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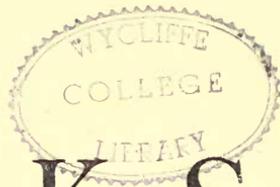
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THE

WORKS

Of the REVEREND

WILLIAM LAW, M.A.,

Sometime Fellow of *Emmanuel*
College, *Cambridge*.

In Nine Volumes.

Volume I.

Three LETTERS to the
Bishop of *Bangor*.

LONDON: Printed for J. RICHARDSON, 1762.
Privately Reprinted for G. MORETON, *Setley*,
Brockenhurst, New Forest, Hampshire. 1892.

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Prefatory Memoir.

THE 'Life' of the REV. WILLIAM LAW has been fully, even diffusively, set forth in his Biography written by CANON OVERTON and published by *Longmans* in the year 1881: and to that work—of which the more interesting particulars are drawn from the late MR. WALTON'S* Collections and DR. BYROM'S 'Journal'—such readers of *William Law's Works* who desire to obtain some general idea of their Writer's life, are referred.

Unfortunately, Canon *Overton's* Work, excellent and painstaking as is its compilation, conveys to the earnest reader only a very vague and unsatisfactory impression of *William Law* himself: being composed chiefly of well-selected extracts from Law's publications with criticisms thereon and numerous explanations and conjectures in well-meant but misplaced, elucidations of motives and actions. In fact, Canon *Overton* has performed a kind of literary autopsy upon *William Law*: quite in the manner of biographical writing of the day; unimpeachable, indeed, in respect of 'scholarly' execution, although occasionally lapsing into ill-chosen expressions as when he describes his subject as a 'grand specimen of Humanity,' instead of example; as if poor *Law* were some Museum specimen to be gazed at and remarked upon, with due pedantry accordingly. This too, in the absence of any authentic portrait of *William Law*, represses the curiosity of the expectant reader; who, abandoning the Biography, consoles himself with the remark made by Miss *HESTER GIBBON*—when requested to write a 'Life' of *William Law*—that his Life was in his Works.

William Law was born at *King's Cliffe* a considerable Village in *Northamptonshire* so long ago as the year 1686, in the Reign of *James the Second*. His father was a 'Grocer and Chandler' in the Village, residing in a house of his own; but, Canon *Overton*

* CHRISTOPHER WALTON, a 'Diamond Jeweller,' of *Ludgate Street, London*, and apparently a man of considerable literary ability—of a peculiar kind—who had a most enthusiastic veneration for WILLIAM LAW. He printed in the year 1856 a 'Cyclopædia of Pure Christian Theology and Theosophic Science in Elucidation of the Sublime Genius and Theosophian 'MISSION OF WILLIAM LAW,' containing nearly 700 pages of the smallest and closest printing, which is perhaps the most laborious and generally unreadable compilation ever printed—excepting the Biographical footnotes relating to *Law* commencing at page 334.

tells us 'his social standing was different from that of an ordinary 'Village tradesman of the present day.' From various evidence it appears that the *Laws* were not of humble origin in respect of 'Gentility'; and mention is made by *Walton* of a Tradesman's token, dated 1659, which bore their 'Coat of Arms'—an evidence of 'Gentility' of more account at that time of 'Heraldic Visitations' than it would be at the present. It may be remembered that *William Law's* great Contemporary BISHOP BUTLER, was the son of a Linen-Draper; and other instances might be recalled—SHAKESPEARE for example—of what has been accomplished by members of that class.

William Law was the fourth son of a family of eight sons and three daughters. His early disposition appears to have been noticed by his father, who alone of all his sons, sent *William* to the University; and he entered as a Sizar of *Emmanuel College, Cambridge*, in the year 1705. He proceeded to the Arts Degrees in the usual course; and was elected to a Fellowship of his College and ordained in the year 1711—no doubt therefore, well fulfilling his father's expectations of him. His political principles (never mere 'Views' with him), obliged him to decline the Oath of Allegiance to *George* the First in the year 1716; which deprived him of his College Fellowship and of all prospect of advancement in the Church. In a note which he wrote to his eldest brother on that occasion he says: 'My prospect indeed is 'melancholy enough. . . . The benefits of my education seem 'partly at an end, but that same education had been more miserably lost, if I had not learnt to fear something worse than misfortunes.' In this great, though providential disappointment to his hopes and those of his family respecting him, his father did not live to share, having died two years previously.

It is said that on leaving *Cambridge*, *William Law* came to *London*: and there is some tradition that he officiated as Curate at *S. Mary's Church* in the *Strand*. Various vague reports are current respecting him at that period; but little is known of him until he published his first letter to Dr. HOADLY, the latitudinarian Bishop of *Bangor*, followed by his other letters on that Controversy. These Letters were written between the years 1717-1719, when *William Law* was about 31 years of age, and are generally considered to have been the most important contribution to that Controversy.

The following 'Rules for my Future Conduct' drawn up by *William Law**—it is said, when he was at *Cambridge*—are worthy of being reproduced with his Works:—

* *Walton's* 'Cyclopædia,' Footnotes, pp. 345-6.

TO fix it deep in my Mind, that I have one business upon my hands—to seek for eternal happiness, by doing the Will of God.

II. To examine everything that relates to me in this view, as it serves or obstructs this only end of Life.

III. To think nothing great or desirable, because the World thinks it so ; but to form all my judgments of things from the infallible Word of God, and direct my Life according to it.

IV. To avoid all concerns with the World, or the ways of it, but where Religion and Charity oblige me to act.

V. To remember frequently, and impress it upon my Mind deeply, that no condition of this Life is for enjoyment, but for trial ; and that every power, ability, or advantage we have, are all so many Talents to be accounted for, to the Judge of all the World.

VI. That the Greatness of Human Nature consists in nothing else but in imitating the Divine Nature. That therefore, all the Greatness of this World, which is not in good actions, is perfectly beside the point.

VII. To remember, often and seriously, how much of Time is inevitably thrown away, from which I can expect nothing but the charge of Guilt ; and how little there may be to come, on which an Eternity depends.

VIII. To avoid all excess in eating and drinking.

IX. To spend as little time as I possibly can, among such persons as can receive no benefit from me, nor I from them.

X. To be always fearful of letting my time slip away without some fruit.

XI. To avoid all idleness.

XII. To call to mind the Presence of God, whenever I find myself under any Temptation to sin, and to have immediate recourse to Prayer.

XIII. To think humbly of myself ; and with great Charity of all others.

XIV. To forbear from all evil speaking.

XV. To think often of the Life of Christ, and to propose it as a pattern to myself.

XVI. To pray, privately, thrice a day, besides my morning and evening Prayer.

XVII. To keep from——* as much as I can without offence.

XVIII. To spend some time in giving an account of the day, previous to Evening Prayer : how have I spent this day? what Sin have I committed? what Temptations have I withstood? have I performed all my Duty?

It was about the year 1727 that *William Law* having achieved a good reputation by his Controversial writings, *Christian Perfection, &c.*, became Tutor in the *Gibbon* family, residing at *Putney*, in particular to the father of the Historian *Gibbon* whom he accompanied to *Emmanuel* College ; and on his pupil's departure thence upon his travels, *Law* returned to *Putney* where he continued to reside for the next twelve years in the capacity of Spiritual Director with the *Gibbon* family, by whom he was much esteemed. It was during his residence at *Putney* that he produced his fame-piece, but not perhaps his master-piece, the *Serious Call*, by which he is now most generally known. It appears to have been at *Putney* also, that he became acquainted with the writings of *Jacob Behmen* the German Mystic, for whom

* Left blank by *Walton*.

and his Commentators, he acquired a great veneration which deepened with him until his death.

On leaving *Putney*, *Law* returned to *King's Cliffe* to reside ; where shortly afterwards Mrs. *Hutcheson*, a Widow lady, and Miss *Hester Gibbon*, who were each possessed of ample means and of strict piety, joined him and devoted themselves and the greater part of their joint income* to the relief of the Poor in a most benevolent, but it would seem, indiscriminate manner. Their Charity becoming notorious, attracted to them all the Vagrants from the whole country round, demoralizing the Village of *King's Cliffe* ; and exciting the rebuke of the then Incumbent administered to them from his pulpit.

Some interesting particulars of the daily life of *William Law's* household at *King's Cliffe* were collected many years ago by Mr. *Walton*, and are abridged, as follows :

MR. LAW rose early each morning, probably about five o'clock, spending some time in devotion ; after which he breakfasted, generally on a cup of chocolate in his bedroom, and then commenced study. . . . Mr. *Law* kept four cows, the produce of which, beyond what was required for his household, he gave to the poor, distributing the milk every morning with his own hands. . . . At nine o'clock a bell was rung for family devotion, of which the Collects and Psalms for the day formed a portion. From . . . the performance of this duty Mr. *Law* retired in silence to his chamber, where he passed the morning in study ; not unfrequently, indeed, interrupted by the message of some poor mendicant for aid, which never failed to secure his immediate attention . . . he inquired into the particular needs of his suppliants, and caused relief to be administered in the shape either of money, apparel, or food. . . . He manifested displeasure if room was not found on the kitchen fire for a vessel for the poor ; and sometimes he has been known to quit his studies in order to taste the broth which had been made for them. . . . In the winter season, he occasionally added ale and wine to these charitable provisions. . . . Amongst the articles of clothing which he provided for the indigent were shirts made of strong coarse linen ; and, that he might not give away what he himself could not thankfully receive, he always wore them himself first . . . after which they were washed and distributed. . . . Instances of hypocrisy are narrated of mendicants, who have been known to change their better clothing, sheltered by the projecting buttresses of the neighbouring church, for rags, and, thus disguised, repair again for relief to the well-known window. Though suspicions at times crossed his mind, Mr. *Law* would give his suppliants the benefit of a doubt, the result of all which was that *King's Cliffe* became the resort of the idle and worthless, and obtained a character for Pauperism which the place did not deserve ; and so much annoyance did it cause to the inhabitants that the Rector . . . endeavoured to put an end to

* Mrs. HUTCHESON'S income is said by *Walton* to have been £2,000, and Miss GIBBON'S between five and seven hundred pounds yearly. It also appears that WILLIAM LAW gave the profits of only the *first* editions of his Works to the Bookseller, so that there would be a considerable income from that source.

the alleged mistaken benevolence of Mr. *Law* and his companions by openly preaching against them from the Pulpit. . . . At noon in winter, and at one in summer, dinner was laid upon the table, of which Mr. *Law* partook very moderately, allowing himself one glass of wine. . . . Immediately after dinner they reassembled (for devotional exercises). That duty performed, Mr. *Law* once more retired to his study and remained there a few hours, again rejoining the ladies at the tea-table. Of this refreshment he did not ordinarily partake, but supplied its place with a raisin or two from his pocket, generally standing and indulging in cheerful conversation. After tea exercises of piety were resumed, and varied by the servants in turn reading a chapter from the Bible. . . . Mr. *Law* and his companions, Mrs. *Hutcheson* and Miss *Gibbon*, were constant in their attendance at Church whenever Divine Service was performed. After the morning service on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*, it was their custom to ride out for an airing, Mr. *Law* and Miss *Gibbon* being on horseback, and Mrs. *Hutcheson*, with the Honourables the Misses *Hatton*, their neighbours (who usually dined with them every alternate Friday) . . . in the carriage. . . . As regards the regular occupations of the ladies,* apart from the time dedicated to outward offices of charity among their Neighbours, or spent in private devotion, it would appear that they consisted in storing their minds with the instructions of Wisdom, and the impressions of Eternity, by transcribing daily portions out of the writings of the ancient . . . divines as in the way of school exercises. . . . As no authentic portrait of Mr. *Law* is in existence . . . we give a sketch of his personal appearance, as nearly as can be gathered from the testimony left upon record, assisted by our knowledge of his character.† . . . In stature . . . rather over than under the middle size, his frame not corpulent, but stoutly built. . . . The general form of his countenance was round; and he possessed a blunt, felicitous expression of utterance. . . . He had well-proportioned features . . . a cheerful, open expression. . . . His face was ruddy, his eyes grey, clear, vivacious. . . . His general manner was lively and unaffected, and, though his walk and conversation among his friends was that of a Sage . . . he was accustomed to see company, and was a man of free conversation. . . . A sister of the . . . *Wesleys* describes him as the very picture of the Law itself for severity and gravity. . . . Perhaps the gravity of his looks and demeanour was a little

* Mrs. HUTCHESON and Miss HESTER GIBBON, each of whom survived WILLIAM LAW; and are buried at the foot of his grave in *King's Cliff* Churchyard. Canon *Overton*, in his 'Biography of *Law*,' rather ungallantly and frivolously records a foolish tradition 'that during *Law's* lifetime the ladies dressed in the severely simple style recommended in the *Serious Call*, but that after his death the feminine 'love of finery broke out,' and 'Miss *Gibbon* appeared resplendent in yellow 'stockings' as if Miss *Gibbon's* stockings had been an apparent and prominent rather than an obscured and withdrawn portion of her apparel; for which supposition there is no evidence, although Dr. *Byrom* reports on hearsay that 'she was said to be a very good lady, though some people thought 'she was mad.'

† Mr. WALTON here adds the following note (p. 502), which will be read with a shudder: 'If our endeavours to obtain possession of his Skull should be crowned with success, we shall then, perhaps, be enabled to offer a more just and complete delineation of his exterior . . . ; his hardy, economic physical training and classically tutored mind rendering it probable that nature in 'him was regular and true'—and very unlike what it was in poor Mr. WALTON!

heightened by the soberness of his dress, which was usually a clerical hat with the loops let down, black coat, and grey wig.

Of the many who applied to *William Law* for spiritual advice and guidance, and who for a time implicitly followed his directions, the most notable was *John Wesley* : of whom *Law* subsequently wrote, 'I was at one time a sort of Oracle with Mr. *Wesley*.' The occasion of their estrangement was because in *Wesley's* opinion, *William Law's* teaching did not sufficiently dwell upon the Saving Merits of the Atonement ; and the instantaneous kind of Salvation comprehended in the Divine words 'Believe ; and thou shalt be saved.' This Doctrine *Wesley* in a lengthy but rather weak and petulant, note charged *Law* with neglecting to teach him ; and asks him 'How will you justify it 'to our common Lord that you never gave me this advice'—of instantaneous Salvation—'Why did I scarcely ever hear you 'name the name of Christ, never so as to ground anything on 'faith in His blood ?' ; and concludes with some personal reflections upon *William Law's* morose disposition, which he thinks cannot be the result of a living faith, &c., and which certainly might have been spared. To this *Law* sent a most admirable and charitable reply, sweeping away *Wesley's* insinuations like so many cobwebs ; in which he says 'A holy man you say taught 'you this "Believe and thou shalt be saved." I am to suppose that till you met with this holy man you had not been 'taught this Doctrine. Did you not above two years ago give a 'new translation of *Thomas à Kempis*. Will you call *Thomas* to 'account and to answer it to God, as you do me for not teaching 'you that doctrine ? Or will you say that you took upon you to 'restore the true sense of that Divine Writer, and instruct others 'how they might profit by reading him, before you had so much 'as a literal knowledge of the most plain, open, and repeated 'doctrine in his book. You cannot but remember what value I 'always expressed of *à Kempis*, and how much I recommended 'it to your meditations. You have had a great many conversations with me, and I dare say you never was with me half an 'hour without my being large upon that very doctrine which you 'make me totally silent and ignorant of . . . I am to suppose 'that you had been meditating upon an Author that of all others 'leads us the most directly to a real living Faith in *Jesus Christ* : 'after you had judged yourself such a master of his sentiments 'and doctrines as to be able to publish them . . . after you had 'done this you had only the faith of a *Judas*.' And concluding : 'Your last paragraph, concerning my sour, rough behaviour, I 'leave in its full force. Whatever you can say of me of that

'kind, *without hurting yourself*, will be always well received by me.'

William Law's veneration for *Jacob Behmen* and belief in his System of Philosophy; and what has been termed, his own 'mysticism,' has by many been misunderstood and misrepresented. His latest Biographer, Canon *Overton*, places too much stress upon a quotation from a letter written by *William Law* to a friend; in which, probably in an unguarded moment of strong enthusiasm, he says 'All pretences and endeavours to hinder the 'opening of this Mystery revealed' in *Jacob Behmen* 'and its 'bearing down all before it, will be as vain as so many attempts 'to prevent or retard the coming of the last day'—and this statement made in the privacy of correspondence—Canon *Overton* describes as a 'Prophecy' unfulfilled. It is therefore, only fair to *William Law's* memory to quote the following extract from a letter written by him five years later—and within two years of his death, to a friend: 'Next to the Scriptures, my only book is 'the illuminated *Behmen*. *And him I only follow so far as he 'helps to open in me that which God had opened in him, concerning 'the death and the life of the fallen and redeemed man. The 'whole Kingdom of Grace and Nature was opened in him; and 'the whole Kingdom of Grace and Nature lies hid in myself. 'And, therefore, in reading of him, I am always at home and 'kept close to the Kingdom of God that is within me.'*

Another of the charges brought against *Law* is, that he was a 'declared Universalist.' The final Restitution of all things, was a subject upon which he spoke and wrote most guardedly; in one instance as follows:—'Put away all needless curiosity in 'Divine matters; and look upon everything to be so but that 'which helps you to die to yourself, that the Spirit and Life of 'Christ may be found in you.'

William Law retired to *King's Cliffe* when he was fifty-one years of age, and he resided there until his death, twenty-two years later. It appears that at Eastertide in the year 1761, when occupying himself as usual about the annual audit of the Schools, which he had founded and endowed in his native place, he caught cold, producing inflammation of the kidneys; which, after a few days' acute suffering, ended his life here. His death occurred between seven and eight o'clock in the morning of *Thursday, 9th April, 1761*. 'When near expiring,' it is reported, 'he sang a hymn with a strong and very clear voice;' and Miss *Gibbon*, who was present, wrote:—'This death-bed instead of 'being a state of Affliction, was, providentially, a state of Divine 'Transport. As to THE TRUTH, all his behaviour bore full 'testimony to it, and the gracious words that proceeded out of

x

and all... nature of love... address like things... the existence of all things changes not through the fall of its creature... all fallen nature and creature to their... some time ago...

x *Memoir of the Rev. William Law.*

‘his mouth were all love, all joy, and all Divine Transport . . .
‘after taking leave of everybody in the most affecting manner,
‘and declaring the opening of the Spirit of Love in the Soul to
‘be all in all—he expired in Divine raptures.’

G. B. M.

Brockenhurst, Hants.
19th October, 1892.

Three LETTERS to the
Bishop of *Bangor*.

The TITLES of
The CONTENTS of the NINE VOLUMES
of the Rev. *William Law's* Works.

- I. Three Letters to the Bishop of *Bangor*.
 - II. (a) Remarks upon a late Book entitled 'The Fable of the Bees.' (b) The Case of Reason, or Natural Religion fairly and fully stated. (c) The absolute Unlawfulness of Stage Entertainments fully demonstrated.
 - III. A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection.
 - IV. A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life.
 - V. (a) A Demonstration of the Gross and Fundamental Errors of a late Book, called 'A plain Account of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.' (b) The Grounds and Reason of Christian Regeneration.
 - VI. (a) An Earnest and Serious Answer to Dr. *Trapp's* Discourse of the Folly, Sin and Danger of being Righteous over-much. (b) An Appeal to all that Doubt or disbelieve the Truths of the Gospel.
 - VII. (a) The Spirit of Prayer : or the Soul rising out of the Vanity of Time into the Riches of Eternity. In Two Parts. (b) The Way to Divine Knowledge ; being several Dialogues between *Humanus, Academicus, Rusticus* and *Theophilus*.
 - VIII. (a) The Spirit of Love. In Two Parts. (b) A Short but Sufficient Confutation of the Rev. Dr. *Warburton's* projected Defence of Christianity.
 - IX. (a) Of Justification by Faith and Works. (b) An Humble, Earnest, and Affectionate Address to the Clergy. (c) A Collection of Letters on the most Interesting and Important Subjects.
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THE
Bishop of BANGOR'S
LATE *B^d Hoadly 1715 - afterward
B^d Keuford, then Salisbury, &
lastly Winchester: in which see
his last Epist.
written 1764
about 85*
SERMON,

AND HIS
LETTER to Dr. SNAPE in
Defence of it,

ANSWERED.

And the Dangerous Nature of some Doctrines
in his *Preservative*,

Set forth in a

Letter to his Lordship.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

LONDON:

Printed for W. INNYS and J. RICHARDSON,
in *Pater-noster-Row*. 1753.



The
First Letter to
the Bishop of *Bangor*.

My Lord,

THAT your Lordship may be prepared to receive what I here presume to lay before you, with the greater Candor, I sincerely profess, that it does not proceed from any Prejudice; but from certain Reasons, upon which I find myself invincibly obliged to differ from your Lordship in Opinion.

To prevent all Suspicion of my designing anything injurious to your Lordship's Character in this Address, I have prefixed, what otherwise I should have chosen to conceal, my Name to it.

Your Lordship is represented as at the Head of a Cause, where every Adversary is sure to be reproached, either as a furious Jacobite, or Popish Bigot, or an Enemy to the Liberty of his Country, and the Protestant Cause. These hard Names are to be expected, my Lord, from a Set of Men who dishonour your Lordship with their Panegyrics upon your Performances; whose Praises defile the Character they would adorn.

When Dr. *Snape* represents your Lordship as no Friend to the good Orders, and necessary Institutions of the Church, you complain of the ill Arts of an Adversary, who sets you out in false Colours, perverts your Words on purpose to increase his own *Imaginary Triumphs*. But, my Lord, in this, Dr. *Snape* only thinks with those who would be counted your best Friends; and would no longer be your Friends, but that they conclude, you have declared against the Authority of the Church. Does your Lordship suppose, that the *T—ds*, the *H—ks*, the *B—ts*, would be at so much Expense of Time and Labour, to justify, commend and enlarge upon your Lordship's Notions, if they did not think you engaged in their Cause? There is not a Libertine, or Loose-Thinker in *England*, but he imagines you intend to dissolve the Church as a *Society*, and are ready to

offer Incense to your Lordship for so meritorious a Design. It is not my Intention to reproach your Lordship with their Esteem, or to involve you in the Guilt of their Schemes ; but to show, that an Adversary does not need any Malice to make him believe you no Friend to the Constitution of the Church, as a Regular Society, since your greatest Admirers every Day publish it by necessary Construction to the World in Print.

After a Word or two concerning a Passage in your Lordship's *Preservative*, I shall proceed to consider your Answer to Dr. *Snape*. In the 98th Page you have these Words: *But when you are secure of your Integrity before God, — this will lead you (as it ought all of us) not to be afraid of the Terrors of Men, or the vain Words of Regular Uninterrupted Successions, Authoritative Benedictions, Excommunications, — Nullity, or Validity of God's Ordinances to the People upon Account of Niceties and Trifles, or any other the like Dreams.*

My Lord, thus much must be implied here : Be not afraid of the Terrors of Men, who would persuade you of the Danger of being in this, or that Communion, and fright you into particular Ways of Worshipping God, who would make you believe such Sacraments, and such Clergy, are necessary to recommend you to his Favour. For these, your Lordship affirms, we may condemn, if we be but secure of our Integrity.

So that if a Man be not a *Hypocrite*, it matters not what Religion he is of. This is a Proposition of an unfriendly Aspect to Christianity : But that it is entirely your Lordship's, is plain from what you declare, p. 90 : *That every one may find it in his own Conduct to be true, that his Title to God's Favour cannot depend upon his actual being or continuing in any particular Method ; but upon his real Sincerity in the Conduct of his Conscience.* Again, p. 91 : *The Favour of God follows Sincerity, considered as such, and consequently equally follows every equal Degree of Sincerity.* So that I hope I have not wrested your Lordship's Meaning, by saying, that, according to these Notions, if a Man be not a Hypocrite, it matters not what Religion he is of. Not only sincere *Quakers, Ranters, Muggletonians, and Fifth Monarchy-Men*, are as much in the Favour of God, as any of the Apostles ; but likewise sincere *Jews, Turks and Deists*, are upon as good a Bottom, and as secure of the Favour of God, as the sincerest Christian.

For your Lordship saith, it is *Sincerity*, as *such*, that procures the Favour of God. If it be *Sincerity*, as *such*, then it is *Sincerity* independent and exclusive of any particular Way of Worship. And if the *Favour of God equally follows every equal Degree of Sincerity*, then it is impossible there should be any

Difference, either as to Merit or Happiness, between a sincere *Martyr* and a sincere *Persecutor*; and he that burns the Christian, if he be but in earnest, has the same Title to a Reward for it, as he that is burnt for believing in Christ.

Your Lordship saith, you can't help it, if People will charge you with* *Evil Intentions* and *Bad Views*. I intend no such Charge: But I wonder your Lordship should think it hard, that anyone should infer from these Places, that you *are against the Interest of the Church of England*.

For, my Lord, cannot the *Quakers*, *Muggletonians*, *Deists*, *Presbyterians*, assert you as much in their interest as we can? Have you said anything for us, or done anything for us in this *Preservative*, but what you have equally done for them? Your Lordship is ours, as you fill a *Bishopric*; but we are at a loss to discover from this Discourse what other Interest we have in your Lordship. For you openly expose our Communion, and give up all the advantages of it, by telling all sorts of People, if they are but sincere in their own Way, they are as much in God's Favour as anybody else. Is this supporting our Interest, my Lord?

Suppose a Friend of King *George* should declare it to all *Britons* whatever, that though they were divided into Five thousand different Parties, to set up different *Pretenders*; yet if they were but sincere in their Designs, they would be as much in the Favour of God, as those who are most firmly attached to his *Majesty*. Does your Lordship think, such a one would be thought any great Friend to the Government? And, my Lord, is not this the Declaration you made as to the Church of *England*? Have you not told all Parties, that their Sincerity is enough? Have you said so much as one Word in Recommendation of our Communion: Or, if it was not for your Church-Character in the Title-Page of this Discourse, could anyone alive conceive what Communion you were of? Nay, a Reader, that was a Stranger, would imagine, that he who will allow no Difference between Communions, is himself of no Communion. Your Lordship, for aught I know, may act according to the strictest Sincerity, and may think it your Duty to undermine the Foundations of the Church. I am only surprised, that you should refuse to own the Reasonableness of such a Charge.

Your Lordship hath cancelled all our Obligations to any particular Communion, upon pretence of *Sincerity*.

I hope, my Lord, there is Mercy in store for all sorts of People, however erroneous in their Way of worshipping God; but cannot believe, that to be a sincere Christian, is to be no more in the Favour of God, than to be a sincere *Deist*, or a

* Answer, p. 46.

sincere *Destroyer* of Christians. It will be allowed, that Sincerity is a necessary Principle of true Religion ; and that without it, all the most specious Appearances of Virtue are nothing worth. But still, neither common Sense, nor plain Scripture, will suffer me to think, that when our Saviour was on Earth, they were as much in the Favour of God, who sincerely refused to be his Disciples, and sincerely called for his Crucifixion, as those who sincerely left all and followed him. If they were, my Lord, where is that Blessedness of Believing so often mentioned in the Scripture ? Or, where is the Happiness of the Gospel Revelation, if they are as well, who refuse it sincerely, as those who embrace it with Integrity ?

Our Saviour declared, that those who believed, should be saved ; but those who believed not, should be damned. Will your Lordship say, that all Unbelievers were insincere ; or, that though they were damned, they were yet in the same Favour with God, as those who were saved ?

The Apostle assures us, *that there is no other Name under Heaven given unto Men, whereby they can be saved, but Jesus Christ.* But your Lordship hath found out an Atonement, more universal than that of his Blood ; and which will even make those blessed and happy, who count it an *unholy Thing*. For seeing it is *Sincerity, as such*, that alone recommends us to the Favour of God, they who sincerely persecute this Name, are in as good a Way, as those that sincerely worship it. Has God declared this to be the only Way to Salvation ? How can your Lordship tell the World, that Sincerity will save them, be they in what Way they will ? Is this all the Necessity of Christ's Satisfaction ? Is this all the Advantage of the Gospel Covenant, that those who sincerely condemn it, are in as good a State without it, as those that embrace it ?

My Lord, here is no Aggravation of your Meaning. If Sincerity, as such, be the only thing that recommends us to God, and every equal Degree of it procures an equal Degree of Favour ; it is a Demonstration, that Sincerity *against* Christ is as pleasing to God, as Sincerity *for* him. My Lord, this is a Doctrine which no Words can enough decry. So I shall leave it, to consider what Opinion St. Paul had of this kind of Sincerity. He did not think, when he persecuted the Church, though he did it *ignorantly*, and in Unbelief, and out of Zeal towards God, that he was as much in the Favour of God, as when he suffered for Christ. *I am the least*, saith he, *of the Apostles, not fit to be called an Apostle ; because I persecuted the Church of Christ.* The Apostle does not scruple to charge himself with Guilt, notwithstanding his Sincerity.

A little Knowledge of human Nature will teach us, that our Sincerity may be often charged with Guilt; not as if we were guilty because we are sincere; but because it may be our Fault that we are hearty and sincere in such or such ill-grounded Opinions. It may have been from some ill Conduct of our own, some Irregularities, or Abuse of our Faculties, that we conceive things as we do, and are fixed in such and such Tenets. And can we think so much owing to a *Sincerity* in Opinions, contracted by ill Habits and guilty Behaviour? There are several faulty Ways, by which People may cloud and prejudice their Understandings, and throw themselves into a very odd Way of thinking; for some Cause or other *God may send them a strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lie.* And will your Lordship say, that those who are thus sunk into Errors, it may be, through their own ill Conduct, or as a Judgment of God upon them, are as much in his Favour, as those that love and adhere to the Truth? This, my Lord, is a shocking Opinion, and has given Numbers of Christians great Offence, as contradicting common Sense and plain Scripture; as setting all Religion upon the Level, as to the Favour of God.

The next thing that, according to your Lordship, *we ought not to be concerned at, is, the vain Words of Regular and Uninterrupted Successions, as Niceties, Trifles, and Dreams.* Thus much surely is implied in these Words, that no kind of *Ordination or Mission* of the Clergy is of any Consequence or Moment to us. For if the Ordination need not be *Regular*, or derived from those who had Authority from Christ to Ordain, it is plain, that no one particular kind of Ordination can be of any more Value than another. For no Ordination whatever can have any worse Defects, than as being *Irregular*, and not derived by a Succession from Christ. So that if these Circumstances are to be looked on as *Trifles and Dreams*, all the Difference that can be supposed betwixt any Ordinations, comes under the same Notion of *Trifles and Dreams*; and consequently, are either Good alike, or Trifling alike. So that *Quakers, Independents, Presbyterians*, according to your Lordship, have as much Reason to think their Teachers as useful to them, and as True Ministers of Christ, as those of the Episcopal Communion have to think their Teachers. For if *Regularity* of Ordination and *Uninterrupted Succession* be mere Trifles, and nothing; then all the Difference betwixt us and other Teachers, must be nothing: for they can differ from us in no other respects. So that, my Lord, if Episcopal Ordination, derived from Christ, hath been contended for by the Church of *England*, your Lordship hath in this Point deserted her: And you not only give up Episcopal Ordination, by ridiculing a

Succession; but likewise by the same Argument exclude any *Ministers* on Earth from having Christ's Authority. For if there be not a Succession of Persons authorised from Christ to send others to act in his Name, then both Episcopal and Presbyterian Teachers are equally *Usurpers*, and as mere *Laymen* as any at all. For there can't be any other Difference between the Clergy and Laity; but as the one hath Authority derived from Christ, to perform Offices which the other hath not. But this Authority can be no otherwise had, than by an Uninterrupted Succession of Men from Christ, empowered to qualify others. For if the Succession be once broke, People must either go into the Ministry of their own Accord, or be sent by such as have no more Power to send others, than to go themselves. And, my Lord, can these be called Ministers of Christ, or received as his Ambassadors? Can they be thought to act in his Name, who have no Authority from him? If so, your Lordship's Servant might Ordain and Baptize to as much purpose as your Lordship: For it could only be objected to such Actions, that they had no Authority from Christ. And if there be no Succession of Ordainers from him, everyone is equally qualified to Ordain. My Lord, I should think it might be granted me, that the Administering of a Sacrament is an Action we have no Right to perform, considered either as Men, Gentlemen, or Scholars, or Members of a Civil Society. Who then can have any Authority to interpose, but he that has it from Christ? And how that can be had from him, without a Succession of Men from him, is not easily conceived. Should a private Person choose a Lord Chancellor, and declare his Authority good; would there be any thing but Absurdity, Impudence and Presumption in it? But why he cannot as well commission a Person to act, sign and seal in the King's Name, as in the Name of Christ, is unaccountable.

My Lord, it is a plain and obvious Truth, that no Man, or Number of Men, considered, as such, can any more make a Priest, or commission a Person to officiate in Christ's Name, *as such*, than he can enlarge the Means of Grace, or add a New Sacrament for the Conveyance of spiritual Advantages. The Ministers of Christ are as much positive *Ordinances*, as the Sacraments; and we might as well think, that Sacraments not instituted by him, might be Means of Grace, as those pass for his Ministers, who have no Authority from him.

Once more, all things are either in common in the Church of Christ, or they are not. If they are, then everyone may Preach, Baptize, Ordain, &c. If all things are not thus common, but the Administering of the Sacrament, and Ordination, &c., are Offices

appropriated to particular Persons ; then I desire to know how, in this present Age, or any other since the Apostles, Christians can know their respective Duties, or what they may, or may not do, with respect to the several Acts of Church-Communion, if there be no *Uninterrupted Succession* of Authorised Persons from Christ : For until Authority from Christ appears, to make a Difference between them, we are all alike ; and anyone may officiate as well as another. To make a Jest therefore of the *Uninterrupted Succession*, is to make a Jest of Ordination ; to destroy the sacred Character, and make all Pretenders to it, as good as those that are sent by Christ.

If there be no *Uninterrupted Succession*, then there are no Authorised Ministers from Christ ; if no such Ministers, then no Christian Sacraments ; if no Christian Sacraments, then no Christian Covenant, whereof the Sacraments are the Stated and Visible Seals.

My Lord, this is all your own. Here are no Consequences palmed upon you ; but the first, plain, and obvious Sense of your Lordship's Words — and yet, after all, your Lordship asks Dr. *Snape, Why all these Outcries against you** ? Indeed, my Lord, you have only taken the main Supports of our Religion away : You have neither left us Priests, nor Sacraments, nor Church : Or, what is the same thing, you have made them all *Trifles* and *Dreams*. And what has your Lordship given us in the room of all these Advantages ? Why, only *Sincerity* : This is the great Universal Atonement for all. This is that, which, according to your Lordship, will help us to the Communion of Saints hereafter, though we are in Communion with anybody, or nobody here.

The next Things we are not to be afraid of, are, *The vain Words of Nullity and Validity of God's Ordinances, i.e.*, whether they are administered by a Clergyman or a Layman. This indeed I have shown was included in what you said about the Trifle of *Uninterrupted Succession*. But, for fear we should have overlooked it there, you have given it us in express Words in the next Line.

Your Lordship tells Dr. *Snape, That you know no Confusion, Glorious or Inglorious, that you have endeavoured to introduce into the Church.*†

My Lord, If I may presume to repeat your own Words, *Lay your Hand on your Heart, and ask yourself*, Whether the encouraging all manner of Divisions, be not endeavouring to introduce Confusion ? If there were in *England* Five thousand

* Answer, p. 40.

† Answer, p. 47.

different Sects, has not your Lordship persuaded them to be content with themselves; not to value what they are told by other Communions; That if they are but sincere, they need not have regard to anything else? Is not this to introduce Confusion? What is Confusion, but Difference and Division? And does not your Lordship plainly declare to the World, that there is no need of uniting? That there is no particular Way or Method, that can recommend us more to the Favour of God, than another? Has your Lordship so much as given the least Hint, that it is better to be in the Communion of the Church of *England*, than not? Have you not exposed her Sacraments and Clergy; and, as much as lay in you, broke down every thing in her, that distinguishes her from Fanatical Conventicles? What is there in her, as a Church, that you have left untouched? What have you left in her, that can any way invite others into her Communion? Are her Clergy authorised more than others? For fear that should be thought, you make a Regular Succession from Christ, a *Trifle*. Are her Sacraments more regularly administered? Lest that should recommend her, you slight the *Nullity or Validity of God's Ordinances*. Is there any Authority in her Laws, which enjoin Communion with her? Lest this should be believed, you tell us, that our being or continuing in any particular Method (or particular Communion) cannot recommend us more to the Favour of God than another.

I must observe to your Lordship, that these Opinions are very oddly put in a *Preservative from ill Principles*; or, *An Appeal to the Consciences and common Sense of the Laity*. Are they to be persuaded not to join with the Nonjurors, because no particular Priests, no particular Sacraments, no particular Communion, is anything but a Dream and Trifle; and such things as no way recommend us to the Favour of God more than others? Are the Nonjurors only thus to be answered? Is the Established Church only thus to be defended? Your Lordship indeed has not minced the Matter: But, I hope, the Church of *England* is to be supported upon better Principles, or not at all.

If I should tell a Person that put a Case of Conscience to me, that all Cases of Conscience are Trifles, and signify nothing; it would be plain, that I had given him a direct Answer: But if he had either Conscience, or common Sense, he would seek out a better Confessor.

Your Lordship tells Dr. *Snape*, that the saith and unsaith, to the *great Diversion of the Roman Catholics*.* But if your Lord-

* Answer, p. 46.

ship would unsay some things you have said, it would be a greater Mortification to them, than all that ever you said or writ in your Life.

To deny the Necessity of any particular Communion, to expose the Validity of Sacraments, and rally upon the Uninterrupted Succession of Priests, and pull down every Pillar in the Church of Christ, is an Errand on which *Rome* hath sent many Messengers. And the Papists are no more provoked with your Lordship for these Discourses, than they were angry at *William Penn*, a reputed Jesuit, for preaching up *Quakerism*. So long as they rejoice in our Divisions, or are glad to see the City of God made a mere *Babel*, they can no more be angry at your Lordship, than at your Advocates.

Dr. *Snape* says, you represent the Church of Christ as a Kingdom, in which Christ neither acts himself, nor hath invested anyone else with Authority to act for him. At this your Lordship cries, p. 22, *Lay your Hand upon your Heart, and ask, Is this a Christian, Human, Honest Representation of what your own Eyes read in my Sermon?*

My Lord, I have dealt as sincerely with my Heart as it is possible; and I must confess, I take the Doctor's Representation to be Christian and Honest. For though you sometimes contend against Absolute and Indispensable Authority; yet it is plain, that you strike at all Authority, and assert, as the Doctor saith, that Christ hath not invested anyone on Earth with an Authority to act for him.

Page 11. You expressly say, *That as to the Affairs of Conscience and eternal Salvation, Christ hath left no Visible Human Authority behind him.*

Now, my Lord, is not this saying, that he has left no Authority at all? For Christ came with no other Authority Himself but as to Conscience and Salvation, he erected a Kingdom which related to nothing but Conscience and Salvation: And therefore they who have no Authority as to Conscience and Salvation, have no Authority at all in his Kingdom. Conscience and Salvation are the only Affairs of that Kingdom.

Your Lordship denies, that anyone has Authority in these Affairs; and yet you take it ill to be charged with asserting, that Christ hath not invested anyone with Authority for him. How can anyone act for him, but in his Kingdom? How can they act in his Kingdom, if they have nothing to do with Conscience and Salvation, when his Kingdom is concerned with nothing else?

—Again, Page 16, your Lordship saith, that no one of them (Christians) *any more than another, hath Authority either to make*

new Laws for Christ's Subjects, or to impose a Sense upon the old ones; or to Judge, Censure, or Punish the Servants of another Master, in Matters purely relating to Conscience.

I can meet with no Divine, my Lord, either Juror or Non-Juror, High or Low, Churchman or Dissenter, that does not think your Lordship has plainly asserted in these Passages, what the Doctor has laid to your Charge, *that no one is invested with Authority from Christ to act for him.*

Your Lordship thinks this is sufficiently answered, by saying, you contend against an Absolute Authority. You do indeed sometimes join Absolute with that Authority you disclaim. But, my Lord, it is still true, that you have taken all Authority from the Church: For the Reasons you everywhere give against this Authority, conclude as strongly against any Degrees of Authority, as that which is truly Absolute.

First, You disown the Authority of any Christians over other Christians, because they are the *Servants of another Master*, p. 16. Now this concludes as strongly against *any* Authority, as that which is *Absolute*: For no one can have the least Authority over those that are entirely under another's Jurisdiction. A small Authority over another's Servant, is as inconsistent as the greatest.

Secondly, You reject this Authority, because of the Objects it is exercised upon, *i.e.* Matters purely relating to Conscience and Salvation. Here this Authority is rejected, because it relates to *Conscience and Salvation*; which does as well exclude every Degree of Authority, as that which is Absolute. For if Authority and Conscience cannot suit together, Conscience rejects Authority, *as such*; and not because there is this or that Degree of it. So that this Argument banishes all Authority.

Thirdly, Your Lordship denies any Church Authority, because Christ doth not *interpose to convey Infallibility, to assert the true Interpretation of His own Laws.** Now, this Reason concludes as full against *all* Authority, as that which is *Absolute*. For if Infallibility is necessary to found an Obedience upon in Christ's Kingdom, it is plain, that nobody in Christ's Kingdom hath any Right to any Obedience from others, nor consequently any Authority to command it; no Members, or Number of Members of it, being infallible.

Fourthly, Another Reason your Lordship gives against Church-Authority, is this; *That it is the taking Christ's Kingdom out of his Hands, and placing it in their own,* p. 14. Now this Reason proves as much against Authority in general, or *any Degrees* of

* Sermon, p. 15.

it, as that which is *Absolute*. For if the Authority of others is inconsistent with Christ's being King of his own Kingdom, then *every Degree* of Authority, so far as it extends, is an Invasion of so much of Christ's Authority, and usurping upon his Right.

The Reason likewise which your Lordship gives to prove the Apostles not Usurpers of Christ's Authority, plainly condemns every Degree of Authority which any Church can now pretend to. *They were no Usurpers, because he then interposed to convey Infallibility; and was in all that they ordained: So that the Authority was his in the strictest Sense.** So that where he does not interpose to convey Infallibility, there every *Degree* of Authority is a *Degree* of Usurpation; and consequently, the present Church having no Infallibility, has no Right to exercise the *least Degree* of Authority, without robbing Christ of his Prerogative.

Thus it plainly appears, that every Reason you have offered against Church-Authority, concludes with as much Strength against *all* Authority, as that which is *Absolute*. And therefore Dr. *Snape* has done you no Injury in charging you with the Denial of *All* Authority.

There happens, my Lord, to be *only* this Difference between your Sermon and the Defence of it, that That is so many Pages against Church-Authority, *as such*, and This is a Confutation of the *Pope's Infallibility*. It is very strange, that so *clear a Writer*, who has been so long inquiring into the Nature of *Government*, should not be able to make himself be understood upon it: That your Lordship should be only preaching against the *Pope*; and yet *All the Lower House of Convocation* should unanimously conceive, that your Doctrine therein delivered, tended to *subvert all Government and Discipline in the Church of Christ*.

And, my Lord, it will appear from what follows, that your Lordship is even of the same Opinion yourself; and that you imagined, you had banished *all* Authority, *as such*, out of the Church, by those Arguments you had offered against an *Absolute Authority*. This is plain from the following Passage, where you ridicule that which Dr. *Snape* took to be an *Authority*, though not *Absolute*. When Dr. *Snape* said, That no Church-Authority was to be obeyed in anything contrary to the Revealed Will of God, your Lordship triumphs thus: *Glorious Absolute Authority indeed, in your own Account, to which Christ's Subjects owe no Obedience, till they have examined into his own Declarations; and then they obey not this Authority, but him.†*

* Answer, p. 38.

† Answer, p. 27.

Here you make nothing of that Authority which is not *Absolute*; and yet you think it hard to be told, that you have taken away all *Church-Authority*. That which is *Absolute*, you expressly deny; and here you say, that which is not *Absolute*, is nothing at all. Where then is the *Authority* you have left? Or how is it that Christ has empowered anyone to act in his Name?

Your Lordship fights safe under the Protection of the Word *Absolute*; but your Aim is at all Church-Power. And your Lordship makes too hasty an Inference, that because it is not *Absolute*, it is none at all. If you ask, Where you have made this Inference, it is on occasion of the above-mentioned Triumph; where your Lordship makes it an insignificant Authority, which is only to be obeyed so long as it is not contrary to Scripture.

Your Lordship seems to think all is lost, as to Church-Power; because the Doctor does not claim an *Absolute one*, but allows it to be subject to Scripture: As if *all* Authority was *Absolute*, or else nothing at all. I shall therefore consider the Nature of this Church-Power, and show, that though it is not *Absolute*, yet it is a *Real Authority*, and is not such a mere Notion as your Lordship makes it.

An *Absolute Authority*, according to your Lordship, is what is to be always obeyed by every Individual that is subject to it, in all Circumstances. This is an Authority that we utterly deny to the Church. But, I presume, there may be an *Authority* inferior to this, which is nevertheless a *Real Authority*, and is to be esteemed as such, and that for these Reasons:

First, I hope it will be allowed me, that our Saviour came into the World with Authority. But it was not lawful for the *Jews* to receive him, if they thought his Appearance not agreeable to those Marks and Characters they had of him in their Scriptures. May not I here say, My Lord, *Glorious Authority of Christ indeed, to which the Jews owed no Obedience, till they had examined their Scriptures; and then they obey, not Him, but Them!*

Again; The Apostles were sent into the World with Authority: But yet, those who thought their Doctrines unworthy of God, and unsuitable to the Principles of Natural Religion, were obliged not to obey them. *Glorious Authority indeed of the Apostles, to whom Mankind owed no Obedience, till they had first examined their own Notions of God and Religion; and then they obeyed, not the Apostles, but Them.*

I hope, my Lord, it may be allowed, that the Sacraments are Real Means of Grace: But it is certain they are only *conditionally*

so, if those that partake of them are endowed with suitable Dispositions of Piety and Virtue. *Glorious Means of Grace of the Sacraments, which is only obtained by such pious Dispositions ; and then it is owing to the Dispositions, and not the Sacraments.* Now, my Lord, if there can be such a thing as instituted *Real Means of Grace, which are only conditionally applied,* I cannot see, why there may not be an instituted *Real Authority* in the Church, which is only to be *conditionally* obeyed.

Your Lordship has written a great many Elaborate Pages to prove the *English Government Limited* ; and that no Obedience is due to it, but whilst it preserves our Fundamentals ; and, I suppose, the People are to judge for themselves, whether these are safe, or not. *Glorious Authority of the English Government, which is to be obeyed no longer than the People think it their Interest to obey it !*

Will your Lordship say, There is *no Authority* in the *English Government*, because only a *conditional Obedience* is due to it, whilst we think it supports our Fundamentals? Why then must the *Church-Authority* be reckoned nothing at all, because only a *Rational Conditional Obedience* is to be paid, whilst we think it not contrary to Scripture? Is a Limited, Conditional Government in the State, such a Wise, Excellent, and Glorious Constitution? And is the same Authority in the Church, such Absurdity, Nonsense, and nothing at all, as to any actual Power?

If there be such a thing as Obedience upon Rational Motives, there must be such a thing as Authority that is not absolute, or that does not require a *Blind, Implicit Obedience*. Indeed, Rational Creatures can obey no other Authority ; they must have Reasons for what they do. And yet because the Church claims only this *Rational Obedience*, your Lordship explodes *such Authority* as none at all.

Yet it must be granted, that *no other Obedience* was due to the *Prophets*, or our *Saviour* and his *Apostles* : They were only to be obeyed by those who Thought their Doctrines *worthy* of God. So that if the Church has *no Authority*, because we must first consult the Scriptures before we obey it ; neither our Saviour, nor his Apostles, had *any Authority*, because the *Jews* were first to consult their Scriptures, and the *Heathens* their Reason, before they obeyed them. And yet this is all that is said against *Church-Authority* ; That because they are to judge of the *Lawfulness* of its Injunctions, therefore they owe it no Obedience : Which false Conclusion I hope is enough exposed.

If we think it unlawful to do anything that the Church requires of us, we must not obey its Authority. So, if we think

it unlawful to submit to any Temporal Government, we are not to comply. But, I hope, it will not follow, that the Government has *no Authority*, because some think it unlawful to comply with it. If we are so unhappy as to judge wrong in any Matter of Duty, we must nevertheless act according to our Judgments; and the Guilt of Disobedience either in *Church* or *State*, is more or less, according as our Error is more or less voluntary, and occasioned by our own Mismanagement.

I believe I have shown, First, That all your Lordship's Arguments against *Church-Authority*, conclude with the same Force against *all Degrees of Authority*: Secondly, That though *Church-Authority* be not Absolute in a *certain Sense*; yet if our Saviour and his Apostles had any Authority, the Church may have a *Real Authority*: For neither he, nor his Apostles, had *such an Absolute Authority*, as excludes all *Consideration* and *Examination*: Which is your Notion of *Absolute Authority*.

Before I leave this Head, I must observe, that in this very Answer to Dr. *Snape*, where you would be thought to have exposed *this Absolute Authority alone*, you exclude *all Authority* along with it. You ask the Doctor,* *Is this the whole you can make of it, after all your boasted Zeal for Mere Authority?* You then say, *Why may not I be allowed to say, No Man on Earth hath an Absolute Authority, as well as you?* My Lord, there can be no understanding of this, unless *Mere Authority* and *Absolute Authority* be taken for the same thing by your Lordship.

But, my Lord, is not the smallest *Particle* of Matter, *Mere Matter?* And is it therefore the same as the *Whole Mass* of Matter? Is an Inch of Space, because it is *Mere Space*, the same as *Infinite Space?* How comes it, then, that *Mere Authority* is the same as *Absolute Authority?* My Lord, *Mere Authority* implies *only Authority*, as a *Mere Man* implies *only a Man*: But your Lordship makes no Difference between *this*, and *Absolute Authority*; and therefore hath left *no Authority* in the Church, unless there be Authority, that is not *Mere Authority*, i.e. Matter that is not *Mere Matter*; or Space that is not *Mere Space*.

When the Church enjoins Matters of Indifference, is she obeyed for any Reason, but for her *Mere Authority?* But your Lordship allows no Obedience to *Mere Authority*; and therefore no Obedience even in Indifferent Matters.

Thus do these Arguments of yours lay all waste in the Church: And I must not omit *one*, my Lord, which falls as

* Answer, p. 26.

heavy upon the *State*, and makes all *Civil Government* unlawful. Your words are these: *As the Church of Christ is the Kingdom of Christ, He himself is King; and in this it is implied, that He is the sole Law-giver to his Subjects, and Himself the sole Judge of their Behaviour in the Affairs of Conscience and Salvation.* If there be any *Truth* or *Force* in this Argument, it concludes with the same *Truth* and *Force* against all Authority in the *Kingdoms* of this World. In Scripture we are told, *the Most High ruleth in the Kingdom of Men* (Dan. iv. 17), *that the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King* (Isa. xxxiii. 22). Now, if because Christ is *King* of the Church, it must be in *this implied*, that he is *sole* Law-giver to his *Subjects*; it is plain to a Demonstration, that because *God* is *King* and *Law-giver* to the whole Earth, that therefore *He* is *sole* Law-giver to his *Subjects*; and consequently, that *all Civil Authority, all Human Laws*, are mere *Invasions* and *Usurpations* upon God's Authority, as *King* of the whole Earth.

Is nobody to have any Jurisdiction in *Christ's Kingdom*, because He is *King* of it? How then comes anyone to have any Authority in the *Kingdoms* of this World, when God has declared himself the *Law-giver*, and *King* of the whole World? Will your Lordship say, that Christ hath left us the *Scriptures*, as the *Statute-Laws* of his *Kingdom*, to prevent the Necessity of *After-Laws*? It may be answered, That God has given us *Reason* for our constant Guide; which, if it were as duly attended to, would as *certainly* answer the *Ends* of *Civil Life*, as the Observance of the *Scriptures* would make us good Christians.

But, my Lord, as human Nature, if left to itself, would neither answer the *Ends* of a *Spiritual* or *Civil* Society; so a *constant Visible* Government in both, is *equally* necessary: And, I believe, it appears to all unprejudiced Eyes, that in this Argument *at least*, your Lordship has declared both *equally Unlawful*.

Your Lordship saith,* *The Exclusion of the Papists from the Throne, was not upon the Account of their Religion.* Three Lines after you say, *I have contended indeed elsewhere, that it was their unhappy Religion which alone made them incapable in themselves, of governing this Protestant Nation by the Laws of the Land.* My Lord, I can't reconcile these two Passages. *Popery alone*, you say, was their *Incapacity*. From which it may be inferred, they had *no other Incapacity*. Yet your Lordship saith, They were not excluded upon the Account of their *Religion*. A

* Answer, p. 25.

little after you say, *The Ground of their Exclusion was not their Religion, considered as such; but the Fatal, Natural, Certain Effects of it upon themselves to our Destruction.*

As for Instance, your Lordship may mean thus: If a *Man of a great Estate* dies, he loses his *Right* to his Estate; not upon the Account of *Death*, considered *as such*; but for the *Certain, Fatal, Natural Effect* of it upon himself. Or, suppose a Person be excluded for being an *Idiot*; it is not for his *Idiocy*, considered *as such*; but for the *Certain, Fatal, Natural Effect* of it upon himself to our Destruction.

My Lord, this is prodigious deep: I wish it be clear; or, that it be not too refined a Notion for common Use on this Subject. Likewise I do not conceive, my Lord, what you can call the *Fatal, Natural, Certain Effects* of any one's Religion. I am sure, among *Protestants* there are no *Natural, Certain Effects* of their Religion upon them; that their Practices don't *Fatally* follow their Principles: Neither is there any demonstrative Certainty, that a *Bishop* cannot be against *Episcopacy*.

If the *Papists* are so *unalterably sincere* in their Religion, that we can prove their *certain* Observation of it, it's pity but they had our Principles, and we had their Practice. I have not that good Opinion of the *Papists*, which your Lordship hath: I believe several of them sit as loose to their Religion, *as other Folks*.

Does you Lordship think, that all *Papists* are alike? That natural Temper, Ambition and Education, don't make as much Difference amongst them, as the *same things* do amongst us? Are all *Protestants* loose and libertine alike? Why should all *Papists* be the same Zealots? If not, my Lord, then these *Effects* you call *Fatal, Natural, and Certain*, may be not to be depended upon.

Your Lordship knows, that it was generally believed, that King *Charles the Second* was a *Papist*: But I never heard of any *Fatal, Natural, and Certain Effects of his Religion upon him*. All that one hears of it is, that he lived like a *Protestant*, and died like a *Papist*. I suppose your Lordship will allow, that several who were lately *Papists*, are now true *Protestants*. I desire therefore to know, what is become of the *Fatal, Certain, and Natural Effects of their Religion*?

My Lord, I beg of you to lay your Hand again upon your Heart, and ask, Whether this be strict Reasoning? Whether it is possible in the very Nature of the thing, *that such Fatal, Natural, and Certain Effects should follow such a Giddy, Whimsical, Uncertain Thing, as Human and Free Choice*? My Lord, is it neither possible for *Papists* to change or conceal their Reli-

gion for Interest, or leave it through a conscientious Conviction? If the former is impossible, then, according to your Lordship, it is the *safest Religion* in the World; because they are all sure of being *sincere*, and consequently, the First Favourites of God. If the latter is impossible, then a great many fine Sermons and Discourses have been written to as wise Purposes, as if they had been directed to the Wind.

I come now to your Lordship's Definition of *Prayer*, a *Calm and Undisturbed Address to God*. It seems very strange, that so great a Master of Words as your Lordship, should pick out Two so very exceptionable, that all your Lordship's Skill could not defend them, but by leaving their first and obvious Sense. Who would not take *Calm* and *Undisturbed* to be very like *Quiet* and *Unmoved*? Yet your Lordship dislikes those Expressions. But if these do not give us a true *Idea* of *Prayer*, you have made a very narrow Escape, and have given us a Definition of *Prayer* as near to a *wrong one* as possible.

Prayer chiefly consisteth of *Confession* and *Petition*. Now, to be *Calm*, and free from all *worldly Passions*, is a necessary Temper to the right Discharge of such Duties: But why our *Confession* must be so *Calm*, and free from all *Perturbation* of Spirit; why our *Petitions* may not have all that Fervour and Warmth, with which either *Nature* or *Grace* can supply them, is very surprising.

My Lord, we are advised to be *Dead to the World*; and I humbly suppose, no more is *implied* in it, than to keep our Affections from being too much engaged in it; and that a *Calm, Undisturbed*, i.e. *Dispassionate* Use of the World is very consistent with our being dead to it. If so, then this *Calm, Undisturbed Address to Heaven*, is a kind of *Prayer* that is very consistent with our being *dead to Heaven*.

We are forbid to *love* the World; and yet no greater *Abstraction* from it is required, than to use it *Calm and Undisturbed*. We are commanded to *set our Affections on Things above*; and yet, according to your Lordship, the *same Calm, Undisturbed Temper is enough*. According to this therefore we are to be *affected*, or rather *unaffected* alike, with *this* and the *next* World; since we are to be *Calm and Undisturbed* with respect to *both*.

The Reason your Lordship offers for this *Definition* of *Prayer*, is this; because you* *look upon Calmness and Undisturbedness to be the Ornament and Defence of human Understanding in all its Actions*. My Lord, this plainly supposes, there is no such thing as the *Right Use* of our *Passions*: For if we could ever use them

* Answer, p. 11.

to any Advantage, then it could not be the Ornament of our Nature to be *dispassionate alike* in all its Actions. It is as much the *Ornament and Defence* of our Nature, to be differently *affected* with Things according to their *respective* Differences, as it is to understand or conceive *different Things* according to their real Difference. It would be no *Ornament or Credit* to us, to conceive no Difference betwixt a *Mountain* and a *Mole-Hill*: And our Rational Nature is as much disgraced, when we are no more *affected* with *great* Things than with *small*. It is the *Essential Ornament* of our Nature, to be as sensibly *affected* in a different Manner with the different Degrees of Goodness of Things, as it is to perceive exactly the different *Natures* or Relations of Things. *Passion* is no more a Crime, *as such*, than the *Understanding* is, *as such*. It is nothing but mistaking the *Value* of Objects, that makes it criminal. An *Infinite Good* cannot be too *passionately* desired, nor a *Real Evil* too *vehemently* abhorred. *Mere Philosophy*, my Lord, would teach us, that the Dignity of *Human Nature* is best declared by a *Pungent Uneasiness* for the *Misery* of Sin, and a *passionate warm Application* to Heaven for Assistance.

Let us now consult the Scripture. St. *Paul* describes a *godly Sorrow* something different from your Lordship's *Calm and Undisturbed Temper*, in these Words: *When ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what Carefulness it wrought in you! Yea, what Indignation, yea, what Fear, yea, what Zeal, yea, what Revenge!* (2 Cor. vii. 11). My Lord, I suppose *these* are not so many Words for *Calm and Undisturbed*. Yet, as different as they are, the Apostle makes them the *Qualities* of a *godly Sorrow*. And all this, at the Expense of that *Calmness* which your Lordship terms the *Ornament* of human Nature. Dr. *Snape* pleads for the *Fervency and Ardour* of our Devotions, from our *Saviour's praying more earnestly* before his *Passion*.

Your Lordship replies, that *this* can give no Directions as to our *daily Prayers*; because it was what our *Saviour* himself knew nothing of, but this once. The Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* knew nothing of this way of Reasoning. For, as an Argument for *daily Patience*, he bids us look to *Jesus*, who endured the *Cross*, because he died for us, leaving us an *Example*.

Our *Saviour*, my Lord, *suffered and died* but *once*; yet is it made a Reason for our *daily Patience*, and proposed as an Example for us to imitate.

If therefore, my Lord, his *Passion*, so *extraordinary* in itself, and as much above the Power of human Nature to bear, as the *Insenseness* of his Devotions *exceeded* our Capacities for Prayer,

be yet proposed as an *Example* to us in the *ordinary* Calamities of Life; how comes it, that *his Devotion* at that time should have no manner of Use or Direction in it as to our Devotions, especially in our *Distress*? How comes it, that his Suffering should have so much of Example in it, so much to be imitated; but the Manner of his *Devotion* then have nothing of Instruction, nothing that need be imitated by us? All the Reason that is offered, is the *Singularity* and *Extraordinariness* of it, when the same may be said of his *Passion*; yet that is allowed to be an *Example*.

Your Lordship is pleased, for the Information of your *Unwary Readers*, to reason thus upon the Place: *If this be the Example of our Saviour*, to assure us of his *Will* about the *Temper* necessary to Prayer, *it will follow that our Blessed Lord Himself never truly prayed before this time: And yet again, if he prayed more earnestly, it will follow, that he had prayed before; and consequently, that this Temper in which He now was, was not necessary to Prayer.*

My Lord, one would think this Elaborate Proof was against something asserted. Here you have indeed a thorough Conquest; but it is over *nobody*. For did anyone ever assert, that such *Extraordinary Earnestness* was *necessary* to Prayer? Does Dr. *Snape*, or any Divines, allow of no Prayers, except we sweat *Drops of Blood*? Will your Lordship say, that the *Necessity* of this Temper is implied in the Quotation of this Text, as a Direction for Prayer? I answer, just as much as we are all obliged to die upon the *Cross*, because his *Sufferings* there are proposed to us as an *Example*.

The plain Truth of the Matter, my Lord, I take to be this: Our *Saviour's Sufferings* on the Cross were such as no Mortal can undergo; yet they are justly proposed as an *Example* to us to bear with Patience such Sufferings as are within the Compass of human Nature. His earnest Devotion before this Passion, far exceeded any *Fervours* which the Devoutest of Mankind can attain to: Yet it is justly proposed to us as an *Example*, to excite us to be as fervent as we can; and may be justly alleged in our Defence, when our *warm* and *passionate* Addresses to God in our Calamities, are condemned as *superstitious Folly*. My Lord, must nothing be an *Example*, but what we can exactly come up to? How then can the *Life* of our *Saviour*, which was entirely free from *Sin*, be an Example to us? How could it be said in the Scripture, *Be ye holy, for I am holy*? Can anyone be *Holy* as *God is*?

My Lord, one might properly urge the *Practice* of the Primitive Christians, who parted with *all* they had for the Support of their

Indigent Brethren, as an Argument for Charity, without designing to oblige People to part with all they have. And he that should, in answer to such an Argument, tell the World, that *Charity* is only a *calm, undisturbed Good Will to all Mankind*, would just as much set forth the *true Doctrine of Charity*, as he that defines Prayer to be a *calm and undisturbed Address to Heaven*, for no other Reason, but because no *certain* Degrees of Fervour or Affection are necessarily required to constitute Devotion. My Lord, has *Charity* nothing to do with the *Distribution of Alms*, because no certain Allowance is fixed? Why then must *Prayer* have nothing to do with *Heat and Fervency*, because no fixed Degrees of it are necessary?

Therefore, my Lord, as I would define *Charity* to be a pious Distribution of so much of our Goods to the Poor, as is suitable to our Circumstances; so I would define *Prayer*, an *Address to Heaven, enlivened with such Degrees of Fervour and Intenseness, as our Natural Temper, influenced with a true Sense of God, could beget in us.*

Your Lordship says, you only desire to strike at the Root of *superstitious Folly*, and *establish Prayer in its room*; and this is to be effected by making our Addresses *calm and undisturbed*: By which we are to understand, a *Freedom from Heat and Passion*, as your Lordship explains it, by an Application to yourself.

If therefore anyone should happen to be so *disturbed* at his Sins, as to offer a *broken and contrite Heart* to God, instead of one *calm and undisturbed*; or, like holy *David*, his Soul should be athirst for God, or pant after him, as the *Hart panteth after the Water-brooks*, this would not be *Prayer*, but *superstitious Folly*.

My Lord, *Calmness of Temper*, as it signifies a Power over our *Passions*, is a *happy Circumstance* of a *Rational Nature*, but no farther: When the Object is well chosen, there is no Danger in the Pursuit.

The *Calmness* your Lordship hath described, is fit for a *Philosopher* in his *Study*, who is solving *Mathematical Problems*. But if he should come abroad into the World, thus entirely empty of all *Passion*, he would live to as much Purpose, as if he had left his Understanding behind him.

What a fine Subject, my Lord, would such a one make, who, when he heard of *Plots, Invasions, and Rebellions*, would continue as *calm and undisturbed*, as when he was *comparing Lines and Figures*? Such a calm Subject would scarce be taken for any *Great Loyalist*.

Your Lordship, in other Places, hath recommended an *open*

and *undisguised Zeal*,* and told us such things as ought to *alarm the coldest Heart*.† Sure, my Lord, this is somewhat more than *Calm* and *Undisturbed*: And will your Lordship, who hath expressed so much Concern for this *Ornament and Defence of human Understanding*, persuade us to part with the least Degree of it upon any Account? I am, my Lord, (with all Respect that is due to your Lordship's Station and Character),

Your most Humble and

Obedient Servant,

William Law.

* Sermon, *Nov.* 5, p. 5.

† Sermon, p. 14.

A SECOND
LETTER

TO THE
Bishop of *BANGOR*;

WHEREIN
His Lordship's NOTIONS

OF
*Benediction, Absolution, and
Church-Communion,*

Are proved to be Destructive of every
Institution of the *Christian Religion.*

To which is added, A

POSTSCRIPT,

In answer to the OBJECTIONS that
have been made against his former Letter.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

L O N D O N :

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1762.

The
Second Letter to
the Bishop of *Bangor*.

My Lord,

A Just Concern for Truth, and the First Principles of the Christian Religion, was the only Motive that engaged me in the Examination of your Lordship's Doctrines, in a former Letter to your Lordship. And the same Motive, I hope, will be thought a sufficient Apology for my presuming to give your Lordship the Trouble of a Second Letter.

Amongst the Vain Contemptible Things, whereof your Lordship would create an Abhorrence in the Laity, are, the *Trifles* and *Niceties of Authoritative Benedictions, Absolutions, Excommunications*.* Again, you say, that *to expect the Grace of God from any Hands, but his own, is to affront him*—† And that *all depends upon God and ourselves; That Human Benedictions, Human Absolutions, Human Excommunications, have nothing to do with the Favour of God*.‡

It is evident from these Maxims (for your Lordship asserts them as such) that whatever Institutions are observed in any Christian Society, upon this Supposition, that thereby Grace is conferred through *Human Hands*, or by the Ministry of the Clergy, such Institutions ought to be condemned, and are condemned by your Lordship, as *trifling, useless, and affronting to God*.

There is an *Institution*, my Lord, in the yet Established Church of *England*, which we call *Confirmation*: It is founded upon the express Words of Scripture, Primitive Observance, and the Universal Practice of all succeeding Ages in the Church. The Design of this Institution is, that it should be a Means of conferring Grace, by the Prayer and Imposition of the *Bishop's Hands* on those who have been already Baptized. But yet against all this Authority, both Divine and Human, and the

* *Preservative*, p. 98.

† P. 89.

‡ P. 101.

express Order of our own Church, your Lordship teaches the Laity, *that all Human Benedictions are useless Niceties ; and that to expect God's Grace from any Hands but his own, is to affront him.*

If so, my Lord, what shall we say in Defence of the Apostles ? We read (*Acts 8. 14*) that when *Philip* the Deacon had baptized the *Samaritans*, the Apostles sent *Peter* and *John* to them, who having prayed, and *laid their Hands on them, they received the Holy Ghost, who before was fallen upon none of them ; only they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus.*

My Lord, several things are here out of Question ; *First*, That something else, even in the Apostolical Times, was necessary, besides Baptism, in order to qualify Persons to become complete Members of the Body, or Partakers of the Grace of Christ. They had been baptized, yet did not receive the Holy Ghost, till the Apostles' Hands were laid upon them. *Secondly*, That God's Graces are not only conferred by means of *Human Hands*, but of some particular Hands, and not others. *Thirdly*, That this Office was so strictly appropriated to the Apostles, or Chief Governors of the Church, that it could not be performed by inspired Men, though empowered to work Miracles, who were of an inferior Order ; as *Philip* the Deacon. *Fourthly*, That the Power of the Apostles for the Performance of this Ordinance, was entirely owing to their superior Degree in the Ministry, and not to any extraordinary Gifts they were endowed with : For then *Philip* might have performed it ; who was not wanting in those Gifts, being himself an Evangelist, and Worker of Miracles : Which is a Demonstration, that his Incapacity arose from his inferior Degree in the Ministry.

And now, my Lord, are all *human Benedictions Niceties and Trifles* ? Are the Means of God's Grace in his *own Hands alone* ? Is it wicked, and *affronting to God*, to suppose the contrary ? How then comes *Peter* and *John* to confer the Holy Ghost by the Imposition of their Hands ? How comes it, that they appropriate this Office to themselves ? Is the Dispensation of God's Grace in his *own Hands alone* ? And yet can it be dispensed to us by the Ministry of some Persons, and not by that of others ?

Were the Apostles so wicked as to distinguish themselves by a Pretence to vain Powers, which God had reserved to himself ; And which your Lordship supposes, from the Title of your *Preservative*, that it is inconsistent with *common Sense*, to imagine that God could or would have communicated to Men ?

Had any of your Lordship's well-instructed Laity lived in the Apostles' Days, with what Indignation must they have rejected

this senseless chimerical *Claim* of the Apostles? They must have said, Why do you, *Peter* or *John*, pretend to this *Blasphemous Power*? Whilst we believe the Gospel, we cannot expect the *Grace of God from any Hands but his own*. You give us the *Holy Ghost!* You confer the *Grace of God!* Is it not impious to think, that *he should make our Improvement in Grace* depend upon your Ministry; or hang our *Salvation* on any particular Order of Clergymen? We know, that God is Just, and Good, and True, and that all depends upon Him and ourselves, and that *human Benedictions* are *Trifles*. Therefore whether you *Peter*, or you *Philip*, or both, or neither of you lay your Hands upon us, we are neither better nor worse; but just in the same *State of Grace* as we were before.

This Representation has not one Syllable in it, but what is founded in your Lordship's Doctrine, and perfectly agreeable to it.

The late most Pious and Learned Bishop *Beveridge* has these remarkable Words upon *Confirmation*: 'How any Bishops in our Age dare neglect so considerable a Part of their Office, I know not; but fear they will have no good Account to give of it, when they come to stand before God's Tribunal.*'

But we may justly, and therefore I hope, with Decency, ask your Lordship, how you dare perform this Part of your Office? For you have condemned it as *Trifling* and *Wicked*; as *Trifling*, because it is an *human Benediction*; as *Wicked*, because it supposes *Grace* conferred by the *Hands of the Bishop*. If therefore any baptized Persons should come to your Lordship for *Confirmation*, if you are *sincere* in what you have delivered, your Lordship ought, I humbly conceive, to make them this Declaration:

'My Friends, for the sake of *Decency* and *Order*, I have taken upon me the *Episcopal Character*; and, according to Custom, which has long prevailed against common Sense, am now to lay my Hands upon you: But I beseech you, as you have any regard to the Truth of the Gospel, or to the Honour of God, not to imagine there is anything in this Action, more than an useless empty Ceremony: For if you expect to have any *Spiritual Advantage* from *human Benedictions*, or to receive *Grace* from the Imposition of a Bishop's Hands, you affront God, and in effect, renounce Christianity.'

Pray, my Lord, consider that Passage in the Scripture, where the Apostle speaks of *Leaving the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ, and going on unto Perfection*; not laying again the Foun-

dation of Repentance from dead Works, of Faith towards God, of the Doctrine of Baptisms, and of Laying on of Hands, and of the Resurrection of the Dead, and of eternal Judgment (Heb. vi. 1, 2).

My Lord, here it is undeniably plain, that this Laying on of Hands (which is with us called *Confirmation*) is so fundamental a Part of Christ's Religion, that it is called one of the first Principles of the Doctrine of Christ; and is placed amongst such primary Truths, as the Resurrection of the Dead, and of Eternal Judgment.

St. *Cyprian* speaking of this Apostolical Imposition of Hands, says, *The same is now practised with us; they who have been baptized in the Church, are brought to the Presidents of the Church, that by our Prayer and Imposition of Hands, they may receive the Holy Ghost, and be consummated with the Lord's Seal.*

And must we yet believe, that all *human Benedictions* are Dreams, and the Imposition of human Hands trifling and useless; and that to expect God's Graces from them, is to affront him; though the Scriptures expressly teach us, that God confers his Grace by means of certain *particular human Hands*, and not of others; though they tell us, this *human Benediction*, this Laying on of Hands, is one of the first Principles of the Religion of Christ, and as such a Foundation-Doctrine, as the Resurrection of the Dead, and Eternal Judgment; and though every Age since that of the Apostles, has strictly observed it as such, and the Authority of our own Church still requires the Observance of it?

I come now, my Lord, to another sacred and Divine Institution of Christ's Church, which stands exposed and condemned by your Lordship's Doctrine; and that is, the *Ordination* of the Christian Clergy; where, by means of a human Benediction, and the Imposition of the Bishop's Hands, the Holy Ghost is supposed to be conferred on Persons towards consecrating them for the Work of the Ministry.

We find it constantly taught by the Scriptures, that all Ecclesiastical Authority, and the Graces whereby the Clergy are qualified and enabled to exercise their Functions to the Benefit of the Church, are the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit. Thus the Apostle exhorts the Elders *to take heed unto the Flock, over which the Holy Ghost had made them Overseers* (Eph. iv. 7). But how, my Lord, had the Holy Ghost made them Overseers, but by the laying on of the Apostles' Hands? They were not immediately called by the Holy Ghost; but being consecrated by *such human Hands* as had been authorised to that Purpose, they were as truly called by him, and sanctified with Grace for

that Employment, as if they had received an immediate or miraculous Commission. So again, *St. Paul* puts *Timothy* in mind to stir up the Gift of God that was in him, by laying on of his Hands (2 Tim. ii. 6).

And now, my Lord, if *human Benedictions* be such idle *Dreams* and *Trifles*; if it be *affronting to God*, to expect his Graces from them, or through *human Hands*; do we not plainly want new Scriptures? Must we not give up the Apostles as furious High-Church Prelates, who aspired to presumptuous Claims, and talked of conferring the Graces of God by their own Hands? Was not this Doctrine as strange and unaccountable then, as at present? Was it not as inconsistent with the Attributes and Sovereignty of God at that Time, to have his Graces pass through other Hands than his own, as in any succeeding Age? Nay, my Lord, where shall we find any Fathers or Councils, in the primitive Church, but who owned and asserted these Powers? They that were so ready to part with their Lives, rather than do the least Dishonour to God, or the Christian Name, yet were all guilty of *this horrid Blasphemy*, in imagining that they were to bless in God's Name; and that by the Benediction and laying on of the Bishop's Hands, the Graces of the Holy Ghost could be conferred on any Persons.

Agreeable to the Sense of Scripture and Antiquity, our Church uses this Form of Ordination: *The Bishop laying his Hands on the Person's Head, saith, Receive the Holy Ghost, for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God, committed unto thee, by the Imposition of our Hands.* From this Form, it is plain, *First*, That our Church holds, that the Reception of the Holy Ghost is necessary to constitute a Person a Christian Priest. *Secondly*, That the Holy Ghost is conferred through *human Hands*. *Thirdly*, That it is by the Hands of a Bishop that the Holy Ghost is conferred.

If, therefore, your Lordship is right in your Doctrine, the Church of *England* is evidently most corrupt: For if it be dishonourable and affronting to God, to expect his Grace from any human Hands, it must of Necessity be dishonourable and affronting to him, for a Bishop to pretend to confer it by his Hands. And can that Church be any ways defended, that has established such an Iniquity by Law, and made the Form of it so necessary? How can your Lordship answer it to your Laity, for taking the Character or Power of a Bishop from such a Form of Words? You tell them it is affronting to God, to expect his Grace from *human Hands*; yet, to qualify yourself for a Bishopric, you let human Hands be laid on you, after a Manner which directly supposes you thereby receive the Holy Ghost! Is

it wicked in them to expect it from *human Hands*? And is it less so in your Lordship, to pretend to receive it from human Hands? He that believes it is affronting to God, to expect his Grace from human Hands, must likewise believe, that our Form of Ordination, which promises the Holy Ghost by the *Bishop's Hands*, must be also affronting to God. Certainly he cannot be said to be very jealous of the Honour of God, who will submit himself to be made a Bishop by a Form of Words derogatory, upon his own Principles, to God's Honour.

Suppose your Lordship were to have been consecrated to the Office of a Bishop by these Words; *Take thou Power to sustain all Things in Being, given thee by my Hands*. I suppose your Lordship would think it entirely unlawful to submit to the Form of such an Ordination. But, my Lord, *Receive thou the Holy Ghost, &c.*, is as impious a Form, according to your Lordship's Doctrine, and equally injurious to the eternal Power and Godhead, as the other. For if the Grace of God can only be had from *his own Hands*, would it not be as innocent in the Bishop to say, *Receive thou Power to sustain all Things in Being*, as to say, *Receive the Holy Ghost, by the Imposition of my Hands*? And would not a Compliance with either Form be equally unlawful? According to your Doctrine, in each of them God's Prerogative is equally invaded, and therefore the Guilt must be the same.

It may also well be wondered, how your Lordship can accept of a Character, which is, or ought to be, chiefly distinguished by the Exercise of that Power which you disclaim, as in the Offices of *Confirmation* and *Ordination*. For, my Lord, where can be the Sincerity of saying, *Receive the Holy Ghost by the Imposition of our Hands*, when you declare it affronting to God, to expect it from any Hands but his own? Suppose your Lordship had been preaching to the Laity against owning any Authority in the *Virgin Mary*, and yet should acquiesce in the Conditions of being made a Bishop in her Name, and by recognising her Power; could such a Submission be consistent with Sincerity? Here you forbid the Laity to expect God's Grace from any Hands but his; yet not only accept of an Office, upon Supposition of the contrary Doctrine; but oblige yourself according to the Sense of the Church wherein you are ordained a Bishop, to act frequently in direct Opposition to your own Principles.

So that, I think, it is undeniably plain, that you have at once, my Lord, by these Doctrines condemned the Scriptures, the Apostles, their martyred Successors, the Church of *England*, and your own Conduct; and have thereby given us some Reason

(though I wish there were no Occasion to mention it) to suspect, whether you, who allow of no other Church, but what is founded in Sincerity, are yourself really a Member of any Church.

I shall now proceed to say something upon the Consecration of the Lord's Supper, which is as much exposed as a *Trifle*, by your Lordship's Doctrine, as the other Institutions. *St. Paul* says, *The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ?* My Lord, is not this Cup still to be blessed? Must there not therefore be such a Thing as a *human Benediction*? And are human Benedictions to be all despised, though by them the Bread and Wine become Means of Grace, and are made the spiritual Nourishment of our Souls? Can anyone bless this Cup? If not, then there is a Difference between human Benedictions: Some are authorised by God, and their Blessing is effectual; whilst others only are vain and presumptuous. If the Prayer over the Elements, and the Consecration, be only a Trifle and a Dream, and it be offensive to God to expect they are converted into Means of Grace by a human Benediction; why then did *St. Paul* pretend to bless them? Why did he make it the Privilege of the Church? Or, why do we keep up the same Solemnity? But if it be to be blessed only by God's Ministers, then how can your Lordship answer it to God, for ridiculing and abusing human Benedictions, and telling the World that a particular Order of the Clergy are not of any Necessity, nor can be of any Advantage to them? For if the Sacrament can only be blessed by God's Ministers, then such Ministers are as necessary as the Sacraments themselves.

St. Paul says, the Cup must be blessed; If you say, anyone may bless it, then, though you contemn the Benedictions of the Clergy, you allow of them by everybody else: If every Body cannot bless it, then you must confess; that the Benedictions of some Persons are effectual, where others are not.

My Lord, the great Sin against the Holy Ghost, was the Denial of his Operation in the Ministry of our Saviour. And how near does your Lordship come to it, in denying the Operation of that same Spirit, in the Ministers whom Christ hath sent? They are employed in the same Work that he was. He left his Authority with them, and promised that the Holy Spirit should remain with them to the End of the World; that whatsoever they should bind on Earth, should be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever they should loose on Earth, should be loosed in Heaven; and that whosoever despises them, despises him, and him that sent him. And yet your Lordship tells us, we need not to trouble our Heads about any particular Sort of Clergy,

that all is to be transacted betwixt God and ourselves ; that human Benedictions are insignificant Trifles.

But pray what Proof has your Lordship for all this ? Have you any Scripture for it ? Has God anywhere declared that no Men on Earth have any Authority to bless in his Name ? Has he anywhere said, that it is a wicked, presumptuous Thing, for anyone to pretend to it ? Has he anywhere told us that it is inconsistent with his Honour to bestow his Graces by *human Hands* ? Has he anywhere told us that he has no Ministers, no Ambassadors on Earth ; but that all his Gifts and Graces are to be received immediately from his own Hands ? Have you any Antiquity, Fathers, or Councils, on your Side ? No ; the whole Tenor of Scripture, the whole Current of Tradition is against you : Your novel Doctrine has only this to recommend it to the Libertines of the Age, who universally give into it, that it never was the Opinion of any Church, or Churchman. It is your Lordship's proper Assertion, *That we offend God in expecting his Graces from any Hands but his own.*

Now it is strange, that God should be offended with his own Methods, or that your Lordship should find us out a Way of pleasing him, more suitable to his Nature and Attributes, than what he has taught us in the Scriptures. I call them his own Methods ; for what else is the whole *Jewish* Dispensation, but a Method of God's Providence, where his Blessings and Judgments were dispensed by *human Hands* ? What is the Christian Religion but a Method of Salvation, where the chief Means of Grace are offered and dispensed by human Hands ? Let me here recommend to your Lordship, the excellent Words of a very learned and judicious Prelate on this Occasion.

'This will have no Weight with any reasonable Man, against the Censures of the Church, or any other Ordinance of the Gospel, that they make the Intervention of other Men necessary to our Salvation ; since it has always been God's ordinary Method, to dispense his Blessings and Judgments by the Hands of Men.'*

Your Lordship exclaims against your Adversaries as such romantic strange sort of Men, for talking of Benedictions and Absolutions, and of the Necessity of receiving God's Ordinances from proper Hands : Yet, my Lord, here is an excellent Bishop, against whose *Learning, Judgment, and Protestantism*, there can be no Objection ; who says, if a Person has but the *Use of his Reason*, he will have nothing to object to any Ordinances of the Gospel, which make the Intervention of other Men necessary

* *Dr. Potter's Church Government*, p. 336.

towards the Conveyance of them, since that has always been God's ordinary Method. The Bishop does not say, it is necessary a Man should be a *great Divine* to acknowledge it ; so he be but a *reasonable Man*, he will allow it. Yet your Lordship is so far from being this *reasonable Man*, that you think your Adversaries void both of Reason and common Sense, for teaching it. You expressly exclude *all* Persons from having any Thing to do with our Salvation, and say, it wholly depends upon God and ourselves.

You tell us, that *authoritative Benediction is another of the Terms of Art used by your Protestant Adversaries ; in which they claim a Right, in one regular Succession, of blessing the People.** An ingenious Author, my Lord, (in the Opinion of many, if not of most of your Friends) calls the *Consecration* of the Elements *Conjuratation* : † Your Lordship calls the *Sacerdotal Benediction* a *Term of Art* ; too plain an Intimation, though in more remote and somewhat softer Terms, that in the Sense of a *certain Father* of the Church, her Clergy are little better than so many Jugglers.

Your Lordship says, *If they only meant hereby to declare upon what Terms God will give his Blessings to Christians, or to express their own hearty Wishes for them, this might be understood.* So it might, my Lord, very easily ; and I suppose every Body understands that they may do this, whether they be Clergy or Laity, Men or Women : For I presume anyone may declare what he takes to be the Terms of the Gospel, and wish that others may faithfully observe them. But I humbly presume, my Lord, that the good Bishop above-mentioned meant something more than this, when he spake of *Ordinances which make the Intervention of other Men necessary to our Salvation, and of God's dispensing his Blessings* in virtue of them through their Hands.

There is a superstitious Custom (in your Lordship's Account it must be so) yet remaining in most Places, of sending for a Clergyman to minister to sick Persons in imminent Danger of Death : Even those who have abused the Clergy all their Lives long, are glad to beg their Assistance when they apprehend themselves upon the Confines of another World. There is no Reason, my Lord, to dislike this *Practice*, but as it supposes a Difference between the *Sacerdotal Prayers* and *Benedictions*, and those of a Nurse.

We read, my Lord, that God would not heal *Abimelech*, though he knew the Integrity of his Heart, till *Abraham* had prayed for

* Page 91.

† *Rites of the Christian Church.*

him : *He is a Prophet*, said God, *he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live* (Gen. xx. 7).

Pray, my Lord, was not God just, and good, and true, in the Days of *Abraham*, as he is now? Yet you see, *Abimelech's Integrity* was not available itself. He was to be pardoned by the Prayer of *Abraham*, and his Prayer was effectual; and so represented, because it was the Prayer of a *Prophet*.

Suppose, my Lord, that *Abimelech* had said with your Lordship, *That it is affronting to God, that we should expect his Graces from any Hands but his own; that all is to be transacted between God and ourselves; and so had rejected the Prayer of Abraham, as a mere Essay of Prophet-Craft; he had then acted with as much Prudence and Piety as your Lordship's Laity would do, if you could persuade them to despise Benedictions and Absolutions, to regard no particular sort of Clergy; but entirely depend upon God and themselves, without any other Assistance whatever.*

We read also, *that Joshua was full of the Spirit of Wisdom, for Moses had laid his Hands upon him* (Deut. xxxiv. 9). Was it not as absurd, my Lord, in the Days of *Joshua*, for human Hands to bless, as it is now? Did there not then lie the same Objection against *Moses*, that there does now against the Christian Clergy? Had *Moses* any more natural Power to give the Spirit of Wisdom, &c., by his Hands, than the Clergy have to confer Grace by theirs? They are both equally weak and insufficient for these Purposes of themselves, and equally powerful when it pleases God to make them so.

Again, when *Eliphaz* and his Friends had displeased God, they were not to be reconciled to God by their own Repentance, or transact that Matter only between God and themselves; but they were referred to apply to *Job*. *My Servant Job shall pray for you, for him will I accept* (Job xlii. 8). Might not *Eliphaz* here have said, shall I so far affront God, as to think I cannot be blessed without the Prayers of *Job*? Shall I be so weak or senseless, as to imagine, my own Supplications and Repentance will not save me; or that I need apply to any one but God alone, to qualify me for the Reception of his Grace?

Again, *The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto Aaron and his sons, saying, on this wise shall ye bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless and keep thee, &c., and I will bless them* (Numb. vi. 22).

Again, *The Priests of the Sons of Levi shall come near; for them hath the Lord thy God chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the Name of the Lord* (Deut. xxi. 5).

Now, my Lord, this is what we mean by the authoritative

Administrations of the Christian Clergy; whether they be by way of Benediction, or of any other kind. We take them to be Persons whom God has chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in his Name. We imagine that our Saviour was a greater *Priest and Mediator* than *Aaron*, or any of God's former Ministers. We are assured that Christ sent his Apostles, as his Father had sent him, and that therefore they were his true Successors: And since they did commission others to succeed them in their Office, by the Imposition of Hands, as *Moses* commissioned *Joshua* to succeed him; the Clergy who have succeeded the Apostles, have as divine a Call and Commission to their Work, as those who were called by our Saviour; and are as truly his Successors, as the Apostles themselves were.

From the Places of Scripture above-mentioned, it is evident, and indeed from the whole Tenor of Sacred Writ, that it may consist with the Goodness and Justness of God to depute Men to act in his Name, and be ministerial towards the Salvation of others; and to lay a Necessity upon his Creatures of qualifying themselves for his Favour, and receiving his Graces by the Hands and Intervention of mere Men.

But, my Lord, if there be now any Set of Men upon Earth that are more peculiarly God's Ministers than others, and through whose Administrations, Prayers, and Benedictions, God will accept of returning Sinners, and receive them to Grace; you have done all you can to prejudice People against them: You have taught the Laity that all is to be transacted between God and themselves, and that they need not value any particular Sort of Clergy in the World.

I leave it to the Great Judge and Searcher of Hearts, to judge from what Principles, or upon what Motives your Lordship has been induced to teach these Things; but must declare, that, for my own Part, if I had the greatest Hatred to Christianity, I should think it could not be more expressed than by teaching what your Lordship has publicly taught. If I could rejoice in the Misery and Ruin of Sinners, I should think it sufficient Matter of Triumph, to drive them from the Ministers of God, and to put them upon inventing new Schemes of saving themselves instead of submitting to the ordinary Methods of Salvation appointed by God.

It will not follow from anything I have said, that the Laity have lost their Christian Liberty, or that no Body can be saved but whom the Clergy please to save; that they have the arbitrary Disposal of Happiness to Mankind. Was *Abimelech's* Happiness in the Disposition of *Abraham*, because he was to be received by Means of *Abraham's* Intercession? Or could *Job* damn *Eliphaz*,

because he was to mediate for him, and procure his Reconciliation to God?

Neither, my Lord, do the *Christian Clergy* pretend to this despotic Empire over their Flocks. They do not assume to themselves a Power to damn the Innocent, or to save the Guilty; but they assert a sober and just Right to reconcile Men to God, and to act in his Name, in restoring them to his Favour. They received their Commission from those whom Christ sent with full Authority to send others, and with a Promise that he would be with them to the End of the World. From this they conclude, that they have his Authority, and that in consequence of it, their Administrations are necessary, and effectual to the Salvation of Mankind; and that none can despise them, but who despise him that sent them; and are as surely out of the Covenant of Grace, when they leave such his Pastors, as when they openly despise, or omit to receive his Sacraments.

And what is there in this Doctrine, my Lord, to terrify the *Consciences* of the *Laity*? What is there here to bring the profane Scandal of *Priestcraft* upon the *Clergy*? Could it be any Ground of *Abimelech's* hating *Abraham*, because that *Abraham* was to reconcile him to God? Could *Eliphaz* justly have any Prejudice against *Job*, because God would hear *Job's* Intercession for him? Why then, my Lord, must the Christian Priesthood be so horrid and hateful an Institution, because the Design of it is to restore Men to the Grace and Favour of God? Why must we be abused and insulted for being sent upon the Errand of Salvation, and made Ministers of eternal Happiness to our Brethren? There is a Woe due to us if we preach not the Gospel, or neglect those ministerial Offices that Christ hath entrusted to us. We are to watch for their Souls, as those who are to give an Account. Why then must we be treated as arrogant Priests, or *popishly* affected, for pretending to have any Thing to do in the Discharge of our *Ministry* with the Salvation of Men? Why must we be reproached with *blasphemous Claims*, and *absurd senseless Powers*, for assuming to bless in God's Name, or thinking our Administrations more effectual than the Office of a common *Layman*?

But farther, To what Purpose does your Lordship except against these Powers in the *Clergy*, from their *common Frailties* and *Infirmities* with the rest of Mankind? Were not *Abraham* and *Job*, and the *Jewish* Priests, Men of like Passions with us? Did not our Saviour command the *Jews* to apply to their Priests, notwithstanding their personal Faults, because they sat in *Moses' Chair*? Did not the Apostles assure their Followers that they were Men of like Passions with them? But did they therefore

disclaim their Mission, or Apostolical Authority? Did they teach, that their natural Infirmities made them less the Ministers of God, or less necessary to the Salvation of Men? Their personal Defects did not make them depart from the Claim of those Powers they were invested with, or desert their Ministry, but, indeed, gave St. *Paul* Occasion to say, *We have this Treasure in earthen Vessels, (i.e., this Authority committed to mere Men) that the excellency of it may be of God, and not of Men.* The Apostle happens to differ very much from your Lordship: He says, such weak Instruments were made use of that the Glory might redound to God. Your Lordship says, to suppose Instruments to be of any Benefit to us, is to lessen the Sovereignty of God, and, in Consequence, his Glory.

Your Lordship imagines you have sufficiently destroyed the *sacerdotal Powers*, by showing, that the Clergy are only Men, and subject to the common Frailties of Mankind. My Lord, we own the Charge, and do not claim any *sacerdotal Powers* from our personal Abilities, or to acquire any Glory to ourselves. But, weak as we are, we are God's Ministers, and if we are either afraid or ashamed of our Duty, we must perish in the Guilt. But is a Prophet therefore proud, because he insists upon the Authority of his Mission? Cannot a Mortal be God's Messenger, and employed in his Affairs, but he must be insolent and assuming, for having the Resolution to own it? If we are to be re-proved for pretending to be God's Ministers, because we are but Men, the Reproach will fall upon Providence; since it has pleased God, chiefly to transact his Affairs with Mankind by the Ministry of their Brethren.

Your Lordship has not one Word from Scripture against these sacerdotal Powers; no Proof that Christ has not sent Men to be effectual Administrators of his Graces: You only assert, that there can be no such Ministers, because they are mere Men.

Now, my Lord, I must beg Leave to say, that if the natural Weakness of Men makes them incapable of being the Instruments of conveying Grace to their Brethren; if the Clergy cannot be of any Use or Necessity to their Flocks, for this Reason; then it undeniably follows, that there can be no *positive Institutions* in the Christian Religion that can procure any spiritual Advantages to the Members of it; then the Sacraments can be no longer any Means of Grace. For, I hope, no one thinks that Bread and Wine have any natural Force or Efficacy to convey Grace to the Soul. The Water in Baptism has the common Qualities of Water, and is destitute of any intrinsic Power to cleanse the Soul, or purify from Sin. But your Lordship will not say, because

it has only the common Nature of Water, that therefore it cannot be a Means of Grace. Why then may not the Clergy, though they have the common Nature of Men, be constituted by God, to convey his Graces, and to be ministerial to the Salvation of their Brethren? Can God consecrate inanimate Things to spiritual Purposes, and make them the Means of eternal Happiness? And is Man the only Creature that he cannot make subservient to his Designs? The only *Being*, who is too weak for an Omnipotent God to render effectual towards attaining the Ends of his Grace?

Is it just and reasonable, to reject and despise the *Ministry* and *Benedictions* of Men, because they are Men like ourselves? And is it not as reasonable, to despise the Sprinkling of Water, a Creature below us, a senseless and inanimate Creature?

Your Lordship therefore, must either find us some other Reason for rejecting the Necessity of *human Administrations*, than because they are *human*; or else give up the Sacraments, and *all* positive Institutions along with them.

Surely, your Lordship must have a mighty Opinion of *Naaman* the *Syrian*, who, when the Prophet bid him go wash in *Jordan* seven times, to the end he might be clean from his Leprosy, very *wisely* remonstrated, *Are not Abana and Pharpar, Rivers of Damascus, better than all the Waters of Israel?*

This, my Lord, discovered *Naaman's* great Liberty of Mind; and it is much, this has not been produced before, as an Argument of his being a *Free-Thinker*. He took the Water of *Jordan* to be *only Water*; as your Lordship justly observes a Clergyman to be *only a Man*: And if you had been with him, you could have informed him, that the washing *seven Times* was a mere *Nicety* and *Trifle* of the Prophet; and that since it is God alone who can work *miraculous Cures*, we ought not to think, that they depend upon any external Means, or any stated Number of repeating them.

This, my Lord, is the true Scope and Spirit of your Argument: If the *Syrian* was right in despising the Water of *Jordan*, because it was *only Water*; your Lordship might be right in despising any particular Order of Clergy, because they are but Men. Your Lordship is certainly as right, or as wrong, as he was.

And now, my Lord, let the common Sense of Mankind here judge, whether, if the Clergy are to be esteemed as having no Authority, because they are but Men; it does not plainly follow, that everything else, every Institution that has not some *natural* Force and Power to produce the Effects designed by it, is not also to be rejected as equally trifling and ineffectual.

The Sum of the Matter is this : It appears from many express Facts, and indeed, from the whole Series of God's Providence, that it is not only consistent with his Attributes, but also agreeable to his ordinary Methods of dealing with Mankind, that he should substitute Men to act in his Name, and be *authoritatively* employed in conferring his Graces and Favours upon Mankind. It appears, that your Lordship's Argument against the authoritative Administrations of the Christian Clergy, does not only contradict those Facts, and condemn the ordinary Method of God's Dispensations ; but likewise proves the Sacraments, and every positive Institution of Christianity, to be ineffectual, and as mere *Dreams* and *Trifles*, as the several *Offices and Orders* of the Clergy.

This, I hope, will be esteemed a sufficient Confutation of your Lordship's Doctrine, by all who have any true Regard or Zeal for the Christian Religion ; and only expect to be saved by the Methods of divine Grace proposed in the Gospel.

I shall now in a word or two set forth the Sacredness of the Ecclesiastical Character, as it is founded in the New Testament ; with a particular regard to the Power of conferring Grace, and the Efficacy of human Benedictions.

It appears therein that all sacerdotal Power is derived from the Holy Ghost. Our Saviour himself took not that Ministry upon him, till he had this Consecration : And during the time of his Ministry, he was under the Guidance and Direction of the Holy Ghost. Through the Holy Spirit he gave Commandment to the Apostles whom he had chosen. When he ordained them to the Work of the Ministry, it was with these Words, *Receive the Holy Ghost*. Those whom the Apostles ordained to the same Function, it was by the same Authority : They laid their Hands upon the Elders, exhorting them to take care of the Flock of Christ, over which the Holy Ghost had made them Overseers.

Hereby they plainly declared, that however this Office was to descend from Man to Man through *human Hands*, that it was the Holy Ghost which consecrated them to that Employment, and gave them Authority to execute it.

From this it is also manifest, that the Priesthood is a Grace of the Holy Ghost : That it is not a Function founded on the Natural or Civil Rights of Mankind, but is derived from the special Authority of the Holy Ghost ; and is as truly a positive Institution as the Sacraments. So that they who have no Authority to alter the Old Sacraments, and substitute New ones, have no Power to alter the Old Order of the Clergy, or introduce any other Order of them.

For why can we not change the Sacraments? Is it not because they are only Sacraments, and operate as they are instituted by the Holy Ghost? Because they are useless ineffectual Rites without this Authority? And does not the same Reason hold as well for the Order of the Clergy? Does not the same Scripture tell us, they are equally instituted by the Holy Ghost, and oblige only by virtue of his Authority? How absurd is it therefore to pretend to abolish, or depart from the settled Order of the Clergy, to make new Orders, or think any God's Ministers, unless we had his Authority, and could make new Sacraments, or a new Religion?

My Lord, how comes it, That we cannot alter the Scriptures? Is it not, because they are Divinely inspired, and dictated by the Holy Ghost? And since it is express Scripture, That the *Priesthood* is instituted and authorised by the same Holy Spirit, Why is not the Holy Ghost as much to be regarded in one Institution, as in another? Why may we not as well make a Gospel, and say, it was writ by the Holy Ghost, as make a new Order of Clergy, and call them his? Or esteem them as having any relation to him?

From this it likewise appears, That there is an absolute Necessity of a strict Succession of authorised Ordainers from the Apostolical Times, in order to constitute a *Christian Priest*. For since a Commission from the Holy Ghost is necessary for the exercise of this Office; no one now can receive it, but from those who have derived their Authority in a true Succession, from the Apostles. We could not, my Lord, call our present Bibles *the Word of God*, unless we knew the Copies from which they are taken were taken from other true ones, till we come to the Originals themselves. No more could we call any true Ministers, or authorised by the Holy Ghost, who have not received their Commission by an uninterrupted Succession of lawful Ordainers.

What an excellent Divine would he be, who should tell the World, it was not necessary that the several Copies and Manuscripts through which the Scriptures have been transmitted through different Ages and Languages, should be all true ones, and none of them forged? That *this was a Thing subject to so great Uncertainty, that God could not hang our Salvation on such Niceties*? Suppose, for Proof of this, he should appeal to the Scriptures; and ask, where any mention is made of ascertaining the Truth of all the Copies? Would not this be a Way of Arguing very Theological? The Application is very easy.

Your Lordship has not one Word to prove the uninterrupted Succession of the Clergy a *Trifle* or *Dream*; but that it is

subject to so great Uncertainty, and is never mentioned in the Scriptures. As to the Uncertainty of it, it is equally as uncertain, as whether the Scriptures be *Genuine*. There is just the same sufficient Historical Evidence for the Certainty of one as the other. As to its not being mentioned in the Scripture, the Doctrine upon which it is founded, plainly made it unnecessary to mention it. Is it needful for the Scriptures to tell us, that if we take our Bible from any false Copy, that it is not the Word of God? Why then need they tell us, that if we are ordained by usurping false Pretenders to Ordination, nor deriving their Authority to that end from the Apostles, that we are no Priests? Does not the thing itself speak as plain in one Case as in the other? The Scriptures are only of use to us, as they are the Word of God: We cannot have this Word of God, which was written so many Years ago, unless we receive it from authentic Copies and Manuscripts.

The Clergy have their Commission from the Holy Ghost: The Power of conferring this Commission of the Holy Ghost, was left with the Apostles: Therefore the present Clergy cannot have the same Commission, or Call, but from an Order of Men, who have successively conveyed this Power from the Apostles to the present time. So that, my Lord, I shall beg leave to lay it down, as a plain, undeniable, Christian Truth, that the Order of the Clergy is an Order of as necessary Obligation as the Sacraments; and as unalterable as the Holy Scriptures; the same Holy Ghost being as truly the Author and Founder of the Priesthood, as the Institutor of the Sacraments, or the Inspirer of those Divine Oracles. And when your Lordship shall offer any fresh Arguments to prove that no particular sort of Clergy is necessary; that the Benedictions and Administrations of the present Clergy of our most excellent Church, are trifling Niceties; if I cannot show that the same Arguments will conclude against the Authority of the Sacraments and the Scriptures, I faithfully promise your Lordship to become a Convert to your Doctrine.

What your Lordship charges upon your Adversaries, as an absurd Doctrine, in pretending the Necessity of one regular, successive, and particular Order of the Clergy, is a true Christian Doctrine; and as certain from Scripture, as that we are to keep to the Institution of particular Sacraments; or not to alter those particular Scriptures, which now compose the Canon of the old and new Testament.

By authoritative Benediction, we do not mean any natural or intrinsic Authority of our own: But a Commission from God, to be effectual Administrators of his Ordinances, and to bless in his

Name. Thus, a Person who is sent from God, to foretell things, of which he had before no Knowledge or Notion; or to denounce Judgments, which he has no natural Power to execute; may truly be said to be an *authoritative Prophet*; because he has the Authority of God for what he does. Thus, when the Bishop is said to confer Grace in Confirmation, this is properly an *authoritative Benediction*; because he is then as truly doing what God has commissioned him to do, as when a Prophet declares upon what Errand he is sent.

It is in this Sense, my Lord, that the People are said to be *authoritatively* blessed by the regular Clergy; because they are *God's Clergy*, and act by his Commission; because by their Hands the People receive the Graces and Benefits of God's Ordinances; which they have no more Reason to expect from other Ministers of their own Election, or if the Word may be used in an abusive Sense, of their own *Consecration*, than to receive Grace from Sacraments of their own Appointment. The Scriptures teach us, That the Holy Ghost has instituted an Order of Clergy: We say, a Priesthood, so authorised, can no more be changed by us, than we can change the Scriptures, or make new Sacraments; because they are all founded on the same Authority, without any Power of a Dispensation delegated to us in one Case more than another. If therefore we have a Mind to continue in the Covenant of Christ, and receive the Grace and Benefit of his Ordinances, we must receive them through such Hands as he has authorised for that Purpose, to the end we may be qualified to partake of the Blessings of them. For as a *true* Priest cannot benefit us by administering a *false* Sacrament; so a *true* Sacrament is nothing, when it is administered by a *false uncommissioned Minister*. Besides this Benediction which attends the Ordinances of God, when they are thus performed by authorised Hands, there is a Benediction of Prayer, which we may justly think very effectual, when pronounced or dispensed by the same Hands.

Thus when the Bishop or Priest intercedes for the Congregation, or pronounces the Apostolical Benediction upon them, we do not consider this barely as an Act of Charity and Humanity, of one Christian praying for another; but as the Work of a Person who is commissioned by God to *bless in his Name*, and be effectually ministerial in the Conveyance of his Graces; or as the Prayer of one who is left with us in Christ's stead, to carry on his great Design of saving us; and whose Benedictions are ever ratified in Heaven, but when we render ourselves in one Respect or other incapable of them.

Now, my Lord, they are these *sacerdotal Prayers*, these autho-

rised Sacraments, these commissioned Pastors, whom the Holy Ghost has made Overseers of the Flock of Christ, that your Lordship encourages the Laity to despise. You bid them *contemn the vain Words of Validity or Invalidity of God's Ordinances*; to heed no particular sort of Clergy, or the pretended *Necessity of their Administrations.*

Your Lordship sets up in this Controversy for an Advocate for the Laity, against the *arrogant Pretences, and false Claims* of the Clergy. My Lord, we are no more contending for ourselves in this Doctrine, than when we insist upon any Article in the Creed. Neither is it any more our particular Cause, when we assert our Mission, than when we assert the Necessity of the Sacraments.

Who is to receive the Benefit of that Commission which we assert, but they? Who is to suffer, if we pretend a false one, but ourselves? Sad Injury, indeed, offered to the Laity! that we should affect to be thought Ministers of God for their Sakes! If we really are so, they are to receive the Benefit; if not, we are to bear the Punishment.

But your Lordship comes too late in this glorious Undertaking, to receive the Reputation of it; the Work has been already, in the Opinion of most People, better done to your Lordship's Hands. The famous Author of *The Rites of the Christian Church*, has carried this *Christian Liberty* to as great Heights as your Lordship. And though you have not one Notion, I can recollect, that has given Offence to the World, but what seems taken from that pernicious Book; yet your Lordship is not so just as ever once to cite or mention the Author; who, if your Lordship's Doctrine be true, deserves to have a Statue erected to his Honour, and receive every Mark of Esteem which is due to the greatest Reformer of Religion.

Did not mine own Eyes assure me that he has cast no Contempt upon the Church, no Reproach upon the Evangelical Institutions, or the Sacred Function, but what has been seconded by your Lordship, I would never have placed your Lordship in the same View with so scandalous a Declaimer against the Ordinances of Christ. Whether I am right, or not, in this Charge, I freely leave to the Judgment of those to determine, who are acquainted with both your Works. Yet this Author, my Lord, has been treated by the greatest and best Part of the Nation, as a Free-thinking Infidel. But for what, my Lord? Not that he has declared against the Scriptures; not that he has rejected Revelation; (we are not, blessed be God, still so far corrupted with the Principles of Infidelity) but because he has reproached every particular Church, as such, and denied all

Obligation to Communion ; because he has exposed Benedictions, Absolutions, and Excommunications ; denied the Divine Right of the Clergy, and ridiculed the pretended Sacredness and Necessity of their Administrations, as mere Niceties and Trifles, though commonly in more distant, I was going to say more decent Ways : In a Word, because he made all Churches, all Priests, all Sacraments, however administered, equally valid, and denied any particular Method necessary to Salvation. Yet after all this profane Declamation, he allows, my Lord, that *Religious Offices may be appropriated to particular Men, called Clergy, for Order sake only ; and not on the Account of any peculiar Spiritual Advantages, Powers, or Privileges, which those who are set apart for them, have from Heaven.**

Agreeable to this, your Lordship owns, that you are not against the *Order, or Decency, or Subordination belonging to Christian Societies.†*

But, pray, my Lord, do you mean any more by this, than the above-mentioned Author ? Is it for any Thing, but the Sake of a little external *Order or Conveniency* ? Is there any Christian Law that obliges to observe this kind of Order ? Is there any real essential Difference between Persons ranked into this Order ? Is it a Sin for any Body, especially the Civil Magistrate, to leave this Order, and make what other Orders he prefers to it ? This your Lordship cannot resolve in the Affirmative ; for then you must allow, that some Communion is safer than others, and that some Clergy have more Authority than others.

Will your Lordship say, that no *particular* Order can be necessary ; yet some Order necessary, which may be different in different Communion ? This cannot hold good upon your Lordship's Principles ; for since Christ has left no Law about any Order, no Members of any particular Communion need submit to that Order ; since it is confessed by your Lordship, That in Religion no Laws, but those of Christ, are of any Obligation. So that though you do not disclaim all external Order and Decency yourself, yet you have taught other People to do it if they please, and as much as they please.

Suppose, my Lord, some Layman, upon a Pretence of your Lordship's Absence, or any other, should go into the Diocese of *Bangor*, and there pretend to ordain Clergymen ; could your Lordship quote one Text of Scripture against him ? Could you allege any Law of Christ, or his Apostles, that he had broken ? Could you prove him guilty of any Sin ? No, my Lord, you would not do that ; because this would be acknowledging such a

* Page 131.

† *Answer to Dr. Snape*, p. 48.

Thing as a *Sinful Ordination*; and if there be Sinful Ordinations, then there must be some Law concerning Ordinations: For *Sin is the Transgression of the Law*: And if there be a Law concerning Ordinations, then we must keep to the Clergy *lawfully* ordained; and must confess, after all your Lordship has said, or can say, that still some Communions are safer than others.

If you should reprove such a one, as an *Englishman*, for acting in Opposition to the *English Laws of Decency and Order*; he would answer, That he has nothing to do with such *Trifles*; That Christ was sole Lawgiver in his Kingdom; That he was content to have his Kingdom as *orderly and decent* as Christ had left it; and since he had instituted no Laws in that Matter, it was presuming, for others to take upon them to add any Thing by way of *Order or Decency*, by Laws of their own: That as he had as much Authority from Christ to ordain Clergy as your Lordship, he would not depart from his Christian Liberty.

If he should remonstrate to your Lordship in these, or Words to the like Effect, he would only reduce your Lordship's own Doctrine to Practice. This, my Lord, is part of that Confusion the learned Dr. *Snape* has charged you with being the Author of, in the Church of God: And all Persons, my Lord, whom you have taught not to regard any particular Sort of Clergy, must know (if they have the common Sense to which you appeal) that then no Clergy are at all necessary; and that it is as lawful for any Man to be his own Priest, as to solicit his own Cause. For to say that no particular Sort of Clergy are necessary, and yet that in general the Clergy are necessary, is the same as to say, that Truth is necessary to be believed; yet the Belief of no particular Truth is necessary.

The next Thing to be considered, my Lord, is your Doctrine concerning Absolutions. You begin thus: *The same you will find a sufficient Reply to their presumptuous Claim to an authoritative Absolution. An infallible Absolution cannot belong to fallible Man. But no Absolution can be authoritative, which is not infallible. Therefore no authoritative Absolution can belong to any Man living.**

I must observe here, your Lordship does not reject this *Absolution*, because the Claim of it is not founded in Scripture; but by an Argument drawn from the Nature of the Thing: Because you imagine such Absolution requires Infallibility for the Execution of it; therefore it cannot belong to Men. Should this be true, it would prove, that if our Saviour had really so intended, he could not have given this Power to his Ministers. But, my

* *Preservative*, p. 92.

Lord, who can see any Repugnancy in the Reason of the Thing itself? Is it not as easy to conceive, that our Lord should confer his Grace of Pardon by the Hands of his Ministers, as by Means of the Sacraments? And may not such Absolution be justly called *authoritative*, the Power of which is granted, and executed by his Authority?

Is it impossible for Men to have this Authority from God, because they may mistake in the Exercise of it? This Argument proves too much, and makes as short Work with every Institution of Christianity, as with the Power of Absolution.

For if it is impossible that Men should have Authority from God to absolve in his Name, because they are not infallible; this makes them equally incapable of being entrusted with any other Means of Grace; and consequently supposes the whole Priest's Office to imply a direct Impossibility in the very Notion of it.

Your Lordship's Argument is this: Christians have their Sins pardoned upon certain Conditions; but fallible Men cannot certainly know these Conditions: Therefore fallible Men cannot have Authority to *absolve*.

From hence I take Occasion to argue thus: Persons are to be admitted to the Sacraments on certain Conditions; but fallible Men cannot tell whether they come qualified to receive them according to these Conditions: Therefore fallible Men cannot have Authority to administer the Sacraments.

2ndly, This Argument subverts all Authority of the Christian Religion itself, and the Reason of every instituted Means of Grace. For if nothing can be authoritative, but what a Man is infallibly assured of, then the Christian Religion cannot be an authoritative Method of Salvation; since a Man, by being a Christian, does not become infallibly certain of his Salvation: Nor does Grace infallibly attend the Participation of the Sacraments. So that though your Lordship has formed this Argument only against this absolving Power, yet it has as much Force against the Sacraments, and the Christian Religion itself. For if it be absurd to suppose that the Priest should absolve anyone, because he cannot be certain that he deserves Absolution; does it not imply the same Absurdity, to suppose that he should have the Power of administering the Sacraments, when he cannot be *infallibly certain* that those who receive them are duly qualified? If a Possibility of Error destroys the Power in one Case, it as certainly destroys it in the other. Again, if Absolution cannot be authoritative, unless it be infallible; then it is plain that the Christian Religion is not an authoritative Means of Salvation; because all Christians are not infallibly saved: Nor can the

Sacraments be authoritative Means of Grace, because all who partake of them do not infallibly obtain Grace.

Your Lordship proceeds with your Laity by way of Expostulation : *If they amuse you with that Power which Christ left with his Apostles, Whose soever Sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever Sins ye retain, they are retained unto them :**

But why *amuse*, my Lord ? Are the Texts of Holy Scripture to be treated only as Matter of *Amusement* ? Or does your Lordship know of any Age in the Church when the very same Doctrine which we now teach, has not been taught from the same Texts ?

Do you know any Successors of the Apostles that thought the Power there specified did not belong to them ? But, however, your Lordship has taught your Laity to believe what we argue from this Text, all *Amusement* ; and told them, *They may securely answer, that it is impossible for them to depend upon this Right as anything certain, till they can prove to you that everything spoken to the Apostles, belongs to Ministers in all Ages.*† The Security of this Answer, my Lord, is founded upon this false Presumption, *viz*, That the Clergy can claim no Right to the Exercise of any Part of their Office, *as Successors of the Apostles*, till they can prove that every Thing that was spoken to the Apostles, belongs to them.

This Proposition must be true, or else there is no Force or *Security* in the Objection you here bring for the Instruction of the Laity. If it is well founded, then the Clergy cannot possibly prove they have any more Right to the Exercise of any Part of their Office than the Laity. Do they pretend to ordain, confirm, to admit or exclude Men from the Sacraments ? By what Authority is all this done ? Is it not because the Apostles, whose Successors they are, did the same Things ? But then, say your Lordship's well-instructed Laity, this is nothing to the Purpose : Prove yourselves Apostles ; prove that every Thing said to the Apostles belongs to you ; and then it will be allowed, that you may exercise these Powers, because they exercised them : But as this is impossible to be done, so it is impossible for you to prove that you have any Powers or Authorities, because they had them.

And now, my Lord, if the Case be thus, what Apology shall we make for Christianity, as it has been practised in all Ages ? How shall we excuse the Noble Army of Martyrs, Saints, and Confessors, who have boldly asserted the Right to so many

* Page 93.

† Page 94.

Apostolical Powers? Could any Men in these Ages pretend, *that everything that was spoken to the Apostles, belonged to themselves?* False, then, was their Claim, and presumptuous their Authority, who should pretend any Apostolical Powers, because the Apostles had them; when they could not prove, *that everything that was spoken to the Apostles, belonged to them.*

Farther; To prove that the above-mentioned Text does not confer the Power of Absolution in the Clergy, you reason thus: *Whatever contradicts the Natural Notions of God, and the Design and Tenor of the Gospel, cannot be the true Meaning of any Passage in the Gospel: But to make the Absolution of weak and fallible Men so necessary, or so valid, that God will not pardon without them; or that all are pardoned who have them pronounced over them, is to contradict those Notions, as well as the plain Tenor of the Gospel.**

Be pleased, my Lord, to point out your Adversary; name any one Church of *England* Man that ever taught this romantic Doctrine which you are confuting. Who ever taught such a Necessity of Absolutions, that God will pardon none without them? Who ever declared that all are pardoned who have them pronounced over them? We teach the *Necessity* and *Validity* of Sacraments; but do we ever declare that all are saved who receive them? Is there no *Medium* between two Extremes? No such Thing, my Lord, as *Moderation!* Must every Thing be thus absolute and extravagant, or nothing at all?

In another Page we have more of this same Colouring: *But to claim a Right to stand in God's Stead, in such a Sense, that they can absolutely and certainly bless, or not bless, with their Voice alone: This is the highest Absurdity and Blasphemy as it supposeth God to place a Set of Men above himself; and to put out of his own Hands the Disposal of his Blessings and Curses.†*

If your Lordship had employed all this Oratory against worshipping the Sun or Moon, it had just affected your Adversaries as much as this. For who ever taught that any Set of Men could *absolutely* bless, or withhold Blessing, independent of God? Who ever taught, that the Christian Religion, or Sacraments, or Absolution, saved People on course, or without proper Dispositions? Whoever claimed such an absolving Power, as to set himself above God, and to take from him the Disposal of his own Blessings and Curses? What has such extravagant Descriptions, such romantic Characters of Absolution, to do with that Power the Clergy justly claim? Cannot there be a Necessity

* Page 93.

† Page 91.

in some Cases of receiving Absolution from their Hands, except they set themselves above God? Is God robbed of the Disposal of his Blessings, when, in Obedience to his own Commands, and in virtue of his own Authority, they admit some as Members of the Church, and exclude others from the Communion of it? Do they pretend to be Channels of Grace, or the Means of Pardon, by any Rights or Powers naturally inherent in them? Do they not in all these Things consider themselves as Instruments of God, that are made ministerial to the Edification of the Church, purely by his Will, and only so far as they act in Conformity to it? Now if it has pleased God to confer the Holy Ghost in Ordination, Confirmation, &c., only by them, and to annex the Grace of Pardon to the Imposition of their Hands, on returning Sinners; is it any *Blasphemy* for them to claim and exert their Power? Is the Prerogative of God injured, because his own Institutions are obeyed? Cannot he dispense his Graces by what Persons, and on what Terms he pleases? Is he deprived of the Disposal of his Blessings, because they are bestowed on Persons according to his Order, and in Obedience to his Authority? If I should affirm, that Bishops have the sole Power to ordain and confirm, would this be robbing God of his Disposal of those Graces that attend such Actions? Is it not rather allowing and submitting to God's own Disposal, when we keep close to those Methods of it which himself has prescribed?

Pray, my Lord, consider the Nature of Sacraments. Are not they necessary to Salvation? But is God therefore excluded from any Power of his own? Has he for that Reason, set Bread and Wine in the Eucharist, or Water in Baptism, above Himself? Has he put the Salvation of Men out of his own Power, because it depends on his own Institutions? Is the Salvation of Christians less his own Act and Deed, or less the Effect of his own Mercy, because these Sacraments in great measure contribute to effect it? Why then, my Lord, must that Imposition of Hands that is attended with his Grace and Pardon, and which has no Pretence to such Grace, but in Obedience to his Order, and in virtue of his Promise, be thus destructive of his Prerogative? Where is there any Diminution of his Honour or Authority, if such Actions of the Clergy are made necessary to the Salvation of Souls in some Circumstances, as their washing in Water, or their receiving Bread and Wine? Cannot God institute Means of Grace, but those Means must needs be above himself? They owe all their Power and Efficacy to his Institution, and can operate no farther than the Ends for which he instituted them. How then is he dethroned for being thus obeyed?

My Lord, you take no notice of Scripture; but in a new Way

of your own, contend against this Power, from the Nature of the Thing : Yet I must beg leave to say, this Power stands upon as sure a Bottom, and is as consistent with the Goodness and Majesty of God, as the Sacraments. If the annexing Grace to Sacraments, and making them necessary Means of Salvation, be a reasonable Institution of God ; so is his annexing Pardon to the Imposition of Hands by the Clergy on returning Sinners. The Grace or Blessing received in either Case, is of his own giving, and in a Method of his own prescribing. And how this should be any Injury to God's Honour, or Affront to his Majesty, cannot easily be accounted for.

The Clergy justly claim a Power of reconciling Men to God, from express Terms of Scripture ; and of delivering his Pardons to penitent Sinners. Your Lordship disowns this Claim, as making fallible Men the absolute Dispensers of God's Blessings, and putting it in their Power to damn and save as they please. But, my Lord, nothing of this Extravagance is included in it. They are only entrusted with a *conditional* Power ; which they are to exercise according to the Rules God has given ; and it only obtains its Effect when it is so exercised. Every instituted Means of Grace is *conditional* ; and it is only then effectual, when it is attended with such Circumstances, as are required by God. If the Clergy, through Weakness, Passion or Prejudice, exclude Persons from the Church of God, they injure only themselves. But, my Lord, are these Powers nothing, because they may be exercised in vain ? Have the Clergy no right at all to them, because they are not *absolutely infallible* in the Exercise of them ?

Can you prove, my Lord, that they are not necessary, because they have not always the same Effect ? May not that be necessary to Salvation, which is only effectual on *certain Conditions* ? Is not the Christian Religion necessary to Salvation, though all Christians are not saved ? Are not the Sacraments necessary Means of Grace, though the Means of Grace obtained thereby is only conditional ? Is everyone necessarily improved in Grace, who receives the Sacrament ? Or is it less necessary, because the salutary Effects of it are not more universal ? Why then must the Imposition of Hands be less necessary, because the Grace of it is conditional, and only obtained in due and proper Circumstances ? Is Absolution nothing, because if withheld wrongfully, it injures not the Person who is denied it ; and if given without due Dispositions in the Penitent, it avails nothing ? Is not this equally true of the Sacraments, if they are denied wrongfully, or administered to unprepared Receivers ? But do they therefore cease to be standing and necessary Means of Grace ?

The Argument therefore against this Power, drawn from the Ignorance or Passions of the Clergy, whereby they may mistake or pervert the Application of it, can be of no Force ; since it is as conditional as any other Christian Institution. The Salvation of no Man can be endangered by the Ignorance or Passions of any Clergymen in the Use of this Power : If they err in the Exercise of it, the Consequences of their Error only affect themselves. The Administration of the Sacraments is certainly entrusted to them : But will anyone say, that the Sacraments are not necessary to Salvation ; because they may, through Ignorance or Passion, make an ill Use of this Trust ?

There is nothing in this Doctrine to gratify the Pride of Clergymen, or encourage them to lord it over the Flock of Christ. If you could suppose an Atheist or a Deist in Orders ; he might be arrogant and domineer in the Exercise of his Powers : But who, that has the least Sense of Religion, can think it matter of Triumph, that he can deny the Sacraments, or refuse his Benediction to any of his Flock ? Can he injure or offend the least of these ; and will not God take Account ? Or, if they fall through his Offence, will not their Blood be required at his Hands ?

Neither is there anything in it that can enslave the Laity to the Clergy ; or make their Salvation depend upon their arbitrary Will. Does anyone think his Salvation in danger, because the Sacraments (the necessary means of it) are only to be administered by the Clergy ? Why then must the Salvation of *Penitents* be endangered, or made dependent on the sole Pleasure of the Clergy ; because they alone can reconcile them to the Favour of God ? If Persons are unjustly denied the Sacraments, they may humbly hope, that God will not lay the Want of them to their Charge. And if they are unjustly kept out of the Church, and denied Admittance, they have no Reason to fear but God will notwithstanding accept them, provided they be in other respects proper Objects of his Favour.

But to proceed, your Lordship says, *The Apostles might possibly understand the Power of remitting and retaining Sins, to be that Power of laying their Hands upon the Sick.*

Is this *possible*, my Lord ? Then it is *possible*, the Apostles might think, that in the Power here intended to be given them, *nothing at all* was intended to be given them. For the Power of healing the Sick, was already conferred upon them. Therefore, if no more was intended to be given them in this Text, it cannot be interpreted, as having entitled them properly to any Power at all.

2. The Power mentioned here, was something that Jesus pro-

mised he would give them hereafter : Which plainly supposes they had it not then : But they then had the Power of *Healing* ; therefore something else must be intended here.

3. The Power of the *Keys* has always been looked upon as the highest in the Apostolical Order. But if it related only to the Power of Healing, it could not be so : For the *Seventy*, who were inferior to the Apostles, had this Power.

4. The very Manner of Expression in this Place, proves, that the Power here intended to be given, could not relate to *Healing the Sick*, or to anything of that Nature ; but to some *spiritual Power*, whose Effects should not be *visible* ; but be made good by virtue of God's Promise. Thus, *whomsoever ye shall heal on Earth, I will heal in Heaven*, borders too near upon an Absurdity. There is no Occasion to promise to make *good* such Actions as are good already, and have antecedently produced their Effects. Persons who were restored to Health, to their Sight, or the Use of their Limbs, did not want to be assured, that the Apostles, by whom they were restored, had the Power to that End ; the Exercise of which Power proved and confirmed itself. There was no need therefore of a Divine Assurance, that a Person that was healed, was actually healed in virtue of it. But when we consider this Promise, as relating to a *Power* whose *Effects* are not *visible*, as the *Pardon of Sins*, the Terms whereby it is expressed, are most proper ; and it is very reasonable to suppose God promising, that the spiritual powers exercised by his Ministers on Earth, though they do not here produce their *visible Effects*, shall yet be made good and effectual by him in *Heaven*.

These Reasons, my Lord, I should think, are sufficient to convince anyone, that the Apostles could not *possibly* understand these Words in the Sense of your Lordship.

Let us now consider the Commission given to *Peter*. Our Saviour said to him, *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it : And I will grant unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.*

Now, my Lord, how should it enter into the Thoughts of *Peter*, that nothing was here intended, or promised by our Saviour, but a Power of Healing ; which he not only had before, but also many other Disciples, who were not Apostles ? *I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven ;* that is, according to your Lordship, *I will give thee Power to heal the Sick.* Can anything be more contrary to the plain obvious

Sense of the Words? Can anyone be said to have the *Keys* of the Kingdom of Heaven, because he may be the Instrument of restoring People to Health? Are Persons Members of Christ's Kingdom, with any regard to Health? How then can he have any Power in that Kingdom; or be said to have the *Keys* of it, who is only empowered to cure Distempers? Could anyone be said to have the *Keys* of a temporal Kingdom, who had no temporal Power given him in that Kingdom? Must not he therefore who has the *Keys* of a spiritual Kingdom, have some spiritual Power in that Kingdom?

Christ has told us, that his Kingdom is not of this World. Your Lordship has told us, that it is so foreign to everything of this World, that no *worldly Terrors* or Allurements, no Pains or Pleasures of the Body, can have anything to do with it. Yet here your Lordship teaches us, that he may have the *Keys* of this spiritual Kingdom, who has only a Power over Diseases. My Lord, are not Sickness and Health, Sight and Limbs, Things of this World? Have they not some relation to bodily Pleasures and Pains? How then can a Power about Things wholly confined to this World, be a Power in a Kingdom that is not of this World? The Force of the Argument lies here: Our Saviour has assured us, that his Kingdom is not of this World: Your Lordship takes it to be of so spiritual a Nature, that it ought not, nay, that it cannot be encouraged or established by any worldly Powers. *Our Saviour gives to his Apostles the Keys of this Kingdom:* Yet you have so far forgotten your own Doctrine, and the Spirituality of this Kingdom, that you tell us, he here gave them a temporal Power of Diseases; though he says, they were the *Keys of his Kingdom* which he gave them. Suppose any Successor of the Apostles should from this Text pretend to the Power of the Sword, to make People Members of this Kingdom: Must not the Answer be, that he mistakes the Power, by not considering, that they are only the *Keys* of a *spiritual*, not of a temporal Kingdom, which were here delivered to the Apostles.

I humbly presume, my Lord, that this would be as good an Answer to your Lordship's Doctrine, as to theirs who claim the Right of the Sword, till it can be shown that *Health* and *Sickness*, *Sight* and *Limbs*, do not as truly relate to the Things of this World as the Power of the Sword.

If this Power of the Keys must be understood, only as a Power of inflicting or curing Diseases; then the Words, in the proper Construction of them, must run thus: *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church*, i.e., a peculiar Society of healthful People, and the *Gates of Hell shall never prevail*

against it, i.e., they shall always be in a State of Health. *I will give unto thee the Keys of this Kingdom of Heaven*, i.e., thou shalt have the Power of inflicting and curing Distempers; *and whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven*, i.e., on whomsoever thou shalt inflict the Leprosy on Earth, he shall be a Leper in Heaven; *and whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven*, i.e., whomsoever thou shalt cure of that Disease on Earth, shall be perfectly cured of it in Heaven.

This, without putting any Force upon the Words, is your Lordship's own Interpretation; which exposes the Honour and Authority of Scriptures as much as the greatest Enemy to them can wish. If our Saviour could mean by these Words, only a *Power of healing Distempers*; or if the Apostles understood them in that Sense, we may as well believe that when he said, *His Kingdom was not of this World*, that he meant, it was of this World; and that the Apostles so understood him too.

But, however, for the Benefit and Edification of the Laity, your Lordship has another Interpretation for them: You say, *if they* (the Apostles) *did apply this Power of remitting Sins to the certain Absolution of particular Persons, it is plain, they could do it upon no other Bottom but this; that God's Will and good Pleasure about such particular Persons was infallibly communicated to them.*

Pray, my Lord, how, or where is this so plain? Is it plain that they never baptized Persons till God had *infallibly communicated his good Pleasure to them about such particular Persons*? Baptism is an Institution equally sacred with this other, and puts the Person baptized in the same State of Grace *that Absolution* does the Penitent. Baptism is designed for the Remission of Sin. It is an Ordinance to which Absolution is consequent; but I suppose Persons may be baptized without such *infallible Communication* promised, as your Lordship contends for. If therefore it be not necessary for the Exercise of Absolution by Baptism, why must it be necessary for Absolution by the Imposition of Hands?

Can Pastors without Infallibility baptize Heathens, and absolve, or be the Instruments of absolving them thereby from their Sins? Are they not as able to absolve Christian Penitents, or restore those who have apostatised? If human Knowledge, and the common Rules of the Church, be sufficient to direct the Priest to whom he ought to administer the Sacraments; they are also sufficient for the Exercise of this other Part of the sacerdotal Office.

But your Lordship proceeds thus: *Not that they themselves absolved any.*

No, my Lord, no more than Water in Baptism of *itself* purifies the Soul from Sin. This baptismal Water is, notwithstanding, necessary for the Remission of our Sins.

Again, you say, *Not that God was obliged to bind and loose the Guilt of Men according to their Declarations, considered as their own Decisions, and their own Determinations.* No, my Lord, who ever thought so? God is not obliged to confer Grace by the *baptismal Water*, considered only as *Water*; but he is, considered as *his own Institution* for that End and Purpose. So if these Declarations are considered only as *the Declarations of Men*, God is not obliged by them: But when they are considered as the Declarations of *Men* whom he has especially authorised to make *such* Declarations in his Name, then they are as effectual with God, as any other of his Institutions whatever.

I proceed now to a Paragraph that bears as hard upon our Saviour, as some others have done upon his Apostles and their Successors; where your Lordship designs to prove, that though Christ claimed a Power of remitting Sins himself, or in his own Person, yet that he really had no such Power.

You go on in these Words: *If we look back upon our Saviour himself, we shall find, that when he declares that the Son of Man had Power upon Earth to forgive Sins, even he himself either meant by it the Power of a miraculous releasing Man from his Affliction; or if it related to another more spiritual Sense of the Words, the Power of declaring, that the Man's Sins were forgiven by God.**

The Words of our Saviour, which we are to look back upon, are these: *Whether it is easier to say, thy Sins are forgiven thee; or to say, arise, take up thy Bed and walk? But that ye may know, the Son of Man hath Power on Earth to forgive Sins* (Mark ii. 9, 10); As if he had said, 'Is not the same Divine Authority and Power required? Is it not a Work as peculiar to God, to perform miraculous Cures, as to forgive Sins? The Reason therefore why I now choose to declare my Authority, rather by saying, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee*, than by saying, *Arise and walk*, was purely to teach you this Truth, that the Power of the Son of Man is not confined to Bodily Cures; but that he has Power on Earth to forgive Sins.'

This, my Lord, is the first obvious Sense of the Words; and therefore I take it to be the true Sense. But your Lordship can look back upon them, till you find that Christ has not this Power, though he claims it expressly; but that he only intends a Power of doing *something or other*, which no more imports a

* *Preservative*, p. 94.

Power of forgiving Sins, than of remitting any temporal Debt or Penalty.

If our blessed Saviour had intended to teach the World that he was invested with this Power, I would gladly know how he must have expressed himself, to have satisfied your Lordship that he really had it? He must have told you, that he had not this Power, and then possibly your Lordship would have taught us, that he had this Power. For no one can discover any Reason why you should deny it him, but because he has in express Words claimed and asserted it. I hope your Lordship has not so low an Opinion of our Saviour's Person, as to think it unreasonable in the Nature of the Thing, that he should have this Power. Where does it contradict any Principle of Reason, to say, that a *King* should be able to pardon his Subjects? Since there is no Absurdity then in the Thing itself, and it is so expressly asserted in Scripture; it is just Matter of Surprise, that your Lordship should carry your Reader from a plain consistent Sense of the Words, to *either this or that, Something or other*, the Origin whereof is only to be sought for in your Lordship's own Invention; rather than not exclude Christ from a Power which he declared he had, and declared he had it for this very Reason, *that we might know that he had it*. Our Saviour has told us that the Way to Heaven is *narrow*. Your Lordship might as reasonably prove from hence, that he meant, it was *broad*, as that he did not mean that he could forgive Sins, when he said, *that ye may know, that the Son of Man hath Power on Earth to forgive Sins*.

Your Lordship has rejected all *Church Authority*, and despised the pretended *Powers* of the Clergy, for this Reason; because Christ is the *sole King, sole Lawgiver, and Judge in his Kingdom*. But, it seems, your Lordship, notwithstanding, thinks it now Time to depose him: And this *sole King in his own Kingdom*, must not be allowed to be capable of pardoning his own Subjects.

This Doctrine, my Lord, is delivered, I suppose, as your other Doctrines, out of a hearty Concern and *Christian Zeal* for the Privileges of the Laity; and to show that your Lordship is not only able to limit as you please the Authority of *temporal Kings*; but also to make Christ himself *sole King*, and yet *no King*, in his Spiritual Kingdom. For, my Lord, the Kingdom of Christ is a Society founded in order to the Reconciliation of Sinners to God. If therefore Christ could not pardon Sins, to what End could he either erect, or how could he support his Kingdom, which is only, in the great and last Design of it, to consist of absolved Sinners? He that cannot forgive Sins in a

Kingdom that is erected for the Remission of Sins, can no more be *sole King* in it, than he that has no *temporal Power*, can be *sole King* in a *temporal Kingdom*. Therefore your Lordship has been thus mighty serviceable to the Christian Laity, as to teach them that Christ is not only *sole King*, but *no King* in his Kingdom.

This is not the first Contradiction your Lordship has unhappily fallen into, in your Attempts upon *kingly Authority*. Nor is it the last which I shall presume to observe to the *common Sense* of your Laity.

Again, in this Account of our blessed Saviour, your Lordship has made no Difference between him and his Apostles, as to this *absolving Authority*. For you say, the *great Commission* given to them implied either a Power of releasing Men from their bodily Afflictions; or of declaring such to be pardoned, whom God had assured them that he had pardoned: And this *all* that you here allow to Christ himself.

Your Lordship's calling him so often *King*, and *sole King*, &c., in his Kingdom, and yet making him a *mere Creature* in it, is too like the Insult, and designed Sarcasm of the *Jews*, who, when they had nailed him to the Cross, writ over his Head, *This is the King of the Jews*.

But to proceed: Your Lordship proves, That our Saviour had not the Power of *forgiving Sins*; because *His Way of Expression was, Thy Sins are forgiven thee. This was plainly to acknowledge, and keep up that true Notion, that God alone forgiveth Sins.*

Let us therefore put this Argument in Form. Christ hath affirmed, that he had Power to forgive Sins: But his Way was to say, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee*: Therefore Christ had not Power to forgive Sins. *Q. E. D.*

It is much your Lordship did not recommend this to your Laity, as another *invincible Demonstration*. For by the Help of it, my Lord, they may prove that our Saviour could no more *heal Diseases*, than *forgive Sins*. As thus; Christ indeed pretends to a Power of healing Diseases; but his usual Way of speaking to the diseased Person was, *thy Faith hath made thee whole*; therefore he had not the Power of *healing Diseases*. The Argument has the same Force against one Power, as against the other. If he did not *forgive Sins*, because he said, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee*; no more did he heal Diseases, because he said, *Thy Faith hath made thee whole*.

I have a Claim of several Debts upon a Man; I forgive him them all, in these Words, *Thy Debts are remitted thee*. A philosophical Wit stands by, and pretends to prove, that I had not the Power of remitting these Debts; because I said, *Thy Debts*

are remitted thee. What can come up to, or equal such *profound Philosophy*, but the *Divinity* of one who teaches, our Saviour could not forgive Sins, because he said, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee?*

But your Lordship says, the Reason why our Saviour thus expresseth himself, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee*, 'was plainly to 'keep up that true Notion, that God alone forgiveth Sins.' Therefore, my Lord, according to this Doctrine, our Saviour was obliged not to claim any Power that was *peculiar* or *appropriated* to God alone. For if this be an Argument, why he should not forgive Sins, it is also an Argument that he ought not to claim any other Power, any more than this; which is proper to God, and only belongs to him. But, my Lord, if he did express himself thus, that he might not lay Claim to any Thing that was peculiar to God, how came he in so many other Respects to lay Claim to such Things as are as truly peculiar to God, as the Forgiveness of Sins? How came he in so many Instances to make himself equal to God? How came he to say, *Ye believe in God, believe also in me? And that Men should worship the Son, even as the Father?* That he was the Son of God, that he was the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Are not evangelical Faith, Worship, and Trust, Duties that are solely due to God? Does he not as much invade the Sovereignty of God, who lays Claim to these Duties, as he that pretends to forgive Sins? Did not Christ also give his Disciples *Power and Authority* over Devils and unclean Spirits, and Power to heal all manner of Diseases?

Now if Christ did not assume a Power to forgive Sins, because God alone could forgive Sins, it is also as unaccountable that he should exercise other *Authorities* and Powers, which are as strictly peculiar to God as that of forgiving Sins. As if a Person should disown that Christ is omniscient, because Omniscience is an *Attribute* of God alone; and yet confess his Omnipotence, which is an *Attribute* equally *divine*.

But farther, my Lord: Did our Saviour thus designedly express himself, lest he should be thought to assume any Power which was divine, then it is certain (according to this Opinion) that if he had assumed any such Power, or pretended to do what was peculiar to God, he had been the Occasion of misleading Men into Error. For if this be a plain Reason why he expressed himself so as to disown this Power, it is plain that if he had owned it, he had been condemned by this Argument, as teaching false Doctrine.

Now if this would have been interpretatively false Doctrine in Christ, to take upon himself any Thing that was peculiar to God,

the Apostles were guilty of propagating this false Doctrine. For there is scarce any known Attribute or Power of God, but they ascribe it to our Saviour. They declare him eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, &c. Is it not a *true Notion*, that God alone can create, and is Governor of the Universe? Yet the Apostles expressly assure us of Christ, that *all Things were created by him*, and that *God hath put all Things in Subjection under his Feet*. 'Tis very surprising that your Lordship should exclude Christ from this Power of *forgiving Sins*, though he has expressly said he could forgive Sins, because such a Power belongs only to God: When it appears through the whole Scripture, that there is scarce any divine Power which our Saviour himself has not claimed, nor any Attribute of God but what his Apostles have ascribed to him. They have made him the *Creator*, the *Preserver*, the *Governor* of the Universe, the Author of eternal Salvation to all that obey him; and yet your Lordship tells us, that he did not pretend to *forgive Sins*, because that was a Power peculiar to God.

Here is then (to speak in your Lordship's elegant Style) an *immovable Resting-place* for your Laity to set their Feet upon; here is an *Argument that will last them for ever*: They must believe that our Saviour did not forgive Sins, *because* this was a Power that belonged to God, though the Scriptures assure us, that every other divine Power belonged to Christ. That is, they must believe, that though our Saviour claimed all divine Powers, yet not this divine Power, *because* it is a divine Power. And, my Lord, if they have the common Sense to believe this, they may also believe, that though our Saviour took human Nature upon him, yet that he had not a human Soul, because it is proper to Man. They may believe, that any Person who has all kingly Power, cannot remit or reprieve a Malefactor, *because* it is an Act of kingly Power to do it; or that a Bishop cannot suspend any Offender of his Diocese, because it is an Act of episcopal Power to do it. All these Reasons are as strong and demonstrative, as that Christ who claimed all divine Powers, could not forgive Sins, *because* it was a *divine Power*.

Lastly, In this Argument your Lordship has plainly declared against the Divinity of Christ, and ranked him in the Order of Creatures. Your Lordship says, Christ did not forgive Sins, because it is *God alone who can forgive Sins*; as plain an Argument as can be offered, that in your Lordship's Opinion Christ is not God: For if you believed him, in a true and proper Sense, God, how could you exclude him from the Power of forgiving Sins, *because* God alone can forgive Sins? It is inconsistent with Sense and Reason to deny this Power to Christ because it is a

divine Power, but only because you believe him not to be a divine Person. If Christ was God, then he might forgive Sins, though God alone can forgive Sins : But you say, Christ cannot forgive Sins, because God *alone* can forgive Sins ; therefore it is plain, that, according to your Lordship's Doctrine, Christ is not truly, or in a proper Sense, God.

Here, my Lord, I desire again to appeal to the *common Sense* of your Laity ; let them judge betwixt the Scriptures and your Lordship. The Scriptures plainly and frequently ascribe all divine Attributes to Christ : They make him the Creator and Governor of the World ; God over all, blessed for ever. Yet your Lordship makes him a Creature, and denies him *such* a Power, because it belongs only to God.

You yourself, my Lord, have allowed him to be absolute Ruler over the Consciences of Men ; to be an arbitrary Dispenser of the Means of Salvation to Mankind ; than which Powers, none can be more divine : And yet you hold, that he cannot forgive Sins, because Pardon of Sin can only be the Effect of a divine Power.

Is it not equally a divine Power (even according to your Lordship), to rule over the Consciences of Men, to give Laws of Salvation, and to act in these Affairs with an uncontrollable Power, as *to forgive Sins* ?

My Lord, let their common Sense here discover the Absurdity (for I must call it so) of your *new Scheme* of Government in Christ's Kingdom. Christ is *absolute* Lord of it, (according to yourself) and can make or unmake Laws relating to it ; can dispense or withhold Grace as he pleases in this spiritual Kingdom, all which Powers are purely divine ; yet you say he cannot forgive Sins, though every express Power which you have allowed him over the Consciences of Men, be as truly a *divine Power* as that of *forgiving Sins*. Has not Christ a proper and personal Power to give Grace to his Subjects ? Is he not Lord over their Consciences ? And are not these Powers as truly appropriated to God ? And has not your Lordship often taught them to be so, as that of *Forgiveness of Sins* ? Is it not as much the Prerogative of God to have any natural intrinsic Power, to confer Grace, or any spiritual Benefit to the Souls of Men, as to forgive Sins ? Has not your Lordship despised all the Administrations of the Clergy, because God's Graces can only come from himself, and are only to be received from his own Hands ? The Conclusion therefore is this, either Christ has a personal intrinsic Power to confer Grace in his Kingdom, or he has not ; if you say he has not, then you are chargeable with the Collusion of making him a King in a spiritual Kingdom, where you allow him no

spiritual Power: If you say he has, then you fall into this Contradiction, that you allow him to have divine Powers, though he cannot have divine Powers; that is, you allow him to *give Grace*, though it is a divine Power, and not to *forgive Sins*, because it is a divine Power. My Lord, I wish your Laity (if there be any to whom you can render it intelligible) much Joy of such profound Divinity. Or if there are others who are more taken with your Lordship's Sincerity, I desire them not to pass by this following remarkable Instance of it: Your Lordship has here as plainly declared, as Words can consequentially declare any Thing, that you do not believe Christ to be God, yet profess yourself Bishop of a Church, whose Liturgy in so many repeated Testimonies declares the contrary Doctrine, and which obliges you to express your Assent and Consent to such Doctrine. My Lord, I here call upon your *Sincerity*; either declare Christ to be perfect God, and then show why he could not *forgive Sins*; or deny him to be perfect God, and then show how you can sincerely declare your *Assent* and *Consent* to the Doctrine of the Church of *England*.

This, my Lord, has an Appearance of Prevarication, which you cannot, I hope, charge upon any of your Adversaries, who if they cannot think, that to be sincere is the only Thing necessary to recommend Men to the Favour of God, yet may have as much, or possibly more Sincerity, than those who do think so.

Before I take Leave of your Lordship, I must take Notice of a *Resting-place*, a *strong Retreat*, a *lasting Foundation*, i.e., a *Demonstration in the strictest Sense* of the Words, that all *Church-Communion* is unnecessary.

Your Lordship sets it out in these Words:

I am not now going to accuse you of a Heresy against Charity, but of a Heresy against the Possibility and Nature of Things. As thus, Mr. Nelson (for Instance) thinks himself obliged in Conscience to communicate with some of our Church. Upon this you declare he hath no Title to God's Mercy; and you and all the World allow, that if he communicates with you whilst his Conscience tells him it is a Sin, he is self-condemned, and out of God's Favour. That Notion (viz. the Necessity of Church-Communion) therefore, which implies this great invincible Absurdity, cannot be true.

Pray, my Lord, what is this wondrous Curiosity of a *Demonstration*, but the common Case of an *erroneous Conscience*? Did the strictest Contenders for Church-Communion ever teach, that any *Terms* are to be complied with against Conscience? But it is a strange Conclusion to infer from thence, that there is no

Obligation to Communion, or that all Things are to be held indifferent, because they are not to be complied with against one's Conscience.

The Truths of the Christian Religion have the same Nature and Obligation, whatever our Opinions are of them, and those that are necessary to be believed, continue so, whether we can persuade ourselves to believe them or not. I suppose your Lordship will not say, that the Articles of Faith and necessary Institutions of the Christian Religion, are no other ways necessary, than because we believe them to be so, that our Persuasion is the only Cause of the Necessity; but if their Necessity be not owing merely to our Belief of them, then it is certain that our Disbelief of them cannot make them less necessary. If the Ordinances of Christ, and the Articles of Faith are necessary, because Christ has made them so, that Necessity must continue the same, whether we believe and observe them or not.

So that, my Lord, we may still maintain the Necessity of Church-Communion, and the strict Observance of Christ's Ordinances, notwithstanding that People have different Persuasions in these Matters, presuming *that our Opinions* can no more alter the Nature or Necessity of Christ's Institutions, than we can believe *Error* into *Truth*, *Good* into *Evil*, or *Light* into *Darkness*. I shall think myself no *Heretic against the Nature of Things*, though I tell a *conscientious Socinian*, that the Divinity of Christ is necessary to be believed, or a *conscientious Jew*, that it is necessary to be a Christian in order to be saved. But if your Lordship's Demonstration was accepted, we should be obliged to give up the Necessity of every Doctrine and Institution, to every Disbeliever that pretended Conscience. We must not tell any Party of People that they are in any Danger for being out of Communion with us, if they do but follow their own Persuasion.

Your Lordship's *invincible Demonstration* proceeds thus :

We must not insist upon the Necessity of joining with any particular Church, because then conscientious Persons will be in Danger either Way; for if there be a Necessity of it, then there is a Danger if they do not join with it, and if they comply against their Consciences, the Danger is the same.

What an inextricable Difficulty is here! How shall Divinity or Logic be able to relieve us?

Be pleased, my Lord, to accept of this Solution, in lieu of your Demonstration.

I will suppose the Case of a *conscientious Jew*; I tell him that Christianity is the only covenanted Method of Salvation, and that he can have no Title to the Favour of God, till he professes

the Faith of Christ. What, replies he, would you direct me to do? If I embrace Christianity against my Conscience, I am out of God's Favour; and if I follow my Conscience, and continue a *Jew*, I am also out of his Favour. The Answer is this, my Lord; The *Jew* is to obey his Conscience, and to be left to the *uncovenanted, unpromised* Terms of God's *Mercy*, whilst the conscientious Christian is entitled to the *express and promised Favours of God*.

There is still the same absolute Necessity of believing in Christ, Christianity is still the only Method of Salvation; though the sincere *Jew* cannot so persuade himself; and we ought to declare it to all *Jews* and Unbelievers whatsoever, that they can only be saved by embracing Christianity: That a false Religion does not become a true one, nor a true one false, in Consequence of their Opinions; but that if they are so unhappy as to refuse the Covenant of Grace, they must be left to such *Mercy* as is without any Covenant. And now, my Lord, what is become of this mighty Demonstration? Does it prove that Christianity is not necessary, because the conscientious *Jew* may think it is not so? It may as well prove that the Moon is no larger than a Man's Head, because an honest ignorant Countryman may think it no larger.

Is there any Person of *common Sense*, who would think it a Demonstration that he is not obliged to go to Church, because a *conscientious* Dissenter will not? Could he think it less necessary to be a Christian, because a *sincere Jew* cannot embrace Christianity? Could he take it to be an indifferent Matter whether he believed the Divinity of Christ, because a *conscientious Socinian* cannot? Yet this is your Lordship's *invincible Demonstration*, that we ought not to insist upon the Necessity of Church-Communion, because a *conscientious Disbeliever* cannot comply with it.

A small Degree of *common Sense*, would teach a Man that true Religion, and the Terms of Salvation, must have the same obligatory Force, whether we reason rightly about them or not; and that they who believe and practise according to them, are in express Covenant with God, which entitles them to his Favour; whilst those who are sincerely erroneous, have nothing but the Sincerity of their Errors to plead, and are left to such *Mercy of God*, as is without any Promise. Here, my Lord, is nothing frightful or absurd in this Doctrine; they who are in the Church which Christ has founded, are upon Terms which entitle them to God's Favour; they who are out of it, fall to his *Mercy*.

But your Lordship is not content with the Terms of the

Gospel, or a Doctrine that only saves a particular Sort of People; this is a narrow View, not wide enough for your Notions of *Liberty*. Particular Religions, and particular Covenants, are *demonstrated* to be absurd, *because* particular Persons may disbelieve, or not submit to them.

Your Lordship must have Doctrines that will save all People alike, in every way that their Persuasion leads them to take: But, my Lord, there needs be no greater Demonstration against your Lordship's Doctrine, than that it equally favours every Way of Worship; for an Argument which equally proves every Thing, has been generally thought to prove nothing; which happens to be the Case of your Lordship's *important Demonstration*.

Your Lordship indeed only instances in a particular Person, Mr. *Nelson*; but your *Demonstration* is as serviceable to any other Person who has left any other Church whatever. The *conscientious Quaker, Muggletonian, Independent, or Socinian, &c.*, has the same Right to obey Conscience, and blame any Church that assumes a Power of censuring him, as Mr. *Nelson* had; and if he is censured by any Church, that Church is as guilty of the same *Heresy against the Nature of Things*, as that Church which censured Mr. *Nelson*, or any Church that should pretend to censure any other Person whatever.

I am not at all surprised that your Lordship should teach this Doctrine, but it is something strange that such an Argument should be obtruded upon the World as an unheard-of *Demonstration*, and that in an *Appeal to common Sense*. Suppose some Body or other in Defence of your Lordship, should take upon him to demonstrate to the World that there is no such Thing as Colour, because there are some People that cannot see; or Sounds, because there are some who do not hear them; He would have found out the only *Demonstration* in the World that could equal your Lordship's, and would have as much Reason to call those *Heretics against the Nature of Things*, who should disbelieve him, and insist upon the Reality of Sounds, as your Lordship has to call your Adversaries so.

For is there no Necessity of Church-Communion, because there are some who do not conceive it? Then there are no Sounds, because there are some who do not hear them; for it is certainly as easy to believe away the *Truth* and *Reality*, as the *Necessity* of Things.

Some People have only taught us the *Innocency of Error*, and been content with setting forth its harmless Qualities; but your Lordship has been a more hearty Advocate, and given it a *Power* over every Truth and Institution of Christianity. If we have

but an *erroneous Conscience*, the whole Christian Dispensation is cancelled ; all the Truths and Doctrines in the Bible are *demonstrated* to be unnecessary, if we do not believe them.

How unhappily have the several Parties of Christians been disputing for many Ages, who, if they could but have found out this *intelligible Demonstration* (from the Case of an erroneous Conscience), would have seen the Absurdity of pretending to necessary Doctrines, and insisting upon *Church-Communion* ; but it must be acknowledged your Lordship's *new-invented Engine* for the Destruction of *Churches* ; and it may be expected the *good Christians of no Church* will return your Lordship their Thanks for it.

Your Lordship has thought it a mighty Objection to some Doctrines in the *Church of England*, that the Papists might make some Advantage of them : But yet your own Doctrine defends *all* Communions alike, and serve the *Jew* and *Socinian*, &c., as much as any other sort of People. Though this sufficiently appears, from what has been already said, yet that it may be still more obvious to the *common Sense* of everyone, I shall reduce these Doctrines to Practice, and suppose, for once, that your Lordship intends to convert a *Jew*, a *Quaker*, or *Socinian*.

Now in order to make a Convert of any of them, these Preliminary PROPOSITIONS are to be first laid down according to your Lordship's Doctrine.

Some *Propositions* for the Improvement of true Religion.

Proposition I. That we are neither more or less in the Favour of God, for living in any particular Method or Way of Worship, but purely as we are sincere. *Preserv.*, p. 90.

Prop. II. That no Church ought to unchurch another, or declare it out of God's Favour. *Preserv.*, p. 85.

Prop. III. That nothing loses us the Favour of God, but a wicked Insincerity. *Ibid.*

Prop. IV. That a conscientious Person can be in no Danger for being out of any particular Church. *Preserv.*, p. 90.

Prop. V. That there is no such Thing as any real Perfection or Excellency in any Religion, that can *justify* our adhering to it, but *that* all is founded in our personal Persuasion ; which your Lordship thus proves : *When we left the Popish Doctrines, was it because they were actually corrupt ?* No ; *The Reason was, because we thought them so.* Therefore if we might leave the *Church of Rome*, not because her Doctrines were corrupt, but because we thought them so, then the same Reason will justify anyone else, in leaving any Church, how true soever its Doctrines are ; and consequently there is no such Thing as any *real* Perfection or

Excellency in any Religion considered in itself, but is *right* or *wrong* according to our Persuasions about it. *Preserv.*, p. 85.

Prop. VI. That Christ is *sole* King and *Lawgiver* in his Kingdom, that no *Men* have any Power of Legislation in it; that if we would be good Members of it, we must show ourselves Subjects of Christ alone, without any Regard to Man's Judgment.

Prop. VII. That as Christ's Kingdom is not of this World, so when worldly Encouragements are annexed to it, these are so many Divisions against Christ and his own express Word. *Serm.*, p. 11.

Prop. VIII. That to pretend to know the Hearts and Sincerity of Men, is Nonsense and Absurdity. *Serm.*, p. 93.

Prop. IX. That God's Graces are only to be received immediately from himself. *Serm.*, p. 89.

These, my Lord, are your Lordship's own Propositions, expressed in your own Terms, without any Exaggeration.

And now, my Lord, begin as soon as you please, either with a *Quaker*, *Socinian*, or *Jew*; use any Argument whatsoever to convert them, and you shall have a sufficient answer from your own Propositions.

Will you tell the *Jew* that Christianity is necessary to Salvation? He will answer from *Prop.* I. *That we are neither more or less in the Favour of God for living in any particular Method or Way of Worship, but purely as we are sincere.*

Will your Lordship tell him, that the Truth of Christianity is so well asserted, that there is no Excuse left for Unbelievers? He will answer from *Prop.* V. *That all Religion is founded in personal Persuasion; that as your Lordship does not believe that Christ is come, because he is actually come, but because you think he is come; so he does not disbelieve Christ because he is not actually come, but because he thinks he is not come.* So that here, my Lord, the *Jew* gives as good a Reason why he is not a Christian, as your Lordship does why you are not a Papist.

If your Lordship should turn the Discourse to a *Quaker*, and offer him any Reasons for embracing the Doctrine of the *Church of England*, you cannot possibly have any better Success; anyone may see from your *Propositions*, that no Argument can be urged, but what your Lordship has there fully answered. For since you allow nothing to the *Truth* of Doctrines, or the *Excellency* of any Communion as such, it is demonstrable that no Church or Communion can have any Advantage above another, which is absolutely necessary in order to persuade any sensible Man to exchange any Communion for another.

Will your Lordship tell a *Quaker*, that there is any Danger in that particular Way that he is in?

He can answer from *Prop. I., III., and IV. That a conscientious Person cannot be in any Danger of being out of any particular Church.*

Will your Lordship tell him that his Religion is condemned by the universal Church?

He can answer from *Prop. II. That no Church ought to unchurch another, or declare it out of God's Favour.*

Will you tell him that Christ has instituted Sacraments as necessary Means of Grace, which he neglects to observe?

He will answer you from *Prop. IX. That God's Graces are only to be received immediately from himself.* And to think that *Bread and Wine*, or the sprinkling of Water, is necessary to Salvation, is as absurd, as to think any Order of the Clergy is necessary to recommend us to God.

Will your Lordship tell him that he displeases God, by not holding several Articles of Faith, which Christ has required us to believe?

He can reply from *Prop. III. That nothing loses us the Favour of God but a wicked Insincerity.* And from *Prop. V. That as your Lordship believes such Things, not because they are actually to be believed, but because you think so; so he disbelieves them, not because they are actually false, but because he thinks so.*

Will your Lordship tell him he is insincere?

He can reply from *Prop. VI. That to assume to know the Hearts and Sincerity of Men, is Nonsense and Blasphemy.*

Will your Lordship tell him that he ought to conform to a Church established by the Laws of the Land?

He can answer from *Prop. VIII. That this very Establishment is an Argument against Conformity? For as Christ's Kingdom is not of this World, so when worldly Encouragements are annexed to it, they are so many Decisions against Christ, and his own express Words.* And from *Prop. VII. That seeing Christ is sole King and Lawgiver in his Kingdom, and no Men have any Power of Legislation in it, they who would be good Members of it, must show themselves Subjects to Christ alone, without any Regard to Man's Judgment.*

I am inclined to think, my Lord, that it is now demonstrated to the common Sense of the Laity, that your Lordship cannot urge any Argument, either from the *Truth*, the *Advantage*, or *Necessity* of embracing the Doctrines of the *Church of England*, to either *Jew*, *Heretic*, or *Schismatic*, but you have helped him to a full Answer to any such Argument, from your own Principles.

Are we, my Lord, to be treated as *popishly* affected for

asserting some Truths, which the Papists join with us in asserting? Is it a Crime in us not to drop some necessary Doctrines, because the Papists have not dropped them? If this is to be *popishly* affected, we own the Charge, and are not for being such *true Protestants*, as to give up the *Apostles' Creed*, or lay aside the Sacraments, because they are received by the Church of *Rome*. I cannot indeed charge your Lordship with being *well affected* to the Church of *Rome*, or of *England*, to the *Jews*, the *Quakers*, or *Socinians*; but this I have *demonstrated*, and will undertake the Defence of it, that your Lordship's *Principles* equally serve them all alike, and do not give the least Advantage to one Church above another, as has sufficiently appeared from your *Principles*.

I will no more say your Lordship is in the Interest of the *Quakers*, or *Socinians*, or *Papists*, than I would charge you with being in the Interest of the Church of *England*; for as your Doctrines equally support them all, he ought to ask your Lordship's Pardon, who should declare you more a Friend to one than the other.

I intended, my Lord, to have considered another very obnoxious Article in your Lordship's Doctrines concerning the *Repugnancy of temporal Encouragements to the Nature of Christ's Kingdom*; but the Consistency and Reasonableness of guarding this spiritual Kingdom with human Laws, has been defended with so much Perspicuity and Strength of Argument, and your Lordship's Objections so fully confuted by the judicious and learned Dean of *Chichester*, that I presume this Part of the Controversy is finally determined.

I hope, my Lord, that I have delivered nothing here that needs any Excuse or Apology to the Laity, that they will not be persuaded, through any vain Pretence of Liberty, to make themselves Parties against the first Principles of Christianity; or imagine, that whilst we contend for the positive Institutions of the Gospel, the Necessity of Church-Communion, or the Excellency of our own, we are robbing them of their natural Rights, or interfering with their Privileges. Whilst we appear in the Defence of any part of Christianity, we are engaged for them in the common Cause of Christians; and I am persuaded better Things of the Laity, than to believe that such Labours will render either our Persons or Professions hateful to them. Your Lordship has indeed endeavoured to give an invidious Turn to the Controversy, by calling upon the Laity to assert their Liberties, as if they were in Danger from the Principles of Christianity.—But, my Lord, what Liberty does any Layman lose, by our asserting, that *Church-Communion* is

necessary? What Privilege is taken from them by our teaching the Danger of certain Ways and Methods of Religion? Is a Man made a Slave because he is cautioned against the Principles of the *Quakers*, against *Fanaticism*, *Popery*, or *Socinianism*? Is he in a State of Bondage because the Sacraments are necessary, and none but episcopal Clergy ought to administer them? Is his Freedom destroyed because there is a particular Order of Men appointed by God to minister in holy Things, and be serviceable to him in recommending him to the Favour of God? Can any Person, my Lord, think these Things Breaches upon their Liberty, except such as think the Commandments a Burden? Is there any more Hardship in saying thou shalt keep to an episcopal Church, than thou shalt be baptized? Or in requiring People to receive particular Sacraments, than to believe particular Books of Scripture to be the Word of God? If some other Advocate for the Laity should, out of Zeal for their Rights, declare that they need not believe one-half of the Articles in the Creed, if they would but assert their Liberty, he would be as true a Friend, and deserve the same Applause, as he who should assert the Necessity of Church-Communion is inconsistent with the natural Rights and Liberties of Mankind.

I am, my LORD,

Your Lordship's most

Humble Servant,

William Law.

Postscript.

I HOPE your Lordship will not think it unnatural or impertinent, to offer here a Word or two in Answer to some Objections against my former Letter.

To begin with the Doctrine of the uninterrupted Succession of the Clergy.

I have, as I think, proved that there is a divine Commission required to qualify any one to exercise the priestly Office, and that seeing this divine Commission can only be had from such

particular Persons as God has appointed to give it, therefore it is necessary that there should be a continual Succession of such Persons, in order to keep up a commissioned Order of the Clergy. For if the Commission itself be to descend through Ages, and distinguish the Clergy from the Laity; it is certain the Persons who alone can give this Commission, must descend through the same Ages, and consequently an uninterrupted Succession is as necessary, as that the Clergy have a divine Commission. Take away this Succession, and the Clergy may as well be ordained by one Person as another; a Number of Women may as well give them a divine Commission, as a Congregation of any Men; they may indeed appoint Persons to officiate in holy Orders, for the Sake of *Decency and Order*; but then there is no more in it, than an external *Decency and Order*; they are no more the Priests of God, than those that pretended to make them so. If we had lost the Scriptures, it would be very well to make as good Books as we could, and come as near them as possible; but then it would be not only Folly, but Presumption, to call them the Word of God. But I proceed to the Objections against the Doctrine of an uninterrupted Succession.

First, It is said, that there is no mention made of it in Scripture, as having any Relation to the Being of a Church.

Secondly, That it is subject to so great Uncertainty, that if it be necessary we cannot now be sure we are in the Church.

Thirdly, That it is a popish Doctrine, and gives them great Advantage over us.

I begin with the *first* Objection, that there is no mention made of it in the Scriptures, which though I think I have sufficiently answered in this Letter, I shall here farther consider.

Pray, my Lord, is it not a true Doctrine, that *the Scriptures contain all Things necessary to Salvation*? But, my Lord, it is nowhere expressly said, that *the Scriptures contain all Things necessary to Salvation*. It is nowhere said, that no other Articles of Faith need be believed. Where does it appear in Scripture, that the Scriptures were writ by any divine Command? Have any of the Gospels or Epistles this Authority to recommend them? Are they necessary to be believed, because there is any Law of Christ concerning the Necessity of believing them?

May I reject this uninterrupted Succession, because it is not mentioned in Scripture? And may I not as well reject all the Gospels? Produce your Authority, my Lord, mention your Texts of Scripture, where Christ *has hung the Salvation of Men* upon their believing that St. *Matthew* or St. *John* wrote such a Book seventeen hundred years ago. These, my Lord, are

Niceties and *Trifles* which are not to be found in Scripture, and consequently have nothing to do with the Salvation of Men.

Now if nothing be to be held as necessary, but what is expressly required in so many Words in Scripture, then it can never be proved that the Scriptures themselves are a *standing Rule of Faith in all Ages*, since it is nowhere expressly asserted, nor is it anywhere said, that the Scriptures should be continued as a Rule of Faith in all Ages. Is it an Objection against the Necessity of a perpetual Succession of the Clergy, that it is not mentioned in the Scripture? And is it not as good a one against the *Necessity* of making Scripture the *standing Rule of Faith in all Ages*, since it is never said that they were to be continued as a standing Rule in all Ages? If Things are only necessary for being said to be so in Scripture, then all that are not thus taught are equally unnecessary, and consequently it is no more necessary that the Scripture should be a fixed Rule of Faith in all Ages, than that there should be Bishops to ordain in all Ages.

Again, Where shall we find it in Scripture, that the Sacraments are to be continued in every Age of the Church? Where is it said that they shall always be the ordinary Means of Grace necessary to be observed? Is there any Law of Christ, any Text of Scripture, that expressly asserts, that if we leave the Use of the Sacraments, we are out of Covenant with God? Is it anywhere directly said, that we must never lay them aside, or that they will be *perpetually* necessary? No, my Lord, this is a *Nicety* and *Trifle* not to be found in Scripture: *There is no Stress laid there upon this Matter*, but upon Things of a quite different Nature.

I now presume, my Lord, that every one who has common Sense plainly sees, that if this Succession of the Clergy is to be despised, because it is not expressly required in Scripture; it undeniably follows, that we may reject the Scriptures, as not being a *standing Rule of Faith in all Ages*; we may disuse the Sacraments, as not the *ordinary Means of Grace in all Ages*; since these are no more mentioned in the Scriptures, or *expressly* required, than this uninterrupted Succession.

If it be a good Argument against the necessity of episcopal Ordainers, that it is never said in Scripture that there shall *always* be such Ordainers; it is certainly as conclusive against the Use of the Sacraments in every Age, that it is nowhere said in Scripture they shall be used in *all Ages*.

If no Government or Order of the Clergy is to be held as necessary, because no such Necessity is asserted in Scripture; it is certain, this concludes as strongly against *Government*, and *the*

Order itself, as against any *particular Order*. For it is no more said in Scripture that there shall be an *Order of Clergy*, than that there shall be any *particular Order*; therefore if this Silence proves against any *particular Order of Clergy*, it proves as much against *Order itself*.

Should therefore any of your Lordship's Friends have so much Church-Zeal, as to contend for the Necessity of *some Order*, though of no particular Order; he must fall under your Lordship's Displeasure, and be proved as mere a *Dreamer* and *Trifler*, as those who assert the Necessity of episcopal Ordination. For if it be plain that there need be no *episcopal Clergy*, because it is not said there shall *always* be episcopal Clergy; it is undeniably plain that there need be *no Order* of the Clergy, since it is nowhere said, there shall be *an Order* of Clergy: Therefore whoever shall contend for an *Order of Clergy*, will be as much condemned by your Lordship's Doctrine, as he that declares for the episcopal Clergy.

The Truth of the Matter is this; if nothing is to be esteemed of any Moment, but counted as mere *Trifle* and *Nicety* among Christians, which is not *expressly* required in the Scriptures; then it is a *Trifle* and *Nicety*, whether we believe the Scriptures to be a *standing Rule of Faith* in all Ages, whether we use the Sacraments in *all Ages*, whether we have any Clergy at all, whether we observe the Lord's Day, whether we baptize our Children, or whether we go to public Worship; for none of these Things are expressly required in so many Words in Scripture. But if your Lordship, with the rest of the Christian World, will take these Things to be of Moment, and well proved, because they are founded in Scripture, though not in *express Terms*, or under *plain Commands*; if you will acknowledge these Matters to be well asserted, because they may be gathered from Scripture, and are confirmed by the universal Practice of the Church in all Ages, (which is all the Proof that they are capable of,) I do not doubt but it will appear, that this *successive Order of the Clergy* is founded on the same Evidence, and supported by as great Authority, so that it must be thought of the same Moment with these Things by all unprejudiced Persons.

For, my Lord, though it be not expressly said, that there shall *always* be a *Succession of Episcopal Clergy*, yet it is a Truth founded in Scripture itself, and asserted by the universal Voice of Tradition in the first and succeeding Ages of the Church.

It is thus founded in Scripture: There we are taught that the Priesthood is a *positive Institution*; that no Man can take this Office unto himself; that neither our Saviour himself, nor his Apostles, nor any other Person, however extraordinarily endowed

with Gifts from God, could, *as such*, exercise the priestly Office, till they had God's express Commission for that Purpose. Now how does it appear, that the Sacraments are positive Institutions, but that they are consecrated to such Ends and Effects, as of themselves they were no way qualified to perform? Now as it appears from Scripture that Men, *as such*, however endowed, were not qualified to take this Office upon them without God's Appointment; it is demonstratively certain, that Men so called are as much to be esteemed a *positive Institution*, as Elements so chosen can be called a *positive Institution*. All the personal Abilities of Men conferring no more Authority to exercise the Office of a Clergyman, than the natural Qualities of Water to make a Sacrament: So that the one Institution is as truly positive as the other.

Again, The Order of the Clergy is not only a *positive* Order instituted by God, but the different Degrees in this Order are of the same Nature. For we find in Scripture, that some Persons could perform some Offices in the Priesthood, which neither Deacons nor Priests could do, though those Deacons and Priests were inspired Persons, and Workers of Miracles. Thus *Timothy* was sent to ordain Elders, because none below his Order, who was a Bishop, could perform that Office. *Peter* and *John* laid their Hands on baptized Persons, because neither Priests nor Deacons, though Workers of Miracles, could execute that Part of the sacerdotal Office.

How can we imagine that the Apostles and Bishops thus distinguished themselves for nothing? That there was the same Power in *Deacons* and *Priests* to execute those Offices, though they took them to themselves? No my Lord; if three Degrees in the Ministry are instituted in Scripture, we are obliged to think them as truly distinct in their Powers, as we are to think that the Priesthood itself contains Powers that are distinct from those of the Laity. It is no more consistent with Scripture, to say that *Deacons* or *Priests* may ordain, than that the Laity are Priests or Deacons. The same divine Institution making as truly a Difference betwixt the Clergy, as it does betwixt Clergy and Laity.

Now if the Order of the Clergy be a *divine positive* Institution, in which there are different Degrees of Power, where some alone can ordain, &c., whilst others can only perform other Parts of the sacred Office; if this (as it plainly appears) be a Doctrine of Scripture, then it is a Doctrine of Scripture, that there is a Necessity of such a Succession of Men as have Power to ordain. For do the Scriptures make it necessary that *Timothy* (or some Bishop) should be sent to *Ephesus* to ordain Priests, because the

Priests who were there could not ordain? And do not the same Scriptures make it as necessary, that *Timothy's* Successor be the only Ordainer, as well as he was in his Time? Will not Priests in the next Age be as destitute of the Power of ordaining, as when *Timothy* was alive? So that since the Scriptures teach, that *Timothy*, or Persons of his Order, could *alone* ordain in that Age, they as plainly teach, that the Successors of that Order can *alone* ordain in any Age, and consequently the Scriptures plainly teach a Necessity of an *episcopal Succession*.

The Scriptures declare there is a Necessity of a divine Commission to execute the Office of a Priest; they also teach, that this Commission can only be had from particular Persons: Therefore the Scriptures plainly teach, there is a Necessity of a *Succession of such particular Persons*, in order to keep up a truly *commissioned Clergy*.

Suppose when *Timothy* was sent to *Ephesus* to ordain Elders, the Church had told him, We have chosen Elders already, and laid our Hands upon them; that if he alone was allowed to exercise this Power, it might seem as if he alone had it; or that Ministers were the better for being ordained by his particular Hands; and that some Persons might imagine they could have no Clergy, except they were ordained by him, or some of his Order; and that seeing Christ had nowhere made an express Law, that such Persons should be necessary to the Ordination of the Clergy; therefore they rejected this Authority of *Timothy*, lest they should subject themselves to *Niceties* and *Trifles*.

Will your Lordship say, that such a Practice would have been allowed of in the *Ephesians*? Or that Ministers so ordained would have been received as the Ministers of Christ? If not, why must such Practice or such Ministers be allowed of in any After ages? Would not the same Proceeding against any of *Timothy's* Successors have deserved the same Censure, as being equally unlawful? If therefore the Scripture condemns all Ordination but what is episcopal, the Scriptures make a *Succession of episcopal Ordainers* necessary. So that I hope, my Lord, we shall be no more told that this is a Doctrine not mentioned in Scripture, or without any Foundation in it.

The great Objection to this Doctrine is, that this *episcopal Order of the Clergy* is only an apostolical Practice; and seeing all apostolical Practices are not binding to us, surely this need not.

In Answer to this, my Lord, I shall first shew, that though all apostolical Practices are not necessary, yet some may be necessary. *Secondly*, That the divine unalterable Right of Episcopacy is not founded *merely* on apostolical Practice.

To begin with the *first*; The Objection runs thus, *All apostolical Practices are not unalterable or obligatory to us, therefore no apostolical Practices are.* This, my Lord, is just as theological, as if I should say all Scripture-Truths are not Articles of Faith, or Fundamentals of Religion, therefore no Scripture-Truths are: Is not the Argument full as just and solid in one Case as the other? May there not be the same Difference between some Practices of the Apostles and others, that there is betwixt some Scripture Truths and others? Are all Truths equally important that are to be found in the Bible? Why must all Practices be of the same Moment that were apostolical? Now if there be any Way, either divine or human, of knowing an Article of Faith, from the smallest Truth, or most indifferent Matter in Scripture, they will equally assist us in distinguishing what apostolical Practices are of perpetual Obligation, and what are not. But it is a strange Way of Reasoning, that some People are fallen into, who seem to know nothing of *Moderation*, but jump as constantly out of one Extreme into another, as if there was no such Thing as a middle Way, or any such Virtue as *Moderation*. Thus either the Church must have an *absolute uncontrollable Authority*, or none at all; we must either hold *all* apostolical Practices necessary, or *none at all*.

Again, If no apostolical *Practices* can be unalterable, because all are not, then no apostolical *Doctrines* are necessary to be taught in all Ages, because all apostolical *Doctrines* are not; and we are no more obliged to teach the *Death, Satisfaction, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, than we are obliged to forbid the *eating of Blood and Things strangled*. If we must thus blindly follow them in all their Practices, or else be at Liberty to leave them in all, we must for the same Reason implicitly teach all their *Doctrines*, or else have a Power of receding from them all.

For if there be any Thing in the Nature of *Doctrines*, in the *Tenor* of Scripture, or the *Sense* of Antiquity, whereby we can know the Difference of some *Doctrines* from others, that some were *occasional temporary* Determinations, suited to particular States and Conditions in the Church, whilst others were such general *Doctrines* as would concern the Church in all States and Circumstances; if there can be this Difference betwixt apostolical *Doctrines*, there must necessarily be the same Difference betwixt apostolical *Practices*, unless we will say, that their *Practices*, were not suited to their *Doctrines*. For occasional *Doctrines* must produce occasional *Practices*.

Now may we not be obliged by some *Practices* of the Apostles, where the Nature of the Thing, and the Consent of Antiquity, shews it to be equally necessary and important in all Ages and

Conditions of the Church, without being tied down to the strict Observance of every Thing which the Apostles did, though it plainly appears that it was done upon *accidental* and *mutable* Reasons? Can we not be obliged to observe the *Lord's Day* from apostolical *Practice*, without being equally obliged to *lock the Doors* where we are met, because in the Apostle's Time they locked them for Fear of their Enemies.

My Lord, we are to follow the *Practices* of the Apostles, as we ought to follow every Thing else, with *Discretion* and *Judgment*, and not run headlong into every Thing they did, because they were Apostles, or yet think that because we need not practise after them in every Thing, we need do it in nothing. We best imitate them, when we act upon such Reasons as they acted upon, and neither make their *occasional* Practices *perpetual* Laws, nor break through such general Rules as will always have the *same Reason* to be observed.

If it be asked how we can know what Practices must be observed, and what may be laid aside? I answer, as we know *Articles* of Faith from *lesser Truths*; as we know *occasional* Doctrines from *perpetual* Doctrines; that is, from the Nature of the Things, from the *Tenor* of Scripture, and the *Testimony* of Antiquity.

Secondly, It is not true, that the *divine unalterable Right* of Episcopacy is founded *merely* upon apostolical Practice.

We do not say that Episcopacy cannot be changed *merely* because we have apostolical Practice for it, but because such is the Nature of the Christian Priesthood, that it can only be continued in that Method, which God has appointed for its Continuance. Thus Episcopacy is the *only* instituted Method of continuing the Priesthood; therefore Episcopacy is *unchangeable*, not because it is an apostolical Practice, but because the Nature of the Thing requires it: A positive Institution being only to be continued in that Method which God has appointed; so that it is the Nature of the Priesthood, and not the apostolical Practice alone, that makes it necessary to be continued. The apostolical Practice indeed shews, that Episcopacy is the Order that is appointed, but it is the Nature of the Priesthood that assures us that it is *unalterable*: And that because an Office which is of no Significancy, but as it is of divine Appointment, and instituted by God, can no otherwise be continued, but in that Way of Continuance which God has appointed.

The Argument proceeds thus: The Christian Priesthood is a divine positive Institution, which as it could only begin by the *divine Appointment*, so it can only descend to After-ages in such a Method as God has been pleased to appoint.

The Apostles (and your Lordship owns, Christ was in *all* that they did*) instituted Episcopacy *alone*, therefore this Method of Episcopacy is unalterable, not because an *apostolical Practice* cannot be laid aside, but because the Priesthood can only descend to After-ages in such a Method as is of divine Appointment.

So that the Question is not fairly stated, when it is asked whether Episcopacy, being an apostolical Practice, may be laid aside? But it should be asked, whether an instituted particular Method of continuing the Priesthood be not necessary to be continued? Whether an appointed Order of receiving a Commission from God be not necessary to be observed, in order to receive a Commission from him? If the Case was thus stated, as it ought, to be fairly stated, anyone would soon perceive, that we can no more lay aside Episcopacy, and yet continue the Christian Priesthood, than we can alter the Terms of Salvation, and be in Covenant with God.

I come now, my Lord, to the second Objection, *That this uninterrupted Succession is subject to so great Uncertainty, that if it be necessary, we can never say that we are in the Church.*

I know no Reason, my Lord, why it is so uncertain, but because it is founded upon *historical Evidence*. Let it therefore be considered, my Lord, that Christianity itself is a *Matter of Fact* only conveyed to us by *historical Evidence*: That the *Canon of Scripture* is only made known to us by *historical Evidence*; that we have no other Way of knowing what Writings are the Word of God; and yet the Truth of our Faith, and every other Means of Grace depends upon our Knowledge and Belief of the Scriptures. Must we not declare the Necessity of the Succession of Bishops, because it can only be proved by *historical Evidence*, and that for such a long Tract of Time?

Why then do we declare the Belief of the Scriptures necessary to Salvation? Is not this equally putting the Salvation of Men upon a *Matter of Fact*, supported only by *historical Evidence*, and making it depend upon Things done seventeen hundred Years ago? Cannot *historical Evidence* satisfy us in one Point, as well as in the other? Is there any Thing in the Nature of this Succession, that it cannot be as well asserted by *historical Evidence*, as the Truth of the Scriptures? Is there not the same bare Possibility in the Thing itself, that the Scriptures may in some important Points be corrupted, as that this Succession may be broke? But is this any just Reason why we should believe, or fear, that the Scriptures are corrupted, because there is a physical

* *Answer to Dr. Snape.*

Possibility of it, though there is all the Proof that can be required of the contrary? Why then must we set aside the Necessity of this Succession from a *bare Possibility* of Error, though there is all the Proof that can be required, that it never was broken, but strictly kept up?

And though your Lordship has told the World so much of the *Improbability, Nonsense, and Absurdity* of this Succession, yet I promise your Lordship an Answer, whenever you shall think fit to show, *when, or how, or where*, this Succession broke, or *seemed* to break, or was *likely* to break.

And till then, I shall content myself with offering this Reason to your Lordship, why it is *morally impossible* it ever should have broken in all the Term of Years, from the Apostles to the present Times.

The Reason is this; it has been a received Doctrine in every Age of the Church, that no Ordination was valid but that of Bishops: This Doctrine, my Lord, has been a constant Guard upon the *episcopal Succession*; for seeing it was universally believed that Bishops *alone* could ordain, it was *morally impossible* that any Persons could be received as Bishops, who had not been so ordained.

Now is it not *morally impossible* that in our Church anyone should be made a Bishop without *episcopal Ordination*? Is there any Possibility of forging Orders, or stealing a Bishopric by any other Stratagem? No, it is *morally impossible*, because it is an acknowledged Doctrine amongst us, that a Bishop can only be ordained by Bishops. Now as this Doctrine must necessarily prevent anyone being a Bishop without *episcopal Ordination* in our Age, so it must have the same Effect in every other Age as well as ours; and consequently it is as reasonable to believe that the Succession of Bishops was not broke in any Age since the Apostles, as that it was not broke in our own Kingdom within these forty Years. For the same Doctrine which preserves it forty Years, may as well preserve it forty hundred Years, if it was equally believed in all that Space of Time. That this has been the constant Doctrine of the Church, I presume your Lordship will not deny; I have not here entered into the historical Defence of it; this, and indeed every other Institution of the Christian Church, has been lately so well defended from the ecclesiastical Records by a very excellent and judicious Writer.*

We believe the Scriptures are not corrupted, because it was always a received Doctrine in the Church, that they were the *standing Rule of Faith*, and because the Providence of God may

* *Original Draught of the Primitive Church.*

well be supposed to preserve such Books as were to convey to every Age the Means of Salvation. The same Reasons prove the great Improbability that this Succession should ever be broken, both because it was always against a received Doctrine to break it, and because we may justly hope the Providence of God would keep up his own Institution.

I must here observe, that though your Lordship often exposes the Impossibility of this Succession, yet at other times, even you yourself, and your Advocates, assert it. Thus you tell us, *That the Papists have one regular Appointment or uninterrupted Succession of Bishops undefiled with the touch of Lay-hands.**

Is this Succession then such an *improbable impossible* Thing, and yet can your Lordship assure us that it is at *Rome*; that though it be seventeen hundred Years old there, yet that it is a true one? Is it such *Absurdity*, and *Nonsense*, and every Thing that is *ridiculous*, when we lay Claim to it; and yet can your Lordship assure us that it is not only possible to be, but *actually* is in Being, in the Church of *Rome*; What Arguments or Authority can your Lordship produce, to shew that there is a Succession there, that will not equally prove it to be here?

You assert expressly, that there is a *true Succession* there; you deny that we have it here; therefore your Lordship must mean, that we have not episcopal Ordination when we separated from the Church of *Rome*. And here the Controversy must rest betwixt you and your Adversaries, *whether we had episcopal Ordination* then; for as your Lordship has expressly affirmed that there is this uninterrupted Succession in the Church of *Rome*, it is impossible that we should want it, unless we had not episcopal Ordination at the *Reformation*.

Whenever your Lordship shall please to appear in Defence of the *Nag's-Head Story*, or any other Pretence against our episcopal Ordination when we departed from *Rome*, we shall beg Leave to shew ourselves so far true Protestants, as to answer any *Popish* Argument your Lordship can produce.

Here let the *common Sense* of the Laity be once more appealed to: Your Lordship tells them that an *uninterrupted Succession* is improbable, absurd, and *morally* speaking, *impossible*, and, for this Reason, they need not trouble their Heads about it; yet in another Place you positively affirm, that this true *uninterrupted Succession* is actually in the Church of *Rome*: That is, they are to despise this Succession, because it never was, or ever can be; yet are to believe that it *really* is in the *Romish* Church. My Lord, this comes very near *saying* and *unsaying*, to the great

* *Preservative*, p. 80.

Diversion of the Papists. Must they not laugh at your Lordship's *Protestant Zeal*, which might be much better called the *Spirit of Popery*? Must they not be highly pleased with all your Banter and Ridicule upon an *uninterrupted Succession*, when they see you so kindly accept theirs: And think it only *Nonsense* and *Absurdity* when claimed by any other Church? Surely, my Lord, they must conceive great Hopes of your Lordship, since you have here rather chosen to contradict yourself, than not vouch for their Succession: For you have said it is *morally impossible*, yet affirm that it is with them.

The third Objection against this *uninterrupted Succession* is this, that it is a *Popish Doctrine*, and *gives Papists Advantage over us*.

The Objection proceeds thus, We must not assert the Necessity of this Succession, because the *Papists* say it is only to be found with them. I might add, because some mighty zealous *Protestants* say so too.

But if this be good Argumentation, we ought not to tell the *Jews*, or *Deists*, &c., that there is any Necessity of embracing Christianity, because the *Papists* say Christians can only be saved in their Church.

Again, we ought not to insist upon a true Faith, because the *Papists* say that a true Faith is only in their Communion. So that there is just as much Popery in teaching this Doctrine, as in asserting the Necessity of Christianity to a *Jew*, or the Necessity of a right Faith to a *Socinian*, &c.

I shall only trouble your Lordship with a Word or two concerning another Point in my former Letter. I there proved that your Lordship has put the whole of our Title to God's Favour upon Sincerity, *as such*, independent of every Thing else. That no Purity of Worship, no Excellence of Order, no Truth of Faith, no Sort of Sacraments, no Kind of Institutions, or any Church, *as such*, can help us to the least Degree of God's Favour, or give us the smallest Advantage above any other Communion. And consequently, that your Lordship has set sincere *Jews*, *Quakers*, *Socinians*, *Muggletonians*, and all *Heretics* and *Schismatics*, upon the same Bottom, as to the Favour of God, with sincere Christians.

Upon this, my Lord, I am called upon to prove that these several Sorts of People can be *sincere* in your Account of Sincerity. To which, my Lord, I make this Answer, Either there are some sincere Persons among *Jews*, *Quakers*, *Socinians*, or any kind of *Heretics* and *Schismatics*, or there are not; if there are, your Lordship has given them the same Title to God's Favour, that you have to the sincerest Christians; if you will

say there are no sincere Persons amongst any of them, then your Lordship damns them all in the Gross ; for surely Corruptions in Religion, professed with Insincerity, will never save People.

I have nothing to do to prove the Sincerity of any of them ; if they are sincere, what I have said is true ; if you will not allow them to be sincere, you condemn them all at once.

Again, I humbly supposed a Man might be sincere in his *religious Opinions*, though it might be owing to *some ill Habits*, or *something criminal* in himself, that he was fallen into such or such a Way of thinking. But it seems this is all *Contradiction* ; and no Man can be sincere, who has *any Faults*, or whose *Faults* have any *Influence* upon his Way of thinking.

Your Lordship tells all the *Dissenters*, that they may be easy if they are sincere ; and that it is the only Ground for Peace and Satisfaction. But pray, my Lord, if none are to be esteemed *sincere*, but those who have no Faults, or whose Faults have no Influence upon their Persuasions, who can be assured that he is *sincere*, but he that has the least Pretence to it, the *proud Pharisee* ? If your Lordship, or your Advocates, were desired to prove your Sincerity, either before God or Man, it must be for these Reasons, because you have no ill Passions or Habits, no faulty Prejudices, no past or present Vices, that can have any Effect upon your Minds. My Lord, as this is the only Proof that any of you could give of your own Sincerity, in this Meaning of it, so the very pretence to it, would prove the Want of it.



A
R E P L Y
T O T H E
Bishop of *BANGOR's*
A N S W E R
T O T H E
R E P R E S E N T A T I O N
O F T H E
C O M M I T T E E
O F
C O N V O C A T I O N.
Humbly addressed to his Lordship.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

L O N D O N :

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The
Third Letter to
the Bishop of *Bangor*.

My Lord,

I BEG leave to trouble your Lordship and the World once more with my Remarks upon the Doctrines you have lately delivered. Your *Sermon* and *Preservative* I have already considered in the most impartial manner I could; and shall now examine your Answer to the *Representation* of the Learned *Committee*, both as it is an Answer to that, and as it contains Opinions contrary to the fundamental Articles of Christianity.

I have less need of excusing to your Lordship this third Address, since you can so easily acquit yourself from the Trouble of making any Reply to whatever comes from me. It seems I have too small a Reputation to deserve your Notice; but if the *Dean of Chichester* would but declare for the Doctrines delivered in my Letters, and put but a little of his Reputation upon the issue, then, you say, you would submit to the Employment of an Answer.*

My Lord, I readily confess that I have neither *Reputation* nor *Learning*, nor any *Title* to recommend me to your Lordship's Notice; but I must own, that I thought the very want of these would, in your Opinion, qualify me to make better Enquiries into Religious Truths, and raise your Esteem of me as a Correspondent in these Matters. For you expressly declare, that if *Learning* or *Literature* is to be interested in this Debate, then the most learned Man has certainly a Title to be the *Universal Judge*.† So that no Man ought to shew any Regard to *Learning*, as a *Qualification* in religious Disputes, unless he will own that the most learned Man has a Title to be a Pope, or as you express it, the *Universal Judge*. Yet your Lordship, in spite of this Protestant Doctrine so lately delivered, has despised and

* *Ans. to Condit. of our Saviour vindicated*, p. 112.

† *Ans. to Repr.*, p. 99.

overlooked all my Opinions in Religion merely for my want of *Character* and *Learning*, and has promised to undertake the *needless* Task of examining those Opinions with another Gentleman, merely upon account of his *Character* and *Reputation*. So that though it is perfect Popery, and making the most learned Man the universal Judge, to allow anything to Learning; yet your Lordship is so *true a Protestant*, and pays so great a Regard to Learning, that you will not so much as examine a Doctrine with a Person of no Character for Learning.

Again you say; *Nothing has been seen to administer so many Doubts and Differences (in Religion) as Learning,** and that *none are seen to be less secure from Error than learned Men.*

Now is it not strange, my Lord, that after this noble Declaration against *Learning*, as the greatest Cause of Doubts and Differences, this extraordinary Preference given to *Ignorance*, as a more likely Guide to Truth, you should despise anyone as below your Notice in religious Disputes, because he wants *that Learning* which so blinds the Understanding? Can you ascribe thus much Honour to Learning, which in your Opinion does so much Dishonour to Religion? Will you *interest* those Qualities in this Debate, which if they are allowed to have any *Interest* in it, will make the Man of the greatest Abilities the *Universal Judge.*

Again, As a farther Reason why you have taken no notice of me, you say, as *considerable a Writer as Mr. Law is, I hope the Committee, as a Body, are much more considerable in the Dean's Eyes; I am sure, they are in mine: And the Dean himself, I have thought a much more considerable writer than Mr. Law, and so have spent all my time upon Him and the Committee.*

Now, my Lord, though I readily acknowledge this to be exceeding true, and have so far at least a just Opinion of myself, as to be afraid to be compared to much less Persons than the Dean, or any of the learned Committee, yet, my Lord, this Reason, which, if urged by anyone else, might pass for a good one, cannot be urged by you, without contradicting a principal Doctrine maintained in your *Answer to the Representation.* For there you bid us *look into the Popish Countries; and see whether one illiterate honest Man be not as capable of judging for himself in Religion, as all their learned Men united; even supposing them met together in a General Council, with all possible Marks of Solemnity and Grandeur.†*

Here we see a Person merely for his want of *Literature* made as good a Judge in Religion, as a *General Council* of the most

* *Ans. to Repr.*, p. 98.

† *Ibid.*, p. 98.

learned Men, acting with the utmost Solemnity. We see a Council in its utmost Perfection contemptuously compared to, and even made less considerable than a private illiterate Person. And this we may fairly suppose was intended to shew your Contempt of the *English Convocation*. But a few Weeks after, when you had another Design in your Head, you tell us to this purpose, that you disregarded the Writings of a single Person of no Figure in the learned World, to pay your respect to the Committee as a *Body, which, as such, is much more considerable in your Eyes*. So that here an *illiterate* Person is made a great Judge in Religion in regard to a Body of learned Men, because he is illiterate; and here that same Person is made of no Consideration in Points of Religion in regard to a *Body* of learned Men, merely because he is *private and illiterate*.

It will be of no Advantage to your Lordship, to say that you have only replied to the *Dean*, in relation to me; in the *same* Words that he used to you, in relation to Mr. *Sykes*.

For, my Lord, that Reply might be proper enough from the Dean, if he judged right of Mr. *Sykes's* Performance; it being very reasonable to overlook an Adversary that has neither Truth, Abilities, or Reputation to support his Cause.

But though this might be right in the Dean, who pays a true Regard to the Authority and Learning of great Men, yet it cannot be defended by your Lordship. For though my *Learning* or *Reputation* were ever so low, they are so far from unqualifying me for Religious Enquiries, that if you would sincerely stand to what you have said, you ought, for the want of these very Accomplishments, to esteem me the more, and even choose me out as a Correspondent in this Debate.

But however, without any farther Regard to the Opinion your Lordship has either of me or my Abilities, I shall proceed to the most impartial Examination of your Book that I possibly can.

Of the Nature of the Church.

TO begin with your Lordship's Description of a Church; *The number of Men, whether small or great, whether dispersed or united, who truly and sincerely are Subjects to Christ alone in Matters of Salvation.**

The learned Committee calls this your Lordship's Description of a Church.

* *Serm.*, p. 17.

Your Lordship answers; *I wonder to hear this called my Description of A Church; whereas I pretend, in those Words to describe no other, but The Universal Invisible Church. It is a Description, not of A Church, in our modern way of speaking; but of The Church, the Invisible Church of Christ.**

May not we also wonder, my Lord, that you should so describe *The Church*, that it will not bear being called *A Church*? If I should say it is a Description of no Church, I have your Lordship's Confession, that it is not *A Church*; so that it is something betwixt *a Church* and no Church, that is, it is *The Church*.

Suppose, my Lord, somebody or other should have a mind to be of your Church, if he betakes himself to *A Church*, he is wrong; you do not mean *A Church*, but *The Church*. Your Lordship owns that this is not a Description of a Church in the modern way of speaking; I humbly presume to call upon your Lordship to shew that it is a Description according to the ancient way of speaking. To call the Number of Believers the Invisible Church, is a way of speaking, no more to be found in the Scriptures, than the Company of *Præ-Adamites*.

There is, no doubt of it, an Invisible Church, *i.e.*, a Number of Beings that are in Covenant with God, who are not to be seen by human Eyes; and we may be said to be Members of this *Invisible Church*, as we are entitled to the same Hopes and Expectations. But to call the Number of Men and Women who believe in Christ and observe his Institutions, whether dispersed or united in this visible World, to call these *The Invisible Church*, is as false and groundless, as to call them the Order of *Angels*, or the Church of *Seraphims*. The Profession of Christians is as visible as any other Profession, and as much declared by visible external Acts. And it is as proper to call a Number of Men practising *Law* or *Physic*, an Invisible Society of *Lawyers* and *Physicians*, as to call the Church on Earth the *Invisible Church*. For all those Acts and Offices which prove People to be Christians, or the Church of Christ, are as visible and notorious, as those which prove them to be of any particular secular Employment. Would it be proper to call the Number of *Infidels* and *Idolaters* the Invisible Church of the Devil? Are they not visibly under the Dominion of the Powers of Darkness? Are they not visibly out of Christ's Church? Must it not therefore be as visible who is in this Church, as who is not in it?

If anyone should tell us that we are to believe *Invisible* Scriptures, and observe *Invisible* Sacraments, he would have just as much Reason and Scripture of his side, as your Lordship has

* *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 70.

for this Doctrine. And it would be of the same Service to the World to talk of these *Invisibilities*, if the *Canon* of Scripture was in dispute, as to describe this *Invisible Church*, when the Case is, with what *Visible Church* we ought to unite.

Our Saviour himself tells us, that *the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a Net that was cast into the Sea, and gathered of every kind; which, when it was full, they drew to shore and sat down, and gathered the good into Vessels, but cast the bad away. And then says, so shall it be at the end of the World.**

This, my Lord, is a Description of the State of Christ's Church given us by himself. Is there anything in this Description that should lead us to take it for an *Invisible Kingdom*, that consists of one particular sort of People *invisibly* united to Christ? Nay, is it not the whole Intent of this Similitude to teach us the contrary, that his Kingdom is to consist of a Mixture of good and bad Subjects till the End of the World? The Kingdom of Christ is said here to gather its Members, as a Net gathers *all kinds* of Fish; it is chiefly compared to it in this respect, because it gathers of *all kinds*; which I suppose is a sufficient Declaration, that this Kingdom consists of Subjects good and bad, as that the Net that gathers of every kind of Fish, takes good and bad Fish. Let us suppose that the Church of Christ was this *Invisible Number* of People united to Christ by such internal invisible Graces; is it possible that a Kingdom consisting of this one particular sort of People *invisibly good*, should be like a Net that gathers of *every kind* of Fish? If it was to be compared to a Net, it ought to be compared to such a Net, as gathers only of one kind, *viz.* good Fish and then it might represent to us a Church that has but one sort of Members.

But since Christ who certainly understood the Nature of his own Kingdom, has declared that it is like a Net that gathers of *every kind of Fish*; it is as absurd to say, that it consists only of *one kind* of Persons (*viz.*, the invisibly good) as to say, that the Net which gathers of *every kind*, has only of *one kind* in it. Farther; *when it was full they drew it to shore, and gathered the good into Vessels, but cast the bad away; so shall it be at the end of the World.* Now as it was the bad as well the good Fish which filled the *Net*, and the Church is compared to the *Net* in this respect; so it is evident that bad Men as well as good are Subjects of this Kingdom. And I presume they are Members of that Kingdom which they fill up, as surely as the Fish must be in the *Net* before they can fill it. All these Circumstances plainly declare that the Church or Kingdom of Christ shall

* *Matth.* xiii. 47.

consist of a Mixture of good and bad People to the End of the World.

Again ; Christ declares that the Kingdom of Heaven is like to a certain King which made a marriage for his Son, and sent his Servants out into the High-ways, who gathered together all as many as they found, both good and bad, and the Wedding was filled with Guests.*

Nothing can be more evident than that the chief Intent of this Parable is to shew that the Church of Christ is to be a Mixture of good and bad People to the end of the World. It is like a *Feast* where good and bad Guests are entertained ; but can it be like such a *Feast* if only the *invisibly* virtuous are Members of it? If the Subjects of this Kingdom are of one *invisible kind*, how can they bear any Resemblance to a *Feast* made up of *all kinds* of Guests? Nay, what could be thought of, more unlike to this Kingdom, if it was such a Kingdom as you have represented it?

How could our blessed Saviour have more directly guarded against such a Description of his Kingdom as your Lordship has given us, than he has done in these Parables? He compares it to a Quantity of good and bad Fish in a *Net*, to a Number of good and bad Guests at a *Feast*. Are there any Words that could more fully declare his Meaning to be, that his Kingdom consisted of good and bad Subjects? Could anyone more directly contradict this Account of our Saviour, than by saying that his Kingdom is an invisible Kingdom consisting of a particular sort of People invisibly virtuous?

Your Lordship professes a mighty Regard for the Scriptures, and a great Dislike to all Doctrines that are not delivered there; pray, my Lord, produce but so much as *one Text* of Scripture; tell us the *Apostle* or *Evangelist* that ever declared the *Number of Believers whether dispersed or united on Earth, to be the Universal Invisible Church*; shew us any one Passage in Scripture which teaches us, that none are of the Church of Christ, but those who have such *Invisible Virtues*, and cannot be known to be so.

There is as much Authority from Scripture to prove that the Church is a Kingdom without any Subjects, as that they are only of it, who have such Invisible Graces. And it is as easy to prove from those sacred Writings, that neither Christ or his Apostles were ever *Visible* on Earth, as that the Number of People on Earth who believe in Christ constitute the *Invisible Church*.

* *Matth.* xxii. 2.

In the Parables above mentioned it is out of all doubt that our Saviour describes his *Universal Kingdom or Church*: It is also certain that the *Universal Invisible Church*, which you call Christ's Church, cannot be this *Universal Church* that is made up of a Mixture of good and bad Members. I therefore beg of your Lordship to let us know where Christ has taught us, that he has two *Universal Churches* on Earth; for if you cannot shew that he has declared that he has these two *Universal Churches*, you must allow that this which you have described, is a Church of your own setting up, not only without any Authority, but even against the express Word of Scripture.

Your Lordship says that the Doctrines which the Learned Committee have condemned, if they be of that evil Tendency, must be so *either with Regard to the Universal Invisible Church, made up of all those who sincerely in their Hearts believe in Christ; or with respect to the Universal Visible Church made up of all, who in all Countries (whether sincerely or insincerely) openly profess to believe in Christ; or with respect to some particular Visible Church.**

It may be justly expected, my Lord, that you should shew us some Grounds for this Distinction. Where does our blessed Lord give us so much as the least Hint that he has founded two *Universal Churches* on Earth? Did he describe his Church by halves when he likened it to a *Net* full of all kinds of Fish? Has he any where let us know that he has another *Universal Kingdom* on Earth besides this, which in the Variety of its Member is like a *Net* full of all sorts of good and bad Fish.

Let your Lordship, if you can, shew any Subtilties in *Popery* which are more of human Invention, or more contrary to Scripture than this refined Distinction. The *Opus Operatum* in the Sacraments, the *temporal* Satisfactions for Sins, Works of *Supererogation*, or any of the nicest Arts of *Jesuitism*, are not less founded in Scripture than this nice Distinction, of injuring either the *Universal Invisible*, or the *Universal Visible*, or a *particular Visible Church*. For, my Lord, the Church of Christ is as truly one and the same Church, as the Sacrament of Baptism is one and the same Baptism; and he no more instituted several sorts of Churches, than he instituted several kinds of Baptism.

Pray, my Lord, therefore be no longer angry at *Human Arts* in Religion; why may not *Popery* have its Peculiarities in Doctrine as well as your Lordship; the Church of *Rome*, with all its Additions and Corruptions, and pompous Ornaments, is as much like the Church as it was in the *Apostles'* Times, as your

* *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 5.

Invisible Church is like that which Christ declared to be his Church. When they set out the Church as *Infallible*, they do but *reason* like your Lordship, when you describe it as *Invisible*.

That there are good and bad Church-men, is past all doubt; but that People are of the Church by means of *Invisible Virtues*, is as false, as that only good Men came to the Feast in the Gospel. We are assured that *many are called, but few are chosen*; *i.e.*, that many shall be made Members of Christ's Church, but few shall be saved; and who these few are that truly work out their Salvation, may be *invisible* to us; but those many that were called, that is, who were in the Church, though they did not live up to all the Intents of Church-Communion, yet were as truly of the Church, as the bad Fish were really in the Net.

But to proceed; I shall Illustrate this Reply of your Lordship concerning an *Universal Visible, and Universal Invisible, and particular Visible Church*, with the following Instances.

Let us suppose any one was charged with writing against the *Sacraments*; if he should with your Lordship reply, that this Charge against him must either relate to the *Universal Visible Sacraments*, or *Universal Invisible Sacraments*, or *particular Visible Sacraments*, he would have just as much *Scripture* or *Reason* to support that Distinction, as your Lordship has for dividing the Church into *Universal Visible, and Universal Invisible, and particular Visible*. For the Profession of Christianity, or Church-Membership, is as external and visible a thing, as the Sacraments are external visible Institutions. So that it is as contrary to Scripture, and as mere an human Invention to make Pretence of an *Universal Invisible Church*, when the Dispute is concerning Christ's Church on Earth, as it is to have recourse to *Invisible Sacraments*, if the Question was concerning *Christ's Sacraments*.

They are both equally external and visible; and as the Sacraments may be received without any spiritual Advantage, so Persons may be of the Church and yet not be saved. And as the Sacraments are not less Sacraments, though they may not convey the designed Benefits to the Receiver; so neither are such a Number of People not of the Church, though they do not obtain that Salvation which is the intended Consequence of Church-Communion.

Your Lordship cannot give any one Reason for introducing this Distinction with Regard to the Church, which will not equally hold for the same Distinction in Regard to the Sacraments; and there is exactly the same *Quakery* and *Fanaticism* in one Doctrine as the other.

For as they are the *Sacraments* which chiefly constitute the

Church, so no *Distinctions* or *Divisions* can with any tolerable Propriety be applied to the Church, but such as may be also applied to the *Sacraments*, that constitute the *Church*. And therefore the Terms *Universal* and *Particular*, *Visible* and *Invisible*, have no more to do with Christ's Church which he has instituted in *this World*, than with the two Sacraments which he also instituted, *Baptism*, and the *Supper* of the Lord.

Again, If anyone was accused of writing against the *Christian Revelation*, he might answer with your Lordship, if this Accusation be true, it must be so either with regard to God's *Universal Visible Revelation* in all the *Canonical Books*, or with regard to his *Universal Invisible Revelation* whereby he speaks inwardly to all *sincere People*, or with respect to some *particular Part* of his *visible Revelation*. Let all the World judge, whether if a Person so accused should make this Reply, it would not plainly appear, either that he was a downright *Enthusiast*, or a crafty Dealer in *Cant* and *artificial Words*. I am sure your Lordship cannot shew that you have more Authority to divide the Church on Earth into *Universal Visible*, and *Universal Invisible*, and *particular Visible*, than he had to divide the *Christian Revelation* into *Visible* and *Invisible*. Neither was it less to the purpose for such a one to talk of *Invisible Scriptures*, if he was accused of denying the *Gospel* of St. *John*, than it is for your Lordship under your present Accusation to have recourse to the *Invisible Church*; but your Lordship will find no Advantage in this Retreat.

Again; Suppose a Person was charged with writing *Treason* against the Government, and in his Defence should thus distinguish; *The Treason* that I am charged with against the Government, must relate either to *Universal Government* in this World, or to *Universal Government* in the *other World*, or to some *particular Government* in this World.

It would be as *ingenuous*, as *sincere*, and as *pertinent* for a Person thus accused to talk of Governments that had no relation to the Case, but in his own Imagination, as for your Lordship in the present Dispute to talk of *Universal Visible*, and *Universal Invisible*, and *particular Visible Churches*. For besides this, that there is no Foundation for such a Distinction, yet if there was such an Invisible Church, how is it possible your Lordship should hurt it? How is it possible the *Learned Committee* should mean to charge you with injuring it? They might as well think your Lordship capable of forming a Design to arrest a Party of *Spirits*, as to attack an Invisible Church that neither you nor they know anything of, or where to find.

Your Lordship saith, *That if you have unjustly laid anything*

down in this Description of the Invisible Church, to the Prejudice or Injury of any Particular Visible Church, you acknowledge that it is your part to answer for it.*

I believe it appears already that your Lordship has a great deal to answer for upon this Head ; and I shall now farther shew, that you have set up this *Invisible Church* in Opposition to all other Churches *whatever*. This will appear from the following Passage in your Sermon ; *This Inquiry will bring us back to the first, which is the only true Account of the Church of Christ or Kingdom of Christ in the Mouth of a Christian, viz. the Number of Men whether small or great, † &c.*

We have your Lordship's Confession that you only here pretend to describe the *Universal Invisible Church* of Christ ; you also here plainly declare, that *it is the only true Account of Christ's Church or Kingdom in the Mouth of a Christian.*

Is not this, my Lord, expressly declaring, that *any other Account of Christ's Church* is not a true one ; for you say this is the *only true one* ? Is it not directly affirming that any other Description of Christ's Church cannot become the Mouth of a Christian ; for you say that this is the *only true one in the Mouth of a Christian* ? So that if we call the *Universal Visible Church*, the *Church of Christ*, we give a false Account of Christ's Church, and such a one as is unfit for the Mouth of a Christian.

Could your Lordship have thought of anything more shocking, than to say that the Description of your *Invisible Church is the only true Account of Christ's Church*, and fit for the Mouth of a Christian, when our Saviour has given us a quite contrary Account of it from his own Mouth ? He compares it to a *Net* full of good and bad Fish, to a *Feast* full of good and bad Guests ; this surely, my Lord, is not an Account of your *Invisible Church*, where there are only *Invisible Members*. Your Lordship cannot say that Christ has here described the *Invisible Church* ; you directly say that your Description of the *Invisible Church*, is the *only true Account of Christ's Church in the Mouth of a Christian* ; and consequently this Account which our Saviour himself has given of his Church, stands condemned by your Lordship as a false Account of Christ's Church unfit for the Mouth of a Christian. I appeal to the common Sense of every Reader, whether I have laid anything to your Charge, but what your own express Words amount to. The short is this ; If Christ has in these Parables described the *Universal Church* as *Visible*, then it is plain that this Account of Christ's Church is a false one in the Mouth of a Christian ; for you say your

* *Answ. to Rep.*, p. 70.

† P. 16.

Account of the Invisible Church *is the only true Account of Christ's Church in the Mouth of a Christian*; so that nothing can secure this Account which our Saviour has given of his Church from your Lordship's Censure, but shewing that it is the very *same Account of the Invisible Church* that you have given; which I believe is more than your Lordship will undertake to prove; it being as hard to prove that a Net full of good and bad Fish, or a Feast full of good and bad Guests, should represent an Invisible Kingdom of only one sort of Subjects, as that the Net and Feast, though both *full*, should represent a Kingdom that had not *one* Subject in it.

If a *Fanatic* should describe the Christian Sacraments, as *Spiritual and Invisible* Sacraments, and then affirm that that was the *only true Account of Christian Sacraments in the Mouth of a Christian*, could we charge him with less than writing against *all* Sacraments but *Invisible* Sacraments? It is just thus far that your Lordship has proceeded against the *External Visible* Church; you have declared the Invisible one to be the *only true Church*, fit to be spoken of by a Christian, which I think is laying down a Position highly injurious to the Visible Church, since it is here condemned as false in the Mouth of a Christian.

From all this it appears, that the *Learned Committee* have justly disliked your Lordship's Description of the Church of Christ.

First; As you describe it as an Invisible Church, directly contrary to the Scripture Representations of it, as given by our Saviour himself.

Secondly; As it is in Disparagement of the *Article* of our Church, which gives quite another Description of the Church.

That the Church described in the *Article* falls under your Lordship's Censure, is very plain. For you declare that your Description of the Invisible, is the *only true Account of Christ's Church*; therefore the Description in the *Article* cannot be a true one, because it is different from yours, which is the *only true one*.

Secondly; You declare that you consider the Church under this Description, *viz.* as *Invisible*, because every other Notion of it, is made up of inconsistent Images:* Therefore the Account of the Church in the *Article* is thus inconsistent.

Now what does your Lordship answer here? Only this, *that the Article speaks of the Visible Church, and you speak of the Invisible one.*†

This Answer, my Lord, proves the Charge upon you to be

* *Serm.*, p. 10.

† *Ans. to Repr.*, p. 78.

just. For since you own that you describe another Church than that which is described in the *Article*, and expressly affirm that your Account of this other Church is the only true Account of *Christ's Church in the Mouth of a Christian*; you plainly declare that the other Church is a false one in the Mouth of a Christian. Yet your Lordship rests satisfied with this Reply, as if you had cleared yourself by it. Whereas this is the very Charge itself, That you have described the Church otherwise than it is in the *Article*, and have called this *different* and *new* Account of it, the *only true Account* of it; and if it be the only true one, then that which is given in the *Article* must be a false one.

Your Lordship goes on, *The Article declares what it is, that makes every such Congregation, the Visible Church of Christ; and I describe what it is that makes every particular Man, a Member of Christ's Universal Invisible Church. The Article describes those outward Acts, which are necessary to make a Visible Church; and I describe that inward Sincerity, and Regard to Christ himself, which make Men Members of the Invisible Church of Christ. And where is the Contradiction contained in all this?**

Suppose, my Lord, anyone should affirm that there is a *Sincere, Invisible Bishop of Bangor*, who is the *only true Bishop of Bangor in the Mouth of a Christian*. Would your Lordship think here was no Reflection intended upon yourself? Would you think this Account no *Contradiction* to your *Right* as Bishop of *Bangor*? Does your Lordship believe such an Assertion could come from anyone that owned your Right to your *Bishopric*, and was a Friend to you in it? Would you imagine that nothing was meant against you, because the other Bishop was said to be *Invisible*? Your Lordship cannot but know, that though he is said to be *Invisible*, yet if he is the *only true Bishop of Bangor in the Mouth of a Christian*, then any other Bishop of *Bangor*, whether *Visible* or *Invisible*, must be a *false one in the Mouth of a Christian*.

Thus it is your Lordship has dealt with the *Visible Church*; you have set another up as the *only true Church*, and yet think all is well: that there is no *Contradiction*, because you call this other an *Invisible Church*, whereas if it be the only true Church, it contradicts every other Church in the highest Sense. And though it does not contradict it as a *Visible Church*, yet it does as a *True Church*, which is of more Consequence.

Your Lordship here puts a Question in favour of the *Visible Church*. *Can it be supposed by this learned Body, that a Man's*

* *Ans. to Repr.*, p. 79.

*being of the Invisible Church of Christ, is inconsistent with his joining himself with any Visible Church?**

No, my Lord, it cannot be supposed. It cannot be supposed by any Body that a Man's being of the *Invisible Church*, is inconsistent with his joining himself to the *Royal Society*, or *College of Physicians*. But pray, my Lord, is this all that your *Invisible Church* will allow of? Dare your Lordship proceed no farther, than only to grant that it is *no Inconsistency, no Contradiction* for a Member of your *Invisible Church* to join with any *Visible Church*? If you would *sincerely* shew that you have said nothing to the Prejudice of the *Visible Church*, you ought to declare that the Members of your *Invisible Church*, may not only *consistently* join with that which is *Visible*, but that it is their *Duty*, and that they are *obliged* to join with it in order to be of yours that is *Invisible*. For if you have set up an *Invisible Church*, which will excuse its Members from being of any that is *Visible*, then you have plainly destroyed it, by making it useless. And it is but a poor Apology for it to say, there is no *Inconsistency* in joining with it, after you have made it needless and unnecessary to join with it. And it will be pretty difficult to give a *consistent Reason*, why any Person should join himself to a needless Church.

Your Lordship has here made great Discoveries of the Nature of your *Invisible Church*, which appears to have nothing *visible* or *external* in it.

For first, you declare that the Article describes one Church, and you another. But how does this appear? How does your Lordship prove this? 1st. *Because the Article declares what it is that makes every such Congregation the Visible Church.*† Now, my Lord, if this shews that the Article does not describe your Church, then it is plain that the Article here describes *something* that does not belong to your Church; for if it *equally* belonged to your Church, it could be no *Proof* that it did not describe your Church. But you expressly say that it describes a different Church from yours; therefore it must describe *something* that does not belong to yours.

Now if that which makes any Congregation the *Visible Church*, be not necessary to make Persons Members of your Church, it follows that they may be Members of yours, without being of any *Visible Church*.

Again; Another Reason why the Article does not describe your *Invisible Church* is this; Because it describes *those outward Acts, which are necessary to make a Visible Church*. These out-

* *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 79.

† *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 70.

ward Acts are, the *Preaching the pure Word of God, and administering the Sacraments*. Now, my Lord, seeing these *outward Acts* shew that the Church here described is not your *Invisible Church*, does not this evidently declare that such outward Acts are not necessary to your Church? For if they did equally belong to both Churches, and were alike necessary to them, how could they more describe one than another? But you say, it is the mentioning of these *outward Acts*, that shews that your *Invisible Church* is not described; therefore it is plain, that you do not include these *outward Acts* as essential to your Invisible Church, and consequently it is a Church to which neither *public Worship*, nor *visible Sacraments are necessary*. For if these outward Acts are necessary to your *Invisible Church*, why does not your Lordship mention them as such? You own you describe what it is that makes every particular Man a Member of the *Invisible Church*; yet you not only take no notice of these *outward Acts*, but say that the Article describes not your Church, because it mentions *these outward Acts*, which is a *Demonstration*, that these *outward Acts do not belong to your Church*.

Farther; When the *Learned Committee* has charged your Lordship with the Omission of *preaching the Word and administering of the Sacraments*, you answer, *they might have added, He omits likewise the very public Profession of Christianity. And is not the Reason plain? because I was not speaking of the Visible Church; to which alone, as such, visible outward Signs, and verbal Professions belong: but of the Universal Invisible Church.**

My Lord, the Reason is very plain, and it is as plain that is not a good Reason. For if the *preaching* of the Word, the *administering* of the Sacraments, and the public Profession of Christianity, be necessary to make anyone a Member of your *Invisible Church*, then there was as good Reason to mention them in your Description, as if you had been describing the Visible Church.

If they are not necessary, then you have set up a Church *exclusive* of the Visible Church. The Case stands thus; If these outward Acts be as necessary to make Persons be of the *Invisible* as of the *Visible Church*, then they ought to come equally into the Description of both Churches, being equally necessary to both: If you say they are not equally necessary, then you must allow that there is no Necessity that the Members of your Church should be in *any external* Communion.

It is therefore no Apology, to say that you describe the

* *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 80.

Invisible Church, unless you will say that a Man may be of it, without *any outward Acts*, or *Communion* with any *Visible Church*. If a Person may be of this *Invisible Church* without having anything to do with *Visible Sacraments*, or *Worship* in a *Visible Communion*, then you have an *Excuse*, why you did not mention these *outward Professions* in your *Description* of the *Church*; but if he cannot be of this *Invisible Communion* without observing these *outward Ordinances*, then it was as necessary to mention these *outward Ordinances* in your *Account* of this *Church*, as if you had been describing a *Church*, which consisted of nothing else but *outward Ordinances*.

So that the short of the *Case* is this; If the *Observation* of external *Ordinances* be not necessary to make Men *Members* of your *Invisible Church*, then indeed there is a plain *Reason* why your *Lordship* should omit them; and it is also plain, that this *Doctrine* sets aside the *Gospel*, if this *Invisible Church*, the *only true Church in the Mouth of a Christian*, be excused from *Gospel Ordinances*. But if these external *Ordinances* be necessary to constitute the *Invisible Church*, then there was as plain a *Reason* to mention them, in the *Description* of your *Church*, as if you had been describing the *Visible Church*.

So that if your *Lordship* will give a good plain *Reason* why you have omitted these *outward Acts*, it must be because they do not belong to it; for otherwise the calling it *Invisible* is no *Excuse*, unless it has no occasion for such *outward Performances*.

And indeed this has appeared to be your *Doctrine* in almost every *Page*, that you set up this *Invisible Church* in *Opposition* to *Outward and Visible Ordinances*. For you all along set out the *Opposition* or *Difference* betwixt the *Visible* and *Invisible Church* in respect to external *Ordinances*: Thus the one is *Visible*, because to it alone belong *external Signs*, or *verbal Professions*.* The other is *Invisible* for the *want* of these. Yet this *Invisible Church* thus destitute, and even necessarily destitute of external *Ordinances*, is by you called, the *only true Church in the Mouth of a Christian*.

One may, I acknowledge, easily conceive in one's *Mind* a *Number* of *People*, whose *Internal* and *Invisible Graces* may entitle them to the *Favour* of *God*; and these may be called an *Invisible Number*, or *Congregation*, or *Church*, because it is *Invisible* to us where it is, or how great it is. But then, my *Lord*, it is a great *Mistake* if this *Invisible Church* is opposed to, or distinguished from the *Visible Church* in respect of *external*

* *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 81.

Ordinances. For in these things they are both *equally* obliged to be Visible. And the Invisible Church is not so called, in *Contradistinction* to those who attend *Visible* Communions, and observe external Ordinances, but in *Contradistinction* to those who are *invisibly bad*, and are not what their external Profession promises. This is the only *Number* of People or *Church*, which the *Invisible* Church is opposed to. For as the Invisible Church intends a *Number* so called, because of their *Invisible* Graces; so this *Invisibly* good Church can be *truly* opposed only to the *Invisibly* bad Church, or such as are not such Persons *inwardly*, as they profess to be *outwardly*.

But, contrary to this, your Lordship has all along considered and described this *Invisible* Church in Opposition to the *Visible*, and made those outward Acts which are *necessary* to the Visible Church, so many *Marks* to distinguish it from that which is Invisible. Thus you say, *that you were not speaking of the Visible Church, to which alone, as such, visible outward Signs, or verbal Professions belong: but of the Universal Invisible Church.**

Here you plainly make *external Signs*, and *outward Professions*, distinguish the Visible from the Invisible Church; whereas it is not *Invisible* in this respect, as being *without* these *external* Professions, or in *Contradistinction* to a *Visible* Church; but it is only Invisible in those Graces, which human Eyes cannot perceive. Thus they are said to be the Invisible Church, because they are a *Number* of Men, who are such *inwardly*, as they profess to be *outwardly*. But this shews, that they cannot be so called in *Contradistinction* to *outward* Professions, since they must have an *outward* Profession themselves before they can be *inwardly sincere* in it; and consequently they are not opposed to, or distinguished from a *Number* of *outward Professors*, for this they are obliged to be themselves, but from a *Number* of outward Professors, who are *not sincere* in what they *outwardly* profess.

If I should describe *charitable* Men to be an *Invisible Church* of Persons *sincerely* well affected to Mankind, and this in *Contradistinction* to others who are *externally* charitable, and perform *outward* Acts of Love; or if I should describe *chaste* Men to be an *Invisible Church* of Persons *inwardly* chaste and pure, and this in *Contradistinction* to others *externally* chaste and *visibly* pure as to *outward Acts*; I should just have the same Authority either from Reason or Scripture to set up these *Invisible Churches* of *charitable* and *chaste* Men, in Opposition to persons *outwardly* charitable and chaste, as your Lordship has to set up this

* *Answ. to Rpr.*, p. 81.

invisible sincere Church, in *Contradistinction* to the visible external Church. For, first, this *Sincerity* no more makes a *Church*, than *Charity* and *Chastity* make a Church, or than *Honesty* makes a Man a *Member* of a Corporation, or an *Officer* in the Army; these, being private personal Virtues, do not constitute a *Church* or *Society*, but concern Men, as Men, in every Estate of Life.

Secondly, *Outward* Ordinances and *Visible* Professions, are as necessary to make Men true Christians, as *outward* Acts of Love and external Purity are necessary to make Men *charitable* or *chaste*. For Christianity as truly implies *external Acts* and *Professions*, as Chastity implies *outward* Purity.

Now, my Lord, suppose the Question was, whether *Adultery* or *Fornication* or any other Impurity was lawful, and that the World was divided upon this Controversy; Would he not be an excellent Preacher of Chastity, that should never tell us whether any or all of these were unlawful, but should pretend to decide the Controversy, by telling the World, that *chaste* Men, are an *Invisible* Church of Persons *inwardly* pure, and this in *Contradistinction* to Persons *externally* pure? Suppose he should tell them, that their Title to Chastity did not depend upon their being or not being of the Number of any *outwardly* pure or impure Persons, but upon their *inward* Purity; What Apology could even Charity itself make for such a Teacher?

The Controversy on foot is this; Whether external Communion with any sort of Fanatics be lawful? Whether it be as safe to be in one external visible Communion as in another? The Word is divided upon this Subject; and your Lordship comes in to end the Controversy. But how? Is it by examining the Merits of the contending Parties? Is it by telling us what is right and what is wrong in the different Communions? Is it by telling us that one external Communion is better than another? Is it by shewing us that any is dangerous? Is it by directing us, with which we ought to join, or indeed that we ought so much as to join with any? No: This right and wrong, or good and bad in *external* Communions, though it was the *whole Question*, is wholly skipped over by your Lordship; and you preach up an *Invisible Church* as the *only true Church in the Mouth of a Christian*, and this in *Contradistinction* to all *Visible* Churches: And only declare, that our Title to God's Favour cannot depend upon our being or continuing in any particular Method, but upon our *Sincerity*.

Your Lordship says; *I have laid down a Description of the Universal Invisible Church or Kingdom of Christ.** Your Lord-

* P. 78.

ship had been as well employed if you had been painting of *Spirits*, or weighing of *Thoughts*. *The main Question*, you say, *is whether this Description be true and just.**

This, my Lord, is not the *main Question*; nor indeed does it concern us at all whether your Lordship is ingenious, or not, in this Description.

For suppose your Lordship had been describing an *Invisible King* to the People of *Great Britain*, do you think the *main Question* amongst the *Lords* and *Commons* would be, whether you had hit off the Description well? No, my Lord, the *main Question* would be, To what Ends and Purposes you had set up such a King, and what Relation the Subjects of *Great Britain* had to him; whether they might leave their *Visible*, and pay only an *internal Allegiance* to your *Invisible King*? If your Lordship should farther describe him as the *only true King in the Mouth of a Britain*, I believe it would be thought but a *poor Apology* to appeal to your fine Painting, that you had described him *justly*, and set him out as *Invisible*. The Application is here very easy; it is a very trifling Question, and only concerns your Lordship's *Parts*, Whether your Description of your *Invisible Church* be just or not? But it is the Use and the End of setting up this Church, which is any Matter of Question to us. Your Lordship might erect as many Churches as you please, if you did it only for *speculative Amusement*, and to try your Abilities in fine Drawing; but if you pretend to unsettle the Christian Church, by your new Buildings, or to destroy the Distinction between the *Church* and *Conventicle*, by your *Invisibles*, we must beg your Lordship's Excuse, and can no more admire the *Beauty* or *Justness* of your fine Descriptions, than you would admire a *just Description* of an *Invisible Diocese*, if it was set out in order to receive your Lordship.

You add; But of this (Description) they (*the Committee*) have not said one word; but rather chosen to go off to an article of the *Church of England*, which defines not the *Universal Invisible Church*. And your Lordship might as well observe, that they have not said one word about *Plato's Republic*. For how they should imagine that you were describing an *Invisible Church*, or if they did, why they should trouble their Heads with such a Description, is not easily conceived.

For, my Lord, if it was your primary Intention only to appear in Defence of an *Universal Invisible Church*, what can we conceive in our Minds more surprising? What can be more extraordinary, than that a *Visible Bishop* at a *Visible Court*, should

with so much Solemnity preach in Defence of a Church which can neither be defended nor injured? Are there any Rights in your Invisible Church which can possibly be lost? If not, to what purpose does your Lordship come in as a Defender? Can the Sight of any Men find it, the Malice of any Men attack it, or the Good-will of any Men support it? No: Yet though it is as invisible as the *Centre* of the Earth, and as much out of our reach as the *Stars*, yet your Lordship has very pathetically preached a Sermon, and published some Volumes, lest this Invisible Church, which nobody knows where to find, should be run away with.

Should the same Christian Zeal induce your Lordship to appear, at some other solemn Occasion, in the Cause of the *Winds*, your Pains would be as well employed; for it would be as reasonable to desire that they might *rise* and *blow* where they list, as that an Invisible Church, nowhere to be known or found by us at present, may not be injured.

If therefore the *Learned Committee* had so far forgot that Visible Church of which they are Members, as to have engaged with your Lordship about your *Invisible Church*, the Dispute would have been to as much purpose, as a *Trial* in *Westminster Hall* about the *Philosopher's Stone*.

But you complain that they rather chose to *go off* to an Article of the Church of *England*. My Lord, this is very hard indeed, that they should *go off* to the Church of *England*, when you had an *Invisible Church* ready for them; or that this Learned Body cannot dispute about Churches, but they must needs bring the *Church of England* into the Question.

Suppose, as in the above-mentioned Instance, your Lordship should lay down a *fine* and *just* Description of your *Invisible King of Great Britain*, a Number of Tories should, instead of examining the Truth of your Description, *go off* to the *Act of Settlement*, which declares a *Visible King of Britain*: This would be to use your Lordship just as the *Learned Committee* have done; who, instead of dwelling upon the Beauty and Justness of this Description, have *gone off* to an old Article in the *Church of England*, which indeed only describes an old-fashioned *Visible Church*, as Churches went in the Apostles' Days: That is, a *Congregation of faithful Men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered*.*

I am of Opinion, that the *Apostolical Church* would not have thought themselves too *Invisible* to be thus described, or that

* *Artic. 19.*

this was too *Visible* a Description of the Church of Christ to take in its *sincere* Members.

Whether therefore your Lordship has given a true Description of the *Invisible* Church, that is, a Church of *Thoughts* and *Sentiments*, I shall not consider, but thus much I must observe, that it is a very false Description; first, as it pretends to describe THE Church,* *and the only true Church in the Mouth of a Christian*. For the Church of Christ, as has been shewn, is as truly a *Visible external* Society, as any Civil or Secular Society in the World: And it is no more distinguished from such Societies by the *Invisibility*, than by the *Youth* or *Age* of its Members.

The holy consecrated *Elements* differ from common *Bread* and *Wine*, but they do not so differ from it, as to cease to be as *Visible*, as common Bread and Wine. Thus the Holy Catholic Church, the Kingdom of Christ, differs from worldly Societies and Kingdoms, but not in point of *Visibility*, but in regard to the *Ends* and *Purposes* for which it is erected, *viz.*, the eternal Salvation of Mankind.

Secondly, This Description contradicts the nineteenth Article of the *Church of England*. For though it is not set up as another *Visible* Church, so as to contradict it in point of *Visibility*, yet seeing it is described as THE Church, and *the only true Church*, it plainly contradicts it in point of Truth; for if it be the only true Church, every other must be a false one.

Thirdly, This Description is a mere *speculative Conjecture*, a *Creature* of the Imagination, which can serve no Purposes, but is entirely foreign to the present Dispute, and must be so to any Dispute which ever can arise between contending Communions. It no more serves to inform anyone, whether he should go to the *Visible* Church, or *Visible* Conventicle, than whether he should study the *Law* or *Physic*. It may indeed serve to make Persons regardless of any *Visible Church*, but can be of no use to them, if they desire to know with what *Visible* Church they ought to join.

It may now be worth our while to observe, how your Lordship came by this Account of Christ's Kingdom, which you say is the *only true* one. *Jesus answered, my Kingdom is not of this World, is the Text to your Sermon*. You say, *you have chosen these Words in which our Lord declares the Nature of his Kingdom*:†

Now, my Lord, one would imagine, that you hereby mean, that our Lord has in *these* Words declared what his Kingdom is; for without this, it cannot be true that he hath declared the

* *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 70.

† *Serm.*, p. 10.

Nature of his Kingdom. Whereas it is so far from being true, that he hath in *these Words* declared what his Kingdom is, that he has only, and that in one particular Respect, declared *what it is not*. If he had said that his Kingdom was not a *Jewish* Kingdom, would this be declaring the Nature of his Kingdom? If a Person should say that his Belief was not the Belief of the Church of *England*, would he in *these Words* declare the Nature of his Belief? Would it not still be uncertain whether he was an *Arian* or *Socinian*, or something different from them both? Thus our Saviour's saying that his *Kingdom is not of this World*, no more declares the Nature of his Kingdom, than a Person by saying *such* a one was not his Son, would in *these Words* declare how many Children he had.

My Kingdom is not of this World, are very indeterminate Words, and capable of several Meanings, if we consider them in themselves. But as soon as we consider them as an Answer to a particular Question, they take one determinate Sense. The Question was, whether our Saviour was the (Temporal) *King of the Jews*? *Jesus answered, my Kingdom is not of this World*. Now as these Words may signify no more than the Denial of what was asked; as there is nothing in them that necessarily implies more, than that he was not a King as the *Jewish* or other Temporal Kings are; as the Question extends the Answer no farther than this Meaning; so if we enlarge it, or fix any other Meaning to it, it is all human Reasoning, without any Warrant from the Text.

Now, taking the Words in this Sense, what a strange Conclusion is this that your Lordship draws from it: That because Christ said his Kingdom was not a Temporal Kingdom as the *Jewish* and other Kingdoms were; therefore his Kingdom is *Invisible*. Is it denied to be a Temporal Kingdom, *because* a Temporal Kingdom is *Visible*? If not, it will by no means follow, that it must be *Invisible*, because it is said not to be Temporal. Must it be in every respect contrary to a Temporal Kingdom, because it is said not to be Temporal? Then it must have no Subjects, because in Temporal Kingdoms there are Subjects; then there must be no King, because in such Kingdoms there are Kings. I suppose the Sacraments may in a very proper Sense be said to be not *Temporal Institutions*, though they are as external and *Visible* as any thing in the World; and consequently the Church may be not Temporal in a very proper Sense, without implying that it must therefore be *Invisible*. Indeed I cannot conceive how your Lordship could have thought of a more odd Conclusion, than this which you have drawn from them. If you had concluded that because Christ's Kingdom is

not a Temporal Kingdom, therefore its Members are all of an Age; it had been as well as to say, therefore they are *Invisible*.

Nothing can be more surprising, than to see your Lordship throughout your whole Sermon describing this Kingdom, with all the Accuracy and Exactness imaginable, and even *demonstrating* every particular Circumstance of its Nature, from this little *Negative*, that it is not a Temporal Kingdom. Your Lordship must be very excellent at taking a *Hint*, or you could never have found out this *Kingdom* of God so exactly from so small a Circumstance. It seems, had this *little Text* been all the Scripture that we had left in the World, your Lordship could have revealed the rest by the help of it. For there is nothing that relates to this Kingdom, or the Circumstances of its Members, but you have purely by the Strength of your Genius, unassisted by any other Scripture proved and demonstrated from this single Passage.

If a Foreigner should tell your Lordship, that his House in his own Country was not as the Houses are in this Kingdom, would it not be very wonderful in your Lordship, to be able to *demonstrate* its Length and Breadth, to tell how many Rooms there are on a Floor, and to describe every Beauty and Convenience of the Structure, merely from having been told that it was not like the Houses in this Kingdom? But it would not be more wonderful, than to see your Lordship describe the Nature of Christ's Kingdom, and explain every Circumstance that concerns its Members, from having been told this Negative Circumstance. Nor indeed is it much to be wondered, seeing you set out upon this bottom, if you give as false an Account of Christ's Kingdom, as you would do of an House, that you only knew what it was not.

Again, you say, *As the Church of Christ is the Kingdom of Christ, he himself is King; and in this it is implied that he is himself the sole Law-giver to his Subjects, and himself the sole Judge of their Behaviour* in the Affairs of Conscience and Salvation.*

What a pretty fine-spun Consequence is this, to be drawn from the above mentioned Text. Your Lordship here advances a mere human Speculation founded upon no other Authority, than the uncertain Signification of the Words, *King* and *Kingdom*; you say it is *in this implied that* because *Christ is King* of his *Kingdom, he is the sole Law-giver to his Subjects*. Pray, my Lord, why is it *in this implied*? Do the Words, *King* and *Kingdom* always imply the *same* thing? Has a King in one

* *Serm.*, p. 11.

Kingdom the *same* Powers, which every King hath in another Kingdom? Has the King of *England* the same Power, which a King of *France*, or any Sovereign hath in his Kingdom? Would it be any reason why the King of *England* should be *sole* Law-giver to his Subjects, because there are Kings who are sole Law-givers to their Subjects? Now if the word, *King*, does not necessarily imply the *same* Power in every Kingdom, how can there be any Conclusion, that *because* Christ is King of his Kingdom, he is sole Law-giver to his Subjects? Yet your Lordship's whole Argument is founded upon this weak and false bottom, that the word, *King*, is to be taken in one absolute and fixed Sense: For you expressly say, it is *in this* implied, that *because* he is King, he is sole Law-giver. Now it is impossible it should be implied *in this*, unless the word, *King*, always implies the same Power: For if there be any Difference in the Constitutions of Kingdoms, though they all have Kings, then it is plain nothing certain as to the Nature and Condition of any Kingdom, can be drawn from its having a King. But your Lordship has described the Constitution of Christ's Kingdom, the Circumstances of its Subjects, and in short everything that can concern it, as absolutely, and with as much Certainty, from Christ's being King of it, as if the word, *King*, had but one Meaning, or every King the same Power.

Again, you tell us; *The grossest Mistakes in Judgment, about the Nature of Christ's Kingdom or Church, have arisen from hence, that Men have argued from other Visible Societies, and other Visible Kingdoms of this World, to what ought to be Visible and Sensible in his Kingdom.*

Is it thus, my Lord? Are all our gross Errors owing to this way of Reasoning? How then comes your Lordship to fall into this grossest of Errors? How come you to state the very Nature of Christ's Kingdom from the Consideration of Temporal Kingdoms, or *Absolute* Monarchies? How come you to argue from the Relation between a King and his Kingdom, to what ought to be in Christ's spiritual Kingdom? Are not Kings and Kingdoms Temporal Institutions? Is not the Relation betwixt a King and his Kingdom a Temporal Relation? How then can you argue from these Temporal Kingdoms, to anything concerning Christ's Kingdom? Why will your Lordship fall into so gross an Error, as to assert that Christ must be *sole* Law-giver to his Subjects, because there are some Temporal *Kings* who are sole Law-givers to their Subjects? Is there any Consequence in this Argument? Nay, are not all our Errors owing to this mistaken way of arguing?

The only way to know the Constitution of this Kingdom, is

not to reason from what is implied in the Words *King* and *Kingdom*, for they do not imply *any fixed, or absolute* Sense, but from the Laws and Institutions of it, whether they admit of or require the Authority of under Magistrates. Thus, if it appears that Christ has commissioned others to act in his Name, to exercise Authority in his Kingdom, and govern his Subjects in such a manner as he has commissioned them to govern; Is it any Answer to this, to say that *the Church is a Kingdom, and Christ is a King, and consequently sole Law-giver in it?* Is there nothing in this Text, *Whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven, &c.*, because Christ is King of his Church?

The whole Scheme of all your Doctrines is raised out of this single Text, *My Kingdom is not of this World*; which certainly implies no more, than if Christ had said, *I am not the Temporal King of the Jews*. Let us therefore see how your Lordship's Doctrines appear, if we bring them to the Principle from whence you had them: As thus, *Jesus is not the Temporal King of the Jews*, therefore there is no such thing as Church-Authority, no Obligation to join in any particular Communion. *Jesus* is not the Temporal King of the *Jews*, therefore *Absolutions, Benedictions, and Excommunications* are *Dreams and Trifles*; therefore no Succession or Order of Clergy is better than another.

Jesus is not the Temporal King of the *Jews*, therefore the *Invisible Church* is the *only true Church in the Mouth of a Christian*; therefore Sincerity alone, exclusive of any particular Communion, is the *only Title* to God's Favour. Now if the Papists should say, *Jesus is not the Temporal King of the Jews*, therefore there is a *Purgatory*, therefore we are to pray to *Saints*; they would shew as much true *Logic* and *Divinity*, as your Lordship has shewn in the Proof of your Doctrines from the above-mentioned Text. And I dare say, that every Reader of this Controversy knows, that you have not pretended to any other Proof from the Scriptures for your Doctrine, than what your Oratory could draw from this single Text.

This therefore, I hope, every Reader will observe, that all which you have advanced against the Universally Received Doctrines of Christianity, is only an *Harangue* upon this single Text, which everyone's common Sense will tell him, contains nothing in it that can possibly determine the Cause, which you are engaged in. For who can imagine, that it is as well to be a sincere *Turk* as a sincere *Christian*, or that a sincere *Quaker* is as much in the Favour of God as a sincere *Churchman*, because our blessed Lord told *Pilate*, that *his Kingdom was not of this World*; and that in such a manner, and upon such an occasion,

as only to imply that he was not that King which he enquired after? Who can conceive that there is no particular Order of the Clergy necessary, no Necessity of any particular Communion, no Authority in any Church, nor any Significancy in the sacerdotal Powers, for this reason, because there is a Text in Scripture, which denies that Christ was the *Temporal King of the Jews*.

Your Lordship has said much of the Plainness and Simplicity of the Gospel, and of its peculiar Fitness to be judged of, by the ordinary common Sense of Mankind; you have also interposed in this Controversy, to deliver them from the Authority of the Church, and turn them loose to the Scriptures. But, my Lord, if this Text, *My Kingdom is not of this World*, which seems to common Sense to contain only the Denial of a particular Question, contains, as you have pretended, the whole Christian Religion; and every other seemingly plain Part of the Gospel is to take its Meaning from this Passage; if it be thus, my Lord, what can we conceive more mysterious than the Scripture? Or more unequal to the common, ordinary Sense of Men?

For how should it come into a plain honest Man's Head, that this Text, which is nothing but the *Denial* of a *certain Question*, should be the *Key* to all the rest of Scripture? How should he know that the plainest Texts in Scripture were not to be understood in their apparent Meaning, but in some Sense or other given them from this Text? Thus, when it is said, *Go ye and disciple all Nations; and lo I am with you to the end of the World*: The first apparent Sense of these Words is this, that as Christ promised to be with the Apostles in the Execution of their Office, both as to *Authority* and *Power*, so he promises the same to their Successors, the Bishops, since he could no otherwise be with them to the End of the World, than by being with their Successors. Now, my Lord, how should an ordinary Thinker know that this plain Meaning of the Words was to be neglected, and that he was to go to the above-mentioned Text, to learn to understand, or rather disbelieve them? For what is there in this Text, *My Kingdom is not of this World*, to shew either that Christ did not authorise the Apostles to ordain Successors, who should have his Authority, or that the Bishops alone, are not such Successors? Is there anything in this Text which can any way determine the Nature, the Necessity, or the Significancy of such a Succession?

Again it is said, that *There is no other Name under Heaven given unto Men, whereby they may be saved but Jesus Christ*. Now how should a Man that has only common Sense imagine, that he must reject this plain Meaning of the Words, and believe

that a *sincere Turk* is as much in the Favour of God as a *sincere Christian*, for this only reason, because *Christ's Kingdom is not of this World?* It must not be common ordinary Sense which can reason and discover at this rate.

Lastly, it is said, *Whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven, &c.* Now how shall anyone that has only *sober Sense* find out, that there is nothing at all left in this Text, that it only gave *something or other to the Apostles*, but gives no Authority to any Persons now, because the *Kingdom of Christ is not of this World.*

Our Saviour told his Disciples, that *they were not of this World*, but is that an Argument that they therefore became immediately invisible? Was neither St. *Peter*, nor St. *Paul, &c.*, ever to be seen afterwards? Why then must the Kingdom of Christ become immediately invisible, because it is said not to be of this World, any more than its first Members were Invisible, who were also declared to *be not of this World?*

Had St. *Peter* or St. *Paul* no visible Power and Authority over the Presbyters and Deacons, because *they were not of this World?* If they had, why may not some Persons have Authority over others in Christ's Kingdom, though *it is not of this World?*

For our blessed Lord's saying that his Disciples *were not of this World*, does as strictly prove that St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* had no distinct Powers from Presbyters and Deacons, as his saying, that *his Kingdom was not of this World*, proves that there is no real or necessary Difference betwixt Bishops and Presbyters in his Kingdom. And it is as good Logic, to say the Disciples of Christ were not of this World, therefore there was no Necessity, that some should have been *Apostles*, and others *Presbyters, &c.*, as to say Christ's Kingdom is not of this World, therefore there is no Necessity that some should be Bishops and others Presbyters in it.

I have been the more particular in examining the Text to your Sermon, and bringing your Doctrines close to it, that every Reader who has common Sense, may be able to perceive that they have no more Relation to that Text from which you would be thought to have them, than if you had deduced them from the first Verse in the first Chapter of *Genesis*.

And yet thus much every Reader must have observed, that it is your Explication of this Text alone, which has led you to condemn all that Authority, to censure all those Institutions as *Dreams* and *Trifles*, which the holy Scriptures, and the first and purest Ages of Christianity, have taught us to esteem as sacred in themselves, being ordained by God; and of the

greatest Benefit to us, being means of obtaining his Grace, and Favour.

Thus far concerning the Nature of Christ's Church.

Of Church Authority.

I COME now to consider what your Lordship has delivered upon the Article of *Church Authority*, as it is invested in the Governors of the Church. And here I have little else to do, but to clear it from those *false Characters*, under which you have been pleased to describe it.

Thus you begin; *If there be an Authority in any to judge, censure, or punish the Servants of another Master, in Matters purely relating to Conscience and eternal Salvation; then Christ has left behind Judges over the Consciences and Religion of his People; then the Consciences and Religion of his People are subject to them whom he has left Judges over them; and then there is a Right in some Christians to determine the Religion and Consciences of others. And what is more, if the Decisions of any Men can be made to concern or affect the State of Christ's Subjects with regard to the Favour of God, then the Salvation of some Christians depends upon the Sentence passed by others.**

Here is the Sum of what you have advanced from *Reason* and the *Nature* of the Thing against the Authority of Church Governors; which you would have pass for a strict Proof, that if they have any Authority in *Matters purely relating to Conscience* derived to them from Christ, that then their Authority can *damn* or *save* at pleasure.

But, my Lord, in this *same strict* way of Reasoning, and by only using your own Words, I will as plainly prove that a *Father* hath not Authority even to send his Children of an *Errand*.

For, 'If the Christian Religion authorises a *Father* to judge 'the Servants of another Master in *Matters purely relating to 'Motion*, then Christ has left behind him Judges *over the Motion* 'of his People, then the *Motion* of his People is subjected to *them* 'whom he has left Judges over *it*; and then there is a *Right* in 'some *Christians* to determine the *Motion* of others. And what 'is more, if the *Determinations* of any Men can concern or affect

* *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 27.

‘ the State of Christ’s Subjects with regard to *Motion*, then the
 ‘ Lives of some Christians depend upon the Determination passed
 ‘ by others; because they may determine them to move from the
 ‘ *top* of a *Precipice* to the *bottom*.’

Here, my Lord, I freely leave it to the Judgment of *common Sense*, whether I have not in your *own Words* proved it as absurd and unreasonable, that a *Father* should have any Power over his Son, so as to send him of an *Errand*, as to allow the Church to have Authority in Matters of *Conscience* and *Salvation*; and the Consequence, according to your Argument, is *equally* dreadful in both Cases: For it is as plain that if *Fathers* have Authority in Matters of *Motion*, then they may *move* their Sons to the *bottom* of a *Precipice*; as that if the *Church* hath Authority in *Matters of Salvation*, then it may *save* or *damn* at pleasure; and it is as well proved, that *Fathers* have no Authority in Matters of *Motion*, because they have no Authority to command their Children to *destroy* themselves, as that the Church hath no Authority in Matters of *Conscience* and *Salvation*, because they have not an Authority to *damn* People for ever: For there is the same room for *Degrees* in the Authority of the Church, which there is for *Degrees* in the Authority of *Parents*; and it is as justly concluded that *Parents* have no Authority in Matters of any *particular Nature*, because they have not *unlimited* Authority in things of that *particular Nature*, as that the *Church* hath no Authority in *Matters of Conscience and Salvation*, because it has not an absolute unlimited Authority in *these Matters*.

Yet this is the whole of your Argument against *Church Authority*, that it cannot relate to Matters of *Conscience* and *Salvation*, because an Authority in *these Matters*, is an *absolute Authority* over the Souls of others; which is just as true, as if anyone should declare that a *Father* hath no Authority in *Matters* purely relating to the *Body* of his Son, because an *Authority* in *these Matters*, is an *absolute Authority* to dispose of his *Body* as he pleases.

Suppose it should be said, that a *Father* hath Authority over his Son in *Civil Affairs*; Will it be an Argument that he has no such Authority, because he has not *all*, or an *unlimited* Authority in *Civil Affairs*? Will it be an Argument that he has no Authority in *such Matters*, because his Son is not *wholly* and *entirely* subjected to him in such Matters? Has a *Father* no Right to choose an *Employment* for his Son, or govern him in several things of a *Civil Nature*, because he cannot oblige him to resign his *Title* to his *Estate*, or take from him the *Benefit* of the *Laws* of the *Land*?

If he has an Authority in these Matters, though not *all*, why cannot the Governors of the Church have an Authority in *Matters of Conscience*, though they have not *all*, or an *unlimited* Authority in Matters of Conscience? How does it follow that they have no such Authority, because Christians are not *wholly* and *absolutely* subjected to them in *such* Matters? Why can there not be *Bounds* to an Authority in *Matters of Conscience*, as well as *Bounds* to an Authority in *Civil Affairs*? And if a *Father* may have Authority over his *Son* in *Civil Affairs*, though that Authority is limited by the *Laws* of the Land, and the superior Authority of the *Civil Magistrate*; why may not the Church have an Authority in *Matters of Conscience* and Salvation, though that Authority is *limited* by the *Scriptures*, and the supreme *Authority* of God?

He therefore who concludes the Church hath no Authority in Matters of *Salvation*, because it cannot *absolutely* save or damn People, reasons as *strictly*, as he who concludes a Person has *no* Authority in *Civil Affairs*, because he cannot grant or take away *Civil Privileges* of the *highest* Nature.

What therefore your Lordship has thus *logically* advanced against the *Authority* of the Church, concludes with the *same Force* against *all* Authority in the World. For if the Church hath no Authority in Matters of Conscience, for this *demonstrative Reason*, because it hath not an *unlimited* Authority in *Matters of Conscience*; then it is also *demonstrated* that no Persons have any Authority in *any particular* Matters, because they have not an *absolute unbounded* Authority in those *particular* Matters.

As thus; A *Prince* hath no Authority to oblige his Subjects to make *War* against *such* a People, because he hath not an *unlimited* Authority to oblige his Subjects to fight *where*, and *when*, and with *whom* he pleases.

A *Father* has no Authority over the *Persons* or *Affairs* of his *Children*, because he cannot dispose of the *Persons* and *Affairs* of his Children in what manner he will.

Masters have no Authority to command the *Assistance* of their *Servants*, because they cannot oblige them to *assist* in a *Rebellion* or *Robbery*.

Thus are all these *particular Authorities*, as plainly confuted by your *Argument*, as the Authority of the Church is confuted by it.

But now, my Lord, have neither *Masters*, nor *Fathers*, nor *Princes*, any Authority in these *particular* Matters, because they have no Authority to command at *any rate*, or as they please in these Matters? If they have, why may not the Governors of

the Church have an Authority in *Matters of Conscience*, though they cannot oblige Conscience at *any rate*, or as they please? Why may not they have an Authority in *Matters of Salvation*, though they have not Power absolutely to damn or save?

Your Lordship would therefore have done as much Justice to Truth, and as much Service to the World, if, instead of calling Christians from the Authority of the Church, you had publicly declared that neither *Masters*, nor *Fathers*, nor *Princes*, have, *properly speaking*, any *real* Authority over their respective *Servants*, *Sons*, and *Subjects*, and that because they are none of them to be obeyed but in *such* and *such* Circumstances, and upon certain supposed Conditions. For you have plainly declared there is no Authority in the Church, that it has no power of obliging, because we are only to obey upon *Terms* and *certain supposed Conditions*. If therefore this *conditional* Obedience proves that there is, *properly speaking*, no Authority in the Church, then that conditional Obedience of *Servants*, *Sons*, and *Subjects*, proves that neither their *Masters*, *Fathers*, or *Princes*, have any Authority *properly speaking*.

You say; *If there be a Power in some OVER others in Matters of Religion, so as to determine these others; then all Communions are upon an equal foot, without any regard to any intrinsic Goodness; or whether they be right or wrong; then no Religion is in itself preferable to another, but all are alike with respect to the Favour of God.**

Now, my Lord, all this might, with as much Truth, be said of any other Authority, as of Church Authority.

As thus; 'If there be a Power in the Prince, or in some over others in *Matters of War and Fighting*, so as to determine those others; then all *Wars* and *Fightings* are upon an equal foot, without any regard to any intrinsic Goodness; or whether they be *right or wrong*; then no *Wars* or *Fightings* are in themselves preferable to others, but all are alike with respect to the Favour of God.'

And now, my Lord, what must we say here? Has the Prince no *Right* or *Power* to command his Subjects to wage War with such a People? Or if he has this Power over them, does this make *all Wars alike*? Does this Authority leave nothing to the *Justice* or *Equity* of *Wars*, but make all *Wars exactly* the same with regard to the *Favour* of God?

Does this Authority of the Prince make all *Engagements* equally lawful to the Subject that engages by his Authority? Is he neither *more* or *less* in the *Favour* of God, for whatever Cause

* *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 114.

he fights in, because he has the Authority of his Prince? Is it as pleasing to God that under such Authority he should make War upon the *Innocent*, plunder and ravage the *Fatherless* and *Widows*, as engage in the Cause of *Equity* and *Honour*?

Now, my Lord, if *all Wars* are not alike to the Persons who are concerned in them, *as to the Favour of God*; if there can be *any Cases* supposed, where it is not only *lawful*, but *honourable* and *glorious* for Soldiers to disobey the *Orders* of their *Prince*; then it is past doubt, that Soldiers *may* and *ought* to have some regard to the *Nature* and *Justice* of the *Orders* they have from their Prince.

But we have your Lordship's Assurance, that if they may have *any* regard to the *Nature* and *Justice* of their *Orders*, then *there is an end of all Authority*, and an *end of all Power of one Man over another in such Matters*.

So that you have as plainly confuted *all Authority* of the *Prince* over his Soldiers in *Matters purely Military*, as you have confuted all Authority of the *Church* in *Matters purely of Conscience*. For it is plain to every Understanding, that if there is an end of all Authority in Religion, because Persons may have some regard to the *intrinsic Goodness of things*,* that therefore there is an end of all *Regal Authority* over Soldiers, if Soldiers may have any regard to the *Nature* and *Justice* of their *Military Orders*.

Your Argument against Church Authority consists of two Parts; the *first Part* is taken from the *Nature of Authority*, and proceeds thus: *If there be an Authority in Matters of Conscience, it must be an absolute Authority over Conscience, so as to be obeyed in all its Commands of what kind soever*; which is as false as if it were said, that if a Father hath Authority over the *Person* of his Son, then he hath an *absolute Authority* to do what he will with his *Person*; or if he hath Authority over his Son in *Civil Affairs*, then he hath an *absolute unlimited Authority* in the *Civil Affairs* of his Son.

The *other Part* of your Argument, is taken from the *Nature of Obedience*, and proceeds in this manner: *If Persons may have some regard to the intrinsic Goodness of things* in Religion, then there is an end of *all Authority* in Matters of Religion; which is as false as to say, that if a *Soldier* may have *some regard* to the *Nature* and *Justice* of the *Military Orders* of his *Prince*, then there is an end of all Authority of the *Prince* over his Soldiers in *Military Affairs*; or if a *Servant* may have *some regard* to the

* *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 115.

Lawfulness of the Commands of his Master, then there is an end of *all Authority* of Masters over their Servants as to such Matters.

So that if there be any such thing as Authority either in *Masters*, or *Fathers*, or *Princes*, then *both Parts* of your Argument are confuted; for none of these have any other than a *limited Authority*, nor do their respective *Servants*, *Sons*, or *Subjects*, owe them any other *active Obedience*, but such as is *conditional*.

Now if it can be any way proved that *Obedience* to our *Masters*, *Parents*, and *Princes* is a very great *Duty*, and *Disobedience* a very great *Sin*; though they cannot oblige us to act against the *Laws of God*, or the *Laws of our Country*; then it will follow that *Obedience* to our *Spiritual* Governors may be a very great *Duty*, and *Disobedience* a very great *Sin*; though they cannot oblige us to submit to their *sinful* or *unlawful* Commands.

And if *common Reason*, the *Laws of God*, and our *Country* be sufficient to direct us, where to *stop* in our *active Obedience* to our *Masters*, *Fathers*, or *Princes*, though they have Authority from God to demand our Obedience; the *same Guides* will with the *same Certainty* teach us where to *stop* in our Obedience to the Authority of the Church, though that Authority be set over us by God himself.

Though this might be thought sufficient to shew the Weakness of your Arguments against the Authority of the Church, yet I shall beg leave to examine them a little farther in another manner.

You say the Authority which you deny, is only an *Authority in Matters relating purely to Conscience and eternal Salvation*, an Authority whose *Laws and Decisions affect the State of Christ's Subjects* with regard to the Favour of God; and the reason of your denying it is this, that if this Authority, or *Laws*, or *Decisions of Men can concern or affect the State of Christ's Subjects with regard to the Favour of God*, then the *eternal Salvation of some Christians depends upon the Sentence passed by others*.*

In order to lay open the Weakness of this Reasoning, I shall state the Meaning of the Propositions of which it consists.

And, first, I suppose an Authority may be properly said to affect the *State* of People with regard to the *Favour* of God, when their *Obedience* to such an Authority procures his Favour, and their *Contempt* of it raises his displeasure; and I believe that this is not only a proper Sense, but the *only* proper Sense which the Words are capable of.

* *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 28.

It is certainly true that the Authority of our blessed Saviour, was an Authority which *affected* the *State* of the *Jews* with regard to the *Favour* of God ; but yet it no otherwise affected their State, than as their Obedience to his Authority was pleasing to God, and their Disobedience to it, the Cause of his farther Displeasure. This is the *only* way in which the Authority of Christ affected the *State* of People with regard to the Favour of God ; and therefore is the *only* manner in which any other Authority can be supposed to affect Persons with regard to the Favour of God.

Secondly ; Any *Things* or *Matters* may be properly said to relate to *Conscience* and *eternal Salvation*, when the Observance of them is a *Means* of obtaining Salvation, and the Neglect of them, an *Hindrance* to our Salvation. Thus *Baptism* and the *Supper* of the Lord, are Matters relating to *Conscience* and *eternal Salvation*, but then they are only so, for this reason, because the partaking of these Sacraments, is a *Means* of obtaining Salvation, and the Refusal of them, is an *Hindrance* of our Salvation. He therefore who hath Authority in *such things*, as by our observing of them we promote our Salvation, and by our neglecting of them, we hinder our Salvation, he has in the utmost Propriety of the Words, an *Authority in Matters of Conscience and Salvation*.

Hence it appears that it is not peculiar or appropriate to the Authority of the Church *alone*, to relate to Matters of Conscience and eternal Salvation, but *equally* belongs to every other Authority which can be called the *Ordinance* of God.

Now all lawful Authority, whether of *Masters*, *Fathers*, or *Princes*, is the *Ordinance* of God, and the respective Duties of their *Servants*, *Children*, and *Subjects*, are as truly Matters of *Conscience* and *eternal Salvation*, as their Observance of any Part of the Christian Religion is a Matter of *Conscience* and *eternal Salvation*: And it is not more their Duty to receive the *Sacrament*, or worship God in any particular manner, than to obey their respective Governors ; nor does it more *concern* or *affect their State* with regard to the *Favour* of God, whether they neglect *those Duties* which particularly regard his *Service*, or *those Duties* which they owe to their *proper* Governors. So that *Conscience* and *eternal Salvation* are *equally* concerned in *both* Cases.

For *things* may as well be Matters of *Conscience* and *eternal Salvation*, though they are of a Civil or Secular Nature, as the *positive Institutions* of Christ are Matters of *Conscience* and *Salvation*.

For *Baptism* has no more of Religion in its *own Nature*, nor

has of *itself* any more concern with our Salvation, than any Action that is merely *Secular* or *Civil*. But as Baptism by *Institution* becomes our *Duty*, and so is a Matter of *Conscience* and *Salvation*; so when Actions merely *Secular* and *Indifferent*, are by a *Lawful Authority* made our *Duty*, they are as truly Matters of *Conscience* and *Salvation*, as any Parts of Religion.

The Difference betwixt a *Spiritual* and *Temporal Authority* does not consist *in this*, that one relates to Matters of *Conscience* and *Salvation*, and *concerns* and *affects* our *State* with regard to the *Favour* of God, and the other does not; but the Difference is this, that *one* presides over us in things relating to Religion and the *Service* of God, the *other* presides over us in things relating to *Civil Life*; and as our Salvation depends as *certainly* upon our Behaviour in things relating to *Civil Life*, as in things relating to the *Service* of God, it follows that they are *both equally Matters* of *Conscience* and *Salvation*: And as the *Temporal Authority* is the *Ordinance* of God, to which we are to submit, not only *for Wrath*, but also for *Conscience's sake*, it undeniably follows, that this *Temporal Authority* as *truly concerns* and *affects* our *State* with regard to the *Favour* of God, as any Authority in Matters *purely* relating to Religion. For such an Authority could in *no other* Sense *affect* our *State* with regard to the *Favour* of God, than by our Obedience or Disobedience to it; but our *State* with regard to the *Favour* of God is as *truly affected* by our *Obedience*, or *Disobedience* to our *Lawful Sovereign*, as by our observing or neglecting any *Duty* in the *World*; and consequently the *Temporal Authority* as *truly affects* our *State* with regard to the *Favour* of God, as any Authority in Matters of Religion.

Seeing therefore, by an Authority in Matters of *Conscience* and *Salvation*, by an Authority which can *affect* our *State* with regard to the *Favour* of God, nothing more is implied, than an Authority to which our Obedience is a *Duty*, and our Disobedience a *Sin*, which is the Case of every *Lawful Authority*; it plainly appears, that all those *frightful* Consequences, those *Dangers* to the Souls of Men which you have charged upon such *Church Authority*, are as truly chargeable upon *Masters*, *Fathers*, and *Princes*, and make their several Authorities as dangerous Powers over the Salvation of others, as the Authority of the Church.

Thus, when your *Demonstration* proceeds in this manner: *If there be an Authority in some over others in Matters purely relating to Conscience and Salvation, then the Salvation of some People will depend upon others*. Which, if we set it in a true Light, ought to proceed thus; *If there be an Authority in Matters*

of Religion, to which our Obedience is a Duty, and our Disobedience a Sin, then the Salvation of some People depends upon others.

But, my Lord, what a Sagacity must he have who can see this dismal Consequence? Who can see that *Masters, Fathers, and Princes*, have a Power over the Souls of *others*, either to *damn* or *save* them, because Obedience to their Authority is a *Duty*, and Disobedience a *Sin*?

Your Lordship cannot here say, that an *Authority* in *Matters purely relating to Conscience and eternal Salvation*, is not expressed *high* enough, by being described as an *Authority to which our Obedience is a Duty, and our Disobedience a Sin*. For, my Lord, no *Authority*, however concerned in things of the greatest Importance in *Religion and Salvation*, can possibly be an *Authority of an higher Nature*, than that *Authority to which our Obedience is a Duty, and our Disobedience a Sin*. It was in this *Sense alone*, that the *Authority of our Saviour himself affected* the state of the *Jews* with regard to the *Favour of God*; his *Authority* was of an *high and concerning Nature* to them only for this Reason, because their Obedience to it was their *Duty*, and their Disobedience their *Sin*.

If we now consider this *Authority* in the Church, in this true Manner in which it ought to be considered, your Lordship's Argument against it, either proves a deal too much, or nothing at all.

Thus, if the Consequence be just, that if it be *Sin* to disobey the Church, then the Church hath a Power of damning us; then it is as good a Consequence in regard to other *Authority*; as thus, *It is a Sin to disobey our Parents, therefore our Parents have a Power of damning us*; it is a *Sin* to disobey our *Prince*, therefore *our Prince has a Power of damning us*. These Consequences are evidently as *just* and *true*, as that other drawn from Church *Authority*; so that all those *dismal Charges* which you have fixed upon *Church Authority*, are as false *Accounts* of it, as if you had asserted that every *Father, or Master, or Prince*, who demands Obedience from his *Child, Servant, or Subject*, in point of *Duty*, or by declaring that their Disobedience is a *Sin*, does thereby prove himself to be a *Pope*, and to have the Souls of others at his Disposal. For it is out of all doubt, that if the *Governors* of the Church by demanding Obedience to them in point of *Duty*, or by declaring Disobedience to be *Sin*, do thereby assert the Claims of *Popery*, and assume a Power to dispose of the Souls of the People; that any other *Authority* which requires this Obedience as a *Duty* of *Conscience*, and forbids Disobedience as *Sin*, does thereby claim the *Authority* of the *Pope*, and pretend to a Power over the Souls of others.

So that if your Lordship has destroyed Church Authority, which pretends Obedience to be a *Duty*, as a *Popish Claim*; you have also as *certainly* destroyed every other Authority which demands Obedience as a *Duty*, as being equally a *Popish Presumption*.

Whenever therefore you shall please to call away *Servants*, *Children*, or *Subjects* from their respective *Masters*, *Fathers*, and *Princes*, you have as many *Demonstrations* ready to prove them all *Papists*, if they will stick by their Obedience to them as a *Duty of Conscience*, and to prove their Governors all *Popes*, if they declare their Disobedience to be *Sin*, as you have to prove Church Authority to be a *Popish Claim*. And I must beg leave to affirm, that they are as much misled who follow your Lordship against the Authority of the Church, as if they should follow you in the *same Argument* against owning any Authority of their *Parents* and *Princes*.

The Intent of all this is only to shew, that though there is an Authority in the Church, to which our Obedience is a *Duty* and our Disobedience a *Sin* (which is as high an Authority as can be claimed) yet this Authority implies no more a *frightful* Power of *disposing* of our Souls, than any other Lawful Authority, which it is a *Sin* to disobey, implies such a Power.

For where is the Danger to our Souls? How is our Salvation made subject to the Pleasure of our Church Governors, because God has appointed them to direct us in the manner of worshipping him, and to preside over things relating to Religion, and made it our Duty to obey them? How does this imply a dangerous Power over our Salvation? If we sin against this Authority, we endanger our Salvation as we do by neglecting *any other Ordinance* of God; and our Damnation is no more affected by any *Power* in the Persons, whom we may be damned for disobeying, than a Person that is *damned* for *killing* his Father, is damned by any *Power* of his *Father's*.

Neither is it in the Power of the Governors in the Church, though they have Authority in Matters of Salvation, to make our Salvation any more difficult to us, than if they had no *such* Authority.

For all their Injunctions must be either *Lawful*, or *Unlawful*; if they are *Lawful*, then by our Obedience to an *Ordinance* of God, we recommend ourselves to the Favour of God; and sure there is no harm in this Authority thus far. And if their Commands are *Unlawful*, then by our not obeying them, we still please God, in choosing rather to obey him than Men, where *both cannot* be obeyed. And where, my Lord, is the

Terror of this Authority so much complained of? How does this make our Salvation lie at the Mercy of our *Church Governors*? We are still as truly saved or damned by our own Behaviour, as though they had no *such Authority* over us; and though we may make their Authority the *Occasion* of our Damnation, by our rebelling against it, yet it is only in such a manner as anyone may make *Baptism*, or the *Supper* of the Lord, the *Occasion* of his Damnation, by a profane Refusal of them.

Upon the whole of this Matter, it appears, First, that when the Authority of the Church is said to be an *Authority in Matters of Conscience and Salvation*, or an Authority which concerns and affects our State with regard to the Favour of God; that this is the only true Meaning of those Propositions, *viz.*, an *Authority in Matters of Religion, to which Obedience is a Duty, and Disobedience a Sin.*

Secondly, That this Authority to which we are *thus obliged*, is as consistent with our working out our own Salvation, and no more puts our Souls into the Disposal of such Authority, than our Salvation is at the Mercy of our *Parents and Princes*, because to obey their Authority is a *great Duty*, and to disobey it, a *great Sin*.

Your Lordship has yet another Argument against *Church Authority*, taken from the Nature of our Reformation, which it seems cannot be defended, if there was then this *Church Authority* we have been pleading for.

Thus you say; *If there be a Church Authority, I beg to know, how can the Reformation itself be justified.**

My Lord, I cannot but wonder this should be a Difficulty with your Lordship, who has writ so *famous* a Treatise to inform People, *how* they not only *may*, but *ought* in point of *Duty* to get rid of a *real Authority*; I mean in your Defence of *Resistance*.

I suppose it is taken for granted, that *James the Second* was King of *England*, that he had a *Regal Authority* over all the People of *England*, and that they all of what Station soever were his *Subjects*; yet granting this *Regal Authority* in him, and this State of *Subjection* in all the People of *England*, your Lordship *knows how* to set *aside* that Government, and set up another Government; and even to make it our *Duty* as *Men* and *Protestants* to set up another Government.

Now since you know how to get rid of this Authority in so *Christian* and *Protestant* a manner, one cannot but wonder

* *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 117.

how you should be at a loss to justify the *Reformation*, without supposing that the Church at *that time* had no Authority.

For did you ever justify the *Revolution*, because *James* the Second had no *Kingly Authority*, or that the People of *England* were not his *Subjects*? Nay, did you not defend it upon the quite contrary Supposition, that though *James* the Second had a *Regal Authority*, though all the People of *England* were his *Subjects*, and had sworn to be his *faithful Subjects*, yet in spite of all these Considerations, did you not assert that they not only *might*, but *ought* to set him aside and choose another Governor in his stead?

And yet after all this, you *know not how* to defend the *Reformation*, it is a perfectly lost Cause, and not a word to be said for it, unless we suppose that there was no *Authority* in the Church when we *reformed* from it. Surely if your Lordship loved to defend the *Reformation*, as well as you loved to defend the *Revolution*, you would not have so *many* Reasons for one, and *none* for the other.

For supposing an Authority in the Church, will not *Tyranny*, *Breach of Fundamentals*, and *unlawful Terms* of Communion, defend our Departure from a *real Authority* in the Church, as well as any *Grievances* or *Oppressions* will defend our leaving a *real Authority* in the State?

What a *pitiful Advocate*, what a *Betrayer* of the *Rights* of the People would you reckon him, who should say, *If there was any Regal Authority in James the Second, if the People of England were his Subjects; I beg to know, how can the Revolution itself be justified?*

Yet just such an *Advocate* are you, just such a *Betrayer* of the *Reformation*, you cannot defend it, it has no bottom to stand upon; and if there was any *Authority* in the Church before the *Reformation*, you *beg to know*, how the *Reformation itself can be justified?*

My Lord, I do not urge this to shew either that the *Revolution* and *Reformation* are equally justifiable, or that they both are to be justified upon the *same* Reasons; but to shew that your Lordship from *your own Principles*, needed not to have wanted as good Reasons for the *Reformation*, as you have produced for the *Revolution*, even supposing the Church of *Rome* had as *real* an Authority over us as *James* the Second had, and that we were as truly in a State of Subjection to that Church before the *Reformation*, as we were in a State of Subjection to that King before the *Revolution*.

Again, you proceed thus; *For there was then* (at the Time of the *Reformation*) *a Church, and an Order of Church-men, vested*

*with all such spiritual Authority, as is of the Essence of the Church. There was therefore a Church Authority to oblige Christians; and a Power in some over others. What was it therefore to which we owe this very Church of England?**

Now, my Lord, I hope you will grant, that just at the Time of the *Revolution*, 'there was then a *King*, vested with all such Civil 'Authority as is of the Essence of a *King*. There was therefore 'a *Regal Authority* to oblige the People of *England*, and a Power 'in one over others. What was it therefore to which we owe this 'very *Revolution* in *England*?'

I suppose you will say that we owe it, not to any *Want* of Authority in the late King *James*, but to his *Abuse* of his Authority: Why therefore is it not as easy to account for the *Reformation*, not from the *Want*, but the *Abuse* of Authority in the Church of *Rome*? Is it an Argument that the People of *England* were no *Subjects*, under no Government, nor had any *King*, because they would no longer submit to the *Oppressions* and *Grievances* of a late Reign, but asserted their *Liberties* and appealed to the Conditions of the *Original Contract*?

If not, why is it an Argument that the Church had *no Authority*, because some Years ago the People of *England* would no longer submit to the *Corruptions*, and *unlawful Injunctions* of the Church of *Rome*, but appealed to the *Scriptures*, and the Practice of the *first* and *purest* Ages of Christianity?

If your Lordship was so entirely consistent with yourself as you tell us you are; if you never pursued an Argument farther than the plain Reason of it led you; how is it possible that you, who have so strenuously defended the *Resistance* of People against a *Legal King*† (for so you expressly call him), should declare that our Separation from the Church of *Rome* cannot be *justified*, without supposing that the Church of *Rome* had never any Authority over us?

For supposing that Church had been really our Sovereign in Affairs of Religion, is it not strange that you, who have asserted that our *present Settlement* is owing entirely to the taking up Arms, and adhering to such as were in Arms against their Sovereign,‡ should yet declare that our opposing the Church of *Rome*, cannot be justified but by supposing, that she never had any *Sovereignty* over us?

Is it not yet stranger, that you, who have defended the *Revolution* by comparing it to the *Reformation*, should yet declare that the *Reformation* cannot be justified without supposing that

* *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 118.

† *Sev. Tracts*, p. 332.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 366.

the Church of *England* was under no Authority of the Church of *Rome*?

For, my Lord, if the Church of *England* had not been under the Authority of the Church of *Rome*, how could our *opposing* that Church be compared to the *resisting* of King *James*? How could our *Separation* from that Church be a Defence of our *withdrawing* our *Allegiance* from King *James*, without supposing that the Church before that *Separation*, had as *Real* and *Legal* Authority as that King had before the *Revolution*?

Your Words are these; *Why should that (i.e., Resistance) be absolutely and entirely condemned, as a damnable Sin, any more than Church Separation, by which we got rid of the Tyranny of Rome? And again, All Church Reformation is not Church Destruction; Why therefore must all Resistance be called Rebellion?**

Now is it not very strange, my Lord, that after this, you should assert that the Church had *no Authority* before the *Reformation*; and that if it had any Authority, then our *Separation* from it cannot be *justified*? Is not this very strange, after you had used it as an Argument to justify the withdrawing of our *Allegiance* from King *James* the Second?

For let us suppose with you, that there was *no Church Authority* at the time of the *Reformation*, and then see how excellent an Argument you have found out in Defence of the *Revolution*, which, upon this Supposition, must proceed in this manner.

The Church of *England* might separate from the Church of *Rome*, who had *no Authority* over her; therefore the People of *England* might resist their *Legal* King, who had a *Regal* Authority over them. Again, The Clergy of *England*, who were *no Subjects* of the Church of *Rome*, might separate from that Church; therefore the People of *England*, who were *Subjects* to King *James* the Second, might withdraw their *Allegiance* from him.

Thus absurd is your Argument made, by supposing that the Church had not as real and rightful an Authority before the *Reformation*, as *James* the Second had before the *Revolution*.

Farther; Let us suppose with your Lordship, that *if there was a real Authority in the Church at the time of the Reformation*, then the *Reformation* has *no bottom*, but is altogether unjustifiable; let us suppose that this Doctrine is true, and then see how consistently you have argued upon this Supposition.

You say the *Reformation* cannot be justified; it has *no bottom* to stand upon, if the Church of *Rome* had a real Authority; yet

* *Sev. Tracts*, p. 334.

this *Opposition*, which is so entirely *wrong*, because an *Opposition* to Authority, is brought by you as a *parallel Case* to prove that the *Resistance* against the *Authority* of King James was entirely *right*. This *Reformation*, which if it was brought about against any *Church Authority*, is said to be for that *very Reason* without any *bottom*, and to have no *Foundation*, is used by your Lordship to point out the *true Bottom* and *firm Foundation* of the *Revolution*.

And here let all the World judge, whether *Reason* and *Religion* alone can induce anyone to maintain the *Truth*, the *Justice*, the *Honour*, the *Christianity* of the Revolution, as founded upon Resistance to a Legal King ; and yet condemn at the same time the *Reformation*, as having neither *Reason*, nor *Truth*, nor *Justice* to support it, as founded upon a Departure from a real Authority in the Church of *Rome*. For *Reason* and *Religion* do as plainly give leave to depart from the *highest* Authority in the Church, when the Laws of God cannot be observed without departing from it, as in any other Case ; and there is no more Necessity of supposing or proving that there was no rightful Authority in the Church, to justify our departing from it, than it is necessary to prove such a Person not to be my *Father*, or to have no *Authority* over me, in order to justify my disobeying his *unlawful Commands*.

Again, your Lordship is farther at a loss about the *Reformation*, which cannot possibly be justified, if afterwards, an *Authority* in Matters of *Conscience* and *Salvation*, be still claimed.

Thus you say ; *Nor can I ever understand, upon this bottom* (*viz.*, the claiming such Authority) *what it was that could move or justify those, who broke off from the Tyranny of the Church of Rome ; unless it be sufficient to say, that it was only that Power might change Hands.**

Here your Lordship cannot conceive anything more unjustifiable than the *Reformation*, if *Church Authority* is still to be kept up ; nor can you upon this Claim assign any other Pretence for *reforming*, but *only* that Power might change Hands.

Did your Lordship then never hear of the *Justice* of removing one Authority, and setting up another ? Can you think of no Case, where *Equity*, *Honour*, and *Duty*, called upon a People to *resist* one Power, and yet make another to succeed ?

Now if this Practice can be equitable and honourable, and is asserted to be so by your Lordship, can it be conceived, that *Reason alone* should induce you to load the *Reformation* with so much *Guilt* and *Injustice*, to condemn it as so groundless an

* *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 48.

Undertaking; because though it set aside the *Tyrannical* Authority of the Church of *Rome*, yet it asserted a true Church Authority, and made Obedience to it necessary to obtain the Favour of God.

Suppose some Friend to the *Revolution*, after hearing that the *Prince of Orange* was proclaimed King, and a *Regal* Authority set up, should then have said in your Lordship's Words, *I can never understand, upon this bottom, what it was that could move or justify those, who broke off from the Tyranny of the late King James; unless it was sufficient to say, that it was only that Power might change Hands.*

I appeal to your Lordship, whether anything could be more *extravagant* and *senseless*, than such a Declaration as this from a Friend to the *Revolution*.

And I as freely appeal to the *common Sense* of everyone, whether your *own Declaration* expressed in the *same Words* with regard to the *Reformation*, sets you out to any better Advantage in relation to that.

For it is full as good Sense to say, where is the *Justice* of the *Revolution*, or what *Foundation* has it in the Reason of Things, if there is still a *King* to be acknowledged, and a *Regal Authority* to be submitted to? as to call out for the *Justice*, and *Equity*, and *Reason* of the *Reformation*, if there is still a *Church Authority* which we are obliged to obey. And it is as certainly the *Shame* and *Reproach* and *Injustice* of the *Revolution*, that a Government and *Regal Authority* is still maintained, as it is the *Shame*, and *Reproach*, and *Injustice* of the *Reformation*, that a *Church Authority* is still asserted.

And there was no more Necessity in the Nature or Reason of the Thing, that the *Reformation* should disown all *Authority* properly so called, in Matters of *Religion*, than that the *Revolution* should have rejected all *Authority* properly so called in *Civil Affairs*. Neither does the *Reformation* any more contradict itself, or undermine its own *Foundation*, and give the *Papists* an Advantage over it, by claiming and asserting a *Church Authority*, than the *Revolution* contradicted itself, or conspired its own Ruin, by setting up a *King*, and maintaining a *Government* in the State. And it had been just as *wise*, as *prudent*, and *politic* Management, if the *Revolution* had set up no Government, but left every Man to himself in *Civil Affairs*, in order to have prevented the Return of the late King *James*; as if the *Reformation* had maintained no Church Authority, but left every Person's Religion to himself, in order to keep out *Popery*. And it is just as much Matter of Joy and Triumph to the *Papists*, to see this Authority asserted in the Church of *England*, as it was Matter

of Joy to the late King *James*, to find that a *Regal Authority* was set up against him.

But to go on ; your Argument, when put in form, will proceed in this manner.

The Church of *England* departed from the Authority of the Church of *Rome*, therefore we may *lawfully* depart from any Church Authority. And again ; at the *Reformation* we *lawfully* separated from the *Communion* of the Church of *Rome*, therefore we may as *lawfully* separate from any particular *Communion*.

And now, my Lord, can any Argument be more trifling, or draw more absurd Consequences after it, than this? And yet, absurd as it is, it is one of your best, and which you seem to take great Delight in : Thus are we told in almost every Page, that if we will stand by the *Reason* and *Justice* of the *Reformation*, we must give up *all Authority* in Matters of Religion ; and not pretend to a Necessity of being of any *particular Church*, if we would justify our leaving the *Romish Church*.

But pray, my Lord, you have told us, that the People of *England* of all *Stations* did *lawfully* and *honourably*, &c., resist the late King *James* ; but does it therefore follow, that they may as *lawfully* and *honourably* resist King *George*? If not, how does it follow, that because we might *justly* separate from the Church of *Rome*, therefore others may as *justly* separate from the Church of *England*?

Is it inconsistent with the Principles of the *Revolution* to declare Men *Rebels*, because it was founded (as you affirm) upon Resistance? If not, why must it be inconsistent with the Principles of the Church of *England*, to declare any people *Schismatics*, because she separated from the Church of *Rome*? Now if you will say that all who take *Arms* at *any time* against *any King*, are justified by those, who took *Arms* against the late King *James* ; then you would have some Pretence to make our *Separation* from the Church of *Rome* a Justification of *every other Separation* in the World. But since you cannot say this, but have pretended to demonstrate the contrary, that though sometimes *Resistance* is not *Rebellion*, yet sometimes *Resistance* certainly is *Rebellion*, you are particularly hard to the *Reformation*, to make it either unjustifiable in itself, or else to be a *Justification* of every other pretended *Reformation*.

But however, as hard as you are upon the *Reformation* in this Place, making it, considered as a *Separation*, a Defence of all other *Separations* from the Church of *England* ; yet you yourself, to shew your equal regard to both sides of a Contradiction, have asserted the contrary, and declared that as all *Resistance* is *not Rebellion*, so neither is *all Separation Schism*.

Now, I suppose, when you say that *all Resistance* is not *Rebellion*, it is certainly implied that *some Resistance* may be *Rebellion*; and likewise by declaring in the *same* manner *all Separation* not to be *Schism*, it must as necessarily be implied that *some Separation* may be *Schism*. Here therefore you plainly teach us, that some *Separation* may be *Schism*, and some *Separation* may not be *Schism*; yet your present Argument is founded upon the contrary Supposition, that either all Separations are *Lawful*, or none are *Lawful*; for it is the constant Complaint in every Chapter of your Book, that the Church of *England* should assert any Necessity or Obligation upon others of conforming to her, when she herself denied the Necessity of her conforming to the Church of *Rome*. So that the *Lawfulness* or *Justice* of her *Separation* from *Rome*, is urged to shew the equal *Lawfulness* and *Justice* of all *Separations* from the Church of *England*; which Argument is plainly founded upon this Proposition, that all Separations from any Churches, are either equally *Lawful*, or equally *Unlawful*. Which is directly contrary to this other Proposition, that some Separation may be *Schism*, and some Separation may not be *Schism*. Which Contradiction is just as palpable, as if you had said, all Resistance is not the Sin of Rebellion; yet all Resistance is either *equally* lawful, or *equally* unlawful.

But to go on, you say that *all Resistance* is not *Rebellion*, and for a Proof of it, say, that all *Church Separation* is not *Schism*; which plainly implies, that there is *at least* as much Difference betwixt some *Separations* from *different Churches*, as there is betwixt some armed *Resistances* against *different Kings*. Now if, according to your Lordship, there is as much Difference betwixt *Resistances*, as there is betwixt an Action that is a *Duty*, and an Action that is a *Sin*, and you have proved this Difference, by comparing those *Resistances* to different sorts of *Separations*, then it will necessarily follow that there may be, nay must be, as much Difference betwixt one *Separation* and another *Separation*, as there is betwixt one Action that is a *Duty*, and another Action that is a *Sin*. This being the true State of the Case, your Lordship's Argument in Defence of the *Separatists*, taken from our *Separation* from the Church of *Rome*, will stand thus.

We separated from the Church of *Rome*, because *such Separation* was our *Duty*, therefore the *Fanatics* may separate from the Church of *England*, though *such Separation* is a *Sin*: Which is as rational an Argument, as if it should be said, such a one killed a Man *lawfully*, therefore anyone else may kill a Man *unlawfully*. For if some Separation may be a *Duty*, and some

Separation a *Sin*, it is as false and ridiculous to infer, that if *our* Separation is just, it justifies *all other* Separations; as to conclude, that because we may do our *Duty*, others may transgress their *Duty*. For there is manifestly, and from your own Acknowledgment, this great Difference between one Separation and another Separation, that one *Separation* in such Circumstances, will no more justify a Separation in other Circumstances, than the Lawfulness of killing a Man in some Cases, will prove it lawful to kill a Man in all other Cases.

Now if your Lordship has any *Demonstrations* ready, to show that *Resistance* in some Circumstances is a *Christian Duty*, and *Resistance* in some other Circumstances is a *damnable Sin*; and that it may be as great a Sin to resist some Princes, as it is a Duty to resist others; if you can help us to any plain Rule, any certain Signs to know an honest Christian *Resister*, from a *Resister* who is a *Rebel* and in danger of *Damnation*; I hope there may be found as plain Rules to shew us who separates *lawfully*, and who separates *unlawfully* from any particular Church. If you can give any Reasons why the late King *James* might be resisted *then*, and yet show it a Sin to resist King *George now*, it is something strange that you cannot find any Reasons, why it was our *Duty* to separate from the Church of *Rome then*, and yet shew it a *Sin* to separate from the Church of *England now*.

For I would suppose at least, that there is as much Difference between separating from the Church of *England* and separating from the Church of *Rome*, as there is betwixt *Resistance* against a *good King*, and *Resistance* against a *Tyrannical Oppressor*; and if there be this Difference, then you must allow, that it is as false to argue from the *Lawfulness* of separating from one Church, to the *Lawfulness* of separating from the other, as it would be to argue, that because oppressive Tyrants may be resisted, therefore just and good Kings may be resisted. I have been the longer in examining this Doctrine, in this particular View in relation to *Resistance*, that it may be seen with how much Truth you say, you have *recommended such Principles as serve to establish the Interest of our common Country and our common Christianity, of human Society and true Religion, upon one uniform, steady, and consistent Foundation.**

For it is evident that these Principles, if put in Practice, directly tend to the utter Ruin of our common Country, and our common Christianity; for I have shewn that all the Arguments which you have advanced against Church Authority, if they

* *Pref. to Com. Rights of Subjects.*

have any Force, conclude with the same Force against all sorts of Authority in the World.

I shall now proceed to a most remarkable evasive Denial of everything you have said relating to Church Authority, from your own Mouth.

*A Remarkable Evasion of your Lordship's
in relation to Church Authority.*

THE *Learned Committee* charged your Lordship with *denying all Authority to the Church, and leaving it without any Authority to judge, censure, or punish Offenders in the Affairs of Conscience and eternal Salvation.** To support this Charge, they quoted these Words of your Sermon; *Christ is sole Lawgiver to his Subjects, and himself sole Judge of their Behaviour in the Affairs of Conscience and Salvation; in these Points he hath left behind him no visible human Authority.*

Now how is it that your Lordship has cleared yourself from this Charge? Why truly by declaring, that by a Denial of *all Church Authority*, you only meant to deny to the Governors of the Church a Power of passing the *irreversible Sentence*, or that Christ has left no visible Authority here to *judge* People at the last Day. When you talked so much of Church Authority in Matters of Religion, and of *an Authority left behind*, it was very reasonable to think that you were speaking of an Authority which related to the Church in this World. But it seems, all you have denied in relation to Church Authority, is only this, that anyone but Christ shall *pass the irreversible Sentence*, or judge us at the last Day.

For you say; *As Christ is to pass the irreversible Sentence, thus he is judge alone. And what I affirm of him, I deny of others in the same Sense in which I affirm it of him: And in no other Sense can I be supposed to deny it, because it answers no Purpose.†*

Therefore when you say no Men have any Authority in Affairs of *Religion* and *Conscience*, you only say that no Men have Authority to pass the *irreversible Sentence* at the last Day. For you declare that thus it is that Christ alone is Judge, and you only deny that of others, which you affirm of him, and con-

* *Repres.*, p. 4.

† *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 33.

sequently the only Authority which you deny them, is that of judging the World at the *last Day*.

Strange! my Lord, that after so many elaborate Pages for ecclesiastical Liberty, so many Compliments received for your successful Attacks upon *Church Authority*; that after all, you should declare, that you have not so much as touched upon *Church Authority*, but have only been labouring to *demonstrate* that the *Judgment of the last Day is committed to Christ alone*.

*Christ, you say, is in no other Sense Judge of the Behaviour of Christians in these Points, than as their Condition must and will be determined by his Sentence. And when I deny this of Men, I do not, I cannot, mean to deny this of them in any other Sense, but that in which I affirm it of Christ.**

So that when you in plain Words seem to deny all Authority in the Church, as by saying, that *Christ alone is Judge of the Behaviour of Christians, in Matters of Religion*, and that he left behind him *no visible human Authority in these Points*; and such like Phrases, as seem to ordinary Understandings to deny all *Rule and Authority* in the Church; you only mean, that *no one but Christ is to pass the Sentence at the last Day*. This is the *Key* your Lordship has given us to your Writings, which indeed gives them quite another Face, and makes them such a Course of *Amusements*, as exceeds all which have yet been seen in that kind; as will appear from the following Particulars.

Thus when you say, that *in the Affairs of Conscience and Salvation, Christ hath left no visible human Authority behind him*. The Meaning is this, that *Christ hath left no body behind him in this World, to pass the irreversible Sentence in the next World, i.e., hath left no one to do that here, which cannot be done till hereafter*. This is the *sublimest* Sense which this Passage is capable of, from your own Construction.

Again, you say, the *Church of Christ is the Number of Persons who are sincerely and willingly Subjects to him as their Lawgiver and Judge*; † which according to this new *Key*, is to be thus understood; The *Church of Christ is the Number of Persons who will sincerely and willingly submit to the Sentence of Christ at the last Day*. For you say, we are to submit to him as our Judge; and you expressly say, he is *in no other Sense judge of the Behaviour of Christians*, than as he is to pass the *irreversible Sentence*; therefore if we are to be *willingly and sincerely* subject to him as *Judge*, our Obedience or Subjection to him as *Judge*, can be no otherwise expressed, than by our Submission to his Sentence then pronounced.

* *Ans. to Repr.*, p. 46.

† *Serm.*, p. 25.

So that this Definition comes at last to signify a Number of Persons, who sincerely and willingly submit, some to be saved, and some to be damned at the last Day ; for this will be the Effect of Christ's Sentence as Judge.

This is as sound Divinity, as if I should define the Church of Christ, to be a *Number of Persons, who sincerely and willingly submit, some to live, and some to die.*

Again, you say, that *your Doctrines relating to the Authority of the Church, is the very Foundation on which the Church of England stands ; and that they are so necessary for its continuance, that without them it is impossible to defend its Cause against the Roman Catholics.*

Now your Doctrine concerning Church Authority, you have over and over declared to be only this, *that Christ alone shall judge the World at the last Day.* For you expressly say, that you deny the Church an Authority of judging in *no other Sense,* than in the Sense in which you affirm it of Christ.

Now, my Lord, how comes this Doctrine to be the Support of the Church of *England* ? How can it possibly have any relation to the Merits of the Cause ? Does it follow that the *Pope* had no Legal Authority in *England,* that *Transubstantiation* is false, that *Purgatory* is a groundless Fiction, and *Prayers* to Saints are unlawful, because *Christ alone shall judge the World* ? This is what you have affirmed of Christ, this is all which you have denied of Men ; and this Doctrine it seems about *Church Authority,* as you are pleased to call it, is the *only Support* of the Church of *England,* and the *very Foundation on which it stands.*

A *Roman Catholic* tells me that *Transubstantiation* is true ; I answer him no, that cannot be, and that for this reason, because no Order of Men shall judge us at the last Day ; Christ alone should do it. Could anything be more extravagant, or more foreign to the Purpose, than such an Answer as this to a *Roman Catholic* ? And yet, according to your Account of the Matter, this is the only Answer which can be defended. For you have denied *no Authority* to the Church, but that which peculiarly belongs to Christ *as Judge at the last Day* ; and yet you say that your Doctrine relating to Church Authority, is the very Foundation and Support of the *Reformation.*

Now if this Doctrine be our only Defence against the Church of *Rome,* and what alone supports us against that Church, then the *Presbyterians, the Independents, Quakers,* and all sorts of *Fanatics,* who own this Doctrine, that *Christ alone shall pass the last Sentence,* are by it as well defended against the Church of *England,* as she is against the Church of *Rome* ; so that it makes

us as much wrong in regard to the *Dissenters*, as it makes us right in regard to the *Papists*; and though it should give us *Victory* over the *Papists*, yet it makes us fall a Conquest to the *Fanatics*. For it is certainly as proper for a *Quaker* to reply to the *Church of England*, that his Reformation is justified against the Authority of the *Church of England*, because Christ alone shall judge the World at the last Day; as for the *Church of England* to make that Answer to the *Church of Rome*.

Your Lordship says, for you to deny Church Authority in any other Sense, *answers no Purpose*. Pray, my Lord, what Purpose does this manner of denying answer? Here is a Dispute about Church Authority, and the Powers of Ecclesiastical Governors: Your Lordship interposes, and declares that no Man shall *pass the irreversible Sentence at the last Day*. To what Purpose, my Lord, is this Declaration? Does it strike any Light into the Controversy, or any way point out the Merits of the Cause? Does this inform us whether there is any such thing as Church Authority, or where it is seated? If two *Families* were trying their Title to the same Estate, and the Judge should pretend to determine the Matter, by saying that *God alone is sole Proprietor of all Things*, it would be as much to the Purpose, as to tell us in the Controversy about Church Authority, that *Christ alone shall judge the World*. Does this any way prove that there is no human Authority in the Church, or that Christians are no way concerned with it? What an excellent Argument is this? *Christ alone* shall judge the World, therefore no Men have *any Authority* in Religion, therefore it can no way affect you with regard to the Favour of God, whether you submit or not, to such human Authority?

Whether your Lordship is forced upon this Method of explaining yourself, by any other Motives than those of Sincerity and Conviction, is what I shall not presume to say; but I believe, if a Person should be called to account for saying the *King* had no Right to *create Peers*, and should afterwards defend himself, by saying that he only meant he could not *create* in that Sense, in which *God alone* could create; I am apt to think such a Defence would be no great Recommendation of his Sincerity. But, my Lord, it would be as proper and as ingenuous for a Person so accused to make such a Defence, or rather such an Escape, as for your Lordship, after the most express repeated Denials of *all Church Authority*, to declare that you only meant to exclude it from passing the *irreversible Sentence* at the last Day. And the Nature of Church Authority is as much settled and determined by this Declaration, as the King's Power in his Kingdom, as to

the Creation of *Peers*, is declared by saying that *God alone* can create.

For is it any Argument that no Persons have any particular Authority to baptize others, to admit to the holy Sacrament, and exclude unworthy Persons from it, because they are not to judge the World at the last Day? Is it a Proof that Bishops have no Authority to ordain, to confirm; no Commission from God to take care of Religious Matters, and see that all Things in the Divine Service be done decently and in order, because Christ alone is to pass Judgment upon all at the last Day? Does it follow that Men are under no Church Authority, but may choose any Government, or no Government as they please, because Christ alone shall call the World to Judgment? There is as much Logic in saying that *Jesus Christ* suffered under *Pontius Pilate*, therefore Bishops have no more Authority than Laymen; as to say they have no Authority in Religious Affairs, because Christ is to judge the World.

Yet you say this was the only proper Sense in which you could be supposed to deny it. Now, my Lord, I should have thought it had been more to the Purpose, to have denied Church Authority in some such Sense, as it had been falsely claimed by somebody or other, that it might have been said that you had an Adversary somewhere or other. But in this Matter, you have not so much as an Adversary in this World; for no one pretends to be Judge, as Christ is Judge, or sets up the *Authority* of the Church in Opposition to the last *Tribunal*; yet this is the *only manner* of Judging, the *only sort* of Authority, which you say you have denied to others; therefore you have only denied that which was never claimed; you have only denied that which no more relates to *Church Authority*, than it relates to *Church Music*. The *Pope* himself neither pretends to pass Sentence at the last Day, nor that his Judgments here will have any Effect in the next World, but conditionally, that is, *Clave non errante*. Now this is not a Sense in which Christ alone is Judge, therefore it is not a Sense in which you have denied it to others. So that notwithstanding this long elaborate Treatise against Church Tyranny and Popish Claims, *Popery* itself is as safe and sound as ever it was. For you have denied this Power of Judging in *no other Sense*, than as you have affirmed it of Christ, as he is to pass the last *irreversible* Sentence at the Day of Judgment; but the *Pope* does not claim it in that Sense, therefore the *Papal Power* is untouched by your Lordship.

Here I must observe, how your Lordship has evaded the great Points in Dispute, both concerning the *Nature* of the Church, and Church Authority. When you were charged with describing the

Church contrary to *Scripture* and the *Article* in the Church of *England*; your Answer was, that you had only described the *Invisible Church*; which was saying in other Words, that in a Dispute amongst *Visible Churches*, and about Church-Communion, you described a Church which had no relation to the Matter, nor ever can have to any Dispute amongst Christians. This, my Lord, to speak tenderly of it, may be called only an *Evasion*.

Again, as to Church Authority, your Lordship has been charged with denying it all, and leaving it no right to judge or censure in the Affairs of Conscience. Your Answer is this, that you have only denied that Christ has left any Men here to judge us at the last Day. That is, in a Controversy about the *Existence* of Church Authority, the *Extent* and *Obligation* of its Laws, you have only denied such an Authority as nobody claims, nor ever will be executed, till *all Visible Churches*, and Disputes about them, will be at an end, *viz.*, at the Day of Judgment.

This, my Lord, is another *Evasion*, and that in the very chief Point in Dispute, where Sincerity should have obliged you to have been open, clear, and express. But no sooner are you touched upon this Point, but you fly into the Clouds, and the very Dissenters themselves lose sight of you.

Thus when you had plainly said, that *Christ hath left behind him no visible human Authority in the Affairs of Conscience*, the Dissenters might justly think they had nothing to be charged with for their Disobedience to Bishops; they might well think that they were left to any Government, or no Government in Religion, as they pleased, since Christ had left *no visible human Authority*; but then how must they be astonished, my Lord, to find that your Assertion about Church Authority, does not at all relate to the Church in *this World*, but to the Exercise of a certain Authority in the *next World*, after all Churches on the Earth are at an end? To find that you have denied no Authority to any Men, but that which peculiarly belongs to Christ at the last Day? That is, that you denied no Authority which ever was claimed either by *Protestant* or *Popish Churches*, or indeed which relates to the Church in *this World*?

Suppose, when his Majesty was last at *Hanover*, anyone should have asserted, that the *Regency* had no Authority in Civil Matters; would the Regency have thought it any Excuse, if he had said that he only meant they were not the Governors of *Hanover*? Yet, my Lord, it would be as proper an Apology for him who had denied the Power of the Regency in *Great Britain*, to say he only meant they had not the supreme Power in *Hanover*, as for your Lordship, after a Denial of *all Visible*

Church Authority in this World, to say you only denied an Authority to pass the irreversible Sentence in the next World.

Thus has your Lordship left the Dispute, and only pretended to deny that which nobody ever claimed, *viz.*, that any Men have Authority to judge the World in Christ's stead, or pass the irreversible Sentence at the last Day. Your Lordship is here apprehensive, that you shall be charged with *fighting without an Adversary*, and therefore you point out several, and say, *I meant it against those, who are so very free in declaring others of Christ's Subjects out of God's Favour; and in obliging Almighty God, to execute the Sentences of Men.*

There has been indeed, my Lord, a Number of Men, ever since Christianity appeared in the World, who have been *very free* in declaring *Heretics* and *Schismatics* out of God's Favour, and who have maintained that these Heretics and Schismatics, when censured by the Church, cannot be received into God's Favour, but by their submitting to, and returning to the Church. But now, if your Lordship means your Doctrine against these, you are still *without an Adversary*, and might as well mean it against no Body; for these Men never pretended to *judge others in Christ's stead, or to erect an Ecclesiastical Authority in Opposition to the Great Tribunal, which is the only Authority you pretend to deny.*

You go on: *If we had not such amongst Protestants; yet it might be pardonable to guard our People against the Presumptions of the Roman Catholics; who assume to themselves that Power of Judgment, which Christ alone can have.*

Surely your Lordship must have so great an Aversion to Popery, that you never could so much as look into their Books; for otherwise I cannot conceive how you should not know, that the Roman Catholics pretended to no Power of Judging so as to affect People, but upon certain Conditions, as *Clave non errante*; but I suppose this is not a Power of Judging which belongs to our Saviour; *Clave non errante* has no Place in his Judgments. How then can your Lordship charge the *Papists* with assuming his Power, when that which they assume, cannot be ascribed to him without Blasphemy? So that, my Lord, it is just as pardonable to guard your People against these Presumptions, as it is to alarm them with false and imaginary Dangers.

Again you say; *But how lately is it, that we have had People terrified with this very Presumption, even by Protestants; and the Terms of Church Power, and the spiritual fatal Effects of Church Censures, made use of to frighten Men into a separate Communion?*

My Lord, I shall not here enter into the Merits of that Con-

troversy, which your Lordship here points at; it being the Doctrine itself which your Lordship blames, and not the Misapplication of it. Thus you censure them, not because they would draw People from a *true* Church to a *false* one, but because they pretend to frighten Men out of one Communion into another. This is your Lordship's heavy Charge against them, that they should presume to talk of the Differences of Communions, and prefer one Communion to another. So that whoever thinks any way of Worship to be dangerous, and endeavours to withdraw People from it, is here censured by your Lordship, as pretending to judge in Christ's stead, and setting up an Authority in Opposition to the last Day.

Your Lordship saith, it is with this *very Presumption* (*viz.*, that they can pass the irreversible Sentence) *that these Men have endeavoured to frighten People into a separate Communion.* If I should say, that it is upon *Presumption* that Christ never appeared in the World, that your Lordship has delivered your late Doctrines, I should freely submit to the Charge of Calunny; and I am sure your Lordship has ventured as far, in saying that it was with *this very Presumption* that these Men delivered such Doctrines. And your Lordship has as much reason to charge them with *Atheism*, as with this *very Presumption*; for they no more presume to *judge in Christ's stead*, or pass the *irreversible Sentence*, than they presume there is no God.

Your Lordship has still, it seems, another Adversary, a late Writer (the Dean of *Chichester*) *who has spoken unwarily of the Effects of the spiritual Punishments, the Church inflicts, being generally suspended till the Offender comes into the other World.**

This first Censure is very modest, carrying it no farther than an *unwary* Expression; but presently the Charge advances; and, you say, *if it be thus, you confess you think the Condition of Christians much worse than the Condition in which St. Paul describes the Heathens, who are left to their own Consciences and the righteous Judgment of God.* So that at last it comes to this, that the Dean has taught such Doctrine, as makes it more desirable to be a *Heathen* than a *Christian*.

Let us therefore try how this Charge is supported: The Dean has said, *the Effects of spiritual Punishments are generally suspended till the Offender comes into another World;* † therefore, says your Lordship, *the Condition of Christians is much worse than that of Heathens,* and the Reason is this, *because Heathens are left to their own Consciences and the righteous Judgment of God;* so that if spiritual Punishments signify anything to

* *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 35.

† *Serm.*, p. 8.

Offenders in the other World, or *have any Effect there*, then such People are in your Lordship's Judgment, not *left to their own Consciences and the righteous Judgment of God*.

Pray, my Lord, how does it follow that if spiritual Punishments have any Effect in *the other World*, that then Offenders are *not left to the righteous Judgment of God*?

Is it an Argument that People are not *left to the righteous Judgment of God*, because they are to be punished in the other World? Or is it an Argument that they are excluded from God's righteous Judgment, because they are not punished till they come thither? I should have thought it a plain Argument for the direct contrary, and that one could not give a stronger Proof that such Offenders were *left to the righteous Judgment of God*, than by saying that the Effects of such Punishments are not felt till the Offender comes into the other World; I should have thought this a manifest Declaration that the Offender was to fall to the *righteous Judgment of God*, since he was not to feel any Punishment till he was fallen into God's Hands. If the *Dean* had intended to teach that Church Punishments have no Effect, but such as the *righteous Judgment of God* gives them, how could he have better signified his Intention, than by declaring, that *the Effects of such Punishments are generally suspended till the Offender comes into the other World*? How could the *Dean* more expressly guard against any horrible Apprehensions of Church Censures, or more directly refer the Cause to God, than he has done here? His Words are a plain Declaration, that such Offenders must fall to the *righteous Judgment of God*, since they are to fall into his Hands before they feel the Effects of such Punishment.

If any discontented Offender against the *Church* should tell me, that if the Censures of the Church can signify anything to him, he should be glad to be a *Heathen*, and have his Fate amongst them; would it not be sufficient Matter of Satisfaction to tell him, that these Punishments will have no Effect but in the other World, where there can be no Injustice; and that it is the same God who judges the Heathens, who will judge Christians?

Yet this Declaration, which is the only Ground for Satisfaction to Men of Conscience, under the Censures of the Church, is by your Lordship pretended to be such an Evil, as to make us rather resign our Christianity, than submit to it. This is all which the *Dean* has said to make it more desirable to be a *Heathen* than a *Christian*.

Suppose, my Lord, the Matter had been worded stronger, and instead of saying that the *Effects of spiritual Punishments are*

generally suspended till the Offenders come into the other World, it had been said, the spiritual Censures of the Church shall rise in the Judgment and condemn Offenders. If it had been thus expressed, what Complaints might you not have made against such unwary Expressions? What Cruelties and Hardships might you not have charged on such Doctrine? And how advantageously might you have compared the Felicity of Heathenism to such Christianity?

But, my Lord, that *Divine Person* who has reserved to himself the righteous Judgment of the World, has yet declared to a certain *Generation*, that the Men of *Nineveh* shall rise up in the Judgment with them and condemn them, because those repented at the preaching of Jonas, but these did not, though a greater than Jonas was with them.*

Now, my Lord, here lies the same Objection against this Doctrine, which there does against the *Dean's*. For is it not full as hard that the *Repentance* of the Men of *Nineveh*, or anywhere else, should have any Effect upon the Impenitent at the Day of Judgment, as that the *Censures* of the Church should have any Effect upon Offenders in the other World? Is it not as cruel that the Impenitent shall have their Guilt aggravated by other People's *preaching* or *Repentance*, as by other People's *Censures*? And would it not be as proper here to say, if this be so, happy they who never heard of *Preaching* or *Repentance*, as to set forth the Happiness of *Heathens*, because they are free from *Church Censures*? If the *Sentence* of the Church will rise in Judgment and condemn Offenders, then you say such Persons do not fall to the righteous Judgment of God. But is not this as true of the Men of *Nineveh*, that if they shall rise up in Judgment and condemn the Impenitent, that then such Persons are not left to the righteous Judgment of God?

So that had you been one of our Saviour's Hearers, you must have been as much astonished at his Doctrine, as at the *Dean's unwary Expression*, and have been obliged to say then, as you have said now, *that you have such Notions of the Goodness of God, and of his gracious Designs in the Gospel, that you think it your Duty to declare your Judgment, that the Supposition is greatly injurious to the Honour of God and of the Gospel, and the thing itself impossible to be conceived.*†

Your Lordship has here only advanced this Argument against the *Significancy* of *Church Censures*, but anyone else may as justly, and to as much Purpose urge it against every Part of Christianity.

* *Matth. xii. 41.*

† *Answ. to Repr., p. 36.*

Thus it may serve to prove that it would be better never to have had the Scriptures; for if any Texts of Scripture shall rise in Judgment and condemn those who disbelieved them, or disregarded their Doctrine, then it may be said, much happier are the Heathens, who have nothing of this to fear from any Scriptures, but are left to their own *Consciences and the righteous Judgment of God.*

Again; As this Argument proves even the Scriptures to be an Unhappiness, so will it prove every Advantage in human Life to be a Misery.

For it is certain that the *Examples* of religious Men, the good *Advice* of our *Friends*, and the virtuous *Commands* of our *Parents* and *Governors*, will, if neglected, *affect* our Condition; and though, like the spiritual *Corrections* of the Church, they may not be felt here, yet hereafter they will rise in Judgment and condemn us. May I not here say with your Lordship, *if the Case be thus*; if other People's *Wisdom, Virtue, Advice* or *Commands*, can affect our *State* in the next World, then more happy are those who never saw a *good* or *wise* Man in their Lives, and who have nothing to fear from the *Advice* or *Commands* of any, but *are left to their own Consciences and the righteous Judgment of God.*

So that you cannot condemn the *Dean's* Doctrine as *horrible*, without condemning it as an *horrible* thing, that the Men of *Nineveh* should rise in Judgment and condemn the impenitent *Jews*; or an *horrible* thing that the *Light* of the *Gospel*, the *Blessings* of Christianity, and the *Advantages* of Education, should have *any Effect* in the next World upon those, who despised them in this World.

Of the Authority of the Church, as it relates to Excommunication.

IN order to vindicate this Doctrine thoroughly, and shew upon what bottom it is founded, I shall, as briefly as I can, state the *Nature* and *Intent* of spiritual Punishments, and shew what Effects they have upon Offenders in the other World; from whence, I persuade myself, it will farther appear, that such Effects do no more exclude Persons from the righteous Judgment of God, than the Heathens are excluded from his righteous Judgment.

Now that corrupt Members may be cut off from Christian

Communion, till by their Amendment they recommend themselves to a Re-admission, is plain from Scripture. This is even granted by your Lordship, that *Christians may set a Mark upon Notorious Offenders, even by refusing to them the peculiar Tokens and Marks of Christian Communion, as well as by avoiding their Company and Conversation.** But then your Lordship makes no more of it, than a *Right which all Christians have to avoid an open, wilful, and scandalous Sinner;†* so that *this Excommunication, considered as a Church Act,* is only the same Power in a Body or Society, of avoiding Persons they abhor; which is the common Privilege of every single Person, whether in or out of the Church, to shun those he dislikes.

And all the Excommunication you allow, is this, that as private Persons have a Right to shun and avoid those they dislike, so the Church may exclude such Members as are disapproved of; and that this judging, or excommunicating, is a Right equally invested in all Christians, and entirely without any Effect upon the Person excommunicated, so as to make his Condition either better or worse before God.

I shall therefore, my Lord, beg leave to shew that the Power of Excommunication, is a *Judicial Power*, which belongs to particular Persons, which they have a Right to exercise from the Authority of Christ; and that Persons so excommunicated, are not to be looked upon as Persons who are only to be abhorred and avoided by Christians, as any Man may avoid those he dislikes, but as Persons who are to be avoided by Christians, because they lie under the *Sentence* of God, and are by his *Authority* turned out of his Kingdom.

That Excommunication is a Power which belongs only to particular Persons, will appear from the Nature of the Thing itself, as it is an Exclusion of Persons from the Christian Worship: for as only particular Men can *officiate* in the Christian Worship, and admit People into Communion; so only those Persons can refuse the Sacrament, and exclude Offenders from Communion. Nothing can be more plain, than that those who can alone administer the Sacrament, can alone exclude Men from it.

All Persons are admitted conditionally into the Christian Covenant, and have only a Title to the Benefits of it, or the ordinary Means of Grace, as they perform the Conditions of their Admission; and those same Persons who have alone the Authority to admit them into the Church upon those Conditions, have alone the Authority to exclude them for Non-performance.

* Page 39.

† Page 43.

And their Act of Exclusion is *as effectual* towards the taking from them all the Privileges of Christians, and as truly makes them *Aliens* from the Kingdom of God, as their Act of Admission at first entitled them to all the Benefits of Church-Communion. For as they have as much Authority to exclude some, as they have to admit others into the Church, the Authority being the same in both Cases, it must be in both Cases *equally effectual*.

If your Lordship will say that all People, are equally qualified to admit Persons into the Church, that, *Go ye, and baptize all Nations*, conferred the same Powers on all Christians; then indeed it must be granted that Excommunication, or Exclusion from the Church, is a Right equally invested in all Christians. But as sure as Christ gave peculiar Powers to his Apostles, as sure as they left particular Men to succeed them in their Powers, so sure is it that only such Successors can either admit or exclude Persons from Christian Communion.

Secondly; That Excommunication belongs to particular Persons, will appear from the Institution of it in Scripture.

*If thy Brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his Fault between thee and him alone. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen Man, and a Publican. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.**

Here, my Lord, is as plain an Institution of *Excommunication*, as can well be conceived; and he who can doubt of it, may doubt whether Baptism be instituted in Scripture.

First, We may observe that here is an Authority given to the Church over the Offender, and that *such* an Authority, as neither belonged to private Men, either separate or united together; for the Offender here had first been admonished, by a single Person, then by *one or two more*, *i.e.*, an indefinite Number, but still here is nothing granted but Admonition; but as soon as he is brought before the Church, there an Authority appears, and the Offender is to feel its Sentence, *let him be unto thee as an Heathen*.

Secondly; That this Authority did not belong to the Church, considered *only* as a greater Number of Christians, but as it signified particular Persons who had this Authority from Christ, for the Edification of his Church.

* *Matth.* xviii. 15.

For Christ expressly declares in the following Verse, that *where two or three are met together in his Name, there is He in the midst of them.*

Here is the Description of that Church before whom the Offender was to be brought, and whose Authority Christ promises to support; it is *two or three met together in his Name.*

Now the Church had not this Authority over the Offender, considered as a *Number, i.e.,* as two or three; for we see that the Offender had been already before *such* a Church; he had been before *two or three*; and after Neglect of them, he was brought before another *two or three, met together in Christ's Name.* Which is a plain Proof that the Offender was not censured by the Church, as it signifies a Number of Christians, but as it implies particular Persons acting in the *Name* of Christ, and with *his Authority.*

Thirdly; We may observe that the Authority here granted to the Church is a *Judicial Authority*, such an Authority as *affects* and *alters* the *Condition* of the Person excommunicated, implied in these Words, *Let him be unto thee as an Heathen; that is, as the Bishop of Oxford observes, in the most natural and common Sense of the Words, they should look upon him no longer as a Member of the Church, but place him amongst Infidels,** and again, *as reduced into the State of Heathens.†*

Now unless it can be said, that a Person who is turned out of the Kingdom of God, and reduced into the State of Heathens, is in the same Condition which he was, when he was in the Church, and had a Right to all the Benefits of Communion; unless we can say that a Person thus rejected from the Means of Grace, by the *Commission* of Christ, is in the same Condition with him, who is continued in the Church by the *same Commission* of Christ; it must be allowed that here is a *Judicial Power* granted to the Church, and such as affects the Condition of the Offender in the Sight of God.

Fourthly; It is to be observed, that this Authority of the Church is made *Judicial* by the express Promise of God to ratify and confirm it. For after it is said, *let him be unto thee as an Heathen,* it is declared, that *whatsoever they should thus bind on Earth, should be bound in Heaven.*

From all this, it plainly appears, that Excommunication is as truly a *Divine Positive Punishment*, as Baptism is a *Divine Positive Blessing*; and that the one as certainly *excludes* us from the Kingdom of God, as the other *admits* us into it. For since

* *Chur. Govt.*, p. 351.

† *Ibid.*, p. 356.

here is as plainly Christ's *express Authority* to take from some Men the ordinary Means of Grace, and exclude them from the common Benefits of Christianity, as there is his Authority *to go and baptize all Nations*; I desire to know, why one is not as truly a Divine *Positive Institution* as the other? Is not Christ's Authority as effectual and significant in excluding, as in admitting Persons into his Kingdom? Is not that same Power as able to take away the Privileges of Church-Membership, as it was at first to grant them?

If therefore there be any Blessing or Happiness in our being admitted into the Church; there must be as much Misery and Punishment in our *Exclusion* from it. For as it implies the Loss of all those Privileges and Favours we were made Partakers of by our Admission into the Church; so we must needs be punished in the same degree that we were happy.

If therefore *Baptism*, a Divine *Positive Institution* to admit us into the Privileges of Christianity, makes any Alteration in our Condition, as to the Favour of God, *i.e.*, if we are brought any nearer to God by Baptism, than we were before; then it plainly follows, *Excommunication*, a Divine *Positive Institution*, which deprives us of all these Privileges of Christianity, and, as the Bishop of *Oxford* expresses it, *reduces Offenders into the State of Heathens*, must needs affect our Condition with regard to the Favour of God.

For if there be anything in Baptism which is just Matter of Joy, there is something equally Terrible in Excommunication; which, when rightly executed, as effectually makes us Aliens from the Promises of God, as Baptism, when rightly administered, makes us Children of God, and Heirs of eternal Life. So that he who can ridicule and expose the *Terrors* and *Effects* of Excommunication, is acting just as Christian a part, as he who derides and despises the Benefits and Advantages of *Baptism*.

Seeing therefore the Church hath as express an Authority to turn some Men out of the Church, as it hath to admit others into it, it is as false an Account of *Excommunication*, to make it only that *common Right* which every Man has, to avoid those he dislikes; as if it should be said, that *Admission* into the Church by Baptism, implies no more, than that *common Right* which every Man has to do good Offices for those he likes. Now, my Lord, is Baptism to be administered, because Persons may do good Offices for one another? Is there a Power in the Church to increase its Members, by admitting others into Communion, for this reason, because People have a common Right to choose their Company? If not, my Lord, how comes the Exclusion of Members to be nothing but a *common Right* of avoiding those

we dislike? Are not Persons excluded from all the Benefits of their Admission? So that if there was any Authority required for the Admission of Persons into the Church, if this Authority was only from God, it is certain that an Exclusion from these Church-Privileges, cannot be executed but by the same Authority, which first granted them. For no Person can be deprived of any Privileges, but by that Power which at first granted them.

When therefore your Lordship recurs to the *common Right* of Persons to avoid, if they can, those they dislike, in order to state the Nature of Excommunication; it is just as much to the Purpose, as if I should get a *Chemist* to examine the natural Qualities of Water, in order to state the true Efficacy of *Baptism*: for Men no more act by any Powers of their own when they exclude Offenders, than they baptize others into Communion by their own Authority, or than Water unites them to Christ by its natural Qualities.

Yet your Lordship sets forth the Nature of Excommunication, and the Right the Church has to it, only from that *common Right, which all Christians have of avoiding if they can those they dislike.* Thus you say, the Church may excommunicate, because *every Person has a Right to judge, may he cannot help judging of the Behaviour of Men*;* that *every Man will judge him to be a Murderer, who takes away his Neighbour's Life unjustly.*

This comes up as truly to the Nature of Excommunication, and is as just an Account of it, as if anyone should set forth the Authority of a British *Judge*, and show the Extent of his *Judicial* Power, by saying, he indeed may judge and condemn a *Murderer*, for this is the Right of every Person to judge, *and no one can help judging and condemning a Murderer.* It is as consistent with Sense, thus to set out the Power of the Judge, as it is with Reason and Scripture, to compare Excommunication to that private Power of *Judging* and *Thinking* which everyone enjoys.

For, my Lord, can it be supposed that when our Saviour tells them, that they should reject such a Person out of the Church, and look upon him as an Heathen, and that he would bind, *i.e.*, confirm their Sentence; can it be supposed, that he only meant they might *think* and *judge* a wicked Person to be a wicked Person, only in such a manner as every Man cannot help *Thinking* and *Judging*? If our blessed Lord only here intended this, what occasion was there for his Promise to ratify their Judgment? What need is there of an Assurance, that they shall privately judge, what they cannot help privately judging? Or

* Page 39.

indeed to what Purpose is any Promise at all made here, if nothing is to be effected? If this Sentence be only a private, unauthorised Declaration, like the Opinion or Judgment of private Men, what Room can there be for this Ratification of our Saviour? If no Effects are intended in the *Judgment* of the Church, what can be the meaning of this Promise? Or rather, since our Saviour has here instituted the Authority, and promised to ratify the Exercise of it, how dares any Christian to compare it to a private personal Power of Judging, or declare that it is without any Effect upon the Condition of Christians? For, my Lord, either something is here promised to the Sentence of the Church, or there is not; if there is something promised, then the Sentence of the Church is no more like the personal Sentence of private Men, than the Power of a Judge is like the Power of a private Man; if you will say there is nothing here promised in these Words, *whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven, &c.*, then you must say that there is nothing at all meant in them; for it is impossible to shew that they can have any other Meaning, than that of a Promise; so that if no Promise is made, they are certainly so many dead Letters.

Again; That this is a *Judicial* Power, is also evident from the Case of the incestuous *Corinthian*. St. Paul says, *What have I to do, to judge them also which are without?* Now the Apostle could not have put this Question, if by Judging here had been meant no Authority, but a private Power of judging and thinking a Sinner to be a Sinner. For a Man can no more help judging a Murderer to be a Murderer, which is without the Church, than if he were within the Church. And it is as proper for us to judge and think aright of those who are out of the Church, as of those who are within it. So that St. Paul could not mean, What have I to do to think a *Murderer* to be a *Murderer* which is without the Church, it being every Man's Duty to think as truly of all Things and Persons as he can? Seeing therefore he plainly intimates that he had a Power of Judging in the Church, which did not belong to him out of the Church, it follows that this Power was *Judicial* and *Authoritative*; for a private Power of Judging and Thinking, belongs to every Man with regard to every Thing.

We shall more easily understand what is meant by the *Effects* of spiritual Punishments, if we consider them under this Division.

First, Such as are the primary and intended Effects; secondly, Such as are only the *accidental* Effects of them.

Now as to the primary and intended Effects of spiritual Punishments, they are these.

First, To preserve the Honour of God and his Church, that ill Members being cut off, it might be *presented a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be Holy, and without Blemish.**

Secondly, To reform Offenders, and reclaim them from their Vices; it is a Discipline given to the Church for the Edification, and not the Destruction of its Members. Thus *St. Paul* says, the incestuous *Corinthian* was to be *delivered over to Satan, for the Destruction of the Flesh, that his Spirit might be saved in the Day of the Lord.†*

Thirdly, To preserve the rest of the Church from the ill Influence of their Example, and that by such Punishments exercised upon others, they might fear, and learn from thence not to offend.

These are the intended Effects of the Punishments which the Church inflicts, to preserve it a Holy Society, and save the Souls of its Members.

God Almighty has instituted several Means for the Advancement of Virtue, and the Salvation of Mankind; and amongst others, he has set up this Authority of the Church to promote the same Ends. It is his *human, ordinary* Means for the Preservation of his Church; and therefore as it cannot operate infallibly, or affect People with a Divine Certainty, it is only conditional, and is to prevail towards the Salvation of Mankind, as far as human and conditional Means can prevail.

And indeed, it is an Institution which has a very natural Tendency to produce the Effects designed by it. For, considering Christianity as a Covenant with God, wherein our Title to Happiness depends upon our Use of the ordinary instituted Means of Grace, nothing can more naturally induce us to live worthy of such Means, than this Authority in the Church to withdraw them upon our Abuse, and expel us from the Terms of the Covenant. Men would not dare to transgress, when they saw they could neither break the Laws, nor corrupt the Faith of Christianity, without being turned out of the Church, by such a Power as Christ hath set up for that Purpose, and with his Promise to make good its Decrees. They must be very obstinate Sinners, who could be content to lie under a Sentence, which as effectually takes from them all Pretension to Christian Happiness, as their Baptism entitled them to those Pretensions at first.

The chief Reason why Sinners are generally so little affected with the Horror of their Condition, is because they look upon

* *Ephes.* iv. 25.

† *1 Cor.* v. 5.

their Punishment at the future Judgment, as a great Distance off; and since they are within the Church, and enjoy the ordinary Means of Grace, they think they can repent in time. But now Christ, by instituting this Church Authority, has suited his Discipline to the Weakness and Frailty of our Nature; and they who are only to be affected with Things present, have a present Judgment to fear; which, though it is only the Judgment of Men, yet is the Judgment of such Men as are commissioned to pronounce it in Christ's Name, and with his Promise to ratify and confirm it. So that they have as much reason to look upon themselves as effectually cast out by God in that Sentence, as they were received into Covenant with God by Baptism; for there is the same Divine Authority to support them both.

As to those other *Effects* of spiritual Punishments in the other World, they are not the intended, but *accidental* Effects of such Punishments, which are brought upon Offenders by their own wicked Behaviour under them.

Thus the Salvation of Mankind is the primary *intended Effect* of Christianity; yet it may have such Effect upon some Men by their own Impiety in it, as to make it better for them if they had never heard of the Name of Christ. For Christianity may become so much a Punishment to some Persons in the other World, that their Condition may be less tolerable than that of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*. But then this is not the intended Effect of Christianity, but an accidental Effect which such Persons bring upon themselves; who by their own ill Conduct turn a Mercy into a Judgment, and make that which was intended to save them, the accidental Cause of their greater Ruin.

Thus it is with spiritual Punishments; they are the merciful Corrections of God intended to prevent our future Misery, but if disregarded, will certainly increase it. This will easily explain what is meant by the *Effects* of spiritual Punishments in the other World, or how *they are suspended till the Offender comes thither*. It is not the direct intended Effect of Church Punishments to increase the Misery of Sinners, or damn them in the other World; no more than it is the direct intended Effect of Christianity to increase People's Damnation: But as Christianity, if abused, will be the accidental Cause of their greater Damnation who so abuse it; so the Censures of the Church, when despised, will have this accidental Effect, as to increase the Punishment of those who so despised them. This is the Nature of those Effects, which spiritual Punishments will have upon the Impenitent in another World.

As for Instance, a Person who is turned out of the Church, may all this while be lusty and strong, and flourish in all the

Advantages of this Life; but when he comes into the other World, he may then find that the spiritual Punishment was a sore Evil, that it is ratified by Christ, has increased his Guilt, and will be Matter of Punishment hereafter.

He will then find that the Censure of the Church has increased his Guilt in these Respects.

First, As it was a *Judicial Sentence* pronounced by Christ's Authority, and therefore not to be despised or neglected without great Impiety; so that let the Sinner have been what he will before, when he continues in his Sins in Contempt of *this Tribunal* set up in Christ's Name, his Guilt is thereby exceedingly increased.

Secondly, As it is the *most powerful Means*, and the very utmost which God can do to reclaim, or even terrify Sinners from their Impiety, as it is the most awakening Call to Repentance, an Institution only less terrible than the last Judgment; those who are not affected with it, must be rendered more odious in the Sight of God, and made ripe for a severer Punishment.

These, my Lord, are the Effects of spiritual Punishments in the other World; it is thus that they alter the Condition of Offenders in the Sight of God in regard to his Favour. They are certainly under greater Displeasure, after they have despised the Censures of Church Authority, and have resisted an *Institution*, which is the last possible Means to recover them.

In former Times, God has been pleased to send his *Prophets* to forewarn Sinners of their Destruction, as *Jonah* to the Men of *Nineveh*: But in the Christian Dispensation, he governs us by his ordinary Providence; and though he does not send express Messengers to recall Sinners, yet he has instituted a *standing Authority* in his Church, to censure Offenders, and give them up to Destruction in his Name, unless they immediately repent. And what can we think more dreadful than a *Sentence* thus pronounced against us by God's Authority, and with his Promise to confirm it?

Was there anything more awakening or more dreadful in the Preaching of *Jonah*, than in this Declaration? *Jonah* could only preach and declare, he could execute nothing himself; it was his being sent in *God's Name*, which created all the Terror, and was the Motive to Repentance. Now though the Church can *only* censure and declare, yet since it is as truly commissioned to censure in *God's Name*, as *Jonah* was sent in *God's Name*, there is as much reason to dread the Consequences of neglecting the Church, as of not repenting at the Message or Preaching of any Prophet from God.

I must now beg leave here, my Lord, *to lament an Assertion*

from the Hands of a Christian and Protestant Bishop; where you declare, that the Excommunication of the incestuous Corinthian, neither added to God's Displeasure, nor would the want of it have at all diminished it. Neither if he had died in an impenitent Condition, would that Sentence have had any Effect in the other World.*

This, my Lord, plainly supposes that there is neither Authority nor Advantage in Excommunication; for if there were, it is certain that our Abuse of it as an Advantage, and our Contempt of it as an Authority, must needs increase our Guilt, and consequently God's Displeasure. Yet your Lordship here teaches the World, that if the incestuous Corinthian, though justly censured, and that by an Apostle directing, and the whole Congregation joining, had died impenitent, that Sentence would have had no Effect in the other World.

Let us therefore suppose that some great Patron of Christian Liberty had gone to the disconsolate Corinthian, sorrowing under the Sentence of the Church, and endeavoured to quiet him after this manner.

'Why do you disquiet yourself with vain Fears about the Censure of the Church, which neither hath nor can have an Effect upon your Condition as to the Favour of God. Let the Apostle and Church be as solemn as they please in the Denunciation; let them in the Name of Christ deliver you over to Satan; yet take Courage, and fear nothing from all this; for you may depend upon it, that, after all, you are but just where you were, before this Sentence were passed. And if you die impenitent, you have no Effects of this Censure to fear in the other World.'

Now this is the Doctrine your Lordship has taught for the Consolation of those who are, or are likely to be under the Sentence of the Church; which if it be now found Doctrine, it was as proper to be told the Corinthian then, as it is for your Lordship to teach it now. And if your Lordship had lived then, it would have been as proper to have told the Corinthian, as to tell us now; and you must have lain under the same Christian Necessity of delivering him from vain Fears, which now constrains you to set all at liberty from the like Apprehensions.

St. Paul, speaking of the Sentence passed upon the Corinthian, says, *Sufficient to such a Man was this Punishment.*† Now, my Lord, if it have nothing of the Nature of a Punishment, if it has no Effect where it is inflicted, if the Person said to be punished can feel no Effect from it, what strange Language is this? Can

* *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 38.

† 2 Cor. ii. 6.

that be called a Punishment, or a sufficient Punishment, which can in no degree be felt, which produces no Effects, or makes no Alteration in the Person where it falls?

Again St. *Paul* tells us, that he had amongst others which had corrupted the Faith, *delivered Hymeneus and Alexander to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme.**

Now if this Sentence can have no Effect, if it cannot signify anything to them, if they are just in the same Condition after it, which they were before, why should it teach them not to blaspheme? Why should a Sentence which they had nothing to fear from, make them any longer afraid to continue in their Errors? Here was therefore either a pious Fraud made use of by the Apostle, to fright Men from their Heresies by something which was in itself vain and insignificant, or else your Lordship has mightily mistaken the Matter, in declaring that it is vain and insignificant. The Apostle plainly inflicts these Censures, as a Terror to Offenders, and to frighten them from continuing in their evil Courses; but if, as you say, Persons be just in the same Condition after this Sentence, in which they were before, if it has no Effect upon them, though they are rightly censured, and yet die impenitent, which is what you expressly say of this *Corinthian*, then it is plain they are only pretended Terrors, and that when the Apostles use them as such, they must be charged with using them as a pious Fraud. And it must be owned that your Lordship has very frankly made the Discovery.

But whoever has Piety enough to believe those First Ambassadors of Christ, will clear them from such a Charge, and rather think it possible that you may mistake in your Philosophy, than they in their Divinity.

To proceed; You declare that though the *incestuous Corinthian had died in an impenitent Condition, the Sentence of the Church would have had no Effect in the other World*: By which you must mean, that it could not affect his Condition there, so as to increase his Punishment, and that because the *Sentence did not add to God's Displeasure, which he incurs solely upon account of his own Behaviour, and not the Sentence of Men.*† As thus, I suppose, your Lordship means, that if an Adulterer is censured by the Church, he is under God's Displeasure solely on account of his Adultery, and not more so, on account of the Sentence of the Church; which cannot make him more an Adulterer, or more guilty in the Sight of God. It is for this reason that Church Censures are so insignificant, so void of all Effect in the

* 1 *Tim.* i. 19.

† Page 37.

other World ; because it is our Sins alone, and not the Sentence of Men, which loses us the Favour of God.

Let us therefore, my Lord, suppose that God himself had delivered *this Sentence* against the *Corinthian* which the Church did, your Lordship's Doctrine would have procured him the same Ease and Quiet, and taught him to be no more concerned about it, than if it had been a *mere Church Censure*. For it is as true in your Lordship's Sense, that the *Sentence* of God did not add to his Displeasure against him, that he was not angry at him because of his *Sentence*, but upon account of the Offender's *Behaviour*. But, my Lord, will it therefore follow, that there is nothing to be dreaded in such a Sentence? Will it follow, that if the Person dies impenitent under it, that it would have no Effect in the other World? Would your Lordship go about, and preach Liberty to Persons under such a Sentence, and assure them that the Sentence itself could have no Effect, that they were but just where they were before it was pronounced? Would you think it proper to deliver Men from such Apprehensions, and persuade them that they are in no Danger from the Sentence of God? And that because it is not his own Sentence, but their Behaviour which increases his Displeasure.

This may perhaps appear a little too shocking, to set up for an *Advocate* for the *Laitie* against the *Sentence* of God ; but, my Lord, if you were to do so, you would have the same Argument to defend yourself against any Effect in the *Divine Sentence*, which you now have against any Effect in the Sentence of the Church. It would be then as much to the Purpose to say, that God is not displeas'd with them, on the account of his *own Sentence*, but purely for their own *Behaviour*; as it is to tell Offenders, that it is not the *Sentence* of the Church, but their *Behaviour* which brings them under the Divine Displeasure.

I must here therefore, my Lord, beg leave to call this a *strict Demonstration*, that if the Sentence of the Church is not to be feared ; if it hath no Effect, because it is not the *Sentence*, but our own *Behaviour* which alone procures us the Divine Displeasure ; if this be true, it is *Demonstration*, that if God himself was to pronounce this Church Sentence, and turn Offenders out of Communion, that there would be *nothing to be feared from it*, that it could have *no Effect* in the other World ; for God's Displeasure against them, would not be occasioned by his own *Sentence*, but by their *Behaviour*. So that were the Discipline of the Church in God's own Hands, and were he with his own Voice to threaten Sinners, as the Church now doth, your Lordship would be as much obliged to comfort the *Laitie* against any

Apprehension of any Effect from the *Sentence* itself, as you are now to deliver them from the *Fear of Man's Judgment*.

Again ; If the *Sentence* of the Church is not to be dreaded, if, it can have *no Effect* in the other World, because we incur the Divine Displeasure solely on account of our own Behaviour ; then it is certain, that the *Sentence* of Christ himself at the last Day can have no Effect in the other World.

If therefore any unwary Divine, should endeavour to alarm his Congregation with the *Effects* of Christ's *Sentence* at the last Day, your Lordship has taught anyone to reject the *Doctrine*, as *greatly injurious to the Honour of God* ; and that such *Doctrine* was also impossible in itself to be conceived, he might presume *strictly to demonstrate*.*

A Sentence which makes not a Tittle of Alteration in the Condition of a Man, in the Eyes of God, with regard to his Favour or Displeasure, cannot be said to have any Effect in the other World.† But the *Sentence* of Christ at the last Day is of this sort.

Therefore the Sentence of Christ makes not a Tittle of Alteration in the Condition of a Man, in the Eyes of God, with regard to his Favour or Displeasure.

That the Sentence of Christ makes no Alteration in the Condition of a Man with regard to the Favour or Displeasure of God, is plain from hence ; that Men incur the Divine Displeasure solely on account of their own Behaviour.

Thus, my Lord, it is demonstratively certain, that as you have argued against the *Effects* of the Church's *Sentence* in the other World, you have taught anyone to argue against any Effect in the *Sentence* of Christ in the next World ; and consequently it must be as *unwary* *Doctrine*, to frighten People with the *Effects* of Christ's *Sentence*, as to terrify them with the *Effects* of the *Sentence* of the Church. And you have offered such an Argument for the utter Insignificancy of this *Sentence*, as would make it equally insignificant, and void of all Effect, though it was pronounced by God himself. So that as much as you often seem to expose it as the *Sentence* of *weak* and *fallible* Men, yet your Argument does not reject it as a *fallible* *Sentence*, but as it is a *Sentence* far from having any Effect. So that if it was pronounced by God himself, it must be as much without *Effect*, and every *Sentence* which ever can be pronounced by God, must be without any Effect as to his Favour or Displeasure, because that is solely occasioned by our own Behaviour. Therefore an *infallible* *Sentence* can no more have any Effect, than a *fallible* one, because it is our *Behaviour* alone which can affect us.

This, my Lord, will be of great use to some People, who will be glad to find that they have no more Effects to fear from God's Sentence, either in this World or the next, than your Lordship has from the Church.

Again; if there be *no Effect* in the Sentence of the Church in the other World, because our *Behaviour* alone incurs the Divine Displeasure, then *nothing* which God inflicts upon us here, can have *any Effect* in the other World.

If therefore God's *Judgments* were visibly fallen upon some *Town* or *Country*, and an *unwary* Preacher should take occasion to excite them to a speedy Repentance, from the sad *Effects* such *Judgments* would have in the other World, if they had not their designed Effects in this, and declare that if they died impenitent under them in this World, they would feel *worse Effects* of them in the other World: A Disciple of your Lordship's might thus reprove the Falseness and Cruelty of such Doctrine. 'How can you terrify People with such vain Fears about God's *Judgments*? Is he provoked against us by his own *Thunder* and *Lightning*? Do his own *Judgments* add anything to his Displeasure against us? Can anything but our own Sins and Behaviour create his Displeasure? Therefore we are certainly in the same Condition, as to that, which we were in before his *Judgments* fell upon us; and if we die impenitent under them, they can have *no Effect* in the other World. False then and greatly dishonourable to God is your Doctrine, which supposes anything can have any Effect of that kind, but our own Behaviour. To alarm us therefore with the *Effects* of such *Judgments*, is to put false Fears into our Minds, and teach us to dread things which are *impossible*; for it is impossible that anything but our *own Behaviour* should increase our Punishment.'

Now, my Lord, is it cruel and unwary Doctrine to awaken Sinners under God's *Judgments* to Repentance, from a Sense of the *worse Effects* of those *Judgments* in the other World, if they do not bring them to Repentance in this? If it is not, I desire to know, why it is not as Reasonable to alarm People with the *Effects* of *spiritual Punishments*, if disregarded, as with the *Effects* of God's *Judgments*, if they are neglected? What is there in the Nature of the Thing, why one Punishment may have Effect in the other World, and not the other? They are both *equally* God's *Punishments*, intended for the *same* Ends.

When Persons are rightly turned out of the Church, and denied the Ordinary Means of Grace, they are as truly under God's *special Judgment*, as a *Country* which is oppressed with

Famine or Pestilence; the one is his *instituted, ordinary Judgment*, to terrify Men from Iniquity; the other is his *extraordinary Judgment*, his miraculous Call to Repentance. It is therefore as sound a Christian Doctrine, to say, that if Persons die impenitent under God's extraordinary Judgment, that such Judgment will have no Effect in the other World; as to say, that if the incestuous *Corinthian* had died impenitent under the just Sentence of the Church, *i.e.*, God's *ordinary Judgment*, that such *Sentence or Judgment* would have had no Effect in the other World. And consequently, to endeavour to terrify Sinners with the Effects of God's *Judgments* in the other World, if they disregard them here, is as much condemned by your Lordship, as the Dean of *Chichester's* Doctrine concerning the *Effects* of spiritual Punishments in the next World.

Lastly; Our blessed Saviour *told the Jews* that if he had not come, they had not had Sin; but now they have no Cloak for their Sin: Which plainly implies, that his coming into the World altered their *Condition* as to the *Favour* of God, because it made them more guilty in his Sight than they were before he came. Yet your Lordship's Argument against the *Effects* of Church Punishments, directly denies this Doctrine. For your Objection against any *Effects* in Church Punishments, is full as strong against any *Effects* in Christ's coming into the World. And if People may be more guilty in the Sight of God, after Christ is come, they may be more guilty after they have been censured by the Church, for the Reason is the same in both Cases. For there can be no Reason given, why Christ's coming should affect their Condition with regard to the *Favour* of God, but that he had a *Divine Mission*, and was an *Authoritative Call* to Repentance; but this is equally true of *Excommunication*, that it is a *Divine Institution*, an *Authoritative Call* to Repentance; therefore they must either both be allowed to affect People's *Condition* with regard to the *Favour* of God, or neither; for the Reason is exactly the same in both Cases.

If therefore a learned *Pharisee*, seeing a relenting *Publican* touched with this Declaration of our Saviour's, should have reproved him after this manner:

'You need not be concerned at this Person's coming into the World, for his coming does not increase God's Displeasure against you, which can only be raised by your own *Behaviour*; it is solely on account of that, that you can be out of God's *Favour*. Sinners are out of God's *Favour*, if this Person had never come, and his coming does not add to God's Displeasure against them; neither if they die in an impenitent Condition after he is come, will his coming have any Effect in the other

'World, where their Condition will not be determined by his *coming*, but by their own *Behaviour*.'

I should be glad, my Lord, to know what you could have said against such a Declaration, or how a Person who would have told the *incestuous Corinthian*, that if he died impenitent under the *Censure* of the Church, that it would have no Effect in the other World, could have anything to object to the *Pharisee*, who tells the *Publican*, if he died impenitent after Christ's *coming*, that his *coming* will have no Effect in the other World.

The *Pharisee* has exactly the same Reason, to tell the *Publican*, that he was neither the more, nor the less, out of God's Favour for Christ's *coming*, that you have to tell the *Corinthian*, that he was neither the more, nor the less, out of God's Favour for what was done by the Church. For the Censure here was right and infallible, and passed in the Name and by the Authority of Christ; it was passed by an *Apostle*, and you affirm that *Christ was in all that the Apostles did*; therefore it may be truly said, that Christ himself came to the *Corinthian* in this Sentence, it was his *Authority* and *Infallibility* which censured him; and yet you say that if he had died impenitent under *this Censure*, he had been just where he was before, and it would have had no Effect in the other World.

Pray therefore, my Lord, let us know how anyone can be more guilty for Christ's *coming*, or why it shall have any Effect in the other World upon those who die impenitent? A few Reasons against this *Pharisee*, would be so many Reasons against your Lordship's Doctrine. For Christ as truly comes to Christians in his *Institutions*, as he came to the *Jews* in *Person*; and it is as dangerous to disregard him in the one Appearance, as in the other.

This Account of Excommunication will, I hope, be thought a sufficient Answer to your Lordship's strict Demonstration, that *it has no Effects in the other World, nor adds anything to God's Displeasure*. For from this it appears, that when you say, that *supposing no such Punishment inflicted upon a wicked Christian, he is under the Displeasure of Almighty God to an equal Degree, as he would be if it were inflicted* :* It is as false as to say, that a *wicked Jew* was under the same Displeasure of God before Christ came, as he was afterwards; or that a Person impenitent under an *extraordinary Judgment*, is no more out of God's Favour afterwards, than he was before, or if God had never visited him. It is as false as to say, that if God himself was to pronounce the *Sentence* of the Church, that Persons under it

would be just in the same Degree of Favour they were before, or that the Sentence of Christ at the last Day will have no Effect.

The other Part of your Demonstration proceeds thus ; Excommunication has no Effect, because *supposing it wrongfully inflicted upon a Christian, he is still equally in the Favour of God.**

The whole of this Argument amounts to this, that a *right* Censure of the Church hath no Effect, because a *wrong* one hath not. I should think anyone in a mighty want of Proof, who should say that the Excommunication of the *incestuous Corinthian* could have no Effect, because the Excommunication of some virtuous Person will not have any Effect ; yet this is your Lordship's Demonstration, that it can signify nothing when it is *right*, because it signifies nothing when it is *wrong*.

Is it an Argument, my Lord, that when a *Bullet* flies through a Man's Head it has *no Effect* upon him, because it will have no Effect if it *miss* him ? Is it a Proof that *Motion* cannot produce *Heat*, because *Rest* cannot produce *Heat* ?

If not, how comes it to be an Argument that a *right* Sentence hath no Effect, because a *wrong* one hath not the *same* Effect ?

A *right* Sentence is as opposite to a *wrong* one, as *Motion* is to *Rest* ; and it is as good Sense to say *Motion* has no such Effect, because *Rest* has no such Effect ; as to say a *right* Sentence has no Effect, because a *wrong* one has not the same.

A *right* Sentence, is the *only* Excommunication which Christ hath instituted, and to which alone this Effect belongs ; but it is strange *Logic* to infer, that this *Institution* cannot have *such* an Effect, because something which Christ hath *not* instituted, hath not the same Effect.

A *wrong* Sentence is as truly a *Breach* and *Transgression* of that *Excommunication* which Christ hath instituted, as *Adultery* is a *Breach* of the seventh Commandment ; it is therefore as absurd to say, that *Chastity* hath not *such an* Effect, because *Adultery* hath not the *same* Effect, as to affirm that a *right* Sentence hath not such an Effect, because a *Violation* of that *right* Sentence hath not the same Effect. Your Lordship's Argument is this, that the *Sentence* hath not *such an* Effect in *some* Circumstances, because it hath not the *same* Effect in *all* Circumstances : Which resolves itself into this Proposition, *That nothing can produce any particular Effect, unless it produce the same Effect in all Circumstances.*

Your Lordship might as well have called it a *Demonstration*

against *all Effects* in the World, as against the *Effects* of spiritual Censures: For there is nothing in the World, no Powers either *Natural, Moral, or Political*, which produce their Effects but in some *supposed right* Circumstances; yet this Ecclesiastical Power is *demonstrated* away by your Lordship, because it does not produce the same Effect in *all* Circumstances.

Farther; If there is no Effect in a *right Sentence* of the Church, because there is no Effect in a *wrong* one; then it will follow, that there is no Effect in either of the Sacraments when *rightly* received, because they want such Effect in Persons who do not rightly receive them. It may as often happen that the Sacraments are administered in *wrong* Circumstances, and as void of that Effect for which they were intended, as any *wrong* Sentence of the Church be pronounced; but does it therefore follow, that there is *no Effect* in the Sacraments, that they are empty and useless to those who receive them rightly, because they are so to those who receive them otherwise? Your Lordship must either affirm that the Sacraments have no Effect, or that the *Opus operatum* is always effectual; for if you say they have Effect, though not always, then it is certain that the *Sentence* of the Church may have Effect, though not *always*. Whether your Lordship will own the Popish Doctrine of the *Opus operatum*, or deny the Sacraments to be* Means of Grace, that is, to have any Effect, I cannot tell; but sure I am, if you do not hold one of these Doctrines, you must own the Sacraments to have *conditional* Effects in *supposed* Circumstances, which will sufficiently confute your own *strict Demonstration*, that Excommunication can have *no* Effect, because it has not in *all* Circumstances.

Again; I presume it may very justly be said, that the Christian Revelation hath *some Effect* towards the Salvation of Mankind; but then it hath not this Effect *always* and *in all Cases*, it is only effectual upon *certain Conditions*. Now if Excommunication can have no Effect, because it is not effectual when it is wrongfully pronounced, then the Christian Revelation can have no Effect towards saving those who embrace it as they should, because it has no such Effect on those who embrace it otherwise. The Reason of the Thing is the same in both Cases, and anyone may as justly set forth the Vanity and Insignificancy of the Christian Revelation, because it does not save all its Professors, as your Lordship exposes the Weakness and Vanity of spiritual

* See the Demonstration of the gross and fundamental Errors, in the Plain Account of the Sacrament, &c.

Censures, because they do not absolutely, and in all Cases, throw People out of God's Favour.

I hope I have here said enough, to vindicate the Authority and Effects of the spiritual Punishments of the Church, against all your Lordship has advanced against them.

I shall make an Observation or two more upon this Head, and then proceed to the other Parts of your Answer.

You say, the *incestuous* Corinthian *was never the more or the less in God's Favour for what was done in the Church.** This Doctrine I have already confuted, and shall now only set this Passage in another Light. Let us suppose that you had said, that *no Man is more in God's Favour for being rightly baptized by the Church.* Now if a Person is not more in God's Favour after he is rightly baptized by the Church, than he was before, then it is certain, that there is no need of Baptism by the Church; for anything is sufficiently proved needless or useless in Religion, if it neither procures nor loses the Favour of God. This is undeniably certain, that if we are not more in the Favour of God for being duly baptized by the Church, than if we were not baptized at all, that then that Baptism is a *useless Trifle.*

Now this is the Doctrine which your Lordship has taught; for he that says the *incestuous Corinthian*, though justly turned out of the Church, *was neither the more or the less in God's Favour for what was done by the Church;* says likewise, that he who is duly baptized into Covenant with God by the Church, is never the more or the less in God's Favour for being duly baptized by the Church. For if it be a mere Trifle, and altogether insignificant to us, as to the Favour of God, to be turned out of the Church, by such an Authority; it must be as *mere a Trifle* to be admitted into the Church by the same Authority. So that he who declares the one, plainly declares the other: For this is evidently plain, that if nothing be *lost* as to the Favour of God, by our being duly turned out of the Church, that then nothing is *got* as to the Favour of God, by our being duly admitted into the Church.

For if our being in the Church was any Step towards God's Favour, or rendered us more acceptable to him, those Degrees of Favour and Acceptance must be certainly lost, by our losing that which was the Cause of them.

He therefore who asserts it is a *Trifle* to be *turned* out of the Church, must also assert, that it is as fruitless and trifling a thing to be *admitted* into the Church. So that all your Lordship's Raillery and Contempt thrown upon *human Excommunications,*

* *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 43.

falls as directly upon *human Baptisms*; and makes them as truly fruitless Trifles without any Advantage, as it makes Excommunication a Trifle without any Punishment.

This therefore is the Sum of your new Religion, set up out of pure Tenderness to the Laity, to deliver them from the Weight and Burden of *Ordinances*; this is to be their Support against human *Excommunications*, human *Benedictions*, human *Baptisms*, &c., that whether before or after *Baptism*, whether before or after *Excommunication*, they are still the same *Children of God*.

Again, you say, *If it be supposed (as it sometimes is upon this Subject) that a Person behaves himself under the most undeserved Censures, with any degree of Impatience, Pride, or Stubbornness, and that this displeaseth Almighty God; it is plain that he incurs no part of that Displeasure, upon account of the Sentence of Men, but solely upon the account of his own Behaviour; it being his own Behaviour alone, and not the Sentence of Men, which has any such Effect.*

Here, my Lord, your *Philosophy* is upon the stretch, and rather than a *Christian* Institution should have any Force or Effect, you have let it run such lengths, as to make even the Ten *Commandments* as mere Trifles as the *Sentence of Men*.

As for Instance: Suppose a Person should tell a Friend that he had a great liking to some of his Neighbour's Goods, but that the eighth Commandment made him afraid to take them from him; if his Friend were but a Master of your *Philosophy*, he might soon convince him of the Folly of such a Fear. He might tell him, that *if it be supposed (as it sometimes is supposed in this Case) that by his manner of taking Goods from his Neighbour, that he displeaseth Almighty God; it is plain that he incurs no Part of that displeasure upon Account of the Commandment, but solely upon the Account of his own Behaviour; it being his own Behaviour alone, and not the Commandment, which has any such Effect.* He might also assure him, that the *Commandment itself* cannot hurt him, that he is not more or less in God's Favour, for what that *Commandment says*, but purely for what he himself *does*.

I now, my Lord, freely submit it to the Judgment of common Sense, whether your profound *Philosophy*, does not as truly make void and set aside the Force and Effect of the *Commandment*, as the *Effect of Excommunication*.

For it is plainly as reasonable to tell a *Thief*, that the eighth *Commandment* cannot hurt him; that if he steals, it is not the *Commandment*, but his own *Behaviour alone*, which will have any *Effect*; as to declare, that an impenitent Offender is neither more or less in the Favour of God for what is done by the Church,

because even supposing God to be angry at him for his Behaviour towards the Sentence of the Church, yet it is not the Sentence, but his own Behaviour, which causes the Divine Displeasure; therefore the Sentence, says your Lordship, is a Trifle without Effect. And therefore may it also be said, that the eighth Commandment is a Trifle without Effect; for it is as true of the Commandment in this Sense, and your Lordship is as much obliged to say that it is our Behaviour against the Commandment, and not the Commandment itself, which will raise God's Displeasure, as to say it is our Behaviour under the Sentence, and not the Sentence itself, which brings God's Displeasure upon us; so that it is undeniably plain, that if for this reason the Sentence of the Church be a Trifle without any Effect, that for the same reason the Commandment must be equally a Trifle, and equally without any Effect.

And now, my Lord, need we not heed the Commandments, because it is not the Commandments themselves which will have any Effect upon us? Why then are we to be exhorted, and preached up into a Contempt of the Sentence of the Church, because it is not the Sentence itself will have any Effect upon us? Is it safe to sin against the Authority of the Commandment, because it is not the Commandment itself which can punish us? If not, where is the Sense, or Reason, or Christianity of telling us, that we need not heed the Sentence of the Church, because the Sentence itself cannot punish us?

Suppose some High Churchman had writ a Treatise against Stealing, and had carried the Matter so very far, as to talk of the fatal Effect which the eighth Commandment would have upon Offenders, when it should rise up in Judgment and condemn them.

Would your Lordship think yourself obliged in regard to the *Liberty* of those who want other People's *Goods*, to tell them, that indeed they ought to take care to act with Sincerity in their acquiring the temporal Things of this Life, that they ought to consider with the utmost Impartiality the Nature of Property, and the Conditions of that *Original Contract*, which first settled the *Rights* and *Bounds* of it, and gave every Man a Right in such or such a Part of the Things of this Life; but that if they should through *Impatience* of Want, or *Pride*, or any other Passion or Prejudice, make too free with their Neighbour's Property, and so displease Almighty God; would you think yourself obliged to tell them, that *the fatal Effects of the eighth Commandment*, and its pretended rising up in Judgment hereafter, is all *Sham* and *Banter*; and that however God may be displeased with them, yet that Commandment will have no

Effect upon them? Would your Love of Liberty, your Concern for the Laity, engage you to give so much Comfort, and preach such smooth things to such a Class of People?

Thus much may be fairly affirmed, that you might as well deliver such a sort of People from their Fear of the Commandment, as to endeavour to persuade impenitent Offenders not to fear the Sentence of the Church. For as the Guilt of Stealing is aggravated by being contracted against the Authority of the eighth Commandment; so the Guilt of Impenitence is heightened, by a Continuance in it against that Authority in the Church, which is as truly founded by God to prevent the *Growth of Sin*, as the eighth Commandment was given by God to prevent *Stealing*. So that he who teaches Offenders to disregard this Sentence, which is authorised by God to awaken and terrify them into Repentance, does the same as if he should teach Thieves to disregard the eighth Commandment, which was given by God to affright People from stealing.

If it should be here objected, that there is a very great difference betwixt the Duty we owe to the eighth Commandment, and our Duty to the Sentence of the Church; because the Commandment is always right and the same, whereas the Church may err in its Sentence.

To this it may be answered, that granting all this, that the Church may sometimes err in its Sentence; yet if it is ever in the right, if it ever can be a fault, or dangerous for Sinners not to submit to, and be corrected by it, this will condemn your Doctrine, which sets it out constantly, and in all Circumstances, as a Dream and Trifle, and without any Effect.

Secondly; Here is no room left for you to plead the Uncertainty of the Church's Sentence, in regard to the Certainty of the Commandment; because you directly set forth your Doctrine in a Case (that of the incestuous *Corinthian*) where all was right and just, and yet declare that in that Case it was without any Effects; and that if the incestuous *Corinthian* had continued impenitent under it, and disregarded it as long as he had lived, it had signified no more to him than if it had never been pronounced. And in this Case, my Lord, and upon this Supposition, that the Authority judges and condemns such Sinners as it ought to do, it is as abominable to tell such that they have nothing to fear from the Judgment of the Church, as to tell a Thief that he has nothing to fear from the eighth Commandment. And I here challenge all the Reason which ever appeared against the Doctrines of Christianity, to show me, why it is not as agreeable to the Scripture to declare, that if a *Thief* lives and dies in his Sins of Stealing, that he has nothing to fear from the

eighth Commandment; as to declare that an impenitent Offender, though *justly* censured by the Authority of the Church, has nothing to fear from such a Censure, though he lives and dies in the Contempt of it.

Thirdly and lastly; Though the Church may sometimes err in its Authority, and the Commandment is always right; yet your Doctrine makes it as reasonable to declare the Commandment without any Effect, as to declare the Sentence of the Church to be without any Effect. For you do not say that Excommunication is a *Trifle without any Effect*, because it is a Sentence which may sometimes be wrong; but because, though we should displease God under the Sentence of the Church, yet that Displeasure would not have been occasioned by the Sentence, but by our *Behaviour alone*. And this Doctrine plainly makes all the Commandments as mere *Trifles* and *void of all Effect*, as it makes the Sentence of the Church so. For it is as true in your Sense, and you are as much obliged to say, that if we sin against the Commandments, and incur the Displeasure of God, that it is not the Commandments, but our Behaviour alone which causes it: And so the Commandments of God have no more to do with the Favour of God, but are as mere *Dreams* without any Effect, as the human Excommunications you have so much exposed. This, my Lord, is a very compendious Confutation both of the *Law* and the *Gospel*; and is a good reason, why so many of those who have no regard for either, but think *Zeal* in Religion a Meanness of Spirit, are yet great *Zealots* for your Lordship's Opinions.

*Of Church-Authority, as it relates to
external Communion.*

YOUR Lordship says, *I know of no Church Authority to oblige Christians to external Communion, nor anything to determine them but their own Consciences.** But to show your Desire to be informed, your Lordship frequently calls upon the Learned *Committee* to declare what the Authority of the Church is. It is something strange, that you should have been so long writing down the Authority of the Church, and yet not know what is meant by

* *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 112.

Church Authority ; that you should take so much pains to oppose (as you say) only *absolute* Authority, and yet not know whether there be any else, or what Authority you have left in the Church, It is yet something stranger that a *Bishop* of the Church, should be frightening the *Laity* from a kind of Church Authority which is not claimed over them, and yet be at the same time pretendedly ignorant of what sort of *Church Authority* they are under. Here you have been preaching against that, which they are not concerned with ; but when you should tell them *what kind* of Authority they are concerned with, you have not one word of Instruction ; but call upon the *Committee* to declare, whether there be any such thing as Church Authority which is not *absolute*. My Lord, if there be not, to what purpose have you so often taken *Refuge* in the word *Absolute* ? Or where is the *Honesty* or *Reason* of saying you have not denied *all* Authority, but only that which is *absolute*, if you believe there is no Authority but what is *absolute* ? If therefore your Lordship has made this Distinction with *any* degree of *Sincerity*, if you intended anything more by it, than an artful playing with Words ; it plainly lies at your Door to shew what Authority you have not touched ; and that in supposing that which is *absolute*, you neither have, nor intended to oppose *all* Authority and Jurisdiction in Matters of Religion. But, instead of this, if the Learned *Committee* should explain to your Lordship what that Authority is, which is not *absolute* ; you only venture so far as to say, that if there is any such Authority, *you are, for aught that you have said, at liberty to declare for it*.* Mighty cautiously expressed, my Lord ! Had a *Courtier*, who rather intends to *amuse* than *inform*, and talk *artfully* than *sincerely*, delivered himself in such inconclusive Terms, it had not been much Matter either of Wonder or Complaint. But for a *Bishop*, who makes *Sincerity* to be of more worth than all the Christian Religion ; for this Bishop, in a Cause which he declares himself ready to die in ; in such a Cause, as is of the last Consequence to us all, as *Men, Christians, and Protestants* ; for this Bishop to say, *if there be such an Authority*, instead of declaring whether there is or not ; and to say, *he is at liberty to declare for it*, instead of plainly saying whether he *ought or not* ; however consistent it may be with *Sincerity*, I am sure it has too much the Appearance of the contrary.

For seeing you are charged with denying *all* Authority in the Church, if you consulted Plainness and Sincerity, if you regarded the Information of the *Vulgar*, and the Peace of the Church,

* *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 25.

which way could these Considerations lead you to defend yourself; but either to shew that there was a real Authority in the Church, which you had not opposed; or else plainly to own that you had denied *all Authority*, because all Authority of every kind is to be denied? But instead of declaring yourself openly and plainly for the sake of Truth, Peace, and Sincerity, you take Refuge in Words, and secure yourself behind a Cloud of *Property's* and *Absolutely's*, to the Disturbance of honest Minds, and to the Satisfaction of the Profane.

Since your Lordship calls out so often to be told *what* that Authority is which obliges us to *external Communion*, I shall beg leave to offer these following Considerations upon this Head, and hope they will sufficiently both assert and explain that Church Authority or Obligation, which we are all under to join in external Communion.

Your Lordship says; *I know of no Church Authority to oblige any Christians to external Communion; nor anything to determine them, but their own Consciences.** I shall therefore beg leave to observe to your Lordship, what *Authority* there is to oblige *All* Christians to *external Communion*; and to show, that they are no more left at liberty in this Matter, than they are at liberty to *steal* or *murder*.

I suppose it is not proper or true, to say, that you know of no Authority to oblige any Christians, or anything to keep them from the Practice of Stealing, but their own Consciences; because there is the express Authority of God against this Practice. Now if it would be improper and false to say this, because the Authority of God has so plainly appeared in it; I shall easily prove, that it is as false and improper to say, that we have *nothing but our Consciences to determine us* in the Case of *external Communion*, since the Authority of God is as express in obliging us to this *external Communion*, as in requiring us to be just and honest in all our Dealings.

I desire no more to be granted me here, than that it is necessary to be a Christian, and that we are called upon by the *Authority* of God to embrace this Religion as necessary to Salvation. This, my Lord, is the express Doctrine of the Scriptures; so that I hope I may presume upon it, as granted by your Lordship, that there is an Authority to oblige People to be Christians, and that this Authority makes it as necessary, that they should be Christians, as it is necessary to obey God, and conform to his Will.

First; If Christianity be a Method of Life necessary to Sal-

vation, then we are necessarily obliged to external Communion ; for we can no other way appear to be Christians, either to ourselves or others, but by this external Communion. A Person who lives in a *Cloister*, may as well be taken for a *Field General*, as he who is not in *external* Communion, for a Christian. For the Christian Religion is a Method of Worship distinct from all others, in those Offices and Duties which constitute external Communion ; so that if you are so far obliged to be a Christian, as to serve God differently from other People, you are obliged to *external Communion*, because that Service which distinguishes the Christian Worshipper from all other People, is such a Service as cannot be performed but in an external Communion in such and such Offices, *viz.*, *Professions of Faith*, *joint Prayers*, and the Observance of the *Sacraments*. *External* Communion is only another Word for the Profession of Christianity, because the several Duties and Obligations which concern anyone as a Christian, and distinguish him from other People, are Duties which as necessarily imply *external Communion*, as walking implies Motion. Therefore to ask whether a Christian be obliged to *external Communion*, is to ask whether a Person who is obliged to walk, be obliged to move. The short is this ; No Man can be a Christian, but by taking upon him the Profession of Christianity ; the Profession of Christianity is nothing else but *external* Communion with Christians ; therefore it is as necessary to be in external Communion, as to be a Christian.

I hope I need not prove to your Lordship, that there is an *Authority* to oblige People to the Profession of Christianity ; intending here only to prove, that the same Authority obliges us to external Communion.

Had your Lordship therefore declared to the World, that you know of no Authority to oblige People to be Christians, it had been as *innocent* and *true* a Declaration, as this you have made concerning *external Communion* ; there being plainly the same Authority obliging us to the one, as to the other. For, my Lord, what is implied in external Communion, but our communicating with our Fellow Christians in those Acts of Worship and Divine Service which Christianity requires of us ? And what Marks or Tokens can we shew of our Christianity, but that we are of the Number of those who are baptized into Christ's Church, for the joint Worship of God in that particular Service which the Christian Religion has taught us ? So that if we prove ourselves Christians, we must prove ourselves in this external Communion, because to be a Christian implies no more, than the being of the Number of those who visibly unite and join in such Acts and Offices of Divine Worship, as are proper to Christians. If there-

fore there be *no Authority* to oblige us to external Communion, then no one is obliged to be a Christian.

Secondly ; If there be *no Authority* to oblige, or *anything* to determine Christians to *external Communion* but their own Consciences, then it is plain, it is as lawful for all Christians to be their own *Priests*, and confine themselves to a private Worship separate from every Christian in the World, as to join in external Communion. For where there is no Authority or Obligation to determine our Practice, there the thing must needs be indifferent ; and to do it or let it alone, must be *equally* lawful. If there was no Authority which obliged us to be baptized, it would not only be *lawful* to let it alone, but *idle* to trouble our Heads about it. The same is true of this external Communion ; if we are under no *Law* concerning it, it is no part of our *Duty* either to do it, or let it alone.

It cannot here be said, that though we are not obliged to external Communion with this or that Church, yet we ought to join with some particular Persons, and not worship God constantly by ourselves, and perform no Offices with other People. For if we are obliged to communicate with any one Person in the World, we are to hold Communion with the whole Church of Christ. For we are not obliged to communicate with this or that particular Person on account of any *Civil* or *Natural* Relation, but as we are *Christians*, and from the *Common Nature* of our Christianity. Since therefore our Obligation to communicate with any particular Persons, does not arise from any private *particular* Relation, but from the *common Nature* of our Religion ; this does equally oblige us to hold Communion with *all* Christians, as with any *particular* Christians, they being all equally related to us as Christians ; and consequently it is as necessary to hold Communion with the external visible Church, as with any particular Christian. From this also it is plain, that it is as lawful to avoid Communion with every particular Christian in the World, as to refuse Communion with any sound Part of the Church on Earth.

I beg of your Lordship to produce but one Argument, why any *two or three* should meet together for the Service of God, which will not equally prove it necessary that Christians should join in external Communion. May it all be laid aside, my Lord ? Need there be any more of this *assembling* ourselves together for performing of Duties, which we thought we could not perform separately ?

I have shown in my second Letter, that your Lordship cannot consistently with your Principles, urge any Reasons to any *Dis-senters* to come over to the Church of *England* ; and here, my

Lord, it will appear, that you have not one Argument against the *Absenters* from all *Public Worship*. For it would be as odd and unreasonable in your Lordship to offer any Argument to such an *Absenter*, why he should join in some Public Worship, after you have denied an Authority which obliges us to external Communion, as it would be for an *Atheist* who had denied the Necessity of any Religion, to persuade a Man to be a *sincere Mahometan*.

If your Lordship should tell this *Absenter* from all Communion, that he ought to join with some Communion or other in the Worship of God; might he not fairly ask your Lordship, how you came to tell the World that *you know of no Authority to oblige any Christians*, or *anything* to determine them to external Communion? Can anyone be obliged to join in Divine Service, who is not obliged to *external Communion*? Could anyone imagine that if he was not obliged to join in external Communion, that it was not lawful to stay at home? Could he think that when your Lordship was declaring against any Obligation to Church Communion, that you meant he ought to join himself with some of the Dissenters? Had your Lordship plainly declared, that no Christian need read *any Book* in the World, could you consistently with yourself offer any Arguments why he should read the *Bible*? Yet this is as consistent, as to desire any Person to communicate with any Body of Christians, after you have plainly disowned any Obligation to external Communion.

For whatever Arguments your Lordship can offer to an *Absenter* from all Public Worship, may be answered in this manner. 'Either your Arguments for my joining with any Christians are invented by yourself, and of your own making, or they are not; if they are Fictions of your Lordship's, and destitute of any Foundation in the Will or Authority of God, then they are vain and to no Purpose; but that all such Arguments are mere Fictions and Inventions of your own, is plain from your Lordship's express Declaration, that *you knew* of no Authority, or *anything* to oblige or determine Christians to external Communion; so that all the Arguments you can offer for my external Communion, are declared by yourself to be such as are of *no Authority*, or have *anything* in them to *determine me to external Communion*.'

And indeed, had your Lordship first declared that there was no such thing as *Figure* in *Bodies*, and then pretended to prove that the World is *round*, it would be no more miraculous, than first to give out, that no Christians are obliged to external Communion, and afterwards take upon you to persuade anyone

to join himself to some *Body* of Christians. Here therefore your Lordship has so preached up and advanced this Kingdom of Christ, that consistently with yourself, you cannot so much as require anyone to be a visible Member of it, or offer the least Shadow of an Argument, why an Absenter should rather go to some Church, than trust to his own Religion at home. Your Lordship wrote a *Treatise* some Years ago on the *Reasonableness of Conformity to the Church of England*. But pray, my Lord, where is the *Reasonableness* of conforming, if we are under no *Obligation* to conform? Where is the Reasonableness of doing that, which is not our *Duty* to do? Where can be the *Reasonableness* of going two or three *Miles* to Church for the sake of external Communion, if there be *no Authority, or anything to determine us to external Communion*? Can it be *reasonable* to spend our Time and some Part of our Wealth in making up such Meetings, as God has not required at our Hands?

Your Lordship must either therefore retract what you have said, and allow that there is *an Authority* to oblige us to external Communion, or acknowledge that no Christians are under any *Obligations* to serve God in any Communion, but may confine themselves to a private Religion, separate from every other Christian in the World. That is, that no one is *obliged* to worship God in the public Assembly, or join with anyone else in the Service of God.

Thirdly; If there be no Authority to oblige us to *external Communion*, then it may well be questioned, how your Lordship can answer for your joining in external Communion in the Church of *England*. Your Lordship knows that the Communion of the Church of *England*, gives great Offence to the *Papist* and *Protestant* Dissenters of all kinds; how then can your Lordship justify your doing that, which you need not do, which gives so much Scandal to so many *tender* Consciences?

Will your Lordship be of a Church, though it is this very Church Communion that is so very offensive? Your Lordship knows that the Animosities and Church Divisions amongst Christians is one of the most sore Evils under the Sun; that all the Party Heats and Controversies are concerning whom we are to communicate with, and in Defence of particular external Communions. Now, my Lord, what should that Christian do, who is all *Sincerity*, who believes there is no *Obligation* to external Communion, and who sees that the *pretended Necessity* of it, causes all the Difference and Division amongst Christians? Can that *sincere* Person who believes and knows all this, keep at the *Head* of a particular Communion? Can he support so *unnecessary, so needless* an Evil? Can that *sincere* Person be a

Bishop in that Communion, which stands distinguished from other external Communions, chiefly as it is *episcopal Communion*, when he allows there is no Necessity of being in Communion either with *Bishops* or *anybody* else? Could that *Pope* be reckoned *sincere*, who should declare that he knew of no Authority, or anything to determine him to exercise the *papal* Powers, could he be a sincere Christian, if he yet continued to exercise them to the *Scandal* and *Offence* of so many Christian Countries? If he could, so might your Lordship for continuing at the Head of an external Communion, which divides and disturbs Christians, though you know of *no Authority to oblige, or anything to determine you* to this external Communion.

Surely your Lordship will have more Compassion at last for your *dissenting Brethren*, more Concern for the Peace of Christ's Kingdom, than to keep up such unnecessary Communions, and disturb so many weak Consciences, by joining externally in the Church of *England*, when you *know of no Authority, or anything to oblige you* to join with any Body.

Suppose the Peace of *Great Britain* was miserably destroyed by *Party* Rage and Dispute about the *Stars*. Would your Lordship head one Party of *Star-gazers* against another? Would you join yourself to such a vain and useless Cause at the Expense of the public Peace? Now, my Lord, if there be *nothing to oblige us to external Communion*, it is all a *Trifle*, and mere *Star-gazing*; and a Person who appears in the Cause, and at the Head of this external Communion, can be no more a Friend to Christianity, by keeping up such an unnecessary Cause of Division, than he could be a good Subject, who should join in the needless idle Quarrels of *Star-gazing Party-men*. In a Word, if your Lordship knows of anything that obliges you to continue in the Church of *England*, you ought not to have said that *you know of no Authority to oblige, or anything to determine any Christian to external Communion*: But if you know of nothing that obliges you to continue in the Church of *England*, then you ought rather to leave it, than to bear a part in so needless a Community, and which gives so much Offence to all those who dislike the Terms of it.

Fourthly; If there be no Authority to oblige us to external Communion, how comes there to be such a Sin as *Schism*? How comes the *Schismatic*, or Divider of Communions, to be so frequently in the Scriptures ranked amongst the most guilty Offenders?

Can it be a Sin to be divided, unless we are under some Obligation to be united?

It has been always granted that *Schism* is the Separation of

ourselves from such a Communion of Christians, as we *ought* to have held Communion with. Now if separate Worship from any Christians in the World be the Sin of *Schism*, then there must be some Law that obliges those *Schismatics* to join with those Christians, from whom they separate, and consequently there is an Authority which obliges Christians to external Communion.

Your Lordship must either shew that *Schism* does not consist in refusing to communicate with some Christians, or that though it be the damnable Sin of Schism to refuse Communion with some Christians, yet there is no Authority to oblige us to external Communion with any Christians, *i.e.*, that though Schism be a Sin, yet it is the Transgression of no Law.

The Apostle says, *Mark those who cause Divisions contrary to the Traditions which ye have learned of me, and avoid them.* My Lord, what strange Language is this, if there is nothing to oblige us to external Communion? If there is no Obligation to be united, why must they be marked who cause Divisions? If there be no Authority that requires external Communion at our Hands, why must those Persons be avoided who prevent external Communion?

Either the Apostle, or your Lordship must be mightily mistaken; the Apostle tells us that *Divisions* in the Church are contrary to the Doctrine which he had taught, and therefore there is the express Authority of the Apostle to oblige us to external Communion. But your Lordship says there is no Authority to oblige us to this Duty, therefore you must either maintain that the Apostle taught no such Doctrine, though he said he had, or that there is no Authority in his Doctrine to oblige us.

I suppose, my Lord, that the Apostle by Divisions here means *external visible Divisions*, because he bids them *mark* those who cause them, and *avoid* them; for *invisible* internal Divisions can no more be *marked*, or invisible *Schismatics* *avoided*, than we can mark People's Thoughts, or lock out a *Spirit*. If therefore the Division here spoken of be external Division, then the Sin here condemned is a Breach of external Communion, and consequently we are here required by the Apostle to join in external Communion; unless we can suppose, that the Apostle could condemn those who were *externally divided*, without meaning that they ought to be *externally united*.

Fifthly; If there be no Authority to oblige us to external Communion, then there is no *Authority* to oblige us to be baptized. For Baptism is an external visible Ordinance of God, which as plainly implies external Communion with others, as

any Contract in the World implies Correspondence with others. And any Person might as well be obliged to bargain and merchandise with others, without being obliged to be concerned with others, as be obliged to be baptized, without being obliged to external Communion.

For as we cannot baptize ourselves, this shows that the Christian Religion is not suited to the State of single independent Persons, but requires our external Communion to the Performance of its Obligations. And as we cannot be baptized by others, but by resigning up ourselves to the Observance of new Laws, this plainly proves that the Person is baptized into a State of *Society* and external Communion. That Baptism does not leave the baptized Person to a separate independent Worship, is very plain from the following Instances.

The Church of *England*, in the Office for Baptism, thus expresses herself: *We receive this Person into the Congregation of Christ's Flock, &c.* Again, *Seeing now—This Person is regenerated and grafted into the Body of Christ's Church, &c.* I should think it very plain, my Lord, to every Reader, that these Passages show that Baptism necessarily implies external Communion, and puts it out of the Power of every baptized Person to refuse external Communion, unless he will break through the Conditions of his Baptism. For can we be *received into the Congregation of Christ's Flock*, without being obliged to keep up this Congregation, or to perform any Duties or Offices considered as a Congregation or Flock? Can we in any Sense be considered as a Congregation or a Flock, but in our Communion in those Offices which shew us to be Christ's Flock? Can we be said to be grafted into the Body of Christ's Church, if we are at liberty never to meet as a Church, or act as a Church?

The Apostle says, *For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body.** What can more manifestly denote external Communion, than this Account of Baptism? Can we be baptized into one Body, and not be obliged to act as a Body? Can we act as a Body, by running away from one another, and refusing to unite in that Service, into which we are baptized? I suppose we are here to be considered as a *Christian Body*; but how a Number of People can be a Christian Body, who are not united in Christian Worship, is hard to conceive.

When therefore you declare that you know of *no Authority* to oblige Christians to external Communion, you desert the Doctrines of Christ, as plainly as if you said, that you know of no Authority which obliges People to be baptized.

Sixthly; If there be no Authority to *oblige*, nor anything to

* 1 Cor. xii. 13.

determine us to external Communion, then there is no Authority to oblige, nor anything to determine us to communicate in the blessed *Sacrament* of the Body and Blood of Christ. For if there is any Law which obliges us to join externally in the Observance of this *Institution*, then it is out of all doubt, that we are obliged to external Communion. Now if you will say that there is no Law of God as to this Matter, then the thing itself must needs be indifferent, and *private Mass* must be allowed to be as right and lawful, as a joint Communion in the Holy Sacrament. Either therefore you must defend *private Mass*, or show some Authority against it; if you can produce any Authority against it, then you produce an Authority for external Communion, and contradict your other Declaration, where you give out, that you do not know of *anything* to determine us to external Communion.

From all this it plainly appears, what *kind* of Authority that is, which obliges us to external Communion; it is that *same* Authority which obliges us to be *baptized*, to receive the *Communion*, to profess the *same* Faith, to worship God in the public Assemblies, and to avoid the Sin of *Schism*; or, in a word, that same Authority which obliges us to be *Christians*.

For all the Offices of Christian Worship and Devotion which *constitute* external Communion, are everyone *expressly* required by God; and therefore *external Communion*, which consists only of these Offices, is *equally* required by God.

And this Authority may be very justly called *Church Authority*, because it arises from the very Nature of the *Church*, because it is the *Institution* of the Church, from whence this Obligation to Communion ariseth. For Christ has instituted this Church, in order to oblige Mankind to enter into it for the Salvation of their Souls: As the Church therefore is instituted for this End, the *Existence* of the Church lays an Obligation upon all, who have any Opportunity, of entering into it; and this Obligation will last as long as the Church of Christ shall last. The short is this; God has instituted an *Order* or *Society* of People, for the *particular* manner of serving and worshipping him; this Society is not a *voluntary* one, which we may be Members of, or not, as we please; but it carries, in its very *Nature* and *Institution*, an Authority obliging us all, as we hope for Happiness, to be Members of it; we are obliged to be of the Church, because Christ has *instituted* the Church; therefore it is the *Institution* of the Church, which lays us under an Obligation of entering into it; and this, and no other, is that *Church Authority* which obliges all People to *external Communion*.

Farther; This may be very properly called Church Authority,

because it was in the *Church*, or that *Order* of Men, which Christ had instituted, before the Scriptures were written.

When there was only this Order of Men, before the Writings of the *New Testament* were in being, there was then this Authority arising from that *instituted* Order of Men, which obliged others to enter into Communion with them; therefore this Authority which began with the Existence of the Church, and flowed from the very *Nature* of the Church, may very justly be called *Church Authority*.

If it should be asked, whether this Authority be *absolute*? I answer, it is just as *absolute*, as that Authority which obliges us to be baptized. Our Saviour has told us, that *if we are not baptized, we shall be damned*: Here therefore is an *Authority* for Baptism; the Scripture has not said whether this be so *absolutely* obliging, that there is no room in any Case for a Dispensation; therefore it is no Case which concerns us. Now the *Authority* which obliges us to *external Communion*, is just upon the *same Terms*; the thing is as plainly required as *Baptism*; but whether in *any Cases* it will be dispensed with, is what we have nothing to do with. If there be any *Sincerity*, any *Weakness*, any *Ignorance*, or the *Want* of anything which will excuse those who refuse to be *baptized*, those *same* Considerations may excuse the Refusal of *external Communion* with the Church.

This, my Lord, is the *Nature* of that *Church Authority*, which obliges to *external Communion*; it is that very *same* Authority which obliges us to the Profession of *Christianity*, or to enter into Covenant with God. For he who is in external Communion with the Church of Christ, is of the Church of Christ, or in Covenant with God; and he who is not in external Communion, is not of the Church of Christ, nor in Covenant with God; and consequently it is that *same* Authority which obliges us to be Christians, or in Covenant with God, which obliges us to external Communion.

So that when you say, you *know of no Church Authority to oblige, or anything to determine People to external Communion*, it is directly saying, that you know of no Church Authority to oblige, or anything to determine them to the *Profession of Christianity*, or to enter into *Covenant* with God.

If your Lordship should here say, that you only meant, you know of no *human* Authority to oblige People to external Communion, &c.

To this it may be answered, that you might as well have meant nothing at all by it, as have meant this. For,

First; Suppose the Question had been, whether there be any Authority, or what Authority it is, which obliges People to be

baptized? and that in order to settle this Point, you had here declared, that *you know of no Church Authority to oblige, or anything to determine them to be baptized, but their own Consciences.*

Could it be thought, my Lord, after this, that you had not denied *all Authority* for Baptism? Could it be supposed, that by this Declaration, you only meant to deny, that the Authority which obliges us to be baptized, is *Human or Civil Authority*? Could anyone who only meant thus much, express himself in this manner?

Yet thus it is, that you have expressed yourself in the Dispute concerning our Obligations to external Communion, you *know of no Church Authority to oblige, or anything to determine People to it*; which makes it equally absurd to suppose, that you only deny that our Obligation to *external Communion* arises from *any human or civil Authority.*

Secondly; If you only meant to deny an *human or civil Authority* in this Matter, how came you not to say so? How came you not to tell us what *Divine or Scripture Authority* there is to oblige us? Is it not as proper and as necessary in a Dispute about *this Authority*, to declare the true and right Authority, as to protest against the wrong Authority? But indeed nothing can be more trifling than to say, that you have only denied any *human or civil Authority* in this Matter.

For, my Lord, whoever imagined that our Obligations to profess Christianity, that is, to be Members of Christ's Church, could proceed from any human Authority? Human Authority may and ought to encourage us in the Practice of our Christian Duties; but that our Obligation to serve God as Christians, that is, in the external Communion of the Church, should arise from any human Authority, can be supposed by none, but those who imagine Christianity to be a Creature of the *State.*

Thirdly; You not only say that you know of no *Church Authority* to oblige, but also add these Words, *nor anything to determine People to external Communion, but their own Consciences.*

Now, my Lord, if you only meant to deny a *human Authority* in this Matter; if you intended to own a *Divine Authority* to oblige us to external Communion; how come you to express yourself thus contrary to your Meaning? For if you believe there is a *Scripture or Divine Authority* which obliges us to external Communion, surely this *Authority* is *something*, and has *some Right to determine* us to external Communion; yet you expressly say that you do not know of *anything* to determine Christians to external Communion.

If it was asked, whether Christians are obliged to *pray* for

their *Enemies*, and you should answer, I do not know *any* thing to determine them to pray for their *Enemies*; would it not be *Nonsense*, and *Contradiction* after this Declaration, to suppose, that you acknowledge that the Scriptures require Christians to pray for their *Enemies*?

But to suppose, that you acknowledge a *Divine* or *Scripture* Authority which obliges to external Communion, after you have expressly declared that you do not know of *anything* to determine us to external Communion, is *equally* contradictory.

Lastly; You say you do not know of *anything* to determine *Christians* to external Communion, but their own *Consciences*.

Now this farther shews, that you deny all *Divine* as well as *Human* Authority to determine us to external Communion. For if there was a *Divine* Law which required this Practice, we are no more left solely to our own *Consciences* in this Practice, than if it was determined by an express human Law.

For can it be said that the *Jews* had nothing but their own *Consciences* to determine them to *abstain* from *Blood*? Can it be said that *Christians* have nothing but their own *Consciences* to determine them to receive the *Holy Sacrament*? If this cannot be said, because there is a *Divine* Law in both these Cases; then it is as false and absurd to say, that there is nothing but our own *Consciences* to determine us to external Communion, if there be a *Divine* Authority which requires this Practice. And consequently, you have plainly denied all *Divine* or *Scripture* Authority for external Communion, when you say that you do not know of *anything* to determine *People* to external Communion, but their own *Consciences*. The short is this; if you will say, that you own a *Divine* and *Scripture* Authority which obliges us to external Communion; and if you will allow this Authority to be *something*, then your *Contradiction* in this Matter, is as palpable and gross as ever appeared in any Writings; for you have expressly said, that you do not know of *anything* to determine us to external Communion: But if you own a *Scripture* Authority that obliges us to external Communion, then your *Contradiction* proceeds thus, that you do know of *something*, but you do not know of *anything* to determine us to external Communion. If you will not assert both Parts of this *Contradiction*, then you must stand to that which you have asserted, *viz.*, that you do not know of *anything* to determine us to external Communion, which I have already shown, is the same thing as declaring, you know of no Authority, or *anything* to determine *People* to profess Christianity, or enter into Covenant with God. But to proceed,

If you should say that you do not deny an *Authority* that

obliges us to external Communion in *General*, but only an *Authority* that can *oblige* us to any *particular* external Communion.

To this I answer, that this is a groundless, false Distinction ; for our *Obligation* to external Communion with the Church of Christ in *general*, and our *Obligation* to external Communion with this or that *particular* Church, is exactly *one* and the *same* Obligation.

For we are not obliged to join with this or that *particular* Church, for any *private*, *particular* Reasons, but because we are obliged to be Christians, or of the Church of Christ. And as no sound Part of Christ's Church, is more his Church than another sound part, so if we separate from any sound part, we are as truly out of Christ's Church, as if we had separated from every part. And we can give no Reasons for separating from such a part, but such as will equally justify our separating from every part of Christ's Church ; and consequently there can be no Reasons offered why we should be Christians, or of the Church of Christ, but will equally oblige us to enter into that particular part of Christ's Church which offers itself to us. For the whole Intent of entering into this or that *particular* Church, is only to be a Christian, or of the Church of Christ, and therefore it must be one and the same Authority which obliges us to be Christians, that obliges us also to be of any *particular* Church.

There is a *Scripture Authority* which obliges us to forgive our *Enemies* : Now it would be as *proper* to say, that though there is an Authority which obliges us to *forgive* our *Enemies* in *general*, yet that Authority does not oblige us to forgive our *particular* *Enemies*, as to say, that though we are obliged to be of the Church of Christ in *general*, yet we are not obliged to be of this or that particular part of Christ's Church.

For the Church of Christ in *general*, as truly consists of these *particular Parts*, as our *Enemies* in *general*, consist of our *particular* *Enemies*.

So that, as it is *one* and the *same* Authority which obliges us to forgive our *Enemies*, that obliges us to forgive our *particular* *Enemies*, for it is *one* and the *same* Authority that obliges us to be *Christians*, that obliges us also to communicate with that *particular* sound part of Christ's Church where we live.

There is therefore no room for this Distinction, to suppose, that though we may be obliged to be of Christ's Church, yet we are not obliged to be of this or that *particular* sound part of Christ's Church ; it being fully as absurd, as to suppose that we may be obliged to be Christians, and yet not be obliged to be Christians.

When therefore you declare, that you know of no *Church Authority* to oblige, or anything to determine us to *external Communion*, it will be to no purpose to say, that you do not mean *Communion* with the Church of Christ in *general*, but only with any *particular* part of Christ's Church; for I have shown that this Distinction is *false*, and fully as *absurd*, as to imagine, that we may be obliged to obey Christ's Commands in *general*, but not be obliged to obey his *particular* Commands.

From what has been said upon this Subject, these following Propositions are plainly true :

First; That as our entering into any particular part of the Church, implies our entering into the Church of Christ, or in other Words, our embracing Christianity; it evidently follows, that the *same* Authority which requires us to embrace *Christianity*, requires us also to enter into that sound *part* of Christ's Church where we live.

Secondly; That this Authority does not arise from any *human* Laws, or the Power which any Men in what Station soever have over others, but is the Authority of God, who has instituted this Church, in order to oblige all Mankind to enter into it.

Thirdly; That this Authority from God, may be very properly called *Church Authority*, because God manifested this Authority to the World by the *Institution* of the Church, because it began with the Church, and flowed from its very Nature; Mankind being therefore obliged to enter into this Church, because there was such a Church instituted by God.

Fourthly; That this Account does not in the least make it either *unjust* or *improper*, in our *spiritual* or *temporal* Governors, to make Laws for our Conformity to this or that part of Christ's Church; for though the Authority which makes it necessary that we should enter into such a *part* of Christ's Church, is from God, yet this no more excludes our Governors from requiring the *same thing* by their *Laws*, than they are excluded from requiring us to observe any *moral Duties*, because the *same moral Duties* are made necessary by the Authority of God. And as our Violation of any *moral Duties* that are commanded, both by Divine and Human Laws, receives an higher Aggravation, so the Guilt of opposing any sound part of Christ's Church is enhanced, by our breaking through the Laws both of God and Man.

Fifthly; From this Account of the Authority which obliges us to external Communion, it will be very easy to discover the *Weakness* and *Fallacy* of several of your Lordship's Arguments upon this Matter.

Thus when you say, *It is evident that there is no Choice of Judgment left to Christians, where there is a superior Authority to oblige them ;—that in Italy, or Spain, or France, they are as much obliged by the Church Authority in Italy, Spain, or France, as Christians in England are obliged to a particular external Communion in England, by any human Authority, as such, in England.**

Now, my Lord, what could you have thought of less to the Purpose, than these Words thus put together? For does any one say, that our Obligation to be of the Church of *England*, arises from any *human Authority, as such, in England?* No, my Lord, if *human Authority* should not only desert the Church, but make the severest Laws against it, yet we should be still under the same Necessity of communicating with it; because that Necessity is independent of *human Laws*, is founded upon the Authority of God, and constantly obliges in the *same Degree*, let the Laws of the *State* be what they will.

Granting therefore, my Lord, that the *human Authority, as such, in France or Spain*, obliges the People of those Kingdoms to conform to those Churches, as truly as the Laws of *England* oblige the People of *England* to conform to the Church of *England*. What follows? Does it follow that therefore the People of *France* or *Spain* are as truly obliged to Communion with the Church in those Kingdoms, as the People of *England* are obliged to Communion with the Church in *England*? No, this will by no means follow; for since we should hold the same Necessity of joining with the *Episcopal Church in England*, though all the human Laws in *England* should forbid us; since we allow only an *accidental* and *conditional Authority* in *human Laws* as they establish any particular Religion, it follows, that in *France* and *Spain, &c.*, they ought to pay the *same regard* to *human Laws*, and no more continue in their Church because it is *established*, than we ought to leave our Church though it was *persecuted*. The short is this:

The *Church Authority* which obliges us to external Communion with any *particular* part of Christ's Church, is that *same divine Authority* which calls upon us to be *baptized*, and enter into *Covenant* with God.

Now if *human Laws*, whether of *Church* or *State*, strike in with this Authority, then they oblige us, as they do in other Cases, where they require us to do that, which the *Laws* of God required before; but if *human Laws*, whether of *Church* or *State*, require us to enter into *such* a Communion, as hath not

* *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 115.

the *Authority* of Christ for it, or forbid our joining with *such* a Communion as is a *true part* of Christ's Church, such Laws are no more to be observed, than if they had established *Idolatry*, or forbid the Worship of the *true* God. For *human* Laws are not supposed to make it our *Duty* to enter into such a Communion, but are applied as proper *means* to induce us to do that, which the *Laws* of God had made it our *Duty* to do before. And it is undeniably true, that though there should be ever so many *human* Laws to command us to enter into any particular Communion, that we must not comply with such Laws, unless it be in regard to *such* a Communion, as it was our *Duty* to enter into, though no such *human* Laws were in being.

So that *human* Laws create no *Necessity* of external Communion, any more than they create the *Necessity* of *praying* to God; but they may be applied as very *proper means* to induce People to perform the *Duty* of *external* Communion, and to perform the *Duty* of *Prayer* to God.

The Question therefore in any *Country* is not this, whether the Laws either of their *Church* or *State* require us to enter into *such* a Communion, but whether it be *such* a Communion, as it would be our *Duty* to enter into, were there no *human* Laws to enjoin it, whether it be a *part* of Christ's Church, which we are obliged to enter into on Pain of everlasting Damnation.

When therefore you say, if the People of *England* are obliged by an *human* Authority, *as such*, to enter into the Church of *England*, then the People of *France*, *Spain* and *Italy*, are as truly obliged by the *human* Authority there to enter into those particular Communion; you say exceedingly true, but to no more purpose, than if you had made the following Declaration.

If the People of *England* are obliged to enter into Communion with the Church of *England* by any *Military* Authority, *as such*; then the People of *France*, *Spain*, and *Italy*, are obliged to Communion with the Churches in *Spain*, *France*, and *Italy*, by the *Military* Authority, *as such*, in *Spain*, *France*, and *Italy*.

This, my Lord, is as much to the Purpose as what you have said; for our *Obligation* to enter into a particular Part of Christ's Church, is no more founded in any *human* Laws, *as such*, than in any *Military* Authority, *as such*; but is founded in the Will of God, who has instituted the Church on Earth, and made our Salvation depend upon our Entrance into it. This is the *Authority* which obliges, this is the *Necessity* which lies upon us, to enter into any Part of Christ's Church.

If therefore you would show, that in *Spain*, or *France*, &c., they are under the *same Necessity* of being of the Church in those Kingdoms, which the People of *England* are of being Members

of the *Episcopal Church in England*; you ought to show that the *Established Church in Spain*, or in *France*, is as truly a *sound Part of the Church of Christ*, as the *Established Church in England* is a *sound Part of the Church of Christ*; and that the way of *Worship there*, is as certainly that *necessary Method of Salvation* which Christ has *instituted*, as the way of *Worship in the Church of England*, is that *necessary Method of Salvation* which Christ has *instituted*.

For this is the only *Authority or Necessity*, which obliges us to enter into any *Church* in any Part of the World; namely, a *Necessity* of being Christians, by entering into that Church which Christ has *instituted*; so that if this same Church be in *Spain*, and *France*, and *England*, then there is an *equal Necessity* of being of the Church in each Kingdom; but if the Church in *Spain* be not the Church which Christ has *instituted*, and the Church in *England* be that Church which Christ has *instituted*, then there is as great a *Necessity of refusing* to communicate with the Church in *Spain*, as of joining in Communion with the Church of *England*.

This therefore being the Nature of the *Authority or Necessity* which obliges to external Communion, nothing can be more trifling, than to argue from the *Necessity* of complying with the Church in *one Kingdom*, to a *Necessity* of complying with the Church in *all other Kingdoms*; unless you could *demonstrate*, that because the *Established Church* in one Kingdom is the true Church of Christ, therefore the *Established Church* in *every other Kingdom* is the true Church of Christ.

Yet your Lordship has spent a great many Pages, in declaiming against any *Authority or Necessity* which can oblige People to communicate with the Church of *England*; because then there would be the *same Necessity* that the People of *Spain*, and *France*, and *Italy*, should communicate with the Church in those Kingdoms. But I hope the most ordinary Reader will be able to tell your Lordship, that there is no more *good Sense*, much less *Divinity*, in this way of instructing the World, than if you had said, there is no *Necessity* that the People of *England* should believe things which are *true*, because then the People of *Spain* will be under the *same Necessity* of believing things which are *false*; and again, that there is no *Necessity* that in *this Kingdom* we should comply with *good Laws*, because in *other Kingdoms* People will be under the *same Necessity* of complying with *wicked Laws*.

But to conclude this Point; I have here stated the Nature of that *Authority or Necessity* which obliges us to external Communion, that it does not arise from the *Laws* of any Men,

whether in *Church* or *State*, but from the Will and Authority of Christ, who has instituted such external Communion, as a *necessary Method* of Salvation.

I have shown also, that *human Laws*, though they, *as such*, do not create a Necessity of external Communion, yet they have a very proper *Significancy*, and are as useful in this Matter, as in any other Parts of our Duty.

Of Sincerity and Private Judgment.

IF you should here say, that by denying the Necessity of external Communion to arise from *human Laws*, *as such*, I have resolved the Choice of a particular Communion into *private Judgment*.

To this I answer ;

First ; That by entering into any *particular Communion*, we are to understand the *same thing* as entering into the *Church of Christ*, or embracing the Religion which Christ has *instituted*.

Secondly ; That when Christ came into the World, People were left to their choice, whether they would embrace Christianity.

Thirdly ; That Christianity is still upon the *same Terms* with Mankind, and it is still left to everyone's private Judgment, whether he will comply with the Terms of Salvation.

Fourthly ; That this does not destroy the *Force* and *Obligations* of Authority, or make it without any Effect upon the Condition of Men. For it does by no means follow, that there is *no Authority*, or that there are *no Effects* to be feared from such Authority, because Men may disown it if they please. For to say there is *nothing* in Authority, that it is insignificant and without *any Effect* upon the Condition of Men, if they may use their *private Judgments*, is as *ridiculous* as to say, there is *nothing* in the Happiness of *Heaven*, or Torments of *Hell*, that they can have *no Effect* upon the Condition of Men, because Men may *judge* of these things as they please.

Fifthly ; There is a Choice of Judgment left to us in every Part of our Duty ;

Whether we will believe a God,
 Whether we will worship him,
 Whether we will believe in *Jesus Christ*,
 Whether we will acknowledge a World to come,
 Whether we will believe there is such a Place as Hell.

And now, my Lord, is there *no Authority* for these things, because we are not forced to believe them against our *Judgments*? Have those who refused to believe in Christ, nothing to fear from his *Authority*, because he appealed to their *Reason*, and left them to *determine* for themselves? Is there no *Authority* for the Torments of *Hell*, or nothing to be feared from that *Authority*, by those who deny there is any such Place.

Now if there can be an *Authority* in these Matters, though the Use of *private Judgment* is allowed in these *same* Matters, if this *Authority* will condemn those who acted contrary to it; then it is certain, that there may be an *Authority* or *Necessity* which obliges us to be of such a *particular* Religion, though the Exercise of our private Judgment is allowed in the Choice of our Religion; and that we may have as much to fear from acting contrary to such *Authority*, though by following our own Opinions, as they have who act contrary to the Will of God in any other Respect, though by following their own Opinions.

So that an *Authority* or *Necessity* which obliges us to be of this or that *particular Communion*, that is, particular Religion, is as consistent with the Exercise of *private Judgment*, as the Necessity of believing a God, and worshipping him, is consistent with the Exercise of our *private Judgment*.

And if you will say, there is an end of all *Authority*, if Men may choose one *Communion* before another; you must also say, that if Men might consider whether they should follow Christ, then there was an end of all *Authority* in Christ over them.

And again; If Men may reason and consider whether there be a God, or Providence, then there is an end of all *Necessity* of believing either a God, or Providence.

If they may *consider* whether the Scriptures are the *Word* of God, or any *particular* Doctrines be contained in Scripture, then there is an end of *all Necessity* of believing the Scriptures to be the *Word* of God, or of believing any *particular* Doctrines to be contained in Scripture.

If they may consider and examine whether any *particular* Religion comes from God, then there is an end of *all Necessity* of receiving any particular Religion from God.

All this Reasoning is full as just, as to conclude that there is an *end of all Authority* to *oblige* People to any particular *Communion*, if they may consider the Excellency of one *Communion* above another, which is what you over and over declare.

Now, my Lord, let us suppose that the Question was, Whether it be *necessary* to believe the *Scriptures* to be the *Word* of God? Would it not become every honest Man, not only to assert this

Necessity, but to show wherein it is founded, and explain to every one that *Authority*, which calls upon us to receive the Scriptures as the Word of God, and which will rise up in *Judgment* against us, if neglected.

And what might we not justly think of him, who, instead of showing the *Authority* or *Necessity* which obliges us to receive the Scriptures as the Word of God, should deliver himself in this manner.

‘ You are reasoning whether there be any *Authority* or *Necessity* which obliges you to receive the *Scriptures* as the *Word* of God. ‘ Whereas your very Reasoning upon this Matter, shows there is ‘ no *Necessity* or *Authority* to which you are obliged to submit. ‘ For since you are allowed to reason and enquire whether this ‘ be necessary, it is certain, there is an end of all *Authority* or ‘ *Necessity*, to oblige you to receive the *Scriptures as the Word* ‘ of God; and if you do but sincerely follow your own private ‘ Persuasions, you are entitled to the same Degrees of God’s ‘ Favour, whether you receive the Scriptures as his Word or ‘ not.’

Now, my Lord, thus it is that you have instructed the World, in relation to the Authority which obliges us to *external Communion*.

The Question is, Whether there be any Authority which obliges us to any *particular external Communion*?

Now, my Lord, what has anyone to do in this Dispute, but to show whether Christ has *instituted* external Communion, or not? For on this alone must the *Necessity* of it depend. And if it appears that external Communion be instituted by our Saviour as a Method of Salvation, then it will follow, that we are under a *Necessity*, as we hope for Salvation, of being in that particular Method or Manner of external Communion, which Christ has instituted; so that unless it can be shown, that all *pretended* Christian Communions, are as truly that *Method*, or particular Communion which Christ has instituted, as any other Communion is; it must be as necessary to be in some *one particular* Communion, as it is necessary to obey Christ; and as dangerous to join in some other Communions, as it is dangerous to despise his Authority.

But now your Lordship, instead of considering what external Communion is *instituted*, and what *Necessity* arises from such *Institution*, or where we may find such external Communion, amongst the many *pretended* Christian Communions, has wholly passed over this Point, and determined the Question, by telling us, that since we are allowed the Use of our Reason in the Choice of Religion, it matters not what *Authority* we oppose,

either of God or Man, and that there can be no *Necessity* of our being of any *particular* Communion, but where our private Judgment *sincerely* directs us.

Thus you say; *If the Excellency of one Communion above another may be regarded, then there is an End of all human Authority to oblige us to one particular external Communion.** And to show that you can as easily destroy all *Divine* Authority or *Necessity* of any *particular* Communion, or Religion, you tell us, that *our Title to God's Favour cannot depend upon our actual being or continuing in any particular Method, but upon our real Sincerity.†* So that here the *Sincerity of private Judgment* as effectually destroys all *divine Authority* and *Necessity* of any particular Communion or Religion, as it destroys that which is *human*; and we are rendered as *happy* and as *high* in the *Favour* of God, for *breaking* his *Laws*, as if we had *observed* them.

For here it is proved, that there is no *Necessity* of any particular Communion or Religion, not because there is none *instituted* by God, but because, whether instituted or not, our *sincere Persuasion* will equally justify us, whether it complies with or opposes such Institution.

But to proceed.

I shall now show, how this Doctrine of yours of *Sincerity* exposes all the *Terms* of Salvation as delivered in Scripture.

In the Scripture we find that *Baptism* is made a *Term* of Salvation; but if *Sincerity without* Baptism be as *certain* a *Title* to the *Favour* of God, as *Sincerity with* Baptism, then it is plain, that *not to be baptized*, is as much a *Condition* or *Term* of Salvation, as *Baptism* is a *Term* of Salvation. For, if *Baptism with Sincerity* was *more* a *Term* or *Condition* of God's *Favour*, than *no Baptism with Sincerity*, then it is certain that it is not *Sincerity alone* that procures the *Favour* of God: And it is as certain, that if *Sincerity alone* procures us the *Favour* of God, then *Baptism* is *no more* a *Term* of Salvation, than the *Refusal of Baptism* is a *Term* of Salvation. So that this Doctrine makes *Baptism*, and the *Refusal* of Baptism, either equally *Terms*, or equally *no Terms* of Salvation; equally *advantageous*, or equally *insignificant*.

When therefore our Blessed Saviour says, that except we are *baptized* we cannot enter into the Kingdom of God,‡ and he that is not *baptized* shall be *damned*; according to this Doctrine of yours, we may also say just the contrary, that except we *refuse* Baptism we cannot enter into the Kingdom of God; and he that is *baptized* shall be *damned*.

* *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 115.

† *Preserv.*, p. 90.

‡ *Job* iii. 3.

This, my Lord, is very shocking; but I shall easily show that these Assertions are as *proper* and as *just*, as the contrary Assertions, if your Doctrine of Sincerity be right.

For, since your Doctrine puts the sincere *Acceptance*, and the sincere *Refusal* of Baptism, upon the same Foot as to the *Favour* of God, there can be no more Danger in sincerely *refusing* Baptism, than in sincerely *accepting* of Baptism. Now if there is no more Danger in the *one* Practice than in the *other*, it must be plain to the most ordinary Understanding, that it is as *just* and *proper* to declare *one* Practice dangerous as the *other*; that is, it must be as proper to say, he that *is* baptized shall be *damm'd*, as to say, he that *is not* baptized shall be *damm'd*.

Now I know your Lordship cannot, upon these Principles, show, that it is more dangerous to *refuse* Baptism sincerely, than to *receive* Baptism sincerely; and so long as this is granted, you must allow that it is as just to fix danger upon *Baptism itself*, as upon the want of Baptism. And consequently, all your Reasonings upon this Subject are one continued Censure upon our Blessed Saviour's Doctrine in relation to Baptism, which according to your Notions, is only as *just* and *proper*, as the quite contrary would have been.

Again, our Saviour tells us, that *except we eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, we have no Life in us.**

Here we see, the *eating* the Flesh and *drinking* the Blood of the Son of Man is an *instituted Term* of Salvation, and insisted upon by our Saviour; but if your Doctrine be true, we may as well declare the *contrary* to be a *Term* of Salvation, and say, *except we sincerely refuse to eat the Flesh and drink the Blood of the Son of Man, we have no Life in us.*

For, my Lord, if Sincerity in *refusing* to eat this Flesh, be the *same Title* to God's Favour that the *eating* of it with Sincerity is, it is plain, there is no more Advantage *in eating*, than in *not eating*; and consequently it is as well to say, that except we *forbear* eating the Flesh of the Son of Man we have no Life in us, as to say, that except we *eat* the Flesh of the Son of Man we have no Life in us; there being plainly from this Doctrine, no more Danger in *forbearing* to eat, than in *eating*; nor any more Necessity of eating, than of forbearing to eat, since both these Practices are *equally good* and *advantageous* with *Sincerity*, and *equally bad* and insignificant without it.

And now, my Lord, let the World judge, whether you could have thought of a Doctrine more *contradictory* to the express Words of our Saviour, and all the *instituted Terms* of Salvation,

* John vi.

than this of yours about Sincerity, which makes it no more necessary to observe the instituted Terms of Salvation, than to break them; and which also makes it as proper, to declare it as dangerous to observe such Institutions, as to reject them. This I have shown particularly in Baptism, where your Doctrine makes it as proper to say, he that *is baptized* shall be damned, as to say, that he who is *not* baptized shall be damned; and in the same manner does it contradict and confound the Scriptures, and make the *contrary* to every Institution as much a Means of Salvation, as the Institution itself.

Your Lordship has given us a *Demonstration*, as you call it, that your Doctrine of *Sincerity* and private *Persuasion* is right.

Thus you ask: *What is it that justified the Protestants — in setting up their own Bishops? Was it, that the Popish Doctrines were actually corrupt, or that the Protestants were persuaded in their own Consciences, that they were so? The latter without doubt.* And then comes your *Demonstration*, in this manner; *take away from them this Persuasion, and they are so far from being justified, that they are condemned for their Departure; give them this Persuasion again, they are condemned if they do not separate.**

You want to be shown the Fallacy in this Demonstration, which I hope I shall show to your Satisfaction.

It is granted, that Corruption in Religion is no *Justification* of those who leave it, unless they are persuaded of that Corruption.

It is also granted, that they who are fully persuaded that a Religion is *sinful*, are obliged to separate from it, though it should not be *sinful*. But then it does by no means follow, that they who leave a *true* Religion, and they who leave a *false* Religion, through their particular Persuasions, are *equally justified*, or have an equal Title to the *same Degree* of God's Favour.

Here lies the *great Fallacy* in this Argument, that you use the same Word (*viz., justified*) in relation to both these People in the very *same Sense*; whereas if they are *justified* (if this Word must be used) it is in a very different *Sense* and different *Measure*, and they are not entitled to the *same Degree* of God's Favour. Now, a Fallacy in this Point destroys the whole Demonstration, for the Question wholly turns upon *this Point*, Whether they who are sincere in a *true* Religion, and they who are sincere in a *false* Religion, are *equally justified* and entitled to the *same Degrees* of God's Favour?

This very Thing was objected to you by the learned *Committee*,

who said, *that an erroneous Conscience was never, till now, allowed wholly to justify Men in their Errors.**

To which you have no better Answer to make than this, *That it must either justify them, or not justify them. It must either wholly justify them, or not justify them at all.†*

My Lord, I suppose a Man is justified by his living *soberly, righteously, and godlily* in this present World. I ask therefore, Does his living *soberly* justify him wholly, or does it not justify him *at all*? If it justifies him *wholly*, then there is no occasion of his living *righteously* and *godlily*; if it does not justify him *at all*, then there is no need of his living *soberly*.

Your Answer to the *Committee* has just as much *Sense* or *Divinity* in it, as there is in this Argument.

Here I must desire, that it may be observed, that the Question is not, Whether *Sincerity* in *any* Religion, does not recommend us to the Favour of God? But whether we are entitled to the *same Degrees* of God's Favour, whether we are sincere in a *true* or *false* way of Worship?

I shall therefore farther consider this Point.

First; If *true* and *right* Religion hath anything in its own Nature to recommend us to God, then *Sincerity* in this *true* and *right* Religion must recommend us *more* to God, than *Sincerity* in a *false* and *wrong* Religion; because we have a Recommendation from our *Religion*, as well as from our *Sincerity* in it. For instance, if it be in *any Degree* in the World more acceptable to God, that we should follow *Christ*, than *Mahomet*, our *Sincerity* in following *Christ*, must recommend us to just *so much* more of God's Favour, than our *Sincerity* in following *Mahomet*; as it is more acceptable to him that we should follow one than the other. Now to say that *true* and *right* Religion, has nothing in its own Nature to recommend us to God, is saying, that things *true* and *right* are no more acceptable to God, than things *false* and *wrong*; but as it would be Blasphemy to say this, so it is very little less, to say, that *Sincerity* in a *false* and *wrong* Religion, is just the *same Justification* or *Recommendation* to the Favour of God, that *Sincerity* in the *true* and *right* Religion is.

Farther; The whole *End* and *Design* of Religion, is to *recommend* us to the Favour of God. If therefore we can suppose a Religion *instituted* by God, which does no more, as such, recommend us to the Favour of God, than a Religion *invented* by *Men* or *Devils*, as *such*, recommends us to the Favour of God; then we must also suppose, that God has instituted a Religion, which

* *Repr.*, p. 7.

† *Answer. to Repr.*, p. 95.

does not *at all* answer the general *End* and *Design* of Religion, *viz.*, the *recommending* us to the Favour of God.

Unless therefore we will profanely declare, that God has instituted a Religion, which, *as such*, does us no Service, nor any better promotes the general *End* of Religion, than any corrupt *Inventions* of Men, we must affirm, that Sincerity in his Religion will entitle us to greater Degrees of his Favour, than Sincerity in a Religion not from Him.

Secondly; If there be any *real Excellency* or *Goodness* in one Religion, which is not in another, then it is certain, that *Sincerity* does not *equally* justify us in any Religion; and on the contrary, it is as certain, that if Sincerity in *any* Religion does entitle us to the *same Degrees* of God's Favour, then there is no such thing as any *real Excellency* or *Goodness* in one Religion, which is not in another.

When you are charged with destroying all Difference between Religions, by this Account of Sincerity, you retreat to an Answer as weak as could possibly have been thought of. Thus you say; *What I said about private Persuasion, relates to the Justification of the Man before God, and not to the Excellency of one Communion above another, which it leaves just as it found it.**

Here, my Lord, you suppose that one Religion may very much exceed another Religion in *Goodness* and *Excellency*, and yet that this *Goodness* and *Excellency* has nothing to do with the *Justification* of Persons; for you say, you were not speaking of the *Excellency* of one Communion above another, but of what relates to the *Justification* of a Man, &c., which plainly shows, that you do not allow the *Excellency* of Religion to have anything to do with the *Justification* of Men; for if you did, it must have been necessary to speak of the *Excellency* of one Religion above another, when you were speaking of what it is which *justifies* a Man before God.

Now, my Lord, to grant that there is an *Excellency* and *Goodness* in some Religion, and yet exclude this *excellent* and *good* Religion, from having any more in it to *justify* and *recommend* us to the Favour of God, than what is to be found in any other Religion less excellent; is just as *good Sense*, as to allow, that some Food is *much more* excellent and proper than other Food; and yet exclude this *most excellent proper* Food, from having anything in it to preserve *Health* and *Strength*, more than in *any other* Food.

For the *Goodness* and *Excellency* of Religion, is as *truly* a *relative* Goodness and Excellency, as the Goodness and Excel-

* *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 113.

lency of Food is a *relative* Goodness and Excellency. And as that Food can only be said to be *better* than another Food, because it has a *better* Effect upon the Body than any other Food; so that Religion can only be said to be *better* than another, because it raises us higher in the Favour of God than any other Religion.

It is therefore most certain, that if any one Religion can be said to be *better* than another, it must be, because one Religion may be of more Advantage to us than another.

For as Religion in general is *good*, because it does us *good*, and brings us into Favour with God; so the *particular Excellency* and *Goodness* of any Religion, must consist in this, that it does us a *more particular Good*, and raises us to *higher* Degrees of God's Favour, than a *less excellent* Religion would have done.

So that when your Lordship talks of the *Excellency* of one Religion above another, as having nothing in it, *as such*, to recommend us to higher Degrees of God's Favour, or effect our *Justification*; it is full as absurd, as to say, that though one kind of *Learning* may be more *excellent* than another kind of *Learning*, yet no Men are more *excellent* or *valuable*, for having one kind of *Learning* rather than another.

For as no kind of Learning can be said to be *peculiarly* excellent, but because it gives some *peculiar Excellency* to those who are Masters of it; so no kind of Religion can be said to be *more excellent* than another, unless those who profess it, reap some *Advantage* from it, which is not to be had from a Religion *less excellent*.

From all this it appears, first, that there can be no such thing as any *Goodness* or *Excellency* in one Religion above another, but as it procures a *peculiar Good* and *Advantage* to those who profess it.

Secondly; That your Lordship can allow no other *Goodness* or *Excellency* in Religion, even from your own express Words, but what implies as great an Absurdity, as to allow of good *Food*, good *Learning*, or good *Advice*, which can do nobody any good *at all*.

For since you expressly exclude the *Goodness* or *Excellency* of any Religion, from having any part in recommending us to the Favour of God, and will only allow it to carry us so far, as Sincerity in a *worse* Religion will carry us; it is certain, that this *good* and *excellent* Religion, is just as good as *that*, which does us no good *at all*.

So that whether you will yet own that you have destroyed all the difference betwixt Religions, or not, I cannot tell; yet I imagine, everyone will see that you have only left such a *Good-*

the Bishop of Bangor. 193

ness in one Religion above another, as can do nobody any good at all.

The short is this; If you will own there is no *Excellency* in one Religion above another, then you are guilty of making *Christianity* no better than *Mahometanism*; but if you will acknowledge a *Goodness* and *Excellency* in one Religion above another, and yet contend that it is *Sincerity alone*, which does us *any Good*, or recommends us to the Favour of God, in all Religions alike, this is as absurd, as to say, such a thing is *much better* for us than any other thing, and yet assert, that *any other* thing will do us as *much good* as that.

I have, I hope, sufficiently confuted *your* Doctrine of Sincerity, from the Nature of Religion. I shall now, in a word or two, examine it farther, by considering the Nature of *Private Persuasion*, which can do all these mighty things.

And, first, I deny that *Persuasion* was the *only* thing which justified the Protestants, or which recommends People to the Favour of God in the Choice of a Religion; and that, because if their *private Persuasion* was founded in *Pride, Prejudice, worldly Interest, or anything*, but the *real Truth*, and the *Justice* of the Cause, that their *private Persuasion* did not *justify* them before God; nor had they, upon this Supposition, so good a Title to his Favour, as those who did not reform.

If you say, that Persons cannot be *sincere* in their Persuasions, who are influenced by *Pride, or Prejudice, or any false Motive*: To this I answer;

First; That according to your *own Principles*, that Man is to be esteemed *sincere*, who *thinks* himself to be *sincere*. For, as it is a first *Principle* with you, that a Man is *justified* in point of Religion, not because he observes what in its own Nature is *true* and *right* Religion, but because he observes that which he *thinks* to be *true* and *right* Religion; so according to *this Principle*, a Man is to be accounted *sincere*, not because he acts up to *true* and *just* Principles of *Sincerity*, but because he *thinks* in his own Mind, that he does act up to such *just* and *true* Principles of *Sincerity*. So that, my Lord, *Sincerity* it seems is as truly a *private Persuasion*, as Religion is a *private Persuasion*; and therefore anyone may as easily think himself *truly* sincere, and yet not have true *Sincerity*, as he may think himself in the *true* Religion, and yet not be in the true Religion.

Unless therefore you will maintain, that a Person who is mistaken in his *Sincerity*, and mistaken in his *Religion* too, who hath neither *true* Religion, or true *Sincerity*, hath as good a Title to the Favour of God as he who is *truly* sincere, and in a *true* Religion, you must give up this *Cause* of *Sincerity*. For it

is *demonstrable* from your *own Principles*, that anyone may as often happen to be mistaken in his Sincerity, and take that for *Sincerity* which is not Sincerity, as he may be mistaken in his *Religion*, and take that for *Religion* which is not *Religion*.

And consequently it is as reasonable to talk of *sincere* Persons who are influenced by *wrong Motives*, as to talk of Persons being *justified* in Religion, who live in a *false Religion*.

So that, my Lord, this is the Result of your Doctrine, that Persons neither *truly sincere*, nor in the *true Religion*, are yet entitled to the *same Degrees* of God's Favour, with those who are *truly sincere* in the *true Religion*.

The short is this, according to a Maxim of your own, you are obliged to acknowledge that Man to be *sincere*, who *thinks* himself to be *sincere*; because you say a Man is to be esteemed Religious, not because he practices *true Religion*, but because he *thinks* he practices *true Religion*; therefore you must say, that a Man is sincere, not because he is *truly sincere*, but because he *thinks* himself to be *sincere*.

It is also as *possible* and as *likely* for a Man to be mistaken in those things which constitute *true Sincerity*, as in those things which constitute *true Religion*.

And therefore if *this Sincerity* be the *only* and the *same* Title to God's Favour in any Religion, it follows, that Sincerity, though influenced by *false Motives*, and in a false way of Worship, is as acceptable to God, as a *sincere Persuasion* governed by *right Motives*, in a *true and instituted* way of Worship.

So that all the fine things which you have said of Sincerity, as implying in it all which is *rational* and *excellent*, are come to nothing; and you are as strictly obliged to allow that Man to be *sincere*, who mistakes the *Grounds* and *Principles* of *true Sincerity*, because he *thinks* himself to be sincere, as to allow that Person to be justified in his Religion, who mistakes the *true Religion*, because he thinks himself in the *true Religion*.

So that it is not *Sincerity*, as it contains all that is *rational* and *excellent* which alone justifies, but as it may be an *idle, vain, whimsical Persuasion*, in which People think themselves in the right. This Persuasion, though founded in the Follies, Passions, and Prejudices of human Nature, consecrates every Way of Worship, and makes the Man thus persuaded as acceptable to God, as he who through a right use of his Reason, serves God in that Method which he has instituted.

I shall end this Point with only this Observation, that however hearty a Friend you may be to the Christian Religion yourself, this I dare say, that the heartiest *Enemy* it has, will thank you for thus *defending* it. And they who with all the Distinctions

betwixt Religions confounded, and maintain that we have nothing to hope or fear but from our *own Persuasions*, are the only Persons who can call you their *proper Defender*.

Of the Reformation.

I PROCEED now, in a Word or two, to show, that the *Necessity* of Communion with any *particular* Church, and the *Effects* of Excommunication, are perfectly consistent with the Principles of the *Reformation*.

You say, *If there be a Church Authority to oblige People to external Communion,——I beg to know, How can the Reformation itself be justified?——For there was then an Order of Churchmen, vested with all spiritual Authority;——there was therefore a Church Authority to oblige Christians, a Power of some over others. What was it therefore to which we owe this very Church of England?**

To this it may be answered,

First ; That this Argument proceeds upon a false Supposition, namely, that it is the *Laws* of *any Men*, which obliges us to *external Communion*. Which I have already shown to be as false, as to suppose that it is the *Laws* of *any Men* which obliges us to be *Christians*.

Secondly ; That there may be a *real* and a *great* Authority which obliges us to *external Communion*, though this Authority be not founded in any *human Laws* ; for there is as real and apparent an Authority for *Baptism* and the *Supper* of the Lord, and other Parts of external Communion, as if they were the express Matter of any human Laws.

Thirdly ; That the *Laws* of Men in this Affair of Religion, are of the same Obligation and Force that they are in other Matters. If they command Things indifferent, they are to be obeyed for the Authority of the Command ; if they enjoin Things in their own Nature good, the *Necessity* of Obedience is greater ; but if they command Things unlawful, we are not to comply, but obey God rather than Man.

Fourthly ; The Question therefore at the *Reformation* was not, Whether the *Laws* of the *Pope* or the *Prince* were on the side of the Church of *Rome* ? But whether that *Faith* and those *Institutions* which constitute the Christian Religion, were with

* *Answ. to Repr.*, p. 118.

the *Reformers*, or with the *Papists*. For the Church Authority which obliged *them then*, and which obliges now to external Communion, was not an Authority which obliged them to comply with any *number* of Bishops, or any *State Laws*, but to enter into Communion with that Bishop or Bishops, who observed that way of Worship which Christ had instituted. The Necessity of being in external Communion, does not oblige us to be in Communion with the *Pope* or any *Number* of Bishops *as such*, whose Authority we may happen to be born under; but it obliges us to be in that Communion, which is that *Way* or *Method* of Salvation which Christ has *instituted*.

So that though we should grant, that at the *Reformation* we broke through the *human* Laws of the *Church*, which required us to continue in Communion with the Church of *Rome*, it will by no means follow, that we broke through *that Authority* which obliges us to external Communion, because *that Authority* is not founded in any *human* Laws, but is the Authority of Christ, requiring us to observe all those things which constitute *external Communion*. For as it is the Authority of Christ which obliges us to be *Christians*, so that same Authority obliges us to enter into that Communion, where the *Institutions* and Faith of Christ are preserved.

When therefore you say, *if Church Authority* (meaning human Laws) be a *sufficient Obligation* upon them to determine them, then *our Forefathers* ought not in Conscience to have separated from the Church of Rome :*

This, my Lord, is no more to the Purpose, than if you had said, if the King of *France* has a Right to be obeyed all over *Europe*, then all over *Europe* they ought in Conscience to obey him.

For since it is neither pretended, nor allowed, that *human* Laws are a *sufficient Obligation* to external Communion, to argue from this Supposition is as foreign to the Purpose, as to suppose that the King of *France* was Governor of all *Europe*.

The next Step you take is also very extraordinary, where having rejected *human* Authority from being a *sufficient Obligation* to external Communion, you thus proceed, *But if Men are their own Judges by the Laws of God and of Christ in this Matter ; if they have a Right to use their Judgment, and be determined by it ;*—then here is a *Justification* of the *Reformation*, and particularly of the *Protestant Church of England*.†

The most *complaisant* Justification, my Lord, that could possibly have been thought of, because it as *peculiarly* justifies

* Page 118.

† Page 181.

all the Enemies of the Church of *England*, of what kind soever, as it justifies the Protestant Church of *England*.

For your Argument proceeds thus ; if there be no *human Authority* to which we are absolutely obliged to submit, but have a Right to use our own Judgments, then the *Reformation* is justified. Here we see the Doctrines of the reformed Church are not taken into the Question ; she is not said to be justified, as being a *true Church*, or as preserving those *Orders* and *Institutions*, which constitute the true Church ; but is justified, because Men may use their Reason, and not enter into any Communion which *human Laws* have happened to establish. Now if we of the Church of *England* are justified in the Choice of our Religion, because no *human Laws* have an absolute Power to oblige us to be of any particular Religion, then all People, whether *Papists* or *Protestants*, whether *Quakers*, *Ranters*, *Jews*, *Turks*, and *Infidels*, are *equally* justified in the Choice of their *particular Ways* of Worship, because *human Laws* have not an absolute Power to oblige them to be of any particular Religion. So that though you call this a *Justification* of the Protestant Church of *England*, you might as justly have called it a *Justification* of *Quakers*, *Jews*, *Turks*, and *Infidels*: For it is as truly a *Justification* of *every one* of them, as it is a *Justification* of the Church of *England*.

But to proceed.

How comes it, my Lord, that the *Reformation* is *justified*, because People may use their Reason, and are not under a Necessity from human Laws of being of this or that Church? Why must the *Reformation* be *right and just*, because *human Laws* are not sufficient to hinder a *Reformation*. Is there no *other Authority* that can make any particular Religion necessary, because *human Authority* cannot? May it not be our *Duty* to be of *this* Communion, and a *Sin* to enter into *another* Communion, though *human Laws* as such cannot make the one a *Duty*, or the other a *Sin*? Does *Baptism*, the *Supper* of the Lord, and a *Belief* in *Jesus Christ*, cease to be necessary, because that necessity does not arise from *human Laws*?

Now if Things may be *necessary* to Salvation, though they are not made so by *human Authority*, then it is no *Justification* of the *Reformation* to say, that the *Reformers* might use their Reason, and not choose that Religion which *human Laws* commanded them to choose ; this will be no *Justification*, till it appears, that they chose that Religion which the *Authority* of God required them to choose.

For it would be Nonsense to say, People are justified for having such a sort of *Baptism*, because the *Necessity* of *Baptism*

does not arise from *human Laws*. Yet this is as *good Sense*, as to say, such a People are justified in their Religion, because no Religion is made necessary by *human Laws*. For as they are only justified in Point of *Baptism*, who observe such Baptism, as the *Authority* of God has *appointed*, so are they only justified in their *Religion*, who enter into that *Religion* which the *Authority* of God has *instituted*.

But your Lordship has no sooner shown that *human Authority*, as *such*, cannot oblige us to be of any *particular Religion*, but you presently congratulate your Readers upon an entire Freedom from all Authority in Religion, and without once mentioning that the Reformation is right and just, because of the *Orders, Doctrines or Institutions*, which it maintains; you say it is justified for *such a Reason*, as justifies in an *equal Degree* every Religion, and every Change of Religion in the World. You have so far justified it, as to show that it is as well to be of it, as of any other Church, and as well to be of any other Church as of it.

Who would not think, my Lord, that the *instituted Terms* of Salvation had something to do with the Justification of Christians? Yet you can justify People without any regard to them. Who would not think that a Religion is unjustifiable, if it is contrary to the Religion *instituted* by Christ? Yet your Lordship has justified *all Changes* in Religion, without any regard to the *Institutions* of Christ solely for this Reason, because Men may use their own Judgment, and not submit to the Laws of Men, as *such*, in the Choice of Religion. As if, because they are not to be altogether governed by the Commands of *Men* in the Choice of a Religion, neither are they to be determined by the Authority of God, or any more tied down to *his Institutions*, than to *human Laws*. Who would think that no *Change* in Religion is *dangerous*, because Religion is only instituted by God, and has his Authority to make it necessary? Yet your Lordship banishes all Danger from *every Change* of Religion, and pronounces the *same Safety* in every Opinion, because People are under no absolute human Authority.

It is very surprising, after all this, to see your Lordship breaking out into *passionate Expressions* for the *Cause* of the *Reformation*, and so often *declaring*, that it is for the sake of the Reformation that you have taken so much Pains, and with so much Pleasure, in your *late Writings*.

Now it seems, your Adversaries have undermined the very Foundations of the reformed Church of *England*; and that in this Manner.

First; They justify the Church of *England*, by showing that

it maintains all those *Orders, Institutions, and Doctrines*, which Christ has made necessary to Salvation; that it is a *true Church*, because it consists of all those Things, which by the *Institution* of Christ constitute a *true Church*.

For this, your Lordship rebukes them as Enemies to the *Reformation*, as Friends to *Popery*; and declares that the Protestants are not justified because they have chosen a *true and right Religion*, but because they *think* they have chosen a true and right Religion.

Again, your Adversaries insist upon the *Necessity* of entering into Communion with the Church of *England*, because it is a true Church of Christ; and declare those guilty of the heinous Sin of *Schism*, who separate from her Communion.

Here again you condemn them, as conspiring the Ruin of the *Reformation*, because if the *Dissenters* are not justified in their Separation from the Church of *England* by their *private Persuasion*, neither is the Church of *England* to be justified for its Separation from *Rome*. So that the Difference between your Lordship and your Adversaries, in relation to the Reformed Church of *England* is this.

They support and recommend this Church, because it contains all the *necessary Doctrines and Institutions* of Christ, and consequently give it an Advantage over every other *way of Worship*, which is either *corrupted or defective*, in these Doctrines and Institutions of Christ.

But you *support and recommend* it (pardon the Expressions) not from anything which relates to it at all, but from *private Persuasion*; and consequently allow every Religion in the World to be as *just, and good, and safe*, if Men are but *so persuaded*.

They defend the Church of *England*, by showing what it is, and by asserting the Truth of its Doctrines.

You have no Title to be mentioned amongst its *Defenders*, but as you may be called a *Defender of Quakers and Fanatics, Jews and Turks*, and every Religion in the World, which any one *thinks to be right*.

To proceed; As a farther *Defence* of the *Reformation*, you ask, *How did the first Reformers behave themselves? Did they not think and speak of them (viz., Absolution and Excommunication) as having nothing to do with the Favour of God, as human Engines, and mere Outcries of human Terror? And did they mean by this to claim to themselves the Right of Absolution, which they had denied to others, because they were fallible and weak Men; or to assert a Power of Excommunication, so as to affect Men's eternal Salvation, to themselves in one Church, which*

*they had disregarded and trampled upon in another? No: They treated all Excommunications as alike, and upon an equal foot; and could upon no other Account neglect and disregard them as they did, but because God had not given to any Man the Disposal of his Mercy or Anger.**

The Argument, my Lord, here proceeds thus: First; That all Absolutions and Excommunications must have been esteemed alike, and equally *insignificant* by our Reformers, because they were not terrified at the Excommunications of the Church of Rome, nor thought an Absolution from that Church necessary.

Secondly; That the Reformers having thus disregarded *these Powers* in that Church, ought not to pretend, that the same Powers have any more Effect when they exercise them in this Church.

To this it may be answered, that if we ought not to pretend to any *Effects* in *Absolution* or *Excommunication*, because we disregarded *those Powers* as exercised by the Church of Rome; that then we ought not to pretend the Necessity of any *Faith*, because we disregarded the Faith of the *Romish Church*; nor the Necessity of any *Sacraments*, nor the Necessity of the *Canonical Writings*, because we disregarded the Canonical Books of the Church of Rome. And it is as good Sense to cry out here, 'Did they not treat their *Sacraments* as mere *Inventions* of Men? Did they mean by this to claim to themselves a Power to make *Sacraments necessary* in one Church, which Power they had trampled upon in another? Did they deny the Necessity of seven *Sacraments there*, in order to assert the Necessity of two *Sacraments here*? No: They treated all *Sacraments* as alike, and upon an equal foot with respect to God's Favour, and could upon no other Account neglect and disregard them as they did, but because God's Favour or Displeasure was no ways affected by any *Sacraments*.'

Here let common Sense judge, whether this Argument of yours, showing the Unreasonableness of pretending to any Significancy in *Excommunication*, because we disregarded the Excommunication of the Church of Rome, does not prove it as unreasonable to insist upon the Necessity of any *Faith*, or any *Sacraments*, or any *Canonical Books*, because we denied the *Romish Creed*, the *Romish Sacraments*, and *Canon* of Scripture?

For our Reformers no more intended to show that Excommunication was a *Dream* and *Trifle*, because they disregarded the Excommunication of the Church of Rome, than they intended to show that all *Sacraments*, all *Faith*, and all *Scripture*,

* *Answ. to Repr.*, pp. 121, 122.

were *Dreams* and *Trifles*, by their not owning either the *Sacraments*, or the *Creed*, or the *Canon* of the Church of *Rome*. And, my Lord, what a worthy Defender of *Christianity* and the *Reformation* would he be, who should ask us what we mean by the Necessity of *Sacraments*, or *Faith*, or *Scripture*, since we have not allowed the Necessity either of the *Romish Sacraments*, *Faith*, or *Scripture*? Yet such a *Defender* is your Lordship, who contends that we ought to reject Excommunication as a *Trifle* and *Dream*, because we disregarded the Excommunication of the Church of *Rome*.

I have now gone as far in the Examination of your *Doctrines*, as my present Design will allow me, and am apt to think that in this and my *former Letters*, I have gone so far, as to show, that a few more *such Defences* of *Christianity* and the *Reformation*, as you have given us, would complete their Ruin, as far as *human Writings* can complete it.

And had you meant ever so much harm to *Christianity* and the *Reformation*, I believe no one who wishes their Confusion, would have thought you could have taken a better way to obtain that End, than by writing as you have lately written.

For he must be a very Bitter *Enemy* to them both, who would not think it sufficient to set *Christianity* and *Mahometanism*, the *Reformation* and *Quakerism*, upon the *same* foot.

And he must be very slow of Apprehension, who does not see that to be plainly done, by resolving all into *private Persuasion*, and making *Sincerity* in every Religion, whether *true* or *false*, the *same Title* to the *same Degrees* of God's Favour.

I shall not with your Lordship make any Declarations about *my own Sincerity*; I am content to leave that to God, and to let all the World pass what Judgment they please about it.

I am, Your Lordship's

Most Humble Servant,

William Law.

Postscript.

THE Learned *Committee* observed to your Lordship, that an *erroneous Conscience was never, till now, allowed wholly to justify Men in their Errors.*

This Observation I have shown to be true and just, as it implies, that though Sincerity in an *erroneous way* of Worship should in *some degree* or other recommend Men to the Favour or Mercy of God, yet it is not that *entire Recommendation* to his Favour, which is effected by our sincere Obedience in the *true way* of Salvation: That is, though it should justify them in *some degree*, yet it cannot justify them in *that degree*, in which they are justified, who sincerely serve God, in that true Religion which he himself has instituted.

Now our Justification, as it is effected by the Merits of Christ, is in *one and the same degree*; but as our Justification is effected by our own Behaviour, it is as capable of *different degrees*, as our Virtue and Holiness is capable of *different degrees*; and it is also necessary that our Justification be *more or less*, according as our Holiness is *more or less*.

Yet in answer to this Observation of the Learned *Committee*, you say, *it must either justify them, or not justify them; it must either justify them wholly, or not justify them at all.* This, my Lord, is as contrary to the Scripture, as it is to the Observation of the *Committee*. For our blessed Saviour, speaking of the *Publican*, says, *I tell you, this Man went down to his House justified, rather than the other.**

Here, my Lord, is as plain a Declaration of *Degrees* in Justification, as can well be made, so far as Justification can be effected by our own Behaviour.

For, it is plain, the *Publican* was not *wholly* justified, because then there would be no need of his embracing Christianity; it is also plain, that he was justified *in part*, or else he could not be said to be justified *rather* than the *Pharisee*.

If therefore your Answer confutes the Observation of the Learned *Committee*, it must also confute this Passage of *Scripture*. I shall only add one word in relation to another Point.

I have already shown the Falseness and evil Tendency of your Argument against *Excommunication*, which you asserted to be a *Dream* and *Trifle* without *any Effect*, because it is our

* Luke xviii. 10, &c.

own Behaviour alone which can signify anything to us with regard to the Favour of God. Now, my Lord, this *Philosophy* strikes at the very Vitals of the Christian Religion: For, if this Sentence can have no Effect, if it is a *Dream* and *Trifle*, because it is *our Behaviour alone* on which the Favour of God depends; then how shall we account for these Passages of Scripture, which attribute our *Justification* to the *Merits* and *Death* of Christ. As thus;

*Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins;**

In whom we have Redemption through his Blood;†

Being justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from wrath.‡

It is the constant, uniform Doctrine of Scripture, that our Reconciliation and Peace with God, our Justification and Sanctification before God, is owing to the *Merits and Death of Christ*. But if what you have said be true, that it is our *Behaviour alone*, which procures the Favour of God, then the *Blood* of Christ must be as truly without any Effect, as Excommunication is without any Effect.

For if the Favour of God depends entirely upon our *Behaviour alone*, then it can depend upon nothing else; and if it depend upon nothing else, then everything else is equally trifling and without any Effect as to that Purpose; and consequently every Passage in Scripture which ascribes our *Acceptance with God* to the *Merits and Blood of Christ*, is as much condemned by your Doctrine, as the *Effects* of Excommunication are condemned by it.

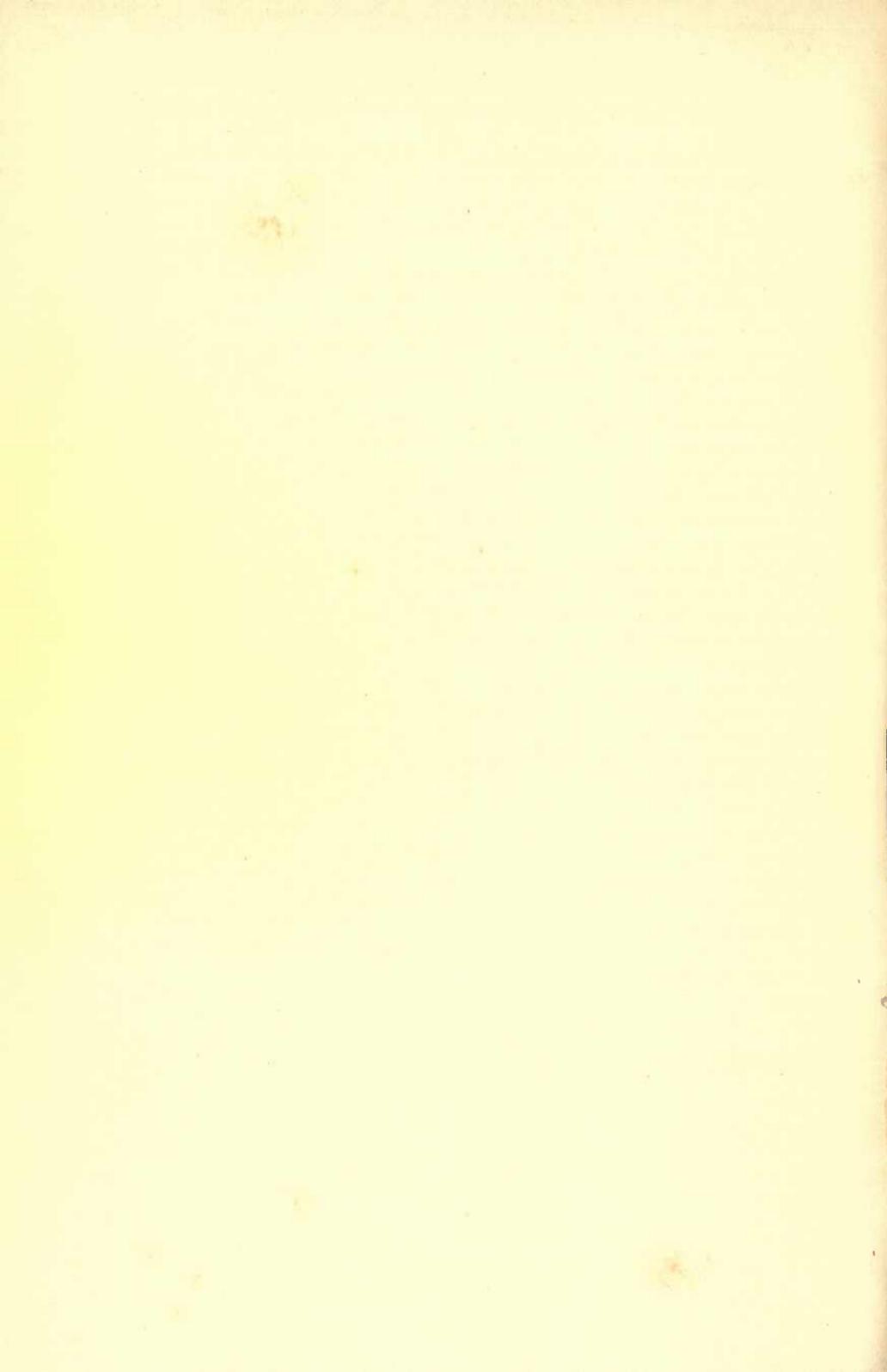
Whether your Lordship did not perceive the *Inconsistency* of this Doctrine, with that *Satisfaction* and *Redemption* which the Scriptures teach; or whether you *knowingly* intended to oppose this Doctrine, is, what I shall leave to everyone's own Judgment. Thus much I shall only say, that as you have here directly contradicted this first Principle of the Christian Religion, if it is not what you intended, I hope you will, for the sake of Christianity, venture to declare, that though you have asserted, that it is our *Behaviour alone*, yet it is not *our Behaviour alone*, but more particularly the *Merits and Death* of Christ, which recommends us to the Favour of God.

F I N I S .

* Gal. i. 3.

† Ephes. i. 7.

‡ Rom. v. 9.







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THE

WORKS

Of the REVEREND

WILLIAM LAW, M.A.,

Sometime Fellow of *Emmanuel*
College, *Cambridge*.

In Nine Volumes.

Volume II.

- I. Remarks upon a late Book, entitled,
'The Fable of the Bees,' &c.
Page 3.
- II. The Case of Reason, or Natural Religion,
fairly and fully stated, &c.
Page 55.
- III. The absolute Unlawfulness of Stage-
Entertainments fully demonstrated.
Page 139.

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Prefatory Advertisement.

I. Remarks upon *'The Fable of the Bees.'*

WILLIAM LAW'S second publication was, like his first, of a controversial nature, although his opponent was a very different personage from Doctor *Hoadly*, Bishop of *Bangor*; of whom a few very general particulars should have been given in the previous volume; which omission is now supplied, by way of brief digression, here. *Benjamin Hoadly* was born in the year 1676; educated at *Catherine College, Cambridge*; Bishop of *Bangor* in 1715, which See he held at the breaking out of the *Bangorian Controversy*, to which *William Law's* three Letters—written between the years 1717-1719, when he was about thirty-one years of age—are considered to have been the most important contribution. His Lordship was translated successively to the Sees of *Hereford, Salisbury* and *Winchester*; and of the last See he was Diocesan for above twenty-six years. He died in the year 1761, aged 85 years, and was buried in *Winchester Cathedral*.

BERNARD DE MANDEVILLE, who was *William Law's* second opponent, was of Dutch extraction, a Native of *Holland* and an Author of a very temporary and unenviable kind of celebrity. Having graduated in Medicine at one of the Continental Universities he came to *London*, where he practised his profession; but does not appear to have been held in much repute by medical men. He therefore wrote a Satire upon them, which appears to have passed unnoticed. In the year 1714, when he was about forty-four years of age, he published a Poem entitled '*The Grumbling Hive; or Knaves turned Honest,*' setting forth a Hive of Bees who having by dishonest practices acquired wealth and luxury agreed to abandon them and to 'turn honest,' which reduced them to poverty; and occasioned their grumbling—in prose and verse of a very lame and doggerel kind. In this effusion, Mandeville not only ridicules the expediency of being Honest as the best Policy—a treatment perhaps which that time-honoured but most worldly-wise maxim well merits—but

iv Prefatory Advertisement.

entirely rejects 'virtue' and 'reason,' affirming that man like the brutes, is governed by mere instincts and passions. He enlarged and republished this work in the year 1723, with the Title of 'The Fable of the Bees; or Private Vices, Public 'Benefits'—when it achieved the notoriety of being 'presented' by the Grand Jury of *Middlesex*, as dangerous to Religion and Order. *William Law* also 'presented' the book in a very masterly manner in his 'Remarks' upon it; which he wrote the same year and published early in the year 1724. *Mandeville* attempted to vindicate his 'philosophy' in the *London Journal* in *August*, 1723; when *William Law* had written, ready for the press, as far as page 45 of this volume; and this 'Vindication' occasioned further strictures from that Writer.

Of *Mandeville's* later life, little is known. He is said to have resided in obscure lodgings; and to have written in the *London Journal* as a Medical Man, in favour of the use of spirituous liquors—for which he was well paid by the Distillers. He died in *January*, 1733, aged 63 years.

The French Writer, PIERRE BAYLE, upon whose works *William Law* in a Postscript makes 'an Observation or two,' is probably known to some readers as the Compiler of the 'Critical Dictionary' and otherwise, as a voluminous and rather unedifying writer. He died 'of a decay of the lungs, after he had been 'writing the greatest part of the day'—wrote himself to death, poor man!—in the year 1706.

The 'Remarks upon the Fable of the Bees' is *Law's* earliest work which has been republished in later times. This was done in the year 1844 under the Editorship of MR. MAURICE upon the suggestion of JOHN STERLING, who described *Law's* 'Remarks' as one of the most remarkable philosophical Essays he had ever seen in English: of which the first Section 'has all the 'highest beauty of' *Law's* 'polemical compositions, and a weight 'of pithy right reason such as fills one's heart with joy. I have 'never seen in our language the elementary ground of a rational 'ideal philosophy as opposed to empiricism, stated in nearly the 'same clearness, simplicity and force.' In MR. MAURICE'S re-issue *Mandeville's* Fable is also partly included—a course almost as impracticable here, as it would be to recite all the arguments of the Bangorian Controversy. Readers of *William Law's* Works scarcely need to be reminded that he always renders full justice to his opponents; and generally quotes whole paragraphs from their writings, so that both sides of the question are fairly and comprehensively stated; which is of great assistance to the modern reader. At the time of writing the 'Remarks,' *William Law* was about 37 years of age.

II. *The Case of Reason ; or Natural Religion fairly and fully stated.*

ALTHOUGH 'The Case of Reason' appears as *William Law's* third publication in the collected edition of his works issued after his decease, and is here, for convenience, so retained ; yet it is not the third, but the sixth, in the order of publication. It was not published until the year 1731, after the excellent Pamphlet respecting the 'Unlawfulness of the Stage-Entertainment'; the 'Practical Treatise on Christian Perfection' and the 'Serious Call' had appeared : and when *William Law* was forty-five years of age and well known.

The Case of Reason was written in reply to DR. TINDAL, 'the Christian Deist's' work entitled 'Christianity as old as the Creation'; which was published in the year 1730 and excited much controversy at the time.

WILLIAM LAW had a curious variety of opponents to contend with. BISHOP HOADLY with his Invisible Church, disregard for outward and visible Ordinances, and Salvation by Sincerity : BERNARD MANDEVILLE with his rejection of anything of the moral nature beyond mere brute instinct ; and DR. TINDAL with his supreme dependence upon Reason or Natural Religion : against each of whom *William Law* most effectually turned their own weapons.

MATTHEW TINDAL is said to have been born in the year 1657. He was a Doctor of Laws and wrote various books of which the most important was that replied to by *William Law*. His 'Defence of the Rights of the Christian Church'—incorrectly reprinted as 'Rites' in the Bangorian Letters—was burnt by Order of the House of Commons. His other works, of a nature sufficiently indicated by the subjects of which they treat, 'Jacobitism, Perjury, Popery, Law of Nations, Rights of 'Sovereigns,' &c., appear to have long since passed with their Author—who died in the year 1733—into Oblivion.

III. *The Absolute Unlawfulness of the Stage-Entertainment fully demonstrated.*

THIS Pamphlet is WILLIAM LAW'S third work in the order of publication; published in the year 1726, when he was about forty years of age. It has been severely censured by *Law's* so-called Admirers; and a late writer describes it as written with greater zeal than knowledge of the facts—a description which is more epigrammatic than just. Even CANON OVERTON gravely considers it his duty as 'a faithful Biographer' not to shrink from admitting the weaknesses of his Subject—very gratuitously and unnecessarily we think in this case; which reveals to us how little real insight he had into the *life of William Law*. JOHN DENNIS a kind of 'Critic' and an ex-Playwright, replied to it in 'The Stage Defended from Scripture, Reason, Experience and 'the Common Sense of Mankind for 2,000 years'—by which he is usually misrepresented as having completely vanquished poor *Law*. Two thousand years ago takes him back to classical times—and he naturally refers to the Grecian stage; as if the London Play-house of *Law's* time, could possibly be compared with the Athenian or Corinthian stages. His Scriptural Authorities, according to CANON OVERTON, appear to be quite negative—*e.g.*, *St. Paul* did not condemn the Athenian stage of his time. From Reason no less than from Experience, *William Law* sufficiently condemns such Entertainments; and the 'Common Sense of Mankind for the last 2,000 years' can scarcely be received as an authority upon any important subject. Disregarding all Criticism: is it possible for any truly pious-minded man to answer the following interrogatory respecting the Stage-Entertainment, which *William Law* puts at page 156, in the affirmative?

'Is it conformable to that Heavenly Affection, that Love of 'God, that Purity of Heart, that Wisdom of Mind, that Perfection of Holiness, that Contempt of the World, that Watchfulness and Self-denial, that Humility and Fear of Sin, which 'Religion requires?'

G. B. M.

REMARKS upon
'The Fable of the Bees.'

REMARKS

U P O N

A B O O K,

E N T I T L E D

The Fable of the Bees,

O R

Private Vices, Publick Benefits.

I N A

LETTER to the AUTHOR.

To which is added,

A POSTSCRIPT, containing an Observation or
two upon Mr. *Bayle*.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. RICHARDSON, in *Pater-noster-row*.

1723.

Remarks
upon a Book entitled
'The Fable of the Bees.'

Sir,

I HAVE read your several Compositions in favour of the Vices and Corruptions of Mankind ; and hope I need make no Apology, for presuming to offer a Word or two on the Side of Virtue and Religion.

I shall spend no Time in Preface, or general Reflections, but proceed directly to the Examination of such Passages as expose *moral Virtue*, as a Fraud and imposition, and render all Pretences to it, as odious and contemptible.

Though I direct myself to you, I hope it will be no Offence, if I sometimes speak, as if I was speaking to a Christian, or show some ways of thinking, that may be owing to that kind of worship which is professed amongst us. Ways of thinking derived from revealed Religion are much more suitable to our low Capacities, than any arrogant Pretences to be wise, by our own Light.

Moral Virtue, however disregarded in Practice, has hitherto had a speculative Esteem amongst Men ; her Praises have been celebrated by Authors of all kinds, as the confessed Beauty, Ornament, and Perfection of Human Nature.

On the contrary, *Immorality* has been looked upon as the greatest Reproach and Torment of Mankind ; no Satire has been thought severe enough upon its natural Baseness and Deformity, nor any Wit able to express the Evils it occasions in private Life, and public Societies.

Your Goodness would not suffer you to see this part of Christendom, deluded with such false Notions, of I know not what *Excellence* in Virtue, or *Evil* in Vice, but obliged you immediately to compose a *System* (as you call it) wherein you do these three things.

1st. You consider Man, *merely* as an *Animal*, having, like other Animals, nothing to do but to follow his Appetites.

2dly. You consider Man as cheated and flattered out of his natural State, by the Craft of Moralists, and pretend to be very

sure, that the '*moral Virtues are the political offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride.*'

So that Man and Morality are here both destroyed together ; Man is declared to be only an *Animal*, and Morality an Imposture.

According to this Doctrine, to say that a Man is dishonest, is making him just such a Criminal, as a Horse that does not dance.

But this is not all, for you dare further affirm in praise of immorality, '*That Evil, as well moral, as natural, is the solid Basis, the Life and Support of all Trades and Employments without exception ; that there we must look for the true Origin of all Arts and Sciences ; and that the Moment Evil ceases, the Society must be spoiled, if not dissolved.*'*

These are the principal Doctrines, which with more than Fanatic Zeal you recommend to your Readers ; and if lewd Stories, profane Observations, loose Jest, and haughty Assertions, might pass for Arguments, few People would be able to dispute with you.

I shall begin with your Definition of Man. '*As for my part, say you, without any Compliment to the courteous Reader, or myself, I believe, Man (besides Skin, Flesh, Bones, &c., that are obvious to the Eye) to be a Compound of various Passions, that all of them as they are provoked, and come uppermost, govern him by turns whether he will or no.*'†

Surely this Definition is too General, because it seems to suit a *Wolf*, or a *Bear*, as exactly as yourself, or a *Grecian Philosopher*.

You say, '*you believe Man to be,*' &c., now I cannot understand to what part of you, this believing Faculty is to be ascribed ; for your Definition of Man makes him incapable of believing anything, unless believing can be said to be a *Passion*, or some Faculty of *Skin* or *Bones*.

But supposing such a Belief as yours, because of its blindness, might justly be called a *Passion*, yet surely there are greater things conceived by some Men, than can be ascribed to mere *Passions*, or *Skin* and *Flesh*.

That Reach of Thought, and strong Penetration which has carried *Sir Isaac Newton* through such Regions of Science, must truly be owing to some higher Principle. Or will you say, that all his Demonstrations, are only so many blind Sallies of *Passion* ?

If Man had nothing but *Instincts* and *Passions*, he could not *dispute* about them; for to *dispute* is no more an *Instinct*, or a *Passion*, than it is a *Leg*, or an *Arm*.

If therefore you would prove yourself to be no more than a *Brute*, or an *Animal*, how much of your *Life* you need alter I cannot tell, but you must at least forbear writing against *Virtue*, for no *mere Animal* ever hated it.

But however, since you desire to be thought only *Skin* and *Flesh*, and a *Compound of Passions*, I will forget your better part, as much as you have done, and consider you in your own way. You tell us, 'that the moral *Virtues* are the political *Offspring*, which *Flattery* begot upon *Pride*.'*

You therefore, who are an *Advocate* for moral *Vices*, should by the *Rule of Contraries*, be supposed to be acted by *Humility*; but that being (as I think) not of the number of the *Passions*, you have no *Claim* to be guided by it.

The prevailing *Passions*, which you say have the sole *Government* of Man in their turns, are *Pride*, *Shame*, *Fear*, *Lust*, and *Anger*; you have appropriated the moral *Virtues* to *Pride*, so that your own *Conduct* must be ascribed either to *Fear*, *Shame*, *Anger*, or *Lust*, or else to a beautiful *Union* and *Concurrence* of them all.

I doubt not, but you are already angry, that I consider you only as an *Animal*, that acts as *Anger*, or *Lust*, or any other *Passion* moves it, although it is your own *Assertion* that you are no better.

But to proceed, 'Sagacious *Moralists*, say you, draw Men like *Angels*, in hopes, that the *Pride* at least of some, will put them upon copying after the beautiful *Originals*, which they are represented to be.†

I am loath to charge you with *Sagacity*, because I would not accuse you falsely; but if this *Remark* is well made, I can help you to another full as just; viz., 'That *Sagacious Advocates* for *Immorality*, draw Men like *Brutes*, in hopes, that the *Depravity* at least of some, will put them upon copying after the base *Originals*, which they are represented to be.'

The *Province* you have chosen for yourself, is to deliver Man from the *Sagacity* of *Moralists*, the *Encroachments* of *Virtue*, and to replace him in the *Rights* and *Privileges* of *Brutality*; to recall him from the giddy *Heights* of *rational Dignity*, and *Angelic likeness*, to go to *Grass*, or wallow in the *Mire*.

Had the *Excellence* of Man's *Nature*, been only a false *Insinua-*

* Page 37.

† Page 38.

tion of crafty Politicians, the very falseness of the thing, had made some Men at Peace with it ; but this Doctrine coming from Heaven, its being a principle of Religion, and a foundation of solid Virtue, has roused up all this Zeal against it.

And God said, *Let us make Man in our own Image, after our Likeness.*

This was a Declaration of the Dignity of Man's Nature, made long before any of your Sagacious Moralists had a Meeting. As this Doctrine came thus early from Heaven, so in the several Ages of the World, God has had his *Oracles*, and *Prophets*, to raise Men's Thoughts to their first Original ; to preserve a Sense of their Relation to God, and Angelic Natures, and encourage them to expect a State of Greatness suitable to that Image after which they were created. To assure *them*, that *they that sleep in the Dust of the Earth shall awake, some to Everlasting Life, and some to shame and everlasting Contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the Firmament, and they that turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever.**

The last Revelation which God has made to the World, by his Son Jesus Christ, is greatly Glorious in this respect, that it has more perfectly brought Life and Immortality to light ; that it turns our Thoughts from the low satisfactions of Flesh and Sense, to press and aspire after that deathless State of Greatness, where we shall be *as the Angels of God.*

It is not therefore the Sagacity and Cunning of any Philosophers that has tricked Men into Notions of Morality, as a thing suitable to a pretended Dignity of Nature within them.

But it is God himself, who first declared the Excellence of human Nature, and has made so many Revelations since, to fill Men's Minds with high and noble Desires suitable to it.

Before I proceed to consider your *Inquiry into your Origin of moral Virtue*, I shall take Notice of the Apology that you make to Jews and Christians.

You are sensible that what you have said is inconsistent, both with the Old and New Testament, and therefore thus excuse yourself to your scrupulous Reader.

That in '*your Inquiry into the Origin of moral Virtue, you speak neither of Jews nor Christians, but Man in his State of Nature and Ignorance of the true Deity.*' †

The Absurdity of this Apology will appear from hence ; Let us suppose that you had been making an *Inquiry into the Origin of the World*, and should declare that it arose from a *casual Concourse of Atoms*, and then tell your scrupulous Reader, by way of

* Dan. xii. 2, 3.

† Page 35.

Excuse, that you did not mean the World, which *Jews* and *Christians* dwell upon, but that which is inhabited by *Man in his State of Nature and Ignorance of the true Deity*: Could anything be more weak or senseless than such an Apology? yet it is exactly the same as that which you have here made.

For the difference of *Jew* or *Heathen*, no more supposes or allows of two different *Origins of Morality*, than it supposes or allows of two different *Origins of the World*.

For as the Creation of the World was over, and owing to its true Cause, before the Existence of either *Jew* or *Heathen*, so Morality was in being, and sprung from its proper Source, before either *Jew* or *Heathen* came into the World. And consequently, neither the Origin of the one or the other admits of any different Account, because in the after Ages of the World, some People were called *Jews*, and others *Heathens*. Besides, if you contradict the Religion of *Jews* and *Christians*, in your Account of Morality, is it less a Contradiction, or less false, because you pretend that your Face was turned towards *Pagans*?

If you were to assert that there was no God, or true Religion, could it be any Excuse, to say that you were speaking to a *Mahometan*?

2dly. To defend your Account of the Origin of Morality, you suppose Man in a State of Nature, savage and brutal, without any Notions of Morality or Ideas of Religion.

Now this very Supposition, is so far from being any Apology for you, that it enhances your Accusation: For you suppose such a State of Nature (as you call it) as the Scripture makes it morally impossible, that Men should ever have been in.

When *Noah's* Family came out of the Ark, we presume, they were as well educated in the Principles of Virtue and moral Wisdom, as any People were ever since; at least we are sure they were well instructed in the true Religion.

There was therefore a Time, when all the People in the World were well versed in moral Virtue, and worshipped God according to the true Religion.

He therefore that gives a *later* Account of the Origin of moral Virtue, gives a *false* Account of it.

Now as all Parts of the World were by degrees inhabited, by the Descendants of such Ancestors, as were well instructed both in Religion and Morality, it is morally impossible that there should be any Nation of the World, amongst whom there were no Remains of Morality, no Instances of Virtue, no Principles of Religion derived from their Ancestors.

At least it is absolutely impossible for you to show that there was any such Nation, free from all Impressions of Religion, and

Morality. This you can no more do, than you can show that all the World are not descended from *Adam*.

So that your *Origin of moral Virtue* supposes a State of Man, which the Scriptures make it morally impossible ever to happen, and which it is absolutely impossible for you to show, that it really did ever happen.

But supposing some of the Posterity of *Noah*, in some Corner of the World, should have become so degenerate, as to have not the least Remains of Virtue or Religion left among them; and suppose some Philosophers should get among them, and wheedle and flatter them into some Notions of Morality; could that be called an Account of the *Origin* of moral Virtue, when moral Virtue from the beginning of the World had been practised and taught, by the virtuous Ancestors of such a depraved Offspring?

To make the taming of some such supposed Savage Creatures the *Origin of Morality*, is as just a way of thinking, as to make the History of the curing People in *Bedlam*, a true Account of the *Origin of Reason*.

3dly. Your Apology to your scrupulous Reader, as if your Origin of Morality related not to Jews or Christians, is false and absurd.

Because, the Observations which you have made upon human Nature, on which your Origin of moral Virtue is founded, are only so many Observations upon the Manners of *all Orders of Christians*. 'Tis their Falseness, Hypocrisy, Pride, and Passion, that have induced you to consider Morality, as having no rational Foundation in Man's Nature, but as the *political offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride*.

And yet you, *good Man*, are not talking about *Christians*, or *Jews*.

But every Page of your Book confutes that Excuse, and indeed needs must; for how should your Observations relate to any but to those People, whose Natures and Practices have furnished you with them?

'I have, say you, searched through every Degree and Station of *Men*;' at last, you tell us, you went to the *Convents*, but even there you found that all was *Farce and Hypocrisy*.*

You tell us also, that whoever searches thus deep into *human Nature* will find, that *moral Virtue is the political offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride*. Yet this searching into all Orders of Men, into *Convents*, and from thence making this Discovery,

that Morality is all owing to *Pride* and *Policy*, is not pronouncing anything upon Christians.

Nothing can be more weak than to form your Opinion of human Nature, upon the Tempers and Practices of all Orders of Christians, and then pretend you are only treating of Man in such a State of Nature, as you never saw one in, in your Life.

For how can your Observations upon Men, under the Power of Education, Custom, Laws, and Religion, tell you what Man is, in a supposed State, where all these are wanting?

Or will you say that you are acquainted, and intimately acquainted with Men, so entirely divested of all the Ideas of Religion, Morality, and Virtue, that you can make their Natures a true Specimen of Man in his most savage, brutal Condition?

Though your Knowledge of human Nature was great, yet you were forced, it seems, to visit the *Convents*, before you could pronounce anything of them. It seems therefore necessary, in order to know what Creatures Men are in a State of brutality, destitute of all Sense of God and Virtue, that you should know where to visit them.

Again, this *Apology* of yours, happens to be inconsistent with the first and main Principle upon which your fine Discourse is founded. I mean your Definition of *Man*, whom you define to be, besides *Skin, Flesh, and Bones, &c.*, a compound of various *Passions*. This is the vile, abominable, false, proud *Animal*, that you treat of under the Name of Man. In your Excuse you tell us, this is Man only in a State of *Nature*, but in your Introduction, you tell us, that to forbear complimenting, that Definition belongs both to *yourself, and the courteous Reader*.

So that you must either allow, that you and your courteous Readers are all Savages, in an unenlightened State of Nature, or else that the Man you have described, belongs to all Orders of Christians.

Having shown the weakness and folly of your *Apology*, I proceed now to your more particular Account of the *Origin of moral Virtue*.

You are pleased to impute its Origin to *Pride* alone, that having the same Cause as fine Clothes, we may wear as much, or as little, or as we please, without incurring any greater Offence, than a little variation in Dress.

If *Pride* be the only foundation of Virtue, then the more vicious anyone is, the more humble he ought to be esteemed; and he who is the most humble is at the greatest distance he can be placed from moral Virtue. And a perfect Humility (which by most Moralists has been reckoned a Virtue) must according to this Account, render anyone incapable of any Virtue; for such

a one not only wants that which you make the only Cause of Virtue, but is possessed of the contrary Quality.

Having carefully considered human Nature, you have at last discovered, that *'the moral Virtues are the political offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride.'*

You are so fond of this Discovery, that you cannot help showing us how you made it.

The first Moralists or Philosophers, say you, *'thoroughly examined all the Strength and Frailty of our Nature, and observing that none were either so savage, as not to be charmed with Praise, or so despicable, as patiently to bear Contempt, justly concluded, that Flattery must be the powerful Argument that could be used to human Creatures.'*

What a Graphical Description is here ! One would think that you had been an Eye witness to all that passed, and that you had held the Candle to those first Philosophers, when they were so carefully peeping into human Nature. You do not love to dwell upon little Matters, or else you could have told us the Philosopher's Name, who first discovered this *Flattery*; how long he looked before he found it; how he proved it to be agreeable to Pride; what Disputes happened upon the Occasion; and how many Ages of the World had passed, before this Consultation of the Philosophers.

But however, you pass on to more material Points: *'They, say you, (that is the Philosophers) making use of this bewitching Engine, extolled the Excellence of our Nature above other Animals. Having by this artful way of Flattery, insinuated themselves into the Hearts of Men, they begun to instruct them in the Notions of Honour and Shame;—they laid before them how unbecoming it was the Dignity of such sublime Creatures, to be solicitous about gratifying those Appetites, which they had in common with Brutes, &c.'*

This you take to be a sufficient Proof, *'that the moral Virtues are the political offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride.'*

I can go no further, till I present you with a fine Speculation of an *Abstract-thinker*, upon the *Origin of the erect posture of Mankind*.

'It was his Opinion, that the nearer we search into human Nature, the more we shall be convinced, that walking upon our Feet with our Body erect, was the political offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride.'

'The first Legislators, says he, having examined the Strength and Weakness of Man's Body, they discovered, that he was not so top heavy, but that he might stand upright on his Feet; but the Difficulty was how to raise him up.'

‘Some Philosopher more sagacious than the rest found out, that though Man crept on the Ground, yet he was made up of Pride, and that if Flattery took hold of that, he might easily be set on his Legs.

‘Making use of this bewitching Engine, they extolled the excellence of his Shape above other Animals, and told him what a grovelling thing it was, to creep on all fours like the meanest Animals.

‘Thus did these first Philosophers shame poor Man out of his natural State of creeping, and wheedled him into the Dignity and Honour of walking upright, to serve their own ambitious Ends, and that they might have his Hands to be employed in their Drudgery.’

This Gentleman being deeply learned in the Knowledge of human Nature, has much the same Curiosities concerning the Origin of Speech, and the first Invention of Truth, which he thinks upon a strict Research into Nature, may very justly be ascribed to Pride and Flattery.

But to return to your History. The next Thing your Philosophers did, was this :

‘*In order to introduce an Emulation amongst Men, they divided the whole Species into two Classes, vastly different from one another. The one consisted of vile grovelling Wretches, which they said were the Dross of their Kind, and having only the Shape of Men, differed from Brutes only in their outward Figure; but the other Class of Men were made up of high Spirited lofty Creatures.*’*

Chronology, and Geography, I presume, are Studies not polite enough for your Attention, or else I suppose you would have told us the Time when, and the Place where all this happened.

For it is material to know what the World was doing before these Philosophers made this Division; whether before this, there was any Fear of God, any Belief of a Providence, any Duty to Parents, any Sense of Equity, any Notions of Faith, or any Regard to Truth.

For if the Inquiry was about the Origin of *Seeing*, or *Hearing*, and you should be ever so exact in telling me the manner how some cunning Philosophers first brought that Matter to bear, I should be very scrupulous about it, unless you told me the Time when, and the Place where they met, what they were doing before, how they came thither, and how they knew when they were there.

Now there is just this same Difficulty in your Account of the *Origin of moral Virtue*.

For let me tell you, Sir, *moral Virtue* came amongst Men, in the same manner, as *Seeing* and *Hearing* came amongst them.

Had there ever been a Time, when there was nothing of it in the World, it could no more have been introduced, than the Faculties of *Seeing* and *Hearing* could have been contrived by Men who were *blind* and *deaf*.

Were not the first Principles and Reasons of Morality conatural to us, and essential to our Minds, there would have been nothing for the moral Philosophers to have improved upon.

Nor indeed can any Art or Science be formed, but in such Matters, as where Nature has taken the first Steps herself, and shown certain Principles to proceed upon.

Perspective supposes an agreement in the different Appearances of Objects.

Music supposes a confessed Perception of various Sounds; and *moral Philosophy* supposes an acknowledged difference of Good and Evil.

Were we not all naturally *Mathematicians* and *Logicians*, there would be no such Sciences; for Science is only an improvement of those first Principles or Ways of thinking, which Nature has given us.

Take away the *Mathematicians' Postulata*, or those first Elements and Principles of Reason, which are allowed by the common Sense of Mankind, and were Philosophers even as cunning as yourself, they must give up all the Science.

Do but suppose *all* to be invented, and then it will follow that *nothing* could be invented in any Science.

It is thus in all Sciences; the rationality of our Nature contains the first Rules, or Principles, and it is the Speculation of Man that builds and enlarges upon them.

As the Mathematician, seeing the acknowledged Differences and Proportions of Lines and Figures, proceeded upon them to enlarge Men's Knowledge in such matters; so the moral Philosophers, seeing the acknowledged Difference between Right and Wrong, Good and Evil, which the common Reason of Man consented to, they proceeded to enlarge and improve upon them.

So that their Labours are but Speculations and Harangues upon those common Principles of Morality, which were as conatural to the Reason of Man, as the first Principles of any other Science.

Moral Philosophy may be compared to *Eloquence*; it is an Improvement upon the common Reason of Man, as *Eloquence* is an Improvement upon *Speech*.

Now should some *Connoisseur* take it into his Head to inquire into the *Origin of Speech*, and tell the World, 'That once upon a time, some *Orators* seeing that Man had something in his Mouth, by the Movement of which, he could make a particular Sound, they told him of the Dignity and Honour of uttering such Sounds, and so through the pride of his Nature taught the *Animal* to speak, though in reality, it was neither natural to him, nor any true Excellence; but ambitious Men flattered him into it, that he might be the fitter to go on their Errands.'

Should any profound Thinker give this Account of the *Origin of Speech*, you would have a Right to say, that he had stole the Discovery from you, who have given us just the same false and ridiculous Account of the *Origin of Morality*.

For it is full as reasonable, to make *Eloquence* the *Origin* of forming *articulate Sounds*, as to make the Harangues or Labours of moral Philosophers, the *Origin of moral Virtue*.

Could it be supposed, that an Understanding so *fine* as yours, could be conveyed to your *Descendants*, and that you should ever have a *Grandson* as *wise* as yourself, it may be expected that he will be able to teach that Generation of Men, that *Seeing*, was first introduced into the World, by Sir *Isaac Newton's* Treatise upon *Optics*.

To inquire into the Origin of moral Virtue, is to inquire into the Origin of *Reason*, *Truth*, and the *Relations* of Things.

And to fancy that some Politicians contrived moral Virtue, is to fancy that some Politician contrived *Reason* and *Truth*, and invented the Difference between one Action and another.

There is nothing that began to be, but what may be destroyed or cease to be; but as *Truth* and *Reason* can never cease to be, so it implies a Contradiction in Terms, for *Truth* and *Reason* ever to have had a Beginning.

It is the same in moral Virtue, which is *Truth* and *Reason*, considered in relation to Actions; and the Difference between one Action and another, is as immutable and eternal, as the Difference between one Line and another, and can no more be destroyed.

As *things* are different by their own proper Natures, independent of our Wills, so *Actions* have their own peculiar Qualities from themselves, and not from our Thoughts about them. In these immutable Qualities of Actions, is founded the fitness and reasonableness of them, which we can no more alter, than

we can change the Proportions or Relations of Lines and Figures.

And it is no more the *Pride* of Man, that has made this Difference between *Actions*, than it is the *Pride* of Man, that makes the Difference between a *Circle* and a *Square*.

Moral Virtue therefore, if considered in itself, as the Rule or Law of intelligent Beings, had *no Origin*; that is, there never was a time when it began to be; but it is as much without Beginning as Truth and Goodness, which are in their Natures as Eternal as God.

But moral Virtue, if considered as the Object of Man's Knowledge, begun with the first Man, and is as natural to him, as it is natural to Man to think and perceive, or feel the Difference between Pleasure and Pain.

For his rational Nature, as much implies a fitness to perceive a Difference in Actions, as to Right and Wrong, as it implies a fitness to perceive a Difference in things as to great and small, pleasing or painful.

It may now be inquired, whether this moral Virtue be our *Law*, and how it appears, that we are under any Obligations to behave ourselves, according to this Difference of *Right* and *Wrong* that appears in Actions?

Now the reasonableness and fitness of Actions themselves is a Law to rational Beings, and the sight of that reasonableness carries an Obligation.

The different Magnitude of things, is a Reason to us, to acknowledge such Difference; and he that affirms anything contrary to the sight of his Mind, offends against the Law of his Nature.

The different nature of *Actions*, is a Reason for us to act according to such Differences, and he who does anything contrary to the sight of his Mind in that respect, sins against the Law of his Nature.

Now that this is not an imaginary Obligation, or a Law fancied by Moralists, may appear from hence; that this is a Law to which even the Divine Nature is subject; for God is necessarily Just and Good, not from any external Force, but from the Excellence of Justice and Goodness. *Reason* is his Law because it is *Reason*. That therefore which is a Law to God because of its Excellence, must surely be a *Law* to all Beings whom he has created capable of discerning that Excellence. For if the Reason or Excellence of the thing, be of sufficient Force to determine the Action of God, certainly it ought not to be thought too little to determine us in our Actions.

Nor can that be said to be an imaginary speculative Law to

intelligent Beings, which is an inviolable Law to the most perfect, intelligent Nature.

2dly. It is the Will of God, that makes moral Virtue our Law, and obliges us to act reasonably.

If you ask how this Will of God appears, I must beg leave at present, only to suppose, that God is of infinite Justice, and Goodness, and Truth; and then the Thing proves itself: For such a God must necessarily Will, that all his Creatures in their several Proportions, be Just, and Good, and True.

Few mathematical Demonstrations conclude stronger than this. There is only one Objection to be made against it, which is to suppose, that God is neither Just nor True.

If rather than yield, you will put the *Epicurean* upon me, and say that God may disregard us, and neither Will one Way, nor the other. It may be answered, that this is inconsistent with the Idea of God just laid down; for a God of infinite Goodness and Truth, can no more fail to Will Goodness and Truth in *every Instance*, than an infinite Being can fail to be present in every Place, or an omnipotent Being be deficient in any Acts of Power. So that it is absolutely necessary to say, either that God, is not of infinite Goodness and Truth, or to allow that He requires all his Creatures in their several Capacities, to be Just, and True, and Good.

Here, Sir, is the noble and divine Origin of moral Virtue, it is founded in the immutable Relations of Things, in the Perfections and Attributes of God, and not in the *Pride* of Man, or the Craft of cunning Politicians.

As the Reasons and Obligations to moral Virtue have always been in being, so has Mankind always had Sight of them: It being as essential and natural, for a rational Being to perceive these Differences of Actions, as it is for an extended Being to occupy Space.

And the Creation of a rational Nature, as much implies a Sight of the reasonableness of things, as the Creation of an extended Being, implies its Possession of so much Space.

Matter of Fact also supports this Observation: For History tells us of no Age or Country, where Men have not agreed to ascribe Justice, Goodness, and Truth, to the Supreme Being.

Now this shows, that they always not only knew, what Goodness, Justice, and Truth were, but also that they took them to be such excellent Qualities, as ought to be ascribed to the highest and best Being.

How monstrous is it therefore, to impute these fine moral Virtues to the Contrivance of Politicians, when all Ages of the

World have agreed to ascribe them to God, and number them amongst his glorious Attributes!

God is Just, therefore there is such a thing as Justice, independent of the Will and Contrivance of Man, is a way of reasoning that cannot be refuted.

It is in vain to say, that there may be a Divine Justice and Goodness, and yet what we call Goodness and Justice amongst Men, may be only a human Contrivance.

For to this it may be answered, that we cannot ascribe anything to God, of which we have not some Conception ourselves, Did we not perceive some degrees of Wisdom, we could not call him *All-wise*; did we not feel Power, and understand what it is, we could not ascribe *Omnipotence* to God. For our Idea of God is only formed by adding *Infinite* to every Perfection that we have any Knowledge of.

So that had we not from the rationality of our Nature, as plain a Sight of Justice, Goodness, and Truth, as we have of *Power*, *Existence*, or anything else, we could not attribute them to God.

That we are rational Beings, is as plain, as that we have Bodies, and bodily Senses. As there is no Man so refined and elevated, but gives frequent Proof, that he is subject also to Instincts and Passions; so there is no one so addicted to an Animal Life, as to show no Signs of an higher Principle within him.

It is this rationality of our Nature, that makes us both capable of, and obliged to practise moral Virtue, and brings us into a kind of Society with God and all other intelligent Beings.

For our Reason gives us a share in that common Light, which all intelligent Beings enjoy, and by making us Partakers of the same Things, so far makes us of one Society.

By our Reason we know some Truths, which God, and all intelligent Beings know; and apprehend some Perfections, and different Qualities in Things and Actions, which all intelligent Beings apprehend.

Now by being let into this Region of Truth, by being able to see some Truths which God also sees, and to know some Perfections which he also knows, we are as plainly declared to be rational Beings, and that Reason is one Law of our Nature, as the Principles of Flesh and Blood show us to be Animals, and subject to the Instincts of an Animal Life.

For how weak is it to suppose, that the *Animal* Life should be the Foundation of Laws of Nature, so as to make it fit for us to act agreeable to its Wants and Desires; and that the *Rationality* of our *Beings*, which is, in some degree, a Likeness to God,

should be the Foundation of no Laws of Nature, so as to make it fit for us to act suitable to its Perfection and Happiness.

The short is this. *Truth* and *Reason* is the Law by which God acts; Man is, in some degree, made a Partaker of that *Truth* and *Reason*; therefore it is a Law to him also. The more we act according to *Order*, *Truth* and *Reason*, the more we make ourselves like to God, who is *Truth* and *Reason* itself.

This is the strong and immovable Foundation of *moral Virtue*, having the same Certainty as the Attributes of God.

Away then, I beseech you, with your idle and profane Fancies about the *Origin of moral Virtue*. For once turn your Eyes towards Heaven, and dare but own a just and good God, and then you have owned the true Origin of Religion and moral Virtue.

Thus much will, I presume, be thought sufficient to vindicate the Excellence and Obligations of *moral Virtue*, from the false and impious Accounts you have given of its Origin.

I proceed to consider in the next place, some other Methods that are made use of to render *moral Virtue* odious and contemptible.

Section II.

THE most boasted Objection against the Reality of Virtue which is urged by Men, who appropriate the Knowledge of human Nature to themselves, is this, that no Action is performed by us through a *Love of Goodness*, or upon a rational Principle of Virtue, but that it is *Complexion*, *natural Temper*, *Education*, *Pride*, *Shame*, or some other blind Impulse, that moves us in all our Actions that have the Appearance of Virtue. Thus a man who relieves an Object of Compassion, only gratifies his *commiserating Temper*; he is subject to *Pity*, 'which is a Frailty of our Natures, and of which the weakest Minds have generally the greatest Share, as may be seen in Women and Children.'^{*} Again, 'The humblest Man alive, say you, must confess, that the Reward of a virtuous Action, which is the Satisfaction that ensues upon it, consists in a certain Pleasure he procures to himself in contemplating his own Worth; which Pleasure, together with the Occasion of it, are as certain Signs of Pride, as looking pale and trembling at any imminent Danger are the Symptoms of Fear.'[†]

^{*} Page 42.

[†] Page 43.

Now, Sir, if this be a true Account of the *humblest Man alive*, then by the Rule of Contraries, this must be a true Account of the *proudest Man alive*; that the Satisfaction he enjoys in being so, consists in a certain Pleasure he procures to himself by contemplating his own Vileness.

This accurate Description you have given us of the *Pleasure of the humblest Man alive*, must be owing to such a feeling Sense as the *blind Man* had of *Light*, who being asked what it was like, answered that it was like the *Sound of a Trumpet*.

But to consider this Charge against human Virtue, that it is nothing but Education, natural Temper, or Complexion; this being so laboured a Point, I shall state the whole Matter as clearly as I can.

1st. It is granted, that an Action is only then virtuous when it is performed, because it is agreeable to Reason, and those Laws which God requires us to observe.

Now this Virtue is Man's Duty, not as a Task that is imposed upon him, but as it is the only Practice, that is the natural Pleasure and proper Good of his being.

Virtue having that natural Fitness to a rational Soul, that fine Sights have to the Eye, or harmonious Sounds to the Ear.

A rational Being is in order, in its right State and Frame, when it is acting reasonably.

The infinite Goodness of God makes him infinitely happy; and the Perfection of every Being is its Happiness; and the greater and more perfect the Virtue of anyone is, the more perfect is his Happiness.

Now it is here to be observed, that an Action is not less virtuous, or loses any of its Excellence, because the Soul is delighted and made happy by it; for it is the very Nature of Virtue to produce such Effects, and it shows the Rectitude of the Soul, when it can act virtuously with Delight, and feel its Happiness in so doing.

This is being virtuous upon Principle, and through a *Love of Goodness*; for Goodness is loved for itself, when it is loved for what it is, the true Good and proper Delight of a rational Being.

Now will anyone say that there is no Excellence in Virtue, that it is mere *Nature* and *Temper*, because it is so agreeable, so proper to our rational Natures; Then let him say there is no Excellence in the Goodness and Justice of God, because they are so suitable to his Nature, and constitute his Happiness.

Granting therefore that Virtue was its own Reward, as it elevates and perfects the Soul, and keeps it in a State of

right enjoyment, it would not be the less reasonable, on that Account.

For Happiness is the only reasonable *End* of every Being.

An action is not good, or virtuous, because it is *Self-denial*, but because it is according to Duty; and he who through long habits of Goodness, has made the Practice of Virtue to have less of Self-denial in it, is the most virtuous Man.

Now, it is no Objection against the *Reality* of Goodness, that as rational Beings, we are *naturally* and *complexionally* disposed to practise and delight in it; or that this natural Disposition, may by Exercise, Meditation and Habits, be heightened and increased.

For Custom, Habit, and natural Temper, are proper Assistances of our most virtuous Actions, and cannot be said to make them less reasonable, unless it be a Fault or Imperfection, to be habitually and strongly disposed to Goodness.

Thus much therefore is true of us considered only as *rational Beings*; that we must even in that State be by Nature and Temper formed to perceive Pleasure, from some particular ways of acting; and that the very excellence of our Natures, consists in a Fitness and Disposition for virtuous Actions, which the more we improve and strengthen by Meditation and Habit, the more reasonable we make ourselves.

It has pleased God in the Formation of Man, so to unite this rational Nature to a Body of Flesh and blood, that they shall generally act together; and that the Soul shall as well be influenced by bodily Instincts, and Motions of the Blood and Spirits, as by its own Thoughts and reflections.

Thus, a delightful Thought conceived ever so secretly in the Mind, shall, at its first Conception, have the Blood and Spirits join in the Pleasure.

So that every right Judgment of the Mind, every proper Aversion, or regular Love, has as much the Concurrence of the Blood and Spirits, as if they were the only Agents.

The Body being thus visible an Agent in all that we do, has made some weak Heads imagine, that we are nothing else but Body; as from the same want of Thought some have concluded, that there is nothing besides the material World, because nothing else is obvious to their Eyes.

The Soul being thus united to the Body, no Act of the Man is less reasonable, or virtuous, because it has the Concurrence of the Blood and Spirits: For this was the Intention of the Union, that a Creature of such a Form, should exert its Instincts and Passions in conformity to Reason.

For Instance, suppose anyone should meditate upon the Attri-

butes and Perfections of God, till the great Idea had raised and warmed his Spirits; though the Reflection is then supported by the Agitation of bodily Spirits, yet the Meditation is not less religious, or less devout, or reasonable, because the Heat of bodily Spirits assisted in it.

Suppose anyone should so often reflect upon an eternal state of Darkness, and Separation from God, till his Blood and Spirits join in increasing the Horror; such an Horror would not be less reasonable, because the Body joined in keeping it up.

The mechanical Influence which our Spirits and Temperament have upon our Actions, does not take away from the reasonableness of them, any more than the rational Frame of our Minds, which is naturally disposed to acquiesce in the Reason of things, destroys the reasonableness of Actions.

As it would be no Excellence in a pure thinking Being, to be equally inclined to Truth or Falsehood, so it would add no Merit to such a mixt Nature as ours is, if our bodily Temperaments were neither more or less inclined to, or delighted with one sort of Actions than another.

Let us only suppose, that a rational Soul and an animal Nature, were united to act in a State of Personality.

It cannot be, that the Reasonableness of its Actions should be impaired by the Body's appearing to have a Share in them, because it does not act according to its Nature, unless the Body does concur; and in such a mixt Being, it is no more required that its Actions should be performed abstractly by pure Reason, than it is allowed that its Motions should be merely Animal.

Yet this is the false Judgment, which Men who are not the greatest Friends of Virtue make, because the Influence of the animal Nature is visible in the best of Men; and because such Enquirers generally converse intimately only with the worst, they rashly conclude against *all Force* of Principle, and deny Reason to have *any* Share in our Actions.

From what has been said, we may easily support the *Reality* of Virtue, from all the Objections of these *Critics* upon human Nature.

For granting the Force of Education, the Power of Custom, and the Influence of our bodily Instincts and Tempers; yet nothing can thence be concluded against the Share that Reason and Principle are required to have in our Actions.

For both Reason and Religion direct us to use the Influence and Assistance of all these Helps; and consequently they no more lessen or take from the Reality of virtuous Actions, when we are assisted by them, than *Fasting* or *Prayer* make our Piety less excellent, because it was assisted by them.

And it is as suitable to our Natures to strengthen and establish our Virtue, by Education, Custom, Complexion, and bodily Instincts, as it is suitable to Religion, to improve and heighten it by Fasting and Prayer.

And he who says, that such or such Actions have no Principle of Virtue or Religion in them, because they are made easy by Education, Temper, and Practice, thinks as weakly, as if he should affirm, that such Actions have no Reality of Principle in them, because they are the Effects of Meditation, and Habits of Attention; for good Habits of Body no more lessen the Excellence of Virtue, than good Habits of Mind.

An Action is virtuous, because it is an Obedience to Reason, and the Laws of God; and does not cease to be so, because the Body is either formed by Use, or created by Disposition, easy and ready for the Performance of it.

A good Education would be a Sin, if the Benefit that is received from it, or the Facility of performing good Actions, took away from their Goodness.

Nay, all Habits of Virtue would, upon this foot, be blamable, because such Habits must be supposed to have rendered both Body and Mind more ready and exact in Goodness.

All these Absurdities necessarily follow from this Argument, that there is no virtuous Principle in our good Actions, because Custom, Education, Temper, and Complexion, have their Share in them.

2dly. This Objection against the Reality of Virtue, is rather a Calumny, than any just Charge against it.

For as it is as certain, that we think and reason, as that we are subject to bodily Instincts and Habits; nothing can prove that our Reason and Reflection do not principally concur in any Action, but the Impossibility of it. He therefore that would prove that my Mind does not act upon a Principle of Reason, where he thinks that Temper or Complexion may carry me through it, can never prove it, till he can show that there was no Principle of Reason, no proper Motive, no Precept of Duty to move me to it: For if there be a plain Reason in the Thing, if there be a Precept of Duty to excite my Mind, as well as a natural Disposition in my Temper to perform the Action, it is impossible for the most penetrating Genius to prove, that my Temperament had a greater Share in the Action, than the Reason of my Mind; and consequently this Objection is a mere Calumny, and an ill-natured Suspicion, which can never prove itself to be justly made.

Now, that Reason is the Chief Principle in the Performance of good Actions, may, in some Degree, be learnt from hence; that

reasonable and wise Actions never occasion any Sorrow or Repentance in the Mind; but, on the contrary, in violent Actions, where the Fermentation of the Blood and Spirits may be supposed to have blindly hurried on the Action, that Fermentation is no sooner abated, but there arises a Pain in the Mind, and Reason condemns the Action; which Condemnation chiefly consists in this, that Reason had not the Guidance of it; which is a plain Confession, that it is the way of our Nature to have Reason govern the Instincts and Motions of the Spirits, and that she shrinks, and is uneasy at those Actions, where she was not the principal Agent.

If therefore Actions only satisfy and content us, by being approved by our Reason, it is a manifest Proof, that our Reason is the principal Agent in our good Actions.

Nor will it be any Objection to this, to say, that many People are satisfied with false Notions of Virtue and Religion; for this only shows that the Principle of Reason may be weak, and of very little discerning Force in some People; but still it is their Faculty of Reason, such as it is, that gives them Peace, when it presides; and it is living contrary to Reason, that gives them Pain, as it gives Pain to others who enjoy a more enlightened Mind.

If the religious *Turk* abhors the Abomination of Wine, it cannot be said, that such Abhorrence is only the Effect of Temper, bodily Instincts, and Custom, unless it could be shown that he would equally abhor it, though he was fully persuaded that *Mahomet* was a Cheat.

From this Account of human Nature, we may be able to reject all those Reproaches which are cast upon Virtue and Religion, as if they were never founded upon any rational Principle, but were the casual blind Effects of Custom, Education, Temper, or Complexion.

1st. As it appears, that in our rational Natures, we are naturally and complexionally formed to practise and delight in reasonable Actions, and that such a Tendency of Temper or Nature towards Virtue, no more lessens the Excellence of it, than the Rectitude of God's Nature, takes away the Excellence of his Actions.

2dly. That Actions are not less virtuous for being suitable to any Disposition, whether natural or acquired, than for being suitable to the Reason of the Mind.

3dly. That *Education, Custom, Habits, Complexion, &c.*, are so far from taking away the Reasonableness of our Actions, that we could not be said to act reasonably, unless we endeavoured to make a greater Progress in Virtue by their Assistance.

4thly. That it is impossible, even in those Actions, where *Custom, Education, Complexion, and Habit* seem to be in full Power, for anyone to prove that Reason and Principle have not the greatest Share in them.

5thly. That Peace of Mind, which attends our good Actions, is a plain Proof of the Power which our Reason had in the Performance of them.

To come now to a particular Instance or two.

1st. *Philo's Charity and Compassion* is no Virtue, you say, because it is mere Complexion and Temper; he gratifies his *Pity*, and acts in Conformity to his Blood and Spirits.

Now this is so far from proving that he has not the Virtue of Charity, that it might be urged as a Proof of his having it.

For his Body is in that Disposition that it should be, supposing that his Mind had been long exercised and indued with Habits of Charity; it gives that further Pleasure in charitable Acts, which the right Turn of the Instincts, and Blood and Spirits, should give to the Mind in every virtuous Action.

For as I have observed, Man is then in his best State, when the Course of the Blood and Spirits act in Concurrence with his Reason; so that when my Body with its *Instincts and Motions*, joins with the right Judgments of my Mind, what I so perform has all the Perfection that an human Creature is able to exert.

This Complexion therefore, or bodily Disposition towards charitable Acts, is so far from implying that therefore the Mind has no Share in the Action, that were the Mind in its best State, and in its full Power (as at first created) it would use a greater and more constant Concurrence of all bodily Tempers in the Performance of its Duty.

So that when Complexion, or bodily Temperament readily joins in the Performance of good Actions, this is so far from implying any Defect of Principle, or want of rational Motive, that it shows, in some degree, the Remains of that primitive Rectitude of Body and Mind before the *Fall*.

2dly. To say that *Philo's Charity* is mere Complexion, is a Calumny, and groundless Accusation; it is a Suspicion as ill-grounded, as if I were to suspect that a Man had no Pride in his Mind, because there appeared an Haughtiness in his Carriage; or no Humility within, because of a natural Lowliness without: It is a Suspicion thus founded against all the Appearances of Truth, and is forced to make those the Proofs of the Absence of a Thing, which are the natural Signs of its Presence.

And as it is thus unreasonable, so is it utterly impossible that it should ever justify itself.

For seeing it is not only possible, but natural for this com-

plexional Disposition to act in Conformity to the internal Principle of the Mind, it can never be proved that it does not.

It can never be proved, that Reason and Religion have not a greater Share in *Philo's* Charity, than his Complexion. How far some Precept of Religion, some Principle of Reason may influence his Mind, cannot be known by the most sagacious Philosopher; therefore the Charge against his Charity, as the mere Effect of Complexion, must be always ill-natured, unjust, and groundless.

Further, granting that *Philo* was complexionally disposed to Pity and Compassion, even before he could be supposed to act upon a Principle of Virtue and Religion, yet even this Supposition will make nothing against it afterwards.

For will anyone argue, that a Man can never fear, love, or hate, upon Principles of Reason, because Children fear, love, and hate, before Reason is of any Force to direct them?

Yet this is as wise, as to suppose that a Man's Complexion is never made to concur with a Principle of Reason, because such Complexion appeared, before Reason could be supposed of sufficient Power to guide it.

As to what you say, 'That *Pity is as much a Frailty of our Nature, as Anger, Pride, &c., That the weakest Minds have generally the greatest Share of it, for which Reason none are more compassionate than Women and Children.*'*

Two Things may be observed. First, The Inconsistency of this Assertion with the rest of your Book.

Here you derive the Compassion of Women, from a supposed *Weakness of Mind*, which supposes, that their *Tempers* depend upon their Minds, and are subject to them, and influenced by them, though in this very Page, you make *Pity* to be only an *Impulse of Nature*, and it is your chief Design throughout your Book to show, that all our *Tempers* and *Passions* are mere Mechanism, and *Constitution*, founded only in the Temper and Tone of our bodily Spirits.

So that according to your deep Philosophy, *Pity* is only an Impulse of Nature, and bodily Temper; yet Women are more pitiful than Men, because they have (as you suppose) *weaker Minds*.

That is, their Minds, because *weak*, have a Power over their *Tempers*, and form their Dispositions; but Men's Minds being *strong*, have no such Power.

To what Temper of Mind such Philosophy as this, is to be imputed, need not be observed.

2dly. To say that Women have the *weakest Minds*, is saying more than you are able to prove. If they are more inclined to Compassion, through a Tenderness of Nature, it is so far from being a *Weakness of their Minds*, that it is a right Judgment, assisted, or made more easy, by a happy Tenderness of their Constitutions.

And it is owing, perhaps, to this *Make* of their Spirits, that they are commonly more affected with the Truths of Religion, than the Generality of Men are.

When our Minds are once softened, by whatever Cause it is, we are generally in the best Disposition for the Impressions of Religion; so that *Pity* is so far from being *as much a Frailty*, as *Pride* and *Anger*, that they are as different in their Effects, as a *Heart of Flesh* and a *Heart of Stone*, which Holy Scripture makes as different as a *Blessing* and a *Curse*.

But to return (if this be a Digression) to my Subject.

Let us now further suppose, that *Philo's* Charity is greatly owing to his Nature and Complexion; that the quality of his Spirits began the Disposition, and helped to recommend this Virtue to the Mind; yet may such a Virtue be as truly rational and religious, as if it had been let into the Mind any other way.

Sickness, *Poverty*, and *Distress*, have a natural Tendency to correct our Follies, and convert our Minds towards our true Good. These Conditions of Life may make it as easy for a Man to be *humble* and *compassionate*, as any bodily Complexion whatever; yet are such *Humility* and *Compassion* not to be esteemed void of Principle or Reason, because such Causes contributed towards them, and led the Mind into them.

For the Mind is acting according to the truest Principles of Reason and Religion, when it makes Advantage of these external Helps, and turns *Ease* and *Pain*, *Sickness* and *Health*, into occasional Causes of greater Piety.

Nor is it any more a Diminution of the Reality of *Philo's* Charity, to say, that bodily Temper first prepared and inclined his Mind towards it, than it is a Diminution of the Reality of anyone's *Repentance*, to say, that it was some Misfortune or cross Accident that first disposed and fitted his Mind for it.

David said (without fear of destroying the Reality of his Piety) *It is good for me, that I have been afflicted.*

Now if Actions, or Ways of Life may be good, though Afflictions contributed towards them, surely they may be equally good, though some Bodily Tempers proved in some degree the Occasions of them.

And it is as consistent with true and real Virtue, to owe its Rise to some bodily Constitution or Temper, as it is consistent with

solid and substantial Piety, to owe its Beginning to some particular Calamity or Action of God's Providence.

But to proceed : It is further objected, that *Philo's* Charity must be *mere Complexion*, and not Virtue, for if it were Virtue he would not allow himself in the Neglect of other Duties.

This, again, is a false Conclusion ; for a Man may perform one Duty upon a Principle of Virtue, and Sense of Duty, and yet through Mistake, or Negligence, be deficient in others.

Such great Judges of human Nature, should consider, that even in worldly Affairs, a Man does not always act up to the same Principle in everything he does.

Will anyone say, that *Avarus* does not consider Gain, when he is making Bargains, because at some other Times he seems not to value Expense ?

If not, why then must *Philo* be looked upon as not *at all* influenced by a Sense of Duty in his Acts of Charity, because at some other Times and Occasions, he seems not to be governed by it.

Our present State, is a State of great Weakness and Imperfection, and our Reason, weak as it is, has a Thousand Impediments to hinder and divert its Force. In the Affairs of Civil Life, we are neither perfectly wise, nor wholly foolish ; and we are almost the same Men in the Things that relate to God. In some Instances, Reason and Religion get more Power over us, and guide us under a Sense of Duty ; whilst in other Parts of our Life, it may be very apparent, that Reason has a less Share in our Actions.

But to conclude that Reason, or a Principle of Virtue, does not influence us in any Part of our Behaviour, because it does not act equally and constantly in every other Part of our Lives, is as absurd, as to affirm, that we do not *think* at all in any Thing that we do, because we do not *think* with the same Exactness or Attention in every Thing that is done by us.

If *Philo* lives in the Neglect or Violation of some Duties, this shows that he is a weak, imperfect Man ; but it does not show that he is the *same* weak and imperfect Man, and as devoid of any Principle of Virtue, when he does his Duty, as when he neglects it : For it is as possible for him to be charitable upon a Principle of Duty, and yet fail in some other Respects, as it is possible for a Man to use his Reason in some Things, and not in others ; or to reason right in some Points, and yield to Folly in others.

So that to impute Actions seemingly virtuous, solely to natural *Temper* or *Complexion*, or some other blind Motive, because the Man is not uniform in his Life, is groundless and absurd ; all that

can with any Truth be affirmed of such a Man, is this, that he is not uniform in his Actions, and that through some Mistake, or Negligence, he is not so careful of his Duty in some Respects as in others.

Our *Understanding* and *Reason*, even in Matters of mere Speculation, are well nigh as weak and inconstant, as in Points of Duty and Conscience.

Few Systems of Philosophy, but obtrude some Errors upon us with as much Assurance, as they affirm the Truth: *Descartes* asserted a *Plenum*; *Sir Isaac Newton* has proved a *Vacuum*.

Now will anyone say, that it was not the *Reason* or *Understanding* of *Descartes* that demonstrated so many solid Truths, because he yielded to Falsity and Error in the Doctrine of a *Plenum*? Yet it would be much more reasonable to affirm this, in Matters of mere Speculation, than to affirm, that in Points of Practice and Duty, a Man is *in no Actions* governed by *Reason* and *Principle*, because in *some* Instances he acts weakly, and not according to Reason.

For, produce but the true Reason why a Philosopher may be said to proceed in some Speculations according to strict Reason and Truth, and yet hold some Tenets contrary to them, and then you will show that it is possible, nay, highly probable, that a Man may, in some Points of Duty, act upon a Principle of Reason and Virtue, though in some Things he may swerve from them.

There is, I acknowledge, a great Difference in bodily Temperaments, so that one Man may be born with better Dispositions for the Practice of some Virtues than others, yet it is Reason within, that is the chief Principle that actuates all of them; for the *finest Spirits* are things as blind and senseless of themselves, as the *Hands* and *Feet*, or the grosser Parts of the Body.

Wit and *Understanding* depend much upon bodily Temperaments; yet who is so weak as to imagine, that therefore the Reason of the Mind has no Share in Arts and Sciences.

It is the same in *Virtue*, or at least, as to some particular Virtues; there may be a kind Disposition in the animal Spirits to produce them, but it is great Weakness to suppose that Reason and Judgment have no Part in them.

It is impossible for our stinted Capacities to explain or calculate the *exact* Powers, that are to be attributed to our Souls and Bodies in the performance of Actions, because we have no clear ideas of them; but we know enough, to affirm the united Operation of both, and to show that he reasons falsely, who would ascribe an Action wholly to the Body, because it appears to have some Share in it; because, supposing it to take its Rise wholly

from *Reason*, the Union of the Soul and Body requires, that the Body should appear to have the same Part in the Production of the Action.

There are nothing more various, imperceptible, or more out of our Sight, than the Motives of human Actions. We know no more how *Arguments* and *Opinions*, act upon the Mind, or how far they contribute to our *Choice*, than we can tell how far the *Air*, and how far the *Sun*, operates in the Growth of Plants.

When a Free-Thinker asserts, that our *religious Belief and Persuasions are not at all the Causes of human Actions*, he proceeds upon as good Grounds, as if he had said, that *Air is not at all the Cause of the Circulation of the Blood*.

For it is as easy to show that *Air* has no Influence upon our Bodies, as that *Reason* and *Opinions* have no Power over our Minds.

And it is more possible to tell how far the *Fluids*, and how far the *Solids* in an human Body, contribute to bodily Action, than it is to affirm how far *Opinions* and *Judgments*, and how far *Temper* and *Complexion*, operate in human Actions.

Nay, these Gentlemen themselves, to make their Philosophy still more ridiculous, are frequently wondering at the strange and monstrous *Contradictions*, which they think they discover in human Nature.

As if they should say, That finding human Nature to be *unaccountable*, they therefore take upon them to give *certain and positive* Accounts of its manner of acting.

I shall be pardoned for insisting so long upon this Article, because it is that on which some celebrated *Wits* have spent so much Pains, to the Prejudice of Religion and Morality. It is not easy to imagine the fatal Effects that Mr. *Bayle's* and *Esprit's* Writings have had upon People's Minds, by denying the Power of *Reason* and *Religion*, and ascribing all human Actions to *Complexion, natural Temper, &c.*

It is an easy Thing to be a *Wit*, and a *Philosopher*, if you will but write against Religion and Virtue; for I need not say all Arguments, but all Fancies, are admired as Demonstrations on that Side; and the bolder Steps you take, the surer you are of being esteemed a *Genius*.

Had Mr. *Bayle* filled his Books with the most useful, noble Truths, he had not had half so many Admirers, as for one single Sentence, which the most thoughtless Rake might have said through the mere Assurance of his own Extravagancies.

Speaking of *Fornication, I question*, says he, *whether one Man in a Hundred is clear of the Guilt.*

Could he have said a more extravagant Thing, that had reflected more upon Morality, and the Power of Religion, he had still been more admired. It is thus that Mr. *Bayle* and *Esprit* have purchased the Esteem, and increased the Numbers, of Infidels and Libertines.

These Gentlemen are dead, and their Ashes safe, if the Death of Men implies no more than the Fall of Leaves.

What Reasons you have to appear in the same Cause of Immorality, or what Security you have against the Power of God, is, I dare say, not known to yourself.

Infidelity and Irreligion have few Topics for Reflection ; they have not so much as one Argument on their Side.

You can no more show that you are not immortal, than you can show what was doing before the Creation of the World.

To fancy that all expires with the Body, is as well supported, as if you were to fancy that there are no Beings but what are visible to your Eyes. To suppose that Man will never be called to an Account, is as much to be depended upon, as if you supposed, that there will be nothing in Being a Thousand Years hence.

Yet these are the *strong Foundations* of Infidelity and Profaneness ; these are the *solid Principles* upon which great *Philosophers* establish deluded (or as they call themselves) *Free-thinkers*.

A Revelation from God, that justifies itself from the Creation of the World ; that tells you every Truth that a wise Man would be glad to hear ; that is supported with all the Authority that an omnipotent God can give ; that is confirmed with all the Assurance that human Testimony can afford ; is of no Weight against a few bold Assertions of weak Mortals, who exceed their Fellow-Creatures only in Arrogance and Presumption.

Section III.

ONE would imagine, by what has already passed, that you had sufficiently vented your Passion upon moral Virtue, and that you had hardly any more Arrows to draw against it ; but you proceed to show us, that however you may fail in Argument, you will never be wanting in Inclination to attack it.

You set yourself with an Air of Satisfaction, as if Morality and Religion lay at your Feet, to *examine into the Pulchrum and Honestum of the Ancients* ; that is, 'to inquire whether there be

'any real Excellence or Worth in Things, a Pre-eminence of one Thing above another.*

And to show that there is no such Thing as any real Worth or Excellence in Things or Actions, but that all is mere Whim and Fancy, you proceed thus :

'In the Works of Nature, Worth and Excellence are as uncertain. How whimsical is the Florist! Sometimes the Tulip, sometimes the Auricula, shall engross his Esteem. What Mortal can decide which is the handsomest, abstract from the Mode in being, to wear great Buttons, or small ones?†

'In Morals, say you, there is no greater Certainty.‡

So that according to your Philosophy, he who prefers Equity to Injustice, is but like him that chooses a great Button rather than a small one; and he who prefers Fidelity to Falseness, as whimsical as the Florist, who admires the Auricula more than the Tulip.

Now if there be only this Difference between Actions, then there can be no greater Difference between Agents, the best of Men can only excel the vilest of their Race, as a Tulip may excel an Auricula.

Nay, if Truth and Falsehood be no otherwise different from one another, than as one Button differs from another, then it must follow, that there can be no greater Difference between the Author of the one, and the Author of the other.

Now, the Religion of our Country tells us, that God is Truth, and the Devil the Author of Lies.

This, Sir, you see is the direct, immediate Blasphemy of your Notions, and not drawn from them by any distant or remote Consequences.

And if I should ask you, why one should be worshipped rather than the other? I should puzzle your profound Philosophy, as much as if I asked you which was the finest Flower? for you cannot tell me that one of these Beings is really good, and the other really evil, and yet maintain, that there is no real Goodness in Truth, nor any real Evil in Lies and Falsehood.

It is utterly impossible to answer this Question, without giving up your Uncertainty in Morals, and allowing that there is something certain and immutable in the Worth and Excellence of Things and Actions.

Should anyone charge you with the grossest Villanies, and most flagrant Immoralities that were ever committed by Man, you could have no more Pretence to be angry at the Imputation, than if he had said, you were particularly fond of little Buttons.

* Page 373.

† Page 377.

‡ Page 379.

To proceed : *'Which is the best Religion, say you, is a Question that has caused more Mischief, than all other Questions together.'**

Religion never comes in your way, but it puts you in a Passion; though I daresay, you never had any harm by it in your Life. This is a heavy Charge upon Religion, and upon the best Religion, for that is it which is inquired after. You charge a great deal of Mischief to this Inquiry after the best Religion, on purpose to enhance, I suppose, your own Merit, that you may appear to do a more public Good, who endeavour to destroy the very Idea of it.

But as Mischievous as you reckon this Inquiry to be, I am of another Opinion, taken from him who made the Inquiry necessary, who is God himself.

Thou shalt have no other God besides me, was setting up the best Religion; and *thou shalt not make to thyself any graven Image, &c.*, was a Determination against Paganism. Now I look upon the best Religion to be a Matter of great Moment, because God has commanded it; and take the Inquiry after it to be well authorised, because God has forbid all false Worship.

If you like it the worse for having this Authority, and should be better pleased with Religion, if it was some Politician's Invention, I shall only say, that you are fonder of Cheats than I am.

Again; I do not allow myself to be angry at the Inquiry after the best Religion, because I find that our blessed Saviour came into the World to teach Men the best Religion, and with the highest Rewards and Punishments to persuade Men to seek after and embrace it. *This is Life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. And again, Go ye and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the End of the World.*

This convinces me, that the Inquiry after the best Religion, is the noblest, the most happy and beneficial of all others, because it is an Inquiry after eternal Happiness: But since you take it to have done more Mischief than all other Inquiries, you know now where to charge it, you know who it was that sent Twelve Apostles, indued with resistless Power, to persuade all the Nations of the World to inquire after, and receive the one best Religion. *'Ask it, say you (i.e., which is the best Religion), at Peking, at Constantinople, at Rome, and you will receive three distinct Answers, extremely different from one another, yet all of them equally positive and peremptory. Christians are well assured of the Falsity of the Pagan and Mahometan Superstitions; but*

'inquire of the several Sects they are divided into, which is the true Church of Christ? and all of them will tell you it is theirs.*'

Then comes your Golden Conclusion. 'It is manifest, then, that the hunting after this Pulcrum and Honestum, is not much better than a wild Goose Chase,' &c.

Here I observe, that very consistently indeed with yourself, having rejected all moral Virtue, and natural Religion, you treat Revelation in the same manner. Christianity and Paganism are put upon the same Foot, and the Inquiry which is the best, esteemed no better than a *wild Goose Chase*, &c. Is this Declaration of yours the Effect of a serious Inquiry into the Merits of different Religions? That cannot be, it reflects too much upon so fine an Understanding as yours, to suppose, that you could ever have been seriously *chasing of wild Geese*.

The Acuteness of your Parts, must have always prevented the Inquiry. You knew, I suppose *ab origine*, from your Cradle, that there was no God, or you could not have been always so clear about the Insignificance of any Religion? For if there be a God, it is more than probable that he is to be worshipped, and it is hardly to be supposed that all Ways of Worship are equally acceptable to him.

You represent the Inquiry after the best Religion, as a mere *wild Goose Chase*, because, if the Question is put at *Peking*, *Constantinople*, or amongst the various Sects of Christians, all of them claim the only true Worship.

Now, Sir, I will remove the Question from the Disciples and Followers, to the *Authors* of these Religions. You shall put the Question thus, Ask *Jesus*, ask *Mahomet*, ask some *Pagan* Impostor, and you will receive three distinct Answers, extremely different from one another, and yet equally positive and peremptory.

Will you stand to your Conclusion here, that therefore it is Madness to concern ourselves more about the one than the other?

Is there any Creature so absurd, as to think this an Argument against *Christ*, or that the Inquiry after Him is Folly, because there was one *Mahomet* called for Disciples?

Yet the Argument is full as just and cogent against Christ himself, as against the Religion which he has instituted; for if the Religion of *Christ* and that of *Mahomet* have nothing to distinguish them, and Christianity is to be ridiculed and despised, because there is such a Religion as *Mahometanism*, then it undeniably follows, that Christ, when on Earth, might be

justly rejected, because there have been other Persons who have pretended to come from God.

This Argument of yours (if it proves anything) proves it impossible that there ever should be any Revelation or Religion from God, which Mankind would be obliged to receive, so long as there were either wicked Spirits, or wicked Men in the World. For evil Spirits and evil Men will have evil Designs, and will oppose the Wisdom and Providence of God, in setting up Ways of Religion suitable to their own Tempers and Designs. But according to your Argument, no Religion has any Pretence to our Regard, when once it is opposed; nor need we trouble our Heads about the Truth of any, because there is more than one that lays Claim to it; which is as good Sense, as if you were to affirm, that a *Lie* was a Demonstration, that there was no such thing as *Truth*.

Whereas, the very Possibility of a false Religion, implies the Possibility of a true one, as much as Falsehood implies the Possibility of Truth, or Wrong supposes Right.

The wisest Speech therefore that you can make to your sagacious Followers, is this:

‘Gentlemen, I would not have you to eat or drink, because *Physicians* differ very much about Diet, and Poisons are generally conveyed that way; nor would I have you take any Money, because there is counterfeit Coin in the World.

‘There are a great many false Accounts of Things, therefore you need not, nay, ought not to trouble yourselves about any that are true.

‘You may laugh at *David*, when he says, *the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament showeth his handiwork*; because there is a contrary Opinion; a Fool that hath said in his Heart there is no God.

‘You need not regard Christianity, or its divine Institution, because there are other Religions at *Peking* and *Constantinople*; nor need you worship the true God, because in *Egypt* they worshipped *Leeks* and *Onions*: Nay, you need not hold that there is any true God, because there are People who have invented false Deities.

‘When any History is urged upon you, you may answer, That of *Robinson Crusoe* is called a true Account; or if anyone pretends to be *positive* on the side of Virtue, you may confute his Arrogance, by saying, It can never be proved that the *Auricula* exceeds the *Tulip*.

‘These are strong and short Maxims, which will support you against the Wisdom of all Ages; they confute whole Volumes of *Prophets* and *Apostles* with a Word speaking.

‘These are Doctrines that require no Study or Application, and you may believe them to be proper, by their Fitness for use. You may drink, debauch, eat, and sleep as you please, without hindering your Progress in these Doctrines. Luxury, and Wantonness will improve your Readiness; and your very Dulness will make you more acute.

‘Nay, the more you sink into Sensuality and the animal Life, the more you will feel and relish the Truth of these Sentiments. Though you are to fly from all Appearance of Truth, and avoid all Concern about any Religion, as you would avoid the Folly of *chasing of wild Geese*, yet you must remember, that you are my Scholars: For I am an *Abstract-Thinker*, and in these my abstract Speculations, you must be my diligent and dutiful Scholars. Though Christianity may be despised, because other Religions are set up against it, yet you must value me the more, for being contrary to the wisest Men of all Ages in the World.

‘Though there is nothing certain or valuable in religious Truths, though moral Virtue is the *Offspring* of Pride, the *Invention* of Philosophers, and all mere Whim and Fancy; yet my Speculations having the utmost Contrariety to all that is virtuous, moral, or religious, you may safely put your whole Trust and Confidence in them.’

This is the best Speech that you can possibly make to your deluded Followers; and I dare say, if your Principles would allow of greater Stupidity or Dulness, you would not be without a Party, who, to avoid Salvation, would join with an Enemy to Virtue, merely for the Sake of his Cause.

The Infidelity of the present Age is very great, and shows such a Contempt of sacred Things, as was hardly ever heard of before.

If one inquires into the Grounds of it, it seems founded on such an implicit Faith reposed in Men of wanton and sensual Minds, as is looked upon to be mean and slavish, when yielded to the highest Evidence in Matters of the last Moment.

To believe *Moses* and the *Prophets*, is ridiculed, because it is *believing*; but to be a Slave to a wanton Infidel, and blindly swear into his Opinions, is glorious and manly, because it is *Free-thinking*.

Deists and *Free-thinkers* are generally considered as *Unbelievers*; but upon Examination, they will appear to be Men of the most resigned and implicit Faith in the World; they would believe *Transubstantiation*, but that it implies a believing in God; for they never resign their Reason, but when it is to yield to something that opposes Salvation.

For the *Deist's* Creed has as many Articles as the *Christian's*, and requires a much greater Suspension of our Reason to believe them. So that if to believe Things upon no Authority, or without any Reason, be an Argument of Credulity, the *Free-thinker* will appear to be the most easy, credulous Creature alive. In the first place, he is to believe almost all the same Articles to be false, which the Christian believes to be true.

Now, it may easily be shown, that it requires stronger Acts of Faith to believe these Articles to be false, than to believe them to be true.

For, taking Faith to be an Assent of the Mind to some Proposition, of which we have no certain Knowledge, it will appear that the *Deist's* Faith is much stronger, and has more of Credulity in it than the *Christian's*. For instance, the Christian believes the *Resurrection* of the Dead, because he finds it supported by such Evidence and Authority, as cannot possibly be higher, supposing the Thing was true; and he does no more Violence to his Reason in believing it, than in supposing that God may intend to do some Things, which the Reason of Man cannot conceive how they will be effected.

On the contrary, the *Deist* believes there will be no Resurrection. And how great is his Faith! for he pretends to no Evidence or Authority to support it; it is a pure, naked Assent of his Mind to what he does not know to be true, and of which no Body has, or can give him any full Assurance.

So that the Difference between a *Christian* and a *Deist*, does not consist in this, that the one assents to Things unknown, and the other does not; but in this, that the Christian assents to Things unknown, on the account of Evidence; the other assents to Things unknown, without any Evidence at all.

Which shows, that the *Christian* is the rational Believer, and the *Deist* the blind Bigot.

Ask a *Deist* or a *Free-thinker*, why he believes Christianity to be an Imposture, you must not expect to have any Arguments offered you; but however, all Arguments aside, he can tell you, that the Inquiry after the best Religion has done *more Mischief*, than all other Inquiries together; that it is, at best, but a *wild Goose Chase*; he will tell you how *Jesus* has been called the *Galilean* by way of Contempt; that there are various Readings in the Scriptures; that Mr. *Whiston* is the most learned and sincere Divine of the Age; that he has called the present Doctrine of the Trinity an *Apostasy*; and says, that the present Text of the *Old Testament*, is not that which was used in our Saviour's Time: He may, perhaps, crack a Jest upon some Text of the

New Testament, and tell you how such a one used to say, that *working a Miracle, was like showing a Trick.*

If you have Strength enough to maintain your Ground against such Attacks as these, the *Deists* can get no Power over you: But it must be confessed, that idle and foolish as these Arts appear in Point of Reason, yet they are very fatal in their Effects upon the Minds of Men.

Religion requires a serious and wise Use of our Reason, and can only recommend itself to us, when we are in a Disposition to reason and think soberly; it preserves its Power over our Minds no longer, than whilst we consider it as the most serious, important, and sacred Thing in the World.

Hence it appears, why we are generally so little affected with Religion, because we are seldom in a State of sober thinking. The Concerns of the World keep our Spirits in a constant Hurry, and prevent our judging rightly of those Things, which are not to be judged of, but by cool Reason.

Every one knows, that Sickness, Adversity, and the Approach of Death, are advantageous Seasons for the Truths of Religion to affect us; whereas they carry no other Advantage, than as they bring a Man into such a State, as disposes him to think seriously. For this Reason, they who only *laugh* at Religion, may be said to have used the strongest Argument against it, for there is no coming at it any other Way; it is only to be attacked by little Jest, lewd flings of Wit, such as may betray the Mind into Levity, and corrupt the Imagination, which so far as it is effected, so far is the Power of Religion lessened.

It is not the Deist's Business to reason soberly, and consider the Weight and Moment of Things with Exactness; for, to reason soberly, is to act against himself, and put his Reader into that State of Mind, in which Religion has its chief Force.

But idle Stories about Gods and Goddesses, and pagan Mysteries, saucy Jest, lewd Innuendoes, and Nick-names given to serious Things, serve the Cause of Infidelity, much better, than any Arguments it has yet found out.

For these not only serve to confound and distract the Mind, and lessen the Difference of Things, but they also gratify and engage the most immoral and wicked Men, as they furnish them with a Confutation of Religion at so cheap a Rate.

How many fine Gentlemen must have been forced to have owned themselves Christians, had not such short Confutations of Christianity been provided to their Hands! But as the Cause is now managed, no one can be too dull, senseless, or debauched, to be a powerful Deist; a poor inflamed Wretch, who never had the Use of his Reason in his Life, may easily call Religion a

Dulcinea del Tobosa, and all who would procure any regard to it, *Saint Errants*; and when he has done this, he may reckon himself a *great Genius*, and to have shown as much Learning in favour of Deism, as the first Rate Infidel of the Age.

How many lively *Beaux* had buried their Parts in Swearing and Obscenity, had not all Jest upon Scripture been allowed as true Proofs of *Deism* and Politeness!

And though the *Fraternity* now boasts of its Numbers (as every Vice if it could speak might do the same) yet, if no one was to be allowed to be a *Deist*, till he had examined the Truths and Authority of Religion, as he would examine the *Title* to an Estate, even the present Age, would be able to show more *Squarers* of the Circle, or *Discoverers* of the Longitude, than *Professors* of Deism.

Nay, was one to ask the most philosophical amongst them, to show the *great Danger* of being a good Christian, or the fatal Consequences of living in Expectation of the *Resurrection*, and *Judgment* to come; was he asked to show the certain Safety of *Infidelity*, or why an Infidel can be no Sufferer for rejecting the Offers of the Gospel; he could give you as plain an Answer, as if you had asked what State this *Globe* of Earth will be in, five thousand Years hence.

But indeed, it seems needless to observe, that Prudence and common Sense have no Hand in Infidelity. Self-murder does not more directly prove Lunacy, than Infidelity proves the loss of Reason.

There is no one that seems more to depend upon the Folly and Madness of his Readers, than you do.

You tell them, that you are a *mere Animal* governed by Appetites over which you have no Power; that is, you describe yourself as a *Machine* that would look well in a *Bridle*, and then pretend to talk of God, and Providence, and Religion, and Morality, and to pierce into the inmost nature of Things and Actions, with as much Ease, as if you were some superior Form, that was made up of pure Wisdom and Intelligence.

But the thing is, you knew what side you had chosen, and that if you were not wanting in Impiety, Lewdness, and Reproaches upon Virtue, you might abound in Nonsense as much as you pleased.

And indeed it must be confessed, that as hardly any Authority is sufficient to recommend a Person, that comes from God, to do us good; so is there scarce any Folly great enough to expose another, that comes a Missioner from the Kingdom of Darkness to do us Harm.

Section IV.

YOU are at last so sensible of the Abilities, which you have discovered, in laying open the Mysteries of human Nature, that you think it but a necessary piece of Civility, to make an Apology to the World, for showing such a superior Knowledge.

Thus say you, '*What Hurt do I do to Man, if I make him more known to himself than he was before?*'

'*But we are so desperately in Love with Flattery, that we can never relish a Truth that is mortifying.*'

To prove the Justice of this Remark, you say, '*I do not believe the Immortality of the Soul would even have found so general a Reception in human Capacities as it has, had it not been a pleasing one, that extolled and was a Compliment to the whole Species.*'*

This Remark supposes that the *Mortality* of the Soul is a *Truth*, for you make our not believing it to be Mortal, a Proof that we cannot relish a Truth that is mortifying. You also impute our Opinion of the Soul's Immortality, to a *desperate love of Flattery*; which is giving it as sure a Mark of an Error, as you could well have thought of.

The reasonableness of this Remark, is founded upon that Advantage and Dignity which arise from Immortality; this is what induces you to think that its Reception in human Capacities is owing to a love of Flattery.

You might have made the same Remark upon the *Belief* of the *Being* and Providence of God, that they had never had so general a Reception in human Capacities, were not Men desperately *in love with Flattery, and not able to relish a Truth that is mortifying.*

For the *Being* and *Providence* of God, are the most pleasing *Truths*, and more extol and elevate Man's Nature and Condition, than anything else; and whilst we assert the Providence of God, we assert our own Happiness, as being the Care and Concern of so great and glorious a Nature.

But how ought that Man to be treated, who should bring the *Belief* of a Divine Being as an Instance of the Power of Flattery over human Nature, or allege the Doctrine of Providence as a Proof, that we cannot relish a Truth that is mortifying.

Yet this would be as well, as to instance, as you have done, in

* Page 256.

the Immortality of the Soul. For it is as reasonable to rejoice in the Immortality of our Souls, as in the Being of God; and it is as impious to say, that we hold its Immortality, because we cannot relish a Truth that is mortifying, as to say that we believe the Providence of God for the same Reason.

What an Aversion must you have to the Force of this Principle, that when you were to show, that we cannot relish a *Truth* that is mortifying, you could like no Instance so well, as the general disbelief of the Soul's Mortality? Can it be supposed that you would have instanced in this Opinion, if you had not wished, that it should lose its Force upon Men's Minds, and be no longer considered as the corner Stone of Religion, but as a *Notion* founded in the Falseness, Pride, and Flattery of Man's Nature?

Was anyone ever so angry as the *Macedonian* Hero's Vanity of being a God, need he have reproached him more, than by imputing it to a *desperate love of Flattery*?

Yet this is the tender Method, in which you have chosen to expose the Belief of the Soul's Immortality, as owing to a desperate love of Flattery.

You will perhaps say, *Have I denied the Soul's Immortality?*

In express Terms you have not denied it; such a flat denial would have signified much less than what you have said.

You knew very well, that to impute the Belief of it to Falseness and Flattery, was the best Way of denying it.

It is rejected here in a manner that highly suits the Temper of Irreligion, by being considered not only as false, but as arising from the basest Qualities of human Nature, *Pride* and a *desperate Love of Flattery*.

These Things serve not only to raise a Disbelief, but to excite an Indignation against a Principle owing to such reproachful Causes; and what is still a greater Point gained, they teach People to look with Contempt and Dislike on those Persons and that Religion, which teach such a Principle.

Our blessed Saviour saith, *I am the Resurrection and the Life, he that believeth in me shall never die.*

Now, according to your Philosophy, this Speech of our Saviour's, must be reckoned an artful Application to the Weakness and Vanity of Human Nature, an Address to the blind Side of Man, to increase his Love of Flattery, and keep him from a true Knowledge of himself.

For if Man believes the Immortality of his Soul, through a desperate Love of Flattery, certainly he who comes to encourage and establish such a Belief, comes to encourage and establish that Immoderate Love of Flattery.

Nay, this Doctrine of yours, not only serves to expose the

Opinion of the Immortality of the Soul, and reproaches the Christian Religion which teaches it, but it prepares a Man to be Proof against all Doctrines of Religion that have any Happiness in them; for whatever is believed or practised that tends any way to raise or exalt the Condition of Man, is equally subject to this Reproach, that it is *received* through an excessive Fondness of Flattery.

So that your wise Philosophy comes to this, that if there was no Honour or Happiness in Religion, no Greatness to be acquired by our obeying God, it could not be charged upon our Pride and Vanity; but since Religion is in order to Happiness, and since our worshipping of God, implies our having a great and glorious Friend and Benefactor, such a Religion may be owing to a Vice of our Nature, a *desperate Love of Flattery*.

And the same may be said of every virtuous Action, that it is practised through a desperate Love of Flattery, in as much as Virtue is supposed to make us Friends and Favourites of God, and so dignifies and exalts our State.

Nay, this way of arguing proves, that the greater and more glorious the Idea is, which we form of God, the more we may be influenced by an ill Motive; for the greater and more glorious we represent the Nature of God, the more we raise and dignify ourselves, who are related to so great a Being, and are in Covenant with him.

So that to clear ourselves of a desperate Love of Flattery, and to show that we can relish Truths that are mortifying, we should conceive very low and mean Notions of God, and such as would make it neither our Honour nor Happiness to worship him.

Such a Religion as this, that had nothing in it worthy of God or Men, might, according to your Account, be owing to some rational Principle, and not capable of being imputed to the Pride or Vanity of Man's Nature.

For since you impute the Belief of the Soul's Immortality, to a desperate Love of Flattery, because such Belief sets us out to great Advantage, and adds Dignity to our Nature, the same Imputation is equally chargeable upon every Doctrine, or Practice, that promises any Happiness or Honour to us; and no Religion or Opinions can be free from that Charge, but such as are of no Benefit or Advantage to us.

From this therefore we may believe, that had we a Religion which proposed nothing worthy of God, or beneficial to Man, the *Deists* and Wits of your Size, would all of them turn *Priests*, and devoutly wait at its *Altars*.

To speak now a Word or two concerning *Pride*.

Pride is an Error or a Vice, as *Covetousness* is a Vice ; it is a notable Desire, ill directed : It is a right Desire, earnestly to desire Happiness ; but that Desire is sinful, when it is wholly set upon *Gold*, or any other *false Good*.

So a Desire of Greatness is an excellent Desire, a right Turn of Mind ; but when it fixes upon a false Honour, it is a vicious Irregularity. To desire the highest Exaltation of which our Nature is capable, is as right a Disposition, as to desire to be as like to God as we can.

Now, had you said that the Belief of the Soul's Immortality, was assisted and strengthened in us through a Desire of Greatness, you had said as reasonable a Thing, as to say, that Christianity makes a stronger Impression upon the Minds of Men through a Desire of Happiness.

For had we not these Dispositions, neither Religion, nor anything else that was of any Advantage to us, could take any hold of us : For, what would the Happiness or Greatness of any Proposal signify to Beings, whose Natures were not affected with them ?

Now, to say that Religion is better received through this Tendency of our Nature, is no more a Reproach, than it is to say that our Understanding and Reason recommend Religion to us.

For these Dispositions or Inclinations constitute the Excellence of our Nature, and give us all the Dignity that we have.

It being as right a Judgment of the Mind, to desire to be as like to God as our Natures will allow, as it is to prefer Truth to Falsehood.

But to impute our Belief of the Immortality of the Soul to *Pride*, is as ridiculous, as to impute our Desire of eternal Happiness to *Avarice*.

For *Pride*, considered as a Vice, is no more the Cause of our Approbation of Immortality, than *Avarice* is the Cause of our setting our Affection on Things above.

Pride is as earthly and down-looking a Vice as *Covetousness*, and as truly sinks the Soul into a State of Meanness.

A Delight in false Honour as much debases and hinders the Mind from aspiring after its true Greatness, as a Fondness for empty Riches keeps the Soul averse from the Approbation of her true Good. That this is the Effect of *Pride*, that it debases the Mind, and makes it unable to relish its true Greatness, that it unfits it for the Reception of Doctrines which exalt and raise our Nature, may be also learnt from Him, who came to lead us unto all Truth.

Speaking of vain-glorious Men, says our blessed Saviour, *How*

*can ye believe, which receive Honour one of another, and seek not that Honour, which cometh from God alone?**

But you make the Pride of Man, the Cause of his believing divine Truths, though they are as opposite to one another, as Avarice and Heavenly-mindedness, Light and Darkness. To make some Apology for yourself, you say, '*What Hurt do I do to a Man, if I make him more known to himself than he was before?*'

You should have put the Question thus: What Hurt do I do to a Man, if I make him more vicious than he was before, if I deprave his Understanding, and lead him into a Contempt and Dislike of the strongest Principles of Religion?

For if there is any Danger either to yourself or others, in corrupting their Minds, and destroying the Motives to Religion and Virtue, you are capable of no other Apology, but what that Being may make, *who goeth about as a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

The *Arrow that flieth by Day*, and the *Pestilence that walketh in Darkness*, are mere Blessings, if compared to the Man who infuses vicious Opinions into the Mind, which weaken the Power of Religion, and make Men less devoted to the Worship and Service of God.

How can you say, that you have only made Man more known to himself, by teaching him that the general Belief of the Soul's Immortality, is owing to a desperate Love of Flattery?

Have you proved, that he does not know himself, if he thinks it is owing to any other Cause? Have you so much as attempted to show, that it can have no other Foundation? That it is not founded in Reason, Religion, and the Attributes of God?

But proving (I recollect) is no Talent of yours; and if you may be allowed to *shine* in anything, it is in loose Insinuations, positive Assertions, and vain Conjectures.

Section V.

YOU come now to give us a Taste of your Skill in *Phraseology*, or the Force and Propriety of Words. All sorts of Learning seem to be at your Service, and you are so constant to yourself, as to make them all conspire in one and the same Design against Religion. *Hope*, being a Word of great Consolation in the Christian

* St. John v. 44.

Religion, you have pitched upon that, as most deserving the kind Assistance of your learned Hand.

' *All hope, say you, includes Doubt; a silver Inkhorn may pass in Speech, because every Body knows what we mean by it; but a certain Hope cannot; the Epithet destroys the Essence of the Substantive; it is palpable Nonsense. The Reason therefore why it is not so shocking to some, to hear a Man speak of certain Hope, as if he should talk of hot Ice, or liquid Oak, is not because there is less Nonsense contained in the first, than in either of the latter, but because the Word Hope, I mean the Essence of it, is not so clearly understood by the Generality of the People, as the Words and Essences of Ice and Oak are.*'*

What a Triumph is here over Religion! And with how much Ease do you reject an Article of Faith with a *Noun Substantive!*

In our *Burial Service* we have these Words, *In sure and certain Hope of a Resurrection, &c.*

This it seems cannot pass in Speech, without the Destruction of a *Substantive; it is shocking, and palpable Nonsense.*

Let it first be observed, that *Hope* implies the *Belief, Dependence, or Expectation* of something that shall come to pass. Now I should think that a Thing may as well be expected with Certainty, as Uncertainty; and that its being certain to happen, is no Inconsistency in the Expression. It can hardly be denied, but that a Man may be certain that some Things will never happen; and where is the Contradiction of supposing him as certain that some Things will happen?

But to come to your own Arguments.

All Hope, say you, includes Doubt. This as much contradicts my Understanding, as if you had said, that *all Trust* includes *Diffidence*; and I cannot trust a Man, unless I distrust him. The Apostle says, *By Hope we are saved*; according to you, he must mean, by *Doubting* we are saved; for if *Hope* necessarily includes *Doubting*, and *Hope* be necessary to Salvation, it evidently follows, that *Doubting* is necessary to Salvation; and every Exhortation to *hope* in God, is an exhortation to *doubt* of God.

Our blessed Saviour said, *If ye have Faith, and doubt not, &c.* Now had you been present at this saying, you could have shown the Impossibility of what he exhorted them to; that *Faith* or *Hope* implied *Doubting*; and that to talk of *certain Hope* or *Faith*, was as shocking to a fine Understanding, as to talk of *hot Ice, or liquid Oak.*

Certain Hope, you say, is palpable Nonsense, because the Epithet destroys the Essence of the Substantive.

So that *Doubting* is the Essence of *Hope*, and consequently whatever else belongs to *Hope*, is only *accidental*; the Essence of *Hope* is *Doubting*.

Now if *Doubting* is the Essence of *Hope*, then where there is the most *Doubting*, there must be the most of *Hope*; for where there is most of the Essence of a Thing, there must necessarily be most of the Thing itself.

Now it seems to me as ridiculous, to make *Doubting* the Essence of *Hope*, as to make *Fear* the Essence of *Courage*. For *Hope*, so far as it goes, as much excludes *Doubting* as *Courage*, so far as it extends, banishes *Fear*. There may be a weak *Hope* which is mixed with *Doubt*, as there may be a half *Courage* that is attended with *Fear*, but a thorough *Hope* as truly rejects *Doubt*, as a perfect *Courage* shakes off all *Fear*. And it is just such *shocking Nonsense* to talk of a *certain Hope*, as to speak of a *fearless Courage*: And there is just as much Murder of the *Substantive* in one Case, as the other.

Hope, or *Expectation*, does not imply *Uncertainty*, but *Futurity*, that the things expected, are not in being, but are to come to pass; this is all that is of the Essence of *Hope*; it is only the *Futurity* of things that makes it.

Let the things come to pass, and the *Hope* ceases, this is the only way of destroying it. But whether the things to come be with *Certainty*, or *Uncertainty* expected, no more destroys that *Disposition of Mind*, which is called *Hope*, than the *Passion of Fear* is destroyed, by exerting itself reasonably, or unreasonably.

Hope is uncertain, not because we cannot hope or expect with *Certainty*, but because the things we hope for are generally not in our *Power*, so as we can be secure of the *Event*.

But you ridiculously suppose, that *Hope*, or *Expectation*, as a *Faculty of the Mind*, necessarily includes *Uncertainty*, as if a *Man* cannot expect or hope for that, which he is sure will answer his *Expectation*; or that he must cease to expect things, because he has certain grounds to expect them. These are the *Absurdities* which you plunge into, rather than allow a *certain Hope of the Resurrection of the Dead*.

Hope is as the things hoped for. In uncertain things it is uncertain. But if *God* is pleased to inform us of things to come, we are with *certain Hope* and *Expectation* to depend upon them.

Agreeable to this, *St Paul* says, *In hope of eternal Life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the World began*.

Here we have an *Apostle's Authority* for a *certain Hope*, made as undeniable as the *Veracity of God*.

But this must be very shocking to a *Gentleman of your refined*

Understanding; and must give you a farther uneasiness, to behold the Destruction of a whole Noun *Substantive*, to establish only an Article of Religion.

You compare *certain Hope*, to *hot Ice*, or *liquid Oak*, and say that the Expressions would be equally *shocking*, were the Nature of *Hope* as well understood, as the Nature of *Ice* and *Oak*.

Had you not been used to understand everything wrong, you had never made this Observation; for the contrary to this happens to be true, that the Expression is not so shocking in one Case as the other, because the Nature of *Hope* is well understood, as that of *Ice*, &c.

It is not shocking to say *certain Hope*, because *Hope* is known to be founded upon some degrees of Assurance.

But does *Ice* suppose some degrees of Heat in order to its Existence? Is *Ice* hotter or colder, as *Hope* is more or less assured? *Hope* is stronger and better, the *more* it has of Assurance, and the *less* it is opposed with Doubts; but is *Ice* the stronger and harder, the *more* it has of Heat, or the *less* it is surrounded with Cold?

Your Comparison also of *certain Hope*, to *liquid Oak*, is equally ingenious and worthy of yourself; for it supposes that an *Oak* changes from *solid* to *liquid*, as *Hope* fluctuates from *Doubts* to *Belief*. For were not an *Oak* as various in its Nature, as to *liquid* and *solid*, as *Hope* is various in its Nature, as to *Doubt* and *Assurance*, it must be *shocking* Nonsense, to make a *liquid Oak* the same thing as an *assured Hope*.

I have been the longer upon this Point, because it is levelled at the very Foundation of our Religion, and would teach People to doubt of its greatest Articles, through the mere force of a Word or two, and for the sake of a Noun *Substantive*.

Section VI.

I HAD now taken my Leave of you, if the Letter you published in the *London Journal*, in defence of your Book, had not been just put into my Hands.

Having seen your Talent at Apology, I expected no great Matter from you in that Way; but however I am now convinced, that your Book gives us but a small Essay of your Abilities, and that you can exceed it as much as you please.

For who would imagine that the Author of so poor a Rhapsody, could produce such masterly Strokes as these in the Defence of it.

'My Vanity, say you, I never could conquer, so well as I could wish, and I am too proud to commit Crimes.'

Surely no one after this will venture to lay anything to your Charge, since great must be your Innocence, if Pride be the Guardian of it.

But if any one should chance to humble you, you must then fall into a defenceless State. But if you are not to be proved guilty, till you can be shown to be deficient in Pride, it may require some time to effect it.

Since you ground your Vindication so much upon your Pride, it may not be amiss to recollect the Definition you have given us of it in your own Book. '*Pride, say you, is that natural Faculty, by which every Mortal, that has any Understanding, overvalues and imagines better things of himself, than any impartial Judge, thoroughly acquainted with all his Qualities and Circumstances, would allow him.*'*

A pretty Qualification indeed, for a Man to found his Innocence upon! Yet you (with a more than ordinary Brightness) own that you are governed by this *Vice*, to prove yourself to be *Faultless*.

Should a *blind* Man who had lost his Way, allege his *Blindness*, as a Proof that he could not lose it, he would show that he was just as well acquainted with the Advantages of Blindness, as you are with the Effects of Pride.

The next ingenious Step that you take, is this: '*The Fable of the Bees, say you, was designed for the Entertainment of People of Knowledge and Education;—it is a Book of severe and exalted Morality, that contains a strict Test of Virtue.*'

Had you said that the Author was a *Seraphim*, and that he never was any nearer the Earth than the fixed Stars, I should have thought you in as sober a Way as you now appear to be in.

That you intended it for the Entertainment of *People of Knowledge and Education*, is what I cannot say is false, for if your Pride is such as you assert, you may be capable of intending anything; I know of nothing too monstrous for you to go about.

But if you can believe, that you have wrote a Book of *severe and exalted Morality*, you must not laugh at those who believed *Stocks and Stones* to be Objects of Worship, or took a *Leek* or an *Onion* to be a *Deity*.

You are happy in this, that you have made an Assertion which an Adversary cannot further expose, because there is no superior Degree of Extravagance to which it can be compared.

For if a Person will write a Book to prove, that Man is a *mere Animal*, and that *moral Virtue* is the political Offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride, and then call it a Book of *severe and exalted Morality*, he has this Satisfaction, that no Skill can aggravate his Nonsense.

‘*Such as it is, you say, you are satisfied it has diverted Persons of great Probity and Virtue.*’

Pray, Sir, how does this appear? Where do you find these People of *great Virtue*? When you wrote your Book, you knew of no such People. Virtue was then nowhere to be found: For you tell us, that having in vain sought for it in the World, you at last went to the *Convents*, but even there it had no Existence. But now, it seems, rather than want an Apology, you will suppose even what confutes your Book, and what you most hate, that there is such a Being as a Man of *great Virtue*.

‘*I lay it down, you add, as a first Principle, that in all Societies, great or small, it is the Duty of every Member of it to be good; that Virtue ought to be encouraged, Vice discountenanced, the Laws obeyed, and the Transgressors punished; and then, you say, there is not a Line in the whole Book that contradicts this Doctrine.*’

This comes so oddly from you, that it need not be exposed to the Reader; if you had intended it as a *public Recantation* of all that you had delivered before, there had been something in it; but to say, that *there is not a Line in your Book that contradicts this*, is trusting too much to the Weakness of your Readers: For, can you pretend to have a *first Principle*, or to talk of *Duty* or *Virtue*, after you have declared, that the *moral Virtues* are all a Cheat, by making them the *political Offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride*?

Can you recommend *Goodness*, who have compared the *Pulchrum* and *Honestum* in Actions, to the whimsical Distinctions of *Flowers* and made the Difference between Good and Evil as fanciful, as the Difference between a *Tulip* and an *Auricula*.

When therefore you pretend to *lay it down as a first Principle, that it is the Duty of every Man to be good, &c.*

It amounts to as much, as if you had said, Having shown, that there is nothing but Fancy in the Preference of Flowers, *I lay it down as a first Principle, that it is the Duty of every Man to admire the Tulip above all other Flowers; that the Love of Tulips ought to be encouraged; and that of Auriculas discountenanced, &c.*

But however, lest any of your Readers should imagine that you meant something more than this, and to clear yourself from all Suspicion of Gravity or Seriousness in your Recommendation of

Virtue and Goodness, you immediately add this Explication of yourself.

*'Would you banish Fraud and Luxury, prevent Profaneness and Irreligion, and make the Generality of the People charitable, good, and virtuous ; break down the Printing-Presses, melt the Founts, and burn all the Books in the Island ; knock down Foreign Trade, prohibit all Commerce with Strangers, and permit no Ships to go to Sea ; restore to the Clergy, the King, and the Barons, their ancient Privileges, Prerogatives, and Possessions ; build new Churches, and convert all the Coin you can come at, into sacred Utensils ; erect Monasteries and Alms-houses in Abundance, and let no Parish be without a Charity-School ; let the Clergy preach Abstinence and Self denial to others, and take what Liberty they please for themselves : let no Man be made Lord-Treasurer but a Bishop.—By such pious Endeavours, and wholesome Regulations, the Scene would soon be altered.—Such a Change would influence the Manners of the Nation, and render them temperate, honest, and sincere ; and from the next Generation we might reasonably expect an harmless, innocent, and well meaning People, that would never dispute the Doctrine of Passive-Obedience, nor any other Orthodox Principles, but be submissive to Superiors, and unanimous in Religious Worship.'**

It must be owned, that you never so much exceeded yourself as in this Flight of your Oratory. And had your teeming Imagination been able to have produced one more Evil or Folly, it had been added to the lovely Idea you have formed of a People intending to live like Christians.

He that can now suspect you guilty of one sober Thought in relation to Religion, or Morality, must be acknowledged to be very senseless.

For, mention your Regard to Religion or Virtue as often as you please, you have here taken care to assure us, that you wish their Prosperity as *heartily*, as you wish to see the Kingdom full of *Monasteries*, and all our Money *converted into sacred Utensils*.

But I beg pardon for supposing, that what you have so clearly said, to show your Abhorrence of Religion, and Contempt of Virtue, needs any illustration.

But to carry on the *Banter*, you still add, *'If I have shown the Way to worldly Greatness, I have always without Hesitation preferred the Road that leads to Virtue.'*

Had there been one Instance of this kind in your Book, I suppose you would have referred us to it. But enough has been

already observed, to show what Virtue implies in your System. I shall however produce one Passage to show, how you *always and without Hesitation prefer the Road that leads to Virtue.*

Speaking of *Lust* you say, 'The *artful Moralists have taught us cheerfully to subdue it.* And then cry out, *Oh! the mighty Prize we have in view for all our Self-denial! Can any Man be so serious as to abstain from Laughter, when he considers that for so much Deceit and Insincerity practised upon ourselves as well as others, we have no other Recompense, than the vain Satisfaction of making our Species appear more exalted, and remote from that of other Animals than it really is, and we in our own Consciences know it to be.*'*

Thus it is, that *without Hesitation* you give your Approbation of Virtue; you make the Moderation of our Passions to be even a Sin against our *own Consciences*, as acting *deceitfully*, contrary to what we know becomes us.

You make *Self-denial*, or any Restraints which distinguish us from Brutes, to be so ridiculous a Thing, as ought to excite the Laughter and Contempt of every Creature.

Thus is your prostitute Pen wantonly employed, to put out, as far as you can, the Light of Reason and Religion, and deliver up mankind to Sensuality and Vileness.

Should I now lament the miserable Fruits of *Free-thinking*, which thus tend not only to set us loose from the Regards of Religion, but to destroy whatever is reasonable, decent, or comely in human Nature, though as a Friend of Religion I might be censured by *some*, yet surely as an advocate for the Dignity of Man, I might be pardoned by *all*.

But is it our peculiar Unhappiness as Clergymen, that if we sit loose to the Duties of Religion, we are doubly reproached, and if we firmly assert its Doctrines, we fall under as great Condemnation.

In all other Causes, a Man is better received, because it is his proper Business to appear, yet that which should recommend our Pleadings, happens to make them less regarded: We are worse heard, because God has made it our Duty to speak.

But I wave this Topic; for if, when we assert the common Doctrines of Christianity, we are thought too much interested, we shall hardly be reckoned less selfish, when we plead for common Equity towards ourselves.

You have therefore picked out a right Body of Men to ridicule; and your manner of doing it shows you knew, that no want of Wit would make you less successful.

We often suffer from *Porters* and *Carmen*, who venture to be smart upon us, through an Assurance, that we must lose by replying. A Security like this has encouraged you to be very liberal of your Mirth, and such Mirth as might pass for *Dulness* upon any other Subject.

I will not say how infinite your Wit has been upon our Dress and Habit, or what uncommon *Vivacity* you have shown upon the *Beaver Hat*, whether new or old.

Had you spared our '*Majestic Gait, slick Faces kept constantly shaved, handsome Nails diligently pared, and Linen transparently curious*,'* nothing of the *Sublime* had been found in your Book. It must be confessed, this is a heavy Charge against the *Priesthood*; but we may see you were loath to enhance it, or you might have mentioned the *black Eyes*, the *high Foreheads*, and the *dimpled Chins*, which may be proved upon several of them, which they show in the Face of the World at Noon-Day.

But since I have charged you with *Wit*, I do not think it fair to leave you under so gross an Accusation, without something to support your Spirits. Read therefore the following Words of the most excellent *Bruyere*.

Have the Libertines, says he, who value themselves so much upon the Title of Wits, have they Wit enough to perceive, that they are only called so by Irony?

You can hardly relish anything of mine, after this taste of so fine a Writer, I shall therefore trouble you but little further.

If you wonder, that I have taken no Notice of the dreadful Evils you charge upon *Charity-Schools*, and the sad Effects which such *catechising Houses* must have upon a Kingdom that is both *Christian* and *Protestant*, I must tell you that I purposely avoided it. Some Things are so plain, that it is yielding too much, to offer to defend them.

Christians, I hope, will have so much common Sense as to know, that no Christian can call such Houses an evil; and as to Complaints from other hands, Who would not wish that the Enemies of Christianity may have every Day more reason to complain?

As to your Part, they will observe, that in these very Writings, where you complain of the Evil of *Charity-Schools*, you make *moral Virtue* a Cheat, the *Offspring* of *Pride*, and the Inquiry after the *best Religion*, but a *wild Goose Chase*. A very worthy Person indeed to talk of either *Good* or *Evil*!

Whilst we can preserve but the very Name of Religion, a charitable Contribution to educate Children in it, must be reckoned amongst our best Works.

Charity-Schools can never need a Defence in a Kingdom, that boasts of having the Scriptures in the *vulgar Tongue*. For if it be our Glory and Happiness to have the Bible in *English*, surely it must be in some Degree glorious, to teach our *Natives* how to read it.

You say, If anyone can show the *least Tittle of Blasphemy* or *Profaneness* in your Book, or *any Thing tending to Immorality, or a Corruption of Manners, you will burn it yourself, at any Time or Place your Adversary shall appoint*. I appoint the first Time, and the most public Place, and if you keep your Word, shall be your humble Servant.

Postscript.

HAVING in my Second Section mentioned Mr. *Bayle*, as the principal Author amongst those, whose Parts have been employed to arraign and expose Virtue and Religion, as being only the blind Effects of *Complexion*, natural *Temper*, and *Custom, &c.* It may not be improper to recommend to his Admirers, the following Instances of that Gentleman's great *Penetration* and *Clearness* on this Subject.

Mr. *Bayle* engaged in a Cause, where he found it necessary to assert, that a *Society of Atheists* might be as virtuous Men, as a Society of other People professing Religion; and to maintain this Opinion, he was further obliged to declare, that religious *Opinions* and *Beliefs*, had no Influence *at all* upon Men's Actions.

This Step was very necessary to be taken; for if religious *Opinions* or *Beliefs* were allowed to have *any* Influence upon our Actions, then it must also have been allowed, that a *Society of Atheists* must have been less virtuous, than a Society of People holding religious *Opinions*.

Mr. *Bayle* therefore roundly denied, that religious *Opinions* have any Influence upon us, and set himself to prove, that *Complexion*, natural *Temper*, *Custom, &c.*, are the *only* Causes of our Actions.

'Thus he says, he is persuaded that Man is that kind of Creature, who with all his boasted Reason, never acts by the Principles of his Belief.* Again, It cannot be denied, that Man acts continually against Principles. And again, I pretend to have demonstrated that Men never act by Principle.'

* *Miscell. Reflect.*

Mr. Bayle has often diverted himself with the Unreasonableness of those *Divines*, who first declare the Sublimity and Inconceivableness of the Christian Mysteries, and then pretend to explain them. But they may laugh at him in their Turn, who happens to be as weak and unreasonable even in his *Philosophic Chair*.

For he can give it you out as an undeniable Maxim, 'that the Mind of Man being subject to infinite Caprice and Variety, no Rule can be laid down concerning it, not liable to a thousand Objections ;'* and then tell you he has demonstrated, that Man never acts by Principle: As if he had said, I give you here a certain and infallible Rule concerning the Mind of Man, not liable to one Objection, though I assure you, that no Rule can be laid down, not liable to a thousand Objections.

Mr. Bayle, to show that his Society of Atheists might be as virtuous as other Men, affirms, 'that a wicked Inclination neither arises from our Ignorance of God's Existence, nor is checked by the Knowledge of a supreme Judge who punishes and rewards. And that an Inclination to Evil, belongs no more to a Heart void of the Sense of God, than one possessed with it, and that one is under no looser a Rein than the other.†

With how much Reason and Freedom of Mind Mr. Bayle asserts this, may be seen from what he says in other Places. Thus in his *Historical Dictionary* he can tell you, 'that there is nothing so advantageous to Man, if we consider either the Mind or the Heart, as to know God rightly."‡

He can commend the Saying of *Silius Italicus*, as very pertinently spoken of the *Carthaginians*, 'Alas, miserable Mortals! your Ignorance of divine Nature, is the original Cause of your Crimes. Again, I will not deny there have been Pagans, who making the utmost Use of their Notion of the divine Nature, have rendered it the Means of abating the Violence of their Passions.'§

These Contradictions need no Illustration; I shall pass on to show you a few more of the same Kind.

Mr. Bayle affirms, that Man never acts by the Principles of his Belief. Yet see how often he teaches the contrary. Speaking of the strange Opinions and Practices of some Pagans, who, though persuaded of a Providence, denied nothing to their Lusts and Passions; he gives this as the Reason of their Conduct, 'Either that they must suppose the Gods approved these Ways, or else that one need not trouble one's self whether they did or no.'||

See here this elevated Free-Thinker asserting, that Man never

* *Miscell. Reflect.*, p. 279.

† *Ibid.*, p. 294.

‡ *Vol. iv.*, p. 2683.

§ *Miscell. Reflect.*, p. 294.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 404.

acts by his Belief, and yet making it necessary, that the Pagans must have had *such* or *such* a Belief, or else they could never have acted as they did.

Instances of this Kind are very numerous. In the Article of the Sadducees, he says, 'The good Life of the Sadducees might have been an Effect of their believing a Providence. Again, the Orthodox will feel the Activity of that Impression, as well as the Sadducees, and being moreover persuaded of a future State, Religion will have a greater Influence upon their Lives.*

Here a Belief of a Providence in this World, is allowed to be the Cause of a good Life, and a Persuasion of a future State affirmed to have a still greater Influence upon our Lives; and yet the same great Reasoner demonstrates, that Men always act without any Regard to their Beliefs or Persuasions.

To demonstrate that Beliefs and Opinions have no part in the forming our Lives, Mr. Bayle appeals to the Lives of Christians; 'For, were it otherwise, says he, how is it possible that Christians, so clearly instructed from Revelation supported by so many Miracles, that they must renounce their Sins, in order to be eternally happy, and to prevent eternal Misery, should yet live as they do, in the most enormous Ways of Sin and Disobedience?'

This is Mr. Bayle's invincible Demonstration, that Beliefs and Persuasions have no Effect upon us, and that Man never acts by Principle; though you shall see that he can as well demonstrate the contrary to this.

In the Article of *Sommona-codom*, speaking of this Doctrine, viz., 'That an old Sinner who has enjoyed all the Pleasures of Life, will be eternally happy, provided he truly repents on his Death-Bed;' he makes this Remark, 'Doubtless, this may be the Reason why the Fear of God's Judgments, or the Hopes of his Rewards, make no great Impressions upon worldly People.†

Here you see this learned Philosopher urges the Lives of Christians, as a Demonstration that Men never act by Persuasion; and yet tells you, as a Thing past all doubt, that they live as they do, through a Persuasion that a Death-Bed Repentance will set all right.

Take another Instance of the same kind.

Religion and Principle have no Effect upon us: 'This must be the Case, says Mr. Bayle, or the ancient Pagans, who were under the Yoke of numberless Superstitions, continually employed in appeasing the Anger of their Idols, awed by infinite Prodigies, and firmly persuaded the Gods dispensed Good or Evil, according to the Life they lead, had been restrained from all the abominable Crimes they committed.‡

* Hist. Dict.

† Ibid.

‡ Miscell. Reflect., 275.

This Paragraph is to show, that religious *Persuasions* have no Effect upon us, because if they had, the *Persuasions* of the Pagans must have made them good Men.

But Mr. *Bayle* here forgets, that he himself has affirmed, that the '*Pagan Religion not only taught ridiculous Things, but that it was besides a Religion, authorising the most abominable Crimes.*'* *That they were led to their Crimes by their very Religion; that it must have been a Point of Faith with them, that to make themselves Imitators of God, they ought to be Cheats, Envious, Fornicators, Adulterers.*

So that this Philosopher shows, with great Consistency, that the *Religion* of the *Pagans* engaged them in *abominable Crimes*; and that the *Pagans* did not act by their Religion, because they were guilty of *abominable Crimes*.

But I proceed no further at present; this Specimen of Mr. *Bayle's* Absurdities and *Contradictions* on this very Article, where he has been most admired, may suffice to show, that if he has gained upon Men's Minds, it has been by other Arts than those of clear Reasoning. I would not by this insinuate, that he was not a Man of fine Parts; *Bellarmin's* Absurdities, though ever so many, still leave room to acknowledge his great Abilities. This seems to have been Mr. *Bayle's* Case; he was no *Jesuit* or *Papist*, but he was as great a *Zealot* in his way. *Bellarmin* contradicted himself for the sake of *Mother Church*; and Mr. *Bayle* contradicted himself as heartily, for the sake of an *imaginary* Society, a *Society of Atheists*.

I have inserted these few contradictory Passages, for the sake of such as are Proselytes to Mr. *Bayle's* Philosophy; let them here see, that in following him, they only leave Religion, to follow *Blindness* and *Bigotry* in Systems of Profaneness.

When *Clergymen* contradict one another, though it be but upon a Ceremony of Religion, *Infidels* make great Advantage of it; for Irreligion having no Arguments of its own, is forced to catch at every Foreign Objection.

But Mr. *Bayle's* *Self-contradictions* upon the chief Article of his Philosophy, may perhaps, not lessen his Authority with our Men of Reason.

For whether our *Free-Thinkers* are not such *Bigots*, as to adore Mr. *Bayle's* *Contradictions*, is what I will not presume to say.

I will promise for nothing, but their little Minds, and blind Zeal, to have a Share in every Error that can give Offence to well-minded Men.

Finis.

THE
C A S E
O F
R E A S O N,
O R
N A T U R A L R E L I G I O N,
Fairly and Fully Stated.

In ANSWER to a BOOK, entitled,
Christianity as old as the Creation.
by Tindal

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

LONDON:
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THE INTRODUCTION, Shewing the State of the Controversy.

THE Infidelity which is now openly declared for, pretends to support itself upon the *sufficiency, excellency, and absolute perfection* of Reason, or Natural Religion.

The author with whom I am here engaged, makes no attempt to disprove or invalidate that *historical evidence* on which Christianity is founded; but by arguments drawn from the nature of God, and natural Religion, pretends to prove, that no Religion can come from God, which teaches anything more than that, which is fully manifest to all mankind by the *mere light* of nature.

His chief principles may be reduced to these following propositions.

1. That human reason, or natural light, is the *only means* of knowing all that God requires of us.

2. That reason, or natural light, is so full, sufficient, plain, and certain a rule or guide in all religious duties, that no external divine revelation can add anything to it, or require us to believe or practise anything, that was not as fully known before. A revelation, if ever made, can only differ from natural religion, in the manner of its being communicated. It can only declare those very *same things externally*, which were before equally declared by the *internal light* of nature.

3. That this must be the case of natural and revealed religion, unless God be an arbitrary Being. For if God be not an arbitrary Being, but acts according to the reason and nature of things; then he can require nothing of us by revelation, but what is already required by the nature and reason of things. And therefore, as he expresses it, *reason and revelation must exactly answer one another like two tallies.**

4. That whatever is at any time admitted as matter of religion, that is not manifest from the reason of the thing, and plainly required by the light of nature, is gross superstition.

5. That it is inconsistent with the divine perfections, to suppose, that God can by an external revelation give any religious light or knowledge, at *any time to any people*, which was not equally given at *all times*, and to *all* people.

This is the state of the controversy. As to the railing accusations, and scurrilous language, which this author pours out, at all adventures, upon the Christian Clergy, I shall wholly pass them over ; my intention being only to appeal to the reason of the Reader, and to add nothing to it, but the safe, unerring light of divine Revelation.

Chapter I.

Enquiring, whether there be anything in the nature and condition of man, to oblige him to think, that he is not to admit of any doctrines or institutions, as revealed from God, but such as his own Reason can prove to be necessary from the nature of things.

I BEGIN with enquiring what there is to *oblige* a man to hold this opinion, because if there is not some strong and plain proof arising from the *nature* and *condition* of man, to *oblige* him thus to abide by the sole light of his own Reason ; it may be so far from being a duty, which he owes to God, that it may be reckoned amongst his most criminal presumptions. And the pleading for this authority of his own Reason, may have the guilt of pleading for his greatest vanity. And if, as this Writer observes, *spiritual pride be the worst sort of pride*,* a confident reliance upon our own Reason, as having a right to determine all matters between God and man, if it should prove to be a *groundless pretension*, bids fair to be reckoned the highest instance of the *worst* kind of the worst of sins.

Every other instance of vanity, every degree of personal pride, and self-esteem, may be a pardonable weakness in comparison of this. For how small is that pride which only makes us prefer our own personal beauty or merit to that of our fellow creatures, when compared with a self-confiding Reason, which is too haughty to adore anything in the divine counsels, which it cannot fully comprehend ; or to submit to any directions from God, but such as its own wisdom could prescribe ? Thus much is certain, that there can be no *medium* in this matter. The claiming this authority to our own Reason, must either be a very great duty, or amongst the greatest of sins.

If it be a *sin* to admit of any *secrets* in divine providence, if it be a *crime* to ascribe wisdom and goodness to God in things we cannot comprehend. If it be a *baseness* and *meanness* of spirit to believe that God can teach us *better*, or *more* than we can teach ourselves. If it be a *shameful apostasy* from the dignity

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of our nature, to be humble in the hands of God, to submit to any *mysterious providence* over us, to comply with any other methods of *homage* and *adoration* of him, than such as we could of ourselves contrive and justify; then it is certainly a great duty to assert and maintain this authority of our own Reason.

On the other hand; If the profoundest humility towards *God*, be the highest instance of piety. If everything within us and without us, if everything we know of God, everything we know of ourselves preaches up humility to us, as the foundation of every virtue, as the life and soul of all holiness. If *sin* had its beginning from *pride*, and *hell* be the effect of it, if *devils* are what they are through spiritual pride and self-conceit, then we have great reason to believe, that the claiming this authority to our Reason, in opposition to the revealed wisdom of God, is not a frailty of *flesh* and *blood*, but that same spiritual pride which turned *Angels* into *apostate* Spirits.

Since therefore this appealing to our own Reason, as the absolutely *perfect measure and rule* of all that ought to pass between God and man, has an *appearance* of a pride of the *worst* kind, and such as unites us both in temper and conduct with the fallen spirits of the kingdom of darkness, it highly concerns every pleader on that side, to consider what grounds he proceeds upon, and to ask himself, what there is in the *state* and *condition* of human nature, to oblige him to think that nothing can be *divine* or *holy*, or *necessary*, in religion, but what *human* Reason dictates?

I hope the reader will think this a fair state of the case, and that all the light we can have in this Matter, must arise from a thorough consideration of the *state* and *condition* of man in this world. If without revelation he is free from mysteries as a *moral* and *religious* agent, then he has some plea from his *state* and *condition* to reject *revealed* mysteries.

But if in a state of natural religion, and mere morality, he cannot acknowledge a divine providence, or worship and adore God, without *as much* implicit faith, and humble submission of his Reason, as any revealed mysteries require; then his *state* and *condition* in the world, condemns his refusal of any revelation sufficiently attested to come from God. This enquiry therefore into the state and condition of man, being so plainly the true point of the controversy, I hope to obtain the reader's impartial attention to it.

Had mankind continued in a state of *perfect innocence*, without ever failing in their duty either to God or man, yet even in such a state, they could never have known what God would or would not reveal to them, but by some express revelation from him. And

as God might intend to raise them to some higher, and unknown state of perfection ; so he might raise them to it by the revelation of such things as their own Reason, though innocent and uncorrupt, yet could not have discovered.

But if man, in a state of *innocence*, could have no pretence to set himself against divine revelation, and make his own Reason the *final judge* of what God could, or could not reveal to him ; much less has he any pretence for so doing in his present state of *sin, ignorance, and misery*, His *nature and condition* is so far from furnishing him with reasons against revelation, against any *supernatural* help from God ; that it seems to be inconsolable without it ; and every circumstance of his life prepares him to hope for terms of *mercy* and deliverance from his present guilt and misery, not according to *schemes* of his *own* contrivance, not from his *own Knowledge* of the *nature, and reason, and fitness* of things, but from some *incomprehensible depth* of divine goodness.

For if sin, and misery, and ignorance, cannot convince us of our own weakness, cannot prepare us to accept of any *methods* of *atonement* for our guilt, but such as our own guilty disordered Reason can suggest, we are not far from the hardened state of those miserable spirits that make war against God.

For to insist upon the *prerogative* of our own nature, as qualifying us to make our own peace with God, and to reject the *atonement* which he has provided for us, because we esteem it more fit and reasonable, that our *own repentance* should be sufficient without it, is the same height of *pride* and *impiety*, as to affirm, that we have no need of any repentance at all.

For as mankind, if they had continued in a state of *Innocence*, could not have known how their innocence was to be rewarded, or what changes of state God intended them for, but as revelation had discovered these things unto them : So after they were *fallen* into a state of guilt and sin, they could never know what *effects* it was to have *upon them*, what *misery* it would expose them to, or *when, or how*, or whether they were ever to be delivered from it, and made as happy as if they had *never* sinned ; these are things that nothing but a revelation from God could teach them.

So that for a Sinner to pretend to appoint the *atonement* for his own Sins, or to think himself able to tell what it *ought* to be, or what *effect* it must have with God, is as foolish and vain a presumption, as if man in *innocence* should have pretended to appoint his own method of being changed into a *Cherubim*.

The Writers against Revelation appeal to the *Reason* and *Nature* of things, as *infallibly* discovering everything that a Revelation from God can teach us.

Thus our Author; *If the relations between things, and the fitness resulting from thence, be not the sole Rule of God's actions, must not God be an arbitrary Being? But if God only commands what the nature of things shew to be fit, it is scarce possible that men should mistake their duty; since a mind that is attentive can as easily distinguish fit from unfit, as the Eye can beauty from deformity.**

It is granted, that there is a fitness and unfitness of actions founded in the nature of things, and resulting from the relations that persons and things bear to one another. It is also granted, that the reasonableness of most of the duties of children to their parents, of parents to their children, and of men to men, is very apparent, from the relations they bear to one another; and that several of the duties which we owe to God, plainly appear to us, as soon as we acknowledge the relation that is between God and us

But then, all this granted, this *whole argument* proves directly the contrary to that which this author intended to prove by it.

I here therefore join with this Author: I readily grant, that the Nature, Reason and Relations of things and persons, and the fitness of actions resulting from thence, is the *sole rule* of God's actions. And I appeal to this one common and confessed principle, as a sufficient proof that a man cannot thus abide by the *sole Light* of his own Reason, without contradicting the nature and reason of things, and denying this to be the *sole Rule* of God's actions.

For if the *fitness* of actions is founded in the *nature* of things and persons, and this fitness be the *sole Rule* of God's actions, it is certain that the Rule by which he acts, must in many instances be *entirely* inconceivable by us, so as not to be known *at all*, and in no instances *fully* known, or *perfectly* comprehended.

For if God is to act according to a *fitness founded in the nature* of things, and nothing can be fit for him to do, but what has its fitness founded in his own *divinely perfect* and *incomprehensible* nature, must he not necessarily act by a Rule *above* all human comprehension? This argument supposes that he cannot do what is *fit* for him to do, unless what he does has its *fitness* founded in his own *Nature*; but if he must govern his actions by his own nature, he must act by a *Rule* that is just as *incomprehensible* to us as his own nature.

And we can be no farther *competent judges* of the *fitness* of the conduct of God, than we are competent judges of the divine nature; and can no more tell what is, or is not *infinitely wise*

in God, than we can raise ourselves to a *state* of infinite wisdom.

So that if the *fitness* of actions is founded in the *particular nature* of things and persons, and the fitness of God's actions must arise from that which is *particular* to his nature, then we have from this argument, the *utmost certainty* that the *Rule* or *Reasons* of God's actions must in many cases be entirely inconceivable by us, and in no cases perfectly and fully apprehended; and for this very reason, because he is not an *arbitrary being*, that acts by *mere will*, but is governed in everything he does, by the reason and nature of things. For if he is not arbitrary, but acts according to the nature of things, then he must act according to his *own nature*. But if his own nature must be the *reason, rule* and *measure* of his actions; if they are only fit and reasonable because they are according to this *Rule and Reason*, then it necessarily follows, that the fitness of many of God's actions must be incomprehensible to us, *merely* for this reason, because they have their *proper fitness*; such a fitness as is founded in the divine nature.

How mistaken therefore is this author, when he argues after this manner. *If God requires things of us, whose fitness our Reason cannot prove from the nature of things, must he not be an arbitrary being?* For how can that prove God to be an arbitrary agent, which is the necessary consequence of his not being arbitrary?

For supposing God to be an arbitrary Being, there would then be a bare possibility of our comprehending the fitness of everything he required of us. For as he might act by *mere will*, so he might choose to act according to our nature, and suitable to our comprehensions, and not according to his own nature, and infinite perfections.

But supposing God not to be an *arbitrary Being*, but to act constantly, as the perfections of his own nature make it *fit* and *reasonable* for him to act, then there is an utter impossibility of our comprehending the reasonableness and fitness of many of his actions.

For instance; look at the *reason* of things, and the *fitness* of actions, and tell me how they moved God to create mankind in the state and condition they are in. Nothing is more above the reason of men, than to explain the reasonableness and infinite wisdom of God's providence in creating man of such a *form* and *condition*, to go through *such* a state of things as human life has shewn itself to be. No revealed mysteries can more exceed the Comprehension of man, than the state of human life itself.

Shew me according to what *fitness*, founded in the *nature* of

things, God's infinite wisdom was determined to form you in such a manner, bring you into such a world, and suffer and preserve *such a state* of things, as human life is, and then you may have some pretence to believe no revealed doctrines, but such as your own reason can deduce from the nature of things and the fitness of actions.

But whilst your own *form*, whilst *Creation* and *Providence* are depths which you cannot thus look into, 'tis strangely absurd to pretend, that God cannot reveal anything to you as a matter of religion, except your own reason can shew its foundation in the nature and reason of things.

For does not your own *make*, and *constitution*, the reasonableness of God's providence, and the *fitness* of the State of human life, as much concern you, as any *revealed* doctrines? Is it not as *unfit* for God to create man in such a *state*, subject to such a *course* of providence, as he cannot *prove* to be founded in the *fitness* and *reasonableness* of things; as to reveal to him such truths, or methods of salvation, as he cannot by any arguments of his own prove to be necessary

Revelation, you say, is on your account, and therefore you ought to see the *reasonableness* and *fitness* of it. And don't you also say, that God has made you for your *own sake*, ought you not therefore to know the reasonableness and fitness of God's forming you as you are? Don't you say, that providence is for the *sake* of Man? is it not therefore fit and reasonable, in the nature of things, that there should be no *mysteries*, or *secrets*, in providence, but that man should so see its methods, as to be able to prove all its steps to be constantly fit and reasonable?

Don't you say, that the *world* is for the *sake* of man; is it not therefore fit and reasonable that man should see, that the *past* and *present* state of the world has been such as the reason and fitness of things required it should be?

Now if the *imperfect* state of human nature, the *miseries* and *calamities* of this life, the *diseases* and mortality of human bodies, the *methods* of God's continual providence in governing human affairs, are things that as much concern us, and as nearly relate to us, as any methods of revealed religion; and if these are things that we cannot examine or explain, according to any *fitness* or *unfitness* founded in the *nature* of things, but must believe a great deal more of the infinite wisdom of God, than we can so explain; have we any reason to think, that God cannot, or ought not to raise us out of this unhappy state of things, help us to an higher order of life, and exalt us to a nearer enjoyment of himself, by any means, but such as our own poor Reason can grope out of the nature and fitness of things?

Now what is the reason, that all is thus mysterious and unmeasurable by human Reason, in these matters so nearly concerning human nature? 'Tis because God is not an *arbitrary Being*, but does that which the *incomprehensible perfections* of his own nature, make it *fit* and *reasonable* for him to do. Do but grant that nothing can be *fit* for God to do, but what is *according* to his own *infinite perfections*: Let but this be the *rule* of his actions, and then you have the *fullest* proof, that the fitness of his actions must be above our comprehension, who can only judge of a *fitness* according to our *own perfections*; and then we must be surrounded with mystery for this very reason, because God acts according to a *certain rule*, his own Nature.

Again: What is the nature of a human soul, upon what *terms*, and in what manner it is *united* to the body, how far it is *different* from it, how far it is *subject* to it, what powers and faculties it *derives* from it; are things wherein the *wisdom* and *goodness* of God, and the *happiness* of man are deeply concerned. Is it not necessary that these things should have their foundation in the *reason*, and *fitness* of things, and yet what natural Reason, un-inspired from above, can shew that this *state* of soul and body is founded in the reason and fitness of things?

Again: The *origin* of the soul, at what time it enters into the body, whether it be *immediately* created at its entrance into the body, or comes out of a *pre-existent state*, must have its fitness or reasonableness founded in the nature of things.

For who can say, that it is the same thing, whether human souls are created *immediately* for human bodies, or whether they come into them out of some *pre-existent state*? Now one of these ways may be exceeding *fit* and *wise*, and the other as entirely *unjust* and *unreasonable*, and yet when Reason left to its own light examines either of these ways, it finds itself *equally perplexed* with difficulties, and can affirm nothing with certainty about it.

Again: Who can say that it is the same thing to man, as a *moral agent*, or that he is to have the same treatment from God, or that the same *kinds* or *degrees* of piety must be exactly required, whether human souls be *fallen spirits*, that pre-existed before the creation of bodies, or were *immediately* created, as bodies were prepared for them?

Now here comes another act of *implicit faith* in natural religion, in a point of the *greatest moment* to the moral world. For as to God's proceeding in this matter of the greatest *justice* or *injustice* in his conduct over us, mere Reason has no ability to examine into it by any pretended fitness or unfitness founded in the nature of things; but must be forced to *believe* that God

deals with us according to infinite wisdom and goodness, or else be amongst those judicious believers, that believe there is no God.

Again : The origin of *sin* and *evil*, or how it entered into the world consistently with the infinite wisdom of God, is a mystery of *natural religion*, which reason cannot unfold. For who can shew from the *reason* and *nature* of things, that it was *fit* and *reasonable*, for the providence of God to suffer sin and evil to enter, and continue in the world as they have? Here therefore the man of natural religion must drop his method of reasoning from the nature and fitness of things, and that in an article of the highest concern to the moral world, and be as mere a believer, as he that believes the most incomprehensible mystery of revealed religion.

Now as there have been in the several ages of the world, some *impatient, restless* and *presuming* spirits, who because they could not in these points explain the justice of God's providence, have taken refuge in horrid *Atheism*, so they made just the same *sober use* of their reason, as our *modern unbelievers*, who because they cannot comprehend, as they would, the *fitness* and *necessity* of certain Christian doctrines, resign themselves up to an hardened *infidelity*. For it is just as wise and reasonable to allow of no mysteries in *Revelation*, as to allow of no mysteries or secrets in *Creation* and *Providence*.

And whenever this writer, or any other, shall think it a proper time, to attack *natural religion* with as much freedom, as he has now fallen upon *revealed*, he need not enter upon any *new hypothesis*, or *different way* of reasoning. For the same turn of thought, the same manner of cavilling may soon find materials in the natural state of man, for as large a bill of complaints against natural religion, and the mysteries of providence, as is here brought against revealed doctrines.

To proceed : If the *fitness of actions* is founded in the *nature and relations of beings*, then nothing can be fit for God to do, but so far as it is fit for the *Governor of all created beings*, whether on earth, or in any other part of the universe ; and he cannot act fitly towards mankind, but by acting as is fit for the Governor of all beings.

Now what is fit for the *Governor of all created nature* to do in this or that particular part of his creation, is as much above our reason to *tell*, as it is above our power to *govern* all beings. And how mankind ought to be governed, with relation to the whole creation, of which they are so small a part, is a matter equally above our knowledge, because we know not how they are a part of the whole, or what relation they bear to any other part, or

how their state affects the whole, or any other part, than we know what beings the whole consists of.

Now there is nothing that we know with more certainty than that God is Governor of the *whole*, and that mankind are a *part* of the whole; and that the uniformity and harmony of divine providence, must arise from his infinitely wise government of the *whole*; and therefore we have the utmost certainty, that we are *vastly incompetent* judges of the fitness or unfitness of any methods, that God uses in the government of so small a part of the universe, as mankind are.

For if the actions of God cannot have their *proper fitness*, unless they are according to the *incomprehensible greatness of his own nature*, and according to his incomprehensible greatness, as *Lord and Governor of all created nature*; have we not the most undeniable certainty, that the fitness of the divine providence over mankind, cannot possibly be seen by those, who are resolved to know nothing of God, but that which their own Reason can teach them?

Again: If the *fitness of actions is founded in the relations of beings to one another*, then the fitness of the actions of God's providence over mankind, must be in many instances altogether mysterious and incomprehensible to us.

For the relation which God bears to mankind, as their *all-perfect Creator* and continual *Preserver*, is a relation that our Reason conceives as imperfectly, and knows as little of, as it does of any of the divine attributes. When it compares it to that of a *Father* and his children, a *Prince* and his subjects a *Proprietor* and his property, it has explained it in the best manner it can, but still has left it as much a *secret*, as we do the divine nature when we only say, it is *infinitely* superior to everything that is *finite*.

By the natural Light of our Reason we may know with certainty, several *effects* of this relation, as that it puts us under the care and protection of a wise, and just, and merciful providence, and demands from us the highest instances of humility, duty, adoration and thanksgiving. But what it is in its own nature, what kind of state, or degree of *dependency* it signifies, what it is to exist in and by God, what it is to see by a *light* that is his, to act by a power from him, to live by a *life* in him; are things as incomprehensible to Reason, *left to itself*, as what it is to be in the *third heavens*, or to hear words that cannot be uttered.

But if this relation consists in these *inconceivable* things, in a communication of *life, light, and power*, if these are enjoyed in God, and in ourselves, our own and yet his, in a manner not to

be explained by anything that we ever heard, or saw ; then we must necessarily be poor judges of what is fit for God to require of us, because of this *relation*. It teaches us nothing but the superficialness of our own knowledge, and the unfathomable depths of the divine perfections.

How little this Writer has considered the nature and manner of this *relation* between God and Man, may be seen by the following paragraphs. *The Holy Ghost*, says he, *cannot deal with men as rational creatures, but by proposing arguments to convince their understandings, and influence their wills, in the same manner as if proposed by other agents*. As absurd, as to say, God cannot create us as rational beings, unless he creates us by such means, and in the same *manner*, as if we were created by other agents. For to suppose that other agents can possibly act upon our understanding, and will, in the *same manner* that God does ; is as gross an absurdity, as to suppose that other agents can create us in the same manner that God creates us.

And to *confine* the manner of the Holy Ghost's acting upon us, to the manner of our acting upon one another by *arguments* and *syllogisms*, is as great weakness, as to *confine* the manner of God's creating us, to the manner of our making a *Statue* with *tools* and *instruments*.

But he proceeds and says, *For to go beyond this, would be making impressions on men, as a seal does on wax ; to the confounding of their reason, and their liberty in choosing ; and the man would then be merely passive, and the action would be the action of another being acting upon him, for which he could be no way accountable.**

Here you see the Holy Spirit has but these two possible ways of acting upon men, it must either only propose an argument, just as a man may propose one, or it must act like a *seal upon wax*.

I only ask this writer, Whether God communicates *life*, and *strength*, and *understanding*, and *liberty of will* to us, only as men may communicate anything to one another ? or as a seal acts upon wax ? If so, it may be granted, that the Holy Ghost cannot act upon us any other way.

But it must be affirmed, that we do, by a continual influx from God, enjoy all these powers, and receive the continuance of all these faculties from him, not as men receive things from one another, nor as *wax* receives the *impression* of the *seal*, but in a way as much above our conception, as creation is above our power ; if we have all our *power* of acting, by a *continual communication* from him, and yet are free-agents, have all our *light*

from him, and yet are *accountable intelligent* Beings: then it must be great weakness to affirm, that the Holy Ghost cannot act upon us in the same manner: For it would be saying, God cannot act upon us as he does act upon us.

The short of the matter is this. Either this *writer* must affirm, that our *rational nature*, our *understanding faculties*, our *power of action*, our *liberty of will*, must *necessarily* subsist without the *continual action* of God upon them, or else he must grant, that God can *act* upon our *understandings* and *wills* without making us as *merely passive* as the wax under the seal.

This writer says, *Though the relation we stand in to God, is not artificial, as most are amongst men——yet this does not hinder, but that we may know the end he had in being related to us as Creator and Governor, and what he requires of his creatures and subjects.* But how are we to know this? *This*, says he, *the Divine Nature*, which contains in it all perfection and happiness, *plainly points out to us.**

If he had said, since God must act over us as Creator and Governor, according to his own infinite *perfection and happiness*, therefore his conduct over us may be *very mysterious*, he had drawn a *plain* conclusion. But he proves all to be plain, because God is to govern us according to something that is not plain, according to his own *incomprehensible nature*.

His argument therefore proceeds thus. God must govern us according to his own *infinite perfection and happiness*; but we *do not know* what his infinite perfections and happiness are:

Therefore we *plainly know* how he is to govern us.

Now if this Writer is capable of taking such an argument as this to be demonstrative, it is no wonder that all his principles of Religion are founded upon demonstration.

But if he knows no more of what arises from the *Relation* between God and his creatures, than he has here demonstrated, he might be very well content with some farther knowledge from Divine Revelation.

It is because of this incomprehensible Relation between God and his creatures, that we are unavoidably ignorant of what God may justly require of us either in a state of *innocence* or *sin*. For as the fitness of actions between Beings *related*, must result from their respective Natures, so the incomprehensibility of the Divine Nature, on which the Relation between God and man is founded, makes it utterly impossible for mere natural reason to say, what *kind of homage*, or *worship*, he may fitly require of man in a state of *innocence*; or what *different* worship and homage he may, or must require of men, as *sinner*s.

And to appeal to the infinite Perfections of God, as *plainly pointing this out*, is the same extravagance, as to appeal to the *incomprehensibility* of God, as a plain proof of our comprehending what God is.

As to the obligations of moral or social duties, which have their foundation in the conveniences of this life, and the several relations we bear to one another, these are the same in the state of *Innocence* or *Sin*, and we know that we truly act according to the Divine Will, when we act according to what these relations require of us.

But the question is, What distinct kind of *Homage*, or *Service*, or *Worship*, God may require us to render to Him, either in a state of *Innocence* or *Sin*, on account of that Relation he bears to us as an all-perfect Creator and Governor?

But this is a question that God alone can resolve.

Human Reason cannot enter into it, it has no principle to proceed upon in it. For as the *necessity* of Divine Worship and Homage, so the *particular matter* and *manner* of it, must have its reason in the Divine Nature.

Sacrifice, if considered only as a *human Invention*, could not be proved to be a reasonable service. Yet considered as a *Divine Institution*, it would be the greatest folly not to receive it as a reasonable service. For as we could see no reason for it, if it was of human invention, so we should have the greatest reason to comply with it, because it was of Divine Appointment. Not as if the Divine Appointment altered the *nature* and *fitness* of things; but because nothing has the *nature* and *fitness* of Divine Worship, but because it is of Divine Appointment.

Man therefore, had he continued in a state of *Innocence*, and without Revelation, might have lived in an awful fear, and pious regard of God, and observed every duty both of moral and civil life, as an act of obedience to him. But he could have no foundation either to invent any particular *matter* or *manner* of Divine Worship himself, or to reject any that was appointed by God, as *unnecessary*. It would have been ridiculous to have pleaded his innocence, as having no need of a Divine Worship? For who can have greater reason, or be fitter to worship God, than innocent Beings? It would have been more absurd, to have objected the sufficiency and perfection of their reason; for why should men reject a *revealed method* and *manner* of Divine Worship and Service, because God had given them sense and reason of their own, sufficient for the duties of social and civil life?

And as reason in a state of such innocence and perfection, could not have any pretence to state, or appoint the matter or

manner of Divine Worship, so when the state of innocence was changed for that of sin, it then became more difficult for bare reason to know what kind of Homage, or Worship could be acceptable to God from sinners.

For what the *Relation* betwixt God and sinners makes it fit and reasonable for God to require or accept of them, cannot be determined by human reason.

This is a *new State*, and the foundation of a *new Relation*, and nothing can be fit for God to do in it, but what has its *fitness resulting* from it. We have nothing to help our conceptions of the forementioned *relative Characters* of God, as our *Governor* and *Preserver*, but what we derive from our idea of human *Fathers* and *Governors*. Which idea only helps us to comprehend these *relations*, just as our idea of human power helps us to comprehend the *Omnipotence* of God. For a father or governor, no more represents the *true state* of God as our *Governor* and *Preserver*, than our living in our Father's *family*, represents the *true manner* of our living in God.

These relations are both very plain and very mysterious; they are very plain and certain, as to the *reality* of their existence; and highly mysterious and inconceivable, as to the *manner* of their existence.

That which is *plain* and *certain*, in these relative characters of God, plainly shews our obligations to every instance of *duty*, *homage*, *adoration*, *love* and *gratitude*.

And that which is *mysterious* and *inconceivable* in them, is a just and solid foundation of that *profound humility*, *awful reverence*, *internal piety*, and *tremendous sense* of the divine Majesty, with which devout and pious persons think of God, and assist at the *offices* and *institutions* of religion. Which excites in them a higher zeal for doctrines and institutions of divine revelation, than for all things human; that fills them with regard and reverence for all *things*, places, and offices, that are either by divine or human authority, appointed to assist and help their desired intercourse with God.

And if some people, by a *long* and *strict* attention to *Reason*, *clear ideas*, the *fitness* and *unfitness* of things, have at last arrived at a demonstrative certainty, that all these sentiments of piety and devotion, are mere *bigotry*, *superstition*, and *enthusiasm*; I shall only now observe, that *youthful extravagance*, *passion*, and *debauchery*, by their own *natural tendency*, without the assistance of any other guide, seldom fail of making the same discovery. And though it is not reckoned any reflection upon *great wits*, when they hit upon the same thought, yet it may seem some disparagement of that *reason* and *philosophy*, which teaches *old*

men to think and judge the same of religion, that *passion* and *extravagance* teaches the young.

To return: As there is no state in human life, that can give us a true idea of any of the forementioned relative characters of God, so this relative state of God towards sinners is still more remote, and less capable of being truly comprehended by anything observable in the relations, betwixt a *judge* and criminals, a *creditor* and his debtors, a *physician* and his patients, a father or prince, and their disobedient children and subjects.

For none of these states separately, nor all of them jointly considered, give us any just idea, either of the *nature* and *guilt* of sin, or how God is to deal with sinners, on the account of the relation he bears to them.

And to ask, whether God in punishing sinners, acts as a *physician* towards patients, or as a *creditor* towards debtors, or as a *prince* towards rebels, or a *judge* over criminals; is the same weakness, as to ask, whether God as our *continual preserver*, acts as our parents, from whom we have our *maintenance*, or as a prince, that only *protects* us. For as the *maintenance* and *protection* that we receive from our parents and prince, are not proper and true representations of the *nature* and *manner* of our *preservation* in God, but only the properest words that human language affords us, to speak of things not human, but divine and inconceivable in their own proper natures: So a *physician* and his patients, a *creditor* and his debtors, a *prince* and his rebels, or a *judge* over criminals, neither separately nor jointly considered, are proper and strict representations of the *reasons* and *manner* of God's proceedings with sinners, but only help us to a more proper language to speak about them, than any other states of human life.

To ask, whether *sin* hath solely the *nature* of an offence, against a prince or a father, and so is pardonable by mere goodness; whether it is like an *error* in a *road* or *path*, and so is entirely at an end, when the right path is taken; whether its guilt hath the nature of a debt, and so is capable of being discharged, just as a debt is; whether it affects the soul, as a *wound* or *disease* affects the body, and so ought only to move God to act as a good physician? all these questions are as vain, as to ask, whether knowledge in God is really *thinking*, or his nature a real *substance*. For as his knowledge and nature cannot be strictly defined, but are capable of being signified by the terms *thinking* and *substance*, so the nature of sin is not *strictly represented* under any of these characters, but is capable of receiving *some representation* from every one of them.

When sin is said to be an offence against God, it is to teach

us, that we have infinitely more reason to dread it on *God's account*, than to dread any offence against our parents, or governors.

When it is compared to a *debt*, it is to signify, that our sins make us accountable to God, not in the *same manner*, but with the same certainty, as a debtor is answerable to his creditor; and because it has some likeness to a debt, that of ourselves we are not able to pay.

When it is compared to a *wound*, or disease in the body, it is not to teach us, that it may as justly and easily be healed as bodily wounds, but to help us to conceive the greatness of its evil; that, as diseases bring death to the body, so sin brings a worse kind of death upon the soul.

Since therefore the *nature* and *guilt* of sin can only so far be known, as to make it highly to be *dreaded*, but not so known as to be *fully* understood, by anything we can compare it to.

Since the *relation* which God bears to *sinners*, can only be so known, as to make it highly reasonable to prostrate ourselves before him, in every instance of humility and penitence; but not so fully known as to teach us how, or in what manner, God must deal with us; it plainly follows, that if God is not an *arbitrary* Being, but acts according to a *fitness, resulting* from this relation, he must, in this respect, act by a *rule* or *reason* known only to himself, and such as we cannot *possibly* state from the *reason* and *nature* of things.

For if the nature of things, and the fitness of actions resulting from their relations, is to be the rule of our Reason, then *Reason* must be here at a full stop, and can have no more light or knowledge to proceed upon, in stating the *nature*, the *guilt*, or proper *atonement* of sin in men, than of sin in *Angels*.

For *Reason*, by consulting the *nature* and *fitness* of things, can no more tell us, what the *guilt* of sin is, what *hurt* it does us, how far it *enters* into, and *alters* our very nature, what *contrariety* to, and *separation* from God, it necessarily brings upon us, or what *supernatural* means are, or are not, necessary to abolish it; our *Reason* can no more tell this, than our *senses* can tell us, what is the *inward*, and what is the *outward* light of *Angels*.

Ask Reason, what *effect* sin has upon the soul, and it can tell you no more, than if you had asked, what effect the *omnipresence* of God has upon the soul.

Ask Reason, and the nature of things, what is, or ought to be, the *true nature* of an atonement for sin, how far it is like *paying a debt*, *reconciling a difference*, or *healing a wound*, or how far it is different from them? and it can tell you no more, than if you

had asked, what is the *true degree* of power that *preserves* us in existence, how far it is *like* that which at first created us, and how far it is *different* from it.

All these enquiries are, by the nature of things, made impossible to us, so long as we have no light but from our own natural capacities, and we cannot take upon us to be *knowing*, and *philosophers*, in these matters, but by deserting our Reason, and giving ourselves up to *vision* and *imagination*.

And we have as much authority from the reason and nature of things, to appeal to *hunger* and *thirst*, and *sensual pleasure*, to tell us *how* our souls shall live in the beatific presence of God, as to appeal to our *reason* and *logic*, to demonstrate how sin is to be *atoned*, or the soul *altered*, *prepared*, and *purified*, for future happiness.

For God has no more given us our Reason to *settle* the nature of an atonement for sin; or to find out what can, or cannot, take away its guilt, than he has given us *senses* and *appetites* to state the nature, or discover the ingredients, of future happiness.

And he who rejects the *atonement* for sins made by the Son of God, as *needless*, because he cannot prove it to be *necessary*, is as extravagant, as he that should deny that God created him by his *only Son*, because he did not *remember* it. For our memory is as proper a faculty to tell us, whether God at first created us, and all things, by his only Son, as our *Reason* is to tell us, whether we ought to be restored to God, with, or without the mediation of Jesus Christ.

When therefore this writer says, *Can anything be more evident, than that if doing evil be the only cause of God's displeasure, that the ceasing to do evil, must take away that displeasure?**

Just as if he had said, if conversing with a *leper* has been the only cause of a man's getting a *leprosy*, must not departing from him, be the removal of the *leprosy*? For if anyone, guessing at the *guilt* of sin, and its *effects* on the soul, should compare it to a *leprosy* in the body, he can no more say, that he has reached its *real*, *internal* evil, than he, that comparing the happiness of heaven to a crown of glory, can be said to have described its real happiness.

This *writer* has no occasion to appeal to reason, and the nature of things, if he can be thus certain about things, whose nature is not only obscure, but *impossible* to be known. For it is as impossible for him to know the *guilt* and *effects* of sin, as to know the shape of an Angel. It is as impossible to know by the mere light of reason what God's *displeasure* at sin is, what *contrariety* to, or *separation* from sinners it implies, or how it *obliges*

God to deal with them ; as to know what the internal essence of God is. Our author therefore has here found the utmost degree of evidence, where it was *impossible* for him to have the *smallest degree* of knowledge.

For though it is very evident, that in the case of sin, Reason can prescribe nothing but repentance ; yet it is equally evident, that Reason cannot say, nothing more is required, to destroy the effects of sin, and to put the sinner in the *same state*, as if it had never been committed.

If a man, having *murdered* twenty of his fellow creatures, should afterward be sorry for it, and wish that he had a power to bring them to life again, or to create others in their stead, would this be an *evident* proof, that he was no *murderer*, and that he had never killed one man in his life ? Will his ceasing to kill, and wishing he had a power to create others in their stead, be a *proof*, that he is just in the *same state* with God, as if he had never murdered a man in his life ? But, unless this can be said, unless a man's repentance sufficiently proves that he *never* was a sinner, it cannot be evident, that repentance is sufficient to put a man in the *same state*, as if he never had sinned.

He therefore that says, *If sin be the only cause of God's displeasure, must not ceasing from sin take away his displeasure ?* has just as much sense and reason on his side, as if he had said, if a man's *murdering* of himself, is the cause of God's displeasure, must not his restoring himself to life again, take away God's displeasure ?

For there is as much foundation in reason, and the nature of things, to affirm, that the soul of a *self-murderer* must have a sufficient power to undo the effects of murder, and put him in his former state ; as to affirm, that *every sinner* must have a sufficient natural power of undoing all the effects of sin, and putting himself in the same state as if he had never sinned.

This objection therefore, against any *super-natural* means of atoning for sin, taken from the *sufficiency* of our own repentance, is as *clear* and *philosophical*, as that *knowledge* that is without *any ideas* ; and as justly to be relied upon, as that *conclusion* which has no *premises*.

This writer has two more objections against the atonement for sin, made by Jesus Christ. *First*, as it is an *human sacrifice*, which nature itself *abhors* ; and which was looked upon as the great abomination of idolatrous *pagan* worship.

The *cruelty*, *injustice*, and *impiety*, of shedding *human* blood in the sacrifices of the *pagan* religion, is fully granted : but *Reason* cannot thence bring the smallest objection against the sacrifice of Christ, as it was *human*.

For how can Reason be more disregarded, than in such an argument as this? The *pagans* were unjust, cruel, and impious, in offering human blood to their false gods, therefore the true God cannot receive any *human* sacrifice for sin, or allow any persons to die, as a punishment for sin.

For, if no human sacrifice can be fit for God to receive, because human Sacrifices, as parts of *pagan* worship, were unjust and impious; then it would follow, that the *mortality*, to which all mankind are appointed by God, must have the *same cruelty* and *injustice* in it. Now that *death* is a punishment for sin, and that all mankind are by death offered as a *sacrifice* for sin, is not only a doctrine of revealed Religion, but the plain dictate of Reason. For, though it is Revelation alone that can teach us, how God threatened death, as the punishment of a particular sin, yet reason must be obliged to acknowledge, that men die, because they are sinners. But, if men die because they are sinners, and reason itself must receive this, as the most justifiable cause of death; then reason must allow, that the death of all mankind is received by the true God, as a *sacrifice* for sin. But if reason must acknowledge the death of all mankind, as a sacrifice for sin, then it can have no just objection against the sacrifice of Christ, *because it was human*.

Revelation therefore teaches nothing more hard to be believed on this point, than reason teaches. For if it be just and fit in God, to *appoint* and *devote* all men to death, as the proper *punishment*, and *means* of their deliverance from their sins; how can it be proved to be unjust and unfit in God, to receive the death of Jesus Christ, for the same ends, and to render thereby the common death and sacrifice of mankind truly effectual?

I need not take upon me to prove the *fitness* and *reasonableness* of God's procedure in the *mortality* of mankind; Revelation is not under any necessity of proving this; because it is no difficulty that arises from revelation, but equally belongs to natural religion; and both of them must acknowledge it to be fit and reasonable; not because it can be proved to be so from the nature of things, but is to be believed to be so, by faith and piety.

But if the necessary faith and piety of natural religion, will not suffer us to think it *inconsistent* with the justice and goodness of God, to appoint all mankind victims to death on the account of sin, then *reason*, or *natural* religion, can have no objection against the sacrifice of Christ, as it is an *human sacrifice*.

And all that *revelation* adds to *natural* religion, on the point of *human* sacrifice, is only this; the knowledge of *one*, that gives *merit*, *effect*, and *sanctification*, to all the rest.

Secondly, It is objected, that the atonement made by Jesus Christ represents God as punishing the *innocent* and acquitting the *guilty*; or, as punishing the innocent *instead* of the guilty.

But this proceeds all upon mistake: for the atonement made by Jesus Christ, though it procures pardon for the guilty, yet it does not acquit them, or excuse them from any punishment, or suffering for sin, which *reason could impose upon them*. Natural religion calls men to repentance for their sins: the atonement made by Jesus Christ does not acquit them from it, or pardon them without it; but calls them to a *severer* repentance, a *higher* self-punishment and penance, than natural religion, alone, prescribes. So that *reason* cannot accuse this atonement, of *acquitting* the guilty; since it brings them under a necessity of doing *more*, and performing a *severer* repentance, than reason, alone, can impose upon them.

God therefore does not by this proceeding, (as is unreasonably said) shew his *dislike* of the *innocent* and his *approbation* of the *wicked*.

For how can God be thought to punish our blessed Saviour out of *dislike*, if his sufferings are represented of such infinite merit with him? Or how can he shew thereby his *approbation* of the guilty, whose repentance is not *acceptable* to him, till recommended by the infinite merits of Jesus Christ?

Reason therefore has nothing that it can justly object, against the atonement made by our blessed Lord, either as it was an *human sacrifice*, or as *freeing* the *guilty*, and punishing the innocent in their stead; because this very sacrifice calls people to a *higher state* of suffering and punishment for sin, than reason, alone, could oblige them to undergo.

As to the fitness and reasonableness of our blessed Lord's sufferings, as he was God and man; and the *nature* and *degree* of their worth; reason can no more enter into this matter, or *prove* or *disprove* anything about it, than it can enter into the state of the whole creation, and shew, how it could, or could not, be in the whole, better than it is.

For you may as well ask any of your *senses*, as ask your *reason* this principal question, *Whether any supernatural means be necessary for the atonement of the sins of mankind?* Or, supposing it necessary, whether the *mediation*, *death*, and *intercession* of Jesus Christ, as God and man, be that true supernatural means?

For as the fitness or unfitness of any *supernatural* means, for the atonement of sin, must result from the *incomprehensible relation* God bears to sinners, as it must have such *necessity*, *worth*, and *dignity*, as this relation *requires*, and because it requires it; it necessarily follows, that if God acts according to *this relation*,

the *fitness* of his actions cannot be according to our comprehension.

Again : Supposing some *supernatural means* to be necessary, for destroying the guilt and power of sin ; or that that *mediation, sufferings, and intercession*, of the Son of God incarnate, is that true supernatural means, it necessarily follows, that a revelation of such, or any other *supernatural means*, cannot possibly be made obvious to our reason and senses, as the things of human life, or the transactions amongst men are ; but can only be so revealed, as to become just occasions of our *faith, humility, adoration, and pious resignation*, to the divine wisdom and goodness.

For, to say that such a thing is *supernatural*, is only saying, that it is something, which, by the *necessary state* of our own nature, we are as incapable of knowing, as we are incapable of seeing *spirits*.

If therefore supernatural and divine things are by the letter of Scripture ever revealed to us, they cannot be revealed to us, as they are in their *own nature* : for if they could, such things would not be *supernatural*, but such as were suited to our capacities.

If an *angel* could appear to us, as it is in its own nature, then we should be *naturally* capable of seeing angels ; but, because our nature is not *capable* of such a sight, and angels are, as to us, *supernatural* objects ; therefore, when *angels* appear to men, they must appear, not as they are in themselves, but in some *human, or corporeal* form, that their appearance may be suited to our capacities.

It is just thus, when any *supernatural* or *divine* matter is revealed by God, it can no more possibly be revealed to us, as it is in its *own nature*, than an *Angel* can appear to us, or make itself visible by us as it is in its own nature ; but such supernatural matter can only be revealed to us, by being represented to us, by its likeness to something, that we already *naturally* know.

This revelation teaches us this *supernatural* matter ; that Jesus Christ is making a *perpetual intercession for us in heaven* : For Christ's *real state, or manner* of existence with God in heaven, in regard to his Church, cannot, as it is in its *own nature*, be described to us ; it is in this respect ineffable, and incomprehensible. And therefore, this high and inconceivable manner of Christ's existence with God in heaven, in regard to his church, is revealed to us under an idea, that gives us the truest representation of it, that we are capable of ; *viz.*, the idea of a *perpetual intercession* for his church.

But if anyone should thence infer, that the Son of God must therefore either be always upon his knees in acts of *mental* or *vocal* prayer, or *prostrate* in some humble form of a supplicant, he would make a very weak inference.

Because this revealed Idea of Christ, as a perpetual Intercessor in heaven, is only a comparative representation of something, that cannot be *directly* and *plainly* known as it is in its own nature; and only teaches us, how to believe something, though imperfectly, yet *truly* and *usefully*, of an incomprehensible matter.

Just as our own ideas of *wisdom* and *goodness* do not teach us what the divine wisdom and goodness are in their *own natures*, but only help us to believe something *truly* and *usefully* of those perfections of God, which are in themselves inconceivable by us.

But then there is no inferring anything from these ideas, by which divine and supernatural things are represented to us, but only the *truth* and *certainty* of that *likeness* under which they are represented.

Thus from our own idea of goodness in ourselves, we can infer nothing concerning goodness, as it is a perfection inherent in God, but only this, that there certainly is in God some *inconceivable*, *infinite* perfection, *truly answerable* to that which we call goodness in ourselves, though as *infinitely* different from it, as *Omnipotence* is infinitely different from all that we *naturally* know of *power*.

But then we can proceed no farther than to the *truth* and *certainty* of this *likeness*; we cannot by any farther considerations of the *nature* and *manner* of goodness, as it is in ourselves, infer anything farther, as to the *nature* and *manner* of the *divine goodness*. This is as impossible, as to state the real nature and manner of *Omnipotence*, by considering the *particulars* of *human power*.

In like manner, our revealed idea of Jesus Christ as an *Intercessor* for us in heaven, gives us the utmost certainty that he is in heaven for our benefit, in a manner *truly* and *fully* answerable to that of a *powerful Intercessor*. But if from considering our own ideas of *human Intercessors*, we should thence pretend to infer the *real supernatural* manner of Christ's existence in heaven, we should fall into the same absurdity, as if we undertook to represent the *true* nature of *Omnipotence*, by considering what we knew of the *nature* and *manner* of human power.

Again: When it is by the letter of Scripture revealed to us, that the blessed Jesus is the one *Mediator* between God and man; that he is the *Atonement*, the *Propitiation*, and *Satisfaction* for our sins: These expressions only teach us *as much* outward

knowledge of so great a mystery, as *human* language can represent. But they do not teach us the *real* or *perfect* nature of Christ's *state* between God and sinners. For that being a *divine* and *supernatural* matter, cannot by any outward words be revealed to us as it is in its *own Nature*, any more than the *essence* of God can be made *visible* to our eyes of Flesh.

But these expressions teach us thus much with certainty, that there is in the *state* of Christ between God and sinners, something infinitely and inconceivably beneficial to us; and *truly answerable* to all that we mean by *meditation, atonement, propitiation, and satisfaction*.

And though the *real, internal manner*, of this meditation and atonement, as it is in its *own nature*, is *incomprehensible* to the natural man, yet this does not lessen our knowledge of the *truth* and *certainty* of it, any more than the *incomprehensibility* of the divine nature, lessens our *certainty* of its real existence.

And as our idea of God, though consisting of incomprehensible perfections, helps us to a real and certain knowledge of the divine nature; and though all mysterious, is yet the solid foundation of all piety; so our idea of Jesus Christ, as our *mediator* and *atonement*, though it be mighty incomprehensible in itself, as to its real nature, yet helps us to a *certain* and *real* knowledge of Christ, as our *mediator* and *atonement*; and, though full of mystery, is yet full of motives to the highest degrees of piety, devotion, love, and gratitude unto God.

All objections therefore, raised from any difficulties about the nature of *atonements, propitiations, and satisfactions*, as these words are used to signify in human life, and common language, are vain, and entirely groundless.

For all these objections proceed upon this supposition, that *atonement, or satisfaction*, when attributed to Jesus Christ, signify neither *more* nor *less*, nor operate in any other manner, than when they are used as terms in *human laws*, or in *civil* life: Take away this supposition, and all objections are entirely removed with it.

Thus our author thinks this an unanswerable difficulty in the present case, when he asks, *How Sins freely pardoned, could want any expiation? Or how, after a full equivalent paid, and adequate satisfaction given, all could be mercy, and pure forgiveness?**

And yet all this difficulty is founded upon this absurd supposition, that atonement and satisfaction, when attributed to Jesus Christ, signify neither more nor less, than atonements and satisfactions, when spoken of in human laws, and human life.

Which is full as absurd, as to suppose, that *power* and *life*, when attributed to God, signify neither more nor less, than when they are spoken of men: For there is no reason why we should think there is anything mysterious and incomprehensible in *power* and *life*, when attributed to God; but what is the same reason for our thinking, that *atonement* and *satisfaction*, when ascribed to the Son of God, must be mysterious and incomprehensible.

To return: I have granted this writer his great principle, *that the relations of things and persons, and the fitness resulting from thence, is the sole rule of God's actions*: and I have granted it upon this supposition, that it must thence follow, that God must act according to his *own nature*; and therefore nothing could be fit for God to do, or worthy of him, but what had the reason of its fitness in his own nature: and if so, then the *rule* of his actions could not fall within our comprehension. And consequently, *reason alone*, could not be a *competent judge* of God's proceedings; or say, what God might, or might not, require of us: and therefore I have, by this means, plainly turned his main argument against himself, and made it fully confute that doctrine, which he intended to found upon it.

But though I have thus far, and for this reason, granted the *nature* and *relations* of things and beings, to be the rule of God's actions, because that plainly supposes, that therefore his *own nature* must be the rule of his actions; yet since our *author*, and other modern opposers of revealed doctrines of religion, hold it in another sense, and mean by it, I know not what *eternal, immutable* reasons and relations of things, *independent* of any being, and which are a *common rule and law of God and man*, I entirely declare against it, as an erroneous and groundless opinion.

Thus, when the writer says, *If the relations between things, and the fitness resulting from thence, be not the sole rule of God's actions, must he not be an arbitrary being?* As he here means some *eternal, immutable relations, independent* of God; so, to suppose, that God cannot be a *wise* and *good* being, unless such eternal, independent relations, be the *sole rule* of his actions, is as erroneous, as to affirm, that God cannot be *omniscient*, unless *mathematical demonstrations* be his *sole manner* of knowing all things. And it is just as reasonable to fix God's knowledge *solely* in mathematical demonstrations, that we may thence be assured of his *infallible knowledge*, as to make I know not what independent relations of things, the *sole rule* of his actions, that we may thence be assured, he is not *arbitrary*, but a wise and good Being.

And we have as strong reasons to believe God to be, in the highest degree, *wise* and *good*, without knowing on *what*, his wisdom and goodness is *founded*; as we have to believe him to be *omniscient*, and *eternal*, without knowing on *what*, his *omniscience* is founded; or to *what*, his *eternity* is owing. And we have the same reason to hold it a vain and fruitless enquiry, to ask what *obliges* God to be *Wise* and *Good*, as to ask what obliges him to be *Omniscient*, or *Eternal*.

And as it would be absurd to ascribe the *Existence* of God to *any cause*, or found it upon any *independent relations* of things, so it is the same absurdity, to ascribe the infinite wisdom and goodness of God to *any cause*, or found them upon any independent relations of things.

Nor do we any more *lose* the notion, or *lessen* the certainty of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness, because we cannot say on *what* they are founded, or to *what* they are to be ascribed, than we *lose* the notion of God, or render his existence *uncertain*, because it cannot be founded on anything, or ascribed to any cause.

And as in our account of the existence of things, we are obliged to have recourse to a Being, whose existence must not be ascribed to *any cause*, because everything cannot have a cause, no more than everything can be created, so in our account of *Wisdom* and *Goodness*, there is the same necessity of having recourse to an infinite Wisdom and Goodness, that never *began* to be, and that is as different as to its *reason* and *manner* of existence, from all other wisdom and goodness, that have a beginning, as the *existence* of God is *different* from the existence of the creatures.

But if it be necessary to hold, that there is an infinite wisdom and goodness that *never began* to be, then it is as necessary to affirm, that such wisdom and goodness can no more be *founded* upon the *relations* of things, than the *unbeginning existence* of God can be *founded* upon the existence of things. And to seek for any *reasons* of a wisdom and goodness that could not begin to be, but was always in the *same infinite* state, is like seeking the cause of that which can have no cause, or asking *what* it is that *contains* infinity.

But to derive the wisdom and goodness of God from the directions he receives from the *Relations* of things, because our wisdom and goodness is directed by them, is as weak and vain, as to found his *knowledge* upon sensation and reflection, because our rational knowledge is *necessarily* founded upon them.

When therefore this writer saith, *Infinite wisdom can have no commands, but what are founded on the unalterable reason of*

things ;* he might as justly have said, an *infinite Creator* can have no *power* of creating, but what is founded on the *unalterable nature* of creatures.

For the *reason* of things, is just as unalterable, as the *nature* of creatures. And if the reasons and relations of things are nothing else but their *manner* of existence, or the *state* of their nature, certainly the relations of things must have the same *beginning*, and the same *alterable* or unalterable nature, as the things from whence they flow. Unless it can be said, that a thing may exist in *such a manner*, though it does not exist at all.

Nothing is more certain, than that the relations of things is only the *particular state* of their nature, or *manner* of existence ; there can therefore no eternal, and unalterable relations exist, but of things that eternally and unalterably exist. Unless a thing may be said to exist eternally and unalterably in such a *particular state* of nature, or *manner* of existence, and yet have no eternal existence.

When therefore he says again, *The will of God is always determined by the nature and reason of things* ;† It is the same as if he had said, the *omnipotence* of God is always determined by the *nature* of causes and effects. For as all causes and effects are what they are, and *owe their nature* to the omnipotence of God, so the relations of things are what they are, and owe their nature to the wisdom and will of God.

Nor does this dependence of the relations of things on the will of God, destroy the nature of relations, or make them doubtful, any more than the existence of things depending on the *power* of God, destroys the certainty of their existence, or renders it doubtful. For as God cannot make things to exist, and not to exist at the same time, though their existence depends upon his power, so neither can he make things to have such relations, and yet not to have such relations at the same time, though their relations depend upon his will.

So that the ascribing the relations of things to the will of God, from whence alone they can proceed, brings no uncertainty to those duties or rules of life, which flow from such relations, but leaves the state of nature with all its relations, and the duties which flow from them, in the greatest certainty, so long as nature itself is continued ; and when that either *ceases entirely*, or is only *altered*, it is not to be wondered at, if all its relations cease, or are altered with it.

Our author says, *Dare anyone say, that God's laws are not founded on the eternal reason of things* ?‡

* Page 247.

† Page 65.

‡ Page 425.
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I dare say it with the same assurance, as that his *existence* is not founded on the *eternal existence* of things. And that it is the same extravagance to say, that God's laws are founded on the *eternal reasons* of things, as to say, that his *power* is founded on the *eternal capacities* of things. For the *capacities* of things have just the same *solidity* and *eternity*, as the relations of things have, and are just such *independent realities*, as they are : And are just the same *proper materials* to found the omnipotence of God upon, as the relations of things are, to found his infinite wisdom upon.

And as we can say, that the *omnipotence* of God in preserving and supporting the creation, will certainly act *suitably* to itself, and *consistent* with that omnipotence which first made things be what they are, and put nature into such a state of causes and effects as it is in ; so we can say, that the *infinite wisdom* of God in giving laws to the world, will act *suitably* to itself, and *consistent* with that wisdom which at first made the *nature* and *relations* of the rational world be what they are.

But then as the *omnipotence* of God, though it acts suitably to the laws and state of the creation, and the nature of causes and effects, which it first ordained, yet cannot be said to be founded upon the nature of causes and effects, because neither causes nor effects have *any nature*, but what they *owe* to omnipotence ; so the infinite wisdom of God, though in giving laws to the world, it acts *suitably* to the natures and relations of rational beings, yet cannot be said to be *founded* upon such relations, because such relations are the *effects* of the divine wisdom, and owe their existence to it.

And the *reason* or *relations* of things shew God's *antecedent* wisdom, and are effects of it, just as the nature of *causes* and *effects* shew his *antecedent* power, and are the effects of it. And as he is infinitely powerful, but not from the *nature* of causes and effects ; so he is infinitely wise, but not from the *reason* and *nature* of things.

Again ; if God is *infinite* wisdom, then his wisdom cannot be founded on the relations of things, unless things *finite*, and relations that began to be, can be the foundation of that wisdom which is infinite, and could not begin to be.

And to ask what their finite wisdom of God can be founded upon, if it is not founded upon the *natures* and *relations* of things, is the same absurdity, as to ask, How God's wisdom could be *without* a beginning, if we cannot tell *how it began* ? For if his wisdom is infinite, it can no more be founded upon anything, or have any reason of its existence, than it can have anything before it.

Therefore to ask, *what* it is founded upon, when it can have no foundation upon *anything*, is asking, what an *independent* being is dependent upon, or *how* that began, which could have no beginning?

And to ask the reason or foundation of *anyone* of the divine attributes, is the same as asking the reason or foundation of them all. And to seek for the reason or foundation of *all* the divine attributes, is seeking for the *cause* of God's existence.

And as we do not come to God's existence, till we come to the *end of causes*, so nothing that is divine, can be attributed to any cause.

Nor is it any more a contradiction to say, there is something whose nature is without any cause or foundation of its existence, than to say, something exists without ever *beginning* to exist. For as nothing can have a beginning, but as it proceeds from some cause; so that which can have no beginning, can have no cause. If therefore the divine wisdom ever *began* to be *infinite*, and we could know when that beginning was, we should have some pretence to search for *that*, upon which its infinity was *founded*; but if it never could begin to be, then to seek for its reason, or foundation, is seeking for its beginning.

This writer affirms, that God's wisdom and goodness must be founded on the nature and reason of things, otherwise it could not be proved, that God was not an *arbitrary being*.

Now to seek for reasons to prove that God is not an arbitrary being, that is, a being of the *highest freedom* and *independency*, that does everything according to his *own will* and *pleasure*, is as vain, as to seek for reasons to prove, that *all things* and *all natures* are not the effect of his *will*. For if everything besides God, received its existence from him; if everything that exists, is the effect of his will, and he can do nothing, but because he *wills* the doing it, must he not be free and arbitrary in as *high a manner*, as he is powerful?

For if God is omnipotent, he must act according to his own will. And to say, that his *will* must be *governed* and *directed* by his wisdom and goodness, is the same, as to say his omnipotence must be governed by something *more powerful*. For if either his *will*, or his *omnipotence* wanted to be governed, there could be nothing to govern them; unless we could suppose, that he had a will *superior* to his will, and a power *superior* to his omnipotence. And though *will* and *power* when considered, as *blind*, or *imperfect* faculties in men, may pass for *humour* and *caprice*, yet as attributes of God, they have the *perfection* of God.

This writer says, *It is not in our power to love the Deity, whilst*

*we consider him to be an arbitrary being, acting out of humour and caprice.**

But if God's *will* is as essentially opposite to *humour and caprice*, as his *omnipotence* is essentially opposite to *weakness and inability*; then it is as absurd to suppose, that God must act according to humour and caprice, because he acts according to his own will, as to suppose that he must act with inability, because he acts by his omnipotence.

And if the will of God, *as such*, is in the highest state of perfection, then we have the *highest reason* to love and adore God, because he is arbitrary, and acts according to his *own all-perfect will*. And if it be asked, what it is that makes the will of God *all-perfect*, it may as well be asked, what it is that makes him omnipotent, or makes him to exist. For, as has been already observed, we have not found out a God, till we have found a being that has no *cause*; so we have not found the *will* of God, till we have found a *will*, that has no *mover*, or *director*, or *cause* of its perfection. For that *will* which never began to be, can no more be anything, but what it is in itself, than it can begin to be.

And if any of God's attributes *wanted* to be governed and directed by the other, it might as well be said, that his infinite goodness was governed by his *will*, as that his will was governed by his goodness, because he cannot be good against his will.

That which makes people imagine, that *will alone* is not so adorable, is because they consider it as a blind imperfect faculty that wants to be directed. But what has such a will as this to do with the *will* of God?

For if the will of God is as *perfect a will*, as his omniscience is a *perfect knowledge*, then we are as sure, that the *will* of God cannot want any direction, or *will* anything amiss, as we are, that his omniscience cannot need any information, or fall into any mistake. And if the *will* of God wanted any direction or government, it is impossible it should have it; for having no superior, it could only be so governed, because it *willed* it, and therefore must be always under its own government.

All the perfection therefore that can be ascribed to God, must be ascribed to his *will*, not as if it was the production of his will (for nothing in God is produced) but as eternally, essentially, and infinitely inherent in it.

And as God's will has thus all the perfection of the divine nature, and has no rule, or reason, or motive to any goodness, that comes from it, but its own *nature and state* in God; so this

great will is the only law of all creatures, and they are all to obey and conform to it, for this reason, because it is the will of God.

Nothing has a *sufficient moral* reason, or fitness to be done, but because it is the will of God that it should be done.

It may be asked, Is there then no *reason* or *nature* of things? Yes; as certainly as there are things. But the nature and reason of things, considered *independently* of the divine will, or *without* it, have no more *obligation* in them, than a *divine worship* considered independently of, and without any regard to the *existence* of God. For the *will* of God is as absolutely necessary to found all *moral obligation* upon, as the existence of God is necessary to be the foundation of religious worship. And the fitness of *moral obligations*, without the *will* of God, is only like the fitness of a *religious* worship without the *existence* of God.

And it is as just to say, that he destroys the *reason* of religion and piety, who finds it upon the nature and existence of God, as to say, he saps the foundation of moral obligations, who finds them upon the will of God. And as religion cannot be justly or solidly defended, but by shewing its connection with, and dependence upon God's existence; so neither can moral obligations be asserted with strength and reason, but by shewing them to be the will of God.

It may again be asked, Can God make that fit in *itself*, which is in *itself* absolutely unfit to be done?

This question consists of improper terms. For God's will no more make actions to be fit *in themselves*, than it makes *things* to exist *in, or of themselves*. No things, nor any actions have any *absolute* fitness, of and in *themselves*.

A *gift*, a *blow*, the making a *wound*, or *shedding* of *blood*, considered in themselves, have no *absolute* fitness, but are fit or unfit according to any variety of accidental circumstances.

When therefore God by his will makes anything fit to be done, he does not make the thing fit in *itself*, which is just in the *same state* considered in *itself*, that it was before, but it becomes fit for the person to do it, because he can only be happy, or do that which is fit for him to do, by doing the will of God.

For instance, the *bare eating* a fruit, considered in *itself*, is neither fit nor unfit. If a fruit is appointed by God for our food and nourishment, then it is as fit to eat it, as to preserve our lives. If a fruit is poisonous, then it is as unfit to eat it, as to commit self-murder. If eating of a fruit is prohibited by an express order of God, then it is as unfit to eat it, as to eat our own damnation.

But in none of these instances is the eating or not eating,

considered in *itself*, *fit* or *unfit*; but has all its fitness, or unfitness, from such circumstances, as are entirely owing to the will of God.

Supposing therefore God to require a person to do something, which according to his present circumstances, *without* that command, he ought not to do, God does not make that which is *absolutely* unfit in *itself*, fit to be done; but only adds *new circumstances* to an action, that is neither fit, nor unfit, moral, nor immoral in *itself*, but *because* of its circumstances.

To instance in the case of *Abraham*, required to sacrifice his son. The killing of a man is neither good nor bad, considered *absolutely* in *itself*. It was lawful for *Abraham* to kill his son, because of the *circumstances* he was in with regard to his son. But when the divine command was given, *Abraham* was in a *new state*, the action had *new circumstances*, and then it was as lawful for *Abraham* to kill his son, as it was lawful for God to require any man's life, either by *sickness*, or any *other means* he should please to appoint.

And it had been as unlawful for *Abraham* to have disobeyed God in this extraordinary command, as to have cursed God at any *ordinary calamity* of providence.

Again, it is objected, *If there is nothing right or wrong, good or bad, antecedently and independently of the will of God, there can then be no reason, why God should will, or command one thing, rather than another.*

It is answered, *first*, That all goodness, and all possible perfection, is as *eternal* as God, and as essential to him as his existence. And to say, that they are either *antecedent* or *consequent*, *dependent* or *independent* of his will, would be equally absurd. To ask therefore, whether there is not something right and wrong, antecedent to the will of God, to render his will *capable* of being right, is as absurd, as to ask for some antecedent cause of his existence, that he may be proved to exist necessarily. And to ask, how God can be good if there is not something good independently of him, is asking how he can be infinite, if there be not something infinite independently of him. And to seek for any other *source* or *reason* of the divine goodness, besides the divine nature, is like seeking for some external cause and help of the divine omnipotence.

The goodness and wisdom, therefore, by which God is wise and good, and to which all his works of wisdom and goodness are owing, are neither *antecedent*, nor *consequent* to his will.

Secondly, Nothing is more certain, than that all *moral obligations* and *duties* of creatures towards one another, *began* with the existence of moral creatures. This is as certain, as that all

physical relations, and corporeal qualities and effects, *began* with the existence of bodies.

As therefore nothing has the nature of a cause or effect, nothing has any quality of any kind in bodies, but what is entirely owing to matter so created and constituted by the *will* of God ; so it is equally certain, that no actions have any *moral qualities*, but what are wholly owing to that state and nature in which they are created by the will of God.

Moral obligations therefore of creatures have the same *origin*, and the *same reason*, that natural qualities and effects have in the corporeal world, *viz.*, the sole will of God. And as in a different state of matter, bodies would have had different qualities and effects ; so in a different state of rational beings, there would be different moral obligations, and nothing could be right or good in their behaviour, but what began then to be right and good, because they then began to exist in such a state and condition of life. And as their state and condition could have no other cause or reason of its existence, but the sole will of God, so the cause and reason of right and wrong in such a state, must be equally owing to the will of God.

The pretended *absolute independent fitnesses*, or *unfitnesses* of actions therefore *in themselves*, are vain *abstractions*, and philosophical *jargon*, serving no ends of morality, but only helping people to wrangle and dispute away that sincere obedience to God, which is their only happiness. But to make these imaginary *absolute fitnesses* the *common law* both of God and man, is still more extravagant. For if the *circumstances* of actions give them their *moral nature*, surely God must first be in our circumstances, before that which is a law to us, can be the same law to him.

And if a father may require that of a son, which his son, because of his *different state*, cannot require of his brother ; surely that which God may require of us, may be as different from that, which a father may require of a son, as God is different from a father.

Thus this writer speaking of the law founded on absolute fitnesses, says, *It is a law by which God governs his own actions, and expects that all the rational world should govern theirs.** And lest you should think that God is not in the same state of necessary subjection and obedience to this law, he farther adds, *that God cannot dispense, either with his creatures, or himself, for not observing it.†*

Now to say, that the *reason* of things is the same law to God that it is to us, is saying, that God is in the *same state* with regard

* Page 59.

† Page 189.

to the nature of things, as we are. For as things are a law to us, because we are in *such* a state; if they are the *same law* to God, it must be because God is in the same state that we are.

Again, if God is as much under a law as we are, then he is as much under authority; for law can no more be without authority, than without a law-giver. And if God and we are under the *same law*, we must be under the *same authority*.

But as God cannot be under any law in common with us his creatures, any more than he can be of the same rank or order with us; so neither can he be under any law at all, any more than he can be under any authority at all.

For that which is the *rule*, or *reason* of God's actions, is no more different from his own will, than his power is different from his will.

And though God is not to be looked upon as an *arbitrary being*, in the sense of this author, who will not distinguish arbitrary from *humour* and *caprice*; yet in a better, and only true sense of the word, when applied to God, he must be affirmed to be an arbitrary being, that acts only from himself, from his *own will*, and according to his *own pleasure*.

And we have no more reason to be afraid to be left to a God without a law, than to a God that had no beginning; or to be left to his will and pleasure, than to be left under the protection and care of a being, that is all love, and mercy, and goodness. For as the existence of God, as such, necessarily implies the existence of all perfection; so the will of God, as such, necessarily implies the *willing* everything, that *all perfection* can will.

And as the existence of God, because it contains all perfection, cannot for that reason have any external cause; so the will of God, because it is *all perfection*, cannot, for that reason, have any external *rule* or *direction*. But his own will is wisdom, and his wisdom is his will. His goodness is arbitrary, and his arbitrariness is goodness.

To bring God therefore into a state of moral obligation and subjection to any external *law* or *rule*, as we are, has all the absurdity of supposing him to be a finite, dependent, temporary, imperfect, improvable, governable being as we are.

But this writer does not only thus bring God into this state of law and obligation with us, but makes farther advances in the same kind of errors.

Hence, says he, *we may contemplate the great dignity of our rational nature, since our reason for kind, though not for degree, is of the same nature with that of God's.**

Here you see *our reason*, that is, our *faculty* of reasoning, for reason cannot be called *our's* in any other respect, has no other difference from reason as it is in God, but that of degree. But what greater absurdity can a man fall into, than to suppose, that a being whose existence had a beginning but a few years ago, differs only in degree from that which could not *possibly* have a beginning; or that a *dependent* and *independent* being, should not be different in *kind*, but *only* in degree. For if nothing that had a beginning, can be without a beginning; if nothing that is dependent can be independent, then no faculties or powers of dependent beings that began to be, can be of the *same kind* with the powers of that independent being, that could not begin to be.

For to say, that the faculties of a dependent and independent being, may be of the same kind, is as flat a contradiction, as to say, the same kind of thing may be dependent, and independent, as it is the same kind of thing.

How extravagant would he be, who should affirm, *existence, life, happiness, and power*, to be of the same *kind* and *nature* in us, as they are in God, and only to differ in degree?

And yet it would be more extravagant to suppose, that though God cannot *possibly* have our *kind* of *existence, life, happiness, and power*, yet he must have *our kind* of reason.

Reason belongs to God and man, just as *power, existence, life, and happiness*, belong to God and man. And he that can from happiness being common to God and man, prove our happiness to be of the *same kind* and nature with God's, may also prove reason in God and man to be of the same kind.

This writer indeed says, *Our happiness is limited*, because *our reason is so*; and that God has *unlimited happiness*, because *he alone has unlimited reason*.*

But if that which is *necessarily limited*, is certainly different from that which is *necessarily unlimited*, then we have proof enough from this very argument, that a reason *necessarily* limited, cannot be of the *same kind* with that reason, which is *necessarily* unlimited. Unless it can be said, that necessary and unnecessary, limited and unlimited, finite and infinite, beginning and unbeginning, have no contrariety in *kind*, but only differ, as a *short* line differs from a *long* one.

The truth of the matter is this; reason is in God and man, as power is in God and man. And as the divine power has some degree of likeness to human power, yet with an *infinite* difference from it; so that perfection which we call *reason* in God, has

some degree of likeness to reason as it is in man, yet is *infinitely* and beyond all conception different from it.

Nor can anyone shew, that we enjoy reason in a *higher degree* in respect of God, than we enjoy power ; or that the *manner*, or *light* of our reason, bears any greater likeness to the light and knowledge of God, than the *manner* and *extent* of our power bears to the omnipotence of God.

And as our enjoyment of power is so limited, so imperfect, so superficial, as to be scarce sufficient to tell us, what power is, much less what omnipotence is ; so our share of reason is so small, and we enjoy it in so imperfect a manner, that we can scarce think or talk intelligibly of it, or so much as define our own faculties of reasoning.

Chapter II.

Shewing from the state and relation between God and man, that human reason cannot possibly be a competent judge of the fitness and reasonableness of God's proceedings with mankind, either as to the time, or matter, or manner of any external revelation.

AS our author has laid it down as an undeniable rule of God's actions, that he must, if he be a wise and good being, act according to the relation he stands in towards his creatures ; so I proceed upon this principle, to prove the incapacity of *human reason*, to judge *truly* of God's proceedings in regard to divine revelation.

For if the fitness of actions *results from the nature and relations* of beings, then the *fitness* of God's actions, as he is an *omniscient creator and governor*, to whom everything is *eternally foreknown*, over beings endued with *our freedom of will*, must be to us very incomprehensible.

We are not so much as capable of comprehending by our own reason the *possibility* of this relation, or how the foreknowledge

of God can consist with the free agency of creatures. We know that God foreknows all things, with the same certainty as we know there is a God. And if *self-consciousness* is an infallible proof of our own existence, it proves with the same certainty the freedom of our will. And hence it is, that we have a full assurance of the consistency of God's foreknowledge with freedom of will.

Now this *incomprehensible* relation between an *eternally fore-knowing creator and governor*, and his free creatures, is the *relation* from whence arises the *fitness* of God's providence over us. But if the *relation* itself is incomprehensible, then those actions that have their *fitness* from it, must surely be incomprehensible. Nothing can be fit for God to do, either in *Creation* or *Providence*, but what has its fitness founded in his own *fore-knowledge* of everything that would follow, from *every kind* of creation, and *every manner* of providence : But if nothing can be fit, but because it is according to *this fore-knowledge* of *everything* that would follow from *every kind* of creation, and *every manner* of providence ; then we have the utmost certainty, that the *fitness* of God's actions as a *fore-knowing Creator*, and *Governor* of free agents, must be founded upon *reasons* that we cannot *possibly* know anything of.

And a *child* that has but just learned to speak, is as well qualified to state the fitness of the laws of *matter* and *motion* by which the whole *vegetable* world is preserved, as the wisest of men is qualified to comprehend, or state the fitness of the methods, or proceedings, which a *fore-knowing providence* observes over free agents. For every reason on which the fitness of such a providence is founded, is not only *unknown* to us, but by a necessity of nature *impossible* to be known by us.

For if the *fitness* of God's acting in this, or that manner, is founded in his *fore-knowledge* of everything that would *happen*, from *every possible way* of acting, *then* it is just as absolutely impossible for us to know the reasons, on which the fitness of his actions are founded, as it is impossible for us to be omniscient.

What human reason can tell, what kind of beings it is *fit* and *reasonable* for God to create, on the account of his own *eternal fore-knowledge* ? And yet this is as possible, as for the same reason to tell, how God ought to govern beings already created, on the account of his own eternal fore-knowledge ; and yet God can neither *create*, nor *govern* his creatures, as it is *fit* and *reasonable* he should, unless he creates and governs them in *this* or *that* manner, on the *account* of his own fore-knowledge. And therefore, if he acts *like* himself, and *worthy* of his own nature, the

fitness of his proceedings must for this very reason, *because* they are fit, be vastly above our comprehension.

Who can tell what *different kinds* of rational creatures, distinguished by variety of natures, and faculties, it is fit and reasonable for God to create, because he *eternally foresaw* what would be the *effect* of such different creations? Who can explain the *fitness* of that vast *variety* there is amongst rational creatures of the *same species*, in their rational faculties, or shew that all their different faculties ought to be as they are? And yet the *fitness* of this providence has its *certain reason* in the divine fore-knowledge, and it could not be fit, but because of it.

Who can tell what *degree* of reason rational creatures ought to enjoy, *because* they are rational; or what degrees of *new* and *revealed* knowledge it is fit and reasonable for God to give, or not give them, because they seem, or seem not to themselves to want it, are disposed, or not disposed to receive it? For as mankind cannot tell why it was *fit* and *reasonable* for God to create them of such a *kind*, and *degree*, as they are of; so neither can they tell how God ought, or ought not to add to their natural knowledge, and make them as *differently accountable* for the use of revealed rules of life, as for the use of their natural faculties.

And as the reason why God created them of *such a kind*, and with *such faculties*, was because of his own fore-knowledge of the *effects* of such a creation; so if ever he does reveal to them any *supernatural* knowledge, both the doing it, the *time*, and *manner* and *manner* of it, must have their *fitness* in his own *eternal fore-knowledge* of the effects of such a revelation.

The reasons therefore on which the *fitness* of this or that revelation, *why* or *when*, of *what matter*, in *what manner*, and to *whom* it is to be made, must, from the nature and reason of things, be as unsearchable by us, as the reasons of *this* or *that* creation of rational beings, at such a *time*, of such a *kind*, in such a *manner* and in such a *state*.

This may help us to an easy solution of those unreasonable questions, which this writer puts in this manner.

*If the design of God in communicating anything of himself to men was their happiness, would not that design have obliged him, who at all times alike desires their happiness, to have at all times alike communicated it to them? If God always acts for the good of his creatures, what reason can be assigned, why he should not from the beginning have discovered such things as make for their good, but defer the doing it till the time of Tiberius: since the sooner this was done, the greater would his goodness appear?**

And again, *How is it consistent with the notion of God's being universally benevolent, not to have revealed it to all his children, when all had equal need of it? Was it not as easy for him to have communicated it to all nations, as to any one nation or person? Or in all languages, as in one?**

Now all this is fully answered, by our author's own great and fundamental principle.

For if the relations between things and persons, and the fitness resulting from thence, be the sole rule of God's actions,† as he expressly affirms: then the sole rule or reason of God's revealing anything to any man, or men, at any time, must have its fitness resulting from the divine fore-knowledge of the effects of such a revelation, at such a time, and to such persons. If God does not act thus, he does not act according to the relation betwixt a fore-knowing Creator, and his free creatures. But if he does act according to a fitness resulting from this relation, and makes, or does not make revelations, according to his own fore-knowledge of the fitness of times, and persons for them; then to ask how a God, always equally good, can make a revelation at any time, and not make the same at all times, is as absurd as to ask, how a God, always equally good, can reveal that at one time, because it is a proper time for it, and not reveal it at every other time, though every other time is improper for it.

God's goodness, directed by his own fore-knowledge of the fitness of times, and of the state and actions of free agents, deferred a certain revelation to the time of *Tiberius*, because he foresaw it would then be an act of the greatest goodness, and have its best effects upon the world: To ask therefore, *what reason can be assigned, why so good and beneficial a revelation was not sooner, or even from the beginning made to the world, is asking, What reason can be assigned, why God is good, and intends the greatest good by what he does, or stays for the doing anything, till such time, as makes it a greater good than if he had done it sooner; it is asking, why God should act, according to his own fore-knowledge of the state and actions of free agents, and order all things, according to a fitness resulting from such a fore-knowledge.*

These questions suppose, that if God shewed his goodness to mankind by a revelation at such time, he must be wanting in goodness before that time, because he did not make it sooner; whereas if his deferring it till such a time, was owing to his fore-knowledge of the actions and state of free agents, and of the effects of his revelation, and because it would then have its best

* Page 196.

† Page 28.

effects, then God is proved to be *equally* good before he made it, for this very reason, because he did not make it before its *proper* time; and he had been wanting in goodness, if he had not *deferred* it till that time.

Now this appealing to God's fore-knowledge of the state and actions of *free agents*, as the cause of all that is particular in the *time* and *manner* of any revelation, and deducing its fitness from thence, cannot be said to be *begging the question* in dispute, but is resolving it directly according to the *rule*, which this writer lays down for God to act by, which is this: That *the relations between things and persons, and the fitness resulting from thence, must be the sole rule of God's actions, unless he be an arbitrary being.*

But if this is the *sole rule*, then God in giving any revelation, must act as the *relation* betwixt a *fore-knowing* Creator and his *free* creatures requires; and his actions must have their *fitness resulting* from his fore-knowledge of the *state* and *actions* of free agents. And if this is God's sole rule, made necessary to him from the nature of things, then to ask why *this* or *that* revelation *only* at *such* a time, is to ask why God *only* does that which is *fit* for him to do. And to ask, why not the same revelation at any other time, is asking why God does not do that, which it is *not fit* for him to do.

This writer asks, *How it is consistent with the notion of God's being universally benevolent, not to have revealed it to all his children, who had equal need of it?* But if they had *equal need* of it, yet if they were not *equally fit* for it, but prepared only to have their *guilt* increased by it, and so be exposed to a greater damnation by refusing it; then God's goodness to them is very manifest, by withholding such information from them, and reserving it for those that would be made happier by it.

Judas and *Pontius Pilate*, and the *Jews* that called for our Saviour's crucifixion, had *equal need* of a Saviour with those that believed in him. *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida* wanted the light of the Gospel as much as those that received it; but if the rest of the world had been, at that time, as much indisposed for the light of the Gospel, as they were, God's goodness had been greater to that age, if he had left them as they were, and reserved the light of the Gospel till a better age had succeeded.

So that this argument, founded on the *equal need* of all, or former ages, has no force, unless it could be shewn, that the same revelation made to any of these former ages, would have produced all those good effects, which God foresaw would follow, from its being reserved for such a *particular time* and *state* of things and persons.

He asks again, *Was it not as easy for God to have communicated it to all nations, as to any one nation or person? Or in all languages, as in any one?* This argument is built upon the *truth* and *reasonableness* of this supposition, That God does things because they are *easy*, or forbears things because they are *difficult* to be performed. For it can be no argument, that God ought to have revealed such things to *all* nations or persons, because it was as *easy* to him, as to do it to *any one* nation or person; unless it be supposed, that the *easiness* of a thing is a reason why God does it, and the *difficulty* of a thing a reason why he does not do it. But if this supposition be very absurd, then the argument founded upon it must be liable to the same charge.

But if God does things, not because they are easy, but because they are infinitely good and fit to be done, and founded in the *relation* of a fore-knowing Creator to his free creatures; then the reason why God has afforded different revelations, to different ages and persons, is this, That his *manner* of revealing everything, might be *worthy* of his own *fore-knowledge* of the effects of it, and that everything that is particular in the *time* or *manner* of any revelation, might have its *fitness resulting* from the *relation* betwixt a good God and his creatures, whose *changing* state, *different* conduct, *tempers* and *actions*, are all eternally fore-known by him.

If it should here be said, that this *writer* only means, that it is as *possible* for God to make the same revelation, have the *same* effects, and produce *as much* good in one age as in another;

This is only saying, It is as *possible* for God to *destroy* the difference of times and states, to *overrule* the nature of things, and turn all mankind into *mere machines*, as it is to govern and preside over them according to their natures. For if the natures of things are not to be destroyed; if the *nature*, and *state*, and *tempers* of men, and the *freedom* of their wills, are to be suffered to act according to themselves; then to say, it is as possible for God to make the same revelation to have the same effect in one age as in another, is as absurd as to say, it is as possible for him to make the *same heat* of the *Sun*, have the same effects upon any one place of the earth, that it has upon another, upon *rocks* and *barren sands*, as it has upon a fertile soil, without altering the nature of *rocks* and *sands*.

Again, it is objected, that a divine revelation must either be the effect of *justice*, or else of *mercy* and *free goodness*; but in either of these cases it ought to be *universal*; for justice must be done to all. But if it is the effect of *mercy* and *free goodness*, this writer asks, *How a being can be denominated merciful and*

good, who is so only to a few, but cruel and unmerciful to the rest?*

It is answered, That there is neither justice in God without mercy, nor *mercy* without justice; and to ascribe a *revelation* to either of them separately, in *contradistinction* to the other, has no more truth or reason in it, than to ascribe the *creation* separately either to the *Wisdom*, or *Power* of God, in *contradistinction* to the other.

Secondly, A divine revelation is not owing to the *justice* or *free goodness* of God, either *separately* or *jointly* considered; but to the goodness, mercy, and justice of God, *governed* and *directed* by his eternal fore-knowledge of all the effects of every revelation, at any, or all times.

God ordains a revelation in this, or that manner, time, and place; not because it is a *justice* that he cannot refuse, not because it is matter of *favour* or *free goodness*, and therefore may be given in any manner at pleasure; but because he has the whole *duration* of human things, the whole *race* of mankind, the whole *order* of human changes and events, the whole *combination* of all causes and effects of human tempers, all the *actions* of free agents, and *all the consequences* of every revelation, plainly in his sight; and according to this eternal fore-knowledge, every revelation receives everything that is *particular* in it, either as to *time*, *matter*, *manner*, or *place*.

He shews his goodness in a revelation to *this part* of the world, not because it is a *part* that *alone* wants it, not because he can bestow his *favours* as he pleases, but because by acting *so* with *such* a part, he *best* shews his goodness and regard to the *whole*. He reveals himself at *such a time*, not because he at *that time* begins to have a *partial* or *particular* kindness, but because by so *timing* his goodness, he *best shews* his care and goodness throughout the *whole duration* of human things, from the beginning to the end of the world. And it is because he had the *same good* will towards mankind in *every age*, that he does what he does in any *particular* age.

And if by the *particular* time and manner of any revelation, the *whole race* of mankind receive more benefit from it; if more are raised to happiness by it, and fewer are made miserable by a blamable *using* or *refusing* it, than could have happened by *any other* time, or manner of giving it to the World, consistent with the natural freedom of men; then God, by being particular in the time and place of giving it, is not merciful to a *few*, and cruel to *many*, but is *most merciful* to *all*; because he only chose *such*

* Page 401.

time, and *place*, and *persons*, because *all* would receive more benefit from it, than they possibly could from the choice of any other time, or place, or persons.

All complaints therefore about that which is *particular*, or *seemingly* partial in the time and manner of any revelation, are very unjustifiable; and shew, that we are discontented at God's proceedings, because he acts like himself, does what is *best* and *fittest* to be done, and governs the world, not according to our weak imaginations, but according to his own infinite perfections.

We will not allow a Providence to be *right*, unless we can comprehend and explain the reasonableness of all its steps; and yet it could not *possibly* be right, unless its proceedings were as much *above* our comprehension, as our wisdom is *below* that which is infinite.

For if the *relations* of *things* and *persons*, and the *fitness* resulting from thence, be the *rule* of God's actions; then all the revelations that come from God, must have their *fitness* resulting from the relation his fore-knowledge bears to the *various states, conditions, tempers, and actions* of free agents, and the *various effects* of every manner of revelation.

But if God cannot act worthy of himself in any manner of revelation, unless he acts according to a fitness resulting from this relation; then we have the highest certainty, that he must act by a *rule* that lies out of our sight, and that his Providence in this particular must be incomprehensible to us; for this very reason, because it has that very fitness, wisdom and goodness in it, that it ought to have.

CHAPTER III.

Shewing how far human reason is enabled to judge of the reasonableness, truth and certainty of divine Revelation.

THE former chapter has plainly shewn, from the state and relation between God and man, that we must be strangers to the true reasons on which a divine revelation is founded, both as to its *time, matter, and manner*.

But it is here objected, *If God by reason of his own perfections must be thus mysterious and incomprehensible, both in the matter*

and manner of divine revelation ; How can we know what revelations we are to receive as divine ? How can we be blamed for rejecting this, or receiving that, if we cannot comprehend the reasons on which every revelation is founded, both as to its matter and manner ?

Just as we may be blamed for some notions of God, and commended for others, though we can have no notions of God, but such as are mysterious and inconceivable. We are not without some natural capacity of judging right of God, of finding out his perfections, and proving what is, or is not worthy to be ascribed to him. Yet what the divine perfections are in themselves, what they imply and contain in their own nature and manner of existence, is altogether mysterious and inconceivable by us at present. If therefore a man may be blamable, or commendable, for his right or wrong belief of a God ; then a man may be accountable for a right or wrong belief of such matters, as are in their own nature too mysterious for his comprehension. And though a man knows the reasons of a divine revelation, either as to its *matter* or *manner*, as imperfectly as he knows the divine nature ; yet he may be as liable to account for believing *false revelations*, as for *idolatry* ; and as full of guilt for rejecting a *true revelation*, as for denying the only *true God*.

Secondly, Though we are insufficient for comprehending the *reasons*, on which the particular *matter* or *manner* of any divine revelation is founded ; yet we may be so far sufficient judges, of the *reasons* for *receiving* or not *receiving* a revelation as divine, as to make our conduct therein justly accountable to God.

For if God can shew a revelation to proceed from him, by the *same undeniable* evidence, as he shews the *creation* to be his *work* ; if he can make himself as visible in a *particular extraordinary* manner, as he is by his *general* and *ordinary* providence ; then, though we are as unqualified to judge of the mysteries of a *revelation*, as we are to judge of the mysteries in *creation* and *providence* ; yet we may be as fully obliged to receive a revelation, as to acknowledge the creation to be the work of God ; and as highly criminal for disbelieving it, as for denying a general Providence.

Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses, were very incompetent judges, of the reasons on which the particular revelations made to them were founded ; but this did not hinder their sufficient assurance, that such revelations came from God, because they were proved to come from God in the same manner, and for the same reasons, as the creation is proved to be the Work of God.

And as *Adam* and *Noah* must see everything wonderful, mysterious, and above their comprehensions, in those new worlds

into which they were introduced by God ; so they could no more expect, that he should require nothing of them, but what they would enjoin themselves, than that their own *frame*, the *nature* of the creation, the *providence* of God, or the *state* of human life, should be exactly as they would have it.

And if their posterity will let no *messages* from heaven, no *prophecies* and *miracles* persuade them, that God can call them to any duties, but such they must enjoin themselves ; or to the belief of any doctrines, but such as their own minds can suggest ; nor to any methods of changing their present state of weakness and disorder for a happy immortality, but such as suit their own *taste*, *temper*, and way of reasoning ; it is because they are grown senseless of the mysteries of creation and providence with which they are surrounded, and forget the awful prerogative of infinite wisdom, over the weakest, lowest rank of intelligent beings.

For the *excellence* of a revelation is to be acknowledged by us, for the same reason that we are to acknowledge the excellence of creation and providence ; not because they are wholly according to human conception, and have no mysteries, but because they are proved to be of God.

And a revelation is to be received as coming from God, not because of its internal excellence, or because we judge it to be worthy of God ; but because God has declared it to be his, in as *plain* and *undeniable* a manner, as he has declared *creation* and *providence* to be his.

For though no revelation can come from God, but what is truly worthy of him, and full of every internal excellence ; yet what is truly *worthy* of God to be *revealed*, cannot possibly be known by us, but by a revelation from himself.

And as we can only know what is worthy of God in creation, by knowing what he has created ; so we can no other way possibly know what is worthy of God to be revealed, but by a revelation. And he that pretends, independently of any revelation, to shew *how*, and in what manner God ought to make a revelation worthy of himself, is as great a *Visionary*, as he that should pretend, independently of the creation, or without learning anything from it, to shew how God ought to have proceeded in it, to make it worthy of himself. For as God alone, knows how to create worthy of himself, and nothing can possibly be proved to be worthy to be created by him, but because he has already created it ; so God alone knows what is worthy of himself in a revelation, and nothing can possibly be proved worthy to be revealed by him, but because he has already revealed it.

Hence we may see how little this *writer* is governed by the

reason and nature of things, who proceeds upon this as an undeniable principle, that we could not know a revelation to be divine, unless we knew, antecedently to revelation, what God could teach or require of us by it. Thus, says he, *Were we not capable by our reason of knowing what the divine goodness could command, or forbid his creatures, antecedently to any external revelation, we could not distinguish the true instituted religion from the many false ones.**

Just as *wild and visionary*, as if it was said, Were we not capable by our reason of knowing what kind or order of beings God *ought* to create, *independently* of anything we learn from the creation, we could never prove this or that creation to proceed from him. Did we not, antecedently to facts and experience, know by our own reason what ought to be the method and manner of divine providence, we could never prove that the providence which governs nations and persons is a divine providence.

For if a revelation could have no proof that it was divine, unless we by our reason, *antecedently* to *all* revelation, knew *all* that *any* revelation could contain, or require of us; then it undeniably follows, that no *providence* or *creation* could be proved to be divine, unless we by our reason, *independently* of creation and providence, could tell what *kind* of beings God ought to create, or what *manner* of providence he ought to observe.

For that which cannot be ascribed to God in revelation, because it is unworthy of his wisdom and goodness, cannot be ascribed to God in creation and providence.

Again, He proceeds to shew, that a revelation from God cannot contain anything, but what human reason can prove from the nature of things; for this reason, because if God could require anything more of us, than what our own reason could thus prove, he must then require *without* reason, be an *arbitrary* being, and then there is an end of all religion.

Now this argument proceeds thus; If God does not act according to the *measure* of *human* reason, he cannot act according to *reason itself*. If he requires anything more of us, than what we *think* the nature of things requires of us, then he cannot act according to the nature of things. If he makes anything a rule or law to us, which we would not impose upon ourselves, then he must make laws by *mere will*, without any reason for them. If he requires us to believe anything of his own nature, or our nature, more than we could have known of ourselves, then he must act by *caprice* and *humour*, and be an arbitrary being. If

his *infinite* wisdom is in any matters of revelation *greater* than ours; if it is not in everything he reveals *measurable* by ours, it cannot be wisdom at all, much less can it be infinite wisdom.

That is, if he is *more powerful* than we are, he cannot be *omnipotent*; if he is *more perfect* than we are, he cannot be *all perfection*; if he acts upon *greater*, or *higher*, or *more* reasonable motives than we do, he cannot be a *reasonable* being.

Now if these absurdities are not plain and manifest to every common understanding, it is in vain to dispute about anything; but if they are, then it is as plain, this writer's great argument against Christianity, and first principle of his *rational religion*, is in the same state of undeniable absurdity, as being solely built upon them.

Thus, says he, *Natural religion takes in all those duties which flow from the reason and the nature of things.** That is, natural religion takes in all those things that bare human reason can of itself discover from the nature of things. This is granted; but what follows? Why, says he, *Consequently, was there an instituted religion which differs from that of nature, its precepts must be arbitrary, as not founded on the nature and reason of things, but depending on mere will and pleasure, otherwise it would be the same with natural religion.†*

That is, since natural religion contains all that bare human reason can of itself discover, if God was to reveal anything more than human reason can discover, he must be an arbitrary being, and act by mere will and pleasure; otherwise his revelation would be the same with, and nothing more than human reason.

Here you see all the absurdities just mentioned, are expressly contained in this argument. God is all *humour, caprice*, and *mere arbitrary will*, if his revelation is not strictly, in every respect, the same with human reason. That is, he is *without* wisdom, *without* reason, if his wisdom and reason *exceed* ours. He has *no reason*, nor *wisdom*, if his reason and wisdom are *infinite*.

Secondly, This argument, if it were allowed, leads directly to *atheism*. For if a revelation cannot be divine, if it contains anything mysterious, whose fitness and necessity cannot be explained by human reason, then neither *creation* nor *providence* can be proved to be divine, for they are both of them more mysterious than the Christian revelation. And revelation itself is *therefore* mysterious, because creation and providence cannot be delivered from mystery. And was it possible for man to comprehend

the reasons, on which the *manner* of the creation and divine providence are founded, then revelation might be without mysteries.

But if the mysteries in revelation are owing to that, which is by the nature of things incomprehensible in creation and providence, then it is very unreasonable to reject revelation, because it has that which it must necessarily have, not from itself, but from the nature and state of things. And much worse is it, to deny revelation to be divine, for such a reason, as makes it equally fit to deny *creation* and *providence* to be of God.

For if everything is *arbitrary*, whose *fitness and expedience* human reason cannot *prove* and *explain*, then surely an *invisible over-ruling providence*, that orders all things in a manner, and for reasons, known only to itself; that subjects human life, and human affairs, to what changes it pleases; that confounds the best laid designs, and makes great effects arise from folly and imprudence; that gives the race not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; that brings good men into affliction, and makes the wicked prosperous; surely such a providence must be highly arbitrary.

And therefore if this argument is to be admitted, it leads directly to *atheism*, and brings us under a greater necessity of rejecting this notion of divine providence, on the account of its mysteries, than of rejecting a revelation that is mysterious in any of its doctrines. And if, as this writer frequently argues, God cannot be said to deal with us as rational agents, if he requires anything of us, that our reason cannot prove to be necessary; surely he cannot be said to deal with us as rational and moral agents, if he overrules our persons and affairs, and disappoints our counsels, makes weakness prosperous, and wisdom unsuccessful, in a *secret* and *invisible* manner, and for reasons and ends that we have no means of knowing.

And if it may be said, To what purpose has he given us reason, if that is not solely to give laws to us; surely it may better be said, To what purpose has he given us reason to take care of ourselves, to provide for our happiness, to prepare *proper* means for certain ends, if there is an overruling providence that changes the *natural course* of things, that confounds the best laid designs, and disappoints the wisest counsels?

There is nothing therefore half so mysterious in the Christian revelation, considered in itself, as there is in that *invisible* providence, which all must hold that believe a God. And though there is enough plain in providence, to excite the adoration of humble and pious minds, yet it has often been a rock of *atheism* to those, who make their own reason the measure of wisdom.

Again, Though the *creation* plainly declares the glory, and wisdom, and goodness of God; yet it has more mysteries in it, more things, whose fitness, expedience, and reasonableness, human reason cannot comprehend, than are to be found in Scripture.

If therefore he reasons right, who says, *If there may be some things in a true Religion, whose fitness and expedience we cannot see, why not others: Nay, why not the whole; since that would make God's laws all of a piece? And if the having of these things is no proof of its falsehood, how can any things fit and expedient (which no Religion is without) be a proof of the truth of any one Religion?** If, I say, this is right reasoning, then it may be said, *If there are things in the creation whose fitness we cannot see, why not others: Nay, why not the whole; since that would make all God's works of a piece? And if the being of such things as these in the creation, is not a proof of its not being divine, How can the fitness and expedience of any creation prove that it is the work of God?*

Thus does this argument tend wholly to Atheism, and concludes with the same force against *creation* and *providence*, as it does against revelation.

This is farther plain from our author's account of the *works* and *laws* of God. It is a first principle with him, that God's *laws* and *works* must have the same infinite wisdom in them. *That they both alike have the character of infinite wisdom impressed on them, and both alike discover their divine original.†*

But if so, then nothing can prove any *works* to be of divine original, but that which will prove any *laws* to be of divine original. And nothing can shew any *laws* to be unworthy of God, but what would equally shew any *works* to be unworthy of God. But we have already seen, that no laws can come from God, or be fit for him to make, but such as human reason can prove to be fit and expedient; therefore *no works* can proceed from God, or be worthy of him, but such as human reason can prove to be fit and expedient.

Either therefore there is nothing in the works of the creation, whose fitness and expedience cannot be proved; nothing in God's providence over whole nations, and particular persons, whose fitness and expedience cannot be explained and justified by human reason, or else neither creation nor providence can be ascribed to God.

He says, *It is impossible men should have any just idea of the perfections of God, who think that the dictates of infinite Wisdom,*

* *First Address to the Inhabitants of London*, page 57.

† Page 124.

*do not carry their own evidence with them, or are not by their own innate worth discoverable to all mankind.**

But if so, then we are obliged, out of regard to the divine perfections, to deny every creature, or part of the creation, to proceed from God, which does not *carry its own evidence of infinite wisdom, and discover its own innate worth to all mankind.*

Anyone must easily see, that I put no force upon this writer's arguments, to give them this atheistical tendency, but barely represent them as they are in his book.

For since it is his own avowed and repeated principle, that God's *works and laws* are both of a kind, and that they must both *alike discover their divine original*; it necessarily follows, that if any *law or command* must be unfit for God to make, because its fitness cannot be proved by human reason; then every creature, or part of the creation, whose fitness and expedience cannot be proved by human reason, must be rejected as unworthy of God. So that this argument leads to Atheism, not by any remote consequence, but by its first and immediate tendency.

For according to it, a man is obliged, out of regard to the divine perfections, to deal with *creation and providence*, as this writer does with *Scripture*; and to allow no more of either of them, than suits with his own notions of that which God ought to do in creation and providence.

The true grounds and reasons on which we are to believe a revelation to be divine, are such external marks and signs of God's action and operation, as are a sufficient proof of it. And if God has no ways of acting that are peculiar and particular to himself, and such as sufficiently prove his action and operation, then revelation can have no sufficient proof that it comes from God.

And if a revelation had no other proof of its Divinity, but such an internal excellency and fitness of its doctrines, as is fully known and approved of by *human reason*; such an internal excellency would be so far from being a sufficient proof of its Divinity, that it would be a probable objection against it. For it has an appearance of great probability, that God would not make an external revelation of that *only*, which was *sufficiently* and fully known to the natural man, or mere Reason, without it.

Although therefore no revelation can come from God, whose doctrines have not an *internal excellency*, and the *highest fitness*; yet the non-appearance of such excellency and fitness to *our*

reason, cannot be a disproof of its Divinity, because it is our ignorance of such matters without revelation, that is the *true ground and reason* of God's revealing anything to us.

The credibility therefore of any external divine revelation with regard to human reason, rests wholly upon *such external* evidence, as is a sufficient proof of the divine operation, or interposition. If there be no such external evidence possible; if God has no ways of acting so *peculiar* to himself, as to be a *sufficient* proof to human reason of his action; then no revelation can be sufficiently proved to be a divine, external revelation from God.

I appeal therefore to the miracles and prophecies on which Christianity is founded, as a sufficient proof, that it is a divine revelation. And shall here consider, what is objected against the sufficiency of this kind of proof.

1. It is objected, That miracles cannot prove a *false*, or *bad* doctrine, to be *true* and *good*; therefore miracles, *as such*, cannot prove the truth of any revelation.

But though miracles cannot prove false to be true, or bad to be good; yet they may prove, that we ought to receive such doctrines, both as true and good, which we could not know to be true and good without such miracles. Not because the miracles have any influence upon the things revealed, but because they testify the credibility of the revealer, as having God's testimony to the truth of that which he reveals.

If therefore miracles can be a sufficient proof, of God's sending any persons to speak in his name, and under his authority; then they may be a sufficient proof of the truth and divinity of a revelation, though they cannot prove that which is false, to be true.

Our author therefore brings a farther objection against this use of miracles.

*If, says he, evil beings can impress notions in men's minds as strongly as good beings, and cause miracles to be done in confirmation of them; is there any way to know to which of the two notions thus impressed are owing, but from their nature and tendency, or internal marks of wisdom and goodness?—And if so, Can external proofs carry us any farther, than the internal proofs do?**

This objection supposes, that no miracles, *as such*, can be a sufficient proof of the divinity of a revelation, for this reason, because we do not know the extent of that power, which evil spirits have, of doing miracles. But this objection is groundless. For, granting that we do not know the nature and extent of

that power which evil spirits may have; yet if we know *enough* of it to affirm, that the *creation* is not the work of evil spirits; if we can securely appeal to the creation, as a *sufficient proof* of God's action and operation; then we are fully secure in appealing to miracles, as a sufficient proof of a divine revelation.

For, if the creation must of necessity be allowed to be the work of God, notwithstanding any *unknown degree* of power in evil spirits; if we can as certainly ascribe it to God, as if we really knew there were no *such* spirits; then in some cases, miracles may be as full a proof of the operation, or interposition of God, as if we really knew there were no such spirits in being.

I do not ask, Whether the *same divine* perfection is necessary to foretell such things as are foretold in Scripture, and work such miracles as are there related, as is necessary to *create*? I do not ask, Whether any power less than divine can do such things? I only ask, Whether there is any certainty, that the creation is the work of God? Whether we can be sure of the divine operation, from the existence of that creation that we are acquainted with? Or, Whether we are in any *doubt* or *uncertainty* about it, because we do not know the *true nature* or *degree* of power, that may belong to evil spirits?

For if it can be affirmed with certainty, that the creation is the work of God, notwithstanding our uncertainty about the degree of power that may belong to evil spirits; then we have the same certainty, that the *prophecies* and *miracles* recorded in Scripture, are to be ascribed to God, as his doing, notwithstanding our uncertainty of the power of evil spirits.

And this is affirmed, not because *prophecies* and *miracles* require the *same degree* of divine power, as to create (for that would be affirming we know not what,) but it is affirmed, because the creation cannot be a *better*, *farther*, or *different* proof of the action or operation of God, than such miracles and prophecies are.

For every reason for ascribing the creation to God, is the same reason for ascribing such miracles and prophecies to God; and every argument against the certainty of those miracles and prophecies coming from God, is the same argument against the certainty of the creation's being the work of God; for there cannot be more or less certainty in one case than in the other.

For, if evil spirits have so the creation in their hands, that by reason of their power over it, *no miracles* can prove the operation of God, then the operation of God cannot be proved from the creation itself.

For the creation cannot be proved to be the operation of God, unless it can be proved that God *still presides* over it.

And if *all that* which is extraordinary and miraculous may be accounted for, without the interposition of God ; then nothing that is ordinary and common, according to the course of nature, can be a proof of the action of God. For there can be no reason assigned, why that which is *ordinary* should be ascribed to God, if all that is, or has been, or can be miraculous, may be ascribed to evil spirits.

Either therefore it must be said, that there are, or may be miracles, which cannot be the effects of evil spirits ; or else nothing that is ordinary and common, can be a proof of the operation of God. For if nothing miraculous can be an undeniable proof of God's action, nothing created can be a proof of it.

The matter therefore stands thus : There are, and may be miracles, that cannot be ascribed to evil spirits, without ascribing the creation to them ; and which can no more be doubted to come from God, than we can doubt of his being the Creator of the world. There may be miracles therefore, which, *as such*, and considered *in themselves*, are as full a proof of the *truth* of that which they attest, as the creation is of the *fitness* of that which is created.

And though the *matter* of a revelation is to be attended to, that we may fully understand it, and be rightly affected with it ; yet the reason of our receiving it as divine, must rest upon that *external authority*, which shews it to be of God.

And the authority of miracles, sufficiently plain and apparent, are of themselves a full and necessary reason for receiving a revelation, which both as to its *matter* and *manner*, would not be approved by us without them.

It seems therefore to be a *needless*, and too *great* a concession, which some *learned divines* make in this matter, when they grant, that we must first examine the doctrines revealed by miracles, and see whether they contain anything in them *absurd*, or *unworthy* of God, before we can receive the miracles as *divine*. For,

I. Where there can be nothing doubted, nor any more required, to make the miracles sufficiently plain and evident, there can be no doubt about the truth and goodness of the doctrine they attest. Miracles in such a state as this are the last resort, they determine for themselves, and cannot be tried by anything farther.

And as the *existence* of things, is the highest and utmost

evidence of God's having created them, and not to be tried by our *judgments* about the reasonableness and ends of their creation; so a course of plain undeniable miracles, attesting the truth of a revelation, is the *highest* and *utmost* evidence of its coming from God, and not to be tried by our judgments about the *reasonableness* or *necessity* of its doctrines.

And this is to be affirmed, not because God is too good to suffer us to be brought into such a snare, but because we can know nothing of God, if such a course of miracles is not a sufficient proof of his action and interposition. For if doctrines revealed by such an *undeniable change* in the natural course of things, have not thence a sufficient proof, that they are divine doctrines; then *no laws* that are according to the natural state of things, can have *thence* any proof, that they are *divine laws*.

For if *no course of miracles* can be of *itself* a sufficient proof, that *that* which is attested by them, is attested by God; then *no settled, ordinary* state of things can of *itself* be a proof, that *that* which is required by the natural state of things, is required by God.

2. To try miracles, sufficiently plain and evident, by *our judgments* of the reasonableness of the doctrines revealed by them, seems to be beginning at the wrong end. For the doctrines had not been revealed, but because of our ignorance of the *nature* and *reasonableness* of them; nor had the miracles been wrought, but to prevent our *acquiescing* in our own judgments about the worth and value of them.

3. To say, That no miracles, however plain and evident are to be received as divine, if they attest any doctrine that appears to *human reason* to be absurd, or unworthy of God, is very unreasonable. For what is it that can be called *human reason* in this respect? Is it anything else than human opinion? And is there anything that mankind are in greater uncertainty, or more contrary to one another, than in their opinions about what is absurd, or unworthy of God in religion? And is it not the very end and design of a divine revelation, to help us to a rule that may put an end to the divisions of human reason, and furnish us with an authority for believing such things, as we should not think it reasonable to believe without it?

And how weak and useless must that revelation be, which has not sufficient authority to teach us *new notions* of religion, and persuade us to believe that to be reasonable and worthy of God, which we could not believe to be so upon a less authority?

But if this be the case, as it seems clearly to be, then we are

not to try plain and evident miracles of the *highest kind*, by our judgments of the reasonableness of the doctrines revealed by them ; but miracles are to be received, as of sufficient authority, to form and govern our opinions about the reasonableness of the doctrines.

It may perhaps be said, though the authority of miracles, is sufficient to govern our opinions in doctrines that are only mysterious, and above the comprehension of our reason, yet that which is plainly and grossly absurd, or unworthy of God, cannot, nor ought to be received upon any authority of the *greatest miracles*.

This objection is vain and absurd ; it is vain, because it relates to a case that never was the case of miracles ; and it is absurd, because it is providing against a case, that never can happen to miracles. For to suppose anything in its own nature grossly absurd, or unworthy of God, to be attested with the *highest evidence* of miracles, is as impossible, and contradictory a supposition, as to suppose God to create rational beings wicked in their nature, that they might thereby be of service to the devil. These two suppositions have not the smallest difference, either in absurdity, or impossibility.

Again ; The history of magical wonders, and extraordinary things done by evil spirits, is no objection against the sufficiency of that proof, that arises from miracles. For the question is not, whether nothing that is extraordinary can be done by evil spirits, in any circumstances, but whether nothing that is miraculous can, *as such*, be a proof of its being done by God. For these two cases are very consistent. It may be very possible for evil spirits, to do things extraordinary in *some circumstances*, as where people enter into contracts with them, and resign themselves up to their power, and yet that miracles may in *other circumstances*, merely as miracles, be a sufficient proof of their being done by God.

Thus the case of the *Egyptian magicians*, is so far from abating the weight of miracles, that it is a great proof of their authority, considered in themselves ; for the *Magicians* could proceed but a little way in their contention with *Moses*, they were soon made to feel his superior power in the same manner, as the rest of the *Egyptians* did, and to confess, that his miracles were done by the *finger of God*. This very instance therefore fully shews, that miracles, *as such*, may be a sufficient proof of God's interposition. For if, in the case of a contention, the superior power must be ascribed to God, then miracles, *as such*, or of *such a kind*, as having none equal to them, or able to stand against them, must in such a state be a sufficient proof of their

being done by God, and give a sufficient warrant, to receive any doctrine that is attested by them.

For, let it be supposed, that the *Egyptian* Magicians had destroyed the power of *Moses*, and brought all the *miraculous evils* upon the *Israelites*, as enemies of the *Egyptian* Gods, which he brought upon them ; what consequence must *reason* have drawn from such an event ? Could *reason* have proved, that the God that made the world was *one* God, and that he alone ought to be worshipped ? Or that the *Egyptians* ought to have left their Gods, who had the *whole creation* in their hands in such a manner, as to change the nature of things as they pleased, and destroy every power that opposed them ?

Now either the case here supposed is possible, or it is impossible. If it is possible, then all the reasons for worshipping the *one true God*, taken from the *nature* and *state* of the creation, may entirely cease, and be so many reasons for idolatrous worship. For no one can have any reasons for worshipping the one true God, from the nature and state of the creation, if other Gods have the greatest power over it, and can turn everything into a *plague* upon those that do not worship them.

But if this case is impossible, then it necessarily follows, that miracles, *as such*, and considered *in themselves*, may be *certain* and *infallible* proofs of God's interposition. For this case can only be impossible, because the greatest, plainest miracles, cannot possibly be on the side of error. But if this cannot be, then the greatest, plainest miracles, *as such*, and considered *in themselves*, are an infallible mark of truth.

And he that abides by miracles in such circumstances, as proofs of the operation of the *one true God*, has the same certainty of proceeding right, as he that takes the state, and nature of the creation, to be the effect of the one true God.

And as miracles thus considered in themselves, are the highest and most undeniable evidence of the truth and divinity of any external revelation ; so Christianity stands fully distinguished from all other religions, by the highest and most undeniable evidence ; since it has all the proof that the *highest state* of miracles can give, and every other religion is without any support from them.

And though this writer, with a boldness worthy of himself, often puts all *traditional religions* upon a level : yet he might have shewn himself as much a friend to truth and sobriety, by asserting, that all *arguments* are equally conclusive, all *tempers* equally virtuous, all *designs* equally honest, and all *histories* and *fables* equally supported by evidence of fact.

But his prodigious rashness in asserting, at all adventures,

whatever he pleases, is not confined to matters of fact, but is as remarkably visible in that part of his book which pretends to argument ; as may be fully seen by the following paragraphs.

‘ It is the observation, says he, of *naturalists*, that there is no ‘ species of creatures, but what have some *innate weakness*, which ‘ makes them an easy prey to other animals that know how to ‘ make the advantage of it. Now the *peculiar foible* of mankind ‘ is *superstition*, which at all times has made them liable to be ‘ practised on, not by creatures of different species, but by those ‘ of their own ; who by a confident pretence of knowing more ‘ than their neighbours, have first circumvented the *many*, the ‘ *credulous*, and *unwary* ; and afterwards forced the *free-thinking* ‘ *few into an outward compliance*.’* Here it is to be observed :

1. That superstition is the *peculiar foible* in man ; as natural and intrinsic to him, as an *innate weakness* in animals. He has it therefore from God and nature, in the same manner as animals have their innate weakness. And therefore it must be as unnatural for men to be without superstition, or not act according to it, as for animals to be without their innate weakness.

2. Mankind are, according to this account, in their natural state, entirely incapable of knowing any true religion. For if, as our author saith, *superstition be the opposite to true religion* ; if this superstition be the *innate peculiar foible* of human nature ; if mankind are not only to begin and end their lives among those that have all the *same foible*, but, what is worse, have at all times had this innate foible increased and practised upon by the crafty pretenders of their own species ; are they not inwardly and outwardly fixed in superstition, the *opposite to true religion* ?

Judge therefore by this, what our author *really* thinks of the *excellency* and *perfection* of the light of nature ; and how much meaning he has in such exclamations as these : *And now let any-one say, how it is possible God could more fully make known his will to all intelligent creatures, than by making everything within and without them, a declaration of it*†?

That is, How can they have a better *inward guide* to true religion, than by having an *innate peculiar foible* contrary to it ? How can they have a better *outward call* to the true religion, than by having all the world conspiring to fix them in superstition ?

For this, he says, is their state ; this innate peculiar foible has been at all times increased and practised upon by the more cunning of their species, and the *free-thinking few forced into an outward compliance*. It is this inward and outward state of Man,

* Page 169.

† Page 19.

that throws our author into so much transport at its absolute perfection, as to matters of religion.

Again; Judge from this with what piety and sincerity he speaks of God, when he says, *Infinite wisdom, directed by infinite goodness, will certainly give us equal degrees of evidence for religious truths, which so much concerns us, as it has done for truths of less importance.** For if our Author believed himself in this assertion, how could he believe superstition to be the *peculiar* inborn foible of man? For can religious truths have the *same degrees of evidence* with things of less importance, if man's *peculiar foible* relates to religion?

Again; He cries out, *In what point is it, that men of the meanest abilities may not know their duty to God? Cannot they tell what sentiments inspire them with love and reverence for the deity?†* Now put these things together, and then his argument will proceed thus: If superstition is *contrary* to true religion, and superstition be the *innate peculiar* foible of all men, how can the *weakest* man be in any mistake about what is right or wrong in religion? Let the reader here judge, whether I put any force upon his words.

Judge again, how serious this Author must be in a variety of such arguments as these: *If, says he, men have been at all times obliged to avoid superstition, and embrace true religion, there must have been at all times sufficient marks of distinction.* And again: *Nothing, says he, can be a greater libel on the true religion, than to suppose it does not contain such internal marks, as will, even to the meanest capacity, distinguish it from all false religions.‡* But if superstition is the *innate, peculiar* foible of mankind, where must a man of the *meanest capacity* look for the *internal marks* of true religion? And if all the world is, and always was, over-run with superstition, and the *free-thinking* few have always been forced into an *outward compliance*, where must such a man look for the *outward marks* of true religion?

To give you one instance more of this writer's extravagant and inconsistent notions:

He makes *reason*, or *natural religion*, to be God's *internal revelation*, differing *only* from *external revelation* in the manner of its being communicated. He rejects *external revelation* as unworthy of God, because it has not been sufficiently made known at *all times*, and in *all places*; yet he sets up an *internal revelation*, as worthy of God, which has never been made known to any *one man* of any *time* or *place* in the world. For what one man ever knew that *reason* was God's *internal revelation*, to which nothing could be added by any *external revelation*?

* Page 131.

† Page 280.

‡ Page 295.

It is a mighty complaint with our author against Christianity, that so much happiness should be deferred till the time of *Tiberius*, and that it should be communicated to no greater a part of the world, than Christianity hath been. But is not this a *judicious* complaint in the mouth of a person, that is setting up a religion, that has been communicated to nobody but himself?

I know nothing that can be said for our author, in excuse of so much confusion and self-contradiction, unless it be the particular hardships of his *sect*. The *free-thinking few*, he says, are *forced into an outward compliance*; and that which *forces* a man into a state of hypocrisy, may force him into a great deal of confusion and self-contradiction.

To return: I have from a consideration of the state and condition of man, and the several relations which God stands in towards his creatures, shewn that it is utterly impossible for human reason to be a competent judge of the fitness, or unfitness, of all that God may, or may not require of us. The two following chapters shall state the nature and perfection of reason, considered in itself, or as it is a faculty, or principle of action in human nature.

Chapter IV.

Of the state and nature of reason, as it is in man; and how its perfection in matters of religion is to be known.

THIS writer and others, who take to themselves the names of *free-thinkers*, make their court to the world, by pretending to vindicate the right that all men have, to judge and act according to their own reason. Though, I think, the world has no more to thank them for on this account, than if they had pretended to assert the right that every man has, to see *only* with his *own eyes*, or to hear *only* with his *own ears*.

For their own reason always did, does, and ever will, govern rational creatures, in everything they determine, either in speculation or practice. It is not a matter of *duty* for men to use their own reason, but of *necessity*: and it is as impossible to do otherwise, as for a being that cannot act but from choice, to act

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without choice. And if a man were to try, not to act according to his own reason or choice, he would find himself under the same difficulty, as he that tries to think, without thinking upon something.

And if God were to command us, by fresh revelations every day of our lives, not to act from a principle of reason and choice, such revelations could have no more effect upon us, than if they came from the weakest amongst mankind. For, as our principle of acting is not derived from ourselves, so it is no more in our power to alter it, or contradict it, than it is in the power of matter not to *gravitate*, or to exist, without taking up some *place*.

Man is under the same necessity of acting from his own choice, that *matter* is of not acting at all ; and a being, whose principle of action is reason and choice, can no more act without it, or contrary to it, than an extended being can be without extension.

All men therefore are equally reasonable in this respect, that they are, and must be, by a *necessity* of nature, equally directed and governed by their own reason and choice.

For, as the principle of action, in human nature, is *reason and choice*, and nothing can be done, or believed, but for *some reason*, any more than a thing can be chosen and not be chosen ; so the acting according to one's own reason is not the privilege of the *philosopher*, but essential to human nature ; and as inseparable from all persons, as self-consciousness, or a sense of their own existence.

The dispute therefore betwixt Christians and *unbelievers*, concerning reason, is not, whether men are to use their *own reason*, any more than whether they are to see with their *own eyes* ; but whether every man's reason must needs guide him by its *own light*, or must cease to guide him, as soon as it guides him by a light borrowed from revelation ? This is the true state of the question, not whether reason is to be followed, but when it is *best* followed ? not whether it is to be our guide, but how it may be made our *safest guide* ?

The *free-thinkers*, therefore, rather appeal to the passions, than reason of the people, when they represent the Clergy and Christianity as enemies to reason, and just thinking, and themselves as friends and advocates for the use of reason.

For Christians oppose unbelievers, not because they *reason*, but because they *reason ill*. They receive revelation, not to suppress the natural power, but to give new and heavenly light to their reason ; not to take away their right of judging for themselves, but to secure them from false judgments.

If therefore a poor peasant should call upon our free-thinkers,

to lay aside their *bigotry* to *ideas*, *arguments*, and *philosophy*, and govern themselves by reason; it would be no more absurd, than for them to exhort Christians to lay aside their bigotry to *creeds* and *doctrines* of revelation, and to govern themselves by reason.

For it may as well be affirmed, that a man departs from the use of his reason, because he depends upon *ideas*, *arguments*, and *sylogisms*; as that he departs from the use of his reason, because he proceeds upon *prophecies*, *miracles*, and *revelations*.

And if he uses his reason weakly, and is subject to delusion in these points, he no more renounces his reason, or goes over to another direction, than *Hobbes*, *Spinoza*, *Bayle*, *Collins*, or *Toland*, renounce their reason, when they take their own *fancies* to be demonstrations.

Christians therefore do not differ from unbelievers in the *constant use* of their reason, but in the *manner* of using it: As *virtuous* men differ from *rakes*, not in their desire of happiness, but in their manner of seeking it.

And though this writer is very free in his charge of *bigotry* upon Christians, yet I may venture to challenge him to shew, that there can possibly be more *bigotry* on the side of religion, than there may be against it. For as *bigotry* is nothing but weak reasoning, so *infidels* are entitled to as large a share of it, as believers; and to suppose that bigotry may be charged upon those who have a zeal for Christianity, but cannot be charged on them that are zealous *against* it, is as just a way of proceeding, as to say of two *brothers*, that one is to be charged with *passion*, because he *loves* his father, but the other cannot be charged with passion, because he *hates* his father.

And as men that write against religion, are as much concerned to have it false, as those who write for it, are to have it true; so all that there is to blind and prejudice the latter, has the same power to blind and prejudice the former.

It appears from what has been said, that every man's own reason is his only principle of action, and that he must judge according to it, whether he receives, or rejects revelation.

Now although every man is to judge according to the light of his own reason, yet his reason has very little light that can be called *its own*. For, as we derive our nature from our parents, so that which we generally call *natural knowledge*, or the light of *nature*, is a knowledge and light that is made natural to us, by the *same authority*, which makes a certain *language*, certain *customs*, and *modes* of behaviour, natural to us.

Nothing seems to be our own, but a *bare capacity* to be instructed, a nature *fitted* for any impressions; as capable of vice as virtue; as ready to be made a vicious animal, as a religious

rational creature ; as liable to be made a *Hottentot*, by being born among *Hottentots*, as to be a *Christian*, by being born among *Christians*.

It is not my intention by this, to signify, that there is not a *good* and *evil*, *right* and *wrong*, founded in the nature of things ; or that morality has any dependence upon the *opinions* or *customs* of men ; but only to shew, that we *find* out this right and wrong, come to a *sense* of this good and evil, not by any inward strength, or light, that our *natural reason* of itself affords, but by such *external means*, as people are taught *articulate language*, *civility*, *politeness*, or any other *rules* of civil life.

Men do not prefer virtue to vice, from a philosophical contemplation of the fitness of the one, and the unfitness of the other, founded in the nature of things ; but because it is a judgment as *early* in their minds, as their knowledge of the words, virtue and vice.

And it can no more be reasonably affirmed, that our knowledge of God and divine things, our opinions in morality, of the excellency of this, or that virtue, of the immortality of our souls, of a future life of rewards and punishments, are the effects of our natural light ; than it can be reasonably affirmed, that our living in *society*, our *articulate language*, and *erect posture*, are owing to the light of nature.

For, as all mankind find themselves in this state, before any reasoning about it ; as *education*, and *human authority* have set our bodies *upright*, taught us *language*, and accustomed us to the *rules* and *manners* of a social life ; so *education*, and the *same human authority*, have impressed and planted in our minds, certain notions of God and divine things, and formed us to a sense of good and evil, a belief of our soul's immortality, and the expectation of another life.

And mankind are no more left to find out a God, or the fitness of moral virtue, by their own reason, than they are left by their own reason to find out who are their parents, or to find out the fitness of speaking an articulate language, or the reasonableness of living in society.

On the contrary ; we know that our manner of coming into the world, subjects us, without any choice, to the *language*, *sentiments*, *opinions*, and *manners*, of those amongst whom we are born. And although when we come to any strength, or art of reasoning, or have a *genius* for philosophic inquiries, we may thence deduce proofs of the *Being* and *Attributes* of God, the *reasonableness* of religion and morality, the *nature* of our souls, and the *certainty* of a future state, and find that the opinions and tradition of mankind concerning these things are well

founded ; yet these are an *after-knowledge*, not common to men, but accidental confirmations of that knowledge and belief of a God, religion and morality, which were before fixed in us, more or less, by education, and the authority of those amongst whom we have lived.

And as no *Philosopher* ever proved the *fitness* of human nature for a *social* life, from principles of reason and speculation, who had not *first* been taught the nature and advantage of Society *another way* ; so no one ever pretended to prove the Being and Attributes of God, or the excellency of moral virtue, who had not *first* been taught the knowledge of God, and moral virtue some *other way*.

Now if this is the state of reason, as it is in man ; if this is all the light that we have from our *own nature*, a *bare capacity* of receiving good or bad impressions, right or wrong opinions and sentiments, according to the state of the world that we fall into ; then we are but poorly furnished, to assert and maintain the *absolute perfection* of our own reason.

If our light is little more than the opinions and customs of those amongst whom we live, and it be so hard for a man to arrive at a greater wisdom, than the common wisdom of the *place* or *country* which gave him birth and education ; how unreasonably do we appeal to the perfection and sufficiency of our own reason, against the *necessity* and *advantage* of divine revelation ?

If we are *nothing* without the assistance of men ; if we are a kind of foolish, helpless animals, till education and experience have *revealed* to us the wisdom and knowledge of our fellow-creatures ; shall we think ourselves too wise and full of our own light, to be farther enlightened with a knowledge and wisdom revealed to us by God himself ?

This gentleman, speaking of education, saith, *Education is justly esteemed a second nature ; and its force is too strong, that few can wholly shake off its prejudices, even in things unreasonable and unnatural ; and must it not have the greatest efficacy in things agreeable to reason, and suitable to nature ?**

All that I shall add to this account, is only this, That we are, by the circumstances and condition of human life, *necessarily* subjected to this *second nature*, and cannot avoid coming under its power.

But here let me ask this pleader for the sufficiency of the light of nature, how those that resign themselves up to the light of their *own nature*, shall know, whether it is their *first*, or their *second nature* that directs them ?

Here are, it seems, *two natures* ; they may be as different as good and evil ; yet as they are both *natures*, both *internal light*, how shall a man know which he follows ? He does not know which was first, or why he should call one first, and the other second ; they are both internal, and without anything to distinguish them. And as he is not to *resist* the motions of nature, or *stifle* its directions ; so he must be as *obedient* to the directions of the *second*, as of the first nature, because he does not perceive their difference, nor has any means to distinguish their operations.

He therefore that asserts the light of nature to be a *sufficient unerring* guide in divine matters, ought either to shew, that our *second* nature is as *safe* a guide as the first ; or that though it is nature, yet it has no *natural power* over us.

For since every man is *necessitated* to take upon him a *second* nature, which he does not *know* to be a second, or *when* it began, or *how far* it has proceeded, or how *contrary* it is to his first nature ; he that would prove the light of nature to be so perfect, that nothing can be added to it, is obliged to prove, that our second nature, which we receive by education, has the *same degree* of perfection. For so far as our second nature is *different* from the first, so far it has *changed* the first ; and if we are to follow nature exclusive of revelation, we may take *revenge, self-murder, incontinence, sensuality, pride, haughtiness, self-conceit*, and a *contempt* of all things *sacred*, to be the true dictates and directions of nature.

For as it may be very easy, and I am afraid often happens to people, to be thus educated ; so if education is a *second nature*, and nature is to be esteemed a *true* and *perfect* guide ; a man thus educated, has all his vices made so many glorious laws of nature ; and through the strength of his natural light, he condemns humility, self-denial, and devotion, as foolish bigotry.

This writer says, *Natural religion*, that is, the religion of nature, is a *perpetual standing rule for men of the meanest, as well as the highest capacities, and carries its own evidence with it, those internal, inseparable marks of truth*.* But if education is a *second nature*, and, as this writer affirms, *has the force of a second nature even in things unreasonable and unnatural* ; then this second nature has not only its natural religion, which is also a *perpetual standing rule for men of the meanest, as well as the highest capacities ; which carries its own evidence with it, those internal, inseparable marks of truth* ; but it may also have a natural religion, both *unreasonable and unnatural* ; since it is

here affirmed, that education has the force of nature even in things of this kind.

Again ; If education has this force of nature even in things unreasonable and unnatural, and still greater force in things agreeable to nature ; if it is also absolutely necessary for all men to come under the power of *some second nature* ; what can be more vain or groundless, than to pretend to *state the light*, or *rectitude* of human nature, since it must be for the most part in every man, as the *uncertainty, variety, happiness or unhappiness* of education has rendered it ?

And our author can no more tell, what man would be, without human education, or what nature would do for those who had no foreign instruction, than he can tell what sort of beings dwell in the *moon*. And yet he that does not know this, how can he know what the light of nature is in itself ?

For if most of our judgments, opinions, tempers, and ways of thinking, are owing to education, and the authority of that part of the world where we dwell ; if these impressions have the power of a *second nature* upon us, then the light of *nature* can no more be distinguished from the light of *education*, than the strength which we have from *nature*, can be distinguished from the strength which we have from our *food*.

So that to declare the light of nature so absolutely perfect, as to be incapable of all improvement even by divine revelation, is no less an extravagance, than to declare the education of mankind to be absolutely perfect in the *same degree*.

For if nature not only *wants*, but cannot possibly *avoid* education ; if this *necessary unavoidable* education becomes *another nature*, undiscernible from the first ; then nothing can possibly be affirmed of the perfection of the light of nature, but what must be affirmed in the *same degree* of the perfection of education. And he that affirms that mankind have had, at *all times*, and in *all places* of the world, the *same sufficient, perfect* light of nature, must affirm, that mankind have had, at all times and in all places of the world, the same *perfect, unerring* education.

When therefore it is just, and fitting for all people, to abide by the *absolute perfection* of their *education*, the *infallible* light of their *second nature*, as the unerring standard, measure, and rule of all that is to be esteemed *moral, religious, and divine* ; then it may be just to appeal to the *natural light* of all men, of all ages, and all places, as a *sufficient teacher* of all that ought, or ought not to be a matter of religion.

For till it can be shewn, that men are not liable to a *second nature* from education, or that there is, or can be any nature without it ; the *state* of nature must *differ* all over the world, and

in every age of the world, just as the light, and advantages of education, have *differed* in the several parts, and ages of the world.

In a word, the religious and moral light of our *first nature*, is just as great as the *first strength* of infants; and the religious and moral light of our *second nature*, is just as perfect as our *education*, and as much of our own growth, as the first language that we are taught to speak.

May not therefore one justly wonder, what it is that could lead any people into an imagination of the absolute perfection of *human reason*? There seems no more in the state of mankind, to betray a man into this fancy, than to persuade him, that the reason of *infants* is absolutely perfect. For sense and experience, are as full and strong a proof against one, as against the other.

But it must be said for these writers, that they decline all arguments from facts and experience, to give a better account of human nature; but with the same justice, as if a man was to lay aside the authority of *history*, to give you a truer account of the life of *Alexander*.

They argue about the perfection of human reason, not as if it were something *already* in being, that had its *nature* and *condition*, and shewed itself to be what it is; but as if it were something that might take its state and condition, according to their fancies and speculations about it.

Their objection against revelation is founded upon the pretended *sufficiency*, and *absolute perfection*, of the light and strength of human reason, to teach all men all that is wise, and holy, and divine, in religion. But how do they prove this perfection of human reason? Do they appeal to mankind as proofs of this perfection? Do they produce any body of men, in this, or any other age of the world, that without any assistance from revelation, have attained to this perfection of religious knowledge? This is not so much as pretended to: The history of such men is entirely wanting. And yet the want of such a fact as this, has even the force of demonstration against this pretended sufficiency of natural reason.

Because it is a matter not capable of any other kind of proof, but must be admitted as certainly true, or rejected as certainly false, according as fact and experience bear witness for, or against it.

For an inquiry about the light, and strength, and sufficiency of reason, to guide and preserve men in the knowledge and practice of true religion, is a question, as *solely* to be resolved by *fact and experience*, as if the inquiry was about the *shape* of man's body, or the *number* of his senses. And to talk of a light and strength of

reason, natural to man, which fact and experience have never yet proved, is as egregious nonsense, as to talk of natural senses, or faculties of his body, which fact and experience have never yet discovered.

For as the *existence* of man cannot be proved, but from fact and experience; so every *quality* of man, whether of body or mind, and every degree of that quality, can only be proved by fact and experience.

The degrees of human *strength*, the nature of human *passions*, the duration of human *life*, the light and strength of human *reason* in matters of religion, are things not possible to be known in any *other degree*, than *so far* as fact and experience prove them.

From the bare consideration of a rational soul in union with a body, and bodily passions, we can neither prove man to be *strong* or *weak*, *good* or *bad*, *sickly* or *sound*, *mortal* or *immortal*: all these qualities must discover themselves, as the *eye* discovers its degree of *sight*, the *hand* its degree of *strength*, &c.

To inquire therefore, whether men have by nature light and strength sufficient to guide, and keep them in the true religion; is the same appeal to fact and experience, as to inquire, whether men are *mortal*, *sickly*, or *sound*; or how far they can *see* and *hear*. For nothing that relates to human nature, as a quality of it, can possibly have any other proof.

As therefore these Gentlemen are, in this debate, without any proof, or even pretence of proof, from fact and experience, so their cause ought to be looked upon to be as vain and romantic, as if they had asserted, that men have senses naturally fitted to hear sounds, and see objects at all distances, though fact and experience, the only means of knowing it, if it was so, has, from the creation to this time, proved the quite contrary.

For he that asserts the sufficiency of the light and strength of reason, to guide men in matters of religion, is not only without any positive proof from fact or experience on his side, but has the history of all ages, for near six thousand years past, fully demonstrating the quite contrary.

If some other enquirers into human nature, should affirm, that there is in mankind a *natural instinct* of mutual love, *sufficient* to make every man, at all times, love every other man, with the *same degree* of affection, as he loves himself; I suppose such an opinion would be thought too absurd and extravagant, to need any confutation. And yet all the absurdity of it would lie in this, that it affirmed something of the *sufficiency* of a natural quality in man, which could not be supported by a single instance of any one man, and was contrary to the experience and history of every age of the world.

Now this is exactly the case of these gentlemen : their opinion has neither more nor less absurdity in it : they only affirm such a sufficiency of light and reason to be natural to all men, as cannot be supported by a single instance of any one man, that ever lived, and is fully contradicted by the experience and history of every age since the creation of the world.

By what has been here said, I hope the reader will observe, that this inquiry about the perfection or imperfection, the strength or weakness, of reason in man, as to matters of religion, rests *wholly* upon fact and experience ; and that therefore all speculative reasonings upon it, are to be looked upon as idle, and visionary, as a sick man's dreams about health ; and as wholly to be rejected, as any speculative arguments that should pretend to prove, in spite of all facts and experience, the *immortality*, and *unalterable* state of human bodies.

Our author himself seems very sensible, that the argument drawn from facts and experience pressed hard upon his cause ; and therefore has given the best answer to it, he can yet think of.

It cannot, says he, be imputed to any defect in the light of nature, that the Pagan world ran into idolatry ; but to their being entirely governed by priests, who pretended Communication with their Gods, and to have thence their revelations, which they imposed on the credulous, as divine oracles.

The truth and justness of this assertion, will fully appear by the following illustration.

‘ It cannot be imputed to any defect in the health, and soundness of man's natural constitution, that the world has, in all ages, been over-run with diseases and distempers ; but to their being entirely governed by physicians, who pretended to I know not what secret knowledge of medicines, which they imposed on the sickly, as infallible remedies.’

For, as a perfect state of health, conscious to itself of a sufficiency of natural strength to keep clear of all diseases, seems to be out of all danger from physicians : so had mankind been ever conscious to themselves, of a sufficient natural knowledge of what is true or false in religion ; or, as this author saith, such as *enabled men of the meanest capacity to distinguish between religion and superstition,** what room had there been for frauds and impostures in religion ?

If a man whose business it was to provide himself with a quantity of *pure gold*, should be continually buying *lead*, and *brass*, and *iron*, instead of it ; would you say, that his falling into

such mistakes, was not to be imputed to any *defect* in his knowledge of *pure gold*, or how to distinguish it from other metals : but to the *lies* and *affirmations* of those who told him, that such lead, and brass, and iron, were pure gold ?

Farther ; This author saith, the world did not run into idolatry through any defect in the light of nature, but because they were *credulous*.

Now credulity, *so far* as it goes in any matter, supposes an *equal degree* of ignorance in that matter, whatever it is. No man is credulous of false accounts, or fabulous relations, where he knows the truth.

Children are exceeding *credulous*, because they are exceeding *ignorant* ; and in the same degree as their knowledge increases, their credulity abates. So that to say, men ran into idolatry, not through want of light, or ignorance of what is true and false in religion, but because they were *credulous* ; is as nice a distinction, as if it should be said, that children believe any fable that you can tell them, not because they are *ignorant* of what is true or false, but because they are *credulous*.

Or as it may be said, in another matter, with the same justness of thought, that such an *army* ran away from the enemy, not through any defect in *natural courage*, but because they were *affrighted*.

For men may as justly be said to have a perfect courage, and yet be governed by their fears, as to have perfect knowledge of that which is true in religion, and yet be credulous of that which is false.

This *Anti-pastor*, in his *second Address* says, *Can the superstition of the Pagans be imputed to any defect, or insufficiency in the light of reason, when it was wholly owing to their abandoning that divine light ; and in defiance of it, running into senseless traditions ?**

But how came it, that they ran into senseless traditions ? What was it that admitted these traditions, as just and good ? Why, it was that faculty which judges of everything, and which this writer recommends as an unerring guide. And to say, a man's superstition is not owing to any defect or weakness of his reason, but to his admitting senseless traditions, is as vain an observation, as to say, a man's false reasoning is not owing to any weakness of his reason, but to his admitting and proceeding upon foolish, and absurd arguments.

For, foolish and absurd arguments do not more shew the state of his reason, who proceeds upon them, than senseless traditions shew the state of his reason, who admits them : For they are as

much the objects of his reason, as arguments ; and all that is senseless and absurd in either of them, must either be charged equally upon the reason of him that admits them, or both equally removed from it. So that if senseless traditions, are not a proof of the weakness of their reason that approve of them, neither are foolish and absurd arguments a proof of the weakness of their reason, who proceed upon them.

Again ; Supposing, as he saith, that the *Pagans, in defiance of their reason*, received such traditions : Does this do any credit to the light of reason ? For how can a man renounce his reason, but by an act of his reason ?

But, is it not as great a reproach to reason, to renounce itself, as to credit a false tradition ? For a *reason* that can, *knowingly*, lay aside itself, is in a more defective and disordered state, than a reason that is only capable of being deluded. But if reason, in this case, lays aside itself, *without* knowing it, then, I suppose, such an *accident* may be fairly attributed to some weakness and defect of reason.

He proceeds thus : *It is certainly no good argument against the sufficiency of the divine light of nature, that men could not err, except they left it, and followed vain traditions.**

This observation has just the same sense and acuteness in it, as if it had been said, *It is certainly no good argument against the sufficiency of the divine healthfulness of human nature, that men could not be sickly, except they left it, and fell into various distempers : Or, against the sufficiency of the divine strength of natural courage, that men could not be timorous, till they left it, and followed vain fears.* For, to prove that reason is sufficient, because everything that is absurd, is contrary to reason, is like proving our healthfulness to be sufficient, because all distempers are contrary to it ; or our courage to be sufficient, because fears and cowardice are contrary to it.

Besides, how is it that men *leave* their reason ? Why, just as *ignorant* men leave their *knowledge* ; as *dull* people leave their *wit*, or *cowards* leave their *courage*. The first part of this paragraph tells you of a *sufficiency of the divine light of nature* : Well ; what has this divine light of nature done ? what sufficient effects has it had ? Why, it has covered all the world with darkness. For, as a proof of the sufficiency of this divine light, he adds, in the very next words, *Whoever considers how all mankind, even the wisest nations, have been imposed on by senseless tales, and idle stories, consecrated by length of time ; well, what then ? what should he conclude from this consideration ? Ought*

* *Second Address, page 39.*

he not to conclude, that the *reason* of the wisest men of all nations, runs very low in matters of religion? This is the only conclusion that common sense can draw from such an observation: But, our author says, *Whoever considers this, will not be very fond of relying upon tradition in matters of religion.*

As if he had said, Whoever considers how all mankind, even the wisest of men, have been imposed upon by absurd arguments, will not be very fond of relying upon arguments. For idle tales, and senseless traditions in matters of religion, impose upon men, in no other manner, than false arguments, and absurd conclusions, impose upon them. And as it is their own reason, that gives the strength and appearance of truth to a senseless argument; so it is their own reason, that gives the credibility, and appearance of truth to senseless traditions.

And to lay the fault upon tradition, and not upon reason that approves it, is as just, as to lay the fault upon an abominable argument, and not upon reason, that proceeds upon it.

Again; Supposing that *all mankind, even the wisest nations,* have for this six thousand years been thus imposed upon, not knowing how to distinguish idle tales and senseless traditions from true religion; is not this a noble foundation for this writer to build the *sufficiency of the divine light of nature upon?* For supposing it had been in the greatest degree *insufficient*, what other effect could have followed from it, but only this, that *all mankind, even the wisest nations,* should have been over-run with error? And is it not strange, that effects should bear no proportion to their causes; that the same things should follow from the *sufficiency* of the divine light of nature, which must have followed from its *greatest imperfection and insufficiency?*

And must not the enemies of *reason* and *free-thinking* be forced to confess, that this writer has chosen an excellent guide for himself; since he so fully acknowledges, that no one yet has been rightly guided by it? Must not his present undertaking be granted to be the effect of cool and sober deliberation, since it only calls people of *all*, even the *meanest capacities*, to such an use of their reason, as the wisest of men and nations have always been strangers to?

Again; It is pretended, that the absurdities of the Pagan world are not owing to any defect of reason, but to their *undue use* of reason. The Bishop of *London* very justly observes, that such a pretence is *begging the question.* Our author thinks not. I will therefore grant, that it was through an *undue use* of their reason. For granting that mankind fell into all those absurdities, by an undue use of their reason, the charge against reason is rather increased than abated. For an undue use of it, is as

great an accusation of reason, as any *weakness* or *blindness* that can be attributed to it. For to distinguish betwixt the defect of reason, and the undue use of reason, is as solid, as to distinguish betwixt the perfection of reason, and a due use of reason. For is not a due use of reason, so far as it proceeds, a certain sign of its perfection? Must not therefore the *undue* use of reason, so far as it proceeds, be an equally certain sign of its imperfection?

For what can make an undue use of reason, but itself? And if reason is so universally liable to an *undue use* of itself, that the universal ignorance and corruption of mankind is to be ascribed to it, then this undue use of reason, is as great a sign of its universal weakness and imperfection, as anything else can be.

This *undue use* of reason, is either voluntary and known, or involuntary and unknown. If it is the latter, then it resolves itself into that natural weakness and infirmity, which his Lordship has so fully proved to belong to human reason. If it is the former, then it may justly be reckoned a *greater disorder*, and such as makes reason more unfit to be a guide, than all the weakness, blindness, and corruption, which his Lordship hath accused it of.

Chapter V.

Shewing, that all the mutability of our tempers, the disorders of our passions, the corruption of our hearts, all the reveries of the imagination, all the contradictions and absurdities that are to be found in human life, and human opinions, are strictly and precisely the mutability, disorders, corruption, and absurdities of human reason.

IT is the intent of this chapter to shew, that although common language ascribes a variety of faculties and principles to the soul, imputing this action to the blindness of our *passions*, that to the inconstancy of our *tempers*; one thing to the heat of our *imagination*, another to the coolness of our *reason*; yet, in strictness of truth, every-

thing that is done by us, is the action and operation of our reason, and is to be ascribed to it, as the sole faculty or principle from whence it proceeded, and by which it is governed and effected.

This writer takes a great deal of pains to prove, by *long quotations*, what nobody denies, that there is a *law* or *light* of reason common to men. All this is as freely granted, as that *love* and *hatred*, *feeling* and *sensation*, are common to men; and is granting no more, than that men are by nature intelligent and rational beings: For the faculties of man, as he is an intelligent being, as necessarily perceive some difference in actions, as to *good* and *bad*, as they perceive some things they like, and some things they dislike. In this sense there is a law or light of reason common to all men: And the law of reason is in men, as the law of *thinking*, of *liking*, and *disliking*, is in men.

And the different degrees of reason are in men, as the different degrees of love and aversion; as the different degrees of wit, parts, good nature, or ill nature, are in men.

And as all men have naturally more or less of these qualities, so all men have naturally more or less of reason: And the bulk of mankind are as different in reason, as they are in these qualities.

As love is the same passion in all men, yet is infinitely different; as hatred is the same passion in all men, yet with infinite differences; so reason is the same faculty in all men, yet with infinite differences.

And as our passions not only make us different from other men, but frequently and almost daily different from ourselves, loving and hating under great inconstancy; so our reason is not only different from the reason of other men, but is often different from itself; by a strange inconstancy, setting up first one opinion, and then another.

So that when we talk of *human reason*, or a reason *common* to mankind, we talk of as *various*, *uncertain*, and *unmeasurable* a thing, as when we talk of a *love*, a *liking*, an *aversion*, a *good nature*, or *ill nature*, common to mankind; for these qualities admit of no variation, uncertainty, or mutability, but such as they directly receive from the *reason* of mankind.

For it is as much the reason of man that acts in all these tempers, and makes them to be just what they are, as it is the reason of man that demonstrates a mathematical proposition.

Was our reason steady, and of one kind, there would be just the same steadiness and regularity in our tempers; did not reason fall into mistakes, follies and absurdities, we should have nothing foolish or absurd in our love or aversion. For every

humour, every kind of love or aversion, is as strictly the *action* or *operation* of our reason, as judgment is the act of our reason.

And the tempers and passions of a child, differ only from the tempers and passions of a man, exactly in the same degree, as the reason of a child differs from the reason of man.

So that our passions and tempers, are the natural actions and real effects of our reason, and have no qualities, either good or bad, but such as are to be imputed to it.

A laudable good nature, or a laudable aversion, is only reason acting in a *certain manner*; a criminal good nature, or a criminal aversion, is nothing else but an ill-judging reason; that is, reason acting in another certain manner.

But still it is reason, or our understanding that is the *only agent* in our bad passions, as well as good passions; and as much the *sole agent* in all our passions and tempers, as in things of mere speculation.

So that the state of reason in human life, is nothing else but the state of human tempers and passions: And right reason in morality, is nothing else but right love, and right aversion.

And all our tempers and ways of liking and disliking, are as much the acts and operations of our reason, as the wisest actions of our life; and they only differ from reason, as reason differs from itself, when it judges rightly, and when it judges erroneously.

All *that* therefore which we commonly call the weakness, blindness, and disorder of our *passions*, is in reality the weakness, blindness, and disorder of our *reason*. For a right love, or wrong love, denotes only reason acting in a *certain, particular manner*.

So that if anything can be said precisely, or with exactness, of love, aversion, good nature, or ill nature, as common to mankind; the same may be said of reason, as common to mankind.

And if it would be very foolish and absurd, to ascribe an absolute perfection to human love, making it alone a sufficient guide to all good, or an absolute perfection to human hatred, as a sufficient preservative from all vice; it is equally absurd to ascribe the same perfection to human reason, because neither love nor hatred have anything perfect or imperfect, good or bad in them, but what is solely the action and operation of reason.

For the distinction of our reason from our passions, is only a distinction in language, made at pleasure; and is no more real in the things themselves, than the *desire* and *inclination* are really different from the *will*. All therefore that is weak and foolish in our passions, is the weakness and folly of our reason; all the

inconstancy and caprice of our humours and tempers, is the caprice and inconstancy of our reason.

It is not *flattery* that compliments vice in authority ; it is not *corruption* that makes men prostitute their honour ; it is not *sensuality* that plunges men into *debauchery* ; it is not *avarice* that makes men sordid ; it is not *ambition* that makes them restless ; it is not *bribery* that makes men sell their consciences ; it is not *interest* that makes them lie, and cheat, and perjure themselves. What is it therefore ? Why, it is that *absolutely perfect* faculty, which our author sets up as the *unerring* standard of all that is *wise, holy and good* ; it is in his strong language, *reason, the use of reason, human reason*, that does all this.

For whether anything be fit to be done, it is, as he says, *reason alone which must judge ; as the eye is the sole judge of what is visible, the ear of what is audible, so reason of what is reasonable.*

Everything therefore that is done, everything that is chosen or preferred in human life before anything else, is as strictly done, or chosen by reason, as everything that is seen, is seen by the eye ; and everything that is heard, is heard by the ear.

To suppose that reason permits itself to be governed by passions or tempers, but is not the *immediate, full agent* of all that is done by them, is as absurd, as to suppose that reason permits itself to be governed by the *hand* when it is writing falsely, or the *tongue* when it is talking profanely, but is not the immediate, direct agent of all that is written and spoken by them.

Brutes are incapable of imprudence and immorality, because none of their actions are the actions of *reason* : Everything therefore that is imprudence, immorality, baseness, or villainy in us, must be the act of our reason ; otherwise it could no more be imprudent or immoral, than the actions of brutes.

If therefore, as this author often saith, reason be the only faculty that distinguisheth us from brutes ; it necessarily follows, that those irregularities, whether of humour, passions, or tempers, which cannot be imputed to brutes, must be solely attributed to that faculty by which we are distinguished from brutes ; and consequently everything that is foolish, vain, shameful, false, treacherous, and base, must be the sole express acts of our reason ; since if they were the acts of anything else, they could have no more vanity, falseness, or baseness, than hunger and thirst.

As therefore all that is faithful, just, and wise, can only be attributed to that which is done by our reason ; so by plain consequence, all that is vain, false, or shameful, can only be imputed to any acts, as they are the acts of reason.

It is not my intent in the least to censure, or condemn our common language, which considers and talks of reason and the passions, as if they were as different as a *governor* and his *subjects*.

These forms of speech are very intelligible and useful, and give great life and ornament to all discourses upon morality ; and are even necessary for the Historian, the Poet, and the Orator.

But when certain persons ascribe to human reason, as a *distinct faculty* of human nature, I know not what *absolute perfection*, making it as immutable, and incapable of any addition or improvement, as God himself ; it is necessary to consider human reason, and human nature, not as it is represented in common language, but as it is in reality in itself.

Notwithstanding therefore in common language, our passions and the effects of them, are very usefully distinguished from our reason, I have here ventured to shew, that all the disorders of human nature, are precisely the disorders of human reason, and that all the perfection or imperfection of our passions, is nothing else but the perfection or imperfection of our reason.

And we may as well think, that judgment, prudence, discretion, are things different from our reason, as that humour, temper, approbation, or aversion, are really different from our reason.

For, as it is a right exercise of reason, that denominates its actions to be *prudence, judgment, and discretion* ; so it is a wrong exercise of reason, that denominates its actions to be *humour, temper, and caprice*.

And it would be as absurd to condemn humour and caprice, if they were not the actions and operations of reason, as to commend a prudence and discretion that were the effects of an irrational principle.

Our follies therefore and absurdities of every kind, are as necessarily to be ascribed to our reason, as the *first, immediate, and sole* cause of them, as our wisdom and discretion are to be ascribed to it in that degree.

The difference between reason assenting to the properties of a *square*, and reason acting in motions of desire or aversion, is only this, that in the latter case, it is reason acting under a sense of its own *good* or *evil*, in the former case, it is reason acting under a sense of *magnitude*.

And as the relations of magnitude, as they are the objects of our reason, are only the objects of its *assent* or *dissent* ; so good and evil, as they are objects of our reason, are only the objects of its *desire* or *aversion* : And as the assent or dissent, in matters of speculation, whether right or wrong, is solely the act of our

reason; so desire or aversion, in human life, whether right or wrong, is equally the act of our reason.

All the good therefore, that there is in any of the desires or aversions of the mere natural man, is the good of our reason; and all the evil or blindness that there is in any of our passions, is solely the evil and blindness of our reason.

Because love, desire, aversion, considered as operations proceeding from mere nature alone, denote nothing else but our reason acting in a certain manner; just as prudence, discretion, and judgment, when considered as our own abilities, or strength, denote nothing else but our reason acting in a certain manner.

We often say, that our passions deceive us, or persuade us; but this is no more strictly so, than when we say, our *interest* deceived, or a *bribe* blinded us. For bribes and interest are not active principles, nor have any power of deception; it is only our reason that gives them a false value, and prefers them to a greater good.

It is just so in what we call the deceit of our passions: They meddle with us no more than bribes meddle with us; but that pleasurable perception, which is to be found in certain enjoyments, is by our reason preferred to that better good, which we might expect from a self-denial.

We say again, that our passions paint things in false colours, and present to our minds vain appearances of happiness.

But this is no more strictly true, than when we say, our *imagination* forms castles in the air. For the imagination signifies no distinct faculty from our reason, but only reason acting upon our *own ideas*.

So when our passions are said to give false colours to things, or present vain appearances of happiness, it is only our reason acting upon its own ideas of *good* and *evil*, just as it acts upon its own ideas of *architecture*, in forming castles in the air.

So that all *that* which we call different faculties of the soul, tempers and passions of the heart, strictly speaking, means nothing else, but the various acts and operations of one and the same rational principle, which has different names, according to the objects that it acts upon, and the manner of its acting.

In some things it is called speculative, in others it is called practical reason. And we may as justly think our speculative reason, is a different faculty from our practical reason, as that our tempers, aversions, or likings, are not as fully and solely to be ascribed to our reason, as syllogisms and demonstrations.

It was as truly reason that made *Medea* kill her children, that

made *Cato* kill himself, that made Pagans offer human sacrifices to idols; that made *Epicurus* deny a providence, *Mahomet* pretend a revelation; that made some men sceptics, others bigots, some enthusiasts, others profane; that made *Hobbes* assert all religion to be human invention, and *Spinosa* to declare trees, and stones, and animals, to be parts of God; that makes free-thinkers deny freedom of will, and fatalists exhort to a reformation of manners; that made *Vaux* a conspirator, and *Ludlow* a regicide; that made *Muggleton* a fanatic, and *Rochester* a libertine: It was as truly human reason that did all these things, as it is human reason that demonstrates mathematical propositions.

Medea and *Cato* acted as truly according to the judgment of their reason at that time, as the *confessor* that chooses rather to suffer, than deny his faith.

And the difference between them does not consist in this, that one power or faculty of the mind acted in one of them, and another faculty or power of the mind acted in another; that is, that reason acted in one of them, and passion in another; but purely in the different state of their reason. For had not *Medea* and *Cato* thought it best to do what they did, at the time they did it, they would no more have done it, than the *confessor* would choose to suffer rather than deny his faith, unless he had judged it best so to do.

It may indeed be well enough said in common language, that passion made *Medea* and *Cato* to do as they did, just as it may be said of a man that affirms a *plenum*, or holds any speculative absurdity, that it is blindness, or prejudice, that keeps him in it. Not as if blindness and prejudice were powers or faculties of his mind, but as they signify the *ill state* of his reason. Just so the passions may be said to govern men in their actions; not as if they were powers of the mind, but as they denote the disordered state of reason. And whenever anything is imputed to the strength and violence of our passions, strictly speaking, it only means the weakness and low condition of our reason at that time.

For reason governs as fully, when our actions and tempers are ever so bad, as it does when our actions and tempers are sound and good. And the only difference is, that reason acting well governs in the one case, and reason acting ill governs in the other.

Just as it is the same reason that sometimes judges strictly right, which at other times judges exceeding wrong, in matters of speculation.

When therefore we say, that reason governs the passions, it means no more, in strict truth, than that reason governs itself;

that it acts with deliberation and attention, does not yield to its first judgments or opinions, but uses second, and third thoughts.

So that guarding against the passions, is only guarding against its own first judgments and opinions; that is, guarding against itself.

To all this it may, perhaps, be objected, that our passions and tempers arise from bodily motions, and depend very much upon the state of our blood and animal spirits, and that therefore what we do under their commotions, cannot be attributed to our reason.

It is readily granted, that the body has this share in our passions and tempers: But then the same thing must be granted of the body, in all the acts and operations of the mind. So that if our desires and aversions cannot be imputed to our reason, as its acts, because of the joint operation of the animal spirits in them; no more can syllogisms and demonstrations be attributed to our reason, as its operations, because the operation of bodily spirits concurrerth in the forming of them.

For the most abstract thought, and calm speculation of the mind, has as truly the *concurrence*, and *conjunct* operation of bodily spirits, as our strongest desires or aversions. And it is as much owing to the state of the body, that such speculations are what they are, as it is owing to the state of the body, that such passions are what they are.

For the motions of the bodily spirits are inseparable from, and according to, the state and action of the mind: When reason is in speculation of a trifle, they concur but *weakly*; when reason speculates intensely, their operation is *increased*. And sometimes the attention of the mind is so great, and has so engaged and called in all the animal spirits to its assistance, that the operations of our senses are suspended, and we neither see, nor feel, till the attention of the mind has let the spirits return to all the parts of the body.

Now will anyone say, that these intense thoughts are less the acts of the mind, because they have a greater concurrence of bodily spirits, than when it is acting with indifference, and so has a lesser quantity of bodily spirits?

Yet this might as well be said, as to say, that the assent or dissent, in speculation, is the act of our reason; but liking or disliking, loving or hating, are not so the acts of our reason, because they have a greater concurrence, and different motions of bodily spirits.

For, as the mind is in a different state when it desires good, or fears evil, from what it is when it only compares two triangles; so the motions or concurrence of the bodily spirits, have only

such a difference, as is strictly *correspondent* to these two states of the mind. They act and join as much in comparing the triangles, as in the desire of good, or fear of evil. And the mind is just so much governed by the body, in its passions, as it is governed by it in its calmest contemplations.

For as the gentle, quiet operation of the animal spirits is then strictly correspondent, and entirely owing to the state and action of the mind; so in all our passions, the strong and increased motion of the animal spirits, is then strictly correspondent, and entirely owing to the state and action of the mind.

So that reason is neither more nor less the agent, in all our tempers and passions, than it is in our most dry and sedate speculations.

It may, and often does happen, that a man may have as great an eagerness and impatience, in the solving a mathematical problem, as another hath to obtain any great good, or avoid any great evil.

But may it therefore be said, that it is not reason that solves, or desires to solve, the problem, because the bodily spirits are so active in it?

In a word; if our passions and tempers might not be imputed to our reason, as its own genuine acts and operations, because they have such a concurrence of bodily spirits, neither could arguing, or reasoning, be attributed to our *reason*, as its proper act and operation, because in all argumentation, the bodily spirits are necessarily employed; and the better and closer the reasoning is, the more they are excited and employed.

If it should farther be objected, that reason is only *right reason*, and therefore cannot be said to act or operate, but where, and so far as, right reason acts.

This is as absurd as to say, that *love* signifies only *pure love*, and *hatred* just hatred; and that therefore a man cannot be said to love, or hate, but when, and so far as, his love is pure, and his hatred just.

To draw now some plain consequences from the foregoing account.

First, If reason be, as above represented, the *universal agent* in the natural man; if all the difference among *such* men, either in speculation, or practice, is only such a difference as reason makes, then nothing can be more extravagant, than to affirm anything concerning the degree of perfection, or imperfection of reason, as *common* to man. It is as wild and romantic, as to pretend to state the measure of folly and wisdom, of fear and courage, of pride and humility, of good humour and ill humour, *common* to mankind: For as these states of the mind, are only so

many different states of reason ; so no uncertainty belongs to them, but what, in the *same degree*, belongs to *reason*.

Secondly, Granting that all matters of religion, must be agreeable to *right, unprejudiced* reason ; yet this could be no ground for receiving nothing in religion, but what *human* reason could prove to be necessary ; for *human* reason, is no more *right unprejudiced* reason, than a sinner is *sinless*, or a man an *angel*.

Granting again, that a man may go a great way towards rectifying his reason, and laying aside its prejudices ; yet no particular man can be a *better judge* of the rectitude of his *own reason*, than he is of the rectitude of his own *self-love*, the sagacity of his own *understanding*, the brightness of his own *parts*, the justness of his own *eloquence*, and the depth of his own *judgment*.

For there is nothing to deceive him in *self-love*, in the opinion of his *own merit, wit, judgment, and eloquence*, but what has the same power to deceive him, in the opinion of his own reason. And if, as our author says, *it be the fate of most sects to be fondest of their ugliest brats*,* none seem so inevitably exposed to this *fatality*, as those whose religion is to have no *form*, but such as it receives from their own hearts.

Thirdly, A man that has his religion to choose, and with this previous privilege, that he need not allow anything to be matter of religion, but what his own right reason can prove to be so, is in as fair a way to be governed by his *passions*, as he that has his *condition* of life to choose, with the liberty of taking that which his own right reason directs him to.

Does anyone suppose now, that nothing but *right reason* would direct him in the choice of his condition ? Or that he would make the better choice, because he proceeded upon this maxim, that nothing could be right, but that which was agreeable to his *own reason* ? Or that his tempers, his prejudices, his self-love, his passions, his partiality, would have no influence upon his choice, because he had resigned himself to his *own right reason* ?

For as our choice of a condition of life is not a matter of speculation, but of good and evil ; so however it is recommended to our reason, it chiefly excites our passions. And our choice will be just as reasonable, as our tempers and passions are. And he that is made the most positive, of the sufficiency of his own right reason, will be the most likely to be governed by the blindness of his own passions.

Now it is just the same in the choice of a religion, as in the choice of a condition of life : As it is not a matter of speculation, but of *good and evil* ; so if it is left to be stated and deter-

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mined by our *own reason*, it rather appeals to our *tempers*, than employs our reason; and to resign ourselves up to our own reason, to tell us what ought, or ought not to be a matter of religion, is only resigning ourselves up to our tempers, to take what we *like*, and refuse what we *dislike* in religion.

For it is not only natural and easy for him, who believes that nothing can be a part of religion, but what his reason can prove necessary to be so, to take that to be *fully proved*, which is only *mightily liked*; and all that to be entirely contrary to *reason*, which is only vastly contrary to his *tempers*; this, I say, is not only natural and easy to happen, but scarce possible to be avoided.

In a word: When *self-love* is a proper arbitrator betwixt a man and his adversary; when *revenge* is a just judge of meekness; when *pride* is a true lover of humility; when *falsehood* is a teacher of truth; when *lust* is a fast friend of charity; when the *flesh* leads to the spirit; when *sensuality* delights in self-denial; when *partiality* is a promoter of equity; when the *palate* can taste the difference between sin and holiness; when the *hand* can feel the truth of a proposition; then may *human reason* be a proper arbitrator between God and man, the sole, final, just judge of all that ought, or ought not to be matter of a *holy, divine and heavenly* religion.

Lastly, If this be the state of reason, as has been fully proved, then to pretend, that our reason is too perfect to be governed by anything but its own light, is the same extravagance, as to pretend, that our love is *too pure* to be governed by anything but its own inclinations, our hatred *too just* to be governed by anything but its own motions. For if all that is base and criminal in love, all that is unjust and wicked in hatred, is strictly and solely to be imputed to our reason; then no perfection can be ascribed to our reason, but such as is to be ascribed to our love and hatred.

Finis.

THE ABSOLUTE
UNLAWFULNESS

OF THE

STAGE-ENTERTAINMENT

FULLY DEMONSTRATED.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

L O N D O N :

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The Absolute Unlawfulness of the Stage-Entertainment.

I AM sensible that the Title of this little Book will, to the Generality of People, seem too high a Flight; that it will be looked upon as the Effect of a fanatical Spirit, carrying Matters higher than the Sobriety of Religion requires. I have only one Thing to ask of such People, that they will suspend their Judgment for awhile, and be content to read so small a Treatise as this is, before they pass any Judgment, either upon the Merits of the Subject, or the Temper of the Writer.

Had a Person some Years ago, in the Time of *Popery*, wrote against the *Worship of Images*, as a *Worship* absolutely unlawful, our Ancestors would have looked upon him as a Man of a very *irregular* Spirit. Now it is possible for the present Age to be as much mistaken in their *Pleasures*, as the former were in their *Devotions*, and that the allowed Diversions of these Times may be as great a Contradiction to the most essential Doctrines of Christianity, as the *Superstitions* and *Corruptions* of the former Ages. All therefore that I desire, is only a little *Free-thinking* upon this Subject; and that People will not as blindly reject all Reason, when it examines their Pleasures, as some blindly reject all Reason, when it examines the Nature of their Devotions.

It is possible that *something* that is called a *Diversion*, may be as contrary to the whole Nature of Religion, as any invented Superstition, and perhaps more dangerous to those that comply with it. As the *Worship of Images* was a great Sin, though under a Pretence of Piety, so the Entertainment of the *Stage* may be very sinful, though it is only intended as a *Diversion*.

For if the *Worship of Images* did not cease to be sinful, though it was intended for pious Purposes, it must be great Weakness to imagine, that the Entertainment of the *Stage* cannot be any great Sin, because it is only used as a *Diversion*.

Yet this is a Way of reasoning that a great many People fall into: They say, *Diversions* are lawful; that the *Stage* is only a

Diversion ; that People go to it without meaning any Harm, and therefore there can be no Sin in it.

But if these People were to hear a Man say, that Religion is lawful ; that the Worship of Images was an Act of Religion ; that he used Images as a Means of religious Devotion, and therefore there could be no Sin in it ; they would mightily lament the Bigotry and Blindness of his Mind. Yet surely this is as wise and reasonable, as for a Person to say, I go to a Play only as to a Diversion : I mean no Harm, and therefore there can be no Sin in it. For if Practices may be exceeding sinful, though they are intended for pious Ends, certainly Practices may be very abominable, though they are only used as Diversions.

When therefore we condemn the *Blindness* of some Christian Countries, for conforming to such gross Corruptions of Religion, we should do well to remember, that they have thus much to be pleaded in their Excuse, that what they do is under a Notion of Piety ; that it is in Obedience to the Authority both of Church and State, and that they are at the same time kept entire Strangers to the Scriptures. But how justly may the same Blindness be charged upon us, if it should appear, that without having any of their Excuses, our Public Stated Diversions are as contrary to Scripture, and the fundamental Doctrines of Religion, as any of the grossest Instances of Superstition ? If we hold it lawful to go to wicked sinful Diversions, we are as great Strangers to True Religion, as they who are pleased with buying *Indulgences*, and worshipping Pieces of holy Wood.

For a *Sinful Diversion* is the same Absurdity in Religion, as a *Corrupt Worship*, and it shews the same Blindness of Mind, and Corruption of Heart, whether we sin against God in the *Church*, or in our *Closets*, or in the *Play-House*. If there is anything contrary to Religion in any of these Places, it brings us under the same Guilt. There may perhaps be this difference, that God may be less displeas'd with such Corruptions as we comply with through a blind Devotion, than with such as we indulge ourselves in through a Wantonness of Mind, and a Fondness for Diversions.

The Matter therefore stands thus : If it should appear that the Stage-Entertainment is entirely sinful ; that it is contrary to more Doctrines of Scripture than the Worship of *Images* ; then it follows, that all who defend it, and take their Share of it, are in the same State as they who worship *Images*, and defend Drunkenness and Intemperance. For to defend or support any sinful Diversion, is the same Thing as supporting or defending any other sinful Practice. It therefore as much concerns us to know whether our Diversions are reasonable, and conformable

to Religion, as to know whether our Religion be reasonable and conformable to Truth. For if we allow ourselves in Diversions that are contrary to Religion, we are in no better a State than those whose Religion is contrary to Truth.

I have mentioned the Worship of *Images*, because it is so great a Corruption in Religion, so contrary to Scripture, and so justly abhorred by all the Reformed Churches; that the Reader may hence learn what he is to think of himself, if the Stage is ever his Diversion: For I am fully persuaded, that he will here find Arguments against the *Stage*, as strong and plain as any that can be urged against the Worship of *Images*, or any other Corruption of the most corrupt Religion.

Let it therefore be observed, that the Stage is not here condemned, as some other Diversions, because they are dangerous, and likely to be Occasions of Sin; but that it is condemned, as Drunkenness and Lewdness, as Lying and Profaneness are to be condemned, not as Things that may only be the Occasion of Sin, but such as are in their own Nature grossly sinful.

You go to hear a *Play*: I tell you, that you go to hear *Ribaldry* and *Profaneness*; that you entertain your Mind with extravagant *Thoughts*, wild *Rants*, *blasphemous Speeches*, *wanton Amours*, *profane Jest*s, and *impure Passions*. If you ask me, Where is the Sin of all this? You may as well ask me, Where is the Sin of *Swearing* and *Lying*? For it is not only a Sin against this or that particular Text of Scripture, but it is a Sin against the *whole Nature* and Spirit of our Religion.

It is a Contradiction to all Christian Holiness, and to all the Methods of arriving at it. For can anyone think that he has a true Christian Spirit, that his Heart is changed as it ought to be, that he is born again of God, whilst he is diverting himself with the Lewdness, Impudence, Profaneness, and impure Discourses of the Stage? Can he think that he is endeavouring to be holy as Christ is holy, to live by his Wisdom, and be full of his Spirit, so long as he allows himself in such an Entertainment? For there is nothing in the Nature of Christian Holiness, but what is all contrary to the whole Spirit and Temper of this Entertainment. That Disposition of Heart which is to take Pleasure in the various Representations of the *Stage*, is as directly contrary to that Disposition of Heart which Christianity requires, as Revenge is contrary to Meekness, or Malice to Good-will. Now that which is thus contrary to the whole Nature and Spirit of Religion, is certainly much more condemned, than that which is only contrary to some particular Part of it.

But this is plainly the Case of the *Stage*: It is an Entertainment that consists of lewd, impudent, profane Discourses, and as

such is contrary to the *whole Nature* of our Religion. For all the Parts of Religion, or its whole Nature has only this one Design, to give us Purity of Heart, to change the Temper and Taste of our Souls, and fill us with such holy Tempers, as may make us fit to live with God in the Society of pure and glorious Spirits.

An Entertainment therefore which applies to the Corruption of our Nature, which awakens our disordered Passions, and teaches to relish Lewdness, immoral Rant, and Profaneness, is exceeding sinful, not only as it is a Breach of some particular Duty, but as it contradicts the *whole Nature*, and opposes *every Part* of our Religion.

For, this Diversion, which consists of such Discourses as these, injures us in a very different manner from other Sins. For as Discourses are an Application to our whole Soul, as they entertain the Heart, and awaken and employ all our Passions, so they more fatally undo all that Religion has done, than several other Sins. For as Religion consists in a right Turn of Mind ; as it is a State of the Heart ; so whatever supports a quite contrary Turn of Mind and State of the Heart, has all the Contrariety to Religion that it can possibly have.

St. *John* says, *Hereby we know that he abideth in us by the Spirit which he hath given us.* There is no other certain Sign of our belonging to Christ ; every other Sign may deceive us : All the external Parts of Religion may be in vain ; it is only the State of our Mind and Spirit, that is a certain Proof that we are in a true State of Christianity. And the Reason is plain, because Religion has no other End, than to alter our Spirit, and give us new Dispositions of Heart, suitable to its Purity and Holiness. That therefore which immediately applies to our Spirit, which supports a wrong Turn of Mind, which betrays, our Hearts into impure Delights, destroys all our Religion, because it destroys that turn of Mind and Spirit, which is the sole End and Design of all our Religion.

When therefore you are asked, Why is it unlawful to swear ? You can answer, Because it is contrary to the Third Commandment. But if you are asked, Why is it unlawful to use the Entertainment of the Stage ? You can carry your answer farther, Because it is an Entertainment that is contrary to all the Parts, the whole Nature of Religion, and contradicts every holy Temper which the Spirit of Christianity requires. So that if you live in the use of this Diversion, you have no Grounds to hope that you have the Spirit and Heart of a Christian.

Thus stands the first Argument against the *Stage* : It has all the Weight in it, that the whole Weight of Religion can give to any Argument.

If you are only for the *Form* of Religion, you may take the Diversion of the Stage along with it. But if you desire the *Spirit* of Religion, if you desire to be truly religious in Heart and Mind, it is as necessary to renounce and abhor the Stage, as to seek to God, and pray for the Guidance of his Holy Spirit.

Secondly. Let the next Argument against the Stage be taken from its manifest Contrariety to this important Passage of Scripture: *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good, to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption.*

Here we see, that all corrupt and unedifying Communication is absolutely sinful, and forbidden in Scripture, for this Reason, because it *grieves the Holy Spirit*, and separates *Him* from us. But if it be thus unlawful to have any corrupt Communication of our own, can we think it lawful to go to Places set apart for that Purpose; to give our Money, and hire Persons to corrupt our Hearts with ill Discourses, and inflame all the disorderly Passions of our Nature? We have the Authority of Scripture to affirm, that *evil Communication corrupts good Manners*, and that *unedifying Discourses grieve the Holy Spirit*.

Now the *Third* Commandment is not more plain and express against *Swearing*, than this Doctrine is plain and positive against going to the *Play-House*. If you should see a Person that acknowledges the *Third* Commandment to be a divine Prohibition against Swearing, yet going to a *House*, and giving his *Money* to Persons who were there met to *Curse* and *Swear* in fine Language, and invent *Musical Oaths and Imprecations*, would you not think him mad in the highest Degree? Now consider whether there be a less Degree of Madness in going to the *Play-House*. You own that God has called you to great Purity of Conversation; that you are forbid all *foolish Discourse*, and *filthy Jestings*, as expressly as you are forbid *Swearing*; and that you are told to *let no corrupt Communication proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good, for the use of edifying*: And yet you go to a *House set apart* for corrupt Communication: You hire Persons to entertain you with all manner of *Ribaldry, Profaneness, Rant, and Impurity* of Discourse, who are to present you with *vile Thoughts, lewd Imaginations, in fine Language*, and to make *wicked, vain, and impure Discourse* more lively and affecting, than you could possibly have it in any ill Company. Now is not this Sinning with as high a Hand, and as grossly offending against plain Doctrines of Scripture, as if you were to give your *Money* to be entertained with *Musical Oaths and Curses*?

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You might reasonably think that *Woman* very ridiculous in her *Piety*, that durst not swear herself, but should nevertheless frequent *Places* to hear *Oaths*. But you may as justly think her very ridiculous in her *Modesty*, who though she dares not to say, or look, or do an immodest Thing herself, should yet give her *Money* to see *Women* forget the *Modesty* of their Sex, and talk *impudently* in a *Public Play-House*. If the *Play-House* was filled with *Rakes* and *ill Women*, there would be nothing to be wondered at in such an Assembly: For *such Persons* to be delighted with such Entertainments, is as natural, as for any *Animal* to delight in its proper *Element*. But for Persons who profess Purity and Holiness, who would not be suspected of *immodest* or *corrupt Communications*, for them to come under the Roof of a *House devoted* to such ill Purposes, and to be pleased Spectators of such Actions and Discourses, as are the Pleasures of the most abandoned Persons; for them to give their Money to be thus entertained, is such a Contradiction to all Piety and common Sense, as cannot be sufficiently exposed.

Consider now, if you please, the Worship of *Images*. You wonder that any People can be so blind, so regardless of Scripture, as to comply with such a Devotion. It is indeed wonderful, But is it not as wonderful, that you should seek and delight in an Entertainment made up of Lewdness, Profaneness, and all the extravagant Rant of disordered Passions, when the Scripture positively charges you to forbear all *corrupt Communication*, as that which *grieves the Holy Spirit*, and separates him from us? Is not this being *blind* and *regardless* of Scripture in as high a degree? For how can the Scripture speak higher, or plainer, or enforce its doctrines with a more dreadful Penalty, than that which is here declared? For without the Holy Spirit of God, we are but Figures of Christians, and must die in our Sins.

If it was said in Scripture, Forbear from all Image-Worship, because it *grieves and removes the Holy Spirit* from you, perhaps you would think the Worshippers of *Images* under greater Blindness, and Corruption of Heart, than they now are. But observe, that if you go to the *Stage*, you offend against Scripture in as high a degree as they, who should worship Images, though the Scriptures forbid it as *grievous to the Holy Spirit*.

If therefore I was to rest here, I might fairly say, that I had proved the Stage to be as contrary to Scripture, as the Worship of *Images* is contrary to the Second Commandment. You think it a strange Contrariety, to see People on their Knees before an *Image* at a Time that the Heart and Mind should raise itself to God. But then, is it not as strange a Contrariety, that a Person should indulge himself in the lewd profane Discourses of the

Stage, who should have his Heart and Mind preserved in the Wisdom, the Purity, and Spirit of Religion? For an Image is not so contrary to God, as Plays are contrary to the Wisdom, the Purity, and the Spirit of Scripture. An Image is only contrary to God, as it has no Power or Perfection: But *Plays* are contrary to Scripture, as the Devil is contrary to God, as they are full of another Spirit and Temper. He therefore that indulges himself in the wicked Temper of the *Stage*, sins against as plain Scripture, and offends against more doctrines of it, than he that uses *Images* in his Devotions.

I proceed now to a Third Argument against the *Stage*.

When you see the *Players* acting with Life and Spirit, Men and Women *equally bold* in all Instances of *Profaneness*, *Passion*, and *Immodesty*, I daresay you never suspect any of them to be Persons of *Christian Piety*. You cannot, even in your Imagination, join Piety to such Manners, and such a Way of Life. Your Mind will no more allow you to join Piety with the Behaviour of the *Stage*, than it will allow you to think *two* and *two* to be *ten*. And perhaps you had rather see your Son chained to a *Galley*, or your daughter driving *Plough*, than getting their Bread on the *Stage*, by administering in so scandalous a manner to the Vices and corrupt Pleasures of the World. Let this therefore be another Argument, to prove the *Absolute Unlawfulness* of going to a *Play*. For consider with yourself, Is the Business of *Players* so contrary to Piety, so inconsistent with the Spirit and Temper of a true Christian, that it is next to a Contradiction to suppose them united, how then can you take yourself to be *innocent*, who *delight* in their Sins, and *hire* them to commit them?

You may make yourself a Partaker of other Men's Sins, by Negligence, and for want of reproofing them: But certainly, if you stand by, and assist Men in their evil Actions, if you make their Vices your Pleasures and Entertainment, and pay your Money to be so entertained, you make yourself a Partaker of their Sins in a very high degree; and consequently, it must be as unlawful to go to a *Play*, as it is unlawful to approve, encourage, assist, and reward a Man for *Renouncing* a Christian Life.

Let therefore all *Men* and *Women* that go to a *Play*, ask themselves this Question; Whether it suits with their Religion, to act the *Parts* that are there acted? Perhaps they would think this as inconsistent with that degree of Piety that they profess, as to do the vilest Things. But let them consider, that it must be a wicked and unlawful Pleasure to delight in anything, that they dare not to do themselves. Let them also consider, that they are really *acting* those *Indecencies* and *Impieties* themselves, which

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they think is the particular Guilt of the *Players*. For a Person may very justly be said to do that *himself*, which he *pays* for the doing, and which is done for his Pleasure.

You must therefore, if you would be consistent with yourself, as much abhor the Thoughts of being at a *Play*, as of being a *Player* yourself. For to think that you must abhor the one, and not the other, is as absurd as to suppose, that you must be temperate yourself, but may assist, encourage, and reward other People for their Intemperance. The Business of a *Player* is profane, wicked, lewd, and immodest: To be anyway therefore approving, assisting, or encouraging him in such a Way of Life, is as evidently sinful, as it is sinful to assist and encourage a Man in *Stealing*, or any other Wickedness.

This Argument is not far-fetched, or founded in any Subtilties of Reasoning, but is so plain and obvious, that the meanest capacity must needs understand it. I may venture to challenge anyone to shew me, that the Business of the *Player* is a more Christian Employment than that of *Robbers*. For he must know very little of the Nature of Religion, that can look upon Lust, Profaneness, and disorderly Passions, to be less contrary to Religion, than the taking Money from the right Owner. And a Person who devotes himself to this Employment, to get his Bread by gratifying the corrupt Taste of the World with wanton, wild, profane Discourses, may be justly supposed to have a more corrupt Heart himself, than many a Man who has taken unlawful Ways of relieving his Wants.

I speak to this Matter with thus much Plainness, because there is so plain Reason for it; and because I think, there is as much Justice and Tenderness in telling every *Player* that his Employment is abominably sinful, and inconsistent with the Christian, as in telling the same Thing to a *Thief*. As it ought to be reckoned no Sign of Enmity or Ill-will, if I should attempt to prove to *Malefactors* the horrid Nature of their Sins, and the Necessity of a sincere Repentance, so I hope it will not be looked upon as a Sign of ill Temper, or Anger at any particular Persons, that I set the Business of *Players* among the most abominable Crimes. For it is with no other Intent, but that they themselves may avoid the dreadful Guilt of so wicked a Profession, and that other People may not dare any longer to support them in it. For it certainly concerns all People, who are not so void of Religion as to be *Players* themselves, to be strictly careful that they have no Share in the Guilt of so unchristian a Profession.

This we reckon very good Reasoning in all other Cases. A Person that dares not *steal*, thinks it equally sinful to encourage Theft. Anyone that abhors *Perjury*, or *Murder*, knows that he

commits those Sins, if he encourages other People in them. What therefore must we think of ourselves, if the Blasphemy, Profaneness, Lewdness, Immodesty, and wicked Rant of Plays, are Parts that we dare not act ourselves, yet make it our Diversion to be delighted with those that do? Shall we think ourselves more enlightened, or more reasonable, than those that worship *Images*? The Second Commandment cannot fright them from the use of Images, but it is because they have had a superstitious Education, are taught to be blindly obedient, and have the Pretence of Piety for what they do. But all the grossest Sins of the *Stage* cannot fright us from it, though we see the Sins, and have nothing to pretend for Compliance, but mere idleness and Diversion.

If anyone was to collect all the foolish vain *Devotions*, which poor mistaken Creatures have paid to *Images*, it would sufficiently justify our Abhorrence of them, and shew the Wisdom of the *Reformation* in abolishing the Use of them. But if a Person was to make a Collection of all the wicked, profane, blphemous, lewd, impudent, detestable Things, that are said in the Play-House only in *one Season*, it would appear to be such a Mass of Sin, as would sufficiently justify anyone in saying, that the Business of Players is the most wicked and detestable Profession in the World.

All People therefore who ever enter into their House, or contribute the smallest Mite towards it, must look upon themselves, as having been so far Friends to the most powerful Instruments of Debauchery, and to be guilty of contributing to a bold, open, and public Exercise of Impudence, Impurity, and Profaneness. When we encourage any good Design, either with our Consent, our Money, or Presence, we are apt to take a great deal of Merit to ourselves; we presently conclude that we are Partakers of all that is *good and praise-worthy in it*, of all the Benefit that arises from it, because we are Contributors towards it. A Man does not think that he has no Share in some public Charity, because he is but one in ten thousand that contributes towards it; but if it be a religious Charity, and attended with great and happy Effects, his Conscience tells him that he is a Sharer of *all* that great Good to which he contributes. Now let this teach us, how we ought to judge of the Guilt of encouraging anything that is bad, either with our *Consent*, our *Money*, or our *Presence*. We must not consider how much our single Part contributes towards it, nor how much less we contribute than several thousands of other People, but we must look at the *whole thing* in itself, and whatever there is of Evil in it, or whatever Evil arises from it, we must charge ourselves with a Share of the whole

Guilt of so great an Evil. Thus it is that we hope and desire to partake of the Merit of all good Designs, which we any way countenance and encourage; and thus it is that the Guilt of all wicked things, which we countenance and assist, will certainly be laid to our Charge.

To proceed now to a fourth Argument. When I consider *Churches*, and the Matter of *Divine Service*, that it consists of holy Readings, Prayers, and Exhortations to Piety, there is Reason to think that the House of God is a natural Means of promoting Piety and Religion, and rendering Men devout, and sensible of their Duty to God. The very Nature of Divine Assemblies, thus carried on, has this direct Tendency: I ask you whether this is not very plain, that *Churches* thus employed should have this Effect? Consider therefore the *Play-House*, and the Matter of the Entertainment there, as it consists of *Love-Intrigues*, *blasphemous Passions*, *profane Discourses*, *lewd Descriptions*, *filthy Jest*s, and all the most extravagant Rant of wanton profligate Persons of both Sexes, heating and inflaming one another with all the *Wantonness* of Address, the *Immodesty* of Motion, and *Lewdness* of Thought, that Wit can invent; consider, I say, whether it be not plain, that a House so employed is as certainly serving the Cause of *Immorality* and *Vice*, as the House of God is serving the Cause of *Piety*? For what is there in our *Church Service* that shews it to be *useful* to Piety and Holiness, what is there in Divine Worship to correct and amend the Heart, but what is directly contrary to all that is doing in the *Play-House*? So that one may with the same Assurance affirm, that the *Play-House*, not only when some very profane Play is on the *Stage*, but in its *daily common* Entertainments, is as certainly the *House of the Devil*, as the Church is the *House of God*. For though the Devil be not professedly worshipped by Hymns directed to him, yet most that is there sung is to his Service; he is there *obeyed* and *pleased* in as certain a manner, as God is worshipped and honoured in the Church.

You must easily see, that the Charge against the *Play-House* is not the Effect of any *particular Temper*, or Weakness of Mind; that it is not an *uncertain Conjecture*, or *religious Whimsy*; but it is a Judgment founded as plainly in the *Nature* and *Reason* of Things, as when it is affirmed, that the House of God is of Service to Religion: And he that absolutely condemns the *Play-House*, as wicked and of a corrupting Nature, proceeds upon as much Truth and Certainty, as he that absolutely commends the *House of God*, as holy and tending to promote Piety.

When therefore anyone pretends to vindicate the *Stage* to you, as a proper Entertainment for holy and religious Persons,

you ought to reject the Attempt with as much Abhorrence, as if he should offer to shew you, that our *Church Service* was rightly formed for those Persons to join in, who are *devoted to the Devil*. For to talk of the *Lawfulness* and *Usefulness* of the *Stage* is full as absurd, and contrary to the plain Nature of Things, as to talk of the *Unlawfulness* and *Mischief* of the *Service of the Church*. He therefore that tells you, that you may safely go to the *Play-House*, as an innocent useful Entertainment of your Mind, commits the same Offence against common Sense, as if he should tell you, that it was dangerous to attend at *Divine Service*, and that its Prayers and Hymns were great *Pollutions* of the Mind.

For the Matter and Manner of *Stage-Entertainments* are as undeniable Proofs, and as obvious to common Sense, that the House belongs to the Devil, and is the Place of his Honour, as the Matter and Manner of *Church Service* prove that the Place is appropriated to God.

Observe therefore, that as you do not want the Assistance of anyone to shew you the *Usefulness* and *Advantage* of *Divine Service*, because the thing is plain, and speaks for itself, so neither, on the other hand, need you anyone to shew the *Unlawfulness* and *Mischief* of the *Stage*, because there the thing is equally plain, and speaks for itself. So that you are to consider yourself as having the same Assurance, that the *Stage* is wicked, and to be abhorred and avoided by all Christians, as you have, that the *Service of the Church* is holy, and to be sought after by all Lovers of Holiness. Consider therefore, that your Conduct, with relation to the *Stage*, is not a Matter of *Nicety*, or *scrupulous Exactness*, but that you are as certain that you do wrong in as notorious a manner, when you go to the *Play-House*, as you are certain that you do right, when you go to *Church*.

Now it is of mighty Use to conceive Things in a right manner, and to see them as they are in their own Nature. Whilst you consider the *Play-House* only as a *Place of Diversion*, it may perhaps give no Offence to your Mind, there is nothing *shocking* in the Thought of it; but if you would lay aside this Name of it for awhile, and consider it in its *own Nature*, as it really is, you would find that you are as much deceived, if you consider the *Play-House* as only a *Place of Diversion*, as you would be, if you considered the House of God only as a *Place of Labour*.

When therefore you are tempted to go to a *Play*, either from your own Inclination, or from the Desire of a Friend, fancy that you was asked in plain Terms to go to the Place of the *Devil's Abode*, where he holds his *filthy Court* of evil Spirits; that you was asked to join in an Entertainment, where he was at the Head

of it; where the whole of it was in order to his Glory, that Men's Hearts and Minds might be separated from God, and plunged into all the Pollutions of Sin and Brutality. Fancy that you are going to a Place that as certainly belongs to the Devil, as the *heathen Temples* of old, where *Brutes* were worshipped, where *wanton Hymns* were sung to *Venus*, and drunken Songs to the God of Wine. Fancy that you are as certainly going to the Devil's *Triumph*, as if you were going to those *old Sports*, where People committed Murder, and offered Christians to be devoured by wild Beasts, for the Diversion of the Spectators. Now whilst you consider the *Play-House* in this View, I suppose you can no more go to a *Play*, than you can renounce your Christianity.

Consider now therefore, that you have not been frightening yourself with *groundless Imaginations*, but that which you have here fancied of the *Play-House* is as strictly true, as if you had been fancying, that when you go to Church you go to the House of God, where the heavenly Hosts attend upon his Service; and that when you read the Scriptures, and sing holy Hymns, you join with the Choirs above, and do God's Will on Earth as it is done in Heaven. For observe, I pray you, how justly that Opinion of the *Play-House* is founded. For was it a Joy to God to see *Idols* worshipped, to see Hymns and Adorations offered up to impure and filthy Deities? Were Places and Festivals appointed for such Ends justly esteemed Places and Festivals devoted to the Devil? Now give the Reason why all this was justly reckoned a Service to the Devil, and you will give as good a Reason why the *Play-House* is to be esteemed his *Temple*.

For what though Hymns and Adorations are not offered to impure and filthy Deities, yet if *Impurity* and *Filthiness* is the *Entertainment*, if immodest Songs, profane Rant, if Lust and Passion entertain the Audience, the Business is the same, and the Assembly does the *same Honour* to the Devil, though they be not gathered together in the Name of some *Heathen God*.

For Impurity and Profaneness in the Worshippers of the True God is as acceptable a Service to the Devil, as Impurity and Profaneness in Idolators; and perhaps a *lewd Song*, in an Assembly of Christians, gives him a greater Delight than in a Congregation of *Heathens*.

If therefore we may say, that a *House* or *Festival* was the Devil's, because he was *delighted* with it, because what was there done, was an *acceptable Service* to him, we may be assured that the *Play-House* is as really the House of the Devil, as any other House ever was. Nay, it is reasonable to think, that the *Play-Houses* in this Kingdom are a greater Pleasure to him, than any

Temple he ever had in the Heathen World. For as it is a greater Conquest to make the Disciples of Christ delight in *Lewdness* and *Profaneness*, than ignorant Heathens, so a *House* that, in the Midst of *Christian Churches*, trains up Christians to *Lewdness* and *Profaneness*, that makes the Worshippers of Christ flock together in Crowds, to rejoice in an Entertainment that is as contrary to the Spirit of Christ, as *Hell* is contrary to *Heaven*; a House so employed may justly be reckoned a more delightful Habitation of the Devil, than any *Temple* in the Heathen World.

When therefore you go to the *Play-House*, you have as much Assurance that you go to the Devil's peculiar Habitation, that you submit to his Designs, and rejoice in his Diversions, which are his best Devices against Christianity, you have as much Assurance of this, as that they who worshipped filthy Deities were in reality Worshippers of the Devil.

Hence it appears, that if instead of considering the *Play-House*, as only a Place of Diversion, you will but examine what Materials it is made of; if you will but consider the Nature of the Entertainment, and what is there doing; you will find it as wicked a Place, as sinful a Diversion, and as truly the peculiar Pleasure of the Devil, as any wicked Place, or sinful Diversion in the Heathen World. When therefore you are asked to go to a Play, do not think that you are only asked to go to a Diversion, but be assured that you are asked to *yield* to the Devil, to go over to his Party, and to make one of his Congregation. That if you do go, you have not only the Guilt of *buying* so much vain Communication, and paying People for being wicked, but are also as certainly guilty of going to the Devil's House, and doing him the same Honour, as if you were to partake of some *Heathen Festival*. You must consider, that all the Laughter there is not only vain and foolish, but that it is a Laughter among Devils, that you are upon profane Ground, and hearing Music in the very Porch of Hell.

Thus it is in the Reason of the thing. And if we should now consider the State of our *Play-House*, as it is in Fact, we should find it answering all these Characters, and producing Effects suitable to its Nature. But I shall forbear this Consideration, it being as unnecessary to tell the Reader, that our *Play-House* is in Fact the *Sink of Corruption and Debauchery*; that it is the general Rendezvous of the most profligate Persons of both Sexes; that it corrupts the Air, and turns the adjacent Places into public Nuisances; this is as unnecessary, as to tell him that the *Exchange* is a Place of *Merchandise*.

Now it is to be observed, that this is not the State of the *Play-*

House through any accidental Abuse, as any innocent or good thing may be abused ; but that Corruption and Debauchery are the truly natural and genuine Effects of the *Stage-Entertainment*. Let not therefore anyone say, that he is not answerable for those Vices and Debaucheries which are occasioned by the *Play-House*, for so far as he partakes of the Pleasure of the *Stage*, and is an Encourager of it, so far he is chargeable with those Disorders which necessarily are occasioned by it. If Evil arises from our doing our Duty, or our Attendance at any *good Design*, we are not to be frightened at it ; but if Evil arises from anything as its *natural* and *genuine* Effect, in all such Cases, so far as we contribute to the Cause, so far we make ourselves guilty of the Effects. So that all who any way assist the *Play-House*, or ever encourage it by their Presence, make themselves chargeable, in some degree, with all the Evils and Vices which follow from it. Since therefore it cannot be doubted by anyone, whether the *Play-House* be a Nursery of Vice and Debauchery, since the evil Effects it has upon People's Manners is as visible as the Sun at Noon, one would imagine, that all People of *Virtue* and *Modesty* should not only avoid it, but avoid it with the utmost Abhorrence ; that they should be so far from entering into it, that they should detest the very Sight of it. For what a Contradiction is it to common Sense, to hear a Woman lamenting the miserable Lewdness and Debauchery of the Age, the vicious Taste and irregular Pleasures of the World, and at the same time dressing herself to meet the lewdest Part of the World at the Fountain-head of all Lewdness, and making herself one of that Crowd, where every abandoned Wretch is glad to be present ? She may fancy that she hates and abominates their Vices, but she may depend upon it, that till she hates and abominates the Place of vicious Pleasures ; till she dares not come near an Entertainment, which is the Cause of so great Debauchery, and the Pleasure of the most debauched People ; till she is thus disposed, she wants the truest Sign of a real and religious Abhorrence of the Vices of the Age.

For to wave all other Considerations, I would only ask her a Question or two on the single Article of *Modesty*. What is *Modesty* ? Is it a little *mechanical outside* Behaviour, that goes no farther than a few *Forms* and *Modes* at particular Times and Places ? Or is it a *real Temper*, a natural Disposition of the Heart, that is founded in *Religion* ? Now if *Modesty* is only a mechanical Observance of a little outside Behaviour, then I can easily perceive how a modest Woman may frequent *Plays* ; there is no Inconsistency for such a one to be one thing in one Place, and another in another Place ; to disdain an immodest Conversa-

tion, and yet at the same Time relish and delight in immodest and impudent Speeches in a public *Play-House*. But if Modesty is a *real Temper* and Disposition of the Heart, that is founded on the Principles of Religion, then I confess I cannot comprehend, how a Person of such Modesty should ever come twice into the *Play-house*. For if it is Reason and Religion that have inspired her with a modest Heart, that make her careful of her Behaviour, that make her hate and abhor every Word, or Look, or Hint in Conversation that has the Appearance of Lewdness, that make her shun the Company of such as talk with too much Freedom; if she is thus modest in *common Life*, from a Principle of Religion, a Temper of Heart, is it possible for such a one (I do not say to seek) but to bear with the Immodesty and Impudence of the *Stage*? For must not Immodesty and Impudence, must not loose and wanton Discourse be the same *hateful things*, and give the same Offence to the modest Mind, in one Place as in another? And must not that Place, which is the Seat of Immodesty, where Men and Women are trained up in Lewdness, where almost every Day in the Year is a Day devoted to the foolish Representations of *Rant, Lust, and Passion*; must not such a Place of all others be the most odious to the Mind, that is *truly modest* upon Principles of *Reason and Religion*? One would suppose, that such a Person should as much abominate the Place, as any other filthy Sight, and be as much offended with an Invitation to it, as if she was invited to see an immodest Picture. For the Representations of the *Stage*, the inflamed Passions of Lovers there described, are as gross an Offence to the Ear, as any Representation that can offend the Eye.

It ought not to be concluded, that because I affirm the *Play-House* to be an Entertainment *contrary* to Modesty, that therefore I accuse all People as void of Modesty whoever go to it. I might affirm, that *Transubstantiation* is contrary to all *Sense and Reason*; but then it would be a wrong Conclusion, to say that I affirmed that all who believe it are void of all *Sense and Reason*.

Now as *Prejudices*, the Force of *Education*, the Authority of *Numbers*, the Way of the World, the Example of *great Names*, may make People *believe*, so the same Causes may make People act against *all Sense and Reason*, and be guilty of Practices which no more suit with the *Purity* of their Religion, than *Transubstantiation* agrees with *common Sense*.

To proceed. *Trebonia* thus excuses herself for going to the *Play-House*. I go but seldom; and then either with my *Mother* or my *Aunt*: We always know the Play beforehand, and never go on the *Sacrament-Week*: And what harm pray, says she, can

there be in this? It breaks in upon no Rules of my Life. I neglect no Part of my Duty: I go to *Church*, and perform the same Devotions at home, as on other Days.

It ought to be observed, that this Excuse can only be allowed, where the Diversion itself is innocent: It must therefore first be considered, what the Entertainment is in itself; whether it be suitable to the Spirit and Temper of Religion: For if it is right and proper in itself, it needs no Excuse; but if it be *wrong* and *contrary* to Religion, we are not to use it *cautiously*, but to avoid it *constantly*.

Trebonia must be told, that it is no Proof of the Innocence of a Thing, that it does not interfere with her *Hours of Duty*, nor break the Regularity of her Life; for very wicked Ways of spending Time may yet be consistent with a regular Distribution of our Hours. She must therefore consider, not only whether such a Diversion hinders the Regularity of her Life, or breaks in upon her Hours of Devotion, public or private, but whether it hinders, or any way affects the *Spirit* and *Temper* which all her Devotions aspire after. Is it conformable to that heavenly Affection, that Love of God, that Purity of Heart, that Wisdom of Mind, that Perfection of Holiness, that Contempt of the World, that Watchfulness and Self-denial, that Humility and Fear of Sin, which Religion requires? Is it conformable to those Graces, which are to be the *daily Subject* of all her Prayers? This is the only way for her to know the *Innocence* of going to a Play. If what she there hears and sees, has no *Contrariety* to any *Grace* or *Virtue* that she prays for; if all that there passes, be fit for the *Purity* and *Piety* of one that is led by the Spirit of Christ, and is *working out* her *Salvation with fear and trembling*; if the Stage be an Entertainment that may be thought to be according to the Will of God; then she disposes of an Hour very innocently, though her *Mother* or her *Aunt* were not with her.

But if the *contrary* to all this be true; if most of what she there *hears* and *sees* be as contrary to the *Piety* and *Purity* of Christianity, as *Feasting* is contrary to *Fasting*; if the *House* which she supports with her *Money*, and encourages with her *Presence*, be a notorious Means of Corruption, visibly carrying on the Cause of *Vice* and *Debauchery*; she must not think herself excused for being with her *Mother*.

Trebonia would perhaps think it strange, to hear one of her virtuous Acquaintance giving the like Reason for going now and then to a *Masquerade*.

Now this Diversion is new in our Country; and therefore most People *yet* judge of it in the manner that they ought, because they are not blinded by *Use and Custom*. But let any-

one give but the true Reasons, why a Person of Virtue and Piety should not go to *Masquerades*, and the same Reasons will as plainly shew, that Persons of Virtue and Piety should keep at as great a distance from the *Play-House*. For the Entertainment of the *Stage* is more directly opposite to the Purity of Religion, than *Masquerades*, and is besides as certain a Means of Corruption, and serves all bad Ends in as great a degree as they do. They only differ, as bad Things of the same Kind may differ from one another. So that if the evil Use, and ill Consequences of *Masquerades*, be a sufficient Reason to deter People of Piety from partaking of them, the same evil Use, and ill Consequences of the *Stage*, ought to keep all People of Virtue from it. If People will consult their *Tempers* only, they may take the Entertainment of one, and condemn the other; as following the same Guide, they may abhor *Intemperance*, and indulge *Malice*: But if they will consult Religion, and make that the Ground of their Opinions, they will find more and stronger Reasons for a constant *Abhorrence* of the *Stage*, than of *Masquerades*.

Again: If *Trebonia* should hear a Person excusing her Use of *Paint* in this manner; That truly she painted but *very seldom*; that she always said her Prayers first; that she never used it on *Sundays*, or the Week before the *Communion*: *Trebonia*, would pity such a *Mixture* of Religion and Weakness. She would desire her to use her Reason, and either to allow *Painting* to be innocent, suitable to the *Sobriety* and *Humility* of a Christian, or else to think it is as unlawful at one Time, as at another. But, *Trebonia*, would you not think it still stranger, that she should condemn *Painting* as *odious* and *sinful*, and yet think that the *Regularity* of her Life, and the *Exactness* of her Devotions, might make it lawful for her to paint *now* and *then*?

I doubt not but you plainly see the Weakness and Folly of such a Pretence for *Painting*, under such Rules, at certain Times. And if you would but as impartially consider your Pretences for going sometimes to the *Play-House*, under the same Rules, you would certainly find them more weak and unreasonable. For *Painting* may with more Reason be reckoned an *innocent Ornament*, than the *Play-House* an *innocent Diversion*. And it supposes a greater *Vanity* of Mind, a more *perverted* Judgment, and a deeper Corruption of Heart, to seek the Diversion of the *Stage*, than to take the Pleasure of a *borrowed Colour*. *Painting*, when considered in itself, is undoubtedly a great Sin; but when it is compared to the Use of the *Stage*, it is but as the *Mote* compared to the *Beam*.

I know you are offended at this *Comparison*, because you judge by your *Temper*, and *Prejudices*, and do not consider the things

as they are in themselves, by the pure Light of *Reason* and *Religion*. *Painting* has not been the way of your Family; it is supposed to be the Practice but of *very few*; and those who use it endeavour to *conceal* it: This makes you readily condemn it. On the contrary, your *Mother* and your *Aunt* carry you to the *Play*; you see *virtuous* People there, and the same Persons that fill our *Churches*; so that your *Temper* is as much engaged to think it lawful to go sometimes to a *Play*, as it is engaged to think the Use of *Paint* always odious and sinful.

Lay aside therefore these Prejudices for a while, and fancy that you had been trained up in some Corner of the World in the Principles of Christianity, and had never heard either of the *Play-House* or *Painting*. Imagine now that you was to examine the Lawfulness of them by the Doctrines of Scripture; you would first desire to be told the Nature of these Things, and what they meant. You would be told, that *Painting* was the borrowing of *Colours* from Art, to make the Face look more beautiful. Now though you found no express Text of Scripture against *Painting*, you would find that it was expressly against *Tempers* required in Scripture; you would therefore condemn it, as proceeding from a *Vanity of Mind*, and *Fondness of Beauty*. You would see that the Harm of *Painting* consisted in this, that it proceeded from a *Temper of Mind* contrary to the *Sobriety* and *Humility* of a Christian, which indeed is harm enough; because this *Humility* and *Sobriety* of Mind is as essential to *Religion*, as *Charity* and *Devotion*. So that in judging according to Scripture, you would hold it as unreasonable to *paint sometimes*, as to be sometimes *malicious, indevout, proud, or false*.

You are now to consider the *Stage*; you are to keep close to Scripture, and fancy that you yet know nothing of *Plays*. You ask therefore first, what the *Stage* or *Play-House* is? You are told that it is a *Place* where all sorts of People meet to be entertained with *Discourses, Actions, and Representations*, which are recommended to the Heart by beautiful Scenes, the Splendour of Lights, and the Harmony of Music. You are told that these *Discourses* are the Invention of Men of Wit and Imagination, which describe imaginary *Intrigues* and *Scenes of Love*, and introduce *Men* and *Women* discoursing, raving, and acting in all the wild indecent Transports of *Lust* and *Passion*. You are told, that the *Diversion* partly consists of *lewd* and *profane* Songs sung to fine Music, and partly of extravagant Dialogues between *immodest Persons* talking in a Style of *Love* and *Madness*, that is nowhere else to be found, and entertaining the *Christian Audience* with all the Violence of *Passion*, Corruption of Heart, Wantonness of Mind, *Immodesty* of Thought, and Pro-

fane Jest, that the Wit of the *Poet* is able to invent. You are told, that the *Players*, Men and Women, are trained up to act and represent all the Descriptions of Lust and Passion in the *liveliest manner*, to add a Lewdness of Action to lewd Speeches; that they get their Livelihood by *Cursing, Swearing, and Ranting* for three Hours together to an Assembly of *Christians*.

Now though you find no particular Text of Scripture condemning the *Stage*, or *Tragedy* or *Comedy*, in express Words; yet what is much more, you find that such Entertainments are a gross Contradiction to the *whole Nature* of Religion; they are not contrary to this or that particular Temper, but are contrary to that *whole Turn of Heart and Mind* which Religion requires. Painting is contrary to Humility, and therefore is to be avoided as sinful; but the Entertainment of the *Stage*, as it consists of *blasphemous* Expressions, *wicked* Speeches, *swearing, cursing*, and *profaning* the Name of God, as it abounds with *impious* Rant, *filthy* Jest, *distracted* Passions, gross Descriptions of *Lust*, and *wanton Songs*, is a *Contradiction to every Doctrine* that our Saviour and his Apostles have taught us. So that to abhor *Painting* at all times, because it supposes a Vanity of Mind, and is contrary to Humility, and yet think there is a lawful Time to go to the *Play-House*, is as contrary to common-Sense, as if a Man should hold that it was lawful sometimes to offend against *all the Doctrines* of Religion, and yet always unlawful to offend against *any one* Doctrine of Religion.

If therefore you were to come (as I supposed) from some Corner of the World, where you had been used to live and judge by the Rules of Religion, and upon your Arrival here had been told what *Painting* and the *Stage* was; as you would not expect to see Persons of *religious Humility* carrying their Daughters to *Paint-Shops*, or inviting their pious Friends to go along with them, so much less would you expect to hear, that *devout, pious*, and *modest* Women carried their Daughters, and invited their virtuous Friends to meet them at the Play. Least of all could you imagine, that there were any People too *pious* and *devout* to indulge the Vanity of *Painting*, and yet not devout and pious enough to abhor the Immodesty, Profaneness, Ribaldry, Immorality, and Blasphemy of the *Stage*.

To proceed. A *polite Writer** of a late Paper thought he had sufficiently ridiculed a certain Lady's Pretensions to *Piety*, when, speaking of her *Closet*, he says,

Together lie her Prayer-Book and Paint,
At once to improve the Sinner and the Saint.

* *Spectator*, No. 79.

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Now, whence comes it that this Writer judges so rightly, and speaks the Truth so plainly, in the Matter of Painting? Whence comes it that the generality of his Readers think his Observation just, and join with him in it? It is because Painting is not yet an *acknowledged Practice*, but is for the most part reckoned a *Shameful Instance* of Vanity. Now as we are not prejudiced in favour of this Practice, and have no Excuses to make for our *own Share* in it, so we judge of it impartially, and immediately perceive its Contrariety to a Religious *Temper* and *State* of Mind. This *Writer* saw this in so strong a Light, that he does not scruple to suppose, that *Paint* is as natural and proper a Means to improve the *Sinner*, as the Prayer-Book is to improve the Saint.

I should therefore hope, that it need not be imputed to any *Sourness* of Temper, Religious *Weakness*, or *Dulness* of Spirits, if a *Clergyman* should imagine, that the *Profaneness*, *Debauchery*, *Lewdness*, and *Blasphemy* of the *Stage*, is as natural Means to improve the *Sinner*, as the *Bottle of Paint*: Or if he should venture to shew, that the *Church* and the *Play-House* are as ridiculous a Contradiction, and do no more suit with the *same* Person, than the *Prayer-Book* and *Paint*.

I shall now make a Reflection or two upon the present celebrated Entertainment of the *Stage*, which is so much to the Taste of the People, that it has been acted almost every Night one whole Season.

The first Scene is said to be a *magnificent Palace discovered: Venus attended with Graces and Pleasures*.

Now how is it possible, that such a Scene as this should be fit for the Entertainment of Christians? Can *Venus* and her *Graces* and *Pleasures* talk any Language that is *like* themselves, but what must be *unlike* to the Spirit of Christianity? The very proposing such a Scene as this, supposes the Audience to be fit for the Entertainment of *Lust* and *Wantonness*. For what else can *Venus* and her *Pleasures* offer to them? Had we any Thing of the Spirit of Christianity in us, or were earnestly desirous of those holy Tempers, which are to render us pure in the Eyes of God, we should abominate the very Proposal of such a Scene as this, as knowing that it must be an Entertainment fitter for *public Stews*, than for People who make any Pretences to the Holiness and Purity of the Spirit of Christ. The Scripture says, *Mortify therefore your members which are upon earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence*. This is the Religion by which we are to be saved. But can the Wit of Man invent anything more contrary to this, than an Entertainment from *Venus* attended with her *Pleasures*?

That People should have such a Religion as this, and at the same time such an Entertainment, is an astonishing Instance of the Degeneracy of the present State of Christianity among us. For if the first Scene had been the *Devil attended with Fiends, cursing and blaspheming*, no one could shew that such a Scene was more contrary to the Religion of *Christians*, than a Scene with *Venus* and her *Pleasures*. And if the Devil himself had been consulted by our *Stage Wits*, which of these Scenes he had rather have, he would certainly have chosen *Venus* and her *Pleasures*, as much fitter to debauch and corrupt a Christian Audience, than a Scene of *cursing* and *blaspheming*.

The Scripture thus describes the Infatuation of the old Idolaters. *And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burnt part of it in the fire; yea, I have also baked bread upon the coals thereof, and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? Shall I fall down to the Stock of a Tree?** It is here reckoned a strange Instance of their Blindness, that they did not make so easy a Reflection upon the nature of Things. But how near are we to this Blindness, if we do not make as easy a Reflection upon this Entertainment; for the very mentioning of such a *Scene* as this, is as plain a Demonstration that the Entertainment is contrary to our Religion, as the *burning* of Wood, and its falling into *Ashes*, is a Demonstration that Wood is of a Nature contrary to God. How are we therefore more enlightened, if none of us considers in his Heart, neither is there Knowledge nor Understanding in us to say, *These are the filthy Deities of the Devil's Invention, with which he polluted and defiled the Heathen World. And shall we still preserve their Power among us? Shall we make such Abominations our Diversion?*

For if we worship the God of *Purity*, if we cannot worship him but with hearts devoted to *Purity*, what have we to do with these Images of *Lewdness*? If we dress a *Venus*, and celebrate her Power, and make her *Graces* and *Pleasures* meet us in wanton *Forms*, and wanton *Language*, is it not as absurd, as contrary to our Religion, as to set up a *Baal* in the Temple of God? What greater Contradiction is there, either to Reason or Religion, in one Case than in the other? *Baal* is as fit for our Devotions, as *Venus* is for our Rejoicings and Praises.

So that the very naming of such a Scene as this is *unlawful Language*, and carries as great a Contrariety to our Religion, as the Worship of *Baal*.

Two Women (whom I suppose to be baptized Christians)

* *Isaiah* xliv. 19.

represent *Venus* and *Diana*, singing, and celebrating their Lusts and Wantonness, as the *Sweets that Life improve*.

Now, if a common *Prostitute* was to come drunk out of a *Brandy-Shop* singing their Words, she would act like herself. No one could say that she had forgot her Character, or was *singing* one way, and *living* another. And I dare say, there is no *Rake* in the Audience so debauched, as not to think this a sufficient Celebration of the Praises and Happiness of his Pleasures.

But what do other People do here? Is there any Entertainment in this Place for *pious, sober, and devout* Minds? Does it become them to sing the Praises of Debauchery, or sit among those that do?

When we hear of a *Witches' Feast*, we do not hear of any but *Witches* that go to it: The Mirth and Joy of such Meetings is left wholly to themselves. Now if these impudent Celebrations of *Venus* and her *Pleasures* were left wholly to *Rakes* and *Prostitutes*; if we reckoned it an Entertainment as contrary to Religion, as a *Witches' Feast*; it would only shew, that we judged as rightly in the one Case as in the other. And indeed, one would think, that no Christian need to be told, that *Venus* and her *Graces* are as much the Devil's *Machinery* as *Witches* and *Imps*.

To proceed. If a Person in Conversation was to address himself to a *Modest Lady* in the words of this Entertainment, she would think herself very ill-used, and that she ought to resent such Treatment. She would think, that her *Modesty* might well be questioned, if she bore such Language.

But how it is consistent with such Modesty, to hire People to entertain her with the same Language in Public, is a Difficulty not easily to be explained. Can *Fathers* and *Mothers*, who sit here with their Children, recommend Purity to them at home, when they have carried them to hear the Praises of Lewdness, as the *Sweets which Life improve*?

If a Person was to make a public Harangue in favour of *Image-Worship*, telling us, that it was the finest Means of raising the Heart to a Delight in God, we should think him a *very wicked Man*, and that the Ears and Hearts of Christians ought to detest such Discourses. Yet Christian People can meet in Crowds, and give their Money to have repeated in their Ears, what are here said to be the *Sweets which Life improve*. This, it seems, is no *Idolatry*.

We are told in Scripture, that *Covetousness is Idolatry*; and the Reason is, because it alienates the Heart from God, and makes it rest in something else. The covetous Man is an *Idolater*, because his Heart says, that *Gain* and *Bags of Gold* are the *Sweets which Life improve*. And can we think that that

corrupt Heart, that celebrates *Lust* and *Wantonness*, as the *Sweets which Life improve*, is guilty of less *Idolatry*, than he that says the same thing of *Riches*? As sure as there is such a Sin as *Idolatry*, as sure as the sordid *Miser* is guilty of it, so sure is it that these words are chargeable, not only with excessive *Immodesty*, but plain *Idolatry*. For how do we think that the *Pagans* worshipped *Venus*? We cannot suppose that it was with *Fasting* and *Prayer*, or any *serious* Devotion. No; they paid her such a Devotion, as the *Stage* now does; they called upon her in *lewd* Songs, and praised her, in praising the Pleasures of *Lust* and *Impurity*, in rejoicing in her mighty Power, and celebrating her Pleasures, as the *Sweets which Life improve*.

These Women go on, and with Music and Voices, as wanton as their Words, are employed to make a deeper Impression on the Hearts of the Audience. Then enter *Bacchus*, *Pan*, and *Silenus*, attended with *Satyrs*, *Fawns*, and *Sylvans*.

And indeed, they enter very properly; for the Discourse is very agreeable to their Nature. But what have Christians to do with this Company? Do they come here to *renounce* their Religion? Or can they think that this Society, with the most beastly *Images* that the Heathen World could invent, is a Society that they may partake of without *Renouncing* Christ?

Our Religion charges us, not to *keep company*, if anyone that is called a Brother be a fornicator,* &c. But where have we left our Religion, if we not only accompany with People devoted to Impurity, but make their Company our Delight, and hire them to entertain us with all the lewd Imaginations that can be invented? If we are not content with this, but *conjure* up all the impure *Fictions* of the Heathen World, and make their *imaginary Deities* more vile and wanton than ever they made them, to render them agreeable to our Christian Minds, shall we reckon this among our *small Sins*? Shall we think it a pardonable Infirmary, or partake of such an Entertainment as this?

The Apostle says, *Ye cannot drink the Cup of the Lord, and the Cup of Devils: Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's Table, and the Table of Devils.*† And can we think that we are not drinking the Cup of Devils, or that we are not at the Devil's Table, when his most favourite Instruments of Impiety, *Venus*, *Bacchus*, *Silenus*, *Satyrs* and *Fawns*, are the Company that we meet to be entertained with? If this is not being at the Devil's Table, he had no Table in the Heathen World. For surely they who call up Devils to their Entertainment, who cannot be enough delighted unless the Impious Demons of the Heathen

* 1 Cor. v. 11.

† 1 Cor. x. 21.

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World converse with them, are in a stricter Communication with the Devil, than they who only eat of that Meat which had been offered in Sacrifice.

Our blessed Saviour says, *He that looketh upon a Woman to lust after her, hath already committed Adultery with her in his Heart.* Can we reckon ourselves his Disciples, who hire our Fellow-Christians, and Christian Women, whose chief Ornament is a sincere Modesty, to sing in merry Assemblies such Words as are used in this Entertainment.

Who can say that I carry Matters too high, when I call this *renouncing* Christianity? For, can any Words be more expressly contrary to the Doctrine of our Saviour, and that in so important a Point? And does he not sufficiently renounce Christianity, who renounces so great a Doctrine, that has Christ for its Author?

If we were to make a Jest of the *Sacraments* in our merry Assemblies, we should shew as much Regard to Christianity, as by such Discourses as these. For all *lewd Discourses* are as plainly contrary to essential Doctrines of Scripture, as any Ridicule upon the Sacraments that can be invented. It may be you could not sit in the *Play-House*, if you saw *Baptism* made a Jest of, and its Use reproached. But pray, why do not you think that there is as much *Profaneness* and *Irreligion* in impudent Speeches and Songs? Has not Christ said as much about *Purity* of Heart, as about either of the *Sacraments*? Has not he made Chastity of Heart as necessary to Salvation as the Sacraments? How comes it then, that an impudent Praise of Lust and Wantonness is not as *profane*, as a ridicule upon the Sacraments? What Rule of Reason or Religion do you go by, when you think it highly sinful to sit and hear the *Sacraments* jested upon, and yet are cheerful and delighted with such Songs and Discourses, as ridicule *Chastity* of Heart, and religious *Modesty*? Can you suppose, that in the Eyes of God you appear as a better Christian, than those who make merry with profaning the Sacraments? If you can think this, you must hold that the Sacraments are more essential to Religion than *Purity* of Heart; and that it is more acceptable to God to *wash*, than to be *clean*; more pleasing to him to treat the *Altar* as holy, than to live in *Holiness* of Heart.

The Sacraments have nothing valuable in their own Nature; they are only useful to Christians, and to be treated with Reverence, because Christ has appointed them as Means of Holiness. But Purity and Chastity of Heart is an essential and internal Excellence, that by its own Nature perfects the Soul, and renders it more acceptable to God. To abhor therefore a Jest upon the

Sacraments, and yet divert ourselves with *impure* Rant, and *lewd* Songs, is being like those who *abhor Idols*, and yet *commit Sacrilege*.

All therefore who partake of this sinful Entertainment, who take their Share of Mirth in such Scenes of Impurity and Lewdness, must look upon themselves, not only as Offenders against the Laws of *Purity*, but also as chargeable with such *Irreligion* and *Profaneness*, as they are who are merry in such Meetings as ridicule and deride the Use of the Holy Sacraments.

It is a great Aggravation of the Guilt of these Assemblies, that Women are employed to lay aside the peculiar Ornament of their Sex, and to add an Immodesty of Action and Address to immodest Speeches. If we knew of an Assembly, where Clergymen met to ridicule the *sacred Rites* of Religion for the sake of entertaining the Audience with *Eloquence*; if we should find that great Part of the Audience were *Clergymen*, who could not forbear an Entertainment so contrary to their Profession; it would easily be seen, that such a sinful Entertainment was more unreasonable, because Clergymen acted in it, and Clergymen came to be entertained with it.

Now this is the Case with the Stage-Entertainment. Women are as particularly called to a *singular Modesty*, as Clergymen are to the Duties of their Profession. If therefore Women act Parts in lewd and impudent Entertainments, they have as much forgot themselves, and appear as *detestable*, as Clergymen that talk *profanely*. And if other Women come to delight themselves with seeing their *Sisters* acting so contrary to themselves, and the peculiar Duties of their Condition, they as much forget themselves as those *Clergy* who should meet to see their *Brethren* raise Diversion out of *Profaneness*. When therefore virtuous and prudent Women think they may go to the *Stage*, where Women so openly depart from the Decencies which are necessary to their Sex, let them consider what they would think of such virtuous and prudent Divines, as should meet to see Clergymen openly contradict the Duties of their sacred Office. For it is the same Absurdity, for modest Women to take Pleasure in a Diversion where Women are *immodest*, as for a good Clergyman to be pleased with a Meeting where Clergymen are *profane*. This must be owned to be strictly true, unless it can be shewn, that *Impudence* and *Immodesty* are not so contrary to the Duties of *Women*, as *Profaneness* is contrary to the Duty of a *Clergyman*. For if there is the same Contrariety, then it must be equally monstrous for Women to encourage a Number of Women in an immodest way of Life, as for *Bishops* and *Priests* to encourage a Number of Clergymen in a State of *Profaneness*.

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Let us now take one Step farther in this Entertainment. The *Stage* has now upon it, *Venus, Bacchus, Silenus, Pan, Satyrs, Fawns, Sylvans, Bacchanals, and Bacchantes*. Now if there were really such Beings as these, one would not wonder to see them got together. As they have all one common Nature of *Vileness*, they are sufficiently recommended to one another. But is it not astonishing, that these *fictitious Beings*, which are only imaginary Representations of such *Lust, Sensuality, and Madness*, as never had any real Existence, but were invented by the Devil for the Delusion of the Heathen World, should be preserved to talk their filthy Language to Congregations of *Christians*? And perhaps *Silenus* never so publicly recommended *Lust and Impudence* in any Heathen Assembly, as he does here among *Christians*. For our *Stage* has made him a fine Singer, that his Lewdness may have all the Recommendation which can be had from it.

Surely no one will now think that I carried the Charge too high, when I called the *Play-House* the House of the *Devil*; for if his *fictitious Beings*, talking his Language, and acting such Parts as they do, be not a sufficient Proof that it is his Work that is here carrying on, it is in vain to pretend to prove anything: There is no Certainty that two and two are four.

If our Eyes could shew us the *holy Angels* in our Church-Assemblies, it would not be a stronger Proof of the Divine Presence, than the seeing such Images as these and hearing their Language is a Proof that the *Stage* is the Devil's Ground. For how can he more certainly assure us of his Presence in any Place, than by *Satyrs, Bacchanals, Bacchantes*, and such like Images of Lewdness? He cannot appear to us as a Spirit; he must therefore get such *Beings* as *these* to appear for him; or, what seems to be more to his Purpose, make deluded *Christians* supply their Places. If therefore there be any certain Marks of the Devil's Power or Presence in any Assemblies, Places, or Temples of the Heathen World, the same are as certain Marks of his Power and Presence in our *Play-House*.

Again: Is it any Argument that the *Church* is God's House, because we there meet the *Ministers* of God, who act in his Name; because we there sing divine Hymns, hear holy Instructions, and raise our Hearts unto God and heavenly Matters; is this any Proof that we are then drawn near to God? If therefore there be a Place set apart for *lewd* and *profane* Discourses, where the same Beings are introduced as filled Heathen Temples, where we celebrate their Power, and praise their Being with wanton Songs and impure Rant, and where we open our Hearts to the Impressions of wild and disordered Passions, is not this

as certain a Proof, that such a *Place* must belong to some Being that is *contrary* to God, and that we are then as certainly drawn near to him? He that does not see this with a sufficient Clearness, could never have seen that the Devil had any Power or Worship in the Heathen World. You must therefore observe, the *Play-House* is not called the House of the Devil, only by way of Terror, and to fright you from a bad Place; but it is called so, because it really is so in the strictest fullest Sense of the Words.

Let us now suppose, that the Disorders of the Stage cannot drive you from it; and that you are no more offended at the Meeting of these filthy Dæmons of the Heathen World, than if you were to meet your Friends.

If this be your Case, how will you prove that your Religion has had any Effect upon you, or that it has done you the least good? For if the same Lewdness and Immorality please you, which pleased the Worshippers of *Venus*; if you delight in such *Rant* and *Madness*, as was the Delight of *Bacchanals*, and *Bacchantes*, is not this a Proof that you have the same *Heart* and *Temper* that they had? And if you are like Idolaters in that which constituted their Idolatry, have you any Reason to think that Christianity has had any Effect upon you? It would even be *Profaneness* in anyone to pretend to the true Spirit of Christianity, so long as he can take pleasure in such an Entertainment as this. For what is there that is unlike to the Spirit of Christ, if this is not? Who that can rejoice in the Lewdness and Beastiality of *Silenus*, and the impure Rant of vile Dæmons, can make any Pretences to a reasonable Piety? Does this Company look as if we had anything holy and divine in our Tempers? Is this living in the Spirit of Christ? Is this the way to be as the Angels of God when we die? Shall we go from the Pleasures of *Bacchus*, *Silenus*, *Bacchanals*, and *Bacchantes*, to the Choir of blessed Spirits that are Above? Is there any Reasonableness or Fitness in these Things? Why should we think, that such a Life as this will have an End so contrary to it?

We reckon it strange Grossness of Mind in the *Turks*, to expect a *Paradise* of carnal Delights. But what a Degree of Grossness it is in us, to know the God of Purity, and hope for a Heaven which only the *pure in Heart* shall enjoy, and yet call up all the vile *Fictions* of Lust and Sensuality that corrupted the Heathen World to entertain our Hearts, that from their Mouths we may hear the Praises of Debauchery and Wantonness? Let any one but consider this, as everything ought to be considered, by the pure Light of Reason and Religion, and he will find that the Use of the Stage may be reckoned amongst our worst Sins,

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and that it is as great a Contradiction to our Religion, as any Corruption or vile Practice of the Heathen World.

I have made these few Reflections upon this Entertainment, not because it exceeds the ordinary Wickedness of the Stage, but for the contrary Reason, because it is far short of it, and is much less offensive than most of our *Plays*. That by shewing the *Stage* to be so impious and detestable, so contradictory to all Christian Piety, in an Entertainment that is moderate, if compared with almost all our *Plays*, there might be no room left for sober Christians to be at any Peace with it. They who would see how much the Impieties of the Stage exceed what I have here observed of this Entertainment, may consult Mr. *Collier's* short View of the Stage, Sir *Richard Blackmore's* Essays, and *A Serious Remonstrance, &c.*, by Mr. *Bedford*.

To return : *Levis* hears all these Arguments against the *Stage*; he owns they are very plain, and strictly prove all that they pretend to; he does not offer one word against them; but still *Levis* has an Answer for them *all*, without answering any *one* of them. 'I have, says he, my own Experience, that these Diver'sions never did me any hurt, and therefore I shall use them.'

But *Levis* does not consider, that this very Answer shews, that he is very much hurt by them; that they have so much disordered his Understanding, that he will defend his Use of them in the most absurd manner imaginable, rather than be driven from them by any Arguments from Religion. For how can a Man shew that he is more hurt by any Practice, or that it has more blinded and perverted his Mind, than by appealing to his own inward Experience in Defence of it, against the plain Nature and Reason of things? Let *Levis* look at this way of reasoning in other Matters. If a Person that prays in an *unknown Tongue*, should disregard all the Arguments that are brought to shew the Absurdity of it, and rest contented with saying, that it never hurt his Devotion, but that he was as much affected in that way, as he could possibly be in any other, *Levis* would certainly tell such a one, that he had lost his Understanding, and that his long Use of such absurd Devotions made him talk so absurdly about them.

Again: If a Worshipper of *Images* was, in Answer to the Second Commandment, only to say, that he had his own Experience that he found no hurt by them; and that he had the same Devotion of Heart to God, as if he did not worship *Images*; Or, suppose another Person to keep very ill Company; and when he is told that *Evil communications corrupt good manners*, should content himself with saying, that he would still use the same ill Company, because he was sure it did him no hurt, nor made any

Impression upon him : Now as *Levis* would be sure that a Man was notoriously hurt by the Worship of *Images*, that should thus blindly defend them, and that the other is sufficiently hurt by ill Company, who should so obstinately stick to it, so he ought to be as sure, that he himself is sufficiently hurt either by Plays, or something else, when with an equal Blindness he defends his Use of them.

Farther : When *Levis* says, that he is sure that the Use of Plays does him no harm, let him consider what he means by that Speech. Does he mean, that though he uses the Diversion of the Stage, yet he finds himself in the true State of Religion ; that he has all those holy Tempers in that degree of Perfection which Christianity requires ? Now if he cannot say this ; how can he say, he is sure that Plays do him no harm ? If a Person was to affirm, that Intemperance did him no hurt, it would be expected that he should own that he was in a perfect State of Health ; For if he had any Disorder or ill Habit of Body, he could not say, that his Intemperance did not contribute towards it. In like manner, if *Levis* will maintain that Plays do no ways disorder him, or corrupt his Heart ; he must affirm, that he has no Disorder or Corruption of Heart belonging to him ; for if he has, he cannot say that the Use of Plays does not contribute towards it.

When therefore *Levis* says, Plays do me no harm at all ; it is the same thing as if he had said, I have no Disorder at all upon me ; my Heart and all my Tempers are in that exact State of Purity and Perfection that they should be.

Again : Let *Levis* consider, that his Taste and Relish of the Stage is a Demonstration that he is already hurt by something or other ; and that his Heart is not in a right State of Religion. *Levis* thinks this is a very censorious Accusation, because he is known to be a very good Churchman, to live a regular Life for the most part, to be charitable, and a Well-wisher to all good Designs. All this is true of *Levis* : But then it is as strictly true, that his Taste for Plays is a Demonstration, that his Heart is not in a right State of Religion. For does *Levis* think, that his frequenting the Church is any Sign of the State of his Heart ? Am I to believe, that he has inward Dispositions that suit with the holy Strains of Divine Service, because he likes to be at Church ? I grant, I am to believe this ; there is good Reason for it. But then, if *Levis* uses the *Play-House*, if the disordered Passions, the lewd Images, the profane Rant, and immodest Parts that are there acted, are a Pleasure to him, is not this as strong a Demonstration, that he has some Dispositions and Tempers that suit with these Disorders ? If I am to conclude

anything from a Man's liking and frequenting Divine Service, is there not as certain a Conclusion to be drawn from a Man's liking and using the Stage? For the Stage can no more be liked, without having some inward Corruptions that are suitable to the Disorders that are there represented, than the Divine Service can be a Pleasure to anyone, that has no Holiness or Devotion in his Heart.

It is infallibly certain, that all Pleasures shew the *State* and *Condition* of our Minds; and that nothing can please us, but what suits with some Dispositions and Tempers that are within us; so that when we see a Man's Pleasures, we are sure that we see a great deal of his Nature. All *Forms* of Life, all *outward* Actions, may deceive us. We cannot absolutely say, that People have such Tempers because they do such Actions; but wherever People place any *Delight*, or receive any *Pleasures*, there we have an infallible Token of something in their Nature, and of what Tempers they have within them.

Diversions therefore and Pleasures, which are reckoned such uncertain Means of judging of the *State* of Men's Minds, are of all Means the most certain; because nothing can please us, or affect us, but what is according to our Nature, which finds something within us that is suitable to it. Had we not inward Dispositions of *Tenderness* and *Compassion*, we should not find ourselves softened and moved with *miserable* Objects. Had we not something *harmonious* in our Nature, we should not find ourselves pleased with Strains of *Music*. In like manner, had we not in our Nature lively Seeds of all those Disorders which are acted upon the Stage, were there not some *inward Corruption* that finds itself gratified by all the irregular Passions that are there represented, we should find no more Pleasure in the Stage, than blind Men find in *Pictures*, or deaf Men in *Music*.

And, on the other Hand, if we were full of the contrary Tempers, were our Hearts full of Affections contrary to those on the *Stage*, were we deeply affected with Desires of Purity and Holiness, we should find ourselves as much offended with all that passes upon the Stage, as *mild* and *gentle* Natures are offended at the Sight of *Cruelty* and *Barbarity*. These Things are of the utmost Certainty.

All People therefore, who use the *Stage*, have as much Assurance that their Heart is not in a right State of Religion, as they possibly can have of anything that relates to themselves.

I hope, none of my Readers will think this too general, or too rash an Assertion; but that they will rather observe, that it is founded on such Evidence of Reason as cannot be rejected, without rejecting everything that is plain and certain in Human

Nature. They must not think it a sufficient Answer to this, to consider either how good they are themselves, or how many excellent Persons they know who do not abstain from the Stage. For this is a way of Reasoning, that is not allowed in any other Case.

Now when it is affirmed, that all Persons who are pleased with the *Stage* must have some Corruptions of Heart, that are gratified with the corrupt Passions which are there acted, is not this as plain and evident, as if it was said, that all who are pleased with seeing barbarous Actions, must have some Seeds of Barbarity in their Nature? If you are delighted with the Stroke of the *Whip*, and love to see the *Blood* fly, is it not past all doubt, that you have a Barbarity within you? And if *impure* Speeches, if *wanton* Amours, if *wild* Passions, and *immoral* Rant, can give you any Delight, is it not equally past all doubt, that you have something of all these Disorders in your Nature? Is it any more uncharitable to affirm this, than to affirm, that all who love to see the *Blood* fly have something barbarous in their Nature? Is there any more Rashness or Severity in it, than in saying, that all who love such or such Strains of *Music* have some Disposition in their Nature that is gratified by them?

It signifies nothing therefore to say, that you know such or such excellent Persons who are pleased with the *Stage*, whom no one ought to suspect to be defective in Piety; it is as absurd as to say, that you know excellent Persons who are pleased with seeing barbarous Actions, whom no one ought to suspect to be defective in *Tenderness*. If you delight in barbarous Sight, and are pleased with the Groans and Pains of the Afflicted, I do not *suspect* you to be defective in *Tenderness*, you have put your Case out of all Suspicion, you have proved that you have a Barbarity in your Nature. So if you delight in the *Stage*, if you taste and relish its *Entertainment*, I do not *suspect* you to be *defective* in Piety; you have put your Case beyond Suspicion; you have proved that you have Dispositions in your Nature, that are gratified by the disorderly Passions of the *Stage*.

Again, consider it in another View: How is it possible that anyone should delight in the *Stage*, but through a Defect in Piety? For is not the Stage guilty of Impurity, Profaneness, Blasphemy, and Immorality? Now though People may differ about the Degree in which they will make this Charge, yet all must own it in some degree. Now if the Charge be but true in *any degree*, must there not be a Want of Piety in those that can partake of an Entertainment chargeable with *Impurity*, *Profaneness*, and *Immorality*? If People were so pious that they could not bear such an Entertainment as this, if nothing could

persuade them to be present at it, this would be no Proof that they were Saints ; for to abhor an Entertainment loaded with so much Guilt, is but a small Instance of an advanced Piety. But surely, if they cannot only bear it, but be pleased with it, it is Proof enough, that their Hearts want several Degrees of Piety which become Christians. Besides, can pious Persons, who use the *Stage*, tell you of any *one Play* for this forty or fifty Years, that has been free from *wild Rant*, *immodest Passions*, and *profane Language*? Must they not therefore be defective in Piety, who partake of a Diversion that is at *no time* free from this Guilt in some degree or other? But supposing there was such a thing as an *innocent Play* once or twice in an Age (which is like supposing *innocent Lust*, *sober Rant*, or *harmless Profaneness*) could this make it at all allowable for pious Persons to use the *Stage*? Could this be any Proof that Persons of real Piety might take Pleasure in it? For could it be consistent with an enlivened Piety to use a Diversion, which in its *common ordinary State* is full of monstrous Impiety and Profaneness, because it sometimes happened in a Number of Years, that it might be innocent for a Day or two? But even this does not happen. The Stage never has *one innocent Play*; not one can be produced that ever you saw acted in *either House*, but what abounds with *Thoughts*, *Passions*, and *Language*, contrary to Religion. Is there therefore any Rashness or Severity in saying, That Persons who use a Diversion, which in its *ordinary State* is full of monstrous Wickedness and Impiety, and in its *best State* is never free from Variety of Sin, must be defective in Piety? How can we know anything with Clearness and Evidence, if we know not this to be clear and evident? For surely it is a necessary Part of Piety to abhor Lewdness, Immorality, or Profaneness, wherever they are; but they who are so pious, as not to be able to be pleased where any of those are, have a Piety that will not permit them ever to see a Play.

There is no Doctrine of our Blessed Saviour, that more concerns all Christians, or is more essential to their Salvation, than this: *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*. Now take the *Stage* in its best State, when some admired *Tragedy* is upon it, are the *extravagant Passions* of distracted Lovers, the *impure Ravings* of inflamed Heroes, the *Joys* and *Torments* of Love, and *gross Descriptions* of Lust; are the *indecent Actions*, the *amorous Transports*, the *wanton Address* of the Actors, which make so great a Part of the *most sober* and *modest Tragedies*; are these things consistent with this Christian Doctrine of *Purity of Heart*? You may as well imagine, that *Murder* and *Rapine* are consistent with *Charity* and *Meekness*.

It is therefore as necessary, as reasonable and as consistent with Christian Charity, to tell *Levis* that his Use and Delight in the *Stage* is as certain a Proof of his want of Piety, as to tell the same thing to a malicious, intemperate, or revengeful Person. Some People who are guilty of Personal Vices may have some Violence of Temptation, some natural Disorder to plead in their Excuse; they perhaps may be so tender as to desire to conceal them, and be afraid to encourage others in the like Practices; but the Use and Encouragement of the *Stage* has no Excuses of this kind; it has no *Infirmity*, *Surprise*, or *Violence* of Temptation, to appeal to; it shews no *Tenderness* of Mind, or *Concern* for others, but is a deliberate, continued, open and public Declaration in favour of *Lewdness*, *Immorality*, and *Profaneness*. Let anyone but collect, not all the Wickedness that has appeared on the *Stage* since he first used it, but only so much as passes there in *anyone* Season, and then he will see what a dreadful Load of Guilt he has brought upon himself. For surely no one can be so weak as to imagine, that he can use and encourage a wicked Entertainment, without making himself a *full Sharer* of all its Wickedness.

Archbishop *Tillotson* treats the *Stage* in this manner. 'I shall 'now speak a few Words concerning *Plays*, which, as they are 'now ordered among us, are a *mighty Reproach* to the Age and 'Nation.—As now the *Stage* is, they are *intolerable*, and not 'fit to be permitted in a *civilized*, much less a *Christian Nation*. 'They do most *notoriously* minister to Infidelity and Vice.— 'And therefore I do not see how any Person *pretending* to 'Sobriety and Virtue, and especially to the *pure and holy* 'Religion of our Blessed Saviour, can without *great Guilt*, and 'open *Contradiction* to his holy Profession, be present at such 'lewd and immodest *Plays*, as too many are; who yet would 'take it very ill to be shut out of the Community of Christians, 'as they would most certainly have been in the first and purest 'Ages of Christianity.*

Here let it be observed, that this Archbishop, who has generally been reckoned eminent for his *Moderation*, and *gentle* manner of treating everything, says of *Plays*, that they are a *mighty Reproach* to the Nation; that they are *intolerable*, and not fit to be permitted in a *Civilized*, much less a *Christian Nation*; that they *notoriously* minister to *Infidelity* and *Vice*.

Now this, I suppose, is as high a Charge, as he would have brought against the worst Articles of *Popery*. If I have said, that People cannot use the *Stage* without being defective in

* *Sermon upon Corrupt Communication.*

Piety, I have not said it in a declaiming way, but have asserted it from Variety of plain Arguments: But this great Man, so much admired for his *tender* Remarks upon *Persons* and *Things*, goes much farther. He does not say, that People of real and advanced Piety cannot use the *Stage*, but he makes it inconsistent with so much as *pretending to Sobriety and Virtue*, much less the *Purity* of the *holy Religion* of our Blessed Saviour. He does not say, that such People cannot be Excellent and Exemplary Christians, or that they must be defective in Piety, but he charges them with *great Guilt*, and *open Contradiction* to their holy Religion, and assures them, that if they had lived in the *first* and *purest* Ages of Christianity, they would have been excommunicated.

I have appealed to this *great Name*, for no other End, but to prevent the charge of Uncharitableness. For surely, if such an eminent Instance of a *charitable* and *gentle* Spirit can roundly affirm, that the Use of such a *Stage* as ours is an *open Contradiction* to Christianity, and such a scandalous Offence, as would certainly have been punished in the first and purest Ages of the Church with the dreadful Punishment of Excommunication; surely it can be no Proof of an *uncharitable Spirit* in me, that I shew by Variety of Arguments, that the Use of such a *Stage* cannot consist with the true Spirit of Christianity, but that there must be *some Defect* in their Piety, who are able to use it.

Jucunda resolves in great Cheerfulness to hear no Arguments against the *Stage*: She says it can be but a *small Sin*; and considering the Wickedness of the Age, that Person is in a very good State, that is only guilty of going to Plays. Desire her ever so often only to consider the plainest Arguments in the World, she puts all off with only this Reply, *God send I may have no greater Sin to answer for, than seeing a Play!*

Jucunda thinks a Clergyman would do better, to insist only upon the material Parts of Religion, and not lay so much Stress upon Things that are only *Diversions*, lest by making Religion to contradict People in everything, Religion itself should be brought into Dislike. *Jucunda* desires, that she may be instructed in some greater Things, than the Sinfulness of going to a *Play*; for she is resolved to hear no more of that.

But pray, *Jucunda*, consider all that you have here said. You say it can be but a *small Sin*. How is it that you know it is but a *small Sin*? What care have you taken to understand its true Magnitude? You shut your Eyes, and stop your Ears, and resolve against all Information about it, and then call it a *small Sin*. But suppose it was but a *small Sin*; is that a Reason why you should be guilty of it? Does the Smallness of Sins recom-

mend them to your Choice? Our blessed Saviour says,* *If thy foot offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out; it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire.* Now this passage, I suppose, does not mean, If thou art guilty of some great Sin, either of *Murder, Perjury*, or the like, thou must cut them off. For the Comparison of a *Foot* and an *Eye*, must signify something that is not directly sinful in itself, but only dangerous in its Use; as it sets us too near to some Sins, or is become too full of Temptation. Yet such Ways of Life as these, which are only dangerous, and expose our Virtue to too great a Hazard, however pleasant and useful, though like an *Eye*, or *Foot*, are yet to be entirely cut off, that we may not fall into Hell-fire. Can it be supposed that *Jucunda* is of this Religion, who pleases herself with a Diversion, because it is but a *small Sin*? Will she ever think of saving herself by cutting off a *Foot*, or plucking out an *Eye*?

Indeed, to talk of a *small Sin*, is like talking of a *small Law* of God: For as there is no Law of God but is a *great* one, because it comes from God, so every Sin, as it is a Transgression of some Law of God, must needs be a great one. There may be Sins that have a smaller degree of Guilt, because they are committed through *Infirmity, Ignorance, or Surprise*; but no Sin is small, that is either carelessly or wilfully continued in. If it be a Sin therefore to use the *Stage*, it cannot be a *small one*, because it has none of those Circumstances which render a Sin a small one. It becomes a very great one to *Jucunda*, because she carelessly and wilfully resolves to continue in it, merely for the sake of a little Diversion.

Let *Jucunda* consider again, what she means by wishing that she may have no greater Sin to answer for than going to a Play. It is a Wish that is silly in itself, because she is not to wish to die in small Sins, but in a perfect Repentance and Abhorrence of all kind of Sin; but it is much sillier still, when it is given as a Reason for going to a *Play*. For it is saying, *I expect to die guilty of greater Sins than of going to a Play, and therefore there is no Occasion to forbear from that.* Now, if she understands herself, she must know, that this is the plain Meaning of her Words. Yet who that understands anything of Religion, or that has any Desire of Holiness, can talk at this rate? It is a Language that is fitter for an *Atheist*, than for a Person that is but *half* a Christian. If a Tradesman that allows himself only

* Mark ix. 45, 47.

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to lie in the Prices of his Goods, should content himself with saying, *God send I may have no greater Sin to answer for*, no one would suppose him to be much concerned about Religion. Yet as many Christian Reasons might be produced, to shew these Lies to be but small Sins, as to shew that the Use of the Stage is but a *small Sin*.

Jucunda would have a *Clergyman* insist upon the most material Parts of Religion, and not lay so much stress upon Things that are only Diversions. I am of your mind, *Jucunda*, that a *Clergyman* ought to insist upon the most material Parts of Religion; but then it does not follow, that he must not lay much Stress upon things that are *Diversions*. For as something that is called a *Diversion* may be entirely sinful, so if this should happen, it is as necessary for a *Clergyman* to call all Christians from it, as it is necessary to exhort them to keep the Commandments. Religion seems to have as little to do with *Trades*, as with *Diversions*; yet if a *Trade* be set up, that is in its own Nature wicked, there is nothing more material in Religion, than to declare the Necessity of forsaking such an Employment. But after all, *Jucunda*, the most essential, and most *material* Parts of Religion, are such as relate to *common Life*, such as alter our Ways of living, such as give Rules to all our Actions, and are the Measure of all our Conduct, whether in Business or *Diversion*. Nothing is so important in Religion to you, as that which makes you sober and wise, holy and heavenly-minded, in the whole Course of your Life. But you are for such *material Parts* of Religion, as should only distinguish you from a *Jew* or an *Infidel*, but make no Difference in common Life betwixt you and *Fops* and *Coquettes*. You are for a Religion that consists in Modes and Forms of Worship, that is tied to *Times* and *Places*, that only takes up a little of your time on *Sundays*, and leaves you all the Week to do as you please. But all this, *Jucunda*, is nothing. The Scripture has not said in vain, *He that is in Christ is a new Creature*. All the Law and the Gospel are in vain to you; all Sacraments, Devotions, Doctrines, and Ordinances, are to no purpose, unless they make you this *new Creature* in all the Actions of your Life. He teaches you the most material Parts of Religion, who teaches you to be of a *religious Spirit* in everything that you do; who teaches you to eat and drink, to labour and rest, to converse and divert yourself in such degrees, and to such ends, as best promote a pious Life.

If *Sots* and *Gluttons* should desire a *Clergyman* to insist upon the most material Parts of Religion, and not lay so great a stress upon *Gluttony* and *Intemperance*, which are things which only relate to *eating* and *drinking*, they would shew that they understood Religion as well as *Jucunda*. For everyone must see, that

some Diversions may as much disorder the Heart, and be as contrary to Religion, as *Gluttony* and *Intemperance*. And perhaps as many People have lived and died unaffected with Religion, through a Course of *Diversions* and *Pleasures*, as through *Gluttony* and *Intemperance*.

If it displeases People to be told, that Religion is to prescribe Rules to their Diversions, they are as unreasonable as those are, who are displeas'd that Religion should prescribe Rules to their Tempers, and Passions, and Inclinations. For as Diversions are only the Gratifications of our Tempers, so if Religion is to forbear us in our Diversions, it is to forbear our Tempers, Passions, and Inclinations. But the Truth is, we ought to be more religiously cautious and watchful about our Diversions, than any other Part of common Life, not only because they take such deep hold of us, but because they have no necessary Foundation in Nature, but are our own Inventions. *Trade* and *Business*, though they are necessary for great Ends of Life, are yet to be subject to the strictest Rules of Religion; surely therefore *Diversions*, which are but like so many *Blanks* in Life, that are only invented to get rid of Time, surely such things ought of all others to have no *mixture* of anything that is sinful in them. For if the thing itself be hardly pardonable, surely it must be a high Crime to add to it the Sin of doing it in a sinful manner. For as Diversions are at best only Methods of losing Time, the most innocent have something in them that seems to want a Pardon; but if we cannot be content with such as only pass away our Hours, unless they gratify our disordered Passions, we are like those who are not content to sleep away their time, unless they can add the Pleasure of sinful Dreams.

Jucunda therefore is much mistaken, if she thinks that Religion has nothing to do with her Diversions, for there is nothing that requires a more religious Exactness than they do. If we are wrong in them, it is the same thing as if we are wrong in our Religion, or sinful in our Business. Nay, Sin in our Diversions is less excusable, and perhaps does us more harm than in anything else. For such as our Diversions are, such are we ourselves. If Religion therefore is to have any Power over us, if it is to enter into our Hearts, and alter and reform the State of our Souls, the greatest Work that it has to do, is to remove us from such Pleasures and Ways of Life as nourish and support a wrong State of our Souls.

If dying Sinners that go out of the World under a Load of Guilt could see what brought them into that State, it would often be found, that all their Sins, and Impieties, and Neglect of Duty, were solely owing to their Diversions; and perhaps were

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they to live their Lives over again, there would be no other possible way of living better than they had done, but by renouncing such ways of Life as were only looked upon as Diversions and Amusements.

People of Fashion and Quality have great Advantage above the Vulgar ; their Condition and Education gives them a Liveliness and Brightness of Parts, from whence one might justly expect a more exalted Virtue. How comes it then, that we see as ill *Morals*, as open *Impiety*, as little *religious Wisdom*, and as great *Disorders* among them, as among the most rude uneducated Part of the World? It is because the *Politeness* of their Lives, their Course of Diversions and Amusements, and their Ways of spending their Time, as much extinguishes the *Wisdom* and *Light* of Religion, as the Grossness and Ignorance of the dullest Part of the World. A poor Creature that is doomed to a stupid Conversation, that sees nothing but *Drudgery*, and *Eating*, *Drinking*, and *Sleeping*, is as likely to have his Soul aspire to God, and aim at an exalted Virtue, as another that is always in the Brightness and Gaiety, of polite Pleasures. It is the same thing, whether the *good Seed* be burnt up with the Heat and Brightness of the *Sun*, or be lost in *Mud*. Many Persons that live and die in a *Mine*, that are confined to Drudgery and Darkness, are just so fatally destroyed by their way of Life, as others that live in a Circle of Pleasures and polite Engagements are destroyed by their way of Life. Everyone sees and owns the Effects of such a gross way of Life ; it is not usual to expect anything wise, or holy, or truly great, from Persons that live and die digging *Coals*. But then it is not enough considered, that there are other ways of Life, of a contrary Appearance, that as certainly and unavoidably produce the same Effects. For a Heart that is devoted to *polite* Pleasures, that is taken up with a Succession of vain and corrupt *Diversions*, that is employed in *Assemblies*, *Gaming*, *Plays*, *Balls*, and such like Business of a *genteel* Life, is as much disposed of, and taken as far out of the way of true Religion, and a divine and holy Life, as if it had been shut up in a *Mine*. These are plain and certain Truths, if there is anything plain and certain, either in the Nature of Religion, or the Nature of Man. Who expects Piety from a *Tapster*, that lives among the Rudeness, Noise, and Intemperance of an *Ale-House*? Who expects Christian Holiness from a *Juggler*, that goes about with his *Cups* and *Balls*? Yet why is not this as reasonable, as to expect Piety and Christian Holiness from a *fine Gentleman* that lives at a *Gaming-Table*? Is there any more reason to look for Christian Fortitude, divine Tempers, or religious Greatness of Mind, in this State of Life?

Had such a one been born in low Life with the same turn of Mind, it had in all probability fixed him in an *Ale-House*, or furnished him with *Cups* and *Balls*.

The sober honest Employments of Life, and the reasonable Cares of every Condition in the World, make it sufficiently difficult for People to live enough to God, and to act with such holy and wise Tempers as Religion requires. But if we make our Wealth and Fortunes the Gratifications of idle and disordered Passions, we may make it as difficult to be saved in a State of *Politeness* and *Gentility*, as in the *basest* Occupations of Life.

Religion requires a steady resolute Use of our best Understanding, and an earnest Application to God for the Light and Assistance of his Holy Spirit.

It is only this watchful Temper, that is full of Attention to everything that is right and good, that watches over our Minds, and guards our Hearts, that desires Wisdom, and constantly calls upon God for the Light and Joy of his Holy Spirit; it is this Temper alone that can preserve us in any true State of Christian Holiness. There is no Possibility of having our Minds strengthened and fixed in wise and reasonable Judgments, or our Hearts full of good and regular Motions, but by living in such a *way of Life*, as assists and improves our Mind, and prepares and disposes us to receive the Spirit of God. This is as certainly the *one only* way to Holiness, as there is but one God that is Holy. Religion can no more subsist in a trifling vain Spirit, that lives by Humour and Fancy, that is full of Levity and Impertinence, wandering from Passion to Passion, giddy with silly Joys, and burdened with impertinent Cares, it can no more subsist with this State of the Soul, than it can dwell in a Heart *devoted* to Sin.

Any way of Life therefore that darkens our Minds, that mis-employs our Understanding, that fills us with a trifling Spirit, that disorders our Passions, that separates us from the Spirit of God, is the same certain Road to Destruction, whether it arises from stupid *Sensuality*, rude *Ignorance*, or polite *Pleasures*. Had anyone therefore the Power of an *Apostle*, or the Tongue of an Angel, he could not employ it better, than in censuring and condemning those ways of Life, which *Wealth*, *Corruption*, and *Politeness*, have brought among us. We indeed only call them Diversions; but they do the whole Work of *Idolatry* and *Infidelity*, and fill People with so much Blindness and Hardness of Heart, that they neither live by Wisdom, nor feel the want of it, but are content to play away their Lives, as regardless of everything that is wise, and holy, and divine, as if they were mere *Birds*, or *Animals*, and as thoughtless of Death, and Judgment,

and Eternity, as if these were Things that had no Relation to human Life.

Now all this Blindness and Hardness of Heart is owing to that way of Life which People of Fortune generally fall into. It is not gross Sins, it is not *Murder*, or *Adultery*, but it is their *Gentility* and *Politeness* that destroys them: It fills them with such Passions and Pleasures, as quite extinguish the gentle Light of Reason and Religion. For if Religion requires a sober Turn of Mind; if we cannot be reasonable, but by subduing and governing our blind Tempers and Passions; if the most necessary Enjoyments of Life require great Caution and Sobriety, that our Souls be not made earthly and sensual by them; what way of Life can so waste and destroy our Souls, so strengthen our Passions, and disorder our Hearts, as a Life of such Diversions, Entertainments, and Pleasures, as are the *Business* of great Part of the World?

If Religion is to reform our Souls, to deliver us from the Corruption of our Nature, to restore the divine Image, and fill us with such Tempers of Purity and Perfection, as may fit us for the Eternal Enjoyment of God, what is the polite Part of the World doing? For how can anyone more resist such a Religion as this; how can more renounce the Grace of God, and hinder the Recovery of the Divine Image, than by living in a Succession of such Enjoyments, as the Generality of People of Fashion are devoted to? For no one who uses the *Stage* has any more Reason to expect to grow in the Grace of God, or to be enlightened and purified by his Holy Spirit, than he that never uses any Devotion. So that it is not to be wondered at, if the Spirit and Power of Religion is wanted, where People so live, as neither to be fit to receive, nor able to co-operate with the Assistance and Light of God's Holy Spirit.

We are taught, that *Charity covereth a multitude of sins*; and that *alms shall purge away sins*. Now let this teach some People how to judge of the Guilt of those Gifts and Contributions, which are given contrary to Charity. I do not mean such Money, as is idly and impertinently squandered away, but such *Gifts* and *Contributions* as are to support People in a wicked Life. For this is so great a Contradiction to Charity, that it must certainly have Effects contrary to it: It must as much cover our *Virtues*, as Charity covers our Sins.

It is no strange Thing, to hear of *Ladies* taking care of a *Benefit-Night* in the Play-House. But surely they never reflect upon what they are doing. For if there is any Blessing that attends Charity, there must as great a Curse attend such Liberalities, as are to reward People for their Wickedness,

and make them happy and prosperous in an unchristian Profession. How can they expect the Blessings of God, or to have their Virtues and Charities placed to their Account, when they have blotted them out, by their Contributions and Generosities to the most open Enemies of the Purity and Holiness of Christ's Religion? He that is thus in the Interest of the Play-House, is most openly against God, and is as certainly opposing Religion, as he that rewards those that labour in the Cause of Infidelity.

It is no uncharitable Assertion to affirm, that a Player cannot be a living Member of Christ, or in a true State of Grace, till he renounces his Profession with a sincere and deep Repentance. Christianity no more allows such Plays and Players as ours are, than it allows the grossest Vices. They are Objects of no other Charity or Kindness, than such as may reduce them to a sincere Repentance. What a Guilt therefore do they bring upon themselves, who make Players their Favourites, and public Objects of their Care and Generosity; who cannot be in the Favour of God, till they cease to be such as they encourage them to be, till they renounce that Life for which they esteem and reward them?

When an Object of *Distress* is offered to People, it is common to see them very scrupulous in their Charity; they seem to think there may be such a thing as a blamable Charity; they desire to know whether the Person be worthy, whether his *Distress* is not owing to his Follies and Extravagances, that they may not relieve such a one as ought to feel the Punishment of his Follies. But what must we say to these things, if those who are thus nice in their *Alms* are yet unreasonable in their *Generosities*; who are afraid of assisting a poor Man, till everything can be said in his Favour, and yet eager to make another rich, who is only recommended by his Follies? What shall we say to these things, if Persons who have so many Rules to govern and restrain their Piety to poor Men, have yet no Rules to govern their Liberalities and Kindness to Libertines, if they should have a *Benefit-Night* upon their hands, not to relieve the Poverty, but to reward the *Merit* of a Player, that he may have the Substance of a *Gentleman* from Christians, for a way of Life that would be a Reproach to a sober Heathen? Shall we reckon this among our small Offences? Is this a pardonable Instance of the Weakness of human Nature? Is it not rather an undeniable Proof, that Christianity has no hold of our Reason and Judgment? And that we must be born again from such a State of Heart as this, before we can enter into the Spirit of Christianity?

I have now only one thing to desire of the Reader, not that he would like and approve of these Reflections, but that he will

not suffer himself to dislike or condemn them, till he has put his Arguments into Form, and knows how many Doctrines of Scripture he can bring against those things that I have asserted. So far as he can shew that I have reasoned wrong, or mistook the Doctrine of Scripture, so far he has a Right to censure. But *general Dislikes* are mere *Tempers* as blind as *Passions*, and are always the strongest where Reasons are most wanted. If People will dislike because they will, and condemn Doctrines only because it suits better with their *Tempers* and *Practices*, than to consider and understand them to be true, they act by the same Spirit of *Poper*y as is most remarkable in the *lowest Bigots*, who are resolute in a *general Dislike* of all *Protestant* Doctrines, without suffering themselves to consider and understand upon what Truth they are founded.

I can easily imagine that some People will censure these Doctrines, as proceeding from a *rigid, uncharitable* Temper, because they seem to condemn so great a Part of the World. Had I wrote a Treatise against *Covetousness*, or *Intemperance*, it had certainly condemned great Part of the World; but surely he must have strangely forgot himself, that should make that a Reason of accusing me of an uncharitable Temper. Such People should consider also, that a Man cannot assert the Doctrines of Christian *Charity* and *Meekness* themselves, without condemning a very great Part of the World. But would it be an Instance of an uncharitable Spirit; to preach up the Necessity of an universal Charity, because it might condemn a very great Part of the World? And if the *Holiness* of Christianity cannot be asserted, without condemning the Pleasures and Entertainments of the fashionable Part of the World, is there any more Uncharitableness in this, than in asserting the Doctrine of universal Love? Does this any more shew an *unchristian rigid* Spirit, than when the beloved Apostle said, *All that is in the World, the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, is not of the Father, but is of the World?*

But I shall not now consider any more Objections, but leave all that I have said to the Conscience and Reason of every Person. Let him but make Reason and Religion the Measure of his Judgment, and then he is as favourable to me as I desire him to be.

It is very common and natural for People to struggle hard, and be loath to own anything to be wrong that they have long practised. Many People will see so much Truth in these Arguments against the *Stage*, that they will wish in their own Minds that they had always foreborne it. But then finding that they cannot assent to these Arguments, without taking a great

deal of Blame to themselves, they will find strong Inclinations to condemn the plainest Reasonings, rather than condemn themselves. Let but a Person forget that he has any Guilt in relation to the *Stage*, let him but suppose that he has never been there, and that he will go or stay away, just as he finds Reason, when he has examined all that can be said against it, let a Man but put himself in this State of Mind, and then he will see all the Arguments against the Stage as plain and convincing, as any that can be brought against the grossest Vices.

If we could look into the Minds of the several Sorts of Readers, we should see how differently People are affected with Arguments, according to the State that they are in. We should see how they, who have never used the *Stage*, contend with the whole Force of their Minds, and see the Certainty and Plainness of every Argument against it. We should see others struggling and contending against all Conviction, in proportion to the Use that they have made of the *Stage*. They that have been its Friends and Advocates, and constant Admirers, will hate the very Name of a Book that is written against it, and will condemn every Argument, without knowing what it is. They who have used the *Stage* much, though in a less degree than this, will perhaps vouchsafe to read a Book against it; but they will read with Fear, they will strive not to be convinced, and be angry at every Argument, for proving so much as it does. Others, that have used the *Stage* in the most moderate degrees, have yet great Prejudices: They perhaps will own, that the *Stage* is blamable, and that it is very well to persuade People from it: But then, these People will not assent to the whole Truth. They will not condemn the Stage, as they ought, because having been there sometimes themselves, it suits better with their own Practice only to condemn it in the general, than to declare it to be sinful in such a degree, as should condemn those who ever use it.

These are the several Difficulties, which this Treatise has to contend with: It is to oppose an evil Practice, and charge it with *such a Degree* of Guilt, as few can consent to, without taking some Part of that Guilt to themselves.

I have mentioned these several Degrees of Prejudice, to put People upon suspecting themselves, and trying the Stage of their Hearts. For the only way to be wise and reasonable, is to suspect ourselves, and put Questions to ourselves in private, which only our own Hearts can answer. Let anyone who reads this Treatise, ask himself, Whether he reads it, as he reads those things which have no Relation to himself? When he reads a Treatise against *Image Worship*, or Prayers to *Saints*, he

knows that he attends to the whole Force of the Arguments ; that he desires to see them in their full Strength, and to comprehend every Evil that they charge upon it. Now everyone can tell, whether he reads this Treatise with this Temper, or whether he comes heavily to it, and unwilling to be convinced by it. If this is his State, he ought to charge himself with all that, which he charges upon the most absurd and perverse People in Life. For it is only this Temper, an *Inclination* not to be convinced, that makes People so *positive* and *obstinate* in Ways and Opinions, that appear so shocking to all reasonable Men. It is this Temper, that makes the *Jew*, the *Infidel*, the *Papist*, and the *Fanatic* of every kind. And he that is not reasonable enough to read impartially a Treatise against the *Stage*, has no Reason to think that his Mind is in better Order than their's is, who cannot freely consider a Book that is wrote against the *Worship of Images*, and Prayers to *Saints*.

There is but one Thing for reasonable People to do in this Case, either to answer all the Arguments here produced against the *Stage*, or to yield to the Truth of them, and regulate their Lives according to them. Our Conduct in this Affair is far from being a small Matter. I have produced no Arguments, but such as are taken from the most Essential Parts of Religion : If therefore there is any Truth in them, the Use of the *Stage* is certainly to be reckoned among *great* and *flagrant* Sins.

I have now only to advise those, who are hereby made sensible of the Necessity of renouncing the *Stage*, that they will act in this Case, as they expect that others should act in Cases of the like nature ; that they will not think it sufficient to forbear the *Stage* themselves, but be instrumental as far as they can in keeping others from it ; and that they will think it as necessary to make this Amends for their former Compliance, and ill Example, as it is necessary to make *Restitution* in cases of Injury. The Cause of Religion, the Honour of God, the Good of their Neighbour, and the Peace and Satisfaction of their own Minds, necessarily require this at their Hands. For as no one can tell how far his Example may have influenced others, and how many People may have been injured by his means, so it is absolutely necessary, that he do as much good as he can by a better Example, and make his own Change of Life a Means of reducing others to the same State of Amendment.

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He does indeed cut with a keen knife into the
inconsistencies of Christians, in this work.



THE

WORKS

Of the REVEREND

WILLIAM LAW, M.A.,

Sometime Fellow of *Emmanuel*
College, *Cambridge*.

In Nine Volumes.

Volume III.

A PRACTICAL TREATISE upon
Christian Perfection.

LONDON: Printed for J. RICHARDSON, 1726.
Privately Reprinted for G. MORETON, *Setley*,
Brockenhurst, New Forest, Hampshire. 1893.

Prefatory Advertisement.

A Practical Treatise upon *Christian Perfection*.

THIS Treatise is WILLIAM LAW'S fourth Work in the Order of Publication; published in the year 1726, when he was about forty years of age.

MR. WALTON records a Tradition to the effect that shortly after the publication of the 'Christian Perfection,' when *William Law* was one day waiting 'in the Shop of his Publisher, in *London*, a person, habited as a Gentleman's servant, accosted him, inquiring if he were the Rev. Mr. *Law*; and being answered in the affirmative, placed a letter in his hands and departed. Upon opening the letter, it was found to contain a Bank-note for £1,000 from some anonymous individual.' *Walton* suggests that 'if this anecdote be true,' it was probably with this donation that *William Law* endowed the Girls' School in his Native place of King's Cliffe: and it is equally probable that the publication of this excellent Treatise procured him the appointment of Tutor in the *Gibbon* family.

In the course of *William Law's* controversial writings his mind may have become impressed with the importance of setting forth in a practical manner the True Profession of Christianity, as the best method of further refuting erroneous doctrines and opinions; such as he had already felt called upon in the defence of True Christianity to expose—hence this Treatise.

The 'Christian Perfection' has exercised an immense influence over the lives of many of its readers; and it may indeed be regarded as a Practical Guide to Christianity. It is the first Work of *William Law's* which really, as a Beacon, directs the Wayfarer through the strait gate into that narrow way,

iv *Prefatory Advertisement.*

with its pitfalls and manifold difficulties which he knew so well, and along which he himself has passed. The popularity of this Work has however been exceeded by that of the 'Serious Call,' which was *William Law's* next work ; but is for the most part merely the 'Christian Perfection' reduced into a Formula or System of Religion, with Rules for Devotion, appointed Hours for, and Subjects of, Prayer. Hence the extreme but unmerited, popularity of the 'Serious Call' far beyond *William Law's* other writings—for 'Man is a bundle 'of Habits,' and the majority of even religious people, from want of sufficient earnestness, require to be led and instructed by 'Rules' at every step, as if they were mentally and spiritually blind.

It is in the 'Christian Perfection' that the following sentence respecting the Light of Revelation occurs : which, in the infinite comprehensiveness of its idea, is amongst the most beautiful that *William Law* ever wrote :

' This Light (of Revelation) has dispersed all the Anxiety of ' Man's vain Conjectures. It has brought him acquainted with ' God ; and, by adding Heaven to Earth and Eternity to Time, ' has opened such a glorious View of Things as makes Man, even ' in his present Condition, full of a Peace of God which passes all ' Understanding.'

G. B. M.

A
PRACTICAL
TREATISE
UPON
CHRISTIAN
PERFECTION.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

*Not as though I had already attained,
either were already perfect.*
Phil. iii. 12.

LONDON:

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at the West-End of St. *Paul's*. 1726.

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A
Practical Treatise
UPON
Christian Perfection.

The Introduction.

CHRISTIAN Perfection will perhaps seem to the common Reader to imply some State of Life which everyone need not aspire after ; that it is made up of such Strictnesses, Retirements, and Particularities of Devotion, as are neither necessary, nor practicable by the Generality of Christians.

But I must answer for myself, that I know of only one common Christianity, which is to be the common Means of Salvation to all Men.

If the Writers upon Christian Perfection have fancied to themselves some peculiar Degrees of Piety, or extraordinary Devotions which they call by that Name, they have not done Religion much Service, by making Christian Perfection to consist in anything, but the right Performance of our necessary Duties.

This is the Perfection which this Treatise endeavours to recommend ; a Perfection that does not consist in any singular State or Condition of Life, or in any particular Set of Duties, but in the holy and religious Conduct of ourselves in every State of Life.

It calls no one to a *Cloister*, but to a right and full Performance of those Duties, which are necessary for all Christians, and common to all States of Life.

I call it *Perfection*, for two Reasons, first, because I hope it contains a full Representation of that Height of Holiness and Purity, to which Christianity calls all its Members : Secondly, that the *Title* may invite the Reader to peruse it with the more Diligence, as expecting to find not only a Discourse upon moral Virtues, but a regular Draught of those holy Tempers which are the perfect Measure and Standard of Christian Piety.

Now as Perfection is here placed in the right Performance of our necessary Duties, in the Exercise of such holy Tempers as are equally necessary and equally practicable in all States of

Life, as this is the highest Degree of Christian Perfection, so it is to be observed, that it is also the lowest Degree of Holiness which the Gospel alloweth. So that though no Order of Men can pretend to go higher, yet none of us can have any Security in resting in any State of Piety that is lower.

And I hope this will be taken as a Sign that I have hit upon the true State of Christian Perfection, if I show it to be such, as Men in *Cloisters* and religious Retirements cannot add more, and at the same time such, as Christians in all States of the World must not be content with less.

For consider, what can Christian Perfection be, but such a right Performance of all the Duties of Life, as is according to the Laws of Christ? What can it be, but a living in such holy Tempers, and acting with such Dispositions as Christianity requires? Now if this be Perfection, who can exceed it? And yet what State, or Circumstance of Life, can allow any People to fall short of it?

Let us take an Instance in some one particular Temper of Christianity. Let it be the Love of God, Christians are to love God with *all their Heart and all their Strength*. Now can any Order of Christians exceed in this Temper? Or is there any Order of Christians who may be allowed to be defective in it?

Now what is thus true of the Love of God, is equally true of all other religious Duties; and consequently all those holy Tempers of Heart which constitute the Perfection of Christian Piety, are Tempers equally necessary for all Christians.

As there is but one Faith and one Baptism, so there is but one Piety, and one Perfection, that is common to all Orders of Christians.

It will perhaps be here objected, that this supposes that all People may be equally good, which seems as impossible in the Nature of Things, as to suppose that all People may be equally wise.

To this it may be answered, that this is neither altogether true, nor altogether false.

For to instance in Charity, it is true that all People may be equally charitable; if we understand by Charity that Habit of the Mind which stands rightly disposed to all Acts of Charity; in this Sense all People may be equally charitable. But if we take Charity for Alms-giving, or a liberal Assistance of the Poor, in this Sense it is false, that all People may be equally charitable.

Now as it is the Hábit of the Miñd, that constitutes the Excellency of Charity, so this is the Charity to which Christians are called, and in which they may all be equally perfect.

Again, are not all People obliged to be equally honest, just, and true and faithful? In these Virtues all are to be eminent and exact in the same Degree, there are no Abatements to be made for any Rank or Order of People.

Now as to the external Exercise of these Duties, there may be great Difference. One Man may have great Business in the World, and be honest and faithful in it all; another may have small Dealings and be honest in them; but provided that there be in both of them the same Justice and Integrity of Mind, they are equally honest, though their Instances of Honesty, as to external Acts of it, are as different, as great Things are different from small.

But as it is the Habit of the Mind, which is the Justice which Religion requires, so in this Respect all People may be equally just.

Now this may serve to show us in what Respect all People may be equally virtuous, and in what Respect they cannot.

As to the external Instances or Acts of Virtue, in these they must differ according to the Difference of their Circumstances, and Condition in the World; but as Virtues are considered as Habits of the Mind, and Principles of the Heart, in this Respect they may all be equally virtuous, and are all called to the same Perfection.

A Man cannot exercise the Spirit of Martyrdom, till he is brought to the Stake; he cannot forgive his Enemies till they have done him Wrong, till he suffers from them. He cannot bear Poverty and Distress till they are brought upon him. All these Acts of Virtue depend upon outward Causes, but yet he may have a Piety and heroic Spirit equal to those who have died for their Religion. He may have that Charity of Mind which prays for its Enemies, he may have that Meekness and Resignation to the Will of God, as disposes People to bear Poverty and Distress with Patience and humble Submission to the Divine Providence.

So that they are only the external Instances and Acts of Virtue, which depend upon outward Causes and Circumstances of Life; a Man cannot give till he has something to give; but the inward Piety of the Heart and Mind which constitutes the State of Christian Perfection, depends upon no outward Circumstances. A Man need not want Charity because he has no Riches, nor be destitute of a forgiving Spirit, because he has no Persecutors to forgive.

Although therefore we neither are, nor can be all in the same Circumstances of Life, yet we are to be all in the same Spirit of Religion; though we cannot be all equal in Alms-giving, yet we

are to be all alike in Charity ; though we are not all in the same State of Persecution, yet we must be all in the same Spirit that forgives and prays for its Persecutors ; though we are not all in Poverty and Distress, yet we must all be full of that Piety of Heart which produces Meekness, Patience, and Thankfulness, in Distress and Poverty.

From these Considerations it is easy to apprehend, how Persons may differ in Instances of Goodness, and yet be equally good ; for as the Perfection of Piety is the Perfection of the Heart, so the Heart may have the same Perfection in all States and Conditions of Life. And this is that Perfection which is common to all States, and to which all Orders of Christians are equally called.

Again, There may be another Difference of Virtue founded in the different Abilities of Persons ; one may have a more enlightened Mind than another, and so may see further into his Duty, and be able to practise it with greater Exactness, but then as his Goodness seems to consist in this, that he is true and faithful to what he knows to be his Duty, so if another is as true and faithful to that Measure of Light and Knowledge which God has given him, he seems to be as good a Man, as he that is true and faithful to a greater Light.

We can hardly reconcile it with the Divine Goodness to give one Man two Talents, and another five, unless we suppose that he is as high in his Master's Pleasure who makes the right use of two, as he that makes the right use of five Talents.

So that it still holds good, that it is the Perfection of the Heart, that makes the Perfection of every State of Life.

It may perhaps be further objected, that the different Degrees of Glory in another Life, supposes that good Men and such as are accepted of God, do yet differ in their Degrees of Goodness in this Life.

I grant that it does.

But then this is no Proof that all Men are not called to the same Goodness, and the same Perfection.

Perhaps it cannot be said of the best of Men that ever lived, that they performed their Duty in such Perfection in all Instances, as they might have done.

Now as it suits with the Divine Mercy to admit Men to Happiness, who have not been in every Respect so perfect as they might have been, notwithstanding that he gave them such a Rule of Perfection ; so it equally suits with the Divine Mercy to admit Men to different Degrees of Happiness, on Account of their different Conduct, though he gave them all one common Rule of Perfection.

Did not God pardon Frailties and Infirmities, the best of Men could not be rewarded. But consider now, does God's pardoning of Frailties and Infirmities in the best of Men, prove that the best of Men were not called to any other Perfection, than that to which they arrived? Does this prove that God did not call them to be strictly good, because he receives them to Mercy with some Defects in Goodness? N6, most surely.

Yet this is as good an Argument, as to say, that all Men are not called to the same State of Goodness, or Perfection, because they are admitted to different Rewards in the other Life.

For it is as right Reasoning, to say, God rewards frail and imperfect Men, therefore they were called to no higher Perfection; as to say that because God rewards different Degrees of Goodness, therefore Men are not called to one and the same Goodness.

For as God could reward none, unless he would reward such as had Failings, so their Difference in their Failings may make them Objects of his different Mercy and Rewards, though the Rule from which they failed, was common to them all.

It therefore plainly appears, that the different Degrees of Glory in another Life, are no more a Proof that God calls some Persons to different and lower States of Goodness, than others, than his pardoning Variety of Sinners is a Proof that he allowed of those Kinds of Sin, and did not require Men to avoid them. For it is full as good an Argument to say, God pardons some Sinners, therefore he did not require them to avoid such Sins, as to say God rewards different Degrees of Goodness, therefore he did not call People to higher Degrees of Goodness.

So that the different Degrees of Glory in the World to come are no Objection against this Doctrine, that all Christians are called to one and the same Piety and Perfection of Heart.

Lastly, it may be farther objected, that although the Law of God calls all Men to the same State of Perfection, yet if there are different Degrees of Glory given to different Degrees of Goodness, this shows that Men may be saved, and happy, without aspiring after all that Perfection to which they were called.

It may be answered, That this is a false Conclusion: For though it may be true, that People will be admitted to Happiness, and different Degrees of Happiness, though they have not *attained* to all that Perfection to which they were called; yet it does not follow that any People will be saved who did not *endeavour* after that Perfection. For surely it is a very different Case, to *fall* short of our Perfection after our best Endeavours, and to *stop* short of it, by not endeavouring to arrive at it. The one Practice may carry Men to a high Reward in Heaven, and the other cast them with the unprofitable Servant into outer Darkness.

There is therefore no Foundation for People to content themselves in any lower Degrees of Goodness, as being sufficient to carry them to Heaven, though not to the highest Happiness in Heaven.

For consider, thou hearest there are different Degrees of Glory; that they are proportioned to different States of Goodness in this Life, thou wilt therefore content thyself with a lower Degree of Goodness, being content to be of the lowest Order in Heaven. Thou wilt have only so much Piety as will save thee.

But consider how vainly thou reasonest; for though God giveth different Rewards, it is not in the Power of Man to take them of himself. It is not for anyone to say I will practise so much Goodness, and so take such a Reward. God seeth different Abilities and Frailties in Men, which may move his Goodness to be merciful to their different Improvements in Virtue: I grant thee that there may be a lower State of Piety which in some Persons may be accepted by God.

But consider, that though there is such a State of Piety that may be *accepted*, yet that it cannot be *chosen*, it ceases to be that State as soon as thou chooseth it.

God may be merciful to a low Estate of Piety, by reason of some pitiable Circumstances that may attend it; but as soon as thou chooseth such an Estate of Piety, it loses those pitiable Circumstances, and instead of a low State of Piety, is changed into a high State of Impiety.

So that though there are meaner Improvements in Virtue, which may make some Persons accepted by God, yet this is no Ground for Content or Satisfaction in such a State; because it ceases to be such a State, and is quite another thing, for being chosen and satisfied with.

It appears therefore from these Considerations, that notwithstanding God may accept of different Degrees of Goodness, and reward them with different Degrees of Glory in another Life, yet that all Christians are called to one and the same Perfection, and equally obliged to labour after it.

Thus much may suffice to give the Reader a general Notion of Perfection, and the Necessity of endeavouring after it.

What it is, and what holy Tempers it requires, will, I hope, be found sufficiently explained in the following Chapters.

Chapter I.

The Nature and Design of Christianity, that its sole End is to deliver us from the Misery and Disorder of this present State, and raise us to a blissful Enjoyment of the Divine Nature.

THE Wisdom of Mankind has for several Ages of the World, been inquiring into the Nature of Man, and the Nature of the World in which he is placed.

The Wants and Miseries of human Nature, and the Vanity of worldly Enjoyments, has made it difficult for the wisest Men to tell what human Happiness was, or wherein it consisted.

It has pleased the infinite Goodness of God, to satisfy all our Wants and Inquiries by a Revelation made to the World by his Son Jesus Christ.

This Revelation has laid open the great Secrets of Providence from the Creation of the World, explained the present State of Things, and given Man all the Information that is necessary to quiet his Anxieties, content him with his Condition, and lead him safely to everlasting Rest and Happiness.

It is now only necessary, that the poor Wisdom of Man do not exalt itself against God, that we suffer our Eyes to be opened by him that made them, and our Lives to be conducted by him, in whom *we live, move, and have our Being.*

For Light is now come into the World, if Men are but willing to come out of Darkness.

As Happiness is the sole End of all our Labours, so this Divine Revelation aims at nothing else.

It gives us right and satisfactory Notions of ourselves, of our true Good and real Evil; it shows us the true State of our Condition, both our Vanity and Excellence, our Greatness and Meanness, our Felicity and Misery.

Before this, Man was a mere Riddle to himself, and his Condition full of Darkness and Perplexity. A restless Inhabitant of a miserable disordered World, *walking in a vain Shadow, and disquieting himself in vain.*

But this Light has dispersed all the Anxiety of his vain Conjectures; it has brought us acquainted with God, and by adding

Heaven to Earth, and Eternity to Time, has opened such a glorious View of Things, as makes Man even in his present Condition, full of a Peace of God which passes all Understanding.

This Revelation acquaints us, that we have a Spirit within us, that was created after the Divine Image, that this Spirit is now in a fallen corrupt Condition, that the Body in which it is placed, is its Grave, or Sepulchre, where it is enslaved to fleshly Thoughts, blinded with false Notions of Good and Evil, and dead to all Taste and Relish of its true Happiness.

It teaches us, that the World in which we live, is also in a disordered irregular State, and cursed for the Sake of Man; that it is no longer the Paradise that God made it, but the Remains of a drowned World, full of Marks of God's Displeasure, and the Sin of its Inhabitants.

That it is a mere Wilderness, a State of Darkness, a Vale of Misery, where Vice and Madness, Dreams and Shadows, variously please, agitate, and torment the short, miserable Lives of Men.

Devils also, and evil Spirits, have here their Residence, promoting the Works of Darkness, and wandering up and down seeking whom they may devour.

So that the Condition of Man in his natural State, seems to be, as if a Person sick of a Variety of Diseases, knowing neither his Distempers, nor his Cure, should be enclosed in some Place, where he could hear, or see, or feel, or taste of nothing, but what tended to inflame his Disorders.

The Excellency therefore of the Christian Religion appears in this, that it puts an End to this State of Things, blots out all the Ideas of worldly Wisdom, brings the World itself to Ashes, and creates all anew. It calls Man from an animal Life and earthly Conversation, to be born again of the Holy Ghost, and be made a Member of the Kingdom of God.

It crushes into nothing the Concerns of this Life, condemns it as a State of Vanity and Darkness, and leads Man to a Happiness with God in the Realms of Light.

It proposes the Purification of our Souls, the enlivening us with the Divine Spirit; it sets before us new Goods and Evils, and forms us to a glorious Participation of the Divine Nature.

This is the one sole End of Christianity, to lead us from all Thoughts of Rest and Repose here, to separate us from the World and worldly Tempers, to deliver us from the Folly of our Passions, the Slavery of our own Natures, the Power of evil Spirits, and unite us to God, the true Fountain of all real Good. This is the mighty Change which Christianity aims at, to put

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us into a new State, reform our whole Natures, purify our Souls, and make them the Inhabitants of heavenly and immortal Bodies.

It does not leave us to grovel on in the Desires of the Flesh, to cast about for worldly Happiness, and wander in Darkness and Exile from God, but prepares us for the true Enjoyment of a divine Life.

The Manner by which it changes this whole State of Things, and raises us to an Union with God, is equally great and wonderful.

I am the *Way, the Truth* and the *Life*, saith our blessed Saviour, *no Man cometh unto the Father but by me.*

As all Things were at first created by the Son of God, and without him was *not anything made that was made*, so are all Things again restored and redeemed by the same Divine Person.

As nothing could come into Being without him, so nothing can enter into a State of Happiness or Enjoyment of God, but by him.

The Price and Dignity of this Redemption at once confounds the Pride, and relieves the Misery of Man. How fallen must he be from God, how disordered and odious his Nature, that should need so great a Mediator to recommend his Repentance!— And on the other Hand, how full of Comfort, that so high a Method, so stupendous a Means should be taken, to restore him to a State of Peace and Favour with God!

This is the true Point of View in which every Christian is to behold himself. He is to overlook the poor Projects of human Life, and consider himself as a Creature through his natural Corruption falling into a State of endless Misery, but by the Mercy of God redeemed to a Condition of everlasting Felicity.

All the Precepts and Doctrines of the Gospel are founded on these two great Truths, the deplorable Corruption of human Nature, and its new Birth in Christ Jesus.

The one includes all the Misery, the other all the Happiness of Man.

It is on these great Doctrines, that the whole Frame of Christianity is built, forbidding only such Things as fasten us to the Disorders of Sin, and commanding only those Duties which lead us into the Liberty and Freedom of the Sons of God.

The Corruption of our Nature makes Mortification, Self-denial, and the Death of our Bodies necessary. Because human Nature must be thus unmade, Flesh and Blood must be thus changed, before it can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Our new Birth makes the Reception of God's Spirit, and the Participation of the holy Sacraments necessary, to form us to

that Life to which the Resurrection of Jesus Christ has entitled us.

So that would we think and act and live like Christians, we must act suitably to these Terms of our Condition, fearing and avoiding all the Motions of our corrupted Nature, cherishing the secret Inspirations of the Holy Spirit, opening our Minds for the Reception of the Divine Light, and pressing after all the Graces and Perfections of our new Birth.

We must behave ourselves conformably to this double Capacity, we must fear, and watch, and pray, like Men that are always in Danger of eternal Death, and we must believe and hope, labour and aspire, like Christians, that are called to fight the good Fight of Faith, and lay hold on eternal Life.

This knowledge of ourselves, makes human Life a State of infinite Importance, placed upon so dreadful a Point betwixt two such Eternities.

Well might our blessed Saviour say to one, that begged first to go and bury his Father, *Follow me, and let the Dead bury their Dead.*

For what is all the Bustle and Hurry of the World, but dead Show, and its greatest Agents, but dead Men, when compared with the State of Greatness, that real Life, to which the Followers of Christ are redeemed?

Had we been made only for this World, worldly Wisdom had been our highest Wisdom; but seeing Christianity has redeemed us to a contrary State, since all its Goods are in Opposition to this Life, worldly Wisdom is now our greatest Foolishness.

It is now our only Wisdom to understand our new State aright, to let its Goods and Evils take Possession of our Hearts, and conduct ourselves by the Principles of our Redemption.

The Nature and Terms of our Christian Calling is of that Concern, as to deserve all our Thoughts, and is indeed only to be perceived by great Seriousness and Attention of Mind.

The Christian State is an invisible Life in the Spirit of God, supported not by sensible Goods, but the spiritual Graces of Faith and Hope; so that the natural Man, especially while busied in earthly Cares and Enjoyments, easily forgets that great and heavenly Condition in which Religion places him.

The Changes which Christianity maketh in the present State of Things, are all invisible, its Goods and Evils, its Dignities and Advantages, which are the only true Standards of all our Actions, are not subject to the Knowledge of our Senses.

In *God we live, and move, and have our Being*, but how unseen, how unfelt is all this!

Christ is the *Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World*, the

true Light, that lighteth every Man that cometh into the World. He is the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the Beginning and End of all Things. The whole Creation subsists in him and by him; nothing is in any Order, nor any Person in any Favour with God, but by this great Mediator. But how invisible, how unknown to all our Senses, is this State of Things!

The Apostle tells us, that we Christians are *come unto Mount Sion, and unto the City of the Living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable Company of Angels, and to the general Assembly of the First-born, which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, &c.**

But our Senses see or feel nothing of this State of Glory, they only show us a Society amongst vain and worldly Men, labouring and contending for the poor Enjoyments of a vain World.

We are Temples of the Holy Ghost, consecrated to God, Members of Christ's mystical Body, of his flesh and of his Bones, receiving Life, Spirit, and Motion from him our Head.

But our Senses see no farther than our Parents and Kindred according to the Flesh, and fix our Hearts to earthly Friendships and Relations.

Religion turns our whole Life into a Sacrifice to God, a State of Probation, from whence we must *all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the Things done in his Body, &c.†*

But our Senses, the Maxims of this Life, and the Spirit of the World, teach quite another Turn of Mind; to enjoy the good Things of Life as our Portion, to seek after Riches and Honours, and to dread nothing so much as Poverty, Disgrace, and Persecution. Well may this Life be deemed a State of Darkness, since it thus clouds and covers all the true Appearances of Things, and keeps our Minds insensible, and unaffected with Matters of such infinite Moment.

We must observe, that in Scripture Christianity is constantly represented to us, as a Redemption from the Slavery and Corruption of our Nature, and a raising us to a nearer Enjoyment of the Divine Glory.

It knows of no Misery, but the Death and Misery which Sin has made, nor of any Happiness, but the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Ghost, which form us to a greater Likeness of God.

Thus saith the Apostle, *Jesus Christ gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all Iniquity.‡*

He was manifested to take away our Sins.§

* Heb. xii. 22.

† 2 Cor. v. 9.

‡ Tit. ii. 13.

§ 1 John iii. 5.

Who gave himself for our Sins, that he might deliver us from this evil World.

The same Scriptures teach us, that as we are redeemed from this State of Sin, so we are raised to a new Life in Christ, to a Participation of the Divine Nature, and a Fellowship with him in Glory.

Thus our blessed Saviour prayeth for all his Followers, *That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us. And the Glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.**

Happy he that hath Ears to hear, and a Heart to feel the Majesty and Glory of this Description of our new Life in Christ!

For surely could we understand what our Saviour conceived, when he sent up this Prayer to God, our Hearts would be always praying, and our Souls ever aspiring after this State of Perfection, this Union with Christ in God.

To proceed, *In my Father's House, saith Christ, are many Mansions. I go to prepare a Place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also.†*

The Apostle tells us, that as *we have borne the Image of the Earthly, we shall also bear the Image of the Heavenly.‡*

And that *when Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in Glory.§*

Beloved, saith St. John, now we are the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear, what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.¶

I cannot leave this Passage, without adding the Apostle's Conclusion to it. And *every Man that hath this Hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

Which teaches us this Lesson, that no Man, whatever he may think of his Christian Improvement, can be said to have this Hope in him, unless he shows it by such a Purification of himself, as may resemble the Purity of Christ.—But to return.

St. Paul thus breaks forth into the Praises of God, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places in Christ.¶¶* And again, *God, who is rich in Mercy, for his great Love where-with he loved us. Even when we were dead in Sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly Places in Christ Jesus.***

* John xvii. 21.

¶ I John iii. 2.

† John xiv. 23.

¶ Eph. i. 3.

‡ I Cor. xv.

** Eph. ii. 4.

§ Col. iii. 4.

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These Passages teach us, that Christianity introduceth us into a new State, made up of invisible Goods, and spiritual Blessings, that it so alters our Condition, as to give us a new Rank and Degree even in this Life; which the Apostle expresses by making us *sit together in heavenly Places*.

So that though we are still in the Flesh, yet, as the Apostle saith, need we know no Man after the Flesh; though we are still Inhabitants of this Vale of Misery, yet are we ranked and placed in a certain Order amongst heavenly Beings in Christ Jesus.

Would we therefore know our true Rank and Condition, and what Place we belong to, in the Order of Beings, we must search after a *Life that is hid with Christ in God*. We must consider ourselves as Parts of Christ's mystical Body, and as Members of a Kingdom of Heaven. In vain do we consider the Beauty and Strength of our Bodies, our Alliances with Men, the Privileges of Birth, and the Distinctions of this World, for these Things no more constitute the State of human Life, than rich *Coffins*, or beautiful *Monuments*, constitute the State of the Dead.

We justly pity the last poor Efforts of human Greatness, when we see a breathless Carcass lying in *State*. It appears to us to be so far from any real Honour, that it rather looks like ridiculing the Misery of our Nature. But were Religion to form our Judgments, the *Life* of a proud, voluptuous, and sensual Man, though shining in all the Splendour of the World, would give us no higher an Idea of human Dignity, than that of a poor *Corpse* laid in *State*.

For a *Sinner*, when glorying in the *Lust of the Flesh*, the *Lust of the Eyes*, and the *Pride of Life*, shows us a more shocking Sight of a Misery ridiculed, than any Pageantry that can expose the Dead.

We have an Apostle's Authority to say, *that he who liveth in Pleasure is dead while he liveth*.

This shows us, that when we enquire what our Life is, or wherein it consists, we must think of something higher than the Vigour of our Blood, the Gaiety of our Spirits, or the Enjoyment of sensible Pleasures; since these, though the allowed Signs of living Men, are often undeniable Proofs of dead Christians.

When therefore we would truly know what our Life, our State, our Dignity, our Good, or our Evil is, we must look at nothing that is temporal, worldly, or sensible. We may as well dig in the Earth for Wisdom, as look at Flesh and Blood, to see what we are, or at worldly Enjoyments, to find what we want, or at temporal Evils to see what we have to fear.

Our blessed Saviour put an absolute End to all Enquiries of this kind, when he said, *Be not afraid of them that kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do.**

Here our Bodies and all bodily Enjoyments are at one Dash struck out of the Account of Happiness, and the present State of Things made so very low, and insignificant, that he who can only deprive us of them, has not Power enough to deserve our Fear.

We must therefore, if we would conceive our true State, our real Good and Evil, look further than the Dim of Eyes of Flesh can carry our Views, we must, with the Eyes of Faith, penetrate into the invisible World, the World of Spirits, and consider our Order and Condition amongst them, a World which (as St. *John* speaks) *has no need of the Sun, neither of the Moon, to shine in it, for the Glory of God doth lighten it, and the Light of the Lamb.* For it is there, amongst external Beings, that we must take an eternal Fellowship, or fall into a Kingdom of Darkness and everlasting Misery. ✓

Christianity is so divine in its Nature, so noble in its Ends, so extensive in its Views, that it has no lesser Subjects than these, to entertain our Thoughts.

It buries our Bodies, burns the present World, triumphs over Death by a general Resurrection, and opens all into an eternal State.

It never considers us in any other Respect, than as fallen Spirits; it disregards the Distinctions of human Society, and proposes nothing to our Fears, but eternal Misery, nor anything to our Hopes, but an endless Enjoyment of the Divine Nature.

This is the great and important Condition in which Christianity has placed us, above our Bodies, above the World, above Death, to be present at the Dissolution of all Things, to see the Earth in Flames, and the Heavens wrapt up like a Scroll, to stand at the general Resurrection, to appear at the universal Judgment, and to live for ever, when all that our Eyes have seen, is passed away and gone.

Take upon thee therefore, a Spirit and Temper suitable to this Greatness of thy Condition; remember that thou art an eternal Spirit, that thou art for a few Months and Years in a State of Flesh and Blood, only to try, whether thou shalt be for ever happy with God, or fall into everlasting Misery with the Devil.

Thou wilt often hear of other Concerns, and other Greatness in this World; thou wilt see every Order of Men, every Family, every Person pursuing some fancied Happiness of his own, as if

* Luke xii. 4.

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the World had not only Happiness, but a particular kind of Happiness for all its Inhabitants.

But when thou seest this State of human Life, fancy that thou sawest all the World asleep, the Prince no longer a Prince, the Beggar no longer begging, but every Man sleeping out of his proper State, some happy, others tormented, and all changing their Condition as fast as one foolish Dream could succeed another.

When thou hast seen this, thou hast seen all that the World awake can do for thee ; if thou wilt, thou mayst go to *sleep* for awhile, thou mayst lie down and *dream* ; for, be as happy as the World can make thee, all is but sleeping and dreaming, and what is still worse, it is like sleeping in a Ship when thou should be pumping out the Water ; or dreaming thou art a Prince, when thou shouldst be redeeming thyself from Slavery.

Now this is no imaginary Flight of a melancholy Fancy, that too much exceeds the Nature of Things, but a sober Reflection justly suited to the Vanity of worldly Enjoyments.

For if the Doctrines of Christianity are true, if thou art that Creature, that fallen Spirit, that immortal Nature which Religion teaches us, if thou art to meet Death, Resurrection, and Judgment, as the Forerunners of an eternal State, what are all the little Flashes of Pleasure, the changing Appearances of worldly Felicities, but so many Sorts of Dreams ?

How canst thou talk of the Happiness of Riches, the Advantages of Fortune, the Pleasures of Apparel, of State, and Equipage, without being in a Dream ?

Is the *Beggar* asleep, when he fancies he is building himself fine Houses ? Is the *Prisoner* in a Dream, when he imagines himself in open Fields, and fine Groves ? And canst thou think that thy immortal Spirit is awake, whilst it is delighting itself in the Shadows and Bubbles of worldly Happiness ?

For if it be true, that Man is upon his Trial, if the Trial is for Eternity, if Life is but a Vapour, what is there that deserves a serious Thought, but how to get well out of the World, and make it a right Passage to our eternal State ?

How can we prove that we are awake, that our Eyes are open, but by seeing, and feeling, and living according to these important Circumstances of our Life ?

If a Man should endeavour to please thee, with fine Descriptions of the Riches, and Pleasures, and Dignities, of the World in the *Moon*, adding that its Air is always serene, and its Seasons always pleasant, would'st thou not think it a sufficient Answer, to say, *I am not to live there ?*

When thy own false Heart is endeavouring to please itself

with worldly Expectations, the Joy of this or that way of Life, is it not as good a Reproof, to say to thyself, *I am not to stay here?*

For where is the Difference betwixt an earthly Happiness, from which thou art to be separated for ever, and a Happiness in the Moon, to which thou art never to go? Thou art to be for ever separated from the Earth, thou art to be eternal, when the Earth itself is lost, is it not therefore the same Vanity to project for Happiness on Earth, as to propose a Happiness in the Moon? For as thou art *never* to go to the one, so thou art to be *eternally* separated from the other.

Indeed the Littleness and Insignificancy of the boasted Honours of human Life, appears sufficiently from the Things themselves, without comparing them to the Subjects of Religion.

For see what they are in themselves.

Ahasuerus, that great Prince of the eastern World, puts a Question to *Haman*, his chief Minister of State, he asks him, *what shall be done unto the Man, whom the King delighteth to honour?**

Haman imagining that he was the Person whom the King had in his Thoughts, answered in these Words,

Let the royal Apparel be brought which the King useth to wear, and the Horse that the King rideth upon, and the Crown Royal which is set upon his Head; and let this Apparel and Horse be delivered to the Hand of one of the King's most noble Princes, that they may array the Man withal, whom the King delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the Street of the City, and proclaim before him, thus shall it be done to the Man whom the King delighteth to honour.

Here you see the Sum total of worldly Honours.

An ambitious *Haman* cannot think of anything greater to ask; *Ahasuerus*, the greatest Monarch in the World, has nothing greater to give to his greatest Favourite; powerful as he is, he can only give such Honours as these.

Yet it is to be observed, that if a poor *Nurse* was to please her *Child*, she must talk to it in the same Language, she must please it with the same fine Things, and gratify its Pride with Honours of the same kind.

Yet these are the mighty Things, for which Men forget God, forget their Immortality, forget the Difference betwixt an Eternity in Heaven, and an Eternity in Hell.

There needs no great Understanding, no mighty Depth of Thought, to see through the Vanity of all worldly Enjoyments;

* Esther vi. 6.

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do but talk of them, and you will be forced to talk of Gewgaws, of Ribbons, and Feathers.

Every man sees the Littleness of all Sorts of Honours, but those which he is looking after himself.

A private English Gentleman, that is half distracted till he has got some little Distinction, does at the same time despise the highest Honours of other Countries, and would not leave his own Condition, to possess the ridiculous Greatness of an *Indian King*. He sees the Vanity and Falseness of their Honours, but forgets that all Honour placed in external Things, is equally vain and false.

He does not consider that the Difference of Greatness, is only the Difference of Flowers and Feathers; and that they who are dressing themselves with *Beads*, have as just a Taste of what adorns their Persons, as they who place the same Pride in *Diamonds*.

When we read of an eastern Prince, that is too great to feed himself, and thinks it a Piece of Grandeur to have other People put his Meat into his Mouth, we despise the Folly of his Pride.

But might we not as well despise the Folly of their Pride, who are ashamed to use their Legs, and think it adds to their State, to be removed from one Place to another by other People.

For he that thinks it stately to be carried, and mean to walk on Foot, has as true Notions of Greatness, as he who is too haughty to put his Meat in his own Mouth.

Again, It is the Manner of some Countries in the Burial of their Dead, to put a Staff, and Shoes, and Money, in the Sepulchre along with the Corpse.

We justly censure the Folly and Ignorance of such a poor Contrivance to assist the Dead; but if we did but as truly understand what Life is, we should see as much to ridicule in the poor Contrivances to assist the Living.

For how many Things in Life do People labour after, break their Rest and Peace to get, which yet when gotten, are of as much real Use to them, as a Staff and Shoes to a *Corpse* under Ground? They are always adding something to their Life, which is only like adding another Pair of Shoes to a Body in the Grave.

Thou mayst hire more Servants, new paint thy Rooms, make more fine Beds, eat out of *Plate*, and put on richer Apparel, and these will help thee to be happy, as *golden Staves*, or *painted Shoes*, will help a dead Man to walk.

See here therefore the true Nature of all worldly *Show* and *Figure*, it will make us as great as those are, who are dreaming that they are Kings, as rich as those who fancy that they have

Estates in the Moon, and as happy as those, who are buried with Staves in their Hands.

Now this is not carrying Matters too high, or imposing upon ourselves with any Subtleties of Reasoning, or Sound of Words; for the Value of worldly Riches and Honours can no more be too much lessened, than the Riches and Greatness of the other Life can be too much exalted. We don't cheat ourselves out of any real Happiness, by looking upon all worldly Honours as Bubbles, any more than we cheat ourselves by securing Honours that are solid and eternal.

There is no more Happiness lost by not being *great* and *rich*, as those are amongst whom we live, than by not being *dressed* and *adorned* as they are, who live in *China* or *Japan*.

Thou art no happier for having painted Ceilings, and marble Walls in thy House, than if the same Finery was in thy *Stables*; if thou eatest upon Plate, it maketh thee just as happy, as if thy Horses wore silver Shoes.

To disregard Gold, Jewels, and Equipage, is no more running away from any real Good, than if we only despised a Feather or a Garland of Flowers.

So that he who condemns *all* the external Show and State of Life as equally vain, is no more deceived, or carried to too high a Contempt for the Things of this Life, than he that only condemns the Vanity of the vainest Things.

You don't think yourself imposed upon, or talked out of any real Happiness, when you are persuaded not to be as vain and ambitious as *Alexander*.

And can you think that you are imposed upon, or drawn from any real Good, by being persuaded to be as meek and lowly as the holy Jesus?

There is as much sober Judgment, as sound Sense in conforming to the Fulness of Christ's Humility, as in avoiding the Height and Extravagance of *Alexander's* Vanity.

Don't therefore think to compound Matters, or that it is enough to avoid the Vanity of the vainest Men. There is as much Folly in seeking little as great Honours; as great a Mistake in needless Expense upon thyself, as upon anything else. Thou must not only be less vain and ambitious than an *Alexander*, but practise the Humility of the blessed *Jesus*.

If thou rememberest that the whole Race of Mankind are a Race of fallen Spirits, that pass through this World as an Arrow passes through the Air, thou wilt soon perceive, that all Things here are equally great and equally little, and that there is no Wisdom or Happiness, but in getting away to the best Advantage.

If thou rememberest that this Life is but a Vapour, that thou art in the Body, only to be holy, humble, and heavenly-minded, that thou standest upon the Brinks of Death, Resurrection, and Judgment, and that these great Things will suddenly come upon thee, like a Thief in the Night, thou wilt see a Vanity in all the Gifts of Fortune, greater than any Words can express.

Do but therefore know thyself, as Religion has made thee known, do but see thyself in the Light, which Christ has brought into the World, and then thou wilt see that nothing concerns thee, but what concerns an everlasting Spirit that is going to God; and that there are no Enjoyments here that are worth a Thought, but such as may make thee more perfect in those holy Tempers which will carry thee to Heaven.

Chapter II.

*Christianity requires a Change of Nature :
a new Life perfectly devoted to God.*

CHRISTIANITY is not a *School*, for the teaching of moral Virtue, the polishing our Manners, or forming us to live a Life of this World with Decency and Gentility.

It is deeper and more divine in its Designs, and has much nobler Ends than these, it implies an *entire Change of Life*, a Dedication of ourselves, our Souls and Bodies unto God, in the strictest and highest Sense of the Words.

Our blessed Saviour came into the World not to make any Composition with it, or to divide Things between Heaven and Earth, but to make War with every State of Life, to put an End to the Designs of Flesh and Blood, and to show us, that we must either leave this World, to become Sons of God, or by enjoying it, take our Portion amongst Devils and damned Spirits.

Death is not more certainly a Separation of our Souls from our Bodies, than the Christian Life is a Separation of our Souls from worldly Tempers, vain Indulgences, and unnecessary Cares.

No sooner are we baptized, *ie. as believers, for we are not to be* as new and holy Persons, that are entered upon a new State of Things, that are devoted to God, and have renounced all, to be Fellow-heirs with Christ, and Members of his Kingdom.

There is no Alteration of Life, no Change of Condition, that implies half so much, as that Alteration which Christianity introduceth.

It is a Kingdom of Heaven begun upon Earth, and by being made Members of it, we are entered into a new State of Goods and Evils.

Eternity altereth the Face and Nature of everything in this World, Life is only a Trial, Prosperity becometh Adversity, Pleasure a Mischief, and nothing a Good, but as it increaseth our Hope, purifieth our Natures, and prepareth us to receive higher Degrees of Happiness.

Let us now see what it is, to enter into this State of Redemption.

Our own Church in Conformity with Scripture, and the Practice of the purest Ages, makes it necessary for us to renounce the *Pomps and Vanities of the World*, before we can be received as Members of Christian Communion.

Did we enough consider this, we should find, that whenever we yield ourselves up to the Pleasures, Profits, and Honours of this Life, that we turn *Apostates*, break our Covenant with God, and go back from the express Conditions, on which we were admitted into the Communion of Christ's Church.

If we consult either the Life or Doctrines of our Saviour, we shall find that Christianity is a Covenant, that contains only the Terms of changing and resigning this World, for another, that is to come.

It is a State of Things that wholly regards Eternity, and knows of no other Goods, and Evils, but such as relate to another Life.

It is a Kingdom of Heaven, that has no other Interests in this World, than as it takes its Members out of it, and when the Number of the Elect is complete, this World will be consumed with Fire, as having no other Reason of its Existence than the furnishing Members for that blessed Society which is to last for ever.

I cannot here omit observing the Folly and Vanity of human Wisdom, which full of imaginary Projects, pleases itself with its mighty Prosperities, its lasting Establishments in a World doomed to Destruction, and which is to last no longer, than till a sufficient Number are redeemed out of it.

Did we see a Number of Animals hastening to take up their Apartments, and contending for the best Places, in a Building that was to be beat down, as soon as its old Inhabitants were got safe out, we should see a Contention full as wise, as the Wisdom of worldly Ambition.

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To return. Christianity is therefore a Course of holy Discipline, solely fitted to the Cure and Recovery of fallen Spirits, and intends such a Change in our Nature, as may raise us to a nearer Union with God, and qualify us for such high Degrees of Happiness.

It is no Wonder therefore, if it makes no Provision for the Flesh, if it condemns the Maxims of human Wisdom, and indulges us in no worldly Projects, since its very End, is, to redeem us from all the Vanity, Vexation, and Misery, of this State of Things, and to place us in a Condition, where we shall be Fellow-heirs with Christ, and as the Angels of God.

That Christianity requires a Change of Nature, a new Life perfectly devoted to God, is plain from the Spirit and Tenor of the Gospel.

The Saviour of the World saith, *that except a Man be born again, of the Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.** We are told, *that to as many as received him, to them he gave Power, to become the Sons of God, which were born, not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God.†*

These Words plainly teach us, that Christianity implies some great Change of Nature, that as our Birth was to us the Beginning of a new Life, and brought us into a Society of earthly Enjoyments, so Christianity, is another Birth, that brings us into a Condition altogether as new, as when we first saw the Light.

We begin again to be, we enter upon fresh Terms of Life, have new Relations, new Hopes and Fears, and an entire Change of everything that can be called good or evil.

This new Birth, this Principle of a new Life, is the very Essence and Soul of Christianity, it is the Seal of the Promises, the Mark of our Sonship, the Earnest of the Inheritance, the Security of our Hope, and the Foundation of all our Acceptance with God.

He that is in Christ, saith the Apostle, is a new Creature, and if any Man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.‡

And again, *He who is joined to the Lord, is one Spirit.§*

It is not therefore any Number of moral Virtues, no partial Obedience, no Modes of Worship, no external Acts of Adoration, no Articles of Faith, but a new Principle of Life, an entire Change of Temper, that makes us true Christians.

If the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the Dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the Dead, shall also quicken

* John iii. 5.

† John i. 12.

‡ Rom. viii. 9.

§ 1 Cor. vi. 17.

your mortal Bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God.*

Since therefore the Scriptures thus absolutely require a Life suitable to the Spirit and Temper of Jesus Christ, since they allow us not the Privilege of the Sons of God, unless we live and act according to the Spirit of God; it is past Doubt, that Christianity requires an entire Change of Nature and Temper, a Life devoted perfectly to God.

For what can imply a greater Change, than from a carnal to a spiritual Mind? What can be more contrary, than the Works of the Flesh are to the Works of the Spirit? It is the Difference of Heaven and Hell.

Light and Darkness are but faint Resemblances of that great Contrariety, that is betwixt the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of the World.

Its Wisdom is Foolishness, its Friendship is Enmity with God.

All that is in the World, the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, is not of the Father.†

Worldly Opinions, proud Reasonings, fleshly Cares, and earthly Projects, are all so many false Judgments, mere Lies, and we know who is the Father of Lies.

For this Reason, the Scripture makes the Devil the God and Prince of this World, because the Spirit and Temper which reigns there, is entirely from him; and so far as we are governed by the Wisdom and Temper of the World, so far are we governed by that evil Power of Darkness.

If we would see more of this Contrariety, and what a Change our new Life in Christ implies, let us consider what it is to be *born of God*.

St. John tells us one sure Mark of our new Birth, in the following Words, *He that is born of God, overcometh the World.‡*

So that the *new Birth*, or the Christian Life, is considered with Opposition to the *World*, and all that is in it, its vain Cares, its false Glories, proud Designs, and sensual Pleasures, if we have overcome these, so as to be governed by other Cares, other Glories, other Designs, and other Pleasures, then are we born of God. Then is the Wisdom of this World, and the Friendship of this World, turned into the Wisdom and Friendship of God, which will for ever keep us *Heirs of God, and Joint-heirs with Christ*.

Again, the same Apostle helps us to another Sign of our new Life in God. *Whosoever, saith he, is born of God, doth not*

* Rom. viii. 11.

† 1 John ii. 16.

‡ 1 Ep. v. 4.

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*commit Sin, for his Seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.**

This is not to be understood, as if he that was born of God, was therefore in an absolute State of Perfection, and incapable afterwards of falling into anything that was sinful.

It only means, that he that is born of God, is possessed of a Temper and Principle, that makes him utterly hate and labour to avoid all Sin ; he is therefore said *not to commit Sin*, in such a Sense as a Man may be said not to do that, which it is his constant Care and Principle to prevent being done.

He cannot sin, as it may be said of a Man that has no Principle but Covetousness, that he cannot do Things that are expensive, because it is his constant Care and Labour to be sparing, and if Expense happen, it is contrary to his Intention ; it is his Pain and Trouble, and he returns to saving with a double Diligence.

Thus is he that is born of God, Purity and Holiness is his only Aim, and he is more incapable of having any sinful Intentions, than the *Miser* is incapable of generous Expense, and if he finds himself in any Sin, it is his greatest Pain and Trouble, and he labours after Holiness with a double Zeal.

This it is to be born of God, when we have a Temper and Mind so entirely devoted to Purity and Holiness, that it may be said of us in a just Sense, that we cannot commit Sin. When Holiness is such a Habit in our Minds, so directs and forms our Designs, as Covetousness and Ambition directs and governs the Actions of such Men, as are governed by no other Principles, then are we alive in God, and living Members of the mystical Body of his Son Jesus Christ.

This is our true Standard and Measure by which we are to judge of ourselves ; we are not true Christians unless we are born of God, and we are not born of God, unless it can be said of us in this Sense that we cannot commit Sin.

When by an inward Principle of Holiness we stand so disposed to all Degrees of Virtue, as the ambitious Man stands disposed to all Steps of Greatness, when we hate and avoid all Kinds of Sins, as the covetous Man hates and avoids all Sorts of Loss and Expense, then are we such Sons of God, as cannot commit Sin.

We must therefore examine into the State and Temper of our Minds, and see whether we be thus changed in our Natures, thus born again to a new Life, whether we be so spiritual, as to have overcome the World, so holy, as that we cannot commit

Sin; since it is the undeniable Doctrine of Scripture, that this State of Mind, this new Birth is as necessary to Salvation, as the believing in Jesus Christ.

To be eminent therefore for any particular Virtue, to detest and avoid several Kinds of Sins, is just nothing at all; its Excellency (as the Apostle saith of some particular Virtues) is but as *sounding Brass and a tinkling Cymbal*.

But when the Temper and Taste of our Soul is entirely changed, when we are renewed in the Spirit of our Minds, and are full of a Relish and Desire of all Godliness, of a Fear and Abhorrence of all Evil, then, as St. John speaks, *may we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our Hearts before him, then shall we know, that he abideth in us by the Spirit, which he hath given us.**

We have already seen two Marks of those that are born of God, the one is, that they have overcome the World, the other, that they do not commit Sin.

To these I shall only add a third, which is given us by Christ himself, *I say unto you, love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you, that you may be the Children of your Father which is in Heaven.†*

Well may a Christian be said to be a *new Creature*, and Christianity an entire Change of Temper, since such a Disposition as this, is made so necessary, that without it, we cannot be the Children of our Father which is in Heaven; and if we are not his Children, neither is he our Father.

It is not therefore enough, that we love our Friends, Benefactors, and Relations, but we must love like God, if we will show that we are born of him. We must like him have a universal Love and Tenderness for all Mankind, imitating that Love, which would that all Men should be saved.

God is Love, and this we are to observe as the true Standard of ourselves, that *he who dwelleth in God, dwelleth in Love*; and consequently he who dwelleth not in Love, dwelleth not in God.

It is impossible therefore to be a *true Christian*, and an *Enemy* at the same time.

Mankind has no Enemy but the Devil, and they who partake of his malicious and ill-natured Spirit.

There is perhaps no Duty of Religion that is so contrary to Flesh and Blood as this, but as difficult as it may seem to a worldly Mind, it is still necessary, and will easily be performed by such as are in Christ, new Creatures.

For take but away earthly Goods and Evils, and you take

* 1 Ep. iii. 19, 24.

† Matt. v. 44.

away all Hatred and Malice, for they are the only Causes of those base Tempers. He therefore that *hath overcome the World*, hath overcome all the Occasions of Envy and ill Nature; for having put himself in this Situation, he can pity, pray for, and forgive all his Enemies, who want less Forgiveness from him, than he expects from his heavenly Father.

Let us here awhile contemplate the Height and Depth of Christian Holiness, and that god-like Spirit which our Religion requireth. This Duty of universal Love and Benevolence, even to our bitterest Enemies, may serve to convince us, that to be Christians, we must be *born again*, change our very Natures, and have no governing Desire of our Souls, but that of being made like God.

For we cannot exercise, or delight in this Duty, till we rejoice and delight only in increasing our Likeness to God.

We may therefore from this, as well as from what has been before observed, be infallibly assured, that Christianity does not consist in any partial Amendment of our Lives, any particular moral Virtues, but in an entire Change of our natural Temper, a Life wholly devoted to God.

To proceed,

This same Doctrine is farther taught by our blessed Saviour, when speaking of little Children, he saith, *Suffer them to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of God.* And again, *Who-soever shall not receive the Kingdom of God, as a little Child, shall in no wise enter therein.**

If we are not resolved to deceive ourselves, to have Eyes and see not, Ears and hear not, we must perceive that these Words imply some mighty Change in our Nature.

For what can make us more contrary to ourselves, than to lay aside all our manly Wisdom, our mature Judgments, our boasted Abilities, and become Infants in Nature and Temper, before we can partake of this heavenly State?

We reckon it Change enough, from Babes to be Men, and surely it must signify as great an Alteration, to be reduced from Men to a State of Infancy.

One peculiar Condition of Infants is this, that they have everything to learn, they are to be taught by others what they are to hope and fear, and wherein their proper Happiness consists.

It is in this Sense, that we are chiefly to become as Infants, to be as though that we had everything to learn, and suffer ourselves to be taught what we are to choose, and what to avoid; to pretend to no Wisdom of our own, but be ready to pursue

* Luke xviii. 16.

that Happiness which God in Christ proposes to us, and to accept it with such Simplicity of Mind, as Children, that have nothing of our own to oppose to it.

But now, is this Infant-temper thus essential to the Christian Life? Does the Kingdom of God consist only of such as are so affected? Let this then be added as another undeniable Proof, that Christianity requires a *new Nature*, and Temper of Mind; and that this Temper is such, as having renounced the Prejudices of Life, the Maxims of human Wisdom, yields itself with a Child-like Submission and Simplicity to be entirely governed by the Precepts and Doctrines of Christ.

Craft and Policy, selfish Cunning, proud Abilities, and vain Endowments, have no Admittance into this holy State of Society with Christ and God.

The Wisdom of this World, the Intrigues of Life, the Designs of Greatness and Ambition, lead to another Kingdom, and he that would follow Christ, must empty himself of this vain Furniture, and put on the meek Ornaments of infant and undesigning Simplicity.

*Where is the Wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the Disputer of this World? saith the Apostle, Hath not God made foolish the Wisdom of this World?**

If therefore we will partake of the Wisdom of God, we must think and judge of this World, and its most boasted Gifts, as the Wisdom of God judgeth of them; we must deem them Foolishness, and with undivided Hearts labour after one Wisdom, one Perfection, one Happiness, in being entirely devoted to God.

This Comparison of the Spirit of a Christian, to the Temper of Children, may also serve to recommend to us a certain Simplicity of Manners, which is a great Ornament of Behaviour, and is indeed always the Effect of a Heart entirely devoted to God.

For as the Tempers of Men are made designing and deceitful, by their having many and secret Ends to bring about, so the Heart that is entirely devoted to God, is at Unity with itself, and all others; it being wholly taken up with *one great Design*, has no little Successes that it labours after, and so is naturally open, simple, and undesigning in all the Affairs of Life.

Although what has been already observed in the foregoing Pages might be thought sufficient to show, that Christianity requires a new Nature, a Life entirely devoted to God; yet since the Scriptures add other Evidences of the same Truth, I must quote a Passage or two more on this Head.

* 1 Cor. i. 20.

The Holy Spirit of God is not satisfied with representing that Change which Christianity introduceth, by telling us, that it is a new Birth, a Being born of God, and the like, but proceeds to convince us of the same Truth by another Way of speaking, by representing it as a State of Death.

Thus saith the Apostle, *ye are dead, and your Life is hid with Christ in God.**

That is, you Christians are dead as to this World, and the Life which you now live, is not to be reckoned by any visible or worldly Goods, but is hid in Christ, is a spiritual Enjoyment, a Life of Faith, and not of Sight; ye are Members of that mystical Body of which Christ is the Head, and entered into a Kingdom which is not of this World.

And in this State of Death are we as Christians to continue till *Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, and then shall we also appear with him in Glory.†*

To show us that this Death begins with our Christian State, we are said to be *buried with him in Baptism*; so that we entered into this State of Death at our Baptism, when we entered into Christianity.

Know ye not, says the Apostle, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his Death? Therefore we are buried with him, by Baptism into Death.‡

Now Christians may be said to be baptized into the Death of Christ, if their Baptism puts them into a State like to that, in which our Saviour was at his Death. The Apostle shows this to be the Meaning of it, by saying, *if we have been planted together in the Likeness of his Death*, that is, if our Baptism has put us into a State like that of his Death.

So that Christian Baptism is not only an external Rite, by which we are entered into the external Society of Christ's Church, but is a solemn Consecration, which presents us an Offering to God, as Christ was offered at his Death.

We are therefore no longer alive to the Enjoyments of this World, but as Christ was then nailed to the Cross, and devoted entirely to God, that he might be made *perfect through Sufferings*, and ascend to the Right Hand of God; so is our old Man to be crucified, and we consecrated to God, by a Conformity to the Death of Christ, that *like as Christ was raised from the Dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of Life, and being risen with Christ, should seek those Things which are above.*

This is the true undeniable State of Christianity; Baptism does

* Col. iii. 3.

† Ibid., 4.

‡ Rom. vi. 4.

not make us effectually Christians, unless it brings us into a State of Death, consecrates us to God, and begins a Life suitable to that State of Things, to which our Saviour is risen from the Dead. This, and no other than this, is the Holiness, and spiritual Temper, of the Christian Life, which implies such a Resignation of Mind, such a Dedication of ourselves to God, as may resemble the Death of Christ. And on the other Hand, such a Newness of Life, such an Ascension of the Soul, such a holy and heavenly Behaviour, as may show that we are risen with Christ, and belong to that glorious State, where he now sits at the Right Hand of God.

It is in this Sense, that the holy Jesus saith of his Disciples, *they are not of this World, even as I am not of this World*; being not left to live the Life of the World, but chosen out of it for the Purposes of his Kingdom, that they might copy after his Death, and Oblation of himself to God.

And this is the Condition of all Christians to the Consummation of all Things, who are to carry on the same Designs, and by the same Means raise out of this corrupted State, a Number of Fellow-heirs with Christ in everlasting Glory. The Saviour of the World has purchased Mankind with his Blood, not to live in Ease and pleasurable Enjoyments, not to spend their Time in Softness and Luxury, in the Gratifications of Pride, Idleness, and Vanity, but to drink of his Cup, to be baptized with the Baptism that he was baptized with, to make War with their corrupt Natures, humble themselves, mortify the Desires of the Flesh, and like him be made perfect through Sufferings.

St. Paul so well knew this to be the Design and Spirit of Religion, that he puts his Title to the Benefits of Christ's Resurrection upon it, when he says,

*That I may know him and the Power of his Resurrection, and the Fellowship of his Sufferings, being made conformable to his Death.**

It is his being made conformable to his Death, on which he founds his Hopes of sharing in the Resurrection of Christ. If Christians think that Salvation is now to be had on softer Terms, and that a Life of Indulgence and sensual Gratifications is consistent with the Terms of the Gospel, and that they need not now be made conformable to his Death, they are miserably blind, and as much mistake their Saviour, as the Worldly Jews who expected a temporal Messiah to deliver them.

Our Redemption is a Redemption by Sacrifice, and none are redeemed, but they who conform to it. *If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him.*

* Phil. iii. 10.

We must then, if we would be wise unto Salvation, die and rise again like Christ, and make all the Actions of our Life holy by offering them to God. *Whether we eat, or drink, or whatsoever we do, we must do all to the Glory of God.*

Since therefore, he that is called to Christianity, is thus called to an Imitation of the *Death* of Christ, to *forbear* from Sin, to overcome the *World*, to be born of the *Spirit*, to be born of God, these surely will be allowed to be sufficient Evidences, that Christianity requireth an *entire Change* of our Nature, a Life perfectly devoted to God.

Now if this is Christian Piety, it may serve to instruct two Sorts of People :

First, those who are content with an outward Decency and Regularity of Life : I don't mean such as are hypocritical in their Virtues ; but all those who are content with an outward Form of Behaviour, without that inward Newness of Heart and Spirit which the Gospel requireth.

Charity, Chastity, Sobriety, and Justice, may be practised without Christian Piety : a *Jew*, a *Heathen*, may be charitable and temperate ; but to make these Virtues become Parts of Christian Piety, they must proceed from a Heart *truly* turned unto God, that is full of an *infant* Simplicity, that is *crucified* with Christ, that is *born* again of the Spirit, that has overcome the *World*. Temperance or Justice without this *Turn* of Heart, may be the Temperance of a *Jew* or a *Heathen*, but it is not Christian Temperance till it proceed from a true Christian Spirit. Could we do and suffer all that Christ himself did or suffered, yet if it was not all done in the *same Spirit* and Temper of Christ, we should have none of his Merit.

A Christian therefore must be sober, charitable, and just, upon the same Principles, and with the same Spirit, that he receives the Holy *Sacrament*, for ends of Religion, as Acts of Obedience to God, as Means of Purity and Holiness, and as so many Instances of a Heart devoted to God.

As the bare eating of Bread, and drinking Wine in the Holy *Sacrament*, is of no use to us, without those religious Dispositions which constitute the true Frame of a pious Mind, so is it the same in all other Duties ; they are mere outward Ceremonies, and useless Actions, unless they are performed in the *Spirit* of Religion : Charity and Sobriety are of no Value, till they are so many Instances of a Heart truly devoted to God.

A Christian therefore is to be sober, not only so far as answers the Ends of a decent and orderly Life, but in such a Manner as becomes one, who is *born* of the Holy Spirit, that is made one with Christ, who dwells in Christ and Christ in him. He must be

sober in such a measure as best serves the Ends of Religion, and practise such Abstinence as may make him fittest for the Holiness, Purity, and Perfection of the Christian Life.

He must be charitable, not so far as suits with Humanity and good Esteem amongst Men, but in such a Measure as is according to the Doctrines and *Spirit* of Religion.

For neither Charity, nor Temperance, nor any other Virtue, are Parts of Christian Holiness, till they are made holy and religious by such a Piety of Heart, as shows that we live *wholly* unto God.

This is what cannot be too much considered by a great many People, whose Religion has made no Change in their Hearts, but only consists in an external Decency of Life, who are sober without the Piety of Sobriety, who pray without Devotion, who give Alms without Charity, and are Christians without the Spirit of Christianity.

Let them remember that Religion is to *alter* our Nature, that Christian Piety consists in a *Change* of Heart, that it implies a new Turn of Spirit, a spiritual Death, a spiritual Life, a dying to the World, and a Living wholly unto God.

Secondly, This Doctrine may serve to instruct those who have lived Strangers to Religion, what they are to do to become true Christians.

Some People who are ashamed of the Folly of their Lives, and begin to look towards Religion, think they have done enough, when they either alter the outward Course of their Lives, abate some of their Extravagances, or become careful of some particular Virtue.

Thus a Man, whose Life has been a Course of Folly, thinks he has made a sufficient Change, by becoming temperate. Another imagines he has sufficiently declared for Religion, by not neglecting the public Worship as he used to do. A *Lady* fancies that she lives enough to God, because she has left off *Plays* and *Paint*, and lives more at home, than in the former Part of her Life.

But such People should consider, that Religion is no one particular Virtue; that it does not consist in the *Fewness* of our Vices, or in any particular Amendment of our Lives, but in such a *thorough Change* of Heart, as makes Piety and Holiness the Measure and Rule of all our Tempers.

It is a miserable Error to be content with ourselves, because we are less vain, or covetous, more sober, and decent in our Behaviour, than we used to be; yet this is the State of many People, who think they have sufficiently reformed their Lives, because they are in some Degree different from what they were. They think

it enough to be changed from what they were, without considering how thorough a Change Religion requires.

But let such People remember, that they who thus *measure themselves by themselves are not wise*. Let them remember that they are not Disciples of Christ, till they have like him offered *their whole Body and Soul* as a reasonable and lively Sacrifice unto God; that they are not Members of Christ's mystical Body, till they are united unto him by a *new Spirit*; that they have not entered into the Kingdom of God, till they have entered with an *infant Simplicity* of Heart, till they are so born again as not to commit Sin, so full of an heavenly Spirit, as to have *overcome the World*.

Nothing less than this *great Change* of Heart and Mind can give anyone any Assurance, that he is truly turned to God. There is but this one Term of Salvation, *He that is in Christ, is a new Creature*. How insignificant all other Attainments are, is sufficiently shown in the following Words: *Many will say to me in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name? And in thy Name have cast out Devils? And in thy Name have done many wonderful Works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work Iniquity.**

So that there is no Religion that will stand us in any stead, but that which is the *Conversion* of the Heart to God; when all our Tempers are Tempers of Piety, springing from a Soul that is *born again of the Spirit*, that tends with one full Bent to a Perfection and Happiness in the Enjoyment of God.

Let us therefore look carefully to ourselves, and consider what manner of Spirit we are of; let us not think our Condition safe, because we are of this or that Church or Communion, or because we are strict Observers of the external Offices of Religion, for these are Marks that belong to more than belong to Christ. All are not his, that *prophecy* or even *work Miracles in his Name*, much less those, who with worldly Minds and corrupt Hearts are only baptized in his Name.

If Religion has raised us into a *new World*, if it has filled us with new *Ends* of Life, if it has taken Possession of our Hearts, and altered the whole Turn of our Minds, if it has changed all our Ideas of Things, given us a new Set of Hopes and Fears, and taught us to live by the *Realities* of an invisible World, then may we humbly hope, that we are true Followers of the Holy Jesus, and such as *may rejoice in the Day of Christ, that we have neither run in vain, nor laboured in vain*.

* Matt. vii. 22.

Chapter III.

Christianity requireth a Renunciation of the World, and all worldly Tempers.

THE Christian Religion being to raise a *new*, spiritual, and as yet invisible World, and to place Man in a certain Order amongst *Thrones, Principalities*, and spiritual Beings, is at entire Enmity with this present, corrupt State of Flesh and Blood.

It ranks the present World along with the Flesh and the Devil, as an equal Enemy to those glorious Ends, and that Perfection of human Nature, which our Redemption proposes.

It pleased the Wisdom of God to indulge the *Jews* in worldly Hopes and Fears.

It was then said, *Therefore shall ye keep all the Commandments, which I command you this Day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the Land, whither you go to possess it.*

The Gospel is quite of another Nature, and is a Call to a very different State, it lays its first Foundation in the Renunciation of the World, as a State of false Goods and Enjoyments, which feed the Vanity and Corruption of our Nature, fill our Hearts with foolish and wicked Passions, and keep us separate from God, the only Happiness of all Spirits.

My Kingdom, saith our blessed Saviour, *is not of this World*; by which we may be assured, that no Worldlings are of his Kingdom.

We have a further Representation of the Contrariety, that there is betwixt this Kingdom and the Concerns of this World. *A certain Man*, saith our Lord, *made a great Supper, and bade many, and sent his Servant at supper-time, to say to them that were bidden: Come, for all Things are now ready; and they all with one Consent began to make Excuse. The first said, I have bought a Piece of Ground, and I must needs go and see it; another said, I have bought five Yoke of Oxen, and I go to prove them, I pray thee have me excused; another said, I have married a Wife, and therefore I cannot come.*

We find that the Master of the House was angry, and said, *None of those Men which were bidden, shall taste of my Supper.**

Our Saviour a little afterwards, applies it all in this Manner,

* Luke xiv. 16.

*Whosoever he be of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple. We are told, that when the Chief Priests and Pharisees heard our Saviour's Parables, they perceived that he spoke of them.**

If Christians hearing the above-recited Parable, are not pricked in their Hearts, and don't feel that our Saviour speaks of them, it must be owned that they are more hardened than *Jews*, and more insincere than *Pharisees*.

This Parable teaches us, that not only the Vices, the Wickedness and Vanity of this World, but even its most lawful and allowed Concerns, render Men unable to enter, and unworthy to be received into the true State of Christianity.

That he who is busied in an honest and lawful Calling, may on that Account be as well rejected by God, as he who is vainly employed in foolish and idle Pursuits.

That it is no more pardonable to be less affected to the Things of Religion, for the Sake of any worldly Business, than for the Indulgence of our Pride, or any other Passion, it further teaches us, that Christianity is a Calling that puts an End to all other Callings; that we are no longer to consider it as our proper State, or Employment, to take care of Oxen, look after an Estate, or attend the most plausible Affairs of Life, but to reckon every Condition as equally trifling, and fit to be neglected, for the Sake of the *one thing needful*.

Men of serious Business and Management, generally censure those who trifle away their Time in idle and impertinent Pleasures, as vain and foolish, and unworthy of the Christian Profession.

But they don't consider that the Business of the World, where they think they show such a manly Skill and Address, is as vain as Vanity itself; they don't consider that the Cares of an Employment, an Attention to Business, if it has got hold of the Heart, renders Men as vain and odious in the Sight of God, as any other Gratification.

For though they may call it an honest Care, a creditable Industry, or by any other plausible Name, yet it is their particular Gratification, and a Wisdom that can no more recommend itself to the Eyes of God, than the Wisdom of an *Epicure*.

For it shows as wrong a Turn of Mind, as false a Judgment, and as great a Contempt of the true Good, to neglect *any* Degrees of Piety, for the Sake of Business, as for any the most trifling Pleasures of Life.

The Wisdom of this World gives an Importance, and Air of

* Matt. xxi. 45.

Greatness to several Ways of Life, and ridicules others as vain and contemptible, which differ only in their kind of Vanity; but the Wisdom from above condemns all Labour, as equally fruitless, but that which labours after everlasting Life. Let but Religion determine the Point, and what can it signify, whether a Man forgets God in his *Farm*, or a *Shop*, or at a *Gaming-Table*? For the World is full as great and important in its *Pleasures*, as in its *Cares*; there is no more Wisdom in the one, than in the other; and the Christian that is governed by either, and made less affected to Things of God by them, is equally odious and contemptible in the Sight of God.

And though we distinguish betwixt *Cares* and *Pleasures*, yet if we would speak exactly, it is Pleasure alone that governs and moves us in every State of Life. And the Man, who in the Business of the World would be thought to pursue it, because of its Use and Importance, is as much governed by his Temper and Taste for Pleasures, as he who studies the Gratification of his *Palate*, or takes his Delight in running *Foxes* and *Hares* out of Breath.

For there is no Wisdom or Reason in anything but Religion, nor is any Way of Life less vain than another, but as it is made serviceable to Piety, and conspires with the Designs of Religion to raise Mankind to a Participation and Enjoyment of the Divine Nature.

Therefore does our Saviour equally call Men from the *Cares* of Employments, as from the *Pleasures* of their Senses, because they are equally wrong Turns of Mind, equally nourish the Corruption of our Nature, and are equally *nothing* when compared to that high State of Glory, which by his Sufferings and Death he has merited for us.

Perhaps Christians who are not at all ashamed to be devoted to the *Cares* and Business of the World, cannot better perceive the Weakness and Folly of their Designs, than by comparing them with such States of Life, as they own to be vain and foolish, and contrary to the Temper of Religion.

Some People have no other Care, than how to give their *Palate* some fresh Pleasure, and enlarge the Happiness of *Tasting*. I desire to know now wherein consists the Sin or Baseness of this Care.

Others live to no other Purpose than to breed *Dogs*, and attend the Sports of the Field.

Others think all their Time dull and heavy, which is not spent in the Pleasures and Diversions of the *Town*.

Men of sober Business, who seem to act the grave Part of Life, generally condemn these Ways of Life.

Now I desire to know upon what Account they are to be condemned. For produce but the true Reason why any of these Ways of Life are vain and sinful, and the same Reason will conclude with the same Strength against every State of Life, but that which is entirely devoted to God.

Let the ambitious Man but show the Folly and Irregularity of *Covetousness*, and the same Reasons will show the Folly and Irregularity of *Ambition*.

Let the Man who is deep in worldly Business, but show the Vanity and Shame of a Life that is devoted to *Pleasures*, and the same Reasons will as fully set forth the Vanity and Shame of worldly *Cares*, So that whoever can condemn Sensuality, Ambition, or any Way of Life, upon the Principles of Reason and Religion, carries his own Condemnation within his own Breast, and is that very Person whom he despises, unless his Life be entirely devoted to God.

For worldly Cares are no more holy or virtuous, than worldly Pleasures, they are as great a Mistake in Life, and when they equally divide or possess the Heart, are equally vain and shameful, as any sensual Gratifications.

It is granted that some Cares are made necessary by the Necessities of Nature; and the same also may be observed of some Pleasures; the Pleasures of Eating, Drinking, and Rest, are equally necessary; but yet if Reason and Religion do not limit these Pleasures by the Necessities of Nature, we fall from rational Creatures, into Drones, Sots, Gluttons, and *Epicures*.

In like Manner our Care after some worldly Things is necessary, but if this Care is not bounded by the just Wants of Nature, if it wanders into unnecessary Pursuits, and fills the Mind with false Desires and Cravings, if it wants to add an imaginary Splendour to the plain Demands of Nature, it is vain and irregular, it is the Care of the *Epicure*, a longing for *Sauces* and *Ragouts*; and corrupts the Soul like any other sensual Indulgence.

For this Reason our Lord points his Doctrines at the most common and allowed Employments of Life, to teach us that they may employ our Minds as falsely, and distract us as far from our true Good, as any Trifles and Vanity.

He calls us from such Cares, to convince us, that even the Necessities of Life must be sought with a kind of Indifference, that so our Souls may be truly sensible of greater Wants, and disposed to hunger and thirst after Enjoyments that will make us happy for ever.

But how unlike are Christians to Christianity! It commands us to take no Thought, saying what shall we eat, or what shall we

drink, yet Christians are restless and laborious till they can eat in *Plate*.

It commands us to be indifferent about Raiment, but Christians are full of Care and Concern to be clothed in *Purple* and fine Linen; it enjoins us to take no Thought for the Morrow, yet Christians think they have lived in vain, if they don't leave Estates at their Death. Yet these are the Disciples of that Lord, who saith, *Whosoever he be of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple*.

It must not be said that there is some Defect in these Doctrines, or that they are not plainly enough taught in Scripture, because the Lives and Behaviour of Christians are so contrary to them; for if the Spirit of the World, and the Temper of Christians, might be alleged against the Doctrines of Scripture, none of them would have lasted to this Day.

It is one of the Ten Commandments, *Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain*; our Saviour has in the most solemn Manner forbid Swearing; yet where more Swearing than amongst Christians, and amongst such Christians as would think it hard to be reckoned a Reproach to the Christian Name?

The Scripture says of Christians, that they are born of God, *and have overcome the World*; can they be reckoned of that Number, who have not so much as overcome this flagrant Sin, and to which they have no Temptation in Nature?

Well therefore may the Doctrines of Humility, Heavenly-mindedness, and Contempt of the World, be disregarded, since they have all the Corruptions of Flesh and Blood, all the innate and acquired Pride and Vanity of our Nature to conquer, before they can be admitted.

To proceed.

I know it is pretended by some, that these Doctrines of our Saviour, concerning *forsaking all*, and the like, related only to his first Followers, who could be his Disciples upon no other Terms, and who were to suffer with him for the Propagation of the Gospel.

It is readily owned that there are different States of the Church, and that such different States may call Christians to some particular Duties, not common to every Age.

It is owned also, that this was the Case of the first Christians, they differed from us in many Respects.

They were personally called to follow Christ; they received particular Commissions from his Mouth, they were empowered to work Miracles, and called to a certain Expectation of Hatred and Sufferings from almost all the World.

These are Particulars in which the State of the first Church differed from the present.

But then it is carefully to be observed, that this Difference in the *State* of the Church, is a Difference in the *external State* of the Church, and not in the internal *inward State* of Christians. It is a Difference that relates to the Affairs and *Condition* of the World, and not to the *personal Holiness* and Purity of Christians.

The world may sometimes favour Christianity, at other Times it may oppose it with Persecution; now this Change of the World makes two different States of the Church, but without making any Difference in the inward personal Holiness of Christians, which is to be always the same, whether the World smiles or frowns upon it.

Whatever Degrees therefore of personal Holiness or inward Perfection, were required of the first Followers of Christ, is still in the same Degree and for the same Reasons required of all Christians to the End of the World.

Humility, Meekness, Heavenly Affection, Devotion, Charity, and a Contempt of the World, are all *internal Qualities* of personal Holiness, they constitute that Spirit and Temper of Religion, which is required for its own Excellence, and is therefore of constant and eternal Obligation. There is always the same Fitness and Reasonableness in them, the same Perfection in practising of them, and the same Rewards always due to them.

We must therefore look carefully into the Nature of the Things, which we find were required of the first Christians; if we find that they were called to Sufferings from other People, this may perhaps not be our Case; but if we see they are called to Sufferings from themselves, to *voluntary Self-denials*, and renouncing their own Rights, we may judge amiss, if we think this was their particular Duty, as the first Disciples of Christ.

For it is undeniable, that these Instances of making themselves Sufferers from themselves, of voluntary Self-denial, and Renunciation of all worldly Enjoyments, are as truly Parts of personal Holiness and Devotion to God, as any Instances of Charity, Humility, and Love of God, that can possibly be supposed.

And it will be difficult to show, why all Christians are now obliged in Imitation of Christ to be *meek and lowly in Heart*, if they, like the first Christians, are not obliged to these Instances of Lowliness and Meekness, or if they are obliged still to imitate Christ, how can they be said to do it, if they excuse themselves from these plain and required Ways of showing it.

If therefore Christians will show that they are not obliged to those Renunciations of the World, which Christ required of his

first Followers, they must show that such Renunciations, such voluntary Self-denials, were not Instances of personal Holiness and Devotion, did not enter into the Spirit of Christianity, or constitute that *Death* to the World, or *new Birth* in Christ, which the Gospel requireth. But this is as absurd to imagine, as to suppose that praying for our Enemies, is no part of Charity.

Let us therefore not deceive ourselves, the Gospel preaches the *same* Doctrines to us, that our Saviour taught his first Disciples, and though it may not call us to the same *external* State of the Church, yet it infallibly calls us to the same *inward* State of Holiness and Newness of Life.

It is out of all Question that this Renunciation of the World was then required, because of the Excellency of such a Temper, because of its Suitableness to the Spirit of Christianity, because of its being in some Degree like to the Temper of Christ, because it was a Temper that became such as were *born again* of God, and were made *Heirs* of eternal Glory, because it was a right Instance of their loving God *with all their Heart, and with all their Soul, and with all their Strength, and with all their Mind*, because it was a proper Way of showing their Disregard to the Vanity of earthly Comforts, and their Resolution to attend only to the one Thing needful.

If therefore we are not obliged to be like them in these Respects, if we may be less holy and heavenly in our Tempers, if we need not act upon such high Principles of Devotion to God, and Disregard of earthly Goods, as they did, we must preach a *new Gospel* of our own, we must say that we need not be *meek and lowly* as the first Christians were, and that those high Doctrines of Charity, of blessing and doing Good to our worst Enemies, were Duties only for the first State of the Church.

For this is undeniable, that if any Heights of Piety, any Degrees of Devotion to God, of Heavenly Affection, were necessary for the first Christians, which are not so now, that the same may be said of every other Virtue and Grace of the Christian Life.

All our Saviour's divine Sermon upon the *Mount*, may as well be confined to his first Disciples, as these Doctrines, and it is as sound in Divinity, as well founded in Reason, to assert, that our Saviour had only Regard to his first Disciples, when he said, *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon*, as when he saith, *Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple*.

For let anyone think, if he can find the least Shadow of a Reason, why Christians should at first be called to higher

Degrees of Heavenly Affection, Devotion to God, and Disregard of the World, than they are now.

It will be as easy to show that they were obliged to a *stronger* Faith, a *more lively* Hope, than we are now.

But if Faith and Hope are Graces of too excellent a Nature, too essential to the Life and Spirit of a Christian, to admit of any Abatements in any Age of the Church, I should think, that heavenly Affection, Devotion to God, and dying to the World, are Tempers equally essential to the Spirit of Religion, and too necessary to the Perfection of the Soul, to be less required in one Age, than in another.

Besides, it is to be considered, that these Tempers are the natural and genuine Effects of Faith and Hope, so that if they are changed, or abated, Faith and Hope must have *so far* suffered Abatements, and failed in their most proper and excellent Effects.

All Men will readily grant, that it would be very absurd, to suppose, that more *Articles of Faith* should have been necessary to be believed by our Saviour's first Followers, than by Christians of After-ages.

Let it then be considered, why this would be absurd, and it will plainly appear, that the same Reason, which makes it absurd to suppose, that anything which was once necessary to be *believed*, should ever lose that Necessity, will equally show, that it is alike absurd to suppose, that anything that was once necessary to be *done*, should ever be lawful to be left undone.

For is it absurd to suppose, that *Articles of Faith*, should not have always the same Relation to Salvation? And is it not equally absurd to suppose the same of *any Graces* or Virtues of the Soul? That the Kingdom of Heaven should at such a time be only open to *such Degrees* of Piety, of heavenly Affection, and dying to the World, and at other Times make *no Demand* of them.

Again, I believe all Men will readily grant, that whenever the Church falls into such a State of Persecution as was in the Beginning, that we are then to suffer for the Faith as the first Christians did.

Now I ask why we are to do as they did, when we fall into the like Circumstances?

Is it because what they did was right and fit to be done? Is it because their Example is safe and agreeable to the Doctrines of Christ? Is it because we must value our Lives at no higher a Rate, than they valued theirs? Is it because suffering for the Faith, is always that same excellent Temper, and always entitled to the same Reward?

If these are the Reasons, as undoubtedly they are, why we must suffer as they did, if we fall into such a State of the Church as they were in, do not all the same Reasons equally prove that we must *use* the World as they did, because we are in the *same* World that they were in?

For let us here put all the same Questions, in Relation to their Self-denials, and Renunciation of Riches, was not what they did in this Respect right and fit to be done? Is not their Example safe and agreeable to the Doctrines of Christ? Are we to value our worldly Goods, more than they valued theirs? Is not the renouncing earthly Enjoyments for the Sake of Christ, always that *same excellent* Temper, and always entitled to the *same Reward*?

Thus we see that every Reason, for suffering as the first Disciples of Christ did, when we fall into the *same State* of Persecution, that they were in, is as strong and necessary a Reason for our contemning and forsaking the World, as they did, because we are still in the *same World* that they were in.

If it can be shown, that the World is changed, that its Enjoyments have not that Contrariety to the Spirit of Christianity, that they had in the Apostles Days, there may be some Grounds for us Christians to take other Methods than they did. But if the World is the *same Enemy* it was at the first, if its *Wisdom* is still *Foolishness*, its *Friendship* still *Enmity with God*, we are as much obliged to treat this Enemy, as the first Disciples of Christ did, as we are obliged to imitate their Behaviour towards any other Enemies and Persecutors of the common Christianity.

And it would be very absurd to suppose, that we were to follow the Doctrines of Christ in renouncing the *Flesh* and the *Devil*, but might abate of their Enmity in Regard to the *World*, when it is by our Use of worldly Goods, that both the *Flesh* and the *Devil* gain almost all their Power over us.

Having said thus much to show that the Gospel belongs to us in *all* its Doctrines of Holiness and Piety, I shall proceed to enquire, what Heavenly Affection, what Renunciation of the World, and Devotion to God, is required of Christians in the Holy Scriptures.

We find in the Passage already quoted, with several others to the like Purpose, that our Saviour saith, as a common Term of Christianity, That *whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple*.

St. Mark tells us, *There came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit Eternal Life? And Jesus said unto him, thou knowest the Commandments, do not commit Adultery, do not Kill, do not Steal, do*

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not bear false Witness, defraud not, honour thy Father and Mother.*

And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my Youth.

Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, one thing thou lackest, go thy way and sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the Poor, and thou shalt have Treasure in Heaven, and come take up the Cross and follow me.

And he was sad at that Saying, and went away grieved, for he had great Possessions.

In St. Matthew it is thus, *If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, &c.*

Some have imagined, that from our Saviour's using the Expression, *If thou wilt be perfect*, that this was only a Condition of some high uncommon Perfection, which Christians as such, were not obliged to aspire after; but the Weakness of this Imagination will soon appear, if it be considered, that the young Man's Question plainly showed what Perfection it was that he aimed at; he only asked what he should do that he might *inherit Eternal Life*. And it was in answer to this Question, that our Saviour told him, that though he had kept the Commandments, yet *one* thing he lacked.

So that when our Saviour saith, *if thou wilt be perfect*, it is the same thing as when he said, *if thou wilt not be lacking in one thing*, that is, if thou wilt practise all that Duty which will make thee inherit eternal Life, thou must not only keep the Commandments, *but sell that thou hast and give to the Poor*.

It plainly therefore appears, that what is here commanded is not in order to some exalted, uncommon Height of Perfection, but as a *Condition* of his being a Christian, and securing an Inheritance of Eternal Life.

This same thing is further proved from our Saviour's general Remark upon it; *How hardly shall they that have Riches enter into the Kingdom of God*.

By which it appears, that it was the bare entering into the State of Christianity, and not any extraordinary Height of Perfection, that was the Matter in question.

This Remark, and the other following one, where our Saviour saith, *It is easier for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle, than for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of God*, undeniably show us thus much, that what is here required of this young Man, is also required of *all* rich Men in *all* Ages of the Church, in order to their being true Members of the Kingdom of God.

For how could this be said of rich Men, that they can hardly and with more Difficulty enter into the Kingdom of God, if they were not obliged to the same, that this rich Man was obliged to.

For if they may enjoy their Estates, and yet enter into the Kingdom of God, the Difficulty is vanished, and they may enter with Ease, though this young Man was put upon much harder Terms.

If therefore we will but use common Sense in understanding these Words of our Saviour, we must allow that they relate to *all* rich Men, and that the same Renunciation of all Self-enjoyment is required of them, that was required of this young Man.

His Disciples plainly understood him in this Sense, by their saying, *Who then can be saved?* And it appears by our Saviour's Answer, that he did not think they understood him amiss; for he seems to allow their Remark upon the Difficulty of the thing, and only answers, *That with God all things are possible*; implying that it was possible for the Grace of God to work this great Change in the Hearts of Men.

Those who will still be fancying (for there is nothing but Fancy to support it) that this Command related only to this young Man, ought to observe, that this young Man was very virtuous; that he was so eager after Eternal Life, as to *run* to our Saviour, and put the Question to him upon his *Knees*, and that for these things our Saviour *loved* him.

Now can it be imagined, that our Saviour would make Salvation more difficult to one who was thus disposed than to others?

That he would impose particularly hard Terms upon one whose Virtues had already gained his *Love*?

And such hard Terms, as for their Difficulty might justly be compared to a *Camel's* going through the Eye of a *Needle*? Would he make him lacking in one thing, which other Men might lack in all Ages, without any hindrance of their Salvation? Would he send him away sorrowful on the account of such Terms, as are no longer Terms to the Christian World?

As this cannot be supposed, we must allow, that what our Saviour required of that young man, was not upon any *particular* Account, or to show his *Authority* of demanding what he pleased; but that he required this of the young Man for the Sake of the *Excellency* of the Duty, because it was a Temper *necessary* for Christianity, and always to be required of all Christians; It being as easy to conceive, that our Saviour should allow of less *Restitution* and *Repentance* in some Sinners than in others, as that he should make more Denial of the World, more Affection for Heaven, necessary to some, than to others.

I suppose it cannot be denied, that an Obedience to this

Doctrine had shown an excellent Temper; that it was one of the most noble Virtues of the Soul; that it was a *right* Judgment of the Vanity of earthly Riches; that it was a *right* Judgment of the Value of heavenly Treasures; and that it was a *proper* Instance of true Devotion to God.

But if this was a Temper so absolutely, so excellently right then, I desire to know, why it has not the *same* Degree of Excellency still?

Hath Heaven or Earth suffered any Change since that time? Is the World become now more worth our Notice, or heavenly Treasure of less Value, than it was in our Saviour's Time? Have we had another Saviour since, that has compounded Things with this World, and helped us to an easier Way to the next?

Further, it ought to be observed, that when our Saviour commandeth the young Man to *sell all* and *give to the Poor*, he gives this Reason for it, *and thou shalt have Treasure in Heaven*.

This manifestly extends the Duty to *all* rich Men, since the Reason that is given for it, either equally obliges *all*, or obliges *none*; unless a Treasure in Heaven can be said to be a valuable Consideration to some, but not to others.

The Matter therefore evidently comes to this, either we must say that our Saviour did not make a reasonable Proposal to the young Man, that what he required of him, was not sufficiently Excellent in itself, and advantageous to him, or we must allow that the same Proposal is as Reasonable for us to accept of now, as it was in the first Ages of the Church.

We must Observe too, that if all the Reasons which pressed this Duty upon the young Man, equally recommend it to us, that if we neglect it, we are equally Unreasonable with him, who went away Sorrowful.

Let those who are startled at this Doctrine, and think it *unnecessary* now, deal Faithfully with their own Hearts, and ask themselves, whether they should not have had the same Dislike of it, had they lived in our Saviour's Days, or whether they can find any one Reason, why they should have been so Spiritual and Heavenly then, which is not as good and as strong a Reason for their being as Spiritual and Heavenly now.

Let them consider, whether if an *Apostle* was to rise from the Dead, calling *all* rich Men to this Doctrine, they would not drive their Coaches from such a Preacher, rather than be saved at such a Price.

To proceed, if this selling all, this Renunciation of worldly Wealth, was not required for the Excellency of the Duty, and its Suitableness to the Spirit of Christianity, it will be hard to

show a Reason, why such voluntary Self-denial, such Renunciation of one's own Enjoyments, such Persecution of one's self, should be required at a Time, when Christianity exposed its Members to such uncommon Hatred and Persecution from other People.

Our Saviour allowed his Disciples when they should fall under Persecution, to flee from one City to another, though they were to be as *harmless as Doves*, yet he commanded them to be as *wise as Serpents*.

If therefore the Enjoyment of Riches had been a thing that had suited with his Religion; was not a Renunciation of all worldly Wealth, a Temper necessary and never to be dispensed with, one would suppose, that it would least of all have been imposed, at a Time when there were so many other unavoidable Burdens to be undergone.

Since therefore this forsaking and renouncing all by our own Act and Deed, since this Degree of Self-denial and Self-persecution was commanded at a Time, when all the World were Enemies to Christians, since they were not then spared or indulged in any pleasurable Enjoyments of their worldly Wealth, but were to add this Instance of Suffering, to all the Sufferings from their Enemies, we may be sure, that it was required because it was a *necessary* Duty, because it was a proper Behaviour of such as were *born of God*, and made *Heirs* of eternal Glory.

If this be true, then it must be owned, that it is still the same *necessary* Duty, and is now as well that proper Behaviour of those who are Sons of God, as ever it was.

For Christianity is just that same spiritual heavenly State, that it was then, the Dignity of Christians has suffered no Alteration since that Time, and a Treasure in Heaven, an Eternal Happiness are still the same great and important Things.

Chapter IV.

A Continuation of the same Subject.

ANYONE that is at all acquainted with Scripture must Observe, that the Doctrine of the foregoing Chapter, is not barely Founded on those particular Texts there considered, but that the same Spirit of renouncing the World, is the most common and repeated Subject of our Saviour's heavenly Instructions.

A certain Man said unto him Lord, I will follow thee whitherso-

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ever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, the Foxes have Holes, and the Birds of the Air have Nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his Head.*

Another also said Lord, I will follow thee, but let me first go bid them farewell, that are at Home at my House.

And Jesus said unto Him, no Man having put his Hand to the Plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God.

These Passages are all of a kind with what our Saviour said to the young Man, they directly teach that same Renunciation of the World, as the first and principal Temper, the very Soul and Essence of Christianity.

This Doctrine is pressed, and urged upon us by various Ways, by every Art of Teaching, that it might enter into the Heart of every Reader.

The Kingdom of God, saith our Saviour, is like unto a Merchant-Man seeking goodly Pearls, who when he had found one Pearl of great Price, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.†

The Doctrine of this Parable needs no Interpretation, it is plain and strong, and presses home the Advice that our Saviour gave to the rich young Man.

When it says, that the Kingdom of God is a Pearl of great Price, I suppose it means, that a great deal is to be given for it, and when it says, that the Merchant went and sold *all* that he had and bought it, I suppose this is to teach us, that it cannot be bought at any *less* Price.

The modern *Jews* would be upon much easier Terms than those who lived in our Saviour's Days; if we can now tell them that the Kingdom of God is no longer like *one Pearl of great Price*, and that they need not sell *all* that they have and buy it; but may go on seeking Pearls as they used to do, and yet be good Members of the Kingdom of God.

Now if we may not preach such a *new* Gospel as this to the present *Jews*, I don't know how we can preach it to Christians.

This Parable does not suppose, that the Merchant went to Trading again, after he had sold *all*, and bought this Pearl of great Price. He was content with that, and did not want any other Riches.

If the Kingdom of God, is not Riches sufficient for us, but we must add another Greatness, and another Wealth to it, we fall under the Condemnation of this Parable.

To proceed. The peaceful, pleasurable Enjoyments of Riches, is a State of Life everywhere condemned by our Blessed Saviour.

* Luke ix. 57, 58.

† Matt. xiii. 45.

*Woe unto you that are Full, for ye shall Hunger, woe unto you that Laugh now, for ye shall Weep and Mourn.**

If we can think that for all this, the Joys of Prosperity, and the gay Pleasures of Plenty, are the allowed Enjoyments of Christians, we must have done wondering at the Blindness and Hardness of the *Jews' Hearts*.

Woe unto you that are Rich, for ye have received your Consolation! It is not said woe unto you that are Rich, for ye have Enriched yourselves by *evil Arts*, and *unlawful Means*, but it is the *bare Enjoyment*, the Consolation that is taken in Riches, to which this Woe is threatened.

This same Doctrine is pressed upon us by a remarkable Parable, so plain and lively, that one would think that every Christian that has heard it, should be afraid of everything that looked like Self-indulgence, or Expense in his own Pleasures and Pride.

There was a certain rich Man, which was clothed in Purple and fine Linen, and fared sumptuously every Day.

And there was a certain poor Beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his Gate full of Sores, and desiring to be fed with the Crumbs which fell from the rich Man's Table: moreover the Dogs came and licked his Sores.

It came to pass, that the Beggar died, and was carried by the Angels into Abraham's Bosom. The rich Man also died, and was buried, and in Hell he lifted up his Eyes, being in Torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his Bosom.†

This Parable teacheth neither more nor less than what our Saviour taught, when he commanded the young Man to sell all that he had. For it is the bare pleasurable Enjoyment, the living in the usual Delights of a great Fortune, that the Parable condemneth. Here is no Injustice, no Villanies or Extortions laid to his Charge, it is only a Life of Splendour and Indulgence, that leaves him in Hell.

This we are further taught, by *Abraham's Answer* to him, *Son, remember that thou in thy Life-time receivedst thy good Things:* This is alleged as the sole Reason of his being in Torments.

It is to be Observed, that nothing is mentioned of *Lazarus*, but his low and afflicted State, and then it is, *he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*

Can anything more plainly show us the Impossibility of enjoying *Mammon* while we live, and God when we die? A rich Man enjoying the Pleasures of Riches, is for that Reason found in Torments, a Beggar patiently bearing Want, is for that Reason made the Care of Angels, and conducted to *Abraham's Bosom*.

* Luke vi. 25.

† Luke xvi.

Does not this manifestly teach us that same Renunciation of worldly Enjoyments, as if we had been expressly required to part with all that we have?

For if a Life of Splendour, and Pleasure, and sensual Grati-
fications, is the Portion of those who choose to enjoy it, if it
exposes us to so much *Woe* and Wrath hereafter, well might our
Blessed Saviour tell the rich Man, that he lacked *one Thing*, that
he was to *sell all* that he had and give to the Poor.

If therefore this Parable contains the Doctrine that it first
taught, if Time has not worn away its Meaning, it contains
a Doctrine that concerns *all* rich Men; it speaks as home to
them, and calls as loudly for a Renunciation of all worldly
Indulgences, as our Saviour did to the rich Man.

So that there is no Advantage got by considering our Saviour's
Command, as a *particular* Charge, and given to a particular
young Man; since it appears by other express Passages and
Parables, that the *same* is required of all other rich Men, as
they expect any other Consolation, than what is to be found in
Riches.

If we will here also appropriate this Parable to this particular
rich Man, we shall judge as reasonably, as if we should maintain
that the *Hell* in which he was tormented was made only for him,
and is a State which no one else has any Occasion to fear.

We must therefore, unless we will set aside the Gospel, and
think ourselves not concerned in its Doctrines, take this as an
undeniable Truth, that Christianity is still that same opposite
State to the World that it was in our Saviour's Days; that he
speaks to us the same Language that he spoke to the young Man
in the Gospel; that if we will not hear his Voice, but indulge
ourselves in the proud sensual Delights of Riches and Grandeur,
our Fate is taught us in the rich Man in Torments; and to us
belongs that dreadful Threatening, *Woe unto you that are rich,
for you have received your Consolation.*

I know it has been said by some, that all that we are taught
by the Command given to the young Man to *sell all*, is this, that
whenever we cannot keep our Possessions without violating some
essential Duty of a Christian, that then, and not till then, need
we think that we are called upon by Christ to quit all and
follow him.

I have, in Answer to this, already shown, that the Thing
required of this young Man, was no *particular* Duty, but that
our Saviour pressed it upon *all*, and by a Reason which made it
equally conclusive for all People, namely, a *Treasure in Heaven.*

I have shown that the same Doctrine is taught in general, by
comparing the Kingdom of God to *one Pearl* of great Price,

which the Merchant could buy at no less a Price, than by selling *all* that he had ; by the Parable of the *rich* Man in Torments, on the Account of his living in the State and Pleasures of a Fortune ; and lastly, by a general Woe that is threatened to all who are rich, as having received their *Consolation* : So that this seems a full Answer to this Interpretation.

But I shall however consider it further.

Now if this be all that is taught us Christians, by the Case of the young Man in the Gospel, that we are to part with our Enjoyments and Possessions, when we cannot keep them without renouncing some great Truth of our Religion, and that till such a time happens, we may peacefully and pleurably enjoy the Delights and State of Plenty.

If this be the Case, I ask how a good Christian is to be assured that this is a safe and just Interpretation ? How shall he be satisfied that there is no Danger in following it ?

It is plainly an interpretation of our own making, it is not the *open expressed* Sense of the Words, it is an Addition of something to them, for which we have no Authority from the Passage itself. So that it may well be asked, how we can be sure that such an Interpretation may be safely complied with.

The Text saith, *Sell all* that thou hast ; this Interpretation saith, Ye need not sell yet, nay, that you need not sell *at all*, but that you may go on in the pleasurable Enjoyment of your several Estates, till such time as you cannot keep them without denying the Faith.

So that the Interpretation seems to have *nothing* to do with the Text, and only teaches a Doctrine, that might as well be asserted without this Text, as with it.

I ask therefore for what Reason we allow this Passage to teach us no more than this ? Is there any other Part of Scripture that requires us to make this Interpretation ? Does it better suit with the Spirit and Temper of the Christian Religion ? Is it more agreeable to its heavenly Designs, its Contempt of the World, than to take them in their apparent Sense ?

If this were true, then the first Followers of Christ, who observed this Doctrine in its literal Sense, and renounced all, acted less suitably to the Spirit of Christianity, than those who now enjoy their Estates.

This Absurdity is enough to expose any pretended Necessity of this Interpretation, which Absurdity must be granted, if we say that this new Interpretation is more suitable to the Spirit of Christianity, than to take the Words as still obliging in their first Sense.

But to cut off all Pretence of any Necessity from any other

Part of Scripture, I have made it plainly appear, that the same Doctrine is certainly taught by many other express Passages of Scripture.

This Interpretation therefore is as contrary to many other Parts of Scripture, as to this Text ; it is contrary to the Spirit of Christianity, and is only brought in to soften the Rigours of Religion, that People may with quiet Consciences enjoy the Pleasures of Plenty, and those who want it, spend their Time in the Ways and Means of acquiring it.

If therefore there be not an *entire Change* in the Way to Heaven, if the once *strait Gate* be not now a wide and open Passage to all full, fat, and stately Christians ; if there is still any Meaning in these Words, *Blessed are the Poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of God*, the sober Christian may as well doubt of this Allowance of enjoying the Pleasures and Plenty of his Estate, till Persecution for the Faith drives him out of it, as if he was told, that he need not *resist* the Devil, till such time as he tempted him to *deny* the Faith, or give up some Truth of his Religion.

When our Saviour gave this Command to the young Man, and afterwards observed, upon his Refusal, that it was easier for a *Camel* to go through the Eye of a Needle, than for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of God, the Apostles took that Command to signify the common Conditions of entering into Christianity, and immediately declared that they had *left all and followed him*.

And our Saviour answered them in such a Manner, as showed, that the Doctrine then delivered, related to all Mankind in the same Sense, and had nothing particular in it, that related to one Man, or one Age of the Church, more than another.

*Verily I say unto you, there is no Man that hath left House or Brethren, or Sisters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands, for my Sake, or the Gospel's, but he shall have an hundred fold now in this present time, and in the World to come Eternal Life.**

Let it now be considered, that supposing it was barely lawful, to enjoy our Estates, and as the World says, live up to them, is this a State of any Merit? Is there any Reward annexed to it? If it is not our Sin, it is at best a losing our Time, and as unrewardable as Sleeping.

But on the other Side we are infallibly assured, that if we come up to the Doctrine of the Text, if we part with our worldly

* Mark x. 29.

Enjoyments and Gratifications for the Sake of Christ, that in this Life we shall receive an *hundred fold*, and in the World to come Eternal Life.

Now if such Persons as these, are to be thus blessed in this Life, and also so rewarded in the next, it is certain that they who are not such Persons, will not be so doubly blessed both in this Life and that which is to come.

But now what an Interpretation must that be, which leads Men from being an *hundred* times as happy as they might be in this Life, and from such an Height of Reward in the next?

Is not this enough to show us, that the Wisdom of this Interpretation, is not a Wisdom from above, that it savoureth not the Things that be of God?

For who can be so wise unto Eternal Life, who can make so much of his Plenty, as by thus parting with it?

Who that was governed by a Wisdom from above, would seek for an Evasion, where the open Sense, is not only safe, but entitled to so vast a Recompense both now and hereafter?

It is to me no small Argument, that our Saviour meant no such Allowance, as this Interpretation has found out, because it is so contrary to the Perfection of the Soul, and is so disadvantageous to those that follow it.

Our blessed Saviour and his Apostles both in Doctrine and Practice are on the Side of renouncing the Enjoyments of Riches, and who is he that dare preach up a worldly Peace and Indulgence, without either Text or Precedent from Scripture, and such a Peace as leads Men from such high Rewards both in this Life, and that which is to come?

When our Saviour told *Peter* of his Sufferings, *Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee. But Jesus turned and said to Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an Offence unto me, for thou savourest not the Things that be of God, but those that be of Men.*

But after all, this Enjoyment of worldly Riches which this Interpretation pleads for, cannot be shown to be barely lawful, this I say cannot be shown, without showing at the same time, that this Passage, *It is easier for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle, than for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of God,* is so old as to be of no Significancy now, for if the Difficulty still continues, the rich Man must have as much to part with now, as he had then.

The same must be said of all those other Passages above-mentioned, concerning the Kingdom being compared to *one great Pearl*, the Case of the *rich Man* in Torments, and the general *Woe* that is denounced against such as are rich, as

having received their *Consolation* ; all these, with a great Variety of other Texts, must have quite lost their first natural Meaning, if this Interpretation be admitted as barely lawful.

So that it is an Interpretation that runs away from the plain open Sense of the Words, and leads from those great Rewards that belong to it ; it is an Interpretation made without any Necessity, not supported by any Doctrine, or Practice of Scripture, contrary to the Practices of the first Christians, contrary to the heavenly Spirit of our Religion, and so contrary to various plain Passages of Scripture, that they must have lost their true Meaning, if this Interpretation be admitted.

Lastly, If all that can be concluded from this Command of our Saviour, is only this, that we are obliged to part with our Estates, when we cannot keep them, without selling the Truth ; if *sell all thou hast and give to the Poor, and thou shalt have Treasure in Heaven*, only means, when applied to us, *thou mayest keep and enjoy thy Estate, till some wicked Terms of keeping it are imposed upon thee*, this is no higher a Perfection, no greater Degree of Heavenly-mindedness, or Disregard to the World, than a Jew or honest *Heathen* would maintain.

For who does not know that it is better to be *just and faithful*, than to be *rich*, and that a Man is rather to part with his Estate, than to keep it at the Expense of his Virtue and Integrity ? This is only the Virtue of choosing rather to be poor, than a Thief.

But if Christians can think that this is the highest Renunciation of the World, the highest Degree of heavenly Affection, to which they are called, if they can think that this is all that is meant by their being *crucified and dead* to the World, by their being in Christ *new Creatures*, by their being *born of God, and having overcome the World*, they may be justly said to treat the Scriptures, as the *Jews* treated our Saviour, when they said, *We will not have this Man to reign over us*.

I have, I think, sufficiently shown that our Saviour required an entire Renunciation of the World, a forsaking all its Enjoyments, in order to be his true Disciples, and that the same is as certainly required of us, as he is the same Christ, and we Heirs of the same Glory.

It will now therefore, I know, be asked, whether all Christians are obliged to *sell* their Estates and give to the Poor, in order to inherit eternal Life ?

The Absurdity and Ridiculousness of such a thing, and the Disorder it must occasion in Life, will be thought sufficient to expose and confute all the foregoing Doctrine.

As to the Absurdity and Ridiculousness of this Doctrine in

the Eyes of worldly Wisdom, that is far from being any Objection against it, since we are assured by God himself, that the *Wisdom* of this World is *Foolishness* with God, and that the Spirit of Christianity, and the Spirit of the World, are as contrary to one another, as the Kingdom of Light, and the Kingdom of Darkness.

What can be more contrary to worldly Greatness and Wisdom, than the Doctrine of the *Cross*, a crucified Saviour? Which way could anyone expose himself to more Jest and Ridicule, than by being too meek and humble to resent an Affront, and accept a *Challenge*?

Not only *Rakes* and *Libertines*, but the grave, the religious part of the World, talk of the Necessity of defending their Honour, and reckon it a Shame not to resent and fight when the Affront is given.

This makes the Spirit of the World, though it be as consistent with our Religion, to honour the Memory of *Cain* for killing his Brother, as to make it a part of Honour to give or accept a *Challenge*.

This may serve to show us, that we must disregard the Maxims and Wisdom of this World, and not form our Judgments of Christian Virtues with any Regard to it, since by it, Patience and Meekness may be reckoned shameful, and Revenge and Murder as Instances of Honour.

But I give now a direct Answer to the foregoing Question, and venture to affirm, upon the Proofs I have already produced, that all Christians are really and effectually obliged to do that, which our Saviour required of the young Man.

Our Saviour bid him sell all that he had and give to the Poor, that he might have Treasure in Heaven: that is, he required him to renounce the Self-enjoyment of his Estate, to live no longer in the Gratifications of his Plenty, but offer it all to God in Works of Charity and Relief of others.

Now the *selling all*, is only a Circumstance of parting with the Enjoyment of his Riches from himself, to all such Objects and Uses as are worthy of it in the Sight of God.

If our Saviour had told Sinners that they must repent in *Sackcloth and Ashes*, I should have thought, that *Sackcloth and Ashes* were only mentioned as a *particular* way of expressing a general Duty; and that though the Circumstance of *Sackcloth and Ashes* might be omitted, yet the *Thing* intended, the Degree of Humiliation and Sorrow, was always to be performed in the same Degree.

I take it to be the same in the Case before us. It is not necessary that a Man should *sell all* that he hath, because that

was the Expression used to the young Man, but it is necessary that he comply with the *Thing* signified, and practise all that Disregard of the World, and heavenly Affection which is there taught.

He sufficiently selleth all, who parteth with the Self-enjoyment of it, and maketh it the Support of those that want it.

This seems to me to be the true and plain Meaning of the Passage. The Words *sell all*, are only used as a *Form of Speech*, as a general Way of expressing the parting with the Enjoyment of an Estate, as *Sackcloth and Ashes* were a general Way of expressing Repentance, and not as laying any direct Obligation of parting with an Estate in that *particular* Way, any more than *Sackcloth* is always necessary to a true Repentance.

A Person that was to give away his Estate, would surely comply with the Doctrine of the Text, which shows that it is the *Thing* signified, and not the *particular* Manner of doing it, that is required.

Yet it is the keeping to this *literal Sense* of the Words, as if the *selling all*, was the particular Thing enjoined, that has taught People to excuse themselves from the Doctrine there delivered.

For there was some Pretence to think, that so particular an Action as the *selling all*, could only relate to him, to whom it was enjoined.

But if Men would consider, that this *selling all*, is only a Circumstance of the Thing, as *Sackcloth* is a Circumstance of Repentance, and that the Thing required is *heavenly Affection*, and Devotion to God, they would find themselves as much concerned in the Doctrine there delivered, as in any other Doctrine of Scripture.

When our Saviour related the good *Samaritan's* Charity, and said unto the Man that talked with him, *Go and do thou likewise*, he is not exhorted to stay for an Opportunity of doing the same Action, but to do the same Thing which was implied by that Action.

Taking therefore the Words in this plain Sense, as an Exhortation to such a Degree of heavenly Affection, and disclaiming all Self-enjoyment of Riches, and not as to any particular Action of *selling all*, it must be affirmed, that they equally concern *all* rich Men to the End of the World, as that young Man to whom they were spoken.

For as he was called to that Temper of Mind, because it was a *right* Temper for a Christian, a *proper* Instance of his Faith and Hope, and Devotion to God, and a *right* Way of using the Things of this World; how can it be thought, that the same Temper is

not equally *right* and *Christian* in every rich Man now ? Or how can it be thought that the rich Men of this Age, are not equally obliged to act conformably to the Temper and Spirit of Religion now, as well as in the Days of Christ ?

Are not Humility and Meekness to be practised in the *same Fulness*, that they were in our Saviour's Time ? But if they are, it will be impossible to show, why any other Virtues should admit of any Abatement.

Or can anyone show a better Instance of Humility and Meekness, than in departing from the splendid Enjoyments of his Fortune, to make it the Support and Relief of poor and distressed People ?

It ought also to be considered, whether it is not impossible to show that Meekness and Humility which was then required, unless he practises them in these Instances. Let it also be considered, that this Use of worldly Things is not only commanded, as suitable to the Graces and Virtues of the Christian Life, but that the Case of the *rich* Man in Torments, with the other Passages above-mentioned, are so many express Threatenings against our Disobedience.

So that it must be affirmed, that we are as much obliged to labour after the same Degrees of Faith, Hope, heavenly Affection, and Disregard of the World, as after the same Degrees of Humility, Charity, and Repentance, that ever were required of any Christians.

Let it also be considered, that the Command of selling all, is only particular in the Expression, but that Thing required, is the general Temper of Christianity ; as is expressed by being *dead* to the World, having our *Conversation* in Heaven, being *born of God*, and having *overcome* the World ; these Expressions have no proper Meaning, if they don't imply all that heavenly Affection, and Disregard of Riches, to which our Saviour exhorted the young Man.

God forbid, saith St. Paul, that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the World is crucified unto me, and I unto the World.*

Now I desire to know why any Christian should think it less dreadful, not to be crucified and dead to the World, than St. Paul thought it ? Is not the Temper and Spirit which the Apostle shows here, as much to be aspired after, as in any other Part of Scripture ?

But can those who spend their Estates in their own Indulgences, who live in the Pomp and Pleasures of Riches, can they

* Gal. vi. 14.

without Profaneness say that of themselves, which the Apostle here saith of himself?

Or can they be said to have the Spirit of Christ, who are directed by a Spirit so contrary to that of the Apostle? Yet the Scripture says expressly, that *if any Man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

Thus we see that this Renunciation of the World, which is thought too great an Extreme, to be taken from the Command given to the young Man in the Gospel, is the Common Temper of Christianity, and a Doctrine the most universally taught of any other. It is indeed the very Heart and Soul of Christian Piety, it is the natural Soil, the proper Stock from whence all the Graces of a Christian naturally grow forth, it is a Disposition of all others the most necessary and most productive of Virtue. And if we might now be *more earthly*, than in the Days of Christ, we must of necessity be proportionably wanting in all other Virtues. For heavenly Affection enters so far into the being of all Christian Virtues, that an Abatement in that, is like an Alteration in the first Wheel that gives Motion to all the rest.

I will now a little appeal to the Imagination of the Reader.

Let it be supposed, that rich Men are now enjoying their Riches, and taking all the common usual Delights of Plenty, that they are labouring for the Meat that perisheth, projecting and contriving Scenes of Pleasure, and spending their Estates in proud Expenses.

After this Supposition, let it be imagined, that we saw the Holy Jesus, who had not where to lay his Head, with his twelve Apostles, that had left all to follow him; let us imagine that we heard him call all the World to take up the *Cross* and follow him, promising a *Treasure in Heaven*, to such as would quit all for his Sake, and rejecting all that would not comply with such Terms, denouncing *Woe* and eternal Death, to all that lived in Fulness, Pomp, and worldly Delights. Let it be imagined that we heard him commanding his Disciples to take no Thought, saying what shall we Eat, or what shall we Drink, or where-withal shall we be Clothed, and giving this Reason for it, because *after all these Things do the Gentiles seek.*

Let it be imagined that we saw the first Christians, taking up the Cross, renouncing the World, and counting all but Dung, that they might gain Christ.

I do not now appeal to the *Judgment* or *Reason* of the Reader, I leave it with his *Imagination*, that wild Faculty, to determine, whether it be possible for these two different Sorts of Men, to be true Disciples of the same Lord.

To proceed.

Let us suppose that a rich Man was to put up such a Prayer as this to God.

‘O Lord, I thy sinful Creature, who am born again to a lively Hope of Glory in Christ Jesus, beg of thee, to grant me a *thousand* times more Riches than I *need*, that I may be able to gratify Myself and Family in the Delights of Eating and Drinking, State and Grandeur, grant that as the little Span of Life wears out, I may still abound more and more in Wealth, and that I may see and perceive all the best and surest Ways of growing Richer than any of my Neighbours: this I humbly and fervently Beg in the Name, &c.’

Such a Prayer as this should have had no Place in this Treatise, but that I have Reason to hope, that in proportion as it offends the *Ear*, it will amend the *Heart*.

There is no one, I believe, but would be ashamed to put up such a Prayer as this to God, yet let it be well Observed, that all are of the Temper of this Prayer, but those who have *overcome* the World.

We need not go amongst Villains and People of scandalous Characters, to find out those, who desire a *thousand* times more than they want, who have an Eagerness to be every Day richer and richer, who catch at all Ways of Gain that are not scandalous, and who hardly think anything enough, except it equals or exceeds the Estate of their Neighbours.

I beg of such that they would heartily condemn the profane and unchristian Spirit of the foregoing Prayer, and that they would satisfy themselves, that nothing can be more odious and contrary to Religion than such Petitions.

But then let them be assured also of this, that the same Things which make an unchristian Prayer, make an unchristian Life.

For the Reason why these Things appear so odious in a Prayer, is because they are so contrary to the Spirit of Religion. But is it not as bad to live and act contrary to the Spirit of Religion, as to pray contrary to it?

At least must not that Manner of Life be very blamable, very contrary to Piety, which is so shocking when put into the Form of a Prayer?

But indeed whatever we may think, as we live, so we really pray, for as Christ saith, *where our Treasure is, there will our Heart be also*; so as the Manner of our Life is, so is our Heart also, it is continually praying, what our Life is acting, though not in any express Form of Words,

To pursue this Argument a little, is this Prayer too shocking?

Dare we not approach God with such a Spirit? How dare we then think of approaching him with such a Life?

Need we any other Conviction, that this Manner of Life is contrary to the Spirit of Christianity, than this, that the praying according to it in Christ's Name, comes near to Blasphemy?

Does not this also sufficiently convince us of the Reasonableness of Christ's Command, to forsake the Fulness, the Indulgence, and Pride of Estates, since it is a State of Life, that our Reason dare not ask God to give us?

Let it be considered how we should abominate a Person, whom we knew to use such a Prayer, and let that teach us how abominable a Life that is like it, must make us to appear in the Eyes of God, and with this Addition of Folly joined to it, that we call the Prayer *Profane*, but think the Life, that answers to it, to be *Christian*.

Perhaps there cannot be a better way of judging of what Manner of Spirit we are of, than to see whether the Actions of our Life are such, as we may safely commend them to God in our Prayers.

For it is undeniable, that if they are such as we dare not mention to God in our Prayers, we ought in all Reason to be as fearful of acting them in his Presence.

We may indeed do several innocent Things, which on account of their Littleness, are unfit to be put into our Devotions, but if the chief and main Actions of our Life are not such, as we may justly beg the Assistance of God's Holy Spirit in the Performance of them, we may be assured, that such Actions make our Lives as unholy, as such Petitions would make our Prayers.

From all that has been above observed, I think it is sufficiently plain, that the present Disciples of Jesus Christ are to have no more to do with worldly Enjoyments, than those that he chose whilst he himself was on Earth, and that he expects as much Devotion to God, and heavenly Affection from us, as from any that he conversed with, and speaks the same Language, and gives the same Commands to all rich Men now, that he gave to the rich young Man in the Gospel.

Chapter V.

A further Continuation of the same Subject.

THE Subject of the two preceding Chapters is of such Importance, that I cannot leave it, without adding some further Considerations upon it.

For, notwithstanding the Scriptures are so clear and express on the side of the Doctrine there delivered, yet I must expect to encounter the Prejudices of Men, who are settled in other Opinions.

I know it will still be asked, Where can be the Impiety of getting or enjoying an Estate ?

Whether it be not honourable, and Matter of just Praise, to provide an Estate for one's Family ?

It will also be asked, What People of *Birth* and *Fortune* are to do with themselves, if they are not to live suitably to their Estates and Qualities ?

Anyone who has taken the trouble to read this Treatise, must have found, that the Doctrine here taught is none of mine, and that therefore I have no occasion to support it against such Questions as these.

The same Persons may as well ask, why the little Span of Life is made a State of Trial and Probation, in which Men of all Conditions are to *work out their Salvation with Fear and Trembling*.

But however to the first Question let it be answered :

Take no thought, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed ; for after all these things do the Gentiles seek.

If to be careful and thoughtful about the Necessaries of Life, be a Care that is here forbidden, and that because it is such a Care as only becomes *Heathens*, surely to be careful and thoughtful how to raise an Estate, and enrich one's Family, is a Care that is sufficiently forbidden Christians. And he that can yet think it lawful and creditable to make it the Care and Design of his Life to get an Estate, is too blind to be convinced by Arguments. He may with as much Regard to Scripture say, that it is lawful to *swear* falsely, though it forbids him to *speak* falsely.

Our Saviour saith, *Labour not for the Meat that perisheth, but*

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for that Meat which endureth unto Everlasting Life.* He commands us not to lay up for ourselves Treasures on Earth; he assures us that we cannot serve God and *Mammon*.

Now these Places have no meaning, if it is still lawful for Christians to heap up Treasures, to labour for great Estates, and pursue Designs of enriching their Families.

I know it is easy to evade the Force of these Texts, and to make plausible Harangues upon the Innocency of labouring to be rich, and the Consistency of serving God and *Mammon*.

I don't question but the rich young Man in the Gospel, who had kept the Commandments of God from his Youth, could have made a very good Apology for himself, and have shown how reasonable and innocent a thing it was, for so good and so young a Man to enjoy an Estate.

The *rich* Man in Torments could have alleged how much Good he did with his Fortune, how many Trades he encouraged by his *Purple* and *fine Linen*, and faring *sumptuously* every Day, and how he conformed to the Ends and Advantages of Society by so spending his Estate.

But to return: The Apostle saith, *Having Food and Raiment, let us be therewith content, that they who will be rich fall into a Temptation and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown Men in Destruction and Perdition.*†

We may perhaps by some Acuteness of reasoning find out, that this Doctrine still leaves us at our liberty, whether we will labour to be rich or not, and if we do, we are as much enlightened as the *Quakers*, who find themselves at liberty from the use of the Sacraments.

We may pretend, that notwithstanding what the Apostle says, of a *Snare*, a *Temptation*, and foolish *Lusts*, yet that we can pursue the Means, and desire the Happiness of Riches, without any Danger to our Virtue.

But if so, we are as prudent as those Christians, who think they can secure their Virtue without *Watching and Prayer*, though our Saviour has said, *Watch and pray that ye enter not into Temptation.*

He therefore that neglects *Watching and Prayer*, though the appointed Means of avoiding *Temptation*, may show that he lives as much according to Scripture, as he that is careful and desirous of Riches and Wealth, though they are the declared Occasions of *Sin*, *Snares*, and *Destruction*.

If we will not be so humble and teachable, as to conform to Scripture in the Simplicity and Plainness of its Doctrines, there

* John vi. 27.

† 1 Tim. vi. 8.

will be no End of our Errors, but we shall be in as much Darkness as where the Light of Scripture never appeared.

For if we could submit to its plain and repeated Doctrines, it would never be asked, what People of *Birth* and *Fortune* are to do with themselves, if they are not to live up to the Splendour and plenty of their Estates.

The rich Man in the Gospel was a *Ruler*, a *young Man*, and a *good Man*; if therefore there are any amongst us that are neither young nor good, it can hardly be thought that they have less to do to inherit Eternal Life, than the young Man in the Gospel.

And as for those who like him have kept the Commandments of God from their Youth, I dare not tell them that they are not under a necessity of offering all their Wealth to God, and of making their Estates, however acquired, not the Support of any foolish vain Indulgences, but the Relief of their distressed Brethren.

Suppose great People by Means of their Wealth could throw themselves into a *deep Sleep* of pleasant Dreams, which would last till Death awaked them, would anyone think it lawful for them to make such Use of their Riches?

But if it was asked why this is not as lawful, as a Life of high Living, vain Indulgences, and worldly Pleasures, it could not be easily told.

For such a Life as this, is no more like a State of *Probation*, than such a *Sleep* is like it; and he that has done nothing but sleep and dream to the Time of his Death, may as well say that he has been *working out his Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, as he that has been living in such Luxury, Splendour, and vain Gratifications, as his Estate could procure him.

The Gospel has made no Provision for Dignity of *Birth*, or Difference in *Fortune*, but has appointed the same *strait Gate*, the common Passage for all Persons to enter into Glory.

The Distinctions of civil Life have their Use, and are in some Degree necessary to Society, but if anyone thinks he may be less devoted to God, less afraid of the Corruptions of Pleasures, the Vanities of Pride, because he was born of one Family rather than another, he is as much mistaken, as he that fancies he has a Privilege to steal, because he was born of a Father that was poor.

Why may not poor People give themselves up to *Discontent*, to *Impatience* and *Repining*? Is it not because Christianity requires the same Virtues in all States of Life? Is it not because the Rewards of Religion are sufficient to make us thankful in every Condition?

But who sees not, that these same Reasons equally condemn

the Gratifications, the sensual Indulgences of the Rich, as the Discontents and Repinings of the Poor ?

So that a great Man taking his Swing in worldly Pleasures, in the various Gratifications, which his Plenty can furnish, is as good a Christian, as careful of his Duty to God, as the poor Man who resigns himself up to Discontent, and spends his Time and Spirits in restless Complaints and Repinings.

And if the Joys of Religion, our Hopes in Christ, are sufficient to make us rejoice in Tribulation, and be thankful to God in the Hardships of Poverty, surely the same Hopes in Christ must be equally sufficient to make us forbear the Luxury and Softness, and all other Pleasures of imaginary Greatness.

If therefore the rich or great Man can find out a Course of Pleasures, that support no wrong Turn of Mind, a Luxury and Indulgence which don't gratify Sensuality, Delights, and Entertainments, which indulge no vain and weak Passions, if they can find out such Self-enjoyments of their Riches, as show that they love God with all their Strength, and their Neighbours as themselves ; if they can find out such Instances of Splendour and Greatness, as gratify neither the *Lust of the Flesh*, the *Lust of the Eyes*, nor the *Pride of Life*, Religion has no Command against such Enjoyments.

But if this cannot be done, let it be remembered, that the Rich have no more Permission to live in sensual Pleasures, and vain Indulgences, than the Poor have, to spend their Time in anxious Complaints and unthankful Repinings.

Let it also be remembered, that if any Distinctions of Life make Men forget, that Sin is their only Baseness, and Holiness their only Honour, if any Condition makes them less disposed to imitate the low, humble Estate of their suffering Master, or forget that they are to return to God by Humiliation, Repentance, and Self-denial, instead of being of any real Advantage, it is their Curse, their Snare, and Destruction.

Had there been any other lawful Way of employing our Wealth, than in the Assistance of the Poor, our Saviour would not have confined the young Man in the Gospel to that *one* Way of employing all that he had.

Was there no Sin in pampering ourselves with our Riches, our Saviour had not said, *Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your Consolation !*

Had a Delight in the Splendour and Greatness of this Life, been an innocent Delight for People of Birth and Fortune, he had never said, *Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Had worldly Mirth, and the noisy Joys of Splendour and

Equipage, been any part of the Happiness of Christians, he had never said, *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

Thus does it appear, from almost every Part of Scripture, that a Renunciation of the World and all worldly Enjoyments, either of Pleasure or Pride, is the necessary Temper of all Christians of every State and Condition.

I know that to all this, it will still be objected, that the different *States* of Life, are Things *indifferent* in themselves, and are made good or evil, by the Tempers of the Persons who enjoy them. That a Man is not necessarily vain and proud, because he lives in great Show and Figure, any more than another is necessarily humble and lowly in Mind, because he lives in a low Estate.

It is granted, that Men may be of a Temper contrary to the State in which they live, but then this is only true of such as are in any State by Force, and contrary to their Desires and Endeavours.

A Man in a low Estate may be very vain and proud, because he is in such a State by Force, and is restless and uneasy till he can raise himself out of it. If the same can be said of any Man that lives in all the Splendour and Figure of Life, that he is in it by Force, and is restless and uneasy till he can lay all aside, and live in a humble lowly State, it may be granted that such a Man, though in the Height of Figure, may be as humble, as another in starving Circumstances may be proud.

But nothing can be more false, than to conclude, that because a Man may be in a low Estate, without having Lowliness of Mind, which Estate he is in by Force, that therefore another may live in all the Height of Grandeur, the Vanity of Figure which his Fortune will allow, without having any Height or Vanity of Mind, though the State of Life be according to his Mind, and such as he chooses before another that has less of Figure and Show in it.

Nothing can be more absurd than such a Conclusion as this ; it is as if one should say, that because a Man may be an *Epicure* in his Temper, though he is forced to live upon Bread and Water, therefore another who seeks after all Sorts of Dainties, and lives upon Delicacies out of Choice, may be no *Epicure*.

Again, Who does not know that a Man may give all his Goods to feed the Poor, and yet want Charity ? But will anyone therefore conclude, that another may keep all his Goods to himself, and yet have Charity ?

Yet this is as well argued, as to say, that because a Man has nothing to spend, he may yet be proud ; therefore though another

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may lay out his Estate in vain Expenses, he may yet have true Humility of Mind.

For as the Man in a low Estate, would be truly what his Estate is, if he liked it, and had no Desires that it should be otherwise than it is, so for the same Reason, if those who live in Pleasures, in Show and vain Expenses, live in such a State out of Choice, we must talk Nonsense, if we do not say, that their Minds are as Vain as the Vanity of their State.

Again, those who talk of People being Humble in a State, that has all the Appearance of Pride and Vanity, do not enough consider the Nature of Virtue. Humility and every other Virtue is never in a complete state, so that a Man can say, that he has finished his task in such or such a Virtue.

No Virtues have any Existence of this Kind in human Minds, they are rather continual Struggles with the contrary Vices, than any finished Habits of Mind.

A Man is humble not for what he has already done, but because it is his continual Disposition to oppose and reject every Temptation to Pride. Charity is a continual Struggle with the contrary Qualities of Self-Love and Envy.

And this is the State of every Virtue, it is a progressive Temper of Mind, and always equally labouring to preserve itself.

Those therefore who suppose, that People may be so finished in the Virtue of Humility, that they can be truly Humble in the Enjoyments of Splendour and Vanity, do not consider that Humility is never finished, and that it ceases to Exist when it ceases to oppose and reject every Appearance of Pride.

This is the true State of every Virtue, a resisting and opposing all the Temptations to the contrary Vice.

To suppose therefore a Man so truly Humble, that he may live in all the Appearances of Pride and Vanity, is as Absurd, as to suppose a Man so inwardly Sober, that he need refuse no strong *Liquors*, so inwardly Charitable that he need not avoid Quarrels, or so Holy that he need not resist Temptations to Sin.

Lastly, The Necessity of renouncing the World in whatever Condition of Life we are, besides what appears from particular Commands, may be proved from those great Degrees of Holiness, those divine Tempers, which Christianity requires.

Christians are to love God, with *all their Heart, with all their Soul, with all their Mind, and with all their Strength, and their Neighbour as themselves.*

Now it is absolutely impossible in the Nature of the Thing, that we should practise either of these Duties in any Christian Sense, unless we are so born of God, *as to have overcome the World.*

A Man that has his Head and his Heart taken up with worldly Concerns, can no more love God with all his Soul and with all his Strength, than a Man who will have his Eyes upon the Ground, can be looking towards Heaven with all the Strength of his Sight.

If therefore we are to love God with all our Heart and with all our Soul, it is absolutely necessary, that we be first persuaded, that we have no Happiness but in him alone, and that we are capable of no other good, but what arises from our enjoyment of the divine Nature.

But we may be assured that we never believe this Truth till we resign or renounce all Pretensions to any other Happiness. For to desire the Happiness of Riches, at the same time that we know that all Happiness is in God, is as impossible as to desire the Happiness of Sickness, when we are assured that no bodily State is happy but that of Health.

It is therefore certain in an absolute Degree, that we are as much obliged to renounce the World with all our Heart and all our Strength, as we are obliged to love God with all our Heart and all our Strength.

It being as impossible to do one without the other, as to exert all our Strength two different ways at the same time.

It is also certain in the same absolute Degree, that we unavoidably love everything in proportion, as it appears to be our Happiness, if it appears to be half of our Happiness, it will necessarily have half the Strength of our Love, and if it appears to be all our Happiness we shall naturally love it with all our Strength.

The Christian Religion therefore which requires the whole Strength of our Nature to aspire after God, lays this just Foundation of our Performing this Duty, by Commanding us to renounce the Happiness of the World, knowing it impossible to have two Happinesses, and but one Love.

And indeed what can be more ridiculous, than to fancy, that a Man who is labouring after Schemes of Felicity, that is taken up in the Enjoyments of the World, is loving God with *all his Soul* and *all his Strength*?

Is it not as absurd as to suppose a Man that is devoted to the Sports of the Field, is at the same time contemplating Mathematical Speculations with all the Ardour of his Mind?

Let anyone but deal faithfully with himself, consult his own Experience, the inward Feeling of his Mind, and consider, whether whilst his Soul is taken up with the Enjoyments of this Life, he feels that his Soul is loving God with all its Force and Strength; let any Man say, that he feels this strong Tendency

of his soul towards God, whilst it tends towards earthly Goods, and I may venture to depart from all that I have said.

Nothing therefore can be more plain than this, that if we are to fill our Soul with a new Love, we must empty it of all other Affections, and this by as great a Necessity as any in Nature.

The Love of God, as I have said of every other Virtue, is never in any complete State, but is to preserve and improve itself by a continual Opposition and Resistance of other Affections.

It is as necessary therefore continually to renounce the World, and all its Objects of our Affections, in order to form the Love of God in our Hearts; as it is necessary to renounce and resist all Motives of Self-love and Envy, to beget the Habit of Charity.

And a Man may as well pretend, that little Envyies are consistent with true Charity, as that little Desires after the Vanities of the World, are consistent with an entire Love of God with all our Hearts.

It may be said, that though this Appears true in the Reason of the Thing, as considered in Speculation, yet that this is a Love for *Angels*, and not suited to the State of Man.

I answer, it is what God has required, and the same Objection may be made against all other Christian Virtues, for they are all required in a perfect Degree.

Secondly, if it is a Degree of Affection hardly attainable, this makes for the Doctrine, which I have delivered, and shows the absolute Necessity of having no more Enjoyments in the World than such as *Necessity* requires.

For if it is so hard to raise the Soul to this Degree of Love, surely it must be stupid to add to the Difficulty, by foolish and contrary Affections.

Thirdly, If this is the proper Love of Angels, this proves that it is as proper for us, who are taught by God to pray, that his Will may be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.

At least, if this is the Love of Angels, it shows us, that we are to imitate it as far as our Nature will allow, and to stop at no Degrees short of it, but such as we cannot possibly reach.

But can he be said to be doing his utmost to Love like an Angel, that is building Schemes of Felicity on Earth, and seeking Satisfaction in its imaginary Enjoyments?

As sure therefore as this is the Love of Angels, as sure as we are called to an Angelical State of Life with God, so surely are we obliged to lay aside every hindrance, to part with every Enjoyment, that may stop or retard the Soul in its Rise and Affection towards God.

We differ from Angels, as we are in a State of Probation, and loaded with Flesh ; and though till the Trial be over, we must bear with Infirmities and Necessities, to which they are not subject, yet we must no more choose Follies, or find out false Delights for ourselves, than if we were, like them, free from all Infirmities.

The Love of Enemies, is said to be a Love that becomes the Perfection of God, but yet we see, that we are so far from being excused from this Manner of Love, because it is Divine, and suits the Nature of God, that we are for that Reason expressly called to it, that we may be *Children of our Father which is in Heaven*.

If therefore we are called to that Spirit of Love, which becomes the Perfection of God, surely the manner of angelic Love is not too high for us to aspire after.

All therefore that we are to learn from this Matter is this, that a Renunciation of the World is necessary, that this holy Love cannot be attained, unless we only use the World so far as our *Needs* and *Infirmities* require, and think of no Happiness but what is prepared for us at the right Hand of God.

Fourthly, this entire Love of God is as possible, as the Attainment of several other Duties, which still are the Rules of our Behaviour, and such as we are obliged to aspire after in the utmost Perfection.

The sincere Love of our Enemies, is perhaps of all other Tempers the hardest to be acquired, and the Motions of Envy and Spite the most difficult to be entirely laid aside, yet without this Temper, we are unqualified to say the Lord's Prayer. We see Examples of this Love of God in the first Followers of our Saviour ; and though we cannot work Miracles as they did, yet we may arrive at their personal Holiness, if we would but be so Humble as to imitate their Examples.

Our Saviour told them the infallible Way of arriving at Piety, which was by renouncing the World, and taking up the Cross and following Him, that they might have Treasure in Heaven. This was the only way then, and it would still be as Successful now, had we but the Faith and Humility to put it in Practice.

But we are now it seems become so *Wise* and *Prudent*, we see so much further into the Nature of Virtue and Vice, than the Simplicity of the first Christians, that we can take all the Enjoyments of the World along with us in our Road to Heaven.

They took Christ at his word and parted with all, but we take upon us to Reason about the Innocency of Wealth, and stately Enjoyments, and so possess everything, but the Spirit of our Religion.

It is sometimes said in defence of the Dulness of our Affections towards God, that Affections are Tempers which we cannot command, and depend much upon Constitution, so that Persons who are possessed of a true Fear of God, may yet by Reason of their Constitution, feel less Vehemency of Love than others, who are less piously disposed.

This is partly true and partly false.

It is true, that our Affections are very much influenced by our Constitutions, but then it is false, that this is any Defence of our want of Affection towards God.

Two Persons that equally feel the want of something to quench their Thirst, may show a different Passion after Water, by a difference in their Constitutions, but still, thirst after Water is the ruling Desire in both of them.

Two *Epicures*, by a difference in their Constitutions, may differ in the manner of their Eagerness after Dainties, but still, it is the Love of Dainties, that is the governing Love in both of them.

It is the same thing in the case before us, two Persons may equally look upon God as their sole Happiness, by Reason of their different Tempers, one may be capable of greater Fervours of Desire of him than the other, but still, it is the ruling Desire of the other.

Therefore though good Men may content themselves, though they have not such Flames of Desire, as they may see or hear of in other People, yet there is no Foundation for this content, unless they know, that they seek and desire no other Happiness than God, and that their Love, though not so fervent as some others, is still the ruling and governing Affection of their Soul.

Notwithstanding the Difference in Constitution, we see all People are affected with what they reckon their Happiness: If therefore People are not full of a Desire of God, it is because they are full, or at least engaged with another Happiness; it is not any Slowness of Spirits, but a Variety of Enjoyments that have taken hold of their Hearts, and rendered them insensible of that Happiness that is to be found in God.

When any Man has followed the Counsels of our Blessed Saviour, when he has renounced the World, rejected all the flattering Appearances of worldly Happiness, emptied himself of all idle Affections, and practised all the Means of fixing his Heart upon God alone, he may be pardoned if he still wants such Warmth of Affection, as so great a Good might justly raise.

But till all this be done, we as vainly appeal to our Constitutions, Tempers, and Infirmities of our State, as the unprofitable

Servant appealed to the Hardness of his Master, and therefore hid his Talent in the Earth.

And it is there said, *Out of thine own Mouth will I Judge thee, thou wicked Servant, thou knewest that I was an austere Man, &c., wherefore then gavest not thou my Money into the Bank, &c.*

So we may justly fear, that we shall be Judged out of our own Mouths, for if we know, the loving God with all our Heart and Soul, to be so difficult to the Temper and Infirmities of our Nature, why therefore do we not remove every Hindrance, renounce every vain Affection, and with double Diligence practise all the Means of forming this divine Temper? For this we may be assured of, that the seeking Happiness in the Enjoyments of Wealth, is as contrary to the entire Love of God, as wrapping up the Talent in a *Napkin*, is as contrary to improving it.

He that has renounced the World, as having nothing in it that can render him Happy, will find his Heart at liberty to aspire to God in the highest Degrees of Love and Desire; he will then know what the *Psalmist* means, by those Expressions, *My Heart is athirst for God, when shall I appear before the Presence of God?*

And till we do thus renounce the World, we are Strangers to the Temper and Spirit of Piety, we do but *act* the Part of Religion, and are no more affected with those Devotions which are put into our Mouths, than an *Actor* upon the *Stage* is really angry himself, when he speaks an angry Speech.

Religion is only what it should be, when its Happiness has entered into our Soul, and filled our Hearts with its proper Tempers, when it is the settled Object of our Minds, and governs and affects us, as worldly Men are affected with that Happiness which governs their Actions.

The ambitious Man naturally rejoices at everything that leads to his Greatness, and as naturally grieves at such Accidents as oppose it.

Good Christians that are so wise as to aim only at *one* Happiness, will as naturally be affected in this Manner, with that which promotes or hinders their Endeavours after it.

For Happiness in whatever it is placed, equally governs the Heart of him that aspires after it.

It is therefore as necessary to renounce all the Satisfactions of Riches and Fortune, and place our sole Happiness in God, as it is necessary to love him with all our Heart, and all our Soul, with all our Mind, and all our Strength.

Another Duty which also proves the Necessity of this Doctrine, is the Love of our Neighbour. *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.*

Now he that thinks he can perform this Duty, without taking our Saviour's Advice of forsaking all and following him, is as much mistaken, as if he imagines that he loves his Neighbour as himself, though he heaps up Treasures for his own Self-enjoyments, and Self-gratifications.

If a Man would know what this Love of his Neighbour implies, let him look impartially into his own Heart, and see what it is that he wishes to himself, and then turn all those same Wishes to his Neighbour, and this will make him feel the just Measure of his Duty, better than any other Description.

This will also teach him, that this true Love of his Neighbour is as inconsistent with the Love of the World, as Duelling is inconsistent with Meekness and Forgiveness of Injuries.

This Love is a Temper of Mind that suits only such Beings, as have *one common undivided* Happiness, where they cannot be Rivals to one another ; now this is the State of Christians, who have as truly *one common* Happiness, as they have one common God ; but if we put ourselves out of this State, and project for ourselves other Felicities in the uncertain Enjoyments of this Life, we make ourselves as incapable of this neighbourly Love, as *Wolves and Bears* that live upon Prey.

Now one common undivided Happiness being the only possible Foundation for the Practice of this great Benevolence, it is demonstrable, that if we seek any other Happiness than this, if we don't renounce all other Pretensions, we cannot keep clear of such Tempers, as will show, that we do not love our Neighbour as ourselves.

This Love, as has been said of the entire Love of God, is suited to the State of Angels, it being not to be imagined that they have more Benevolence than this for one another ; they can readily perform this Duty, because they never vary from their *one true* Happiness ; and as this makes it easy to them, so nothing can make it *possible* for us, but by imitating them, in placing our *only* Happiness in the Enjoyment of our true Good.

If our Happiness depends upon Men, our Tempers will necessarily depend upon Men, and we shall love and hate People in Proportion, as they help or hinder us in such Happiness.

This is absolutely necessary, and we can never act otherwise, till we are governed by a Happiness where no Men can make themselves our Rivals, nor prevent our Attainment of it.

When we are in this State, it will be no harder to help our Neighbour as ourselves, than it is to wish them the Enjoyment of the same Light, or the same common Air ; for these being Goods, which may be enjoyed equally by all, are not the Occasions of Envy.

But whilst we continue eager Competitors for the imaginary Enjoyments of this Life, we lay a necessary Foundation for such Passions, as are all directly contrary to the Fruits of Love.

I take it for granted, that when our Saviour delivered this Doctrine of Love, he intended it should be a governing Principle of our Lives; it concerns us therefore, as we have any Regard to our Salvation, to look carefully to ourselves, and to put ourselves in such a State, as we may be capable of performing it.

Now in this State we cannot be, till we are content to make no more of this World, than a Supply of our Necessities, and to wait for *one only* Happiness in the Enjoyment of God.

I don't appeal to Niggards and Worldlings, to the Proud and Ambitious; let those who think themselves *moderate* in their worldly Desires and Enjoyments, let such deal faithfully with their own Breasts, and see whether their Prosecution of worldly Affairs, permits them to love all Christians as themselves.

Their Moderation may perhaps keep them from the bitter Envyings and Hatred, to which ambitious Worldlings are subject, but still they have as certainly in their Degree, and in Proportion to their Love of the World, their Envyings, and Hatreds, and Want of sincere Love, as other Men.

If anyone's Heart can bear him Witness, that in Thought, Word, and Deed, he treats all Men with that Love which he bears to himself, it must be one, whose Heart fervently cries out with the Apostle, *God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of Jesus Christ, by which the World is crucified unto me, and I unto the World.*

Any other Glory than this, any other Use of the World, than being thus crucified to it, is inconsistent with this Degree of brotherly Love.

For a further Proof of this Truth, we need only look into the World, and see the Spirit that appears amongst almost all Christians.

We need not go to wicked and loose People, let us go into any virtuous Family whatever, we shall find that it has its particular *Friendships* and *Hatreds*, its *Envyings* and *Evil-speakings*, and all founded in the Interests and Regards of the World.

Now all this necessarily proceeds from hence, that all Christians are busy in attending to their worldly Interests, intending only to keep clear of dishonest and scandalous Practices; that is, they use the World as far as honest *Heathens*, or *Jews* would do, and so consequently have such Tempers as *Jews* and *Heathens* have.

For it is not only Cheating and unlawful Practices, but the

bare Desire of worldly Things, and the placing Happiness in them, that lays the Foundation of all these unchristian Tempers ; that begets particular Friendships and Enmities, and divides Christians into more Parties, than there are Families amongst them.

Were there no dishonest Persons amongst us, yet if Christians give themselves up to the Happiness and Enjoyments of this World, there would be still almost the same Want of the loving our Neighbours as ourselves.

So that it is purely the engaging so far in the World, as sober Christians do, it is their false Satisfaction in so many Things that they ought to renounce, it is their being too much alive to the World, that makes all, even the Devout and Religious, subject to Tempers so contrary to the Love of their Neighbour.

How comes it that most People find it so easy to love, forgive, and pray for all Men at the Hour of their Death? Is it not because the Reason of Enmity, Envy, and Dislike, then ceases? All worldly Interests being then at an End, all worldly Tempers die away with them.

Let this therefore teach us that it is absolutely necessary to die to the World, if we would live and love like Christians.

I have now done with this Subject of *renouncing the World and all worldly Tempers*. I hope I have been so plain and clear upon it, as is sufficient to convince any serious Reader, that it is a Doctrine of Jesus Christ, that it is the very Foundation of his Religion, and so necessary, that without it we can exercise no Christian Temper in the Manner that we ought.

Some People have imagined, that they only renounce the World, as it ought to be renounced, who retire to a *Cloister*, or a *Monastery* ; but this is as unreasonable, as to make it necessary to lay aside *all Use of Clothes*, to avoid the Vanity of *Dress*.

As there is a sober and reasonable Use of particular Things, so there is a sober reasonable Use of the World, to which it is as lawful to conform, as it is lawful to eat and drink.

They only renounce the World as they ought, who live in the midst of it without worldly Tempers, who comply with their Share in the Offices of human Life, without complying with the Spirit that reigneth in the World.

As it is right to go thus far, so is it wrong as soon as we take one Step further.

There is nothing right in eating and drinking, but a strict and *religious* Temperance. It is the same thing in other Compliances with the State of this Life ; we may *dress*, we may *buy* and *sell*, we may *labour*, we may provide for ourselves and our Families ; but as these Things are only lawful for the same

Reason that it is lawful to eat and drink, so are they to be governed by the same *religious* Strictness, that is to govern our Eating and Drinking; all Variation from this Rule, is like *Gluttony* and *Intemperance*, and fills our Souls with such Tempers, as are all contrary to the Spirit of Christ and his Religion.

The first Step that our Desires take beyond Things of Necessity, ranks us amongst *Worldlings*, and raises in our Minds all those Tempers, which disturb the Minds of worldly Men.

You think yourself very reasonable and conformable to Christianity, because you are moderate in your Desires; you don't desire an immense Estate, you desire only a *little* Finery in Dress, a *little* State in Equipage, and only to have Things *genteel* about you.

I answer, if this be your Case, you are happy in this, that you have but little Desires to conquer; but if these Desires have as *fast* hold of you, as greater Desires have of other People, you are in the same State of Worldly-mindedness that they are, and are no more *dead* to the World, than they that are the *fondest* of it. A Fondness for three or four Hundred Pounds a Year, is the same Slavery to the World, as a Fondness for three or four Thousand; and he that craves the Happiness of *little Fineries*, has no more renounced the World, than he that wants the Splendour of a large Fortune.

You hate the Extravagance of *Dress*, but if you cannot depart from your own *little Finery*, you have as much to alter in your Heart, as they that like none but the *finest* of Ornaments.

Consider therefore, that what you call moderate Desires, are as great Contrarieties to Religion, as those which you reckon immoderate; because they hold the Heart in the same State of false Satisfactions, raise the same vain Tempers, and do not suffer the Soul to rest wholly upon God.

When the Spirit of Religion is your Spirit, when Heavenly-mindedness is your Temper, when your Heart is set upon God, you will have no more Taste for the Vanity of one sort of Life than another.

Further, imagine to yourself, that this Pretence in Favour of moderate Desires, and *little Fineries*, had been made to our blessed Saviour, when he was upon Earth, preaching his Doctrines of renouncing the World and denying ourselves.

I dare say your own Conscience tells you, that he would have rebuked the Author of such a Pretence with as much Indignation, as he rebuked *Peter*, *Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou savourest not the Things that be of God.*

Now the Spirit of Christianity is the same Spirit that was in Christ, when he was upon the Earth; and if we have Reason to

think, that such a Pretence would have been severely condemned by Christ, we have the same Reason to be sure, that it is as severely condemned by Christianity.

Had our blessed Saviour a little before he left the World, given Estates to his Apostles, with a Permission for them to enjoy *little Fineries*, and a moderate *State* in *genteel Show* and *Equipage*, he had undone all that he had said of the Contempt of the World, and Heavenly-mindedness; such a Permission had been a Contradiction to the most repeated and common Doctrines that he had taught.

Had his Apostles lived in such a State, how could they have gloried only in the *Cross* of Christ, by which the World was crucified unto them, and they unto the World? How could they have said, *Love not the World, nor the Things in the World, for all that is in the World, the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, is not of the Father, but is of the World?*

Had they lived in a *little State*, in a moderate Show of Figure, Equipage, and worldly Delights, how could they have said, that *She that liveth in Pleasure, is dead whilst she liveth?*

How could they have said, that *They who will be rich, fall into a Temptation, and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown Men in Destruction?*

For it is not the Desire of *great Riches*, but it is the Desire of Riches, and a Satisfaction in the Pleasures of them, that is the *Snare*, and the *Temptation*, and that fills Men's Minds with foolish and hurtful Lusts, that keeps them in the same State of worldly Folly, as they are whose Desires are greater.

Lastly, Had the Apostles lived in that Manner, how could they have said, that *Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the World?*

For certainly he who is happy in the *Pleasure* and *Figure* of a small Estate, has no more overcome the World, than he who is happy in the *Splendour* of one that is greater.

Thus therefore Matters stand with Relation to our blessed Saviour and his Apostles; the Doctrines they taught made it impossible for them to take any Part, or seek any Pleasure in the *Show*, and *Figure*, and *Riches*, of this World.

One would think that this one Reflection, was alone sufficient to show us, what Contempt of the World, what heavenly Affection we are to aspire after.

For how blind and weak must we be, if we can think that we *may* live in a Spirit and Temper, which could not *possibly* be the Spirit and Temper of Christ and his Apostles?

Another Pretence for worldly Care, and Labour after Riches, is to provide for our Families.

You want to leave Fortunes to your Children, that they may have their Share in the *Figure* and *Show* of the World. Now consider, do you do this upon Principles of Religion, as the wisest and best Thing you can do, either for yourself, or your Children?

Can you be said to have chosen the *one Thing needful* for yourself, or the *one Thing needful* for them, who make it your chief Care, to put them in a State of Life, that is a *Snare*, and a *Temptation*, and the most likely of all others, to fill their Minds with *foolish and hurtful Lusts*?

Is it your Kindness towards them, that puts you upon this Labour? Consider therefore what this Kindness is founded upon; perhaps it is such a Kindness, as when *tender Mothers* carry their Daughters to all *Plays* and *Balls*; such a Kindness, as when *indulgent Fathers* support their Sons in all the Expense of their Follies; such kind Parents may more properly be called the *Tempters* and *Betrayers* of their Children.

You love your Children, and therefore you would leave them rich. It is said of our blessed Saviour, that he loved the *young rich Man* that came unto him, and as an Instance of his Love, he bid him *sell all* that he had, and give to the Poor. What a Contrariety is here? The Love which dwelleth in you, is as contrary to that Love which dwelt in Christ, as Darkness is contrary to Light.

We have our Saviour's express Command to love one another, *as he hath loved us*, and can you think that you are following this Love, when you are giving those Things to your Children, which he took away from his Friends, and which he could not possibly have given them, without contradicting the greatest Part of his Doctrines?

But supposing that you succeed in your Intentions, and leave your Children rich, what must you say to them when you are dying? Will you then tell them, that you have the same Opinion of the Greatness and Value of Riches that you ever had, that you feel the Pleasure of remembering how much Thought and Care you have taken to get them? Will you tell them, that you have provided for their Ease and Softness, their Pleasure and Indulgence, and Figure in the World, and that they cannot do better, than to eat and drink, and take their Fill of such Enjoyments as Riches afford? This would be dying like an *Atheist*.

But on the other Hand, if you will die like a *good Christian*, must you not endeavour to fill their Minds with your dying Thoughts? Must you not tell them, that they will soon be in a State, when the World will signify no more to them, than it does to you, and that there is a Deceitfulness, a Vanity, a Littleness, in the Things of this Life, which only dying Men feel, as they ought.

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Will you not tell them, that all your own Failings, the Irregularity of your Life, your Defects in Devotion, the Folly of your Tempers, the Strength of your Passions, and your Failure in Christian Perfection, has been all owing to wrong Opinions of the Value of worldly Things; and that if you had always seen the World in the same Light that you see it now, your Life had been devoted to God, and you would have lived in all those holy Tempers and heavenly Affections, in which you now desire to die?

Will you not tell them, that it is the Enjoyment of the World, that corrupts the Hearts, and blinds the Minds of all People, and that the only Way to know what Good there is in *Devotion*, what Excellence there is in *Piety*, what Wisdom in *Holiness*, what Happiness in *heavenly Affection*, what Vanity in this *Life*, and what Greatness in *Eternity*, is to die to the World, and all worldly Tempers?

Will you not tell them, that Riches spent upon ourselves, either in the Pleasures of *Ease* and *Indulgence*, in the Vanity of *Dress* or the Show of *State* and *Equipage*, are the Bane and Destruction of our Souls, making us blindly content with *Dreams* of Happiness, till Death awakes us into *real* Misery?

From this therefore it appears, that your Kindness for your Children, is so far from being a good Reason why you should so carefully labour to leave them rich, and in the Enjoyment of the *State* and *Show* of the World, that if you die in a Spirit of Piety, if you love them, as Christ loved his Disciples, your Kindness will oblige you to exhort them to renounce all Self-enjoyment of Riches, as contrary to those holy Tempers, and that heavenly Affection, which you now find to be the only Good and Happiness of human Nature.

Chapter VI.

Christianity calleth all Men to a State of Self-denial and Mortification.

CHRISTIANITY is a *Doctrine of the Cross*, that teaches the Restoration of Mankind to the Favour of God, by the Death and Sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

This being the Foundation of the Christian Religion, it shows us, that all Persons who will act conformably to the Nature and Reason of Christianity, must make themselves Sufferers for Sin.

For if there is a Reasonableness between Sin and Suffering, every Christian acts against the Reason of Things, that does not endeavour to pay some part of that Debt which is due to Sin.

Indeed it would be strange to suppose, that Mankind were redeemed by the Sufferings of their Saviour, to live in Ease and Softness themselves; that Suffering should be the *necessary* Atonement for Sin, and yet that *Sinners* should be excused from *Sufferings*.

Such an High Priest became us, says the Apostle, *who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from Sinners*.

Now if the *Holiness* of Christ rendered his Sacrifice acceptable to God, does not this teach us that we must labour to be *holy* in order to be accepted of God?

But is there not the same Reason, and the same Example in the Sufferings of Christ, if they made God more propitious to Sin, must we not as well take this Way of Suffering, to make ourselves fitter Objects of Divine Pardon?

There is therefore the same Reason in the Nature of the Thing, for us Sinners to endeavour to conform ourselves to the *Sufferings*, as to labour after the *Holiness* of Christ; since they both jointly conspired to recommend the great Atonement for Sin, and must jointly conspire to render us proper Objects of the Benefits of it.

Nor is the sinless State of Christ a better Reason for us to avoid and flee from Sin, than his suffering State is a Reason for our renouncing all Softness and Indulgence in Pleasures.

Had Christ wanted either Holiness or Sufferings, his Sacrifice had been wanting in an essential Part. If therefore we think to be accepted of God by Holiness, without Suffering, we seem to contradict the Nature of our Religion as much, as if we thought to be accepted through Sufferings without Holiness.

It may perhaps be said, in the Words of our *Liturgy*, *That Christ having by his one Oblation of himself once offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction, for the Sins of the whole World*, that Christians have no Occasion to make any Suffering for Sin.

To this it may be answered,

That the Sacrifice of Christ is full and sufficient, first, as it takes away the Necessity of all the *legal Sacrifices*: Secondly, as it has no Need to be repeated again: And thirdly, as it fully reconciles God to accept of us upon the Terms of the New Covenant.

Now there is no Occasion to suffer for Sin, in order to make the Sacrifice of Christ *more complete*, or to add a further Value to the Atonement for Sin; but then it is to be considered, that if

Self-suffering for Sin be a good and reasonable Duty in itself, and proper for a Sinner, that the Fulness of Christ's Sacrifice has no more taken away the Necessity of it, than it has taken away the Necessity of Humility, or any other Virtue.

Christ is as well said to be our *Sanctification*, our *Holiness* and *Righteousness*, as our Atonement for Sin, yet we should much mistake the Scripture, if we should think, that because he is our Holiness, therefore we need not endeavour to be Holy ourselves.

Yet this is as good a Conclusion, as to imagine, that we need not suffer for our Sins ourselves, because Christ's Sufferings are a full Atonement for Sin.

For they are no otherwise a *sufficient* Atonement for Sin, than as Christ is our *sufficient* Holiness, so that we may as well trust to his Holiness, without labouring to be Holy ourselves, as trust to his Sufferings, without making ourselves also Sufferers for Sin.

Let it now therefore be observed, that were there no particular Precepts or Doctrines, that expressly called us to a State of Self-denial, and Self-suffering, the very Nature of Religion, is an undeniable Argument, that the Way of Suffering, is the right and certain Way for Sinners to find God more Propitious to their Sin.

He that can doubt of this, must suppose, that God required a Way of Atonement in Jesus Christ, that had nothing of Atonement in it; for if it had, it must be undeniable, that all, who, as far as their Natures will allow, conform themselves to the Similitude of Christ's Sacrifice, must make themselves more acceptable to God.

That Christ's Sufferings have not made all other Sufferings for Sin needless, is plain from hence, that all Christians are still left subject to *Death*. For surely it may with Truth be affirmed, that Death is a Suffering for Sin.

Now since all Christians are to offer up their Bodies at Death, as a *Sacrifice* or *Suffering* for Sin, this plainly teaches us that a State of Self-denial and Suffering is the proper State of this Life. For surely it must be proper to make every Part of our Life suitable to such an *End*.

Does God unmake us, and dash our very Form into pieces? and can we think that a Life of Pleasure and Self-indulgence, can become us under such a Sentence?

What plainer Proof can we have, that we are *devoted* Sufferers for Sin, than that we are devoted to Death? for Death hath no place in a State of allowed Pleasure and Enjoyment. When the Suffering for Sin is over, there will be no more Death; but so long as Death lasts, so long are all Beings that are subject to Death, in a State that requires Humiliation and Suffering; and

they rebel against God, if they do not make their Lives conformable to that Mark of divine Displeasure, which death signifies.

Thus as the *Mortality* of our Condition, is a certain Proof that our Life is in *Disorder*, and *unacceptable* to God, so is it also a Proof, that we ought to refuse Pleasures and Satisfactions, which are the Pleasures of a State of Disorder, and stay for Joy and Delights till we are removed to such a State of Perfection, as God will delight to continue to all Eternity.

The Apostle tells us that *Flesh and Blood cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*, must we not therefore be very unreasonable, if we can cast about for Mirth in such a Condition, or give up ourselves to the vain Pleasures and Indulgences of a Flesh and Blood, which are too corrupt, too unholy to enter into the Kingdom of God?

This may suffice to show us the Excellency and Reasonableness of our Saviour's Doctrine.

He said unto them all, if any Man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his Cross daily and follow me.

For whosoever will save his Life, shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his Life for my sake, the same shall save it.

Here is a common Condition proposed to all that would be Christ's Disciples, they are called to deny themselves, and take up their Cross daily. To show us that this belongs to all Christians, the Apostle saith, *He said unto them all*; St. *Mark* hath it thus, *And when he had called the People unto him, with his Disciples also, he said unto them.*

The Church of *Rome* refuses to give the *Cup* in the Holy Sacrament to the Laity. We reckon it a very good Argument against that Custom, that our Saviour when he delivered the Cup, said unto them, *Drink ye all of this.*

Now if it be an Argument that *all Christians* are to receive the Cup, because in the Institution of the Sacrament it is said, *Drink ye all of this*, is it not as good an Argument that all Christians are here called to deny themselves, and take up their Cross daily, because it is delivered in the same Manner, *He said unto them all*, and again, *When he called the People unto him with his Disciples also, he said unto them?*

To me this Place seems as general a Call to all Christians, as *Drink ye all of this*, is a general Command to all Christians.

Let anyone try to evade the Obligation of this Text, and he will find, that he must use such Arguments, as will equally serve to get rid of any other Part of Holy Scripture.

If this Passage only called the first Disciples of Christ to an external State of Sufferings, and Persecutions from other People,

it might with some Pretence be supposed only to relate to People, when they are in such a State of Persecution.

But as it calls them to *deny themselves*, to take up their Cross daily, it is plain, that it calls them to a Suffering and Self-denial, which they were to inflict upon themselves.

Now if they are called thus to deny themselves, and subject themselves to a voluntary Cross in order to be Christ's Disciples, it will be hard to show, that Self-denials are not as lasting Terms of Christianity, as Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Water-Baptism is Necessary because our Saviour has Instituted it, and the Reason for continuing it, is the same as for observing it at first. But still, it is but an external Rite, or Sacrament, which in its own Nature hath nothing relating to Holiness and Purification of the Soul, but has all its Excellency from the Institution of Christ.

This cannot be said of these Sort of Sufferings, for they have an *internal* and *essential* Relation to Holiness and Purification in the *present State* of Man.

I say in the *present State* of Man, because though these Self-denials or Mortifications, are proper only to Man whilst he is in this State of Corruption, yet they are as true Parts of Holiness, and as essential Virtues, as those which will last for ever.

Charity to the Poor is founded in the Necessities and Infirmities of this Life, yet it is as real a Degree of Holiness, and as much to be performed for its own Sake, as that Charity which which will never have an End.

It is the same in these Self-denials, they only belong to a State of Sin, but whilst such a State continues, they are the indispensable Duty of Sinners, and as necessary and acceptable to God as relieving the Poor.

This must be allowed, or we must deny, that there was any real Atonement for Sin in the Sufferings and Death of Christ; for if there were any real Atonement in the Sufferings of Christ, if his Sufferings rendered God propitious and reconciled* to Sinners, it is undeniable, that all who suffer with the *same Spirit* that Christ suffered, must in their Degree recommend themselves to the Favour of God, on the same Account, and for the same Reasons that the Sufferings of Christ procured Peace and Reconciliation.

If Christ the Lord of all, and Head of the Church, is still making Intercession for us at the Right Hand of God, does not this plainly teach us, that we cannot be accepted by God, unless we live in a State of Supplication and Prayer for ourselves?

And if he who had no Sin of his own, was obliged to such Sufferings to make himself be heard as an *Advocate* for Sin:

*This is a
necessary
ground
of
peace
to
live
in
life.*

surely Sinners themselves cannot presume to sue for their own Pardon, without putting themselves in the *like State* of Humiliation and Suffering. For since the Atonement is made by Sufferings, this as truly recommends Sufferings to Sinners, as if it had been made by Prayer, that would have shown the Way of Prayer to have been the Way of finding Pardon.

Self-denial therefore and Sufferings are Duties essential to the present State of Sin, and recommend us to God, as Holiness and Purity recommend us, by their own Nature and intrinsic Fitness, that is, they are good, as Prayer, Humility, and Charity are good.

When we shall be removed to a State that is free from Sin, Self-Denial and Mortification will then be no Part of our Duty; but so long as this State of Sin lasts, so long does the Necessity and Reason of Self-denial and Mortification last; they are as necessary, as Prayers and Devotion, and are as truly essential Parts of Holiness, as Chastity and Humility.

For Repentance and Sorrow for Sin is as necessary to a being in a State of Sin, as necessary on its own Account, and from the Nature of the Thing, as the Love of God is necessary from a Being that receives all his Happiness from God.

For to express our Indignation, and inflict Punishment on that which displeases God, is as reasonable in itself, and as much an Act of Holiness, as to love and cherish that which God loves. So that all our Self-denials as Punishments of Sin, as Expressions of Sorrow for Guilt, and as Preventions of Temptation, may be considered as so many Instances of our Love of Purity.

Whilst therefore we continue in a State of Corruption, it is as necessary that we continue in a State of Repentance, Self-denial, and Sorrow, as it is necessary to continue our Desires and Endeavours after Purity.

If we can find a Time when we have no Sin to lament, no Occasion for the Severities of Repentance, it may be granted, that that would be a Time for the abstaining from Self-denial, and voluntary Sufferings.

But if human Life knows of no such Season, if we can never look at ourselves, but under the Weight of Sin, it is a Demonstration that Indignation at ourselves, and a voluntary Suffering for Sin, is the necessary constant State of Christians.

Indeed if it be allowed that Repentance and Sorrow for Sin is necessary, and that it ought to be the constant Habit of a Christian's Mind, till this Life be at an End, we need no stronger Proof of the constant Necessity of Self-denial and Mortification.

For what Reason can there be for Sorrow and Grief for Sin, which is not the same Reason for Self-denial, and the daily Cross? Is not Grief and Sorrow for Sin, a *Suffering and Punishment* for Sin? Or can we grieve and afflict ourselves for our Sins, unless we express that Grief by a hearty Indignation, and real Self-denial?

If therefore we consider the Reason and Fitness of Repentance, we see the Reason and Fitness of Self-denial, and voluntary Sufferings, and consequently we must acknowledge, that these Self-denials are not less necessary, nor less recommended to us, than Repentance and Sorrow for Sin.

For since they are of the same Nature, and for the same End, and also essential to true Repentance, it follows, that all Christians are obliged to be as constant in their Self-denials, and Mortifications, as they are to be constant in their Repentance.

Because such voluntary Sufferings have the same essential Relation to Holiness, that Charity and the Love of God have.

For though Charity and the Love of God will never cease, but this Self-denial will have an End, yet is this Self-denial during this State of Sin, as essential to the Holiness of Persons in such a State, as any other Virtue.

It being the same Degree of inward Purity, and as right a Spirit and Temper to *mourn and afflict* ourselves for our Sins, as to *love* that which God *loves*, or be thankful for his Mercies.

Now if a Person was to give himself up to *Sorrow* in a *State of Happiness*, or to *Unthankfulness*, though in the *Midst of Mercies*, he would act just as unreasonably, just as contrary to the Nature of Things, as he that gives himself up to Pleasures and Indulgences in a *State of Corruption and Sin*.

Let it therefore be carefully observed, that Self-denial and Mortification, are only other Words for Repentance and Sorrow for Sin, and he that can distinguish them from one another, may distinguish Grief from Sorrow.

He therefore that can doubt, whether Christians are called to a daily Practice of Self-denial, seems to know as little of true Religion, as if he doubted whether they were called to a daily Repentance. For when we may live in a State contrary to *Repentance*, then, and then only, may we live in a State contrary to *Self-denial*.

Let a Christian ever cease from Self-denial, let him ever forbear the Mortification of his Appetites, and at that Time he ceases to consider himself as a *Sinner*, and behaves himself as though he were then free from the *Guilt* and *Danger* of Sin.

But as he never is in this State of Freedom, so if he acts as if

he were so, he acts as falsely, as if he took himself to be an *Angel*.

There is therefore as much Reason that the *daily Cross*, or Self-denial, should be imposed upon Christians, as a daily Prayer, or Repentance; and there is the same Impiety, the same false Judgment in refusing a daily Self-denial, as in refusing or ceasing from a daily Devotion and Sorrow for Sin.

For a Man may as well imagine that he prays or gives Thanks to God, when he only repeats the Words of a Prayer or Thanksgiving, as that he repents for his Sins, unless his Repentance be a *real* Punishment, a *true State* of Mortification.

We may now observe, that this Doctrine of Self-suffering is founded upon the most important fundamental Articles of our Religion.

If we consider our Redemption as an Atonement made by Suffering, does not this show us the Necessity of seeking Pardon by a Fellowship in the Sufferings of Christ?

Need we any other Argument, that there is no State so suitable to a Sinner as that of Suffering, when God has appointed Sufferings as the Atonement for Sin?

If we consider that we are devoted to *Death*, and under a Necessity of falling into Dust, as a *Sacrifice* for Sin, does not this teach us the Necessity of making our Life conformable to the Intention of such a Death?

For could there be any *Necessity* that we should die as a *Sacrifice* for Sin, if we might lead a Life of a *contrary* Nature? Or could we act more contrary to God, than by making that Life a State of Pleasure and Indulgence, which he has laid under the *Curse* of Death? Ought we to indulge a Life which God considers as too unholy to continue in Being?

Lastly, If we consider that Repentance is the chief, the most constant and perpetual Duty of a Christian, that our Holiness has hardly any other Existence, than what arises from a perpetual Repentance, can it be doubted, that Mortification and Self-denial are essential, perpetual Parts of our Duty?

For to suppose a Repentance without the Pain of Mortification, and the Punishment of Self-denial, is as absurd, as to suppose a Labour after Holiness, which takes not one Step towards it.

For if Repentance be not an Exercise of Mortification and Self-denial, it is no more a State of Repentance, than the lifting up our Hands, without our Hearts, is a State of Prayer and Devotion.

Repentance is a hearty Sorrow for Sin, Sorrow is a Pain or Punishment, which we are obliged to raise to as high a Degree as we can, that we may be fitter Objects of God's Pardon.

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So that Self-denial and Mortification is only another Word, for a *real Repentance*.

If Christians will still so far forget the Nature and Design of their Religion, as to imagine that our Saviour's Call to a daily Cross and Self-denial was only a Call to his first Disciples to expect Sufferings and Death from their Enemies, they are governed by as little Reason, as if they should think, *Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand*, only obliged those to Repentance, who first entered into the Kingdom of God.

For there is nothing in the Nature of Repentance, that shows it to be a more constant Duty, or more essential to the Christian Life, than there is in this Mortification and Self-suffering.

It is also very absurd to suppose, that a Command to deny themselves and take up their own Cross daily, should mean only the enduring and expecting of Sufferings from others.

Let us now suppose the contrary, that Christians are not called to this State of Mortification, or Denial of their Appetites. Let us suppose that Christian Churches are full of *fine gay* People, who spend their Days in all the Pleasures and Indulgences which the Spirit of the World can invent.

Can it in any Sense be said of such, that they live in a *State of Repentance and Sorrow* for Sin? May they not with as much Regard to Truth, be said to live in *Sackcloth and Ashes*? Can their Hearts feel any Sorrow, or be mourning for the Weight and Misery of Sin, who live only to the studied Enjoyments of Ease and Pleasure? Can they be said to grieve at Guilt, or be afraid of Sin, who pamper all their Appetites, and seek all the Enjoyments that lead to Temptation? Can they who live in the Gratifications of the Flesh, and Scenes of Pleasure, be said to be working out their Salvation *with Fear and Trembling*? May they not as justly be said to be walking barefoot to *Jerusalem*?

If therefore we will not destroy the whole State of Religion, if we will but own it to be a State of *Trial and Probation*, we must also allow, that Self-denial and Abstinence from Pleasures are daily essential Duties of it.

For a Life of Sorrow for Sin, and mourning for the Guilt of it, and a Life of Pleasure and Indulgence, are inconsistent States, and as necessarily destroy one another, as Motion puts an End to Rest.

Repentance will have no Place in Heaven, because that will be a State of Perfection, and for the same Reason it ought never to be laid aside on Earth, because there is no Time, when we are not under the Guilt, and subject to the Danger of Sin.

This does not suppose, that we are always to be uttering

Forms of Confession from our Mouths, but it supposes, that we are always to live with so much Watchfulness, as becomes penitent Sinners, and never do anything, but what highly suits with a *State of Repentance*.

So that whenever we can abate our Self-denials, without abating our Sorrow for Sin, when we can find Pleasures that neither *soften* the Mind, nor make it *less fearful* of Temptation, then, and so far only, may we seek our Ease.

For Repentance whilst it is only a Lipwork at stated Times is nothing, it has not had its Effect, till it has entered into the State and Habit of our Lives, and rendered us as fearful of Sin in every Part of our Lives, as when we are making our Confessions.

Now this State of Penitence, which alone is suited to a State of Corruption and Infirmary, can no more exist without constant daily Self-denial, than we can daily govern our Appetites, without daily looking after them.

To proceed. Our Saviour saith, *Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted*.

Now this is another direct Call to Self-denial and Abstinence from Pleasures, as must appear to everyone, that knows Mourning to be different from Pleasure and Indulgence.

The Blessedness that is here ascribed to Mourning, must be understood in relation to Mourning, as it is a *State of Life*, and not as to any transient Acts, or particular Times of Mourning.

For no Actions are valuable, or rewardable, but as they arise from a *State or Temper* of Mind that is constant and habitual.

If it had been said blessed are the Charitable, it must have meant, blessed are they who live in a *State and Habit* of Charity. For the same Reason, are we to understand the Blessedness which is due to Mourning, to be only due to a State and Life of Mourning.

Secondly, *Blessed are they that mourn*, shows us that this Mourning concerns all Men as such, without any Distinction of *Time* or *Persons*, so that its Excellency and Fitness must be founded upon something that is common and constant to all times and all Persons. For if there was any time, when we might change this State of Mourning, or were there any Persons that might be excused from it, it could not be said in general, *Blessed are they that mourn*.

If therefore this Mourning be a reasonable and excellent Temper, that equally leads *all Orders* of Men to Blessedness, its Reasonableness must be founded in the common State and Condition of Man; that is, if Mourning be good for all Men, it must be, because the State and Condition of all Men as such, requires Mourning.

But if this Mourning be founded in the present State of Man, as suitable to his Condition in this Life, it must be always the same excellent and proper Temper, till Death changes his State, and puts him in a Condition, that requires another Temper.

Now what can this State of Mourning be, but a godly Sorrow founded upon a true Sense and Feeling of the Misery of our State, as it is a State of *fallen Spirits*, living in Sin and Vanity, and *Separation* from God ?

What can it be, but a ceasing to enjoy and rejoice in the false Goods and Enjoyments of this Life, because they delude and corrupt our Hearts, increase our Blindness, and sink us deeper in our Distance from God ?

What Mourning can be blessed, but such as mourns at that which displeases God, which condemns and rejects what the Wisdom of God rejects, which loosens us from the Vanity of the World, lessens the Weight of our Corruption, and quickens our Motions and Aspirings towards Perfection ?

This is not a Mourning that shows itself in *occasional Fits* of Sorrow, or Dejection of Mind, but it is a *regular Temper*, or rather a *right Judgment*, which refuses Pleasures, that are not only the Pleasures of a corrupted State, but such as also increase and strengthen our Corruption.

One constant Property of a true Mourning, is Abstinence from Pleasures ; and we generally reckon a Sorrow very near its End, when Diversions and Amusements begin to be relished.

This Mourning therefore to which this Blessedness is ascribed, must be a constant Abstinence from vain Joys ; it must preserve itself by rejecting and disrelishing all those worldly Delights and Satisfactions, which if admitted, would put an end to its State of Mourning.

Now what is all this, but that State of *Self-denial* and *Daily-cross* to which our Saviour called his Disciples ?

For we may imagine anything, if we can imagine, that a State of religious Mourning is not a State of religious Self-denial.

Unless therefore we will say, that the Blessedness of Mourning, was also only preached to Christ's first Followers, we must allow, that *all Christians* are equally called to that *Daily-cross* and *Self-denial*, which was then required.

It ought also here to be observed, that we are called to these Duties upon our Hopes of Happiness.

For *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted*, is the same thing as saying, Miserable and cursed are they that do not mourn, for they shall not be comforted. Again,

Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Nothing can carry a greater Denial and Contradiction to all the Tempers and Ways of the World than this Doctrine ; it not only puts an end to all that we esteem wicked and immoderate Desires of worldly Satisfactions, but calls us from all worldly Satisfactions, which anyway fasten the Soul to any false Goods, and make it less ardent after true Happiness. As the Christian Religion regards only the Salvation of our Souls, and restoring us to a Life with God in Heaven, it considers everything as ill, that keeps us in a State of any false Enjoyment, and nothing as good, but what loosens us from the World, and makes us less Slaves to its Vanities. *Blessed are the poor in Spirit*, because it is a Spirit of Disengagement and Disrelish of the World, that puts the Soul in a State of Liberty and Fitness, to relish and receive the Offers of true Happiness.

The Doctrine of this Text, is purely the Doctrine of *Self-denial* and *Daily-cross*, to which our Saviour called his Disciples.

For let anyone consider, how it is possible for a Man to be *poor in Spirit*, but by renouncing those Enjoyments, which are the proper Delights of such as are *high*, and *rich* in Spirit. Now a Man is *high* in Spirit, when his own State and Dignity give him a Pleasure, he is *rich* in Spirit who seeks and delights in the Enjoyments and Felicities which Riches afford, he is therefore *poor in Spirit*, who mortifies all vain Thoughts, rejects every Self-pleasure, and avoids and dislikes the empty Satisfactions which Riches and Fortune give.

Now this, which is undoubtedly the Doctrine of this Passage, is the very Essence and Soul of all Self-denial and Mortification, which is nothing else but a constant checking all our vain Tempers, and a denying ourselves such Enjoyments, as naturally strengthen and support them. So that the Blessedness of Poverty of Spirit, is the Blessedness of Self-denial and Mortification.

For surely if we are called to a constant Poverty of Spirit, we are called to a constant Refusal of all Enjoyments, but such as Poverty of Spirit requires.

For it is to be observed, that when it is said, *Blessed are the poor in Spirit*, that the Meaning is, *Blessed* are they that are governed by this Spirit, for that is only a Man's Spirit and Temper, which rules and directs his Actions.

An ambitious Man, is one that is governed by his Spirit of Ambition, so a Man is poor in Spirit, when that is the Spirit which governs his Actions.

As the rich in Spirit, are such as seek the Felicity and Gratifications of Riches, so the poor in Spirit is he, who avoids and dislikes all such Gratifications, and seeks such Things as properly suit with such a mortified Habit of Mind.

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So that no one is to reckon himself *poor in Spirit*, till it makes him not only reject all Instances of Pride and Self-enjoyment, but till he seeks and desires things that are as proper to a Poverty of Spirit, as *Food* is proper to Hunger, or *Water* to Thirst.

For as Hunger is known by its being a Desire of *Food*, and Thirst by its Desire of *Liquor*, so Poverty of Spirit can only be known, by its seeking such things, as are as *true Signs* of it, as the seeking of Water, is a Sign of Thirst.

For this is undeniable, that every Spirit or Temper must only be known, by the Nature of the Things it covets.

If we are High-minded, our Care will be exercised about high Things, and if we are lowly in Heart, we shall as certainly not only condescend, but seek after things that are lowly. Let a Man therefore, who would deal faithfully with himself, consider not only whether he is *Proud, Luxurious, Indulgent* of himself, and devoted to the Pleasures and Satisfaction of this Life, but let him consider whether he is *poor in Spirit*, whether the Things that he seeks, the Designs he has on foot, the Happiness he aims at, and the Course of his Life, be such as is really directed by a true Poverty of Spirit.

For he ought not to think that he is governed by this Spirit, till he finds himself an Enemy to every Pleasure, every Care, and every Labour that is contrary to it. When he hates Self-indulgence, as the *Epicure* hates Self-denial, when he studies Humility, as the *ambitious* Man aims at *Greatness*, when he avoids the Vanities of the World, as the *Sailor* avoids *Rocks*, then may he reckon himself entitled to that Blessedness, which belongs to those who are *poor in Spirit*.

This is that Self-denial, Holy-discipline, Daily-cross, to which all Christians are called; that by thus losing their Lives, that is, thus ceasing to live the Life of this World, they may purchase to themselves a Life of endless Happiness in another State.

I believe there are few Christians, who do not acknowledge that Christianity is still in some Degree a *Doctrine of the Cross*; and that the Texts above cited, have still some meaning with regard to all Christians; but then they believe this in some such loose and general Way, or live with so little regard to what they do believe of it, that they feel no Condemnation of themselves, whatever their Lives are, from hearing these Doctrines.

But notwithstanding all this, it is certain that Christians are as much obliged to conform exactly to these Doctrines of the Cross, as to the Observance of the Ten Commandments. For the Ten Commandments were not more certainly Laws to the

Jews, than the Doctrines of Self-denial and Poverty of Spirit are Laws to *all Christians*.

Another plain and remarkable Instance of Self-denial, is to be seen in the following Words.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, an Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth, but I say unto you, that ye resist not Evil, but whosoever will smite thee on thy right Cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any Man will sue thee at Law and take away thy Coat, let him have thy Cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go with him a Mile, go with him twain.

Our Blessed Saviour's first Proposal was this, *If any Man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his Cross daily, and follow me.*

In the Text before us, he instructs them in several Instances, wherein this Self-denial and Daily-cross consisted, which are now the common Terms of Salvation to all Christians.

We are to deny ourselves, in not demanding a *Tooth for a Tooth*, we are to take up our *Daily-cross* by turning our Cheek to the Smiter, and suffering such ill Usage, as we could prevent by Resistance.

We are to deny ourselves, in not defending ourselves by Suits at Law; and must take up the Cross of one Injury after another, rather than appeal to the Contention of a Trial. This is sufficiently taught, by our being required to expose ourselves to the farther Loss of our *Cloak*, rather than have recourse to Law to secure our *Coat*.

The Words which deliver this Doctrine are so very plain and express, that they need no Illustration, it is as plain also, that they equally belong to all Christians of all Ages. The Manner of our Saviour's delivering himself upon these Points, puts it out of all question, that they were Doctrines of the *Cross*, which were to be perpetual Marks of his Followers.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, an Eye for an Eye, &c. But I say unto you, that ye resist not Evil, &c.

It was not possible for our Saviour to express himself in a more authoritative Manner than he has here done, or to show us more plainly, that he was here acting as the *great Law-giver* of Christians, and delivering Doctrines which should be *perpetual Laws* to all his Disciples, and such as should constantly distinguish them from all the World. Nor is it possible for anyone to evade the literal and open Meaning of these Doctrines, but in such a way as must destroy the Sense of any other Part of Scripture.

If it could be shown, that we are not obliged by the plain and express Doctrine of these Passages, it might as well be shown,

that the next Doctrine, *But I say unto you, love your Enemies, bless them that curse you*, does not oblige us in the plain and literal Sense of the Words.

For both the Passages are equally supported by the same Authority of our Saviour, expressed in the same manner, *I say unto you*. This Degree also of Love which we are to show to our Enemies, is as much a Doctrine of the *Cross*, as contrary to all our natural Tempers, and worldly Interests, as that of Patience, Meekness, and Submission to those who treat us injuriously. These Virtues are also necessary to one another; we cannot thus Love and do good to our Enemy, unless we are thus patient under Sufferings, and deny ourselves all Instances of Anger and Uneasiness at them.

It is pretended by some that these Passages only forbid our Prosecution of *spiteful* and *malicious* Suits at Law.

But such People might as well pretend, that the Eighth Commandment only forbids *wanton* and *spiteful* Stealing, but allows it, when it is done Soberly and with no spiteful Intention.

For the Case which our Saviour put, is directly intended against such a Pretence as this.

It is the Case of a Man, who has a Suit commenced against him for his *Coat*, he is not allowed to consider that it is his *own* Coat, and that he enters no further into the Trial, than to secure his *Coat*; he is not allowed to show this Degree of Contention or Anger at Injustice, or Impatience under Suffering, but is patiently to permit his Coat to be taken from him, though that Patience be the Means of losing his Cloak also.

It is not therefore spiteful Prosecutions, but the most seemingly reasonable Self-defence that is here forbidden. Further, *Malice* and *Revenge* were not allowed to the *Jews*, yet we are here commanded to deny ourselves such Methods of Self-defence, and Rules of Justice as were allowed to them.

If Christians will still think that they may defend *all* their Rights, and enter into all *such* Contentions for them, as the *Laws* of the Land will support them in, if they will think that they need bear *no other* Injuries, but such as Courts of *Law* cannot redress, they are as much mistaken, as if they imagine, they need Practise no other Charity or Worship of God, but such as humane Laws Demand.

For Christian *Meekness*, *Self-denial*, and *Patience* under Sufferings, are no more to be formed by the Standard of human Laws, than our Devotion to God.

In these Things Jesus Christ is our *only Lawgiver*, and his Laws are to be complied with as the certain Terms of our Salvation.

Notwithstanding therefore we may be able either by personal Power or legal Contention to repel Injuries, return Evil for Evil, and demand a *Tooth* for a *Tooth*, yet as Disciples of Christ we are to turn our Cheek to the Smiter, let him that would take our Coat, have our Cloak also, and be rather content to suffer many Injuries, than by defending ourselves, raise our Passions, embitter our Tempers, and destroy that Charity which we owe to our Neighbour.

Now this *Meekness* and *Self-denial* is highly suitable to the Spirit and Temper of Christianity.

It is highly suitable to a Religion that restores Sinners to God by *Sufferings*, it is suited to such as have *forsaken all* to follow Christ, it is suited to such as are to be *dead* and *crucified* to the World, to such as are to be *meek* and *lowly* as Christ, it is suited to such as are commanded to *love* and do all Good to their most violent Enemies, and who are to love their Neighbour as themselves.

And whatever Pride, Self-love, or *humane Wisdom* may suggest against this Doctrine, may with equal Strength be Objected against all those other Doctrines, which are thus of a Spirit like unto it.

But let Christians consider, that it is of these Doctrines of the *Cross*, that our Saviour saith, *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my Words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own Glory and in his Father's, and of the holy Angels.* Further,

This is my Commandment, saith Christ, *that ye love one another, as I have loved you.* Now this as plainly forbids all Strife and angry Contentions with others, as when we are commanded to part with our Coat rather than contend for it. For it is as impossible to love our Adversary whilst we are contending with him, as Christ loved us, as to follow Christ, and at the same time depart from him.

His Love towards Mankind (which is the Example for our Love) knew of no Enemies, nor refused any Sufferings, but was a continual Labour for the Salvation of all Men. If therefore we treat *any* Persons as our *Enemies*, or fly in the Face of those who injure us, and are impatient under Sufferings, we are fallen from that Love which is to govern all our Actions.

Men may fancy what they please of the Charity of their Temper, whilst they are resisting Evil, and carrying on the Contentions of Law, as others may think they *have their Conversation in Heaven*, whilst they are labouring after Riches on Earth; but if they would consider, that Christian Charity is to be like the Charity of Christ, who died for his Enemies, they would

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soon find, that it must be a Charity of another Kind, that allows them to *contend* with their Enemies.

Every Resistance or Contention of any Kind, is a Quarrel, and necessarily begets some Degrees of Spite and Ill-will, and though they may often be carried on with some Show of *external Decency*, yet the *inward Temper* partakes of the Contention, is tainted with some *little and ill-natured* Resentments, and destroys that divine Spirit of Love to which we are called.

So that to talk of the Charity of resisting, and contentious Suits at Law, is almost like talking of the Charity of *Duels*.

The only Way therefore to preserve our Christian Spirit, and show ourselves more like Christ than those who injure us, is to act as he did under Injuries, and bear them with Patience, for such Reasons as rendered him patient. We are sure that whilst we follow him, we follow the *Way, the Truth, and the Life*, but as soon as we resent and form Designs of conquering our Oppressor, we partake of his Spirit, and offend against Meekness and Charity, as he offended against Justice.

We must therefore bear with Injuries and Wrongs, not because it is difficult to redress them, but because it is difficult, and next to impossible, to resist and contend with our Adversaries, without forfeiting that Humility, Meekness, and Divine Love, to which we are called.

We must suffer with Patience, because such Patience is an Exercise of our Self-denial, that renders us more like our Lord and Master.

This cannot be doubted of, since we are told of our blessed Saviour, *That though he were a Son, yet learned he Obedience, by the Things which he suffered.*

Now if this be true, is it not true in the same Degree, that we are not only to bear Sufferings with Patience, but even receive them with Thankfulness, as proper Means to teach us Obedience to the Laws of God?

For if he who was a Son, who was without Sin, and so full of Divine Knowledge, yet received *Instruction* from Sufferings, surely we who are poor infirm Creatures, must want that Instruction which is to be learnt from them.

For to suppose, that we can be obedient to God without Sufferings, is to suppose, that we can do our Duty without such Helps as the Son of God had. Sufferings are therefore to be considered amongst the Graces of God, which *purify* our Souls, *enlighten* our Minds with Divine Knowledge, and prepare us to *perfect Holiness in the Fear of God.*

But how contrary to the Spirit of Christ do we act, if our Sufferings provoke us into Methods of *Retaliation*, and instead

of teaching us Obedience to God, lead us into a State of *Enmity* towards our Brethren.

Further ; It became him, saith the Apostle, *for whom are all Things, and by whom are all Things, in bringing many Sons unto Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through Sufferings.**

We are here plainly taught not only that Christ was made perfect through Sufferings, but that it was fit he should be made perfect that Way, as the only Way that could bring *many Sons unto Glory.* *not merely life.*

So that we see one End of Christ's Sufferings before his being crowned with Glory and Honour, was to teach us, that Sufferings is the *Way* to arrive at Glory, and that those who desire to be Sons of Glory, must first be made perfect through Sufferings.

We therefore forget the Nature of our Religion, we mistake the one great Design of Christ's Sufferings, we go out of the Road to Glory, if we do not patiently submit to Sufferings, if we are not thankful that we *suffer with Christ, that we may reign with him.*

Christian Men in vain pretend that they only defend themselves against *Injustice.* For these are the very Hardships which Christ suffered, and which they are, if they would be guided by his Spirit, to suffer with Patience.

St. Peter speaking to Servants, saith, *This is thank-worthy, if a Man for Conscience toward God endure Grief suffering wrongfully. If when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an Example, that ye should follow his Steps.*

Here the Apostle finds the Duty of Servants being subject to Masters, who treat them *injuriously*, upon the *common Doctrine* of Christianity ; because to suffer *wrongfully* is thank-worthy before God, and because Christ's Example has called us to bear with Patience those injurious and wrongful Hardships.

Let it therefore be carefully observed, that as sure as the Apostle here speaks by the Spirit of God, so sure is it that our Behaviour is not thank-worthy or acceptable with God, unless we endure wrongful Sufferings with Patience, and that if we lay aside this Meekness, we leave the Example of Christ, who only saves such as follow his Steps.

I have now gone through several Instances of that Mortification, Self-denial, and Suffering, to which the Christian World are called.

* Heb. ii. 10.

If the Doctrines of this Chapter seem hard and grievous, they can only seem so to such, as have wrong Notions of human Life.

Too many People imagine this Life to be something, that is substantial in itself, and valuable for its own Goods, and look upon Religion as something that is added to it, to make a worldly Life more easy, regular, and happy; and so embrace Religion with no other Spirit, nor to any further Degree, than as it complies with the Ease, Order, and Happiness, of that Way of Life in which they live.

Our blessed Saviour has fully confuted this Opinion, by teaching us, that there is but *one Thing needful*. If therefore we are but so far Christians, as to believe that what our Saviour has here taught, is strictly true, then all the pretended Grievances of Self-denial and Suffering are all struck off at once.

For what though Meekness, Patience, and Humility, may often make us Sufferers, yet if such Sufferings make us only lose such Things as are *not needful* for us, where is any Ground for Complaint?

But further, such Sufferings are not only without any real Hurt, but they promote our Happiness, and become Matter of real and solid Joy.

*Blessed are ye, when Men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of Evil of you falsely for my Sake, rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your Reward in Heaven.**

Christ does not endeavour to comfort us in this State, as if it were a *hard* or *melancholy* State, which we must bear because it is made easier with Patience, or because God has pleased to impose it upon us, but he looks at it in quite another View, not as needing Comfort, but as having Matter fit for Congratulation.

What Christians are they therefore, what Strangers to the Spirit of Christ, who reckon those Things amongst the Hardships of Religion, which Christ recommends to us as Reasons of *rejoicing*, and being *exceeding glad*?

The whole Matter therefore plainly comes to this, if our Sufferings, our Injuries, or Hardships, be such as we undergo, because we dare not depart from that Meekness, and Patience, and Charity, which Christ has taught, because we had rather love our Enemies than be revenged on them, rather suffer like Christ, and be full of his Spirit, than avoid Sufferings by a contrary Temper, such Sufferings are our greatest Gains.

If on the contrary, you know of any Meekness and Patience which is not after the Example of Christ, any Injuries or Suffer-

* Matt. v. 11.

ings which you can resist, and yet show that you follow the Example of Christ's Patience, and Meekness, and Charity, the Doctrine of this Chapter has no Recommendation of such Sufferings.

You are only here exhorted to bear such Injuries and Sufferings as make you more like Christ, such as are true Instances of that Meekness, Patience, and Charity, which were the principal Tempers of his Spirit.

Now be the Hardships or Self-denials what they will, if they make us more like to Christ, they have done more for us, than all the Prosperity in the World can do; and he that defends himself at the Expense of any Temper, that was the Temper of Christ, has done himself an Injury, greater than the worst and most powerful of his Enemies can bring upon him.

And all this is founded upon this one Reason, because there is but *one Thing needful*, the Salvation of our Souls. It is this that changes the Natures of all human Things, and makes everything good or evil only so far as it promotes or hinders this *one End of Life*. The Salvation of the World is the only Happiness of the World, and he that has secured his Share in that, has secured to himself all the Joy and Gladness that can befall human Nature.

A Christian therefore that is not content with Salvation, that wants to add a worldly Joy and Pleasure to the great Things of Religion, is more senseless than the Man, who should think he had hard Usage to be saved from a *Shipwreck*, unless he were carried off upon a *Cedar Plank*. *or a Sandal-wood, or Camphire.*

Chapter VII.

Some further Considerations upon the Reasonableness of Self-denial.

BEFORE I proceed any further in other Instances of Self-denial, it may be proper to show in what the Duty of Self-denial is founded, or wherein the Reasonableness and Necessity of it consists.

Every Duty or Virtue of the Christian Life is founded in Truth and Reason, and is required because of its Fitness to be done, and not because God has Power to command what he pleases.

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If we are commanded to be meek and humble, it is because Meekness and Humility are as true Judgments, and as suitable to the Truth of our State, as it is a true Judgment and suitable to the State of every dependent Being to be thankful for Mercies.

If we are bid to rejoice, it is at something that is truly joyful; if to fear, it is to fear something that is really dreadful. Thus we are called to no Tempers but such as are so many true Judgments, and as truly founded in the *Nature* and *Reason* of Things, as if we were bid to believe *two* to be the half Part of *four*.

God is Reason and Wisdom itself, and he can no more call us to any Tempers or Duties, but such as are strictly reasonable in themselves, than he can act against himself, or contradict his own Nature.

As we can say with Assurance, that God cannot lie, so we may with the same Certainty affirm, that he cannot enjoin anything to rational Creatures, that is contrary to the Reason of their Nature, no more than he can enjoin them to love Things that are not lovely, or hate Things that are in their Nature not hateful.

When God speaks, we are as sure that infinite Reason speaks, as we are sure there is a God.

A little Reflection upon this Matter, will give us the utmost Assurance in such Reasonings as this.

As sure therefore as there is a God, so sure is it that a Religion from God has only reasonable Commands to reasonable Creatures. No Tempers can be imposed upon us by Way of *Task* and *Imposition*, which we might as reasonably be without, if it were not required of us. God can only will, that reasonable Creatures should be more Reasonable, more Perfect, and more like Himself, and consequently can enjoin us no Duties, or Tempers of Mind, but such as have this Tendency. All his Commands are for our Sakes, founded in the Necessities of our Natures, and are only so many Instructions to become more Happy, than we could be without them.

A good Man who enjoys the Use of his Reason, is offended at *Madmen* and *Fools*, because they both act contrary to the Reason of Things. The *Madman* fancies himself, and everything about him, to be different from what they are; the *Fool* knows nothing of the Value of Things, is ridiculous in his Choices, and prefers a *Shell* before the most useful Things in Life.

Now a good Man merely through the Love of Reason, is offended at their Conduct, and would do all that he could to abate the *Frenzy* of the one, and the *Stupidity* of the other.

Let this a little represent to us the Conduct of God towards fallen Man. God is *Reason* itself, how highly therefore must he be offended at the Follies and Stupidity of Mankind? If a *Madman* seems so unreasonable a Creature to us, because he fancies himself to be *something* that he is not, how unreasonable must fallen Man, who is fallen from all true Knowledge of himself, appear to him who is infinite Reason?

Again, God is *Goodness* itself, if therefore human Goodness is inclined to endeavour the Cure of *Madmen* and *Fools*, must not Goodness itself be much more inclined to correct the Madness and Folly of fallen Man?

We see that Men are said to be *Mad*, when they fancy themselves and the things about them to be different from what they are; they are said to be *Fools*, when they mistake the *Value* of Things. Now if this be true, as it most certainly is, it may serve to show us, that Man in his present State of Disorder and Ignorance, must appear to God, both as *Fool* and *Mad*; for every Sinner is truly *Mad*, as he imagines himself, and all things about him, to be what they are not; he is really a *Fool*, as he is ridiculous in his Choices, and mistakes the *Value* of Things.

Now Religion is our *Cure*, it is God's merciful Communication of such Rules and Discipline of Life, as may serve to deliver us from the *Infatuation* and *Ignorance* of our fallen State. It is to teach us the Knowledge of ourselves, and all things about us, that we may no longer act like Madmen; it is to teach us the true *Value* of Things, that we may know our good and evil, and not be as *Idiots* in the Choice of Things.

Now Fools and Madmen have their Paradise, and are pleased with their imaginary Happiness; this makes them averse from all Methods of Cure.

For this Reason, God presses his Instructions upon us with Terrors and Threatenings, and makes those Virtues which are the natural Good and Cure of our Souls, such Duties to him, as he will punish the Neglect of them.

So that the Power of God is mercifully employed to move us to such a reasonable Way of Life, as is necessary for our Happiness.

Some People are so weak, as to wonder, what we call Sin should be so odious to God, or what it can signify to God, whether we are *Wise* or *Foolish*.

Let such consider, that God is *Wisdom* and *Reason* itself, and consequently everything that is contrary to Reason and Wisdom, is contrary to his Nature; so that a State of Sin, is a State of Contrariety to God. To ask therefore why God hates all Sin, is

the same thing as to ask, why God cannot tell any Sort of *Lie*, it is because every Deviation from Truth is contrary to his Nature, which is Truth itself, so every Instance of Sin, as it is an unreasonable Act, is contrary to his Nature, who is *Reason* itself.

There is therefore a necessity from the Nature of Things, that every Creature be delivered from Sin, before it can enter into the beatific Presence of God; for if God could reward wicked Beings, and make them Happy by the Enjoyment of his Presence, he would as much cease to act according to the Nature of Things, as if he should punish a Being that lived in Innocence, for to punish Innocence, and to reward Sin, are equally contrary to the *Nature* and *Reason* of Things.

This Observation may teach us to admire the Excellency of the Christian Religion, which restores Sinners to God by so *great an Atonement* for Sin, and which only admits the *Repentance* and Devotion of fallen Man, through the *Merits* and *Mediation* of the Son of God.

To return, Let such People also consider, that even reasonable Men have a necessary Dislike of Fools and Madmen, they cannot possibly make them the Objects of their Pleasure and Affection.

But now if some things are so odious in themselves, that even the Reason of Man cannot but abhor them, how much more odious, how much more contrary to the Perfection of the divine Nature, must the Folly and Madness of Sin be?

Thus if we consider what Reason is in ourselves, that it necessarily dislikes unreasonable Persons as well as Things, we may have some Notion, how all Sin and Sinners, that is, all Beings which act contrary to *Reason*, must be in a State of the utmost Contrariety to God, who is the *highest Reason*.

God is Love, yet it is certain, that he can only love such Things as are *Lovely*; so God is *Goodness*, yet he cannot make Sinners Happy, because there is as much Contradiction to Reason and Perfection in making Sinners Happy, as in loving things that are not truly *Lovely*, or in hating things, that are not *Hateful*. This may serve to give us in some Measure a true Idea of the Nature of Religion and the Nature of Sin.

That Religion is God's gracious Method of delivering us from the Unreasonableness and Corruption of our Natures, that by complying with its Rules and Discipline, we may be so altered in our Natures, so restored to Reason, as to be fit for the Rewards of an infinitely Wise and Perfect Being.

That *Sin* is the Misery and Disorder, the Madness and Folly of our Nature, which as necessarily separates us from God, as God is contrary to all Unreasonableness.

I have just mentioned these things, to help us to conceive rightly, what is meant by the Reasonableness and Necessity of those Tempers which Religion requires. As I hope this is sufficient to give anyone a positive Assurance, that Religion is so far from being an Imposition upon us, consisting of needless Duties, that it is founded in the Nature and Reason of Things, and is as necessary to restore us to the Enjoyment of God, as it is necessary that God should love things according as they are Lovely.

For let anyone carefully consider this Proposition, whether it be not absolutely certain, that God loveth all things, accordingly as they are Lovely. Is not this as certain as that God is Reason itself? Could he be infinitely Reasonable, or Reason in Perfection, if he did not regard things according to their Natures? hating only those things that are truly Hateful, and loving things so far as they are Lovely? To act by any other Rule, than the Reason and Nature of Things, is to act by Humour and Caprice.

Let this therefore teach us, that as we are in ourselves, so we are necessarily either odious, or acceptable to God.

So far as we cease from Sin, and suffer ourselves to be made Wise and Reasonable, by the Wisdom and Reason of Religion, so far we make ourselves Objects of the Love of that infinitely perfect Being, who necessarily loves Beings as they are lovely in their Nature.

And so far as we continue in the Madness and Folly of Sin, and neglect the Rules of Religion which would deliver us from the Guilt and Slavery of it, so far we make it necessary for that perfect Being to hate us, who cannot but hate things accordingly as they are in themselves Hateful.

Some People, either through Self-love, or some confused Opinion of God and Themselves, are always fancying themselves to be *particular* Favourites of God, imagining all their little Successes, or Blessings in their Health and Circumstances above other People, to be distinguishing Marks of God's *particular* Kindness towards them.

But such Persons must consider that God is *Reason* itself, that he is subject to no *particular* Fondness, no more than he is capable of Weakness, and that he can no more love them, with any *particular* Love, that is not an Act of the highest Reason, than he can lie, or act contrary to the Truth.

They should consider that the Things of this Life, its Successes and Prosperities, are so far from being Marks of God's particular Favour, that Afflictions have a much better Claim to it, *for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, &c.*

When such People fancy themselves in the *particular* Favour of God, they should consider, that to be loved by God, is to be loved by *infinite Reason* and Wisdom, and that Reason can only love or approve Things as they are conformable to it. To be approved by Reason, we must act conformably to Reason, and to be approved by the highest Reason, we must act conformably to the highest Reason.

So that when our Lives are conformable to the highest Reason, then may we believe that so far as they are such, so far are they in the Favour of God, who is the highest Reason. To fancy that anything else can make us Favourites of God, is mere Ignorance and Pride, and owing to the same Vanity and Self-love, which makes some People think that they are admired and esteemed by all that know them.

For so sure as God is Reason itself, so sure is it, that to be loved by God, and to be approved by the highest Reason, is the same thing; so that if he whose Life is not conformable to the highest Reason, imagines that he is particularly beloved by God, he is guilty of the same Absurdity, as if he believed that God is not the highest Reason, or Reason in Perfection.

It is not more certain that there is but one God, than it is certain that there is but one Way of making ourselves Objects of his Love, namely, by conforming and acting according to the highest Reason. When our Lives are agreeable to Reason, and the Nature of Things, then are our Lives agreeable to God.

Now so far as we act conformably to Religion, so far we act according to the highest Reason, and draw near to God, by a Wisdom that comes from God, and was revealed unto us, that it might make us such reasonable Beings, as to be fit Objects of his eternal Love.

For a Religion from God must be according to the Nature of God, requiring no other Change of Thoughts or Actions, but such as is conformable to Truth and Reason.

Now the Reasonableness of Actions consists in their Fitness to be done; there is a Reasonableness in being thankful for Mercies, there is a Reasonableness in rejoicing at Things that are joyful, and so in all other Actions or Tempers they are either reasonable or unreasonable, as they are agreeable or contrary to the Nature of Things.

This is what I would have understood by the Reasonableness of all religious Duties or Tempers; they are all required, because they are as suitable to the Nature and Reason of Things, as it is suitable to the Reason of Things, to be thankful for Mercies, or fear Things that are truly dreadful.

Thus for Instance, Humility is nothing else but a *right Judg-*

ment of ourselves, and is only so far enjoined, as it is suitable to the Truth of our State; for to think worse of ourselves than we really are, is no more a Virtue, than to take *five* to be less than *four*.

On the contrary, he that is proud, offends as much against Truth and Reason, and judges as falsely of himself, as the *Mad-man* who fancies himself to be a King, and the *Straw* to which he is chained, to be a *Throne* of State.

Having observed thus much concerning the Reasonableness of Tempers or Duties, which Religion demands, I proceed now to show, wherein the Reasonableness and Necessity of Self-denial consists.

If a Person was to walk upon a *Rope* across some great River, and he was bid to deny himself the Pleasure of walking in *silver Shoes*, or looking about at the Beauty of the Waves, or listening to the Noise of Sailors, if he was commanded to deny himself the Advantage of *fishing* by the Way, would there be any Hardship in such Self-denial? Would not such Self-denials be as reasonable, as commanding him to love Things that will do him good, or to avoid Things that are hurtful?

Strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way that leadeth unto Life, saith our blessed Saviour. Now if Christians are to walk in a *narrow Way that leadeth to Eternal Life*, the chief Business of a Christian must be, to deny himself all those Things which may either stop or lead him out of his narrow Way. And if they think that Pleasures and Indulgences are consistent with their keeping this narrow Way, they think as reasonably, as if the Man upon the Rope should think, that he might safely use silver Shoes, or stop in his Way to catch Fish.

Again, If a Man that was a Slave to Sottishness, and stupefying Pleasures, that rendered him averse from all Exercises of the Mind, was yet obliged in order to save his Life, to attain to such or such a Degree of mathematical Knowledge, must it not be as necessary for such a one to deny himself those Indulgences which increased his Stupidity, as it would be necessary to study the Relations of Figures?

Now this is the Foundation of all Christian Self-denial; we are born and bred in Slavery to Sin and corrupt Tempers, and are only to be saved by putting off this old Man, and being renewed in Holiness and Purity of Life. The Denials therefore of Religion, are only the necessary Means of Salvation, as they are necessary to lessen the Corruption of our Nature, destroy our old Habits, alter the Taste and Temper of our Minds, and prepare us to relish and aspire after Holiness and Perfection.

For since our Souls are in a State of Corruption, and our Life

is a State of Probation, in order to alter and remove this Corruption, it is certain, that every Thing and every Way of Life which nourishes and increases our Corruption, is as much to be avoided, as those Things which beget in us Purity and Holiness, are to be sought after.

A Man who wants his Health, is as well and for the same Reasons to avoid such Things as nourish his Illness, as he is to take Medicines that have a healing Quality. Self-denial is therefore as essential to the Christian Life, as Prayer is, it being equally necessary to deny ourselves such Things as support our Corruption, as it is necessary to pray for those Things which will do us good, and purify our Natures.

The whole of the Matter is this, Christians are called from a State of Disorder, Sin, and Ignorance, to a State of Holiness, and Resemblance of the Divine Nature. If therefore there are any Things, or any Ways that corrupt our Minds, support our Vanity, increase our Blindness, or nourish Sensuality, all these are as necessarily to be avoided, as it is necessary to be holy.

If there are any Denials or Mortifications that purify and enlighten the Soul, that lessen the Power of bodily Passions, that raise us to a heavenly Affection, and make us taste and relish the Things that be of God, these are as necessarily to be practised, as it is necessary to believe in Jesus Christ.

So that the Matter comes to this, if there are no Indulgences in *eating* that do us Harm, then *fasting* is of no Use, but if there are, if they enslave the Soul, and give it a sensual Taste, then we are as much obliged to abstain from what does us this Harm, as we are obliged to pray for anything that can do us good.

No Christian who knows anything of the Gospel, can doubt whether *fasting* be a common Duty of Christianity, since our Saviour has placed it along with secret Alms, and private Prayer. *When thou fastest, anoint thy Head, and wash thy Face, that thou appear not unto Men to fast, but to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.**

So that the same Instructions and the same Reasons are given for *private fasting*, as for *secret Alms* and *private Prayer*, that thy Father who seeth in secret, may reward thee openly. Now as it is manifestly entitled to the same Reward, it is manifestly put upon the same Foot, as private Prayer, and as equally acceptable to God.

Eating and Drinking are the common Support of Life, but then as they are the Support of a corrupt Life, the Nourish-

* Matt. vi. 17, 18.

ment of a disordered Body that weighs down the Soul, whose Appetites and Tempers are in a State of Enmity with the Life and Purity of the Soul, it is necessary that we take care so to support the Life of the Body, as not to occasion the Sickness and Death of the Soul.

The Fall of Man consists very much in the Fall of the Soul into the Dominion and Power of the Body, whose Joy, and Health, and Strength, is often the Slavery, Weakness, and Infirmary, of the Soul.

How far our Bodies affect our Habits, or Ways of Thinking, may be seen by the Difference between Sickness and Health, Youth and Old Age. These different States of the Body, alter the whole Turn of our Minds, and give us new Ways of Thinking, all owing to the different Strength of bodily Appetites and Tempers. No sooner is the Body weakened by any Occasion, but the Soul is more at Liberty, speaks higher for itself, and begins to act more reasonably.

What is the Reason that a *Midnight* Reflection goes generally deeper than a Thought at any other time? No Reason can well be assigned, but the Peace and Tranquillity of the Body, which gives the Soul a Liberty of seeing further into Things, than at any other time.

The Difference between the same Man full and fasting, is almost the Difference of two Persons; a Man that in the Morning finds himself fit for any Meditations, is after a full Meal changed into another Creature, fit only for idle Amusements, or the Yawnings of an Animal.

He has not only created a Dulness in his Soul, but has perverted its Taste; for he can be pleased with a *Romance* or *impertinent* History, at the same time that he has no Relish for a Book of Devotion, that requires less Attention.

I mention this to show, that *fasting* has a nearer Relation to all *religious* Tempers, than is generally thought, and that indulgent or full Feeding does not only dull the Mind, but more particularly gives it a Dullness towards the Things of Religion. If it were not thus, a Book of religious Reflections would be as acceptable at such Times, as those other Books which require as much, or more Attention.

And the Reason of this is plain, because all our Tempers and Desires are always suitable to the State we are in; if we are in a State of sensual Joy, feeling the Happiness of a *full Stomach* and *heated Blood*, we relish or desire nothing but what suits with it. For this Reason *Plays*, and *Romances*, and vain Diversions, can entertain a Man that has eat as long as he could, but Lectures upon *Morality*, or Discourses upon *Death* and *Judgment*, would

tire him into Sleep. What we observe of the *Jaundice*, that it makes us see all things *yellow*, is in a certain Degree true of every *State* of the Body; it makes us conceive things with some Degree of Likeness to the Condition it is then in. Every Alteration in the Body, gives some Alteration to our way of conceiving the same Things.

As he therefore that would see things in their proper Colours, must first cure himself of the *Jaundice*, so he that would apprehend things according to their Natures, must take care that his Body be so ordered, as to have as little a Share as possible in his Judgments.

When a Man has his Stomach full of Wind, and feels no pleasant Enjoyment of his Body, you can hardly propose anything to him, that will appear reasonable: Do but stay till his Stomach is altered, till he has had a full and cheerful Meal, and he will be as naturally in a better Temper, as any other Animal that has filled its Belly.

When Men have been unreasonably out of Temper, through the mere Motions of the Body, I believe they often condemn themselves afterwards, but then they do not consider, that the contrary State, is a State of the same Slavery to the blind Motions of the Body, and liable to the same Condemnation. For if a *full* and *pleasant* Meal, makes us so *gay* and *cheerful*, as to laugh and be pleased with the *vainest Things*, we are then as unreasonable, and as mere Slaves to our Bodies, as when a *cold* or *empty* Stomach shall make us angry at everything.

For it is as great a Contradiction to Reason and Wisdom, to be pleased with Things or Persons, because our Body is in a State of Joy, as it is to be Angry and Displeased at Things or Persons, because an easterly Wind, or an undigested Meal has soured our Spirits.

Now both these States, are equally States of Slavery to the Body, equally expose our Folly, and have the same Contrariety to Religion. A Man is as far from religious Wisdom, when *full feeding* has made him merry, *vain*, and *trifling*, as when a *contrary State* of Body makes him *sour*, *angry* and *fretful*.

It is the Business therefore of Religion, to put an end to these States of Slavery, to deliver Man from these blind Laws of *Flesh* and *Blood*, and give him a Wisdom and Constancy, a Taste and Judgment suitable to the Reason and Wisdom of the Laws of God. To fill our Souls with such Principles of Peace, as may give us Habits of Tranquillity, superior to the changeable Tempers of our Bodies.

Now *Fasting*, as it is a Denial of *bodily Indulgences*, as it disciplines the Body into a State of Obedience, and contradicts

its Appetites, is the most constant and universal Means of procuring Liberty and Freedom of Mind.

For it is the Love of our Body, and too much Care of its Enjoyments, that makes us too sensible of its Demands, and subject to its Tempers. Whatever we nourish and cherish, so far gains an Interest in us, and rules us in the same Degree, that it has got our Affections. Till therefore Religion has entered us into a State of Self-denial, we live in a State that supports the Slavery and Corruption of our Natures.

For every Indulgence of the Body in Eating and Drinking, is adding to its Power, and making all our Ways of Thinking subservient to it.

A Man that makes every Day, a Day of *full* and *cheerful* Meals, will by Degrees make the Happiness of every Day depend upon it, and consider everything with regard to it.

He will go to *Church* or stay at home, as it suits with his *Dinner*, and not scruple to tell you, that he generally eats too heartily to go to the Afternoon Service.

Now such People are under a worse Disorder of Body, than he who has the *Jaundice*, and have their Judgment more perverted, than he who sees all Things *yellow*.

For how can they be said to perceive the Difference of Things, who have more Taste for the Preparations of the *Kitchen*, than for the Joys and Comforts of the House of God, who choose rather to make themselves *unfit* for Divine Service, than to balk the Pleasure of a *full Meal*? And this not by Chance, or upon some unusual Occasion, but by a constant intended Course of Life.

Let such People deal faithfully with themselves, and search out their Spirit. Can they think that they are *born again of God*, that they have the *Spirit of Christ*, who are thus subject to the Pleasures of *Gluttony*? Can they be said to treat their Bodies as *Temples* of the Holy Ghost, who make them *unfit* for the holy Service of public Worship? Can they be said to offer their Bodies unto God, as a *reasonable, holy, and living* Sacrifice? Can they be said to *love God with all their Heart, and all their Soul*, or to have *forsaken all* to follow Christ, who will not so much as forsake *half a Meal* for the sake of Divine Worship?

I know it will be thought too severe that I have called this *Gluttony*, because it is the Practice of Numbers of People of Worth and Reputation; but I hope they will turn their Dislike of the Name, into a Dislike of the Thing, for it is as certainly *Gluttony*, as picking of Pockets is stealing.

The Sin of *Gluttony* is the Sin of Over-eating, of being too much given to full Meals. Now this may be difficult in some

Instances to state exactly, yet he who owns he eats so much as renders him *indisposed* for the public Worship of God, has determined against himself, and put his own Case out of all Question. For if there be such a Sin, as the Sin of Over-eating, it must surely then be committed when we eat too much to attend upon the Service of the Church.

Men may fancy that they are only chargeable with *Gluttony*, who eat till they *surfeit* their Bodies; they may think those only guilty of *Drunkenness*, who drink till they have lost their Senses. But there is a much surer Rule to go by, given them by the Spirit of God. *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.* All therefore in Eating and Drinking that is not within the Bounds of the Glory of God, is offered to something that is not the Glory of God, it is offered to the Corruption and Sensuality of our Natures, it is the Sin of Intemperance, and has the Sin of Indevotion added to it, when it is indulged at a time, that keeps us from the public Worship of God.

Let such People examine their own Hearts, and see what Opinion they have of Divine Service. Can they look upon it, as doing God's Will on Earth as it is done in Heaven? Can they look upon it, as entering into the Presence of God, as approaching the Throne of Grace? Can they esteem it to be the Nourishment and Support of their Souls, a necessary Means of securing the Divine Assistance, as a most acceptable Way of pleasing God, and securing their eternal Happiness, who are not afraid to eat and drink till they are indisposed and unwilling to attend at it? If they still have just Notions of the Nature of Divine Service, let them think of these Words of our blessed Saviour, *If ye know these Things, happy are ye if ye do them.*

But if they look upon it as of less Concern than a *full Meal*, if they think that there is no Occasion for *Exactness* in it, it is time they were told, that they have *not the Love of God abiding in them.*

For if they did really *hunger and thirst after Righteousness*, which is the true Love of God, they would rejoice at every Opportunity of entering further into his Favour; they would go to the House of God, the Abode of his Presence, with more Joy than to any other Place, and think those Days the most happy, that were most devoted to the Cares and Joys of a Life with God to all Eternity.

They would cut off a *right Hand*, or pluck out a *right Eye*, rather than be hindered from those Helps, which are to raise their Hope, enliven their Faith, and form their Souls to a Delight and Joy in God.

If they want this Zeal towards God, they want a Zeal which is the Life and Spirit of a Christian, which distinguishes a Disciple of Christ from those who live without God in the World.

I have spoken the more home to this Point, because it is so allowed a Practice, which as unavoidably destroys the true Spirit and Temper of Religion, as any Things that are notoriously sinful.

Indeed a constant Course of full Feeding is the Death of the Soul, and every Day that is a Day of such Happiness, is a Day lost to Religion.

When a Man has rejoiced himself with full Eating and Drinking, he is like any other *Animal*, disposed only to *Play* or *Idleness*. He has no more Feeling of Sin than he has of *Hunger*, can no more perceive himself to be a *miserable fallen* Creature, than he can perceive himself to be a *Beggar*, and consequently is no more affected with any *Forms of Confession* or Repentance, than if he was every Day to confess, that he was a *starving Beggar*.

For this Course of *Self-enjoyment* is as contrary to Humility, Contrition, and a true Sense of Sin, as it is contrary to a State of *Beggary and Want*, and consequently a Man in such Happiness, can no more sincerely deplore the *Weight of Sin*, than he can feel himself in the *Misery of Poverty*.

If therefore Religion is to be the State and Temper of our Minds, if it is to be the ruling Taste and Relish of our Souls, if its Goods and Evils are to govern our Actions, it is as necessary to renounce Sensuality, and mortify our Bodies, as it is necessary to resist Temptations. For Abstinence or Self-denial is not only a good, advisable, and reasonable Practice, but is a constant, necessary, and universal Duty, and enters further into the Cure of our Souls, than any other Practice. It is as necessary for a Christian who would get rid of the Disorders of his Nature, and lessen the Weight of Sin, as it is necessary for a Man in a *Dropsy* to abstain from *Drink*, or a Man in a *Fever* to refrain from such Things as *inflame* his Blood.

Indeed this Self-denial is the chief and most general Exercise of the Christian Life, and is the very *Form* and *Substance* of every Virtue; for so far as we deny our natural Tempers, so far we seem to be advanced in Virtue.

We are so far humble, as we deny ourselves in the Instances of Pride, so far heavenly-minded, as we deny our earthly Inclinations, so far charitable, as we deny our Tempers of Self-love and Envy; and so in every Virtue, it seems to have its chief Foundation in the Denial of some corrupt Temper of our Natures.

upon Christian Perfection. III

I know some People object, that *Fasting* is not an *universal* Duty, that it is rather like some particular *Medicine* or *Remedy*, that is only necessary for some particular Cases, and particular Constitutions.

To this it may be answered, that if by *Fasting*, is meant an entire Abstinence from all Food for such or such a certain Space of Time, that Fasting in that Sense, is not an universal and constant Duty. But then it ought to be observed, that this is no more the Nature of Fasting, than any *particular Form* of Confession of such or such a Length, is the precise Nature of Repentance.

For as Repentance does not consist in any stated fixed Degrees of Sorrow and Pain for Sin, which is to be the *common* Repentance for *all* Men, in *all* States, and at *all* Times, but is such an Exercise of Grief and Contrition, as is suited to everyone's particular State, so *Fasting* is not any *fixed Degree* of Abstinence from *all* Food, which is to be the *common* Measure of Fasting to *all* Men, in *all* States, and at *all* Times, but is such an Exercise of Abstinence and Self-denial, as is proper to everyone's particular State.

Now if we understand Fasting in this Sense in which it ought to be understood, as an Abstinence from such Food and such Pleasures and Degrees of Feeding as are proper in every State of Life, to destroy Sensuality, lessen the Corruption of our Natures, and make us relish and taste spiritual Enjoyments, in this Sense Fasting is as *constant and universal* a Duty, as Repentance.

For as Repentance is an universal Duty, because the Reason of it is common to all Men, so this Fasting is necessary to all Men, because Sensuality, fleshly Lusts, and the Corruption of bodily Tempers, is the *universal* Corruption of all Men.

It is sometimes also objected, that Fasting cannot be an universal Duty, because some People's Constitutions will not suffer them to eat enough* for their Health.

To this it may be answered, that some People may be so infirm, that they cannot attend at the *public Worship* of God, yet surely public Worship is an *universal* Duty, though some People's Constitutions may make them incapable of going to it.

Secondly, This Objection is only of Weight against Fasting, as it signifies an entire Abstinence from all Food for a certain Space of Time, but is of no Force against such an Abstinence, as I have shown to be the *common Duty* of all Christians.

Thirdly, Persons of weak and infirm Constitutions, have often as much Necessity of Self-denial, as others of the most healthful Bodies; for their very State, it may be, has taught them Indul-

gence, by being accustomed to so much Care of themselves, they become no better than perpetual Nurses of themselves, and consequently are too much devoted to that, which is not the *one Thing needful*.

Weakly People may as well be *Epicures*, and have the same *Sensuality* to conquer, as other People, and consequently have the same Necessity of their Degree of Abstinence and Denial, that others have.

Let such People have recourse to the Example of *Timothy*, who was an apostolical Bishop. His History teaches us, that he was weakly, and subject to frequent Infirmities, who notwithstanding he may be supposed to have enjoyed the *extraordinary* Gifts of the Holy Ghost, yet in this state of Divine Greatness, and Bodily Weakness, he wanted the *Authority* and *Advice* of an Apostle to persuade him to drink anything besides Water. This we are sufficiently taught, by the Apostle's giving this Advice in his Epistle to him, *Drink no longer Water*, that is, nothing but Water, *but use a little Wine for thy Stomach's Sake, and thine often Infirmities.*

Lastly, The World abounds with People who are weakly and tender merely by their Indulgences; they have bad Nerves, low Spirits, and frequent Indispositions through Irregularity, Idleness, and Indulgence.

Now these People, it is true, are not *fit for Fasting*, and, perhaps if they were to deal faithfully with themselves, they would find that they are as unfit for most other Exercises of Religion; and consequently if their Condition might be pleaded as an Objection against the Necessity of Fasting, it might as well be pleaded against the Necessity of half the Duties of Christianity.

Upon the whole Matter it appears, that Fasting is a constant universal Duty, and that it is liable to no other Exceptions, than such as are common to several other great Duties of Religion.

It is no *fixed Degree* of Sorrow that is the common Repentance of all Men, it is no *particular Sum* of Money that is the common Charity of all Men, it is no *fixed Form*, or *Length*, or *Hour* of Prayer, that is the common Devotion of all Men, yet all these are *constant* and *universal* Duties.

In like Manner, though *Fasting* may be subject to all the same Variations, yet is it a *constant* and *universal* Duty.

Justus is a grave sober Man, he is very angry at those People who neglect or ridicule *Fasting*; he thinks they know nothing of Religion.

Thus far *Justus* is very right, and knowing thus much, one would wonder that he is so inconsistent with himself, for pre-

sently after this, *Justus* will tell you, that he never fasts but upon *Good-Friday* and the *Thirtieth of January*.

If *Justus* had lived before the Murder of King *Charles*, he had had but one Fast in the Year, yet in all Likelihood he would have then stood up for the *Doctrine* of Fasting.

If a Man were to be angry at those who neglect or despise the *Service of the Church*, as People who know nothing of Religion, and then tell you that he himself never goes thither, but on *Good-Friday* and the *Thirtieth of January*, you would say that he knew nothing of the Nature of Church-Service.

Now *Justus* shows the same Ignorance of the Nature of *Fasting*.

For if Prayer and Repentance, and the *Service* of the Church, were not *common Acts* of Devotion, and right and necessary Ways of worshipping God, they would not be necessary upon *Good-Friday*, or any other particular Day.

In like Manner, unless *Fasting* were a *common* and *necessary* Part of Religion, something that was always a proper Means of applying to God, it would neither be *necessary*, nor *acceptable*, on those particular Days.

For it is not the Day that makes the Duty to be *necessary*, but the Day happens to be a *proper* Occasion of exercising a necessary Duty.

Some great *Calamity* happens to you, you do very well to make it an Occasion of exercising great Devotion; but if you stay till some other *Calamity* happens, before you pray again, or think that Prayer is only *proper* in Times of *Calamity*, you know nothing of Devotion.

It is the same thing in *Fasting*; some great Occasion may justly call you to it, but if you forbear Fasting, till such great Occasions happen again, or think that Fasting is only *proper* for such *public Occasions*, you know nothing of the Nature of Fasting.

If *Justus* were to say that he never *repents* but on those public Days, he might as easily defend himself, as when he says, he only *fasts* at those Times.

For is there any Benefit in Fasting on those particular Days? Does it add anything to your Piety and Devotion? Does it make your Repentance and Sorrow for Sin more real and affecting? Does it calm and abate your Passions, lessen the Power of your Body, and put you in a better State of Devotion, than when you take your usual Meals? If it has not something of this Effect, where is the Use of it at such Times when you would have your Devotions the best performed? And if it has this Effect, how comes it that you will have but one or two such

Days in the Year? Why will you not thus affect your Soul, thus assist your Devotions, thus discipline your Body, thus allay your Passions, thus raise your Heart, thus humble yourself till the *Day* comes, on which King *Charles* was Murdered? Is not this like staying till then, before you *repent*?

Our Blessed Saviour saith, *But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine Head, and wash thy Face, that thou appear not unto Men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which is in secret shall reward thee openly.**

Here our Saviour's Advice relates wholly to *private Fasting*, to which other People are to be Strangers, to such a Fasting as is a secret Service to God, who will therefore highly reward it. Yet *Justus* tells you that he *fasts* only twice in the Year, and that on *public* Days. Now what is this to be called, is it Weakness, or Perverseness?

If you were to ask me whether *frequent, private* Prayer, be a necessary Duty, I should think it sufficient to read to you the following Passage, *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy Closet, and when thou hast shut thy Door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*

Nothing need be added to this Authority; the Necessity and Advantage of private Prayers is here so expressly taught, that there is no room left to doubt about it.

Justus readily acknowledges all this, how comes it then, *Justus*, that you know nothing of the Necessity and Advantage of *private Fasting*? How comes it that the same Authority and the same Words do not teach you as much in one place as in another? Has not our Saviour expressed himself exactly in the same Manner, and given the same Advice, and proposed the same Reward, to private Fasting, as to private Prayer?

Further, when the Disciples of our Lord, could not cast the evil Spirit out of a Man, who was a *Lunatic*, he not only tells them, that it was through want of Faith, but also gives them a very important Instruction in these Words, *Howbeit this kind goeth not out, but by Prayer and Fasting.†*

Now does this look, as if Fasting were an occasional Thing, only for a Day or two in the Year? Is it ranked with Prayer as having the same *common Nature*, as being equally prevailing with God? And is not this sufficient to teach us, that we must think of Fasting, as we think of Prayer; that it is a proper Way of Devotion, a right Method of applying to God? And if that Prayer is most prevailing, and enters furthest into Heaven, which

* Matt. vi. 17.

† Matt. xvii. 21.

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is attended with Fasting, it is proof enough surely, that Fasting is to be a common ordinary Part of our Devotion.

Is it sufficient and powerful enough to cast out *Devils*, and cure *Lunatics*, and shall we neglect it, when we pray against the evil Tempers and Passions which possess our Hearts? Shall we not pray to God in the most powerful prevailing Manner that we can?

If we were to Fast without Praying, would not this be a Way of Worship of our own Invention? And if we Pray and neglect Fasting, is it not equally choosing a Worship of our own? For he that has taught us the Use and Advantage of Prayer, has in the same Words taught us the same Things of Fasting, and has also joined them together, as having the same Power with God.

If therefore *Justus* will take his Religion from Scripture, he must own, that Fasting is of the Nature of Prayer, that it has the same Authority from Christ, and that he who only Fasts on a public Day or two in a Year, no more observes the whole Duty of Christian-fasting, than he who only attends some public yearly Days of Prayer, can be said to fulfil the whole Duty of Christian Devotion.

To proceed, we may also observe, that the Reason of Self-denial and Abstinence is constant and perpetual, because we are perpetually united to a Body, that is more or less fit to join with our Souls in Acts of Holiness, according to the State that it is in.

As therefore it is always necessary to take Care what Thoughts and Inclinations we indulge in our Minds, so it is equally necessary, that we be constantly careful, how we alter the State of our Bodies, or indulge them in such Gratifications, as may make them less fit for the Purposes of an holy Life.

For since there are *States* of the Body, which favour Holiness, and these States depend much upon our Manner of Living, it is absolutely necessary, that we avoid every Degree of Indulgence, every Kind of Irregularity and Idleness, or other Course of Life, that may make our Bodies less Active, less *Pure*, and less *conformable* to the Duties of Religion.

And this is to be done, as I said before, not only as a reasonable and advisable Thing, but as of the utmost necessity, it being as essential to Holiness, to purify our Bodies, and practise a strict Temperance, as it is necessary to practise a strict Charity.

Now Christian Temperance is no more that, which may pass for Temperance in the Sight of Men, than Christian Charity, is that which is visible to the World.

A worldly Man may think himself sufficiently Temperate,

when he only abstains from such Excesses, as may make him fitter to enjoy an healthful *Sensuality*.

But Christian Temperance is of quite another Nature, and for other Ends, it is to put the Body into a State of *Purity*, and *Submission*, and give the Soul a divine and heavenly Taste.

It is therefore to be observed, that Christian Temperance is never enough practised, but when it puts the Body in the fittest State for Devotion and other Acts of Holiness, when our Bodies have all that Good done to them, have all that Purification, and right Tempers which Abstinence and Self-denial can give them, then do we practise Christian Temperance.

There is no other Rule than this to go by, for since Christian Temperance is in order to Holiness, Purity, and heavenly Affection, he can only be said to be *truly* Temperate, whose Temperance is most serviceable to the *highest* Degrees of Holiness.

And to stop short of any known Degrees of Temperance, is like stopping short of any known Degrees of Charity. It is therefore as necessary to practise all the Exercises of Self-denial, and strict Abstinence, as it is necessary to aspire after real Holiness.

For as our Bodies are constant and Home-Enemies, and have a mighty Influence in all our Actions, so far as we preserve them in a State suitable to Holiness, so far we preserve ourselves fit for the Exercise of Religion.

It is out of all question that there is a Purity and Impurity of our Bodies, as well as of our Souls, that is, there are some States and Tempers of our Bodies, that favour and incline to Acts of Virtue, and others that as much incline to all Sorts of Sensuality.

This is as certain, as that *Gluttony* and *Drunkeness* disposes Men to all Sorts of Sins, and give them a Disrelish for all Kinds of Holiness. For as these States of Life have the utmost Contrariety to Religion, so every *Approach* towards them, is in a *certain Degree* partaking of them.

A man who lives in such a State, as not to be called either a *Glutton*, or a *Drunkard*, may yet be so near them, as to Partake of those Tempers and Inclinations, which are the Effects of Gluttony and Drunkeness.

For there are such Degrees in these, as in other Ways of Life. A Man may be vain and uncharitable, yet not so as to be remarkable for his Vanity and Uncharitableness, so he may be also under the Guilt and evil Effects of Eating and Drinking, though not so as to be esteemed either a Glutton or Intemperate.

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So that the only Security for a good Christian, is to make it the Care of his Life, to resist all Enjoyments that cherish Vanity and Uncharitableness, not only in such Degrees as are *scandalous* and *visible* in the Eyes of Men, but such as *inwardly* hurt the Humility and Charity of his Mind.

In like manner as to eating and drinking, he is constantly to practise such Abstinence, as may secure him not only from Sensuality in the Sight of the World, but such as may best *Alter, Purify,* and *Humble* his Body, and make it the holy Habitation of a Soul devoted to a spiritual Life.

St. Paul saith, *I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the Air. But I keep under my Body, and bring into subjection, lest that by any Means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a Castaway.* *ce (funk) die allowed - not allowed.*

Let it here be observed, that the Apostle practised this Self-denial and Mortification, not only as a good and advisable Thing, and suitable to Holiness, but as of the last Necessity. It was not, as he was an *Apostle*, and that he might be fitter for the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost, but it was to secure his Salvation, lest when he had preached to others, he should be a *Castaway.* *ie as above - not in my sense of the word in English: but*

Let it be considered that this Apostle, who lived in *Infirmities, in Reproaches, in Necessities, in Persecutions, in Distresses for Christ's Sake, who was also full of Signs, and Wonders and mighty Deeds, and who had been caught up into the third Heavens,* yet reckons all his Virtues as insecure, and his Salvation* in Danger, without this severity of Self-denial; he thought all his other Advancements in Piety, without this, to be as vain a Labour, as *beating the Air.*† *will and is had enough his fallowing*

of so: his Reward

So run I, saith he, *not as uncertainly,* by which he plainly teacheth us, that he who does not thus run, who does not thus mortify the Body, runs uncertainly, and fighteth to as little Purpose, as he that beateth the Air.

Can they therefore who live in Ease, and Softness, and bodily Indulgences, who study and seek after every Gratification, be said to be of *St. Paul's* Religion, or to be governed by that Spirit, which governed him? *non, aliter!*

An Apostle preaching the Gospel with Signs and Wonders in the midst of Distress and Persecution, thought his own Salvation* in Danger, without this Subjection of his own Body, and shall we who are born in the Dregs of Time, who have no Works like his to appeal to, think it safe to feed and indulge in Ease and Plenty?

* 1 Cor. ix. 26.

† 2 Cor. xii.

A Man may indeed practise the outward Part of a Christian, he may be Orthodox in his Faith, and regular in the Forms of Religion, and yet live in Ease and Indulgence. But if he would *put on Christ*, and be clothed with the Humility and Meekness of his true Disciples, if he would *love* his Enemies and be in Christ a *new Creature*, if he would live by *Faith* and have his Conversation in Heaven, if he would be *born again* of God, and *overcome* the World, he must lay the Foundation of all these Graces in the Mortification and Subjection of his Body. For not only Religion, but Reason, can show us, that almost every ill Temper, every Hindrance of Virtue, every Clog in our Way of Piety, and the Strength of every Temptation, chiefly arises from the *State* of our Bodies.

Chapter VIII.

The Subject of Self-denial further continued.

THERE are no Truths of Christianity more plainly delivered in the Scriptures, or more universally acknowledged by all Christians, than these two, viz., the *general Corruption* of human Nature, and the *absolute Necessity* of divine Grace. Now these two Doctrines make the Reason and Necessity of a continual Self-denial, plain and obvious to the meanest Capacity ; and extend it to all those Things or Enjoyments, which either strengthen the Corruption of our Nature, or grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and cause him to leave us.

Let anyone but reflect upon the Nature of these two fundamental Truths, and he will find himself soon convinced, that all those Enjoyments are to be abstained from, which either support our natural Blindness and Corruption, or resist and abate the Inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

He will find also, that this Self-denial must extend itself to every Day of our Lives, unless he can find a Day when he is free from Weakness, or out of the Way of all Temptations, a Day which offers nothing suitable to the Corruption of his Nature, or nothing contrary to the good Motions and Directions of the Holy Ghost. Most People acknowledge this in general, they think it right to avoid Things which strengthen our Corruption, and *grieve* the Spirit of God, but then not conceiving

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this with any sufficient Exactness, they think that an Abstinence from gross Sins, is a sufficient Security.

But let such People consider, that the Corruption of our Nature is like any other bodily Illness, that never keeps at one Stand, but is either increasing or abating by everything that we do.

A *Dropsy* or a *Gangrene* is not only increased by Drunkenness, or disorderly Indulgences, but receives constant Strength by all little Indulgences that suit with it.

Now the Corruption of our Nature is an inbred Distemper, that possesses us in the Manner of a *Dropsy* or *Gangrene*; if we give into notorious Sins, we become Slaves to this Corruption, and are straightway dead in Sin.

But though we keep clear of such great Offences, yet if we indulge or allow ourselves in such Practices, as suit with the Corruption of our Nature, we as certainly nourish a slow Death, and destroy ourselves by Degrees, as a Man in a *Dropsy*, who abstains from Drunkenness, yet allows himself in such Ways as will not suffer his Distemper to abate.

Now as little Allowances that continually increase a Distemper, will as certainly in Time make it mortal, as if it had been urged on by violent Methods, so little Indulgences which increase the Corruption of our Nature, as certainly tend to a spiritual Death, as other more irregular Methods.

It is therefore absolutely certain, that our *Self-denial* is to be as *universal* as the Means of our Corruption, that it is to last as long as our Disorder, and is to extend itself to every Thing and every Way of Life, that naturally increases it; and this, for as necessary a Reason, as a Man in a *Dropsy*, is not only to abstain from Drunkenness, but from every Indulgence that increases his Distemper.

A State of *Regimen* therefore, that is, a State of holy Discipline, is as necessary to alter the Disorder of our Nature, as it is necessary to remove any distempered Habit of Body.

Let it be considered, that the Corruption of our Nature is but very weakly represented, by comparing it to these Distempers; that they rather express the Manner of its Cure, and the Necessity of labouring after it, than set forth the Degree of the Disorder.

For a Man in these Distempers, may have only some Part affected with them; but the Corruption of our Natures is as extensive as our Natures: It is the Corruption of every Faculty and every Power, it is Blindness in our Understandings, it is Vanity in our Wills, Intemperance in our Appetites, it is Self-love, Anger, Lust, Pride, and Revenge, in our Passions, it is

Falseness, Hypocrisy, Hatred, and Malice, in our Hearts. Now all this, and more than this, makes the miserable Corruption of human Nature.

So that it is as necessary that our Lives be a State of *Regimen*, that we live by such Rules as are contrary to this Variety of Disorders, as it is necessary for a Man under a Complication of habitual Distempers, to enter into a *Course* of Regularity.

I suppose it will be readily granted, that all Tempers are increased by Indulgence, and that the more we yield to any Disposition, the stronger it grows; it is therefore certain, that *Self-denial* is our only Cure, and that we must practise as many Sorts of Self-denial, as we have ill Tempers to contend with.

Pride, Hypocrisy, Vanity, Hatred, and Detraction, are all disorderly Indulgences, and have their only Cure in *Self-denial*, as certainly as Drunkenness and Sensuality.

To deny one's self all Indulgences of Pride and Vanity, all Instances of Falseness and Hypocrisy, of Envy, and Spite, requires greater Care and Watchfulness, and a more continual Self-denial, than to avoid the Motives to Intemperance.

And he who thinks to render himself humble, any other Way than by *denying* himself all Instances of Pride, is as absurd as he who intends to be sober, without abstaining from all Degrees of Intemperance. For *Humility* as truly consists in the Practise of Things that are *humble*, as *Justice* consists in the doing Things that are *just*.

Every Virtue is but a *mere Name*, an empty Sound, till it shows itself by an Abstinence from all Indulgences of the contrary Vice, till it is founded in this Self-denial.

Now this is readily granted to be true in all sensual Vices, that they are only to be cured by a perpetual Self-denial.

But the Practice of the same Self-denial is as absolutely required, to destroy every ill Temper of the Mind, as any sort of Sensuality.

Self-love, Pride, Vanity, Revenge, Hypocrisy, and Malice, are acknowledged to be very gross Sins, and indeed they are of the very Nature of the Devil, and as certainly destroy the Soul, as Murder and Adultery.

But the Misfortune is, that we govern ourselves in these Tempers, not by what is sinful according to the Principles of Religion, but by what is odious in the Eyes of the World. We don't labour to avoid the *Sin*, but are content to avoid what is *scandalous* in it.

Thus for Instance, People would not be thought proud, but then they are afraid of no Degrees of it, but such as the World condemns; they don't form their Lives by the Scripture-Rules

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of Humility, but only endeavour to be decent and fashionable in their Pride.

Others would be very sorry to be remarked for an envious and malicious Spirit, who at the same time make the Faults of their Acquaintance the Pleasure of their Lives, and turn all their Conversation into Evil-speaking and Detraction.

Now all this proceeds from hence, that they govern themselves by the Spirit of the World; the World allows of Evil-speaking and Detraction, and therefore they practise it openly, though it is as contrary to Religion, as Murder and Injustice.

And thus it will be with all these wicked Tempers, till we practise an universal Self-denial, and labour after a religious Perfection in all our Ways of Life.

We are certainly under Habits of Pride, till we are governed by Humility, and we are not governed by Humility till we deny ourselves, and are afraid of every Appearance of Pride, till we are willing to comply with every Thing and every State, that may preserve and secure our Humility.

No Man is governed by a religious Justice, till he is exact in all Degrees of it, till he denies himself all Approaches towards Injustice, till he fears and abhors every Appearance of Fraud, and Crafty Management.

Now it is this Temper and State of Mind that is the Measure of every Virtue.

A common *Liar* may hate some Sorts of Lies, an *unjust* Man may avoid some Sorts of Injustice, so a *proud* Person may dislike some Instances of Pride, but then he has no more Title to Humility, than an unjust Man has a Title to Integrity, because there are some Sorts of Injustice that he avoids.

So that it is not any single Acts, or any particular Restraints, but it is an uniform State and Temper of the Mind, that stands constantly disposed to every Degree of Humility, and averse from every Degree of Pride, that is to denominate a Person to be truly humble.

To measure any virtuous Temper by any other Standard than this, is not to measure ourselves by Religion. How can anyone be said to be religiously *chaste*, unless he abhors and avoids all Instances of Lewdness and Impurity? How could he be said to be *sincerely* pious, unless he was fearful of every Occasion of Sin?

Must it not therefore be the same in Humility and every other Virtue? Can anyone be reckoned *truly* humble, till he denies himself all Instances of Pride?

Self-denial therefore is so universally necessary, that it is the Foundation of every Virtue; Humility and Charity requiring

more Self-contradiction and Self-denial, than the strictest Temperance.

From these Observations we may be able to pass a true Judgment upon ourselves as to our State of Virtue. If we are denying ourselves, we are so far labouring after Virtue ; but if *Self-love*, if *Idleness* and *Indulgence*, be the State of our Lives, we may be sure that we are as distant from true Religion, as the *Sot* is distant from strict Temperance.

A Life of Idleness, Indulgence, and Self-love, is an entire Resignation of ourselves to every Vice, except such as cannot be committed without Trouble ; and we may assure ourselves, that if we are in this State, we are not only Strangers to Virtue, but ready for every Sin that suits with Ease and Softness.

Persons of this Turn of Mind, lose the very *Form* of Piety, and find it too great a Contradiction to their Idleness, to comply with the very outward Appearance of Religion. They would be oftener at *Church*, but it may be, their *Seat* is crowded, and they can sit with more Ease by their Fire-Side at Home. They would be more exact in kneeling when they are there, if they had always the same Ease in kneeling.

I mention these Particulars, as only small Instances of that general Deadness and Indisposition towards all Parts of Religion, which this Spirit of Idleness and Indulgence creates. For it affects People in the same Manner as to every other part of their Duty, and makes them incapable of attending to it. For a Person that is too idle and self-indulgent to undergo the *constant Trouble* of public Worship, must be at a great Distance from those Virtues, which are to be acquired by *Care* and *Watchfulness*, which are to *crucify* us to the World, and make us alive unto God.

Ambition and worldly *Cares* distract the Mind, and fill it with false Concerns, but even these Tempers are in a nearer State to Religion, and less indispose the Soul to it, than Idleness and Indulgence. For Ambition and worldly Cares, though they employ the Mind wrong, yet as they employ it, they preserve some Degree of Activity in it, which by some Means or other may happen to take a right Turn ; but *Idleness* and *Indulgence* is the Death and Burial of the Soul.

I have been more particular upon this Temper, because it is so common, and even acknowledged without Shame. People who would not be thought *Reprobates*, are yet not afraid to let you know that they hardly do anything but *eat*, and *drink*, and *sleep*, and take such *Diversions* as suit with their Ease ; whereas if such a State of Life be examined by the Rules of Reason and Religion, it will appear as dangerous and frightful, as any other

Reprobate State of Sin. For it is a State that nourishes all the Corruption of our Nature, that exposes us to all the Vanity of the World, and resigns us up to all the Power of the Devil.

Did we design to set ourselves in the fairest Posture for the Devil to hit us, we ought to choose that of Idleness and Indulgence.

Watch and pray, saith our Saviour, *that ye fall not into Temptation*. The Devil's Advice is, be idle and indulge, and then ye will yield to every Temptation. For if Watching and Prayer have any Tendency to prevent our falling into Temptation, it is certain that Idleness and Indulgence must in an equal Degree make us incapable of resisting them.

To return. As certain therefore as our Nature is in a State of Corruption, as certain as this Corruption consists in ill Tempers and Inclinations, so certain is it, that if we would not die in our Sins, we must enter upon such a Course of Life as is a *State of Denial* not only to this or that, but to *all* those corrupt Tempers and Inclinations.

For since Man is only a Compound of corrupt and disorderly Tempers, it is as necessary to deny himself, as to resist Evil; and he is indeed only so far virtuous, as he has put off himself, and is guided and governed by another Spirit.

When we speak of Self-denial, we are apt to confine it to Eating and Drinking; but we ought to consider that though a strict Temperance be necessary in these Things, yet these are the easiest and smallest Instances of Self-denial. Pride, Vanity, Self-love, Covetousness, Envy, and other Inclinations of the like Nature, call for a more constant and watchful Self-denial, than the Appetites of Hunger and Thirst.

Till therefore we make our Self-denial as universal as our Corruption, till we deny ourselves all Degrees of Vanity and Folly, as earnestly as we deny ourselves all Degrees of Drunkenness, till we reject all Sorts of Pride and Envy, as we abhor all Kinds of Gluttony, till we are as exact in all Degrees of Humility, as we are exact in all Rules of Temperance, till we watch and deny all irregular Tempers, as we avoid all Sorts of Sensuality, we can no more be said to practise Self-denial, than he can be said to be Just, who only denies himself the Liberty of stealing.

And till we do enter into this Course of universal Self-denial, we shall make no Progress in true Piety, but our Lives will be a *ridiculous Mixture* of I know not what, *sober* and covetous, proud and *devout*, *temperate* and vain, *regular* in our Forms of Devotion, and irregular in all our Passions, circum-

spect in *little Modes* of Behaviour, and careless and negligent of *Tempers* the most essential to Piety.

And thus it will necessarily be with us, till we lay the Axe to the Root of the Tree, till we deny and renounce the whole Corruption of our Nature, and resign ourselves up entirely to the Spirit of God, to think and speak and act by the Wisdom and Purity of Religion.

Let it be supposed that Religion required us to forget a *Language* that we loved, and had been bred in, and constantly to speak in a *Language* that was *New* and *Difficult*.

Could we possibly forget our former *Language* that we loved, and was natural to us, any other Way, than by denying ourselves the Liberty of ever speaking it?

Could we forget it by only forbearing to use it on some particular Occasions? Would it not be as necessary to abstain from thinking, reading, and writing in it, as to abstain from using it in Conversation? Could we render our new *Language* any other Way habitual or natural to us, than by making it the *Language* of *all* Seasons?

Now this may teach us the absolute Necessity of an universal Self-denial, for though Religion does not command us to part with an old *Language* that we love, yet it commands us to part with an *old Nature*, and to live and act by a new Heart and a new Spirit.

Now can we think to part with an *old Nature* by fewer Rules of Abstinence, than are necessary to get rid of an old *Language*? Must we not deny ourselves the Liberty of ever acting according to it? Can we get rid of it by only denying it in particular Instances? Must it not be as necessary to abstain from all its Ways of thinking and wishing, liking and disliking, as to practise any Abstinence at all? For if the whole is to be changed, if a *new Heart* is to be obtained, we are doing nothing, whilst we only renounce it in part; and can no more be said to live by a new Heart, than they can be said to speak only a new *Language*, whose general Conversation is in their old natural Tongue.

Indeed a little Attention to the Nature of Man, and the Nature of Christianity, will soon convince us, that *Self-denial* is the very Substance, the beginning and ending of all our Virtues. For,

First, Christianity, is the *Cure* of the Corruption of our natural State. Now what is the Corruption of our natural State? Why it consists chiefly in *Tempers, and Passions, and Inclinations that fix us to bodily and earthly Enjoyments, as to our proper good*.

Now how is it that Christianity cureth this Corruption of our Nature? Why it cureth this Corruption of our Nature,

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by teaching us to live and act by *Principles of Reason and Religion*.

What are these Principles of Reason and Religion ?

They are such as these :

First, That God is our *only Good*, that we cannot possibly be happy, but in such Enjoyment of him, as he is pleased to communicate to us.

Secondly, That our Souls, [are immortal Spirits,] that [are here only in a *State of Trial and Probation*.

Thirdly, That we must all appear before the Judgment-Seat of God, to receive the Sentence of eternal Life, or eternal Death.

These are the chief Principles of *Reason and Religion*, by which every Christian is to live ; judging and thinking, choosing and avoiding, hoping and fearing, loving and hating according to these *Principles*, as becomes a Creature, that is sent hither to prepare himself to live with God in everlasting Happiness.

Now who does not see, that this resolves all our Religion into a State of *Self-denial*, or Contradiction to our natural State ?

For first, what can be a greater Self-denial, or more Contradictory to all our habitual Notions, and natural Sentiments, than to live and govern ourselves, by a Happiness that is to be had in *God alone* ? A Happiness, which our Senses, our old Guides, neither see, nor feel, nor taste, nor perceive ? A Happiness, which gives us neither *Figure* nor *Dignity*, nor *Equipage*, nor *Power*, nor *Glory* amongst one another ?

Look at Man in his natural State, acting by the Judgment of his Senses, following the Motions of his Nature, and you will see him acting, as if the World was full of infinite Sorts of Happiness.

He has not only a thousand imaginary Pleasures, but has found out as many Vexations, all which show, that he thinks *Happiness* is everywhere to be found, for no one is vexed at any Thing, but where he thinks he is disappointed of some possible Happiness.

The Happiness therefore of Religion, which is an Happiness in *God alone*, is a great *Contradiction* to all our natural and habitual Tempers and Opinions, not only as it proposes a Good, which our Senses cannot relish, but as it leads us from all those imaginary Enjoyments, upon which our Senses have fixed our Hearts.

To think of Religion in any other Sense, than as a State of *Self-denial*, is knowing nothing at all of it. For its whole Nature is to direct us by a Light, and Knowledge, and Wisdom from God, which is all contrary to the Darkness, Ignorance, and Folly of our Natures.

It is therefore altogether impossible for any Man to enter into the Spirit of Religion, but by *denying himself*, by renouncing all his *natural Tempers* and Judgments, which have been formed by the blind Motions of Flesh and Blood, and strengthened by the Example and Authority of the World. He cannot walk in the *Light* of God, but by rejecting the *Dreams* of his Senses, the *Visions* of his own Thoughts, and the *Darkness* of worldly Wisdom.

We may let our Senses tell us, what we are to *eat* and *drink*, or when we are to *sleep*, we may let them teach us, how near we may draw to a *Fire*, how great a *Burden* we may carry, or into how deep a *Water* we may go; in these Things they are our proper Guides.

But if we appeal to them to know the *true Good* of Man, or the proper Happiness of our *rational Nature*, if we ask *them* what *Guilt* there is in Sin, or what *Excellence* there is in Piety, if we consult them as our Guides and Instructors in these Matters, we act as absurdly, as if we were to try to *hear* with our *Eyes*, or to *see* with our *Ears*.

For our Senses are no more fitted to tell us our *true Good*, as we are Christians and rational Creatures, than our *Eyes* are fitted to instruct us in *Sounds*, or our *Ears* in *Sights*.

Religion therefore has just so much Power over us, as it has Power over our *natural Tempers*, and the Judgments of our Senses, so far as it has made us *deny* ourselves, and reject the Opinions and Judgments of Flesh and Blood, so far has it settled its Power within us.

Hence appears the absolute Necessity of our Saviour's Proposal to Mankind, *If any Man will come after me, let him deny himself and follow me.*

For it plainly appears from the Nature of the Thing, that no Man can follow Christ, or walk in the Light that he walked, but by *denying himself*, and walking contrary to the Darkness and Errors of his own Heart and Mind.

All our Ways of thinking and judging of the Nature and Value of Things, are corrupted with the Grossness and Errors of our Senses.

We judge of every Thing in the same Manner, that the *Child* judges of his *Playthings*, that is, it is by our Senses alone that we pass the Judgment, though we think that we act with the *Reason of Men*.

The World is made up of *fine Sights*, Equipage, Sports, Show and Pageantry, which please and captivate the Minds of Men, because Men have yet the Minds of *Children*, and are just the same Slaves to their Senses, that Children are.

As Children and Men see the *same Colours* in Things, so

Children and Men feel the *same sensible* Pleasures, and are affected with external Objects in the same Manner.

But the Misfortune is, that we laugh at the little Pleasures, *poor* Designs and *trifling* Satisfactions of Children, whilst at the same time, the *Wisdom* and *Ambition* and *Greatness* of Men is visibly taken up with the *same Trifles*.

A *Coach and Six* and an *Embroidered Suit* shall make a great *Statesman* as happy, as ever a *Go-cart* and *Feather* made a Child.

When a Man thinks how happy he shall be with a great Estate, he has all the same Thoughts come into his Head, that a Child has, when he thinks what he would do with a great Sum of Money; he would buy twenty *little Horses*, he would have twenty *fine Coats*, and all *fine Sights*, and the like.

Now promise but a Man a great Estate, and you will raise all these same Thoughts and Designs in his Mind.

Now whence can all this proceed, but from this, that Men act with the *same Vanity* of mind, are under the *same poor* guidance of their Senses, are as ignorant of their *true Happiness*, as great Strangers to their *own Nature*, and as far from a true Sense of their *relation* to God, as when they first set out in Life.

And is not this a plain Argument of the Reasonableness and Necessity of *Self-denial*? For to indulge ourselves and live according to our *natural Tempers* and Judgments, is to grow old in the Follies of Childhood. And to deny ourselves, is to save ourselves, as it is denying such Tempers and Judgments as are contrary to our eternal Happiness.

To proceed, let us take another view of the weakness and disorder of our Nature, that we may still see a greater Necessity of not walking according to it.

When we see People *drunk* or in a violent Passion, we readily own, that they are, so long as that continues, in a State of *Delusion*, thinking, saying, and doing irregular Things by the mere *Force* of their Blood and Spirits. In these States we all see and acknowledge the Power of our *Bodies* over our Reason, and never suppose a Man capable of judging or acting wisely, so long as he is under the violence of *Passion* or heated with *Drink*.

Now this is more or less the constant State of all Mankind, who are by bodily Impressions, and the Agitations of the Blood and Spirits, in the same kind of *Delusion*, as Men that are *Drunk* or in a *Passion*, though not always in the same Degree.

A Man that is Drunk has heated his Blood to that Degree, that it sends up Spirits to the Brain in too violent a Motion, and in too great a quantity. This violent Motion of the Spirits,

raises so many Ideas in the Brain, and in so Disorderly a Manner, that the Man is every Minute different from himself, as fast as different or new Ideas are raised in his Head by the impetuous Course of the Spirits. This is the disorder of a Man that is *Drunk*.

Now this is the State of all People more or less, when they appear to one another as Sober.

For first, Drunkenness is a State of disorder and Delusion, because our Heads are then filled with a Crowd of Ideas, which we have little or no power over, and which for that Reason distract our Judgment.

Now this is in a certain Degree the State of all Men, whilst they are in the Body ; the Constitution of our Bodies, and our Commerce with the World is constantly filling our Heads with Ideas, and Thoughts, that we have little or no Power over, but *intrude* upon our Minds, alter our Opinions, and *affect* our Judgments in the same Manner, as they disorder the Minds of those who are Drunk.

Let anyone but try to *Meditate* upon any the most Important Doctrine of Religion, and he will find the Truth of this Observation, he will find a Thousand Ideas crowd in upon him, in spite of all his Care to avoid them, which will hinder his Meditation, and prevent his seeing Things in that Light in which he would see them, if his Mind was empty of other Thoughts.

Now it is the same Cause that hinders him from Thinking *so well* as he would, that hinders the Drunken man from Thinking *at all* ; that is, an *Involuntary Succession of Ideas*.

So that every Man, so long as he is in the Body, is in some Degree weak and disordered in his Judgment, in the same Manner and for the same Causes, as People who are Drunk.

Secondly, Another Circumstance of *Drunkenness* is this, that Ideas and Thoughts are raised in a disorderly Manner, because the *Blood* is too much heated.

Now this is another constant Circumstance that attends Men in every State of Life.

For first, it is the same Thing whether our Spirits be heated with Liquor, or anything else, if they are heated, all the same Effects are produced.

This is undeniably true, because we daily see, that Passion will heat and disorder People in the same Manner, as they are, who are inflamed with Liquor.

Therefore our own *Thoughts* and *Imaginations* have the same effect upon our Spirits, as *Drink* ; so that it is the same Thing whether a Man be Drunk with Passion, or any violent Set of Thoughts, or heated with Liquor. There is the same Weakness

of Mind, the same disordered Imagination, and the same wrong Apprehension of the Nature of Things.

Now though all People are not at all Times Drunk with *Passion*, or some *Violent* Imagination, yet they are always in a Disorder of the same Kind; they have something that affects and hurries their Spirits in the same Manner, that a Man's Spirits are affected in some violent Passion.

And the Reason is, because Men are always in some *Passion* or other, though not to that Degree as to be visible, and give Offence to other People.

We are always in a State either of *Self-love*, Vanity, Pride, Hatred, Spite, Envy, Covetousness or Ambition. Some one or other of these Passions is in some Degree affecting our Spirits in the same Manner, that any violent Passion, or heat of Liquor affects our Spirits, differing only in the Degree.

A silent *Envy*, a secret *Vanity*, which nobody sees, raises Thoughts in our Heads, and disorders our Judgments in the same Manner, as more violent Passions.

But you may increase the *Vanity*, and *Envy* till it ends in Distraction and Madness, as it sometimes happens, but then we may be sure, that it disorders our Understanding in the same Manner, and made us Foolish and Extravagant in some Degree, long before it came to Madness. Whilst therefore we are in the Body, we are constantly in a State of Disorder, like to those who are Drunk or in a violent Passion; we have some Passion or other, either of *Self-love*, Vanity, Envy or the like, that affects our Spirits, and disorders our Judgment, in the same Manner, though not in the same Degree, as their Spirits are affected, who are in the heat of Drink, or in some violent Passion.

Thirdly, Another Circumstance of Drunkenness is this, that it Forms us to a Taste and Temper peculiar to it, so as to leave a Dulness and Indisposition in the Mind toward any Thing else. An habitual Drunkard has no Pleasure, like that confused Hurry and Heat of Thoughts that arises from inflamed Blood. The repeating of this Pleasure so often has given him a Turn of Mind, that Relishes nothing but what relates to Intemperance.

Now this is the State of all People in some respect or other, there is some way of Life that has got hold of them, and given them a Taste and Relish for it, in the same Manner that Drinking has Formed the Drunkard to a peculiar liking of it. All People are not intemperate, but all are under Habits of Life, that affect the Mind in the same Manner, as Intemperance.

Some People have indulged themselves so long in *Dressing*, others in *Play*, others in *Sports* of the Field, others only in little

gossiping Stories, that they are as much Slaves to these Ways of Life, as the intemperate Man is a Slave to Liquor.

Now we readily own that a Man who has enslaved himself to the Pleasures of Drinking and Intemperance, has thereby rendered himself incapable of being a *reasonable Judge* of other Happiness and Pleasure; but then we do not enough consider, that we are hurt in the same Manner, by any other Way of Life, that has taken hold of us, and given us a Temper and Turn of Mind peculiar to it.

It is to as little Purpose to talk of Religion, or the Happiness of Piety, to a Person who is fond of *Dress*, or *Play*, or *Sports*, as to another who is intemperate; for the Pleasures of these particular Ways of Life make him as deaf to all other Proposals of Happiness, and as incapable of judging of other Happiness and Pleasure, as he who is enslaved to Intemperance.

A *Lady* abominates a *Sot*, as a Creature that has only the Shape of a Man; but then she does not consider that drunken as he is, perhaps he can be more content with the Want of *Liquor*, than she can with the Want of *fine Clothes*: And if this be her Case, she only differs from him, as one intemperate Man differs from another.

Thus it appears, that whether we consider the Nature, Circumstances, and Effects of Drunkenness, that all Mankind are more or less in the *same State* of Weakness and Disorder.

I have dwelt the longer upon this Comparison, because it seems so easily to explain the Disorder of our Nature. For as everyone readily sees how the bodily Disorders of Drunkenness, and violent Passion, blind and pervert our Minds, so it seems an easy Step from thence, to imagine how the Body, though in a *cooler State*, does yet disorder the Mind in the same Manner, though not in the same Degree. It is also easy to conceive, that if *violent Passion*, or a heated Imagination, confounds our Judgments, and gives us wrong Apprehensions of Things, that therefore *all Passions*, though more *still* and *secret*, must yet influence our Minds, and make us weak and disordered in our Judgments, in the same Manner, though not in the same Degree, as those are, who are in a violent Passion. So that the meanest Capacity may by this apprehend, that so long as we are in the Body, we are in a State of Weakness and Disorder, that is full of such Blindness and Delusion, as attends a State of Drunkenness and Passion.

It is intended by this Account of human Nature, to convince us of the *absolute Necessity* of renouncing ourselves, of denying all our Tempers and Inclinations, and resigning ourselves wholly to the Light and Wisdom of God. For since by our State of

Corruption and Slavery to the Body, we are always under the Power of its *blind Motions*, since all our Inclinations and Judgments are only the Judgments of heated Blood, drunken Spirits, and disordered Passions, we are under as absolute a Necessity of denying all our natural Tempers and Judgments, as of refraining from Intemperance.

For must a Man who is in a Fit of *violent* Passion, silence that Passion before he can judge of the ordinary Things of Life? Is it a State of such Blindness as makes him blind in the plainest Matters, and unable to judge rightly even of Things which he is acquainted with? And can we think, that our more *still* and *secret* Passions of Self-love, Pride, Vanity, Envy, and the like, make us less blind as to the Things of God, than a heated Passion does as to the Things of this World?

Will an inflamed Passion disorder a Man too much to judge of anything even in his own Business? And will not a Passion of *less Violence* disorder a Man's Judgment in Things of a spiritual Nature, which he never was rightly acquainted with, which he never saw or understood in the Manner that he ought, and which are all contrary to the Impressions of his Senses?

Everyone sees People in the World whom he takes to be incapable of *sober* Judgments, and *wise* Reflections, for this Reason, because he sees that they are full of themselves, blinded with Prejudices, violent in their Passions, wild and extravagant in their Imaginations.

Now as often as we see these People, we should reflect that we see *ourselves*; for we as certainly see a *true Representation* of ourselves, when we look at such People, as we see a true Picture of our State, when we see a Man in the Sorrows and Agonies of Death.

You are not *dying* as this Man is, you are not in his State of Sickness and Extremity; but still his State shows you your own *true Picture*, it shows you that your Life is in the *midst of Death*, that you have in you the Seeds of Sickness and Mortality, that you are dying, though not in his *Degree*, and that you are only at a little *uncertain Distance* from those, who are lying upon their last Beds.

When therefore you see Men living in the Disorders of their Passions, blinded with Prejudices, swelling in Pride, full of themselves, vain in their Imaginations, and perverse in their Tempers, you must believe, that you see as true a Representation of your own State, as if you saw a Man in his last Sickness.

You, it may be, are not in the Extravagance of his disordered Tempers, you are at some *uncertain Distance* from his State, but if you fancy that you are not corrupted with *Self-love*, not

weakened by Prejudices, not blinded with Pride, not vain in your Imaginations, not ridiculous in your Tempers, because you are not in such Disorders as you find some People, you think as absurdly, as if you were to imagine yourself to be *immortal*, because you are not in that *Extremity* of Death, in which you see some People.

And as the true Way of knowing and being rightly affected with the Weakness and Mortality of our State, is frequently to view the Condition of *dying Men*, as Pictures of ourselves, so the most likely Means to affect us with a just Sense of the Corruption and Disorder of our Hearts, is to consider the Frailties, Corruptions, and Disorders, of other People, as certain Representations of the Frailty and Corruption of our own State.

When therefore you see the Violence of other Men's Passions, the Irregularity of their Tempers, the Strength of their Prejudices, the Folly of their Inclinations, and the Vanity of their Minds, remember that you see so many plain Reasons for *denying* yourself, and resisting your own Nature, which has in it the Seeds of all those evil Tempers, which you see in the most irregular People.

From the foregoing Reflections upon human Nature, we may learn thus much, that Abstinence, as to Eating and Drinking, is but a small part of Christian *Self-denial*.

The Corruption of our Nature has its chief Seat in the Irregularity of our Tempers, the Violence of Passions, the Blindness of our Judgments, and the Vanity of our Minds; it is as dangerous therefore to indulge these Tempers, as to live in Gluttony and Intemperance.

You think it shameful to be an *Epicure*, you would not be suspected to be fond of *Liquor*, you think these Tempers would too much spoil all your Pretences to Religion; you are very right in your Judgment, but then proceed a Step farther, and think it as shameful to be fond of *Dress*, or delighted with *yourself*, as to be fond of *Dainties*, and that it is as great a Sin to please any corrupt *Temper* of your Heart, as to please your *Palate*; remember that Blood heated with *Passion*, is like Blood heated with *Liquor*, and that the Grossness of Gluttony is no greater a Contrariety to Religion, than the Politeness of Pride, and the Vanity of our Minds.

I have been the longer upon this Subject, trying every Way to represent the Weakness and Corruption of our Nature, because so far as we rightly understand it, so far we see into the Reasonableness and Necessity of all religious Duties. If we fancy ourselves to be wise and regular in our Tempers and Judgments, we can see no Reason for denying ourselves; but if

we find that our whole Nature is in Disorder, that our Light is Darkness, our Wisdom Foolishness, that our Tempers and Judgments are as gross and blind as our Appetites, that our Senses govern us as they govern Children, that our Ambition and Greatness is taken up with *Gewgaws* and *Trifles*, that the State of our Bodies is a State of Error and Delusion, like that of Drunkenness and Passion.

If we see ourselves in this true Light, we shall see the whole Reason of Christian *Self-denial*, of Meekness, and Poverty of Spirit, of putting off our old Man, of renouncing our whole Selves, that we may see all Things in God; of watching and Prayer, and mortifying all our Inclinations, that our Hearts may be moved by a Motion from God, and our Wills and Inclinations be directed by the Light and Wisdom of Religion.

Religion has little or no hold of us, till we have these right Apprehensions of ourselves; it may serve for a little Decency of outward Behaviour, but it is not the Religion of our Hearts, till we feel the weakness and disorder of our Nature, and embrace Piety and Devotion, as the Means of recovering us to a State of Perfection and Happiness in God.

A Man that thinks himself in *Health*, cannot lament the Sickness of his State.

If we are pleased with the Pride and Vanity of our Minds, if we live in Pleasure and Self-satisfactions, we shall feel no meaning in our Devotions, when we lament the Misery and Corruption of our Nature. We may have Times and Places to mourn for Sins, but we shall feel no more inward Grief, than *hired Mourners* do at a Funeral.

So that as the Corruption of our Nature, is the Foundation and Reason of *Self-denial*, so a right Sense and Feeling of that Corruption, is necessary to make us rightly affected with the Offices and Devotions of Religion.

I shall now show, that the reasonableness and necessity of *Self-denial*, is also founded upon another fundamental Doctrine of Religion, namely, the *Necessity of Divine Grace*, which I shall leave to be the Subject of the following Chapter.

Chapter IX.

Of the Necessity of Divine Grace, and the several Duties to which it calleth all Christians.

I COME now to another Article of our Religion, namely, the *absolute Necessity of Divine Grace*, which is another universal and constant Reason of *Self-denial*.

The invisible Operation and Assistance of God's Holy Spirit, by which we are disposed towards that which is good, and made able to perform it, is a confessed Doctrine of Christianity.

Our natural Life is preserved by some Union with God, who is the Fountain of Life to all the Creation, to which Union we are altogether Strangers; we find that we are alive, as we find that we think, but how, or by what Influence from God our Life is supported, is a Secret into which we cannot enter. It is the same Thing with Relation to our spiritual Life, or Life of Grace, it arises from some *invisible Union* with God, or Divine Influence, which in this State of Life we cannot comprehend. Our blessed Saviour saith, *The Wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the Sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of God.** This shows us, how ignorant we are of the manner of the Operations of the Holy Spirit; we may feel its Effects, as we may perceive the Effects of the Wind, but are as much Strangers to its manner of coming upon us, as we are Strangers to that exact Point, from whence the Wind begins to blow, and where it will cease.

The Spirit of God is like the Nature of God, too high for our Conceptions, whilst we are in these dark Houses of Clay. But our blessed Saviour has in some Degree helped our Conceptions in this Matter, by the manner of his giving the Holy Spirit to his Disciples. *And he breathed on them, and said unto them, receive the Holy Ghost.* Now by this Ceremony of breathing, we are taught to conceive of the Communications of the Holy Spirit with some likeness to Breath, or Wind, that its Influences come upon us in some manner most like to a gentle breathing of the Air. Representations of this kind are only

* John iii. 8.

made in Compliance with the Weakness of our Apprehensions, which not being able to conceive Things as they are in their own Nature, must be instructed, by comparing them to such Things as our Senses are acquainted with. Thus, the *Wisdom* and *Knowledge* that is revealed from God, is compared to *Light*, not because *Light* is a true Representation of the Wisdom of God, but because it serves best to represent it to our low Capacities. In like manner, the *Influences* of the Holy Spirit, are set forth by the Ceremony of *breathing* upon us, not because *Breath*, or *Air*, or *Wind*, are true Representations of the Gifts of the Spirit, but because they are the properest Representations, that yet fail within our Knowledge.

But that which is most necessary for us to know, and of which we are sufficiently informed in Scripture, is the *absolute Necessity* of this Divine Assistance.

We are used to consider those only as *inspired* Persons, who are called by God to some extraordinary Designs, and act by immediate Revelation from him. Now as Inspiration implies an *immediate Revelation* from God, in this Sense there has been but few inspired Persons; but Inspiration, as it signifies an *invisible Operation*, or *Assistance* and *Instruction* of God's Holy Spirit, is the common Gift and Privilege of all Christians; in this Sense of Inspiration, they are all *inspired Persons*. Know ye not, saith St. Paul, that your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you. St. John likewise, Hereby know we that he dwelleth in us by the Spirit, which he has given us. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the Sons of God. Again, Now if any Man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* From these and many other Passages of the like Nature, it is undeniably plain, that the Life which we now live, is a Life in and by the Spirit of God, and that they are only Sons of God, who are led by this Spirit. Now this Doctrine plainly proves the Necessity of a constant Self-denial, for it must be necessary, that we deny ourselves all those Tempers and Ways of Life, which may make God withhold his Grace from us; and likewise all those Enjoyments and Indulgences, which may make us less able and less disposed to improve and co-operate with those Degrees of Divine Grace, that are communicated to us.

Our blessed Saviour saith, *If any man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*† This teaches us, how we are to invite the good Spirit of God to dwell in us: We are to *Prepare* ourselves for the Abode of this Divine Guest, by loving Christ

* Rom. viii. 9.

† John xiv. 23.

and keeping his Commandments. Whence we also learn, that the Spirit of God does not *equally Visit* all Persons in all ways of Life, but that we must *Prepare* ourselves for his Presence.

We are also told, that *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble*. This also explains to us the Method of Divine Grace, that it is bestowed with regard to the *State* and *Temper* of Persons ; that there are some Dispositions which *separate* us from the Spirit of God, and others that procure to us a larger Share of its Gifts and Graces. We are also here Taught to consider *Pride*, not only as a Sin that has its particular Guilt, but as it has this certain Effect, that it *Extinguishes* the Divine Light, *deprives* us of God's Spirit, and leaves us to sink under the Corruption and Weight of our Nature.

We are to consider *Humility* also, not only as it is a reasonable Duty, and proper to our State, but as it *qualifies* and *prepares* us for larger Degrees of Divine Grace, such as may Purify and Perfect our Souls in all Manner of Holiness. All Instances therefore of Pride are to be avoided, all Sorts of Humility to be practised, not only for their own Sakes, but as necessary *Preparatives* for Divine Grace, that we may be *fit Temples* for the Holy Ghost to dwell in. Now seeing we are none of Christ's, if the Spirit of Christ be not in us, seeing we are only so far Christians, as we are renewed by the Holy Ghost, nothing can be more necessary to true Piety, than that we Form every Part of our Lives with regard to this Holy Spirit. That we consider all our *Tempers, Pleasures, Cares, Designs* and *Ways* of Life, whether they be such, as *suit* with the Wisdom and Heavenly Guidance of the Holy Spirit. This Doctrine shows us to ourselves in a *new Point* of View, and may serve to teach us several Truths, which we should otherwise not so readily apprehend.

When we are left to consider our Duty with relation to the express Commandments of God ; there are many ways of Life which we think ourselves at Liberty to follow, because they seem to be no plain Breach of any Commandment. But we are to look to a further Rule, and to consider our Pleasures and Cares, our Designs and Endeavours, not only whether they are contrary to the Letter of the Law, but whether they are according to the Spirit of God, for if they are contrary to the Spirit of God, if they suit not with his secret Inspirations, they are as truly to be avoided as if they were contrary to some express Commandment. For we are assured from Scripture, that they only are the Sons of God, *who are led by the Spirit of God*, and none can be said to be led by the Spirit of God, but they whose Lives are according to it, whose Actions, Cares and Pleasures,

Hopes and Fears are such, as may be said to be guided by the Motions of the Holy Ghost.

We are therefore to consider ourselves as *inspired Persons*, that have no Knowledge, or Wisdom but what comes from God, and that this Wisdom will no longer dwell with us, than so long as we act and conduct ourselves Conformably to it. So that we must not vainly deceive ourselves in saying, where is the harm of such *Indulgences*, or such *Vanities* and idle *Amusements*, but must consider, whether they are such as are Conformable to a Life that is to be directed by the Holy Ghost, whether they will *invite* his Assistance, and make him *delight* to dwell with us. In this Manner must we Examine and Try all our Ways of Life, as well our Cares as our Pleasures, and all our Tempers and Inclinations. For unreasonable Cares, as well as unreasonable Pleasures, are equally contrary to the Wisdom of the Holy Spirit, and equally separate us from him. People often think their Designs and Diversions Innocent because they are not *sinful* in their Nature, but they should also consider whether they are not *vain* and *foolish*, and *unsuitable* to the State and Condition of a Christian. For a Life of *Folly*, and *Vanity* and *trifling Designs*, is no more living by the *Spirit of God*, than a Life of *gross Sins*, is keeping the *Commandments*. So that the safest Rule to judge of our Actions by, is to consider them with relation to that Spirit, by which we are to be guided. Is this Design, or this Diversion according to the Wisdom of the Spirit of God? Am I in these Things improving the secret Inspiration of the Holy Ghost? Am I here governed by a Wisdom from above? Are these ways such as I can truly say, that I am led into them by the Spirit of God? Do I allow myself in them, because they serve to set forth the Glory of God, and are agreeable to the Condition of a Disciple of Christ? Are they good Proofs that the Spirit of God dwelleth in me, and that by thus Sowing to the Spirit, I shall of the Spirit Reap everlasting Life. This is the Rule of Perfection, by which Christians are to regulate their Thoughts, Words and Actions, for we are called by God to a State of Purity and Holiness, to act by the Motions of his Holy Spirit, and make no other Use of ourselves, or the World we are in, than such as is conformable to that Dignity of Life, and State of Glory to which we are called. The Spirit of our Religion is to be the Spirit of our Lives, the constant Principle of all our Tempers and Inclinations, which is to render us Reasonable, and Wise and Holy in all our Progress through the World.

The *Renewal* of our Hearts by the Spirit of God consists in *new Thoughts* and *new Desires*, in filling our Minds with great

and sublime Truths, and in giving us Desires and Inclinations, Hopes and Fears, Cares and Pleasures suitable to them.

This is being born^d of the Spirit. Hence appears a plain Reason of an *universal Self-denial*, because the Spirit of the World and the Spirit of our corrupt Hearts, is in a State of Contrariety to this Spirit and Wisdom which is from above. So that it is to be the main Business and Labour of our Lives, to contradict those Motions of our Hearts, and those Tempers of the World, which are *contrary* to this Spirit, which is to be the Principle of our new Life in Christ.

We must therefore deny ourselves all those Ways of Life, all Cares and Enjoyments which too much possess our Minds, and render them insensible of these great Truths. We must Practise all that *Self-denial, Temperance, Abstinence, Care and Watchfulness* which can anyway *fit* and *prepare* our Minds to hear and receive, to comprehend and relish the Instructions and Doctrine which come from the Spirit of God. For all these Truths, every Thing that relates to God and Religion have a different Effect upon us, according to the State or Way of Life that we are in. As *Land* must be prepared to receive the best Seed, as *Rocks* can bring forth no Fruit, so unless our Minds are in some *proper State* and Disposition to *Co-operate* with the Holy Spirit, and receive his Instructions, his Gifts and Graces will bring forth no Fruit.

'Tis acknowledged by all, that a Life of *Intemperance* and *Debauchery* makes us dead and senseless of Religion, and incapable of receiving its Truths: But then it is not enough considered, that the *Vanity* of the Mind and Understanding busied in *Trifles*, an *impertinent Course* of Life, will as certainly produce the *same Effect*. If our Understanding is full of foolish Imaginations, devoted to Trifles, Religion can gain no Entrance. A Man may be so earnest in *picking Straws*, as to have no Leisure to think of his Salvation, nor any more Inclination to it, than one that is constantly in *Drink*. *Children*^d are incapable of Religion, not because they are *intemperate* and *debauched*, but because they have *little Minds*, that are taken up and employed with *little and trifling* Entertainments. Now if when we are Men, we have the Minds of Children, and have only changed our *Playthings*, we shall embrace and practise Religion just to as much Purpose as Children do: For a Mind taken up with *Georgaws*, and *Trifles*, and impertinent Satisfactions, is in the same State, whether it be *four*, or whether it be *fifty Years* old. If it be made silly with *trifling* Concerns, and *false* Satisfactions, it is in a State of as much Disorder, and as contrary to Religion, as a State of *Gluttony* and *Intemperance*.

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Thus poor *Amusements*, vain *Arts*, useless *Sciences*, impertinent *Learning*, false *Satisfactions*, a wrong *Turn of Mind*, a State of *Idleness*, or any the vainest *Trifles* of Life, may keep Men at as great a Distance from the true Impressions of Religion, and from living by the Spirit of God, as the *Ignorance* of Childhood, or the *Debaucheries* of Intemperance.

Titius is temperate and regular, but then he is so great a *Mathematician*, that he does not know when *Sunday* comes: He sees People going to *Church*, as he sees others going to Market, he goes on studying, measuring, and calculating, and may as well be called a *Merchant*, as a *Christian*.

All Doctrines of *Religion* are disagreeable to *Philo*, he avoids them as he avoids *Party*; now what's the Reason of it? It is not because he is *debauched* and *intemperate*, but he is a *Virtuoso* devoted to polite *Literature*, his Soul is extended to all the *Curiosities* in the World, and thinks all Time to be lost, that is not spent in the Search of *Shells*, *Urns*, *Inscriptions*, and *broken Pieces of Pavements*. This makes the Truths of *Religion*, and the Concerns of *Eternity*, seem small Things in his Eyes, fit only for the Enquiry of narrow, *little* and *unpolite* Souls.

Patronus is fond of a Clergyman who understands *Music*, *Painting*, *Statuary*, and *Architecture*. He is an Enemy to the *Dissenters*, and loves the *Church of England* because of the *Stateliness* and *Beauty* of its Buildings; he never comes to the *Sacrament*, but will go forty Miles to see a *fine Altar-piece*. He goes to Church when there is a *new Tune* to be heard, but never had any more serious Thoughts about *Salvation*, than about *Flying*. If you visit him when he is dying, you will hear his dying Thoughts upon *Architecture*.

Eusebius would read Prayers *twice* every Day in his *Parish*, he would be often with the Poor and Sick, and spend much Time in charitable Visits; he would be wholly taken up in the *Cure* of Souls, but that he is busy in studying the *old Grammarians*, and would fain *reconcile* some Differences amongst them, before he dies.

Lycia has no wicked or irreligious Temper, and she might be pious, but that she is too *easy*, *gay*, and *cheerful*, to admit of Care of any Kind. She can no more *repent*, than she can be *out of Temper*, and must be the same *sparkling cheerful* Creature in the *Church*, as in the *Playhouse*. She might be capable of understanding the Misery of human Nature, and the Necessity of the Comforts of Religion, but that she is so *happy* every time she is *dressed*.

Matrona is old, and has been this *fifty Years*, eating and drinking, sleeping and waking, dressing and undressing, *paying*

and *receiving Visits*. She has no Profaneness, and if she has no Piety, it is owing to this, that she never had a *spare half Hour* in all her Life to think about it. She envies her Daughters, because they will *dress* and *visit* when she is dead.

Publius goes to *Church* sometimes, and reads the Scripture, but he knows not what he reads or prays, his Head is so full of *Politics*. He is so angry at *Kings* and *Ministers of State*, that he has no Time nor Disposition to call himself to account. He has the History of all *Parliaments*, *Elections*, *Prosecutions*, and *Impeachments*, and dies with little or no Religion, through a constant Fear of *Popery*.

Siccus has neither *Virtues* nor *Vices*, he has been all his life-long *building* and *pulling down*, making *Canals* and *Ditches*, raising *Walls* and *Fences*. People call him a good Man, because he employs the Poor; *Siccus* might have been a *religious* Man, but that he thought *building* was the chief Happiness of a rational Creature. He is all the Week amongst *Dirt* and *Mortar*, and stays at home on *Sundays* to view his *Contrivances*. He will die more contentedly, if his *Death* does not happen whilst some *Wall* is in building.

Silvius laughs at *preaching* and *praying*, not because he has any profane Principles, or any Arguments against Religion, but because he happens to have been used to nothing but *Noise*, and *Hunting*, and *Sports*.

I have mentioned these several *Characters*, to show us that it is not only *Profaneness*, *Debauchery*, and *open Vices*, that keep Men from the Impressions of true Religion, but that the mere *Play-things* of Life, impertinent *Studies*, vain *Amusements*, false *Satisfactions*, idle *Dispositions*, will produce the same Effect. A *wrong Turn* of Mind, *impertinent Cares*, a Succession of the *poorest Trifles*, if they take up our Thoughts, leave no more Room for the *Cares* and *Fears* of true Piety, than gross *Sensuality*.

Our blessed Saviour saith, *Woe unto you Pharisees, for ye love the uppermost Seats in Synagogues, and Greetings in the Markets.** The Wisdom of this World would find little to condemn in such a Behaviour as this, but yet we see that the Wisdom of God condemns it with a *Woe*, teaching us, that every *wrong Turn* of Mind, every false Satisfaction, puts the Soul in a State that is *contrary* to Religion, and makes Men *unfit* to receive its Doctrines. This is the Reason why Religion calls us to a State of *Self-denial*, *Humility*, and *Mortification*, because it is a State that awakens the Soul into right Apprehensions of Things, and

* Luke xi. 43.

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qualifies us to see, and hear, and understand the Doctrines of eternal Truth. We must deny ourselves all our Ways of Folly and Vanity, let go every false Satisfaction, that the Soul may be at Liberty with its full Attention, to listen to the Instructions of Religion.

Would we see anything exactly, we must take our Eyes from everything else, so if we would apprehend truly the Things of Religion, we must take our Minds from all other Objects; we must empty ourselves of all false Satisfactions, or we shall never know the Want, nor feel the Excellency of our true Good.

We see even in worldly Matters, that if we propose anything to a Man when he is in the Pursuit of something else, he hardly hears, or understands us, we must stay for a Season of more Leisure and Indifference, till his Thoughts and Passions are at rest.

Now this holds much stronger in Matters of Religion, its Doctrines are neither heard nor understood, because it always finds us in the Pursuit of *something else*, it matters not what this *something else* is, whether it be *loving uppermost Seats in the Synagogues*, a Fondness for *Trifles*, a Joy in *Luxury and Idleness*, or a Labour after Riches; the Mind is equally employed wrong, and so not in a Condition to like, or at Leisure to listen to any other Happiness. If you were to propose the same Truths to a Man in another State, when Weariness or Disappointment has made him give up all Designs, or when Sickness or the Approach of Death shows him that he must act no longer in them, they would have quite another Effect upon him; then the great Things of Religion appear great indeed; he *feels* their whole Weight, and is *amazed* that he did not see them always in the same Manner. Now it is the great End and Design of *Self-denial*, to put a Stop to the Follies of Life, and mortify all our Passions, that our Souls may quietly consider, and fully comprehend the Truths which come from God, that our Hearts being at Liberty from a Crowd of foolish Thoughts, may be ready to obey and co-operate with the *Inspirations* of that Spirit, which is to lead and quicken us in all Holiness; that *Death and Judgment, Heaven and Hell*, may make as deep Impressions upon our Minds in the Middle of our Lives, as at our last Hour; that we may be as wise and prudent as *sick and dying* Men, and live with such Apprehensions as most People die with, that we may see the Vanity of the World, the Misery of Sin, the Greatness of Eternity, and the Want of God, as they see it who stand upon the Brink of another World.

This is the great and happy Work of Self-denial, which is to

fill us with a Spirit of Wisdom, to awaken us into a true Knowledge of ourselves, and show us who, and where, and what we are. Till this Self-denial has put a Stop to our Follies, and opened our Eyes, our Life is but a *Sleep*, a *Dream*, a mere Succession of *Shadows*, and we act with as little Reason and Judgment, as a Child that is pleased with blowing about a *Feather*. We must therefore not only deny our wicked and sinful Inclinations, but also all our Follies, Impertinences, and vain Satisfactions; for as plain and known Sins harden and corrupt, so Impertinences and false Satisfactions delude and blind our Hearts, and render them insensible of our real Misery, or true Happiness.

We are true Members of the Kingdom of God, when the Kingdom of God is within us, when the Spirit of Religion is the Spirit of our Lives, when seated in our Hearts, it diffuses itself into all our Motions, when we are wise by its Wisdom, sober by its Sobriety, and humble by its Humility; when it is the Principle of all our Thoughts and Desires, the Spring of all our Hopes and Fears; when we like and dislike, seek and avoid, mourn and rejoice, as becomes those who are born again of God. Now this is the Work of the Holy Spirit in our Hearts, to give us a *new Understanding*, a *new Judgment*, Temper, Taste, and Relish, new Desires, and new Hopes and Fears. So far therefore as we *prepare* ourselves by Self-denial, for this Change of Heart and Mind, so far we *invite* the Assistance, and *concur* with the Inspirations of the Holy Spirit. And so far as we nourish any foolish Passion, indulge any Vanity of Mind, or Corruption of Heart, so far we *resist the Graces* of God's Holy Spirit, and render ourselves *indisposed* to relish and improve his secret Inspirations. Christians are therefore to consider themselves, not only as Men, that are to act by a Principle of Reason, but as spiritual Beings, who have a higher Principle of Life within them, and are to live by the *Wisdom* and *Instructions* of the Spirit of God.

As reasonable Men would do everything that tended to strengthen and improve their Reason, so wise Christians ought to practise every Way of Life, that can fit them for further Degrees of Grace, that can strengthen and preserve their Union with the Spirit of God. For as a Man without Reason has but the *Figure* of a Man, so a Christian without the Spirit of God, has but the *Form* of a Christian. And as the Perfection of a Man consists in the highest Improvement of his Reason, so the Perfection of a Christian consists in his Growth in Grace, in the *spiritual Turn* and *Temper* of his Heart and Mind. Here therefore must we fix all our Care and Concern, that we may remove

all Hindrances of Divine Grace, and preserve this Kingdom of God within us ; that we may be truly spiritual in all our Ways and Designs, and indulge no Tempers that may lessen our Union with the Spirit of God.

Some Persons will perhaps refrain from *Grief*, when they find that it hurts their *Eyes* ; they will avoid *Passion* and *Anger*, if it ends in Pains of the Head ; but they would do well to consider that these Tempers are to be abstained from upon much greater Accounts. *Passion* may disorder our Bodies, waste our Spirits, and leave Pains in our *Heads* : but it leaves greater Marks of Injury in our better Part, as it throws us into a State of Madness, and *banishes* the Holy Spirit of Peace and Gentleness, and *prepares* us for the Suggestions of the Spirit of Darkness. *Grief* may hurt our *Eyes*, but it much more hurts our *Souls*, as it sinks them into a State of Gloom and Darkness, which *expels* and *quenches* the Spirit of God ; for Light may as well unite with Darkness, as the Spirit of God dwell with the gloomy Dulness and Horror of stupid Grief. What I have observed of these two Passions, ought to be concluded of every other *Passion* and *Temper* ; we are to consider it as it *suits* with, or *resists* that new Spirit by whose holy Motions we are to be preserved in a State of Holiness.

Now seeing this Change of our Hearts, and *Newness* of Spirit is the whole of Religion, we must fear and avoid all *Irregularity* of Spirit, every *unreasonable Temper*, because it affects us in the Seat of Life, because it hurts us in our principal Part, and makes us *less capable* of the Graces, and *less obedient* to the Motions of God's Holy Spirit. We must labour after a State of Peace, Satisfaction and Thankfulness, free from the Folly of vain Hopes, idle Fears, and false Anxieties, that our Souls may be disposed to feel the Joys, to rejoice in the Comforts, and advance in the Graces of the Holy Ghost.

With what *Care* and *Exactness* we are to conduct ourselves, with Regard to the Spirit of God, is fully set forth in the following Words : *Let no corrupt Communication proceed out of your Mouth, but that which is good to the Use of edifying, that it may minister Grace unto the Hearers, and grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the Day of Redemption.** That we may not here mistake what is meant by *corrupt Communication*, that we may not fancy it only implies sinful and wicked Discourse, the Apostle adds ; *but that which is good to the Use of edifying, that it may minister Grace unto the Hearers.* So that it is a Conversation that does not edify and profit the

* Eph. iv. 29.

Hearer, that the Apostle condemns as corrupt, and such as is to be avoided. Let it be observed that the Apostle does not prohibit this kind of Conversation, because it is *useless*, impertinent, and better to be avoided, but for a Reason of the utmost Consequence, that we may *not grieve the Holy Spirit of God*. This shows us, that we Christians are to govern ourselves by no less a Rule, than a *Conformity* to the Spirit of God, that we are not only to deny ourselves vain and foolish Actions, but also idle and unedifying Discourse, and conduct ourselves in all our Behaviour, with such a Spirit of Wisdom and Purity, as may make the Holy Ghost *delight* to dwell in us. This Rule of Perfection is highly conformable to the Nature of our Religion. For as our Religion consists in a *new Heart* and *new Spirit*, it is certain that we are then only arrived to the true State of our Religion, when it governs our Words and Actions, and is the *constant Temper* of our Minds at all Times, and on all Occasions. A *covetous Man* is not only covetous when he is in his *Counting-Room*, he is the same Person, and governed by the same Temper and Way of thinking wherever he is. And the same Thing is equally true of every Way of Life, when it has once entered into our Heart, and become a settled Temper, it is not occasionally exercised in this or that Place, or at set Times, but is always in Being, and constantly disposing us to Thoughts, and Words, and Actions suitable to it.

Some Persons seem to know so little of Religion, that they confine it to Acts of *Devotion*, and *public Occasions* of Divine Service, they don't consider that it consists in a *new Heart* and *new Spirit*, and that Acts of Devotion, Prayer and Preaching, Watchings, Fastings and Sacraments, are only to fill us with this *new Heart and Spirit*, and make it the common constant Spirit of our Lives every Day and in every Place.

A Man may be said to have some regard to Religion, who is *regular* at Places of Divine Worship, but he cannot be reckoned of a *religious Spirit*, till it is his Spirit in every Place, and on every Occasion, till he lives and breathes by it, and thinks and speaks, and acts according to its Motions.

A Man may frequent *Meetings for Mirth*, but yet, if when he is out of them, he gives himself unto Peevishness, Chagrin and Dulness, I presume no one will say, that such a Man is of a *cheerful Spirit*. It is easy to make the Application here, if we are only Attendants at *Places* of Religion, if when we are out of those Places, we are of another Spirit, I don't say Proud or Covetous, but Vain and Foolish, if our Actions are silly, and our Conversation trifling and impertinent, our Tempers vain and worldly, we are no more of a *religious Spirit*, than a dull and

peevish Man is of a *cheerful Spirit*, because he is regular at some set Meetings for *Mirth*.

If a Person of *Pride* and *Vanity* in the general Course of his Life, should yet think himself *humble*, because he had his appointed Times of praying for *Humility*, we might justly say of him, that he knew nothing of the Nature of that Virtue: In like manner, if one, whose Conversation, whose Discourse and Carriage, and Temper in *common Life*, are not according to the Spirit of Religion, should yet think himself religious, because he had his appointed Places of Prayer, it might be justly said of him, that he was a Stranger to the Nature of true Religion. For Religion is not ours till we live by it, till it is the Religion of our Thoughts, Words, and Actions, till it goes with us into every Place, sits uppermost on every Occasion, and forms and governs our Hopes and Fears, our Cares and Pleasures. He is the religious Man who watches and guards his Spirit, and endeavours to be always in the Temper of Religion, who worships God in every Place by a Purity of Behaviour, who is as fearful of foolish Thoughts, irregular Tempers, and vain Imaginations, at one Time as at another, who is as Wise and Heavenly at *Home*, or in the *Field*, as in the *House of God*. For when once Religion has got Possession of a Man's Heart, and is become as it ought to be, his ruling Temper, it is as agreeable to such a one in all Places, and at all Times to speak and act according to its Directions, as it is agreeable to the *Ambitious* Man, to act according to the Motions of Ambition. We must therefore take it for granted, that if we are not Religious in our Conversation and common Temper, we are not Religious in our Hearts, we may have a *Formality* of Religion at certain *Times* and *Places*, but we are not of a *religious Spirit*.

We see everybody speaking and conversing according to their *Spirit* and *Temper*, the Covetous, the Ambitious, the Vain and Self-conceited have each of them their proper Language suitable to their Spirit and Temper, they are the *same Persons* in all Places, and always talk like themselves. If therefore we could meet with Persons of a truly Religious Spirit and Temper, we should find them like Men of other Tempers, the same Persons in *all Places*, and always Talking and Acting like themselves. We should find them Living by one Temper, and Conversing with Men with the same Spirit that they converse with God, not one Thing in one Place, and another in another, not formal and grave at a *Funeral*, and mad and frantic at a *Feast*, not listening to Wisdom at *Church*, and delighting in Folly at *Home*, not angry at one foolish Thing, and as much pleased with another, but steady and uniform in the same wise and religious Temper.

Further, as we are not of a *religious Spirit* till it is the Spirit of our Life, and orders our Conversation; so it is carefully to be observed, that if our Conversation is Vain and Foolish, it keeps us in a State incapable of Religion, by *grieving* the *Holy Spirit*. For as we can do nothing without the Spirit of God, as it is our *Breath*, our *Life*, our *Light* and our *Strength*, so if we live in such a Way as *grieves* and *removes* this Holy Spirit from us, we are as Branches that are broken off from the Tree, and must perish in the Deadness and Corruption of our Nature. Let this therefore teach us to judge Rightly of the Sin and Danger of *Vain*, *Unedifying* and *Corrupt* Communication; it is not the Sin of *Idleness* or *Negligence*, it is not the Sin of a *Pardonable Infirmary*, it is not a *little Mistake* in spiritual Wisdom, but it is a Sin that stands between us and the *Tree of Life*, that opposes our whole Happiness, as it *grieves* and *separates* the Holy Spirit from us. Let this also teach some People the Reason, why they are so *dead* and *senseless* of Religion, and hardly capable of an outward formal Compliance with it; they are not guilty of gross Sins, they have an aversion to *Cheating* and *Falseness*, but at the same time have no more feeling or relish of Religion, than mere *Reprobates*. Now the Reason of it is this, they live in such an *Impertinence* of Conversation, their own Communication is so constantly upon *silly* and *vain* Subjects, and they are so fond of those who have the Talent of conversing in the same Manner, that they render themselves *unfit* for the Residence of the Holy Spirit. Their whole Life is almost nothing else, but a Course of that *Filthiness*, *foolish Talking* and *Jesting*, which the Apostle forbids. Now this kind of Conversation may *grieve* the Holy Spirit, for these two Reasons, first, because it proceeds from too *disordered* a Soul, for the Holy Spirit to delight in; for such as our Conversation is, such is our *Heart*, for Truth itself has assured us, that *Out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh*. If therefore we are delighted with idle *Raillery*, *foolish Jestings*, and ridiculous *Stories*, we must not think that we are only Foolish, so far as a *little talk* goes, but we must charge ourselves home, and be assured that it is a foolishness of Heart, a vanity of Soul that we labour under.

Secondly, Another Reason why this Conversation grieves the Holy Spirit, may be this, because it is of so great Consequence, and has so great an Influence in Life. We don't seem enough to apprehend, either how much *Good* or how much *Evil* there is in Conversation, and I believe it may be affirmed that the greatest Instructions, and the greatest Corruptions proceed from it. If some People were to give us their true History, they would tell

us that they never had any Religion, since they had such Acquaintance, and others have been insensibly led into a *sincere Piety*, only by conversing with pious People. For Men's common Conversation and ordinary Life teach much more effectually, than anything they say or do at set Times and Occasions.

When a Clergyman Preaches, he is for the most part considered as doing his Duty, as Acting according to his Profession, and doing that which all Clergymen do, whether *good* or *bad*. But if he is the same wise and virtuous Man in his Communication, that he is in the *Pulpit*, if his Speech be *seasoned with Salt*, that it may minister Grace unto the Hearers, if the *common* and *ordinary* Actions of his Life be visibly governed by a Spirit of Piety; Such a one will make Converts to Holiness; he will be heard with Reverence on the *Sunday*, not so much for the Weight of what he says, as for what he says and does all the Week. And on the contrary, if a *Clergyman* when he comes out of the *Pulpit*, is but like other Men, as *Irregular* in his Tempers, as *Trifling* in his Conversation, as *Eager* in Diversions, and as *Ridiculous* in his Pleasures, as *Vain* in his Designs, as other People, he will mightily lessen his Power over the Hearts of his Hearers. A *Father* now and then gives his Son virtuous Advice, and the Son perhaps would be much the better for it, but that he never hears him talking Virtuously, but when he is giving him Advice, this makes him think, that he is then only Acting the Part of a *Father*, as when he is buying him *Clothes*, or putting him out to an *Employment*. Whereas if he saw his *Father's* *ordinary Life* and Conversation to be under the Rules of Religion, and his everyday Temper, a Temper of Piety, 'tis very likely, that he would be won into an Imitation of it.

A *Mother*, orders her Daughter to be taught the *Catechism*, and desires that she may have Books of *Devotion*. The Daughter would have imagined that she was to have formed herself by these Books, she would have read them when she was alone, but that she finds her Mother sits up at Night to read *Romances*, and if she is ill, must be read to Sleep with a *Play*. She might have had some Notion of religious *Modesty* and *Humility*, but that she sees her Mother eager after *all Diversions*, Impatient till she knows *all Intrigues*, fond of the Wit and Flattery of *Rakes*, pleased with the Gentility of *Fops*, and the Gracefulness of *Players*.

Now a Daughter educated with a Mother of this Temper and Conversation, is rendered almost incapable of Religion.

This therefore may be one Reason, why a vain unedifying Conversation grieves the Holy Spirit, *viz.*, because it not only proceeds from a Corruption of Heart, a disordered State of the

Soul, but because it is so powerful in its Influences, and does so much harm to those whom we converse with. For it is our Communication, our *ordinary Temper*, and manner of *common Life* that affects other People, that either hardens them in Sin, or awakens them to a Sense of Piety. Let therefore all *Clergymen*, and *Masters* and *Mistresses* of Families, look carefully to themselves, let them consider, that if their *ordinary Life*, their Communication be *vain*, *impertinent*, and *unedifying*, that they are not only in a corrupt State of Heart, but are guilty of corrupting and perverting the Hearts of those who belong to them. Let them not think, that they have sufficiently discharged their Duty, by seeing that those who relate to them, have their proper Instructions, for it is next to impossible for such Instructions to have their proper Effect, against the Temper and Example of those we converse with. If a *Clergyman Plays*, and *Drinks* and *Sports* with his Flock in the Week-Days, let him not wonder, if he preaches them asleep on *Sundays*. If a *Father is intemperate*, if he *Swears*, and converses *foolishly* with his Friends, let him not wonder, that his Children cannot be made virtuous. For there is nothing that teaches to any Purpose, but our ordinary Temper, our common Life and Conversation; and almost all People will be such as those, amongst whom they were born and bred. It is therefore the necessary Duty of all Christians in all States of Life, to look carefully to their *ordinary Behaviour*, that it be not the Means of poisoning and corrupting the Hearts of those whom they converse with. They must consider, that all the Follies, and Impertinences of their ordinary Life and Conversation, have the Guilt of destroying Souls, and that the Blood of those, whom their Follies have destroyed, will be required at their Hands.

It is sometimes said of a *foolish*, *irregular* and *vain* Person, that he is only his *own Enemy*; but this is as absurd as to say, that a Person of *exemplary* and *eminent* Piety, is only his *own Friend*; for as his lively Piety will certainly communicate itself to those about him, so the Folly and impertinent Spirit of an irregular Man, will naturally infect those who are obliged to be near him.

A *Mistress* whose daily Conversation is a daily Proof to her *Maids*, that she is governed by a Spirit of true Piety in all that she says and does, whose regular Life is a continual visible Labour to *work out her Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, is a Blessing to all who stand about her; she communicates Happiness even to those who are born of her Servants; they will be educated in Piety, because their Parents learnt what Piety was, in waiting on such a *Mistress*.

A *good-natured*, *drinking*, *sleeping*, *playing*, *swearing* *Master*, is

a Curse to those who attend upon him ; they are led into all Irregularities, by following his Steps, and are sent into the World hardened in Follies, and insensible of Religion, by having lived with such a *Master*. This therefore ought carefully to be considered by all Christians, as a mighty Encouragement to an exact Strictness and Regularity of Behaviour ; that as a *holy Conversation* entitles us to a Reward for other People's Virtues, so an *evil Communication* and the Folly of our Lives, makes us liable to a Punishment for other Men's Sins. For we can neither live well nor ill to ourselves alone, but must of Necessity do either Good or Harm to others, by our Manner of Conversation. This is one great Reason why a vain corrupt Communication does so *grieve* the Holy Spirit, because it is so infecting an Evil, and does so corrupt the Manners of those whom we converse with. This Doctrine of abstaining from corrupt Communication, that we may not *grieve* the Spirit of God, teaches us a high Aim and exalted Degree of Perfection, which is peculiar to Christianity. As Christianity lays the Design of uniting us to God, and raising us to a more intimate Participation of the Divine Nature, so we are to make the *Spirit* of our Religion, and the *Greatness* of its Designs, the *Rule* of our Perfection.

We must not only conduct ourselves by Rules of Morality, but pursue such Degrees of Purity, as can only be expressed by an *Imitation* of God, and aspire after such Wisdom, as is suggested to us, by considering that we are *Temples* of the Holy Ghost, and must live like Beings *consecrated* by the Spirit of Wisdom. If we were frequently to consider the Holy Presence of this God within us, and to ask ourselves, Does this Discourse, this Behaviour, become one who is to act according to the *Inspirations* of the Divine Spirit? we should find, that the very Thought of this Dignity of our State, would determine several Points where no express Law condemns us ; we should find such a contrariety in many of our allowed Ways, to our Christian Greatness, to this Holy Spirit that is given unto us, as would sufficiently check our Behaviour, only by showing us that we acted below ourselves.

It is common in Life to hear a Man say, this does not become a *Gentleman*, that does not become a Man of *Quality* : Now I would have us find out something like this in Religion ; for certainly if any State of Life has its Dignity, which can excite Men to a suitable Greatness of Action, surely the State of a Christian, which is a State of such relation to God, which unites us to his Holy Spirit, ought to raise in us a Desire of acting suitably to so exalted a Condition. For who can so justly be afraid of acting *below himself*, as he who is made one

with Christ? Who can so reasonably think that he is never wise, or holy, or pure enough, as he who is to walk with God in the Light of his Holy Spirit, whose Soul and Body is made a *sacred Temple* for the Divine Presence?

The *Heathen Philosophers* exhorted Man to reverence his Reason, as a Ray of the Deity; but we can go much higher, we can exhort him to reverence the Deity that dwelleth in him, and to act with such Purity, as becomes Persons who are *inspired* by the Holy Ghost.

This is the Improvement that we are to make of this Doctrine of Divine Grace; it must make us exact and careful of our Behaviour, that we may walk worthy of that Holy Spirit that dwelleth in us.

Chapter X.

The Necessity of Divine Grace, obligeth all Christians to a constant Purity, and Holiness of Conversation; wherein is shown, the great Danger, and great Impiety, of reading vain and impertinent Books.

I HAVE shown in the foregoing Chapter, that the *Necessity of Divine Grace* is a mighty Argument for an universal Care and Exactness of Life and Conversation. I come now to speak of one remarkable Branch of it; *Let no corrupt Communication proceed out of your Mouth, but that which is good to the Use of edifying, that it may minister Grace to the Hearers, and grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed to the Day of Redemption.* Now if we are to let no corrupt Communication proceed out of our Mouth, that we may not *grieve the Holy Spirit*, and separate him from us, then it follows, that we are also to deny ourselves the Entertainment of all *corrupt, impertinent, and unedifying* Books. For if vain and idle Words are not to proceed out of our Mouths, we must be under the same Necessity of not letting them enter into our Hearts.

If we would know what Books are to be avoided, as corrupt and grievous to the Holy Spirit, we must look back to the Rule of our Communication; for as that Communication is there said

to be *corrupt*, that does not *edify* and minister Grace to the Hearers, so must we look upon all those Books as corrupt, which do not improve and confirm our Hearts in Virtue, or, in the Apostle's Words, such as do not *edify and minister Grace* to the Readers. Now this Book-entertainment is as certainly forbidden by the Apostle, as *Cheating* is forbidden by the *Eighth* Commandment: For if I am not to say foolish and impertinent Things myself, because such a Communication *grieves* and removes the Holy Spirit of God, I am as certainly forbid the reading the corrupt and impertinent Sayings of other People. The Books which mostly corrupt our Hearts, and fill us with a Spirit of Folly, are such, as almost all the World allow themselves to read, I mean, Books of *Wit* and *Humour*, *Romances*, *Plays*, and other Productions of the *Poets*. Thus a *grave orthodox* old Gentleman, if he hears that his *Niece* is very good, and delights in Reading, will fill her Closet with Volumes of *Plays*, and Poems on *several Occasions*, on purpose to encourage her to spend her Time well. There is not perhaps a more surprising Infatuation in the Conduct of Christians, than with regard to these Books.

A *Father* would be very much troubled to see his Daughter in Conversation pleased with the *lewd* Remarks of a *Rake*; he would be afraid that she had lost the Virtue of her Mind, if she could relish such a Turn of Conversation. Yet this same Father shall help his Daughter to a Volume of *Occasional Poems*, for her Closet-Entertainment, full of such *gross Immodesties*, as hardly any *Rake* would venture to express in any Conversation. It is perhaps a Collection of the *Poet's* finest, strongest, and most finished Thoughts in Lewdness and Immodesty. Every Wantonness of Imagination, every Transport of Passion, every Extravagance of Thought, which ever seized him in his Life, is there preserved for the Meditation of the Christian Reader; as if *Profaneness*, *Blasphemy*, the grossest Descriptions of Lust, and the wildest Sallies of impure Passions, were made good and useful for a Christian, by being put into *Rhyme* and *Measure*. And what shows this *Infatuation* in a yet higher Degree, is this, that it is still a prevailing Opinion in the World, that the reading virtuous Books is a great Means of improving in Virtue; whereas one would suppose, that the Books I have mentioned could only be allowed upon a Belief, that there was neither Good nor Harm to be got by Reading.

But, however, let us remember that though the Way of the World which is thus inconsistent, may allow this *polite* kind of Entertainment, yet this is no Rule or Security for our Conduct, since we are no more to make the Spirit of the World our Guide,

than we are to make the Riches of the World our Happiness. The Doctrines of the Scriptures are the only Rule by which we are now to live, and the Rule by which we shall hereafter be judged. Now if we will allow ourselves in the reading *profane*, *impure*, and *impertinent* Books, which have everything in them that can *pervert* our Understandings, and *corrupt* our Hearts, though the Scripture forbids all *unedifying Discourse*, as a Thing that grieves the Holy Spirit, it must be said, that we act as contrary to Scripture, as if we indulged and pleased ourselves in *Malice and Revenge*.

You read a *Play*, I tell you that you read *Ribaldry* and *Profaneness*, that you fill your Mind with extravagant Thoughts, lewd Intrigues, vain Fictions, wanton Ideas, and impure Descriptions. If you ask me where is the Sin of this, you may as well ask me where is the Sin of *Swearing* and *Lying*: For it is a Sin not only against this or that *particular* Text, but it is a Sin against the *whole Nature* and Spirit of our Religion; it is a Contradiction to all Holiness and to all the Methods of arriving at it. For if evil unedifying Communication be forbidden in Scripture, and for this Reason, because it grieves the Spirit of God, then the Entertainment of such Books is certainly forbidden. For certainly the wild Rant, the profane Speeches, filthy Jest, and impure Passions, which there abound, are an evil Communication in the highest Degree, and must therefore highly grieve and separate the Holy Spirit from us. Can therefore any Practice be forbid upon a more dreadful Penalty than this? For without the Spirit of God, we are but Figures of Christians, and must die in our Sins. If therefore we can prove it to be a small Matter to grieve the Spirit of God, then we may allow that it is but a small Offence, to please ourselves in reading those corrupt Books. Our Blessed Saviour saith, *Out of the Heart proceed evil Thoughts*, and that *these are the Things that defile a Man*; must it not therefore be a great Defilement to take evil Thoughts into our Hearts? Need we any other Motive than this, to watch and guard the Purity of our Minds? He that, notwithstanding this Doctrine of our Saviour's, dares to set apart Times for the reading the evil and impure Thoughts that are in these Books, does as plainly despise the Doctrine of Christ, as he that murders, despises the Doctrine of the Sixth Commandment.

You will say, perhaps, that you only read these Books now and then, for *Amusement*, and only to *divert* your Spirits, and that most of the Time which you devote to Reading, is spent in reading Books that may improve your Piety. If this be your Case, you can say that for yourself which very few can; for the

Generality of Readers make other Books their chief and most constant Entertainment. But to speak now to your Excuse, you only read such Books now and then, for your Amusement, and to divert your Spirits; that is, you entertain your Mind with *evil* Thoughts, you read, relish, and digest, the *Lewdness*, *Profaneness*, and *Impurity*, of these Books, not with a serious Design of making yourself lewd, profane, and impure, but only as it were in jest, and to have a little Pleasure from them. Now this is the plain Meaning of this Excuse, which is as absurd as anything can well be supposed. It is as if a Man, who allows himself now and then to get *drunk*, and *swear*, and *rant*, should say in his Excuse, that he is for the most part very sober, and that when he takes these Liberties, it is not through any Desire or Liking of the Sin of Drunkenness, but only as it were in jest, and through the mere Gaiety of his Spirits. You will ask, perhaps, if the Sin of reading *Plays* be like the Sin of *Drunkenness*. I answer, very like it, and perhaps equally grievous to the Spirit of God. For is not evil Thoughts, Vanity of Mind, and Impurity of Heart, the most dreadful State that we can be in? Can you therefore imagine that the *feeding* and *entertaining* your Mind with evil Thoughts, and impure Discourses, is a less Sin than *drinking* too much? What Rule of Reason or Scripture have you to go by in such a Judgment? You may fancy that there is something much more gross and shameful in Drunkenness, than in this Practice; but if you would judge not by Fancy, but by the Light of Religion, you would find, that it is a Drunkenness and Intemperance of the Mind, as *gross* and *shameful*, as abominable in the Sight of God, and as contrary to Piety, as that stupid intemperance which consists in drinking too much.

One great Shame of Drunkenness, is this, that it fits us for *Ribaldry*, and all the *Folly* of Discourse; that it makes us say silly Things ourselves, and be pleased with the most *foolish* Rant and *extravagant* Nonsense of other People. Are not you therefore doing that which is most *shameful* in Drunkenness? And is it not a Sign of greater Impurity, and greater Want of Piety, for you *coolly* and *soberly* to seek and relish such *Rant* and *Folly* of Discourse, such profane Jests and Wantonness of Wit, as Men are most pleased with, when Drink has made them *half mad*. Now the liking of such Discourse as this, makes up great Part of the Guilt of Drunkenness, must it not therefore imply a greater Guilt in you, who like such foolish Discourse when you are sober? *Drunken* Men like ill Discourse, because Reason and Religion have then no Power over them; if therefore you have as false a Judgment, and relish a Discourse that is equally

foolish and mad, must it not be owing to the same Thing, because *Reason* and *Religion* have then no Power over you? *Drunken* Men like any sort of Madness; they are not nice in their Taste; if a Discourse be but wild or lewd, they delight in it, but you like only a Madness that is put into *Verse*, you only delight in the impure Descriptions and Ravings of Lust, when they are adorned with *beautiful* Expressions and made *Musical* to the Ear. So that the Difference betwixt you and a *drunken* Man does not consist in this, that you have a more *religious Taste*, or *Purity* of Mind than he; but in this, that he likes *all Sorts* of Rant, and Wantonness of Discourse, but you do not like it, unless it be in *Rhyme*, and divided into *Acts* and *Scenes*. He likes a Song because it is a *Song*, but you do not like it, unless its Impurity and Profaneness be made more Charming by soft and dying Sounds. If therefore a young Lady will go to Bed with her *Play*, she must not reckon herself better Employed, than her Brother who is at the same time *half Mad* over his *Bottle*. For it is impossible to show, that the entertaining ourselves with such *evil* Thoughts and *filthy* Communications is a less Sin, than to be Ranting over a *Bottle*. He that can do this, may also prove, that it is a less Sin to tell a Lie when you are *Sober*, than when you are *Drunk*.

Again, you say in your Excuse, that you only read these Books now and then, to divert your Spirits, and that you mostly read good Books. Now this Excuse carries its own Conviction, for it acknowledges all that is necessary to condemn it. For it owns that these Books are *Vain* and *Corrupting*, that they are of a contrary Nature to good Books, and naturally produce contrary Effects: And you reckon yourself only secure from being hurt by them, for this Reason, because your Mind is so well Seasoned and Strengthened by the Use of good Books. But pray consider the absurdity of all this. For this is saying, I venture into Temptations, not because I cannot avoid them, or am ignorant that they are Temptations, but because I know myself to be *Strong*. I read *impure* Imaginations, *filthy* Jest, and *Profane* Harangues, not because they are an harmless, innocent Diversion, but because the Purity and Piety of my Mind is too great to receive the least Injury from them.

Now nothing can be conceived more Absurd and Irreligious than such an Excuse as this. Yet what Christian who reads *Plays* can possibly make a better. For to say that our *Plays* are not full of *profane Rant*, *filthy Jest* and *gross* Descriptions of Impurity, is the same Thing as to say that we have no *Plays* in English.

Further, there is a proper Time for every Thing that is lawful

to be done: Now can you tell me when it is proper for a Christian to Meditate upon these Books. Is it to be left to your Temper to entertain yourself as it suits with you, or can your Reason point out the convenient Seasons for it? If you are blindly to follow your Temper, then you are in no better State, than other People who are blindly following other Tempers. If your Reason can appoint any Time for such Entertainment, it must be because there is some Time that is proper for it. Now the different Times or States of our Mind may perhaps be all comprehended under some one of these.

There is a Time when our Hearts are more than ordinarily raised towards God, when we feel the Joys and Comforts of Religion, and enjoy a Peace that passes all Understanding. Now I suppose Reason will not allot this Time for the Diversion of such Books.

There is a Time, when either through the Neglect of Duty, Remorse of Mind, worldly Vexations, bodily Tempers, or the Absence of God's Spirit, that we sink into Dejection and Dulness, grow burdensome to ourselves, and can hardly think of anything with Satisfaction. Now if Reason is to judge, this is of all Times the most improper for such Entertainment. For if there is any Time that is more proper than another to think upon God, it is when we are *in Heaviness*.

When we are *Sick*, it is time to apply to the *Physician*, when we are *Weary* it is a proper Time to *Rest*; now there is the same natural Fitness in having recourse to God and Religion, when we are under any dejection of Mind. For it is not more the sole Property of Light to dispel Darkness, than it is the sole Property of Religion to relieve all Uneasiness. *Is anyone Afflicted*, says the Apostle, *let him pray*. Now this we are to look upon, not only as wise Advice of something that is very good to be done in Affliction, but as a strict Command, that leaves us no Choice of doing anything in the stead of it.

It is as absolute a Command, as if he said, *Hath anyone Sinned, let him Repent*. For an Application to God, is as much the one thing to be done in the Hour of Trouble, as Repentance is the one thing to be done in Time of Sin. Our Blessed Saviour saith, *Be of good comfort, I have overcome the World*. He therefore who in the want of Comfort, seeks for it in anything else, but in the Redemption of Christ, in his Conquest over the World, is no more a true Christian, than he who does not believe in Christ.

You seem to make Times of Dulness, the Occasion of your Reading those Books, by saying that you only read them to *divert* your Spirits. So that, that which you take to be a Reason

for reading them, is a strong Objection against it. For it is never so improper to read those Books, as when you want to have your Spirits raised, or your Mind made easy to itself. For it is the highest Abuse you can put upon yourself, to look for Ease and Quiet in anything, but in right Apprehensions of God's Providence. And it is a Sin against the *whole Nature* of Religion, not to make it the whole Measure and Reason of all your Peace and Enjoyment in every Occurrence of Life.

If you must amuse yourself with a Volume of *Plays*, because you are laid up with a *Broken leg*, or have *lost a Friend*, you are as far from Wisdom, as a *Child* who is to be made quiet with a *Rattle*, and not much more Religious than those, who worship *Idols*; for to seek to such things for Relief and Refreshment, is like applying to the Devil in *Distress*. A Man who drinks *Drams* every time he is dull or uneasy, is a *wise, prudent, and sober* Man, if compared to the Christian who in Seasons of Dejection, has recourse to *wanton* Wit and *profane* Rant to divert his Spirits: He destroys the Religion and Purity of his Mind, much more effectually, than the other destroys the Constitution and Health of his Body.

Some People think that in *great Distresses*, it is proper to seek Comfort in God and religious Reflections, but that in the *little Troubles* and Vexations of Life, anything that can divert the Mind from them, is as well. But this is very absurd, for surely if God is our proper and sufficient Comfort in great Distresses, he must also be our *best Relief* in those that are smaller. Unless it can be said, that the Truths of Religion are able to make us bear *Persecution* and *Martyrdom* with content, but not great enough to make us easy in *little Trials*.

Secondly, To seek for Relief in foolish Diversions, is not only applying to a false Remedy, but is also destroying the chief Power of Religion. For as Religion has no Power over us, but as it is our Happiness, so far as we neglect, or refuse to make Use of its Comforts, so far we lessen and destroy its Power over us. For it cannot otherwise be the ordinary daily Care of our Lives, than by being our ordinary Happiness and Consolation in all the Changes and Chances of Life. A Christian therefore is to make his Christianity his Comfort, not only in Times of *great Trial* and Sufferings, but in all the *lesser Vexations* of Life, that by this Means every little Occasion of Grief or Disquiet, may be an Occasion of his being more affected with Religion, and made more sensible of its true Comforts.

Thirdly, Those who are for driving away the ordinary Cares, and *little Vexations*, of human Life, by *Diversions*, don't enough consider the Nature of human Life. For the little ordinary

Troubles of Life, make up the *whole Trouble* of Life, and the Reason why so many People are full of Trouble and Uneasiness, is, because they are unable to bear little ordinary Troubles ; and they are unable to bear them, because they don't use the proper Means. For since every Disquiet is at something or other that concerns our State and Condition, there is no Way of relieving us from this Disquiet, but by getting right Notions of our Condition. If *Children* were capable of knowing themselves, or could be taught the Nature of Things, we should not use such Methods of pleasing them as we do ; but as they cannot think and reflect, we never endeavour to reason them into Content ; but if they have lost one *Plaything*, we only promise them another. The Application is here very easy : For if *Men* will make themselves happy, as *Children* are made happy, not by considering the Nature of Things, but by a *Change of Amusements*, they must also expect to have the Vexations and Torments of *Children*, and be, like them, laughing and crying at they know not what, all the Days of their Life. For *Children* are only easily vexed, because they are easily pleased ; and it is certain, that they who can be pleased with Things without knowing their Worth and Value, must in the same Degree be liable to be displeas'd at Things, without knowing their Weight and Importance. And as this is the true State of Childhood, so whosoever is in this State, whatever his *Age* may be, his *Office* or his *Dignity* in Life, is yet as truly in the State and Folly of Childhood, as he that is but four Years old. Take an Instance or two.

A *Child* whose Heart is half broken at some Misfortune, may perhaps be made easy with a Picture of a *Huntsman* and a *Pack of Hounds* ; but if you would comfort the *Father* who grieves for his eldest Son, the *Hounds* must be all *alive*, they must *cry* and *run*, and follow a *Hare*, and this will make the *Father* as easy, as the *Picture* made the *Child* ; such Happiness will make him bear the Loss of his Son.

A *Mother* comforts her little *Girl* with a *Pack of Cards* that are finely *painted* : By-and-by she wants to be comforted herself, some *great Calamity* has happened to her. Now you must not think to comfort her with *painted Cards*, or building Houses with them, her Grief is too great, and she has been too long a *Mother*, to be pleased with such Things ; it is only *serious Ombre* that can dry her Eyes, and remove Sorrow from her Heart.

I might easily multiply Instances of this kind, but these are sufficient to show us, that Persons of *Age* and *Authority* often differ only from *Children*, as one *Child* may differ from another. This is the true Reason why human Life is so full of Complaint, why it is such a *Mixture* of ridiculous Pleasures, and vain Dis-

quiets; namely, because we live in an entire Ignorance of the Nature of Things, never considering why we are pleased with this, or displeas'd with that, nor any more appeal to Religion to correct our Judgments, than Children appeal to Reason to form their Tempers. For if we will only *play*, or lull ourselves into Repose, as Children are *rocked* to Sleep, it is not to be wonder'd at, if, like them, we *cry* as soon as we are *awake*. For every false Relief that is not founded in Reason, is only adding to the Weakness and Disorder of our Nature, and making us more liable to further Vexations. For it is absolutely certain, that a Person who is made easy by vain and false Satisfactions, is in the same Degree capable of being made uneasy by vain and ridiculous Vexations. They therefore who don't think it necessary to apply to Religion in all the *common* and *ordinary* Disquiets of Life, mistake the Nature of human Life, not considering that it is our applying false Relief to these, that is the Occasion of all our Troubles, and that we are *weak* and *impatient*, *fretful* and *dissatisfied*, for no other Reason, but because we never made use of the right Remedy against the *ordinary Accidents* of Life; for had we but learnt to bear *little Troubles* and Disappointments upon right Reasons, because we are Christians, and Children of God, we should find but few Troubles that would have any great Trial in them. And the Reason why People *seemingly* religious, are subject to the same *Dulness* and *Peevishness*, to the same *Vexations*, and Variety of Grievances, that other People are, is this, because they make no more Use of their Religion on these Occasions, than other People: They don't so much as intend to keep themselves *easy*, *thankful*, and *cheerful*, by making Religion the *Measure* and *Standard* of all their Thoughts and Judgments, in all the common Chances of Life, any more than those do, who have no Thoughts about Religion. And this is the Reason why you see them as ridiculous in common Life, as vainly pleas'd, and as foolishly vexed, as other People.

For Religion makes no further Difference betwixt People, than so far as it is applied. If one Man is constant at *Church*, and another is mostly absent, the Difference betwixt them may yet be only the Difference of frequenting and not frequenting the Service of the Church. For a Religion only carried thus far, makes no further Difference betwixt People. You must not therefore expect that they must be different Persons in the ordinary Behaviour of their common Life, for they may, notwithstanding this Difference, be equally *vain* and *unreasonable* in their Ways, and equally Slaves to the Folly and Humour of their *particular Temper*. And all this for this plain Reason,

because Religion, like anything else, can have no Effect but where it is applied.

Suppose a Person had *lame Feet*, and *bad Eyes*. and that he had an *Oil* that was an infallible Cure for them both, when applied to both; if you saw him only using it for his *Eyes*, you would not wonder that it had not cured his *Feet*; you would know that his anointing his *Eyes*, could only cure his *Eyes*, and that there was no Ground to expect, that his *Feet* should be any better, till he anointed his *Feet*. And all this for this plain Reason, because Things, however good in themselves, can have no further Effect than as they are applied. Now it is just thus in Religion. If it consists only in Devotions and *public Worship*, it has made this Alteration in a Man, that it has taught him to attend to Devotion and public Worship; it has operated so far as he has applied it. But why must you wonder that he is not of a *wise, virtuous*, and *religious* Temper, in all the Actions of his ordinary Life? Is not this wondering why the *Oil* has not cured a Man's *Feet*, when he has never applied it to them, but has only anointed his *Eyes*?

When the regular Churchman as plainly makes Religion the *Measure* of his ordinary Life, as he makes it the *Rule* of his going to *Church*, when he as directly uses it to this Purpose, as a Man anoints his *Eyes*, who would be cured by anointing them; then you will see him as different in his *ordinary Life* from other People, as different in his Pleasures and Grievances, in his Cares and Concerns, as he is different from them in *Forms and Regularity* of Worship. But till Men do this, till they apply the Principles of Religion to all the Actions of *ordinary Life*, till they make it the *Measure* of all their daily Tempers, their Joys and Fears, till they think there is as much Piety in being *wise* and *holy* in their common Tempers, as in being *devout* at Church, as much Sin in being vainly pleased and foolishly vexed, as in neglecting the Divine Service; till they thus directly apply Religion to common Life, as a Man applies a Remedy to the Part that he would have cured, it is no more to be expected, that a Religion of *Forms of Worship* and Devotion, should make a Man religious in the common Judgments and Actions of his ordinary Life, than it is to be expected that an *Oil* which is only applied to our *Eyes*, should cure our *Feet*. So that it is the Manner of our *ordinary Life*, which carries on a Course of Fears and Cares, Pleasures and Amusements, Loves and Hatreds, suitable to our *Tempers and Condition* of Life; it is this Manner of our ordinary Life, which we think is thus left to ourselves, that makes Religion so insignificant in the World; it lies by, like a *Remedy* that is *unapplied*, it has no Effect, because it is used only as a

formal Thing, that has its Devotions and Duties at *set Times* and Occasions; whereas it should be used and considered as the *Rule and Reason* of all our Judgments and Actions, as the *Measure* of all our Cares and Pleasures, as the *Life* of our Life, the Spirit of our Spirit, and the very Form and Essence of all our Tempers. It is to be in us, like a *new Reason* and Judgment of our Minds, that is, to reason and judge of everything that we do, and to preside over, and govern, all the Motions of our Hearts. *Is anyone afflicted, saith the Apostle, let him sing Psalms; is anyone afflicted, let him pray.* This is Religion in the Apostle's Account; it is not only an Attendance at the public Worship, but it is the *ruling Habit* of our Minds, something that constantly devotes us wholly to God, that allows of no Mirth in our common Life, but a Mirth proper for the Brethren of Christ, a Mirth that can express itself by a rejoicing in God; that allows of no other Cure for Grief or Vexation, than what is to be had from Recourse to God. And indeed, what can be more senseless and absurd, than to see a Christian ever acting in any other Consideration than as a Christian? He is senseless to a Degree of Madness, when he indulges a Thought, or a Motion of his Heart, when he either takes a Pleasure, or relieves a Grief, where he cannot say, I do this as a Christian, as suitable to that State in which Christianity has placed me.

We reckon a Man sufficiently *Mad* that fancies himself a *King*, and governing his Subjects, at the same Time that he is tied to a Bed of *Straw*. So that Madness consists in mistaking our Condition, in having a Set of Thoughts not suitable to it. Now a *Christian* repeats every Day, *I believe in the Forgiveness of Sin, the Resurrection of the Body, and the Life Everlasting*, he thanks God for the *Redemption of Jesus Christ, for the Means of Grace, and for the Hope of Glory*. Yet at the same Time, in this State of *Greatness*, he fancies himself in a *thousand Wants and Miseries*. He cries and labours and toils for a Happiness, that has no Existence but in his *own Imagination*; he fancies himself a *Being*, that is to be made happy with *Sauces, and Ragouts, with painted Clothes, and shining Diamonds*; he seeks the Pleasures of *Rakes and Libertines*, is grieved and fretted like a Child at the loss of a *Feather*; and must be diverted as they are, with *Shows and Plays*, and imaginary Scenes of Rant and Nonsense.

Now is not such a one *Mad*? Does he not know as little of his *State*, as the Man in *Straw*, who fancies himself a *King*. But for a Christian in Times of Dulness or Vexation, to seek Relief in foolish Amusements, in the loose, wild Discourses of *Plays*, when he should *acquaint himself with God, and be at Peace*, is a

Degree of Madness that exceeds all others ; it is acting as contrary to the Nature of Things, as if a Man who had lost the Use of his *Limbs*, should choose to comfort his Lameness with *painted Shoes*, when he might have the Use of his Feet restored. For the Consolations of Religion relieve Uneasiness and Trouble, as a *lame* Man is relieved, when his *Limbs* are restored ; they conquer Grief, not by cheating and deluding the Weakness of our Minds, but as the *Resurrection* conquers Death, by restoring us to a new and glorious Life. If you need any further Conviction, that Times of Grief and Uneasiness are highly improper for these *Diversions*, let me desire you to suppose that you knew a Christian, who in his last Hours sent for *Buffoons* and *Jugglers* to divert his Mind from the Apprehensions of *Death*. I daresay you have religious Arguments enough, to prove such a Practice to be stupid and profane in the highest Degree. But perhaps you are not aware, that every Argument against such a Practice as this, concludes as strongly against the same Practice at any other Time of our Life. Try therefore with yourself, if every good Argument against such Folly when we are dying, will not be the same Argument against the same Folly in any other Part of our Life. For every Argument that shows the Impiety and Folly of applying to *foolish Diversions*, when we are under the Troubles of *Death*, will show the same Impiety and Folly of applying to such Relief in any Troubles of Life. For to imagine, that we may be ridiculous and vain, and foolish in the *Troubles* of Life, but serious, holy, and religious in the *Troubles* of Death, is the same Folly and Absurdity, as to suppose, that we must be devout and penitent on our Death-Beds, but need not be devout and penitent in the other Parts of our Life. For as there is no Religion or Repentance on our Death-Bed, but what ought to be the Religion of our Lives ; so is there no Wisdom, or Seriousness, or Application to God in the *Sorrows of Death*, but what is equally necessary and proper in all the *Sorrows of Life*. For we are obliged to live unto God in the same manner that we are to die unto God. For why must I think rightly of Death ? Why must I then apply to God ? Why must I reason and judge rightly at that Time ? Why may I not then divert my Mind with *loose* and *impertinent* Entertainments ? Now give but the true Reason of this, and you will give the Reason why I am always to live in the same manner. For as the Reasons of Wisdom and Holiness are not founded in Death, so do they receive no Alteration by the Approach of Death ; there is no Wisdom and Holiness but what is equally necessary, whether I am twenty *Years* or twenty *Days* from Death. Death may bring me into a greater Fear of Folly, but it does not bring me into a greater

Necessity of avoiding it, than I was in before; because *all the Reasons* of Piety, Wisdom, and Devotion to God, have been *equally Reasons* all my Life; for the Holiness and Wisdom of Persons in Health, is as necessary, and as much the Terms of Acceptance with God, as the Holiness and Wisdom of dying Persons. And he who dares to be Foolish and Vain, and seek impertinent Entertainments, because he is *Strong and in Health*, is governed by the same Spirit, and sins against the same Reasons of Piety, as he who dares to be *vain, foolish*, and impertinent at the Approach of *Death*. When therefore you think fit to amuse yourself with foolish Diversions, and drive away, what you may call, dull Hours, with the impertinent and wild Imaginations of *Plays, &c.*, you must remember, that you are under the same Condemnation as they are, who apply to the same Relief to ease them of the Thoughts of Death. For as we always stand in the same Relation to God, as he is as much the true Happiness of *living*, as of *dying* Men, so Wisdom and Holiness, and right Dispositions of our Minds, are always Duties of the *same Necessity*.

If it were ever lawful to forget our Happiness in God, and seek for a ridiculous Happiness in vain and extravagant Diversions, if it were ever proper to *live* in this Temper, it would be equally proper to *die* in the same Temper. For we are not upon any *new Terms* with God at our Death, nor under any other Obligations, but such as are equally necessary to make us live in his Favour.

We often wonder at the Worldly-mindedness, the Hardness, Impenitence and Insensibility of *dying Men*. But we should do well to remember, that Worldly-mindedness, Folly, Impenitence, Vanity, and Insensibility, are as much to be wondered at in *living, healthful Men*; and that they are the same odious Sins, and as contrary to all Sense and Reason, and make us as unlike to God, at one Time as at another. Either therefore you must say, that *Plays* and such like *Books* are proper Meditations for dying Men, that they keep up a *right Turn* of Mind, and do not render the Soul unacceptable to God, or else you must own that they are also improper at *all other Times*. For any Thing that indulges a State of Mind that is not according to the *Wisdom* and *Holiness* of Religion, is equally unlawful at *all Times*. *Again*, do but consider your own Notions that you have of *Plays*, and you will find, that if you were consistent with yourself, you would never read them. Not only you, but the Generality of Readers, would think it very improper, and contrary to Piety, to read *Plays* on the *Sunday*. Now I would have you ask yourself why it would be so irreligious, to read these Books

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on the *Sunday*? Is it because there is such a *Contrariety* betwixt the Subjects of such Books, and the Design of the *Sunday*? Is it because they are contrary to such Meditations, as we should make on that Day? Is it because they are vain and loose, and profane, full of impure Thoughts and wanton Descriptions? There can be no possible Reason given, why we may not read these Books on the *Sunday*, but because they are thus *contrary* to Piety. Need a Christian therefore have any other Argument to persuade him to refrain from these Books? Is it not a sufficient Proof, that they are never to be read, because they are not to be read when his Mind ought to have a religious Turn? Can these Books be more thoroughly condemned, than by being thought too bad to be opened on the *Sunday*. Or need we only stay till *Monday*, to be *vain* and *foolish*, to put on a *new Temper*, and take delight in such Thoughts and Reflections, as we durst not touch the Day before? If therefore we would be consistent with ourselves, we must either prove that *Plays* and such like *Books* are proper Meditations for pious Christians, fit for the Piety and Devotion of the *Sunday*, or else acknowledge that they are equally unfit for their Entertainment at any other Time: For it is manifestly certain, that we are to indulge *no Temper* of Mind on any Day, that we may not *improve* and *delight* in on the *Sunday*.

For to suppose, that we are to have a *new Heart*, and mind on the *Sunday*, different from that *Taste* and *Temper* which we may indulge all the Week, is the same Folly as to suppose, that we need only be *Christians* on the *Sunday*. The Difference betwixt *Sundays* and other Days, does not consist in any Difference in the *inward State* of our Minds, but in the outward Circumstances of the Day, as a general Rest from our lawful Callings, and a public Celebration of Divine Worship. This is the particular Holiness of the Sunday, which requires a particular Rest from Labour, and Attendance at divine Worship, but requires no particular *inward Holiness* of the Mind, but such as is the necessary Holiness of every Day. So that whatever is *contrary* to that Holiness, Purity, and Wisdom of Mind, which is to be our *Temper* on the Sunday, is as much to be abhorred and avoided all the Week as on the Sunday, because though Sunday differs from other Days in *outward Marks* of Holiness, yet Christians are to be every Day alike as to the *inward State* and Temper of their Minds.

Therefore, though the *Labours* of our ordinary Employment and other Actions are to be forborne on the Sunday, and yet are very Lawful on other Days; yet the Case is very different as to these *Books*, they are *unfit* to be read at any time, for the *same*

Reason that they are not fit to be read on Sundays. And the Reason is this, because though we may do things on the Week-Days, that we ought not to do on the Sunday, yet we must indulge *no Temper*, nor support any *Turn of Mind*, that is contrary to that Purity of Heart and Mind, which we are to aspire after on the Sunday. We may *Labour* on the Week-Days, because Labour is an *external Action*, that is not contrary to any Purity or Holiness of Mind, but we must no more be *covetous* on the Week-Days, than on Sundays, because Covetousness is a *Temper of the Mind*, a wrong *Disposition* of the Heart, that is equally contrary to Religion on *all Days*.

Now reading is not the Labour of our *Hands*, or our *Feet*, but is the Entertainment and Exercise of the *Heart* and *Mind*; a Delight in either good or bad Books, is as truly a *Temper* and *Disposition* of the Heart, as *Covetousness* and *Pride* is a *Disposition* of the Heart. For the same Reason therefore that *Pride* and *Covetousness* are constantly to be avoided on every Day of our Lives, because they are *wrong Tempers* of the Mind, and *contrary* to essential Holiness: For the same Reason is the *Pleasure* of Reading *ill* and *corrupt* Books, always to be avoided at all times, because it is a *Temper* and *Disposition* of our Hearts, that is contrary to that State of Holiness which is essential to Christianity.

If you were to hear a Christian say, that on Sundays he abstained from *evil Speaking*, and *corrupt* Communication, but not on the Week-Days, you would think him either very Ignorant of the Nature of Religion, or very Profane. Yet this is as Wise and Religious, as to forbear reading *ill Books* and *wanton Poems* only on Sundays, and to take the Liberty of Reading them at other times. For that Vanity of Mind, that Foolishness of Heart, that depraved Taste, which can relish the wild Fictions, the lewd Speeches, the profane Language of mad Heroes, disappointed Lovers, raving in all the furious Expressions of Lust and Passion, and Madness, is as *corrupt a Temper*, as contrary to Holiness, and as odious on its own Account, as *evil Speaking* and *Malice*.

When therefore you see a Person reading a *Play*, as soon as he comes from the Sunday's Solemnity of public Service, you abhor his Profaneness, but pray be so just to yourself, so consistent with common Sense, as to think everyone liable to the *same Accusation*, who delights in the same Book on any other Time of the Week; and that the Difference of reading *Plays* on Week-Days and not on Sundays, is only the Difference of *Speaking evil* on Week-Days, and not on Sundays.

From these Reflections, I hope, it sufficiently appears, that

the reading vain and impertinent Books, is no Matter of Indifference, but that it is justly to be reckoned amongst our *greatest Corruptions*, that it is as unlawful, as *Malice* and *evil Speaking*, and is no more to be allowed in any Part of our Life, than *Pride* or *Covetousness*.

Reading, when it is an Exercise of the Mind upon wise and pious Subjects, is, next to *Prayer*, the best Improvement of our Hearts. It enlightens our Minds, collects our Thoughts, calms and allays our Passions, and begets in us wise and pious Resolutions. It is a Labour that has so many Benefits, that does so much Good to our Minds, that it ought never to be employed amiss: It enters so far into our Souls, that it cannot have a little Effect upon us. We commonly say, that a Man is known by his *Companions*; but it is certain, that a Man is much more known by the Books that he converses with. These *Closet-companions* with whom we choose to be alone and in private, are never-failing Proofs of the State and Disposition of our Hearts.

When we are abroad, we must take such as the World gives us, we must be with such People, and hear such Discourse, as the common State of our Life exposes us to. This is what we must bear with, because not altogether to be avoided. And as it is not altogether Matter of Choice, so it is no Proof of what Temper we are of. But if we make our *Closet* an Entertainment of greater Vanity and Impertinence, than any Conversation we can meet with abroad, if *rakish, libertine* Writers are welcome to us in secret, if *Histories* of Scandal and *romantic* Intrigues are to be with us in our private Retirements, this is a plain Discovery of our *Inside*, and is a manifest Proof, that we are as vain, and foolish, and vicious, as the *Authors* that we choose to read. If a *wanton Poem* pleases you, you may fairly reckon yourself in the same State and Condition with him who made it. In like manner, if *Histories* of *Nonsense* and *Folly*, if Compositions of *Intrigue* and *Scandal* suit your Temper, such Books do as truly represent your Nature, as they represent the Nature of their Authors.

Julia has buried her Husband, and married her Daughters, since that she spends her time in reading. She is always reading *foolish* and *unedifying* Books: She tells you every time she sees you, that she is almost at the End of the silliest Book, that ever she read in her Life; that the best of it is, it is very long, and serves to dispose of a good deal of her time. She tells you that all *Romances* are sad Stuff, yet is very impatient till she can get all that she can hear of. *Histories* of *Intrigue* and *Scandal*, are the Books that *Julia* thinks are always too short. If *Julia* were to drink *Drams* in private, and had no Enjoyment of herself without them, she would not tell you this, because she knows it

would be plainly telling you that she was a *poor disordered Sot*. See here therefore the Weakness of *Julia*; she would not be thought to be a *Reprobate*, yet she lets you know that she lives upon *Folly*, and *Scandal*, and *Impertinence*, in her *Closet*, that she cannot be in *private* without them, that they are the only Support of her dull Hours, and yet she does not perceive, that this is as plainly telling you that she is in a *miserable, disordered, reprobate State of Mind*.

To return. It is reckoned very dangerous not to guard our Eyes; but it is much more dangerous not to guard our *Meditations*; because whatever enters that way, enters deeper into our Souls, than anything that only affects our Sight. Reading and Meditation is that to our Souls, which Food and Nourishment is to our Bodies, and becomes a part of us in the same Manner; so that we cannot do ourselves either a *little Good*, or *little Harm*, by the Books that we read.

You perhaps think, that it is a *dull Task* to read only religious and moral Books, but when you have the Spirit of Religion, when you can think of God, as your only Happiness, when you are not afraid of the Joys of Eternity, you will think it a dull Task to read any other Books. Don't fancy therefore that your Heart is right, and that you are well enough affected with Religion, though you had rather read Books upon other Subjects; for it is there that you are to charge your *Dulness*; Religion has no hold of you, the Things of Eternity are not the Concerns of your Mind, it is *dull and tiresome* to you to be *wise* and *pious*, and that makes it a dull Task to read Books that treat only upon such Subjects. When it is the Care of your Soul to be humble, holy, pious, and heavenly-minded, when you know anything of the Guilt and Misery of Sin, or feel a real Desire of Salvation, you will find religious Books to be the greatest Feast and Joy of your Mind.

If you think it dull and tedious to be in wise, prudent, and sober *Company*, it is because you are neither *wise* nor *sober* yourself: So if it is dull and tiresome to you to be often upon Subjects of Piety and Religion, it is as sure a Proof that you are neither *pious* nor *religious*. If therefore you can suppose, that a wise and sober Man may be most delighted with the *Noise* and *Revellings* of Drunkenness, then you may suppose, that it is possible for you to be truly religious, and yet be most pleased with the *Folly* and *Impertinence* of corrupt and unedifying Books. You perhaps will say, that you have so much spare Time for reading, that you think you need not employ it all in reading good Books. It may be so, you may have also more Time than you need devote to Acts and Offices of *Charity*; but

will you thence conclude, that you may at those Times do Things *contrary* to Charity, and indulge yourself in *Spite* and *Mischief*?

If you have every Day more Time than you can employ in Reading, Meditation, and Prayer; if this Time hangs upon your Hands, and cannot be turned to any Advantage, let me desire you to go to *sleep*, or *pick Straws*: For it is much better to do this, than to have recourse to corrupt and impertinent Books. Time lost in *Sleep*, or *picking Straws*, is better lost than in such Exercises of the Mind. Consider further, that *idle* and *spare Time*, is a dangerous State, and calls for great Care and Watchfulness; to have recourse then to evil and impertinent Books, is like inviting the Devil because you are alone. If you could read ill Books when you were in Haste, or in a Hurry of other Matters, it would do you much less Harm, than to read them, because your Time hangs upon your Hands. So that that Season which you take to be an Excuse for such *Reading*, is a stronger Argument against it; because evil Thoughts and vain Subjects have twice the Effect, and make double Impressions, when they are admitted at Times of Leisure and Idleness. Consider again, to what a miserable unchristian State you are reduced, when you are forced to have recourse to foolish Books, to get rid of your Time. Your Fortune perhaps has removed you from the Necessity of labouring for your *Bread*, you have been politely educated in Softness, you have no Trade or Employment to take up your Time, and so are left to be devoured by corrupt Passions and Pleasures. Whilst poor People are at hard Labour, whilst your Servants are drudging in the meanest Offices of Life, you, oppressed with *Idleness* and *Indulgence*, are relieving yourself with *foolish* and *impertinent* Books, feeding and delighting a disordered Mind with *romantic* Nonsense, and *poetic* Follies. If this be the Effect of *Riches* and *Fortune*, only to expose People to the Power of disordered Passions, and give them time to corrupt their Hearts with Madness and Folly, well might our Blessed Lord say, *Woe unto you that are rich!*

When you see a *poor Creature* drudging in the meanest Offices of Life, and glad of the dirtiest Work to get his *Bread*, you are apt to look upon him as a *miserable Wretch*: it raises a *Mixture* of Pity and Contempt in you, and you hardly know, whether you *pity* or *disregard* him most. But remember, that every time you see such a Person, you see a more reasonable Creature than yourself, and one who is much more *nobly employed* than you are. He is acting *conformably* to the State of human Life, and bearing a hard Part with Patience; he is doing a Work, which, mean as it is, will be looked upon as done unto the Lord; whilst you, idling in *Softness* and *Pleasures*, are unable to bear your

Time, unless it be stolen away from you by *foolish, corrupt, and unedifying* Books.

Fancy that you saw a *patient Christian*, old, broken, and crooked, with carrying Burdens all his Life; fancy that you saw another Christian lolling in *State and Softness*, and making every Day a Day of *Vanity and Impertinence*, of *foolish Readings*, and vain Imaginations; which of them do you think is most likely to die into the Hands of good *Angels*, and be carried into *Abraham's Bosom*?

But after all, what a vain Imagination it is, to think that you have any such thing as *spare Time*? Is there any Time for which you are not accountable to God? Is there any Time which God has so left to your own Disposal, that you may sacrifice it to the Indulgence of vain Tempers, and the Corruption of your Heart? You can no more show this, than you can show that all your Time is your own. To talk therefore of *spare Time*, is to talk of *something* that never did nor ever will belong to any Christian. You may have a *spare Time* from this or that *Labour or Necessity*, you may abate, or change any *particular Exercise*, you may leave off this or that Way, you may take this or that Refreshment, you have all these *spare Times* from particular Actions, but you have no *spare Time* that releases you from the Laws of Christianity, or that leaves you at Liberty, not to act by the Principles of Religion and Piety.

You have a *spare Time* to recreate and refresh yourself, but this Time is to be governed by the same Principles of religious Wisdom, as the Time that is spent in Cares and Labours. For your Recreations and Pleasures are only lawful, so far as they are directed by such Wisdom and Piety, as is to direct your Cares and Labours. If therefore the Providence of God has placed you above the Necessity of labouring for your Livelihood, you must not think that you have so much *spare Time* to spend, as you please, but that you are as certainly called to some *other Labour*, as others are called to labour for their *Bread*. Great part of the World is doomed to Labour and Slavery, they have it not in their Power to choose any other Way of Life, and their Labour is therefore an acceptable Service to God, because it is such as their State requires. Happy you, therefore, if you knew your Happiness, who have it in your Power to be always doing the *best Things*, who, free from Labour and Hardships, are at Liberty to choose the *best Ways* of Life, to study all the Arts of *Self-improvement*, to practise all the Ways of doing Good, and to spend your Time in all the noblest Instances of Piety, Humility, Charity, and Devotion! Bless God therefore, not because you have *spare Time*, for that you have none, but that

you have *spare Time* to employ in the best Ways that you can find, that whilst others are oppressed with Burdens, and worn out in Slavery, you have Time, and Leisure, and Retirement, to think and meditate upon the greatest and best of things, to enlighten your Mind, to correct the Disorders of your Hearts, to study the Laws of God, to contemplate the Wonders of his Providence, to convince yourself of the Vanity and Folly of the World, and to comfort and delight your Soul with those great and glorious Things, which God has prepared for those that love him. This is the Happiness of being free from Labour, and Want; not to have *spare Time* to squander away in *Vanity* and *Impertinence*, but to have *spare Time* to spend in the Study of Wisdom, in the Exercise of Devotion, in the Practice of Piety, in all the Ways and Means of doing Good, and exalting our Souls to a State of *Christian Perfection*.

It is a Doctrine of Scripture, and highly agreeable to Reason, *That unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required*. Consider therefore, that a Life of Leisure, and Freedom from Want and Hardships, is *as much* as can well be given you in this World, as it is giving you an Opportunity of living wholly unto God, and making all the Parts of your Life useful to the best Purposes. As sure therefore as it is a State, that has so many Advantages, that furnishes you with so many Means of being eminent in Piety, so sure is it that it is a State from which God expects Fruits that are worthy of it. Had it been your *Lot* to labour in a *Mine*, or serve under some cruel Master, you must have served as unto God, and in so doing, you had finished the Work which God had given you. But as you are free from all these States of Life, you must look upon yourself as God's *Servant*, as called to choose that Way of labouring and spending your Time, which may most promote that which God desires to be most promoted. God has given you Liberty to choose, but it is only that you may have the Blessedness of choosing the *best Ways* of spending your Time. Though therefore you are at Liberty from servile and mean Labour, yet you are under a Necessity of labouring in all good Works, and making all your Time, and Fortune, and Abilities, serviceable to the best Ends of Life. You have no more Time that is your own, than he has who is to live by constant Labour; the only Difference betwixt you and him, is this, that he is to be diligent in a poor slavish Labour, that oppresses the Body, and dulls and dejects the Mind; but you in a *Service that is perfect Freedom*, that renders your Body a *fit Temple* for the Holy Ghost, and fills your Soul with such Light, and Peace, and Joy, as is not to be found in any other Way of Life.

Do you think that a *poor Slave* would displease God by refusing to act in that painful Drudgery that is fallen to his Share? And do you think that God will not be more displeas'd with you, if you refuse to act your *full part* in the best of Labours, or neglect that happy joyful Business of doing Good, which your State of Life has call'd you to? Is it expected that *poor People* should make a right Use of their Condition, and turn all their Labour into a Service unto God? And can you think that you are not oblig'd to make the proper Improvement of your Condition, and turn all your *Rest*, and *Ease*, and *Freedom* from Labour, into a Service unto God? Tell me therefore no more, that you indulge yourself in idle Amusements, in vain, corrupt, and unedifying Books, because you have *spare Time*; for it is absolutely false to say that you have any such thing; it is also saying, that because God has given you *spare Time* from servile Labour, that you may choose the best Ways of Life, devote yourself to the most Divine Exercises, and become eminent and exemplary in all the Instances of a holy and heavenly Life; therefore you presume to throw it away in Idleness and Impertinence.

Chapter XI.

A further Consideration of that Purity and Holiness of Conversation, to which the Necessity of Divine Grace calleth all Christians; wherein is shown, that the Entertainment of the Stage, is a corrupt and sinful Entertainment, contrary to the whole Nature of Christian Piety, and constantly to be avoided by all sincere Christians.

I HAVE shown in the foregoing Chapter, that the reading of *Plays*, or any other Books of that kind, is a dangerous and sinful Entertainment, that corrupts our Hearts, and separates the Holy Spirit from us. You will now perhaps ask me, if it is unlawful for a Christian to go to the *Playhouse*. I answer, that it is absolutely unlawful. As un-

lawful, as for a Christian to be a *Drunkard* or a *Glutton*, or to *Curse* and *Swear*. This I think, after what has been above observed, will be easily proved.

For let us resume the Doctrine of the Apostle, we are absolutely forbid all *corrupt Communication*, and for this important Reason, because it *grieves* and *separates* the Holy Spirit from us. Is it unlawful therefore to have any *corrupt Communication* of our own? And can we think it *lawful* to go to *Places set apart* for that Purpose? To give our Money, and hire Persons to corrupt our Hearts with ill Discourses, and inflame all the disorderly Passions of our Nature? We have the Authority of Scripture to affirm, That *evil Communication corrupts good Manners*; and that *unedifying Discourses grieve the Holy Spirit*. Now the *third* Commandment is not more plain and express against *Swearing*, than this Doctrine is plain and positive against going to the *Playhouse*. If you should see a Person, who acknowledges the *third* Commandment to be a Divine Prohibition against Swearing, yet going to a *House*, and giving his *Money* to Persons, who were there met, to *Curse* and *Swear* in fine Language, and invent *musical Oaths* and *Imprecations*, would you not think him Mad in the highest Degree? Now consider, whether there be a less Degree of Madness in going to the *Playhouse*. You own, that God has called you to a great Purity of Conversation, that you are forbid all *foolish Discourse*, and *filthy Jestings*, as expressly as you are forbid *Swearing*; that you are to let no *corrupt Communication* proceed out of your Mouth, but *such as is good for the Use of edifying*; and yet you go to the *House set apart* for corrupt Communications, you hire Persons to entertain you with all manner of *Ribaldry*, *Profaneness*, *Rant*, and *Impurity* of Discourse; who are to present you with *vile* Thoughts, and *lewd* Imaginations in *fine Language*, and to make *wicked*, *vain*, and *impure* Discourse, more lively and effecting, than you could possibly have it in any ill Company. Now, is not this sinning with as high a Hand, and as grossly offending against the plain Doctrines of Scripture, as if you were to give your *Money* to be entertained with *musical Oaths* and *Curses*? You might reasonably think that *Woman* very ridiculous in her *Piety*, who durst not Swear herself, but should nevertheless frequent *Places* to hear *Oaths*. But you may as justly think her very ridiculous in her *Modesty*, who, though she dares not to say, or look, or do an immodest Thing herself, shall yet give her *Money*, to see *Women* forget the *Modesty* of their Sex, and talk *impudently* in a public *Playhouse*. If the *Playhouse* were filled with *Rakes* and ill *Women*, there would be nothing to be wondered at in such an

Assembly ; for *such Persons* to be delighted with such Entertainments, is as natural, as for any *Animal* to delight in its proper *Element*. But for Persons who profess Purity and Holiness, who would not be suspected of *Inmodesty* or *corrupt Communication*, for them to come under the Roof of a *House devoted* to such ill Purposes, and be pleased Spectators of such Actions and Discourses, as are the Pleasure of the most abandoned Persons, for them to give their Money to be thus entertained, is such a Contradiction to all Piety and common Sense, as cannot be sufficiently exposed.

Again, when you see the *Players* acting with Life and Spirit, Men and Women *equally bold* in all Instances of *Profaneness*, *Passion*, and *Inmodesty*, I dare say, you never suspect any of them to be Persons of *Christian Piety*. You can't even in your Imagination join Piety to such Manners, and such a Way of Life. Your Mind will no more allow you to join Piety with the Behaviour of the *Stage*, than it will allow you to think *two* and *two* to be *ten*. And perhaps you had rather see your Son chained to a *Galley*, or your Daughter driving *Plough*, than getting their Bread on the *Stage*, by administering in so scandalous a Manner to the Vices and corrupt Pleasures of the World. Let this therefore be another Argument to prove the *absolute Unlawfulness* of going to a *Play*. For consider with yourself : is the Business of *Players* so contrary to Piety, so inconsistent with the Spirit and Temper of a true Christian, that it is next to a Contradiction to suppose them united? How then can you take yourself to be *Innocent*, who *delight* in their Sins, and *hire* them to commit them? You may make yourself a Partaker of other Men's Sins, by Negligence, and for want of reprovng them ; but certainly, if you stand by, and assist Men in their evil Actions, if you make their Vices your Pleasure and Entertainment, and pay your Money to be so entertained, you make yourself a Partaker of their Sins in a very high Degree. And consequently it must be as unlawful to go to a *Play*, as it is unlawful to approve, encourage, assist, and reward a Man for *renouncing* a Christian Life. Let therefore every *Man* or *Woman* who goes to a *Play*, ask themselves this Question, Whether it suits with their Religion to act the *Parts* that are there acted? Perhaps they would think this as inconsistent with that Degree of Piety that they profess, as to do the vilest Things. But let them consider, that it must be a wicked and unlawful Pleasure, to delight in any Thing that they dare not do themselves. Let them also consider, that they are really *acting* those Indecencies and Impieties themselves, which they think is the particular Guilt of the *Players*. For a Person may

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very justly be said to do that *himself*, which he *pays* for the doing, and which is done for his Pleasure. You must, therefore, if you would be consistent with yourself, as much abhor the Thoughts of being at a *Play*, as of being a *Player* yourself, for to think that you must forbear the one and not the other, is as absurd, as to suppose, that you must be temperate yourself, but may assist, encourage, and reward other People for their Intemperance. The Business of a *Player*, is profane, wicked, lewd, and immodest, to be any way therefore approving, assisting, or encouraging him in such a Way of Life, is as evidently sinful, as it is sinful to assist and encourage a Man in *stealing*, or any other Wickedness.

To proceed. When I consider *Churches*, and the Matter of *Divine Service*, that it consists of holy Readings, Prayers, and Exhortations to Piety, there is Reason to think, that the House of God, is a natural Means of Promoting Piety, and Religion, and rendering Men devout and sensible of their Duty to God. The very Nature of divine Assemblies thus carried on, has this direct Tendency. I ask you whether this is not very plain, that *Churches* thus employed should have this Effect.

Consider therefore the *Playhouse*, and the Matter of the Entertainment there, as it consists of *Love-intrigues*, *blasphemous Passions*, *profane Discourses*, *lewd Descriptions*, *filthy Jest*s, and all the most extravagant Rant of wanton, vile, profligate Persons of both Sexes, heating and inflaming one another with all the *Wantonness* of Address, the *Immodesty* of Motion, and *Lewdness* of Thought, that Wit can invent; consider, I say, whether it be not plain, that a House so employed, is as certainly serving the Cause of *Immorality* and *Vice*, as the House of God is serving the Cause of *Piety*? For what is there in our *Church-Service*, that shows it to be *useful* to Piety and Holiness, what is there in divine Worship to correct and amend the Heart, but what is directly *contrary* to all that is doing in the *Playhouse*? So that one may with the same Assurance affirm, that the *Playhouse*, not only when some very profane Play is on the *Stage*, but in its *daily*, *common* Entertainment, is as certainly the *House of the Devil*, as the Church is the *House of God*. For though the Devil be not professedly Worshipped by Hymns directed to him, yet most that is there Sung, is to his Service, he is there *obeyed* and *pleased* in as certain a Manner, as God is Worshipped and Honoured in the Church.

You must easily see, that this Charge against the *Playhouse*, is not the Effect of any *particular Temper*, or *Weakness* of Mind, that it is not an *uncertain Conjecture*, or *religious Whimsy*, but is a Judgment founded as plainly in the *Nature* and *Reason* of

Things, as when it is affirmed that the House of God, is of Service to Religion. And he who absolutely condemns the *Playhouse*, as wicked and corrupting, proceeds upon as much Truth and Certainty, as he who absolutely commends the *House of God*, as Holy, and tending to promote Piety.

When therefore anyone pretends to vindicate the *Stage* to you, as a proper Entertainment for holy and religious Persons, you ought to reject the Attempt with as much Abhorrence, as if he should offer to show you, that our *Church-Service* was rightly formed for those Persons to join in, who are *devoted to the Devil*. For to talk of the *Lawfulness* and *Usefulness* of the *Stage*, is fully as absurd, as contrary to the plain Nature of Things, as to talk of the *Unlawfulness* and *Mischief* of the Service of the Church. He therefore who tells you, that you may safely go to the *Playhouse*, as an innocent, useful Entertainment of your Mind, commits the same Offence, against common Sense, as if he should tell you, that it was dangerous to attend at Divine Service, and that its *Prayers* and *Hymns* were great *Pollutions* of the Mind.

For the Matter and Manner of *Stage-entertainments*, is as undeniable a Proof, and as obvious to common Sense, that the House belongs to the Devil, and is the Place of his Honour, as the Matter and Manner of *Church-Service* proves that the Place is appropriated to God.

Observe therefore, that as you do not want the Assistance of anyone, to show you the *Usefulness* and *Advantage* of Divine Service, because the thing is plain, and speaks for itself. So neither, on the other hand, need you anyone to show you the *Unlawfulness* and *Mischief* of the Stage, because there the thing is equally plain, and speaks for itself. So that you are to consider yourself, as having the same Assurance that the *Stage* is wicked, and to be abhorred and avoided by all Christians, as you have that the Service of the Church is Holy, and to be sought after by all Lovers of Holiness. Consider therefore, that your Conduct, with relation to the *Stage*, is not a Matter of *Nicety* or *scrupulous Exactness*, but that you are as certain that you do wrong in as notorious a Manner, when you go to the *Playhouse*, as you are certain that you do right, when you go to *Church*.

Now it is of mighty Use to conceive things in a right Manner, and to see them as they are in their own Nature. While you consider the *Playhouse*, as only a *Place of Diversion*, it may perhaps give no Offence to your Mind: There is nothing *shocking* in the Thought of it; but if you would lay aside this Name of it for awhile, and consider it in its *own Nature*, as it really is,

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you would find that you are as much deceived, if you consider the *Playhouse*, as only a *Place of Diversion*, as you would be, if you considered the House of God only as a *Place of Labour*.

When therefore you are tempted to go to a *Play*, either from your own Inclination, or the Desire of a Friend, fancy that you were asked in plain Terms to go to the Place of the *Devil's Abode*, where he holds his *filthy Court* of evil Spirits; that you were asked to join in an Entertainment, where he was at the *Head* of it, where the whole of it was in order to his Glory, that Men's Hearts and Minds might be separated from God, and plunged into all the Pollutions of Sin and Brutality. Fancy that you were going to a Place that as certainly belongs to the Devil, as the *Heathen Temples* of old, where *Brutes* were Worshipped, where *wanton Hymns* were Sung to *Venus*, and *drunken Songs* to the God of *Wine*. Fancy that you were as certainly going to the Devil's Triumph, as if you were going to those *old Sports*, where People committed Murder, and offered Christians to be devoured by wild Beasts, for the Diversion of Spectators. Now whilst you consider the *Playhouse* in this View, I suppose that you can no more go to a *Play*, than you can expressly renounce your Christianity.

Consider therefore now, that you have not been frightening yourself with *groundless Imaginations*, but that what you have here fancied of the *Playhouse* is as strictly true, as if you had been fancying, that when you go to Church, you go into the House of God, where the heavenly Host attend upon his Service, and that when you there read the Scriptures, and Sing holy Hymns, you join with the Choirs above, and do God's Will on Earth as it is done in Heaven. For observe, I pray you, how justly that Opinion of the *Playhouse* is founded. For, was it a Joy and Delight to the Devil to see *Idols worshipped*, to see Hymns and Adorations offered up to impure and filthy Deities? Were Places and Festivals appointed for such Ends, justly esteemed Places and Festivals devoted to the Devil? Now give the Reason why all this was justly reckoned a Service to the Devil, and you will give as good a Reason, why the *Playhouse* is to be esteemed his *Temple*. For, what though Hymns and Adorations are not offered to impure and filthy Deities, yet if *Impurity* and *Filthiness* is there the *Entertainment*, if immodest Songs, profane Rant, if Lust and Passion entertain the Audience, the Business is the same, and the Assembly does the *same Honour* to the Devil, though they are not gathered together in the Name of some *Heathen God*.

For Impurity and Profaneness in the Worshipers of the true

God, is as acceptable a Service to the Devil, as Impurity and Profaneness in any Idolaters, and perhaps a *lewd Song* in an Assembly of Christians gives him greater Delight, than if it had been sung in a Congregation of *Heathens*.

If therefore we may justly say, that a *House* or *Festival* was the Devil's, because he was *delighted* with it, because what was there done, was an *acceptable Service* to him, we may be assured that the *Playhouse*, is as really the House of the Devil, as any other House ever was. Nay, it is reasonable to think that the *Playhouses* in this Kingdom, are a greater Pleasure to him than any *Temple* he ever had in the *Heathen World*. For as it is a greater Conquest to make the Disciples of Christ delight in *Lewdness* and *Profaneness*, than ignorant Heathens, so a *House*, that in the Midst of *Christian Churches*, trains up Christians in *Lewdness* and *Profaneness*, that makes the Worshippers of Christ flock together in Crowds to rejoice in an Entertainment, that is as contrary to the Spirit of Christ, as *Hell* is contrary to *Heaven*, a House so employed, may justly be reckoned a more delightful Habitation of the Devil, than any *Temple* in the Heathen World. When therefore you go to the *Playhouse*, you have as much Assurance, that you go to the Devil's peculiar Habitation, that you submit to his Designs, and rejoice in his Diversions (which are his best Devices against Christianity), you have as much Assurance of this, as that they who worshipped filthy Deities, were in reality Worshippers of the Devil.

Again, Consider those *old Sports* and *Diversions*, where Christians were sometimes thrown to wild Beasts, consider why such Sports might well be looked upon as the *Devil's Triumph*. I suppose you are at no stand with yourself, whether you should impute such Entertainments to the Devil. Consider, therefore, why you should not as readily allow the *Stage* to be his Entertainment.

For were it a Delight to the Devil to see Heathens sporting with the bodily Death of Christians? And must it not be a greater Delight to him to see Christians sporting themselves in the Death of their Souls?

The Heathens could only kill the Body, and separate it from the Soul, but these Christian-Diversions murder the Soul, and separate it from God. I daresay, no Arguments could convince you, that it was *lawful* to rejoice at those Sports, which were thus defiled with human Blood; but then pray remember, that if the Death of the Soul be as great a Cruelty, as the Death of the Body, if it be as dreadful for a Soul to be separated from God, as to be separated from the Body, you ought to think it as entirely unlawful to enter that House where so many eternal

Lives are sacrificed, or ever to partake of those Diversions which separate such Numbers of Souls from God.

Hence it appears, that if instead of considering the *Playhouse*, as only a Place of Diversion, you will but examine what Materials it is made of, if you will but consider the Nature of the Entertainment, and what is there doing, you will find it as wicked a Place, as sinful a Diversion, and as truly the peculiar Pleasure and Triumph of the Devil, as any wicked Place, or sinful Diversion, in the Heathen World. When therefore you are asked to go to a *Play*, don't think that you are asked only to go to a *Diversion*, but be assured that you are asked to *yield* to the Devil, to go over to his *Party*, and to make one of his Congregation; that if you do go, you have not only the Guilt of *buying* so much vain and corrupt Communication, but are also as certainly guilty of going to the Devil's House, and doing him the same Honour, as if you were to partake of some *Heathen Festival*.

You must consider, that all the Laughter there, is not only vain and foolish, but that it is a Laughter amongst Devils, that you are upon *profane Ground*, and hearing Music in the very Porch of Hell.

Thus it is in the Reason of the Thing, and if we should now consider the State of our *Playhouse* as it is in Fact, we should find it answering all these Characters, and producing Effects suitable to its Nature: But I shall forbear this Consideration, it being as unnecessary to tell the Reader that our *Playhouse* is in Fact the *Sink of Corruption and Debauchery*, that it is the general Rendezvous of the most profligate Persons of both Sexes, that it corrupts the Air, and turns the adjacent Places into public Nuisances; this is as unnecessary, as to tell him, that the *Exchange* is a Place of *Merchandise*.

Now it is to be observed, that this is not the State of the *Playhouse*, through any accidental Abuse, as any innocent or good Thing may be abused; but that Corruption and Debauchery are the truly natural and genuine Effects of the *Stage-Entertainment*. Let not therefore anyone say, that he is not answerable for those Vices and Debaucheries, which are occasioned by the *Playhouse*, for so far as he partakes of the Pleasure of the *Stage*, and is an Encourager of it, so far he is chargeable with those Disorders which necessarily are occasioned by it. If Evil arises from our doing our Duty, or our Attendance at any *good Design*, we are not to be frightened at it; but if Evil arises from anything as its *natural* and *genuine* Effect, in all such Cases, so far as we contribute to the Cause, so far we make ourselves guilty of the Effects. So that all who any way assist the *Play-*

house, or ever encourage it by their Presence, make themselves chargeable in some Degree, with all the Evils and Vices which follow from it. Since therefore it cannot be doubted by any one, whether the *Playhouse* be a Nursery of Vice and Debauchery, since the evil Effects it has upon People's Manners, is as visible as the Sun at Noon, one would imagine, that all People of Virtue and Modesty, should not only avoid it, but avoid it with the utmost Abhorrence ; that they should be so far from entering into it, that they should detest the very Sight of it. For what a Contradiction is it to common Sense, to hear a Woman lamenting the miserable Lewdness and Debauchery of the Age, the vicious Taste, and irregular Pleasures of the World, and at the same time dressing herself to meet the lewdest Part of the World, at the Fountain-Head of all Lewdness, and making herself one of that Crowd, where every abandoned Wretch is glad to be present? She may fancy that she hates and abominates their Vices, but she may depend upon it, that till she hates and abominates the Place of vicious Pleasures, till she dare not come near an Entertainment which is the Cause of so great Debauchery, and the Pleasure of the most debauched People, till she is thus disposed, she wants the truest Sign of a real and religious Abhorrence of the Vices of the Age.

For to waive all other Considerations, I would only ask her a Question or two on the single Article of *Modesty*. What is Modesty? Is it a little *mechanical outside* Behaviour, that goes no further than a few *Forms and Modes* at particular Times and Places? Or is it a *real Temper*, a rational Disposition of the Heart, that is founded in *Religion*? Now if Modesty is only a mechanical Observance of a little outside Behaviour, then I can easily perceive how a modest Woman may frequent *Plays*; there is no Inconsistency for such a one to be one Thing in one Place, and another in another Place, to disdain an immodest Conversation, and yet at the same time, relish and delight in immodest and impudent Speeches in a public *Playhouse*. But if Modesty is a *real Temper* and Disposition of the Heart, that is founded in the Principles of Religion, then I confess, I cannot comprehend how a Person of such Modesty, should ever come twice into a *Playhouse*. For it is Reason and Religion that has inspired her with a modest Heart, that makes her careful of her Behaviour, that makes her hate and abhor every Word, or Look, or Hint, in Conversation, that has the Appearance of Lewdness, that makes her shun the Company of such as talk with too much Freedom ; if she is thus modest in *common Life*, from a Principle of Religion, a Temper of Heart, is it possible for such a one (I don't say to seek) but to bear

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with the Immodesty and Impudence of the *Stage*? For must not Immodesty and Impudence, must not loose and wanton Discourse be the same *hateful Things*, and give the same Offence to a modest Mind, in one Place, as in another? And must not that Place, which is the Seat of Immodesty, where Men and Women are trained up in Lewdness, where almost every Day in the Year, is a Day devoted to the foolish Representations of *Rant, Lust, and Passion*; must not such a Place, of all others, be the most odious, to a Mind that is *truly modest* upon Principles of *Reason and Religion*? One would suppose, that such a Person should as much abominate the Place, as any other filthy Sight, and be as much offended with an Invitation to it, as if she were invited to see an immodest Picture. For the Representations of the *Stage*, the inflamed Passions of Lovers there described, are as gross an Offence to the Ear, as any Representation that can offend the Eye.

It ought not to be concluded, that because I affirm the *Playhouse* to be an Entertainment *contrary* to Modesty, that therefore I accuse all People as void of Modesty, who ever go to it. I might affirm, that *Transubstantiation* is contrary to all *Sense and Reason*; but then it would be a wrong Conclusion to say, that I affirmed that all who believe it are void of all Sense and Reason. Now as *Prejudices*, the Force of *Education*, the Authority of *Numbers*, the Way of the *World*, the Example of *great Names*, may make People *believe*, so the same Causes may make People *act* against *all Sense and Reason*, and be guilty of Practices which no more suit with the *Purity* of their Religion, than *Transubstantiation* agrees with *common Sense*.

To proceed. I once heard a young Lady thus excusing herself for going to the *Playhouse*, that she went but seldom, and then in Company of her *Mother* and her *Aunt*, that they always knew their *Play* beforehand, and never went on the *Sacrament Week*. And what Harm, pray, says she, can there be in this? It breaks in upon no Rules of my Life, I neglect no part of my Duty, I go to *Church*, and perform the same Devotions at Home, as on other Days. It ought to be observed, that this Excuse can only be allowed where the *Diversion* itself is *innocent*; it must therefore be first considered, what the Entertainment is in itself, whether it be suitable to the Spirit and Temper of Religion; for if it is right and proper in itself, it needs no Excuse; but if it be *wrong*, and *dangerous* to Religion, we are not to use it *cautiously*, but to avoid it *constantly*.

Secondly, It is no Proof of the Innocency of a Thing, that it does not interfere with our *Hours of Duty*, nor break the Regularity of our Lives, for very wicked Ways of spending Time,

may yet be consistent with a regular Distribution of our Hours. She must therefore consider, not only whether such a Diversion hinders the Regularity of her Life, or breaks in upon her Devotions, public or private, but whether it hinders or any way affects that *Spirit and Temper*, which all her Devotions aspire after. Is it conformable to that Heavenly Affection, that Love of God, that Purity of Heart, that Wisdom of Mind, that Perfection of Holiness, that Contempt of the World, that Watchfulness and Self-denial, that Humility and Fear of Sin? Is it conformable to these Graces, which are to be the *daily Subject* of all her Prayers? This is the only way for her to know the *Innocency* of going to a *Play*. If what she there hears and sees, has no *Contrariety* to any *Graces* or *Virtues* which she prays for, if all that there passes be fit for the *Purity* and *Piety* of one who is led by the Spirit of Christ, and is working out her Salvation *with Fear and Trembling*, if the *Stage* be an Entertainment, that may be thought according to the Will of God, then she disposes of an Hour very innocently, though her *Mother* or her *Aunt* were not with her. But if the contrary to all this be true, if most of what she there hears and sees, be as *contrary* to the *Piety* and *Purity* of Christianity, as *Feasting* is contrary to *Fasting*; if the House which she supports by her Money, and encourages by her Presence, be a notorious Means of Corruption, visibly carrying on the Cause of Vice and Debauchery, she must not then think herself excused for being with her *Mother*.

Thirdly, The same Person would perhaps think it strange to hear one of her virtuous Acquaintance, giving the like excuse for going now and then to a *Masquerade*.

Now this Diversion is new in our Country, and therefore People judge of it in the manner that they should, because they are not blinded by *Use and Custom*; but let anyone give but the true Reasons why a Person of Virtue and Piety should not give into such Entertainments, and the same Reasons will show, that a Person of strict Piety, should keep at as great a Distance from the *Playhouse*. For the Entertainment of the *Stage* is as directly opposite to the *Purity* of Religion, and is as much the *natural Means* of Corruption, and serves all bad Ends in as high a Manner as *Masquerades*, they only differ, as bad Things of the same kind may differ from one another. So that if the evil Use, the ill Consequences of *Masquerades*, be a sufficient Reason to deter People of Piety, from partaking of them, the same evil Use and ill Consequences of the *Stage*, ought to keep all People of Virtue from it. If People will consult their *Temper* only, they may take the Entertainment of one, and condemn the other, as

following the same Guide, they may abhor *Intemperance*, and indulge *Malice*, but if they will consult Religion, and make that the Ground of their Opinions, they would find as strong Reasons for a constant Abhorrence of the *Stage*, as of *Masquerades*.

Further, she that is for going only to the *Playhouse* now and then, with this Care and Discretion, does not seem to have enough considered the Matter, or to act by Reason, for if the *Stage* be an innocent and proper Entertainment, if in its own Nature it be as harmless and useful, as *walking, riding, taking the Air, or conversing* with virtuous People, if this be the Nature of it, then there is no need of this Care and Abstinence, a virtuous Lady need not excuse herself, that she goes but very seldom. But if it be the very Reverse of all this, if it be that Fountain of Corruption and Debauchery, which has been observed, then to go to it at any Time admits of no excuse, but is as absurd, as contrary to Reason and Religion, as to do any other ill Thing with the same Care and Discretion. If you should hear a Person excusing her Use of *Paint* in this manner, that truly she painted but *very seldom*, that she always said her Prayers first, that she never used it on *Sundays*, or the Week before the *Communion*, would you not pity such a *Mixture* of Religion and Weakness? Would you not desire her to use her Reason, and either allow *painting* to be an innocent Ornament, suitable to the *Sobriety* and *Humility* of a Christian, or else to think it as unlawful at one time as at another? Would you not think it strange that she should condemn *painting* as odious and sinful, and yet think, that the Regularity of her Life, the Exactness of her Devotions, and her Observance of Religion, might make it lawful for her to *paint now and then*? I don't doubt, but you plainly see the Weakness and Folly of such a Pretence for *painting* under such Rules at certain Times. And if you would but as impartially consider your Pretences for going sometimes to the *Playhouse*, you would certainly find them equally Weak and Unreasonable. For *Painting* may with more Reason be reckoned an *innocent Ornament*, than the *Playhouse* an innocent Diversion; and it supposes a greater Vanity of Mind, a more perverted Judgment, and a deeper Corruption of Heart, to seek the Diversion of the *Stage*, than to take the Pleasure of a *borrowed Colour*.

I know you are offended at this *Comparison*, because you judge by your *Temper* and *Prejudices*, and don't consider the Things, as they are in themselves, by the pure Light of Reason and Religion. *Painting* has not been the Way of your *Family*, it is supposed to be the Practice but of *very few*, and those who use it, endeavour to *conceal* it, this makes you readily condemn it;

On the contrary, your *Mother* and your *Aunt* carry you to a *Play*, you see *virtuous* People there, and the same Persons that fill our *Churches*, so that your *Temper* is as much engaged to think it lawful to go sometimes to a *Play*, as it is engaged to think the Use of *Paint* odious and sinful. Lay aside therefore these Prejudices for a while, fancy that you had been trained up in some Corner of the World, in the Principles of Christianity, and had never heard either of the *Playhouse* or *Painting*. Imagine now that you were to examine the Lawfulness of them by the Doctrines of Scripture. You would first desire to be told the Nature of these Things, and what they meant. They would tell you that *painting* was the borrowing of *Colours* from Art, to make the Face look more beautiful. Now though you found no express Text of Scripture against *painting*, you would find, that it was expressly against *Tempers* required in Scripture; you would therefore condemn it, as proceeding from a *Vanity* of Mind, a *Fondness* of Beauty; you would see that the Harm of *painting* consisted in this, that it proceeded from a *Temper* of Mind, contrary to the *Sobriety* and *Humility* of a Christian, which indeed is harm enough, because this Humility and Sobriety of Mind is as *essential* to Religion, as Charity and Devotion. So that in judging according to Scripture, you would hold it as unreasonable to *paint sometimes*, as to be sometimes *malicious, indevout, proud, or false*.

You are now to consider the *Stage*, you are to keep close to Scripture, and fancy that you yet know nothing of *Plays*. You ask therefore first what the *Stage* or *Playhouse* is. You are told that it is a *Place* where all Sorts of People meet to be entertained with *Discourses*, *Actions*, and *Representations*, which are recommended to the Heart, by beautiful Scenes, the Splendour of Lights, and the Harmony of Music. You are told, that these Discourses are the Inventions of Men of Wit and Imagination, which describe imaginary *Intrigues* and *Scenes of Love*, and introduce *Men* and *Women* discoursing, raving, and acting in all the wild, indecent Transports of *Lust* and *Passion*. You are told that the Diversion partly consists of *lewd* and *Profane* Songs, sung to fine Music, and partly of extravagant Dialogues between *immodest Persons*, talking in a Style of *Love* and *Madness*, that is nowhere else to be found, and entertaining the *Christian Audience*, with all the Violence of Passion, Corruption of Heart, Wantonness of Mind, Immodesty of Thought, and profane Jests, that the Wit of the *Poet* is able to invent. You are told, that the *Players*, Men and Women, are trained up to act and represent all the Descriptions of Lust and Passion in the *liveliest Manner*, to add a Lewdness of Action to lewd

Speeches ; that they get their Livelihood, by *Cursing, Swearing, and Ranting*, for three Hours together to an Assembly of *Christians*.

Now though you find no particular Text of Scripture condemning the *Stage*, or *Tragedy*, or *Comedy*, in express Words, yet, what is much more, you find that such Entertainments are a gross Contradiction to the *whole Nature* of Religion. They are not contrary to this or that particular Temper, but are contrary to that *whole Turn* of Heart and Mind which Religion requires. *Painting* is contrary to *Humility*, and therefore is always to be avoided as sinful. But the Entertainment of the *Stage*, as it consists of *blasphemous* Expressions, *wicked* Speeches, *Swearing, Cursing, and Profaning* the Name of God, as it abounds with *impious* Rant, *filthy* Jests, *distracted* Passions, gross Descriptions of *Lust*, and *wanton* Songs, is a *contradiction to every Doctrine* that our Saviour and his Apostles have taught us. So that to abhor *Painting* at all Times, because it supposes a Vanity of Mind, and is contrary to *Humility*, and yet think there is a lawful Time to go to the *Playhouse*, is as contrary to common Sense, as if a Man should hold that it was lawful sometimes to offend against *all the Doctrines* of Religion, and yet always unlawful to offend against *any one* Doctrine of Religion.

If therefore you were to come (as I supposed) from some Corner of the World, where you had been used to live and judge by the Rules of Religion, and upon your arrival here, had been told what *Painting*, and the *Stage* was ; as you would not expect to see Persons of *religious Humility* carrying their Daughters to *Paint-shops*, or inviting their *pious Friends* to go along with them, so much less would you expect to hear, that *devout, pious* and *modest* Women carried their Daughters, and invited their virtuous Friends to meet them at the *Play*. Least of all could you imagine, that there were any People *too pious* and *devout* to indulge the Vanity of *Painting*, and yet not devout or pious enough to *abhor* the Immodesty, Profaneness, Ribaldry, Immorality, and Blasphemy of the *Stage*.

To proceed. A *polite Writer** of a late Paper thought he had sufficiently ridiculed a certain Lady's Pretension to *Piety*, when speaking of her *Closet*, he says :

*Together lie her Prayer-book and Paint,
At once t' improve the Sinner and the Saint.*

Now whence comes it that this *Writer* judges so rightly, and speaks the Truth so plainly in the Matter of *Painting*? Whence

* *Spectator*, No, 79.

comes it that the generality of his Readers, think his Observation just, and join with him in it? It is because *Painting* is not yet an *acknowledged Practice*, but is for the most Part reckoned a *shameful Instance* of Vanity. Now as we are not prejudiced in Favour of this Practice, and have no Excuses to make for our *own Share* in it, so we judge of it impartially, and immediately perceive its Contrariety to a religious Temper and State of Mind. This *Writer* saw this in so strong a Light, that he does not scruple to suppose, that *Paint* is as natural and proper a Means to improve the *Sinner*, as the Prayer-book is to improve the *Saint*.

I should therefore hope, that it need not be imputed to any *Sourness* of Temper, religious *Weakness* or *Dulness* of Spirits, if a *Clergyman* should imagine, that the Profaneness, Debauchery, Lewdness, and Blasphemy of the *Stage*, is as natural a Means to improve the *Sinner*, as a *Bottle of Paint*; or if he should venture to show, that the *Church* and the *Playhouse* are as ridiculous a Contradiction, and do no more suit with the *same* Person, than the *Prayer-book* and *Paint*.

Again, Suppose you were told that the *holy Angels* delight in the Repentance and Devotion of Christians, that they attend at God's *Altar*, and rejoice in the Prayers and Praises, which are there offered unto God; I imagine you could easily believe it, you could think it very agreeable to the Nature of such good Beings, to see *fallen Spirits* returning unto God. Suppose you were told also, that these same heavenly Beings delighted to be with Men in their *Drunkenness*, *Revellings*, and *Debaucheries*, and were as much pleased with their Vices and Corruptions, as with their Devotions, you would know, that both these Accounts could not possibly be true; you could no more doubt in your Mind, whether *good Angels* that delight in the Conversion and Devotion of Christians, do also delight in their Vices and Follies, than you can doubt, whether the same Person can be *alive* and *dead* at the same time. You would be sure, that in Proportion as they delighted in the *Piety* and *Holiness* of Men, they must necessarily in the same Degree abhor and dislike their *Vices* and *Corruptions*. So that, supposing the Matter of our *Church-Service*, the Excellency of its Devotions, its heavenly Petitions, its lofty Hymns, its solemn Praises of the most High God, be such a glorious Service as invites and procures the Attendance of that *blessed* Choir, if this be true, I suppose you are as certain as you can be of the plainest Truth, that the *Filthiness*, the *Rant*, *Ribaldry*, *Profaneness*, and *Impiety* of the *Stage*, must be the Hatred and Aversion of those *good Spirits*. You are sure, that it is as impossible for them to behold the *Stage* with Pleasure, as to look upon the *Holy Altar* with Abhorrence.

Consider a while on this Matter, and think how it can be lawful for you to go to a *Place*, where if a *good Angel* was to look with Pleasure, it would cease to be good? For as that which makes Angels good, is the same *right Temper* which makes you good, so the same Tempers which would render Angels evil, must also render you evil. You may perhaps tell me, that you are not an *Angel*. I grant it, neither are you Jesus Christ, neither are you God, yet you are called to be *Holy* as Jesus Christ was *Holy*, and to be *Perfect as your Father which is in Heaven is Perfect*. Though you are not an *Angel*, yet it is Part of your glorious Hope, that you shall be *as the Angels of God*, so that as you are capable of their Happiness, you must think yourself obliged to be as like them in your Temper, as the Infirmary of your present State will permit. If *Angels* are to rejoice in singing the Praises of God, though their Joy may exceed yours, yet you are as much obliged to your Degree of Joy in this Duty, as they are. Angels by the Light and Strength of their Nature, may abhor all manner of Sin with stronger Aversion, a higher Degree of Abhorrence, yet you are as much obliged to abhor all manner of Sin, as they are. So that it is no more lawful for you to delight in impure, profane Diversions, which *good Angels* abhor, than it is lawful for you to hate those *Praises* and *Adorations* which are their Delight.

You are to consider also, that these *contradictory Tempers* are no more possible in the *same Men*, than in the *same Angels*; 'tis no more possible for your Heart truly to delight in the Service of the Church, to be in earnest in all its Devotions, and at the same time delight in the Entertainment of the *Stage*, than it is possible for an *Angel* to delight in them both.

You may fancy that you relish these Entertainments, and at the same time relish and delight in the Service of God, and are very hearty in your Devotions; you may fancy this, as *cruel Men* may fancy themselves to be *merciful*, the *covetous* and *proud* may fancy themselves to be *humble* and *heavenly-minded*; but then take Notice, that it is all but mere Fancy: For it is as impossible to be really devout with your Reason and Understanding, and at the same time delight in the Entertainment of the *Stage*, as 'tis impossible to be really *charitable*, and delighting in *Malice* at the same time. There is indeed a *Falseness* in our Hearts, a *Mechanism* in our Constitution, which will deceive those, who do not constantly *suspect* themselves. There are *Forms of Devotion*, little Rules of Religion, which are fixed in us by *Education*, which we can no more part with, than we can part with any other Customs, which we have long used. Now this makes many People think themselves mighty pious, because they find

it is not in their Nature to forbear or neglect such and such *Forms of Piety*; they fancy that Religion must have its Seat in their Heart, because their Heart is so unalterable in *certain Rules* of Religion. Thus a Person who is exact in his Times of Prayer, will perhaps think himself much injured, if you were to tell him that it is his *want of Piety*, that makes him relish the Diversion of the *Stage*: His Heart immediately justifies him against such an Accusation, and tells him how constant he is in his Devotions; whereas it is very possible, that he may have but little more Piety, than what consists in some *Rules and Forms*, and that his Constancy to such Rules, may be owing to the same Cause, which makes others constantly *sleepy* at such an Hour, that is, the mere *Mechanism* of his Constitution, and the Force of *Custom*. This is the State of Numbers of People, otherwise it would not be so common, to see the same People constant and unalterable in *some Rules* of Religion, and as constant and unalterable in *Pride, Passion, and Vanity*.

Again, there are many other Instances of a false Piety: Some People feel themselves capable of *religious Fervours*, they have their Passions frequently affected with *religious Subjects*, who from thence imagine, that their Hearts are in a true State of Religion. But such a Conclusion is very deceitful. For the mere *Mechanism* and natural Temper of our Bodies, and our present Condition, may be the chief Foundation of all this. Thus a *Lady* may find herself, as she thinks, *warm* in her Devotions, and praise God at *Church* with a Sense of Joy; she thinks she is very good because she finds herself thus *affected* and *pleased* with the Service of the *Church*; whereas it may be, the very Reason why she is more than ordinarily devout, and thinks it a Pleasure to praise God, is, because she is going to a *Ball*, or a *Play*, as soon as Divine Service is over. This agreeable Expectation has so put her Spirits in Order, that she can be very *thankful* to God all the time she is at *Church*.

Another has been pleased with the Compliments paid to her Person, she finds herself very *finely dressed*, she is full of Joy under *such Thoughts*, and so can easily break out into *Fervours of Devotion*, and rejoice in God at a Time, when she can rejoice in *anything*. These frequent Starts of Devotion, make her think herself to be far advanced in Piety, and she does not perceive that the *Height* of her Devotion, is owing to the *Height* of her Vanity. Let her but be *less pleased* with herself, let her be *unregarded, undressed*, without such *pleasing Reflections*, and she will find herself sunk into a strange *Dulness* towards Devotion.

The same Temper is very frequent in *common Life*; you meet a Person who is very fond of you, full of Affection, and pleased

with everything you say or do ; you must not imagine that he has more *Friendship* for you, than when he saw you last, and hardly took any Notice of you : The Matter is only this, the Man is in a *State of Joy* at something or other, he is pleased with *himself*, and so is easily pleased with you, stay but till this *flow of Spirits* is gone off, and he will show you no more Affection, than he used to do. This is the Religion of *Numbers* of People ; they are devout by *Fits* and *Starts*, in the same Manner as they are pleased by *Fits* and *Starts*, and their Devotion at those very Times is no more a Sign of true *Piety*, than the Civility and Compliments of a Person *overjoyed*, are Signs of true *Friendship*. But still these little Flashes of Devotion make People think themselves in a State of Religion.

Take another instance of a false Piety of another kind : *Junius* has been orthodox in his Faith, a Lover of Churchmen, a Hater of Heretics, these several Years ; he is the first who is sorry for a *dangerous Book* that is come out, he is amazed what People would be at by such Writings, but thanks God there is Learning enough in the World to confute them. He reads all the Confutations of *Atheists*, *Deists*, and *Heretics*, there is only one sort of Books, for which *Junius* has no Taste, and that is, Books of *Devotion*. He freely owns that they are not for his Taste, he does not *understand their Flights*.

If another Person were to say so much, it would be imputed to his want of Piety : but because *Junius* is known to be an Enemy to Irreligion, because he is constantly at Church, you suppose him to be a pious Man, though he thus confesses that he wants the *Spirit of Piety*. It is in the same Manner that *Junius* deceives himself, his Heart permits him to neglect Books of Devotion, because his Heart is constantly showing him his *Zeal* for Religion, and *Honour* for the Church ; this makes him no more suspect himself to want any Degrees of Piety, than he suspects himself to be a Favourer of *Heresy*. If he never thinks any ill of himself, if he never suspects any Falseness in his own Heart, if he is prejudiced in favour of all his own Ways, it is because he is prejudiced in favour of all *orthodox Men*. *Junius* reads much Controversy, yet he does not take it ill, that you pretend to inform him in Matters of *Controversy* ; on the contrary, he never reads Books of Devotion, yet is angry if you pretend to correct him in Matters of that kind. You may suppose him mistaken in something that he is always studying, and he will be thankful to you for setting him right ; but if you suppose him mistaken in Things that he never applies himself to, if you suppose that any Body knows what *Humility*, *Heavenly-mindedness*, *Devotion*, *Self-denial*, *Mortification*, *Repentance*, *Charity*, or

the *Love* of God is, better than he, you provoke his Temper, and he won't suffer himself to be informed by you. *Great Numbers* of People are like *Junius* in this Respect, they think they are very religious by listening to Instruction upon *certain Points*, by reading *certain Books*, and being ready to receive further Light, who yet can't bear to be instructed in Matters where they are most likely to be deceived, and where the Deceit is of the utmost Danger. They will be thankful for your telling them the particular Times in which the *Gospels* were written, for explaining the Word *Euroclydon*, or *Anathema Maranatha*, they will be glad of such useful Instruction, but if you touch upon such Subjects as really concern them in a high Degree, such as try the *State* and *Way* of their Lives, these religious People, who are so fond of religious Truths, cannot bear to be thus instructed.

What is the Reason that when we consult *Lawyers*, it is not to hear Harangues upon the *Law*, or its several *Courts*; it is not to hear the Variety of Cases that concern other People, but it is to be instructed and assisted in our *own Case*? Why do we thank them for dealing impartially with us, for searching and examining into the true State of our *Case*, and informing us of every Thing that concerns us? What is the Reason that we apply to *Physicians*, not to hear the Rise and Progress of *Physic*, or the History of Disputes amongst them, not to hear of other People's Distempers, but to tell them our own *particular State*, and learn the *Cure* of our own Distempers? Why do we thank them for being *nicely exact* in searching us out, for examining into every Part of our Lives, our Ways of *eating, drinking, and sleeping*, and not suffering us to deceive ourselves with wrong Opinions and Practices? What is the Reason why we act thus consistently, and in the same Manner, in both these Instances? Now the only Reason is this, because in both these Instances we are *really in earnest*. When you are in earnest in your Religion, you will act as consistently and in the same Manner there. When you desire *solid Piety*, as you desire *sound Health*, your chief Concern will be about your *own Disorders*; you will thank *Divines* and *Casuists* for making you their chief Care, you will be glad to have them examine and search into your Ways of Life, to be rightly informed of the Follies, Vanities, and Dangers, of your State. You will be glad to read those Books, and consult those *Casuists*, which are most *exact* and *faithful* in discovering your Faults, who question and examine all your Ways, who discover to you your *secret Corruptions*, and *unsuspected Follies*, and who are best able to give you the surest Rules of arriving at Christian Perfection; when

you are in earnest in your Religion, you will as certainly act in this Manner, as you act in the same Manner with the *Lawyer* or *Physician*. Take this also for an undeniable Truth, that till you do act in this Manner, you are not in earnest in your Religion. This therefore is a good Rule to examine yourself by. Do you find that you act in Religion as you do in other Cases, where you are in earnest? Are you as suspicious of yourself, as fearful of Mistake, as watchful of Danger, as glad of Assistance, as desirous of Success, as in other Matters where your Life or Fortune are at stake, or where your Heart is engaged? Never imagine that your Religion is founded in a true Fear of God, and a hearty Desire of Salvation, till you find yourself acting as you do in other Matters, where your Fears are great, and your Desires hearty. If you had rather read Books that *entertain* the Mind, than *correct* the Heart, if you had rather hear a *Casulist* examine other People's Lives, than your's, if you had rather hear him talk of the Excellency and Wisdom of Religion, than be exact in trying the Excellency and Wisdom of your way of Life, you must take it for granted, that you are not in earnest in the Reformation of your Life, and that there are *some Tempers* in you more strong and powerful, that more rule and govern you, than the Fear of God, and a Desire of Salvation. To return now to my Subject.

I had observed that People who are religious upon a true Principle, who are devout with their *Reason* and *Understanding*, cannot possibly either *relish* or *allow* the Entertainment of the *Stage*. I observed that these contradictory Tempers, a Delight in the Offices and Divine Services of the *Church*, and a Delight in the Entertainments of the *Stage*, are no more possible to be in the same *good Men*, than in the same *good Angels*. This made it necessary for me to step a little aside from my Subject, to consider some *false Appearances* of Religion, which are chiefly founded in *natural Temper, Custom, Education*, and the *Way* of the World; which yet so far deceive People, as to make them fancy themselves in a good State of Religion, while they live and act by another Spirit and Temper.

Now I readily own, a Man may come up to these Appearances of Religion, he may carry on a Course of such Piety as this, and yet *relish* the Diversion of the *Stage*. It is no Contradiction for a Man to like to say his Prayers, to be often delighted with the Service of the *Church*, to hear *Sermons*, to read *Divinity*, to detest *Heretics*, and yet find a constant *Pleasure* in the vain Entertainments of the *Stage*. The World abounds with Instances of People who *swear, drink, and debauch*, with all these *Appearances* of Religion. Now as we are sure that where we see these

Vices, those Persons have only an *Appearance* of Religion, which is founded in something else than a true Fear of God; so wherever we see sober and regular People, Lovers of the Church, and Friends to Religion, taking the Pleasure of the *Stage*, we may be as sure that their Religion is *defective*, and founded in something that is *weak*, and *false*, and *blind*, that permits them to act so inconsistently. For the reasoning is full as strong in one Case as in the other. Now although I would not have People to be solely guided by what they feel, or think they feel, in their own Minds, yet this we may depend upon, as certain in our Tempers, that we never *love* or *affect* anything *truly*, but we *hate* and *avoid* all that is *contrary* to it in an equal Degree. So that we may be assured, that all that Love, or Zeal, or Affection, that we pretend for anything, is but mere Pretence, and a *blind Motion*, unless it appears by a zealous, lively Abhorrence of everything that is *contrary* to it. Upon this Ground I again affirm, that it is impossible for truly religious People to *bear* the Entertainments of the *Stage*. For consider only the Matter in this short View. A truly religious Person is to love and fear, and adore God, with *all his Heart, and with all his Soul, and with all his Strength*; now I ask you, who is it that has this true Love of God? Is it he that delights in Profaneness at *all Times*? Or is it he that can bear with Profaneness *sometimes*? Or is it he that abhors and avoids it at *all Times* and in *all Places*? Which of these three hath a Right to be esteemed a true Lover of God? Now he that goes to a *Play* at any time, though he may say that he does not delight in *Profaneness*, yet he must own, that he can sometimes, and in some Places, bear with Profaneness. For Profaneness of some kind or other, is in most of our *Plays*, almost as common, as the Name of God in Scripture. But I will suppose it were only now and then, and that no Profaneness either of Thought or Expression happened above *twice* or *thrice* in an Entertainment, yet this is *Profaneness*, and he that can bear with *so much*, that can seek the Entertainment as a Pleasure, must acknowledge, that though he does not delight in Profaneness as such, yet he can *bear* with Profaneness for the Sake of *other Delight*. Now ask yourself, has not he a truer Love of God, whose Piety will not suffer him to bear with Profaneness at any Time, or in any Place, or for any Pleasure? Am I not therefore supported by plain Reason and common Sense, when I affirm, that it is for want of true Piety, that any People are able to bear the Entertainment of the *Stage*?

You see also that no higher Degree of Piety, is required to fill one with a constant Abhorrence of the *Stage*, than such a

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Piety, as implies an Abhorrence of Profaneness at *all* Times, and in *all* Places.

When you are thus pious, when you thus love God, you will have a Piety, a Love of God that will not suffer you to be at an Entertainment that has any *Mixture* of Profaneness. Now as there must be this manifest Defect in true Piety, before you can bear with the Profaneness of the *Stage*; so if you consider every other Part of the Character of a truly religious Man, you will find, that there must be the same Defect run through the whole of it, before he can be fit for such Diversion.

You tell me that you love the *Church*, and rejoice at the Returns of Divine Service, though you now and then go to a *Play*. Now consider what it is which these Words mean, *If you love and delight in the Service of the Church*, then you love to be in a *State* of Devotion, you love to *draw near* to God, you love to be made sensible of the *Misery, Guilt, and Weight* of Sin, you love to *abhor* and *deplore* your Iniquities, and to lament the *Misery* and *Vanity* of human Life; you love to hear the Instructions of *Divine Wisdom*, to *raise* your Soul unto God, and *sing* his Praises; you love to be on your Knees *praying* against all the *Vanities* and *Follies* of Life, and for all the *Gifts* and *Graces* of God's Holy Spirit.

Now all this is implied in the true Love of *Church-Service*; for unless you love it *for what it is*, and because you feel its Excellency, your Love is only a *blind, mechanical* Motion; but if you love it in Truth and Reality, if you are thus affected with it, because all its Parts so highly suit the Condition of human Nature, whilst you are thus disposed, you can no more relish the *wicked Spirit* and *foolish Temper* of Stage Entertainments, than *sincere, dying* Penitents can delight in the *Guilt* of their Sins.

Never imagine therefore, that you are sincerely affected with the *Confessions* of the Church, or that you are truly *glad* for the Return of those Hours, which humble you in the Sight of God, never imagine that you truly feel the Misery and Weight of Sin, or sincerely lament the Corruption of your Nature, whilst you dare go to the Fountain-head of Corruption, the Place where Sin reigns and exercises its highest Power.

Never imagine that you have the Spirit of Devotion, that your Heart is renewed with the Holy Ghost, that it truly rejoices in the Means of Grace, and the Hope of Glory; never imagine that it is your Joy and Delight to worship God in the Beauty of Holiness, to send up your Soul to him in Prayers and Praises, so long as the Way of the *Stage*, its *impious* Nonsense, *vile* Jests, *profane* Passions, and *lewd* Speeches, are not your utter Abhor-

rence. For it is not more absurd to believe, that a *corrupt* Tree may bring forth *good Fruit*, than to believe, that a pious Mind, truly devoted to God, should taste and relish the Entertainment of the *Stage*. For the *Taste* and *Relish* of the Mind, is a more certain Sign of the State and Nature of the Mind, than the Quality of *Fruit* is a Sign of the State and Nature of *Trees*.

Had the *impure Spirits* which asked our Blessed Saviour, to suffer them to enter into the *Herd of Swine*, said at the same time, that it was their only *Delight* and *Joy* to dwell in the Light and Splendour of God, no one could have believed them, any more than he could believe Light and Darkness to be the same Thing.

When you have the Spirit of Christ, when you are devoted to God, when Purity, Holiness, and Perfection is your real Care, when you desire to live in the Light of God's Holy Spirit, to act by his Motions, to rise from Grace to Grace, till you are finished in Glory, it will be as impossible for you, whilst you continue so disposed, either to *seek* or *bear* the Entertainment of the *Stage*, as it is impossible for *pure* and *holy Spirits* to ask to enter into a *Herd of Swine*. If you want the Delight of so corrupt an Entertainment, so contrary to the *Spirit* and *Purity* of Religion, you ought no more to believe yourself, when you pretend to true Piety and Devotion, than you ought to have believed those *impure Spirits*, if they had pretended to have been *Angels of Light*. For this is absolutely certain, and what you ought carefully to consider, that nothing ever gives us any Pleasure, but what is *suitable* to the *State* and *Temper* of Mind that we are then in. So that if the *Corruption*, the *Immorality*, the *profane Spirit* and *wanton Temper* of the *Stage-Entertainment* can give you any Pleasure, you are as sure that there is *something* like *all these Vices* in your Heart, as you can be of anything that relates to a human Mind.

Lastly, Ask yourself, when you think that you have a true Love for Divine Service, whether he is not a truer Lover of it, whose Soul is so *fashioned* to it, so *deeply affected* with it, that he can delight in nothing that is *contrary* to it; who can bear with *no* Entertainment that is made up of *Speeches*, *Passions*, *Harangues*, and Songs so *opposite* to the Wisdom, the Discourses, Instructions, and Hymns, of Divine Service. This I believe, you cannot deny, and if this cannot be denied, then it must be owned as a certain Truth, that he who can bear with the *Stage-Entertainment*, has this further Defect, that he wants the *true Love* of Divine Service.

Again, it is Part of a truly religious Man, to *love* the Scriptures, and *delight* in reading them; you say this is your Temper,

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though you go to *Plays*. I answer, that it is for want of a true Love and Delight in the Scriptures, that you are able to relish *Plays*. You may perhaps so love the Scriptures, that you may think it your Duty to read them; and desire to understand them. But when you once so love the Scriptures, as to *love* to be *like* them, to desire that the Spirit and Temper of Scripture, may be the *one Spirit and Temper* of your Life: When, for Instance, you love this Doctrine, *strive to enter in at the strait Gate. If thy right Eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee.* When you are of the same Mind with this Scripture, *be sober, be vigilant, because your Adversary the Devil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.**

When you are intent upon this Truth, *for we must all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his Body.†* When this Text has taken Possession of your Heart, *Seeing then that all these things must be dissolved, what Manner of Persons ought ye to be in all holy Conversation and Godliness?‡*

When you resign up your whole Soul to this Exhortation, *Take my Yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in Heart.§* When your Heart can truly bear you witness to this Doctrine, that you *put on the whole Armour of Christ, that you may be able to stand, that you live by Faith and not by Sight, pressing after the Prize of your high Calling.* When you thus love and delight in the Scriptures, when you thus enter into its Spirit and Temper, when its Purity is your Purity, its Fears, and Hopes, and Joys are your Fears, and Hopes, and Joys, you will find yourself one of those, who constantly and at *all Times* abominate the Folly, Impertinence and Profaneness of the *Stage*.

Let me desire you, when you are dressed for a *Play*, to read over our Saviour's Divine Sermon on the *Mount* before you go; try whether your Soul is full of the Spirit that is there taught, examine whether you then feel in your Heart such a Love of the Scripture, as to love *those Conditions* of Blessedness that are there described, *Blessed are the Poor in Spirit, blessed are they that Mourn, blessed are they that Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness.* Do you find yourself in these heights of *Holiness*? Is your Soul reformed, purified and exalted according to *these Doctrines*? Or can you imagine, that you are *conforming* yourself to those Doctrines, that you *depart* from none of them, when you are preparing yourself for a Pleasure, which is the proper Pleasure of the most corrupt and debauched Minds? *Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God.* Can you

* 1 Pet. v. 8. † 2 Cor. v. 10. ‡ 2 Pet. iii. 11. § Matt. xi. 29.

think that you are rightly affected with this Doctrine, that you are labouring after this Purity, that you are preparing to see God, when you are going to an Entertainment, to which they ought only to go, who have no Thoughts of seeing God, nor any Desires after that Purity which prepares us for it?

Lastly, Another Virtue essential to Christian Holiness is *Chastity*, our Blessed Saviour has given us the Measure of this Virtue in these Words: *But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a Woman to lust after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his Heart.* We are sure therefore that this Virtue is not preserved, unless we keep ourselves clear from all immodest Thoughts and impure Imaginations; we are sure also that the Guilt of these, is like the Guilt of Adultery. This is the Doctrine of Christ. Look now into the *Playhouse*, and think whether any Thing can be imagined more contrary to this Doctrine?

For, not to consider the monstrous Lewdness and Immodesty of the *Stage*, take it in its *best State*, when some admired *Tragedy* is upon it. Are the extravagant Passions of *distracted Lovers*, the impure Ravings of *inflamed Heroes*, the tender Complaints, the Joys and Torments of Love, and *gross Descriptions* of Lust; are the *indecent* Actions, the amorous Transports, the *wanton Address* of the Actors, which make so great a Part of the *most sober and modest* Tragedies, are these Things an Entertainment consistent with this Christian Doctrine? You may as well imagine, that Murder and Rapine are consistent with Charity and Meekness. I hope it will not now be said, that I have spent too much Time upon a Subject, that seems not necessary in a Treatise upon *Christian Perfection*. For though these Things are generally looked upon as *little* because they are called *Pleasures* and *Diversions*, yet they may as justly be called *Vices* and *Debaucheries*; they affect Religion, as *Lies* and *Falsehood* affect it, in the very Heart and Essence, and render People as incapable of true Piety, as any of the grossest Indulgences of Sensuality and Intemperance. And perhaps it may be true, that more People are kept Strangers to the true Spirit of Religion, by what are called *Pleasures*, *Diversions*, and *Amusements*, than by *confessed Vices*, or the Cares and Business of Life. I have now only one Thing to beg of the *Reader*, that he would not think it a sufficient Answer to all this, to say in general, that it is a Doctrine too *strict* and *rigid*, but that he would consider every Argument as it is in itself, not whether it be strict and rigid, but whether it be false Reasoning, or more strict and rigid than the Doctrine of Scripture: If it prescribes a Purity and Holiness which is not according to the Spirit and Temper of the Scriptures, let it be rejected, not as too strict and rigid, but as a

Species of false Worship, as vain and ridiculous as *Idolatry*: But if what is here asserted, be highly conformable to the most plain Doctrines of Scripture, the saying that it is too strict and rigid, is of no more Weight against it, than if it were said, that it was *too true*. It is not my Intention to trouble the World with any particular Notions of my own; or to impose any unnecessary Rules, or fancied Degrees of Perfection upon any People. But in declaring against the *Stage*, as I have done, I have no more followed any particular Spirit or private Temper, or any more exceeded the plain Doctrine of Scripture, than if I had declared against *Drunkenness* and *Debauchery*. Let a Man but be so much a *Christian*, as not to think it too *high a Degree* of Perfection, or too *strict and rigid* to be in earnest in these two Petitions, *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil*; and he has Christianity enough to persuade him, that it is neither too high a Perfection, nor too *strict and rigid*, constantly to declare against, and always to avoid the Entertainment of the *Stage*.

Chapter XII.

Christians are called to a constant State of Prayer and Devotion.

IT is one principal Article of our Religion, to believe, that our Blessed Saviour is now at the Right Hand of God, there making *perpetual Intercession* for us, till the Redemption of Mankind is finished. Prayer therefore is undoubtedly a proper Means of drawing near to God, a necessary Method of restoring Sinners to his Favour, since he who has conquered Sin and Death, who is constituted Lord of all, is yet, as the *great Advocate* for Sinners, obliged to make *perpetual Intercession* for them.

Whenever, therefore, we are in the Spirit of Prayer, when our Hearts are lifted up to God, breathing out Holy Petitions to the Throne of Grace, we have this Encouragement to be *constant and fervent* in it, that we are then joining with an Intercession at the Right Hand of God, and doing that for ourselves on Earth, which our Blessed Saviour is perpetually doing for us in Heaven. This Reason of Prayer is perhaps not much considered, yet it certainly contains a most powerful Motive to it. For who, that considers his Redemption, as now carrying on by an *Intercession* in Heaven, can think himself so agreeable to God, so like his Saviour, as when the Constancy of his own Prayers bears some Resemblance

to that never-ceasing Intercession which is made above? This shows us also, that we are most of all to desire those Prayers, which are offered up at the *Altar*, where the Body and Blood of Christ are joined with them. For as our Prayers are only acceptable to God through the Merits of Jesus Christ, so we may be sure, that we are praying to God in the most prevailing Way, when we thus pray in the Name of *Christ*, and plead his Merits in the *highest Manner* that we can.

Devotion may be considered, either as an Exercise of public or private Prayers at set Times and Occasions, or as a Temper of the Mind, a State and Disposition of the Heart, which is rightly affected with such Exercises. Now external Acts of Devotion, are like other external Actions, very liable to Falseness, and are only so far good and valuable, as they proceed from a right Disposition of Heart and Mind. Zealous Professions of *Friendship* are but the more abominable Hypocrisy, for being often repeated, unless there be an equal Zeal in the Heart; so solemn Prayers, rapturous Devotions, are but repeated Hypocrisies, unless the Heart and Mind be *conformable* to them. Since therefore it is the Heart only, that is devout, since the Regularity and Fervency of the Heart, is the Regularity and Fervency of Devotion; I shall consider Devotion chiefly in this Respect, as it is a *State and Temper* of the Heart. For it is in this Sense only, that Christians are called to a *constant State of Devotion*, they are not to be always on their Knees in Acts of Prayer, but they are to be always in the State and Temper of Devotion.

Friendship does not require us to be always waiting upon our Friends in external Services, these Offices have their Times and Seasons of Intermission, it is only the Service of the Heart, the Friendship of the Mind, that is never to intermit; it is not to begin and end, as external Services do, but is to persevere in a Constancy like the Motion of our Heart, or the Beating of our Pulse. It is just so in Devotion, *Prayers* have their *Hours*, their Beginning and Ending, but that turn of Mind, that Disposition of the Heart towards God, which is the Life and Spirit of Prayer, is to be as constant and lasting as our own Life and Spirit.

The repeating of a *Creed* at certain Times, is an Act of Faith, but that Faith which *overcometh* the World, stays neither for Times nor Seasons, but is a living Principle of the Soul, that is always believing, trusting, and depending upon God. In the same manner, verbal Prayers are Acts of Devotion, but that Prayer which saveth, which openeth the Gates of Heaven, stops not at *Forms and Manuals* of Devotion, but is a Language of the Soul, a Judgment of the Heart, which worships, adores, and delights in God, at all Times and Seasons.

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The *Necessity* and *Reason* of Prayer, is like all other Duties of Piety, founded in the Nature of God, and the Nature of Man. It is founded in the Nature of God, as he is the sole Fountain and Cause of all Happiness; it is founded in the Nature of Man, as he is weak and helpless, and full of Wants. So that Prayer is an *earnest Application or Ascent of the Heart to God, as to the sole Cause of all Happiness*. He therefore that most truly feels the Misery, Corruption, and Weakness of his own Nature, who is most fully convinced that a Relief from all these Disorders, and a true Happiness, is to be found in God alone, he who is most fully convinced of these two Truths, is most fully possessed of the Spirit of Prayer. There is but one Way therefore to arrive at a true State of Devotion, and that is, to get right Notions of ourselves, and of the Divine Nature, that having a full View of the Relation we bear to God, our Souls may as constantly aspire to him, as they as constantly aspire after Happiness. This also shows us the absolute Necessity of all those forementioned Doctrines of *Humility, Self-denial, and Renunciation of the World*. For if Devotion is founded in a Sense of the Poverty, Misery, and Weakness of our Nature, then nothing can more effectually destroy the Spirit of Devotion, than *Pride, Vanity, and Indulgence*, of any kind. These Things stop the Breath of Prayer, and as necessarily extinguish the Flame of Devotion, as Water extinguishes common Fire.

If Prayer is also founded in right Notions of God, in believing him to be the sole Fountain and Cause of all our Happiness, then everything that takes this Truth out of our Minds, that makes us *less sensible* of it, makes us so far *less capable* of Devotion; so that worldly Cares, vain Pleasures, false Satisfactions, are all to be renounced, that we may be able to pray. For the Spirit of Prayer has no further hold of us, than so far as we see our Wants, Imperfections, and Weakness, and likewise the infinite Fulness and All-sufficiency of God; when we thoroughly feel these two great Truths, then are we in the true Spirit of Prayer. Would you therefore be in the State and Temper of Devotion, you must practise all those Ways of Life, that may humble you in your own Sight; you must forbear all those Indulgences and Vanities which blind your Heart, and give you false Notions of yourself; you must seek that Way of Life, accustom yourself to such Practices as may best convince you of the Vanity of the World, and the Littleness of everything but God. This is the only Foundation of Prayer. When you don't enough see either your own Littleness, or the Greatness of God, when you either seek for Pleasure in yourself, or think that it is

anywhere to be found, except in God, you put yourself out of a State of Devotion. For you can desire nothing, but what you think you want, and you can desire it only in such a degree, as you feel the Want of it. It is certain therefore, that whatever lessens or abates the Feeling of your own Wants, whatever takes you from looking to God, as the only possible Relief of them, so far lessens and abates the Spirit and Fervour of your Devotion.

We sometimes exhort People to Fervour in Devotion, but this can only mean as to the outward Acts of it; for to exhort People to be Fervent in Devotion, as that implies a Temper of the Heart, is to as little Purpose, as to exhort People to be *Merry*, or to be *Sorry*. For these Tempers always follow the Judgments and Opinions of our Minds, when we perceive Things to be, as we like them, then we are *Merry*; when we find Things in a contrary State, then we are *Sorry*. It comes to pass after the same manner in *Devotion*, bid a Man be fervent in Devotion, tell him it is an excellent Temper, he knows no more how to go about it, than how to be merry, because he is bid to be so. Stay till *old Age*, till *Sickness*, *Misfortunes*, or the Approach of *Death*, has convinced him that he has nothing good in himself, that there is nothing valuable in the World, that all that is good, or great, or glorious is in God alone, and then he will find himself as disposed to Devotion, and zealous Desires after God, as the Man is disposed to Cheerfulness, who sees Things in that State in which he would have them to be. So that the one and only way to be devout, is to see and feel our own Weakness, the Vanity of the World, and the Greatness of God, as dying Men see and feel them. It is as impossible to be *devout* without seeing Things in *this View*, as it is impossible to be *cheerful* without perceiving something in our Condition, that is according to *our Mind*. Hence therefore we may learn to admire the Wisdom and Divinity of the Christian Religion, which calls all its Members to *Humility*, *Self-denial*, and a Renunciation of *worldly Tempers*, as a necessary Foundation of Piety and Devotion. It was in these Practices that our Saviour first instituted his Religion; it was on these Conditions that the Apostles embraced it, and taught it to others; it was in these Doctrines that the primitive Christians became such worthy Followers of our Saviour and his Apostles. These Doctrines are still in the Gospel, and till they are to be found in our Lives, we shall never find ourselves in a State of Devotion. For I must again repeat, what my Reader cannot too much reflect upon; that since Devotion is an earnest Application of the Soul to God, as the only Cause and Fountain of Happiness, that it is

impossible for the Soul to have this Desire, without having such Reasons to produce and support it, as are necessary to produce and support other Tempers of the Mind.

Now it is impossible for a Man to *grieve* when he finds his Condition answering his Desires ; or to be *overjoyed* when he finds his State to be full of Misery, yet this is as possible, as consistent with our Nature, as for a Man to *aspire* after, and *delight* in God as his only Happiness, whilst he is *delighting* in himself and the Vanity of the World. So that to pretend to Devotion without great *Humility*, and an entire Renunciation of all *worldly Tempers*, is to pretend to Impossibilities ; it is as if a Man should pretend to be *cheerful*, whilst he is in Vexation and Impatience ; he must first bring himself to a State of Satisfaction and Contentment, and then Cheerfulness will flow from it ; so he that would be devout, must first be humble, have a full View of his own Miseries and Wants, and the Vanity of the World, and then his Soul will be full of Desires after God. A *proud*, or *vain*, or *worldly-minded* Man, may use a *Manual* of Prayers, but he cannot be *devout*, because Devotion is the Application of an *humble* Heart to God, as its only Happiness.

Hence we may also perceive, why People of *Learning* and great Application to *Books*, who seem to have retired from the Corruptions of the World, to spend their time in their Studies, are yet often not Devout. The Reason is, because Devotion is founded in great *Humility*, and a full Sense of the Vanity and Littleness of *every Thing* but God. Whereas it is often the *same Vanity* that wears out some Scholars in their *Studies*, that wears out other People at *Court*, in the *Camp*, or at *Sea*. They do not want to be *Merchants*, or *Colonels*, or *Secretaries* of State, but they want to be *Critics*, *Grammarians*, and *Historians*. They, it may be, disregard Riches and Equipage, despise the Sports and Diversions of the *present Age*, avoid the Folly of Conversation, but then it is to contemplate the *Riches* and *Equipage*, the *Sports* and *Diversions* of the ancient *Romans*.

The Vanity of some *Ladies* and *Gentlemen* would be touched, if you should tell them, that they did not understand *Dress* : Some great *Scholars* would be more dejected, if you should suppose them Ignorant of a *Fold* in the *Roman Garments*.

The *Bulk* of Mankind are so dull and tasteless, so illiterate, as to set their Hearts upon *current Coin*, large *Fields*, and Flocks and Herds of *Cattle*. Great Learning has raised some Men above this grossness of Taste, their Hearts only beat at the Sight of a *Medal* and *ancient Coins*, they are only afraid of dying before they have outdone the World, in their Collections of *Shells*, *Skins*, *Stones*, *Animals*, *Flies*, and *Insects*.

You would not expect that a *Merchant* should be devout because he traded in all Parts of *Europe*, or that a *Lady* should be pious, because she understands all Sorts of *fine Work* and *Embroidery*. Now if you were to look into the Business of many profound Scholars, if you were to consider the Nature of such Learning as makes the greatest Figure in the World, you will find no more Tendency in it to Piety and Devotion, than there is in *Merchandise* or *Embroidery*.

When Men retire into their Studies to *change* their Nature, to *correct* and *reform* their Passions, to find out the Folly, the Falseness, the Corruption and Weakness of their Hearts, to *penetrate* into the Vanity and Emptiness of all worldly Attainments, when they read and meditate to fill their Souls with religious Wisdom and heavenly Affections, and to raise their Hearts unto God, when this is *Learning* (and what else deserves the Name), then Learning will lead Men unto God, learned Men will be very Devout, and great *Scholars* will be great *Saints*.

Hence we also learn, why so many People seemingly Religious, are yet Strangers to the Spirit of Devotion. *Crito* buys *Manuals* of Devotion, he finds nothing in them but what is according to the Doctrines of Religion, yet he is not able to keep pace with them, he feels nothing of what he reads, and throws them by, as something that does not *suit* his Taste: He does not consider that the *fault* is in himself, and that these *very same* Books will suit him when he is *dying*. He does not consider, that whilst he is so well pleased with himself, so fond of the World, so delighted with a Variety of Schemes that he has on foot, it is as impossible for him to be Devout, as for a *Stone* to hang by itself in the Air, or a Building to stand without anything to stand upon. If *Crito* was to begin his Devotion to God, with *Humility*, *Self-denial*, and a Renunciation of all *worldly Tempers*, he would show that he used common Sense in his Religion, that he was as wise as that Builder, who begins his House by laying a Foundation. But to think of adding Devotion to a Life that does not naturally lead to it, that is not so ordered, as to be so many Steps towards it, is as absurd, as if a Man should think of getting to the End of his Journey, without going through any of the Way that leads to it. For as it is a Temper of the Mind, it must arise from the State of our Mind, and must have its proper Causes to produce it, as all other Tempers have.

Suppose you were to call a Man from some joyful Feast, from the Pleasures of *Songs*, *Music*, and *Dancing*, and tell him to go into the next Room to *grieve* for half an Hour, and then return to his Mirth; suppose you were to tell him that he must mourn

that half Hour from the Bottom of his Heart, that it was a very excellent Thing, and highly becoming a rational Creature. It is possible he might obey you so far, as to go into the *Room* appointed for Mourning, he may be able to sit still, look grave, sigh and hang down his Head, and stay out his *half Hour*, but you are sure that he cannot *really grieve*, and for this Reason, because he is in a State of festival Joy, and is returning to his Feast. Now this is the State of *Crito*, and great Numbers of Christians, they are always at a *Feast*; their Life is nothing else but a Succession of such Pleasures, Satisfactions, and Amusements, as affect and hurry their Minds, like the festival Joys of *Drinking, Music, and Dancing*. So that when they go to Devotion, they are just as capable of it, as a Man that is rejoicing at a Feast, is capable of mourning at the same time. Let not the Reader imagine, that this is the Case only of such great People, as live in such a constant Scene of Pleasure, as their Fortunes can procure, for it is a Case that equally concerns almost all States of Life. For as a Man rejoicing at an ordinary Feast, is as indisposed for Grief, as one that is merry at a more splendid Entertainment; so that Course of Pleasures and worldly Delights, which falls in with lower States of Life, may render such People as *Incapable* of Devotion, as they are, who have other Entertainments provided for them. Now no one wonders that he cannot *put on* Grief, when he is rejoicing at a *Feast* of any kind, because he knows there is sufficient Reason for it, because his Mind is then otherwise engaged. But if *Crito* would but deal thus faithfully with himself, he would as readily own, that he cannot *relish* Strains of Devotion, that his Heart does not enter into them, for this Reason, because it is *otherwise* engaged. For People certainly *relish* everything that *suits* with the State of Life that they live, and can have no Taste or Relish, but such as arises from the Way and Manner of Life that they are in. Whoever therefore finds himself unable to relish Strains of Devotion, dull and unaffected with them, may take it for certain, that it is owing to the *Way and State* of Life that he is in: He may also be further assured, that his Life is wanting in the Virtues of *Humility, Self-denial, and a Renunciation of worldly Goods*, since these Virtues as naturally *prepare and dispose* the Soul to aspire to God, as a Sense of *Sickness* disposes People to wish for *Health*.

Let us now put these Things together; it is certain, that Devotion, as a Temper of the Mind, must have something to produce it, as all other Tempers have, that it cannot be taken up at Times and Occasions, but must arise from the State of the Soul, as all other Tempers and Desires do. It is also equally

certain, that Humility, Self-denial, and a Renunciation of the World, are the only Foundation of Devotion, that it can only proceed from these, as from its proper Causes. Here therefore we must fix our Rule to take the just Measure of ourselves. We must not consider how many Books of Devotion we have, how often we go to Church, or how often we have felt a Warmth and Fervour in our Prayers, these are uncertain Signs; but we must look to the Foundation, and assure ourselves, that our Devotion neither is, nor can be, greater than our Humility, Self-denial, and Renunciation of the World. For as it must proceed only from these Causes, so it can rise no higher than they carry it, and must be in the same State of Strength or Weakness that they are. If our Humility is false, our Self-denial hypocritical and trifling, and our worldly Tempers not half mortified, our Devotion will be just in the same State of Falseness, Hypocrisy, and Imperfection. The Care therefore of our Devotion, seems wholly to consist in the Care of these Duties; so far as we proceed in them, so far we advance in Devotion. We must alter our Lives, in order to alter our Hearts, for it is impossible to *live* one way, and *pray* another.

This may teach us to account for the several false Kinds of Devotion which appear in the World, they cannot be otherwise than they are, because they have no Bottom to support them. Devotion is like *Friendship*, you hear of it everywhere, but find it nowhere; in like manner, Devotion is everywhere to be seen in *Modes of Worship*, in *Forms of Speech*, in outward Adorations, but is in *reality* scarcely to be found. Hence also it is, that you see as much difference in the Devotion, as in the Faces of Christians, for wanting its true Foundation, being like an affected Friendship, it has as many *Shapes*, as there are *Tempers* of Men. Many people are thus far sincere in their Devotions, that they would be glad to pray Devoutly, they strive to be Fervent, but never attain to it, because they never took the only possible Way. They never thought of altering their Lives, or of living different from the rest of the World, but hope to be Devout, merely by reading over Books of Devotion. Which is as odd a Fancy, as if a Man should expect to be Happy, by reading Discourses upon Happiness. When these People dare take Christianity as it is offered to them in the Gospel, when they deny themselves, and renounce the World, as our Saviour exhorted his Followers, they will then have begun Devotion.

Trebonius, asks how often he shall pray: He thinks the nicety of the Question shows the *Piety* and *Exactness* of his Heart; but *Trebonius* is deceived, for the Question proves that he is a stranger to Devotion. *Trebonius* has a Friend, he is constantly

Visiting him, he is never well out of his Company; if he is absent Letters are sent at all Opportunities. Now what is the Reason that he never asks how often he shall Visit, how often he shall delight in, how often he shall write to his Friend? It is because his Friend has his Heart, and his Heart is his faithful and sufficient Instructor. When *Trebonius* has given his Heart to God, when he takes God to be as great a Good, as substantial a Happiness, as his Friend, he will have done asking how often he shall pray.

Julius goes to Prayers, he confesses himself to be a miserable Sinner, he accuses himself to God with all the Aggravations that can be, as having *no health* in him, yet *Julius* cannot bear to be informed of any Imperfection, or suspected to be wanting in any Degree of Virtue. Now can there be a stronger Proof, that *Julius* is wanting in the Sincerity of his Devotions? Is not this a plain Sign, that his Confessions to God are only Words of *Course*, an humble *Civility* of Speech to his Maker, in which his Heart has no Share?

If a Man were to confess that his *Eyes* were bad, his *Hands* weak, his *Feet* feeble, and his *Body* helpless, he would not be angry with those who supposed he was not in perfect Strength, or that he might stand in need of some Assistance. Yet *Julius* confesses himself to be in great Weakness, Corruption, Disorder, and Infirmity, and yet is angry at anyone, that does but suppose him defective in any Virtue. Is it not the same thing as if he had said, *You must not imagine that I am in earnest in my Devotions?*

It would be endless to produce Instances of false Devotion; I shall therefore proceed no further in it, but rather endeavour to explain and illustrate that which is true. Devotion, we see, is an earnest Application of the Soul to God as its only Happiness. This is Devotion considered as a State and Temper of the Mind. All those Texts of Scripture which call us to God, as our true and only Good, which exhort us to a Fulness of Faith, of Hope, of Joy, and Trust in God, are to be considered as so many Exhortations to Devotion. Because Devotion is only another Name for the Exercise of all these Virtues. That Soul is devoted to God, which constantly rises and tends towards God in Habits of Love, Desire, Faith, Hope, Joy, and Trust. The End and Design of Religion, as it proposes to raise Man to a Life of Glory with Christ at the Right Hand of God, carries a stronger Reason for Devotion, than any particular Exhortation to Prayer. Beloved, saith St. *John*, *It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* St. *Paul* also saith, *As we have borne*

*the Image of the Earthly, we shall also bear the Image of the Heavenly.**

Now these and such like Texts seem to me to carry the most powerful Motives, to awaken the Soul into a State of Devotion. For as the Apostle saith, *He that hath this Hope, purifieth himself, even as he is Pure.* So he that hath this Hope of being taken into so glorious an Enjoyment of the Divine Nature, must find his Heart raised and enlivened in thinking upon God. For these Truths cannot be believed without putting the Soul into a State of Prayer, Adoration, and Joy in God. The seeing thus far into Heaven, is seeing so many Motives to Praise and Thanksgiving.

It was this View of future Glory that made the Apostle break out in this Strain of Thanksgiving, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us to a lively Hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead, to an Inheritance undefiled and that fadeth not away.†* And would we Praise and Adore God with such Thanksgiving, as filled the Heart of this Apostle, we must raise it from a Contemplation of the same Truth; that *incorruptible Inheritance* that is prepared for us.

Again, the same Apostle saith to the *Philippians*, *Our Conversation is in Heaven*, and as the Reason and Motive to this heavenly Conversation, he addeth, *Whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body.‡* So that the most powerful motive to Heavenly-mindedness, the plainest Reason for our Conversation in Heaven, is our Expectation of Christ's glorious Appearance, when he shall come to put an *End* to the Miseries of this Life, and clothe us with Robes of Immortality. These Truths much more effectually raise the Heart to God, than any particular Precepts to Prayer, they do not so much exhort, as carry the Soul to Devotion: He that feels these Truths, feels himself Devout, they leave a Light upon the Soul, which will kindle into holy Flames of Love and Delight in God.

The way therefore to live in true Devotion, is to live in the Contemplation of these Truths; we must daily consider the End and Hope of our Calling, that our Minds may be formed and raised to such Tempers and Desires as are suitable to it, that all little Anxieties, worldly Passions, and vain Desires may be swallowed up in one great Desire of future Glory. When the Heart is in this State, then it is in a State of Devotion, tending to God in such a Manner as justly suits the Nature of our

* 1 Cor. xv.

† 1 Pet. i. 3.

‡ Phil. iii. 20.

Religion. For whither should our Hearts tend, but where our Treasure is? This Devotion to God, is signified in Scripture, by living by *Faith and not by Sight*, when the invisible Things of the other Life, are the Reason, the Motive, and the Measure of all our Desires and Tempers. When Christians are thus settled in right Judgments of Things, and tending towards God in such Motions and Desires as are suitable to them, then are they devout Worshipers of God everywhere; this makes the common Actions of their Life, Acts of Religion, and turns every Place into a *Chapel*. And it is to this State of Devotion, that we are all called, not only by particular Precepts, but by the whole Nature and Tenor of our Religion.

Now as all States and Tempers of the Mind must be supported by Actions and Exercises suitable to them, so Devotion, which is an earnest Application of the Soul to God, as its only Happiness, must be supported and kept alive, by Actions and Exercises suitable to it, that is, by *Hours and Forms of Prayer* both public and private. The Devotion of the Heart disposes us to observe set Times of Prayer, and on the other Hand, set Times of Prayer as naturally increase and enliven the Devotion of the Heart. It is thus in all other Cases: Habits of the Mind dispose us to Actions suitable to them, and these Actions likewise strengthen and improve the Habits, from whence they proceeded.

It is the habitual Taste for *Music*, that carries People to *Concerts*, and again it is *Concerts* that increases the habitual Love of *Music*. So it is the right Disposition of the Heart towards God, that leads People to outward Acts of Prayer, and on the other Side, it is outward Acts of Prayer, that preserve and strengthen the right Disposition of the Heart towards God. As therefore we are to judge of the Significancy of our Prayers, by looking to the State and Temper of our Heart; so are we also to judge of the State of our Heart, by looking to the *Frequency, Constancy, and Importunity* of our Prayers. For as we are sure that our Prayers are insignificant, unless they proceed from a right Heart, so unless our Prayers be *frequent, constant, and full of Importunity*, we may be equally sure that our Heart is not right towards God.

Our Blessed Saviour has indeed condemned one sort of long Prayer. *But when ye pray, use not vain Repetitions as the Heathens do; for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.** Now it is not *Length* or a *Continuance* of Prayer that is here forbid, but *vain Repetitions*, when instead of praying, the

* Matt. vi. 7.

same Words are only often repeated. *Secondly*, the *Heathens* are not here condemned for being *importunate* and *persevering* in their Prayer; but for a *wrong Judgment*, a false Devotion, in that they thought they were heard, because they *spoke much*, that is, often repeated the same Words. So that all that *Christians* are here forbid, is only this, they are not to think that the *Efficacy* of Prayer consists in vain and long Repetitions, but are to apply to God upon a better Principle, a more enlightened Devotion. Now though this is plainly all that is here condemned, yet some People imagine that a Continuance and Importunity of Prayer is here reprov'd, and thence conclude that Shortness is a necessary Qualification of Prayer.

But how willing must such People be to be deceived, before they can Reason in this manner. For the Words have plainly no Relation to *Length* or *Shortness* of Prayer, they no more condemn the one than the other, but speak altogether to *another* Matter. They only condemn an Opinion of *Heathens*, which supposed, that the Excellency and Power of Prayer consisted in a Multitude of Repetitions. Now to think, that a short Prayer is better, because it is *short*, is the same Error as to hold with the *Heathens*, that a Prayer is more powerful, the longer the same Words are repeated. It is the same Mistake in the Nature of Devotion.

But supposing the Meaning of these Words were something obscure (which it is not) yet surely it is plain enough, that our Saviour has *expressly* taught and recommended a *Continuance* and *Importunity* in Prayer. And how perversely do they read the Gospel, who can find his Authority against such kind of Devotion! For can he who was so often retiring to *Deserts*, to *Mountains*, to *Solitary* Places to pray, who spent *whole Nights* in Prayer, can he be supposed to have left a Reproof upon such as should follow his Example? But besides the Authority of his great Example, his Doctrine is on no Point more plain and certain, than where he teaches Frequency, Continuance, and Importunity in Prayer. *He spake a Parable unto them, to this End, that Men ought always to pray, and not to faint. Saying, there was in a City a Judge which feared not God, nor regarded Man. And there was a Widow in that City, and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of my Adversary. And he would not for awhile: But afterwards he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard Man, yet because this Widow troubleth me, I will avenge her. And shall not God avenge his own Elect, which cry Day and Night unto him?* The Apostle tells us, that this Parable was to teach Men to *pray always*, and *not to faint*, and it is plain to anyone that reads it, that it has no other intent, but to recom-

mend *Continuance* and *Importunity*, as the most prevailing Qualifications of Prayer. The Widow is relieved, not because she asked Relief, but because she *continued* asking it, and God is said to avenge his Elect, not because they cry to him now and then, but because they *cry Day and Night*. Our Blessed Saviour teacheth the same Doctrine in another Parable, of a Person going to his Friend to borrow *three Loaves* of him at Midnight, where it thus concludes, *I say unto you, though he would not rise and give him, because he is his Friend, yet because of his Importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth*. Here again the sole Scope of this Passage is to show, the great Power and Efficacy of Continuance and Importunity in Prayer.

Consider further in what manner Prayer is mentioned in Scripture. St. Paul does not command us to pray, but to *pray without ceasing*.* The same Doctrine is thus taught in another Place, *continue in Prayer*.† And again, *Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit*.‡ It is said of Anna, *That she served God in Fasting and Prayer Night and Day*. Now who can imagine that *Shortness* is any Excellency of Prayer?

Clito says, he desires no more Time for rising, dressing, and saying his Prayers, than a Quarter of an Hour. He tells this to his Friends, not to show his want of Religion, but that he may be thought to understand Devotion. You tell him that our Saviour's Parables teach *Continuance* and *Importunity* in Prayer, that the Apostles exhort to *pray without ceasing*, to pray *always*, and that devout Persons are recorded in Scripture, as praying *Night and Day*. Still *Clito* is for short Prayers. He at last finds a Text of Scripture, and appeals to the Example of the *Angels*, they only said, *Glory be to God on High, and on Earth Peace, Goodwill towards Men*. *Clito* takes this to be an Argument for short Prayer, because the Angels had done so soon. But *Clito* must be told, that this is no Prayer. It is only a joyful Proclamation to Men. And surely the manner of *Angels* speaking to Men, can be no Rule or Measure of the Devotion of Men speaking to God. The Angels had no more to tell the World, than this Message of Joy, but does it therefore follow, that Sinners are to be as short in their Addresses to God? The Scripture tells us sometimes of *Voices* from Heaven, but it would be strange, to make Things that were then spoken, the Measure of our Prayers when we call upon God. If *Clito* must have an Example from Heaven, he might have found one much more proper than this, where it is said, *That they rest not Day and*

* 1 Thess. v. 17.

† Col. iv. 2.

‡ Ephes. vi. 18.

*Night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is, and is to come.**

Our Blessed Saviour saith, *But thou, when thou prayest enter into thy Closet, and when thou hast shut thy Door, pray unto thy Father, &c.†* Now here is indeed no mention of the Time that Prayer is to be continued, but yet this Preparation for Prayer, of *entering* into our Closet, and *shutting* the Door, seems to teach us that it is a Work of some Time, that we are not hastily to open our Door, but to allow ourselves time to continue and be importunate in our Prayers.

How long and how often all People ought to pray, is not to be stated by any one particular Measure. But this we may take as a general Rule, that relates to all Particulars, that every Christian is to pray so often and so long, as to show a Perseverance and Importunity in Prayer, as to show that he prays *without ceasing*, that he prays always, and that he *cries* to God *Night and Day*, for these are essential Qualifications of Prayer, and expressly required in Scripture. One would think it impossible for People to be sparing in their Devotions, who have read our Saviour's Parables, which teach us that the Blessings of Heaven, the Gifts and Graces of God's Holy Spirit are given to such as are importunate in their Prayers. I shall now only add a Word or two in Favour of frequent and *continued* Prayers.

First, *Frequent* and *continued* Prayers, are a likely Means to beget in us the *Spirit* of Prayer. A Man who is often in his Closet, on his Knees to God, though he may for some Time perform but a *Lip-labour*, will, if he perseveres, find the very Labour of his Lips altering the Temper of his Heart, and that he has learned to pray, by praying often.

This we find to be true in all Parts of Life, that we catch a Spirit and Temper from such Conversation and Ways of Life as we allow ourselves in. Use is called a second Nature, and Experience teaches us, that whatever we accustom ourselves to, it will by Degrees transform our Spirit and Temper into a Likeness to it.

Credula was for some Time a tender *Mother*, friendly and charitable to her Neighbours, and full of Good-will towards all People; she is now spiteful, malicious, envious, and delights in nothing but Scandal. How came *Credula* thus changed? Why she has been for several years spending her Time in *visiting*, she entered into *Scandal* and *evil Speaking* at first merely for the Sake of *Talk*, she has gone on talking, till she has talked her very Heart and Spirit into a Taste for nothing

* Rev. iv. 8.

† Math. vi. 6.

else; at first she only detracted from her Neighbours and Friends, because she was visiting, but now she visits for the Sake of Detraction. *Credula* is hardened and cruel in evil Speaking, for the same Reason, that *Butchers* are inhuman and cruel, because she has been so long used to murder the Reputation of her Neighbours. She has killed all her own Family over and over, and if she seeks new Acquaintance, it is to get fresh Matter for Scandal; now all this change in *Credula*, is purely owing to her *indulging* a talkative Temper.

Now everything that we use ourselves to, enters into our Nature in *this Manner*, and becomes a *part* of us before we are aware. It is common to observe, that some People tell a Story so long, till they have forgotten that they invented it. This is not as is supposed, through a bad Memory, but because the things which we make *constant* and *familiar*, will by Degrees steal the Approbation of the Heart. If therefore we would but be often on our Knees, putting up our Prayers to God, though for a while it was only *Form* and *outward* Compliance, yet our Hearts would by Degrees learn the *Language* of our Mouths. The Subject of our Prayers would become the Subject of our Hearts, we should pray ourselves into Devotion, and it would become a part of us, in the same manner that all other ways enter into our Nature. Our Reason and Judgment would at last consent to our lips, and by saying the same things often, we should come to *believe* and *feel* them in a proper Manner. For it is a very reasonable Thing, to Judge of the Effects of good Customs, by what we see to be Effects of bad ones. They therefore who are *hasty* in their Devotions, and think a little will do, are Strangers both to the Nature of *Devotion* and the Nature of *Man*; they do not know that they are to *learn* to pray, and that Prayer is to be learnt, as they learn all other things, by *Frequency*, *Constancy*, and *Perseverance*.

Secondly, There is another great Advantage in frequent and continued Prayers.

The Cares and Pleasures of Life, the Levity, Vanity, and Dulness of our Minds, make us all more or less unfit for our Devotions. We enter into our *Closets* thus unprepared for Prayer; now if our Petitions are very short, we shall end our Prayers before our Devotion is begun, before we have time to collect our Minds, or turn our Hearts to the Business we are upon.

Now continuance in Prayer, is as great relief against these Indispositions, not only as it gives the Heart leisure to fall from worldly Cares and Concerns, but as it Exercises the Mind upon such Subjects, as are likely to abate its Vanity and Distraction,

and raise it into a State of Seriousness and Attention. It is the Case of all People, to find themselves Inconstant in their Prayers, joining heartily with some Petitions, and wandering away from others; it is therefore but common Prudence to continue our Prayers, that our Minds which will wander from some Parts, may have others to join in. If we were Masters of our Attention, and could be as Fervent as we pleased, then indeed fewer Words might serve for our Devotion, but since our Minds are weak, inconstant, and ungovernable, we must endeavour to catch and win them to Devotion, by such Means as are suited to such a State of Weakness, Dulness, and Inconstancy. He that goes to his *Closet* in a *hurry*, only to repeat a *short Form* of Words, may pray *all his Life* without any Devotion, and perhaps he had been a devout Man long ago, if it had ever entered into his Head, that *Meditation* and *Continuance* in Prayer are necessary to excite Devotion. If a Man were to make it a *Law*, to himself, to *Meditate* a while before he began his Prayers, if he were to force his Mind to think, what Prayer is, what he prays for, and to whom he prays; if he should again make it a Rule to stop in some Part of his Prayers, to ask his Heart, whether it really prays, or to let his Soul rise up in silence unto God; prayers thus performed, thus assisted by Meditation and Continuance, would in all likelihood soon render the Mind truly Devout. It is not intended by this, to impose *any particular* Method upon all People; it is only to show us, that there are *certain Means* of assisting our Devotion, some Rules, though *little* in themselves, yet of *great use* to render our Minds Attentive and Fervent in our applications to God. It is the Business therefore of every sincere Christian, to be as wise as he can in these Arts and Methods of Self-government. As we ourselves know most of the Falseness of our own Hearts, of the Temper of our Minds, and the Occasion of our Defects, so if we would but be so wise, as to think the Amendment of our Hearts, the best and greatest Work, that we can do, every one's Reason would help him to such useful Rules, as had a peculiar fitness to his own State. *Self-reflection* is the shortest and most certain Way of becoming truly Wise, and truly Pious.

There are *two Seasons* of our Hearts, which if we would but reflect upon, we might get much Knowledge of ourselves, and learn how to assist our Devotion. I mean the *time* when we are *most affected* with our Devotions, and the *time* when we are *most indisposed* to pray. Both these *Seasons* equally serve to instruct us in the Knowledge of ourselves, and how to govern the Motions of our Hearts.

Reflect with yourself, how it was with you, what *Circumstances*

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you were in, what had *happened* to you, what you had been *doing*, what *Thoughts* you had in your Head at such a Time, when you found yourself *so affected* with your Devotions. Now if you find out what State you were then in, when you were disposed to pray so Fervently, then you have found out a certain Way of raising your Devotion at another time. For do but put yourself in the same State, recall the same Thoughts, and do as you had then been doing, and you will find the same Causes will again produce the same Effects, and you will be again in the same Temper of Devotion. If you were then to put down in *Writing*, some short Remembrances of the *chief Things*, that ever raised your Heart to Fervency of Prayer, so that you might have Recourse to a full View of them, as often as your Mind wanted such Assistance, you would soon find a Benefit, that would well Reward your Labour. On the contrary, whenever you have found yourself *very much Indisposed* for Prayer, reflect with yourself, what State you were then in, what had *happened* unto you, what *Thoughts* you had in your Head, what *Passions* were then awakened, what you had been *doing*, or were *intending* to do; for when you have found out the State that you were then in, you have found out the real Hindrances of your Devotion, and are made certain what things you are to avoid, in order to keep yourself in a Temper of Devotion.

If you were here again to make short remembrances in *Writing*, of the chief Things which at such times rendered you indisposed for Prayer, and oblige yourself frequently to read them and reflect upon them, you would by this Means, set a *Mark* upon everything that did you any Hurt, and have a constant, faithful Information of what Ways of Life, you are most to avoid. If in Examining your State, you should find that sometimes *impertinent Visits*, *foolish Conversation*, or a Day idly Spent in *civil Compliances* with the Humours and Pleasures of other People, has rendered your Mind *dull* and *indisposed*, and less *affected* with Devotion, than at other times, then you will have found, that impertinent Visits, and Ceremonious Compliances in spending our time, are not *little, indifferent Things*, but are to be numbered amongst those Things which have a *great effect* upon our Minds, and such as are to be daily watched and guarded against, by all those who are so wise as to desire, to be daily alive unto God in the Spirit and Temper of Devotion.

I pass now to another Observation upon the Benefit of frequent Prayers.

Thirdly, *Frequent and continued Prayer* is the best Remedy against the Power of Sin. I do not mean as it procures the

Divine Grace and Assistance, but as it naturally *Convinces*, *Instructs*, and *Fortifies* the Mind against all Sin. For every endeavour to pray, is an endeavour to *feel* the Truth of our Prayers, to *convince* our Minds of the Reasonableness and Fitness of those Things, that are the Subject of our Prayers, so that he who prays most, is one that most labours to convince his Heart and Mind of the Guilt, Deformity, and Misery of Sin. Prayer therefore considered merely as an *Exercise* of the Heart upon such Subjects, is the most *certain way* to destroy the Power of Sin; because so far as we pray, so far we *renew* our Convictions, *enlighten* our Minds and *fortify* our Hearts by fresh Resolutions. We are therefore to consider the Necessity and Benefit of Prayer, not only as it is that which God *hears*, but also as it is that, which by its natural Tendency *alters* and *corrects* our Opinions and Judgments, and forms our Hearts to such Ways of Thinking, as are suitable to the Matter of our Prayers.

Now this is an unanswerable Argument for *frequency* and *continuance* in Prayer, since if Prayer at all convinces the Mind, frequency and continuance in Prayer, must be the most certain way to establish the Mind in a steady well-grounded State of Conviction. They therefore who are for short Prayers, because they suppose, that God does not *need* much entreaty, ought also to show, that the Heart of Man does not need Assistance of *much Prayer*, that it is so regular and uniform in its Tendency to God, so full of right Judgments and good Motions, as not to *need* that Strength and Light, and Help, which arises from *much praying*. For unless this be the State of our Hearts, we shall want much Prayer to *move* and *awake* ourselves, though but little was necessary to *excite* the Goodness of God. If therefore Men would consider Prayer, not only as it is an *Invocation* of God, but also as it is an *Exercise of holy Thoughts*, as it is an endeavour to *feel* and be affected with the great Truths of Religion, they would soon see, that though God is so good, as not to *need* much calling upon, yet that Man is so weak as to need much Assistance, and to be under a constant Necessity of that Help, and Light, and Improvement which arises from praying much.

It is perhaps for this Reason, that God promises to give to those who are *importunate* and ask *without ceasing*, to encourage us to practise that Exercise, which is the most natural Cure of the Disorders of our Souls. If God does not give to us at our first asking, if he only give to those who are importunate, it is not because our Prayers make any *Change* in God, but because our Importunity has made a change in *ourselves*, it has *altered*

our Hearts, and rendered us proper Objects of God's Gifts and Graces. When therefore we would know how much we ought to pray, we must consider how much our Hearts want to be altered, and remember that the great Work of Prayer, is to work upon ourselves; it is not to *move* and affect God, but it is to *move* and affect our own Hearts and fill them with such *Tempers* as God delights to reward.

Prayer is never so good a Preservation against Sin, it never so corrects and amends the Heart, as when we extend it to all the *Particulars* of our State, enumerating all our Wants, Infirmities, and Disorders, not because God needs to be informed of them, but because by this Means we inform ourselves, and make our Hearts in the best Manner acquainted with our true Condition. When our Prayers are thus particular, descending to all the Circumstances of our condition, they become by this Means a faithful Glass to us, and so often as we pray, so often we see ourselves in a true Light.

This is the most likely Means to raise in us proper Affections, to make us feel the Force and Truth of such Things, as are the Subject of our Devotions. Don't be content therefore with confessing yourself to be a *Sinner*, or with praying against Sin in *general*, for this will but little affect your Mind, it will only show you to yourself in such a State as all Mankind are in; but if you find yourself out, if you confess and lay open the Guilt of your own *particular Sins*, if you pray constantly against such particular Sins, as you find yourself most subject to, the *frequent Sight* of your own Sins, and your *constant deploring* of their Guilt, will give your Prayers Entrance into your Heart, and put you upon Measures how to amend your Life.

If you confess yourself only to be a *Sinner*, you only confess yourself to be a *Man*, but when you describe and confess your *own particular* Guilt, then you find Cause for your own *particular Sorrow*, then you give your Prayers all the Power they can have, to affect and wound your Hearts. In like manner, when you pray for God's Grace, don't be satisfied with a general Petition, but make your Prayers suitable to your Defects; and continue to ask for such Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit, as you find yourself most Defective in, for this will not only give Life to your Petitions, and make your Heart go along with them, but will also be the surest Means to fit and prepare you for such Graces, as you pray for.

Lastly, This Particularity in our Prayers, is the greatest Trial of the *Truth* of our Hearts.

A Man perhaps thinks he prays for Humility, because he has the Word, *Humility*, in his Prayers. But if he were to branch

out Humility into all its *particular Parts*, he would perhaps find himself not disposed to pray for them. If he were to represent to himself the several Particulars, which make a Man *poor in Spirit*, he would find his Heart not desirous of them. So that the only way to know the Truth of our Hearts, and whether we really pray for any Virtue, is to have all its Parts in our Prayers, and make our Petitions ask for it in all its Instances. If the *proud* Man were to pray daily, and frequently for Humility in all its Kinds, and to beg of God to remove him from all Occasions of *such Pride*, as is common to his *particular State*, and to disappoint him in all his Attempts, that were contrary to Humility, he would find, that such Prayers, would either conquer his Pride, or his Pride would put an End to his Prayers. For it would be impossible to live long in any Instances of Pride, if his daily and frequent Prayers, were Petitions against those particular Instances. Now everyone may make his private Devotions thus useful to him, if he has but Piety enough to intend it. For everyone may know his own State if he will; we indeed commonly say, that People are blind to themselves, and know the least of their true State. We pass this Judgment upon People, because we see them pretending to so many Virtues, which do not belong to them, and declaiming against Vices, to which they are the most subject. Therefore we say, that Men don't know themselves, but this is false Reasoning.

We see People often pretending to be *Rich*, now this is not, because they don't know their State, but because they would not have you to know it, and they presume it possible to impose upon you. Now the Case is just the same in all other Pretences. The false, the proud, the worldly Man that pretends to Fidelity, Humility, and Heavenly Affection, knows that he is neither Faithful, nor Humble, nor Heavenly-minded; he no more thinks he has these Virtues, than a Man thinks he has a great Estate, when he endeavours to be thought rich; he knows that he only affects the Reputation of these Virtues, and is only blind in this, that he imagines he imposes upon you, and passes for the Man he is not.

Every Man therefore has Knowledge enough of himself, to know how to make his Prayers particularly fitted to the Corruption and Disorders of his Heart, and when he is so desirous of Salvation, as to enter into such a Method of Prayer, he will find, that he has taken the best Means, to make his Prayers effectual Remedies against all his Sins. Let me now only add this one Word more, that he who has learned to *pray*, has learned the greatest Secret of a holy and happy Life. Which way soever else we let loose our Hearts, they will return unto us

again *empty* and *weary*. Time will convince the *vainest* and *blindest* Minds, that Happiness is no more to be found in the Things of this World, than it is to be dug out of the Earth. But when the Motions of our Hearts, are Motions of Piety, tending to God in constant Acts of Devotion, Love and Desire, then have we found Rest unto our Souls, then is it, that we have conquered the Misery of our Nature, and neither Love nor Desire in vain ; then is it, that we have found out a Good suited to our Natures, that is equal to all our Wants, that is, a constant Source of Comfort and Refreshment, that will fill us with Peace and joyful Expectations here, and eternal Happiness hereafter. For he that lives in the Spirit and Temper of Devotion, whose Heart is always full of God, lives at the *Top* of human Happiness, and is the furthest removed from all the Vanities and Vexations, which disturb and weary the Minds of Men, who are devoted to the World.

Chapter XIII.

All Christians are required to imitate the Life and Example of Jesus Christ.

OUR Religion teaches us, that as we have borne the Image of the Earthly, so we shall bear the Image of the Heavenly, that after our Death we shall rise to a State of Life and Happiness, like to that Life and Happiness, which our Blessed Saviour enjoys at the Right Hand of God. Since therefore it is the great End of our Religion to make us Fellow-Heirs with Christ, and Partakers of the same Happiness, it is not to be wondered at, that our Religion should require us to be like Christ in this Life, to imitate his Example, that we may enter into that State of Happiness, which he enjoys in the Kingdom of Heaven.

For how can we think that we are going to the Blessed Jesus, that we are to be hereafter as he is, unless we conform to his Spirit in this Life, and make it our great Endeavour to be what he was, when he was here. Let it therefore here be observed, that the *Nature* of our Religion teaches us this Duty in a more convincing Manner, than any particular Precepts concerning it. For the most ordinary Understanding must feel the Force and Reasonableness of this Argument. You are born to depart out of this World, to ascend to that State of Bliss,* to live in such

** is not till
the morning
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Enjoyment of God to all Eternity, as our Blessed Saviour now enjoys, you are therefore to live in the Spirit and Temper that he lived, and make yourselves first like him here, that you may be like him hereafter. So that we need not look for particular Texts of Scripture, which command us to imitate the Life of Christ, because we are taught this Duty by a Stronger and more convincing Authority; because as the End and Design of our Religion, is to make us one with Christ hereafter, Partakers of the same State of Life, so it plainly calls us to be one with him here, and to be Partakers of that same Spirit and Temper in which he lived on Earth. When it is said that we are to imitate the Life of Christ, it is not meant that we are called to the same manner of Life, or the same sort of Actions, for this cannot be, but it is certain that we are called to the same Spirit and Temper, which was the Spirit and Temper of our Blessed Saviour's Life and Actions. We are to be like him in Heart and Mind, to act by the same Rule, to look towards the same End, and to govern our Lives by the same Spirit. This is an Imitation of Jesus Christ, which is as necessary to Salvation, as it is necessary to believe in his Name. This is the sole End of all the Counsels, Commands and Doctrines of Christ, to make us like himself, to fill us with his *Spirit* and *Temper*, and make us live according to the Rule and Manner of his Life. As no Doctrines are true, but such as are according to the Doctrines of Christ, so it is equally certain, that no Life is regular or Christian, but such as is according to the Pattern and Example of the Life of Christ. For he lived as infallibly as he taught, and it is as irregular, to vary from his Example, as it is false, to dissent from his Doctrines. To live as he lived, is as certainly the one sole Way of living as we ought, as to believe as he taught, is the one sole Way of believing as we ought. I am, saith the Blessed Jesus, *The Way, the Truth, and the Life, no Man cometh unto the Father but by me.* Christians often hear these Words, and perhaps think that they have enough fulfilled them by believing in Jesus Christ. But they should consider, that when Jesus Christ saith he is the *Way*, his meaning is, that his way of Life is to be the way, in which all Christians are to live, and that it is by living after the manner of his Life, that any Man cometh unto the Father. So that the Doctrine of this Passage is this, that however we may call ourselves Christians, or Disciples of Christ, yet we cannot come unto God the Father, but by entering into that way of Life, which was the way of our Saviour's Life. And we must remember, that there is no other way besides this, nothing can possibly bring us to God, but that way of Life, which first makes us one with Christ, and teacheth us to

walk as he walked. For we may as well expect to go to a Heaven where Christ is not, as to go to that where he is, without the Spirit and Temper which carried him thither. If Christians would but suffer themselves to reflect upon this Duty, their own Minds would soon convince them of the Reasonableness and Necessity of it. For who can find the least Shadow of a Reason, why he should not imitate the Life of Christ, or why Christians should think of any other Rule of Life? It would be as easy to show that Christ acted amiss, as that we need not act after his Example. And to think that these are Degrees of Holiness, which though very good in themselves, are yet not necessary for us to aspire after, is the same Absurdity as to think, that it was not necessary for our Saviour to have been so perfect himself as he was. For, give but the Reason why such Degrees of Holiness and Purity became our Saviour, and you will give as good a Reason for us to aspire after them. For as the Blessed Jesus took not on him the Nature of Angels, but the Nature of Man, as he was in all Points made like unto us, Sin only excepted, so we are sure, that there was no Spirit or Temper that was Excellent in him, that recommended him to God, but would be also Excellent in us, and recommend us to God, if we could arrive at it.

If it should be said, that Jesus was the *Saviour* of the World, that he was born to *redeem* Mankind, was the *Son of God*, and therefore in a Condition so different from ours, that his Life can be no Rule of our Life. To this it may be answered, That these Differences don't make the Life of Christ to be less the *Rule* and *Model* of all Christians. For, as I observed before, it is the *Spirit* and *Temper* of Christ, that all Christians are to imitate, and not his particular Actions, they are to do their *proper Work* in that Spirit and Temper, in which Christ did the Work on which he was sent. So that although Christians are not Redeemers of the World as he was, though they have not his extraordinary Powers, nor that great Work to finish which he had, yet they have their Work to do in the manner that he did his; they have their Part to act, which though it be a different Part, must not be performed with a different Spirit, but with such Obedience to God, such Regard to his Glory, for such Ends of Salvation, for such Good of others, and with all such Holy Dispositions, as our Blessed Saviour manifested in every Part of his Life. A *Servant* of the lowest Order is in a very different State from his Master, yet we may very justly exhort such a one, to follow the Example of a pious and charitable Master, not because he can perform the *same Instances* of Piety and Charity, but because he may show the *same Spirit* of Piety and Charity in the Actions, which are proper to his State. This

may show us, that the different State of our Lord and Master leaves him still the *exact Rule* and *Pattern* of his lowest Servants, who though they cannot come up to the Greatness of his Actions, may yet act according to that Spirit from whence they proceeded; and then are they true Followers of Christ, when they are following his Spirit and Temper, acting according to his Ends and Designs, and doing that in their several States, which Christ did in his.

The Blessed Jesus came into the World to save the World; now we must enter into this same Design, and Make *Salvation* the greatest Business of our Lives; though we cannot, like him, contribute towards it, yet we must contribute all that we can, and make the Salvation of ourselves and others, the one only great Care of our Lives.

The *poor Widow's Mites* were but a small Matter in themselves, yet as they were the utmost she could do, our Blessed Saviour set them above the larger Contributions of the Rich. This may encourage People in every State of Life to be contented with their *Capacity* of doing good, provided that they do but act up to it. Let no one think that he is too low, too mean and private to follow his Lord and Master in the Salvation of Souls, let him but add his Mite, and if it be all that he hath, he shall be thought to have done much, and be reckoned amongst those who have best performed their Master's Will. It is not meant by this, that all People are to be Preachers and Teachers of Religion, no more than all are to be *Apostles, or all Prophets, or all Workers of Miracles*. Christians are like Members of one and the same Body, they are as different from one another as Hands and Eyes, and have as different Offices to perform, yet may their different Parts serve and promote the same common End. As the *Eye cannot say to the Hand, I have no need of thee, nor again the Head to the Feet, I have no need of you*,* so neither can the learned Teacher say he hath no need of the private unlearned Person. For the Work of Salvation is carried on by all Hands, as well by him that is taught, as by him that teacheth. For an *unlearned* Person by being desirous of Instruction, and careful to comply with it, may by these very Dispositions promote Salvation in as true a Degree, as he who is able and willing to instruct. This teachable Disposition may more effectually draw others to a like Temper of Mind, than another Man's Ability and Care of teaching. And perhaps in many Instances, the Success of the Teacher is more owing to the Manners and Example of some Person that is taught, than to the Power and

* 1 Cor. xii. 21.

Strength of the Teacher. Therefore though, as the Apostle saith, all have *not the Gifts of Healing*, though all do not *speak with Tongues*, yet all have *some Part* that they may act in the Salvation of Mankind, and may follow their Lord and Master in the great Work, for which he came down from Heaven. We must not therefore think, that it is only the Business of *Clergymen* to carry on the Work of Salvation, but must remember, that we are engaged in the same Business, though not in the same Manner. Had the *poor Widow* thought herself excused from taking Care of the Treasury, had she thought that it belonged only to the *Rich* to contribute to it, we find that she had been mistaken, and had lost that great Commendation which our Saviour bestowed upon her. Now it may be that some Widows may be so very poor, as not to have so much as a *Mite* to give to the Treasury, who must therefore content themselves with the Charity of their Hearts; but this can never happen in the Business of Salvation, here no one can be so poor, so destitute, so mean and private, as not to have a *Mite* to contribute towards it. For no Circumstances of Life can hinder us from being *Examples* of Piety and Goodness, and making our Lives a *Lesson* of Instruction to all who are about us. And he that lives an exemplary Life, though his State be ever so *poor* and *mean*, is *largely* contributing to the Salvation of others, and proving himself the *best Follower* of his Lord and Master.

This therefore is the first great Instance in which we are to follow the Example and Spirit of our Blessed Saviour. He came to save the World, to raise Mankind to a Happiness in Heaven, we must therefore all consider ourselves as called to carry on this *great Work*, to concur with our Saviour in this glorious Design. For how can we think ourselves to be his *Followers*, if we do not follow him in that for which alone he came into the World? How can we be like the Saviour of the World, unless the *Salvation* of the World be our chief and constant Care? We cannot save the World as he saved it, but yet we can contribute our Mite towards it. *How knowest thou, O Wife, saith the Apostle, whether thou shalt save thy Husband? Or how knowest thou, O Man, whether thou shalt save thy Wife?** This shows very plainly, that *all Persons* may have a great Share in the Salvation of those who are near them, and that they are to consider themselves as expressly called to this great Work. For the Apostle uses it as the same Argument both to Husband and Wife, which supposes that it is a Business, in which one is as much concerned as the other. The *Woman* we know is not

* 1 Cor. vii. 16.

allowed to speak in the *Church*, yet is she here instructed with *some share* in the Salvation of the World, she is called to this great Work, and supposed equally capable of saving the Husband, as the Husband of saving the Wife. Now what is here said of Husband and Wife, we must extend to *every State* and Relation of this Life; *Brothers* and *Sisters*, *Relations*, *Friends*, and *Neighbours* must all consider themselves as called to the *Edification* and Salvation of one another. How knowest thou, *O Sister*, whether thou shalt save thy *Brother*? How knowest thou, *O Man*, whether thou shalt save thy *Neighbour*, is a Way of thinking that ought never to be out of our Minds. For this would make *Brothers* and *Sisters* bear with one another, if they considered that they are to do that for one another, which Christ has done for all the World. This Reflection would turn our Anger towards bad Relations into Care and Tenderness for their Souls, we should not be glad to get away from them, but give them more of our Company, and be more exact in our Behaviour towards them, always supposing it possible, that our *good Conversation* may some time or other affect them, and that God may make use of us as a Means of their Salvation.

Eutropius is very good and pious himself, but then his Fault is, that he seeks only the Conversation of pious and good People; he is careful and exact in his Behaviour towards his virtuous Friends and Acquaintance, always studying to oblige them, and never thinking he has done enough for them; but gets away from, and avoids those that are of another Temper. Now *Eutropius* should recollect, that this is acting like a *Physician* who would take care of the *Healthy*, and disregard those who are *Sick*. He should remember, that his irreligious Friends and Relations are the very Persons who are fallen to his Care, to be edified by him, and that he is as directly called to take care of their Salvation, as the Husband to take care of the unbelieving Wife. *Eutropius* therefore, if he would imitate his Lord and Master, must apply to the *lost Sheep of the House of Israel*, and endeavour by all the innocent Arts of pleasing and conversing with his Friends, to gain them to Repentance. We must not excuse ourselves from this Care, by saying that our Relations are obstinate, hardened, and careless of all our Behaviour towards them, but must support ourselves with the Apostle's Argument, how knowest thou, *O Man*, whether it will be always so, or whether thou mayest not at last save thy Relation?

The Apostle saith, *Destroy not him with thy Meat for whom Christ died.** We may therefore justly reason thus with our-

* Rom xiv. 15.

selves, that as it lies much in our Power to hinder the Salvation, so it must be in our Power in an equal Degree to edify and promote the Salvation of those whom Jesus Christ died to save. Destroy not therefore by thy Negligence, by thy Impatience, by thy Want of Care, that Relation for whom Christ died, nor think that thou hast done enough to save those who relate to thee, till there is no more that thou canst do for them. This is the State in which all Christians are to consider themselves, as appointed by God in their several Stations to carry on that great Work, for which Christ came into the World. *Clergymen* are not the only Men who have a *Cure* of Souls, but every Christian has some People about him, whose Salvation he is obliged to be careful of, with whom he is to live in all Godliness and Purity, that they may have the Benefit of his Example and Assistance in their Duty to God. So that all Christians, though ever so *low* and *mean*, and *private*, must consider themselves as *hired* by Christ to work in his *Vineyard*; for as no Circumstances of Life can hinder us from saving ourselves, so neither can they hinder us from promoting the Salvation of others. Now though we have according to our different Stations different Parts to act, yet if we are careful of that Part which is fallen to our Share, we may make ourselves equally Objects of God's Favours.

Thou, it may be, art not a *Prophet*, God has not honoured thee with this Post in his Service, yet needest thou not fall short of this Happiness; for our Saviour hath said, *That he that receiveth a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet, shall receive a Prophet's Reward.* Now this shows us that though all Men have not the same Part to act in the common Salvation, yet that none will be losers by that State they are in, if they be but true to the particular Duties of it. If they do all the Good they can in their *particular State*, they will be looked upon with such Acceptance as the *poor Widow* who gave all that she had. Hence we may learn the Greatness of their Folly, who neglecting the exact Performance of such Duties as fall within their Power, are pleasing themselves with the great Things they would do, were they but in another State.

Clemens, has his Head full of imaginary Piety. He is often proposing to himself what he would do if he had a great Estate; he would outdo all charitable Men who are gone before him: He would retire from the World, he would have no Equipage, he would allow himself only Necessaries, that Widows and Orphans, the Sick and Distressed, might find Relief out of his Estate. He tells you that all other Ways of Spending an Estate is Folly and Madness.

Now *Clemens* has at present a moderate Estate which he

spends upon himself in the same Vanities and Indulgences, as other People do : He might live upon one Third of his Fortune, and make the rest the Support of the Poor, but he does nothing of all this that is in his Power, but pleases himself with what he would do, if his Power were greater. Come to thy Senses, *Clemens*, do not talk what thou wouldst do, if thou wast an *Angel*, but consider what thou canst do as thou art a *Man*. Make the best Use of thy *present State*, do now as thou thinkest thou wouldst do with a great Estate, be *sparing*, *deny* thyself, *abstain* from all Vanities, that the Poor may be better maintained, and then thou art as Charitable as thou canst be in any Estate. Remember the poor *Widow's Mite*.

Fervidus, is a regular Man, and exact in the Duties of Religion, but then the Greatness of his Zeal to be doing Things that he cannot, makes him overlook those little Ways of doing Good, which are every Day in his Power. *Fervidus* is only sorry that he is not in Holy Orders, and that his Life is not spent in a Business the most desirable of all Things in the World. He is often thinking what Reformation he would make in the World, if he were a *Priest* or *Bishop* ; he would have devoted himself wholly to God and Religion, and have had no other Care, but how to save Souls. But do not believe yourself, *Fervidus*, for if you desired in earnest to be a Clergyman, that you might devote yourself entirely to the Salvation of others, why then are you not doing all that you can in the State that you are now in ? Would you take extraordinary Care of a *Parish* or a *Diocese*, why then are you not as extraordinary in the Care of your Family ? If you think the Care of other Peoples' Salvation, to be the happiest Business in the World, why do you neglect the Care of those who are fallen into your Hands ? Why do you show no Concern for the Souls of your Servants ? If they do their Business for which you hired them, you never trouble your Head about their Christianity. Nay, *Fervidus*, you are so far from labouring to make those who are about you truly Devout and Holy, that you almost put it out of their Power to be so. You hire a *Coachman* to carry you to Church, and to sit in the Street with your *Horses*, whilst you are attending upon Divine Service. You never ask him how he supplies the loss of Divine Service, or what means he takes to preserve himself in a State of Piety. You imagine that if you were a *Clergyman*, you would be ready to lay down your Life for your Flock, yet you cannot lay aside a *little State* to promote the Salvation of your Servants. It is not desired of you, *Fervidus*, to die a *Martyr* for your Brethren ; you are only required to go to *Church* on Foot, to spare some *State* and *Attendance*, to bear sometimes with a

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little *Rain* and *Dirt*, rather than keep those Souls which are as dear to God and Christ as your's is, from their *full Share* in the common Worship of Christians. Do but deny yourself such small matters as these, let us but see that you can take the least Trouble, to make all your Servants and Dependants true Servants of God, and then you shall be allowed to imagine, what Good you would have done, had you been devoted to the Altar.

Eugenia is a good young Woman, full of pious Dispositions; she is intending, if ever she has a Family, to be the *best Mistress* of it that ever was, her House shall be a *School* of Religion, and her Children and Servants shall be brought up in the strictest Practice of Piety; she will spend her time, and live in a very different Manner from the rest of the World. It may be so, *Eugenia*, the Piety of your Mind makes me think that you intend all this with Sincerity. But you are not yet at the Head of a Family, and perhaps never may be. But, *Eugenia*, you have now one Maid, and you do not know what Religion she is of; she dresses you for the Church, you ask her for what you want, and then leave her to have as little Christianity as she pleases. You turn her away, you hire another, she comes, and goes no more instructed or edified in Religion by living with you, than if she had lived with any Body else. And all this comes to pass, because your Mind is taken up with greater Things, and you reserve yourself to make a whole Family Religious, if ever you come to be Head of it. You need not stay, *Eugenia*, to be so extraordinary a Person; the Opportunity is now in your Hands, you may now spend your time, and live in as different a Manner from the rest of the World, as ever you can in any other State. Your *Maid* is your Family at present, she is under your Care, be now that religious Governess that you intend to be; teach her the *Catechism*, hear her read, exhort her to pray, take her with you to Church, persuade her to love the Divine Service, as you love it, edify her with your Conversation, fill her with your own Notions of Piety, and spare no Pains to make her as Holy and Devout as yourself. When you do thus much Good in your present State, then are you that extraordinary Person that you intend to be, and till you thus live up to your present State, there is but little Hopes that the altering of your State, will alter your Way of Life.

I might easily produce more Instances of this Kind, where People are vainly pleasing themselves with an *imaginary* Perfection to be arrived at some time or other, when they are in different Circumstances, and neglecting that real Good which is proper to their State, and always in their Power. But these are, I hope, sufficient to show my Reader how to ex-

amine his own Life, and find out himself, if I have not done it for him.

There is no Falseness of our Hearts, that leads us into greater Errors, than imagining that we shall some time or other be better than we are, or need be now ; for *Perfection* has no Dependence upon *external* Circumstances, it wants no *Times* or *Opportunities*, but it is then in its highest State, when we are making the *best Use* of that Condition in which we are placed. The *poor Widow* did not stay till she was *rich*, before she contributed to the Treasury, she readily brought her Mite, and, little as it was, it got her the Reward and Commendation of great Charity. We must therefore all of us imitate the Wisdom of the poor Widow, and exercise every Virtue in the same Manner, that she exercised her Charity. We must stay for no Time or Opportunities, wait for no *Change of Life*, or *fancied Abilities*, but remember that every time is a time for Piety and Perfection. Everything but Piety has its Hindrances, but Piety, the more it is hindered, the higher it is raised. Let us therefore not vainly say, that if we had lived in our Saviour's Days, we would have followed him, or that if we could work Miracles, we would devote ourselves to his Glory. For to follow Christ as far as we can in our present State, and to do all that we are able for his Glory, is as acceptable to him, as if we were working Miracles in his Name.

The Greatness that we are to aim at, is not the Greatness of our Saviour's *particular Actions*, but it is the Greatness of his Spirit and Temper, that we are to act by in all Parts of our Life. Now every State of Life, whether *public* or *private*, whether *bond* or *free*, whether *high* or *low*, is capable of being conducted and governed by the same *Spirit* and *Temper*, and consequently every State of Life may carry us to the same Degree of Likeness to Christ. So that though we can in *no respect* come up to the Actions, yet we must in every respect act by the Spirit and Temper of Christ. *Learn of me*, saith our Blessed Lord, *for I am meek and lowly in Heart*. He doth not say, be ye in the State and Condition that I am in, for that were impossible, yet though ever so different in State and Condition, he calls upon us to be like him in Meekness and Lowliness of Heart and Spirit, and makes it necessary for us to go through our particular State with that Spirit and Temper, which was the Spirit and Temper of his whole Life. So far therefore as we can learn the Heart and Spirit of our Saviour, so far as we can discover the Wisdom, Purity, and Heavenliness of his Designs, so far we have learned of what Spirit and Temper we ought to be of, and must no more think ourselves at liberty to act by any other Spirit, than we are

at liberty to chose another Saviour. In all our Actions and Ways of Life we must appeal to this Rule, we must reckon ourselves no further living like Christians, than as we live like Christ, and be assured, that so far as we depart from the Spirit of Christ, so far we depart from that State to which he has called us. For the Blessed Jesus has called us to live as he did, to walk in the same Spirit, that he walked, that we may be in the same Happiness, with him when this Life is at an end. And indeed, who can think that anything but the *same Life*, can lead to the *same State*?

When our Blessed Saviour was upon the Cross, he thus prayed for his Enemies, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.** Now all Christians readily acknowledge that this Temper of Christ, is to be the *exact Rule* of our Temper on the like Occasion, that we are not to fall short of it, but must be perfectly like Christ in this Charity towards our Murderers. But then perhaps they do not enough consider, that for the very same Reason, every other Temper of Christ, is as much the *exact Rule* of all Christians, as his Temper towards his Murderers. For are we to be thus disposed towards our Persecutors and Murderers, because Christ was so disposed towards his? And is it not as good an Argument that we are to be so, and so disposed towards the World and all worldly Enjoyments, because Christ was so disposed towards them? He was as right in one case as the other, and no more erred in his Temper towards *worldly Things*, than in his Temper towards his *Enemies*. Should we not fail to be good Christians, if we fell short of that forgiving Spirit, which the Blessed Jesus showed upon the Cross? And shall we not equally fail to be good Christians, if we fall short of that humble and meek Spirit which he showed in all his Life? Can any one tell why the Temper of Christ towards his Enemies, should be more the exact Measure of our Temper, than any other Spirit that he showed upon any other Occasion? Think, *Reader*, if thou canst find a Reason, why thou mayest not as well forgive thy Enemies less than Christ forgave his, as to love the World more than he loved it? If thou canst tell why it is not as dangerous to be wanting in the Humility, Meekness, and other Tempers of Christ, as to be wanting in his Charity, towards his Enemies. We must therefore either own, that we may be good Christians, without the *forgiving Spirit*, which Christ then exercised, or we must own that we are not good Christians, whenever we depart from the Spirit of Christ in any *other Instances*. For the Spirit of Christ consisted as much in Meekness,

* Luke xxiii. 34.

Humility, Devotion, and Renunciation of the World, as in the *forgiving* his Enemies: They therefore who are contrary to Christ in any of these Tempers, are no more like to Christ, than they who are contrary to him in this forgiving Spirit. If you were to see a Christian dying without this Temper towards those that destroyed him, you would be frightened at it; you would think that Man in a dreadful State, that died without that Temper in which Christ died. But then, remember, that he judges as rightly, who thinks it equally dreadful to live in any other Spirit, that is not the Spirit of Christ. If thou art not living in that *Meekness* and *Lowliness* of Heart, in that *Disregard* of the World, that *Love of God*, that *Self-denial* and *Devotion* in which our Saviour lived, thou art as unlike to him, as he that *dies* without that *Temper*, in which he died.

The short of the Matter is this, the Spirit and Temper of Christ, is the *strict Measure* of the Spirit and Temper of all Christians. It is not in this or that particular Temper of Christ, that we are to follow his Example, but we are to aspire after his whole Spirit, to be in all things as he was, and think it as dangerous to depart from his Spirit and Temper in one Instance, as in another. For besides that there is the same Authority in all that our Saviour did, which obliges us to conform to his whole Example: Can any one tell us why we should have more value for this World, than our Saviour had? What is there in our *State* and *Circumstances*, that can make it proper for us to have more affection for the Things of this Life, than our Saviour had? Is the World any more our *Happiness* than it was his Happiness? Are Riches, and Honours, and Pleasures, any more our *proper Good*, than they were his? Are we any more born for this Life, than our Saviour was? Are we in less danger of being *Corrupted* by its Enjoyments, than he was? Are we more at leisure to take up *our rest*, and spend our time in worldly Satisfaction than he was? Have we a work upon our Hands that we can *more easily* finish, than he could finish his? That requires of us less *Mortification* and *Self-denial*, less *Devotion* and *Watching*, than our Saviour's required of him? Now as nothing of this can be said, so nothing can be said in our Excuse, if we follow not our Saviour's Temper in this Respect. As this World is as little our Happiness, and more our Danger, than it was his, as we have a Work to finish that requires *all our Strength*, that is as *contrary* to the World, as our Saviour's was, it is plain, there was no Reason or Necessity of his Disregard of the World, but what is the same Reason and Necessity for us to disregard it in the same Manner.

Again, take another Instance of our Blessed Saviour's Spirit,

*I came down from Heaven, saith he, not to do my own Will, but the Will of him that sent me.**

And again, *My Meat and Drink is to do the Will of him that sent me.* Now can any Christian show, why he may think otherwise of himself, than our Saviour here thought? Or that he need be *less devoted* to the Glory of God than he was? What is there in our *Nature* and *Condition* to make any Difference of this Kind? Do we not stand in the same Relation to God that our Saviour did? Have we not the same Nature that he had? Are we too great to be made Happy in the same Way that he was? Or can anything else be the Happiness of our Nature, but that which was the Happiness of his? Was he a *sufferer*, a *loser*, did he leave the true Happiness of *human Life*, by devoting himself to the Will of God? Or can this be our Case, though it was not his? Can we be *losers*, by looking to God *alone*, and *devoting* ourselves to his Glory? Was it not the Greatness and Happiness of our Saviour that he lived to God alone? And is there any other Happiness or Greatness for us, but by making that the End and Aim of our Life, which he made the End and Aim of his Life? For we may as well seek out for another God, as for another Happiness, or another Way to it, than that in which Christ is gone before us. He did not mistake the Nature of *Man*, or the Nature of the *World*, he did not overlook any *real Felicity*, or pass by any *solid Good*, he only made the best Use of human Life, and made it the Cause of all the Happiness and Glory that can arise from it. To find a Reason therefore, why we should live otherwise than he lived, why we should less seek the Glory of God than he sought it, is to find a Reason why we should less promote our own Greatness and Glory. For our State and Condition in this Life lays us under *all the Obligations*, that our Saviour was under to live as he did, his Life is as much our *right Way*, as it was his, and his Spirit and Temper is as *necessary* for our Condition, as it was for his. For this World and all the Things of the World signify as *little* to us, as they did to him; we are no more in our *true State*, till we are got out of this World, than he was; and we have no other way to arrive at true Felicity and Greatness, but by so *devoting* ourselves to God, as our Blessed Saviour did. We must therefore make it the great Business and Aim of our Lives, to be like Christ, and this not in a *loose* or *general* Way, but with great *Nicety* and *Exactness*, always looking to his *Spirit*, to his *Ends* and *Designs*, to his *Tempers*, to his Ways and Conversation in the World, as the *exact Model* and *Rule* of our Life.

* John vi. 38.

Again, *Learn of me*, saith our Blessed Saviour, *for I am Meek and Lowly of Heart*, Now this Passage is to be considered, not as a Piece of good Advice, that would be of use to us, but as a *positive* Command requiring a *necessary* Duty. And if we are commanded to learn of Christ Meekness and Lowliness, then we are commanded in the same positive Manner, to learn *his* Meekness and Lowliness. For if we might take up with a Meekness and Lowliness of Heart, that was *not his*, then it would not be necessary to learn them of him. Since therefore we are commanded to learn them of him, it is plain, that it is his Meekness and Lowliness that we are commanded to learn; that is, we are to be Meek and Lowly, not in any *loose* or *general* Sense of the Words, not according to the *Opinions* and *Practices* of Men, but in such *Truth* and *Reality* as Christ was Meek and Lowly.

It ought also to be observed, that there must be something very *Extraordinary* in these Dispositions of the Heart, from the manner in which we are taught them. It is only in this Place, that our Saviour says expressly, *Learn of me*; and when he says, *Learn of me*, he does not say, for I am just and equitable, or kind or holy, but *I am meek and lowly of Heart*; as if he would teach us, that these are the Tempers which most of all *distinguish* his Spirit, and which he most of all requires his Followers to learn of him. For consider, does Christ when he describes himself, choose to do it by *these Tempers*? When he calls upon us to learn of him, does he only mention *these Tempers*? And is not this a sufficient Proof that these are Tempers, which the Followers of Christ, are most of all obliged to learn, and that we are then most *unlike* to Christ, when we are wanting in them? Now as our great Lord and Master has made these Characters, the *distinguishing* Characters of his Spirit, it is plain, that they are to be the *distinguishing* Characters of our Spirit, for we are only so far his, as we are like him. Consider also, was he *more lowly* than he need have been? Did he practise any Degrees of Humility that were *unnecessary*? This can no more be said, than he can be charged with Folly. But can there be any Instances of Lowliness which became him, that are not necessary for us? Does our State and Condition excuse us from any kind of Humility, that were necessary for him? Are we higher in our Nature, more raised in our Condition, or more in Favour of God than he was? Are there *Dignities*, *Honours*, and *Ornaments* of Life which we may delight in, though he might not? We must own these Absurdities, or else acknowledge, that we are to breathe the same *lowly Spirit*, act with the *same Meekness*, and practise the *same humble* Behaviour that he did. So that the Matter comes plainly to this Conclusion, either that Christ

was more humble and lowly than his Nature and Condition required, or we are under the same Necessity of as great Humility, till we can prove that we are in a higher state than he was.

Now as it is plainly the Meekness and Lowliness of Christ, that we are to Practise, why should we think, that we have attained unto it, unless we show forth these Tempers in *such Instances*, as our Saviour showed them? For, can we suppose, that we are Meek and Lowly as he was, if we live in *such Ways* of Life, and seek after *such Enjoyments* as his Meekness and Lowliness would not allow him to follow? Did he mistake the *proper Instances* of Lowliness? If not, it must be our great Mistake not to follow his Steps. Did his Lowliness of Heart make him disregard the Distinction of this Life, avoid the Honours, Pleasures, and Vanities of Greatness? And can we think that we are living by the same lowly Spirit, whilst we are seeking after all the Dignities and Ornaments both of our Persons and Conditions? What may we not think, if we can think after this Manner? For let us speak home to this Point, either our Saviour was *wise, judicious*, and governed by a *Divine Spirit* in these Tempers, or he was not; to say that he was not, is horrid *Blasphemy*, and to say that he was, is saying, that we are neither *wise*, nor *judicious*, nor governed by a *Divine Spirit*, unless we show the *same Tempers*. Perhaps you will say, that though you are to be *lowly in Heart* like Christ, yet you need not disregard the Ornaments, Dignities, and Honours of Life, and that you can be as truly meek and lowly in the *Figure and Show* of Life, as in any other State.

Answer me, therefore, this one Question. Was our Saviour's Lowliness, which showed itself in an utter disregard of all *Pomp* and *Figure* of Life, a *false Lowliness* that mistook its *proper Objects*, and showed itself in Things *not* necessary? Did he abstain from Dignities and Splendour, and deny himself Enjoyments which he might with the *same Lowliness* of Heart have taken Pleasure in? Answer but this Question plainly, and then you will plainly determine this Point; if you justify our Saviour, as being *truly* and *wisely* Humble, you condemn yourself, if you think of any *other* Humility, than *such* as he practised. Consider further, that if you were to hear a Person reasoning after this Manner in any other Instance, if he should pretend to be of an *inward Temper* contrary to the *outward Course* of his Life, you would think him very absurd. If a Man that lived in an outward Course of *Duels* and *Quarrels*, should say, that in his Heart he forgave all Injuries, allowed of no Resentments. If another whose common Life was full of *Bitterness*, and *Wrath*, and *Evil-Speaking*, should pretend that in his Heart he loved

his Neighbour as himself, we should reckon them amongst those that were more than a little touched in their Heads. Now to pretend to any Temper contrary to our *outward Actions*, is the same Absurdity in one Case as in another. And for a Man to say, that he is lowly in Heart, whilst he is seeking the *Ornaments, Dignities, and Show of Life*, is the same Absurdity, as for a Man to say, that he is of a *meek* and forgiving Spirit, whilst he is seeking and revenging *Quarrels*. For to disregard and avoid the Pomp and Figure, and vain Ornaments of worldly Greatness, is as essential to Lowliness of Mind, as the avoiding of *Duels* and *Quarrels* is essential to Meekness and Charity. As therefore there is but *one way* of being charitable as our Saviour was, and that by such outward Actions towards our Enemies as he showed, so is there but *one way* of being lowly in Heart as he was, and that by living in such a Disregard of all vain and worldly Distinctions, as he lived. Let us not therefore deceive ourselves; let us not fancy that we are truly Humble, though living in all the *Pride* and *Splendour* of Life; let us not imagine that we have any Power to render ourselves Humble and Lowly any other way, than by an humble and lowly Course of Life. Christ is our *Pattern* and *Example*, he was content to be *one Person*, he did not pretend to *Impossibilities*, to reconcile the *Pride* of Life with the *Lowliness* of Religion, but renounced the one, that he might be a true Example of the other. He had a Power of working Miracles, but to *reconcile* an humble and lowly Heart with the vain *Ornaments* of our Persons, the *Dignities of State* and *Equipage*, was a *Miracle* he did not pretend to. It is only for us great Masters in the science of Virtue, to have this mighty Power; we can be humble, it seems, at *less Expense* than our Saviour was, without supporting ourselves in it by a way of Life suitable to it. We can have *Lowliness* in our Hearts, with *Paint* and *Patches* upon our Faces, we can deck and adorn our Persons in the Spirit of Humility, make all the Show that we can in the *Pride* and *Figure* of the World, with Christian Lowliness in some *little Corner* of our Hearts.

But suppose now that all this was possible, and that we could preserve an humble and lowly Temper in a way of Life contrary to it. Is it any advantage to a Man to be one Thing in his *Heart*, and another Thing in his *Way of Life*? Is it any excuse, to say that a Man is kind and tender in his Heart, though his Life hath a Course of contrary Actions? Is it not a greater Reproach to him, that he lives a churlish Life with Tenderness in his Heart? Is he not that Servant that shall be beaten with many stripes for sinning against his Heart and Conscience? Now it is the same Thing in the Case before us. Are you *humble* and *lowly*

in your Heart, is it not therefore a greater Sin in you, not to practise Humility and Lowliness in *your Life*? If you live contrary to Conscience, are you not in a State of greater Guilt? Are not lowly Actions, an humble Course of Life, as much the proper Exercise of Humility, as a charitable Life and Actions, is the proper Exercise of Charity?

If therefore a Man may be excused for not living a charitable Life, because of a supposed Charity in his Heart, then may you think it excusable to forbear a Lowliness of Life and Actions, because of a pretended Humility in your Mind. Consider further, is any Thing so agreeable to a proud Person, as to *shine* and make a *Figure* in the Pride of Life? Is such a Person content with being high in *Heart* and *Mind*? Is he not uneasy till he can add a way of Life *suitable* to it? Till his *Person*, his *State*, and *Figure* in Life appear in a Degree of Pride suitable to the Pride of his Heart? Nay, can any Thing be a greater Pain to a proud Man, than to be forced to live in an humble lowly State of Life? Now if this be true of Pride, must not the contrary be as true of Humility? Must not Humility in an equal Degree dispose us to ways that are contrary to the Pride of Life, and *suitable* and *proper* to Humility? Must it not be the same Absurdity, to suppose a Man content with *Humility of Heart*, without adding a Life *suitable* to it, as to suppose a Man content with a *secret Pride* of his Heart, without seeking such a *State* of Life as is according to it? Nay, is it not the same Absurdity, to suppose an humble Man seeking all the *State* of a Life of Pride, as to suppose a proud Man desiring only *Meanness* and *Obscurity*, and unable to relish any Appearance of Pride? These Absurdities are equally manifest and plain in one Case as in the other. So that what way soever we examine this Matter, it appears, that a Humility of Mind, that is not a Humility of *Person*, of *Life* and *Action*, is but a *mere Pretence*, and as contrary to common Sense, as it is contrary to the *Doctrine* and *Example* of our Saviour.

I shall now leave this Subject to the Reader's own Meditation, with this one further Observation.

We see the Height of our calling, that we are called to follow the Example of our Lord and Master, and to go through this World with his Spirit and Temper. Now nothing is so likely a Means to fill us with his Spirit and Temper, as to be frequent in reading the *Gospels*, which contain the History of his Life and Conversation in the World. We are apt to think, that we have sufficiently read a Book, when we have so read it, as to know what it contains, this reading may be sufficient as to many Books, but as to the *Gospels*, we are not to think that we have

ever read them enough, because we have often read and heard what they contain. But we must read them, as we do our *Prayers*, not to know what they contain, but to fill our Hearts with the Spirit of them. There is as much Difference betwixt reading, and reading, as there is betwixt praying, and praying. And as no one prays well, but he who is daily and constant in Prayer, so no one can read the Scriptures to sufficient Advantage, but he who is daily and constant in the reading of them. By thus conversing with our Blessed Lord, looking into his Actions and manner of Life, hearing his Divine Sayings, his Heavenly Instructions, his Accounts of the Terrors of the Damned, his Descriptions of the Glory of the Righteous, we should find our Hearts formed and disposed to *Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness*. Happy they, who saw the Son of God upon Earth converting Sinners, and calling *fallen Spirits* to return to God! And next happy are we, who have his Discourses, Doctrines, Actions, and Miracles which then converted *Jews* and Heathens into *Saints and Martyrs*, still preserved to fill us with the same Heavenly Light, and lead us to the same State of Glory.

Chapter XIV.

An Exhortation to Christian Perfection.

WHOEVER hath read the foregoing Chapters with Attention, is, I hope, sufficiently instructed in the Knowledge of *Christian Perfection*. He hath seen that it requireth us to *devote* ourselves *wholly* unto God, to make the Ends and Designs of Religion, the Ends and Designs of all our Actions. That it calleth us to *be born again of God*, to live by the Light of his Holy Spirit, to *renounce the World* and all *worldly Tempers*, to practise a constant, *universal Self-denial*, to make daily War with the Corruption and Disorder of our Nature, to prepare ourselves for *Divine Grace* by a Purity and Holiness of Conversation, to avoid all Pleasures and Cares which *grieve the Holy Spirit*, and separate him from us, to live in a *daily constant State* of Prayer and Devotion, and as the Crown of all to imitate the *Life and Spirit* of the Holy Jesus.

It now only remains, that I exhort the Reader to labour after this Christian Perfection. Were I to exhort anyone to the Study of *Poetry* or *Eloquence*, to labour to be *Rich* and *Great*, or to

spend his Time in *Mathematics* or other Learning, I could only produce such Reasons as are fit to delude the Vanity of Men, who are ready to be taken with any Appearance of Excellence. For if the same Person were to ask me, what it signifies to be a *Poet* or *Eloquent*, what Advantage it would be to him, to be a great *Mathematician*, or a great *Statesman*, I must be forced to answer, that these Things would signify just as much to him, as they now signify to those Poets, Orators, Mathematicians, and Statesmen, whose Bodies have been a long while lost amongst common Dust. For if a Man will but be so thoughtful and inquisitive, as to put the Question to every human Enjoyment, and ask what real Good it would bring along with it, he would soon find, that every Success amongst the Things of this Life, leaves us just in the same State of Want and Emptiness in which it found us. If a Man asks why he should labour to be the first *Mathematician*, *Orator*, or *Statesman*, the Answer is easily given, because of the *Fame* and *Honour* of such a Distinction, but if he were to ask again, why he should thirst after Fame and Honour, or what Good they would do him, he must stay long enough for an Answer. For when we are at the *Top* of all human Attainments, we are still at the *Bottom* of all human Misery, and have made no further Advancement towards true Happiness, than those, whom we see in the Want of all these Excellences. Whether a Man die before he has written *Poems*, compiled *Histories*, or raised an *Estate*, signifies no more than whether he died an hundred, or a thousand Years ago.

On the contrary, when anyone is exhorted to labour after Christian Perfection, if he then asks what Good it will do him, the Answer is ready, that it would do him a Good, which Eternity alone can measure, that it will deliver him from a State of Vanity and Misery, that it will raise him from the poor Enjoyments of an animal Life, that it will give him a glorious Body, carry him in spite of Death and the Grave to live with God, be Glorious among Angels and Heavenly Beings, and be full of an infinite Happiness to all Eternity. If therefore we could but make Men so reasonable, as to make the shortest Inquiry into the Nature of Things, we should have no Occasion to exhort them to strive after Christian Perfection. *Two Questions*, we see, put an End to all the vain Projects and Designs of human Life, they are all so empty and useless to our Happiness, that they cannot stand the Trial of a *second* Question. And on the other Hand, 'tis but asking whether Christian Perfection tends, to make us have no other Care. One single Thought upon the eternal Happiness that it leads to, is sufficient to make all People *Saints*.

This shows us how inexcusable all Christians are, who are devoted to the Things of this Life, it is not because they want *fine Parts*, or are unable to make *deep Reflections*, but it is because they reject the first Principles of *common Sense*, they won't so much as ask what those Things are, which they are labouring after. Did they but use thus much Reason, we need not desire them to be wiser, in order to seek only eternal Happiness. As a Shadow at the first Trial of the Hand, appears to have no Substance, so all Human Enjoyments sink away into nothing at the first Approach of a *serious Thought*. We must not therefore complain of the Weakness and Ignorance of our Nature, or the deceitful Appearances of worldly Enjoyments, because the lowest Degree of Reason, if listened to, is sufficient to discover the Cheat. If you will, you may *blindly* do what the rest of the World are doing, you may follow the *Cry*, and run yourself out of *Breath*, for you know not what. But if you will but show so much Sense, as to ask why you should take such a Chase, you will need no deeper a Reflection than this, to make you leave the Broad-way, and let the Wise and Learned, the Rich and Great be mad by themselves. Thus much common Sense will turn your Eyes towards God, will separate you from all the Appearances of worldly Felicity, and fill you with one only Ambition after eternal Happiness.

When *Pyrrhus* King of *Epirus*, told *Cineas* what great Conquests he intended to make, and how many Nations he would subdue, *Cineas* asked him what he would do, when all this was done? He answered, we will then live at Ease and enjoy ourselves and our Friends. *Cineas* replied to this Purpose, Why then, Sir, do we not *now* live at Ease and enjoy ourselves? If Ease and Quiet, be the utmost of our Views and Designs why do we run away from it at present? What Occasion for all these Battles and Expeditions all over the World?

The *Moral* of this Story is very extensive, and carries a Lesson of Instruction to much the greatest part of the Christian World.

When a Christian is eager after the Distinctions of this Life, proposing some mighty Heights to which he will raise himself, either in *Riches*, *Learning*, or *Power*, if one was to ask him what he will do when he has obtained them, I suppose his Answer would be, that he would then retire, and devote himself to *Holiness and Piety*. May we not here justly say with *Cineas*, if Piety and Holiness is the *chief End* of Man, if these are your last Proposals, the upshot of all your Labours, why do you not enter upon Happiness at present? Why all this wandering out of your Way? Why must you go so far about? For to devote

yourself to the World, though it is your last Proposal to retire from it to Holiness and Piety, is like *Pyrrhus's* seeking of *Battles*, when he proposed to live in Ease and Pleasure with his Friends. I believe there are very few Christians, who have it not in their Heads at least, to be some Time or other Holy and Virtuous, and readily own, that he is the happy Man that dies truly Humble, Holy, and Heavenly-minded. Now this Opinion which all People are possessed of, makes the Projects and Designs of Life, more Mad and Frantic than the *Battles of Pyrrhus*. For one may not only say to such People, why do you neglect the *present* Happiness of these Virtues, but one must further add, why are you engaged in ways of Life, that are quite contrary to them? You want to be *Rich* and *Great*, is it that Riches and Greatness may make you more *Meek* and *Humble*, and *Heavenly-minded*? Do you aspire after the distinctions of Honour, that you may more truly feel the *Misery* and *Meanness* of your Nature, and be made more lowly in your own Eyes? Do you plunge yourself into worldly Cares, let your Passions fix upon Variety of Objects, that you may love God with all your Heart, and raise your Affections to Things above? You acknowledge Humility to be essential to Salvation, yet make it the chief Care of your Life to run away from it, to raise yourself in the *Show* and *Figure* of the World? Is not this fighting of *Pyrrhus's* *Battles*? Nay, is it not a much more egregious Folly? For your own, that you cannot be saved without true Humility, a real Lowliness of Temper, and yet are doing all that you can to keep it out of your Heart. What is there in the Conduct of the maddest Hero, that can equal this Folly?

Suppose, that *strict Sobriety* was the sole End of Man, the necessary Condition of Happiness, what would you think of those People, who knowing and believing this to be true, should yet spend their Time in getting Quantities of all Sorts of the *strongest Liquors*? What would you think if you saw them constantly enlarging their *Cellars*, filling every Room with *Drams*, and contending who should have the *largest Quantities* of the strongest Liquors? Now this is the Folly and Madness of the Lives of Christians, they are as Wise and Reasonable, as they are who are always providing strong Liquors in order to be *strictly Sober*. For all the Enjoyments of human Life, which Christians so aspire after, whether of *Riches*, *Greatness*, *Honours*, and *Pleasures*, are as much the Dangers and Temptations of a Christian, as strong and pleasant Liquors, are the Dangers and Temptations of a Man that is to drink only Water. Now if you were to ask such a Man, why he is continually increasing

his Stock of Liquors, when he is to abstain from them all, and only to drink Water, he can give you as good a Reason, as those Christians, who spare no Pains to acquire Riches, Greatness, and Pleasures, at the same time that their Salvation depends upon their Renouncing them all, upon their Heavenly-mindedness, great Humility, and constant Self-denial.

But it may be, you are not devoted to these Things, you have a greater Soul, than to be taken with *Riches, Equipage,* or the *Pageantry* of State. You are deeply Engaged in *Learning* and *Sciences*.

You are, it may be, squaring the *Circle*, or settling the Distances of the *Stars*, or busy in the Study of *exotic Plants*.

You, it may be, are comparing the ancient Languages, have made deep Discoveries in the *Change of Letters*, and perhaps know how to write an *Inscription* in as obscure Characters, as if you had lived above two Thousand Years ago. Or, perhaps, you are meditating upon the *Heathen Theology*, collecting the History of their *Gods* and *Godesses*; or you are scanning some ancient *Greek* or *Roman* Poet, and making an exact Collection of their *scattered* Remains, *Scraps* of Sentences, and *broken* Words.

You are not exposing your Life in the Field like a mad *Alexander* or *Cæsar*, but you are again and again fighting over all their Battles in your *Study*, you are collecting the Names of their *Generals*, the Number of their *Troops*, the Manner of their Arms, and can give the World a more exact Account of the Times, Places, and Circumstances of their Battles than has yet been seen.

You will perhaps ask whether this be not a very commendable Inquiry? An excellent Use of our Time and Parts? Whether People may not be very reasonably Exhorted to these Kind of Studies? It may be answered, that all Inquiries (however Learned they are reckoned) which do not improve the Mind in some useful Knowledge, that do not make us Wise in *religious Wisdom*, are to be reckoned amongst our greatest Vanities and Follies. All Speculations that will not stand this Trial, are to be looked upon as the Wanderings and Impertinences of a *disordered Understanding*.

It is strange Want of Thought to imagine, that an Inquiry is ever the better, because it is taken up in *Greek* and *Latin*. Why is it not as Wise and Reasonable for a *Scholar* to dwell in the *Kitchen* and converse with *Cooks*, as to go into his Study, to meditate upon the *Roman* Art of *Cookery*, and learn their Variety of *Sauces*.

A *grave Doctor* in Divinity would perhaps think his time very ill Employed, that he was acting below his Character, if he were

to be an *Amanuensis* to some *modern Poet*. Why then does he think it suitable with the Weight of his Calling, to have been a *Drudge* to some *ancient Poet*, counting his Syllables for several Years, only to help the World to read, what some *irreligious, wanton, or Epicurean Poet* has written.

It is certainly a much more reasonable Employment to be making *Clothes*, than to spend one's Time in reading or writing Volumes upon the *Grecian* or *Roman* Garments.

If you can show me a Learning that makes Man truly *sensible* of his Duty, that fills the Mind with *true Light*, that reforms the *Heart*, that disposes it right towards God, that makes us more *reasonable* in all our Actions, that inspires us with *Fortitude, Humility, Devotion*, and Contempt of the *World*, that gives us right Notions of the *Greatness* of Religion, the *Sanctity* of Morality, the *Littleness* of every Thing but God, the *Vanity* of our Passions, and the *Misery* and Corruption of our Nature, I will own myself an Advocate for such Learning. But to think that time is well employed, because it is spent in such Speculations as the Vulgar cannot reach, or because they are fetched from *Antiquity*, or found in *Greek* or *Latin*, is a Folly that may be called as great as any in human Life.

They who think that these Inquiries are consistent with a Heart *entirely devoted* to God, have not enough considered human Nature; they would do well to consult our Saviour's Rebuke of *Martha*. She did not seem to have wandered far from her proper Business, she was not busy in the History of *Housewifery*, or inquiring into the *Original of the Distaff*, she was only taken up with her present Affairs, and *cumbered about much serving*, but our Blessed Saviour said unto her, *Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many Things. But one thing is needful.*

Now if *Scholars* and *Divines* can show, that they only apply to such Studies as are serviceable to the *one thing needful*, if they are busy in a Philosophy and Learning that has a necessary Connection with the Devotion of the Heart to God, such Learning becomes the Followers of Christ. But if they trifle in *Greek* and *Latin*, and only assist other People to follow them in the same Impertinence, such Learning may be reckoned amongst the Corruptions of the Age. For all the Arguments against *Pride, Covetousness, and Vanity*, are as good Arguments against *such Learning*, it being the same Irreligion to be devoted to any false *Learning*, as to be devoted to any other *false Good*.

A Satisfaction in any vain Ornaments of the Body, whether of *Clothes* or *Paint*, is no greater a Mistake, than a Satisfaction in the *vain Accomplishments* of the Mind.

A Man that is eager and laborious in the Search and Study of that which does him *no good*, is the same poor, little Soul, as the *Miser*, that is happy in his *Bags*, that are laid by in Dust. A ridiculous Application of our *Money, Time, and Understanding*, is the same Fault, whether it be found amongst the Finery of *Fops*, the Hoards of *Misers*, or the Trinkets of *Virtuosos*. It is the same false Turn of Mind, the same Mistake of the Use of Things, the same Ignorance of the State of Man, and the same Offence against Religion.

When we see a Man brooding over *Bags* of Wealth, and labouring to die *Rich*, we do not only accuse him of a poor Littleness of Mind, but we charge him with great Guilt, we do not allow such a one to be in a State of Religion. Let us therefore suppose that this covetous Man was on a sudden changed into another Temper, that he was grown *Polite* and *Curious*, that he was fond and eager after the most useless Things, if they were but *ancient* or *scarce*; let us suppose that he is now as greedy of *original Paintings*, as he was before of *Money*, that he will give more for a *Dog's-Head*, or a *Snuff* of a Candle by a good *Hand*, than ever he gave in Charity all his Life, is he a wiser Man, or a better Christian than he was before? Has he more overcome the World, or is he more devoted to God, than when his Soul was locked up with his Money? Alas! his Heart is in the same false Satisfaction, he is in the same State of Ignorance, is as far from the true Good, as much separated from Good, as he whose Soul is cleaving to the Dust; he lives in the same Vanity, and must die in the Misery, as he that lives and dies in *Foppery* or *Covetousness*.

Here therefore I place my first Argument for *Christian Perfection*, I exhort thee to labour after it, because there is no choice of anything else for thee to labour after, there is nothing else that the Reason of Man can exhort thee to. The whole World has nothing to offer thee in its stead, choose what other way thou wilt, thou hast chosen nothing but Vanity and Misery; for all the different Ways of the World, are only different Ways of deluding thyself, this only excels that, as one Vanity can excel another. If thou wilt make thyself more Happy than those who pursue their own Destruction, if thou wilt show thyself wiser than *Fops*, more reasonable than *sordid Misers*, thou must pursue that Happiness, and study that Wisdom which leads to God, for every other Pursuit, every other Way of Life, however *polite* or *plausible* in the Opinions of the World, has a Folly and Stupidity in it, that is equal to the Folly and Stupidity of *Fops* and *Misers*.

For a while shut thine Eyes, and think of the *silliest Creature* in human Life, imagine to thyself something, that thou thinkest

the most *poor*, and *vain* in the Way of the World. Now thou art thyself that poor and vain Creature, unless thou art devoted to God, and labouring after Christian Perfection: Unless this be thy Difference from the World, thou canst not think of any Creature more silly than thyself. For it is not any *Post*, or *Condition*, or *Figure* in Life, that makes one Man wiser or better than another, if thou art a proud *Scholar*, a worldly *Priest*, an inde-vout *Philosopher*, a crafty *Politician*, an ambitious *Statesman*, thy Imagination cannot invent a Way of Life, that has more of Vanity or Folly than thine own.

Every one has Wisdom enough to see, what Variety of Fools and Madmen there are in the World.

Now perhaps we cannot do better, than to find out the true Reason of the Folly and Madness of any Sort of Life. Ask thyself therefore wherein consists the Folly of any Sort of Life, which is most condemned in thy Judgment.

Is a drunken *Fox-hunter* leading a foolish Life? wherein consists the Folly of it? Is it because he is not getting Money upon the *Exchange*? Or because he is not wrangling at the *Bar*? Or not waiting at *Court*? No, the Folly of it consists in this, that he is not living like a *reasonable Christian*, that he is not acting like a Being that is *born again* of God, that has a Salvation to work out with *fear and trembling*, that he is throwing away his Time amongst *Dogs*, and Noise, and Intemperance, which he should devote to Watching and Prayer, and the Improvement of his Soul in all holy Tempers. Now if this is the Folly (as it most certainly is) of an intemperate *Fox-hunter*, it shows us an equal Folly in every other Way of Life, where the same great Ends of Living are neglected. Though we are shining at the *Bar*, making a Figure at *Court*, great at the *Exchange*, or famous in the *Schools* of Philosophy, we are yet the same despicable Creatures, as the intemperate *Fox-hunter*, if these States of Life keep us as far from the improvements of Holiness, and heavenly Affections. There is nothing greater in any Way of Life than *Fox-hunting*, it is all the same Folly, unless Religion be the Beginning and Ending, the Rule and Measure of it all. For it is as *noble* a Wisdom, and shows as *great a Soul*, to die less Holy and Heavenly for the sake of *Hunting* and *Noise*, as for the sake of anything that the World can give us.

If we will judge and condemn things, by our Tempers and Fancies, we may think some Ways of Life mighty wise, and others mighty foolish, we may think it Glorious to be pursuing Methods of *Fame* and *Wealth*, and foolish to be killing *Foxes*, but if we will let Reason and Religion show us the Folly and Wisdom of Things, we shall easily see, that all Ways of Life are *equally*

Little and Foolish, but those that perfect and exalt our Souls in Holiness.

No one therefore can complain of Want of Understanding in the Conduct of his Life, for a small Share of Sense is sufficient to condemn *some Degrees of Vanity*, which we see in the World ; everyone is able and ready to do it. And if we are but able to condemn the vainest Sort of Life upon *true Reasons*, the same Reasons will serve to show, that all Sorts of Life are equally vain, but the *one Life of Religion*. Thou hast therefore, as I observed before, no choice of anything to labour after instead of Christian Perfection : If thou canst be content to be the *poorest, vainest, miserablest* Thing upon Earth, thou mayst neglect Christian Perfection. But if thou seest anything in human Life that thou abhorrest and despisest, if there be any Person that lives so, as thou shouldst fear to live, thou must turn thy Heart to God, thou must labour after *Christian Perfection*, for there is nothing in Nature but this, that can set thee above the *vainest, poorest, and most miserable* of human Creatures. Thou art everything that thou canst abhor and despise, everything that thou canst fear, thou art full of every Folly that thy Mind can imagine, unless thou art all devoted to God.

Secondly, Another Argument for *Christian Perfection* shall be taken from the necessity of it.

I have all along shown, that Christian Perfection consists in the right Performance of our *necessary Duties*, that it implies such holy Tempers, as constitute that common Piety, which is necessary to Salvation, and consequently it is such a Piety as is equally necessary to be attained by all People. But besides this, we are to consider, that God only knows what *Abatements* of Holiness he will accept ; and therefore we can have no Security of our Salvation, but by doing our utmost to deserve it.

There are different Degrees of Holiness, which it may please God to Reward, but we cannot State these different Degrees ourselves ; but must all labour to be as eminent as we can, and then our different Improvements must be left to God. We have nothing to trust to, but the Sincerity of our Endeavours, and our Endeavours may well be thought to want Sincerity, unless they are Endeavours after the utmost Perfection. As soon as we stop at any Degrees of Goodness, we put an End to our Goodness, which is only valuable by having all the Degrees, that we can add to it. Our highest Improvement, is a State of great Imperfection, but will be accepted by God, because it is our highest Improvement. But any other State of Life, where we are not doing all that we can, to purify and perfect our Souls, is a State that can give us no Comfort or Satisfaction,

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because so far as we are wanting in any Ways of Piety that are in our Power, so far as we are defective in any holy Tempers, of which we are capable, so far we make our very Salvation uncertain. For no one can have any Assurance that he pleases God, or puts himself within the Terms of Christian Salvation, but he who serves God with his whole Heart, and with the utmost of his Strength. For though the Christian Religion be a Covenant of Mercy, for the Pardon and Salvation of *frail* and *imperfect* Creatures, yet we cannot say that we are within the Conditions of that Mercy, till we do all that we can in our frail and imperfect State. So that though we are not called to such a Perfection, as implies a *sinless State*, though our Imperfections will not prevent the Divine Mercy, yet it cannot be proved, that God has any Terms of Favour for those, who do not labour to be as Perfect as they can be.

Different Attainments in Piety will carry different Persons to Heaven, yet none of us can have any Satisfaction, that we are going thither, but by arriving at all that Change of Nature, which is in our Power. It is as necessary therefore to labour after Perfection, as to labour after our Salvation, because we can have no Satisfaction that a failure in one, will not deprive us of the other. When therefore you are exhorted to Christian Perfection, you must remember, that you are only exhorted to secure your Salvation, you must remember also, that you have no other Rule to judge of your Perfection, but by the Sincerity and *Fulness* of your Endeavours to arrive at it.

We may judge of the Measure and Extent of *Christian Holiness*, from the one Instance of *Charity*. This Virtue is thus described, *Charity seeketh not her own, beareth all Things, believeth all Things, hopeth all Things, endureth all Things*. Now this Charity though it be in Perfection, is yet by the Apostle made so absolutely Necessary to Salvation, that a failure in it, is not to be supplied by any other, the most shining Virtues. *Though I have all faith, so that I could remove Mountains, though I bestow all my Goods to feed the Poor, though I give my Body to be burned, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing*. The Apostle expressly teaches us, that this Perfection in Christian Charity, is so necessary to Salvation, that even *Martyrdom* itself is not sufficient to Atone for the want of it. Need we now any other Argument to convince us, that to labour after our Perfection, is only to labour after our Salvation? For what is here said of Charity, must in all Reason be understood of every other Virtue, it must be practised in the same *Fulness* and Sincerity of Heart as this Charity. It may also justly be affirmed, that this Charity is so holy a Temper, and requires so many other Virtues as the Foun-

dation of it, that it can only be exercised by a Heart, that is far advanced in Holiness, that is entirely devoted to God. Our whole Nature must be changed, we must have put off the *old Man*, we must be *born again* of God, we must have *overcome the World*, we must live *by Faith*, be full of the Spirit of Christ, in order to Exercise this Charity.

When therefore you would know, whether it be necessary to labour after Christian Perfection, and live wholly unto God, read over *St. Paul's Description of Charity*: If you can think of any *Negligence* of Life, any *Defects* of Humility, any *Abatements* of Devotion, any *Fondness* of the World, any *Desires* of *Riches* and *Greatness*, that is consistent with the *Tempers* there described, then you may be content with them; but if these *Tempers* of an exalted Charity cannot subsist, but in a Soul that is devoted to God, and resigned to the World, that is humble and mortified, that is full of the Spirit of Christ, and the Cares of Eternity, then you have a plain Reason of the Necessity of Labouring after all the Perfection, that you are capable of; for the Apostle expressly saith, that without these *Tempers*, the very *Tongues* of *Angels*, are but as *sounding Brass* or a *tinkling Cymbal*. ✓ Do not therefore imagine, that it only belongs to People of a *particular Piety and Turn of Mind*, to labour after their Perfection, and that you may go to Heaven with much less Care; there is only one *strait Gate* and one *narrow Way* that leadeth unto Life, and there is no Admission, but for those who *strive* to enter into it. If you are not *striving*, you neglect the express condition which our Lord requires, and it is flat Nonsense to think that you *strive*, if you do not use all your Strength. The Apostle represents a Christian's striving for eternal Life in this Manner, *Know ye not that they which run in a Race, run all, but one receiveth the Prize? So run that ye may obtain*. So that, according to the Apostle, he only is in the *Road* to Salvation, who is so contending for it, as he that is running in a *Race*. *Further*, you can have no Satisfaction that you are sincere in any one Virtue, unless you are endeavouring to be Perfect in all the Instances of it. If you allow yourself in any *Defects* of Charity, you have no Reason to think yourself sincere in any Acts of Charity. If you indulge yourself in any Instances of Pride, you render all your Acts of Humility justly suspected, because there can be no *true Reason* for Charity, but what is as good a Reason for *all Instances* of Charity; nor any religious Motive for Humility, but what is as strong a Motive for all Degrees of Humility. So that he who allows himself in any known *Defects* of Charity, Humility, or any other Virtue, cannot be supposed to practise any Instances of that Virtue upon true Reasons of Religion. For if

it was a right Fear of God, a true Desire of being like Christ, a hearty Love of my Fellow-Creatures that made me give *Alms*, the same Dispositions would make me *love and forgive* all my Enemies, and deny myself all kinds of *Revenge*, and *Spite*, and *Evil-speaking*.

So that if I allow myself in known Instances of Uncharitableness, I have as much Reason to suppose myself void of true Charity, as if I allowed myself in a Refusal of *such Alms* as I am able to give. Because every Instance of Uncharitableness, is the same Sin against all the Reasons of Charity, as the allowed Refusal of *Alms*. For the Refusal of *Alms* is only a great Sin, because it shows that we have not a right Fear of God, that we have not a hearty Desire of being like Christ, that we want a *true Love* of our Fellow Creature. Now as every allowed Instance of Uncharitableness shows a Want of all these Tempers, so it shows, that every such Instance is the same Sin, and sets us as far from God, as the Refusal of *Alms*.

To forbear from *Spite and Evil-speaking*, is a proper Instance of Christian Charity, but yet it is such a Charity as will not profit those, who are not charitable in *Alms*, because by refusing *Alms*, they sin against as many Reasons of Charity, as he that lives in *Spite and Evil-speaking*. And on the other Hand, he that allows himself in *Spite and Evil-speaking*, sins against all the same Reasons of Charity, as he that lives in the Refusal of *Alms*. This is a Doctrine that cannot be too much reflected upon by all those who would practise a Piety, that is pleasing to God.

Too many Christians look at *some Instances* of Virtue which they practise, as a sufficient Atonement for their known Defects in some other Parts of the same Virtue. Not considering, that this is as absurd, as to think to make some apparent Acts of *Justice*, compound for other allowed Instances of *Fraud*.

A *Lady* is perhaps satisfied with her Humility, because she can look at some apparent Instances of it ; she sometimes visits *Hospitals and Alms-houses*, and is very familiar and condescending to the Poor : Now these are very good Things, but then it may be, that these very Things are looked upon as sufficient Proofs of Humility ; she *Patches and Paints*, and delights in all the Show and Ornaments of *personal Pride*, and is very easy with herself, because she visits the *Hospitals*. Now she should consider, that she places her Humility in that which is but a Part, and also the smallest and most deceitful Part of it. For the hardest, the greatest, and most essential Part of Humility, is to have low Opinions of ourselves, to love our *own Meanness*,

and to renounce all such Things, as gratify the Pride and Vanity of our Nature. Humility also is much better discovered by our Behaviour towards our *Equals and Superiors*, than towards those who are so much below us. It does no hurt to a *proud Heart*, to stoop to some low Offices to the meanest People. Nay, there is something in it that may gratify *Pride*, for perhaps our own Greatness is never seen to more Advantage, than when we stoop to those who are so far below us. The lower the People are to whom we stoop, the better they show the Height of our own State. So that there is nothing difficult in these Condescensions, they are no *Contradictions* to Pride.

The truest Trial of Humility, is our Behaviour towards our *Equals*, and those that are our Superiors or Inferiors but in a *small Degree*. It is no Sign of Humility, for a private Gentleman to pay a profound Reverence, and show great Submission to a *King*, nor is it any sign of Humility for the same Person to condescend to great Familiarity with a *poor Almsman*. For he may act upon the same Principle in both Cases.

It does not hurt him to show *great Submission* to a *King*, because he has no Thoughts of being *equal* to a *King*, and for the same Reason it does not hurt him to condescend to poor People, because he never imagines, that they will think themselves *equal* to him. So that it is the great Inequality of Condition, that makes it as easy for People to condescend to those who are a great Way below them, as to be submissive, and yielding to those who are vastly above them.

From this it appears, that our most splendid Acts of Virtue, which we think to be sufficient to atone for our other known Defects, may themselves be so Vain and Defective as to have no worth in them. This also shows us the absolute Necessity of labouring after *all Instances* of Perfection in every Virtue, because if we pick and choose what Parts of any Virtue we will perform, we sin against all the same Reasons, as if we neglected all Parts of it. If we choose to *give* instead of *forgiving*, we choose something else instead of *Charity*.

Thirdly, Another Motive to induce you to aspire after *Christian Perfection*, may be taken from the double Advantage of it in this Life, and that which is to come.

The Apostle thus exhorts the *Corinthians*, wherefore *my beloved Brethren*, be ye *steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know, that our Labour will not be in vain in the Lord.** This is an Exhortation founded upon solid Reason; for what can be so Wise and Reasonable, as to be

* 1 Cor. xv.

always abounding in *that Work*, which will never be *in vain*? Whilst we are pleased with ourselves, or pleased with the World, we are pleased with Vanity, and our most prosperous Labours of this Kind are, as the *Preacher* saith, *but Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity*. But whilst we are labouring after Christian Perfection, we are labouring for Eternity, and building to ourselves higher Stations in the Joys of Heaven. *As one Star differeth from another Star in Glory, so also is the Resurrection of the Dead*: We shall surely rise to different Degrees of Glory, of Joy and Happiness in God, according to our different Advancements in Purity, Holiness, and good Works.

No Degrees of Mortification and Self-denial, no private Prayers, no secret Mournings, no Instances of Charity, no Labours of Love will ever be forgotten, but all treasured up to our everlasting Comfort and Refreshment. For though the Rewards of the other Life, are free Gifts of God, yet since he has assured us, that every Man shall be rewarded according to his Works, it is certain that our Rewards will be as different as our Works have been.

Now stand still here a while, and ask yourself, whether you really believe this to be true, that the more Perfect we make ourselves here, the more Happy we shall be hereafter. If you do not believe this to be strictly true, you know nothing of God or Religion. And if you do believe it to be true, is it possible to be *awake*, and not aspiring after Christian Perfection? What can you think of, what can the World show you, that can make you any amends for the Loss of *any Degree* of Virtue? Can any way of Life make it reasonable for you to die *less perfect*, than you might have done?

If you would now devote yourself to Perfection, perhaps you must part with some Friends, you must displease some Relations, you must lay aside some Designs, you must refrain from some Pleasures, you must alter your Life, nay, perhaps you must do more than this, you must expose yourself to the Hatred of your Friends, to the Jest and Ridicule of *Wits*, and to the Scorn and Derision of worldly Men; but had you not better do and suffer all this, than to die *less perfect*, less prepared for Mansions of eternal Glory? But, indeed, the suffering all this, is suffering nothing. For why should it signify anything to you, what *Fools* and *Madmen* think of you? And surely it can be no Wrong or rash Judgment, to think those both Fools and Mad, who condemn what God approves, and like that which God condemns. But if you think this too much to be done, to obtain Eternal Glory, think, on the other hand, what can be gained instead of it.

Fancy yourself living in all the Ease and Pleasure that the World can give you, esteemed by your Friends, undisturbed by your Enemies, and gratifying all your *natural Tempers*. If you could *stand still* in such a State, you may say, that you had got *something*; but alas! every Day that is *added* to such a Life, is the same thing as a Day taken from it, and shows you that so much Happiness is gone from you; for be as Happy as you will, you must see it all sinking away from you, you must feel yourself *decline*, you must see that your Time *shortens apace*, you must hear of *sudden Deaths*, you must fear *Sickness*, you must both dread and desire *old Age*, you must fall into the Hands of Death, you must either die in the painful, bitter Sorrows of a deep Repentance, or in sad, gloomy Despair, wishing for *Mountains to fall upon you, and Seas to cover you*. And is this a *Happiness* to be chosen? Is this all that you can gain, by neglecting God, by following your own Desires, and not labouring after Christian Perfection? Is it worth your while to separate yourself from God, to lose your Share in the Realms of Light, to be *thus Happy*, or I may better say, to be thus Miserable even in this Life? You may be so blind and foolish as not to think of these Things, but it is impossible to think of them, without labouring after Christian Perfection. It may be, you are too young, too happy, or too busy to be affected with these Reflections, but let me tell you, that *all* will be over before you are aware, your *Day* will be spent, and leave you to such a *Night*, as that which surprised the *foolish Virgins*. And at *Midnight there was a great Cry made, behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him*.*

The *last Hour* will soon be with you, when you will have nothing to look for, but your *Reward* in another Life, when you will stand with nothing but *Eternity* before you, and must begin to be *something*, that will be your State for ever. I can no more *reach* Heaven with my *Hands*, than I can describe the Sentiments, that you will then have, you will then feel Motions of Heart that you never felt before, all your Thoughts and Reflections will pierce your Soul in a Manner, that you never before experienced, and you will feel the Immortality of your Nature, by the Depth and piercing Vigour of your Thoughts. You will then know what it is to die, you will then know, that you never knew it before, that you never thought worthily of it, but that dying Thoughts are as *new* and *amazing*, as that State which follows them.

Let me therefore exhort you, to come prepared to this Time

* Matt. xxv. 6.

of Trial, to look out for Comfort, whilst the Day is before you, to treasure up such a *Fund* of good and pious Works, as may make you able to bear that State, which cannot be borne without them. Could I any way make you apprehend, how dying Men feel the Want of a pious Life, how they lament Time lost, Health and Strength squandered away in Folly, how they look at Eternity, and what they think of the Rewards of another Life, you would soon find yourself one of those, who desire to live in the highest State of Piety and Perfection, that by this Means you may grow old in Peace, and die in full Hopes of eternal Glory.

Consider again, that besides the Rewards of the other Life, the labouring after Christian Perfection, or devoting yourself wholly to God, has a great Reward even in this Life, as it makes Religion *doubly* pleasant to you. Whilst you are divided betwixt God and the World, you have neither the Pleasures of Religion, nor the Pleasures of the World, but are always in the Uneasiness of a divided State of Heart. You have only so much Religion as serves to disquiet you, to check your Enjoyments, to show you a *Hand-writing upon the Wall*, to interrupt your Pleasures, to reproach you with your Follies, and to appear as a *Death's-head* at all your Feasts, but not Religion enough, to give you a Taste and Feeling of its proper Pleasures and Satisfaction. You dare not wholly neglect Religion, but then you take no more than is just sufficient to keep you from being a Terror to yourself, and you are as loth to be *very good*, as you are fearful to be *very bad*. So that you are just as Happy, as the *Slave* that dares not run away from his Master, and yet always serves him against his Will. So that instead of having a Religion that is your *Comfort* in all Troubles, your Religion is itself a *Trouble*, under which you want to be Comforted; and those Days and Times hang heaviest upon your Hands, which leave you only to the Offices and Duties of Religion. *Sunday* would be very dull and tiresome, but that it is but one Day in *seven*, and is made a Day of *dressing* and *visiting*, as well as of Divine Service: You don't care to keep away from the Public Worship, but are always glad when it is over. This is the State of a *Half-piety*; thus they live who add Religion to a worldly Life; all their Religion is mere *Yoke* and *Burden*, and is only made tolerable by having but little of their Time.

Urbanus, goes to Church, but he hardly knows whether he goes out of a Sense of Duty, or to meet his Friends. He wonders at those People who are *Profane*, and what Pleasure they can find in Irreligion; but then he is in as great wonder at those who would make every Day, a Day of Divine Worship,

he feels no more of the Pleasures of Piety, than of the Pleasures of Profaneness. As Religion has everything from him, but his *Heart*, so he has everything from Religion, but its *Comforts*. *Urbanus* likes Religion, because it seems an *easy* Way of pleasing God, a *decent* thing, that takes up but little of our Time, and is a proper *Mixture* in Life. But if he were reduced to take *Comfort* in it, he would be as much at a loss, as those who have lived without God in the World. When *Urbanus* thinks of Joy, and Pleasure, and Happiness, he does not think at all of Religion. He has gone through a hundred Misfortunes, fallen into a Variety of Hardships, but never thought of making Religion his *Comfort* in any of them, he makes himself Quiet and Happy in another Manner. He is content with his Christianity, not because he is *pious*, but because he is not *profane*. He continues in the same Course of Religion, not because of any real Good he ever found in it, but because it does him no hurt.

To such poor Purposes as these do Numbers of People profess Christianity. Let me therefore exhort you *o a *solid Piety*, to devote yourself wholly unto God, that entering deep into Religion, you may enter deep into its Comforts, that serving God with all your Heart, you may have the Peace and Pleasure of a Heart that is at Unity with itself. When your Conscience once bears you witness, that you are *steadfast, immovable, and always abounding in the Work of the Lord*, you will find that your Reward is already begun, and that you could not be less Devout, less Holy, less Charitable, or less Humble, without lessening the most substantial Pleasure, that ever you felt in your Life. So that to be content with any lower Attainments in Piety, is to rob ourselves of a present Happiness, which nothing else can give us.

You would perhaps devote yourself to Perfection, but for this or that *little Difficulty*, that lies in your Way, you are not in so convenient a State for the full Practice of Piety as you could wish. But consider, that this is Nonsense, because Perfection consists in conquering Difficulties. You could not be Perfect, as the present State of Trial requires, had you not those Difficulties and Inconveniences to struggle with. These things therefore which you would have removed, are laid in your Way, that you may make them so many Steps to Perfection and Glory.

As you could not Exercise your Charity, unless you met with Objects, so neither could you show, that you had *overcome* the World, unless you had many worldly Engagements to overcome. If all your *Friends* and *Acquaintance*, were Devout, Humble, Heavenly-minded, and wholly intent upon the one End of Life, it would be less Perfection in you to be like them. But if you are *Humble* amongst those that delight in Pride, *Heavenly-*

minded, amongst the *Worldly*, *Sober* amongst the *Intemperate*, *Devout* amongst the *Irreligious*, and labouring after *Perfection* amongst those, that despise and ridicule your Labours, then are you truly devoted unto God. Consider therefore, that you can have no Difficulty, but such as the World lays in your Way, and that Perfection is never to be had, but by parting with the World. It consists in nothing else. To stay therefore to be Perfect, till it suits with your Condition in the World, is like staying to be Charitable, till there were no Objects of Charity. It is as if a man should intend to be Courageous some time or other, when there is nothing left to try his Courage.

Again, You perhaps turn your Eyes upon the World, you see all Orders of People full of other Cares and Pleasures, you see the Generality of *Clergy* and *Laity*, Learned and Unlearned, your Friends and Acquaintance mostly living according to the Spirit that reigneth in the World, you are perhaps content with such a *Piety*, as you think contents great *Scholars*, and *famous Men*, and it may be, you cannot think that God will reject such Numbers of Christians. Now all this is amusing yourself with Nothing, it is only losing yourself in vain Imaginations, it is making that a *Rule*, which is no Rule, and cheating yourself into a false Satisfaction. As you are not censoriously to damn other People, so neither are you to think your own Salvation secure, because you are like the generality of the World.

The *foolish Virgins* that had provided no Oil for their Lamps, and so were shut out of the Marriage-Feast, were only thus far foolish, that they trusted to the *Assistance* of those that were *Wise*. But you are more *foolish* than they, for you trust to be saved by the *Folly* of others, you imagine yourself safe in the *Negligence*, *Vanity*, and *Irregularity* of the World. You take confidence in the *broad Way*, because it is *broad*, you are content with yourself, because you seem to be along with *the many*, though God himself has told you, that *narrow* is the Way, that leadeth unto Life, and *few* there be that find it.

Lastly, one Word more and I have done, think with yourself, what a Happiness it is, that you have it in your Power to secure a Share in the Glories of Heaven, and make yourself one of those blessed Beings that are to live with God for ever. Reflect upon the Glories of bright Angels, that shine about the Throne of Heaven, think upon that Fulness of Joy, which is the State of Christ at the Right Hand of God, and remember, that it is this same State of Glory and Joy that lies open for you. You are less, it may be, in worldly Distinctions than many others, but as to your Relation to God, you have no Superior upon Earth. Let your Condition be what it will, let your Life be ever

so mean, you may make the End of it, the Beginning of eternal Glory. Be often therefore in these Reflections, that they may fill you with a wise Ambition of all that Glory, which God in Christ hath called you to. For it is impossible to understand and feel anything of this, without feeling your Heart affected with strong Desires after it. The Hopes and Expectations of so much Greatness and Glory, must needs awake you into earnest Desires and Longings after it. There are many Things in human Life, which it would be in vain for you to aspire after, but the Happiness of the next, which is the Sum of all Happiness, is secure and safe to you against all Accidents. Here no Chances or Misfortunes can prevent your Success, neither the Treachery of Friends, nor the Malice of Enemies can disappoint you, it is only your own false Heart that can Rob you of this Happiness. Be but your own true Friend, and then you have nothing to fear from your Enemies. Do you but sincerely labour in the Lord, and then neither Height nor Depth, neither Life nor Death, neither Men nor Devils, can make your Labour in vain.

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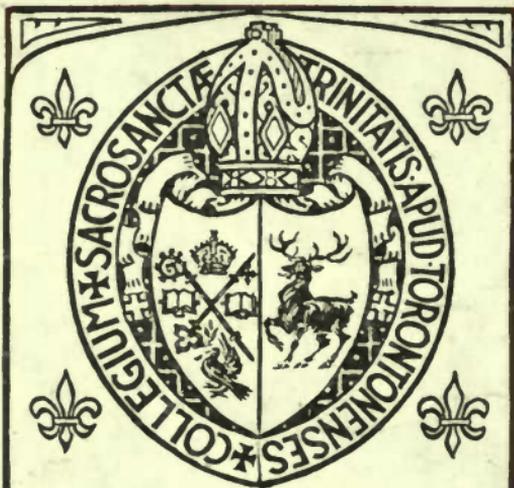
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THE
WORKS

Of the REVEREND

WILLIAM LAW, M.A.,

Sometime Fellow of *Emmanuel*
College, *Cambridge*.

In Nine Volumes.

Volume IV.

A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy
Life, adapted to the State and
Condition of all Orders
of Christians.

LONDON: Printed for J. RICHARDSON, 1762.
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Prefatory Advertisement.

A SERIOUS CALL

TO A

Devout and Holy Life.

THE SERIOUS CALL to a Devout and Holy Life, is WILLIAM LAW'S fifth work in the order of publication, printed in the year 1729, when he was about forty-three years of age. It was written by him during the early portion of his ten years' residence with the *Gibbon* family at *Putney*, with whom he resided in the capacity of Spiritual Director, and by whom, as most readers know, he was greatly esteemed.

The 'Serious Call' is the most widely and generally known of all WILLIAM LAW'S works; and is undoubtedly his masterpiece: if not, as some think in a certain sense, his masterpiece. It has passed through some hundreds of editions by various Publishers, from the year of its publication to the present time; and has, more than any other religious work, attracted—as it will ever continue to do—the notice and admiration, and its precepts the emulation, of successive generations of the wisest and best among men. Of such, various authoritative opinions have been quoted, in acknowledgment and support of the great excellence of this work: which excellence, the most ordinary reader may at once by its perusal, discern for himself.

It is supposed that the Character of 'Paternus' described in this work, was that of WILLIAM LAW'S father; and that 'Eusebia' represented his widowed-mother; but this is mere conjecture: both portraits, as that of 'Ouranius'—which is likewise supposed to be William Law himself—being, more probably, ideals of his own. These and other 'Characters,' are cleverly and humorously described—in particular that of 'Mundanus,' who 'has made a great figure in business,' which he has carried to its greatest improvement and perfection. 'The only one thing which has not fallen under his improvement nor received any benefit from his judicious mind, is his devotion.

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' This is just in the same poor state it was when he was only six years of age, and the old man prays now in that little form of words which his mother used to hear him repeat night and morning. This *Mundanus*, who hardly ever saw the poorest utensil, or ever took the meanest trifle into his hand, without considering how it might be made or used to better advantage, has gone all his life long praying in the same manner as when he was a child without ever considering how much better or oftener he might pray. . . . If *Mundanus* sees a book of devotion he passes it by as he does a spelling-book, because he remembers that he learned to pray so many years ago under his mother when he learned to spell. . . . '

It will probably not escape the attention of the thoughtful reader that in Chapter XX., upon 'Intercessory Prayer,' WILLIAM LAW sets our duty towards our Neighbour—particularly towards such of whose reputation and manner of life *we* do not quite approve—in a new, and deeply instructive light—in a most impressive and logical passage, which it is remarkable should have been omitted from DR. WHYTE'S recently published Selections from Law's works.

In it WILLIAM LAW reminds us that when is 'let loose any ill-natured passion, either of hatred, or contempt, towards—as you suppose—an ill man, consider what you would think of another, who was doing the same towards a good man, and be assured that you are committing the same sin. You will perhaps say—How is it possible to love a good and a bad man, in the same degree? Just as it is possible to be as *just* and *faithful* to a good man as to an evil man. Now are you in any difficulty about performing *justice* and *faithfulness* to a bad man? Are you in any doubts whether you need be so *just* and *faithful* to him, as you need be to a good man? Now why is it that you are in no doubt about it? It is because you know that justice and faithfulness are founded upon reasons that never *vary* or *change*, that have no dependence upon the *merits* of men, but are founded in the Nature of Things, in the Laws of God, and therefore are to be observed with an equal exactness towards good and bad men. Now do but think thus justly of Charity, or love to your Neighbour, that it is founded upon reasons, that *vary* not, that have no dependence upon the *merits* of men, and then you will find it as possible to perform the same *exact charity*, as the same *exact justice*, to all men, whether good or bad.'

G. B. M.

A
SERIOUS CALL

TO A

DEVOUT and HOLY LIFE.

ADAPTED TO

The State and Condition of all Orders
of CHRISTIANS.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

St. Luke viii. 8.

*And behold, I come quickly, and my reward
is with me.*

Rev. xxii. 12.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. RICHARDSON, in *Pater-noster-*
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A
SERIOUS CALL
TO A
Devout *and* Holy Life.

Chapter I.

*Concerning the Nature and Extent of
Christian Devotion.*

DEVOTION is neither *private* nor *public* Prayer, but Prayers whether private or public, are particular parts or instances of Devotion. Devotion signifies a life given, or *devoted* to God.

He therefore is the devout man, who lives no longer to his own *will*, or the *way* and *spirit* of the world, but to the sole will of God, who considers God in everything, who serves God in everything, who makes all the parts of his *common* life, parts of piety, by doing everything in the name of God, and under such rules as are conformable to his Glory.

We readily acknowledge, that God alone is to be the rule and measure of our *Prayers*; that in them we are to look *wholly* unto him, and act wholly for him; that we are only to pray in *such a manner*, for *such things*, and *such ends*, as are suitable to his Glory.

Now let anyone but find out the reason, why he is to be thus strictly pious in his prayers, and he will find the same as strong a reason, to be as strictly pious in all the other parts of his life. For there is not the least shadow of a reason, why we should make God the *rule* and *measure* of our prayers; why we should then look *wholly* unto him, and pray according to his will; but what equally proves it necessary for us to look *wholly* unto God, and make him the *rule* and *measure* of all the other actions of our life. For any ways of life, any employment of our talents, whether of our *parts*, our *time*, or *money*, that is not *strictly* according to the will of God, that is not for such *ends* as are suitable to his glory, are as great *absurdities* and *failings*, as prayers

that are not according to the will of God. For there is no other reason, why our prayers should be according to the will of God, why they should have nothing in them, but what is *wise*, and *holy*, and *heavenly*, there is no other reason for this, but that our lives may be of the same nature, full of the same *wisdom*, *holiness*, and *heavenly* tempers, that we may *live* unto God in the *same spirit* that we pray unto him. Were it not our strict duty to live by *reason*, to devote *all* the actions of our lives to God, were it not absolutely necessary to walk before him in wisdom and holiness and all heavenly conversation, doing everything in his name, and for his glory, there would be no excellency or wisdom in the most *heavenly prayers*. Nay, such prayers would be absurdities, they would be like Prayers for *wings*, when it was no part of our duty to *fly*.

As sure, therefore, as there is any wisdom in praying for the spirit of God, so sure is it, that we are to make that Spirit the rule of *all* our actions; as sure as it is our duty to look *wholly* unto God in our Prayers, so sure is it, that it is our duty to live *wholly* unto God in our lives. But we can no more be said to live unto God, unless we live unto him in all the *ordinary* actions of our life, unless he be the rule and measure of all our ways, than we can be said to pray unto God, unless our Prayers look *wholly* unto him. So that unreasonable and absurd ways of life, whether in *labour* or *diversion*, whether they consume our *time*, or our *money*, are alike unreasonable and absurd Prayers, and are as truly an offence unto God.

'Tis for want of knowing, or at least considering this, that we see such a *mixture* of Ridicule in the lives of many People. You see them strict as to some *times* and *places* of Devotion, but when the service of the *Church* is over, they are but like those who seldom or never come there. In their way of life, their manner of spending their *time* and *money*, in their *cares* and *fears*, in their *pleasures* and *indulgences*, in their labour and diversions, they are like the rest of the world. This makes the loose part of the world generally make a jest of those who are *devout*, because they see their Devotion goes no further than their *Prayers*, and that when they are over, they live no more unto God, till the time of Prayer returns again; but live by the same *humour* and *fancy*, and in as full an enjoyment of all the *follies* of life as other People. This is the reason why they are the jest and scorn of careless and worldly People; not because they are really devoted to God, but because they appear to have no other Devotion, but that of *occasional Prayers*.

Julius is very fearful of missing Prayers; all the Parish supposes *Julius* to be sick, if he is not at *Church*. But if you were

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to ask him why he spends the rest of his time by *humour* and *chance*? why he is a companion of the silliest People in their most *silly pleasures*? why he is ready for every impertinent entertainment and diversion? If you were to ask him why there is no amusement too trifling to please him? why he is busy at all *balls* and *assemblies*? why he gives himself up to an *idle gossiping* conversation? why he lives in foolish friendships and fondness for particular persons, that neither want nor deserve any particular kindness? why he allows himself in foolish hatreds and resentments against particular persons, without considering that he is to love everybody as himself? If you ask him why he never puts his *conversation*, his *time*, and *fortune*, under the rules of Religion, *Julius* has no more to say for himself, than the most disorderly Person. For the whole tenor of Scripture lies as directly against such a life, as against *debauchery* and *intemperance*: He that lives in such a course of *idleness* and *folly*, lives no more according to the Religion of Jesus Christ, than he that lives in gluttony and intemperance.

If a man were to tell *Julius* that there was no occasion for so much constancy at Prayers, and that he might, without any harm to himself, neglect the service of the Church, as the generality of People do, *Julius* would think such a one to be no Christian, and that he ought to avoid his company. But if a person only tells him, that he may live as the generality of the world does, that he may enjoy himself as others do, that he may spend his *time* and *money* as People of fashion do, that he may conform to the follies and frailties of the generality, and gratify his tempers and passions as most People do, *Julius* never suspects that man to want a Christian spirit, or that he is doing the devil's work.

And if *Julius* were to read all the New Testament from the beginning to the end, he would find his course of life condemned in every page of it.

And indeed there cannot anything be imagined more absurd in itself, than *wise* and *sublime*, and *heavenly* Prayers, added to a life of *vanity* and *folly*, where neither *labour* nor *diversions*, neither *time* nor *money*, are under the direction of the wisdom and heavenly tempers of our Prayers. If we were to see a man pretending to act *wholly* with regard to God in everything that he did, that would neither spend time or money, or take any labour or diversion, but so far as he could act according to strict principles of reason and piety, and yet at the same time neglect *all Prayer*, whether public or private, should we not be amazed at such a man, and wonder how he could have so much folly along with so much religion?

Yet this is as reasonable, as for any person to pretend to strict-

ness in *Devotion*, to be careful of observing *times* and *places* of Prayer, and yet letting the rest of his life, his *time*, and *labour*, his *talents* and *money*, be disposed of without any regard to strict rules of Piety and Devotion. For it is as great an absurdity to suppose holy Prayers, and divine Petitions without an holiness of life suitable to them, as to suppose an holy and divine life without Prayers.

Let anyone therefore think, how easily he could confute a man that pretended to great strictness of Life without Prayer, and the same Arguments will as plainly confute another, that pretends to *strictness* of *Prayer*, without carrying the same strictness into every other part of life. For to be weak and foolish in spending our *time* and *fortune*, is no greater a mistake, than to be weak and foolish in relation to our *Prayers*. And to allow ourselves in any ways of life that neither are, nor can be offered to God, is the same irreligion, as to neglect our Prayers, or use them in such a manner, as makes them an offering unworthy of God.

The short of the matter is this, either Reason and Religion prescribe *rules* and *ends* to all the ordinary actions of our life, or they do not : If they do, then it is as necessary to govern all our actions by those rules, as it is necessary to worship God. For if Religion teaches us anything concerning *eating* and *drinking*, or spending our *time* and *money* ; if it teaches us how we are to *use* and *contemn* the world ; if it tells us what tempers we are to have in *common* life, how we are to be disposed towards all people, how we are to behave towards the *sick*, the *poor*, the *old* and *destitute* ; if it tells us whom we are to treat with a *particular* love, whom we are to regard with a particular esteem ; if it tells us how we are to treat our enemies, and how we are to mortify and deny ourselves, he must be very weak, that can think these parts of Religion are not to be observed with as much *exactness*, as any doctrines that relate to Prayers.

It is very observable, that there is not one command in all the Gospel for *Public Worship* ; and perhaps it is a duty that is least insisted upon in Scripture of any other. The frequent attendance at it is never so much as mentioned in all the New Testament. Whereas that *Religion* or *Devotion* which is to govern the *ordinary actions* of our life, is to be found in almost every verse of Scripture. Our blessed Saviour and his Apostles are wholly taken up in Doctrines that relate to *common life*. They call us to renounce the world, and differ in every *temper* and *way* of life, from the spirit and way of the world : to renounce all its goods, to fear none of its evils, to reject its joys, and have no value for its happiness : to be as new *born babes*, that are born

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into a new state of things; to live as *Pilgrims* in spiritual watching, in holy fear, and heavenly aspiring after another life: to take up our daily cross, to deny ourselves, to profess the blessedness of mourning, to seek the blessedness of poverty of spirit: to forsake the pride and vanity of Riches, to take no thought for the morrow, to live in the profoundest State of Humility, to rejoice in worldly sufferings: to reject the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; to bear injuries, to forgive and bless our enemies, and to love mankind as God loveth them: to give up our whole hearts and affections to God, and strive to enter through the strait gate into a life of eternal Glory.

This is the *common Devotion* which our Blessed Saviour taught, in order to make it the *common life* of all Christians. Is it not therefore exceeding strange, that People should place so much piety in the attendance upon public worship, concerning which there is not one precept of our Lord's to be found, and yet neglect these common duties of our *ordinary* life, which are commanded in every Page of the Gospel? I call these duties the devotion of our *common life*, because if they are to be practised, they must be made parts of our common life, they can have no place anywhere else.

If *contempt* of the world and *heavenly* affection, is a necessary temper of Christians, it is necessary that this temper appear in the whole course of their lives, in their manner of using the world, because it can have no place anywhere else.

If *self-denial* be a condition of salvation, all that would be saved, must make it a part of their *ordinary* life. If *humility* be a Christian duty, then the common life of a Christian, is to be a constant course of humility in all its kinds. If *poverty of spirit* be necessary, it must be the spirit and temper of *every day* of our lives. If we are to *relieve* the naked, the sick, and the prisoner, it must be the common charity of our lives, as far as we can render ourselves able to perform it. If we are to *love our enemies*, we must make our common life a visible exercise and demonstration of that love. If *content* and *thankfulness*, if the patient bearing of evil be duties to God, they are the Duties of every Day, and in every circumstance of our life. If we are to be wise and holy as the new-born sons of God, we can no otherwise be so, but by renouncing everything that is foolish and vain in every part of our common life. If we are to be in Christ *new creatures*, we must show that we are so, by having *new ways* of living in the world. If we are to *follow* Christ, it must be in our common way of spending every day.

Thus it is in all the virtues and holy tempers of Christianity,

they are not *ours* unless they be the virtues and tempers of our *ordinary life*. So that Christianity is so far from leaving us to live in the common ways of life, conforming to the folly of customs, and gratifying the passions and tempers which the spirit of the world delights in, it is so far from indulging us in any of these things, that all its virtues which it makes necessary to salvation, are only so many ways of living above, and contrary to the world in all the common actions of our life. If our common life is not a common course of *humility, self-denial, renunciation* of the world, *poverty* of spirit, and *heavenly affection*, we do not live the lives of Christians.

But yet though it is thus plain, that this, and this alone is Christianity, an uniform open and visible practice of all these virtues, yet it is as plain, that there is little or nothing of this to be found, even amongst the better sort of People. You see them often at Church, and pleased with fine preachers, but look into their lives, and you see them just the same sort of People as others are, that make no pretences to devotion. The difference that you find betwixt them, is only the difference of their natural tempers. They have the same *taste* of the world, the same worldly *cares, and fears, and joys*; they have the same *turn* of mind, equally *vain* in their desires. You see the same fondness for *state and equipage*, the same *pride* and vanity of *dress*, the same *self-love and indulgence*, the same foolish *friendships*, and groundless *hatreds*, the same *levity* of mind, and *trifling* spirit, the same *fondness* for diversions, the same idle dispositions, and vain ways of spending their time in visiting and conversation, as the rest of the world, that make no pretences to devotion.

I do not mean this comparison betwixt People seemingly good, and professed *rakes*, but betwixt People of sober lives. Let us take an instance in two modest Women: let it be supposed, that one of them is careful of times of Devotion, and observes them through a sense of duty, and that the other has no hearty concern about it, but is at Church seldom or often, just as it happens. Now it is a very easy thing to see this difference betwixt these persons. But when you have seen this, can you find any further difference betwixt them? Can you find that their *common life* is of a different kind? Are not the *tempers, and customs, and manners* of the one, of the same kind as of the other? Do they live as if they belonged to different worlds, had different views in their heads, and different rules and measures of all their actions? Have they not the same *goods and evils*, are they not pleased and displeased in the *same manner*, and for the same things? Do they not live in the same

course of life? Does one seem to be of this world, looking at the things that are temporal, and the other to be of another world, looking wholly at the things that are eternal? Does the one live in pleasure, delighting herself in *show* or *dress*, and the other live in *self-denial* and *mortification*, renouncing everything that looks like vanity, either of *person*, *dress*, or *carriage*? Does the one follow *public diversions*, and trifle away her time in *idle* visits, and *corrupt* conversation, and does the other study all the arts of improving her time, living in Prayer and Watching, and such good works, as may make all her time turn to her advantage, and be placed to her account at the last day? Is the one careless of expense, and glad to be able to adorn herself with every costly ornament of dress, and does the other consider her fortune as a talent given her by God, which is to be improved religiously, and no more to be spent in vain and needless ornaments, than it is to be buried in the earth?

Where must you look, to find one Person of Religion differing in this manner, from another that has none? And yet if they do not differ in these things which are here related, can it with any sense be said, the one is a *good* Christian, and the other not?

Take another instance amongst the men. *Leo* has a great deal of good nature, has kept what they call *good* company, hates everything that is *false* and *base*, is very generous and brave to his friends, but has concerned himself so little with Religion, that he hardly knows the difference betwixt a *Jew* and a *Christian*.

Eusebius on the other hand, has had early impressions of Religion, and buys books of Devotion. He can talk of all the *feasts* and *fasts* of the Church, and knows the *names* of most men that have been eminent for piety. You never hear him swear, or make a loose jest, and when he talks of Religion, he talks of it, as of a matter of the last concern.

Here you see, that one person has Religion enough, according to the way of the world, to be reckoned a *pious Christian*, and the other is so far from all appearance of Religion, that he may fairly be reckoned a *Heathen*; and yet if you look into their *common life*, if you examine their *chief* and *ruling* tempers in the greatest *articles* of life, or the greatest *doctrines* of Christianity, you will find the least difference imaginable.

Consider them with regard to the use of the world, because that is what everybody can see.

Now to have right *notions* and *tempers* with relation to this world, is as essential to religion, as to have right notions of God. And it is as possible for a man to worship a *Crocodile*,

and yet be a *pious man*, as to have his affections set upon this world, and yet be a *good Christian*.

But now if you consider *Leo* and *Eusebius* in this respect, you will find them exactly alike, *seeking, using, and enjoying* all that can be got in this world in the same manner, and for the same ends. You will find that *riches, prosperity, pleasures, indulgences, state, equipage, and honour*, are just as much the happiness of *Eusebius* as they are of *Leo*. And yet if Christianity has not changed a man's mind and temper with relation to these things, what can we say that it has done for him?

For if the doctrines of Christianity were practised, they would make a man as different from other people as to all *worldly* tempers, *sensual pleasures*, and the *pride* of life, as a *wise man* is different from a *natural*; it would be as easy a thing to know a Christian by his *outward course* of life, as it is now difficult to find anybody that lives it. For it is notorious, that Christians are now not only like other men in their *frailties* and *infirmities*, this might be in some degree excusable, but the complaint is, they are like *Heathens* in all the *main* and *chief articles* of their lives. They enjoy the world, and live every day in the same tempers, and the same designs, and the same indulgences, as they do who know not God, nor of any happiness in another life. Everybody who is capable of any reflection, must have observed, that this is generally the state even of devout people, whether *men* or *women*. You may see them different from other people, so far as to *times* and *places* of prayer, but generally like the rest of the world in all the other parts of their lives. That is, adding *Christian Devotion* to a *Heathen* life: I have the authority of our Blessed Saviour for his remark, where he says, 'Take no thought, saying what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? for after all these things do the Gentiles seek.' But if to be thus affected even with the necessary things of this life, shows that we are not yet of a *Christian Spirit*, but are like the *Heathens*, surely to enjoy the vanity and folly of the world as they did, to be like them in the main chief tempers of our lives, in self-love and indulgence, in sensual pleasures and diversions, in the vanity of dress, the love of show and greatness, or any other gaudy distinctions of fortune, is a much greater sign of a *heathen* temper. And consequently, they who add Devotion to such a life, must be said to *pray* as *Christians*, but *live* as *heathens*.

Chapter II.

An inquiry into the Reason, why the generality of Christians fall so far short of the Holiness and Devotion of Christianity.

IT may now be reasonably inquired, how it comes to pass, that the lives even of the better sort of people, are thus strangely contrary to the principles of Christianity?

But before I give a direct answer to this, I desire it may also be inquired, how it comes to pass that *swearing* is so common a vice amongst Christians? It is indeed not yet so common amongst *women*, as it is amongst *men*. But amongst men this sin is so common, that perhaps there are more than *two in three* that are guilty of it through the whole course of their lives, swearing *more or less*, just as it happens, some constantly, others only now and then as it were by chance. Now, I ask how comes it, that two in three of the men are guilty of so gross and profane a sin as this is? There is neither ignorance, nor human infirmity to plead for it: It is against an express commandment, and the most plain Doctrine of our blessed Saviour.

Do but now find the reason why the generality of men live in this notorious vice, and then you will have found the reason why the generality even of the better sort of people, live so contrary to Christianity.

Now the reason of common swearing is this, it is because men have not so much as the *intention to please God in all their actions*. For let a man but have so much piety as to *intend to please God in all the actions of his life, as the happiest and best thing in the world*, and then he will never swear more. It will be as impossible for him to swear, whilst he feels *this intention* within himself, as it is impossible for a man who intends to please his Prince, to go up and abuse him to his face.

It seems but a small and necessary part of piety to have such a *sincere intention* as this; and that he has no reason to look upon himself as a Disciple of Christ, who is not thus far advanced in piety. And yet it is purely for want of this degree of piety, that you see such a mixture of sin and folly in the lives even of the better sort of People. It is for want of this *intention*, that you see men who profess religion, yet live in *swearing* and *sensuality*; that you see *Clergymen* given to pride and covetous-

ness, and worldly enjoyments. It is for want of this *intention*, that you see *women* who profess Devotion, yet living in all the folly and vanity of *dress*, wasting their time in *idleness* and *pleasures*, and in all such instances of state and equipage as their estates will reach. For let but a woman feel her heart full of *this intention*, and she will find it as impossible to *patch* or *paint*, as to curse or swear; she will no more desire to shine at *Balls* and *Assemblies*, or make a figure amongst those who are most finely dressed, than she will desire to dance upon a *Rope* to please Spectators: She will know, that the one is as far from the *wisdom* and *excellency* of the Christian Spirit, as the other.

It was this *general intention*, that made the *primitive Christians* such eminent instances of piety, that made the goodly fellowship of the *saints*, and all the glorious army of *martyrs* and *confessors*. And if you will here stop, and ask yourself, why you are not as pious as the primitive Christians were, your own heart will tell you, that it is neither through *ignorance*, nor *inability*, but purely because you never *thoroughly intended* it. You observe the same *Sunday-worship* that they did; and you are *strict* in it, because it is your full *intention* to be so. And when you as fully intend to be like them in their *ordinary common life*, when you intend to please God in *all your actions*, you will find it as possible, as to be strictly exact in the service of the Church. And when you have this *intention to please God in all your actions, as the happiest and best thing in the world*, you will find in you as great an aversion to everything that is *vain* and *impertinent* in common life, whether of business or pleasure, as you now have to anything that is *profane*. You will be as fearful of living in any foolish way, either of spending your *time*, or your *fortune*, as you are now fearful of neglecting the public Worship.

Now, who that wants this general sincere *intention*, can be reckoned a Christian? And yet if it was amongst Christians, it would change the whole face of the world; true piety, and exemplary holiness, would be as common and visible, as *buying* and *selling*, or any trade in life.

Let a *Clergyman* but be thus *pious*, and he will *converse* as if he had been brought up by an *Apostle*; he will no more think and talk of *noble preferment*, than of *noble eating*, or a *glorious chariot*. He will no more complain of the *frowns* of the world, or a *small cure*, or the want of a *patron*, than he will complain of the want of a *laced coat*, or a *running horse*. Let him but *intend to please God, in all his actions, as the happiest and best thing in the world*, and then he will know, that there is nothing *noble* in a Clergyman, but a burning zeal for the salvation of souls;

nor anything poor in his profession, but *idleness* and a *worldly Spirit*.

Again, let a *Tradesman* but have this *intention*, and it will make him a saint in his *shop*; his every-day business will be a course of wise and reasonable actions, made holy to God, by being done in obedience to his will and pleasure. He will *buy* and *sell*, and *labour* and travel, because by so doing he can do some good to himself and others. But then, as nothing can please God but what is wise, and reasonable, and holy, so he will neither buy nor sell, nor labour in any other *manner*, nor to any other *end*, but such as may be shown to be *wise*, and *reasonable*, and *holy*. He will therefore consider, not what arts, or methods, or application will soonest make him richer and greater than his brethren, or remove him from a *shop* to a life of *state* and *pleasure*; but he will consider what arts, what methods, what application can make worldly business most acceptable to God, and make a life of trade a life of holiness, devotion, and piety. This will be the temper and spirit of every tradesman; he cannot stop short of these degrees of piety, whenever it is his *intention to please God in all his actions, as the best and happiest thing in the world*.

And on the other hand, whoever is not of this spirit and temper in his *trade* and *profession*, and does not carry it on only so far as is best subservient to a wise, and holy, and heavenly life; it is certain that he has not this *intention*; and yet without it, who can be shown to be a follower of Jesus Christ?

Again, let the *Gentleman* of birth and fortune but have this *intention*, and you will see how it will carry him from every appearance of evil, to every instance of piety and goodness. He cannot live by *chance*, or as *humour* and fancy carry him, because he knows that nothing can please God but a wise and regular course of life. He cannot live in *idleness* and *indulgence*, in *sports* and *gaming*, in pleasures and intemperance, in vain expenses and high living, because these things cannot be turned into means of piety and holiness, or made so many parts of a wise and religious life.

As he thus removes from all appearance of evil, so he hastens and aspires after every instance of goodness. He does not ask what is *allowable* and *pardonable*, but what is *commendable* and *praiseworthy*. He does not ask, whether God will forgive the *folly* of our lives, the *madness* of our pleasures, the *vanity* of our expenses, the richness of our *equipage*, and the careless consumption of our *time*; but he asks, whether God is pleased with these things, or whether these are the appointed ways of gaining his favour? He does not inquire, whether it be pardonable

to hoard up money, to adorn ourselves with diamonds, and gild our chariots, whilst the *widow* and the *orphan*, the *sick* and the *prisoner*, want to be relieved; but he asks, whether God has required these things at our hands, whether we shall be called to account at the last day for the neglect of them; because it is not his intent to live in such ways as, for aught we know, God may *perhaps* pardon; but to be diligent in such ways, as we know, that God will *infallibly* reward.

He will not therefore look at the lives of Christians, to learn how he ought to spend his estate, but he will look into the Scriptures, and make every *doctrine, parable, precept, or instruction*, that relates to rich men, a *law* to himself in the use of his estate.

He will have nothing to do with costly apparel, because the rich man in the Gospel was 'clothed with purple and fine linen.' He denies himself the *pleasures* and *indulgences* which his estate could procure, because our blessed Saviour saith, 'Woe unto you 'that are rich, for ye have received your consolation.' He will have but *one rule* for charity, and that will be, to spend *all* that he can that way, because the judge of quick and dead hath said, that all that is so given, is given to him.

He will have no *hospitable table* for the rich and wealthy to come and feast with him, in good eating and drinking; because our blessed Lord saith, 'When thou makest a dinner, call not 'thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy 'rich neighbours, lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense 'be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, 'the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed. 'For they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recom- 'pensed at the resurrection of the just.*'

He will waste no money in gilded roofs, or costly furniture: He will not be carried from pleasure to pleasure, in expensive state and equipage, because an inspired Apostle hath said, that 'all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the 'eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the 'world.'

Let not anyone look upon this as an imaginary description of charity, that looks fine in the notion, but cannot be put in practice. For it is so far from being an imaginary impracticable form of life, that it has been practised by great numbers of Christians in former ages, who were glad to turn their whole estates into a constant course of charity. And it is so far from being impossible now, that if we can find any Christians, that

* Luke xiv. 12-14.

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sincerely *intend to please God in all their actions, as the best and happiest thing in the world*, whether they be young or old, single or married, men or women, if they have but this *intention*, it will be impossible for them to do otherwise. This one principle will infallibly carry them to the height of charity, and they will find themselves unable to stop short of it.

For how is it possible for a man that *intends to please God in the use of his money*, and intends it because he judges it to be his *greatest happiness*, how is it possible for such a one, in such a state of mind, to bury his money in *needless, impertinent* finery, in covering himself or his *horses* with gold, whilst there are any works of piety and charity to be done with it, or any ways of spending it well?

This is as strictly impossible, as for a man who intends to please God in his *words*, to go into company on purpose to *swear and lie*. For as all waste and unreasonable expense is done *designedly*, and with *deliberation*, so no one can be guilty of it, whose *constant intention* is to please God in the use of his *money*.

I have chosen to explain this matter, by appealing to this *intention*, because it makes the case so plain, and because everyone who has a mind, may see it in the clearest light, and feel it in the strongest manner, only by looking into his own Heart. For it is as easy for every person to know, whether he *intends to please God in all his actions*; as for any *servant* to know, whether this be his intention towards his *master*. Everyone also can as easily tell how he lays out his money, and whether he considers how to please God in it, as he can tell where his estate is, and whether it be in *money or land*. So that there is no plea left for *ignorance or frailty*, as to this matter, everybody is in the *light*, and everybody has *power*. And no one can fail, but he who is not so much a Christian, as to *intend to please God in the use of his estate*.

You see two persons, one is regular in *public and private Prayer*, the other is not. Now the reason of this difference is not this, that one has *strength and power* to observe Prayer, and the other has not; but the reason is this, that one *intends to please God in the duties of Devotion*, and the other has no intention about it. Now the case is the same, in the right or wrong use of our *time and money*. You see one person throwing away his time in *sleep and idleness*, in *visiting and diversions*, and his money in the most vain and unreasonable expenses. You see another careful of every day, dividing his hours by rules of Reason and Religion, and spending all his money in works of charity; now the difference is not owing to this, that one has

strength and power to do thus, and the other has not ; but it is owing to this, that one *intends to please God* in the right use of all his *time*, and all his *money*, and the other has no intention about it.

Here therefore let us judge ourselves sincerely, let us not vainly content ourselves with the common disorders of our lives, the *vanity* of our expenses, the *folly* of our diversions, the *pride* of our habits, the *idleness* of our lives, and the *wasting* of our time, fancying that these are *such imperfections* as we fall into through the unavoidable *weakness* and *frailty* of our natures ; but let us be assured, that these disorders of our *common* life are owing to this, that we have not so much Christianity, as *to intend to please God in all the actions of our life, as the best and happiest thing in the world*. So that we must not look upon ourselves in a state of common and pardonable imperfection, but in such a state, as wants the *first and most fundamental* principle of Christianity, *viz., an intention to please God in all our actions*.

And if anyone were to ask himself, how it comes to pass, that there are any *degrees* of sobriety which he neglects, any *practices* of humility which he wants, any *method* of charity which he does not follow, any *rules* of redeeming time which he does not observe, his own heart will tell him, that it is because he never *intended* to be so exact in those duties. For whenever we fully intend it, it is as possible to conform to all this *regularity* of life, as it is possible for a man to observe *times* of Prayer.

So that the fault does not lie here, that we desire to be good and perfect, but through the weakness of our nature fall short of it ; but it is, because we have not piety enough to *intend* to be as good as we can, or to please God in *all the actions* of our life. This we see is plainly the case of him who spends his time in *sports*, when he should be at *Church* ; it is not his want of power, but his want of *intention*, or desire to be there.

And the case is plainly the same in every other folly of human life. *She* that spends her time and money in the unreasonable ways and fashions of the world, does not do so, because she wants power to be wise and religious in the management of her time and money, but because she has no *intention* or desire of being so. When she feels this intention, she will find it as possible to act up to it, as to be strictly *sober* and *chaste*, because it is her care and desire to be so.

This doctrine does not suppose, that we have no need of divine grace, or that it is in our own power to make ourselves perfect. It only supposes, that through the want of a *sincere* intention of pleasing God in *all our actions*, we fall into such irregularities of life, as by the *ordinary* means of grace, we should have power to avoid.

And that we have not that perfection, which our present state of grace makes us capable of, because we do not so much as *intend* to have it.

It only teaches us, that the reason why you see no *real* mortification, or self-denial, no *eminent* charity, no *profound* humility, no *heavenly* affection, no *true* contempt of the world, no *Christian* meekness, no *sincere* zeal, no *eminent* piety in the *common lives* of Christians, is this, because they do not so much as *intend* to be exact and exemplary in these virtues.

Chapter III.

Of the great danger and folly, of not intending to be as eminent and exemplary as we can, in the practice of all Christian virtues.

ALTHOUGH the goodness of God, and his rich mercies in Christ Jesus, are a sufficient assurance to us, that he will be merciful to our unavoidable weaknesses and infirmities, that is, to such failings as are the effects of *ignorance* or *surprise*; yet we have no reason to expect the same mercy towards those sins which we have lived in, through a want of *intention* to avoid them.

For instance, the case of a *common swearer*, who dies in that guilt, seems to have no title to the divine mercy, for this reason, because he can no more plead any weakness, or infirmity in his excuse, than the man that hid his *talent* in the earth, could plead his want of strength to keep it out of the earth.

But now, if this be right reasoning in the case of a *common swearer*, that his sin is not to be reckoned a *pardonable frailty*, because he has no weakness to plead in its excuse, why then do we not carry this way of reasoning to its true extent? Why do not we as much condemn every other error of life, that has no more weakness to plead in its excuse than common swearing?

For if this be so bad a thing, because it might be avoided, if we did but sincerely intend it, must not then all other erroneous ways of life be very guilty, if we live in them, not through weakness and inability, but because we never sincerely intended to avoid them?

For instance, you perhaps have made no progress in the most

important Christian virtues, you have scarce gone half way in *humility* and *charity*; now if your failure in these duties is purely owing to your want of *intention* of performing them in any true degree, have you not then as little to plead for yourself, and are you not as much without all excuse, as the *common swearer*?

Why, therefore, do you not press these things home upon your conscience? Why do you not think it as dangerous for you to live in such defects, as are in your power to amend, as it is dangerous for a common swearer to live in the breach of that duty, which it is in his power to observe? Is not negligence, and a want of a sincere intention, as blamable in one case, as in another?

You, it may be, are as far from *Christian Perfection*, as the common swearer is from keeping the *third Commandment*; are you not therefore as much condemned by the doctrines of the Gospel, as the swearer is by the *third Commandment*?

You perhaps will say, that all People fall short of the Perfection of the Gospel, and therefore you are content with your failings. But this is saying nothing to the purpose. For the question is not whether Gospel Perfection can be fully attained, but whether you come as near it, as a sincere intention, and careful intelligence can carry you. Whether you are not in a much lower state than you might be, if you sincerely intended, and carefully laboured to advance yourself in all Christian virtues.

If you are as forward in the Christian Life, as your best endeavours can make you, then you may justly hope, that your *imperfections* will not be laid to your charge; but if your defects in *piety*, *humility*, and *charity*, are owing to your negligence, and want of *sincere intention*, to be as eminent as you can in these virtues, then you leave yourself as much without excuse, as he that lives in the sin of swearing, through the want of a sincere intention to depart from it.

The salvation of our souls is set forth in Scripture as a thing of difficulty, that requires *all our diligence*, that is to be *worked out with fear and trembling*.

We are told, that 'strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it. That many are called, but few are chosen.' And that many will miss of their salvation, who seem to have taken *some pains* to obtain it: As in these words, 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.'

Here our blessed Lord commands us to *strive* to enter in,

because many will fail, who only *seek* to enter. By which we are plainly taught, that Religion is a state of *labour* and *striving*, and that many will fail of their salvation; not because they took no pains or care about it, but because they did not take pains and care enough; they only *sought*, but did not *strive* to enter in.

Every Christian therefore, should as well examine his life by these *Doctrines*, as by the Commandments. For these *Doctrines* are as plain marks of our condition, as the Commandments are plain marks of our duty.

For if salvation is only given to those who *strive* for it, then it is as reasonable for me to consider, whether my course of life be a course of striving to obtain it, as to consider whether I am keeping any of the Commandments.

If my Religion is only a formal compliance with those modes of worship, that are in fashion where I live; if it costs me no pains or trouble; if it lays me under no rules and restraints; if I have no careful thoughts and sober reflections about it, is it not great weakness to think that I am *striving to enter in at the strait gate*?

If I am seeking everything that can delight my senses, and regale my appetites; spending my time and fortune in pleasures, in diversions, and worldly enjoyments, a stranger to watchings, fastings, prayers, and mortifications, how can it be said that I am *working out my salvation with fear and trembling*?

If there is nothing in my life and conversation, that shows me to be different from *Jews* and *Heathens*; if I use the world, and worldly enjoyments, as the *generality* of people now do, and in all ages have done, why should I think that I am amongst *those few*, who are walking in the *narrow way* to heaven?

And yet if the way is *narrow*, if none can walk in it but those that *strive*, is it not as necessary for me to consider, whether the *way* I am in be *narrow enough*, or the labour I take be a *sufficient* striving, as to consider whether I sufficiently observe the second or third Commandment.

The sum of this matter is this: From the above-mentioned, and many other passages of Scripture, it seems plain, that our salvation depends upon the *sincerity* and *perfection* of our endeavours to obtain it.

Weak and imperfect men shall, notwithstanding their frailties and defects, be received, as having pleased God, if they have done their *utmost* to please him.

The rewards of charity, piety, and humility, will be given to those, whose lives have been a *careful labour* to exercise these virtues in as *high* a degree as they could.

We cannot offer to God the service of *Angels*; we cannot obey him as man in a state of perfection could; but *fallen men* can do their *best*, and this is the perfection that is required of us; it is only the perfection of our *best* endeavours, a careful labour to be as perfect as we can.

But if we stop short of this, for aught we know, we stop short of the mercy of God, and leave ourselves nothing to plead from the terms of the Gospel. For God has there made no promises of mercy to the *slothful* and *negligent*. His mercy is only offered to our frail and imperfect, but best endeavours to practise all manner of righteousness.

As the law to angels is angelical righteousness, as the law to perfect beings is strict perfection, so the law to our imperfect nature is, the *best* obedience that our frail nature is able to perform.

The measure of our love to God, seems in justice to be the measure of our love of every virtue. We are to love and practise it 'with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and 'with all our strength.' And when we cease to live with this regard to virtue, we live below our nature, and instead of being able to plead our *infirmities*, we stand chargeable with *negligence*.

It is for this reason that we are exhorted, to work out our salvation with *fear* and *trembling*; because unless our *heart* and *passions* are eagerly bent upon the work of our salvation; unless *holy fears* animate our endeavours, and keep our consciences strict and tender about every part of our duty, constantly examining how we live, and how fit we are to die, we shall in all probability fall into a state of negligence, and sit down in such a course of life, as will never carry us to the rewards of heaven.

And he that considers, that a just God can only make such allowances as are suitable to his justice, that our works are all to be examined by fire, will find, that *fear* and *trembling* are proper tempers for those, that are drawing near so great a trial.

And indeed there is no probability, that anyone should do all the duty that is expected from him, or make that progress in piety, which the holiness and justice of God requires of him, but he that is constantly afraid of falling short of it.

Now this is not intended, to possess people's minds with a scrupulous anxiety, and discontent in the service of God, but to fill them with a just fear of living in sloth and idleness, and in the neglect of such virtues, as they will want at the day of Judgment.

It is to excite them to an earnest examination of their lives, to such zeal, and care, and concern after Christian perfection, as they use in any matter that has gained their heart and affections.

It is only desiring them to be so apprehensive of their state, so humble in the opinion of themselves, so earnest after higher degrees of piety, and so fearful of falling short of happiness, as the great apostle St. Paul was, when he thus wrote to the *Philippians*.

‘Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect;—but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.’ And then he adds, ‘Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded.’

But now, if the Apostle thought it necessary for those, who were in his state of perfection, to be *thus minded*, that is, thus labouring, pressing and aspiring after some degrees of holiness, to which they were not then arrived, surely it is much more necessary for us, who are born in the dregs of time, and labouring under great imperfections, *to be thus minded*, that is, thus earnest and striving after such degrees of a holy and divine life, as we have not yet attained.

The best way for anyone to know, how much he ought to aspire after holiness, is to consider, not how much will make his present life easy, but to ask himself, how much he thinks will make him easy, at the hour of death.

Now any man that dares be so serious, as to put this question to himself, will be forced to answer, that at death, everyone will wish that he had been as perfect as human nature can be.

Is not this therefore sufficient, to put us not only upon wishing, but labouring after all that perfection, which we shall then lament the want of? Is it not excessive folly, to be content with such a course of piety, as we already know cannot content us, at a time when we shall so want it, as to have nothing else to comfort us? How can we carry a severer condemnation against ourselves, than to believe, that at the hour of death, we shall want the virtues of the *Saints*, and wish that we had been amongst the first servants of God, and yet take no methods of arriving at their height of piety, whilst we are alive?

Though this is an *absurdity* that we can easily pass over at present, whilst the health of our bodies, the passions of our minds, the noise, and hurry, and pleasures, and business of the world, lead us on with eyes that see not, and ears that hear not, yet at death, it will set itself before us in a dreadful magnitude, it will haunt us like a dismal Ghost, and our conscience will never let us take our eyes from it.

We see in worldly matters, what a torment self-condemnation is, and how hardly a man is able to forgive himself, when he has

brought himself into any calamity, or disgrace, purely by his own folly. The affliction is made doubly tormenting, because he is forced to charge it all upon himself, as his own act and deed, against the nature and reason of things, and contrary to the advice of all his friends.

Now by this we may in some degree guess, how terrible the pain of that self-condemnation will be, when a man shall find himself in the miseries of death, under the severity of a self-condemning conscience, charging all his distress upon his own folly, and madness, against the sense and reason of his own mind, against all the doctrines and precepts of religion, and contrary to all the instructions, calls, and warnings, both of God, and man.

Penitens was a busy, notable tradesman, and very prosperous in his dealings, but died in the *thirty-fifth* year of his age.

A little before his death, when the doctors had given him over, some of his neighbours came one evening to see him, at which time, he spake thus to them.

I see, says he, my friends, the tender concern you have for me, by the grief that appears in your countenances, and I know the thoughts that you now have about me. You think how melancholy a case it is, to see so young a man, and in such flourishing business, delivered up to death. And perhaps, had I visited any of you in my condition, I should have had the same thoughts of you.

But now, my friends, my thoughts are no more like your thoughts, than my condition is like yours.

It is no trouble to me now to think, that I am to die young, or before I have raised an estate.

These things are now sunk into such mere *nothings*, that I have no name little enough to call them by. For if in a few days, or hours, I am to leave this carcass to be buried in the earth, and to find myself either for ever happy in the favour of God, or eternally separated from all light and peace, can any words sufficiently express the littleness of everything else?

Is there any dream like the dream of life, which amuses us with the neglect and disregard of these things? Is there any folly like the folly of our manly state, which is too *wise* and *busy*, to be at leisure for these reflections?

When we consider death as a misery, we only think of it as a miserable separation from the enjoyments of this life. We seldom mourn over an old man that dies rich, but we lament the young, that are taken away in the progress of their fortune. You yourselves look upon me with pity, not that I am going unprepared to meet the Judge of quick and dead, but that I am to leave a prosperous trade in the flower of my life.

This is the wisdom of our manly thoughts. And yet what folly of the silliest children is so great as this?

For what is there miserable, or dreadful in death, but the consequences of it? When a man is dead, what does anything signify to him, but the state he is then in?

Our poor friend *Lepidus* died, you know, as he was dressing himself for a *feast*; do you think it is now part of his trouble, that he did not live till that entertainment was over? *Feast*, and *business*, and *pleasures*, and *enjoyments*, seem great things to us, whilst we think of nothing else, but as soon as we add death to them, they all sink into an equal littleness; and the soul that is separated from the body, no more laments the loss of *business*, than the losing of a *feast*.

If I am now going into the joys of God, could there be any reason to grieve, that this happened to me before I was forty years of age? Could it be a sad thing to go to heaven, before I had made a few more *bargains*, or stood a little longer behind a *counter*?

And if I am to go amongst lost spirits, could there be any reason to be content, that this did not happen to me till I was old, and full of riches?

If good Angels were ready to receive my soul, could it be any grief to me, that I was dying upon a *poor bed* in a *garret*?

And if God has delivered me up to evil spirits, to be dragged by them to places of torments, could it be any comfort to me, that they found me upon a bed of state?

When you are as near death as I am, you will know, that all the different states of life, whether of youth or age, riches or poverty, greatness or meanness, signify no more to you, than whether you die in a *poor*, or *stately* apartment.

The greatness of those things which follow death, makes all that goes before it sink into nothing.

Now that *judgment* is the next thing that I look for, and everlasting happiness, or misery is come so near me, all the enjoyments and prosperities of life seem as vain and insignificant, and to have no more to do with my happiness, than the clothes that I wore before I could speak.

But, my friends, how am I surprised, that I have not always had these thoughts? for what is there in the terrors of death, in the vanities of life, or the necessities of piety, but what I might have as easily and fully seen in any part of my life?

What a strange thing is it, that a little *health*, or the poor business of a *shop*, should keep us so senseless of these great things, that are coming so fast upon us!

Just as you came into my chamber, I was thinking with my-

self, what numbers of souls there are now in the world, in my condition at this very time, surprised with a summons to the other world; some taken from their *shops* and *farms*, others from their *sports* and *pleasures*, these at *suits of Law*, those at *Gaming-tables*, some on the *road*, others at their own *fire-sides*, and all seized at an hour when they thought nothing of it; frightened at the approach of death, confounded at the vanity of all their labours, designs, and projects, astonished at the folly of their past lives, and not knowing which way to turn their thoughts, to find any comfort. Their consciences flying in their faces, bringing all their sins to their remembrance, tormenting them with deepest convictions of their own folly, presenting them with the sight of the angry Judge, the worm that never dies, the fire that is never quenched, the gates of hell, the powers of darkness, and the bitter pains of eternal death.

O my friends! bless God that you are not of this number, that you have time and strength to employ yourselves in such works of piety, as may bring you peace at the last.

And take this along with you, that there is nothing but a life of great piety, or a death of great stupidity, that can keep off these Apprehensions.

Had I now a thousand worlds, I would give them all for one year more, that I might present unto God, one year of such devotion and good works, as I never before so much as intended.

You perhaps, when you consider that I have lived free from scandal and debauchery, and in the communion of the Church, wonder to see me so full of remorse and self-condemnation at the approach of death.

But, alas! what a poor thing is it, to have lived only free from *murder*, *theft*, and *adultery*, which is all that I can say of myself.

You know indeed, that I have never been reckoned a *sot*, but you are at the same time witnesses, and have been frequent companions of my *intemperance*, *sensuality*, and great *indulgence*. And if I am now going to a Judgment, where nothing will be rewarded but *good works*, I may well be concerned, that though I am no *sot*, yet I have no *Christian sobriety* to plead for me.

It is true, I have lived in the communion of the Church, and generally frequented its worship and service on *Sundays*, when I were neither too *idle*, or not otherwise disposed of by my *business* and *pleasures*. But then, my conformity to the public worship, has been rather a thing of course, than any real intention of doing that, which the service of the Church supposes; had it not been so, I had been oftener at Church, more devout when there, and more fearful of ever neglecting it.

But the thing that now surprises me above all wonders, is

this, that I never had so much as a *general intention* of living up to the piety of the Gospel. This never so much as entered into my head, or my heart. I never once in my life considered, whether I were living as the laws of Religion direct, or whether my way of life was such, as would procure me the mercy of God at this hour.

And can it be thought, that I have kept the Gospel terms of salvation, without ever so much as *intending* in any serious and deliberate manner, either to know them, or keep them? Can it be thought, that I have pleased God with such a life as he requires, though I have lived without ever considering, what he requires, or how much I have performed? How easy a thing would salvation be, if it could fall into my careless hands, who have never had so much serious thought about it, as about any one common bargain that I have made?

In the business of life I have used prudence and reflection. I have done everything by rules and methods. I have been glad to converse with men of experience and judgment, to find out the reasons why some fail, and others succeed in any business. I have taken no step in trade but with great care and caution, considering every advantage, or danger that attended it. I have always had my eye upon the main end of business, and have studied all the ways and means of being a gainer by all that I undertook.

But what is the reason that I have brought none of these tempers to Religion? What is the reason that I, who have so often talked of the necessity of *rules* and *methods*, and *diligence* in worldly business, have all this while never once thought of any rules, or methods, or managements, to carry me on in a life of Piety?

Do you think anything can astonish, and confound a dying man like this? What pain do you think a man must feel, when his conscience lays all this folly to his charge, when it shall show him how regular, exact, and wise he has been in small matters, which are passed away like a dream, and how stupid and senseless he has lived, without any reflection, without any rules, in things of such eternal moment, as no heart can sufficiently conceive them?

Had I only my *frailties* and *imperfections* to lament, at this time, I should lie here humbly trusting in the mercies of God. But, alas! how can I call a general disregard, and a thorough neglect of all religious improvement, a *frailty* or *imperfection*; when it was as much in my power to have been exact, and careful, and diligent in a course of piety, as in the business of my *trade*.

I could have called in as many helps, have practised as many rules, and been taught as many certain methods of holy living, as of thriving in my shop, had I but so *intended* and *desired* it.

Oh my friends! a careless life, unconcerned and unattentive to the duties of Religion, is so without all excuse, so unworthy of the mercy of God, such a shame to the sense and reason of our minds, that I can hardly conceive a greater punishment, than for a man to be thrown into the state that I am in, to reflect upon it.

Penitens was here going on, but had his mouth stopped by a *convulsion*, which never suffered him to speak any more. He lay convulsed about twelve hours, and then gave up the ghost.

Now if every *reader*, would imagine this *Penitens* to have been some particular acquaintance or relation of his, and fancy that he saw and heard all that is here described, that he stood by his bedside when his poor friend lay in such distress and agony, lamenting the folly of his past life, it would, in all probability, teach him such wisdom as never entered into his heart before. If to this, he should consider how often he himself might have been surprised in the same state of negligence, and made an example to the rest of the world, this double reflection, both upon the *distress* of his friend, and the *goodness* of that God, who had preserved him from it, would in all likelihood soften his heart into holy tempers, and make him turn the remainder of his life into a regular course of piety.

This therefore being so useful a meditation, I shall here leave the reader, as I hope, seriously engaged in it.

Chapter IV.

We can please God in no state, or employment of life, but by intending and devoting it all to his honour and glory.

HAVING in the first Chapter stated the general nature of Devotion, and shown, that it implies not any *form of Prayer*, but a certain form of life, that is offered to God not at any particular *times*, or *places*, but everywhere and in everything, I shall now descend to some particulars, and show how we are to devote our *labour* and *employment*, our *time* and *fortunes* unto God.

As a good Christian should consider every place as holy,

because God is there, so he should look upon every part of his life as a matter of holiness, because it is to be offered unto God.

The profession of a *Clergyman*, is a holy profession, because it is a ministration in *holy things*, an attendance at the *Altar*. But worldly business is to be made holy unto the Lord, by being done as a service to him, and in conformity to his divine will.

For as all men, and all things in the World, as truly belong unto God, as any *places, things, or persons* that are devoted to divine service, so all things are to be *used*, and all persons are to *act* in their several states and employments for the Glory of God.

Men of worldly business therefore, must not look upon themselves as at liberty to live to themselves, to sacrifice to their own *humours* and *tempers*, because their employment is of a worldly nature. But they must consider, that as the world and all worldly professions, as truly belong to God, as *persons* and *things* that are devoted to the *Altar*, so it is as much the duty of men in worldly business to live wholly unto God, as it is the duty of those, who are devoted to divine service.

As the whole world is God's, so the whole world is to act for God. As all men have the same *relation* to God, as all men have all their *powers* and *faculties* from God, so all men are obliged to act for God, with all their powers and faculties.

As all things are God's, so all things are to be used and regarded as the things of God. For *men* to abuse things on *earth*, and live to themselves, is the same rebellion against God, as for *Angels* to abuse things in *Heaven*; because God is just the same Lord of all on earth, as he is the Lord of all in Heaven.

Things may, and must *differ* in their *use*, but yet they are all to be used according to the will of God.

Men may, and must differ in their *employments*, but yet they must all act for the same ends, as dutiful servants of God, in the right and pious performance of their several callings.

Clergymen must live wholly unto God in one *particular* way, that is, in the exercise of *Holy offices*, in the ministration of *Prayers* and *Sacraments*, and a zealous distribution of spiritual goods.

But men of other employments, are in their *particular* ways as much obliged to act as the servants of God, and live wholly unto him in their several callings.

This is the only difference between Clergymen, and People of other callings.

When it can be shown, that men might be vain, covetous, sensual, worldly minded, or proud in the exercise of their

worldly business, then it will be allowable for *Clergymen* to indulge the same tempers in their sacred profession. For though these tempers are most odious and most criminal in *Clergymen*, who besides their baptismal vow, have a second time devoted themselves to God, to be his servants, not in the *common offices* of human life, but in the *spiritual* service of the most *holy, sacred* things, and who are therefore to keep themselves as separate and different from the *common life* of other men, as a *Church* or an *Altar* is to be kept separate from houses, and tables of common use; yet as all Christians are by their baptism *devoted* to God, and made professors of holiness, so are they all in their several callings to live as holy and heavenly persons; doing everything in their *common* life only in such a manner, as it may be received by God, as a service done to him. For things spiritual and temporal, sacred and common, must, like *men* and *angels*, like *heaven* and *earth*, all conspire in the Glory of God.

As there is but one *God* and *Father of us all*, whose Glory gives light and life to everything that lives; whose presence fills all places, whose power supports all beings, whose providence ruleth all Events; so everything that lives, whether in *heaven* or *earth*, whether they be *thrones* or *principalities*, *men* or *angels*, they must all with one spirit, live *wholly* to the praise and glory of this one God and Father of them all. *Angels* as *angels*, in their heavenly ministrations, but *men* as men, *women* as women, *bishops* as bishops, *priests* as priests, and *deacons* as deacons; some with things *spiritual*, and some with things *temporal*, offering to God the daily sacrifice of a reasonable life, wise actions, purity of heart, and heavenly affections.

This is the *common business* of all persons in this world. It is not left to any *women* in the world to trifle away their time in the follies and impertinences of a *fashionable life*, nor to any *men* to resign themselves up to worldly *cares* and *concerns*: it is not left to the *rich*, to gratify their passions in the *indulgences* and *pride* of life, nor to the *poor*, to vex and torment their hearts with the *poverty* of their state; but men and women, rich and poor, must, with *bishops* and *priests*, walk before God in the same wise and holy spirit, in the same denial of all vain tempers, and in the same discipline and care of souls; not only because they have all the same rational nature, and are servants of the same God, but because they *all want* the same holiness, to make them fit for the same happiness, to which they are all called. It is therefore absolutely necessary for all Christians, whether *men* or *women*, to consider themselves, as persons that are *devoted* to holiness; and so order their *common ways of life*, by

such rules of reason and piety, as may turn it into *continual service* unto almighty God.

Now to make our *labour*, or *employment* an acceptable service unto God, we must carry it on with the same *spirit* and *temper*, that is required in giving of *alms*, or any work of *piety*.* For, if 'whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we must do all 'to the glory of God'; if 'we are to use this world as if we used 'it not'; if we are to 'present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, 'acceptable to God';† if 'we are to live by faith, and not by 'sight,' and to 'have our conversation in heaven'; then it is necessary, that the *common way* of our life in every state, be made to glorify God by *such tempers*, as make our prayers and adorations acceptable to him. For if we are worldly, or earthly-minded in our *employments*, if they are carried on with *vain* desires, and *covetous* tempers, only to satisfy ourselves, we can no more be said to live to the glory of God, than *gluttons* and *drunkards* can be said, to eat and drink to the glory of God.

As the glory of God is *one* and the *same* thing, so whatever we do suitably to it, must be done with *one* and the *same* spirit. That same state and temper of mind, which makes our *alms* and *devotions* acceptable, must also make our *labour*, or *employment*, a proper offering unto God. If a man labours to be *rich*, and pursues his business, that he may raise himself to a state of *figure* and *glory* in the world, he is no longer serving God in his employment; he is acting under other *masters*, and has no more title to a reward from God, than he that gives *alms*, that he may be *seen*, or *prays*, that he may be *heard* of men. For vain and earthly desires are no more allowable in our *employments*, than in our *alms* and *devotions*. For these tempers of worldly pride, and vain glory, are not only evil, when they mix with our good works, but they have the same evil nature, and make us odious to God, when they enter into the common business of our employment. If it were allowable, to indulge *covetous* or *vain* passions in our worldly *employments*, it would then be allowable to be vain-glorious in our *devotions*. But as our *alms* and *devotions* are not an acceptable service, but when they proceed from a heart *truly devoted* to God, so our common employment cannot be reckoned a service to him, but when it is performed with the *same* temper and piety of heart.

Most of the employments of life are in their own nature lawful; and all those that are so, may be made a substantial part of our duty to God, if we engage in them only *so far*, and for such *ends*, as are suitable to *beings* that are to live *above* the

* 1 Cor. x. 31.

† Rom. xii. 1.

world, all the time that they live in the world. This is the *only measure* of our application to any worldly business, let it be what it will, where it will, it must have no more of our *hands*, our *hearts*, or our *time*, than is consistent with an hearty, daily, careful preparation of ourselves for another life. For as all Christians, as such, have renounced this world, to prepare themselves by *daily* devotion, and *universal* holiness, for an eternal state of quite another nature, they must look upon worldly employments, as upon *worldly wants*, and *bodily infirmities*; things not to be desired, but only to be endured and suffered, till death and the resurrection has carried us to an eternal state of real happiness.

Now he that does not look at the things of this life in this *degree* of littleness, cannot be said, either to feel or believe the *greatest* truths of Christianity. For if he thinks anything great or important in human business, can he be said, to feel or believe those Scriptures which represent this life, and the greatest things of life, as *bubbles*, *vapours*, *dreams*, and *shadows*?

If he thinks *figure* and *show*, and worldly *glory*, to be any *proper* happiness of a Christian, how can he be said to feel or believe this doctrine, 'Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil for the Son of Man's sake'? For surely, if there was any real happiness in *figure* and *show*, and *worldly glory*; if these things deserved our thoughts and care, it could not be matter of the *highest joy*, when we are torn from them by *persecutions* and *sufferings*? If, therefore, a man will so live, as to show, that he feels and believes the most *fundamental* doctrines of Christianity, he must live *above* the world; this is the *temper* that must enable him to do the business of life, and yet live *wholly* unto God, and to go through some *worldly* employment with a *heavenly* mind. And it is as necessary, that people live in their employments with this *temper*, as it is necessary, that their employment itself be *lawful*.

The *husbandman* that tilleth the ground, is employed in an honest business, that is necessary in life, and very capable of being made an *acceptable service* unto God. But if he labours and toils, not to serve any reasonable ends of life, but in order to have his *plough* made of *silver*, and to have his *horses* harnessed in *gold*, the honesty of his employment is lost as to him, and his labour becomes his *folly*.

A *tradesman* may justly think, that it is agreeable to the will of God, for him to sell such things as are *innocent* and *useful* in life, such as help both himself, and others, to a reasonable sup-

port, and enable them to assist those that want to be assisted. But if instead of this, he trades only with regard to *himself*, without any other rule than that of his own *temper*, if it be his chief end in it to grow *rich*, that he may live in *figure* and *indulgence*, and be able to retire from business to *idleness* and *luxury*, his trade, as to him, loses all its *innocency*, and is so far from being an acceptable service to God, that it is only a more plausible course of *covetousness*, *self-love*, and *ambition*. For such a one turns the necessities of employment into pride and covetousness, just as the *sot* and *epicure* turn the necessities of eating and drinking, into *gluttony* and *drunkenness*. Now he that is up early and late, that sweats and labours for these ends, that he may be sometime or other rich, and live in *pleasure* and *indulgence*, lives no more to the glory of God, than he that *plays* and *games* for the same ends. For though there is a great difference between *trading* and *gaming*, yet most of that difference is lost, when men once trade with the *same desires* and *tempers*, and for the same *ends*, that others game. *Charity* and *fine dressing*, are things very different; but if men give *alms*, for the same reasons that others *dress fine*, only to be *seen* and *admired*, charity is then but like the vanity of *fine clothes*. In like manner, if the same motives make some people painful and industrious in their *trades*, which make others constant at *gaming*, such pain are but like the pains of gaming.

Calidus has traded above thirty years in the greatest city of the kingdom; he has been so many years constantly increasing his *trade*, and his *fortune*. Every hour of the day is with him an hour of business; and though he *eats* and *drinks* very heartily, yet every *meal* seems to be in a hurry, and he would say *grace* if he *had time*. *Calidus* ends every day at the *tavern*, but has not leisure to be there till near nine o'clock. He is always forced to drink a good *hearty glass*, to drive thoughts of business out of his head, and make his spirits *drowsy* enough for sleep. He does business all the time that he is rising, and has settled several matters, before he can get to his *counting-room*. His prayers are a short *ejaculation* or two, which he never misses in *stormy*, *tempestuous* weather, because he has always something or other at *Sea*. *Calidus* will tell you with great pleasure, that he has been in this *hurry* for so many years, and that it must have killed him long ago, but that it has been a *rule* with him, to get out of the town every *Saturday*, and make the *Sunday* a day of quiet, and good *refreshment* in the country.

He is now so rich, that he would leave off his business, and amuse his *old age* with building, and furnishing a fine house in the country, but that he is afraid he should grow *melancholy*, if

he were to quit his business. He will tell you with great gravity, that it is a dangerous thing for a man that has been used to get money, ever to leave it off. If thoughts of Religion happen at any time to *steal* into his head, *Calidus* contents himself with thinking, that he never was a friend to *heretics* and *infidels*, that he has always been civil to the *Minister* of his parish, and very often given something to the *charity schools*.

Now this way of life is at such a *distance* from all the doctrines and discipline of Christianity, that no one can live in it through *ignorance* or *frailty*. *Calidus* can no more imagine that 'he is 'born again of the spirit';* that he is 'in Christ a new 'creature';† that he lives 'here as a stranger and pilgrim, 'setting his affections upon things above, and laying up treasures in heaven.'‡ He can no more imagine this, than he can think that he has been all his life an *Apostle*, working *Miracles*, and preaching the *Gospel*.

It must also be owned, that the *generality* of trading people, especially in *great towns*, are too much like *Calidus*. You see them all the week buried in business, unable to think of anything else; and then spending the *Sunday* in idleness and refreshment, in wandering into the country, in such visits and jovial meetings, as make it often the worst day of the week.

Now they do not live thus, because they cannot support themselves with *less care* and application to business; but they live thus because they want to grow *rich* in their trades, and to maintain their families in some such *figure* and degree of *finery*, as a *reasonable Christian* life has no occasion for. Take away but this *temper*, and then people of *all trades*, will find themselves at leisure to live every day like Christians, to be careful of every duty of the Gospel, to live in a visible course of Religion, and be every day strict observers both of private and public Prayer.

Now the only way to do this, is for people to consider their trade as something, that they are obliged to *devote* to the glory of God, something that they are to do only in such a manner, as that they may make it a duty to him. Nothing can be right in *business*, that is not under these rules.—The Apostle commands servants, 'to be obedient to their masters, in singleness of heart, 'as unto Christ. Not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as 'the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. 'With good will doing service as unto the Lord, and not to 'men.'§

* John iii. 5.

† 2 Cor. v. 17.

‡ Col. iii. 1.

§ Eph. vi. 5; Col. iii. 22, 23.

This passage sufficiently shows, that all Christians are to live wholly unto God in every state and condition, doing the work of their *common calling*, in such a manner, and for such ends, as to make it a part of their *devotion* or *service* to God. For certainly if *poor slaves* are not to comply with their business as *men-pleasers*, if they are to look wholly unto God in all their actions, and serve in *singleness of heart*, as unto the Lord, surely men of other *employments* and *conditions*, must be as much obliged to go through their business with the same *singleness of heart*; not as pleasing the vanity of their own minds, not as gratifying their own selfish, worldly passions, but as the servants of God in all that they have to do. For surely no one will say, that a slave is to devote his state of life unto God, and make the will of God, the *sole rule* and end of his service, but that a *tradesman* need not act with the same spirit of devotion in his business. For this is as absurd, as to make it necessary for one man to be more *just*, or *faithful* than another.

It is therefore absolutely certain, that no Christian is to enter *any further* into business, nor for any *other ends*, than such as he can in *singleness* of heart offer unto God, as a *reasonable* service. For the Son of God has redeemed us for this *only end*, that we should, by a life of *reason* and *piety*, live to the glory of God; this is the *only rule* and *measure*, for every order and state of life. Without this *rule*, the most *lawful* employment becomes a *sinful* state of life.

Take away this from the life of a *Clergyman*, and his holy profession serves only to expose him to a *greater damnation*. Take away this from *tradesmen*, and shops are but so many houses of greediness and filthy lucre. Take away this from *gentlemen*, and the course of their life becomes a course of sensuality, pride, and wantonness. Take away this rule from our *tables*, and all falls into gluttony and drunkenness. Take away this measure from our *dress* and *habits*, and all is turned into such *paint*, and *glitter*, and ridiculous ornaments, as are a *real* shame to the wearer. Take away this from the use of our *fortunes*, and you will find people sparing in nothing but charity. Take away this from our *diversions*, and you will find no sports too silly, nor any entertainments too vain and corrupt to be the pleasure of Christians.

If therefore we desire to live unto God, it is necessary to bring our *whole life* under this law, to make his glory the *sole rule* and *measure* of our acting in every employment of life. For there is no other *true devotion*, but this of living devoted to God in the common business of our lives.

So that men must not content themselves with the *lawfulness*

of their employments, but must consider whether they *use* them, as they are to use *everything*, as *strangers* and *pilgrims*, that are baptized into the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that are to follow him in a *wise and heavenly* course of life, in the mortification of all worldly desires, and in purifying and preparing their souls for the blessed enjoyment of God.*

For to be vain, or proud, or covetous, or ambitious in the *common course* of our business, is as contrary to these holy tempers of Christianity, as cheating and dishonesty.

If a *glutton* were to say in excuse of his gluttony, that he only eats such things as it is *lawful* to eat, he would make as good an excuse for himself, as the greedy, covetous, ambitious tradesman, that should say, he only deals in lawful business. For as a Christian is not only required to be honest, but to be of a Christian *spirit*, and make his life an exercise of *humility*, *repentance*, and *heavenly* affection, so all tempers that are contrary to these are as contrary to Christianity, as *cheating* is contrary to *honesty*.

So that the matter plainly comes to this, all irregular tempers in *trade* and *business*, are but like irregular tempers in *eating* and *drinking*.

Proud views, and *vain desires*, in our worldly employments, are as truly vices and corruptions, as *hypocrisy* in prayer, or *vanity* in alms. And there can be no reason given, why vanity in our *alms*, should make us odious to God, but what will prove any other kind of pride to be *equally* odious. He that labours and toils in a *calling*, that he may make a figure in the world, and draw the eyes of People upon the splendour of his condition, is as far from the pious humility of a Christian, as he that gives *alms* that he may be seen of men. For the reason, why pride and vanity in our *prayers* and *alms*, renders them an unacceptable service to God, is not because there is anything *particular* in prayers and alms, that cannot allow of pride, but because pride is in no respect, nor in anything, *made for man*; it destroys the *piety* of our prayers and alms, because it destroys the piety of *everything* that it touches, and renders every action that it governs, incapable of being offered unto God.

So that if we could so *divide* ourselves, as to be *humble* in some respects, and proud in others, such humility would be of no service to us, because God requires us as truly to be humble in *all our actions* and designs, as to be true and honest in all our actions and designs.

And as a man is not honest and true, because he is so to a

* Col. iii. 1; 1 Pet. i. 15, 16; Eph. v. 26, 27.

great *many* People, or upon *several* occasions, but because truth and honesty is the *measure* of all his dealings with everybody ; so the case is the same in humility, or any other temper, it must be the general ruling habit of our minds, and extend itself to all our actions and designs, before it can be imputed to us.

We indeed sometimes talk, as if a man might be humble in some things, and proud in others ; humble in his *dress*, but proud of his *learning* ; humble in his *person*, but proud in his *views* and *designs*. But though this may pass in common discourse, where few things are said according to *strict* truth, it cannot be allowed, when we examine into the nature of our actions.

It is very possible for a man that lives by cheating, to be very punctual in *paying* for what he buys ; but then everyone is assured, that he does not do so out of any principle of *true* honesty.

In like manner, it is very possible for a man, that is proud of his *estate*, ambitious in his *views*, or vain of his *learning*, to disregard his *dress*, and *person*, in such a manner as a truly humble man would do ; but to suppose that he does so out of a true principle of religious humility, is full as absurd, as to suppose that a *cheat* pays for what he buys, out of a principle of religious honesty.

As therefore all kinds of dishonesty destroy our pretences to an *honest principle* of mind, so all kinds of pride destroy our pretences to an *humble spirit*.

No one wonders that those *prayers*, and *alms*, which proceed from pride and ostentation, are odious to God ; but yet it is as easy to show, that pride is as pardonable there as anywhere else.

If we could suppose, that God rejects pride in our *prayers* and *alms*, but bears with pride in our *dress*, our *persons*, or *estates*, it would be the same thing as to suppose, that God condemns falsehood in some actions, but allows it in others. For pride in one thing, differs from pride in another thing, as the robbing of one man differs from the robbing of another.

Again, if pride and ostentation is so odious, that it destroys the *merit* and *worth* of the most reasonable actions, surely it must be equally odious in those actions, which are only founded in the *weakness* and *infirmity* of our nature. As thus, *alms* are commanded by God, as excellent in themselves, as true instances of a divine temper, but *clothes* are only allowed to cover our shame ; surely therefore it must at least be as odious a degree of pride, to be vain in our *clothes*, as to be vain in our *alms*.

Again, we are *commanded to pray without ceasing*, as a means of rendering our souls more exalted and divine, but we are forbidden *to lay up treasures upon earth* ; and can we think that it is not as bad, to be vain of those *treasures*, which we are *for-*

bidden to lay up, as to be vain of those *prayers*, which we are *commanded* to make.

Women are required to have their *heads covered*, and to *adorn* themselves with *shamefacedness* ;* if therefore they are *vain* in those things, which are expressly forbidden, if they patch and paint that part, which can only be adorned by *shamefacedness*, surely they have as much to repent of for such a pride, as they have, whose pride is the motive to their prayers and charity. This must be granted, unless we will say, that it is more *pardonable* to glory in our *shame*, than to glory in our *virtue*.

All these instances are only to show us the great necessity of such a regular and uniform piety, as extends itself to all the actions of our common life.

That we must *eat* and *drink*, and *dress* and *discourse*, according to the sobriety of the *Christian* spirit, engage in no employments but such as we can truly devote unto God, nor pursue them any further, than so far as conduces to the reasonable ends of a holy devout life.

That we must be *honest*, not only on *particular* occasions, and in *such* instances, as are *applauded* in the world, *easy* to be performed, and free from *danger*, or *loss*, but from such a *living principle* of justice, as makes us love truth and integrity in *all its instances*, follow it through all dangers, and against all opposition ; as knowing that the more we pay for any truth, the better is our *bargain*, and that then our integrity becomes a *Pearl*, when we have parted with all to keep it.

That we must be *humble*, not only in such instances as are *expected* in the world, or *suitable* to our tempers, or confined to particular occasions, but in such an humility of spirit, as renders us meek and lowly in the *whole course* of our lives, as shows itself in our *dress*, our *person*, our *conversation*, our *enjoyment* of the world, the *tranquillity* of our minds, *patience* under injuries, *submission* to superiors, and *condescensions* to those that are below us, and in all the outward actions of our lives.

That we must devote, not only *times* and *places* to prayer, but be everywhere in the *spirit* of devotion, with hearts always set towards heaven, looking up to God in all our actions, and doing everything as his servants, living in the world as in a holy temple of God, and always worshipping him, though not with our lips, yet with the *thankfulness* of our hearts, the *holiness* of our actions, and the *pious* and *charitable* use of all his gifts. That we must not only send up petitions and thoughts, now and then to heaven, but must go through all our worldly business with an

* 1 Cor. xi. 13 ; 1 Tim. ii. 9.

heavenly spirit, as members of Christ's mystical body, that with new hearts, and new minds, are to turn an earthly life, into a preparation for a life of greatness and glory in the kingdom of heaven.

Now the only way to arrive at this piety of spirit, is to bring all your actions to the same rule as your devotions and alms. You very well know what it is, that makes the piety of your alms or devotions ; now the same rules, the same regard to God, must render everything else that you do, a fit and acceptable service unto God.

Enough, I hope, has been said, to show you the necessity of thus introducing Religion into all the actions of your common life, and of living and acting with the same regard to God, in all that you do, as in your prayers and alms.

Eating is one of the lowest actions of our lives, it is common to us with mere animals, yet we see that the piety of all ages of the world, has turned this ordinary action of an animal life, into a piety to God, by making every meal to begin and end with devotion.

We see yet some remains of this custom in most Christian families ; some such little formality, as shows you, that people used to call upon God at the beginning and end of their meals. But, indeed, it is now generally so performed, as to look more like a mockery upon devotion, than any solemn application of the mind unto God. In one house you may perhaps see the head of the family just pulling off his hat ; in another half getting up from his seat ; another shall, it may be, proceed so far, as to make as if he had said something ; but, however, these little attempts are the remains of some devotion that was formerly used at such times, and are proofs that religion has formerly belonged to this part of common life.

But to such a pass are we now come, that though the custom is yet preserved, yet we can hardly bear with him, that seems to perform it with any degree of seriousness, and look upon it as a sign of a fanatical temper, if a man has not done it as soon as he begins.

I would not be thought to plead for the necessity of long prayers at these times ; but thus much I think may be said, that if prayer is proper at these times, we ought to oblige ourselves to use such a form of words, as should show, that we solemnly appeal to God for such graces and blessings, as are then proper to the occasion. Otherwise the mock ceremony, instead of blessing our victuals, does but accustom us to trifle with devotion, and give us a habit of being unaffected with our prayers.

If every head of a family was, at the return of every meal, to

oblige himself to make a *solemn adoration* of God, in such a decent manner, as becomes a devout mind, it would be very likely to teach him, that *swearing, sensuality, gluttony*, and *loose discourse*, were very improper at those meals, which were to *begin and end* with devotion.

And in these days of general corruption, this part of devotion is fallen into a *mock ceremony*, it must be imputed to this cause, that *sensuality* and *intemperance* have got too great a power over us, to suffer us to add any devotion to our meals. But thus much must be said, that when we are as pious as *Jews* and *Heathens* of all ages have been, we shall think it proper to pray at the beginning and end of our meals.

I have appealed to this pious custom of all ages of the world, as a proof of the reasonableness of the doctrine of this and the foregoing chapters ; that is, as a proof that religion is to be the *rule* and measure of all the actions of *ordinary* life. For surely, if we are not to *eat*, but under such rules of devotion, it must plainly appear, that whatever else we do, must in its proper way, be done with the same regard to the glory of God, and agreeably to the principles of a *devout* and *pious* mind.

Chapter V.

Persons that are free from the necessity of labour and employments, are to consider themselves as devoted to God in a higher degree.

GREAT part of the world are free from the necessities of labour and employments, and have their *time* and *fortunes* in their own disposal.

But as no one is to live in his *employment* according to his own humour, or for such ends as please his own fancy, but is to do all his business in such a manner, as to make it a service unto God ; so those who have no particular employment, are so far from being left at greater liberty to live to themselves, to pursue their own humours, and spend their time and fortunes as they please, that they are under greater obligations of living wholly unto God in all their actions.

The *freedom* of their state, lays them under a greater *necessity* of always choosing, and doing the *best* things.

They are those, of whom *much will be required*, because *much is given unto them*.

A *slave* can only live unto God in one *particular* way, that is, by religious patience and submission in his state of slavery.

But all ways of holy living, all instances, and all kinds of virtue, lie open to those, who are masters of themselves, their time and their fortune.

It is as much the duty therefore, of such persons, to make a wise use of their liberty, to devote themselves to all kinds of virtue, to aspire after everything that is holy and pious, to endeavour to be eminent in all good works, and to please God in the highest and most perfect manner; it is as much their duty to be thus wise in the conduct of themselves, and thus extensive in their endeavours after holiness, as it is the duty of a *slave* to be *resigned* unto God in his state of slavery.

You are no *labourer*, or *tradesman*, you are neither *merchant*, nor *soldier*; consider yourself therefore, as placed in a state, in some degree like that of *good angels*, who are sent into the world as *ministering spirits*, for the general good of mankind, to *assist*, *protect*, and *minister* for them who shall be heirs of salvation.

For the more you are free from the *common* necessities of *men*, the more you are to imitate the *higher* perfections of *angels*.

Had you, *Serena*, been obliged by the necessities of life, to wash clothes for your maintenance, or to wait upon some *mistress*, that demanded all your *labour*, it would then be your duty to serve and glorify God, by such *humility*, *obedience*, and *faithfulness*, as might adorn that state of life.

It would then be recommended to your care, to improve that *one talent* to its greatest height. That when the time came, that mankind were to be rewarded for their labours by the great Judge of quick and dead, you might be received with a 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of the Lord.*'

But as God has given you *five talents*, as he has placed you above the necessities of life, as he has left you in the hands of yourself, in the happy liberty of choosing the most exalted ways of virtue; as he has enriched you with many gifts of fortune, and left you nothing to do, but to make the best use of variety of blessings, to make the most of a short life, to study your own perfection, the honour of God, and the good of your neighbour; so it is now your duty to imitate the greatest servants of God, to inquire how the most eminent saints have lived, to study all

* Matt. xxv.

the *arts* and *methods* of perfection, and to set no bounds to your love and gratitude to the bountiful author of so many blessings.

It is now your duty to turn your *five talents*, into five more, and to consider how your *time*, and *leisure*, and *health*, and *fortune*, may be made so many happy means of purifying your own soul, improving your fellow-creatures in the ways of virtue, and of carrying you at last to the greatest heights of eternal glory.

As you have no *mistress* to serve, so let your own soul be the object of your daily care and attendance. Be sorry for its impurities, its spots and imperfections, and study all the holy arts of restoring it to its natural and primitive purity.

Delight in its service, and beg of God to adorn it with every grace and perfection.

Nourish it with *good works*, give it peace in *solitude*, get it strength in *prayer*, make it wise with *reading*, enlighten it by *meditation*, make it tender with *love*, sweeten it with *humility*, humble it with *penance*, enliven it with *Psalms* and *Hymns*, and comfort it with frequent *reflections* upon future glory. Keep it in the *presence* of God, and teach it to imitate those *guardian angels*, which though they attend on human affairs, and the lowest of mankind, yet 'always behold the face of our Father 'which is in heaven.'*

This, *Serena*, is your profession. For as sure as God is one God, so sure it is, that he has but one command to all mankind, whether they be bond or free, rich or poor; and that is, to act up to the *excellency* of that nature which he has given them, to live by *reason*, to walk in the *light* of religion, to use everything as wisdom directs, to glorify God in all his gifts, and dedicate every condition of life to his service.

This is the *one common* command of God to all mankind. If you have an employment, you are to be thus reasonable, and pious, and holy, in the exercise of it; if you have time and a fortune in your own power, you are obliged to be thus reasonable, and holy, and pious, in the use of all your time, and all your fortune.

The right religious use of everything and every talent, is the indispensable duty of every being, that is capable of knowing right and wrong.

For the reason why we are to do *anything* as unto God, and with regard to our duty, and relation to him, is the same reason why we are to do *everything* as unto God, and with regard to our duty, and relation to him.

That which is a reason for our being *wise* and *holy*, in the

* Matt. xviii. 10.

discharge of all our *business*, is the same reason for our being wise and holy in the use of all our *money*.

As we have always the *same natures*, and are everywhere the servants of the same God, as every place is equally full of his presence, and everything is equally his gift, so we must always act according to the reason of our nature ; we must do everything as the servants of God ; we must live in every place, as in his presence ; we must use everything, as that ought to be used which belongs to God.

Either this piety and wisdom, and devotion is to go through every way of life, and to extend to the use of everything, or it is to go through no part of life.

If we might forget *ourselves*, or forget God, if we might disregard our reason, and live by *humour* and *fancy*, in anything, or at any time, or in any place, it would be as lawful to do the same in everything, at every time, and every place.

If therefore some People fancy, that they must be grave and solemn at *Church*, but may be *silly* and *frantic* at home ; that they must live by some rule on the *Sunday*, but may spend *other days* by chance ; that they must have some times of *Prayer*, but may waste the rest of their time as they please ; that they must give some money in *charity*, but may squander away the rest as they have a mind ; such People have not enough considered the nature of Religion, or the true reasons of Piety. For he that upon principles of Reason can tell, why it is good to be wise and heavenly-minded at *Church*, can tell that it is always desirable to have the *same tempers* in all other places. He that truly knows why he should spend any time well, knows, that it is never allowable to throw any time away. He that rightly understands the reasonableness, and excellency of *Charity*, will know, that it can never be excusable to waste any of our money in pride and folly, or in any needless expenses.

For every argument that shows the wisdom and excellency of Charity, proves the wisdom of spending *all* our fortune well. Every argument that proves the wisdom and reasonableness of having times of Prayer, shows the wisdom and reasonableness of losing none of our time.

If anyone could show, that we need not *always* act as in the divine presence, that we need not consider and use *everything*, as the gift of God, that we need not *always* live by reason, and make Religion the rule of all our actions, the same arguments would show, that we need *never* act as in the presence of God, nor make Religion and reason the measure of *any* of our actions. If therefore we are to live unto God at any time, or in any place, we are to live unto him at all times, and in all places. If we

are to use anything as the gift of God, we are to use everything as his gift. If we are to do anything by strict rules of reason and piety, we are to do everything in the same manner. Because *reason*, and *wisdom*, and *piety*, are as much the best things at *all times*, and in *all places*, as they are the best things, at *any time*, or in *any place*.

If it is our glory and happiness to have a *rational nature*, that is endowed with wisdom and reason, that is capable of imitating the Divine nature, then it must be our glory and happiness, to improve our reason and wisdom, to act up to the excellency of our rational nature, and to imitate God in all our actions, to the utmost of our power. They therefore who confine Religion to *times* and *places*, and some little rules of *retirement*, who think that it is being too strict and rigid to introduce religion into *common life*, and make it give laws to all their actions and ways of living, they who think thus, not only mistake, but they mistake the *whole nature* of Religion. For surely they mistake the *whole nature* of Religion, who can think any part of their life is made more easy, for being free from it. They may well be said to mistake the *whole nature* of wisdom, who do not think it desirable, to be *always* wise. He has not learnt the *nature* of piety, who thinks it too much to be pious in all his actions. He does not sufficiently understand what *reason* is, who does not earnestly desire to live in everything according to it.

If we had a Religion that consisted in absurd superstitions, that had no regard to the perfection of our nature, People might well be glad to have some part of their life excused from it. But as the Religion of the Gospel is only the refinement, and exaltation of our best faculties, as it only requires a life of the highest Reason, as it only requires us to use this world, as in reason it ought to be used, to live in such *tempers* as are the glory of intelligent beings, to walk in such *wisdom* as exalts our nature, and to practise such piety, as will raise us to God; who can think it grievous, to live *always* in the spirit of such a Religion, to have *every part* of his life full of it, but he that would think it much more grievous, to be as the Angels of God in heaven?

Further, as God is one and the same being, always acting like himself, and suitably to his own nature, so it is the duty of every being that he has created, to live according to the nature that he has given it, and *always* to act like itself.

It is therefore an immutable law of God, that all rational beings should act *reasonably* in *all* their actions; not at this *time*, or in that *place*, or upon this *occasion*, or in the use of some particular thing, but at *all times*, in *all places*, at *all occasions*,

and in the use of *all* things. This is a law, that is as unchangeable as God, and can no more cease to be, than God can cease to be a God of wisdom and order.

When therefore any being that is endued with reason, does an *unreasonable* thing at any time, or in any place, or in the use of anything, it sins against the *great law* of its nature, abuses itself, and sins against God, the author of that nature.

They therefore who plead for *indulgences* and *vanities*, for any *foolish* fashions, *customs*, and *humours* of the world, for the misuse of our *time*, or *money*, plead for a rebellion against our nature, for a rebellion against God, who has given us reason for no other end, than to make it the *rule* and *measure* of all our ways of life.

When therefore you are guilty of any *folly*, or *extravagance*, or indulge any *vain* temper, do not consider it as a small matter, because it may seem so, if compared to some other sins; but consider it, as it is acting *contrary* to your *nature*, and then you will see that there is nothing *small*, that is *unreasonable*. Because all unreasonable ways are contrary to the nature of all rational beings, whether *men*, or *Angels*. Neither of which can be any longer agreeable to God, than so far as they act according to the reason and excellence of their nature.

The infirmities of human life make such *food* and *raiment* necessary for us, as *Angels* do not want; but then it is no more allowable for us to turn these necessities into *follies*, and indulge ourselves in the luxury of *food*, or the vanities of *dress*, than it is allowable for *Angels* to act below the dignity of their proper state. For a reasonable life, and a wise use of our proper condition, is as much the duty of all *men*, as it is the duty of all *Angels* and *intelligent* beings. These are not *speculative* flights, or *imaginary* notions, but are *plain* and *undeniable laws*, that are founded in the *nature* of rational beings, who as such are obliged to live by reason, and glorify God by a continual right use of their several talents and faculties. So that though men are not *Angels*, yet they may know for what ends, and by what rules, men are to live and act, by considering the state and perfection of *Angels*. Our blessed Saviour has plainly turned our thoughts this way, by making this petition a constant part of all our Prayers. 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.' A plain proof, that the obedience of *men*, is to imitate the obedience of *Angels*, and that rational beings on earth, are to live unto God, as rational beings in Heaven live unto him.

When therefore you would represent to your mind, how Christians ought to live unto God, and in what degrees of wisdom and holiness, they ought to use the things of this life,

you must not look at the world, but you must look up to God, and the society of Angels, and think what wisdom and holiness is fit to prepare you for such a state of glory. You must look to all the *highest precepts* of the Gospel, you must examine yourself by the *spirit* of Christ, you must think how the *wisest* men in the world have lived, you must think how *departed souls* would live, if they were again to act the short part of human life; you must think what degrees of wisdom, and holiness, you will wish for, when you are leaving the World.

Now all this is not over-straining the matter, or proposing to ourselves, any needless perfection. It is but barely complying with the Apostle's advice, where he says, 'Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*' For no one can come near the doctrine of this passage, but he that proposes to himself to do everything in this life as the servant of God, to live by reason, in everything that he does, and to make the wisdom and holiness of the Gospel, the rule and measure of his desiring, and using, every gift of God.

Chapter VI.

Containing the great obligations, and the advantages of making a wise and religious use of our estates and fortunes.

AS the holiness of Christianity consecrates all *states* and *employments* of life unto God, as it requires us to aspire after an universal obedience, doing and using everything as the servants of God, so are we more especially obliged to observe this religious exactness, in the use of our *estates* and *fortunes*.

The reason of this would appear very plain, if we were only to consider, that our *estates* are as much the gift of God, as our *eyes*, or our *hands*, and are no more to be buried, or thrown away at pleasure, than we are to put out our eyes, or throw away our limbs, as we please.

But besides this consideration, there are several other great

* Phil. iv. 8.

and important reasons, why we should be religiously exact in the use of our estates.

First, Because the manner of using our money, or spending our estate, enters so far into the business of every day, and makes so great a part of our common life, that our *common life* must be much of the same nature, as our *common way* of spending our estate. If reason and religion govern us in this, then reason and religion hath got great hold of us ; but if *humour, pride, and fancy*, are the measures of our spending our estate, then humour, pride, and fancy, will have the direction of the greatest part of our life.

Secondly, Another great reason for devoting all our estate to right uses, is this, because it is capable of being used to the most *excellent* purposes, and is so *great* a means of doing good. If we waste it, we do not waste a *trifle*, that signifies little, but we waste that which might be made as eyes to the *blind*, as a husband to the *widow*, as a father to the *orphan* : We waste that, which not only enables us to minister worldly comforts to those that are in distress, but that which might purchase for ourselves everlasting treasures in heaven. So that if we part with our money in foolish ways, we part with a great power of comforting our fellow-creatures, and of making ourselves for ever blessed.

If there be nothing so glorious as doing good, if there is nothing that makes us so like to God, then nothing can be so glorious in the use of our money, as to use it all in works of love and goodness, making ourselves *friends, and fathers, and benefactors*, to all our fellow-creatures, imitating the divine love, and turning all our power into acts of generosity, care, and kindness, to such as are in need of it.

If a man had *eyes, and hands, and feet*, that he could give to those that wanted them ; if he should either lock them up in a *chest*, or please himself with some *needless, or ridiculous* use of them, instead of giving them to his brethren that were *blind and lame*, should we not justly reckon him an inhuman wretch ? If he should rather choose to amuse himself with *furnishing* his house with those things, than to entitle himself to an eternal reward, by giving them to those that wanted *eyes and hands*, might we not justly reckon him mad ?

Now *money* has very much the nature of *eyes and feet* ; if we either lock it up in *chests*, or waste it in *needless and ridiculous* expenses upon ourselves, whilst the poor and the distressed want it for their *necessary* uses ; if we consume it in the *ridiculous ornaments* of apparel, whilst others are starving in *nakedness*, we are not far from the cruelty of him, that chooses rather to adorn his house with the *hands and eyes*, than to give

them to those that want them. If we choose to indulge ourselves in such expensive enjoyments, as have no *real use* in them, such as satisfy no *real want*, rather than to entitle ourselves to an eternal reward, by disposing of our money well, we are guilty of his madness, that rather chooses to lock up *eyes* and *hands*, than to make himself for ever blessed, by giving them to those that want them.

For after we have satisfied our own *sober* and *reasonable* wants, all the rest of our money is but like *spare eyes*, or *hands*; it is something that we cannot keep to ourselves, without being *foolish* in the use of it, something that can only be used well, by giving it to those that want it.

Thirdly, If we waste our money, we are not only guilty of wasting a *talent* which God has given us, we are not only guilty of making that useless, which is so powerful a means of doing good, but we do ourselves this further harm, that we turn this useful talent into a powerful means of corrupting ourselves; because so far as it is spent *wrong*, so far it is spent in the support of some *wrong temper*, in gratifying some vain and unreasonable desires, in conforming to those fashions, and pride of the world, which, as Christians and reasonable men, we are obliged to renounce.

As *wit* and fine *parts* cannot be trifled away, and only lost, but will expose those that have them into greater follies, if they are not strictly devoted to piety: so *money*, if it is not used strictly according to reason and religion, cannot only be trifled away, but it will betray people into *greater* follies, and make them live a more silly and extravagant life, than they could have done without it. If, therefore, you do not spend your money in doing good to others, you must spend it to the hurt of yourself. You will act like a man, that should refuse to give that as a *cordial* to a sick friend, though he could not drink it himself without *inflaming* his blood. For this is the case of *superfluous* money; if you give it to those that want it, it is a *cordial*; if you spend it upon yourself in something that you do not want, it only *inflames* and disorders your mind, and makes you worse than you would be without it.

Consider again the fore-mentioned comparison; if the man that would not make a right use of *spare eyes* and *hands*, should, by continually trying to use them himself, spoil his own eyes and hands, we might justly accuse him of still greater madness.

Now this is truly the case of riches spent upon ourselves in *vain* and *needless* expenses; in trying to use them where they have no *real use*, nor we any *real want*, we only use them to our great hurt, in creating unreasonable desires, in nourishing ill

tempers, in indulging our passions, and supporting a worldly, vain turn of mind. For high *eating and drinking*, fine *clothes*, and fine *houses, state, and equipage*, gay *pleasures, and diversions*, do all of them naturally hurt, and disorder our hearts; they are the food and nourishment of all the folly and weakness of our nature, and are certain means to make us vain and worldly in our tempers. They are all of them the support of something, that ought not to be supported; they are contrary to that sobriety and piety of heart, which relishes divine things; they are like so many weights upon our minds, that make us less able, and less inclined to raise up our thoughts and affections to the things that are above.

So that money thus spent, is not merely *wasted, or lost*, but it is spent to bad purposes, and miserable effects, to the corruption and disorder of our hearts, and to the making us less able to live up to the sublime doctrines of the Gospel. It is but like keeping money from the poor, to buy poison for ourselves.

For so much as is spent in the vanity of *dress*, may be reckoned so much laid out to *fix* vanity in our minds. So much as is laid out for *idleness and indulgence*, may be reckoned so much given to *render* our hearts *dull and sensual*. So much as is spent in *state and equipage*, may be reckoned so much spent to *dazzle* your own eyes, and render you the *idol* of your own imagination. And so in everything, when you go from *reasonable* wants, you only support some unreasonable *temper, some turn* of mind, which every good Christian is called upon to *renounce*.

So that on all accounts, whether we consider our fortune as a *talent*, and trust from God, or the *great good* that it enables us to do, or the *great harm* that it does to ourselves, if idly spent; on all these great accounts it appears, that it is absolutely necessary, to make reason and religion the strict rule of using all our fortune.

Every exhortation in Scripture to be wise and reasonable, satisfying only such wants as God would have satisfied; every exhortation to be spiritual and heavenly, pressing after a glorious change of our nature; every exhortation to love our neighbour as ourselves, to love all mankind as God has loved them, is a command to be *strictly religious* in the use of our money. For none of these tempers can be complied with, unless we be wise and reasonable, spiritual and heavenly, exercising a brotherly love, a godlike charity in the use of all our fortune. These tempers, and this use of our worldly goods, is so much the doctrine of all the New Testament, that you cannot read a chapter, without being taught something of it. I shall only produce one remarkable passage of Scripture, which is sufficient to justify all that I have said concerning this religious use of all our fortune.

‘When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.— Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.’

I have quoted this passage at length, because if one looks at the way of the world, one would hardly think, that Christians had ever read this part of Scripture. For what is there in the lives of Christians, that looks as if their salvation *depended* upon these good works? And yet the necessity of them is here asserted in the highest manner, and pressed upon us by a lively description of the glory and terrors of the day of Judgment.

Some people, even of those who may be reckoned virtuous Christians, look upon this text only as a general recommendation of *occasional* works of charity; whereas it shows the necessity not only of occasional charities now and then, but the necessity of such an *entire charitable life*, as is a continual exercise of all such works of charity as we are able to perform.

You own, that you have no title to salvation, if you have neglected these good works; because such persons as have neglected them, are, at the last day, to be placed on the left hand, and banished with a *Depart, ye cursed*. There is, therefore, no salvation but in the performance of these good Works. Who is it, therefore, that may be said to have performed these good Works? Is it he that has *sometime* assisted a *prisoner*, or relieved the *poor* or *sick*? This would be as absurd, as to say, that he had performed the duties of *devotion*, who had *sometime* said his prayers. Is it, therefore, he that has *several times* done these works of charity? This can no more be said, than he can be said to be the truly *just* man, who had done acts of justice *several times*. What is the rule therefore, or measure of per-

forming these good works? How shall a man trust that he performs them as he ought?

Now the rule is very *plain* and *easy*, and such as is *common* to every other *virtue*, or good *temper*, as well as to charity.—Who is the humble, or meek, or devout, or just, or faithful man? Is it he that has *several times* done acts of humility, meekness, devotion, justice, or fidelity? No. But it is he that lives in the *habitual exercise* of these virtues. In like manner, he only can be said to have performed these works of charity, who *lives* in the *habitual exercise* of them to the utmost of his power. He only has performed the duty of divine love, who loves God *with all his heart*, and *with all his mind*, and *with all his strength*. And he only has performed the duty of these good works, who has done them with all his heart, and with all his mind, and with all his strength. For there is no other measure of our doing good, than our *power* of doing it.

The Apostle St. *Peter* puts this question to our blessed Saviour; 'Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him, till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times; but until seventy times seven.*' Not as if after this number of offences, a man might then cease to forgive; but the expression of seventy times seven, is to show us, that we are not to bind our forgiveness by *any number* of offences, but are to continue forgiving the most repeated offences against us. Thus our Saviour saith in another place, if he trespass 'against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.†' If, therefore, a man ceases to forgive his brother, because he has forgiven him *often* already; if he excuses himself from forgiving this man, because he has forgiven *several others*; such a one breaks this law of Christ, concerning the forgiving one's brother.

Now the rule of *forgiving*, is also the rule of *giving*; you are not to *give*, or do good to *seven*, but to *seventy times seven*. You are not to cease from giving, because you have given often to the same person, or to other persons; but must look upon yourself as much obliged to continue relieving those that continue in want, as you were obliged to relieve them once or twice. Had it not been in your power, you had been excused from relieving any person *once*; but if it is in your power to relieve people *often*, it is as much your duty to do it often, as it is the duty of others to do it but seldom because they are but seldom able. He that is not ready to forgive every brother, as often as

* Matt. xviii. 22.

† Luke xvii. 4.

he wants to be forgiven, does not forgive like a disciple of Christ. And he that is not ready to give to every brother, that wants to have something given him, does not give like a disciple of Christ. For it is as necessary to give to seventy times seven, to live in the continual exercise of all good works to the utmost of our power, as it is necessary to forgive until seventy times seven, and live in the habitual exercise of this forgiving temper, towards all that want it.

And the reason of all this is very plain, because there is the same goodness, the same excellency, and the same *necessity* of being thus charitable at one time, as at another. It is as much the best use of our money, to be *always* doing good with it, as it is the best use of it at any *particular time*; so that that which is a reason for a charitable *action*, is as good a reason for a charitable *life*. That which is a reason for forgiving *one* offence, is the same reason for forgiving *all* offences. For such charity has nothing to recommend it to-day, but what will be the same recommendation of it to-morrow; and you cannot neglect it at one time, without being guilty of the same sin, as if you neglected it at another time.

As sure, therefore, as these works of charity are necessary to salvation, so sure is it, that we are to do them to the utmost of our power; not to-day, or to-morrow, but through the *whole course* of our life. If therefore it be our duty at any time to deny ourselves any *needless* expenses, to be *moderate* and *frugal*, that we may have to give to those that want, it is as much our duty to do so at all times, that we may be further able to do more good: For if it is at any time a sin to prefer *needless vain* expense, to works of charity, it is so at all times: because charity as much excels all needless and vain expenses at one time, as at another. So that if it is ever necessary to our salvation, to take care of these works of charity, and to see that we make ourselves in some degree capable of doing them, it is as necessary to our salvation, to take care to make ourselves as capable as we can be, of performing them in all the parts of our life.

Either therefore you must so far renounce your Christianity, as to say, that you need never perform any of these good works; or you must own, that you are to perform them all your life in as high a degree as you are able. There is no middle way to be taken, any more than there is a middle way betwixt pride and humility, or temperance and intemperance. If you do not strive to fulfil all charitable works, if you neglect any of them that are in your power, and deny assistance to those that want what you can give, let it be when it will, or where it will, you number yourself amongst those that want Christian charity.

Because it is as much your duty to do good with all that you have, and to live in the continual exercise of good works, as it is your duty to be temperate in all that you eat and drink.

Hence also appears the *necessity* of renouncing all those *foolish* and *unreasonable* expenses, which the pride and folly of mankind have made so common and fashionable in the world. For if it is necessary to do good works, as far as you are able, it must be as necessary to renounce those needless ways of spending money, which render you unable to do works of charity.

You must therefore no more conform to these ways of the world, than you must conform to the vices of the world; you must no more spend with those that idly waste their money as their own humour leads them, than you must drink with the drunken, or indulge yourself with the epicure; because a course of such expenses is no more consistent with a *life of charity*, than excess in drinking is consistent with a *life of sobriety*. When therefore any one tells you of the lawfulness of expensive apparel, or the innocency of pleasing yourself with costly satisfactions, only imagine that the same person was to tell you, that you need not do works of charity; that Christ does not require you to do good unto your poor brethren, as unto him; and then you will see the wickedness of such advice: For to tell you, that you may live in such expenses, as make it impossible for you to live in the exercise of good works, is the same thing as telling you, that you need not have any care about such good works themselves.

Chapter VII.

How the imprudent use of an estate corrupts all the tempers of the mind, and fills the heart with poor and ridiculous passions, through the whole course of life; represented in the character of Flavia.

IT has already been observed, that a prudent and religious care is to be used, in the manner of spending our *money* or *estate*, because the manner of spending our estates makes so great a part of our common life, and is so much the business of every day, that according as we are wise, or imprudent, in this respect, the *whole course* of our lives, will be rendered either very wise, or very full of folly.

Persons that are well *affected* to Religion, that receive instructions of piety with *pleasure* and *satisfaction*, often wonder how it comes to pass, that they make no greater *progress* in that Religion which they so much *admire*.

Now the reason of it is this ; it is because Religion lives only in their *head*, but something else has possession of their *hearts* ; and therefore they continue from *year* to *year* mere *admirers*, and *praisers* of piety, without ever coming up to the reality and perfection of its precepts.

If it be asked, why Religion does not get possession of their hearts, the reason is this. It is not because they live in *gross sins*, or *debaucheries*, for their regard to religion preserves them from such disorders.

But it is because their *hearts* are constantly *employed*, *perverted*, and kept in a wrong state, by the *indiscreet use* of such things as are *lawful* to be used.

The use and enjoyment of their estates is *lawful*, and therefore it never comes into their heads, to imagine any great danger from that quarter. They never reflect, that there is a *vain*, and *imprudent* use of their estates, which, though it does not destroy like *gross sins*, yet so *disorders* the heart, and supports it in such *sensuality* and *dulness*, such *pride* and *vanity*, as makes it incapable of receiving the *life* and *spirit* of piety.

For our souls may receive an infinite hurt, and be rendered incapable of all virtues, merely by the use of *innocent* and *lawful* things.

What is more innocent than *rest* and *retirement* ? And yet what more dangerous, than sloth and idleness ? What is more lawful than *eating* and *drinking* ? And yet what more destructive of all virtue, what more fruitful of all vice, than *sensuality* and *indulgence* ?

How *lawful* and *praiseworthy* is the care of a family ? And yet how certainly are many people rendered incapable of all virtue, by a worldly and solicitous temper ?

Now it is for want of religious exactness in the use of these *innocent* and *lawful things*, that Religion cannot get possession of our hearts. And it is in the *right* and *prudent* management of ourselves, as to these things, that all the *arts* of holy living chiefly consist.

Gross sins are plainly seen, and easily avoided by persons that profess Religion. But the *indiscreet* and *dangerous* use of innocent and lawful things, as it does not *shock* and *offend* our consciences, so it is difficult to make people at all sensible of the danger of it.

A *Gentleman* that expends all his estate in *sports*, and a

woman that lays out all her fortune upon herself, can hardly be persuaded that the spirit of Religion cannot subsist in such a way of life.

These persons, as has been observed, may live free from debaucheries, they may be friends of Religion, so far as to *praise* and *speak* well of it, and admire it in their imaginations; but it cannot govern their hearts, and be the spirit of their actions, till they change their way of life, and let Religion give laws to the use and spending of their estates.

For a woman that loves *dress*, that thinks no expense too great to bestow upon the *adorning* of her person, cannot stop there. For that temper draws a *thousand* other follies along with it, and will render the whole course of her life, her *business*, her *conversation*, her *hopes*, her *fears*, her *taste*, her *pleasures*, and *diversions*, all suitable to it.

Flavia and *Miranda* are two maiden sisters, that have each of them *two hundred pounds* a year. They buried their parents, twenty years ago, and have since that time spent their estate as they pleased.

Flavia has been the *wonder* of all her friends, for her excellent management, in making so surprising a figure in so moderate a fortune. Several *ladies* that have twice her fortune, are not able to be always so *genteel*, and so *constant* at all places of *pleasure* and *expense*. She has everything that is in the *fashion*, and is in every place where there is any *diversion*. *Flavia* is very *orthodox*, she talks warmly against *heretics* and *schismatics*, is generally at *Church*, and often at the sacrament. She once commended a *sermon* that was against the *pride* and *vanity* of dress, and thought it was very just against *Lucinda*, whom she takes to be a great deal finer than she need to be. If anyone asks *Flavia* to do something in charity, if she likes the person who makes the proposal, or happens to be in a right *temper*, she will toss him *half-a-crown* or a *crown*, and tell him, if he knew what a *long Milliner's bill* she had just received, he would think it a great deal for her to give. A *quarter* of a year after this, she hears a *sermon* upon the *necessity* of charity; she thinks the man preaches well, that it is a very *proper* subject, that people *want* much to be put in mind of it; but she applies nothing to herself, because she remembers that she gave a *crown* some time ago, when she could so ill spare it.

As for *poor* people themselves, she will admit of no complaints from them; she is very positive they are all *cheats* and *liars*; and will say anything to get relief, and therefore it must be a sin to encourage them in their evil ways.

You would think *Flavia* had the tenderest conscience in the

world ; if you were to see, how *scrupulous* and apprehensive she is of the guilt and danger of *giving amiss*.

She buys all books of *wit* and *humour*, and has made an expensive collection of all our *English Poets*. For she says, one cannot have a *true taste* of any of them, without being very conversant with them all. She will sometimes read a *book of Piety*, if it is a short one, if it is much commended for *style* and *language*, and she can tell where to *borrow* it.

Flavia is very *idle*, and yet very fond of *fine work* ; this makes her often *sit* working in *bed* until *noon*, and be told many a *long story* before she is up ; so that I need not tell you, that her morning devotions are not *always* rightly performed.

Flavia would be a *miracle* of *Piety*, if she were but half so careful of her soul, as she is of her body. The rising of a *pimple* in her face, the sting of a *gnat*, will make her keep her room two or three days, and she thinks they are very *rash* people that do not take care of things in time. This makes her so over-careful of her *health*, that she never thinks she is well enough ; and so *over-indulgent*, that she never can be really well. So that it costs her a great deal in *sleeping-draughts* and *waking-draughts*, in *spirits* for the head, in *drops* for the nerves, in *cordials* for the stomach, and in *saffron* for her *tea*.

If you visit *Flavia* on the *Sunday*, you will always meet *good company*, you will know what is doing in the world, you will hear the last *lampoon*, be told who wrote it, and who is meant by every name that is in it. You will hear what *plays* were acted that week, which is the finest song in the *opera*, who was intolerable at the last assembly, and what games are most in fashion. *Flavia* thinks they are *Atheists* that play at *cards* on the *Sunday*, but she will tell you the *nicety* of all the games, what *cards* she held, how she *played* them, and the *history* of all that happened at *play*, as soon as she comes from *Church*. If you would know who is *rude* and *ill-natured*, who is *vain* and *foppish*, who lives too *high*, and who is in *debt* : If you would know what is the quarrel at a *certain house*, or who and who are in *love* : If you would know how late *Belinda* comes home at night, what *clothes* she has bought, how she loves *compliments*, and what a long story she told at such a place : If you would know how cross *Lucius* is to his *wife*, what ill-natured things he says to her, when *nobody* hears him ; if you would know how they hate one another in their *hearts*, though they appear so kind in public ; you must visit *Flavia* on the *Sunday*. But still she has so great a regard for the holiness of the *Sunday*, that she has turned a poor old widow out of her house, as a *profane wretch*, for having been found once *mending her clothes* on the *Sunday* night.

Thus lives *Flavia*; and if she lives ten years longer, she will have spent about *fifteen hundred and sixty Sundays* after this manner. She will have worn about *two hundred* different suits of clothes. Out of this *thirty years* of her life, *fifteen* of them will have been disposed of in *bed*; and of the remaining fifteen, about *fourteen* of them will have been consumed in eating, drinking, dressing, visiting, conversation, reading and hearing Plays and Romances, at Operas, Assemblies, Balls and Diversions. For you may reckon all the time that she is *up*, thus spent, except about an *hour* and half, that is disposed of at Church, most *Sundays* in the year. With great management, and under mighty rules of economy, she will have spent *sixty hundred* pounds upon herself, bating only some *shillings, crowns, or half-crowns*, that have gone from her in *accidental* charities.

I shall not take upon me to say, that it is impossible for *Flavia* to be saved; but thus much must be said, that she has no grounds from Scripture to think she is in the way of salvation. For her whole life is in direct opposition to all those *tempers* and *practices*, which the Gospel has made necessary to salvation.

If you were to hear her say, that she had lived all her life like *Anna* the Prophetess, who *departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers, night and day*, you would look upon her as very extravagant; and yet this would be no greater an extravagance, than for her to say, that she has been *striving to enter in at the strait gate*, or making any *one doctrine* of the Gospel, a rule of her life.

She may as well say, that she lived with our Saviour when he was upon earth, as that she has lived in imitation of him, or made it any part of her care to live in such tempers, as he required of all those that would be his disciples. She may as truly say, that she has every day *washed the saints' feet*, as that she has lived in Christian *humility* and *poverty of spirit*; and as reasonably think, that she has taught a *Charity-school*, as that she has lived in *works of charity*. She has as much reason to think, that she has been a *sentinel* in an army, as that she has lived in *watching*, and *self-denial*. And it may as fairly be said, that she lived by the labour of her hands, as that she had *given all diligence to make her calling and election sure*.

And here it is to be well observed, that the *poor, vain* turn of mind, the *irreligion*, the *folly* and *vanity* of this whole life of *Flavia*, is all owing to the *manner* of using her estate. It is this that has formed her *spirit*, that has given life to every *idle temper*, that has supported every *trifling passion*, and kept her from all thoughts of a prudent, useful, and devout life.

When her parents died, she had no thought about her two

hundred pounds a year, but that she had so much money to do what she would with, to spend upon herself, and purchase the pleasures and gratifications of all her passions.

And it is this setting out, this false judgment and indiscreet use of her fortune, that has filled her whole life with the same indiscretion, and kept her from thinking of what is *right*, and *wise*, and *pious* in everything else.

If you have seen her delighted in *plays* and *romances*, in *scandal* and *backbiting*, easily *flattered*, and soon *affronted*: if you have seen her devoted to *pleasures* and *diversions*, a slave to every *passion* in its turn, nice in everything that concerned her *body* or *dress*, careless of everything that might benefit her *soul*, always wanting some new entertainment, and ready for every *happy* invention, in *show* or *dress*, it was because she had *purchased* all these tempers with the yearly revenue of her fortune.

She might have been *humble*, *serious*, *devout*, a lover of *good books*, an admirer of *prayer* and *retirement*, careful of her *time*, diligent in *good works*, full of *charity* and the *love* of God, but that the imprudent use of her estate forced all the contrary tempers upon her.

And it was no wonder, that she should turn her *time*, her *mind*, her *health*, her *strength*, to the same uses that she turned her fortune. It is owing to her being wrong in so great an *article* of life, that you can see nothing wise, or reasonable, or pious in any other part of it.

Now though the irregular trifling spirit of this *character* belongs, I hope, but to few people, yet many may here learn some instruction from it, and perhaps see something of their own spirit in it.

For as *Flavia* seems to be undone by the unreasonable use of her fortune, so the *lowness* of most people's virtue, the *imperfections* of their piety, and the disorders of their *passions*, is generally owing to their imprudent use and enjoyment of lawful and innocent things.

More people are kept from a true sense and taste of Religion, by a *regular kind* of sensuality and indulgence, than by *gross drunkenness*. More men live regardless of the great duties of piety, through too *great a concern* for worldly goods, than through *direct injustice*.

This man would perhaps be devout, if he were not so great a *Virtuoso*. Another is deaf to all the motives to piety, by indulging an *idle*, *slothful* temper.

Could you cure This man of his great *curiosity* and *inquisitive* temper, or That of his *false* satisfaction and *thirst* after *learning*, you need do no more to make them both become men of great piety.

If this *woman* would make *fewer visits*, or That not be *always talking*, they would neither of them find it half so hard to be affected with Religion.

For all these things are only *little*, when they are compared to *great sins*; and though they are little in that respect, yet they are great, as they are *impediments* and *hindrances* of a pious spirit.

For as *consideration* is the only *eye* of the soul, as the truths of Religion can be seen by nothing else, so whatever raises a *levity* of mind, a *trifling* spirit, renders the soul incapable of seeing, apprehending, and relishing the doctrines of piety.

Would we therefore make a real progress in Religion, we must not only abhor *gross* and *notorious* sins, but we must regulate the *innocent* and *lawful* parts of our behaviour, and put the most common and allowed actions of life, under the rules of discretion and piety.

Chapter VIII.

How the wise and pious use of an Estate, naturally carrieth us to great perfection in all the virtues of the Christian Life; represented in the character of Miranda.

ANY one pious regularity of any one part of our life, is of great advantage, not only on its own account, but as it uses us to live by rule, and think of the government of ourselves.

A man of business, that has brought one part of his affairs under certain rules, is in a fair way to take the same care of the rest.

So he that has brought any one part of his life under the rules of religion, may thence be taught to extend the same order and regularity into other parts of his life.

If anyone is so wise as to think his *time* too precious to be disposed of by chance, and left to be devoured by anything that happens in his way: If he lays himself under a necessity of observing how every day goes through his hands, and obliges himself to a certain order of time in his *business*, his *retirements*, and *devotions*, it is hardly to be imagined, how soon such a conduct would reform, improve, and perfect the whole course of his life.

He that once thus knows the value, and reaps the advantage of a well-ordered time, will not long be a stranger to the value of anything else that is of any real concern to him.

A rule that relates even to the smallest part of our life, is of great benefit to us, merely as it is a rule.

For as the *Proverb* saith, *He that has begun well, has half done*: So he that has begun to live by rule, has gone a great way towards the perfection of his life.

By rule, must here be constantly understood, a *religious rule*, observed upon a principle of duty to God.

For if a man should oblige himself to be moderate in his meals, only in regard to his stomach; or abstain from drinking, only to avoid the headache; or be moderate in his sleep, through fear of a lethargy, he might be exact in these rules, without being at all the better man for them.

But when he is moderate and regular in any of these things, out of a sense of *Christian sobriety* and *self-denial*, that he may offer unto God a more reasonable and holy life, then it is, that the *smallest rule* of this kind, is naturally the beginning of great piety.

For the smallest rule in these matters is of great benefit, as it teaches us some part of the government of ourselves, as it keeps up a *tenderness* of mind, as it presents God often to our thoughts, and brings a sense of religion into the ordinary actions of our common life.

If a man, whenever he was in company, where anyone *swore*, talked *lewdly*, or spoke *evil* of his neighbour, should make it a rule to himself, either gently to reprove him, or if that was not proper, then to leave the company as decently as he could; he would find, that this little rule, like a little *leaven* hid in a great quantity of *meal*, would spread and extend itself through the whole form of his life.

If another should oblige himself to abstain on the *Lord's Day* from many innocent and *lawful* things, as *travelling*, *visiting*, *common conversation*, and discoursing upon *worldly matters*, as *trade*, *news*, and the like; if he should devote the day, besides the public worship, to greater retirement, reading, devotion, instruction, and works of Charity: Though it may seem but a small thing, or a needless nicety, to require a man to abstain from such things as may be done without sin, yet whoever would try the benefit of so little a rule, would perhaps thereby find such a change made in his spirit, and such a taste of piety raised in his mind, as he was an entire stranger to before.

It would be easy to show, in many other instances, how little and small matters are the first steps, and natural beginnings of great perfection.

But the two things which of all others, most want to be under a strict rule, and which are the greatest blessings both to ourselves and others, when they are rightly used, are our *time*, and our *money*. These talents are continual means and opportunities of doing good.

He that is piously strict, and exact in the wise management of either of these, cannot be long ignorant of the right use of the other. And he that is happy in the religious care and disposal of them both, has already ascended several steps upon the *ladder* of Christian perfection.

Miranda (the Sister of *Flavia*) is a sober, reasonable Christian; as soon as she was mistress of her *time* and *fortune*, it was her first thought, how she might *best fulfil* everything that God required of her in the use of them, and how she might make the best and happiest use of this short life. She depends upon the truth of what our blessed Lord hath said, *that there is but one thing needful*, and therefore makes her whole life but one continual labour after it. She has but one reason for doing, or not doing, for liking, or not liking anything, and that is, the *will* of God. She is not so weak as to pretend to add, what is called the *fine lady*, to the true Christian; *Miranda* thinks too well, to be taken with the *sound* of such silly words; she has renounced the world to follow Christ in the exercise of humility charity, devotion, abstinence, and heavenly affections; and that is *Miranda's* fine breeding.

Whilst she was under her mother, she was forced to be *genteel*, to live in *ceremony*, to sit up late at *nights*, to be in the folly of every *fashion*, and always *visiting* on *Sundays*; to go *patched*, and loaded with a *burden of finery*, to the holy Sacrament; to be in every polite *conversation*; to hear profaneness at the *playhouse*, and wanton songs and love intrigues at the *opera*; to dance at public places, that *fops* and *rakes* might admire the fineness of her *shape*, and the *beauty* of her motions. The remembrance of this way of life, makes her exceeding careful to atone for it, by a contrary behaviour.

Miranda does not divide her duty between God, her neighbour, and herself; but she considers all as due to God, and so does everything in his name, and for his sake. This makes her consider her *fortune*, as the gift of God, that is to be used as everything is, that belongs to God, for the wise and reasonable ends of a Christian and holy life. Her *fortune* therefore is divided betwixt herself, and several other *poor People*, and she has only her part of *relief* from it. She thinks it the same folly to indulge herself in needless, vain expenses, as to give to other People to spend in the same way. Therefore she will not give

a *poor* man money to go see a *Puppet-show*, neither will she allow herself any to spend in the same manner; thinking it very proper to be as *wise* herself, as she expects poor men should be. For is it a folly and a *crime* in a *poor* man, says *Miranda*, to waste what is given him in foolish trifles, whilst he wants *meat, drink, and clothes*? And is it less folly, or a less crime in me, to spend that money in silly diversions, which might be so much better spent in *imitation* of the divine goodness, in works of kindness and charity towards my fellow-creatures, and Fellow-Christians? If a poor man's own *necessities* are a reason why he should not waste any of his money idly, surely the necessities of the *poor*, the *excellency* of Charity, which is received as done to Christ himself, is a much *greater reason* why no one should ever waste any of his money. For if he does so, he does not only do like the poor man, only waste that which he wants himself, but he wastes that which is wanted for the most noble use, and which Christ himself is ready to receive at his hands. And if we are angry at a *poor* man, and look upon him as a *wretch*, when he throws away that which should buy his own bread; how must we appear in the sight of God, if we make a *wanton idle* use of that, which should buy bread and clothes for the hungry and naked brethren, who are as near and dear to God as we are, and fellow-heirs of the same state of future Glory? This is the spirit of *Miranda*, and thus she uses the gifts of God; she is only one of a certain number of *poor People*, that are *relieved* out of her fortune, and she only differs from them in the *blessedness* of giving.

Excepting her victuals, she never spent ten pounds a year upon herself. If you were to see her, you would wonder what poor body it was, that was so surprisingly *neat* and *clean*. She has but one rule that she observes in her dress, to be always *clean*, and in the *cheapest* things. Everything about her resembles the purity of her soul, and she is always clean without, because she is always pure within.

Every morning sees her *early* at her Prayers, she rejoices in the beginning of every day, because it begins all her pious rules of holy living, and brings the fresh pleasure of repeating them. She seems to be as a *guardian Angel* to those that dwell about her, with her watchings and prayers blessing the place where she dwells, and making intercession with God for those that are asleep.

Her devotions have had some intervals, and God has heard several of her private Prayers, before the light is suffered to enter into her sister's room. *Miranda* does not know what it is to have a dull half-day; the return of her hours of Prayer, and

her religious exercises, come too often to let any considerable part of time lie heavy upon her hands.

When you see her at *work*, you see the same wisdom that governs all her other actions, she is either doing something that is necessary for herself, or necessary for others, who want to be assisted. There is scarcely a poor family in the neighbourhood, but wears something or other that has had the labour of her hands. Her wise and pious mind neither wants the amusement, nor can bear with the folly of idle and impertinent work. She can admit of no such folly as this in the day, because she is to answer for all her actions at night. When there is no wisdom to be observed in the employment of her hands, when there is no *useful* or *charitable* work to be done, *Miranda* will work no more. At her *table* she lives strictly by this rule of holy Scripture, 'Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' This makes her begin and end every meal, as she begins and ends every day, with acts of devotion: She eats and drinks only for the sake of living, and with so *regular* an abstinence, that every *meal* is an exercise of *self-denial*, and she humbles her body every time that she is forced to *feed* it. If *Miranda* were to run a *race* for her life, she would submit to a *diet* that was proper for it. But as the race which is set before her, is a race of *holiness, purity, and heavenly* affection, which she is to finish in a corrupt, disordered body of earthly passions, so her everyday diet has only this one end, to make her body fitter for this spiritual race. She does not weigh her meat in a pair of *scales*, but she weighs it in a much better balance; so much as gives a proper strength to her body, and renders it able and willing to obey the soul, to join in Psalms and Prayers, and lift up eyes and hands towards Heaven with greater readiness, so much is *Miranda's meal*. So that *Miranda* will never have her eyes swell with fatness, or pant under a heavy load of flesh, until she has *changed* her religion.

The holy Scriptures, especially of the New Testament, are her daily study; these she reads with a watchful attention, constantly casting an eye upon herself, and trying herself, by every doctrine that is there. When she has the New Testament in her hand, she supposes herself at the feet of our Saviour and his Apostles, and makes everything that she learns of them, so many laws of her life. She receives their sacred words with as much attention, and reverence, as if she saw their persons, and knew that they were just come from Heaven, on purpose to teach her the way that leads to it.

She thinks, that the trying of herself every day by the doctrines of Scripture, is the only possible way to be ready for

her trial at the last day. She is sometimes afraid that she lays out too much money in books, because she cannot forbear buying all practical books of any note; especially such as enter into the *heart* of religion, and describe the *inward holiness* of the Christian life. But of all human writings, the lives of pious persons, and eminent saints, are her greatest delight. In these she searches as for hidden treasure, hoping to find some secret of holy living, some uncommon degree of piety, which she may make her own. By this means *Miranda* has her head and her heart, so stored with all the principles of wisdom and holiness, she is so full of the one main business of life, that she finds it difficult to converse upon any other subject; and if you are in her company, when she thinks it proper to talk, you must be made wiser and better, whether you will or no.

To relate her charity, would be to relate the history of every day for twenty years; for so long has all her fortune been spent that way. She has set up nearly twenty poor tradesmen that had failed in their business, and saved as many from failing. She has educated several poor children, that were picked up in the streets, and put them in a way of an honest employment. As soon as any labourer is confined at home with sickness, she sends him, till he recovers, *twice* the value of his wages, that he may have one part to give to his family, as usual, and the other to provide things convenient for his sickness.

If a family seems too large to be supported by the labour of those that can work in it, she pays their rent, and gives them something yearly towards their clothing. By this means, there are many poor families that live in a comfortable manner, and are from year to year blessing her in their prayers.

If there is any poor man or woman, that is more than ordinarily wicked and reprobate, *Miranda* has her eye upon them, she watches their time of need and adversity; and if she can discover that they are in any great straits, or affliction, she gives them speedy relief. She has this care for this sort of people, because she once saved a very profligate person from being carried to prison, who immediately became a true penitent.

There is nothing in the character of *Miranda* more to be admired, than this temper. For this tenderness of affection towards the most abandoned sinners, is the highest instance of a divine and God-like soul.

Miranda once passed by a house, where the *man* and his *wife* were cursing and swearing at one another, in a most dreadful manner, and three children crying about them; this sight so much affected her compassionate mind, that she went the next day, and bought the three children, that they might not be

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ruined by living with such wicked parents; they now live with *Miranda*, are blessed with her care and prayers, and all the good works which she can do for them. They hear her talk, they see her live, they join with her in Psalms and Prayers. The eldest of them has already converted his parents from their wicked life, and shows a turn of mind so remarkably pious, that *Miranda* intends him for *holy orders*; that being thus saved himself, he may be zealous in the salvation of souls, and do to other miserable objects, as she has done to him.

Miranda is a constant relief to poor people in their *misfortunes* and *accidents*; there are sometimes little misfortunes that happen to them, which of themselves they could never be able to overcome. The death of a *cow*, or a *horse*, or some little *robbery*, would keep them in distress all their lives. She does not suffer them to grieve under such accidents as these. She immediately gives them the full value of their loss, and makes use of it as a means of raising their minds towards God.

She has a great tenderness for *old people* that are grown past their labour. The parish allowance to such people is very seldom a comfortable maintenance. For this reason they are the constant objects of her care; she adds so much to their allowance, as somewhat exceeds the wages they got when they were young. This she does to comfort the infirmities of their age, that being free from trouble and distress, they may serve God in peace, and tranquillity of mind. She has generally a large number of this kind, who by her charities and exhortations to holiness, spend their last days in great piety and devotion.

Miranda never wants compassion, even to common beggars; especially towards those that are *old* or *sick*, or full of *sores*, that want *eyes* or *limbs*. She hears their complaints with tenderness, gives them some proof of her kindness, and never rejects them with hard, or reproachful language, for fear of adding affliction to her fellow-creatures.

If a poor old traveller tells her, that he has neither *strength*, nor *food*, nor *money* left, she never bids him go to the place from whence he came, or tells him, that she cannot relieve him, because he may be a *cheat*, or she does not know him; but she relieves him for that reason, because he is a *stranger*, and *unknown* to her. For it is the most noble part of charity, to be kind and tender to those whom we never saw before, and perhaps never may see again in this life. *I was a stranger, and ye took me in*, saith our blessed Saviour; but who can perform this duty, that will not relieve persons that are unknown to him?

Miranda considers, that *Lazarus* was a common beggar, that he was the care of *Angels*, and carried into *Abraham's* bosom.

She considers, that our blessed Saviour and his Apostles, were kind to *beggars*; that they spoke comfortably to them, healed their diseases, and restored eyes and limbs to the lame and blind. That *Peter* said to the beggar that wanted an alms from him, 'Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.' *Miranda*, therefore, never treats beggars with disregard and aversion, but she imitates the kindness of our Saviour and his Apostles towards them; and though she cannot, like them, work miracles for their relief, yet she relieves them with that power that she hath; and may say with the Apostle, 'Such as I have give I thee, in the name of Jesus Christ.'

It may be, says *Miranda*, that I may often give to those that do not deserve it, or that will make an *ill use* of my alms. But what then? Is not this the very method of divine goodness? Does not God make *his sun to rise on the evil, and on the good*? Is not this the very *goodness* that is recommended to us in Scripture, that by imitating of it, we may be children of our Father which is in Heaven, *who sendeth rain on the just, and on the unjust*? And shall I with-hold a little *money, or food*, from my fellow-creature, for fear he should not be good enough to receive it of me? Do I beg of God to deal with me, not according to my merit, but according to his own great goodness; and shall I be so absurd, as to with-hold my charity from a poor brother, because he may perhaps not deserve it? Shall I use a *measure* towards him, which I pray God never to use towards me?

Besides, where has the Scripture made *merit* the rule or measure of charity? On the contrary, the Scripture saith, 'If thy enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirst, give him drink.'

Now this plainly teaches us, that the *merit* of persons is to be no rule of our charity, but that we are to do acts of kindness to those that *least* of all deserve it. For if I am to *love* and do good to my worst enemies; if I am to be charitable to them, notwithstanding all their *spite* and *malice*, surely *merit* is no measure of charity. If I am not to with-hold my charity from such bad people, and who are at the same time my enemies, surely I am not to deny alms to poor beggars, whom I neither know to be bad people, nor any way my enemies.

You will perhaps say, that by this means I encourage people to be *beggars*. But the same thoughtless objection may be made against all *kinds* of charities, for they may encourage people to depend upon them. The same may be said against *forgiving* our enemies, for it may *encourage* people to do us hurt. The same may be said even against the goodness of God, that by

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pouring his blessings on the evil and on the good, on the just and on the unjust, evil and unjust men are *encouraged* in their wicked ways. The same may be said against clothing the naked, or giving medicines to the sick, for that may encourage people to *neglect* themselves, and be *careless* of their health. But when the *love of God dwelleth in you*, when it has enlarged your heart, and filled you with bowels of mercy and compassion, you will make no more such objections as these.

When you are at any time turning away the *poor*, the *old*, the *sick* and *helpless* traveller, the *lame*, or the *blind*, ask yourself this question, Do I sincerely wish these poor creatures may be as happy as *Lazarus*, that was carried by *Angels* into *Abraham's* bosom? Do I sincerely desire that God would make them fellow-heirs with me in eternal Glory? Now if you search into your soul, you will find that there are none of these motions there, that you are wishing nothing of this. For it is impossible for anyone heartily to wish a poor creature so *great* a happiness, and yet not have a heart to give him a *small* alms. For this reason, says *Miranda*, as far as I can, I give to *all*, because I pray to God to forgive *all*; and I cannot refuse an *alms* to those whom I pray God to bless, whom I wish to be partakers of *eternal glory*, but am glad to show some degree of love to such, as, I hope, will be the objects of the infinite Love of God. And if, as our Saviour has assured us, *it be more blessed to give than to receive*, we ought to look upon those that ask our alms, as so many *friends* and *benefactors*, that come to do us a greater good than they can receive, that come to *exalt* our virtue, to be *witnesses* of our charity, to be *monuments* of our love, to be our *advocates* with God, to be to us in Christ's stead, to *appear* for us at the day of judgment, and to help us to a blessedness greater than our alms can bestow on them.

This is the spirit, and this is the life of the devout *Miranda*; and if she lives ten years longer, she will have spent *fifty hundred* pounds in charity, for that which she allows herself, may fairly be reckoned amongst her *alms*.

When she dies, she must shine amongst *Apostles*, and *Saints*, and *Martyrs*; she must stand amongst the *first servants* of God, and be glorious amongst those that have fought the good fight, and finished their course with joy.

Chapter IX.

Containing some reflections upon the life of Miranda, and showing how it may, and ought to be imitated by all her sex.

NOW this life of *Miranda*, which I heartily recommend to the imitation of her sex, however contrary it may seem to the way and fashion of the world, is yet suitable to the true spirit, and founded upon the plainest doctrines of Christianity.

To live as she does, is as truly suitable to the Gospel of Christ, as to be *baptized*, or receive the *Sacrament*.

Her spirit is that which animated the *Saints* of former ages ; and it is because they lived as she does, that we now celebrate their memories, and praise God for their examples.

There is nothing that is *whimsical*, *trifling*, or *unreasonable* in her character ; but everything there described, is a right and proper instance of a solid and real piety.

It is as easy to show, that it is *whimsical* to go to church, or to say one's prayers, as that it is *whimsical* to observe any of these rules of life. For all *Miranda's* rules of living unto God, of spending her *time* and *fortune*, of eating, working, dressing, and conversing, are as substantial parts of a reasonable and holy life, as devotion and prayer.

For there is nothing to be said for the wisdom of *sobriety*, the wisdom of *devotion*, the wisdom of *charity*, or the wisdom of *humility*, but what is as good an argument for the wise and reasonable use of *apparel*.

Neither can anything be said against the folly of *luxury*, the folly of *sensuality*, the folly of *extravagance*, the folly of *prodigality*, the folly of *ambition*, of *idleness*, or *indulgence*, but what must be said against the folly of *dress*. For religion is as deeply concerned in the one as in the other.

If you may be vain in one thing, you may be vain in everything ; for one kind of vanity only differs from another, as one kind of intemperance differs from another.

If you spend your fortune in the needless vain finery of dress, you cannot condemn prodigality, or extravagance, or luxury, without condemning yourself.

If you fancy that it is your *only folly*, and that therefore there can be no great matter in it ; you are like those that think they

are only guilty of the folly of covetousness, or the folly of ambition. Now though some people may live so plausible a life, as to appear chargeable with no other fault, than that of covetousness or ambition; yet the case is not as it appears, for covetousness, or ambition, cannot subsist in a heart, in other respects rightly devoted to God.

In like manner, though some people may spend most that they have in needless expensive ornaments of dress, and yet seem to be in every other respect truly pious, yet it is certainly false; for it is as impossible for a mind that is in a *true state* of religion, to be vain in the use of clothes, as to be vain in the use of *alms* or *devotions*. Now to convince you of this from your own reflections, let us suppose that some *eminent saint*, as for instance, that the holy *Virgin Mary* was sent into the world, to be again in a state of trial for a few years, and that you were going to her, to be edified by her great piety. Would you expect to find her dressed out, and adorned in fine and expensive clothes? No. You would know in your own mind, that it was as impossible, as to find her learning to *dance*. Do but add *saint*, or *holy*, to any person, either *man*, or *woman*, and your own mind tells you immediately, that such a character cannot admit of the vanity of fine apparel. A *saint* genteely dressed, is as great nonsense, as an *Apostle* in an *embroidered suit*; everyone's own natural sense convinces him, of the inconsistency of these things.

Now what is the reason, that when you think of a *saint*, or *eminent* servant of God, you cannot admit of the vanity of apparel? Is it not because it is inconsistent with such a right state of heart, such true and exalted piety? And is not this therefore, a demonstration, that where such vanity is admitted, there a right state of heart, true and exalted piety, must needs be wanted? For as certainly as the holy *Virgin Mary* could not indulge herself, or conform to the vanity of the world in *dress* and *figure*; so certain is it, that none can indulge themselves in this vanity, but those who want her piety of heart; and consequently it must be owned, that all needless and expensive finery of dress, is the effect of a disordered heart, that is not governed by the true spirit of religion.

Covetousness is not a crime, because there is any harm in *gold* or *silver*, but because it supposes a foolish and unreasonable state of mind, that is fallen from its true good, and sunk into such a poor and wretched satisfaction.

In like manner, the *expensive finery* of dress is not a crime, because there is anything good or evil in clothes, but because the expensive ornaments of clothing, shows a *foolish* and un-

reasonable state of heart, that is fallen from right notions of human nature, that abuses the end of clothing, and turns the necessities of life, into so many instances of pride and folly.

All the world agree in condemning *remarkable fops*. Now what is the reason of it? Is it because there is anything sinful in their *particular dress*, or *affected manners*? No: but it is because all people know, that it shows the state of a man's mind, and that it is impossible for so ridiculous an outside, to have anything wise, or reasonable, or good within. And indeed, to suppose a fop of *great piety*, is as much nonsense, as to suppose a coward of *great courage*. So that all the world agree in owning, that the *use and manner* of clothes, is a mark of the state of a man's mind, and consequently, that it is a thing highly essential to religion. But then it should be well considered, that as it is not only the *sot* that is guilty of intemperance, but everyone that transgresses the *right and religious* measures of eating and drinking; so it should be considered, that it is not only the *fop* that is guilty of the vanity and abuse of dress, but everyone that departs from the reasonable and religious ends of clothing.

As therefore every argument against *sottishness*, is as good an argument against *all kinds* of intemperance; so every argument against the vanity of *fops*, is as good an argument against *all vanity* and abuse of dress. For they are all of the same kind, and only differ, as one degree of intemperance may differ from another. She that only *paints* a little, may as justly accuse another, because she paints a great deal; as she that uses but a common finery of dress, accuse another that is excessive in her finery.

For as in the matter of temperance, there is *no rule*, but the sobriety, that is according to the doctrines and spirit of our religion; so in the matter of apparel, there is *no rule* to be observed, but such a right use of clothes, as is strictly according to the doctrines and spirit of our religion. To pretend to make the *way of the world* our measure in these things, is as weak and absurd, as to make the way of the world the measure of our sobriety, abstinence, or humility. It is a pretence that is exceedingly absurd in the mouths of Christians, who are to be so far from conforming to the fashions of this life, that to have *overcome the world*, is made an essential mark of Christianity.

This therefore is the way that you are to judge of the crime of vain apparel: You are to consider it as an offence against the *proper use* of clothes, as covetousness is an offence against the proper use of money; you are to consider it as an indulgence of *proud and unreasonable* tempers, as an offence against the

humility and *sobriety* of the Christian spirit ; you are to consider it as an offence against all those doctrines, that require you to do all to the *glory* of God, that require you to make a *right use* of your talents ; you are to consider it as an offence against all those texts of Scripture, that command you to *love* your neighbour as yourself, to *feed* the hungry, to *clothe* the naked, and do *all works* of charity that you are able ; so that you must not deceive yourself with saying, Where can be the harm of *clothes* ? for the covetous man might as well say, Where can be the harm of *gold* or *silver* ? but you must consider, that it is a great deal of harm to want that *wise*, and *reasonable*, and *humble* state of heart, which is according to the spirit of religion, and which no one can have in the manner that he ought to have it, who indulges himself either in the *vanity* of dress, or the *desire* of riches.

There is therefore nothing right in the use of *clothes*, or in the use of anything else in the world, but the *plainness* and *simplicity* of the Gospel. Every other use of things (however polite and fashionable in the world) distracts and disorders the heart, and is inconsistent with that inward state of piety, that purity of heart, that wisdom of mind, and regularity of affection, which Christianity requireth.

If you would be a good Christian, there is but one way, you must *live* wholly unto God ; and if you would live wholly unto God, you must live according to the wisdom that comes from God ; you must act according to right judgments of the nature and value of things ; you must live in the exercise of holy and heavenly affections, and use all the gifts of God to his praise and glory.

Some persons perhaps, who admire the purity and perfection of this life of *Miranda*, may say, How can it be proposed as a common example ? How can we who are married, or we who are under the direction of our parents, imitate such a life ?

It is answered, Just as you may imitate the life of our blessed Saviour and his apostles. The circumstances of our Saviour's life, and the state and condition of his apostles, were more different from yours, than that of *Miranda's* is ; and yet their life, the purity and perfection of their behaviour, is the common example that is proposed to all Christians.

It is their *spirit* therefore, their piety, their love of God, that you are to imitate, and not the particular form of their life.

Act under God as they did, direct your common actions to that end which they did, glorify your proper state with such love of God, such charity to your neighbour, such humility and self-denial, as they did ; and then, though you are only teaching

your own children, and St. *Paul* is converting whole nations, yet you are following his steps, and acting after his example.

Do not think therefore, that you cannot, or need not be like *Miranda*, because you are not in her state of life; for as the same spirit and temper would have made *Miranda* a saint, though she had been forced to labour for a maintenance, so if you will but aspire after her spirit and temper, every *form* and *condition* of life, will furnish you with sufficient means of employing it.

Miranda is what she is, because she does everything in the name, and with regard to her duty to God; and when you do the same, you will be exactly like her, though you are never so different from her in the outward state of your life.

You are married, you say, therefore you have not your *time* and *fortune* in your power as she has.

It is very true; and therefore you cannot spend *so much* time, nor *so much* money, in the manner that she does.

But now *Miranda's* perfection does not consist in this, that she spends *so much* time, or *so much* money in such a manner, but that she is careful to make the best use of all that time, and all that fortune, which God has put into her hands. Do you therefore make the best use of all that time and money which is in your disposal, and then you are like *Miranda*.

If she has *two hundred* pounds a year, and you have only *two mites*, have you not the more reason to be exceeding exact in the wisest use of them? If she has a great deal of time, and you have but a little, ought you not to be the more *watchful* and *circumspect*, lest that *little* should be lost?

You say, if you were to imitate the *cleanly plainness* and *cheapness* of her dress, you should offend your *husbands*.

First, Be very sure, that this is *true*, before you make it an *excuse*.

Secondly, If your *husbands* do really require you to *patch* your faces, to expose your breasts *naked*, and to be *fine* and *expensive* in all your *apparel*, then take these two resolutions:

First, To forbear from all this, as soon as your *husbands* will *permit* you.

Secondly, To use your utmost endeavours, to recommend yourselves to their affections by such *solid virtues*, as may correct the *vanity* of their minds, and teach them to love you for such qualities, as will make you amiable in the sight of God and his holy angels.

As to this doctrine concerning the plainness and modesty of dress, it may perhaps be thought by some, to be sufficiently confuted by asking, whether all persons are to be clothed in the *same manner*?

These questions are generally put by those, who had rather perplex the plainest truths, than be obliged to follow them.

Let it be supposed, that I had recommended an universal plainness of *diet*. Is it not a thing sufficiently reasonable to be *universally* recommended? But would it thence follow, that the *nobleman* and the *labourer* were to live upon the *same food*?

Suppose I had pressed an *universal temperance*, does not religion enough justify such a doctrine? But would it therefore follow, that all people were to drink the *same liquors*, and in the same *quantity*?

In like manner, though *plainness* and *sobriety* of dress is recommended to *all*, yet it does by no means follow, that all are to be clothed in the *same manner*.

Now what is the *particular rule* with regard to temperance? How shall particular persons that use *different liquors*, and in different *quantities*, preserve their temperance?

Is not this the rule? Are they not to *guard* against *indulgence*, to make their use of liquors a *matter of conscience*, and allow of *no refreshments*, but such as are consistent with the *strictest rules* of Christian sobriety?

Now transfer this *rule* to the matter of *apparel*, and all questions about it are answered.

Let everyone but guard against the *vanity* of dress, let them but make their *use* of clothes a *matter of conscience*, let them but desire to make the *best use* of their money, and then everyone has a rule, that is sufficient to direct them in every state of life. This rule will no more let the great be *vain* in their *dress*, than *intemperate* in their *liquors*; and yet will leave it as lawful to have *some difference* in their apparel, as to have some difference in their drink.

But now will you say, that you may use the *finest, richest wines*, when, and as you please; that you may be as *expensive* in them as you have a mind, because *different liquors* are allowed? If not, how can it be said, that you may use *clothes* as you please, and wear the *richest* things you can get, because the *bare difference* of clothes is lawful?

For as the lawfulness of different liquors, leaves no *room*, nor any *excuse* for the *smallest degrees* of intemperance in drinking, so the lawfulness of different apparel, leaves no room, nor any excuse for the smallest degrees of *vanity* in dress.

To ask what is *vanity in dress*, is no more a puzzling question, than to ask what is *intemperance in drinking*. And though Religion does not here state the *particular measure* for all individuals, yet it gives such *general rules*, as are a sufficient direction in every state of life.

He that lets Religion teach him, that the *end* of drinking is only so far to refresh our *spirits*, as to keep us in *good health*, and make *soul* and *body* fitter for all the offices of a *holy* and *pious* life, and that he is to desire to *glorify* God by a *right* use of this *liberty*, will always know what *intemperance* is, in his particular state.

So he that lets Religion teach him, that the *end* of clothing is only to hide our *shame* and *nakedness*, and to secure our bodies from the injuries of *weather*, and that he is to desire to *glorify* God by a *sober* and *wise* use of this *necessity*, will always know what *vanity* of dress is, in his particular state.

And he that thinks it a *needless nicety*, to talk of the *religious* use of apparel, has as much reason to think it a *needless nicety*, to talk of the religious use of *liquors*. For luxury and indulgence in *dress*, is as great an *abuse*, as luxury and indulgence in *eating* and *drinking*. And there is no avoiding either of them, but by making religion the *strict measure* of our allowance in both cases. And there is nothing in Religion to excite a man to this *pious exactness* in one case, but what is as good a motive to the same exactness in the other.

Further, as all things that are *lawful*, are not therefore *expedient*, so there are some things lawful in the use of *liquors*, and *apparel*, which by abstaining from them for *pious ends*, may be made means of great perfection.

Thus, for instance, if a man should deny himself such use of *liquors* as is *lawful*; if he should refrain from such *expense* in his drink as might be allowed without sin; if he should do this, not only for the sake of a more *pious self-denial*, but that he might be able to relieve and refresh the helpless, poor, and sick: if another should abstain from the use of that which is *lawful* in *dress*, if he should be more *frugal* and *mean* in his habit, than the necessities of religion *absolutely* require; if he should do this not only as a means of a *better humility*, but that he may be more able to *clothe* other People; these Persons might be said to do that, which was highly suitable to the *true spirit*, though not *absolutely* required by the *letter* of the law of Christ.

For if those *who give a cup of cold water to a disciple of Christ*, shall not lose their reward, how dear must they be to Christ, who often give themselves water, that they may be able to give *wine* to the sick and languishing members of Christ's body!

But to return. All that has been here said to *married* women, may serve for the same instruction to such as are still under the direction of their *Parents*.

Now though the obedience which is due to parents, does not oblige them to carry their virtues no higher than their parents

require them; yet their obedience requires them to submit to their direction in all things, not contrary to the laws of God.

If, therefore, your parents require you to live more in the *fashion* and *conversation* of the world, or to be more *expensive* in your dress and person, or to dispose of your time otherwise, than suits with your desires after *greater perfection*, you must submit, and bear it as your *cross*, till you are at liberty to follow the higher counsels of Christ, and have it in your power to choose the best ways, of raising your virtue to its greatest height.

Now although, whilst you are in this state, you may be obliged to forego *some means* of improving your virtue, yet there are some others to be found in it, that are not to be had in a life of more liberty.

For if in this state, where *obedience* is so great a virtue, you comply in all things lawful, out of a *pious, tender* sense of duty, then those things which you thus perform, are instead of being hindrances of your virtue, turned into means of improving it.

What you lose by being restrained from such things, as you would choose to observe, you *gain* by that excellent virtue of obedience, in humbly complying against your temper.

Now what is here granted, is only in things *lawful*; and therefore the diversion of our *English stage* is here excepted; being elsewhere proved, as I think, to be *absolutely unlawful*.

Thus much to show, how persons under the direction of others, may imitate the wise and pious life of *Miranda*.

But as for those who are altogether in their own hands, if the liberty of their state makes them covet the *best gifts*, if it carries them to choose the *most excellent* ways, if they having all in their own power, should turn the whole form of their life into a regular exercise of the highest virtues, happy are they who have so learned Christ.

All persons cannot receive this saying. They that are able to receive it, let them receive it, and bless that Spirit of God, which has put such good motions into their hearts.

God may be served, and glorified in every state of life. But as there are some states of life more desirable than others, that more purify our natures, that more improve our virtues, and dedicate us unto God in a higher manner, so those who are at liberty to choose for themselves, seem to be called by God to be more eminently devoted to his service.

Ever since the beginning of Christianity, there hath been two *orders, or ranks* of People amongst good Christians.

The *one* that feared and served God in the *common offices* and business of a secular worldly life.

The *other* renouncing the common business and common

enjoyments of life, as *riches, marriage, honours, and pleasures*, devoted themselves to *voluntary poverty, virginity, devotion, and retirement*, that by this means they might live wholly unto God, in the daily exercise of a divine and heavenly life.

This testimony I have from the famous ecclesiastical historian *Eusebius*, who lived at the time of the *first general council*, when the faith of our *Nicene Creed* was established, when the Church was in its greatest *glory and purity*, when its Bishops were so many holy *fathers*, and eminent *saints*.

'Therefore,' saith he, 'there hath been instituted in the Church of Christ, *two ways, or manners* of living. The *one* raised above the ordinary state of nature, and common ways of living, rejects *wedlock, possessions, and worldly goods*, and being wholly separate and removed from the ordinary conversation of common life, is appropriated and devoted solely to the worship and service of God, through an *exceeding degree of heavenly love*.

'They who are of this *order* of people, seem dead to the life of this world, and having their *bodies* only upon *earth*, are in their *minds, and contemplations*, dwelling in heaven. From whence, like so many heavenly inhabitants, they look down upon human life, making *intercessions and oblations* to Almighty God, for the whole race of mankind. And this not with the *blood* of beasts, or the fat, or smoke, and burning of *bodies*, but with the highest exercises of true piety, with cleansed and purified hearts, and with an whole form of life strictly devoted to virtue. These are their sacrifices, which they continually offering unto God, implore his mercy and favour for themselves and their fellow-creatures.

'Christianity receives this as the perfect manner of life.

'The other is of a lower form, and suiting itself more to the condition of human nature, admits of *chaste wedlock*, the care of children and family, of trade and business, and goes through all the employments of life under a sense of piety, and fear of God.

'Now they who have chosen this manner of life, have their set times for *retirement and spiritual exercises*, and particular days are set apart, for their hearing and learning the word of God. And this order of people are considered, as in the *second state of piety*.*

Thus this learned historian.

If therefore persons, of either sex, moved with the life of *Miranda*, and desirous of perfection, should unite themselves into little societies, professing *voluntary poverty, virginity, retirement and devotion*, living upon *bare necessaries*, that some might

* Euseb., 'Dem. Evan.,' l. 1, c. 8.

be relieved by their *charities*, and *all* be blessed with their prayers, and benefited by their *example*: Or if for want of this, they should practise the same manner of life, in as high a degree as they could by themselves; such persons would be so far from being chargeable with any *superstition*, or *blind devotion*, that they might be justly said to restore *that piety*, which was the *boast* and *glory* of the Church, when its greatest *saints* were alive.

Now as this *learned historian* observes, that it was an *exceeding great degree of heavenly love*, that carried these persons, so much above the *common ways* of life, to such an eminent state of holiness; so it is not to be wondered at, that the Religion of Jesus Christ, should fill the hearts of many Christians with this *high degree* of love.

For a Religion that opens such a scene of Glory, that discovers things so infinitely above all the world, that so triumphs over death, that assures us of such mansions of bliss, where we shall so soon be as the *Angels* of God in Heaven; what wonder is it, if such a Religion, such truths and expectations, should in some holy souls, destroy all earthly desires, and make the ardent love of heavenly things, be the one continual passion of their hearts?

If the Religion of Christians is founded upon the infinite *humiliation*, the cruel *mockings* and *scourgings*, the prodigious *sufferings*, the *poor, persecuted* life, and painful death of a crucified Son of God; what wonder is it, if many *humble adorers* of this profound mystery, many *affectionate lovers* of a crucified Lord, should renounce their share of worldly pleasures, and give themselves up to a continual course of mortification and self-denial, that thus suffering with Christ here, they may reign with him hereafter?

If *Truth* itself hath assured us, that *there is but one thing needful*, what wonder is it, that there should be some amongst Christians so full of faith, as to believe this in the highest sense of the words, and to desire such a separation from the world, that their care and attention to the one thing needful may not be interrupted?

If our blessed Lord hath said, 'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: And come and follow me.' What wonder is it, that there should be amongst Christians some such zealous followers of Christ, so intent upon heavenly treasure, so desirous of perfection, that they should renounce the enjoyment of their estates, choose a voluntary poverty, and relieve all the poor that they are able?

If the *chosen vessel*, St. Paul, hath said, 'He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may

'please the Lord : And that there is this difference also between 'a wife and a virgin ; the unmarried woman careth for the 'things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and 'Spirit :' What wonder is it, if the purity and perfection of the virgin state, hath been the praise and glory of the Church in its first and purest ages ? That there hath always been some so *desirous* of pleasing God, so zealous after *every degree* of purity and perfection, so glad of *every means* of improving their virtue, that they have renounced the comforts and enjoyments of wedlock, to trim their *lamps*, to purify their souls, and wait upon God in a state of perpetual virginity ?

And if in these our days, we want examples of these *several degrees* of perfection, if neither *Clergy*, nor *laity*, are enough of this spirit ; if we are so far departed from it, that a man seems, like *St. Paul at Athens*, a *setter forth of strange doctrines*, when he recommends *self-denial*, *renunciation* of the world, *regular devotion*, *retirement*, *virginity*, and *voluntary poverty*, it is because we are fallen into an age, where the *love not only of many*, but of most, *is waxed cold*.

I have made this little appeal to *Antiquity*, and quoted these few passages of Scripture, to support some uncommon practices in the life of *Miranda* ; and to show that her highest rules of holy living, her *devotion*, *self-denial*, *renunciation* of the world, her *charity*, *virginity*, and *voluntary poverty*, are founded in the *sublimest counsels* of Christ and his Apostles, suitable to the *high expectations* of another life, proper instances of a *heavenly love*, and all followed by the *greatest saints* of the best and purest ages of the Church.

'He that hath ears to ear, let him hear.'

Chapter X.

Showing how all orders and ranks of men and women of all ages, are obliged to devote themselves unto God.

I HAVE in the foregoing Chapters, gone through the several great instances of Christian devotion, and shown that all the parts of our common life, our *employments*, our *talents*, and gifts of *fortune*, are all to be made holy and acceptable unto God, by a wise and religious use of everything, and by directing our actions and designs to such ends, as are suitable to the honour and glory of God.

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I shall now show, that this regularity of devotion, this holiness of common life, this religious use of everything we have, is a devotion that is the duty of all orders of Christian people.

Fulvius has had a learned education, and taken his degrees in the *University*, he came from thence, that he might be free from any rules of life. He takes no employment upon him, nor enters into any business, because he thinks that every employment or business, calls people to the careful performance and just discharge of its several duties. When he is grave, he will tell you that he did not enter into holy orders, because he looks upon it to be a state that requires great holiness of life, and that it does not suit his temper to be so good. He will tell you, that he never intends to marry, because he cannot oblige himself to that regularity of life, and good behaviour, which he takes to be the duty of those who are at the head of a family. He refused to be *Godfather* to his nephew, because he will have no *trust* of any kind to answer for.

Fulvius thinks that he is conscientious in this conduct, and is therefore content with the most *idle, impertinent, and careless* life.

He has no Religion, no Devotion, no pretences to Piety. He lives by no rules, and thinks all is very well, because he is neither a *priest*, nor a *father*, nor a *guardian*, nor has any *employment* or *family* to look after.

But *Fulvius*, you are a rational creature, and as such, are as much obliged to live according to *reason* and *order*, as a *priest* is obliged to attend at the *altar*, or a *guardian* to be faithful to his trust; if you live contrary to *reason*, you do not commit a small crime; you do not break a small trust; but you break the *law* of your nature, you rebel against God who gave you that nature, and put yourself amongst those, whom the God of *reason* and *order* will punish as *apostates* and *deserters*.

Though you have no employment, yet as you are baptized into the profession of Christ's religion, you are as much obliged to live according to the holiness of the Christian spirit, and perform all the promises made at your baptism, as any man is obliged to be honest and faithful in his calling. If you abuse this great calling, you are not false in a small matter, but you abuse the precious blood of Christ; you crucify the Son of God afresh; you neglect the highest instances of divine goodness; you disgrace the church of God; you blemish the body of Christ; you abuse the means of Grace, and the promises of Glory; and it will be more tolerable for *Tyre* and *Sidon*, at the day of judgment, than for you.

It is therefore great folly, for anyone to think himself at liberty

to live as he pleases, because he is not in such a state of life as some others are : For if there is anything dreadful in the abuse of any *trust* ; if there is anything to be feared for the neglect of any calling ; there is nothing more to be feared than the wrong use of our *reason*, nor anything more to be dreaded, than the neglect of our *Christian calling* ; which is not to serve the little uses of a short life, but to redeem souls unto God, to fill Heaven with saints, and finish a kingdom of eternal Glory unto God.

No man therefore, must think himself excused from the *exactness* of piety and morality, because he has chosen to be *idle* and *independent* in the world ; for the *necessities* of a reasonable and holy life, are not founded in the several conditions and employments of this life, but in the immutable nature of God, and the nature of Man. A man is not to be reasonable and holy, because he is a *priest*, or a *father* of a family ; but he is to be a pious priest, and a good father, because piety and goodness are the *laws* of human nature. Could any man please God, without living according to *reason* and *order*, there would be nothing displeasing to God in an *idle* priest, or a *reprobate* father. He therefore, that abuses his *reason*, is like him who abuses the *priesthood* ; and he who neglects the holiness of the *Christian life*, is as the man that disregards the most *important trust*.

If a man were to choose to put out his *eyes*, rather than enjoy the light, and see the works of God, if he should voluntarily kill himself, by refusing to eat and drink, everyone would own, that such a one was a rebel against God, who justly deserved his highest indignation. You would not say, that this was only sinful in a *priest*, or a *master* of a family, but in every man as such.

Now wherein does the sinfulness of this behaviour consist ? Does it not consist in this, that he abuses his *nature*, and refuses to act that part for which God had created him ? But if this be true, then all persons who abuse their *reason*, that act a different part from that for which God created them, are like this man, rebels against God, and on the same account subject to his wrath.

Let us suppose that this man, instead of putting out his eyes, had only employed them in looking at *ridiculous things*, or shut them up in *sleep* ; that instead of *starving* himself to death, by not eating at all, he should turn every meal into a *feast*, and eat and drink like an *Epicure* ; could he be said to have lived more to the glory of God ? could he any more be said to act the part for which God had created him, than if he had put out his eyes, and starved himself to death ?

Now do but suppose a man acting unreasonably ; do but sup-

pose him extinguishing his *reason*, instead of putting out his *eyes*, and living in a course of folly and impertinence, instead of starving himself to death ; and then you have found as *great a rebel* against God.

For he who puts out his eyes, or murders himself, has only this guilt, that he abuses the powers that God has given him ; that he refuses to act that part for which he was created, and puts himself into a state that is contrary to the divine will. And surely this is the guilt of everyone who lives an unreasonable, unholy, and foolish life.

As therefore, no particular state, or private life, is an excuse for the abuse of our *bodies*, or *self-murder*, so no particular state, or private life, is an excuse for the abuse of our reason, or the neglect of the holiness of the Christian religion. For surely it is as much the will of God that we should make the best use of our rational faculties, that we should conform to the purity and holiness of Christianity, as it is the will of God, that we should use our eyes, and eat and drink for the preservation of our lives.

Till therefore, a man can show, that he sincerely endeavours to live according to the will of God, to be that which God requires him to be ; until he can show, that he is striving to live according to the holiness of the Christian religion ; whosoever he be, or wheresoever he be, he has all that to answer for, that they have, who refuse to live, who abuse the greatest trusts, and neglect the highest calling in the world.

Everybody acknowledges, that all orders of men are to be equally and exactly *honest* and *faithful* ; there is no exception to be made in these duties, for any private or particular state of life. Now if we would but attend to the reason and nature of things ; if we would but consider the nature of God, and the nature of man, we should find the same necessity for every other right use of our reason, for every grace, or religious temper of the Christian life : We should find it as absurd to suppose, that one man must be exact in piety, and another need not, as to suppose that one man must be exact in *honesty*, but another need not. For Christian *humility*, *sobriety*, *devotion*, and *piety*, are as great and necessary parts of a reasonable life, as *justice* and *honesty*.

And on the other hand, *pride*, *sensuality*, and *covetousness*, are as great disorders of the soul, are as high an abuse of our reason, and as contrary to God, as *cheating* and *dishonesty*.

Theft and *dishonesty* seem indeed, to vulgar eyes, to be greater sins, because they are so hurtful to civil society, and are so severely punished by human laws.

But if we consider mankind in a higher view, as God's *order*

or *society* of rational beings, that are to glorify him by the right use of their reason, and by acting conformably to the order of their nature, we shall find, that every temper that is equally contrary to reason and order, that opposes God's ends and designs, and disorders the beauty and glory of the rational world, is equally sinful in man, and equally odious to God. This would show us, that the sin of *sensuality* is like the sin of *dishonesty*, and renders us as great objects of the divine displeasure.

Again, if we consider mankind in a further view, as a redeemed order of *fallen spirits*, that are baptized into a fellowship with the Son of God ; to be temples of the Holy Ghost ; to live according to his holy inspirations ; to offer to God the reasonable sacrifice of an humble, pious, and thankful life ; to purify themselves from the disorders of their fall ; to make a right use of the means of grace, in order to be sons of eternal glory : If we look at mankind in this true light, then we shall find, that all tempers that are contrary to this holy society, that are abuses of this infinite mercy ; all actions that make us unlike to Christ, that disgrace his body, that abuse the means of grace, and oppose our hopes of glory, have everything in them, that can make us for ever odious unto God. So that though *pride* and *sensuality*, and other vices of the like kind, do not hurt civil society, as *cheating* and *dishonesty* do ; yet they hurt that society, and oppose those ends, which are greater and more glorious in the eyes of God, than all the societies that relate to this world.

Nothing therefore can be more false, than to imagine, that because we are private persons, that have taken upon us no charge or employment of life, that therefore we may live more at large, indulge our appetites, and be less careful of the duties of piety and holiness ; for it is as good an excuse for *cheating* and *dishonesty*. Because he that abuses his *reason*, that indulges himself in *lust* and *sensuality*, and neglects to act the wise and reasonable part of a true Christian, has everything in his life to render him hateful to God, that is to be found in *cheating* and *dishonesty*.

If therefore, you rather choose to be an *idle Epicure*, than to be *unfaithful* ; if you rather choose to live in *lust* and *sensuality*, than to injure your neighbour in his goods, you have made no better a provision for the favour of God, than he that rather chooses to rob a *house*, than to rob a *church*.

For the abusing of our own nature, is as great a disobedience against God, as the injuring our neighbour ; and he that wants piety towards God, has done as much to damn himself, as he that wants honesty towards men. Every argument therefore,

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that proves it necessary for all men, in all stations of life, to be truly honest, proves it equally necessary for all men, in all stations of life, to be truly holy and pious, and do all things in such a manner, as is suitable to the glory of God.

Again, another argument to prove, that all orders of men are obliged to be thus holy and devout in the common course of their lives, in the use of everything that they enjoy, may be taken from our obligation to *prayer*.

It is granted, that *prayer* is a duty that belongs to all states and conditions of men; now if we inquire into the reason of this, why no state of life is to be excused from prayer, we shall find it as good a reason, why every state of life is to be made a state of piety and holiness in all its parts.

For the reason why we are to pray unto God, and praise him with Hymns, and Psalms of Thanksgiving, is this, because we are to live wholly unto God, and glorify him all possible ways. It is not because the praises of *words*, or *forms* of thanksgiving, are more particularly parts of piety, or more the worship of God than other things; but it is, because they are possible ways of expressing our dependence, our obedience and devotion to God. Now if this be the reason of verbal praises and thanksgivings to God, because we are to live unto God all possible ways, then it plainly follows, that we are equally obliged to worship, and glorify God in all other actions, that can be turned into acts of piety and obedience to him. And as actions are of much more significancy than words, it must be a much more acceptable worship of God, to glorify him in all the actions of our common life, than with any little form of words at any particular times.

Thus, If God is to be worshipped with forms of thanksgivings, he that makes it a rule, to be content and thankful in every part and accident of his life, because it comes from God, praises God in a much higher manner, than he that has some set time for singing of Psalms. He that dares not say an ill-natured word, or do an unreasonable thing, because he considers God as everywhere present, performs a better devotion, than he that dares not miss the church. To live in the world as a stranger and a pilgrim, using all its enjoyments as if we used them not, making all our actions so many steps towards a better life, is offering a better sacrifice to God, than any forms of holy and heavenly prayers.

To be humble in all our actions, to avoid every appearance of pride and vanity, to be meek and lowly in our words, actions, dress, behaviour, and designs, in imitation of our blessed Saviour, is worshipping God in a higher manner, than they who have only *times* to fall low on their knees in devotions. He that contents

himself with *necessaries*, that he may give the *remainder* to those that want it; that dares not to spend any money foolishly, because he considers it as a talent from God, which must be used according to his will, praises God with something that is more glorious than songs of praise.

He that has appointed times for the use of wise and pious prayers, performs a proper instance of devotion; but he that allows himself no times, nor any places, nor any actions, but such as are strictly conformable to wisdom and holiness, worships the divine nature with the most true and substantial devotion. For who does not know, that it is better to be pure and holy, than to *talk* about purity and holiness? Nay, who does not know, that a man is to be reckoned no further pure, or holy, or just, than as he is pure, and holy, and just in the common course of his life? But if this be plain, then it is also plain, that it is better to be holy, than to have holy prayers.

Prayers therefore are so far from being a sufficient devotion, that they are the smallest parts of it. We are to praise God with words and prayers, because it is a possible way of glorifying God, who has given us such faculties, as may be so used. But then as words are but small things in themselves, as times of prayer are but little, if compared with the rest of our lives; so that devotion which consists in times and forms of prayer, is but a very small thing, if compared to that devotion which is to appear in every other part and circumstance of our lives.

Again; as it is an easy thing to worship God with forms of words, and to observe times of offering them unto him, so it is the smallest kind of piety.

And, on the other hand, as it is more difficult to worship God with our substance, to honour him with the right use of our time, to offer to him the continual sacrifice of self-denial and mortification; as it requires more piety to eat and drink only for such ends as may glorify God, to undertake no labour, nor allow of any diversion, but where we can act in the name of God; as it is most difficult to sacrifice all our corrupt tempers, correct all our passions, and make piety to God the rule and measure of all the actions of our common life: so the devotion of this kind is a much more acceptable service unto God, than those words of devotion which we offer to him either in the *Church*, or in our *closet*.

Every sober reader will easily perceive, that I do not intend to lessen the true and great value of Prayers, either public or private; but only to show him, that they are certainly but a very slender part of devotion, when compared to a devout life.

To see this in a yet clearer light, let us suppose a person to

have appointed times for praising God with Psalms and Hymns, and to be strict in the observation of them; let it be supposed also, that in his common life he is restless and uneasy, full of murmurings and complaints at everything, never pleased but by chance, as his temper happens to carry him, but murmuring and repining at the very seasons, and having something to dislike in everything that happens to him. Now can you conceive anything more absurd and unreasonable, than such a character as this? Is such a one to be reckoned *thankful* to God, because he has *forms of praise* which he offers to him? Nay, is it not certain, that such forms of praise must be so far from being an acceptable devotion to God, that they must be abhorred as an abomination? Now the absurdity which you see in this instance, is the same in any other part of our life; if our *common life* hath any contrariety to our prayers, it is the same abomination, as songs of thanksgiving in the mouths of murmurers.

Bended knees, whilst you are clothed with pride; heavenly petitions, whilst you are hoarding up treasures upon earth; holy devotions, whilst you live in the follies of the world; prayers of meekness and charity, whilst your heart is the seat of spite and resentment; hours of prayer, whilst you give up days and years to idle diversions, impertinent visits, and foolish pleasures; are as absurd, unacceptable service to God, as forms of thanksgiving from a person that lives in repinings and discontent.

So that unless the common course of our lives, be according to the common spirit of our prayers, our prayers are so far from being a real or sufficient degree of devotion, that they become an empty lip-labour, or, what is worse, a notorious hypocrisy.

Seeing therefore we are to make the *spirit and temper* of our prayers, the *common spirit and temper* of our lives, this may serve to convince us, that *all orders* of people are to labour and aspire after the *same utmost* perfection of the Christian life. For as all Christians are to use the same holy and heavenly devotions, as they are all with the same earnestness to pray for the Spirit of God; so is it a sufficient proof, that all orders of people are, to the utmost of their power, to make their life agreeable to that one spirit, for which they are all to pray.

As certain, therefore, as the same holiness of prayers requires the same holiness of life, so certain is it, that all Christians are called to the same holiness of life.

A *soldier*, or a *tradesman*, is not called to minister at the *altar*, or preach the Gospel; but every soldier or tradesman is as much obliged to be devout, humble, holy, and heavenly-minded in all the parts of his *common life*, as a *clergyman* is obliged to be zealous, faithful, and laborious in all parts of his profession.

And all this for this one plain reason, because all people are to pray for the same holiness, wisdom, and divine tempers, and to make themselves as fit as they can for the same heaven.

All men therefore, as men, have one and the same *important* business, to act up to the excellency of their rational nature, and to make *reason* and *order* the law of all their designs and actions. All Christians, as Christians, have one and the same calling, to live according to the excellency of the Christian spirit, and to make the sublime precepts of the Gospel, the rule and measure of all their tempers in common life. The one thing needful to one, is the one thing needful to all.

The *merchant* is no longer to hoard up treasures upon earth: the *soldier* is no longer to fight for glory; the great *scholar* is no longer to pride himself in the depths of science; but they must all with one spirit 'count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.'

The *fine lady* must teach her eyes to weep, and be clothed with humility. The *polite gentleman* must exchange the gay thoughts of wit and fancy, for a 'broken and a contrite heart.' The man of *quality* must so far renounce the dignity of his birth, as to think himself miserable till he is *born again*. *Servants* must consider their service as done unto God. *Masters* must consider their servants as their brethren in Christ, that are to be treated as their fellow members of the mystical body of Christ.

Young Ladies must either devote themselves to piety, prayer, self-denial, and all good works, in a *virgin-state* of life; or else marry to be holy, sober, and prudent in the care of a family, bringing up their children in piety, humility, and devotion, and abounding in all other good works, to the utmost of their state and capacity. They have no choice of anything else, but must devote themselves to God in one of these states. They may choose a married, or a single life; but it is not left to their choice, whether they will make either state, a state of holiness, humility, devotion, and all other duties of the Christian life. It is no more left in their power, because they have fortunes, or are born of rich parents, to divide themselves betwixt God and the world, or take such pleasures as their fortune will afford them, than it is allowable for them to be sometimes chaste and modest, and sometimes not.

They are not to consider, how much religion may secure them a *fair character*, or how they may add devotion to an *impertinent*, *vain*, and *giddy* life; but must look into the *spirit* and *temper* of their prayers, into the *nature* and *end* of Christianity, and then they will find, that whether married or unmarried, they have but one business upon their hands, to be wise, and pious, and holy, not

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in little modes and forms of worship, but in the whole turn of their minds, in the whole form of all their behaviour, and in the daily course of their common life.

Young Gentlemen must consider, what our blessed Saviour said to the young Gentleman in the Gospel; he bid 'him sell all 'that he had and give to the poor.' Now though this text should not oblige *all* people to sell *all*; yet it certainly obliges all kinds of people to *employ all* their estates, in such wise and reasonable and charitable ways, as may sufficiently show, that all that they have is devoted to God, and that no part of it is kept from the poor, to be spent in needless, vain, and foolish expenses.

If, therefore, *young Gentlemen* propose to themselves a life of pleasure and indulgence, if they spend their estates in high living, in luxury and intemperance, in state and equipage, in pleasures and diversions, in sports and gaming, and such like wanton gratifications of their foolish passions, they have as much reason to look upon themselves to be *Angels*, as to be disciples of Christ.

Let them be assured, that it is the one only business of a *Christian Gentleman*, to distinguish himself by good works, to be eminent in the most sublime virtues of the Gospel, to bear with the ignorance and weakness of the vulgar, to be a friend and patron to all that dwell about him, to live in the utmost heights of wisdom and holiness, and show through the whole course of his life a true religious greatness of mind. They must aspire after such a gentility, as they might have learnt from seeing the blessed Jesus, and show no other spirit of a gentleman, but such as they might have got by living with the holy Apostles. They must learn to love God with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their strength, and their neighbour as themselves; and then they have all the greatness and distinction that they can have here, and are fit for an eternal happiness in heaven hereafter.

Thus in all orders and conditions, either of men or women, this is the one common holiness, which is to be the *common life* of all Christians.

The *Merchant* is not to leave devotion to the Clergyman, nor the *Clergyman* to leave humility to the *labourer*; women of *fortune* are not to leave it to the poor of their sex, to be *discreet, chaste, keepers at home, to adorn themselves in modest apparel, shamefacedness, and sobriety*; nor *poor women* leave it to the rich to attend at the worship and service of God. *Great men* must be eminent for true *poverty of spirit*, and people of a *low and afflicted* state must greatly rejoice in God.

The man of *strength* and *power* is to forgive and pray for his

enemies, and the *innocent sufferer* who is chained in prison, must, with *Paul* and *Silas*, at midnight sing praises to God. For God is to be glorified, holiness is to be practised, and the spirit of Religion is to be the common spirit of every Christian, in every state and condition of life.

For the Son of God did not come from above, to add an external form of worship to the several ways of life that are in the world ; and so to leave people to live as they did before, in such tempers and enjoyments as the fashion and spirit of the world approves. But as he came down from heaven, altogether divine and heavenly in his own nature, so it was to call mankind to a divine and heavenly life ; to the highest change of their whole nature and temper ; to be born again of the Holy Spirit ; to walk in the wisdom and light and love of God ; and be like him to the utmost of their power ; to renounce all the most plausible ways of the world, whether of greatness, business, or pleasure ; to a mortification of all their most agreeable passions ; and to live in such wisdom, and purity, and holiness, as might fit them to be glorious in the enjoyment of God to all eternity.

Whatever therefore is *foolish, ridiculous, vain, or earthly, or sensual* in the life of a Christian, is something that ought not to be there ; it is a *spot* and a *defilement* that must be *washed* away with tears of repentance. But if anything of this kind runs through the *course* of our whole life, if we allow ourselves in things that are either vain, foolish, or sensual, we renounce our profession.

For as sure as Jesus Christ was wisdom and holiness, as sure as he came to make us like himself, and to be baptized into his spirit, so sure it is, that none can be said to keep to their Christian profession, but they who to the utmost of their power, live a wise and holy and heavenly life. This and this alone is Christianity, an universal holiness in every part of life, a heavenly wisdom in all our actions, not conforming to the spirit and temper of the world, but turning all worldly enjoyments into means of piety and devotion to God.

But now, if this devout state of heart, if these habits of inward holiness be true Religion, then true Religion is equally the duty and happiness of all orders of men ; for there is nothing to recommend it to one, that is not the same recommendation of it to all states of people.

If it be the happiness and glory of a *Bishop* to live in this devout spirit, full of these holy tempers, doing everything as unto God, it is as much the glory and happiness of all men and women, whether young or old, to live in the same spirit. And whoever can find any reasons, why an *ancient Bishop* should be

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intent upon divine things, turning all his life into the highest exercises of piety, wisdom, and devotion, will find them so many reasons, why he should to the utmost of his power, do the same himself.

If you say that a *Bishop* must be an eminent example of Christian holiness, because of his high and sacred calling, you say right. But if you say, that it is more to his advantage to be exemplary, than it is yours, you greatly mistake. For there is nothing to make the highest degrees of holiness desirable to a Bishop, but what makes them equally desirable to every *young person* of every family.

For an exalted piety, high devotion, and the religious use of everything, is as much the glory and happiness of one state of life, as it is of another.

Do but fancy in your mind, what a spirit of piety you would have in the *best Bishop* in the world, how you would have him *love* God, how you would have him *imitate* the life of our Saviour and his Apostles, how you would have him live *above* the world, *shining* in all the instances of a *heavenly life*, and then you have found out that spirit, which you ought to make the spirit of your own life.

I desire every reader to dwell a while upon this reflection, and perhaps he will find more conviction from it, than he imagines. Everyone can tell how good and pious he would have some people to be; everyone knows, how wise and reasonable a thing it is in a *Bishop*, to be entirely above the world, and be an eminent example of Christian perfection: As soon as you think of a *wise and ancient Bishop*, you fancy some exalted degree of piety, a living example of all those holy tempers, which you find described in the Gospel.

Now if you ask yourself, what is the happiest thing for a *young Clergyman* to do? You must be forced to answer, that nothing can be so happy and glorious for him, as to be like that excellent holy Bishop.

If you go on and ask, what is the happiest thing, for any *young Gentleman* or his *sisters* to do? The answer must be the same; that nothing can be so happy or glorious for them, as to live in such habits of piety, in such exercises of a Divine life, as this good old Bishop does. For everything that is great and glorious in Religion, is as much the true glory of every man or woman, as it is the glory of any Bishop. If high degrees of Divine love, if fervent charity, if spotless purity, if heavenly affection, if constant mortification, if frequent devotion be the best and happiest way of life for any Christian; it is so for every Christian.

Consider again; if you were to see a Bishop in the whole course of his life, living below his character, conforming to all the foolish tempers of the world, and governed by the same cares and fears which govern vain and worldly men, what would you think of him. Would you think that he was only guilty of a *small mistake*? No. You would condemn him, as erring in that which is not only the *most*, but the *only important* matter that relates to him. Stay a while in this consideration, till your mind is fully convinced, how miserable a mistake it is in a Bishop, to live a careless worldly life.

Whilst you are thinking in this manner, turn your thoughts towards some of your acquaintance, your brother, or sister, or any young person. Now if you see the common course of their lives to be not according to the doctrines of the Gospel, if you see that their way of life, cannot be said to be a sincere endeavour to enter in at the strait gate, you see something that you are to condemn, in the same degree, and for the same reasons. They do not commit a *small mistake*, but are wrong in that which is *their all*, and mistake their true happiness, as much as that *Bishop* does, who neglects the high duties of his calling. Apply this reasoning to yourself; if you find yourself living an idle, indulgent, vain life, choosing rather to gratify your passions, than to live up to the doctrines of Christianity, and practise the plain precepts of our blessed Lord, you have all that blindness and unreasonableness to charge upon yourself, that you can charge upon any irregular Bishop.

For all the virtues of the Christian life, its perfect purity, its heavenly tempers, are as much the sole rule of your life, as the sole rule of the life of a Bishop. If you neglect these holy tempers, if you do not eagerly aspire after them, if you do not show yourself a visible example of them, you are as much fallen from your true happiness, you are as great an *enemy* to yourself, and have made as *bad a choice*, as that Bishop, that chooses rather to enrich his family, than to be like an *Apostle*. For there is no reason, why you should not think the highest holiness, the most heavenly tempers, to be the duty and happiness of a *Bishop*; but what is as good a reason, why you should think the same tempers, to be the duty and happiness of all Christians. And as the wisest *Bishop* in the world, is he, who lives in the greatest heights of holiness, who is most exemplary in all the exercises of a Divine life, so the *wisest youth*, the wisest *woman*, whether married, or unmarried, is she, that lives in the highest degrees of Christian holiness, and all the exercises of a Divine and heavenly life.

Chapter XI.

Showing how great devotion, fills our lives with the greatest peace and happiness that can be enjoyed in this world.

SOME people will perhaps object, that all these rules of holy living unto God in all that we do, are too great a *restraint* upon human life; that it will be made too *anxious* a state, by thus introducing a regard to God in all our actions. And that by depriving ourselves of so many seemingly innocent pleasures, we shall render our lives *dull, uneasy, and melancholy*. To which it may be answered :

First, That these rules are prescribed for, and will certainly procure a quite contrary end. That instead of making our lives dull and melancholy, they will render them full of content and strong satisfactions. That by these rules, we only change the childish satisfactions of our *vain* and *sickly* passions, for the solid enjoyments, and real happiness of a *sound mind*.

Secondly, That as there is no foundation for comfort in the enjoyments of this life, but in the assurance that a wise and good God governeth the world, so the more we find out God in everything, the more we apply to him in every place, the more we look up to him in all our actions, the more we conform to his will, the more we act according to his wisdom, and imitate his goodness, by so much the more do we enjoy God, partake of the divine nature, and heighten and increase all that is *happy* and *comfortable* in human life.

Thirdly, He that is endeavouring to subdue, and root out of his mind all those passions of *pride, envy, and ambition*, which religion opposes, is doing more to make himself happy, even in this life, than he that is contriving means to indulge them.

For these passions are the causes of all the disquiets and vexations of human life: they are the *dropsies* and *fevers* of our minds, vexing them with false appetites, and restless cravings after such things as we do not want, and spoiling our taste for those things which are our proper good.

Do but imagine that you somewhere or other saw a man, that proposed *reason* as the rule of all his actions, that had no desires

but after such things as *nature* wants, and *religion* approves, that was as pure from all the motions of *pride*, *envy*, and *covetousness*, as from thoughts of *murder*; that in this freedom from worldly passions, he had a soul full of Divine love, wishing and praying that all men may have what they want of worldly things, and be partakers of eternal glory in the life to come.

Do but fancy a man living in this manner, and your own conscience will immediately tell you, that he is the happiest man in the world, and that it is not in the power of the richest fancy, to invent any higher happiness in the present state of life.

And on the other hand, if you suppose him to be in any degree *less perfect*; if you suppose him but subject to one foolish fondness, or vain passion, your own conscience will again tell you, that he so far lessens his own happiness, and robs himself of the true enjoyment of his other virtues. So true is it, that the *more* we live by the rules of religion, the more peaceful and happy do we render our lives.

Again, as it thus appears, that real happiness is only to be had from the *greatest degrees* of piety, the *greatest denials* of our passions, and the *strictest rules* of religion, so the same truth will appear from a consideration of *human misery*. If we look into the world, and view the disquiets and troubles of human life, we shall find that they are all owing to our violent and irreligious passions.

Now all trouble and uneasiness is founded in the *want* of something or other; would we therefore know the true cause of our troubles and disquiets, we must find out the cause of our wants; because that which creates, and increaseth our wants, does in the same degree create, and increase our trouble and disquiets.

God Almighty has sent us into the world with very few wants; *meat*, and *drink*, and *clothing*, are the only things necessary in life; and as these are only our present needs, so the present world is well furnished to supply these needs.

If a man had half the world in his power, he can make no more of it than this; as he wants it only to support an *animal* life, so is it unable to do anything else for him, or to afford him any other happiness.

This is the state of man, born with few wants, and into a large world, very capable of supplying them. So that one would reasonably suppose, that men should pass their lives in content and thankfulness to God, at least, that they should be free from violent disquiets and vexations, as being placed in a world, that has more than enough to relieve all their wants.

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But if to all this we add, that this short life, thus furnished with all that we want in it, is only a short passage to eternal glory, where we shall be clothed with the brightness of *angels*, and enter into the joys of God, we might still more reasonably expect, that human life should be a state of peace, and joy, and delight in God. Thus it would certainly be, if reason had its full power over us.

But, alas! though God, and Nature, and Reason, make human life thus free from wants, and so full of happiness, yet our passions, in rebellion against God, against *nature* and *reason*, create a new world of evils, and fill human life with imaginary wants, and vain disquiets.

The man of *pride* has a thousand wants, which only his own pride has *created*; and these render him as full of trouble, as if God had created him with a *thousand appetites*, without creating anything that was proper to satisfy them. *Envy* and *Ambition* have also their endless wants, which disquiet the souls of men, and by their contradictory motions, render them as foolishly miserable, as those that want to *fly* and *creep* at the same time.

Let but any complaining, disquieted man, tell you the ground of his uneasiness, and you will plainly see, that he is the author of his own torment; that he is vexing himself at some imaginary evil, which will cease to torment him, as soon as he is content to be that which God, and nature, and reason, require him to be.

If you should see a man passing his days in disquiet, because he could not *walk* upon the *water*, or *catch birds* as they fly by him, you would readily confess, that such a one might thank himself for such uneasiness. But now if you look into all the most tormenting disquiets of life, you will find them all thus absurd; where people are only tormented by their own folly, and vexing themselves at such things, as no more concern them, nor are any more their proper good, than *walking* upon the *water*, or *catching birds*.

What can you conceive more silly and extravagant, than to suppose a man racking his brains, and studying night and day how to *fly*? *wandering* from his own house and home, wearying himself with *climbing* upon every ascent, *cringing* and *courting* everybody he meets, to lift him from the ground, bruising himself with *continual falls*, and at last breaking his neck? And all this, from an imagination, that it would be *glorious* to have the eyes of people gazing up at him, and mighty happy to *eat*, and *drink*, and *sleep*, at the top of the highest trees in the kingdom. Would you not readily own, that such a one was only disquieted by his *own folly*?

If you ask, what it signifies to suppose such silly creatures as these, as are nowhere to be found in human life ?

It may be answered, that wherever you see an *ambitious* man, there you see this *vain and senseless flyer*.

Again, if you should see a man that had a large *pond of water*, yet living in *continual thirst*, not suffering himself to drink *half a draught*, for fear of lessening his pond ; if you should see him wasting his time and strength, in *fetching more water* to his pond, always *thirsty*, yet always carrying a *bucket of water* in his hand, watching early and late to catch the *drops of rain*, gaping after every cloud, and running greedily into every *mire and mud*, in hopes of water, and always studying how to make every *ditch empty* itself into his *pond*. If you should see him grow *grey and old* in these anxious labours, and at last end a *careful, thirsty* life, by falling into his own *pond*, would you not say, that such a one was not only the author of all his own disquiets, but was foolish enough to be reckoned amongst *idiots and madmen* ? But yet foolish and absurd as this character is, it does not represent half the follies, and absurd disquiets of the *covetous man*.

I could now easily proceed, to show the same effects of all our other passions, and make it plainly appear, that all our miseries, vexations, and complaints, are entirely of our own making, and that in the same absurd manner, as in these instances of the *covetous* and *ambitious* man. Look where you will, you will see all *worldly vexations*, but like the vexation of him, who was always in *mire and mud* in search of water to drink, when he had more at home, than was sufficient for an *hundred horses*.

Celia is always telling you, how *provoked* she is, what *intolerable shocking* things happen to her, what *monstrous* usage she suffers, and what *vexations* she meets with everywhere. She tells you that her patience is quite worn out, and there is no bearing the behaviour of people. Every *assembly* that she is at, sends her home provoked ; something or other has been said, or done, that no *reasonable, well-bred* person ought to bear. *Poor people* who want her charity, are sent away with hasty answers, not because she has not a heart to part with any money, but because she is *too full* of some trouble of her own, to attend to the complaints of others. *Celia* has no business upon her hands, but to receive the income of a plentiful fortune ; but yet by the doleful turn of her mind, you would be apt to think, that she had neither *food nor lodging*. If you see her look more pale than ordinary, if her lips tremble when she speaks to you, it is because she is just come from a *visit*, where *Lupus* took no notice at all of her, but talked all the time to *Lucinda*,

who has not half her fortune. When cross accidents have so disordered her spirits, that she is forced to send for the *Doctor*, to make her able to eat ; she tells him, in great anger at Providence, that she never was well since she was born, and that she envies every beggar that she sees in health.

This is the disquiet life of *Calia*, who has nothing to torment her but her own *spirit*.

If you could inspire her with *Christian humility*, you need do no more to make her as happy, as any person in the world. This virtue would make her thankful to God, for half so much health as she has had, and help her to enjoy more for the time to come. This virtue would keep off *tremblings* of the spirits, and *loss* of appetite, and her blood would need nothing else to sweeten it.

I have just touched upon these absurd characters, for no other end, but to convince you in the plainest manner, that the *strictest rules* of religion, are so far from rendering a life *dull, anxious*, and *uncomfortable*, (as is above objected) that, on the contrary, all the miseries, vexations, and complaints that are in the world, are all owing to the *want* of religion ; being directly caused by those absurd passions, which religion teaches us to deny.

For all the *wants* which disturb human life, which make us uneasy to ourselves, quarrelsome with others, and unthankful to God ; which weary us in vain labours and foolish anxieties ; which carry us from project to project, from place to place, in a poor pursuit of we know not what, are the wants which neither God, nor nature, nor reason, hath subjected us to, but are solely infused into us by pride, envy, ambition, and covetousness.

So far therefore, as you reduce your desires to such things as *nature* and *reason* require ; so far as you regulate all the motions of your heart by the *strict rules* of religion, so far you remove yourself from that infinity of *wants* and vexations, which torment every heart that is left to itself.

Most people indeed confess, that religion preserves us from a great many evils, and helps us in many respects to a more happy enjoyment of ourselves ; but then they imagine, that this is only true of such a *moderate share* of religion, as only gently restrains us from the excesses of our passions. They suppose, that the *strict rules* and restraints of an *exalted* piety, are such *contradictions* to our nature, as must needs make our lives *dull* and *uncomfortable*.

Although the weakness of this objection, sufficiently appears from what hath been already said, yet I shall add one more word to it.

This objection supposes, that religion *moderately* practised,

adds *much* to the happiness of life; but that such heights of piety as the perfection of religion requireth, have a contrary effect.

It supposes therefore, that it is happy to be kept from the *excesses* of envy, but unhappy to be kept from *other* degrees of *envy*. That it is happy to be delivered from a *boundless* ambition, but unhappy to be without a more *moderate* ambition. It supposes also, that the happiness of life consists in a *mixture* of virtue and vice, a mixture of ambition and humility, charity and envy, heavenly affection and covetousness. All which is as absurd, as to suppose that it is happy to be free from excessive pains, but unhappy to be without more moderate pains; or that the happiness of *health* consisted, in being partly sick, and partly well.

For if humility be the peace and rest of the soul, then no one has so much happiness from humility, as he who is the most humble. If excessive envy is a torment of the soul, he most perfectly delivers himself from torment, who most perfectly extinguishes every spark of envy. If there is any peace and joy, in doing any action according to the will of God, he who brings the most of his actions to this rule, does most of all increase the peace and joy of his life.

And thus it is in every virtue; if you act up to every degree of it, the more happiness you have from it. And so of every vice; if you only abate its excesses, you do but little for yourself; but if you reject it in all degrees, then you feel the true ease and joy of a *reformed* mind.

As for example: If religion only restrains the *excesses* of revenge, but lets the spirit still live within you, in lesser instances, your religion may have made your life a little more outwardly decent, but not made you at all happier, or easier in yourself. But if you have once sacrificed all thoughts of revenge, in obedience to God, and are resolved to return good for evil at all times, that you may render yourself more like to God, and fitter for his mercy in the kingdom of love and glory; this is a height of virtue, that will make you feel its happiness.

Secondly, As to those satisfactions and enjoyments, which an exalted piety requireth us to deny ourselves, this deprives us of no real comfort of life.

For, *1st*, Piety requires us to renounce no ways of life, where we can act *reasonably*, and offer what we do to the glory of God. All ways of life, all satisfactions and enjoyments, that are within these bounds, are no way denied us by the strictest rules of piety. Whatever you can do, or enjoy, as in the presence of

God, as his servant, as his rational creature, that has received reason and knowledge from him ; all that you can perform conformably to a rational nature, and the will of God, all this is allowed by the laws of piety. And will you think that your life will be uncomfortable, unless you may displease God, be a fool, and mad, and act contrary to that reason and wisdom which he has implanted in you ?

And as for those satisfactions, which we dare not offer to a holy God, which are only invented by the folly and corruption of the world, which inflame our passions, and sink our souls into grossness and sensuality, and render us incapable of the divine favour, either here or hereafter ; surely it can be no uncomfortable state of life, to be rescued by religion from such self-murder, and to be rendered capable of eternal happiness.

Let us suppose a *person*, destitute of that knowledge which we have from our senses, placed somewhere alone by himself, in the midst of a variety of things which he did not know how to use ; that he has by him *bread, wine, water, golden dust, iron, chains, gravel, garments, fire, &c.* Let it be supposed, that he has no knowledge of the *right use* of these things, nor any direction from his *senses* how to quench his *thirst*, or satisfy his *hunger*, or make *any use* of the things about him. Let it be supposed, that in his drought he puts *golden dust* into his eyes ; when his *eyes* smart, he puts *wine* into his *ears* ; that in his hunger, he puts *gravel* in his mouth ; that in pain, he loads himself with the *iron chains* ; that feeling cold, he puts his feet in the water ; that being frightened at the fire, he runs away from it ; that being weary, he makes a *seat* of his *bread*. Let it be supposed, that through his ignorance of the right use of the things that are about him, he will vainly torment himself whilst he lives ; and at last die, *blinded with dust, choked with gravel, and loaded with irons.* Let it be supposed, that some good Being came to him, and showed him the nature and use of all the things that were about him, and gave him such *strict rules* of using them, as would certainly, if observed, make him the happier for all that he had, and deliver him from the pains of hunger, and thirst, and cold.

Now could you with any reason affirm, that those strict rules of using those things that were about him, had rendered that poor man's life *dull and uncomfortable* ?

Now this is in some measure, a representation of the *strict rules* of religion ; they only relieve our ignorance, save us from tormenting ourselves, and teach us to use *everything* about us to our proper advantage.

Man is placed in a world full of variety of things ; his ignorance makes him use many of them as absurdly, as the man

who puts *dust* in his *eyes* to relieve his *thirst*, or put on *chains* to remove pain.

Religion therefore here comes into his relief, and gives him *strict rules* of using everything that is about him ; that by so using them suitably to his own nature, and the nature of the things, he may have always the pleasure of receiving a right benefit from them. It shows him what is strictly right in meat, and drink, and clothes ; and that he has nothing else to expect from the things of this world, but to satisfy such wants of his own ; and then to extend his assistance to all his brethren, that as far as he is able, he may help all his fellow-creatures, to the same benefit from the world that he hath.

It tells him, that this world is incapable of giving him any other happiness, and that all endeavours to be happy in *heaps of money*, or *acres* of land, in *fine clothes*, *rich beds*, *stately equipage*, and *show* and *splendour*, are only vain endeavours, ignorant attempts after impossibilities ; these things being no more able to give the least degree of happiness, than *dust* in the eyes can cure thirst, or *gravel* in the mouth satisfy hunger ; but like dust and gravel misapplied, will only serve to render him more unhappy by such an ignorant misuse of them.

It tells him, that although this world can do no more for him, than satisfy these wants of the body, yet that there is a much greater good prepared for man, than eating, drinking, and dressing ; that it is yet invisible to his eyes, being too glorious for the apprehension of flesh and blood ; but reserved for him to enter upon, as soon as this short life is over ; where, in a new body, formed to an angelic likeness, he shall dwell in the light and glory of God to all eternity.

It tells him, that this state of glory will be given to all those, who make a *right use* of the things of this present world ; who do not blind themselves with *golden dust*, or eat *gravel*, or groan under loads of *iron* of their own putting on ; but use *bread*, *water*, *wine*, and *garments*, for such ends as are according to *nature* and *reason* ; and who with faith and thankfulness, worship the kind giver of all that they enjoy here, and hope for here-after.

Now can anyone say, that the strictest rules of such a religion as this, debar us of any of the comforts of life ? Might it not as justly be said of those rules, which only hindered a man from *choking* himself with *gravel* ? For the strictness of these rules, only consists in the exactness of their rectitude.

Who would complain of the severe strictness of a law, that without any exception forbade the putting of dust into our eyes ? Who could think it too rigid, that there were no abate-

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ments? Now this is the *strictness* of religion, it requires nothing of us strictly, or without abatements, but where every degree of the thing is wrong, where every indulgence does us some hurt.

If religion forbids all instances of *revenge* without any exception, it is because all revenge is of the nature of *poison*; and though we do not take so much as to put an end to life, yet if we take any at all, it corrupts the whole mass of blood, and makes it difficult to be restored to our former health.

If religion commands an *universal charity*, to love our neighbour as ourselves, to forgive and pray for all our enemies without any *reserve*; it is because all degrees of love are degrees of happiness, that strengthen and support the divine life of the soul and are as necessary to its health and happiness, as proper food is necessary to the health and happiness of the body.

If religion has laws against *laying up treasures upon earth*, and commands us to be content with food and raiment; it is because every other use of the world, is abusing it to our own vexation, and turning all its conveniences into snares and traps to destroy us. It is because this *plainness* and *simplicity* of life, secures us from the cares and pains of restless pride and envy, and makes it easier to keep that straight road, that will carry us to eternal life.

If religion saith, 'Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor,' it is because there is no other natural or reasonable use of our riches, no other way of making ourselves happier for them; it is because it is as *strictly* right to give others that which we do not want ourselves, as it is right to use so much as our own wants require. For if a man has more food than his own nature requires, how base and unreasonable is it, to invent *foolish ways* of wasting it, and make sport for his own *full belly*, rather than let his fellow-creatures have the same comfort from food, which he hath had? It is so far therefore from being a hard law of religion, to make this use of our riches, that a reasonable man would rejoice in that religion, which teaches him to be happier in that which he gives away, than in that which he keeps for himself; which teaches him to make spare food and raiment be greater blessings to him, than that which feeds and clothes his own body.

If religion requires us sometimes to *fast*, and *deny* our natural appetites, it is to lessen that struggle and war that is in our nature, it is to render our bodies fitter instruments of purity, and more obedient to the good motions of divine grace; it is to dry up the springs of our passions that war against the soul, to cool the flame of our blood, and render the mind more capable of divine meditations. So that although these abstinences give

some pain to the body, yet they so lessen the power of bodily appetites and passions, and so increase our taste of spiritual joys, that even these severities of religion, when practised with discretion, add much to the comfortable enjoyment of our lives.

If religion calleth us to a life of *watching* and *prayer*, it is because we live amongst a crowd of enemies, and are always in need of the assistance of God. If we are to confess and bewail our sins, it is because such confessions relieve the mind, and restore it to ease; as *burdens* and *weights* taken off the shoulders, relieve the body, and make it easier to itself. If we are to be frequent and fervent in holy petitions, it is to keep us steady in the sight of our true good, and that we may never want the happiness of a lively faith, a joyful hope, and well grounded trust in God. If we are to pray often, it is that we may be often happy in such secret joys as only prayer can give; in such communications of the divine presence, as will fill our minds with all the happiness, that beings not in heaven are capable of.

Was there anything in the world more worth our care, was there any exercise of the mind, or any conversation with men, that turned more to our advantage than this intercourse with God, we should not be called to such a continuance in prayer. But if a man considers what it is that he leaves when he retires to devotion, he will find it no small happiness, to be so often relieved from doing *nothing*, or nothing to the purpose; from dull idleness, unprofitable labour, or vain conversation. If he considers, that all that is in the world, and all that is doing in it, is only for the body, and bodily enjoyments, he will have reason to rejoice at those *hours* of prayer, which carry him to higher consolations, which raise him above these poor concerns, which open to his mind a scene of greater things, and accustom his soul to the hope and expectation of them.

If religion commands us to live *wholly* unto God, and to *do all* to his glory, it is because every other way, is living *wholly* against ourselves, and will end in our own shame and confusion of face.

As everything is *dark*, that God does not enlighten; as everything is *senseless*, that has not its share of knowledge from him; as nothing *lives*, but by partaking of life from him; as nothing *exists*, but because he commands it to be; so there is no *glory*, or *greatness*, but what is the glory or greatness of God.

We indeed may talk of *human glory*, as we may talk of *human life*, or *human knowledge*; but as we are sure that human life implies nothing of our *own*, but a dependent living in God, or enjoying so much life in God; so human glory, whenever we find it, must be only so much glory as we enjoy in the glory of God.

This is the state of all creatures, whether men, or angels; as

they make not themselves, so they enjoy nothing from themselves; if they are great, it must be only as great receivers of the gifts of God; their *power* can only be so much of the divine power acting in them; their *wisdom* can be only so much of the divine Wisdom shining within them; and their *light* and *glory*, only so much of the light and glory of God shining upon them.

As they are not *men* or *Angels*, because they had a mind to be so themselves, but because the will of God formed them to be what they are; so they cannot enjoy this or that happiness of men or angels, because they have a mind to it, but because it is the will of God, that such things be the happiness of men, and such things the happiness of angels. But now if God be thus all in all; if his will is thus the measure of all things, and all natures; if nothing can be done, but by his power; if nothing can be seen but by a light from him; if we have nothing to fear, but from his justice; if we have nothing to hope for, but from his goodness; if this is the nature of man, thus helpless in himself; if this is the state of all creatures, as well those in *heaven*, as those on *earth*; if they are nothing, can do nothing, can suffer no pain, nor feel any happiness, but so far, and in such degrees, as the power of God does all this; if this be the state of things, then how can we have the least glimpse of joy or comfort, how can we have any peaceful enjoyment of ourselves, but by living wholly unto that God, using and doing everything conformably to his will? A life thus devoted unto God, looking wholly unto him in all our actions, and doing all things suitably to his glory, is so far from being dull, and uncomfortable, that it creates new comforts in everything that we do.

On the contrary, would you see how *happy* they are who live according to their own wills, who cannot submit to the *dull* and *melancholy* business of a life devoted unto God; look at the man in the *parable*, to whom his Lord had given one talent.

He could not bear the thoughts of using his talent, according to the will of him from whom he had it, and therefore he chose to make himself happier in a way of his own. 'Lord,' says he, 'I knew thee, that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hadst not sown, and gathering where thou hadst not strawed. And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent, in the earth. Lo there thou hast that is thine.'

His Lord having convicted him out of his own mouth, despatches him with this sentence, 'Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

* Matt. xxv. 24.

Here you see how happy this man made himself, by not acting *wholly* according to his Lord's will. It was, according to his own account, a happiness of *murmuring* and *discontent*; I knew thee, says he, that thou wast an *hard man*: It was an happiness of *fears* and *apprehensions*; I was, says he, *afraid*: It was an happiness of *vain labours* and *fruitless travails*: I *went*, says he, and *hid thy talent*: and after having been a while the sport of foolish passions, tormenting fears, and fruitless labours, he is rewarded with darkness, eternal weeping, and gnashing of teeth.

Now this is the happiness of all those, who look upon a *strict* and exalted piety, that is, a right use of their talent, to be a dull and melancholy state of life.

They may live awhile free from the restraints and directions of Religion, but instead thereof, they must be under the absurd government of their passions: They must, like the man in the *parable*, live in *murmurings*, and *discontents*, in *fears*, and *apprehensions*. They may avoid the labour of doing good, of spending their time devoutly, of laying up treasures in heaven, of clothing the naked, of visiting the sick; but then they must, like this man, have *labours*, and *pains* in vain, that tend to no use or advantage, that do no good either to themselves, or others; they must *travel*, and *labour*, and *work*, and *dig*, to hide their talent in the earth. They must like him, at their Lord's coming, be convicted out of their own mouths, be accused by their own hearts, and have everything that they have said and thought of Religion, be made to show the justice of their condemnation to eternal darkness, weeping, and gnashing of teeth.

This is the purchase that they make, who avoid the strictness and perfection of Religion, in order to live happily.

On the other hand, would you see a short description of the happiness of a life rightly employed, wholly devoted to God, you must look at the man in the *parable*, to whom his Lord had given five talents. 'Lord,' says he, 'thou deliveredst unto me five talents; behold I have gained besides them five talents more. His Lord said unto him, well done thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

Here you see a life that is wholly intent upon the improvement of the talents, that is devoted wholly unto God, is a state of happiness, prosperous labours, and glorious success. Here are not, as in the former case, any *uneasy passions*, *murmurings*, *vain fears*, and *fruitless labours*. The man is not toiling, and digging in the earth for no end nor advantage; but his pious labours prosper in his hands, his happiness increases upon him;

the blessing of five becomes the blessing of ten talents ; and he is received with a 'well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

Now as the case of these men in the *parable*, left nothing else to their choice, but either to be happy in using their gifts to the *glory* of the Lord, or miserable by using them according to their *own humours* and *fancies* ; so the state of Christianity leaves us no other choice.

All that we have, all that we are, all that we enjoy, are only so many talents from God : if we use them to the ends of a pious and holy life, our five talents will become ten, and our labours will carry us into the joy of our Lord ; but if we abuse them to the gratification of our own passions, sacrificing the gifts of God to our own pride and vanity, we shall live here in vain labours and foolish anxieties, shunning Religion as a melancholy thing, accusing our Lord as a hard master, and then fall into everlasting misery.

We may for a while amuse ourselves with *names*, and *sounds*, and *shadows* of happiness ; we may talk of this or that greatness and dignity ; but if we desire real happiness, we have no other possible way to it, but by improving our talents, by so holily and piously using the *powers* and *faculties* of *men* in this present state, that we may be happy and glorious in the *powers* and *faculties* of *angels* in the world to come.

How ignorant therefore are they, of the nature of Religion, of the nature of man, and the nature of God, who think a life of *strict piety* and devotion to God, to be a *dull uncomfortable* state ; when it is so plain and certain, that there is neither comfort or joy to be found in anything else ?

Chapter XII.

The happiness of a life wholly devoted unto God, further proved, from the vanity, the sensuality, and the ridiculous, poor enjoyments, which they are forced to take up with, who live according to their own humours. This represented in various characters.

WE may still see more of the happiness of a life devoted unto God, by considering the poor contrivances for happiness, and the contemptible ways of life, which they are thrown into, who are not under the directions of a strict piety, but seeking after happiness by other methods.

If one looks at their lives, who live by no rule but their own humours and fancies; if one sees but what it is, which they call *joy*, and *greatness*, and *happiness*; if one sees how they rejoice, and repent, change and fly from one delusion to another; one shall find great reason to rejoice, that God hath appointed a *strait and narrow way*, that leadeth unto life, and that we are not left to the folly of our own minds, or forced to take up with such shadows of joys and happiness, as the weakness and folly of the world has invented. I say *invented*, because those things which make up the *joy and happiness* of the world are mere *inventions*, which have no foundation in nature and reason, are no way the proper good or happiness of man, no way perfect either in his body, or his mind, or carry him to his true *end*.

As for instance, when a man proposes to be happy in ways of *ambition*, by raising himself to some *imaginary heights* above other people; this is truly an *invention* of happiness, which has no foundation in nature, but is as mere a cheat, of our own making, as if a man should intend to make himself happy by *climbing up a ladder*.

If a *woman* seeks for happiness from *fine colours* or *spots* upon her face, from *jewels* and *rich clothes*, this is as merely an *invention* of happiness, as contrary to *nature* and *reason*, as if she should propose to make herself happy, by painting a *post*, and

putting the same finery upon it. It is in this respect that I call these joys and happiness of the world, mere *inventions* of happiness, because neither God, nor nature, nor reason, hath appointed them as such; but whatever appears joyful, or great, or happy in them, is entirely *created* or invented by the blindness and vanity of our own minds.

And it is on these inventions of happiness, that I desire you to cast your eye, that you may thence learn, how *great a good* Religion is, which delivers you from such a multitude of follies, and vain pursuits, as are the torment and vexation of minds, that wander from their true happiness in God.

Look at *Flatus*, and learn how miserable they are, who are left to the folly of their own passions.

Flatus is rich and in health, yet always uneasy, and always searching after happiness. Every time you visit him, you find some new project in his head, he is eager upon it as something that is more worth his while, and will do more for him than anything that is already past. Every new thing so seizes him, that if you were to take him from it, he would think himself quite undone. His sanguine temper, and strong passions, promise him so much happiness in everything, that he is always cheated, and is satisfied with nothing.

At his first setting out in life, *fine clothes* were his delight, his inquiry was only after the best *Tailors* and *Peruke-makers*, and he had no thoughts of excelling in anything but *dress*. He spared no expense, but carried every nicety to its greatest height. But this happiness not answering his expectations, he left off his *Brocades*, put on a plain coat, railed at *fops* and *beaux*, and gave himself up to *gaming* with great eagerness.

This new pleasure satisfied him for some time, he envied no other way of life. But being by the fate of *play* drawn into a *duel*, where he narrowly escaped his death, he left off the *dice*, and sought for happiness no longer amongst the *gamesters*.

The next thing that seized his wandering imagination, was the diversions of the *town*: and for more than a twelvemonth, you heard him talk of nothing but *Ladies*, *Drawing-rooms*, *Birth-nights*, *Plays*, *Balls*, and *Assemblies*. But growing sick of these, he had recourse to hard *drinking*. Here he had many a merry night, and met with stronger joys than any he had felt before. Here he had thoughts of setting up his staff, and looking out no further; but unluckily falling into a *fever*, he grew angry at all strong liquors, and took his leave of the happiness of being drunk.

The next attempt after happiness carried him into the *field*, for two or three years, nothing was so happy as *hunting*; he entered upon it with all his soul, and leaped more *hedges* and

ditches than had ever been known in so short a time. You never saw him but in a *green coat*; he was the envy of all that blow the *horn*, and always spoke to his dogs in great propriety of language. If you met him at home on a bad day, you would hear him blow his horn, and be entertained with the surprising accidents of the last *noble chase*. No sooner had *Flatus* outdone all the world in the breed and education of his *dogs*, built new *kennels*, new *stables*, and bought a new *hunting-seat*, but he immediately got sight of another happiness, hated the senseless noise and hurry of hunting, gave away his dogs, and was for some time after deep in the *pleasures of building*.

Now he invents new kinds of *dove-cotes*, and has such contrivances in his *barns* and *stables*, as were never seen before: He wonders at the dulness of the old builders, is wholly bent upon the improvement of *Architecture*, and will hardly hang a door in the ordinary way. He tells his friends, that he never was so delighted in anything in his life; that he has more happiness amongst his *brick* and *mortar*, than ever he had at *court*; and that he is contriving how to have some little matter to do that way as long as he lives.

The next year he leaves his house unfinished, complains to everybody of *Masons* and *Carpenters*, and devotes himself wholly to the happiness of *riding about*. After this, you can never see him but on *horseback*, and so highly delighted with this new way of life, that he would tell you, give him but his *horse* and a *clean country* to ride in, and you might take all the rest to yourself. A variety of new *saddles* and *bridles*, and a great change of horses, added much to the pleasure of this new way of life. But, however, having after some time tired both himself and his horses, the happiest thing he could think of next, was to go *abroad* and visit *foreign Countries*; and there indeed happiness exceeded his imagination, and he was only uneasy that he had begun so fine a life no sooner. The next month he returned home, unable to bear any longer the impertinence of *foreigners*.

After this he was a great *student* for one whole year; he was up early and late at his *Italian grammar*, that he might have the happiness of understanding the *opera*, whenever he should hear one, and not be like those *unreasonable* people, that are pleased with they know not what.

Flatus is very ill-natured, or otherwise, just as his affairs happen to be when you visit him; if you find him when some project is almost worn out, you will find a peevish ill-bred man; but if you had seen him just as he entered upon his *riding regimen*, or begun to excel in sounding of the horn, you had been saluted with great civility.

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Flatus is now at a full stand, and is doing what he never did in his life before, he is *reasoning* and *reflecting* with himself. He loses several days, in considering which of his *cast-off* ways of life he should try again.

But here a new project comes in to his relief. He is now living upon *herbs*, and running about the country, to get himself into as *good wind* as any *running-footman* in the kingdom.

I have been thus circumstantial, in so many foolish particulars of this kind of life, because I hope, that every particular folly that you here see, will naturally turn itself into an argument, for the wisdom and happiness of a religious life.

If I could lay before you a particular account of all the circumstances of terror and distress, that daily attend a life at *sea*, the more particular I was in the account, the more I should make you feel and rejoice in the happiness of living upon the *land*.

In like manner, the more I enumerate the *follies*, *anxieties*, *delusions*, and restless desires which go through every part of a life devoted to human passions, and worldly enjoyments, the more you must be affected with that peace, and rest, and solid content, which religion gives to the souls of men.

If you but just cast your eye upon a *madman*, or a *fool*, it perhaps signifies little or nothing to you; but if you were to attend them for some days, and observe the lamentable madness and stupidity of all their actions, this would be an affecting sight, and would make you often bless yourself for the enjoyment of your reason and senses.

Just so, if you are only told in the gross, of the folly and madness of a life devoted to the world, it makes little or no impression upon you; but if you are shown how such people live every day; if you see the continual folly and madness of all their particular actions and designs, this would be an affecting sight, and make you bless God, for having given you a greater happiness to aspire after.

So that *characters* of this kind, the more folly and ridicule they have in them, provided that they be but natural, are most useful to correct our minds; and therefore are nowhere more proper than in books of devotion, and practical piety. And as in several cases, we best learn the nature of things, by looking at that which is contrary to them; so perhaps we best apprehend the *excellency* of wisdom, by contemplating the *wild extravagances* of folly.

I shall therefore continue this method a little further, and endeavour to recommend the happiness of piety to you; by showing you in some other instances, how miserably and poorly they live, who live without it.

But you will perhaps say, that the ridiculous, restless life of *Flatus*, is not the common state of those who resign themselves up to live by their own humours, and neglect the strict rules of religion; and that therefore it is not so great an argument of the happiness of a religious life, as I would make it.

I answer, that I am afraid it is one of the most *general characters* in life; and that few people can read it, without seeing something in it that belongs to themselves. For where shall we find that wise and happy man, who has not been eagerly pursuing different appearances of happiness, sometimes thinking it was here, and sometimes there?

And if people were to divide their lives into particular stages, and ask themselves what they were pursuing, or what it was which they had chiefly in view, when they were *twenty* years old, what at *twenty-five*, what at *thirty*, what at *forty*, what at *fifty*, and so on, till they were brought to their last bed; numbers of people would find, that they had liked, and disliked, and pursued as many different appearances of happiness, as are to be seen in the life of *Flatus*.

And thus it must necessarily be, more or less, with all those who propose any other happiness, than that which arises from a strict and regular piety.

But *Secondly*, let it be granted, that the *generality* of people are not of such *restless*, fickle tempers as *Flatus*; the difference then is only this, *Flatus* is continually changing and trying something new, but others are content with some one state; they do not leave *gaming*, and then fall to *hunting*. But they have so much *steadiness* in their tempers, that some seek after no other happiness, but that of *heaping* up riches; others grow old in the sports of the *field*; others are content to *drink* themselves to death, without the least inquiry after any other happiness.

Now is there anything more *happy*, or *reasonable*, in such a life as this, than in the life of *Flatus*? Is it not as great and desirable, as wise and happy, to be constantly changing from one thing to another, as to be nothing else but a *gatherer* of money, a *hunter*, a *gamester*, or a *drunkard*, all your life?

Shall religion be looked upon as a burden, as a dull and melancholy state, for calling men from such *happiness* as this, to live according to the laws of God, to labour after the perfection of their nature, and prepare themselves for an endless state of joy and glory in the presence of God?

But turn your eyes now another way, and let the *trifling joys*, the *gewgaw-happiness* of *Feliciania*, teach you how wise they are, what delusion they escape, whose hearts and hopes are fixed upon an happiness in God.

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If you were to live with *Feliciana* but one half year, you would see all the happiness that she is to have as long as she lives. She has no more to come, but the poor repetition of that which could never have pleased once, but through a littleness of mind, and want of thought.

She is to be again dressed fine, and keep her visiting day. She is again to change the colour of her *clothes*, again to have a new *head*, and again put *patches* on her face. She is again to see who acts best at the *playhouse*, and who sings finest at the *opera*. She is again to make ten visits in a day, and be ten times in a day trying to talk artfully, easily, and politely about *nothing*.

She is to be again delighted with some new fashion; and again angry at the change of some old one. She is to be again at cards, and gaming at midnight, and again in bed at noon. She is to be again pleased with hypocritical compliments, and again disturbed at imaginary affronts. She is to be again pleased with her good luck at gaming, and again tormented with the loss of her money. She is again to prepare herself for a birth-night; and again see the town full of good company. She is again to hear the cabals and intrigues of the town; again to have secret intelligence of private amours, and early notice of marriages, quarrels, and partings.

If you see her come out of her chariot more briskly than usual, converse with more spirit, and seem fuller of joy than she was last week, it is because there is some surprising new dress, or new diversion just come to town.

These are all the *substantial* and *regular* parts of *Feliciana's* happiness; and she never knew a pleasant day in her life, but it was owing to some one, or more, of these things.

It is for this happiness, that she has always been deaf to the reasonings of religion, that her heart has been too gay and cheerful to consider what is *right* or *wrong* in regard to eternity; or to listen to the sound of such dull words, as *wisdom*, *piety*, and *devotion*.

It is for fear of losing some of this happiness, that she dares not meditate on the immortality of her soul, consider her relation to God, or turn her thoughts towards those joys, which make Saints and Angels infinitely happy in the presence and glory of God.

But now let it be here observed, that as poor a round of happiness as this appears, yet most women, that avoid the restraints of religion for a gay life, must be content with very small parts of it. As they have not *Feliciana's* fortune and figure in the world, so they must give away the comforts of a pious life, for a very small part of her happiness.

And if you look into the world, and observe the lives of those women, whom no arguments can persuade to live wholly unto God, in a wise and pious employment of themselves, you will find most of them to be such, as lose all the comforts of religion, without gaining the tenth part of *Feliciana's* happiness. They are such as spend their time and fortunes, only in mimicking the pleasures of richer people; and rather look and long after, than enjoy those delusions, which are only to be purchased by considerable fortunes.

But if a woman of *high* birth, and *great* fortune, having read the Gospel, should rather wish to be an *under servant* in some pious family, where wisdom, piety, and great devotion, directed all the actions of every day; if she should rather wish this than to live at the top of *Feliciana's* happiness; I should think her neither *mad*, nor *melancholy*; but that she judged as rightly of the spirit of the Gospel, as if she had rather wished to be poor *Lazarus at the gate*, than to be the rich man 'clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day.'

But to proceed: Would you know what an happiness it is, to be governed by the wisdom of religion, and to be devoted to the joys and hopes of a pious life, look at the poor condition of *Succus*, whose greatest happiness, is a *good night's* rest in bed, and a *good meal* when he is up. When he talks of happiness, it is always in such expressions, as show you, that he has only his *bed* and his *dinner* in his thoughts.

This regard to his *meals* and *repose*, makes *Succus* order all the rest of his time with relation to them. He will undertake no business that may hurry his spirits, or break in upon his hours of *eating* and *rest*. If he reads, it shall only be for half an hour, because that is sufficient to amuse the spirits; and he will read something that may make him laugh, as rendering the body fitter for its *food* and *rest*. Or if he has at any time a mind to indulge a grave thought, he always has recourse to a useful treatise upon the *ancient cookery*. *Succus* is an enemy to all *party-matters*, having made it an observation, that there is as good eating amongst the *Whigs*, as the *Tories*.

He talks coolly and moderately upon all subjects, and is as fearful of falling into a passion, as of catching cold; being very positive, that they are both equally injurious to the *stomach*. If ever you see him more hot than ordinary, it is upon some provoking occasion, when the dispute about cookery runs very high, or in the defence of some beloved dish, which has often made him happy. But he has been so long upon these subjects, is so well acquainted with all that can be said on both sides, and has

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so often answered all objections, that he generally decides the matter with great gravity.

Succus is very loyal, and as soon as ever he likes any wine, he drinks the king's health with all his heart. Nothing could put rebellious thoughts into his head, unless he should live to see a *Proclamation* against eating of *Pheasants' eggs*.

All the hours that are not devoted either to *repose*, or *nourishment*, are looked upon by *Succus* as *waste* or *spare time*. For this reason he lodges near a *coffee-house* and a *tavern*, that when he rises in the morning, he may be near the *news*, and when he parts at night, he may not have far to bed. In the morning you always see him in the same place in the *coffee-room*, and if he seems more attentively engaged than ordinary, it is because some *criminal* is broke out of *Newgate*, or some *Lady* was robbed last night, but they cannot tell where. When he has learnt all that he can, he goes home to settle the matter with the Barber's boy, that comes to shave him.

The next *waste-time* that lays upon his hands, is from dinner to supper. And if melancholy thoughts ever come into his head, it is at this time, when he is often left to himself for an hour or more, and that after the greatest pleasure he knows is just over. He is afraid to sleep, because he has heard, it is not healthful at that time, so that he is forced to refuse so welcome a guest.

But here he is soon relieved, by a settled method of playing at cards, till it is time to think of some little nice matter for supper.

After this, *Succus* takes his glass, talks of the excellency of the *English constitution*, and praises that *Minister* the most, who keeps the best table.

On a *Sunday* night you may sometimes hear him condemning the iniquity of the *town-rakes*; and the bitterest thing that he says against them, is this, that he verily believes, some of them are so abandoned, as not to have a *regular meal*, or a *sound night's sleep* in a week.

At eleven, *Succus* bids all good night, and parts in great friendship. He is presently in bed, and sleeps till it is time to go to the coffee-house next morning.

If you were to live with *Succus* for a twelvemonth, this is all that you would see in his life, except a few *curses* and *oaths* that he uses as occasion offers.

And now I cannot help making this Reflection :

That as I believe the most likely means in the world, to inspire a person with true piety, was to have seen the example of some eminent professor of Religion; so the next thing that is likely to fill one with the same zeal, is to see the *folly*, the *baseness*,

and *poor* satisfactions of a life destitute of Religion. As the one excites us to love and admire the wisdom and greatness of Religion, so the other may make us fearful of living without it.

For who can help blessing God for the *means of grace*, and for the *hope of glory*, when he sees what variety of folly they sink into, who live without it? Who would not heartily engage in all the labours and exercises of a pious life, be 'steadfast, immovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord,' when he sees, what *dull* sensuality, what *poor* views, what *gross* enjoyments they are left to, who seek for happiness in other ways.

So that whether we consider the greatness of Religion, or the littleness of all other things, and the meanness of all other enjoyments, there is nothing to be found in the whole nature of things, for a thoughtful mind to rest upon, but a happiness in the hopes of Religion.

Consider now with yourself, how unreasonably it is pretended, that a life of *strict* piety must be a *dull* and *anxious* state? For can it with any reason be said, that the duties and restraints of Religion must render our lives heavy and melancholy, when they only deprive us of such happiness, as has been here laid before you?

Must it be tedious and tiresome, to live in the continual exercise of charity, devotion, and temperance, to act wisely and virtuously, to do good to the utmost of your power, to imitate the divine perfections, and prepare yourself for the enjoyment of God? Must it be dull and tiresome, to be delivered from blindness and vanity, from false hopes, and vain fears, to improve in holiness, to feel the comforts of conscience in all your actions, to know that God is your friend, that all must work for your good, that neither life nor death, neither men nor devils can do you any harm; but that all your sufferings and doings, that are offered unto God, all your watchings and prayers, and labours of love and charity, all your improvements, are in a short time to be rewarded with everlasting glory in the presence of God; must such a state as this be *dull* and *tiresome*, for want of such happiness, as *Flatus*, or *Feliciana* enjoys?

Now if this cannot be said, then there is no happiness or pleasure lost, by being strictly pious, nor has the devout man anything to envy in any other state of life. For all the art and contrivance in the world, without Religion, cannot make more of human life, or carry its happiness to any greater height, than *Flatus* and *Feliciana* have done.

The finest *wit*, the greatest *genius* upon earth, if not governed by Religion, must be as *foolish*, and *low* and *vain* in his methods of happiness, as the *poor Succus*.

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If you were to see a man duly endeavouring all his life to satisfy his thirst, by holding up one and the same *empty cup* to his mouth, you would certainly despise his ignorance.

But if you should see others of *brighter parts*, and *finer understandings*, ridiculing the dull satisfaction of *one cup*, and thinking to satisfy their own thirst, by a variety of gilt and golden empty cups; would you think that these were ever the *wiser*, or *happier*, or *better employed*, for their *finer parts*?

Now this is all the difference that you can see in the happiness of this life.

The *dull* and *heavy* soul, may be content with *one empty appearance* of happiness, and be continually trying to hold *one* and the *same empty cup* to his mouth all his life. But then let the *wit*, the *great scholar*, the *fine genius*, the *great statesman*, the *polite gentleman*, lay all their heads together, and they can only show you, *more*, and *various empty appearances* of happiness; give them all the world into their hands, let them cut and carve as they please, they can only make a greater variety of *empty cups*.

So that if you do not think it hard to be deprived of the pleasures of *gluttony* for the sake of Religion, you have no reason to think it hard to be restrained from any other worldly pleasure. For search as deep, and look as far as you will, there is nothing here to be found, that is *nobler*, or *greater*, than high eating and drinking, unless you look for it in the wisdom and laws of Religion.

And if all that is in the world, are only so many *empty cups*, what does it signify, which you take, or how many you take, or how many you have?

If you would but use yourself to such meditations as these, to reflect upon the vanity of *all orders* of life without piety, to consider how all the ways of the world, are only so many different ways of error, blindness, and mistake; you would soon find your heart made wiser and better by it. These meditations would awaken your soul into a zealous desire of that solid happiness, which is only to be found in recourse to God.

Examples of great piety are not now common in the world, it may not be your happiness to live within sight of any, or to have your virtue inflamed by their light and fervour. But the misery and folly of worldly men, is what meets your eyes in every place, and you need not look far to see, how poorly, how vainly men dream away their lives, for want of religious wisdom.

This is the reason, that I have laid before you so many characters of the vanity of a worldly life, to teach you to make a benefit of the corruption of the age, and that you may be made

wise, though not by the sight of what piety is, yet by seeing what misery and folly reigns, where piety is not.

If you would turn your mind to such reflections as these, your own observation would carry this instruction much further, and all your conversation and acquaintance with the world, would be a daily conviction to you of the necessity of seeking some greater happiness, than all the poor enjoyments of this world can give.

To meditate upon the perfection of the divine attributes, to contemplate the glories of Heaven, to consider the joys of Saints and Angels, living for ever in the brightness and glory of the divine presence; these are the meditations of souls advanced in piety, and not so suited to every capacity.

But to see and consider the *emptiness* and error of all worldly happiness; to see the *grossness* of sensuality, the *poorness* of pride, the *stupidity* of covetousness, the *vanity* of dress, the *delusion* of honour, the *blindness* of our passions, the *uncertainty* of our lives, and the *shortness* of all worldly projects; these are meditations that are suited to all capacities, fitted to strike all minds; they require no depth of thought, or sublime speculation, but are forced upon us by all our senses, and taught us by almost everything that we see and hear.

This is that 'wisdom that crieth, and putteth forth her voice'* in the streets, that standeth at all our doors, that appealeth to all our senses, teaching us in everything, and everywhere, by all that we see, and all that we hear, by births and burials, by sickness and health, by life and death, by pains and poverty, by misery and vanity, and by all the changes and chances of life, that there is nothing else for man to look after, no other end in nature for him to drive at, but a happiness which is only to be found in the hopes and expectations of Religion.

* Prov. viii. 1.

Chapter XIII.

That not only a life of vanity, or sensuality, but even the most regular kind of life, that is not governed by great devotion, sufficiently shows its miseries, its wants, and emptiness to the eyes of all the world. This represented in various characters.

IT is a very remarkable saying of our Lord and Saviour to his disciples, in these words : ' Blessed are your eyes, for ' they see, and your ears, for they hear.' They teach us two things: *First*, That the *dulness* and *heaviness* of men's minds, with regard to spiritual matters, is so great, that it may justly be compared to the want of *eyes* and *ears*.

Secondly, that God has so filled every *thing*, and every *place*, with motives and arguments for a godly life, that they who are but so blessed, so happy as to use their eyes and their ears, must needs be affected with them.

Now though this was in a more especial manner, the case of those whose senses were witnesses of the life and miracles and doctrines of our blessed Lord, yet it is as truly the case of all Christians at this time. For the reasons of Religion, the calls to piety, are so written and engraved upon everything, and present themselves so strongly, and so constantly to all our senses in everything that we meet, that they can only be disregarded by *eyes* that see not, and *ears* that hear not.

What greater motive to a religious life, than the *vanity*, the *poorness* of all worldly enjoyments? And yet who can help seeing and feeling this every day of his life?

What greater *call* to look towards God, than the pains, the sickness, the *crosses*, and vexations of this life; and yet whose eyes and ears are not daily witnesses of them?

What *miracles* could more strongly appeal to our senses, or what message from heaven speak louder to us, than the *daily dying* and departure of our fellow-creatures?

So that the one thing needful, or the great end of life, is not left to be discovered by fine reasoning and deep reflections; but is pressed upon us in the plainest manner, by the experience of all our senses, by everything that we meet with in life.

Let us but *intend to see and hear*, and then the whole world becomes a book of wisdom and instruction to us all ; all that is *regular* in the order of nature, all that is *accidental* in the course of things, all the mistakes and disappointments that happen to ourselves, all the miseries and errors that we see in other people ; become so many plain lessons of advice to us ; teaching us with as much assurance as an Angel from Heaven, that we can no ways raise ourselves to any true happiness, but by turning all our thoughts, our wishes, and endeavours, after the happiness of another life.

It is this right use of the world, that I would lead you into, by directing you to turn your eyes upon every shape of human folly, that you may thence draw fresh arguments and motives, of living to the best and greatest purposes of your creation.

And if you would but carry this *intention* about you, of profiting by the follies of the world, and of learning the *greatness* of Religion, from the *littleness* and *vanity* of every other way of life ; if, I say, you would but carry this intention in your mind, you would find, every day, every place, and every person, a fresh proof of their wisdom, who choose to live wholly unto God. You would then often return home, the wiser, the better, and the more strengthened in Religion, by everything that has fallen in your way.

Octavius is a learned, ingenious man, well versed in most parts of literature, and no stranger to any kingdom in *Europe*. The other day, being just recovered from a lingering *fever*, he took upon him to talk thus to his friends.

My *glass*, says he, is almost run out ; and your eyes see how many marks of *age* and *death* I bear about me : But I plainly feel myself sinking away faster than any standers-by imagine. I fully believe, that one year more will conclude my reckoning.

The attention of his friends was much raised by such a declaration, expecting to hear something truly excellent from so learned a man, who had but a *year* longer to live. When *Octavius* proceeded in this manner : For these reasons, says he, my friends, I have left off all *taverns*, the wine of those places is not good enough for me in this decay of nature. I must now be *nice* in what I drink ; I cannot pretend to do, as I have done ; and therefore am resolved to furnish my own *cellar* with a little of the very best, though it costs me ever so much.

I must also tell you, my friends, that age forces a man to be *wise* in many other respects, and makes us change many of our opinions and practices.

You know how much I have liked a large acquaintance ; I now condemn it as an error. Three or four *cheerful, diverting*

companions, is all that I now desire ; because I find, that in my present infirmities, if I am left *alone*, or to *grave* company, I am not so easy to myself.

A few days after *Octavius* had made this declaration to his friends, he relapsed into his former illness, was committed to a *nurse*, who closed his eyes, before his fresh parcel of wine came in.

Young *Eugenius*, who was present at this discourse, went home a new man, with full resolutions of devoting himself wholly unto God.

I never, says *Eugenius*, was so deeply affected with the wisdom and importance of religion, as when I saw how *poorly* and *meanly* the learned *Octavius* was to leave the world, through the want of it.

How often had I envied his *great learning*, his skill in *languages*, his knowledge of *antiquity*, his *address*, and fine manner of *expressing* himself upon all subjects ! But when I saw how *poorly* it all ended, what was to be the *last year* of such a life, and how foolishly the master of all these accomplishments was then forced to talk, for want of being acquainted with the *joys* and *expectations* of piety, I was thoroughly convinced, that there was nothing to be envied or desired, but a *life* of true piety ; nor anything so *poor* and *comfortless*, as a *death* without it.

Now as the young *Eugenius* was thus edified and instructed in the present case ; so if you are so happy as to have anything of his *thoughtful* temper, you will meet with variety of instruction of this kind ; you will find that arguments for the wisdom and happiness of a strict piety, offer themselves in all places, and appeal to all your senses in the plainest manner.

You will find, that all the world *preaches* to an *attentive* mind ; and that if you have but ears to hear, almost everything you meet, teaches you some lesson of wisdom.

But now, if to these admonitions and instructions, which we receive from our senses, from an experience of the state of human life ; if to these we add the lights of religion, those great truths which the Son of God has taught us ; it will be then as much past all doubt, that there is but one *happiness* for man, as that there is but one God.

For since religion teaches us, that our souls are immortal, that piety and devotion will carry them to an eternal enjoyment of God ; and that carnal worldly tempers will sink them into an everlasting misery with damned spirits ; what gross nonsense and stupidity is it, to give the name of *joy* or *happiness* to anything but that, which carries us to this joy and happiness in God ?

Were *all* to die with our *bodies*, there might be some pretence for those *different sorts* of happiness, that are now so much talked of; but since *our all* begins at the death of our bodies; since all men are to be immortal, either in misery or happiness, in a world entirely different from this; since they are all hastening hence at all uncertainties, as fast as death can cut them down; some in *sickness*, some in *health*, some *sleeping*, some *waking*, some at *midnight*, others at *cock-crowing*, and all at hours that they know not of; is it not certain, that no man can exceed another in joy and happiness, but so far as he exceeds him in those virtues, which fit him for a happy death?

Cognatus is a sober, regular *Clergyman*, of good repute in the world, and well esteemed in his parish. All his parishioners say he is an *honest man*, and very notable at making a *bargain*. The farmers listen to him with great attention, when he talks of the properest time of selling corn.

He has been for twenty years a diligent observer of *markets*, and has raised a considerable fortune by good management.

Cognatus is very *orthodox*, and full of *esteem* of our *English* Liturgy; and if he has not prayers on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*, it is because his *Predecessor* had not used the parish to any such custom.

As he cannot serve both his *livings* himself, he makes it matter of *conscience* to keep a *sober curate* upon one of them, whom he *hires* to take care of all the souls in the parish, at as cheap a rate as a sober man can be procured.

Cognatus has been very prosperous all his time; but still he has had the uneasiness and vexations that they have, who are deep in worldly business. *Taxes*, *losses*, *crosses*, *bad mortgages*, *bad tenants*, and the hardness of the times, are frequent subjects of his conversation; and a good or bad *season* has a great effect upon his spirits.

Cognatus has no other end in growing rich, but that he may leave a considerable fortune to a *Niece*, whom he has *politely* educated in expensive finery, by what he has saved out of the tithes of *two livings*.

The neighbours look upon *Cognatus* as an happy clergyman, because they see him (as they call it) in *good circumstances*; and some of them intend to dedicate their own sons to the Church, because they see how well it has succeeded with *Cognatus*, whose father was but an *ordinary man*.

But now if *Cognatus*, when he first entered into holy orders, had perceived how absurd a thing it is to grow *rich* by the Gospel; if he had proposed to himself the example of some *primitive father*; if he had had the piety of the great *St. Austin*

in his eye, who durst not enrich any of his relations out of the revenue of the Church, if, instead of twenty years' care to lay up treasures upon earth, he had distributed the income of every year, in the most Christian acts of charity and compassion.

If instead of tempting his *Niece* to be proud, and providing her with such ornaments, as the *Apostle* forbids, he had clothed, comforted, and assisted numbers of *widows, orphans*, and distressed, who were all to appear for him at the last day.

If instead of the cares and anxieties of *bad bonds, troublesome mortgages*, and *ill bargains*, he had had the constant comfort of knowing, that his treasure was securely laid up, where neither moth corrupteth, nor thieves break through and steal: Could it with any reason be said, that he had mistaken the spirit and dignity of his order, or lessened any of that happiness, which is to be found in his sacred employments?

If instead of rejoicing at the happiness of a second *living*, he had thought it as unbecoming the office of a clergyman, to *traffic* for gain in *holy things*, as to open a *shop*.

If he had thought it better to recommend some *honest labour* to his *Niece*, than to support her in *idleness* by the labours of a *curate*; better that she should want *fine clothes* and a rich husband, than that *cures of souls* should be farmed about, and brother clergymen not suffered to *live* by those altars at which they serve. If this had been the spirit of *Cognatus*, could it with any reason be said, that these rules of religion, this strictness of piety, had robbed *Cognatus* of any real happiness? Could it be said, that a life thus governed by the spirit of the Gospel, must be *dull* and *melancholy*, if compared to that of raising a fortune for a *Niece*?

Now as this cannot be said in the present case, so in every other kind of life, if you enter into the particulars of it, you will find, that however easy and prosperous it may seem, yet you cannot add piety to any part of it, without adding so much of a better joy and happiness to it.

Look now at that condition of life, which draws the envy of all eyes.

Negotius is a temperate honest man. He served his time under a master of great trade, but has, by his own management, made it a more considerable business than ever it was before. For thirty years last past, he has wrote fifty or sixty letters in a week, and is busy in corresponding with all parts of *Europe*. The general good of trade seems to *Negotius* to be the general good of life; whomsoever he admires, whatever he commends or condemns, either in Church or State, is admired, commended, or condemned, with some regard to trade.

As money is continually pouring in upon him, so he often lets

it go in various kinds of expense and generosity, and sometimes in ways of charity.

Negotius is always ready to join in any public contribution : If a *purse* is making at any place where he happens to be, whether it be to buy a *plate* for a horse-race, or to redeem a *prisoner* out of gaol, you are always sure of having something from him.

He has given a fine *ring of bells* to a Church in the country ; and there is much expectation, that he will some time or other make a more beautiful *front* to the *market-house*, than has yet been seen in any place. For it is the generous spirit of *Negotius*, to do nothing in a mean way.

If you ask what it is, that has secured *Negotius* from all *scandalous vices*, it is the same thing that has kept him from all *strictness of devotion*, it is his great business. He has always had too many important things in his head, his thoughts have been too much employed, to suffer him to fall either into any courses of *rakery*, or to feel the necessity of an *inward, solid piety*.

For this reason he hears of the pleasures of debauchery, and the pleasures of piety, with the same indifferency ; and has no more desire of living in the one, than in the other, because neither of them consist with that turn of mind, and multiplicity of business, which are his happiness.

If *Negotius* was asked, What is it which he drives at in life ? he would be as much at a loss for an answer, as if he was asked, what any other person is thinking of. For though he always seems to himself to know what he is doing, and has many things in his head, which are the motives of his actions ; yet he cannot tell you of any *one general end* of life, that he has chosen with deliberation, as being truly worthy of all his labour and pains.

He has several confused notions in his head, which have been a long time there ; such as these, *viz.*, That it is *something great* to have more business than other people, to have more dealings upon his hands than an hundred of the same profession ; to grow continually richer and richer, and to raise an immense fortune before he dies. The thing that seems to give *Negotius* the greatest life and spirit, and to be most in his thoughts, is an expectation that he has, that he shall die richer than any of his business ever did.

The generality of people, when they think of happiness, think upon *Negotius*, in whose life every instance of happiness is supposed to meet ; sober, prudent, rich, prosperous, generous, and charitable.

Let us now, therefore, look at this condition in another, but truer light.

Let it be supposed, that this same *Negotius* was a painful,

laborious man, every day deep in variety of affairs ; that he neither drank, nor debauched ; but was sober and regular in his business. Let it be supposed, that he grew old in this course of trading ; and that the *end* and *design* of all this labour, and care, and application to business, was only this, that he might die possessed of more than an hundred thousand pair of *boots* and *spurs*, and as many great coats.

Let it be supposed, that the sober part of the world say of him when he is dead, that he was a great and happy man, a thorough master of business, and had acquired a hundred thousand pair of *boots* and *spurs* when he died.

Now if this was really the case, I believe it would be readily granted, that a life of such business was as poor and ridiculous, as any that be invented. But it would puzzle anyone to show, that a man that has spent all his time and thoughts in business and hurry that he might die, as it is said, worth an hundred thousand pounds, is any whit wiser than he, who has taken the same pains, to have as many pair of *boots* and *spurs* when he leaves the world.

For if the *temper* and *state* of our souls be our *whole state* ; if the only end of life be to die as *free* from sin, and as *exalted* in virtue as we can ; if naked as we came, so naked are we to return, and to stand a trial before Christ, and his holy angels, for everlasting happiness or misery ; what can it possibly signify what a man had, or had not, in this world ? What can it signify what you *call* those things which a man has left behind him ; whether you call them *his* or *anyone's* else ; whether you *call* them *trees*, or *fields*, or *birds* and *feathers* ; whether you *call* them an hundred *thousand pounds*, or an hundred thousand pair of *boots* and *spurs* ? I say, *call* them ; for the *things* signify no more to him than the *names*.

Now it is easy to see the folly of a life thus spent, to furnish a man with such a number of *boots* and *spurs*. But yet there needs no better faculty of seeing, no finer understanding, to see the folly of a life spent, in making a man a possessor of *ten towns* before he dies.

For if when he has got all his *towns*, or all his *boots*, his soul is to go to its *own place* amongst separate spirits, and his body be laid by in a *coffin*, till the last trumpet calls him to judgment ; where the inquiry will be, how *humbly*, how *devoutly*, how *purely*, how *meekly*, how *piously*, how *charitably*, how *heavenly*, we have *spoken*, *thought*, and *acted*, whilst we were in the body ; how can we say, that he who has worn out his life in raising an *hundred thousand pounds*, has acted wiser for himself, than he who has had the same *care*, to procure an hundred thousand of *anything* else ?

But further: Let it now be supposed, that *Negotius*, when he first entered into business, happening to read the Gospel with *attention*, and eyes open, found that he had a much greater business upon his hands, than that to which he had served an apprenticeship; that there were things which belong to man, of much more importance than all that our eyes can see; so glorious, as to deserve all our thoughts; so dangerous, as to need all our care; and so certain, as never to deceive the faithful labourer.

Let it be supposed, that from reading this book, he had discovered that his soul was more to him than his body; that it was better to grow in the virtues of the soul, than to have a large body, or a full purse; that it was better to be fit for heaven, than to have variety of fine houses upon the earth; that it was better to secure an everlasting happiness, than to have plenty of things which he cannot keep; better to live in habits of humility, piety, devotion, charity, and self-denial, than to die unprepared for judgment; better to be most like our Saviour, or some eminent saint, than to excel all the tradesmen in the world, in business and bulk of fortune.

Let it be supposed, that *Negotius* believing these things to be true, entirely devoted himself to God at his first setting out in the world, resolving to pursue his *business* no further than was consistent with great devotion, humility, and self-denial; and for no other ends, but to provide himself with a sober subsistence, and to do all the good that he could, to the souls and bodies of his fellow-creatures.

Let it therefore be supposed, that instead of the continual hurry of business, he was frequent in his retirements, and a strict observer of all the *hours* of prayer; that instead of restless desires after more riches, his soul had been full of the love of God and heavenly affection, constantly watching against worldly tempers, and always aspiring after divine grace; that instead of worldly cares and contrivances, he was busy in fortifying his soul against all approaches of sin; that instead of costly show, and expensive generosity of a splendid life, he loved and exercised all instances of humility and lowliness; that instead of great treats and full tables, his house only furnished a sober refreshment to those that wanted it.

Let it be supposed that his contentment kept him free from all kinds of envy. That his piety made him thankful to God in all crosses and disappointments. That his charity kept him from being rich, by a continual distribution to all objects of compassion.

Now had this been the Christian spirit of *Negotius*, can anyone say, that he had lost the true joy and happiness of life, by thus conforming to the spirit, and living up to the hopes of the Gospel?

Can it be said, that a life made exemplary by such virtues as these, which keep heaven always in our sight, which both delight and exalt the soul here, and prepare it for the presence of God hereafter, must be *poor* and *dull*, if compared to that of heaping up riches, which can neither stay with us, nor we with them?

It would be endless to multiply examples of this kind, to show you how little is lost, and how much is gained, by introducing a strict and exact piety into every condition of human life.

I shall now therefore leave it to your own meditation, to carry this way of thinking further, hoping that you are enough directed by what is here said, to convince yourself, that a true and exalted piety is so far from rendering any life dull and tiresome, that it is the only joy and happiness of every condition in the world.

Imagine to yourself some person in a *consumption*, or any other *lingering distemper*, that was *incurable*.

If you were to see such a man wholly intent upon doing everything in the spirit of Religion, making the wisest use of all his time, fortune, and abilities. If he was for carrying every duty of piety to its greatest height, and striving to have all the advantage that could be had from the remainder of his life. If he avoided all business, but such as was necessary; if he was averse to all the follies and vanities of the world, had no taste for *finery*, and *show*, but sought for all his comfort in the hopes and expectations of Religion; you would certainly commend his prudence, you would say that he had taken the right method to make himself as joyful and happy, as anyone can be in state of such infirmity.

On the other hand, if you should see the same person, with *trembling* hands, *short* breath, *thin* jaws, and *hollow* eyes, wholly intent upon business and bargains, as long as he could speak. If you should see him pleased with *fine clothes*, when he could scarce stand to be dressed, and laying out his money in *horses* and *dogs*, rather than purchase the prayers of the poor for his soul, which was so soon to be separated from his body, you would certainly condemn him, as a weak silly man.

Now as it is easy to see the reasonableness, the wisdom and happiness of a religious spirit in a *consumptive man*, so if you pursue the same way of thinking, you will as easily perceive the same wisdom and happiness of a pious temper, in every other state of life.

For how soon will every man that is in *health*, be in the state of him that is in a *consumption*? How soon will he want all the same comforts and satisfactions of Religion, which every dying man wants?

And if it be wise and happy to live piously, because we have not above a year to live, is it not being more wise, and making ourselves more happy, because we may have more years to come! If one year of piety before we die, is so desirable, is not more years of piety much more desirable?

If a man had *five fixed* years to live, he could not possibly think at all, without intending to make the best use of them *all*. When he saw his stay so short in this world, he must needs think that this was not a world for him; and when he saw how near he was to another world, that was eternal, he must surely think it very necessary, to be very diligent in preparing himself for it.

Now as reasonable as piety appears in such a circumstance of life, it is yet more reasonable in every circumstance of life, to every thinking man.

For who but a madman, can reckon that he has *five years certain* to come?

And if it be reasonable and necessary to deny our worldly tempers, and live wholly unto God, because we are *certain* that we are to die at the end of *five years*; surely it must be much more reasonable and necessary, for us to live in the same spirit, because we have no *certainly*, that we shall live *five weeks*.

Again, if we were to add *twenty* years to the *five*, which is in all probability more than will be added to the lives of many people, who are at man's estate; what a poor thing is this! how small a difference is there between five, and twenty-five years?

It is said, that a *day* is with God as a *thousand years*, and a thousand years as one day; because in regard to his eternity, this difference is as nothing.

Now as we are all created to be *eternal*, to live in an endless succession of ages upon ages, where *thousands* and *millions of thousands* of years, will have no proportion to our everlasting life in God; so with regard to this eternal state, which is our real state, twenty-five *years* is as poor a pittance, as twenty-five *days*.

Now we can never make any true judgment of time as it relates to us, without considering the true state of our *duration*. If we are *temporary* beings, then a little time, may justly be called a great deal in relation to us, but if we are *eternal* beings, then the difference of a few years is as nothing.

If we were to suppose *three* different *sorts* of rational beings, all of *different*, but fixed duration, one sort that lived *certainly* only a *month*, the other a *year*, and the third an *hundred* years.

Now if these beings were to meet together, and talk about

time, they must talk in a very different language; *half an hour* to those that were to live but a *month*, must be a very different thing, to what it is to those, who are to live an *hundred years*.

As therefore *time* is thus *different* a thing, with regard to the *state* of those who enjoy it, so if we would know what time is with regard to ourselves, we must consider our state.

Now since our eternal state, is as certainly ours, as our present state; since we are as certainly to live for ever, as we now live at all; it is plain, that we cannot judge of the value of any particular time, as to us, but by comparing it to that eternal duration, for which we are created.

If you would know, what *five years* signify to a being that was to live an *hundred*, you must compare *five* to an *hundred*, and see what proportion it bears to it, and then you will judge right.

So if you would know, what *twenty years* signify to a son of *Adam*, you must compare it, not to a *million* of ages, but to an *eternal* duration, to which no number of millions bears any proportion; and then you will judge right, by finding it *nothing*.

Consider therefore this: how would you condemn the folly of a man, that should lose his share of future glory, for the sake of being *rich*, or *great*, or *praised*, or delighted in *any enjoyment*, only *one poor day* before he was to die!

But if the time will come, when a number of years will seem less to everyone, than a day does now; what a condemnation must it then be, if eternal happiness should appear to be lost, for something less than the enjoyment of a day!

Why does a day seem a trifle to us now? It is because we have years to set against it. It is the duration of years, that makes it appear as nothing.

What a *trifle* therefore must the years of a *man's age* appear, when they are forced to be set against *eternity*, when there shall be nothing but eternity to compare them with!

Now this will be the case of every man, as soon as he is out of the body, he will be forced to forget the distinctions of days and years, and to measure time, not by the course of the Sun, but by setting it against eternity.

As the *fixed stars*, by reason of our being placed at such distance from them, appear but so many *points*; so when we, placed in eternity, shall look back upon *all time*, it will all appear but as a *moment*.

Then, a *luxury*, an *indulgence*, a *prosperity*, a *greatness* of *fifty years*, will seem to everyone that looks back upon it, as the same *poor short* enjoyment, as if he had been snatched away in his *first sin*.

These few reflections upon *time*, are only to show how poorly they think, how miserably they judge, who are less careful of an eternal state, because they *may* be at some *years'* distance from it, than they would be, if they knew they were within a few *weeks of it*.

Chapter XIV.

Concerning that part of Devotion which relates to times and hours of Prayer. Of daily early prayer in the morning. How we are to improve our forms of Prayer, and how to increase the spirit of devotion.

HAVING in the foregoing Chapter, shown the necessity of a devout spirit, or habit of mind in every part of our common life, in the discharge of all our business, in the use of all the gifts of God : I come now to consider that part of devotion, which relates to *times* and *hours* of prayer.

I take it for granted, that every Christian, that is in health, is up *early* in the morning ; for it is much more reasonable to suppose a person up *early*, because he is a *Christian*, than because he is a *labourer*, or a *tradesman*, or a *servant*, or has business that wants him.

We naturally conceive some abhorrence of a man that is in *bed*, when he should be at his *labour*, or in his *shop*. We cannot tell how to think anything good of him, who is such a slave to drowsiness, as to neglect his business for it.

Let this therefore teach us to conceive, how odious we must appear in the sight of heaven, if we are in *bed*, shut up in *sleep* and *darkness*, when we should be praising God ; and are such slaves to drowsiness, as to neglect our devotions for it.

For if he is to be blamed as a *slothful drone*, that rather chooses the lazy indulgence of sleep, than to perform his proper share of worldly business ; how much more is he to be reproached, that had rather lie folded up in a bed, than be raising up his heart to God in acts of praise and adoration ?

Prayer is the nearest approach to God, and the highest enjoyment of him, that we are capable of in this life.

It is the noblest exercise of the soul, the most exalted use of our best faculties, and the highest imitation of the blessed inhabitants of heaven.

When our hearts are full of God, sending up holy desires to the throne of grace, we are then in our highest state, we are upon the utmost heights of human greatness ; we are not before *kings* and *princes*, but in the presence and audience of the *Lord* of all the world, and can be no higher, till death is swallowed up in glory.

On the other hand, *sleep* is the *poorest, dullest* refreshment of the body, that is so far from being intended as an *enjoyment*, that we are forced to receive it either in a state of *insensibility*, or in the folly of *dreams*.

Sleep is such a *dull, stupid* state of existence, that even amongst *mere animals*, we despise those most, which are most drowsy.

He therefore that chooses, to enlarge the slothful indulgence of sleep, rather than be *early* at his devotions to God, chooses the dullest refreshment of the body, before the highest, noblest employment of the soul ; he chooses that state, which is a reproach to *mere animals*, rather than that exercise, which is the glory of *Angels*.

You will perhaps say, though you rise *late*, yet you are always careful of your devotions when you are up.

It may be so. But what then ? Is it well done of you to rise late, because you pray when you are up ? Is it pardonable to waste great part of the day in bed, because some time after you say your prayers ?

It is as much your duty to rise to pray, as to pray when you are risen. And if you are late at your prayers, you offer to God the prayers of an idle, slothful worshipper, that rises to prayers, as idle servants rise to their labour.

Further, if you fancy that you are careful of your devotions, when you are up, though it be your *custom* to rise late, you deceive yourself ; for you cannot perform your devotions as you ought. For he that cannot deny himself this drowsy indulgence, but must pass away good part of the morning in it, is no more prepared for prayer when he is up, than he is prepared for *fasting, abstinence, or any other self-denial*. He may indeed more easily read over a *form* of prayer, than he can perform these duties ; but he is no more disposed to enter into the *true spirit* of prayer, than he is disposed to *fasting*. For sleep thus indulged, gives a *softness and idleness* to all our tempers, and makes us unable to relish anything, but what suits with an *idle state* of mind, and gratifies our natural tempers, as sleep does. So that a person that is a slave to this idleness, is in the *same temper*

when he is up ; and though he is not asleep, yet he is under the effects of it ; and everything that is *idle, indulgent, or sensual*, pleases him for the same reason that sleep pleases him ; and on the other hand, everything that requires *care, or trouble, or self-denial*, is hateful to him, for the same reason that he hates to rise. He that places any happiness in this morning indulgence, would be glad to have all the day made happy in the same manner ; though not with sleep, yet with *such enjoyments*, as gratify and indulge the body in the same manner as sleep does ; or at least, with such as come as near to it as they can. The remembrance of a warm bed is in his mind all the day, and he is glad when he is not one of those, that sit starving in a *Church*.

Now you do not imagine, that such a one can truly mortify that body which he thus indulges ; yet you might as well think this, as that he can truly perform his devotions ; or live in such a drowsy state of indulgence, and yet relish the joys of a *spiritual life*.

For surely, no one will pretend to say, that he knows and feels the true happiness of prayer, who does not think it worth his while to be *early* at it.

It is not possible in nature, for an *Epicure* to be truly devout ; he must renounce this habit of sensuality, before he can relish the happiness of devotion.

Now he that turns sleep into an *idle indulgence*, does as much to corrupt and disorder his soul, to make it a slave to bodily appetites, and keep it incapable of all devout and heavenly tempers, as he that turns the necessities of eating, into a course of indulgence.

A person that eats and drinks too much, does not feel such effects from it, as those do, who live in *notorious* instances of gluttony and intemperance ; but yet his course of indulgence, though it be not *scandalous* in the eyes of the world, nor such as *torments* his own conscience, is a great and constant hindrance to his improvement in virtue ; it gives him 'eyes that see not,' and 'ears that hear not' ; it creates a sensuality in the soul, increases the power of bodily passions, and makes him incapable of entering into the true spirit of Religion.

Now this is the case of those who waste their time in *sleep* ; it does not *disorder* their lives, or *wound* their consciences, as *notorious acts* of intemperance do ; but like any other more moderate course of indulgence, it silently, and by smaller degrees, wears away the spirit of religion, and sinks the soul into a state of dulness and sensuality.

If you consider devotion only as a time of so much prayer, you may perhaps perform it, though you live in this daily indul-

gence : But if you consider it as a *state* of the heart, as a *lively fervour* of the soul, that is deeply affected with a sense of its own misery and infirmities, and desiring the spirit of God more than all things in the world, you will find that the spirit of indulgence, and the spirit of prayer, cannot subsist together. Mortification, of *all kinds*, is the very life and soul of piety ; but he that has not so small a degree of it, as to be able to be early at his prayers, can have no reason to think that he has taken up his cross, and is following Christ.

What conquest has he got over himself? What right hand has he cut off? What trials is he prepared for? What sacrifice is he ready to offer unto God ; who cannot be so cruel to himself, as to rise to prayer at such time, as the drudging part of the world are content to rise to their labour.

Some people will not scruple to tell you, that they indulge themselves in sleep, because they have *nothing* to do ; and that if they had either *business*, or *pleasure* to rise to, they would not lose so much of their time in sleep. But such people must be told, that they mistake the matter ; that they have a great deal of business to do ; they have a *hardened heart* to change ; they have the *whole spirit* of Religion to get. For surely, he that thinks devotion to be of less moment, than business or pleasure ; or that he has nothing to do, because nothing but his prayers want him, may be justly said to have the whole spirit of Religion to seek.

You must not therefore consider, how small a crime it is to *rise late*, but you must consider how great a misery it is, to want the *spirit* of Religion, to have a heart not rightly affected with prayer ; and to live in such softness and idleness, as makes you incapable of the most fundamental duties, of a truly Christian and spiritual life.

This is the right way of judging, of the crime of wasting great part of your time in bed.

You must not consider the thing barely in itself, but what it proceeds from ; what virtues it shows to be wanting ; what vices it naturally strengthens. For every habit of this kind, discovers the *state* of the soul, and plainly shows the *whole turn* of your mind.

If our blessed Lord used to pray early before day ; if he spent whole nights in prayer ; if the devout *Anna* was day and night in the temple ; if *St. Paul* and *Silas* at midnight sang praises unto God ; if the *primitive Christians*, for several hundred years, besides their hours of prayer in the day-time, met publicly in the Churches at *midnight*, to join in Psalms and Prayers, is it not certain that these practices showed the *state* of their

heart? Are they not so many plain proofs of the *whole turn* of their minds?

And if you live in a contrary state, wasting great part of every day in sleep, thinking any time soon enough to be at your prayers; is it not equally certain, that this practice as much shows the state of your heart, and the whole turn of your mind?

So that if this indulgence is your way of life, you have as much reason to believe yourself destitute of the true spirit of devotion, as you have, to believe the Apostles and Saints of the Primitive Church were truly devout. For as their way of life was a demonstration of their devotion, so a contrary way of life, is as strong a proof of a want of devotion.

When you read the Scriptures, you see a Religion that is all *life*, and *spirit*, and *joy* in God; that supposes our souls risen from earthly desires, and bodily indulgences, to prepare for another body, another world, and other enjoyments. You see Christians represented as temples of the Holy Ghost, as children of the day, as candidates for an eternal crown, as watchful virgins, that have their lamps always burning, in expectation of the bridegroom. But can he be thought to have this joy in God, this care of eternity, this watchful spirit, who has not zeal enough to rise to his prayers?

When you look into the writings and lives of the first Christians, you see the same spirit that you see in the Scriptures. All is reality, life and action. Watching and prayers, self-denial and mortification, was the common business of their lives.

From that time to this, there has been no person like them, eminent for piety, who has not, like them, been eminent for self-denial and mortification. This is the only royal way that leads to a kingdom.

But how far are you from this way of life, or rather how contrary to it, if instead of imitating their austerity and mortification, you cannot so much as renounce so poor an indulgence, as to be able to rise to your prayers? If self-denials and bodily sufferings, if watchings and fastings, will be marks of glory at the day of Judgment, where must we hide our heads, that have slumbered away our time in sloth and softness?

You perhaps may find some pretences, to excuse yourselves from that severity of fasting and self-denial, which the first Christians practised. You fancy that human nature is grown weaker, and that the difference of *Climates*, may make it not possible for you to observe their methods of self-denial and austerity, in these colder countries.

But all this is but pretence; for the change is not in the *outward* state of things, but in the *inward* state of our minds. When

there is the same spirit in us, that there was in the Apostles and primitive Christians, when we feel the weight of Religion, as they did, when we have their faith and hope, we shall take up our cross, and deny ourselves, and live in such methods of mortification as they did.

Had St. *Paul* lived in a cold country, had he had a constitution made weak with a *sickly stomach*, and often *infirmities*, he would have done as he advised *Timothy*, he would have mixed a little wine with his water.

But still he would have lived in a state of self-denial and mortification. He would have given this same account of himself: 'I therefore so run, not as uncertainly, so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it unto subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.'

After all, let it now be supposed, that you imagine there is no necessity for you to be so sober and vigilant, so fearful of yourself, so watchful over your passions, so apprehensive of danger, so careful of your salvation, as the *Apostles* were. Let it be supposed, that you imagine that you want less self-denial and mortification, to subdue your bodies, and purify your souls, than they wanted; that you need not have your loins girt, and your lamps burning as they had, will you therefore live in a quite contrary state? Will you make your life as constant a course of softness and indulgence, as theirs was of strictness and self-denial.

If therefore, you should think that you have time sufficient, both for prayer and other duties, though you rise late; yet let me persuade you to rise early, as an instance of *self-denial*. It is so small a one, that if you cannot comply with it, you have no reason to think yourself capable of any other.

If I were to desire you, not to study the gratifications of your *palate*, in the niceties of meats and drinks, I would not insist much upon the crime of wasting your money in such a way, though it be a great one; but I would desire you to renounce such a way of life, because it supports you in such a state of sensuality and indulgence, as renders you incapable of relishing the most essential doctrines of Religion.

For the same reason, I do not insist much on the crime of wasting so much of your time in sleep, though it be a great one, but I desire you to renounce this indulgence, because it gives a softness and idleness to your soul; and is so contrary to that *lively, zealous, watchful, self-denying* spirit, which was not only the spirit of Christ and his Apostles, the spirit of all the saints and martyrs which have ever been amongst men, but must be the

spirit of all those, who would not sink in the common corruption of the world.

Here therefore, we must fix our charge against this practice ; we must blame it, not as having this or that particular evil, but as a *general habit*, that extends itself through our whole spirit, and supports a state of mind that is wholly wrong.

It is contrary to piety ; not as accidental slips and mistakes in life are contrary to it, but in such a manner, as an ill habit of body is contrary to health.

On the other hand, if you were to rise early every morning, as an instance of self-denial, as a method of renouncing indulgence, as a means of redeeming your time, and fitting your spirit for prayer, you would find mighty advantages from it. This method, though it seems such a small circumstance of life, would in all probability be a means of great piety. It would keep it constantly in your head, that softness and idleness were to be avoided, that self-denial was a part of Christianity. It would teach you to exercise power over yourself, and make you able by degrees to renounce other pleasures and tempers that war against the soul.

This one rule would teach you to think of others ; it would dispose your mind to exactness, and be very likely to bring the remaining part of the day, under rules of prudence and devotion.

But above all, one certain benefit from this method you will be sure of having, it will best fit and prepare you for the reception of the Holy Spirit. When you thus begin the day in the spirit of religion, renouncing sleep, because you are to renounce softness, and redeem your time ; this disposition, as it puts your heart into a good state, so it will procure the assistance of the Holy Spirit ; what is so planted and watered, will certainly have an increase from God. You will then speak from your heart, your soul will be awake, your prayers will refresh you like meat and drink, you will feel what you say, and begin to know what saints and holy men have meant, by fervours of devotion.

He that is thus prepared for prayer, who rises with these dispositions, is in a very different state from him, who has no rules of this kind ; who rises by chance, as he happens to be weary of his bed, or is able to sleep no longer. If such a one prays only with his mouth ; if his heart feels nothing of that which he says ; if his prayers are only things of course ; if they are a lifeless form of words, which he only repeats because they are soon said, there is nothing to be wondered at in all this ; for such dispositions are the natural effects of such a state of life.

Hoping therefore, that you are now enough convinced of the

necessity of rising early to your prayers, I shall proceed to lay before you a method of daily prayer.

I do not take upon me to prescribe to you the use of any *particular forms* of prayer, but only to show you the necessity of praying at such times, and in such a manner.

You will here find some helps, how to furnish yourself with such *forms* of prayer, as shall be useful to you. And if you are such a proficient in the spirit of devotion, that your heart is always ready to pray in its own language, in this case I press no necessity of borrowed forms.

For though I think a form of prayer very *necessary* and *expedient* for *public* worship, yet if anyone can find a better way of raising his heart unto God in private, than by *prepared forms* of prayer, I have nothing to object against it; my design being only to assist and direct such as stand in need of assistance.

Thus much, I believe, is certain, that the *generality* of Christians ought to use *forms* of prayer, at all the regular times of prayer. It seems right for everyone to begin with a *form* of prayer; and if in the midst of his devotions, he finds his heart ready to break forth into new and higher strains of devotion, he should leave his *form* for a while, and follow those fervours of his heart, till it again wants the assistance of his usual petitions.

This seems to be the *true liberty* of *private* devotion; it should be under the direction of some *form*; but not so tied down to it, but that it may be free to take such new expressions, as its present fervours happen to furnish it with; which sometimes are more affecting, and carry the soul more powerfully to God, than any expressions that were ever used before.

All people that have ever made any reflections upon what passes in their own hearts, must know that they are mighty changeable in regard to devotion. Sometimes our hearts are so *awakened*, have such *strong* apprehensions of the divine Presence, are so full of *deep* compunction for our sins, that we cannot confess them in any language, but that of *tears*.

Sometimes the light of God's countenance shines so bright upon us, we see so far into the invisible world, we are so affected with the wonders of the love and goodness of God, that our hearts worship and adore in a language higher than that of words, and we feel transports of devotion, which only can be felt.

On the other hand, sometimes we are so *sunk* into our bodies, so *dull* and *unaffected* with that which concerns our souls, that our hearts are as much too low for our prayers; we cannot keep pace with our *forms* of confession, or feel half of that in our hearts which we have in our mouths; we thank and praise God

with forms of words, but our hearts have little or no share in them.

It is therefore highly necessary, to provide against this *inconstancy* of our hearts, by having at hand such *forms* of prayer, as may best suit us when our hearts are in their *best* state, and also be most likely to raise and stir them up, when they are *sunk* into *dulness*. For as words have a power of affecting our hearts on all occasions, as the same thing differently expressed has different effects upon our minds; so it is reasonable, that we should make this advantage of language, and provide ourselves with such forms of expressions, as are most likely to move and enliven our souls, and fill them with sentiments suitable to them.

The first thing that you are to do, when you are upon your *knees*, is to shut your *eyes*, and with a short *silence* let your soul place itself in the presence of God; that is, you are to use this, or some other better method, to separate yourself from all common thoughts, and make your heart as sensible as you can of the divine presence.

Now if this recollection of spirit is necessary, as who can say it is not? then how poorly must they perform their devotions, who are always in a *hurry*; who begin them in haste, and hardly allow themselves time to repeat their very *form*, with any gravity or attention? Theirs is properly *saying* prayers, instead of *praying*.

To proceed; if you were to use yourself (as far as you can) to pray always in the *same* place; if you were to reserve that place for devotion, and not allow yourself to do anything common in it; if you were never to be there yourself, but in times of devotion; if any *little room*, (or if that cannot be) if any particular *part* of a room was thus used, this kind of consecration of it, as a place *holy* unto God, would have an effect upon your mind, and dispose you to such tempers, as would very much assist your devotion. For by having a place thus sacred in your *room*, it would in some measure resemble a *chapel* or *house* of God. This would dispose you to be always in the spirit of religion, when you were there; and fill you with *wise* and *holy* thoughts, when you were by yourself. Your own apartment would raise in your mind, such sentiments as you have, when you stand near an *altar*; and you would be afraid of thinking or doing anything that was *foolish* near that place, which is the place of prayer, and holy intercourse with God.

When you begin your petitions, use such various expressions of the attributes of God, as may make you most sensible of the greatness and power of the divine Nature.

Begin therefore in words like these : ' O Being of all beings, ' Fountain of all light and glory, gracious Father of men and ' angels, whose universal Spirit is everywhere present, giving life, ' and light, and joy, to all angels in heaven, and all creatures ' upon earth,' &c.

For these representations of the divine Attributes, which show us in some degree the majesty and greatness of God, are an excellent means of raising our hearts, into lively acts of worship and adoration.

What is the reason, that most people are so much affected with this petition in the *Burial Service* of our Church : ' Yet, O ' Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most ' merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal ' death? ' It is, because the joining together so many *great expressions*, gives such a description of the greatness of the Divine Majesty, as naturally affects every sensible mind.

Although therefore prayer does not consist in *fine words*, or *studied expressions* ; yet as words speak to the soul, as they have a certain power of raising thoughts in the soul ; so those words which speak of God in the *highest* manner, which most *fully* express the power and presence of God, which raise thoughts in the soul most suitable to the greatness and providence of God, are the most useful, and most edifying in our prayers.

When you direct any of your petitions to our blessed Lord, let it be in some expressions of this kind : ' O Saviour of the ' world, God of God, Light of Light ; thou that art the Bright- ' ness of thy Father's Glory, and the express Image of his ' Person ; thou that art the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning ' and End of all things ; thou that hast destroyed the power of ' the devil, that hast overcome death ; thou that art entered into ' the Holy of Holies, that sittest at the right hand of the Father, ' that art high above all thrones and principalities, that makest ' intercession for all the world ; thou that art the judge of the ' quick and dead ; thou that wilt speedily come down in thy ' Father's glory, to reward all men according to their works, be ' thou my light and my peace,' &c.

For such representations, which describe so many *characters* of our Saviour's nature and power, are not only proper acts of *adoration*, but will, if they are repeated with any attention, fill our hearts with the highest fervours of true devotion.

Again, if you ask any particular grace of our blessed Lord, let it be in some manner like this :

' O holy Jesus, Son of the most high God, thou that wert ' scourged at a pillar, stretched and nailed upon a cross, for the ' sins of the world, unite me to thy cross, and fill my soul with

'thy holy, humble, and suffering spirit. O Fountain of mercy, thou that didst save the thief upon the cross, save me from the guilt of a sinful life; thou that didst cast seven devils out of Mary Magdalene, cast out of my heart all evil thoughts, and wicked tempers. O Giver of life, thou that didst raise Lazarus from the dead, raise up my soul from the death and darkness of sin. Thou that didst give to thy Apostles power over unclean spirits, give me power over my own heart. Thou that didst appear unto thy disciples when the doors were shut, do thou appear unto me in the secret apartment of my heart. Thou that didst cleanse the lepers, heal the sick, and give sight to the blind, cleanse my heart, heal the disorders of my soul, and fill me with heavenly light.'

Now these kinds of appeals have a double advantage; first, as they are so many proper acts of our *faith*, whereby we not only show our belief of the *miracles* of Christ, but turn them at the same time into so many instances of worship and adoration.

Secondly, As they strengthen and increase the faith of our prayers, by presenting to our minds so many instances of that *power* and *goodness*, which we call upon for our own assistance.

For he that appeals to Christ, as casting out *devils*, and raising the *dead*, has then a powerful motive in his mind to pray earnestly, and depend faithfully upon his assistance.

Again; in order to fill your prayers with excellent strains of devotion, it may be of use to you to observe this further rule:

When at any time either in reading the *Scripture*, or any book of *Piety*, you meet with a passage, that more than ordinarily affects your mind, and seems as it were to give your heart a new motion towards God, you should try to turn it into the *form* of a petition, and then give it a place in your prayers. By this means, you would be often improving your prayers, and storing yourself with proper forms, of making the desires of your heart known unto God.

At all the *stated hours* of prayer, it will be of great benefit to you, to have something *fixed*, and something at *liberty*, in your devotions.

You should have some *fixed* subject, which is constantly to be the chief matter of your prayer at that particular time; and yet have liberty to add such *other petitions*, as your condition may then require.

For instance; As the *morning* is to you the beginning of a new life; as God has then given you a new enjoyment of yourself, and a fresh entrance into the world, it is highly proper, that your *first* devotions should be a *praise* and thanksgiving to God, as for a new creation; and that you should offer and devote

body and soul, all that you *are*, and all that you *have*, to his service and glory.

Receive therefore every day, as a *resurrection* from death, as a new enjoyment of life; meet every *rising sun* with such sentiments of God's goodness, as if you had seen *it*, and all things *new created* upon your account; and under the sense of so great a blessing, let your joyful heart praise and magnify so good and glorious a Creator.

Let therefore *praise and thanksgiving*, and *oblation* of yourself unto God, be always the *fixed and certain* subject of your *first* prayers in the morning; and then take the liberty of adding such other devotions, as the *accidental* difference of your *state*, or the *accidental* difference of your *heart*, shall then make most needful and expedient for you.

For one of the greatest benefits of *private* devotion, consists in rightly adapting our prayers to these two conditions, the difference of our *state*, and the difference of our *hearts*.

By the difference of our *state*, is meant the difference of our *external state* or condition, as of *sickness, health, pains, losses, disappointments, troubles*, particular *mercies*, or *judgments* from God; all sorts of *kindnesses, injuries or reproaches* from other people.

Now as these are great parts of our state of life, as they make great difference in it, by continually changing; so our devotion will be made doubly beneficial to us, when it watches to receive and sanctify all these *changes* of our state, and turns them all into so many occasions, of a more particular application to God, of such thanksgivings, such resignation, such petitions, as our present state more especially requires.

And he that makes every change in his state, a reason of presenting unto God some particular petitions suitable to that change, will soon find, that he has taken an excellent means, not only of *praying* with fervour, but of *living* as he prays.

The next condition, to which we are always to adapt some part of our prayers, is the *difference* of our *hearts*; by which is meant the different state of the tempers of our hearts, as of *love, joy, peace, tranquillity*; *dulness and dryness of spirit, anxiety, discontent, motions of envy and ambition, dark and disconsolate thoughts, resentments, fretfulness, and peevish tempers*.

Now as these tempers, through the weakness of our nature, will have their succession more or less, even in pious minds; so we should constantly make the *present state* of our heart, the reason of some particular application to God.

If we are in the delightful calm of sweet and easy passions, of *love and joy* in God, we should then offer the grateful tribute of

thanksgiving to God, for the possession of so much happiness, thankfully owning and acknowledging him as the bountiful Giver of it all.

If, on the other hand, we feel ourselves laden with *heavy* passions, with *dulness* of spirit, *anxiety* and *uneasiness*, we must then look up to God in acts of humility, confessing our unworthiness, opening our troubles to him, beseeching him in his good time to lessen the weight of our infirmities, and to deliver us from such passions as oppose the purity and perfection of our souls.

Now by thus watching, and attending to the present state of our hearts, and suiting some of our petitions exactly to their wants, we shall not only be well acquainted with the disorders of our souls, but also be well exercised in the method of curing them.

By this prudent and wise application of our prayers, we shall get all the relief from them that is possible; and the very *changeableness* of our hearts, will prove a means of exercising a greater variety of holy tempers.

Now by all that has here been said, you will easily perceive, that persons careful of the greatest benefit of prayer, ought to have a great share in the forming and composing their own devotions.

As to that part of their prayers, which is always fixed to one certain subject, in that they may use the help of forms composed by other persons; but in that part of their prayers, which they are always to suit to the present *state* of their *life*, and the *present* state of their *heart*, there they must let the sense of their own condition help them to such kinds of *petition*, *thanksgiving*, or *resignation*, as their present state more especially requires.

Happy are they, who have this business and employment upon their hands!

And now, if people of leisure, whether men, or women, who are so much at a loss how to dispose of their time, who are forced into poor contrivances, idle visits, and ridiculous diversions, merely to get rid of hours that hang heavily upon their hands; if such were to appoint some certain spaces of their time, to the study of devotion, searching after all the means and helps to attain a devout spirit; if they were to collect the best *forms* of devotion, to use themselves to transcribe the finest passages of *scripture-prayers*; if they were to collect the devotions, confessions, petitions, praises, resignations, and thanksgivings, which are scattered up and down in the Psalms, and range them under proper heads, as so much proper fuel for the flame of their own devotion; if their minds were often thus employed, sometimes

meditating upon them, sometimes getting them by heart, and making them as habitual as their own thoughts, how fervently would they pray, who came thus prepared to prayer?

And how much better would it be, to make this benefit of *leisure-time*, than to be *dully* and *idly* lost in the poor impertinences of a *playing, visiting, wandering* life?

How much better would it be, to be thus furnished with hymns and anthems of the saints, and teach their souls to ascend to God, than to *corrupt, bewilder, and confound* their hearts, with the *wild fancies, the lustful* thoughts of a lewd Poet?

Now though people of leisure seem called more particularly to this study of devotion, yet persons of much business or labour, must not think themselves excused from this, or some better method of improving their devotion.

For the greater their business is, the more need they have of some such method as this, to prevent its power over their hearts; to secure them from sinking into worldly tempers, and preserve a sense and taste of heavenly things in their minds. And a little time *regularly* and *constantly* employed to any one *use* or *end*, will do great things, and produce mighty effects.

And it is for want of considering devotion in this *light*, as something that is to be nursed and cherished with care, as something that is to be made part of our business, that is to be improved with care and contrivance, by art and method, and a diligent use of the best helps; it is for want of considering it in this light, that so many people are so little benefited by it, and live and die strangers to that spirit of devotion, which by a prudent use of proper means, they might have enjoyed in a high degree.

For though the spirit of devotion is the gift of God, and not attainable by any *mere* power of our own, yet it is mostly given, and *never withheld*, from those, who by a wise and diligent use of proper means, prepare themselves for the reception of it.

And it is amazing to see, how eagerly men employ their *parts*, their *sagacity, time, study, application* and *exercise*; how all helps are called to their assistance, when anything is intended and desired in worldly matters; and how *dull, negligent*, and unimproved they are, how little they use their *parts, sagacity*, and abilities, to raise and increase their devotion!

Mundanus is a man of excellent parts, and clear apprehension. He is well advanced in age, and has made a great figure in business. Every part of *trade* and business that has fallen in his way, has had some improvement from him; and he is always contriving to carry every method of doing anything

well, to its greatest height. *Mundanus* aims at the greatest perfection in everything. The *soundness* and *strength* of his mind, and his just way of thinking upon things, makes him intent upon removing all imperfections.

He can tell you all the defects and errors in all the common methods, whether of *trade*, *building*, or improving *land*, or *manufactures*. The clearness and strength of his understanding, which he is constantly improving, by continual exercise in these matters, by often digesting his thoughts in writing, and trying everything every way, has rendered him a great master of most concerns in human life.

Thus has *Mundanus* gone on, increasing his *knowledge* and *judgment*, as fast as his years came upon him.

The one only thing which has not fallen under his improvement, nor received any benefit from his judicious mind, is his *devotion*: This is just in the same *poor* state it was, when he was only six years of age, and the *old man* prays now, in that little form of words, which his mother used to hear him repeat night and morning.

This *Mundanus*, that hardly ever saw the poorest *utensil*, or ever took the meanest *trifle* into his hand, without considering how it might be *made*, or *used* to better advantage, has gone all his life long praying in the same manner, as when he was a *child*; without ever considering how much *better* or *oftener* he might pray; without considering how improvable the spirit of devotion is, how many helps a wise and reasonable man may call to his assistance, and how necessary it is, that our prayers should be enlarged, varied and suited to the particular state and condition of our lives.

If *Mundanus* sees a book of *devotion*, he passes it by, as he does a *spelling-book*, because he remembers that he learned to *pray*, so many years ago under his *mother*, when he learned to *spell*.

Now how poor and pitiable is the conduct of this man of sense, who has so much judgment and understanding in everything, but that which is the *whole wisdom* of man?

And how miserably do many people, more or less, imitate this conduct?

All which seems to be owing to a strange infatuated state of negligence, which keeps people from considering what *devotion* is. For if they did but once proceed so far, as to *reflect* about it, or ask themselves any questions concerning it, they would soon see, that the spirit of *devotion* was like any other *sense* or *understanding*, that is only to be improved by *study*, *care*, *application*, and the *use* of such *means* and *helps*, as are necessary to make a man a proficient in any art or science.

Classicus is a man of learning and well versed in all the best authors of antiquity. He has read them so much, that he has entered into their spirit, and can very ingeniously imitate the manner of any of them. All their thoughts are his thoughts, and he can express himself in their language. He is so great a friend to this improvement of the mind, that if he lights on a young scholar, he never fails to advise him concerning his studies.

Classicus tells this young man, he must not think that he has done enough, when he has only learned *languages*; but that he must be daily conversant with the best authors, read them again and again, catch their spirit by living with them, and that there is no other way of becoming like them, or of making himself a man of *taste* and *judgment*.

How wise might *Classicus* have been, and how much good might he have done in the world, if he had but thought as *justly* of *devotion*, as he does of *learning*?

He never, indeed, says anything *shocking* or *offensive* about *devotion*, because he never *thinks*, or *talks* about it. It suffers nothing from him, but neglect and disregard.

The two Testaments would not have had so much as a place amongst his Books, but that they are both to be had in *Greek*.

Classicus thinks that he sufficiently shows his regard for the Holy Scripture, when he tells you, that he has no other Books of piety besides them.

It is very well, *Classicus*, that you prefer the Bible to all other Books of piety; he has no judgment, that is not thus far of your opinion.

But if you will have no other book of piety besides the *Bible*, because it is the best, How comes it, *Classicus*, that you do not content yourself with *one* of the *best* Books amongst the *Greeks* and *Romans*? How comes it that you are so greedy and eager after *all* of them? How comes it that you think the knowledge of one is a necessary help to the knowledge of the other? How comes it that you are so earnest, so laborious, so expensive of your time and money, to restore *broken periods*, and *scraps* of the ancients?

How comes it that you read so many *Commentators* upon *Cicero*, *Horace*, and *Homer*, and not one upon the Gospel? How comes it that your love of *Cicero*, and *Ovid*, makes you love to read an *author* that writes like them; and yet your *esteem* for the *Gospel* gives you no desire, nay, prevents your reading such Books, as breathe the very spirit of the Gospel?

How comes it that you tell your *young scholar*, he must not content himself with barely understanding his authors, but must

be continually reading them *all*, as the only means of entering into their spirit, and forming his own judgment according to them ?

Why then must the Bible lie alone in your study ? Is not the spirit of the saints, the piety of the holy followers of Jesus Christ, as good and necessary a means of entering into the spirit and *taste* of the Gospel, as the reading of the ancients is of entering into the spirit of antiquity ?

Is the spirit of poetry only to be got by much reading of Poets and Orators ? And is not the spirit of devotion to be got in the same way, by frequently reading the holy thoughts, and pious strains of devout men ?

Is your young Poet to search after *every line*, that may give new wings to his fancy, or direct his imagination ? And is it not as reasonable for him, who desires to improve in the divine life, that is, in the love of heavenly things, to search after every strain of devotion, that may move, kindle, and inflame the holy ardour of his soul ?

Do you advise your *Orator* to translate the best Oration, to commit much of them to memory, to be frequently exercising his talent in this manner, that habits of thinking and speaking justly may be formed in his mind ? And is there not the same benefit and advantage to be made by books of devotion ? Should not a man use them in the same way, that habits of devotion, and aspiring to God in holy thoughts, may be well formed in his soul ?

Now the reason why *Classicus* does not *think* and judge thus reasonably of devotion, is owing to his never thinking of it in any other manner, than as the repeating a *form of words*. It never in his life entered into his head, to think of devotion as a *state of the heart*, as an *improvable talent* of the mind, as a *temper* that is to *grow* and *increase* like our *reason* and *judgment*, and to be formed in us by such a regular diligent use of proper means, as are necessary to form any other wise habit of mind.

And it is for want of this, that he has been content all his life, with the *bare letter* of Prayer, and eagerly bent upon entering into the *spirit of heathen poets and orators*.

And it is much to be lamented, that numbers of *scholars* are *more or less* chargeable with this excessive folly ; so negligent of improving their devotion, and so desirous of other poor accomplishments, as if they thought it a nobler talent, to be able to write an *epigram* in the *turn of Martial*, than to *live*, and *think*, and *pray* to God, in the spirit of St. *Austin*.

And yet, to correct this temper, and fill a man with a quite contrary spirit, there seems to be no more required, than the *bare belief* of the truth of Christianity.

And if you were to ask *Mundanus*, and *Classicus*, or any man of business, or learning, whether *piety* is not the highest perfection of man, or *devotion* the greatest attainment in the world, they must both be forced to answer in the affirmative, or else give up the truth of the Gospel.

For to set any accomplishment against devotion, or to think anything, or all things in the world, can bear any proportion to its excellency ; is the same absurdity in a Christian, as it would be in a *Philosopher* to prefer a *meal's meat*, to the greatest improvement in knowledge.

For as *Philosophy* professes purely the search and enquiry after knowledge, so *Christianity* supposes, intends, desires, and aims at nothing else, but the raising fallen man to a divine life, to such habits of holiness, such degrees of devotion, as may fit him to enter among the holy inhabitants of the kingdom of heaven.

He that does not believe this of Christianity, may be reckoned an infidel ; and he that believes thus much, has *faith* enough to give him a right *judgment* of the *value* of things, to support him in a *sound mind*, and enable him to conquer all the temptations which the world shall lay in his way.

To conclude this Chapter, Devotion is nothing else but *right apprehensions* and *right affections* towards God.

All practices therefore that heighten and improve our true apprehensions of God, all ways of life that tend to *nourish, raise,* and fix our affections upon him, are to be reckoned so many helps and means to fill us with devotion.

As *Prayer* is the proper fuel of this holy flame, so we must use all our care and contrivance to give prayer its full power ; as by *alms, self-denial, frequent retirements,* and *holy readings,* composing *forms* for ourselves, or using the *best* we can get, adding *length* of time, and observing *hours* of Prayer ; *changing, improving,* and *suiting* our devotions to the condition of our lives, and the state of our hearts.

Those who have most leisure, seem more especially called to a more eminent observance of these holy rules of a devout life. And they who by the necessity of their state, and not through their own choice, have but little time to employ thus, must make the best use of that little they have.

For this is the certain way of making devotion produce a devout life.

Chapter XV.

Of chanting, or singing of Psalms in our private devotions. Of the excellency and benefit of this kind of devotion. Of the great effects it hath upon our hearts. Of the means of performing it in the best manner.

YOU have seen in the foregoing Chapter, what means and methods you are to use, to raise and improve your devotion. How *early* you are to begin your prayers, and what is to be the *subject* of your *first devotions* in the morning.

There is one thing still remaining, that you must be required to observe, not only as fit and proper to be done, but as such as cannot be neglected, without great prejudice to your devotions. And that is, to begin all your Prayers with a *Psalm*.

This is so right, is so beneficial to devotion, has so much effect upon our hearts, that it may be insisted upon as a *common* rule for all persons.

I do not mean, that you should *read* over a Psalm, but that you should *chant* or *sing* one of those Psalms, which we commonly call the *reading Psalms*. For *singing* is as much the *proper* use of a *Psalm*, as *devout supplication* is the *proper* use of a *form* of Prayer. And a Psalm only *read*, is very much like a Prayer that is only *looked* over.

Now the method of *chanting* a Psalm, such as is used in the Colleges in the *Universities*, and in some *Churches*, is such as all Persons are capable of. The change of the voice in thus *chanting* of a Psalm is so small and natural, that everybody is able to do it, and yet sufficient to raise and keep up the gladness of our hearts.

You are therefore to consider this *chanting* of a Psalm, as a necessary beginning of your devotions, as something that is to *awaken* all that is *good* and *holy* within you, that is to call your *spirits* to their proper duty, to set you in your best *posture* towards heaven, and tune all the powers of your soul to worship and adoration.

For there is nothing that so clears a way for your prayers,

nothing that so disperses *dulness* of heart, nothing that so purifies the soul from *poor* and *little* passions, nothing that so *opens* heaven, or carries your heart so near it, as these *songs of praise*.

They create a sense and delight in God, they awaken holy desires, they teach you how to ask, and they prevail with God to give. They kindle an *holy* flame, they turn your heart into an *altar*, your prayers into *incense*, and carry them as a sweet-smelling savour to the throne of Grace.

The difference between singing and reading a Psalm, will easily be understood, if you consider the difference between reading and singing a *common song* that you like. Whilst you only read it, you only *like* it, and that is all ; but as soon as you sing it, then you enjoy it, you feel the delight of it, it has got hold of you, your passions keep pace with it, and you feel the *same spirit* within you, that seems to be in the words.

If you were to tell a person that has such a song, that he need not *sing* it, that it was sufficient to *peruse* it, he would wonder what you mean ; and would think you as absurd, as if you were to tell him, that he should only *look* at his *food*, to see whether it was good, but need not *eat* it : For a song of praise not sung, is very like any other good thing not made *use* of.

You will perhaps say, that singing is a *particular talent*, that belongs only to particular people, and that you have neither *voice* nor *ear* to make any music.

If you had said that singing is a *general talent*, and that people differ in that as they do in all other things, you had said something much truer.

For how vastly do people differ in the talent of *thinking*, which is not only common to all men, but seems to be the very essence of human nature ? How readily do some people reason upon everything ? and how hardly do others reason upon anything ? How clearly do some people discourse upon the most abstruse matters ? and how confusedly do others talk upon the plainest subjects ?

Yet no one desires to be excused from *thought*, or *reason*, or *discourse*, because he has not these *talents*, as some people have them. But it is full as just, for a person to think himself excused from *thinking* upon God, from *reasoning* about his duty to him, or *discoursing* about the means of salvation, because he has not these talents in any *fine degree* ; this is full as just, as for a person to think himself excused from singing the praises of God, because he has not a *fine ear*, or a musical *voice*.

For as it is *speaking*, and not *graceful* speaking, that is a required part of prayer ; as it is *bowing*, and not *genteel* bowing,

that is a proper part of adoration ; so it is *singing*, and not *artful* fine singing, that is a required way of praising God.

If a person were to forbear praying, because he had an *odd tone* in his voice, he would have as good an excuse as he has, that forbears from *singing* Psalms, because he has but little management of his voice. And as a man's speaking his prayers, though in an odd tone, may yet sufficiently answer all the ends of his own devotion ; so a man's singing of a Psalm, though not in a very musical way, may yet sufficiently answer all the ends of rejoicing in, and praising God.

Secondly, This objection might be of some weight, if you were desired to sing, to entertain other people ; but is not to be admitted in the present case ; where you are only required to sing the praises of God, as a part of your private devotion.

If a person that had a very ill voice, and a bad way of speaking, were desired to be the mouth of a congregation, it would be a very proper excuse for him, to say that he had not a voice, or a way of speaking that was proper for prayer. But he would be very absurd, if for the same reason he should neglect his own private devotions.

Now this is exactly the case of singing Psalms ; you may not have the talent of singing, so as to be able to entertain other people, and therefore it is reasonable to excuse yourself from it ; but if for that reason you should excuse yourself from this way of praising God, you would be guilty of a great absurdity : Because singing is no more required for the music that is made by it, than prayer is required for the fine words that it contains, but as it is the natural and proper expression of a heart rejoicing in God.

Our blessed Saviour and his apostles sung an hymn ; but it may reasonably be supposed, that they rather *rejoiced* in God, than made *fine* music.

Do but so live, that your heart may truly rejoice in God, that it may feel itself affected with the praises of God, and then you will find, that this state of your heart will neither want a voice, nor ear to find a tune for a Psalm. Everyone, at some time or other, finds himself able to sing in some degree ; there are some times and occasions of joy, that make all people ready to express their sense of it in some sort of harmony. The joy that they feel, forces them to let their voice have a part in it.

He therefore that saith he wants a voice, or an ear, to sing a Psalm, mistakes the case ; he wants that *spirit* that really rejoices in God ; the dulness is in his *heart*, and not in his *ear* ; and when his heart feels a true joy in God, when it has a full relish of what is expressed in the Psalms, he will find it very pleasant,

to make the motions of his voice express the motions of his heart.

Singing indeed, as it is improved into an art, as it signifies the running of the voice through such or such a compass of notes, and keeping time with a studied variety of changes, is not natural, nor the effect of any natural state of the mind; so in this sense, it is not *common* to all people, any more than those *antic* and *invented* motions which make *fine dancing*, are common to all people.

But singing, as it signifies a motion of the voice suitable to the motions of the heart, and the changing of its tone according to the meaning of the words which we utter, is as natural and common to all men, as it is to speak *high*, when they *threaten* in anger, or to speak *low*, when they are *dejected* and ask for a *pardon*.

All men therefore are singers, in the same manner as all men *think*, *speak*, *laugh*, and *lament*. For singing is no more an invention, than *grief* or *joy* are inventions.

Every state of the heart naturally puts the body into some state that is suitable to it, and is proper to show it to other people. If a man is *angry*, or *disdainful*, no one need instruct him how to express these passions by the *tone* of his voice. The *state* of his heart disposes him to a *proper* use of his voice.

If therefore there are but *few* singers of *divine* songs, if people want to be *exhorted* to this *part* of devotion; it is because there are but few, whose hearts are *raised* to that *height* of piety, as to feel any motions of *joy* and *delight* in the praises of God.

Imagine to yourself, that you had been with *Moses* when he was led through the *Red Sea*; that you had seen the waters divide themselves, and stand on an heap on both sides; that you had seen them held up till you had passed through, then let fall upon your enemies; do you think that you should then have wanted a *voice* or an *ear* to have sung with *Moses*, 'The Lord is my strength, and my song, and he is become my salvation,' &c.? I know, your own heart tells you, that all people must have been singers upon such an occasion. Let this therefore teach you, that it is the heart that tunes a voice to sing the praises of God; and that if you cannot sing these same words now with joy, it is because you are not so affected with the salvation of the world by Jesus Christ, as the *Jews* were, or you yourself would have been, with their deliverance at the *Red Sea*.

That it is the state of the heart, that disposes us to rejoice in any particular kind of singing, may be easily proved from variety of observations upon human nature. An *old debauchee* may, according to the language of the world, have neither *voice* nor ear, if you only sing a *Psalm*, or a song in praise of *virtue* to

him ; but yet, if in some *easy tune* you sing something that celebrates his *former debauches*, he will then, though he has no *teeth* in his head, show you, that he has both a *voice* and an *ear* to join such music. You then awaken his heart, and he as *naturally* sings to such words, as he laughs when he is pleased. And this will be the case in every song that touches the heart ; if you celebrate the ruling passion of any man's heart, you put his voice in tune to join with you.

Thus if you can find a man, whose *ruling temper* is devotion, whose heart is full of God, his voice will rejoice in those songs of praise, which glorify that God who is the joy of his heart, though he has neither voice nor ear for other music. Would you therefore delightfully perform this part of devotion, it is not so necessary to learn a *tune*, or practise upon *notes*, as to prepare your heart ; for as our blessed Lord saith, out of the heart proceed *evil thoughts, murders, &c.*, so it is equally true, that out of the heart proceed *holy joys, thanksgiving* and *praise*. If you can once say with *David*, ' My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed ; ' it will be very easy and natural to add, as he did, ' I will sing and ' give praise, ' &c.

Secondly, Let us now consider another reason for this kind of devotion. As singing is a natural *effect* of joy in the heart, so it has also a natural power of rendering the heart joyful.

The soul and body are so united, that they have each of them power over one another in their actions. Certain thoughts and sentiments in the soul, produce such and such motions or actions in the body ; and on the other hand, certain motions and actions of the body, have the same power of raising such and such thoughts and sentiments in the soul. So that as singing is the natural *effect* of joy in the mind, so it is as truly a natural *cause* of raising joy in the mind.

As devotion of the heart naturally breaks out into outward acts of prayer, so outward acts of prayer are natural means of raising the devotion of the heart.

It is thus in all states and tempers of the mind ; as the inward state of the mind produces outward actions suitable to it, so those outward actions, have the like power of raising an inward state of mind suitable to them.

As *anger* produces angry words, so angry words increase anger.

So that if we barely consider human nature, we shall find, that *singing* or *chanting* the Psalms, is as proper and necessary to raise our hearts to a delight in God, as prayer is proper and necessary to excite in us the spirit of devotion. Every reason for one, is in all respects as strong a reason for the other.

If therefore you would know the reason and necessity of singing Psalms, you must consider the reason and necessity of praising and rejoicing in God; because singing of Psalms is as much the true exercise and support of this spirit of thanksgiving, as prayer is the true exercise and support of the spirit of devotion. And you may as well think, that you can be devout as you ought, without the use of prayer, as that you can rejoice in God as you ought, without the practice of singing Psalms. Because this singing is as much the *natural language* of praise and thanksgiving, as prayer is the natural language of devotion.

The union of soul and body is not a mixture of their substances, as we see bodies united and mixed together, but consists solely in the mutual power that they have of acting upon one another.

If two persons were in such a state of dependance upon one another, that neither of them could act, or move, or think, or feel, or suffer, or desire anything, without putting the other into the same condition, one might properly say, that they were in a state of strict union, although their substances were not united together.

Now this is the union of the soul and body; the substance of the one cannot be mixed, or united with the other; but they are held together in such a state of union, that all the actions and sufferings of the one, are at the same time the actions and sufferings of the other. The soul has no thought or passion, but the body is concerned in it; the body has no action or motion, but what in some degree affects the soul.

Now as it is the sole will of God, that is the *reason* and *cause* of all the powers and effects which you see in the world; as the *Sun* gives light and heat, not because it has any natural power of so doing; as it is fixed in a certain place, and other bodies moving about it, not because it is in the nature of the Sun to stand still, and in the nature of other bodies to move about it; but merely because it is the *will* of God, that they should be in such a state. As the *eye* is the organ, or instrument of seeing, not because the *skins*, and *coats*, and *humours* of the eye, have a natural power of giving sight: As the ears are the organs, or instruments of hearing; not because the *make* of the ear has any natural power over sounds, but merely because it is the will of God, that *seeing* and *hearing* should be thus received: So in like manner it is the sole will of God, and not the nature of a human soul or body, that is the cause of this union betwixt the soul and the body.

Now if you rightly apprehend this short account of the union of the soul and body, you will see a great deal into the reason and necessity of all the outward parts of Religion.

This union of our souls and bodies, is the reason both why we have so little, and so much power over ourselves. It is owing to this union, that we have so little power over our souls; for as we cannot prevent the effects of external objects upon our bodies, as we cannot command outward causes, so we cannot always command the inward state of our minds; because, as outward objects act upon our bodies without our leave, so our bodies act upon our minds by the laws of the union of the soul and the body: And thus you see it is owing to this union, that we have so *little* power over ourselves.

On the other hand, it is owing to this union, that we have so *much* power over ourselves. For as our souls, in a great measure, depend upon our bodies, and as we have great power over our bodies, as we can command our outward actions, and oblige ourselves to such habits of life, as naturally produce habits in the soul, as we can mortify our bodies, and remove ourselves, from objects that inflame our passions, so we have a great power over the *inward* state of our souls. Again, as we are masters of our outward actions, as we can force ourselves to outward acts of reading, praying, singing, and the like, and as all these bodily actions have an effect upon the soul, as they naturally tend to form such and such tempers in our hearts; so by being masters of these outward, bodily actions, we have great power over the inward state of the heart.

And thus it is owing to this union, that we have so much power over ourselves.

Now from this you may also see the necessity and benefit of singing Psalms, and of all the outward acts of Religion? for if the body has so much power over the soul, it is certain that all such bodily actions as affect the soul, are of great weight in Religion. Not as if there were any true worship, or piety in the actions themselves, but because they are proper to raise and support that *spirit*, which is the true worship of God.

Though therefore the seat of Religion is in the heart, yet since our bodies have a power over our hearts, since outward actions both proceed from, and enter into the heart, it is plain, that outward actions have a great power over that Religion which is seated in the heart.

We are therefore as well to use outward helps, as inward meditation, in order to beget and fix habits of piety in our hearts.

This doctrine may easily be carried too far; for by calling in too many outward means of worship, it may degenerate into superstition: as on the other hand, some have fallen into the contrary extreme. For because Religion is justly placed in the

heart, some have pursued that notion so far, as to renounce vocal prayer, and other outward acts of worship, and have resolved all religion into a *quietism*, or *mystic* intercourse with God in silence.

Now these are two *extremes* equally prejudicial to true Religion; and ought not to be objected either against internal, or external worship. As you ought not to say, that I encourage that *quietism* by placing religion in the heart: so neither ought you to say, that I encourage superstition, by showing the benefit of outward acts of worship.

For since we are neither *all soul*, nor *all body*; seeing none of our actions are either separately of the soul, or separately of the body; seeing we have no habits but such as are produced by the actions both of our souls and bodies; it is certain, that if we would arrive at habits of devotion, or delight in God, we must not only meditate and exercise our souls, but we must practise and exercise our bodies to all such outward actions, as are conformable to these inward tempers.

If we would truly prostrate our souls before God, we must use our bodies to postures of lowliness: if we desire true fervours of devotion, we must make prayer the frequent labour of our lips. If we would banish all pride and passion from our hearts, we must force ourselves to all outward actions of patience and meekness. If we would feel inward motions of joy and delight in God, we must practise all the outward acts of it, and make our voices call upon our hearts.

Now therefore, you may plainly see the reason and necessity of *singing of Psalms*; it is because outward actions are necessary to support inward tempers; and therefore the outward act of joy is necessary to raise and support the inward joy of the mind.

If any People were to leave off prayer, because they seldom find the motions of their heart answering the words which they speak, you would charge them with great absurdity. You would think it very reasonable, that they should continue their prayers, and be strict in observing all times of prayer, as the most likely means of removing the dulness and indevotion of their hearts.

Now this is very much the case as to singing of Psalms; people often sing without finding any inward joy suitable to the words which they speak; therefore they are careless of it, or wholly neglect it; not considering, that they act as absurdly, as he that should neglect prayer, because his heart was not enough affected with it. For it is certain, that this singing is as much the natural means of raising motions of joy in the mind, as prayer is the natural means of raising devotion.

I have been the longer upon this head, because of its great

importance to true religion. For there is no state of mind so holy, so excellent, and so truly perfect, as that of *thankfulness* to God, and consequently nothing is of more importance in Religion, than that which exercises and improves this habit of mind.

A *dull, uneasy, complaining* spirit, which is sometimes the spirit of those that seem careful of Religion, is yet, of all tempers, the most contrary to Religion, for it disowns that God which it pretends to adore. For he sufficiently disowns God, who does not adore him as a Being of infinite goodness.

If a man does not believe that all the world is as God's family, where nothing happens by chance, but all is guided and directed by the care and providence of a Being, that is all love and goodness to all his creatures; if a man do not believe this from his heart, he cannot be said truly to believe in God. And yet he that has this faith, has faith enough to overcome the world, and always be thankful to God. For he that believes that everything happens to him for the *best*, cannot possibly complain for the want of something that is *better*.

If therefore you live in murmurings and complaints, accusing all the accidents of life, it is not because you are a weak, infirm creature, but it is because you want the first principle of religion, a right belief in God. For as thankfulness is an express acknowledgment of the goodness of God towards you, so repinings and complaints, are as plain accusations of God's want of goodness towards you.

On the other hand, would you know who is the greatest Saint in the world: It is not he who *prays* most, or *fasts* most; it is not he who gives most *alms*, or is most eminent for temperance, chastity, or justice; but it is he who is *always thankful* to God, who *wills* everything that God *willeth*, who receives everything as an instance of God's goodness, and has a heart always ready to praise God for it.

All prayer and devotion, fastings and repentance, meditation and retirement, all sacraments and ordinances, are but so many means to render the soul thus divine, and conformable to the will of God, and to fill it with thankfulness and praise for everything that comes from God. This is the perfection of all virtues; and all virtues that do not tend to it, or proceed from it, are but so many false ornaments of a soul not converted unto God.

You need not therefore now wonder, that I lay so much stress upon singing a Psalm at all your devotions, since you see it is to form your spirit to such joy and thankfulness to God, as is the highest perfection of a divine and holy life.

If anyone would tell you the shortest, surest way to all happi-

ness, and all perfection, he must tell you to make a *rule* to yourself, to *thank and praise God for everything that happens to you*. For it is certain, that whatever seeming calamity happens to you, if you thank and praise God for it, you turn it into a blessing. Could you therefore work miracles, you could not do more for yourself, than by this *thankful spirit*, for it *heals* with a word speaking, and turns all that it touches into happiness.

If therefore you would be so true to your eternal interest, as to propose this *thankfulness* as the end of all your Religion ; if you would but settle it in your mind, that this was the state that you were to aim at by all your devotions, you would then have something plain and visible to walk by in all your actions, you would then easily see the effect of your virtues, and might safely judge of your improvement in piety. For so far as you renounce all selfish tempers, and motions of your own will, and seek for no other happiness, but in the thankful reception of everything that happens to you, so far you may be safely reckoned to have advanced in piety.

And although this be the highest temper that you can aim at, though it be the noblest sacrifice that the greatest saint can offer unto God, yet is it not tied to any *time*, or *place*, or *great* occasion, but is always in your power, and may be the exercise of every day. For the *common events* of every day are sufficient to discover and exercise this temper, and may plainly show you how far you are governed in all your actions by this thankful spirit.

And for this reason, I exhort you to this method in your devotion, that every day may be made a day of thanksgiving, and that the spirit of murmur and discontent may be unable to enter into the heart, which is so often employed in singing the praises of God.

It may perhaps, after all, be objected, that although the great benefit, and excellent effects of this practice are very apparent, yet it seems not altogether so fit for *private* devotions ; since it can hardly be performed without making our devotions public to other people, and seems also liable to the charge of *sounding a trumpet* at our prayers.

It is therefore answered ; *First*, That great numbers of people have it in their power to be as private as they please : such persons therefore are excluded from this excuse, which however it may be so to others, is none to them. Therefore let such take the benefit of this excellent devotion.

Secondly, Numbers of people are by the *necessity* of their state, as *servants, apprentices, prisoners, and families* in small houses, forced to be continually in the presence or sight of somebody or other.

Now, are such persons to neglect their prayers, because they cannot pray without being seen? Are they not rather obliged to be more exact in them, that others may not be witnesses of their neglect, and so corrupted by their example?

Now what is here said of devotion, may surely be said of this *chanting a Psalm*, which is only a part of devotion. *

The rule is this; Do not pray that you *may be seen* of men, but if your *confinement* obliges you to be always in the sight of others, be more afraid of being seen to *neglect*, than of being seen to have *recourse* to prayer.

Thirdly, The short of the matter is this. Either people can use such privacy in this practice as to have no hearers, or they cannot. If they can, then this objection vanishes as to them: and if they cannot, they should consider their *confinement*, and the *necessities* of their state, as the confinement of a *prison*; and then they have an excellent *pattern* to follow, they may imitate *St. Paul and Silas*, who *sung praises to God in prison*, though we are expressly told, that the *prisoners heard them*. They therefore did not refrain from this kind of devotion for fear of being heard by others. If therefore anyone is in the same necessity, either in *prison*, or out of prison, what can he do better than to follow this example?

I cannot pass by this place of Scripture, without desiring the pious reader to observe, how strongly we are here called upon to this use of Psalms, and what a mighty recommendation of it, the practice of these two great *Saints* is.

In this their great distress, in *prison*, in *chains*, under the soreness of *stripes*, in the horror of *night*, the *divinest, holiest* thing they could do, was to *sing praises unto God*.

And shall we, after this, need any exhortation to this holy practice? Shall we let the *day* pass without such thanksgivings, as they would not neglect in the *night*? Shall a *prison, chains*, and *darkness* furnish them with songs of praise, and shall we have no singings in our *closets*?

Further let it also be observed, that while these two holy men were thus employed in the most exalted part of devotion, doing that on *earth*, which *Angels* do in *Heaven*, that 'the foundations of the prison were shaken, all the doors were opened, and everyone's bands were loosed.'*

And shall we now ask for motives to this divine exercise, when instead of *arguments*, we have here such *miracles* to convince us of its mighty power with God?

Could God by a voice from Heaven more expressly call us to

* Acts xvi. 26.

these songs of praise, than by thus showing us, how he *hears*, *delivers*, and *rewards* those that use them ?

But this by the way. I now return to the objection in hand ; and answer *Fourthly*, That the *privacy* of our prayers is not destroyed by our *having*, but by our *seeking* witnesses of them.

If therefore nobody hears you but those you cannot separate yourself from, you are as much in *secret*, and 'your Father who 'seeth in secret,' will as truly reward your secrecy, as if you were seen by him alone.

Fifthly, *Private* prayer, as it is opposed to prayer in *public*, does not suppose that no one is to have any witness of it. For *husbands* and *wives*, *brothers* and *sisters*, *parents* and *children*, *masters* and *servants*, *tutors* and *pupils*, are to be witnesses to one another of such devotion, as may truly and properly be called private. It is far from being a duty to conceal such devotion from such near relations.

In all these cases therefore, where such relations sometimes pray together in private, and sometimes apart by themselves, the chanting of a Psalm can have nothing objected against it.

Our blessed Lord commands us, when we *fast*, to 'anoint our 'heads, and wash our faces, that we appear not unto men to fast, 'but unto our Father which is in secret.'

But this only means, that we must not make *public ostentation* to the *world* of our *fasting*.

For if no one was to fast in *private*, or could be said to fast in private, but he that had no witnesses of it, no one could keep a private fast, but he that lived by himself : For every family must know who fasts in it. Therefore the *privacy* of fasting does not suppose such a privacy as excludes *everybody* from knowing it, but such a privacy as does not seek to be known abroad.

Cornelius the devout Centurion, of whom the Scripture saith, that he 'gave much,' and 'prayed to God alway,' saith unto St. *Peter*, 'four days ago, I was fasting until this hour.'*

Now that this fasting was sufficiently *private* and acceptable to God, appears from the vision of an *Angel*, with which the holy man was blessed at that time.

But that it was not so private, as to be entirely unknown to others, appears, as from the relation of it here, so from what is said in another place, that he 'called two of his household 'servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited upon him 'continually.† So that *Cornelius's* fasting was so far from being unknown to his family, that the soldiers and they of his household were made devout themselves, by *continually wait-*

* Acts x. 30.

† Acts x. 7.

ing upon him, that is, by seeing and partaking of his good works.

As therefore the *privacy* or *excellency* of fasting, is not destroyed by being known to some particular persons, neither would the *privacy* or *excellency* of your devotions be hurt, though by *chanting* a Psalm, you should be heard by some of your family.

The whole of the matter is this. *Great part* of the world can be as private as they please, therefore let them use this excellent devotion between God and themselves.

Another *great part* of the world must, and ought to have witnesses of several of their devotions; let them therefore not neglect the use of a *Psalm* at *such times* as it ought to be known to those with whom they live, that they do not neglect their prayers. For surely there can be no harm in being known to be *singing* a Psalm, at *such times* as it *ought* to be known that you are at your *prayers*.

And if at other times, you desire to be in such secrecy at your devotions, as to have nobody suspect it, and for that reason forbear your *psalm*; I have nothing to object against it: Provided, that at the known *hours* of prayer, you never omit this practice.

For who would not be often doing that in the *day*, which St. *Paul* and *Silas* would not neglect in the middle of the night? And if when you are thus singing, it should come into your head, how the *prison* *shaked*, and the *doors* *opened*, when St. *Paul* sung, it would do your devotion no harm.

Lastly, seeing our *imagination*s have great power over our hearts, and can mightily affect us with their *representations*, it would be of great use to you, if, at the beginning of your devotions, you were to *imagine* to yourself some such representations, as might heat and warm your heart into a temper suitable to those prayers that you are then about to offer unto God.

As thus: before you begin your *psalm* of praise and rejoicing in God, make this use of your *imagination*.

Be still, and *imagine* to yourself, that you saw the heavens open, and the glorious Choirs of Cherubims and Seraphims about the throne of God. *Imagine* that you hear the music of those Angelic voices, that cease not day and night to sing the glories of him that *is*, and *was*, and *is to come*.

Help your imagination with such passages of Scripture as these: 'I beheld, and lo, in heaven a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne, and before the lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. And they cried

'with a loud voice, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb.

'And all the angels stood round about the throne, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, 'Amen : Blessing and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and strength, be unto God, for ever and ever. 'Amen.'*

Think upon this till your imagination has carried you above the clouds, till it has placed you amongst those heavenly beings, and made you long to bear a part in their eternal music.

If you will but use yourself to this method, and let your imagination dwell upon such representations as these, you will soon find it to be an excellent means of raising the spirit of devotion within you.

Always therefore begin your *Psalm*, or Song of praise, with these *imaginations* ; and at every verse of it, imagine yourself amongst those heavenly companions, that your voice is added to theirs, and that *Angels* join with you, and you with them ; and that you with a poor and low voice are singing that on earth, which they are singing in heaven.

Again, Sometimes *imagine* that you had been one of those that joined with our blessed Saviour when he *sung an Hymn*. Strive to imagine to yourself, with what *majesty* he looked ; fancy that you had stood *close* by him surrounded with his *glory*. Think how your heart would have been *inflamed*, what *ecstasies* of joy you would have then felt, when *singing* with the Son of God. Think again and again, with what joy and devotion you would then have sung, had this been really your happy state, and what a punishment you should have thought it, to have been then silent ; and let this teach you how to be affected with *Psalms* and *Hymns* of thanksgiving.

Again, Sometimes imagine to yourself, that you saw holy *David* with his *hands* upon his *harp*, and his *eyes* fixed upon *heaven*, calling in transport upon all the Creation, *Sun* and *Moon*, *light* and *darkness*, *day* and *night*, *men* and *angels*, to join with his rapturous soul in praising the Lord of Heaven.

Dwell upon this imagination, till you think you are singing with this divine musician, and let such a companion teach you to exalt your heart unto God in the following Psalm ; which you may use constantly first in the morning.

Psalm cxlv. 'I will magnify thee, O God my king : and I will praise thy name for ever and ever,' &c.

These following Psalms, as the 34th, 96th, 103rd, 111th, 146th,

147th, are such as wonderfully set forth the glory of God ; and therefore you may keep to any one of them, at any particular hour, as you like : Or you may take the finest parts of any Psalms, and so adding them together, may make them fitter for your own devotion.

Chapter XVI.

Recommending devotion at nine o'clock in the morning, called in Scripture the third hour of the day. The subject of these prayers is humility.

I AM now come to another hour of prayer, which in Scripture is called the *third hour* of the day ; but according to our way of numbering the hours, it is called the ninth hour of the morning.

The devout Christian must at this time look upon himself, as called upon by God to renew his acts of prayer, and address himself again to the throne of grace.

There is indeed no express command in Scripture to repeat our devotions at this hour. But then it is to be considered also, that neither is there any express command to begin and end the day with prayer. So that if that be looked upon as a reason for neglecting devotion at this hour, it may as well be urged as a reason, for neglecting devotion both at the beginning and end of the day.

But if the practice of the saints in all ages of the world, if the customs of the pious *Jews* and primitive Christians be of any force with us, we have authority enough to persuade us, to make this hour a constant season of devotion.

The Scriptures show us, how this hour was consecrated to devotion both by *Jews* and Christians ; so that if we desire to number ourselves amongst those whose hearts were devoted unto God, we must not let this hour pass, without presenting us to him in some solemnities of devotion. And besides this authority for this practice, the reasonableness of it, is sufficient to invite us to the observance of it.

For if you were up at a good time in the morning, your first devotions will have been at a *proper* distance from this hour ; you will have been long enough at other business, to make it

proper for you to return to this greatest of all business, the raising your soul and affections unto God.

But if you have risen so *late*, as to be hardly able to begin your first devotions at this *hour*, which is proper for your *second*, you may thence learn, that the indulging yourself in the morning sleep is no *small* matter; since it sets you so far *back* in your devotions, and robs you of those graces and blessings, which are obtained by frequent prayers.

For if prayer has *power* with God, if it *looses* the bands of sin, if it *purifies* the soul, *reforms* our hearts, and draws down the *aids* of divine grace; how can that be reckoned a small matter, which robs us of an hour of prayer?

Imagine yourself somewhere placed in the air, as a spectator of all that passes in the world; and that you saw in one view, the devotions which all Christian people offer unto God every day. Imagine, that you saw some piously dividing the *day* and *night*, as the primitive Christians did, and constant at all hours of devotion, *singing* Psalms, and *calling* upon God, at all those times, that *Saints* and *Martyrs* received their gifts and graces from God.

Imagine that you saw others living without any rules, as to *times* and *frequency* of prayer, and only at their devotions sooner or later, as *sleep* and *laziness* happens to permit them.

Now if you were to see this, as God sees it, how do you suppose you should be affected with this sight? What judgment do you imagine, you should pass upon these different sorts of people? Could you think, that those who were thus *exact* in their rules of devotion, got nothing by their *exactness*? Could you think, that their prayers were received just in the same manner, and procured them no more blessings, than theirs do, who prefer laziness and indulgence to *times* and *rules* of devotion?

Could you take the one to be as true servants of God, as the other? Could you imagine, that those who were thus different in their *lives*, would find no difference in their states after *death*? Could you think it a matter of *indifferency*, to which of these people you were *most* like?

If not, let it be now your care, to join yourself to that number of devout people, to that society of saints, amongst whom you desire to be found, when you leave the world.

And although the bare *number* and *repetition* of our prayers is of little value, yet since prayer rightly and attentively performed, is the most *natural means* of amending and purifying our hearts; since *importunity* and *frequency* in prayer is as much pressed upon us by Scripture, as prayer itself; we may be sure, that

when we are frequent and importunate in our prayers, we are taking the *best means*, of obtaining the highest benefits of a devout life.

And on the other hand, they, who through negligence, laziness, or any other indulgence, render themselves either unable, or uninclined to observe *rules* and *hours* of devotion, we may be sure, that they deprive themselves of those graces and blessings, which an *exact* and *fervent* devotion procures from God.

Now as this frequency of prayer, is founded in the doctrines of Scripture, and recommended to us by the practice of the true worshippers of God; so we ought not to think ourselves excused from it, but where we can show, that we are spending our time in such business, as is more acceptable to God, than these returns of prayer.

Least of all must we imagine, that *dulness*, *negligence*, *indulgence*, or *diversions*, can be any pardonable excuses, for our not observing an exact and frequent method of devotion.

If you are of a devout spirit, you will rejoice at these returns of prayer, which keep your soul in an holy enjoyment of God; which change your passions into divine love, and fill your heart with stronger joys and consolations, than you can possibly meet with in anything else.

And if you are not of a devout spirit, then you are moreover obliged to this frequency of prayer, to train and exercise your heart into a true sense and feeling of devotion.

Now seeing the holy spirit of the Christian Religion, and the example of the saints of all ages, calls upon you thus to divide the day into hours of prayer; so it will be highly beneficial to you, to make a right choice of those matters, which are to be the subject of your prayers, and to keep *every* hour of prayer appropriated to some *particular* subject, which you may alter, or enlarge, according as the state you are in requires.

By this means, you will have an opportunity of being *large* and *particular* in all the *parts* of any virtue or grace, which you then make the subject of your prayers. And by asking for it in *all* its parts, and making it the substance of a *whole* prayer once every day, you will soon find a mighty change in your heart; and that you cannot thus constantly pray, for all the parts of any virtue every day of your life, and yet live the rest of the day contrary to it.

If a *worldly-minded* man, was to pray every day against all the *instances* of a worldly temper: If he should make a large *description* of the temptations of covetousness, and desire God to assist him to reject them all, and to disappoint him in all his covetous designs, he would find his conscience so much *awakened*,

that he would be forced either to forsake such prayers, or to forsake a worldly life.

The same will hold true in any other instance. And if *we ask, and have not, 'tis because we ask amiss.* Because we ask in *cold* and *general* forms, such as only *name* the virtues, without describing their *particular parts*, such as are not enough particular to our *condition*, and therefore make no change in our hearts. Whereas, when a man enumerates all the parts of any virtue in his prayers, his conscience is thereby awakened, and he is frightened at seeing how far short he is of it. And this stirs him up to an ardour in devotion, when he sees how much he wants of that virtue, which he is praying for.

I have, in the last chapter, laid before you the excellency of *praise* and *thanksgiving*, and recommended that as the subject of your first devotions in the morning.

And because an *humble state* of soul, is the very state of Religion, because humility is the *life* and *soul* of piety, the *foundation* and *support* of every virtue and good work, the best *guard* and *security* of all holy affections; I shall recommend humility to you, as highly proper to be made the constant subject of your devotions, at this *third hour* of the day; earnestly desiring you to think no day *safe*, or *likely* to end well, in which you have not thus *early* put yourself in this posture of humility, and called upon God to carry you through the day, in the exercise of a *meek* and *lowly* spirit.

This virtue is so essential to the *right state* of our souls, that there is no pretending to a *reasonable* or *pious* life without it. We may as well think to see without *eyes*, or live without *breath*, as to live in the spirit of religion, without the spirit of *humility*.

And although it is thus the *soul* and *essence* of all religious duties, yet is it, generally speaking, the least *understood*, the least *regarded*, the least *intended*, the least *desired* and *sought* after, of all other virtues, amongst all sorts of Christians.

No people have more occasion to be afraid of the approaches of pride, than those who have made *some advances* in a pious life. For pride can grow as well upon our *virtues*, as our *vices*, and steals upon us on all occasions.

Every good thought that we have, every good action that we do, lays us open to pride, and exposes us to the assaults of vanity and self-satisfaction.

It is not only the beauty of our persons, the gifts of fortune, our natural talents, and the distinctions of life; but even our *devotions* and *alms*, our *fastings* and *humiliations*, expose us to fresh and strong temptations of this evil spirit.

And it is for this reason, that I so earnestly advise every *devout* person to begin every day in this exercise of humility, that he may go on in *safety* under the protection of this good guide, and not fall a sacrifice to his own progress in those virtues, which are to save mankind from destruction.

Humility does not consist, in having a *worse* opinion of ourselves than we deserve, or in abasing ourselves *lower* than we really are. But as all virtue is founded in *truth*, so humility is founded in a *true* and *just* sense of our *weakness*, *misery*, and *sin*. He that rightly feels and lives in this sense of his condition, lives in humility.

The *weakness* of our state appears from our inability to do anything, as of ourselves. In our natural state we are entirely without *any power*; we are indeed active beings, but can only act by a power, that is every *moment* lent us from God.

We have no more power of our own to move a *hand*, or stir a *foot*, than to move the *sun*, or stop the *clouds*.

When we *speak* a word, we feel no more power in ourselves to do it, than we feel ourselves able to raise the *dead*. For we act no more within our *own power*, or by our own strength, when we *speak* a word, or make a *sound*, than the *Apostles* acted within their own power, or by their own strength, when a *word* from their mouth cast out *devils*, and cured *diseases*.

As it was solely the power of God, that enabled them to speak to *such purposes*, so it is solely the power of God that enables us to speak *at all*.

We indeed find that we can *speak*, as we find that we are *alive*; but the actual exercise of speaking is no more in our own power, than the actual enjoyment of life.

This is the dependent, helpless poverty of our state; which is a great reason for humility. For since we neither are, nor can do anything of ourselves, to be proud of anything that we are, or of anything that we can do, and to ascribe glory to ourselves for these things, as our own ornaments, has the guilt both of *stealing* and *lying*. It has the guilt of stealing, as it gives to ourselves those things which only belong to God. It has the guilt of lying, as it is the denying the truth of our state, and pretending to be something that we are not.

Secondly, Another argument for humility, is founded in the *misery* of our condition.

Now the misery of our condition appears in this, that we use these *borrowed* powers of our nature, to the *torment* and *vexation* of ourselves, and our fellow-creatures.

God Almighty has entrusted us with the use of reason, and we use it to the disorder and corruption of our nature. We reason

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ourselves into all kinds of folly and misery, and make our lives the sport of foolish and extravagant passions: Seeking after imaginary happiness in all kinds of shapes, creating to ourselves a thousand wants, amusing our hearts with false hopes and fears, using the world worse than irrational animals, envying, vexing, and tormenting one another with restless passions, and unreasonable contentions.

Let any man but look back upon his own life, and see what use he has made of his reason, how little he has consulted it, and how less he has followed it. What foolish *passions*, what vain *thoughts*, what needless *labours*, what extravagant *projects*, have taken up the greatest part of his life. How foolish he has been in his *words* and *conversation*; how seldom he has done well with *judgment*, and how often he has been kept from doing ill by *accident*; how seldom he has been able to *please* himself, and how often he has *displeased* others; how often he has changed his counsels, hated what he loved, and loved what he hated; how often he has been enraged and transported at *trifles*, pleased and displeased with the very *same things*, and constantly changing from one vanity to another. Let a man but take this view of his own life, and he will see reason enough to confess, that *pride was not made for man*.

Let him but consider, that if the world knew all that of him, which he knows of himself; if they saw what *vanity* and *passions* govern his inside, and what secret *tempers* sully and corrupt his best actions, he would have no more pretence to be honoured and admired for his *goodness* and *wisdom*, than a *rotten* and *distempered* body, to be loved and admired for its *beauty* and *comeliness*.

This is so true, and so known to the hearts of almost all people, that nothing would appear more dreadful to them, than to have their hearts thus fully discovered to the eyes of all beholders.

And perhaps there are very few people in the world, who would not rather choose to die, than to have all their *secret* follies, the *errors* of their judgments, the *vanity* of their minds, the *falseness* of their pretences, the frequency of their *vain* and disorderly *passions*, their *uneasiness*, *hatreds*, *envies*, and *vexations*, made known unto the world.

And shall pride be entertained in a heart, thus *conscious* of its own *miserable behaviour*?

Shall a creature in such a condition, that he could not support himself under the *shame* of being known to the world in his *real state*; shall such a creature, because his shame is only known to God, to holy Angels, and his own conscience; shall he, in the

sight of God and holy angels, dare to be *vain* and *proud* of himself?

Thirdly, If to this we add the *shame* and *guilt* of sin, we shall find a still greater reason for humility.

No creature that had lived in innocence, would have thereby got any pretence for *self-honour* and *esteem*; because as a creature, all that it *is*, or *has*, or *does*, is from God, and therefore the honour of all that belongs to it is only due to God.

But if a creature that is a *sinner*, and under the *displeasure* of the great governor of all the world, and deserving nothing from him, but pains and punishments for the *shameful* abuse of his powers; if such a creature pretends to self-glory for anything that he is, or does, he can only be said to glory in his shame.

Now how *monstrous* and *shameful* the nature of sin is, is sufficiently apparent from that *great atonement*, that is necessary to cleanse us from the guilt of it.

Nothing less has been required to take away the guilt of our sins, than the sufferings and death of the Son of God. Had he not taken our nature upon him, our nature had been for ever separated from God, and incapable of ever appearing before him.

And is there any room for *pride*, or *self-glory*, whilst we are partakers of *such a nature* as this?

Have our sins rendered us so abominable and odious to him that made us, that he could not so much as *receive* our prayers, or *admit* our repentance, till the Son of God made himself man, and became a suffering advocate for our whole race; and can we in *this state*, pretend to high thoughts of ourselves? Shall we presume to take delight in our *own worth*, who are not worthy so much as to *ask pardon* for our sins, without the mediation and intercession of the Son of God?

Thus deep is the foundation of humility laid, in these deplorable circumstances of our condition; which show, that it is as great an offence against truth, and the reason of things, for a man in this state of things, to lay claim to any degrees of glory, as to pretend to the honour of creating himself. If man will boast of anything as his own, he must boast of his *misery* and *sin*; for there is nothing else but this, that is his own property.

Turn your eyes towards heaven, and fancy that you saw what is doing there; that you saw *cherubims* and *seraphims*, and all the glorious *inhabitants* of that place, all united in one work; not seeking *glory* from one another, not labouring their own *advancement*, not contemplating their own *perfections*, not singing their own *praises*, not valuing *themselves*, and despising *others*, but all employed in one and the same work, all happy in

one and the same joy; 'casting down their crowns before the throne of God, giving glory, and honour, and power to him alone.'^{*}

Then turn your eyes to the *fallen world*, and consider how unreasonable and odious it must be, for such poor *worms*, such miserable *sinner*s, to take delight in their own *fancied glories*, whilst the highest and most glorious sons of heaven, seek for no other greatness and honour, but that of ascribing all honour and greatness, and glory to God alone?

Pride is only the disorder of the *fallen world*, it has no place amongst other beings; it can only subsist where *ignorance* and *sensuality*, *lies* and *falsehood*, *lusts* and *impurity* reign.

Let a man, when he is most delighted with his own *figure*, look upon a *crucifix*, and contemplate our blessed Lord *stretched* out, and *nailed* upon a *Cross*; and then let him consider, how absurd it must be, for a heart full of *pride* and *vanity*, to pray to God, through the sufferings of such a *meek* and *crucified* Saviour?

These are the reflections that you are often to meditate upon, that you may thereby be disposed to walk before God and man, in such a spirit of humility, as becomes the *weak*, *miserable*, *sinful* state of all that are descended from fallen *Adam*.

When you have by such general reflections as these, convinced your mind of the reasonableness of humility, you must not content yourself with this, as if you were therefore humble, because your mind acknowledges the reasonableness of humility, and declares against pride. But you must immediately enter yourself into the practice of this virtue, like a *young beginner*, that has all of it to learn, that can learn but little at a time, and with great difficulty. You must consider, that you have not only this virtue to learn, but that you must be content to proceed as a learner in it all your time, endeavouring after greater degrees of it, and practising every day *acts* of humility, as you every day practise acts of devotion.

You would not imagine yourself to be devout, because in your judgment you approved of prayers, and often declared your mind in favour of devotion. Yet how many people imagine themselves humble enough, for no other reason, but because they often commend humility, and make vehement declarations against pride?

Cæcus is a rich man, of good birth, and very fine parts. He is fond of *dress*, curious in the *smallest* matters that can add any *ornament* to his person. He is haughty and imperious to all his

* Rev. iv. 10, 11.

inferiors, is very full of everything that he says, or does, and never imagines it possible, for such a judgment as his to be mistaken. He can bear no contradiction, and discovers the weakness of your understanding, as soon as ever you oppose him. He changes everything in his *house*, his *habit*, and his *equipage*, as often as anything more elegant comes in his way. *Cæcus* would have been very religious, but that he always thought he was so.

There is nothing so odious to *Cæcus* as a proud man ; and the misfortune is, that in this he is so very quick-sighted, that he discovers in almost everybody, some *strokes* of vanity.

On the other hand, he is exceeding fond of humble and modest persons. Humility, says he, is so amiable a quality, that it forces our esteem wherever we meet with it. There is no possibility of despising the *meanest* person that has it, or of esteeming the *greatest* man that wants it.

Cæcus no more suspects himself to be proud, than he suspects his want of sense. And the reason of it is, because he always finds himself so in love with humility, and so enraged at pride.

It is very true, *Cæcus*, you speak *sincerely*, when you say you love humility, and abhor pride. You are no *hypocrite*, you speak the *true* sentiments of your mind ; but then take this along with you, *Cæcus*, that you only love humility, and hate pride, in *other people*. You never once in your life thought of any other humility, or of any other pride, than that which you have seen in *other people*.

The case of *Cæcus* is a common case ; many people live in all the instances of pride, and indulge every vanity that can enter into their minds, and yet never suspect themselves to be governed by pride and vanity, because they know how much they dislike proud people, and how mightily they are pleased with humility and modesty, wherever they find them.

All their speeches in favour of humility, and all their railings against pride, are looked upon as so many true exercises, and effects of their own humble spirit.

Whereas in truth, these are so far from being proper acts, or proofs of humility, that they are great arguments of the want of it.

For the fuller of pride anyone is himself, the more impatient will he be at the smallest instances of it in other people. And the less humility anyone has in his own mind, the more will he demand, and be delighted with it in other people.

You must therefore act by a quite contrary measure, and reckon yourself only so far humble, as you impose *every instance* of humility upon yourself, and *never* call for it in other people.

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So far an enemy to pride, as you never *spare* it in yourself, nor ever *censure* it in other persons.

Now in order to do this, you need only consider, that pride and humility signify nothing to you, but so far as they are your own ; that they do you neither good nor harm, but as they are the tempers of your heart.

The loving therefore of humility is of no benefit or advantage to you, but so far as you love to see all your own thoughts, words, and actions governed by it. And the hating of pride does you no good, is no perfection in you, but so far as you hate to harbour any degree of it in your own heart.

Now in order to begin, and set out well in the practice of humility, you must take it for granted that you are *proud*, that you have all your life been more or less infected with this unreasonable temper.

You should believe also, that it is your *greatest* weakness, that your heart is most *subject* to it, that it is so *constantly* stealing upon you, that you have reason to watch and suspect its approaches in all your actions.

For this is what most people, especially new beginners in a pious life, may with great truth think of themselves.

For there is no one vice, that is more deeply rooted in our nature, or that receives such constant nourishment from almost everything that we think or do. There being hardly anything in the world that we *want* or *use*, or any *action* or *duty* of life, but pride finds some means or other to take hold of it. So that at what time soever we begin to offer ourselves to God, we can hardly be surer of anything than that we have a great deal of pride to repent of.

If therefore you find it disagreeable to your mind, to entertain this opinion of yourself, and that you cannot put yourself amongst those that want to be cured of pride, you may be as sure, as if an *Angel* from heaven had told you, that you have not only much, but all your humility to seek.

For you can have no greater sign of a more confirmed pride, than when you think that you are humble enough. He that thinks he loves God enough, shows himself to be an entire stranger to that holy passion ; so he that thinks he has humility enough, shows that he is not so much as a beginner in the practice of true humility.

Chapter XVII.

Showing how difficult the practice of humility is made, by the general spirit and temper of the world. How Christianity requireth us to live contrary to the world.

EVERY person, when he first applies himself to the exercise of this virtue of humility, must, as I said before, consider himself as a *learner*, that is to learn something that is contrary to former tempers and habits of mind, and which can only be got by *daily* and *constant* practice.

He has not only as much to do, as he that has some new *art*, or *science* to learn, but he has also a great deal to *unlearn*: He is to forget, and lay aside his *own spirit*, which has been a long while fixing and forming itself; he must forget, and depart from abundance of passions and opinions, which the *fashion* and *vogue*, and spirit of the world, have made natural to him.

He must lay aside his own spirit; because as we are born in *sin*, so in *pride*, which is as *natural* to us as self-love, and continually springs from it. And this is the reason, why Christianity is so often represented as a *new birth*, and a *new spirit*.

He must lay aside the opinions and passions which he has received from the world; because the *vogue* and *fashion* of the world, by which we have been carried away, as in a *torrent*, before we could pass right judgments of the value of things, is, in many respects, contrary to *humility*: so that we must *unlearn* what the spirit of the world has taught us, before we can be governed by the spirit of humility.

The Devil is called in Scripture the prince of this world, because he has great power in it, because many of its rules and principles are invented by this evil spirit, the father of all lies and falsehood, to separate us from God, and prevent our return to happiness.

Now according to the *spirit* and *vogue* of this world, whose corrupt air we have all breathed, there are many things that pass for *great* and *honourable*, and most *desirable*, which yet are so far from being so, that the *true greatness* and honour of our nature consist in the not desiring them.

To abound in wealth, to have fine houses, and rich clothes, to be beautiful in our persons, to have titles of dignity, to be above

our fellow-creatures, to command the bows and obeisance of other people, to be looked on with admiration, to overcome our enemies with power, to subdue all that oppose us, to set out ourselves in as much splendour as we can, to live highly and magnificently, to eat and drink, and delight ourselves in the most costly manner, these are the *great*, the *honourable*, the *desirable* things, to which the *spirit* of the world turns the eyes of all people. And many a man is afraid of *standing* still, and not engaging in the pursuit of these things, lest the same world should take him for a *fool*.

The history of the Gospel, is chiefly the history of Christ's conquest over this *spirit* of the world. And the number of true Christians, is only the number of those, who following the *Spirit* of Christ, have lived *contrary* to this spirit of the world.

'If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' Again, 'Whosoever is born of God, overcometh the world. Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.' This is the language of the whole New Testament. This is the *mark* of Christianity; you are to be *dead*, that is, dead to the *spirit* and *temper* of the world, and live a new life in the *Spirit* of Jesus Christ.

But notwithstanding the clearness and plainness of these doctrines which thus renounce the world, yet great part of Christians live and die slaves to the *customs* and *temper* of the world.

How many people swell with *pride* and *vanity*, for such things as they would not know how to value at all, but that they are admired in the world?

Would a man take *ten years* more drudgery in business to add *two horses* more to his coach, but that he knows, that the world most of all admires a *coach* and *six*? How fearful are many people of having their houses poorly furnished, or themselves meanly clothed, for this only reason, lest the world should make no account of them, and place them amongst *low* and *mean* people?

How often would a man have *yielded* to the haughtiness and ill-nature of others, and shown a *submissive* temper, but that he dares not pass for such a poor-spirited man in the *opinion* of the world?

Many a man would often drop a *resentment*, and forgive an *affront*, but that he is afraid, if he should, the world would not forgive him?

How many would practise Christian *temperance* and sobriety in its utmost *perfection*, were it not for the censure which the world passes upon such a life?

Others have frequent intentions of living up to the *rules* of

Christian perfection, which they are frightened from, by considering what the world would say of them.

Thus do the impressions which we have received from living in the world enslave our minds, that we dare not attempt to be *eminent* in the sight of God, and holy Angels, for fear of being little in the eyes of the world.

From this quarter arises the greatest difficulty of humility, because it cannot subsist in any mind, but so far as it is dead to the world, and has parted with all desires of enjoying its greatness and honours. So that in order to be truly humble, you must unlearn all those notions, which you have been all your life learning from this corrupt spirit of the world.

You can make no *stand* against the assaults of pride, the meek affections of humility can have no place in your soul, till you stop the power of the world over you, and resolve against a *blind obedience* to its laws.

And when you are once advanced thus far, as to be able to stand still in the torrent of worldly *fashions* and *opinions*, and, examine the *worth* and *value* of things which are most admired and valued in the world, you have gone a great way in the gaining of your freedom, and have laid a good foundation for the amendment of your heart.

For as great as the power of the world is, it is all built upon a *blind obedience*, and we need only open our eyes, to get rid of its power.

Ask who you will, *learned* or *unlearned*, everyone seems to know and confess, that the general temper and spirit of the world, is nothing else but *humour*, *folly*, and *extravagance*.

Who will not own, that the wisdom of *Philosophy*, the piety of *Religion*, were always confined to a small number? And is not this expressly owning and confessing, that the *common spirit* and *temper* of the world, is neither according to the wisdom of *Philosophy*, nor the piety of *Religion*.

The world therefore seems enough condemned, even by itself, to make it very easy for a thinking man to be of the same judgment.

And therefore I hope, you will not think it a *hard saying*, that in order to be *humble*, you must withdraw your obedience from that *vulgar spirit*, which gives laws to *Fops* and *Coquettes*, and form your judgments according to the wisdom of *Philosophy*, and the piety of *Religion*. Who would be afraid of making such a change as this?

Again, To lessen your fear and regard to the opinion of the world, think how soon the world will disregard you, and have no more thought or concern about you, than about the *poorest animal* that died in a *ditch*.

Your friends, if they can, may bury you with some distinction, and set up a monument, to let posterity see that your *dust* lies under such a *Stone*; and when that is done, all is done. Your place is filled up by another, the world is just in the same state it was, you are blotted out of its sight, and as much forgotten by the world, as if you had never belonged to it.

Think upon the *rich*, the *great*, and the *learned* persons, that have made great figures, and been high in the esteem of the world; many of them died in your time, and yet they are sunk, and lost, and gone, and as much disregarded by the world, as if they had been only so many *bubbles of water*.

Think again, how many poor souls see heaven lost, and lie now expecting a miserable eternity, for their service and homage to a world, that thinks itself every whit as well without them, and is just as merry as it was, when they were in it.

Is it therefore worth your while to lose the *smallest degree* of virtue, for the sake of pleasing so *bad a master*, and so *false a friend* as the world is?

Is it worth your while to bow the knee to such an *idol* as this, that so soon will have neither *eyes*, nor *ears*, nor a *heart* to regard you, instead of serving that great, and holy, and mighty God, that will make all his servants partakers of his own eternity?

Will you let the fear of a false world, that has no love for you, keep you from the fear of that God who has only created you, that he may love and bless you to all eternity?

Lastly, you must consider what behaviour the profession of Christianity requireth of you, with regard to the world.

Now this is plainly delivered in these words: 'Who gave 'himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present 'evil world.* Christianity therefore implieth a deliverance from this world; and he that professeth it, professeth to live contrary to everything, and every temper, that is peculiar to this evil world.

St. *John* declareth this opposition to the world in this manner, 'They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and 'the world heareth them. We are of God.† This is the description of the followers of Christ; and it is proof enough, that no people are to be reckoned Christians in reality, who in their hearts and tempers belong to this world. 'We know,' saith the same Apostle, 'that we are of God, and the whole world 'lieth in wickedness.‡ Christians therefore can no further know that they are of God, than so far as they know they are

* Gal. i. 4.

† 1 John iv. 5.

‡ 1 John v. 19.

not of the world ; that is, that they do not live according to the *ways* and *spirit* of the world. For all the ways, and maxims, and politics, and tempers of the world, lie in wickedness. And he is only of God, or born of God in Christ Jesus, who *has overcome this world*, that is, who has chosen to live by faith, and govern his actions by the principles of a wisdom, revealed from God by Christ Jesus.

St. *Paul* takes it for a certainty, so well known to Christians, that they are no longer to be considered as living in this world, that he thus argues from it, as from an undeniable principle, concerning the abolishing the rites of the *Jewish* law : ' Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances ? '* Here could be no argument in this, but in the Apostle's taking it for undeniable, that Christians knew, that their profession required them to have done with all the tempers, and passions of this world, to live as citizens of the new *Jerusalem*, and to have their conversations in heaven.

Our blessed Lord himself, has fully determined this point, in these words : ' They are not of this world, as I am not of this world.' This is the state of Christianity with regard to this world. If you are not thus out of, and contrary to the world, you want the distinguishing mark of Christianity ; you do not belong to Christ, but by being out of the world, as he was out of it.

We may deceive ourselves, if we please, with vain and softening comments upon these words, but they are, and will be understood in their first simplicity and plainness, by everyone that reads them in the same spirit that our blessed Lord spoke them. And to understand them in any lower, less significant meaning, is to let carnal wisdom explain away that doctrine, by which itself was to be destroyed.

The Christian's great conquest over the world, is all contained in the mystery of Christ upon the *Cross*. It was there, and from thence, that he taught all Christians how they were to come out of, and conquer the world, and what they were to do in order to be his Disciples. And all the *doctrines, sacraments, and institutions* of the Gospel, are only so many explications of the meaning, and applications of the benefit of this great mystery.

And the state of Christianity implieth nothing else, but an *entire, absolute* conformity to that *spirit*, which Christ showed in the mysterious sacrifice of himself upon the *cross*.

Every man therefore is only so far a Christian, as he partakes

* Col. ii. 20.

of this spirit of Christ. It was this that made St. *Paul* so passionately express himself, 'God forbid that I should glory, 'save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:' But why does he glory? Is it because Christ had suffered in his stead, and had excused him from suffering? No, by no means. But it was because his Christian profession had called him to the honour of suffering with Christ, and of dying to the world under reproach and contempt, as he had done upon the cross. For he immediately adds, 'by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I 'unto the world.* This you see was the reason of his glorying in the cross of Christ, because it had called him to a like state of death and crucifixion to the world.

Thus was the cross of Christ, in St. *Paul's* days, the glory of Christians; not as it signified their not being ashamed to own a Master that was crucified, but as it signified their glorying in a Religion, which was nothing else but a doctrine of the Cross, that called them to the same suffering spirit, the same sacrifice of themselves, the same renunciation of the world, the same humility and weakness, the same patient bearing of injuries, reproaches, and contempts, and the same dying to all the greatness, honours, and happiness of this world, which Christ showed upon the Cross.

To have a true idea of Christianity, we must not consider our blessed Lord, as suffering in *our stead*, but as our *representative*, acting in our *name*, and with such particular merit, as to make our *joining* with him *acceptable* unto God.

He suffered, and was a sacrifice, to make our sufferings and sacrifice of ourselves fit to be received by God. And we are to suffer, to be crucified, to die, and rise with Christ, or else his crucifixion, death, and resurrection will profit us nothing.

The necessity of this conformity to all that Christ did, and suffered upon our account, is very plain from the whole tenor of Scripture.

First, as to his *sufferings*, this is the only condition of our being saved by them, 'if we suffer with him, we shall also reign 'with him.'

Secondly, as to his *Crucifixion*: 'Knowing this, that our old 'man is crucified with him,† &c. Here you see, Christ is not crucified in *our stead*; but unless our old man be really crucified with him, the cross of Christ will profit us nothing.

Thirdly, as to the death of Christ, the condition is this: 'If we 'be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with 'him.' If therefore Christ be dead alone, if we are not dead

* Gal. vi. 14.

† Rom. vi. 6.

with him, we are as sure from this Scripture, that we shall not live with him.

Lastly, as to the *resurrection* of Christ, the Scripture showeth us how we are to partake of the benefit of it: 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.'*

Thus you see, how plainly the Scripture sets forth our blessed Lord, as our *representative* acting and suffering in our name, binding and obliging us to conform to all that he did and suffered for us.

It was for this reason, that the holy Jesus said of his disciples, and in them of all true believers, 'They are not of this world, as I am not of this world.' Because all true believers conforming to the *sufferings, crucifixion, death, and resurrection* of Christ, live no longer after the spirit and temper of this world, but their *life is hid with Christ in God*.

This is the state of separation from the world, to which all orders of Christians are called. They must so far renounce all worldly tempers, be so far governed by the things of another life, as to show, that they are truly and really *crucified, dead, and risen* with Christ. And it is as necessary for all Christians, to conform to this *great change* of spirit, to be thus in Christ *new creatures*, as it was necessary that Christ should *suffer, die, and rise* again for our salvation.

How high the Christian life is placed above the ways of this world, is wonderfully described by St. *Paul* in these words: 'Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh; yet henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.'†

He that feels the *force* and *spirit* of these words, can hardly bear any human interpretation of them. Henceforth, says he, that is, since the death and resurrection of Christ, the state of Christianity is become so glorious a state, that we do not even consider Christ himself as in the flesh upon earth, but as a God of glory in heaven; we know and consider ourselves not as men in the flesh, but as fellow-members of a new society, that are to have all our hearts, our tempers, and conversation in heaven.

Thus is it that Christianity has placed us out of, and above the world; and we fall from our calling, as soon as we fall into the tempers of the world.

Now as it was the spirit of the world that nailed our blessed

* Col. iii. 1.

† 2 Cor. v. 16.

Lord to the *cross*; so every man that has the spirit of Christ that opposes the world as he did, will certainly be crucified by the world some way or other.

For Christianity still lives in the same world that Christ did; and these two will be utter enemies, till the kingdom of darkness is entirely at an end.

Had you lived with our Saviour as his true disciple, you had then been hated as he was; and if you now live in his spirit, the world will be the same enemy to you now, that it was to him then.

'If ye were of the world,' saith our blessed Lord, 'the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.'*

We are apt to lose the true meaning of these words, by considering them only as an *historical description*, of something that was the state of our Saviour and his disciples at that time. But this is reading the Scripture as a *dead letter*; for they exactly describe the state of true Christians at this, and all other times, to the end of the world.

For as *true Christianity* is nothing else but the spirit of Christ, so whether that spirit appear in the person of Christ himself, or his Apostles, or followers in any age, it is the same thing; whoever hath his spirit, will be hated, despised, and condemned by the world, as he was.

For the world will always love its own, and none but its own: this is as certain and unchangeable, as the contrariety betwixt *light* and *darkness*.

When the holy Jesus saith, 'If the world hate you,' he does not add by way of consolation, that it may some time or other cease its hatred, or that it will not always hate them; but he only gives this as a reason for their hearing it, 'You know that 'it hated me, before it hated you:' signifying, that it was he, that is, his spirit, that by reason of its contrariety to the world, was then, and always would be hated by it.

You will perhaps say, that the world is now become Christian, at least that part of it where we live; and therefore the world is not now to be considered in that state of opposition to Christianity, as when it was *heathen*.

It is granted, the world now professeth Christianity. But will anyone say, that this Christian world is of the spirit of Christ? Are its general tempers the tempers of Christ? Are the passions of sensuality, self-love, pride, covetousness, ambition,

* John xv. 19.

and vain-glory, less contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, now they are amongst Christians, than when they were amongst heathens? Or will you say, that the tempers and passions of the heathen world are lost and gone?

Consider, *secondly*, what you are to mean by the world. Now this is fully described to our hands by St. *John*. 'All that is in 'the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the 'pride of life,* &c. This is an exact and full description of the world. Now will you say, that *this world* is become *Christian*? But if all this still subsists, then the *same world* is now in being, and the same enemy to Christianity, that was in St. *John's* days.

It was this world that St. *John* condemned, as being not of the Father; whether therefore it outwardly professeth, or openly persecuteth Christianity, it is still in the same state of contrariety to the true spirit and holiness of the Gospel.

And indeed the world by professing Christianity, is so far from being a less dangerous enemy than it was before, that it has by its favours destroyed more Christians, than ever it did by the most violent persecution.

We must therefore be so far from considering the world as in a state of less enmity and opposition to Christianity, than it was in the first times of the gospel, that we must guard against it as a greater and more dangerous enemy now, than it was in those times.

It is a greater enemy, because it has greater power over Christians by its favours, riches, honours, rewards and protections, than it had by the fire and fury of its persecutions.

It is a more dangerous enemy, by having lost its appearance of enmity. Its outward profession of Christianity makes it no longer considered as an enemy, and therefore the generality of people are easily persuaded, to resign themselves up to be governed and directed by it.

How many consciences are kept at quiet, upon no other foundation, but because they sin under the authority of the Christian world?

How many directions of the Gospel lie by unregarded, and how unconcernedly do particular persons read them, for no other reason, but because they seem unregarded by the Christian world?

How many compliances do people make to the Christian world, without any hesitation, or remorse; which if they had been required of them only by heathens, would have been refused, as contrary to the holiness of Christianity.

* 1 John ii. 16.

Who could be content with seeing how contrary his life is to the *Gospel*, but because he sees, that he lives as the Christian world doth ?

Who that reads the Gospel, would want to be persuaded of the necessity of *great self-denial, humility, and poverty of spirit*, but that the authority of the world has banished this doctrine of the cross ?

There is nothing therefore, that a good Christian ought to be more suspicious of, or more constantly guard against, than the authority of the *Christian world*.

And all the passages of Scripture, which represent the world as contrary to Christianity, which require our separation from it, as from a *Mammon of unrighteousness*, a monster of iniquity, are all to be taken in the same *strict sense*, in relation to the present world.

For the change that the world has undergone, has only altered its methods, but not lessened its power of destroying Religion.

Christians had nothing to fear from the *heathen world*, but the loss of their lives ; but the world become a *friend*, makes it difficult for them to *save* their Religion.

Whilst *pride, sensuality, covetousness, and ambition*, had only the authority of the *heathen world*, Christians were thereby made more intent upon the contrary virtues. But when pride, sensuality, covetousness, and ambition, have the authority of the Christian world, then private Christians are in the utmost danger, not only of being shamed out of the practice, but of losing the very notion of the piety of the Gospel.

There is therefore hardly any possibility of saving yourself from the present world, but by considering it as the same *wicked enemy*, to all true holiness, as it is represented in the Scriptures ; and by assuring yourself, that it is as dangerous to conform to its *tempers and passions*, now it is Christian, as when it was heathen.

For only ask yourself, Is the *piety, the humility, the sobriety* of the Christian world, the piety, the humility, and sobriety of the Christian spirit ? If not, how can you be more undone by any world, than by conforming to that which is Christian ?

Need a man do more to make his soul unfit for the mercy of God, than by being *greedy and ambitious* of honour ? Yet how can a man renounce this temper, without renouncing the spirit and temper of the world, in which you now live.

How can a man be made more incapable of the spirit of Christ, than by a *wrong value* for money ; and yet how can he be more wrong in his value of it, than by following the authority of the Christian world ?

Nay, in every *order* and *station* of life, whether of *learning* or *business*, either in Church or State, you cannot act up to the spirit of Religion, without renouncing the most *general temper* and *behaviour* of those, who are of the same order and business as yourself.

And though *human prudence* seems to talk mighty wisely about the necessity of avoiding *particularities*, yet he that dares not be so *weak* as to be particular, will be often obliged to avoid the most substantial duties of Christian piety.

These reflections will, I hope, help you to break through those difficulties, and resist those temptations, which the authority and fashion of the world have raised against the practice of *Christian humility*.

Chapter XVIII.

Showing how the education which men generally receive in their youth, makes the doctrines of humility difficult to be practised. The spirit of a better education, represented in the character of Paternus.

ANOTHER difficulty in the practice of humility, arises from our education. We are all of us, for the most part corruptly educated, and then committed to take our course in a corrupt world; so that it is no wonder, if examples of great piety are so seldom seen.

Great part of the world are undone, by being born and bred in families that have no Religion; where they are made vicious and irregular, by being like those with whom they first lived.

But this is not the thing I now mean; the education that I here intend, is such as children generally receive from virtuous and sober *parents*, and learned *tutors* and *governors*.

Had we continued perfect, as God created the first man, perhaps the perfection of our nature had been a sufficient *self-instruction* for everyone. But as *sickness* and *diseases* have created the necessity of *medicines* and *physicians*, so the change and disorder of our rational nature, have introduced the necessity of *education* and *tutors*.

And as the only end of the physician is, to restore nature to

its own state, so the only end of education is, to restore our rational nature to its proper state. Education therefore is to be considered as *reason* borrowed at *second hand*, which is, as far as it can, to supply the loss of *original* perfection. And as physic may justly be called the *art* of restoring health, so education should be considered in no other light, than as the art of recovering to man the use of his reason.

Now as the instruction of every *art* or *science* is founded upon the *discoveries*, the *wisdom*, *experience*, and *maxims* of the several great men that have laboured in it; so *human wisdom*, or *right use* of our reason, which young people should be called to by their education, is nothing else but the *best experience*, and *finest reasonings* of men, that have devoted themselves to the study of wisdom, and the improvement of human nature.

All therefore that *great saints*, and *dying* men, when the fullest of light and conviction, and after the highest improvement of their reason, all that they have said of the necessity of *piety*, of the excellency of *virtue*, of their *duty* to God, of the emptiness of riches, of the vanity of the *world*; all the *sentences*, *judgments*, *reasonings*, and maxims of the wisest of philosophers, when in their highest state of wisdom, should constitute the *common lessons* of instruction for youthful minds.

This is the only way to make the *young* and *ignorant* part of the world the better for the *wisdom*, and *knowledge* of the wise and ancient.

An education which is not *wholly* intent upon this, is as much beside the point, as an art of *Physic*, that had little or no regard to the restoration of health.

The youths that attended upon *Pythagoras*, *Socrates*, *Plato*, and *Epictetus*, were thus educated. Their everyday lessons and instructions were so many lectures upon the nature of man, his true *end*, and the right use of his faculties; upon the immortality of the soul, its relation to God, the beauty of virtue, and its agreeableness to the divine nature; upon the dignity of reason, the necessity of temperance, fortitude and generosity, and the shame and folly of indulging our passions.

Now as Christianity has, as it were, new created the *moral* and *religious* world, and set everything that is reasonable, wise, holy, and desirable, in its true point of light; so one would expect, that the education of youth should be as much bettered and amended by Christianity, as the *faith* and *doctrines* of Religion are amended by it.

As it has introduced such a *new state* of things, and so fully informed us of the *nature* of man, the *ends* of his creation, the state of his condition; as it has fixed all our *goods* and *evils*,

taught us the means of purifying our souls, pleasing God, and becoming eternally happy ; one might naturally suppose, that every Christian Country abounded with *schools* for the teaching, not only a few questions and answers of a *Catechism*, but for the forming, training, and practising youths in such an outward course of life, as the *highest* precepts, the *strictest* rules, and the *sublimest* doctrines of Christianity require.

An education under *Pythagoras*, or *Socrates*, had no other end, but to teach youth to *think, judge, act*, and follow such *rules* of life as *Pythagoras* and *Socrates* used.

And is it not as reasonable to suppose, that a Christian education should have no other end, but to teach youth how to think, and judge, and act, and live according to the *strictest laws* of Christianity ?

At least, one would suppose, that in all Christian schools, the teaching youth to begin their lives in the *spirit* of Christianity, in such *severity* of behaviour, such *abstinence, sobriety, humility, and devotion*, as Christianity requires, should not only be *more*, but an *hundred times* more regarded, than any, or all things else.

For our education should imitate our *guardian angels*, suggest nothing to our minds but what is *wise* and *holy* ; help us to discover and subdue every *vain passion* of our hearts, and every *false judgment* of our minds.

And it is as *sober* and *reasonable*, to expect and require all this benefit of a Christian education, as to require that physic should strengthen all that is right in our nature, and remove that which is *sickly* and *diseased*.

But alas, our modern education is not of this kind.

The *first temper* that we try to awaken in children, is *pride* ; as dangerous a passion as that of *lust*. We stir them up to vain thoughts of themselves, and do everything we can, to puff up their minds with a sense of their own abilities.

Whatever way of life we intend them for, we apply to the *fire* and *vanity* of their minds, and exhort them to everything from corrupt motives : We stir them up to action from principles of *strife* and *ambition*, from *glory, envy*, and a desire of distinction, that they may excel others, and shine in the eyes of the world.

We repeat and inculcate these motives upon them, till they think it a part of their duty to be *proud, envious, and vain-glorious* of their own accomplishments.

And when we have taught them to scorn to be outdone by any, to bear no *rival*, to thirst after *every instance* of applause, to be content with nothing but the highest distinctions ; then we begin to take comfort in them, and promise the world some mighty things from youths of such a glorious spirit.

If children are intended for *holy orders*, we set before them some eminent *orator*, whose *fine* preaching has made him the *admiration* of the age, and carried him through all the *dignities* and *preferments* of the Church.

We encourage them to have these *honours* in their eye, and to expect the reward of their studies from them.

If the youth is intended for a *trade*; we bid him look at all the rich men of the *same trade*, and consider how many now are carried about in their *stately coaches*, who began in the same low degree as he now does. We awaken his ambition, and endeavour to give his mind a *right turn*, by often telling him how very rich such and such a tradesman died.

If he is to be a *lawyer*, then we set great *Counsellors*, Lords *Judges*, and *Chancellors*, before his eyes. We tell him what *fees*, and great *applause* attend fine pleading. We exhort him to take fire at these things, to raise a spirit of emulation in himself, and to be content with nothing less than the highest honours of the *long Robe*.

That this is the nature of our *best education*, is too plain to need any proof; and I believe there are few parents, but would be glad to see these instructions daily given to their children.

And after all this, we complain of the effects of pride; we wonder to see *grown men* acted and governed by *ambition*, *envy*, *scorn*, and a *desire* of glory; not considering that they were all the time of their youth called upon, to all their action and industry upon the same principles.

You teach a child to *scorn* to be outdone, to thirst for *distinction* and *applause*; and is it any wonder that he continues to act all his life in the same manner?

Now if a youth is ever to be so far a Christian, as to govern his heart by the *doctrines* of humility, I would fain know at *what time* he is to begin it; or if he is *ever* to begin it at all, why we train him up in tempers quite contrary to it?

How *dry* and *poor* must the doctrine of humility sound to a youth, that has been spurred up to all his industry by *ambition*, *envy*, *emulation*, and a desire of *glory* and *distinction*? And if he is not to act by these *principles* when he is a *man*, why do we call him to act by them in his *youth*?

Envy is acknowledged by all people to be the most *ungenerous*, *base* and *wicked* passion, that can enter into the heart of man.

And is this a temper to be instilled, nourished and established in the minds of young people?

I know it is said, that it is not *envy*, but *emulation*, that is intended to be awakened in the minds of young men.

But this is vainly said. For when children are taught to bear

no *rival*, and to *scorn* to be outdone by any of their age, they are plainly and directly taught to be *envious*. For it is impossible for anyone to have this *scorn* of being outdone, and this contention with *rivals*, without burning with *envy* against all those that seem to excel him, or get any distinction from him. So that what children are taught is *rank envy*, and only covered with a name of a less odious sound.

Secondly, if *envy* is thus confessedly bad, and it be only *emulation* that is endeavoured to be awakened in children, surely there ought to be *great care* taken, that children may know the one from the other. That they may abominate the one as a great *crime*, whilst they give the other admission into their minds.

But if this were to be attempted, the *fineness* of the distinction betwixt *envy* and *emulation*, would show that it was easier to divide them in words, than to separate them in action.

For *emulation*, when it is defined in its best manner, is nothing else but a *refinement* upon *envy*, or rather the most *plausible part* of that black and venomous passion.

And though it is easy to separate them in the *notion*, yet the most acute *Philosopher*, that understands the art of distinguishing ever so well, if he gives himself up to *emulation*, will certainly find himself *deep* in *envy*.

For *envy* is not an *original* temper, but the natural, necessary, and unavoidable effect of *emulation*, or a desire of glory.

So that he who establishes the one in the minds of people, necessarily fixes the other there. And there is no other possible way of destroying *envy*, but by destroying *emulation*, or a desire of glory. For the one always rises and falls in proportion to the other.

I know it is said in defence of this method of education, that ambition, and a desire of glory, are necessary to excite young people to industry; and that if we were to press upon them the doctrines of humility, we should deject their minds, and sink them into *dulness* and *idleness*.

But these people who say this, do not consider, that this reason, if it has any strength, is full as strong against pressing the doctrines of humility upon *grown men*, lest we should deject their minds, and sink them into *dulness* and *idleness*.

For who does not see, that *middle-aged men* want as much the assistance of pride, ambition, and vain-glory, to spur them up to action and industry, as *children* do? And it is very certain, that the precepts of humility are more contrary to the designs of such men, and more grievous to their minds, when they are pressed upon them, than they are to the minds of young persons.

This reason therefore that is given, why children should not be

trained up in the principles of true humility, is as good a reason why the same humility should never be required of grown men.

Thirdly, Let those people, who think that children would be spoiled, if they were not thus educated, consider this.

Could they think, that if any children had been educated by our blessed Lord, or his holy Apostles, that their minds would have been sunk into dulness and idleness?

Or could they think, that such children would not have been trained up in the profoundest principles of a strict and true humility? Can they say that our blessed Lord, who was the meekest and humblest man that ever was on earth, was hindered by his humility from being the greatest example of worthy and glorious actions, that ever was done by man?

Can they say that his Apostles, who lived in the humble spirit of their master, did therefore cease to be laborious and active instruments of doing good to all the world?

A few such reflections as these, are sufficient to expose all the poor pretences for an education in pride and ambition.

Paternus lived about *two hundred* years ago; he had but one son, whom he educated himself in his own house. As they were sitting together in the *Garden*, when the child was *ten years* old, *Paternus* thus began to him.

The little time that you have been in the world, my child, you have spent wholly with me; and my love and tenderness to you, has made you look upon me as your only friend and benefactor, and the cause of all the comfort and pleasure that you enjoy: Your heart, I know, would be ready to break with grief, if you thought this was the last day that I should live with you.

But, my child, though you now think yourself mighty happy, because you have hold of my hand, you are now in the hands, and under the tender care of a much greater father and friend than I am, whose love to you is far greater than mine, and from whom you receive such blessings as no mortal can give.

That God whom you have seen me daily worship, whom I daily call upon to bless both you and me, and all mankind, whose wondrous acts are recorded in those Scriptures which you constantly read; that God who created the heavens and the earth, who brought a flood upon the old world, who saved *Noah* in the Ark, who was the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, whom *Job* blessed and praised in the greatest afflictions, who delivered the *Israelites* out of the hands of the *Egyptians*, who was the protector of righteous *Joseph*, *Moses*, *Joshua*, and holy *Daniel*, who sent so many Prophets into the world, who sent his Son Jesus Christ to redeem mankind; this God who has done all these great things, who has created so many millions of men,

who lived and died before you were born, with whom the spirits of good men that are departed this life, now live, whom infinite numbers of Angels now worship in Heaven; this great God who is the creator of worlds, of angels, and men, is your loving father and friend, your good creator and nourisher, from whom, and not from me, you received your being ten years ago, at the time that I planted that little tender *Elm* which you there see.

I myself am not half the age of this *shady Oak*, under which we sit; many of our fathers have sat under its boughs, we have all of us called it ours in our turn, though it stands, and drops its *masters*, as it drops its *leaves*.

You see, my son, this wide and large *Firmament* over our heads, where the *Sun* and *Moon*, and all the *Stars* appear in their turns. If you were to be carried up to any of these bodies at this vast distance from us, you would still discover others, as much above you, as the *Stars* that you see here are above the *Earth*. Were you to go up or down, *East* or *West*, *North* or *South*, you would find the same height without any *top*, and the same depth without any *bottom*.

And yet, my child, so great is God, that all these bodies added together, are but as a *grain* of sand in his sight. And yet you are as much the care of this great God and Father of all *worlds*, and all *spirits*, as if he had no son but you, or there were no creature for him to love and protect but you alone. He numbers the *hairs* of your head, watches over you sleeping and waking, and has preserved you from a thousand dangers, which neither you, nor I, know anything of.

How poor my power is, and how little I am able to do for you, you have often seen. Your late *sickness* has shown you, how little I could do for you in that state; and the frequent pains of your head are plain proofs, that I have no power to remove them.

I can bring you *food* and *medicines*, but have no power to turn them into your relief and nourishment. It is God alone that can do this for you.

Therefore, my child, fear, and worship, and love God. Your eyes indeed cannot yet see him. But every thing you see, are so many marks of his power and presence, and he is nearer to you, than anything that you can see.

Take him for your *Lord*, and *Father*, and *Friend*; look up unto him as the fountain and cause of all the good that you have received through my hands; and reverence me only as the *bearer* and *minister* of God's good things unto you. And he that blessed my father before I was born, will bless you when I am dead.

Your youth and little mind is only yet acquainted with my family, and therefore you think there is no happiness out of it.

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But, my child, you belong to a greater Family than mine, you are a young member of the family of this Almighty Father of all Nations, who has created infinite order of Angels, and numberless generations of men, to be fellow-members of one and the same society in Heaven.

You do well to reverence and obey my authority, because God has given me power over you, to bring you up in his fear, and to do for you, as the holy fathers recorded in Scripture did for their children, who are now in rest and peace with God.

I shall in a short time die, and leave you to God, and yourself, and if God forgiveth my sins, I shall go to his Son Jesus Christ, and live amongst Patriarchs and Prophets, Saints and Martyrs, where I shall pray for you, and hope for your safe arrival at the same place.

Therefore, my child, meditate on these great things, and your soul will soon grow great and noble by so meditating upon them.

Let your thoughts often leave these *gardens*, these *fields* and *farms*, to contemplate upon God and Heaven, to consider upon Angels, and the spirits of good men living in light and glory.

As you have been used to look to me in all your actions, and have been afraid to do anything, unless you first knew my will, so let it now be a rule of your life, to look up to God in all your actions, to do everything in his fear, and to abstain from everything that is not according to his will.

Bear him always in your mind, teach your thoughts to reverence him in every place, for there is no place where he is not.

God keepeth a *book* of life, wherein all the actions of all men are written; your name is there, my child, and when you die, this book will be laid open before men and angels, and according as your actions are there found, you will either be received to the happiness of those holy men who have died before you, or be turned away amongst wicked spirits, that are never to see God any more.

Never forget this book, my son, for it is written, it must be opened, you must see it, and you must be tried by it. Strive therefore to fill it with your good deeds, that the handwriting of God may not appear against you.

God, my child, is all *love*, and *wisdom*, and *goodness*; and everything that he has made, and every action that he does, is the effect of them all. Therefore you cannot please God, but so far as you strive to walk in love, wisdom, and goodness. As all wisdom, love, and goodness proceed from God, so nothing but love, wisdom, and goodness, can lead to God.

When you love that which God loves, you act with him, you join yourself to him; and when you love what he dislikes, then you oppose him, and separate yourself from him. This is the true

and the right way ; think what God loves, and do you love it with all your heart.

First of all, my child, worship and adore God, think of him magnificently, speak of him reverently, magnify his providence, adore his power, frequent his service, and pray unto him frequently and constantly.

Next to this, love your neighbour, which is all mankind, with such tenderness and affection, as you love yourself. Think how God loves all mankind, how merciful he is to them, how tender he is of them, how carefully he preserves them, and then strive to love the world, as God loves it.

God would have all men to be happy, therefore do you *will*, and desire the same. All men are great instances of divine love, therefore let all men be instances of your love.

But above all, my son, mark this, never do anything through strife, or envy, or emulation, or vain-glory. Never do anything in order to excel other people, but in order to please God, and because it is his will, that you should do everything in the best manner that you can.

For if it is once a pleasure to you to excel other people, it will by degrees be a pleasure to you, to see other people not so good as yourself.

Banish therefore every thought of *self-pride*, and *self-distinction*, and accustom yourself to rejoice in all the excellencies and perfections of your fellow-creatures, and be as glad to see any of their good actions, as your own.

For as God is as well pleased with their well doings, as with yours, so you ought to desire, that everything that is wise, and holy, and good, may be performed in as high a manner by other people, as by yourself.

Let this therefore be your only motive and spur to all good actions, honest industry, and business, to do everything in as perfect and excellent a manner as you can, for this only reason, because it is pleasing to God, who desires your perfection, and writes all your actions in a book. When I am dead, my son, you will be master of all my estate, which will be a great deal more than the necessities of one family require. Therefore as you are to be charitable to the souls of men, and wish them the same happiness with you in heaven, so be charitable to their bodies, and endeavour to make them as happy as you upon earth.

As God has created all things for the common good of all men, so let that part of them which is fallen to your share, be employed as God would have all employed, for the common good of all.

Do good, my son, first of all to those that most deserve it, but remember to do good to all. The greatest sinners receive daily

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instances of God's goodness towards them, he nourishes and preserves them, that they may repent and return to him ; do you therefore imitate God, and think no one too bad to receive your relief and kindness, when you see that he wants it.

I am teaching you *Latin* and *Greek*, not that you should desire to be a great *Critic*, a fine *Poet*, or an eloquent *Orator* ; I would not have your heart feel any of these desires ; for the desire of these accomplishments is a vanity of the mind, and the masters of them are generally vain men. For the desire of anything that is not a real good, lessens the application of the mind after that which is so.

But I teach you these languages, that at proper times you may look into the history of past ages, and learn the methods of God's providence over the world : that reading the writings of the ancient *Sages*, you may see how wisdom and virtue have been the praise of great men of all ages, and fortify your mind by these wise sayings.

Let truth and plainness therefore be the only ornament of your language, and study nothing but how to think of all things as they deserve, to choose everything that is best, to live according to reason and order, and to act in every part of your life in conformity to the will of God.

Study how to fill your heart full of the love of God, and the love of your neighbour, and then be content to be no deeper a scholar, no finer a gentleman, than these tempers will make you. As true Religion is nothing else but simple Nature governed by right reason, so it loves and requires great plainness and simplicity of life. Therefore avoid all superfluous shows of finery and equipage, and let your house be plainly furnished with moderate conveniences. Do not consider what your estate can afford, but what right reason requires.

Let your *dress* be sober, clean, and modest, not to set out the beauty of your person, but to declare the sobriety of your mind, that your outward garb may resemble the inward plainness and simplicity of your heart. For it is highly reasonable, that you should be *one man*, all of a piece, and appear outwardly such as you are inwardly.

As to your *meat* and *drink*, in them observe the *highest rules* of Christian temperance and sobriety ; consider your body only as the servant and minister of your soul ; and only so nourish it, as may best perform an humble and obedient service to it.

But, my son, observe this as a most principal thing, which I shall remember you of as long as I live with you.

Hate and despise all *human glory*, for it is nothing else but human folly. It is the greatest *snare*, and the greatest *betrayer* that you can possibly admit into your heart.

Love humility in all its instances, practise it in all its parts, for it is the noblest state of the soul of man ; it will set your heart and affections right towards God, and fill you with every temper that is tender and affectionate towards men.

Let every day therefore be a day of humility, condescend to all the weakness, and infirmities of your fellow-creatures, cover their frailties, love their excellencies, encourage their virtues, relieve their wants, rejoice in their prosperities, compassionate their distress, receive their friendship, overlook their unkindness, forgive their malice, be a servant of servants, and condescend to do the lowest offices to the lowest of mankind.

Aspire after nothing but your own purity and perfection, and have no ambition, but to do everything in so reasonable and religious a manner, that you may be glad that God is everywhere present, and sees and observes all your actions. The greatest trial of humility, is an humble behaviour towards your equals in *age, estate, and condition* of life. Therefore be careful of all the motions of your heart towards these people. Let all your behaviour towards them be governed by unfeigned love. Have no desire to put any of your equals below you, nor any anger at those that would put themselves above you. If they are proud, they are ill of a very bad distemper, let them therefore have your tender pity ; and perhaps your meekness may prove an occasion of their cure. But if your humility should do them no good, it will however be the greatest good that you can do to yourself.

Remember that there is but one man in the world, with whom you are to have perpetual contention, and be always striving to exceed him, and that is yourself.

The time of practising these precepts, my child, will soon be over with you, the world will soon slip through your hands, or rather you will soon slip through it ; it seems but the other day since I received these same instructions from my dear Father, that I am now leaving with you. And the God that gave me ears to hear, and a heart to receive what my Father said unto me, will, I hope, give you grace to love and follow the same instructions.

Thus did *Paternus* educate his son.

Can anyone now think that such an education as this, would weaken and deject the minds of young people, and deprive the world of any worthy and reasonable labours ?

It is so far from that, that there is nothing so likely to ennoble, and exalt the mind, and prepare it for the most heroic exercise of all virtues.

For who will say, that a love of God, a desire of pleasing him, a love of our neighbour, a love of truth, of reason, and virtue, a contemplation of eternity, and the rewards of piety, are not

stronger motives to great and good actions, than a little uncertain popular praise.

On the other hand, there is nothing in reality that more weakens the mind, and reduces it to meanness and slavery, nothing that makes it less master of its own actions, or less capable of following reason, than a love of praise and honour.

For as praise and honour are often given to *things* and *persons*, where they are not due, as that is generally most praised and honoured, that most gratifies the *humours*, *fashions*, and vicious *tempers* of the world; so he that acts upon the desire of praise and applause, must part with every other principle; he must say *black* is *white*, put *bitter* for *sweet*, and *sweet* for *bitter*, and do the meanest, basest things, in order to be applauded.

For in a corrupt world, as this is, worthy actions are only to be supported by their own worth, where instead of being praised and honoured, they are most often reproached, and persecuted.

So that to educate children upon a motive of *emulation*, or a desire of *glory*, in a world where glory itself is *false*, and most commonly given *wrong*, is to destroy the natural integrity and fortitude of their minds, and give them a *bias*, which will oftener carry them to base and mean, than great and worthy actions.

Chapter XIX.

Showing how the method of educating daughters, makes it difficult for them to enter into the spirit of Christian humility. How miserably they are injured and abused by such an education. The spirit of a better education, represented in the character of Eusebia.

THAT turn of mind which is taught and encouraged in the education of *daughters*, makes it exceeding difficult for them to enter into such a sense and practice of humility, as the spirit of Christianity requires.

The right education of this *sex*, is of the utmost importance to human life. There is nothing that is more desirable for the common good of all the world. For though *women* do not carry

on the *trade* and *business* of the world, yet as they are *mothers*, and *mistresses* of families, that have for some time the care of the education of their children of both sorts, they are entrusted with that which is of the greatest consequence to human life. For this reason, *good* or *bad* women are likely to do as much good or harm in the world, as good or bad men in the greatest business of life.

For as the *health* and *strength*, or *weakness* of our bodies, is very much owing to *their methods* of treating us when we were young; so the *soundness* or *folly* of our minds, are not less owing to those *first tempers* and ways of thinking, which we eagerly received from the *love, tenderness, authority*, and constant *conversation* of our mothers.

As we call our first language our *mother-tongue*, so we may as justly call our first tempers our *mother-tempers*; and perhaps it may be found more easy to forget the *language*, than to part entirely with those *tempers* which we learnt in the *nursery*.

It is therefore much to be lamented, that this *sex*, on whom so much depends, who have the first forming both of our *bodies* and our *minds*, are not only educated in *pride*, but in the *silliest* and most *contemptible* part of it.

They are not indeed suffered to dispute with us the proud *prizes* of *arts* and *sciences*, of *learning* and *eloquence*, in which I have much suspicion they would *often* prove our superiors; but we turn them over to the study of *beauty* and *dress*, and the whole world conspires to make them think of nothing else. *Fathers* and *mothers, friends, and relations*, seem to have no other wish towards the *little girl*, but that she may have a *fair skin, a fine shape, dress well, and dance* to admiration.

Now if a fondness for our *persons*, a desire of *beauty*, a love of *dress*, be a part of pride (as surely it is a most contemptible part of it) the first step towards a *woman's humility*, seems to require a *repentance* of her education.

For it must be owned, that, generally speaking, good parents are never more fond of their daughters, than when they see them *too fond* of themselves, and *dressed* in such a manner, as is a great reproach to the gravity and sobriety of the Christian life.

And what makes this matter still more to be lamented, is this, That women are not only spoiled by this education, but we spoil that *part* of the world, which would otherwise furnish *most instances* of an eminent and exalted piety.

For I believe it may be affirmed, that for the most part there is a *finer sense, a clearer mind, a readier apprehension, and gentler dispositions* in that *sex*, than in the other.

All which tempers, if they were truly improved by *proper*

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studies, and *sober* methods of education, would in all probability carry them to greater heights of piety, than are to be found amongst the generality of men.

For this reason, I speak to this matter with so much openness and plainness, because it is much to be lamented, that persons so *naturally* qualified to be great examples of *piety*, should by an erroneous education, be made *poor* and *gaudy* spectacles of the greatest vanity.

The *Church* has formerly had *eminent saints* in that sex, and it may reasonably be thought, that it is purely owing to their *poor* and *vain* education, that this honour of their sex is for the *most part* confined to *former* ages.

The corruption of the world indulges them in great vanity, and mankind seem to consider them in no other view, than as so many *painted idols*, that are to allure and gratify their passions ; so that if many women are *vain*, *light*, *gewgaw* creatures, they have this to excuse themselves, that they are not only such as their *education* has made them, but such as the *generality* of the world *allows* them to be.

But then they should consider, that the *friends* to their *vanity* are no friends of theirs ; they should consider, that they are to live for *themselves*, that they have as great a share in the *rational nature* as men have ; that they have as much *reason* to pretend, and as much *necessity* to aspire after the *highest accomplishments* of a Christian and solid virtue, as the *gravest* and *wisest* among Christian *Philosophers*.

They should consider, that they are *abused* and *injured*, and *betrayed* from their *only perfection*, whenever they are taught, that anything is an *ornament* in them, that is not an ornament in the *wisest* amongst mankind.

It is generally said, that *women* are naturally of *little* and *vain minds* ; but this I look upon to be as *false* and *unreasonable*, as to say, that *butchers* are naturally *cruel* ; for as their cruelty is not owing to their *nature*, but to their *way* of life, which has changed their nature ; so whatever *littleness* and *vanity* is to be observed in the minds of women, it is like the cruelty of *butchers*, a temper that is wrought into them by that life which they are *taught* and *accustomed* to lead.

At least thus much must be said, that we cannot charge anything upon their *nature*, till we take care that it is not *perverted* by their education.

And on the other hand, if it were true that they were thus naturally vain and light, then how much more blamable is that education, which seems contrived to *strengthen* and *increase* this folly and weakness of their minds ?

For if it were a virtue in a woman to be proud and vain in herself, we could hardly take better means to raise this passion in her, than those that are now used in her education.

Matilda is a fine woman, of good *breeding*, great *sense*, and much *religion*. She has three daughters that are educated by herself. She will not trust them with anyone else, or at any *school*, for fear they should learn anything ill. She stays with the *dancing-master* all the time he is with them, because she will hear everything that is said to them. She has heard them read the Scriptures so often, that they can repeat great part of it without book : And there is scarce a good book of *devotion*, but you may find it in their *closets*.

Had *Matilda* lived in the first ages of Christianity, when it was practised in the *fulness* and *plainness* of its doctrines, she had in all probability been one of its greatest saints.

But as she was born in corrupt times, where she wants examples of Christian perfection, and hardly ever saw a piety higher than her own ; so she has many defects, and communicates them all to her daughters.

Matilda never was *meanly* dressed in her life ; and nothing pleases her in *dress*, but that which is very *rich* and *beautiful* to the eye.

Her daughters see her great zeal for religion, but then they see an equal earnestness for all sorts of *finery*. They see she is not negligent of her *devotion*, but then they see her more careful to preserve her *complexion*, and to prevent those changes, which time and age threaten her with.

They are afraid to meet her, if they have missed the *Church* ; but then they are more afraid to see her, if they are not *laced* as *strait* as they can possibly be.

She often shows them her *own picture*, which was taken when their father fell in love with her. She tells them, how *distracted* he was with passion at the *first sight* of her, and that she had never had so *fine a complexion*, but for the diligence of her good mother, who took exceeding care of it.

Matilda is so intent upon all the arts of improving their *dress*, that she has some *new fancy* almost every day, and leaves no ornament untried, from the richest *jewel* to the poorest *flower*. She is so nice and critical in her judgment, so sensible of the smallest error, that the maid is often forced to dress and undress her daughters three or four times in a day, before she can be satisfied with it.

As to the *patching*, she reserves that to herself ; for, she says, if they are not stuck on with judgment, they are rather a prejudice, than an advantage to the *face*.

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The children see so plainly the *temper* of their mother, that they even affect to be *more pleased* with dress, and to be more fond of every little ornament, than they really are, merely to gain her favour.

They saw their eldest sister once brought to her *tears*, and her *perverseness* severely reprimanded, for presuming to say, that she thought it was better to cover the *neck*, than to go so *far naked* as the modern dress requires.

She stints them in their *meals*, and is very scrupulous of what they eat and drink, and tells them how many *fine shapes* she has seen spoiled in her time, for want of such care. If a *pimple* rises in their faces, she is in a great fright, and they themselves are as afraid to see her with it, as if they had committed some great sin.

Whenever they begin to look too *sanguine* and *healthful*, she calls in the assistance of the *doctor*; and if *physic*, or *issues*, will keep the complexion from inclining to *coarse* or *ruddy*, she thinks them well employed.

By this means they are *poor*, *pale*, *sickly*, *infirm* creatures, *vapoured* through want of spirits, *crying* at the smallest accidents, *swooning* away at anything that frights them, and hardly able to bear the *weight* of their best clothes.

The eldest daughter lived as long as she could under this discipline, and died in the twentieth year of her age.

When her body was opened, it appeared that her *ribs* had grown into her *liver*, and that her other *entrails* were much hurt, by being *crushed* together with her *stays*, which her mother had ordered to be twitched so strait, that it often brought tears into her eyes, whilst the maid was dressing her.

Her youngest daughter is run away with a *gamester*, a man of great beauty, who in *dressing* and *dancing* has no superior.

Matilda says, she should die with grief at this accident, but that her *conscience* tells her, she has contributed nothing to it herself. She appeals to their *closets*, to their books of devotion, to testify what care she has taken, to establish her children in a life of solid piety and devotion.

Now though I do not intend to say, that no daughters are brought up in a *better way* than this, for I hope there are many that are: yet thus much I believe may be said, that the much greater part of them, are not brought up so well, or accustomed to so much Religion, as in the present instance.

Their minds are turned as much to the care of their beauty and dress, and the indulgence of vain desires, as in the present case, without having such rules of devotion to stand against it. So that if *solid piety*, *humility*, and a *sober sense* of themselves, is

much wanted in that sex, it is the plain and natural consequence of a vain and corrupt education.

And if they are often too ready to receive the first *fops, beaux,* and fine *dancers,* for their husbands; it is no wonder they should like that in men, which they have been taught to admire in themselves.

And if they are often seen to lose that little Religion they were taught in their youth, it is no more to be wondered at, than to see a *little flower* choked and killed amongst *rank weeds.*

For *personal pride,* and *affectation,* a *delight* in beauty, and *fondness* of finery, are tempers that must either kill all Religion in the soul, or be themselves killed by it; they can no more thrive together, than *health* and *sickness.*

Some people that judge hastily, will perhaps here say, that I am exercising too great a severity against the sex.

But more reasonable persons will easily observe, that I entirely spare the *sex,* and only arraign their *education;* that I not only spare them, but plead their *interest,* assert their *honour,* set forth their *perfections,* commend their *natural* tempers, and only condemn that *education,* which is so *injurious,* to their interests, so *debases* their honour, and *deprives* them of the benefit of their *excellent* natures and tempers.

Their education, I profess, I cannot spare; but the only reason is, because it is their *greatest enemy,* because it deprives the world of so many *blessings,* and the Church of so many *saints,* as might reasonably be expected from persons, so formed by their natural tempers to all goodness and tenderness, and so fitted by the clearness and brightness of their minds, to contemplate, love, and admire everything that is holy, virtuous, and divine.

If it should here be said, that I even charge *too high* upon their *education,* and that they are not so *much* hurt by it, as I imagine:

It may be answered, that though I do not pretend to state the *exact degree* of mischief that is done by it, yet its plain and natural tendency to do no harm, is sufficient to justify the most *absolute* condemnation of it.

But if anyone would know, how *generally* women are hurt by this education; if he imagines there may be no personal pride, or vain fondness of themselves, in those that are *patched* and *dressed* out with so much glitter of *art* and *ornament:*

Let him only make the following experiment wherever he pleases.

Let him only acquaint any such woman with his opinion of her: I do not mean that he should tell her to her face, or do it

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in any rude public manner ; but let him contrive the most *civil, secret, friendly* way that he can think of, only to let her know his opinion, that he thinks she is neither *handsome*, nor *dresses* well, nor *becomes* her finery ; and I dare say, he will find there are but very few *fine dressed* women that will like him never the worse for his *bare opinion*, though known to none but themselves ; and that he will not be long without seeing the *effects* of her resentment.

But if such an experiment would show him, that there are but few such women that could bear with his *friendship*, after they knew he had such an opinion of them, surely it is time to complain of, and accuse that *education*, which so *generally* corrupts their hearts.

For though it is hard to judge of the hearts of people, yet where they *declare* their *resentment*, and *uneasiness* at anything, there they pass the judgment upon themselves. If a woman cannot *forgive* a man who thinks she has no *beauty*, nor any *ornament* from her dress, there she *infallibly* discovers the *state* of her own heart, and is condemned by *her own*, and not another's judgment.

For we never are *angry* at others, but when their opinions of us are contrary to that which we have of ourselves.

A man that makes no *pretences* to scholarship, is never angry at those that do not take him to be a *scholar* ; so if a woman had no *opinion* of her own *person* and *dress*, she would never be *angry* at those, who are of the *same opinion* with herself.

So that the general bad effects of this education, are too much known to admit of any reasonable doubt.

But how possible it is to bring up daughters in a more excellent way, let the following character declare.

Eusebia is a pious widow, well born, and well bred, and has a good estate for five daughters, whom she brings up as one entrusted by God, to fit five virgins for the kingdom of Heaven. Her family has the same regulation as a *religious house*, and all its orders tend to the support of a constant regular devotion.

She, her *daughters*, and her *maids*, meet together at all the *hours of prayer* in the day, and chant Psalms, and other devotions, and spend the rest of their time in such good works, and innocent diversions, as render them fit to return to their *Psalms* and *Prayers*.

She loves them as her spiritual children, and they reverence her as their spiritual mother, with an affection far above that of the fondest friends.

She has divided part of her estate amongst them, that every one may be charitable out of their own stock, and each

of them take it in their turns to provide for the *poor* and *sick* of the Parish.

Eusebia brings them up to all kinds of labour that are proper for women, as *sewing, knitting, spinning*, and all other parts of *housewifery*; not for their *amusement*, but that they may be serviceable to themselves and others, and be saved from those temptations which attend an idle life.

She tells them, she had rather see them reduced to the necessity of maintaining themselves by their own work, than to have riches to excuse themselves from labour. For though, says she, you may be able to assist the poor without your labour, yet by your labour you will be able to assist them more.

If *Eusebia* has lived as free from sin as it is possible for human nature, it is because she is always watching and guarding against *all instances* of pride. And if her virtues are stronger and higher than other people's, it is because they are all founded in a deep *humility*.

My children, says she, when your father died, I was much pitied by my friends, as having all the care of a family, and the management of an estate fallen upon me.

But my own grief was founded upon another principle; I was grieved to see myself deprived of so faithful a friend, and that such an eminent example of Christian virtues, should be taken from the eyes of his children, before they were of an age to love and follow it.

But as to worldly cares, which my friends thought so heavy upon me, they are most of them of our own making, and fall away as soon as we *know ourselves*.

If a person in a *dream* is disturbed with strange appearances, his trouble is over as soon as he is *awake*, and sees that it was the folly of a dream.

Now when a right knowledge of ourselves enters into our minds, it makes as great change in all our thoughts and apprehensions, as when we *awake* from the *wanderings* of a dream.

We acknowledge a man to be *mad*, or *melancholy*, who fancies himself to be a *glass*, and so is afraid of stirring; or taking himself to be *wax*, dare not let the *Sun* shine upon him.

But, my children, there are things in the world which pass for *wisdom, politeness, grandeur, happiness, and fine breeding*, which show as great *ignorance* of ourselves, and might as justly pass for *thorough madness*, as when a man fancies himself to be *glass*, or *ice*.

A woman that dares not appear in the world without *fine clothes*, that thinks it a happiness to have a face *finely coloured*, to have a skin *delicately fair*, that had rather die than be reduced

to poverty, and be forced to work for a poor maintenance, is as ignorant of herself to the full, as he that fancies himself to be *glass*.

For this reason, all my discourse with you, has been to acquaint you with yourselves, and to accustom you to such books and devotions, as may best instruct you in this greatest of all knowledge.

You would think it hard, not to know the family into which you were born, what ancestors you were descended from, and what estate was to come to you. But, my children, you may know all this with exactness, and yet be as ignorant of yourselves, as he that takes himself to be *wax*.

For though you were all of you born of my body, and bear your father's name, yet you are all of you *pure spirits*. I do not mean that you have not bodies that want *meat and drink*, and *sleep*, and *clothing*, but that *all* that deserves to be called *you*, is nothing else but *spirit*. A being spiritual and rational in its nature, that is as contrary to all fleshly or corporeal beings, as *life* is contrary to *death*; that is made in the image of God, to live for ever, never to cease any more, but to enjoy *life*, and *reason*, and *knowledge*, and *happiness* in the presence of God, and the society of Angels, and glorious Spirits, to all eternity.

Everything that you call yours, besides this spirit, is but like your *clothing*; something that is only to be used for awhile, and then to *end*, and *die*, and *wear away*, and to signify no more to you, than the *clothing* and *bodies* of other people.

But, my children, you are not only in this manner *spirits*, but you are *fallen* spirits, that began your life in a state of corruption and disorder, full of tempers and passions, that blind and darken the reason of your mind, and incline you to that which is hurtful.

Your bodies are not only *poor* and *perishing* like your clothes, but they are like *infected clothes*, that fill you with ill diseases and distempers, which oppress the soul with sickly appetites, and vain cravings.

So that all of us are like two beings, that have, as it were, two hearts within us; with the one we see, and taste, and admire reason, purity and holiness; with the other we incline to pride, and vanity, and sensual delights.

This internal war we always feel within us more or less; and if you would know the one thing necessary to all the world, it is this: to preserve and perfect all that is *rational*, *holy* and *divine* in our nature, and to mortify, remove, and destroy all that *vanity*, *pride*, and *sensuality*, which springs from the corruption of our state.

Could you think, my children, when you look at the world, and see what *customs*, and *fashions*, and *pleasures*, and *troubles*, and *projects*, and *tempers*, employ the hearts and time of mankind, that things were thus, as I have told you?

But do not you be affected at these things, the world is in a great *dream*, and but few people are awake in it.

We fancy that we fall into darkness, when we die; but alas, we are most of us in the dark till then; and the eyes of our souls only then begin to see, when our bodily eyes are closing.

You see then your state, my children; you are to honour, improve, and perfect the spirit that is within you, you are to prepare it for the kingdom of Heaven, to nourish it with the love of God, and of virtue, to adorn it with good works, and to make it as holy and heavenly as you can. You are to preserve it from the errors and vanities of the world; to save it from the corruptions of the body, from those false delights, and sensual tempers, which the body tempts it with.

You are to nourish your spirits with pious readings, and holy meditations, with watchings, fastings, and prayers, that you may taste, and relish, and desire that eternal state, which is to begin when this life ends.

As to your bodies, you are to consider them as *poor*, *perishing* things, that are sickly and corrupt at present, and will soon drop into common dust. You are to watch over them as *enemies*, that are always trying to tempt and betray you, and so never follow their advice and counsel; you are to consider them as the *place* and *habitation* of your souls, and so keep them *pure* and *clean*, and *decent*; you are to consider them as the servants and instruments of action, and so give them *food*, and *rest*, and *raiment*, that they may be strong and healthful to do the duties of a charitable, useful, pious life.

Whilst you live thus, you live like yourselves; and whenever you have less regard to your souls, or more regard to your bodies, than this comes to; whenever you are more intent upon adorning your persons, than upon the perfecting of your souls, you are much more beside yourselves, than he, that had rather have a *laced coat*, than an healthful body.

For this reason, my children, I have taught you nothing that was dangerous for you to learn; I have kept you from everything that might betray you into *weakness* and *folly*; or make you think anything fine, but a *fine mind*; anything happy but the favour of God; or anything desirable, but to do all the good you possibly can.

Instead of the vain, immodest entertainment of *Plays*, and *Operas*, I have taught you to delight in visiting the *sick* and

poor. What *music*, and *dancing*, and *diversions* are to many in the world, that prayers and devotions, and Psalms are to you. Your hands have not been employed in plaiting the hair, and adorning your persons; but in making clothes for the naked. You have not wasted your fortunes upon yourselves, but have added your labour to them, for to do more good to other people.

Instead of forced *shapes*, *patched faces*, *genteel airs*, and *affected motions*, I have taught you to *conceal* your bodies with *modest garments*, and let the world have nothing to view of you, but the *plainness*, the *sincerity*, and *humility* of all your behaviour.

You know, my children, the *high perfection*, and the *great rewards* of virginity; you know how it frees from worldly cares and troubles, and furnishes means and opportunities of higher advancements in a divine life; therefore love, and esteem, and honour virginity: bless God for all that glorious company of holy virgins, that from the beginning of Christianity have, in the several ages of the Church, renounced the cares and pleasures of matrimony, to be perpetual examples of solitude, contemplation, and prayer.

But as everyone has their proper gift from God, as I look upon you all to be so many great blessings of a married state; so I leave it to your choice, either to do as I have done, or to aspire after higher degrees of perfection in a virgin state of life.

I desire nothing, I press nothing upon you, but to make the most of human life, and to aspire after perfection in whatever state of life you choose.

Never therefore consider yourselves as persons that are to be *seen*, *admired*, and *courted* by men; but as *poor sinners*, that are to save yourselves from the vanities and follies of a miserable world, by *humility*, *devotion*, and *self-denial*. Learn to live for your own sakes, and the service of God; and let nothing in the world be of any value with you, but that which you can turn into a service to God, and a means of your future happiness.

Consider often how powerfully you are called to a virtuous life, and what great and glorious things God has done for you, to make you in love with everything that can promote his glory.

Think upon the vanity and shortness of human life, and let death and eternity be often in your minds; for these thoughts will strengthen and exalt your minds, make you wise and judicious, and truly sensible of the littleness of all human things.

Think of the happiness of prophets and apostles, saints and martyrs, who are now rejoicing in the presence of God, and see

themselves possessors of eternal glory. And then think how desirable a thing it is, to watch and pray, and do good as they did, that when you die you may have your lot amongst them.

Whether married therefore, or unmarried, consider yourselves as mothers and sisters, as friends and relations to all that want your assistance; and never allow yourselves to be idle, whilst others are in want of anything that your hands can make for them.

This useful, charitable, humble employment of yourselves, is what I recommend to you with great earnestness, as being a substantial part of a wise and pious life. And besides the good you will thereby do to other people, every virtue of your own heart will be very much improved by it.

For next to *reading, meditation, and prayer*, there is nothing that so secures our hearts from foolish passions, nothing that preserves so holy and wise a frame of mind, as some *useful, humble* employment of ourselves.

Never therefore consider your labour as an *amusement*, that is to get rid of your time, and so may be as trifling as you please; but consider it as something that is to be serviceable to yourselves and others, that is to serve some sober ends of life, to save and redeem your time, and make it turn to your account when the works of all people shall be tried by fire.

When you were little, I left you to little amusements, to please yourselves in any things that were free from harm; but as you are now grown up to a knowledge of God, and yourselves; as your minds are now acquainted with the worth and value of virtue, and exalted with the great doctrines of Religion, you are now to do nothing as children, but despise everything that is poor, or vain, and impertinent; you are now to make the labours of your hands suitable to the piety of your hearts, and employ yourselves for the same ends, and with the same spirit, as you *watch and pray*.

For if there is any good to be done by your labour, if you can possibly employ yourselves usefully to other people, how silly is it, how contrary to the wisdom of Religion, to make that a *mere amusement*, which might as easily be made an exercise of the *greatest charity*?

What would you think of the wisdom of him, that should employ his time in distilling of waters, and making liquors which nobody could use, merely to amuse himself with the variety of their colour and clearness, when with less labour and expense he might satisfy the wants of those, who have nothing to drink?

Yet he would be as wisely employed, as those that are amusing

themselves with such tedious works, as they neither need, nor hardly know how to use when they are finished; when with less labour and expense they might be doing as much good, as he that is *clothing* the naked, or *visiting* the sick.

Be glad therefore to know the wants of the poorest people, and let your hands be employed in making such *mean* and *ordinary* things for them, as their necessities require. But thus making your labour a gift and service to the poor, your ordinary work will be changed into a holy service, and made as acceptable to God, as your devotions.

And charity is the greatest of all virtues, as it always was the *chief temper* of the greatest saints; so nothing can make your own charity more amiable in the sight of God, than this method of adding your labour to it.

The *humility* also of this employment will be as beneficial to you, as the charity of it. It will keep you from all vain and proud thoughts of your own state and distinction in life, and from treating the poor as creatures of a different species. By accustoming yourselves to this labour and service for the poor, as the *representatives* of Jesus Christ, you will soon find your heart softened into the greatest meekness, and lowliness towards them. You will reverence their estate and condition, think it an *honour* to serve them, and never be so pleased with yourself, as when you are *most humbly* employed in their service.

This will make you true disciples of your meek Lord and Master, 'who came into the world, not to be ministered unto, 'but to minister;' and though he was Lord of all, and amongst the creatures of his own making, yet was amongst them, 'as one 'that serveth.'

Christianity has then had its most glorious effects upon your hearts, when it has thus changed your spirit, removed all the pride of life from you, and made you delight in humbling yourselves, beneath the lowest of all your fellow-creatures.

Live therefore, my children, as you have begun your lives, in humble labour for the good of others; and let ceremonious visits, and vain acquaintances, have as little of your time as you possibly can. Contract no foolish friendships, or vain fondnesses for particular persons; but love them most, that most turn your love towards God, and your compassion towards all the world.

But above all, avoid the conversation of *fine-bred fops* and *beaux*, and hate nothing more than the idle discourse, the flattery, and compliments of that sort of men; for they are the *shame* of their own *sex*, and ought to be the *abhorrence* of yours.

When you go abroad, let humility, modesty, and a decent

carriage, be all the *state* that you take upon you ; and let tenderness, compassion, and good nature, be all the *fine breeding* that you show in any place.

If evil *speaking, scandal, or backbiting*, be the conversation where you happen to be, keep your heart and your tongue to yourself ; be as much grieved, as if you were amongst cursing and swearing, and retire as soon as you can.

Though you intend to marry, yet let the time never come, till you find a man that has those perfections, which you have been labouring after yourselves ; who is likely to be a friend to all your virtues, and with whom it is better to live, than to want the benefit of his example.

Love *poverty*, and reverence *poor people* ; as for many reasons, so particularly for this, because our blessed Saviour was one of the number, and because you may make them all so many *friends* and *advocates* with God for you.

Visit and converse with them frequently ; you will often find *simplicity, innocence, patience, fortitude*, and great piety among them ; and where they are not so, your good example may amend them.

Rejoice at every opportunity of doing an humble action, and exercising the meekness of your minds, whether it be, as the Scripture expresses it, in *washing the saints' feet*, that is, in waiting upon, and serving those that are below you ; or in bearing with the haughtiness and ill-manners of those that are your equals, or above you. For there is nothing better than humility ; it is the fruitful soil of all virtues ; and everything that is kind and good, naturally grows from it.

Therefore, my children, pray for, and practise humility, and reject everything in *dress, or carriage, or conversation*, that has any appearance of pride.

Strive to do everything that is praiseworthy, but do nothing in order to be praised ; nor think of any reward, for all your labours of love and virtue, till Christ cometh with all his holy angels.

And above all, my children, have a care of vain and proud thoughts of your own virtues. For as soon as ever people live different from the common way of the world, and despise its vanities, the devil represents to their minds the height of their own perfections ; and is content they should excel in good works, provided that he can but make them proud of them.

Therefore watch over your virtues with a jealous eye, and reject every vain thought, as you would reject the most wicked imaginations ; and think what a loss it would be to you, to have the fruit of all your good works, devoured by the vanity of your own minds.

Never therefore allow yourselves to despise those, who do not follow your rules of life ; but force your hearts to love them, and pray to God for them ; and let *humility* be always *whispering* it into your ears, that you yourselves will fall from those rules to-morrow, if God should leave you to your own strength and wisdom.

When, therefore, you have spent days and weeks well, do not suffer your hearts to contemplate anything as your own, but give all the glory to the goodness of God, who has carried you through such rules of holy living, as you were not able to observe by your own strength ; and take care to begin the next day, not as proficients in virtue, that can do great matters, but as *poor beginners*, that want the daily assistance of God, to save you from the *grossest sins*.

Your dear father was an humble, watchful, pious, wise man. Whilst his sickness would suffer him to talk with me, his discourse was chiefly about your education. He knew the benefits of humility, he saw the ruins which pride made in our sex ; and therefore he conjured me with the tenderest expressions, to renounce the *fashionable ways* of educating daughters in *pride* and *softness*, in the care of their *beauty* and *dress* ; and to bring you all up in the *plainest, simplest* instances of an humble, holy, and industrious life.

He taught me an *admirable rule* of humility, which he practised all the days of his life ; which was this ; to let no morning pass, without thinking upon some *frailty* and *infirmity* of our own, that may put us to *confusion*, make us *blush inwardly*, and entertain a mean opinion of ourselves.

Think therefore, my children, that the soul of your good father, who is now with God, speaks to you through my mouth ; and let the double desire of your father, who is gone, and of me, who am with you, prevail upon you to love God, to study your own perfection, to practise humility, and with innocent labour and charity, to do all the good that you can to all your fellow-creatures, till God calls you to another life.

Thus did the pious widow educate her daughters.

The spirit of this education speaks so plainly for itself, that, I hope, I need say nothing in its justification. If we could see it in life, as well as read of it in books, the world would soon find the happy effects of it.

A *daughter* thus educated, would be a blessing to any family that she came into ; a fit companion for a wise man, and make him happy in the government of his family, and the education of his children.

And she that either was not inclined, or could not dispose of

herself well in marriage, would know how to live to great and excellent ends in a state of virginity.

A very ordinary knowledge of the *spirit* of Christianity, seems to be enough to convince us, that no education can be of true advantage to young women, but that which trains them up in *humble industry*, in *great plainness* of life, in *exact modesty* of *dress*, *manners*, and *carriage*, and in *strict devotion*. For what should a Christian woman be, but a *plain, unaffected, modest, humble* creature, averse to everything in her *dress* and *carriage*, that can draw the eyes of beholders, or gratify the passions of lewd and amorous persons?

How great a stranger must he be to the Gospel, who does not know, that it requires this to be the spirit of a pious woman?

Our blessed Saviour saith, 'Whosoever looketh upon a woman 'to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in 'his heart.'*

Need an education, which turns women's minds to the *arts* and *ornaments* of dress and beauty, be more strongly condemned, than by these words? For surely, if the eye is so easily and dangerously betrayed, every *art* and *ornament* is sufficiently condemned, that naturally tends to betray it.

And how can a woman of piety more justly abhor and avoid anything, than that which makes her person more a *snare* and *temptation* to other people? If *lust*, and *wanton eyes* are the death of the soul, can any women think themselves innocent, who with naked breasts, patched faces, and every ornament of dress, invite the eye to offend?

And as there is no pretence for innocence in such a behaviour, so neither can they tell how to set any bounds to their guilt. For as they can never know how much, or how often they have occasioned sin in other people, so they can never know how much guilt will be placed to their own account.

This, one would think, should sufficiently deter every pious woman from everything, that might render her the occasion of loose passions in other people.

St. Paul, speaking of a thing entirely *innocent*, reasons after this manner: 'But take heed lest by any means this liberty of 'yours, become a stumbling-block to those that are weak.— 'And through thy knowledge thy weak brother perish, for whom 'Christ died. But when ye sin so against the brethren, and 'wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, 'if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the 'world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.'†

* Matt. v. 28

† 1 Cor. viii. 9, 11.

Now if this is the spirit of Christianity ; if it requires us to abstain from things thus lawful, innocent, and useful, when there is any danger of betraying our weak brethren into any error thereby : Surely it cannot be reckoned too *nice* or *needless* a point of conscience, for women to avoid such things, as are neither innocent nor useful, but *naturally* tend to corrupt their own hearts, and raise ill passions in other people.

Surely every woman of Christian piety ought to say, in the spirit of the Apostle, if *patching* and *paint*, or any *vain adorning* of my person, be a natural means of making weak, unwary eyes to offend, I will renounce all these arts as long as I live, lest I should make my fellow-creatures to offend.

I shall now leave this subject of *humility* ; having said enough, as I hope, to recommend the necessity of making it the constant, chief subject of your devotion, at this hour of prayer.

I have considered the nature and necessity of humility, and its great importance to a religious life. I have shown you how many difficulties are formed against it from our natural tempers, the spirit of the world, and the common education of both sexes.

These considerations will, I hope, instruct you how to form your prayers for it to the best advantage ; and teach you the necessity of letting no day pass, without a serious, earnest application to God, for the *whole spirit* of humility. Fervently beseeching him to fill every part of your soul with it, to make it the ruling, constant habit of your mind, that you may not only feel it, but feel all your other tempers arising from it ; that you may have no thoughts, no desires, no designs, but such as are the true fruits of an humble, meek, and lowly heart.

That you may always appear poor, and little, and mean in your own eyes, and fully content that others should have the same opinion of you.

That the whole *course* of your life, your *expense*, your *house*, your *dress*, your manner of *eating*, *drinking*, *conversing*, and doing *everything*, may be so many continual proofs of the true, unfeigned humility of your heart.

That you may look for nothing, claim nothing, resent nothing ; that you may go through all the actions and accidents of life, calmly and quietly, as in the presence of God, looking wholly unto him, acting wholly for him ; neither seeking vain applause, nor resenting neglects, or affronts, but doing and receiving everything in the meek and lowly spirit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Chapter XX.

Recommending Devotion at twelve o'Clock, called in Scripture the sixth hour of the day. This frequency of Devotion equally desirable by all orders of people. Universal love is here recommended to be the subject of prayer at this hour. Of intercession, as an act of universal love.

IT will perhaps be thought by some people, that these hours of prayer come *too thick* ; that they can only be observed by people of great leisure, and ought not to be *pressed* upon the generality of men, who have the *cares* of families, *trades* and *employments* ; nor upon the *gentry*, whose *state* and *figure* in the world cannot admit of this frequency of Devotion. And that it is only fit for *Monasteries* and *Nunneries*, or such people as have no more to do in the world than they have.

To this it is answered,

First, that this method of Devotion is not pressed upon any sort of people, as *absolutely necessary*, but recommended to *all people*, as the *best*, the *happiest*, and most *perfect* way of life.

And if a great and exemplary Devotion, is as much the greatest happiness and perfection of a *Merchant*, a *Soldier*, or a man of *Quality*, as it is the greatest happiness and perfection of the most *retired contemplative* life, then it is as proper to recommend it without any *abatements* to one order of men, as to another. Because happiness and perfection are of the same worth and value to all people.

The *Gentleman* and *Tradesman* may, and must spend much of their time differently from the pious *Monk* in the *cloister*, or the contemplative *Hermit* in the *désert* : But then, as the *Monk* and *Hermit* lose the ends of retirement, unless they make it all serviceable to Devotion ; so the *Gentleman* and *Merchant* fail of the greatest ends of a *social life*, and live to their loss in the world, unless Devotion be their *chief* and *governing* temper.

It is certainly very *honest* and *creditable* for people to engage in *trades* and *employments* ; it is reasonable for *Gentlemen* to manage well their *estates* and *families*, and take such recreations

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as are proper to their state. But then every Gentleman and Tradesman, loses the greatest happiness of his creation, is robbed of something that is greater than all employments, distinctions and pleasures of the world, if he does not live more to *Piety* and *Devotion*, than to anything else in the world.

Here are therefore no excuses made for men of *business* and *figure* in the world. *First*, Because it would be to excuse them from that which is the greatest end of living; and be only finding so many reasons for making them *less beneficial* to themselves, and *less serviceable* to God and the world.

Secondly, Because most men of business and figure engage *too far* in worldly matters; much further than the reasons of human life, or the necessities of the world require.

Merchants and *Tradesmen*, for instance, are generally ten times further engaged in business than they need; which is so far from being a reasonable *excuse* for their want of time for *Devotion*, that it is their *crime*, and must be censured as a blamable instance of covetousness and ambition.

The *Gentry* and people of *Figure*, either give themselves up to *State-employments*, or to the gratifications of their *passions*, in a life of *gaiety* and *debauchery*; and if these things might be admitted as allowable avocations from *Devotion*, *Devotion* must be reckoned a poor circumstance of life.

Unless *Gentlemen* can show that they have another God, than the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; another Nature, than that which is derived from *Adam*; another Religion than the Christian, it is in vain to plead their state, and dignity, and pleasures, as reasons for not preparing their souls for God, by a *strict* and *regular* *Devotion*.

For since *Piety* and *Devotion* are the *common unchangeable* means, of saving all the souls in the world that shall be saved, there is nothing left for the *Gentleman*, the *Soldier*, and the *Tradesman*, but to take care that their several states be, by care and watchfulness, by meditation and prayer, made states of an *exact* and *solid piety*.

If a *Merchant*, having forborn from too great business, that he might quietly attend on the service of God, should therefore die worth *twenty*, instead of *fifty* thousand pounds, could anyone say that he had mistaken his *calling*, or gone a *loser* out of the world?

If a *Gentleman* should have killed *fewer foxes*, been less frequent at *balls*, *gaming*, and *merry-meetings*, because stated parts of his time had been given to *retirement*, to *meditation* and *devotion*, could it be thought, that when he left the world, he would regret the loss of those hours, that he had given to the care and improvement of his soul?

If a *Tradesman* by aspiring after Christian perfection, and retiring himself often from his business, should instead of leaving his children fortunes to spend in *luxury* and *idleness*, leave them to live by their own honest labour; could it be said, that he had made a *wrong use* of the world, because he had shown his children, that he had more regard to that which is eternal, than to this which is so soon to be at an end?

Since therefore devotion, is not only the best and most desirable practice in a *Cloister*, but the best and most desirable practice of men, as men, and in *every state* of life, they that desire to be excused from it, because they are men of *figure*, and *estates*, and *business*, are no wiser than those, that should desire to be excused from *health* and *happiness*, because they were men of *figure* and *estates*.

I cannot see why every *Gentleman*, *Merchant*, or *Soldier*, should not put these questions seriously to himself:

What is the best thing for me to intend and drive at in all my actions? How shall I do to make the most of human life? What ways shall I wish that I had taken, when I am leaving the world?

Now to be thus wise, and to make thus much use of our reason, seems to be but a *small* and *necessary* piece of wisdom. For how can we pretend to sense and judgment, if we dare not seriously consider, and answer, and govern our lives by that which such questions require of us?

Shall a *Nobleman* think his birth too high a dignity to condescend to such questions as these? Or a *Tradesman* think his business too great, to take any care about himself?

Now here is desired no more devotion in anyone's life, than the answering these *few questions*, requires.

Any devotion that is not to the greater advantage of him that uses it, than anything that he can do in the *room* of it; any devotion that does not procure an *infinitely greater* good, than can be got by neglecting it, is freely yielded up; here is no demand of it.

But if people will live in so *much ignorance*, as never to put these questions to themselves, but push on a blind life at all chances, in quest of they know not what, nor why; without ever considering the worth, or value, or tendency of their actions, without considering what God, *reason*, *eternity*, and their own happiness require of them; it is for the honour of *devotion*, that none can neglect it, but those who are thus inconsiderate, who dare not enquire after that which is the best, and most worthy of their choice.

It is true, *Claudius*, you are a man of *figure* and *estate*, and

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are to act the part of such a station in human life ; you are not called, as *Elijah* was, to be a Prophet, or as *St. Paul*, to be an Apostle.

But will you therefore not love yourself? Will you not seek and study your own happiness, because you are not called to preach up the same things to other people?

You would think it very absurd, for a man not to value his own *health*, because he was not a *Physician* ; or the preservation of his *limbs*, because he was not a *Bone-setter*. Yet it is more absurd for you *Claudius*, to neglect the improvement of your soul in piety, because you are not an Apostle, or a Bishop.

Consider this text of Scripture, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die ; but if through the spirit, ye do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God.*' Do you think that this Scripture does not equally relate to all mankind? Can you find any exception here for men of *figure* and *estates*? Is not a *spiritual* and *devout* life here made the common condition, on which all men are to become *sons* of God? Will you leave *hours of prayer*, and rules of devotion, to particular states of life, when nothing but the same spirit of devotion can save you, or any man, from eternal death?

Consider again this text: 'For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.†' Now if your *estate* would excuse you from appearing before this judgment-seat ; if your *figure* could protect you from receiving according to your works, there would be some pretence for your leaving devotion to other people. But if you, who are now thus distinguished, must then appear *naked* amongst *common souls*, without any other distinction from others, but such as your virtues or sins give you ; does it not as much concern you, as any *Prophet*, or *Apostle*, to make the best provision for the best rewards at that great day?

Again, consider this doctrine of the Apostle: 'For none of us,' that is, of us Christians, 'liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself: For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living.‡'

Now are you, *Claudius*, excepted out of the doctrine of this text? Will you, because of your *condition*, leave it to any particular sort of people, to *live* and *die* unto Christ? If so, you

* Rom. viii. 13, 14.

† 2 Cor. v. 10.

‡ Rom. xiv. 7, 8.

must leave it to them, to be redeemed by the death and resurrection of Christ. For it is the express doctrine of the text, that for *this end* Christ died and rose again, that none of us should live to himself. It is not that Priests, or Apostles, or *Monks*, or *Hermits*, should live no longer to themselves; but that *none of us*, that is, no Christian of what state soever, should live unto himself.

If therefore there be any instances of piety, any rules of devotion, which you can neglect, and yet live as truly unto Christ, as if you observed them, this text calls you to no such devotion. But if you forsake such devotion, as you yourself know is expected from some *particular sorts* of people; such devotion as you know becomes people that live wholly unto Christ, that aspire after *great piety*; if you neglect such devotion for any *worldly consideration*, that you may live more to your own *temper* and *taste*, more to the *fashions* and *ways* of the world, you forsake the terms on which all Christians are to receive the benefit of Christ's death and resurrection.

Observe further how the same doctrine is taught by St. Peter; 'As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in 'all manner of conversation.'*

If, therefore, *Claudius*, you are one of those that are here called, you see what it is that you are called to. It is not to have so much religion as suits with your temper, your business, or your pleasures, it is not to a particular sort of piety, that may be sufficient for Gentlemen of figure and estates; but it is *first*, to be 'holy, as He which hath called you is holy'; *secondly*, it is to be *thus holy* in all manner of conversation; that is, to carry this spirit and degree of holiness into every part, and through the whole form of your life.

And the reason the Apostle immediately gives, why this spirit of holiness must be the common spirit of Christians, as such, is very affecting, and such as equally calls upon all sorts of Christians. 'Forasmuch as ye know,' says he, 'that ye were 'not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, 'from your vain conversation,—but with the precious blood 'of Christ,' &c.

As if he had said, Forasmuch as ye know ye were made capable of this state of holiness, entered into a society with Christ, and made heirs of his glory, not by any human means, but by such a mysterious instance of love, as infinitely exceeds everything that can be thought of in this world; since God has redeemed you to himself, and your own happiness, at so *great*

* 1 Peter i. 15.

a price, how base and shameful must it be, if you do not henceforth devote yourselves wholly to the glory of God, and become holy, as he who hath called you is holy?

If, therefore, *Claudius*, you consider your *figure* and *estate*; or if, in the words of the text, you consider your *gold* and *silver*, and the *corruptible things* of this life, as any reason why you may live to your own humour and fancy, why you may neglect a life of strict piety and great devotion; if you think anything in the world can be an excuse for you, not imitating the holiness of Christ in the whole *course* and *form* of your life, you make yourself as guilty, as if you should neglect the holiness of Christianity, for the sake of *picking straws*.

For the greatness of this new state of life, to which we are called in Christ Jesus, to be for ever as the Angels of God in heaven, and the greatness of the *price* by which we are made capable of this state of glory, has turned everything that is *worldly*, *temporal*, and *corruptible*, into an *equal littleness*; and made it as great baseness and folly, as great a contempt of the blood of Christ, to neglect *any degrees* of holiness, because you are a man of some *estate* and *quality*, as it would be to neglect it, because you had a fancy to *pick straws*.

Again; the same Apostle saith, 'Know ye not, that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.'*

How poorly, therefore, *Claudius*, have you read the Scripture, how little do you know of Christianity, if you can yet talk of your *estate* and condition, as a pretence for a freer kind of life?

Are you any more *your own*, than he that has no estate or dignity in the world? Must *mean* and *little* people preserve their bodies as temples of the Holy Ghost, by *watching*, *fasting*, and *prayer*; but may you indulge yours in *idleness*, in *lusts*, and *sensuality*, because you have so much *rent*, or such a *title* of distinction? How poor and ignorant are such thoughts as these?

And yet you must either think thus, or else acknowledge, that the holiness of *Saints*, *Prophets*, and *Apostles*, is the holiness that you are to labour after, with all the diligence and care that you can.

And if you leave it to others, to live in such piety and devotion, in such self-denial, humility, and temperance, as may render them able to glorify God in their body, and in their spirit; you must leave it to them also, to have the benefit of the blood of Christ.

Again; the Apostle saith, 'You know how we exhorted, com-

* 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

‘forted, and charged every one of you, that you would walk ‘worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and ‘glory.’*

You perhaps, *Claudius*, have often heard these words, without ever thinking how much they required of you. And yet you cannot consider them, without perceiving to what an eminent state of holiness they call you.

For how can the holiness of the Christian life be set before you in higher terms, than when it is represented to you as *walking worthy of God*? Can you think of any abatements of virtue, any neglects of Devotion, that are well consistent with a life, that is to be made worthy of God? Can you suppose that any man walks in this manner, but he that watches over all his steps; and considers how everything he does, may be done in the spirit of holiness? and yet as high as these expressions carry this holiness, it is here plainly made the necessary holiness of all Christians. For the Apostle does not here exhort his fellow *Apostles* and *Saints* to this holiness, but he *commands* all Christians to endeavour after it. ‘We charged,’ says he, ‘every ‘one of you, that you would walk worthy of God, who hath ‘called you to his kingdom and glory.’

Again, St. Peter saith, ‘If any man speak, let him speak ‘as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of ‘the ability that God giveth; that God in all things may be ‘glorified in Jesus Christ.’†

Do you not here, *Claudius*, plainly perceive your high calling? Is he that speaketh, to have such regard to his words, that he appear to speak as by the direction of God? Is he that giveth, to take care that he so giveth, that what he disposeth of may appear to be a gift that he hath of God? And is all this to be done, that God may be glorified in all things?

Must it not then be said, Has any man *Nobility, dignity, of State, or figure* in the world? Let him so use his *Nobility, or figure* of life, that it may appear he uses these as the gifts of God, for the greater setting forth of his Glory. Is there now, *Claudius*, anything forced or far-fetched in this conclusion? Is it not the plain sense of the words, that everything in life is to be made a matter of holiness unto God? If so, then your *estate and dignity* is so far from excusing you from *great piety and holiness* of life, that it lays you under a greater necessity of living more to the glory of God, because you have more of his gifts that may be made serviceable to it.

For people, therefore, of *figure, or business, or dignity* in the

* 1 Thess. ii. 11, 12.

† 1 Peter iv. 11.

world, to leave *great piety* and *eminent devotion* to any particular orders of men, or such as they think have little else to do in the world, is to leave the kingdom of God to them.

For it is the very end of Christianity, to redeem all orders of men into *one holy* society, that rich and poor, high and low, masters and servants, may in one and the same spirit of piety, become a 'chosen generation,' a 'royal Priesthood, an holy 'Nation, a peculiar people, that are to show forth the praises 'of him, who hath called them out of darkness, into his marvellous light.'*

Thus much being said to show, that *great Devotion* and Holiness is not to be left to any particular sort of people, but to be the *common spirit* of all that desire to live up to the terms of common Christianity; I now proceed to consider the nature and necessity of *universal love*, which is here recommended to be the subject of your Devotion at this hour. You are here also called to *Intercession*, as the most proper exercise to raise and preserve that love.

By intercession, is meant a praying to God, and interceding with him for our fellow-creatures.

Our blessed Lord hath recommended his love to us, as the pattern and example of our love to one another. As therefore he is continually making intercession for us all, so ought we to intercede and pray for one another.

'A new commandment,' saith he, 'I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another.'

The newness of this precept did not consist in this, that men were commanded to love one another; for this was an old precept, both of the law of *Moses*, and of nature. But it was new in this respect, that it was to imitate a new, and till then unheard-of example of love; it was to love one another, as Christ had loved us.

And if men are to know that we are Disciples of Christ, by thus loving one another, according to his new example of love, then it is certain, that if we are void of this love, we make it as plainly known unto men, that we are none of his Disciples.

There is no principle of the heart that is more acceptable to God, than an *universal* fervent love to all mankind, *wishing* and *praying* for their happiness; because there is no principle of the heart that makes us more like God, who is love and goodness itself, and created all beings for their enjoyment of happiness.

The greatest *Idea* that we can frame of God is, when we

* 1 Peter ii. 9.

conceive him to be a Being of infinite love and goodness; using an infinite wisdom and power, for the common good and happiness of all his creatures.

The highest notion therefore, that we can form of man is, when we conceive him as like to God in this respect as he can be; using all his finite faculties, whether of wisdom, power, or prayers, for the common good of all his fellow-creatures: Heartily desiring they may have all the happiness they are capable of, and as many benefits and assistances from him, as his state and condition in the world will permit him to give them.

And on the other hand, what a *baseness* and *iniquity* is there in all instances of *hatred*, *envy*, *spite*, and *ill-will*; if we consider that every instance of them is so far acting in *opposition* to God, and intending *mischief* and *harm* to those creatures, which God *favours*, and *protects*, and *preserves*, in order to their happiness? An *ill-natured* man amongst God's creatures, is the most *perverse* creature in the world, acting contrary to that *love*, by which himself *subsists*, and which alone gives subsistence to all that variety of beings, that enjoy life in any part of the creation.

'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them.'

Now though this is a doctrine of *strict justice*, yet it is only an *universal love* that can comply with it. For as love is the *measure* of our acting towards ourselves, so we can never act in the same manner towards other people, till we look upon them with that love, with which we look upon ourselves.

As we have no degrees of *spite*, or *envy*, or *ill-will* to ourselves, so we cannot be disposed towards others as we are towards ourselves, till we *universally* renounce all instances of *spite*, and *envy*, and *ill-will*, even in the *smallest* degrees.

If we had any imperfection in our *eyes*, that made us see *any one* thing wrong, for the same reason they would show us an hundred things wrong.

So that if we have any temper of our hearts, that makes us *envious*, or *spiteful*, or *ill-natured* towards *any one* man, the same temper will make us *envious*, and *spiteful*, and *ill-natured* towards a great many more.

If therefore we desire this divine virtue of love, we must exercise and practise our hearts in the love of *all*, because it is not *Christian* love, till it is the love of all.

If a man could keep this whole law of love, and yet offend in *one point*, he would be guilty of all. For as one *allowed* instance of *injustice*, destroys the justice of all our other actions, so one allowed instance of *envy*, *spite*, and *ill-will*, renders all our other acts of *benevolence* and *affection* nothing worth.

Acts of love, that proceed not from a principle of *universal love*, are but like acts of justice, that proceed from a heart not disposed to *universal justice*.

A love which is not universal, may indeed have *tenderness* and *affection*, but it hath nothing of *righteousness*, or *piety* in it : It is but humour, and temper, or interest, or such a love as *Publicans* and *Heathens* practise.

All particular *envies* and *spite*, are as plain departures from the spirit of Christianity, as any particular acts of injustice. For it is as much a law of Christ, to treat everybody as your *neighbour*, and to love your neighbour as *yourself*, as it is a law of Christianity, to abstain from *theft*.

Now the noblest motive to this universal tenderness and affection, is founded in this Doctrine, 'God is love, and he 'that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God.'

Who therefore, whose heart has any tendency towards God, would not aspire after this divine temper, which so changes and exalts our nature into an union with him ?

How should we rejoice in the exercise and practice of this love, which so often as we feel it, is so often an assurance to us, that God is in us, that we act according to his spirit, and is love itself ? But we must observe, that love has then only this mighty power of uniting us to God, when it is so *pure* and *universal*, as to imitate that love, which God beareth to all his creatures.

God willeth the happiness of all beings, though it is no happiness to himself. Therefore we must desire the happiness of all beings, though no happiness cometh to us from it.

God equally delighteth in the perfections of all his creatures, therefore we should rejoice in those perfections, wherever we see them, and be as glad to have other people perfect as ourselves.

As God forgiveth all, and giveth grace to all, so we should forgive all those injuries and affronts which we receive from others, and do all the good that we can to them.

God Almighty, besides his own great example of love, which ought to draw all his creatures after it, has so provided for us, and made our happiness so *common* to us all, that we have no occasion to envy, or hate one another.

For we cannot stand in one another's way, or by enjoying any particular good, keep another from his full share of it.

As we cannot be happy, but in the enjoyment of God, so we cannot rival, or rob one another of this happiness.

And as to other things, the *enjoyments* and *prosperities* of this life, they are so little in themselves, so foreign to our happiness, and, generally speaking, so *contrary* to that which they

appear to be, that they are no foundation for envy, or spite, or hatred.

How silly would it be to envy a man, that was drinking poison out of a *golden cup*? And yet who can say, that he is acting wiser than thus, when he is envying any instance of worldly greatness?

How many *saints* has adversity sent to Heaven? And how many poor sinners has prosperity plunged into everlasting misery? A man seems then to be in the most glorious state, when he has conquered, disgraced, and humbled his enemy; though it may be, that same conquest has saved his adversary, and undone himself.

This man had perhaps never been debauched, but for his *fortune* and *advancement*; *that* had never been pious, but through his *poverty* and *disgrace*.

She that is envied for her beauty, may perchance owe all her *misery* to it; and *another* may be for ever happy, for having had no admirers of her *person*.

One man succeeds in everything, and so loses all: *Another* meets with nothing but crosses and disappointments, and thereby gains more than all the world is worth.

This Clergyman may be undone by his being made a *Bishop*; and *that* may save both himself and others, by being fixed to his first *poor vicarage*.

How envied was *Alexander* when, conquering the world, he built *towns*, set up his *statues*, and left marks of his glory in so many kingdoms!

And how despised was the poor preacher *St. Paul*, when he was *beaten with rods*! And yet how strangely was the world mistaken in their judgment! How much to be envied was *St. Paul*! How much to be pitied was *Alexander*!

These few reflections sufficiently show us, that the different conditions of this life, have nothing in them to excite our uneasy passions, nothing that can reasonably interrupt our love and affection to one another.

To proceed now to another motive to this *universal* love.

Our power of doing *external acts* of love and goodness, is often very narrow and restrained. There are, it may be, but few people to whom we can contribute any worldly relief.

But though our outward means of doing good are often thus limited, yet if our hearts are but full of love and goodness, we get, as it were, an infinite power; because God will attribute to us those good works, those acts of love, and tender charities, which we sincerely desired, and would gladly have performed, had it been in our power.

You cannot heal all the *sick*, relieve all the *poor*; you cannot comfort all in distress, nor be a father to all the fatherless. You cannot, it may be, deliver many from their misfortunes, or teach them to find comfort in God.

But if there is a love and tenderness in your heart, that *delight* in these good works, and *excites* you to do *all* that you can: If your love has *no bounds*, but continually *wishes* and *prays* for the relief and happiness of all that are in distress, you will be received by God as a benefactor to those, who have had nothing from you but your *goodwill*, and tender affections.

You cannot build *hospitals* for the *incurable*; you cannot erect *monasteries* for the education of persons in holy *solitude*, continual *prayer*, and *mortification*; but if you join in your heart with those that do, and thank God for their pious designs; if you are a friend to these great friends to mankind, and rejoice in their eminent virtues, you will be received by God as a sharer of such good works as, though they had none of your *hands*, yet had *all your heart*.

This consideration surely is sufficient to make us look to, and watch over our hearts, with all diligence; to study the improvement of our *inward tempers*, and aspire after every height and perfection of a loving, charitable and benevolent mind.

And on the other hand, we may hence learn the great evil and mischief of all *wrong turns* of mind, of *envy*, *spite*, *hatred*, and *ill-will*. For if the goodness of our hearts will entitle us to the reward of good actions, which we never performed; it is certain that the badness of our hearts, our *envy*, *ill-nature*, and *hatred*, will bring us under the guilt of actions that we have never committed.

As he that lusteth after a woman shall be reckoned an adulterer, though he has only committed the crime in his heart; so the malicious, spiteful, ill-natured man, that only *secretly* rejoices at evil, shall be reckoned a *murderer*, though he has shed no blood.

Since therefore our hearts, which are always naked and open to the eyes of God, give such an exceeding extent and increase, either to our virtues or vices, it is our *best* and *greatest* business to govern the motions of our hearts, to watch, correct, and improve the inward state and temper of our souls.

Now there is nothing that so much exalts our souls, as this heavenly love: it cleanses and purifies like a holy fire, and all ill tempers fall away before it. It makes room for all virtues, and carries them to their greatest height. Everything that is good and holy grows out of it, and it becomes a continual source of all holy desires, and pious practices. By love, I do not mean any *natural tenderness*, which is more or less in people, according to

their constitutions; but I mean a *larger principle* of the soul, founded in *reason* and *piety*, which makes us tender, kind, and benevolent to all our fellow-creatures, as creatures of God, and for his sake.

It is this love, that loves all things in God, as his creatures, as the images of his power, as the creatures of his goodness, as parts of his family, as members of his society, that becomes a holy principle of all great and good actions.

The love therefore of our neighbour, is only a branch of our love to God. For when we love God with all our hearts, and with all our souls, and with all our strength, we shall necessarily love those beings that are so nearly related to God, that have everything from him, and are created by him, to be objects of his own eternal love. If I hate or despise any one man in the world, I hate something that God cannot hate, and despise that which he loves.

And can I think that I love God with all my heart, whilst I hate that which belongs only to God, which has no other master but him, which bears his image, is part of his family, and exists only by the continuance of his love towards it?

It was the impossibility of this, that made St. *John* say, 'That if any man saith, he loveth God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar.'

These reasons sufficiently show us, that no love is *holy*, or *religious*, till it becomes *universal*.

For if Religion requires me to love all persons, as God's creatures, that belong to him, that bear his image, enjoy his protection, and make parts of his family and household; if these are the great and necessary reasons, why I should live in love and friendship with any one man in the world, they are the same great and necessary reasons, why I should live in love and friendship with every man in the world; and consequently, I offend against *all these reasons*, and break through all these *ties*, and *obligations*, whenever I want love towards any one man. The sin therefore of hating, or despising any one man, is like the sin of hating all God's creation; and the necessity of loving any one man, is the same necessity of loving every man in the world. And though many people may appear to us ever so sinful, odious, or extravagant in their conduct, we must never look upon that, as the least motive for any contempt or disregard of them; but look upon them with the greater compassion, as being in the most pitiable condition that can be.

As it was the Sins of the world, that made the Son of God become a compassionate suffering Advocate for all mankind, so no one is of the Spirit of Christ, but he that has the *utmost com-*

passion for sinners. Nor is there any greater sign of your own perfection, than when you find yourself all love and compassion towards them that are very weak and defective. And on the other hand, you have never less reason to be pleased with yourself, than when you find yourself most angry and offended at the behaviour of others. All sin is certainly to be hated and abhorred, wherever it is ; but then we must set ourselves against sin, as we do against *sickness* and *diseases*, by showing ourselves tender and compassionate to the *sick* and *diseased*.

All other hatred of sin, which does not fill the heart with the *softest, tenderest* affections towards persons miserable in it, is the servant of sin, at the same time that it seems to be hating it.

And there is no temper, which even good men ought more carefully to watch and guard against, than this. For it is a temper that lurks and hides itself under the cover of many virtues, and by being unsuspected, does the more mischief.

A man naturally fancies, that it is his own exceeding love of virtue, that makes him not able to bear with those that want it. And when he *abhors* one man, *despises* another, and cannot bear the *name* of a third, he supposes it all to be a proof of his own *high sense* of virtue, and *just hatred* of sin.

And yet, one would think, that a man needed no other cure for this temper, than this one reflection :

That if this had been the *Spirit* of the Son of God, if he had hated sin in *this manner*, there had been no redemption of the World : That if God had hated sinners in this manner, day and night, the world itself had ceased long ago.

This therefore we may take for a certain rule, that the more we partake of the divine nature, the more improved we are ourselves, and the higher our sense of virtue is, the more we shall pity and compassionate those that want it. The sight of such people will then, instead of raising in us a haughty contempt, or peevish indignation towards them, fill us with such bowels of compassion, as when we see the miseries of an *hospital*.

That the follies therefore, crimes, and ill-behaviour of our fellow-creatures, may not lessen that love and tenderness which we are to have for all mankind, we should often consider the reasons, on which this duty of love is founded.

Now we are to love our neighbour, that is, all mankind, not because they are wise, holy, virtuous, or well-behaved ; for all mankind neither ever was, nor ever will be so ; therefore it is certain, that the reason of our being obliged to love them, cannot be founded in their virtue.

Again ; if their virtue or goodness were the reason of our being obliged to love people, we should have no *rule* to proceed

by ; because though some people's virtues or vices are very notorious, yet, generally speaking, we are but very ill judges of the virtue and merit of other people.

Thirdly, We are sure that the virtue or merit of persons, is not the reason of our being obliged to love them, because we are commanded to pay the highest instances of love to our worst enemies ; we are to love, and bless, and pray for those that most injuriously treat us. This therefore is demonstration, that the merit of persons is not the reason, on which our obligation to love them is founded.

Let us further consider, what that love is, which we owe to our neighbour. It is to love him as ourselves, that is, to have all those sentiments towards him, which we have towards ourselves ; to wish him everything that we may lawfully wish to ourselves ; to be glad of every good, and sorry for every evil, that happens to him ; and to be ready to do him all such acts of kindness, as we are always ready to do to ourselves.

This love therefore, you see, is nothing else but a love of *benevolence* ; it requires nothing of us but such *good wishes, tender affections*, and such acts of *kindness*, as we show to ourselves.

This is all the love that we owe to the best of men ; and we are never to want any degree of this love to the worst, or most unreasonable man in the world.

Now what is the reason why we are to love every man in this manner ? It is answered, that our obligation to love all men in this manner, is founded upon many reasons.

First, Upon a reason of *equity* ; for if it is *just*, to love ourselves in this manner, it must be *unjust* to deny any degree of this love to others, because every man is so exactly of the same nature, and in the same condition as ourselves.

If therefore your own crimes and follies, do not lessen your obligation to seek your *own good*, and wish *well* to yourself ; neither do the follies and crimes of your neighbour, lessen your obligation to wish and seek the good of your neighbour.

Another reason for this love, is founded in the authority of God, who has commanded us to love every man as ourself.

Thirdly, We are obliged to this love, in imitation of God's goodness, that we may be children of our Father which is in Heaven, who willeth the happiness of all his creatures, and maketh his Sun to rise on the evil, and on the good.

Fourthly, Our redemption by Jesus Christ, calleth us to the exercise of this love, who came from Heaven, and laid down his life, out of love to the whole sinful world.

Fifthly, By the command of our Lord and Saviour, who has required us to love one another, as he has loved us.

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These are the great, perpetual reasons, on which our obligation to love all mankind as ourselves, is founded.

These reasons never vary or change, they always continue in their full force ; and therefore equally oblige at all times, and in regard to all persons.

God loves us, not because we are wise, and good, and holy, but in pity to us, because we want this happiness : He loves us, in order to make us good. Our love therefore must take this course ; not looking for, or requiring the merit of our brethren, but pitying their disorders, and wishing them all the good that they want, and are capable of receiving.

It appears now plainly, from what has been said, that the love which we owe to our brethren, is only a love of *benevolence*. *Secondly*, That this duty of benevolence, is founded upon such reasons as never vary or change, such as have no dependence upon the *qualities* of persons. From whence it follows, that it is the same *great sin*, to want this love to a bad man, as to want it to a good man. Because he that denies any of this benevolence to a bad man, offends against all the *same reasons* of love, as he does that denies any benevolence to a good man : And consequently it is the same sin.

When therefore, you let loose any ill-natured passion, either of hatred, or contempt towards (as you suppose) an ill man, consider what you would think of another, that was doing the same towards a good man, and be assured that you are committing the same sin.

You will perhaps say, How is it possible to love a good and a bad man, in the same degree ?

Just as it is possible to be as *just* and *faithful* to a good man, as to an evil man. Now are you in any difficulty about performing *justice* and *faithfulness* to a bad man ? Are you in any doubts, whether you need be so *just* and *faithful* to him, as you need be to a good man ? Now why is it, that you are in no doubt about it ? It is because you know, that justice and faithfulness are founded upon reasons that never *vary* or *change*, that have no dependence upon the *merits* of men, but are founded in the nature of things, in the laws of God, and therefore are to be observed with an equal exactness towards good and bad men.

Now do but think thus justly of charity, or love to your neighbour, that it is founded upon reasons, that *vary* not, that have no dependence upon the *merits* of men, and then you will find it as possible to perform the same *exact charity*, as the same *exact justice*, to all men, whether good or bad.

You will perhaps further ask, if you are not to have a *particular esteem*, *veneration*, and *reverence* for good men ? It is answered ;

Yes. But then this *high esteem* and *veneration*, is a thing very different from that love of *benevolence* which we owe to our neighbour.

The high esteem and veneration which you have for a man of eminent piety, is no act of charity to him ; it is not out of pity and compassion, that you so reverence him, but it is rather an act of charity to yourself, that such esteem and veneration, may excite you to follow his example.

You may, and ought to love, like, and approve the life which the good man leads ; but then this is only the loving of virtue, wherever we see it. And we do not love virtue with the love of benevolence, as anything that wants our *good wishes*, but as something that is our proper good.

The whole of the matter is this. The *actions* which you are to *love*, *esteem*, and *admire*, are the actions of good and pious men ; but the *persons* to whom you are to do all the good you can, in all sorts of kindness and compassion, are all persons, whether good or bad.

This distinction betwixt love and benevolence, and esteem or veneration, is very plain and obvious. And you may perhaps still better see the plainness and necessity of it, by this following instance.

No man is to have a *high esteem* or *honour*, for his own accomplishments, or behaviour ; yet every man is to love himself, that is, to wish well to himself ; therefore this distinction betwixt love and esteem, is not only plain, but very necessary to be observed.

Again, if you think it hardly possible to dislike the actions of unreasonable men, and yet have a true love for them : Consider this with relation to yourself.

It is very possible, I hope, for you not only to dislike, but to *detest* and *abhor* a great many of your own past actions, and to accuse yourself of *great folly* for them. But do you then lose any of those tender sentiments towards yourself, which you used to have ? Do you then cease to wish well to yourself ? Is not the love of yourself as strong then, as at any other time ?

Now what is thus possible with relation to ourselves, is in the same manner possible with relation to others. We may have the highest good wishes towards them, desiring for them, every good that we desire for ourselves, and yet at the same time, dislike their way of life.

To proceed ; all that love which we may justly have for ourselves, we are in *strict justice* obliged to exercise towards all other men ; and we offend against the great law of our nature, and the greatest laws of God, when our tempers towards others, are different from those which we have towards ourselves.

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Now that *self-love* which is *just* and *reasonable*, keeps us constantly *tender*, *compassionate*, and *well-affected* towards ourselves ; if therefore you do not feel these kind dispositions towards all other people, you may be assured, that you are not in that state of charity, which is the very life and soul of Christian piety.

You know how it hurts you, to be made the *jest* and *ridicule* of other people ; how it grieves you to be *robbed* of your reputation, and *deprived* of the favourable opinion of your neighbours : If therefore you expose others to *scorn* and *contempt* in any degree ; if it pleases you to see or hear of their *frailties* and *infirmities* ; or if you are only *loath* to conceal their faults, you are so far from loving such people as yourself, that you may be justly supposed to have as much hatred for them, as you have love for yourself. For such tempers are as truly the proper fruits of hatred, as the contrary tempers are the proper fruits of love.

And as it is a certain sign that you love yourself, because you are tender of everything that concerns you ; so it is as certain a sign that you hate your neighbour, when you are pleased with anything that hurts him.

But now, if the want of a *true* and *exact* charity, be so great a want, that, as St. Paul saith, it renders our greatest virtues but empty sounds, and *tinkling cymbals*, how highly does it concern us to study every art, and practise every method of raising our souls to this state of charity ? It is for this reason, that you are here desired, not to let this hour of prayer pass, without a full and solemn supplication to God, for all the instances of an universal love and benevolence to all mankind.

Such daily constant devotion, being the only likely means of preserving you in such a state of love, as is necessary to prove you to be a true follower of Jesus Christ.

Chapter XXI.

Of the necessity and benefit of Intercession, considered as an exercise of universal love. How all orders of men are to pray and intercede with God for one another. How naturally such intercession, amends and reforms the hearts of those that use it.

THAT intercession is a great and necessary part of Christian Devotion, is very evident from Scripture. The first followers of Christ, seem to support all their love, and to maintain all their intercourse and correspondence, by mutual prayers for one another.

St. *Paul*, whether he writes to churches, or particular persons, shows his *intercession* to be perpetual for them, that they are the constant subject of his prayers.

Thus to the *Philippians*, 'I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. Always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy.* Here we see, not only a continual intercession, but performed with so much gladness, as shows that it was an exercise of love, in which he highly rejoiced.

His Devotion had also the same care for particular persons; as appears by the following passage. 'I thank my God, whom I serve from my forefathers, with a pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day.† How holy an acquaintance and friendship was this, how worthy of persons that were raised above the world, and related to one another, as new members of a kingdom of Heaven!

Apostles and great Saints did not only thus benefit, and bless particular Churches, and private persons; but they themselves also received graces from God by the prayers of others. Thus saith St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, 'You also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf.‡

This was the *ancient friendship* of Christians, uniting and

* Phil. i. 4, 5.

† 2 Tim. i. 3.

‡ 2 Cor. i. 11.

cementing their hearts, not by worldly considerations, or human passions, but by the mutual communication of spiritual blessings, by prayers and thanksgivings to God for one another.

It was this holy intercession, that raised Christians to such a state of mutual love, as far exceeded all that had been praised and admired in human friendship. And when the same spirit of *intercession* is again in the world, when Christianity has the same power over the hearts of people, that it then had, this holy friendship will be again in fashion, and Christians will be again the wonder of the world, for that exceeding love which they bear to one another.

For a *frequent* intercession with God, earnestly beseeching him to forgive the sins of all mankind, to bless them with his providence, enlighten them with his Spirit, and bring them to everlasting happiness, is the divinest exercise that the heart of man can be engaged in.

Be daily therefore on your knees, in a solemn, deliberate performance of this devotion, praying for others in such *forms*, with such *length*, *importunity*, and *earnestness*, as you use for yourself; and you will find all *little*, *ill-natured* passions die away, your heart grow *great* and *generous*, delighting in the common happiness of others, as you used only to delight in your own.

For he that daily prays to God, that all men may be happy in heaven, takes the likeliest way to make him wish for, and delight in their happiness on earth. And it is hardly possible for you, to beseech and entreat God to make anyone happy in the highest enjoyments of his glory to all eternity, and yet be troubled to see him enjoy the much smaller gifts of God, in this short and low state of human life.

For how strange and unnatural would it be, to pray to God to grant *health* and a *longer* life to a *sick man*, and at the same time to *envy* him the poor pleasure of *agreeable medicines*?

Yet this would be no more strange, or unnatural, than to pray to God that your neighbour may enjoy the *highest* degrees of his mercy and favour, and yet at the same time envy him the little *credit* and *figure*, he hath amongst his fellow-creatures.

When therefore you have once habituated your heart to a serious performance of this holy intercession, you have done a great deal, to render it incapable of *spite* and *envy*, and to make it *naturally* delight in the happiness of all mankind.

This is the natural effect of a *general intercession* for all mankind. But the greatest benefits of it are then received, when it descends to such *particular* instances, as our *state* and *condition* in life more particularly require of us.

Though we are to treat all mankind as *neighbours* and *brethren*,

as any occasion offers ; yet as we can only live in the actual society of a few, and are by our state and condition more particularly *related* to some than others ; so when our intercession is made an exercise of love and care, for those amongst whom our *lot* is fallen, or who belong to us in a *nearer relation*, it then becomes the greatest benefit to ourselves, and produces its best effects in our own hearts.

If therefore you should always change and alter your intercessions, according as the *needs* and *necessities* of your *neighbours* or *acquaintance* seem to require ; beseeching God to deliver them from such or such particular evils, or to grant them this or that particular gift, or blessing ; such intercessions, besides the great charity of them, would have a mighty effect upon your own heart, as disposing you to every other good office, and to the exercise of every other virtue towards such persons, as have so often a place in your prayers.

This would make it pleasant to you, to be *courteous*, *civil*, and *condescending* to all about you ; and make you unable to say, or do a rude, or hard thing to those, for whom you had used yourself to be so kind and compassionate in your prayers.

For there is nothing that makes us love a man so much, as praying for him ; and when you can once do this sincerely for any man, you have fitted your soul for the performance of everything that is kind and civil towards him. This will fill your heart with a generosity and tenderness, that will give you a better and sweeter behaviour, than anything that is called *fine breeding* and *good manners*.

By considering yourself as an advocate with God, for your neighbours and acquaintance, you would never find it hard to be at peace with them yourself. It would be easy to you to bear with, and forgive those, for whom you particularly implored the divine mercy and forgiveness.

Such prayers as these, amongst *neighbours* and *acquaintance*, would unite them to one another in the strongest bonds of love and tenderness. It would exalt and ennoble their souls, and teach them to consider one another in a higher state, as members of a *spiritual society*, that are created for the enjoyment of the common blessings of God and fellow-heirs of the same future glory.

And by being thus desirous, that everyone should have their full share of the favours of God, they would not only be content, but glad to see one another happy, in the little enjoyments of this transitory life.

These would be the natural effects of such an intercession, amongst people of the same *town* or *neighbourhood*, or that were acquainted with one another's *state* and *condition*.

Ouranius is a holy Priest, full of the spirit of the Gospel, watching, labouring, and praying for a poor *country village*. Every soul in it, is as dear to him as himself; and he loves them all, as he loves himself; because he *prays* for them all, as often as he *prays* for himself.

If his whole life is one continual exercise of great zeal and labour, hardly ever satisfied with any degrees of care and watchfulness, it is because he has learned the great value of souls, by so often appearing before God, as an *intercessor* for them.

He never thinks he can love, or do enough for his flock; because he never considers them in any other view, than as so many persons, that by receiving the gifts and graces of God, are to become his *hope*, his *joy*, and his *crown of rejoicing*.

He goes about his Parish, and visits everybody in it; but visits in the same spirit of piety, that he preaches to them; he visits them, to encourage their virtues, to assist them with his advice and counsel, to discover their manner of life, and to know the state of their souls, that he may *intercede* with God for them, according to their *particular necessities*.

When *Ouranius* first entered into holy orders, he had a *haughtiness* in his temper, a great *contempt* and *disregard* for all foolish and unreasonable people; but he has *prayed away* this spirit, and has now the greatest tenderness for the most obstinate sinners; because he is always hoping, that God will sooner or later hear those prayers that he makes for their repentance.

The *rudeness*, *ill-nature*, or *perverse* behaviour of any of his flock, used at first to betray him into impatience; but now it raises no other passion in him, than a desire of being upon his knees in prayer to God for them.

Thus have his *prayers* for others, *altered* and *amended* the state of his own heart.

It would strangely delight you to see, with what *spirit* he converses, with what *tenderness* he reproveth, with what *affection* he exhorts, and with what *vigour* he preaches; and it is all owing to this, because he reproveth, exhorts, and preaches to those, for whom he first *prays* to God.

This devotion softens his heart, enlightens his mind, sweetens his temper, and makes everything that comes from him, instructive, amiable, and affecting.

At his first coming to his little *Village*, it was as disagreeable to him as a *prison*, and every day seemed too tedious to be endured in so retired a place. He thought his Parish was too full of *poor* and *mean* people, that were none of them fit for the conversation of a *Gentleman*.

This put him upon a close application to his studies. He kept

much at home, writ *notes* upon *Homer* and *Plautus*, and sometimes thought it hard to be called to pray by any poor body, when he was just in the midst of one of *Homer's battles*.

This was his *polite*, or I may rather say, *poor, ignorant* turn of mind, before devotion had got the government of his heart.

But now his days are so far from being tedious, or his Parish too great a retirement, that he now only wants more time to do that variety of good, which his soul thirsts after. The solitude of his little Parish is become matter of great comfort to him, because he hopes that God has placed him and his flock there, to make it their way to Heaven.

He can now not only converse with, but gladly attend and wait upon the poorest kind of people. He is now daily watching over the *weak* and *infirm*, humbling himself to perverse, rude, ignorant people, wherever he can find them; and is so far from desiring to be considered as a *Gentleman*, that he desires to be used as the *servant* of all; and in the spirit of his Lord and Master *girds himself*, and is glad to *kneel down* and *wash* any of their *feet*.

He now thinks the poorest creature in his Parish good enough, and great enough, to deserve the humblest attendances, the kindest friendships, the tenderest offices, he can possibly show them.

He is so far now from wanting agreeable company, that he thinks there is no better conversation in the world, than to be talking with *poor* and *mean* people about the kingdom of Heaven.

All these noble thoughts, and divine sentiments, are the effects of his great devotion; he presents everyone so often before God, in his prayers, that he never thinks he can *esteem*, *reverence*, or *serve* those enough, for whom he implores so many mercies from God.

Ouranius is mightily affected with this passage of Holy Scripture, 'The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.'^{*}

This makes him practise all the arts of holy living, and aspire after every instance of piety and righteousness, that his prayers for his flock may have their full force, and avail much with God.

For this reason, he has sold a small estate that he had, and has erected a charitable retirement for ancient, poor people, to live in prayer and piety, that his prayers being assisted by such good works, may *pierce the clouds*, and bring down blessings upon those souls committed to his care.

Ouranius reads how God himself said unto *Abimelech*, concern-

* James v. 16.

ing *Abraham*, 'He is a Prophet; he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live.'*

And again, how he said of *Job*, 'And my servant Job shall pray for you; for him will I accept.'†

From these passages *Ouranius* justly concludes, that the prayers of men eminent for holiness of life, have an extraordinary power with God; that he grants to other people such pardons, reliefs and blessings, through their prayers, as would not be granted to men of less piety and perfection. This makes *Ouranius* exceeding studious of Christian perfection, searching after every grace and holy temper, purifying his heart all manner of ways, fearful of every error and defect in his life, lest his prayers for his flock should be less availing with God, through his own defects in holiness.

This makes him careful of every *temper* of his heart, give *alms* of all that he hath, *watch*, and *fast*, and *mortify*, and live according to the strictest rules of *temperance*, *meekness*, and *humility*, that he may be in some degree like an *Abraham*, or a *Job* in his Parish, and make such prayers for them, as God will hear and accept.

These are the happy effects, which a *devout intercession* hath produced in the life of *Ouranius*.

And if other people, in their several stations, were to imitate his example, in such a manner as suited their particular state of life, they would certainly find the same happy effects from it.

If *Masters*, for instance, were thus to remember their *servants* in their prayers, beseeching God to bless them, and suiting their petitions to the particular wants and necessities of their servants; letting no day pass, without a *full performance* of this part of Devotion, the benefit would be as great to themselves, as to their servants.

No way so likely as this, to inspire them with a true sense of that power which they have in their hands, to make them delight in doing good, and becoming exemplary in all the parts of a wise and good master.

The presenting their servants so often before God, as equally related to God, and entitled to the same expectations of Heaven, as themselves, would naturally incline them to treat them, not only with such *humanity* as became *fellow-creatures*, but with such *tenderness*, *care*, and *generosity*, as became *fellow-heirs* of the same glory. This Devotion would make masters inclined to everything that was good towards their servants; be watchful of their behaviour, and as ready to require of them an exact

* Gen xx. 7.

† Job xlii. 8.

observance of the duties of Christianity, as of the duties of their service.

This would teach them to consider their servants as God's servants, to desire their perfection, to do nothing before them that might corrupt their minds, to impose no business upon them that should lessen their sense of Religion, or hinder them from their full share of Devotion, both public and private. This praying for them, would make them as glad to see their servants eminent in piety as themselves, and contrive that they should have all the opportunities and encouragements, both to know, and perform all the duties of the Christian life.

How natural would it be for such a Master, to perform every part of Family Devotion; to have constant prayers, to excuse no one's absence from them; to have the Scriptures, and books of piety often read amongst his servants; to take all opportunities of instructing them, of raising their minds to God, and teaching them to do all their business, as a service to God, and upon the hopes and expectations of another life?

How natural would it be for such a one to pity their weakness and ignorance, to bear with the dulness of their understandings, or the perverseness of their tempers; to reprove them with tenderness, exhort them with affection, as hoping that God would hear his prayers for them?

How impossible would it be for a Master, that thus interceded with God for his servants, to use any unkind threatenings towards them, to damn and curse them as *dogs* and scoundrels, and treat them only as the dregs of the creation?

This Devotion would give them another spirit, and make them consider how to make proper returns of care, kindness, and protection to those, who had spent their strength and time in service and attendance upon them.

Now if *Gentlemen* think it too low an employment for their state and dignity, to exercise such a Devotion as this for their *servants*, let them consider how far they are from the spirit of Christ, who made Himself not only an intercessor, but a sacrifice for the whole race of sinful mankind.

Let them consider how miserable their greatness would be, if the Son of God should think it as much below Him to pray for them, as they do to pray for their fellow-creatures.

Let them consider how far they are from that spirit, which prays for its most unjust enemies, if they have not kindness enough to pray for those, by whose labours and service they live in ease themselves.

Again, If *Parents* should thus make themselves *advocates* and *intercessors* with God for their children, constantly applying to

Heaven in behalf of them, nothing would be more likely, not only to bless their children, but also to form and dispose their own minds, to the performance of everything that was excellent and praiseworthy.

I do not suppose, but that the generality of parents remember their children in their prayers, and call upon God to bless them. But the thing here intended, is not a general remembrance of them, but a *regular method* of recommending all their *particular needs* and *necessities* unto God; and of praying for every such particular *grace* and *virtue* for them, as their *state* and *condition* of life shall seem to require.

The state of parents is a holy state, in some degree like that of the Priesthood, and calls upon them to bless their children with their prayers and sacrifices to God. Thus it was that holy *Job* watched over, and blessed his children, he 'sanctified them, 'he rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings, 'according to the number of them all.'*

If parents therefore, considering themselves in this light, should be daily calling upon God, in a *solemn, deliberate* manner, *altering* and *extending* their intercessions, as the *state* and *growth* of their children required, such Devotion would have a mighty influence upon the rest of their lives; it would make them very circumspect in the government of themselves; prudent and careful of everything they said or did, lest their example should hinder that, which they so constantly desired in their prayers.

If a father was daily making particular prayers to God, that he would please to inspire his children with *true piety, great humility, and strict temperance*, what could be more likely to make the father himself become exemplary in these virtues? How naturally would he grow ashamed of wanting such virtues, as he thought necessary for his children? So that his prayers for their piety, would be a certain means of exalting his own, to its greatest height.

If a father thus considered himself as an intercessor with God for his children, to bless them with his prayers, what more likely means to make him aspire after every degree of holiness, that he might thereby be fitter to obtain blessings from Heaven for them? How would such thoughts make him avoid everything that was sinful and displeasing to God, lest when he prayed for his children, God should reject his prayers?

How tenderly, how religiously would such a father converse with his children, whom he considered as his little spiritual flock, whose virtues he was to form by his example, encourage by his

* Job i. 5.

authority, nourish by his counsel, and prosper by his prayers to God for them ?

How fearful would he be of all greedy and unjust ways of raising their fortune, of bringing them up in pride and indulgence, or of making them too fond of the world, lest he should thereby render them incapable of those graces, which he was so often beseeching God to grant them ?

These being the plain, natural, happy effects of this intercession, all parents, I hope, who have the real welfare of their children at heart, who desire to be their true friends and benefactors, and to live amongst them in the spirit of wisdom and piety, will not neglect so great a means, both of raising their own virtue, and doing an eternal good to those, who are so near and dear to them, by the strongest ties of nature.

Lastly, If all people, when they feel the first approaches of *resentment, envy, or contempt*, towards others; or if in all little disagreements, and misunderstandings whatever, they should, instead of indulging their minds with little low reflections, have recourse, at such times, to a more particular and extraordinary intercession with God, for such persons as had raised their envy, resentment, or discontent ; this would be a certain way to prevent the growth of all uncharitable tempers.

If you were also to form your prayer, or intercession at that time, to the greatest degree of *contrariety* to that temper which you were then in, it would be an excellent means of raising your heart to the greatest state of perfection.

As for instance, when at any time you find in your heart motions of envy towards any person, whether on account of his *riches, power, reputation, learning, or advancement*, if you should immediately betake yourself at that time to your prayers, and pray to God to bless and prosper him in that *very thing*, which raised your envy ; if you should express and repeat your petitions in the strongest terms, beseeching God to grant him all the happiness from the enjoyment of it, that can possibly be received, you would soon find it to be the best antidote in the world, to expel the venom of that poisonous passion.

This would be such a triumph over yourself, would so humble and reduce your heart into obedience and order, that the Devil would even be afraid of tempting you again in the same manner, when he saw the temptation turned into so great a means of amending and reforming the state of your heart.

Again, If in any little difference, or misunderstandings that you happened to have at any time, with a *relation, a neighbour, or anyone else*, you should then pray for them in a more *extraordinary manner*, than you ever did before ; beseeching God to

give them every grace, and blessing, and happiness you can think of, you would have taken the speediest method that can be, of reconciling all differences, and clearing up all misunderstandings. You would then think nothing too great to be forgiven; stay for no condescensions, need no mediation of a third person, but be glad to testify your love and good-will to him, who had so high a place in your secret prayers.

This would be the mighty power of such Christian devotion; it would remove all peevish passions, soften your heart into the most tender condescensions, and be the best arbitrator of all differences that happened betwixt you and any of your acquaintance.

The greatest resentments amongst friends and neighbours, most often arise from poor *punctilios*, and *little mistakes* in conduct. A certain sign that their friendship is *merely human*, not founded upon religious considerations, or supported by such a course of mutual prayer for one another, as the first Christians used.

For such devotion must necessarily either destroy such tempers, or be itself destroyed by them.

You cannot possibly have any ill-temper, or show any unkind behaviour to a man, for whose welfare you are so much concerned, as to be his advocate with God in private.

Hence we may also learn the odious nature and exceeding guilt of all *spite, hatred, contempt*, and *angry passions*; they are not to be considered as defects in *good-nature*, and *sweetness* of temper, not as failings in *civility* of manners, or *good-breeding*, but as such *base tempers*, as are entirely inconsistent with the *charity* of intercession.

You think it a small matter to be *peevish* or *ill-natured*, to such or such a man; but you should consider whether it be a small matter to do that, which you could not do, if you had but so much charity, as to be able to recommend him to God in your prayers.

You think it a small matter to *ridicule* one man, and *despise* another; but you should consider, whether it be a small matter to want that charity towards these people, which Christians are not allowed to want towards their most inveterate enemies.

For be but as charitable to these men, do but *bless* and *pray* for them, as you are obliged to bless and pray for your *enemies*, and then you will find that you have charity enough, to make it impossible for you to treat them with any degree of scorn or contempt.

For you cannot possibly despise and ridicule that man, whom your *private prayers* recommend to the love and favour of God.

When you despise and ridicule a man, it is with no other end, but to make him ridiculous and contemptible in the eyes of other men, and in order to prevent their esteem of him. How therefore can it be possible for you, sincerely to beseech God to bless that man with the *honour* of his love and favour, whom you desire men to treat as worthy of their *contempt*?

Could you, out of love to a neighbour, desire your *Prince* to honour him with every mark of his esteem and favour, and yet at the same time expose him to the scorn and derision of your own servants?

Yet this is as possible, as to expose that man to the scorn and contempt of your fellow-creatures, whom you recommend to the favour of God in your secret prayers.

From these considerations, we may plainly discover the reasonableness and justice of this doctrine of the Gospel, 'Who-soever shall say unto his brother, *Raca*, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou Fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.'*

We are not, I suppose, to believe that every hasty word, or unreasonable expression, that slips from us by *chance* or *surprise* and is contrary to our intention and tempers, is the great sin here signified.

But he that says, *Raca*, or thou *Fool*, must chiefly mean him that allows himself in *deliberate*, *designed* acts of *scorn* and *contempt* towards his brother, and in that temper speak to him, and of him, in reproachful language.

Now since it appears, that these tempers are at the bottom, the most *rank uncharitableness*, since no one can be guilty of them, but because he has not charity enough to pray to God for his brother; it cannot be thought hard or rigorous justice, that such tempers should endanger the salvation of Christians. For who would think it hard, that a Christian cannot obtain the favour of God for himself, unless he reverence and esteem his brother Christian, as one that bears the image of God, as one for whom Christ died, as a member of Christ's body, as a member of that holy society on earth, which is in union with that triumphant Church in Heaven?

Yet all these considerations must be forgot, all these glorious privileges disregarded, before a man can treat him that has them, as an object of scorn and contempt.

So that to scorn, or despise a brother, or, as our blessed Lord says, to call him *Raca*, or *Fool*, must be looked upon, as amongst the most odious, unjust, and guilty tempers, that can

* Matt. v 22.

be supported in the heart of a Christian, and justly excluding him from all his hopes in the salvation of Jesus Christ.

For to despise one for whom Christ died, is to be as contrary to Christ, as he that despises anything that Christ has said, or done.

If a Christian that had lived with the holy Virgin *Mary*, should, after the death of our Lord, have taken any occasion to treat her with contempt, you would certainly say, that he had lost his piety towards our blessed Lord. For a true reverence for Christ must have forced him to treat her with respect, who was so nearly related to him.

I dare appeal to any man's mind, whether it does not tell him, that this relation of the Virgin *Mary* to our blessed Lord, must have obliged all those that lived and conversed with her, to treat her with great respect and esteem. Might not a man have justly dreaded the vengeance of God upon him, for any scorn or contempt that he had shown to her?

Now if this be plain and obvious reasoning, if a contempt offered to the Virgin *Mary*, must have been interpreted a contempt of Christ, because of her near relation to him, then let the same reasoning show you the great impiety of despising any brother.

You cannot despise a brother, without despising him that stands in a *high relation* to God, to his Son Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Trinity.

You would certainly think it a mighty impiety to treat a *writing* with great contempt, that had been written by the *finger* of God; and can you think it a less impiety to contemn and vilify a brother, who is not only the *workmanship*, but the *image* of God?

You would justly think it great profaneness, to contemn and trample upon an *Altar*, because it was appropriated to holy uses, and had had the body of Christ so often placed upon it; and can you suppose it to be less profaneness to scorn and trample upon a brother, who so belongs to God, that his very body is to be considered as the 'temple of the Holy Ghost'?

Had you despised and ill-treated the Virgin *Mary*, you had been chargeable with the impiety of despising her, of whom Christ was born. And if you scorn and despise a brother, you are chargeable with the impiety of despising him, for whom Christ laid down his life.

And now if this scornful temper is founded upon a disregard of all these relations, which every Christian bears to God, and

Christ, and the Holy Trinity, can you wonder, or think it hard, that a Christian who thus allows himself to despise a brother, should be in danger of hell-fire ?

Secondly, It must here be observed, that though in these words, 'whosoever shall say, Thou Fool,' &c., the *great sin* there condemned is an *allowed temper* of despising a brother ; yet we are also to believe, that all *hasty expressions*, and words of *contempt*, though spoken by *surprise* or *accident*, are by this text condemned as great sins, and notorious breaches of Christian charity.

They proceed from great want of Christian love and meekness, and call for great repentance. They are only little sins, when compared with *habits* and *settled tempers* of treating a brother despitefully, and fall as directly under the condemnation of this text, as the grossest habits of uncharitableness.

And the reason why we are always to apprehend great guilt, and call ourselves to a strict repentance for these hasty expressions of anger and contempt, is this ; because they seldom are what they seem to be, that is, *mere starts* of temper, that were occasioned *purely* by *surprise* or *accident*, but are much more our own proper acts, than we generally imagine.

A man says a great many bitter things ; he presently forgives himself, because he supposes it was only the *suddenness* of the occasion, or something *accidental*, that carried him so far beyond himself.

But he should consider, that perhaps the *accident*, or *surprise*, was not the occasion of his angry expressions, but might only be the occasion of his angry temper showing itself.

Now as this is, generally speaking, the case, as all *haughty*, *angry* language generally proceeds from some *secret habits* of pride in the heart ; so people that are subject to it, though only now and then as accidents happen, have great reason to repent of more than their present behaviour, to charge themselves with greater guilt than accidental passion, and to bring themselves to such penance and mortification, as is proper to destroy *habits* of a haughty spirit.

And this may be the reason, why the text looks no further than the outward language ; why it only says, 'Whosoever shall say, Thou Fool' ; because few can proceed so far, as to the accidental use of *haughty*, *disdainful* language, but they whose hearts are more or less possessed with *habits*, and *settled tempers* of pride and haughtiness.

But to return, *Intercession* is not only the best arbitrator of all differences, the best promoter of true friendship, the best cure and preservative against all unkind tempers, all angry and

haughty passions, but is also of great use to discover to us the true state of our own hearts.

There are many tempers which we think *lawful* and *innocent*, which we never suspect of any harm ; which if they were to be tried by this devotion, would soon show us how we have deceived ourselves.

Susurrus is a pious, temperate, good man, remarkable for abundance of excellent qualities. No one more constant at the service of the Church, or whose heart is more affected with it. His charity is so great, that he almost starves himself, to be able to give greater alms to the poor.

Yet *Susurrus* had a prodigious failing, along with these great virtues.

He had a mighty inclination to hear and discover, all the defects and infirmities of all about him. You were welcome to tell him anything of anybody, provided that you did not do it in the *style* of an enemy. He never disliked an *evil-speaker*, but when his language was *rough* and *passionate*. If you would but whisper anything gently, though it was ever so bad in itself, *Susurrus* was ready to receive it.

When he visits, you generally hear him relating, how sorry he is for the defects and failings of such a neighbour. He is always letting you know, how tender he is of the reputation of his neighbour ; how loath to say that which he is forced to say ; and how gladly he would conceal it, if it could be concealed.

Susurrus had such a tender, compassionate manner of relating things the most prejudicial to his neighbour, that he even seemed, both to himself and others, to be exercising a Christian charity, at the same time that he was indulging a whispering, evil-speaking temper.

Susurrus once whispered to a particular friend in great secrecy, something too bad to be spoken of publicly. He ended with saying, how glad he was, that it had not yet took wind, and that he had some hopes it might not be true, though the suspicions were very strong. His friend made him this reply :

You say, *Susurrus*, that you are glad it has not yet taken wind ; and that you have some hopes it may not prove true. Go home therefore to your *closet*, and pray to God for this man, in such a manner, and with such earnestness, as you would pray for yourself on the like occasion.

Beseech God to interpose in his favour, to save him from false accusers, and bring all those to shame, who by *uncharitable whispers*, and *secret stories*, wound him, like those that stab in the dark. And when you have made this prayer, then you may,

if you please, go tell the same secret to some other friend, that you have told to me.

Susurrus was exceedingly affected with this rebuke, and felt the force of it upon his conscience, in as lively a manner, as if he had seen the *books opened* at the day of Judgment.

All other arguments might have been resisted; but it was impossible for *Susurrus*, either to reject, or to follow this advice, without being equally self-condemned in the highest degree.

From that time to this, he has constantly used himself to this method of intercession; and his heart is so entirely changed by it, that he can now no more privately whisper anything to the prejudice of another, than he can openly pray to God to do people hurt.

Whisperings and evil-speakings now hurt his ears, like oaths and curses; and he has appointed one day in the week, to be a day of penance as long as he lives, to humble himself before God, in the sorrowful confession of his former guilt.

It may well be wondered, how a man of so much piety as *Susurrus*, could be so long deceived in himself, as to live in such a state of *scandal* and *evil-speaking*, without suspecting himself to be guilty of it. But it was the *tenderness* and seeming *compassion*, with which he heard and related everything, that deceived both himself and others.

This was a falseness of heart, which was only to be fully discovered, by the true *charity of intercession*.

And if people of virtue, who think as little harm of themselves, as *Susurrus* did, were often to try their spirit by such an *intercession*, they would often find themselves to be such, as they least of all suspected.

I have laid before you, the many and great advantages of *intercession*. You have seen what a divine friendship it must needs beget amongst Christians, how dear it would render all relations and neighbours to one another; how it tends to make *Clergymen, Masters, and Parents*, exemplary and perfect in all the duties of their station; how certainly it destroys all envy, spite, and ill-natured passions; how speedily it reconciles all differences, and with what a piercing light it discovers to a man the true state of his heart.

These considerations will, I hope, persuade you to make such intercession as is proper for your state, the *constant, chief* matter of your devotion, at this hour of prayer.

Chapter XXII.

Recommending Devotion at three o'clock, called in Scripture the ninth hour of the day. The subject of prayer at this hour, is resignation to the divine pleasure. The nature and duty of conformity to the will of God, in all our actions and designs.

I HAVE recommended certain subjects, to be made the fixed and chief matter of your Devotions, at all the hours of prayer that have been already considered.

As *thanksgiving*, and *oblation* of yourself to God, at your first prayers in the morning. At *nine*, the great virtue of Christian *humility* is to be the chief part of your petitions. At *twelve*, you are called upon to pray for all the graces of *universal love*, and to raise it in your heart by such general and particular *intercessions*, as your own state, and relation to other people, seem more particularly to require of you.

At this *hour* of the afternoon, you are desired to consider the necessity of *resignation* and *conformity* to the will of God, and to make this great virtue the principal matter of your prayers.

There is nothing *wise*, or *holy*, or *just*, but the *great will* of God. This is as strictly true in the most rigid sense, as to say, that nothing is infinite and eternal but God.

No beings therefore, whether in Heaven, or on earth, can be wise, or holy, or just, but so far as they conform to *this will* of God. It is conformity to this will, that gives virtue and perfection to the highest services of angels in Heaven; and it is conformity to the same will, that makes the ordinary actions of men on earth, become an acceptable service unto God.

The whole nature of virtue consists in conforming, and the whole nature of vice in declining from the will of God. All God's creatures are created to fulfil his will; the *Sun* and *Moon* obey his will, by the necessity of their nature; *Angels* conform to his will, by the perfection of their nature: If therefore you would show yourself, not to be a *rebel* and *apostate* from the order of the creation, you must act like beings both above and below you; it must be the great desire of your soul, that God's will may be done by you on earth, as it is done in heaven. It

must be the settled purpose and intention of your heart, to *will* nothing, *design* nothing, *do* nothing, but so far as you have reason to believe, that it is the will of God, that you should so desire, design, and do.

'Tis as just and necessary to live in this state of heart, to think thus of God and yourself, as to think that you have any dependence upon him. And it is as great a rebellion against God, to think that your will may ever differ from his, as to think that you have not received the power of *willing* for him.

You are therefore to consider yourself as a being, that has no other business in the world, but to be that which God requires you to be; to have no tempers, no rules of your own, to seek no self-designs, or self ends, but to fill some *place*, and act some *part* in strict conformity, and thankful resignation to the divine pleasure.

To think that you are your own, or at your own disposal, is as absurd, as to think that you created, and can preserve yourself. It is as plain and necessary a first principle, to believe you are thus God's, that you thus belong to him, and are to act and suffer all in a thankful resignation to his pleasure, as to believe, that in him you *live, and move, and have your being*.

Resignation to the divine will, signifies a cheerful approbation, and thankful acceptance of everything that comes from God. It is not enough patiently to submit, but we must thankfully receive, and fully approve of everything, that by the order of God's providence happens to us.

For there is no reason why we should be patient, but what is as good and strong a reason why we should be thankful. If we were under the hands of a wise and good *Physician*, that could not mistake, or do anything to us, but what certainly tended to our benefit; it would not be enough to be patient, and abstain from murmurings against such a Physician; but it would be as great a breach of duty and gratitude to him, not to be pleased and thankful for what he did, as it would be to murmur at him.

Now this is our true state with relation to God; we cannot be said so much as to *believe* in him, unless we believe him to be of *infinite wisdom*. Every argument therefore for patience under his disposal to us, is as strong an argument for approbation and thankfulness, for everything that he does to us. And there needs no more to dispose us to this gratitude towards God, than a full belief in him, that he is this being of infinite wisdom, love, and goodness.

Do but assent to this truth, in the same manner as you assent to things of which you have no doubt, and then you will cheerfully approve of everything, that God has already approved for you.

For as you cannot possibly be pleased with the behaviour of any person towards you, but because it is for your good, is wise in itself, and the effect of his love and goodness towards you ; so when you are satisfied that God does not only do that which is wise, and good, and kind, but that which is the effect of an infinite wisdom and love in the care of you ; it will be as necessary, whilst you have this faith, to be thankful and pleased with everything which God chooses for you, as to wish your own happiness.

Whenever therefore you find yourself disposed to *uneasiness*, or *murmuring*, at anything that is the effect of God's providence over you, you must look upon yourself as *denying*, either the wisdom, or goodness of God. For every complaint necessarily supposes this. You would never complain of your *neighbour*, but that you suppose you can show either his *unwise*, *unjust*, or *unkind* behaviour towards you.

Now every murmuring, impatient reflection, under the providence of God, is the same accusation of God. A complaint always supposes *ill-usage*.

Hence also you may see the great necessity and piety of this thankful state of heart, because the want of it, implies an accusation of God's want, either of wisdom, or goodness, in his disposal of us. It is not therefore any high degree of perfection, founded in any uncommon *nicety* of thinking, or *refined notions*, but a plain principle, founded in this plain belief, that God is a being of infinite wisdom and goodness.

Now this resignation to the divine will, may be considered in two respects ; *First*, As it signifies a thankful approbation of God's *general* providence over the world : *Secondly*, As it signifies a thankful acceptance of his *particular* providence over us.

First, Every man is by the law of his creation, by the first article of his creed, obliged to consent to, and acknowledge the wisdom and goodness of God in his *general providence* over the whole world. He is to believe, that it is the effect of God's great wisdom and goodness, that the world itself was formed at such a particular time, and in such a manner : That the general order of nature, the whole frame of things, is contrived and formed in the best manner. He is to believe that God's providence over states and kingdoms, times and seasons, is all for the best : That the revolutions of state, and changes of empire, the rise and fall of monarchies, persecutions, wars, famines, and plagues, are all permitted, and conducted by God's providence, to the general good of man in this state of trial.

A good man is to believe all this, with the same fulness of assent, as he believes that God is in every place, though he neither sees, nor can comprehend the manner of his presence.

This is a noble magnificence of thought, a true religious greatness of mind, to be thus affected with God's general providence, admiring and magnifying his wisdom in all things; never murmuring at the course of the world, or the state of things, but looking upon all around, at heaven and earth, as a pleased spectator; and adoring that invisible hand, which gives laws to all motions, and overrules all events, to ends suitable to the highest wisdom and goodness.

It is very common for people, to allow themselves great liberty in finding fault with such things, as have only God for their cause.

Everyone thinks he may justly say, what a *wretched, abominable climate* he lives in. This man is frequently telling you, what a *dismal, cursed day* it is, and what intolerable *seasons* we have. Another thinks he has very little to thank God for, that it is hardly worth his while to live in a world so full of changes and revolutions. But these are tempers of great impiety, and show that religion has not yet its seat in the heart of those that have them.

It sounds indeed much better to murmur at the course of the world, or the state of things, than to murmur at Providence; to complain of the seasons and weather, than to complain of God; but if these have no other cause but God and His providence, it is a poor distinction to say, that you are only angry at the things, but not at the cause and director of them.

How *sacred* the whole frame of the world is, how all things are to be considered as God's, and referred to him, is fully taught by our blessed Lord in the case of *oaths*: 'But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King; neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black';* that is, because the whiteness or blackness of thy hair is not thine, but God's.

Here you see all things in the whole order of nature; from the highest heavens to the smallest hair, are always to be considered, not separately as they are in themselves, but as in some relation to God. And if this be good reasoning, thou shalt not swear by the *earth*, a *city*, or thy *hair*, because these things are God's, and in a certain manner belong to him; is it not exactly the same reasoning to say, Thou shalt not murmur at the *seasons* of the earth, the *states* of cities, and the change of *times*, because all these things are in the hands of God, have him for their

* Matt. v. 36.

Author, are directed and governed by him to such ends, as are most suitable to his wise Providence?

If you think you can murmur at the state of things, without murmuring at Providence, or complain of seasons without complaining of God; hear what our blessed Lord says further upon oaths: 'Whoso shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by 'all things thereon: And whoso shall swear by the temple, 'sweareth by him that dwelleth therein: And he that shall 'swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him 'that sitteth thereon.*

Now does not this Scripture plainly oblige us to reason after this manner, Whoso murmurs at the course of the world, murmurs at God that governs the course of the world. Whoso repines at *seasons* and *weather*, and speaks impatiently of times and events, repines and speaketh impatiently of God, who is the sole Lord and Governor of *times*, *seasons*, and *events*.

As therefore when we think of God himself, we are to have no sentiments but of praise and thanksgiving; so when we look at those things which are under the direction of God, and governed by his Providence, we are to receive them with the same tempers of praise and gratitude.

And though we are not to think all things right, and just, and lawful, which the Providence of God permits; for then nothing could be unjust, because nothing is without his permission; yet we must adore God in the greatest public calamities, the most grievous persecutions, as things that are suffered by God, like *plagues* and *famines*, for ends suitable to his wisdom and glory in the government of the world.

There is nothing more suitable to the piety of a reasonable creature, or the spirit of a Christian, than thus to approve, admire, and glorify God in all the acts of his general Providence; considering the whole world as his particular family, and all events as directed by his wisdom.

Everyone seems to consent to this, as an undeniable truth, *That all things must be as God pleases*; and is not this enough to make every man pleased with them himself? And how can a man be a peevish complainer of anything that is the effect of Providence, but by showing that his own *self-will* and *self-wisdom*, is of more weight with him, than the will and wisdom of God? And what can Religion be said to have done for a man, whose heart is in this state?

For if he cannot thank and praise God, as well in calamities and sufferings, as in prosperity and happiness, he is as far from

* Matt. xxiii. 20.

the piety of a Christian, as he that only loves them that love him, is from the charity of a Christian. For to thank God only for such things as you like, is no more a proper act of piety, than to believe only what you see, is an act of faith.

Resignation and thanksgiving to God are only acts of piety, when they are acts of *faith*, *trust*, and *confidence* in the divine Goodness.

The faith of *Abraham* was an act of true piety, because it stopped at no difficulties, was not altered or lessened by any human appearances. It first of all carried him, against all show of happiness, from his own kindred and country, into a strange land, *not knowing whither he went*. It afterwards made him, against all appearances of nature, when his 'body was dead,' when he was about an hundred years old, depend upon the promise of God, 'being fully persuaded, that what God had promised, he was able to perform.' It was this same faith, that against so many pleas of nature, so many appearances of reason, prevailed upon him to 'offer up Isaac — accounting 'that God was able to raise him up from the dead.'*

Now this faith is the true pattern of Christian resignation to the divine pleasure; you are to thank and praise God, not only for things agreeable to you, that have the appearance of happiness and comfort; but when you are like *Abraham*, called from all appearances of comfort, to be a *pilgrim* in a strange land, to part with an *only son*; being as fully persuaded of the divine Goodness in all things that happen to you, as *Abraham* was of the divine promise, when there was the least appearance of its being performed.

This is true Christian resignation to God, which requires no more to the support of it, than such a plain assurance of the goodness of God, as *Abraham* had of his veracity. And if you ask yourself, what greater reason *Abraham* had to depend upon the divine Veracity, than you have to depend upon the divine Goodness, you will find that none can be given.

You cannot therefore look upon this as an unnecessary, high pitch of perfection, since the want of it implies the want, not of any high notions, but of a plain and ordinary faith in the most certain doctrines, both of natural and revealed religion.

Thus much concerning resignation to the divine Will, as it signifies a thankful approbation of God's *general providence*: It is now to be considered, as it signifies a *thankful* acceptance of God's *particular providence* over us.

Every man is to consider himself as a particular object of

* Heb xi. 17, 19.

God's providence ; under the same care and protection of God, as if the world had been made for him alone. It is not by chance that any man is born at such a *time*, of such *parents*, and in such a *place* and *condition*. It is as certain, that every *soul* comes into the body at such a time, and in such circumstances, by the express *designment* of God, according to *some purposes* of his will, and for some *particular ends* ; this is as certain, as that it is by the express designment of God, that some beings are *Angels*, and others are *men*.

It is as much by the counsel and eternal purpose of God, that you should be born in your particular state, and that *Isaac* should be the son of *Abraham*, as that *Gabriel* should be an *Angel*, and *Isaac* a man.

The Scriptures assure us, that it was by divine appointment, that our blessed Saviour was born at *Bethlehem*, and at such a time. Now although it was owing to the dignity of his person, and the great importance of his birth, that thus much of the divine counsel was declared to the world, concerning the time and manner of it ; yet we are as sure from the same Scriptures, that the *time* and *manner* of every man's coming into the world, is according to some *eternal purposes* and *direction* of Divine Providence, and in *such time*, and *place*, and *circumstances*, as are directed and governed by God, for *particular ends* of his wisdom and goodness.

This we are as certain of from plain revelation, as we can be of anything. For if we are told, that not a *sparrow falleth to the ground without our heavenly Father* ; can anything more strongly teach us, that much greater beings, such as human souls, come not into the world without the care and direction of our heavenly Father ? If it is said, *the very hairs of your head are all numbered* ; is it not to teach us, that nothing, not the *smallest* things imaginable, happen to us by *chance* ? But if the smallest things we can conceive, are declared to be under the divine direction, need we, or can we, be more plainly taught, that the greatest things of life, such as the *manner* of our coming into the world, our *parents*, the *time*, and other *circumstances* of our birth and condition, are all according to the *eternal purposes*, *direction*, and *appointment* of Divine Providence ?

When the disciples put this question to our blessed Lord, concerning the blind man, *saying*, 'Master, who did sin, this 'man, or his parents, that he was born blind ?' He that was the eternal wisdom of God, made this answer, 'Neither hath this 'man sinned, nor his parents ; but that the works of God should 'be made manifest in him.* Plainly declaring, that the par-

* John ix. 3, 7.

ticular circumstances of every man's birth, the body that he receives, and the condition and state of life into which he is born, are appointed by a secret Providence, which directs all things to their particular *times* and *seasons*, and *manner* of existence, that the wisdom and works of God may be made manifest in them all.

As therefore it is thus certain, that we are what we are, as to birth, time, and condition of entering into the world; since all that is particular in our state, is the effect of God's particular providence over us, and intended for some particular ends both of his glory and our own happiness, we are by the greatest obligations of gratitude, called upon to conform, and resign our will to the will of God in all these respects; thankfully approving and accepting everything that is particular in our state; praising and glorifying his name for our birth of such *parents*, and in such *circumstances* of state and condition; being fully assured, that it was for some reasons of infinite wisdom and goodness, that we were so born into such particular states of life.

If the man above-mentioned, was born blind, that the *works of God might be manifested in him*, had he not great reason to praise God, for appointing him in such a particular manner, to be the instrument of his Glory? And if one person is born *here*, and another *there*; if one falls amongst *riches*, and another into *poverty*; if one receives his flesh and blood from these *parents*, and another from those, for as particular ends, as the man was born blind; have not all people the greatest reason to bless God, and to be thankful for their *particular state* and *condition*, because all that is particular in it, is as directly intended for the glory of God, and their own good, as the *particular blindness* of that man, who was so born, that 'the works of God might be manifested in him'?

How noble an idea does this give us of the divine Omniscience presiding over the whole world, and governing such a long chain and combination of seeming accidents and chances, to the common and particular advantage of all beings? So that all persons, in such a wonderful variety of causes, accidents, and events, should all fall into such particular states, as were foreseen, and fore-ordained to their best advantage, and so as to be most serviceable to the wise and glorious ends of God's government of all the world.

Had you been anything else than what you are, you had, all things considered, been less wisely provided for than you are now; you had wanted some circumstances and conditions, that are best fitted to make you happy yourself, and serviceable to the glory of God.

Could you see all that which God sees, all that happy chain of causes and motives, which are to move and invite you to a right course of life, you would see something to make you like that state you are in, as fitter for you than any other.

But as you cannot see this, so it is here that your Christian *faith* and *trust* in God, is to exercise itself, and render you as grateful and thankful for the happiness of your state, as if you saw everything that contributes to it with your own eyes.

But now if this is the case of every man in the world, thus blessed with some particular state that is most convenient for him, how reasonable is it for every man, to will that which God has already willed for him ; and by a pious faith and trust in the divine goodness, thankfully adore and magnify that wise providence, which he is sure has made the best choice for him of those things, which he could not choose for himself.

Every uneasiness at our own state, is founded upon comparing it with that of other people. Which is full as unreasonable, as if a man in a *dropsy* should be angry at those that prescribe different things to him, from those which are prescribed to people in *health*. For all the different states of *life*, are like the different states of *diseases*, what is a remedy to one man in his state, may be poison to another.

So that to murmur because you are not as some others are, is as if a man in one disease, should murmur that he is not treated like him that is in another. Whereas if he was to have his will, he would be killed by that, which will prove the cure of another.

It is just thus in the various conditions of life ; if you give yourself up to uneasiness, or complain at anything in your state, you may, for aught you know, be so ungrateful to God, as to murmur at that very thing, which is to prove the cause of your salvation.

Had you it in your power to get that which you think is so grievous to want, it might perhaps be that very thing, which of all others, would most expose you to eternal damnation.

So that whether we consider the infinite goodness of God, that cannot choose amiss for us, or our own great ignorance of what is most advantageous to us, there can be nothing so reasonable and pious, as to have no will but that of God's, and desire nothing for ourselves, in our *persons*, our *state*, and *condition*, but that which the good providence of God appoints us.

Further, as the good providence of God thus introduces us into the world, into such states and conditions of life, as are most convenient for us, so the same unerring wisdom, orders all events and changes in the whole course of our lives, in such a manner, as to render them the fittest means to exercise and improve our virtue.

Nothing hurts us, nothing destroys us, but the ill-use of that liberty, with which God has entrusted us.

We are as sure that nothing happens to us by chance, as that the world itself was not made by chance ; we are as certain that all things happen, and work together for our good, as that God is goodness itself. So that a man has as much reason to *will* everything that happens to him, because God *wills* it, as to think that is wisest, which is directed by infinite wisdom.

This is not cheating, or soothing ourselves into any false content, or imaginary happiness ; but is a satisfaction grounded upon as great a certainty, as the being and attributes of God.

For if we are right in believing God to act over us with infinite wisdom and goodness, we cannot carry our notions of conformity and resignation to the divine will too high ; nor can we ever be deceived, by thinking that to be best for us, which God has brought upon us.

For the providence of God is not more concerned in the government of *night* and *day*, and the variety of *seasons*, than in the common course of events, that seem most to depend upon the mere wills of men. So that it is as strictly right, to look upon all worldly accidents and changes, all the various turns and alterations in your own life, to be as truly the effects of Divine Providence, as the rising and setting of the Sun, or the alterations of the seasons of the year. As you are therefore always to adore the wisdom of God in the direction of these things ; so it is the same reasonable duty, always to magnify God, as an equal Director of everything that happens to you in the course of your own life.

This holy resignation and conformity of your will to the will of God, being so much the true state of piety, I hope you will think it proper to make this hour of prayer, a constant season of applying to God for so great a gift : That by thus constantly praying for it, your heart may be habitually disposed towards it, and always in a state of readiness to look at everything as God's, and to consider him in everything ; that so everything that befalls you, may be received in the spirit of piety, and made a means of exercising some virtue.

There is nothing that so powerfully governs the heart, that so strongly excites us to wise and reasonable actions, as a true sense of God's *presence*. But as we cannot see, or apprehend the essence of God, so nothing will so constantly keep us under a lively sense of the presence of God, as this holy resignation, which attributes everything to him, and receives everything as from him.

Could we see a *miracle* from God, how would our thoughts be

affected with an holy awe and veneration of his presence! But if we consider everything as God's doing, either by order or permission, we shall then be affected with *common things*, as they would be who saw a *miracle*.

For as there is nothing to affect you in a miracle, but as it is the *action* of God, and bespeaks his *presence*; so when you consider God, as *acting* in all things, and all events, then all things will become venerable to you, like *miracles*, and fill you with the same awful sentiments of the divine presence.

Now you must not reserve the exercise of this pious temper, to any particular times or occasions, or fancy how *resigned* you will be to God, if such or such trials should happen. For this is amusing yourself with the *notion* or *idea* of resignation, instead of the virtue itself.

Do not therefore please yourself with thinking, how piously you would act and submit to God in a *plague*, a *famine*, or *persecution*, but be intent upon the perfection of the present day; and be assured, that the best way of showing a *true zeal*, is to make *little things* the occasion of *great piety*.

Begin therefore in the smallest matters, and most ordinary occasions, and accustom your mind to the daily exercise of this pious temper, in the lowest occurrences of life. And when a *contempt*, an *affront*, a little *injury*, *loss*, or *disappointment*, or the smallest events of every day, continually raise your mind to God in proper acts of resignation, then you may justly hope, that you shall be numbered amongst those that are resigned and thankful to God in the greatest trials and afflictions.

Chapter XXIII.

Of Evening prayer. Of the nature and necessity of examination. How we are to be particular in the confession of all our sins. How we are to fill our minds with a just horror and dread of all sin.

I AM now come to six o'clock in the evening, which, according to the Scripture account, is called the twelfth, or *last hour* of the day. This is a time so proper for Devotion, that I suppose nothing need be said to recommend it, as a season of prayer to all people that profess any regard to piety.

As the labour and action of every state of life, is generally over at this hour, so this is the proper time for everyone to call himself to account, and review all his behaviour, from the first action of the day. The necessity of this examination, is founded upon the necessity of repentance. For if it be necessary to repent of all our sins, if the guilt of unrepented sins still continue upon us, then it is necessary, not only that all our sins, but the particular circumstances and aggravations of them, be known and recollected, and brought to repentance.

The Scripture saith, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*' Which is as much as to say, that then only our sins are forgiven, and we cleansed from the guilt and unrighteousness of them, when they are thus confessed, and repented of.

There seems therefore to be the greatest necessity, that all our daily actions be constantly observed, and brought to account, lest by a negligence we load ourselves with the guilt of unrepented sins.

This examination therefore of ourselves every evening, is not only to be considered as a *commendable rule*, and fit for a wise man to observe, but as something that is as necessary, as a daily confession and repentance of our sins; because this daily repentance is of very little significancy, and loses all its chief benefit, unless it be a *particular confession* and repentance of the sins of that day. This examination is necessary to repentance, in the same manner as *time* is necessary; you cannot repent or express your sorrow, unless you allow some time for it; nor can you repent, but so far as you *know* what it is that you are repenting of. So that when it is said, that it is necessary to examine and call your actions to account; it is only saying, that it is necessary to know *what*, and how many things you are to repent of.

You perhaps have hitherto only used yourself to confess yourself a sinner in *general*, and ask forgiveness in the *gross*, without any *particular remembrance*, or contrition for the particular sins of that day. And by this practice you are brought to believe, that the same short, general form of confession of sin in general, is a sufficient repentance for every day.

Suppose another person should hold, that a confession of our sins in general *once* at the end of *every week* was sufficient; and that it was as well to confess the sins of *seven days* altogether, as to have a particular repentance at the end of every day.

I know you sufficiently see the unreasonableness and impiety of this opinion, and that you think it is easy enough so show the danger and folly of it.

* 1 John i. 9.

Yet you cannot bring one argument against such an opinion, but what will be as good an argument against such a *daily repentance*, as does not call the *particular sins* of that day to a strict account.

For as you can bring no *express text* or Scripture against such an opinion, but must take all your arguments, from the nature of *repentance*, and the necessity of a *particular repentance* for particular sins, so every argument of that kind, must as fully prove the necessity, of being very particular in our repentance of the sins of every day. Since nothing can be justly said against leaving the sins of the *whole week* to be repented for in the *gross*, but what may as justly be said against a daily repentance, which considers the sins of that day only in the *gross*.

Would you tell such a man, that a daily confession was necessary to keep up an abhorrence of sin, that the mind would grow hardened and senseless of the guilt of sin without it? And is not this as good a reason for requiring, that your daily repentance be *very express* and *particular* for your daily sins? For if confession is to raise an abhorrence of sin, surely that confession which *considers* and *lays open* your particular sins, that brings them to light with all their circumstances and aggravations, that requires a particular sorrowful acknowledgment of every sin, must in a much greater degree fill the mind with an abhorrence of sin, than that which only, in *one* and the *same form* of words, confesses you only to be a sinner in *general*. For as this is nothing but what the *greatest Saint* may justly say of himself, so the daily repeating of only such a confession, has nothing in it to make you truly ashamed of your own way of life.

Again; must you not tell such a man, that by leaving himself to such a *weekly, general* confession, he would be in great danger of forgetting a great many of his sins? But is there any sense or force in this argument, unless you suppose that our sins are all to be remembered, and brought to a particular repentance? And is it not necessary, that our particular sins be not forgotten, but particularly remembered in our daily, as in a repentance at any other time?

So that every argument for a daily confession and repentance, is the same argument for the confession and repentance of the *particular sins* of every day.

Because daily confession has no other reason or necessity, but our daily sins; and therefore is nothing of what it should be, but so far as it is a repentance and sorrowful acknowledgment of the sins of the day.

You would, I suppose, think yourself chargeable with great impiety, if you were to go to bed without confessing yourself to

be a sinner and asking pardon of God ; you would not think it sufficient that you did so yesterday. And yet if without any regard to the present day, you only repeat the same form of words that you used yesterday, the sins of the present day may justly be looked upon to have had no repentance. For if the sins of the present day require a new confession, it must be such a new confession as is proper to itself. For it is the *state* and *condition* of every day, that is to determine the *state* and *manner* of your repentance in the evening ; otherwise the same general form of words is rather an empty formality, that has the appearance of a duty, than such a true performance of it, as is necessary to make it truly useful to you.

Let it be supposed, that on a certain day you have been guilty of these sins ; that you have told a *vain lie* upon yourself, ascribing something falsely to yourself through pride ; that you have been guilty of *detraction*, and indulged yourself in *some degree* of intemperance. Let it be supposed, that on the next day you have lived in a contrary manner ; that you have neglected no duty of devotion, and been the rest of the day innocently employed, in your proper business. Let it be supposed, that on the evening of both these days you only use the same confession in *general*, considering it rather as a duty that is to be performed every night, than as a repentance that is to be suited to the *particular state* of the day.

Can it with any reason be said, that each day has had its proper repentance ? Is it not as good sense to say, there is no difference in the guilt of these days, as to say that there need be no different repentance at the end of them ? Or how can each of them have its proper repentance, but by its having a repentance as large and extensive, and particular as the guilt of each day ?

Again, let it be supposed, that in that day, when you had been guilty of the three notorious sins above-mentioned, that in your evening repentance, you had only called one of them to mind. Is it not plain, that the other two are unrepented of, and that therefore their guilt still abides upon you ? So that you are then in the state of him, who commits himself to the night without the repentance for such a day, as had betrayed him into two such great sins.

Now these are not needless particulars, or such scrupulous niceties, as a man need not trouble himself about ; but are such plain truths, as essentially concern the very life of piety. For if repentance is necessary, it is full as necessary that it be rightly performed, and in due manner.

And I have entered into all these particulars, only to show you in the plainest manner, that *examination*, and a careful review of

all the actions of the Day, is not only to be looked upon as a good rule, but as something as necessary as repentance itself.

If a man is to account for his expenses at night, can it be thought a needless exactness in him, to take notice of every particular expense in the Day?

And if a man is to repent of his sins at night, can it be thought too great a piece of scrupulosity in him, to know and call to mind what sins he is to repent of?

Further; though it should be granted, that a confession in *general* may be a sufficient repentance for the end of such days, as have only the unavoidable frailties of our nature to lament; yet even this fully proves the absolute necessity of this self-examination: for without this examination, who can know that he has gone through any day in this manner?

Again: An evening repentance, which thus brings all the actions of the day to account, is not only necessary to wipe off the guilt of sin, but is also the most certain way to amend and perfect our lives.

For it is only such a repentance as this, that touches the heart, awakens the conscience, and leaves an horror and detestation of sin upon the mind.

For instance, If it should happen, that upon any particular evening, all that you could charge yourself with should be this, *viz.*, a *hasty*, *negligent* performance of your devotions, or too much time spent in an *impertinent conversation*; if the unreasonableness of these things were fully reflected upon, and acknowledged; if you were then to condemn yourself before God for them, and implore his pardon and assisting grace, what could be so likely a means, to prevent your falling into the same faults the next day?

Or if you should fall into them again the next day; yet if they were again brought to the same examination, and condemnation in the presence of God, their happening again, would be such a proof to you of your own *folly* and *weakness*, would cause such a *pain* and *remorse* in your mind, and fill you with such *shame* and *confusion* at yourself, as would, in all probability, make you exceedingly desirous of greater perfection.

Now in the case of repeated sins, this would be the certain benefit, that we should receive from this examination and confession; the mind would thereby be made humble, full of sorrow and deep compunction, and, by degrees, forced into amendment.

Whereas a *formal*, *general* confession, that is only considered as an evening duty, that overlooks the particular mistakes of the day, and is the same, whether the day be spent ill or well, has little or no effect upon the mind; a man may use such a daily

confession, and yet go on sinning and confessing all his life, without any remorse of mind, or true desire of amendment.

For if your own particular sins are left out of your confession, your confessing of sin in *general*, has no more effect upon your mind, than if you had only confessed, that *all men* in general are *sinner*s. And there is nothing in any confession to show that it is yours, but so far as it is a *self-accusation*, not of sin in general, or such as is common to all others, but of such *particular sins*, as are your own *proper shame* and reproach.

No other confession, but such as thus discovers and accuses your own particular guilt, can be an act of true sorrow, or real concern at your own condition. And a confession that is without this sorrow and compunction of heart, has nothing in it, either to atone for past sins, or to produce in us any true reformation and amendment of life.

To proceed: In order to make this examination still further beneficial, every man should oblige himself to a certain method in it. As every man has something *particular* in his nature, stronger inclinations to *some vices* than others, some infirmities that *stick closer* to him, and harder to be conquered than others; and as it is as easy for every man to know this of himself, as to know whom he likes or dislikes; so it is highly necessary, that these particularities of our natures and tempers, should never escape a severe trial at our evening repentance: I say, a *severe trial*, because nothing but a rigorous severity against these natural tempers, is sufficient to conquer them.

They are the *right eyes*, that are not to be spared; but to be plucked out and cast from us. For as they are the infirmities of nature, so they have the strength of nature, and must be treated with great opposition, or they will soon be too strong for us.

He therefore who knows himself most of all subject to *anger* and *passion*, must be very *exact* and *constant* in his examination of this temper every evening. He must find out every slip that he has made of that kind, whether in thought, or word, or action; he must *shame*, and *reproach*, and *accuse* himself before God, for everything that he has said or done in obedience to his passion. He must no more allow himself to forget the examination of this temper, than to forget his whole prayers.

Again: If you find that *vanity* is your prevailing temper, that is always putting you upon the *adornment* of your person, and catching after everything that *compliments* or *flatters* your abilities, never spare or forget this temper in your evening examination; but confess to God every vanity of thought, or word, or action, that you have been guilty of, and put yourself to all the shame and confusion for it that you can.

In this manner, should all people act with regard to their *chief frailty*, to which their nature most inclines them. And though it should not immediately do all that they would wish, yet by a constant practice, it would certainly in a short time produce its desired effect.

Further: As all states and employments of life have their particular *dangers* and *temptations*, and expose people more to some sins than others, so every man that wishes his own improvement, should make it a *necessary part* of his evening examination, to consider how he has avoided, or fallen into such sins, as are most common to his state of life.

For as our business and condition of life has great power over us, so nothing but such watchfulness at this, can secure us from those temptations to which it daily exposes us.

The *poor man*, from his condition of life, is always in danger of *repining* and *uneasiness*; the *rich man* is most exposed to *sensuality* and *indulgence*; the *tradesman* to *lying* and *unreasonable gains*; the *scholar* to *pride* and *vanity*; so that in every state of life, a man should always, in his examination of himself, have a strict eye upon those faults, to which his state of life most of all exposes him.

Again: As it is reasonable to suppose, that every good man has entered into, or at least proposed to himself *some method* of holy living, and set himself *some such rules* to observe, as are not common to other people, and only known to himself: so it should be a constant part of his night recollection, to examine how, and in what degree, he has observed them, and to reproach himself before God, for every neglect of them.

By rules, I here mean, such rules as relate to the well-ordering of our *time*, and the *business* of our common life: Such rules as prescribe a certain order to all that we are to do, our *business*, *devotion*, *mortifications*, *readings*, *retirements*, *conversation*, *meals*, *refreshments*, *sleep*, and the like.

Now as good rules relating to all these things, are certain means of great improvement, and such as all serious Christians must needs propose to themselves, so they will hardly ever be observed to any purpose, unless they are made the *constant subject* of our evening examination.

Lastly, You are not to content yourself with a *hasty general* review of the day, but you must enter upon it with deliberation; begin with the *first action* of the day, and proceed step by step, through every particular matter that you have been concerned in, and so let no *time*, *place*, or *action* be overlooked.

An examination thus managed, will in a little time make you

as different from yourself, as a *wise man* is different from an *idiot*. It will give you such a newness of mind, such a spirit of wisdom, and desire of perfection, as you were an entire stranger to before.

Thus much concerning the *evening examination*.

I proceed now to lay before you such considerations, as may fill your mind with a just dread and horror of all sin, and help you to confess your own, in the most passionate contrition and sorrow of heart.

Consider first, how odious all sin is to God, what a mighty baseness it is, and how abominable it renders sinners in the sight of God. That it is sin alone that makes the great difference betwixt an angel, and the devil; and that every sinner is, so far as he sins, a friend of the devil's, and carrying on his work against God. That sin is a greater blemish and defilement of the soul, than any filth or disease is a defilement of the body. And to be content to live in sin, is a much greater baseness, than to desire to wallow in the mire, or love any bodily impurity.

Consider how you must abhor a creature, that delighted in nothing but filth and nastiness, that hated everything that was decent and clean; and let this teach you to apprehend, how odious that soul that delights in nothing but the impurity of sin, must appear unto God.

For all sins, whether of *sensuality*, *pride*, or *falseness*, or any other *irregular* passion, are nothing else but the filth, and impure diseases of the rational soul. And all righteousness is nothing else but the *purity*, the *decency*, the *beauty* and *perfection* of that spirit, which is made in the image of God.

Again: Learn what horror you ought to have for the guilt of sin, from the greatness of that *atonement* which has been made for it.

God made the world by the breath of his mouth, by a word speaking, but the redemption of the world has been a work of longer labour.

How easily God can create beings, we learn from the first chapter of *Genesis*; but how difficult it is for infinite mercy to forgive sins, we learn from that *costly atonement*, those *bloody sacrifices*, those *pains* and *penances*, those *sicknesses* and *deaths*, which all must be undergone, before the guilty sinner is fit to appear in the presence of God.

Ponder these great truths: That the Son of God was forced to become man, to be partaker of all our infirmities, to undergo a poor, painful, miserable, and contemptible life, to be persecuted, hated, and at last nailed to a Cross, that by such sufferings, he might render God propitious to that nature in which he suffered.

That all the bloody sacrifices and atonements of the *Jewish Law*, were to represent the necessity of this *great sacrifice*, and the *great Displeasure* God bore to sinners.

That the world is still under the *curse* of sin, and *certain marks* of God's displeasure at it; such as *famines, plagues, tempests, sickness, diseases* and *death*.

Consider that all the sons of *Adam* are to go through a painful, sickly life, denying and mortifying their natural appetites, and crucifying the lusts of the flesh, in order to have a share in the atonement of our Saviour's death.

That all their penances and self-denials, all their tears and repentance, are only made available by that great Intercession, which is still making for them at the right hand of God.

Consider these great truths; that this *mysterious redemption*, all these *sacrifices* and *sufferings*, both of God and man, are only to *remove* the guilt of sin; and then let this teach you, with what tears and contrition, you ought to purge yourself from it.

After this general consideration of the guilt of sin, which has done so much mischief to your nature, and exposed it to so great punishment, and made it so odious to God, that nothing less than so great an atonement of the Son of God, and so great repentance of our own, can restore us to the divine favour.

Consider next your own *particular share* in the guilt of sin. And if you would know with what zeal you ought to repent yourself, consider how you would exhort another sinner to repentance; and what repentance and amendment you would expect from him, whom you judged to be the *greatest sinner* in the world.

Now this case, every man may justly reckon to be his own. And you may fairly look upon yourself to be the greatest sinner that you *know* in the world.

For though you may know abundance of people to be guilty of some gross sins, with which you cannot charge yourself, yet you may justly condemn yourself, as the greatest sinner that you *know*. And that for these following reasons:

First, Because you *know more* of the folly of your own heart, than you do of other people's; and can charge yourself with *various sins*, that you only know of yourself, and cannot be *sure* that other sinners are guilty of them. So that as you know more of the *folly*, the *baseness*, the *pride*, the *deceitfulness* and *negligence* of your own heart, than you do of anyone's else, so you have just reason to consider yourself as the greatest sinner that you know: Because you know more of the *greatness* of your own sins, than you do of other people's.

Secondly, The greatness of our guilt arises chiefly, from the greatness of God's goodness towards us, from the particular

graces and blessings, the favours, the lights, and instructions, that we have received from him.

Now as these *graces and blessings*, and the multitude of God's favours towards us, are the great aggravations of our sins against God, so they are *only known* to ourselves. And therefore every sinner *knows more* of the *aggravations* of his own guilt, than he does of other people's; and consequently may justly look upon himself to be the greatest sinner that he knows.

How good God has been to other sinners, what *light and instruction* he has vouchsafed to them; what *blessings and graces* they have received from him; how often he has touched their hearts with holy inspirations, you cannot tell. But all this you know of yourself, therefore you know greater aggravations of your own guilt, and are able to charge yourself with greater ingratitude, than you can charge upon other people.

And this is the reason, why the *greatest saints* have in all ages condemned themselves as the greatest sinners, because they knew *some aggravations* of their own sins, which they could not know of other people's.

The right way therefore to fill your heart with true contrition, and a deep sense of your own sins, is this: You are not to consider, or compare the *outward form, or course* of your life, with that of other people's, and then think yourself to be less sinful than they, because the outward course of your life is less sinful than theirs.

But in order to know your own guilt, you must consider your own particular circumstances, your *health, your sickness, your youth, or age, your particular calling, the happiness of your education, the degrees of light and instruction* that you have received, the *good men* that you have conversed with, the *admonitions* that you have had, the *good books* that you have read, the numberless multitude of *divine blessings, graces, and favours* that you have received, the *good motions* of grace that you have resisted, the *resolutions* of amendment that you have often broken, and the *checks* of conscience that you have disregarded.

For it is from these circumstances, that everyone is to state the *measure and greatness* of his own guilt. And as you know only these circumstances of your own sins, so you must necessarily know how to charge yourself with higher degrees of guilt, than you can charge upon other people.

God Almighty knows greater sinners, it may be, than you are; because he sees and knows the circumstances of all men's sins: But your own heart, if it is faithful to you, can discover no guilt so great as your own; because it can only see in you those circumstances, on which great part of the guilt of sin is founded.

You may see sins in other people, that you cannot charge upon yourself; but then you know a number of circumstances of your own guilt, that you cannot lay to their Charge.

And perhaps that person that appears at such a distance from your virtue, and so odious in your eyes, would have been much better than you are, had he been altogether in your circumstances, and received all the same favours and graces from God that you have.

This is a very *humbling reflection*, and very proper for those people to make, who measure their virtue, by comparing the outward course of their lives with that of other people's.

For look at whom you will, however different from you in his way of life, yet you can never know, that he has resisted *so much* divine grace as you have, or that in all your circumstances, he would not have been *much truer* to his duty than you are.

Now this is the reason why I desired you to consider, how you would exhort that man to confess and bewail his sins, whom you looked upon to be one of the *greatest sinners*.

Because if you will deal justly, you must fix the charge at *home*, and look no further than *yourself*. For God has given no one any power of knowing the *true greatness* of any sins, but his own: and therefore the greatest sinner that everyone *knows*, is himself.

You may easily see, how such a one in the outward course of his life breaks the laws of God; but then you can never say, that had you been exactly in all his circumstances, that you should not have broken them more than he has done.

A serious and frequent reflection upon these things, will mightily tend to humble us in our own eyes, make us very apprehensive of the greatness of our own guilt, and very tender in censuring and condemning other people.

For who would dare to be severe against other people, when, for ought he can tell, the severity of God may be more due to him, than to them? Who would exclaim against the guilt of others, when he considers that he knows more of the greatness of his own guilt, than he does of theirs?

How often you have resisted God's holy Spirit; how many motives to goodness you have disregarded; how many particular blessings you have sinned against; how many good resolutions you have broken; how many checks and admonitions of conscience you have stifled, you very well know: But how often this has been the case of other sinners, you know not. And therefore the greatest sinner that you know, must be yourself.

Whenever therefore you are *angry* at sin or sinners, whenever you *read* or *think* of God's indignation and wrath at wicked men,

let this teach you to be the most severe in your censure, and most humble and contrite in the acknowledgment and confession of your own sins, because you know of no sinner equal to yourself.

Lastly, to conclude this chapter : Having thus examined and confessed your sins at this hour of the evening, you must afterwards look upon yourself, as still obliged to betake yourself to prayer again, just before you go to *bed*.

The subject that is most proper for your prayers at that time, is *death*. Let your prayers therefore, then be wholly upon it, reckoning up all the *dangers, uncertainties, and terrors* of death ; let them contain everything, that can affect and awaken your mind into just apprehensions of it. Let your petitions be all for right sentiments of the *approach* and *importance* of death ; and beg of God, that your mind may be possessed with such a sense of its *nearness*, that you may have it always in your thoughts, do everything as in sight of it, and make every day, a day of preparation for it.

Represent to your imagination, that your *bed* is your *grave* ; that all things are ready for your interment ; that you are to have no more to do with this world ; and that it will be owing to God's great Mercy, if you ever see the light of the Sun again, or have another day to add to your works of piety.

And then commit yourself to sleep, as into the hands of God ; as one that is to have no more opportunities of doing good ; but is to awake amongst spirits that are separate from the body, and waiting for the judgment of the last great day.

Such a solemn resignation of yourself into the hands of God every evening, and parting with all the world, as if you were never to see it any more, and all this in the silence and darkness of the night, is a practice that will soon have excellent effects upon your spirit.

For this time of the night is exceeding proper for such prayers, and meditations ; and the likeness which *sleep* and *darkness* have to *death*, will contribute very much, to make your thoughts about it the more deep and affecting. So that I hope, you will not let a time, so proper for such prayers, be ever passed over without them.

Chapter XXIV.

The Conclusion. Of the Excellency and Greatness of a devout Spirit.

I HAVE now finished what I intended in this Treatise. I have explained the nature of devotion, both as it signifies a life devoted to God, and as it signifies a regular method of daily prayer. I have now only to add a word or two, in recommendation of a life governed by this spirit of devotion.

For though it is as reasonable to suppose it the desire of all Christians to arrive at Christian Perfection, as to suppose, that all sick men desire to be restored to perfect health; yet experience shows us, that nothing wants more to be pressed, repeated, and forced upon our minds, than the plainest rules of Christianity.

Voluntary poverty, virginity, and devout retirement, have been here recommended, as things not necessary, yet highly beneficial to those that would make the way to perfection the most easy and certain. But Christian perfection itself is tied to no particular form of life; but is to be attained, though not with the same ease, in every state of life.

This has been fully asserted in another place; where it has been shown, that Christian perfection *calls no one* (necessarily) *to a Cloister, but to the full performance of those duties, which are necessary for all Christians, and common to all states of life.**

So that the whole of the matter is plainly this: *Virginity, voluntary poverty,* and such other *restraints of lawful things,* are not necessary to Christian perfection; but are much to be commended in those, who choose them as *helps and means* of a more *safe and speedy* arrival at it.

It is only in this manner, and in this sense, that I would recommend any particularity of life; not as if perfection consisted in it, but because of its great tendency to produce and support the *true spirit* of Christian perfection.

But the thing which is here pressed upon all, is a life of *great and strict* devotion; which, I think, has been sufficiently shown to be equally the duty and happiness of all orders of men. Neither is there anything in any particular state of life, that can be justly pleaded as a reason for any abatements of a devout spirit.

* 'Christian Perfection,' p. 2.

But because in this *polite* age of ours, we have so *lived away* the spirit of devotion, that many seem afraid even to be suspected of it, imagining *great devotion* to be *great bigotry*; that it is founded in *ignorance* and *poorness* of spirit, and that *little, weak, and dejected* minds, are generally the greatest proficient in it:

It shall here be fully shown, that *great* devotion is the *noblest* temper of the *greatest* and *noblest* souls; and that they who think it receives any advantage from *ignorance* and *poorness* of spirit, are themselves not a little, but entirely ignorant of the nature of devotion, the nature of God, and the nature of themselves.

People of *fine parts* and *learning* or of great knowledge in *worldly matters*, may perhaps think it hard to have their *want* of devotion charged upon their *ignorance*. But if they will be content to be tried by Reason and Scripture, it may soon be made appear, that a *want* of devotion, wherever it is, either amongst the learned or unlearned, is founded in *gross ignorance*, and the *greatest blindness* and *insensibility* that can happen to a rational creature.

And that devotion is so far from being the effect of a *little* and *dejected* mind, that it must and will be always *highest* in the most *perfect* natures.

And *first*, Who reckons it a sign of a *poor, little* mind, for a man to be full of *reverence* and *duty* to his parents, to have the truest *love* and *honour* for his *friend*, or to excel in the *highest instances* of gratitude to his *benefactor*?

Are not these tempers in the *highest* degree, in the most exalted and perfect minds?

And yet what is *high devotion*, but the highest exercise of these tempers, of *duty, reverence, love, honour*, and gratitude to the amiable, glorious *parent, friend, and benefactor* of all mankind?

Is it a true greatness of mind, to reverence the authority of your parents, to fear the displeasure of your friend, to dread the reproaches of your benefactor? and must not this *fear, and dread, and reverence*, be much more just, and reasonable, and honourable, when they are in the *highest degree* towards God?

Now as the higher these tempers are, the more are they esteemed amongst men, and are allowed to be so much the *greater proofs* of a true greatness of mind; so the higher and greater these same tempers are towards God, so much the more do they prove the nobility, excellence, and greatness of the mind.

So that so long as *duty* to parents, *love* to friends, and *gratitude* to benefactors, are thought great and honourable tempers; devotion, which is nothing else but duty, love, and gratitude to God, must have the highest place amongst our highest virtues.

If a *Prince*, out of his *mere goodness*, should send you a pardon

by one of his *slaves*, would you think it a part of your duty to receive the *slave* with marks of *love, esteem*, and gratitude for his great kindness, in bringing you so great a gift ; and at the same time think it a *meanness* and *poorness* of spirit, to show *love, esteem*, and *gratitude* to the Prince, who of his own goodness freely sent you the pardon ?

And yet this would be as reasonable, as to suppose, that love, esteem, honour, and gratitude, are *noble tempers*, and instances of a *great soul*, when they are paid to our fellow-creatures ; but the effects of a *poor, ignorant, dejected* mind, when they are paid to God.

Further ; that part of devotion which expresses itself in *sorrowful* confessions, and *penitential* tears of a broken and contrite heart, is very far from being any sign of a *little* and *ignorant* mind.

For who does not acknowledge it an instance of an *ingenuous, generous*, and *brave* mind, to acknowledge a fault, and ask pardon for any offence ? And are not the *finest* and *most improved* minds, the most remarkable for this excellent temper ?

Is it not also allowed, that the *ingenuity* and *excellence* of a man's spirit is much shown, when his sorrow and indignation at himself rises in proportion to the folly of his crime, and the *goodness* and *greatness* of the person he has offended ?

Now if things are thus, then the *greater* any man's mind is, the more he *knows* of God and himself, the more will he be disposed to prostrate himself before God, in all the *humblest acts* and expressions of repentance.

And the greater the *ingenuity*, the *generosity*, *judgment*, and *penetration* of his mind is, the more will he exercise and indulge a *passionate, tender* sense of God's just displeasure ; and the more he knows of the greatness, the goodness, and perfection of the divine nature, the fuller of shame and confusion will he be at his own sins and ingratitude.

And on the other hand, the more *dull* and *ignorant* any soul is, the more *base* and *ungenerous* it naturally is, the more *senseless* it is of the goodness and purity of God ; so much the more averse will it be to all acts of *humble confession* and *repentance*.

Devotion therefore is so far from being best suited to *little ignorant* minds, that a *true elevation* of soul, a *lively sense* of honour, and *great knowledge* of God and ourselves, are the greatest *natural helps* that our devotion hath.

And on the other hand, it shall here be made appear by variety of arguments, that *indevoition* is founded in the most excessive ignorance.

And, *First*, Our blessed Lord, and his Apostles, were eminent

instances of great and frequent devotion. Now if we will grant, (as all Christians must grant) that their great devotion was founded in a true knowledge of the nature of devotion, the nature of God, and the nature of man; then it is plain, that all those that are insensible of the duty of devotion, are in this excessive state of ignorance, they neither know God, nor themselves, nor devotion.

For if a right knowledge in these three respects, produces great devotion, as in the case of our Saviour and his Apostles, then a neglect of devotion must be chargeable upon ignorance.

Again; how comes it that most people have recourse to devotion, when they are in sickness, distress, or fear of death? Is it not because this state shows them *more* of the want of God, and their own weakness, than they perceive at other times? Is it not because their infirmities, their approaching end, *convince* them of something, which they did not *half perceive* before?

Now if devotion at these seasons, is the effect of a *better knowledge* of God, and ourselves, then the neglect of devotion at other times, is always owing to great ignorance of God, and ourselves.

Further; as indevotion is ignorance, so it is the most *shameful* ignorance, and such as is to be charged with the *greatest folly*.

This will fully appear to anyone that considers, by what rules we are to judge of the excellency of any knowledge, or the shamefulness of any ignorance.

Now *knowledge* itself would be no *excellence*, nor ignorance any *reproach* to us, but that we are *rational* creatures.

But if this be true, then it follows plainly, that that knowledge which is most *suitable* to our rational nature, and which most concerns us, as such, to know, is our *highest, finest* knowledge; and that ignorance which relates to things that are most *essential* to us, as rational creatures, and which we are most concerned to know, is, of all others, the most *gross* and *shameful* ignorance.

If therefore there be any things that concern us more than others, if there be any truths that are more to us than all others, he that has the fullest knowledge of these things, that sees these truths in the *clearest, strongest* light, has, of all others, as a *rational creature*, the clearest understanding, and the strongest parts.

If therefore our relation to God be our *greatest relation*, if our advancement in his favour be our *highest advancement*, he that has the *highest notions* of the excellency of this relation, he that most *strongly* perceives the *highest worth*, and great *value* of holiness and virtue, that judges everything *little*, when compared with it, proves himself to be master of the *best*, and *most excellent* knowledge.

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If a *Judge* had fine skill in *painting, architecture, and music*, but at the same time had *gross and confused* notions of *equity*, and a *poor, dull* apprehension of the *value* of justice, who would scruple to reckon him a *poor ignorant Judge*?

If a *Bishop* should be a man of great address and skill in the arts of preferment, and understanding how to raise and enrich his family in the world, but should have no *taste or sense* of the maxims and principles of the *saints and fathers* of the Church; if he did not conceive the holy nature, and great obligations of his calling, and judge it better to be *crucified* to the world, than to live idly in *pomp and splendour*, who would scruple to charge such a Bishop with want of understanding?

If we do not judge, and pronounce after this manner, our reason and judgment are but empty sounds.

But now, if a *Judge* is to be reckoned *ignorant*, if he does not feel and perceive the *value, and worth* of justice; if a *Bishop* is to be looked upon as *void* of understanding, if he is more *experienced* in other things, than in the *exalted virtues* of his Apostolical calling; then all *common Christians* are to be looked upon as *more or less* knowing, accordingly as they know more or less of those great things, which are the *common and greatest* concern of all Christians.

If a *Gentleman* should fancy that the *Moon* is no bigger than it appears to the *eye*, that it shines with its *own light*, that all the *Stars* are only so many spots of light; if after reading books of *Astronomy*, he should still continue in the same opinion, most people would think he had but a poor apprehension.

But if the same person should think it better to provide for a *short life* here, than to prepare for a *glorious eternity* hereafter, that it was better to be *rich*, than to be *eminent* in piety, his *ignorance and dulness* would be too great to be compared to anything else.

There is no knowledge that deserves so much as the name of it, but that which we call *judgment*.

And that is the most clear and improved understanding, which *judges* best of the *value and worth* of things. All the rest is but the capacity of an *animal*, it is but mere *seeing and hearing*.

And there is no excellence of any knowledge in us, till we exercise our *judgment*, and judge well of the *value and worth* of things.

If a man had *eyes* that could see beyond the *Stars*, or pierce into the *heart* of the earth, but could not see the things that were before him, or discern anything that was serviceable to him, we should reckon that he had but a *very bad sight*.

If another had *ears* that received sounds from the world in the

Moon, but could hear nothing that was said or done upon earth, we should look upon him as *bad as deaf*.

In like manner, if a man has a *memory* that can retain a great many things; if he has a *wit* that is *sharp* and *acute* in arts and sciences, or an imagination that can wander agreeably in *fictions*, but has a *dull, poor* apprehension of his *duty* and *relation* to God, of the *value* of piety, or the *worth* of moral virtue, he may very justly be reckoned to have a *bad understanding*. He is but like the man, that can only *see* and *hear* such things as are of no benefit to him.

As certain therefore as piety, virtue, and eternal happiness are of the most concern to man, as certain as the immortality of our nature, and relation to God, are the most glorious circumstances of our nature, so certain is it, that he who *dwells most* in contemplation of them, whose heart is *most affected* with them, who sees *furthest* into them, who best comprehends the *value* and *excellency* of them, who judges all worldly attainments to be *mere bubbles* and *shadows*, in comparison of them, proves himself to have of all others, the *finest understanding*, and the *strongest judgment*.

And if we do not reason after this manner, or allow this method of reasoning, we have no arguments to prove, that there is any such thing as a *wise man*, or a *fool*.

For a man is proved to be a *natural*, not because he wants any of his *senses*, or is incapable of *everything*, but because he has no *judgment*, and is entirely ignorant of the *worth* and *value* of things. He will perhaps choose a *fine coat* rather than a *large estate*.

And as the essence of *stupidity* consists in the entire want of *judgment*, in an ignorance of the *value* of things, so on the other hand, the essence of wisdom and knowledge must consist in the *excellency* of our judgment, or in the knowledge of the *worth* and *value* of things.

This therefore is an undeniable proof, that he who knows *most* of the value of the best things, who judges, most rightly of the things which are of most concern to him, who had rather have his soul in a state of Christian perfection, than the greatest share of worldly happiness, has the *highest wisdom*, and is at the furthest distance from men that are *naturals*, than any knowledge can place him.

On the other hand, he that can talk the *learned* languages, and repeat a great deal of *History*, but prefers the *indulgence* of his body to the *purity* and *perfection* of his soul, who is *more* concerned to get a *name*, or an *estate* here, than to live in eternal glory hereafter, is in the nearest state to that *natural*, who chooses a *painted coat*, rather than a *large estate*.

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He is not called a *natural* by men, but he must appear to God, and heavenly Beings, as in a more excessive state of stupidity, and will sooner or later certainly appear so to himself.

But now if this be undeniably plain, that we cannot prove a man to be a *fool*, but by showing that he has no knowledge of things that are *good* and *evil* to himself, then it is undeniably plain, that we cannot prove a man to be *wise*, but by showing that he has the *fullest* knowledge of things, that are his *greatest* good, and his greatest evil.

If therefore God be our greatest good; if there can be no good but in his favour, nor any evil but in departing from him, then it is plain, that he who judges it the best thing he can do to please God to the utmost of his power, who worships and adores him with all his heart and soul, who had rather have a *pious mind*, than all the *dignities* and *honours* in the world, shows himself to be in the *highest state* of human wisdom.

To proceed; we know how our blessed Lord acted in an human body; it was 'his meat and drink, to do the will of his Father 'which is in heaven.'

And if any number of heavenly spirits, were to leave their habitations in the light of God, and be for a while united to human bodies, they would certainly tend towards God in all their actions, and be as heavenly as they could, in a state of flesh and blood.

They would certainly act in this manner, because they would know that God was the *only good* of all spirits; and that whether they were *in* the body, or *out* of the body, in *heaven*, or on *earth*, they must have every degree of their greatness and happiness from God alone.

All human spirits, therefore, the *more exalted* they are, the more they *know* their divine Original, the *nearer* they come to heavenly spirits; by so much the more will they live to God in all their actions, and make their whole life a *state of devotion*.

Devotion, therefore, is the greatest sign of a great and noble *genius*, it supposes a soul in its *highest state* of knowledge; and none but *little* and *blinded* minds, that are sunk into *ignorance* and *vanity*, are destitute of it.

If an human spirit, should imagine some *mighty Prince* to be greater than God, we should take it for a *poor, ignorant* creature; all people would acknowledge such an imagination to be the height of stupidity.

But if this same *human spirit*, should think it better to be devoted to some *mighty Prince*, than to be devoted to God, would not this still be a greater proof of a poor, ignorant, and blinded nature?

Yet this is what all people do, who think anything *better, greater, or wiser*, than a devout life.

So that which way soever we consider this matter, it plainly appears, that devotion is an instance of *great judgment*, of an *elevated nature*; and the want of *devotion* is a certain proof of the want of *understanding*.

The greatest spirits of the heathen world, such as *Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Epictetus, Marcus Antoninus, &c.*, owed all their *greatness* to the spirit of devotion.

They were full of God; their wisdom and deep contemplations tended only to deliver men from the vanity of the world, the slavery of bodily passions, that they might act as *spirits* that came from God, and were soon to return to him.

Again; To see the dignity and greatness of a devout spirit, we need only compare it with other tempers, that are chosen in the room of it.

St. *John* tells us, that 'all in the world' (that is, all the tempers of a worldly life) 'is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.'

Let us therefore consider, what *wisdom* or *excellency* of mind there is required, to qualify a man for these delights.

Let us suppose a man given up to the pleasures of the body; surely this can be no sign of a *fine* mind, or an *excellent* spirit: For if he has but the temper of an *animal*, he is great enough for these enjoyments.

Let us suppose him to be devoted to *honours* and *splendours*, to be fond of *glitter* and *equipage*; now if this temper required any great *parts* or *fine* understanding, to make a man capable of it, it would prove the world to abound with *great wits*.

Let us suppose him to be in love with *riches*, and to be so eager in the pursuit of them, as never to think he has enough; now this passion is so far from supposing any *excellent sense*, or *great understanding*, that blindness and folly are the best supports that it hath.

Let us lastly suppose him in another light, not singly devoted to any of these passions, but, as it mostly happens, governed by all of them in their turns; does this show a more exalted nature, than to spend his days in the service of any one of them?

For to have a *taste* for these things, and to be devoted to them, is so far from arguing any *tolerable parts* or understanding, that they are suited to the *dullest, weakest* minds, and require only a great deal of pride and folly to be greatly admired.

But now let *Libertines* bring any such charge as this, if they can, against devotion. They may as well endeavour to charge light, with everything that belongs to darkness.

Let them but grant that there is a God, and Providence, and then they have granted enough to justify the wisdom, and support the honour of devotiou.

For if there is an infinitely wise and good Creator, in whom we live, move, and have our being, whose Providence governs all things in all places, surely it must be the highest act of our *understanding* to conceive rightly of him; it must be the noblest instance of *judgment*, the most exalted temper of our nature, to worship and adore this universal Providence, to conform to its laws, to study its wisdom, and to live and act everywhere, as in the presence of this infinitely good and wise Creator.

Now he that lives thus, lives in the spirit of devotion.

And what can show such great parts, and so fine an understanding, as to live in this temper?

For if God is *wisdom*, surely he must be the wisest man in the world, who *most* conforms to the wisdom of God, who *best* obeys his Providence, who enters *furthest* into his designs, and does all he can, that God's will may be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.

A devout man makes a true use of his reason; he sees through the *vanity* of the world, discovers the *corruption* of his nature, and the *blindness* of his passions. He lives by a *law* which is not visible to *vulgar eyes*; he enters into the world of *spirits*; he compares the greatest things, sets *eternity* against *time*; and chooses rather to be for ever great in the presence of God when he dies, than to have the greatest share of worldly pleasure whilst he lives.

He that is devout, is full of these *great thoughts*; he lives upon these noble reflections, and conducts himself by *rules* and *principles*, which can only be apprehended, admired, and loved by *reason*.

There is nothing therefore that shows so great a *genius*, nothing that so raises us above *vulgar spirits*, nothing that so plainly declares an *heroic* greatness of mind, as great devotion.

When you suppose a man to be a *saint*, or all devotion, you have raised him as much above all other conditions of life, as a *Philosopher* is above an *animal*.

Lastly, *Courage* and *bravery* are words of a great sound, and seem to signify an *heroic* spirit; but yet *humility*, which seems to be the *lowest*, *meanest* part of devotion, is a more certain argument of a *noble* and *courageous* mind.

For humility contends with greater enemies, is more constantly engaged, more violently assaulted, bears more, suffers more, and requires greater courage to support itself, than any instances of worldly bravery.

A man who dares be poor and contemptible in the eyes of the world, to approve himself to God ; who resists and rejects all human glory, who opposes the clamour of his passions, who meekly puts up with all injuries and wrongs, and dares stay for his reward till the invisible hand of God gives to everyone their proper places ; endures a much *greater trial*, and exerts a *nobler fortitude*, than he that is bold and daring in the fire of battle.

For the boldness of a soldier, if he is a stranger to the spirit of devotion, is rather *weakness* than fortitude ; it is at best but *mad passion*, and heated spirits, and has no more true valour in it than the fury of a *tiger*.

For as we cannot lift up a hand, or stir a foot, but by a power that is lent us from God ; so bold actions that are not directed by the laws of God, as so many executions of his will, are no more true bravery, than *sedate malice* is Christian *patience*.

Reason is our *universal law*, that obliges us in all places, and at all times ; and no actions have any honour, but so far as they are instances of our obedience to reason.

And it is as *base* and *cowardly*, to be bold and daring against the principle of reason and justice, as to be bold and daring in *lying* and *perjury*.

Would we therefore exercise a *true fortitude*, we must do all in the spirit of *devotion*, be valiant against the corruptions of the *world*, and the lusts of the *flesh*, and the temptations of the *devil*: For to be daring and courageous against these enemies, is the noblest bravery that an human mind is capable of.

I have made this digression, for the sake of those, who think a great devotion to be *bigotry* and *poorness* of *spirit* ; that by these considerations they may see, how *poor* and *mean* all other tempers are, if compared to it ; that they may see, that all worldly attainments, whether of greatness, wisdom, or bravery, are but *empty sounds* ; and there is nothing *wise*, or *great*, or *noble* in an *human spirit*, but rightly to *know*, and heartily *worship* and *adore* the great God, that is the *support* and *life* of all spirits, whether in *heaven* or on *earth*.

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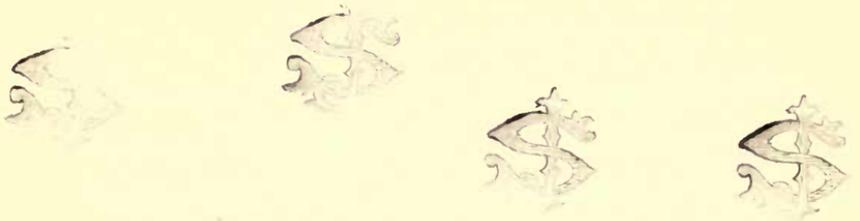


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Prefatory Advertisement.

A Demonstration of the Errors of a late Book, &c.

BETWEEN the publication of the 'Serious Call' and this Demonstration, WILLIAM LAW wrote his Reply to DR. TINDAL'S 'Case of Reason,' which appears in the second volume of this re-issue of Law's Works. He also wrote, during the years 1731-2, three Letters to a Lady inclined to enter into the Romish Communion. These Letters were not published until after his decease, nor with the collected edition of his Works, but separately: they will be found in the last Volume of this Edition.

The Demonstration was published in the year 1737, when William Law had left the *Gibbon* family; and was living in his late father's house at *King's Cliffe*. It was written—after WILLIAM LAW had become greatly influenced by the writings of JACOB BEHMEN—in repudiation of 'A Plain Account of the Nature and End of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper' of which BISHOP HOADLY is supposed to have been the Author. The Demonstration, like all WILLIAM LAW'S works, contains many excellent and deeply instructive passages—that upon the Names or Titles given to the Sacrament being capable of very general application:

WHATEVER *Names* or *Titles* this Institution is 'signified to you by, whether it be called a *Sacrifice* 'propitiatory or commemorative; whether it be 'called an holy Oblation, the *Eucharist*, the 'Sacrament of the *Body* and *Blood* of Christ, the Sacrament 'of the *Lord's Supper*, the *Heavenly Banquet*, the *Food of Im-* 'mortality, or the *Holy Communion*, and the like, matters not 'much. For all these *Words* or *Names* are right and good, and

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‘there is nothing wrong in them, but the striving and contention about them. For they all express *something* that is true of the Sacrament, and therefore are every one of them, in a good Sense, rightly applicable to it ; but all of them are far short of expressing the whole Nature of the Sacrament, and therefore, the Help of all of them is wanted. He therefore that contends for one Name, as the only proper one in Exclusion of the rest, is in the same Mistake, as he that should contend for one *Name* and *Character* of our Saviour, as the only proper one, in Exclusion of all the rest. For as all the *Names* and *Titles* by which Christ is described, from the *Seed of the Woman* in *Genesis*, to the *Alpha* and *Omega* in the last Chapter of the *Revelation*, are only to *help* us to know, believe, and experience more of him as our Saviour, than can be expressed by all these different Characters of him : So all the various *Names* and *Titles* given to the Sacrament, are only to teach us to know, believe, and find more of our Redemption and Salvation in the Sacrament, than can be pointed out to us by any or all of these Expressions.’

To those who require Evidence of the Truth of the Gospel the following passage is commended :

BUT it may be you will say, you would believe the Gospel if you could, but that its Evidence cannot have that Effect upon your Mind. You may say also, the Gospel is a Matter of Fact ; you must examine into the Truth of it, as you do into the Truth of other Matters of History ; and as both the internal and external Evidence of the Gospel is much defended and opposed by learned Men, its Evidence is so perplexed, and made a Matter of such laborious and intricate Enquiry, that your Mind cannot come at any Certainty of what you ought to believe concerning the Truth of it. I will therefore propose to you the *shortest*, and at the same time the *surest* of all Methods. . . . I don't recommend to you to lay aside Prejudice, and begin again the Controversy from the Bottom, and read all on both Sides with all the Impartiality that you can. I would as soon send you on a *Pilgrimage*, to be a *Penitent*, as propose to you this Travel to be a Christian. The Truth of the Gospel lies much nearer to us than we imagine, and we only dispute and wrangle ourselves into a Distance from it. Do you think that you need many Books to show you that you are a *Sinner*, that you have the Disorder of almost all the *Beasts* within you ; that you have besides this, such Passions and Tempers of Pride, Envy, Selfish-

'ness and Malice, as would make you shun the Sight of other
'People, if they could see all that passes within you? Need any
'Learning instruct you, that at the same time that you have all
'these Disorders, both of the Beasts and evil Spirits within you,
'you have a great Desire to seem to be without them, and are
'affecting continually to have, and appear in those very Virtues
'which you feel the Want of? When you are full of Hatred
'and Envy, you affect to be thought good and good-natured,
'when proud, to appear as humble. Now I desire you to know
'no Books, but *this Book* of your own Heart, nor to be well read
'in any Controversy but in that which passes *within you*, in order
'to know the Gospel to be the greatest of all Truths, and the
'infallible Voice of God speaking the Way of Salvation to you.'

II.—*The Grounds and Reasons of Christian Regeneration.*

THIS remarkable Treatise, written by WILLIAM LAW and published in the year 1739, is based upon the teaching or revelation of JACOB BEHMEN. The influence of JACOB BEHMEN'S writings with WILLIAM LAW has proved fatal to *Law's* reputation as a Religious Teacher with many persons; and a great stumbling-block to those to whom the 'Christian Perfection' and the 'Serious Call' have been most convincing and productive of eternal benefit.

The general and erroneous supposition, that WILLIAM LAW, after leading from his youth upwards, not only an irreproachable, but a sanctified life; and having written such books as the 'Christian Perfection' and the 'Serious Call'—the most perfect religious guides, considered merely as such, that have ever appeared and a world-enduring honour to poor aspiring human nature—and after having displayed so strong and penetrating an understanding, free from any kind of error, in the detection and exposure of such fallacies as are set forth in the 'Bangorian Letters': 'Fable of the Bees': 'Case of Reason,' &c., should—with all his deep insight, intellectual power, and life's-devotion to the Truth—have become the victim of a delusion in adopting the ideas of Jacob Behmen, is a supposition which is perfectly incredible* to, and to be rejected by, an earnest Reader, who is possessed of any 'divine idea.'

* This appears to be the silent conviction of so able an Authority as the Rev. Dr. WHYTE upon this portion of WILLIAM LAW'S life.

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'The Grounds and Reasons of Christian Regeneration' represents WILLIAM LAW'S earliest exposition and elucidation of JACOB BEHMEN'S ideas; and as an Introduction to the exalted sphere of thought and devotion upon which WILLIAM LAW was then entering, it is admirable.

Perhaps the most impressive idea that WILLIAM LAW sets before us in these new Studies, is that in which he approaches the subject of 'Universalism' and doctrine of 'Free Will.' BISHOP BUTLER has demonstrated almost to a certainty that we are 'Free Agents'; but WILLIAM LAW goes further and deepens that tremendous responsibility in a truly awful manner in the following passage:

I WILL grant you all *that* you can suppose, of the Goodness of God and that no Creature will be finally lost, but what *Infinite Love* cannot save. But still, here is no *Shadow* of Security for *Infidelity*; and your *refusing* to be saved through the *Son* of God, whilst the Soul is in the *redeemable State* of this Life, may at the Separation of the Body, for aught you know, leave it in *such* a Hell, as the infinite Love of God cannot deliver it from. For, *first*, you have no *Kind*, or *Degree* of Proof, that your Soul is not that *dark, self-tormenting, anguishing* and *imperishable Fire*, above-mentioned, which has lost its *own proper* Light, and is only comforted by the Light of the *Sun*, till its Redemption be effected. *Secondly*, You have no *Kind*, or *Degree* of Proof, that God himself can redeem, or save, or enlighten this *dark Fire-Soul*, any other Way than, as the Gospel proposes, by the *Birth* of the Son of God in it. Therefore your own Hearts must tell you, that for aught you know, *Infidelity*, or the *refusing* of this Birth of the Son of God, may, at the End of Life, leave you in *such* a State of *Self-torment*, as the infinite Love of God can no way deliver you from.'

G. B. M.

A
DEMONSTRATION

OF THE

Gross and Fundamental ERRORS

Of a late BOOK, called

*A Plain Account of the Nature and
End of the Sacrament of the
Lord's Supper, &c.*

Wherein also the Nature and Extent of the Redemption of all Mankind by JESUS CHRIST is stated and explained; and the Pretences of the *Deists*, for a Religion of *Natural Reason* instead of it, are examined to the Bottom. The whole humbly, earnestly, and affectionately addressed to all Orders of Men, and more especially to all the Younger CLERGY.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

L O N D O N :

Printed for W. INNYS and J. RICHARDSON,
R. MANBY and J. S. COX. 1737.

A
DEMONSTRATION
OF THE
ERRORS *of a* LATE BOOK.

MY Design (worthy Reader) is not to lay before you all the Errors and false Reasonings of this Author throughout his whole Treatise. This would lead you into too much Wrangle, and the Multiplicity of Things disputed, would take your Eye from the chief Point in Question, and so make the Matter less edifying to you.

Many therefore of his lesser Mistakes I shall pass over, and only endeavour to discover such gross and fundamental Errors, as may justly pass for an entire Confutation of his whole Book.

The Foundation on which he proceeds, and the principal Matters of his Discourse, are not only notoriously against the Truth of the Sacrament, but plainly destructive of the principal Doctrines of the Christian Religion.

And if this Key of Knowledge, put into your Hands by this Author, is accepted by you, you will not only lose all the right Knowledge of this Sacrament, but be rendered a *blind, deaf*, and even *dead* Reader of all the other Doctrines of Scripture. For the Way he points out to find the Truth of the Doctrine of the Sacrament, is the only Way to lose the Truth of all the most important Parts of the Gospel.

Who this Nameless Author is, neither concerns the Truth, nor You, nor Me, and therefore I leave that Matter as he has left it.

He begins with giving us this Account of the Principles on which he proceeds. 'I have endeavoured to establish and 'explain the true Nature, End, and Effect of the Sacrament of 'the Lord's Supper. And this in such a manner, that all who 'are concerned may, I hope, be led into the right way of judging 'about it.* To this I have endeavoured to guide them, by 'directing and confining their Attention to all that is said about 'this Duty, by those who alone had any Authority to declare the

‘ Nature of it : Neither on the one hand diminishing, nor on the other augmenting, what is declared by them to belong to it.—If therefore the Manner in which I have chosen to treat this Subject, should appear to some to stand in need of any Apology ; this is the only one I can persuade myself to make, That I have no Authority to add to the Words of Christ and his Apostles upon this Subject ; nor to put any Meaning or Interpretation upon these Words, but what is agreeable to the common Rules of speaking in like Cases, and to the declared Design of the Institution itself.*—All who (in the *Apostle’s* Phrase) love our Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity, and who desire to be no wiser about his Appointments, than he himself was ; and are content to expect no more from his Institution than he himself put into it, will join with me at least in the one only Method of examining into the Nature and Extent of it.†

Here he has given us a short, but full Account of the *Principles* on which he proceeds, which I shall reduce into the following Propositions.

First, That the *Nature, End, and Effects* of the Holy Sacrament can only be *so far* known, and apprehended by us, as the *bare* Words of Christ in the Institution of the Sacrament, related by the Apostles and Evangelists, have made them known to us.

Secondly, That no other Meaning or Interpretation is to be put upon these Words, but what is *agreeable to the common Rules of speaking* on the like Occasions.

Thirdly, That this Examination into the Meaning of the Words, according to the common Rules of speaking on the like Occasions, is the *one only Method of Knowing* what is meant by them.

Fourthly, That this Knowledge thus acquired from such a Consideration of the Words, is *all* the Knowledge that we can have of the *Nature, End, and Effects* of this Holy Sacrament.

Everyone must see that these Propositions are fairly taken from his own Words, and that they are the Foundation of his whole Discourse. He builds upon them as upon so many Axioms, or first Principles ; and all he says from the Beginning to the End of his Treatise, is founded upon the supposed incontestable Truth of them.

Here therefore let me desire you to fix your Eye, for here I will place the Merits of the Cause with him : If this Foundation cannot be shaken, I will dispute nothing that he has built upon it.

But then let it be observed, that if these Propositions are

proved to be absolutely false, and most evidently repugnant to the repeated *Letter*, constant *Spirit*, and whole *Tenor* of Scripture, then all this whole Treatise, from the Beginning to the End, so far as he proceeds upon his own avowed Principles, is mere Fiction and Fable, a Castle in the Air.

I shall therefore in the plainest Manner show the Falseness of these Propositions, and that they are so far from being what He takes them to be, *viz.*, the only Means of arriving at the Fulness of Scripture Truths, that whoever entertains them as Truths, and abides by them in his Search after Scripture Truths, is, and must be, so long as he continues in that Sentiment and Practice, *Stone-Blind* to all the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God, as related in Scripture.

And that, if it were anyone's Desire to do exactly what our Blessed Lord charges upon the Pharisees and Lawyers, 'That they shut up the Kingdom of Heaven, took away the Key of Knowledge, entered not in themselves, and those that were entering in, they hindered': Were this the deepest Desire of anyone's Heart, the one only effectual Way of doing it, must be the Way that this Author has taken in this Treatise. For, it shall also be made appear, that these Principles of his are that *very Veil* which the Apostle says was upon the Hearts of the *Jews*; and that the Scriptures have never been *useless* to, *misunderstood*, or *rejected* by any People of any Age, but for this Reason, because their Hearts were blinded and hardened by this very Method of knowing Scripture Truths, which he proposes to us. All the Characters of 'stiff-necked, hardened, blind, carnal, and uncircumcised in Heart and Spirit,' which are in the Scriptures given to the unbelieving *Jews*, are only so many various Ways of describing that *State* of Heart, which these very Principles had produced in them.

Had they thought of any other Method of knowing their *Messiah*, but that of the *bare Letter* of Scripture, interpreted according to the *common Rules of speaking*, the greatest Occasion of their Infidelity had been removed.

But to begin in my proposed Method. The Holy Sacrament was instituted in these Words: 'And as they were eating, Jesus took Bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the Disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is my Body. And He took the Cup, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it: For this is my Blood of the new Testament, which is shed for many, for the Remission of Sins,' Matth. xxvi. 26. In St. *Luke* the Words of Institution are: 'And he took Bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave it unto them, saying, This is my Body which is given for you: This do in remembrance

'of me. Likewise also the Cup after Supper, saying, This Cup 'is the new Testament in my Blood, which is shed for you,' Luke xxii. 19.

Let us now apply the Doctrine contained in the fore-mentioned Propositions to these Words of the Institution of the Sacrament. According to the Doctrine of those Propositions, the one only *Method of understanding* what is meant by these Words of the Institution, is to consider and interpret them 'according to the common Rules of speaking in like Cases.' But, pray Sir, where must a Man look for a *like Case*? Does the World afford us any Case like it? Have the *Speaker*, or the *Things* spoken, any Things in common Life that are alike to either of them? How vain is it therefore to refer us to the *common Rules* of speaking on the *like Cases*, when the whole World affords us neither any Person like him that spoke, nor any Thing, or Case, like the Things and Case here spoken of.

The Scripture saith, 'He spake the Word, and they were 'made; He commanded, and they were created.'* Has this Way of speaking any Parallel in the Language of Men? Do human Things and Transactions furnish us with anything like this?

Now the Word which *thus* speaking *created* all things, is not more extraordinary, more above the common Rules of speaking, or more without human Example, than that Word which, in the *Institution* of the Sacrament, *spake*, and it was *done*; commanded, and it was created. For it is the same Omnipotent Word that *here* speaketh, that spoke the Creation into Being; and the Effects of his speaking in the Institution of the Sacrament, are as *extraordinary*, and as much above the Effects of human speaking, as when the same Word *spake*, and *they were made*; *commanded*, and *they were created*. And it is impossible for anyone to show, that there is less of *Divine Power* and *Greatness*, less of *Mystery* and *Miracle* implied in these Words spoken by the Eternal Word in the Institution of the Sacrament, than when the same Eternal Word said, 'Let there be 'Light, and there was Light.'

All Words have a Meaning, a Significancy and Effect, according to the Nature of him, whose they are. The Words of God are of the Nature of God, Divine, Living and Powerful; the Words of an Angel are, as that Angel is in Power and Perfection; the Words of a Devil have only his Nature and Power, and therefore they can only and solely *tempt* to Evil; the Words of Man are, as Men are, *weak*, *vain*, *earthly*, and of a

* Psalm cxlviii. 5.

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poor and *narrow* Signification. To direct us therefore to the common Rules of speaking amongst Men, as the *only Means* of truly knowing *all* that the Son of God spoke, when he spoke of himself, and on such an Occasion, and in such Circumstances as never did, nor ever can happen or belong to anyone but himself, is surely no small Mistake. The common Rules of speaking are like other things that are common amongst Men, *viz.*, poor, empty, and superficial, hardly touching the *Outside* of the mere human Things we talk about. If therefore what the Son of God said of himself in the Institution of this Holy Sacrament, must necessarily be supposed to have no *higher* Meaning or *deeper* Sense, than such as is according to the *common* Rules of speaking amongst Men; it must necessarily follow, that he spoke as *meanly*, as *imperfectly*, and as *superficially* in what he said of himself, and the Matter he was upon, as when Men speak of themselves and human Things. For if there were not the same weak, empty, and superficial Meaning in his Words, as there is in the common Discourse of Men; then the common Rules of speaking amongst Men cannot be a *proper*, much less the *only Means* of understanding *all the Truth* that is contained in them.

This Author seems to be in the same mistake concerning Jesus Christ and his Kingdom, as his Disciples were in, before they had *received Power from on high*. They had till then heard him only with their *outward Ears*; conceived what he said, only according to the *common Rules* of speaking amongst Men, and so continued *perfect Strangers* to all the Mysteries and great Truths of the Gospel. But after the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, their Understandings were opened, and they saw all things with new Eyes, and in a new Light; they then fully apprehended what their Lord meant by these remarkable Words, 'My Kingdom is not of this World.' Which is the same thing as if he had said, I speak not as a Person of this World, nor of the Things of this World, and therefore the Things which I say, can neither be understood by a *worldly Mind*, nor according to the *common Ways* of speaking amongst Men. And had this Author sufficiently attended to the Sense of these Words, and felt the Truth of them in his own Heart, it seems next to impossible for him to have fallen into his present way of Reasoning. For he that truly and fully believes that the Kingdom of Christ is not of this World, and that therefore *worldly Powers and Privileges* are not a proper Part of it, can hardly be so inconsistent with himself, as to affirm, that worldly Language, spoken on worldly Matters, is the *only proper Key* to the right Understanding the Truths and Doctrines of this

Kingdom, that is so out of, above, and contrary to this World.

And if he has but one just and good Argument to prove, that worldly Power is not the proper and only Power that belongs to this Kingdom, the same Argument will as fully prove, that worldly Language understood according to the common Rules of speaking, cannot be the proper and only Means of rightly apprehending the Truths of this Kingdom.

To proceed ; he refers and confines us to the bare Words of the Institution, for the right and full understanding of *all* that is to be understood of the *Nature, End, and Effects* of the Holy Sacrament.

Here he throws an easy Deception into the Mind of His Reader, who because he may justly think he is right in declaring the Words of the Institution to be the only *true* and *full* Account of the Sacrament, as to the *outward Form and Matter* of it, suspects him not to be wrong, when he concludes from thence, that the Words are also the only *true and full* Account of the *Nature, End and Effects* of the Holy Sacrament. Whereas this is as false, as the other is true ; for the Nature, and End, and Effects of the Holy Sacrament, neither are, nor possibly can be taught us (as shall be shown hereafter) from the bare Words of the Institution, considered by themselves.

Let us suppose that one of this Author's *rational Men, of clear Ideas*, but an absolute Stranger to the Scriptures, and to our Saviour's Doctrines, had been present only when he spoke the Words of the Institution ; would his Knowledge of the Meaning of Words, according to the *common Rules* of speaking, have directed him to the true Sense of all that was implied by this Sacrament and the Observation of it ? To say that such a Person thus qualified could have known the true *Nature, End, and Effects* of the Holy Sacrament, is surely too absurd to be imagined. And to say that he could not, is fully giving up this Author's *whole* Doctrine, namely, that the *bare understanding the Words of the Institution according to the common Rules* of speaking, is the *only Way* to understand *all* that is certain and true as to the *Nature, End, and Effects* of the Sacrament. For if this were so, it would evidently follow, that a perfect Stranger to all the other Doctrines and Institutions both of the Old and New Testament, would be as well qualified to understand all that was implied in the Words of the Institution, as he that had the fullest Knowledge of everything that ever had been revealed or appointed by God, either before or since the Birth of Christ.

But if some Knowledge of what God has revealed both in the Old and New Testament be required, for a right understanding

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what is implied in the Words of the Institution, then it is absolutely false, and highly blamable, to say, that the bare Words of the Institution, considered in themselves only, according to the common Rules of speaking, are the *only* Means or Method of understanding all that is implied in them.

Either this Sacrament has some relation to some other Doctrines of the Old and New Testament, or it has not; if it has no Relation to them, then it must be said to have no Agreement with any other Part of Scripture: But if it has some Relation to other Doctrines of Scripture, then it demonstratively follows, that this Institution must be interpreted, not according to the *bare Meaning* of the Words in the common Ways of speaking, but according to that *Relation* which it has to some other Doctrines of Scripture. This, I think, is incontestable, and entirely overthrows his only *Method* of understanding the Nature of the Sacrament.

Again, another Argument of still greater Force against him may be taken from the Apostles themselves. He confines us to the bare Words of the Institution related by the Apostles and Evangelists, as the *only Means* of knowing all that can be known of the *Nature, End, and Effects* of the Sacrament; and yet it is certain, beyond all Doubt, that the Apostles and Evangelists neither had, nor could possibly have this Design in relating and recording the Words of the Institution, namely, that we might thereby have the one *only Means* of knowing all that is to be understood by it.

For they very well knew, that they had received no such Knowledge themselves from the bare Words of the Institution, and therefore they could not relate them as the *only Means* of Instruction in that Matter to others. They very well knew, that if they had received *no other* Light, besides that which those Words conveyed, they had died in a *total Ignorance* of the whole Matter.

They very well knew, that though they had personally conversed with Christ, had heard from his own Mouth, Mysteries preparatory to their right Knowledge of their Saviour, that notwithstanding all this, when they heard and saw him institute the Sacrament in its outward *Form and Matter*, as they relate it, by the help of the bare Words of the Institution, they then neither *did*, nor *could* rightly understand the *Nature, End, and Effects* of the Holy Sacrament. And therefore it may be said to be *certain* beyond *all Doubt*, that they neither *did* nor *could* relate and record these Words of the Institution, as the *only Means* of rightly understanding all that is implied in the Sacrament, as to the Nature, End, and Effects of it. And yet this

Author takes all this for granted, and supposes that the Apostles had all their Knowledge of the Sacrament from the Words of the Institution, and that they have recorded the Institution for this End, and with this Design, that we might know all that they knew, and all that could be known concerning it.

That the Apostles themselves did not comprehend the Nature, End, and Effects of the Sacrament from the Words of the Institution, is plain; for they did not then know what *Person* their Saviour was, or *how* he was to save them, or *what* their *Salvation* in itself implied. They knew nothing of the Nature or Merit of his Sufferings, but thought all to be lost, when he suffered Death. They knew not how to believe in his Resurrection, and when they did believe it, they knew nothing of the Consequences of it; which is a plain *Proof* that they did not at all see into the *Meaning* of the Holy Sacrament, for had they known what was implied in it, they must have known their *Saviour*, and the *Nature* of their Salvation. And yet (what is well to be observed) it is also plain, that in this State of gross *Ignorance* and *Infidelity*, knowing nothing of their Salvation, they had *all* that Knowledge of the Holy Sacrament which this Author is recommending to the Christian World, as the only true Knowledge of it. For they must have understood the Words according to the *common Rules* of speaking, which is all that he allows to be understood by them. For any other Sense or Meaning, that is not literally expressed in the Words taken according to the common Rules of speaking, is by him called a being *Wiser* than Christ in his own Appointments, an *adding* to the Institution, or a *putting something* into it, which he has not put in. So that it is evidently plain, that this *Purity* of Knowledge concerning the Sacrament, which this Author has writ so large a Volume in Recommendation of, is that *very* Knowledge of the Sacrament which the Apostles had, when they had *no Faith* in Christ as their Saviour, nor any *Knowledge* of the Nature of Christian Salvation. Everyone must see that this Charge is justly brought against him, and that he cannot possibly avoid it. For if that is the only right Knowledge of the Nature, End, and Effects of the Holy Sacrament, which the bare Words of the Institution, understood only according to the common Rules of speaking, declare; if every other Sense and Meaning is to be rejected as a Criminal adding, or putting something into Christ's Institution, and a presuming to be *wiser* than he was; then it undeniably follows, that that *simple* and *sure* Knowledge of the Sacrament, which he lays so great Claim to, and so much contends for, is that *very gross Ignorance* of it which the Apostles were in, when they had *no Light* but from

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the bare Words of the Institution, and had all the Articles of the Christian Faith to learn.

Further, as the Apostles did not, so they could not *possibly* know the *Nature, End, and Effects* of the Holy Sacrament, from the bare Words of the Institution, nor is it possible for any *one* since their Time to know it by that Help alone.

The outward *Matter* and *Form* indeed, or that wherein the positive Institution consists (as I have already said) is sufficiently plain and intelligible from the *bare Words* of the Institution, and is by them made unalterable. This is the only Plainness of the Institution. But what Mysteries or Doctrines of Christian Faith are to be acknowledged or confessed by the *Words, the Form, and the Matter* of it, and what are not, cannot be known from the bare Words of the Institution, but are to be learnt by *that Light* which brought the Apostles and the Church after them into a true and full Knowledge of the *fundamental* Articles of the Christian Faith.

Take the Words of the Institution alone as the Apostles first heard them, understood only according to the *common Rules* of speaking, and then there is nothing in them, but that *poor Conception* which they had of them at *that time*, and such as did them no good; and then also we have that Knowledge of this Institution, which this Author pleads for. But, take the same Words of the Institution, understood and interpreted according to the *Articles* of the Christian Faith, and seen in that *Light* in which the Apostles afterwards saw them, when they *knew* their Saviour; and then everything that is great and adorable in the Redemption of Mankind, everything that can delight, comfort and support the Heart of a Christian, is found to be centred in this Holy Sacrament. There then wants nothing but the Wedding Garment to make this Holy Supper the *Marriage Feast* of the Lamb: And it is this Holy Solemnity, this Author is taking so much Pains to wrangle us out of, by so many dry Subtleties of a superficial Logic.

But I proceed to show, that neither the Apostles, nor any other Persons since them, could possibly know the Nature, End and Effects of the Holy Sacrament, from the bare Words of the Institution considered only in themselves, according to the common Rules of speaking. And this may be demonstrated from every Part of the Institution.

I shall begin with these Words, which are only a *Command* to observe the Institution, 'Do this in Remembrance of me': That is, let this be done as your *Confession* and *Acknowledgment* of the Salvation that is received through me. Does not every common Christian, that has any Knowledge of Scripture, know,

that this is the plain Meaning of these Words? And that as often as he *does this*, he does it in Remembrance of his Saviour, in *Acknowledgment* and *Confession* of that *Salvation* which Mankind received through him? But now, that which is thus *plain* and *intelligible* in the Words of the Institution to a common Christian, knowing only the *chief Articles* of his Salvation, is altogether *unintelligible* to any Man that is left solely to the bare Words of the Institution; for unless he was instructed in the other Parts of Scripture, so as to know what he was to understand by the Words, they would signify no more to him than they would to a *Heathen*, who had by *Chance* found a bit of Paper in the Fields with the *same Words* writ upon it.

Now a *Heathen*, ignorant of all Divine Revelation, if he found such a Paper, could not know what it related to, nor what any of the Words signified; he could not know when he was nearer, or when he was further from a right understanding of them; the common Rules of speaking amongst Men, would be of no use to teach him, whether there was any *Truth* in such a Paper, or what kind of Truths were declared by it.

Now this is exactly the Case of him that renounces *all other Means* of knowing what is contained in the Institution, but that of the Words themselves, understood *only* according to the *common Rules* of speaking amongst Men. Such a one is only in the State of this Heathen, the Words of the Institution are as *unintelligible* and *useless* to him, as if he had found them by chance; they relate to he knows not what, they may be all *Fiction* and *Invention* for aught he knows, they cannot possibly be understood as having any Truth or Reality in them, till he that reads them, *knows more* than is related by them, till he knows the chief Articles of the Christian Salvation. For the bare Words of the Institution, considered by themselves, do not at all *prove*, *justify*, or *explain*, even that which they *literally* express; they are all but *empty, unmeaning Words*, till the *Proof*, the *Justification* and *Explication* of them, is learned from some other Parts of Scripture. They do not at all prove, justify, or explain, either that we *want* a Saviour, or *why* we want him, or that a Saviour is given us, and *how* he effects our Salvation; and yet *all* these things are *absolutely* necessary to a right understanding of this Institution; and as soon as these things are *proved, justified* and *explained*, as soon as we know that we *want* a Saviour, and that one is given to us; as soon as we know *who* this Saviour is, *how* he saves us, and the Nature and Manner of our Salvation, then, and not till then, all these Words of the Institution become clearly intelligible after a new Manner; then all the great Articles of our Salvation appear to be finely remembered, acknowledged, and set forth by them.

The short of the Matter is this ; to understand these Words only by themselves, knowing no more in them or by them, than what the common Use of Words teaches us, is to understand them *only* in such a Degree as a *Heathen* may understand them, who knows nothing of the Scripture besides ; and this is the Knowledge, or rather the *total Ignorance* of the Sacrament, that this Author is contending for.

But if these Words are but a *Part* of the Christian Religion, if they are to be understood *according* to that *Religion* of which they are a Part, if the Articles of our Christian Salvation have any *Concern* in them, and we are to receive them as Christians in *such* a Sense as our *Christianity* requires of us ; then it is undeniably certain, that this Author refers us to an *Absurdity*, and *Impossibility*, when he refers and confines us to the bare Words of the Institution, understood only according to the common Rules of speaking, in order to have a *Christian* Knowledge of the Holy Sacrament.

Again, 'Do this in Remembrance of me': Now take these Words in what Sense you please, is it not *equally* and *absolutely* necessary for the right understanding of them, to know who and what kind of Person this ME is, who is here to be remembered ? For if this is to be done in *Remembrance* of him, how can he be remembered, or acknowledged, unless it be known what *Qualities* and *Characters* of him are to be remembered and acknowledged ?

But this is not done in the Words of the Institution ; the *State*, *Nature*, and *Characters* of the Person to be remembered are not there *declared*, nor *proved*, and *explained* ; therefore something of the *greatest Importance* to the Words, and that must have the greatest Effect upon the Sense of them, and that is absolutely necessary to the right understanding of them, is necessarily to be learnt elsewhere ; and therefore it is again proved that he refers us to an *Absurdity* and *Impossibility*, when he refers and confines us to the bare Words of the Institution, to know all that a Christian can rightly know of them.

For if all that is done in this Sacrament, is to be done for the sake of *remembering* and *acknowledging* him as our Saviour, then surely it requires us to remember, and acknowledge him, according to what *he is*, with regard to our Salvation, and according to those Characters which are so plainly ascribed to him in Scripture, and on which our whole Religion is founded ; and therefore it is also necessary, that we rightly know (what cannot possibly be known from the bare Words of the Institution) in what *Respects* and on how many *Accounts* he is our *Saviour*, before we can *rightly* make this Remembrance and Acknowledgment of him as such.

It was the want of *this Knowledge*, that made the Institution

of the Sacrament useless to the Apostles when they first heard it; but when they had got this *Knowledge*, and knew all the *Characters* of their Saviour, and in how *many* Respects he stood as the *Mediator* and Redeemer betwixt God and Man, then the Institution became *highly* intelligible to them, and every Part of it plainly declared the Mystery that in a certain Sense was both concealed and expressed by it. Now the Addition of this Knowledge of the *Nature, Condition, and Characters* of the Person to be remembered and acknowledged by the Institution, is adding nothing to the Institution, but the *right Use* of it; it is bringing nothing to it, but a Mind capable of knowing and observing it.

He that is to understand a Proposition written in *Hebrew*, cannot be charged with adding to that Proposition, because he holds it *necessary* to learn the *Hebrew Language*, before he pretends to understand a Proposition written in Hebrew.

Now a Scripture-Christian Institution must as necessarily be understood according to Scripture and Christian Doctrine, as an Hebrew Proposition must be understood according to the Hebrew Language: And the making use of Scripture and Christian Doctrine, in order to understand a Scripture and Christian Institution, is no more an *adding* of something to the Institution, that need not, or ought not to be done, than the interpreting an Hebrew Proposition by the Hebrew Language, is an adding of something to it, that need not, or ought not to be done.

And, on the other hand, to confine us to the *bare Words* of the Institution, as they are in themselves, as they sound only in common Language, in order to understand a *Scripture-Christian Institution*, is exactly the same thing as to confine us to the *bare Words* of a Proposition written in Hebrew, considered only according to the common Rules of speaking, and not according to that Meaning they have in the *Hebrew Language* to which they belong, and of which they are a Part.

For a Scripture-Christian Institution must in the same manner have its Dependence upon, Foundation in, and Interpretation from Scripture and Christian Doctrine, of which it is a Part, and to which it belongs, as an Hebrew Proposition hath Dependence upon, Foundation in, and Interpretation from the Hebrew Language, to which it belongs, and of which it is a Part.

This Scripture-Christian Institution being thus interpreted, according to the Scripture and Christian Doctrine, of which it is a Part, is, when thus interpreted, left and kept in that *State*, in which Christ left it to be kept. Nay, the Institution itself cannot even *literally* be observed according to the bare Words of it, unless it be observed according to *this Knowledge and Acknowledgment* of all the Characters of Christ.

For though the bare Words of the Institution do not *express* or teach these Characters, yet the bare Words or Letter of it *requires* thus much: For since the Letter of the Institution requires us to *do this in Remembrance* and Acknowledgment of Christ, the bare Letter requires us in *doing this*, to acknowledge and remember all the Characters of Christ; therefore he that in *doing this* does not remember and acknowledge all the Characters of Christ, must be said not to observe the very Letter of the Institution. Hence therefore there arises another plain Demonstration against his Doctrine, *viz.*, that we are to know no more of the Nature or right Observation of the Sacrament, than what is expressly taught us in the bare Words of the Institution. For the very Letter itself of the Institution contradicts this; and if he will not directly refuse what the bare Words expressly command, he must seek for *something* towards the right Observation of this Sacrament, which is only required, but not taught in the Words of the Institution. For by the Letter of the Institution you are commanded to remember and acknowledge a Person, whose *Characters, Condition* and *Offices* to be acknowledged, are not taught in the Institution, but only to be found in other Parts of Scripture; and therefore the bare Letter of the Institution is grossly violated, if we look no further than to the Words of the Institution for a right Knowledge and Observation of the Sacrament.

Again, If the Scriptures *teach* and *prove* Christ to be the Sacrifice, Atonement and Propitiation for our Sins, as expressly as they teach us the *Institution* of the Sacrament, does not the Remembrance and Acknowledgment of him as the Sacrifice, Atonement and Propitiation for Sin, become a *necessary Part* of our right Observation of the Sacrament? For if the Sacrament is appointed for the Remembrance and Acknowledgment of Christ as our Saviour, and if as our Saviour he is the *Atonement*, the *Sacrifice*, and *Propitiation* for our Sins, is not the Remembrance and Acknowledgment of him as our Sacrifice and Atonement, *essential* to the Remembrance of him as our Saviour? If these Characters were mentioned in the Institution, I suppose they would be allowed to be an essential Part of it. But if the Letter of the Institution directly points to, and calls for the Acknowledgment of these Characters, then they are as essential to it, as if they were expressly mentioned in it.

Jesus Christ is not mentioned in the Institution as our *Saviour*, but I suppose it will not be denied that he is there by way of necessary Implication, since the Person there to be remembered, is declared by the Scripture to be our *Saviour*. But if we may be allowed thus to take our Saviour to be the Person that is to

be remembered and acknowledged by the Sacrament, if this may be done without adding anything to the Institution, if it must be done as absolutely essential to it, then the Addition of *Sacrifice, Atonement, and Propitiation* for our Sins, may be added without adding anything to the Institution, and must be done as absolutely essential to it; because the Scriptures *teach and prove*, that Jesus Christ, as our Saviour, is the Sacrifice, Atonement, and Propitiation for our Sins. Therefore if the Remembrance of him as our Saviour is essential to the Sacrament, the Remembrance and Acknowledgment of him as the Sacrifice and Atonement, and Propitiation for Sin, is essential to the Sacrament.

And therefore it follows again, that the very Words of the Institution direct us to a *further Knowledge* of the Sacrament, than that which is *expressly* taught by them.

To proceed: *Take, eat; this is my Body.* Now what signifies it what anyone can make of these Words, understood according to the *common* Ways of speaking? For the Way itself is *singular* and *uncommon*, and has no certain Meaning according to the common Rules of speaking. He may as well read a Discourse upon *Truth*, to know whether these Words have *any Truth* in them, as consult the common Forms of speaking, to know what is meant by them. For if the things mentioned and expressed in these Words, were not made *significant* and *important* to us by *something* not mentioned in the Sacrament, if they were not asserted and explained in *other Parts* of Scripture, it could never be known from the Words themselves, that they were of any *Significancy* to us, or that there was any *Truth* and *Reality* in them. The short of the Matter is this: Either these Words are only a great Impropriety of Speech, darkly expressing only a common thing; or they are a figurative Form of Words, which by the Particularity of the Expression are to raise the Mind to a *Faith* and *Apprehension* of such Things, as cannot be *plainly* and *nakedly* represented by human Language. Now one of these two must necessarily be true, that is, they must necessarily be either a *dark Form* of Words with only a plain *common Meaning* of an ordinary Thing at the bottom, or they must be a mysterious Form of Words signifying *something* more than human. But now which of these two they are, cannot *possibly* be known from the Words of the Institution. For the Words in themselves prove nothing at all of this; from aught that appears in the Words themselves, they may be mere *Fiction* and *Impropriety* about a Trifle, or the *greatest* and most *important* of all Truths may be taught by them. But this can no other possible way be known, but by other Parts of Scripture. And if the Scriptures were as silent about the *Truth, Nature, and Extent* of the Things

barely mentioned in the Sacrament, as the Institution itself is, it must be the same useless, unintelligible Form of Words to us, that it was to the Apostles when they first heard them, and had no Knowledge of their Saviour.

But, on the other hand, if the Things *barely mentioned* in the Words of the Institution, are *openly asserted*, and *variously explained* in other Parts of Scripture; if we are often told what the *Body* of Christ is in several Respects, of the *Necessity* and *Possibility* of Eating his Flesh, and Drinking his Blood; if the Scriptures abound with *Instruction*, showing us how we have *our Life* in him and from him, how we must be *born again* in him and through him, how he must be *formed* in us, and we *new Creatures* in him; then it follows, that to separate the *Institution* from these Scriptures that *variously unfold* its Nature, and to confine us to the *bare* Words of the Institution itself, in order to understand it *fully*, is the same *Absurdity*, the same Offence against Scripture and Reason, as it would be to confine us to the bare Words of the first Promise of a Saviour made in the third Chapter of *Genesis*, in order to know *fully* our Christian Saviour, and what our *Christian Salvation* is. For as that first Promise of a *Seed of the Woman that should bruise the Serpent's Head*, contained the *whole* Character of our Saviour, and all that related to him as such, and yet contained *nothing* of it intelligible *enough*, till further *Revelations, Doctrines* and *Facts* explained all that was *short* and *figurative* in that first Promise, and showed how every Part of our Salvation was promised by it; so the Institution of the Sacrament contained *every* thing relating to Christ as our Saviour, and yet contained *nothing* of it intelligible *enough*, till further *Revelations, new Light, Doctrines* and *Facts* explained all that was *short* and *figurative* in it, and plainly showed what it was in its *real* Nature, how it *stood* in the *Heart* of our Religion, fully attesting and representing the chief Characters of Christ, as he was our Saviour and Redeemer.

Therefore it is the same gross Error to confine the Words of the Institution to their *own literal* Meaning, and to understand them *only* according to the *common Rules* of speaking, as it would be to confine that *first Promise* of a Saviour to the *literal* Meaning of the Words in which it was expressed, understood only according to the *common Rules* of speaking. For as it was by the Scriptures speaking a Language *different* from the Expressions of the first Promise of a *Seed to bruise the Serpent's Head*, and giving *further Revelations* concerning the promised Saviour in *other* Words, that the Words of the first Promise itself came rightly to be understood and believed; so it is by the Scriptures speaking a Language *different* from that of the Sacrament, and

by revealing *Doctrines* on which it is *founded*, that the Sacrament itself came rightly to be known and understood. And if the Scripture may and must be allowed to explain, confirm, and establish the true Meaning of the first Promise of a *Seed* to destroy the Serpent's Head, even where the *Words* of it are not *mentioned*, or *expressly* said to be explained; then the Scriptures may and must be allowed to explain, confirm, and establish the *true Nature* of the Sacrament, even where the *Words* of it are not mentioned, or *expressly* said to be explained.

Yet this Author *poorly* and *vainly* supposes, that the *Nature* of the Sacrament, and the Things *meant* by it, are *nowhere* to be looked for in Scripture, but where the *Sacramental Words*, or the Manner of the *outward Institution* is repeated, or expressly said to be explained: Which is as just and solid, as if a *Jew* should from the same Skill in Words suppose, that the Explication of the first Promise of a *Woman's Seed* to bruise the Serpent's Head, was *nowhere* to be looked for in Scripture, but in *such Places* as spoke strictly the *Language* of the first Promise, and mentioned the express Words, *Seed*, and *Bruise*, and the *Serpent's Head*.

And indeed herein, in this *poor literal* Exactness lay all the *Infidelity* of the Jews, the *Blindness* and *Hardness* of their Hearts, and their *Incapacity* to receive their Saviour. Look at every Folly, Grossness, and erroneous Principle of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*; look through the whole of their false Religion, and you will find, that they fell into it all, because they had this Author's *Method* of finding the Truth. They placed *all* in the *Letter* of Scripture, as this Author does; they understood that Letter only according to the *common Rules* of speaking amongst Men, as this Author does; they looked upon and understood all the *Institutions* of their Religion, as this Author looks upon and understands the *Sacrament*; they saw just so far into the *Law*, as he does into the *Gospel*; they had his Degree of Knowledge, and he has their Degree of Ignorance. For take but away from the *Scribe* and *Pharisee* the Letter of Scripture, understood according to the *common Rules* of speaking, and you take away *all their Religion*; they see *no more* of an inward Mystery, Spirit, or Doctrine in it, than this Author sees in the Sacrament.

Again, leave them but the *Letter* of Scripture, *understood* according to the *common Rules* of speaking, as this Author would have the Sacrament left, and then you leave them *all* that they would have; and the Religion of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* is in its *full Perfection*, and has *exactly* the Perfection of this Author's *plain Account* of the Sacrament.

This made me say above, that it would appear, that this

Author's *Method* of understanding the Scripture Doctrine of the Sacrament, was that *very Veil* which the Apostle said was upon the *Hearts* of the Jews; and that he was labouring to draw Skins over our Eyes, and to make our Ears gross and dull of hearing, that the *New Testament* might be as useless to us, as the *Old Testament* was to the unbelieving Letter-learned *Scribes* and *Pharisees*. For his excellent Method of understanding the Nature of the Sacrament, is to a *tittle* that very Method which kept them *totally* ignorant of the Nature of their Religion.

Every Prophecy of our Saviour, whether in the *Law*, or the *Psalms*, or the *Prophets*, served only to keep him more out of their Knowledge; because looking *only* upon it, as this Author looks upon the Words of the Institution, they were under a *Necessity* of understanding it *wrong*, and so the more Prophecies they had of him, the further they were carried from the true Knowledge of their promised Saviour. *Circumcision, Sacrifices, Washings, Feasts and Fasts, &c.*, which were intended and appointed as so many *School-masters* or *Guides* to Christ, were by them turned into *dead, carnal, earthly* Ordinances, that left them in their Sins, and *incapable* of acknowledging their Saviour, or so much as *feeling* any want of one; for this *very Reason*, because they saw no further into their Sacrifices, than this Author sees into the Sacrament; but thought that the whole *Nature* and *End* of a Sacrifice was fully observed, when they had *slain an Ox*, and not changed it into the *cutting off of a Dog's Head*. This was their *Great Point* in Sacrifice, just as this Author has found out the *Great Point*, as he calls it, of the Sacrament, which consists in a *bare Act of the Memory*, remembering Christ as a Teacher of Religion at the *Instant* you take the Bread or the Cup, and not remembering *Aristotle* or *Socinus, &c.*, as Teachers of *Logic* and *Criticism*.

When you have by this sole Act of your Memory thus *separated* and *distinguished* what is done in the Sacrament, from *that* which is done for *Food*, or *Mirth*, or in *Memory* of your Friends, then you have secured the *great Point* in the Sacrament, and are to look for nothing further as to the peculiar *Nature, End, and Effects* of it. Just as the Letter-learned *Pharisee* thought that the *whole Nature* and *End* of the Sacrifice was *fully* observed when he had *slain an Ox*, and not cut off a *Dog's Head*.

And if you are for adding anything to the Sacrament besides this *distinguishing* Act of the Memory, you are as blamable in the Sight of this Author, as the *Apostles* were in the Eyes of the *unbelieving* Pharisee, when they taught that the *Blood* of slain Beasts was, as to its *Nature* and *End*, a *Type* and *Application* of the Atonement of Christ's Blood. Thus does this Author stand

in the very *State* and *Place* of the unbelieving *Pharisee*, teaching Christians the *Gospel*, as he taught the Jews the *Law*, and excluding the true Knowledge of Christ from Christian Institutions, just as the *Pharisee* excluded it from the *Jewish*.

And if you ask, or search ever so much into the *true Reason* why the Religion of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* was so odious in the Sight of our Blessed Saviour, why he cast so many *Reproaches* upon it, why he denounced so many *Woes* against it; the one *true genuine* Cause was this, it was because they stood on the *Outside* of the Law, just as this Author stands on the *Outside* of the Gospel, and were content with such a *plain Account* of their Sacrifices and Circumcision, as he has given us of the Sacrament; it was because they stuck to the *bare Letter* of Scripture, only understood according to the *common Rules* of speaking amongst Men; it was this Fulness of a *false, empty, and dead* Knowledge, that made the Scriptures useless to them, that fixed them in a State of *blind Self-sufficiency*, and made it harder for the *Rational, Letter-learned* Pharisee, than for a *gross Sinner* to see the *Kingdom of God*, or to acknowledge him that preached it.

And here we may see the true and solid Meaning of the Apostle, when he saith, God had 'made them able Ministers of 'the New Testament, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit; for 'the Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth Life.*'

For the Letter of Scripture, understood only according to the *common Rules* of speaking, is the *Letter that killeth*, the Letter that made the *Jews* Unbelievers in Christ, that makes *speculative* Christians, *Idealists, Critics* and *Grammarians* fall into Infidelity; but Scripture, interpreted not by *Lexicons* and *Dictionaries*, but by *Doctrines* revealed by God, and by an *inward Teaching* and *Uction* of the Holy Ghost, is that Spirit which giveth Life.

But this Author, according to his own Principles, is obliged to own himself to be an Anti-Apostle, and to declare, that not God, but *Logic*, and *much Attention* to human Words and Ways of Reasoning, have made him an *able Minister* of the New Testament, not of the *Spirit*, but of the *Letter*; and has convinced him, that it is the *Letter alone* that giveth Life. For he cannot allow the smallest Degree of sound Doctrine to be in the Apostle's Words; had he but dropped an Expression like it, or made the least Acknowledgment of a *killing Letter* of Scripture, till the Spirit gave Life to it, it must have passed for a full *Recantation* of all his *Plain Account*.

But to return to the further Consideration of the Words of the

* 2 Cor. iii. 6.

Institution : ' This is my Body, which is given for you ; this is ' my Blood, which is shed for many, for the Remission of Sins.' Who can know what is *right* or *wrong* in these Expressions, or in what *Sense* they are to be received, if he look only to the Sound of the Words according to the common Rules of speaking ? Or supposing he could guess out some *tolerable* Meaning ; yet if the Scripture has *Doctrines* concerning these things, *teaching, asserting,* and explaining *how,* and in *what* Sense his *Body is given for us,* and *his Blood the Atonement for our Sins,* in a Way and Manner above all *human Thought and Conception ;* then it follows, that *no Meaning* of the Words can be admitted, but that which is according to the Scripture Explication of the things mentioned by them.

Nothing therefore can be more unjustifiable and impracticable, than this Author's *only Method* of understanding the Nature of the Sacrament from the Words considered in themselves. For as this cannot be the Way of understanding the Truth of *any* Doctrines of Scripture, so least of all can it be the Way of understanding the true Meaning of the Words of the Institution ; for these Words have a more than ordinary Relation to, and Dependence upon all the Scriptures. For as Christ is in some respect or other *represented,* and made *further* known what he is to us, in almost every Page of Scripture ; so the *Sacrament,* which is to be done in Remembrance and Acknowledgment of what *he is* to us, must have its *Relation* to, and *Dependence* upon *all* those Places and Doctrines of Scripture, which teach what *he is* to us, and *what* we are to remember and acknowledge him to be. Therefore, *all those* Passages of Scripture, which teach and explain the *Nature, Office,* and *Condition* of Christ, directly and immediately teach and explain *what* we are to do, remember, and acknowledge in the Sacrament, and are in the same Degree *true* and *proper* Comments upon the Nature of the Sacrament, in which they are *true* Accounts and Descriptions of our Saviour. And that which we are to believe of our Saviour according to the Scriptures, that we are to remember and acknowledge of him in the Sacrament ; and therefore the Scripture Explication of the Sacrament is not, as this Author extravagantly supposes, confined to *those Texts* that mention expressly the *Sacrament,* or the Words of the *Institution,* but is as *large* and *extensive* as the Scripture Explication of the *Nature, Office,* and *Condition* of Christ as our Saviour. Wherever we are taught anything concerning him *as such,* there we are directly taught something of the true *Nature* and *End* of the Sacrament, and what we are to remember and acknowledge of him in the doing it.

'Search the Scriptures,' saith our Blessed Saviour, 'for they are they which testify of me.' Is not this in the plainest Manner referring us to *all* the Scriptures that speak of him as our Saviour, to know what we are to *remember* and acknowledge of him in the Sacrament? For since he saith, Search the Scriptures, for they are they that *testify* of me; and in the Sacrament, Do this in *Remembrance* or *Acknowledgment* of me; is it not directly as full to the Purpose, as if he had said, Search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify *what* you are to *remember* and acknowledge concerning me in the Sacrament? For that which they testify of him, that they must testify of the *Nature* and *End* of the Sacrament, which is to be done in Remembrance and Acknowledgment of that which is so testified of him. Since therefore every Scripture that testifies anything concerning Christ, as our Saviour, testifies so much of that which is to be acknowledged of him in the Sacrament, it plainly follows, that the Nature and End of the Sacrament can only be so *far* known, as the Nature, Character, *Office* and *Condition* of Christ is known; and that all those Scriptures which teach us the one, in the same Degree teach us the other, and are as necessary to teach us the Nature of the Sacrament, as the Nature of Christ; for this plain Reason, because the Sacrament is to remember and acknowledge that which is taught us concerning the Nature of Christ.

Hence again it appears with how little Judgment and less Truth this Author affirms, that the Nature and End of the Sacrament is only to be known from the bare Words of the Institution, understood according to the common Rules of speaking.

Again, another Argument which will make the Absurdity of this same Error still further apparent, may be taken from the following Passage of Scripture. When our Saviour said in the 6th of St. *John*, that his 'Flesh was Meat indeed, and his Blood was Drink indeed;' and that unless a 'Man did eat his Flesh, and drink his Blood, he had no Life in him; his Disciples were astonished at his Discourse, and said, How can this Man give us his Flesh to eat?' To which, by way of Answer, he said, 'The Words that I say unto you, they are Spirit, and they are Life.' For if our Saviour had thought at all like this Author, and had intended to be understood according to the common Rules of speaking, he would have spoken only common Language; and upon their not understanding what he said, he must have directed them to the right Way, and have said, *Consider my Words only according to the common Rules of speaking*, and then you will know *all* that is to be known by them.

Least of all could he have said, to help their understanding of them in a common Way, 'The Words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are Life;' for surely such a Way of speaking could not be a directing them to the common Rules of speaking amongst Men. For if he had intended to show them in the strongest Manner, how much what he said was different from, and superior to all the *common Meaning* of human Words; how could he have done this in a higher Degree, than by saying as he did, 'The Words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are Life.'

Now, the Question put by his Disciples, 'How can this Man give us his Flesh to eat?' comes as *naturally* in the Case of the Sacrament, where we are to eat his Body, and drink his Blood, as in the forementioned Place of St. *John*; and as there is the same Foundation for the same Question, so there is strictly the same Foundation for the same Answer, *viz.*, 'The Words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are Life.'

And it is *absolutely* impossible for anyone to show, that the Words of the Institution are not as *truly* to be looked upon as *Spirit* and *Life*, as the other Words about eating his *Flesh*, and drinking his *Blood*. For surely, he that is obliged to own, that the Words in St. *John*, of eating his *Flesh*, and drinking his *Blood*, are *Spirit* and *Life*, cannot have any Proof that the Words in the Sacrament, of eating his *Body* and drinking his *Blood*, have *nothing* of that *Spirit* and *Life* in them. For if it be asked, Why the Words in St. *John* are *Spirit* and *Life*? The one *only* Reason is this, because they speak of eating Christ's *Flesh* and drinking his *Blood*, which is such a *spiritual, living Participation* of the Nature of Christ, or, in Scripture Words, such a *putting on of Christ*, as cannot be understood or obtained by *outward* and *dead* Words. And yet if the Words in the Sacrament must be said, *not* to be *Spirit* and *Life*, the *one only* Reason must be this, because they only speak of eating Christ's *Body*, and drinking his *Blood*.

But surely this is too great an Absurdity for anyone to hold; for it is saying, that the drinking his *Blood*, when joined with eating his *Body*, is only an *human* Expression, to be understood according to the *common* Rules of speaking; but that the drinking his *Blood*, when joined with eating his *Flesh*, is so *great a Mystery*, so above our *common Ways* of conceiving, that the Words expressing it, are said to be *Spirit* and *Life*.

But now if the Case be thus, if the Words in the Sacrament must be allowed to be *Spirit* and *Life*, for the same Reason that the Words in St. *John* are said to be *Spirit* and *Life*; then there is an End of this Author's poor Contrivance to enter into the

whole Truth contained in the Sacrament, by only considering the Words according to the *common Rules* of speaking. It is a Contrivance as *unfit* for the Purpose, as *weakly* and improperly thought of, as an Iron Key to open the Kingdom of Heaven.

Again, If a Person hearing the Words of our Saviour, as recorded in *St. John*, had said to him, There is no more *Spirit* and *Life* in your Words than in the Words of anyone else, and they can mean *no more* than our Words according to the *common Rules* of speaking, such a Person might have been reckoned amongst those that blasphemed the Son of God.

Now if this Author will say the same thing concerning the Words of the Institution, of eating his Body and drinking his Blood, that they are no more *Spirit* and *Life*, than the Words of Men speaking of *human* things, and that nothing more is to be understood in them and by them, than according to the *common Rules* of speaking; I desire to know, how this could be a lesser Degree of Blasphemy, or a smaller Offence against the Son of God, than in the former Case? Or why it was not as *right* and *justifiable* for a Person to say, there was no *Spirit* and *Life* in the Words of our Saviour, speaking of eating his *Flesh* and drinking his Blood, as to say, there is no Spirit and Life in his Words, speaking in the Sacrament of eating his *Body* and drinking his Blood?

Lastly, Either therefore this Author must say with those that blaspheme the Son of God, that the Words of the Institution are not the Words of him, whose Words were *Spirit* and *Life*, or he must give up his only Method of understanding the true Meaning of them. For if they are *Spirit* and *Life*, then to seek for the Sense of such Words in the common Forms of speaking, is truly to seek the *Living* amongst the Dead.

From what has been said of the Words of the Institution, of their not being understood by the Apostles, of the Impossibility of their being understood according to the Sound of the Words in the common Ways of speaking; of the Impossibility of their being understood, till the great Doctrines and Articles of the Christian Faith were first known, and so became the plain and visible Explication of them; from these things we may sufficiently see the Falseness of this Author's *chief Propositions* concerning the Sacrament.

These *Propositions* are printed in a pompous Manner, with great Show of Significancy, as so many Pillars of Truth. The four first are the chief; if therefore they are removed, the others must go with them.

I shall begin with the fourth Proposition, because it is the chief; both those that are before, and those that follow it, de-

pend entirely upon the Truth of it; and yet it has already appeared, and shall be made still more apparent, that there is not the least glimpse of Truth in it.

Speaking of our Saviour's instituting the Sacrament, he says as follows.

Proposition IV. 'It cannot be doubted, that he himself sufficiently declared to his first and immediate Followers, the whole of what he designed should be understood by it, or implied in it.'

And yet it has been fully shown to be out of all doubt, by a Variety of Arguments, that the first Followers of Christ, neither *did*, nor *possibly* could understand the *whole Nature* of the Sacrament from the Words of the Institution; which is all that our Saviour himself declared to them about it, and also all that this Author appeals to, as a Proof of his having *sufficiently* declared the whole Matter to them.

Further, what is asserted in this Proposition, is as directly contrary to *Truth, Scripture, Fact*, and our Saviour's own *Declarations*; as if it had been asserted, that our Saviour did that *sufficiently* himself, which he declared he had *not* done sufficiently; and also *should* not be done, till after his leaving the World. For at the time that he was about to depart from them, he expressly says unto them, 'I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he the Spirit of Truth is come, he shall guide you into all Truth.'

From this Declaration of our Saviour, as well as from plain Facts recorded in the History of the Apostles, it is out of all doubt, that he left the Apostles in *great Ignorance* of the Christian Religion, and that it was not his Intention to deliver them out of this Ignorance by his *own personal* Instruction of them; but that they were to *continue* in this Ignorance till further *Revelations*, new Light, and *certain Facts* which were about to happen, should open to them a clear and full View of the Nature of the Christian Religion.

For first, *here are many things* that they were yet to be taught, which they *then* had not been taught, and of which they were then to continue ignorant; therefore it is plain, that they could not *sufficiently* know *all* that they were to know, or *all* that our Saviour *designed* they should know of any *Article* or *Institution* of the Christian Religion; that is, they were so far from knowing the *whole Nature* and End of the Sacrament, that they knew the whole Nature of *nothing* else in the Christian Religion, but knew everything that they did know, in the most *imperfect Manner*. For surely, if *many things* relating to the Christian

Salvation were yet to be kept secret from them, the Christian Salvation was imperfectly made known unto them; and therefore they could only have been taught *in Part*, and had only seen as it were some first Sketches, or beginning Lines of what they were afterwards to see in its true Fulness.

And that *these many things*, of which they were kept thus ignorant, were many things of the *greatest Importance* and Signification to the right Knowledge of the Christian Salvation, is evident from the Reason given by our Saviour, why they were not then taught by him, *viz.*, 'But ye cannot bear them now.' For surely, if those *many things* were then not taught them, for this reason, *because they were not able to bear them then*; they must have been things of the *greatest Importance*, and most *uncommon* in their Nature; such things as were the *hardest* to be comprehended, the most *difficult* to be believed, and the most *contrary* to the common Conceptions of Men, and consequently such as were most necessary and essential to a right Knowledge of the Christian Salvation.

From this also it appears, how low a State of Knowledge the Apostles were in at the time of the Institution of the Sacrament, since they were not only ignorant of so *many things* of the greatest Importance to be known, but were in a State so *contrary* to this Knowledge, so full of Dispositions *contrary* to it, that they were then *incapable* of being taught it.

And though all this be declared by our Saviour himself, at the *End* of all his Instructions, when he was upon the *Point* of going from them; yet this Author, in *direct* and *full* Contradiction to *Scripture Facts*, and this express *Declaration* of our Saviour, says, 'It cannot be doubted, that he sufficiently declared 'to his Disciples the whole of what he designed should be understood by it.'

Whereas, the contrary to this is as plainly declared by our Saviour himself, as if he had said in express Words, I have instituted a Sacrament to be observed by you hereafter; but *what* is to be understood by it, and implied in it, can *only* be known by you now, in that *poor, low, and ignorant* Manner, in which you know other things at present concerning me. But when the *many things* which ye now cannot bear to be taught, shall by my *Death, Resurrection, and Ascension*, and the *coming* of the Holy Ghost, be made truly intelligible to you, and become the real Light of your Minds, then shall ye clearly see and know the whole of that which I designed to be understood by, and implied in this Sacrament of my Body and Blood.

For what our Saviour has said concerning the *Imperfection* of their Knowledge then, and their *Unfitness* to be instructed

further, and of their *Necessity* of being taught in *another* Manner, is as plain a Proof of this, as if it had in express Words been applied to the Sacrament.

For though it is too much for anyone to pretend to say exactly *what* or how *many* these Things were, that they were then not in a Condition and Capacity to understand; yet this may with great Assurance be affirmed, that the Doctrines concerning Christ's *Death*, the *Nature*, *Necessity*, and *Merits* of his Sacrifice and Atonement for the Sins of the World, the *Possibility* and *Necessity* of eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood, were certainly amongst those many things; and therefore this Holy Sacrament, which hath its Foundation in this *Atonement for Sins*, and is itself instituted for the *eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood* must of all necessity be amongst *those many things*, of which they were then greatly ignorant, because they were not in a Condition to receive a *right* and *full* Knowledge of them. Therefore there is the fullest Proof that can be desired, that our Saviour *did* not, and could not intend sufficiently to declare to them the whole of what he intended should be understood and implied in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.

And for this reason also He saith unto them, 'It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come. But if I depart, I will send him unto you.' Again, 'These things have I said, being yet present with you; but the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my Name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your Remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.'

As if he had said, 'It is expedient for you that I go away, because so long as I thus stay with you in the Flesh, ye cannot know, nor believe, nor enter into the true Nature, End, Merits and Effects of my Death, Resurrection and Ascension; neither can the Holy Ghost come upon you *in my Name*, till my Kingdom is thus set up, and these things are accomplished in me. Therefore *these things I have said*, being yet *present with you*; that is, I have spoken *thus far* of these things in a way suited to your present State; not that they should be the Matter of your *present* Knowledge, whilst you know nothing *rightly*, nor apply anything that I say, to its *proper Object*; but I have said these things to you, that they may be laid up in your Minds, then and then only to be truly *understood*, rightly *remembered* in their proper Place, and duly applied to their *proper Objects*, when the Holy Ghost shall come in my Name, that is, upon the Foundation of my Death, Resurrection and

‘Ascension, and shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your Remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.’

From all these things it appears sufficiently, that this Author’s fourth and fundamental Proposition is absolutely false, and grossly contradictory to *Scripture, Facts*, and the express *Declaration* of our Saviour; and that our Saviour himself, in his own Person, before he left the World, did not, could not intend *sufficiently to declare* to his Disciples *the whole of what he intended should be understood by, and implied in the Sacrament.*

And here I must observe to you, that the Confutation of this fourth Proposition, is not to be considered as the Discovery of a *single Error* in this Author, but as a full Detection of the *general Falseness*, and erroneous Procedure of his whole Book; for everything, and every other Proposition of any moment, throughout his whole Book, is founded upon the supposed Truth of this fourth Proposition. He cannot take *one Step*, in the way he is in, without it. He has not an Argument but what is built upon it. And all his Treatise, from the Beginning to the End, is as idle and wandering as a sick Man’s Dream, unless you grant him these two bulky Errors; 1st, That our Saviour himself, in the Words of the Institution, *sufficiently declared to his Disciples the whole of what he intended should be understood by, and implied in the Sacrament.* 2^{dly}, That the only Method of understanding the *whole* of what he so sufficiently declared to them, is to interpret the same bare Words of the Institution, according to the common Rules of speaking.

But as both these Positions have, as I think, been already shown to be *gross Errors*, directly contrary to *Reason, Sense, Scripture, Facts*, and the express Declaration of our Saviour himself, so the whole of his Treatise is already in the fullest Manner confuted.

But I shall now proceed to consider some poor, little Pretences of Argument, which this Author brings in Support of this false Proposition. Which are as follow: ‘For this being,’ says he, ‘a Positive Institution, depending entirely upon his Will; and not designed to contain anything in it, but what he himself should please to affix to it, it must follow, that he declared his Mind about it, fully and plainly,’ p. 4.

This is his whole Proof, that our Saviour himself sufficiently taught his Disciples the *whole Nature* and Meaning of the Sacrament, and that they *wholly* understood it.

The thing that he would here speak to, is very improperly expressed, and ought to have proceeded thus: ‘This being a

‘positive Institution, by his Will and Pleasure introduced into a Religion, which contains the Means and Method of the Salvation of Mankind by himself the Institutor, cannot be designed by him to be any ways understood, or to have any other Nature, Meaning, and End in it, than such as is truly and fully according to the Doctrines of that Religion into which he has introduced it, and more especially according to that Part of Religion in which he has placed it.’

Whereas instead of this, this Author poorly says, *it was not designed to contain anything in it, but what he should please to affix to it.* For he put nothing to be contained in it, he affixed nothing to it, but only placed it in the *Heart*, or midst of a Religion; which Religion, as soon as it was truly known by his Disciples, would sufficiently declare and explain to them the whole Nature and End of this positive Institution. In consequence of what he had just now erroneously said, he proceeds thus: ‘Because otherwise he must be supposed to institute a Duty, of which none could have any Notion without his Institution; and at the same time not to instruct his Followers sufficiently what that Duty was to be.’ Whereas instead of this, it ought to have been expressed thus: ‘Because otherwise, if he had not so instituted this Sacrament, as to have its Nature, End, and Effects explained and determined by that Religion, and chiefly by that Part of Religion, in which it was placed, it could never have appeared to any of his Followers, what they were to do in it, or that there was any Reason in its Institution, or any Benefit to be had from the Observance of it.’

As for instance; If the *Religion*, of which the Sacrament is a *Part*, did not teach us how his *Body is given* and his *Blood shed for us*, if it did not teach us something concerning the *eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood*, what could the mentioning of these *two strange* things in the Sacrament signify to us, or how could we have any Notion of what was to be done or acknowledged by the Sacrament? For if the Sacrament speaks of *anything* that the Religion in which it is placed speaks *nothing of*; if it represents *anything* that that Religion *has not* to be represented, then it can signify no more in that Religion after its Institution, than it did before. But if to be a *Part* of that Religion in which it is appointed, it must speak the *Language* of that Religion; if the things that it represents, must be the *Things* of that Religion, then it plainly follows, 1st, That our Saviour himself in Person, at the Time, and by the Words of the Institution, *did not, could not fully and plainly declare* the whole Nature of the Sacrament; because the Language which it spoke, and the Things that it represented, were the Language and Things

of a Religion, which was not, and could not then be known by his Disciples. *2dly*, It follows also, that our Saviour had *fully* and *sufficiently* provided for their right Knowledge of this Sacrament, because it was so *worded* and so *placed* in their Religion, that the first true Knowledge of their Religion would become the full and clear Explication of it.

This Sacrament was instituted before the Religion, of which it was to be a Part, was known; is it therefore any wonder in itself, or any Matter of Accusation of our Saviour, that when he appointed this Institution, he left it to be *then* only understood, *when* the Religion, of which it was to be a Part, should be known? And if he left his Disciples in the *same* Ignorance of the Sacrament, as of the *Nature, Merits, and End* of his Death, Resurrection and Ascension, is there any more to find fault with in the one, than in the other?

And this Author might with the same show of Argument prove, that he did declare unto them, fully and plainly, the *whole Nature, Merits, and End* of his Death. For it may as well be said of that, as of the Sacrament, that he must have *fully and plainly declared his Mind about it*; otherwise he must be supposed to have instructed them of a Matter of Faith, which, without his Instruction, they could have no Notion of, and at the same time not to instruct them fully about it.

Now if anything may be said in defence of what our Saviour did to his Disciples with regard to that imperfect State in which he left them, as to the Knowledge of the *Nature, Merits, and End* of his Death; if he might justly leave the *true* and *full* Knowledge of it, to its only proper *Time*, and only proper *Manner* of being fully known; namely, till the Consequences of his Death, till his Resurrection, Ascension, and coming of the Holy Ghost, should prove the *Nature, Power, Merits, and End* of it; then the same may and must be said in defence of our Saviour's leaving his Disciples so ignorant of the *Nature, End, and Effects* of the Holy Sacrament. It was not because he was *deficient* in instructing them, but because he instructed them with the *greatest Wisdom*; not giving them *verbal* Explications of Things which *could not* so be understood by them, but leaving them to be informed in the one only proper *Time*, and the only proper *Manner*; namely, when by the Knowledge of his Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, and by the coming of the Holy Ghost, they should *truly* and *fully* know the whole of that Religion, of which this Sacrament was appointed to be a Part.

All therefore which this Author saith of the Necessity of their knowing sufficiently at first from the Words of the Institution, the whole Nature of it, because it was a *Positive Institution*, and

could have no more in it than he intended should be in it, are mere empty Words; for it is granted on all Sides, that the Institution can be *only* that which Christ intended it should be, and can imply no more than he designed should be implied in it. But the Question is, how we are to know all that he designed should be understood by, and implied in it.

This Author says, this can only be known from the *bare Words* of the Institution considered *in themselves*, according to the *common Rules* of speaking. Therefore, according to this Author, had *Socrates* said the same Things that Christ said, the Institution had been just the same thing as it is; it had had the same Meaning, and there had been neither *more* or *less* in it. This cannot be denied: For if the Words of the Institution are only to be understood according to the *common Meaning* or Sound of Words in common Life; then they must have the same Meaning, and signify neither more or less, whether they be applied to Christ, or *Socrates*.

On the other hand, we say, since Christ appointed this Institution to stand in a *certain Place*, to be a *certain Part*, and to have *Relation* to *certain Doctrines* of a Religion *not* known, when this Institution was appointed; that therefore what Christ meant by it, and would have implied in it, can then *only* be *fully* known, and when that Religion in which it was to have a certain Place, and of which it was to be a certain Part, and to whose Doctrines it was to be related, came to be fully known and understood. In short, that a Christian Institution, ingrafted into the Christian Religion, and connected with its chief Doctrines, could then only be fully known, when the Christian Religion was fully known.

Thus for Instance: Let it be supposed that at the Time of instituting the Sacrament, the Apostles had no other Way of knowing what was meant by it, but by considering the Words *in themselves*, according to the *common Sound* of the Words. Yet, if after the *Death*, and *Resurrection*, and *Ascension* of our Saviour, and the coming of the *Holy Ghost*, they *knew* a Religion, which they knew *nothing* of before, and saw this Sacrament to be a *Part* of that Religion; had they not then got a *new* and *sure* Way of understanding what our Saviour meant by it? And had they not this *very new* Means of understanding it from our Saviour himself? Did not he teach them *all* that they were taught by his *Death*, *Resurrection*, and *Ascension*, and by the coming of the *Holy Ghost*? And was not that which he thus taught them in this manner, to be as *sacred* with them, and as much to be *adhered* to, as when he only taught them the *Words*, *outward Form*, and *Matter* of the Sacrament? And if he thus led them into the Possession and Knowledge of every *Truth* and

Doctrine upon which this Sacrament was founded, and to which it was related; is he not *still* the Teacher of the Sacrament, as well as he was the Teacher of it in the Words of the Institution?

Vainly therefore doth this Author thus further argue, that seeing 'no one can be a Judge, but the Institutor himself, of what he designed should be contained in it; therefore, supposing him 'not to have spoken his Mind plainly about it, it is impossible 'that any other Person should make up the Defect,' p. 5.

Vainly, I say, is all this argued, because here is no Defect charged upon the Words of the Institution, nor any *other Person* appointed or appealed to, to *make up* the Defect. The Words of the Institution are allowed to be *full* and *plain*, as to all that is *positive* in this Institution, both as to the *Matter* and *Form* of the Sacrament: They were as plain at the *first* as they are now, or ever can be. But that Part which is *not* positive in this Institution, which is the *greatest* and *chiefest* Part of it, namely, the *Truths* signified and represented, and acknowledged by the outward *Form* and *Matter* of the Sacrament; as the *Body of Christ given, and his Blood shed* for the Sins of the World, and the *Eating his Flesh and drinking his Blood* were not then, are not *now*, nor ever *can* be truly and rightly known from the Plainness of the Words of the Institution alone. Yet here is not the *smallest Defect* either in the Institutor or the Institution. For since the Institution was not an independent thing, made for itself, and on its *own* Account, nor to be practised at the *Time* it was appointed; it was no *Defect* in it, that it did not explain itself, or was not then known, when it was not to be practised. And seeing the Institution was appointed for the *Sake* of a Religion, that then was *not*, but soon should *be*, it could be no *Defect* in the Institutor, that it was not known *sooner* than it was wanted, or *till* the Time came, that everything else that was to be practised with it, or for the *Sake* of it, were fully and truly known.

It was no Defect in our Saviour as a Teacher of Religion, that his Religion was not known nor understood, till after his *Ascension* into Heaven, and the *Coming* of the Holy Ghost; because his Ascension, and the coming of the Holy Ghost, were to be fundamental *Articles* and principal *Parts* of his Religion.

So also it was no Defect in him, as an Institutor of the Sacrament, that the true Nature and End of it was not known, when he first instituted it, or from the bare Words of the Institution; or that it was not to be known, till such things as were to be the *principal Parts* of it came to be known.

And as that which was *further* and *fully* known of the Christian Religion, after our Saviour's Death, was not by anyone's *making*

up the Defect of his teaching, but was *solely* done by his *own Power*, and in his *own Name*; so all that which was further and fully known of the Sacrament after the Death of Christ, was not by anyone's *making* up the Defect of his Institution, but was his *own further* teaching them by his *Death, Resurrection, and Ascension*, and by the coming of the *Holy Ghost*. For as he thus by his own Power set up his own Kingdom, so all that which was plainly shown and declared by his Kingdom, was strictly shown and declared by himself.

And as it necessarily followed, that they must know more of Christ as their *Saviour*, and the *Manner* of their Salvation, after his Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, and Mission of the Holy Ghost, than they did before; so also it necessarily follows, that they must have exactly the *same Increase* of Knowledge at that Time, concerning the Nature of the Sacrament, which they had concerning their Saviour; because the Sacrament is expressly appointed to *do that* which it does, in *Remembrance* and *Acknowledgment* of that Saviour *so* made known. And therefore the more they knew of him as their Saviour, the more they must know of that which was to be remembered and acknowledged of him in the Holy Sacrament.

All therefore which this Author says, of the *making up the Defect*, if Christ did not at first make the *whole* of the Institution plain, is of no Significancy; for what they further knew rightly of it, when they knew their Religion, and saw *how* and in what *manner* it was a Part of it; all this further true and real Knowledge of it, came as *plainly* and *undeniably* from him, as the Words of the Institution did; and what they were taught by his Death and Resurrection, and the Consequences of them, was as truly from him, as what they were taught by his *Birth* and *Incarnation*, and miraculous Conversation with them.

Having thus despatched this Author's Fourth and chiefest Proposition, and his Proof of it; I shall now go back to his First, which stands thus.

Proposition I. 'The partaking of the Lord's Supper, is not a 'Duty of itself, or a Duty apparent to us from the Nature of the 'thing; but a Duty made such to Christians, by the positive 'Institution of Jesus Christ,' p. 2.

There is a great deal of Error and Deceit proposed to the Reader in this Proposition. For it is to make him believe, that the *Nature* and *End* of the Sacrament is *wholly positive*, and that all that we are to mean, and intend, and do by it, is *something* that we are only obliged to do by virtue of the *Institution*: All which is absolutely false.

For the Institution, as to its *Nature* and *End*, is so far from

being *wholly positive*, that its Nature and End hath *nothing positive* in it. And all that which it is our Duty to *intend* and do by the Sacrament, is to be intended and done for *itself*, on its *own Account*; and that which is positive in the Sacrament, is only as a *Means*, or *Mark*, or *Sign* of our doing it. That which is *positive* in this Institution, and not to be done but because of the *Will* of the Institutor, is something entirely *distinct*, and *different* from the Nature, End and Intent of the Institution. And that in which the *whole Reason, Meaning, End and Intent* of this Institution essentially consists; is something that is to be done for *itself*, and does not take its Reason of being done from the Institution.

Now if all that is to be *done, implied* and *intended* by our celebrating the Lord's Supper, was, and is *absolutely* necessary to be done, though the Way of doing it by the Sacrament had never been instituted; then the *Meaning, End and Intent* of the Sacrament cannot be *positive*; and if our Obligation to do *all* that is contained in this Meaning and Intent of the Sacrament, is an Obligation arising from the Thing itself, then this is not a *positive Duty*.

Now the Meaning, End and Intent of the Sacrament, is to *remember, acknowledge* and *profess* Christ to *be* our Saviour, and the *Manner* in which he is our Saviour; but all this is to be done on its *own Account*, from the Nature of the Thing itself, and must have been done, though the Sacrament had not been instituted; therefore the *Meaning, End and Intent* of the Sacrament has nothing *positive* in it, and contains only our *natural Duty* to Christ, arising from the Relation between him and us. For to acknowledge and profess Christ to be our *Saviour*, and in all the Respects in which he is our Saviour, is no more a *positive Duty*, than it is a *positive Duty* to acknowledge and profess the Goodness of God towards us; but is a Duty of itself, of the same Nature, and of the same Obligation, as *Faith* and *Love*, and Adoration of our Creator and Redeemer are.

But to show still more plainly, that the Nature, End and Intent of the Sacrament, is not positive, but entirely distinct and different from that which is positive in the Sacrament; take the following Instance.

Let it be supposed, that God by a positive Command enjoined the People of one Age to build an *Altar* for his *Honour* and *Worship*; the People of another Age to set up a *Tabernacle*, and a third to build a *Temple* for the same End and Intent; namely, for his *Honour* and *Worship*.

Now here are three positive *Appointments*, and three positive *Duties*; and all that is positive in the one, is very different from

that which is positive in the other ; yet the *Meaning, End* and *Intent* of all three is the *same*, namely, the *Honour* and *Worship* of God ; therefore the *Meaning, End* and *Intent* of positive *Appointments*, is something not positive, but *entirely different* and distinct from that which is the positive Part of it.

Now this is exactly the Case of the Sacrament : Bread and Wine appointed to be used in *acknowledgment* of Jesus Christ as our Saviour, is as the *Altar* or *Tabernacle*, appointed to be built for the *Honour* and *Worship* of God. And as it was purely depending upon the Will of God, whether it should be an *Altar* or a *Tabernacle*, or a *Temple*, that should be built for his Honour and *Worship* ; so it was solely depending upon the Will of Jesus Christ, whether it should be *Bread* and *Wine*, or any other thing else that was to be used in Remembrance and Acknowledgment of him. And as the Honour and *Worship* of God, which was the sole *Meaning, End* and *Intent* of building either *Altar* or *Tabernacle*, was a natural Duty, founded in the *Relation* between God and *his* Creatures, and was something that was to be done, though no *Altar* or *Tabernacle* had ever been built ; so the Remembrance and Acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as our Saviour, which is the *End* and *Intent* of our using *Bread* and *Wine* in the Sacrament, was a *natural* Duty, founded in the *Relation* between Christ and us, and was something that was to be done for itself, though the Use of *Bread* and *Wine* in the Sacrament had never been appointed. It is therefore an unpardonable Error in this Author, to represent the Sacrament, as containing nothing in its *Meaning, End* and *Intent*, that was a Duty *itself*, or to be done upon its *own Account* ; but that everything implied by it, was only a Duty by virtue of the Institution. For the Reverse of all this is the very Truth ; for *all* that is *meant, implied* and intended by the Sacrament, is as much our Duty to do on its own Account, as it is our Duty to *believe* in God ; and the positive Part, the Use of *Bread* and *Wine* in this Sacrament, is only an *appointed Way* of our expressing, acknowledging and doing that, which it was *our Duty* to express, acknowledge and do, though we had never been taught to use *Bread* and *Wine* for that End.

And indeed this is the Case of all positive *Appointments* and *Institutions* of Revealed Religion ; the *Meaning, End* and *Intent* of them, was always something *entirely different* from that which was *positive* in them ; for the same Reason, that an *Idea* or *Sentiment* is entirely different from that *English* or *Latin* Word by which you are to express it, or to put yourself, or another Person in mind of it. For the *positive* Part of an Institution has much of the Nature of *Language* in it, and is to express and

teach something by *Symbols* and *outward* Things, better than it could be expressed or taught by mere Words; but that which is *meant, implied, and intended* by the Symbol, is as different from it in its *whole Nature*, as the *Idea of Sentiment* meant and intended by an *English* or *Latin* Word, is different from it in its *whole Nature*. To look therefore, as this Author doth, for the *whole Nature, End and Intent* of the Sacrament, in the *positive Part* of this Institution, is as absurd, as to look for the true Knowledge of God and the Divine Attributes from the *English* Word, *God*. For the Things meant and intended by the Sacrament, are as entirely and wholly different from that Use of Bread and Wine by which they are expressed, as the Divine Nature is entirely and wholly different from that *English* or *Latin* Word, which is to express or remind us of that Divine Nature.

Great Part of the *Jewish* Religion consisted in positive Appointments and Institutions; but the *Meaning, End and Intent* of them was entirely of another Nature, and consisted of such things as were Duties of themselves, and of the highest Necessity to be done. For the End and Intent of their Institutions were either to keep up and exercise their *Faith* and *Hope* of a Redeemer, or to set forth the *Characters* and Marks by which they should know him, or to represent to them the *Nature* and *Manner* of their expected Redemption, or to teach them some *inward dying* unto Sin, and *inward living* unto God, or some other Truth, *Doctrine* or *Practice*, that was to be acknowledged and done for itself, though no positive Institution had ever been made on its Account. And the one only Reason why the greatest Part of the *Jews* lived in such a *total* Ignorance of their Religion, was, because they had learned it in the *same Manner* as this Author has learned Christianity; they would *see nothing* in their Institutions but what a *Heathen* might as well have seen, nothing but what could be seen in the *Outside* of them; just as this Author will see no more in the Sacrament, than what a *Heathen* that knows only the Words of the Institution may see in it. They were too learned and rational to allow of any Mysteries at the Bottom of their *Services*, as this Author is too sober a Critic to allow of any Mystery in the Institution of the Sacrament. And as they, through a blind Zeal for the *Letter*, and to show their Fidelity to them, lost all that which was truly *meant and intended* by them; so this Author, full of the same Zeal for the *Letter* and *Plainness* of this Christian Institution, is doing all that he can to make us lose all that is truly meant and intended by it.

The Sacrifices of the *Jews* were at the bottom, only so many *Representations* and *Applications* of that great Sacrifice for the

Sins of the World, first promised to all Mankind, in these Words: 'The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Serpent's Head;' but because this was not *expressly* said in the Institution of any of their Sacrifices, *this is done in consequence of that first Promise*, or this is to show you *how and in what manner* you are to seek and find your Redeemer, because the Letter was not thus adapted to these carnal Men, they contented themselves with the *Religion of slaying Beasts*. Just as this Author is only a *bare Eater* of Bread and Wine in the Sacrament, because it is not there *expressly said*, what great Mysteries of Christ as our Saviour are represented by it. The *Jews* had many Passages in their Scriptures that called them to the *Spirituality* of their Religion, and showed them the inward *Meaning, Spirit and Intent* of all their Institutions; but because it was not expressly said, *This is* an Explication of *such an Ordinance*, or this that is *here* said, relates to the true Meaning and Intent of *such an Institution*, all these Passages of Scripture were neglected by them, and not applied to their proper Objects. It is just thus with this Author; the New Testament abounds with Passages that prove, teach and explain the true *Meaning, End and Intent* of the Holy Sacrament; but because those Passages don't expressly say, *This is the Proof or Explication* of what is said in the Institution, they are by him overlooked and rejected, as having nothing to do with it. The learned *Pharisee*, in order to know the Meaning and Intent of *killing a Heifer* in Sacrifice, or of *circumcising* the Flesh, would only look for *such Places* of Scripture, as *appoint* the killing of an Heifer, and the circumcising the Flesh; just so this Author, to know the true Meaning and Intent of the Institution of the Sacrament, only searches the Scripture in the *same manner*. He seeks only *such Places* as expressly mention the Institution, or repeat the Words of it.

The *Jews* neither expected nor allowed any *Benefits* and Merits of Christ to be obtained by *means* of their Sacrifices; because such Benefits were not *literally* mentioned in the Institution of their Sacrifices; just so this Author, neither expects nor allows the *Merits* and *Benefits* of Christ's Passion to be applied to us by the Holy Sacrament, because the Application of such Benefits and Merits is not expressly mentioned in the Words of the Institution. Thus was it that the *Jews* never found their Saviour in the Old Testament; and thus it is, that this Author has lost him in the New.

And indeed, upon his Principles, it is *impossible* that anyone should ever know anything of the *real Nature and Truth* of the *Jewish or Christian Religion*. For let anyone but search into the Nature, Meaning and Intent of the *Jewish* Institutions, as

this Author doth into the Nature and Intent of the Sacrament ; and he must, as I said above, be rendered *stone-blind* to all the Mysteries of the Old Testament as well as of the New.

For as Christ was the *Substance*, the *Heart*, and true *Meaning* of all their Ordinances, though not mentioned *expressly* in the Letter of their *positive* Institutions, they were obliged by this Author's Principles, not to acknowledge him to be in them, and to reject all such Interpretations as led to him ; and to allow nothing to be meant by their positive Institutions, but that which the Words of them understood, according to the common Rules of speaking, declared to be in them : Therefore every *Jew* that had this Author's *Principles*, was under a *Necessity* of being stone-blind, or *totally* ignorant of the real Nature and Truth of the *Jewish* Religion.

Again, the Apostle saith, ' He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that Circumcision which is outward in the Flesh ; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and Circumcision 'is that of the Heart, in the Spirit, and not in the Letter.'*

But according to this Author's Principles, you are to maintain, that he *only* is a *Jew*, which is one *outwardly*, and that *only* is Circumcision which is *outward* in the Flesh ; for to allow *Judaism* to have anything inwardly more than is in the *outward Letter*, or Circumcision to be anything else than that which is *expressed* in the Words of the Institution, is a thing not lawful to be done upon this Author's Principles. This I think may sufficiently show you the Truth of what I said to you in the Beginning, that if you accept of this Author's Key of Knowledge, for the right understanding the Nature of the Sacrament ; you will not only lose all the right Knowledge of the Sacrament, but be rendered a *Blind*, *Deaf* and *Dead* Reader of all the other most important Doctrines of Scripture. For, according to his Principles, you are to see no more Spirit, Life, or Mystery in any other Sayings of our Saviour, than in that of the Sacrament ; and low as he had reduced that, it is full as high and mysterious, and deep in its Meaning, as anything in the whole Nature of the Christian Religion can be allowed to be by this Author.

But to return ; There are plainly two distinct and essential Parts of the Sacrament, which constitute its whole Nature. The first is in these Words, ' This is my Body which is given for you, ' this is my Blood which is shed for the Remission of Sins.'

What is here said by our Lord Christ, we are to acknowledge to be true ; therefore we are to own and acknowledge this great Truth, that this Bread and Wine are made Symbols and Me-

* Rom. ii. 28.

morials of, *viz.*, that his Body is given for us, and his Blood shed for the Remission of Sins; and consequently all that the Scripture teaches concerning the Truth, Reality and Manner in which he is the Sacrifice, Atonement and Satisfaction for our Sins, is in this Sacrament to be of all necessity acknowledged and confessed by us. And we cannot perform this Sacrament according to what it is, unless we see and own all that to be in it, which Christ saw and owned to be in it; unless we present it to him in the same Meaning, as he presented it to his Disciples. For if Christ has declared this *Nature* and *Meaning* to be in it, we cannot perform this Sacrament according to Christ's Declaration, unless we also in our Performance of it, declare that same *Nature* and *Meaning* to be in it. Therefore the Acknowledgment of Christ's being the Atonement and Satisfaction for our Sins, is an essential and important Part of the Sacrament. If we were to mistake or neglect something in the right Use of Bread and Wine in the Sacrament, such Mistake would only relate to the outward positive Part of this Institution, which has no Obligation upon us but from Divine Appointment; but if we refuse to own and confess Christ to be the *Atonement* and *Satisfaction* for our Sins, we sin against God and the Nature of things, as those Atheists do, who refuse to own that it was the Goodness of God that created them.

Secondly, The other essential, and no less important Part of the Sacrament is, *the eating the Body, and drinking the Blood of Christ*. This is plainly another essential Part of the Sacrament, *entirely distinct* from the other. The one respects Christ, as he is the *Atonement* and Satisfaction for our Sins; the other shows that he is to be owned and received as a *Principle of Life to us*.

The other Words, 'Do this in Remembrance of me,' relate equally to both these Parts, and are only as if our Saviour had said after the Institution; Let this, which I have thus appointed to be done, be *your Acknowledgment* of that Salvation which is received through me, both as I am the *Atonement* and Satisfaction for Sin, and a *Principle of Life* to all that lay hold of me.

You cannot help seeing that all this is plain, easy and natural in this Explication of the Words of the Institution, and that I have used no Art or Force to come at it, and that no one can find any fault with it; but he that is unwilling to own these *two great Truths* of Scripture, that Christ as our Saviour is the *Atonement* and Satisfaction for our Sins, and a *Principle of Life* to us. The short of the Matter is this; the Scriptures are full of Proofs of these two great and fundamental Characters, that he is in one respect the Atonement and Satisfaction for our Sins,

and in another, a *Principle* of a new Life to us ; if therefore these two essential Characters of our Saviour, which contain all that is said of him as such, are not to be acknowledged by us in the Sacrament ; then the Sacrament must be said to be instituted for the Denial of Christ ; and the Words, ‘ Do this in ‘ Remembrance of me,’ must have this Meaning, *Do this in Denial of me* : For if he is not to be remembered, as the Atonement and Satisfaction for Sin, and as a Principle of new Life to us ; then he is not to be remembered and acknowledged as he is, and therefore in the strictest Sense is to be *denied*.

Hence it appears, that this Author’s *Plain Account* can have no Truth or Reasonableness in it, but upon this Supposition, that Christ Jesus is not a real *Atonement* and *Satisfaction* for our Sins, nor a real *Principle of Life* to us. For if these things were true of Christ as our Saviour, then the Sacrament, which is done in Acknowledgment of him, as such, must also of necessity acknowledge these Truths. Therefore this Author’s *Plain Account*, which does not acknowledge these things of Christ, can have no Truth or Reasonableness in it, but upon this Supposition, that these things are not true of Christ.

For if these things were real Doctrines of Scripture, it must follow, that they were to be acknowledged in the Sacrament, even though they were not expressly mentioned or pointed at in the Words of the Institution. For since the Sacrament is to be done in Remembrance and Acknowledgment of Christ, it necessarily follows, that that which the Scriptures teach us concerning the Nature and Character of Christ, is to be remembered and acknowledged of him *in* and *by* the Sacrament, because the Sacrament is appointed for that End. And therefore, since this Author will not allow our Saviour to be thus acknowledged in the Sacrament, he must deny that he is thus described in Scripture.

Now deny either of these Characters of our Saviour, and you deny all the Christian Religion ; the Words, *Saviour*, *Salvation*, *Redemption*, and such like, have no proper *Meaning*, *Truth* or *Reality* in them.

But if you allow these Characters of our Saviour, that he really is, what he said he was, and what all the Scriptures affirm of him ; namely, the *Atonement* for Sins, and a *Principle* of a new Life to us ; then the Sacrament, which is the Representation and Acknowledgment of these two great Truths, has all that is great, mysterious, and adorable in the Christian Religion, centred in it. And had this Author believed these two great Doctrines concerning our Saviour, it had been as impossible for him to have his present poor Notion of the Sacrament, as it was

impossible for St. *John*, who knew that the *Word was God*, and that the same *Word was made Flesh*, to have had so poor a Notion of Jesus Christ, as those *Jews* had, who took him to be only the Carpenter's Son.

Hence also it plainly appears, that seeing these two great Truths are the essential Parts of the Sacrament, and that it is appointed to *express* our *Faith* of them ; that the *Nature* and *End* of the Sacrament is not, as this Author teaches, to turn an *Act* of our Memory upon Christ ; but that it is to exercise our *Faith* in Christ, and to be our *open Profession* of these *two great Truths* ; and also that our *Faith* is thereby exercised in this *twofold* Manner ; 1st, In believing Christ to be the *true Atonement* for our Sins, and a real Principle of Life to us : 2dly, In believing that this Atonement, and his being a Principle of Life to us, is made *certain* and *confirmed* to us, by taking the Bread and Wine to be the true Significations of them.

For when our Saviour says, *Do this*, it is the same thing as if he had said, Do these *two Things* appointed in the Sacrament, as your *Act of Faith*, that I am both the Atonement for your Sins, and a *Principle* of Life to you. Don't say bare and empty outward Words, when you say, ' This is my Body which is given 'for you, and this my Blood which is shed for the Remission of 'Sins ;' but let *Faith* say them, and acknowledge the Truth of them : When you eat *my Body*, and drink *my Blood*, don't let your Mouth *only* eat, or perform the *outward* Action ; but let *Faith*, which is the *true Mouth* of the inward Man, believe that it *really* partakes of me, and that I enter in by *Faith* ; and when you thus by *Faith* perform these *two essential* Parts of the Sacrament, then, and then only may what you do be said to be done in *Remembrance of me*, and of what I am to you. For nothing *remembers* me but *Faith*, nothing *acknowledges* me but *Faith*, nothing *finds* me, nothing *knows* me but *Faith*.

I appeal to the most ordinary Understanding for the Truth of all this ; for it is so plain and visible, that nothing but *Art* or *Prejudice* can avoid it. For since our Saviour says, This is *my Body* which is *given for you*, this is *my Blood* which is shed for the Remission of Sins, what he says, that we are to say ; and what we say, that we are to believe ; and therefore what we are here to do, is an *Act* or *Exercise* of *Faith*. And since in these Words he says *two Things*, the one, that he is the *Atonement* for our Sins ; the other, that this Bread and this Wine are the *Signification* or Application of that Atonement, or that which we are to take for it ; therefore we in *doing this*, are by *Faith* to say and believe these *two Things* ; and therefore all that we here *do*, is *Faith*, and *Faith* manifested in this *twofold* manner.

Again, seeing our Saviour commands us to *eat* his Body, and *drink* his Blood, we are to *say* and *believe*, that his Body and Blood are there *signified* and *exhibited* to us; and that his Body and Blood may be *eaten* and *drank*, as a *Principle of Life* to us; and therefore Faith is *all*, or all is Faith in this other essential Part of the Sacrament; and we cannot possibly *do that* which our Saviour commands us to do, unless it be done by *Faith*.

But now this Author, in his *Plain Account*, takes no more notice of these *two great essential* Parts of the Sacrament, than if there was not *one Word* about them: And yet they are *so much* there, that in the whole Institution, there is not a Word about anything else. For the Words, 'Do this in Remembrance of me,' are as entirely distinct from the Institution, as a Command to do a thing, is distinct from the thing that is to be done. They enter no more into the Nature of the Institution, nor any more teach us *what* is to be done in it, than if Christ had only said, 'Do this as your Duty to me.' Had he said thus, it would easily have been seen, that the Institution must be entirely distinct from such a Command to observe it. And yet his saying, 'Do this in Remembrance of me,' has neither more nor less in it, than if he had said, 'Do this as your Duty to me.'

The plain Truth is this; The Institution consists of those two essential Parts just mentioned; that is, in *offering, presenting,* and *pleading* before God, by *Faith*, the Atonement of Christ's Body and Blood, and in *owning* him to be a Principle of Life to us, by our *eating* his Body and Blood: This is the entire, whole Institution. The words, 'Do this in Remembrance of me,' are only the *Command* to observe the Institution. *Do this*, is a Command to *do all* that had been mentioned in the Institution; and the Words, *in Remembrance of me*, don't show *what* the Institution is, or what is to be *done* in it, but only the Reason, why such an Institution, whatever it is, was commanded to be observed.

The Words therefore, in *Remembrance of me*, are not a Part of the *Institution*, but are only a Part of the *Command* to observe the Institution, and only show the Reason why such an Institution is commanded to be observed.

And yet this Poor Man (for so I must call one so miserably insensible of the Greatness of the Subject he is upon) can find nothing in the Institution, but, first, *Bread* and *Wine*, not placed and offered before God, as first *signifying* and *pleading* the Atonement of his Son's Body and Blood, and then *eaten* and *drank* in *Signification* of having our Life from him: But Bread and Wine set upon a *Table*, to put the People, that see it, in *mind*, that by and by they are to exercise an *Act of the Memory*. And then,

secondly, this same Bread and Wine afterwards brought to every-one in particular, not for them to know, or believe that they are receiving anything of Christ, or partaking of anything from him; but only to let them know, that the *very instant* they take the Bread and Wine into their Mouth, is the *very time* for them *actually* to excite that *Act of the Memory*, for the exciting of which, Bread and Wine had been before *set* upon a Table.

This is this Author's *Great Point* in the Observance of the Sacrament, and what he calls the *peculiar* Nature of this Duty. And this he teaches, not because the *Church*, or *Saint*, or *Father* of any Age since Christ, has taught him so; but because being a serious Man, and of great *Exactness* in weighing of *Words*, he has found out, that the *Words*, *in Remembrance of me*, which are only a Part of the *Command* to observe the Institution, are the *whole* of the Institution itself; and that therefore nothing is to be admitted into it but an *Act of the Memory*, and Bread and Wine taken into the Mouth to *excite that Act of the Memory*; because *Remembrance* which is the whole of this Duty, neither is nor can be anything else but an *Act of the Memory*.

Thus by making first the *Words*, *in Remembrance of me*, the whole Essence of the Institution, when they are as distinct from it, as they are from these *Words*, 'This is my Body which is given for you;' and teach us only the reason why we are commanded to do that which is to be done in the Institution:

And then, *2dly*, By limiting the Word *Remembrance*, and allowing nothing to be meant by it, but an *Act of the Memory*: By the help of these two equally *false* and *shameful* Steps, this Author has stripped the Institution of every Mystery of our Salvation, which the *Words* of Christ show to be in it, and which every Christian that has any *true Faith*, though but as a *Grain* of Mustard Seed, is sure of finding in it.

God, we know, made a certain great Promise to *Abraham*; now let it be supposed, that God, after the making of this Promise to him, had enjoined him to come frequently to that Place where the Promise was made to him *in Remembrance of it*: Could it be supposed, that the *Remembrance* here spoken of, could signify anything else, but an Exercise of his *Faith* in that Promise; and as an outward *Sign* of his declaring to God his full Belief of it? Or could anything be more extravagant, than to say that God here only required of *Abraham* an *Act of his Memory*, because the word *Remembrance* relates only to the *Memory*?

Now this is strictly the Case of the Sacrament. In the Institution our Saviour has said, 'This is my Body and Blood, which 'is given and shed for you, for the Remission of Sins;' in the

Institution he has bidden us to eat *his Body*, and drink *his Blood*. All this is proposed to our *Faith*, just as the Promise was proposed to *Abraham's Faith*. When therefore he bids us to *do* this, that is, do these two things in *Remembrance* of him; can it be supposed, that the *Remembrance* of him can be anything else but an Act of Faith in him, believing and owning all that concerning him, which we *say* and *do* in and by the Sacrament? For nothing but Faith can *see*, or *hear*, or *understand*, or *do* that which is to be done in the Sacrament: Nothing but Faith can say, that this his Body and Blood are the Atonement of our Sins: Nothing but Faith can say, that the Bread and Wine are his Body and Blood: Nothing but Faith can eat his Body, and drink his Blood: Nothing but Faith can say, that his Body and Blood are a Principle of Life to us: Therefore the Command to *do these Things*, is a Command to exercise so many *Acts of Faith*; because the Things commanded can only be done by Faith; and the Person, in *Remembrance* of whom these Things are to be done, can only be remembered by *Faith*. For to *remember* him, neither is nor can be anything else, but to have *Faith* in him.

And therefore it is out of all doubt, that when he said, 'Do 'this in Remembrance of me,' nothing more nor less can possibly be meant by it, than if he had said, Do *all this*, as your *Act of Faith* in me.

Since therefore this is so plainly the Nature of the Institution, which is solely appointed to express our Faith in these two great Characters of our Saviour, both as he is the Atonement for our Sins, and a Principle of Life to us; you may well ask how it was possible for this Author, with his Eyes open, and the Scriptures before him, to give us so *false* and so *poor* an Account of it.

Now the *one only* Reason why the Scriptures are thus useless to him, and why he is forced to find out a Doctrine that is not in them, is this, it is because he is *blinded* with a Philosophy, and Science *falsely so called*, which will not allow him to believe, that Jesus Christ was *truly* and *essentially* God, as well as a perfect Man: For the Foundation and Possibility of Christ's being a *real Atonement* and Satisfaction for our Sins, and a *real Principle* of Life to us, was his *Divine Nature*; but as this Author cannot be suspected to believe this great Foundation Doctrine, that Christ was *truly* and *essentially* God, *very God of very God*, so he could not believe him to be a *true* and *real Atonement* for Sins, or a *true* and *real Principle* of Life to us, and therefore could admit nothing of *these Truths* into his Account of the Sacrament.

The way therefore that this Author came by his *Plain Account*

of the Sacrament, was not, as he would have you believe, from a *bare impartial Consideration* of the Words of the Institution, but from his wrong Knowledge of the Christian Faith. He had first *lost* and *renounced* all the right and true Knowledge of our Saviour in the Scriptures, and therefore was obliged not to *find* it in the Sacrament. And because it would be openly confessing to the World, that he was in the Sense of the Scripture an *Antichrist*, if he should plainly have told you, that he did not believe Christ to be *truly* and *essentially* God, or the *Atonement* and *Satisfaction* for our Sins, or a *Principle* of Life to us; therefore he only tells you, that he has been led into this Account of the Sacrament, by a *bare Consideration of the Words of the Institution*, according to the common Rules of speaking.

Now if this Author will declare, that he sincerely believes Jesus Christ to be *truly* and *really* God by *Nature*, and the true real *Atonement* and *Satisfaction* for our Sins, and a true and real *Principle* of Life to us; I shall be glad, and he ought to be glad, that I have been the Occasion of his declaring Things so important to himself, and to the Matter in hand. But this I may still say, that he could not have had *this Faith*, when he wrote his *Plain Account*, unless he may be supposed to have had it, but would not write of the Sacrament conformably to it.

And, Secondly, If he will now declare, that without any Equivocation or mental Reserve, he fully believes these great Truths, no further a Recantation of his whole Book need to be desired.

For if these Things are true and undeniable Characters of our Saviour; then it follows, that the *Nature* and *End* of the Sacrament must be *essentially* concerned with them, since it is the confessed Nature and End of the Sacrament, to remember and acknowledge Christ to be *that* which the Scriptures testify him to be.

The short of the Matter is this; either this Author will plainly own a sincere Belief of these Doctrines, or he will not: If he will not own the Belief of them, you have no reason to consider him as a *Christian* Writer upon this Subject; and so ought no more to learn from him, than from a *Jew*, the Nature of the Sacrament. But if he will declare his full Belief of these Doctrines, then you have the fullest Assurance from himself, that his *Plain Account* cannot be *Christian*: Because if these Things are true of Christ, they must be remembered and acknowledged in that Sacrament, which is appointed for the Remembrance and Acknowledgment of him.

Now these two *essential Parts* of the Sacrament, relating to this twofold Character of our Saviour, as he is the Atonement

and Satisfaction for our Sins, and as he is a Principle of Life to us, contain the whole *Nature, End, and Effects* of the Sacrament. You are to look nowhere, nor in anything else, for the right Knowledge of this Sacrament, but in the right Faith and Knowledge of these two great Points. And everything that they teach you, and everything that the Scripture teaches you of these two great Points, is the *only true* Doctrine of the Sacrament.

All that you know of Christ, as the Atonement for our Sins, all that you know of him, as a Principle of Life to us, is neither more nor less than that which you are to *know, and confess, and appeal* to, in and by the Use of the Sacrament. And indeed these two great Points do so plainly show themselves, at first Sight, to be in the Words of the Institution, that any Man upon the bare reading of them, without any further Knowledge, might justly say, If Christ is not an Atonement for our Sins, why is his Body said to be *given, and his Blood shed for our Sins?* If he is not a *Food* to our Souls, or a *Principle of Life* to us, why are we commanded to *eat* his Body, and *drink* his Blood?

So that though a Man could not say, that these Things were certainly true, or in what Sense they were true, merely from the mention of them in the Sacrament, yet he might justly say, that the Words of the Institution pointed at such Truths, and could have no *Foundation*, unless these Things barely mentioned in it, were in the Scriptures proved and declared to be true Doctrines of the Christian Religion.

And as these two great Points are so visibly plain in the Sacrament, and constitute its *whole Nature*; so as soon as we rightly understand what the Scripture has taught concerning these Points, they make known to us, in the shortest and plainest Way, all the *Merit, Dignity, and Value* of this Sacrament, all the Blessings and Advantages derived to us from it, and all the pious Dispositions with which we are to approach it. Hence it was that the Apostles, after the Day of Pentecost, when they had all their Ignorance dispelled, yet gave us no further or particular Explications of the Nature of the Sacrament; because as soon as it was known, that Christ was a real Atonement and Satisfaction for Sins, and a real Principle of Life to us; as soon as these two great Doctrines were known, the Sacrament had all the Explication it could possibly have.

For no more can be known of the Sacrament, than is signified by them. All that is great, mysterious, and adorable in these Doctrines, as found in the Scriptures, is equally great, mysterious and adorable in them as they are found in the Sacrament.

Needless therefore would all Books be upon the Nature of

the Sacrament, and the right Preparation for it, did we but truly know and believe Christ to be the Atonement and Satisfaction for our Sins, and a Principle of Life to us; for the Belief of these things in the Sacrament, would like the *Uction*, spoken of by St. John, *teach us all things* concerning it; and we should have no need of other teaching.

No one need then, as this Author vainly does, enquire for some *Promise of Scripture annexing a Benefit to this Sacrament*, to know what Good we receive by it. For the Knowledge of these two great Parts of the Sacrament, would sufficiently show us the inestimable Benefit that we receive by it.

For if this Sacrament is appointed by Jesus Christ, as the *Acknowledgment* of his being the Atonement of our Sins, and a Principle of Life to us; if it is appointed to *stand* between him and us, as a *declared Proof* on his Side, that he is thus our Atonement and Life; and as a *declared Proof* on our Side, that we *own, seek, and apply* to him as such; and if this is not set as a Mark *once* for all, but as a Proof that is to be *repeated continually*, and that is to be made good to us, not by our once having done it, or he once owned it, but to be *perpetually* owned and done, both on his Side and ours, can we want any other Assurance of the Benefit and Advantage of observing this Sacrament, than the thing itself by its own Nature declares?

For if we are in Covenant with Christ, and have an Interest in him, as our *Atonement and Life*; not because he once said, That this was his Body and Blood, given and shed for our Sins, or because we once owned it, and pleaded it before him; but because he continues to say the *same thing* in the Sacrament, and to *present* himself there to us as our Atonement and Life, and because we *continue* to own and apply to him as such; it necessarily follows, that the Sacrament rightly used, is the highest Means of finishing our Salvation, and puts us in the fullest Possession of all the Benefits of our Saviour, both as he is our *Atonement and Life*, that we are *then* at *that time* capable of.

For if the Atonement of our Sins by Christ, and that Life which he communicates to us, is not to be considered as a *transient Matter*, as something that is *done* and *past*, but as something that on the Side of Christ is *always* doing, and never will be done, till the Consummation of all Things; if our applying to, and receiving Christ as our Atonement and Life, is not to be considered as a *transient Act*, as something that is *done* and *past*, but as something that is *always* doing, and never will be done, till we depart out of a State of Trial; then it follows, that *that* which is the appointed *Means* or *Proof* of Christ's *continuing* to communicate himself to us, as our *Atonement and Life*, and of our

continuing to apply to, and receive him as such, is in its *own Nature*, and unless hindered by us, a *certain Means and Instrument* of conveying and imparting to us all the Benefits of Christ, both as he is our *Atonement* and Life. To ask therefore for a *particular Promise* annexed to this Institution, which in its Nature communicates to us *all* that *ever* was *promised* to us in a Saviour, is highly absurd.

But after all, it can be truly said, that the Scriptures are very full and particular in setting forth the Benefits and Advantages of the Holy Communion, to all those that have Eyes that see, and Ears that hear. For do not the Scriptures plainly enough tell us of the *Benefit* of believing, seeking, and applying to Christ as the Atonement for our Sins? And is not the Benefit of *this Faith* the Benefit of the *Sacrament*, if Christ is there *believed*, sought and applied to as our Atonement?

And is it not the sole End of the Sacrament to *continue, confirm* and *exercise* this Faith, to which all the Blessings of our Salvation are annexed? Therefore, all that the Scriptures say of the Riches and Blessings, and Treasures, which *Faith* in Christ as our Redeemer, can procure to us, *all* that they say of the Benefit of that Faith, which is absolutely required and exercised by this Sacrament.

Again, do not the Scriptures plainly and frequently enough tell us of the Benefit of the *New Birth* in Christ, of the *putting on* Christ, of having Christ *formed in us*, of Christ's being our *Life*, of our having *Life in him*, of his being that *Bread from Heaven*, that *Bread of Life*, of which the *Manna* was only a *Type*; of his *Flesh* being *Meat indeed*, and his *Blood* *Drink indeed*; of our *eating* his *Flesh*, and *drinking* his *Blood*, and that without it we *have no Life in us*; and are not all these things so many *plain* and *open* Declarations of that which we seek and obtain, 'by eating the Body and Blood of Christ?'

For we eat the *sacramental* Body and Blood of Christ, to show that we *want* and *desire*, and by Faith lay hold of the *real, spiritual Nature* and Being of Christ; to show that we want and desire, the Progress of the *New Birth* in Christ; to *put on* Christ, to have Christ *formed* and revealed in us, to have him *our Life*, to *partake* of him our second *Adam*, in the same *Fulness* and *Reality*, as we partake of the Nature of the first *Adam*: And therefore all that the Scripture says of the Benefits and Blessings of *these things*, so *much* it says of the Benefits and Blessings that are sought and obtained by the eating the Body and Blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper. For to eat the *Body* and *Blood* of Christ, is neither more nor less than to *put on Christ*, to receive Birth and Life, and Nourishment and Growth from him; as the

Branch receives its Being and Life, and Nourishment and Growth from the Vine. And because Christ is *that* to us, which the Vine is to the Branches, therefore there is a strict Truth and Reality in these Expressions; and the *same Truth and Reality*, whether it be expressed, by saying, that we eat the *Flesh and Blood* of Christ, or that we *put on Christ*, or that Christ is *formed*, manifested or revealed in us.

For if you could bid the *Branch* to eat the Substance and Juice of the Vine, the same must be intended, as if you had said, that the Vine must be *formed* in the Branch, or must *manifest* itself in the Branch. So when it is said, that we must eat the *Flesh and Blood* of Christ, it is the same thing as saying, that Christ must be *formed in us*, or manifested in us.

But you will perhaps say, How does it appear, that these Expressions of *putting on Christ*, of Christ's being *formed in us*, of his being *our Life*, the *Bread of Life*, and his *Flesh Meat indeed*, and his *Blood Drink indeed*; How does it appear, that these and the like Places of Scripture are to be understood *Sacramentally*?

I answer, it does not appear. And the Question itself is as absurd, as if it was asked, How does it appear, that the Scriptures are to be understood *Sacramentally*? Whereas, if the Question began at the right End, it should proceed thus, How does it appear, that the Sacrament is to be understood *Scripturally*, or according to the plain Doctrines of Scripture? Was the Question thus put, as it ought to be, it would fall of itself. For surely it need not be proved, that the things spoken of Christ in the Sacrament, are to be understood according to that which is spoken of Christ in the Scripture. When our Saviour said in the sixth of *St. John*, 'That his *Flesh* was *Meat* indeed, and his *Blood* Drink indeed, and that except a Man eat his *Flesh*, and *drink* his *Blood*, he hath no *Life* in him; and that he who eateth *his* *Flesh*, and drinketh his *Blood*, dwelleth in him, and he in *him*;' he did not speak of the Sacrament, nor could possibly speak of it, for this plain Reason, because he spoke of the *Truth*, the *Reality*, and the *Thing* itself; for the *sake* of which, and for the *Application* of which to ourselves, he afterwards instituted the Sacrament.

But if the Sacrament was instituted for the sake of that *Truth* and *Reality*, of which he then spake; then the Sacrament must be *essentially* related to that which he then said, and must have its *Meaning* and *End* according to it.

And if what he then said, was that *Truth* and *Reality* of the Thing itself, and the Sacrament was instituted as an outward Sign, Proof or Declaration of it; then what he said in *St. John*, he spoke not of the Sacrament; and yet what he instituted in

the Sacrament, has *all its Meaning* according to that which he said in *St. John*.

To ask, whether our Saviour meant the *Sacramental Bread and Wine*, when he said, my Flesh is Meat indeed, and my Blood is Drink indeed, is as absurd as to ask, whether he did not mean the Flesh and Blood of some other Person, when he said, *my* Flesh and *my* Blood?

And, on the other hand, to ask, whether the Sacramental Bread and Wine does not *signify* to us that Flesh and Blood which is our Meat indeed, and Drink indeed, is as absurd, as to ask, whether the appointed Sign of a thing, does not signify that which it is appointed to signify?

These two things therefore are evidently plain: First, That our Saviour in the sixth of *St. John* did not, could not possibly speak of his Sacramental Body and Blood, or Bread and Wine, because he spoke of *himself*, of his real, natural, and true Life, of which we must partake: Secondly, That what he calls his Body and Blood in the Sacrament, or has appointed to be the Signs of his Body and Blood, must be understood according to that which he has said in *St. John*, of his Flesh which is Meat indeed, and his Blood which is Drink indeed; for this plain Reason, because the appointed Sign of a thing must signify that which it is appointed to signify.

Therefore in *St. John* there is nothing said of the Sacrament; and yet what is said in the Sacrament, is to be *necessarily* understood of that *very thing* which is said in *St. John*. And the Reason is plain; for the *Thing* is essentially different from that which is appointed to be a *Sign* of it; therefore, he that speaks of the *Thing*, cannot in speaking of that, speak of the *Sign*. But the Sign, as such, has all its Nature from the Thing that it is to signify; and therefore the *Thing* itself must be *meant* by that which the Sign speaks of.

To say, as some do, that our Saviour could not speak of that in *St. John*, which is *intended* by the Sacrament, because the Sacrament was not then instituted, is very weak and unreasonable; for it is saying, that he could not then speak of a *Thing* or *Doctrine*, because he afterwards appointed something to be a *Sign* or outward *Declaration* of it. For if he had appointed an Institution, or *positive Rite*, which related to nothing that he had before taught, it must have been very unaccountable. Thus to command us to eat his Body and Blood in the Sacrament, if he had not beforehand taught that we had *our Life* from him, and that his *Flesh* was our *Meat indeed*, and his Blood our *Drink indeed*, had been very unaccountable. But seeing he had in the openest, plainest Manner declared, that he was the *Life of Men*,

and that except we eat his *Flesh and drink his Blood* we have no Life in us; the Command to eat *Bread and Wine* as his *Body and Blood*, is plain and intelligible; and we have the fullest Assurance of the Meaning of it, for this reason, because Christ had often, and long beforehand taught *that Truth*, of which he afterwards appointed the Sacrament to be an *outward Sign*, and an outward *Means* of our owning, confessing, and embracing it. Thus all the Controversy about this Place in *St. John*, and other like Passages of Scripture, is at an end, and has the most plain and satisfactory Solution; such Passages do not speak of the Sacrament, because they speak of the *thing itself*, of which the Sacrament is an appointed outward Signification; but the Sacrament *directly speaks* of, and *points* to those Passages, because they contain that *Truth and Reality* which the Sacrament is appointed to signify.

For were not Christ our *real Life*, there had not been any *outward Figure* or Declaration of it appointed; was there not a *real Eating the Flesh and Drinking the Blood of Christ*, was there not a *true substantial putting on* of Christ, or partaking of the Nature of Christ, the *Sacramental Eating and Drinking* of his Body and Blood, had not been appointed; there could have been no Foundation for it; or if appointed, it could have had no Meaning suitable to the Words. But since *That* which is Sacramentally *figured* or *signified*, by the Eating and Drinking the Sacramental Body and Blood of Christ, is in the Scriptures declared to be a *real Truth*, since its *Reality* is taught, declared and explained by various Ways and Manners of Speech, it is undeniable, that the Sacrament, which is an appointed Figure, must be explained and asserted according to *that Truth and Reality*, of which it is the appointed Figure.

When our Saviour said, 'he that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him': When he said, 'I am the Life'; and again, 'I am the true Vine, and ye are the Branches,' &c., he spake as much *strict* and *real Truth*, and as much according to the *Letter*, as when he said of himself, he came down from *Heaven*, or that *he is in the Father*, and the *Father in him*. What is there said, is no more to be considered as a *Metaphor*, or *Figure of Speech*, than when it is said, that *God is our Father*, or that in God we *live, move, and have our Being*.

For what is said of Christ, *as our Life*, is as strictly true, as when it is said, *that in God we live, and move, and have our Being*; and what is said of Christ's being the *true Vine*, has the same *real Truth* in it, as when God is said to be *our Father*.

Had Christ indeed said, *This Vine is me, and these Branches are ye*, what he said must then have been as *figurative*, as when

he said of the Bread, 'This is my Body;' and his speaking so of a Vine, must have been only a Sign to us, that he was in Truth and Reality that to us, which the Vine is in a poor, *earthly, perishable* Manner to its Branches. But seeing he does not speak of a *Vine*, but speaks directly of *himself*, and says, that I am *the true Vine*; it is as if he had said, I am the Vine in Truth and Reality, as God is the Father of you all in Truth and Reality, because I am that in a *true and real, and living* Manner to you, which the Vine is in a poor, earthly, perishable Manner to its Branches.

Therefore all that is here said, is the *real Truth*, as far as human Words can set it forth; and when it is said, that we must *put* on Christ, or that *Christ* must be *formed* in us, or that he is the *true Vine*, and *we are the Branches*, there is the same *literal, real, immutable* and eternal Truth in these Expressions, as when it is said, that 'in God we live and move, and have our being,' or that God is our *Father*, and we his Children.

Now to deny that Christ is thus *our Life*, is as great a Denial of him, as to deny him to be the *eternal Word*, or the Son of God, or the *Light that lighteth every Man that cometh into the World*. And to deny that we receive our Life from him, or eat his Flesh and Blood in the same Reality as the Branch *eateth* of the Substance and Juice of the Vine, and receiveth what it hath from it, is as great a Denial of him, as if we deny that he *came from Heaven, and was in Heaven*, even when he was upon Earth.

But if we own these great Truths, which are the very Heart and Substance of Christianity, if we know and acknowledge that we are thus of him, and by him, that our *inward Man*, which is all that is Christian within us, has all its *Birth, Life, and Growth* from Christ, as its Principle, *eating, drinking, and drawing* in Life from him, as the *Branch* eats, drinks, and draws its Life and Substance from the Vine; then we cannot be at a Loss either to know what is meant by the Sacrament, and the Benefits we receive thereby, or to know what Parts of Scripture explain those Benefits to us. Since it must appear to us beyond all doubt, *that all that* which the Scriptures speak to us of Christ, as the Atonement for our Sins, and our Peace with God, and all that they speak to us of *our Life* in Christ, of his *forming and manifesting* himself in the Birth and Growth of our inward new Man; is that which it speaks to us of the *Meaning and Benefits* of this Holy Sacrament, which is solely appointed as the Figure of all this, as the *Application* of all this to us, and as an established Means of exercising, increasing and strengthening our Faith in him, as he is *all this* to us.

Here therefore is full *room* for all our Devotion, and at the

same time a full *Security* against all Delusion. For whilst we believe nothing of the Sacrament, seek nothing in it, nor plead anything by it, but such Scripture Truths and Benefits as we are obliged to believe, own and plead, though the Sacrament had not been appointed, all the Devotion which the Sacrament thus raises in us, is as secure from Delusion, has as much the Stamp of Truth upon it, and is as proper an Exercise of solid Piety, as when any Thing or Occasion excites us to an Act of loving God with all our Mind, and Heart, and Strength. For as we cannot too much esteem, love and adore our Saviour, both as he is the *Atonement* for our Sins, and a *Principle* of Life to us; so if the Use of the Sacrament quickens, nourishes, keeps up, and increases this Esteem, Love and Adoration of him, as such, it cannot do this too much.

For as we do nothing in the Sacrament, but what is our natural Duty, and good and right in itself; as we seek to Christ, trust in Christ, rely upon his Merits, desire to have Life in and from him, only in such a Manner as we ought to do, though we were not assisted in it by the Sacrament; so all this Faith and Hope, and Love and Desire, and Devotion which we practise by means of the Sacrament, has everything in it, that can prove it to be right, and just, and good. And the want of this Faith, Hope, Love, Desire, Adoration and Devotion, is more blamable in the Use of the Sacrament than anywhere else, because it is there more properly required, and has the most proper Object and Occasion to excite it.

You must therefore consider the Sacrament purely as an *Object* of your *Devotion*, that is to exercise all your *Faith*, that is to raise, exercise, and inflame every holy Ardour of your Soul that tends to God. It is an *Abstract*, or *Sum* of all the Mysteries that have been revealed concerning our Saviour, from the first Promise of a *Seed of the Woman* to bruise the *Serpent's Head*, to the Day of Pentecost.

As you can receive or believe nothing higher of our Saviour, than that he is the *Atonement* for our Sins, and a *real Principle* of Life to us; so every Height and Depth of Devotion, Faith, Love, and Adoration, which is due to God as your Creator, is due to God as your Redeemer.

Jacob's Ladder that reached from Earth to Heaven, and was filled with Angels ascending and descending between Heaven and Earth, is but a small Signification of that Communion between God and Man, which this holy Sacrament is the Means and Instrument of.

Now here it may be proper for you to observe, that whatever *Names* or *Titles* this Institution is signified to you by, whether

it be called a *Sacrifice* propitiatory, or commemorative ; whether it be called an holy Oblation, the *Eucharist*, the *Sacrament* of the *Body* and *Blood* of Christ, the *Sacrament* of the *Lord's Supper*, the *Heavenly Banquet*, the *Food of Immortality*, or the *Holy Communion*, and the like, matters not much. For all these *Words* or *Names* are right and good, and there is nothing wrong in them, but the striving and contention about them.

For they all express *something* that is true of the *Sacrament*, and therefore are every one of them, in a good Sense, rightly applicable to it ; but all of them are far short of expressing the whole Nature of the *Sacrament*, and therefore the *Help* of all of them is wanted.

He therefore that contends for one Name, as the only proper one in Exclusion of the rest, is in the same Mistake, as he that should contend for one *Name* and *Character* of our Saviour, as the only proper one, in Exclusion of all the rest. For as all the *Names* and *Titles* by which Christ is described, from the *Seed of the Woman* in *Genesis*, to the *Alpha* and *Omega* in the last Chapter of the *Revelation*, are only to *help* us to know, believe, and experience more of him as our Saviour, than can be expressed by all these different Characters of him : So all the various *Names* and *Titles* given to the *Sacrament*, are only to teach us to know, believe, and find more of our Redemption and Salvation in the *Sacrament*, than can be pointed out to us by any or all these Expressions.

If you have yet known Christ in any true Degree, what must you think of him, who should contend that the *Lamb of God* was the only proper Character of our Saviour, and that therefore those other Names, *Seed of the Woman*, *Root of David*, *Bright and Morning Star*, *Bread of Life*, *Tree of Life*, *Son of Man*, *First-born of all the Creatures*, *Word of God*, could not belong to him as our Saviour, because of the Disagreement there is between a *Lamb*, and the *Bread of Life*, or a *Tree of Life* ?

Now this is the Learning this Author is full of ; from this scrupulous *Attention* to Words, and the Ideas annexed to them, he rejects almost all the *Names* by which the *Sacrament* has ever been expressed.

He is able to prove, that the *Sacrament* is not a *Commemorative Sacrifice*, because it is the *Supper* of the Lord ; just as another by the same Skill in Words, might prove, that the *Lamb of God* is not the *Tree of Life*, or the *Bread* that *came down from Heaven*, because of the great Difference there is between a *Tree*, *Bread*, and a *Lamb*.

Now the Reason why our Saviour is described under this vast Variety of Characters, is this, because no one Phrase or particular

Form of Expression can truly describe him to us ; therefore that is to be done as well as it can, by different and seemingly contrary Characters.

Thus he is called the *Seed of the Woman* that was to bruise the Serpent's Head, in another respect the *Lamb of God*, in another the *Desire of all Nations*, in another the *Son of Man*, in another the *Brightness of his Father's Glory*, in another the *Bread that came down from Heaven*, in another the *Tree of Life*, the *Alpha and Omega*. Now it is the exceeding Difference, and even literal Contrariety of these Expressions, that makes them proper and useful to us ; and we have the more true Knowledge of our Saviour because of these Characters, which, considered in themselves, seem to have no Agreement with each other.

Thus the *Lamb of God*, and the *Bread of Life*, are Characters of our Saviour, that have no Connection with each other, and yet they teach us the greatest Truths concerning our Saviour, because they are thus without Connection, and so unrelated to each other.

It is just thus with the Sacrament ; the different and seemingly incoherent *Characters* and Expressions by which it is signified to us, help us to know more Truth of it, merely because of their Difference, than could be taught us by such Expressions as had a literal Agreement and Connection with each other.

Do you therefore reject this Author's *Wisdom of Words* which he proposes to you, and be content to be devout without it. Be glad to know, that as the Nature, Office, and Condition of our Saviour could not be made known to us, but by a Variety of different *Names* and *Titles* ascribed to him ; so the *Nature* and *End* and Effects of this Holy Sacrament could not be made known to us, but by a Variety of different Names and Titles ascribed to it ; that in one respect it is a *Propitiatory* Sacrifice, in another a *Commemorative* Sacrifice ; in one respect it is the *Seal* and *Renewal* of the Covenant between God and Man, in another the *Food of Immortality*, the *Life of the Soul*, the *Bread* that came down from Heaven, the *Tree of Life* ; that in one respect it is the Holy *Eucharist*, in another the Holy *Communion*.

And be assured, that he who tries to set these Expressions at Variance with each other, and would persuade you that if one is a true Account of the Sacrament, the others cannot be so, is as vain a *Disputer of this World*, as he that would persuade you, that if our Saviour be the *Seed of the Woman*, he cannot be essentially the Son of God ; or that if he be the *Lamb of God*, he cannot be the *Bread of Life*.

The reason why this Sacrament is said in one respect to be a *Propitiatory*, or *Commemorative* Sacrifice, is only this, because you there *offer*, *present*, and *plead* before God, such Things as are

by Christ himself said to be his *Body* and *Blood given for you* : But if that which is thus *offered, presented, and pleaded* before God, is offered, presented, and pleaded before him only for *this Reason*, because it signifies and represents both to God, and Angels, and Men, the *great Sacrifice* for all the World, is there not sufficient Reason to consider this *Service* as truly a *Sacrifice* ? Or even supposing, that the calling this *Service* a *Sacrifice*, is no more according to a certain *literal Exactness* of some *Critics*, that when our Saviour says of himself, ' I am the ' Resurrection ;' or that a *Quibbler* in Words may be able to object as much against it, as against our Saviour's saying of himself, ' I am the Resurrection and the Life,' have you any reason to dislike it on that Account, or to wish that such *little Critics* might find more of their empty, superficial, worthless Niceties in the Language of the Church, than in the Language of Scripture ?

The miserable Use which this Author makes of this Kind of Learning may be sufficiently seen by the following Instances : ' To say,' says he, ' that this Communion *is the actual* partaking ' of all the Benefits of Christ's Body broken and Blood shed for ' us, or of his Living and Dying for our Good, has this peculiar ' Absurdity in it, that in this Rite, which was instituted *for the* ' Remembrance of Christ, it destroys that very Notion of *Remem-* ' brance, which is the *Essence* of it. The great Design of this ' Institution is to call to mind the *Remembrance* of Christ, and to ' commemorate the Benefits accruing to Christians from it. To ' make it therefore the *actual partaking* of these Benefits, is ' altering the Nature of it, as much as *actual partaking* of any- ' thing is different from remembering it.* Many other Passages like this are to be found in this Author.

Now to see the Truth and Sense of this Doctrine in its proper Light : Let it be supposed, that our Saviour, after the Institution, had thus added, ' Observe well what it is that I have taught ' you to understand and do by this *Rite* : I have indeed said, ' This is my Body which is given for you ; but the Meaning ' of my Institution does not lie in these Words, nor are you to ' think that I am any way present in that which I call *my Body*, or ' that you are to present, and show, and plead it before God as ' *my Body*, which is *given* for you ; for this is not my Intent, ' though I thus speak. I have also said, This is my Blood ' which is shed for the Remission of Sins, and have ordered ' you to *say so* of it before God, and Angels, and Men in the ' Church ; but what I have taught has nothing to do with this

‘ Institution, nor is it any Part of it; there is no Remission of
‘ Sins to be *thought of* in it, or *pleaded* by it. I have also bid you
‘ to *eat* that which I have declared to be *my Body*, and to drink
‘ that which I have declared to be *my Blood*; but you must not
‘ therefore imagine, that you receive *anything* of me, or of my
‘ *Nature*, into yourselves, or that I am a *Principle* of Life to you.
‘ For though I thus speak so fully and plainly of eating my *very*
‘ *Body* and *Blood*, yet nothing is meant of any *real partaking* of
‘ anything from me. For this is *no Part* of my Institution, nor
‘ is it appointed for you to *receive* anything from me, nor for me
‘ to *communicate* anything to you. And to prevent your Appre-
‘ hension of anything of this kind, and to secure you from
‘ the dangerous Error of supposing that any *Benefits* and Bless-
‘ ings are received by your receiving my Body and Blood; I
‘ have added, Do this in Remembrance of me; which Words
‘ sufficiently show, that neither *Me*, nor the *Benefits* of me, as
‘ your Saviour, can here be received, because that which is
‘ appointed here to be *remembered*, cannot, without great
‘ Absurdity, be supposed to be *present*. Had I indeed said, Do
‘ this in *Acknowledgment* of me, or of that *Salvation* which is
‘ *received* through me; or had I said, Do this as an Act of *Faith*
‘ in me as your Saviour, then indeed you must have believed
‘ that there were *great Benefits* and Blessings presented to you by
‘ this Institution; for ye could not by *Faith* appeal to this my
‘ Body and Blood as given for you, and by *Faith* eat this as my
‘ Body and Blood, without the actual partaking of my Benefits
‘ and Blessings, both as I am the Atonement for your Sins, and
‘ a Principle of Life to you: But as I have chosen the Word
‘ *Remembrance*, you must see that it is only an *Act of your*
‘ *Memory* that is required of you; for this is the *great Point*
‘ in this Institution, perform but this and you have performed all
‘ that the Nature and End of this Institution requires of you.
‘ Take care therefore that you keep strictly to this *bare Act* of
‘ the Memory, and that you don’t *add* anything to it; for the
‘ *Essence* of this Institution consists in this *simple Act* of the
‘ Memory. But above all, take heed of such *Faith*, *Devotion*,
‘ and *Desire* of me, as may lead you to *hope* or *believe* that you
‘ partake of my Benefits by the partaking of this holy Rite; for
‘ such a *Faith* and *Hope* are so *inconsistent* with this Institution,
‘ that they would *destroy* the very Nature and Essence of it, which
‘ is to be the *Remembrance* of my Benefits, and therefore cannot
‘ possibly be the actual partaking of them. Nor can you think of
‘ partaking of them by this holy Institution, but by making it
‘ an Institution of your own, directly contrary to that which I
‘ designed it to be.’

Everyone, I believe, must at first Sight perceive, that to put this Paraphrase upon the Sacrament into the Mouth of our Saviour, would be Profaneness and Blasphemy; and yet everyone must plainly see, that profane and blasphemous as it would be, there is not a Thought or Word in it, but what is strictly according to this Author's Doctrine.

Secondly, Let it be supposed that instead of 'Do this in Remembrance of me,' our Saviour had said, *Do this* as a Means of *partaking of all my Benefits to Mankind*: This Author's Criticism would prove it *absurd* to make the Sacrament even then an *actual* partaking of those Benefits. For he must say, that the great Design of it, was to be a *Means* of partaking of those Benefits. To make it therefore the *actual partaking of those Benefits, is altering the Nature of it, as much as actual partaking of anything is different from the Means of partaking of it.* Such is his Wisdom of Words!

Thirdly, If it were true, that the *actual partaking* of Christ's Benefits was not only not intended by, but also *inconsistent* with the right Observance of this Institution, so as to *destroy its Essence, and alter its Nature*, if such actual partaking was thought of by it; then it would follow, that no good Christian ought to observe this Institution, or act according to the Nature and Intent of it.

For it is as unlawful and even atheistical for any Christian to think himself not an *actual Partaker* of the Benefits and Blessings of Christ, as to think himself not an *actual Partaker* of the Benefits and Blessings of a God and Providence. 'Without me,' says our Blessed Lord, 'ye can do nothing.'^{*} But, according to this Author, we not only can, but *must* do all that is done in this Sacrament *without him*, and must look upon the Sacrament as instituted for this *very End*, to keep up a *Sense* and *Belief* of our being *without him*, and to assure us, that we are not *actual Partakers* of him, that he is not *present* with us, nor acting in us. Again, saith our blessed Lord, 'Abide in me, and I in you; as 'the Branch cannot bear Fruit, except it abide in the Vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.'

But, according to this Author, he that would rightly perform this Institution, must, every time he performs it, come *out* of Christ as perfectly as he can, and make himself as separate from Christ, as the *withered Branch* that is separated from the Vine; that having no *actual Possession* of the Benefits and Blessings of Christ, he may be qualified to *do this in Remembrance of them.*

Further, no one can believe in Christ, love Christ, adore him,

* John xv. 5.

and hope and trust in him, without being an *actual Partaker* of the Benefits of Christ by so doing ; if therefore to the due Observation of the Sacrament, and to preserve its *Nature* and *Essence*, there must be no *actual partaking* of the Benefits of Christ allowed in it, or by it ; then it must be performed without Faith or Love of Christ, and without any Devotion towards him, or Adoration of him ; for if these accompany that which we do in the Sacrament, and attend our reception of it, the Benefits of Christ must be *actually* received by it.

Fourthly, To see still more of the Absurdity and Impiety of this Author's Observation on the *Remembrance in the Sacrament*, we need only apply it to this parallel Text of Scripture, 'Remember thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth.* For, according to our Author, he that would not alter and *destroy* the Nature and Essence of this Duty of *remembering* God, must not pretend, or hope, or believe, that by the Observance of this Duty, he is made an *actual Partaker* or Sharer of the Goodness, Perfections, and Attributes of his Creator, or of anything that belongs to his Creator, or that can be remembered of him : Because so long as he keeps strictly to the true Nature of this Duty, and continues to *remember* his Creator, so long every Thing, or Attribute, or Perfection that belongs to his Creator, must be considered as at a *Distance* from him, as *unenjoyed* and unpossessed by him, because that which is to be *remembered*, cannot be *present*. And therefore the Command *to remember our Creator*, is, according to this Doctrine, a Command to look upon our Creator as at a *Distance* and far from us, and is inconsistent with our believing, that 'in him we live, move, and have our Being' ; because we cannot *remember* a *Creator* so present with us, and of whose Perfections we are *actual Partakers*.

If therefore this Author has found out the right Way of remembering God as our *Redeemer*, he ought to have told us, that the same Way of remembering God as our Creator was wrong, and tended to *Atheism*. For to remember God as *absent*, is but a very little way from *Atheism*.

Lastly, If, as this Author teaches, the *actual partaking* of the Benefits of Christ's living and dying for us, by means of this Sacrament, is an Absurdity that cannot be supposed, without destroying the Nature and Essence of the Sacrament, for this Reason, because that which is possessed as present, and *actually partaken* of, cannot be *remembered* ; then it follows, that no Man can fully perform this Duty, that is, make it a Remembrance of *all the Benefits* of Christ, but he that is *actually* dispossessed of

* Eccles. xii. 1.

all of them. Because he cannot remember *all*, if any of them are then present with him, and enjoyed by him.

Secondly, It follows, that he who daily grows in the Gifts and Graces of Christ, and in whom Christ is every Day more and more formed, must, in proportion as the Strength, and Spirit, and Power of Christ is revealed in him, daily be less qualified to do perfectly that which is to be done in the Sacrament; because being daily more and more possessed of the Benefits and Blessings of Christ, he has every Day less and less to commemorate in and by the Sacrament.

Thirdly, It follows, that he who falls from his State of Grace in Christ, who becomes every Day more and more empty and destitute of his Gifts and Graces, who daily loses something of the Sense and Taste of the *heavenly Gifts, and the Powers of the World to come*, and finds himself less animated, assisted and strengthened by the Power and Spirit of Christ, must in proportion, as he becomes every Day more earthly, sensual, carnal, blind and weak, and wretched, and dead, and fallen from Christ, be more and more qualified to do that, which, according to this Author, is to be done in the Sacrament; for losing every Day something of the Benefits of Christ, and being daily a less Partaker of them, he is daily qualified to commemorate more of them, and so to perform that which is to be performed in this Sacrament in a more perfect manner.

Again, the Apostle saith, 'Know ye not that Christ Jesus is in you, except ye be Reprobates'*? But this Author must say, Know ye not that Christ Jesus is not in you, nor can be in you, if the Sacrament is to be observed in *Remembrance* of him? For how can ye without Absurdity *commemorate* that which is not absent from you?

Lastly, He who can say with the Apostle, 'the Life that I now live is not mine, but Christ that liveth in me, *is utterly* incapable of remembering Christ in the Sacrament; for he cannot commemorate an *absent* Christ, and therefore cannot commemorate him, till Christ has done living in him.

But there is no end of exposing all the impious Consequences of this Author's learned Account of the Word Remembrance. Which, monstrous as it is, is only founded upon a little *Criticism*, that the word Remembrance can only signify an *Act of the Memory* upon something that is *absent*. And yet it is certain that it does not, cannot signify so, when you are to remember your Creator, and therefore need not signify so, when you are to remember your Redeemer. And if you do but suppose it pos-

* 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

sible, that 'Do this in Remembrance of me,' may only signify, *do this in regard* of me, as your Act of Faith in me; then all this extraordinary Doctrine of the Impossibility and Absurdity of partaking of the Benefits of Christ by partaking of the Sacrament, has not so much as one of his Quibbles to support it.

Further, this Author's absurd Interpretation of the word *Remembrance* in the Sacrament is founded on this gross Error, that the things to be remembered, are things *done* and *past*, and therefore only capable of being remembered by an Act of the Memory. This he expressly says in many places. Thus, *They*, says he, *could not do the Actions here named, in remembrance of anything which was not done and past.** And in other Places, that the *Benefits cannot be present that are to be commemorated.*

And therefore the whole Support of this arguing is founded on this Error, that the things to be remembered, are *done* and *past*. Which is an Error, that he could not have fallen into, if he had but moderately understood the Nature either of the *Jewish* or *Christian* Religion.

Now that which is to be remembered in the Sacrament is Christ, or the Benefits and Blessings of Christ as the Saviour of Mankind; but neither Christ, nor his Benefits and Blessings have the Nature of things *done*, or *gone*, and *past*, but are always present, always in being, always doing, and never done.

'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,' always was, now is, and ever will be present as the Saviour of the World. He is the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the *Beginning* and the *End*, and therefore equally present in and through all from the Beginning to the End. 'Behold,' saith he, 'I stand at the Door, and knock; if any Man hear my Voice, and open the Door, I will come into him, and will sup with him.'† Thus he stood at the Door of *Adam's* Heart, as near as he stood to the *Apostles'*; and thus he stands, and will stand knocking at the Door of every Man's Heart, till Time shall be no more. Happy he that does not consider this Christ as absent, and is only for such a *Supper of the Lord*, as will not admit of his Presence.

The Benefits and Blessings of Christ as the Saviour of Mankind, began with the first Promise of a *Seed* of the *Woman* to *bruise the Serpent's Head*; they have continued with this Promise, they are the Benefits of every Age, they will never be at an End, till all that was implied in that Promise shall have its full Completion in the utter Destruction of the Serpent. Jesus Christ was the *Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World*; and the first

* Page 30.

† Rev. iii. 20.

Sacrifice of the first Man, and every Sacrifice since, that hath been accepted of God, has been made solely acceptable through the Benefits and Blessings of Christ.

All the Shadows and Types, Sacrifices and Ceremonies of the *Jewish* Religion were only so many Ways of applying the Benefits of Jesus Christ to that People. 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,' is the same in and through all Ages; he was the Saviour of *Adam*, the *Patriarchs*, and the *Jews*, just as he is our Saviour. His Body and Blood, offered in their Sacrifices, was their Atonement, as it is ours, offered upon the Cross. His Flesh and Blood was Meat and Drink, or a *Principle of Life* to them, as it is to us.

Jesus Christ was theirs, as he is ours; he was the Life, and Substance, and Spirit of the Law, as he is the Life, and Substance, and Spirit of the Gospel; only with this Difference, that then Christ was covered, and received under more outward Figures and Ceremonies than he is now; we do that more openly, which was then done more covertly by the *Israel of God*.

His Atonement for our Sins is not a *transitory* Thing, that *began* and *ended* with his Passion and Death, but it began with the *Lamb that was slain from the Foundation of the World*; for he was the Lamb of God slain in all their *Types* and *Sacrifices* through every Age, till he became the *real* expiatory Sacrifice on the Cross for the Sins of the World.

When he died upon the Cross, his Atonement did not then become a thing that was *over*, or *past*, and *done*, that was only to be remembered by an *Act of the Memory*, but continued increasing in its Power and Virtue.

As Christ by his Death put an end to nothing in Religion but Types and Prefigurations; so by his Death he put an end to nothing of his Atonement, but that which was typical and prefigurative of it. And as he arose from the Grave with greater Power and Strength, and became instead of a *meek* and *suffering* Lamb, a *powerful* Conqueror over Death, a *Royal Priest* over the House of God, so his Atonement went on increasing in Strength and Virtue.

His Atonement was so far from being a Thing then *done* and *past*, when his Blood was shed upon the Cross, that it was shed for this very End, that he might for ever do that in the *Reality*, which the High Priest did in the *Type*, when with the Blood of the Sacrifice he entered once a Year into the Holiest of all, to make the *highest Atonement* for the People.

Thus Christ, to perform, and to continue for ever the most powerful Way of atoning for us, *by his own Blood he entered once into the Holy Place*—now to appear in the Presence of *God for*

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us.* Where he continueth for ever, and *hath an unchangeable Priesthood*; † and therefore our Atonement is never *done* and *past*, but is just as *perpetual* and *unchangeable* as his *Priesthood*. For he can be no longer a Priest, than while he maketh an Atonement and Intercession for us. And from this his *unchangeable Priesthood*, the Apostle thus argues, 'wherefore he is able also 'to save them to the uttermost, who come unto God by him, ‡ 'seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for us.'

But if he is 'able to save them to the uttermost, who come 'unto God by him;' then his Atonement is not something *done* and *past*, but always in being, always present, always doing, and always presenting itself everywhere, and to every Man; and if he is *ever living to make Intercession* for us, then we have a *Propitiation* that never ceases, that is as *near* to us as it was to the Apostles, and will be as *present* to those that shall be born two thousand Years after Christ, as it was to those who stood by his Cross when he died. Agreeable to this, St. John saith, 'We have 'an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous: And 'he is the Propitiation for our Sins.' He does not say, we have had an Advocate in this World, but that we *have* one *with* the Father, nor that Christ was our Propitiation some time ago, but that he *is* the Propitiation for our Sins.

And indeed Jesus Christ is the Atonement for our Sins, in that same *unlimited universal* and *omnipresent* Manner, in which he is the *Life* and *Light* of the World. And as he is the *Light which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World*, and is not an *actual present* Light to some, and a *distant unpossessed* Light to others, only to be remembered by an *Act of their Memory*; so he is the Atonement for every Man that cometh into the World, and is not an *actual, present* Atonement to some, and a *distant* Atonement to others, only to be remembered by an *Act of their Memory*; but is an Atonement *actually* and *really* present to all, as he is a Light *actually* and *really* present to all, and every Man that cometh into the World.

Therefore this Author's Account of the *Remembrance* in the Sacrament, has not only those Absurdities in it demonstrated above, but is also solely founded upon this grossest of all Errors, that the Benefits and Blessings of Christ, as the Saviour of Mankind, are something *done* and *past*; which is an Error that no one could have fallen into, that had but a common Knowledge of the first and plainest Principles either of the *Jewish* or *Christian* Religion. For both these Religions are founded upon this *great Truth*, and suppose it in every Part, that the Benefits and

Heb. ix. 24.

† Heb. vii. 24.

‡ Heb. vii. 25.

Blessings of Christ were always in *being*, always *doing*, always *present* in and to every Age, as well *before* as *since* the Incarnation and Death of Christ.

And as this Author has been forced to assert, they were things *absent*, *done*, and *past*, in order to make the Sacrament to consist of an Action of the *Memory* upon those absent things; so seeing it is an undeniable Truth, that they are not things absent, done, and past, but are as actually present, as ever they were, or ever could be, it follows, according to his own Principles, that the *Remembrance* spoken of in the Sacrament, cannot possibly signify only an *Action of the Memory*, but must necessarily signify such *Faith* and *Acknowledgment* of Christ, as when we are bid to *remember our Creator*, or *believe* in God.

Further, this Author proceeds thus: 'To say that the Communion is the actual partaking of all the Benefits of Christ's living and dying for us, is to put that upon one single Act of Obedience, which is by our blessed Lord made to depend upon the whole System of all Virtues united.* And again, 'Such a Doctrine as this would, in my Opinion, be not only inconsistent with the plainest Declarations of the Gospel, but directly contradictory and destructive to the main Design of it.†

What this Author calls here a *single Act*, and a single *Instance* of Obedience, is true only of his own Sacrament, which consists only of a *single Action* of the *Memory* cast upon Christ at a *certain Instant* of Time, and to which single Action, this Author expressly says, that no Prayer is necessary,‡ not even necessary to attend upon it, either as *going before*, or *following after* it. That in its own *proper and peculiar Nature*, it has nothing to do with Prayer or Devotion of any kind, can have no Perfection from it, nor be in any Degree imperfect as to its *Nature* and *Essence*, for want of any Prayer, because its *Essence* is entirely distinct from Prayer.

And therefore all *Prayers*, *Thanksgivings* and *Devotions*, are to be considered as things distinct from this Sacrament, that have no Relation to the *peculiar Nature* and *proper Essence* of it.§

Hence it is plain, that we do not overcharge this Author, when we say, that he places the whole Nature of the Sacrament in a *bare single Action* of the *Memory*. For if, as he says, no kind of Prayer, Devotion or Thanksgiving, is of the *Essence* of this Sacrament, or can be an essential Part of it; then it has all its Perfection within itself, as it is a bare Act of the *Memory*, and

* Page 58.

† Page 144.

‡ Page 160.

§ Page 173.

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cannot, as to its own *proper* Nature or Essence, have anything added to it by Prayer, or taken from it by the want of Prayer. Hence it is also undeniable, that this Author's Sacrament is not so much as a *bare Act* of Religion, nor can have any more Religion in it, than if it was the Act of a *Parrot*. For no Act can be a religious Act, but so far, and in such Degree, as it is an Act of *Faith*, and *Love*, and *Devotion* to God. But this Author's Sacrament will not, as it is a Sacrament, allow Faith, or Love, or Devotion to be any *Part* of it, therefore it cannot be so much as a *bare Act* of Religion.

Nay, it may and must be said, that the right Observation of this Author's Sacrament is directly an Act of *Atheism*. For if it is an Act, that in its *own Nature*, and according to its *peculiar Essence*, cannot be performed according to what it is, unless it be done without *Faith*, and *Love*, and *Devotion* towards God ; then it is directly an *Act of Atheism*, because *Atheism* is nothing else but a Cessation of Faith, Love and Devotion towards God. But the Essence of this Author's Sacrament cannot be preserved, unless you keep *Prayer*, *Devotion* and *Thanksgiving* out of it. Therefore to perform it rightly according to what it is, is to perform an Act of *Atheism*.

And if at the taking of the Bread and Wine, you should suffer Faith, or Love, or Adoration of God, or Thanksgiving, to take up your Mind, you might as well have let the Sacrament alone, for you have neglected *all that* in which its whole Nature consists ; and have only been in such a State of Devotion, as has nothing to do with it, nor can *possibly* be a *Part* of it. And therefore, if you will perform this Sacrament rightly according to this Author, you must perform it *Atheistically* ; you must excite such a Remembrance as *excludes* Faith, Love, Devotion and Thanksgiving, from being a *Part* of it. And your Remembrance is not performed, unless it be such a Remembrance as these things cannot be a *Part* of.

The Devils are said to *believe a God* ; but why is it that their Faith is no *religious Act*, nor of any Benefit to them? It is because their Faith is only a *bare Act* of *believing*, just as this Author's Sacrament has only a *bare Act* of *remembering* ; and that which is the Perfection of his Sacrament, is their Wretchedness.

If you ask this Author, why Faith, and Prayer, and Adoration, and Thanksgiving, are not of the Essence, or cannot be essential Parts of the Sacrament : All he has to say is this, that the *Duty of Prayer is a Duty absolutely distinct from the Participation of the Lord's Supper*.*

* Page 160.

It may and must be granted, that Prayer, Humility, Faith, Hope, Charity, &c., are absolutely *distinct* from each other; that Humility is not Prayer, nor Faith in its proper Idea Prayer, and so of the rest. Yet notwithstanding this Distinction between them, they are all of them essential to each other. Faith is of the Essence of Prayer, Hope is of the Essence of Faith, and all of them are essential Parts of Prayer. Therefore when this Author asserts that Prayer is not an essential Part of the Communion, he is just as much in the right, and has as much Truth on his Side, as he who says, that Humility, Faith and Hope are not essential to Prayer, because Prayer is distinct from Humility, Faith and Hope.

What this Author saith of the Sacrament, that it is one *single Act*, or one *single Instance of Obedience*, is only true of his *own Fiction* of a Sacrament, which he makes to consist in a single Act of the Memory; and indeed it would be highly inconsistent with the Gospel, to make such a Sacrament a Means of obtaining the Benefits of Christ. But this is not the Sacrament of Christ, nor the Sacrament which the Church of Christ observes.

For all that relates to our Salvation, either on the Part of Christ, or on our own Part, is plainly united in that Sacrament which Christ has instituted. All that relates to our Salvation on the *Part of Christ*, is in the Sacrament, because he has said, that his *Body and Blood* are *there for the Remission of our Sins*, and that his Body and Blood are there to be *eaten and drank*, as the Food and Life of our Souls, therefore Christ as our Saviour is *wholly* there.

And all that relates to our Salvation on our own Part, is there; because we cannot *come* to Christ, or find him to be there, as he has said he is, unless we come to him with all those Qualities and pious Dispositions that *correspond* to him, as he is an *Atonement* for our Sins, and a Principle of Life to us; therefore all that relates to our Salvation, either on the *Part of Christ*, or on our *own Part*, is plainly united in the Sacrament. And to call such a Communion *one single Act* of Obedience, is just the same Absurdity, as to say, that the *Baptism* of a *Heathen* converted to Christianity, is but *one single Instance of Obedience*. For everything that is implied in such a *Conversion* and *Baptism*, whether it be on the Part of Christ, or on the Part of the Person baptized, is implied in this *Communion*.

And as the Baptism of such a Person contains *all* in it that *relates* to his Salvation, either on the Part of Christ, or on his own Part, and therefore cannot without great Ignorance be called a *single Instance* or Act of Obedience: So it is with the Sacrament, it is *all that* to the pious Communicant, both on the

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Part of Christ, and on his own Part, that Baptism is to the true converted Heathen; and he is made an actual Partaker of all the Benefits of Christ by it, as the *Convert* is made so by *Baptism*; and therefore it is the same Absurdity to call it a single Act, or Instance of Obedience.

And as it would be vain and groundless to say, that it was *inconsistent with the main Design of the Gospel*, to make such Baptism the *actual* partaking of all the *Benefits* of Christ; so it is equally, if not more so, to say the same thing of Communion; because every pious and holy Disposition is to be supposed to be in an *higher* State, in the pious Communicant, than in the pious Desirer of Baptism; and therefore, it cannot without much Absurdity be supposed, that the Sacrament is not as beneficial to the pious Communicant, as Baptism is to the pious Convert.

For if Christ has appointed this Institution, to assure us, that he is *there*, both as the *Atonement* for our Sins, and a *Principle of Life to us*, and we come to it with such pious Dispositions as *correspond* and *answer* to him in both these Respects, and make us capable of him; it must be great Absurdity to say, that we find him *not* there as our Atonement, *nor* receive him as a Principle of Life to us, *nor* are made Partakers of these Benefits of him.

If we stand before this Atonement, *without* such Dispositions as *correspond* to it, we are as *absent* from the *Sacrament of Christ*, as they are that refuse to come to it; if we eat that which is before us in the Sacrament, without such *Faith* and *Purity* as qualify us to receive the Flesh and Blood of Christ, we are only eating *that*, which *might* have been the *Bread of Life* to our Souls.

But if we, according to the Condition of our Humanity, are *that* which these two *essential* Parts of the Sacrament require us to be, then we may and ought as firmly to believe, that we are by this Sacrament made *actual Partakers* of all the Benefits of Christ, as that we are saved through Christ, and not by ourselves.

This Author makes great Complaint of ascribing these Benefits to the Reception of the Communion, because *it is*, as he says, *to put that upon a single Instance of Obedience, which our blessed Lord has made to depend upon the whole System of all Virtues united in us*: That is, Christ has made the System of all Virtues united in us, to be the *only Qualification* for the *actual* partaking of his Benefits; which is not only utterly inconsistent with the Gospel, but nonsensical in itself; for it is saying that we are then *only qualified* for the Benefits of our Saviour, when

we have *no need* of them; for if all Virtues were so united in us, all that our Saviour could do for us, would be done beforehand.

But let us take an Instance or two from our Saviour's own Words, and then we shall best see how truly this Author has said, that he has made the actual partaking of his Benefits, *to depend upon the whole System of all Virtues united*. When our blessed Lord stood by *Jacob's Well*, talking with the Woman of *Samaria*, he said to her, 'If thou knewest the Gift of God, and 'who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink, thou wouldst have 'asked of him, and he would have given thee living Water; a 'Water which shall be in him that drinketh it, a Well of Water 'springing up into everlasting Life.'*

Here, I suppose, are offered to this poor Woman *all the Benefits* of the Saviour of Mankind. Our Lord does not say to her, If thou hadst the *whole System of all Virtues united in thee*, then thou mightest be made a Partaker of all my Benefits; I could make the Water of eternal Life perpetually spring up within thee.

No, there is no such Jargon as this in the Gospel: But as he came as a compassionate Saviour, to make the Blind to see, the Deaf to hear, and the Dumb to speak, and the Dead to awake; as he came as a good *Shepherd* to seek that which was lost, and as a *Physician* to heal the Sick; so he only says to the Woman, if she had *asked*, that is, if she had felt the *Want* of a Saviour, as the Blind feel the want of Sight, and her *Heart* had only *desired* this Gift of God, he would then have bestowed this greatest of all Gifts upon her.

But surely, if this Desire in the Woman would have made her thus capable of *all the Benefits* of our Saviour, it cannot be inconsistent with the Gospel, to make the *same Desire* as beneficial to a *true* and *pious* Christian, as it would have been to an *unbaptized Samaritan*.

Again, our Lord saith, 'All things whatsoever ye shall ask in 'Prayer, believing, ye shall receive.† Here you see, *all things*, and therefore *all the Benefits of Christ*, are ascribed to *Faith*, and we have everything that we can desire or pray for, by virtue of it. Does not our Lord here ascribe as much *Benefit* to Faith, as ever anyone ascribed to the holy Communion? Or who ever said that of the Power, or Benefit, or Efficacy of the Sacrament, which our Lord here says of the Benefit of *Faith*?

Is not this as inconsistent with the Gospel, as the actual partaking of Christ's Benefits, by the *single Duty* of receiving the

* John iv. 10.

† Matt. xxi. 22.

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Sacrament? Is not this Benefit of the Prayer of Faith as contrary to this Author's *whole System of Virtues united in us*, as the other Benefit of the Sacrament? Is it not as just to say, that this *Prayer of Faith* is only a *single Instance* of Obedience, as to say so of the Sacrament? And is not the *main Design of the Gospel* as much destroyed by making *Faith* to be thus beneficial, as by making the Communion to be so beneficial?

Or can it be supposed, that when our Lord, who ascribes thus much to the *Prayer of Faith*, when it is *alone*, would think it *too much* to be ascribed to it, when the Holy Sacrament is *united* with it? Or must it be supposed, that this *Prayer of Faith* loses its Virtue and Power, is deprived of its excellent Effects, *only then*, when it is a Part of the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood.

Again, our Lord saith, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you.' Must not this Author have as much to complain of in this Doctrine, that ascribes so much to Prayer in the *Name of Christ*, as in that Doctrine, that ascribes so much to the Sacrament? Must he not say, that the praying in the *Name of Christ*, is but *one single Instance of Obedience*; and that to say, we are thereby made Partakers of all the Benefits of Christ, is *putting that upon one single Act of Obedience*, which our blessed Lord has *made to depend upon the whole System of all Virtues united in us*? Must he not say, that this Account of the Power and Efficacy of Prayer in *Christ's Name*, is a Doctrine destructive of the main Design of the Gospel?

For everything that this Author objects against this Doctrine of the Sacrament, must with the same Strength be objected against these, and many other the like express Declarations of our Saviour.

Everyone must know that it would be very easy to produce various Passages of the Gospel, that teach the same Doctrine, as these do that I have quoted; and that when this Author said, our Saviour *made the partaking of his Benefits to depend upon the whole System of all Virtues united in us*, he had just the same Reason and Authority from the Gospel to say so, as he has to say, that Christ declared he came to *seek* that which was *not lost*, to *heal* those which were *not sick*, and *save* those who stood in *no need* of a Saviour.

But now, seeing this is the Nature, Power, and Efficacy of the Prayer of *Faith*, and of Prayer in the *Name of Christ*; seeing he himself has assured us, that they make us actual Partakers of everything that we can ask of the Father, or that he through Christ can give us, we have the fullest Assurance, that if we do

that which the Sacrament requires to be done; if we don't separate *Faith* and Prayer in the *Name of Christ* from it, but perform it in *this Faith and Prayer*, or make it as it ought to be, a *real Exercise* of this Faith and Prayer, then we receive in and by it all the Benefits of our Saviour.

But because this Author seems entirely out of his Element, when speaking of the Benefits of Jesus Christ, and not to be able to speak an intelligible Word about it, as to the true Grounds and Nature of it, but only to puzzle himself and the Reader with an empty superficial Way of arguing from the Sound of Words: I shall therefore, in a word or two, endeavour to lay before you the true Grounds of the Benefits of Jesus Christ, as he is the Saviour of *all Mankind*.

It is the fundamental Doctrine, or rather the *known* Foundation of all *revealed* Religion, and the *known* Foundation of all natural Piety and Goodness, that Jesus Christ is the *second Adam*: That he is a *common Head*, or *Parent*, or *Person* to all Mankind, in the same manner as *Adam* is the *common Head*, or *Parent*, or *Person* to all Mankind.

That a real *Birth*, *Life*, *Nature*, and true *Man*, is in the same *Truth* and *Reality* derived to us from this our *second Adam*, as a real Birth, and Life, and Nature is derived to us from our first *Adam*. And that as without any *Figure* or *Metaphor* of Speech we are all said to be born of *Adam*, and descended from him; so we are all in the same Dependence upon our *second Adam*, really and not figuratively born of him, and have our Descent from him; Spirit of his Spirit, Life of his Life, in the same Truth and Reality, as every Man has the Nature of the first *Adam*.

And herein is seen the infinite Depth of Divine Love and Goodness to Mankind, who though they were by the Condition of their Creation to be derived from one *Head* or *Parent*, and to take his *State* of Perfection or Imperfection; yet were by the Goodness and Care of God for them, provided from the very Beginning with a *second Parent*, or common Head, who after the *Fall* of the first, and the fallen State that he had brought upon his Posterity, should be a *common Restorer*, and put it in every Man's Power to have the same Choice of Life and Death, as the first Man had; that so, they who were lost before they were born, and were made Inheritors of a miserable Nature without their Choice, might have a Divine Life restored to them in a *second Parent*, which should not be in the Power of anyone to lose for them, but should depend entirely upon their *own Will and Desire* of it, upon their *own Faith*, and *Hope*, and *Hungering* after it.

This eternal and immutable Truth, worthy of being written in capital Letters of Gold, is the Foundation of all revealed and natural Religion: and a standing Monument of God's universal Goodness and Love to all Mankind, and such as is sufficient to make all Men rejoice and give praise to God.

For by this Truth, all that seems hard and cruel to human Reason, that the Posterity of *Adam* should be involved in the Consequences of their first Father's Fall, (yet how could it be otherwise?) all this, I say, is made a wonderful Scene of Love, as soon as we consider, that all Mankind were redeemed as soon as they were lost, and that their Redemption was as *early*, as universal, and as extensive in its Effects, as the Fall was. And that no Son of *Adam* is left to inherit a *poor, earthy, perishable, corrupt* Nature from him, without having it in his Choice to be *born again* of a second *Adam*, and restored, with Advantage, to all the Riches, and Treasures, and Blessings of a divine and paradisiacal Nature, which were lost without his Consent.

There is something so amazingly loving and merciful in this Conduct of divine Providence over Mankind, that I cannot help thinking, no one can calmly consider it in the Quiet of his Mind, without having all his Infidelity melted down by it. And that such an *Act of general Pardon*, as early as the first Sin, and a new Parent provided for us, to be our Parent by *Choice and Faith*, as soon as our first Parent had undone us without our Consent: Such an Act of Pardon being the Beginning and Foundation of all revealed Religion, and of everything that is afterwards revealed in it, has surely enough in it, if once known, to make revealed Religion the Joy, and Comfort, and Desire of every Man's Heart. What would I give that I could but dart one Ray of this Truth into every Unbeliever's Heart; for the smallest Ray of it would do to everyone as the *Light that fell from Heaven* did to *St. Paul*, it would make as it were *Scales fall from his Eyes*: And he would find that all *Books and Systems* of Infidelity were as unreasonable in themselves, and as hurtful to him, as those Commissions were which *Paul* had from the *High Priest* to bind all that called on the Name of *Christ*.

But to proceed: That Jesus Christ is thus the Saviour and universal Redeemer of all Mankind, that he is this second *Adam* or Parent, giving a new Birth and Life to all that which was extinguished and lost by *Adam*; restoring *Adam* himself, and in him all Mankind to a Possibility of being born again, by their own *Will, Choice, Faith, and Desire*; and that revealed Religion began with the *Declaration* of this Redemption, and has revealed nothing but for the Sake and Support of it, is a Truth sufficiently attested by Scripture.

The Declaration which God made to *Adam* immediately after his Fall, of a *Seed of the Woman to bruise the Serpent's Head*, was a Declaration of *Pardon* and *Redemption* to *Adam*, and in him to all Mankind; for what he said to *Adam*, that he said to all that were in the Loins of *Adam*; who, as they fell in his Fall before they were born, without the Possibility of any one Man's being exempted from it; so were they all put into his State of *Pardon* and *Redemption* before they were born, without the Possibility of any one Man's being excluded, or left out of it.

Thus revealed Religion *begins* with an Offer of a *second Adam*, and upon the Foot of an *universal Pardon* and *Redemption* to all Mankind. Every Son of *Adam* is in the same Covenant with God that *Adam* was, and has the same *Bruiser* of the Serpent as *near* to him, as he was to *Adam*, and declared to be his Redeemer, in the same Degree as he was declared to be the Redeemer of *Adam*.

And who would seek for Arguments against such a Saviour? Or who would cavil at a *revealed Religion*, that has no other Beginning or End, but to reveal an *universal Redemption*? Or who can enough call upon all the Creation, Heaven and Earth, Angels and Men, and everything that hath Breath, to praise the Lord for such Salvation? You must forgive these little Digressions; for I want so much to touch the Heart of my Reader, and make him in love with God, and his own Salvation in Christ Jesus, that I know not how to content myself with bare Arguments.

Now this Declaration of God to *Adam*, of his pardon and Redemption by the Seed of the Woman, is not to be considered, as we consider the *Declaration* of a *Pardon* made by some great *Prince* to an offending *Subject*, which is only a Declaration of *Words*, that are heard only with our outward Ears, and of a Person that is entirely distinct from us.

God's pardoning a Sinner, or redeeming fallen Man, has nothing like this in it. If this offending Subject had his *Life*, and *Breath*, and *Being* in and from this great Prince, or could be said to *live*, and *move*, and *have his Being in him*; it would be easy, nay, necessary to believe, that his Declaration of Pardon to him, must be something very different from a Pardon of Words, and must signify some *inward Effect*, or *Change*, or new *State* of Existence in his Prince.

Now this Declaration of God's Pardon and Reconciliation to *Adam*, and in him to all Mankind, is not the Declaration of a Being that is *out of*, or *separate* from us, but of a God in whom *we live*, and *move*, and *have our Being*; who is the *Centre* of that which is most *Central* in us, the Life of our Life, the Spirit of our Spirit: His Declaration therefore of Pardon is not a Declaration

of *Words*, or of a Being that is separate from us ; but must signify some inward *Change*, or new *State* of our Existence in him, or that *he is* to us, and in us, that which *he was not* before he pardoned us. For his Words are Power, and what he speaks he acts ; and what he acts, he acts not *out of us*, but in the *inmost Essence* of our Being, because so we exist in him, and he in us.

If God at the Fall had said, *Let us save Man*, the same had been effected, as when he said, 'Let us make Man.' When therefore God said to *Adam* and *Eve*, 'The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Head of the Serpent,' what was said, was done ; and it was the same Thing, had the same Meaning and Effect, as if he had said, 'Be ye henceforth in a State of Salvation, and let the redeeming, conquering Seed of the Woman from this time begin to have Power in you, and to be in you a Strength and 'Might against the Serpent.' And what he said was done, as when he said, 'Let there be Light, and there was Light.'

Thus this Declaration of Pardon and Redemption made by God to *Adam*, and, in him, to all his Posterity, was not *solely* a Promise of something to come, or of a Pardon that was at a Distance, no more than it was the Promise of a God that was at a Distance from him ; but the Declaration of something then *inwardly done* and *given*, by a God inwardly present in him, and signified no less than God's *seeking* and *manifesting* himself again to a Creature, that had *lost* him as his *God* and *only Good*.

For how can the Anger of that Being, 'in whom we live, and 'move, and have our Being,' be only an Anger of *Words*, or made known to us only by Words ? Or how can it be anything else, but some *inward Loss* of that which is our *Good* in him ?

Or how can his Pardon be only a Pardon of *Words*, or something heard only with our Ears ? Or how can it be anything else, but his *restoring* that to us, or his *reviving* that in us, which makes us again capable of *finding* him our *God* and *only Good* ?

Therefore God's Declaration of Pardon to *Adam*, was not barely a Promise of something to come, but the Pardon itself ; and was the *real Communication* of something to *Adam*, which made him *capable* of enjoying God as his *Good*, which he had not when he *wanted* to be pardoned, and which he could not have, if God was in a State of *Anger* with him.

Now had not God spoken this Pardon and Reconciliation to *Adam* after his Fall, he had been in the Condition of the *Deep*, when it was said, *Darkness was upon the Face of the Deep*.

Nay, it had been much worse with him ; for had not God made this Declaration of Pardon and Redemption to him at that time, that is, had he not done *inwardly* in the *Depth* of his

Soul, something like that which he did to the Darkness of the Deep, when he spoke Light into it, *Adam* and *Eve*, and *all* their Posterity, had been inwardly mere *Devils*, and outwardly mere *Beasts*, a motley Mixture of both, till the Beast fell into the Earth, and the Soul to the State of Devils.

For had not God thus in the Beginning of the Fall, before any Man was born into the World of *Adam* and *Eve*, had he not spoken Pardon and Redemption unto *Adam* and *Eve*; neither they, nor any of their Posterity had been *capable* of any *Faith*, or *Hope*, or *Desire* of God, but had lived as much without all *Conscience*, or *Instinct* of Goodness, as the Beasts of the Earth and Devils do.

Therefore God redeemed Man, that is, restored to him a Power of being again his Creature, or a Power of *knowing* and *finding* him to be his *God*, when he said, the 'Seed of the Woman shall 'bruise the Serpent's Head.' He redeemed him by *communicating* to him a *Sense*, a *Feeling*, and a *Desire* of God, by communicating to him a *Capacity* to enjoy him as his *only Good*, by sowing into him a *Seed* of the Woman, a *Spark* of Life, an *Instinct* of Goodness, a *Taste* of Heaven, a *Principle* of Holiness, a *Touch* of Love, the *Pearl* of the Gospel, the *Pledge* of Immortality, the *hidden Kingdom* of God.

For all these Expressions of a Seed, a Spark, an Instinct, a Principle, a Pearl and Kingdom, are insufficient to express *that inward Treasure* of the Soul, and *Fund* of everlasting Happiness, which God in the Beginning of the Redemption, or as his Act of Redemption, communicated to Man.

Now in this Degree of Redemption is every Creature that is born of *Adam*; he has this Kingdom of God in his Soul, as a *Grain of Mustard Seed*, as a *Spark* of Life, as a *Pledge* of Immortality, as his *Attraction* to God: If he *tramples* this *Pearl* under his Feet, if he will *choke* this Word, if he will *put out* this Spark, if he will *resist* this Attraction, then his Destruction is from himself; and when the Carcass of Flesh and Blood falls off from him, he must find himself in his *own Hell*, and must have the Misery of a *darkened*, *anxious*, *fiery*, *self-tormented* Nature for ever, that would not suffer itself to be redeemed.

But if he will consent to his Redemption, and co-operate with that *inward Redeemer* which God has put into his Soul; if he will suffer his Spark to *kindle*, his *Instinct* of Goodness to *spread* itself, the Light of the Life to *arise* in him, the Voice of God to be *heard* in him; then will the *Divine Life*, the *inward Man*, be brought forth in him; and when his Body breaks off, Heaven will be made *manifest* in his Soul, and he will fall into all the Fulness of God. The *Son* of God will be his *Light*, the *Holy*

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Spirit will breathe in him, and the Power and Omnipotency of the *Father* will be Life and Strength in him; and thus, in the completest Sense of the Words, shall he *ever live, and move, and have his Being* in God.

And now, my dear Reader, what shall I say to you? How shall I do that, which I most of all desire to do, touch your Heart? Or how can your Heart be untouched with this affecting View of the Mercies of God in Christ Jesus, and of the Riches and Treasures which lie hid in your own Soul, wanting nothing but your own Consent and good Wishes to be manifested in you?

But it may be, modern *Infidelity* has stolen into your Heart, and so you lie starving in the midst of Plenty, choosing rather to famish on the *dry Husks of Reason, Dispute, and Infidelity*, than to have this Divine Life, this Riches of your own Soul, discovered to you on the Terms of the Gospel. It may be you have buried this *Spark* of Life, this *inward Man*, and have heaped all the Earth upon him that you can get, that you have sealed the Stone of his *Sepulchre*, and have set your greatest Enemy, a *reasoning Infidelity*, upon the *Watch*, to dispute, wrangle, and deny every Doctrine of Scripture, *that as a good Angel* would roll away the Stone of the Sepulchre, and let your *inward Redeemer* arise in you.

If this is your Case, if you have let a *reasoning Infidelity* into your Heart, you know not what Mischief you have let into it; for the Denial of the Gospel reaches much further, and is more extensive than you imagine.

For to deny Jesus Christ, is to deny *your Share* in the first Pardon of God to Man; it is returning into the first State of the *Fall*, and refusing to be a Partner with *Adam* in his State of Forgiveness; it is going over to the Side of the Serpent, and declaring that you will not enter into Peace with God on the Terms of *bruising his Head*; for Jesus Christ that calls upon you in the *Gospel*, is that same Christ which became *Adam's* Pardon; and if you reject him in the *Gospel*, it is rejecting him from the Beginning: and is saying, that you will have no Share in that Salvation which was granted to *Adam*, and in him to all Mankind. Nay, what is still more, if you reject the *Saviour* offered to you in the *Gospel*, you reject *all that* which makes you differ from a *Devil*; for that Saviour which speaks to you in the *Gospel*, is that very same *inward Light of your Mind*, which makes you now differ from a *Devil*; for had you *nothing* of that Jesus Christ in you, whom you reject in the *Gospel*, you would be in the same *dark Malignity*, and *self-tormenting* Wretchedness, in which every diabolical Nature is.

To refuse him that speaketh to you in the Gospel, is not barely to renounce a certain *particular Religion* revealed by God at a certain Time, it is not barely to reject Christ as *come in the Flesh*; but it is rejecting *all* that God has ever *transacted* with Man, it is renouncing all that is *Divine* and *Good* within you, all that God inwardly speaks and teaches in the Depth of your Soul; it is saying that you will have no Benefit from the *good Workings* or *Motions* of your own Heart, or the *Instincts* of Goodness that are stirring in it; for Jesus Christ that calls you to Repentance in the Gospel, is the *very same* blessed Saviour, that *warns, reproveth, and preaches* Repentance in the inmost Essence of your Spirit. For it is a Deceit of the grossest Kind, to think that Christ came only as our Saviour, when he came in the *Flesh*, or that he only speaks to us that which is *outwardly* spoken in the Gospel; for he always was *that* in every Man that *saved* him from being entirely a diabolical Nature, and was as really the Teacher and Mover of all that is good *within* you, as he was the Teacher of the *Gospel*. Therefore to reject him as your Saviour, to refuse him as such, and to desire to be without him, is in reality to desire to be in *Hell*, to have the *Darkness* and *Distress* of diabolical Beings; it is desiring to be without any *Light of God* upon your Mind, or any *Instincts* of Goodness stirring in your Heart.

And if this is not the *immediate Effect* of your Infidelity, if you don't immediately find that the Denial of Christ is *putting out* all the Light within you; 'tis because Christ is Love, and will be so good towards you, as to continue his inward Light to you, though you reject his outward Light of the Gospel.

But, my Friend, be wise in time, for this Goodness will continue but a Time; don't let a *poor worthless* Infidelity beguile you to *eat the Dust* of the Earth with the Serpent, when God has provided for you the *Bread of Life*. For this Time of Goodness and Forbearance will soon be over; and if the End of it finds you in your Infidelity, rejecting the Benefits of Christ, you will then see the whole of all you desired, you will be without Christ, you will find that all is gone with him, and that you will have nothing left, but that Nature which is the Torment of Hell.

You now think, that because you can frame *Ideas* of Virtue, and exert some *Acts* of Goodness, though you reject all Faith in Christ, that therefore he is not *necessary* to your Virtue and Happiness; but your miserable Mistake lies here, that you think Christ is only he that preached the Gospel, and that it is not him that speaks and moves every good Thought or Word

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that is spoken in you, but that you have a Light and Goodness of your own. But when this Time is over, and you have spent your Hour of Grace, Christ will no longer stand knocking at the Door of your Heart; and then you will find, that you are as empty of all *inward Light*, as you are of the Gospel, and that by rejecting him as your Saviour, you have rejected all that was *Divine* and *Good* within you.

Infidelity therefore is a much *deeper* Evil than you may imagine, it denies and rejects more than you think of; you may intend by it only to change the Light of the *Gospel* for the Light of *Reason*, but Christ will not be divided by your Intention; he is the *one only* Light of Men, the same in the *Heart* that he is in the *Gospel*; and though you may now think that you have *two Teachers*, because he teaches in two Places, and therefore may adhere to one, and reject the other; yet this is a Deceit that can last no longer than the Disputings of this World last with you.

When the Veil of Flesh and Blood is pulled off, and you must stand in the Nakedness of your Soul before God; then you will know, that these *two Lights* are only one, and that neither of them can be rejected by itself. These Lights appear now as two, only because God is so good as to leave no Part of you *untried*, but presses the Kingdom of Heaven upon you, both from within, and from without.

The eternal *Word*, the *Son* of God, took human Nature upon him, worked all his Miracles, taught all his Doctrines, underwent all his Sufferings, to make that Light of the Mind, which *every Man that cometh into the World* had received from him, effectual to their Salvation; therefore the Light of the Gospel, and the Light of the Mind, are one, as Christ is one, whether he speaks to you inwardly or outwardly. If therefore you reject Christ in the utmost Efforts of his Goodness to save you, you will find that the renouncing of Christ, is renouncing all that you have from him, and that all the good Light of your Mind, call it what you will, as it was his, is all rejected with him, and that nothing is left in that Soul, where he is not, but mere Darkness.

But to return to my Subject; what I have said above of God's Covenant with *Adam*, and the Redemption granted to him, is God's Covenant with all Mankind, and therefore thus far all Mankind are the redeemed of Jesus. There is no Partiality in God, no Election of one People to Salvation, and Dereliction of another to their own Misery. As all *fell* and *died* in *Adam*, so all were *restored* in his Restoration.

Thus says the Apostle, 'As by the Offence of one, Judgment came upon all to Condemnation; even so by the Righteousness

‘of one, the free Gift came upon all Men unto Justification of Life.’*

But you will perhaps say, how does it appear, that this first Covenant of God with Mankind, or Redemption of all Men in the Redemption of *Adam*, is the Redemption in and by Jesus Christ.

I may better ask you, Where you can have the smallest Reason even to suspect the contrary? For is not the *Seed of the Woman*, Jesus Christ? And if our Salvation then began, when God made Declaration of the *saving Power* of this Seed, it is plain, that Christ’s Redemption then began in Mankind, that he was thenceforward in every Man as a *Spark* of Life, that as a *secret Power*, should bruise the Serpent, and support us against him, till he, in the Fulness of Time, should, in the *Fulness of the Promise*, become such a Seed of the Woman, as should openly triumph over Death and Hell, and all the Kingdom of the Serpent. For if it were Christ that became *Adam’s* Redeemer in the promised Seed; if he had actually the Power of that Salvation manifested in his Soul, and was in a State of Redemption, because Christ was become the Ransom and Life of his Soul; then all the Sons of *Adam*, from the first to the last, are in *Adam’s* state of Covenant with God through Jesus Christ, and have the Seed of the Woman doing *all that* for them, which it did for *Adam*.

Again, Does not the Gospel expressly say, that Jesus Christ is the *True Light, which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World*? Therefore Jesus Christ is in every Man that cometh into the World, and every Son of *Adam* is in a State of Redemption in and by Jesus Christ, and every Son of *Adam* has received *that same* from Jesus Christ, which *Adam* received from him, *viz.*, an *inward Light* of Life, a *Beginning* of his Salvation, an *actual Power* or Strength to resist the Serpent; therefore Jesus Christ, as he is the Light and Life of Men, as he is the Bruiser of the Serpent, as he is the Power of Salvation, is and ever was the *Free Gift of God unto all Men*.

Again, does not the Scripture teach us, that God is as well the God of the *Gentiles*, as the God of the *Jews*? But if he is their God, then they are his People. And as we know that God is not the Creator of any Beings, but in and by Jesus Christ, by whom everything was made, that was made; so he is not the God of any People, but in and by Jesus Christ, who is the Reconciler of all Things unto God, by whom alone all Things and Persons are made acceptable to him; therefore if he is the God

* Rom. v. 18.

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and Father of the *Gentiles*, then the *Gentiles* have an Interest in Jesus Christ, have all their Access to God, as their Father and Creator, in and by the Benefits and Merits of Jesus Christ; or, in other Words, are actual Partakers of the Benefits of Jesus Christ, as he is the Saviour of Mankind.

Which is a Privilege or Blessing that this Author will not allow Christians to have, even when eating the Flesh and drinking the Blood of Christ; so little does he know what he speaks of, when he speaks of the partaking of the Benefits of Christ.

But you will perhaps further ask, How can the *Gentiles* have an Interest in the Benefits of Jesus Christ, since they know him not, nor ask anything in his Name. May you not as well ask me, How they can be said *to live, and move, and have their Being in God*, who know not what it is to have *Life, and Motion, and Being* in him, nor ever confessed it in a true Manner, or under a right Sense of it? For if they can have the Benefit of a Life in God, and be blessed by it, who are either totally, or much ignorant of it; then Christ, as he is the Atonement and Life of *Adam* and his Posterity, may be a Benefit and Blessing to those who are totally ignorant of it, or at least know nothing of him, as he is Christ, or the Son of God manifest in the Flesh.

Again, the Scripture says of Jesus Christ, that he came *unto his own, and his own received him not*, that is, *they knew him not*: Now if he could come unto his own, though they knew him not, then it is plain, that they may be *his*, who know him not, that is, they may have some Interest in him, be purchased by him, have received much from him, be greatly related to him, who yet are insensible of it.

Lastly, You might much better ask me, How can they, who never knew anything of Christ, as their *Mediator* and *Atonement*, be judged by him at the last Day? For if they were altogether Strangers to Christ, had no Relation to him, had received nothing from him, or by means of him, he could not be their *Judge*. For Jesus Christ cannot do anything as a *Judge*, till he has done everything as a *Saviour*; nor be anywhere a Judge, but where he has first appeared as a Saviour.

Therefore it is an evident Truth, that had not *all* Nations, and every *individual* Man, received a *certain* Means of Salvation through him, he could not be the *Judge* of *all*.

Heathens, Jews, and Christians differ not thus, that the one have a *Saviour* and are in a *redeemed* State, and the other are not; or that the one have *one* Saviour, and the other have *another*; for the *one* Judge of all, is the one Saviour of all: but they only

differ in this, that one and the same Saviour is *differently* made known to them, and differently to be *obtained by them*. The Heathens knew him not as he was in the numerous *Types* of the *Jewish Law*, they knew him not as he is gloriously *manifested* in the Gospel; but they knew him as he was the *God* of their *Hearts*, manifesting himself by a *Light* of the Mind, by *Instincts* of Goodness, by a *Sensibility* of Guilt, by *Awakenings* and *Warnings* of Conscience; and this was their *Gospel*, which they received as truly and really in, and by, and through *Jesus Christ* as the Law and Gospel were received through him.

Therefore it is a great and glorious Truth, enough to turn every Voice into a Trumpet, and make Heaven and Earth ring with Praises and Hallelujahs to God, that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of all the World, and of every Man of every Nation, Kindred, and Language. Therefore saith St. *John*, 'They sung a new Song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the Book, and to open the Seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy Blood, out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation.* And again, 'After this I beheld, says he, and lo, a great Multitude, which no Man could number, of all Nations, and Kindreds, and People, and Tongues, stood before the Throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white Robes, and with Palms in their Hands, and cried with a loud Voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb.†

I must, before I proceed further, put in here a Word of Caution to two Sorts of Readers. If you are in such a State, as I supposed one to be above, touched with modern Infidelity, having your *Reason* set upon the *watch* to guard you against the Gospel, it may here do its Office, and will perhaps tell you, that what I have here said in favour of the *general Light*, or *Seed of Life* that is in all Men, is much the same thing that you say in Defence of *natural Reason*, or Religion, only with this Difference, that I mention it as coming from Christ, and you consider it as the bare Light of Nature.

Now if this were all the Difference, is not this enough to show you, that my Opinion is the very *Denial* of yours; for if I proved that what you called the natural Light of Men, was wholly derived from the *divine Revelation*, would not that be a sufficient Proof that I denied and disproved your Religion of natural Reason? And have I not done the same thing, if I have asserted the Light of Men to be a Light derived from Christ? And how can such an Assertion be made in the least favourable to your Opinion, that such a Light is *natural*?

* Rev. v. 9.

† Rev. vii. 9, 10.

But to prevent all Misapprehension, I now declare to you, and will show you in the most explicit manner, that that which I call the Light of Men, or the Seed of Life sown into all Men by Jesus Christ, is as wholly different from that which you call *natural Reason*, as Light is different from Darkness; and that they stand in that same State of *Contrariety* to each other, both as to their *Original*, their *Nature* and *Qualities*, as our Saviour and *Pontius Pilate* did.

I must therefore assure you, that as I fear God, and wish your Salvation, so I can no more say a word in favour of what is now called the Religion of *natural Reason*, than I would recommend to you the ancient *Idolatry* of Heathens. And yet at the same time, I am no more an Enemy to *Reason*, than I am an Enemy to the Light of the Sun, and as freely wish you all the Benefits of the one, as of the other.

But if you do by *Reason*, as they did by the *Sun*, who thought it to be *divine*, fell down before it, and expected *all* from it; then I must speak as plainly to you of the *Inability* of Reason to do you this Good, as I must have spoken of the *Inability* of the Sun to such *Idolaters* of it.

And if I should have told them, that the Sun was no more their God, than the poorest *Worm* upon Earth, and that it could no more make those to be divine that worshipped it, than a Storm of *Hail* could make those to be divine that it fell upon, I should have told them a great Truth. So if I say to you, that *Reason*, or the *Faculty* of Reasoning, is no more the Religion of Man, than the Faculty of *doubting* or *erring* is; and that it can no more make those to be divine who place their Trust in it, than a great *Error* can make those to be divine who abide by it, I should tell you a great and useful Truth.

For Reason, or a Faculty of Reasoning upon the moral Habitues and Relations of Things and Persons, or upon the *moral Proportion* of Actions, has no more of the Nature and Power of Religion in it, than so much Reasoning upon the Relations of *Squares* and *Triangles*. And if a Man had this Religion of *Reason* only when he was dreaming in *Sleep*, it would be the same good thing to him, as it is to those who make it their Religion when they are awake.

For the *Good* of Religion, is like the Good of *Food* and *Drink* to an hungry and thirsty Creature; and if instead of giving such a one Bread and Wine, or Water, you should teach him to seek for Relief, by attending to clear Ideas of the Nature of Bread, of different Ways of making it, and the Relation it hath to Water; he would be left to die in the Want of Sustenance, just as your *Religion* of Reasoning leaves the Soul to perish in the Want of

Religion. And as such a Man would have no more Benefit from such *Reasoning* about the Relation that Bread had to Water, whether it was the Reasoning of a *Dream*, or the Reasoning of a Man *awake*, because either Way he was kept under the same Want of that which was to preserve his Life ; so whether a Man has your Religion of *Reasoning* only when he is *asleep*, or when he is awake, is the same thing ; because either Way he is kept under the same Want of that which can alone preserve the Life of the Soul. For the *Good* that is in Religion, or the Good that we want to receive by it, is no more within the *reach* of our *Reason*, or to be *communicated* to us by it, than the Good of Food is in the reach of our Reason, or can be communicated to us by it. And yet as a Man may have the *Good* of Food much assisted and secured to him, by the right Use of his Reason, though Reason has not the Good of Food in it ; so a Man may have the *Good* of Religion much assisted and secured to him by the right Use of Reason, though Reason has not the *Good* of Religion in it.

And as a Man ought not to be accused as an Enemy to the true Use of Reasoning about Food, because he declares that Reason is not Food, nor can supply the Place of it ; so a Man ought not to be accused as an Enemy to the Use of Reasoning in Religion, because he declares that Reason is not Religion, nor can supply the Place of it.

But to show you the Bottom of this whole Matter, pray consider with me as follows : We have no Want of Religion, but *so far* as we want to *better* our State in God, or so far as we are *unpossessed* of God, or *less* possessed of him than we might be. This is the true Ground of Religion, to alter our *State* of Existence in God, and to have *more* of the Divine Nature or Perfections communicated to us. Nothing therefore is our *Good* in Religion, but that which alters our State of Existence in God for the better, and puts us in Possession of something of God, or makes us Partakers of the Divine Nature in such a Manner and Degree as we wanted it.

Everything that is in Life, has its Degree of Life in and from God, it *lives*, and *moves*, and *has its Being in God*. This is as true of Devils themselves, as of the highest and most perfect Angels. Therefore all the Happiness or Misery of all Creatures consists only in this, as they are *more* or *less* possessed of God, or as they *differently* partake of the Divine Nature, or according to their different State of Existence in God.

But if this be the Truth of the Matter, (and who can deny it?) then we have the Certainty of Demonstration, that nothing can be our *Good* in Religion, but that which *communicates* to us something of God, or the Divine Nature, or that which *better*s our State and Manner of Existence in God.

For if Devils are what they are, because of their State and Manner of Existence in God ; if blessed Angels are what they are, because of their State and Manner of Existence in God ; then it undeniably follows, that all that is betwixt Angels and Devils, all Beings from the Happiness of the one to the Misery of the other, must and can have no other Happiness or Misery, but according to their *State* and *Manner* of Existence in God, or according as they have more or less of the State of Angels, or the State of Devils in them. Therefore nothing can be our *Good* in Religion, but that which alters our State and Manner of Existence in God, and renders us possessed of him in a different and better Manner.

Now if you were to send to the fallen Spirits of Darkness, all the *Systems* of your Religion of *Reason*, that have been published here, to let them know that they have the Power of their own Restoration and Happiness within themselves, that they need seek to nothing, but their own *natural Reason* and Understanding, and the *Strength* and *Activity* of their own Powers, to raise them to all the Happiness they are capable of ; such a Religion would be so far from altering or mending their State of Existence in God, or doing them any good, that it would add Strength to all their Chains ; and the more firmly they believed and relied upon it, the more would they be confirmed and fixed in their Separation from God.

And yet, a Religion that must necessarily keep them in Hell, is the only Religion that you will have to carry you to Heaven. May God deliver you from this Error !

On the other hand, if you could infuse into those dark Spirits a Glimpse of that *Light* of the Mind, or *Instinct* of Goodness, which I have said all Mankind have received from Jesus Christ, as their second *Adam*, their Salvation would be so far begun, and Hell would become a State of *Trial* for their Redemption. Therefore that Light of the Mind, or Instinct of Goodness, which I have spoken of, has the utmost Contrariety to your Religion of *Reason*, that can possibly be imagined.

The one is the Beginning of the new Birth in Christ, and the Foundation of Heaven ; the other is the Growth of Death, and the very Essence of Hell in the Soul. Now that here is no Aggravation of the Matter, but the plain and naked Truth, you may easily see from a Consideration of the Articles of your Religion of *Reason*. Your Religion of Reason, is a Religion of *natural Strength* and *Power*, that rejects the *Necessity* of a Saviour, that feels no *Want* of him, that rejects the *Necessity* of *Divine Grace*, the *Guidance* of the Holy Spirit, and feels no *Want* of it ; these are the *essential Parts* of your Religion of Reason,

which are in Truth and Reality the Religion of Hell, or that *very State* of Mind which reigns and governs there.

For could those miserable Spirits renounce these Articles of your Religion, their Chains of Darkness would break off from them. Could they cast themselves down before God, humbly confessing, that of themselves they are not able to save themselves, or even to think a good Thought: Could they in Humility and Penitence beg of the Mercy of God, to do something *in* them and *for* them, which they cannot do to themselves: Could they acknowledge the *Want* of a Saviour, ask God to *find* one for them: Could they *feel* and *own* the Want of his *Holy Spirit*, and humbly beg of God to be assisted by it, a Door of Salvation would be opened to them. And yet you see that nothing opens this Door, but the plain and full Renunciation of every Part of your Religion of Reason.

And if it be asked, Why they cannot be saved? no other Reason can be given, but because they *will* not; they *cannot* renounce your *Religion of Reason*, that is, they cannot humbly acknowledge their own *Inability* to do themselves good; they will not admit the Thought of a *Saviour*, they will not be *assisted* by the Spirit of God, or own the *Want* of his Life in them, and therefore they are and must be what they are, Prisoners in Chains of Darkness.

Awake therefore, my dear Friend, and cast away this Religion from you, with more Earnestness than you would cast burning Coals out of your Bosom: For could it only destroy your Body, I should have been less earnest in giving you notice of it. But as I have the fullest Conviction, that it is the *Death* and *Darkness* of your Soul, and is bringing the *Essence* of Hell secretly and invisibly into it; you must forgive me, if I use all the Expressions and Descriptions I can think of, to prevent your giving into it. Had I a superficial Charity for you, or a slight View of the Hurt you are doing to yourself, I should speak to you accordingly; but the Depth and Earnestness of my Desire to do you good, must have expressions suitable to it. Study not therefore how to find fault with me, or to dislike the Words, or Manner of my *Style*, for it is the Style of Love and Zeal for your Salvation; and if you condemn anything but Love in it, you condemn something that is not there.

I have shown you, that the Religion of Reason is the *very State* of hellish Minds, and that they are what they are, because they will *do all* for themselves, place all in their *own Strength*, because they cannot be *humble*, cannot own the *Want* of a Saviour; and I have only appealed to this Instance of the *Nature* and *Power* of your Religion of Reason, to show you in the most

undeniable Manner, that it must, and can have no other Effect upon you, than it has upon them ; that it must produce the *same* Hell in your Soul, the same Separation from God, and cannot possibly be any more the Way of Salvation for you, than it is for them.

What is the Reason that the *Faith* of the Devils, or their Belief of a God, does them no good? It is because there is nothing in it but their *own Act*, a mere Product of their own ; it is because it is an Act of your *Religion of Reason*, that will have no Virtue but by its *own Strength*, and of its own Growth. But if they could have so much of the Religion of the Gospel, as to say in the Language of it, *Lord, help our Unbelief*, their Faith would be changed, and be beneficial to them, only for this Reason, because they had renounced your Religion of doing good to themselves by their *own natural Powers*.

Hence it sufficiently appears, that your Way of natural Reason cannot be the Way of Salvation ; *1st*, Because the *Want* of Salvation is nothing else, but the wanting to have our State, or Manner of Existence in God, altered for the better ; or to have *something* of God communicated to us, which we want and are capable of receiving. But if this is the *Nature* of Salvation, then no Religion can *save* us, can do us our *proper Good*, or supply our proper Want, but that which has Power to *alter* our State of Existence in God, or to *communicate* to us that of God which we want, and are capable of. Therefore it follows, that nothing but that same God which created us, which gave us our State and Manner of Existence in him, and communicated to us that which we possess of him ; nothing but that same God can *redeem* us, or help us to that State or Manner of Existence in him, which we have lost, or are in want of.

But if God alone can redeem us, and for the same Reason that he alone can *create* ; if Creation and Redemption necessarily require the same Power, and must for the same Reason be necessarily appropriated to God, because each of them equally imply the Communication of *something* of God to us ; then I suppose it may be granted, that the Religion of Reason, which is for *saving* ourselves by our own *natural Powers*, is the greatest of all Absurdities ; as absurd as to suppose, that we can create by our own natural Powers, because Creation and Redemption both of them equally imply a *Communication* of something of the Divine Nature ; and therefore he that cannot do the one, cannot do the other.

And if a Man was to ask himself, why he cannot be the Saviour of other People, as well as of himself? He could say nothing against the one, but what must for the same Reason be

said against the other. For if Salvation is a Communication of *something* of God to the Person saved, then it is plain, that a Man can no more do this for himself, than he can do it for another.

There never could have been any Dispute about the *Possibility* of saving ourselves, nor any *Pretence* to save ourselves by our own natural Faculties, had not Men lost all true Knowledge both of God and themselves. For this Dispute cannot happen, till Men suppose that God is some *outward Being*, that our Relation to him is an *outward Relation*, that Religion is an outward Thing that passes between God and us, like Terms of Behaviour between Man and Man; that Sin hurts and separates us from God, only as a Misdemeanour hurts and separates us from our Prince; that an offended or angry God either gives or refuses Pardon to us, as an angry Prince does to his Subjects; and that what he gives us, or forgives us, is something as distinct and different from himself, as when a Prince sitting upon his Throne gives or forgives something to an Offender, that is an hundred Miles from him.

Now all this is the same total Ignorance of God, of what he is, of the *Relation* we have to him, and the Manner of his being *our Good*, as when the old Idolaters took Men to be Gods. And yet nothing is more plain, than that your Religion of Reason is *wholly* founded upon these gross and false Notions of God. You have not an Argument in its Defence, but what supposes all these Errors just mentioned; that our Relation to God is an *outward Relation*, like that of Subjects to their Prince, and that what we do to, and for God, as our Service to him, is and must be done by our *own Power*, as that which we do to, and for our Prince, must be by our own Power. And here lies the Foundation of all your Religion of Reason and Natural Power, that if it was not *sufficient* to obtain for us all that we want of God, he must be less good than a good earthly Prince, who requires no more of us, than that which we have a *natural* Strength to do, or can do by our own Power.

And yet this Error appears to have all the Grossness of *Idolatry*, as soon as you suppose, that God is no *outward separate* Being, but that we are what we are, have what we have, can do that which we can do, because he has brought us to this State of Life, Power and Existence *in himself*, because he has made us, so far as we are made Partakers or Possessors of his own Nature, and has communicated to us so much of himself; or, in the Words of Scripture, because *in him we live, move, and have our Being*, and consequently have no Life, Motion or Being out of him. For from this State of our Existence in God, it necessarily

follows, first, that by the Nature of our Creation we are only put into a Capacity of *receiving* Good : A Creature as such, can be in no other State ; it is as impossible for him to enrich himself, or communicate more Good to himself, as it was to create himself. *2dly*, That nothing but God himself can do us any good. *3dly*, That God cannot do us good, but by the Communication of himself in some manner to us.

For hence it evidently follows, that your Religion of Reason, which supposes that we have natural Powers that can put us in Possession of that, which we want to be possessed of in God, or that we need no more Divine Assistance to recover what we have lost of God, than to obtain a Pardon from a Prince ; or that God need communicate no more of himself to us in our Salvation, than a Prince communicates of himself to his pardoned Subject, has all the *Mistakes, Error* and *Ignorance* of God that is in *Idolatry*, when it takes God to be something that he is not ; and has all the *false Devotion* that is in *Idolatry*, when it puts the same Trust in, and expects the same Help from its *own Powers* and *Faculties*, which *Idolaters* did in and from their *Idols*.

Therefore your Religion of Reason, which you esteem as the modern *Refinement* of an human Mind, and more excellent and *rational* than the Faith and Humility of the Gospel, has all the Dregs of the Heathen *Idolatry* in it, and has changed *nothing* in *Idolatry*, but the *Idol* ; but has the same Mistakes of the Nature of God, and of the Manner in which he is *our God*, and *our Good*, as those *Idolaters* had ; and only differs from them in such a Degree of *Philosophy*, as the Religion of worshipping the *Sun* differs from the Religion of worshipping an *Onion*.

And if you expect that divine Assistance from your *Reason*, which one did from the *Sun*, and another from an *Onion* ; ye are all equally *Idolaters*, though ye may not be equally *Philosophers*.

For as soon as it is known and confessed, that God is all in all, that in him we live, move, and have our Being ; that we can have nothing *separately* or *out* of him, but everything in him ; that we can have no Being, nor any Degree of Being, nor any Degree of Good but in him ; and that he can give us nothing but himself, nor any Degree of Salvation, but in such Degree as he communicates something more of himself ; as soon as this is known, then it is known with the utmost Evidence, that to put our Trust in the *Sun*, an *Onion*, or our *own Reason*, if not equally absurd, is yet equally *idolatrous*, and equally *prejudicial* to our Salvation.

This I think, my dear Friend, may sufficiently show you both

the Nature and Danger of your Religion of Reason ; and that it can no more supply the Needs and Necessities of your Soul, than an *Idol* can save them that worshipped it ; that in this respect it has the *Insignificancy* of an *Idol*, the *Vanity* of an *Idol*, and the *Sin* of an *Idol* ; that it is that same Self-confidence, Self-acquiescence, that same Refusal of a Saviour and all divine Assistance, that keeps lost Spirits the Prisoners of Hell. Could they touch the Spirit of the Gospel, their Freedom would be begun ; and because they will not, cannot depart in the *smallest Tittle* from your Religion of natural Strength, their Chains are unmovable.

For no Soul can be lost, that can truly humble itself before God, and apply to his *Mercy* to be helped, saved, and redeemed in *such* a Manner as it shall please him. Let it be hid, or buried, or imprisoned where it will, Hell and Earth, Death and Darkness, and everything must give way to the Soul thus converted to God, that has no Confidence in itself, that sees nothing of its own but Sin, and that desires and calls upon God to save it by *some Miracle* of his own Mercy and Goodness. By this *Sensibility* of the *Want* of a Saviour, and by this *humble Conversion* and Application to God for him, all Chains are broken off, all Wounds are healed, and the Soul must infallibly find, if it thus continues to seek, its Salvation in the unknown Depths and Riches of the Divine Mercy.

On the other hand, no Soul, however refined and speculative, however lofty and aspiring in its Imaginations, spiritual in its Conceptions, or deep in its Penetration, can possibly be saved, that trusts in its own Strength and Ability, and will have no *other Saviour* or Redeemer, but its own *natural Reason* and Faculties.

The whole Universe has not two Truths of greater Certainty than these. And yet if they are Truths, and Truths of the utmost Certainty, then the absolute *Necessity* of the Gospel Salvation, and *utter Impossibility* of being saved by your Religion of *Reason*, has its final Decision.

Further, that *Principle* of Life, or *Light* of the Mind, which I have said that every Man receives from Jesus Christ, as the Beginning of his Salvation, is entirely different from your magnified *Light of Reason*, as that signifies a Faculty of viewing the Relations of the Ideas of Things, and drawing Consequences from them. For that Light I speak of, is *Goodness* itself, a *Seed* or *Degree* of so much of the heavenly Life in the Soul ; but this Faculty of *Speculating* and *Reasoning* has nothing of the Nature of Goodness or Religion ; it has not so much as the *Shadow* of it, and is in its own Nature as foreign from Religion, when it is

speculating upon it, as when it is speculating upon anything else. Just as our Faculty of seeing has no more of *Goodness*, or the Nature of an *Angel* in it, when it sees the Picture of an *Angel*, than when it sees the Picture of a *Beast*.

And as a blind Man has no more *Light* in him, when he reasons about *Light* and *Colours*, than when he discourses about *Weights* and *Measures*; so this *Ratiocination*, or *Reasoning* of the *Mind*, has no more of *Religion* in it, when it speculates its *Ideas* of *God*, *Goodness* and *Morality*, than when it speculates its *Ideas* of *Trees* and *Houses*.

And the *Reason* is plain, because this Faculty of speculating and arguing, is only the *Activity* of the *Mind* upon its own *Images* and *Ideas*, and is only the *same bare* Activity, whatever the *Images* be that exercise it; it has nothing of the Nature of the *Images* that it views, nor gets the Nature of them, because it views them; as it does not become *dark* when it considers the Nature, Causes, and Effects of *Darkness*, nor becomes *Light* when it reasons about it; so neither is it *Religion*, nor gets anything of the Nature of *Religion*, when it is wholly taken up in making *Descriptions* and *Definitions* of it.

If the *Needle* touched with the *Loadstone* was an intelligent Being, it could reason and make *Definitions* of *itself*, of *Attraction*, and of the *Loadstone*; but it would be easy to see, that the *Attraction* in the *Needle*, or the *Virtue* of the *Loadstone* that was left in it, was something in its *whole Nature* really different from this reasoning about it; and that this reasoning and defining had no *Relation* to this *Attraction*, nor would ever be the more like it, for its reasoning upon it, though it continued ever so long, or improved ever so much in its *Descriptions* of it, but would always be at the same *Distance* from it, and could have nothing of its Nature in it. But now if this reasoning Faculty in the *Needle* should pretend, that the *Needle* need not be drawn by an inward *Attraction*, that it need not be *unfixed*, or delivered from any *outward* Impediments of its turning to the *Loadstone*, because this reasoning Faculty was its *true* and *proper* *Attraction*, being full of *Ideas* and *Definitions* of it; you would then have a *plain Example* of your Practice, in taking natural Reason to be true Religion, and to have the Nature and Power of *something* that carries the Soul to God.

For this Instance is a clear Explication of the whole Matter; for that which I have called the first *Redemption* of Christ in the Soul, a *Seed* of Life, an *Instinct* of Good, a *Stirring* of Conscience, an *Attraction* to God, is that to the Soul, which *Attraction* is to the *Needle* that is touched, and is as *different* from your Religion of Reason, as a *reasoning* Faculty in the *Needle* would be different

from its *Attraction*, and never could be Attraction, or have the Nature of it.

If the Needle loses its Attraction, its Communication with the Loadstone is at an end; and though it reasons never so long about it, it is still at the same Distance from it. So if the Soul loses its *Instinct* of Goodness, its *Seed* of a Divine Life, its *Attraction* to God, all its Reasonings and Definitions about God and Goodness are of no Use to carry it to God, but it must lie in an absolute State of Separation from him, if its Attraction, its inward Tendency to God, is lost.

And let me tell you, my dear Friend, for so I must call you and think of you, that there is much more in this *Instance* than you imagine. For all is *Magnetism*, all is *Sentiment*, *Instinct*, and *Attraction*, and the *Freedom* of the Will has the Government of it. There is nothing in the Universe but Magnetism, and the Impediments of it. For as all things come from God, and all things have *something* of God and Goodness in them, so all things have *magnetical* Effects and *Instincts* both towards God and one another. This is the *Life*, the *Force*, the *Power*, the *Nature* of everything, and hence everything has all that is really Good or Evil in it; Reason stands only as a Busybody, as an idle Spectator of all this, and has only an *imaginary* Power over it.

We discover this Magnetism in some things, where it breaks out sensibly; but it is everywhere, for the *same Reason* that it is anywhere, though we are too busy with the Fictions of our own Minds to see it, or too much employed in such things as resist and suppress its Force.

But because this Magnetism is a secret Life, that wants to increase its Strength before it can sensibly show its Power; and because we have an *Activity* of Reason within us, that is soon in Action, and concerns itself with everything, and takes all upon it, as if it did all; because it can *look* at all, and *dispute* about all, therefore it is, that this Magnetism, or Instinct towards God and Goodness, has much Difficulty to show itself sufficiently, and only stirs now and then within us, or when Sickness, Distress, or some great outward Shock has so dashed in pieces all Images of Reason, and stopped the *Activity* of our Minds, that this secret Power of the Soul has Liberty to awake in it.

This is that Trumpet of God which will raise and separate the Dead, and then all Impediments being removed, everything will take its place, not according to the Images and Ideas it has here played with, but according to the inward Tendency and Attraction of its Nature, and Heaven and Hell will each take its own.

And even whilst we are in this Life, this Magnetism is the *Mark* within us, to what Part we belong; and that which has

its Attraction in us, has the Right to us, and Power over us, though for a while Flesh and Blood, and the Nature of our temporal State, hinders this from being visibly and sensibly known.

Nothing however is more plain, than that our Goodness bears no Proportion to our intellectual Abilities of Reason ; everyone sees this, and yet no more than this need be seen, to give us the fullest Demonstration, that natural Reason has no Connection with Virtue and Goodness, and therefore surely can have no Connection with our Salvation, or be the proper Cause of it.

Hence we see, that *learned, acute, rational* Philosophers are often *Atheists* ; and those that can demonstrate the Foundation of Virtue, and paint every Office of it, are Rakes and Debauchees, and will sell every Appearance of practical Virtue for a Salary of so much a Year ; whilst those that seem to have little of intellectual Accomplishments, are Virtuous and Honest, have a taste and Relish for every practical Virtue.

The natural Love or Affection of Relations, bears no Proportion to our rational Abilities to speak or write of them. A Parent that is of too refined an Understanding to content himself with the Morals of the Gospel, or its low Way of making Men good, and that wants to be entertained with a Virtue of more *Mathematical* Exactness, is often content with the Demonstration, and so remains deficient in the plainest Duties of domestic Affection : when the poor Labourer or Mechanic, that knows not what you mean by a Definition, has all the solid Love and Affection that becomes a good Relation. All this, and much more, which you and everyone may think for himself of the same Kind, is a sufficient Proof, that the *Ground* of Goodness in every Man, is something entirely *distinct* from our natural Faculties of Reason and Speculation.

And therefore, when you place the Power of your Salvation in your *intellectual* Light, or the Strength of your *own Reason*, you place it in your *weakest* Part, in the *poorest*, most *trifling* and *insignificant* Thing that belongs to you, and upon that which has the least Effect in human Life.

The only Good that Reason can do to you, is to remove the Impediments of Virtue, and to give room to that inward *Instinct* or *Attraction* to God and Goodness to display itself ; that the inmost Spirit of your Mind may receive its Strength and Assistance from the Spirit of God, from which, as the *Needle* from the Loadstone, it has all its *Instinct* of Goodness and *Tendency* towards God.

For this inward Instinct of Goodness, or Life of God in the Soul, is all the real and living Goodness that is in you, and is as different and distinct from natural Reason, as the *Light*, and *Heat*, and *Power* and *Virtue* of the Sun, is different from a *Picture*

of it upon a Piece of *Canvas*, and has as different Effects upon the Mind.

For this Light of bare Reason, or the reasoning Faculty of the Mind, has no Contrariety to the Vices of the Heart, it neither kills them, nor is killed by them. As Pride, Vanity, Hypocrisy, Envy or Malice, don't take away from the Mind its *Geometrical* Skill; so a Man may be most Mathematical in his Demonstrations of the Religion of Reason, when he has extinguished every good Sentiment of his Heart, and be the most zealous for its Excellency and Sufficiency, when he has his Passions in the most disordered State.

But in that *Light of the Heart*, or *Attraction* to God, which I have said is common to all Mankind in and through Jesus Christ, all is contrary. As it is a Gift and Grace of God, so it is a *real Life*, a living Thing, a *Sentiment* of the Heart, and so far as it grows and increases in us, so far it destroys all that is bad and corrupt within us. It has the same Contrariety to all Vices of the Heart, that Light has to Darkness, and must either suppress or be suppressed by them.

Now when I speak of this Light, or Instinct of the *Heart*, or *Attraction* to God, I have not only the Authority of Scripture, but every Man's own Experience on my side; that Distinction between the *Head* and the *Heart*, which everyone knows how to make, plainly declares for all that I have said. It shows that the State, and Manner, and Tendency of our Heart, is all that is good within us; and that the Reasonings and Speculations of the Head, are only an empty Show and Noise that is made in the *Outside* of us.

For that which we mean by the *Heart*, plainly speaks thus much; it is a kind of *Life* and *Motion* within us, which every one knows contains all that is good or bad in us; that we are that which our Hearts are, let us talk, and reason, and dispute what we will about Goodness and Virtue; and that this State of our Heart is as distinct from, and independent of all Speculations of our reasoning Faculties, as it is distinct from, and independent of all the Languages in which a Scholar can reason and speculate upon it. And if a Man should say, that the Excellency and Sufficiency of natural Religion consisted in knowing all the Languages in which Virtue, Goodness and Religion are expressed by different Sounds and Characters, he would have said as much Truth, and as well grounded, as he who places the Excellency and Sufficiency of natural Religion in the many Arguments and Demonstrations which Reason can raise about it. For all Reasoning and Speculation stand on the *Outside* of the Heart, in the same superficial Manner as all Languages do.

For our Heart is our *Manner* of Existence, or the State in which we feel ourselves to be ; it is an inward Life, a vital Sensibility, which contains our Manner of feeling what and how we are ; it is the State of our Desires and Tendencies, of inwardly seeing, hearing, tasting, relishing and feeling that which passes within us : it is that to us inwardly with regard to ourselves, which our Senses of seeing, hearing, feeling, &c., are, with regard to Things that are without, or external to us.

Now as Reason is a poor, superficial, and insignificant Thing with respect to our outward Senses, unable to add anything to our *hearing* and *seeing*, &c., or to be the true Power and Life of them, by all its Speculations and Reasonings upon them ; so it is much more a poor, and superficial, and insignificant Thing with respect to the inward Sensibility of the Heart, or its seeing, feeling, &c., and much more unable to add to, or amend the State of the Heart, or become the Life and Power of its Motions, by its Arguings about them.

And therefore, to seek for the Religion or Perfection of the Heart in the Power of our Reason, is more groundless and absurd, and against the Nature of Things, than to seek for the Perfection and Strength of our Senses in the Power of our Reason.

Now I appeal to every Man in the World for the Truth of all this ; for every Man has the fullest inward Conviction, that his Heart is not his Reason, nor his Reason his Heart, but that the one is as different from the other in its whole Nature, as Pain, and Joy, and Desire, are different from *Definitions* of them ; and that as a thousand Definitions of Joy and Desire, will not become that Desire and Joy itself ; so a thousand Definitions of Religion will not become Religion itself, but be always in the same State of Distance from it ; and that all Reasoning and Speculations upon Religion, are at the same State of Distance from the Nature and Power of Religion, as Speculations upon our Passions are from the Nature and Power of them.

You know, not by Hearsay, Reasoning, or Books, but by an inward Sentiment, that your Reason can be very nicely religious, very strict in its Descriptions of Goodness, at the same time that the Heart is a mere Libertine, sunk into the very Dregs of Corruption : On the other hand, you know, that when your Reason is debauched with Arguments, is contending for Profaneness, and seems full of Proof that Piety is Superstition, your Heart at the same time has a Virtue in it, that secretly dissents from all that you say.

Now all this Proof that the State of Reason is not the State of your *Heart*, is the same Proof that Reason is not the *Power*

or Strength of our Religion, because *what* our Heart is, that is our Religion; what belongs to our Heart, that belongs to our Religion; which never had nor can have any other Nature, Power, or Perfection, than that which is the Nature, Power, and Perfection of our Heart.

You are forced to know and feel, whether you will or no, that God has a certain *secret Power* within you, which is watching every Opportunity of saying something to you, either of yourself, the Vanity of the World, or the Guilt and Consequences of Sin.

This is that Instinct of Goodness, Attraction of God, or Witness of himself in the Soul of every Man, which without Arguments and Reasonings rises up in the Soul, and would be doing some good to it, if not quenched and resisted by the Noise and Hurry either of Pleasures or Business.

And this is everyone's *natural Religion*, or Call to God and Goodness, which is faithful to every Man, and is the only Foundation of all the Virtue and Goodness that shall be brought forth in him. And the least *Stirring* of this inward Principle, or Power of Life, is of more Value than all the *Activity* of our Reason, which is only as it were a Painter of dead Images, which leave the Heart in the same State of Death, and Emptiness of all Goodness in which they find it.

Therefore, my dear Friend, know the Place of your Religion, turn inwards, listen to the Voice of Grace, the Instinct of God that speaks and moves within you; and instead of forming dead and lifeless Images, let your Heart pray to God, that all that is Good and Holy in him, may touch, and stir, and revive all that is capable of Goodness and Holiness in you. Your Heart wants nothing but God, and nothing but your Heart can receive him. This is the only Place and Seat of Religion, and of all Communication between God and you.

We are apt to consider *Conscience* only as some working of our Heart, that checks us, and so we are rather afraid, than fond of it. But if we looked upon it as it really is, so much of *God within* us, revealing himself within us, so much of a heavenly Life, that is striving to raise us from the dead, we should love and adhere to it, as our happy Guide to Heaven.

For this Reason, I have called this *Spark* of Life, or Instinct of Goodness, our *inward Redeemer*; not only because it is the only Thing within, that helps forward our Salvation, but also because it is the first Beginning of Christ's *Redemption* in the Souls of all Men, by his becoming the Atonement for all.

And as it is the first Step of Christ's Redemption in the Soul, and that which became their *Capacity* of Salvation; so the Progress of their Redemption consists in the Increase and Growth

of this first seed of Life, till the new Man be wholly raised up by it.

Lastly, Another real Difference between this *Instinct* of Goodness, or Piety of the *Heart*, and your Religion of Reason, is this, that natural Reason in itself is incapable of Jesus Christ; it cannot comprehend him, it is at Enmity with him, and sets itself up against him. For it feels *no Want* of a Saviour, and therefore is *unwilling* to receive one. Or if it were to admit of a Saviour, it must be only such a one as came to increase the Number of its *Images* and *Ideas*, or to help it to be *more active* and artful in the ranging, dividing and distinguishing them. And for this Reason it is, that a Book of *Ideas* and *Distinctions* is more valued by some People, than all the Salvation that is offered in the Gospel.

But this natural Religion or Instinct of Goodness, of which I have spoken, as God's *free Gift* to all Men in Jesus Christ, has that natural Fitness for the receiving of Christ, as the Eye has for receiving the Light; it wants him, it desires him, it is for him, it knows him, it rejoices in him, as the Eye wants, desires, knows, and rejoices in the Light. And of this natural Religion, or Religion of the Heart, does our Saviour plainly speak, when he saith, *He that is of God heareth God's Word*, — and again, *My Sheep hear my Voice*. Therefore this Instinct of Goodness, or Piety of the Heart, though it is God's Gift to Man before his hearing the outward Word, is yet a certain Preparation for it; and if it be brought forth in us, is a never-failing Fitness to receive it. Therefore he that has this *natural* Religion of the *Heart*, of which I have spoken, has the greatest Fitness to receive the Gospel, he is so of *God*, that *he heareth God's Word*, such a Sheep of Christ as knoweth his Voice. And therefore the receiving, or not receiving the Gospel, is the greatest of all Demonstrations, whether a Man hath, or hath not that *right Religion* that is antecedent to it.

Natural Religion, when rightly understood, is a real Thing, and of the same Truth as revealed Religion. But the Mistake lies here, in our taking natural Religion to be the Work or Effect of natural Reason; whereas Reason, or our Faculty of reasoning upon our Ideas, is not a *Part* of natural or revealed Religion, but only a bare Spectator of its own Images of natural and revealed Religion, just as it is not a Part of our *hearing* and *seeing*; nor can come any nearer to them, than as it is a bare Spectator of its own Images of them.

All Men, by virtue of God's first Pardon to *Adam*, are put into a State of Salvation; and as this State, though it is the free Gift of God, is common to all Men, as Men, or born of

Adam; so it may in a good Sense be called their natural State, and the Religion of this State, their natural Religion.

Now the Question is, What is the natural Religion of this State? It is that which his State and Condition speaks to him. Now his Condition and State in the World plainly speaks thus much to him, that he is a *Sinner*, and yet in a State of *Favour* with God, or in a *Possibility* of being accepted of him. Every Man's Nature teaches him thus much, with the same Certainty that it teaches him, that he is weak and mortal. That he is a *Sinner*, and at the same time an Object of *Divine Mercy*, are things that are made known to him, not by Arguments or Speculation, but by his own being what he is.

Therefore the whole of natural Religion consists in a Man's following this Voice of Nature, and acting conformably to it; in acknowledging the *Sinfulness* of his State, and in *imploping* and *relying* upon the *divine Mercy* to be delivered from it. This is the whole Truth of natural Religion; an humble *penitent Sense* of Sin, and an humble *Faith* and *Trust* in the *Mercy* of God to be delivered from it; though it is not known by what Name to call that Deliverance, or what kind of Saviour is wanted to effect it. But he that thus according to the Direction of his natural State lives before God, in *Penitence*, and in *Faith* in his *Mercy*, is sure of having the Benefit of all the Mercy of God, though he does not know the *Method*, or the *Means*, by which the Mercy of God will save him.

So that *true, natural* Religion and revealed Religion agree in these two great and essential Points, that Man is in a State of *Sin*, and yet in a State of *Acceptance* with God through his *Mercy*; therefore the Piety of the one, is the Piety of the other, *viz.*, a *penitent Sense* of Sin, and a humble *Faith* and *Trust* in God to be delivered from it by *his Mercy*.

And here you may again see, why this Natural Religion is to be considered, not as a Matter of *Reason*, but as an *Instinct* of *Goodness*, or Piety of the *Heart*; because it is nothing else but *so much Goodness*, not in *Idea*, but in the very *inward Essence* of the Soul, as distinguishes and preserves it both from Beasts and fallen Spirits.

Had a Man no *Sense* of Shame for his Sins, he would be in the very State of the *Beasts*; had he no *Faith* and *Hope* in the *Mercy* of God, he would be in the State of the Devils. Therefore that internal *Sentiment* of *Heart*, that *Instinct* of Goodness, is his *only true* Religion of Nature, because it is thus the *Preservation* of his Nature, and the *saving* him from being like to Beasts and fallen Spirits.

Reason therefore, as it is a Faculty of speculating and com-

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paring Ideas, has no more Share in this Religion of Nature, than it has a Share in our natural Powers of *hearing* and *seeing*; and as it can only in a *little Way*, and in certain *Circumstances*, do some outward Service to these *Senses*, so it can only in the same little and low Way help and assist this Religion of Nature by some *outward Services*.

And as this Instinct of Goodness, or inward Sentiment of the Heart, is that alone which *preserves* our Nature, and therefore is alone the *true Religion*, or *Salvation* of Nature; so the whole of all revealed Religion is to *improve* this true Religion of Nature in its *two Essential Parts*, Penitence for Sin, and Faith and Trust in the Mercy of God. For all revealed Religion has only this End, it teaches nothing, intends nothing, but to give us more Reasons for *Penitence*, and more Reasons for *Faith* and *Trust* in the Mercy of God.

And therefore it was that I said, this Instinct of Good, or true Religion of Nature, is the *very Preparation* of the Heart for the Reception of the Gospel. For so much as there is of this *Penitence* and *Faith* living in the Soul, so much it has of Eyes to see, of Ears to hear, and of a Heart to understand all the Truths of Divine Revelation. The Humility and Penitence of the Gospel, the Mercies of God in and through Jesus Christ, are as agreeable to a Man in this State of Heart, as Food and Water to the hungry and thirsty Soul. The Gospel presents everything to him that he wants; and God is thereby become all that to him, which the miserable State of his Soul stood in need of. And so when he finds the Gospel, he finds the Pearl, for which he gladly sells all that he hath.

Therefore a Man can have no greater Proof that the Religion of *Nature* is suppressed in him, that he has not the Religion of *Penitence* and *Faith*, than by his Refusal of the Gospel; for the Gospel as naturally agrees with such a State of Heart, as Light mixes with Light, and Darkness with Darkness.

Lay the Cause of Infidelity where you will, it is a certain Truth, that it lies only in this *Insensibility* of Heart, in this *Extinction* of the Religion of Nature. And if the least *Sentiment* of Penitence arises in your Heart, or a *Sensibility* of the Need of *Divine Mercy*, the Gospel has got so far an Entrance into you, and it cannot lose its hold of you, but by your losing this State of Heart.

Let your Reason pretend what it will, and fancy it has ever so many Objections of *Speculation* and *Argument* against the Gospel, they are all Objections of the Heart. For the Gospel speaks only to the Heart, and nothing but the Heart can either receive or reject it. For this is an eternal Truth, which you

cannot too much reflect upon, that *Reason* always follows the State of the Heart, and what your Heart is, that is your Reason. If your Heart is full of Sentiments of *Penitence*, and of *Faith* in the divine Mercy, your Reason will take part with your Heart, and will entertain itself with all Arguments, Ideas, and Discourses, that can *exercise* this Religion of the Heart.

But if your Heart is shut up in Death and Dryness, your Reason will be according to it, a *poor Quibbler* in Words, and dead Images, and will delight in nothing but such dry Objections and Speculations as answer to the Deadness and Insensibility of your Heart.

So that what you imagine, of your having a Religion of *pure Reason*, is the merest Fiction of Deceit that can be imposed upon you; for Reason has nothing of *its own*, it acts nothing of *itself*, it barely *reflects* that which comes from the *Heart*, as the *Moon* barely reflects that which comes from the *Sun*; it is the *Servant* of the Heart, and must act or not act in Obedience to it; what the Heart *loves*, that Reason contends for; and what the Heart has no Inclination to, that Reason objects against. Therefore there neither is, nor was, nor ever can be any other Religion but the Religion of the Heart, and Reason is only its Servant, in the same Manner, and in the same Degree, whatever the Religion of the Heart be, whether true or false.

And to imagine that Natural Religion is the Effect of pure Reason and Speculation, is as great an Error against the Nature of Things, and more hurtful to you, than to imagine that *natural hearing* and *seeing* is the Effect of Reason and Speculation.

Natural Religion, if you understand it rightly, is a most excellent Thing, it is a *right Sentiment* of Heart, it is so much Goodness in the Heart, it is its Sensibility both of its Separation from, and its Relation to God; and therefore it shows itself in nothing but in a *penitential Sentiment* of the Weight of its Sins, and in an humble Recourse by *Faith* to the *Mercy* of God. Call but this the Religion of *Nature*, and then the more you esteem it, the better; for you cannot wish well to it, without bringing it to the Gospel State of Perfection.

For the Religion of the Gospel is this Religion of *Penitence*, and *Faith* in the *Mercy* of God, brought forth into its full Perfection. For the Gospel calls you to nothing, but to know, and understand, and practise a full and real *Penitence*, and to know by *Faith*, such Heights and Depths of the divine Mercy towards you, as the Religion of Nature had only some little uncertain Glimmerings of. Therefore there is the same Agreement, and the same Difference between the *true* Religion of Nature, and the Religion of the Gospel, that there is between

the *Breaking* of the Day, and the Rising of the Sun to its *meridian* Height; the one is the *Beginning*, and the other is the *Perfection* of the same Thing. And as the Light of the *Day-break*, and the Light of the *Noon-day*, are both the same Light, and from the same Producer of Light; so the Light of the Religion of Nature, and the Light of the Gospel, are the same Light, and from the same Producer of Light in the Mind.

If you only stood for some time in the first *Break* of Day, sensible of the Misery of Darkness, and only feeling some Hope and Expectation of the Light, yet knowing nothing of that *Globe of Fire* that afterwards was to appear, and bless you with so many unknown and un hoped for Joys and Comforts of the Noon-day Light, you would then resemble one standing for some time in the Day-break of Natural Religion, sensible of the *Weight* of his Sins, and only *hoping* in God for *some kind* of Mercy towards him; yet knowing nothing of that *Globe of Fire*, that *Mystery of divine Love* that was by degrees to discover itself, and bless him with so many unknown, un hoped-for Joys and Comforts of the divine Mercy towards him.

The original Instinct of Goodness in the Soul, which I have shown to be the only Religion of Nature, is the Light of *Day-break* in the Soul, and is that Light which *lighteth every Man that cometh into the World*. The Light of the Gospel is that *Noon-day* Light, which discovers such Joys and Comforts as no one could have thought of, that had only stood in the *Break* of Day.

And as no one, when the Day arises, can reject or dispute the Coming or Goodness of the Rising *Sun*, but because he has *lost* that Sense which was to *distinguish* Light from Darkness; so no one can reject or dislike, or dispute against the Light of the Gospel, but he that has *extinguished* that *Instinct* of Goodness in his Soul, which *alone* can distinguish Good from Evil, and make him love the one, and reject the other.

Don't therefore, my dear Friend, deceive yourself, nor let any one else deceive you. The Matter is of infinite Consequence that you have before you. You come into the World but once, and have but one Trial, but the Effects of it are to last for ever. The Time of disputing and speculating upon Ideas is short; it can last no longer than whilst the *Sun* of this World can refresh your Flesh and Blood, and so keep the Soul from knowing its own Depth, or what has been growing in it. But when this is over, then you must know and feel what it is to have a Nature as *deep*, and *strong*, and *large* as Eternity.

If you have lived upon the Amusements of *Reason* and Speculation, your Life has been worse than a *Dream*, and your

Soul will, at the End of such a Life, be left to itself in its own *Darkness, Hunger, Thirst, and Anxiety*, to be for ever devoured by its *own Fire*. But if you have watched over that *Instinct of Goodness* which God planted in your Soul, and have exercised yourself in that *Penitence* for your Sins, and humble *Faith* in the *Mercy* of God, that the Gospel proposes to you; then when your Body falls off from you, you will feel and know what a Kingdom of God lay hid in your Soul, you will see that you have a *Life and Strength* like that of Eternity, and the Fulness of God himself will be your everlasting Enjoyment.

For Heaven and Hell stand ready to awake and be revealed in you, and can no longer be hid from you, than whilst you are under the Cover of Flesh and Blood. And then will be fully verified in you that Saying of Scripture, *he that seeketh findeth*: For you will find that which you have sought, and according to your Faith, so will it eternally be done unto you. Your Soul will have nothing taken from it, but it will have all *that Good* which you sought after, and provided for it. You chose to be *saved* only by the Powers of your *own Reason*, and refused the *Mercy* of God that was to have saved you, and therefore you will have that *very Salvation* you have chosen, you will be entirely *without the Mercy* of God, and left wholly to your *own Nature*: And that Salvation is the Misery of Hell.

You are now your own *Carver*, and must be *that* which you shall have made of yourself. If the Depth of your Heart has not in this Lifetime its proper Cure; if it has not something done to it, which your *Reason* can no more do, than it can create the Light, your Heart will become your Hell. And if you let the Light of the Gospel shine into it, and revive the *good Seed* of Life in it, then it will become the Seat and Habitation of your Heaven.

You may perhaps imagine, that because you practise Sobriety and Justice, and are a Friend to moral Behaviour, both in yourself and other People, that therefore your *Disbelief* of the Gospel cannot proceed from the *Disorder* of your Heart, or a *Want* of Piety. But this, Sir, is all Mistake. For you may have all this moral Behaviour, and yet have *nothing* at all of that *Sentiment* of *Penitence*, and *Faith* in the divine *Mercy*, which I have shown to be the *only true* Religion of Nature. It is as easy to have all this kind of Goodness which you appeal to, as it is to be *civil, well-bred*, and a Friend to the *Peace and Order* of that Society of which one is a Member. Even an *Atheist* may find his Ends, and act suitably to his own Principles of Self-love, Ease and Reputation, by this moral Behaviour.

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from what Principle all this Morality proceeds. If there was this *Sentiment of Penitence* and *Faith* in the Mercy of God at the Bottom, then this Morality would want and rejoice at the Precepts and Doctrines of the Gospel, because they raise a Morality upon the Foundation of *Penitence* and *Faith*. But when this Morality is only a *worldly* Wisdom, a *Convenience* of Life, a *political* Conformity, and as mere a *Gratification* of *Selfishness*, as any other worldly Accomplishments are, then this Morality is in the greatest Enmity with the Gospel, because the Gospel takes away its Worth, and all the Self-accomplishment that was placed in it.

Therefore it is not the mere moral Man that has that *Goodness* of the Heart, that is a Qualification to receive the Gospel: For an *Atheist* may be such a *moral* Man; but it is he, whose Heart is in a *State of Penitence* for his Sins, and *humbly* looking to the *Mercy* of God to be *some way* or other delivered from them.

This is the *only* Foundation of a religious Morality, and this is that *State of Heart* which must be wanting in *every* Moralist that *refuses* the Gospel.

Hence therefore it is plain, that you may have a great deal of Morality in your Behaviour, and yet nothing of the *Religion of Nature* in your Heart, and so be entirely unqualified to receive the Gospel, because of the *Disorder* of your Heart. For the Morality of an *unreformed* Heart, adds no more Goodness to it, than *whited Sepulchres* do to the *Rottenness* of dead Men's Bones.

What I say I say not to reproach you, but from a sincere Desire of doing you all the good that I can. For I have too much Experience myself of the Weakness and Mistakes of human Nature, to reproach any Degree of them in other People. But if you will take in good Part what is well meant, I hope you will find that I have been your Friend in discovering the Bottom of your Disorder.

But it may be you will say, you would believe the Gospel if you could, but that its Evidence cannot have that Effect upon your Mind. You may say also, the Gospel is a Matter of Fact; you must examine into the Truth of it, as you do into the Truth of other Matters of History; and as both the internal and external Evidence of the Gospel is much defended and opposed by learned Men, its Evidence is so perplexed, and made a Matter of such laborious and intricate Enquiry, that your Mind cannot come at any Certainty of what you ought to believe concerning the Truth of it.

I will therefore propose to you the *shortest*, and at the same

time the *surest* of all Methods, and such as you shall either be obliged to acquiesce in as sufficient, or to own that you have suppressed that *Instinct* of Goodness within you, which I have shown to be the original Birthright of all Mankind, and to be the *only* State of Heart that *saves* us from being a mere Mixture of the Beasts and the Devils.

I don't recommend to you to lay aside Prejudice, and begin again the Controversy from the Bottom, and read all on both Sides with all the Impartiality that you can. I would as soon send you on a *Pilgrimage*, to be a *Penitent*, as propose to you this Travel to be a Christian. The Truth of the Gospel lies much nearer to us than we imagine, and we only dispute and wrangle ourselves into a Distance from it.

Do you think that you need many Books to show you that you are a *Sinner*, that you have the Disorder of almost all the *Beasts* within you; that you have besides this, such Passions and Tempers of Pride, Envy, Selfishness and Malice, as would make you shun the Sight of other People, if they could see all that passes within you? Need any Learning instruct you, that at the same time that you have all these Disorders, both of the Beasts and evil Spirits within you, you have a great Desire to seem to be without them, and are affecting continually to have, and appear in those very Virtues which you feel the Want of? When you are full of Hatred and Envy, you affect to be thought good and good-natured, when proud, to appear as humble.

Now I desire you to know no Books, but *this Book* of your own Heart, nor to be well read in any Controversy but in that which passes *within you*, in order to know the Gospel to be the greatest of all Truths, and the infallible Voice of God speaking the Way of Salvation to you. No *Echo* answers to the Voice that raises it, so certainly and agreeably as the Voice of Nature, or the State of your own Heart answers to that which the Gospel preaches unto you. And this I will show you to be the shortest and surest of all Methods to discover the Truth of the Gospel.

The Gospel is built on these *two Pillars*, *First*, That you are a *fallen*: *Secondly*, That you are a *redeemed* Creature. Now every Man's own Soul, and what daily passes within him, speaks these two great Truths to him, with a Conviction and *Sensibility* that cannot be avoided.

You have seen, and you feel, and know that you are a Sinner, that you have the Disorders of the Beasts, and the Depravity of evil Spirits within you. Is not this saying to you, not in the Sound of Words, but by the *Frame* and Voice of your Nature

that you are a *fallen* Creature, and not in that State in which a good Being must have created you? For I appeal to yourself, in your own Degree of Goodness, if you could create your own Children, whether you would not create them in a better State, and with less Evil, both of the Beast and the Devil, in them, than that in which you were born yourself?

Therefore, only supposing God to have your Degree of Goodness, he could not have created the first Man, from whom your Nature is derived, in the State that you are; and therefore supposing him only to be good, you have a sufficient Proof; but supposing him to be infinitely good, or Goodness itself, you have an infallible Demonstration written in the Frame of your Nature, that you are a *fallen* Creature, or not in that State in which God created you.

Again, Do you want any Learning, or Books, or Reasoning, to show you, that every Man, as well as yourself, affects to appear virtuous, to have good Qualities, and is ashamed of every beastly and diabolical Disorder; and would seem to have Virtues and Goodness that he has not, because of an innate Love that he has for them, and from a Sense of their being proper for him? And is not this saying again with the same Fulness of Certainty, that you are a *redeemed* Creature, that there is in you an *inward* Redeemer, a *Light* of the Mind, a *Seed* of Goodness, an *Instinct* to Virtue, given you by God, though without Revelation you don't know *when* nor *how*?

And is not this such an Evidence of the *Truth* of the Christian Religion, and of its *Fitness* to *save* your Soul, as not only needs not the Assistance of foreign Books and Learning, but is also sufficient to support itself against all the Books and Learning in the World that should oppose it? Can any Echo answer better to the Voice that raises it, than the Voice of your Nature answers to the Sound of the Gospel? And do you not hereby plainly see, that you stand nearer to the Truth of the Christian Religion, than you do to anything else? It is only the Description of that which passes within you. It is the Book of yourself, it talks of nothing *out* of you, it speaks but that which is written *within* you, and therefore you have a sufficient Help to understand it. To look for *outward* Testimonies, is like looking for yourself *abroad*; turn but your Eyes inward, and you have no need of Miracles to show you, that Jesus Christ came from that God that made you, and that he teaches you the only Way to find that Perfection and Happiness for which he made you.

What can the Gospel say to you of the Fall of Man, that your Heart does not feel to be true? What can it say to you of

your Redemption, that is not at the same time said to you by the State of your own Soul?

For if you were not fallen, how could you labour under so much Corruption? A sinful Creature cannot come from God in its sinful State. And, on the other hand, if you were not redeemed, how could you feel a Dislike of Sin, an Inclination to Goodness, and a Desire of appearing virtuous? For what else is this Desire of Goodness, but a certain *inward Principle* that has begun your *Redemption*, and is trying to carry it on?

Now the Christian Religion says nothing to you; it has not one Doctrine, or Practice, or Institution, but what has its immediate Relation to these two great Truths, and is, for the sake of them, either to convince you of your Fall, or to assist your Redemption.

Now if a Revelation from God had only told you, that you had a Mixture of *Evil* and *Good* in you, could you have any doubt about the Truth of such a Revelation? Or if it told you that the Evil came from the Fault of your first Parents, and the Good was God's free Gift to you at their Fall, that the Evil might be resisted and suppressed; if it told you, that God had a Desire, and a Design in the Depths of his Mercy, to assist the *Good* that was in you, that it might conquer and put an entire End to all the Evil of your Nature, would you ask for Proofs of the Goodness of such a Revelation, or of its being worthy of God, and suitable to your own Needs?

Now the Christian Religion is this Revelation. It tells you only this great Truth, that you are *fallen* and *redeemed*, that is, that you have a Mixture of *Evil* and *Good* in you; it tells you that God, as early as the *Fall*, redeemed you, when the *Seed* of the Woman became the Enemy of the *Serpent*; that is, as soon as the Evil came into you, he of his *free Gift* put a good *Power* into you to withstand it; it tells you, that from the Beginning of the World, it has been God's gracious Desire and Design in and by Jesus Christ to render your Redemption effectual, that is, to make the *Good* that is in you perfectly overcome all your *Evil*.

Complain therefore no more of want of Evidence; neither *Books*, nor *Study*, nor *Learning* is wanted; the Gospel is *within* you, and you are its *Evidence*; it is preached unto you in your own Bosom, and everything within you is a *Proof* of the Truth of it.

Ask how you shall know there is such a thing as Day and Night; for the Fall and Redemption are as manifest *within* you, as Day and Night are Manifest *without* you.

Here, Sir, in this intimate and true Knowledge of yourself lies the most precious Evidence of the Gospel, and is as near to you, as you are to yourself; because all that is said and declared, and

recorded in the Gospel, is only a plain Record of that which is said and done, and doing in yourself.

And when you once feel it thus proved to you, by its Agreement with the State of your own Nature, then it becomes a Pearl that is dearer to you than your Life; and what is best, it is then a Pearl which no one can rob you of. You are then in such Assurance and Possession of the Power and Goodness of Christ, as those blind Men were, whose Eyes he had opened to see the Light.

Then all the Wrangle and Dispute of Learned Men against the Truth of the Gospel, will signify no more to you, nor raise any more Doubt in you, than if by *History* and *Criticism* they would prove, that you never had any Benefit from the Light of the Sun.

If you go *only* outwardly to work, and seek only for an outward Proof of the Truth of the Gospel, you can only know it by such Labours, and in such Uncertainty as you know other Matters of History, and must be always balancing what is said for, and against it. And if you come to believe it this way, your Faith will be held by an uncertain Tenure, you will be alarmed at every new Attack, and frightened at every new Enemy that pretends to lessen the Evidence of the Gospel.

But these, Sir, are Difficulties that we make to ourselves, by neglecting the proper Evidence of the Gospel, and choosing only to know it, as we know other Histories that have no *Relation* to us, or *Connection* with our own State.

The Gospel is not a History of something that was done and past 1700 Years ago, or of a Redemption that was then *present*, and only to be transmitted to Posterity as a Matter of *History*; but it is the Declaration of a Redeemer, and a redeeming Power that is always in its *redeeming State*, and equally *present* to every Man.

We all stand as near to the Reasons and Motives for receiving the Gospel, as they did to whom it was first preached. No one then did, or could receive Jesus Christ when he was on Earth, but for the same Reasons, that the *Sick*, the *Lame*, and the *Blind*, sought to him to be cured, namely, because they felt their *Infirmities*, and wanted to be *relieved* from them. But if this State of Heart, or their Sensibility of their Condition, of what they were, and what they wanted, was then the *only possible* Reason they could have for receiving Christ; then it follows, that every Man of every Age, has all the Reasons for receiving or not receiving the Gospel within himself, and stands just as near to and just as far from the Evidence of it, as those did who first heard it.

If you know of no Burden or *Weight* of Sin, nor *want* any Assistance to overcome it, the Gospel has *no Evidence* for you ; and though you had stood by our Saviour, you had been never the nearer to it. But if you know your State, as the *Sick*, the *Lame*, and the *Blind* knew their State ; if you groan under the Power of Sin, and are looking towards God for some Assistance to overcome it, then you have *all* the *Reasons* for receiving the Gospel written in your Heart, and you stand as *near* all its *proper Evidence*, whether you were born the last Age, or 1700 Years ago.

Now if you don't *know* and *feel*, that the Gospel has this Foundation in you, that you have that *Fall* and *Redemption* in you that it teaches, then all external Evidence of it can be of no use to you, because you are not the *Person* that wants *such* a Salvation.

But if you know that these two things are written in the Frame of your Nature, that Evil and Good, or the *Fall* and the *Redemption*, are at Strife within you, and that you want some Divine Assistance to help you to overcome the Evil that is in you ; then the Gospel needs no external Evidence, because your Heart is a Witness of all the Truth of it. For you are then only doing that in a lower Degree, which the Gospel teaches and enables you to do in a more perfect and prevailing Manner.

Further, if you have only that *Instinct* of Goodness in you, which I have shown to be the *only Religion* of Nature ; if you have a Desire to act suitably to this State of your Heart, this Struggle of Evil and Good that is in you, and are weary of your Sins, and desirous to be delivered from them, then you are fully prepared to love, admire, and receive all the Precepts of the Gospel, because they have no End, but to do that which you want and desire to have done in you ; that is, to suppress the Power of Evil in you, to destroy the old Man, or the first Life of your corrupt Nature, and to raise the new Man, or Principle of Goodness that is in you, to its full State of Strength and Perfection.

And here you have the shortest and surest of all Methods, to find both the Truth and Excellency, and Necessity of the Gospel Method of Salvation.

I put no Labour or deep Enquiry upon your Hands : I desire you only to know, what you cannot help knowing, that you have *Good* and *Evil* alive, and at work in you. For this is the whole of the Fall of *Adam*, and of the Redemption of Jesus Christ. Say that you have no Evil in you, and I will not desire you to believe the Fall of *Adam*. Say that you have no Sense of Goodness in you, and I will not desire you to acknowledge the

Redemption through Jesus Christ. But if neither of these can be denied to be in you, if your own Heart confesses these two things ; how can you want a Proof of the Truth of that Religion, which only tells you that which your own Heart is a Witness of?

Again, Say that you have no *Instinct* of Goodness in you, that you have no *Dislike* of the Corruption of your Nature, nor the *smallest* Desire to be free from it, and then I will excuse your Ignorance of the Truth and Fitness of the Precepts of the Gospel.

But if you will but own *so much* of natural Religion, as to be *at all* troubled at your Sins, or but *secretly wish* that God would *some way* or other help you to get the better of them ; then you are under a Necessity of seeing and knowing that the Precepts of the Gospel are highly suited to the State of your Soul, to assist *this Degree* of natural Religion in you, and to help you to *that Conquest* over Sin which you want.

So that from this plain and easy Knowledge of yourself, you are absolutely obliged either to deny the *most known* State of your Heart, and to deny that you have *any Degree, or Desire* of Goodness in you ; or to own the Gospel to have *everything* in it, both as to Doctrine and Precept, that strictly answers to the *State and Necessities*, and good Inclinations of your Heart.

And therefore the Proof of the Gospel is at *no Distance* from you, requires no Labour of Learning, or Search of History, but arises from the most obvious Knowledge of yourself, what you are, and what you want. And you may have the utmost assurance, that you cannot hurt or deceive yourself in this short Method that I have recommended. For if you cannot be hurt or deceived in believing yourself to be a *Sinner*, and yet to be in a State that *admits* of the divine *Mercy* to you, then you are sure that you cannot have any Hurt or Deceit put upon you by the Gospel ; because it is to do nothing to you, you are to receive nothing from it, but a *Confirmation* of your *Penitence*, and a *Strengthening* your *Faith* in the Mercy of God.

Understand all the Gospel in this Manner, and then you understand it according to the Truth, as it is in itself. For there is not a Doctrine or Precept of the Gospel, but is given you for this End ; to perfect your Penitence, to show you all the Grounds, and Reasons, and Extent of it, and to confirm, increase, and exercise your Faith in the Mercy of God, by such a Discovery of God, and his Goodness towards you, as without the Gospel could not have been known.

So then, if you know the Religion of *Nature*, the Religion of *Penitence* and *Faith*, to be a true and good Religion ; if the Proof of the Truth and Goodness of this Religion lies *within*

you, then the Proof of the Truth and Goodness of the Gospel is in the *same Degree* of Nearness to you, and you cannot but know it in the same Manner and Degree as you know yourself, what you are, and what you want.

Thus much may serve to convince my unbelieving Reader, if I have such a one, whom I would fain lead to God, that I have said nothing in favour of a modern Religion of Reason; which I have shown to have the *Vanity, Insignificancy, and Sin* of the ancient Idolatry in it, and to be that *very Confidence* in natural Strength, and *Hardness of Heart*, which keeps fallen Angels Prisoners of Darkness.

I must now say a word to the zealous Christian, who may perhaps imagine, from what I have said of that inward Light, which is the *Gift of God* to all Men in Jesus Christ, that I have brought this Light too near to the advantageous State of revealed Religion, whether Jewish or Christian.

To such a one I say, first, that what I have said of this *Light* of the Mind, or *Instinct* of Goodness common to all Men, is so much said of the *Light* and of the *Benefit* of Divine Revelation. Because this *Light* of the Mind, or *Instinct* of Goodness, is not something *independent* of, and *antecedent* to all divine Revelation, but was the *Effect* of God's revealing himself as *reconciled* to *Adam* through the *Seed of the Woman*. God's pardoning *Adam* as the *Head* and *Representative* of all Mankind, and giving him a *Mediator* and *Redeemer*, was putting him into a State and Capacity of being *renewed* in his Mind; and this *renewing Power*, which God then by pardoning him bestowed upon him, is that *Instinct* of Goodness, or *Light* of the Mind, of which I have spoken. And therefore all the *Possibility* of Religion, and all that is *good* in it, is to be ascribed to divine Revelation.

Secondly, What I have said of this common Light, or Piety of the Heart, is only to signify, that they have a *Possibility* of such good Dispositions as belong to those, of whom it is said, 'He that is of God, heareth God's Word'; and of such as Christ spoke, when he said, 'My Sheep hear my Voice.'

Now if there were not a *Possibility* or *Capacity* of this Degree of Goodness in Men, distinct from all outward Revelation, How could Mankind be fit for God to make a Revelation to? For if Men could not be in *this State* of Goodness, so as to be *prepared* or *qualified* Hearers of the Word of God, why should God speak to them? Or why should the Voice of Christ be sounded, if there were *no Sheep* that could know it? Therefore what I have said of this Light of Men, is only so much said of their *Capacity* to receive divine Revelation; it is only a *Glimmering* of Light, a *Seed* of Goodness, a *Possibility* of Piety, which lies only in the

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Soul, as the *Beginning* of its Salvation, and therefore is in great want of, and must be much benefited by further Revelations from God.

I have not considered it as a *Species* of Religion that may *trust* in *itself*, or set up *itself* against Divine Revelation, as having no Need of it. When it is thus, it is not the Religion that I speak of, it is so far from being then the *Light* of Christ in the Soul, or the *Instinct* of Goodness that it had from him, that it is the *Darkness* and *Depravity* of the Heart, and the *Foundation* of that Hell which will be at last manifested in it.

Lastly, If my zealous Christian should find it a disagreeable Thought to him, to think that *all Mankind* have had some *Benefit* from Christ, and that the *Seed of the Woman* from the Beginning has helped, and will to the End of the World help and call *every Man* to resist and make War against the Serpent; I must tell him, he need have no greater Proof than this, that his own Heart is not yet truly Christian, that he is not a true Disciple of that Lord who *would have all Men to be saved*.

Having said this much to guard against all Misapprehension, either by the Unbeliever, or the Christian, I now return to my Subject, concerning the Benefits of Christ, as he is the Saviour of Mankind.

Now this great Truth that I have already declared, namely, that all Mankind were pardoned and redeemed in *Adam's* Pardon and Redemption; that at the Fall, Jesus Christ became the *second Adam*, or Parent of all Mankind, who from him received a Principle or Seed of Life, an Instinct of Goodness, which was to be in every Man a *Beginning* of a new Birth, a *Possibility* of his Salvation, or receiving a new Man from this second *Adam*, in the same Reality as he received a *natural* Life from the first *Adam*; this great and glorious Truth is of great Importance when rightly known, and is the Key to all the Mysteries of Scripture; it leads you into the Fulness of the greatest Truths, and disperses all Difficulties.

This *free Gift* of God to all Men, in thus making all Men *Partakers* of Christ's Redemption, by a Seed of Life, which all Men, as Men, receive from Christ, is the true and solid Meaning of that which is called *Preventing Grace*, and which, when rightly spoken of, is said to be common to all Men. It is *Grace*, because it is God's *free Gift*; we could not lay hold of it by any Power of our own, nor had any Right to claim it. It is *Preventing Grace*, because it prevents, or goes before, and is not given us for anything that we have done. And therefore it has its plain Distinction from God's *assisting* Grace, which always is in *Proportion* to the Nature of our Actions, and only works as

they work. Hence there is a full End of all the wretched Disputes of an abominable *Election* and *Reprobation*, and of other Disputes concerning the Grace of God.

For if all Men, as Sons of *Adam*, are by the *free Gift* of God made Sons of the *second Adam*, and, as such, have a *Principle* or *Seed* of Life in them from him, in order to be raised up to a Perfection of the new Man in Jesus Christ; and if this *Seed* of Life, or *Instinct* of Goodness, or Light of the Mind, is the *General Preventing* Grace of all Men, that enables them so to act as to obtain God's *assisting* Grace in the Renewal of their Minds; then you must easily see, that all Men have a *general Call* and a general *Capacity* to obtain their Salvation, and that the Doctrine of *particular absolute* Election and Reprobation is plucked up by the Roots, and most of the Difficulties of God's Dispensations fairly solved. But this by the by.

Now you must have observed that this *general* Grace, or *Redemption*, or *Life* given to all Men in Christ as their *second Adam*, is not done only by an *outward teaching*, as when one teaches another the Way of a new Life, or by an *outward Adoption*, as when a Person takes a Stranger to be his Son; but by the *Communication* of an essential *Seed* or *Principle* of Life from the *second Adam* to all the Sons of the first *Adam*. From which Seed or Principle of Life, every Son of *Adam* has Christ for his spiritual Father and Parent in the *same Reality*, as he had the first *Adam* for his natural Parent.

For this Reason, the *Change* that Religion aims at, is constantly represented as a *New Birth*, and our Progress in Religion as our Progress in *Regeneration*, or being born again. We are not called upon only to change our *Notions*, or to receive such an *Alteration*, as *Scholars* may receive from their *Teachers*, but to die to ourselves, that a new Life may be raised up in us; or to suffer something to be revived in us that is not of our own Growth, or any Change that we can make upon ourselves.

Thus says our Lord, 'Except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*' And to show that this new Birth is to be understood according to the *literal Truth* of the Expression, there is added, 'That which is born of the Flesh is Flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.' Therefore the Birth of the Spirit is as *real* as the Birth of the Flesh, and Christ is a Principle of Life to us, as surely as we derive our Flesh from *Adam*.

Again, 'The first Adam was made a living Soul, the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit.†' That is, the first *Adam* was

* John iii. 5.

† 1 Cor. xv. 45.

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made to be a Fountain, or Original, of a *natural Life* to Men, the second *Adam* was made a Reviver or Parent of a *spiritual Life* in Men. Therefore the spiritual Life derived from the second *Adam*, is in the same *Degree of Reality*, as the natural Life derived from the first *Adam*. The Apostle adds, 'The first 'is of the Earth, earthy: the second is the Lord from Heaven. 'And as is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: And 'as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.'

Therefore those that are related to Christ, have his heavenly *Life* and *Nature* in them, in the same *Reality* as those that are related to *Adam* have his earthy *Nature* in them. 'And as we 'have borne the Image of the earthy, so we shall also bear the 'Image of the heavenly.' Therefore, as we bear the Image of the first *Adam*, by having *his Nature and Life* in us, *derived*, from him; so we can only bear the Image of the second, by having his *Nature and Life* in us, *derived* from him.

So that it is an undoubted Truth, that Christ is our second *Adam*, or a Raiser of a *new Birth* and *Life* in us, in the same *Reality* as we have our natural Birth and Life from *Adam*. Hence it is that you see so much mention in Scripture of Christ's being *in us*, *formed* in us, *revealed* in us, of our *putting* on Christ, of our receiving Life from him, as the Branches from the Vine. Hence also so much mention of a *new* and *old* Man that is in us, and the whole of Religion represented as a Contest betwixt this twofold Man that is in us, the one from the first, the other from the second *Adam*.

The Knowledge of this great Truth, that Christ is our second *Adam*, as mentioned above, renders all the most mysterious, and seemingly hard Passages of Scripture, not only plainly intelligible, but full of a most affecting Sense. Thus when it is said, that Christ must be *formed* in us, and that 'we are Members of 'his Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones,' &c.* All this, and the like, is highly intelligible, as soon as it is known, that Christ is the *Parent* of a *spiritual Man* in us, in the same *Reality*, as *Adam* is the Parent of our natural Life.

Thus also when Christ saith, 'Except ye eat the Flesh of the 'Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you.' And again, 'I am the Bread of Life, he that cometh to me shall never 'hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.†' And again, 'Whosoever shall drink the Water that I shall give him, 'shall never thirst: But the Water that I shall give him, shall be 'in him a Well of Water springing up into everlasting Life.‡' And again, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.—Whosoever 'liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.‡

* Eph. v. 30.

† John vi. 35.

‡ John iv. 14.

§ John xi. 25.

Now if Jesus Christ had been only a Teacher of *Morality*, how unaccountable must all this Language have been? But as soon as it is known that he is a spiritual *Parent*, or *Principle* of Life to us, in the same Reality as we derive our Flesh and Blood from *Adam*, and that this *Life* lieth in us as a *Seed*, which is to be brought forth to the Fulness of its Stature by *Faith* in Christ, then all these Passages have a Meaning that is plainly intelligible, yet never to be exhausted, but is always suited to the State and Progress of the Reader.

For if Christ is a Principle of Life to us, and this Life is *drawn* into, or *formed* in us by means of our *Faith*; then how justly are we said to eat Christ as the *Bread of Life*, to *eat his Flesh*, and *drink his Blood*, &c., when by Faith we draw him into us, as our Principle of Life? For what can express the Nature of this *Faith*, so well as *Hunger* and *Thirst*? Or how can it be a *real* Faith, unless it have much of the Nature of *Hunger*, of a strong *Desire*, and ardent *Thirst*?

Therefore all these Expressions are as *literally* suited to the Nature of the Thing, to *that* which Christ is to us, as human Words can be, and are not a Language adapted to our *Reason*, to increase its Ideas; but are the Language of Heaven to the heavenly Part of us, and are *only* to excite, direct, and confirm our *Faith* in Christ, or to raise, increase, and exercise our *Hunger*, *Thirst*, and *Desire* of the new Birth of Christ in our Soul.

But this Author knowing nothing of this Doctrine, is forced to deny the most precious Truths of Scripture. Thus all that our Saviour says of himself in the sixth of *St. John*, of his *Flesh* being 'Meat indeed, and his Blood Drink indeed,' and of the *Necessity of eating and drinking it, to have eternal Life in us*; all this, says this Author, 'was only a very high figurative Representation to the Jews then about him, of their Duty and Obligation to receive into their Hearts, and Digest his whole Doctrine, 'as the Food and Life of their Souls.'*

Therefore, according to this Author, Christ is our Life, in no other Meaning or Sense, than any other Person who teaches us any Doctrine that may do us good, and we have no Life from him any other way, than we may have from any Teacher of useful Truths. And therefore what he says of himself, of his being the *Life* of the World, has just as much Truth in it, as if any of the Apostles had said the same things of themselves. Nay, had *Socrates* or *Plato*, or anybody else, preached the same Gospel that our Saviour has done, there had been just the same Meaning, and neither more nor less in it than in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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St. John saith, 'Who is a Liar, but he that denieth that Jesus 'is the Christ? He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and 'the Son.'*

Now surely the Son could not be mentioned with the Father, as an equal Object of our Faith and Acknowledgment, if he could not in *Reality* be said to be our *Life* in such a Sense, as the *Father* may be said to be *our God*, not by a *very high* or *strong Figure of Speech*, but in Truth and Reality.

The Scriptures tell us, that Jesus Christ is the 'Word that was 'with God,' and 'was that God by whom all things were made.'† 'That by him all things were created that are in Heaven and in 'Earth, visible and invisible,—and that in him all things consist.‡

Must not this Author be here obliged to have recourse to much *higher and stronger Figures of Speech*, to account for the Meaning of these Expressions? For if there is anything in the Nature of our Saviour, to support the *literal* Meaning and Truth of these Expressions, then it must not only be *groundless*, but absolutely *false*, to say, that we can only be said to *dwell in him*, or have *our Life* from him, by a *very high* or *strong Figure* of Speech.

For surely, if all things both in Heaven and Earth are created by him, if 'in him all things consist,' then it may be said without any strong Figure, that he is *our Life*, and that we 'dwell in 'him, and he in us,' in the same Reality, as we are said to 'live, 'and move, and have our Being in God.' For if this Creator becomes our Redeemer, we may be said to receive Life from him, to be new-born, or created again by him, in the same Reality and Fulness of Truth, as we can be said to be created by him at first.

When therefore this Author saith, 'We may be said (by a 'strong Figure of Speech) to dwell in him, and he in us; to be 'one with Christ, and Christ with us,' that is, that 'Christ and 'we, to all the Intents and Purposes of true Religion, shall be 'in perfect Friendship and Union together'§: It is the same barefaced Denial of the Gospel, the same direct Blasphemy against God, as to affirm, that God can only by a *strong Figure of Speech*, be said to be our *Life*, our 'Creator, in whom we live, 'and move, and have our Being.' It is the same Blasphemy as to affirm, that we have no Relation to, or Dependence upon God, or Existence in him, but such as any *Party* of People, whether at *Court*, or the *Exchange*, have with one another, when they are to all the *Intents* and *Purposes* of their *Party* Interest, in *perfect Friendship* and *Union* together.

* 1 John ii. 22.

† John i. 3.

‡ Col. i. 16

§ Page 111.

But to return : From this Doctrine of Christ's being a *Principle* of Life, or *Parent* of a new Birth in us, we may see the plain Reason, why the Scripture describes a Christian as a Creature or Instrument of the Holy Spirit, and entirely animated by it, so far as he is truly Christian. Because as Christianity consists in the Birth of a new Man within us, it must needs have a Spirit and Breath as suitable to it, as the Spirit and Air of this World is suitable to a Life of Flesh and Blood. And as every Thought and Motion of our outward Man must be in, and by the Assistance of the Spirit, and Air of this outward World : so every Thought, and Motion, and Desire of our inward spiritual Man, must be in, and by the Assistance of the Spirit, and Air of that World, whose Creature it is.

Now, was there not as really this new spiritual Man within us, in the same Reality of Existence, as our outward rational Nature, there could be no Foundation for this Doctrine of the Necessity of God's Holy Spirit. Nor could the Scripture Account of the Guidance of that Holy Spirit be at all intelligible, upon this Supposition, that we had nothing more in us, but our *outward rational Nature*.

Thus when it is said, *No one can call Jesus the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit* : How could this be intelligible, or have any Truth in it, if there were not a Principle in us, a spiritual Man, distinct from our rational Nature ? For our rational Nature can as well call Jesus Lord, as it can call anyone else Lord, or as *Judas* said, 'Hail Master.'

Therefore since Man in his natural State, and by his Powers as a rational Man, cannot truly call Jesus Lord, it follows, that he has a spiritual Nature or Principle in him, entirely distinct from his rational Nature, and which receiving its Life and Power from the Spirit of God, has alone the *Power* of owning, knowing, and receiving Jesus Christ as Lord.

St. Paul saith, 'Ye are not in the Flesh, but in the Spirit, if 'so be the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. Now if any Man hath 'not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* And again ; 'Now 'we have received not the Spirit of this World, but the Spirit 'which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely 'given to us of God. But the natural Man receiveth not the 'things of the Spirit of God ; for they are Foolishness unto him, 'neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.†

Therefore there is a *spiritual Life*, or *Man* within us, by which alone we have our *Communication* with God, and which is so

* Rom. viii. 9.

† 1 Cor. ii. 12.

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distinct and different from our *natural, rational* Man, that they are of a Nature contrary to each other. The one is by Nature fitted to receive, and know the things of the Spirit of God; the other has a Nature that cannot know, nor receive them.

This is not to be understood, as if the natural Man could not understand the Words of Scripture, as other Words are to be understood, for he can reason and discourse as well upon Scripture, and the things of the Spirit of God, as upon other Matters.

Neither are we to take him that is able to *discern* things spiritually, to be only such a one whose Faculty of *Reasoning* is assisted by the Holy Spirit. For this does not make the spiritual Man here spoken of. No, the Subject of the Holy Spirit, or that which operates upon in us, is not our *reasoning Faculty*, it no more assists our Reason in this manner, than it assists our Eyes to read a difficult Print, or our Ears to hear Sounds more distinctly.

For as the Holy Spirit is *Holiness* itself, or the *Life* and *Power* of Holiness, so it operates only in the manner of itself, and only upon that Part of us, which has its own Nature, or a real Agreement with it. Therefore the spiritual Man that is animated, enlightened and guided by the Holy Spirit, is that *vital Instinct* of Goodness, that *Spark of Life*, of which I have spoken so much, and which shows itself in an inward *Sentiment* of the *Weight* of Sin, and in an inward *Sentiment* of *Hope* and Conversion to the *Mercy* of God.

This is the Beginning, or Foundation, or Seed of that spiritual Man, for whom the Scriptures are written, to whom they speak, and who alone has a Capacity to hear and receive them, because he alone has a Capacity to be animated, moved, and governed by the Holy Spirit.

And therefore it is, that our Saviour saith so often, 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.' Meaning only this inward State of Sensibility of the Heart. He is so far from saying, according to modern Learning, he that hath *clear Ideas*, that has accustomed himself to *Reason*, and distinguish about them; he that can speculate impartially, and search into the Nature of Things, Actions and Persons, by comparing the Ideas of them; let such a one so prepared, draw near to the Kingdom of Heaven; he is so far from saying anything like this, that he rejects it all as the *Burden* and *Darkness* of the Heart, and says, 'Except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.'

But you will perhaps say, If the Scriptures are not proposed to our *Reason*, if Reason is not the *Subject* or *Faculty* of Religion in us; is not this the same as to say, that the Scriptures and Religion are proposed to the *unreasonable* Part of us; Is it not

saying, that we must neglect or suppress that which is most excellent in us, in order to be religious?

You shall see Reason possessed of all that belongs to it, and yet Religion set up in a better Place.

I will grant you much more than you imagine in respect of Reason; I will grant it to have as great a Share in the good Things of Religion, as it has in the good Things of this Life; that it can assist the Soul, just as it can assist the Body; that it has the same Power and Virtue in the *spiritual* World that it has in the *natural* World; that it can communicate to us as much of the one as of the other, and is of the same Use and Importance in the one as in the other. Can you ask more?

Now Man considered as a Member of this World, that is to have his Share in the Good that is in it, is a *sensible* and a *rational* Creature; that is, he has a certain Number of *Senses*, as Seeing, Hearing, Tasting, Smelling and Touching, by which he is *sensible* of that which the outward World, in which he is placed, can do to him, or communicate to him, he is sensible of what Kind and Degree of Happiness he can have from it; besides these *Organs* of Sense, he has a *Power* or Faculty of *reasoning* upon the Ideas which he has received by these Senses.

Now how is it, that this World, or the good things of this World are communicated to Man? How is he put in Possession of them? To what *Part* of him are they proposed? Are his *Senses* or his *Reason* the Means of his having so much as he has, or can have from this World?

Now here you must degrade Reason, just as much as it is degraded by Religion. And as we say, that the good Things of Scripture and Religion are not proposed to our Reason; so you must say, that the good Things of this World are not proposed to our Reason. And as *St. Paul* says, the *natural* Man cannot receive the Things of the Spirit of God, because they are *spiritually* discerned; so you must also say, the *rational* Man cannot receive the Things of this World, because they are to be *sensibly* received, that is, by the Organs of Sense.

Thus must you necessarily set Reason as low, with respect to the Things of this World, as it is set with respect to the Things of the spiritual World. It is no more the Means of communicating the good Things of the one, than of communicating the good Things of the other.

It stands in the same Incapacity in one World, as in the other.

For everyone knows, that we know no more, can receive no more, can possess no more of anything that is communicable to us from this World, than what we know, receive and possess by our *Senses*, or that *sensible Capacity* that is in us, of having some-

thing communicated to us by the World. *Sounds* are only proposed to our *Ears*, Light to our *Eyes*; nothing is communicated to our *Reason*; no Part of the World hath any Communication with it. Reason therefore has no *higher* Office or Power in the Things of this World, than in the Things of Religion. The World is only so far known, received and possessed, as we receive and possess it by our Senses. And Reason stands by, as an impotent Spectator, only beholding and speculating upon its *own Ideas* and *Notions* of what has passed between the World and the *sensible* Part of the Soul.

And as this is the State of Man in this World, where he receives all the Good he can receive from it, by a *Sensibility* of his Nature, entirely distinct from his Faculty of reasoning; so is it his State with regard to the spiritual World, where he stands only capable of receiving the invisible good Things of it, by a *Sensibility* of his Nature, or such a Capacity as *lets* the spiritual World into him, in the manner as the natural is let into him in this Life. Religion therefore does no more violence to your Reason, or rejects it in any *other way*, than as all the good Things of this Life reject it. It is not *Seeing*, it is not *Hearing*, it is not *Tasting* and Feeling the Things of this Life, it can supply the Place of no one of these Senses. Now it is only thus *helpless* and *useless* in Religion; it is neither Seeing, nor Hearing, Tasting nor Feeling of spiritual Things; therefore in the Things of Religion, and in the Things of this World, it has *one* and the *same* Insignificancy. So that the Things of the Spirit of God belong not to Reason, cannot be known and received by it, for the same Reason, that the good Things of this World belong not to Reason, and cannot be known and received by it.

It is the *Sensibility* of the Soul that must receive what this World can communicate to it; it is the *Sensibility* of the Soul that must receive what God can communicate to it. Reason may follow after in either Case, and view through its own Glass what is done, but it can do no more.

Now the *Sensibility* of the Soul, which is its Capacity for Divine Communications, or for the Operation of God's Holy Spirit upon it, consists in an *inward Sentiment* of the *Weight* and Disorder of *Sin*, and in an *inward Sentiment* of *Hope* and *Conversion* to the Mercy of God. This is the first *Seed* of Life, sown into the Soul when *Adam* was redeemed; and it is this *Seed* of Life, or *Sensibility*, that the Holy Spirit of God acts upon, moves and quickens, and enlightens; and to this it is, that all that is said in the Scripture is addressed. Nothing but this *Sensibility*, or State of Heart, has Eyes to see, or Ears to hear the *Things* of the Spirit of God.

Reason may be here of the same Service to us, as it may be when we want any of the Enjoyments of this Life. It may take away a *Cover* from our Eyes, or open our Window-shutters, when we want the Light, but it can do no more towards seeing, than to make way for the Light to act upon our Eyes. This is all its *Office* and *Ability* in the good Things of Religion, it may remove that which hinders the *Sensibility* of the Soul, or prevents the Divine Light's acting upon it, but it can do no more.

Hence you may judge of the following Passage of the *Plain Account*, 'We may be sure we are pleasing God, whilst we are 'obeying the Command of his Son.'—'But in this particular Instance of our Duty, we can with Reason go further, I say with Reason; because the Benefits received from all such Performances by reasonable Creatures, cannot possibly be received but in a reasonable way. These duties, how well soever performed, cannot be supposed to operate as Charms; nor to influence us, as if we were only Clock-Work, or Machines, to be acted upon by the arbitrary Force of a superior Being.*

Now all this is in direct Contradiction to the Nature and State of Man in this World. For no good thing of this World, no Power or Virtue in the whole System of Beings that surround us, can possibly be communicated to our Reason, or by the Way of our Reason. Whatever the World communicates to us of its Power and Virtue must be communicated to the *Sensibility* of our Nature, to that Part of us which is as distinct from our reasoning Faculty, as seeing the Light is distinct from a *Conjecture* about the Nature of it.

Now let us suppose a Man to stand in this World, only with his *rational* Nature, or Faculty of *reasoning*, but destitute of the *Sensibility* of his Nature, or the *Organs* of Sense; What would all this World, or all the Good of it signify to him? If he was to receive nothing but by the way of Reason, would it not be the same thing as to say, that he was to receive nothing from it?

Now this is the State that this Author would have you be in, with relation to God, and the spiritual World. No Power, or Virtue, or Influence of God, or the spiritual World, is to be communicated to you, but by the way of Reason, and you are to stand with relation to all the Riches and Powers, and Virtues of God, and the spiritual World, in the same State as he stands in this World, who is to know and feel, and possess no more of it, than he can know, and feel, and possess by the way of Reason, without any *one Sense*. Therefore it is plain, that this Author

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desires all Communication from God to you, to be as much at an end, as all Communication from this World must be at an end, if you had not *one Sense* left.

I have just supposed a Man to stand in this World, *without* all Sensibility of Nature, endued only with a Faculty of *reasoning*; let it now be supposed, that you had a Power to awaken a Sensibility of Nature in him, and to help him to all those Senses that are common to Man. Would you say, this must by no means be done? Would you say, that you must keep off this Sensibility of Nature, that you might preserve him a free Agent? And that if the Light and Heat of the Sun, the Virtues and Powers of the World, should operate upon him in any other manner than by the way of Reason, he would be turned from a rational Creature, into a mere Machine and Clock-work.

Now this is the Way that this Author would preserve you a *Free Agent*, with relation to God, and the spiritual World: He will not allow you to have any Senses, that he may preserve your Reason. For if God, or the spiritual World, could do that to you, which this outward World can do to a Man that has his Senses; if God should communicate any Good to you, as the *Sun* communicates its Light and good Influence without the Assistance of your Reason, and only by making you *sensible* of them, you are undone, the *Freedom* and *Rationality* of your Nature is lost, and you are turned into *Clock-work*.

Let me ask this rational Man, who is so great an Enemy to all that is not done in a *rational Way*, whether he feels no Attachment to the World, and his Interest in it; whether he pursues it *no further*, and has no *Sensibility* of its Power over him, but just so much as *pure Reason* and the Light of the Gospel raise in him; whether he has no *Self-love*, no *Family-love*, no *Party-love*, no *Ambition*, no *Pride*, no *Sensuality*, but what is weighed out to him by Arguments and Motives of pure Reason, enlightened by the Letter of the Gospel? Now if there is something of those Tempers in him, arising from some *secret Power* that is working in him, that has not all its *Life* and *Working* from pure Reason, will he therefore say, that he is a mere *Machine*, that he has no Liberty left, that he is no longer a rational Creature; Now if a Degree of Goodness should steal upon him this way, without consulting his Reason, if he should find a *heavenly Love*, a *Purity* of Heart, an *Attraction* to God, a Desire of *Holiness*, a *Poverty* of Spirit, a *Contempt* of the World, a *Sensibility* of the Greatness of eternal Things, *stirring* and *awakened* in him in a greater degree than ever he intended to have them by his *own Reason*, would he be obliged to cry out, that his *reasonable Soul* was undone, that he had lost the *Rationality* of his Nature,

was become a *Machine*, because such a Sense of God and Goodness had got Entrance into him without consulting his Reason?

And if God is as ready to operate upon our Souls, and to manifest his Power and Presence in them, when we give way to it, as the World and the Devil are when we leave an entrance for them, has a Preacher of the Gospel any Authority from thence, to reproach this divine Assistance, as 'Communications 'and Impressions from above, which leave the Mind in a State 'satisfied with what carries no rational Satisfaction in it?'

For however this Author may please himself with thinking that his Mind is free from *Communications and Impressions from above, and satisfied only with such Things as carry a rational Satisfaction in them*; yet it is an eternal immutable Truth, founded in the Nature of Things, that no Soul can enjoy any Degree of Good whatever, but by a *Communication or Impression* of something upon it.

Every Creature, as such, is by the Necessity of its Nature, in a State of *Poverty and Want*, and may be defined to be only a *Capacity* to receive so much Good as shall be communicated to it, or impressed upon it. Were not this the State of our Souls, it would not be the State of our Bodies; and as the Body stands in this World in Poverty and Want, only *capable* of being fed, nourished, comforted and blessed by Communications and Impressions from the Things that surround it, so the Soul stands in the same Poverty and Want in the spiritual World, and only *capable* of being nourished, comforted, and blessed by Communications and Impressions from God.

So that this Author's Satisfaction which he has chosen for himself, a Satisfaction purely *rational*, or by *way* of his Reason, instead of divine Impressions, is the Choice of a Man in a *Dream*, that knows nothing of the Nature of God, or of his Soul, or of the State and Nature of Things. For the Satisfaction of every Being, from the highest Angel to the lowest of human Creatures, is all *sensible*, and wholly seated in the *Sensibility* of their Nature.

This is as certain, as that a Child has no *rational* Satisfaction; for no Man ever was satisfied or dissatisfied for any other Reason, or upon any other Account, than as a Child is satisfied or dissatisfied, namely, according as its *Senses*, or the *Sensibility* of its Nature, has or has not that which is agreeable to it. For Nature shows what it is in a Child, and does not become *another* thing in a grown Man. The Child has no Cunning or Fraud, and therefore he plainly owns what he wants and cries for it.

Grown Men are under the same *Sensibility* of Nature, want only what the Child wanted, *viz.*, to have their Senses gratified, but they have the Cunning not to *own* it, and the Fraud to *pretend* something else.

And thus it must be with every human Creature. He must be governed by *this Sensibility* of his Nature, must be happy or unhappy, according as his Senses are gratified, till *such time* as he is born again from above, till the *new Birth* has awakened *another Sensibility* in him, and opened a way for divine *Communications* and *Impressions* to have more Effect upon him, than the Things of this World have upon his natural Senses. For no created Being whatever, can any Moment of Time be free from Communications and Impressions of some kind or other; if it is not governed by Communications and Impressions from *above*, it is certainly governed by Communications and Impressions from *below*.

The *Needle* that is touched with the *Loadstone*, does not *then begin* to be under the *Power* of Attraction, for it was under the Power of Attraction from the Earth before. And if it loses the Attraction of the Loadstone, it does not cease to be attracted by something else.

The Soul that is touched with an Impression from God, does not *then begin* to be under the *Power* of something that acts upon it, for the World and the Devil, or the Nature of those Things that surround it, attract it, and act upon it. For as it has something of the Nature of everything in it, so the whole Nature of Things as continually act upon it by Impressions, as the *Sun* acts upon everything that has anything of the *Nature* of the Sun in it.

Now the *Freedom* of the Will, is not a Freedom *from* Communications and Impressions, but is only a Liberty of *choosing* to be made happy, either by yielding ourselves up to the *Attraction* or *Operation* of God upon us, or to be miserable, by yielding ourselves up to the *Impressions* of the World, and sensible Things.

There is no *middle way*; if we *reject* or make ourselves *incapable* of Impressions from God, we are the Machines and Clockwork of this sensible World.

Two Men born blind may talk and dispute about receiving Light in a *rational way*, and think it ought only to be received by their *Reason*, or in Conformity to its Power of speculating; as soon as their Eyes are opened, they both see that *Reason* was a *Fool*, and that Light can only act upon them by way of *Impression* upon the Sensibility of their Nature.

It is so far therefore from being a dangerous Delusion to

expect, desire, believe, and pray for Communications and Impressions from above, by means of the holy Sacrament, that it is as right and sound a Faith, and as beneficial to the Soul, as to believe that the Goodness of God's Providence is in everything, and that everything is blessed by his Power and Presence in it to the faithful Receiver.

All the Perfections of God have some kind of Similitude or Resemblance of their Power in the Perfections of the *Sun*, which refresh our animal and rational Nature by continual Communications and Impressions upon it, as the Perfections of God communicate and impress themselves upon the inmost Spirit of our Souls.

And he that would have his animal rational Nature comforted and refreshed only in a *rational* way, without Communications and Impressions from the Sun, would be just such a *Pleader* for *Reason*, as he that would have religious Satisfaction only in a rational way, without Communications and Impressions from above.

For the Impressions from God are more necessary and essential to the pious Life of the Soul, than the Impressions of the Sun are to the comfortable Life of our outward rational Man.

And he that prays for nothing else but these divine Communications and Impressions, who thinks of nothing else, desires nothing else, trusts in nothing else, as able to comfort, strengthen, and enrich his Soul: He that is thus, all *Prayer*, all *Love*, all *Desire*, and all *Faith*, in these *Communications* and *Impressions* from above, is just in the same State of *Sobriety*, as he that only prays that God *would not leave him to himself*.

For he that is without anything of these Communications and Impressions of God upon him, is in the same State of *Death* and *Separation* from God as the Devils are. And to turn Men from the *Faith* and *Love*, and *Desire* of these divine Impressions, is to lay the *Axe* to the Root of Religion, and is as *direct* a way to *Atheism*, as to teach them, as *Epicurus* did, that God is *afar off*. For a God *without* any Communications and Impressions upon us, and a God *afar off*, are equally atheistical Tenets, equally destructive of all Piety.

The one Opinion is the same Denial of God as the other.

And when Men have once lost *all Sense* of the Necessity of being inwardly, invisibly, and secretly supported, assisted, guided, and blessed by Communications and Impressions of God upon their Souls, it signifies not much what Religion they profess, or for what Reason they profess it, whether they have the Reason of *Epicurus*, or *Hobbs*, or this *Author*. For a Religion has no good of Religion in it, but so far as it introduces the *Life, Power, and Presence* of God into the Soul.

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For there is nothing good even in Heaven itself, but the *Fulness* of divine Communications and Impressions; no Wretchedness in Hell, but what arises from an entire Cessation of them; and this Life has no *Possibility* of being changed into a heavenly Life, but so far as it is capable of divine Communications and Impressions.

For as the *Sun* is the Light of this World, only by Communications and Impressions of his Light upon all Objects, according to their Capacity to receive it; so God is the God of all his Creatures, only by Communications and Impressions of his Life, and Power, and Presence upon all his Creatures, according to their Capacity to receive them. And therefore to discredit and ridicule the *Desire, Hunger, Faith, and Expectation* of divine Communications and Impressions in all Acts and Parts of Religion, is to teach Men to *unite* Religion with *Atheism*, and to make their very Acts of Religion, a *Renunciation* of, and *Departure* from God.

Had this Author openly and plainly said with *Epicurus*, God is *afar off*, the *Atheism* had been plain and apparent, and confessed by all; and yet he has said more than this; for to say that we are without all Communications and Impressions of God upon us, for this Reason, because they would make us *Machines* and *Clock-work*, and could give us no *rational* Satisfaction, is not only saying that God is *afar off*, but that he *ought* and *must* continue to be so, if we are not to be *Machines*, and lose the *Rationality* of our Nature. So that according to this Author's Doctrine, rational and free Agents are not only to believe with *Epicurus*, but also ought to rejoice that God is *afar off*, and to desire, for the sake of the *Rationality* of their Nature, that he may always be at the same Distance from them.

Hence it is, that this Author is, as *Epicurus* was, forced to invent a *summum bonum*, or chief *Good* for Man, exclusive of the Enjoyment of God. Thus says he, 'The highest Good of mortal Man, is the uniform Practice of Morality, chosen by ourselves, as our Happiness here, and our unspeakable Reward hereafter.*'

For as *Epicurus* was forced to place the *highest Good* of Man in his *Philosophical Garden*, because he had separated the Gods from Men, and placed them apart by themselves; so this Author having rejected all divine Communications and Impressions upon us, as having no *rational Satisfaction* in them, as making us *Machines* and *Clock-work*, was forced to invent a *highest*

* Page 157.

Good for mortal Man, both here and hereafter, that has nothing of Good in it.

Epicurus therefore and this *Parochial Minister* of the Gospel agree in this; First, that they place the *highest Good*, or *Happiness* of Man, in something that is *exclusive* of God. Secondly, that they place it in something that they *can do* for themselves.

The *Church*, of which this Author says he is a *Minister*, sings every Day, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God, Heaven and Earth 'are full of thy Majesty and Glory;' but according to him, it sings of something that is no Part of its Happiness, either here or hereafter.

The Gospel, of which he pretends to be a Preacher, brings the glad Tidings of a Saviour, and Salvation to all Mankind; but he preaches a *highest Good* of mortal Man, that has nothing of this Saviour or Salvation in it.

Jesus Christ says, 'Except a Man be born again of the Water 'and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.' That 'as the Father raises up the dead, and quickeneth them, 'even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.* And 'that to as 'many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the 'Sons of God.' Who 'were born, not of Blood, nor of the Will 'of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God.† Again, 'If 'ye abide in me, and my Words abide in you, ye shall ask what 'ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Ask and ye shall 'receive, that your Joy may be full. If any Man love me, my 'Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make 'our abode with him.' The Apostle saith, 'Giving thanks unto 'the Father, who hath delivered us from the Power of Darkness, 'and hath translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, in 'whom we have Redemption through his Blood.'

Now had a *Celsus*, or a *Porphyry*, or any *modern Adversary* of the Gospel, a mind to show their utmost *Detestation* and *Abhorrence* of these Doctrines, of a Birth of the *Spirit*, a *Birth* of God, a *quickenig Saviour*, a *Life in him* and through him, a *Redemption through his Blood*, a *Translation into his Kingdom*, of our *asking and receiving all* through him, of his Father's and his *Abode* in us, had they the greatest Desire to persuade all People that all this was a *groundless Fiction*, without the least Truth or Reasonableness in it, need they declare any more, or desire any more to be believed than this, 'That the highest Good of Man, 'is the uniform Practice of Morality, chosen by ourselves, as 'our 'Happiness here, and our unspeakable Reward hereafter?' For

* John v. 21.

† John i. 12.

is not this the same thing as to say, all the Doctrines of the Gospel *Saviour* and Salvation, of a *new Birth*, of the Spirit of God, of *Redemption through Christ*, of *Righteousness* in him of entering into *his Kingdom*, are absolutely false? For it is the same total Denial of all the Christian Method of Salvation, as to say, that we have our Happiness or highest Good both here and hereafter from *Epicurus*. For the Salvation, and Happiness, and eternal Life which we receive through Jesus Christ, is equally denied and rejected as false, whether you place our *highest Good* in what we can do for ourselves, or in what *Epicurus* can do for us.

The Scripture saith, 'The Gift of God is eternal Life, through 'Jesus Christ our Lord.* And again, 'He that hath the Son, 'hath Life; and he who hath not the Son, hath not Life.† Again, 'By Grace ye are saved through Faith; and that not of 'yourselves, it is the Gift of God.‡ And again, 'If Christ be 'not raised, ye are yet in your Sins:§ And, 'as in Adam all died, 'so in Christ shall all be made alive.' And again, 'Your Life is 'hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our Life shall 'appear, then shall ye also appear with him in Glory:§

Now this Author does not expressly say all this is absolutely false, and not fit to be believed, but he only desires you to believe something, that will show it to be *impossible* to be true.

For if our *own Morality*, chosen by ourselves, is our *highest Good and Reward both here and hereafter*, it is impossible to be true, that we have *no Life* but in the *Son of God*, or that eternal Life is the *Gift of God* to us through Jesus Christ, or that we are *saved by Grace*, through Faith, and *not of ourselves*.

So that this Author is not to be considered as one that has barely mistaken something in the Nature of the Sacrament, but as one that rejects the *whole Method* of Salvation through Jesus Christ, and will have no Happiness or Redemption from him here, or eternal Life hereafter.

When therefore he saith, 'Do we not partake of the Benefit of 'Remission of our Sins, by partaking of the Lord's Supper 'worthily? I must answer, No; if the Gospel be true.¶

This ought to have no more Weight with you, than if *Celsus* or *Porphyry*, or *Hobbs*, had said the same thing. For since he makes our *own Morality*, chosen by ourselves, to be our *highest Good, both here and hereafter*, he as absolutely rejects our Salvation through Jesus Christ, and denies the Love and Goodness of God towards us in Christ Jesus, to be our *highest Good, both here and hereafter*, as ever *Celsus* or *Porphyry* did: And therefore can

* Rom. vi. 23. † 1 John v. 12. ‡ Eph. ii. 8. § Col. iii. 3. || Page 144.

have no more Right or Pretence to explain any Part of that Salvation, which he has so totally denied, than they had. In the Gospel, says he, *No Pardon of past Sins is promised or given, unless to those just converted, renouncing their Sins, and baptized into the Christian Faith; or to those, who having sinned after Baptism, actually amend their Lives.* This is to show you, that there is no Remission of Sins obtained by the worthy partaking of the Sacrament, *if the Gospel be true.*

Now in the Gospel, our Blessed Lord seeing their Faith, 'saith 'to the Sick of the Palsy, Son, be of good cheer, thy Sins are 'forgiven thee.'

Now here Pardon of Sins is given, directly contrary to this Author's Assertion, to one not converted and baptized into the Christian Faith, but because of his and their *Faith* that brought him on a Bed.

Again, of *Magdalen*, our Lord saith, 'Her Sins, which are 'many, are forgiven; for she loved much. But to whom little is 'forgiven, the same loveth little.'

Here you see again a plain Confutation of this Author's Doctrine; for here Remission of Sins is actually given and declared to be due to *Love*, and Love is affirmed to be the *Measure* of it.

Therefore it is an undeniable Doctrine of the Gospel, that *Faith* and *Love* are *certain* Means of obtaining Remission of our Sins; if therefore the Sacrament is an *Exercise* of our *Faith* and *Love*, then we have the utmost Assurance from our Saviour's own Words, that we thereby obtain Remission of our Sins.

But this Author has another Argument against it, taken from our *Liturgy*. In our Public *Office*, says he, 'it is not supposed 'that the worthy partaking of the Lord's Supper does itself 'operate this Forgiveness; but it is made part of a Prayer to God, 'that they who have partaken of it, may obtain Remission of their 'Sins, &c. They are taught to pray thus, after the Act of Com-
'munion is over, which supposes that it is not already obtained.*

Now if there was any Truth or Reason in this Argument, it would follow, that our Saviour's Apostles had obtained *no Remission* of Sins from him; and though he had *chosen* them out of the World, called them his *Friends*, and declared his *extraordinary Love* for them, and though they *left all and followed* him, yet he had not done that for them, which he had done for the sick of the Palsy, and many others; for this Reason, because he had taught and enjoined them a Form of Prayer, in which they were to *pray for the Forgiveness of their Sins.*

For if it is rightly argued, that there is *no Remission* of Sins obtained by the Use of the Sacrament, because *afterwards* there is *Prayer* made for the Forgiveness of Sins; then it must follow, that our Saviour's Apostles could not have received any Remission of Sins, when he taught them to pray for it. It must follow also, that he never intended that they should be in the *State* of new Converts, *baptized* for the Remission of their Sins, because then they could not without great Absurdity have used that Form of Prayer which he gave them.

It follows also, that the Apostles could not have taught this Form of Prayer, or enjoined the Use of it to their new baptized Converts, because it would have been, according to this Author, a proving to them, that they had not received the Pardon of their Sins by Baptism.

Now the Inconsistency which this Author finds in praying for the Forgiveness of Sins, and all other Benefits of Christ's Passion, after the Reception of the Sacrament, if the Sacrament itself was a means of obtaining them, all this Inconsistency and Difficulty had been removed, if he had only known or acknowledged, that the Christian Life is a *progressive* State, and that Forgiveness of Sins is a Grace and Benefit of Jesus Christ, bestowed upon us in the same manner as every other Grace or degree of Holiness, as a *Talent* to be improved, as a *Seed* to be nourished up by us to its full Growth. And for this Reason it is, that we are obliged to pray for every Grace, and every Virtue, that we have *already* received, because we had received it to grow up in us, and *Prayer* or *Desire* of it is the only Soil in which it can grow.

Thus he to whom God has *already* given the Grace of *Penitence*, for that reason *prays* for Penitence; he that has already received of God the Gift of *Faith*, for that reason *prays*, *Lord, help thou my Unbelief*; and he that is the *fullest* of Righteousness, feels the greatest *Hunger* and *Thirst* after it.

But according to this Author's Religion, he that has received the Spirit of God, cannot be supposed to pray for it; and yet according to the Religion of the *Gospel*, no one can pray for it, but because he has received it.

I shall now only add a word or two on what this Author says in Defence of the *Safety* of his Doctrine of the Sacrament; though it should be erroneous.

It ought certainly,' says he, 'to be far from the Thoughts of every Christian to lessen any Privileges, or undervalue any Promises, annexed by Christ to any Duty or Institution of his Religion. It is an inexcusable Carelessness to do it for want of due Consideration.—But this, I think, may with Truth be said,

‘that an Error of this sort (should it be supposed) does not really ‘hurt any Christian, nor alter the Effect of the Duty at all.’*’

The Safety therefore of his Doctrine of the Sacrament, supposing it to lessen and undervalue the Benefits of it, is grounded upon this general Proposition, which he takes to be a great Truth, *viz.*, ‘That to lessen or undervalue the Privileges and Promises ‘annexed to any Duty or Institution by Jesus Christ, does not ‘really hurt any Christian, or alter the Effect of the Duty at all.’

Now this Doctrine directly leads to *Infidelity*, for Infidelity is nothing else but a *lessening and undervaluing* the Privileges and Promises annexed to *Faith* in Christ.

The Scripture saith, ‘In this was manifested the Love of God ‘toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into ‘the World, that we might live through him;’ and again, *He sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins.*† ‘God so loved ‘the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever ‘believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal Life.’ Here the Privilege and Promise of *Life*, and *Atonement* for our Sins, is annexed to *Faith* in Christ; but according to this Author, it does you no *real Hurt*, nor *alters* the *Effect* of your Faith at all, though you *lessen* and *undervalue* this Privilege and Promise of Life, and Atonement for your Sins, offered to your Faith in Christ Jesus.

Is not this directly saying, that Infidelity is as safe and beneficial to you, as a Belief of the Privileges and Promises of the Gospel? Is it not saying, that it is as beneficial to you to esteem Christ only as a Carpenter’s Son, as to expect *Atonement* and *Life* from him, as the only begotten Son of God?

It is said of our blessed Lord, that among those of his own Country *he did no mighty Works, because of their Unbelief*. Now what was their *Unbelief*? It was nothing but the *Infidelity* which this Author would prove to be *harmless*; it was only a *lessening* and *undervaluing* all those Privileges and Promises which our Saviour offered to those that would have a just Sense of the Value of them. Now if we lessen or undervalue any Privileges and Promises annexed to Faith in Christ, or any other Duty, such *Unbelief* will certainly have the same Effect upon us that it had upon those amongst whom Christ lived, it will hinder him from doing any mighty Works among us, or in other Words, render our Knowledge and Profession of him ineffectual to our Salvation.

Prayer and *Faith* are amongst the greatest Duties of the Christian Life, and are the most powerful Means of obtaining

* Pref., p. 5.

† 1 John iv. 9.

all the Blessings of our Salvation. Now to these two Duties the greatest *Privileges* and *Promises* are annexed by Christ. The Promise of the Holy Spirit is made to Prayer. Now, according to this Author, if you lessen and undervalue this Privilege and Promise annexed to Prayer, if you grow indifferent about the Necessity or Benefit of the Holy Spirit, and fancy that you are sufficient of yourself for all the Virtue that you want, all this does you no *real Hurt*, nor *alters* at all the *Effect* of your Prayer.

Again, another Privilege annexed to Prayer, is that of being heard in and through the *Name of Christ*.

'Hitherto,' says our blessed Lord, 'ye have asked nothing in my Name; ask and ye shall receive, that your Joy may be full.'—'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you.'*

Now if any Infidel, to abate your Zeal for, and Confidence in this kind of Prayer, should teach you, that no one can suffer any *real Hurt* by *lessening* and undervaluing Prayer in the *Name of Christ*, and that it would have the same Effect upon you, though you expected little or no Good from it, the Gospel would be preached to you, just as it is by this Author.

Again, 'All things whatsoever ye shall ask in Prayer, believing, ye shall receive.' Now what is this *believing*, but an entire Faith in the Privileges and Promises annexed to Prayer?

But if Prayer is effectual because of this Faith in the Promises made to Prayer, then everyone suffers a *real Hurt*, and the *Effect* of his Prayer is altogether hindered by this want of Faith, or by a lessening and undervaluing the Privileges and Promises annexed to it.

But if this Author's Doctrine was true, it might then be said, in Contradiction to the Gospel, Prayer does you as much real good when you have little or no Faith in it, as when you have ever so much, and your believing is no help to your receiving.

The Scriptures attribute a kind of Omnipotency to Faith; thus, 'All things are possible to him that believeth.' Again, 'According to thy Faith, so be it done unto thee.—Thy Faith hath saved thee.—Thy Faith hath made thee whole.' But according to this Author, it must be said, that the Want of Faith does you no *real Hurt*, that you will be *healed* and *saved*, and *have all things done to you*, in the same manner, whether you be faithless or believing.

And on this Foundation it is that he grounds your *Safety* in receiving his Doctrine of the Sacrament, though he should have lessened and undervalued the Benefits annexed to it. But you

* John xvi. 24.

ought to observe, that you can have no Safety in receiving his Doctrine of the Sacrament, unless it be safe for you to receive another Gospel.

Had the *Sick*, the *Lame*, the *Blind*, and the *Deaf* believed that which this Author would have you believe, as safe Doctrine, *viz.*, that to lessen and undervalue the Promises and Privileges made to Faith, could do them no *real Hurt*, they had continued in their Infirmities, merely for knowing Jesus Christ and the Gospel as this Author would have you know them.

When two *blind Men* ran crying after our Saviour to have Mercy on them, 'He saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able 'to do this? They said unto him, yea, Lord. Then touched he 'their Eyes, saying, according to your Faith be it unto you. And 'their Eyes were opened.*' The poor Woman that wanted to be healed of her Infirmity, said, 'If I may but touch his Clothes 'I shall be whole:' Upon this Faith of the Woman, our Saviour said, 'I perceive that Virtue is gone out of me;' and turning him about, and seeing the Woman, 'he said unto her, Daughter, be 'of good comfort, thy Faith hath made thee whole.†'

Now, had the blind Men answered to our Saviour's Question, No, Lord, we do not believe that thou canst give us Sight; had the diseased Woman said, I am so far from expecting to be healed by touching his Clothes, that I don't believe he has the Power of healing in himself; according to this Author, their *Infidelity* must have helped them to just the same Benefit from Christ, as their *Faith* did, notwithstanding that Christ himself ascribes it to their Faith. For unless it be true, that their want of Faith had helped them to the same Benefit from Christ that their Faith did, it cannot be true, that to *lessen and undervalue the Privileges and Promises annexed to any Duty, does you no real Hurt, nor alters the Effect of it at all.*

And therefore the Safety which this Author proposes to you, in lessening and undervaluing the Privileges and Promises annexed to the Sacrament, is only the Safety of Infidelity, and such a Safety as they are in, who lessen and undervalue the Privileges and Promises annexed to Faith in Jesus Christ.

And indeed herein he is, though inconsistent with the Gospel, very consistent with himself. For if, as he has said, *an uniform Morality chosen by ourselves, is our highest Good both here and hereafter*; our highest Good makes Christ as needless to us as the Sacrament; for if this is true, you can no more need the Benefits of a Saviour, than the Benefits of a Sacrament, and it can signify nothing to your Happiness, whatever Privileges and

* Matt. ix. 30.

† Matt. ix. 22.

Promises are offered to you in the Gospel, because you want none, can receive none as a Part of your Happiness, because you have it all from yourself, both here and hereafter.

So that if this Minister of the Gospel carries his Point with you, if you believe his Doctrine of the Sacrament, upon the *Principles* on which he teaches it, you may indeed retain something of the *outward Form* of the Sacrament, but must reject the *whole Salvation* of the Gospel.

FINIS.

THE
GROUNDS AND REASONS
OF CHRISTIAN
REGENERATION,
OR, THE
NEW - BIRTH,
Offered to the Consideration of
CHRISTIANS AND DEISTS.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

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The Introduction.

I SHOULD reckon it a Matter of great Importance, if I knew how to bespeak the *serious Attention* of the Reader to one of the greatest Articles of the Christian Religion, and of the greatest Concern to himself.

And though the Subject is *particular*, and seems only to relate to *one Point*, yet the Things which will here come under Consideration, will extend to Matters of the most general Moment, and contain the most affecting Reasons to awaken and convert the Heart both of the *Deist*, and the Christian.

For it is my Intent so to search and lay open the true Grounds and Reasons of the Christian *New-Birth*, that the Things said, may equally reach both these sorts of Readers.

For the Deists, and Unbelievers, have a great Share of my compassionate Affections, and I never can think, or write of the infinite Blessings of the Christian Redemption, without feeling in my Heart, an impatient Longing to see them the happy Partakers of them. And as one naturally believes, what one strongly wishes; so I cannot help hoping, that both Christians and *Deists* will here find Truths of such a Nature, as must in some Degree touch their Hearts, if not read with *Prejudice and Aversion*.

OF THE
Nature and Necessity
OF
REGENERATION,
OR, THE
NEW-BIRTH.

MAN was created by God *after his own Image*, and in *his own Likeness*, a living Mirror of the *Divine Nature*: where Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, each brought forth their *own Nature* in a *creaturely Manner*.

(2.) As the Son, who is begotten of the Father, is the *Brightness* of the Father's Glory, and the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and the Son, as an *amiable, moving Life of both*; so it was in this created Image of the Holy Trinity. In it, the Father's *Nature* generated the Nature of the *Son*, and the Holy Ghost proceeded from them both, as an amiable, moving Life of both.* *This was the Likeness or Image of God*, in which the first Man was created, a *true Offspring* of God, in whom the *Divine Birth* sprung up as in the Deity, where Father, Son, and Holy Ghost saw themselves in a *creaturely Manner*.

(3.) In the Divine Nature the Father cannot possibly be separated from the Son, nor the Holy Ghost from both, or either of them. But *such Separation* could come to pass in the Trinity, become *creaturely*, or in the created living Image of the Trinity.

(4.) If such Separation could not have happened, Man *could not* have fallen out of *Paradise*; for so long as this Image of the Holy Trinity continued *unbroken*, so long it must be in Paradise, Heaven, or the Kingdom of Divine Joy.

(5.) But that this *Separation* could happen in this created Image of the Trinity, *viz.*, that the *Birth* of the *Son*, and the *Arising* or *Proceeding* of the Holy Ghost, could be *separated* or

* See *An Appeal to Deists, Arians, &c.*, c. i., pp. 45-58.

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lost, is also certain ; because Man is actually fallen out of Paradise into this *poor, wretched, perishable* World.

(6.) Whilst Man continued an *unbroken Image* of the holy Trinity, he was necessarily in Paradise, in the open Enjoyment of the Kingdom of God. He stood indeed upon the *Earth*, and with the *same outward* World about him, as we do now ; but Paradise was *over* all, the *Cover* of all ; and therefore he neither *saw* nor *felt* either his own *outward* Body, or the Things of this *outward* World, in the *manner*, as we *now* see, and feel them. His own dark, gross, heavy, fleshy Body, which appeared after the Fall, and the *naked Grossness, Heaviness, Darkness, Discord, Contrariety, and Enmity*, of the Elements of this *outward* World, the Strife of *Heat and Cold, of Storms and Tempests*, were Things *suppressed* in Paradise, and as *entirely* hid from his Eyes, as the Darkness of the Night is hid from our Eyes by the Light of the Day.

(7.) This is plainly taught us in the holy Scripture, where it is said of our first Parents in Paradise, before the Fall, that 'they were naked, and were not ashamed.' And again, after the Fall, it is said, 'their Eyes were opened,' and 'they saw they were naked,' and through Shame sought for a Covering. It is not said, they *saw* their Nakedness in Paradise, but that *though* they were naked, that is, had such Bodies as afterwards *appeared* to be naked, *yet* they were not ashamed, And the Reason of their not being ashamed, was because that Nakedness was *not then visible*, could not *then* show itself, but was *concealed* and *covered* from *them* by their *paradisiacal* Glory ; but as soon as by Sin, they *died* to the paradisiacal Life and Glory, then they *saw* their Nakedness, which Sight filled them with Shame and Confusion.

(8.) From these two Passages of Scripture it is most plain, first, that *another sort* of Seeing, or another Sight of Things, was opened in *Adam* after the Fall, than *that* which he had before it : For he *then first* saw his *own Nakedness*, and therefore *first* also then saw the *outward World*, with *such Eyes* as he saw his own Body, that is, in the same State of *Nakedness*, as he saw himself, destitute of its paradisiacal Glory. *Secondly*, That before his Fall, his *Seeing* was *divine*, by means of a *divine Light*, shining forth from the Kingdom of God, that was then not *hid*, but powerfully opened *within him*. It was then with him, as with the heavenly City, of which St. *John* says, 'It had 'no need of the Sun, neither of the Moon to shine in it ; for the 'Glory of God did enlighten it, and the Lamb is the Light 'thereof.' Rev. xxi. 23. *Thirdly*, That after the Fall, when the Image of the holy Trinity was *broken* in him, this divine Light *departed* from him, and he was left to the *firmamental Light* of

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this World, to the Light of *Beasts*, to see himself, and all other *outward* Things, in *no other* Light and Glory, but such as the *Sun, Stars, and Elements*, cast upon one another. Thus he stood with regard to this *outward* World, a *poor Prisoner* of this earthly Life, as much under the Power and Slavery of the Elements, as his Fellow-creatures the *Beasts*.

(9.) Paradise being departed from the Earth (which before kept all in harmony) now Discord and Contrariety broke forth in *all* the Elements, and Animals upon it. The *Elementary* Nature in Man, and Beasts, was in the *same* Disorder with the *outward* Elements and Stars. From this time *Storms and Tempests, Thunders and Lightnings, Earthquakes*, and all sorts of Strife and Contrarieties through all temporal Nature; and in *Man*, and other *Animals*, arose the *same* *Disquiet*; for the Elements *in* and *without* man, were of the same Nature, and therefore acted upon one another. Hence, Heat, Cold, Pain, Sorrow, Fear, *Disquiet*, Diseases, Sickness and Death, came upon Man, fallen *out of Paradise into* this World.

(10.) This was the State of the World, and of Man in it, after that *Paradise* was *retired* from it; when, instead of the *Light and Glory* of Paradise, which before made it all *Peace and Unity*, and a sweet Habitation of Divine Joy, it had now only the *Light* of the *Sun*, which could only keep the Elements in *such Harmony*, and *Discord*, as we now see in the World. Thus stood Man in this *outward* World; let us now look at the *inward* State of his Soul, and see what *Condition* he was of, in the inward, and spiritual World.

(11.) We have before shown, that Man was created a *living Image* of the holy Trinity in Unity, that the *Divine Birth* arose in him, and that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, saw themselves in him, in a *creaturely Manner*.

Now by his Transgression *this* Image of the Holy Trinity was broken; the Generation of the *Son*, or *Word*, and the Proceeding of the Holy Ghost in him, were at an *End*; in the *Day* that he sinned, in *that* Day he died *this* *Death*. And therefore *what* was he as to *his* *Soul*? *What* must be said of it? It was something, *that* was deprived of *that* *Birth*, which was the *Brightness of its* *Glory*, and which should be that to it, which the *Son of God* is to the Father; it wanted *that* *Spirit*, which was its *amiable* *Life*, and which was to be that to it, which the *Holy Ghost* is to the Father, and the Son.

Yet the Soul was *still* a *Life*, an *imperishable* *Life*, that could not be *dissolved*, or *cease* to be. Now seeing *every* *Life*, whether spiritual or corporeal, consists in *Fire*, or rather is *Fire*; therefore we may say of the Soul in this State, *that* it is a spiritual

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dark *Fire-breath*, an *Anger-Fire*, that must heat, and torment itself with its *own inward burning Strife*, and yet be *unable* to reach, touch, or obtain any Spark of *Light and Love*, to make its *Fire-Life* sweet and amiable, or such a Flame of Fire, as *Angels* are said to be.

(12.) This was the *State* of the Soul after the *Fall*, when the *Birth* of the Son of God, and the *Proceeding* of the Holy Ghost, were *no more* to be found, or felt in it. It was in the *State* and *Condition* of the Devils, who in their *fallen Nature*, are from *Flames of Love*, become this spiritual, dark, raging, aching *Fire-breath*, that can draw *no Light of Love* into it.

And the Reason why, even the most profligate Persons do not *fully know*, and perceive their Souls to be in this miserable State, a *dark Root of self-tormenting Fire*, is this, because the Soul, though thus fallen, was still *united to the Blood* of an human Body, and therefore the *sweet*, and *cheering Light* of the Sun, could reach the *Soul*, and do *that* for it in some *Degree*, and for some *Time*, which it does to the *Darkness, Sharpness, Sourness, Bitterness, and Wrath* that is in *outward Nature*, that is, it could *enlighten, sweeten, and cheer* it in a certain Degree.

But as this is not its *own Light*, that is, does not *arise in* the Soul itself, but only reaches it by *means* of the Body ; so if the Soul hath in *this time* got *no Light of its own*, then, when the Death of the Body breaks off its *Communion* with the Light of this World, the Soul is left a *mere dark, raging Fire*, in the State of Devils.

And if all the Light of this World was to be *immediately* at once extinguished, *all human Souls* that were not in some *real Degree* of Regeneration, would immediately find themselves to be nothing but the rage of *Fire*, and the Horror of *Darkness*.

(13.) Now, though the Light and Comfort of this *outward World*, keeps even the worst of Men from any *constant, strong Sensibility* of *that* wrathful, fiery, dark, and self-tormenting Nature, *that is the very Essence* of every fallen, unregenerate Soul ; yet every Man in the World has, more or less, *frequent and strong Intimations* given him, that *so* it is with him, in the *inmost Ground* of his Soul.

How many Inventions are some People forced to have recourse to, to keep off a certain *inward Uneasiness*, which they are *afraid* of, and know not *whence* it comes? Alas, it is because there is a *fallen Spirit*, a *dark aching Fire* within them, which has never had its *proper Relief*, and is trying to *discover* itself, and calling out for *Help*, at every *Cessation* of worldly Joy.

Why are some People, when under heavy *Disappointments*, or some great *worldly Shame*, at the very Brink of Distraction,

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unable to bear themselves, and desirous of Death of any kind? 'Tis because worldly *Light* and *Comforts*, no longer acting *sweetly* upon the *Blood*, the soul is *left* to its own *dark, fiery raging* Nature, and would destroy the Body at *any* rate, rather than continue under such a *Sensibility* of its own *wrathful, self-tormenting Fire*.

Who has not at one time or other felt a Sourness, Wrath, Selfishness, Envy, and Pride, which he could not tell *what* to do with, or *how* to bear, rising up in him *without* his Consent, casting a *Blackness* over all his Thoughts, and then as *suddenly* going off again, either by the Cheerfulness of the *Sun*, or *Air*, or some agreeable Accident, and again, *at times*, as suddenly returning upon him? Sufficient Indications are *these* to every Man, that there is a *dark Guest* within him, concealed under the *Cover* of Flesh and Blood, often *lulled asleep* by worldly *Light* and *Amusements*, yet such as will, in spite of everything, show itself, which if it has not its *proper Relief* in this Life, must be *his Torment* in Eternity. And it was for the sake of this *hidden Hell* within us, that our Blessed Lord said when on Earth, and says now to every Soul, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest.'

For as the Soul is become this *Self-tormenting Fire*, only because the *Birth of the Son* of God was *extinguished* in it by our first Parents; so there is *no other* possible Remedy for it, either in Heaven or Earth, but by its coming to this Son of God, to be *born again* of him.

Oh, *poor Unbelievers*, that content yourselves with this Foundation of *Hell* in your Nature, and either seek for *no* Salvation, or, what is worse, turn your Backs with Disregard on the *one only* Saviour, that God himself can help you to!

Think not of saving yourselves. It is no more in your Power, than to save the fallen Spirits that are in Hell; you can no more do the one than the other. Talk not of the *Mercy* and *Goodness* of God; his Mercy is indeed *infinite*, and his Goodness above all Conception; but then the *Infiniteness* of it consists in *this*, that he of his own mere Mercy found out, and offered this Saviour to all Mankind, because in the Nature of Things, nothing less than this Saviour could redeem them.

Therefore to rely upon a Mercy of God, that is not *within* the Christian Scheme of it, is to rely upon a *Fiction* of our own Minds; because *all* the Mercy that God can show to Mankind, *all* that his *omnipotent Love* can do for them, is *done* and *offered* to them in, and through the Redemption of Jesus Christ.

If either *Devils*, or *lost Souls* could *possibly* be annihilated, neither of them would by the Goodness of God, be suffered to

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exist in *Misery*, for *Misery's sake*. But a Man may as well expect that his Soul shall be annihilated through the Goodness of God, though *Annihilation* is impossible, and what cannot be done, as to expect to be saved through the Divine Goodness, without the Mediation of the Son of God, when the *Birth* of the Son of God in the Soul, is the *one only* Salvation, that the Omnipotence of God can bestow upon him.

Therefore to choose or rely upon *some other* Goodness of God besides that, which he has offered to us in Jesus Christ, is the most dreadful Mistake that can befall any Man, and must, if persevered in, leave him out of the *Possibility* of any Kind, or Degree of Salvation. For as the Son of God is the *Brightness* and *Glory* of the *Father*, so no Soul made in the *Likeness of God* is capable of any Degree of *Brightness* and *Glory*, but so far as the *Birth* of the Son of God is in it; therefore to reject *this Birth*, to refuse *this* Method of Redemption, is to reject *all the Goodness*, that the Divine Nature itself hath for us.

➤ (14.) But to return. I have shown in few Words the *original Dignity and Glory* of Man's Creation and State in Paradise, and the lamentable *Change*, that the Fall has brought upon him.

From a divine and heavenly Creature, he is so wretchedly changed, as to have *inwardly* the Nature, and dark Fire of the Devils, and *outwardly* the Nature of *all* the Beasts, a *Slave* of this outward World, living at all *Uncertainties*, amongst Pains, Fears, Sorrows, and Diseases, till his Body is forced to be removed from our Sight, and hid in the Earth.

Now from this short View of *what* Man is fallen *from*, and what he is fallen *into*, we may see at once in the *strongest Light* the divine *Excellency* and absolute *Necessity* of those Doctrines of our blessed Lord, calling us to *all Kinds* of renouncing the *World*, to so *many Ways* of denying all the Passions and inclinations of Flesh and Blood.

Were the World, as it *now is*, and we, as we *now are*, in the *very first* State in which God made it and us, there would be some Foundation for saying, as some do, 'What are all these 'Things for, if they are not to be enjoyed? Why have we these 'Passions and Inclinations, if they may not be gratified?' But *all these* Questions are *fully* answered, as soon as it is known, that the *first State* of Things is quite altered; that we were not created to be in this World in the *Manner* we are *now* in it; that Paradise was our *first State*, where we should have stood in divine *Strength* and *Ability*, *insensible* of any Evil from *outward* Nature; that *Sin* destroyed this *first State* of Things, destroyed the *Divine Life* in the Soul, and removed *Paradise* from off the Earth;—that Man, cast out of Paradise, came as a *Malefactor*

into this *outward* World, to be punished and scourged by all its *divided, warring* Elements; that by his falling *into* this World, it got the *same* Power over him, as over the Beasts, that are its proper Inhabitants, and of the same Nature with itself; that *thus* fallen *under* its Dominion, it continually breathes its *own corrupt Nature* into him, feeds him with such *Husks* as the Swine eat, and proposes *such* Pleasures to him, as make him *unwilling*, and *unable* to regain his first Divine Life.

Now, as soon as this is known to be the *Condition* of Man, thus fallen from a *Divine Life* under the Dominion of this World, then all the *renouncing, self-denying* Doctrines of the Gospel, appear to have the *utmost* Reason and Necessity in them; then it appears to be as much our Happiness, to *deny* the Tempers and Inclinations of this earthly Nature, and to be delivered from the *Power* of its Pleasures over us, as to be delivered from the Power of *Death* and *Hell*.

And the most *sober Reason* thus acquainted with the Nature of our Fall, must be *forced* to consider *this World* as having merely the Nature of an *Hospital*, where People *only* are, because they are *distempered*, and where *no* Happiness is sought for, but that of being *healed*, and made fit to *leave* it.

(15.) To proceed: That I have not stated Man's first Dignity too high, is evidently plain from the Scripture Account of it. It is a fundamental Truth of our Religion, that he was created in *Paradise* for a Life *suitable* to it. But *Paradise* is a *Divine Habitation*, still existing *where* it was at the first, though not *visible* to Eyes which see *only* by the Light of the Sun, and is the Habitation of such as have attained their *first* paradisiacal Nature; it was in this *Paradise*, that our Saviour, through a Miracle of Love, promised to be with the Thief on the Cross.

It is also a fundamental Truth of Scripture, that Man was created to be *immortal, incapable* of Death, and of everything *that* had any *Likeness* to it, so long as he continued in the Perfection of his State. That it was *Sin alone* which brought Sorrow, Pain, Evil, Distress, Sickness and Death upon him.

But if this be a Truth *that* cannot be denied, then it must be equally true, that before he sinned, he must have stood in *such a Paradise*, as kept everything in the outward World *entirely under* him, so *that* neither *Fire* nor *Water*, nor any other Element, could have the least Power over him. But if *Fire*, the fiercest of the Elements, had not the least Power of touching his Body in any *hurtful Manner*, or of causing *any Pain* to it; then it must be granted, *that* *Paradise covered, and governed* the Power of all the Elements of this outward World; that Man lived in it as an *absolute* Lord over it; and therefore it undeniably

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follows, that the *Manner*, in which he *now* is under the Power of the Elements, capable of receiving Pain and Evil from them, is a State that he *was not in*, till Sin took Paradise from him, and left him in the *same* poor Condition, that we *now* are in, capable of receiving Pain and Death, from almost everything that is about us.

That Man in Paradise lived in this World *insensible*, and also *incapable* of any Evil from it, superior to all its Elements, is plain from the Tree of *Knowledge of Good and Evil*.

For how could it be more plainly told us, that outward Things, the *Stars and Elements* could not *affect* his State, or make any *Impression* upon him, than by telling us, that he had no Knowledge of Good and Evil in this World, till he had eaten of that Tree? Is not this directly telling us, that before such eating, he was above the *Nature* of this World, that it had not Power to operate upon him, or give him any *Sense or Feeling*, of what there was of Good or Evil in it.

Now that he was created to be, and to continue thus a Lord over all temporal Nature, superior to all the influences and Effects of the Stars and Elements, is also plain from the Prohibition given him, not to eat of this Tree of Knowledge.

But he was not content with this happy Superiority above the Evil and Good of outward Nature. His Imagination, helped on by the Devil, longed to look into, to know and feel the secret working Powers of that outward Nature, which it was his Happiness, and Paradise to be insensible of.

When God forbade his eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, it was the same thing as if he had said, *Fall not into the outward World, under the Dominion of its Stars and Elements, but keep thy State in Paradise.*

When Man disobeyed God, and took the Fruit of the Tree into his Body, which brought the Nature and Power of the Stars and Elements into it; this is not to be considered, as that single Act of eating, but it signifies as much as if he had said; *By eating this Fruit, I desire to come within the Influences of the Stars and Elements, and to be made sensible, and feeling of the Good and Evil that is in them.*

Therefore, small as the Action seems to be at the first View, and of a very limited Nature, it was his *refusing* to be that, which God created him to be; it was his *express, open, voluntary* Act and Deed, by which he chose to *fall into* this outward World, in the Manner we now are in it.

Therefore it was not the mere eating of a Fruit, *that* brought *Adam's* Misery upon him, but it was the eating a Fruit, as his *chosen Means* of entering into this World.

God himself was not *angry* at all, or at a small Act of eating

a Fruit, and so in *Anger* turned Man out of Paradise, into a World *cursed* for that Sin. But Man freely and voluntarily chose, against the *Will*, and *Command* of God, to be in the World in its *cursed State*, unblessed by Paradise: For he chose to enter into a *Sensibility* and *Feeling* of its *Good* and *Evil*, which is directly choosing to be, where Paradise is not; for nothing that is in Paradise, can be touched, or hurt by anything of the outward World. Therefore the first State of Man was a state of such Glory, and heavenly Prerogatives, as I have above related; and his Fall, was a Fall into, or under the Power of this outward World.

(16.) If it be also further asked, What *sufficient* Proof there is, *first*, that the *Likeness* and *Image* of God, in which Man was created, signified thus much, that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, each brought forth their *own Nature* in him, and in him saw themselves in a *creaturely manner*? And then, *secondly*, that by the *first Sin*, this *Birth* of the Son of God, and *Proceeding* of the Holy Ghost was *extinguished* and *lost* in the Soul of Man? It may be answered, that these great Truths stand attested by *undeniable* Evidence of Scripture.

First, from the *Means* and *Manner* of our Redemption. For there is nothing that can so *fully*, and *justly* show us the *true Nature* of our Fall, as the Nature and Manner of our Redemption. And it seems highly suitable to the Wisdom of God to let the *first*, be but in part discovered, till the latter showed and proved itself in an undeniable manner. And this, no doubt, is the Reason why *Moses* is suffered to write *no more* of the Nature of the Fall of Man, or *what* it implied, than he has done. Because the Time for a plain Insight into that Matter, was not *then* come, and it was to lie as much a Secret, as to the true Nature of it, as the *Nature* and *Manner* of our Redemption then did; which was then only *obscurely* declared, by an *Enmity* between the *Seed* of the Woman, and the *Seed* of the Serpent.

But when the Seed of the Woman showed itself to be the *Son of God*, the Second Person of the holy Trinity, *united* to our human Nature; then the Nature of our Fall, and *what* we fell from, and what was the Seed of the *Serpent* in us, manifested themselves in the *same Degree* of Certainty. And therefore it is very unreasonable to hold, that we ought to say *no more* of our first State before the *Fall*, of its *Dignity* and *Perfection*, and what was *lost* by the Fall, than what is *openly* and *expressly* declared by *Moses*. For as it seemed good to the Divine Wisdom to *conceal* the Mystery of our Redemption and Salvation for many Ages, and to let *Moses* only discover it under a Declaration of a *Serpent-destroyer*; so there was a *Fitness*, and even *Necessity*,

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that the *Nature* and *Degree* of our Fall should be kept in the same *Degree* of *Secrecy*, then *only* to be discovered with a sufficient *Degree* of Plainness and Certainty, when our *Redemption* and *Salvation* came plainly to be laid open. The Religion of the *Jews* was suited to *that State* of Things and Times in which they lived; neither the Mysteries of the *Creation*, nor *Redemption*, were then discovered; Things *past*, and Things to come, had then only their *Figures*, *Shadows*, and *Types*.

But when the Son of God became *incarnate*, and showed forth in the plainest Manner, the *Nature*, *Manner*, and *Necessity* of our Redemption through *his Blood*, and a *Life* received from him, then the *Nature* and *Degree* of our Fall became equally *plain* and *manifest*; and everything that he has told us of the Nature and Necessity of a *new* or *second Birth* from him, was *so much* told us of our *first Birth* in Paradise.

For the Nature and Greatness of our Redemption, must show the Nature and Greatness of our Fall. These Things have such a necessary Correspondence, as cannot be denied, but by a Mind utterly indisposed to receive Conviction.

If our Redemption proposed to restore to us a *Divine Sight*, would not this be a sufficient Proof, that by the *Fall* we had *lost* some *Divine Manner* of seeing? So, if *God himself* takes our Nature upon him to *redeem* us, and it be declared that *nothing*, but this *uniting* the Divine Nature to the human, can be *our Redemption*, can we want a Proof, that the Divine Nature existed in *some manner* in us, before the Fall?

Now it is a plain, manifest Doctrine of the holy Scriptures, that Man by the Fall is in *such a Condition*, that there was *no help* or *Remedy* for him, either in the Height above, or in the Depth below, but by the *Son of God's* becoming incarnate, and taking the fallen Nature upon him. If this *alone* could be the Remedy, does not this enough show us the Disease? Does not this speak plainly enough, *what* it was that Man had lost by his Fall, namely, the *Birth of the Son* of God in his Soul; and therefore it was, that only the Son of God in so mysterious a manner, could be his Redeemer?

If he had *lost* less, a *less Power* could have redeemed him. If he had lost something *else*, the Restoration of *that* something, would have been his Redemption.

But since it is an *open*, *undeniable* Doctrine of the Gospel, that there can be *no Salvation* for Mankind but in the *Name*, and by the *Power* of the Son of God, by his being united to the fallen Nature, and so raising his *own Birth* and *Life* in it, is it not *sufficiently* declared to us, that *what* was lost by the Fall, was the *Birth* of the Son of God in the Soul?

Secondly, This same Doctrine is not left to be drawn from any Consequences of Things, but is in express Words taught us, when it is said, that we must be *born again from above*, born of *God*; for this is expressly telling us *what Birth* we have lost, and is only saying, that the first Birth is to be restored, or that the Divine Birth is to arise, or to be brought again into us, as *at the first*, when the *living Image* of the Holy Trinity was brought forth *in us*.

What this *new regained Birth* is, we are plainly told by *St. Peter*, that is a being *born again of an incorruptible Seed by the Word*, that is, the eternal *Word*, or *Son of God*. Which Divine Word being only in the Soul as a *Seed*, is to restore by degrees the *first Birth* of the Word, or *Son of God* in the Soul. Which is Proof enough that *this* was the State of the Soul in its Creation, that *this Birth* was then in it, and so was an *Image* of the Holy Trinity; and that the *Death* which *Adam* died in the Day that he sinned, was the *losing* this holy Birth from his Soul. And on this Account it was, that nothing could restore him, but that which was able to restore *this Birth* again to his Soul, and make it again *such* an Image of God, as that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, might *therein* see themselves again in a *creaturely Manner*, and dwell in it, and it in them.

Thirdly, The *Holy Ghost* is in the Scriptures declared to be the *Sanctifier*, or *Renewer* of Holiness in the Soul, and this in such a manner, that *all* the Motions and Operations of the Soul, so far as they are *without* it, and *unmoved* by it, are so far *unholy*, and *unable* even for a good Thought.

Now how could our Thoughts or Operations be *unholy* in themselves, and want the Sanctification and *Renewing* of the Holy Ghost, unless *this* Holy Spirit had first existed in us, and by our Fall had been separated from us?

Had not the *Birth* of the Holy Ghost *arisen* in us at our Creation, we could no more be *unholy* for want of it, than the *Beasts* are, nor any more *now* have wanted to be *renewed* by it, than the *Beasts* that never had it. But since there is now *no Sanctification* or Redemption for us, but by having the Holy Ghost as a *free Gift* of God breathed again into us, it is *no less* than a Demonstration, that we had before we fell, this Holiness by the *Nature* which God gave us *at first*; and that the Holiness of our *Creation* consisted in *this*, that the Holy Spirit then *proceeded*, or *arose* forth in our Soul, as the Birth of the *Son of God* did; and that it might for the same Reason be then called the Holiness of our *Nature*, as it is now after the Fall, called a Holiness by *Gift* or *Grace*. For if we are now to be born again *of the Spirit* by Grace, does not this tell us, that we had *this*

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Birth of the Spirit in us at the first, and that then it was the Birth of our Nature by Creation?

Fourthly, These same great Truths are evidently signified to us in the fullest manner by our *Baptism*, and the *Form* of it. Our Baptism is to signify our seeking and obtaining a *new Birth*. And our being baptized in, or into the *Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, tells us in the plainest manner, *what Birth* it is that we seek, namely, *such* a new Birth as may make us again what we were at first, a *living real Image* or *Offspring* of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

It is owned on all hands, that we are baptized into a *Renovation of some Divine Birth that we had lost?* and that we may not be at a loss to know *what* that Divine Birth is, the *Form* in Baptism openly declares to us, that it is to regain that first Birth of *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost* in our Souls, which at the *first* made us to be *truly* and *really* Images of the *Nature* of the Holy Trinity in Unity. The *Form* in Baptism is but very imperfectly apprehended, till it is understood to have *this* great Meaning in it. And it must be owned, that the Scriptures tend wholly to guide us to *this* understanding of it. For since they teach us, a *Birth of God*, a *Birth of the Spirit*, that we must obtain, and that Baptism, the appointed *Sacrament* of this New Birth, is to be done into the *Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, can there be any doubt, that this Sacrament is to signify the *Renovation* of the Birth of the Holy Trinity in our Souls? And that therefore *this* was the holy Image *born* or *created* at first, when God said, 'Let us make Man in our Image, after our own Likeness,' that is, *so* make him, that we may *see ourselves*, our own Nature in him, in a *creaturely Manner*.

What an harmonious Agreement does there *thus* appear, between our *Creation* and *Redemption?* and how finely, how surprisingly do our *first* and our *second* Birth answer to, and illustrate one another?

At our first Birth it is said thus, 'Let us make Man in our Image, after our own Likeness'; when the Divine Birth was *lost*, and Man was to receive it again, it is said, 'Be thou baptized into the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost': Which is saying, Let the *Divine Birth*, be brought forth again in thee, or be thou born again *such* an Image of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as thou wast at first.

These Considerations all taken from the plain Words, and acknowledged Doctrines of Scripture, do, I think, sufficiently declare and prove to us, these great Truths of the *last Importance*, namely, that the Image in which Man was created, was *such*, as in which, the Holy Trinity saw *itself*, or its *own Nature* in a

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creaturally Manner, in which the Father's *Nature* generated the Nature of the *Son*, and the Holy Ghost *proceeded* from them both, as the amiable moving Life of both.

That by *Adam's Sin*, this holy Image of the Holy Trinity was *broken*, and in *such* a Manner, that the *Birth* of the *Son* of God, and of the *Holy Spirit*, was *no more* in it, and that therefore in a *stupendous Mystery* of Love, the *Son of God* united himself to our *fallen Nature*, to recover, and restore to it, *all that* it had *lost*, and in *such* a Manner, that it might *never* be lost again to all Eternity.

As soon as it is observed and known, that our *Fall* consisted in the *losing* of the Birth of the Son of God in our Soul, and consequently the *proceeding* forth of the Holy Spirit in it, there appears a surprising Agreeableness and Fitness, in the Means of our Redemption, namely, that we could *only* be saved by the *eternal Son* of God; that he only could save us, by taking our *Nature* upon him, and so uniting it with him, that his *Life*, or *Birth* might again *arise* in us, as at the first, and so we become again a perfect living Image of the Holy Trinity.

(17.) Now the Reason why I have gone thus far in inquiring into the Dignity of *Man's original State*, and searched thus deep into his *lamentable Fall*, is this, to point out to the Reader the *true Nature* of the Christian Religion, and the infinite *Importance* of it; which Religion is administered by God, as our *only Relief* from our sad Condition; and that he may at one View see the Height and Depth of Divine Love, which has had so great Care of Mankind.

I persuade myself, no one can *see* these Truths, in the *Manner* that I have represented them, without being in *some degree* inclined to believe them; and in the *same degree* stirred up to act in Conformity to them.

We know nothing *truly* of the Nature of the Christian Religion, and our *deep Concern* in it, but so far as we see into the Nature of our *first State* in the Creation, and our *present State* by the Fall. And as this Knowledge is in some degree necessary, so is it also in some degree obvious to every Man.

Every Man has a *Consciousness* within himself, that a *Perfection* in all Kinds of Virtue becomes him; this Consciousness obliges him to set the best Foot forwards, and to put on the *Appearance* of all the Virtue that he can. Now what else is this, but an *inward strong Testimony* of his own Mind, declaring to him, that *Perfection* was his *first State*, and that because his Nature *once* had it, he can neither lose the *agreeable* Idea of it, nor quit his *Pretences* to it; so that every Man carries in his *own Breast*, in the Depth of his *own Frame* and Constitution, a strong

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Proof of all those Truths, that I have deduced from Scripture. For I have not been speaking of things *foreign* or *strange* to us, but of things *sensible* felt within us, and spoken to us, by the whole Form of our Nature.

(18.) The *Condition* in which I have represented our Soul to be by the *Fall*, a mere *dark Fire-breath*, of an *hellish* Nature, showing itself in every Man more or less by its Fruits, by such *Eruptions* and Breakings forth of *dark Passions*, but hiding itself under an outward Appearance of *Good*, and a feigned Civility or Rectitude of Manners, is what every Man must be forced to own to be more or less in himself.

For this is the State of every Man's Soul, because it has lost the *Birth of the Son* of God in it, and so is only as a strong Root of a *fiery Life*, unenlightened, and unblessed by *that holy Word*, which is the *Brightness of the Father's Glory*.

This dark Root of a *fiery, self-tormenting Life*, which is the *whole Nature* of the fallen Soul, destitute of the Birth of the Son of God in it, is a Life *that* subsists in *four Elements*, as the Life of this World hath its four Elements.

Now the four Elements of this *dark, fiery Soul*, or fallen Nature, are, (1.) A restless *Selfishness*; (2.) A restless *Envy*; (3.) A restless *Pride*; and, (4.) A restless *Wrath* or *Anger*. I call them the *Elements* of the fallen Soul, because they are *that* to it, which the four Elements of this World are to the Life of the Body.

Now these four Elements which nourish and keep up the Life of the fallen Soul, are also the four Elements of *Hell*, in which the Devils dwell; they can no more *depart* from, or *exist out* of these Elements, than an earthly Life can *depart* from, or exist without the four Elements of this World, *Fire, Air, Water, and Earth*.

Now, as the Soul, by the losing of the Birth of the Son of God in it, is become an aching *dark Root* of Fire, that has this restless *Selfishness*, restless *Envy*, restless *Pride*, and restless *Wrath* in it, which are the four Elements of *Hell*; so by its being in these, or having them *in it*, it is come to pass, *that* evil Spirits have *such* Communion with it, and so great *Power* over it.

Every *stirring* of the Soul in the Element of *Pride*, is a *moving* in the Devil's *Element*, where he *is*, and has Power to *join* and *act* with *it*; every *Motion* in the Element of *Envy* or *Wrath*, is so far impowering him to *enter* into the Breath of our Life, and *settle* his fiery Kingdom in us.

And thus in *every one* of these four Elements, so far as we *willingly* are in their Sphere of Activity, and act and stir *according* to them, *so far* we become *Members* of the Devil's Kingdom, and have him for our *Leader*, and *Guide*. How watchful there-

fore ought we to be of our Hearts, how fearful of *consenting to*, or not *enough* resisting every Motion of these Elements within us, since every voluntary yielding to them, is *opening* the Kingdom of Darkness in our Souls, and giving the Devil Power to infuse his wretched *Nature* into us. And we have still further Reason for this Fear and Watchfulness, if it be considered, that as no one of the *Elements* of this outward World could *be*, or *subsist*, if the other three *were not*, because they are the *mutual Cause* of one another; so it is in these other Elements, if we live in *one*, we live in *all*; *Selfishness* cannot *be*, or *subsist* without *Envy*, nor *Pride* without *Wrath* and *Selfishness*, nor any *one* of the four, without carrying the *other* three in its Bosom; therefore we must have the same Fear of *any one*, as of them all, for the *Name* of every one is *Legion*.

Could we see, as we see outward Objects, what a dreadful Misery these four Elements bring upon our Souls, we should shun and fly from everything that gave *Life* and *Strength* to them, with more Earnestness, than from the most violent Evils that could threaten our Bodies; we should choose to burn in any *Fire*, rather than in that of our own *Wrath* and *Pride*, any Poverty of outward Life, rather than *that* of our own *pinching Envy*, any *Prison*, rather than to be *shut up* in our own dark *Selfishness*. For all *outward Fires*, Chains, Torments, Slaveries, Poverties, are but *transient Shadows*, of the tormenting, fiery, dark Slavery of an *unredeemed Soul*, left, and given up to these four Elements of Hell.

And the Reason why they are not a Hell to *profligate Men now* upon Earth, is, as has been said, because we *now* live in *Flesh* and *Blood*, under the *cheering* Influences of the *Sun*, and the Diversion and Amusement of *outward Things*, and in several *Forms of Happiness*, which our Imaginations play with in time. This Wandering of the Imagination through its *own Inventions* of Delight, hinders the poor Soul from feeling *what it is*, in its own Nature; and therefore, though ever so much a *Slave* of these Elements, it only feels or perceives the Torment of them *by Fits*, and on certain *Occasions*. And yet sometimes it is seen, that one or other of these Elements awakens so violently, as to become *intolerable*, and to give a true and plain *Foretaste* of the Condition and Nature of Hell in the Soul that feels it.

Here again, I cannot help observing by-the-by, the wondrous Excellency and Divine Nature of the Gospel Religion, which knowing our *Fall* to consist in this *darkened Fire* of the Soul, dwelling in *these Elements* of Hell, has set before us such amazing Representations of *Humility*, *Meekness*, and *Universal Love*, as the Imagination of Man could never have thought of; namely,

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the *Humility, Meekness, and Lowliness* of the Son of God, who left his Glory, to take upon him the Form of a Servant for our Sakes; the *great Love* of God towards us Sinners, in giving his only begotten Son to redeem us, and the Love of God the Son, in laying his Life down for us, *that* we might imitate this amazing *Humility, Meekness, and Divine Love*, and love one another as he has loved us. These are *Mysteries* of Love and Mercy that are set before us, to quench the *fiery Wrath* of our fallen Nature, and to compel us, if possible, to abhor our own dark Passions, and in Humility and Meekness become Lovers of God, and one another.

(19.) Now so far as we, by true Resignation to God, die to the Element of *Selfishness* and *own Will*, so far as by *universal Love*, we die to the Element of *Envy*, so far as by *Humility* we die to the Element of *Pride*, so far as by *Meekness* we die to the Element of *Wrath*, so far we get *away* from the Devil, enter into *another* Kingdom, and leave him to dwell without us in his own Elements.

These are not *Fictions* of a *visionary* Imagination, but sober Truths, spoken by the Word of God in Scripture, and written and engraven in the Book of every Man's *own Nature*.

No Man since the *Fall*, but is a living Witness to these Truths; to *deny* them, is to *own* and *prove* them: for we could not tell a *Lie*, or resist the Truth, but because we have this *dark Enemy* to Truth hidden in our Bosom.

(20.) Now the greatest Good that any Man can do to himself, is to give leave to this *inward Deformity* to show itself, and not to strive by any Art or Management, either of Negligence or Amusement, to *conceal* it from him. *First*, Because this Root of a *dark Fire-life* within us, which is of the Nature of Hell, with all its Elements of *Selfishness, Envy, Pride, and Wrath*, must be in some sort *discovered* to us, and *felt* by us, before we can *enough* feel, and enough groan under the Weight of our Disorder. Repentance is but a kind of *Table-Talk*, till we see so much of the Deformity of our inward Nature, as to be in some degree frightened and terrified at the Sight of it. There must be some kind of an *Earthquake* within us, something that must *rend* and *shake* us to the bottom, before we can be enough sensible, either of the State of Death we are in, or enough desirous of that Saviour, who alone can raise us from it.

A *plausible Form* of an outward Life, that has only learned *Rules* and *Modes* of Religion by *Use* and *Custom*, often keeps the Soul for *some time* at ease, though all its inward *Root* and *Ground* of Sin has never been *shaken* or *molested*, though it has never tasted of the *bitter Waters* of Repentance, and has only known the Want of a Saviour by *Hearsay*.

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But Things cannot pass thus : Sooner or later, Repentance must have a *broken*, and a *contrite* Heart ; we must with our blessed Lord go over the Brook *Cedron*, and with him sweat great Drops of Sorrow, before he can say for us, as he said for himself, ' It is finished.'

Now, though this Sensibility of the Sinfulness of our *inward Ground*, is not to be expected to be the *same* in *all*, yet the *Truth* and *Reality* of it must, and will be in all, that do but *give way* to the Discovery of it ; and our Sinfulness would ever be in our Sight, if we did not industriously turn our Eyes from it. If we used but half the Pains, to find out the Evil that is *hidden* in us, as we do to *hide* the Appearance of it from others, we should soon find, that in the midst of our *most orderly Life*, we are in Death, and want a *Saviour*, to make our most apparent Virtues to be virtuous.

It is therefore exceeding good and beneficial to us, to discover this *dark, disordered Fire* of our Soul ; because when rightly known, and rightly dealt with, it can as well be made the Foundation of *Heaven*, as it is of *Hell*.

For when the *Fire* and *Strength* of the Soul, is sprinkled with the *Blood* of the Lamb, then its Fire, becomes a Fire of *Light*, and its Strength is changed into a Strength of triumphing *Love*, and will be fitted to have a Place amongst those *Flames of Love*, that wait about the Throne of God.

The Reason why we know so little of Jesus Christ, as our *Saviour*, *Atonement*, and *Justification*, why we are so destitute of *that Faith* in him, which alone can change, rectify, and redeem our Souls, why we live starving in the Coldness and Deadness of a formal, historical, *hearsay-Religion*, is this ; we are Strangers to our own inward *Misery* and *Wants*, we know not that we lie in the Jaws of *Death* and *Hell* ; we keep all things quiet within us, partly by outward Forms, and Modes of Religion and Morality, and partly by the Comforts, Cares and Delights of this World. Hence it is that we consent to receive a Saviour, as we consent to admit of the Four Gospels, because only Four are received by the Church. We believe in a Saviour, not because we feel an absolute want of one, but because we have been told there is one, and that it would be a Rebellion against God to reject him. We believe in Christ as our Atonement, just as we believe, that he cast seven Devils out of *Mary Magdalene*, and so are no more helped, delivered, and justified by believing that he is our Atonement, than by believing that he cured *Mary Magdalene*.

True Faith, is a coming to Jesus Christ to be saved, and delivered from a *sinful Nature*, as the *Canaanitish* Woman came to him, and would not be denied. It is a Faith of *Love*, a Faith

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of *Hunger*, a Faith of *Thirst*, a Faith of *Certainty* and firm *Assurance*, that in Love and Longing, and Hunger, and Thirst, and full Assurance, *will lay hold* on Christ, as its loving, assured, certain and infallible Saviour and Atonement.

It is this Faith, that breaks off all the Bars and Chains of Death and Hell in the Soul; it is to this Faith, that Christ always says, what he said in the Gospel, 'Thy Faith hath saved thee, thy Sins are forgiven thee; go in Peace.' Nothing can be denied to this Faith; all things are possible to it; and he that thus seeks Christ, must find him to be his Salvation.

On the other hand, all things will be dull and heavy, difficult and impossible to us, we shall toil all the Night and take nothing, we shall be tired with resisting Temptations, grow old and stiff in our Sins and Infirmities, if we do not with a strong, full, loving, and joyful Assurance, seek and come to Christ for *every Kind*, and *Degree* of Strength, Salvation and Redemption. We must come unto Christ, as the Blind, the Sick, and the Leprous came to him, expecting *all* from him, and nothing from themselves. When we have this Faith, then it is, that Christ *can do all his mighty Works in us*.

(21.) From the foregoing Account anyone may be supposed already to see the *Nature* and *Necessity* of Regeneration, or the New Birth. It is as necessary as our Salvation. By our *Fall*, our Soul has lost the *Birth of the Son of God* in it; by this Loss it is become a *dark, wrathful, self-tormenting Root* of Fire, shut up in the four hellish Elements of *Selfishness, Envy, Pride, and Wrath*; considered as a fallen Soul, it cannot stir one Step, or exert one Motion but *in*, and *according* to these Elements; therefore it is as necessary to have this Nature *itself* changed, and to be born *again* from above, as it is necessary to be delivered from Hell, and eternal Death.

For these Elements are Hell, and eternal Death itself, and not *without*, or standing at a *distance* from us, but Hell and Death springing up in the *Forms*, and *Essences* of our fallen Nature; they are the *Serpent* that is in *us*, and constitute that *gnawing Worm which never dieth*; for they mutually *beget*, and mutually *torment* each other, and so constitute a Worm, or *worming Pain*, that never dieth.

Now as this *Hell, Serpent, Worm, and Death*, are all *within us*, rising up in the *Forms* and *Essences* of our fallen Soul; so our *Redeemer*, or *Regenerator*, whatever it be, must be also equally *within us*, and spring up from as great a *Depth* in *our Nature*. Now the Scripture sufficiently tells us, that it is only the *promised Seed of the Woman*, the eternal *Word*, or *Son of God* made Man, that can *bruise* this *Head*, or kill this Life of the *Serpent* in us;

therefore *this Seed* of the Woman must have its Dwelling in the *Ground and Essence* of our Nature, because the Serpent is *there*, that a new Life of a *new Nature* may arise from *this Seed* within us; and therefore it is plain, that *Regeneration*, or the *New Birth*, is, and can be *no other* thing, but the *recovering of the Birth of the Son of God* in the fallen Soul.

And this is what the Scripture means by the Necessity of our being *born of God, born again from above, born of the Spirit*. Hence also we see in the clearest Light, the Meaning of all those Passages of Scripture, where we are said to be *in Christ*, that Christ is *in us*;—that we must *put on Christ*;—that he must be *formed in us*;—that he is *our Life*;—that we must *eat his Flesh and drink his Blood*;—that he is our *Atonement*, that his *Blood* alone *cleanseth us* from all our Sins; that we have *Life* from him, as the Branches have Life from the *Vine*;—that he is our *Justification, or Righteousness*; that in him we are *created again* to good Works; that *without him* we can do nothing, and have *no Life* in us: All these, I say, and the like Sayings of Scripture, have a wonderful Congruity and Plainness in them, and fill the Mind with the most excellent and solid Truths, as soon as it is known, that Regeneration is *absolutely* necessary, and that this Regeneration signifies, the *recovering of the Birth of the Son of God* in the Soul.

(22.) And as it does this Justice to so great and concerning a Part of Scripture, so it sets the *whole Scheme* of the Christian Salvation in the most agreeable and engaging Light, and such as is enough even to compel everyone, to embrace it with the utmost Earnestness. The Mystery of this Salvation is still preserved, and yet hereby so *unfolded*, that every Man has as much Reason to desire to be *born again*, and to believe that the *Son of God* can *only* bring forth this Birth in him, as to believe that God made him, and can alone make him happy.

A *Mediator, an Atonement, Regenerator*, thus understood, must be as agreeable and desirable to every human Mind, and as much according to his *own Wishes*, as to be delivered from the *Uneasiness and Disquiets* of a Nature, which he finds himself not *Master* of, nor able to fix it in a State of *better* Enjoyment.

What is it that any *thoughtful, serious* Man could wish for, but to have a *new Heart*, and a *new Spirit*, free from the *hellish, self-tormenting Elements of Selfishness, Envy, Pride, and Wrath*? His *own Experience* has shown him, that nothing *human* can do this for him; can take away the *Root of Evil* that is in him; and it is so *natural* to him to think, that God alone can do it, that he has often been tempted to *accuse* God, for suffering it to be so with him.

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Therefore to have the *Son of God* come from Heaven to redeem him by a Birth of his own Divine Nature in him, must be a way of Salvation, highly suited to his *own Sense, Wants* and *Experience*; because he finds, that *his Evil* lies deep in the very *Essence* and *Forms* of his Nature, and therefore can only be removed by the arising of a *New Birth*, or Life in the first Essences of it.

Therefore an *inward Saviour*, a Saviour, *that is God himself*, raising his own *Divine Birth* in the fallen Soul, has such an *Agreeableness* and *Fitness* in it, to do for him *all that* he wants, as must make every *sober Man*, with open Arms, ready and willing to receive such a Salvation.

(23.) Some People have an *Idea*, or Notion of the Christian Religion, as if God was thereby declared so full of *Wrath* against *fallen Man*, that nothing but the *Blood* of his only begotten Son could satisfy his *Vengeance*.

Nay, some have gone such *Lengths* of Wickedness, as to assert, that God had by *immutable Decrees* reprobated, and rejected a *great Part* of the Race of *Adam*, to an *inevitable* Damnation, to show forth and magnify the *Glory* of his Justice.

But these are miserable Mistakers of the Divine Nature, and miserable Reproachers of his great Love, and Goodness in the Christian Dispensation.

For *God is Love*, yea, *all Love*, and so all Love, *that nothing* but Love can come from him; and the Christian Religion, is nothing else but an *open, full* Manifestation of his *universal* Love towards *all* Mankind.*

As the Light of the *Sun* has only *one common* Nature towards all Objects *that* can receive it, so God has only one common Nature of *Goodness*, towards all created Nature, breaking forth in infinite Flames of Love, upon every Part of the Creation, and calling everything to the *highest* Happiness it is capable of.

God so loved Man, when his *Fall* was *foreseen*, that he chose him to Salvation in Christ Jesus, *before* the Foundation of the World. When Man was actually fallen, God was so *without* all Wrath towards him, so full of *Love* for him, that he sent his only begotten Son into the World to redeem him. Therefore God has *no Nature* towards Man, but *Love*, and all *that* he does to Man, is Love.

(24.) There is no *Wrath* that stands between God and us, but what is awakened in the *dark Fire* of our own fallen Nature; and ^{to} quench *this Wrath*, and not *his own*, God gave his only begotten Son to be made Man. God has *no more* Wrath in him-

* See *Spirit of Prayer* .

self *now*, than he had *before* the Creation, when he had only himself to love. The precious Blood of his Son was not poured out to *pacify* himself (who in himself had *no Nature* towards Man but *Love*), but it was poured out, to quench the *Wrath*, and *Fire* of the fallen Soul, and kindle in it a *Birth* of Light, and Love.*

As Man lives, and moves, and has his Being in the *Divine Nature*, and is supported by it, whether his Nature be good or bad; so the *Wrath* of Man, which was awakened in the *dark Fire* of his fallen Nature, may, in a *certain Sense*, be called the *Wrath* of God, as *Hell* itself may be said to *be in* God, because nothing can be *out of* his Immensity; yet this *Hell*, is not God, but the dark Habitation of the Devil. And this *Wrath* which may be called the *Wrath* of God, is not God, but the fiery *Wrath* of the fallen Soul.

And it was solely to quench *this Wrath*, awakened in the *human Soul*, that the *Blood* of the Son of God was *necessary*, because nothing but a *Life* and *Birth*, derived from him *into* the human Soul, could change this darkened Root of a *self-tormenting Fire*, into an amiable Image of the holy Trinity, as it was at first created.

This was the *Wrath*, *Vengeance*, and *vindictive Justice* that wanted to be satisfied, in order to our Salvation; it was the *Wrath* and *Fire* of *Nature* and *Creature* kindled only in itself, by its departing from due Resignation, and Obedience to God.

When *Adam* and *Eve* went trembling behind the Trees, through *Fear* and *Dread* of God, it was only *this Wrath* of God awakened in them; it was a Terror, and Horror, and Shivering of *Nature*, that arose up *in themselves*, because the *Divine Life*, the *Birth* of the Son of God, which is the *Brightness* and *Joy* of the Soul, was departed from it, and had left it, to feel its own *poor miserable State* without it. And this may well enough be called the *Wrath*, and *Justice* of God upon them, because it was a Punishment, or painful State of the Soul, that necessarily followed their *revolting* from God.

But still there was *no Wrath*, or painful *Sensation*, that wanted to be *appeased*, or *satisfied*, but in *Nature* and *Creature*; it was only the *Wrath* of *fallen Nature*, that wanted to be changed, into its *first State* of Peace and Love. When God spoke to *them*, he spoke only Love; *Adam*, where art thou? And he called him, only to comfort him with a promised Redemption, through a *Seed of the Woman*, a Spark of the WORD of Life which should reign in him, and his Posterity, till all Enemies were under their Feet.

* See *Spirit of Love*, part ii., p. 50, &c.

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God therefore is all Love, and nothing but Love and Goodness can come from him. He is as far from Anger in himself, as from Pain and Darkness. But when the fallen Soul of Man, had awakened in itself, a wrathful, *self-tormenting Fire*, which could *never* be put out by itself, which could never be relieved by the *natural* Power of *any* Creature whatsoever, then the Son of God, by a Love, *greater than* that which created the World, became Man, and gave his own *Blood*, and *Life* into the fallen Soul, that it might through his *Life in it*, be raised, quickened, and *born again* into its first State of inward Peace and Delight, Glory and Perfection, never to be lost any more. O inestimable Truths! precious Mysteries, of the Love of God, enough to split the hardest Rock of the most obdurate Heart, that is but able to receive one Glimpse of them! Can the World resist such Love as this? Or can any Man doubt, whether he should open all that is within him, to receive such a Salvation?

O unhappy Unbelievers, this Mystery of Love compels me in Love, to *call* upon you, to *beseech* and *entreat* you, to look upon the Christian Redemption in this amiable Light. All the Ideas that your own Minds can form of Love and Goodness, must sink into nothing, as soon as compared with God's Love and Goodness in the Redemption of Mankind.

I appeal to nothing but the State of your own Hearts and Consciences, to prove the *Necessity* of your embracing this Mystery of *Divine Love*. I will grant you all *that* you can suppose, of the Goodness of God, and that no Creature will be finally lost, but what *Infinite Love* cannot save.

But still, here is no *Shadow* of Security for *Infidelity*; and your *refusing* to be *saved* through the *Son* of God, whilst the Soul is in the *redeemable State* of this Life, may at the Separation of the Body, *for* aught you know, leave it in *such* a Hell, as the infinite Love of God *cannot* deliver it from. For, *first*, you have no *Kind*, or *Degree* of Proof, that your Soul is not that *dark, self-tormenting, anguishing* and *imperishable Fire*, above-mentioned, which has lost its *own proper* Light, and is only comforted by the Light of the *Sun*, till its Redemption be effected. *Secondly*, You have no *Kind*, or *Degree* of Proof, that God himself *can* redeem, or save, or enlighten this *dark Fire-Soul*, any other Way than, as the Gospel proposes, by the *Birth* of the Son of God in it. Therefore your own Hearts must tell you, that for aught you know, *Infidelity*, or the *refusing* of this Birth of the Son of God, may, at the End of Life, leave you in *such* a State of *Self-torment*, as the infinite Love of God can no way deliver you from.

You build much upon certain *clear Ideas*, founded in the Nature and Fitness of Things; but I beseech you to consider,

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that here in this *great Point*, on which all depends, you have no Ideas at all ; for you have not *one* clear, or even *obscure* Idea, that your Souls cannot be in this *disordered State*, or that they can be set into a right Order, without the Birth of the Son of God brought forth in them.

But to return.

(25.) What has been already said of the *Nature* of Regeneration, may sufficiently show us, how greatly it is *mistaken*, when it is said to signify only a *moral Change* of our Tempers and Inclinations.

Tempers and Inclinations are the *Fruits* of the new-born Nature, and not the Nature itself ; and as *Fruits* and *Flowers* are entirely distinct, and different from the *Root* and the *Tree*, and necessarily suppose the Root and the Tree, before they can be brought forth ; so good Tempers and Inclinations are as distinct from, and posterior to that Nature, which is to produce them, as its *Fruits*.

And if *good Tempers* rightly purified, could really arise, or be brought forth in us, without a *Change* first made in the *Root*, or *Nature*, that is to bring them forth, it would be no Absurdity to say, that Men may *gather Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles*.

But if our blessed Lord has declared this, to be contrary to the Nature of Things, and has further said, that *the Tree must first be made good, before it can bring forth good Fruit* ; then we can with sufficient ground of Assurance say, that our *Nature* must first be *made good*, its *Root* and *Stock* must be new made, or regenerated again, before it can bring forth good *Fruits* of moral Behaviour.

(26.) Angels are justly represented to us, as *Flames of Love* ; now every Flame must have a *hidden Fire* for its Root, from which it has its Subsistence ; and the *spiritual flaming* angelical Nature, must have a *spiritual Fire* concealed under it. Now let it be supposed, that in an Angel this *Flame of Love* was extinguished, and that there then *only* remained that inward *Root* of a *spiritual Fire*. Let it be supposed, that this *spiritual Fire* that has lost its *Flame* of Love cannot cease to *be*, and to be a *fiery Spirit* ; that it cannot, by any Properties of its Fire *kindle itself* in its first *Flame of Love* ; that all its own Stirrings can produce no one Thought, Motion or Desire, but what solely tends either to *Selfishness, Envy, Pride, or Wrath* ; that it can of itself no more come out of this State, than *Fire* locked up in a *Flint*, can of itself become a *Flame* ; could it be said, that this Angel had only lost *some moral good Dispositions* ? Must it not be said, to have lost that *Nature*, from which alone, its good

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Tempers could proceed? Let it be further supposed, that God, by a Miracle of Love entered into the *fiery Root*, or Essence of this fallen Angel, and by a *new Birth* made it again to be a *Flame of Love*; could it be said, that it had gained nothing by this new Birth, but only a Change of *some moral* Tempers? Must it not be said to have gained a new Nature, a *Flame of Love*, instead of a *dark Fire*? and from this new Nature, its angelical and good Tempers can alone proceed.

(27.) But the representing the New-Birth, as signifying *only* a Change of moral Behaviour, is not only thus *false* and *absurd* in itself, but is also exceeding prejudicial to true *Conversion*, and saps the *Foundation* of our Redemption.

That it is highly prejudicial to *true Conversion*, is most evident from this, that it hides and suppresses the *real Nature* of our fallen State, and the true Greatness of the *Love* and *Mercy* of God in our Redemption. Now these two things it inevitably does in a great Degree, and therefore the Hurt that it does us, is more than can be well imagined.

And it is owing to this Cause more than to any other, that even amongst People of sober Behaviour, Religion is only a superficial thing, that has no true *Depth* in them, because they have never understood the true *Depth* of Religion, nor conceived, in how deep a manner, their Nature is concerned in it.

A *Heathen* may say, that by going to such a *Neighbourhood*, or marrying into such a *Family*, or falling into Acquaintance with *such a Man*, he obtained an entire *Change in his moral Behaviour*. Now if Christians are told, that this is the *true, and only* Meaning of their *new Birth* in Christ Jesus, namely, a great Change in their moral Behaviour, a thing that happens to *Heathens*, by the *ordinary Occurrences* of human Life, it is no wonder, that they live all their Lives, Strangers to true *Humility*, and *Penitence*, are never truly *converted* to God, or have any *just Sense* of his *infinite Mercy*, in the manner of their Salvation.

For if they are to believe, that to be *born of God*, born from *above*, born of the *Spirit*, born of an *incorruptible Seed* of the *Word of God*, signifies no more than this now mentioned, must not this naturally lead them, to take *everything* that is said of God and Christ, in the *Mysteries* of their Redemption, in a Sense as much *below* the Expression, as this of the New Birth? Must it not naturally lead them to think, that all Scripture-Doctrines, have more of *Height* and *Mystery* in the *Expression*, than in the *thing* itself? and that there is no need to *fear*, or *hope*, or *believe*, or *trust*, or *resign*, or *love*, or *seek*, or *do*, or *bear*, or *give*, or *suffer* according to the *apparent* Language, and *plain* Expression of the Gospel? And thus, the Words of him that spoke as never Man

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spoke, have all their *Spirit* and *Life* taken from them ; and we may be said to have the Words of Christ, as though we had them not.

(28.) The whole Nature of the Christian Religion, stands upon these *two great Pillars*, namely, the Greatness of our *Fall*, and the Greatness of our *Redemption*. In the full and true Knowledge of these Truths, lie all the Reasons of a deep *Humility*, *Penitence*, and *Self-denial*, and also all the Motives and Incitements, to a most hearty, sincere, and total *Conversion* to God. And everyone is necessarily more or less of a true Penitent, and more or less truly converted to God, according as he is more or less deeply, and inwardly sensible of these Truths.

And till these *two great Truths*, have awakened, and opened our Minds for the full Reception of the Divine Light ; all Reformation and Pretence to Amendment, is but a *dead*, and *superficial* thing, a mere Garment of Hypocrisy, to hide us from ourselves, and others.

Nothing can truly awaken a Sinner, but a true Sense, of the deep inward Possession, and Power that Sin has in him. When he sees, that Sin *begins* with his *Being*, that it rises up in the *Essences* of his Nature, and lives in the *first Forms* of his Life, and that he lies thus chained, and barred up in the very Jaws of Death and Hell, as unable to alter his own State, as to create another Creature ; when along with this Knowledge he sees that the *free Grace* of God, has provided him a Remedy *equal* to his Distress, that he has given him the holy *Blood* and *Life* of Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, to enter *as deep* into his Soul, as Sin has entered, to change the *first Forms*, and *Essences* of his Life, and bring forth in them a *New Birth* of a Divine Nature, which is to be an immortal Image of the Holy Trinity, everlastingly safe, blessed, and enriched in the Bosom of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; when a Man once *truly knows*, and *feels* these two Truths, he may be said, truly to know, and feel so much of the Power of Christ brought to Life in him. And there seems to be no more, that you need do *outwardly* for him. The Voice of his inward Teacher is so ever speaking, so ever heard, and loved within him, that you can say nothing to him *outwardly* of any *Humility*, *Penitence*, or *Self-abasement*, but what is less, than his own wounded Heart suggests to him. Humility can only be feigned or false, before this Conviction. He can now, no more take any Degree of Good to himself, than assume any Share in the Creation of Angels ; and all *Pride* or *Self-esteem* of any kind, seems to him to contain as *great a Lie* in it, as if he was to say, that he helped to create himself.

You need not tell him that he must turn unto God with all his

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Strength, with all his Heart, all his Soul, and all his Spirit ; for all that he can offer unto God, seems to him already less than the least of his Mercies towards him. He has so seen the exceeding Love of God, in the *Manner* and *Degree* of his Redemption, that it would be the greatest of Pain to him, to do anything, but upon a Motive of Divine Love. As his Soul has found God to be *all Love*, so it has but one Desire, and that is, to be itself *all Love* of God. This is the *Conviction* and *Conversion*, that necessarily arises from a full, inward *Sensibility* of these Truths ; the Soul is thereby wholly consecrated to God, and can like, or love, or do nothing, but what it can, some way or other, turn into a *Service of Love* towards him. But where the Weight and Power of these Truths is not livingly felt in the Heart, there it is not to be wondered at, if Religion has no Root, that is able to bring forth its proper Fruits.

And if the Generality of Christians, are a Number of *dead, superficial* Consenters to the *History* of Scripture-Doctrines, as unwilling to have the *Spirit*, as to part with the *Form* of their Religion ; loath to hear of any kind of *Self-denial*, fond of *worldly Ease, Indulgence,* and *Riches*, unwilling to be called to the *Perfection* of the Gospel, professing and practising Religion, merely as the *Fashion* and *Custom* of the Place they are in, require ; if some rest in *outward Forms* of Religion, others in certain *Orthodoxy* of Opinions ; if some expect to be saved by the Goodness of the *Sect* they are of, others by a certain Change of their *outward Behaviour* ; if some content themselves with a *lukewarm Spirit*, and others depend upon their *own Works*, these are *Delusions*, that must happen to those, who do not know and feel, in some good Degree, the *true Nature* of their own *fallen Soul*, and what a *Kind* of Regeneration can alone save them.

But all these Errors, Delusions, and false *Rests*, are cut up by the Root, as soon as a Man knows the *true Reason* and *Necessity* of his wanting so great a Saviour.

For he that knows the Ground and Essences of his Soul to be so many *Essences of Sin*, which form Sin as they form his Life, entirely *incapable* of producing any Good, till a *Birth* from God has arisen in them ; such a one can neither place his Redemption, where it *is not*, nor seek it coolly and negligently, where *it is*.

For knowing, that it is the *Hell within* his own Nature, that only wants to be destroyed, he is intent only upon bringing Destruction upon that ; and this secures him from *false Religion*.

And knowing, that this *inward Hell* cannot be destroyed, unless God becomes his *Redeemer*, or Regenerator in the *Ground* of his Soul ; this makes him *believe* all, *expect* all, and *hope* all from his Saviour Jesus Christ alone.

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And knowing that all this Redemption, or Salvation, is to be brought about in the inmost *Ground and Depth* of his Heart, this makes him always apply to God, as the God of *his Heart*; and therefore what he offers to God is his *own Heart*; and this keeps him always *spiritually* alive, wholly employed and intent upon the *true Work* of Religion, the fitting and preparing his Heart for all the Operations of God's Holy Spirit upon it. And so he is a true *inward Christian*, who, as our blessed Lord speaks, has the *Kingdom of God within him*, where the State and Habit of his Heart continually, thankfully, *worships the Father in Spirit and in Truth*.

(29.) Having sufficiently shown the Nature and Necessity of Regeneration, that it consists *solely* in the *Restoration* of the Birth of the Son of God in the human Soul, it must be plain from thence, that it is solely the Work of God, he being alone able to effect it; and that Man can have no other Share in it, but that of complying with the Terms, on which it is to be received of God.

It may be proper to inquire, When, and how this great Work is done in the Soul? ←

The Mercy and infinite Goodness of God, has chosen all Mankind to Salvation in Jesus Christ, before the Foundation of the World. Now this eternal Decree of God, took place upon the *Fall of Adam*; and as he was admitted into the Terms of Christian Salvation *immediately* after his Transgression, so all Mankind, as being in his Loins, were taken into the same Covenant of Grace, and what was then done to *Adam*, was done to him, as the *common Parent* of Mankind.

The *Bruiser* of the Serpent given to *Adam*, as his Saviour, was not a *verbal Promise* of something *only*, that should come to pass in future Ages to redeem him, and which left his Soul in the same State of inward Darkness, Disorder, and Weakness in which it found him; but it was a *redeeming Power*, which by the Mercy of God, was treasured up in his fallen Nature, which was to resist and overcome the *Wrath* and *Death*, and awakened *Nature* of Hell, *that* was in his Soul; and from *that* Time of God's accepting him to a Salvation, through the Seed of the Woman, he was saved by the Power of Christ *within him*, as really, as those that lived, and believed in Christ, after he had been incarnate. As nothing can save the *last* Man, or become his *Righteousness*, or Redemption, but the Divine Nature of Jesus Christ, *derived* into his Soul, so nothing else could be *Righteousness*, Redemption, or Salvation to the first Man.

All Men therefore *that* ever were, or shall be descended from *Adam*, have *Jesus Christ* for their Saviour, as *Adam* had, they

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receive the Promise made to him, and receive by *that* Promise, that which he received by it, they have a Seed of the Woman, an *incorruptible Seed* of Life, springing up in the *first Essences* of their Life, which is to *oppose* and *resist* the Seed of the Serpent, or the *diabolical Nature* that is in them also. And therefore no Son of *Adam* is *without* a Saviour, or can be *lost*, or entirely *overcome* by the Evil, that the Fall has brought upon him, but by his *own turning* away from this Saviour *within* him, and giving himself up to the Suggestions, and Workings of the *evil Nature*, that is in him.

(30.) This Mystery of an *inward Power* of a Salvation *hidden* in all Men, has had just such degrees of *Obscurity* and *Manifestation*, as the Nature, and *Birth*, and *Person* of the Messiah have had; that is, as the Nature and Person of Jesus Christ, as an *Atonement*, *Saviour* and *Redeemer* of Mankind, were for several Ages of the World only *obscurely pointed* at, and typified by the Religion of the *Jews*; so this *Seed* of a New Birth, or *saving Power* of Christ hidden in the Souls of all Men, was, through the same Ages, under the *same Veil*, and *Obscurity*.

But when the eternal Son of God became incarnate, and manifested to the World the Mysteries of his *Nature*, *Person*, and *Office*, when it was publicly declared, that he was the *Life* and *Light* of the World, the *only Source* of Goodness in every Creature, the 'Light that lighteth every Man that cometh into the World'; that we must all be *born again of him*, be born again *from above*, be born of the Spirit, and *that* everyone was to profess the *owning*, *seeking* and *desiring* this Divine Birth, by a *Baptism* into the Name, or Nature, of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; then it became *plainly* manifest, what Christianity was from the Beginning, and in *what Manner* Jesus Christ was the Saviour of *Adam*, and what it was that he received, by receiving a *Bruiser of the Serpent*, into the first Essences of his Life.

Therefore when Jesus Christ came into the World, declaring the *Necessity* of a New Birth, to be owned, and sought, by a *Baptism* into the Name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; this was not a *new Kind*, or Power of Salvation, but only an *open Declaration* of the *same* Salvation, *that* had been till then, only *typified*, and veiled under certain *Figures* and *Shadows*, as he himself had been. And Men were called not to a new Faith in him, as *then* first become their *inward Life*, and *Light*, but to a more *open* and *plain Acknowledgment* of him, who from the Beginning, had been the one Life and Light, and only Salvation of the first Man, and all that were to descend from him.

(31.) Now the Things required on our Part, towards the raising and bringing forth this new Birth in us, are *Repentance*, and

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Faith. These are to be the *continual Support* of our Regeneration, carrying it on to the End of our Lives.

But now though Repentance and Faith are to *bring forth*, and carry on our Regeneration; yet they are themselves the Effect and Fruit of it, *viz.*, of that *first Seed* or *Light* of Life, which God *willed* to be in *Adam*.

For had not God of his own *free Grace*, chosen *Adam* and *Eve* to Salvation in Jesus Christ, by doing inwardly in the deep, and darkened Essences of their fallen Souls, something like that, which he did to the 'Darkness which was upon the Face of the 'Deep,' when he said, 'Let there be Light' in it; *Adam* and *Eve*, and all their Posterity, had been *inwardly*, as to their Souls, only of the Nature of the Devils, full of their *dark* and *fiery* Dispositions, shut up in their Elements, *incapable* of any Thought or Motion, but what tended to *Selfishness*, *Envy*, *Pride*, and *Wrath*.

Neither they, nor any of their Posterity, could have brought forth *any Degree* of Humility, Resignation, Love, Faith, Hope, or Desire of God; but had lived *hardened* and *fixed*, in the abovenamed *Elements* of Hell, full of their *own perverse Will*, without all *Conscience*, or *Instinct* of Goodness.

And therefore when God of free Grace, provided that falling Man should fall into a State of Redemption, that is, into a *Possibility* of being God's Creature again; this was effected by God's *treasuring up*, or *preserving* in him a Seed of *the Woman*, a *remaining* Spark of his first Divine Life; which first Divine Life, was *then*, Christ in him, his *full Birth* of Glory, as certainly, as *Christ in us*, is now our Hope of Glory.

St. *Paul* says, 'God hath chosen us in Christ Jesus, before the 'Foundation of the World.' Now from this eternal, foreseeing Goodness of God towards Mankind, it is, that a *Root* or *Remains* of the first Divine Life, called a *Seed of the Woman*, the *ingrafted* WORD, a *Kingdom of God*, a *Pearl of great Price*, a *Treasure hid in a Field*, was fore-ordained to be preserved, and treasured up, though hidden under that Death, which *Adam* died in Paradise. And thence it was, that the Goodness of God, could direct distressed *Adam* to this Comfort, *viz.*, 'The Seed of 'the Woman shall bruise the Head of the Serpent'; not a foreign Seed, to be sown into thee *from without*, but a remaining, preserved Seed of thy *first Life* of Christ, which through the Divine Love, for thee, is hidden, and securely treasured up under thy own fallen earthly Nature, as a *Pearl* hidden in thy own Field, a *Principle* of Holiness, a *Touch* of Love, the *Pledge* of Immortality, and *Fund* of everlasting Happiness. For this heavenly Pearl, called by St. *Peter*, 'the incorruptible Seed of

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'the WORD,' shall surely come forth again out of its state of *hiddenness* and *Death*; shall quicken and revive into its first *Glory*, through Christ, who is, and ever shall be, the *RESURRECTION*, and *LIFE* of all that, which was hid and lost in the *Death*, that *Adam* died.

(32.) And here it is, that we see again how 'God is Love,' *universal Love* towards all Mankind, having put all into a State of *Redemption*. For if all Men, as Sons of *Adam*, are by the *free Grace* of God made Sons of the *second Adam*, and, as such, have a *Seed* of Life in them from him, in order to be raised up to a *Perfection* of the new Man in Christ Jesus; and if this *Seed* of a New Birth, or *Light* of Life, is the *general*, and *preventing Grace* of all Men, that enables them so to act, as to obtain God's *assisting Grace*, in the *Renewal* of their Hearts and Minds, then it is a glorious and undeniable Truth, that there is no *Partiality* in God, no *Election* of one People to *Mercy* in Christ Jesus, and *Dereliction* of another to their *own helpless* Misery, but that all Men, have a *general Call*, and a *general Capacity* to obtain their *Salvation*; and that as certainly as all *fell* and *died* in *Adam*, so all were *restored* in his *Restoration*.

(33.) Now as the first *Power* and *Ability* of our having one good Thought, or Desire of turning to God in *Penitence* and *Faith*, is the Effect of this first Seed of a New Birth in all Men; so this Seed of a New Birth is *quicken*ed, *strengthen*ed, and *brought forth* to its full *Stature* or *highest Degree* of *Perfection*, by Acts, or rather Habits of *Repentance* and *Faith*.

So that Faith and Repentance are the *Life* of the new Man, or the Acts by which it *grows*, and is *brought forth* into its proper State of *Perfection*. There is no *Difference* between Faith and Works, in this *inward new-born* Man. Its Faith is its Works, and its Works are its Faith. For Faith is its *turning to God*, and its turning to God, is its *Aversion*, or *turning from* all Evil; so that Faith and good Works, are only two Considerations of *one* and the *same thing*, or of one and the same State of mind, in the *new-born Man*.

(34.) This *Seed* of the New Birth, that is God's free, and fore-ordained Gift to Man, as the *Power* that is to redeem him, is the *Reason* and *Foundation* of that Language in Scripture, of a *new*, inward and *spiritual* Man, and of an *old*, *natural*, and outward *rational* Man, and of the *Enmity* between the one and the other; in which *Enmity*, the whole *Warfare*, and *Trial* of the *Christian Life*, consist.

The Seed of the New Birth, is the inward and *new* Man, which is to grow up into that spiritual and holy Man, which was *first created* in *Paradise*.

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This inward Man, is alone the *Subject* of Religion and Divine Grace; he only *is of God, and heareth God's Word*; he only hath Eyes to *see*, and Ears to *hear*, and a Heart to *conceive* the Things of God.

This is he alone, *that is born of God, and cannot sin*, because he has no Sin in his Nature. This is he alone, *that overcometh the World*, because he is of a Divine Nature, and is both contrary to the World, and above it. This is he alone, that can love his Brother as himself, because the Love of God is alone alive, and abideth in him.

The *old, natural* Man, or the *rational* Man of this World, is the *dark fallen* Nature, enlightened *only*, and solely with the *Light* of this outward World; it is the diabolical Nature, only softened with *Flesh and Blood*, quieted and comforted with the *Light of the Sun*, by this *Light*, he can only see the *outward Images* of Things, whether *Divine* or *human*, and can only *reason, dispute, and wrangle* about his own shadowy Images, but can know no more of God, and the Things of God, than such *dead Images* can represent unto him.

The *old* or *natural* Man, may be an *Historian, a Poet, an Orator, a Critic, a Politician*, or worldly wise Man, &c., all this Skill and Art lies within his reach; the *Fire* of his Soul, *kindled* only by the *Light of the Sun*, may do all this. But notwithstanding all these *Trappings and Endowments*, he is wholly shut up in his own dark Prison of *Selfishness, Envy, Pride, and Wrath*; his *Virtues, Piety, and Goodness* can be only *such*, as give no Disturbance to these *four Elements* of the fallen Nature.

He is an *Animal*, full of earthly, sensual Passions and Tempers, and can only favour such things as can gratify their Nature.

Here, and here only, lies the *true, solid, and immutable* Distinction, between the *old* and the *new* Man, and the plain Reason, why the *Life* of the one, is the *Death* of the other.

(35.) Now in this essential Difference, between the *old* and the *new* Man, we may at one View, see a clear and solid Ground of Distinction, between what is called a bare *historical, and superficial* Faith, which cannot *save* the Soul, but leaves it a Slave to Sin, and that *living and real* Faith, which effecteth our Salvation, and sets us in the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God.

Human Reason, or the *natural* Man of this Life, can believe and assent to this Truth, that Christ is our Saviour, and that we are to be saved by a Righteousness from him, as easily, as it can assent to any other Relation, or Matter of Fact. But whilst it is human Reason *only*, that *assents* to this Truth, little or nothing is done to the Soul by it; the Soul is under much the same Power of Sin as before, because only the *Notion, or Image, or*

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History of the Truth is taken in by it; and *Reason* of itself can take in no more.

But when the *Seed* of the New Birth, called the *inward Man*, has *Faith* awakened in it, its *Faith* is not a *Notion*, but a real, *strong, essential Hunger*, an attracting, or *magnetic Desire* of Christ, which as it proceeds from a *Seed* of the *Divine Nature* in us, so it attracts and unites with its *Like*, it lays hold on Christ, puts on the *Divine Nature*, and in a living and real Manner, grows powerful over all Sins, and effectually works out our Salvation.

And therefore it is justly called a *Divine Faith*, not only because of its *Divine Effects*, but chiefly because it arises from that, which is *Divine within us*, and by its *attracting Hunger*, and Thirst after that Fountain of Life, from whence it came, becomes essentially united with it; breathes by that SPIRIT, and lives by that WORD which eternally *proceeds out of the Mouth of God*. Of this Faith alone it is, that our Lord speaks, when he says, 'whoso eateth my Flesh and drinketh my Blood, hath eternal Life.'

When this Faith is thus awakened, and sprung up in the inward Man, then we may be said to have a *saving Faith*, or a *saving Knowledge* of Jesus Christ.

(36.) From these *two Sorts* of Faith here mentioned, we may very plainly see and perceive, why there is such a *Misunderstanding* between two *Sorts of Believers*, and why they speak a Language so unsatisfactory, and *disgustful* to one another.

Busy inquisitive *Reason*, learned enough in its *own Sphere*, grammatically skilled in Scripture-Knowledge, looking no further, or deeper into the *Things of God*, than a *Dictionary* can guide it, cannot bear the Language of the regenerate, inward Man, but condemns it as *fanatical*, and *enthusiastic*; not considering, that this *rational Man*, which is made the Judge of *Salvation*, is that very individual *old Man with his Deeds*, that we are by the Religion of the Gospel, to be *saved*, and delivered from; and that we should have no occasion for a *new Seed* of a *Divine Life* in us, no occasion to be *born again of God*, but because *this natural Man* of human Reason, can neither *see* nor *hear*, nor *feel*, nor *taste*, nor understand the Things of God, as they are in themselves.

(37.) From this Difference between the *new*, and the *old Man*, which is a Difference as *real*, as that between Heaven and Earth, several Lessons of great Instruction may be learnt.

When Religion is in the Hands of the *mere natural Man*, he is always the worse for it; it adds a *bad Heat* to his own *dark Fire*, and helps to inflame his four Elements of *Selfishness*, *Envy*, *Pride*, and *Wrath*. And hence it is, that worse Passions, or a worse Degree of them, are to be found in Persons of great

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religious Zeal, than in others *that* make no Pretences to it. History also furnishes us with Instances of Persons of great *Piety* and *Devotion*, who have fallen into great *Delusions*, and deceived both themselves and others. The Occasion of their Fall was this; it was, because they made a *Saint* of the *natural Man*. My Meaning is, they considered their *whole Nature*, as the *Subject* of Religion, and Divine Graces; and therefore their Religion was according to *the Workings* of their *whole Nature*, and the *old Man* was as busy, and as much delighted in it, as the *New*. And hence it was, that Persons of this Stamp, all inflamed, as they seemed to be, with *Piety*, yet overlooked in their own Lives, such Errors of moral Behaviour, as the first Beginners in Religion, dare not allow themselves in.

Others again, perhaps truly awakened by the Spirit of God, to devote themselves wholly to *Piety*, and the Service of God, yet making too *much haste* to have the *Glory* of Saints, the Elements of fallen Nature, *Selfishness*, *Envy*, *Pride* and *Wrath*, could *secretly* go along with them. For to seek for *Eminence*, and Significancy in Grace, is but like seeking for *Eminence* and Significancy in *Nature*. And the *old Man* can relish *Glory*, and Distinction in *Religion*, as well as in *common Life*, and will be content to undergo as many *Labours*, *Pains*, and *Self-denials*, for the sake of religious, as for the sake of secular *Glory*. There is nothing safe in Religion, but in such a Course of Behaviour, as leaves *nothing* for corrupt Nature to *feed*, or *live* upon; which can only then be done, when every Degree of *Perfection* we aim at, is a Degree of *Death* to the Passions of the natural Man.

(38.) It may now perhaps be said, if Regeneration is so *great* a Matter, if it signifies the *Restoring* to the Soul its first *paradisaical* Light, or the Renewing of the *Birth* of the Son of God in it; surely so great a Thing, and transacted *within* us, must not only be known and felt, *when* it is *brought about*, but must be known and felt in some *strange*, and *extraordinary* Manner.

It may be answered, *first*, That all Mankind may in a certain and good Sense, be said to be in some degree Sharers of this Regeneration, as having in them a *Seed* of Life, *that* is contrary to their corrupt Nature; which *Seed* they partake of, as Heirs of the first Grace, granted to *Adam* in the *ingrafted Word*. This first Seed, or *Light* of Life, *which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World*, is the *first Seed* of the New Birth; which Birth stands in this Life, as a *Tree* or Plant in the Soil, and is only in a State of growing during this Life. For was the *New Birth*, with regard both to Soul and Body, ever totally *finished* in anyone, he would be as certainly in Paradise, as *Adam* was, and be as much above the Power of the Elements of this World, as *Adam*

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was at his Creation. *Secondly*, All Christians are in a *higher* and *further* State of Regeneration, by the *Grace* of Baptism into the Name of the Holy Trinity. By Baptism, they profess themselves Disciples of Jesus Christ, in his Kingdom of Grace, to seek for Life, Righteousness, and Sanctification in him; to live by his Spirit, in Conformity to his Doctrine, Life, Sufferings and Death, in a continual Resistance of the Corruptions of their Nature, the Temptations of the World and the Devil.

This Profession faithfully kept, is their *Progress* in the Way of Regeneration. Some only outwardly make this Profession, and so only have the Name of Christians. Some make it in a much better manner; yet being very defective in their Conformity to the Life and Doctrines of Jesus, live and die far short of that Purification, or Renewal of the inward Man, which the Religion of the Gospel proposes.

Others renouncing all for Christ, and following his *Counsels*, as well as his *Precepts*, arrive at high Degrees of Regeneration, and experience such a *Life in Christ*, or such a *Manifestation* of Christ in them, as others less faithful to their Master, must be Strangers to.

To ask therefore by what *strange* or *extraordinary* Effects, the Work of the New Birth is to be *known*, and *felt* to be *done* in the Soul, is a very improper, and useless Question. Because Regeneration is not to be considered as a Thing, *done*, but as a State that is *progressive*, or as a Thing, *that* is continually doing.

(39.) If it be further asked, What are then the certain *Marks*, or *Effects* of a *highly advanced* Degree of Regeneration, which Christians are to *look for*?

It may be answered, This Question is not useful: *First*, Because there is no Obligation upon anyone, to *know* and *feel* the Height, or Advancement of his State. *Secondly*, Because the *Inquiry* after such Knowledge, and inward *Feeling* of it, is very dangerous. *Thirdly*, Because it can be no hurt to anyone's Piety and Holiness, to take it to be *lower* than it really is. *Fourthly*, Because nothing keeps up our Progress in the Way of Regeneration, let it be in what Degree it will in us, but our *constant Fidelity* in conforming to the Doctrines, Life, and Death of Jesus Christ. *Fifthly*, Because this Question directs, and turns People's Minds to the seeking after *certain Effects*, merely from *Ideas* and *Descriptions* of them, when their Minds should only be set upon the *Causes* that are to produce them.

Thus, supposing it to be true, that an *Assurance of Salvation*, or Continuance in Grace, was a *genuine Effect* of a certain Degree of Regeneration; Christians should not be directed to seek for *this Assurance*, as a certain *Mark* or *Effect* of such a

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Degree of Regeneration, for this is directing them to seek for this Effect from their *ownelves*, and not from the *State* of their Regeneration.

For their Minds and Imaginations will be naturally upon the *Stretch*, how to work themselves up into this Pitch of *Assurance*, and so it will be something, *that* they have seized upon by their *own Will*, and not received as the *genuine Effects* of their State in Grace. Whereas, supposing (but not granting) this Assurance to be the *proper* Effect of a certain Degree of the New Birth, yet it is an Effect that is not to be sought for *beforehand*, but only to be received when its *proper Cause* has produced it.

(40.) It is a great Error, to fix any certain Marks or Effects to *such a Degree* of Regeneration; for its Effects will be various in *different* Persons, from a Variety of Causes, both on the Part of God, and Man.

The truly pious Christian, in whom the Holy Ghost dwelleth as in his Temple, is indeed in a State of *high Acquiescence* in God; but he wants no more to have this Acquiescence turned into an *Assurance* of his own Mind, that he *cannot fall* from his State of Grace, than he wants to have the Promises of God made sure to him, by the Promise of some mortal Man.

And if it pleases God to impress strongly and plainly upon his Mind, that his Salvation is secured, he receives it, as he does everything from God, with a grateful Mind; yet will he not *rest* in it, or receive it as a *Sign* of his *high Regeneration*, but rather as a Sign that God saw his *Weakness* stood in need of it; and so will pass over it, and return to an *humble, total* Resignation of his whole *Soul, Spirit, and Body*, both for Time and Eternity, into the Hands of God, through Faith in the Merits of his Saviour Jesus Christ.

Least of all can such a one call peremptorily upon others, for *such* an Assurance as he has had, or condemn their *Resignation* and *Peace* in the want of it; he will be more afraid of thus *meddling* with the Things of God, than of being a *Busy-body* in *other Men's Matters*.

(41.) The only useful Question in this Matter, is this, How a Man may know that he is in the *Way* of Regeneration, that he is spiritually *alive*, and *growing* in the inward and new Man?

It may be answered, Just as the *State, Nature, and Life* of the *natural* Man makes itself to be *known, and felt*. The Soul of Man, or that which is the *Subject* both of the *old* and *new* Nature, is not two, but *one Soul*. The Fire of the Soul, or that *spiritual Fire* which is the Soul itself, is kindled or enlightened by the Light of the *Sun*; this makes the *natural Man*, and from whence the *Imagination, Will, Desires, Thoughts, and Inclinations* of the natural Life arise.

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The same individual *Fire-soul*, enlightened by the *Son of God*, makes the true *new Man*, from which Soul *thus enlightened*, the Imagination, Will, Desires, Thoughts, and Inclinations of the New Man arise. So that the same Proofs are to be expected in both Cases, the spiritual Man is to know that he is alive in the same manner, as the natural Man knows and feels his Life. In these things, in the Imagination, Will, Desires, Thoughts, and Inclinations, consists the Life of each Nature; and what are more than these, are to be considered as the outward Fruits and Effects of each Nature.

(42.) Now though the natural Life in all Men is *one* and the *same*, yet there are under it Variety of *Complexions*, which makes Men of the same Nature, almost infinitely different from one another. Now the Matter is just thus with the spiritual Man, or in the inward World. As many different Complexions arise in the Soul, enlightened by the Son of God, as in the Soul, enlightened by the *outward Light* of this World.

For the outward World is but a *Glass*, or *Representation* of the inward; and everything and Variety of things in temporal Nature, must have its *Root*, or hidden *Cause*, in something that is more inward.

It is therefore a well-grounded, and undeniable Truth, that the new spiritual Man hath his *particular Complexion*, as sure as the outward and natural Man hath. Hence it is, that there has been so great a Difference, in the *Form* and *Character* of the most eminent and faithful Servants of God; one could think of nothing but *Penitence* and penitential *Austerities*; another all inflamed with the *Love* of God, could think or speak of nothing else; some have been driven into a *holy Solitude*, living as *John the Baptist*; others have been wholly taken up in Works of Charity, loving their Neighbour even more than themselves. A great Variety of this kind, has been always found amongst those, who were most truly devoted to God, whose Variety, is not only not hurtful in itself, nor displeasing to God, but is as much according to his Will, and the Designs of his Wisdom, as the Difference between *Cherubims* and *Seraphims*, or the Variety of the *Stars* in the Firmament.

Every *Complexion* of the inward Man, when sanctified by *Humility*, and suffering itself to be tuned, and struck, and moved by the Holy Spirit of God, according to its particular *Frame* and *Turn*, helps mightily to increase that Harmony of Divine Praise, Thanksgiving, and Adoration, which must arise from different *Instruments*, *Sounds*, and *Voices*. To condemn this *Variety* in the Servants of God, or to be *angry* at those who have not served him, in the Way that we have chosen for our-

selves, is but too plain a Sign, that we have not enough renounced the Elements of *Selfishness, Pride, and Anger.*

(43.) From this Variety of Complexions both in the inward and outward Man, we may make some useful Observations. And the first may be this, that every Man whose Complexion is strong in him, as to one particular Kind, is vehemently inclined to imprint the same upon others, and that others of the same Kind, are naturally disposed to catch and receive it from him. But I shall consider this Matter only with regard to Religion. Let it be supposed that Men of a certain *Complexion*, have taken upon them to try the religious State of others by these Questions: Are you sure that you should be able to die a *Martyr*? Do you find certain strong Resolutions, not in your *Head*, or your *Brain*, but in your inward Man, that you would not refuse a *Martyrdom* of any kind? Have you the *Witness* of the Spirit within you, bearing witness with your Spirit, that you are in this State?

Now, it is beyond all Question, *that* an *Examination* of this Kind, or a *Demand* of such a Faith, can have no better Foundation than *Complexion*. Who do you think would be most likely to come into this Faith? First, It would be those that were most *unlikely* to keep it. It would be those who knew the *least* of themselves, and whose Piety had more of *Heat* than of *Light* in it. It would be *those*, whose outward Man was of the *same Complexion*, *that* was *Sanguine*, capable of a *false Fire*, and willing to have the *Glory* of Resolutions, and fine Persuasions at so easy a Rate. Let it now be supposed, that People of another Complexion should put such Questions as these: Do you *know* and *feel* that all your Sins are forgiven you? Do you know *when* and *where*, or at what *Time*, and in what *Place*, you received this Forgiveness? Do you know *when* and *where* you ceased to be one of those Sinners *called to Repentance*? And became one of those *Whole*, that *need not a Physician*? Have you an *absolute Assurance* of your Salvation, and *that* you cannot *possibly* fall from your State of Grace? Now who may be thought to be the most likely to come into this Religion?

First, Not he who is deeply *humble*, *that* abhors *Self-justification*, and truly knows the *Free Grace* of God. Such a one would say, I believe the Forgiveness of Sins, with as much Assurance, as I believe there is a God; I believe that Jesus Christ does now to all those who have a *true*, and *full* Faith in him, *that* which he did to those who *so* believed in him, when he was upon Earth. That he forgives their Sins, as immediately, as certainly, as fully, as when he said by an outward Voice, 'Thy Sins are forgiven thee.' I believe that in *this Faith* lies all our *Strength*, and

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Possibility of growing up in the inward Man, and recovering that Image and Likeness of God, in which we were created; that to *this Faith* all things are possible, and *that* by this Faith, every Enemy we have, whether he be within us, or without us, may, and must be entirely overcome. I believe, that to Repentance and Faith in Christ, Salvation is made as *secure*, and as absolutely *assured*, as *Paradise* was made *secure* to the Thief upon the Cross, by the express Word of our Saviour. I believe that *my own Sins*, were they greater, and more than the Sins of the whole World, would be wholly expiated, and taken away by my Faith, in the *Blood and Life* of my blessed Saviour.

But if I now want to add *something* of my own to this Faith, if this great and glorious Faith is *defective*, and saves me not, till I can add my *own Sense*, and my *own Feeling* to it, at such a *Time or Place*, is not this saying in the plainest Manner, that *Faith alone* cannot justify me? Is not this making *this Faith* in the Blood of Christ *defective*, and *insufficient* to my Salvation, till a *Self-Satisfaction*, an *own-Pleasure*, an *own-Taste*, are joined with it? Might it not better be said, *that* Faith could not justify me till it had Works, than that it cannot justify me without these inward *Workings, Feelings, Witnessings*, of my own *Mind, Sense, and Imagination*? Is there not likely to be a more hurtful *Self-seeking*, a more hurtful *Self-Confidence*, a more hurtful *Self-Trust*, a more dangerous *Self-Deceit*, in making Faith to depend upon these inward *Workings and Feelings*, than in making it depend upon outward good Works of our own?

Secondly, No one who was *truly resigned* unto God in *all things*, would come into these Questions; for to be resigned unto God in *all things*, and yet seek to be *not resigned* to him, in these *great Matters* above mentioned, is a Contradiction.

Such a one would say, I seek not to have an inward *Sense and Feeling* of the Certainty of these things, because that would be departing from that *pure, entire, full, and naked* Faith in God, and Resignation of myself to him, which alone can justify me in his Sight, and make me capable of the Operations of his Holy Spirit. He can only then, do all his good Pleasure in me, when I have no *own Will*, no *Self-seeking*; this total Resignation of myself to him, is the one only *immediate Disposition*, or *Capability* of enjoying God himself with all his infinite Treasures. Particular *Impressions*, sensible *Convictions*, strong *Tastes*, high *Satisfactions*, though they may be often the good Gifts of God, yet if they are much sought for, or *rested* in, they minister Food to a spiritual *Self-love*, and *Self-seeking*, and lay the Foundation of spiritual Pride; and so become a Wall of Partition between God and the Soul. For the Soul may be as fully fixed in *Selfish-*

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ness, through a Fondness of Sensible Sweetness, pious Motions, and delightful Enjoyments in spiritual things, as by a Fondness for earthly Satisfactions.

Thirdly, No one, whose Heart was truly touched by a *pure* and *perfect* Love of God, could come into these Questions. For this Love cannot seek for *Self-comfort* in the Answer of such Questions as these.

Such a Person would say, My Religion consists in living *wholly to my Beloved*, according to *his* Satisfaction, and not *my own*. What God wills, that I will; what God loves, that I love; what pleases God, that pleases me. I have no desire to know anything of myself, or to feel anything in myself, but that I am an *Instrument* in the Hands of God, to *be*, to *do*, and *suffer*, according to his good Pleasure. I am content to know that I *love* and *rejoice* in God *alone*, that he is what he is, and that I am what he pleases to make of me, and do with me.

(44.) Seeing then it appears that the truly *humble* Man, the Man that is wholly *resigned* to God, and the *pure Lover* of him, are not likely to come into the Religion of these Questions, let us now see who may be supposed ready to receive it.

First, All young Persons, whose Passions had not yet been much *awakened*, or spent their *Fire*; who had but little Experience of *themselves*, and the Deceitfulness of their *own Hearts*; for everything in their Nature, would help them to like, love, and obtain such an *Assurance*, Strength of *Conviction*, inward *Feeling*, as is here required.

Secondly, All restless *Self-Lovers*, who were uneasy with themselves, and everything else, who could find nothing in Religion, or common Life, that enough pleased them; these would be easily persuaded to work themselves up into a Belief, that their Sins were forgiven them at *such a Time*, or that Christ took an entire Possession of them at *such a Place*. For hearing that true Religion consisted *solely* in this, and that they only wanted it, because of their want of Faith in it, they would naturally embrace this, as the shortest Way to Comfort and Rest *in themselves*, in their own *Self-convictions*.

Thirdly, All Persons of a *sanguine, tender*, and *imaginary* Complexion, would be likely to strike in with the Religion of these Questions. For such Persons receiving everything *strongly*, and having a Power of believing and imagining almost in any degree, as they please, they would not find it hard, to comply with Doctrines so suited to their Nature, and which indulged that in them, which wanted most to be indulged, a sanguine Imagination.

Fourthly, All those who so *blaspheme* God, as to make him

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from all Eternity *absolutely* to elect some to an *irresistible* Salvation, and *absolutely* to *reprobate* others to an *unavoidable* Damnation. For there could be no subsisting under such an horrid Belief as this, but by those, who through a blind *Partiality*, strong Bias of *Self-love*, and *Self-esteem*, can work themselves up into a *full Assurance*, inward *infallible Feeling*, that they are in the Number of the *absolutely* elected from all Eternity.

Lastly, These Questions are a great *Bait* to all kinds of *Hypocrites*, who must find themselves much inclined to enter into a Religion, where they may pass immediately for *Saints*, upon their *own Testimony*, and stand in the highest Rank of Piety, and of Interest in Christ, merely by *their own* laying Claim to it.

(45.) Suppose it was to be asked Christians, as *necessary* to their Salvation, Do you believe and know that you have the *Self-denial* and *Mortification* of *John the Baptist*? Have you an inward Conviction that you have a *Zeal* equal to that of *St. Paul*? Have you an *Assurance* that your Love is full as *high* as that of *John the Evangelist*? That your *Penitence* is equal to that of *Mary Magdalene*?

Could these Questions, with any Warrant from Scripture, be put to all Christians, as Terms of their Salvation?

Yet there is as much Foundation in the Gospel, for putting such Questions as these, and making the Salvation of Christians to depend upon them, as for asking them, on the same Account, *When*, and *where*, they *felt* their Sins were forgiven them? When and where they felt Christ to take an entire Possession of them? When and where they felt themselves made *sure* of their Salvation, and *incapable* of falling from their State of Grace?

For what is all this but calling, hastening, and stirring up People to seek for Self-Justification, and compelling them to *think highly*, and affirm *rashly* of themselves, in order to be saved? Why might it not be as well to call upon them to say, I feel myself as *good* as *St. Paul*, as *pious* as *St. John*, as to say, I *feel* that my Salvation is *secure*, and that I *cannot* fall from my State of Grace? Is not this making Faith in *one's self*, as good, as necessary, and as beneficial to us, as Faith in *Christ*?

Would it not be as well, nay better, to make good Works of *our own*, necessary to true Faith, than to make Self-Justification, which is not a good Work, to be the very Essence and Perfection of it?

The Matter will not be much mended by saying, that this *Feeling* and *Assurance* is acknowledged to be the *pure Gift* of God, and so cannot be called *our own*, or *our own Justification*. For if I have not this Gift of God, till I *pronounce* it myself, till my *own Feeling* and Assurance *confirms* it to me, I am self-

justified, because my Justification arises, from what I *feel* and *declare* of myself.

(46.) How strangely must they have read the Gospel, who can take a *naked implicit* Faith, and an *humble total* Resignation of our *Spirit, State, and Life*, into the Mercy and Goodness of God, to be not only a *poor and imperfect*, but a *reprobate* State; or that a Man has no true and *saving Faith*, till it is an *infallible own-Feeling, and Self-Assurance*? What must such People think of our Saviour dying upon the Cross, with these Words in his Mouth; 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!' Will they say that this is a *dangerous* State? Is the *Spirit* of Christ here to be *renounced*? Will they say, that no *new-born* Christian can die in this Manner? Or that if he does, he is not in a State of Salvation?

To know no more, and to seek to know no more of our Salvation, than we can know by an *implicit* Faith, and *absolute* Resignation of ourselves to God in Christ Jesus, is the true *saving Knowledge* of Christ, and such as keeps us in the highest Degree of Fitness to receive our perfect Salvation.

(47.) I hope it will here be observed, that I no way depreciate, undervalue, or reject any particular *Impressions, strong Influences, delightful Sensations, or heavenly Foretastes* in the inward Man, which the holy Spirit of God may at times bestow upon good Souls; I leave them their just Worth, I acknowledge them to be the *good Gifts* of God, as special *Calls, and Awakenings* to forsake our Sins, as great *Incitements* to deny ourselves, and take up our Cross, and follow Christ with greater Courage, and Resolution.

They may be as *beneficial, and useful* to us in our spiritual Life, as other Blessings of God, such as *Prosperity, Health, happy Complexion, and the like*. But then, as *outward Blessings, remarkable Providences, religious Complexion, and the like*, may be very serviceable to awaken us, and excite our Conversion to God, and much assist the spiritual Life; so they may very easily have a contrary Effect, serve to fill us with *Pride, and Self-satisfaction*, and make us esteem ourselves, as *greater Favourites* of God, than those that want them. Who may yet be led to a *higher Degree* of Goodness, be in a *more purified* State, and stand *nearer* to God in their *poor, naked, and destitute* Condition, than we in the midst of great Blessings.

It is just thus with regard to those *inward Blessings* of the spiritual Life. They are so many *Spurs, Motives, and Incitements* to live wholly unto God; yet they may instead of that, fill us with *Self-satisfaction and Self-esteem*, and prompt us to *despise* others that want them, as in a *poor, mean, and reprobate*

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State; who yet may be *higher* advanced, and stand in a *nearer* Degree of Union with God, by *Humility, Faith, Resignation,* and *pure Love,* in their inward *Poverty* and *Emptiness,* than we who live *high* upon spiritual *Satisfactions,* and can talk of nothing, but our *Feasts of fat Things.*

All that I would here say of these inward *Delights* and *Enjoyments,* is only this, They are not *Holiness,* they are not *Piety,* they are not *Perfection,* but they are God's gracious *Allurements,* and *Calls* to seek after Holiness and spiritual Perfection. They are not to be sought for, for their *own sakes*; they are not to be prayed for, but with such a perfect *Indifference* and *Resignation,* as we must pray for any earthly Blessings; they are not to be *rested in,* as the Perfection of our Souls, but to be received as *Cordials,* that suppose us to be *sick, faint,* and *languishing*; and ought rather to convince us, that we are as yet, but *Babes,* than that we are really *Men* of God.

But to demand them in others, to make them uneasy under the Want of them, full of Search and Endeavour how to come at them, and satisfied in the Enjoyment of them, is as great a Mistake in itself, and as prejudicial to true Piety, as to make *outward Blessings* of Providence, Marks of Salvation, or *worldly Poverty, Pains,* and *Distress,* to be Proofs, that we are *not born* of God.

‘There are indeed Impressions and Communications from God, ‘which are more necessary and essential to the pious Life of the ‘Soul, than the Impressions of the *Sun* are to the comfortable ‘Life of our outward Man. And he that prays for nothing else ‘but these Divine Communications and Impressions, who thinks ‘of nothing else, trusts in nothing else, as able to comfort, ‘strengthen, and enrich his Soul; he that is thus all Prayer, ‘all Love, all Desire, and all Faith, in these Communications and ‘Impressions from above, is just in the same State of *Sobriety,* ‘as he that only prays that God would not *leave him to himself.* ‘For he that is without anything of *these Communications* and ‘Impressions of God upon him, is in the same State of *Death* ‘and *Separation* from God, as the Devils are.’*

These *Impressions* or *Operations* of God upon our Souls, are of the Essence of Religion, which has no Goodness in it, but so far as it introduces the *Life, Power,* and *Presence* of God into the Soul. The praying therefore for Impressions of *this kind* from God, is only praying that we may not be *left to ourselves*; to pray always for these with Faith, and hunger and thirst after

* Demonstration of the gross Errors, &c., in the *Plain Account of the Sacrament,* p. 287.

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them, is only praying earnestly, that the *Kingdom of God may come, and his Will be done in us.*

For the Soul is only so far cleansed from its Corruption, so far delivered from the *Power of Sin*, and so far purified, as it has renounced all *own Will*, and *own Desire*, to *have* nothing, *receive* nothing, and *be* nothing, but what the *one Will* of God chooses for it, and does to it.

This, and *this alone* is the true Kingdom of God *opened* in the Soul, when stripped of all Selfishness, it has only *one Love*, and *one Will* in it, when it has no Motion or Desire, but what branches from the Love of God, and resigns itself wholly to the Will of God.

There is nothing Evil, or the Cause of Evil to either Man, or Devil, but his *own Will*; there is nothing *Good* in itself, but the *Will of God*: he therefore who *wholly* renounces his *own Will*, turns away from *all Evil*; and he who gives himself up wholly to the Will of God, puts himself in the Possession of all that is good.

(48.) It may freely be granted, *that Conversion* to God, is often very *sudden* and *instantaneous*, unexpectedly raised from Variety of Occasions. Thus, one by seeing only a *withered Tree*,* another by reading the Lives and Deaths of the *Antediluvian Fathers*, one by hearing of *Heaven*, another *Hell*, one by reading of the *Love*, or *Wrath* of God, another of the *Sufferings* of Christ, may find himself, as it were, *melted* into Penitence all on a sudden. It may be granted also, that the greatest Sinner, may in a *Moment* be converted to God, and feel himself wounded in such a Degree, as perhaps those never were, who had been turning to God all their Lives.

But then it is to be observed, that this *Suddenness* of Change, or *Flash* of Conviction, is by no means of the *Essence* of true Conversion, and is no more to be demanded in ourselves, or others, than such a Light from Heaven, as shone round St. *Paul*, and cast him to the Ground. *Secondly*, That no one is to expect, or require, *that* another should receive his Conversion, or Awakening, from the same Cause, or in the same Manner, as he has done, that is, that *Heaven*, or *Hell*, or the *Justice*, or *Love* of God, or Faith in Christ, either as our *Light*, or our *Atonement*, must needs be the *first Awakening* of the Soul, because it has been so with him. *Thirdly*, That this Stroke of Conversion, is not to be considered, as signifying our *high State* of a New Birth in Christ, or a *Proof* that we are on a sudden made *New Creatures*, but that we are thus suddenly called, and *stirred* up to look after a

* *Frere Laurent.*

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Newness of Nature. *Fourthly*, That this *Sensibility*, or *manifest Feeling* of the Operations of God upon our Souls, which we have experienced in these first Awakenings, is not to be expected, or desired, to go along with us, through the Course of our Purification. *Fifthly*, That Regeneration, or the *Renewal* of our first Birth and State, is something entirely *distinct*, from this first *sudden Conversion*, or *Call* to Repentance; that it is not a Thing done in an *Instant*, but is a certain *Process*, a *gradual Release* from our Captivity and Disorder, consisting of several *Stages* and *Degrees*, both of Death and Life, which the Soul must go through, before it can have thoroughly put off the old Man. I will not say that this must needs be in the *same Degree* in all, or that there cannot be any Exception to this. But thus much is true and certain, that Jesus Christ is our *Pattern*, that *what* he did for us, *that* we are also to do for ourselves, or, in other Words, we must *follow him in the Regeneration*. For what he did, he did, both as our *Atonement*, and *Example*, his Process, or Course of Life, Temptations, Sufferings, denying his own Will, Death, and Resurrection, all done, and gone through, on our Account, because the human Soul wanted *such a Process* of Regeneration and Redemption; because, only in such a *gradual Process*, all that was lost in *Adam*, could be restored to us again. And therefore it is beyond all doubt, *that* this *Process* is to be looked upon, as the stated Method of our Purification.

It is well worth observing, that our Saviour's *greatest Trials*, were near the End of his *Process* or Life, that he then experienced the *sharpest Part* of our Redemption. This might sufficiently show us, that our *first Awakenings* have carried us but a little way; that we should not then begin to be *self-assured* of our *own Salvation*, but remember, that we stand at a great Distance from, and in great Ignorance of our severest Trials.

To sum up all in a Word: Nothing hath separated us from God but our *own Will*, or rather our own Will is our Separation from God. All the Disorder, and Corruption, and Malady of our Nature, lies in a certain *Fixedness* of our own Will, Imagination, and Desire, wherein we live to ourselves, are our own *Centre* and *Circumference*, act wholly from ourselves, according to our own Will, Imagination, and Desires. There is not the smallest Degree of Evil in us, but what arises from *this Selfishness*, because we are thus, *All in All* to ourselves.

It is this *Self*, that our Saviour calls upon us to deny; it is this Life of *Self*, that we are to *hate* and to *lose*, that the Kingdom of God may arise in us, that is, that God's Will may be done in us. All other Sacrifices that we make, whether of worldly *Goods*, *Honours*, or *Pleasures*, are but small Matters, com-

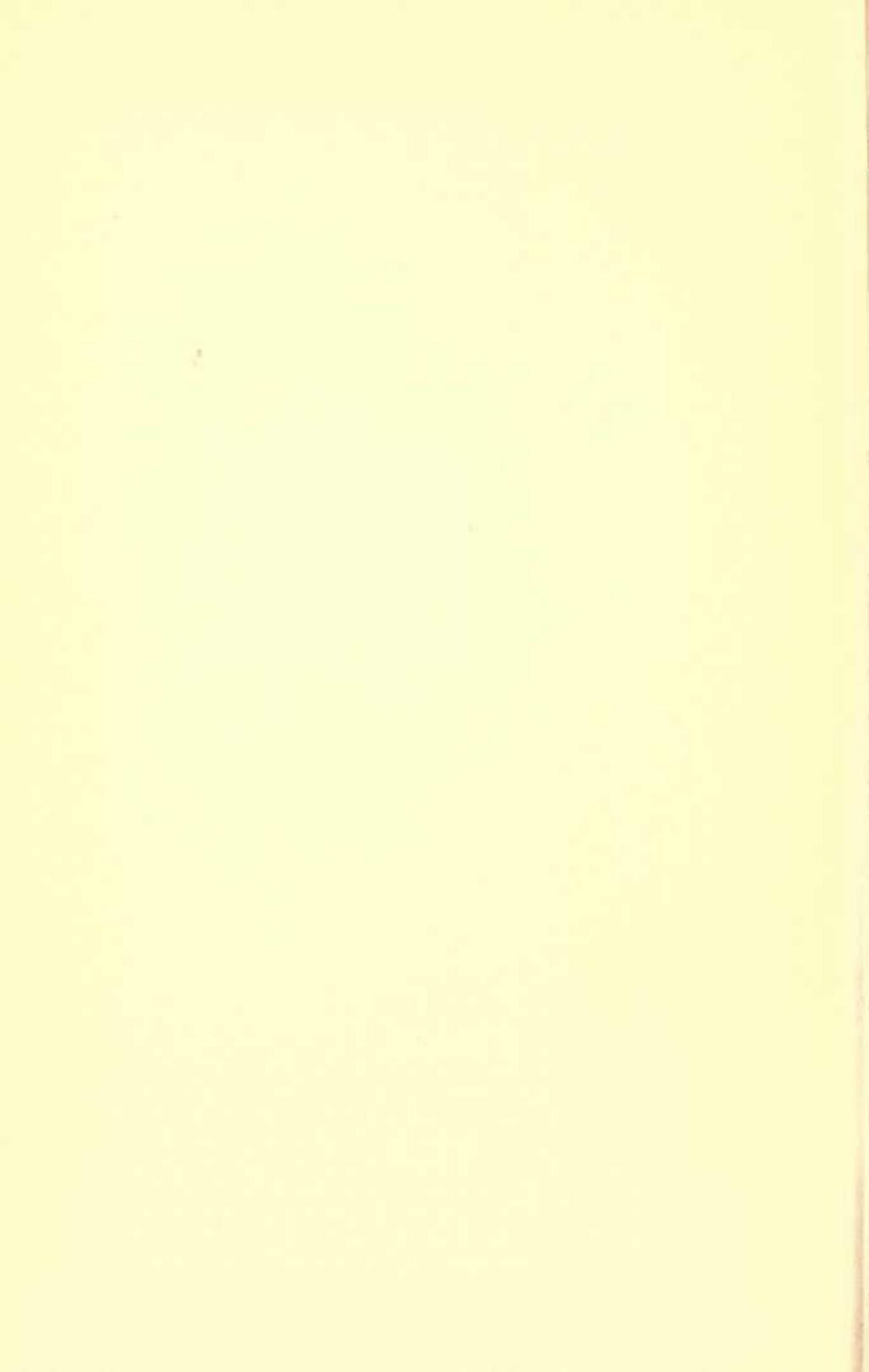
pared to that Sacrifice and Destruction of *all Selfishness*, as well *spiritual*, as natural, that must be made, before our Regeneration hath its perfect Work.

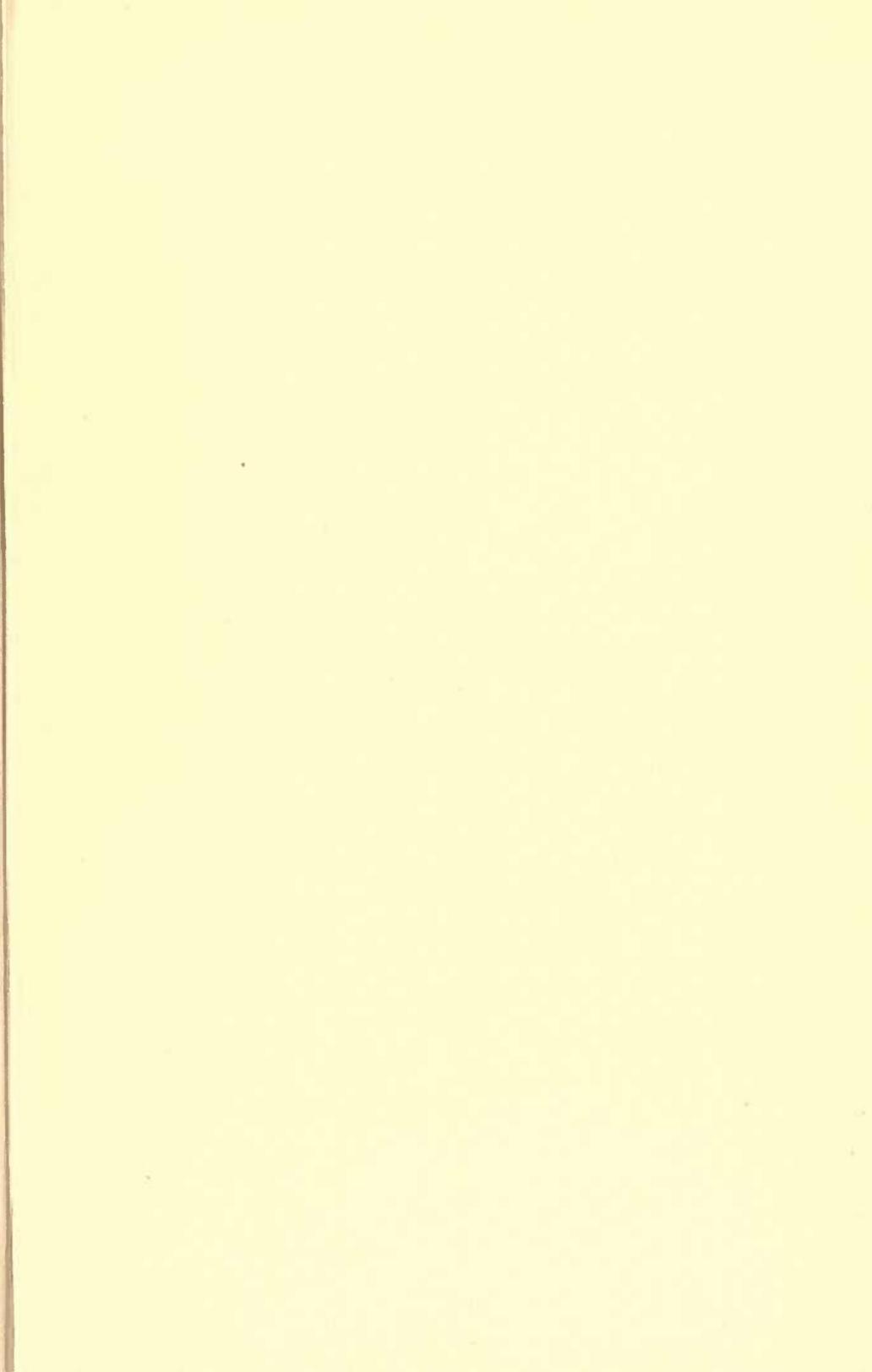
There is a Denial of our *own Will*, and certain Degrees even of *self-denying Virtues*, which yet give no Disturbance to *this Selfishness*. To be humble, mortified, devout, patient in a *certain Degree*, and to be persecuted for our Virtues, is no *Hurt* to this Selfishness; nay, *spiritual-self* must have all these Virtues to subsist upon; and his Life consists, in *seeing, knowing and feeling* the Bulk, Strength, and Reality of them. But still in all this Show, and Glitter of Virtue, there is an *unpurified Bottom* on which they stand, there is a *Selfishness*, which can no more enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, than the Grossness of Flesh and Blood can enter into it.

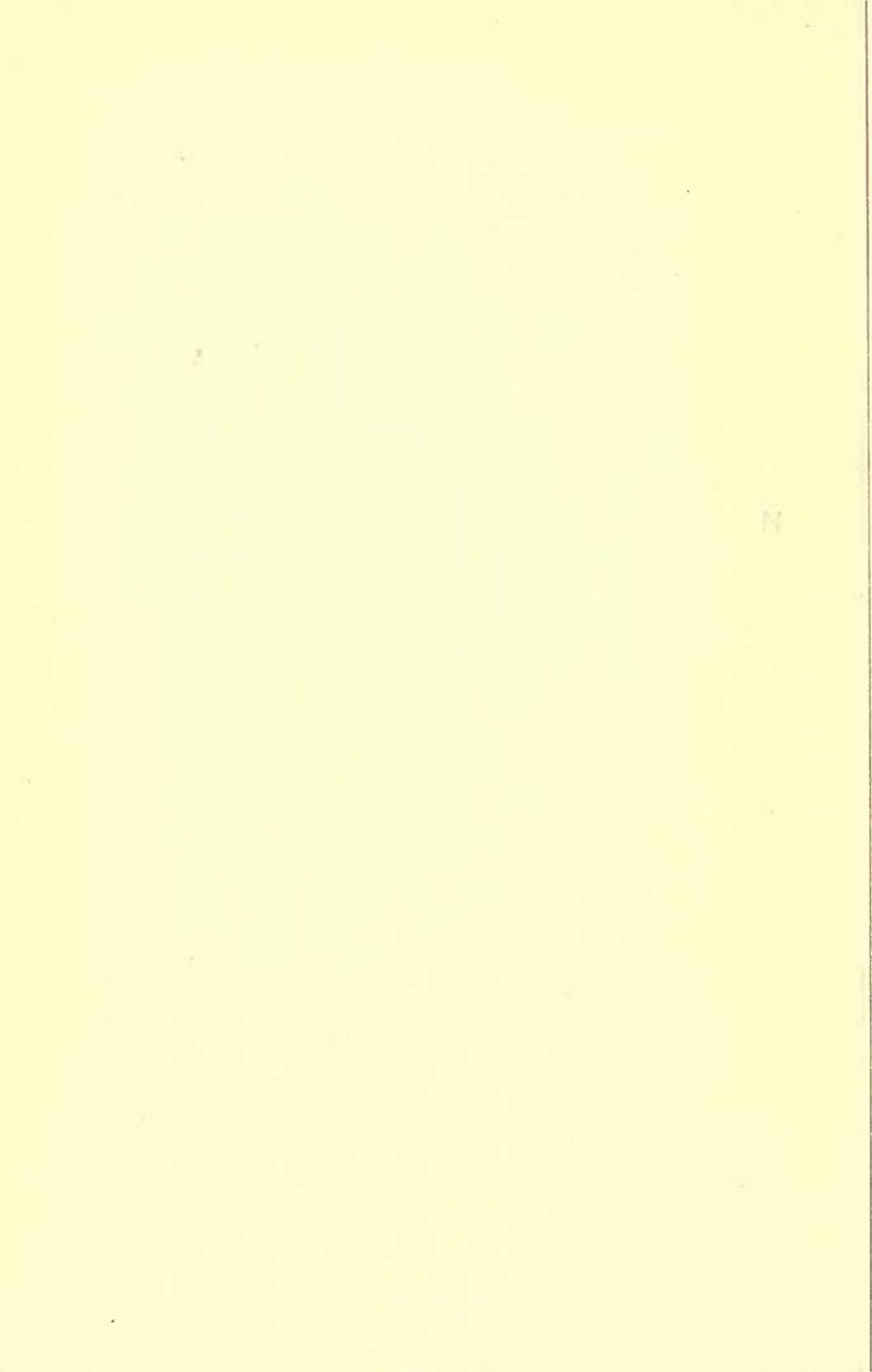
What we are to feel, and undergo in these *last Purifications*, when the *deepest Root* of all Selfishness, as well spiritual as natural, is to be *plucked up*, and torn from us, or how we shall be able to stand in *that Trial*, are both of them equally impossible to be known by us beforehand.

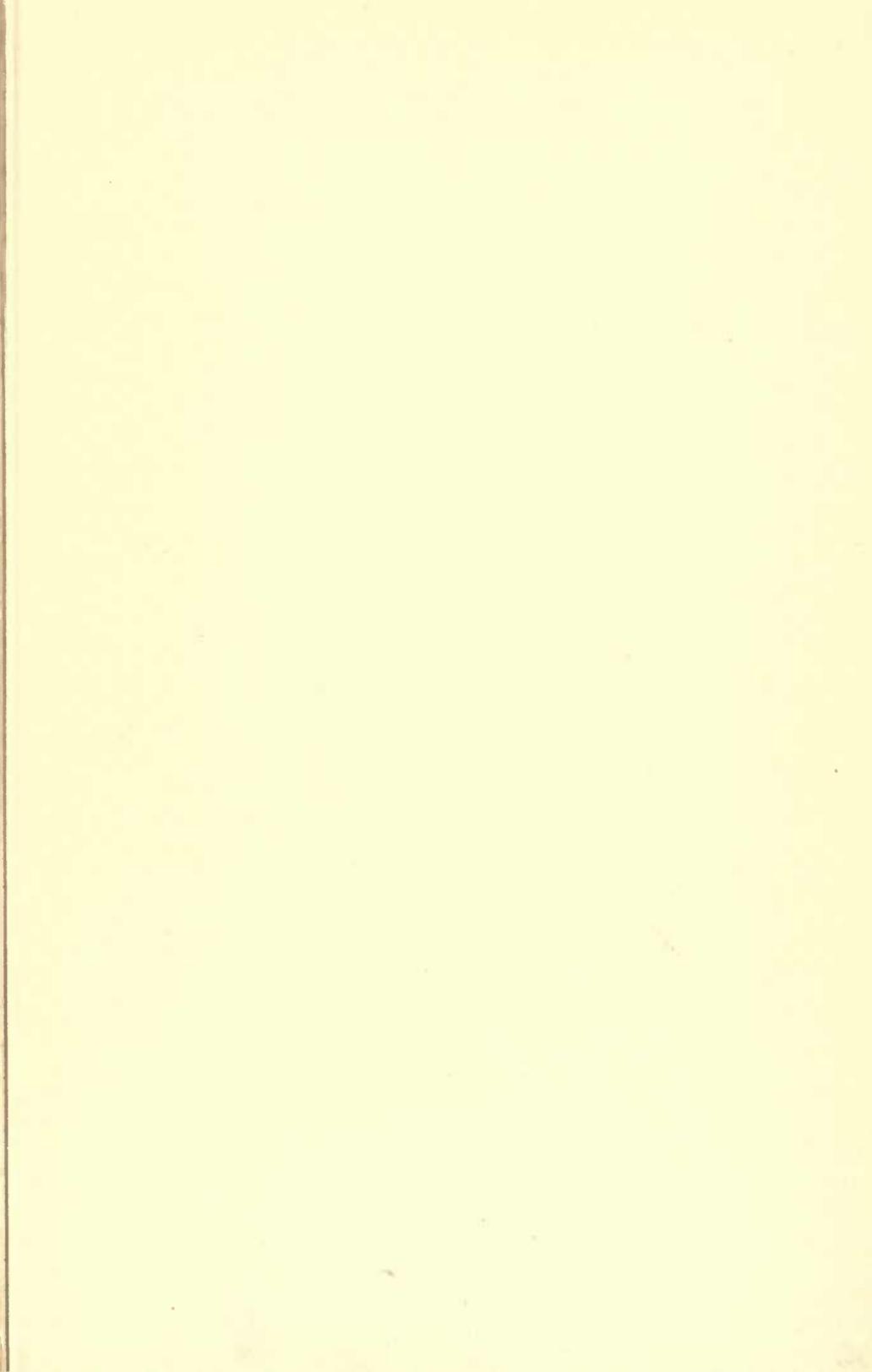
It is enough for us to know, that we *hunger and thirst after the Righteousness* which is in Christ Jesus; that by Faith we desire, and hope to be in him new Creatures; to know, that the *greatest Humility*, the *most absolute Resignation* of our whole selves unto God, is our *greatest and highest Fitness*, to receive our greatest and highest Purification, from the Hands of God.

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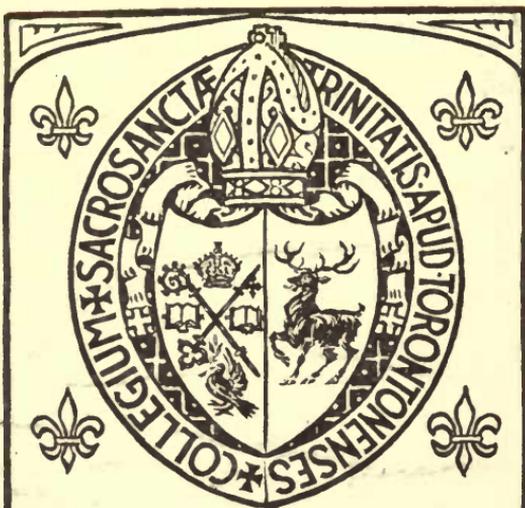
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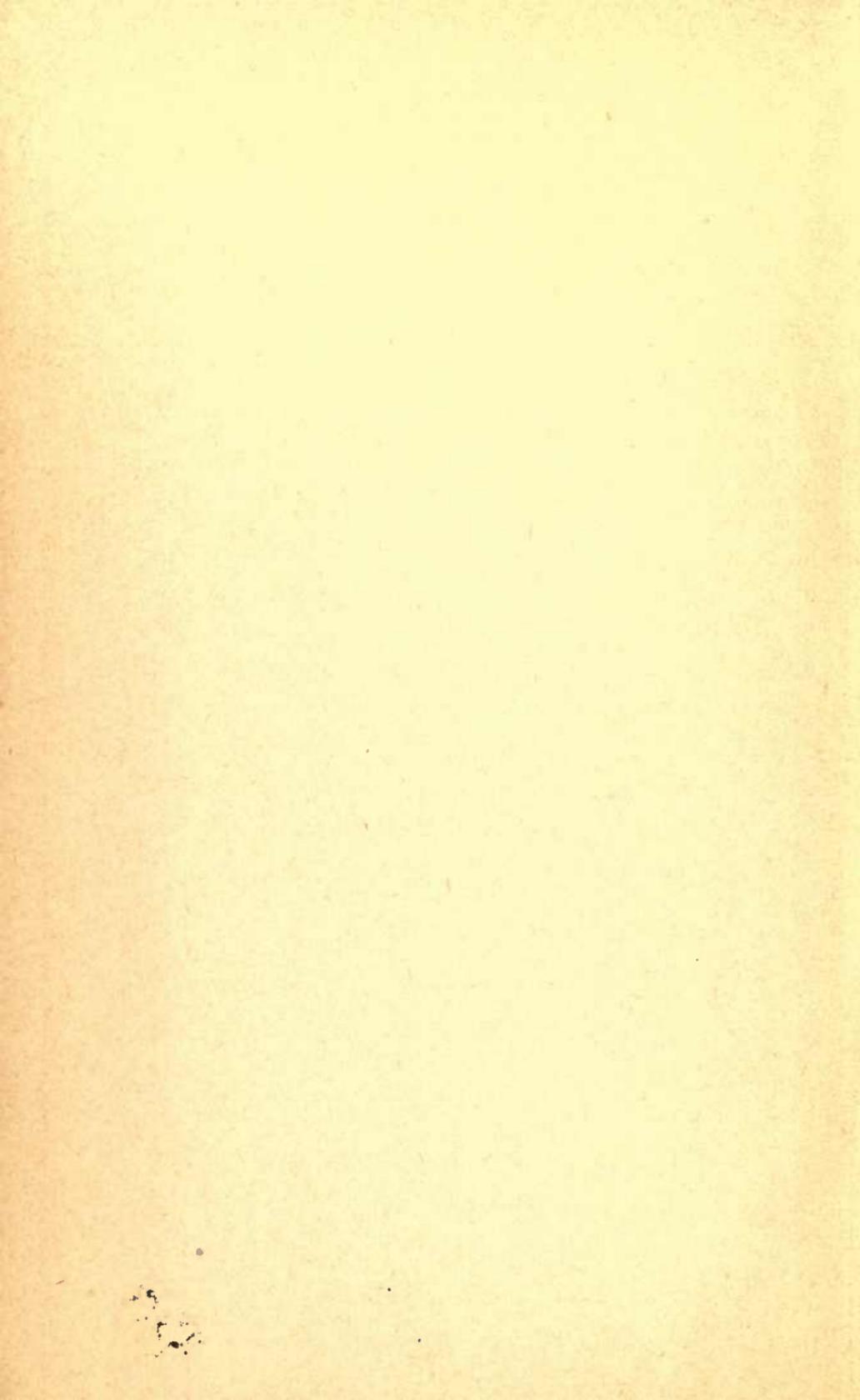


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MIGHT I follow the *Bent* of my own Mind, my *Pen*, such as it is, should be wholly employed in setting forth the infinite Love of God to Mankind in Christ Jesus, and in endeavouring to draw all Men to the Belief and Acknowledgment of it. This *one great Mercy* of God, which makes the *one only* Happiness of all Mankind, so justly deserves all our Thoughts and Meditations, so highly enlightens, and improves every Mind that is attentive to it, so removes all the Evils of this present World, so sweetens every State of Life, so inflames the Heart with the Love of every Divine and human Virtue, that he is no small Loser, whose Mind is, either by *Writing* or *Reading*, detained from the View and Contemplation of it.

When this Mystery of Divine Love was first manifested to the World, it produced its proper Effects, it put an End to all *Selfishness* and *Division*; for *all that believed were of one heart, and one spirit, and had all things common*.^{*} And indeed under the real Influence, and full Belief of this great Mystery of Divine Love, there seems to be no Room left for anything else amongst Christians, but Returns of Love to God, and Flowings out of Love towards one another.

But now it is so difficult to enter into Controversy without being, or at least *seeming* in some Degree unkind to the Person that one opposes, that it is with great Reluctance that I have entered upon my present Undertaking; having nothing more deeply riveted in my Heart, than an universal Love and Kindness for all Mankind, and more especially for those whom God has called to be my Fellow-Labourers in promoting the Salvation of Mankind. But however unwilling, yet I find myself obliged

* Acts ii.

to consider, and lay open many grievous Faults in the Doctor's Discourse; and to show to all Christians, that the dearest Interests of their Souls are much endangered by it.

And this I must do with great Plainness and Sincerity, in the Love of Truth, and under the Direction of Charity, saying nothing in the Spirit of an *Adversary*, sparing nothing through *Respect of Persons*, sacrificing nothing to the *Taste* or *Temper* of the World, but setting forth every Thing in that naked Light, in which the Spirit of God represents it to my own Mind.

The Doctor undertakes to stir up, and alarm Mankind with the *Sin, Folly, and Danger, of being righteous over-much*. The Text from which he has the *Title* of his Discourse is very unhappily chosen, and must be looked upon rather as a *severe Reproach*, than any kind of Justification of it. The Text is indeed in the Writings of *Solomon*, and as it stands there, has no Hurt in it; because as the Royal Preacher sometimes introduces *Fools*, and sometimes *Infidels*, making their Speeches, so there is a Necessity of supposing that to be the Case in the Doctor's Text; not only from the Context, which plainly shows there are Two Persons introduced, the one *for*, the other *against* Righteousness; but because the Words, unless stripped of all their proper Meaning, cannot be taken in a Sense that is tolerable, or consistent with the common *Notions* of Piety.

Is it not therefore strange, that the Doctor should choose to have a *Discourse* and *Title* to it, conformable to a Text of *this kind*? For if his Discourse is of a Piece with his Text, must not all sensible People find it as hard to reconcile his Discourse, as to reconcile the Text with the *common Notions* of Piety? Is it not strange, that he should think it right and just, to limit, explain, and model, both the Letter and Spirit of the Gospel by such a Saying in the Writings of *Solomon*, as must be ascribed to the Spirit and Mouth of an Infidel? Is it not still stranger, that such a Text, so offensive to Piety, should have not only been so long dwelt upon in the Doctor's Three Churches, but sent abroad into the Christian World, as a proper *Key* to all the practical Sayings, Parables, and Doctrines, of Jesus Christ?

Supported by this Text, the Doctor endeavours to deter and frighten Christians from the *Sin, Folly, and Danger, of being righteous over-much*, and from what he calls the *baneful Plague* of Enthusiasm. But then it is Matter of just Complaint, that he does all this, without ever showing in any Part of his Discourse, wherein true Righteousness, or the right and sober Spirit of Piety consists. If he supposed his Readers to be already well acquainted with the Nature and Extent of Christian Holiness, and to have just and distinct Ideas of Religion, what it is

in itself, what Change, Purification, and Perfection, it aims at in human Nature, how, and by what Means, a Man may make himself a full Partaker of all that Benefit, Change, and Perfection, that is intended by it, there would then have been little Occasion for his present Undertaking.

For if they may be supposed thus to know what is right in Religion, they would by such Knowledge be in the best State of Security against that which is wrong.

But the Doctor overlooks this important Matter. He neither supposes them to have this Knowledge, nor endeavours to help them to it ; but in a Flow of Zeal, in a loose, declamatory Style, reflects at large upon all Attempts towards a Piety, that is not *modern, common*, and according to the present Power and Fashion of Religion in the World. Thus, you everywhere find hard and severe Reflections cast upon *Pretenders* to Piety, *pretended Spiritualists*, and *Righteous over-much* ; great Accusation of *Excesses, Extraordinaries, and By-paths* ; but nowhere a *Word*, or a *Hint*, in Favour of those, who would only be so *excessive, so extraordinary*, and so much out of the *common Paths*, as the blessed Saints, and Martyrs of the Primitive Church were ; nowhere are *such People* told, that he wishes them *God speed*, that *their Zeal* is much wanted both amongst *Clergy and Laity*, and that the Gospel suffers, because we know not where to find *living Examples* of its Purity and Perfection. Nowhere are such People told, that he writes not *against* them, that He *loves* their Spirit, and should be glad to *add* new Fervours to it ; nowhere are they told, what *Christian Perfection* is, what a Holiness of Body, Soul and Spirit it requires, and what Blessedness of Life it gives ; how powerfully all are called to it ; how earnestly all ought to aspire after it ; and how sadly they are mistaken, what Enemies to themselves, who for the Sake of any, or all the Things in the World, die less purified and perfect, than they might have been.

If we had to do only with *one single* Person, sincerely good, yet seeming to carry Matters too high in some Parts of his Duty, if we intended *privately* to dissuade him from such Heights ; yet even *this*, thus *privately* done, and to a Person of *Piety*, would be exceeding *dangerous*, and very *unjustifiable* ; unless we took the utmost Care at the same Time, *to keep up* the pious Zeal of his Mind, to show him wherein the *true Point* of Perfection consisted, and to encourage his utmost Endeavours after it.

But if this Caution, Instruction, and Encouragement, cannot be omitted without great Hurt to Religion, when we speak only to a Person of *Piety*, and in *private*, about any religious *Extremes*,

what must be said of the Doctor's Conduct? who to the World *dead* in *Trespases and Sin*, preaches up the *Sin, Folly, and Danger*, of being Righteous over-much. To the World *Eating and Drinking*, and *rising up to Play*, he harangues upon the Madness, Danger, and Folly, of too much Temperance, Abstinence, Mortification, and Severity of Life. To the World *asleep, insensible, and careless*, not only of the Purity and Perfection, but of the First Principles of the Gospel, he *boldly, rashly* reproaches all Appearances of Holiness, that are *uncommon and extraordinary*. To *no Part* of the World does he represent or propose the *Perfection* of the Gospel, or recommend it as that, which deserves all that they can do, *or* suffer for Sake of it.

This, therefore, I am obliged to point out, as a *fundamental Defect* in the Doctor's Discourse, and such as renders it an evil *Temptation*, a dangerous *Snare*, and fatal *Delusion*, to all those, who do not read it with a full and thorough Dislike.

Coldness, Indifference, and a lifeless outward Compliance with all the Duties of Religion; a Slavery to Ease, Softness, and sensible Pleasures; a criminal Conformity to the Spirit, Fashions, and Corruptions, of the World; unmortified Passions; a coniving at favourite Sins; deep roots of Pride, Partiality, and Self-Love; an unawakened Conscience; an Insensibility of their corrupt, unreformed, unregenerate State; a Proneness to be content and satisfied with poor Beginnings, Names and Appearances of Virtue; is perhaps the State of more than *Two-thirds* of those that are looked upon to be the Religious amongst us.

Now the Doctor's Discourse has a direct and natural Fitness to lull all these People asleep, to suppress all Stirrings and Intentions of Amendment, to keep up and nourish every Disorder of their Hearts, to increase their Blindness, and awaken nothing in them, but a *hurtful Zeal* to censure and condemn all those, that are endeavouring to practise the *uncommon* Piety of the Gospel.

There is scarce a Reader amongst *this Number* of People, whether he be *Layman* or *Clergyman*, but will find this Effect from the Doctor's Instructions; he will begin to take *fresh Comfort* in his State, to think himself *happy* for having had no *aspirings* after high Improvements in Piety; he will not only be *content* with his Corruptions, but be *fixed*, and hardened against all *inward* and *outward* Calls to a solid Piety; he will approve of the *Deadness* and *Insensibility* of his own Heart, and acquiesce in it, as his true and just *Security*, from the *Sin* and *Folly* and *Danger* of being Righteous over-much.

Again, others there are, I make no doubt, in all Parts of this Kingdom, both amongst Clergy and Laity, Men and Women,

rich and poor, whose Consciences are greatly awakened, who see the *general Apostacy* from the Religion of the Gospel, whose Souls are wanting, and wishing nothing so much, as to know how, all that they *are*, all that they *have*, and all that they *do*, may be one continual Sacrifice, and Service of Love unto God; to know how, and in what Manner, and to what Extent, and by what Means, they may and ought to 'be perfect, even as their 'Father which is in Heaven is perfect.'

Now who can help looking with *Love, Pity, and Compassion*, upon these poor Souls, longing for that, which has been so long *lost*; asking after that, which scarce anyone will tell them anything of, and wanting to enter upon Paths, where there are few or no Footsteps to be seen, nor any Travellers in Motion!

Now had these awakened Souls lived in the First Ages of the Church, nay, I may say in almost any till these very last Ages of it, their Zeal had not been in vain; they could have been at no Loss to know *how* they were to proceed in their heavenly Purpose; because they could have always been immediately directed to some *living Examples* of the perfect Spirit of the Gospel, who were publicly known and acknowledged by all to be such, and who had the same *undisputed Right* to point out every Degree of Christian Perfection, as *John the Baptist* had to preach up *Mortification and Self-denial*. Every Age, and every Sex, consecrated *Virgins, holy Widows, Converts, and Penitents*, Priests and People of *all Conditions*, had their open, known and public Standards to resort to, where everyone was sure to be guided and directed, assisted and encouraged to live up to that Height of Holiness and Perfection, which was proper to their State and Condition.

But now how does the Doctor deal with this Sort of People? What *Love, Instruction, Assistance, and Encouragement*, does he reach out to them? Why, truly, he considers them as a deluded, *weak, or hypocritical, or half-thinking* People, that disturb the Christian Church with their Projects about Perfection, who are to be set right by returning to the Instruction of *common Sense*. He ridicules and exposes every Step they must take in their intended Progress, by adding Absurdities of his own Invention to it. There is nothing for such People throughout his whole Discourse, but Reproaches, Ridicule, and Discouragement.

Are they desirous of all that *Self-denial*, all that *Mortification* of bodily Appetites and sensual Passions, as may *best fit* them to be Temples of the Holy Spirit, he ridicules them as holding the Sinfulness of *smelling a Rose*?*

Do they begin to discover the *deep Corruption* of their Nature, the *Superficialness* and *Weakness* of their Virtues, and to fear they have as yet scarce *come up* to the Righteousness of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*? He tells them, 'The great Enemy of Souls adapts his Temptations to all Sorts of Tempers and Dispositions.—Those who are disposed to be good and virtuous, if he cannot prevail with them to be vicious, commonly so-called, he labours to make them over-virtuous, that is vicious, though not commonly so-called; and so involves them in Dangers and Mischiefs.*

Are they such as are only desirous of reforming their *own Lives*, by bringing all their Actions to the Standard of the Gospel, and wholly intent upon their own Advancement in merely *practical Piety*?

To these he shows, that they are in the *very Paths* that lead, and always did lead, to *Fanatic Madness*. Thus, says he, 'To what a Height of *Fanatic Madness* in *Doctrine*, as well as Practice are some advanced, who set out at first with an Appearance of more than ordinary Sanctity in *Practice only*? And again, 'I do say, that in all Ages Enthusiasts have been *Righteous over-much*; they began with the last mentioned, and ended with the other. And is it not so now?†

Further, Are there others, who begin to feel the *Mystery* of their Redemption discovered in their own Souls, so that they hunger and thirst after the Manifestation of the Divine Life in them, desiring that Christ may be wholly *formed* and *revealed* in them, that they may *put on* Christ, *be* in him *new Creatures*, led by his Spirit, *growing* in him as Branches in the Vine, hearing the Word of God *written* and *spoken* in their Hearts, in his Light *seeing Light*, and tasting in the inward Man the Powers of the World to come.

For such as these, the Doctor has this Instruction: 'That there is,' says he, 'such a Thing as the Operation and Influence of the Holy Spirit upon our Souls, though we cannot distinguish it from the Operations of our own Minds, is not only granted, but insisted upon, by all sincere and sober Christians. But what *Reason*, what *Scripture*, is there for this inward *Seeing, Hearing, Feeling*?‡

According therefore to the Doctor's Divinity, both Reason and Scripture *require*, that the true Christian be *inwardly blind*, *inwardly deaf*, and void of all inward *Feeling*. For if neither Scripture nor Reason will allow of any *inward Senses*, then they must both of them require an *inward Insensibility*. But Scripture, from *Genesis* to the *Revelation*, is full of Proof of these

inward Senses. I shall not now produce them. I shall here only observe, that *Hardness of Heart* is a common and well-known Phrase of Scripture, and everywhere signifies some Degree of *Blindness, Deafness, and Loss of Feeling*.* I suppose it will not be said, that it signifies Blindness, or Loss of *outward Eyes and Ears, or Feeling*: Neither does it signify a Want of *human Reason, or natural Sagacity*; for *learned, polite, and ingenious Men* are full as subject as others are, to this *Hardness of Heart*. Therefore the Scripture is as *open, as plain and express*, in declaring for *inward Senses*, as it is in declaring against such a Thing as *Hardness of Heart*.

Hardness of Heart is *that* to the *inward Senses* which a *deep*, or, as we call it, a *dead Sleep*, is to the *outward*. It keeps our inward Eyes and Ears closed and stopped, just as Sleep does our outward Eyes, and Ears, and Feeling. A *broken and a contrite Heart* unlocks all our inward Senses, and makes us see, and hear, and feel the Things, which could no more be seen, heard, or felt before, than a Man in a deep Sleep can hear, and see, and feel the Things that are said and done about him.

Water violently frozen into a *Rock of Ice*, is very different from the *same Water* melted, rarified, warmed, and moving under the Influences of the *Sun* and the *Air*. Now if this *Water* was a *sensible Being*, we might well suppose, that when it was a *soft, yielding, transparent, flowing Substance*, full of *Light and Air*, that it had *certain Senses* in that State; which Senses were *lost, and locked up*, as soon as it became a hard, rough, thick, dark, immovable *Rock of Ice*, made so by *Coldness*, or for the Want of the Motion of *Light and Air* in it. And that the *Ice* must of all Necessity be *first melted*, before *these Senses* could be found again.

Now this Difference between *Water flowing* full of *Light and Air*, and the *same Water* frozen into a dark hard *Rock of Ice*, is but a small Resemblance of the Difference between a *hardened Heart*, and the *same Heart* become *broken*. And a *Lump of Ice* would be as well qualified to deny that *sweet Sensibility* of *Water* flowing full of *Light and Air*, as the natural Man is to dispute those *Senses*, which arise in the Heart, that is broken and penetrated by the *Light, and Spirit of God* in it.

But no more of this at present. I now return to the Doctor. His further Instruction to this Sort of People stands thus: They are told by him, that their high Notions of Spiritual Improvements have this Effect: On the one Hand, they lead to *Presumption*; on the other, to *Desperation*. 'He has been told,' he says, 'that some have been actually thrown into Despair. They have been made stark mad, and received into Bedlam, as such.'

* Matt.

And then he cries out, 'Was the Religion of Jesus Christ intended 'to make People mad? Is this for the Honour of Christianity?''* I shall not here question the Doctor's Information. I shall only observe, that when our Saviour was upon Earth, there were Two Sorts of *mad* People about him. The *one Sort* ran about in Disorder, tore their Clothes, and cut their own Flesh; the *other Sort* raved in Malice, threw Dust into the Air, stopped their Ears, and cried out, *Crucify him, crucify him.*

Now it may be asked, which of these Two Sorts of People were in the most *disordered* and *distempered* State? Whose *Madness* was the most *shocking*, that of the *Lunatics*, or that of the *High Priests, Scribes, and Pharisees*? Those who only mangled their own Bodies, or those that *thirsted* after the Blood of Christ, and would have no Rest, till they saw his Body nailed to the Cross? To me the *Lunatics* seem to be in a *less Degree* of Disorder; and the Reason is this; because I see that our Saviour could heal them, but not the Priests, Scribes, and Pharisees.

Now is it reasonable, on the account of the *Madness* of these Priests, Scribes, and Doctors of the Law, to say, 'Is this for the 'Honour of the Jewish Law? Was the Law and the Prophets 'intended to make People mad?' Now if the Doctor knows how to excuse the *Law* and the *Prophets*, though these great Students of them were in such a desperate State of *Frenzy* and *Madness*, then Christianity may be blameless; though here and there a Christian may be fit for *Bedlam.*

Again, there are others, who desire to bring the whole Form of their Lives under Rules of Religion, to let the Spirit of the Gospel give Laws to the most ordinary, indifferent, innocent and lawful Things and Enjoyments, so that as the Apostle speaks, 'whether they eat or drink, or whatever they do, they may do all 'to the Glory of God.'

These People are told by the Doctor, That 'wholly abstaining 'from Things indifferent and innocent in themselves, as forbidden 'and unlawful, is a signal Instance of being Righteous over-much; 'and so, on the other hand, is making Things indifferent to be 'necessary, and Matters of Duty.'†

What is here said has some Truth in it, and might be useful in its proper Place, and under right Limitations. But as it here stands in the Discourse, it is a grievous *Snare* and *Deceit* to the Reader. For it is to signify to him, that *wholly abstaining from* Things in themselves *indifferent* and *innocent* cannot be made a *Matter* of true religious Advancement; but is a blamable

Instance of a Piety in Excess. If the Doctor had meant only to teach, that we should not wholly abstain from Things indifferent and innocent, as if they were *in themselves unlawful*, he should have told his Readers that he meant no more; he should have told them, that such Things might be abstained from *justly*, and *piously* upon a better Principle, and so become very *expedient* and *edifying*; and that he did not condemn the abstaining wholly from such Things, when it was done upon a *Motive* of Piety, for the *better* fulfilling any Duty; but *only* when it was done from a superstitious Notion, of the Things being in *themselves sinful*.

Had he done this, he had prevented the *Snare* and *Deceit* that is now in his Assertion; but then he would, at the same time, have made it useless and insignificant to the Design of his Discourse, and would have left a Door open for such Advances of Piety as he is here opposing.

It might easily be shown, if this was the Place for it, that no one can *truly* fulfil, or live up to the Two First and greatest of all Laws, that of loving God with all our Heart, all our Strength, and all our Mind; and that of loving our Neighbour as ourselves; unless he be willing and glad, in many Instances, *wholly to abstain* from Things in themselves indifferent and innocent; and also to make Things that in themselves are indifferent, to be Matters of Duty.

St. *Paul's* Doctrine is this: 'All Things are lawful for me, but 'all Things are not expedient.' This sets the Matter right on both Sides. It leaves Things in their own State of Indifference and Lawfulness, and yet carries us to a higher Rule of acting. It directs us wholly to abstain from some Things innocent in themselves, and to do some Things to which the Law calls us not, because they are *expedient*; because by so doing, we show a higher Love of God, and a greater Desire of doing everything to his Honour and Glory; because we thereby attain a greater Purity and Perfection of Heart, a greater Conquest over all our inward and outward Enemies, and in a greater Degree help forward the Edification of our Neighbour.

Let us look at St. *Paul's* Doctrine and Example in the Two following remarkable Instances. *First*, where he declares it to be *lawful* for those that preach the Gospel to live by the Gospel, and yet makes it Matter of the greatest *Comfort* and *Joy* to himself, that he had wholly abstained from this *lawful* Thing. And declares, it were better for him to die, than that *this Rejoicing* should be taken from him. He appeals to his daily and nightly labouring with his own Hands, that so he might preach the Gospel freely, and not be chargeable to those that heard him. And this he said he did, not for want of Authority to do

otherwise, but that he might make himself an Ensample unto them to follow him.

What fine and awakening Instructions are here given to us of the *Clergy*, in a practical Matter of the greatest Moment! How ought everyone to be frightened at the *Thought* of desiring or seeking a *Second Living*, or of rejoicing at *great Pay* where there is but *little Duty*, when the Apostle's Rejoicing consisted in this, that he had passed through all the Fatigues and Perils of preaching the Gospel without any Pay at all! How *cautious*, nay, how *fearful* ought we to be, of going so far as the *secular* Laws permit us, when the Apostle thought it more desirable to lose his Life, than to go so far as the very Laws of the Gospel would have suffered him!

It is lawful to receive *more* for doing the Work of the Ministry in any *Parish*, and to spend more upon ourselves than our bare Subsistence requires.—It is *looked upon* as *lawful* to get several *Preferments*, and to make a Gain of the Gospel, by hiring others to do Duty for us at a lower Rate.—It is *looked upon* as *lawful* to quit a *Cure* of Souls of a small Income, for *no other* Reason but because we can get another of a greater.—It is looked upon as lawful for a Clergyman to take the Revenue of the Church, which he serves, to his *own Use*, though he has more than a sufficient Competency of *his own*, and much more than the Apostle could get by his Labour.—It is looked upon as lawful for the Clergy to live in State and Equipage, to buy Purple and fine Linen, out of the Revenues of the Church.—It is looked upon as lawful for Clergymen to enrich their Families, and bring up their Children in the fashionable Vanities, and corrupting Methods of a worldly and expensive Life, by Money got by preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

But now *supposing* all this to be *lawful*, what *Comfort* and *Joy* might we treasure up for ourselves, what *Glory* and *Honour* might we bring to Religion, what *Force* and *Power* might we give to the Gospel, what *Benefit* and *Edification* should we do to our Neighbour, if we *wholly abstained* from all these Things, not by working Day and Night with our own Hands, as the great Apostle did, but by limiting our Wants and Desires according to the plain Demands of Nature, and a religious Self-Denial?

The other Instance of the Apostle's, I appeal to, is that, where he says, it is good neither to eat 'flesh, nor to drink wine, nor 'anything whereby thy Brother stumbleth and is offended.* And again, 'If meat make my Brother to offend, I will eat no 'flesh while the world standeth, that I may not offend my

* Rom. xiv. 23.

‘Brother.’* Hence it appears, that to abstain from Things indifferent, as if they were in themselves sinful, is wrong; but *wholly to abstain* from them upon other Motives, may be the *highest Piety*, and oftentimes Matter of necessary Duty and Edification. But since the Doctor has not looked at this Matter in this twofold View, in which it can only be justly apprehended, he can’t well be excused from that *Half-Thinking*, which he so much reproaches in others.

But I must further observe, that there is yet more of *Snare* and *Deception*, in what the Doctor has here said of this Matter. For the Reader may thereby be easily brought into a Belief, that Things in themselves indifferent and innocent, &c., are not the *proper Subjects* of Religion, or *Means* of advancing in Piety, and that he need not bring himself under *any Laws* of Religion concerning such Things. Whereas nothing can be more contrary to Truth, or more hurtful to his Piety, than such a Belief.

Eating, Drinking, Sleeping, Dressing, Resting, Labour, Conversation, Trade, Diversion, and Money, are in themselves indifferent, innocent, and useful. But it is in the religious, or irreligious Use of these Things, that some People *live* up to the Spirit of the Gospel, and others *wholly die* to it. And it is from *strict Laws* of Religion made concerning these *indifferent* and *innocent* Things, that the spiritual Life of everyone is to be built up.

And it is for want of religious Laws in the Use of innocent and lawful Things that the Spirit of the Gospel cannot get Possession of our Hearts. For our Souls may receive an infinite Hurt, and be rendered incapable of all true Virtue, merely by the Use of innocent and lawful Things.

What is more innocent than *Rest* and *Retirement*? And yet what more dangerous than Sloth and Idleness? How lawful and praiseworthy is the Care of a Family? And yet how certainly are many People rendered incapable of all Virtue, and dead to all the Calls of God, by a worldly solicitous Temper? How lawful and beneficial is it to us, to eat and drink in such Quantity and Quality, as may render the Body healthful, subservient and useful to the Soul? And yet, what Danger is there in eating and drinking, if we are not under *this strict Law* of Religion, to seek *only* Health, and not the Pleasure of various Tastes in our Food. What *Sensuality* of Discourse shall we not *every Day* fall into, unless it be a fixed Law to us, to speak of no other Joy in our Food, but that which is expressed by our *Grace* before and after our Meals.

* 1 Cor. viii. 13.

14 *An Earnest and Serious*

How indifferent a Thing, and innocent in itself, is *Dress*. And yet what more hurtful and abounding with Sin? It reaches and infects the Heart and Soul, both of the Wearer and Beholder. Its Evils are innumerable. It has destroyed, and does destroy, like a Pestilence.

If the lustful Eye is in the Scripture deemed to be an Adultery, we may see plainly the Reason why the Apostle requires Women to be *covered*, not to beautify their outward Person with costly Ornaments of Dress, or curled Hair, but to be adorned with *Shamefacedness* and *Modesty*. For it is only saying, in other Words, that it becomes not the Piety of Christian Women, to carry and hold out *Snares* and *Temptations* to the unwary Eye, that can so easily be betrayed into so great a Sin.

Now how can all these Evils, which arise from the Use of these Things indifferent and lawful in themselves, be avoided, but by making every Thing in our *common* and *ordinary* Life to be Matter of Conscience; which is, to have its *Rule*, and *Measure*, and *End*, from the Spirit of Religion. And indeed what other End or Intent is there in Religion, but to govern every Motion and Desire of our Hearts, to make all the Actions of our *common Life* pure and holy, by being done in strict Conformity to the Will of God, and under the Light and Guidance of his Holy Spirit? So that every outward *Form* of our Lives, and the *whole Manner* of our living in the World, whether in *Estates*, *Titles*, *Shops*, or *Farms*, whether in *Eating*, *Drinking*, *Dressing*, &c., may make it known to all the World, that we do everything in the *Name* of Jesus Christ, suitably to that high Vocation wherewith we are called.

The Apostle directs *Servants* to this Degree of Piety; that is, 'to be obedient to their masters, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ. Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With goodwill doing service, as unto the Lord, and not to men.*' Surely, if poor Slaves, by reason of their Christian Profession, are not to comply with their Business, as *Men-pleasers*, if they are to look wholly unto God in *all their Actions*, and serve in *Singleness of Heart*, as unto the Lord, surely all Christians of other *Employments* and *Conditions*, must be as much obliged to go through their Business with the *same Singleness* of Heart, not as pleasing the Vanity of their own Minds, not as gratifying their own selfish, worldly Passions, but as the Servants of God, that are to live *wholly* unto him in *everything* that they do. It

* Eph. vi. 5; Col. iii. 22.

is therefore absolutely certain, that no Christian is to enter *any further* into Business, nor seek any worldly Profit, nor do anything in any other *Measure*, nor for any *other End*, than such as he can in *Singleness* of Heart do unto God, as a reasonable Service.

No Folly of Life whatever can be rightly removed, but by being thus *wholly* cut up by the Roots, by making *everything* subject to the Spirit of Religion. That which is to direct our *Prayers*, and govern us at *Church*, must, with the *same Strictness*, direct our *Conversation*, and govern our Dealings in common Life. We must *Dress* with the same Spirit that we give *Alms*, or go to *Prayers*; that is, we must no more Dress to be *seen* and *admired* by others, than we must give *Alms*, or make *Prayers* for the same Reasons. And when Religion has its Seat in our Hearts, and is the Work of God's Spirit in us, this acting according to its Direction in *all Things*, will be so far from seeming to be a hard Lesson, that it would be a Pain to act otherwise. It is no Hardship to a *Miser*, to do *every* thing suitable to the greedy Desires of his Heart. The ambitious Man is not troubled with acting always agreeably to his Ambition. If these Persons are in Trouble or Distress, or under any Dejection, you can *only* comfort the one with Honour and Power, and the other with filthy Lucre and Gain.

Yet the Doctor complains of the *Treatise upon Christian Perfection*, because Christians in *Sickness*, *Distress*, and *Dejection* of Spirit, are there *solely* directed to seek for Comfort and Refreshment in God *alone*. Our Blessed Lord is very short, and yet very full, upon this Article; he only says, 'Be of good Comfort, I have overcome the World.' And the Doctor might as well be angry at the *Gospel* for having made no mention of *worldly Amusements* proper for *sick* and *distressed* Christians, as at the *Treatise of Christian Perfection*, for not having done the same.

If I should see a *sick* Man smelling a *Rose*, eating an *agreeable Fruit*, or *diverting* himself with a *Child*, I should not call him from such sinful Indulgences. But if he wanted Comfort in his State, I would no more direct him to *anything*, but the great and solid Comforts, that are to be found in the Love and Goodness of God, than I would direct him to *another* Saviour than Jesus Christ.

For to tell Christians, that in *some kinds* of Trouble, they might justly seek for Relief, by reading a *Play*, or wanton *Bucolic*, instead of the *Gospel*, would be the same Absurdity, as to have told People in our Saviour's Time, that, in *some Sorts* of Distress, they might justly have Recourse to *Simon Magus*, instead of Jesus Christ.

But now to look back a little. I have considered the Bulk of those Christians that are the most likely to be the Doctor's Readers, under Two Characters. The one, as living some Way or other in a partial, false, superficial, or half State of Piety ; the other as an awakened People, called by the Spirit of God to come out of the common Corruptions of the Times. I have shown, that the Doctor's Discourse (where it is not disliked) must do great Hurt, and have dreadful Effects upon those Two Sorts of People ; the one Sort it seals up in a false Security, sleeping in the Chambers of Death, without any Oil in their Vessels ; the other it frightens, and discourages from their pious Intentions of trimming their Lamps with all Diligence, and living upon the *Watch* for the midnight Call of the Bridegroom's Voice.

That I may therefore do all the Good that I can to both these Sorts of People, that I may awaken the one from their false Security in their half Form of Godliness, and assist and encourage the other to proceed wth all Earnestness, after every Degree of Christian Holiness ; I shall, before I proceed any further, lay down a short, but plain Account of the *whole Nature and Ground* of the Christian Religion, that everyone may clearly see, why we want the Christian Religion to save us : What it is to do for us ; and how it is done. By this Means everyone will best judge of the Importance of this Enquiry, and how he ought to be affected with what is said on either Side of the Matter.

(1.) Man was created a living, real, perfect Image of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This I have largely explained, and proved elsewhere.*

(2.) This whole visible World, as far as the Stars and Elements, or any corporeal Being reaches, stands in the *Place*, or takes up that *Extent* of Space, where *Lucifer* and his Angels, before their Fall, had their glorious Kingdom. So far as this visible Frame of Nature extends itself, so far was the Extent of their Kingdom.

(3.) That the *Place* or *Extent* of this World, was the Place or Extent of their Kingdom, is plain, from the Two following Reasons : *First*, Because the Place of this World is *now* their Habitation. For we must by no Means suppose, that God brought them from some other Region into this World only to tempt Man, and make his Life dangerous ; but they are here *now*, because they were created to dwell *here*. For fallen Angels

* *Grounds and Reasons of Christian Regeneration, &c.*

cannot *possibly* leave the *Place* of their Sin and Fall, they must live in the *Defilements* and *Disorders* of their spoiled Kingdom; and in that *Place* they must find their Hell and Torment, where they extinguished their Light and Joy. *Secondly*, Because the whole Extent of this World, everything in it, *Sun, Moon, Stars, Fire, Air, Water, and Earth, Stones, Minerals*, must all be *dissolved*, and pass through a *purifying Fire*. Therefore all these Things are polluted, and have in them some Grossness and Disorder from the Fall of the Angels. Therefore we may see *where* they have lived, and *how far* the *Place* of their Kingdom extended, by the Extent of those Things that are to be *dissolved* and *purified*.

(4.) When the Angels had, by their Rebellion against God, lost the Divine Life *within* themselves, and brought their *whole outward* Kingdom into Darkness, Grossness, Wrath, and Disorder, so that, as *Moses* speaketh, 'Darkness was upon the Face of the Deep,' that is, the whole Deep, or Extent of the *Place* of this World; then, at the *Fall* of the Angels, and in the *Place* where they were fallen, and out of the *Materials* of their ruined angelical Kingdom, did God begin the *Creation* of this present, material, temporary, visible World.

(5.) 'In the beginning,' saith *Moses*, 'God created the Heaven and the Earth'; here, at this *Instant*, ended the Devil's Power over the *Place* or Kingdom in which he was created: As soon as the whole of his outward, disordered Kingdom was thus *divided* into a *created Heaven and Earth*, all was taken out of his Hands, he was *shut out* of everything, and he and all his Hosts became only *poor Prisoners* in their lost Kingdom, that could only *wander* about in Chains of Darkness, looking with impotent Rage and Anger at the *created Heaven and Earth*, which was sprung up in their own *Place* of Habitation, and which they could not *rule* over, because their Nature had *no Communion* with this new created Heaven and Earth.

(6.) Thus was this *outward Kingdom*, of the whole Extent of this World, taken out of the Hands of *Lucifer* and his Angels; all its *Wrath, Darkness, Grossness, Disharmony, Fire, and Disorder*, was, by the *Six Days' Creation*, changed into a *temporary State*, restored to a certain, but low Resemblance of its first State, and put into that Form and Order of Sun, Stars, Fire, Air, Light, Water, and Earth, in which we now see it.

(7.) Into this World, thus created out of the *Ruins* of the Kingdom of the fallen Angels, and made *paradisical*, by the Goodness of God, was Man introduced on the *Sixth Day* of the Creation, to take his *Place*, as *Lord and Prince* of it, to have Power over all outward Things, to discover and manifest the

Wonders of this new created World, and to bring forth such an *holy Offspring*, as might fill up the Places of the fallen Angels. And when that was done, and certain Periods of Time had produced these great Effects, then this *whole Frame* of Things was, by the last *purifying Fire*, to have been raised from its *paradisaical State*, into which it was put at the Creation, into that *first heavenly Brightness*, and high Degree of Glory, in which it stood before the Fall of *Lucifer*.

(8.) But the first Man, thus created to be a *Prince and Father*, of a new angelical Kingdom, stood not out his Trial for this glorious State.

(9.) He came into this World in that *same glorious Body*, in which, after the Resurrection, he shall *be like the Angels in Heaven*. For no other Body, but that which was at *first* created, and *died* in *Adam's Sin*, shall rise in Jesus Christ. He only saves and restores that which was lost. The Resurrection will only take away what *Sin*, and *Death*, and *Earth*, had added to the *first created Body*.

(10.) In this Body, which shall rise Triumphant over Death and Hell, did the first created Man stand in this World, *incapable* of receiving any Hurt, or *knowing* Evil from outward Nature. The *Holy Ghost* was the *Breath* of his Life, and the *Son of God* was the *Light*, that illuminated all both within and without him.

(11.) Had he *fixed* his Will to be *absolutely* and *eternally* what he was, had he desired only to eat of the Tree of Life, to live by the Word of God, he had been established, and confirmed to be an eternal Angel, or Divine Man.

(12.) But his Imagination wandered after the Secrets of this outward World, after the Fruit and Knowledge of such Good and Evil, as wrought an entire Change in his Nature. For *everything* must have the Nature of that which it chooses for its *Food*.

His own *strong Will* (a Spark of the Divine Omnipotence) was to be his *Maker*; for he could not be an Angel of Light with less Freedom. What he desired, that he had: as his Imagination worked, so he became to be. He turned from the Tree and Light of Life, and took in the Fruit and Darkness of the *earthly Nature*. And so he fell from his *Height* of Glory as deep into an *earthly Life*, and the Miseries of the Earth, as the Devil fell into a *hellish Life*, and the Miseries of Hell.

(13.) Imagine a most precious *Pearl*, infinitely more bright, infinitely more transparent, infinitely more illuminated, than any that mortal Eyes ever saw. Imagine this Pearl to be in a Moment penetrated, thickened, darkened, deformed in every Part, and through every Pore, with something as hard as *Iron*,

as heavy as *Lead*, as rough as *Earth*, as dark as *Soot*, and then you have but a *Shadow* of that which happened only to the *Body of Adam*, when, by desiring and eating the earthly Fruit, he drew in the earthly Nature of this World into his pearly, paradisaical Body. And here, by-the-by, we may see as in a Glass, what it is that earthly Desires *now do* to every Son of *Adam*; they do *all that* which they did to the first Man, they carry on, keep up, and continue, that *same Death* in us, which he died in Paradise.

(14.) Here it was that his eternal Soul, the *immortal Fire* of Life in him, being swallowed up, and smothered by an *earthly dark Body*, lost the *Light* of the Son of God, and the *Breath* of the Holy Spirit. And this was the *great and immediate Death* that he died in Paradise, before he became the Father of Mankind, a Death much more grievous than that which is to bring us all to our Graves. It was a Death that extinguished all that was Divine and Holy in the Human Nature, just as the Sin of Angels had turned them into Devils. Now in looking at *this Death*, or the Extinction of this *first Divine Life*, we have the clearest, fullest View, of what we are to understand by our *Regeneration* by the *Second Adam*. For what can it possibly be, but the Restoration of that *same Divine Life* which was lost in *Adam the First*, and to which he *absolutely* died in Paradise? Must not that which is re-generated in the Human Nature, be *something* that has been generated in it *before*? If we want to be redeemed, or regenerated *only*, because *Adam died* in Paradise, and lost the *First Birth* of Human Nature, must not Regeneration be *only and solely* the bringing forth again that *First Birth* in the Human Nature? Or will anyone say, that Christ is not in as high a Degree the *Restorer* of our First Birth, as *Adam* was the *Destroyer* of it? Now, though this great Truth, seated in the very Heart of the Christian Religion, speaks at once the *whole Nature* of Regeneration, and leaves no room to mistake about it; yet many learned Men, either not *seeing*, or not *loving*, or being afraid to *own* it, have been forced, not only to mistake, but wholly to sink the most solid, substantial, edifying, and glorious Article of the Christian Faith; and, instead of telling us the *Height* and *Depth* of the Benefit and Blessing of having the *Nature* and *Life* of Christ derived into, or regenerated in us, they can only teach us, what *Kind of Word* Regeneration is—that it is a *Figurative Expression*—and that our Saviour may be justified for having made use of it. What learned Pains do some People take to root up the Belief of our having a *Life* and *Birth* from Jesus Christ, in the *same Truth and Reality*, that we had lost a *Life* and

Birth in Adam? They run from *Book to Book*, from *Language to Language*, they call upon every *Disputant*, consult all *Critics*, search all *Lexicons*, to show us, that according to Scripture, and Antiquity, and the Rules of true Criticism, Regeneration need *signify* no more, than what is meant by the *federal Rite of Baptism*. Nay, what is still worse, they appeal to the *poor Notions* of the blind, infatuated *Jews*; they produce the *Opinions* which they had of a Regeneration talked of, and a Baptism used amongst them, when they rejected and crucified our Saviour, to teach us, *what* we are to understand by our *Divine Birth* in Christ Jesus. But if this be the Use of Learning amongst ourselves, we need not look at *Rome* or *Geneva*, or the ancient Rabbis of the *Jewish Sanhedrim*, to see what miserable Work Learning can make with the Holy Scriptures. For it must be said, that the true Messiah is not *rightly owned*, the Christian Religion is not *truly known*, nor its Benefits *rightly sought*, till the Soul is all Love, and Faith, and Hunger, and Thirst, after this new *Life, Birth, and real Formation* of Jesus Christ in it, till without Fear of *Enthusiasm* it seeks and expects all its Redemption from it. But to return.

(15.) Man, thus dead to the Divine Life, thus destitute of the *Son*, and *Holy Spirit* of God, thus fallen into an *earthly Nature*, under the Dominion of an earthly World, which would afford him for a while a miserable Life, and then leave him to a more miserable Death, thus fallen, he could do no more to replace himself in Paradise, or to regain his first Nature, than the Devil could do, to restore to himself his lost Glory.

(16.) But in this State the *infinite Mercy* of God met him. That Love which at the *first breathed*, or *spoke* out of the Mouth of God, a living, holy and Divine Soul and Spirit into him, now again *breathed*, or *inspoke* a Spark, or Seed, or Ray of Divine Light into him, in the Declaration of a *Serpent-Treader*; which Seed or Spark of Life should in Time do *all that*, which *Adam* should have done; that is, should raise up and bring forth a *Generation* of Men, that should become *Sons of God*, and take Possession of that Kingdom from which the Angels had fallen.

(17.) Here now began the merciful Mystery of Man's Redemption; for this *Seed* of a Divine Life, or *inspoken Word* of Grace, or *Treader* of the Serpent, was the Holy Jesus, the *Second Adam*, who from that Time, stood in the Place of the First Man, and became the Father and Regenerator of *Adam* himself, and all his Posterity. And from that Time it may be said in a certain and true Sense, that the *Incarnation* of the Son of God began; because he was from *that Time* entered again into the human Nature, as a *Seed*, or *Beginning* of its Salvation,

hidden under the *Veil* of the Law, and not made manifest, till he was born in the Holy, and highly Blessed Virgin *Mary*. And in this Sense it is, that our Blessed Lord said of himself, that *he was the Light of the World*, as *Adam* might have said of himself, that he was the Sin and Death of the World; because, as Sin and Death came *wholly* from him upon *all Men*, so the Light of Life came as wholly and universally from Jesus Christ. And in this Sense also St. *John* says of him, 'that he was the true Light 'which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World.' Because every Man, wherever born, has from him this Light of Life, this inward Saviour, or Seed of his Salvation, in the Birth of his own Life, which is to overcome the Darkness, resist the Evil, and bruise the Serpent that is in his fallen Nature. This Beginning of the Divine Birth in our Souls, if it is not stifled and suppressed by us, but inwardly revered, and attended to, as the Voice and Call of God *within* us, is our certain Guide and Leader to Christ, born in the Fulness of Time, and sacrificed for us upon the Cross.

(18.) What we want from Jesus Christ, as our Redeemer, is manifest by that which he offers and gives to us, namely, a Birth from *Himself*, a Birth from the *Holy Spirit*, a Redemption from the *Hell* that is in our Souls, and from the *Death* and *Corruption* that is in our Bodies.

(19.) We were no more created to be in the Sorrows, Burdens, and Anguish, of an *earthly Life*, than the Angels were created to be in the *Wrath* and *Darkness* of Hell. It is as contrary to the *Will* and *Goodness* of God towards us, that we are *out* of Paradise, as it is contrary to the Designs and Goodness of God towards the Angels, that some of them are *out* of Heaven, Prisoners of Darkness.

The Grossness, Impurity, Sickness, Pain and Corruption of our Bodies, is brought upon us by ourselves in the same Manner as the dark, hideous serpentine Forms of the Devils are brought upon them. How absurd, and even blasphemous, would it be, to say with the Scripture and the Church, that we are by *Nature Children of Wrath, and born in Sin*, if we had that Nature which God at first gave us? What a Reproach upon God to say, that this World is a *Valley of Misery*, a *Shadow of Death*, an Habitation of *Disorders, Snares, Evils, and Temptations*, if this was an *original* Creation, or that State of Things for which God created us? Is it not as consistent with the Goodness and Perfections of God, to speak of the *Misery* and *Disorder* that holy Angels find *above*, and of the Vanity, Emptiness and Sorrow of the *heavenly State*, as to speak of the Misery of *Men*, and the Sorrows of *this World*, if Men and the World were in *that Order*

in which God at first had placed them? If God could make any Place *poor*, and *vain*, and miserable, or create any Beings into a State of *Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*, he might do so in *all Places*, and to *all Beings*.

(20.) But by the Mercy of God in Christ Jesus, this Prison of an earthly Life is turned into a State of *Purification*, it is made a *Time and Place* of putting off our *filthy and defiled* Garments, and of *slaying and sacrificing* that corrupt old Man of Sin that is hid under them. And God suffers the *Sun* to shine upon us, and the *Elements* to afford us Nourishment, for *no other End*, but that we may all have *Time and Opportunity* to hear the *Call* of the Son of God, to embrace a second *Adam*, to be *born again* of him, to be renewed by the *Holy Spirit*, and be made capable of that Kingdom from which *Lucifer* and his Angels fell.

(21.) Look at our Saviour's Sermon on the *Mount*, and indeed at all his Instructions, and you will find them pointing at nothing else on *our Side*, but a *Denial* of ourselves, and a *Renunciation* of the World. And indeed how could it be otherwise? For if we are ourselves *something* which we were not created to be, and if this is our Misery, that we have raised and awakened a *Nature and Life* in us, which is not our *first*, that we had from God; must not the First Step towards our Salvation be, a denying and departing with *our whole Will and Inclination* from that which we have made ourselves to be, from that Life which we have awakened in us? If *Self* is our Misery and Captivity, must not our Deliverance require a total, continual Self-denial? If we want a Redeemer, *only* because we have *wandered* out of Paradise, and could not get *back* to it ourselves; if we are overcome by this World, *only* because the *Will and Desire* of our first Father *sought* after it, what Wonder is it that he who is to *replace* us in Paradise should call us to a *Renunciation* of the World? If this World has got its Dominion over us, *merely* because the *Will and Desire* of Man turned itself towards the Earth; how can its Dominion over us be *destroyed*, but by our *turning* our whole *Will and Desire* towards Heaven?

(22.) Vain Man, taken with the *Sound* of heavenly Things, and *Prospects* of future Glory, yet at the same Time a *fast Friend* to all the Interests and Passions of Flesh and Blood, would fain compound Matters between God and Mammon. He is very willing to acknowledge a *Saviour*, that died on the Cross to save him; he is ready to receive outward *Ordinances*, and *Forms* of Divine Worship, and to contend with Zeal for the Observance of them. He likes Heaven, and future Glory, on these Conditions. He is also ready to put on an *outward Morality* of Behaviour, to let Religion polish his Manners, that

he may have the Credit and Ornament of a *prudential Piety*, *well-ordered Passions*, and a *Decency* of outward Life; this gives no Hurt, or at least no *Death's-Blow* to the old Man. But to lay the Axe to the *whole Root* of our Disease, to cut all those *silken Cords* asunder, which tie us to the World, and the World to us, to deny every Temper and Passion that cannot be made Holy, Wise, and Heavenly; to die to every Gratification which keeps up, and strengthens the Folly, Vanity, Pride and Blindness of our *fallen Nature*; to leave no *little Morsels* of Sensuality, Avarice and Ambition, for the *old Man* to feed upon, however well *covered* under his Mantle; this, though it be the very Essence of Religion on *our Part*, is what he flies from with as much Aversion as from *Heresy* and *Schism*. Here he makes learned Appeals to *Reason* and *Common Sense* to judge betwixt him and the Gospel; which is just as wise, as to ask the learned *Greek*, and the worldly *Jew*, whether the *Cross* of Christ be not *Foolishness*, and a just Rock of Offence; or to appeal to *Flesh* and *Blood* about the narrow Way to that *Kingdom of Heaven*, into which itself cannot possibly have any Entrance.

(23.) To seek for anything in Religion, but a *new Nature* fitted for a new World, is knowing neither it, nor ourselves. *To be born* again, is to be fit for Paradise, in whatever Part of the Universe we live. *Not to be born again*, is continuing *where* the Sin and Death of *Adam* left us, whatever *Church*, or *Sect* of Religion we have Fellowship with. All *Ways* and *Opinions*, all *Forms* and *Modes* of Divine Worship, stand on the *Outside* of Religion. They may be, and certainly are, great and desirable *Helps* to the Kingdom of God, when we consider them only as the *Gate*, or *Guide* to that *inward Life*, which wants to be raised, and brought forth in us. But this is unquestionably true, that our *Salvation* consists *wholly* and *solely* in the *Birth* of the Son of God, and the *Renewal* of the Holy Ghost, in our Souls. When *this* begins, our *Salvation begins*; as this goes on, our *Salvation goes on*; when this is finished, our *Salvation is finished*. This alone *saves* the Soul; because this alone restores the First *Paradisaical*, Divine Nature, which is the true Image of God, and which alone can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

(24.) If we had only a *notional Knowledge* that our First Father had *sinned*, and knew no more of his *sinful Condition* than History tells us of it; if we had only certain *instituted Types* and *Figures* to keep up the Remembrance of it in our Minds, we should never be the worse for his Sins; we should have no Hurt by *owning* ourselves to be Children of a sinful Father, if his *Nature*, *Life* and *Spirit* was not propagated in us: So, if we have only a *notional Belief* that Jesus is become the

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Second Adam, to redeem or regenerate the fallen Nature; if we know this only in the *Notion* and *History* kept up in our Minds by *outward Figures* and *Ordinances*, though we contend ever so much for this Belief of a Saviour, and write *Volumes* in Defence of it; yet he is not *our Saviour*, till his *Nature, Life, and Spirit*, be born in us. If there be any Man in the World, in whom the *Nature of Adam* is not, he has *no Sin* from *Adam*. If there be any Man, in whom the *Life of Jesus* is not, he has *no Righteousness* from him. We must have *Life and Righteousness* in the same *Truth and Reality* in us from the *Second Adam*, as we have *Sin and Death* in us from the *First*.

(25.) The Whole of the Matter is this: This World is our *Curse and Separation* from God; by the *Mystery* of our *Redemption* it is turned into a short State of *Purification*, and can only be made so, by our going with our *whole Will and Desire* out of it, and away from it, as *Adam* by *his Will and Desire* sought after, and fell into it. The *Second Adam* must take us out, as the *First Adam* brought us into this World. Our *Bodies* are our *Burdens* which *Sin* has laid upon us: Our *stinging, wounding Passions* are the *Nails* which must fasten our *Hands and Feet* to the *Cross* on which we are to die, and commend our *Spirit* into the *Hands of God*, as our *Lord* did. But yet, all this *Turning* with our *whole Will, and Desire* towards God, and *Paradise*, all this *Bearing* our *Cross*, and passing through the *fiery Trials* of this *Life*, is still but *preparatory* to our *Salvation*, which wholly consists in the *Incarnation* of the *Son of God* in the *Soul, or Life of Man*. That must be *done, and born* in us, which was *done, and born* in the *Virgin Mary*. As our *Sin and Death* is, *Adam in us*, so our *Life and Salvation* is, *Christ in us*. This is it alone that *saves* us, that *delivers* us from the *Fall*, that *restores* all that was lost in *Adam*; by this alone what died in *Adam*, is brought to *Life* again in us; by this alone we can be taken out of an *earthly Life, Nature, and World*, and translated into a *heavenly Life, Nature, and World*.

(26.) *Christ*, by the overshadowing of the *Holy Spirit*, became in the *Body* of the *holy Virgin Mary*, of the same *Nature* with that *First Man*, which was created in *Paradise*, who, according to the *Purpose* of God, was to have been the *Father* of an *holy, paradisaical Race* of Men. Now the *First Purpose* of God must *stand*, and that which God designed must *come to pass*. But seeing the *First Adam* failed in this *Design* of God, and was not the *Generator* of such a *Race of Men*, therefore the *Wisdom* of God provided a *Second Adam*, who was born of the *Virgin Mary* in the *same Degree* of *Perfection*, in which the *first Man* was *created*. To this *holy, paradisaical, human Nature*, the *Son of*

God was *personally* united ; and thus Christ, the Second *Adam*, took the *Place* of the First, and stands as the Regenerator, Redeemer, Second Father of all the Sons of *Adam*. Now as we are *earthly, corrupt, and worldly* Men, by having the *Nature and Life* of the First *Adam* propagated in us, so we must become *holy, paradisaical, and heavenly* Men, by having the *Life and Nature* of the Second *Adam* derived into, or regenerated in us ; or, as the Scripture speaks, by being *born again* of him. Therefore if we are to have the *Nature* of Christ regenerated in us, as the *Life* of *Adam* is *born* in us ; if we are to be *like him* in Nature, as we are like to *Adam* in Nature ; if we are to be the heavenly Sons of the one, as we are the earthly Sons of the other, then there is an *absolute Necessity*, that *That* which was *done and born* in the *Virgin Mary*, be also by the *same Power* of the Holy Ghost *done and born* in us, by a *Seed* of Life derived into us from Christ our Regenerator. The *Mystery* of Christ's Birth must be the *Mystery* of *our Birth* ; we cannot be his Sons, but by having the *Birth of his Life* derived into us ; for the *new paradisaical* Man must be brought forth in the *same manner* in every individual Person ; *that* which brought forth this holy Birth in the *First Adam* at his Creation, and in the *Second Adam* in the *Virgin Mary*, *that alone* can bring it forth in any one of their Offspring. Jesus Christ therefore stands as our *Regenerator*, to help us by a *Second Birth* from him, to such an *holy, pure, and undefiled* Nature, as he himself received in the *Blessed Virgin*, and which we should have received in Paradise from our *First Father*.

From the Time of the Fall of *Adam*, the *incorruptible Seed* of Christ is in us all, in the whole human Nature ; he has Power, as the Son of God, to quicken and raise it up, till it comes to be that First holy Image of the Blessed Trinity. And when a Divine Faith arises in this *Seed of Life*, by which it lays hold on Christ as the Author, Preserver, and Finisher of its Life, as the Atonement, Saviour and Deliverer from the Death and Hell that surrounds it, then it grows up into a *new, inward* Man, of the same Nature with *that* which *appeared* in Paradise, and with *that* which was *born* in the *Virgin Mary*. Then the Birth of the Son of God, the Birth of the Spirit, and that *First holy Humanity* which *Adam* lost, are all restored to us, but in a *Mystery* in the inward Man *hid* in God, till the Resurrection shall separate everything that is *earthly, dark, and corruptible*, from it. Thus by Faith in Christ we *put on Christ*, he becomes *formed in us*, we eat *his Flesh*, and drink *his Blood*, and have *his Nature and Life in us* ; that is, we have a Flesh and Blood, a holy Humanity, derived into us from Christ, in the *same Reality*

as we have Flesh and Blood, a corrupt Humanity from *Adam*, our First Father. Thus we are real Members, living Branches, and new-born Children, of Christ, our Regenerator; he is our Father, and as such, as certainly brings us into the Kingdom of Heaven, Heirs of all his Glory, as *Adam* brought us into the Prison of this World, Heirs of all his Sin and Misery. This is the Whole of the Christian Redemption. Let us look where we will, and talk of what we will, there is no Possibility of Salvation for any one Son of *Adam*, but in this *Divine Birth*, nor can this Birth be had any other way. And to this great Truth all the Writings of the New Testament bear undeniable Witness. For the further and full View of this important Matter, I refer the Reader to another *little Book*,* which, if I could afford it, should be sent *gratis* into all Parts of the Kingdom. Look now at *yourselves*, at the *World*, at *Religion*, in this true Light, and surely you must enough see and feel the desirable Nature of every Virtue, and every Degree of it, which the Gospel sets before you. Surely you must awaken into a strong Abhorrence of everything, that the *Fall* has brought upon you, whether it be in your *Souls*, your *Bodies*, or the *State* of the World into which you are fallen. To renounce the poor Interests of a worldly Life, to be content with a *Pilgrim's Fare* in it, to live looking and longing after that which you have lost; to have no more of Covetousness, of Pride, of Vanity, and Ambition, than *John the Baptist* had; to live unto God in your *Shops*, your *Employments* and *Estates*, with such Thoughts and Desires of going to your heavenly Father, as the *lost Son* had when he saw his poor Condition, eating *Husks* among *Swine*, is only a Proof that you are, like him, *come to yourselves*, that you begin to see *what*, and *how*, and *where* you are. Surely you can need no Exhortations to hasten and run to your Redeemer, to ask and beseech him in Faith and Love to do everything in you and for you, that your darkened corrupted Heart, and polluted Body, stands in need of. He now stands as near you, as full of Love over you, as he did to *Lazarus* when he raised him from the Dead. He is no further from your Call, than he was from the Call of blind *Bartimæus*, whose Eyes he immediately opened. Surely it should now be more needless to exhort you to look earnestly and diligently after every Means of recovering your first glorious State, than to exhort the Blind to receive their Sight, the Sick to accept of Health, or the Captive to suffer his Chains to be taken off. For when you thus see your *Misery* and your *Redemption* in this strong Light, both of them so exceeding

* *Grounds and Reasons of Christian Regeneration, &c.*

great, you see *something* that must needs penetrate and awaken the inmost Depth of your Soul, that leaves you no room to *doubt* about the Nature of any Virtue, no Liberty to indulge *one vain* Passion, or to think it any Hardship that the Gospel calls you to be *perfect*. For in *this Light* every Virtue of the Gospel stands known and recommended to us, just as *Health, Purity* and *Sight*, stand recommended to a *sickly, noisome, blind Leper*, who was shut up in a *Place* that continually increased all his Evils. It strips us of nothing but the *Uncleanness* of Leprosies, the *Miseries* of Sores, Pains, and Blindness. It takes nothing from the World which is about us, but its *Poison* and *Power* of infecting us. So that to be called to the Height of all Virtue attainable in this Life, however excessive it may seem to the *Reasonings* of Flesh and Blood, is only being called *away* from every *Misery* and *Evil* that can be avoided by us. Jesus Christ is become our Regenerator, that we may again be made like unto God, have the *Purity* and *Perfection* of an angelic Nature, and be made capable of enjoying the infinite Riches and Treasures of the Divine Nature to all Eternity. No Virtue therefore has any *blamable Extreme* in it, till it *contradicts* this general End of Religion, till it *hinders* the Restoration of the Divine Image in us, or make us *less fit* to appear amongst the Inhabitants of Heaven. *Abstinence, Temperance, Mortification* of the Senses and Passions, can have *no Excess* till they hinder the *Purification* of the Soul, and make the Body less useful and subservient to it. *Charity* can have *no Excess* till it *contradicts* that Love which we are to have in Heaven, till it is *more* than that which would *lay down* its Life even for an *Enemy*, till it *exceeds* that which the first Christians practised, when they had *all things common* ; till it exceeds that of St. John, who requires him that has *Two Coats*, to give to him that has none, and he that has *Meat* to do likewise ; till it is loving our poor Brethren *more* than Christ has loved us ; till it goes *beyond* the Command of loving our Neighbour as we love ourselves ; till it forgets that our own Life is to be preserved.

See now how the Doctor instructs and enlightens his Readers on these Two great Articles, *Christian Temperance*, and *Charity*. To remove the Restraints of the First, he says, ' Our Blessed ' Saviour came eating and drinking, was present at Weddings, ' and other Entertainments ; nay, at one of them worked a ' Miracle to make Wine, when it is plain, there had been more ' drank than was absolutely necessary for the Support of Nature, ' and consequently something had been indulged to Pleasure ' and Cheerfulness.*

O Holy Jesus, that thy Divine Life should, by a Preacher of thy Gospel, be made a *Plea* for Liberties of Indulgence! The Doctor's Argument lies in this; that our Saviour worked a *Miracle to help them to more Wine*, when they had already *drank to the Indulgence of Pleasure and Cheerfulness*, therefore he could be *no Enemy* to such pleasant Indulgences; therefore it is *lawful* for us Christians to delight in them. Now if this Lawfulness is well proved, the Doctor may go on and prove these Indulgences to be *good and pious*; because what our Saviour worked a *Miracle to promote*, must needs be esteemed to be so. And so the adding another Bottle, when Friends are rejoicing, may be made to be a *Christian Duty*. But the Doctor should have remembered, that the *Wine* here spoken of, was not *common Wine*, and therefore has not the *least Relation* to our *common Drinking*—that it was not Wine from the *Juice* of the Grape—that it had nothing in it, but what came from a heavenly Hand—that it must have in it the *Purity and Virtue* of him that made it—that it had as good *Qualities* in it, and was fitted to have the *same Effects* upon *some* that drank it, as the *Clay*, which he moistened with *his Spittle*, had upon the Eyes of the *Blind*. He should have remembered, that it was *Water*, only *so altered*, and endued with *such Qualities*, as he pleased to *put into* it; and therefore we may be sure, it was Water as *highly blessed* for their Use, as they were *capable* of; we may be sure it was fitter to allay the Heat and Disorder of their Drinking, than if it had been *Water unaltered* by our Saviour. How suitable was this Miracle to a Feast! How worthy of so Divine a Person! To make them *cooler*, by giving them Water made fitter for that Purpose, and to raise their *Faith* by its miraculously seeming to be turned into the best of Wine. Well might it be said of this Miracle, that he thereby *manifested forth his Glory, and his Disciples believed on him*. But according to the Doctor's horrid Account of this Miracle, it must be said, that he thereby showed his Approbation of *continuing* such Pleasures of Drinking, and has left us a Proof, that we may do the same. But I must further vindicate the Life and Example of our Blessed Lord from the Indignity and Irreverence done to it by the Doctor. Our Blessed Lord came indeed, as he says of himself, *eating and drinking*. But how, or in what Manner, or in what Sense, did he say this of himself? Why, it was in Opposition to, and Distinction from, *John the Baptist*, who came eating only *one Sort* of Food. And it was to show the *Jews* their great Guilt in this respect, that *nothing* could do them any good. For the *Mortification* of the Baptist they condemned, as coming from the Devil; and the *Condescension* of the Holy

Jesus in coming to their Tables, they accused as *Gluttony* and *Wine-bibbing*. Now the Doctor is plainly doing what our Lord accused the *Jews* of; he with them condemns the *Mortification* of the Baptist, as coming from the Devil. But he differs from the *Jews* in this, that he does not condemn, but *approves* of our Lord, as a *Friend* to Feasts, and merry Meetings.

Our Saviour, suitable to his gracious Love, in coming into the World, sought the Conversation of Sinners and Publicans; because he came to *save that which was lost*, and because he knew that some amongst such Sinners were more movable, than the proud Sanctity of the learned Pharisees. But may we thence conclude, that the *Lives* of such Sinners were not blamable in his Sight? Is not this as well, as to imagine he *favoured* the Indulgences of Feasting and good Fellowship, because he was found there? The Holy Jesus conversed *more freely*, spoke of himself, and of the Kingdom of God, *more divinely* to a *wicked Woman of Samaria*, than he appears to have done to his Disciples. May we thence conclude, that he *approved* of a Woman of that Character, or that he thereby set his *Seal* to the Goodness and Lawfulness of her Way of living? Is not this as well, as to make his *Presence* at a Wedding, an *Approbation* of the Freedom and Indulgences of such Feasts?

O Holy Jesus, thou didst nothing of thyself, thou soughtest only the Glory of thy Father, from the Beginning to the End of thy Life; thou spentest whole Nights in Prayer in Mountains and Desert Places; thou hadst not where to lay thy Head; thy common poor Fare with thy Disciples was *barely Bread* and *dried Fish*; thy miraculous Power never helped thee to any Dainties of Refreshment, though ever so much fatigued, and fainted with Labour. But yet, because this Holy Jesus came into the World to save *all Sorts* of Sinners, and to show that every Kind and Degree of Sin could be taken away, and forgiven by him, therefore he came into *all Places*, and entered into *all Sorts* of Companies. He did not, as the Baptist, tie himself to *one Sort* of Food, but he came eating and drinking. But why did he so? It was, that he might reprove and convert Sinners at their own Tables. He came, not to indulge himself, or to find such Gratifications as the Baptist abstained from, but to *work Miracles*, to awaken and astonish Sinners in the *Midst* of their Indulgences.

It is said, that wherever the *King* is, there is the *Court*. But with much more Reason may it be said, that wherever our Saviour came, *there* was the *Temple*, or the *Church*. He came to *Feasts* and *Entertainments* with the same Spirit, for the same End and in the same Divine Power, as he went to raise a *dead*

Corpse; namely, to show forth the Glory of God. Wherever he came, it was in the *Spirit* and *Power* of the Redeemer of Mankind; everything he did, was only to destroy the Works of the Devil, to deliver Men from his Power, raise the *Dead*, and give *Sight* to the Blind, and *Ears* to the Deaf; it made no Difference to him, whether he did this in the *Temple*, or in the *Streets*, at a *Feast*, or at a *Funeral*. As he was everywhere God, so every Place became Holy to him. *Lastly*, If our Saviour came *Eating* and *Drinking*, and was present, as is pretended, at cheerful Entertainments, to show his *Approbation* of such Indulgences, and to leave us a *Proof*, that we may do so too; how came *John the Baptist*, that severe Master of Mortification, to be a fit Preparer of the Way to the Kingdom of Heaven? Surely his *Voice* must *cry wrong*, if such Mortification was not *right*. And if our Saviour disapproved of the *Severity* of his Life and Manners, how came he to point him out to the *Jews*, as a *burning* and *shining Light*? Thus much may serve to vindicate our Saviour's holy Life and Example from the shocking Misapplication the Doctor has made of it.

Let us now see how he treats and instructs the charitable Christian in these Words: 'What! says the *Half-Thinker*, is 'not Charity to the Poor, a most excellent Thing? And can I 'be too charitable? Can I therefore bestow too much upon the 'Poor? I answer, Would you consider the other Side, you 'would perceive, that though you cannot be too charitable, yet 'you may bestow too much upon the Poor, to the Ruin of your 'Wife and Children, which is not Charity, but *Madness*, and a 'great and *most grievous Sin*. Did you never hear, that 'Charity begins at Home? Did you never read that of St. 'Paul? If any provide not for his own, and especially those 'of his own House; he hath denied the Faith, and is worse 'than an Infidel.'*

The Doctor's Proverb I shall leave to himself. But the Text of St. *Paul*, which he has as grossly mistaken and misapplied, as he did our Saviour's Miracle, I must take out of his Hands. St. *Paul's* Words are quoted to prove, that it is *Madness*, a *great and grievous Sin*, for anyone, through Charity to the Poor, to render himself unable to provide for his *Wife* and *Children*. Now the Apostle in this Place speaks no more about *this Sin*, than he speaks against the Sin of *Watching* and *Prayer*. Nay, what is more, there is not in all his Writings, or in the whole New Testament, the *least Supposition* or *Hint* that such a Sin ever was, or would be committed by any charitable

Man. The Apostle was singly speaking of *such Women* as were to be taken into the Order of *Widows*, for the Service of the Church, and to be *maintained* by it.* Verse 4, he says, that such Widows as had *Children* or *Nephews* that could support them, such were not to be maintained by the Church. And to such *Sons* and *Nephews* who have *Mothers* and *Aunts* that thus want their Assistance, he says, 'If anyone provide not for his 'own, especially for those of his own House,' *i.e.* If any *Sons* or *Nephews*, having Mothers or Aunts become *desolate Widows*, and take not care to assist them, especially if they live with them, such have renounced the Piety of the Gospel, and have not so much Humanity as *Infidels*. This alone is the Plain Doctrine of the Apostle, which the Doctor has grossly perverted, to the condemning of that which he never thought of, either there, or in any Part of Scripture. On the contrary, the Scripture abounds with Passages that might persuade us, that no *Family* could ever be ruined by the *Alms* and *Charity* of its Father. 'I have been young, and now am old,' saith the Psalmist, 'yet never saw I the Righteous forsaken, or their Seed 'begging their Bread. The liberal Soul shall be made fat, and 'he that watereth, shall be watered again.' They that cannot believe this, want the Faith of Christians. Had anyone in the Apostle's Time reduced his Wife and Children to *Want*, by his *great Charity* to the Poor, the Apostle would have been so far from rebuking him, as a *half-thinking Fool*, or exposing him to others, as guilty of *Madness*, and *grievous Sin*, that he would have told them, that he had consecrated *himself* and *Family* to the Church, that he and they were thereby become the dear Objects of the Church's *Care* and *Love*, since their present Distress was brought upon them by a boundless Love and Compassion for the Poor. I will now suppose that the Apostle had condemned a *Charity* in a *Father* that was to the Detriment of his *Wife* and *Children*; I will put the following *Case* in as high Terms as the Doctor can well desire. Let it be supposed that some good *Bishop*, possessed of as rich a *Bishopric* as that of *Winchester*, should through his extensive Love and Charity for the Poor throughout his whole Diocese, be forced to use the *utmost Frugality* in Family Expense, and to bring up his Children in *Employments* of Labour, to help themselves to *Food* and *Raiment*; one a *Carpenter*, in which Business our Saviour is said to have laboured in his Youth; another a *Maker of Tents*, the *Trade* of the great Apostle; and the rest in the like manner. Let it be supposed, that when he died, he left only

1 Tim. v. 5, 8.

Twenty Pounds a Year amongst them, not to be *possessed* by any one of them, but only to be *used* by everyone, as *Sickness* or *Age* made them stand in need of it, with this Injunction, that it should be given to other *sick* and *helpless* People, when there was *no such* amongst themselves. Let it be supposed that by his Life and Conversation, he had filled his Wife and Children with the *true* and *perfect* Spirit of the Gospel, that they *loved* and *rejoiced* in his Memory for all the Good that he had done to them, desiring nothing but to go through the World in that same *Humility, Piety, Charity, Love of God, and Renunciation* of the World, as he had done. Will the Doctor say, that this *Bishop* had *ruined* his Wife and Children? that *half-thinking* had betrayed him into a *most grievous Sin*, that he had by this Life *denied the Faith*, and become *worse* than an *Infidel*? I will venture to say, that if such a Bishop should ever appear in this Kingdom, he would bid fair to put an End to *Infidelity* through all his Diocese, though it were the largest in the Nation. Now if the Doctor does not *know* of anyone, either amongst the *Laity* or *Clergy*, who is *ruining* his Wife and Children by a *greater* and *more blamable* Charity than that of this Bishop, it must be said, that he has been in too much Haste; that his *Zeal* has not proceeded from *Knowledge*; and that he has been throwing *cold Water* upon Charity, before there was any *Flame* in it.

I now proceed to show in a more general Way, the blamable Nature and Design of the Doctor's Discourse. The whole Christian World, from the Time of our Saviour to this Day, has been praying, 'Thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done on Earth 'as it is in Heaven.' Sacraments, Divine Worship, and the Order of the Clergy, are appointed as ministerial Helps for this End, to raise, set up, and establish, this Kingdom of God on Earth. The *Fall* of Man brought *forth* the Kingdom of this World; Sin in all Shapes is nothing else but the *Will* of Man driving on in a State of *Self-Motion*, and *Self-Government*, following the Workings of a Nature *broken off* from its Dependency upon, and Union with, the Divine Will. All the Evil and Misery in the Creation arises *only* and *solely* from this one Cause. There is not the smallest Degree of Distraction, Pain, or Punishment, either within us, or without us, but what is owing to this. *viz.*, that Man stands *out of* his Place, is not *in*, and *under*, and *united* to God as he should be, as the Nature of Things require. God created everything to partake of his *own Nature*, to have some Degree and Share of his *own Life* and *Happiness*. Nothing can be good or evil, happy or unhappy, but as it does or does not stand in the same Degree of *Divine*

Life in which it was created, receiving in God, and from God, all that Good that it is capable of, and co-operating with, and under him, according to the Nature of its Powers and Perfections. As soon as it turns *to itself*, and would, as it were, have a *Sound* of its *own*, it breaks off from the *Divine Harmony*, and falls into the Misery of its own *Discord*; and all its Workings then are only so many Sorts of Torment, or Ways of feeling its own Poverty. The Redemption of Mankind can then only be effected, the Harmony of the Creation can only then be restored, when the Will of God is the Will of every Creature. For this Reason our Blessed Lord having taken upon him a created Nature, so continually declares against the doing anything of himself and always appeals to the Will of God, as the only *Motive* and *End* of everything he did, saying, that it was his *Meat* and *Drink to do the Will* of him that sent him.

What now can be so desirable to a sober, sensible Man, as to have the *vain, disorderly* Passions of his own corrupted Heart removed from him, to be filled with such *Unity, Love, and Concord*, as flows from God, to stand *united* to, and *co-operating* with the Divine Goodness, willing nothing, but what God wills, loving nothing, but what God loves, and doing all the Good that he can to every Creature, from a Principle of *Love* and *Conformity* to God. Then the Kingdom of God is come, and his Will is done in that Soul, as it is done in Heaven. Then Heaven itself is in the Soul, and the Life, and Conversation of the Soul is in Heaven. From such a Man the Curse of this World is removed; he walks upon consecrated Ground, and everything he meets, everything that happens to him, helps forward his *Union*, and *Communion* with God. For it is the *State* of our *Will*, that makes the *State* of our *Life*; when we receive everything *from* God, and do everything *for* God, everything does us the *same Good*, and helps us to the same Degree of Happiness. *Sickness* and *Health, Prosperity* and *Adversity*, bless and purify such a Soul in the *same Degree*; as it turns everything *towards* God, so every Thing becomes *Divine* to it. For he that *seeks* God in everything, is sure to *find* God in everything. When we thus live wholly unto God, God is wholly ours, and we are then happy in all the Happiness of God; for by uniting with him in *Heart*, and *Will*, and *Spirit*, we are united to all that he is, and has in himself. This is the Purity and Perfection of Life, that we pray for in the Lord's Prayer, that *God's Kingdom may come*, and *his Will be done* in us, as it is in Heaven. And this we may be sure is not only *necessary*, but *attainable* by us, or our Saviour would not have made it a Part of our daily Prayer. It may now then justly be asked, have we yet obtained that, which we have been

so long, and so universally praying for? Can we look upon the Church of this Nation, as drawing *near*, or even *tending* to this State of Perfection? Can we be carried to any one *Parish*, either in *Town* or *Country*, where it can with Truth be said of any *one Pastor* and his *Flock*, that there the Kingdom of God is *coming*, and his Will *begins* to be done on Earth, as it is done in Heaven? Can we therefore find any *one Parish*, where the *Pastor* has not *great Reason* to reject the Doctor's Discourse, and to pray both for himself and his *Flock*, that they may enter *much further* into the Spirit and Practice of Christianity, than they have yet entered, that the Gospel may have *much greater Power* over them than it hath yet had, and that they all may, with a most awakening Conviction, *see* and *understand* what it is, that has made so *Divine* and *powerful* a Religion, so without its *proper Effect* upon them? For if the Case be thus, if we stand at this amazing Distance from that State of Perfection to which Christ has called us, though we have his infallible Promise to be with us to the End of the World, to assist us with *such Power* and *Strength* from above, as to obtain, and do everything that we pray for, through a *right Faith* in him, and Conformity to his Laws and Example; if the Case be thus, does not *Heaven* and *Earth* seem to call upon *every Minister* of the Gospel, to take *some Share* to himself of this *miserable State* of Things, and to endeavour to convince both *himself* and his *Flock*, that they have not yet been Christians in *true earnest*, that they have professed Christ with the Tempers of *Jews* and *Heathens*, that they have not yet entered into the *narrow Way* that leads to Life; that they have not yet enough *renounced* the World; not enough *denied* themselves; not enough *emptied* their Hearts of Passions hurtful to Piety; not enough *offered* and *devoted* themselves to God; not enough made the Spirit of Religion the Spirit of *their Lives*; not enough sought for Strength and Deliverance from Sin by a *firm* and *living Faith* in Jesus Christ, who is made *Righteousness* and *Sanctification* to every Sinner that turns to God through Faith in him; not enough prayed, and desired that they might be *born again* of God by the awakening and quickening the *incorruptible Seed* of Divine Life in their Souls, so that Christ may be truly said to be *formed* in them; not enough prayed, and desired to be *everywhere*, and on *all Occasions*, under the perpetual Influence and Guidance of the Holy Spirit, that they may think, and say, and do everything by his Holy Inspiration; not enough looked to that *first and great Commandment*, of loving God with our whole Heart and whole Strength; not enough endeavoured to keep the *next*, which is like unto it, that of loving our Neighbour, *as we love* ourselves; not enough renounced such

Fashions, Customs, and Conformities, to the World, as greatly corrupt the Heart, and grieve and separate the Holy Spirit from it. Now which way soever we consider the lamentable State of Religion amongst us, whether they be Evils *within* or *without* the Church, no Evil can be *removed*, nor any *Remedy* be procured by us of the *Clergy*, but in this *one Way*, That every *Individual* of the *Order*, from the highest to the lowest, begin in right Earnest with himself, open the Book of his *own Heart* and Life, and consider seriously in the Presence of God, whether, according to *his Degree* in the Ecclesiastical Function, the World has had its *due Share* of *Salt* and *Light* from him ; whether all that is in the World, the *Lust of the Flesh*, the *Lust of the Eyes*, and the *Pride of Life*, have been so *openly*, so *constantly* discouraged and renounced by him, that the *whole Form* of his Life has been one loud, continual Call to all Orders of Christians, to set their Affections on Things above, to mind only the one Thing needful ; to have nothing at Heart, but to be in Christ new Creatures, seeking, intending, desiring nothing through the Pilgrimage of this Life, but to *live unspotted from the World*, and to obtain every Height of Holiness, and heavenly Affection, which becomes those who are to be called Sons and Heirs of God with Christ Jesus. If Religion was at this Time in a most flourishing State amongst us, abounding with such Congregations as made up the primitive Church, it would be *great Injustice* to suppose that the Clergy had not, under God, been the *chief Instruments* of building it up to such a State of Perfection, since they are considered by our Saviour himself, as the *Salt* and *Light* of the World, which are to preserve it both from Darkness and Corruption. Seeing then that an *universal Corruption* of Manners is on all hands confessed to have overspread this Christian Nation, and the *true Spirit* of Religion hardly *anywhere* to be seen, nothing can be more *reasonable* in itself, more suitable to the *present State* of Things, than for every *Clergyman*, wherever his *Lot* is fallen, to suspect himself to have, in *some Degree* or other, contributed to this common Calamity, and to be *more or less* chargeable with the Guilt of it, and to try to discover his *own State*, by such like Questions as these, laid *home* to his Conscience. If Christianity has not done that to my Flock which is the *only End* and Intent of it, is there nothing of this Failure *chargeable* upon my Conduct over it ? Can my righteous Judge lay nothing grievous to my Charge on that Account ? Can my own Heart bear me Witness that I did not run in my *own Will*, was not driven by *human Passions*, but stayed and waited till the *Holy Spirit* called me to this Office ? Have I not undertaken the *Care* of other's Souls, before I had ever

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any *true* and *real* Care of my own? Have I not presumed to *convert* and *strengthen* others, before I was converted myself? To preach by *hearsay* of the Grace, and Mercy, and Salvation, of the Gospel, whilst I myself was an *obedient Slave* to Sin? Have I not taken upon me to *explain* and *lay open* the Mysteries of God's Love in Christ Jesus, before they had had their *proper Entrance* into my own Soul? Has my own *Repentance, Compunction, deep Sensibility* of the Burden of Sin, and *want* of a Saviour, taught me how to make the Terrors of the Lord known in the Deep of every Man's Heart, and to awaken and pierce the Consciences of Sinners? Has my own *true and living Faith* in Christ my Saviour, my own Experience of the atoning, cleansing, sanctifying Power of his precious Blood, enabled me with great Boldness to tell all Sinners, that to the *Faith which worketh by Love*, Christ always and infallibly saith, what he said in the Gospel, 'Thy Sins are forgiven: thy Faith hath saved thee; go in Peace'?

Can my own Heart, and God, who is greater than our Hearts, bear me Witness that in my sacred Office I have not sought *myself*, or my own Things, but the Things of Jesus Christ? If I have changed one *Flock* or *Station* for another, or added one *Cure* to another, have I done it in *Singleness of Heart, as unto the Lord*, and not for *myself*? Has all that I have *sought* or *done* of this Kind, been *only* from this *Motive*, and in this *View*, that I might be more truly *faithful* to him that hath called me, and be more and more *spent* and *sacrificed* for the Salvation of Souls? Have I neglected no Means of fitting and preparing myself for the Illuminations of God's Holy Spirit, which alone can enable me in any Measure to speak to, and work upon, the Hearts and Consciences of Men? Have I earnestly longed, and laboured after every Kind and Degree of inward and outward Holiness, and Purity of *Body, Soul, and Spirit*, that my *standing* at the *Altar* may be acceptable to God, and my Prayers and Intercessions for my Flock *avail* much before him? Has my own *Self-denial, Renunciation* of the World, and *Love* of the Cross of Christ, enabled me to preach up those Duties in their *full Extent*? Has my own strictly *pious Use* of the Things of this World, my own Readiness to relieve and assist every Creature to the utmost Extent of my Ability, fitted me to call others to these Things with Power and Authority? Have all Ages and Conditions of People under my Care had their proper Instruction and Warning from me, so that I have spared no Folly, Vanity, Indulgence, or Conformity to the World, that hurts Men's Souls, and hinders their Progress in Piety? Have I done all that by my Prayers and Preaching, Life and

Example, which Christ expects from those whom he has enjoined to feed his Sheep? Can my Flock by looking at me see what Virtues they want? Can they by following me, be led to every Kind and Degree of Christian Perfection? Lastly, has the Will of God and the Spirit of the Gospel been the Beginning and End, the Reason and Motive, the Rule and Measure, of my liking or disliking, doing or not doing, every thing among those People with whom I have lived as their Minister? These are a few of such Questions as the present State of Religion in this *Island* calls upon every Minister of the Gospel to sift and try himself by. For as the *Order* of the Clergy is instituted for no other End, but for the *preserving* of Religion and true Piety in the World; so when any Age is more than ordinarily sunk in Vice and Impiety, the *whole Order* of the Clergy, and *every Member* of it, have great reason not only to be deeply *afflicted*, but greatly *affrighted* at it, and to suspect and fear their *own Conduct*, since that which is *their particular Work*, has had so *little Success*. They have great reason to apprehend, that it is some Degeneracy of Spirit, some common Misbehaviour, some general Negligence, some want of Example, some Failure in Doctrine, some Defect in Zeal and Care of their particular Flocks, that *too much* contributes to *so general* a Corruption of Manners. This does not suppose, that it is in the Power of our Order to regulate the Manners of People as we please; it only supposes, that of all human Means it has the *greatest Effect*; and that when any Nation or People are either very *good* or very *bad*, the Behaviour of the Clergy may *reasonably* be reckoned to have *greatly* contributed to it. Let us all therefore of the Clergy, who have any *right Sense* of the Nature of our Order, any *true Love* for our Brethren of it, awaken and stir up one another to a faithful Diligence in our Callings, not such as may secure us from public Scandal, and the Laws of the Land, but such a faithful Diligence as the Nature of our Office, the Spirit of the Gospel, and the present Decay of Religion, calls for. Let us beseech and entreat one another deeply to consider the great Need that this poor Nation hath of a *zealous, pious, exemplary, disinterested* and *laborious* Clergy; to consider the *dreadful Judgments* of God, that may justly be expected to fall first upon *our own Heads*, if this *true, only* Relief and Remedy is not procured by *all* of us, according to the *utmost* of our Ability. It is now no time for *Ease, Indulgence*, or worldly *Repose*; all is to be renounced, all is to be sacrificed; and we must in the *Spirit of Martyrdom* awaken the World into a *Faith* and *Love* of the Gospel. Now is the Time that we must *give up* all our worldly Regards, 'forsake all that we have; that we must hate Father

'and Mother, Wife and Children, and Brothers and Sisters, yea, 'and our own Lives also,' or we cannot be faithful Ministers of Jesus Christ. The same Spirit which first planted the Gospel, is now required to *recover* and *restore* it amongst us. We must break off our Chains of *worldly Prudence*, and come forth in the *Spirit* and *Power* of the Gospel; so live, and speak, and act, whether in the Pulpit or out of it, that all who see and hear us may be forced to confess that God is in us of a Truth, and that his Holy Spirit hath sent us. A *Ministry* that hath not *this Power*, that have not *full Proof*, both to themselves and others, that the Holy Spirit is thus *with them*, opening the Kingdom of God in their own Souls, and enabling them to preach it to others with Spirit and Power, are to answer to God for their Want of it.

To ask whether the Assistance of the Holy Spirit is to be *ordinary* or *extraordinary*, is as needless and groundless a Distinction, as to ask whether a *Minister* of the Gospel ought to be an *ordinary* or *extraordinary* good Man. The Operation of the Holy Spirit in us since the *Fall*, is a *supernatural* Power, and therefore in a just Sense *always* extraordinary, because enabling us to be and do that, which the ordinary Power of fallen Nature is insufficient for; but it is more or less restored to us, as we are more or less fitted to receive it. And all that *Assistance* or *Renovation* of the Holy Spirit which an Apostle might expect, for the raising his own personal Holiness to its *greatest Height*, or for enabling him with *Spirit* and *Power* to move, affect, and convert the Hearts of Men to the Faith of the Gospel, may be *justly expected* now by such Ministers of the Gospel, as do all that which an Apostle did to obtain and receive it. Our Religion is *founded* on this Doctrine,—that we are to be *born again* of the Holy Spirit,—that it is to be the *Breath* and *Life* of our new-born, inward Man,—that there is no *Sanctification* of the Heart, no *Illumination* of the Mind, no *Knowledge* of Divine Mysteries, no *Love* of holy Things, *possible* to be had, but in and by the *Motion* and *Life* of this Holy Spirit *renewed* or *born again* in us;—that its *Life*, *Motion*, and *Power*, in us, increaseth according to our Faith, Prayers, and Desires of it.

Is it not now a *flat Denial* of all this to say, as is said by some, that the *Establishment* of the Gospel in the World, together with the Assistances of *human Learning* and *Languages*, has been the *Occasion* why the Assistance of the Holy Ghost is *abated*, and become only such as may be called *ordinary*? For if we consult either Scripture or Experience, must it not be said, that *worldly Peace* and *Prosperity* want *as much* to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit, as *Persecution* and *Distress*? That *human*

Learning and Knowledge need as *high Degrees* of Divine Grace and Help, as *human Ignorance*? Is not the Blindness, the Infatuation and Corruption of *Men of Letters*, as notorious as that of *unlearned Men*? Does an *Editor of Terence, Horace, or Virgil*, receive such Illumination from *Plays and Poetry*? Do *Cardinals and Pluralists* receive so much *Uction and Assistance* from *human Establishments*, as to need *less* to be led and governed by the Holy Spirit of God? Or will we say, that a *critical Study* of divided Languages, and a Religion established in worldly *Ease and Peace*, are not only in themselves free from *Danger and Corruption*, but have so much of the *Nature of the Holy Spirit* of God in them, that they can be to us in *his Stead*, and make his sanctifying Operations upon us needed in a *less Degree*?

On the Part of God, our *Redemption* in Jesus Christ, and our *Sanctification* by the Holy Ghost, stand always in the *same Degree of Nearness and Fulness* to all of us; there is hardly a Chapter in the New Testament that can be understood, or its Doctrines observed, but upon the Supposition of this great Truth. If Christ is *less formed* in us than he was in the first Saints of the Church, if we come not to the *perfect Man, to the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ*, it is not because Christ is now become only our Redeemer in an *ordinary Way or Degree*, but it is because we have not *so turned* to him, not so turned *from* ourselves, not so counted all Things but *Dung*, that we might win Christ, and be found in him, as the first Saints did. If the Holy Spirit does not now in *such a Degree* renew, quicken, move, and sanctify our Hearts, and fill us with *such Degrees* of Divine Light and Love, as was done in the first Age of the Church, it is not because this sanctifying Spirit has committed *some Part* of his Work to *human Learning*, and so is become only our Sanctifier in a lesser and *ordinary Degree*, but it is because we ourselves have *forsaken this Fountain of living Waters, and hewed out broken Cisterns* for ourselves; it is because we have *grieved* this holy Spirit, *resisted* his Motions, *quenched* his holy Fire, and under an *outward Profession* of Christ have kept up that *Old Man, with his Deeds*, which cannot be the Temple and Habitation of the Holy Spirit.

If therefore we have any true Sense of the Nature and Weight of our Ecclesiastical Calling, any Desire to do the *full Work* of the Ministry, to satisfy the Wants and Necessities of our Flocks, if we have any Fear of being condemned as *useless, insignificant* Labourers in Christ's Vineyard, it is high time to awake from this Dream of an *ordinary and extraordinary* Sanctification of the Holy Spirit; it serves only to keep us *unsanctified*, shut up

in *Death*, in the *dead Workings* of our own corrupted Nature, to keep us *learnedly* content with our State, as if we were *rich*, and *increased in Goods*, and *had Need of nothing*,* and hinders us from knowing that we are *wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*.

Several of the Clergy, whose Lot is fallen in this corrupt Age, may be supposed to have taken upon them the sacred Office, and to have lived in it, not enough according to the Nature and Spirit of it, merely through the *Degeneracy* of the Times, and from a Consideration that they are well enough, according to the *Measure* of Religion that now passes in the World. And perhaps there are few, if any, of the Order, however eminent for good Works, whose Virtues have not received *some Abatement* from the same Cause. This therefore may be added as another Reason why all the Clergy of this Land should search into their Lives and Conduct with the utmost Severity, and bring everything to the Test of the Letter and Spirit of the Gospel.

The Christian Religion has not had its proper Effect, nor obtained its intended End, till it has so set up the Kingdom of God amongst us, that 'his Will is done on Earth, as it is done 'in Heaven.' This is the Perfection that every Christian, when advancing forward in the several Degrees of Holiness and Purification, is to *tend* to, and *aspire* after. And if they who are to be taught, are to be thus separated from an earthly Nature, thus emptied of all worldly Passions, thus dead to the Workings of Self-will, and Self-love, that the Spirit of God may be all in all in them, what Manner of Men ought they to be, who are to *teach, promote, advance, and lead* the Way to this Purity and Perfection? What a Distance ought he to be from every *Appearance* of Pride, that is to draw others to love and practise the profound Humility of the Blessed Jesus? How ought he to deny his Appetites, to humble his Body, and be steady in all Kinds of Self-Denial, who would convince his Flock that *they who sow to the Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap* Destruction? How heavenly-minded, how devoted to God, how attentive to the one Thing needful, how unspotted from the World ought he to be, who is to persuade others that they cannot possibly *serve God and Mammon*? How empty ought he to be of all *selfish* Cunning, all *worldly* Policy, all Arts and Methods of *Ambition*, who is to fix it deep in the Hearts of his Hearers, that *unless they become as little Children, they cannot see, nor enter into the Kingdom of God*? What open Hands, and open Heart ought he to have, what an Extent of Charity ought to be visible in him,

* Rev. iii. 17.

who is to bring his Flock to this Faith, that 'it is more blessed 'to give than to receive?' How remarkably, undeniably plain, open, sincere, undesigning, and faithful, should he be, who is to recommend, plant, and establish sincerity, Plainness, Simplicity, Truth, and Innocence, amongst his Flock? There is such a necessary Fitness in these Things, that the Force and Power of Religion must be much prevented, when its Precepts are recommended to the World by such as excuse themselves from the plain and open Practice of them?

The Office of the Ministry is of the highest Nature; it is a Trust which no Language can sufficiently express; and the unfaithful Discharge of it is, of all Conditions in Life, the most dreadful. To be charged with the *Death* and *Blood* of Souls, by that God who laid down his Life to redeem them, is a Condemnation that will carry more of Guilt and Punishment in it than any other. Would you know the Office of a Christian Pastor, you must look at the Office of Christ; would you know what Manner of Spirit he ought to be of, you must look at the Spirit of Christ. For the Work of the Ministry is only the Work of Christ committed to other Hands, who are to supply his Absence, to be here in his Stead, to be doing the same Things, and with the same Spirit that he did, till the End of the World.

Nothing is so highly *honourable* as to bear a Part in the Priesthood of Christ, and be employed in the Work of the Ministry; but then it should be *well considered*, that it is only honourable in the *same Sense* as it may be said that nothing is more honourable than to suffer as a *Martyr*. It is an Honour that is as different from all worldly Figure and Distinction, as the Glory of Christ upon the Cross is different from the Triumph of an earthly Prince. When therefore we think of the *Honour* and *Dignity* of the Pastoral Function, we should be careful to remember, that it is only the Honour of *dying* a Martyr, an Honour of *humbling*, *abasing*, and *sacrificing* ourselves with Christ, and continuing the Exercise of his suffering Priesthood for the Salvation of the World. The holy Function is often considered only as an *authoritative Commission* to minister in holy Things; but it is much more than this; it is a Call and Command to act with the Spirit of Christ, to represent his Purity, to continue his Holiness, to bear a Part of his Sacrifice, and devote themselves for the Good of others, as he did. A Priest that has *only* his Ordination to distinguish him, wants as much to make him a true Priest, as *Judas* wanted to make him a true Apostle. For though Holiness gives no Man a *Commission* to exercise the Pastoral Office, yet all who are called to it,

are as much ordained and appointed to a *peculiar Holiness* of Life, as to the *Administration* of the Sacraments; and when they cease to be as *Light* and *Salt* to the rest of the World, they sin against the Pastoral Office in as *high a degree* as they that enter upon it without any Authority.

For the sacred Office is God's *Appointment*, to continue through all Ages of the World, the Spirit and Power of Christ, for reconciling Men to God, in the same *Manner*, and by the *same Means* of Holiness, Sacrifice, and Devotion, which Christ exercised when he was upon Earth. We need no other Proof of this, than this one Saying of our Blessed Lord: 'As my Father hath sent me, so send I you.' That is, for all the Ends for which I am come into the World, for all the same Ends I send you into it, to be there in my stead, to supply my Absence, to carry on the Work that I have begun, to exercise my Power, to act with my Spirit, to continue the Exercise of my Love, and Labour, and Suffering, for the Salvation of Mankind. To be sent by our Blessed Lord for the same Ends as he was sent into the World, is such an Appointment of us to all Kinds and Degrees of Holiness, as can never be rightly discharged, but by our giving and devoting ourselves wholly and absolutely unto God.

Imagine that you had lived with our Blessed Lord when he was upon Earth, that you had learned the Dignity and Divinity of his Person, that you had seen the Love which he bore to Mankind, that you had entered into the glorious Designs of his Kingdom; which were, to convert the Inhabitants of the Earth, poor Creatures of Flesh and Blood, into Sons of God, and Heirs of eternal Glory.

Imagine that you had seen him after his Resurrection, when he had redeemed the World, conquered Sin, Death, and Hell, and was about to take Possession of his Throne; imagine that then, in that State, you had seen him commission some of his Followers to be *Priests* and *Intercessors* with God on Earth, as he had been, to *feed*, and *nourish*, and *watch* over his Flock, as he had done, to go before them in *such exemplary* Holiness, such Love of God, such Compassion for Sinners, such Contempt of the World, such Poverty of Spirit, such Obedience and Resignation, as they had him for an Ensamble; had you been present at all this, how would you then have *heard* and *felt* these Words: 'As my Father hath sent me, so send I you'?

What Sentiments of Piety, what Magnificence of Spirit, what exalted Holiness, would you have expected of those, who were called to succeed so great a Master in so great a Work? Could you think they could be fit for this Office, or were enough like him that had called them to it, unless they had *renounced* and

sacrificed everything for the Sake of it? Could you think that any Care but that of the Church of God was proper for them? Would you not own that the Conversion of Sinners to God, ought to have been their *one only* Labour and Pains? that they were to seek for no other Happiness in this World, than such as their Lord and Master had done, but consider themselves as called from the common Affairs, Ease and Pleasures of Life, to be in Christ's Stead towards the rest of Mankind, to conduct them safely to eternal Happiness? Now when we consider the Apostles in this Light, as being the first that were entrusted with the *Care of Souls*, and from Christ himself, we can see no *Degree* of Zeal, no Height of Piety, no Compassion for Sinners, no Concern for the Honour of God, no Contempt of Sufferings, no Disregard of worldly Interest, no Watchings or Mortifications, no Fervours of Devotion, to which we of the Clergy are not equally obliged. For the Salvation of Mankind is still the same glorious, great and necessary Work that it was in their Days, is still to be carried on by the same Means, and is now in the Hands of the Clergy, as it was then in theirs. If it was their Happiness and Glory to be faithful to him that called them, to forget the little Interests of Flesh and Blood, and have nothing at Heart, but the Advancement of God's Kingdom, we shall fail both of Happiness and Glory, if we seek it any other way. If an Apostle, considering the Weight of reconciling Souls unto God, is forced to cry out, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' shall we think any Care but that which is the greatest, sufficient to make us stand uncondemned before God? It is a fatal Deception to imagine, that the Life of a Minister of God is ever to be a Life of Ease or worldly Repose. For though the temporal Sword be not always drawn against them, nor they forced to flee from one City to another, yet the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, have perhaps never so much Difficulty to be resisted, as in temporal Prosperity, nor have the Ministers of Christ ever more Occasion to put on all their Armour, than when the World is given up to Ease, and Peace, and Plenty. Swarms of Vice steal upon us in these Seasons, the Spirit and Life of Religion is in danger of being lost, and the Salvation of Souls is made more difficult, than in the most perilous Times. And how is such a State of Temptation to be resisted, such a Torrent of Vice to be opposed, but by the Clergy's showing themselves *visible* and *notorious* Examples of all the contrary Virtues. When Mankind are wallowing in Debauchery, wantoning in Pleasures, and given up to Vanity and Luxury in all Shapes, it is then the Duty of the faithful Minister, by his being crucified to the World, to proclaim himself the Messenger of a

crucified Saviour, and to make his own self-denying, mortified, and heavenly Life, a *plain, open, and constant* Reproof of all vain Indulgences. For to yield to, or fall in with the Softness, Vanity, Luxury, Indulgence, or Avarice of the World, is the same Infidelity and Breach of Trust in the sacred Office, as to depart from the true Faith, and fall in with some abominable Heresy.

I believe I need not now help the Reader to observe, that the Doctor's Undertaking is further liable to these great Objections against it: *First*, That it calls us from the *Sin and Danger* of being *Righteous over-much*, when we are always to own, that we are not yet *Righteous enough*. *Secondly*, That it proposes to *stir* us up against *this Sin and Danger*, at a time, when this Nation is in Danger of the *severest Judgments* of God upon it, for a *general Irreligion* and Profaneness. *Thirdly*, That it tends to lead the *Clergy* from a *just Sense* of what the Nature of their Office, the Nature of Religion, and the present State of this Nation, requires of them. That it tends to raise an *ill Spirit* in them, not only to be *content* with an ordinary common Degree of Piety in themselves, and their Flocks, but, with a *watchful, and jealous* Eye to guard against all the *Beginnings* of an uncommon, or more than ordinary Sanctity of Life, either in themselves or others.

Thus, says he, 'To what a Height of Fanatic Madness in 'Doctrine, as well as Practice, are some advanced, who set out 'at first with an Appearance of *more than ordinary Sanctity in 'Practice only*?'* Is not this calling upon the *Clergy* to beware, how they admit these *Beginnings* of a more than ordinary Sanctity of Life, either in themselves, or those committed to their Care? Is it not plainly telling them, that they must stick *closely and steadily* to such Sanctity of Practice, as may be called ordinary, or else they will be in Fanatic Madness? Here is no Force put upon his Words, 'a more than ordinary Sanctity in 'Practice only,' is marked out as the genuine natural Cause of *Fanatic Madness*; and therefore the *Cause* is equally condemned with the *Effect*. Had he meant that his Reader should not have the *same Dislike* of the one, as of the other, or had he been afraid of his doing so, would he not have put in a Word in Favour of a *more than ordinary* Sanctity of Life? would he not have said, that he did not intend to *blame* that, or at least not *so much* as the other? But not a Word of this, a more than ordinary Sanctity in *Practice only*, and *Fanatic Madness*, are considered as *Cause* and *Effect*, and left in the same State of

Condemnation, to be equally guarded against, and avoided by the Reader. So that in a Nation over-run with all manner of Corruption both of Principle and Practice, where the *ordinary State of Religion* has hardly the Form of Godliness, People are in *this State of Things* to content themselves with *such a Sanctity of Life*, as may be deemed to be *ordinary*.

And here I can't help addressing myself with great Affection to all my younger Brethren of the Clergy. According to the Course of Nature, you are likely to have the Care of the Church wholly upon your Hands in a short time; and therefore it is chiefly from you that the Restoration of true Piety is to be expected in this Nation. I beseech you, therefore, for your own Sakes, for the Gospel's Sake, for the Sake of Mankind, to devote yourselves *wholly* to the Love and Service of God. As you are yet but Beginners in this great Office, you have it in your Power to make your Lives the greatest Happiness, both to yourselves, and the whole Nation. You are entered into *Holy Orders* in degenerate Times, where *Trade and Traffic* have seized upon all holy Things; and it will be easy for you, without Fear, to swim along with the corrupt Stream, and to look upon him as an Enemy, or *Enthusiast*, that would save you from being lost in it. But think, my dear Brethren, think in time, *what Remorse* you are treasuring up for yourselves, if you live to *look back* upon a loose, negligent, corrupt, disorderly, worldly, unedifying Life, spent amongst those whose Blood will be required at your Hands. Think, on the other Hand, how blessedly your Employment will end, if by your *Voices*, your *Lives*, and *Labours*, you put a Stop to the Overflowings of Iniquity, restore the Spirit of the *Primitive Clergy*, and make all your Flock bless and praise God, for having sent you amongst them. Lay this down as an infallible Principle, that an *entire, absolute Renunciation* of all worldly Interest, is the only *possible Foundation* of that exalted Virtue which your Station requires. Without this, all Attempts after an exemplary Piety are in vain. If you want anything from the World by way of *Figure and Exaltation*, you shut the Power of your Redeemer out of your own Souls; and instead of converting, you corrupt the Hearts of those that are about you. Detest therefore, with the *utmost Abhorrence*, all Desires of making your Fortunes, either by *Preferments* or *rich Marriages*, and let it be your only Ambition to stand at the *Top* of every Virtue, as *visible Guides and Patterns* to all that aspire after the Perfection of Holiness. Consider yourselves merely as the *Messengers* of God, that are solely sent into the World on *his Errand*, and think it Happiness enough, that you are called to the *same Business*, for which the Son of

God was born into the World. I don't call you from a *sober Use* of human Learning, but I would fain persuade you to think nothing worthy of your Notice in *Books* and *Study*, but that which *directly* applies to the *Amendment* of the Heart, which makes you more *holy*, more *Divine*, more *heavenly*, than you would be without it. You want nothing, but to have the *Corruption* of your natural Birth *removed*, to have the Nature, Life and Spirit of Jesus Christ *derived into* you; as this is *all* that you *want*, so let this be *all* that you *seek* from *Books*, *Study*, or *Men*. This is the *only, certain* Way to become *eminent Divines*, instructed to the Kingdom of Heaven. And above all, let me tell you, that the *Book* of all Books is your *own Heart*, in which are written and engraven the deepest Lessons of Divine Instruction; learn, therefore, to be deeply attentive to the Presence of God in your Hearts, who is always *speaking*, always *instructing*, always *illuminating* that Heart that is attentive to him. Here you will meet the Divine Light in its *proper Place*, in that *Depth* of your Souls, where the *Birth* of the Son of God, and the *Proceeding* of the Holy Ghost, are always ready to spring up in you: And be assured of this, that so much as you have of *inward Attention* to God in your Hearts, of *inward Love* and *Adherence* to his holy *Light* and *Spirit* within you, so much as you have of real, unaffected *Humility* and *Meeekness*, so much as you are dead to your *own Will* and *Self-love*, so much as you have of *Purity of Heart*, so much, and *no more*, nor *any further*, do you see and know the Truths of God. These Virtues are the only *Eyes*, and *Ears*, and *Senses*, and *Heart*, by which you will know and understand everything in Scripture, in that *Manner*, and in that *Degree*, in which God would have it understood, both for your own Good, and the Good of other People. It was owing to this *Purity of Heart*, and *Attendance* upon God, that an *ancient Widow*, named *Anna*,* knew him to be the *true Messiah*, whom the *Rulers*, *Chief Priests*, and *Doctors* of the Law, condemned as an *Impostor*. Had they, instead of their Adherence to *critical Knowledge*, and *rabbinical Learning*, been devoted to God in such *Purity of Heart* as she was, they had known as much of the Kingdom of God as she did. Place therefore all your Hope and Confidence, all your learned Help and Skill, in the ardent Love and Practice of *these Virtues*, and then, and then only, you will be able Ministers, holy Priests, and Messengers of God; your cleansed Hearts, like so many purified *Mirrors*, will be always penetrated, always illuminated, by the Rays of Divine Light, and you will no more need the *Critics*, to

* Luke ii. 36.

tell you what God speaks to you in the Scriptures, than to tell you what God speaks to you in your own Hearts. There are indeed in the Scriptures *Secrets* and *Mysteries*, only fully to be known in God's own Time, and not a *Minute* sooner; but of all Men in the World, the critical Dealers in *Words* and *Particles*, know the *least* of them, and make the *vainest* Attempts to understand them. But Scripture, considered as a Doctrine of *Life, Faith, and Salvation* in Jesus Christ, is a *sealed* or *unsealed*, an *open* or *shut up* Book to every Heart, in the same Proportion as it stands turned to the World, or turned to God. Nothing understands God, but the Spirit of God; nothing brings the Spirit of God into any Mind, but the renouncing all for it, the turning wholly to it, and the depending wholly upon it. *Human Learning* is by no means to be rejected from Religion; for it is of the *same good* Use and Service, and affords the *same Assistance* to Religion, that the *Alphabet, Writing* and *Printing* does. But if it is raised from this *Kind* and *Degree* of Assistance, if it is considered as a Key, or *the Key*, to the Mysteries of our Redemption in Jesus Christ, instead of *opening* to us the Kingdom of God, it *locks* us up in our *own Darkness*. It is a Truth confessed on all Hands, that the Kingdom of *Grace* is the *Beginning* of the Kingdom of *Glory*, and that they differ only in *degree*. Is not this plainly confessing, that the Light of the Kingdom of Grace must be *one* and the *same* with that of the Kingdom of Glory? How else can one be the Beginning of the other? And must not *that*, which is to be our one only Light in Heaven in a *full Degree*, be now our *one only* Light of all heavenly Things in a lower Degree? Therefore all that we see and know of the Kingdom of God *now*, must be by that *same Light* by which we shall see and know the Kingdom of God hereafter. God is an *all-speaking, all-working, all-illuminating* Essence, possessing the Depth, and bringing forth the Life of every Creature according to its Nature. Our Life is out of this Divine Essence, and is itself a creaturely Similitude of it; and when we turn from all Impediments, this Divine Essence becomes as *certainly* the true Light of our Minds *here*, as it will be *hereafter*. This is not *Enthusiasm*, but the Words of Truth and Soberness; and it is the running away from *this Enthusiasm*, that has made so many great Scholars as useless to the Church as *tinkling Cymbals*, and all *Christendom* a mere *Babel* of learned Confusion. I shall now only add one Word more: A composed Gravity of Life, a suitable Decency of outward Behaviour, is not the Thing that is demanded of you; your Piety must be solid, your Lives exemplary, the Perfection of your Virtues must shine before Men, or you will all of you in your *several Degrees*,

stand chargeable with the ill State of Religion, that is about you.

I must now take Notice of an injurious Quotation or two that the Doctor has made from the *Treatise of Christian Perfection*. The Doctor quotes me as affirming, 'That not only the Wickedness and Vanity of this World, but even its most lawful and allowed Concerns, render Men unable to enter, and unworthy to be received into the true State of Christianity.' And again that 'the Wisdom from above condemns all Labour as equally fruitless, but that which labours after everlasting Life.' Then the Doctor affirms thus: 'Here's an utter Condemnation of all Trades, and of all Professions, of all Business, and secular Concerns whatever.'* Does the Doctor then believe that I bought *Pen, Ink, and Paper*, and wrote that Book, to show that no Christian ought to *make, buy or sell* Pen, Ink, and Paper? And that I published that Book to prove that it was my Opinion that it was utterly unlawful for a Christian to be a *Printer, a Bookbinder, or a Bookseller*? Does not the Doctor know, that the *Christian Perfection* in the Two first Pages, to prevent all Mistake, openly *declares* for the *Continuance* of Mankind in their several States and Conditions, openly *declares* against a *Cloister, or any singular State of Life*, openly asserts Christian Perfection to consist in the *holy and religious* Conduct of ourselves in *every State of Life*?† Does he not know that in the *Serious Call to a Devout Life, &c.*, which presently followed the other Book, the very *Title* declares solely for a *Piety adapted to the State and Condition of all Orders of Men*? But there is something still more wonderful, more regardless of Right and Wrong in the Doctor's Charge against me; for in this very Passage quoted by him, secular Business is expressly affirmed to be *most lawful and allowed Concerns*. And yet from this Passage affirming the Lawfulness of worldly Business, and proceeding upon it as a certain Truth, the Doctor has extracted the Unlawfulness of all secular Concerns whatever. Again, Does not the Doctor know that he designedly mangled the Words he quoted, and left out that Part which showed the Reason of my so expressing myself? That I was there speaking to that Parable of our Lord's, where all that were bidden to the Feast, refused to come. *The First*, because he had bought a *Piece of Ground*; the other, because he must *try his Oxen*; the Third, because he *had married a Wife*. Then the Master in Anger said, 'None of these Men shall taste of my Supper.' Whence I thus observed 'This Parable teaches us, that not only the

* Page 15.

† Page 2.

'Vices and the Vanity of the World, but its most lawful and 'allowed Concerns, render Men unable to enter, and unworthy to 'be received into the true State of Christianity.' And does not everyone see this to be the plain, necessary, and inoffensive Sense of the Parable? Had I not made Nonsense of it, if I had said, that *lawful Business* could *not* become a *Hindrance* of Men's Salvation? For are there not here Three *lawful Concerns* become Three *Hindrances* of their coming to the Feast, and Three *Reasons* of their being declared unworthy of it? Then I go on to show, that it is not the Employment itself that is condemned, but its being made a *Reason*, or *Excuse*, as in the Parable, for not living wholly unto God, adding these Words, the 'true Wisdom from above condemns all Labour as equally 'fruitless, but that which labours after everlasting Life.' Let but Religion *determine the Point*, and *what can it signify, whether a Man forgets God in his Farm, or a Shop, or at a Gaming Table?* Now what is there here condemned, but the *forgetting God?* Or will anyone say, that a *Shop*, and a *Farm*, are here condemned, because God is to be *remembered* in them, or because they are to be made Employments of Piety, that *labour after everlasting Life?* The Doctor proceeds to charge me with 'positively asserting, that all Christians are, in all Ages, obliged 'to sell all that they have, and give it to the Poor.' I have been so far from asserting this, that I have with all my Might said, and proved the direct contrary, that *no Christians of any Age* are obliged to it. Speaking of the Command of our Saviour's to the young Man, 'to sell all, and give it to the Poor,' I have shown, by Variety of Arguments, and Texts of Scripture, that that Command calls no rich Man to *sell* what he has; that it calls him only to do that with his Estate, which he is called to, by the whole Tenour of Scripture, as having Riches, that are not his own, of which he is only a Steward, and not a Proprietor, as being obliged to love his Neighbour as himself in the Use of them. That the Command of *selling all*, implies only such *heavenly Affection*, such 'Disregard of Riches, as is expressed, 'by being dead to the World, having our Conversation in 'Heaven, being born again from above, and having overcome the 'World.' From the Beginning to the End of this Matter, I have utterly rejected *all feeling*, and shown, that it means only a perfect Charity, a *parting with the Self-Enjoyment of our Estates, to make them, as far as we are able, the common Support of those People whom we are to love, as we love ourselves, and as Christ has loved us.* The Doctor, therefore, in this Accusation, must be allowed to have stuck closely to his Text; he has not been *Righteous over-much.* The Doctor makes now an Inference or

two from this Doctrine of Charity. 'According to this Divinity,' says he, 'it is a Sin to be rich.' Here he is just as wrong as he could possibly be. For, according to the Divinity in the Book of *Christian Perfection*, and the *Serious Call, &c.*, the Blessedness, the Piety, the Happiness arising from the Possession of Riches, is demonstrated from Chapter to Chapter, and visibly painted in a great Variety of Characters. Those Two Books were published chiefly to show to rich Men their exceeding Happiness. And I can consistently say, that I should reckon it a Happiness to myself, to be one of the Number, supported only by this one Saying of our Lord's; that 'it is more blessed 'to give, than to receive.' Another Inference the Doctor makes, is this; that according to this Divinity, 'if a Man sues you for 'your House or Land, without the least Pretence of Right, you 'are bound to recede from your Right, and let him have it, rather 'than defend it.* There had been as much *Truth*, and more *Wit*, if he had said, when *Thieves have any Design of entering into your House, you are obliged to have no Locks or Bolts upon your Doors*. For I have said no more of the Unlawfulness of appealing to *Courts of Justice*, to secure us in the just Possession of our House and Land, than of the Unlawfulness of going to a *Smith* for Locks and Bolts, when Thieves want to have our Goods. I take it to be as lawful to live under *human Government*, and to enjoy the Benefit of it, as to live under the Light and Benefit of the *Sun*. And I look upon *Courts of Justice*, which are to protect People in the Enjoyment of their Property, to be the first and chief Benefit of Government. And if they were absolutely unlawful, for the same Reason would all *Locks*, and *Doors*, and *Fences* be so too. On the other hand, I have said, that the abstaining from Contentions at Law, choosing to *suffer*, and bear with *Variety of Injuries*, where we might *legally* defend ourselves, and bring *Punishment* upon those that injure us, is a *proper Part* of Christian Self-denial, a just *Conformity* to the Meekness, and suffering Spirit of our Blessed Lord, and highly beneficial to our own spiritual Advancement. And must not everyone, that owns the Gospel, say the same? Has not our Saviour himself first said so? But does it therefore follow, that a Man has no *Rights*, or none that he may *own*; because it may be often, and in *many Cases*, a Matter of great Piety to suffer wrongfully with Patience? The short of the Matter is this: All Things that are lawful, are not expedient, nor edifying. Of Contentions at Law, most of them are very apt to do us great Hurt, many of them are piously to be avoided, through

Patience and Meek-suffering of Wrong; but some may be necessary, even as Parts of our Duty. Is there anything more plain, or self-evident, than this? The Doctor might have observed, that I spoke of *Law-Suits* only under the Article of *Self-denial*, and therefore was only to speak of the Duty, Piety and Benefit, of forbearing from them; that there was great Necessity that this Doctrine of Meekness, and patient Suffering of ill Usage, should be *fully* set forth, both to *Clergy* and *Laity*; that I had no more Reason to tell People that *Courts of Justice* were in themselves lawful, and such as might *justly* be appealed to in some Cases, than to tell them that it was lawful to live in this *Island*, and that they need not seek for a *Country* where there was no Laws nor Government to protect them. The Doctor has something like an excuse for the *Weakness* and *Injustice* of all the foregoing Remarks and Censures; they are to be considered only as *little Dashes* of his Pen upon Books, which he says 'are not considerable enough to be formally refuted.*' Something like this I remember was formerly said by the Bishop of *Bangor*, now Lord Bishop of *Winchester*, concerning my Letters to him. But his Lordship had the Prudence and Equity not to make *inconsiderate* Remarks upon Books, that he thought not inconsiderable enough to be formerly refuted by him. Into whose Head could it enter to think of *formally confuting Thomas à Kempis, Taylor's Life of Christ, or his Holy Living and Dying?* Or what must we think of his Piety, who should say, that he only forbore such a Work, because the Reasonings in those Books were too inconsiderable to be formally refuted? I desire no Authority for what I have written, but the Gospel, or I could soon show that everything in my Books that offends the Doctor, is again and again to be found, not only in these pious Authors, but in the Writings of the most eminent Saints through all Ages of the Church.

FINIS.

AN
A P P E A L

To all that Doubt, or Disbelieve
The Truths of the GOSPEL,
WHETHER
They be DEISTS, ARIANS, SOCINIANS,
Or *Nominal* Christians.

IN WHICH
The true Grounds and Reasons of the whole
Christian FAITH and LIFE are plainly and
fully demonstrated.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

To which are added,
Some Animadversions upon Dr.
Trapp's Late REPLY.

LONDON :

Printed for W. INNYS and J. RICHARDSON,
in *Pater Noster Row*. 1740.

An ADVERTISEMENT
to the READER.

I Have Nothing to say by way of Preface or Introduction. I only ask this Favour of the Reader, that he would not pass any Censure upon this Book, from only dipping into this, or that particular Part of it, but give it one fair Perusal in the Order it is written, and then I shall have neither Right, nor Inclination to complain of any Judgment he shall think fit to pass upon it.

An Appeal to all who Doubt the Truths of the Gospel.

Chapter I.

Of Creation in general. Of the Origin of the Soul. Whence Will and Thought are in the Creature. Why the Will is free. The Origin of Evil solely from the Creature. This World not a first, immediate Creation of God. How the World comes to be in its present State. The first Perfection of Man. All Things prove a Trinity in God. Man hath the triune Nature of God in Him. Arianism and Deism confuted by Nature. That Life is uniform through all Creatures. That there is but one kind of Death to be found in all Nature. The fallen Soul hath the Nature of Hell in it. Regeneration is a real Birth of a Divine Life in the Soul. That there is but one Salvation possible in Nature. This Salvation only to be had from Jesus Christ. All the Deist's Faith and Hope proved to be false.

IT has been an Opinion commonly received, though without any Foundation in the Light of Nature, or Scripture, that God created this whole visible World, and all Things in it, *out of Nothing*. Nay, that the Souls of Men, and the highest Orders of Beings, were created in the same Manner. The Scripture is very decisive against this Original of the Souls of Men. For *Moses* saith, 'God breathed

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'into Man (*Spiraculum Vitarum*) the Breath of Lives, and Man 'became a Living Soul.' Here the Notion of a Soul created *out of Nothing*, is in the plainest, strongest Manner rejected, by the first Written Word of God ; and no *Jew* or *Christian* can have the least Excuse for falling into such an Error ; here the highest and most Divine Original is not darkly, but openly, absolutely, and in the strongest Form of Expression ascribed to the Soul ; it came forth as a Breath of Life, or Lives, out from the Mouth of God, and therefore did not come out of the Womb of *Nothing*, but is what it is, and has what it has in itself, from, and out of the first and highest of all Beings.

For to say that God breathed forth into Man the Breath of Lives, by which He became a *Living Soul*, is directly saying, that *That* which was Life, Light, and Spirit in the living God, was breathed forth from Him to become the Life, Light and Spirit of a Creature. The Soul therefore being declared to be an Effluence from God, a *Breath* of God, must have the *Nature* and *Likeness* of God in it, and is, and can be nothing else, but something, or so much of the *Divine Nature*, become creaturely existing, or breathed forth from God, to stand before Him in the *Form* of a Creature.

When the Animals of this World were to be created, it was only said, Let the Earth, the Air, the Water bring forth Creatures after their kinds ; but when Man was to be brought forth, it was said, 'Let us make Man in our own Image and 'Likeness.' Is not this directly saying, Let Man have his Beginning and Being out of us, that He may be so related to us in his Soul and Spirit, as the Animals of this World are related to the Elements from which they are produced. Let Him so come forth from us, be so breathed out of us, that our triune, Divine Nature may be manifested in Him, that he may stand before us as a creaturely Image, Likeness, and Representative of that which we are in ourselves.

Now, from this original Doctrine of the Creation of Man, known to all the first Inhabitants of the World, and published in the Front of the first Written Word of God ; these great Truths have been more or less declared to all the Nations of the World. *First*, That all Mankind are the *created Offspring* of the One God. *Secondly*, That in all Men there is a Spirit or Breath of Lives, that did not begin to be *out of Nothing*, or was created out of Nothing ; but came from the true God into Man, as his *own Breath* of Life breathed into Him. *Thirdly*, That therefore there is in all Men, wherever dispersed over the Earth, a *Divine, immortal, never-ending* Spirit, that can have nothing of Death in it, but *must* live for ever, because it is the Breath of the *ever-*

living God. *Fourthly*, That by this immortal Breath, or Spirit of God in Man, all Mankind stand in the same Nearness of Relation to God, are all equally his Children, are all under the same Necessity of paying the same Homage of Love and Obedience to Him, all fitted to receive the same Blessing and Happiness from Him, all created for the same eternal Enjoyment of his Love and Presence with them, all equally called to worship and adore Him in Spirit and Truth, all equally capable of seeking and finding Him, of having a Blessed Union and Communion with Him.

These great Truths, the first Pillars of all true and Spiritual Religion, on which the Holy and Divine Lives of the ancient Patriarchs was supported, by which they worshipped God in a true and right Faith; these Truths, I say, were most *eminently* and *plainly* declared in the express Letter of the *Mosaic* Writings, here quoted. And no Writer, whether *Jewish* or *Christian*, has so plainly, so fully, so deeply laid open the true Ground, and Necessity of an *Eternal, never-ceasing Relation* between God, and all the Human Nature; no one has so incontestably asserted the *Immortality* of the Soul, or Spirit of Man; or so deeply laid open, and proved the Necessity of *one* Religion, *common* to all Human Nature, as the Legislator of the *Jewish Theocracy* has done. *Life and Immortality* are indeed justly said to be *brought to Light by the Gospel*; not only because they there stand in a new Degree of Light, largely explained, and much appealed to, and absolutely promised by the Son of God Himself, but chiefly because the precious *Means* and *Mysteries* of obtaining a *blessed* Life, and a *blessed* Immortality, were only revealed, or brought to Light by the Gospel.

But the incontestable *Ground* and *Reason* of an immortal Life, and eternal Relation between God, and the whole Human Nature, and which lays all Mankind under the same Obligations to the same true Worship of God, is most fully set forth by *Moses*, who alone tells us the *true Fact*; *How*, and *Why* Man is immortal in his Nature, *viz.*, because the Beginning of his Life was a Breath, breathed into Him from God; and for this End, that he might be a living Image and Likeness of God, created to partake of the Nature and Immortality of God.

This is the *great Doctrine* of the *Jewish* Legislator, and which justly places Him amongst the *greatest Preachers* of true Religion. *St. Paul* used a very powerful Argument to persuade the *Athenians* to own the true God, and the true Religion, when he told them, 'that God made the World and all Things therein; that He giveth Life and Breath, and all Things; that he hath made of *one Blood*, all Nations of Men to dwell on the Earth;

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‘that they should *all seek* the Lord, if haply they might feel ‘after, and find Him, seeing He is not far from any of us, *because ‘in Him we live, move, and have our Being.*’* And yet this Doctrine, which St. Paul preaches to the *Athenians*, is nothing else, but that *same Divine and Heavenly Instruction*, which He had learnt from *Moses*, which *Moses* openly and plainly taught all the *Jews*. The *Jewish Theocracy* therefore was by no means an *Intimation* to that People, that they had no Concern with the true God, but as Children of *this World*, under his temporal Protection or Punishment ; for their Lawgiver left them *no room* for such a Thought, because He had as plainly taught them their *eternal Nature and eternal Relation*, which they had to God in common with all Mankind ; as St. Paul did to the *Athenians*, who only set before them that *very Doctrine* that *Moses* taught all the *Jews*. The great End of the *Jewish Theocracy* was to show, both to *Jew and Gentile*, the absolute, uncontrollable Power of the one God, by such a *Covenanted Interposition* of his Providence, that all the World might know, that the *one God*, from whom both *Jew and Gentile* were fallen away, by departing from the Faith and Religion of their First Fathers, was the only God, from whom all Mankind could receive either Blessing or Cursing.

This was the great Thing intended to be proclaimed to all the World by *this Theocracy, viz.*, that only the God of *Israel* had Power to save or destroy, to punish or reward, according to his Pleasure ; and that therefore all the Gods of the Heathens, were mere Vanity. If therefore any *Jews*, by *reason* of those extraordinary Temporal Blessings and Cursings which they received under their Theocracy, grew *grossly ignorant*, or dully senseless of their eternal Nature, and eternal Relation to God, and of that *one true Religion*, which by Nature they were obliged to observe in common with all Mankind ; if they took God only to be their *local or tutelary Deity*, and themselves to be only Animals of this World ; such a Grossness of Belief was no more to be charged upon their great Lawgiver, *Moses*, than if they had believed, that a Golden Calf was their true God. But to return to the Creation.

2. It is the same Impossibility for a Thing to be created *out of Nothing*, as to be created *by Nothing*.† It is no more a Part, or Prerogative of God’s Omnipotence to create a Being out of Nothing, than to make a Thing to be, without any one *Quality* of Being in it ; or to make, that there should be *Three*, where

* Acts xvii. 24.

† See *Spirit of Prayer*, Part II., page 58, &c. *Way to Divine Knowledge*, page 247, &c.

there is neither *Two*, nor *One*. Every Creature is nothing else, but *Nature* put into a *certain Form* of Existence ; and therefore a Creature not formed *out of Nature*, is a Contradiction. A *Circle*, or a *Square* cannot be made *out of Nothing*, nor could any Power bring them into Existence, but because there is an *Extension* in Nature, that can be put into the *Form* of a Circle, or a Square : But if dead Figures cannot by any Power be made *out of Nothing*, who sees not the Impossibility of making Living Creatures, Angels, and the Souls of Men out of Nothing ?

3. *Thinking* and *Willing* are Eternal, they never began to be. Nothing can think, or will *now*, in which there was not Will and Thought from *all Eternity*. For it is as possible for Thought *in General* to begin to be, as for *That* which thinks in a particular Creature to *begin* to be of a *Thinking Nature* : therefore the Soul, which is a *Thinking, Willing Being* is come forth, or created *out of That* which hath *Willed* and *Thought* in God, from all Eternity. The *created Soul* is a Creature of *Time*, and had its Beginning on the *Sixth Day* of the Creation ; but the *Essences* of the Soul, which were then formed into a Creature, and into a State of Distinction from God, had been in God from all Eternity, or they could not have been *breathed* forth from God into the Form of a living Creature.

And herein lies the true Ground and Depth of the *uncontrollable Freedom* of our Will and Thoughts : They must have a *Self-motion*, and *Self-direction*, because they came out of the *Self-existent* God. They are eternal, Divine Powers, that never began *to be*, and therefore cannot begin to be in Subjection to any Thing. That which *thinks* and *wills* in the Soul, is *That very same* unbeginning Breath which *thought* and *willed* in God, before it was breathed into the Form of an human Soul ; and therefore it is, that Will and Thought cannot be bounded or constrained.

Herein also appears the high Dignity, and never-ceasing Perpetuity of our Nature. The *Essences* of our Souls can never cease to be, because they never began to be : and nothing can live eternally, but that which hath lived from all Eternity. The *Essences* of our Soul were a Breath in God before they became a Living Soul, they lived in God before they lived in the created Soul, and therefore the Soul is a Partaker of the Eternity of God, and can never cease to be. Here, O Man, behold the great Original, and the high State of thy Birth ; Here let all that is within thee praise thy God, who has brought Thee into so high a State of Being, who has given Thee Powers as eternal, and boundless as his own Attributes, that there might be no End or Limits of thy Happiness in Him. Thou beganest as *Time*

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began, but as Time was in Eternity before it became *Days* and *Years*, so Thou wast in God before Thou wast brought into the Creation: And as Time is neither a *Part* of Eternity, nor *broken* off from it, yet come *out of it*; so thou art not a *Part* of God, nor broken off from Him, yet born out of Him. Thou shouldst only will that which God willeth, only love that which He loveth, co-operate, and unite with Him in the whole Form of thy Life; because all that Thou art, all that Thou hast, is only a Spark of his own Life and Spirit derived into Thee. If thou desirest, inclinest, and turnest to God, as the *Flowers* of the Field desire, and turn towards the Sun, all the Blessings of the Deity will spring up in Thee; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, will make their Abode with Thee. If thou turnest in towards thyself, to live to thyself, to be happy in the Workings of an *own Will*, to be rich in the Sharpness and Acuteness of thy *own Reason*, thou chooseth to be a *Weed*, and canst only have such a Life, Spirit and Blessing from God, as a *Thistle* has from the *Sun*. But to return.

4. To suppose a *Willing, Understanding* Being, created *out of Nothing*, is a great Absurdity. For as *Thinking* and *Willing* must have *always* been from all Eternity, or they could never have been either in Eternity, or Time; so, wherever they are found in any particular, finite Beings, they must of all Necessity, be direct Communications, or Propagations of *that Thinking and Willing*, which never could begin to be.

The Creation therefore of a Soul, is not the Creation of Thinking and Willing, or the making That to *be*, and to *think*, which before had Nothing of Being, or Thought; but it is the Bringing the *Powers* of Thinking and Willing out of their *Eternal State* in the One God, into a *Beginning State* of a Self-conscious Life, distinct from God. And this is God's omnipotent, creating Ability, that He can make the *Powers* of his *own Nature* become Creatural, Living, Personal Images of what He is in Himself, in a State of *distinct Personality* from Him: So that the Creature is one, in its finite, limited State, as God is one, and yet hath nothing in it, but that which was in God before it came into it: For the Creature, be it what it will, high or low, can be Nothing else, but a limited Participation of the Nature of the Creator. Nothing can be in the Creature, but what came from the Creator, and the Creator can give nothing to the Creature, but that which it hath in itself to give. And if Beings could be created out of Nothing, the Whole Creation could be no more a Proof of the Being of God, than if it had sprung up of itself out of Nothing: For if they are brought into Being out of Nothing, then they can have *Nothing of God* in

them ; and so can bear *no Testimony* of God ; but are as good a Proof, that there is no God, as that there is one. But if they have *any Thing* of God in them, then they cannot be said to be created out of Nothing.

5. That the Souls of Men were not created out of Nothing, but are born out of an *Eternal Original*, is plain from hence ; from that *Delight* in, and *Desire* of *Eternal Existence*, which is so strong and natural to the Soul of Man. For nothing can delight in, or desire Eternity, or so much as form a *Notion* of it, or *think* upon it, or any way reach after it, but that alone which is generated from it, and come out of it. For it is a Self-evident Truth, that Nothing can look higher, or further back, than into its *own Original* ; and therefore, Nothing can look or reach back into Eternity, but that which came out of it. This is as certain, as that a *Line* reaches, and can reach no further back, than to that *Point* from whence it arose.

Our bodily Eyes are born out of the *firmamental Light* of this World, and therefore they can look no further than the *Firmament* : But our Thoughts know no Bounds ; therefore they are come out of that which is boundless. The Eyes of our Minds can look as easily backwards into that Eternity which always hath been, as into that which ever shall be ; and therefore it is plain, that *That* which *Thinks* and *Wills* in us, which so easily, so delightfully, so naturally penetrates into all Eternity, has always had an Eternal Existence, and is only a Ray or Spark of the Divine Nature, brought out into the Form of a Creature, or a limited, personal Existence, by the Creating Power of God.

6. Again. Every Soul shrinks back, and is frightened at the very Thought of falling into Nothing. Now this undeniably proves, that the Soul was not created *out of* Nothing. For it is an Eternal Truth, spoken by all Nature, that every Thing strongly aspires after, and cannot be easy, till it finds and enjoys that Original out of which it arose. If the Soul therefore was brought forth out of Nothing, all its *Being* would be a *Burden* to it ; it would want to be dissolved, and to be delivered from every kind and Degree of *Sensibility* ; and nothing could be so sweet and agreeable to it, as to think of falling back into *That Nothingness*, out of which it was called forth by its Creation. Thus is the Eternal, immortal, Divine Nature of the Soul, which the *Schools* prove with so much Difficulty one of the most obvious, self-evident Truths in all Nature. For Nothing but that which is Eternal in its own Nature, can have the least Thought about Eternity.

If a *Beast* had not the *Nature* of the Earth in it, Nothing that is on the Earth, or springs out of it, could be in the least Degree

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agreeable to it, or desired by it. If the Soul had not the *Nature* of Eternity in it, Nothing that is eternal could give it the *smallest* Pleasure, or be able to make *any kind* of Impression upon it. For as Nothing can taste, or relish, or enter into the agreeable Sensations of this World, but that which hath the *Nature* of this World in it; so Nothing can taste, or relish, or look into Eternity with any kind of Pleasure, but that which hath the *Nature* of Eternity in it.

7. If the Soul was not born, or created *out of* God, it could have no *Happiness* in God, no *Desire*, nor any *Possibility* of enjoying Him. If it had *nothing of God in it*, it must stand in the *utmost Distance* of Contrariety to him, and be utterly incapable of living, moving, and having its Being in God: For every Thing must have the *Nature* of That, out of which it was created, and must live, and have its Being in that *Root* or *Ground* from whence it sprung. If therefore there was nothing of God in the Soul, nothing that is in God could do the Soul any Good, or have *any kind* of Communication with it; but the *Gulf* of Separation between God and the Soul, would be even greater than that which is between Heaven and Hell.

8. But let us rejoice, that our Soul is a *Thinking, Willing* Being, full of Thoughts, Cares, Longings, and Desires of Eternity; for *this* is our *full Proof*, that our Descent is from God Himself, that we are born *out of* Him, breathed forth *from him*; that our Soul is of an Eternal Nature, made a Thinking, Willing, Understanding Creature *out of* That which hath *Willed* and *Thought* in God from all Eternity; and therefore must, for ever and ever, be a Partaker of the Eternity of God.

And here you may behold the sure Ground of the absolute Impossibility of the *Annihilation* of the Soul. Its Essences never began to be, and therefore can never cease to be; they had an *Eternal Reality* before they were in, or became a distinct Soul, and therefore they must have the same Eternal Reality in it. It was the *Eternal Breath* of God before it came into Man, and therefore the Eternity of God must be *inseparable* from it. It is no more a Property of the Divine Omnipotence to be able to annihilate a Soul, than to be able to make an *Eternal Truth* become a *Fiction* of Yesterday: And to think it a Lessening of the Power of God, to say, that he cannot annihilate the Soul, is as absurd, as to say, that it is a Lessening of the *Light* of the *Sun*, if it cannot *destroy*, or *darken* its own Rays of Light.

O, dear Reader, stay a while in this important Place, and learn to know thyself: All thy Senses make Thee to know and feel, that thou standest in the *Vanity* of *Time*; but every Motion, Stirring, Imagination, and Thought of thy Mind,

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whether in *fancying, fearing, or loving* Everlasting Life, is the same *infallible* Proof, that Thou standest in the *Midst of Eternity*, art an Offspring and Inhabitant of it, and must be for ever inseparable from it. Ask when the *first Thought* sprung up, find out the Birth-Day of Truth, and then thou wilt have found out, when the Essences of thy Soul first began to be. Were not the Essences of thy Soul as old, as *Unbeginning*, as *unchangeable*, as *Everlasting* as Truth itself, Truth would be at the *same Distance* from Thee, as absolutely *unfit* for Thee, as utterly unable to have *any Communion* with Thee, as to be the *Food* of a *Worm*.

The *Ox* could not feed upon the *Grass*, or receive any Delight or Nourishment from it, unless Grass and the Ox had *one and the same* Earthly Nature and Original; Thy Mind could receive no Truth, feel no Delight and Satisfaction in the Certainty, Beauty, and Harmony of it, unless Truth and the Mind stood both in the same Place, had *one and the same* unchangeable Nature, Unbeginning Original. If there will come a Time, when *Thought itself* shall cease, when all the Relations and Connections of Truth shall be *untied*; then, but not till then, shall the Knot, or Band of thy Soul's Life be unloosed. It is a Spark of the Deity, and therefore has the Unbeginning, Unending Life of God in it. It knows nothing of Youth, or Age, because it is born Eternal. It is a Life that must burn for ever, either as a Flame of Light and Love in the Glory of the Divine Majesty, or as a miserable Firebrand in that God, which is a *Consuming Fire*.

9. It is impossible, that this World, in the State and Condition it is now in, should have been an *immediate* and *Original* Creation of God: This is as impossible, as that God should create Evil, either *Natural* or *Moral*. That this World hath Evil in all its Parts; that its Matter is in a corrupt, disordered State, full of Grossness, Disease, Impurity, Wrath, Death and Darkness, is as evident, as that there is Light, Beauty, Order and Harmony everywhere to be found in it. Therefore it is as impossible, that this outward State and Condition of Things, should be a *first* and *immediate* Work of God, as that there should be Good and Evil in God Himself. All Storms and Tempests, every Fierceness of Heat, every Wrath of Cold proves with the *same Certainty*, that outward Nature is not a *first Work of God*, as the *Selfishness, Envy, Pride, Wrath, and Malice* of Devils, and Men proves, that they are not in the *first State* of their Creation. As no Kind or Degree of *Moral Evil* could possibly have its Cause in, or from God, so there cannot be the least Shadow of *Imperfection* and *Disorder* in outward

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Nature, but what must have sprung up in the *same manner*, and from the *same Causes*, as Sickness and corrupt Flesh is come into the Human Body, namely, from the Sin of the Creature. Storms, Tempests, Gravel, Stone, sour and dead Earth are the *same Things*, the *same Diseases*, the *same Effects* of Sin, produced in the *same manner* in the outward Body of Nature, as corrupt Flesh, *Fevers, Dropsies, Plagues, Gravel, Stone, and Gout*, are produced in the outward Body of Man. For That, and That only which produces Stone in the *Body of Man*, did produce Stone in the *outward Nature*, as shall plainly appear by and by. For Nature within, and without Man, is *one* and the *same*, and has but one and the same way of Working; a *Stone* in the Body, and a Stone out of the Body of Man, proceeds from one and the *same Disorder* of Nature.

When therefore you see a *diseased, gouty, leprous, asthmatical, scorbutic* Man, you can with the utmost Certainty say, this is not that Human Body which God *first* created in Paradise; so, when you see the Disorders of *Heat and Cold*, the *poisonous Earth, unfruitful Seasons*, and *malignant Qualities* of outward Nature, you can with the same Certainty affirm, this State of Nature is not a *first* Creation of God, but *that same* must have happened to it, which has happened to the Body of Man. For *dark, sour, hard, dead Earth*, can no more be a first, immediate Creation of God, than a *Wrathful Devil*, as such, can be created by Him. For dark, sour, dead Earth is as disordered in its kind, as the Devils are, and has as certainly lost its *first* heavenly Condition and Nature, as the Devils have lost theirs. But now, as in Man, the *little World*, there is Excellency and Perfection enough to prove, that Human Nature is the Work of an all-perfect Being, yet, so much Impurity and Disease of corrupt Flesh and Blood, as undeniably shows, that Sin has almost quite spoiled the Work of God. So, in the *great World*, the Footsteps of an infinite Wisdom in the Order and Harmony of the Whole, sufficiently appears; yet, the Disorders, Tumults, and Evils of Nature, plainly demonstrate, that the present Condition of this World is only the *Remains* or *Ruins*, first, of a *Heaven* spoiled by the Fall of Angels, and then of a *Paradise* lost by the Sin of Man. So that Man, and the World in which He lives, lie both in the *same State* of Disorder and Impurity, have both the *same Marks* of Life and Death in them, both bring forth the same sort of Evils, both want a Redeemer, and have need of the same kind of Death and Resurrection, before they can come to their first State of Purity and Perfection.

10. That this outward World was not created *out of Nothing*, is plainly taught by St. Paul, who declares, *Rom. i. 20*, that the

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Creation of the World is out of the *Invisible Things of God*; so that the outward Condition and Frame of Visible Nature, is a plain Manifestation of that Spiritual World from whence it is descended. For as every *Outside* necessarily supposes an *Inside*, and as temporal *Light* and *Darkness* must be the Product of *Eternal Light* and *Darkness*, so this outward, visible State of Things necessarily supposes some inward, invisible State, from whence it is come into this Degree of Outwardness. Thus all that is on Earth is only a Change or Alteration of *something* that was in Heaven: And Heaven itself is Nothing else but the *first glorious Out-birth*, the *Majestic Manifestation*, the *beatific Visibility* of the One God in Trinity. And thus we find out, how this temporal Nature is related to God; it is only a *gross Out-birth* of that which is an *Eternal Nature*, or a *blessed Heaven*, and stands only in such a Degree of Distance from it, as *Water* does to *Air*; and this is the Reason why the *last Fire* will, and must turn this gross, Temporal Nature into its first, heavenly State. But to suppose the gross Matter of this World to be made *out of Nothing*, or to be a Grossness that has proceeded from Nothing, or compacted Nothing, is more absurd, than to suppose *Ice* that has *congealed* Nothing, a *Yard* that is not made up of *Inches*, or a *Pound* that is not the Product of *Ounces*.

11. And indeed to suppose this, or any other material World to be made out of Nothing, has all the same Absurdities in it, as the supposing *Angels* and *Spirits*, to be created out of Nothing.

All the Qualities of all Beings are *Eternal*; no *real Quality* or *Power* can appear in any Creature, but what has its *eternal Root*, or *generating Cause* in the Creator. If a Quality could *begin* to be in a Creature, which did not *always* exist in the Creator, it would be no Absurdity to say, that a Thing might begin to be, without any Cause either of its Beginning, or Being. All Qualities, Properties, or whatever can be affirmed of God, are *self-existent*, and *necessary existent*. Self and necessary Existence is not a *particular* Attribute of God, but is the *general Nature* of every Thing that can be affirmed of God. All Qualities and Properties are *self-existent* in God: Now, they cannot change their Nature when they are derived, or formed into Creatures, but must have the *same Self-birth*, and necessary Existence in the Creature, which they had in the Creator. The Creature *begins* to be, when, and as it pleased God; but the *Qualities* which are become *Creaturely*, and which constitute the Creature, are *self-existent*, just as the same Qualities are in God. Thus, *Thinking*, *Willing*, and *Desire* can have no *outward Maker*, their Maker is *in themselves*, they are self-existent Powers *wherever*

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they are, whether in God, or in the Creature, and as they form themselves in God, so they form themselves in the Creature. But now, if no Quality can *begin* to be, if all the Qualities and Powers of Creatures must be *eternal* and *necessary* existent in God, before they can have any Existence in any Creature; then it undeniably follows, that every created Thing must have its whole Nature *from*, and *out of* the Divine Nature.

All Qualities are not only good, but *infinitely perfect*, as they are in God; and it is *absolutely* impossible, that they should have any *Evil* or *Defect* in them, as they are in the One God, who is the great and *Universal All*. Because, where *all Properties* are, there must necessarily be an *all possible perfection*: And that which must *always* have *All* in itself, must, by an *absolute* Necessity, be *always all perfect*. But the same Qualities, thus infinitely good and perfect in God, may become *imperfect* and *evil* in the Creature; because in the Creature, being limited and finite, they may be *divided* and *separated* from one another by the Creature itself. Thus *Strength* and *Fire* in the Divine Nature, are Nothing else but the *Strength* and *Flame of Love*, and never can be anything else; but in the Creature, *Strength* and *Fire* may be separated from *Love*, and then they are become an *Evil*, they are *Wrath* and *Darkness*, and all *Mischief*: And thus that same *Strength* and *Quality*, which in Creatures making a right Use of their *own Will*, or *Self-motion*, becomes their *Goodness* and *Perfection*, doth in Creatures making a wrong Use of their Will, become their evil and mischievous Nature: And it is a Truth that deserves well to be considered, that there is *no Goodness* in any Creature, from the highest to the lowest, but in its *continuing* to be such an *Union of Qualities and Powers*, as God has brought together in its Creation.

In the highest Order of created Beings, this is their standing in their *first Perfection*, this is their *Fulfilling* the whole Will or Law of God, this is their *Piety*, their *Song* of Praise, their *Eternal Adoration* of their great Creator. On the other hand, there is no Evil, no Guilt, no Deformity in any Creature, but in its *dividing* and *separating* itself from something which God had given to be in Union with it. This, and This alone, is the *Whole Nature* of all Good, and all Evil in the Creature, both in the *moral* and *natural* World, in Spiritual and Material Things. For Instance, *dark*, *fiery Wrath* in the Soul, is not only very like, but it is the very self-same Thing in the Soul which a *Wrathful Poison* is in the Flesh. Now, the Qualities of *Poison* are in themselves, all of them *good Qualities*, and necessary to *every Life*; but they are become a *Poisonous Evil*, because they are *separated* from some other Qualities. Thus also the Qualities

of *Fire* and *Strength* that constitute an *Evil Wrath* in the Soul, are in themselves very *good Qualities*, and necessary to every good Life ; but they are become an evil Wrath, because separated from some other Qualities with which they should be united.

The Qualities of the *Devil* and all fallen Angels, are good Qualities ; they are the *very same* which they received from their infinitely perfect Creator, the very same which *are*, and *must be* in all heavenly Angels ; but they are an hellish, abominable Malignity in them *now*, because they have, by their *own Self-motion*, separated them from the *Light* and *Love* which should have kept them glorious Angels.

And here may be seen at once, in the clearest Light, the *true Origin* of all Evil in the Creation, without the least Imputation upon the Creator. God could not *possibly* create a Creature to be an *infinite All*, like Himself: God could not bring any Creature into Existence, but by deriving into it the *self-existent, self-generating, self-moving* Qualities of his own Nature : For the Qualities must be in the Creature, *that* which they were in the Creator, only in a State of Limitation ; and therefore, every Creature must be *finite*, and must have a *Self-motion*, and so must be capable of moving right and wrong, of uniting or dividing from what it will, or of falling from that State in which it ought to stand : But as every Quality, in every Creature, both within and without itself, is equally *good*, and equally *necessary* to the Perfection of the Creature, since there is nothing that is evil in it, nor can become evil to the Creature, but *from itself*, by its *separating That* from itself, with which it can, and ought to be united, it plainly follows, that *Evil* can no more be charged upon God, than *Darkness* can be charged upon the *Sun* ; because every Quality is *equally good*, every Quality of Fire is as good as every Quality of Light, and only becomes an Evil to that Creature, who, by his *own Self-motion*, has separated Fire from the Light in his own Nature.

12. If a delicious, fragrant *Fruit* had a Power of separating itself from that rich *Spirit*, fine *Taste*, *Smell*, and *Colour* which it receives from the Virtue of the *Sun*, and the Spirit of the *Air* ; or if it could in the *Beginning* of its Growth, turn away from the *Sun*, and receive no Virtue from it, then it would stand in its own first Birth of *Wrath*, *Sourness*, *Bitterness*, and *Astringency*, just as the *Devils* do, who have *turned back* into their own dark Root, and rejected the *Light* and *Spirit* of God : So that the hellish Nature of a Devil is Nothing else, but its own *first Forms* of Life, withdrawn, or separated from the heavenly Light and Love ; just as the *Sourness*, *Astringency*, and *Bitterness* of a Fruit, are Nothing else but the *first Forms*

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of its own vegetable Life before it has reached the Virtue of the *Sun*, and the Spirit of the *Air*.

And as a *Fruit*, if it had a *Sensibility* of itself, would be full of Torment, as soon as it was shut up in the *first Forms* of its Life, in its own *Astringency*, *Sourness*, and Stinging *Bitterness* : So the Angels, when they had *turned back* into these very same *first Forms* of their own Life, and broken off from the Heavenly Light and Love of God, they became their own Hell. No *Hell* was made for them, no *new Qualities* came into them, no *Vengeance* or *Pains* from the God of Love fell upon them ; they only stood in that State of *Division* and *Separation* from the Son, and Holy Spirit of God, which, by their own Motion, they had made for themselves. They had nothing in them, but what they had from God, the *first Forms* of an Heavenly Life, Nothing but what the most heavenly Beings have, and must have, to all Eternity ; but they had them in a State of Self-torment, because they *had separated them* from that *Birth* of Light and Love, which alone could make them glorious Sons, and blessed Images of the Holy Trinity.

The same strong *Desire*, fiery *Wrath*, and Stinging *Motion* is in Holy Angels, that is in Devils, just as the same *Sourness*, *Astringency*, and biting *Bitterness* is in a full ripened Fruit, which was there before it received the Riches of the Light and Spirit of the *Air*. In a ripened Fruit, its first Sourness, Astringency, and Bitterness is not *lost*, nor *destroyed*, but becomes the *real Cause* of all its rich *Spirit*, fine *Taste*, fragrant *Smell*, and beautiful *Colour* ; take away the *working, contending* Nature of these *first Qualities*, and you *annihilate* the Spirit, Taste, Smell, and Virtue of the Fruit, and there would be nothing left for the *Sun* and *Spirit* of the *Air* to enrich.

Just in the same manner, that which in a Devil is an evil *Selfishness*, a wrathful *Fire*, a Stinging *Motion*, is in an Holy Angel, the *everlasting Kindling* of a Divine Life, the *strong Birth* of an Heavenly Love, it is a *real Cause* of an ever-springing, ever-triumphing Joyfulness, an ever-increasing Sensibility of Bliss.

Take away the *working, contending* Nature of these first Qualities, which in a Devil, are only a *Serpentine Selfishness*, *Wrath*, *Fire*, and Stinging *Motion* ; take away these, I say, from Holy Angels, and you leave them neither *Light*, nor *Love*, nor heavenly Glory, Nothing for the Birth of the Son, and Holy Spirit of God to rise up in.

So that here you may see this glorious Truth, that the Love and Goodness of God is as *plain* and *undeniable* in having given to the fallen Angels, those *very Qualities* and Powers which are

now *their Hell*, as in giving the first Sourness, Astringency and Bitterness to *Fruits*, which alone makes them capable of their delicious Spirit, Taste, Colour, and Smell.

13. And thus you see the uniform Life of all the Creatures of God; how they are all raised, enriched, and blessed by the *same Life* of God, derived into different Kingdoms of Creatures. For the Beginnings and Progress of a perfect Life in Fruits, and the Beginnings and Progress of a perfect Life in Angels, are not only like to one another, but are the very same Thing, or the working of the very *same Qualities*, only in different Kingdoms. *Astringency* in a *Fruit*, is the very same Quality, and does the same Work in a Fruit, that *attracting Desire* does in a Spiritual Being; it is the same *Beginner, Former, and Supporter* of a Creaturely Life in the one, as in the other. No Creature in Heaven, or Earth, can *begin* to be, but by this *Astringency*, or *Desire*, being made the Ground of it: And yet this Astringency kept from the Virtue of the *Sun*, can only produce a *poisonous Fruit*, and this *astringent Desire* in an Angel, turned from the Light of God, can only make a *Devil*. The biting, stinging Bitterness of a Fruit, if you could add *Thought* to it, would be the very *gnawing Envy* of the Devil: And the envious Motion in the Devil's Nature, would be Nothing else but that Stinging Bitterness which is in a Fruit, if you could *take Thought* from the Devil's Motion.

14. From this Attraction, Astringency, or Desire, which is *one* and the *same* Quality in every individual Thing, which is the *first Form* of Being and Life, the very *Ground* of every Creature, from the highest Angel to the lowest Vegetable, we are led by an unerring Thread to the *first Desire*, or that Desire which is in the *Divine Nature*. For as this Attraction, or astringent Desire is in Spiritual and corporeal Things, one and the same Quality, working in the same Manner, so is it *one* and the *same* Quality with that *first, unbeginning Desire*, which is in the Divine Nature.

That there is an attracting Desire in the Divine Nature, is undeniable, because *Attraction* is essential to all Bodies; and *Desire*, which is the same Quality, is absolutely inseparable from all intelligible Beings; therefore, that which is necessarily existent in the Creature, upon the Supposition of its Creation, must necessarily be in the Creator; because no inherent, operative Quality can be in the Creature, unless the same kind of Quality had always been in the Creator: Therefore, Attraction or Desire, which are inseparable from every created Being and Life, are only various *Participations* of the Divine Desire; or *Emanations* from it, formed into different Kingdoms of

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Creatures, and working in all of them according to their respective Natures.

In *Vegetables*, it is that Attraction, or Desire, which brings every growing Thing to its highest Perfection: In Angels, it is that blessed Hunger, by which they are filled with the Divine Nature: In Devils, it is turned into that Serpentine Selfishness, or crooked Desire, which makes them a Hell and Torment to themselves.

15. On the other hand, as we thus prove *a posteriori*, from a View of the Creature, that there must be an *attracting* Desire in the Divine Nature; so we can prove *a priori* also, from a Consideration of God, that there must be an *attracting Desire* in every Thing that ever was, or can be created by God: For nothing can come into Being, but because God *wills* and *desires* it; therefore the *Desire* of God is the Creator, the Original of every Thing. The *Creating Will*, or *Desire* of God, is not a *distant*, or *separate* Thing, as when a Man wills or desires something to be done, or removed at a Distance from him; but it is an Omnipresent, working Will and Desire, which is itself, the Beginning and Forming of the Thing desired. Our own Will, and desirous Imagination, when they work and create in us a *settled Aversion*, or *fixed Love* of anything, resemble in some Degree, the *Creating Power* of God, which makes Things out of itself, or its own working Desire. And our Will, and working Imagination could not have the Power that it has now even after the Fall, but because it is a Product, or Spark of that *first* Divine Will or Desire which is omnipotent.

16. Here therefore we have plainly found the true Original, or *first Source* of all Things. The *Desire* in God is the first *Former*, *Generator*, and *Creator* of all Things; they are all the *Births* of this omnipotent, working Desire; for every Thing that comes into Being, must have the Nature of that Power that formed it, and therefore the Nature of every Creature must stand in an *attractive Desire*, that is, every Thing must be a *Created*, *attractive Power*; because it is the *Birth*, or *Product* of a Desire, or attractive Power, and could neither come into, nor continue in Being, but because it was generated not only *by*, but *out of* an attracting Desire. And herein lies the *Band*, or *Knot* of all created Being and Life.

17. *Will* or *Desire* in the Deity, is justly considered as God the *Father*, who from Eternity to Eternity, *wills* or *generates* only the *Son*, from which eternal Generating, the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds: And this is the infinite Perfection or Fulness of Beatitude of the Life of the Triune God.

Now, as the unbeginning, eternal Desire is in God, so is the

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created Desire in the Creature ; it stands in the *same Tendency*, hath the Nature of the Divine Desire, because it is a *Branch* out of it, or created from it. In the Deity, the Eternal Will or Desire, is a *Desiring*, or *Generating* the Son, whence the Holy Spirit proceeds ; the Desire that is come out of God into the *Form* of a Creature, has the *same Tendency*, it is a Desire of the Son and Holy Spirit. And every created Thing in Heaven and Earth attains its Perfection, by its Gaining in some Degree, the *Birth* of the Son and Holy Spirit of God in it : For all Attraction and Desire in the Creature, *generates* in them as it did in God ; and so the Birth of the Son and Holy Spirit of God arises in *some Degree*, or other, in all Creatures that are in their proper State of Perfection.

18. And here lies the Ground of that plain, and most fundamental Doctrine of Scripture, that the Father is the *Creator*, the Son the *Regenerator*, and the Holy Spirit the *Sanctifier*. For what is this but saying in the plainest manner, that as there are *Three* in God, so there must be *Three* in the Creature, that as the *Three* stand related to one another in God, so must they stand in the same Relation in the Creature. For if a threefold Life of God must have distinct Shares in the Creation, Blessing, and Perfection of Man, is it not a Demonstration, that the Life of Man must stand in the same threefold State, and have such a Trinity in it, as has its true Likeness to that Trinity which is in God ?

That which *generates* in God, must generate in the Creature ; and that which is *generated* in God, must be generated in the Creature ; and that which *proceeds* from this Generation in the Deity, must *proceed* from this Generation in the Creature : And therefore, the same *threefold Life* must be in the Creature in the same manner as it is in God. For a Creature that can only exist, and be blessed by the *distinct Operation* of a Triune God upon it, must have the same Triune Nature that is answerable to it. And herein lies our true, and easy, and sound, and edifying Knowledge and Belief of the Mystery of a Trinity in Unity : And this is all that the Scripture teaches us concerning it. It is not a Doctrine that requires learned or nice Speculations, in order to be rightly apprehended by us. But when with the Scriptures, we believe the Father to be our *Creator*, the Son our *Regenerator*, and the Holy Spirit the *Sanctifier* ; then we are learned enough in this Mystery, and begin to know the Triune God in the same Manner in *Time*, that we shall know him in *Eternity*.

And the Reason why this great Mystery of a Trinity in the Deity is thus revealed to us, and the Necessity of a Baptism in

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the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, laid upon us, is this ; it is to show us, that the Divine, Triune Life of God is lost in us, and that nothing less than a Birth from the Son and Holy Spirit of God in us, can restore us to our first Likeness to that Triune God, who at first created us. This I have fully shown in the little *Treatise upon Regeneration*.

19. When Man was created in his Original Perfection, the Holy Trinity was his *Creator* ; the *Breath of Lives*, which became a *Living Soul*, was the Breath of the *Triune God* : But when Man began to *will*, and *desire*, that is, to *generate* contrary to the Deity, then the Life of the Triune God *extinguished* in him.

The *Desire* in Man being turned from God, lost the *Birth* of the Son, and the *Proceeding* of the Holy Spirit ; and so fell into, or under the Light and Spirit of this World : That is, of a *Paradisaical Man*, enjoying Union and Communion with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and living on Earth in such Enjoyment of God, as the *Angels* live in Heaven, he became an *Earthly Creature*, subject to the Dominion of this outward World, capable of all its evil Influences, subject to its Vanity and Mortality ; and as to his outward Life, stood only in the highest Rank of *Animals*. This and This alone, is the true *Nature* and *Degree* of the *Fall* of Man ; it was neither more nor less than this. It was a *Falling out of one World*, or *Kingdom*, into *another*, it was changing the Life, Light and Spirit of God, for the Light and Spirit of this World. Thus it was that *Adam* died the very Day of his Transgression, he died to all the Influences and Operations of the Kingdom of God upon him, as we die to the Influences of this World, when the Soul leaves the Body ; and, on the other hand, all the Influences, Operations and Powers of the Elements of this Life became opened in him, as they are in every Animal at its Birth into this World.

All other Accounts of that Fall, which *only* suppose the Loss of some Moral Perfection, or Natural Acuteness of his Rational Powers, are not only senseless Fictions, but are an express Denial of the Old and New Testament Account of it ; for the Old Testament expressly says, that *Adam* was to *die* the *Day* of his Transgression, and therefore it is certain, that He then did die, and that the Fall was his losing his first Life : And to say that he did not die to that first Life in which he was created, is the same Denial of Scripture, as to say, that he did not eat of the forbidden Tree.

Again, the same Scripture assures us, that after the *Fall*, his *Eyes were opened* ; I suppose this is a Proof, that before the *Fall*, they were *shut*. And what is this, but saying in the plainest manner, that before the Fall, the *Life*, *Light* and *Spirit* of this

World, were *shut* out of him? and that the Opening of his Eyes, was only another way of saying, that the Life and Light of this World were opened in him?

If an *Angel*, or any Inhabitant of Heaven, was to be sent of a Message into this World, it must be supposed, that neither the Darkness, nor Light of this World could act according to their Nature upon him; and therefore, though he was here, he must be said not to have the *opened Eyes* of this World: But if this Heavenly Messenger should be taken with our Manner of Life, should be in Doubts about returning to Heaven, and long to have such Flesh and Blood as ours is, as earnestly as *Adam* longed to eat of the earthly Tree; and if by this Longing, he should actually obtain that which he desired; must it not then be said of him, when he had got this new Nature, *his Eyes were opened*, to see *Light* and *Darkness*; and that only for this Reason, because the Heavenly Life was departed from him, and the Earthly Life of this World was opened in Him? And thus it was that *Adam* died, and thus his Eyes were opened.

Again, when his Eyes were thus opened, or the Light and Life of this World thus opened in him, he was immediately ashamed and shocked at the Sight of his own Body, and wanted to *hide* it from himself, and from the Sight of the Sun. Now, how could this have happened to him, if his Body had not undergone some very extraordinary Change, from a State of Glory and Perfection, to a lamentable Degree of Vileness and Impurity?

All the Terror at his fallen State, seems to arise from the sad Condition, in which he saw and felt his outward Body. This made him ashamed of himself; this made him tremble, at hearing the Voice of God; this made him creep behind the Trees, and endeavour to hide and cover his Body with Leaves.

And is not all this the same Thing, as if *Adam* had said, 'All my Sin, my Guilt, my Misery, and Shame, is published before Heaven and Earth, by this sad State and Condition in which my Body now appears.'

But now, what was this sad State and Condition of his Body? What did *Adam* see in the Manner and Form of it that filled him with such Confusion? Why, he only saw that he was fallen from his Paraisaical Glory, to have the same gross Flesh and Blood as the Beasts and Animals of this World have; which was, to bring forth an Offspring in the same earthly Manner, as they did. He could see, and be ashamed of no other Deformity in his Body, but that which he had in common with the Animals of this World; and therefore there was nothing else in his outward Form that He could be ashamed of; and yet it was his

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outward Form that filled him with Confusion. And is not this the greatest of all Proofs, that before his Fall, his Body had not *this Nature* and Condition of the Beasts in it? Is it not the same Thing, as if he had said, 'this Body which now makes me 'ashamed, and which I want to hide, though it be only with 'thin Leaves, because it brings me down amongst the Animals 'of this World, is not that first Body of Glory into which God at 'first breathed the Breath of Lives, and in which I became a 'Living Soul.'

Again, if *Adam's* Body had been of the same kind of Flesh and Blood as ours is now, only in a better State of Health and Vigour, How could he have been created Immortal? If he was not created Immortal, how can it be said, that Sin alone brought Mortality, or Death into human Nature? But if he had Immortality in his first created State, then he must have such a Body as none of the Elements, or Elementary Things of this World could act upon; for there is no Death in any Creature of this World, but what is brought upon it by that Strife and Destruction which the four Elements bring upon one another. But if Sin alone gave the Elements, and all Elementary Things their first Power of acting upon the Body of *Adam*; then it is plain, that before his Sin, he had not, could not have a Body of *such Flesh and Blood* as we now have, but that he stood, as to the *State, Nature, and Condition* of his outward Body, at as great a Distance and Difference from the Animals of this World, as Heaven does from Earth, and was created with Flesh and Blood as much exalted above, and superior to the Nature and Power of all the Elements, as the Beasts of this World are under them.

And herein plainly appears the true Sense of that saying, 'God made not Death,' that is, he made not *That* which is *mortal, or dying* in the Human Nature, but Sin alone formed and produced *That* in Man, which could, and must die like the Bodies of Beasts. *Death, and the Grave, and the Resurrection,* are all three, standing Proofs, that the Body of *bestial* Flesh and Blood, which we now have, at the Sight of which *Adam* was ashamed, which must die, which can rot in the Grave, which must not be seen after the Resurrection, was not that first Body, in which *Adam* appeared before God in Paradise: For if it is an undeniable Truth of Scripture, that this *Flesh and Blood cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*; it must be a Truth of the same Certainty, that *this Flesh and Blood* could not by God Himself be brought into Paradise; but that it must have the *same Original* with every other polluted Thing that is an Abomination in his Sight, or incapable of entering into the Kingdom of God.

20. That the Gospel also plainly shows, that Man was created in the Dignity and glorious Enjoyment of the Triune Life of God, and that his Fall, was a falling into the earthly Life of the Light and Spirit of this World, I have sufficiently proved from the greatest Articles of our Christian Faith, concerning the Necessity, Nature, and Manner of our Redemption, in the Book of *Christian Regeneration*. I have there shown, that Baptism in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, signifies Nothing but our being born again into this Triune Life of God.—That the Necessity of being born again of the *Word* or Son of God, of being born of the *Spirit*, or receiving Him as a Sanctifier of our newly raised Nature, plainly proves that what we lost by the Fall, was this Triune Life of God : He that denies this, denies the whole of the Christian Redemption.*

21. It has been already observed, that when Man was created in his Original Perfection, the Holy Trinity was his Creator ; but when Man was fallen, or had lost his first Divine Life, then there began a new Language of a *Redeeming* Religion. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were now to be considered, not as creating every Man as they created the Frst, but as *differently* concerned in raising the fallen Race of Mankind, to that first Likeness of the Holy Trinity in which their first Father was created : Hence it is, that the Scriptures speak of the Father, as *Drawing*, and *Calling* Men ; because the *Desire* which is from the Father's Nature, must be the first Mover, Stirrer, and Beginner. This Desire must be moved and brought into an *anguishing State*, and have the Agitation of a Fire that is *kindling* ; and then Men are truly *drawn* by the *Father*.

The Son of God is now considered as the *Regenerator* or Raiser of a new Birth in us ; because he enters a second Time into the Life of the Soul, that his own Nature and Likeness may be again generated in it, and that he may be *That* to the Soul in its State, *which* he is to the Father in the Deity.

The Holy Ghost is represented as the *Sanctifier*, or Finisher of the Divine Life restored in us ; because as in the Deity, the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, as the amiable, blessed *Finisher* of the Triune Life of God ; so the fallen Nature of Man cannot be raised out of its unholy State, cannot be blessed and sanctified with its true Degree of the Divine Life, till the Holy Spirit arises up in it.

Since then the Triune God, or the three Persons in the one God, must have this Difference of Shares, must reach out this

* See *Spirit of Prayer*, Part II., page 63, &c., page 91. *Way to Divine Knowledge*, pages 39-53.

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different Help to the Raising up of fallen Man, it is undeniable, that the first created Man stood in the Image and *real Likeness* of the one God, not only representing, but *really having* in his Birth and Life, the Birth and Life of the Holy Trinity. God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost had *such* a Unity in Trinity *in Man*, as they had in the Deity itself: How else could Man be the Image and Likeness of the Holy Trinity, if it was not such a Birth in Man, as it was in itself? Or, how could the Holy Trinity dwell and operate in Man, each Person according to its respective Nature, unless there was the same threefold Life in Man as there is in God? How could the Holy Trinity be an Object of Man's Worship and Adoration, if the Holy Trinity had not produced itself in Man? The Creature is only to own and worship its Creator; therefore Father, Son, and Holy Ghost must have each of them their *Creaturely* Offspring, or *Product* in Man, if Man is to worship Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If therefore you deny *Angels*, and the Souls of perfect Men to have the triune Nature, or Life of God in them: If you deny that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, have such Union and Relation in the Soul, as they have out of it, you are guilty of as great Heresy and Apostacy from the Gospel, as if you denied the Father to be the Creator or Him that *calleth* and *draweth*, the Son to be the Redeemer, or Him that regenerateth, and the Holy Spirit to be Him that sanctifieth Human Nature.

22. Again: Consider this great Truth, which will much illustrate this Matter; you can be an *Inhabitant* of no World, or a *Partaker* of its Life, but by its being inwardly the *Birth* of your own Life, or by having the *Nature* and *Condition* of that World *born* in you. As thus, *Hell* must be *inwardly born* in the Soul, it must *arise* up within it, as it does without it, before the Soul can become an Inhabitant of it.

Again: That which is the Life of this outward World, *viz.*, its *Fire*, and *Light*, and *Air*, must have such a *State* and *Birth* within you, as they have without you, before you can be an Inhabitant or Partaker of the Life of this World; that is, Fire must be in you, must be the *same Fire*, have the same *Place* and *Nature* within you, have the same Relation to the *Light* and *Air* that is within you, as it has without you, or else the Fire of the *outward World*, cannot keep up, or have *any Communion* with your own Life.

The Light of this World can signify nothing to you, cannot reach or enrich you with its Powers and Virtues, if the same Light is not arisen in the *same Manner* in the kindling of your own Life, as it arises in the outward World.

The *Air* also of this World can do you no Good, can be no

Blower up and Preserver of your Life, but because it has the *same Birth* in you, that it has in outward Nature. And therefore it must be a Truth of the greatest Certainty, that so it must of all Necessity be with Respect to the *Kingdom of God*, or that *Life* which is to be had in the *Beatific Presence* of God; it must, by an absolute Necessity, have the *same Birth* within you, as it has without you, before you can enter into it, or become an Inhabitant of it: If you are to live, and be eternally blessed in the *triune Life*, or Beatific Presence of God, that Triune Life, must, of the utmost Necessity, first make itself *creaturely* in you; it must *be* and *arise* in you, as it does without you, before you can possibly enter into any Communion with it.

Now is there any Thing more plain and Scriptural, more easy to be conceived, more pious to be believed, and more impossible to be denied, than all this? And yet this is all that I have said, in two Propositions in the Treatise upon *Christian Regeneration*: It is there said, 'Man was created by God *after his own Image*, 'and *in his own Likeness*, a Living Mirror of the Divine Nature; 'where *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost* each brought forth their 'own Nature in a Creaturely Manner.' Now, what is this, but saying, That the Holy Trinity brought forth a Creature in its own Likeness, standing in a creaturely Birth of the Divine, triune Life? If it did not stand thus, how could it have a Likeness of the Holy Trinity? Or how could it have its *Form* or *Creation* from the Holy Trinity? Or how could it without this triune Life in itself, enter into, or be a Partaker of the triune Life or Presence of God? In the next Proposition it is said; 'In it, 'that is, in this created Image of the Holy Trinity, the Father's 'Nature generated the Divine *Word*, or *Son* of God, and the 'Holy Ghost proceeded from them both as an amiable, moving 'Life of both. This was the *Likeness* or *Image* of God, in which 'the first Man was created, a true Offspring of God, in whom 'the Divine Birth sprung up as in the Deity, where Father, Son, 'and Holy Ghost, saw themselves in a creaturely manner.'

Now, what is this, but saying in the plainest Manner, only thus much, that the triune, creaturely Life stood in the *same Birth* and Generation of its threefold Life, as the Deity doth, whose Image, Likeness, and Offspring it is? And can it possibly be otherwise; for if the Creature cometh from the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as their *created Image* and *Likeness*, must not That which it hath from the Father, be of the *Nature* of the Father, That which it hath from the Son, be of the *Nature* of the Son, and That which it hath from the Holy Ghost, be of the *Nature* of the Holy Ghost? And must they not therefore stand in the Creature in such Relation to one another, as they do in

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the Creator? If it is the Nature of the Father to *generate*, if it is the Nature of the Son to be *generated*, if it is the Nature of the Holy Ghost to *proceed* from both, must not That which you have from the Father generate in you, That which you have from the Son be *generated* in you, and that which you have from the Holy Ghost, *proceed* from both in you? All which is only saying this plain and obvious Truth, that That Being, or *created Life*, which you have from Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, must stand in such a *triune Relation* within you as it does without you; that having this threefold Likeness of God, you may be capable of entering into an Enjoyment of his *triune, beatific Life* or Presence.

For, consider again this Instance, with regard to the Life of this World. The *Fire*, and *Light*, and *Air*, of outward Nature, must become *creaturely* in you; that is, you must have a Fire that is your *own creaturely* Fire, you must have a Light that is generated by, or from your *own Fire*, a *Breath* that proceeds from your *own Fire* and *Light*, as the *Air* of outward Nature proceeds from its Fire and Light: You must have all this *Nature* and *Birth* of Fire, and Light, and Air in your own creaturely Being, or you cannot possibly *live in*, or have a Life from the Fire, and Light, and Air of *outward Nature*: No Omnipotence can make you a *Partaker* of the Life of this outward World, without having the Life of this outward World *born in* your own creaturely Being. And therefore, no Omnipotence can make you a *Partaker* of the Beatific Life or Presence of the Holy Trinity, unless that Life stands in the *same triune State* within you, as it does without you.

The Nature of this World must become *creatural* in you, before you can live, or have a Share in the Life of this World; the triune Nature of God must breathe forth itself to stand creaturely in you, before you can live, or have a Share in the Beatific Life or Presence of the triune God.

Now, is not all this strictly according to the very outward *Letter*, and inward *Truth* of the most important Articles of the Christian Religion? For what else can be meant by the Necessity of our being born again of the *Word*, or Son of God, being born of the *Spirit* of God, in order to our Entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven? Is not this saying, that the triune Life of God must first have *its Birth* in us, before we can enter into the triune, beatific Life, or Presence of God? What else is taught us by that *new Birth* sought for by a *Baptism*, in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? Does it not plainly tell us, that the triune Nature of the Deity is *That* which wants to be born in us, and that our Redemption consists in Nothing

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else but in the *Bringing forth* this new Birth in us, and that, being thus born again in the *Likeness* of the Holy Trinity, we may be capable of its threefold Blessing and Happiness? The New Testament tells us of the Impossibility of our being *redeemed*, but by the Son of God, of the Impossibility of our being made *holy*, but by the Holy Spirit of God : Now, how could we want any distinct Thing *particularly* from the Son of God, any distinct Thing, *particularly* from the Holy Ghost, in order to raise and repair our fallen Nature, how could *this Particularity* be thus *absolutely necessary*, but because the holy *threefold Life* of the Deity must stand *within* us, in the Birth of our own Life, as it does without us, that so we may be capable of living in God, and God in us.

Search to Eternity, why no *Devil*, or *Beast* can possibly be a *Partaker* of the Kingdom of Heaven, and there can only this *one Reason* be assigned for it, because neither of them have the *triune, holy Life* of God in them : For every created Thing does, and must, and can only want, seek, unite with, and enjoy That *outwardly*, which is of the *same Nature* with itself. Remove a *Devil* where you will, he is still in Hell, and always at the *same Distance* from Heaven ; he can touch, or taste, or reach Nothing but what is in Hell. Carry a *Beast* where you please, either to *Court*, or to *Church*, he is yet at the *same infinite Distance* from the Joys and Fears either of *Church*, or *Court*, as the Beasts that never saw any Thing else but their own Kind : And all this is grounded solely on this Eternal Truth ; namely, That no Being can rise *higher* than its *own Life* reaches. The *Circle* of the *Birth* of Life in every Creature is its necessary *Circumference*, and it cannot possibly reach any further ; and therefore it is a joyful Truth, that Beings created to *worship* and *adore* the Holy Trinity, and to enter into the beatific Life and Presence of the triune God, must, of all Necessity, have the *same triune Life* in their own Creaturely Being. And now, what can be so glorious, so edifying, so ravishing, as this Knowledge of God and ourselves? The very Thought of our standing in this *Likeness* and *Relation* to the Infinite Creator and *Being* of all Beings, is enough to kindle the Divine Life within us, and melt us into a continual Love and Adoration : For how can we enough love and adore that Holy Trinity which has created us in its own Likeness, that we might live in an Eternal Union and Communion with it? Will anyone call this an *irreverent Familiarity*, or *bold Looking* into the Holy Trinity, which is nothing else but a thankful Adoration of it, as our Glorious Father and Creator? It is our best and only Acknowledgment of the greatest Truths of the Holy Scriptures ; it is the Scripture

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Doctrine of the Trinity kept in its own Simplicity, separated from *Scholastic Speculations*, where the three in God, are only distinguished by that threefold Share that they have in the Creation and Redemption of Man. When we thus know the Trinity in ourselves, and adore its high Original in the Deity, we are possessed of a Truth of the greatest Moment, that enlightens the Mind with the most solid and edifying Knowledge, and opens to us the fullest Understanding of all that concerns the Creation, Fall, and Redemption of Man.

Without this Knowledge, all the Scripture will be used as a *dead Letter*, and formed only into a *figurative, historical* System of Things, that has no Ground in Nature; and learned Divines can only be learned in the Explication of Phrases, and verbal Distinctions.

The first Chapters of *Genesis* will be a Knot that cannot be untied; the Mysteries of the Gospel will only be called *fæderal Rites*, and their inward Ground reproached as enthusiastic Dreams; but when it is known, that the *triune Nature* of God was brought forth in the *Creation* of Man, that it was lost in his *Fall*, that it is *restored* in his *Redemption*, a never-failing Light arises in all Scripture, from *Genesis* to the *Revelation*. Every Thing that is said of God, as Father, Regenerator, or Sanctifier of Man; every Thing that is said of Jesus Christ, as Redeeming, forming, dwelling in, and quickening; and of the Holy Spirit, as moving and sanctifying us: Every Thing that is said of the Holy Sacraments, or promised in and by them, has its deep and inward Ground *fully discovered*; and the whole Christian Religion is built upon a *Rock*, and that Rock is *Nature*, and God will appear to be doing every Good to us, that the God of all Nature can possibly do. The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity is wholly practical; it is revealed to us, to discover our high Original, and the Greatness of our Fall, to show us the deep and profound Operation of the triune God in the Recovery of the Divine Life in our Souls; that by the Means of this Mystery thus discovered, our Piety may be rightly directed, our *Faith* and *Prayer* have their proper Objects, that the Workings and Aspirings of our own Hearts may co-operate, and correspond with that triune Life in the Deity, which is always desiring to manifest itself in us; for as every Thing that is in us, whether it be Heaven, or Hell, rises up in us by a *Birth*, and is generated in us by the Will-spirit of our Souls, which kindles itself either in Heaven, or Hell; so this Mystery of a triune Deity manifesting itself, as a *Father* creating, as a *Son*, or *Word*, regenerating, as a *Holy Spirit* sanctifying us, is not to entertain our Speculation with dry, metaphysical Distinctions of the Deity, but to

show us from what a Height and Depth we are fallen, and to excite such a Prayer and Faith, such a Hungering and Thirsting after this triune Fountain of all Good, as may help to generate and bring forth in us that first Image of the Holy Trinity in which we were created, and which must be born in us before we can enter into the State of the Blessed: Here we may see the Reason, why the Learned World has had so many fruitless Disputes about this Mystery, and why it has been so often a Stone of Stumbling to Philosophers and Critics; it is because they began to reason about that, which never was proposed to *their Reason*, and which no more belongs to human Learning and Philosophy, than *Light* belongs to our *Ears*, or Sounds to our *Eyes*. No Person has any *Fitness*, nor any *Pretence*, nor any *Ground* from Scripture, to think, or say any Thing of the Trinity, till such Time as he stands in the State of the Penitent Returning *Prodigal*, weary of his own sinful, shameful Nature; and desiring to renounce the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, and then is he *first* permitted to be baptized *into the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*: This is the *first Time* the Gospel *teaches*, or calls anyone to the Acknowledgment of the Holy Trinity. Now, as this Knowledge is first given in Baptism, and there only as a Signification of a triune Life of the Deity, which must be regenerated in the Soul; so the Scriptures say Nothing afterwards to this Baptized Penitent concerning the Trinity, but only with Regard to *Regeneration*, everywhere only showing him how Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all equally Divine, must draw, awaken, quicken, enlighten, move, guide, cleanse, and sanctify the new-born Christian: Is it not therefore undeniably plain, that all abstract Speculations of this Mystery, how it is in itself, how it is to be *ideally* conceived, or Scholastically expressed by us, are a Wandering from that true Light, in which the Trinity of God is set before us, which is only revealed as a Key, or Direction to the true Depths of that Regeneration, which is to be sought for from the triune Deity? But to go on in a further Account of the Creation.

23. Now, as all Creatures, whether intellectual, animate, or inanimate, are Products, or Emanations of the *Divine Desire*, created *out of* the Father, who from Eternity to Eternity generates the Son, whence the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds; so every intelligent, created Being, not fallen from its State, stands in the *same Birth*, or *generating Desire*, it generates in its Degree, as God the Father generates eternally the Son, and is blessed and perfected in the Divine Life, by having the Holy Spirit arise up in it.

Hence it is, that those Angels which stood, and continued in

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the *same Will and Desire* in which they came out from God, willing and desiring as God from all Eternity had *willed and desired*, were by the Rising up of the Holy Spirit in them, *confirmed and established* in the Divine Life, and so became eternally and inseparably united with the ever-blessed triune Deity.

On the other hand, those Angels which did not keep their *Will and Desire* in its first created *Tendency*, but raised up an *own Will and Desire*, which own Will and Desire was their *direct, full* choosing and desiring to *be, and do* something which they could not be, and do in God, and is therefore properly called their aspiring to be *above* God, or to be without any *Dependence* upon him; these Angels, by thus going *backwards* with their Will and Desire *out of, or from* God and the *Divine Truth*, could only find, or generate *That* which had the *utmost Contrariety* to God and the Divine Birth, and so became under a Necessity of finding themselves in an *Eternal State, Spirit and Life* that was *directly contrary* to all that is good, holy, amiable, blessed and Divine.

Now, the *Will and Desire* in every Creature is *generating, and efficacious*, strictly according to the State and Nature of that Creature;* therefore, Eternal Beings in an Eternal State, must have an Eternal Power and Efficacy in the Working of their Wills and Desires: When therefore those Angels, with all the Strength of their Eternal Desires, turned away from, and contrary to God and the Divine Birth, they could become Nothing else, but Beings eternally separated and broken off from all that was God and Goodness: For Eternal Beings that stood only in an eternal State, acting with all their Vigour, not doubting, but strongly willing, could not do anything that had only a *Temporal Nature and Effect*, because they stood not in such a Nature or such a World, and therefore what they willed and generated with all their Nature, (which was a Contrariety to God) that became the Eternal State of their Nature. And this is the Birth and Origin of Hellish Beings.

God had done all to them and for them, that he had done to and for the Angels that stood; he had given them the same holy *Beginning* of their Lives, had brought them forth out of himself in the *same Tendency*, that which was the Nature of other Angels, was theirs; he could not make any established, fixed, and unchangeable Angels, because the Life of every Thing must be a *Birth*, and *willing* Beings must have a *Birth* of their *Wills*; he could not make them *fixed*, because every

* See *Way to Divine Knowledge*, pages 139-160.

Thing that comes from God, must *so* come from him, as it was in him, a *self-existent* and *self-moving* Power, and therefore no Goodness of God could hinder their having a *Self-motion*, because they were, and could be Nothing else but Creatures brought forth *by*, and *out* of his own *self-existent* and *self-moving* Nature.

God is all Good, and every Thing that comes out from him, as his Creature, Product, or Offspring, must come forth in *that* State of Goodness, which it had in Him; and every Creature, however high in its Birth from God, must in the Beginning of its Life, have a *Power* of joining with or departing from God, because the Beginning of its Life is nothing else but the Beginning of its *own Self-motion* as a Creature; and therefore no Creature can have its State or Condition *fixed*, till it gives itself up either wholly unto God, or turns *wholly* from him; for if it is an Intelligent Creature, it can only be so, by having the Intelligent Will of God derived into it, or made creaturely in it; but the Intelligent Will brought into a creaturely Form, must be *That* which it was in the Creator, and therefore must be the same *self-existent* and *self-moving* Power that it was before it became creaturely in any Angel or Spirit. And thus the Cause and Origin of Evil, wherever it is, is absolutely and eternally separated from God.

24. Again: As all Intelligent Beings can no way attain their Happiness and Perfection, but by standing with their Will and Desire united to God, in the *same Tendency* in which the Father eternally generateth the Son, from whence the Holy Spirit proceedeth as the Finisher of the triune, beatific Life, so the same Thing is manifestly proved to us by the lowest kind of Beings that are in this visible World; for all *Vegetables*, by their Attraction or Astringency, which is *their Desire*, and is an *Out-birth* of the Divine Desire, reach their utmost Perfection by the *same Progress*, that is, by getting a Birth of the *Light* and *Spirit* of this outward World into them, and so become infallible, though remote Proofs that no Life can be brought to its proper Perfection in the Creature, till the Image of the *triune Life* of God, is, according to the State and Capacity of the Creature, formed in it: Look where you will, every Thing proclaims and proves this great Truth. The Christian Doctrine of the Salvation of Mankind by a Birth of the Son, and Holy Spirit of God in them, is not only written in Scripture, but in the *whole State* and *Frame* of Nature, and of every Life in this World; for every perfect Fruit openly declares, that it can have no Goodness in it, till the *Light* and *Spirit* of this World has done that to it and in it, which the Light and Spirit of

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God must do to the Soul of Man, and therefore is a full Proof, that it is as absolutely necessary for every Human Creature to desire, believe, and receive the Birth of the Son and Holy Spirit of God to save it from its own Wrath and Darkness, as it is necessary for every Fruit of the Earth to be raised and regenerated from its own Bitterness and Sourness, by receiving the Light and Spirit of this World into it.

25. Some Learned Men, willing to discover the Image of the Holy Trinity in the Creation, have observed *three Properties* both in Body and Spirit, which they supposed to be a proper Likeness of the Trinity. But all this is Nothing to the Matter.

For as the Holy Trinity is a *threefold Life* in God, so the Image of the Trinity is only found in a *threefold Life* in the Creature; for it is the *whole Birth*, or Generation of the Thing itself, whether it be corporeal or spiritual, that stands in such a *threefold State* as the Holy Trinity doth, that is the *proper Likeness* or Image of the Trinity. As there is one infinitely perfect Deity, because this one Deity is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, so every Creature that is an original Production of the Deity, or in its proper State of Perfection, stands in its whole Being, or generating as the Deity doth, and neither hath, nor ever can have any Perfection, but because the Triune Nature of God is manifested and brought forth in it; for Perfection of *Life in God*, and a Perfection of *Life derived* from God, must stand in the same threefold State, and that which is a Life from the Deity, must have a Life of the Trinity in it.

26. Take away *Attraction*, or *Desire* from the Creature of this World, and you annihilate the Creature; for where there is no Attraction or Desire, there can be no Nature or Being; and therefore Attraction or Desire shows the Work of the Creator in every Thing, or what is meant by the *Divine Fiat*, or Creating Power. Now, what is it which this *Attraction* or *Desire* wants, hungers, draws and reaches after? Nothing else but the *Light* and *Spirit* of this World. What is the *true, deep, and infallible* Ground of this? Why does this *Desire thus* work in every Life of this World? It is because the Eternal Will in the Deity, is a *Desiring* or *Generating* the Son, from whence the Holy Spirit of God proceeds: And therefore Attraction, which is an *Out-birth* of the Divine Desire, stands in a perpetual Desiring of the Light and Spirit of this World, because they are the two *Out-births* of the Light and Holy Spirit of God. What rational Mind can help being charmed with this wonderful Harmony and Relation betwixt God, Nature, and Creature?

27. And now, my dear Reader, if you are either *Arian*, or *Deist*, be so no longer: The Ground is dug up from under you,

and neither Opinion has any Thing left to stand upon ; you may wrangle and wrest the Doctrine of Scripture, because it is only taught in Words ; but the Veil is now taken off from Nature, and every *Plant* and *Fruit* will teach you with the Clearness of a Noon-day Sun, these two great Truths ; *First*, That Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one Being, one Life, one God : *Secondly*, That the Soul, which is dead to the Paraisaical Life, must be made alive again by the Birth of the Son and Holy Spirit of God in it, in the same Manner as a *dead Seed* is, and only can be brought to Life in this World, by the Light and Spirit of this World.

If you are an *Arian*, don't content yourself with the Numbers that are with you, or with a Learned Name or two that are on your Side : *Arianism* has never yet been recommended by the Genius and Learning of a *Baronious*, or *Bellarmin* ; and nothing but a poor, groping, purblind Philosophy, that is not able to look either at God, Nature, or Creature, hath ever led any Man into it : For it is a Truth proclaimed by all Nature and Creature, that there is a *threefold Life* in God, and every Thing that is, whether it be *happy*, or *miserable*, perfect or imperfect, is only so, because it has, or has not the *triune Nature* of God in it.

A *beginning Fruit* is like a *Poison* ; a *Seed*, for a while, is shut up in a *hard Death*. Why are they both at *first* in this State ? It is because each of them stands *as yet* only in that *first Birth* of Nature, which is but a *Beginning Manifestation* of the Deity. Let the Light of the Sun, and the Spirit of this World be born in them, and then the sour, astringent Fruit, and the *dead Seed* becomes a perfect, vegetable Life, and is in its kind perfect, for this *one only* Reason, because the triune Life of the Deity is truly manifested in it.

28. If you are a *Deist*, made so, either by the disorderly State of *your own* Heart, or by Prejudices taken from the Corruptions and Divisions of Christians, or from a Dislike of the Language of Scripture, or from an Opinion of the Sufficiency of a Religion of Human Reason, or from whatever else it may be, look well to yourself, Christianity is no Fiction of Enthusiasm, or Invention of Priests.

If you can show, that the Gospel proposes to bring Men into the Kingdom of Heaven by any other Method, than that, which *Nature* requires to make any Creature a living Member of this World, then I will acknowledge the Gospel not to be founded in Nature.

But if what the Gospel saith of the absolute Necessity, that the fallen Soul be born again of the Son and Holy Spirit of God, is the very same which all temporal Nature saith of every Thing

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that is to enter into the Life of this World, *viz.*, that it cannot partake of the Life of this World, till the Light and Spirit of this World is born in it; then does not all Nature in this World, and every Life in it, declare, that the Christian Method of Salvation is as *necessary* to raise fallen Man, as the Sun and Spirit of this World is, to bring a Creature alive into it?

Now, as there is but one God, so there is but *one Nature*, as unalterable as that God from whom it arises, and whose Manifestation it is; so also there is but *one Religion* founded in Nature, and but one Salvation *possible* in Nature. Revealed Religion is nothing else but a Revelation of the *Mysteries* of Nature, for God cannot reveal, or require any Thing by a spoken or written Word, but that which he reveals and requires by *Nature*; for *Nature* is his great *Book* of Revelation, and he that can only read its Capital Letters, will have found so many Demonstrations of the Truth of the written Revelation of God.*

But to show, that there is but one Salvation *possible* in Nature, and that Possibility solely contained in the Christian Method: Look from the Top to the Bottom of all Creatures, from the highest to the lowest Beings, and you will find, that *Death* has but *one Nature* in all Worlds, and in all Creatures: Look at *Life* in an Angel, and *Life* in a *Vegetable*, and you will find, that *Life* has but *one* and the *same* Form, one and the same Ground in the whole Scale of Beings: No Omnipotence of God can make that to be *Life*, which is not *Life*, or that to be *Death*, which is not *Death*, according to *Nature*; and the Reason is, because *Nature* is nothing else but God's own outward Manifestation of what he inwardly is, and can do; and therefore no Revelation from God can teach, or require any Thing but that which is taught and required by God in, and through *Nature*. The *Mysteries* of Religion therefore, are no higher, nor deeper than the *Mysteries* of *Nature*, and all the *Rites*, *Laws*, *Ceremonies*, *Types*, *Institutions* and *Ordinances* given by God from *Adam* to the *Apostles*, are only typical of something that is to be done, or instrumental to the doing of that, which the *unchangeable Working* of *Nature* requires to be done. As sure therefore as there is but one and the same Thing that is *Death*, and one and the same Thing that is *Life* throughout all *Nature*, whether temporal or eternal, so sure is it, that there is but one Way to *Life* or *Salvation* for fallen Man. And this Way, let it be what it will, must and can be only that, which has its *Reason* and *Foundation* in that one *Universal Nature*, which is the one unchange-

* *Spirit of Love*, Part II., pages 134-149.

able Manifestation of the Deity. For if there is but *one Thing* that is Life, and one thing that is Death throughout all Nature, from the highest *Angel* to the hardest *Flint* upon Earth, then it must be plain, that the *Life* which is to be raised or restored by Religion, must, and can only be restored according to Nature: And therefore, true Religion can only be the Religion of Nature, and Divine Revelation can do nothing else, but reveal and manifest the Demands and Workings of Nature.

29. Now, the one great Doctrine of the Christian Religion, and which includes all the rest, is this, that *Adam*, by his Sin, *died* to the Kingdom of Heaven, or that the *Divine Life* extinguished in him; That he cannot be *redeemed*, or restored to this first *Divine Life*, but by having it kindled or regenerated in him by the Son and Holy Spirit of God: Now, that which is here called *Death*, his losing the Light and Spirit of the Kingdom of Heaven, and that which is here made necessary to make him *alive* again to the Kingdom of Heaven, is that *very same* which is called, and is *Death* and *Life* throughout all Nature, both temporal and eternal: And therefore, the Christian Religion requiring this Method of raising Man to a Divine Life, has its infallible Proof from all Nature.* Consider Death, or the Deadness that is in a *hard Flint*, and you will see what is the *Eternal Death* of a fallen *Angel*: The *Flint* is dead, or in a State of Death, because its *Fire* is bound, compacted, shut up, and imprisoned; this is its Chains and Bands of Death: A *Steel* struck against a *Flint* will show you, that every Particle of the *Flint* consists of this *compacted Fire*.

Now, a fallen *Angel* is in no other State of Death, knows no other Death than this: It is in its whole Spiritual, Intelligent Being, nothing else, but that *very same* which the *Flint* is, in its insensible Materiality, *viz.*, an imprisoned compacted, darkened Fire-spirit, shut up, and tied in its own Chains of Darkness, as the *Fire* of the *Flint*; and you shall see by and by, that the *Flint* is changed from its first State into its present Hardness of Death, in the same Manner, and by the same Means, as the Heavenly *Angel* is become a fiery *Serpent* in the State of *Eternal Death*.

Now, look at every Death that can be found betwixt that of a fallen *Angel*, and that of a *hard Flint*, and you will find that Death enters nowhere, into no kind of Vegetable, Plant, or Animal, but as it has entered into the *Angel*, and the *Flint*, and stands in the same manner in every Thing wherever it is.

Now, that a fallen *Angel*, is nothing else but a Fire-spirit

* *Spirit of Love*, Part II., page 117, &c.

imprisoned in the same manner as a Flint is an imprisoned Fire, is plain from the Scripture Account of them ; not only because all the wrathful Properties of a Fire *without Light*, are ascribed to them as their essential Qualities, but because the *Place* of their Habitation, or the *State* of their Life, is a *Fire of Hell*. For how could it be possible, that a *hellish Fire* should be the *Eternal State* of their Life, unless their *Nature* was such a Fire? Must not their painful Condition arise from *their Nature*, and their Misery be only a Sensibility of themselves, of that which they have made themselves to be? Therefore, if Fire *shut up* in Darkness, is the Nature of Hell, it can only be so, because such a darkened Fire is the *very Nature* of a fallen Angel. Or how again could the Human Soul, which has withstood its Salvation in this Life, be said to fall into *Eternal Death*, or the Fire of Hell, if the Soul itself did not become *that Fire* of Hell? For when you say the Soul enters into Hell, you say neither more nor less, than if you had said, that Hell enters into the Soul ; therefore, the State of Hell, and the State of the Soul in Hell, is one and the same Thing. If therefore Hell is a State of Fire shut up, and imprisoned from all Communion with Light, then the same dark, imprisoned Fire must be the Nature of the fallen Angel and lost Soul ; and thus, what your Eyes see to be the *Death* or *Deadness* of a Flint, is that same Thing, or that *same State* of the Thing, which the Scripture assures you, to be the *Eternal Death* of a fallen Angel, and a lost Soul. Here also you may see a plain Proof of what I have elsewhere declared concerning the fallen Soul ; that considered *without* its Redeemer in it, or the *in-spoken Word* of Life given to *Adam* at his Fall, it is in itself, as a fallen Soul, the *same dark, fiery Spirit*, as the Devils are ; and that the Reason why Men wholly given up to Wickedness, and who have *suppressed* the Redeeming Power of God in their Souls, do not become *fully sensible* of this State of their Souls, is this, because the Soul, while it is in *this Flesh* and *Blood*, is capable of being *softened, assuaged, and comforted* in some Degree or other, by the Influences of the *Sun* and *Spirit* of this World, as all other Creatures and Beings are. And if it was not thus, how could it be a plain, constant Doctrine of Scripture, that when the *Unredeemed Soul* departs this Life, it is incapable of anything but Hell? Is not this directly saying, that Hell, or the Sensibility of Hell was only hid and suppressed in such a Soul, by the Life and Light of this World shining upon it.

Now what I have said of the sad Condition of the Soul at the *Fall*, that it lost the Divine Life, or the Birth of the Son and Holy Spirit of God in it, and so became of the *same dark, fiery*

Nature, as the Devils, is not possible to be denied, without denying the most universally received Doctrine of Scripture.

Is it not a fundamental Doctrine of Scripture, that *Adam* and all his Posterity had been *left* in a State of *Eternal Death*, or Damnation, unless Jesus Christ had become their Redeemer, and taken them out of their natural State? But how can you believe, or own they had been *left* in this State, without believing and owning that they were *in* it? Or, how can you with the Scripture believe, that by the Fall they became *Heirs* of Eternal Death and Damnation with the Devils, unless you believe and affirm, that by the Fall they became of a hellish, diabolical Nature? Or how can you hold, that by the Fall they *wanted* to be delivered from the State of the Devils, and yet not allow, that by the Fall, they got the Nature of the Devils? Can any Thing be more absurd and inconsistent? Is it not the same Thing as saying, that God made them Heirs of Eternal Death and Hell, before they were by Nature fit for it, or before they had extinguished in themselves the Divine Life which was at first brought forth in them.

Again : It is a Scripture Doctrine of the utmost Certainty and Importance, that those Souls which have *totally* resisted and withstood all that God has done in them and for them by his Son Jesus Christ, will, at their Departure from the Body, be incapable of any Thing but *Eternal Death*, or a hellish Condition. Now, how can you possibly hold this Doctrine of Scripture, without holding at the same Time, that the Soul was in that State by the Fall, before it had received its Redeemer, as it is then in, when it has *refused* to receive him ; for all that you can say of a lost Soul is only this, that it has *lost* its Redeemer, and therefore is only in the Condition of that Soul which has *not received* him : And therefore, if a lost Soul is only an unredeemed Soul, it must be plain, that the Soul, *before* it had received its Redeemer, was in the miserable Condition, and had the miserable Nature of a Lost Soul ; and therefore, the only Difference between the fallen Soul, and the lost Soul is this, they are both in the *same need* of a Saviour, both have the *same miserable* Nature, because they have him *not* ; but the one has the Offer of him, and the other has refused to accept of Him : But his final Refusal of him, has only left him in Possession of that *fallen State* of a hellish Condition, which it had before a Saviour was given to it ; and therefore, it is a Truth of the utmost Certainty, that *Adam*, by his Fall, died to the Divine Life, and that by this Death, his Soul became of the *same Nature* and *Condition* with the fallen Angels ; and that therefore *that new Birth* or Regeneration, which he is to obtain

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by his Redeemer Jesus Christ, is nothing else but the bringing back his Soul into the Kingdom of Heaven, by a *Birth* of the Son and Holy Spirit of God brought forth in it, that so the Life of the triune God may be in him *again*, as it was at his *Creation*, when his Soul was first breathed forth from the triune God. Is there any Thing more great, more glorious, or more consistent than these Truths? Or is there any Possibility of denying any Part of them, without giving up the whole? Or is there any Reason, why a Christian should be loath to believe this, and this alone, to be the true State of that Regeneration which is so absolutely required by the Gospel? Is it an unreasonable or uncomfortable Thing to be told, that our Regeneration is a true and real Regaining that heavenly, Divine, immortal Life which at first came forth from God, and which alone can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven?

Say that *Adam* did not die a real Death at his Transgression, that he did not lose a Divine, immortal Life, Light and Spirit, that he did not then first become a mere earthly, mortal, Diabolical Animal in the true and proper Sense of the Words, but that these Things could only be affirmed of him in a figurative Form of Speech; say this, and then tell me what Reality you have left in any Article of our Salvation?

But if all these Things must be said of fallen Man according to the strictest Truth of the Expression, then the Gospel Regeneration, by a Birth of the Son and Holy Spirit of God, arising a *second Time*, in the Soul of Man, must mean such a real Birth of a new heavenly Life, as the proper Sense of the Words denote.

30. But to return now to my Argumentation with the Deist.

I have plainly shown you, that there is, and can be but one kind of Death through all Nature, whether temporal or eternal; and this I have done, by showing that *Eternal Death* in an *Angel*, is the same Thing, and has the same Nature, as the hard Death that is in a senseless Flint. But if it be a certain Truth, that Death has but *one Way* of entering into, or possessing any Being from the highest of spiritual to the lowest of material Creatures, then, though nothing else could be offered, it must be an infallible Consequence, that *Life* has but one Way of being *kindled* throughout all Nature, and that therefore there can be but *one true Religion*, and that only can be it, which hath the *one only way* of kindling the heavenly Life in the Soul.

Now, look where you will, the Birth or kindling of Life through all Nature shows you, that the Way of Gospel Regeneration, or Raising the Divine Life again in the fallen Soul, is that one and the same Way, by which every kind of Life is, and must be

raised, wherever it is found. The Gospel saith, unless the fallen Soul be born again from above, be born again of the Word, or Son, and the Spirit of God, it cannot see, or enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: Now here it says a Truth, as much confirmed and ratified by all Nature, as when it is said, except a Creature hath the Light and Spirit of this World born in it, it cannot become a living Animal of this World: Or, except a *Seed* have the Light and Spirit of this World incorporated in it, it cannot become a *Vegetable* of this World, either as Plant, Fruit, or Flower. Ask now wherein lies the absolute Impossibility, that the fallen Soul should be raised to its Divine Life, without a *Birth* of the *Son* and Holy *Spirit* of God in it, and the true Ground of this Impossibility is only this, because a *Seed* shut up in its own cold hardness, cannot possibly be raised into its highest Vegetable Life, but by a *Birth* of the *Light* and *Spirit* of this World rising up in it.

On the other hand, ask why a *Seed* cannot possibly become a Vegetable Life, till the Light and Spirit of this World has been incorporated, or generated in it; and the only true Ground of it is, because a fallen Soul can only be raised to a Divine Life, or become a Plant of the Kingdom of Heaven, by receiving the Birth of the Light and Spirit of God into it. For the true Reason, why Life is in *such a Form*, and rises in *such a Manner* in the lowest Creature living, is because it does, and must arise in the *same manner*, and stand in the *same Form* in the highest of Living Creatures: For Nature does, and must always act and generate in *one* and the *same unchangeable* Manner, because it is nothing else but the *Manifestation* of one unchangeable God.

It is *one* and the *same* Operation of Light and Spirit, that turns Fire into every Degree and kind of Life that can be found either in temporal or eternal Nature: It is one and the same Operation of Light and Spirit, that upon one State of Fire, raises only a *vegetable* Life, upon another State of Fire, raises an *animal* Life, upon another State of Fire, raises an *intellectual* and *angelical* Life.

There is no State or Form of Death in any Creature, but where some kind of Fire is shut up from Light and Spirit, nor is there any kind of Life but what is kindled by the same Operation of Light and Spirit upon some sort of Fire.

A *Fruit* must first stand in a *poisonous, sour, astringent, bitter, and fiery* Agitation of all its Parts, before the Light and Spirit of this World can be generated in it. And thus Light and Spirit operate upon one sort of Fire in the Production of a vegetable Life.

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An *Animal* must be conceived in the same manner, it must begin in the *same Poison*, and when Nature is in its *fiery Strife*, the Light and Spirit of this World kindles up the true animal Life.

Thus also there is but one kind, or State of Death that can fall upon any Creature, which is nothing else, but its *losing the Birth* of Light and Spirit in itself, by which it becomes an imprisoned, dark Fire. In an Animal, Vegetable, or mere Matter, it is a senseless State of imprisoned Fire; in an Angel, or intellectual Being, as the Soul of Man, it is a *self-tormenting, self-generating, fiery* Worm, that cannot lose its Sensibility, but is in a State of *Eternal Death*, because it is separated *eternally* from that Light and Spirit, which alone can raise a Divine Life in any intellectual Creature.

And thus it is plain, beyond all Possibility of Doubt, that there is neither *Life* nor *Death* to be found in any Part of the Creation but what sets its infallible Seal to this Gospel Truth, that fallen Man cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven any other Way, than by being born again of the Son and Holy Spirit of God.

31. And here, my Friend, you may with Certainty see what a poor, groundless *Fiction*, your Religion of *Human Reason* is; its Insignificancy and Emptiness is shown you by every Thing you can look upon.

Salvation is a *Birth of Life*, but Reason can no more bring forth *this Birth*, than it can kindle Life in a *Plant*, or *Animal*: You might as well write the Word *Flame*, upon the outside of a *Flint*, and then expect that its imprisoned Fire should be *kindled* by it, as to imagine, that any *Images*, or *Ideal Speculations* of Reason painted in your Brain, should raise your Soul out of its State of Death, and kindle the Divine Life in it. No: Would you have Fire from a *Flint*; its House of Death must be *shaken*, and its Chains of Darkness *broken off* by the Strokes of a *Steel* upon it. This must of all Necessity be done to your Soul, its *imprisoned Fire* must be awakened by the *sharp Strokes* of Steel, or no true Light of Life can arise in it: All Nature and Creature tells you, that the Heavenly Life must begin in you from the same Causes, and the same Operation as every earthly Life, whether vegetable, or animal, does in this World.*

Now, look where you will, all Life must be generated in this Manner: First, an *Attraction*, or an *astringing* Desire, must work itself into an *anguishing Agitation*, or *painful Strife*; this Attraction become restless, and highly agitated, is that *first Poison*, or

* *Way to Divine Knowledge*, page 162, &c.

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Strife of the *Properties* of Nature, which is and must be the *Beginning* of every *Vegetable* or *Animal* Life; it is by this *Strife*, or inward *Agitation*, that it reaches and gets a *Birth* of the Light and Spirit of this World into it, and so becomes a Living Member, either of the animal or vegetable World.

Now, this must be your Process, a *Desire* brought into an *anguishing State*; or the *bitter Sorrows* and *fiery Agitations* of Repentance, must be the *Beginning* of a Divine Life in your Soul; 'tis by this awakened Fire, or inward Agitation, that it becomes capable of being regenerated, or turned into an heavenly Life, by the Light and Holy Spirit of God.

Nothing is, or can possibly be Salvation, but this regenerated Life of the Soul: How vain and absurd would it be, to talk of a Creature's being made a Member of a vegetable or animal Kingdom, through an *outward Grace* or *Favour*? or by any *outward Thing* of any kind? For does not Sense, Reason, and all Nature force you to confess, that it is absolutely impossible for *any Thing* to become a *Living Member* of the animal or vegetable Kingdom, but by having the animal or vegetable Life *raised* or brought forth in it? Therefore, does not Sense and Reason, and all Nature join with the Gospel in affirming, that no Man can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, till the *Heavenly Life*, or that which is the Life in Heaven, *be born* in him?

The Gospel says to the fallen, earthly Man, that he must be *born again from above*, before he can see, enter into, or become a Living Member of the Kingdom that is above.

Now, he that understands this to be a *figurative Saying*, that requires no *real Birth* of a *real Life* that is only above, but that an earthly Man may enter into the Life of Heaven, by only carrying this figurative Saying along with him, is as absurd, as ignorant, and offends as much against Sense, Reason, and all Nature, as he who holds, that it is a *figurative Expression*, when we say that nothing can enter into the vegetable Kingdom, till it has the *vegetable Life* in it, or be a Member of the Animal Kingdom, till it hath the Animal Life born in it.*

And if some Learned Men will say, that it is *Religious Enthusiasm* to place our Salvation, or Capacity for the Kingdom of Heaven in the *inward Life* or *Birth* of Heaven derived into our Souls, they are only as learned as those who should call it *Philosophical Enthusiasm* to place the true Nature of a Vegetable, or Animal, in its getting the *inward, real Birth* of a Vegetable and Animal Life. But to return to the Deist.

You act as if God was a Being that had an *arbitrary, discre-*

* *Way to Divine Knowledge*, page 159.

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tionary Will, or Wisdom, like that of a great Prince over his Subjects, who will reward Mankind according as their Services appeared to him. And so you fancy, that your Religion of Reason may appear as valuable as a Religion that consists of Forms, and Modes, Ordinances, and Doctrines of Revelation ; but your Idea of the last Judgment is a Fiction of Reason that knows nothing rightly of God. God's last rewarding, is only his last separating every Thing into its own Eternal Place ; it is only putting an end to all temporary Nature, to the Mixture of Good and Evil that is in Time, and leaving every Thing to be *That* in *Eternity*, which it has made itself to be in *Time*. Thus it is that our Works follow us, and thus God rewards every Man according to his Deeds.*

During the Time of this World, God may be considered as the good Husbandman ; he sows the Seed, the End of the World is the Harvest, the Angels are the Reapers ; if you are *Wheat*, you are to be gathered into the Barn, if you are *Tares*, it signifies nothing, *whence*, or *how*, or by what *Means* you are become so ; Tares are to be rejected, because they are Tares, and Wheat to be gathered by the Angels, because it is Wheat : This is the Mercy, and Goodness, and Discretionary Justice of God that you are to expect at the last Day. If you are not Wheat, that is, if the heavenly Life, or the Kingdom of God, is not grown up in you, it signifies nothing what you have chosen in the stead of it, or why you have chosen it, you are not *That*, which alone can help you to a Place in the Divine Granary.

God wants no Services of Men to reward, he only wants to have *such a Life* quickened and raised up in you, as may make it *possible* for you to enter into, and live in Heaven.

He has created you out of his own *Eternal Nature*, and therefore you must have either an Eternal Life, or Eternal Death according to it. If eternal Nature standeth *in you*, as it doth *without* you, then you are born again to the Kingdom of Heaven ; but if Nature works contrary in you to what it does in Heaven, then you are in Eternal Death : And here lies the Necessity of our being *born* again of the *Word* and *Spirit* of God, in order to the Kingdom of Heaven. It is because we are created out of that eternal Nature which is the *Kingdom of Heaven* ; 'tis because we are *fallen out* of it into a Life of temporal Nature, and therefore must have the Life of eternal Nature *re-kindled* in us, before we can possibly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven : Therefore, look where you will, or at what you will, there is only one Thing to be done, we want

* *Way to Divine Knowledge*, pages 169-183.

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Nothing else, but to have the *Light World*, or the life of Eternal Nature kindled again in our Souls, that *Life*, and *Light*, and *Spirit* may be *That* in our Souls, which they are in Eternal Nature, out of which our Souls were created ; that so we may be heavenly Plants growing up to the Kingdom of Heaven.*

You deceive yourself with fancied Notions of the Goodness of God ; you imagine, that so perfect a Being cannot damn you for so *small* a Matter, as *choosing* a Religion according to your *own Notions*, or for not joining yourself with this, or that Religious Society.

But all this is great Ignorance of *God*, and *Nature*, and *Religion*. God has appointed a Religion, by which Salvation is to be had according to the *Possibility* of Nature, where no Creature will be saved, or lost, but as it works with, or contrary to Nature. For as the God of Nature cannot himself act *contrary* to Nature, because Nature is the *Manifestation* of himself, so every Creature having its Life in, and from *Nature*, can have only *such* a Life, or *such* a Death as is according to the *Possibility* of Nature : And therefore, no Creature will be saved, by an *arbitrary* Goodness of God, but because of its *Conformity* to Nature, nor any Creature lost by a Want of Compassion in God, but because of its Salvation being *impossible*, according to the *whole State* of Nature.

It is not for Notional, or Speculative Mistakes, that Man will be rejected by God at the last Day, or for *any Crimes* that God could *over-look*, if he was so pleased ; but because Man has continued in his *unregenerate State*, and has resisted and suppressed that *Birth of Life*, by which alone he could become a Member of the Kingdom of Heaven. The *Goodness* and *Love* of God have no *Limits* or *Bounds*, but such as his Omnipotence hath : And every Thing that hath a *Possibility* of partaking of the Kingdom of Heaven, will *infallibly* find a Place in it.

God comes not to Judgment to display any Wrath of his own, or to inflict any Punishment as from Himself upon Man : He only comes to declare, that all temporary Nature is at an End, and that therefore, all Things must be, and stand in their own Places in Eternal Nature : His Sentence of *Condemnation*, is only a leaving them that are lost, in such a Misery of their *own Nature*, as has finally rejected all that was possible to relieve it.

You fancy that God will not reject you at the last Day, for having not received this, or that *Mode*, or *Kind* of Religion : But here all is Mistake again. You might as well imagine, that no particular *kind* of Element was necessary to extinguish

* *Way to Divine Knowledge*, pages 186-195.

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Fire, or that *Water* can supply the *Place* of Air in kindling it, as suppose that no *particular kind* of Religion is absolutely necessary to raise up such a Divine Life in the Soul as can only be its Salvation ; for Nature is the *Ground* of all Creatures, it is God's Manifestation of himself, it is his Instrument in, and by which he acts in the Production and Government of every Life ; and therefore a Life that is to belong to *this* World, must be raised according to *temporal* Nature, and a Life that is to live in the next World, must be raised according to *Eternal* Nature.

Therefore, all the particular *Doctrines, Institutions, Mysteries,* and *Ordinances* of a revealed Religion that comes from the God of Nature, must have their *Reason, Foundation,* and *Necessity* in Nature ; and then your renouncing such a revealed Religion, is renouncing *all* that the God of Nature can do to save you.

When I speak of Nature as the true Ground and Foundation of Religion, I mean nothing like that which you call the Religion of *Human Reason,* or *Nature* ; for I speak here of *Eternal Nature,* which is the Nature of the *Kingdom of Heaven,* or that Eternal State, where all redeemed Souls must have their Eternal Life, and live in Eternal Nature by a Life derived from it, as Men and Animals live in temporal Nature, by a Life derived from it ; for, seeing Man stands with his Soul in Eternal Nature, as certainly as he lives outwardly in temporal Nature, and seeing Man can have nothing in this World, neither Happiness, nor Misery from it, but what is according to temporal Nature, so he can with his Soul, attain nothing, nor suffer nothing in the next World, but what is according to the Eternal Nature of that World ; and therefore, it is an infallible Truth, that that *particular* Religion can *alone* do us any Good, or help us to the Happiness of the next World, which works *with,* and *according* to Eternal Nature, and is able to *generate* that Eternal Life in us. But your Notion of a Goodness of God that may be expected at the last Day, is as groundless, as if you imagined, that God would then stand over his Creatures in a compassionate kind of *weighing* or *considering* who should be saved, and who damned, because a good-natured Prince might do so towards Variety of Offenders.

But hear how the God of Nature himself speaks of this Matter : *Behold, I have set before thee, Life and Death, Fire and Water,—choose whither thou wilt.* Here lies the *Whole* of the Divine Mercy ; 'tis all on *this side* the Day of Judgment : Till the End of Time, God is *compassionate* and *long-suffering,* and continues to every Creature a *Power* of choosing Life or Death, Water or Fire ; but when the End of Time is come, there is an End of Choice, and the last Judgment is only a putting

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everyone into the full and sole Possession of *That* which he has chosen.

But your Notion of a Goodness of God at the last Day supposes, that if a Man has erroneously chosen *Death* instead of *Life*, *Fire* instead of *Water*, that God will not suffer such a Creature to be deprived of Salvation through a *mistaken Choice*; but that in such a Creature, he will make *Death* to be *Life*, and *Fire* to be *Water*. But you might as well expect, that God should make a Thing to be, and not to be at the same Time; for this is as possible as to make Hell to be Heaven, or Death to be Life: For Darkness can no more be Light, Death can no more be Life, Fire can no more be Water in any Being through a Compassion of God towards it, than a *Circle* could be a *Square*, a *Falsehood* a *Truth*, or *two* to be more than *three*, by God's looking upon them.

32. Our Salvation is an *Entrance* into the Kingdom of Heaven; now, the *Life*, *Light* and *Spirit* of Heaven must as necessarily be in a Creature before it can *live* in Heaven, as the *Life*, *Light* and *Spirit* of this World must be in a Creature before it can *live* in this World: Therefore the *one only* Religion that can save any one Son of fallen *Adam*, must be that which can *raise* or *generate* the *Life*, *Light* and *Spirit* of Heaven in his Soul, that when the *Light* and *Spirit* of this World leaves him, he may not find himself in eternal *Death* and *Darkness*.

Now if this *Light* and *Spirit* of Heaven is *generated* in your Soul as it is generated in Heaven, if it arises up in your Nature *within* you, as it does in eternal Nature *without* you, (which is the Christian new Birth, or Regeneration) then you are become capable of the Kingdom of Heaven, and nothing can keep you out of it; but if you die without this Birth of the Eternal *Light* and *Spirit* of God, then your Soul stands in the *same Distance* from, and *Contrariety* to the Kingdom of Heaven, as Hell does: If you die in this unregenerate State, it signifies nothing *how* you have lived, or *what* Religion you have owned, all is left undone that was to have saved you: It matters not what *Form* of *Life* you have appeared in, what a Number of decent, engaging or glorious Exploits you have done either as a *Scholar*, a *Statesman*, or a *Philosopher*; if they have proceeded only from the *Light* and *Spirit* of this World, they must die with it, and leave your Soul in that Eternal *Darkness*, which it must have, so long as the *Light* and *Spirit* of Eternity is not generated in it.

And this is the true Ground and Reason, why an outward *Morality*, a *Decency* and *Beauty* of *Life* and *Conduct* with respect to this World, arising only from a *Worldly Spirit*, has nothing

of Salvation in it: He that has his Virtue only from this World, is only a *Trader* of this World, and can only have a Worldly Benefit from it. For it is an undoubted Truth, that every Thing is necessarily bounded by, or kept within the Sphere of its *own Activity*; and therefore, to expect Heavenly Effects from a Worldly Spirit, is Nonsense: As *Water* cannot rise higher in its Streams, than the Spring from whence it cometh, so no Actions can ascend further in their Efficacy, or rise higher in their Value, than the *Spirit* from whence they proceed. The Spirit that comes from Heaven is always in Heaven, and whatsoever it does, tends to, and reaches Heaven: The Spirit that arises from this World, is always in it; it is as worldly when it gives *Alms*, or prays in the *Church*, as when it makes *Bargains* in the *Market*. When therefore the Gospel saith, He that gives Alms to be seen of Men, hath his Reward; it is grounded on this general Truth, That every Thing, every Shape, or kind or degree of Virtue that *arises* from the *Spirit* of this World, has nothing to expect but *That* which it can receive from this World: For every Action must have its Nature, and Efficacy according to the Spirit from whence it proceeds. He that loves to see a *Crucifix*, a worthless Image, solely from this Principle, because from his Heart he embraces Christ as his suffering Lord and Pattern, does an Action poor, and needless in itself, which yet by the Spirit from whence it proceeds, *reaches* Heaven, and *helps* to kindle the heavenly Life in the Soul. On the other hand, he that from a *selfish Heart*, a *Worldly Spirit*, a Love of Esteem, distinguishes himself by the most rational Virtues of an exemplary Life, has only a Piety that may be reckoned amongst the *perishable* Things of this World.

33. You (the *Deist*) think it a *Partiality* unworthy of God, when you hear that the *Salvation* of Mankind is attributed and appropriated to *Faith* and *Prayer* in the Name of Jesus Christ. It must be answered, *First*, That there is *no Partiality* of any kind in God; every Thing is accepted by him according to its *own Nature*, and receives all the Good from him that it can possibly receive: *Secondly*, That a Morality of Life, not arising from the *Power* and *Spirit* of Jesus Christ, but brought forth by the Spirit of *this World*, is the same Thing, has the same Nature and Efficacy in a Heathen, as a Christian, does only the *same* worldly Good to the one, as it does to the other; therefore, there is not the least *Partiality* in God, with respect to the *Moral Works* of Mankind, considered as arising from, and directed by the Spirit of this World.

Now, were these the *only Works* that Man could do, could he

only act from *the Spirit* of this World, no *Flesh* could be saved, that is, no earthly Creature, such as Man is, could possibly *begin* to be of a heavenly Nature, or have a heavenly Life *brought* forth in him; so it is only a Spirit from Heaven derived into the fallen Nature, that makes *any Beginning* of a heavenly Life in it, that can lay the *Possibility* of its having the least Ability, Tendency, and Disposition towards the Kingdom of Heaven. This Spirit derived from Heaven, is the *Birth* of the Son of God, given to the Soul as its *Saviour, Regenerator, or Beginner* of its Return to Heaven; it is that *Word of Life, or Bruiser* of the Serpent, that was *in-spoken* into the first fallen Father of Men; 'tis this *alone* that gives to all the Race of *Adam* their *Capacity* for Salvation, their *Power* of being again Sons of God; and therefore, Faith and Prayer in the *Name* of Jesus Christ, or Works done in the *Spirit* and *Power* of Jesus Christ can *alone save* the Soul, because the Soul can have *no Relation* to Heaven, *no Communion* with it, *no Beginning* or *Power* of Growth in the heavenly Life, but solely by the Nature and Name of Jesus Christ *derived* into it. God's Redemption of Mankind is as universal as the Fall: It was the one Father of all Men that fell, therefore, all his Children were born into his fallen State: It was the *one Father* of all Men that was redeemed by the *in-spoken Word* of Life into him; therefore, all his Children are born into his State of Redemption, and have as certainly the same Bruiser of the Serpent in the *Birth* of their Life from him, as they have from him a *Serpentine Nature* that is to be bruised.

Hence it was, that this *Bruiser* of the Serpent, when born of a Virgin, and come to die for the World, saith of himself, 'I am 'the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no Man cometh unto the 'Father but by me.' Hence also the Apostle saith, 'There is 'no other Name under Heaven given among Men, whereby we 'must be saved,'—because he is that *same* saving Name, or Power of Salvation which from the *Beginning* was given to *Adam*, as an *in-spoken Word* of Life, or Bruiser of the Serpent: And therefore, as sure as *Adam* had *any Power* of Salvation *derived* into him from Jesus Christ, so sure was it, that the Apostle *must tell* both Jews and Heathens, that there *was no Salvation in any other.*

Therefore, though Jesus Christ is the *one only* Saviour of all that can anywhere, or at any Time be saved, yet there is no *Partiality* in God, because, this same Jesus Christ, who came in Human Flesh to the Jews in a certain Age, was that *same Saviour* who was given to *Adam*, when all Mankind were in his Loins; and who, through all Ages, and in all Countries, from

the first Patriarchs to the End of the World, is the common Saviour, as he is the common *Light that lighteth every Man* that cometh into the World, and that *Principle of Life* both in Jews and Heathens, by which they had any Relation to God, or any *Power, or Right, or Ability* to call him Father. When therefore you look upon the Gospel as *narrowing* the Way of Salvation, or limiting it to those, who only know and believe in Jesus Christ, since his Appearance in the Flesh, you mistake the *whole Nature* of the Christian Redemption.

And when you reject *this Saviour* that then appeared, and *died* as a Sacrifice upon the *Cross*, you don't renounce a *particular kind* of Religion, that was given *only* at a certain Time to one Part of the World, but you renounce the *one Source and Fountain* of all the Grace and Mercy that God *can* bestow upon Mankind, you renounce your Share of that first Covenant which God made with *all Men in Adam*, you go back into his *first fallen State*, and so put yourself into that Condition of Eternal Death, from which there is no Possibility of Deliverance, but by that one Saviour whom you have renounced.

And now, my dear Friend, beware of Prejudice, or Hardness of Heart: One careless, or one relenting Thought upon all that is here laid before you, may either quite shut out, or quite open an Entrance for true Conviction. I have shown you what is meant by Christian Redemption, and the absolute Necessity of a *new and heavenly Birth*, in order to obtain your Share of a heavenly Life in the next World: I have confirmed the Truths of the Gospel, by Proofs taken from what is undeniable in Nature: And I readily grant you that nothing can be true in revealed Religion, but what has its *Foundation* in Nature; because a Religion coming from the God of Nature, can have no other End but to reform, and set right the Failings, Transgressions, and Violations of Nature. When the Gospel saith that Man fallen from the State of his Creation, and become an earthly Animal of this temporal World, must be born again of the Son and Holy Spirit of God, in order to be a heavenly Creature; 'tis because all Nature saith, that an immortal, eternal Soul, must have an *immortal, eternal Light and Spirit*, to make it live in Eternal Nature, as every Animal must have a *temporal Light and Spirit*, in order to live in temporary Nature. Must you not therefore either deny the *Immortality* of the Soul, or acknowledge the Necessity of its having an *Eternal Light and Spirit*? When the Gospel saith, that nothing can *kindle or generate* the heavenly Life, but the Operation of the *Light and Spirit* of Heaven, it is because all Nature saith, that no temporal Life can be raised but in the *same manner* in temporary Nature. Must

you not therefore be forced to confess, that Nature and the Gospel both preach the *same Truths*.

Light and Spirit must be wherever there are *living* Beings: And there must be the same Difference betwixt the Light and Spirit of different Worlds, as there is betwixt the Worlds themselves. *Hell* must have its Light, or it could have no *living* Inhabitants, but its Light is not so *refreshing*, not so *gentle*, not so *delightful*, not so *comfortable* as flashing Points of Fire in the thickest Darkness of Night; and therefore their Light is called an *Eternal Darkness*, because it can never *disperse*, but only horribly *discover* Darkness: *Hell* also must have its *Spirit*; but it is only an incessant Sensibility of *wrathful Agitations*, of which the Thunder and Rage of a Tempest is but a low, shadowy Resemblance, as being only a little outward Eruption of *That Wrath*, which is the inward, restless Essence of the Spirit of *Hell*; and therefore that Life, though it be a living Spirit, is justly called an *Eternal Death*.

The Light and Spirit of God admit of no Delineation or Comparison, they are only so far known to anyone, as they are brought into the Soul by a Birth of themselves in it.

Now consider, I pray you: The Light and Spirit of this World can no more be the Light and Spirit of *immortal Souls*, than *Grass* and *Hay* can be the Food of Angels; but is as different from the Light and Spirit of Heaven, as an Angel is different from a Beast of the Field. When therefore the Soul of a Man departs from his Body, and is *eternally* cut off from *all* temporal Light and Spirit, what is it that can keep such a Soul from falling into *Eternal Darkness*, unless it have in itself, that *Light* and *Spirit*, which is of the same Nature with the Light and Spirit of Eternity, so that it may be in the Light of Heaven or Eternal Nature, as it was in the Light of this World in temporary Nature.

Light and Spirit there must be in every Thing that lives, but the Death of the Body takes away the Light and Spirit of this World; if therefore the Light and Spirit of Heaven be *not born* in the Soul when it loses the Body, it can only have that Light and Spirit, which is the very *Death* and *Darkness* of *Hell*.

When Man lost the Light and Spirit of his Creation, he lost it by turning the *Will* and *Desire* of his Soul into an Earthly Life; this was his Desire of *knowing Good and Evil* in this World. His Fall therefore consisted in this, his Soul lost its first *innate, in-breathed* Light and Spirit of Heaven, and instead of it, had only the Light and Spirit of Temporary Nature, to keep up for a Time such a Life in him from this World, as the proper Creatures of this World have: And this is the Reason,

why Man, the noblest Creature that is in this World, has yet various Circumstances of Necessity, Poverty, Distress and Shame, that are not common to other Animals of this World. 'Tis because the Creatures of this Life are here *at home*, are the proper Inhabitants of this World, and therefore that Womb out of which they are born, has provided them with all that they want; but Man being only *fallen* into it, and as a Transgressor, must in many Respects find himself in such Wants as other Creatures have not. *Transitory Time* has brought them forth, and therefore they can have no Pain, nor Concern, nor Danger in *passing away*; because it is the *very Form* of their Nature, to begin, and to have an End: And therefore the God of Nature has no outward Laws, or Directions for the Creatures of this World.

But the Soul of Man being *not born* of the Light and Spirit of this transitory World, but only standing a while as a *Stranger* upon Earth, and being under a *Necessity* of having either the Nature of an Angel, or a Devil, when it *leaves* this World, is met by the Mercy and Goodness of the God of Nature, is inwardly and outwardly called, warned, directed, and assisted *how* to regain that Light and Spirit of Heaven which it lost, when it fell under the temporary Light and Spirit of this World. And this is the whole Ground and End of revealed Religion, *viz.*, to kindle such a *Beginning* or *Birth* of the Divine Light and Spirit in the Soul, that when Man must take an Eternal Leave of the Light and Spirit of this World, he may not be in a State of Eternal Death and Darkness.

Now, seeing the Light and Spirit of Heaven or Eternal Nature, is as different from the Light and Spirit of this World, as an Angel is from an Animal of the Field, if you have lived here only to the Spirit and Temper of this World, governed by its Goods and Evils, and only wise according to its Wisdom, you must die as *destitute* of the Light and Spirit of Heaven, as the Beasts that perish. You have now an *Aversion* and *Dislike*, or at least, a *Disbelief* of the Doctrines of Christian Regeneration, you struggle against *this Kind* of Redemption, you would have no Salvation from the *Light* and *Spirit* of Eternity regenerated in your Soul; where then must you be, when the Light and Spirit of this World leaves you?

Do you think that the Light and Spirit of God will then *seize* upon you, *shine* up in you by an *outward Force*, though they never could *be born* in you? Or do you think, that the Light and Spirit of God can *now be generating* themselves in you, and ready to appear, as soon as you have ended a Life, that has continually *resisted* them, and would have no *new Birth* from

them? Or that God, by a compassionate Goodness, will not suffer you to be in that Condition, into which your *own Will* has brought you? No, my Friend, the *Will* that is in you, must do *That* for you, which the Will that was in Angels did for those that *stood*, and for those that *fell*.

God's Goodness or Compassion is always in the *same* infinite State, always *flowing forth*, in and through all Nature in the same infinite Manner, and nothing wants it, but that which cannot receive it: Whilst the Angels stood, they stood encompassed with the infinite Source of all Goodness and Compassion, God was communicated to them in as high a Degree as their Nature could receive; and they fell, not because he ceased to be an infinite, open Fountain of all Good to them, but because they had a Will which must direct itself.

For the Will, at its first arising in the Creature, can be subject to no outward Power, because it has no outward Maker; as it stands in a creaturely Form, God is its true Creator; but as a *Will*, it has no *outward Maker*, but is a Ray, or Spark, derived from the *Unbeginning* Will of the Creator, and is of the same Nature in the Creature, as it was in the Creator, *self-existent, self-generating, self-moving, and uncontrollable* from without; and there could not possibly be a *free Will* in the Creature, but by its being *directly* derived, or propagated from the same Will in the Creator, for Nothing can be free *now*, but that which *always* was so.

But if the free Will of God, which is above and superior to Nature, be communicated to the Creature, then the Creature's free Will must have the same Power over its *one Nature*, that the Will of God has over that Eternal Nature, which is his own Manifestation: And therefore, every free Creature must have, and find its *own Nature* in *this, or that State*, as a *Birth* from the free Working of its own Will. And here appears the true Reason, why no Creatures of this World can commit Sin; 'tis because they have no Will that is *superior* to Nature: Their Will in every one of them, is only the Will of Nature; and therefore let them do what they will, they are always doing that which is *natural*, and consequently, not sinful. But the Will of Angels and Men being an *Offspring, or Ray*, derived from the Will of God, which is *superior* to Nature, stands chargeable with the State and Condition of their Nature; and therefore it is, that the Nature of the Devil, and the Nature of fallen Man is imputed to both of them, as their Sin, which could not be, but because their Will was uncontrollable, and gave Birth and Being to that State and Condition of Nature, which is called, and is their Sin.

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Therefore, O Man! look well to thyself, and see what Birth thou art bringing forth, what Nature is growing up in Thee, and be assured, that stand thou must, in that State in Nature, which the Working of thy own Will has brought forth in Thee, whether it be happy or miserable. Expect no Arbitrary Goodness, of God towards Thee, when thou leavest this World; for that must grow for ever which hath grown here. God hath created thee in Nature, his Mercy hath shown Thee all the Laws and Necessities of Nature, and how Thou mayest rise from Thy Corruption, according to the Possibilities of Nature, and He can only save Thee by thy conforming to the Demands of Nature: The Greatness of the Divine Mercy and Favour towards all Men appears in this, that when all Nature had failed, and Mankind could from Nature have nothing but Eternal Death, that God brought such a Second *Adam* into the World, as being God and Man, could make Nature begin its Work again, where it failed in the first *Adam*.

The *free Grace* and Mercy by which we are said in the Scripture to be *saved*, is not an arbitrary Good Will in God, which saves whom he pleases; as a Prince may forgive some, and not forgive others, merely through his own Sovereign Grace and Favour: Nothing of this Kind hath any Place in God, or in the Mystery of our Redemption; but the Mercy and Grace, by which we are saved, is therefore free, because God hath freely, and from his own Goodness, put us into a *State* and Possibility of Salvation, by freely giving us Jesus Christ, (the Divine and Human Nature united in one Person) as the only Means of regenerating that first Divine and Human Life, which the whole Race of Mankind had lost. In this sense alone it is, that all our Salvation is wholly owing to the free Grace of God, that is, our *State*, and *Possibility*, and *Means* of attaining Salvation is wholly owing to his free Grace in giving us Jesus Christ; but our Salvation, considered as a *finished Thing*, is not, cannot be found by any Act of God's free Grace towards us, but because *all That* is done, altered, removed, suppressed, quickened, and recovered by us in the *State* of our Nature, which the free Grace of God had furnished us with the Possibility and Means of doing. If Nature and Creature had no Share in working out our Salvation; if it was all free Grace, effected against, and without the Powers of Nature, how comes it, that the fallen Angels are not to be redeemed as well as Man? Must we say that God is less good to them than he is to us? Or if they are not redeemed, can there be any other Reason for it, but because it is an Impossibility in Nature? Must not an infinite Good do all the Good that is wanted, and is possible to be done? If free Grace can

do what it pleases, if it wants no Concurrence of Nature and Creature, how can any Being, whether Man or Angel, be eternally miserable, but through an Eternal Defect in the Goodness of God towards it? Shall we call that infinite Goodness, which sets Bounds and Limits to itself, and which could do more Good, but will not?

The Truth of the Matter is this, God is as infinite and boundless in Love and Goodness, as he is in *Power*, but his Omnipotence can only do that which is possible, and nothing is possible but that which hath its Possibility in Nature; because Nature is God's first Power, his great, universal Manifestation of his Deity, in and through, and by which all his infinite Attributes break forth, and display themselves: So that to expect, that God should do any Thing that is above, or contrary to this Nature, is as absurd as to expect that God should act above, or contrary to himself: As God can only make a Creature to be in, and through, and by Nature; so the Reason why he cannot make a Creature to be, and not to be at the same Time, is only this, because it is contrary to Nature. Let no Man therefore trust to be saved at the last Day, by any *arbitrary* Goodness, or *free Grace* of God; for Salvation is, and can be nothing else, but the having *put off* all that is damnable and hellish in our Nature, which Salvation can be found by no Creature but by its own full conforming to, and concurring with those Mysterious Means, which the free Grace of God hath afforded for the Recovery of our first, perfect, glorious State in Nature.

Chapter II.

Of Eternal and Temporal Nature. How Nature is from God, and the Scene of his Action. How the Creatures are out of it. Temporal Nature created out of that which is eternal. The fallen Angels brought the first Disorders into Nature. This World created to repair those Disorders. Whence Good and Evil is in every Thing of this

World. How Heaven and Hell make up the Whole of this World. How the Fire of this World differs from eternal Fire; and the Matter of this World from the Materiality of Heaven. Eternal Nature is the Kingdom of Heaven, the beatific Manifestation of the triune God. God is mere Love and Goodness. How Wrath and Anger come to be ascribed to him. Of Fire in general. Of the Unbeginning Fire. Of the Spirituality of Fire. How Fire comes to be in material Things. Whence the Possibility of kindling Fire in the Things of this World. Every Man is, and must be the Kindler of his own Eternal Fire, &c.

1. **W**AS there no *Nature*, there could be no Creature, because the Life of every Creature is, and can be nothing else, but the Life of *that Nature* out of which it was created, and in which it has its Being. Eternal Beings must have their Qualities, Nature, Form and Manner of Existence out of *Eternal Nature*, and temporal Beings out of temporary Nature: Was there no Eternity, there could be no Time, was there nothing infinite, there could be nothing finite; therefore we have here two great fundamental Truths that cannot be shaken; *First*, That there is, and must be, an *Eternal Nature*; because there is a Nature that is temporary, and that it must be that to Eternal Creatures, which temporal Nature is to temporal Creatures: *Secondly*, That everywhere, and in all Worlds, *Nature* must stand between God and the Creature, as the Foundation of all mutual Intercourse; God can transact nothing with the Creature, nor the Creature have any Communion with God, but in, and by *that Nature*, in which it stands.

I hope no one will here ask me for Scripture Proofs of this, or call these Truths *Nostrums*, because they are not to be found in the *same Form* of Expression in some particular Text of Scripture. Where do the Holy Writings tell us, that a Thing cannot be, and not be at the *same Time*? Or that every *Consequence* must arise from *Premises*? And yet the Scripture is continually supposing both these Truths, and there could be no Truth in the Scripture, or anywhere else, if these Things were not undeniable.

There is nothing said of Man throughout all Scripture, but what supposes him to stand *in Nature*, under a necessity of choosing something that is *natural*, either Life or Death, Fire or Water. There is nothing said of God with relation to Creatures, but what supposes him to be the God of *Nature*, manifesting himself in and through Nature, calling, assisting and directing every Thing to its highest *natural* State. Nature is the Scene of his Providence, and all the Variety of his governing Attributes display themselves by his various Operations in and through Nature: Therefore it is equally certain, that what God does to any Creature, must be done through the *Medium* of Nature, and also what the Creature does toward God, must be done in and through the Powers of *that Nature* in which it stands. No temporary Creature can turn to God, or reach after him, or have any Communion with him, but in, and according to that Relation which temporary Nature bears to God; nor can any Eternal Beings draw near to, or unite with God in any *other manner*, than that in which Eternal Nature is united with him. Would you know, why no Omnipotence of God can create Temporal Animals but out of temporary Nature, nor eternal Animals but out of Eternal Nature; it is because no Omnipotence of God can produce a visible *Triangle*, but out of, and by three visible *Lines*; for, as *Lines* must be before there can be any *lineal Figures*, so *Nature* must be before there can be *natural Creatures*.

2. Every Thing that is in Being, is either God, or Nature, or Creature; and every Thing that is not God, is only a Manifestation of God; for as there is nothing, neither Nature, nor Creature, but what must have its Being in, and from God, so every Thing is, and must be according to its Nature, more or less a *Manifestation* of God. Everything therefore, by its Form and Condition, speaks *so much* of God, and God in every Thing, speaks and manifests *so much* of himself. Temporary Nature is this beginning, created System of *Sun, Stars, and Elements*; 'tis temporary Nature, because it begins and hath an End, and therefore is only a temporary Manifestation of God, or God manifested according to transitory Things.

3. Properly and strictly speaking, nothing *can begin* to be: The Beginning of every Thing is nothing more, than its beginning to be in a *new State*. Thus *Time* itself does not begin to be, but *Duration*, which always was, began to be measured by the Earth's turning round, or the rising and setting of the Sun, and that is called the Beginning of *Time*, which is, properly speaking, only the Beginning of the Measure of *Duration*: Thus it is with all temporal Nature, and all the Qualities and Powers of temporal Beings that live in it: No Quality or Power of Nature *then* began to be, but such Qualities and Powers as had been from all Eternity, began then to be in a *new State*. Ask what *Time* is, it is nothing else but something of *Eternal Duration* become *finite, measurable, and transitory*? Ask what *Fire, Light, Darkness, Air, Water, and Earth* are; they are, and can be nothing else, but some eternal Things become *gross, finite, measurable, divisible, and transitory*? For if there could be a temporal *Fire* that did not *spring* out of *Eternal Fire*, then there might be *Time* that did not come out of *Eternity*.

'Tis thus with every temporary Thing, and the Qualities of it; 'tis the Beginning of Nothing, but only of a *new State* of something that existed before: Therefore all temporary Nature is a Product, Offspring, or Out-birth of *Eternal Nature*, and is nothing else but so much of *Eternal Nature* changed from its eternal to a temporal Condition. *Fire* did not begin to be, *Darkness* did not begin to be, *Light* did not begin to be, *Water* and *Earth* did not begin to be, when this temporary World first appeared, but all these Things came out of their *Eternal State*, into a lower, divided, compacted, created and transitory State. *Hearing, Seeing, Tasting, Smelling, Feeling*, did not then begin to be, when God first created the Creatures of this World, they only came to be Qualities and Powers of a lower, and more imperfect Order of Beings than they had been before.

Figures, and their Relations, did not then begin to be, when *Material Circles and Squares, &c.*, were first made, but these *Figures* and Relations began then to appear in a lower State than they had done before: And so it must be said of all temporal Nature, and every Thing in it. It is only *something* of *Eternal Nature* separated, changed, or created into a new, temporary State and Condition.

4. Now it may be asked, why was *Eternal Nature* thus degraded, debased, and changed from its *Eternal State* of Perfection? Will anyone say, that God of his own Will changed *Eternal Nature*, which is the *Glorious Manifestation* of his Power and Godhead, the *Seat* of his holy Residence, his *Majestic Kingdom* of Heaven, into this poor, miserable Mixture of Good

and Evil, into this impure State of Division, Grossness, Death, and Darkness? No. It is the highest of all Absurdities, to say so. Now, we sufficiently know from Scripture, that a whole Hierarchy, or Host of Angels, renounced their Heavenly Life, and thereby raised up a *Kingdom* that was not Heavenly. Could they not have inflamed and disordered outward Nature in which they lived, they could not have destroyed the Heavenly Nature in themselves: For every Thing must be according to the State of that World in which it lives; and therefore, the State of outward Nature, and the State of inward Nature in the Angels must stand and fall together; and as sure as a whole Kingdom of Angels lost their heavenly Life, so sure it is, that their whole Kingdom lost its heavenly State and Condition: And therefore, it is an undeniable Truth, founded on Scripture Evidence, that *same Part* of Eternal Nature was changed from its *first State* of Glory and Perfection, *before* the Creation of Temporary Nature; therefore, in the Creation of this poor, gross, disordered, perishable, material World, one of these two Things was done, either God took the *spoiled Part* of Heaven or Eternal Nature, and created it into this *Temporary State* of Good and Evil; or he degraded, and brought down some Part of the Kingdom of Heaven from its Glory and Perfection, into *this Mixture* of Good and Evil, Order and Disorder in which the World stands. He could not do this *latter*, without bringing Evil into Nature, as the Devil had done, and therefore we may be sure he did not do it; but if he did the former, then the Creation of this lower World, was a glorious Act, and worthy of the infinite Goodness of God, it was putting an End to the Devil's working Evil in Nature, and it was putting the Evil that was brought into Nature, in a way of being finally overcome, and turned into Good again. Will anyone now call these Things *whimsical Speculations*? Can any Thing be thought of *more worthy* of God, more *conformable* to Nature, or more *consonant* to all revealed Religion? But perhaps you will say, how could the Angels spoil or destroy that glorious Kingdom of Eternal Nature in which they dwelt. It may be answered, how could it possibly be otherwise? How could they live in Eternal Nature, unless Nature without them, and Nature within them, mutually *mixed* and *qualified* with each other? Would you have such mighty Spirits, with their eternal Energies, have less Power in *that Nature*, or Kingdom in which they dwelt, than a kindled Piece of *Coal* hath in this World? For every Piece of *Coal* set on Fire, adds so much Heat to outward Nature, and so far alters and changes the State of it.

5. Now, let it be supposed, not only that a Piece of *Coal*, but

that the Whole of every Thing in this World, that could either give or receive Fire was made to burn, what Effect would it have upon the whole Frame of Nature? Would not the whole State of Things, the Regions, Places, and Divisions of the Elements, and all the Order of temporal Nature be quite destroyed?

When therefore *every Angelical Life* kindled itself in Wrath, and became thereby divided, darkened, and separated from God, the same Kindling, Darkening, Dividing and Confusion must be brought forth in their Natural Kingdom, because they lived in Nature, and could have neither Love, nor Wrath, but such as they could exert in and by the Powers of Nature.

Now, all Fire, wherever it is, is either a Fire of Wrath, or a Fire of Love: Fire not overcome or governed by *Light*, is the Fire of *Wrath*, which only tears in Pieces, consumes and devours all that it can lay hold of, and it *wills* nothing else: But *Light* is the Fire of *Love*, it is meek, amiable, full of kind Embraces, lovingly spreading itself, and giving itself with all its Riches into every Thing that can receive it. These are the *two Fires* of Eternal Nature, which were but one in Heaven, and can be only one wherever Heaven is; and it was the *Separation* of these two Fires that changed the Angels into Devils, and made their Kingdom a Beginning of Hell.

Now, either of these two Fires, wherever it is kindled in animate or lifeless Things, communicates its own kind of Heat in some Degree to outward Nature, and so far alters and changes the State of it: The Wrath of a *Man*, and the Wrath of a *Tempest* do *one* and the *same Thing* to outward Nature, alter its State in the same Manner, and only differ in their Degree of doing it.

Fire kindled in a material Thing, can only communicate with the Materiality of Nature; but the Fire of a wrathfully-inflamed Man, being a Fire both of Body and Soul, communicates a *two-fold* Heat, it stirs up the Fire of outward Nature, as Fire does in a *Coal*, and it stirs up the Wrath of Hell as the Devils do.

The Fire of Love kindled by the Light and Spirit of God in a truly regenerated Man, communicates a twofold Blessing, it outwardly joins with the meek Light of the Sun, and helps to overcome the Wrath of outward Nature; it inwardly co-operates with the Power of Good Angels, in resisting the Wrath and Darkness of Hell: And it would be no Folly to suppose, that if all human Breath was become a *mere, unmixed* Wrath, that all the Fire in outward Nature would immediately break forth, and bring that Dissolution upon outward Nature, which will arise from the last Fire. Therefore it is necessary, that a whole Kingdom of Angels should kindle the *same* Wrath and Disorder in outward Nature

that was in themselves; for being in eternal Nature, and communicating with it, as temporal Beings do in temporal Nature, what they did in themselves, must be done in that Nature or Kingdom in which they lived, and moved, and had their Being.

What a powerful Fire there is in the Wrath of a Spirit, may be seen by the Effects of human Wrath; one sudden Thought shall in a Moment discolour, poison, inflame, swell, distort and agitate the *whole Body* of a Man. Whence also is it, that a diseased Body infects the Air, or that malignant Air infects a healthful Body? Is it not because there is, and must be an inseparable Qualifying, Mixing and Uniting betwixt Nature and those Creatures that live in it? Now, all Diseases and Malignties, whether in Nature or Creature, all proceed from the sinful Motions of the *Will* and *Desires* of the Creature. This is as certain, as that Death and all that leads to it, is the *sole Product* of Sin; therefore it is a certain Truth, that all the Disorder that ever was, or can be in Nature, arises from that Power which the Creature hath in and upon Nature; and therefore, as sure as a whole Host of Heavenly Beings raised up a fiery, wrathful, dark Nature in themselves, so sure is it, that the same wrathful, fiery, dark Disorder was raised up in that Kingdom, or Nature, in which they had their Being.

6. Now the Scriptures nowhere say in express Words, that the *Place* of this World was the Place of the Angels that fell, and that their fallen, spoiled and disordered Kingdom, was by the Power of God, *changed* or *created* into this temporary State of Things in which we live; this is not expressly said, because it is plainly implied and fully signified to us by the most general Doctrines of Scripture; for if we know, both from Nature and Scripture, that this World is a *Mixture* of Good and Evil, do not we enough know, that it could only be created out of *That* which was Good and Evil? And if we know that Evil cannot come from God, if we know that the Devil had actually brought it forth *before* the Creation of this World; are we not enough told, that the Evil which is in this World, is the Evil that was *brought forth* into Nature by the Devil? And that therefore the Matter of this World, is that *very Materiality* which was spoiled by the fallen Angels? How can we need a particular Text of Scripture to tell us, that the *Place* of this World was the Place of the *Angels* before their *Fall*, when the whole Tenor of Scripture tells us, that it is the Place of their Habitation *now*? For how could they have, or find Darkness, but in that *very Place*, where they had extinguished the Light? What could they have to do with us, or we with them, but that we are entered into *their Possessions*, and

have their Kingdom made over to us? How could they go about amongst us as roaring Lions, seeking whom they may devour, but that our Creation has brought us amongst them? They cannot *possibly* be anywhere, but where they fell, because they can live nowhere but in the *Evil* which they have brought forth; they can have no Wrath and Darkness but where they broke off from Light and Love; they can communicate with no outward Nature but that which fell with them, and underwent the same Change as they did: Therefore, though St. *Jude* saith with great Truth, that they *left their own Habitation*, yet, it is only as they left their own Angelical Nature, not departed from it into a distant Place, but deformed and changed it; so that the Heaven that was within them, and without them, is *equally left*, because both within them, and without them, they have no Habitation but a fiery Darkness broken off from the Light of God.

And therefore, as Man by his Creation is brought into a Power of Commerce with those fallen Angels, who must live, and could only act in that Part of Nature which they had deformed, it is plain, that this Creation placed him in *that System* of Things, which was formed and created out of their fallen Kingdom, because they can act, or be acted upon nowhere else.

7. And this is the one true, and only Reason, why there is Good and Evil throughout all temporal Nature and Creature; 'tis because all this temporary Nature is a Creation out of that Strife of Evil against Good which the fallen Angels had brought into their Kingdom. No subtle, *evil Serpent* could have been generated, no *Tree of Knowledge* of Good and Evil could have sprung out of the Earth, but because Nature in this World was *that Part* of Eternal Nature which the fallen Angels had *corrupted*; and therefore, a Life made up of Good and Evil could be brought forth by it. Evil and Good was in the Angelical Kingdom as soon as they set *their Wills* and *Desires* contrary to God, and the Divine Life. Had God permitted them to go on, their whole Kingdom had been like themselves, all over *one unmix'd* Evil, and so had been incapable of being created into a redeemable State: But God put a Stop to the Progress of Evil in their Kingdom, he came upon it *whilst* it was in Strife, and *compact'd* or *created* it all into a new, temporary, material State and Condition; whence these two Things followed: *First*, That the fallen Angels lost their Power over it, and could no further kindle their *own Fire* in it, but were as chained Prisoners, in an Extent of Darkness which they could neither get out of, nor extend any further: *Secondly*, This new Creation being created out of this *begun Strife*, stood as yet in

the *Birth* of Life, and so became capable of being assisted and blessed by God ; and finally, at the End of Time, restored to its first heavenly State.

Now, the Good and Evil that is in this World is *that same* Good and Evil, and in the *same Strife* that it was in the Kingdom of the fallen Angels, only with this happy Difference, there it was under the Devil's Power, and in a Way to be wholly evil ; here it is in a new compacted, or created State under the Providence and Blessing of God, appointed to bring forth a *new kind* of Life, and display the Wonders of Divine Love, till such Time as a new Race of Angelical Creatures born in this Mixture of Good and Evil, shall be fit to receive the Kingdom of *Lucifer*, restored to its first Glory ?

Is there any Part of the Christian Religion that does not either *suppose* or *speak* this great Truth, any Part of outward Nature that does not *confirm* it ? Is there any Part of the Christian Religion that is not made more intelligible, more beautiful and edifying by it ? Is there any Difficulty of outward Nature that is not totally removed and satisfied by it ?

How was the Philosophy of the Ancient Sages perplexed with the State of Nature ? They knew God to be all Goodness, Love, and Perfection, and so knew not what to do with the Misery of Human Life, and the Disorders of outward Nature, because they knew not *how* this Nature came into its *present State*, or from whence it was descended. But had they known, that temporal Nature, all that we see in this whole Frame of Things, was only the *sickly, defiled* State of Eternal Things put into a temporary State of *Recovery*, that Time and all transitory Things were only in this War and Strife, to be finally delivered from all the Evil that was brought into Eternal Nature, their Hearts must have praised God for this Creation of Things as those *Morning Stars* did, that *shouted for Joy* when it was first brought forth.

8. From this true Knowledge of the *State*, and *Nature*, and *Place* of this Creation, what a Reasonableness, Wisdom, and Necessity does there appear in the hardest Sayings, Precepts and Doctrines of the Gospel ? He that thus knows what this World is, has great Reason to be glad that he is born into it, and yet still greater Reason to rejoice, in being called out of it, preserved from it, and shown how to escape with the Preservation of his Soul. The Evils that are in this World, are the Evils of *Hell*, that are tending to be nothing else but Hell ; they are the *Remains* of the Sin and Poison of the fallen Angels : The Good that is in this World are the Sparks of *Life* that are to generate *Heaven*, and gain the Restoration of the first Kingdom of

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Lucifer. Who therefore would think of any Thing, desire any Thing, endeavour any Thing, but to resist Evil in every Kind, under every Shape and Colour? Who would have any Views, Desires and Prayers after any Thing, but that the *Life and Light* of Heaven may rise up in Himself, and that God's Kingdom may come, and his Will be done in all Nature and Creature?

Darkness, Light, Fire and Air, Water and Earth, stand in their temporary, created Distinction and Strife, for no other End, with no other View, but that they may obtain the *one Thing needful*, their first Condition in Heaven: And shall Man that is born into Time for no other End, on no other Errand, but that he may be an Angel in Eternity, think it hard to live as if there were but one Thing needful for him? What was the poor *Politics*, the earthly *Wisdom*, the *Ease*, *Sensuality*, and *Advancements* of this World for us, but such Fruits as must be eaten in Hell? To be swelled with Pride, to be fattened with Sensuality, to grow great through Craft, and load ourselves with earthly Goods, is only living the Life of Beasts, that we may die the Death of Devils. On the other hand, to go starved out of this World, rich in nothing but heavenly Tempers and Desires, is taking from *Time* all that we came for, and all that can go with us into Eternity.

9. But to return to the further Consideration of Nature. As all temporary Nature is nothing else but eternal Nature brought out of its kindled, disordered Strife, into a created or compacted Distinction of its *several Parts*, so it is plain, that the Whole of this World, in all its *working Powers*, is nothing else but a Mixture of Heaven and Hell. There cannot be the smallest Thing, or the smallest Quality of any Thing in this World, but what is a Quality of *Heaven* or *Hell*, discovered under a temporal Form: Every Thing that is disagreeable to the *Taste*, to the *Sight*, to our *Hearing*, *Smelling* or *Feeling*, has its Root and Ground, and Cause, *in* and from *Hell*, and is as surely in its Degree the *Working* or *Manifestation* of Hell in this World, as the most diabolical Malice and Wickedness is: The *Stink* of Weeds, of Mire, of all *poisonous*, corrupted Things, *Shrieks*, horrible *Sounds*, *wrathful Fire*, *Rage of Tempests*, and *thick Darkness*, are all of them Things, that had *no Possibility* of Existence, till the fallen Angels disordered the *State* of their Kingdom; therefore, every Thing, that is disagreeable and horrible in this Life, every Thing that can afflict and terrify our Senses, all the Kinds of natural and moral Evil, are only *so much* of the Nature, Effects, and Manifestation of Hell: For Hell and Evil are only two Words for *one* and the *same* Thing: The Extent of one is the Extent of the other, and all that can be

ascribed to the one, must be ascribed to the other. On the other hand, all that is sweet, delightful and amiable in this World, in the *Serenity* of the Air, the *Fineness* of Seasons, the *Joy* of Light, the *Melody* of Sounds, the *Beauty* of Colours, the *Fragrancy* of Smells, the *Splendour* of precious Stones, is nothing else but Heaven *breaking through* the Veil of this World, *manifesting* itself in such a Degree, and darting forth in such Variety *so much* of its own Nature. So that Heaven and Hell are not only as near you, as constantly showing and proving themselves to all your Senses, as *Day* and *Night*, but *Night* itself is nothing else but Hell breaking forth in *such a Degree*, and the *Day* is nothing else but a certain *Opening* of Heaven, to save us from the Darkness that arises from Hell.

O Man! consider thyself, here thou standest in the earnest, perpetual Strife of Good and Evil, all Nature is continually at work to *bring about* the great Redemption; the whole Creation is travelling in Pain, and laborious Working, to be delivered from the *Vanity* of Time, and will thou be asleep? Everything thou hearest, or seest, says nothing, shows nothing to Thee, but what either eternal Light, or eternal Darkness hath *brought forth*; for as *Day* and *Night* divide the whole of our Time, so Heaven and Hell divide the whole of our Thoughts, Words and Actions. Stir which way thou wilt, do, or design what thou wilt, thou must be an *Agent* with the *one* or with the *other*. Thou canst not stand still, because thou livest in the *perpetual Workings* of temporal and eternal Nature; if thou workest not with the Good, the Evil that is in Nature carries thee along with it: Thou hast the Height and Depth of Eternity in Thee, and therefore be doing what thou wilt, either in the *Closet*, the *Field*, the *Shop*, or the *Church*, thou art sowing *That* which grows, and must be reaped in Eternity. Nothing of thine can vanish away, but every Thought, Motion, and Desire of thy Heart, has its *Effect* either in the Height of Heaven, or the Depth of Hell: And as Time is upon the Wing, to put an End to the *Strife* of Good and Evil, and bring about the last great *Separation* of all Things into their Eternal State, with such Speed art Thou making Haste either to be wholly an Angel, or wholly a Devil: O! therefore awake, watch and pray, and join with all thy Force with that Goodness of God, which has created Time and all Things in it, to have a happy End in Eternity.

10. Temporal Nature opened to us by the Spirit of God, becomes a *Volume* of holy Instruction to us, and leads us into all the Mysteries and Secrets of Eternity: For as every Thing in temporal Nature is *descended* out of that which is eternal, and stands as a *palpable, visible Out-birth* of it; so when we know

how to separate the *Grossness, Death, and Darkness* of Time from it, we find what it is in its eternal State. Fire, and Light, and Air in this World are not only a true Resemblance of the Holy Trinity in Unity, but are the Trinity itself in its most *outward, lowest* kind of Existence or Manifestation ; for there could be no Fire, Fire could not *generate* Light, Air could not *proceed* from both, these three could not be thus united, and thus divided, but because they have their *Root and Original* in the Triunity of the Deity. Fire *compacted, created, separated* from Light and Air, is the *Elemental Fire* of this World : Fire uncreated, uncompact, unseparated from Light and Air, is the *heavenly Fire* of Eternity : Fire kindled in any material Thing is only Fire *breaking out* of its *created, compacted* State ; it is nothing else but the awakening the *Spiritual Properties* of that Thing, which being thus stirred up, strive to get rid of that material *Creation* under which they are imprisoned : Thus every kindled Fire, with all its Rage and Fierceness, tears and divides, scatters and consumes that *Materiality* under which it is imprisoned ; and were not these *Spiritual Properties* imprisoned in Matter, no material Thing could be made to burn. And this is another Proof, that the Materiality of this World is come out of a higher, and spiritual State, because every Matter upon Earth can be made to *discover* Spiritual Properties concealed in it, and is indeed a Compaction of nothing else. Fire is not, cannot be a *material* Thing, it only makes itself visible and sensible by the Destruction of Matter : Matter is its *Death and Imprisonment*, and it comes to Life but by being able to agitate, divide, shake off, and consume that Matter which held it in Death and Bondage ; so that every Time you see a Fire kindled, you see Nature striving in a *low degree* to get rid of the Grossness of this material Creation, and to do that which can alone be done by the *last Fire*, when all the inward, spiritual Properties hid in every Thing, in *Rocks, and Stones, and Earth, in Sun, and Stars, and Elements*, shall by the last Trumpet be awakened and called forth : And this is a certain Truth, that Fire could *nowhere* now be kindled in any material Thing, but for *this Reason*, because all material Nature was created to be restored, and stands by Divine Appointment in a *Fitness and Tendency* to have its Deliverance from this created State, by *Fire* ; so that every Time you see a Piece of Matter *dissolved* by Fire, you have a *full Proof*, that all the Materiality of this World is appointed to a Dissolution by Fire ; and that then, (O glorious Day !) Sun and Stars, and all the Elements will be delivered from Vanity, will be again that *one eternal, harmonious, glorious* Thing which they were, before they were compacted into *material* Distinctions and Separations.

11. The Elements of this World stand in great *Strife* and *Contrariety*, and yet in great Desire of *mixing* and *uniting* with each other; and hence arises both the *Life* and *Death* of all Temporal Things: And hereby we plainly know that the Elements of this World were once *one undivided* Thing; for Union can *nowhere* be desired, but where there has first been a *Separation*; as sure therefore as the Elements desire each other, so sure is it, that they have been *parted* from each other, and are only Parts of some *one Thing* that has been divided. When the Elements come to *such* a Degree of Union, a Life is produced; but because they have still a *Contrariety* to each other, they soon destroy again that same Life which they had built, and therefore every four-elementary Life is short and transitory.

Now, from this undeniable State of Nature, we are told these following great Truths: 1. That the *four* Elements are only *four Parts* of That, which before the Creation of this World, was only a *one Element*, or one *undivided Power* of Life. 2. That the Mortality of this Life is wholly and solely owing to the *divided State* of the Elements. 3. That the true, immortal Life of Nature, is only *there* to be found, where the four Elements are only *one Thing*, mere *Unity* and *Harmony*; where Fire and Air, Water and Earth, have a much more *glorious* Union than they have in *Diamonds* and precious *Stones*: For in the brightest Diamonds the four Elements still partake of their divided State, though to our *Eye* they appear as only *one glorious* Thing; but the Beauty of the *Diamond* is but a *Shadow*, a low Specimen of *that Glory* which will shine through all Nature, when Fire and Air, Water and Earth shall be again that *one Thing* which they were, before the Fall of Angels and the Creation of this World. 4. That the Body of *Adam* (being formed for Immortality) could not possibly have the *Nature*, or be made out of the *divided State* of the Elements. The Letter of Scripture absolutely demonstrates this; for if Sickness, Sorrow, Pain, the Trouble of Heat and Cold, all so many Forerunners of Death, can *only be* where the Elements are in *Division* and *Contrariety*; and if, according to Scripture, these Calamities did not, could not *possibly* touch *Adam* till he fell, then it is plain from Scripture, that before his Fall, the Division and Contrariety of the Elements was not in him: And that was his *Paradisaical* Nature, in and by which he stood in a State of Superiority over all the Elements of this World. 5. That the Body of *Adam* lost its one Elementary Glory and Immortality, and then first became *gross, dark, heavy* *Flesh* and *Blood*, under the Power of the four Elements, when he *lusted* to eat, and *actually* did eat of that Tree, which had its Good and Evil from the *divided State* of the Elements. 6.

Hence we also know, with the greatest Certainty, the Mystery of the Resurrection of the Body, that it consists *wholly* and *solely* in the reducing the four-Elementary Body of this World, to its *first, one Elementary State*, and then everyone has that *same Body* raised again that died, and *all* that *Adam* lost is *restored*. For if the Body is mortal, and dies because it is become a Body of the *four Elements*, it can only be raised *immortal*, by having its four Elements reduced again into *one*: And here lies the *true Sameness* of the Body that died, and that which rises again. But to proceed :

12. As all the four Elements, by their *Desiring*, and wanting to be *united* together, prove that they are only four grossly divided *Out-births* of That which before was *only one* heavenly, harmonious Element, so every single Element fully demonstrates the same Thing; for every single Element, though standing in its *created Contrariety* to every other, has yet in its *own* divided State, all the four Elements *in itself*: Thus the *Air* has every Thing in it that is in the Earth, and the Earth has in itself every Thing that is in Fire, Water and Air, only in a different Mixture and Compaction; were it not so, had not every Element in some Degree the *whole Nature* of them all, they could not possibly mix, and qualify with one another; and this may well pass for a Demonstration, that *That* out of which the four Elements are descended, was *one harmonious* Union of them all, because every one of the four, has *now*, and must have in its divided State, all the four in itself, though not in Equality; for if the four must be together, though unequally lodged in every single Element, it is plain, the four must have been *one harmonious* Thing, before they were brought into four *unequal Separations*: And therefore, as sure as there are four warring, disagreeing Elements in *Time*, so sure is it, that *That* which is now in this fourfold Division, was and is in Eternity, *one*, in an heavenly, harmonious Union, keeping up an Eternal, joyful, glorious Life in *Eternal Nature*, as its four broken Parts bring forth a poor, miserable, transitory Life in temporal Nature.

13. All *Matter* in this World is only the Materiality of Heaven *thus* altered. The Difference between *Matter* in this World and *Matter* in the other World, lies wholly and solely in this; in the one it is *dead*, in the other it is *living* Materiality. It is dead Materiality in this World, because it is *gross, dark, hard, heavy, divisible, &c.* It is in this State of Death, because it is *separated, or broken* off from the *Eternal Light*, which is the true Life, or the Power of Life in every Thing.

In eternal Nature or the Kingdom of Heaven, Materiality stands in Life and Light; it is the Light's *glorious Body*, or that

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Garment wherewith Light is *clothed*, and therefore has all the Properties of Light in it, and only differs from Light, as it is its *Brightness* and *Beauty*, as the *Holder* and *Displayer* of all its Colours, Powers and Virtues. But the same Materiality in this World, being created or compacted into a Separation from Fire united with Light, is become the Body of *Death* and *Darkness*, and is therefore *gross, thick, dark, heavy, divisible, &c.*, for Death is nothing else but the shutting up, or shutting out the *united Power* of Fire and Light: This is the *only Death* that ever did, or can happen to any Thing, whether earthly or heavenly. Therefore, *every Degree* of Hardness, Darkness, Stiffness, &c., is a Degree of Death; and herein consists the Deadness of the Materiality of this World. When it shall be raised to Life, that is, when the *United Power* of Fire and Light shall *kindle* itself through all temporal Nature, then *Hardness, Darkness, Divisibility, &c.*, will be all extinguished together.

That the *Deadness* of the Earth may, and certainly will be brought to Life by the *united Power* of Fire and Light, is sufficiently shown us by the Nature and Office of the *Sun*. The *Sun* is the *united Power* of Fire and Light, and therefore the Sun is the Raiser of Life out of the *Deadness* of the Earth; but because Fire and Light as united in the Sun, is only the Virtue of temporary Fire and Light, so it can only raise a short and fading, transitory Life. But as sure as you see, that Fire and Light united in the Sun, can change the *Deadness* of the Earth, into such a beautiful Variety of a Vegetable Life, so sure are you, that this dark, gross Earth, is in its State of Death and Darkness, only for this Reason, because it is *broken off* from the united Power of Fire and Light: For as sure as the outward Operation of the Fire and Light of the Sun can change the *Deadness* of the Earth into a *Degree* of Life, so sure is it, that the Earth lies in its present *Deadness*, because it is separated from its *own Eternal* Fire and Light: And as sure as you see, that the Fire and Light of the Sun can raise a *temporal Life* out of the Earth, so sure is it, that the united Power of *Eternal* Fire and Light can, and will turn all that is earthly, into its *first State* of Life and Beauty. For the Sun of this World, as it is the Union of temporary Fire and Light, has no Power, but as it is the *outward Agent*, or *Temporary Representative* of *Eternal* Fire and Light, and therefore it can only do that in part, and imperfectly in Time, which by the *Eternal* Fire and Light will be *wholly* and *perfectly* done in Eternity. And therefore every Vegetable Life, every Beauty, Power, and Virtue which the Sun calls forth out of the Earth, tells us, with a *Divine Certainty*, that there will come a Time, when all that is hid in the *Deadness, Grossness,*

and Darkness of the Earth, will be again called up to a Perfection of *Life* and *Glory of Beauty*.

14. How has the Philosophy of the *Schools* been puzzled with the *Divisibility* of Matter! It is because human Reason, the Mistress of the *Schools*, partakes of the *Deadness* of the Earth; and the Soul of Man must first have the Light of *Eternal Life* rise up in him, before he can *see* or *find* out the Truths of Nature. Human Reason knew nothing of the Death of the Matter, or the Nature and Reason of its temporary Creation, and so thought Death and Divisibility to be *essential* to Matter; but the Light of God tells every Man this infallible Truth, that *God made not Death* in any Thing, that he is a God of Life, and therefore, every Thing that comes from him, comes into a *State* of Life. Matter is thick, hard, heavy, divisible, and the like, only for a *Time*, because it is *compacted* or *created* into Thickness, Hardness, and Divisibility only for a *Time*: These are only the Properties of its *temporal*, created State, and therefore are no more *essential* to it than the Hardness of *Ice* is essential to Water. Now, that the Creation of the Matter of this World is nothing else but a *Compaction*, that all the Elements are *separated Compactions* of That which before was free from such a *Compaction*, is plain from Scripture. For we are told, that all the Material Things and Elements of this World, are to have their created State and Nature taken from them, by being *dissolved* or *melted*: But if this be a Scripture Truth, then it is equally true from Scripture, that their Creation was only a *Compaction*; and a *Compaction* of *something* that stood before according to its own Nature, absolutely free from it. *Mortality*, *Corruptibility*, and *Divisibility*, are not essential Properties, but temporary Accidents, they are in Things, as *Diseases* and *Sickness* are, and are as separable from them; and that is the true Reason, why this *Mortal can put on Immortality*, this *Corruptible can put on Incorruptibility*, and this *Divisible put on Indivisibility*: For when the four Elements shall be dissolved and loosed from their *separate Compaction* from one another, when Fire and Air, Water and Earth, shall be *a one* much more glorious and harmonious Thing than they are now in the brightest Diamond, then the *Divisibility* of this redeemed Materiality will be more impossible to be *conceived*, than the *Distance* between Fire and Water in a *Diamond*.

15. The Reason why all inanimate Things of this World tend towards their utmost Perfection in their Kind, lieth wholly and solely in this Ground; it is because the four Elements of this World were once the one Element of the *Kingdom* of the fallen Angels; and therefore, Nature in this World is *always*

labouring after its *first* Perfection of Life, or as the Scripture speaks, the 'whole Creation travaileth in Pain, and groaneth to 'be delivered from its present Vanity:' And therefore it is, that all Vegetables and Fruits naturally grasp after every Kind and Degree of Perfection they can take in; endeavouring with all their Power, after that *first Perfection* of Life which was before the Fall of the Angels. Every *Taste* and *Colour*, and *Power* and *Virtue*, would be what it was before *Lucifer* kindled his dark, fiery, wrathful Kingdom; but as this cannot be, so when every Fruit and Flower has worked itself *as far* towards a heavenly Perfection as it can, it is forced to wither and rot, and become a *Witness* to this Truth, that neither Flesh nor Blood, nor Fruit, nor Flower, can reach the Kingdom of God.

16. All the Misery and Imperfection that is in Temporary Nature, arises from the divided State of the Elements: Their Division is that which brings all Kinds and Degrees of Death and Hell into this World, and yet their being in a certain Degree in one another, and always endeavouring after their *first Union*, is so much of the Nature and Perfection of Heaven still in them. The Death that is in this World, consists in the Grossness, Hardness and Darkness of its Materiality. The Wrath that is in this World consists in the kindled Division of its Qualities, whence there arises a contrary Motion and Fermentation in all its Parts, in which consists both the Life and Death of all its Creatures. This Death and this Wrath is the Nature of Hell in this World, and is the Manifestation of the *Disorders* which the fallen Angels have occasioned in Nature. The Heaven in this World began when God said, *Let there be Light*, for so far as Light is in any Thing, *so much* it has of Heaven in it, and of the *Beginning* of a heavenly Life: This shows itself in all Things of this World, chiefly in the Life-giving Power of the *Sun*, in the *Sweetness* and *Meekness* of Qualities and Tempers, in the *Softness* of Sounds, the *Beauty* of Colours, the *Fragrancy* of Smells, and *Richness* of Tastes and the like; thus far as any Thing is tintured with *Light*, so far it shows its *Descent* from Heaven, and its partaking of something heavenly and paradisaical. Again, *Love* or Desire of Union, is the other Part of Heaven that is visible in this World. In Things without Life, it is a *senseless Desire*, a friendly *mixing* and *uniting* of their Qualities, whereby they strive to be again in that first State of Unity and Harmony in which they existed, before they were kindled into Division by *Lucifer*. In rational Creatures, it is *Meekness*, *Benevolence*, *Kindness* and *Friendship* amongst one another: And thus far they have Heaven and the Spirit of God in them, each in their Sphere, being and doing

that to one another, which the Divine Love is and does to all.

Again, the Reason why Man is naturally taken with beautiful Objects, why he admires and rejoices at the Sight of *lucid* and *transparent* Bodies, and the *Splendour* of precious Stones, why he is delighted with the *Beauty* of his own Person, and is fond of his Features when adorned with *fine Colours*, has this only true Ground, 'tis because he was created in the *greatest Perfection* of Beauty, to live amongst all the Beauties of a *glorious Paradise*: And therefore Man, though fallen, has this strong *Sensibility* and reaching Desire after all the *Beauties*, that can be picked up in fallen Nature. Had not this been his Case, had not *Beauty*, and *Light*, and the *Glory* of Brightness been his *first State* by Creation, he would now no more want the Beauty of Objects, than the *Ox* wants to have his Pasture enclosed with beautiful Walls, and painted Gates. Every Vanity of fallen Man shows our first Dignity, and the Vanity of our Desires are so many Proofs of the *Reality* of that which we are fallen from. Man wants to see himself in Riches, Greatness and Power, because Human Nature came first into the World in that State; and therefore, what he had in *Reality* in Paradise, that is he vainly seeking for, where he is only a poor Prisoner in the Valley and Shadow of Death.

17. All Beings that are purely of this World, have their Existence in and Dependence upon temporal Nature. God is no Maker, Creator or Governor of any Being or Creature of this World, *immediately*, or by himself, but he creates, upholds and governs all Things of this World, by, and through, and with temporal Nature: As temporary Nature is nothing else but Eternal Nature *separated, divided, compacted*, made *visible* and *changeable* for a Time, so Heaven is nothing else but the *beatific Visibility*, the *Majestic Preference* of the abyssal, unsearchable, triune God: 'Tis that Light with which the Scripture saith, God is *decked as with a Garment*, and by which he is manifested and made visible to *heavenly Eyes* and *Beings*; for Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as they are the triune God, *deeper* than the Kingdom of Heaven or Eternal Nature, are invisible to all created Eyes; but that *beatific Visibility* and *outward Glory* which is called the Kingdom of Heaven, is the *Manifestation* of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in, and by, and through the glorious Union of *Eternal Fire*, and *Light*, and *Spirit*. In the Kingdom of Heaven, these are three and one, because their Original, the Holy Trinity, is so, and we must call them by the Names of Fire, and Light, and Spirit; because all that we have of Fire, and Light, and Spirit in this World, has

its *whole Nature* directly from them, and is indeed nothing else but the Fire, and Light, and Spirit of Eternity, brought into a *separated, compacted*, temporal State. So that to speak of a heavenly Fire, has no more *Grossness* and *Offence* in it, than when we speak of a heavenly *Life*, a heavenly *Light*, or heavenly *Spirit*; for if there is a heavenly Light and Spirit, there must of all necessity be a heavenly Fire; and if these Things were not in Heaven in a *glorious State* of Union, they never could have been here in this *gross State* of a temporal Compaction and Division: So that as sure as there are Fire, and Light, and Air in this World, in a *divided, compacted*, imperfect State, in which consists the Life of temporary Nature and Creatures, so sure is it, that Fire, and Light, and Spirit are in the Kingdom of Heaven, united in *one Perfection* of Glory, in which consists the beatific Visibility of God, the Divine Nature, as communicable to heavenly Beings.

18. The Kingdom of Heaven stands in this *threefold Life*, where three are one, because it is a Manifestation of the Deity, which is three and one; the Father has his *distinct* Manifestation in the Fire, which is always *generating* the Light; the Son has his *distinct* Manifestation of the *Light*, which is always *generated* from the Fire; the Holy Ghost has his *Manifestation* in the Spirit, that always *proceeds* from both, and is always *united* with them.

It is this Eternal Unbeginning Trinity in Unity of Fire, Light, and Spirit, that constitutes *Eternal Nature*, the *Kingdom of Heaven*, the *heavenly Jerusalem*, the *Divine Life*, the *beatific Visibility*, the *Majestic Glory* and *Presence* of God. Through this Kingdom of Heaven, or Eternal Nature, is the invisible God, the incomprehensible Trinity *eternally breaking* forth, and manifesting itself in a boundless Height and Depth of blissful Wonders, opening and displaying itself to all its Creatures as in an infinite Variation and endless Multiplicity of its Powers, Beauties, Joys and Glories. So that all the Inhabitants of Heaven are for ever Knowing, Seeing, Hearing, Feeling, and variously enjoying all that is great, amiable, infinite and glorious in the Divine Nature.

Nothing ascends, or comes into this Kingdom of Heaven, but that which descended, or came out of it, all its Inhabitants must be innate Guests, and born out of it.

19. God considered in himself, as distinct from this Eternal Nature, or Kingdom of Heaven, is not the *immediate* Creator of any Angels, Spirits, or Divine Beings; but as he creates and governs all temporal Beings *in*, and *by*, and *out* of temporal Nature, so he creates and governs all Spiritual and Heavenly

Beings *in*, and *by*, and *out* of Eternal Nature: This is as absolutely true, as that no Being can be *temporal*, but by partaking of temporal Nature, nor any Being eternal, but by partaking of the eternal, Divine Nature; and therefore, whatever God creates is not created *immediately* by *himself*, but in and by, and out of *that Nature*, in which it is to live, and move, and have its Being, temporal Beings out of temporal Nature, and eternal Beings out of the heavenly Kingdom of Eternal Nature: And hence it is, that all Angels, and the Souls of Men are said to be born of God, Sons of God, and Partakers of the *Divine Nature*, because they are formed out of *that* Eternal Nature, which is the *unbeginning Majesty* of God, the *Kingdom of Heaven*, or *Visible Glory* of the Deity. In this Eternal Nature, which is the Majestic Clothing, or Glory of the triune God, manifested in the glorious Unity of Divine Fire, Light, and Spirit, have all the created Images of God, whether they be Angels or Men, their Existence, Union and Communion with God; because Fire, and Light, and Spirit have the *same Union* and *Birth* in the Creature, as in the Creator: And hence it is, that they are so many various Mirrors of the Deity, penetrated with the Majesty of God, receiving and returning back Communications of the Life of God. Now, in this Ground, that is, in this Consideration of God, as manifesting his Holy Trinity through *Nature* and *Creature*, lieth the solid and true Understanding of all that is so variously said of God, both in the Old and New Testament with Relation to Mankind, both as to their Creation, Fall, and Redemption. God is to be considered throughout, as the God of Nature, only manifesting himself to all his Creatures in a Variety of Attributes in and by Nature; creating, governing, blessing, punishing, and redeeming them according to the *Powers*, *Workings*, and *Possibilities* of Nature. Fire, Light, and Spirit in *harmonious Union*, is the substantial Glory, the beatific Manifestation of the triune God, visible and communicable to Creatures formed out of it. All intelligent, holy Beings were by God formed and created out of, and for the Enjoyment of this Kingdom of Glory, and had Fire, and Light, and Spirit, as the triune Glory of their created Being: And herein consisted the infinite Love, Goodness and Bounty of God to all his Creatures: It was their being made Creatures of this Fire, Light, and Spirit, Partakers of that *same Nature* in which the Holy Trinity had stood from all Eternity *gloriously manifested*. And thus they were Creatures, Subjects, and Objects of the Divine Love; they came into the nearest, highest Relation to God; they stood in, and partook of his own *manifested Nature*, so that the outward Glory and Majesty of the triune God, was

the very *Form*, and *Beauty*, and *Brightness* of their own created Nature. Every Creature which thankfully, joyfully, and absolutely gave itself up to this blessed Union with God, became absolutely fixed in its first created Glory, and incapable of knowing anything but Love, and Joy, and Happiness in God to all Eternity: Thus in this State, all Angels and Men came first out of the Hands of God. But seeing *Light* proceeds from Fire by a *Birth*, and the Spirit from both, and seeing the *Will* must be the *Leader* of the Birth, *Lucifer* and *Adam* could both do as they did, *Lucifer* could will strong *Might* and *Power*, to be greater than the Light of God made him, and so he brought forth a Birth of *Might* and *Power*, that was only mighty *Wrath* and *Darkness*, a Fire of Nature broken off from its Light. *Adam* could will the *Knowledge* of *temporal Nature*, and so he lost the Light and Spirit of Heaven for the Light and Spirit of this World: And had Man been left in this State of temporary Nature, without a Redeemer, he must, when the Light of this World had left him, have found himself in the same absolute Wrath and Darkness of Nature, which the fallen Angels are in.

20. Now, after these two Falls of two Orders of Creatures, the Deity itself came to have *new* and *strange* Names, new and unheard of Tempers and Inclinations of *Wrath*, *Fury*, and *Vengeance* ascribed to it. I call them *new*, because they began at the *Fall*; I call them *strange*, because they were *foreign* to the Deity, and could not *belong* to God in himself: Thus God is in the Scriptures said to be a *Consuming Fire*. But to whom? To the fallen Angels, and lost Souls. But *why*, and *how* is he so to them? It is because those Creatures have lost *all* that they had from God, but *Fire*; and therefore God can only be *found* and *manifested* in them, as a *Consuming Fire*. Now, is it not justly said, that God, who is nothing but infinite Love, is yet in *such Creatures* only a *Consuming Fire*, and that though God be nothing but Love, yet they are under the *Wrath* and *Vengeance* of God, because they have only *that Fire* in them, which is broken off from the Light and Love of God, and so can know, or feel nothing of God, but *his Fire* in them? As Creatures they can have no Life, but what they have *in* and *from* God; and therefore, that wrathful Life which they have, is truly said to be a *Wrath of God* upon them. And yet it is as strictly true, that there is no Wrath in God himself, that he is not changed in *his Temper* towards the Creatures, that he does not cease to be one and the same *infinite Fountain* of Goodness, *infinitely flowing forth* in the Riches of his Love upon all and every Life; but the Creatures have changed *their State* in Nature, and so the God of Nature can only be *manifested* in and to them, according

to their *own State* in Nature: And this is the true Ground of rightly understanding all that is said of the *Wrath* and *Vengeance* of God in and upon the Creatures. It is only in *such* a Sense as the *Curse* or *Unhappiness* of God may be said to be upon them, not because any Thing cursed, or unhappy can be *in*, or come *from* God, but because they have made *that Life* which they must have in God, to be mere *Curse* and *Unhappiness* to them: For every Creature that lives, must have its Life in and from God, and therefore God must be in every Creature; this is as true of Devils, as of Holy Angels: But how is God in them? Why only as he is manifested in *Nature*. Holy Angels have the *triune* Life of God in them, therefore God is in them all *Love*, *Goodness*, *Majesty* and *Glory*, and theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Devils have *nothing* of this triune Life left in them, but the *Fire* of Eternal Nature *broken off* from all Light and Joy; and therefore the Life that they can have in and from God, is only a Life of *Wrath* and *Darkness*, and theirs is the Kingdom of Hell: And because this Life is a Strength of Life which they must have *in* and *from* God, and which they cannot *take out* of his Hands; therefore, is their cursed, miserable, wrathful Life truly and justly said to be the *Curse*, and *Wrath*, and *Vengeance* of God in and upon them, though God himself can no more have Wrath and Vengeance, than he can have *Mischief* and *Malice* in him: For this is a glorious, twofold Truth, that from God considered as in himself, nothing can come from Eternity to Eternity, but infinite Love, Goodness, Happiness, and Glory; and also that infinite Love, Goodness, Happiness and Glory are, and will be for ever and ever flowing forth from him in the *same boundless, universal, infinite* manner; he is the same infinitely overflowing Fountain of Love, Goodness and Glory after, as before the *Fall* of any Creatures; his Love, and the infinite Workings of it can no more be *lessened*, than his Power can be increased by any outward Thing; no Creature, or Number of Creatures can raise any Anger in him, 'tis as impossible as to cast *Terror*, or *Darkness*, and *Pain* into him, for nothing can come into God from the Creature, nothing can be in him, but that which the Holy Trinity in Unity is in itself. All Creatures are Products of the infinite, triune Love of God; nothing *willed*, and *desired*, and *formed* them, but *infinite Love*, and they have all of them all the Happiness, Beauty and Excellency that an infinitely powerful Love can reach out to them: The same infinite Love *continues still* in its *first creating* Goodness, willing, desiring, working, and doing nothing with regard to all Creatures, but what it willed, did, and desired in the *Creation* of them: This God over Nature and Creature, darts *no more* Anger at Angels when fallen, than he

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did in the Creation of them: They are not in *Hell*, because Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are *angry* at them, and so cast them into a Punishment, which their Wrath had *contrived* for them; but they are in Wrath and Darkness, because they have done to the Light which *infinitely* flows forth from God, as that Man does to the Light of the Sun, who puts out his own Eyes: He is in Darkness, not because the Sun is *darkened* towards him, has *less Light* for him, or has lost all *Inclination* to enlighten him, but because he has put out that *Birth of Light* in himself, which alone made him capable of seeing in the Light of the Sun. It is thus with fallen Angels, they have extinguished in themselves that *Birth of Light and Love*, which was their *only Capacity* for that Happiness, which infinitely, and everywhere flows forth from God; and they no more have their Punishment from God himself than the Man who puts out his Eyes, has his Darkness from the Sun itself.

21. God, considered in himself, as the holy, triune God, is not the immediate Fountain and Original of Creatures; but God considered as *manifesting* himself in and through Nature, is the Creator, Father and Producer of all Things. The hidden Deity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is from Eternity to Eternity, *manifested*, made *visible, perceivable, sensible* in the united Glory of Fire, Light and Spirit; this is the *beatific Presence*, the *glorious Out-birth* of the Holy Trinity; this is that eternal, universal Nature, which *brings* God into all Creatures, and all Creatures into God, according to that Degree and Manner of Life which they have in Nature: For the Life of Creatures must stand in Nature, and Nature is nothing else but God made *manifest, visible, and perceptible*; and therefore the Life of every Creature, be it what it will, a Life of Joy or Wrath, is only *so much* of God made *manifest* in it, and *perceptible* by it, and thus is God in some Creatures only a God of Wrath, and in others, only a God of Glory and Goodness.

No Creature can have Life, or live, and move, and have its Being in God, but by being formed out of, and living in this Manifestation of Nature. Thus far Hell and Heaven, Angels and Devils are *equally* in God, that is, they equally live, move, and have their Being in that *Eternal Nature*, which is the Eternal Manifestation of God: The one have a Life of Glory, Majesty, and Love, and Bliss, the other a Life of Horror, Fire, Wrath, Misery, and Darkness. Now, all this could not possibly be, there could be no Room for *this Distinction* between Creatures standing in Nature, the one could not possibly have a Life of *Majestic Bliss and Glory*, the other of *fiery Horror and Darkness*, but because the Holy, triune God is *manifested* in the *united* Glory

and Bliss of Fire, Light, and Spirit. For the Creatures could only divide *That*, which there was in Nature to be divided, they could only divide *That*, which was *united*, and divisible; and therefore, as sure as Heaven is a splendrous Light of blissful Majesty, as sure as Hell is a Place of *fiery Wrath* and *Darkness*, so sure is it from the Scriptures, that Eternal Nature, which is from God, or a Manifestation of God, is a Nature of *united* Fire, Light, and Spirit, otherwise, some Creatures could not have the *blissful Glory* of Light, and others, a horrible, fiery *Darkness* for their *separate Portions*.

All therefore that has been said of an Eternal Nature, or Kingdom of Heaven, consisting of *united* Fire, Light, and Spirit, is not only to be looked upon as an Opinion well grounded, and sufficiently discovered by the Light of Nature, but as a *fundamental* Truth of revealed Religion, fully established by *all* that is said in the Scriptures both of Heaven and Hell. For if God was not *manifested, visible, perceptible* and *communicable*, in and by this *united* Fire, and Light, and Spirit, how could there be a Heaven of *glorious Majesty*? If this Fire of Heaven could not be *separated, or broken off* from its heavenly Light, how could there be a Hell in Nature? Or, how could those Angels which lost the Light of Heaven, have *thereby* fallen into a State of hellish *Darkness, or Fire*? Is not all this the greatest of Demonstrations, that the holy Triunity of God is, and must be manifested in Nature, by the Union of Fire, Light, and Spirit? And is not this Demonstration wholly taken from the very Letter of the most plain Doctrines of Scripture?

Hell and Wrath could have no *Possibility* of Existence, but because the Light, and Majesty, and Glory of Heaven, must of all necessity have its Birth *in* and *from* the Fire of Nature. An Angel could not have *become* a Devil, but because the Angelic *Light* and *Glory* had, and must have *its Birth* in and from the *Fire* of Life. And thus as a Devil was *found*, where angelic Light and Glory had its Existence, so a Hell was found, where heavenly Glory was *before*; and as the Devil is nothing but a Fire-spirit *broken off* from its Angelical Light and Glory, so Hell is nothing but the Fire of Heaven *separated* from its first Light and Majesty.

And here we have plainly found two Worlds in Eternity; not *possible* to be two, nor ever *known* to be two, but by such Creatures, as have in their own Natures, by their own Self-motion, separated the Fire of Eternal Nature from its Eternal Light, Spirit and Majesty. And this is also the Beginning, or first Opening of the *Wrath* of God in the Creature; which is, in other Words, only the Beginning, or first Opening of Pain

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and Misery in the Creature, or the Origin of a hellish, tormenting State of Life.

22. And here, in this *dark wrathful* Fire of the fallen Creature, do we truly find that *Wrath and Anger and Vengeance* of God, that cleaves to Sin, that must be *quenched, atoned, and satisfied* before the Sinner can be reconciled to God; that is, before it can have again that *triune* Life of God in it, which is its Union with the holy Trinity of God, or its regaining the Kingdom of Heaven in itself.

Some have objected, that by thus considering the *fallen* Soul, as a *dark, wrathful* Fire-Spirit, for this Reason, because it has lost the *Birth* of the Son and holy Spirit of God in it, that this casts Reproach upon God the Father, as having *the Nature* of such a Soul in Him. But this is a groundless Objection, for this State of the Soul casts no more Reproach upon the *first*, than upon the second and third Persons of the holy Trinity. The fallen Soul, that has lost the Birth of the Son and holy Spirit of God in it, cannot be said to have *the Nature* of the Father left in it. This would be blasphemous Nonsense, and is no way founded on this Doctrine. But such a Soul must be said to have *a Nature* from the Father left in it, though a *spoiled* one, and this because the Father is the *Origin, Fountain and Creator* of all kind of Existence: Hell, and the Devils have their Nature from Him, because every Kind of Creature must have what it has of Life and Being from its Creator; but Hell and the Devils have not therefore *the Nature* of the Father in them. If it be asked what the Father is, as he is the first Person in the sacred Trinity, the Answer must be, that as such, He is the *Generator* of the Son and holy Spirit: This is *the Nature* of the Father; where *this generating* is not, there is not *the Nature* of the Father. Is it not therefore highly absurd to charge this Doctrine with ascribing *the Nature* of the Father to the *fallen* Soul, which asserts the Soul to be fallen, for *this Reason*, because it has quite *lost and extinguished* all Power and Ability for the *Birth* of the Son and holy Spirit in it? How could it be more roundly affirmed, or more fully proved, that the fallen Soul *hath not* the Nature of the Father left in it. But to proceed:

The Reader ought not to wonder, or be offended at the frequent mention of the Word *Fire*, which is here used to denote the true Nature, and State of the Soul. For both Nature and Scripture speak continually the same Language. For wherever there is mention of Life, Light, or Love in the Scriptures, there Fire is *necessarily* supposed, as being that in which all Life, and Light, and Love must necessarily arise; and therefore the Scriptures speak as often of Fire, as they do of Life, and

Light, and Love, because the one necessarily includes the other: For all Life, whether it be *vegetable, sensitive, animal, or intellectual*, is only a kindled Fire of Life in such a Variety of States; and every dead, insentive Thing is only so, because its Fire is quenched, or shut up in a hard Compaction. If therefore we will speak of the *true Ground* of the fallen State of Men and Angels, we are not at Liberty to think of it under any *other Idea*, or speak of it in any *other manner*, than as the *darkened Fire* of their Life, or the Fire of their Life unable to kindle itself into Light and Love. Do not the Scriptures strictly confine us to this Idea of Hell? So that it is not any particular Philosophy, or affected Singularity of Expression, that makes me speak in this manner of the Soul, but because all Nature and Scripture forces us to confess, that the Root of all and every Life stands, and must necessarily stand in the *Properties* of Fire.

The holy Scriptures also speak much of Fire, in the Ideas which they give us, both of the Divine Nature, and of created Spirits, whether they be saved, or lost; the former as becoming Flames of heavenly Light and Love, the latter as dark Fire-brands of Hell.*

No Description is, or can be given us either of Heaven or Hell, but where Fire is necessarily signified to be the *Ground* and *Foundation* both of the one and of the other. Why do all Languages, however distant, and different from one another, all speak of the Coldness of *Death*, the Coldness of *Insensibility*?

* Theologia fere supra omnes Sacrosanctam Ignis Figuram probasse reperitur. Eam enim invenies non solum *Retas igneas* fingere, sed etiam ignea animalia—quinetiam *Thronos igneos* esse dicit, ipsosq; summos Seraphim *incensos* esse ex ipso nomine declarat, eisq; Ignis & *Proprietatem* & *Actionem* tribuit: semperatq; ubiq; igneam figuram probat. Ac igneam quidem Formam significare arbitror cœlestium Naturarum *maximam* in Deo imitando *similitudinem*. Theologi summam, & formâ carentem essentiam *ignis Specie* multis locis describunt, quòd Ignis multas Divinæ, si dictu fas est, *Proprietatis, Imagines* ac *Species* præ se ferat. Ignis enim, qui sensu percipitur, in omnibus & per omnia sine admixtione funditur, secerniturq; a rebus omnibus, lucetq; totus simul, & abstrusus est, incognitusq; manet ipse per se—Cohiberi, vinciq; non potest—quicquid ipsi proprius quoquo modo adhibeatur, sui particeps facit. Renovat omnia vitali calore, illustrat aperto lumine; teneri non potest, nec misceri. Dissipandi vim habet, commutari non potest, sursum fertur, celeritate magna præditus est, sublimis est, nec humilitatem ullam ferre potest. Immobilis est, per se movetur, aliis motum affert; comprehendendi vim habet, ipse comprehendendi non potest. Non eget altero: clam se amplificat: in materiis quæ ipsius capaces sunt, magnitudinem suam declarat. Vim efficiendi habet, potens est: omnibus præsto est; nec videtur: *Altritu* autem quasi *Inquisitione* quadam connaturaliter repente apparet, rursusq; ita avolat ut comprehendendi, & detineri nequeat: in omnibus sui communionibus minui non potest—Multas etiam alias Ignis Proprietates invenire possumus, quæ propria sunt divinæ actionis. *S. Dionis. Arcop. de cœlesti Hierarçi, 56.*

Why do they all agree in speaking of the *Warmth* of Life, the *Heat* of Passions, the *Burnings* of Wrath, the *Flames* of Love? It is because it is the Voice or Dictate of universal Nature, that Fire is the *Root* or *Seat* of Life, and that every Variety of human Tempers is only the various *Workings* of the Fire of Life.—It ought to be no Reason why we should think *grossly* of Fire, because it is seen in so many *gross Things* of this World? For how is it seen in them? Why only as a *Destroyer*, a *Consumer*, and *Refiner* of all *Grossness*; as a *Kindler* of Life, and Light out of Death and Darkness. So that in all the Appearances of Fire, even in earthly Things, we have Reason to look upon it as something of a heavenly, exalting, and glorious Nature; as that which disperses Death, Darkness, and Grossness, and raises up the Power and Glory of every Life.

If you ask what Fire is in its first, true, and unbeginning State, not yet entered into any Creature, It is the Power and Strength, the Glory and Majesty of eternal Nature; it is that which *generates, enriches, brightens, strengthens* and *displays* the Light of Heaven. It is that which makes the eternal Light to be majestic, the eternal Love to be flaming: For the *Strength* and *Vivacity* of Fire, must be both the Majesty of Light, and the Ardour of Love. It is the glorious *Out-birth*, the true *Representative* of God the Father *eternally generating* his only Son, Light and Word.

If you ask what Fire is in its own spiritual Nature, it is merely a *Desire*, and has no other Nature than that of a *working Desire*, which is continually its *own Kindler*. For every *Desire* is nothing else, but its *own striking* up, or its *own kindling* itself into some Kind and Degree of Fire. And hence it is that Nature (though reduced to great Ignorance of itself) has yet forced all Nations and Languages to speak of *its Desires*, as *cool, warm, or burning, &c.*, because every Desire is, so far as it goes, a *kindled Fire*. And it is to be observed, that Fire could have no Existence or Operation in material Things, but because all the Matter of this World has in it more or less of spiritual and heavenly Properties compacted in it, which *continually desire* to be delivered from their material Imprisonment. And the stirring up *the Desire* of these spiritual Properties, is the *kindling* of that *Heat, and Glance, and Light*, in material Things, which we call Fire, and is nothing else but their gloriously breaking, and triumphantly dispersing that hard Compaction in which they were imprisoned. And thus does every kindled Fire, as a *Flash* or *transitory opening* of heavenly Glory, show us in little and daily, but *true* Instances, the *Triumph* of the last Fire, when all that is spiritual and heavenly in this

World, shall kindle and separate itself from that, which must be the Death and Darkness of Hell.

Now the Reason, why there are spiritual Properties in all the material Things of this World, is only this, it is because the Matter of this World is the *Materiality* of the Kingdom of Heaven, brought down into a *created State* of Grossness, Death, and Imprisonment, by occasion of the Sin of those Angels, who first inhabited the Place, or Extent of this material World.

Now these heavenly Properties, which were brought into this *created* Compaction, lie in a *continual Desire* to return to their first State of Glory; and this is the *groaning of the whole Creation to be delivered from Vanity*, which the Apostle speaks of. And in this *continual Desire* lieth the kindling, and *all the Possibility* of kindling any Fire in the Things of this World. Quench *this Desire*, and suppose there is nothing in the *Matter* of this World that desires to be restored to its first Glory, and then all the breaking forth of Fire, Light, Brightness, and Glance in the Things of this World, is utterly quenched with it, and it would be the same Impossibility to strike Fire, as to strike Sense and Reason out of a Flint.

24. But you will perhaps say, though this be a Truth, yet it is more *speculative* than *edifying*, more fitted to entertain the Curiosity, than to assist the Devotion of Christians. But stay awhile, and you shall see it is a Truth full of the most edifying Instruction, and directly speaking to the Heart.

For if *every Desire* is in itself, in its own Essence, the *kindling* of Fire, then we are taught this great practical Lesson, that our *own Desire* is the Kindler of our own Fire, the Former and Raiser of *that Life* which leads us. What our Desire kindles, that becomes the Fire of our Life, and fits us either for the majestic Glories of the Kingdom of God, or the dark Horrors of Hell: So that our *Desire* is all, it does all, and governs all, and all that we have and are, must arise from it, and therefore it is, that the Scripture saith, 'Keep thy Heart with all Diligence, for 'out of it are the Issues of Life.'

We are apt to think that our *Imaginations* and *Desires* may be played with, that they rise and fall away as nothing, because they do not always bring forth outward and visible Effects. But indeed they are the greatest Reality we have, and are the true *Formers* and *Raisers* of all that is real and solid in us. All outward Power that we exercise in the Things about us, is but as a *Shadow* in Comparison of that *inward Power*, that resides in our *Will, Imagination, and Desires*; these communicate with Eternity, and kindle a Life which always reaches either Heaven or Hell. This Strength of the inward Man makes all that is the

Angel, and all that is the Devil in us, and we are neither good nor bad, but according to the Working of that which is spiritual and invisible in us. Now our Desire is not only thus powerful and productive of real Effects, but it is always alive, always working and *creating* in us, I say creating, for it has no less Power, it perpetually generates either Life or Death in us: And here lies the Ground of the great Efficacy of *Prayer*, which when it is the Prayer of the Heart, the Prayer of Faith, has a kindling and creating Power, and forms and transforms the Soul into every Thing that its Desires reach after: It has the Key to the Kingdom of Heaven, and unlocks all its Treasures, it opens, extends, and moves that in us, which has its Being and Motion in and with the Divine Nature, and so brings us into a real Union and Communion with God.

Long *Offices* of Prayer sounded only from the Mouth, or impure Hearts, may Year after Year be repeated to no Advantage, they leave us to grow old in our own poor, weak State: These are only the poor Prayers of Heathens, who, as our Lord said, 'think to be heard by their much speaking.' But when the Eternal Springs of the purified Heart are stirred, when they stretch after that God from whence they came; then it is, that what we ask, we receive, and what we seek, we find. Hence it is, that all those great Things are by the Scriptures attributed to Faith, that to it all Things are possible; that it heals the Sick, saves the Sinner, can remove Mountains, and that all Things are possible to him that believeth; 'tis because the Working of *Will* and *Desire* is the first Eternal Source of all Power, *that* from which every Thing is kindled into that Degree of Life in which it standeth; 'tis because *Will* and *Desire* in us are *Creaturely Offsprings* of that first Will and Desire which formed and governed all Things; and therefore, when the Creaturely Power of our Will, Imagination and Desire leaves off its Working in Vanity, and gives itself wholly unto God in a *naked* and *implicit* Faith in the Divine Operation upon it, then it is, that it does nothing in vain, it rises out of Time into Eternity, is in Union and Communion with God, and so all Things are possible to it. Thus is this Doctrine so far from being vainly speculative, that it opens to us the Ground, and shows us the Necessity and Excellency of the greatest Duties of the Gospel.

25. Now, as *all Desire* throughout Nature and Creature is but *one* and the *same* Thing, branching itself out into various Kinds and Degrees of Existence and Operation, so there is but *one Fire* throughout all Nature and Creature, standing only in different States and Conditions. The Fire that is in the *Light* of the Sun, is the same Fire that is in the *Darkness* of the Flint: That

Fire which is the Life of our Bodies, is the Life of our Souls; that which *tears* Wood in Pieces, is the same which upholds the beauteous Forms of Angels: It is the same Fire that burns *Straw*, that will at last melt the *Sun*, the same Fire that brightens a *Diamond*, is darkened in a *Flint*: It is the same Fire that kindles Life in an Animal, that kindled it in Angels: In an Angel it is an Eternal Fire of an Eternal Life, in an Animal it is the same Fire brought into a temporary Condition, and therefore can only kindle a Life that is temporary: The same Fire that is mere Wrath in a Devil, is the Sweetness of flaming Love in an Angel; and the same Fire which is the Majestic Glory of Heaven, makes the Horror of Hell.

Chapter III.

The true Ground of all the Doctrines of the Gospel discovered. Why Adam could make no Atonement for his Sins. Why, and how Jesus Christ alone could make this Atonement. Whence the Shedding of Blood for the Remission of Sins. What Wrath and Anger it is, that is quenched and atoned by the Blood of Christ. Of the last Sufferings of Christ. Why, and how we must eat the Flesh and drink the Blood of Jesus Christ.

WE have now, Worthy Reader, so far cleared the Way, that we have nothing to do, but to rejoice in the most open Illustration, and full Proof of all the great Doctrines of the Gospel, and to see all the Objections, which *Deists, Arians, and Socinians* have brought against the first Articles of our Faith, dashed to Pieces: For as soon as we but begin to know, that the holy, triune Deity from Eternity to Eternity *manifests* itself in *Nature*, by the *triune Birth* of Fire, Light and Spirit, and that all Angels and Men must have been created out of *this Nature*;

there is not a Doctrine in Scripture concerning the Creation, Fall, and Redemption of Man, but becomes the most plainly intelligible, and all the Mysteries of our Redemption are proved and confirmed to us, by all that is visible and perceptible in all Nature and Creature.

Here we have the plain Foundation of the whole Economy of all Religion from the Beginning to the End of Time, why the *Incarnation* of the Son of God, who is the Light of the World, must have before it the *fiery Dispensation* of the Father delivered from *Mount Sinai*; and after it, the *pouring out*, or *proceeding* forth of the Holy Spirit upon all Flesh; it is because the *triune Life* of the fallen race must be restored according to the *triune Manifestation* of the Holy Deity in Nature.

Here we know what the *Love*, and what the *Anger* of God is, what *Heaven* and *Hell*, an *Angel* and a *Devil*, a lost and a redeemed Soul are. The *Love*, and Goodness, and Blessing of God known, found, and enjoyed by any Creature, is nothing else but the Holy Trinity of God known, found, and enjoyed in the blissful, glorious, *triune Life* of Fire, Light and Spirit, *where* Father, Son, and Holy Ghost *perpetually* communicate their own nameless, numberless, boundless Powers, Riches and Glories to the created Image of their own Nature. The *Hell* in Nature, and the hellish Life in the Creature, the *Wrath* of God in Nature and Creature, is nothing else but the *triune*, holy Life broken and destroyed in *some Order* of Creatures, it is only the Fire of Heaven *separated* from its heavenly Light and Spirit. This is that *Eternal Anger*, and *Wrath*, and *Vengeance*, that must be *atoned*, *satisfied*, and *removed*, that eternal Fire that must be quenched, that eternal *Darkness* that must be changed into Light, or there is no *Possibility* in Nature, that the Soul of fallen Man should ever see the Kingdom of God: And here all the Doctrines of the *Socinians* are quite torn up by the Roots. For in this Ground appeareth the *absolute Necessity* of the Incarnation, Life, Sufferings, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of the Son of God. Here lieth the *full Proof*, that through *all Nature* there could no Redeemer of Man be found, but only in the Second Person of the adorable Trinity become Man. For as the Light and Spirit of Eternal Life, is the Light and Spirit of the Son and Holy Ghost manifested in Heaven, so the Light of Eternal Life could never come again into the *fallen Soul*, but from him *alone*, who is the *Light* of Heaven. He must be again in the Soul, as he was in it, when it was first breathed forth from the Holy Trinity, he must be manifested in the Soul, as he is in Heaven, or it can never have the Life of Heaven in it.

The *Socinians* therefore, or others, who think they pay a just

Deference to the Wisdom and Omnipotence of God, when they suppose there was no *absolute Necessity* for the Incarnation of the Son of God ; but that God, if he had so pleased, could as well have saved Man some *other Way*, show as great Ignorance both of God and Nature, as if they should have said, that when God makes a *blind Man* to see by *opening* or *giving* him Eyes, there was no Necessity in the *Thing* itself, that *Sight* should be given in *that particular Way*, but that God, if he had so pleased, could have made him become a *seeing Man* in this World without *Eyes*, or *Light* of this World.

For if the *Son* of God is the *Light* of Heaven, and Man only wants to be redeemed, because he has *lost* the Light of Heaven ; is it not absolutely impossible for Him to be redeemed any *other Way*, or by any other Thing, than by a *Birth* of this Son of God in him. Is not this Particularity the *one only* Thing that can raise fallen Man, as *seeing Eyes* are the one only Thing that can take away Blindness from the Man ?

If *Adam* had been able to *undo* in himself all that he had *done*, if he could have *gone back* into that State from whence he was fallen, if he could have *raised up* again in himself that Birth of the Holy Trinity, in which he was created, *no Saviour* had been wanted for him ; but because he could not do any Thing of this, but must be *That* which he had made himself to be, therefore the *Wrath* of Nature, or the *Wrath* of God *manifested* in Nature, abode upon him, and *this Wrath* must of all necessity be *appeased*, *atoned*, and *satisfied*, that is, it must be *kindled* into Light and Love, before he could again find, and enjoy the *God of Nature*, as a God of Light and Love.

Could *Adam* himself have done all that which I have just now mentioned, then his own Actions had *atoned* and *satisfied* the Divine Wrath, and had *reconciled* him to God : For nothing lost him the Love of God, but *That* which separated him from God ; and nothing did, or ever can separate him from God, but the Loss of that *triune Life*, in which alone the Holy Trinity of Divine Love can dwell. If therefore *Adam* could have raised again in himself that *triune Life*, then his Sin, and the Wrath of God upon him, had been *only transitory* ; but because he did *That*, which according to all the *Possibilities of Nature*, was unalterable ; therefore he became a *Prisoner* of an eternal *Wrath*, an Heir of an *everlasting, painful* Life, till the Love of God, who is greater than Nature, should *do That* for him and in him, which he could by no Powers of Nature do for himself, nor the highest of Creatures do for him.

3. And here we see in the plainest Light, that there was *no Anger* in God *himself* towards the fallen Creature, because it was

purely and solely the infinite Love of God towards him, that did, and alone could raise him out of his fallen State: All Scripture, as well as Nature, obliges us to think thus of God. Thus it is the whole Tenor of Scripture, that 'God so loved the World, 'that he sent his only-begotten Son into it, that the World, 'through him, might be saved.' Is not this saying *more* than if it had been said, that there was *no Anger* in God himself towards fallen Man? Is he not expressly declared to be *infinitely* flowing forth in Love towards him? Could God be more infinite in Love, or more infinitely distant from all *Possibility* of Anger towards Man, when he first created him, than when he *thus* redeemed him? God out of pure and free Love gave his Son to be the Life of the World, *first*, as an *inspoken* and *ingrafted* Word of Life, as the *Bruiser* of the Serpent given to *all Mankind* in their Father *Adam*. This *Word* of Life, and *Bruiser* of the Serpent, was the *Extinguisher* of that Wrath of God that lay upon fallen Man. Now, will the Scriptures, which tell us that the Love of God sent his Son into the World, to redeem Man from that *hellish Wrath* that had seized him, allow us to say, that it was to extinguish a Wrath that was got into *God himself*, or that the Bruiser of the Serpent was to *bruise, suppress, or remove* something that Sin had *raised* in the Holy Deity *itself*? No surely, but to bruise, alter, and overcome an *Evil* in Nature and the Creature, that was become Man's *Separation* from the Enjoyment of the God of Love, whose Love still existed in its own State, and still followed him, and gave his only Son to make him capable of it. Do not the Holy Scriptures continually teach us, that the Holy Jesus became incarnate *to destroy the Works of the Devil*, to overcome Death and Hell that had taken Man captive? And is not this sufficiently telling us, *what* that Wrath was, and *where* it existed, which must be *atoned, satisfied, and extinguished*, before Man could again be alive unto God, or reconciled unto him, so as to have the triune Life of Light and Love in him? It was a Wrath of *Death*, a Wrath of *Hell*, a Wrath of *Sin*, and which only the precious, powerful Blood of Christ could change into a Life of Joy and Love: And when this Wrath of Death and Hell are *removed* from Human Nature, there neither is, nor can be any *other Wrath* of God abiding on it. Are not the Devils and all lost Souls justly said to be under the *eternal Wrath* of God, and yet in *no Wrath* but that which exists in Hell, and in their own Hellish Nature.

4. They therefore, who suppose the Wrath and Anger of God upon fallen Man, to be a *State* of Mind in God himself, to be a political kind of *just Indignation*, a Point of *Honourable Resentment*, which the Sovereign Deity, as Governor of the World,

ought not to recede from, but must have a *sufficient* Satisfaction done to his offended Authority, before he can, consistently with his Sovereign Honour, receive the Sinner into his Favour, hold the Doctrine of the *Necessity* of Christ's atoning Life and Death in a mistaken Sense. That many good Souls may hold this Doctrine in this Simplicity of Belief, without any more Hurt to themselves, than others have held the *Reality* of Christ's Flesh and Blood in the Sacrament under the Notion of the *Transubstantiation* of the Bread and Wine, I make no Manner of Doubt: But when Books are written to impose and require this Belief of others, as the only saving Faith in the Life and Death of Christ, it is then an Error that ceases to be innocent: For neither Reason nor Scripture will allow us to bring Wrath into God himself, as a Temper of his Mind, who is only infinite, unalterable, overflowing Love, as unchangeable in Love, as he is in Power and Goodness. The Wrath that was awakened at the Fall of Man, that then seized upon him, as its Captive, was only a *Plague*, or *Evil*, or *Curse* that Sin had brought forth in Nature and Creature: it was only the beginning of Hell: It was *such* a Wrath as God himself pitied Man's lying under it; it was *such* a Wrath as God himself furnished Man with a Power of overcoming and extinguishing, and therefore it was not a Wrath that was according to the *Mind, Will, and Liking*, or Wisdom of God; and therefore it was not a Wrath that was in God himself, or which was exercised by his Sovereign Wisdom over his disobedient Creatures: It was not *such* a Wrath, as when Sovereign Princes are angry at Offenders, and will not cease from their Resentment, until some political Satisfaction, or valuable Amends be made to their slighted Authority. No, no; it was such a Wrath as God himself hated, as he hates Sin and Hell, a Wrath that the God of all Nature and Creature so *willed* to be *removed* and *extinguished*, that seeing nothing less could do it, he sent his only begotten Son into the World, that all Mankind might be *saved* and *delivered* from it. For seeing the Wrath that was awakened and brought forth by the Fall, and which wanted to be appeased, atoned, and quenched, was the Wrath of *eternal Death*, and *eternal Hell*, that had taken Man captive; therefore God spared not the precious, powerful, efficacious Blood of the Holy Jesus, because that alone could extinguish this eternal Wrath of Death and Hell, and re-kindle Heaven and Eternal Life again in the Soul. And thus all that the Scriptures speak of the *Necessity* and *powerful* Atonement of the Life and Death of Christ, all that they say of the *infinite Love* of God towards fallen Man, and all that they say of the *Eternal Wrath* and *Vengeance* to which Man was become a Prey, have the most solid Foundation, and are all of

them proved to be consistent, harmonious Truths of the greatest Certainty, according to the plain Letter of Scripture.

5. It is the Foundation of the Law and the Gospel, that *without shedding of Blood, there is no Remission of Sins*; and that the precious Blood of Christ could alone do this, could alone reconcile us to God, and deliver us from the Wrath to come. How, and why Blood, and only the Blood of Jesus Christ could do this, will appear as follows: *Adam* was created with a two-fold Respect, to be himself a glorious, living, eternal Image of the Holy, triune God, and to be a *Father* of a new World of like Beings, all descended from himself: When *Adam* fell, he lost both these Conditions of his created State; the Holy Image of God was extinguished, his Soul lost the Light and Spirit of Heaven, and his Body became earthly, bestial, corruptible Flesh and Blood, and he could only be a *Father* of a Posterity partly *diabolical*, and partly *bestial*.

Now, if the first Purpose of God was to stand, and to take Effect; if *Adam* was still to be the Father of a Race that were to become Sons of God, then there was an absolute Necessity that all that *Adam* had *done* in and to himself, and his Posterity, by the Fall, should be *undone* again; the *Serpent* and the *Beast*, that is, the Serpentine Life, and the bestial Life in Human Nature, must both of them be *overcome*, and *driven* out of it. This was the *one only*, possible Salvation for *Adam*, and every Individual of his Posterity.

Adam had killed that which was to have been immortal in him, he had raised that into a Life which never should have been alive in him, and therefore that which was to be *undone* and *altered* both in himself and his Posterity, was this, it was to part with a *Life* that he had raised up into Being, and to get *another Life*, which he had quite extinguished.

And here appears the true, infallible Ground of *all the Sacrifice*, and all the *Blood-shedding* that is necessary to redeem and reconcile Man to God. 'Tis because the earthly, fleshly, bestial, corruptible Life under the Elements of this World, is a Life *raised* and *brought* into Man by the Fall, is not that Life which God created, but is an Impurity in the Sight of God, and therefore cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; 'tis a Life, or Body of Sin, brought forth by Sin, and the Habitation of Sin, and therefore it is a Life that must be *given up*, its Blood must be *poured out*, before Man can be released from his Sins: This is the *one only* Ground of all the *Shedding of Blood* in Religion. Had not a Life *foreign* to the Kingdom of God, and utterly *incapable* of it, been *introduced* by the Fall, there had been no possible Room for the *Death* of any Creature, or the *pouring out*

any Blood, as serviceable and instrumental to the raising fallen Man.

6. But now, this bestial, animal Life which is thus to be given up, and its Blood poured out, is but the half, and lesser half of that which is required to deliver Man from all that the Fall has brought upon him. For the heavenly Life, the Birth of the Light and Holy Spirit of God which *Adam* had quite extinguished, was to be *kindled* or *regenerated* again; also his *first, glorious, immortal* Body was to be regained, before he could become an Inhabitant of the Kingdom of Heaven: But for all this *Adam* had no Power. See here again the true and dreadful State of the *Fall*, it was the Fall into *such* a Life, as must be *slain* and *sacrificed* before the fallen Soul could come to God; and yet this Death and Sacrifice of the Body, which was thus absolutely necessary, was the most dreadful Thing that could happen to Man, because *his own* Death, come when it would, would only remove him from the *Light* of this World into the Eternal Darkness, and hellish State of fallen Angels: And here we find the true Reason, why Man's own Death, though a Sacrifice *necessary* to be made, had yet nothing of *Atonement* or *Satisfaction* in it; it was because it left the eternal Wrath of Nature, and the Hell that was therein, unquenched and unextinguished in the Soul, and therefore made no *Reconciliation* to God, no *Restoration* to the Creature of its *first State* and *Life* in God, but left the Soul in its dark, wrathful Separation from the Kingdom of Light and Love.

But here the amazing Infinity of Divine Love appeared, such a Mystery of Love as will be the universal Song of Praise to all Eternity. Here God, the second Person in the holy Trinity, took human Nature upon him, became a suffering, dying Man, that there might be found a Man, whose Sufferings, Blood and Death had Power to *extinguish* the Wrath and Hell that Sin had brought forth, and to be a *Fountain* of the first heavenly Life to the whole Race of Mankind.

It was *human Nature* that was fallen, that had lost its first heavenly Life, and got a bestial, diabolical Life in the stead of it. Now if *this* human Nature was to be restored, there was but *one possible* Way, it must go back to the State from whence it came, it must put off all that it had put on, it must regain all that it had lost: But the human Nature that fell, could do nothing of this, and yet all this must be done in and by *that* human Nature which is fallen, or it could never, to all Eternity, come out of the State of its Fall; for it could not possibly come out of the State of its Fall, but by *putting off* all that, which the Fall had brought upon it. And thus stood Man, as to all the

Powers of Nature and Creature, in an *utter Impossibility* of Salvation, and had only a short Life of this World betwixt him and Hell.

7. But let us now change the Scene, and behold the Wonders of a *new Creation*, where all Things are called out of the *Curse* and *Death* of Sin, and created again to Life in Christ Jesus; where all Mankind are chosen and appointed to the *Recovery* of their first glorious Life, by a *new Birth* from a second *Adam*, who, as an *universal Redeemer*, takes the *Place* of the first fallen Father of Mankind, and so gives Life and Immortality, and Heaven to all that lost them in *Adam*.

God, according to the Riches of his Love, raised a Man out of the Loins of *Adam*, in whose mysterious Person, the *whole Humanity*, and the *Word* of God was personally united; that *same Word* which had been *inspoken* into *Adam* at his Fall, as a secret *Bruiser of the Serpent*, and *real Beginning* of his Salvation; so that in this second *Adam*, God and Man was one Person. And in this Union of the Divine and human Nature lies the *Foundation* and *Possibility* of our Recovery. For thus the holy Jesus became qualified to be the *second Adam*, or universal Regenerator of all that are born of *Adam* the first. For being himself *that Deity*, which as a *Spark* or *Seed* of Life was given to *Adam*, thus all that were born of *Adam* had also a *Birth* from him, and so stood under him, as their common Father and Regenerator of a heavenly Life in them. And it was this first *inspoken Word* of Life which was given to *Adam*, that makes all Mankind to be the *spiritual Children* of the *second Adam*, though he was not born into the World till so many Years after the Fall. For seeing the *same Word* that became their perfect Redeemer in the Fulness of Time, was in them from the Beginning, as a Beginning of their Redemption, therefore he stood related to all Mankind as a *Fountain* and *Deriver* of an heavenly Life into them, in the same *universal manner* as *Adam* was the Fountain and Deriver of a miserable Mortality into them.

And seeing also this great and glorious Redeemer had in himself the *whole Humanity*, both as it was *before* and after the *Fall*, *viz.*, in his inward Man the *Perfection* of the first *Adam*, and in his outward the *Weakness* and *Mortality* of the fallen Nature; and seeing he had all this, as the *Undoer* of all that *Adam* had done, as the *Overcomer* of Death, as the *Former* and *Raiser* of our heavenly Life, therefore it was, that all his Conquests over this World, Sin, Death, and Hell, were not the Conquests of a *single Person* that terminated in himself, but had their real *Effect* and efficacious *Merit* through *all* human

Nature, because he was the *appointed Father* and *Regenerator* of the whole human Nature, and as such, had that *same Relation* to it all as *Adam* had : And therefore as *Adam's* Fall, Sin and Death, did not, could not terminate in himself, because he was our *appointed Father*, from whom we must have such a State and Condition of Life as he had ; so the Righteousness, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ into the Kingdom of Heaven did not terminate in himself, but became ours, because he is our appointed *second Adam*, from whom we are to derive *such* a State and Condition of Life as he had ; and therefore all that are *born again* of him, are certainly born into *his State* of Victory and Triumph over the World, Sin, Death and Hell.

8. Now here is opened to us the true Reason of the *whole Process* of our Saviour's Incarnation, Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven : It was because fallen Man was to go through *all these Stages* as necessary Parts of his Return to God ; and therefore, if Man was to go out of his *fallen State*, there must be a Son of *this fallen Man*, who, as a *Head* and *Fountain* of the whole Race, could do all this, could go back through all these Gates, and so make it *possible* for all the Individuals of human Nature, as being *born* of him, to inherit his *conquering Nature*, and follow him through all these Passages to eternal Life. And thus we see, in the strongest and clearest Light, both *why* and *how* the holy Jesus is become our great Redeemer.

Had he failed in any of these Things, had he not *been* all that he was, and *did* all that he did, he could not have made one full, perfect, sufficient Atonement and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World, that is, he could not have *been* and *done* that, which in the *Nature* of the Thing was *absolutely* necessary, and *fully* sufficient to take the whole human Race *out of* the Bondage and Captivity of their fallen State. Thus, had he not really had the Divine Nature in his Person, he could not have *begun* to be our *second Adam* from the Time of the Fall, nor could we have stood *related* to him as Children, that had received a *new Birth* from him. Neither could he have made a *Beginning* of a Divine Life in our fallen Nature, but that he was that God who could make Nature *begin again* where it had failed in our first Father. Without this Divinity in his Person, the Perfection of his Humanity would have been as helpless to us as the Perfection of an Angel. Again, had he not been *Man*, and in human Nature *overcome* Sin and Temptation, he could have been *no Saviour* of fallen Man, because nothing that he had done had been done *in* and *to* the fallen Nature. *Adam* might as well have derived Sin into the Angels by his Fall, as Christ had

derived Righteousness into us by his Life, if he had not *stood* both in our Nature, and as the *common Father* and *Regenerator* of it; therefore his Incarnation was necessary to deliver us from our Sins, and accordingly the Scripture saith, 'he was manifest 'in the Flesh to destroy the Works of the Devil.' Again, if Christ had not *renounced* this Life, as heartily and thoroughly as *Adam* chose it, and declared absolutely for another Kingdom in another World; if he had not *sacrificed* the Life he took up in and from this World, he could not have been our Redeemer, and therefore the Scripture continually ascribes Atonement, Satisfaction, Redemption, and Remission of Sins to his *Sufferings* and *Death*. Again, had not our Lord entered into that State of *eternal Death* which fallen Man was eternally to inherit; had he not broken *from it* as its Conqueror, and rose again from the Dead, he could not have delivered us from the Effects of our Sins, and therefore the Apostle saith, 'If Christ be not risen, ye 'are yet in your Sins.' But I must enlarge a little upon the Nature and Merits of our Saviour's *last Sufferings*. It is plain from Scripture that *that Death*, which our blessed Lord died on the Cross, was *absolutely* necessary for our Salvation; that he, as our Saviour, *was to taste Death for every Man*—that as the *Captain of our Salvation*, *he was to be made perfect through Sufferings*—that there was no Entrance for fallen Man into Paradise till Christ had overcome that Death and Hell, or that first and second Death which stood between us and it.

Now the absolute Necessity of our Saviour's doing and suffering all this, plainly appears, as soon as we consider him as the *second Adam*, who, as such, is to *undo* all the Evil that the first *Adam* had done in human Nature; and therefore must enter into *every State* that belonged to this fallen Nature, *restoring* in every State that which was lost, *quicken*ing that which was extinguished, and *overcoming* in every State that by which Man was overcome. And therefore as *eternal Death* was as certainly brought forth in our Souls, as temporal Death in our Bodies, as this Death was a State that *belonged* to fallen Man, therefore our Lord was obliged to taste *this dreadful Death*, to enter into the *Realities* of it, that he might carry our Nature *victoriously* through it. And as fallen Man was to have entered into this eternal Death at his giving up the Ghost in this World, so the second *Adam*, as *reversing* all that the first had done, was to stand in this *second Death* upon the Cross, and die from it into that Paradise out of which *Adam* the first died into this World.

Now when the Time drew near that our blessed Lord was to enter upon his last great Sufferings, *viz.*, the *Realities* of that second Death through which he was to pass, then it was that all

the *anguishing Terrors* of a lost Soul began to open themselves in him ; then all that eternal Death which *Adam* had brought into his Soul, when it lost the Light and Spirit of Heaven, began to be *awakened*, and *stirring* in the second *Adam*, who was come to stand in the *last State* of the fallen Soul, to be encompassed with that eternal Death and *Sensibility* of Hell, which must have been the everlasting State of fallen Man.

The *Beginning* of our Lord's Entrance into the terrible Jaws of this second *Death*, may be justly dated from those affecting Words, 'My Soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death, tarry 'ye here with me and watch.' See here the Lord of Life reduced to such Distress as to beg the Prayers, Watching, and Assistance of his poor Disciples! A plain Proof that it was not the Sufferings of this World, but a State of *dreadful Dereliction* that was coming upon him. O holy Redeemer, that I knew how to describe the anguishing Terrors of thy Soul, when thou wast entering into eternal Death, that no other Son of Man might fall into it.

The Progress of these Terrors are plainly shown us in our Lord's *Agony* in the Garden, when the *Reality* of this eternal Death so broke in upon him, so awakened and stirred itself in him, as to force great Drops of Blood to sweat from his Body. This was that *bitter Cup* which made him withdraw himself, prostrate himself, and thrice repeat an earnest Prayer, that if it were possible, it might pass from him, but at the same Time heartily prayed to drink it according to the Divine Will.

This was that Cup he was drinking from the sixth to the ninth Hour on the Cross, nailed to the Terrors of a *two-fold Death*, when he cried out 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'

We are not to suppose that our Lord's Agony was the Terrors of a Person that was going to be murdered, or the Fears of that Death which Men could inflict upon him ; for he had told his Disciples, not to fear them that could only kill the Body, and therefore we may be sure he had no such Fears himself. No, his Agony was his Entrance into the *last, eternal Terrors* of the lost Soul, into the real Horrors of that dreadful, eternal Death, which Man unredeemed must have died into when he left this World. We are therefore not to consider our Lord's Death upon the Cross, as only the Death of that mortal Body which was nailed to it, but we are to look upon him with wounded Hearts, as fixed and fastened in the State of that *two-fold Death*, which was due to the fallen Nature, out of which he could not come till he could say, 'It is finished ; Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit.'

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In that Instant he gave up the Ghost of this earthly Life; and as a Proof of his having overcome all the Bars and Chains of Death and Hell, he rent the *Rocks*, opened the *Graves*, and brought the *Dead* to Life, and triumphantly entered into that long shut up Paradise, out of which *Adam* died, and in which he promised the Thief, he should that Day be with him.

When therefore thou beholdest the *Crucifix*, which finely represents to thy Senses the Saviour of the World hanging on the Cross, let not thy Thoughts stay on any Sufferings, or Death, that the Malice of Men can cause; for he hung there in greater Distress than any human Power can inflict, *forsaken* of God, *feeling*, *bearing*, and *overcoming* the Pains and Darkness of that eternal Death which the fallen Soul of *Adam* had brought into it. For as *Adam* by his Fall, or Death in Paradise, had nothing left in his Soul, but the *Nature*, *Properties* and *Life* of Hell, all which must have *awakened* in him in their full Strength, as soon as he had lost the Flesh, and Blood, and Light of this World, as this eternal Death was a *State* that belonged to Man by the Fall, so there was an *absolute* Necessity that the Saviour of Man should enter into all these awakened Realities of the last eternal Death, and come victoriously out of them, or Man had never been redeemed from them. For the fallen Nature could no way possibly be saved, but by its *own coming* victoriously out of every Part of its fallen State; and therefore all this was to be done by that Son of Man, from whom we had a Power of deriving into us his victorious Nature.

Lastly, if our blessed Lord was not ascended into Heaven, and set on the Right Hand of God, he could not deliver us from our Sins; and therefore the Scripture ascribes to him, as ascended, a perpetual Priesthood in Heaven: 'If any Man Sin,' saith St. *John*, 'we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and he is the Propitiation for our Sins.'

All these Things therefore are so many equally essential Parts of our Saviour's Character, and he is the *one Atonement*, the *full Satisfaction* for Sin, the *Saviour* and *Deliverer* from the Bondage, Power, and Effects of Sin. And to ascribe our Deliverance from Sin, or the Remission of our Sins more to the *Life* and *Actions*, than to the *Death* of Christ, or to his Death more than to his *Resurrection* and *Ascension*, is directly contrary to the plain Letter and Tenor of the Scripture, which speaks of *all these* Things as *jointly* qualifying our Lord to be the *all-sufficient* Redeemer of Mankind; and when speaking separately of any of them, ascribes the *same* Power, Efficacy, and redeeming Virtue to one as to the other.

And all this is very plain from the Nature of the Thing; for

since all these Things are necessary Parts or Stages of our Return to God, every one of them must have the same necessary Share in delivering us from our sinful State ; and therefore what our Saviour did, as living, dying, rising from the Dead, and ascending into Heaven, are Things that he did as equally necessary, and equally efficacious to our full Deliverance from all the Power, Effects, and Consequences of our Sins.

And here we may see, in the plainest Light, how Christ is said to bear *our Iniquities*, to be made *Sin for us*, and how his Sufferings have delivered us from the Guilt and Sufferings due to our Sins, and how we are *saved* by him. It is not by an *arbitrary, discretionary* Pleasure of God, accepting the Sufferings of an *innocent* Person, as a sufficient *Amends* or *Satisfaction* for the Sins of Criminals. This is by no means the true Ground of this Matter. In this View we neither think rightly of our Saviour, nor rightly of God's receiving us to Salvation through him. God is reconciled to us through Jesus Christ in *no other Sense* than as we are *new born, new created* in Christ Jesus. This is the only Merit we have from him. Jesus Christ was made Sin for us, he bore our Iniquities, he saved us, not by giving the *Merit* of his innocent unjust Sufferings as a *full Payment* for our *Demerits*, but he saved us because he made himself *one of us*, became a Member of *our Nature*, and *such a Member* of our Nature, as had *Power* to heal, remove, and overcome all the Evils that were brought into our Nature by the Fall. He bore our Iniquities and saved us, because he stood in our Nature as our *common Father*, as one that had the same Relation to all Mankind as *Adam* had, and from whom we can derive all the conquering Power of *his Nature*, and so are enabled to come out of our Guilt and Iniquities by having his Nature *derived* into us. This is the whole of what is meant by having our *guilty Condition transferred* upon him, and his *Merit* transferred upon us: Our Guilt is transferred upon him in *no other Sense* than as he took upon him the State and Condition of our fallen Nature, to bear all its Troubles, undergo all its Sufferings, till he had *healed* and *overcome* all the Effects of Sin. His *Merit* or *Righteousness* is imputed or derived into us in no other Sense, than as we receive from him a *Birth*, a *Nature*, a *Power* to become the Sons of God. Hence it appears, what vain Disputes the World has had upon this Subject, and how this edifying, glorious Part of Religion has been perplexed and lost in the Fictions and Difficulties of scholastic Learning. Some People have much puzzled themselves and others with this *Question*, How it is consistent with the Goodness and Equity of God to *permit*, or *accept* the Sufferings of an innocent Person as a

Satisfaction for the Guilt and Punishment of criminal Offenders ? But this Question can only be put by those, who have not yet known the most fundamental Doctrine of the Gospel Salvation ; for according to the Gospel, the *Question* should *proceed* thus, How it is consistent with the Goodness and Equity of God, to raise *such an innocent, mysterious Person* out of the Loins of fallen Man, as was able to *remove* all the Evil and Disorder that was brought into the fallen Nature ? This is the only Question that is according to the true Ground of our Redemption, and at once disperses all those Difficulties which are the mere Products of Human Invention. The Short of the Matter is this :

Man considered as created, or fallen, or redeemed, is *That* which he is, because of his State in Nature ; he can have no Goodness in him when created, but because he is brought into such a Participation of a *Goodness* that there is *in Nature* ; he can have no Evil in him when *fallen*, but because he is fallen from his good State *in Nature* ; he can no way be redeemed, but by being brought into his first State of Perfection *in Nature* ; and therefore, this is an eternal, immutable Truth, that he can be redeemed by the God *of Nature*, only according to the *Possibilities* of Nature : And here lies the *true Ground*, the whole Reason of all that our Saviour *was*, and *did*, and *suffered* on our Account : It was because in and through *all Nature* there could be no other Relief found for us : It was because nothing less than *such a Process* of such a *Mysterious Person* could have Power to undo all the Evils that were done in and to the Human Nature ; and therefore it is not only consistent with the Goodness and Equity of God to bring such a Mysterious Person into the World, but is the most infinite Instance of his most Infinite Love to all Mankind, that can possibly be conceived and adored by us. To proceed :

9. By the Fall of our first Father we have lost *our first, glorious Bodies*, that *eternal, celestial* Flesh and Blood which had as truly the Nature of Paradise and Heaven in it, as our present Bodies have the Nature, Mortality and Corruption of this World in them : If therefore we are to be redeemed, there is an *absolute Necessity* that our Souls be *clothed* again with this first paradisaical, or heavenly Flesh and Blood, or we can never enter into the Kingdom of God. Now, this is the Reason, why the Scriptures speak so particularly, so frequently, and so emphatically of the powerful Blood of Christ, of the great Benefit it is to us, of its *Redeeming, Quickening, Life-giving* Virtue ; it is because our first Life, or heavenly Flesh and Blood is *born again* in us, or *derived* again into us from this Blood of Christ.

Our Blessed Lord, who died for us, had not only that outward

Flesh and Blood, which he received from the Virgin *Mary*, and which died upon the Cross, but he had also an holy Humanity of heavenly Flesh and Blood veiled under it, which was appointed by God to *quicken, generate, and bring forth* from itself, such an holy Offspring of immortal Flesh and Blood, as *Adam* the first should have brought forth before his Fall.

If our Lord Christ had not had a *heavenly Humanity*, consisting of such Flesh and Blood as is not of this World, he had not been so perfect as *Adam* was, nor could our Birth from him, raise us to *that Perfection*, which we had lost, nor could his Blood be said to *purchase, ransom, redeem, and restore* us; because, as it is heavenly Flesh and Blood that we have lost, so we can only have it *ransomed and restored* to us, by that Blood which is of the *same* heavenly and immortal Nature with that which we have quite lost. Our common Faith, therefore, obliges us to hold, that our Lord had the *Perfection* of the first *Adam's* Flesh and Blood united with, and veiled under that fallen Nature, which he took upon him from the Blessed Virgin *Mary*. Had he not taken our *fallen* Nature upon him, nothing that he had done, could have been of any Advantage to us, or brought any Ransom or Redemption to our fallen Nature; and had he not taken *our Nature* as it was *before* the Fall, he could not have been our *second Adam*, or a *Restorer* to us of *that Nature*, which we should have had from *Adam* if he had not fallen.

Now, what our Common Faith thus fully teaches, concerning a heavenly, as well as earthly Humanity, which our Lord had, is also plainly signified to us by several clear Texts of Scripture; as where he saith of himself, 'I am from above, ye are from beneath;' again, 'I am not of this World;' and further, 'No one ascends into Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man, who is in Heaven:'. These and other Texts of the like Nature, which plainly speak of *something* in our Blessed Lord, which can neither be understood of his Divinity, nor of *that* Flesh and Blood which he received from the Virgin *Mary*, has forced some *Scholastic Divines* to hold the *Pre-existence* of our Saviour's Soul, which is an Opinion utterly inconsistent with our Redemption; for it is as necessary that our Lord should have a Soul as well as a Body derived from *Adam*, in order to be the Redeemer of *Adam's* Offspring: But all these Texts, which a Learning, merely *literal*, has thus mistaken, do only prove this great, necessary, and edifying Truth, that our Blessed Lord had a heavenly Humanity, which clothed itself with the Flesh and Blood of this World in the Womb of the Virgin; and from that heavenly Humanity, or Life-giving Blood it is, that our first heavenly, immortal Flesh and Blood is

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generated and formed in us again ; and therefore his Blood is truly the *Atonement*, the *Ransom*, the *Redemption*, the *Life* of the World ; because it brings forth, and generates from itself the paradisaical, immortal Flesh and Blood, as *certainly*, as *really*, as the Blood of fallen *Adam* brings forth and generates from itself the sinful, vile, corruptible Flesh and Blood of this Life.

Would you further know, what Blood this is, that has this atoning, Life-giving Quality in it ? It is that Blood which is to be received in the Holy Sacrament. Would you know, why it quickens, raises and restores the inward Man that died in Paradise ? The Answer is from Christ himself, ' He that eateth ' my Flesh and drinketh my Blood, dwelleth in me, and I in ' him, that is, he is born of my Flesh and Blood.' Would you know, why the Apostle saith, ' That he hath purchased us by ' his Blood,' Acts xx. 28. ' That we have Redemption through ' his Blood,' Ephes. i. 7. Why he prays ' the God of Peace— ' through the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant, to make us ' perfect in every good Work to do his Will ; ' 'tis because the Holy Jesus saith, ' except we drink his Blood, we have no Life ' in us,' and therefore the drinking his Blood, is the same Thing as receiving a *Life* of heavenly Flesh and Blood from him : And all this is only saying, that our Saviour, the second *Adam*, must do *that* for us and in us, which the first *Adam* should have done ; his Blood must be that to us by way of *Descent*, or *Birth* from him, which the Blood of our first Father, if he had not fallen, would have been to us ; and as this Blood of an immortal Life is lost by the Fall, so he from whom we receive it again by a *secondary Way*, is justly and truly said, to *purchase*, to *redeem*, and *ransom* us by his Blood.

Now, there is but *one redeeming, sanctifying, Life-giving* Blood of Christ, and it is that which gave and shed itself under the Veil of that outward Flesh and Blood that was sacrificed upon the Cross ; it is that Holy and Heavenly Flesh and Blood which is to be received in the Holy Sacrament ; it is that holy, immortal Flesh and Blood which *Adam* had before the Fall, of which Blood, if we had *drank*, that is, if we had been *born* of it, we had not wanted a Saviour, but had had such Flesh and Blood as could have entered into the Kingdom of Heaven ; had we received this holy, immortal Flesh and Blood from *Adam* before his Fall, it had been called our being *born* of his Flesh and Blood ; but because we receive that same Flesh and Blood from Jesus Christ, our second *Adam*, by our *Faith*, our *Hunger* and *Desire* of it ; therefore it is justly called our eating and drinking his Flesh and Blood.

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And here we have another strong Scripture Proof, that our Saviour had heavenly Flesh and Blood veiled under that which he received from the Virgin *Mary*. For does not the Holy Sacrament undeniably prove to us, that he had a heavenly Flesh entirely different from that which was seen nailed to the Cross, and which was to be a heavenly, substantial Food to us ; that he had a Blood entirely different from that which was seen to run out of his mortal Body, which Blood we are to drink of, and live for ever ?

Now, that Flesh and Blood cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, is a Scripture Truth ; and yet it must be affirmed to be a Truth according to the same Scriptures, that Flesh and Blood can, and must enter into the Kingdom of God, or else, neither *Adam*, nor any of his Posterity could enter in thither ; therefore, it is a Scripture Truth, that there is a *Flesh* and *Blood* that has the Nature, the Likeness, and Qualities of Heaven in it, that is as wholly different from the Flesh and Blood of this World, as Heaven is different from the Earth. For if the Flesh and Blood that we now have, cannot possibly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, and yet we must be Flesh and Blood, and Christ our Lord must be Flesh and Blood, for ever in Heaven ; then it follows, that there is a real Flesh and Blood that has nothing of this World in it, that neither arises from it, nor is nourished by it, but will subsist eternally, when this World is dissolved and gone. Now, if this Flesh and Blood is lost by the Fall of our first Father, and if the Blood which we derive from him is the *Cause*, the *Seat*, and *Principle* of our mortal, corruptible, impure Life ; if from the Blood of this first Father, all our Unholiness, Impurity and Misery is derived into us, then we may clearly understand what is meant by our being redeemed by the Blood of Christ, and why the Scriptures speak so much of his *atoning*, *quicken*ing, *Life-giving*, *cleansing*, *sanctify*ing Blood ; it is because it is to us the Reverse of the Blood of *Adam*, it is the *Cause*, the *Seat*, the *Principle* of our Holiness and Purity of Life ; it is that from which we derive an immortal, holy Flesh and Blood in the same Reality from this second *Adam*, as we inherit a corrupt, impure, and earthly Flesh and Blood from our first *Adam* : And therefore that which would have been done to us by our *Birth*, if we had been born of the holy Blood of *Adam* unfallen, that we are to understand to be done to us, in and by the Holy Blood of Christ. For the Blood of Christ is that to us in the Way of Redemption, which the Blood of our first Father should have been to us in the Order of the Creation ; for the Redemption has no other End, but to raise us from our Fall, to do that for us, which we should have had by the Condition of our Creation, if

our Father had kept his State of Glory and Immortality ; and this is a certain Truth, that there would have been no eating the Flesh, and drinking the Blood of Christ in the Christian Scheme of Redemption, but that the Flesh and Blood which we should have had from *Adam*, must of all necessity be had, before we can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

10. Here therefore is plainly discovered to us, the true Nature, Necessity and Benefit of the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ; both why, and how, and for what End, we must of all necessity, eat the Flesh, and drink the Blood of Christ. No *figurative Meaning* of the Words is here to be sought for, we must eat Christ's Flesh, and drink his Blood in the *same Reality*, as he took upon him the *real Flesh* and *Blood* of the Blessed Virgin : We can have no real Relation to Christ, can be no true Members of his mystical Body, but by being real Partakers of that same kind of Flesh and Blood, which was truly his, and was his, for this *very End*, that through him, the same might be brought forth in us : All this is strictly true of the Holy Sacrament, according to the plain Letter of the Expression ; which Sacrament was thus instituted, that the *great Service* of the Church might continually show us, that the whole of our Redemption consisted in the receiving the *Birth, Spirit, Life* and *Nature* of Jesus Christ into us, in being born of him, and *clothed* with a heavenly Flesh and Blood from him, just as the whole of our Fall consists in our being born of *Adam's* sinful Nature and Spirit, and in having a vile, corrupt and impure Flesh and Blood from him.

But what Flesh and Blood are we to eat and drink ? Not such as we have already, not such as any Offspring of *Adam* hath, not such as can have its Life and Death by, and from the Elements of this World ; and therefore, not that outward, visible, mortal Flesh and Blood of Christ, which he took from the Virgin *Mary*, and was seen on the Cross, but a *heavenly, immortal* Flesh and Blood, which came down from Heaven, which hath the *Nature, Qualities, and Life* of Heaven in it, according to which our Lord said of himself, that he was a 'Son of Man come down from Heaven,' that 'he was not of this World,' that 'he was from Above,' &c., that *very* Flesh and Blood which we should have received from *Adam*, if we had kept his first glorious and immortal Nature. For as the Flesh and Blood which we lost by his Fall, was the Flesh and Blood of *Eternal Life*, so it is the same Flesh and Blood of *Eternal Life* which is offered to us in the Holy Sacrament, that we may eat, and live for ever : This is the adorable Height and Depth of this Divine Mystery, which brings Heaven

and Immortality again into us, and gives us *Power to become Sons of God*. Woe be to those who come to it with the Mouths of *Beasts*, and the Minds of *Serpents*! who, with impenitent Hearts, devoted to the Lusts of the Flesh, the Lusts of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, for worldly Ends, outward Appearances, and secular Conformity, boldly meddle with those Mysteries that are only to be approached by those that are of a *pure Heart*, and who worship God in *Spirit and in Truth*. Justly may it be said of such, that they *eat and drink Damnation to themselves, not discerning*, that is, not regarding, not reverencing, not humbly adoring the Mysteries of the *Lord's Body*.

If you ask how the eating and drinking the Body and Blood of Christ, is the receiving that Flesh and Blood of Eternal Life, which we should have had from *Adam* himself, it is for this plain Reason, because the *same kind* of Flesh and Blood is in Christ, that was in *Adam*, and is in Christ as it was in *Adam*, for this *very End*, that it might *be derived* into all his Offspring: So that we come to the Sacrament of the Blessed Body and Blood of Christ, because he is *our Second Adam*, from whom we must now receive that eternal, celestial Flesh and Blood which we should have had from our first Father; and therefore it is, that the Apostle saith, the 'first Adam was made a living Soul,' that is, had a *Life in himself*, which could have brought forth an eternal, ever-living Offspring; but having brought forth a dead Race, *the last Adam*, as the Restorer of the Life that was lost, *was made a quickening Spirit*, because quickening again *that Life* which *Adam* as a *living Soul*, should have brought forth.

And thus we have the *plain and full Truth* of the most mysterious Part of this Holy Sacrament, delivered from the tedious Strife of Words, and that Thickness of Darkness which learned Contenders on all Sides have brought into it. The Letter and Spirit of Scripture are here both preserved, and the Mystery appears so amiable, so intelligible, and so beneficial, as must needs raise a true and earnest Devotion in everyone that is capable of hungering and thirsting after Eternal Life. And this true and sound Knowledge of the Holy Sacrament could never have been lost, if this Scripture Truth had not been overlooked; namely, that Christ is *our second Adam*, that he is to do *that* for us, which *Adam* should have done; that we are to have *that Life* from him, as a *Quickening Spirit*, which we should have had from *Adam* as a *living Soul*; and that our Redemption is only doing a *second Time*, or in a *second Way*, that which should have been done by the first Order of our Creation: This plain Doctrine attended to, would sufficiently show us, that the Flesh and Blood of *Eternal Life*, which we are to receive from

Christ, must be *that Flesh and Blood* of Eternal Life which we lost in *Adam*. Now, if we had received this immortal Flesh and Blood by our *Descent* from *Adam*, we must in the Strictness of the Expression have been said to partake of the Flesh and Blood of *Adam*; so seeing we *now* receive it from Christ, we must in the same Strictness of the Expression, be said to be *real Partakers* of the Flesh and Blood of Christ, because he hath the same heavenly Flesh and Blood which *Adam* had, and for the *same End* that *Adam* had it; namely, that it may come *by* and *through* him into us. And thus is this great Sacrament, which is a continual Part of our Christian Worship, a continual Communication to us of all the Benefits of our Second *Adam*; for in and by the Body and Blood of Christ, to which the Divine Nature is united, we receive all that Life, Immortality, and Redemption, which Christ, as living, suffering, dying, rising from the Dead, and ascending into Heaven, brought to Human Nature; so that this great Mystery is that, in which all the Blessings of our Redemption and new Life in Christ are centred. And they that hold a Sacrament short of *this Reality* of the true Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, cannot be said to hold that Sacrament of *Eternal Life*, which was instituted by our Blessed Lord and Saviour.

FINIS.

SOME
ANIMADVERSIONS
UPON
Dr. *Trapp's* late REPLY.

HAD I the Spirit of an *Adversary*, or were inclined to find Entertainment for the *Satirical Reader*, it would not be easy for me to overlook the Opportunity which Dr. *Trapp's* Reply has put into my Hands ; but as I don't want to lessen any Appearance of Ability which the Doctor has shown on this Occasion, or have any Wish that his *Pen* had not all its Advantages ; so whatever *personally* concerns him, either as a *Writer*, a *Scholar*, a *Disputant*, a *Divine*, or a *Christian*, shall have no Reflection from me ; and though by this means, some sort of Readers may be less pleased, yet, the more Christian Reader will be glad to find, that thus I must leave *two Thirds* of his Reply untouched ; and as I neither have, nor (by the Grace of God) ever will have any *personal Contention* with any Man whatever, so all the *Triumph* which the Doctor has gained over me by that Flow of Wrath and Contempt which he has let loose upon me, I shall leave him quietly to enjoy.

It would be no Pleasure to me, nor Benefit to the World, to discover that *Malignity* of Spirit, that *undistinguishing Head*, that *diabolical Calumny*, that *shameful Ignorance*, that *unthinking Temper*, that *blundering Mind*, that *perverse Disposition*, that *indecent Sufficiency*, that *unbecoming Presumption*, that *nauseous Dulness*, that *Ignorance of Logic*, that *Insensibility* of Argument, that Want of *Grammar*, which he has so heartily laid to my Charge ; and if he has any Readers that thank him for this, I shall make no Attempt to lessen their Number.

As I desire nothing for myself, or the Reader, but good *Eyes*, and a good *Heart*, seriously attentive to Things useful and edifying, and always open to the Light and Influence of the Holy Spirit of God, so I shall endeavour to say nothing but what is *suitable* to such a State of Mind, both in myself and the Reader.

The Doctor, by way of Plea for a certain Freedom in Drink-

ing, had appealed to our Saviour's Miracle at the Marriage Feast, where he turned Water into Wine, *at a Time* when the Guests had already drunk enough, and *had indulged something to Pleasure and Cheerfulness*. Therefore more Wine, or a Continuance of Drinking, when Man have *already indulged something to Pleasure and Cheerfulness*, has Authority from our Saviour's Conduct at the Feast.

One would imagine no one need be helped to look with a just Indignation at this Abuse and Profanation of our Lord's Miracle. Did the Saviour of the World *mean*, or *intend* to teach any Thing like this in what he did? Was this the *Spirit* of his Mind when he *thus timed* this Miracle, did he intend to convey *this Instruction* to them? Now, if our Lord had not this Spirit, did not mean *thus* to instruct the Feasters by thus *timing* his Miracle, Is it not a great Profanation of it to appeal to it for that Instruction, which was not meant or intended by it? Had any one of those *Guests* then present, come up to our Lord and said, Sir, we have heard indeed a Report that you require a Man to deny himself, to hate even his own Life in this World, and to forsake all that he hath in order to be your Disciple, but now we perceive, not by Words, but by your *miraculous Actions*, that you are *no Enemy* to these kind of Pleasures and Indulgences, since you have worked a Miracle to help us to *more Wine*, when we had already drunk enough, and had *indulged something to Pleasure and Cheerfulness*. What would our Lord have said to so sagacious an Observer? Would he have told him, that *Flesh and Blood had not revealed* so great a Truth unto him? Would he have acquiesced in the *Propriety* and *Justness* of his Observation, and pronounced him rightly *disposed* to by one of his Disciples? But if such an Observation could not have been approved by our Lord as a *Sign* of a good Mind, how is the Doctor to be excused, who not only looks *thus* at it himself, but proposes it to the World to be considered in *that View*? In order to vindicate our Saviour's Conduct in this Matter, I ventured, without any Help from *Commentators* or *Schoolmen*, to tell the Doctor, 'That the Wine here spoken 'of, was not *common Wine*, and therefore had no Relation to 'our common Drinking—that it was not Wine from the Juice of 'the Grape—that it had nothing in it but what came from a 'heavenly Hand—that it must have in it the *Purity* and *Virtue* 'of him that made it—that it had as good Qualities in it, and 'was fitted to have the same Effect upon some that drank it as 'the Clay which he moistened with his Spittle had upon the 'Eyes of the Blind—that it was Water only *so altered*, and 'endued with such Qualities, as he pleased to put into it; and

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' therefore we may be sure it was Water as *highly blessed* for their Use as they were capable of; we may be sure it was fitter to allay the Heat and Disorder of their Drinking, than if it had been Water *unaltered* by our Saviour. How suitable was this Miracle to a Feast? How worthy of so Divine a Person! to make them cooler by giving them Water made fitter for that Purpose, and to raise their Faith by its miraculously seeming to be the best of Wine.*

Now how can it be proved that this Interpretation is not a true one, not a safe one, not a good one? That our Saviour could do all this which is here mentioned, that he could convert Water into a Wine of this Nature, is undeniable; therefore if it had not this Nature and Qualities in it, it could only be because he chose to make it as bad as that Wine, which has the *Curse* of the Earth in it. But who will undertake to prove that Wine thus brought forth by a Divine Power, must have the *Nature* of Wine that is squeezed from the Grape under the *Curse* of Sin?

The Doctor confutes my Interpretation, by calling it a *senseless, impious, profane, ridiculous Nostrum, a Whimsy of my own Brain, diluting the glorious Miracle into nothing*. He has also accepted the Help of a learned Assistant, one *Philoclericus*, who backs this Confutation by saying, that *it has evaporated the Miracle into nothing*. They both agree that I have brought it to nothing, and only differ in my manner of doing it. The one holds it to be by *Dilution*, and the other by *Evaporation*.

To set this Matter therefore in a *clear Light*, let it be supposed, that the *Ruler of the Feast* should have come to our Saviour, and said, Sir, having been surpris'd at the extraordinary Difference between the last Cup of Wine that was brought to me, and that which had been used in the Feast before, I called the *Bridegroom* to tell him my Wonder at that extraordinary Wine which he had kept to the last; but being since informed by them that drew it, that this Wine was by thy *Word of Power* drawn from Vessels brim full of Water, I now come to fall down before thee, and confess that thou art come from God, and hast given me a Wine that has *not the Nature* of the earthly Grape in it: But as God gave our Fathers *Manna* to eat, which was justly called *Angels' Food*, and *Bread from Heaven*, so this Wine, which thou by a *Divine Power* has given us, must be looked upon, not as the *poor Juice* of the Grape, but as Wine given us *from Heaven*.

Now had the Doctor and his *learned Assistant* been there, and

* *Serious Answer, etc.*, page 48.

had been such Christians as they are now, they must both have fallen upon the Ruler of the Feast, as a *senseless, impious, profane, ridiculous* Wretch, that had *diluted* and *evaporated* our Lord's glorious Miracle into nothing: Though it was impossible in the Nature of the Thing, for all the Disciples of our Lord, though ever so full of Faith in him, to make higher Profession of the *Reality* of this glorious Miracle than the Ruler here has done; and yet he has said nothing but what is said in the Account which I have given of the Wine. And indeed it must be strangely absurd for any one to suggest, that the *Reality* of the Miracle is hurt by this Account of the Wine. For is not as great a Divine Power required to change Water into a Wine, that has a *better Nature* and Qualities than common Wine, as to make it have no more Goodness and Virtue in it than is in the *ordinary Juice* from the Grape? Or is it not rightly called Wine by those that drew it, or by him that drank it, because it was Wine in Perfection, in such Perfection, as the Grape could never give since *Adam* brought the Curse into the World.

The Doctor says, he *believes* it was just the same sort of Wine as if it had been from the Juice of the Grape, and his Reason is, 'because it is a Part of his Faith that our Saviour had the Power 'of creating,' p. 56. Now this is the very worst Reason the Doctor could possibly have thought of. For the Doctor, I will venture to say, is so orthodox a Schoolman as to hold the common Notion of Creating, *viz.*, that it is a *Power of making something to be out of nothing*. But Wine thus created is the last Thing the Doctor should have had Recourse to; *first*, because it is directly contrary to the Letter of the Text, which expressly saith, the Water was made Wine, therefore not a *created Wine*. *Secondly*, because Wine so created, could not possibly be *just the same Sort of Wine, as if it had been from the Juice of the Grape*, because as the Grape and every earthly Thing stands in a State of Evil, Corruption, and Curse through the Sin of the fallen Creatures, it is absolutely impossible that any Thing *immediately* created by God *out of Nothing*, should have any Thing of that Evil, Corruption, or Curse in it which Sin alone has brought into the Creatures.

The Truth of the Matter is, here was no more a *Creation* of Wine in this Miracle, than Wine is created *every Time* the Vine has ripe Grapes upon it. Water, together with Earth, is every Year turned into the Juice of the Grape by the Power of the Sun, from God's *eternal Word*, first saying, 'Let the Earth bring forth, 'the Fruit-tree yielding Fruit,' &c.

This same *eternal*, ever *speaking*, ever *operating Word* of God, being become Man, could as well turn Water into Wine in a

quicker Way by his own Power, as by the Help of the Vine once in a Year. Seeing therefore this Wine was not raised from Water and Earth, according to the common Course of Vegetation in fallen Nature, but by the immediate Agency of the God of Nature upon Water alone, it is reasonable and absolutely necessary to suppose, that it was Wine very much freed from all that Evil, Wrath, and Curse, which is inseparable from the *ordinary Workings* of the present State of Nature. Hence it appears, that the Interpretation here given, is so far from being a profane, impious, senseless *Nostrum*, is so far from having any Thing of Force, or Fiction in it, that it is the *first*, most *easy*, *natural*, and *direct* Sense, in which the Miracle can be justly understood. And therefore every sober Christian ought to reject the Doctor's Use of this Miracle as inconsistent with Piety. Great Intemperance, we all know, is carried on by such as pretend not to exceed the lawful Bounds of Pleasure and Indulgence. And is it consistent with Christian Piety, or Prudence, to furnish such People with a Pretext for what they do, from our Saviour's Example and Conduct? Or is he to be blamed, who by a just, innocent, and safe Interpretation of the Miracle, leaves such People no Claim to its Authority? Surely it is a sad Mistake to draw Arguments for sensual Indulgence from him, who came to teach and save the World by every Kind and Degree of possible Self-denial.

But I shall add but one Argument more, which is sufficient of itself to show how unjustly the Doctor draws an Argument from our Saviour's turning Water into Wine, when more than was necessary had been already drank, and *something*, as he says, *had been indulged to Pleasure and Cheerfulness*; and my Argument is this: It is undeniably plain from the whole Story of this Matter, that there was no more Water turned into Wine than that *one Cup*, which was carried to the Ruler of the Feast, and therefore neither Foundation nor Excuse for the Doctor's Argument from it.

When the Vessels were empty, our Lord ordered them to be filled, and to be filled up to the Brim *with Water*. Such an Order as this must, at least in the Execution of it, draw the Eyes and Attention of many that were present. Not a Syllable is ever mentioned of any Wine in the Vessels; they are only represented to us as standing brimful of Water. Our Lord only bids a Servant to draw from these Pots thus full of Water, and what he drew and carried to the Ruler from Vessels full of Water, was such Wine as strangely surprised him with its peculiar Excellency. The Wine was only found in that Cup into which our Saviour ordered the Servant to draw, and bear to the Ruler,

and as he gave this Command but once, so it is certain there was but this one Cup of miraculous Wine. A hasty Reader, that has his Eye upon the Increase of the Liquor, and wants to have an Argument for his Purpose from it, may hurry himself into a Fancy, that our Saviour made all the Water Pots stand brimful of Wine. But the Story itself plainly represents quite another Matter, and is only a Relation of *one Cup* of miraculous Wine. The Care that our Lord took, that all the Vessels should be filled with Water up to the Top, was not, that the Guests might have all the Wine these Vessels could hold, but that all the Vessels being filled up to the Top, and made visible to all Beholders, might be so many plain Proofs that the Wine which he ordered to be drawn, could only be drawn from one of those Vessels which so many Beholders saw to be brimful of Water, both before and after the Drawing of the Cup of Wine. And herein lay the Strength, and Certainty, and Glory of the Miracle; that so many Witnesses were forced to see and own, that by the Word of our Lord, Wine was drawn from Pots just filled, and still remaining full to the Top with Water. And when this Miracle had thus incontestably manifested itself, the whole Affair was over, and the Guests were left, not to rejoice over full Pots of Water turned into Wine, but to make sober Reflections upon the Divinity of that Person, who had put such an astonishing End to their Drinking. Great and holy Jesus! How like thyself, the Saviour of the World, hast thou acted at this Feast! How couldst thou more sink the Value, extinguish the Desire, suppress all Thoughts of Pleasure and Indulgence in earthly Wine, than by showing the Feasters, that from the poorest of the Elements thou couldst call forth such Wine as no Grape could give? How couldst thou more effectually take from them their sensual Joy, or more powerfully call them to deny themselves and come after thee, than by thus miraculously showing them, that the richest Delights of sensual Gratifications were far short of what thou couldst give to those, that would leave all earthly Delights for thee.

The next Thing of Importance which I shall speak to, shall be with Regard to what I have said to the Clergy. The miserable State of Religion, and the great Corruption of Manners, so incontestably apparent in this Island, gave me a just Occasion to desire all the Clergy, from the highest to the lowest in the Order, to consider their Conduct, and see how free they were from the common Corruption, and how justly every one could clear himself from having any Share in this general Depravity of Manners. I was not insensible that this was a dangerous Attempt, that would expose me to the Resentment of not a few

of my Brethren : But as I wrote for no other End but to do as much Good as I could to those who were capable of it, so I had no Care but how to speak disagreeable Truths, in as Christian and inoffensive a manner as I could ; how I have succeeded in this, is left to the World to judge. And as it is but too apparent, that the *Root* of all the Evil, which but too much spreads itself through the whole Body of the Clergy, is owing to a *worldly, trading* Spirit, too visible from the Top to the Bottom of the Order, so I pointed at it in the softest and most affecting manner that I could, in the following Words, grounded on a plain Apostolical Doctrine and Practice.

St. *Paul*, I had observed, had said, it was lawful for those that preach the Gospel to live by the Gospel, and yet makes it Matter of the greatest Joy and Comfort to himself that he had wholly abstained from this *lawful Thing*; and declares, it were better for him to die than that *this* Rejoicing should be taken from him. He appeals to his daily and nightly working with his own Hands, that so he might preach the Gospel *freely*, and not be chargeable to those that heard him. And this he said he did, not for want of Authority to do otherwise, but that he might make himself an Example unto them to follow him. Here, I say, 'What fine and awakening Instructions are here 'given to us of the *Clergy*, in a practical Matter of the greatest 'Moment? How ought every one to be frightened at the Thoughts 'of desiring or seeking a *second Living*, or of rejoicing at *great 'Pay* where there is but *little Duty*, when the Apostle's *rejoicing* 'consisted in *this*, that he had passed through all the Fatigues 'and Perils of preaching the Gospel without any Pay at all? 'How cautious, nay, how fearful ought we to be, of going so far 'as the secular Laws permit us, when the Apostle thought it 'more desirable to lose his Life, than to go so far as the very 'Law of the Gospel would have suffered him?

'It is looked upon as lawful to get several Preferments, and 'to make a Gain of the Gospel, by hiring others to do Duty for 'us at a lower Rate.—It is looked upon as lawful to quit a *Cure* 'of Souls of a small Income, for *no other* Reason, but because we 'can get another of a greater.—It is looked upon as lawful for a 'Clergyman to take the Revenues of the Church, which he 'serves, to his *own Use*, though he has more than a sufficient 'Competency of his own, and much more than the Apostle could 'get by his Labour.—It is looked upon as lawful for the Clergy 'to live in State and Equipage, to buy Purple and fine Linen 'out of the Revenues of the Church.—It is looked upon as 'lawful for Clergymen to enrich their Families, to bring up their 'Children in the fashionable Vanities, and corrupting Methods

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'of a worldly and expensive Life, by Money got by preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But now, supposing all this to be *lawful*, what Comfort and Joy might we treasure up to ourselves, what Glory and Honour might we bring to Religion, what Force and Power might we give to the Gospel, what Benefit and Edification should we do to our Neighbour, if we *wholly* abstained from all these lawful Things? Not by working Day and Night with our own Hands, as the great Apostle did, but by limiting our Wants and Desires according to the plain Demands of Nature, and a religious Self-Denial.'

Now, there are but two possible ways of justly replying to this; *first*, either by showing that these Observations are falsely drawn from the Apostle's Doctrine and Practice, that I have mistaken the Spirit of St. *Paul*, and the Genius of the Gospel, that I am here doing what the Apostle would not do, was he here in Person, and representing such Things as Corruptions, which the Apostle would be glad to see flourishing in the Church of Christ: Or, *secondly*, that though these Things are plainly condemnably from the Apostle's Doctrine and Practice, yet they are not chargeable upon the Spirit, Temper and Practice of the Clergy of this Land. Now, though not a Word to the Purpose could possibly be said, but by one of these two Ways, yet the Doctor shuts his Eyes to both of them, and then pronounced the following Sentence upon Me, *That a Quaker, or Infidel, could not well have reflected with more Virulency upon the Clergy of our Church, than I have done in these Expressions.*

Must I then suppose, that the Doctor in his *Sermons*, never mentions any Failings that concerns his Auditors, or lays before them any of their unchristian Ways of Life? If he does, I desire to know how he clears himself from *virulently* reflecting upon them and their Christianity? The *Quakers*, and *Infidels*, are ready enough, and able enough to show, that most Congregations of Christians are sadly fallen away from the Religion of the Gospel; and does the Doctor forbear this Charge, is he ashamed to call his Flock to a more Christian Life, or afraid to remind them of their Departure from the Gospel, lest he should seem to join with Quakers and Infidels, who make great Complaints of the Corruptions of Christians? Or, how can the Doctor desire to be thought to have any *true Love* or *just Esteem* for those Christians, whom he is so often reminding of the Corruption and Depravity of their Manners, so contrary to the Religion of Jesus Christ? Now, if the Doctor knows how to untie this *Knot*, and to extricate himself from the Charge of *virulent reflecting* upon his Parishioners, as *Quakers*

and *Infidels* do, then he has dissolved his Charge against me into a mere nothing.

If it was a Thing required of me I know no more how to raise in myself the least Spark of Rancour, or Ill-will towards the Clergy, as such, than I know how to work myself up into a Hatred of the Light of the Sun. It is as natural to me, to wish them all their Perfection, as to wish Peace and Happiness to myself both here and hereafter; and when I point at any Failings in their Conduct, it is only with such a Spirit as I would pluck a Brother out of the Fire.

In that Part of my *Answer*, which is addressed to the younger Clergy, I said, 'Lay this down for an infallible Principle; that an entire, absolute Renunciation of all worldly *interest*, is the only possible Foundation of that exalted Virtue, which your Station requires; without this, all Attempts after an exemplary Piety are in vain: (*and then, by way of Limitation and Explication of this, it thus immediately follows:*) If you want any Thing from the World by way of *Figure* and *Exaltation*, you shut the Power of your Redeemer out of your own Souls, and instead of converting, you corrupt the Hearts of those that are about you. Detest therefore, with the *utmost Abhorrence*, all Desires of making your fortunes, either by *Perferments*, or rich *Marriages*, and let it be your only Ambition, to stand at the *Top* of every Virtue, as visible Guides and Patterns to all that aspire after the Perfection of Holiness,' p. 61.

Now, one would imagine there was no Part of the Christian World, however corrupted by Division, where this Doctrine would not be admitted at least in Theory; or, that the Gospel of Christ should be thought to be reproached, where such Advice as this was given to young Divines: And yet it is of this very Advice, that Dr. *Trapp* says, 'he hopes they will have more Grace and Sense than to follow it: That it is false Doctrine, tending to the Reproach and Scandal of the Christian Religion,' p. 87.

Is it then come to this, that unless young Divines choose to serve *Mammon* as well as God, their Profession is a renouncing of *Grace* and *Sense*, and a *Reproach to Religion*? And must they that pretend to act in Christ's Name, as Successors in his Office, take Care that they renounce not the Politics of the Kingdom of this World? For my part, I thought it as safe, as Christian, as consistent with the Honour of the Gospel, to give this Advice thus to suppress all worldly Views, as to resist all the Temptations of the Devil.

Had *Martin Luther*, when he gave his Reasons and Motives for withdrawing from Communion with the *Pope*, been able to have added this: that the *Advice* here given, had been formally

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condemned by the *Pope* in a great Council, the Defenders of that Church would have found it as hard to have made such a *Decree* consistent with the Gospel, as the selling of Indulgencies: And it may well be supposed, that no Protestant writer, when setting forth the *Marks* of Antichrist, and the *Beast* in that Church, would have forgot to have made this *Condemnation* to be one of them.

For who can show it to be so contrary to the whole Spirit of the Gospel, to call in the *Assistance* of the Saints, or to deny the *Cup* to the Laity in the Manner the Church of *Rome* does, who can show this to put so entire a Stop to the Salvation by the Gospel, as to condemn the *Advice* here given to young Divines as a Scandal and Reproach to Christianity? For all the Ends and Designs of the Gospel may be pursued, and Men may arise out of the Corruption of their Nature, notwithstanding these two Mistakes: But to condemn it as an Error inconsistent with *Grace* and *Sense*, a Scandal and Reproach to Christianity, for young Divines to renounce worldly Views, and devote themselves wholly to God, is striking at the whole Root of all Holiness of Life, and no less than a Denial of the whole Spirit of the Gospel.

Our Church requires all its Candidates for Holy Orders, to make Profession of their being moved and called by the Holy Ghost to enter into the Service of the Church: This, I should think, is Proof enough, that the Spirit of this World ought not to be alive in them, when they make this Profession; and yet, if any young Persons should come to be ordained, thus dead to all worldly Views, thus wholly devoted to God, as I have here recommended, they ought, according to the Doctor, to be rejected by the Bishop, of being led by a Spirit that has lost all *Grace* and *Sense*, and is a *Scandal* and *Reproach* to the Christian Religion.

It is needless to quote particular Texts of Scripture, teaching the same that I have here taught; as, that our Saviour assures us, that we 'cannot serve God and Mammon': That *St. Paul* requires us, *having Food and Raiment, to be therewith content*, for this Reason, *because they that will be rich, fall into divers Temptations of the Devil*: That *St. John* forbids us to 'love the World, 'or the Things of the World,' for this Reason, because all that is in the World, the 'Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and 'the Pride of Life, is not of the Father, but is of the World.' It is needless to have Recourse to particular Texts of this kind, because the whole Nature and Reason of our Redemption is a standing, plain Proof of the same Thing; for we want to be redeemed for no other Reason, but because we are born Children of this World, and have by Nature only the Life, Spirit and

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Temper of this World in us : This is our Fall, our Curse, our Separation from God ; and therefore we can have no Redemption, but by a Renunciation of all the Workings of the Life of this World in us, by a total dying to, and denying ourselves ; because all that we are, as to our State, Spirit and Life in this World, is a Life that carries us from God, a Life that should not have been raised up in us ; 'tis a Life begun by the Fall, a Life of Sin and Corruption, which cannot enter into Heaven. The Life that we have in this World, from the Fall of *Adam*, is not to be *naturally* destroyed or murdered, nor are the Necessaries and Conveniences of Life to be rejected, nor is anyone to renounce his Share in the Employments that are necessary and useful to Social Life : The Renunciation of this World reaches no further than the renouncing the Spirit, Temper, and Inclinations of this worldly Life : We may stand in our Stations, when we stand in them as the Servants of God, as Citizens of the new *Jerusalem*, who have amongst earthly Things, our Conversation in Heaven : We may keep our Possessions, when we possess them as the Things of God, and use them not as Nature, but as the Spirit directs us ; when we do thus, we have the Poverty of Spirit, which the Gospel requires, and come up to the very Letter of that Command given to the young Man, 'to sell all that he 'had, and give to the Poor.'

But now, if our natural Life in this World, is a corrupt, impure, disorderly, bestial, diabolical Life brought forth by the *Fall*, if we want to be redeemed because we have this State of Life in and from this World, if we want to be born again of the Son of God, born again of the Holy Spirit, because our natural Birth is according to the Spirit of this World ; if nothing of the Beast, or the Devil, no kind or degree of Selfishness, Envy, Pride and Vanity can enter into the Kingdom of God, then it is plain from the Nature of the Thing, that all religion which leaves this Nature alive and unrenounced, which lets Selfishness, Pride, Wrath, and Vanity subsist in us, which bring us to our Graves in the same Nature in which we were born, is not the Religion that can save us. If this Nature in all its most secret Workings is not renounced and denied, it matters not what we are, or what we have been doing, it signifies little in what Chair we have sat, whether in *Italy*, or *England*, how long we have been Preachers, how many heretics and Schismatics we have opposed, or how many Books we have written in Defence of Orthodoxy ; it is as vain to appeal to this, as to our having preached and *prophesied* in the Name of Christ, in the Streets and Fields : For if this Nature is allowed to live in us, all our good Works have been governed by it, they have sprung from

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Selfishness, are animated with Pride, and only serve to gratify our own natural Passions. When therefore the Doctor calls upon young Divines to have *more Grace and Sense* than to be driven from Thoughts of advancing themselves by *Preferments and rich Marriages*, he would do well to consider, how little short this is of calling them to break their very Baptismal Vow, of *renouncing the Poms and Vanities of the World*. And if young Candidates for Holy Orders, looking only at their Baptismal Vow, should be led into this Degree of Self-denial and Detachment from the World, does the Doctor think, that the Apostles, from whom this Baptismal Vow is descended, will rise up in the Day of Judgment, and condemn such gross Ignorance and Abuse of it? Does he think, that there are any departed Saints that will join with him in saying, that such a Spirit is a *Scandal and Reproach* to the Gospel? What more favourable Disposition could the Adversary of Mankind wish to see, either in young or old Divines, than a wanting and desiring to have Figure in the World, either by Preferments or rich Marriages? Would he find it difficult to enter into those Hearts, where the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life had thus entered? Or would he look upon such as but half fitted for him, in Comparison of those who entered into holy Orders in a Spirit of Self-denial, and Renunciation of the Poms and Vanities of the World? Does the Doctor think that these gross Instances of worldly Ambition have no Affinity with those Poms and Vanities, which must be renounced in Baptism?

John the Baptist was but the Preparer of the Way for evangelical Purity of Life; but does the Doctor think that if the *Baptist* was now to come amongst us, as some have thought he will come again before the End of the Church, that he would look at Things as the Doctor does, that he would see such Perfections and such Corruptions, such Orthodoxy and such Enthusiasm as the Doctor sees; that this *burning and shining Light* would see no *Generation of Vipers* but where the Doctor sees them; that he would preach nowhere but in Churches; that he would spare no Clergy, nor any Church, but that which is established in this Island; that he would complain of the Hardships of our Clergy, and the suffering Spirit which they are forced to practise, as the Doctor does; that he would plead for a priestly Liberty of coveting Preferments and rich Marriages, as the Doctor doth; that he would condemn the *Treatise upon Christian Perfection* amongst the *most pernicious Books* of the Age, that he would recommend *Wharton's Defence of Pluralities*, and the Doctor's Discourse of the *Folly, Sin, and Danger of being righteous over-much*, as the true Fruits of that Spirit which

first preached the Gospel? He that can believe this, must believe that the Baptist was come to confess the Errors and Mistakes of his first Appearance in the World.

I shall therefore proceed to tell young Divines, that a total Renunciation of the Spirit, Temper, and Inclinations of this Life, is the one Thing necessary to consecrate them to their holy Office; that as sure as the Church of Christ is not a Kingdom of this World, as sure as Jesus Christ came to deliver us from this evil World, as sure as he requires us to be born again from above, to hate even our own Life in this World, and to forsake all and follow him, so sure is it that no one has the *Call* of the Holy Spirit to the Ministry of the Gospel, nor the least Ground of hoping to be led and governed by it in his Ministry, till he at least prays, desires, and heartily endeavours to have all that Disregard of worldly Prosperity, Figure, and Distinction, which the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the Maxims of the Gospel, and the Practice of the Apostles set before him. Till this Renunciation of the World is made, we cannot enter into the Ministry at its *own Door*, but, like Thieves and Robbers, climb over its Walls; and then it will be no Wonder if we do no more Good to the Church than Thieves do the House they break open and plunder. If a young Minister wants to act the Part, and have the Appearance of a fine Gentleman, to go on in the common Spirit of the World, to cover a secular Spirit with an ecclesiastic Garb, and make his Fortunes in the Church, he must be told, that it is much safer to be a *Publican* and a *Sinner*, than to be a *Trader* in spiritual Things; that he who with unsanctified Hands attends at the Altar, is further from the Kingdom of God, than he who has not yet made one Step towards it.

Covetousness is *Idolatry*; it is a heathenish, Anti-Christian Vice, though only trafficking in worldly Matters; but when it takes Possession of the Altar, and makes a Trade of the Mysteries of Salvation, and turns Godliness into Gain, it has a Blackness of Vice and Depravity which much exceeds that of the worldly Miser. The Spirit of an Ecclesiastic should be the Spirit of Heaven, knowing nothing of this World, but how to escape its Snares and Temptations, burning in the Love of God, and holding out Life and Direction to all that aspire after every Perfection of the Christian Life.

'Tis too commonly thought, that when a young Student has taken his Degree, and shown some Signs of a Genius for Learning, that he is well prepared to enter into the Service of the Church. But alas! all the Accomplishments of human Learning are but the Ornaments of the *Old Man*, which leave the Soul in its Slavery to Sin, full of all the Disorders and

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Corruptions of the fallen Nature, and under the Blindness and Perverseness of some of its Passions. If it were not thus, how could the Errors of all Churches have the *greatest* Scholars for their *Champions*? All the learned Catholic World is amazed at the Prejudice, the Blindness, the Perverseness, the Partiality, the Weakness, the Sophistry, the Unfairness of *Protestant Critics*. All the Protestant World is in the same Degree of Wonder at the same Disorders in *Catholic Disputants*. Is not this a Demonstration of the *Nature, Power, and Place* of human Learning? Of its great Usefulness and Benefit to Religion? Does not this enough show, that it is the Effect and Offspring of the old Man, has his Nature and Qualities, dwells in him, and is governed by him? Is not this a Demonstration, that the *greatest Degrees* of historical, verbal, critical Knowledge are no real Hindrance of spiritual Blindness? Is not this a Demonstration, that human Learning is as different from Divine Light as Heaven is from Earth, the new from the old Man; and that considered in itself, it leaves us in our first State of Slavery to blind and corrupt Passions? Now nothing can deliver a Man from this State, but a Spirit born into him from above, a Light from the Spirit of God derived into his Soul, which alone can bring forth a *new Man* created in Christ Jesus. Nothing can make way for this new Birth from above, but a total Renunciation and Dying to all that we are by our natural Birth in this World. 'Tis only *this Separation* from Things below, that can make us Partakers of the Truth and Light that comes from above. Take away *all Selfishness* from the Papist and the Protestant, or let them both be dead to the Workings of this Spirit, and then they will be as fully agreed about Gospel Truths, as they are in the Form of a *Square* and a *Circle*. For nothing stands in the way of Divine Truths, or hinders its plain and full Entrance into us, but this *Partiality* or *Selfishness*, which adheres to everyone who does not make it his first Maxim, Prayer, and Endeavour to die to, and deny himself in all the Tempers and Inclinations of our fallen Nature. This Self-denial is the continual Doctrine of our Lord; it is by him made the Beginning of all Conversion to God, and he that cannot, or will not begin there, can make no Beginning of that Life, Light, and Salvation to which he is called in Christ Jesus: Therefore he that offers himself for holy Orders, without this Spirit of Self-denial, is a miserable Intruder into the Mysteries of Salvation; he only hardens and fixes himself in the Corruptions of his own Nature, and instead of becoming an Instrument of saving others, his very Office makes his own Salvation more dangerous.

I doubt not but some will here charge me with pleading for

Poverty in the Ministry, and with Enmity to that Maintenance which they have both from the Law and the Gospel. But this is so far from being true, that I wish every good Minister, whom the Spirit of God has called to his Office, and governs in it, had much more of this World's Goods than are needful for his own reasonable subsistence; because it is certain, that such a one's Money would all be put into the *Poor's Bag*, and he would as gladly and liberally administer to their temporal as to their spiritual Necessities. I write against nothing but *Avarice, Selfishness, Pride, and Ambition*, and the making the Provisions of the Church *subservient* to these Tempers. A Provision arising from the Gospel, is *consecrated* by the Gospel, and is profaned by being touched and used by a worldly Spirit. And he who turns this Provision of the Gospel into a Support and Gratification of worldly Passions, sins against the Nature and Law of the Gospel more than he that pays his Tithes with Reluctance.

I can easily believe there are Clergy in this Land, who labour in the Gospel, without having a sufficient Subsistence from it; but if much of this Evil was to be charged upon *Pluralities, Commendams*, and such like spiritual Trading, there would be no Injustice in it. And if the inferior Clergy had their Labours only undervalued by the Laity, they would be in much better Condition than they are.

When it is complained by what shameful *Qualifications*, empty *Titles*, and unworthy Pretences, Numbers of Persons get *loaded and dignified* with Variety of Preferments; it is answered, in Excuse of this great Evil, That if Preferments might not be thus crowded together, great *Learning*, distinguished *Abilities*, and eminent *Labours* for the Service of Religion, must go unrewarded.

As this Answer is not fetched from the Gospel, or the Primitive Church, so I shall show, that it is a little supported by Reason. For if this great Learning is truly Gospel Learning, if this eminent Labour is truly pious Labour, what State of Life can so little want to be rewarded? How can Imagination itself place a Man more *above* the Thoughts and Desires of worldly Advancement? If such a one is full of the Light and Spirit of the Gospel, if his Labours have been like those of an Apostle, must he not like an Apostle be *dead* to the World? Can such a one look upon his Labour as a *Hardship*, because it has left him as *low*, and as far from the *Pomp* of the World as it found him? Can he repine because the Gospel has not proved a good *worldly Bargain* to him? If the Spirit of God has begun, and directed all his Labours, animated all his Studies and Designs, can such

a one think it hard, that he has not by such Labours purchased to himself a Share in the State and Pride of Human Life?

If by a *great Divine*, is only meant a Person well skilled in *Critical Contention*, who can artfully, plausibly, scholastically defend a Set of Notions, amongst which he happened to be born, and bred, such a Divine, I own, may be very *impatient*, and *much cooled* in his Zeal, unless he finds himself well rewarded; but if an eminent Divine is to be understood in a Sense suitable to the Gospel, he is that *particular Person* that must needs have the greatest *Contempt and Dislike* of every Thing, that has but the *Appearance* of the Pomp and Vanity of this World in it. If therefore it was urged, that this Conjunction of Preferments and dignifying Rewards was necessary to bring *ambitious Scholars* into the Church, or to keep them in it, there would be some Sense, though no Gospel in the Pretence; but to talk of them as necessary to be the Rewards of eminent Piety and Apostolic Labour, is as absurd, as to say, that those who have truly put on Christ, who stand in the highest Degree of a renewed Nature, who best know and feel the Blessing of a mortified, heavenly Spirit, have less Reason to be *content with Food and Raiment*, than those who stand in a lower Degree of the Christian Life; 'tis saying, that a *Bishop*, because having most of the *Spirit and Office* of an Apostle in him, may well desire more of the *Pride and Figure* of this World, than the lower Clergy, who have less of the Apostolical Spirit and Perfection in them.

To want to stand in some Degree of worldly Figure, is the State of a *Babe* in the Christian Life, that hath hardly tasted the Milk of Evangelical Nourishment, and therefore can no way become those, who are to lead and compel others to the Perfection and Fulness of the Stature in Christ Jesus.

A *great Divine* is but a *cant* Expression, unless it signifies a Man *greatly advanced* in the Divine Life, whose Experience and Example is a Demonstration of the *Reality* of all the Graces and Virtues of the Gospel. No Divine has any more of the Gospel in him, than that which proves itself by the Spirit, Actions, and Form of his Life, the rest is but Hypocrisy, not Theology: If therefore Poverty of Spirit, a Disregard of worldly Figure, a total Self-denial is any Part of the Gospel, an eminent Divine, or one advanced in the Spirit and Life of Jesus, can have no Wish with regard to the Figure, Pride and Pomp of this Life, but to be placed out of every Appearance of it: And if the first and highest in Divine Knowledge are not the foremost in Poverty of Spirit, and the outward Humility of Christ and his Apostles; if eminent Divines want and desire to have a Dignity of worldly Figure, to have Respect by any other Means than by

the Divine Virtues and Graces of an Evangelical Spirit and Conversation, and are not content with all the Contempt that such a Life can expose them to, they may be *great Scholars*, but they are *little Divines*, and must be thought to be much wanting in that which is the chief Part of the Ministers of Jesus Christ. But to proceed :

The next Thing I said to the young Clergy, was this ; ‘ Consider yourselves *merely* as the Messengers of God, that are sent ‘ into the World *solely* on his Errand ; and think it Happiness ‘ enough that you are called to the same Business for which the ‘ Son of God was born into the World,’ p. 81.

Now, I thought what I *here* said, was as unexceptionable, as pious, as unfit to be condemned by a Professor of Christian Theology, as if I had only recommended the loving of God with all our Heart and Soul, and Mind and Strength ; and that if any Clergyman disliked it, he would be forced to keep his Dislike to himself : But the Doctor is very open in his Indignation at it ; the same Answer, he says, is to be given here, as before, *viz.*, ‘ that it is false Doctrine, tending to the Scandal and ‘ Reproach of the Christian Religion.’

Our Blessed Lord, when he sent the first Preachers of the Gospel into the World, said unto them, ‘ As my Father hath sent ‘ me, so send I you—go ye and teach all Nations—and lo ‘ I am with you to the End of the World.’ Now let it be supposed, that these first Preachers of the Gospel fully believed, that from the Time of their Appointment to this high Office, they *were to consider themselves merely as the Messengers of God, sent into the World solely on his Errand*, and that *it was Happiness enough for them to be called to that Business*, for which the Son of God was born into the World ; if they had this Belief, what follows ? Why, according to the Doctor, it follows, that they set out from the very first in one of the greatest Errors, had mistaken the Nature and Intent of their Mission, and had gone into the World upon a Principle that *was false* in itself, and *scandalous* and *reproachful* to the Christian Religion.

But if this Belief is not to be condemned in the first Clergy, as a false Opinion of their Office, scandalous and reproachful to the Christian Religion, I desire to know why those Clergy, who claim their Succession from the first, and expect the Presence of Christ in and with their Ministry, are not to be called upon to be of the same Spirit and Belief with the first of their Order ; or how it can be a Scandal to the Gospel, for the modern Clergy to be as wholly devoted to the Service of God, as the Apostles were : Surely there is something so extravagant in the Doctor’s Condemnation of the Advice here given to young Divines, as

must shock even the common Reader; and if it could be supposed, that there are others amongst the learned Clergy, who are in this like minded with the Doctor, and glad to see this Advice condemned in this manner, if it could be supposed, that there are not Numbers amongst them of Rank and Eminence that want and desire to bear their Testimony against it, have we not too much Reason to fear that, which God threatened to the Angel of the Church at *Ephesus*, namely, *the Removal of our Candlestick out of its Place?*

The Doctor sets it out as an extraordinary Presumption in *such a Man* as I am, to pretend to give advice to young Divines, when it is so sufficiently done already by the 'Offices of our Church, the Charges, Instructions and Exhortations of our Bishops at their Visitation, and so many excellent Ordination 'and Visitation Sermons,' p. 87. Now, granting the Plenty and Excellency of all these, yet I have some hope, that my Presumption may be found to be only like that of the *poor Widow*, who after so many rich Oblations of great People, *presumed* to put her little *Mite* into the Treasury. And if it be true, that the Things here suggested by me, are only such as have been already fully set forth by so many great Bishops and excellent Preachers, how will the Doctor come off for condemning it, as false Doctrine, scandalous, and *reproachful* to the Christian Religion?

Dr. *Trapp* gives a Reason for his condemning this Advice, which is thus expressed: 'It is,' says he, 'false to say, that Clergymen ought to mind nothing, in any Degree, but their Profession and Duty, as Clergymen; they are Husbands, Parents, Men, as well as Clergymen, and must in some measure 'be concerned in the Affairs of the World,' p. 88.

Part of this I own to be very true, *viz.*, that they are Men, and have the Wants of Human Nature which must be supplied; and for a full Proof of this, the Doctor might have justly appealed to *St. Paul*, who, though miraculously called to be an Apostle, and separated from the World to be *merely* a Messenger and Apostle of Jesus Christ; yet, after this high Apostleship, worked at his *Trade*, and often spent some Part of the Day and the Night in making Tents: Therefore, if all those whom I have exhorted to consider themselves as so highly set apart for the sole Service of God, should show such a Degree of worldly Care as *St. Paul* did, when he worked at his Trade, they might yet justly be said to act suitably to their Station, as the Ministers of God, that are wholly devoted to his Service; for if they should refuse to live, how could it be their Desire to live wholly to the Service of God; or, who can say that *St. Paul* departed from his Character, as a Minister of God, when he laboured with his own Hands,

that he might gloriously and freely preach the Gospel? For it was for the Sake of the Gospel, to promote and recommend the Gospel, to make his Preaching the more successful; it was to show that he had fully renounced the World, desired nothing from it, but for the Glory and Love of God, would preach Salvation *freely* to the World: And thus have all the Ministers of the Gospel an Example in *St. Paul*, how they may make their *Care* of a Livelihood a *Part* of their Service to God.

But when the Doctor says, that Clergymen are *Husbands* and *Parents*, I must object a little; because no Scripture, or Antiquity shows me, that these Characters must belong to a Preacher of the Gospel; and therefore, when a Clergyman excuses himself from any Heights of the Ministerial Service, by saying, *he has married a Wife*, and *therefore cannot come up to them*; it seems to be no better an Excuse, than if he had said, *he had hired a Farm*, or *bought five Yoke of Oxen*.

I know very well, that the *Reformation* has allowed Priests and Bishops not only to look out for Wives, but to have as many as they please, one after another: But this is only to be considered as a *bare Allowance*, and perhaps granted upon such a Motive, as *Moses* of old made one to the *Jews*, for the *Hardness of their Hearts*, though *from the Beginning it was not so*; and therefore when *Elogiums* are sometimes made from the *Pulpit* on this Matter, I think they had better been spared; an Allowance granted to Weakness, is but an indifferent Subject to be made a Matter of Glory.

The Doctor should also have observed, that my Address was made to the young Clergy, and such as are only upon entering into holy Orders, *nine* in ten of which, may be supposed to be neither *Husbands* nor *Fathers*. He should also have remembered that our *Universities* are full of Clergy, who are obliged to live *unmarried*, that they may have proper *Leisure* and *Freedom* to attend their Studies without Impediment from worldly Cares. And therefore if I pointed at such a Dedication of the Clergy to the Service of God, as *Husbands* and *Fathers* cannot enter into, yet the Matter is not blamable, because there are so many that have not yet entered into this State of Subjection to the World, but are at Liberty to devote themselves wholly to the Service of the Gospel. And therefore if to such as these, I can so represent the Weight, the Duties, the heavenly Nature of the Priesthood, as to prevent or extinguish in them all Thoughts and Desires of being thus married to the World, what hurt have I done them, or the married Clergy, or the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Virginity or *Celibacy*, when entered into from a Principle of

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divine Love, from a Heart burning with the Desire of living *wholly* and *solely* to God, is a State that gives Wings to all our Endeavours, and truly fits the Soul for the highest Growth of every heavenly Virtue: And if he that is consecrated to the Service of the Altar, desires not to keep his Heart from carnal Love; if he feels not such an Ascent of his Soul towards Heaven, as to have no Wish, but that his *whole Body, Soul, and Spirit*, may be presented to God in its utmost Degree of Purity, he must be said to have his Lamp *much less* kindled, than many of the Laity, both *Men* and *Women* have had, in all Ages of the Church. Custom and common Practice has too great a Power over our Judgments, and reconciles us to any Thing; but if a Christian, who lived when Christianity was in its Glory, when the first *Apologists* for it, appealed to the Numbers of *both Sexes*, devoted to the Chastity of the single Life, as an *invincible Proof* of the Power, and Divinity of the Gospel; if a Christian of those Days was now to come into the World, he must needs be much more shocked at Reverend Doctors in Sacerdotal Robes, *making Love* to Women, than at seeing a *Monk* in his *Cell*, *kissing* a wooden Crucifix.

The Knowledge and Love of the Virgin State began with Christianity, when the Nature of our Corruption, and the Nature of our Redemption were so fully discovered by the Light of the Gospel. Then it was, that a new Degree of heavenly Love was kindled in the human Nature, and brought forth a State of Life that had not been desired, till the Son of the Virgin came into the World. *John* the *Baptist* may be looked upon as the Beginner of the Gospel Dispensation; this *burning and shining Light* was in his Person, the Figure of *Judaism* ending in Christianity. In his outward Birth and State he was a *Jew*, in his inward Spirit and Character he belonged to the Gospel. He came out of the Wilderness burning and shining, to preach the Kingdom of Heaven *at Hand*. This may show us that Heat and Light from above, kindled in a State of great Self-denial are necessary to make us able Ministers of the Gospel; and that if we pretend to the Ministry with these Qualifications, and come only burning and shining with the Spirit of this World, we are only as well fitted to hinder, as the Baptist was to prepare the Way to the Kingdom of Heaven. Look at this great Saint, all ye that desire to preach the Gospel. He came forth in the highest Degrees of *Mortification* and *Chastity* of Life. But why did he so come? It was to show the World that these two great Virtues must form the Spirit of every Preacher of the Gospel. His Character does not call you to a Wilderness beyond *Jordan*, or to be clothed with Camels' Hair, &c. Such

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Circumstances are particular to himself; but it calls you to his inward Spirit of Self-denial, to stand in his State of Death to the World, and all carnal Love, if you would not only preach, but prove the Perfection of the Gospel: For if the *Baptist* was to be thus dead to the Flesh and the World, that he might only preach thus much, that the Kingdom of heaven *was at Hand*; can a less Self-denial be required of those, who are to preach that which is much more, namely, that the Kingdom of Heaven *is come*?

Now if this holy *Baptist*, when he came to *Jerusalem*, and had preached awhile upon Penitence, and the Kingdom of Heaven *at hand*, had made an Offering of his Heart to some fine *young Lady of great Accomplishments*, had not this put an End to all that was burning and shining in his Character? And if those Clergy who date their Mission from Jesus Christ himself, who claim being sent by him as he was by his Father, to stand as his *Representatives*, applying the *Means and Mysteries* of Salvation to all that desire to be *born again* from above, if they, whether they be *Vicars, Rectors, Arch-Deacons, Deans, or Bishops*, should look upon their Office to be as *sacred*, and their Station as *high*, in the Kingdom of God, as the *Baptist's* was; if they should look upon *Love-Addresses* to the Sex, as *unbecoming*, as *foreign*, as *opposite* to their Character, as to the *Baptist's*; could anyone say, that they took too much upon them, or paid too great a Reverence to the Holiness and Purity of that Priesthood, which they derived from the very Person and Office of Jesus Christ?

Our blessed Lord improved upon these two Articles of Mortification and Chastity, and sets them before every Preacher of the Gospel in a yet fuller Light. It is needless to show how much he speaks of the Nature and Necessity of a total Self-denial; but what he says of the Virgin-Life, as to be chosen by those who are able to choose it, for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake, Matt. xix. 12, is more than a Volume of human Eloquence in Praise of it. What Wonder is it, if after this great Numbers both of Men and Women were found in the first Ages of the Church, that chose to know no Love, but that of God in a single Life?

St. Paul has done everything to hinder a Minister of Jesus Christ from entering into Marriage, except calling it a sinful State, when he says: 'He that is married, careth for the Things 'of the World, how he may please his Wife;' and how could he more powerfully press the Virgin Life upon the Clergy, than when he says, 'He that is unmarried, careth for the Things that 'belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord'? Now, who would imagine, that after this Determination of the Matter, by

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so great an Apostle, there should be any need of Church Authority to restrain anyone in Holy Orders, from seeking after a Wife? Yet it must be supposed, that even in the primitive Church there was some Fear at least, that such a Restraint would soon be needful; because the twenty-seventh *Apostolical Canon* orders, that none amongst the Clergy be permitted to *enter* into Wedlock, except those, who have no higher an Office in the Church, than that of mere *Singers* and *Readers*.

When our Blessed Lord sent the first Preachers of the Gospel into the World, he took them from amongst *married Men, Fishermen, Publicans, and Tentmakers*; and there was no more Reason to look upon a Person as unfit to be an Apostle, because he had a Wife, than because he had a Trade: And therefore, St. *Paul* does not tell *Timothy* and *Titus* to ordain no married Person, for then no Elders could have been ordained in the Church, but he only enjoins them to lay Hands only on such as were in the most perfect Condition of the married Life, who had been the Husbands but of one Wife, and whose whole Family was a *Proof* of their Wisdom and Piety.

Hence it was, that the primitive Church made so great a Difference between a married Clergyman, and a Clergyman that married; the former was allowed for the Reasons above-mentioned, but the latter always censured as a thing *highly reproachful*, as a departing from that Self-denial, Devotion and Consecration to God, in which everyone in Holy Orders ought to live: But when Christianity had breathed a while in the World, there soon became less Occasion to ordain Persons that were married; for the *Apologists* appeal to the Numbers of both Sexes consecrated to God in a Virgin Life, as one great Proof of the Divinity of the Christian Religion. But when such Arguments as these were used, to set forth the Glory of the Gospel, need anyone be told, that it must have been *highly shameful* in those Days, for a Priest of such a Religion, to be *looking out* for a Wife? There is scarce a *Saint*, or *eminent* Father of the first Ages, who did not write set Discourses, and preach entire Homilies in Praise of this Virgin Perfection of Life; but surely this was enough telling the World, that *that Order* of Men who officiated in the Mysteries of this Divine Religion, and were Teachers of its Perfection, were Persons devoted to God in a Holy Virginity of Life: And if it be asked, why amongst all our modern fine Sermons, we have none upon the *Perfection and Advantage* of a holy Virginity; the Reason can be only this, because our Priests and Bishops marry as often, as the Common People of the World. In the Primitive Church, if a *Subdeacon*

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married a *Widow*, he was degraded from his Office; and the Reason was, because he who tempted a Woman to marry a *second Time*, was looked upon to be a Corrupter of Human Nature: These were the Sentiments of the Church, when it might be truly called the Spouse of Jesus Christ.

I shall conclude this Matter with a Passage taken from the 'Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life'; it is a Quotation from the great and learned *Eusebius*, who lived at the time of the first *general Council*, when the Faith of our *Nicene Creed* was established: His Words are these, 'There hath been, *saith he*, 'instituted in the Church of Christ, *two ways* or *Manners* of 'Living; the *one* raised above the ordinary State of Nature, 'and *common Ways* of Living, rejects *Wedlock*, *Possessions*, and 'Worldly Goods, and being wholly separated and removed from 'the ordinary Conversation of Common Life, is appropriated 'and devoted solely to the Worship and Service of God, through 'an *exceeding Degree* of *heavenly Love*: They who are of this 'Order of People, seem dead to the Life of this World, and 'having their *Bodies* only upon Earth, are in their *Minds* and 'Contemplations dwelling in Heaven; from whence, like so many 'heavenly Inhabitants, they look down upon Human Life, 'making *Intercessions* and *Oblations* for the whole Race of Man- 'kind; and this, not with the Blood of Beasts, or the Fat, or 'Smoke and burning of Bodies, but with the *highest Exercises* 'of true Piety, with cleansed and purified Hearts, and with a 'whole Form of Life strictly devoted to Virtue: These are their 'Sacrifices, which they are continually offering unto God, and 'implore his Mercy and Favour for themselves and their fellow 'Creatures. Christianity receives *this* as the perfect Manner of 'Life.

'The *other* is of a *lower Form*, and suiting itself more to the 'Condition of Human Nature, admits of *chaste Wedlock*, the 'Care of Children and Families, of Trade and Business, and 'goes through all the Employments of Life, under a Sense of 'Piety and Fear of God: Now, they who have chosen this 'Manner of Life, have their set Times for *Retirement* and '*Spiritual Exercises*, and particular Days are set apart for their 'hearing and learning the Word of God: And *this Order* of 'People are considered as in the *second State* of Piety.* Here you see the Perfection of the Christian Life plainly set out, and how it was, that Numbers of private Persons, Men and Women, who had no Share in the Ecclesiastical Office, yet, by this Perfection of Life, made themselves *holy and heavenly Intercessors*

* *Serious Call, &c.*, page 134.

for the whole Race of Mankind. Now, are we not here obliged to suppose, that in this Father's Days, the Clergy were in *this Number* of People, that were thus heavenly in the *whole Form* of their Life, thus *devoted* to God and the *Edification* of the Church, by embracing the perfect Life of Christianity? If they were not, do they not stand plainly condemned by the Religion of the Gospel, since this Father assures us, that *Christianity held this to be the perfect Manner of Life*? I shall only add thus much here, that till such a *Degree* of heavenly Love, such a *Sense* of the Purity, Holiness and heavenly Nature of the sacred Calling, till such a *Desire* of Perfection is awakened in the Clergy, as shuts out all *carnal* Love and *worldly* Tempers from their Hearts, they cannot be such *Priests* and *Intercessors* with God, such *Patterns* of Purity and Holiness, such *Kindlers* of Divine Love and heavenly Desires amongst Men, as the Nature of their Office both intends and requires of them.

If a *Candidate* for Holy Orders dares not make this *total Donation* of himself to God, to be an Instrument of his good Pleasure only in the Service of the Gospel, if it is not the real State of his Heart, to wish nothing for himself in this World, but the most *perfect* Purification of his Nature, the *highest* Advancement in all Divine Virtues; if he desires anything in and by his Office, but a *Concurrence* with Jesus Christ in the Salvation of Souls; if he has *any Reserves* of Self-seeking, or Self-advancement in the World, any fleshly Passions which he hopes to make consistent with the Duties of his Profession; if he is not separated in *Will* and *Desire* from all that is not God, and the Service of God, he must be said to want the best Proofs of his being called by the Holy Ghost.

Dr. *Trapp's* violent Condemnation of what I said to the young Clergy, and Candidates for Holy Orders, made it necessary for me to enter thus far into this subject. If anything that I have said to these Persons, concerning the Excellency, the Advantage, the Purity, the Necessity of a Virgin Life, in order to their own Perfection, and the full Edification of the Church, gives Offence to any of the married Clergy, it can only be to those, who don't wish to see the Church in a better State, than that, in which they found it; and to such there need no Apology be made.

But to turn to another Matter; I had said, that 'Salvation wholly consists in the Incarnation of the Son of God in the Soul or Life of Man; that that which was *done* and *born* in the *Virgin Mary*, must be done, and born in us: As our Sin and Death is *Adam in us*, so our Life and Salvation is *Christ in us*— As we are earthly, corrupt Men, by having the Nature and Life

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'of *Adam* the first propagated in us, so we must become new and 'heavenly Men, by having the Life and Nature of *Adam* the 'second regenerated in us: But if we are to be like him in 'Nature, as we are like to *Adam* in Nature, then there is an 'absolute Necessity, that *that* which was *done* and *born* in the 'Virgin *Mary*, be also by the same Power of the Holy Ghost, 'done and *born* in us. The Mystery of Christ's Birth must be 'the Mystery of our Birth, we cannot be his Sons but by having 'the Birth of his Life derived into us: The new Paradaisaical Man 'must be brought forth in the same Manner in every *individual* 'Person. That which brought forth this *Holy Birth* in the first '*Adam* at his Creation, and in the second *Adam* in the Virgin '*Mary*, *that alone* can bring it forth in any one of their Offspring.* Now, there seems to be nothing in all this, but what is easily to be apprehended, and fully believed by everyone, that knows anything of the Christian Life; but the Doctor makes *two Replies* to this Doctrine: The first is this, 'Were such Words,' says he, 'ever heard amongst Christians before?† Yes, good Sir, they have often been heard before, by such as *have Ears to hear*; for they are the very Words which Christ, and his Apostles have as plainly spoken, as they have spoken any one Article of the Apostles' Creed: They are only as different from the Words of Christ and his Apostles, as the *English* Words of the Bible, are different from those *Greek* Words, in which the Gospels were written. When the Scripture saith, that Christ must be *formed* in us, doth it not say, that Christ must be born, or become incarnate to us? When it saith, Christ was born of the Virgin *Mary*, does it not say, that Christ was incarnate of the Virgin *Mary*? Or is there anything to fright a learned Divine, who has for forty Years been told, that Christ must be *formed in us*, *revealed in us*, that he must *put on* Christ, to be told, that Christ must *become incarnate* in us, that he must bring forth himself in us, and have *such a Birth* in our Soul and Life, as he had in the Virgin *Mary*? For wherever he is born, must he not be born in the *same Manner*? Was it not the *Word* of God, that by the Power of the Holy Ghost became Man in the Virgin *Mary*? And is there any Thing in this Birth on this wise that is inconsistent with the Birth of our new Man in Christ Jesus? Must not the *same Word* of God, by the *same Operation* of the Holy Spirit, bring forth that in us, which is the new Man in Christ Jesus, or Christ formed in us? When our Lord saith, that we must be born again from Above, of the Word of God, is it more or less than saying, that *that* Word which was born in the Virgin

* *Serious Answer*, page 41.

† *Reply*, page 47.

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Mary, and was incarnate in her, must be *born* and *incarnate* in us? When the Apostle saith, that we must be born again of the *incorruptible Seed of the Word*, is not this expressly saying, that *that must be done and born in us*, which was done and born in the *Virgin Mary*? If he says, that Christ must be formed in us, does he not say, that he must have such a Birth and Form in us, as he had in the *Virgin Mary*; only with this Difference, that in the Birth of Christ, the *Fulness* of the Deity, or eternal Word became Man, and dwelt personally in him; but in us, only a *Spark*, or *Seed* of the *Word* is formed and raised up into a new, heavenly Man. Is there now any Thing in all this, but the most comfortable, substantial Part of our Redemption set out in the plainest Words of Scripture? Reject this Doctrine, say that you cannot, you will not, you desire not to have Christ *thus born and formed* in you, and then you reject all that Salvation, which the *Word* of God, born of a *Virgin*, hath brought into the World. For the Scripture is absolutely plain in telling us, that lost Man cannot be made alive again unto God, but solely by this way, by being born again of the *Word* and holy *Spirit* of God; if therefore we desire not, but reject *such a Birth*, as was brought forth by the *Word* and holy *Spirit* of God in the *Virgin Mary*; do we not plainly reject *that Birth* in which all our Salvation consists? And therefore to say that *that must be done and born* in us, which was done and born in the *Virgin Mary*, is as plain, as scriptural, as to say, that we must be born again of the *Word* and holy *Spirit* of God. And on this Ground it is, that *Christ in us*, is said to be our *Hope of Glory*.—And that the *Kingdom of Heaven is within us*—that we must be in Christ new Creatures—that we must put on Christ—that he must be formed in us, revealed, manifested in us—that he is our Life—that he brings us forth out of himself, as the Vine does its Branches—that unless we eat his Flesh and drink his Blood we have no Life in us. These, and many other the like Sayings of Scripture, which are the strongest, deepest Expressions of the Nature and Manner of our Salvation, are all grounded on this Truth, *viz.*, That the Mystery of Christ's Birth is the Mystery of our New Birth; that *that must be done and born in us*, which was done and born in the *Virgin Mary*, namely a New Man brought forth in the Likeness of Christ, by a Birth from the *Word*, and holy *Spirit* of God.

But the Doctor has a *second Reply* to this Matter, which stands thus expressed. *Whether*, says he, *you consider the Divinity, or the Sense of this, could George Fox himself have outdone it?* p. 48. This Reply, considered in itself, might have its Place amongst those *algebraic Quantities*, that are some Degrees less

than nothing ; but with Regard to the Doctor's Purpose it has *something* in it, for it is an Appeal to *that* which is very powerful, which has suppressed many a good Truth ; it is an Appeal to *vulgar Prejudice*, and shows that the Doctor is not without his Expectations from that Quarter. And thus it is, that the *Catholic Artist* in his Country, plays a *Martin Luther*, when he wants to reproach *that*, which he knows not how to confute. What Degree of Sense, or Divinity *George Fox* was possessed of, I cannot pretend to say, having never read any of his Writings ; but if he has said any good and Divine Truths, I should be as well pleased in seeing them in his Books, as in any of the *Fathers* of the primitive Church. For as the Gospel requires me to be as glad to see, *Piety, Equity, strict Sobriety, and extensive Charity* in a *Jew, or a Gentile*, as in a Christian ; as it obliges me to look with Pleasure upon their Virtues, and be thankful to God, that such Persons have *so much* of true and sound Christianity in them ; so it cannot be an unchristian Spirit, to be as glad to see Truths in one Party of Christians, as in another ; and to look with Pleasure upon any good Doctrines, that are held by any Sect of Christian People, and be thankful to God, that they have so much of the genuine, saving Truths of the Gospel amongst them. For if we have no Anger or Complaint against those that are divided from us, but what proceeds from a Christian Fear, that what they *hold and practise* will not be so *beneficial* to them, as our Religion will be to us, must we not have the utmost *Readiness and Willingness* to find, own, and rejoice in those good Doctrines and Practices which they still retain and profess ? If a poor *Pilgrim*, under a Necessity of travelling a dangerous and difficult Road by himself, had through his *own Perverseness* lost the Use of a *Leg*, and the Sight of *one Eye*, could we be said to have any *charitable Concern* for his Perverseness and Misfortune, unless we were glad to see, that he had one good Leg, and one good Eye still left, and unless we hoped and desired they would bring him at last to his Journey's End. Now let every Part of the Church which takes itself to be *sound and good*, and is only angry at every other Part, because they have *lessened the Means* of their own Salvation ; let her but have thus much Charity in her Anger, and then she will be glad to see, in every perverse Division, something like the one *good Leg*, and the one *good Eye* of the Pilgrim, and which she will hope and wish may do them the same Good.

Selfishness and *Partiality* are very inhuman and base Qualities, even in the Things of this World, but in the Doctrines of Religion they are of a baser Nature. Now this is the *greatest Evil* that the Division of the Church has brought forth ; it raises in every Communion a *selfish, partial* Orthodoxy, which

consists in courageously defending all that it has, and condemning all that it has not. And thus every Champion is trained up in Defence of their *own Truth*, their *own Learning*, and their *own Church*, and he has the most Merit, the most Honour, who likes every Thing, defends every Thing amongst themselves, and leaves nothing uncensured in those that are of a different Communion. Now how can Truth, and Goodness, and Union, and Religion be more *struck at*, than by such Defenders of it? If you ask why the great Bishop of *Meaux* wrote so many learned Books against all Parts of the *Reformation*, it is because he was born in *France*, and bred up in the Bosom of *Mother Church*. Had he been born in *England*, had *Oxford*, or *Cambridge* been his *Alma Mater*, he might have rivalled our great Bishop *Stillfleet*, and would have wrote as many learned *Folios* against the Church of *Rome* as he has done. And yet I will venture to say, that if each Church could produce but one Man apiece that had the *Piety* of an Apostle, and the *impartial Love* of the first Christians, in the first Church at *Jerusalem*, that a Protestant and a *Papist* of this Stamp, would not want *half a Sheet* of Paper to hold their Articles of Union, nor be half an Hour before they were of one Religion. If therefore it should be said, that Churches are divided, estranged, and made unfriendly to one another, by a *Learning*, a *Logic*, a *History*, a *Criticism* in the Hands of *Partiality*, it would be saying that, which every particular Church too much proves to be true. Ask why even the best amongst the Catholics are very shy of owning the *Validity* of the Orders of our Church, it is because they are afraid of removing any *Oodium* from the Reformation? Ask why no Protestants anywhere touch upon the Benefit or Necessity of Celibacy in those, who are separated from worldly Business to preach the Gospel, 'tis because that would be seeming to *lessen* the Romish Error of not suffering Marriage in her Clergy? Ask why even the most worthy and pious amongst the Clergy of the established Church, are afraid to assert the Sufficiency of the Divine Light, the Necessity of seeking only to the Guidance and Inspiration of the holy Spirit, 'tis because the *Quakers*, who have broken off from the Church, have made this Doctrine their Corner Stone.

If we loved Truth as such; if we sought it for its own Sake; if we loved our Neighbour as ourselves; if we desired nothing by our Religion but to be acceptable to God; if we equally desired the Salvation of all Men; if we were afraid of Error only because of its hurtful Nature to us, and our Fellow-Churches, then nothing of this Spirit could have any Place in us.

There is therefore a *Catholic Spirit*, a *Communion of Saints* in the Love of God and all Goodness, which no one can learn from that which is called *Orthodoxy* in particular Churches, but is only to be had by a *total Dying* to all worldly Views, by a *pure Love* of God, and by such an *Unction* from above, as delivers the Mind from all *Selfishness*, and makes it love Truth and Goodness with an Equality of Affection in every Man, whether he be *Christian, Jew, or Gentile*. He that would obtain this Divine and Catholic Spirit in this disordered, divided State of Things, and live in a divided Part of the Church without partaking of its Division, must have these *three Truths* deeply fixed in his Mind: *First*, that universal Love, which gives the whole Strength of the Heart to God, and make us love every Man as we love ourselves, is the Noblest, the most Divine, the God-like State of the Soul, and is the utmost Perfection to which the most perfect Religion can raise us; and that no Religion does any Man any Good, but so far as it brings this Perfection of Love into him. This Truth will show us, that *true Orthodoxy* can nowhere be found, but in a pure disinterested Love of God, and our Neighbour. *Secondly*, That in the *present divided* State of the Church, Truth itself is torn and *divided asunder*; and that therefore he can be the only *true Catholic*, who has more of Truth, and less of Error, than is hedged in by any divided Part. This Truth will enable us to live in a divided Part, *unhurt* by its Division, and keep us in a true Liberty and Fitness to be edified and assisted by all the Good that we hear or see in any other Part of the Church. And thus uniting in Heart and Spirit with all that is *holy and good* in all Churches, we enter into the true *Communion of Saints*, and become real Members of the holy Catholic Church, though we are confined to the outward Worship of only one particular Part of it. It is thus, that the Angels, as ministering Spirits, assist, join, unite, and co-operate with every Thing that is holy and good, in every Division of Mankind. *Thirdly*, he must always have in Mind this great Truth, that it is the Glory of the Divine Justice to have no Respect of *Parties or Persons*, but to stand equally disposed to that which is right and wrong, as well in the *Jew* as in the *Gentile*. He therefore that would like as God likes, and condemn as God condemns, must have neither the *Eyes* of the *Papist* nor the *Protestant*; he must like no Truth the less because *Ignatius Loyola*, or *John Bunyan* were very zealous for it; nor have the less Aversion to any Error, because *Dr. Trapp* or *George Fox* had brought it forth. Now if this universal Love, and impartial Justice, is the Spirit which will judge the World at the last Day, how can this Spirit be *too soon*, or *too much* in

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us; Or what can do us more Hurt than that which is an *Hindrance* of it? When I was a young Scholar of the *University*, I heard a great *Religionist* say in my *Father's* House, that if he could believe the late *King of France* to be in Heaven, he could not tell how to wish to go thither himself. This was exceeding shocking to all that heard it: Yet *something* of this kind of Temper must be supposed to be more or less in those, who have, as a Point of *Orthodoxy*, worked themselves up into a hearty *Contempt* and *Hatred* of those that are divided from them. He that has been all his Life long used to look with great Abhorrence upon those whom he has called *superstitious Bigots, dreaming Visionaries, false Saints, canting Enthusiasts, &c.*, must naturally expect they will be treated by God as they have been by him; and if he had the *Keys* of the Kingdom of Heaven, such People would find it hard to get a Place in it. But it stands us greatly in Hand to get rid of this Temper *before* we die; for if nothing but *universal Love* can enter into the Kingdom of God, what can be more necessary for us, than to be full of this Love before we die?

We often hear of People of great *Zeal* and *Orthodoxy*, declaring on their *Death-beds* their strict Attachment to the Church of *England*, and making *solemn Protestations* against all other Churches; but how much better would it be, if such a Person was to say, 'In this *divided State* of Christendom, I must conform to some outwardly divided Part of it, and therefore I have chosen to live and die in outward Communion with the Church of *England*; fully believing, that if I worship God in *Spirit* and in *Truth* in this divided Part of the Church, I shall be as acceptable to him, as if I had been a faithful Member of the *one whole* Church, before it was broken into separate Parts.' But 'as I am now going out of this disordered Division into a *more universal State* of Things, as I am now falling into the Hands of the great Creator and Lover of *all Souls*; as I am going to the God of *all Churches*, to a Kingdom of *universal Love*, which must have its Inhabitants from *all People, Nations, and Languages* of the Earth; so in this Spirit of universal Love, I desire to perform my last Act of Communion in this divided Church, uniting and joining in Heart and Spirit with all that is *Christian, Holy, Good, and Acceptable* to God in all other Churches; praying, from the Bottom of my Soul, that every Church may have *its Saints*; that God's Kingdom may come, his Will be done in every Division of Christians and Men, and that *every Thing that hath Breath may praise the Lord.*'

Need anyone now be told of the superior Excellency of this

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Spirit, or its Fitness to be admitted into the Kingdom of universal Love? Need we any Proof that nothing but this *Catholic* Spirit will carry us *unhurt* by Schism, through all those Divisions which the Devil, the World, and fleshly Wisdom have brought into the Church? *Again*, We have often seen learned Protestants very zealous in pulling to Pieces the Lives of the Saints of the *Romish* Church, and casting all the Reproach and Ridicule they can, upon their wondrous Spirit; though the Lives of the Saints of the primitive Church, written by the Fathers of the greatest Name and Authority, are as fit for to be exposed in the same Manner. Now, whence does this proceed? Why, from a *secret Touch* of that Spirit which could not bear to have the late King of *France* in Heaven; it proceeds from a *partial, selfish* Orthodoxy, which cannot bear to hear, or own, that the Spirit and Blessing of God are so visible in a Church from which it is divided, and against which it has so much preached: But if a Person be of this Spirit, what does it signify *where* he has his outward Church? If a *Romish Priest* in the North of *England* could not bear the Splendour of a Life *so devoted* to God, so fruitful in all the Works of Piety and Goodness, as was that of the late Lady *Elizabeth Hastings*, if he should want to sully the Brightness of her Christian Graces, and prove her to have been no *Saint*, lest it should appear, that the Spirit of God was not *confined* to the *Romish* Church, would not such a Zeal show a worse Spirit, than that of *Superstition*, a greater Depravity of Heart, than the saying now and then an *Ave Mary*.

The more we believe, or know of the Corruptions and Hindrances of true Piety in the Church of *Rome*, the more we should rejoice to hear, that in every Age so many eminent Spirits, great Saints, have appeared in it, whom we should thankfully behold as so many *great Lights* hung out by God, to show the true Way to Heaven, as so many joyful Proofs that Christ is still present in that Church, as well as in other Churches, and that the Gates of Hell have not prevailed, or quite overcome it? Who that has the least Spark of Heaven in his Soul, can help thinking and rejoicing in this manner at the Appearance of a *St. Bernard*, a *Teresa*, a *Francis de Sales*, &c., in that Church? Who can help praising God, that her *invented Devotions*, *superstitious* Use of Images, *Invocation* of Saints, &c., have not so suppressed any of the Graces and Virtues of an Evangelical Perfection of Life, but that amongst *Cardinals*, *Jesuits*, *Priests*, *Friars*, *Monks* and *Nuns*, Numbers have been found, who seemed to live for no other End, but to give Glory to God and Edification to Men, and whose Writings have every Thing in them, that can guide the Soul out of the Corruption of this Life into the

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highest Union with God. And he who through a *partial Orthodoxy* is diverted from feeding in these green Pastures of Life, whose just Abhorrence of Jesuitical *Craft* and *worldly Policy* keeps him from knowing and reading the Works of an *Alvares du Pas*, a *Rodrigues*, a *Du Pont*, a *Guilloree*, a *Pere Surin*, and such like Jesuits, has a greater Loss than he can easily imagine: And if any Clergyman can read the Life of *Bartholomeus a Martyribis*, a *Spanish Archbishop*, who sat with great Influence at the very Council of *Trent*, without being edified by it, and desiring to read it again, I know not why he should like the Lives of the best of the Apostolical Fathers: And if any Protestant Bishop should read the *Stimulus Pastorum* wrote by this Popish Prelate, he must be forced to confess it to be a Book, that would have done Honour to the best Archbishop, that the Reformation has to boast of. O my God, how shall I unlock this Mystery of Things; in the Land of *Darkness*, overrun with *Superstition*, where Divine Worship seems to be all *Show* and *Ceremony*, there both amongst Priests and People, thou hast those, who are fired with the pure Love of thee, who renounce everything for thee, who are devoted wholly and solely to thee, who think of nothing, write of nothing, desire nothing but the Honour, and Praise, and Adoration that is due to thee, and who call all the World to the *Maxims* of the Gospel, the Holiness and Perfection of the Life of Christ. But in the Regions where *Light* is sprung up, whence *Superstition* is fled, where all that is outward in Religion seems to be *pruned, dressed,* and put in its *true Order*; there a cleansed *Shell*, a *whited Sepulchre*, seems too generally to cover a *dead Christianity*.

The Error of all Errors, and that which makes the blackest Charge against the *Romish Church*, is *Persecution*, a religious Sword drawn against the Liberty and Freedom of serving God according to our best Light, that is, against our *worshipping the Father in Spirit and in Truth*: This is the great *Whore*, the *Beast*, the *Dragon*, the *Antichrist*. Now, though this is the frightful Monster of that Church, yet, even here, who, except it be the Church of *England*, can throw the first Stone at her? Where must we look for a Church that has so renounced this *persecuting Beast*, as they have renounced the Use of *Incense*, the *Sprinklings* of Holy Water, or the *extreme Unction* of dying Persons? What Part of the Reformation abroad has not practised and defended Persecution? What Sect of Dissenters at home have not, in their Day of Power, dreadfully condemned *Toleration*?

When it shall please God to dispose the Hearts of all Princes in the Christian World entirely to destroy this *Antichristian*

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Beast, and leave all their Subjects in that religious Freedom which they have from God; then the *Light* of the Gospel, the *Benefit* of its Faith, the *Power* of its Ministers, the *Usefulness* of its Rites, the *Benediction* of its Sacraments will have proper *Time* and *Place* to show themselves; and that Religion which has the most of a *Divine Power* in it, whose *Offices* and *Services* do most good to the Heart, whose Ministers are most of all *devoted* to God, and have the *most Proof* of the Power and Presence of Christ with them, will become, as it ought to be, the most universal; and by this Destruction of the *Beast*, nothing but the Errors, Delusions, Corruptions and Fictions of every Religion, will be left in a helpless State. All that I have said on this Matter, has been occasioned by the Doctor's Appeal to *vulgar Prejudice*; and all that I have said is only to intimate this much, that the *greatest Evil* which the Division of the Church brings forth, is a *Sectarian, selfish Spirit*, that with the Orthodoxy of the *Old Jews*, would have God to be *only their God*, and themselves only, *his chosen People*. If therefore we would be true Christians of the *Catholic Church*, we must put off this *Selfishness* and *Partiality* of the carnal *Jew*, we must enter into a Catholic Affection for all Men, love the Spirit of the Gospel wherever we see it; not work ourselves up into an Abhorrence of a *George Fox*, or an *Ignatius Loyola*; but be equally glad of the Light of the Gospel wherever it shines, or from what Quarter it comes; and give the same Thanks and Praise to God for an *eminent Example* of Piety, wherever it appears, either in *Papist* or *Protestant*.

To return. Dr. *Trapp* supposing the World running into a Charity that would ruin Wife and Family, asks his charitable *Half-thinker* thus: 'Did you never hear that *Charity begins at home*? Did you never read that of *St. Paul*, If any provide 'not for his own, and especially those of his own House, he hath 'denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel.' The Doctor's Proverb I meddled not with, but the Text of *St. Paul* I rescued from his gross Misapplication of it. That Text has no more Relation to an *excessive Charity*, the Sin the Doctor was opposing, than to an *excessive Fasting*. The Apostle neither thought of this Sin in this Place, nor in any other Part of his Writings; nor does he ever give the smallest *Hint* of the Danger of falling into it. The one Thing in Question was this, whether poor Widows, who had near Relations, that could supply their Wants, should be maintained by the Charity of the Church: The Apostle determines the Matter thus; that if such Persons, who were thus able, did not *thus provide* for, that is, *supply* the Wants of their poor Kindred, they were so far from having the *Faith*

of Christians, that they wanted a *Goodness* that was to be found amongst Infidels : This is the whole of the Apostle's Doctrine in this Text. He speaks of *providing* for those of our own House or Family, in *no other* Sense, than as it signifies our *Charity* to them, when they fall into Distress : But the Doctor, either led away with, or *trusting* to the *Sound* of the *English Word*, *provide*, grafts all these following Errors upon this plain Text. When it is said, a Person has *provided* well for his Family, everyone supposes that he has *laid up well in Store*, or got an *Estate* to be divided amongst them for their future Subsistence, from *this Use* of the *English Word*, *provide*, in the Text, the Doctor would have it believed, that the Apostle teaches every Head of a Family to be carefully and continually laying up in Store, and making some fixed Provision for the future Maintenance of his Kindred. But the Apostle is as *infinitely distant* from this Thought or Direction, as from teaching them to get their *Cellars* well filled with strong Liquors : When he here says, *provide*, he says only this, Shut not your Eyes to the Wants of your poor Kindred, but provide them *with what* they have need of, and don't let them fall to the Charge of the Church. The Doctor's *second Error* is this ; that, according to this Text, a Christian ought not to *hinder* himself from thus laying up in Store for his Family, or leave them to live by their Labour and Industry, through an *Extent* of Charity to his poor Neighbours. Though the Apostle has not one single Syllable about this Matter ; and is as far from saying any Thing like it, as from saying, that a Christian, when he *makes a Feast*, should only invite his rich Kindred and Acquaintance. The one has as much of the Apostle and the Gospel for it, as the other. The Doctor's *third Error* is this ; that, according to this Text, he, who by a *daily, continual* Charity, has incapacitated himself to lay up in Store, a fixed Provision for the future Maintenance of his Family, is condemned by the Apostle, as *denying the Faith*, and *worse than an Infidel* : Though the Apostle speaks no more here of *such a Person*, or any more condemns him, than he speaks in the *Praise of Ananias and Saphira*, who kept back Part of the Price of the Land they had sold.

The Person here condemned, is not he, who through a *continual* Charity, or loving his Neighbour as himself, is *hindered* from laying up in Store ; not he, who, through a Christian Love of relieving the distressed Members of Christ, is content with helping his own Family to Food and Raiment, such a Person is not thought of, much less condemned by the Apostle ; but it is that Christian, who being *able*, is yet unwilling to *support* his near Relations, that are fallen into Poverty, but through a sordid

Selfishness, leaves them to be maintained by the Church ; this is the only Christian the Apostle here condemns, as having put off the Piety of the Gospel, and wanting even the Virtue of good-natured Infidels.

I said further, Had the Apostle known a *Parent* in his Days, who, through his *great Charity* for others, had reduced his own Family to a want of Relief, he would have been so far from rebuking him as an *half-thinking Fool*, or exposing him to others, as guilty of *Madness*, that he would have told them, that such a one had consecrated himself and Family to the Church, as the proper Objects of their Care. To which the Doctor gives this Answer, *This he affirms, and this I deny ; and as he produces no other Proof, so I give no other Answer*, p. 69. Had the Doctor said, as his Affirmation has no Sense in it, so there need be no Sense in my Denial of it, he had answered as well as he has here done. What I affirmed, did not consist, as the Doctor's *Denial* doth, only of *two Words* ; but was, a large Proposition that carried its *own Proof* along with it, because I said nothing of the Apostle, but what the Nature of the Thing obliged me to say of every sober Christian. For if any Christian could be supposed to want Compassion and Affection for such a Sufferer, from his *own Charity* to others, he must be such a one as the Apostle affirms to *have denied the Faith, and to be worse than an Infidel*. But to show the Doctor what I said, has its Proof from the common Voice of Christianity in the Apostle's Days, may sufficiently appear from the following Passage of St. *Clement*, who was a Companion and Fellow-labourer of the Apostle, and Bishop of no less a Church than that of *Rome*. 'We have 'known *many* amongst us, (says St. *Clement*) who have delivered 'themselves into Bonds and Slavery, that they might restore 'others to their Liberty ; *many* who have hired out themselves 'Servants unto others, that by their Wages they might feed and 'sustain them that wanted.'*

Will the Doctor now say, that this is no Proof of that which I affirmed of the Apostle, that he would have had a Love for those who were become Sufferers by their own Charity to others ? Does not this Apostolical Bishop make it his Boast, and the Glory of Christianity ; not that they had some, but *many* such amongst them ?

It was not only in the first Church at *Jerusalem*, that the Christians had all things common. For St. *Barnabas* writing to some converted *Jews*, teaches them to have all Things common, to call nothing their own in this World, because they were called

* 1 Epist. ad Cor.

to the common Enjoyment of the Things of Eternity. 'Communicabis in omnibus rebus proximo tuo; nihil dices quicquam tibi proprium, si enim Communicatis in Vicem, in bonis, incorruptibilibus, quanto magis in corruptibilibus.*'

An Age after this, *Justin Martyr* thus glories of the Power of the Gospel-Faith; 'We,' says he, 'who before were become Christians, loved our Wealth and Possessions above all Things, now give up all Property in them, that they may be in common for all that want them. Qui Pecuniarum & Possessionum Fructus ac Proventus præ rebus omnibus adamabamus, nunc etiam quæ habemus in Commune conferimus, & cum indigentibus quibuscunque communicamus.†' What a *lean, heathenish* Figure must the Doctor's Proverb of *Charity beginning at home*, have made in the Days of *St. Barnabas, Clement, or Justin Martyr*? Or who durst then have made such a Use of the Text of *St. Paul*, as the Doctor has done, or coupled it with such a Proverb? Were any of these first Saints to judge of this Matter, the Doctor might, for aught I know, have a worse *Reprimand* from them for so doing, than if he had only coupled *Cardinals with Pluralists*.

In order to show the Doctor that he was very unseasonably preaching against the *Sin* and *Folly* of an excessive Charity, when yet every Part of the Church wanted to be shown how they were fallen from the Gospel-degree of it, I set before him an *imaginary* Bishop of *Winchester*, yet drawn according to the Model of the Holy Bishops of the first Ages. I supposed this Bishop so born again from Above, so filled with the Spirit of Jesus Christ, that he looked upon all the *Revenues* of his *See*, with no other Eyes, than as our Saviour looked at that *Bag* that was carried along with him by his Disciples, as *so much* for his own Necessities, and the Necessities of others. I supposed that in this Spirit, he so expended his yearly Income, that he chose to bring up his Children as much *Strangers* to all worldly Figure, and in as *low a State* of Labour as that to which our Lord and his Apostles had been used. I supposed, that by a Piety of Life and Conversation, equal to this exalted Charity, he had *instilled* such a heavenly Spirit into his Wife and Children, as made them *highly thankful* for their Condition, and full of Praise to God for the Blessing of such a *Relation*. *Dr. Trapp*, though an ancient Divine, seems to start back with Fright, at the *Sight* of this Apostolical Bishop, and supposes, that if such a Monster of a Man was now to get into a Bishopric, he must needs make his Children extraordinary wicked, fill them with Abhorrence of his

* Epist. Bar. N. 10.

† 2 Apol.

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Memory, and spread Infidelity in the World, by making Christianity a Jest to Infidels, p. 71.

‘I say,’ says the Doctor, *very clearly and plainly*, that ‘such a Bishop must be a Madman,’ p. 70. Now, if the Doctor will prove from the Scriptures this Bishop to be a *Madman*, it must be for the following Reasons; *First*, because he had so *mean a Spirit*, as to suffer the Son of a *Bishop* to work under a *Carpenter*, as the Redeemer of Mankind had done. *Secondly*, because he taught himself and his Family to believe *that* which St. Paul believed, that ‘having Food and Raiment, we ought to be there-
‘with content.’ *Thirdly*, because he came up to the very Letter of the great Commandment, of ‘loving our Neighbour as our-
‘selves.’ *Fourthly*, because he seemed to imitate the Spirit of the first Christians at *Jerusalem*, who accounted ‘nothing to be
‘their own that they possessed.’ *Fifthly*, because he had turned himself and Family from all the Vanity of this World, the *Lust* of the *Flesh*, the *Lust* of the *Eyes*, and the *Pride of Life*. *Sixthly*, because he seemed to have *this* of the Apostle *fixed* in his mind. ‘He that saith, he abideth in Christ, ought so to walk,
‘as he walked.’ *Seventhly*, because his Life was fashioned according to this Doctrine of the Holy Jesus, ‘Learn of me, for
‘I am meek, and lowly of Heart: I am among you, as he that
‘serveth: Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your
‘Minister; even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered
‘unto, but to minister.’ For it may be said with the greatest Certainty, that if the Doctor will have *any Proof* from the Scripture of the Madness of this Bishop, it must be as absurd as the Reasons here alleged.

Come we now to consider this Bishop according to the Spirit, Practice and Laws of the Church in all Ages. Anyone versed ever so little in the History of the Church, must see at the first Sight, that this *supposed* Bishop is a *true Copy* of the first Apostolical Fathers. And if this Bishop was to be accounted a Madman, because of the *Manner* of his Life, we must come down several Ages after *Constantine*, to the *Mitre* and *Triple Crown*, before we could find a Bishop in *his Senses*. The *Clements*, the *Polycarps*, the *Ignatius's*, the *Irenæus's*, the *Cyprians*, the *Gregorys*, the *Basils*, the *Ambroses*, the *Chrystostoms*, the *Hillarys*, the *Augustins*, and a Number that have long graced our *Calendars*, as Saints, must take their Place among *Bedlamites*; for they were all of them to a *Tittle*, the very Man I have supposed at *Winchester*. They considered every *Penny* that was brought in by the Gospel, as a *Provision for the Poor*, and themselves as only entitled to their common Share out of it. They durst no more raise any of their Relations

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into a *Splendour* of Life, or give them any *Figure* from the Revenues of the Church, than commit *Sacrilege*. They gloried as much in their own *strict* Poverty and Want of worldly *Figure*, as in their having *totally* renounced Idols.

But we have much more than primitive Example for our Bishop of *Winchester*; the Doctrine and Laws of the Church have unanimously from Age to Age, to the very Council of *Trent*, required every Bishop to be of the same Spirit of which we have supposed him. The Church, both by the Doctrine of Fathers, and the Canons of Councils constantly maintains; *First*, that the Clergy are not *Proprietors*, but barely *Stewards* of the Benefices they enjoy; having them for no other End, but for their own necessary, frugal Subsistence, and the Relief of the Poor. *Secondly*, that a Clergyman using his Benefice for his *own Indulgence*, or the enriching his *own Family*, is guilty of *Sacrilege*, and is a Robber and Murderer of the Poor. *Thirdly*, that if a Clergyman has a reasonable Subsistence of his own, and is not in the *State* of the Poor, that then, let his Benefice be what it will, he has no Right to use any Part of it for himself, nor for *his Kindred*, unless they be fit to be considered amongst those Poor that are to be relieved by the Church. *Fourthly*, that every Bishop and Clergyman is to live in an humble, lowly, frugal, outward State of Life, seeking for no Honour or Dignity in the World, but that which arises from the Distinction and Lustre of his Virtues. *Fifthly*, that a *Beneficed* Clergyman using the Goods of the Church for his own Indulgence, or raising Fortunes for his Children, or their expensive Education, is sacrilegious, and a Robber of the Poor. *Sixthly*, that every Clergyman is to die out of the Church as *poor* as he entered into it. *Seventhly*, that a Clergyman *dying*, cannot *leave* or *bequeath* any Thing to his Children or Friends, but *barely* that which he had *independently* of the Church.*

* (a) Nihil ecclesia nisi Fidem possidet—Possessio ecclesia est Egenorum sumptus, *Amb. Ep.* 31. (b) Si Pauperum Compauperes sumus, & nostra sunt, & illorum. Si autem privatim quæ nobis sufficiunt, possidemus, non sunt illa *nostrum*, sed Pauperum *Procurationem* gerimus, non Proprietatem nobis Usurpatione damnabili vindicamus, *Augus. Ep.* 50, *ad Bonif.* (c) Quoniam quicquid habent Clerici, Pauperum est—Qui bonis Parentum & opibus sustentari possent, si quod Pauperum est, accipiunt *Sacrilegium profectò* committunt, & per Abusionem Talium, Judicium sibi manducant, & bibunt, *Hieron. Ep. ad Damas.* (d) Episcopus vilem *Suppellectilem*, & *Mensam*, ac *Victum Pauperem* habeat, & Dignitatis sua Authoritatem Fide & Vitæ meritis quærat, *Concil. Carthag.* 4. (e) Memento quod *Pauperem Vitam* Sacerdos gerere debet, & ideo si superbiam habet, si magno gaudet Beneficio, præter *Victum* & *Vestitum quod superest*, Pauperibus dare non differat, quia omnia *Pauperum* sunt. *Aug. Serm.* 37. *ad Fratres.* (f) Hujus tu e vicino sectare *Vestigia*, & cæterorum, qui Virtutum illius similies sunt, quos

May it not therefore well be wondered what could provoke Dr. *Trapp* to censure our Bishop as a Madman, whose *whole Form of Life*, and *Use of his Bishopric*, is not only after the Model of the first and greatest Saints that ever were Bishops, but also such as the whole Church from the Beginning, both in Council and out of Council, from Age to Age, hath *absolutely* required of every beneficed Clergyman, who would not be condemned by her, as sacrilegious, and a Robber of the Poor? They who would see the whole of this Matter set in a clear Light, may read an excellent Treatise of the learned *Dupin*, wrote near the End of his Life, where this Truth is by him asserted and incontestably proved, *viz.*, That whatever Changes have been made in the *Nature and Tenure* of the Goods and Revenues of the Church, or however they have been variously divided amongst Ecclesiastics, yet this has remained *always unchangeable and undeniable*, That a Clergyman was no Proprietor of his Benefice; that he could only take so much of it to his own Use, as was *necessary* to his Subsistence, and then the Remainder, be it what it would, belonged to the Poor. This, says he, is strictly maintained by the Canons of Councils,

Sacerdotium & humiliores facit, & pauperes. *Hieron. Ep. 4. ad Rustic.* (g) Præcipimus ut in potestate sua Episcopus Ecclesiæ Res habeat—ex iis autem quibus indiget, (si tamen indiget) ad suas necessitates percipiat. *Canon. Apost. 40.*—eas veluti Deo contemplante dispenset; nec ei liceat ex iis aliquid contingere, aut Parentibus propriis (quæ Dei sunt) condonare. Quod si Pauperes sunt, tanquam Pauperibus subministret, ne eorum occasione Ecclesiæ Res depredantur, *Can. Apost. 39.* (h) Manifesta sint quæ pertinere videntur ad Ecclesiam cum Notitia Presbiterorum & Diaconorum, ut si contigerit Episcopo migrare de Seculo, nec Res Ecclesiæ depereant, nec quæ *propria* probantur Episcopi, sub Occasione Rerum Ecclesiæ pervadantur: justum enim est ut sua Episcopus quibus voluerit, derelinquat, & quæ Ecclesiæ sunt, eidem conservantur Ecclesia. *Concil. Antioch, chap. 24.* (i) Quicunque Clerici, qui nihil habentes ordinantur, & tempore Episcopatus, vel Clericatus sui, agros, vel quæcunque predia nomine suo comparant, tanquam Rerum dominicarum *Invasionis Crimine* teneantur obnoxii, nisi admoniti, Ecclesia eadem ipsa contulerint. (N.B.) Si autem ipsis proprie aliquid *liberalitate* alicujus, vel *Successione* Cognationis obvenerit, faciant inde quod ipsorum Proposito congruit. (k) Sacerdotes ipsis quoque Filiis suis, quibus paterna debetur Hæreditas, nihil debent derelinquere, nisi quod sibi a Parentibus derelictum est: Ergo qui *ditior est* Sacerdos, quam venit ad Sacerdotium, quicquid plus habuerit, *non filiis debet dare*, sed Pauperibus, & Sanctis fratribus, ut reddat ea quæ Domini sunt, Domino suo. *Hieron. in Ezech., chap. 46.* (l) Timeant Clerici, timeant Ministri Ecclesiâ, qui *in terris Sanctorum* quas possident, tam iniqua gerunt, ut Stipendiis quæ sufficere debeant, minime contenti, Superflua quibus egeni sustendandi forent, impiè, sacrilege, sibi retineant, & in usus suæ Superbiæ atque Luxuriæ victum Pauperum consumere non vereantur, duplici profectò Iniquitate peccantes, quod & *aliena* diripiunt, and *Sacris* in suis vinitatibus abutuntur. *St. Bernard, Serm. 23, in Cantic.* Vide, lege, & relege. *S. Prosperum* de Vitâ contemplativâ.

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both before and after the Division of ecclesiastical Revenues. '*C'est ce que portent précisément les Canons, & avant, & après la Partition des Biens ecclésiastiques.*'*

But now if this be the Case, if this be an incontestable Doctrine, supported by every Authority that can be brought for any one Doctrine of the Gospel, have we not here an *utter Condemnation* of Pluralities? Is it not an Affront to the Gospel, to the plainest Maxims of Right and Wrong, the whole Authority of the Church, to offer one single Word in Defence of them? Logical, scholastic Distinctions and Definitions of the Nature of *Parishes* and *Residence*, can signify no more here, where the *whole Nature* of the Thing is to be avoided, than the *same Art* of Words, when used by *Jesuitical Casuists*, can justify the Violation of moral Duties. And if Dr. *Trapp* was only to look at this one Doctrine, he would have no reason to think it so sad a Thing, to see *Pluralists* coupled with *Cardinals*. 'See,' says the learned Dupin, 'Rules which appear hard to many of the beneficed Clergy, but yet,' says he, 'they are true, conformable to natural Equity, the Laws, Custom, and Tradition of the Church, and the Practice of the most holy Bishops; and woe be to those that observe them not.' *Malheur a Ceux qui ne les suivent pas.*† And therefore he concludes thus, 'There may be many amongst the beneficed Clergy who err in this Matter, through an Ignorance of that which is required of them; therefore what I have said ought to be taken in good Part, as proceeding from Charity, and a sincere Love of Truth.'

I come now to that which the Doctor says of Enthusiasm and Enthusiasts. Speaking to the younger Clergy of the Means of attaining Divine Knowledge, I had these Words, 'The Book of all Books is your own Heart, in which are written the deepest Lessons of Divine Instruction; learn therefore to be deeply attentive to the *Presence* of God in your Hearts, who is always speaking, always instructing, always illuminating that Heart that is attentive to him.' Now can any Thing be conceived more scriptural, or more inoffensive than all this? Is there anything to suppress or hurt the Piety and Devotion of that Heart, which would place its all in God? Which desires to be moved and guided in all Things by his holy Spirit. How can we worship God in Spirit and in Truth, how can we pray unto him, turn to him, how can we raise any Act of Faith or Hope in him, Resignation unto him, or Dependence upon him, but by thus thinking of him? Take any Thing from God that I have

* *Traite Philos. & Theolog. sur l'amour de Dieu*, page 415.

† *Ibid.*, page 442.

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here ascribed to him, suppose him not to be thus inwardly speaking, instructing, illuminating, and then tell me why my Heart should seek him, or how it can find him? A Page or two after this, to show the deep and intimate Union the Soul has with its Creator, I said, 'God is an *all-speaking, all-working, all-illuminating* Essence, possessing the Depth, and bringing forth 'the Life of every Creature according to its Nature. Our Life is 'out of this Divine Essence, and is itself a *creaturely Similitude* 'of it; and when we turn from *all Impediments*, this Divine 'Essence becomes as certainly the true Light of our Minds *here*, 'as it will be *hereafter*.' Now is there any Thing here to shock, or fright, or delude the Piety of any Christian? Is it a monstrous Thing to be told, that the Light of Heaven reaches us in this World, that we have this Communion with God; that when we turn rightly to him, he dwells in us and we in him; that we receive his Operation and Light upon us in this Life, as we shall do in the next, only with this Difference, that now what is done *in Faith* will then be in *open Vision*? How can we believe anything that is said of the Light and holy Spirit of God in the Scripture, without believing this? If this be not true, how can we believe that Jesus Christ is the Light which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World? Or is there any Thing here more said of God, than when the Apostle saith, that 'in him we live, move, and have our Being'? If the *Word* of God was not an *ever-speaking* Word, how could Nature and Creature *speak forth* any Thing? If God was *ever* silent could any Thing else speak? Again, if Nature is *constantly* at Work; if there could be no Nature but because there is a *continual stirring* and *working* which cannot cease; is not this a sufficient Proof that there is an *all-working Deity*? And if we are told, that, in the Kingdom of Heaven, there shall be no Sun, nor Moon, but the *Lamb shall be the Light thereof*, is not this telling us, that God himself is the uncreated Light, always in the same State of Infinity, and therefore an *all-illuminating* Being? And if there is *always* Light *in Nature*, a Light that cannot be extinguished, must it not come from the *all-illuminating* Being? Yet Dr. *Trapp* says, all this 'is Enthusiasm, if ever there was any 'in the World'; that they are the 'Words of Falsehood and 'Frenzy.'* If the Doctor had been clear in this Matter, it had been very easy for him to have shown his Reader wherein this Enthusiasm and Frenzy lay; and it was also very necessary for him to have here said something very plain and clear concerning the Nature and Ground of Enthusiasm: For if his Reader,

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without any clear and distinct Notion of Enthusiasm, is taught to cry out against a Doctrine, which only teaches, that God is always speaking, instructing, and illuminating that Heart that is in great *Purity* turned to him ; if he is taught boldly and blindly to condemn *this* as Enthusiasm and Frenzy, how shall such a one be able to defend himself, when he is told by others, that two Thirds of the New Testament is Enthusiasm? As where it is said, 'I am the Light and Life of the World : The Kingdom of Heaven is within you : Except ye eat my Flesh and drink my Blood, ye have no Life in you : If any Man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our Abode with him : No Man can come unto me, except the Father draweth him : The natural Man cannot receive and know the Things of the Spirit of God : He breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost : The Spirit of Truth, he dwelleth in you, and shall be with you : No Man can say, *Abba* Father, or that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost : As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God.' In our *Liturgy* we pray that God would prevent us in all our Doings, and further us with his *continual Help* : That we may obey the godly Motions of the Spirit in Righteousness and true Holiness : That by his holy Inspiration we may *think* those Things that be good, and by his merciful Guiding may perform the same : That his holy Spirit may in all Things direct and rule our Hearts, &c. Now what must the unlearned Reader, or the learned Doctor himself do with these and the like Places of Scripture, and Prayers of the Church, if it be *Enthusiasm*, *Falsehood*, and *Frenzy* to say, that God is intimately present in the Depth of our Souls, always speaking, instructing, enlightening that Heart, which is truly turned to him? Or how can these Scriptures and Prayers have the *least Truth* or *Reasonableness* in them, but upon this Supposition, that God is an all-speaking, all-knowing, all-illuminating Being, out of whom we are born, and in whom we live, and move, and have our Being. But I shall here speak a Word or two of the true Ground, and Nature of Enthusiasm.

In *Will*, *Imagination*, and *Desire*, consists the Life, or fiery Driving of every intelligent Creature. And as every intelligent Creature is its own *Self-mover*, so every intelligent Creature has Power of *kindling* and *inflaming* its Will, Imagination and Desire as it pleases, with Shadows, Fictions, or Realities ; with Things carnal or spiritual, temporal or eternal. And *this kindling* of the Will, Imagination, and Desire, when raised into a *ruling Degree* of Life, is properly that which is to be understood by Enthusiasm : And therefore Enthusiasm is, and must be of as

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many Kinds as those Objects are, which can kindle and inflame the Wills, Imaginations, and Desires of Men. And to appropriate Enthusiasm to Religion, is the same Ignorance of Nature, as to appropriate *Love* to Religion; for Enthusiasm, a kindled, inflamed Spirit of Life, is as *common*, as *universal*, as *essential* to human Nature, as *Love* is; it goes into *every Kind* of Life as *Love* does, and has only such a Variety of Degrees in Mankind as *Love* hath. And here we may see the Reason, why no People are so angry at Religious Enthusiasts, as those that are the *deepest* in some Enthusiasm of *another Kind*.

He whose Fire is kindled from the Divinity of *Tully's* Rhetoric, who travels over high Mountains to salute the dear Ground that *Marcus Tullius Cicero* walked upon; whose *noble Soul* would be ready to break out of his Body, if he could see a *Desk*, a *Rostrum* from whence *Cicero* had poured forth his Thunder of Words, may well be unable to bear the *Dulness* of those, who go on *Pilgrimages* only to visit the *Sepulchre*, whence the *Redeemer of the World* rose from the dead, or who grow devout at the Sight of a *Crucifix*, because the Son of God hung as a Sacrifice thereon.

He whose heated Brain is all over painted with the *ancient Hieroglyphics*; who knows *how* and *why* they were *this* and *that*, better than he can find out the Customs and Usages of his *own Parish*; who can clear up every Thing that is *doubtful* in Antiquity, and yet be forced to live in Doubt about that which passes in his own Neighbourhood; who has found out the Sentiments of the *first Philosophers* with such Certainty, as he cannot find out the *real Opinion* of any of his Contemporaries; he that has gone thus high into the *Clouds*, and dug thus deep into the *Dark* for these *glorious Discoveries*, may well despise those Christians, as *brain-sick Visionaries*, who are sometimes finding a *moral* and *spiritual* Sense in the bare Letter and History of Scripture-Facts.

It matters not what our Wills and Imaginations are employed about; wherever they *fall* and love to *dwell*, there they *kindle* a Fire, and that becomes the *Flame of Life*, to which every Thing else appears as *dead*, and *insipid*, and *unworthy* of Regard. Hence it is that even the poor Species of *Fops* and *Beaux* have a right to be placed among Enthusiasts, though capable of no other Flame than that, which is kindled by *Tailors* and *Peruke-Makers*. All *refined Speculatists*, as such, are great Enthusiasts; for being devoted to the Exercise of their Imaginations, they are so *heated* into a Love of their *own Ideas*, that they seek no other *summum bonum*. The *Grammarian*, the *Critic*, the *Poet*, the *Connoisseur*, the *Antiquary*, the *Philosopher*, the *Politician*, are

all violent Enthusiasts, though their Heat is only a Flame from *Straw*, and therefore they all agree in *appropriating* Enthusiasm to Religion. All *ambitious, proud, self-conceited* Persons, especially if they are *Scholars*, are violent Enthusiasts, and their Enthusiasm is an *inflamed* Self-Love, Self-Esteem, and Self-Seeking. This Fire is so kindled in them, that every Thing is nauseous and disgusting to them, that does not offer Incense to that Idol, which their Imagination has set up in themselves. All *Atheists* are dark Enthusiasts; their Fire is kindled by a Will and Imagination turned from God into a gloomy Depth of *Nothingness*, and therefore their Enthusiasm is a *dull burning* Fire, that goes in and out, through *Hopes* and *Fears* of they know not what that is to come. All *professed Infidels* are remarkable Enthusiasts, they have kindled a *bold* Fire from a *few faint Ideas*, and therefore they are all Zeal, and Courage, and Industry to be *constantly blowing* it up. A *Tyndal* and a *Collins* are as inflamed with the Notions of Infidelity, as a *St. Bennet* and *St. Francis* with the Doctrines of the Gospel.

Enthusiasts therefore we all are, as certainly as we are Men; and consequently, Enthusiasm is not a Thing blamable in *itself*, but is the common Condition of human Life in *all its States*; and every Man that lives either *well* or *ill*, is that which he is, from that *prevailing Fire* of Life, or *driving* of our Wills and Desires, which is properly called Enthusiasm. You need not then go to a *Cloister*, the *Cell* of a *Monk*, or to a *Field Preacher*, to see Enthusiasts, they are everywhere, at *Balls* and *Masquerades*, at *Court* and the *Exchange*: They sit in all *Coffee-houses*, and *cant* in all Assemblies. The *Beau* and the *Coquette* have no *Magic*, but where they meet Enthusiasts. The *Mercer*, the *Tailor*, the *Bookseller* have all their Wealth from them; the Works of a *Bayle*, a *Shaftesbury*, and *Cicero*, would lose *four Fifths* of their astonishing Beauties, had they not *keen Enthusiasts* for their Readers.

That which concerns us therefore, is only to see with what Materials our *prevailing Fire* of Life is kindled, and in what *Species* of Enthusiasts it truly places us. For either the *Flesh* or the *Spirit*; either the Wisdom from *above*, or the Wisdom of *this World*, will have *its Fire* in us; and we must have a *Life* that governs us either according to the Sensuality of the *Beast*, the Subtlety of the *Serpent*, or the Holiness of the *Angel*. Enthusiasm is not blamable in Religion, when it is true Religion that kindles it. We are created with *Wills* and *Desires* for no other End, but to love, adore, desire, serve, and co-operate with God; and therefore the more we are inflamed in *this Motion* of our Wills and Desires, the more we have of a God-

like, Divine Nature, and Perfection in us. Religious Enthusiasm is not blamable, when it is a *strong Persuasion*, a *firm Belief* of a continual Operation, Impression, and Influence from above, when it is a total Resignation to, and Dependence upon the *immediate Inspiration*, and *Guidance* of the holy Spirit in the whole Course of our Lives; this is as sober, and rational a Belief, as to believe that we *always* live, and move, and have our Being in God. Both Nature and Scripture demonstrate this to be the true Spirit of a Religious Man. Nature tells everyone, that we can only be heavenly by a Spirit derived from Heaven, as plainly as it tells us, that we can only be earthly, by having the Spirit of this World breathing in us. The Gospel teaches no Truth so *constantly*, so *universally* as this, that every good Thought and good Desire is the Work of the holy Spirit. And therefore both Nature and Scripture demonstrate, that the *one only* Way to Piety, Virtue and Holiness, is to *prepare, expect, and resign* ourselves up wholly to the Influence and Guidance of the holy Spirit, in every Thing that we think, or say, or do. The moment anyone departs from *this Faith*, or loses *this Direction* of his Will and Desire, so far, and so long he goes out of the one only Element of all Holiness of Life. There is nothing that so sanctifies the Heart of Man, that keeps us in such habitual Love, Prayer, and Delight in God; nothing that so kills all the Roots of Evil in our Nature, that so renews and perfects all our Virtues, that fills us with so much Love, Goodness, and good Wishes to every Creature, as *this Faith*, That God is always *present* in us with his *Light and Holy Spirit*. When the Heart has once learnt thus to find God, and knows how to live everywhere, and in all Things in this immediate Intercourse with him, seeing him, loving him, and adoring him in every Thing, trusting in him, depending upon him for his continual Light and holy Spirit; when it knows that *this Faith* is infallible; that by thus believing, it thus possesses all that it believes of God; then it begins to have the Nature of God in it, and can do nothing but flow forth in Love, Benevolence, and good Will towards every Creature; it can have no Wish towards any Man, but that he might thus know, and love, and find God in himself, as the true Beginning of Heaven, and the heavenly Life in the Soul.

On the other hand, no Error so hurtful to the Soul, so destructive of all the Ends of the Gospel, as to be led from this Faith and *entire Dependence* upon the holy Spirit of God, or to place our Recovery in any Thing else, but in the Operation of the Light and holy Spirit of God upon the Soul. It is withdrawing Men not only from the earliest, the most natural, the most fruit-

ful, but the only possible Source of all Light and Life. For every Man, as such, has an open Gate to God in his Soul, he is always in that Temple, where he can worship God in Spirit and Truth: Every Christian, as such, has the *first Fruits* of the Spirit, a *Seed* of Life, which is his *Call* and *Qualification* to be always in a State of inward Prayer, Faith, and holy Intercourse with God. All the *Ordinances* of the Gospel, the daily *sacramental* Service of the Church, is to keep up, and exercise, and strengthen *this Faith*; to raise us to such an habitual Faith and Dependence upon the Light and holy Spirit of God, that by thus seeking and finding God in the *Institutions* of the Church, we may be habituated to seek him and find him; to live in his Light, and walk by his Spirit in all the Actions of our ordinary Life. This is the Enthusiasm in which every good Christian ought to endeavour to live and die.

I come now to an *Enthusiast*, which the Doctor has accidentally met with, from whom, it seems, 'I have borrowed some 'of my strange Notions, and would put them off as my own,' p. 119. The Doctor has this Intelligence from his *trusty Assistant*, who says, 'what else can be expected from those, Who 'read Jacob Behmen, Dr. Pordage, and Mrs. Lead, with almost 'the same Veneration and implicit Faith, that other People read 'the Scripture,' *ibid.* Two of these Writers I know very little of, yet as much as I desire to know; but *J. Behmen*, called the *Teutonic Theosopher*, I have read much, and much esteem: But the Design of putting off some of his strange Notions, as *my own*, is as well grounded, as if the Doctor had charged me with a Design of picking his Pocket.

The illustrious Sir *Isaac Newton*, when he wrote his *Principia*, and published to the World his great Doctrine of *Attraction*, and those *Laws of Nature* by which the *Planets* began, and continue to move in their Orbits, could have told the World, that the *true and infallible* Ground of what he there advanced, was to be found in the *Teutonic Theosopher*, in his *three first Properties of Eternal Nature*; he could have told them, that he had been a *diligent Reader* of that wonderful Author, that he had made large Extracts out of him, and could have referred to him for the Ground of what he had observed of the Number *Seven*. Now why did not this great Man do thus? Must we suppose that he was *loth* to have it thought, that he had been *helped* by any Thing that he had read? No: It is an unworthy Thought. But Sir *Isaac* well knew, that *Prejudice* and *Partiality* had such Power over many People's Judgments, that Doctrines, though ever so deeply founded in, and proved by all the Appearances of Nature, would be suspected by some as dangerous, and condemned by others,

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even as *false* and *Wicked*, had he made any *References* to an Author that was *only called* an Enthusiast.

Dr. *Trapp* may take himself for an *eminent* Example and Proof of this. He has here shown with what *Speed* Matters may be determined by Prejudice. For here a *Stranger*, a *Layman*, not so much as known to the Doctor by Name, who, for aught he can tell, may be some *small Retailer* of Infidelity, or *Snuff-Candle* in the Playhouse, who has gained upon the Doctor by no other *Marks* of Ability and Judgment, but his *Compliments* to him, and his *Scurrility* upon me; from the *Authority* of this Informer, the Doctor immediately puts *J. B.* into his *List* of Enthusiasts. Is not this a Proof of what *Sir Isaac Newton* must have met with from some great Scholars, and to what a *speedy Confutation* he must have exposed himself, and the plainest Appearances of Nature, had he ever referred to the *Teutonic Theosopher*? Now am I here to suppose, that this Censure of the Doctor's relating to *J. B.* is a *Rashness* that has here *first* seized upon him by *Chance*, that he never *before* in his Life allowed himself to treat any *Man*, or any *Book* in this manner; that if he took the Judgment of another, it was of somebody that he knew; if he condemned an Author, he always *stayed* till he had read *something* of him, at least an *Index*, or a *Title Page* or two of his Works? Or am I to suppose, that this has been the Doctor's Method *upwards of thirty-seven Years*; calling one Man an Enthusiast, another a Fanatic, this a monstrous, that the *most pernicious Book of the Age*, as rashly, as hastily, regarding no more of Right or Wrong in that which he affirms of these Matters, than he has here done with regard to *J. B.*? But I hope the Doctor is singular in this Spirit; for if it could be supposed, that it was common amongst learned Men, to get their Knowledge of ancient and modern, foreign and domestic Enthusiasts, as hastily and slightly as the Doctor here doth; must it not be very dangerous for the *Unlearned* to take any Opinions of this kind from them? Must it not be said, that *one Grain* of Equity, good Sense, and real Knowledge, is more to be desired, than an *hundred Weight* of such Learning?

When I considered the *fallen Soul*, as a *Fire-Spirit*, deprived of its *proper Light*, and therefore become of a Diabolical Nature, I could have directed to *J. B.* for the deep and infallible Ground of it; but what need was there for that, when I could make the plainest Principles of *Nature*, the plainest Doctrines of *Scripture*, everything that was said of the *Fall*, of *Heaven*, of *Hell*, and the like, to be undeniable Proofs of it? What I said in the *Second Proposition* of the Discourse upon *Regeneration*, concerning the Holy Trinity of God *in Man*, stands not in *that Form* of

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Expression anywhere that I know of; but for the true Ground and Certainty of it, I could have referred to the *Teutonic Theosopher*, to many ancient and modern Writers of the greatest Name, and to a *venerable Record* of Antiquity, ascribed even to St. *Peter* himself; where he asserts, even upon the *same Ground* as I have done, that because we were created in the Image and Likeness of God, therefore the triune Life arises in us, as it does in God, and we have *in us*, the *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*.*

But what Occasion was there for these References, when I had so much better Proof, when I could show, that all which the Scriptures say of the whole *Nature and Manner* of our Redemption, of the whole *Nature and Form* of Baptism, all that they say of the *Necessity* of the *Word*, and Holy Spirit of God having again a *Birth in us*, are absolute, decisive Proofs of it?† I knew also very well, that the most essential, fundamental, and joyful Doctrines of the Gospel would be *questioned*, or received with *Difficulty*, had I referred to a *poor Shoemaker* for any Proof of them: And it may well be believed, that the Doctor would have been amongst the *first and loudest* of those, who would have cried out at my Folly and Presumption in directing to an Author, whom all the World knew to be an *illiterate Enthusiast*; and yet, if all the World knows it as the Doctor knows it, all the World may be said to know nothing about it.

Dr. *Trapp* has a Fling at my Want of Taste for his *Virgil's, Horace's, and Terence's*: I own, when I was about *Eighteen*, I was as fond of these Books as the Doctor can well be *now*, and should then have been glad to have translated the *Sublime Milton*, if I had found myself able; but this *Ardour* soon went off, and I think it as good a Proof of the *Sublime*, to desire the Death of all that is Diabolical and *Serpentine* in my own Nature, as to be *charmed* with those *Speeches* which the *Devils* make in *Milton*. Had the Doctor been more conversant in the Writings of a Set of Men called *Mystical Divines*, than he appears to have been, he had been better able to have charged me with *humble Plagiary* than he is at present, and might have done more Service to what he calls the *Noble Science of Theology*, than by all that *Light* which he has got from his *Poets*, which he acknowledges to have *somewhat of Wantonness in them*, p. 38. Of these *Mystical Divines*, I thank God, I have been a

* Rationalis Homo, factus ad Imaginem, & Similitudinem Dei, fert in se Symbolicè Factoris sui Imitationem. Habet enim in se Patrem, Filium & Spiritum. Mens quidem locum Patris obinet, Filii vero, qui ex mente gignitur, Sermo Interior, at quæ auditur Vox Prolationis, Spiritum representat, &c., *Coteler, S. S. Patr.*, pages 595—1719.

† See Regeneration, pages 22-33.

diligent Reader, through all Ages of the Church, from the Apostolical *Dionisius the Arcopagite*, down to the great *Fenelon* Archbishop of *Cambray*, the illuminated *Guion*, and *M. Bertot*. Had the Doctor read *St. Cassian*, a Recorder of the Lives, Spirit and Doctrine of the Holy Fathers of the *Desarts*, as often as he had read the *Story of Æneas* and *Dido*, he had been less astonished at many Things in my Writings: But I apprehend the Doctor to be as great a Stranger to the Writers of this kind, with which every Age of the Church has been blessed, and to know no more of the Divine *Rusbrochius*, *Thaulerus*, *Suso*, *Harphius*, *Johannes de Cruce*, &c., than he does of *J. B.* For had he known any Thing of them, he had known that I am as chargeable with the Sentiments of all of them, as with those of *J. Behmen*. For though I never wrote upon any Subject till I could call it *my own*, till I was so fully possessed of the Truth of it, that I could sufficiently prove it in *my own Way*, without borrowed Arguments; yet, Doctrines of Religion I have none, but what the Scriptures and the *first-rate* Saints of the Church are my Vouchers for.

Writers, like those I have mentioned, there have been in all Ages of the Church, but as they served not the Ends of *Popular Learning*, as they helped no People to *Figure* and *Preferment* in the World, and were useless to *scholastic, controversial* Writers, so they dropped out of public Use, and were only known, or rather *unknown*, under the Name of *Mystical Writers*, till at last some People have hardly heard of that very Name. Though if a Man was to be told what is meant by a Mystical Divine, he must be told of something as *heavenly*, as *great*, as *desirable*, as if he was told, what is meant by a real, *regenerate, living* Member of the *Mystical Body* of Christ. For they were thus called, for no other Reason, than as *Moses* and the Prophets, and the Saints of the Old Testament may be called the *Spiritual Israel*, or the true *Mystical Jews*. These Writers began their Office of Teaching, as *John the Baptist* did, after they had passed through every kind of Mortification and Self-denial, every kind of Trial and Purification, both inward and outward. They were deeply learned in all the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God, not through the Use of *Lexicons*, or meditating upon *Critics*, but because they had *passed from Death unto Life*. They highly reverence and excellently direct the true Use of everything that is *outward* in Religion, but like the Psalmist's *King's Daughter*, they are *all glorious within*: They are truly Sons of *Thunder*, and Sons of *Consolation*; they break open the *whited Sepulchres*; they awaken the Heart, and show it its *Filth* and *Rottenness* of Death, but they leave it not, till the Kingdom of

Heaven is raised up within it. If a Man have no Desire but to be of the Spirit of the Gospel, to obtain all that Renovation of Life and Spirit, which alone can make him to be in Christ a new Creature, it is a great Unhappiness to him to be unacquainted with these Writers, or to pass a Day without reading something of what they have written. For though the Scriptures are an inexhaustible Source of Spiritual Instruction, leading the Heart to the deepest Knowledge of all the Mysteries of the inward, new Life in God, with the greatest Plainness and Openness of Expression, yet a *worldly Spirit*, the *Schools*, *Criticism*, and *Controversy* have so dried, and deadened every Thing into an outward Letter and figurative Expression, that much of their Use is lost, till these Holy Writers, who interpret them by the same Spirit which wrote them, guide us to the true Use and Understanding of them; for in these Writers, the Spirit of God speaks a second Time, and every Thing that can awaken, convert, instruct and inflame the Heart with the Love of God, and all Holiness and Purity of Life, is to be found in the most irresistible Degree of Conviction. You will perhaps say, Do I then call all the World to these Spiritual Books? No, by no means. But I call all those, whom our Saviour called to himself in these Words: 'Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.'

But to return to the Doctor's Enthusiast.

Jacob Behmen, in his natural Capacity and outward Condition of Life, was as *mean* and illiterate as anyone that our Lord called to be an Apostle, but as a *chosen Servant* of God, he may be placed amongst those who had received the highest Measures of Light, Wisdom and Knowledge *from Above*. He was no more a *human Writer*, spoke no more from *Opinion*, *Conjecture*, or *Reason*, in what he published to the World, than *St. John* did, when he put his *Revelation* into Writing. He has no Right to be placed amongst the inspired *Penmen* of the New Testament, he was no Messenger from God of any Thing *new* in Religion, but the Mystery of all that was *old* and *true* both in Religion and Nature was *opened* in him. This is the *Particularity* of his Character, by which he stands fully distinguished from all the Prophets, Apostles, and extraordinary Messengers of God. They were sent with occasional Messages, or to make such Alterations in the Economy of Religion as pleased God; but this Man came on no particular Errand, he had nothing to alter, or add, either in the *Form*, or Doctrine of Religion; he had no new Truths of Religion to propose to the World, but all that lay in Religion and Nature, as a Mystery unsearchable, was in its deepest Ground opened in this In-

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strument of God. And all his Works are nothing else but a deep Manifestation of the Grounds and Reasons of that which is *done*, that which is *doing*, and is to *be done*, both in the Kingdom of Nature, and the Kingdom of Grace, from the Beginning to the End of Time. His Works therefore, though immediately from God, have not at all the *Nature* of the Holy Scriptures, they are not offered to the World, as *necessary* to be received, or as a Rule of Faith and Manners? and therefore no one has any Right to complain, either of the *Depths* of his Matter, or the *Peculiarity* of his Style: They are just as they should be, for those that are fit for them; and he that likes them not, or finds himself unqualified for them, has no Obligation to read them.

The whole System of Christianity has generally been looked upon as a Mystery of Salvation, solely founded in the Divine Pleasure; and to be such a Scheme of Redemption, as is wholly to be resolved into the Contrivance of the *Will* and Wisdom of God; and therefore Men can think as differently of it, can fall into as many Opinions about it, as they can of the Will and Wisdom of God. Hence has arisen all the *speculative Opposition* to the Gospel: It is because Reason, human Speculation, and Conjecture, is always imagining it can form a Religion more worthy of the Wisdom and Designs of the Supreme Being than the Christian is; and would be thought to oppose the Gospel only for the Honour of God, and the Divine Attributes. This is the great, prevailing *Idolatry* of the present *Heathen World*, or *that Part* of Mankind who are Infidels, or Deists. Hence also is risen another Species of Idolatry, even amongst Christians of *all Denominations*; who, though receiving and professing the Religion of the Gospel, yet worship God not in Spirit and in Truth, but either in the Deadness of an outward Form, or in a *Pharisaical*, carnal Trust and Confidence in their own Opinions and Doctrines. This Body of People, whether they be *Clergy* or *Laity*, are but *nominal Christians*; because they have little more than the *Name* of every Mystery of the Gospel: *Historical Christians*, because satisfied with the *History* of Gospel-Salvation: *Literal Christians*, because looking only to, and contending only for, the *Letter* of the Institutions and Mysteries of Jesus Christ. For the Letter, for the federal Rite, and the *figurative* Expression of Regeneration, they are all Zeal and Industry; but the *Reality* of it, the *true Life* of the New Birth, they *oppose* and *reject* as heartily as the *Deist* does the outward Form and Letter. Now this *twofold Idolatry* of the present Heathen and Christian World has its full Discovery and Confutation in the Mystery opened in *J. B.* which, when

understood, leaves no Room for any Man either to disbelieve the Gospel, or to content himself with the *Letter* of it. For, in the Revelation made to this Man, the first *Beginning* of all Things is opened, the *whole State*, the *Rise*, the *Workings*, and the *Progress* of all Nature is revealed, and every Doctrine, Mystery, and Precept of the Gospel is found, not to have sprung from any *arbitrary Appointment*, but to have its *eternal, unalterable* Ground and Reason in Nature; and God appears to save us by the Methods of the Gospel, because there was *no other* possible Way to save us in all the Possibility of Nature. And therefore the *idolatrous* Confidence of the Deist in his *own Reason*, and of the nominal Christian in the *outward Letter* of their Religion, have equally their full Confutation.

To those who confine Idolatry to the Worship of *such Idols* as the old Heathens and *Jews* worshipped, it may seem a Paradox, to talk of the Idolatry of the *present World*, either amongst *Deists* or *Christians*. But if we consider Things more than Words, we shall find, that Idolatry is nowhere, but where the Heart has *set up* Something in the *Place* of God; and therefore is everywhere, and in every Thing, where the Heart places that *Repose*, *Trust*, and *Delight*, which should be placed in God alone. For God is only owned, and confessed to be *our God*, by these Acknowledgments and Dispositions of our Hearts towards Him. It is an infallible Truth, That all Sin has its Beginning and Continuance in and from Idolatry: This alone debauched the former and the later Ages of the World, and is the one Source of all the Corruption of Manners, from the Beginning to the End of Time. You don't make a *Golden Calf*, as the *Jews* did, to worship it; but if *Mammon* is your God, if your Life is devoted to Pride, Ambition, and Sensuality, your Idolatry is not so *sensible*, but it is as *real* as theirs, who danced about a Golden Calf. You fancy that *Venus* is not your *Goddess*, because you are not worshipping a *figured Image* of her, in a Temple called by her Name; but if you look at the *Odes*, the *Hymns*, the *Songs*, which you love, which Lust has inspired, then you may know that *Venus* is the Goddess of your Heart. It is thus with every Object, and in every Course of Life, that which possesses and governs our Heart, has usurped the *Right* and *Place* of God in it, and has that *Worship*, *Trust*, and *Devotion* of the Heart, which is due to God alone: And therefore the Idolatry of the present World, is only of a different Kind from that of the ancient, it is less seen, and less confessed, but not less real, than when carved Images, and figured Idols were adored.

Deism, or the Religion of *human Reason*, set up in Opposition to the Gospel, is *direct Idolatry*, and has every Grossness and

Vanity of Image Worship. For to put our Trust in our own Reason, to be content with its Light, to resign ourselves up to it, and depend upon it as our Guide, is a Mistake that has every Grossness and Vanity of the Adoration of an Idol. Now this Kind of Idolatry has overrun all the last Ages of the World; it is the last Effort of human Vanity; it is the utmost that Idolatry can do, both to hide and propagate itself, and is the Devil under the Appearance of an *Angel of Light*. The Gospel has no Enemy but this Idolatry, and it is as visible in the Church, as out of it: Hence it is, that the State of the Church is so sadly described in the *Revelation* of *St. John*, for so many Ages, as a spiritual Whoredom. When the old *Jews* left off the *Idols* of the Heathens, they fell into an Idolatry of another kind, which was this, they *idolized* the Rites and Ceremonies of their own true Religion; they placed that *Confidence* in the outward Letter, and expected that Good from their outward Rites, which they should have placed, sought, expected from God alone. This is the Idolatry of the rational Deist, and the nominal Christian. But when the Mystery of all Nature and Grace, which by the Mercy of God has opened itself in the Writings of *J. B.* shall find its Children, every Idolatry, both within and without the Church, will be ashamed to show itself.

But it may be asked by some, what warrant I have for all that I have said of *J. B.* or how I can prove to the World, that his Writings are the Work of the holy Spirit? It is answered, I neither intend, nor desire to prove this to the World. And if anyone will dispute or deny every Thing that I have said of him, he will meet with no Opposition from me. I have given notice of a *Pearl*, if anyone takes it to be otherwise, or has neither Skill or Value for Pearls, he is at Liberty to trample it under his Feet. Nothing passes with the World for Proof of a divinely inspired Writer, but Miracles; if People can see no other Proof but this, it is not in my Power to give them better Eyes. I suppose the Gospel, and all the Writings of the New Testament, have *internal Characters* of their Divine Original, for those that can see them; but if they had been left to those internal Characters, I am apt to think, that the Sons of *Cicero*, the Disciples of a *Bayle*, or those who stand the highest in such like Literature, would, of all Men, be the most indisposed and unwilling to see and own them.

Had we no Miracles for Proof of the Inspiration of the Scriptures, they would be still what they are, the *true Word*, and *Wisdom* of God, and there would be the same Benefit in believing and receiving them as such. But to *whom* could they be proved to come from the Spirit of God? Not to a *Ciceronian*,

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because it is the Character, the *Genius*, the *Greatness* of *Cicero*, to *dissemble* and *personate* ; and as an *Orator*, a *Statesman*, and a *Philosopher*, to affirm or deny as he pleases, without any Regard to his own Sentiments. And therefore to the Sons of *Cicero* nothing can be proved, because they depart from his Character, if they discover their own Sentiments, and don't either, as *Philosophers*, *Orators*, or *Statesmen*, affirm and deny as they please, or as suits the Character which they choose to act under.

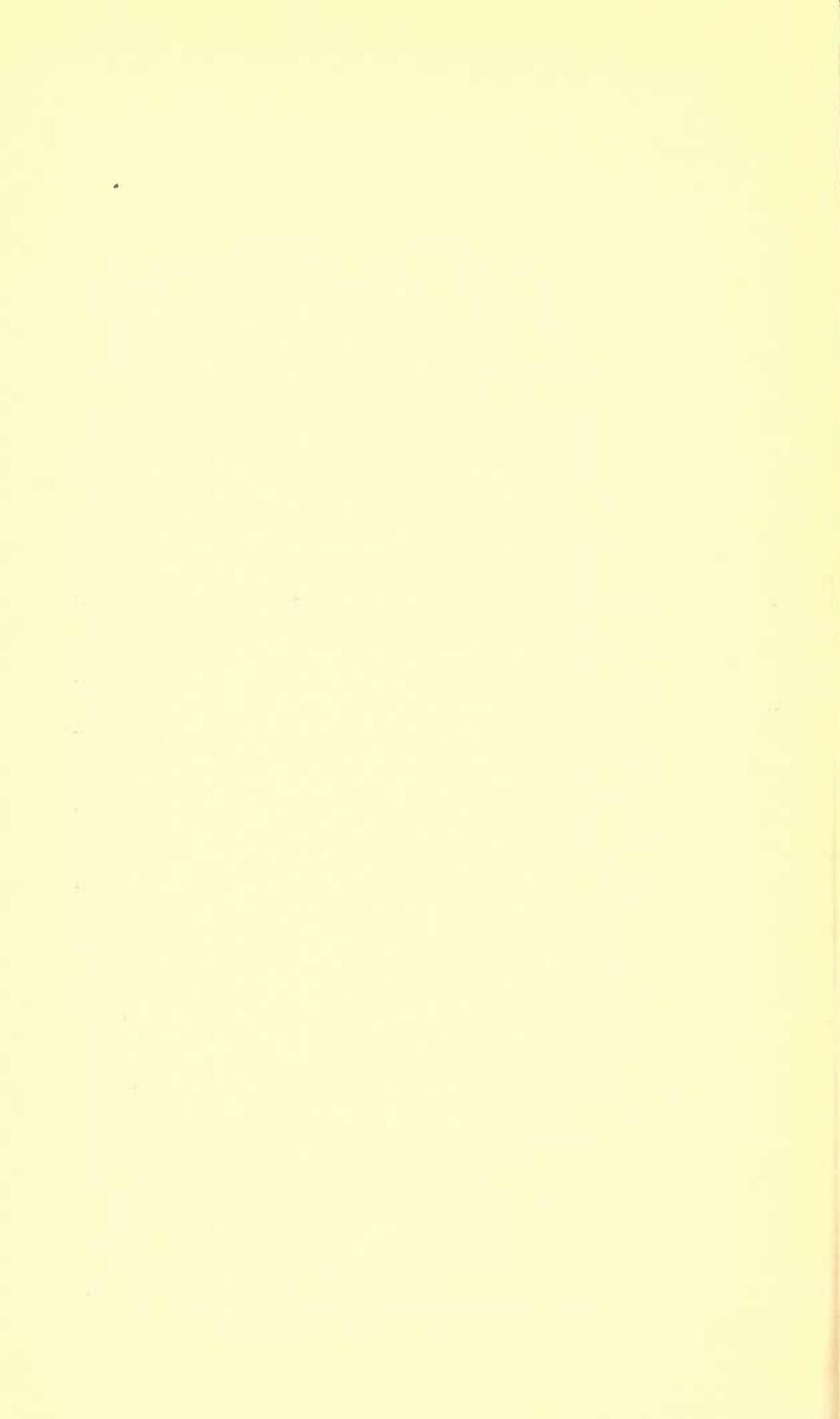
Again ; It cannot be proved to a Disciple of *Bayle* ; because, though he was a Man, 'whose Strength and Clearness of Reasoning can be equalled only by the Gaiety, Easiness, and Delicacy of his Wit ; who, pervading human Nature with a Glance, struck into the Province of *Paradox*, —— and had 'not enough of real Greatness, to overcome the last Foible of 'superior Geniuses, the Temptation of Honour, which the '*Academic Exercise of Wit* is supposed to bring to its Professors.*

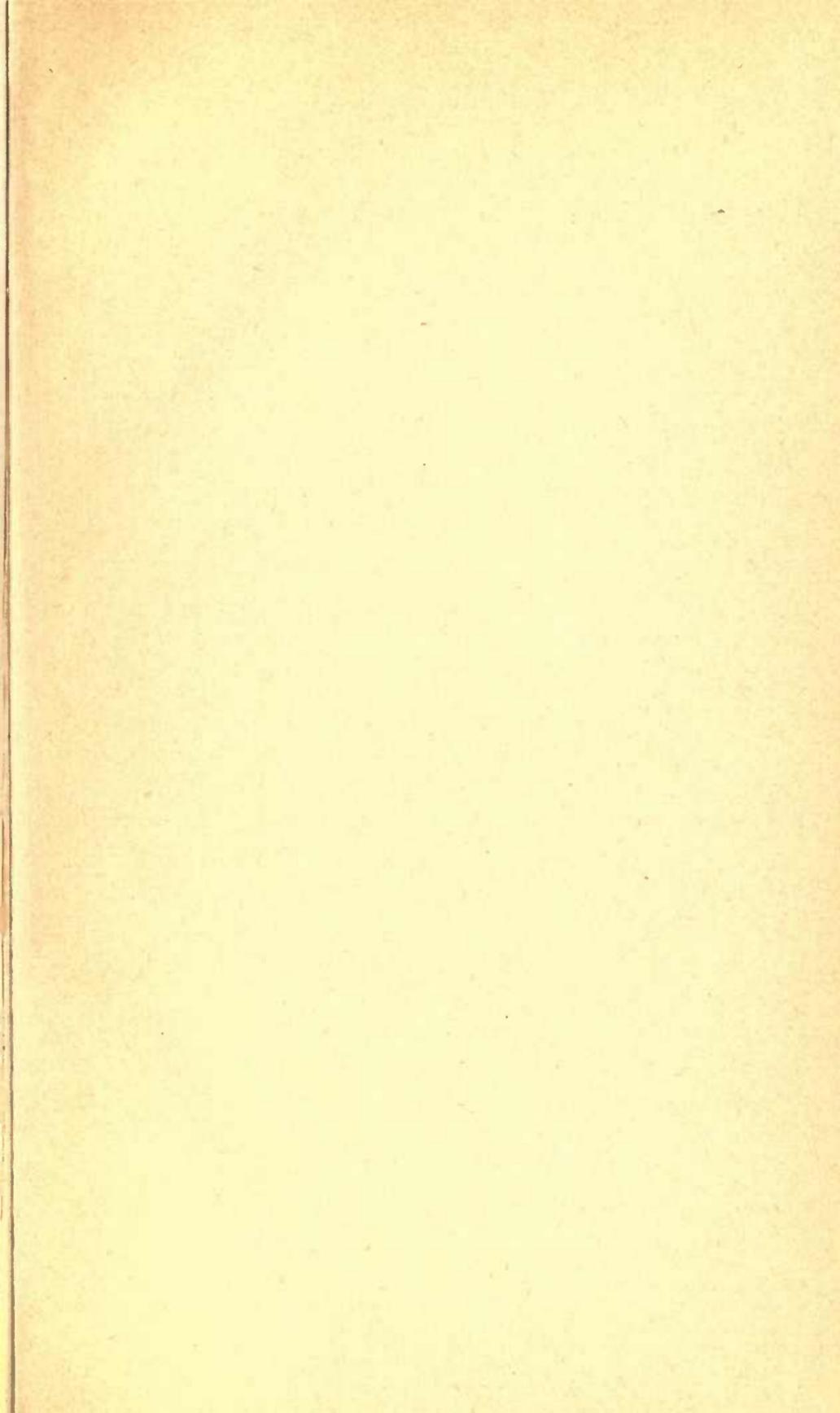
And therefore to a true Disciple of *Bayle*, nothing that is just, sober, or true, can be sufficiently proved ; because it is his *Genius*, his Honour, his Ambition, to maintain the *Paradox*.

The next Question is, *How* this can be proved, *viz.*, That the Scriptures have internal Characters of their Divinity. Now this can only be, by an honest Simplicity, and Love of Truth, by Humility and Prayer, and Conversion of the Heart to God in the reading of them. These are the only Dispositions that could possibly bring any Man into a Sense and Belief of their Divine Original : and therefore, all those critical Scholars, and rationally wise Men, whose Enquiries are animated with a Love of Glory and personal Distinction, and who looked into those Writings for such Ends, and with such Views as they read other Books, would be of all Men the most unable to see, and unwilling to own the very *best Truths* of the Holy Scriptures ; because it is the very Nature and End of the Scriptures, to discover the Vanity and Falseness of that Light and Knowledge, which is got from human Reasoning, and to subdue that Self-sufficiency, which is so inseparable from certain *Kinds* and *Degrees* of human Learning.

FINIS.

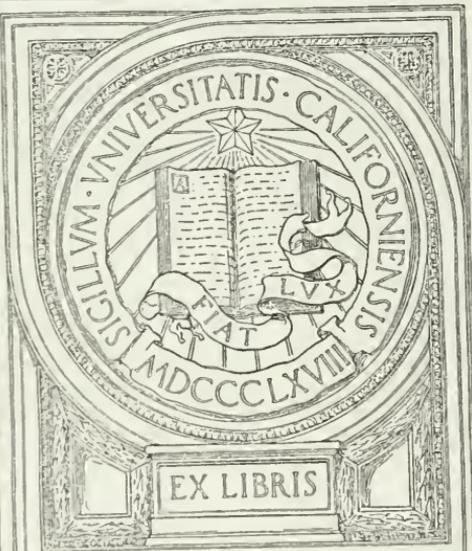
* *Divine Legation of Moses*, B. I., page 33.







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THE
SPIRIT of PRAYER;

OR,

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RICHES of ETERNITY.

In TWO PARTS.

PART I.

By WILLIAM LAW, M.A.

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THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

Chapter I.

Treating of some Matters preparatory to the Spirit of Prayer.

THE greatest Part of Mankind, nay of Christians, may be said to be asleep; and that particular Way of Life, which takes up each Man's Mind, Thoughts, and Actions, may be very well called his particular Dream. This Degree of Vanity is equally visible in every Form and Order of Life. The Learned and the Ignorant, the Rich and the Poor, are all in the same State of Slumber, only passing away a short Life in a different kind of Dream. But why so? It is because Man has an Eternity within him, is born into this World, not for the Sake of living here, not for any Thing this World can give him, but only to have Time and Place, to become either an eternal Partaker of a Divine Life with God, or to have an hellish Eternity among fallen Angels: And therefore, every Man who has not his Eye, his Heart, and his Hands, continually governed by this twofold Eternity, may be justly said to be fast asleep, to have no awakened Sensibility of Himself. And a Life devoted to the Interests and Enjoyments of this World, spent and wasted in the Slavery of earthly Desires, may be truly called a Dream, as having all the Shortness, Vanity, and Delusion of a Dream; only with this great Difference, that when a Dream is over, nothing is lost but Fictions and Fancies; but when the Dream of Life is ended *only* by Death, all that Eternity is lost for which we were brought into Being. Now there is no Misery in this World, nothing that makes either the Life or Death of Man to be full of Calamity, but this Blindness and Insensibility of his State, into which he so willingly, nay obstinately plunges himself. Every Thing that has the Nature of Evil and Distress in it takes its Rise from hence. Do but suppose a Man to know himself, that he comes into this World on no other Errand, but to rise out of the Vanity of Time into the Riches of Eternity; do but suppose him to govern his inward Thoughts and outward Actions by this View of himself, and then to him every Day has lost all its Evil; Prosperity and Adversity have no

Difference, because he receives and uses them both in the same Spirit; Life and Death are equally welcome, because equally Parts of his Way to Eternity. For poor and miserable as this Life is, we have all of us free Access to all that is Great, and Good, and Happy, and carry within ourselves a *Key* to all the Treasures that Heaven has to bestow upon us.—We starve in the midst of Plenty, groan under Infirmities, with the Remedy in our own Hand; live and die without knowing and feeling any Thing of the *One, only Good*, whilst we have it in our Power to know and enjoy it in as great a Reality, as we know and feel the Power of this World over us: For Heaven is as near to our Souls, as this World is to our Bodies; and we are created, we are redeemed, to have our Conversation in it. God, the only *Good* of all intelligent Natures, is not an absent or distant God, but is more present *in* and *to* our Souls, than our own Bodies; and we are Strangers to Heaven, and without God in the World, for this only Reason, because we are void of that Spirit of Prayer, which alone can, and never fails to unite us with the *One, only Good*, and to open Heaven and the Kingdom of God within us. A Root set in the finest Soil, in the best Climate, and blessed with all that Sun, and Air, and Rain can do for it, is not in so sure a Way of its Growth to Perfection, as every Man may be, whose Spirit aspires after all that, which God is ready and infinitely desirous to give him. For the *Sun* meets not the springing Bud that stretches towards him with half that Certainty, as God, the Source of all Good, communicates himself to the Soul that longs to partake of Him.

We are all of us, by Birth, the Offspring of God, more nearly related to him than we are to one another; for *in him we live, and move, and have our Being*. The first Man that was brought forth from God had the Breath and Spirit of *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, breathed into him, and so he became a living Soul. Thus was our first Father born of God, descended from Him, and stood in Paradise in the Image and Likeness of God. He was the Image and Likeness of God, not with any Regard to his outward Shape or Form, for no Shape has any Likeness to God; but he was in the Image and Likeness of God, because the Holy Trinity had breathed their own Nature and Spirit into him. And as the Deity, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, are always in Heaven, and make Heaven to be everywhere, so this Spirit, breathed by them into Man, brought Heaven into Man along with it; and so Man was in Heaven, as well as on Earth, that is, in Paradise, which signifies an heavenly State, or Birth of Life.*

* *Spirit of Prayer*, Part II., page 61.

Adam had all that Divine Nature, both as to an heavenly *Spirit*, and heavenly *Body*, which the Angels have: But as he was brought forth to be a Lord and Ruler of a new World, created out of the *Chaos* or *Ruins* of the Kingdom of fallen Angels; so it was necessary that he should also have the Nature of this new created World in himself, both as to its *Spirit* and *Materiality*. Hence it was, that he had a *Body* taken from this new created Earth, not such dead Earth as we now make *Bricks* of, but the *blessed* Earth of Paradise, that had the Powers of Heaven in it, out of which the *Tree of Life* itself could grow. Into the Nostrils of this outward *Body*, was the Breath or *Spirit* of this World breathed; and in this *Spirit* and *Body* of this World, did the inward celestial *Spirit* and *Body* of *Adam* dwell: It was the *Medium* or *Means* through which he was to have Commerce with this World, become visible to its Creatures, and rule over it and them. Thus stood our first Father; an Angel both as to *Body* and *Spirit* (as he will be again after the Resurrection) yet dwelling in a *Body* and *Spirit* taken from this new created World, which however was as inferior to him, as subject to him, as the Earth and all its Creatures were. It was no more alive in him, no more brought forth its Nature within him, than *Satan* and the Serpent were alive in him at his first Creation. And herein lay the Ground of *Adam's* Ignorance of Good and Evil; it was because his outward *Body*, and the outward World (in which alone was Good and Evil) could not discover their own Nature, or open their own Life within him, but were kept inactive by the Power and Life of the celestial Man within it. And this was Man's first and great Trial; a Trial, not imposed upon him by the mere Will of God, or by Way of Experiment; but a Trial necessarily implied in the Nature of his State: He was created an Angel, both as to *Body* and *Spirit*; and this Angel stood in an outward *Body*, of the Nature of the outward World; and therefore, by the Nature of his State, he had his Trial, or *Power* of choosing, whether he would live as an Angel, using only his outward *Body* as a Means of opening the Wonders of the outward World to the Glory of his Creator; or whether he would turn his Desire to the opening of the bestial Life of the outward Worldling himself, for the Sake of *knowing the Good and Evil* that was in it. The Fact is certain, that he lusted after the Knowledge of this Good and Evil, and made use of the Means to obtain it. No sooner had he got this Knowledge, by the opening the bestial Life and Sensibility within him, but in that Day, nay, in that Instant, *he died*; that is, his heavenly *Spirit* with its heavenly *Body* were both extinguished in him; but his Soul, an

6 *The Spirit of Prayer.*

immortal Fire that could not die, became a poor Slave in Prison of bestial Flesh and Blood. See here the Nature and Necessity of our Redemption ; it is to redeem the first Angelic Nature that departed from *Adam* ; it is to make that heavenly Spirit and Body which *Adam* lost, to be alive again in all the human Nature ; and this is called *Regeneration*. See also the true Reason why only the *Son*, or *eternal Word* of God, could be our Redeemer ; it is because He alone, by whom all Things were at first made, could be able to bring to Life again that celestial Spirit and Body which had departed from *Adam*. See also why our blessed Redeemer said, 'Except a Man be born again, of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.' He must be born again of the *Spirit*, because *Adam's* first heavenly *Spirit* was lost : He must be born again of *Water*, because that heavenly Body which *Adam* lost, was formed out of the heavenly Materiality, which is called *Water*. Thus in the *Revelation* of *St. John*, the heavenly Materiality, out of which the Bodies of the Angels and also of *Adam* were formed, is called a *glassy Sea*, as being the nearest and truest Representation of it that can be made to our Minds. The Necessity of our regaining our first heavenly Body, is the Necessity of our eating the Body and Blood of Christ. The Necessity of having again our first heavenly Spirit, is declared by the Necessity of our being baptized by the Holy Ghost. Our *Fall* is nothing else, but the Falling of our Soul from this celestial Body and Spirit into a *bestial* Body and Spirit of this World. Our rising out of our fallen State, or Redemption, is nothing else but the regaining our first angelic Spirit and Body, which in Scripture is called our *inward*, or *new Man*, created again in *Christ Jesus*. See here, lastly, the true Ground of all the Mortifications of Flesh and Blood, required in the Gospel ; it is because this *bestial Life* of this outward World should not have been opened in Man ; it is his Separation from God, and Death to the Kingdom of Heaven ; and therefore, all its *Workings*, *Appetites*, and *Desires*, are to be restrained and kept under, that the first heavenly Life, to which *Adam* died, may have Room to rise up in us.

But to return. That *Adam* was thus an Angel at his first Creation, dwelling in an outward Body and outward World, incapable of receiving any Impressions from them, and able to rule them at his Pleasure ; that all outward Nature was a State of Life *below* him, in Subjection to him ; that neither Sun, nor Stars, nor Fire, nor Water, nor Earth, nor Stones, could act upon him, or hurt him, is undeniably plain from hence ; because his first and great Sin, which cost him his angelical Life, and took

from him his Crown of Glory, consisted in this, that he lusted to know, and took the Means of knowing, what Good and Evil are in the bestial Life of this World : For this plainly demonstrates, that before his Sin, whilst he stood in the first State of his Creation, that he was an Angel in Nature and Power, that neither his *own outward* Body, nor any Part of outward Nature, had any Power in him or upon him ; for had his own outward Body, or any Element of outward Nature, had any Power to act upon him, to make any Impressions, or raise any Sensations in him, he could not have been ignorant of Good and Evil in this World. Therefore, seeing that his eating of the forbidden Tree, was that alone which opened this Knowledge in him, it is a Demonstration, that in his first State he was in this World as an Angel, that was put into the Possession of it only to rule as a superior Being over it ; that he was to have no Share of its Life and Nature, no Feeling of Good or Evil from it, but to act in it as a heavenly Artist, that had Power and Skill to open the Wonders of God in every Power of outward Nature. An Angel, we read, used at a certain Time to come down into a *Pool* at *Jerusalem* ; the Water stirred by the Angel gave forth its Virtues, but the Angel felt no Impressions of *Weight*, or *Cold* from the Water. This is an Image of *Adam's* first Freedom from, and Power over all outward Nature. He could wherever he went, do as this Angel did, make every Element, and elementary Thing, discover all the Riches of God that were hidden in it, without feeling any Impressions of any kind from it. This was to have been the Work both of *Adam* and his Offspring, to make all the Creation show forth the Glory of God, to spread Paradise over all the Earth, till the Time came, that all the Good in this World was to be called back to its first State, and all the Evil in every Part left to be possessed by the Devil and his Angels. But since He fell from this first State into an *Animal* of this World, his Work is changed, and he must now labour with Sweat to *till* the cursed Earth, both for Himself and the Beasts upon it.

Let us now consider some plain and important Truths, that follow from what has been said above.

First, It is plain that the Sin and fall of *Adam* did not consist in this, *viz.*, that he had only committed a *single Act of Disobedience*, and so might have been just as He was before, if God had pleased to overlook this *single Act* of Disobedience, and not to have brought a Curse upon him and his Posterity for it.— Nothing of this is the Truth of the Matter, either on the Part of God, or on the Part of Man.

Secondly, It is plain also, that the Command of God, not to lust after, and eat of the forbidden Tree, was not an *arbitrary*

Command of God, given at Pleasure, or as a mere Trial of Man's Obedience ; but was a most kind and loving *Information* given by the God of Love to his new-born Offspring, concerning the State He was in, with Regard to the outward World : Warning him to withdraw all Desire of entering into a *Sensibility* of its Good and Evil ; because such Sensibility could not be had, without his immediate dying to that Divine and heavenly Life which he then enjoyed. ' Eat not,' says the God of Love, ' of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, for in the Day thou eatest thereof thou wilt surely die.'

As if it had been said, ' I have brought Thee into this Paradise, with such a Nature as the Angels have in Heaven. By the Order and Dignity of thy Creation, every Thing that lives and moves in this World is made subject to Thee, as to their Ruler. I have made Thee in thy outward Body of this World, to be for a Time a little lower than the Angels, till Thou hast brought forth a numerous Offspring, fit for that Kingdom which They have lost. The World around Thee, and the Life which is newly awakened in it, is much lower than Thou art ; of a Nature quite inferior to thine. It is a gross, corruptible State of Things, that cannot stand long before me ; but must for awhile bear the Marks of those Creatures, which first made Evil to be known in the Creation. The Angels, that first inhabited this Region, where Thou art to bring forth a new Order of Beings, were great and powerful Spirits, highly endowed with the Riches and Powers of their Creator. Whilst they stood (as the Order of Creation requires) in Meekness and Resignation, under their Creator, nothing was impossible to them ; there was no End of their glorious Powers throughout their whole Kingdom. Perpetual Scenes of Light, and Glory, and Beauty, were rising and changing through all the Height and Depth of their *glassy Sea*, merely at their Will and Pleasure. But finding what Wonders of Light and Glory they could perpetually bring forth ; how all the *Powers* of Eternity, treasured up in their *glassy Sea*, unfolded themselves, and broke forth in ravishing Forms of Wonder and Delight, merely in Obedience to their Call ; they began to admire and even adore themselves, and to fancy that there was *some Infinity of Power hidden* in themselves, which they supposed was kept under, and suppressed, by that Meekness, and Subjection to God, under which they acted. Fired and intoxicated with this proud Imagination, they boldly resolved, with all their eternal Energy and Strength, to take their Kingdom, with all its Glories, to themselves, by eternally abjuring all Meekness and Submission to God. No sooner did their eternal potent Desires fly in this Direction of a Revolt

‘ from God, but in the Swiftness of a Thought Heaven was lost ;
‘ and they found themselves dark Spirits, stripped of all their
‘ Light and Glory. Instead of Rising up above God (as they
‘ hoped) by breaking off from Him, there was no End of their
‘ eternal Sinking into new Depths of Slavery, under their own
‘ self-tormenting Natures. As a Wheel going down a Mountain,
‘ that has no bottom, must continually keep on its Turning, so
‘ are they whirled down by the Impetuosity of their own wrong
‘ turned Wills, in a continual Descent from the Fountain of all
‘ Glory, into the bottomless Depths of their own dark, fiery,
‘ working Powers. In no Hell, but what their own natural
‘ Strength had awakened ; bound in no Chains, but their own
‘ unbending, hardened Spirits ; made such, by their renouncing,
‘ with all their eternal Strength, all Meekness, and Subjection to
‘ God. In that Moment, the beautiful Materiality of their King-
‘ dom, their *glassy Sea* in which they dwelt, was by the wrathful
‘ rebellious Workings of these apostate Spirits broken all into
‘ Pieces, and became a black Lake, a horrible Chaos of Fire and
‘ Wrath, Thickness and Darkness, a Height and Depth of the
‘ confused, divided, fighting Properties of Nature. My creating
‘ *Fiat* stopped the Workings of these rebellious Spirits, by divid-
‘ ing the Ruins of their wasted Kingdom, into an Earth, a Sun,
‘ Stars, and separated Elements. Had not this Revolt of Angels
‘ brought forth that disordered *Chaos*, no such Materiality as this
‘ outward World is made of had ever been known. Gross com-
‘ pacted Earth, Stones, Rocks, wrathful Fire here, dead Water
‘ there, fighting Elements, with all their gross Vegetables and
‘ Animals, are Things not known in Eternity, and will be only
‘ seen in Time, till the great Designs are finished, for which Thou
‘ art brought forth in Paradise. And then, as a Fire awakened
‘ by the Rebel Creature, began all the Disorders of Nature, and
‘ turned that glassy Sea into a Chaos, so a *last Fire*, kindled at
‘ my Word, shall thoroughly purge the Floor of this World. In
‘ those purifying Flames, the Sun, the Stars, the Air, the Earth
‘ and Water, shall part with all their Dross, Deadness, and Divi-
‘ sion, and all become again that first, heavenly Materiality, a
‘ *glassy Sea* of everlasting Light and Glory, in which Thou and
‘ thy Offspring shall sing Hallelujahs to all Eternity. Look not
‘ therefore, thou Child of Paradise, thou Son of Eternity, look
‘ not with a longing Eye after any Thing in this outward World.
‘ There are the Remains of the fallen Angels in it ; Thou hast
‘ nothing to do in it, but as a Ruler over it. It stands before
‘ Thee, as a Mystery big with Wonders ; and Thou, whilst an
‘ Angel in Paradise, hast Power to open and display them all.
‘ It stands not in thy Sphere of Existence ; it is, as it were, but a

‘ Picture, and transitory Figure of Things ; for all that is not
 ‘ Eternal, is but as an Image in a Glass, that seems to have a
 ‘ Reality, which it has not. The Life which springs up in this
 ‘ Figure of a World, in such an infinite Variety of Kinds and
 ‘ Degrees, is but as a Shadow ; it is a Life of such Days and Years,
 ‘ as in Eternity have no Distinction from a Moment. It is a life
 ‘ of such Animals and Insects, as are without any Divine Sense,
 ‘ Capacity, or Feeling. Their Natures have nothing in them,
 ‘ but what I commanded this new modelled *Chaos*, this Order of
 ‘ Stars and fighting Elements, to bring forth.

‘ Now *Adam*, observe, I will open to Thee a great Mystery.
 ‘ The heavenly Materiality of the Angels’ Kingdom before their
 ‘ Revolt was a *glassy Sea*, a Mirror of beauteous Forms, Figures,
 ‘ Virtues, Powers, Colours, and Sounds, which were perpetually
 ‘ springing up, appearing and changing in an infinite Variety, to
 ‘ the Manifestation of the Wonders of the Divine Nature, and
 ‘ to the Joy of all the Angelical Kingdom. This heavenly
 ‘ Materiality had its Fruits and Vegetables, much more real
 ‘ than any that grow in Time, but as different from the Grossness
 ‘ of the Fruits of this World, as the heavenly Body of an Angel
 ‘ is different from the Body of the grossest Beast upon Earth.
 ‘ In this angelical Kingdom, the *one* Element (which is now in
 ‘ four Parts) was then a fruitful Mother of Wonders, continually
 ‘ bringing forth new *Forms* and *Figures of Life* ; not Animals,
 ‘ Beasts, or Insects, but beautiful *Figures*, and *ideal* Forms of
 ‘ the endless Divisibility, and Degrees of Life, which only broke
 ‘ forth as delightful Wonders of the Depth of the Riches of the
 ‘ Divine Nature, and to tune the Voices of Angels with Songs of
 ‘ Praise to the infinite Source of Life. And hence, O *Adam*, is
 ‘ that endless infinite Variety both of the animal and vegetable
 ‘ Life in this perishable World. For no Fruits of Vegetables
 ‘ could have sprung up in the divided Elements, but because
 ‘ they are the divided Parts of that one heavenly Materiality, or
 ‘ *glassy Sea*, in which angelical Fruits had formerly grown forth.
 ‘ No animal Life could have arose from Stars, Air, and Water,
 ‘ but because they are all of them the gross Remains of that one
 ‘ Element, in which the *Figures* and *Images* of Life had once
 ‘ risen up in such an infinite Variety of Degrees and Kinds.
 ‘ Hence it was, that when my creating *Fiat* spoke to these new
 ‘ ranged Stars, and Elements, and bid Life awake in them all
 ‘ according to its *Kind*, they all obeyed my Word, and every
 ‘ Property of Nature strove to bring forth, after the *Kind* and
 ‘ *Manner* as it had done in the Region of Eternity. This, my
 ‘ Son, is the Source and Original of all that infinite Variety, and
 ‘ Degrees of Life, both of Animals and Vegetables, in this

The Spirit of Prayer. 11

‘World. It is because all outward Nature, being fallen from Heaven, must yet, as well as it can, do and work as it had done in Heaven.

‘In Heaven, all Births and Growths, all Figures and spiritual Forms of Life, though infinite in Variety, are yet all of a heavenly Kind, and only so many Manifestations of the Goodness, Wisdom, Beauty, and Riches of the Divine Nature. But in this new modelled *Chaos*, where the Disorders that were raised by *Lucifer* are not wholly removed, but Evil and Good must stand in Strife, till the last purifying Fire, here every Kind and Degree of Life, like the World from whence it springs, is a Mixture of Good and Evil in its Birth.

‘Therefore, my Son, be content with thy angelical Nature, be content, as an Angel in Paradise, to eat Angels’ Food, and to rule over this mixed, imperfect, and perishing World, without partaking of its corruptible, impure, and perishing Nature. Lust not to know *how* the Animals feel the Evil and Good which this Life affords them; for if Thou couldst feel what they feel, Thou must be as they are; Thou canst not have their *Sensibility*, unless Thou hast their Nature: Thou canst not at once be an Angel and an earthly Animal. If the bestial Life is raised up in Thee, the same Instant the heavenly Birth of thy Nature must die in Thee. Therefore turn away thy Lust and Imagination from a Tree, that can only help Thee to the Knowledge of such Good and Evil, as belongs only to the Animals of this outward World; for nothing but the bestial Nature can receive Good or Evil from the Stars and Elements; they have no Power, but over that Life which proceeds from them. Eat therefore only the Food of Paradise; be content with Angels’ Bread; for if Thou eatest of this Tree, it will unavoidably awaken and open the bestial Life within Thee; and in that Moment, all that is heavenly must die, and cease to have any Power in Thee. And Thou must fall into a Slavery for Life, under the divided fighting Powers of Stars and Elements. Stripped of thy angelical Garment, that hid thy outward Body under its Glory, Thou wilt become more naked than any Beast upon Earth, be forced to seek from Beasts a Covering, to hide Thee from the Sight of thine own Eyes. A shameful, fearful, sickly, wanting, suffering, and distressed Heir of the same speedy Death in the Dust of the Earth, as the poor Beasts, whom Thou wilt thus have made to be thy Brethren.’

This Paraphrase I leave to the Reflection of the Reader, and proceed to show,

Thirdly, That the Misery, Distress, and woeful Condition,

which *Adam* by his Transgression brought upon Himself, and all his Posterity, was not the Effect of any *severe vindictive Wrath* in God, calling for Justice to his offended Sovereignty, and inflicting Pains and Punishments suitable to the Greatness of his just Indignation, and Anger at the disobedient Creature.

If *Adam*, contrary to the Will of God, and for the Sake of some new-fancied Knowledge, had broken both his own Legs, and put out both his Eyes, could it with any Show of Truth and Reason have been said, that God, in the Severity of his Wrath at so heinous an Offence, had punished *Adam* with *Lameness* and *Blindness*? And if it be further supposed, that God seeing *Adam* lying in this lame and blind Condition, came and spoke kindly to him, informing him of a *Secret of Love*, which He had in Heaven, which He promised to send him immediately by his highest Messenger of Love; assuring him, that by the Use of this heavenly *Secret* or *Divine Power*, his Legs and Eyes should, in some Course of Time, be infallibly restored to him, even in a better State than they were in at the first; must it not be still more unreasonable and absurd, to charge anything of this *Lameness* and *Blindness* upon a *Wrath* in God kindled against *Adam*? Nay, is it not clear, in the Highest Degree, that in all this Matter *Adam* had nothing from God, but the Overflowings of mere Love and Goodness, and that he had no Lameness and Blindness, but from his own voluntary Acts upon himself?

This is a simple, but clear Representation of the Case, how Matters stood betwixt God and our first Father, when by his own Act and Deed he extinguished that Divine Life, in which God had created him. *Adam* had no more Hurt, no more Evil done to Him, at his Fall, than the very Nature of his *own Action* brought along with it upon himself. He lusted to have the *Sensibility* of that Good and Evil, which the Beasts of this World have. He was told, that it could not be had without the Loss of his heavenly Life; because such Loss was as necessarily implied in the Nature of the Thing itself, as Blindness is implied in the Extinction of Eyes. However, he ventured to make the Trial, and chose to eat of That, which could and did open this *Sensibility* of earthly Good and Evil in him. No sooner was this Sensibility opened in him, but he found it to be a *Subjection* and *Slavery* to all outward Nature, to Heat and Cold, to Pains and Sickness, Horror of Mind, disturbed Passions, Misery, and Fears of Death. Which is in other Words only saying, that he found it to be an Extinction of that Divine, angelical Nature, which till then had kept him insensible, and incapable of any hurtful Impressions, from any or all the Powers of this World. Therefore, to charge his miserable State, as a Punishment inflicted

upon him by the severe Wrath of an incensed God, is the same Absurdity, as in the former supposed Lameness and Blindness. Because the whole Nature of all that miserable Change, both as to *Body* and *Soul*, which then came upon him, was neither more, nor less, than what was necessarily implied in that which he chose to do to himself. And therefore it had nothing of the Nature of a Punishment inflicted from *without*, but was only that which his own Action had done in and to himself: Just as the Man that puts out his own Eyes, has only that Darkness and Blindness, which his own Action has brought forth in himself.

From this short, yet plain and true Account of this Matter, we are at once delivered from a Load of Difficulties that have been raised about the *Fall* of Man, and *Original Sin*. It has been a great Question, How the Goodness of God could punish so *small* and *single* an Act of *Disobedience* in *Adam*, with so great a Punishment? Here the *Sovereignty* of God has been appealed to, and has set the Matter right; and from this *Sovereignty*, thus asserted, came forth the Systems of absolute *Election*, and absolute *Reprobation*. But for our Comfort it appears, that the Question here put concerns neither God nor Man, that it relates not at all to the Matter, and has no Existence, but in the Brains of those that formed it. For the Action in which *Adam's Sin* consisted, was such an Act, as in *itself* implied *all that miserable Change* that came upon him, and so was not a *small*, or *single* Act of *Disobedience*, nor had the least Punishment, of any kind, inflicted by God upon it. All that God did on this Transgression was mere Love, Compassion, and Relief administered to it. All the *Sovereignty* that God here showed, was a *Sovereignty* of Love to the fallen Creature. So that all the *Volumes* on this Question may be laid aside, as quite beside the Point. Another, and the greatest Question of all, and which *Divines* of all Sorts have been ever solving, and yet never have solved, is this; *How it can consist with the Goodness of God, to impute the Sin of Adam to all his Posterity?* But here, to our Comfort again, it may be said, that this Question is equally a vain Fiction with the other, and has nothing to do with the Procedure of God towards Mankind. For there is *no Imputation* of the Sin of *Adam* to his Posterity, and so no Foundation for a Dispute upon it. How absurd would it be to say, that God *imputes* the Nature, or the Body and Soul of *Adam* to his Posterity? for have they not the Nature of *Adam* by a natural Birth from him, and not by *Imputation* from God? Now this is all the Sin that *Adam's Posterity* have from him, they have only their Flesh and Blood, their Body and Soul from him, by a Birth from him, and not *imputed* to them from God. Instead

therefore of the former Question, which is quite beside the Matter, it should have been asked thus, How it was consistent with the Goodness of God, *that Adam could not generate Children of a Nature and Kind quite superior to himself?* This is the only Question that can be asked with relation to God; and yet it is a Question whose Absurdity confutes itself. For the only Reason why Sin is found in all the Sons of *Adam*, is this, it is because *Adam* of earthly Flesh and Blood, cannot bring forth a holy Angel out of himself, but must beget children of the same Nature and Condition with himself. And therefore here again it may be truly said, that all the laborious Volumes on God's imputing *Adam's* Sin to his Posterity, ought to be considered as waste Paper.*

But further, As it is thus evident from the Nature of *Adam's* Transgression, that all his Misery came from the Nature of his own Action, and that nothing was inflicted upon him, from a Wrath or Anger in God at him, so is it still much more so, from a Consideration of the Divine Nature. For it is a glorious and joyful Truth, (however suppressed in various Systems of Divinity) that from Eternity to Eternity, no Spark of Wrath ever was, or ever will be in the holy Triune God. If a Wrath of God was anywhere, it must be everywhere, if it burned once, it must burn to all Eternity. For everything that is in God himself is boundless, incapable of any Increase or Diminution, without Beginning, and without End. It is as good Sense, as consistent with the Divine Nature, to say that God, moved by a Wrath *in* and *from* Himself, began the Creation, as that a Wrath in God ever punished any Part of it. Nature and Creature is the only *Source* from whence, and the *Seat* in which, Wrath, Pain, and Vexation can dwell. Nor can they ever break forth either in *Nature* or *Creature*, but so far as either this, or that, has lost its State in God. This is as certain, as that Storms and Tempests, Thunder and Lightnings, have no Existence in Heaven. God, considered in Himself, is as infinitely separate from all Possibility of doing Hurt, or willing Pain to any Creature, as He is from a Possibility of suffering Pain or Hurt from the Hand of a Man. And this, for this plain Reason, because He is in himself, in his holy Trinity, nothing else but the boundless Abyss of all that is Good, and Sweet, and Amiable, and therefore stands in the utmost Contrariety to every Thing that is not a Blessing, in an eternal Impossibility of willing and intending a Moment's Pain or Hurt to any Creature. For from this unbounded Source of Goodness and Perfection, nothing but

* See *Appeal to all that Doubt, &c.*, page 198. *Letter to the Bishop of London*, page 70.

infinite Streams of Blessing are perpetually flowing forth upon all Nature and Creature, in a more incessant Plenty, than Rays of Light stream from the Sun. And as the *Sun* has but one Nature, and can give forth nothing but the Blessings of Light, so the holy Triune God has but *one* Nature and Intent towards all the Creation, which is, to pour forth the Riches and Sweetness of his Divine Perfections, upon every Thing that is capable of them, and according to its Capacity to receive them.

The Goodness of God breaking forth into a Desire *to communicate Good*, was the Cause and the Beginning of the Creation. Hence it follows, that to all Eternity, God can have no *Thought*, or *Intent* towards the Creature, but *to communicate Good*; because He made the Creature for this sole End, to receive Good. The first Motive towards the Creature is unchangeable; it takes its Rise from God's Desire *to communicate Good*; and it is an eternal Impossibility, that anything can ever come from God, as his *Will* and *Purpose* towards the Creature, but *that same Love and Goodness*, which first created it: He must always *will* that to it, which He *willed* at the Creation of it. This is the amiable Nature of God, He is *the Good*, the unchangeable, overflowing Fountain of Good, that sends forth nothing but Good to all Eternity. He is *the Love* itself, the unmixed, unmeasurable Love, doing nothing but from Love, giving nothing but Gifts of Love, to every Thing that He has made; requiring nothing of all his Creatures, but the Spirit and Fruits of that Love, which brought them into Being. Oh, how sweet is this Contemplation of the Height and Depth of the Riches of Divine Love! With what Attraction must it draw every thoughtful Man, to return Love for Love to this overflowing Fountain of boundless Goodness? What Charms has that Religion, which discovers to us our Existence in, Relation to, and Dependence upon this Ocean of Divine Love! View every Part of our Redemption, from *Adam's* first Sin, to the Resurrection of the Dead, and you will find nothing but successive Mysteries of that first Love, which created Angels and Men. All the Mysteries of the Gospel are only so many Marks and Proofs of God's desiring to make his Love triumph, in the Removal of Sin and Disorder from all Nature and Creature.*

But to return, and consider further the Nature of *Adam's* Fall, We have seen that it consisted of no *arbitrary Punishment* inflicted on him by a Wrath raised *in* God, but was only such a State of Misery, as his own Action necessarily brought upon him. Let us now see what happened to his Soul, a little more

* *Spirit of Love*, Part II., pages 1—18, 71.

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distinctly, and how it differed from what it was before his Fall, in its heavenly State.

The Angels that kept their State, and those that fell from it, were at first of one and the same Nature ; the Angels that fell, did not lose all their Nature, for then they must have fallen into *nothing* ; they only lost the heavenly and Divine Part of it, and therefore there is something still remaining in them, that is also in the holy Angels, and which is common to both of them. Now this which they did not lose, because it cannot be lost, is a certain *Root of Life*, or *Ground* of their Existence, which when once in Being, cannot be broken, and in which the unceasing Eternity, or Immortality of their Nature consists, a *Root* or first *Ground* of Life, equally capable of a Heavenly Birth, or of a Birth and Growth into Hell. Now that there is this *Root* of Life in Angels, and that it is something quite distinct from their heavenly Nature, is very plain from hence, that the Devils have lost their *heavenly*, and yet have kept their *eternal* and *immortal* Nature ; therefore that in which their Eternity and Immortality consists, must be something entirely distinct from their heavenly Nature, and must be also the same with *that*, in which the Eternity and Immortality of the holy Angels consists. For the fallen Angels have no other *eternal Root* in them, but that which they had before their Fall, and which they brought from Heaven ; and therefore *that* which is, and must be eternal and undying in their Nature, is the *same eternal Root* of Life, which is in the Angels that kept their State. And consequently, the only Difference betwixt an Angel and a Devil, is this, that in the Angel its eternal *Root* of Life *generates* a Birth of the *Light* and holy *Spirit* of God in it ; and in a Devil, this eternal Root of Life has lost *this Birth*, and the Power of bringing it forth again. Now here is to be truly seen the real Difference betwixt the Soul of *Adam* before, and after his Fall. Before his Fall, it had the Nature of an Angel of God, in which the Divine Birth of the Light and holy Spirit of God sprung up, but when contrary to the Will, and Command of God, a bestial Life was awakened in him, the heavenly Life was necessarily extinguished. The Soul therefore having lost that heavenly Birth which made it like an Angel of God, had nothing remaining in it, but that eternal and immortal *Root* of Life, which is the very Essence of a fallen Angel. But here we must observe a great and happy Difference, betwixt the Soul of *Adam*, though dead to all that was heavenly, and the Soul of a Devil. The Angels that extinguished the Birth of Heaven in themselves, fell directly into the horrible Depths of their own strong self-tormenting Nature, or their *own Hell*, and that for these two Reasons.

First, Because there was nowhere else for them to fall into, but into this tormenting Sensibility of their own fiery, wrathful, darkened Nature.

Secondly, Because their Revolt from God was an Attempt, and Intent to be higher and greater by awakening, and trusting to their own *natural Powers*, than they had hitherto been by Submission to God. They would have a Greatness that sprung only from *themselves*, and therefore they found *That* which they sought, they found themselves left to all the *Greatness* that was in themselves, and that was *their Hell, viz.*, a fiery Strength of a self-tormenting Nature, because separate from the one Source of Light and Love, of Peace and Joy.

But *Adam*, though his Soul was as entirely dead to Heaven, as the Souls of the Devils were, yet fell not into *their Hell*, for these two Reasons.

First, Because his Angelical Man dwelt in a Body taken from this outward World, which Body did not die at his Transgression, therefore his Soul that had lost his Heavenly Light, did not fall directly into the Devil's Hell, but it fell into a Body of Earthly Flesh and Blood, which being capable of the Enjoyments and Satisfaction of this Life, could, whilst it lasted, keep the Soul insensible of its own fallen State, and hellish Condition.

Secondly, because *Adam* not aspiring to be *above*, or *without* God by his own proud Strength, but only lusting to enter in a *Sensibility* of the Good and Evil of the bestial Life of this World, he found *only That* which he sought, and fell into no *other State* or Misery, than that bestial Life, which his own Actions and Desires had opened in him. And therefore this outward World stood him in great Stead, it prevented his immediate Falling into the State of Fallen Angels.

But then, as there was nothing that kept him out of the Hell of Fallen Angels, but his *Body* of Earthly Flesh and Blood, and as this was now as *mortal* in him, as it was in the Beasts, and lay at the Mercy of a thousand Accidents, that could every Moment take it from him, so he was in his fallen State, standing as it were on the Brink of Hell, liable every Moment to be pushed into it.*

See here the *deep* Ground and *absolute* Necessity of that new Birth, of *Word, Son, and Spirit* of God, which the Scripture speaks so much of. It is because our Soul, as fallen, is quite dead to, and separate from the Kingdom of Heaven, by having lost the Light and Spirit of God in itself; and therefore it is,

* See *Grounds and Reasons of Regeneration*, pages 6—12, 39—48.

and must be incapable of entering into Heaven, till by this new Birth, the Soul gets again its first Heavenly Nature.

If thou hast nothing of this Birth when thy Body dies, then thou hast only that *Root of Life* in Thee, which the Devils have, thou art as far from Heaven, and as incapable of it, as they are; thy Nature is their Nature, and therefore their Habitation must be thine. For nothing can possibly hinder thy Union with Fallen Angels, when thou diest, but a Birth of *That* in thy Soul, which the Fallen Angels have *lost*.

How pitiable therefore, or rather how hurtful is that *Learning*, which uses all its Art of Words, to avoid and lose the true Sense of our Saviour's Doctrine concerning the new Birth, which is necessary to fallen Man, by holding, that the Passages asserting the new Birth, are only a *figurative*, strong Form of Words concerning *something*, that is not *really* a Birth, or Growth of a new Nature, but may, according to the best Rules of *Criticism*, signify, either our *Entrance* into the Society of Christians, by the Rite of Baptism, or such a new Relation, as a Scholar may have with his Master, who by a Conformity to Terms of Union, or by copying his Ways and Manners, may, by a *Figure of Speech*, be said to be born again of him.

Now let it here be observed, that no Passage of Scripture is to be called, or esteemed as a *figurative* Expression, but where the *literal* Meaning cannot be allowed, as implying something that is either *bad* in itself, or *impossible*, or *inconsistent* with some plain and undeniable Doctrines of Scripture. Now that this is not the Case here, is very evident. For who will presume to say, that for the Soul of fallen Man to be born again of the Son, or Light, and Holy Spirit of God, is in the *literal* Sense of the Words, a Thing *bad* in itself, or *impossible*, or *inconsistent* with any plain and undeniable Doctrines of Scripture? The *Critics* therefore, who, in this Matter, leave the literal Meaning of the Words, and have Recourse to a figurative Sense, are without Excuse, and have nothing they can urge as a Reason for so doing, but their own Skill in Words. But it may be further added as a just Charge against these *Critics*, that their fixing these Passages to a figurative Meaning, is not only without any Ground, or Reason for so doing, but is also a *bad* Meaning, *impossible* to be true, and utterly *inconsistent* with the most plain, and fundamental Doctrines of Scripture. Now that this is the Case here, may in Part be seen by the following Instance.

Let it be supposed, that a human Body had lost the *Light*, and *Air* of this World, and was in a State of Death, because both these were quite extinguished in it. Must it not be said, that this human Body cannot see, or enter again into the Life of

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this World, unless the Light and Air of this World get again a *new Birth* in it: Is there here any Occasion, or any Room to form a Doubt, how these Words are to be understood, or any Possibility to mistake the Meaning of them? What a *Philosopher* would he be, who for fear of being called an *Enthusiast*, should here deny the *literal* Meaning of a new Birth of *Light* and *Air*, and think himself sufficiently justified in flying from it, because in his great Reading, he had seen the Words, *Birth*, *Light* and *Air*, sometimes, and upon some Occasions, used only in a *figurative* Sense?

Now this is exactly, and to a Tittle the Case of the Soul, as fallen, and lying in the same State of Death to the Kingdom of God, till a *new Birth* of the Light and Spirit of God be again brought forth in it. And therefore the *Necessity* of understanding these Words in their literal Meaning, the Absurdity of flying to a *figurative* Sense of the new Birth, and the *Impossibility* of that being the true one, is equally plain, and certain in both these Cases.

Now that the Soul, as fallen, is in this *real State* of Death, is a Doctrine not only plain from the whole Tenor of Scripture, but affirmed in all Systems of Divinity. For all hold, and teach, that Man *unredeemed*, must at the Death of his Body have fallen into a State of Misery, like that of the fallen Angels. But how can this be true, unless it be true, that the Life of Heaven was extinguished in the Soul, and that Man had really lost that Light, and Spirit of God, which alone can make any Being capable of living in Heaven? All therefore that I have here, and elsewhere said, concerning the Death of the Soul by its Fall, and its wanting a *real* new Birth of the Son, and Holy Spirit of God in it, in order to its Salvation, cannot be denied, but by giving up this great, fundamental Doctrine, namely, 'That Man in his fallen State, and unredeemed, must have been 'eternally lost.' For it cannot be true, that the Fall of Man unredeemed, would have kept him for ever out of Heaven, but because his Fall had absolutely put an End to the Life of Heaven in his Soul.

On the other Hand, it cannot be true that Jesus Christ is his Redeemer, and does deliver him from his fallen State, unless it be true, that Jesus Christ helps him to a new Birth of that Light and Spirit of God, which was extinguished by his Fall. For nothing could possibly be the Redemption, or Recovery of Man, but *Regeneration* alone. His Misery was his having lost the Life and Light of Heaven from his Soul, and therefore nothing in all the Universe of Nature, but a new Birth of that which he had lost, could be his Deliverance from his fallen State.

And therefore if Angels after Angels had come down from Heaven to assure him, that God had no Anger at him, he would still have been in the same *helpless State*; nay, had they told him, that God had Pity and Compassion towards him, he had yet been *unhelped*; because in the Nature of the Thing, nothing could make so much as a Beginning of his Deliverance, but that which made a Beginning of a new Birth in him, and nothing could fully effect his Recovery, but which perfectly finished the new Birth of all that heavenly Life which he had lost.

The Gospel tells us of a certain Man who fell among Thieves, who stripped him, and wounded him, and left him half dead; that first a *Priest*, then a *Levite* coming that Way, both of them avoided the poor Man, by passing on the other Side.

Here it is plain, that this Priest and Levite left the poor Man in the *same helpless State* in which they found him. Let it now be supposed, that instead of going on the other Side of the Road, they had come up to him, and poured *Oil* and *Wine* into his Wounds, only in a *figurative* Sense of the Words, that is, that they had spoken such Words to him, Words so *soft*, so oily, and reviving, that in a just *Figure* of Speech, they might be called a *pouring of Wine and Oil* into his Wounds. Now had they done this, must it not still be said, that the poor Man's Wounds and Nakedness were still left in their first *helpless State*? And all for this plain Reason, because the poor Man was naked, and wounded, not in a *figurative* Sense of the Words, but *really* and *truly*, and therefore could have no Help or Benefit, but from real Oil and Wine really poured into his Wounds. And for the same plain Reason, the fallen Soul, *really* dead to the Kingdom of Heaven, can have no Help but by a new Birth of the Light and Spirit of Heaven, *really* brought forth again in it. When *Adam* lay in his Death Wounds to the Kingdom of God, had the highest Order of *Archangels*, or *Seraphims* come by that Way, they could only have done as the Priest and Levite did, go on the other Side; or if they had come up to him, and done all they could for him, it could only have been such a *Good* or *Relief* to him, as by a *Figure* of Speech might be so called.

For as *Adam* had extinguished the Light and Spirit of God in himself, so no one could be the *good Samaritan* to him, or pour that Wine and Oil into his Wounds, which they wanted, but He who was the *Author* and *Source* of Light and Life to every Being that lives in Heaven.

One would wonder how any Persons, that believe the great Mystery of our Redemption, who adore the Depths of the Divine

Goodness, in that the Son of God, the second Person in the Trinity, became a Man himself, in order to make it *possible* for Man by a *Birth* from him to enter again into the Kingdom of God, should yet seek to, and contend for, not a *real*, but a figurative Sense of a new Birth in Jesus Christ. Is there any Thing more inconsistent than this? Or can any Thing strike more directly at the Heart of the whole Nature of our Redemption? God became Man, took upon him a Birth from the fallen Nature. But why was this done? Or wherein lies the adorable Depth of this Mystery? How does all this manifest the Infinity of the Divine Love towards Man? It is because nothing less than this mysterious Incarnation (which astonishes Angels) could open a *Way*, or begin a *Possibility*, for fallen Man to be *born again* from above, and made again a *Partaker* of the Divine Nature. It was because Man was become so dead to the Kingdom of Heaven, that there was no Help for him through all Nature. No Powers, no Abilities of the highest Order of Creatures, could kindle the least Spark of Life in him, or help him to the least Glimpse of that heavenly Light which he had lost. Now when all Nature and Creature stood round about *Adam* as unable to help him, as he was to help himself, and all of them *unable* to help him, for *this Reason*, because *that* which he had lost, was the *Life* and *Light* of Heaven, how glorious, how adorable is that Mystery, which enables us to say, that when Man laid thus incapable of any Relief from all the *Powers* and *Possibilities* of Nature, that then the Son, the Word of God, entered by a Birth into this fallen Nature, that by this mysterious Incarnation all the fallen Nature might be *born again* of him according to the *Spirit*, in the *same Reality*, as they were born of *Adam* according to the *Flesh*? Look at this Mystery in this true Light, in this plain Sense of Scripture, and then you must be forced to fall down before it, in Adoration of it. For all that is great and astonishing in the Goodness of God, all that is glorious and happy with Regard to Man, is manifestly contained in it.

But tell me, I pray, what becomes of all this, what is there left in any Part of this Mystery, if this *new Birth*, for the Sake of which God became Man, is not really a new Birth in the Thing itself, is not, as the Scripture affirms, a real Birth of the Son and Spirit of God in the Soul, but something or other, this or that, which the *Critics* say, may be called a new Birth, by a certain Figure of Speech? Is not *this* to give up all our Redemption at once, and a turning all the Mysteries of our Salvation into mere empty, unmeaning Terms of Speech? He that should deny the *Reality* of the Resurrection, upon Pretence,

that by the Rules of Criticism, it needs not signify a real coming out of a State of Natural Death, might have more to say for himself both from Reason and Scripture, than he that denies the Reality of the new Birth in Christ Jesus. For this new Birth is not a *Part*, but the *Whole* of our Salvation. Every Thing in Religion, from the Beginning to the End of Time, is only for the Sake of it. Nothing does us any Good, but either as it helps forward our Regeneration, or as it is a true Fruit or Effect of it.

All the glad Tidings of the Gospel, all the Benefits of our Saviour, however variously expressed in Scripture, all centre in this one Point, that He is become our Light, our Life, our Resurrection, our Holiness and Salvation; that we are in Him new Creatures, *created again* unto Righteousness, born again of Him, from above, of the Spirit of God. Every Thing in the Gospel is for the Sake of this new Creature, this new Man in Christ Jesus, and nothing is regarded without it. What Excuse therefore can be made for that Learning, which, robbing us of the true Fruits of the Tree of Life, leaves us nothing to feed upon, but the dry Dust of Words?

'I am the Vine, Ye are the Branches.' Here Christ, our second *Adam*, uses this Similitude to teach us, that the new Birth that we are to have from Him is *real*, in the most strict and literal Sense of the Words, and that there is the same *Nearness* of Relation, betwixt Him and his true Disciples, that there is betwixt the *Vine* and its Branches, that He does all that in us, and for us, which the Vine does to its Branches. Now the Life of the Vine must be really derived into the Branches, they cannot be Branches, till the Birth of the Vine is brought forth in them. And therefore as sure as the Birth of the Vine must be brought forth in the Branches, so sure is it, that we must be born again of our second *Adam*. And that unless the Life of the Holy Jesus be in us by a Birth from Him, we are as dead to Him, and the Kingdom of God, as the Branch is dead to the Vine, from which it is broken off.

Again our Blessed Saviour says, 'Without me, ye can do *Nothing*.' The Question is, when, or how a Man may be said to be *without* Christ? Consider again the Vine and its Branches: A Branch can then only be said to be without its Vine, when the Vegetable Life of the Vine is no longer *in it*. This is the only Sense, in which we can be said to be *without* Christ; when He is no longer in us, as a Principle of a heavenly Life, we are then without Him, and so *can do Nothing*, that is, Nothing that is good or holy. A Christ not *in us*, is the same Thing as a Christ *not ours*. If we are only *so far* with Christ, as to own and receive the History of his Birth, Person, and Character, if

this is all that we have of Him, we are as much *without* Him, as much left to ourselves, as little helped by Him, as those evil Spirits which cried out, 'We know Thee, who thou art, the Holy 'One of God.' For those evil Spirits, and all the fallen Angels, are totally *without* Christ, have no Benefit from Him, for this *one* and *only* Reason, because Christ is not *in Them*; Nothing of the Son of God is *generated*, or *born* in them. Therefore every Son of *Adam*, that has not *something* of the Son of God *generated*, or born *within* Him, is as much *without Christ*, as destitute of all Help from Him, as those evil Spirits who could only make an *outward Confession* of Him.

It is the Language of Scripture, that *Christ in us* is our Hope of Glory? that Christ formed in us, living, growing, and raising his own Life and Spirit in us, is our only Salvation. And indeed all this is plain from the Nature of the Thing; for since the *Serpent, Sin, Death* and *Hell*, are all essentially *within us*, the very *Growth* of our Nature, must not our Redemption be equally *inward*, an inward *essential Death* to this State of our Souls, and an inward Growth of a contrary Life within us? If *Adam* was only an *outward Person*, if his whole Nature was not our Nature, born in us, and derived *from Him into us*, it would be Nonsense to say, that his Fall is our Fall. So in like manner, if Christ, our second *Adam*, was only an *outward Person*, if He entered not as *deeply* into our Nature as the first *Adam* does, if we have not *as really* from Him a new inward, spiritual Man, as we have outward Flesh and Blood from *Adam*, what Ground could there be to say, that our Righteousness is from Him, as our Sin is from *Adam*?

Let no one here think to charge me with Disregard to the Holy Jesus, who was born of the *Virgin Mary*, or with setting up an *inward* Saviour in Opposition to that outward Christ, whose History is recorded in the Gospel. No: It is with the utmost Fulness of Faith and Assurance, that I ascribe all our Redemption to that blessed and mysterious Person, that was then born of the *Virgin Mary*, and will assert no inward Redemption but what wholly proceeds from, and is effected by that Life-giving Redeemer, who died on the Cross for our Redemption.

Was I to say, that a *Plant* or *Vegetable* must have the Sun *within* it, must have the Life, Light, and Virtues of the Sun incorporated *in it*, that it has no Benefit from the Sun, till the Sun is thus *inwardly* forming, generating, quickening, and raising up a Life of the Sun's Virtues in it, would this be setting up an *inward* Sun, in Opposition to the outward one? Could any Thing be more ridiculous than such a Charge? For is not all that is here said of an inward Sun in the *Vegetable*, so much

said of a Power and Virtue derived from the Sun in the Firmament? So in like manner, all that is said of an inward Christ, inwardly formed, and generated in the Root of the Soul, is only so much said of an *inward Life*, brought forth by the *Power* and *Efficacy* of that Blessed Christ, that was born of the *Virgin Mary*.

Chapter II.

Discovering the true Way of turning to God, and of finding the Kingdom of Heaven, the Riches of Eternity in our Souls.

THOU hast seen, dear Reader, the Nature and Necessity of *Regeneration*, be persuaded therefore fully to believe, and firmly to settle in thy Mind this most certain Truth, that all our Salvation consists in the *Manifestation of the Nature, Life, and Spirit of Jesus Christ, in our inward new Man*. This alone is Christian Redemption, this alone delivers from the Guilt and Power of Sin, this alone redeems, renews, and regains the first Life of God in the Soul of Man. Every Thing besides this, is *Self*, is *Fiction*, is *Propriety*, is *own Will*, and however coloured, is only thy *old Man, with all his Deeds*. Enter therefore with all thy Heart into this Truth, let thy Eye be always upon it, do every Thing in View of it, try every Thing by the Truth of it, love Nothing but for the Sake of it. Wherever thou goest, whatever thou dost, at Home, or Abroad, in the Field, or at Church, do all in a Desire of Union with Christ, in Imitation of his Tempers and Inclinations, and look upon all as Nothing, but that which exercises, and increases the Spirit and Life of Christ in thy Soul. From Morning to Night keep Jesus in thy Heart, long for Nothing, desire Nothing, hope for Nothing, but to have all that is within Thee changed into the Spirit and Temper of the Holy Jesus. Let this be thy *Christianity*, thy *Church*, and thy *Religion*. For this new Birth in Christ thus firmly believed, and continually desired, will do every Thing that thou wantest to have done in Thee, it will dry up all the Springs of Vice, stop all the Workings of Evil in thy Nature, it will bring all that is Good into Thee, it will open all the Gospel within Thee, and thou wilt know what it is to be taught of God. This longing Desire of thy Heart to be *one* with Christ will soon put a stop to all the

Vanity of thy Life, and nothing will be admitted to enter into thy Heart, or proceed from it, but what comes from God and returns to God: thou wilt soon be, as it were, tied and bound in the Chains of all holy Affections and Desires, thy *Mouth* will have a *Watch* set upon it, thy *Ears* would willingly hear nothing that does not tend to God, nor thy *Eyes* be open, but to see, and find Occasions of doing Good. In a Word, when this Faith has got both thy *Head* and thy *Heart*, it will then be with thee, as it was with the *Merchant* who found a *Pearl of great Price*, it will make thee gladly to *sell all that thou hast, and buy it*. For all that had seized and possessed the Heart of any Man, whatever the *Merchant* of this World had got together, whether of Riches, Power, Honour, Learning, or Reputation, loses all its Value, is counted but as *Dung*, and willingly parted with, as soon as this glorious Pearl, the new Birth in Christ Jesus, is discovered and found by him. This therefore may serve as a *Touchstone*, whereby every one may try the Truth of his State; if the old Man is still a *Merchant* within thee, trading in all sorts of worldly Honour, Power, or Learning, if the Wisdom of this World is not Foolishness to thee, if earthly Interests, and sensual Pleasures, are still the Desire of thy Heart, and only covered under a *Form* of Godliness, a *Cloak* of Creeds, Observances, and Institutions of Religion, thou mayest be assured, that the *Pearl of great Price* is not yet found by thee. For where Christ is born, or his Spirit rises up in the Soul, *there all Self* is denied, and obliged to turn out; *there* all carnal Wisdom, Arts of Advancement, with every Pride and Glory of this Life, are as so many *heathen Idols* all willingly renounced, and the Man is not only content, but rejoices to say, that *his Kingdom is not of this World*.

But thou wilt perhaps say, How shall this great Work, the Birth of Christ, be effected in me? It might rather be said, since Christ has an infinite Power, and also an infinite Desire to save Mankind, how can anyone miss of this Salvation, but through his *own unwillingness* to be saved by Him? Consider, how was it, that the *Lame* and *Blind*, the *Lunatic* and *Leper*, the *Publican* and *Sinner*, found Christ to be their Saviour, and to do *all That* for them, which they wanted to be done to them? It was because they had a real Desire of having *That* which they asked for, and therefore in true *Faith* and *Prayer* applied to Christ, that his Spirit and Power might enter into them, and heal *That* which they wanted, and desired to be healed in them. Every one of these said in *Faith and Desire*, 'Lord, if thou wilt, 'thou canst make me whole.' And the Answer was always this, 'According to thy Faith, so be it done unto Thee.' This is Christ's Answer *now*, and thus it is done to every one of us at

this Day, as *our Faith is, so is it done unto us*. And here lies the whole Reason of our falling short of the Salvation of Christ, it is because we have *No Will* to it.

But you will say, Do not all Christians desire to have Christ to be their Saviour? Yes. But here is the Deceit; all would have Christ to be their Saviour in the *next World*, and to help them into Heaven when they die, by his Power, and Merits with God. But this is not *willing* Christ to be thy Saviour; for his Salvation, if it is had, must be had in this World; if He saves Thee, it must be done in this Life, by changing and altering *all that is within Thee*, by helping thee to a new Heart, as He helped the Blind to see, the Lame to walk, and the Dumb to speak. For to have Salvation from Christ, is nothing else but to be made like unto Him; it is to have his Humility and Meekness, his Mortification and Self-denial, his Renunciation of the Spirit, Wisdom, and Honours of this World, his Love of God, his Desire of doing God's Will, and seeking only his Honour. To have these Tempers formed and begotten in thy Heart, is to have Salvation from Christ. But if thou *willest not* to have these Tempers brought forth in thee, if thy Faith and Desire does not seek, and cry to Christ for them in the *same Reality*, as the Lame asked to walk, and the Blind to see, then thou must be said to be *unwilling* to have Christ to be thy Saviour.

Again, Consider, How was it, that the carnal *Jew*, the deep-read *Scribe*, the learned *Rabbi*, the Religious *Pharisee*, not only did not receive, but *crucified* their Saviour? It was because they *willed*, and *desired* no such Saviour as He was, no such *inward Salvation* as He offered to them. They desired no Change of their own Nature, no inward Destruction of their own natural Tempers, no Deliverance from the Love of themselves, and the Enjoyments of their Passions; they liked their Sate, the Gratifications of their Old Man, their *long Robes*, their *broad Phylacteries*, and *Greetings* in the Markets. They wanted not to have their *Pride* and *Self-love* dethroned, their Covetousness and Sensuality to be subdued by a new Nature from Heaven derived into them. Their only Desire was the Success of *Judaism*, to have an *outward* Saviour, a *temporal* Prince, that should establish their *Law* and Ceremonies over all the Earth. And therefore they crucified their Dear Redeemer, and would have none of his Salvation, because it all consisted in a Change of their Nature, in a *new Birth* from above, and a Kingdom of Heaven to be opened *within* them by the Spirit of God.

Oh Christendom, look not only at the *old Jews*, but see thyself in this Glass. For at this Day (Oh sad Truth to be told!) at this Day, a Christ *within* us, an *inward* Saviour raising a *Birth*

of his own Nature, Life, and Spirit within us, is rejected as gross *Enthusiasm*, the learned *Rabbies* take Counsel against it. The Propagation of *Popery*, the Propagation of *Protestantism*, the Success of some *particular* Church, is the *Salvation* which Priests and People are chiefly concerned about.

But to return. It is manifest, that no one can fail of the Benefit of Christ's Salvation, but through an *unwillingness* to have it, and from the same Spirit and Tempers which made the *Jews* unwilling to receive it. But if thou wouldst still further know, how this great Work, the *Birth* of Christ, is to be effected in thee, then let this joyful Truth be told thee, that this great Work is *already* begun in every one of us. For this Holy Jesus, that is to be formed in thee, that is to be the Saviour and new Life of thy Soul, that is to raise thee out of the Darkness of Death into the Light of Life, and give thee Power to become a Son of God, is already *within* thee, living, stirring, calling, knocking at the Door of thy Heart, and wanting nothing but thy own *Faith* and *good Will*, to have as real a Birth and Form in thee, as He had in the Virgin *Mary*. For the eternal *Word*, or Son of God, did not then first begin to be the Saviour of the World, when He was Born in *Bethlehem* of *Judea*; but that *Word* which became Man in the Virgin *Mary*, did, from the Beginning of the World, enter as a *Word* of Life, a *Seed* of Salvation, into the first Father of Mankind, was inspoken into him, as an ingrafted *Word*, under the Name and Character of a *Bruiser of the Serpent's Head*. Hence it is, that Christ said to his Disciples, 'the Kingdom of God is within you'; that is, the Divine Nature is within you, given unto your first Father, into the Light of his Life, and from him, rising up in the Life of every Son of *Adam*. Hence also the holy Jesus is said to be the 'Light, which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World.' Not as He was born at *Bethlehem*, not as He had an human Form upon Earth; in these Respects he could not be said to have been the Light of every Man that cometh into the World; but as He was that *eternal Word*, by which all Things were created, which was the *Life* and *Light* of all Things, and which had as a *second* Creator entered again into fallen Man, as a Bruiser of the Serpent; in this respect it was truly said of our Lord, when on Earth, that 'He was that Light which lighteth every Man, that cometh into 'the World.' For He was really and truly all this, as He was the *Immanuel*, the God *with us*, given unto *Adam*, and in him to all his Offspring. See here the Beginning and glorious Extent of the *Catholic Church* of Christ, it takes in all the World. It is God's unlimited, universal Mercy to all Mankind; and every human Creature, as sure as he is born of *Adam*, has a Birth of

the Bruiser of the Serpent within him, and so is infallibly in Covenant with God through Jesus Christ. Hence also it is, that the Holy Jesus is appointed to be Judge of all the World, it is because all Mankind, all Nations and Languages have in him, and through him been put into Covenant with God, and made capable of resisting the Evil of their fallen Nature.

When our blessed Lord conversed with the Woman at *Jacob's Well*, he said unto her, 'If thou knewest the Gift of God, and 'who it is that talketh with thee, thou wouldest have asked of 'Him, and He would have given Thee living Water.' How happy (may anyone well say) was this Woman of *Samaria*, to stand so near this *Gift of God*, from whom she might have had living water, had she but vouchsafed to have asked for it! But, dear Christian, this Happiness is thine; for this Holy Jesus, *the Gift of God*, first given unto *Adam*, and in him to all that are descended from him, is the *Gift of God to Thee*, as sure as thou art born of *Adam*; nay, hast thou never yet owned him, art thou wandered from him, as far as the Prodigal Son from his Father's House, yet is he still with Thee, he is the Gift of God to Thee, and if thou wilt turn to Him, and ask of Him, he has living Water for Thee.

Poor Sinner! consider the Treasure thou hast within Thee, the Saviour of the World, the eternal Word of God lies hid in Thee, as a Spark of the Divine Nature, which is to overcome Sin and Death, and Hell within Thee, and generate the Life of Heaven again in thy Soul. Turn to thy Heart, and thy Heart will find its Saviour, its God within itself. Thou seest, hearest, and feelest nothing of God, because thou seekest for Him *abroad* with thy outward Eyes, thou seekest for Him in Books, in Controversies, in the Church, and outward Exercises, but *there* thou wilt not find Him, till thou hast *first* found Him in thy Heart. Seek for Him in thy Heart, and thou wilt never seek in vain, for there He dwells, there is the Seat of his Light and Holy Spirit.

For this turning to the Light and Spirit of God within Thee, is thy *only true* turning unto God, there is no other Way of finding Him, but in that Place where he dwelleth in Thee. For though God be everywhere present, yet He is only present to Thee in the deepest, and most central Part of thy Soul. Thy natural *Senses* cannot possess God, or unite Thee to Him, nay thy inward Faculties of *Understanding*, *Will*, and *Memory*, can only reach after God, but cannot be the *Place* of his Habitation in Thee. But there is a *Root*, or *Depth* in Thee, from whence all these Faculties come forth, as Lines from a *Centre*, or as Branches from the Body of the Tree. This Depth is called the *Centre*, the *Fund* or *Bottom* of the Soul. This Depth is the

Unity, the *Eternity*, I had almost said, the *Infinity* of thy Soul ; for it is so infinite, that nothing can satisfy it, or give it any Rest, but the infinity of God. In this *Depth* of the Soul, the Holy Trinity brought forth its own living Image in the first created Man, bearing in Himself a living Representation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and this was his Dwelling in God and God in him. This was the Kingdom of God *within* Him, and made Paradise *without* Him. But the Day that *Adam* did eat of the forbidden earthly Tree, in that Day he absolutely died to this Kingdom of God *within* Him. This *Depth* or *Centre* of his Soul having lost its God, was shut up in Death and Darkness, and became a Prisoner in an earthly Animal, that only excelled its Brethren, the Beasts, in an upright Form, and serpentine Subtilty. Thus ended the Fall of Man. But from that Moment that the God of Mercy inspoke into *Adam* the Bruiser of the Serpent, from that Moment all the Riches and Treasures of the Divine Nature came again into Man, as a *Seed* of Salvation sown into the *Centre* of the Soul, and only lies hidden there in every Man, till he desires to rise from his fallen State, and to be born again from above.

Awake then, thou that Sleepest, and Christ, who from all Eternity has been espoused to thy Soul, shall give Thee Light. Begin to search and dig in thine own Field for this *Pearl of Eternity*, that lies hidden in it ; it cannot cost Thee too much, nor canst thou buy it too dear, for it is *All*, and when thou hast found it, thou wilt know, that all which thou hast sold or given away for it, is as mere a Nothing, as a Bubble upon the Water.

But if thou turnest from this heavenly Pearl, or tramplest it under thy Feet, for the sake of being Rich, or Great, either in Church or State, if Death finds Thee in *this Success*, thou canst not then say, that though the *Pearl* is lost, yet *something* has been gained instead of it. For in that parting Moment, the *Things*, and the *Sounds* of this World, will be exactly alike ; to have had an *Estate*, or only to have *heard* of it, to have lived at *Lambeth* twenty Years, or only to have twenty Times *passed* by the Palace, will be the *same Good*, or the *same Nothing* to Thee.

But I will now show a little more distinctly, what this *Pearl of Eternity* is. *First*, It is the *Light* and *Spirit* of God within Thee, which has hitherto done Thee but little Good, because all the Desire of thy Heart has been after the Light and Spirit of this World. Thy Reason, and Senses, thy Heart and Passions, have turned all their Attention to the poor Concerns of this Life, and therefore thou art a Stranger to this Principle of

Heaven, this Riches of Eternity within Thee. For as God is not, cannot be truly found by any Worshipers, but those who worship Him in *Spirit* and in *Truth*, so this Light and Spirit, though always within us, is not, cannot be found, felt, or enjoyed, but by those whose whole Spirit is turned to it.

When Man first came into Being, and stood before God as his own Image and Likeness, this *Light* and *Spirit* of God was as *natural* to him, as truly the Light of his Nature, as the *Light and Air* of this World is natural to the Creatures that have their Birth in it. But when Man, not content with the Food of Eternity, did eat of the earthly Tree, this Light and Spirit of Heaven was no more *natural* to him, no more rose up as a Birth of his Nature, but instead thereof, he was left solely to the Light and Spirit of this World. And this is *that Death*, which God told *Adam*, he should surely die, in the Day that he should eat of the forbidden Tree.

But the Goodness of God would not leave Man in this Condition. A Redemption from it was immediately granted, and the Brusier of the Serpent brought the Light and Spirit of Heaven *once more* into the human Nature, not as it was in its first State, when Man was in Paradise, but as a *Treasure hidden* in the Centre of our Souls, which should discover, and open itself by Degrees, in such Proportion, as the *Faith* and *Desires* of our Hearts were turned to it. This Light and Spirit of God thus freely restored again to the Soul, and lying in it as a *secret Source* of Heaven, is called *Grace*, *Free Grace*, or the *Supernatural Gift*, or Power of God in the Soul, because it was something that the Natural Powers of the Soul could no more obtain. Hence it is, that in the greatest Truth, and highest Reality, every *stirring* of the Soul, every *Tendency* of the Heart towards God and Goodness, is *justly* and *necessarily* ascribed to the *Holy Spirit*, or the *Grace* of God. It is because this *first Seed* of Life, which is sown into the Soul, as the *Gift* or *Grace* of God to fallen Man, is itself the *Light* and *Spirit* of God, and therefore every *Stirring*, or *Opening* of this Seed of Life, every awakened Thought or Desire that arises from it, must be called the *Moving*, or the *Quickening* of the Spirit of God; and therefore that new Man which arises from it, must of all Necessity be said to be *solely the Work and Operation* of God. Hence also we have an easy and plain Declaration of the true Meaning, solid Sense, and certain Truth, of all those Scriptures, which speak of the *Inspiration* of God, the Operation of the *Holy Spirit*, the Power of the *Divine Light*, as the *sole* and *necessary* Agents in the Renewal and Sanctification of our Souls, and also as being Things *common* to all Men. It is because this

Seed of Life, or Bruiser of the Serpent, is *common* to all Men, and has in all Men a *Degree* of Life, which is in itself so much of the *Inspiration*, or Life of God, the *Spirit* of God, the *Light* of God, which is in every Soul, and is its Power of becoming born again of God. Hence also it is, that all Men are exhorted not to *quench*, or *resist*, or *grieve* the Spirit, that is, this *Seed of the Spirit and Light* of God that is in *all* Men, as the only Source of Good. Again, *the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh*. By the *Flesh* and its Lustings, are meant the *mere human Nature*, or the *natural Man*, as He is by the Fall; by the *Spirit* is meant the *Bruiser of the Serpent*, that Seed of the Light and Spirit of God, which lies as a Treasure hidden in the Soul, in order to bring forth the Life that was lost in *Adam*. Now as the *Flesh* has its Life, its Lustings, whence all sorts of Evil are truly said to be inspired, quickened, and stirred up in us, so the Spirit being a *Living Principle within us*, has its *Inspiration*, its *Breathing*, its *Moving*, its *Quickening*, from which alone the Divine Life, or the Angel that died in *Adam*, can be born in us.

When this *Seed* of the Spirit, *common* to all Men, is not resisted, grieved, and quenched, but its *Inspirations* and *Motions* suffered to grow and increase in us, to unite with God, and get Power over all the Lusts of the *Flesh*, then we are born again, the Nature, Spirit, and Tempers of Jesus Christ are opened in our Souls, the Kingdom of God is come, and is found within us. On the other Hand, when the *Flesh*, or the *Natural Man* has resisted and quenched this Spirit or Seed of Life within us, then the works of the *Flesh*, Adultery, Fornication, Murders, Lying, Hatred, Envy, Wrath, Pride, Foolishness, worldly Wisdom, carnal Prudence, false Religion, hypocritical Holiness, and serpentine Subtilty, have set up their Kingdom within us.

See here in short, the State of Man as redeemed. He has a *Spark* of the Light and Spirit of God, as a *Supernatural Gift* of God given into the Birth of his Soul, to bring forth by Degrees a *New Birth* of that Life which was Lost in Paradise. This Holy Spark of the Divine Nature within Him, has a natural, strong, and almost infinite Tendency, or Reaching after that eternal Light and Spirit of God, from whence it came forth. It came forth from God, it came *out* of God, it *partaketh* of the Divine Nature, and therefore it is always in a State of Tendency and Return to God. And all this is called the *Breathing*, the *Moving*, the *Quickening* of the Holy Spirit within us, which are so many Operations of this Spark of Life tending towards God. On the other Hand, The Deity as considered in itself, and *without* the Soul of Man, has an *infinite, unchangeable* Tendency of Love,

and Desire towards the Soul of Man, to unite and communicate its own Riches and Glories to it, just as the Spirit of the *Air without* Man, unites and communicates its Riches and Virtues to the Spirit of the Air that is *within* Man. This Love, or Desire of God towards the Soul of Man, is so great, that He gave his only begotten Son, the Brightness of his Glory, to take the human Nature upon Him, in its fallen State, that by this mysterious Union of God and Man, all the Enemies of the Soul of Man might be overcome, and every human Creature might have a Power of being born again according to that Image of God, in which he was first created. The Gospel is the History of this Love of God to Man. Inwardly he has a *Seed* of the Divine Life given into the Birth of his Soul, a Seed that has all the *Riches of Eternity* in it, and is always wanting to come to the Birth in him, and be alive in God. Outwardly he has Jesus Christ, who as a *Sun* of Righteousness, is always casting forth his enlivening Beams on this *inward Seed*, to kindle and call it forth to the Birth, doing that to this Seed of Heaven in Man, which the Sun in the Firmament is always doing to the vegetable Seeds in the Earth.

Consider this Matter in the following Similitude. A *Grain* of Wheat has the *Air* and *Light* of this World inclosed, or incorporated in it: This is the Mystery of its Life, this is its Power of Growing, by this it has a strong continual Tendency of uniting again with that *Ocean* of Light and Air, from whence it came forth, and so it helps to kindle its own Vegetable Life.

On the other Hand, That great *Ocean* of Light and Air, having its own *Offspring* hidden in the Heart of the Grain, has a perpetual strong Tendency to unite, and communicate with it again. From this Desire of Union on *both Sides*, the Vegetable Life arises, and all the Virtues and Powers contained in it.

But here let it be well observed, that this Desire on both Sides cannot have its Effect, till the *Husk* and gross Part of the Grain falls into a State of Corruption and Death, till this begins, the Mystery of Life hidden in it, cannot come forth. The Application here may be left to the Reader. I shall only observe, that we may here see the true Ground, and absolute Necessity, of that dying to ourselves, and to the World, to which our Blessed Lord so constantly calls all his Followers. An universal Self-Denial, a perpetual Mortification of the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, is not a Thing imposed upon us by the *mere Will* of God, is not required as a *Punishment*, is not an Invention of dull and *monkish* Spirits, but has its *Ground* and *Reason* in the Nature of the Thing, and is as absolutely necessary to make Way for the New Birth, as the Death

of the *Husk* and gross Part of the Grain, is necessary to make Way for its Vegetable Life.

But *Secondly*, This *Pearl of Eternity* is the *Wisdom* and *Love* of God within Thee. In this Pearl of thy Serpent Bruiser, all the Holy Nature, Spirit, Tempers, and Inclinations of Christ, lie as in a Seed in the Centre of thy Soul, and Divine Wisdom and heavenly Love will grow up in Thee, if thou givest but true Attention to God present in thy Soul. On the other Hand, There is hidden also in the Depth of thy Nature the *Root*, or *Possibility* of all the hellish Nature, Spirit, and Tempers of the fallen Angels. For Heaven and Hell have each of them their *Foundation* within us, they come not into us from *without*, but spring up in us, according as our *Will* and *Heart* is turned either to the Light of God, or the Kingdom of Darkness. But when this Life, which is in the midst of these two Eternities, is at an End, either an Angel, or a Devil will be found to have a *Birth* in us.

Thou needest not therefore run here, or there, *saying*, *Where is Christ?* *Thou needest not say*, *Who shall ascend into Heaven, that is, to bring down Christ from above?* *Or who shall descend into the Deep, to bring up Christ from the Dead?* For behold the *Word*, which is the Wisdom of God, is in thy Heart, it is there as a Bruiser of thy Serpent, as a Light unto thy Feet and Lanthorn unto thy Paths. It is there as an *Holy Oil*, to soften and overcome the wrathful fiery Properties of thy Nature, and change them into the humble Meekness of Light and Love. It is there as a *speaking Word* of God in thy Soul; and as soon as thou art ready to hear, this eternal speaking Word will speak Wisdom and Love in thy inward Parts, and bring forth the Birth of Christ, with all his Holy Nature, Spirit, and Tempers, within Thee. Hence it was (that is, from this Principle of Heaven, or Christ in the Soul) hence I say it was, that so many eminent Spirits, Partakers of a Divine Life, have appeared in so many Parts of the heathen World; glorious Names, Sons of Wisdom, that shone, as Lights hung out by God, in the midst of idolatrous Darkness. These were the Apostles of a *Christ within*, that were awakened and commissioned by the *inward Bruiser* of the Serpent, to call Mankind from the blind Pursuits of Flesh and Blood, to know themselves, the Dignity of their Nature, the Immortality of their Souls, and the Necessity of Virtue to avoid eternal Shame and Misery. These *Apostles*, though they had not the *Law*, or *written Gospel* to urge upon their Hearers, yet having turned to God, they found, and preached the Gospel, that was written in their Hearts. Hence one of them could say this Divine Truth, *viz.*, *That such only are Priests and*

Prophets, who have God in themselves. Hence also it is, that in the Christian Church, there have been in all Ages, amongst the most illiterate, both Men and Women, who have attained to a deep Understanding of the Mysteries of the Wisdom and Love of God in Christ Jesus. And what wonder? Since it is not Art or Science, or Skill in Grammar or Logic, but the Opening of the Divine Life in the Soul, that can give true Understanding of the Things of God. This Life of God in the Soul, which for its Smallness at first, and Capacity for great Growth, is by our Lord compared to a Grain of Mustard Seed, may be, and too generally is suppressed and kept under, either by worldly Cares, or Pleasures, by vain Learning, Sensuality, or Ambition. And all this while, whatever Church, or Profession any Man is of, he is a mere *Natural Man, unregenerate, unenlightened* by the Spirit of God, because this Seed of Heaven is choked, and not suffered to grow up in him. And therefore his *Religion* is no more from Heaven than his *fine Breeding*; his *Cares* have no more Goodness in them than his *Pleasures*; his Love is worth no more than his *Hatred*; his Zeal for this, or against that Form of Religion, has only the Nature of any other worldly Contention in it. And thus it is, and must be with every mere natural Man, whatever Appearances he may put on, he may, if he pleases, know himself to be the Slave, and Machine of his own corrupt Tempers and Inclinations, to be enlightened, inspired, quickened and animated by Self-love, Self-esteem, and Self-seeking, which is the only Life, and Spirit of the mere natural Man, whether he be *Heathen, Jew, or Christian.*

On the other Hand, Wherever this Seed of Heaven is suffered to take Root, to get Life and Breath in the Soul, whether it be in Man, or Woman, young or old, there this new born inward Man is justly said to be *inspired, enlightened, and moved* by the Spirit of God, because his whole Birth and Life is a Birth from above, of the Light and Spirit of God; and therefore all that is in him, has the Nature, Spirit, and Tempers of Heaven in it. As this regenerate Life grows up in any Man, so there grows up a true and real Knowledge of the whole Mystery of Godliness in himself. All that the Gospel teaches of Sin and Grace, of Life and Death, of Heaven and Hell, of the New and Old Man, of the Light and Spirit of God, are Things not got by *Hearsay*, but inwardly known, felt and experienced in the Growth of his own new born Life. He has then an *Uction* from above which teaches him all Things, a Spirit that *knows what it ought to pray for*, a Spirit that *prays without ceasing*, that is risen with Christ from the Dead, and has all its Conversation in Heaven, a Spirit that has *Groans and Sighs that cannot be uttered*, that travaileth

and groaneth with the whole Creation, to be delivered from Vanity, and have its glorious Liberty in that God, from whom it came forth.

Again, *Thirdly*, This *Pearl* of Eternity is the *Church*, or Temple of God *within Thee*, the consecrated Place of Divine Worship, where alone thou canst worship God in *Spirit*, and in *Truth*. In *Spirit*, because thy Spirit is that alone in Thee, which can unite, and cleave unto God, and receive the Workings of his Divine Spirit upon Thee. In *Truth*, because this *Adoration* in Spirit, is that *Truth* and *Reality*, of which all outward *Forms* and *Rites*, though instituted by God, are only the *Figure* for a Time, but this Worship is Eternal. Accustom thyself to the Holy Service of this inward Temple. In the midst of it is the Fountain of Living Water, of which thou mayest drink, and live for ever. There the Mysteries of thy Redemption are celebrated, or rather opened in Life and Power. There the Supper of the Lamb is kept; the *Bread that came down from Heaven, that giveth Life to the World*, is thy true Nourishment: all is done, and known in real Experience, in a living Sensibility of the Work of God on the Soul. There the Birth, the Life, the Sufferings, the Death, the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, are not merely remembered, but inwardly found, and enjoyed as the real States of thy Soul, which has followed Christ in the Regeneration. When once thou art well grounded in this *inward Worship*, thou wilt have learnt to live unto God *above Time*, and *Place*. For every Day will be *Sunday* to thee, and wherever thou goest, thou wilt have a *Priest*, a *Church*, and an *Altar* along with Thee. For when God has all that He should have of thy Heart, when renouncing the Will, Judgment, Tempers and Inclinations of thy *old Man*, thou art wholly given up to the Obedience of the Light and Spirit of God within Thee, to *Will* only in his Will, to *Love* only in his Love, to be *Wise* only in his Wisdom, then it is, that every Thing thou doest is as a Song of Praise, and the common Business of thy Life is a conforming to God's Will on Earth, as Angels do in Heaven.

Fourthly, and *Lastly*, This *Pearl* of Eternity is the *Peace* and *Joy* of God within Thee, but can only be found by the Manifestation of the Life and Power of Jesus Christ in thy Soul. But Christ cannot be thy Power and thy Life, till in Obedience to his Call, *thou deniest thyself, takest up thy daily Cross, and followest Him*, in the Regeneration. This is peremptory, it admits of no Reserve or Evasion, it is the one Way to Christ and Eternal Life. But be where thou wilt, either *here*, or at *Rome*, or *Genova*, if *Self* is undenied, if thou livest to thine *own Will*, to the Pleasures of thy natural Lust and Appetites, Senses and Passions,

and in Conformity to the vain Customs, and Spirit of this World, thou art dead whilst thou livest, the Seed of the Woman is crucified within Thee, Christ can profit thee Nothing, thou art a Stranger to all that is holy and heavenly within Thee, and utterly incapable of finding the *Peace* and *Joy* of God in thy Soul. And thus thou art *Poor*, and *Blind*, and *Naked*, and *Empty*, and livest a miserable Life in the Vanity of Time ; whilst all the Riches of Eternity, the Light and Spirit, the Wisdom and Love, the Peace and Joy of God are within Thee. And thus it will always be with Thee, there is no Remedy, go where thou wilt, do what thou wilt, all is shut up, there is no open Door of Salvation, no Awakening out of the Sleep of Sin, no Deliverance from the Power of thy corrupt Nature, no Overcoming of the World, no Revelation of Jesus Christ, no Joy of the New Birth from above, till dying to thy Self and the World, thou turnest to the Light, and Spirit, and Power of God in thy Soul. All is fruitless, and insignificant, all the Means of thy Redemption are at a Stand, all outward Forms are but a dead Formality, till this Fountain of Living Water is found within Thee.

But thou wilt perhaps say, How shall I discover this Riches of Eternity, this Light, and Spirit, and Wisdom, and Peace of God, treasured up within me ? Thy *first Thought* of Repentance, or *Desire* of turning to God, is thy *first Discovery* of this Light and Spirit of God within Thee. It is the Voice and Language of the *Word* of God within Thee, though thou knowest it not. It is the Bruiser of thy Serpent's Head, thy Dear *Inmanuel*, who is beginning to preach *within* Thee, that same which He first preached in public, saying, 'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven 'is at Hand.' When therefore but the smallest Instinct or Desire of thy Heart calls Thee towards God, and a newness of Life, give it Time and Leave to speak ; and take care thou refuse not Him that speaketh. For it is not an Angel from Heaven that speaks to Thee, but it is the eternal *speaking Word* of God in thy Heart, that Word which at first created Thee, is thus beginning to create Thee a *second Time* unto Righteousness, that a new Man may be formed again in Thee in the Image and Likeness of God. But above all Things, beware of taking this *Desire* of Repentance to be the Effect of thy own Natural *Sense* and *Reason*, for in so doing thou lovest the *Key* of all the Heavenly Treasure that is in Thee, thou shuttest the Door against God, turnest away from Him, and thy Repentance (if thou hast any) will be only a vain, unprofitable Work of thy own Hands, that will do Thee no more Good, than a *Well* that is without Water. But if thou takest this *awakened Desire* of turning to God, to be, as in Truth it is, the coming of Christ in thy Soul, the *Working*,

Redeeming Power of the Light and Spirit of the Holy Jesus within Thee, if thou dost reverence and adhere to it, as such, this Faith will save Thee, will make Thee whole ; and by thus believing in Christ, though thou wert dead, yet shalt thou live.

Now all depends upon thy right Submission and Obedience to this speaking of God in thy Soul. Stop therefore all Self-activity, listen not to the Suggestions of thy own Reason, run not on in thy own Will, but be retired, silent, passive, and humbly attentive to this new risen Light within Thee. Open thy Heart, thy Eyes, and Ears, to all its Impressions. Let it enlighten, teach, frighten, torment, judge, and condemn Thee, as it pleases, turn not away from it, hear all it says, seek for no Relief out of it, consult not with Flesh and Blood, but with a Heart full of Faith and Resignation to God, pray only this Prayer, that God's Kingdom may come, and his Will be done in thy Soul. Stand faithfully in this State of Preparation, thus given up to the Spirit of God, and then the Work of thy Repentance will be wrought in God, and thou wilt soon find, that He that is in Thee, is much greater than all that are against Thee.

But that thou mayest do all this the better, and be more firmly assured, that this *Resignation* to, and *Dependence* upon the working of God's Spirit within Thee, is right and sound, I shall lay before Thee two great, and infallible, and fundamental Truths, which will be as a Rock for thy Faith to stand upon.

First, That through all the whole Nature of Things, nothing can *do*, or *be* a real Good to thy Soul, but the *Operation of God* upon it. *Secondly*, That all the Dispensations of God to Mankind, from the Fall of *Adam*, to the Preaching of the Gospel, were only for this *one End*, to fit, prepare, and dispose the Soul for the *Operation* of the Spirit of God upon it. These two great Truths well and deeply apprehended, put the Soul in its right State, in a continual Dependence upon God, in a Readiness to receive all Good from Him, and will be a continual Source of Light in thy Mind. They will keep Thee safe from all Errors, and false Zeal in Things, and Forms of Religion, from a Sectarian Spirit, from Bigotry, and Superstition ; they will teach Thee the true Difference between the Means and End of Religion ; and the Regard thou showest to the *Shell*, will be only so far, as the *Kernel* is to be found in it.

Man, by his Fall, had broken off from his true *Centre*, his proper Place in God, and therefore the Life and Operation of God was no more in Him. He was fallen from a Life in God into a Life of *Self*, into an animal Life of Self-love, Self-esteem, and Self-seeking in the poor perishing Enjoyments of this

World. This was the *Natural State* of Man by the Fall. He was an Apostate from God, and his natural Life was all Idolatry, where *Self* was the great Idol that was worshipped instead of God. See here the whole Truth in short. All Sin, Death, Damnation, and Hell, is nothing else but this Kingdom of *Self*, or the various Operations of Self-love, Self-esteem, and Self-seeking, which separate the Soul from God, and end in eternal Death and Hell.

On the other Hand, All that is *Grace, Redemption, Salvation, Sanctification, Spiritual Life*, and the *New Birth*, is nothing else but so much of the Life, and Operation of God found again in the Soul. It is Man come back again into his *Centre* or *Place* in God, from whence he had broken off. The Beginning again of the Life of God in the Soul, was then first made, when the Mercy of God inspoke into *Adam* a *Seed* of the Divine Life, which should bruise the Head of the Serpent, which had wrought itself into the human Nature. Here the Kingdom of God was again within us, though only as a *Seed*, yet small as it was, it was yet a *Degree* of the Divine Life, which if rightly cultivated, would overcome all the Evil that was in us, and make of every fallen Man a new-born Son of God.

All the Sacrifices and Institutions of the ancient Patriarchs, the *Law of Moses*, with all its Types, and Rites, and Ceremonies, had this *only End*; they were the Methods of Divine Wisdom for a Time, to keep the Hearts of Men from the Wanderings of Idolatry, in a State of *Holy Expectation* upon God, they were to keep the *first Seed* of Life in a State of Growth, and make Way for the further Operation of God upon the Soul; or, as the Apostle speaks, to be as a *Schoolmaster unto Christ*, that is, till the Birth, the Death, the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, should conquer Death and Hell, open a new Dispensation of God, and baptize Mankind afresh with the Holy Ghost, and Fire of Heaven. Then, that is, on the Day of *Pentecost*, a *new Dispensation* of God came forth; which on God's Part, was the Operation of the Holy Spirit in Gifts and Graces upon the whole Church; and on Man's Part, it was the Adoration of God in *Spirit* and in *Truth*. Thus all that was done by God, from the Bruiser of the Serpent given to *Adam*, to Christ's sitting down on the right Hand of God, was all for this End, to remove all that stood between God and Man, and to make Way for the *immediate* and *continual* Operation of God upon the Soul; and that Man, baptized with the Holy Spirit, and born again from Above, should absolutely renounce *Self*, and wholly give up his Soul to the Operation of God's Spirit, to know, to love, to will, to pray, to worship, to preach, to exhort, to use all the Faculties

of his Mind, and all the outward Things of this World, as enlightened, inspired, moved and guided by the Holy Ghost, who by this last Dispensation of God, was given to be a Comforter, a Teacher, and Guide to the Church, who should abide with it for ever.

This is Christianity, a spiritual Society, not because it has no worldly Concerns, but because all its Members, as such, are born of the Spirit, kept alive, animated and governed by the Spirit of God. It is constantly called by our Lord the Kingdom of God, or Heaven, because all its *Ministry* and *Service*, all that is done in it, is done in Obedience and Subjection to *that Spirit*, by which Angels live, and are governed in Heaven.* Hence our blessed Lord taught his Disciples to pray, that this Kingdom might come, that so God's Will might be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven; which could not be, but by that same Spirit, by which it is done in Heaven. The short is this: The Kingdom of *Self* is the Fall of Man, or the great Apostasy from the Life of God in the Soul; and everyone wherever he be, that lives unto *Self*, is still under the Fall and great Apostasy from God. The Kingdom of Christ is the Spirit and Power of God dwelling and manifesting itself in the Birth of a new inward Man; and no one is a Member of this Kingdom, but *so far* as a true Birth of the Spirit is brought forth in him. These two Kingdoms take in all Mankind, he that is not of one, is certainly in the other; Dying to one is Living to the other.

Hence we may gather these following Truths: *First*, Here is shown the true Ground and Reason of what was said above, namely, That when the *Call* of God to Repentance first arises in thy Soul, thou art to be *retired, silent, passive*, and humbly attentive to this new risen Light within thee, by wholly stopping, or disregarding the Workings of thy own Will, Reason, and Judgment. It is because all these are false Counsellors, the sworn Servants, bribed Slaves of thy fallen Nature, they are all Born and Bred in the Kingdom of *Self*; and therefore if a new Kingdom is to be set up in thee, if the Operation of God is to have its Effect in thee, all these natural Powers of *Self* are to be silenced and suppressed, till they have learned Obedience and Subjection to the Spirit of God. Now this is not requiring thee to become a *Fool*, or to give up thy Claim to Sense and Reason, but is the shortest Way to have thy Sense and Reason delivered from Folly, and thy whole rational Nature strengthened, enlightened, and guided by that Light, which is Wisdom itself.

A Child that obediently denies his own Will, and own Reason,

* *Way to Divine Knowledge, &c.*, page 77.

to be guided by the Will and Reason of a truly wise and understanding Tutor, cannot be said to make himself a Fool, and give up the Benefit of his rational Nature, but to have taken the shortest Way to have his own Will and Reason made truly a Blessing to him.

Secondly, Hence is to be seen the true Ground and Necessity of that universal Mortification and Self-denial with regard to all our Senses, Appetites, Tempers, Passions and Judgments. It is because all our whole Nature, as fallen from the Life of God, is in a State of Contrariety to the Order and End of our Creation, a continual Source of disorderly Appetites, corrupt Tempers, and false Judgments. And therefore every Motion of it is to be mortified, changed and purified from its *natural State*, before we can enter into the Kingdom of God. Thus when our Lord says, 'Except a Man hateth his Father and Mother, yea, and his own Life, he cannot be my Disciple'; it is because our best Tempers are yet *carnal*, and full of the *Imperfections* of our fallen Nature. The Doctrine is just and good; not as if *Father* and *Mother* were to be hated; but *that Love*, which an unregenerate Person, or *natural Man*, has towards them, is to be *hated*, as being a blind *Self-love*, full of all the *Weakness* and *Partiality*, with which fallen Man loves, honours, esteems, and cleaves to himself. This Love, *born* from corrupt Flesh and Blood, and *polluted* with Self, is to be *hated* and *parted* with, that we may love them with a Love *born* of God, with such a Love, and on such a Motive, as Christ has loved us. And then the *Disciple* of Christ far exceeds all others in the Love of Parents. Again, Our *own Life* is to be *hated*; and the Reason is plain, it is because there is nothing lovely in it. It is a *Legion* of Evil, a monstrous Birth of the *Serpent*, the *World*, and the *Flesh*; it is an *Apostasy* from the *Life* and *Power* of God in the Soul, a Life that is *Death* to Heaven, that is pure unmixed *Idolatry*, that lives wholly to *Self*, and not to God; and therefore *all this own Life* is to be absolutely *hated*, all this Self is to be *denied* and *mortified*, if the Nature, Spirit, Tempers and Inclinations of Christ are to be brought to Life in us. For it is as impossible to live to both these Lives at once, as for a *Body* to move two contrary Ways at the same Time. And therefore all these Mortifications and Self-denials have an absolute Necessity in the Nature of the Thing itself.

Thus when our Lord further says, unless a Man forsaketh *all that he hath*, he cannot be my Disciple; the Reason is plain, and the Necessity absolute. It is because *all that the natural Man* has, is in the Possession of *Self-love*, and therefore *this Possession* is to be absolutely *forsaken*, and parted with. All

that he has, is to be put into other Hands, to be given to Divine Love, or this *natural Man* cannot be changed into a *Disciple* of Christ. For Self-love in *all that it has*, is earthly, sensual, and devilish, and therefore must have *all* taken away from it ; and then to the *natural Man* *all* is lost, he has *nothing* left, all is laid down at the Feet of Jesus. And then all Things are common, as soon as *Self-love* has lost the Possession of them. And then the Disciple of Christ, *though having nothing, yet possesseth all Things*, all that the *natural Man* has *forsaken*, is restored to the *Disciple* of Christ an *hundred-fold*. For Self-love, the greatest of all *Thieves*, being now cast out, and all that he had stolen and hidden, thus taken from him, and put into the Hands of Divine Love, every *Mite* becomes a large Treasure, and Mammon opens the Door into everlasting Habitations. This was the Spirit of the *first Draught* of a Christian Church at *Jerusalem*, a Church made truly after the Pattern of Heaven, where the Love that reigns in Heaven reigned in it, where Divine Love broke down all the selfish Fences, the Locks and Bolts of *me, mine, my own, &c.*, and laid all Things common to the Members of this new Kingdom of God on Earth.

Now though many Years did not pass after the Age of the Apostles, before *Satan* and *Self* got footing in the Church, and set up Merchandize in the House of God, yet this *one Heart*, and *one Spirit*, which then first appeared in the *Jerusalem* Church, is that *one Heart* and *Spirit* of Divine Love, to which *all are* called, that would be true Disciples of Christ. And though the Practice of it is lost as to the Church in general, yet it ought not to have been lost ; and therefore every Christian ought to make it his great Care and Prayer, to have it restored in himself. And then, though born in the Dregs of Time, or living in *Babylon*, he will be as truly a Member of the first heavenly Church at *Jerusalem*, as if he had lived in it, in the Days of the Apostles. This Spirit of Love, born of that celestial Fire, with which Christ baptizes his true Disciples, is alone that Spirit, which can enter into Heaven, and therefore is that Spirit which is to be born in us, whilst we are on Earth. For no one can enter into Heaven, till he is made heavenly, till the Spirit of Heaven is entered into him. And therefore all that our Lord has said of denying and dying to *Self*, and of his parting with all that he has, are Practices absolutely necessary from the Nature of the Thing.

Because all turning to Self is so far turning *from* God, and so much as we have of Self-love, so much we have of a hellish, earthly Weight, that must be taken off, or there can be no Ascension into Heaven. But thou wilt perhaps say, If *all Self-*

love is to be renounced, then all Love of our Neighbour is renounced along with it, because the Commandment is, only *to love our Neighbour as ourselves*. The Answer here is easy, and yet no Quarter given to Self-love. There is but *one only* Love in Heaven, and yet the Angels of God love one another in the *same manner*, as they love themselves. The Matter is thus: The one supreme, unchangeable *Rule* of Love, which is a *Law* to all intelligent Beings of all Worlds, and will be a Law to all Eternity, is this, *viz.*, *That God alone is to be loved for himself, and all other Beings only in Him, and for Him*. Whatever intelligent Creature lives not under this Rule of Love, is so far fallen from the Order of his Creation, and is, till He returns to this eternal Law of Love, an *Apostate* from God, and incapable of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now if God alone is to be loved for *Himself*, then no Creature is to be loved for *itself*; and so all *Self-love* in every Creature is absolutely condemned.

And if all created Beings are only to be loved *in* and *for* God, then my Neighbour is to be loved, *as* I love myself, and I am only to love myself, as I love my Neighbour, or any other created Being, that is, only *in* and *for* God. And thus the Command of loving our Neighbour as ourselves, stands firm, and yet all Self-love is plucked up by the Roots. But what is loving any Creature, only *in*, and *for* God? It is when we love it only as it is God's *Work, Image, and Delight*, when we love it merely as it is God's, and belongs to him, this is loving it *in* God, and when all that we wish, intend, or do to it, is done from a Love of God, for the Honour of God, and in Conformity to the Will of God, this is loving it *for* God. This is the *one Love* that is, and must be the Spirit of all Creatures that live united to God. Now this is no speculative Refinement, or fine-spun Fiction of the Brain, but the simple Truth, a first Law of Nature, and a necessary Band of Union between God and the Creature. The Creature is not in God, is a Stranger to Him, has lost the Life of God in itself, whenever its Love does not thus begin and end in God.

The Loss of this Love, was the *Fall* of Man, as it opened in him a Kingdom of *Self*, in which Satan, the World, and the Flesh, could all of them bring forth their own Works.* If therefore Man is to rise from his Fall, and return to his Life in God, there is an absolute Necessity that *Self*, with all his Brood of gross Affections, be deposed, that his first Love in and for which he was created, may be born again in him. Christ came

* *Spirit of Prayer*, Part II., pages 12—22.

into the World to *save Sinners*, to destroy the Works of the Devil. Now *Self* is not only the Seat and Habitation, but the very *Life* of Sin. The Works of the Devil are all wrought in *Self*, it is his peculiar *Workhouse*, and therefore Christ is not come as a Saviour from Sin, as a Destroyer of the Works of the Devil in any of us, but *so far* as *Self* is beaten down, and overcome in us. If it is literally true, what our Lord said, *That his Kingdom was not of this World*, then it is a Truth of the same Certainty, that no one is a Member of this Kingdom, but he that in the literal Sense of the Words renounces the Spirit of this World. Christians might as well part with half the Articles of their Creed, or but half believe them, as really to refuse, or but by halves enter into these Self-denials.

For all that is in the *Creed*, is only to bring forth this Dying and Death to all and every Part of the old Man, that the Life and Spirit of Christ may be formed in us.

Our Redemption is *this new Birth*; if this is not done, or doing in us, we are still unredeemed. And though the Saviour of the World is come, He is not come in us, He is not received by us, is a Stranger to us, is not ours, if his Life is not within us. His Life is not, cannot be within us, but so far as the Spirit of the World, Self-love, Self-esteem, and Self-seeking, are renounced, and driven out of us.

Thirdly, Hence we may also learn the true Nature and Worth of all *Self-denials* and *Mortifications*. As to their Nature, considered in themselves, they have nothing of *Goodness* or *Holiness*, nor are any real Parts of our Sanctification, they are not the true *Food* or *Nourishment* of the Divine Life in our Souls, they have no *Quickening*, *Sanctifying Power* in them; their only Worth consists in this, that they remove the Impediments of Holiness, break down that which stands between God and us, and make Way for the *Quickening*, *Sanctifying* Spirit of God to operate on our Souls. Which Operation of God is the *one only* Thing that can raise the Divine Life in the Soul, or help it to the smallest Degree of real Holiness, or Spiritual Life. As in our Creation, we had only that *Degree* of a Divine Life, which the Power of God derived into us; as then all that we had, and were, was the *sole Operation* of God in the Creation of us; so in our Redemption, or regaining that first Perfection, which we have lost, all must be again the Operation of God; *every Degree* of the Divine Life restored in us, be it ever so small, must and can be nothing else but so much of the Life and Operation of God found again in the Soul. All the Activity of Man in the Works of Self-denial has no Good in itself, but is only to open an Entrance for the *one only* Good, the Light of God, to operate upon us.

Hence also we may learn the Reason, why many People not only lose the Benefit, but are even the worse for all their Mortifications. It is because they mistake the whole Nature and Worth of them. They practise them for their *own Sakes*, as Things good in themselves, they think them to be *real* Parts of Holiness, and so *rest* in them, and look no *further*, but grow full of Self-esteem, and Self-admiration, for their own Progress in them. This makes them Self-sufficient, morose, severe Judges of all those that fall short of their Mortifications.

And thus their *Self-denials* do only *that* for them, which *Indulgences* do for other People, they withstand and hinder the Operation of God upon their Souls, and instead of being *really* Self-denials, they strengthen and keep up the Kingdom of *Self*.

There is no avoiding this fatal Error, but by deeply entering into this great Truth, that all our own Activity and Working has no Good in it, can do no Good to us, but as it leads and turns us in the best Manner to the Light and Spirit of God, which alone brings Life and Salvation into the Soul. 'Stretch forth thy Hand,' said our Lord to the Man 'that had a withered Hand;' he did so, and 'it was immediately made whole as the other.'

Now had this Man any Ground for Pride, or a high Opinion of himself, for the Share he had in the Restoring of his Hand? Yet just such is our Share in the Raising up of the Spiritual Life within us. All that we can do by our own Activity, is only like this Man's stretching out his Hand; the rest is the Work of Christ, the only Giver of Life to the withered Hand, or the dead Soul. We can only then do living Works, when we are so far born again, as to be able to say with the Apostle, 'Yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me.' But to return, and further show, how the Soul that feels the Call of God to Repentance is to behave under it, that this stirring of the Divine Power in the Soul may have its full Effect, and bring forth the Birth of the new Man in Christ Jesus. We are to consider it (as in Truth it is) as the *Seed* of the Divine Nature within us, that can only grow by its *own Strength*, and *Union* with God. It is a Divine Life, and therefore can grow from nothing but Divine Power. When the Virgin *Mary* conceived the Birth of the holy Jesus, all that she did towards it herself, was only this single Act of Faith and Resignation to God; 'Behold the Handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy Word.' This is all that we can do towards the Conception of that new Man that is to be born in ourselves. Now this Truth is easily consented to, and a Man thinks he believes it, because he consents to it, or rather, does not deny it. But this is not enough, it is to be apprehended in a deep, full, and practical Assurance, in such a Manner as a Man

knows and believes that he did not create the *Stars*, or cause Life to rise up in himself. And then it is a Belief, that puts the Soul into a right State, that makes room for the Operation of God upon it. His Light then enters with full Power into the Soul, and his holy Spirit moves and directs all that is done in it, and so Man lives again in God as a new Creature. For this Truth thus firmly believed, will have these two most excellent Effects: *First*, It will keep the Soul fixed, and continually turned towards God, in Faith, Prayer, Desire, Confidence, and Resignation to Him, for all that it wants to have done in it, and to it; which will be a continual Source of all Divine Virtues and Graces. The Soul thus turned to God must be always receiving from Him. It stands at the true Door of all Divine Communications, and the Light of God as freely enters into it, as the Light of the *Sun* enters into the *Air*. *Secondly*, It will fix and ground the Soul in a true and lasting Self-denial. For by thus knowing and owning our own *Nothingness* and Inability, that we have no other Capacity for Good, but that of receiving it from God alone, *Self* is wholly denied, its Kingdom is destroyed; no room is left for spiritual Pride and Self-esteem; we are saved from a Phari-saical Holiness, from wrong Opinions of our own Works and good Deeds, and from a Multitude of Errors, the most dangerous to our Souls, all which arise from the *Something* that we take ourselves to be either in Nature or Grace. But when we once apprehend but in some good Degree, the *All* of God, and the *Nothingness* of ourselves, we have got a Truth, whose Usefulness and Benefit no Words can express. It brings a Kind of Infallibility into the Soul in which it dwells; all that is vain, and false, and deceitful, is forced to vanish and fly before it. When our Religion is founded on this Rock, it has the Firmness of a Rock, and its Height reaches unto Heaven. The World, the Flesh, and the Devil, can do no hurt to it; all Enemies are known, and all disarmed by this great Truth dwelling in our Souls. It is the Knowledge of the *All* of God, that makes *Cherubims* and *Seraphims* to be Flames of Divine Love. For where this *All* of God is truly known, and felt in any Creature, there its whole Breath and Spirit is a Fire of Love, nothing but a pure disinterested Love can arise up in it, or come from it, a Love that begins and ends in God. And where this Love is born in any Creature, there a Seraphic Life is born along with it. For this pure Love introduces the Creature into the *All* of God; all that is in God is opened in the Creature, it is united with God, and has the Life of God manifested in it.

There is but *one Salvation* for all Mankind, and that is the *Life* of God in the Soul. God has but *one Design* or Intent

towards all Mankind, and that is to *introduce* or *generate* his own Life, Light, and Spirit in them, that all may be as so many Images, Temples, and Habitations of the Holy Trinity. This is God's good Will to all *Christians, Jews, and Heathens*. They are all *equally* the Desire of his Heart, his Light continually *waits* for an Entrance into *all* of them, his *Wisdom crieth, she putteth forth her Voice*, not here, or there, but everywhere, in all the Streets of all the Parts of the World.

Now there is but *one possible* Way for Man to attain this Salvation, or Life of God in the Soul. There is not one for the *Jew*, another for a *Christian*, and a Third for the *Heathen*. No; God is one, human Nature is one, Salvation is one, and the *Way* to it is one; and that is, the Desire of the Soul turned to God. When this *Desire* is alive and breaks forth in any Creature under Heaven, then the *lost Sheep* is found, and the *Shepherd* has it upon his Shoulders. Through *this Desire* the *Poor prodigal Son* leaves his *Husks and Swine*, and hastes to his Father: it is because of *this Desire*, that the Father sees the Son, while yet *afar off*, that he runs out to meet him, falls on his Neck, and kisses him. See here how plainly we are taught, that no sooner is this *Desire arisen*, and in *Motion* towards God, but the *Operation* of God's Spirit answers to it, cherishes and welcomes its *first Beginnings*, signified by the Father's seeing, and having Compassion on his Son, whilst yet *afar off*, that is, in the first Beginnings of his *Desire*. Thus does *this Desire* do all, it brings the Soul to God, and God into the Soul, it unites with God, it co-operates with God, and is one Life with God. Suppose this *Desire* not to be alive, not in *Motion* either in a *Jew*, or a *Christian*, and then all the Sacrifices, the Service, the Worship either of the *Law*, or the *Gospel*, are but *dead Works*, that bring *no Life* into the Soul, nor beget any *Union* between God and it. Suppose this *Desire* to be awakened, and fixed upon God, though in Souls that never heard either of the *Law* or *Gospel*, and then the Divine Life, or *Operation* of God, enters into them, and the new Birth in Christ is formed in those who never heard of his Name. And these are they 'that shall come 'from the East, and from the West, and sit down with Abraham, 'and Isaac, in the Kingdom of God.'

Oh my God, just and good, how great is thy Love and Mercy to Mankind, that Heaven is thus everywhere open, and Christ thus the *common* Saviour to all that turn the Desire of their Hearts to thee! Oh sweet Power of the *Bruiser* of the Serpent, born in every Son of Man, that stirs and works in every Man, and gives every Man a Power, and Desire, to find his Happiness in God! O holy Jesus, heavenly *Light, that lightest every Man*

that cometh into the World, that redeemest every Soul that follows thy Light, which is *always within Him!* O holy Trinity, immense Ocean of Divine Love in which all Mankind live, and move, and have their Being! None are separated from Thee, none live out of thy Love, but all are embraced in the Arms of thy Mercy, all are Partakers of thy Divine Life, the Operation of thy holy Spirit, as soon as their Heart is turned to Thee! Oh plain, and easy, and simple Way of Salvation, wanting no Subtleties of Art or Science, no borrowed Learning, no Refinements of Reason, but all done by the simple natural Motion of every Heart, that truly longs after God. For no sooner is the finite Desire of the Creature in motion towards God, but the infinite Desire of God is united with it, co-operates with it. And in this united Desire of God and the Creature, is the Salvation and Life of the Soul brought forth. For the Soul is shut out of God, and imprisoned in its own dark Workings of Flesh and Blood, merely and solely, because it desires to live to the Vanity of this World. This *Desire* is its Darkness, its Death, its Imprisonment, and Separation from God.

When therefore the *first Spark* of a Desire after God arises in thy Soul, cherish it with all thy Care, give all thy Heart into it, it is nothing less than a Touch of the Divine *Loadstone*, that is to draw Thee out of the Vanity of Time into the Riches of Eternity. Get up therefore and follow it as gladly, as the *Wise men of the East* followed the *Star* from Heaven that appeared to them. It will do for Thee, as the *Star* did for them, it will lead Thee to the Birth of Jesus, not in a Stable at *Bethlehem* in *Judea*, but to the Birth of Jesus in the *dark Centre* of thy own fallen Soul.

I shall conclude this *first Part*, with the Words of the heavenly Illuminated, and blessed *Jacob Behmen*.

‘It is much to be lamented, that we are so blindly led, and the ‘Truth withheld from us through imaginary Conceptions; for if ‘the *Divine Power* in the inward Ground of the Soul was ‘manifest, and working with its Lustre in us, then is the whole ‘Triune God present in the *Life* and *Will* of the Soul; and the ‘Heaven, wherein God dwells, is opened in the Soul, and *There*, ‘in the Soul, is the *Place* where the Father begets his Son, and ‘where the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son.

‘Christ says, “I am the Light of the World, he that followeth ‘me, walketh not in Darkness.” He directs us only to himself, ‘He is the *Morning Star*, and is generated and rises in us, and ‘shines in the Darkness of our Nature. O how great a Triumph ‘is there in the Soul, when he arises in it! then a Man knows, ‘as he never knew before, that he is a Stranger in a foreign Land.’

A PRAYER.

OH heavenly Father, infinite, fathomless Depth of never-ceasing Love, save me from myself, from the disorderly Workings of my fallen, long corrupted Nature, and let my Eyes see, my Heart and Spirit feel and find, thy Salvation in Christ Jesus.

O God, who madest me for thyself, to show forth thy Goodness in me, manifest, I humbly beseech Thee, the Life-giving Power of thy holy Nature within me; help me to such a true and living Faith in Thee, such Strength of Hunger and Thirst after the Birth, Life, and Spirit of thy Holy Jesus in my Soul, that all that is within me, may be turned from every inward Thought, or outward Work, that is not Thee, thy Holy Jesus, and heavenly working in my Soul. *Amen.*

FINIS.

THE
SPIRIT of PRAYER;
OR,
The SOUL rising out of the
VANITY of TIME,
INTO THE
RICHES of ETERNITY.

PART THE SECOND.

In several DIALOGUES between
ACADEMICUS, RUSTICUS and THEO-
PHILUS. At which HUMANUS was
present.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M.A.

LONDON:
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THE
FIRST DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

Academicus, Rusticus, and Theophilus.

At which *Humanus* was present.

A*CAD.* Well met, honest *Rusticus*. I can now tell you with much Pleasure, that we shall soon see a *Second Part* of the Spirit of Prayer. And as soon as I get it, I will come and read it to you.

Rust. I have often told you, *Academicus*, that I wondered at your Eagerness and Impatience to see more of this Matter. As to my Part, I have no such Thrift within me, and should make no Complaint, if it never came out.

Acad. My Friend *Rusticus*, you cannot read; and that is the Reason, that you are not in my State of Impatience, to see another Book.

Rust. Indeed, *Academicus*, you quite mistake the Matter. The First Part of the Spirit of Prayer you read to me more than three or four times, and that is the Reason, why I am in no State of Eagerness after a Second Part. I have found in the First Part, all that I need to know of God, of Christ, of myself, of Heaven, of Hell, of Sin, of Grace, of Death, and of Salvation: That all these Things have their *Being*, their *Life*, and their *Working*, in my own Heart: That God is always in me, that Christ is always within me; that he is the inward *Light* and *Life* of my Soul, a *Bread* from Heaven, of which I may always eat; a *Water* of eternal *Life* springing up in my Soul, of which I may always drink. O my Friend, these Truths have opened a new Life in my Soul: I am brought home to myself; the Veil is taken off from my Heart; I have found my God; I know that his Dwelling-place, his Kingdom, is within me. What need we then call out for Books written only with Pen and Ink, when such a Book as this, so full of Wonders, is once opened in our own Hearts? My Eyes, my Ears, my Thoughts, are all turned inwards, because all that God, and Christ, and Grace, are doing for me, all that the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, are working

against me, are only to be known, and found there. What need then of so much News from abroad, since all that concerns either *Life* or *Death*, are all transacting, and all at work, within me?

How could I be said to have felt these great Truths, to be sensible of these Riches of Eternity treasured up in my Soul, to know what a great Good the Divine Nature is in me, and to me, if instead of turning all the Desire and Delight of my Heart towards them, I only felt a Longing and Desire to read more concerning the Spirit of Prayer? No, *Academicus*, another, and a better Fire is kindled within me; my Heart is in motion, and all that is within me tends towards God; and I find that nothing concerns me more, than to keep my Heart from wandering after anything else. I now know to what it is that I am daily to die, and to what it is that I am daily to live; and therefore look upon every Day as lost, that does not help forwards both this Death, and this Life, in me. I have not yet done half, what the First Part of the Spirit of Prayer directs me to do, and therefore have but little Occasion to call out for a Second.

Theop. Indeed, *Academicus*, I must own, that honest *Rusticus*, as you called him, has spoken well. Your Education has so accustomed you to the Pleasure of reading Variety of Books, that you hardly propose any other End in reading, than the Entertainment of your Mind: Thus the Spirit of Prayer has only awakened in you a Desire to see another Part upon the same Subject. This Fault is very common to others, as well as Scholars, and even to those who only delight in reading good Books.

Philo for this twenty Years has been collecting and reading all the *spiritual* Books he can hear of. He reads them, as the *Critics* read Commentators and Lexicons, to be nice and exact in telling you the *Style*, *Spirit*, and *Intent* of this or that spiritual Writer, how one is more accurate in this, and the other in that. *Philo* will ride you forty Miles in Winter to have a Conversation about spiritual Books, or to see a Collection larger than his own. *Philo* is amazed at the Deadness and Insensibility of the Christian World, that they are such Strangers to the inward Life and spiritual Nature of the Christian Salvation; he wonders how they can be so zealous for the outward Letter and Form of Ordinances, and so averse to that spiritual Life, that they all point at, as the one thing needful. But *Philo* never thinks how wonderful it is, that a Man who knows Regeneration to be the Whole, should yet content himself with the Love of Books upon the new Birth, instead of being born again himself. For

all that is changed in *Philo*, is his Taste for Books. He is no more dead to the World, no more delivered from himself, is as fearful of Adversity, as fond of Prosperity, as easily provoked, and pleased with Trifles, as much governed by his *own* Will, Tempers, and Passions, as unwilling to deny his Appetites, or enter into War with himself, as he was *twenty Years* ago. Yet all is well with *Philo*; he has no Suspicion of himself; he dates the Newness of his Life, and the Fulness of his Light, from the time that he discovered the Pearl of Eternity in spiritual Authors.

All this, *Academicus*, is said on your Account, that you may not lose the Benefit of this Spark of the Divine Life that is kindled in your Soul, but may conform yourself suitably to so great a Gift of God.

It demands at present an Eagerness of another Kind, than that of much reading, even upon the most spiritual Matters.

Acad. I thank you, *Theophilus*, for your good Will towards me; but did not imagine my Eagerness after such Books to be so great and dangerous a Mistake. And if I do not yet entirely give into what you say, it is because a Friend of yours has told us (and as I thought by way of Direction) that he has been a diligent Reader of all the spiritual Authors, from the apostolical *Dionysius* down to the illuminated *Guion*, and celebrated *Fenelon* of *Cambray*: And therefore it would never have come into my Head, to suspect it to be a Fault, or dangerous, to follow his Example.

Theoph. I have said nothing, my Friend, with a Design of hindering your Acquaintance with all the truly spiritual Writers. I would rather in a right Way help you to a true Intimacy with them: For they are Friends of God, entrusted with his Secrets, and Partakers of the Divine Nature: And he that converses rightly with them, has a Happiness, that can hardly be over-valued.

My Intention is only to abate, for a time, a Spirit of Eagerness after much reading, which in your State has more of Nature than Grace in it; which seeks Delight in a Variety of new Notions, and rather gratifies Curiosity, than reforms the Heart.

Suppose you had seen an Angel from Heaven, who had discovered to you a Glimpse of its own internal Brightness, and of that glorious Union in which it lived with God, opening more of itself to the inward Sight of your Mind, than you could either forget or relate. Suppose it had told you with a piercing Word, and living Impression, that all its own angelic and heavenly Brightness was hid in yourself, concealed from you under a bestial Covering of Flesh and Blood; that this Flesh and Blood

was become the Master of it, would not suffer it to breathe, or stir, or come to Life in you. Suppose it had told you, that all your Life had been spent in helping this Flesh and Blood to more and more Power over you, to hinder you from knowing and feeling this Divine Life within you. Suppose it had told you, that to this Day you had lived in the grossest *Self-idolatry*, loving, serving, honouring, and adoring yourself instead of loving, serving, and adoring God with all your Heart, and Soul, and Spirit : That all your Intentions, Projects, Cares, Pleasures, and Indulgences, had been only so much Labour to bring you to the Grave in a total Ignorance of that great Work, for which alone you were born into the World.

Suppose it had told you, that all this Blindness and Insensibility of your State, was obstinately and wilfully brought upon yourself, because you had boldly slighted and resisted all the daily inward and outward Calls of God to your Soul, all the Teachings, Doings, and Sufferings, of a Son of God to redeem you. Suppose it left you with this *Farewell*, O Man awake ; thy Work is great, thy Time is short, I am thy last Trumpet ; the *Grave* calls for thy Flesh and Blood, thy Soul must enter into a new Lodging. To be born again, is to be an Angel : Not to be born again is to become a Devil.

Tell me now, *Academicus*, what would you expect from a Man who had been thus awakened, and pierced by the Voice of an Angel ? Could you think he had any Sense left, if he was not cast into the deepest Depth of Humility, Self-dejection, and Self-abhorrence ? Casting himself, with a broken Heart, at the Feet of the Divine Mercy, desiring nothing but that, from that Time, every Moment of his Life might be given unto God, in the most perfect Denial of every Temper, Will, and Inclination, that nourished the Corruption of his Nature : Wishing and praying from the Bottom of his Heart, that God would lead him into and through everything inwardly and outwardly, that might destroy the evil Workings of his Nature, and awaken all that was holy and heavenly within him ; that the Seed of Eternity, the Spark of Life, that he had so long quenched and smothered under earthly Rubbish, might breathe, and come to Life, in him.

Or would you think he was enough affected with this angelic Visit, if all that it had awakened in him, was only a Longing and eager Desire to hear the same, or another Angel talk again ?

Acad. Oh *Thcophilus*, you have said enough : For all that is within me consents to the Truth and Justness of what you have said. I now feel in the strongest Manner, that I have been rather amused, than edified, by what I have read.

Theoph. A spiritual Book, *Academicus*, is a Call to as real and total a Death to the Life of corrupt Nature, as that which *Adam* died in Paradise, was to the Life of Heaven. He indeed died at once totally to the Divine Life in which he was created: But as our Body of Earth is to last to the End of our Lives; so to the End of our earthly Life, every Step we take, every Inch of our Road, is to be made up of Denial, and dying to ourselves; because all our Redemption consists in our regaining that first Life of Heaven in the Soul, to which *Adam* died in Paradise. And therefore the one single Work of Redemption, is the one single Work of Regeneration, or the raising up of a Life, and Spirit, and Tempers, and Inclinations, contrary to that Life and Spirit which we derive from our earthly fallen Parents. To think therefore of anything, but the continual, total Denial of our earthly Nature, is to overlook the very one thing on which all depends. And to hope for anything, to trust or pray for anything, but the *Life of God*, or a *Birth* of Heaven, in our Souls, is as useless to us, as placing our Hope and Trust in a graven Image. Thus saith the Christ of God the one Pattern, and Author of our Salvation: 'If any Man will be my Disciple, let him deny himself, hate his own Life, take up his daily Cross, and follow me.' And again: 'Unless a Man be born again from above, of Water and the Spirit, he cannot see, or enter into, the Kingdom of God.'

Now is your time, *Academicus*, to enter deeply into this great Truth. You are just come out of the Slumber of Life, and begin to see with new Eyes the Nature of your Salvation. You are charmed with the Discovery of a Kingdom of Heaven hidden within you, and long to be entertained more and more with the Nature, Progress, and Perfection of the new Birth, or the Opening of the Kingdom of God in your Soul.

But my Friend, stop a little. It is indeed great Joy, that the *Pearl of great Price* is found; but take notice, that it is not yours, you can have no Possession of it, till, as the Merchant did, *you sell all that you have*, and buy it. Now *Self* is all that you have, it is your sole Possession; you have no Goods of your *own*, nothing is yours but *this Self*. The Riches of *Self* are your *own Riches*; but *all this Self* is to be parted with before the Pearl is yours. Think of a lower Price, or be unwilling to give thus much for it, plead in your Excuse, that you keep the Commandments, and then you are that very rich young Man in the Gospel, who went away sorrowful from our Lord, when he had said, 'If thou wilt be perfect,' that is, if thou wilt obtain the Pearl, 'sell all that thou hast, and give to the Poor'; that is, die to all thy *Possession of Self*, and then

thou hast given all that thou hast to the Poor ; all that thou hast is devoted and used for the Love of God and thy Neighbour. This selling all, *Academicus*, is the Measure of your dying to *Self* ; all of it is to be given up ; it is an *apostate* Nature, a *stolen* Life, brought forth in Rebellion against God : it is a continual Departure from him. It corrupts everything it touches ; it defiles everything it receives ; it turns all the Gifts and Blessings of God into Covetousness, Partiality, Pride, Hatred, and Envy. All these Tempers are born, and bred, and nourished, in *Self* ; they have no other Place to live in, no Possibility of Existence, but in that Creature which is fallen from a Life in God, into a Life in *Self*.

Acad. Pray, Sir, tell me more plainly, what this *Self* is, since so much depends upon it.

Theoph. It is Hell, it is the Devil, it is Darkness, Pain, and Disquiet. It is the one only Enemy of Christ, the great Antichrist. It is the Scarlet Whore, the fiery Dragon, the old Serpent, the devouring Beast, that is mentioned in the Revelation of St. *John*.

Acad. You rather terrify than instruct me, by this Description.

Theoph. It is indeed a very frightful Matter ; it contains everything that Man has to dread and hate, to resist and avoid. Yet be assured, my Friend, that, careless and merry as the World is, every Man that is born into it, has all these Enemies to overcome *within* himself. And every Man, till he is in the Way of Regeneration, is more or less governed by them. No Hell in any remote Place, no Devil that is separate from you, no Darkness or Pain that is not within you, no Antichrist either at *Rome* or *England*, no furious Beast, no fiery Dragon, without, or apart from you, can do you any Hurt. It is your own Hell, your own Devil, your own Beast, your own Antichrist, your own Dragon, that lives in your own Heart's Blood, that alone can hurt you.

Die to this *Self*, to this inward Nature ; and then all outward Enemies are overcome. Live to this *Self*, and then, when this Life is out, all that is within you, and all that is without you, will be nothing else but a mere seeing and feeling this Hell, Serpent, Beast, and fiery Dragon.

See here, *Academicus*, the twofold Nature of every Man. He has *within* him a redeeming Power, the *Meekness* of the heavenly Life, called the *Lamb of God*. This seed is surrounded, or encompassed, with the *Beast* of fleshly Lusts, the *Serpent* of Guile and Subtlety, and the *Dragon* of fiery Wrath. This is the great Trial, or Strife of human Life, whether a Man will live to the

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Lusts of the *Beast*, the Guile of the *Serpent*, the Pride and Wrath of the *fiery Dragon*, or give himself up to the Meekness, the Patience, the Sweetness, the Simplicity, the Humility, of the *Lamb of God*.

This is the Whole of the Matter between God and the Creature. On one Side, Fire and Wrath, awakened first by the rebellious Angels; and on the other Side, the Meekness of the Lamb of God, the Patience of Divine Love coming down from Heaven, to stop and overcome the Fire and Wrath that is broken out in Nature and Creature. Your Father *Adam* has introduced you into the Fire and Wrath of the fallen Angels, into a World from whence Paradise is departed. Your Flesh and Blood is kindled in that Sin, which first brought forth a murdering *Cain*. But, dear Soul, be of good Comfort, for the *Meekness*, the *Love*, the *Heart*, the *Lamb of God*, is become Man, has set himself in the Birth of thy own Life, that in him, and with him, and by a Birth from him, Heaven and Paradise may be again opened both within thee, and without thee, not for a Time, but to all Eternity.

Once more, *Academicus*. Every Man in this World stands *essentially* in Heaven, and in Hell, both as to that which is within him and that which is without him: For Man and the World are both in the *same* fallen State. The *Curse* in the Earth is that *same thing* in outward Nature, that the *Loss* of the Divine Life was to the Soul of *Adam*. The whole World, in all its Nature, is nothing else but a *real Mixture* of Heaven and Hell. The Sun and the Water of this World, are what keep under and overcome the Darkness, Wrath, and Fire of Hell, and carry on the vegetable and animal Life that are in it. The Light of the Sun blesses all the Workings of the Elements, and the cool softening Essence of the Water, keeps under the Fire and Wrath of Nature. In all *animal* Creatures, the Birth of *Light* in their own Life, and the *Water* of their own Blood, both produced by the Light of the Sun, and the Water of outward Nature, bring forth an Order of earthly Creatures, that can enjoy the Good that is in this World, in Spite of the Wrath of Hell, and the Malice of Devils.

But Man has more than all this; for being at first created an Angel, and intended by the Mercy of God to be an Angel again, he has the *Light* of Heaven, and the *Water* of eternal Life, both given to *Adam* in that *Seed of the Woman*, which was to *bruise* the Head of the Serpent that is, to overcome the Curse, the Fire, and Wrath, or Hell, that was awakened in the fallen Soul. So that Man has not only, in common with the other Animals, the Light and Water of outward Nature, to quench the Wrath of his own Life in this mixed World, but he has the Meekness, the Light, the Love, the Humility of the Holy Jesus, as a Seed of

Life born in his Soul, to bring forth that first Image of God, in which *Adam* was created. This, my Friend, is the true Ground of all true Religion: It means nothing, it intends nothing, but to overcome that *earthly Life*, which overcame *Adam* in the Fall, that made him a Prisoner of Hell, and a Slave to the corrupt Workings of earthly Flesh and Blood. And therefore you may see, and know with a mathematical Certainty, that the one thing necessary for every fallen Soul, is to die to all the Life that we have from this World, and the Life of Heaven may be born again in him. The Life of this World is the Life of the *Beast*, the *Scarlet Whore*, the old *Serpent* and the *fiery Dragon*.

Hence it is that Sin rides in Triumph over Church and State, and from the Court to the Cottage all is over-run with Sensuality, Guile, Falseness, Pride, Wrath, Envy, Selfishness, and every form of Corruption. Everyone swims away in this Torrent, but he who hears and attends to the *Voice* of the Son of God *within* him, calling him to die to this Life, to take up his Cross, and follow him. Much learned Pains has been often taken to prove *Rome*, or *Constantinople*, to be the Seat of the Beast, the Antichrist, the Scarlet Whore, &c. But, alas! they are not at such a Distance from us, they are the Properties of fallen human Nature, and are all of them alive in our own Selves, till we are dead or dying to all the Spirit and Tempers of this World. They are everywhere, in every Soul, where the heavenly Nature, and Spirit of the Holy Jesus is not. But when the human Soul turns from itself, and turns to God, dies to itself, and lives to God in the Spirit, Tempers, and Inclinations of the Holy Jesus, loving, pitying, suffering, and praying for all its Enemies, and overcoming all Evil with Good, as this Christ of God did; then, but not till then, are these Monsters separate from it. For Covetousness and Sensuality of all kinds, are the very devouring *Beast*; Religion governed by a worldly, trading Spirit, and gratifying the partial Interest of Flesh and Blood, is nothing else but the *Scarlet Whore*; Guile, and Craft, and Cunning, are the very Essence of the *old Serpent*; Self-Interest and Self-Exaltation are the whole Nature of *Antichrist*. Pride, Persecution, Wrath, Hatred and Envy, are the very Essence of the *fiery Dragon*.

This, *Academicus*, is the fallen human Nature, and this is the *old Man*, which is alive in everyone, though in various Manners, till he is born again from above. To think therefore of anything in Religion, or to pretend to real Holiness, without totally dying to this old Man, is building Castles in the Air, and can bring forth nothing, but *Satan* in the Form of an Angel of Light. Would you know, *Academicus*, whence it is, that so

many false Spirits have appeared in the World, who have deceived themselves and others with false Fire, and false Light, laying Claim to Inspirations, Illuminations, and Openings of the Divine Life, pretending to do Wonders under extraordinary Calls from God? It is this; they have turned to God without turning from themselves; would be alive in God, before they were dead to their own Nature; a thing as impossible in itself, as for a Grain of Wheat to be alive before it dies.

Now Religion in the Hands of Self, or corrupt Nature, serves only to discover Vices of a worse kind, than in Nature left to itself. Hence are all the disorderly Passions of religious Men, which burn in a worse Flame than Passions only employed about worldly Matters: Pride, Self-Exaltation, Hatred, and Persecution, under a Cloak of religious Zeal, will sanctify Actions, which Nature, left to itself, would be ashamed to own.

You may now see, *Academicus*, with what great Reason I have called you, at your first setting out, to this great Point, the *total dying to Self*, as the only Foundation of a solid Piety. All the fine Things you hear or read of an inward and spiritual Life in God, all your Expectations of the Light and Holy Spirit of God, will become a false Food to your Soul, till you only seek for them through Death to Self.

Observe, Sir, the Difference which Clothes make in those, who have it in their Power to dress as they please: Some are all for Show, Colours, and Glitter; others are quite fantastical and affected in their Dress; Some have a grave and solemn Habit; others are quite simple and plain in their whole manner. Now all this Difference of Dress, is only an outward Difference, that covers the same poor Carcase, and leaves it full of all its own Infirmities. Now all the Truths of the Gospel, when only embraced and possessed by the *old Man*, make only such superficial Difference, as is made by Clothes. Some put on a solemn, formal, prudent, outside Carriage; others appear in all the Glitter and Show of religious Colouring, and spiritual Attainments; but under all this outside Difference, there lies the poor fallen Soul, imprisoned, unhelped, in its own fallen State. And thus it must be, it is not possible to be otherwise, till the spiritual Life begins at the true Root, grows out of *Death*, and is born in a broken Heart, a Heart broken off from all its own natural Life. Then Self-hatred, Self-contempt, and Self-denial, are as suitable to this new-born Spirit, as Self-love, Self-esteem, and Self-seeking, are to the unregenerate Man. Let me, therefore, my Friend, conjure you, not to look forward, or cast about for spiritual Advancement, till you have rightly taken this *first* Step in the spiritual Life. All your future Progress depends upon it: For this Depth of Religion

goes no deeper than the Depth of your Malady : For Sin has its Root in the Bottom of your Soul, it comes to Life with your Flesh and Blood, and breathes in the Breath of your natural Life ; and therefore, till you die to Nature, you live to Sin ; and whilst this Root of Sin is alive in you, all the Virtues you put on, are only like fine painted Fruit hung upon a bad Tree.

Acad. Indeed, *Theophilus*, you have made the Difference between true and false Religion as plain to me, as the Difference between Light and Darkness. But all that you have said, at the same time, is as new to me, as if I had lived in a Land, where Religion had never been named. But pray, Sir, tell me how I am to take this *first Step*, which you so much insist upon.

Thop. You are to turn wholly from yourself, and to give up yourself wholly unto God, in this or the like twofold Form of Words or Thoughts :

‘ Oh my God, with all the Strength of my Soul, assisted by thy Grace, I desire and resolve to resist and deny all my own Will, earthly Tempers, selfish Views, and Inclinations ; every thing that the Spirit of this World, and the Vanity of fallen Nature, prompts me to. I give myself up wholly and solely unto Thee, to be all thine, to have, and do, and be, inwardly and outwardly, according to thy good Pleasure. I desire to live for no other Ends, with no other Designs, but to accomplish the Work which thou requirest of me, an humble, obedient, faithful, thankful Instrument in thy Hands to be used as thou pleasest.’

You are not to content yourself, my Friend, with now and then, or even many times, making this Oblation of yourself to God. It must be the daily, the hourly Exercise of your Mind ; till it is wrought into your very Nature, and becomes an essential State and Habit of your Mind, till you feel yourself as habitually turned from all your own Will, selfish Ends, and earthly Desires, as you are from Stealing and Murder ; till the whole Turn and Bent of your Spirit points as constantly to God, as the Needle touched with the Loadstone does to the North. This, Sir, is your first and necessary Step in the spiritual Life ; this is the Key to all the Treasures of Heaven ; this unlocks the sealed Book of your Soul, and makes room for the Light and Spirit of God to arise up in it. Without this, the spiritual Life is but spiritual Talk, and only assists Nature to be pleased with an Holiness that it has not.

The Necessity of this first Step, and the Folly of pretending to succeed without it, is thus represented by our blessed Lord : ‘ What Man intending to build a house,’ &c.

All our Ability and Preparation to succeed in this great Affair,

lie in this *first Step*. You may perhaps think this an hard Saying. But do not go away sorrowful, like the young Man in the Gospel, because he had great Possessions. For, my Friend, you little think what a Deliverance you will have from all Hardships, and what a Flow of Happiness is found even in this Life, as soon as the Soul is *thus* dead to *Self*, freed from its own Passions, and wholly given up to God ; of which I shall speak to you by and by. I have told you the Price of the new Birth. I shall now leave you to consider, whether you will be so wise a Merchant, as to give up all the Wealth of the old Man for this heavenly Pearl. I do not expect your Answer now, but will stay for it till To-morrow.

But pray, Gentlemen, who is this *Humanus*? I do not remember to have seen him before: He seems not willing to speak, yet is often biting his Lips at what is said.

Rust. This *Humanus*, Sir, is my Neighbour ; but so ignorant of the Nature of the Gospel, that he is often trying to persuade me into a Disbelief of it. I say ignorant (though he is a learned man) because I am well assured, that no Man ever did, or can oppose the Gospel, but through a total Ignorance of what it is in itself: For the Gospel, when rightly understood, is irresistible; it brings more good News to the human Nature, than Sight to the Blind, Limbs to the Lame, Health to the Sick, or Liberty to the condemned Slave. But this Neighbour of mine has never yet been in Sight of the Truth, as it is in the Gospel ; he knows nothing of the Grounds and Reason of it, but what he has picked up out of Books, that have been written against it, and for it. He often makes use of one Maxim of the Gospel, to overthrow it, and wonders that so plain and honest a Man as I am, will not submit to it. He says, if it be a Truth, as the Gospel saith, ' That the Tree must be known by its Fruit, and that a good Tree ' cannot bring forth corrupt Fruit,' we need only look at the Lives of Christians, the Craft of Priests, the Wars, Contentions, Hatreds, Sects, Parties, Heresies, Divisions, Outrages, and Persecutions, which Christianity has brought forth, we need only look at this, to have all our Senses and Reason assure us, that the Gospel must be a bad Tree.

But this is enough concerning the Man. He comes with me at his own earnest Desire, which has lately seized him, and upon his own strict Promise, not to interrupt our Conversation ; but to be a silent Hearer, till it is all over. And therefore, if you please, Sir, I beg our Conversation may for awhile turn upon the chief Points asserted in the Spirit of Prayer, for two Reasons ; first, that *Academicus* may see what Reasons I had for saying, that Book had given me a sufficient Instruction ; and also that

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Humanus, hearing these great Points, may hear the whole Ground and Nature, the Necessity and Blessedness of the Christian Redemption, set forth in such a Degree of Light, and Truth, and Amiableness, as he had no Notion of before.

Theoph. Your Neighbour is welcome, and I pray God to give him an Heart attentive to those Truths, which have made so good an Impression upon you. The first Point that you desire us to speak to, is concerning the Original of this temporal World. How God was moved to create it, upon the Fall of a whole Host, or Kingdom of Angels, who, by their Revolt from God, lost the Divine Light, and awakened in themselves, and the Region in which they dwelt, the dark, wrathful Fire of Hell: For Hell is nothing else, but Nature departed, or excluded, from the Beams of Divine Light. The *Materiality* of their Kingdom was *spiritual*, and the Light that glanced through it, that filled its Transparency with an Infinity of glorious Wonders, was the Son of God, the Brightness of the Father's Glory. The *Spirit* that animated the inward Life of those glorious Angels, and that moved with its sweet Breath, through all this *glassy Sea*, opening and changing new Scenes in the Mirror of Divine Wisdom, was the *Holy Spirit* of God, that eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son. Thus did these celestial Spirits live, move, and have their Being, in God. All was Heaven, and they all were so many created Gods, eternally sinking down, and rising up, into new Heights and Depths of the Riches of the Divine Nature. With this Degree of Glory and Happiness was the whole Extent of the Place of this World filled, before the Angels fell: and to this Degree of Happiness, and heavenly Glory, will the whole Place of this World be again raised, when the Love of God shall have finished the great Work of the Redemption of Mankind. Heaven again, and Angels again, raised out of the Misery of Time, to sing eternal Praises to the Holy Trinity, and to the Lamb that has overcome Sin, and Death, and Hell, and turned all the Wrath, and Misery and Darkness of this World, into an Heaven never more to be changed. Oh *Rusticus*, what Sentiments do these Things raise in you?

Rust. Indeed, Sir, they almost make me to forget, that I am in the Body. You have set me upon a Mountain, from which, whether I look backwards, or forwards, or downwards, all is equally surprising: backwards, a Breach made in Heaven, the first Opening of Hell and Darkness, and a new Creation out of the Ruins of the fallen Angels; forwards, Time and all temporal Nature rising again into its first Eternity; downwards, a Globe of Earth, the Seat of War between Heaven and Hell, where Men are born to partake of the dreadful Strife, and have only

the little Span of Life, either to overcome with God, or be overcome by the Devil. Oh, Sir, what great things are these? I wish that all the World, as well as my Neighbour *Humanus*, were forced to be silent Hearers of them. But pray, Sir, go on.

Theoph. When God saw the *Darkness that was upon the Face of the Deep*, and the whole angelic Habitation become a Chaos of Confusion, the *Spirit of God moved upon the Face of the Waters*; that is, the Spirit of God began to operate again in this outward Darkness, that covered this once transparent *glassy Sea*; for from a glassy Sea it was become a Deep covered with Darkness, which was soon to take another Nature; to have its Fire and Wrath converted into Sun and Stars; its Dross and Darkness into a Globe of Earth; its Mobility and Moisture into Air and Water; when the Spirit of God began to move and operate in it. But before this Chaos had entered into this new Order, God said, 'Let there be Light; and there was Light.' This Light, my Friend, was not the present Light of this World, which now governs the Night and the Day; for the Sun, the Moon, and Stars, were not created till the fourth Day. But the Light which God then spoke forth, was a Degree of Heaven, that was commanded to glance into the darkened Deep, which penetrated through all the Depth of the Chaos, and intermixed itself through every Part; not turning the Whole into a Region of Light, but only by its quickening Virtue fitting, disposing, and preparing every Part to take that Change, which every following Day of the Creation was to bring forth, in and out of this darkened Deep: For Darkness is Death, and Light is Life. This was the Nature and Work of that first Light, which God called forth on the first Day: It was God's baptizing the dead *Chaos* with the Spirit of Life, that it might be capable of a Resurrection into a new Creation.

See here the Uniformity of the Divine Procedure, with regard both to fallen Nature and Creature. When the Creature (Man) was fallen, his Redemption was begun by God's speaking a *Seed* of Light, called the Seed of the Woman, into the Birth of his Life. This alone could qualify him for the new Creation in Christ Jesus. When *Nature* was fallen, its Restoration was begun in the same Manner: Light was commanded to enter into it, or rather to rise up in it: This was its Power or Possibility of coming out of its fallen State.

Marvel not, *Rusticus*, that I call this first Light of the first Day, a Degree of Heaven: For Light is natural, essential, and inseparable from heaven; it belongs only to Heaven; and wherever else it is, it is only there as a Gift from Heaven. And therefore so much as there is of Light in this World, so much

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there is of Heaven in it. Darkness is natural, essential, and inseparable from Hell; and can be nowhere else, but where Hell can in some Degree open and discover itself. And wherever, and in what Degree, Darkness can show itself; there, and in the same Degree, is the Nature of Hell known and felt. This World is made up of Light and Darkness, not only as it consists of Day and Night, but because every earthly thing is itself a *Mixture* of Light and Darkness. The Darkness is the Evil, and the Light is the Good, that is in everything. If the Darkness was predominant in Vegetables, they would all be rank Poison; if in Animals, they would be all as so many wrathful venomous Serpents of Hell. If the Light did quite suppress the Darkness in Vegetables, they would be like the Fruits which were to have been Man's Food in Paradise.

Rust. These Things, *Theophilus*, strike a most amazing Light into all the Mysteries both of Nature and Grace. But they do not more enlighten, than they edify the Mind. They are all reforming Truths; they have the Nature of Alteratives, they purge the Heart of all its Dross; they force it to drop all its Pretensions to earthly things, as the poor deceitful Baits of fallen Nature; and to long for nothing, but to have That first Heaven and Life in God, for which Angels and Men were at first created. But I want to show to my Friend *Humanus*, as it were in one View, that Chain of Truths, which follows from what you have said: Though I had rather you would do it.

Theoph. Agreed: And I will set them in order thus. First, That the Place of this World is the very Place, or Region, which belonged to *Lucifer*, and his Angels. Secondly, That everything that we see in this World, all its Elements, the Stars, the Firmament, &c., are nothing else but the invisible Things of the fallen World, made visible in a new and lower State of Existence. Thirdly, That before the Rebellion of the Angels there was nothing but God, and Heaven, and heavenly Beings. Light, and Love, and Joy, and Glory, with all the Wonders thereof, were the only things seen and felt by the Angels. Darkness and Fire, with every Quality thereof, were absolutely unknown to the Angels; they had no more Suspicion of them, than of the Possibility of Sickness, Pains, Heat, and Cold. All they aimed at, was at being higher in the Glories, and Powers, and Light, of that Heaven in which they lived. But their turning to their own Strength to effect this, was their whole turning from God, and a falling into Nature without God, which was the first Discovery of *Darkness*, Wrath, and Fire, and Pain, and Torment. Fourthly, Hence it appears, that *Darkness* is the *Ground* of the Substance, or Materiality of Nature; *Fire* is its Life; and *Light*

is its glorious Transmutation into the Kingdom of Heaven ; and *Spirit* is the Opener of all its Wonders. All that can be conceived, is either God, or Nature, or Creature ; God is the Holy Trinity *without*, or *before* Nature ; but Nature is the Manifestation of the Holy Trinity in a triune Life of *Fire, Light, and Spirit*.

Fifthly. Here we see the plain and true Original of all Evil, without any Perplexity, or Imputation upon God : That Evil is nothing else but the Wrath, and Fire, and Darkness of Nature broken off from God : That the Punishment, the Pain, or the Hell of Sin, is no designedly prepared, or arbitrary Penalty inflicted by God, but the natural and necessary State of the Creature, that leaves, or turns from God. Sixthly, That the Will of the Creature is the only Opener of all Evil or Good in the Creature ; the Will stands between God and Nature, and must in all its Workings unite either with God, or Nature : The Will totally resigned, and given up to God, is one Spirit with God, and God dwelleth in it ; the Will turned from God, is taken Prisoner in the Wrath, Fire, and Darkness of Nature.

Seventhly. Here we see, *how* and *why* a Creature can lose, and die to all its Happiness and Perfection, and, from a beauteous Angel become a deformed Devil. It is because Nature has no Beauty, Happiness, or Perfection, but solely from the *Manifestation* or *Birth* of the Holy Trinity in it. God manifested in Nature, is the only Blessing, Happiness, and Perfection of Nature. Therefore the Creature, that in the Working of its Will is turned from God, must have as great a Change brought forth in it, as that of Heaven into Hell, forced to live, but to have no other Life, but that of its own gnawing Worm left to itself.

Eighthly. Hence we see the deep Ground, and absolute Necessity, of the Christian Redemption, by a Birth from above, of the Light and Spirit of God, demonstrated in the most absolute Degree of Certainty. It is because all Nature is in itself nothing, but an *hungry wrathful Fire* of Life, a tormenting Darkness, unless the Light and Spirit of God kindle it into a Kingdom of Heaven. And therefore the fallen Soul can have no *possible Relief*, or Redemption, it must be, to all Eternity, an *hungry, dark, fiery, tormenting* Spirit of Life, unless the Light, or Son, and Spirit of God, be born again in it.

Hence also it follows, that in all the Possibility of Things, there is and can be but one Happiness, and one Misery. The one Misery, is Nature and Creature left to itself ; the one Happiness, is the Life, the Light, and Spirit of God, manifested in Nature and Creature. This is the true Meaning of those

Words of our Lord, 'There is but one that is good, and that is 'God.'

Ninthly. Hence it is also seen, that there is and can be but *one true Religion* for the fallen Soul, and that is, the Dying to *Self*, to *Nature* and *Creature*; and a turning with all the *Will*, the *Desire*, and *Delight* of the Soul to God. Sacrifices, Oblations, Prayers, Praises, Rites, and Ceremonies, without this, are but as sounding Brass, and tinkling Cymbals. Nay, Zeal, and Constancy, and Warmth, and Fervour, in the Performance of these religious Practices, is not the Matter; for Nature and Self-love can do all this. But these religious Practices are then only Parts of true Religion, when they mean nothing, seek nothing, but to keep up a continual Dying to Self, and all worldly things, and turn all the Will, Desire, and Delight of the Soul to God alone. *Lastly*, There is and can be only *one Salvation* for the fallen Soul, and that is Heaven opened again in the Soul, by the Birth of such a Life, Light, and Spirit, as is born in Angels. For *Adam* was created to possess that Heaven from which the Angels fell; but nothing can enter into Heaven, but the angelic Life, which is born of Heaven. The Loss of this angelic Life was the Fall of *Adam*, or that Death which he died, on the Day he did eat of the earthly Fruit; therefore the Regeneration, or new Birth of his first angelic Life, is the one only Salvation of the fallen Soul. Ask not therefore, whether we are saved by Faith, or by Works? for we are saved by neither of them. Faith and Works are at first only *preparatory* to the new Birth; afterwards they are the true *genuine Fruits* and Effects of it. But the new Birth, a Life from Heaven, the new Creature, called *Christ in us*, is the one only Salvation of the fallen Soul. Nothing can enter into Heaven, but this Life which is born of, and comes from Heaven.

Rust. I thank you, *Theophilus*, for setting these awakening Truths in so strong a Light. And I think it is not possible for my Friend *Humanus* to be unaffected with them.

They must needs open in him a new Way of thinking about Religion, and show him the deep and solid Ground of the absolute Necessity of the Christian Redemption, and incline him to be a willing Hearer of that which follows.

Theoph. I hope it will be so, *Rusticus*; and what I would here, and through every Point we speak of, observe to your Friend *Humanus*, is this: That the Christian Religion is the *one only true Religion of Nature*, deeply and necessarily founded in the *Nature of Things*; that its Doctrines are not founded in an *arbitrary Appointment* of God, but have their *natural and necessary Reason*, why they cannot be otherwise, as has here

been shown in the one great Point of Regeneration, which is the Whole of Man's Salvation, and the one only thing intended by all Revelation, from the Fall of Man to the End of the World. Now the true Ground of the one true Religion of Nature cannot be known, or seen into, but by going back to the Beginning of Things, and showing how they came into their present State. We must find out, *why* and *how* Religion came to be necessary, and on *what* its Necessity is founded. Now this cannot be done, unless we find out, what *Sin*, and *Evil*, and *Death*, and *Darkness*, are in themselves; and how they came into Nature and Creature. For this alone can show us, what Religion is *true*, is *natural*, is *necessary*, and alone sufficient to remove all Evil, Sin, and Disorder, out of the Creation. For this Reason, we began with the Grounds and Reasons of the Creation of this World, showing how it came to be as it is. But this could not be done, but by going so far back as the Fall of Angels. For it was their Revolting from God, that brought *Wrath*, and *Fire*, and *Thickenss*, and *Darkness*, and *Death*, into Nature and Creature; and so gave occasion to this new Creation, and to its being in such a State, and of such a Nature, as it is.

For who does not see, that this first Deadness, Thickenss, Wrath, Fire, and Darkness, caused by the Angels' Sin, are the very *Materials* out of which this World is made? For are not the Fire, the Air, the Water, the Earth, the Rocks and Stones of this World, the Rage of Heat and Cold, the Succession of Day and Night, the Wrath of Storms and Tempests, an undeniable and daily Proof of all this? Now when we thus see what Sin, and Evil, and Death, and Darkness, are in Nature, and how they came into it, then we see also, how and what they are, and how they came into the Creature; because the Creature has its Form, its Being, in and out of Nature. They came into Nature, or rose up in it, by Nature's being broken off from God, and so losing the Light and Spirit of God, which made it to be a Kingdom of Heaven; we see also, that when this disordered Nature was to be taken out of its fallen State by a new Creation, that, to do this, the *Spirit of God moved*, or entered again into the Darkness of the Waters, and the *Light of God* was called into it. A plain Proof, that the Malady of Nature, was nothing else but *its Loss of the Light and Spirit of God* working in it. This shows us also, that the fallen Creature is to be restored, or put into a Way of Recovery, in *one and the same* Way as fallen Nature; *viz.*, by the *Spirit*, and *Light of God entering* into it again, and bringing forth a new Birth, or Creation in Christ Jesus. Just as the Spirit and Light entering into the *Chaos*, created or turned the Angels' ruined Kingdom

into a Paradise on Earth. God help him, who can see no Light or Truth here! Your Friend *Humanus* lays claim to a Religion of Nature and Reason: I join with him, with all my Heart. No other Religion can be right, but that which has its Foundation in Nature. For the God of Nature can require nothing of his Creatures, but what the *State* of their Nature calls them to. Nature is his great Law, that speaks his whole Will both in Heaven and on Earth; and to obey Nature, is to obey the God of Nature, to please him, and live to him, in the highest Perfection. God indeed has many *After-laws*; but it is after his Creatures have fallen from Nature, and lost its Perfection. But all these *After-laws* have no other End or Intention, but to repair Nature, and bring Men back to their first natural State of Perfection. What say you now, *Academicus*, to all these Matters?

Acad. You, Sir, and *Rusticus*, both of you know, how these Matters have affected me, ever since I read the Book called *The Appeal to all that Doubt, &c.* From that Time, I have stood upon new Ground; I have seen things in such a Newness of Light and Reality, as makes me take my former Knowledge for a Dream. A Dream I may justly call it, since all my Labour was taken up in searching into a Seventeen hundred Years History of Doctrines, Disputes, Decrees, Heresies, Schisms, and Sects, wherever to be found, in *Europe, Asia, and Africa.* From this goodly Heap of Stuff crowded into my Mind, I have been settling Matters betwixt all the present Christian Divisions both at home and abroad, according to the best Rules of Criticism; having little or no other Idea of a religious Man, than that of a stiff Maintainer of certain Points against all those that oppose them. And in this respect, I believe I may say, that I only swam away in the common Torrent.

And in this laborious Dream I had in all Likelihood ended my Days, had not that Book, and some others of the like kind, shown me, that Religion lay nearer home, was not to be dug out of Disputes, but lay hid in myself, like a Seed, which, for want of its proper Nourishment, could not come to the Birth. But however, though Matters stand thus with myself, and I seem to be entered into a Region of Light, yet I must not forget to tell you, what some of my learned Friends object to all this. They say, that in those Books, there are many Things asserted, which have not the *plain Letter* of Scripture to support them; and therefore Men of sober Learning, are cautious of giving into Opinions, not strictly grounded on the plain Letter of Scripture, however fine and plausible they may seem to be.

Theoph. Is there not some Reason, *Academicus*, to take this Objection of your learned Friends to be a mere Pretence? For

what is more fully grounded upon the plain Letter of Scripture, than the Doctrine of a real Regeneration, a new Birth of the *Word*, the *Son*, and *Holy Spirit* of God, really brought forth in the Soul? And yet this *plain Letter* of Scripture, upon the most important of all Points, the very *Life*, and *Essence*, and whole Nature of our Redemption, is not only *overlooked*, but openly *opposed*, by the Generality of Men of sober Learning. But this Point, has not only the plain Letter of Scripture for it, but what the Letter asserts, is absolutely required by the whole Spirit and Tenor of the New Testament. All the Epistles of the Apostles proceed upon the supposed Certainty of this one great Point.

A Son of God, united with, and born in our Nature, that his Nature may have a Birth in us; an Holy Spirit, breathing in the Birth and Life of our Souls, quickening the dead Life of fallen *Adam*, is the Letter and Spirit of the Apostles' Writings; grounded upon the plain Letter of our Lord's own Words, that unless we are born again from above, of the Son, Word, Water, and Spirit of God, we cannot enter or see the Kingdom of Heaven.

Again: Is it not the plain Letter of Scripture, that *Adam* died the Day that he did eat of the earthly Tree? Have we not the most solemn Asseveration of God for the Truth of this? Was not the Change which *Adam* found in himself a Demonstration of the Truth of this Fact? Instead of the Image and Likeness of God in which he was created, the Beauty of Paradise, he was stripped of all his Glory, confounded in the shameful Deformity of his own Body, afraid of being seen, and unable to see himself uncovered; delivered up a Slave to a Rage of all the Stars and Elements of this World, not knowing which Way to look, or what to do in a World, where he was dead to all that he formerly felt, and alive only to a new and dreadful Feeling of Heat and Cold, Shame and Fear, and horrible Remorse of Mind, at his sad Entrance into a World, whence Paradise, and God, and his own Glory, were departed. Death enough surely!

Death in its highest Reality, much greater in its Change, than when an Animal of earthly Flesh and Blood is only changed into a cold lifeless Carcase.

A Death, that in all Nature had none like it, none equal to it, none of the same Nature with it, but that which the Angels died, when, from Angels of God, they became living Devils, serpentine, hideous Forms, and Slaves to Darkness. Say that the Angels lost no Life, that they did not die a real Death, because they are yet alive in the Horrors of Darkness, and then you may say, with the same Truth, that *Adam* did not die,

when he lost God, and Paradise, and the first Glory of his Creation, because he afterwards lived and breathed in a World which was outwardly, in all its Parts, full of the same Curse that was within himself. But further, not only the plain Letter of the Text, and the Change of State, which *Adam* found in himself, demonstrated a *real Death* to his former State; but the whole Tenor of Scripture absolutely requires it; all the System of our Redemption proceeds upon it. For tell me, I pray, What need of a Redemption, if *Adam* had not lost his first State of Life? What Need of the Deity to enter again into the human Nature, not only as acting, but taking a Birth in it, and from it? What need of all this mysterious Method, to bring the Life *from above* again into Man, if the Life from above had not been *lost*? Say that *Adam* did not die, and then tell me, what Sense or Reason there is in saying, that the Son of God became Man, and died on the Cross to restore to him the Life that he had lost? It is true indeed, that *Adam*, in his Death to the Divine Life, was left in the Possession of an earthly Life. And the Reason is plain why he was so: For his great Sin consisted in his Desire and Longing to enter into the Life of this World, to know its Good and Evil, as the Animals of this World do; it was his choosing to have a Life of this World after this *new Manner*, and his entering upon the Means of attaining it, that was his Death to the Divine Life. And therefore it is no Wonder, that after his Death to Heaven and Paradise, he found himself *still alive* as an earthly Animal. For the Desire of this earthly Life was his *great Sin*, and the *Possession* of this earthly Life was the proper Punishment and Misery that belonged to his Sin; and therefore it is no Wonder that *that Life*, which was the proper Punishment, and real Discovery of the Fruits of his Sin, should subsist, after his Sin had put an End to the Life of Paradise and God in him. But wonderful it is to a great Degree, that any Man should imagine, that *Adam* did not die on the Day of his Sin, because he had as good a Life left in him, as the Beasts of the Field have.

For is this *the Life* or is *the Death* that such Animals die, the Life and Death with which our Redemption is concerned? Are not all the Scriptures full of a Life and Death of a much higher Kind and Nature? And do not the Scriptures make Man the perpetual Subject to whom this *higher* Life and Death belong? What Ground or Reason therefore can there be to think of the Death of an Animal of this World, when we read of the Death, that *Adam* was assuredly to die the Day of his Sin? For does not all that befel him on the Day of his Sin, show that he lost a much greater Life, suffered a more dreadful

Change, than that of giving up the Breath of this World? For in the Day of his Sin, this Angel of Paradise, this Lord of the new Creation, fell from the Throne of his Glory (like *Lucifer* from Heaven) into the State of a poor, darkened, naked, distressed Animal of gross Flesh and Blood, unable to bear the odious Sight of that which his new-opened Eyes forced him to see; inwardly and outwardly feeling the Curse awakened in himself, and all the Creation, and reduced to have only the Faith of the Devils, to *believe* and *tremble*. Proof enough, surely, that *Adam* was dead to the Life, and Light, and Spirit of God; and that, with this Death, all that was *Divine* and *heavenly* in his Soul, his Body, his Eyes, his Mind, and Thoughts, was quite at an End. Now *this* Life to which *Adam* then died, is *that* Life which all his Posterity are in want of, and cannot come out of that State of that Death into which he fell, but by having *this first* Life of Heaven born again in them. Now is there any Reason to say, that Mankind, in their Natural State, are not dead to that first Life in which *Adam* was created, because they are alive to this World? Yet this is as well as to say, that *Adam* did not die a real Death, because he had afterwards an earthly Life in him. How comes our Lord to say, that 'unless ye eat the Flesh, and drink the Blood, of the Son of Man, ye have no Life in you?' Did he mean, ye have no earthly Life in you? How comes the Apostle to say, 'He that hath the Son of God has Life, but he that hath not the Son of God hath not Life?' Does he mean the Life of this World? No. But both Christ and his Apostle assert this great Truth, that all Mankind are in the State of *Adam's first Death*, till they are made alive again, by a Birth of the *Son*, and *Holy Spirit* of God brought forth in them. So plain is it, both from the express Letter, and Spirit of Scripture, that *Adam* died a *real Death* to the Kingdom of God in the Day of his Sin. Take away this Death, and all the Scheme of our Redemption has no Ground left to stand upon.

Judge now, *Academicus*, Who leaves the Letter of Scripture, your learned Friends, or the Author of the *Appeal*? They leave it, they oppose it, in that which is the *very Life* of Christianity.

For without the *Reality* of a new Birth, founded on the Certainty of a *real Death* in the Fall of *Adam*, the Christian Scheme is but a Skeleton of empty Words, a Detail of strange Mysteries between God and Man, that do nothing, and have nothing to do.

On the other hand, look now at the things set forth in the *Appeal*, concerning the Fall of Angels, the Nature and Effects of their Revolt, and the Creation of this World as deduced therefrom. They neither *leave*, nor *oppose* any Letter, or Doctrine of

Scripture. They add nothing to Religion, but the *full Proof* of all its Articles; they intend nothing but to open the *original Ground*, and true Reason, of the Christian Redemption, and the absolute Necessity of its being such, as the Gospel declares. Now the *Letter* of Scripture does not do this in open Words; it sets not forth the *why*, and *how* things are, either in Nature or Grace; it teaches not the *Ground* or *Philosophy* of the Christian Faith; it contents itself with bare *Facts* and *Doctrines*, and calls for *simple* Faith and Obedience. No Wonder therefore, that when the *natural* and *necessary* Ground of the Christian Redemption is *opened*, that the Letter of Scripture is not *Step* by *Step* appealed to, for everything that is said. And yet many things may be sufficiently grounded on Scripture, that are not so expressed in the *Letter*. The *Sadducees* denied, that there was any Resurrection at all; and this they did, because they could not find it in the *express Letter* of the Five Books of *Moses*. And yet it seems, that the Resurrection was *plainly* and *strongly* taught there: For thus saith our Lord,—That the Dead shall rise again, *Moses* showed at the Bush, when he said, ‘The Lord ‘is the God of Abraham, Isaac, &c. For he is not the God of ‘the Dead, but of the Living.’* This shows us that a thing may be fully and sufficiently proved from Scripture, which is not plainly expressed in the Letter. And thus stands the Matter with regard to those great, and edifying Truths set forth in the *Appeal*. They are *truly scriptural*, they have their *Ground* and *Authority* from Scripture, though not so open and express in the Letter, as Matters of Faith and necessary Doctrine are. For is not the Fall of Angels a Scripture-Truth? Is not the Desolation which their Fall brought into Nature, and the very Place of this World a Scripture-Truth? What else can be meant by *Darkness upon the Face of the Deep*? What Darkness, or what Deep, but in the Place of this World? What Darkness, or State of the Deep, but that, which God was about to raise out of its disordered State? And does not the Letter of Scripture show, that out of *this Darkness and Waters*, and State of the Deep, the Spirit and Light of God entering into them, brought forth the Earth, the Stars, the Sun, and all the Elements, into a Form of a new World?

To ask for a particular Text of Scripture, saying in so many express Words, that the Place of this World is the very Place and Extent of the Kingdom of the fallen Angels, is quite ridiculous, and without the least Ground in Reason, as is enough shown in the *Appeal*. For does not our Lord expressly call the *Devil*,

* Luke xx. 37, 38.

a Prince of this World? But how could this Name belong to him, but because he is here in his own *first Region* and *Territories*, and has still some Power, till all the Evil that he has raised in it, shall be entirely separated from it? For was not this World raised out of the *Materials* of the fallen Angels' Kingdom, and was not the Wrath, and Fire, and Darkness *of their Fall*, still in some Degree remaining in every Part of this World, they could have *no more* Power in it, than they have in Heaven; they must be as entirely incapable of seeing or entering into it, as they are of seeing or entering into the Kingdom of Heaven: For they have nothing but Evil in their Nature; they can touch nothing, move nothing, see nothing, feel nothing, taste nothing, act in nothing, but *that very* Evil, Darkness, Fire, and Wrath, and Disorder, which they first awakened and kindled both in themselves, and their Kingdom. And therefore it is a Truth of the utmost Certainty, that they can be nowhere, but where there is something of *that* Evil still subsisting which they brought forth. And this may pass for Demonstration (if there be any such thing) that the Scriptures themselves *demonstrate* the Place of this World, to be the *very* Place and Region in which the Angels fell. And they still are *here*, because their Kingdom is not *wholly* delivered from all the Evil they had raised in it, but is to stand for a Time, only in a State of Recovery, where they themselves must see, in spite of all the Rage and Malice of their fiery Darts, that the *Mystery* of a Lamb of God, born upon Earth, will raise Creatures of Flesh and Blood, amidst the Ruins of their spoiled Kingdom, to be an Host of Angels in Heaven restored, and themselves plunged into an Hell, that is cut off from everything, but their *own* Wrath, Fire, and Darkness. And all this, *Academicus*, to make it known through all the Regions of Eternity, that *Pride* can degrade the highest Angels into Devils, and *Humility* raise fallen Flesh and Blood to the Thrones of Angels. This, this is the *great End* of God's raising a new Creation, out of a fallen Kingdom of Angels; for *this End* it stands in its State of War, a War betwixt the Fire and Pride of fallen Angels, and the Meekness and Humility of the Lamb of God: It stands its Thousands of Years in this Strife, that the last Trumpet may sound *this great Truth*, through all Heights and Depths of Eternity, 'That Evil can have no Beginning, but from Pride; 'nor any End, but from Humility.'

Oh *Academicus*, what a Blindness there is in the World! What a Stir is there amongst Mankind about *Religion*, and yet almost all seem to be afraid of *That*, in which alone is *Salvation!*

Poor Mortals! What is the one Wish and Desire of your Hearts? What is it that you call Happiness, and matter of

Rejoicing? Is it not when everything about you helps you to stand upon *higher Ground*, gives full Nourishment to *Self-esteem*, and gratifies every *Pride* of Life? And yet *Life* itself is the *Loss* of everything, unless *Pride* be overcome. Oh stop awhile in Contemplation of this great Truth. It is a Truth as unchangeable as God; it is written and spoken through all Nature; Heaven and Earth, fallen Angels, and redeemed Men, all bear Witness to it. The Truth is this: *Pride must die in you, or nothing of Heaven can live in you.* Under the Banner of this Truth, give up yourselves to the meek and humble Spirit of the Holy Jesus, the Overcomer of all Fire, and Pride, and Wrath. This is the one Way, the one Truth, and the one Life. There is no other open Door into the Sheepfold of God. Everything else is the *Working* of the Devil in the *fallen Nature* of Man. Humility must sow the Seed, or there can be no Reaping in Heaven. Look not at Pride only as an unbecoming Temper; not at Humility only as a decent Virtue; for the one is Death, and the other is Life; the one is all Hell, and the other is all Heaven.

So much as you have of Pride, so much you have of the fallen Angel alive in you; so much as you have of true Humility, so much you have of the Lamb of God within you. Could you see with your Eyes what *every Stirring* of Pride does to your Soul, you would beg of everything you meet, to tear the Viper from you, though with the Loss of an Hand, or an Eye. Could you see what a sweet, Divine, transforming Power there is in Humility, what an heavenly Water of Life it gives to the fiery Breath of your Soul, how it expels the Poison of your fallen Nature, and makes room for the Spirit of God to live in you, you would rather wish to be the *Footstool* of all the World, than to want the smallest Degree of it. Excuse, *Academicus*, this little Digression, if it be such, for the Subject we were upon, forced me into it.

Acad. Indeed, Sir, the Lesson you have here given, is the same that the whole Nature of the Fall of Angels, and the whole Nature of the Redemption of Man, daily reads to every Creature; and he, who alone can redeem the World, has plainly shown us, wherein the Life and Spirit of our Redemption must consist, when he saith, 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of Heart.' Now if this Lesson is unlearnt, we must be said to have *left* our Master, as those Disciples did, 'who went back, and walked no more with him.*' But if you please, *Theophilus*, we will now break off till the Afternoon.

Theoph. Give me Leave first, *Academicus*, but just to mention

* John vi.

one Point more, to show you still further, how unreasonably your Friends object to the *Appeal* the Want of the plain Letter of Scripture. Now let it be supposed, that the Account of the Fall of Angels, the Creation, &c., given in the *Appeal*, has not Scripture enough;—Take then the contrary Opinion, which is that of your Friends; *viz.*, That all Worlds, and all Things, are created *out of nothing*.

Show me now, *Academicus*, I do not say a Text, but the *least Hint* of Scripture, that by all the Art of commenting, can so much as be drawn to look that way. It is a *Fiction*, big with the grossest Absurdities, and *contrary* to everything that we know, either from Nature or Scripture, concerning the Rise and Birth, and Nature of Things, that have begun to be. *Adam* was not created out of nothing; for the Letter of *Moses* tells us in the plainest Words, *out of what* he was created or formed, both as to his inward, and his outward Nature. It tells us also as expressly *out of what*, *Eve*, the next Creature, was created. But from the Time of *Adam* and *Eve*, the Creation of every human Creature is a Birth out of its Parents' Body and Soul, or whole Nature. And to show us how *all things*, or Worlds, as well as all living Creatures, are not created *out of nothing*, *St. Paul* appeals to this very Account, that *Moses* gives of the Woman's being formed *out of the Man*; But 'all things' (says he) 'are out of God.*' Here this *Fiction* of a Creation *out of nothing*, is by the plain and open Letter of Scripture, absolutely removed from the whole System of created things, or things which begin to be; for *St. Paul's* Doctrine is, that *all things* come into Being, *out of God*, in the same Reality, as the Woman was formed or created *out of Man*. So again, 'There is to us 'but one God, out of whom are all things;† for so you know the *Greek* should be translated, not of, but *out of God*; not of, but *out of the Man*. The *Fiction* therefore, which I speak of, is not only without, but expressly *contrary* to, the plain Letter of Scripture. For everything that we see, every Creature that has Life, is by the Scripture-account, a *Birth* from *something else*. And here, Sir, you are to take Notice of a *Maxim* that is not deniable, that the Reason why *any* thing proceeds from a *Birth*, is the Reason why *every* thing *must* do so. For a *Birth* would not be in Nature, but because Birth is the *only* Procedure of Nature. Nature itself is a *Birth* from God, the *first Manifestation* of the hidden, inconceivable God, and is so far from being *out of nothing*, that it is the Manifestation of *all that* in God, which was before unmanifest. As Nature is the first

* 1 Cor. ix. 12.

† 1 Cor. viii. 6.

Birth, or Manifestation of God, or Discovery of the Divine Powers, so all Creatures are the *Manifestation* of the Powers of Nature, brought into a Variety of Births, by the Will of God, *out of* Nature. The first Creatures that are the nearest to the Deity, are *out of* the highest Powers of Nature, by the Will of God, willing that Nature should be manifested in the Rise and Birth of Creatures *out of* it. Nature, directed and governed by the Wisdom of God, goes on in the Birth of one thing *out of* another. The spiritual Materiality of Heaven brings forth the Bodies, or heavenly Flesh and Blood of Angels, as the Materiality of this World brings forth the Birth of gross Flesh and Blood. The spiritual Materiality of Heaven, so far as the Extent of the Kingdom of fallen Angels reached, has by various Changes occasioned by their Fall, gone through a Variety of *Births*, or *Creations*, till some of it came down to the Thickness of *Air* and *Water*, and the Hardness of *Earth* and *Stones*. But when things have stood in this State their appointed Time, the last purifying Fire, kindled by God, will take away all *Thickness*, *Hardness*, and *Darkness*, and bring all the divided Things and Elements of this World back again, to be that first *glassy Sea*, or heavenly *Materiality*, in which the Throne of God is set, as was seen by *St. John*, in the Revelation made to him.

But the Fiction of the Creation *out of nothing*, is not only contrary to the Letter and Spirit of the Scripture-account of the Rise and Birth of Things, but is in itself full of the grossest Absurdities, and horrid Consequences. It *separates* everything from God, it leaves *no Relation* between God and the Creature, nor any *Possibility* for any *Power*, *Virtue*, *Quality*, or *Perfection* of God, to be in the Creature : For if it is created *out of nothing*, it cannot have *something* of God in it. But I here stop : For, as you know, we have agreed, if God permit, to have hereafter one Day's entire Conversation on the Nature and End of the Writings of *Jacob Behmen*, and the right Use and Manner of reading them, as preparatory to a *New Edition* of his Works, so this and some other Points shall be adjourned to that Time. In the Afternoon, we will proceed only on such Matters, as may further set the Christian Redemption in its true and proper Light before your Friend *Humanus*.

Acad. I am very glad, *Theophilus*, that I have mentioned these Objections to you, though they were of no Weight with me, since you have thereby had an Occasion of giving so full an Answer to them. The Master stands now in this plain and easy Point of Light.

In the *Appeal* we have a System of uniform Truths, concerning the Fall of Angels, their spoiled and darkened Kingdom,

and the Creation of this World as raised out of it. We have the Creation and Fall of Man, his Regeneration, and the Manner of it, all opened and explained according to the *Letter and Tenor* of Scripture, from their deepest Ground, in such a manner, as to give Light and Clearness into all the Articles of the Christian Faith; to expel all Difficulties and Absurdities that had crept into it; and the whole Scheme of our Redemption is proved to be absolutely necessary, both from Scripture, and all that is seen and known in Nature and Creature.

On the other hand, the Opinion which is, and must be received, if the Account in the *Appeal* is rejected, appears to be a *Fiction*, that has no Sense, no Reason, no Fact, no Appearance in Nature, nor one single Letter of Scripture, to support it, but stands in the utmost Contrariety to all that the Scripture saith of the Creation of everything, and is in itself full of the grossest Absurdities, raising Darkness and Difficulties in all Parts of Religion, that can never be removed from it. For a Creation that has nothing of God in it, can explain nothing that relates to God: For a Creation out of nothing, has no better Sense in it, than a Creation *into nothing*. My Friends, for this time, Adieu.

The End of the First DIALOGUE.

THE SECOND DIALOGUE.

THEOPH. Let us now speak of *Adam* in his first Perfection, created by God to be a Lord and Ruler of this new-created World, to people it with an Host of angelic Men, till Time had finished its Course, and all things were fitted to be restored to that State, from which they were fallen by the Revolt of Angels.

For the Restoration of all things to their first glorious State, by making the Good to overcome the Evil, was the End which God proposed by the State and Manner of this new Creation.

Adam was the chosen Instrument of God, to conduct this whole Affair, to keep up this new-made World in the State in which God had created it, not to till the Earth, which we now plough, but to keep *That*, which is now called the *Curse* of the Earth, covered, hid, and overcome, by that Paradise in which he was created. For this End, he was created in a twofold Nature, of the Powers of Heaven, and the Powers of this World. Inwardly, he had the celestial Body and Soul of an Angel, and he had this angelic Nature united to a Life and Body taken from the Stars and Elements of this outward World. As Paradise overcame, and concealed all the Wrath of the Stars and Elements, and kept that *Evil*, which is called the *Curse*, from being known or felt, so *Adam's* angelic, heavenly Nature, which was the Paradise of God within him, kept him quite ignorant of the Properties of that earthly Nature that was under it. He knew, and saw, and felt nothing in himself, but a Birth of Paradise, that is, a Life, Light, and Spirit of Heaven: For he had no Difference from an Angel in Heaven, but that this World was joined to him, and put under his Feet. And this was done, because he was created by God to be the *restoring Angel*, to do all that in this outward World, which God would have to be done in it, before it could be restored to its first State. And therefore he must have the Nature of all this World in him, because he was to act in it, and upon it, as its *restoring Angel*; and yet with such Distinction from it, with such Power upon it, and over it, as the Light has upon and over Darkness. Does not now the whole Spirit of the Scriptures consent to this Account of *Adam's* first Perfection? Do not all the chief Points of our Redemption demand this Perfection

in *Adam unfallen*? How else could his *Fall* bring on the Necessity of the Gospel-Redemption of a new Birth from above, of the *Word* and Holy Spirit of God? For had he not had this Perfection of Nature at first, his Redemption could not have consisted in the Revival of this Birth and Perfection in him. For had it been something less than the Loss of an angelic and heavenly Life, that had happened to him by his Fall, had it been only *some Evil*, that related to a Life of this World, nothing else but *some Remedy* from this World, could have been his Redemption. But since it is the Corner-stone of the Gospel, that nothing less than the *eternal Word*, which was Man's Creator, could be his Redeemer, and that by a new Birth from above, it is a Demonstration, that he was at first created an Angel, born from above, and such a Partaker of the Divine Life, as the Angels are; and that his Fall was a real Death or Extinction of his angelic Life.

Now the Letter of *Moses* is express for this first Perfection of *Adam*. God said, 'Let us make Man in our own Image, 'after our Likeness.' How different is this from the Creation of the Animals of this World? What can you think or say higher of an Angel? Or what Perfection can an Angel have, but that of being in the Image and after the Likeness of God? But now what an Absurdity would it be, to hold that *Adam* was created in the Image and Likeness of God, and yet had not in him so much as the Image and Likeness of an Angel? Again, was not Paradise lost, was not *Evil* and the *Curse* awakened in all the Elements, as soon as *Adam* fell? And does not this prove, beyond all Contradiction, that *Adam* was created by God, as I said above, to be the *restoring Angel*; to have Power over all the outward World; to keep all its Evil from being known or felt; till the Fall of Angels from Heaven had been repaired by a Race of angelic Men born on Earth? But how could he do, and be all this, for which he was created by God, how could he keep up the Life of Heaven and Paradise in himself, and this new World, unless the Life of Heaven had been his own Life? Or how could he be the Father of an Offspring that were to have no Evil, nor so much as the Knowledge of what was Good and Evil in this World? Could anything but an heavenly Man bring forth an heavenly Offspring? Or could he be said to have the Life of this World opened in him in his Creation, who was to bring forth a Race of Beings, insensible of the Good and Evil in this World? For everything that has the Life of this World opened in it, is under an absolute Necessity of knowing and feeling its Good and Evil.

Secondly, That *Adam*, when he first entered into the World, had the Nature and Perfection of an Angel, is further plain from *Moses*, who tells us, that he was made at first both Male and Female in one Person ; and that *Eve*, or the Female Part of him, was afterwards taken out of him. Now this Union of the Male and Female in him, was the *Purity*, or *Virgin Perfection* of his Life, and is the very Perfection of the angelic Nature. This we are assured of from our Lord himself, who, in Answer to the Question of the *Sadducees*, said unto them ; ‘Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, and the Power of God ; for in the Resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in Marriage, but are as the Angels in Heaven.’* Or, as in *St. Luke*, ‘for they are equal to the Angels of God.’ Here we have a twofold Proof of the angelic Perfection of *Adam* : (1.) Because we are told, that that State in which he was created, neither Male nor Female, but with both Natures in his one Person, is the very Nature and Perfection of the Angels of God in Heaven. (2.) Because everyone who shall have a Part in this Resurrection, shall then have this angelic Perfection again ; to be no more Male or Female, or a Part of the Humanity, but such perfect, complete, undivided Creatures, as the Angels of God are. But now this Perfection could not belong to the Humanity after the Resurrection, but because it belonged to the first Man before his Fall : For nothing will be restored, but that which was first lost ; nothing rise again, but that which should not have died ; nor anything be united, but that which should not have been parted. The short is this : Man is *at last* to have a Nature equal to that of the Angels. This Equality consists in this, that as they have, so the Humanity will have, both Male and Female Nature in one Person.

But the Humanity was thus created at first, Male and Female in one Person, therefore the Humanity had at *first* a Nature and Perfection equal to that of the Angels. Thus is the Letter of *Moses* much more plain for the angelic Perfection of *Adam* in his Creation, than it is for the Resurrection of the Dead ; and yet we have our Lord’s Word for it, that *Moses* sufficiently proved the Resurrection of the Dead. What say you, *Academicus*, to this Matter ?

Acad. I will here just mention what my good old *Tutor* says : The Author of the *Appeal*, says he, founds all his Scheme of Regeneration or Redemption on a supposed *threefold Life*, in which *Adam* was created. His sole Proof of this threefold Life is taken from this Text of *Moses* : ‘God breathed into Man the

* Matt. xxii. 29, 30.

‘Breath of Lives, and Man became a living Soul.’ From this Phrase, *The Breath of Lives*, the *Appeal*, without any Authority from the Text, observes thus; ‘Here the highest, and most ‘Divine Original is not darkly, but openly, absolutely, and in the ‘strongest Form of Expression, ascribed to the Soul,’ &c. A vain Assertion, says my Tutor; for the *Breath of Life* or Lives is used by *Moses* only as a Phrase for *animal Life*. This is plainly seen, *Gen. vii. ver. 21.* ‘And all Flesh died,—all in ‘whose Nostrils was the Breath of Lives.’

Behold, says he, the very Phrase, which the *Appeal* takes to be so full a Proof of the high Dignity, and threefold Life of God in the Soul, here made use of to denote the Life of every kind of Animal.—And therefore, says he, if this *Phrase* proves the Soul of *Adam* to be a *Mirror of the Holy Trinity*, it proves the same of every Breath in the Nostrils of every Creature.

Theoph. To make short work, *Academicus*, with your Tutor’s Confutation, as he thinks, of the capital Doctrine of the *Appeal*, I shall only quote the whole Period, as it stands in the *Appeal*. ‘God breathed into him the *Breath of Lives* (*Spiraculum vitarum*) ‘and Man became a living Soul. Here, says the *Appeal*, the ‘Notion of a Soul, created *out of nothing*, is in the plainest, ‘strongest Manner, rejected by the first written Word of God; ‘and no Jew or Christian can have the least Excuse for falling ‘into such an Error: Here the *highest and most Divine* Original ‘is not darkly, but openly, absolutely ascribed to the Soul. It ‘came forth as a Breath of Life, or Lives, out of, and from the ‘Mouth of God; and therefore did not come out of the *Womb* ‘of *nothing*, but is what it is, and has what it has in itself, ‘from, and out of, the first and highest of all Beings.’* Here, *Academicus*, behold the Falseness and Weakness of your Tutor’s Observation.—The *Appeal*, you plainly see, proves only from the Text of *Moses*, the high Original of the Soul; and only for this Reason, because it is the *Breath of God*, breathed into Man. The *Appeal* makes no Use of the Expression, the *Breath of Lives*, takes no Notice of it, deduces nothing from it, but *solely* considers the *Act* of God, as *breathing* the Spirit of the Soul from himself; and from this *Act* of God, the high Birth and Dignity of the Soul is most justly affirmed. And the *Appeal* makes this Observation *solely* to prove, that the Soul is not created *out of nothing*. This is the one, sole, open, and declared Intent of the *Appeal*, in all this Paragraph. But your Tutor, overlooking all this, though nothing else is there, makes the Author of the *Appeal* to affirm the threefold Life of God in the Soul, merely

* *Appeal*, page 2.

from the Phrase of the *Breath of Lives*, when there is not one single Word about it. For the *Appeal* not only has not the least Hint in this Place of any such Matter, to be proved from the *Breath of Lives*, but through the whole Book there is not the smallest Regard paid to this Expression, nor any Argument ever deduced from it. How strange is all this in your good old Tutor!

The Matter is plainly this; the Author of the *Appeal* looks wholly to the *Action* of God, *breathing* his own Spirit into *Adam*; and from this Breathing, he justly affirms the *Divine Nature* of the Soul; all his Argument is deduced from thence. Now if your Tutor, or anyone else, could show, that God *breathed* his own Spirit into every Animal, and with this Intent, that it might come forth in his own Image and Likeness, then the Distinction and high Birth of the Soul, pleaded for by the *Appeal*, would indeed be lost. But till then, the *Appeal* must, and therefore will for ever, stand unconfuted in its Assertion of the Dignity and Divine Birth of the Soul.

Again; behold, *Academicus*, a still further Weakness chargeable upon your Tutor. You have seen, that his Reasoning upon the *Breath of Lives*, is meddling with something that the *Appeal* meddles not with, makes no Account of: But your Tutor has conjured it up for his own Use; and yet see what a poor Use he makes of it. He affirms that *Moses* uses only the *Breath of Lives*, as a Phrase for animal Life. How does he prove this? Why, truly from this Reason, because *Moses* uses the same Phrase when he speaks of the Lives of all Animals.

Now does not every *Englishman* know, that we make use of the same *four Letters* of the Alphabet, when we say the *Life* of a Man, the *Life* of a Beast, and the *Life* of a Plant? That we use the same *five Letters*, when we say the *Death* of a Man, the *Death* of a Beast, and the *Death* of a Plant? But will it thence follow, that the *Life* and *Death* of Men, and Beasts, and Plants, are of the same Nature and Degree, and have the same Good and Evil in them? Yet this is full as well, as to conclude, that the *Breath* of Life in Man, and the *Breath* of Life in Animals, is of the same *Nature* and *Degree*, has the same *Goodness* and *Excellence* in it, because the same Words, made up of the same Letters, express them both. Your Tutor therefore, *Academicus*, and not the Author of the *Appeal*, is the Person that reasons weakly from the Phrase of the *Breath of Lives*: For that Author never so much as offers to argue from it. His Proof of the threefold *Life* of God in the Soul, so far as it is deduced from the Text of *Moses*, lies wholly in this; that it is the *Breath* and *Spirit* of the triune God, breathed forth from this triune Deity into Man. This, sure, is no small Proof of its having the triune

Nature of God in it. And this threefold Life of the Soul, thus plainly deducible from the Letter of *Moses*, is shown to be absolutely certain, from every chief *Doctrine* and Institution, nay, from the *whole Nature* of our Redemption: And all the Gospel is shown to set its Seal to this great Truth, the *threefold Life* of God in the Soul. Nay, everything in Nature, Fire, and Light, and Air; everything that we know of Angels, of Devils, of the animal Life of this World; are all in the plainest and strongest manner, from the Beginning to the End of the *Appeal*, made so many Proofs of the threefold Life of the triune God in the Soul. Thus says the *Appeal*; *No Omnipotence can make you a Partaker of the Life of this outward World, without having the Life of this outward World born in your own creaturely Being*; the Fire, and Light, and Air of this World, must have their Birth in your own creaturely Being, or you cannot possibly live in, or have a Life from *outward Nature*. And therefore no Omnipotence can make you a Partaker of the beatific Life, or Presence of the Holy Trinity, unless that Life stands in the same triune State within you, as it does without you.* Again: Search to Eternity, says the *Appeal*, why no Devil or Beast can possibly enter into Heaven, and there can only this one Reason be assigned for it, because neither of them have the *triune* holy Life of God in them.† But enough of this Mistake of your good old Tutor. *Rusticus* will I am afraid chide you for being the Occasion of this long Digression from the Point we were speaking to.

Rust. Truly, Sir, I do not know what to make of these great Scholars; they seem to have more Love for the Shadow of an Objection, than for the most substantial Truths. I think I here see a great Reason, why our Saviour chose poor and illiterate Fishermen to be his Apostles. *St. Paul* was the only Man that had some Learning, and he was a Persecutor of Christ, till such time as God made *as it were Scales* to fall from his Eyes;—And then he became a powerful Apostle. But let us return to your Account of the first created Perfection of Man, and the Degree of his falling from it. It is one of the best Doctrines that I ever heard in my Life. It not only stirs up everything that is good, and makes me hate everything that is evil, in me; but it gives so good a Sense, so sound a Meaning to every Mystery of the Gospel, that it makes everything our Saviour has done for us, and everything he requires of us, to be equally necessary and beneficial to us. But suppose now our Fall not to be a Change of Nature, not a *Death* to our first Life, but only a single Sin or Mistake in the first Man; What a Difficulty is there in sup-

* *Appeal*, page 51.

† *Ibid.*, page 53.

posing so great a Scheme of Redemption to set right a single Mistake in one single Creature? Again, What could Man have to do with Angels and Heaven, if he had not, at his Creation, had the Nature of Heaven and Angels in him? But pray, Sir, begin again just where you left off.

Theoph. I was indeed, *Rusticus*, at that Time just going to say, that *Adam* had lost much of his first Perfection before his *Eve* was taken out of him; which was done to prevent worse Effects of his Fall, and to prepare a means for his Recovery, when his Fall should become total, as it afterwards was, upon the eating of the earthly Tree of Good and Evil.

'It is not good that Man should be alone,' saith the Scripture: This shows, that *Adam* had altered his first State, had brought some *Beginning* of Evil into it, and had made *that* not to be good, which God saw to be good, when he created him. And therefore as a less Evil, and to prevent a greater, God divided the first perfect human Nature into two Parts, into a Male and a Female Creature; and this, as you shall see by and by, was a wonderful Instance of the Love and Care of God towards this new Humanity. It was at first, the total Humanity in one Creature, who should in that State of Perfection, have brought forth his own Likeness out of himself, in such *Purity* of Love, and such *Divine Power*, as he himself was brought forth by God: The Manner of his own Birth from God, was the Manner that his own Offspring should have had a Birth from him; all done by the pure Power of a Divine Love. Man stood no longer in the Perfection of his first State, as a birth of Divine Love, than whilst he loved himself *only* as God loved him, as in the *Image*, and *after the Likeness of God*. This *Purity* of Love, and Delight in the Image of God, would have carried on the Birth of the Humanity, in the same manner, and by the same Divine Power, as the first Man was brought forth: For it was only a Continuation of the same generating Love that gave Birth to the first Man. But *Adam* turned away his Love from the Divine Image, which he should only have loved, and desired to propagate out of himself. He gazed upon this outward World, and let in an adulterate Love into his Heart, which desired to know the Life that was in this World. This impure Desire brought the Nature of this World into him. His first Love and Divine Power, had no Strength left in it; it was no longer a Power of bringing forth a Divine Birth from himself. His first Virginity was lost by an *adulterate* Love, which had turned its desire into this World. This State of *Inability*, is that which is called his falling into a deep Sleep: And in this Sleep, God divides this overcome Humanity into a Male and Female.

The first Step therefore towards the Redemption or Recovery of Man, *beginning* to fall, was the taking his *Eve* out of him, that so he might have a *second Trial* in Paradise ; in which if he failed, another effectual Redeemer might arise out of the *Seed of the Woman*. Oh my Friends, what a wonderful Procedure is there to be seen in the Divine Providence, turning all Evil, as soon as it appears, into a further Display and Opening of new Wonders of the Wisdom and Love of God ! Look back to the first Evil, which the Fall of Angels brought forth. The Darkness, Wrath, and Fire, of fallen Nature, were immediately taken from them, and turned into a new Creation, where those apostate Angels were to see all the Evil that they had raised in their Kingdom, turned against them, and made the Ground of a new Race of Beings, which were to possess those Thrones which they had lost. Look now at *Adam* brought into the World in such angelic Nature, as he, and all his redeemed Sons, will have after the Resurrection ; an Angel at first, and an Angel at last ; with Time, and Misery, and Sin, and Death, and Hell, all of them felt, and all overcome betwixt the two glorious Extremes. When this first human Angel, through a *false, impure* Love, lost the Divine Power of generating his own Likeness out of himself, God took Part of his Nature from him, that so the Eye of his Desire, which was turned to the Life of this World, might be directed to that Part of his Nature which was taken from him. And this is the Reason of my saying before, that this was chosen as a less Evil, and to avoid a greater ; for it was a less Degree of falling from his first Perfection, to love the Female Part of his own divided Nature, than to turn his Love towards that, which was so much lower than his own Nature. And thus, at *that Time*, *Eve* was an *Help*, that was truly and properly *meet* for him, since he had lost his first Power of being himself the Parent of an angelic Offspring, and stood with a longing Eye, looking towards the Life of this World.

But the most glorious Effect of this Division into Male and Female is yet to come. For when *Adam* and *Eve* had joined in the eating of the Tree of Good and Evil, and so were totally fallen from God and Paradise, into the Misery and Slavery of the bestial Life of this World ; when this greatest of all Evils had thus happened to these two divided Parts of the Humanity ; when all the Angel was lost, and nothing but a shameful, frightened Animal of this World, was to be seen in this divided Male and Female ; then in, and by, and through this Division, did God open and establish the glorious Scheme of an *universal* Redemption to these fallen Creatures, and all their Offspring, by the mysterious *Seed* of the *Woman*.

Had *Adam* stood in his first State of Perfection, as a Birth of Divine Love, and loving only the Divine Image and Likeness in himself, this Love would have been itself the fruitful Parent of an holy Offspring ; no *Eve* had been taken out of him, nor any Male or Female ever known in human Nature : All his Posterity had been in him secured, and the earthly Tree of Good and Evil had never been seen in Paradise. But though he lost this first generating Power of Divine Love, and stood as a barren Tree, yet seeing God's Purpose of raising an Offspring from *Adam*, to possess the Thrones of fallen Angels, must go on and succeed, therefore that *Adam* might yet have an Offspring, God took from him that, which is called the Female Part of his Nature, that by this means, both a *Posterity*, and a *Saviour*, might proceed from him : For through this Division of Man, God would, in a wonderful Manner, do *that* which *Adam* should have done, before he was divided.

For out of this Female Part, and after the Fall, God would raise, without the Help of *Adam*, that same glorious angelic Man, which *Adam* should have brought forth before and without his *Eve* ; which glorious Man is therefore called the Second *Adam* : 1. As having in his Humanity that very Perfection, which the First *Adam* had in his Creation. 2. Because he was to do all that for Mankind, by a Birth of Redemption from him, which they should have had by a Birth of Nature from *Adam*, had he kept his first State of Perfection. What say you, *Academicus*, to all this ?

Acad. Truly, Sir, there seems to be so much Light, and Truth, and Scripture, for all this Account that you have given of these Matters, as must even force one to consent to it. But then all our Systems of Divinity, to which learned Men are chained, are quite silent of these Matters. I never before heard of this *gradual Fall* of *Adam*, nor this angelic State of his first Creation, and Power of bringing forth his own Offspring, and therefore can hardly believe it so strongly as I would, and as the Truth seems to demand of me.

Rust. Pray, Sir, let me speak to *Academicus* : He seems to be so hampered with Learning, that I can hardly be sorry, that I am not a great Scholar.

Can anything be more punctually related in Scripture than the *gradual Fall* of *Adam* ? Do not you see, that he was created first with both Natures in him ? Is it not expressly told you, that *Eve* was not taken out of him, till such Time as it was *not good* for him to be as he then *was*, and yet God saw that it was good when he created him ? Is it not plain therefore, that he had fallen from the Goodness of his first Creation, and therefore his Fall was not at once, nor total, till his eating of the earthly Tree ? Again, as to his being an *Angel* at his first Creation,

because of both Natures in him, is it not sufficiently plain from his being designed to be an Angel of the same Nature at last, in the Resurrection? For this is an Axiom that cannot be shaken, that *Nothing can rise higher*, than its *first created Nature*; and therefore an Angel at last, must have been an Angel at first. Do you think it possible for an Ox in Tract of Time to be changed into a rational Philosopher? Yet this is as possible, as for a Man that has only by his Creation the Life of this World in him, to be changed into an Angel of Heaven. The Life of this World can reach no further than this World; no Omnipotence of God can carry it further; and therefore, if Man is to be an Angel at the last, and have the Life of Heaven in him, he must of all Necessity, in his Creation, have been created an Angel, and had his Life kindled from Heaven; because no Creature can possibly have any other Life, or higher Degree of Life, than that which his Creation brought forth in him.

Theoph. Marvel not, *Academicus*, at that which has been said of the first Power of *Adam*, to generate in a Divine Manner an holy Offspring, by the Power of that Divine Love which gave Birth to himself; for he was born of that Love for no other End, than to multiply Births of it; and whilst his Love continued to be *one* with that Love, which brought him into Being, nothing was impossible to it. For Love is the great Creating *Fiat* that brought forth every Thing, that is distinct from God, and is the only working Principle that stirs, and effects every Thing that is done in Nature and Creature. Love is the *Principle* of Generation from the highest to the lowest of Creatures; it is the first Beginning of every Seed of Life; every Thing has its Form from it; every Thing that is born is born in the Likeness, and with the Fruitfulness, of that same Love that generates and bears it; and this is its own Seed of Love within itself, and is its Power of fructifying in its Kind.

Love is the holy, heavenly, magic Power of the Deity, the first *Fiat* of God; and all Angels, and eternal Beings, are the first Births of it. The Deity delights in beholding the ideal Images, which rise up and appear in the Mirror of his own eternal Wisdom. This Delight becomes a loving Desire to have living Creatures in the Form of these Ideas; and this loving Desire is the *generating* heavenly Parent, out of which Angels, and all eternal Beings are born. Every Birth in Nature is a Consequence of this first prolific Love of the Deity, and generates from that which began the first Birth. Hence it is, that through all the Scale of Beings, from the Top to the Bottom of Nature, Love is the *one Principle* of Generation of every Life; and every Thing generates from the same Principle, and by the same Power, by

which itself was generated. Marvel not therefore, my Friend, that *Adam*, standing in the *Power* of his first Birth, should have a Divine Power of bringing forth his own Likeness. But I must now tell you, that the greatest Proof of this glorious Truth is yet to come: For I will show you that all the Gospel bears Witness to that heavenly Birth, which we should have had from *Adam* alone.—This Birth from *Adam* is still the one Purpose of God, and must be the *one Way* of all those, that are to rise with Christ to an Equality with the Angels of God. All must be Children of *Adam*; for ail that are born of Man and Woman, must lay aside this polluted Birth, and be born again of a second *Adam*, in that same Perfection of an holy angelic Nature, which they should have had from the first *Adam*, before his *Eve* was separated from him. For it is an undeniable Truth of the Gospel, that we are called to a new Birth, different in its whole Nature, from that which we have from Man and Woman, or there is no Salvation; and therefore it is certain from the Gospel, that the Birth which we have from *Adam*, divided into Male and Female, is not the Birth that we should have had, because it is the one Reason, why we are under a Necessity of being born again of a Birth from a second *Adam*, who is to generate us again in that Purity and Divine Power, in and by which we should have been born of the first angelic *Adam*.

A Divine Love in the first pure and holy *Adam*, united with the Love of God, willing him to be the Father of an holy Offspring, was to have given Birth to a Race of Creatures from him. But *Adam* fulfilled not this Purpose of God; he awakened in himself a false Love, and so all his Offspring were forced to be born of Man and Woman, and thereby to have such *impure* Flesh and Blood as cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Is not this Proof enough, that this Birth from *Adam* and *Eve* is not the *first Birth* that we should have had? Will anyone say, How could *Adam* have such a Power to bring from a Birth in such a *Spiritual Way*, and so contrary to the present State of Nature? The whole Nature of the Gospel is a full Answer to this Question. For are we not all to be born again in the *same Spiritual Way*, and are we not, merely by a *Spiritual Power*, to have a Birth of heavenly Flesh and Blood? The Strangeness of such a Power in the first *Adam*, is only just so strange, and hard to be believed, as the same Power in the second *Adam*; who is called the second *Adam* for no other Reason, but because he stands in the *Place* of the first, and is to do *That*, which the first should have done. And therefore our having from him a new heavenly Flesh and Blood raised in us by a *Spiritual Power*, superior to the common Way of Birth in this World, is the

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strongest of Proofs, that we should have been born of *Adam* in the *same Spiritual Power*, and so contrary to the Birth of Animals into this World. For all that we have from the second *Adam*, is a Proof that we should have had the same from *Adam* the first:—A Divine *Love* in *Adam* the first, was to have brought forth an holy Offspring. A Divine *Faith* now takes its Place, in the second Birth, and is to generate a new Birth from the second *Adam*, is to eat his Flesh, and drink his Blood, by the same Divine Power, by which we should have had a Birth of the angelic Flesh and Blood of our first Parent. Thus, *Academicus*, is this Birth from *Adam alone* no Whimsy, or Fiction, or fine-spun Notion, but the very Birth that the Gospel absolutely requires, as the Substance of our Redemption. There is no Room to deny it, without denying the whole Nature of our Redemption. On the other hand, the Birth that we have from *Adam* divided into *Male* and *Female*, is through all Scripture declared to be the Birth of *Misery*, of *Shame*, of *Pollution*, of *sinful* Flesh and Blood; and is only a Ground and Reason, why we must be born again of other Flesh and Blood, before we can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. This Truth therefore, that we were to have had an heavenly Birth from *Adam*, depends not upon this, or that particular Text of Scripture, but is affirmed by the whole Nature of our Redemption, and the whole Spirit of Scripture, representing our Birth from this World as shameful, as that of the wild Ass's Colt, and calling for a new Birth from above, as absolutely necessary, if Man is to have a Place among the Angels of God. And therefore it may be affirmed, that so sure as it is from Scripture, that Christ is become our second *Adam*, to help us to *such* a Birth, so sure is it from Scripture, that we should have had the *same Birth* from our first Parent, who, if not fallen, could have wanted no Redeemer of his Offspring, and therefore must have brought forth that *same Birth*, which we have from Christ, but could not have from the Birth of Man and Woman. I shall now only just mention to you a Passage much to the Matter in Hand, taken from the second Epistle of St. *Clemens*, a Bishop of *Rome*, who lived in the very Time of the Apostles. He relates, that Christ being asked, when his Kingdom should come, gave this Answer: 'When two Things shall become one, and that which is outward be as that which is inward, the Male with the Female, and neither Man nor Woman.' There wants no Comment here: I shall only observe, that the Meaning of the Words, *When that which is outward shall be as that which is inward*, seems plainly to be this, when the outward Life or Birth is come to be as the inward angelic Life is, then the Birth will be one, the Male and Female

in one, and then the Kingdom of God is come. These Words were in the next Century quoted by *Clemens of Alexandria*, though with some Alteration. The same Author also relates another Answer given by our Lord, to much the same Question, put by *Salome*, where our Lord's Answer was thus: 'When ye shall have put off, or away, the Garment of Shame and Ignominy, and when two shall become one, the Male and the Female united, and neither Man nor Woman.' The Garment of Shame and Ignominy, is plainly that Clothing of Flesh and Blood, at the Sight of which both *Adam* and *Eve* were ashamed.

Acad. I am fully satisfied, *Theophilus*, with the Account you have given of the first Perfection, and Divine State of our first Parent. And I think nothing can be plainer, than that we were to have been born of him to the same heavenly Birth, which we now are to receive from Christ, our second *Adam*. But I must still say, that I am afraid, your critical Adversaries will here find some Pretence, to charge you with a Tendency, at least, to that Heresy, which held Marriage to be unlawful, since you here hold that it came in by *Adam's* falling from his first Perfection.

Theoph. I own, my Friend, that there is no knowing when one is safe from Men of that Stamp. But as for me, my Eye is only upon Truth; and wherever that leads, there I follow; they, if they please, may persecute it with Objections. Here is not the least Pretence for the Charge you speak of: For here is no more Condemnation of Marriage, as *unlawful*, than there is a Condemnation of God, for keeping up the State, and Life of this World. The Continuation of the World, though fallen, is a glorious Proof and Instance of the Goodness of God, that so a Race of new-born Angels may be brought forth in it. Happy therefore is it, that we have such a World as this to be born into, since we are only born, to be born again to the Life of Heaven. Now Marriage has the Nature of this fallen World; but it is God's appointed Means of raising the Seed of *Adam* to its full Number. Honourable therefore is Marriage in our fallen State, and happy is it for Man to derive his Life from it, as it helps him to a Power of being eternally a Son of God.

Nor does this Original of Marriage cast the smallest Reflection upon the *Sex*, as if they brought *all*, or *any* Impurity into the human Nature. No, by no means. The Impurity lies in the *Division*, and that which *caused it*, and not in either of the divided Parts. And the female Part has this Distinction, though not to boast of, yet to take Comfort in, that the Saviour of the World is called the *Seed of the Woman*, and had his Birth only from the female Part of our divided Nature. But *Rusticus*, I see, wants to speak.

Rust. Indeed, Sir, I do. But it is only to observe to you, what a System of solid, harmonious, and great Truths are here opened to our View, by this Consideration of the first angelic State of *Adam*, and his falling from it into an earthly animal Life of this World; created at first an human Angel, with an Host of Angels in his Loins, and then falling from this State, with this particular Circumstance, that he had not only undone himself, but had also involved an innocent, and almost numberless Posterity in the same Misery, who now must all be born of him in his fallen Condition. Thus looking at this Creation of so noble and high a Creature, and his Fall, as introducing so extensive a Train of Misery, how worthy of God, how becoming a Love and Wisdom that are infinite, does all the stupendous Mystery of our Redemption appear! It was to restore an Angel, big with an angelic Offspring, an Angel that God had created to carry on the great Work of this new Creation, to bring Time with all its Conquests back into Eternity, an Angel in whom, and with whom, were fallen an innocent, numberless Posterity, that had not yet begun to breathe.

What a Sense and Reasonableness does this State of Things give to all those Passages of Scripture, which bring a God incarnate from Heaven, to remedy this sad Scene of Misery, that was opened on Earth! What less than God, could awaken again the dead angelic Life? What less than God's entering into the human Birth itself, and becoming one of it, and with it, could generate again the Life of God in every human Birth? The *Scripture* saith, 'God so loved the World;'—'God spared 'not his only Son;''—'Christ laid down his Life for us;' &c. How glorious a Sense is there in all these Sayings, when it is considered, that all this was done for so high and Divine a Creature, created by God for such great Ends, and full of a Posterity, that was to have filled an Heaven restored? In this Light, every Part of our Redemption gives a Glory, a Wisdom, and Goodness to God, which far surpasses every other View we can possibly take of them: Whereas if you *lessen* this angelic Dignity of the first Man, if you suppose his Fall to be *less* than that of falling, with all his Posterity, from an *angelic* Life, into the *earthly, animal Life* of this World, Slaves to Sin and Misery, all the Fabric of our Redemption is full of such Wonders, as can only be wondered at. Thus, if you consider this World, and Man its highest Inhabitant made out of nothing, and with only the Breath of this earthly Life breathed into his Nostrils, what is there to call for this great Redemption from Heaven?

Again, if you consider the Fall of Man, only as a *single Act* of

Disobedience to a *positive, arbitrary* Command of God, this is to make all the Consequences of his Fall inexplicable. For had the first Sin been only a *single Act* of Disobedience, it had been more worthy of Pardon, than any other Sin, merely because it was the first, and by a Creature that had as yet no Experience. But to make the first single Act of Disobedience, not only *unpardonable*, but the Cause of such a Curse and Variety of Misery entailed upon all his Posterity, from the Beginning to the End of Time; and to suppose, that so much Wrath was raised in God at this single Act of Disobedience, that nothing could make an Atonement for it, but the stupendous Mystery of the Birth, Sufferings, and Death, of the Son of God; is yet further impossible to be accounted for. In this Case, the supposed Wrath, and Goodness of God, are equally inexplicable.—And from hence alone, have sprung up the detestable Doctrines, about the *Guilt* and *Imputation* of the first Sin, and the several Sorts of partial, absolute Elections, and Reprobations, of some to eternal Happiness, and others to be Firebrands of Hell to all Eternity. Detestable may they well be called, since if *Lucifer* could truly say, that God from all Eternity determined, and created him to be *that* wicked hellish Creature that he is, he might then add, *Not unto him, but unto his Creator*, must all his Wickedness be ascribed. How innocent, how tolerable is the Error of Transubstantiation, when compared with this absolute Election and Reprobation! It indeed cannot be reconciled to our Senses and Reason, but then it leaves God, and Heaven, possessed of all that is holy and good; but this Reprobation-Doctrine, not only overlooks all Sense and Reason, but confounds Heaven and Hell, takes all Goodness from the Deity, and leaves us nothing to detest in the Sinner, but God's eternal irresistible Contrivance to make him to be such.

But now, when we take this Matter of the Creation, and Fall of Man, as Truth, and Fact, and Scripture, plainly represent it, every Thing that can awaken in ourselves a Love, and Desire to be like unto God, is to be found in it. Whilst Man stood in his first Perfection, unturned from God, this World was under his Feet; Paradise was the Element in which he lived; the *Spirit* of God was his Life; the *Son* of God was his Light; he was in the World, as much above it, and with as full Distinction from it, as incapable of being hurt by it, as an Angel, that only comes with a Divine Commission into it. The whole World was a Gift, put into his Hands; the Standing, or Fall of it was left to him; as his Will and Mind should *work*, so should either Paradise, or a cursed Earth overcome. God, by this new Creation, had so altered the wrathful State of *Lucifer's* fallen

Kingdom, that the Evil that had been raised in it, was hid and overcome by the Good. It was thus created, and put into this new State, for this sole End, that a human Angel might keep Paradise alive, and bring forth a paradisaical Host of Angels, in the very Place, where the fallen Angels had brought forth their Evil. But all these great Things, depended upon *Adam's* conforming to the Designs of God, and living in this World in such a State, as God had created him in. He could not conform to the Designs of God any other Way, than by the *Rectitude* of his *Will*, willing that which God willed, both in the Creation of him, and the World.

Whilst his Will stood thus inclined, the new Creation was preserved, himself was an Angel, and the World a Paradise. No Evil would have been known either in Plant, or Fruit, or Animal, nor could have been known, but by the *declining Will*, and Desire of Man calling it forth. His first *longing Look* towards the Knowledge of the Life of this World, was the first *loosening* of the Reins of Evil.—It began to have Life, and a Power of stirring, as soon as his Desire began to be earthly; hence the Curse, or Evil, hid in the Earth, could begin to show itself, and got a *Power* of giving forth an *evil Tree*, whose Fruit was the Key to the Knowledge of Good and Evil; a Tree which could not have grown, had he willed nothing, but that which God willed in the Creation of him.

He was not the Creator of this bad Tree, no more than he was the Creator of the good Trees, that grew in Paradise. But as the heavenly *Rectitude* of his Will *kept up* the heavenly Powers of Paradise in the Earth, so when his Will began to be earthly, it opened a Passage for the natural Evil; that was hid in the Earth, to bring forth a Tree in its own Likeness. The Earth as now, had then a natural Power of bringing forth a Tree of its own Nature, *viz.*, Good and Evil, but Paradise was that heavenly Power, which hindered it from bringing forth *such* Productions: But when the *Keeper* of Paradise turned a Wish from God, and Paradise, after a bad Knowledge, then Paradise lost some of its Power, and the Curse, or Evil, hid in the Earth, could give forth a bad Tree. But see now the Goodness, and Compassion of God towards this mistaken Creature; for no sooner had *Adam*, by the abuse of his Power and Freedom, given *occasion* to the Birth of this evil Tree, but the God of Love informs him of the *dreadful* Nature of it, *commands* him not to eat of it, assuring him, that *Death* was hid in it, that Death to his angelic Life, would be found in the Day that he should eat of it. A plain Proof, if anything can be plain, that this Tree came not from God, was not according to *his own Will* and *Purpose* towards *Adam*, but

from such a natural Power in the Earth, as could not show itself, till the *strong Will and Desire* of *Adam*, beginning to be earthly, worked with *That*, which was the *Evil* hid in the Earth. But pray, *Theophilus*, do you now speak again.

Theoph. The short of the Matter then, my Friend, is this: Neither *Adam*, nor any other Creature, has at its *Creation*, or Entrance into Life, any *arbitrary Trial* imposed upon it by God. The *natural State* of every intelligent Creature is its *one only Trial*; and it cannot sin, but by departing from that Nature, or falling from that State in which it was created. *Adam* was created an human Angel in Paradise, and he had no *other Trial* but this, whether he would live in Paradise, as an Angel of God, insensible of the Life, or the Good and Evil, of this earthly World. This was the Tree of Life, and the Tree of Death, that must stand before him; and the Necessity of his choosing either the one, or the other, was a Necessity founded in his own happy Nature.

The true Account therefore of the Fall of *Adam*, is a *gradual Declension*, or Tendency of his Will, from the Life of Paradise into the Life of this World, till he was at last wholly fallen into it, and swallowed up by it. The first Beginning of his Lust towards this World, was the first Beginning of his Fall, or Departure from the Life of Heaven and Paradise; and his eating of the earthly Tree, was his last and finishing Step of his Entrance into, and under the full Power of this World. This was the true Nature of his Fall. On the other hand, all that we see on the Part of God, is a *gradual Help*, administered by God to this falling Creature, suitable to *every Degree* of his falling, till at last, in the Fulness of his Fall, an *universal Redeemer* of him, and his Posterity, was given by a Second *Adam*, to regenerate again the whole Seed of *Adam* the First.

Thus, the first Degree of his Lust towards this World had *some Stop* put to it, by the taking his *Eve* out of him; that so his Desire into the Life of this World, might be in some measure lessened. When his Lust into this World still went on, and gave Occasion to the Birth of the evil Tree, a suitable Remedy was here given by God; for God laid a *Prohibition* upon it, and declared the *Death* that must be received from it. When he was further so overcome by his lusting Desire, as to eat of the Tree that had the Nature of this World in it, and so lost his first Life, and angelic Clothing, then God, even then all Goodness and Mercy to him, only told him of the *Curse* and *Misery* that was opened in Nature; that himself and Posterity must be sweating, labouring Animals, in a fallen World, till their sickly, shameful, naked, new-gotten Bodies mixed and mouldered in the Corrup-

tion of that Earth, whose Fruits they had chosen to know, instead of those of Paradise.

Now all this is nothing of a *Penalty wrathfully* inflicted by God, but was the *natural State of Adam*, as soon as his own Lust had led him out of an heavenly Paradise, into the earthly Life of this World. God brings no Misery upon him, but only *shows* the Misery that he had *opened* in himself, by not keeping to the State in which he was created. And no sooner had God informed this miserable Pair of the State they had brought upon themselves, but, in that Moment, his eternal Love *begins a Covenant* of Redemption, that was to begin in them, and in and through them extend itself to all their Posterity. A Beginning of a new Birth, called the *Seed of the Woman*, as the Remains of the first Breath of Life, was treasured up, or preserved in the Light of their Life, which, as an *Immanuel*, or *God with them*, should be born in all their Posterity, and be their Power of becoming again such Sons of God, as should fulfil the first Designs of the Creation of *Adam*, and fill Heaven again with that Host of Angels which it had lost. Thus from the Creation of *Adam*, through all the Degrees of his Fall to the Mystery of his Redemption, everything tells you, that God is Love. Nay the very Possibility of his having so great a Fall, gives great Glory to the Goodness and Love of God towards him. He was created an Angel, and therefore had the highest Perfection of an Angel, which is a *Freedom* of Willing. Secondly. He was created to be the *restoring* Angel of this new Creation. Now these two Things, which were his highest Glory, and greatest Marks of the Divine Favour, were the only *Possibility* of his falling. Had he not had an angelic Freedom of Will, he could not have had a false Will; had he not had *all Power* given unto him over this World, he could not have fallen into it? It was this Divine and high Power over it, that opened a Way for his Entrance, or falling into it.— Thus, *Academicus*, from this View of Man, we come to the utmost Certainty of a threefold Nature or Life in him. 1. He is the Son of a fallen Angel. 2. He is the Son of a Male and Female of this bestial World. 3. He is a Son of the Lamb of God, and has a Birth of Heaven again in his Soul. Hence we see also, that all that we have to fear, to hate, and renounce; all that we have to love, to desire, and pray for; is *all within* ourselves. No Man can be miserable, but by falling a Sacrifice to his own *inward Passions* and Tempers; nor anyone happy, but by overcoming himself. How ridiculous would a Man seem to you, who should torment himself, because the Land in *America* was not well tilled? Now everything that is not within you, that has not its Birth and Growth in your own Life, is at the same

Distance from you, is as foreign to your own Happiness or Misery, as an *American* Story. Your Life is all that you have ; and nothing is a Part of it, or makes any Alteration in it, but the Good or Evil that is in the Workings of your own Life. Hence you may see why our Saviour, who, though he had all Wisdom, and came to be the Light of the World, is yet so short in his Instructions, and gives so small a Number of Doctrines to Mankind, whilst every Moral Teacher, writes Volumes upon every single Virtue. It is because he knew what they knew not, that our whole Malady lies in this, that the *Will* of our Mind, the *Lust* of our Life, is turned into this World ; and that nothing can relieve us, or set us right, but the *turning* the Will of our Mind, and the Desire of our Hearts to God, and that Heaven which we had lost. And hence it is, that he calls us to nothing, but a *total Denial* of ourselves, and the *Life* of this World, and to a Faith in him, as the Worker of a new Birth and Life in us. Did we but receive his short Instructions with true Faith, and Simplicity of Heart, as the Truth of God, we should not want anyone to comment or enlarge upon them. A Traveller that has taken a wrong Road, does not want an Orator to discourse to him on the Nature of Roads, but to be told, in short, which is his right Way. Now this is our Case ; it was not a *Number* of things that brought about our Fall ; *Adam* only took up a *wrong Will* ; that Will brought him, and us into our present State, or *Road of Life* ; and therefore our Saviour uses not a Number of Instructions to set us right ; he only tells us to renounce the *false Will*, which brought *Adam* into the *Life* of this World, and to take up that Will, which should have kept him in Paradise. Observe now, my Friend, the great Benefit that we have from the foregoing Account of Man's original Perfection, and the Nature of his Fall. It opens the true Ground of our Religion, and the absolute Necessity of it ; it forces us to know, that our whole natural Life is a mistaken Road, and that Christ is alone our true Guide out of it. It teaches us every Reason for renouncing ourselves, and loving the whole Nature of our Redemption, as the greatest Joy and Desire of our Hearts. We are not only compelled, as it were, to hunger after it, to run with Eagerness into its Arms, but are also delivered from all Mistakes about it, from all the Difficulties and Perplexities, which divided Sects and Churches have brought into it. For, from this View of things, we see, not uncertainly, but with the fullest Assurance, that our *Will*, and our *Heart* is all ; that nothing else either finds or loses God ; and that all our Religion is only the Religion of the Heart. We see with open Eyes, that as a *Spirit of Longing* after the Life of this World, made *Adam* and us to be the poor

Pilgrims on Earth that we are, so the *Spirit of Prayer*, or the longing Desire of the Heart after Christ, and God, and Heaven, breaks all our Bonds asunder, casts all our Cords from us, and raises us out of the Miseries of Time, into the Riches of Eternity. Thus seeing and knowing our first and our present State, everything calls us to Prayer; and the Desire of our Heart becomes the Spirit of Prayer. And when the Spirit of Prayer is born in us, then Prayer is no longer considered, as only the Business of this or that Hour, but is the continual Panting or Breathing of the Heart after God. Its Petitions are not picked out of Manuals of Devotion; it loves its own Language, it speaks most when it says least. If you ask what its Words are, they are *Spirit*, they are *Life*, they are *Love*, that unite with God.

Acad. I apprehend, Sir, that what you here say of the Spirit of Prayer, will be taken by some People for a Censure upon *Hours* and *Forms* of Prayer; though I know you have no such Meaning.

Rust. Pray let me speak again to *Academicus*: His Learning seems to be always upon the Watch, to find out some Excuse for not receiving the whole Truth. Does not *Theophilus* here speak of the *Spirit of Prayer*, as a *State* of the Heart, which is become the *governing* Principle of the Soul's Life? And if it is a living *State* of the Heart, must it not have its Life in itself, independent of every outward Time and Occasion? And yet must it not, at the same time, be that alone which disposes and fits the Heart to rejoice and delight in Hours, and Times, and Occasions of Prayer? Suppose he had said, that *Honesty* is an *inward living* Principle of the Heart, a Rectitude of the Mind, that has all its Life and Strength *within* itself: Could this be thought to censure all Times and Occasions of performing outward Acts of Honesty? Now the *Spirit* of Prayer differs from all outward Acts and Forms of Prayer, just as the *Honesty of the Heart*, or a living Rectitude of Mind, differs from outward and occasional Acts of Honesty. And yet should a Man overlook, or disregard Times and Occasions of outward Acts of Honesty, on Pretence that true Honesty was an inward living Principle of the Heart, who would not see, that such a one had as little of the inward Spirit, as of the outward Acts of Honesty? *St. John* saith, 'If any Man hath this World's Goods, and seeth 'his Brother hath need, and shutteth up his Bowels of Compassion to him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him?' Just so, and with the same Truth, it may be said, If a Man overlooks, neglects, or refuses, Times and Hours of Prayer, *how dwelleth the Spirit of Prayer* in him? And yet, its own Life and Spirit is vastly superior to, independent of, and stays for no

particular Hours, or Forms of Words. And in this Sense it is truly said, that it has its own Language, that it wants not to pick Words out of Manuals of Devotion, but is always speaking forth Spirit and Life, and Love towards God. But pray, *Theophilus*, do you go on, as you intended.

Theoph. I shall only add, before we pass on to another Point, that, from what has been said of the first State and Fall of Man, it plainly follows, that the *Sin* of all Sins, or the *Heresy* of all Heresies, is a *worldly Spirit*. We are apt to consider this Temper only as an Infirmary, or pardonable Failure; but it is indeed the great *Apostasy* from God and the Divine Life. It is not a single Sin, but the whole Nature of all Sin, that leaves no Possibility of coming out of our fallen State, till it be totally renounced with all the Strength of our Hearts. Every Sin, be it of what kind it will, is only a Branch of the worldly Spirit that lives in us. 'There is but one that is good,' saith our Lord, 'and that is God.' In the same Strictness of Expression it must be said, there is but *one Life* that is good, and that is the Life of God and Heaven. Depart in the least Degree from the Goodness of God, and you depart into Evil; because nothing is good but his Goodness.

Choose any Life, but the Life of God and Heaven, and you choose Death; for Death is nothing else but the Loss of the Life of God. The Creatures of this World have but *one Life*, and that is the Life of this World: This is their *one Life*, and *one Good*. Eternal Beings have but *one Life*, and *one Good*, and that is the Life of God. The Spirit of the Soul is in itself nothing else but a Spirit breathed forth from the Life of God, and for this only End, that the Life of God, the Nature of God, the Working of God, the Tempers of God, might be manifested in it. God could not create Man to have a Will of his own, and a Life of his own, different from the Life and Will that is in himself; this is more impossible than for a good Tree to bring forth corrupt Fruit. God can only delight in his own Life, his own Goodness, and his own Perfections; and therefore cannot love or delight, or dwell, in any Creatures, but where his own Goodness and Perfections are to be found. Like can only unite with Like, Heaven with Heaven, and Hell with Hell; and therefore the Life of God must be the Life of the Soul, if the Soul is to unite with God. Hence it is, that all the Religion of fallen Man, all the Methods of our Redemption, have only this *one End*, to take from us that *strange* and *earthly* Life we have gotten by the Fall, and to kindle again the Life of God and Heaven in our Souls: Not to deliver us from that gross and sordid Vice called *Covetousness*,

which Heathens can condemn, but to take the *whole Spirit* of this World entirely from us, and that for this necessary Reason, because 'All that is in the World, the Lust of the Flesh, the 'Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, is not of the Father,' that is, is not that Life, or Spirit of Life, which we had from God by our Creation, 'but is of this World,' is brought into us by our Fall from God into the Life of this World. And therefore a worldly Spirit is not to be considered, as a single Sin, or as something that may consist with some real Degrees of Christian Goodness, but as a State of *real Death* to the Kingdom and Life of God in our Souls. Management, Prudence, or an artful Trimming betwixt God and Mammon, are here all in vain; it is not only the Grossness of an outward, visible, worldly Behaviour, but the *Spirit*, the *Prudence*, the *Subtlety*, the *Wisdom* of this World, that is our *Separation* from the Life of God.

Hold this therefore, *Academicus*, as a certain Truth, that the *Heresy* of all Heresies is a *worldly Spirit*. It is the whole Nature and Misery of our Fall; it keeps up the Death of our Souls, and, so long as it lasts, makes it impossible for us to be born again from above. It is the greatest Blindness and Darkness of our Nature, and keeps us in the grossest Ignorance both of Heaven and Hell. For though they are both of them within us, yet we feel neither the one, nor the other, so long as the Spirit of this World reigns in us. Light, and Truth, and the Gospel, so far as they concern Eternity, are all empty Sounds to the worldly Spirit. His own Good, and his own Evil, govern all his Hopes and Fears; and therefore he can have no Religion, or be further concerned in it, than so far as it can be made serviceable to the Life of this World. *Publicans* and *Harlots* are all born of the Spirit of this World; but its highest Birth, are the *Scribes*, and *Pharisees*, and *Hypocrites*, who turn Godliness into Gain, and serve God for the Sake of Mammon; these live, and move, and have their Being, in and from the Spirit of this World.—Of all Things therefore, my Friend, detest the Spirit of this World, or there is no Help; you must live and die an *utter Stranger* to all that is Divine and heavenly. You will go out of the World in the same Poverty and Death to the Divine Life, in which you entered into it. For a worldly, earthly Spirit can know nothing of God; it can know nothing, feel nothing, taste nothing, delight in nothing, but with earthly Senses, and after an earthly Manner. 'The natural Man,' saith the Apostle, 'receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, 'they are Foolishness unto him. He cannot know them, 'because they are spiritually discerned'; that is, they can only be discerned by *that Spirit*, which he has not. Now the true

Ground and Reason of this, and the absolute Impossibility for the natural Man to receive and know them, how polite, and learned, and acute soever he be, is this; it is because all *real Knowledge* is *Life*, or a living *Sensibility* of the Thing that is known. There is no Light in the Mind, but what is the Light of *Life*; so far as our Life reaches, so far we understand, and *feel*, and know, and no further. All after this, is only the Play of our Imagination, amusing itself with the *dead Pictures* of its own Ideas. Now this is all that the natural Man, who has not the Life of God in him, can possibly do with the Things of God. He can only contemplate them, as Things *foreign* to himself, as so many *dead Ideas*, that he receives from Books, or Hearsay; and so can learnedly dispute and quarrel about them, and laugh at those as Enthusiasts, who have a living Sensibility of them. He is only the worse for his *hearsay, dead Ideas* of Divine Truths; they become a bad Nourishment of all his natural Tempers: He is proud of his Ability to discourse about them, and loses all Humility, all Love of God and Man, through a vain and haughty Contention for them. His *Zeal* for Religion is Envy and Wrath; his *Orthodoxy* is Pride and Obstinacy; his *Love* of the Truth is Hatred and Ill-will to those who dare to dissent from him. This is the constant Effect of the Religion of the natural Man, who is under the Dominion of the Spirit of this World. He cannot know more of Religion, nor make a better Use of his Knowledge, than this comes to; and all for this plain Reason, because he stands at the *same Distance* from a *living Sensibility* of the Truth, as the Man that is born blind, does from a *living Sensibility* of Light. Light must first be the *Birth* of his own Life, before he can enter into a *real Knowledge* of it. Yet so ignorant is the natural Man with all his learned Acuteness, that he does not so much as know, that there is, and must be, this great *Difference* between real Knowledge, and dead Ideas of Things; and that a Man cannot know anything, any further than as his *own Life* opens the Knowledge of it in himself.

The Measure of our Life is the Measure of our Knowledge; and as the Spirit of our Life works, so the Spirit of our Understanding conceives. If our Will works with God, though our natural Capacity be ever so mean and narrow, we get a real Knowledge of God, and heavenly Truths; for everything must feel that in which it lives.

But if our Will works with Satan, and the Spirit of this World, let our Parts be ever so bright, our Imaginations ever so soaring, yet all our living Knowledge, or real Sensibility, can go no higher or deeper, than the *Mysteries* of Iniquity, and the

Lusts of Flesh and Blood. For where our Life is, there, and there only, is our Understanding; and that for this plain Reason, because as Life is the *Beginning* of all Sensibility, so it is and must be the *Bounds* of it; and no Sensibility can go any further than the Life goes, or have any other *Manner* of Knowledge, than as the Manner of its Life is. If you ask what *Life* is, or what is to be understood by it? It is in itself nothing else but a *working Will*; and no Life could be either good or evil, but for this Reason, because it is a *working Will*: Every Life, from the highest Angel to the lowest Animal, consists in a working Will; and therefore as the Will works, as that is with which it unites, so has every Creature its *Degree*, and *Kind*, and *Manner* of Life; and consequently as the Will of its Life works, so it has its *Degree*, and *Kind*, and *Manner* of Conceiving and Understanding, of Liking and Disliking. For nothing feels, or tastes, or understands, or likes, or dislikes, but the Life that is in us. The Spirit that leads our Life, is the Spirit that forms our Understanding. The Mind is our Eye, and all the Faculties of the Mind see everything according to the State the Mind is in. If *selfish Pride* is the Spirit of our Life, everything is only seen, and felt, and known, through this Glass. Everything is dark, senseless, and absurd to the proud Man, but that which brings Food to this Spirit. He understands nothing, he feels nothing, he tastes nothing, but as his Pride is made *sensible* of it, or capable of being *affected* with it. His *working Will*, which is the Life of his Soul, lives and works only in the Element of Pride; and therefore what suits his Pride, is his *only Good*; and what contradicts his Pride, is *all* the Evil that he can feel or know. His Wit, his Parts, his Learning, his Advancement, his Friends, his Admirers, his Successes, his Conquests, all these are the *only* God and Heaven, that he has any *living* Sensibility of. He indeed can talk of a Scripture-God, a Scripture-Christ, and Heaven; but these are only the ornamental Furniture of his Brain, whilst Pride is the God of his Heart. We are told, that 'God resisteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble.' This is not to be understood, as if God, by an *arbitrary Will*, only chose to deal thus with the proud and humble Man. Oh no. The true Ground is this, The *Resistance* is on the Part of Man. Pride resisteth God, it rejects him, it turns from him, and chooses to worship and adore something else instead of him; whereas Humility leaves all for God, falls down before him, and opens all the Doors of the Heart for his Entrance into it. This is the only Sense, in which God resisteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble. And thus it is in the true Ground and Reason of every Good and Evil that rises up in us;

we have neither Good nor Evil, but as it is the *natural* Effect of the *Workings* of our own Will, either with, or against God ; and God only interposes with his Threatenings and Instructions, to *direct* us to the right Use of our Wills, that we may not blindly work ourselves into Death, instead of Life. But take now another Instance like that already mentioned. Look at a Man whose *working Will* is under the Power of *Wrath*. He sees, and hears, and feels, and understands, and talks wholly from the *Light* and *Sense* of Wrath. All his Faculties are only so many Faculties of Wrath ; and he knows of no Sense or Reason, but that which his enlightened Wrath discovers to him. I have appealed, *Academicus*, to these Instances, only to illustrate and confirm that great Truth, which I before asserted, namely, that the *working of our Will*, or the State of our Life, governs the State of our Mind, and forms the *Degree* and *Manner* of our Understanding and Knowledge ; and that as the *Fire* of our Life burns, so is the Light of our Life kindled : And all this only to show you the utter *Impossibility* of *knowing* God, and Divine Truths, till your *Life* is Divine, and wholly dead to the Life and Spirit of this World ; since our Light and Knowledge can be no better, or higher, than the State of our Life and Heart is. Tell me now, do you feel the Truth of all this ? I say feel, because no Truth is possessed, till you have a feeling and living Sensibility of it.

Acad. Oh ! Sir, you have touched every String of my Heart ; and I now wish, with the *Psalmist*, that I had the Wings of a Dove, that I might fly away, and be at Rest ; fly away from the Spirit of this World, to be at Rest in the sweet Tranquillity of a Life born again of God. You know, Sir, that in the Morning you told me of a certain *first Step*, that all Necessity must be the *Beginning* of a spiritual Life ; you gave me till To-morrow to speak my Mind and Resolution about it. But you have now extorted my Answer from me, I cannot stay a Moment longer : With all the Strength that I have, I turn from every Thing that is not God, and his holy Will ; with all the Desire, Delight, and Longing of my Heart, I give up myself wholly to the Life, Light, and Holy Spirit of God ; pleased with nothing in this World, but as it gives Time, and Place, and Occasions, of doing and being *that*, which my heavenly Father would have me to do, and be ; seeking for no Happiness from this earthly fallen Life, but that of *overcoming* all its Spirit and Tempers. But I believe, *Theophilus*, that you had something further to say.

Theoph. Indeed, *Academicus*, there is hardly any knowing, when one has said enough of the evil Effects of a *worldly Spirit*. It is the Canker that eats up all the Fruits of our other good

Tempers ; it leaves no Degree of Goodness in them, but transforms all that we are, or do, into its own earthly Nature. The *Philosophers* of old, began all their Virtue in a total Renunciation of the Spirit of this World. They saw with the Eyes of Heaven, that Darkness was not more contrary to Light, than the Wisdom of this World was contrary to the Spirit of Virtue ; therefore they allowed of no Progress in Virtue, but so far as a Man had overcome himself, and the Spirit of this World.

This gave a Divine Solidity to all their Instructions, and proved them to be Masters of true Wisdom. But the Doctrine of the Cross of Christ, the last, the highest, the most finishing Stroke given to the Spirit of this World, that speaks more in *one Word* than all the Philosophy of voluminous Writers, is yet professed by those, who are in more Friendship with the World, than was allowed to the Disciples of *Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, or Epictetus.*

Nay, if those ancient Sages were to start up amongst us with their Divine Wisdom, they would bid fair to be treated by the Sons of the Gospel, if not by some Fathers of the Church, as dreaming Enthusiasts.

But, *Academicus*, this is a standing Truth, The World can only love its own, and Wisdom can only be justified of her Children. The Heaven-born *Epictetus* told one of his Scholars, That *then* he might *first* look upon himself, as having made *some true* Proficiency in Virtue, when the World took him for a *Fool* ; an Oracle like that, which said, *The Wisdom of this World is Foolishness with God.*

If you were to ask me, What is the Apostasy of these last Times, or whence is all the Degeneracy of the present Christian Church ? I should place it all in a *worldly Spirit*. If here you see open Wickedness, there only Forms of Godliness ; if here superficial Holiness, political Piety, crafty Prudence, there haughty Sanctity, partial Zeal, envious Orthodoxy ; if almost everywhere you see a *Jewish* Blindness, and Hardness of Heart, and the Church trading with the Gospel, as the old *Jews* bought and sold Beasts in their Temple ; all these are only so many Forms and proper Fruits of the worldly Spirit. This is the great *Net*, with which the Devil becomes a Fisher of Men ; and be assured of this, my Friend, that every Son of Man is in this *Net*, till through and by the Spirit of Christ, he breaks out of it.

I say the *Spirit* of Christ, for nothing else can deliver him from it. Trust now to any Kind, or Form of religious Observances, to any Number of the most plausible Virtues, to any Kinds of Learning, or Efforts of human Prudence, and then I will tell you what your Case will be ; you will overcome *one*

Temper of the World, *only* and *merely* by cleaving to another. For nothing leaves the World, nothing renounces it, nothing can possibly overcome it, but singly and solely the Spirit of Christ. Hence it is, that many learned Men, with all the rich Furniture of their Brain, live and die Slaves to the Spirit of this World; and can only differ from gross Worldlings, as the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* differ from *Publicans* and *Sinners*: It is because the Spirit of Christ, is not the *one only* thing that is the *Desire* of their Hearts; and therefore their Learning only works in, and with the Spirit of this World, and becomes itself, no small Part of the *Vanity of Vanities*. Would you further know, *Academicus*, the evil Nature and Effects of a worldly Spirit, you need only look at the blessed Power and Effects of the *Spirit of Prayer*; for the one goes downwards with the same Strength, as the other goes upwards; the one betroths and weds you to an earthly Nature, with the same Certainty, as the other espouses, and unites you to Christ, and God, and Heaven. The Spirit of Prayer, is a *pressing forth* of the Soul out of this earthly Life; it is a stretching with all its Desire after the Life of God; it is a leaving, as far as it can, all its *own Spirit*, to receive a Spirit from above, to be one Life, one Love, one Spirit with Christ in God. This Prayer, which is an emptying itself of all its own Lusts, and natural Tempers, and an opening itself for the Light and Love of God to enter into it, is the Prayer in the *Name of Christ*, to which nothing is denied. For the Love which God bears to the Soul, his eternal, never-ceasing Desire to enter into it, to dwell in it, and open the Birth of his Holy Word, and Spirit in it, stays no longer, than till the Door of the Heart opens for him. For nothing does, or can keep God out of the Soul, or hinder his holy Union with it, but the *Desire* of the Heart turned from him. And the Reason of it is this; it is because the *Life* of the Soul is in itself nothing else but a *working Will*; and therefore wherever the Will works or goes, there, and there only, the Soul lives, whether it be in God, or the Creature.

Whatever it desires, that is the *Fuel* of its Fire; and as its Fuel is, so is the Flame of its Life. A Will, given up to earthly Goods, is at Grass with *Nebuchadnezzar*, and has one Life with the Beasts of the Field: For earthly Desires keep up the *same Life* in a Man and an Ox. For the one only Reason, why the Animals of this World have no Sense or Knowledge of God, is this; it is because they cannot form any other than earthly Desires, and so can only have an earthly Life. When therefore a Man wholly turns his working Will to earthly Desires, he dies to the Excellence of his natural State, and

may be said only to live, and move, and have his Being, in the Life of this World, as the Beasts have.—Earthly Food, &c., only desired and used for the Support of the earthly Body, is suitable to Man's present Condition, and the Order of Nature: But when the Desire, the Delight, and Longing of the Soul is set upon earthly Things, then the Humanity is degraded, is fallen from God; and the Life of the Soul is made as *earthly* and *bestial*, as the Life of the Body: For the Creature can be neither higher nor lower, neither better nor worse, than as the Will worketh: For you are to observe, that the Will has a Divine and *magic* Power; what it desires, that it takes, and of that it *eateth* and *liveth*. Wherever, and in whatever, the *working* Will chooses to *dwell* and *delight*, that becomes the Soul's *Food*, its *Condition*, its *Body*, its *Clothing*, and *Habitation*: For all these are the true and certain Effects and Powers of the working Will.

Nothing does, or can go with a Man into Heaven, nothing follows him into Hell, but *that* in which the Will dwelt, with which it was fed, nourished, and clothed, in this Life. And this is to be noted well, that Death can make no Alteration of this State of the Will; it only takes off the outward, worldly Covering of Flesh and Blood, and forces the Soul to see, and feel, and know, what a Life, what a State, *Food*, *Body*, and *Habitation*, its own working Will has brought forth for it. Oh *Academicus*, stop awhile, and let your Hearing be turned into Feeling. Tell me, is there anything in Life that deserves a Thought, but how to keep this *Working* of our Will in a right State, and to get that *Purity* of Heart, which alone can see, and know, and find, and possess God? Is there anything so frightful as this worldly Spirit, which turns the Soul from God, makes it an House of Darkness, and feeds it with the Food of Time, at the Expense of all the Riches of Eternity?

On the other hand, what can be so desirable a Good as the *Spirit of Prayer*, which empties the Soul of all its own Evil, separates Death and Darkness from it, leaves *Self*, *Time*, and the *World*, and becomes one Life, one Light, one Love, one Spirit with Christ, and God, and Heaven?

Think, my Friends, of these Things, with something more than Thoughts; let your hungry Souls eat of the Nourishment of them as a Bread of Heaven; and desire only to live, that with all the *Working* of your Wills, and the *whole Spirit* of your Minds, you may live and die united to God: And thus let this Conversation end, till God gives us another Meeting.

The End of the Second DIALOGUE.

THE THIRD DIALOGUE.

RUST. I have brought again with me, Gentlemen, my silent Friend, *Humanus*, and upon the same Condition of being silent still. But though his Silence is the same, yet he is quite altered. For this twenty Years I have known him to be of an even cheerful Temper, full of Good-nature, and even quite calm and dispassionate in his Attacks upon Christianity, never provoked by what was said either against his Infidelity, or in Defence of the Gospel. He used to boast of his being free from those four Passions and Resentments, which, he said, were so easy to be seen, in many or most Defenders of the Gospel-Meekness. But now he is morose, peevish, and full of Chagrin, and seems to be as uneasy with himself, as with every Body else: whatever he says, is rash, satirical, and wrathful. I tell him, but he will not own it, that his Case is this: The Truth has touched him; but it is only so far, as to be his *Tormentor*. It is only as welcome to him, as a *Thief* that has taken from him all his Riches, Goods, and Armour, wherein he trusted. The Christianity he used to oppose is vanished; and therefore all the Weapons he had against it, are dropped out of his Hands. It now appears to stand upon another Ground, to have a deeper Bottom, and better Nature, than what he imagined; and therefore he, and his Scheme of Infidelity, are quite disconcerted. But though his Arguments have thus lost all their Strength, yet his *Heart* is left in the State it was; it stands in the same Opposition to Christianity as it did before, and yet without any Ideas of his Brain to support it. And this is the true Ground of his present, uneasy, peevish State of Mind. He has nothing now to subsist upon, but the resolute *Hardness* of his Heart, his *Pride* and *Obstinacy*. These he cannot give up by the Force of his Reason; his Heart cannot bear the Thoughts of such a Sacrifice; and yet he feels and knows, that he has no Strength left, but in a settled *Hardness*, *Pride*, and *Obstinacy*, to continue as he is.—These, I own, are severe and hard Words: But, hard as they are, I am sure *Humanus* knows, that they proceed from the Softness and Affection of my Heart towards him, from a compassionate Zeal to show him where his Malady lies, and the Necessity of overcoming himself, before he can have the Blessing of Light,

and Truth, and Peace. Though it is with some Reluctance, yet I have chosen thus to make my Neighbour known both to himself, and to you, that you may speak of such Matters as may give the best Relief to the State he is in.

Theoph. Indeed, *Rusticus*, I much approve of the Spirit you have here shown, with regard to your Friend, and hope he will take in good Part all that you have said. As for me, I embrace him with the utmost Tenderness of Affection. I feel and compassionate the trying State of his Heart, and have only this one Wish, that I could pour the heavenly Water of Meekness, and the Oil of Divine Love, into it. Let us force him to know, that we are the Messengers of Divine Love to him ; that we seek not ourselves, nor our own Victory, but to make him victorious over his own Evil, and become possessed of a new Life in God. His Trial is the greatest and hardest that belongs to human Nature : And yet it is absolutely necessary to be undergone.

Nature must become a Torment and Burden to itself, before it can willingly give itself up to that Death, through which alone it can pass into Life. There is no true and real *Conversion*, whether it be from Infidelity, or any other Life of Sin, till a Man comes to know, and feel, that nothing less than his *whole* Nature is to be parted with, and yet finds in himself no *Possibility* of doing it. This is the Inability that can bring us at last to say, with the Apostle, 'When I am weak, then am I strong.' This is the Distress that stands near to the Gate of Life ; this is the Despair by which we lose all our own Life, to find a new one in God. For here, in this Place it is, that *Faith*, and *Hope*, and true Seeking to God and Christ, are born.—But till all is Despair in ourselves, till all is lost that we had any Trust in as our own ; till then, Faith and Hope, and turning to God in Prayer, are only things learnt and practised by *Rule* and *Method* ; but they are not born in us, are not *living* Qualities of a new Birth, till we have done feeling any Trust or Confidence in ourselves. Happy therefore is it for your Friend *Humanus*, that he is come thus far, that everything is taken from him on which he trusted, and found Content in himself. In this State, one *Sigh* or *Look*, or the least *Turning* of his Heart to God for Help, would be the Beginning of his Salvation. Let us therefore try to improve this happy Moment to him, not so much by Arguments of Reason, as by the Arrows of that Divine Love which overflows all Nature and Creature.

For *Humanus*, though hitherto without Christ, is still within the Reach of Divine Love : He belongs to God ; God created him for himself, to be an Habitation of his own Life, Light, and Holy Spirit ; and God has brought him and us together, that

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the lost Sheep may be found, and brought back to its heavenly Shepherd.

Oh *Humanus*, Love is my *Bait*; you must be caught by it; it will put its Hook into your Heart, and force you to know, that of all strong Things, nothing is so strong, so irresistible, as Divine Love.

It brought forth all the Creation; it kindles all the Life of Heaven; it is the Song of all the Angels of God. It has redeemed all the World; it seeks for every Sinner upon Earth; it embraces all the Enemies of God; and from the Beginning to the End of Time, the one Work of Providence, is the one Work of Love.

Moses and the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles, were all of them Messengers of Divine Love. They came to kindle a Fire on Earth, and that Fire was the Love which burns in Heaven. Ask what God is? His Name is Love; he is the Good, the Perfection, the Peace, the Joy, the Glory, and Blessing, of every Life. Ask what Christ is? He is the *universal Remedy* of all Evil broken forth in Nature and Creature. He is the *Destruction* of Misery, Sin, Darkness, Death, and Hell. He is the *Resurrection and Life* of all fallen Nature. He is the unwearied Compassion, the long-suffering Pity, the never-ceasing Mercifulness of God to every Want and Infirmity of human Nature.

He is the Breathing forth of the Heart, Life, and Spirit of God, into all the dead Race of *Adam*. He is the Seeker, the Finder, the Restorer, of all that was lost and dead to the Life of God. He is the Love, that, from *Cain* to the End of Time, prays for all its Murderers; the Love that willingly suffers and dies among Thieves, that Thieves may have a Life with him in Paradise; the Love that visits Publicans, Harlots, and Sinners, and wants and seeks to forgive, where most is to be forgiven.

Oh, my Friends, let us surround and encompass *Humanus* with these Flames of Love, till he cannot make his Escape from them, but must become a willing Victim to their Power. For the universal God is universal Love; all is Love, but that which is hellish and earthly. All Religion is the Spirit of Love; all its Gifts and Graces are the Gifts and Graces of Love; it has no Breath, no Life, but the Life of Love. Nothing exalts, nothing purifies, but the Fire of Love; nothing changes Death into Life, Earth into Heaven, Men into Angels, but Love alone. Love breathes the *Spirit* of God; its Words and Works are the *Inspiration* of God. It speaketh not of itself, but the *Word*, the eternal Word of God speaketh in it; for all that Love speaketh, that God speaketh, because Love is God. Love is Heaven revealed in the Soul; it is Light, and Truth; it is infallible; it

has no Errors, for all Errors are the Want of Love. Love has no more of Pride, than Light has of Darkness ; it stands and bears all its Fruits from a Depth, and Root of Humility. Love is of no Sect or Party ; it neither makes, nor admits of any Bounds ; you may as easily inclose the Light, or shut up the Air of the World into one Place, as confine Love to a Sect or Party. It lives in the *Liberty*, the *Universality*, the *Impartiality* of Heaven. It believes in one, holy, catholic God, the God of all Spirits ; it unites and joins with the catholic Spirit of the one God, who unites with all that is good, and is meek, patient, well-wishing, and long-suffering over all the Evil that is in Nature and Creature. Love, like the Spirit of God, rideth upon the Wings of the Wind ; and is in Union and Communion with all the Saints that are in Heaven and on Earth. Love is quite pure ; it has no By-ends ; it seeks not its own ; it has but *one Will*, and that is, to give itself into everything, and overcome all Evil with Good. Lastly, Love is the *Christ* of God ; it comes down from Heaven ; it regenerates the Soul from above ; it blots out all Transgressions ; it takes from Death its Sting, from the Devil his Power, and from the Serpent his Poison. It heals all the Infirmities of our earthly Birth ; it gives Eyes to the Blind, Ears to the Deaf, and makes the Dumb to speak ; it cleanses the Lepers, and casts out Devils, and puts Man in Paradise before he dies. It lives wholly to the Will of him, of whom it is born ; its Meat and Drink is, to do the Will of God. It is the Resurrection and Life of every Divine Virtue, a fruitful Mother of true Humility, boundless Benevolence, unwearied Patience, and Bowels of Compassion. This, *Rusticus*, is the Christ, the Salvation, the Religion of Divine Love, the true Church of God, where the Life of God is found, and lived, and to which your Friend *Humanus* is called by us. We direct him to nothing but the inward Life of Christ, to the Working of the Holy Spirit of God, which alone can deliver him from the Evil that is in his own Nature, and give him a Power to become a Son of God.

Rust. My Neighbour has infinite Reason to thank you, for this lovely Draught you have given of the Spirit of Religion ; he cannot avoid being affected with it. But pray let us now hear, how we are to enter into this Religion of Divine Love, or rather what God has done to introduce us into it, and make us Partakers again of his Divine Nature.

Theoph. The first Work, or Beginning of this redeeming Love of God, is in that *Immanuel*, or God with us, treasured up, or preserved in the first *Adam*, as the *Seed of the Woman*, which in him, and all his Posterity, should bruise the Head, and over-

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come the Life of the Serpent in our fallen Nature. This is Love indeed, because it is universal, and reaches every Branch of the human Tree, from the first to the last Man, that grows from it. Miserably as Mankind are divided, and all at War with one another, everyone *appropriating* God to themselves, yet they all have but one God, who is the Spirit of all, the Life of all, and the Lover of all. Men may divide themselves, to have God to themselves; they may hate and persecute one another for God's sake; but this is a blessed Truth, that neither the Hater, nor the Hated, can be divided from the one, holy, catholic God, who with an unalterable Meekness, Sweetness, Patience, and Good-will towards all, waits for all, calls them all, redeems them all, and comprehends all in the outstretched Arms of his catholic Love. Ask not therefore how we shall enter into this Religion of Love and Salvation? for it is itself entered into us, it has taken Possession of us from the Beginning. It is *Immanuel* in every human Soul; it lies as a Treasure of Heaven, and Eternity in us; it cannot be divided from us by the Power of Man; we cannot lose it ourselves; it will never leave us nor forsake us, till with our last Breath we die in the Refusal of it. This is the open Gate of our Redemption; we have not far to go to find it. It is every Man's own Treasure; it is a Root of Heaven, a Seed of God, sown into our Souls by the *Word* of God; and, like a small Grain of Mustard-seed, has a Power of growing to be a Tree of Life. Here, my Friend, you should, once for all, mark and observe, *where* and *what* the true Nature of Religion is; for here it is plainly shown you, that its *Place* is within; its Work and Effect is *within*; its Glory, its Life, its Perfection, is all within; it is merely and solely the raising a new Life, new Love, and a new Birth, in the inward Spirit of our Hearts. Religion (which is solely to restore Man to his first and right State in God) had its Beginning, and first Power, from the *Seed of the Woman*, the Treader on the Serpent's Head; and therefore all its Progress, from its Beginning to its last finished Work, is, and can be nothing else, but the growing Power and Victory of the *Seed of the Woman*, over all the Evil brought by the Serpent into human Nature. For the Seed of the Woman is the Spirit, and Power, and Life of God, given or breathed again into Man, to be the Raiser and Redeemer of that first Life, which he had lost. This was the *spiritual* Nature of Religion in its first Beginning, and this alone is its *whole Nature* to the End of Time; it is nothing else, but the Power, and Life, and Spirit of God, as *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, working, creating, and reviving Life in the fallen Soul, and driving all its Evil out of it. This is the true Rock, on which the Church of Christ is built; this is the

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one Church out of which there is no Salvation, and against which the Gates of Hell can never prevail.

Here therefore we are come to this firm Conclusion, that let Religion have ever so many *Shapes, Forms, or Reformations*, it is no true *Divine Service*, no proper *Worship* of God, has no Good in it, can do no Good to Man, can remove no Evil out of him, raise no *Divine Life* in him, but so far as it *serves, worships, conforms*, and *gives* itself up to this *Operation* of the holy, triune God, as living and dwelling in the Soul. Keep close to this Idea of Religion, as an inward, spiritual Life in the Soul; observe all its Works within you, the Death and Life that are found there; seek for no Good, no Comfort, but in the inward Awakening of all that is holy and heavenly in your Heart; and then, so much as you have of this inward Religion, so much you have of a real Salvation. For Salvation is only a Victory over Nature; so far as you resist and renounce your own vain, selfish, and earthly Nature, so far as you overcome all your own natural Tempers of the old Man, so far God enters into you, lives, and operates in you, he is in you the Light, the Life, and the Spirit, of your Soul; and you are in him that new Creature, that worships him in Spirit, and in Truth. For *Divine Worship or Service* is, and can be only performed by being *like-minded* with Christ; nothing worships God, but the Spirit of Christ his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased. This is as true, as that 'no Man hath known 'the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son revealeth 'him.' Look now at anything as Religion, or *Divine Service*, but a strict, unerring Conformity to the Life and Spirit of Christ, and then, though every Day was full of *Burnt-offerings*, and *Sacrifices*, yet you would be only like those Religionists, who 'drew near to God with their Lips, but their Hearts were far 'from him.'

For the Heart is always far from God, unless the Spirit of Christ be alive in it. But no one has the living Spirit of Christ, but he who in all his Conversation walketh, as he walked. Consider these Words of the Apostle, 'My little Children, of whom 'I travail in Birth, till Christ be formed in you.' This is the Sum total of all, and, if this is wanting, all is wanting. Again, says he, 'He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly.—Circumcision is 'nothing, and Uncircumcision is nothing, but the new Creature 'is all.' Nay, see how much further he carries this Point, in the following Words: 'Though I speak with the Tongues of Men 'and Angels, though I have the Gift of Prophecy, though I have 'all Faith, so that I could remove Mountains,' &c., 'and have not 'Charity' (that is, have not the Spirit of Christ) 'it profiteth me 'nothing.' For by *Charity* here, the Apostle means neither more

nor less, but strictly that same Thing, which, in other Places, he calls the *new Creature*, *Christ formed in us*, and our being led by the Spirit of Christ. According to the Apostle, nothing avails but the *new Creature*, nothing avails but the Spirit of Charity here described; therefore this Charity, and the new Creature, are only two different Expressions of *one* and the *same* Thing, viz., the *Birth*, and *Formation* of Christ in us. Thus saith he, 'If any Man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;' nay, though he could say of himself (as our Lord says many will) Have I not prophesied in the Name of Christ, cast out Devils, and done many wonderful Works? yet such a one not being *led by the Spirit of Christ*, is that very Man, whose high State the Apostle makes to be a mere Nothing, because he has not that Spirit of Charity, which is the Spirit of Christ. Again, 'There is no Condemnation to those, who are in Christ Jesus;' therefore to be in Christ Jesus, is to have that Spirit of Charity, which is the Spirit, and Life, and Goodness of all Virtues. Now here you are to observe, that the Apostle no more rejects *all outward Religion*, when he says *Circumcision is nothing*, than he rejects *Prophesying*, and *Faith*, and *Alms-giving*, when he says they *profit nothing*; he only teaches this solid Truth, that the Kingdom of God is within us, and that it all consists in the State of our Heart; and that therefore all outward Observances, all the most specious Virtues, profit nothing, are of no Value, unless the hidden Man of the Heart, the new Creature, led by the Spirit of Christ, be the Doer of them.

Thus, says he, 'They who are led by the Spirit of God, are the Sons of God.' And therefore none else, be they who, or where, or what they will, Clergy, or Laity, none are, or can be, Sons of God, but they who give up themselves entirely to the Leading and Guidance of the Spirit of God, desiring to be moved, inspired, and governed solely by it.

Again, 'We are of the Circumcision, who worship God in Spirit'; and to show, that this is not a vain Pretence, he says in another Place, 'The Manifestation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal.' Therefore *no Profit* from anything else; all Preaching and Hearing is vain, and all Preachers and Hearers stand chargeable with the Vanity of their religious Performances, who think of Preaching or Hearing *profitably*, any other Way, or by any other Power, than in and by the Holy Spirit of God dwelling and working in them. Thus again, 'If the Spirit of him, who raised Jesus from the Dead, dwell in you, he also shall quicken your mortal Bodies by his Spirit, which dwelleth in you.' In vain therefore is Life expected, either for Body or Soul, but by the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. Again,

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‘Through him we both have Access by one Spirit to the Father’; therefore this *one Spirit* is the one only Way to God, and Salvation. Thus does all Scripture bring us to this Conclusion, that all Religion is but a dead Work, unless it be the Work of the Spirit of God; and that Sacraments, Prayers, Singing, Preaching, Hearing, are only so many Ways of being fervent in the Spirit, and of giving up ourselves more and more to the inward working, enlightening, quickening, sanctifying Spirit of God within us; and all for this End, that the Curse of the *Fall* may be taken from us, that Death may be swallowed up in Victory, and a true, real, Christ-like Nature formed in us, by the same Spirit, by which it was formed in the Holy Virgin *Mary*. Now for the true Ground, and absolute Necessity, of this turning wholly and solely to the Spirit of God, you need only know this plain Truth; namely, that the Spirit of God, the Spirit of *Satan*, or the Spirit of this World, are, and must be, the one or the other of them, the *continual* Leader, Guide, and Inspirer, of everything that lives in Nature. There is no going out from some one of these; the Moment you cease to be moved, quickened, and inspired by God, you are infallibly moved and directed by the Spirit of *Satan*, or the World, or by both of them. And the Reason is, because the Soul of Man is a *Spirit*, and a *Life*, that in its whole Being is nothing else but a *Birth* both of God and Nature; and therefore, every Moment of its Life, it must live in some Union and Conjunction, either with the Spirit of God governing Nature, or with the Spirit of Nature fallen from God, and working in itself. As Creatures therefore, we are under an absolute Necessity of being under the Motion, Guidance, and Inspiration, of some Spirit, that is more and greater than our own. All that is put in our own Power, is only the Choice of our *Leader*; but led and moved we must be, and by that Spirit, to which we give up ourselves, whether it be to the Spirit of God, or the Spirit of fallen Nature. To seek therefore to be always under the Inspiration and Guidance of God’s Holy Spirit, and to act by an immediate Power from it, is not proud Enthusiasm, but as sober and humble a Thought, as suitable to our State, as to think of renouncing the World, and the Devil: For they never are, or can be, renounced by us, but so far as the Spirit of God is living, breathing, and moving in us: And that for this plain Reason, because nothing is contrary to the Spirit of *Satan*, and the World, nothing works, or can work, contrary to it, but the Spirit of Heaven.

Hence our Lord said, ‘He that is not with me, is against me; and ‘he that gathereth not with me, scattereth;’ plainly declaring, that not to be with him, and led by his Spirit is to be led by the Spirit

of *Satan*, and the World. Ask now, what Hell is? It is Nature destitute of the Light and Spirit of God, and full only of its own Darkness; nothing else can make it to be Hell. Ask what Heaven is? It is Nature quickened, enlightened, blessed, and glorified, by the Light and Spirit of *God* dwelling in it. What Possibility therefore can there be, of our dividing from Hell, or parting with all that is hellish in us, but by having the Life, Light, and Spirit of God living and working in us? And here again, my Friends, you may see in the greatest Clearness, why nothing is available, nothing is Salvation, but the new Birth of a Christlike Nature; it is because everything else but this Birth, and Life of the Spirit, is only the Spirit of *Satan*, or the Spirit of this World. Have you anything to object to these things?

Acad. Truly, Sir, all Objections are over with me; you have taken from me every Difficulty or Perplexity that I had, either about Religion, or the Providence of God. I can now look back into the first Origin of Things with Satisfaction: I have seen how the World and Man began to be, in a Way highly worthy of the Divine Wisdom, and how they both came into their present Condition, and how they both are to rise out of it, and return back to their first State in a glorious Eternity. It now appears to me with the utmost Clearness, that to look for Salvation in anything else, but the Light of God *within* us, the Spirit of God working *in us*, the Birth of Christ *really* brought forth *in us*, is to be as carnally minded, as ignorant of God, and Man, and Salvation, as the Jews were, when their Hearts were wholly set upon the Glory of their *Temple-service*, and a temporal Saviour to defend it, by a temporal Power. For everything but the Light and Spirit of God bringing forth a Birth of Christ in the Soul, everything else, be it what it will, has and can have no more of Salvation in it, than a temporal fighting Saviour. For what is said of the Impossibility of the Blood of Bulls and of Goats to take away Sins, must with the same Truth be said of all other outward creaturely Things; they are all at the same Distance from being the Salvation of the Soul, and in the same Degree of Inability to take away Sins, as the Blood of Bulls and Goats.

And all this for this plain Reason, because the Soul is a Spirit breathed forth from God himself, which therefore cannot be blessed but by having the Life of God in it; and nothing can bring the Life of God into it, but only the Light and Spirit of God. Upon this Ground I stand in the utmost Certainty, looking wholly to the Light and Spirit of God for an inward Redemption from all the inward Evil that is in my fallen Nature. All that I now want to know is this, what I am to do, to procure this

continual Operation of the Spirit of God within me. For I seem to myself, not to know this enough ; and I am also afraid of certain Delusions, which I have heard many have fallen into, under Pretences of being led by the Spirit of God. Pray therefore, *Theophilus*, give me some Instructions on this Head.

Rust. Pray, Gentlemen, let an unlearned Man speak a Word here. Suppose, *Academicus*, you had a longing earnest Desire, to be governed by a *Spirit of Plainness* and *Sincerity* in your whole Conversation. Would this put you upon asking for *Art*, and *Rules*, and *Methods*, or consulting some learned Man, or Book, to direct you, and keep you from Delusion? Would you not know and feel in yourself, that your own earnest Desire, and Love of Sincerity and Plainness, and your own inward Aversion to everything that was contrary to it, must be the one only possible Way of attaining it, and that you must have it in that Degree, as you loved and liked to act by it? Now there is no more of *Art*, or any *Secret* required to bring and keep you under the Direction of the Spirit of God, than under the Spirit of Plainness and Sincerity. The longing earnest Desire of the Heart, brings you into the safe Possession of the one, as it does of the other. For it has been enough proved, that the *Spirit of Prayer* forms the Spirit of our Lives, and every Man lives as the Spirit of Prayer leads him. Nay every Prayer for the Holy Spirit, is the Spirit itself praying in you. For nothing can turn to God, desire to be united to him, and governed by him, but the Spirit of God. The Impossibility of praying for the Spirit of God in vain, is thus shown by our blessed Lord: 'If ye, being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those that ask for it?' But I here stop.

Acad. I do not know how to understand what *Rusticus* has said. For do not all good Christians daily pray for the Spirit of God? yet how few are led by it? Pray, *Theophilus*, do you speak here.

Theoph. People may be daily at the Service of the Church, and read long Prayers at home, in which are many Petitions for the Holy Spirit, and yet live and die, led and governed by the Spirit of the World; because all these Prayers, whether we hear them read by others, or read them ourselves, may be done in Compliance only to Duties, Rules, and Forms of Religion, as Things we are taught not to neglect; but, being only done thus, they are not the true, real Working of the Spirit of the Heart, nor make any real Alteration in it. But you are to observe, that *Rusticus* spoke of the *Spirit of Prayer*, which is the Heart's own Prayer, and which has all the Strength of the Heart in it. And

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this is the Prayer that must be affirmed to be *always* effectual ; it never returns empty ; it eats and drinks that, after which it hungers and thirsts ; and nothing can possibly hinder it from having that, which it prays for. This we are assured of from these Words of Truth itself ; ‘Blessed are they that hunger and ‘thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be filled.’ But this Blessedness could not belong to Hungering, if the truly Hungry and Thirsty, could ever be sent empty away. Every Spirit necessarily reaps that which it sows, it cannot possibly be otherwise, it is the unalterable Procedure of Nature. Spirit is the first Power of Nature, everything proceeds from it, is born of it, yields to it, and is governed by it. If the Spirit soweth to the Flesh, it reapeth that Corruption which belongs to the Flesh ; if it soweth to the Spirit, it reapeth the Fruits of the Spirit, which are eternal Life. *The Spirit of Prayer* therefore is the Opener of all that is good within us, and the Receiver of all that is good without us ; it unites with God, is one Power with him ; it works with him, and drives all that is not God, out of the Soul. The Soul is no longer a Slave to its natural Impurity and Corruption, no longer imprisoned in its own Death and Darkness, but till the Fire from Heaven, the Spirit of Prayer, is kindled in it.

Then begins the Resurrection, and the Life ; and all that which died in *Adam* comes to Life in Christ. Ask not therefore, *Academicus*, what you are to do to obtain the Spirit of God, to live in it, and be led by it ? For your Power of having it, and your Measure of receiving it, are just according to that *Faith* and Earnestness with which you desire to be led by it. For the hungry Spirit of Prayer is *that Faith*, to which all Things are possible, to which all Nature, though as high as Mountains, and as stiff as Oaks, must yield and obey. It heals all Diseases, breaks the Bands of Death, and calls the Dead out of their Graves. Look at the small *Seeds* of Plants, shut up in their own dead Husks, and covered with thick Earth, and see how they grow. What do they do ? They *hunger* and *thirst* after the Light and Air of this World. Their Hunger eats that which they hunger after, and this is their Vegetation. If the Plant ceases to hunger, it withers and dies, though surrounded with the Air and Light of this World.

This is the true Nature of the spiritual Life ; it is as truly a Growth or *Vegetation*, as that of Plants ; and nothing but its *own Hunger* can help it to the true Food of its Life. If this hunger of the Soul ceases, it withers and dies, though in the midst of Divine Plenty. Our Lord, to show us that the new Birth is really a State of spiritual Vegetation, compares it to a

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small Grain of Mustard-seed, from whence a great Plant arises. Now every Seed has a Life in itself, or else it could not grow. What is this Life? It is nothing else but an *Hunger* in the Seed, after the Air and Light of this World; which Hunger, being met and fed by the Light and Air of Nature, changes the Seed into a living Plant. Thus it is with the *Seed* of Heaven in the Soul? it has a Life in itself, or else no Life could arise from it. What is this Life? It is nothing else but Faith, or an *Hunger* after God and Heaven; which no sooner stirs, or is suffered to stir, but it is met, embraced, and quickened, by the *Light* and *Spirit* of God and Heaven; and so a new Man in Christ, is formed from the Seed of Heaven, as a new Plant from a Seed in the Earth. Let us suppose now, that the *Seed* of a Plant had *Sense* and *Reason*, and that, instead of continually hungering after, and drawing in the Virtue of the Light and Air of our outward Nature, it should amuse, and content its Hunger with *reasoning* about the Nature of Hunger, and the different Powers and Virtues of Light and Air; must not such a Seed of all Necessity wither away, without ever becoming a living Plant? Now this is no false Similitude of the *Seed* of Life in Man: Man has a Power of drawing all the Virtue of Heaven into himself, because the *Seed* of Heaven is the *Gift* of God in his Soul, which wants the Light and Spirit of God to bring it to the Birth, just as the Seed of the Plant wants the Light and Air of this World; it cannot possibly grow up in God, but by taking in Light, Life, and Spirit from Heaven, as the Creatures of Time take in the Light, and Life, and Spirit of this World. If therefore the Soul, instead of *hungering* after Heaven, instead of eating the Flesh and Blood of the Christ of God, contents and amuses this *Seed* of Life with *Ideas*, and *Notions*, and Sounds, must not such a Soul of Necessity wither, and die, without ever becoming a living Creature of Heaven? Wonder not therefore, *Academicus*, that *all the Work* of our Salvation and Regeneration is, by the Scripture, *wholly* confined to the Operation of the Light and Spirit of God, *living* and *working* in us. It is for the same Reason, and on the same Necessity, that the Life and Growth of the Creatures of this World, must be *wholly* ascribed to the Powers of this World, living and working in them. Nor does all this, in the least Degree, make a Man a *Machine*, or without any Power with regard to his Salvation. He must grow in God, as the *Plants* grow in this World, from a Power that is not his own, as they grow from the Powers of outward Nature. But he differs entirely from the Plants in this, that an *uncontrollable* Will, which is his own, must be the Leader and Beginner of his Growth either in God, or Nature. It is strictly true, that

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all Man's Salvation depends upon himself ; and it is as strictly true, that *all the Work* of his Salvation, is *solely* the Work of God in his Soul. All his Salvation depends upon himself, because his *Will-Spirit* has its Power of Motion in itself. As a Will, it can only receive that which it willeth ; everything else is absolutely shut out of it. For it is the unalterable Nature of the Will, that it cannot possibly receive anything into it, but that which it *willeth* ; its Willing is its only Power of receiving ; and therefore there can be no possible Entrance for God or Heaven into the Soul, till the *Will-Spirit* of the Soul desires it ; and thus all Man's Salvation depends upon himself. On the other hand, nothing can create, effect, or bring forth, a Birth or Growth of the Divine Life in the Soul, but that *Light and Spirit* of God, which brings forth the Divine Life in Heaven, and all heavenly Beings. And thus the *Work* of our Salvation is wholly and solely the Work of the Light and Spirit of God, dwelling and operating in us. Thus, *Academicus*, you see that God is all ; that nothing but *his Life and working Power* in us, can be our Salvation ; and yet that nothing but the *Spirit of Prayer* can make it *possible* for us to have it, or be capable of it. And therefore neither you, nor any other human Soul, can be *without* the Operation of the Light and Spirit of God in it, but because its *Will-Spirit*, or its *Spirit of Prayer*, is turned towards something else ; for we are always in Union with *that*, with which our Will is united. Again : Look, *Academicus*, at the Light and Air of this World, you see with what a Freedom of Communication they *overflow, enrich, and enliven* every Thing ; they enter everywhere, if not hindered by *something* that withstands their Entrance. This may represent to you the *ever-overflowing* free Communication of the Light and Spirit of God, to every human Soul. They are everywhere ; we are encompassed with them ; our Souls are as near to them, as our Bodies are to the Light and Air of this World ; nothing shuts them out of us, but the Will and Desire of our Souls, turned from them, and *praying* for something else. I say, *praying* for something else ; for you are to notice this, as a certain Truth, that every Man's Life is a *continual State* of Prayer ; he is no Moment free from it, nor can possibly be so. For all our natural Tempers, be they what they will, Ambition, Covetousness, Selfishness, Worldly-mindedness, Pride, Envy, Hatred, Malice, or any other Lust whatever, are all of them in reality, only so many different *Kinds, and Forms* of a *Spirit of Prayer*, which is as inseparable from the Heart, as Weight is from the Body. For every natural Temper is nothing else, but a Manifestation of the Desire and Prayer of the Heart, and shows us, how it *works* and wills. And as the Heart worketh, and willeth, *such*, and no

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other, is its Prayer. All else is only *Form*, and *Fiction*, and empty beating of the Air. If therefore the working Desire of the Heart is not habitually turned towards God, if this is not our Spirit of Prayer, we are *necessarily* in a State of Prayer towards something else, that carries us from God, and brings all kind of Evil into us. For this is the Necessity of our Nature; pray we must, as sure as our Heart is alive; and therefore when the State of our Heart is not a Spirit of Prayer to God, we pray *without ceasing* to some, or other Part of the Creation. The Man whose Heart habitually tends towards the Riches, Honours, Powers, or Pleasures of this Life, is in a *continual* State of Prayer towards all these Things. His Spirit stands always *bent* towards them; they have his Hope, his Love, his Faith, and are the many Gods that he worships: And though when he is upon his Knees, and uses Forms of Prayer, he directs them to the God of Heaven; yet these are in Reality the God of his Heart, and, in a sad Sense of the Words, he really worships them in Spirit, and in Truth. Hence you may see, *Academicus*, how it comes to pass, that there is so much Praying, and yet so little of true Piety amongst us. The *Bells* are daily calling us to Church, our *Closets* abound with *Manuels* of Devotion, yet how little Fruit! It is all for this Reason, because our Prayers are not *our own*; they are not the Abundance of *our own* Heart; are not *found* and *felt* within us, as we feel our own Hunger and Thirst; but are only so many *borrowed Forms* of Speech, which we use at certain Times and Occasions. And therefore it is no Wonder that little Good comes of it. What Benefit could it have been to the *Pharisee*, if, with an Heart inwardly full of its own Pride and Self-exaltation, he had outwardly hung down his Head, smote upon his Breast, and borrowed the *Publican's* Words, 'God 'be merciful to me a Sinner?' What greater Good can be expected from our Praying in the Words of *David*, or Singing his Psalms seven times a Day, if our Heart has no more of the Spirit of *David* in it, than the Heart of the *Pharisee* had of the Spirit of the humble *Publican*?

Acad. O *Theophilus*, Truth and Reason force me to consent to what you say; and yet I am afraid of following you: For you here seem to condemn Forms of Prayer in public, and *Manuels* of Devotion in private. What will become of Religion, if these are set aside or disregarded?

Theoph. Dear *Academicus*, abate your Fright. Can you think, that I am against your praying in the Words of *David*, or breathing his Spirit in your Prayers, or that I would censure your singing his Psalms seven times a Day? Remember how very lately I put into your Hands the *Book* called, *A Serious Call to a Devout*

Life, &c., and then think how unlikely it is, that I should be against Times and Methods of Devotion. At three several Times, we are told, our Lord prayed, repeating the *same Form of Words*; and therefore a set Form of Words are not only consistent with, but may be highly suitable to, the most Divine Spirit of Prayer. If your own Heart, for Days and Weeks, was unable to alter, or break off from inwardly thinking and saying, 'Hallowed be thy Name, thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done;' if at other times, for Weeks and Months, it stood always inwardly in another Form of Prayer, unable to vary, or depart from saying, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, with all thy holy Nature, Spirit, and Tempers, into my Soul, that I may be born again of Thee, a new Creature;' I should be so far from censuring such a *Formality* of Prayer, that I should say, Blessed and happy are they, whose Hearts are tied to such a Form of Words. It is not therefore, Sir, a set Form of Words that is spoken against, but an *heartless* Form, a Form that has no Relation to, or Correspondence with, the State of the Heart that uses it. All that I have said is only to teach you the true Nature of Prayer, that it is only the Work of the Heart. and that the Heart only prays in Reality (whatever its Words are) for that which it habitually *wills, likes, loves,* and *longs* to have. It is not therefore the using the Words of *David*, or any other Saint, in your Prayers, that is censured, but the using them without that State of Heart, which first spoke them forth, and the trusting to them, because they are a good Form, though in our Hearts we have nothing that is like them. It would be good to say incessantly with holy *David*, 'My Heart is athirst for God. — As the Hart desireth the Water-brooks, so longeth my Soul after Thee, O God.' But there is no Goodness in saying daily these Words, if no *such Thirst* is felt, or desired in the Heart. And, my Friend, you may easily know, that dead Forms of Religion, and Numbers of repeated Prayers, keep Men content with their State of Devotion, because they make use of such holy Prayers; though their Hearts, from Morning to Night, are in a State quite contrary to them, and join no further in them, than in liking to use them at certain times.

Acad. I acquiesce, *Theophilus*, in the Truth of what you have said, and plainly see the Necessity of condemning what you have condemned; which is not the Form, but the *heartless* Form. But still I have a Scruple upon me: I shall be almost afraid of going to Church, where there are so many good Prayers offered up to God, as suspecting they may not be the Prayers or Language of my own Heart, and so become only a *Lip-labour*, or, what is worse, an *Hypocrisy* before God.

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Theoph. I do not, *Academicus*, dislike your Scruple at all ; for you do well to be afraid of saying anything of yourself, or to God, in your Prayers, which your Heart does not truly say. It is also good for you to think, that many of the Prayers of the Church may go faster, and higher, than your Heart can in Truth go along with them. For this will put you upon a right Care over yourself, and so to live, that, as a true Son of your Mother the Church, your Heart may be able to speak her Language, conform to her Service, and find the Delight of your Soul in the Spirit of her Prayers. But this will only then come to pass, when the Spirit of Prayer is the Spirit of your Heart ; then every good Word, whether in a Form, or out of a Form, whether heard, or read, or thought, will be as suitable to your Heart, as gratifying to it, as Food is to the hungry, and Drink to the thirsty Soul. But till the Spirit of the Heart is thus renewed, till it is *emptied* of all earthly Desires, and stands in an *habitual* Hunger and Thirst after God (which is the true Spirit of Prayer) till then, all our Forms of Prayer will be, more or less, but too much like *Lessons* that are given to *Scholars* ; and we shall mostly say them, only because we dare not neglect them. But be not discouraged, *Academicus* ; take the following Advice, and then you may go to Church without any Danger of a mere Lip-labour or Hypocrisy, although there should be an *Hymn*, or a *Psalm*, or a *Prayer*, whose Language is higher than that of your own Heart. Do this : Go to the Church, as the *Publican* went into the Temple ; stand *inwardly* in the Spirit of your Mind, in that *Form* which he outwardly expressed, when he cast down his Eyes, smote upon his Breast, and could only say, God be merciful to me a Sinner ! Stand unchangeably (at least in your Desire) in *this Form* and State of Heart ; it will sanctify every Petition that comes out of your Mouth ; and when anything is read, or sung, or prayed, that is more exalted and fervent than your Heart is, if you make this an Occasion of a further *sinking down* in the Spirit of the *Publican*, you will then be helped, and highly blessed, by those Prayers and Praises, which seem only to fit, and belong to, a better Heart than yours.

This, my Friend, is a Secret of Secrets ; it will help you to reap where you have not sown, and be a continual Source of Grace in your Soul. This will not only help you to receive Good from those Prayers, which seem too good for the State of your Heart, but will help you to find Good from everything else : For everything that inwardly stirs in you, or outwardly happens to you, becomes a real Good to you, if it either finds or excites in you this humble Form of Mind : For nothing is in vain, or without Profit, to the humble Soul ; like the Bee, it takes its

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Honey even from bitter Herbs ; it stands always in a State of Divine Growth ; and everything that falls upon it, is like a Dew of Heaven to it. Shut up yourself therefore in this *Form* of Humility, all Good is enclosed in it ; it is a Water of Heaven, that turns the Fire of the fallen Soul, into the Meekness of the Divine Life, and creates that Oil, out of which the Love to God and Man gets its Flame. Be inclosed therefore always in it ; let it be as a Garment wherewith you are always covered, and the Girdle with which you are girt ; breathe nothing but in and from its Spirit ; see nothing but with its Eyes ; hear nothing but with its Ears ; And then, whether your are in the Church, or out of the Church ; hearing the Praises of God, or receiving Wrongs from Men, and the World, all will be Edification, and every Thing will help forward your Growth in the Life of God.

Acad. Indeed, *Theophilus*, this Answer to my Scruple is quite Good : I not only like, but I love it much : it gives as well an Unction to my Heart, as a Light to my Mind. All my Desire now is, to live no longer to the World, to myself, my own natural Tempers and Passions, but wholly to the Will of the blessed and adorable God, moved and guided by his Holy Spirit.

Theoph. This Resolution, *Academicus*, only shows that you are just come to yourself ; for everything short of this earnest Desire to live wholly unto God, may be called a most dreadful Infatuation or Madness, an Insensibility that cannot be described. For what else is our Life, but a *Trial* for the greatest Evil, or Good, that an Eternity can give us ? What can be so dreadful, as to die possessed of a wicked immortal Nature, or to go out of this World with Tempers, that must keep us for ever burning in our *own Fire*, and Brimstone ? What has God not done to prevent this ? His redeeming Love began with our Fall, and kindles itself as a Spark of Heaven in every fallen Soul. It calls every Man to Salvation, and every Man is forced to hear, though he will not obey his Voice. God has so loved the World, that his only Son hung and expired, bleeding on the Cross, not to atone his *own Wrath* against us, but to extinguish our *own Hell* within us, to pour his heavenly Love into us, to show us that Meekness, Suffering, and Dying to our own Fallen Nature, is the *one, only possible* Way, for fallen Man to be alive again in God. Are we yet Sons of Pride, and led away with Vanity ? Do the Powers of Darkness rule over us ? Do impure evil Spirits possess and drive on our Lives ? Has Sin lost all its Power of frightening us ? Is Remorse of Conscience no longer felt ? Are Falsehood, Guile, Debauchery, Profaneness, Perjury, Bribery, Corruption, and Adultery, no longer seeking to hide themselves in Corners, but openly entering all our high Places, giving Battle to every Virtue, and laying

Claim to the Government of the World? Are we thus near being swallowed up by a Deluge of Vice and Impiety? All this is not come upon us, because God has left us too much without Help from Heaven, or too much exposed us to the Powers of Hell; but it is because we have rejected and despised the *whole Mystery* of our Salvation, and trampled under Foot the precious Blood of Christ, which alone has that omnipotence, that can either bring Heaven into us, or drive Hell out of us. O *Britain, Britain*, think that the Son of God saith unto thee, as he said, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy Children, as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not! Behold, your House is left unto you desolate.' And now let me say, What aileth thee, O *British Earth*, that thou *quakest*, and the Foundations of thy Churches that they *totter*? Just *that same* aileth thee, as ailed *Judah's Earth*, when the Divine Saviour of the World, dying on the Cross, was *reviled, scorned, and mocked*, by the inhabitants of *Jerusalem*; then the *Earth quaked, the Rocks rent*, and the Sun refused to give its Light. Nature again declares for God; the Earth, and the Elements can no longer bear our Sins: *Jerusalem's Doom* for *Jerusalem's Sin*, may well be feared by us. Oh ye miserable *Pens* dipped in *Satan's Ink*, that dare to publish the Folly of believing in Jesus Christ, where will you hide your guilty Heads, when Nature dissolved, shall show you the Rainbow, on which the crucified Saviour shall sit in Judgment, and every Work receive its Reward? O tremble! ye *apostate* Sons that come out of the Schools of Christ, to fight *Lucifer's Battles*, and do that for him, which neither he, nor his Legions can do for themselves. Their inward Pride, Spite, Wrath, Malice and Rage against God, and Christ, and human Nature, have no *Pens* but yours, no *Apostles* but you. They must be forced to work in the Dark, to steal privately into impure Hearts, could they not beguile you into a fond *Belief*, that you are *Lovers of Truth, Friends of Reason, Detectors of Fraud, great Geniuses, and Moral Philosophers*, merely, and solely, because ye blaspheme Christ, and the Gospel of God. Poor deluded Souls, rescued from Hell by the Blood of Christ, called by God to possess the Thrones of fallen Angels, permitted to live only by the Mercy of God, that ye may be born again from above! my Heart bleeds for you. Think, I beseech you, in time, what Mercies ye are trampling under your Feet. Say not that *Reason*, and your intellectual Faculties, stand in your Way; that these are the *best Gifts*, that God has given you, and that these suffer you not to come to Christ. For all this is as vain a Pretence, and as gross a Mistake, as if ye were to say, that you had nothing but your *Feet*

to carry you to Heaven. For your *Heart* is the best and greatest *Gift* of God to you ; it is the highest, greatest, strongest, and noblest *Power* of your Nature ; it forms your whole Life, be it what it will ; all Evil, and all Good, comes from it ; your Heart alone has the Key of Life and Death ; it does all that it will ; Reason is but its *Plaything*, and whether in Time or Eternity, can only be a *mere Beholder* of the *Wonders* of Happiness, or *Forms* of Misery, which the right, or wrong *Working* of the Heart is entered into.

I will here give you an infallible *Touch-stone*, that will try all to the Truth. It is this : Retire from the World, and all Conversation, only for *one Month* ; neither write, nor read, nor debate anything in private with yourself ; stop all the former Workings of your Heart and Mind ; and, with all the Strength of your Heart, stand all this Month as continually as you can, in this following Form of Prayer to God. Offer it frequently on your Knees ; but, whether sitting, standing, or walking, be always inwardly longing, and earnestly praying this *one Prayer* to God : ‘ That, of his great Goodness, he would make known to you, and ‘ take from your Heart, every *Kind*, and *Form*, and *Degree* of ‘ Pride, whether it be from evil Spirits, or your own corrupt ‘ Nature ; and that he would awaken in you the deepest *Depth* ‘ and *Truth* of all that Humility, which can make you capable of ‘ his Light, and Holy Spirit.’ Reject every Thought, but that of wishing, and praying in this Manner from the Bottom of your Heart, with such Truth and Earnestness, as People in Torment, wish and pray to be delivered from it. Now if you dare not, if your Hearts will not, cannot give themselves up in this manner to the Spirit of this Prayer, then the *Touch-stone* has done its Work, and you may be as fully assured, both what your Infidelity is, and from what it proceeds, as you can be of the plainest Truth in Nature. This will show you, how vainly you appeal to your *Reason*, and *Speculation*, as the Cause of your Infidelity ; that it is full as false and absurd, as if *Thieves* and *Adulterers* should say, that their Theft and Adultery was entirely owing to their bodily *Eyes*, which showed them external Objects, and not to anything that was *wrong* or *bad* in their Hearts. On the other hand, if you can, and will give yourselves up in *Truth* and *Sincerity* to this Spirit of Prayer, I will venture to affirm, that if you had twice as many evil Spirits in you, as *Mary Magdalen* had, they will all be cast out of you, and you will be forced with her, to weep with Tears of Love, at the feet of the holy Jesus.

But here, my Friends, I stop, that we may return to the Matter we had in hand.

Rust. You have made no Digression, *Theophilus*, from our main Point, which was to recommend Christianity to poor *Humanus*. He must, I am sure, have felt the Death-blows, that you have here given to the Infidel Scheme. Their *Idol* of Reason, which is the vain God, that they worship in vain, is here like *Dagon* fallen to the Ground, never to rise up again. *Humanus* is caught by your *Bait* of Love, and I daresay he wants only to have this Conversation ended, that he may try himself to the Truth, by this Divine *Touch-stone*, which you have put into his Hands.

Acad. Give me leave, Gentlemen, to add one Word to this Matter. *Theophilus* has here fairly pulled *Reason* out of its usurped Throne, and shown it to be a powerless, idle *Toy*, when compared to the royal Strength of the Heart, which is the kingly Power, that has all the Government of Life in its Hands. But if *Humanus*, or anyone else, would see *Reason* fully maintained in all its *just Rights*, and yet entirely disarmed of all its Pretences to a Religion of *its own*, and the Truth of the Gospel fully proved to every Man, learned, or unlearned, from the known State of his own Heart; if he would see all this set forth in the strongest, clearest Light, he need only read about an hundred Pages of a *Book** published about twelve Years ago, to which no Answer has, nor, it may be, ever will be given by any Patron of Reason, and Infidelity. And if Part of that Book (as I have often wished) beginning at Page 70 to 117, was printed by itself, and known and read in every Part of the Kingdom, all Christians, though no Scholars, would have Learning enough both to see the *deep, true, and comfortable* Foundation of their Gospel Faith, and the miserable Folly, and Ignorance of those, who would set up a Religion of human Reason instead of it. But now, *Theophilus*, I beg we may return to that very Point concerning Prayer, where we left off. I think my Heart is entirely devoted to God, and that I desire nothing but to live in such a State of Prayer, as may best keep me under the Guidance and Direction of the Holy Spirit. Assist me therefore, my dear Friend, in this important Matter; give me the fullest Directions, that you can; and if you have any *Manual* of Devotion, that you prefer, or any Method that you would put me in, pray let me know it.

Rust. I beg leave to speak a Word to *Academicus*. I am glad, Sir, to see this Fire of Heaven, thus far kindled in your Soul; but wonder that you should want to know, how you are to keep

* A Demonstration of the Gross and Fundamental Errors of a late Book, called, *A Plain Account of the Nature, &c., of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.*

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up its Flame, which is like wanting to know, how you are to *love* and *desire* that, which you do love and desire. Does a blind, or sick, or lame Man want to know, how he shall *wish* and *desire* Sight, Health, and Limbs? or would he be at a Loss, till some *Form* of Words taught him how to long for them? Now you can have no Desire or Prayer for any *Grace*, or Help from God, till you in some Degree as surely feel the *Want* of them, and desire the *Good* of them, as the sick Man feels the Want, and desires the Good of Health. But when this is your Case, you want no more to be told how to pray, than the thirsty Man wants to be told, what he shall ask for. Have you not fully consented to this Truth, that the Heart only can pray, and that it prays for nothing but *that*, which it *loves*, *wills*, and *wishes* to have? But can *Love* or *Desire* want *Art*, or *Method*, to teach it to be, that which it is? If from the Bottom of your Heart you have a sincere, warm Love for your most valuable Friend, would you want to buy a Book, to tell you, what Sentiments you feel in your Heart towards this Friend, what Comfort, what Joy, what Gratitude, what Trust, what Honour, what Confidence, what Faith, are all alive, and stirring in your Heart towards him? Ask not therefore, *Academicus*, for a Book of Prayers; but ask your Heart what is *within* it, what it *feels*, how it *stirs*, what it *wants*, what it would have altered, what it desires? and then, instead of calling upon *Theophilus* for Assistance, stand in the same Form of Petition to God.

For this turning to God according to the inward *Feeling*, *Want*, and *Motion* of your own Heart, in Love, in Trust, in Faith of having from him all that you want, and wish to have, this turning thus unto God, whether it be with, or without Words, is the best Form of Prayer in the World.—Now no Man can be ignorant of the State of his own Heart, or a Stranger to those Tempers, that are alive and stirring in him, and therefore no Man can want a Form of Prayer; for what should be the Form of his Prayer, but that which the Condition, and State of his Heart demands? If you know of no Trouble, feel no Burden, want nothing to be altered, or removed, nothing to be increased or strengthened in you, how can you pray for anything of this Kind? But if your Heart knows its own Plague, feels its inward Evil, knows what it wants to have removed, will you not let your Distress form the Manner of your Prayer? or will you pray in a Form of Words, that have no more Agreement with your State, than if a Man walking above-ground, should beg every Man he met, to pull him out of a deep Pit. For Prayers not formed according to the *real State* of your Heart, are but like a Prayer to be pulled out of a deep Well, when you are not in it. Hence

you may see, how unreasonable it is to make a Mystery of Prayer, or an Art, that needs so much Instruction; since every Man is, and only can be, directed by his *own inward* State and Condition, when, and how, and what he is to pray for, as every Man's *outward* State shows him what he outwardly wants. And yet it should seem, as if a Prayer-Book was highly necessary, and ought to be the Performance of great Learning and Abilities, since only our learned Men and Scholars make our Prayer-Books.

Acad. I did not imagine, *Rusticus*, that you would have so openly declared against *Manuals* of Devotion, since you cannot but know, that not only the most learned, but the most pious Doctors of the Church, consider them as necessary Helps to Devotion.

Rust. If you, *Academicus*, were obliged to go a long Journey on *Foot*, and yet through a Weakness in your Legs could not set one Foot before another, you would do well to get the best travelling *Crutches* that you could.

But if, with sound and good Legs, you would not stir one Step, till you had got *Crutches* to hop with, surely a Man might show you the Folly of not walking with your own Legs, without being thought a declared Enemy to *Crutches*, or the Makers of them. Now a *Manual* is not so good an Help, as *Crutches*, and yet you see *Crutches* are only proper, when our Legs cannot do their Office. It is, I say, not so good an Help as *Crutches*, because that which you do with the *Crutches*, is that *very same* Thing, that you should have done with your Legs; you *really* travel; but when the Heart cannot take one Step in Prayer, and you therefore read your Manual, you do not do that *very same* Thing, which your Heart should have done, that is, *really* pray. A fine Manual therefore is not to be considered as a Means of praying, or as something that puts you in a State of Prayer, as *Crutches* help you to travel; but its chief Use, as a Book of Prayers to a dead and hardened Heart that has no Prayer of its own, is to show it, what a *State* and *Spirit* of Prayer it *wants*, and at what a sad Distance it is from feeling all that Variety of humble, penitent, grateful, fervent, resigned, loving Sentiments, which are described in the Manual, that so, being touched with a View of its own miserable State, it may begin its own Prayer to God for Help. But I have done. *Theophilus* may now answer your earnest Request.

Theoph. Your earnest Desire, *Academicus*, to live in the Spirit of Prayer, and be truly governed by it, is a most excellent Desire; for to be a Man of Prayer is that which the Apostle means by *living in the Spirit, and having our Conversation in Heaven*. It is to have done, not only with the confessed Vices,

but with the allowed Follies and Vanities of this World. To tell such a soul of the *Innocence* of Levity, that it needs not run away from idle Discourse, vain Gaiety, and trifling Mirth, as being the harmless Relief of our heavy Natures, is like telling the *Flame*, that it needs not always be ascending upwards. But here you are to observe, that this Spirit of Prayer is not to be taught you by a Book, or brought into you by an *Art* from without, but must be an inward Birth, that must arise from your own *Fire* and *Light* within you, as the Air arises from the Fire and Light of this World. For the Spirit of every Being, be it what or where it will, or be its Spirit of what Kind it will, is only the Breath or Spirit that proceeds from its own Fire and Light. In vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual Creatures, it is all in the same Manner; Spirit is the *third Form* of its Life, and is the Birth that proceeds from the other *two*; and is the Manifestation of their Nature and Qualities. For such as the Fire and Light are, such and no other, neither higher nor lower, neither better nor worse, is the *Spirit* that proceeds from them. Now the Reason why all, and every Life does, and must stand in this Form, is wholly and solely from hence, because the Deity, the one Source and Fountain of all life, is a *triune* God, whose *third Form* is, and is called, the Spirit of God, proceeding from the Father, and the Son.

The *painful* Sense and Feeling of what you are, kindled into a working State of Sensibility by the Light of God within you, is the *Fire* and *Light* from whence your Spirit of Prayer proceeds. In its first kindling nothing is found or felt, but Pain, Wrath, and Darkness, as is to be seen in the first kindling of every Heat or Fire. And therefore its first Prayer is nothing else but a Sense of Penitence, Self-condemnation, Confession, and Humility. It feels nothing but its own Misery, and so is all Humility. This Prayer of Humility is met by the Divine Love, the Mercifulness of God embraces it; and then its Prayer is changed into Hymns, and Songs, and Thanksgivings. When this State of Fervour has done its Work, has melted away all earthly Passions and Affections, and left no Inclination in the Soul, but to delight in God alone, then its Prayer changes again. It is now come so near to God, has found such Union with him, that it does not so much pray as live in God. Its Prayer is not any particular Action, is not the Work of any particular Faculty, not confined to Times, or Words, or Place, but is the Work of his whole Being, which continually stands in Fulness of Faith, in Purity of Love, in absolute Resignation, to do, and be, what and how his Beloved pleases. This is the last State of the Spirit of Prayer, and is its highest Union with God in this Life.

Each of these foregoing States has its Time, its Variety of Workings, its Trials, Temptations, and Purifications, which can only be known by Experience in the Passage through them. The *one* only and *infallible* Way to go safely through all the Difficulties, Trials, Temptations, Dryness, or Opposition, of our own evil Tempers, is this: It is to expect nothing from ourselves, to trust to nothing in ourselves, but in everything expect, and depend upon God for Relief. Keep fast Hold of this *Thread*, and then let your Way be what it will, Darkness, Temptation, or the Rebellion of Nature, you will be led through all, to an Union with God: For nothing hurts us in any State, but an Expectation of something in it, and from it, which we should only expect from God. We are looking for our *own* Virtue, our *own* Piety, our *own* Goodness, and so live on and on in our *own* Poverty and Weakness; To-day pleased and comforted with the seeming Strength and Firmness of our own pious Tempers, and fancying ourselves to be *somewhat*; To-morrow, fallen into our own *Mire*, we are dejected, but not humbled; we grieve, but it is only the Grief of Pride, at the seeing our Perfection not to be such as we vainly imagined. And thus it will be, till the *whole Turn* of our Minds is so changed, that we as fully see and know our *Inability* to have any Goodness of *our own*, as to have a Life of our own.

For since nothing is, or can be, good in us, but the Life of God manifested in us, how can this be had but from God alone? When we are happily brought to this Conviction, then we have done with all Thought of being our own Builders; the whole Spirit of our Mind is become a mere *Faith*, and *Hope*, and *Trust* in the sole Operation of God's Spirit, looking no more to any other Power, to be formed in Christ new Creatures, than we look to any other Power for the Resurrection of our Bodies at the last Day. Hence may be seen, that the Trials of every State are its greatest Blessings; they do that for us, which we most of all want to have done, they force us to know our own *Nothingness*, and the *All* of God.

People who have long dwelt in the Fervours of Devotion, in an high Sensibility of Divine Affections, practising every Virtue with a kind of Greediness, are frightened, when *Coldness* seizes upon them, when their Hymns give no Transport, and their Hearts, instead of flaming with the Love of every Virtue, seem ready to be overcome by every Vice. But here, keep *fast Hold* of the Thread I mentioned before, and all is well. For this *Coldness* is the Divine *Offspring*, or genuine Birth, of the former Fervour; it comes from it as a good Fruit, and brings the Soul nearer to God, than the Fervour did. The Fervour was good,

and did a good Work in the Soul; it overcame the earthly Nature, and made the Soul delight in God, and spiritual Things; but its Delight was too much an *own Delight*, a fancied Self-holiness, and occasioned Rest and Satisfaction in Self, which if it had continued uninterrupted, undiscovered, an earthly Self had only been changed into a spiritual Self. Therefore I called this Coldness, or Loss of Fervour, its Divine *Offspring*, because it brings a Divine Effect, or more fruitful Progress in the Divine Life. For this Coldness overcomes, and delivers us from spiritual Self, as Fervour overcame the earthly Nature. It does the Work that Fervour did, but in an higher Degree, because it gives up more, sacrifices more, and brings forth more Resignation to God, than Fervour did; and therefore it is more in God, and receives more from him. The devout Soul therefore is always safe in every State, if it makes everything an Occasion either of rising up, or falling down into the Hands of God, and exercising Faith, and Trust, and Resignation to him. Fervour is good, and ought to be loved; but Tribulation, Distress, and Coldness, in their Season are better, because they give Means and Power of exercising an *higher* Faith, a *purer* Love, and *more perfect* Resignation to God, which are the best State of the Soul. And therefore the pious Soul that eyes only God, that means nothing but being his alone, can have no Stop put to its Progress; Light and Darkness equally assist him; in the Light he looks up to God; in the Darkness he lays hold on God; and so they both do him the same Good.

This little Sketch, *Academicus*, of the Nature and Progress of the Spirit of Prayer, may show you, that a *Manual* is not so great a Matter as you imagined.

The best Instruction that I can give you, as helpful, or preparatory to the Spirit of Prayer, is already fully given, where we have set forth the original Perfection, the miserable Fall, and the glorious Redemption of Man. It is the true Knowledge of these great Things that can do all for you, which human Instruction can do. These Things must fill you with a Dislike of your present State, drive all earthly Desires out of your Soul, and create an earnest Longing after your first Perfection. For Prayer cannot be taught you, by giving you a Book of Prayers, but by awakening in you a true Sense and Knowledge of what you are, and what you should be; that so you may see, and know, and feel, what Things you want, and are to pray for. For a Man does not, cannot pray for anything, because a fine Petition for it is put into his Hands, but because his *own* Condition is a *Reason* and *Motive* for his asking for it. And therefore it is, that the *Spirit of Prayer*, in the First Part, began with a full Dis-

covery and Proof of these high and important Matters, at the Sight of which the World, and all that is in it, shrinks into nothing, and everything past, present, and to come, awakens in our Hearts a continual Prayer, and longing Desire, after God, Christ, and Eternity.

Acad. I perceive then, *Theophilus*, that you direct me entirely to my *own* Prayer in my private Devotions, and not to the Use of any Book. But surely you do not take this to be right in general, that the common People, who are unlearned, and mostly of low Understandings, should kneel down in private, without any borrowed Form of Prayer, saying only what comes then into their own Heads.

Theoph. It would be very wrong, *Academicus*, to condemn a Manual *as such*, or to tell any People, learned or unlearned, that they ought not to make any Use of it. This would be quite rash and silly: But it cannot be wrong, or hurtful to anybody, to show, that Prayer is the natural Language of the Heart, and, as such, does not want any Form, or borrowed Words. Now all that has been said of Manuals of Prayers, only amounts to thus much; that they are not necessary, nor the most natural and excellent Way of praying. If they happen to be necessary to any Person, or to be his most excellent Way, it is because the natural, real Prayer of his Heart is already engaged, loving, wishing, and longing after, the Things of this Life; which makes him so insensible of his spiritual Wants, so blind and dead as to the Things of God, that he cannot pray for them, but so far as the Words of other People are put into his Mouth. If a Man is blind, and knows it not, he may be told to pray for Sight; if he is sick, and knows nothing of it, he may be told to pray for Health: So if the Soul is in this State, with regard to its spiritual Wants, a Manual may be of good Use to it, not so much by helping it to pray, as by showing it, at what a miserable Distance it is from those Tempers which belong to Prayer.

But when a Man has had so much Benefit from the Gospel, as to know his own Misery, his want of a Redeemer, who he is, and how is he to be found; there everything seems to be done, both to awaken and direct his Prayer, and make it a true Praying in and by the Spirit. For when the Heart really pants and longs after God, its Prayer is a Praying, as moved and animated by the Spirit of God; it is the Breach or Inspiration of God, stirring, moving and opening itself in the Heart. For though the earthly Nature, our *old Man*, can oblige or accustom himself to take heavenly Words at certain Times into his Mouth, yet this is a certain Truth, that nothing ever did, or can have the least *Desire* or *Tendency* to ascend to Heaven, but that which came down from

Heaven ; and therefore nothing in the Heart can pray, aspire, and long after God, but the Spirit of God moving and stirring in it. Every Breath therefore of the true Spirit of Prayer, can be nothing else but the Breath of the Spirit of God, breathing, inspiring, and moving the Heart, in all its Variety of Motions and Affections, towards God. And therefore every time a good Desire stirs in the Heart, a good Prayer goes out of it, that reaches God as being the Fruit and Work of his Holy Spirit. When any Man, feeling his Corruption, and the Power of Sin in his Soul, looks up to God, with true Earnestness of Faith and Desire to be delivered from it, whether with Words, or without Words, how can he pray better ? What need of any Change of Thoughts, or Words, or any Variety of Expressions, when the one Faith and Desire of his Heart made known to God, and continued in, is not only all, but the most perfect Prayer he can make ? Again, suppose the Soul in another State, feeling with Joy its offered Redeemer, and opening its Heart for the full Reception of him ; if it stands in this State of Wishing and Longing for the Birth of Christ, how can its Prayer be in an higher Degree of Request ? Or if it breaks out frequently in these Words, 'Come, Lord Jesus, 'come quickly, with all thy holy Nature, Spirit, and Tempers 'into my Soul,' is there any Occasion to enlarge, or alter these Words into another Form of Expression ? Can he do better, or pray more, than by continually standing from time to time in this State of wishing to have Christ formed in him ? Nay, is it not more likely, that his Heart should be more divided and dissipated by a numerous Change of Expressions, than by keeping united to one Expression that sets forth all that he wants ? For it is the Reality, the Steadiness, and Continuity of the Desire, that is the Goodness of Prayer, and its Qualification to receive all that it wants. Our Lord said to one that came to him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee ? He answered, 'Lord, 'that I may receive my Sight' : And he received it. Another said, 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean' : And he was cleansed. Tell me what Learning, or fine Parts, are required to make such Prayers as these ? and yet what Wonders of Relief are recorded in Scripture, as given to such short Prayers as these ! Or tell me what Blessing of Prayer, or Faith, or Love, may not now be obtained in the same Way, and with as few Words, as then was done ? Every Man therefore that has any Feeling of the Weight of his Sin, or any true Desire to be delivered from it by Christ, has Learning and Capacity enough to make his own Prayer. For Praying is not speaking forth eloquently, but simply, the true Desire of the Heart ; and the Heart, simple and plain in good Desires, is in the truest State of Preparation

for all the Gifts and Graces of God. And this I must tell you, that the most simple Souls, that have accustomed themselves to speak their own Desires and Wants to God, in such short, but true Breathings of their Hearts to him, will soon know more of Prayer, and the Mysteries of it, than any Persons who have only their Knowledge from Learning, and learned Books.

Acad. You seem to me, *Theophilus*, to have much Truth in what you say, and yet to be in a Way by yourself. I cannot take you to be with those who place *all* in many and long Forms; and now I take you to be even more against those, who make much Account of what they call a *gifted Man*, and make that to be the *true Gift* of Prayer, when anyone is able to pray *extempore*, or with his own Words, for an Hour or two at a Time.

Theoph. I have shown you, *Academicus*, that Prayer is purely the Desire of the Heart; that it has not the Nature of praying, but so far as it is the true Language of the Heart. I have shown you the great Benefit that all People must receive from this true Prayer of the Heart. And to remove all Pretence of Want of Ability in the lowest Sort of People to pray from their own Hearts, I have shown, that the most *simple, short* Petitions, when truly spoken by the Heart, have all the Perfection that Prayer can have.

But mark, Sir, why or when I ascribe this Perfection to it. It is when the Heart stands continually in *this State* of wishing to have that, which is expressed in so few Words. It is then, that I said, there was no Occasion to *enlarge*, or *alter* the Words into another or longer Form, because the *Reality*, the *Steadiness*, and the *Continuity* of the Desire, is the Goodness and Perfection of the Prayer. Now, Sir, let us suppose two Men; the one is frequently an *Hour*, or two, or a whole Night, on his Knees, in silent Prayer, in high Acts of Love, and Faith, and Resignation to God, not outwardly spoken by his Mouth; the other is as long a Time pouring forth the Devotion of his Heart in a Variety of fervent Expressions. May not both these Men justly appeal to me, not only as not condemning, but as asserting, the Goodness of their *Length* and Manner of Prayer, since I make a short simple Petition to be only *then* a good Prayer, when it proceeds from a *steady, continued* Desire of the Heart? It is not therefore *Silence*, or a *simple* Petition, or a great *Variety* of outward Expressions, that *alters* the Nature of Prayer, or makes it to be *good*, or *better*, but only and solely the *Reality*, *Steadiness*, and *Continuity* of the Desire; and therefore whether a Man offers this Desire to God in the silent Longing of the Heart, or in simple short Petitions, or in a great *Variety* of Words, is of no

Consequence ; but all of them are equally good, when the true and right State of the Heart is with them.

Thus you see, *Academicus*, that I am so far from being, as you said, in a *Way by myself*, that I am with every Man in *every Way*, whose Heart stands right towards God. But if you would know what I would call a true and great *Gift of Prayer*, and what I most of all wish for to myself, it is a *good Heart, that stands continually inclined towards God.*

Acad. I am not sorry, *Theophilus*, that I have made so unreasonable an Observation upon what you said, since it has occasioned you to give so good and just an Answer to it. But yet this *silent Prayer* you speak of, is what I never read nor heard anything of before ; and it seems to me but like a *ceasing* to pray ; and yet you seem to like it in its Turn, as well as any other Way of praying.

Theoph. All that I have said of Prayer, *Academicus*, has been only to this End, to show you its true and real Nature, whence it is to arise, where it is to be found, and how you are to begin, and become a true Proficient in it. If, therefore, you were at present to look no further, than how to put yourself in a State of beginning to practise a Prayer proceeding from your own Heart, and continuing in it, leaving all that you are further to know of Prayer, to be known in its own Time by Experience, which alone can open any true Knowledge in you, this would be much better for you, than to be asking beforehand about such things, as are not your immediate Concern.

Begin to be a Man of Prayer, in this easy, simple, and natural Manner, that has been set before you ; and when you are faithful to this Method, you will then need no other Instructor in the Art of Prayer. Your own Heart thus turned to God, will want no one to tell it, when it should be *simple* in its Petitions, or *various* in its Expressions, or prostrate itself in *Silence* before God. But this Hastiness of knowing Things, before they become our Concern, or belong to us, is very common. Thus a Man that has but just entered upon the Reformation of his Life, shall want to read or hear a Discourse upon *Perfection*, whether it be absolutely attainable or not ; and shall be more eager after what he can hear of this Matter, though at such a Distance from himself, than of such Things as concern the next Step that he is to take in his own proper State.

You, my Friend, have already rightly taken the *first Step* in the spiritual Life ; you have devoted yourself absolutely to God, to live wholly to his Will, under the Light and Guidance of his Holy Spirit, intending, seeking nothing in this World, but such a Passage through it, as may tend to the Glory of God, and the

Recovery of your own fallen Soul. Your *next Step* is this, it is a looking to the Continuance of this first Resolution, and Donation of yourself to God, to see that it be kept alive, that everything you do may be animated and directed by it, and all the Occurrences of every Day, from Morning to Night, be received by you, as becomes a Spirit that is devoted to God. Now this *second Step* cannot be taken, but purely by Prayer; nothing else has the least Power here but Prayer: I do not mean you must frequently read or say a Number of Prayers (though this in its Turn may be good and useful to you) but the Prayer I mean, and which you must practise, if you would take this *second Step* in the spiritual Life, is *Prayer of the Heart*, or a Prayer of your own, proceeding from the State of your Heart, and its own Tendency to God. Of all things therefore look to this Prayer of the Heart; consider it as your infallible Guide to Heaven; turn from everything that is an Hindrance of it, that quenches or abates its Fervour; love and like nothing but that which is suitable to it; and let every Day begin, go on, and end, in the Spirit of it. Consider yourself as always wrong, as having gone aside, and lost your right Path, when any *Delight, Desire, or Trouble*, is suffered to live in you, that cannot be made a Part of this Prayer of the Heart to God. For nothing so infallibly shows us the true State of our Heart, as that which gives us either Delight or Trouble; for as our Delight and Trouble is, so is the State of our Heart: If therefore you are carried away with any Trouble or Delight, that has not an immediate Relation to your Progress in the Divine Life, you may be assured your Heart is not in its right State of Prayer to God. Look at a Man who is devoted to some *one Thing*, or has some one great worldly Matter at Heart, he stands turned from everything that has not some Relation to it; he has no Joy or Trouble but what arises from it; he has no Eyes nor Ears, but to see or hear something about it. All else is a Trifle, but that which some way or other concerns this great Matter. You need not tell him of any Rules or Methods to keep it in his Thoughts; it goes with him into all Places and Companies; it has his first Thoughts in the Morning; and every Day is good or bad, as this great Matter seems to succeed or not. This may show you how easily, how naturally, how constantly, our Heart will carry on its own State of Prayer, as soon as God is its great Object, or it is wholly given up to him, as its one great Good. This may also show you, that the Heart cannot enter into a State of the Spirit of Prayer to God, till that which I called the first *Step* in the spiritual Life is taken, which is the taking God for its *All*, or the giving itself up *wholly* to God. But when this Foundation is

laid, the Seed of Prayer is sown, and the Heart is in a continual State of Tendency to God; having no other Delight or Trouble in Things of any kind, but as they help or hinder its Union with God. Therefore, *Academicus*, the Way to be a Man of Prayer, and be governed by its Spirit, is not to get a *Book* full of Prayers; but the best Help you can have from a Book, is to read one full of such Truths, Instructions, and awakening Informations, as force you to see and know *who*, and *what*, and *where*, you are; that God is your *All*; and that all is *Misery*, but a Heart and Life devoted to him. This is the best outward Prayer-Book you can have, as it will turn you to an inward Book, and Spirit of Prayer in your Heart, which is a continual longing Desire of the Heart after God, his Divine Life, and Holy Spirit. When, for the Sake of this inward Prayer, you retire at any time of the Day, never begin till you know and feel, why and wherefore you are going to pray; and let this *why* and *wherefore*, form and direct everything that comes from you, whether it be in Thought or Word. As you cannot but know your own State, so it must be the easiest Thing in the World to look up to God, with such Desires as suit the State you are in; and praying in this Manner, whether it be in one, or more, or no Words, your Prayer will be always sincere, and good, and highly beneficial to you.—Thus praying, you can never pray in vain; but one Month in the Practice of it, will do you more Good, make a greater Change in your Soul, than twenty Years of Prayer only by Books, and Forms of other People's making.

No Vice can harbour in you, no Infirmary take any Root, no good Desire can languish, when once your Heart is in this Method of Prayer; never beginning to pray, till you first see how Matters stand with you; asking your Heart what it wants, and having nothing in your Prayers, but what the known State of your Heart puts you upon *demanding*, *saying*, or *offering*, unto God. A Quarter of an Hour of this Prayer, brings you out of your Closet a new Man; your Heart feels the Good of it; and every Return of such a Prayer, gives new Life and Growth to all your Virtues, with more Certainty, than the Dew refreshes the Herbs of the Field: Whereas, overlooking this true Prayer of your own Heart, and only at certain Times taking a Prayer that you find in a Book, you have nothing to wonder at, if you are every Day praying, and yet every Day sinking further and further under all your Infirmities. For your Heart is your Life, and your Life can only be altered by that which is the real Working of your Heart. And if your Prayer is only a Form of Words, made by the Skill of other People, such a Prayer can no more change you into a good Man, than an *Actor* upon the

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Stage, who speaks kingly Language, is thereby made to be a King: Whereas one Thought, or Word, or Look, towards God, proceeding from your own Heart, can never be without its proper Fruit, or fail of doing a real Good to your Soul. Again, another great and infallible Benefit of this kind of Prayer is this; it is the only Way to be delivered from the Deceitfulness of your own Hearts.

Our Hearts deceive us, because we leave them to themselves, are absent from them, taken up in outward Things, in outward Rules and Forms of Living and Praying. But this kind of Praying, which takes all its Thoughts and Words only from the State of our Hearts, makes it impossible for us to be Strangers to ourselves. The Strength of every Sin, the Power of every evil Temper, the most secret Workings of our Hearts, the Weakness of any or all our Virtues, is with a Noonday Clearness forced to be seen, as soon as the Heart is made our Prayer-Book, and we pray for nothing, but according to what we read, and find there.

Acad. O *Theophilus*, you have shown me, that it is almost as easy and natural a Thing to pray, as to *breathe*; and that the best Prayer in the World, is that which the Heart can thus easily send forth from itself, untaught by anything, but its own Sense of God and itself. And yet I am almost afraid of loving this kind of Prayer too much. I am not free from suspicions about it: I apprehend it to be that very *praying* by the *Spirit*, or as *moved* by the Spirit, or from a *Light within*, which is condemned as *Quakerism*.

Theoph. There is but one good Prayer that you can possibly make, and that is a Prayer *in* and *from* the Spirit, or as the Spirit of God *moves* you in it, or to it. This, this alone, is a Divine Prayer; no other Prayer has, or can possibly have any Communion with God. Take the Matter thus: Man is a *threefold* Being; he has three Natures; he partakes of the *Divine*, the *elementary*, and the *diabolical* Nature. Had he not these three Natures in a certain Degree in him, he could have no Communion with God, he could not enjoy the Elements, nor could the evil Spirits have the least Power of Access to him.

Now the *astral*, *elementary* Nature of Man, in this World, cannot have a Longing after the pure Deity; it cannot hunger, and thirst after the Divine Image, nor desire to be perfect as God is perfect; this is as impossible, as for the Beasts of the Field to long to be Angels. Therefore Flesh and Blood in us, can no more make a *Divine* Prayer, than in any other Animal of this World.

The *diabolical* Nature which is in us, can do nothing but that

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which the Devils do : It can only rise up in its *own* Pride, Envy, and Self-Exaltation, and only hate all the Goodness that is either in Heaven, or on Earth. And therefore it is a Truth of the greatest Certainty, that no Man ever did, or can send up a Divine and heavenly Prayer to God, or such a Prayer as can reach God, but *in* and *by* the Spirit of God in him. Our *astral, elementary* Man, and our proud, subtle, serpentine Nature, can read, or say a Prayer full of good Words and Wishes, as easily as *Satan* could use *Scripture-Language* in the Temptation of Christ ; but nothing can wish to be like God, or to *unite* with his Goodness and Holiness, but that Spirit in us, which partakes of his Divine Nature. Therefore to ridicule praying by the Spirit, or as moved by the Spirit, is ridiculing the *one only* Prayer that is Divine, or can do us any Divine Good ; and to reject and oppose it, as a vain Conceit, is to quench, and suppress all that is holy, heavenly, and Divine, within us. For if this Holy Spirit does not live, and move in us, and bring forth all the praying Affections of our Souls, we may as well think of reaching Heaven with our Hands, as with our Prayers.

Acad. I know not, *Theophilus*, how to deny anything that you have here said : Yet this Account seems to make no Distinction between *our own good* Spirit, and the Holy Spirit of God. I took the Inspirations, and Graces of the Holy Spirit to be something, that came into us from *without*, and to be as *distinct* from our own Good Spirit, as God is distinct from the Creature.

Theoph. The Holy Spirit of God is as necessary to our Divine Life, or the Life of Grace, as the *Air* of this World is necessary to our animal Life ; and is as *distinct* from us, and as much *without* us, as the *Air* of this World is *distinct* from, and *without*, the Creatures that live in it. And yet *our own good* Spirit is the *very Spirit* of God, moving and stirring in us. No Animal can unite with, or breathe the Air of this World, till it has first the Air of this World brought forth, as the *true Birth* of its own Life in itself ; this is its only Capacity to live in the Spirit of this World ; and the Breath or Spirit that thus arises in its own Life, is the *very same* Breath, that is in outward Nature, in which it lives. It is strictly thus, with the Spirit of God in our Souls ; it must first have a Birth *within us*, arising from the Life of our Souls, and as such, is our only Capacity to have Life, and live in the Spirit of God himself, and is the *very Breath* of the Spirit of God, who is yet as distinct from us, as the Breath of our animal Life, that arises from our own Fire, is distinct from the Air of the World in which it lives. And thus, *Academicus*, our *own good* Spirit is the *very Spirit* of the Deity, and yet not God, but the Spirit of God, breathed or kindled into a creaturely

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Form ; and this good Spirit, Divine in its *Origin*, and Divine in its *Nature*, is that alone in us, that can reach God, unite with him, co-operate with him, be moved, and blessed by him, as our earthly Spirit is, by the outward Spirit of this elementary World.

Acad. Indeed, *Theophilus*, you have, in few Words, so gone to the Bottom of this Matter, that nothing is left either for any further Doubt, or Inquiry about it. My own good Spirit is the Breath of God in me, and so related to God, as the Breath of my animal Life is related to the *Air*, or Spirit of this outward World. It is from God, has the *Nature*, the *Eternity*, the *Spirituality* of God, as the Breath of my Flesh and Blood, has the Grossness, the earthly, transitory Nature of the Spirit of this World. And as all my Communication with this World arises from the Breath of this World, kindled in my *own Life*, so all my possibility of Communication with God, arises solely from the Breath of his Holy Spirit *brought forth* in the Life of my Soul ; and I can only live in God, by his Spirit having a Birth in me, as I can only live in this World, by having its Spirit born in me. This plain Truth sets all the Scripture-Doctrine, concerning the *Necessity*, *Power*, and *Operation* of the Holy Spirit, in the greatest and most edifying Degree of Clearness. Thus, what can be a more plain, sober, and palpable Truth, than when the Apostle says, ' They only are the Sons of ' God, who are led by the Spirit of God ' ? It is only like saying, that those Creatures only belong to this World, who live in, and by its Spirit. I shall here, Sir, only add, that my Gospel-Faith stands now upon a most solid, and comfortable Foundation ; my Heart is all delight, and Devotion to God, when I consider, *First*, That Christ my Redeemer is the first *Seed* of the *Woman*, or *Power of Salvation preserved in fallen Adam* ; *the Immanuel* ; *the God within every Man* ; ' the Light that lighteth every Man ' that cometh into the World.' *Secondly*, That the Holy Spirit of God, the Breath of Eternity, has also *its Seed* of Life in my Soul ; for where the *Word*, or *Son* of God is, there is the Spirit of God in the *same State* ; if one is only a *Seed* of Life, a Spark of Heaven, the other is so also ; and these two, thus considered, are the glorious *Pearl* of Eternity, hidden in every Man's Soul, and so often spoken of before. And thus we understand, how the Whole of our Redemption (according to the plain Language of Scripture) is *inwardly* and *outwardly* solely the Work of the Light and Spirit of God, a Kingdom of God both *within* and *without* us, and to which we do not, cannot live, but so far as we are inspired, moved, and led, by the Spirit of God. Earnestly, therefore, to pray, humbly to hope, and faithfully to expect, to be *continually* inspired, and animated by the Holy Spirit of God

has no more of *Vanity, Fanaticism, or enthusiastic Wildness* in it, than to hope and pray, to act in everything from and by a *good Spirit*. For as sure as the Lip of Truth hath told us, that there is but *One that is good*, so sure is it, that not a *Spark* of Goodness, nor a *Breath* of Piety, can be in any Creature, either in Heaven, or on Earth, but by that Divine Spirit, which is the *Breath* of God, breathed from himself into the Creature. The Matter is not about *Appearances* of Goodness, *Forms* of Virtue, *Rules* of Religion, or a *prudential Piety*, suited to Time, and Place, and Character; all these are Degrees of Goodness, that our old Man can as easily trade in, as in any other Matters of this World. But so much as we have of an *heavenly and Divine* Goodness, or of a Goodness that *belongs* to Heaven, and has the Nature of Heaven in it, so much we must have of a *Divine Inspiration* in us. For as nothing can fall to the Earth, but because it has the Nature of the Earth in it; so it is a Truth of the utmost Certainty, that nothing can ascend towards Heaven, or have the least Power to unite with it, but that very Spirit which came down from Heaven, and has the Nature of Heaven in it. This Truth, therefore, that the Kingdom of God is within us, that its Light is solely the *Lamb* of God, its Spirit solely the Spirit of God, stands upon a Rock, against which all Attempts are in vain. All that I now further desire to know, is only this; how I may keep free from all Delusions in this Matter, and not take my own natural Abilities, Tempers, and Passions, or the Suggestions of evil Spirits, to be the Working of the Spirit of God in me. Pray, Sir, tell me how I shall safely know when, and how far, I am led and governed by the Spirit of God?

Theoph. You may know this, *Academicus*, just as you know, when you are governed by the Spirit of Wrath, Envy, Guile, Craft, or Covetousness. Every Man knows this of himself, as easily, and as certainly, as he knows when he is hungry, pleased, or displeased. Now it is the same Thing with regard to the Spirit of God; the Knowledge of it is as perceptible in yourself, and liable to no more delusion. For the Spirit of God, is more distinguishable from all other Spirits and Tempers, than any of your natural Affections or Tempers are, from one another; as I will here plainly show you.

‘God is unwearied *Patience*, a *Meekness* that cannot be provoked; he is an ever-enduring *Mercifulness*; he is unmixed *Goodness*, impartial, universal *Love*; his Delight is in the *Communication* of himself, his own Happiness, to everything, according to its Capacity. He does everything that is good, righteous, and lovely, for its own sake, because it is good, righteous, and lovely. He is the *Good* from which nothing but

‘ Good comes, and resisteth all Evil, *only* with Goodness.’ This, Sir, is the *Nature* and *Spirit* of God, and here you have your *infallible* Proof, whether you are moved, and led by the Spirit of God. Here is a Proof that never can fail you; is always at hand; and is liable to no Mistake or Delusion. If it be the earnest Desire, and Longing of your Heart, to be *merciful* as he is merciful; to be full of his *unwearied Patience*, to dwell in his *unalterable Meekness*; if you long to be like him in *universal, impartial* Love; if you desire to communicate *every Good*, to every Creature that you are able; if you love and practise everything that is good, righteous, and lovely, for its *own sake*, because it is good, righteous, and lovely; and resist no Evil, but with *Goodness*; then you have the utmost Certainty, that the Spirit of God lives, dwells, and governs in you. Now all these Tempers are as capable of being known to every Man, as his own Love and Hatred; and therefore no Man can be deceived as to the Possession of them, but he that chooses to deceive himself. Now if you want any of these Tempers, if the *whole Bent* of your Heart and Mind is not set upon them, all Pretences to an *immediate Inspiration*, and *continual* Operation of the Spirit of God in your Soul, are vain and groundless. For the Spirit of God is *that* which I have here described; and where his Spirit dwells and governs, there all these Tempers are brought forth, or springing up, as the certain Fruits of it. What room, therefore, *Academicus*, for so much Uncertainty, or Fear of Delusion, in this Matter? Keep but within the Bounds here set you; call nothing a *Proof* of the Spirit or Work of God in your Soul, but *these Tempers*, and the Works which they produce; and then, but not till then, you may safely and infallibly say, with St. *John*, ‘ Hereby we know that he abideth ‘in us by the Spirit which he hath given us.’

Acad. Indeed, *Theophilus*, you have given me a short, but very full and satisfactory Answer to my Question. I now perceive, that, as a spiritual Man, or one devoted to the Spirit of God, I am not to look after any *Extraordinaries*, any new Openings, Illuminations, Visions, or Voices, inward or outward, from God, as *Proofs* of the Spirit of God dwelling and working in me; but that all my Proof and Security of being governed by the Spirit of God, is to be grounded on other Matters: That the boundless Humility and Resignation of the Holy Jesus; the unwearied Patience, the unalterable Meekness, the impartial, universal Love of God, manifested in my Soul; are its only Proofs, that God is in me of a Truth. Thus far all is right and good.

But yet, Sir, surely it must be said with Truth, that the Spirit of God often discovers itself, and operates in good Souls in very

extraordinary Ways, in uncommon Illuminations, and Openings of Divine Light and Knowledge, in the Revelation of Mysteries, in strong Impulses and Sallies of a wonderful Zeal, full of the highest Gifts and Graces of God : And that these have frequently been God's gracious Methods of awakening a sinful World.

Theoph. What you say, *Academicus*, is very true ; and almost every Age of the Church is a sufficient Proof of it. By the Goodness of God, the Church has always had its *extraordinary Persons*, highly gifted from above, made burning, and shining Lights, and carried into as uncommon Ways of Life, by the same Spirit, and for the same Ends, as *John the Baptist* was ; and as different from common Christians, as he was from the common *Jews*. But, my Friend, these extraordinary Operations of God's Holy Spirit, and the Wonders of his Gifts and Graces showing themselves at certain Times, and upon certain Persons, through all the Ages of the Church, are not Matters of common Instruction ; they belong not to our Subject ; it would be Ignorance and Vanity in me, to pretend to let you into the Secret of them ; it would be the same Thing in you, to think yourself ready for it.

Would you know the *Sublime*, the *Exalted*, the *Angelic*, in the Christian Life, see what the Son of God saith : ' Thou shalt love ' the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, with ' all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength ; and thy Neighbour ' as thyself. On these two, saith he, hang all the Law and the ' Prophets.' And without these *two Things*, no good Light ever can arise, or enter into your Soul. Take all the Sciences, shine in all the Accomplishments of the lettered World, they will only lead you from one vain Passion to another ; everything you send out from within you is selfish, vain, and bad ; everything you see or receive from without, will be received with a bad Spirit ; till *these two* heavenly Tempers have overcome the *natural Perverseness* of fallen Nature. Till then, nothing *pure* can proceed from within, nor anything be received in *Purity* from without.

Think yourself therefore unfit, incapable of judging rightly, or acting virtuously, till these two Tempers have the Government of your Heart. Then every Truth will meet you ; no hurtful Error can get Entrance into your Heart ; you will neither deceive, nor be deceived ; but will have a better Knowledge of all Divine Matters, than all the human Learning in the World can help you to.

Would you know what it is to love God with all your Heart and Soul, &c., you need only look back to that, which has been said of the *Nature* and *Spirit* of God.* For when with all your

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Heart and *Soul* you love, and long to have, that *Nature* and *Spirit*, to be wholly united to it, possessed and governed by it, then you love God with all your Heart and Soul, &c. And then you are first capable of loving yourself and your Neighbour rightly. For so much as you have of the Divine Nature and Spirit in you, just so much Power have you of loving yourself and your Neighbour aright; that is, of loving only and equally, *that* in yourself and your Neighbour, which the Deity *only* and *equally* loves, both in you, and him. But it is time to part, when we have only told our silent Friend, *Humanus*, that if we live to meet again, we shall, with all our Hearts, receive him as a Speaker among us.—And so, Gentlemen, once more, Adieu.

FINIS.

THE
W A Y
TO
DIVINE KNOWLEDGE:
BEING SEVERAL
D I A L O G U E S
BETWEEN
HUMANUS, ACADEMICUS, RUSTICUS,
and THEOPHILUS.

As preparatory to a new Edition of the
Works of JACOB BEHMEN; and the right
Use of them.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

L O N D O N :
Printed for J. RICHARDSON, in *Pater-noster-*
row. 1752.

THE FIRST DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

*Humanus, Academicus, Rusticus and
Theophilus.*

HUMANUS. Oh! *Theophilus*, I must yield, and it is with great Pleasure that I now enter into Conversation with you. You have taken from me all Power of cavilling and disputing. I have no Opinions that I choose to maintain, but have the utmost Desire of entering further into this Field of Light, which you have so clearly opened to my View. I shall not trouble you with the relation of what has passed in my Soul, nor what Struggles I have had, with that Variety of heathenish Notions which have had their Turn in my Mind. It is better to tell you, that they are dead and buried, or rather consumed to nothing by that new Light, which you have opened in so many great Points, that I was quite a Stranger to before. To reject all that you have said concerning the Fall of Angels, the Original of this World, the Creation and Fall of Man, and the Necessity of a Redemption, as great as that of the Gospel, is impossible; nothing can do it, or stand out against it, but the most wilful and blind Obstinacy.

But these great Points cannot be received in any true Degree without seeing the vain Contention of all those, who either defend, or oppose the Gospel, without any true and real Knowledge of them. The one contend for, and the other oppose, not the Gospel, but a System of empty words, and historical Facts, branched into Forms and Modes of dividing one Church from another; whereas the Gospel is no History of any *absent, distant, or foreign* Thing, but is a Manifestation of an *essential, inherent, real* Life and Death in every Son of *Adam*; grounded on the Certainty of his first angelical Nature, on the Certainty of his real Fall from that, into an animal earthly Life of impure bestial Flesh and Blood, and on the Certainty of an inward Redemption from it, by the Divine Nature given again into him. These three great Points, with all the Doctrines, Duties, and Consequences, that are essentially contained in, or flow from them, are the

Gospel of *Jesus Christ*, to which, by your means, I am become a Convert. I am now, dear *Theophilus*, strongly drawn Two different Ways. First, I am all Hunger and Thirst after this new Light, a Glimpse of which has already raised me, as it were, from the Dead: and I am in the utmost Impatience to hear more and more of this Divine Philosophy, which, I so plainly see, opens all the Mysteries both of Nature and Grace, from the Beginning to the End of Time. What I have heard from you, when I was obliged to be silent, and what I have since found and felt by much reading the *Appeal*, and that *Dialogue*, obliges me to speak in this ardent Manner. They have awakened something in me which I never felt before, something much deeper than my Reason, and over which I have no Power; it glows in my Soul, like a Fire, or Hunger, which nothing can satisfy, but a further View of those great Truths, which I this Day expect from your opening to us the Mysteries of Heaven revealed to that wonderful Man, *Jacob Behmen*.

On the other hand, I find in myself a vehement impulse to turn Preacher amongst my former Infidel Brethren; which Impulse I know not how to resist: For being just converted myself, I seem to know, and feel the *true Place*, from whence Conversion is to arise in others; and by the Reluctance which I have felt in my Passage from one Side to the other, I seem also to know the *true Ground* on which Infidelity supports itself. And he only is able to declare with Spirit and Power any Truths, or bear a faithful Testimony of the Reality of them, who preaches nothing but what he has first seen, and felt, and found to be true, by a living Sensibility and true Experience of their Reality and Power in his own Soul. All other Preaching, whether from Art, Hearsay, Books, or Education, is, at best, but playing with Words, and mere trifling with sacred Things. Being thus divided in myself, I hope to have your Direction.

Theophilus. Dear *Humanus*, my Heart embraces you with great Joy, and I am much pleased with what you say of yourself. This *Hunger* of your Soul is all that I wish for; it is the *Fire* of God, the *Opening* of Eternity, the *Beginning* of your Redemption, the *Awakener* of the angelic Life, the *Root* of an omnipotent Faith, and the *true Seeker* of all that is lost. For all these Things, and much more, are the blessed Powers which will soon break forth, and show themselves to be the true Workings of this celestial Fire, that has begun to glow within you.

Your Business is now to give Way to this heavenly Working of the Spirit of God in your Soul, and turn from everything either within you, or without you, that may hinder the further Awakening of all that is holy and heavenly within you. For

within you is that heavenly Angel that died in Paradise, and died no other Death, than that of being hid a while from your Sight and Sensibility.

For be assured of this, as a certain Truth, that corrupt, fallen, and earthly as human Nature is, there is nevertheless in the Soul of every Man, the Fire, and Light, and Love of God, though lodged in a State of Hiddenness, Inactivity, and Death, till something or other, human or Divine, *Moses* and the Prophets, *Christ* or his Apostles, discover its Life within us.

For the Soul of every Man is the Breath and Life of the Triune God, and as such, a Partaker of the Divine Nature ; but all this Divinity is unfelt, because overpowered by the Workings of Flesh and Blood, till such time as Distress, or Grace, or both, give Flesh and Blood a Shock, open the long shut-up Eyes, and force a Man to find something in himself, that Sense and Reason, whilst at quiet, were not aware of. Wonder not therefore at this Conflict in your Soul, that you are eager after more Light, and impatient to communicate that which you have. For you must be thus driven ; and both these Desires are only Two Witnesses to this Truth, that a heaven-born Spirit is come to Life in you.

Only remember this ; Look well to the Ground on which you stand, keep a watchful Eye upon every Working of Nature, and take care that nothing human, earthly, private, or selfish, mix with this heavenly Fire : That is, see that your Mind be *free, universal, impartial*, without Regard to here or there, this or that, but loving all Goodness, practising every Virtue, for itself, on its own Account, because it is so much of God ; neither coveting Light, nor longing to communicate it to others, but merely and solely for this Reason, that the Will of God may be done, and the Goodness of God brought to Life, both in you and them. For there is no Goodness but God's ; and his Goodness is not alive, or fruitful in you, but so far, and in such a Degree, as the Good that you mean, and do, is done in and by that Spirit, by which God himself is good. For as there is but One that is good, so there is, and can be but One Goodness. And therefore it is, that we are called not to an human, worldly, prudential, partial Goodness, suitable to our selfish Reason, and natural Tempers, but to ' be perfect, as our Father in Heaven is 'perfect.' And the full Reason is expressed in the Words ; for if our Father is in heaven, we must be there too in Spirit and Life, or we are not his Children ; if Heaven is that for which we are made, and that which we have lost, it is not any human Goodness, but a heavenly Birth and Spirit of God's own Goodness, working in us, as it does in God, that can make us the heavenly Children of our Father in Heaven. You must love the

Light of God, as God loves it ; you must desire that others may enjoy it, as God desires it. Now God is a free, universal, impartial Love, loving and doing every kind of Good, for its own Sake, because that is the highest and most perfect Working of Life ; and because everything else but Goodness, for its own Sake, is imperfect, and a Degree of Evil, Misery, and Death. And no Creature can come out of its Imperfection, Misery, and Death, but by the pure, free, unmixed Goodness of God, being born in it. Though you had outwardly all Virtues, and seemed doing all that the Saints of God have done, yet unless the *same Spirit*, by which God himself is Good, brought forth your Goodness, all would be only an earthly Labour, that could have no Communication with Heaven.

Therefore, my Friend, set out right, and be assured of this Truth, that *Nature*, and *Self*, and every *particular View*, must be totally renounced ; or else, be your Zeal what it will, ever so pleasing to yourself, or astonishing to the World, you are not working with God.

Here now you have the Test of Truth, by which you may always know, whether it be the Spirit of God, and the Love of God, that drives you. If your Zeal is after this *pure, free, universal* Goodness of God, then of a Truth the Spirit of God breatheth in you ; but if you feel not the Love of this pure, free, universal Goodness, and yet think that you love God, you deceive yourself ; for there is no other true Love of God, but the loving *that*, which God is.

But if you please, *Humanus*, pray tell me, in what manner you would attempt to make Converts to Christianity.

Humanus. I would not take the Method generally practised by the modern Defenders of Christianity. I would not attempt to show from *Reason* and *Antiquity*, the Necessity and Reasonableness of a Divine Revelation in general, or of the *Mosaic* and Christian in particular. Nor enlarge upon the Arguments for the Credibility of the Gospel-History, the Reasonableness of its Creeds, Institutions, and Usages ; or the Duty of Man to receive Things above, but not contrary to, his Reason. I would avoid all this, because it is wandering from the true Point in Question, and only helping the Deist to oppose the Gospel with a Show of Argument, which he must necessarily want, was the Gospel left to stand upon its own Bottom.

And, on the other hand, should the Deist yield up such a Cause as this, and change Sides, he could only be said to have changed his Opinion about Facts, with any more altering or bettering his State in God, than if he had only altered his Opinion about Things in Dispute amongst the ancient Philosophers.

For since the *Fall* of Man, implying a real Change from his first State, or a total Death to his first created Life, since the Necessity of a new Birth of that lost Life, by the Life of God again restored to, or born in the Soul, are *two Points*, quite overlooked by those who defend the Truth and Reasonableness of the Christian Scheme, it may truly be said, that the *only Ground*, and *whole Nature* of the Gospel is quite dropped, and given up by those who thus defend it.

For the Gospel has but *one Ground*, or Reason, and that is the Fall of Man, it has but *one Nature*, and that is to help Man again to *all* that he had lost.

How unreasonable would it be, to offer the Christian Redemption to glorious Angels in Heaven? Could anything be more inconsistent with their heavenly, unfallen State? Yet just so unreasonable would it be to offer it to Man unfallen from his first created State.—For Man standing in that first Perfection of Life, which God breathed into him, and in that very outward State, or World, into which God himself brought him, wants no more Redemption, than the most glorious Angels do; and to preach to such a Man, in order to be reconciled to God, the Necessity of dying to himself, and the World he is in, would be as contrary to all Sense and Reason as to preach to Angels the Necessity of dying to themselves, their Divine Life and the Kingdom of Heaven, for which God had created them.

Thus does it appear, that the Fall of Man into the Life of this earthly World, is the sole Ground of his wanting the Redemption, which the Gospel offers.

Hence it is that the Gospel has only one simple Proposal of certain Life, or certain Death to Man; of Life, if he will take the Means of entering into the Kingdom of God, of death if he chooses to take up his Rest in the Kingdom of this World. This is the simple Nature, and sole Drift of the Gospel; it means no more, than making known to Man that this World, and the Life of it, is his Fall, and Separation from God, and Happiness, both here and hereafter: And that to be saved or restored to God and Happiness, can only be obtained, by renouncing all Love, and Adherence to the Things of this World. Look at all the Precepts, Threatenings, and Doctrines of the Gospel, they mean nothing, but to drive all Earthly-mindedness and carnal Affections out of the Soul, to call Man from the Life, Spirit and Goods of this World, to a Life of Hope, and Faith, and trust, and Love and Desire of a new Birth from Heaven.

To embrace the Gospel, is to enter with all our Hearts into its Terms of dying to all that is earthly both within us, and

without us ; and on the other hand to place our faith, and Hope, and Trust, and Satisfaction in the Things of this World, is to reject the Gospel with our whole Heart, Spirit and Strength, as much as any Infidel can do, notwithstanding we made ever so many verbal Assents and Consents to everything that is recorded in the New Testament.

This therefore is the one true essential Distinction between the Christian and the Infidel. The Infidel is a Man of this World, wholly devoted to it, his Hope and Faith are set upon it ; for where our Heart is, there, and there only is our Hope and Faith. He has only such Virtue, such Goodness, and such a Religion, as entirely suits with the Interest of Flesh and Blood, and keeps the Soul happy in the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life : This, and this alone, is *Infidelity*, a *total Separation* from God, and a Removal of all Faith, and Hope from him, into the Life of this World. It matters not, whether this Infidel be a *Professor* of the Gospel, a Disciple of *Zoroaster*, a Follower of *Plato*, a *Jew*, a *Turk*, or an Opposer of the Gospel-History : This Difference of Opinions or Professions alters not the Matter, it is the Love of the World instead of God, that constitutes the *whole Nature* of the Infidel.

On the other hand, the Christian renounces the World, as his horrid Prison ; he dies to the Will of Flesh and Blood, because it is Darkness, Corruption, and Separation from God ; he turns from all that is earthly, animal, and temporal, and stands in a continual Tendency of Faith, and Hope, and Prayer to God, to have a better Nature, a better Life and Spirit born again into him from above.

Where this Faith is, there is the Christian, the new Creature in Christ, born of the Word and Spirit of God : neither Time nor Place, nor any outward Condition of Birth, and Life, can hinder his Entrance into the Kingdom of God.

But where this Faith is not, there is the *true, complete* Infidel, the Man of the Earth, the Unredeemed, the Rejector of the Gospel, the Son of Perdition, that is *dead in Trespasses and Sins, without Christ, an Alien from the Commonwealth of Israel, a Stranger from the Covenants of Promise, having no Hope, and without God in the World.*

Here therefore I fix my true Ground of converting Men to Christianity ; and how miserably, may I say, do they err, who place Christianity and Infidelity in anything else, but in the Heart either devoted to this World, or devoted to God !

He therefore that opens a Field of Controversy to the *Deist*, about Revelation in general, or the History of Facts, Creeds, and Doctrines of Churches, not only leads him from the Merits

of the Gospel, but brings him into a Field of Battle, where he may stand his Ground as long as he pleases. This I can truly say from my own Experience, who have been twenty Years in this Dust of Debate; and have always found that the more Books there were written in *this Way* of defending the Gospel, the more I was furnished with new Objections to it, and the less apprehensive of any Danger from my not receiving it.

For I had frequently a Consciousness rising up within me, that the Debate was equally vain on both Sides, doing no more real Good to the one than to the other, not being able to imagine, that a Set of scholastic, logical Opinions about History, Facts, Doctrines, and Institutions of the Church, or a Set of logical Objections against them, were of any Significancy towards making the Soul of Man either an eternal Angel of Heaven, or an eternal Devil of Hell. And therefore it was, that I was often tempted rather to think, there was neither Heaven, nor Hell, than to believe that such a Variety of Churches, and Systems of Opinion, all condemning, and all condemned by one another, were to find the Heaven of God opened to receive them, but he who was equally led by Opinion to reject them all, was doomed to Hell. But you, Sir, (and how can I enough thank you for it?) have put a full End to all this vain Strife of Opinions floating in the Brain; You have dispersed the Clouds that surrounded my bewildered Mind; You have brought me home to myself, where I find Heaven and Hell, Life and Death, Salvation and Damnation at Strife within me; You have shown me the infinite Worth of Christianity, and the dreadful Nature of Infidelity, not by helping me to a new Opinion, for my *Reason* to maintain, but by proving to me this great and decisive Truth, that Christianity is neither more nor less, *than the Goodness of the Divine Life, Light and Love, living and working in my Soul*; and that Infidelity in its whole Nature, is purely and solely *the Heart of Man living in, governed by, and contented with the evil Workings of the earthly Life, Spirit, and Nature.*

This is the Infidelity that you have forced me to fly from, and renounce, and *that* is the Christianity, to which I am converted with all the Strength of my Heart and Spirit. Away then with all the Fictions and Workings of Reason, either for, or against Christianity! They are only the wanton Sport of the Mind, whilst ignorant of God, and insensible of its own Nature and Condition. Death and Life are the only Things in Question; *Life* is God, living and working in the Soul; *Death* is the Soul living and working according to the Sense and Reason of bestial Flesh and Blood. Both this Life, and this Death are of their own Growth, growing from their own Seed within us, not as

busy Reason talks or directs, but as our Heart turns either to the one or the other.

But, dear *Theophilus*, I must now tell you, that I want to make haste in this new Road you have put me in. Time is short, I am afraid of leaving the World, before I have left all worldly Tempers, and before the first holy and heavenly Birth be quickened, and brought to Life in me.

An Angel my first Father was created, and therefore nothing but the Angel belongs to Man, and nothing but the Angel can enter into Heaven. Angelic Goodness, therefore, is the one Thing that Man must look up to God for, because it is the one Goodness that he has lost. Everything else, Flesh and Blood, Earth and all earthly Tempers, everything that had its Rise from the Fall of *Adam*, must be renounced, and given up to Death, and the first angelic Glory of the Life of God in Man may be again found in him.

Theophilus. Indeed, *Humanus*, you have made great Haste already ; for all the Haste that we can make, consists in a total dying to all the Tempers and Passions which we have received from the Spirit of this World, by our Fall into it. And the more watchfully, earnestly, and constantly, we do this, the more Haste we make to our lost Country, and heavenly Glory.

It is no Extravagance, or overstraining the Matter, when we say, that our Goodness must be angelic ; for no Goodness less than that, can be Divine and heavenly, or help us to a Life in Heaven. It is often said, that we are poor, infirm Men, and not Angels ; and therefore must be content with the Poverty and Infirmary of human Virtues. That we are poor, infirm Men, is undeniable ; but this is the one infallible Reason, why a Virtue that is according to our Nature, or of its own Growth, can do us no Good. We were not created poor and infirm Men by God, but have lost him, are separated from him ; full of Misery, because we have changed our first State, and brought all this Poverty, Corruption, and Infirmary, upon ourselves. And therefore, as this Infirmary is from ourselves, so we must intend nothing less, or short of the total Removal of it, nor think that we have our proper Goodness, till we stand in that Degree of it, in which God created us. For, be assured of this great Truth, that nothing in us can be the Delight of God, but that very Creature, which he created. All therefore must be parted with, that God hath not created and brought to Life in us. And no Goodness but that of an Angel, can overcome the Evil that is in us, or do the Will of God on Earth, as it is done in Heaven, which is the only Goodness in and for which God created us.

Academicus. Pray, *Theophilus*, give me leave to say, that I

should think it better, not to insist so much upon the Word *Angelic*, when you speak of the Goodness, that ought to be ours. For it seems to me too liable to Objection. We have not the high Faculties, and exalted Powers of Angels; and therefore our Goodness cannot rise up to an Equality with theirs.

Rusticus. Pray, *Academicus*, give me leave also to say, that if your Learning did not lead you to mind Words, more than Things, you could not have fallen into this critical Scruple. For our Call to angelic Goodness, does not suppose or require any high Stretch, or refined Elevation, of our intellectual Faculties and Powers. A *Shepherd* watching over his Flock, a poor *Slave* digging in the Mines, may each of them, though so employed to the End of their Lives, stand before God in a Degree of Goodness truly angelic. On the other hand, you may spend all your Time in high Speculations, writing and preaching upon Christian Perfection, composing Seraphic Hymns of heavenly Matters, with a Strength of Thought and Genius that delights both yourself and others, and yet, so doing to the Day of your Death, have only a Goodness like that of eating and drinking that which most pleases your Palate.

Would you know the true Nature of angelic Goodness, see how the Spirit of Christ speaks, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, Soul, and Strength, and thy Neighbour as thyself. I came into the World, not to do my own Will, not to seek my own Glory or Honour, not to have a Kingdom in this World, but to promote the Kingdom of God, and do the Will of my Father in Heaven. My Meat and Drink is to do the Will of him that sent me. When thou makest a Feast, call not thy rich Friends and Acquaintance, but the poor, the lame, and blind,' &c. 'Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the Glory and Praise of God.' Thus speaks the Spirit of Christ; and he that in this Spirit thus lives, is an Angel, whether he be in Heaven, or enclosed in Flesh and Blood. And all of us are in the Way of attaining to this angelic Goodness, as soon as we hate the selfish Tempers of our own earthly Life, and earnestly long, in the Spirit of Prayer, to have the Life of God brought forth in us. Now this Goodness we must have, or we have none at all; for there is but one *God*, one *Good*, and one *Goodness*; and it is rightly called *Angelic*, because nothing is capable of it, but the heavenly angelic Nature; nor can it have any Existence in Man, till the Workings of our earthly Nature are overcome, and brought into Subjection to *that* Spirit, which is not of Man, but from Heaven. For Flesh and Blood, in all its Workings, can work only for itself; Darkness can only be dark, it has no other

Nature; Coldness can only be cold; Earth can only be earthly; and the Works of Light can only proceed from Light. Flesh and Blood, or that Life which is only from the Stars and Elements of this World, can only work as the Stars and Elements work, only for Time, and a corruptible Life; it can only be bestial, and serve the Ends of a bestial Life; it is insensible and incapable of Divine Virtue, and is, and can be of no higher a Nature in a Man, than in a Beast, and must have the same End in both. It is quite incapable of entering into the Kingdom of God; and only for this Reason, because it is absolutely incapable of having any true and heavenly Goodness. It has then only its proper Goodness, when it has lost its Power of acting, and is governed by a Spirit superior to it; whilst it lives and rules, it can only live to itself; is nothing but an earthly own Will, own Love, own Honour, own Interest, never rising higher, doing better, or coming any nearer to Goodness, than its own Pride or Covetousness, Envy or Wrath, can carry it. For these Tempers, with all their lesser Subdivisions, are the *Atmosphere* that sets Bounds to the Breath of the earthly Life; they are essential to it, and as inseparable from it, as Hardness and Darkness are inseparable from a Rock of Stone. So long as the stony Rock lasts, so long is it hard and dark. And so long as earthly Flesh and Blood lives and acts, it can only live and act for itself; it can seek, love, like, or do no manner of Thing, but as its own Will, own Love, own Interest, is some way or other felt, and found in it. Would you know the true Ground and Reason of this? It is because no Life can go out of, or further than itself; nor can it will anything, but what its own Life is. This is absolutely true of every Life, whether it be Divine, earthly, or hellish; it can seek, love, and delight in nothing, but that which is according to its own Life.

See here, *Academicus*, the Folly of your quarrelling with the Word *Angelic*, since the Thing itself, angelic Goodness, is absolutely necessary; it is the Goodness of our first Creation, and must be the Goodness of our Redemption. The falling from it has brought forth all the Evils that we are surrounded with, and nothing can deliver us from the Death of our fallen State, but a true and full Resurrection of all that Purity and Goodness, which was living in the first Creation of Man. To be content with our Infirmities, is to be content with our Separation from God; and not to aspire after the one angelic Goodness, is to be *Carnally-minded*, which we are told, is *Death*; that is, Death to the one Divine Life.

A Virtue that is only according to the State of this earthly Life, is a Virtue of Art, and human Contrivance, a Fiction of

Behaviour, modelled according to Rule and Custom, or Education, that can go no deeper, nor rise higher, nor reach further, than the Sense and Reason, and Interests of Flesh and Blood, can carry it. But this can have no Communication with God and Heaven, because it is not born of them, but is a lower, separate State of Life, that at best can only bring forth a Civility of outward Manners, little better than such a new Birth as may be had from a Dancing-master. But the Goodness which we want, and which we were created to have, is the one holy blessed Life of God, and Christ, and Heaven, living in the Soul. For from Eternity to Eternity, there never was, or ever can be, any other heavenly Goodness in any Creature, but the Life, and Spirit, and Word of God, speaking, living, and breathing in it.

Bid the *Anatomist*, that can skilfully dissect an human Body, that can tell you the Names, Nature, and Offices of most of its Parts, that can show you how they all conspire to give Life, Strength, and Motion, to the living Machine: Bid him, I say, put Life into the dead Carcase.

Now learned Reason, when pretending to be a Master of Morality, is just as powerful as this very Anatomist. It can skilfully dissect a dead System of Morality, can separate all its Parts, tell you the Names, Nature, Distinctions, and Connections, of most kinds of Good and Evil. But when this is done, learned Reason, with all its Dictates, Distinctions, and Definitions, can do just as much Good to the Soul, that has lost its Goodness, as the Anatomist can do the Carcase that has lost its Life.

It is wonderfully astonishing, that you Men of Learning seldom come thus far, as to see and feel this glaring Truth, that Goodness must be a *living* Thing; but, blinded with the empty Sounds of Words in Variety of Languages, are as content and happy *with a Religion of Nature delineated*, or a Book of *Axioms, Maxims, and Deductions*, mathematically placed one after another, as if you had really found the Tree of Life. Whereas, in Truth, all this is no better than the Reading a Lecture upon the Use of the Heart, Liver, and Lungs, to a dead Carcase: For the Life of Goodness can no more be raised, or brought into the Soul, by this Art of Reasoning, than Life can be brought into the Carcase, by a Discourse upon the Heart, Liver, and Lungs, made over it.

Oh! *Academicus*, forget your Scholarship, give up your Art and Criticism, be a plain Man, and then the first Rudiments of Sense may teach you, that there, and there only, can Goodness be, where it comes forth as a *Birth of Life*, and is the free natural Work and Fruit of *that* which lives within us. For till

Goodness thus comes from a *Life* within us, we have in Truth none at all. For Reason, with all its Doctrine, Discipline, and Rules, can only help us to be so good, so changed, and amended, as a wild Beast may be, that by Restraints and Methods is taught to put on a Sort of Tameness, though its wild Nature is all the Time only restrained, and in a Readiness to break forth again as Occasion shall offer.

Thus far the Masters of Morality and human Discipline may go; they may tame and reform the outward Man, clothe him with the Appearance of many Images of Virtue, which will, some or all of them, be put off, just as Time, Occasion, and Flesh and Blood, require it. For the Goodness of a living Creature must be its own Life; it must arise up in it as its own Love, or any Passion doth; just as the Fierceness of the Tiger, and the Meekness of the Lamb, are the Birth of their own Life. And if Goodness is not our *natural* Birth from our natural Parents, we must of all Necessity be born again from a Principle above Nature, or no Goodness can be living in us. Now since Goodness is a Life, we have a Twofold Proof, that no Goodness can be living in us, till we are born again of the *Word* and Spirit of God: For Nature, as well as Scripture, assures us, that God is originally the *One Good*, and the *One Life*; and therefore no good Life can possibly be in us, but by the Word, Life, and Spirit of God, having a Birth in us. And from this Birth alone it is, that the free genuine Works of Goodness flow forth with the Freedom of the Divine Life, wherewith the Spirit of God has made us free; loving and doing all manner of Good, merely for Goodness-sake; virtuous in all kind of Virtue, purely for Virtue-sake: Then we are the natural true Children of our heavenly Father, and do the Works of Heaven with a cheerful and willing Mind. Then it is, that we are good in the Manner as God is good, because it is his Goodness that is born in us; we are perfect as he is perfect, we love as he loves, are patient as he is patient, we give as he gives, we forgive as he forgives, and resist Evil only with Good as he does.

This, *Academicus*, is angelic Goodness; and is the Goodness of those who are born again of the *Word*, and become new Creatures in the Spirit of *Christ*. This Goodness our first Father lost, when he chose to have the Eyes of Flesh and Blood, and the Spirit of this World, opened in him; and therefore our Redeemer, who well knew what we had lost, and must have again, has taught us in our daily Prayer, to ask for angelic Goodness in these Words; *viz.*, 'Thy Kingdom come; thy Will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven.' But I have done, and I think you must have done, with your learned Scruple about the

Word *angelic*. And now, *Theophilus*, if you please, return to your Subject with *Humanus*.

Theophilus. Let me then tell you, *Humanus*, that I much approve of the Way that you intend to proceed in. You are come directly to the Truth and Heart of the Matter, and have hit upon the One only Method of putting *Deism* to a full Stand, by reducing Christianity to this One single great Point, which so evidently contains the whole Ground and Nature of it.

Now this One great Point consists of Two essential Parts; 1st, the Fall of Man from a Divine angelic Life, into an earthly, bestial, corruptible, miserable Life of this World. 2dly, The Redemption of Man, or his regaining his first angelic Perfection, by a new Birth of the Divine Nature, by the *Word* and Spirit of God. Stand steadily upon this true Christian Ground; and then you will not only stand safely yourself, but you will have left the Deist no Ground to stand upon. For here all the laboured Volumes of Infidelity, with which these last Ages have swarmed, are at once rendered useless, and cannot put so much as a little Finger into this Debate. Consult all, from *Hobbes* to the *Moral Philosopher*, and you consult in vain; their Works are as dead as themselves, and unable to give forth one Word against this Christianity. They had a much easier Task upon their Hands; for nothing can be easier than for Reason to object, and continue objecting, to the extraordinary Matters of the Old and New Testament. I do not mention this as an Accusation of the Deist, or to charge them with the crafty Contrivance of placing the Merits of the Cause where it is not. No, the Learning of the Christian World must bear the Blame of these fruitless Disputes: The Demonstrators of the truth and Reasonableness of Christianity have betrayed their own Cause, and left true Christianity unmentioned in their Defences of it. What a Reasonableness of Christianity have some great Names helped us to? Just as useful, and good to our fallen Souls, as the Reasonableness of consenting to the Death of *Pharaoh* and his Host in the *Red Sea*. But you, my Friend, being rightly converted to a Christianity that began before the Scriptures were written, and is as old as the Creation and Fall of Man, keep close to its true and real Ground; and, instead of showing the Reasonableness of believing a long History of Things, show the absolute Necessity of Man's dying to his present Life, in order to have a better from God. This is the Christianity that began with the Fall, and has been preached ever since to every Son of fallen Man, in every Corner of the World; and by the same Preacher that tells every Man, that he ought to be better than he is. For was not Man fallen from a better State than that he

is now in, he could no more be ashamed or offended at anything that his Nature prompts him to do, than the Ox is ashamed at breaking into a good Pasture. Every Man therefore, from the Beginning of the World, has had Christianity and the Gospel written and preached within him ; as it contains the Fall of Man, and his Want of being raised to a better State. But as we see, that the Truth and Reality of his Fall, and the Truth and Reality of his Redemption by a real Birth from above, can be lost, nay disowned, amongst those that are daily reading and expounding the Scriptures ; so it is no wonder that the same should have happened to those, who had no Scriptures to read. Justly therefore, *Humanus*, are Churches and Creeds, Doctrines above and contrary to Reason, Miracles of the Old and New Testament, and all historical Facts and Matters, which are so great an Harvest to the Deists, justly, I say, are they removed by you out of the Debate ; and the One great Point above-mentioned only insisted upon as the Whole of the Matter. For this One Point gained, all is gained ; and, till this Point is cleared up, all the rest is but a Debate about nothing.

For if Man is fallen from a Divine Life, no one need to be told, that he can only be redeemed or saved from his Fall by having the same Divine Life born in him again, or a Second time. Nothing therefore touches the Truth of the Debate betwixt the Christian and the Infidel, but that which proves with Certainty, that Man has, or has not lost a Divine Life.

If he is thus fallen, has died this Death to a Divine Life, then the Nature and Necessity of the Christian New-birth sufficiently proves itself. But if it can be proved, that he is not thus fallen, but stands in that State and Degree of Life in which God created him ; the Deists have reason enough to reject the Christian Scheme of Redemption.

Strange it is therefore beyond Expression, that every Man, whether Christian or Infidel, should not see, that here lies the Whole of the Matter ; or that any learned Defender of Christianity should think of beginning anywhere, or in anything, but where the Redemption itself begins ; or imagine there can be the least Ground to propose a Redemption to Man, till he shows *Why*, and from *What*, he is to be redeemed. Stranger is it still, if you consider, that Christians have nothing to excuse their wandering from this One great Point, since both the Testaments bear so open a Witness to it. ‘ In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die ;’ says the Old Testament. ‘ Except a Man be born again from above, of the Word and Spirit of God, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven ;’ says the New Testament.

Thus do these Two Testaments begin with the most open Declarations of these Two Things; *viz.*, The Death of Man to his First created Life: 2dly, His Redemption only and solely by a real Birth of the Divine Life, received again from above. What Excuse therefore can be made for those who read the Scripture, and yet overlook that very One Point; not only so plainly declared, but which, in itself, is the One only Ground and Foundation upon which all the Scripture stands? For had not Man died, neither *Moses*, nor the *Prophets*, had ever been in Being. For Man not fallen, but abiding in his first created Perfection of Life, had been as free from any outward Law, as the Light is from Darkness. The keeping his own Nature, had been the keeping, and doing, and seeing, and knowing all that God required of him. So that neither Law, nor Prophecy, has any Ground or Reason, but because Man is dead to his first Life.

But seeing Man is dead to his first Life, and living only in an earthly bestial World, under the Power and Slavery of the evil Motions and Tempers of gross Flesh and Blood; therefore *Moses* must come with his Law, to set Sin before him, and give him Precepts of resisting and dying to all the Lusts of this new earthly Life, which he is fallen into: Therefore, to seek for any other Learning in or from *Moses*, than that of learning to resist and die to the Tempers and Passions of this earthly Life, is knowing nothing right of *Moses*, nor of ourselves.

Next after *Moses* came the *Prophets*, or the Spirit of Prophecy, with its *far-seeing Sight*, and Declaration of Glories to come. Now the Ground of Prophecy is this, it is because Man is to be *restored* to his first glorious State; and therefore the Spirit of Prophecy comes forth from God to awaken *Hope* and *Faith*, Expectation and Desire in Man; because these are the only Powers that can draw him out of the Mire of the earthly Life, in which he sticks, and carry him up to his first heavenly State again. Nothing therefore is to be sought for in or from the *Prophets*, but the Increase of our Hope, Faith, and Desire of the *New Birth* of that glorious Life which we have lost, and they foretold was to be had again.

Thus, my Friend, you see the Importance of this One Point; *Moses* and the *Prophets* have no Ground or Reason but this, that Man has lost his Divine Life; and that this same Divine Life is to be born again in him. Now seeing this is the Ground and Reason of the Scriptures, therefore is it the one unerring Key to the right Use of them. They have only this one Intent, to make Man know, resist, and abhor the Working of his fallen earthly Nature; and to turn the Faith, Hope, and longing Desire of his Heart to God: And therefore we are only to read them with this

View, and to learn this one Lesson from them. Whatever therefore occurs, that cannot be turned to this general End, but relates only to some temporal, occasional, or private Matter, is of no more Importance to us, than the Cloak and Parchments which St. *Paul* speaks of.

How many hundred Barns must there be, to hold all the learned Volumes, that had never been written, had Man looked upon the Scriptures as having no other View or End, but to teach him to renounce the Tempers of his fallen earthly Nature, and live unto God in Faith and Prayer; to be born again of the Divine Nature! But this one End being overlooked by learned Reason, *Hebrew* and *Syriac*, *Arabic*, *Greek*, and *Latin*, have been called in, to torture the Scriptures into a Chaos of confused Opinions, that has covered the Christian World with Darkness, and lost the only Good that was to be had from the written Word of God. Whereas, standing upon the Ground on which you stand, with only this one great Point at Heart, the Scriptures are a plain, easy, and certain Instruction; and no honest unlearned Heart stands in need of any Commentator, to help him to all the Benefit that can be had from Scripture, or secure him from any hurtful Error.

Humanus. Indeed, *Theophilus*, my own Experience can bear a full Testimony to the Truth of all that you have said. For upon my reading now the New Testament, with this Key in my Hand; *viz.*, of Man thus fallen, and thus called to a new Birth from Heaven; everything I read in it has Spirit and Life, and overflows my Soul with such an Unction, and Sensibility of sweet Doctrine, as I am not able to express. For whilst I consider it only as written to drive all earthly Tempers and Passions out of the Soul, and inflame the Heart with Love and Desire of the *Grace*, the *Spirit*, the *Light* and *Life* of the heavenly Nature, I can say, as the *Jewish* Officers did, Never Man spoke like *Christ* and his Apostles.

Why was the Son of God made Man? It was because Man was to be made again a Divine Creature. Why did Man want such a Saviour? It was because he was become earthly, mortal, gross Flesh and Blood. Now take *Christ* in this Light, and consider Man in this State, and then all that is said in the Gospel stands in the fullest Light.

Thus, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will refresh you.' How poor, how mean, and uncertain a Sense is there in this, till you know, that Man has lost his Divine Nature, and is fallen into a World that is all *Labour*, *Burden*, and *Misery*! But as soon as this is known, then how easy, how plain, is the full and highest Sense of these Words,

'Come unto me, all that labour, are weary and heavy laden, and 'I will refresh you!'—I will bring to Life that first happy State which you have lost. This is the *Note*, the *Paraphrase*, the *Expositor*, the *Key* to the true Sense of every Doctrine of *Christ*; which, though variously expressed to awaken the Heart, is only one and the same Thing. Thus, 'Blessed are they that mourn, 'for they shall be comforted.' But why so? Because he that is troubled at the Corruption, Vanity, and Impurity of his fallen earthly State, has the Comfort of the heavenly Life ready for him. Again, 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after 'Righteousness, for they shall be filled.' How plain and great is the Sense here, as soon as we know, that *Christ* is our Righteousness: and that the righteous Life of *Christ* in the Soul, is that Life which our first Father lost! Therefore, to hunger and thirst after this Righteousness, is the one Way to be filled with that Divine Life, that we had lost. Again, 'If any Man thirst, let 'him come unto me and drink: And out of his Belly shall flow 'Rivers of living Water.' What can the *Latin* or *Greek* Critic do here? Nothing at all. He will only try to make some Excuse for the Strangeness of the Phrase. But when these Words are read by one who knows that he and all Mankind, have lost the Divine Nature, he tastes and feels the glad Tidings which they bring; and is in Love with these sweet Sounds, which promise such an overflowing Return of Heaven into his Soul. Again, 'I beseech you,' says the Apostle, 'as Strangers and Pilgrims, 'abstain from fleshly Lusts, which war against the Soul,' &c. The *Critic* looks into his Books, to see how *Latin* and *Greek* Authors have used the Words *Stranger* and *Pilgrim*, and so some Sense or other is given to the Apostle; but the Christian, who knows that Man, wandering out of Paradise, a Colony of Heaven, was taken Captive by the *Stars* and *Elements*, to live in Labour and Toil, in Sickness and Pain, in Hunger and Thirst, in Heat and Cold, amongst the Beasts of the Field; where evil Spirits, like roaring Lions, seek to devour him; he only knows in what Truth and Reality Man is a poor Stranger, and distressed Pilgrim upon Earth. Again, 'To the Poor,' saith *Christ*, 'the Gospel is 'preached.' The Critic only considers the several kinds of worldly Poverty. But the Christian, who knows that the real great Poverty of Man consists in his having lost the Riches and Greatness of his first Life, knows, that to this poor Man the Gospel is preached, because he only, who is sensible in this Poverty, can hear and receive it. For to Man, insensible of his fallen State, the glad Tidings of the Gospel are but like News from *Fairy Land*; and the Cross of *Christ* can only be a Stumbling-block and Foolishness to him, whether he be a Christian, a *Jew*, or a

Greek. Thus does it appear, that all the Doctrines and Sayings of *Christ* and his Apostles are full of a comfortable, Divine, and exalted Sense, or mere empty Words, just as the Fall of Man from a Divine Life, is either owned or disowned. But I have done.

Theophilus. Thus far then, *Humanus*, we are agreed, that the Fall of Man into the Life and State of this World, is the whole Ground of his Redemption; and that a real Birth of *Christ* in the Soul, is the whole Nature of it. Let me now only ask you, How you would endeavour to convince a Man of his fallen State?

Humanus. I would not begin with the Account that *Moses* gives of it, for several Reasons; but chiefly for these Two: *First*, Because the *Fall* is not an *historical* Matter; nor would a mere historical Knowledge of it be of any Use, or do any real Good to him. *Secondly*, Because *Moses's* Account is not the Proof of the Fall, and therefore not to be appealed to as such.

Moses is the first Historian of *natural Death*, and has recorded the Death of the First Man, and of many others who were born of him: But the *Proof* that Man is *mortal*, lies not in *Moses's* History of the Death of the First Man, but in the known Nature of Man, and the World from which he has his Life. Again, we do not want *Moses* to assure us, that there was a First Man; that he had something from *Heaven*, and something from the *Earth* in him; and must have come into the World in another Manner than all those who have descended from him. For every Man is himself the infallible Proof of this; *Moses* is only the Historian that has recorded the *When*, and *Where*, and *How* this First Man came into the World, and what was his Name. But the *Proof* and *Certainty* of the Fact, that such a First Man there must have been, lies not in *Moses's* Account, but stands proved to every Man from his own Nature and State in this World.

Thus it is with the *Fall*; we have no more Occasion to go to *Moses*, to prove that Man and the World are in a fallen State, than to prove that Man is a poor, miserable, weak, vain, distressed, corrupt, depraved, selfish, self-tormenting, perishing Creature; and that the World is a sad Mixture of false Goods, and real Evils; a mere Scene of all Sorts of Trials, Vexations, and Miseries; all arising from the Frame, and Nature, and Condition both of Man and the World. This is the full infallible Proof of the Fall of Man; which is not a Thing learnt from any History, but shows itself everywhere, and every Day, with such Clearness as we see the Sun. *Moses* is not the Prover of the Fact, that Man is fallen; but the Recorder of the *When* and *How*, and the *Manner* in which the Fall hath happened.

My First Attempt therefore, upon any Man, to convince him of the Fall, as the Ground of the Redemption, should be an Attempt to do that for him, which Affliction, Disappointments, Sickness, Pain, and the Approach of Death, have a natural Tendency to do; *viz.*, to convince him of the Vanity, Poverty, and Misery of his Life and Condition in this World. For as this is the true Proof of the fallen State of Man, so Man can only be convinced of it, by having this Proof truly set before him. I would therefore appeal at first to nothing but his own Nature and Condition in the World; and show him how unreasonable, nay, impossible it is, that a God, who has nothing in himself but infinite Goodness and infinite Happiness, should bring forth a Race of intelligent Creatures, that have neither natural Goodness, nor natural Happiness. The inspired Saints of God say thus, 'Man that is born of a Woman hath but a short Time to live, and is full of Misery.' Again, 'Man walketh in a vain Shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain.' Now if what is here truly said of Mankind, could be truly said of any Order of the Beasts and Animals of the Field, who could defend the Goodness of God in bringing such Creatures into such a State of Life? Now though the Deist rejects the Scriptures, considered as a Volume of Divine Revelation, yet everything that he outwardly sees, and inwardly feels, demonstrates this *capital Truth* of Scripture, that Man is in this poor and miserable State of Life. And therefore, everything that we know of God, and everything that we know of Man, is a daily irresistible Proof, that Man is in a fallen State. Look at the human Infant just come out of the Womb, you can hardly bear the Sight; it is a Picture of such Deformity, Nakedness, Weakness, and helpless Distress, as is not to be seen amongst the home-born Animals of this World: The *Chicken* has its Birth from no Sin, and therefore it comes forth in Beauty; it runs and pecks as soon as its Shell is broken; The *Pig* and the *Calf* go both to play, as soon as the Dam is delivered of them; they are pleased with themselves, and please the Eye that beholds their frolic State and beauteous Clothing; whilst the new-born Babe of a Woman, that is to have an upright Form, that is to view the Heavens, and worship the God that made them, lies for Months in gross Ignorance, Weakness, and Impurity; as sad a Spectacle when he first begins to breathe the Life of this World, as when in the Agonies of Death he breathes his last.

What is all this, but the strongest Proof, that Man is the only Creature that belongs not to this World, but is fallen into it through Sin? And therefore his Birth, in such Distress, bears all these Marks of Shame and Weakness. Had he been originally

of this World, it is necessary to suppose, that this World had done the highest Honour to its highest Creature; and that he had begun his Life in greater Perfection than any other Animal, and brought with him a more beautiful Clothing than the finest Lilies of the Field have. But, to go on: When the human Infant is set upon his Legs, and begins to act for himself, he soon becomes a more pitiable Object than when crying in the Cradle. The Strength of his Life is a mere Strength of wild Passions; his Reason is Craft, and selfish Subtlety; he loves and hates only as Flesh and Blood prompt him, Jails and Gibbets cannot keep him from Theft and Murder. If he is rich, he is tormented with Pride and Ambition; if poor, with Murmuring and Discontent: Be he which he will, sooner or later, disordered Passions, disappointed Lusts, fruitless Labour, Pains and Sickness, will tear him from this World in such *Travail* as his Mother felt, when she brought forth the sinful Animal.

Now all this Evil and Misery, are purely the natural and necessary Effects of his Birth in the bestial Flesh and Blood of this World, and there is nothing in his *natural* State that can put a Stop to it; he must be evil and miserable *so long* as he has *only* the Life of this World in him. Therefore the absolute Certainty of the Fall, and the absolute Necessity of a New Birth, are Truths, independently of Scripture, plain to a Demonstration. Thus, God is in himself infinite Goodness, and infinite Happiness; but Man, in his present earthly Birth and Life, can neither have Goodness or Happiness; therefore his present State of Life could not be brought forth by a God who is all Goodness and Happiness. Thus every Man, that believes in a Creator infinitely perfect, is under a Necessity of believing the whole Ground of Christian Redemption, namely, that Man hath some way or other lost that Perfection of Life, which he had at first from his Creator.

But the Christian has yet an additional Proof of this Matter, because the Scriptures, which with him are infallible, so frequently and openly bear Witness to it.

Thus, 'Let us make Man in our Image, according to our Likeness.' How great, how Divine, is this Beginning of Man? How can there be any Evil or Misery, any Vanity or Weakness, in a Creature so brought forth? But now what is become of this Man? For if you look at Man just coming out of the Womb, the pitiable Object above described, what can be so absurd, as to call this Birth, his Creation in the Likeness and after the Image of God? Now what is said of the first Man, is not spoken of one Person, but of the human Nature; for the first Man, was only the first Instance of that which Mankind were to

be. He had no Perfection peculiar to himself, but that of being the first Man; and had he stood, all that came from him, had come to Life as he did, in the same Strength and Glory of Perfection, and not been born of a bestial Womb, like the wild Ass's Colt. Again, set the following Text against *Moses's* Perfection of the first Image of God, 'Man that is born of a Woman hath 'but a short time to live, and is full of Misery.'

Is not this a full Proof, that the first created Life of Man is quite dead, and that an earthly Life of Misery is risen up instead of it? Again, the Apostle saith, 'The natural Man knoweth 'not the Things of God; they are Foolishness unto him.' Can this natural Man, the Man of earthly Flesh and Blood, that can have no Acquaintance with, or Knowledge of God, to whom the *Things of God are Foolishness*; can this be the Man first created in the Image and Likeness of God? What can be more absurd than such a Thought? Or what Excuse can be made for that Learning, which cannot see from so plain a Scripture, that human Nature, *now*, is not that human Nature, which it was at first created; but is dead to that first Life, which it had in the Image and Likeness of God, or the Things of God could not possibly be *Foolishness* to it? But I will end this Matter with these borrowed Words, 'We were no more created to be in the 'Sorrows, Burdens, and Anguish of an *earthly Life*, than the 'Angels were created to be in the Wrath and Darkness of Hell. 'It is as contrary to the Will and Goodness of God towards us, 'that we are out of Paradise, as it is contrary to the Designs and 'Goodness of God towards the Angels, and some of them are 'out of Heaven, Prisoners of Darkness.

'The Grossness, Impurity, Sickness, Pain and Corruption of 'our Bodies, is brought upon us by ourselves, in the same manner, 'as the hideous, serpentine Forms of the Devils are brought 'upon them. How absurd, and even blasphemous would it be, 'to say with the Scripture and the Church, *That we are the 'Children of Wrath, and born in Sin*, if we had that Nature, 'which God at first gave us? What a reproach upon God, to 'say, that this World is a Valley of Misery, a Shadow of 'Death, full of Disorders, Snares, Evils, and Temptations, if this 'was an original Creation, or that State of Things for which God 'created us? Is it not as consistent with the Goodness and 'Perfection of God, to speak of the Misery and Disorder that 'unfallen holy Angels find above, and of the Vanity, Emptiness, 'and Sorrow of their heavenly State, as to speak of the Misery 'of Men, and the Sorrows of this World, if Men and the World 'were in that Order, in which God at first had placed them? 'If God could make any Place poor and vain, and create any

‘ Beings into a State of Vanity and Vexation of Spirit, he might ‘ do so in all Places, and to all Beings.’*

Theophilus. You have put the Fall, *Humanus*, upon its right Proof, and shown great Judgment in your intended Method of converting anyone to the Belief of it. You have set the whole Matter in so just a Light, that I have nothing that I would add to it.

Humanus. Give me leave, Gentlemen, just to put in a Word or two concerning another plain Indication, that Man has lost that Life and Nature, in which he was first created. *Reason* has been my God, and is the vain Idol of modern Deism, and modern Christianity; and yet human *Reason* has no higher a Birth, than human *Ignorance*, *Infirmity*, and *Mortality*; they all began together; they are inseparable; they generate and are generated from one another; they are the Life of each other; and they must live and die together, and all bear the same Witness to the fallen State of Man. For no Creature can come from the Hands of God into a State of any Ignorance of anything, that is fit and proper to be known by it. This is as impossible, as for God to have an envious, evil Will. Now all right and natural Knowledge, in whatever Creature it is, is *sensible*, *intuitive*, and *its own Evidence*. But *Opinion*, *Reasoning*, or *Doubting* (for they are all but one Thing) can only *then* begin, when the Creature has lost its first right and natural State, and is got *somewhere*, and become *somewhat*, that it cannot tell what to make of. Then begins *Doubting*, from thence *Reasoning*, from thence *Debating*; and this is the high Birth of our magnified Reason, as nobly born, as *Groping* is, which has its Beginning in and from Darkness, or the Loss of Light. Hence we have a full Proof, that Man has lost his first natural State in which God created him. For Reasoning, Doubt, and Perplexity in any Creature, is the Effect of some Fall, or Departure from its first State of Nature, and shows, that it wants, and is seeking, something that its Nature would have, but knows not how to come at it. The *Beasts* seek not after Truth; a plain Proof, that it has no Relation to them; *has* no Suitableness to their Nature, nor ever belonged to them. Man is in Quest of it, in Perplexity about it, cannot come at it; takes Lies to be Truth, and Truth to be Lies; a plain Proof, both that he has it not, and yet *has* had it, was created in it, and for it; for nothing can seek for anything, but that which is lost, and is wanted; nor could it form the least Idea of it, but because it has belonged to it, and ought to be his.

* *Serious Answer to Dr. Trapp, on the Sin, &c., of being Righteous over-much.*

The Beasts have no Ignorance of anything, that concerns them; but have all the sensible, intuitive Knowledge of every thing that is the Good of their Nature. But man left to his Reason, is all over Ignorance, Doubt, Conjecture, and Perplexity in Matters of the highest Moment, about what he himself is, what is his chief Good, where he is to seek it, and how to obtain it. For to ask your Reason, how God is your God, how you are in him and from him, what he is in himself, and what he is in you, is but like asking your Hands to feel out the *Thickness*, or the *Thinness*, of the Light. To ask your Reason, whether the Soul of Man is immortal in its Nature, is to as good Purpose, is going no further out of the Way, than if you were to ask your *Eyes* to show you, where *Extension* begins, and where it ends. To ask your Reason, whether Man has anything of God, or the Divine Nature in him, is just as suitable to the Nature and Power of your Reason, as if you were to ask your *Nose*, whether this or that sweet, aromatic Smell in the Garden, has any *heavenly Power* mixed with, and opening itself in it.

Reason therefore, is so far from being able to help Man to that Knowledge, which his Nature and Condition want, that it can only help his Ignorance to increase and fructify in Doubts, Fictions, and absurd Debates. And the Thing cannot be otherwise; *Man* must *walk in a vain Shadow*, so long as Reason is his Oracle. For nothing can act suitably to Nature, find its true State in Nature, or answer the End of its Creation by the *Power* of Reason; because Reason is not the *Life*, the *Power*, or Former of Nature; and therefore has no more Power over Nature, than over the Powers and Principles of Vegetation, either in the Body of Man, or any other Creature. He therefore who turns to his Reason, as the true Power and Light of his Nature, betrays the same Ignorance of the whole Nature, Power, and Office of Reason, as if he were to try to smell with his *Eyes*, or see with his *Nose*. For as each of these Senses has only its *one Work* or Power which it cannot alter, or exceed; so Reason has only its *one Work* or Power, which it cannot alter, or exceed; and that one Work is, to be a bare Observer and Comparer of Things that manifest themselves to it by the Senses. This is as much its one only Power, as Seeing is the only Power of the *Eyes*. When therefore Reason takes upon it to determine on Things not manifested to it by the Senses, as to judge about a Divine new Birth, a Divine Faith; or how the Soul wants, or does not want God, &c., it is then as much out of its Place and Office, as the Eye that takes upon it to smell; and its true Name and Nature is, *Whim*, *Humour*, *Caprice*, *Conjecture*, *Opinion*, *Fancy*, and every other Species of Blindness, and Passion.

Now suppose a Man to come thus into the World, with this chief Difference from other Creatures; that he is at a Loss to find out what he is, how he is to live, and what he is to seek, as his chief Happiness; what he is to own of a God, of Providence, Religion, &c. Suppose him to have Faculties that put him upon this Search, and no Faculties, that can satisfy his Inquiry; and what can you suppose more miserable to himself, or more unworthy of a good Creator? Therefore, if you will not suppose a God, that has been good to all Creatures, and given every Animal its proper Light of Nature, except Man, you must be forced to own, that Man has certainly lost the true Light and Perfection of his Nature, which God at first gave him.

But I believe *Academicus* wants to say something, and therefore I have done.

Academicus. I was only going to say, that every Attribute of God, everything that Sense and Reason force us to see, and know, and feel, both of ourselves, and the World, join with the Letter and Spirit of all Scripture in attesting, that Man has certainly had a Divine Life, to which he has certainly died. But yet I must own it is very difficult to conceive, how a Creature brought forth in so high Perfection, in such Enjoyment of the Life, Light, and Spirit of God, could either deceive himself, or be deceived by another.

Theophilus. All that we want to know, my Friend, is the Certainty of the Fact, and this is of the greatest Moment to us: For this is it, that takes us from the Herd of earthly Animals, and lays the Foundation of Religion, and Divine Virtue. For had not a Divine Life at *first* been in us, we should be *now* at the same Distance from all true Virtue and Goodness, and as incapable of forming the least Thought or Desire of it, as other Animals; and should have nothing to do, but to look to ourselves, live to our earthly Nature, and make the most of this World. For this is the only Wisdom and Goodness, that an earthly Nature is capable of, whether it be a Man, or a Fox. The Certainty therefore of the Fact, of our first Divine Birth, is all; nothing more need be inquired after. For on this Ground stands all our Comfort; hence it is, that, in Faith and Hope, we can look up to God as our Father, to Heaven as our native Country, and have the Honour to be accounted only as Strangers and Pilgrims upon Earth.

But however, to remove your Difficulty, I shall give you a little Sketch of the Possibility of Man's Falling, although created in the Perfection above-mentioned.

Now supposing God to have brought a new intelligent Creature into a new World, all the Attributes of God oblige us to suppose

this Creature to be created in a perfect State both inwardly and outwardly. As intelligent, it must partake of the Divine Understanding; as living, it must have a Degree of the Divine Life in it; as good, it must have a Birth of the Divine Goodness in it; as an Offspring of Divine Love, it must have a Divine Happiness, for the Enjoyment of which the Love of God created it. Now there is but *one possible* Way for this intelligent Creature, thus endowed, to fall from, or lose the Happiness of its first created State. It cannot knowingly choose Misery, or the loss of its Happiness: Therefore it can only fall by *such* an Ignorance, or *Power* of falling, as is consistent with its perfect State. Now this Power lay wholly in the *Newness* of its Life: It only *began* to find itself an intelligent Being; and yet had a Power of Looking with the Eyes of its Understanding either inwards, or outwards; upwards, or downwards. It had a Power of acquiescing and rejoicing in *that*, which it found itself to be, and adoring that Power and Goodness which had brought it into the Possession of such a Nature: And it had a Power of *wandering* into Conjectures, and Reasons about *that*, which it *was not*. Now as a free, intelligent Creature, it could not be without this Power of thus turning its intelligent Eye; and yet as a beginning Creature that had no *Experience*, this Power could not be free from a *Possibility* of wandering; and therefore its Power of wandering was not a Defect, but a necessary Part of its first perfect State. Now in this *Possibility* of wandering with its intelligent Eye, looking where it ought not, and entering into Conjectures about *that*, which *it was not*, may be clearly seen the Possibility of its falling from a State of high Perfection.

This is the one only possible Way for a good, intelligent, *new* Creature, to lose its Happiness. And I think it may justly be affirmed, that the *Mosaic* Account of the Fall of Man is exactly this very Case; namely, how the Eye of his *new unexperienced* Understanding, beginning to cast a wandering Look into *that* which he *was not*, was by an unsuspected *Subtlety*, or Serpent, drawn into a *Reasoning* and Conjecturing about a certain *Good* and *Evil*, which were no Part of his own created State.

Which Inquiry, being given into, ended in the real Knowledge of this *Good* and *Evil*, the Sensibility of which became an immediate Death to his first Divine Life, destroyed the angelic Image in the Likeness of God, and set a gross, earthly, naked, ashamed, frightened, wretched Animal of bestial Flesh and Blood in its Place, the only Animal to which this new Knowledge of Good and Evil could belong.

Supposing therefore the Fall of Man, which is a Fact attested, and proved by every Thing we know of God, Ourselves, and

the World ; the *Mosaic* Account of it has every Mark of Truth, Sobriety, and Justness, as being a plain and easy Description of the one only Way, by which a Creature so endowed could change or lose its first happy State.

Academicus. Truly, *Theophilus*, you have given a most natural and full Solution of my Difficulty, by which, I suppose, you mean as well to explain the Fall of Angels, as of Men. But, Sir, if that Pride, to which their Fall is charged, must have stolen upon them, in that same *unsuspected Way*, in which the Longing after the Tree of Good and Evil insinuated itself into Man ; *viz.*, from a wandering Look into *that*, which they were not, occasioned by the *Newness* of their untried Life, in which they had but just began to be ; suffer me then, to ask, Why the fallen Angels were not, at first, the immediate Objects of Divine Mercy and Goodness ? Why they are to be for ever Prisoners of a never-ending Hell ? Or, are you of Opinion, that Angels, as well as Men, will be at last brought back to their first State ?

Theophilus. Your Questions, *Academicus*, seem to have too much of Curiosity in them : But, as I hope you will not give way to this Temper, so I will, for once, comply with your Demands.

The *Fall* of Angels must be supposed to have been as soon after their Creation, as that of *Adam*. Had they stood any time in their new-created State, they had been in one and the same impossibility of Falling, as the Angels that are now in Heaven. For no pure, intelligent, good, and holy created Being, can possibly lose this Divine State of Perfection, but through the first Use of its untried State and Powers. The Manner of *Adam's* falling into the Life of this World, plainly shows the Manner how the Angels fell into Hell, namely, at first only by looking and conjecturing with their intelligent Eye into *that*, which they were not, which was not opened in them, but was hid in God. This Looking went on till it became a Lust and strong Longing after that *somewhat* ; just as it had done in *Adam*, who so gazed upon the earthly Good and Evil, till it opened itself in him. *Adam* looked only at that which was *Creaturely*, and in a *Life below* him ; and therefore only that *lower, creaturely, bestial* Life, was brought forth in him. But the Angel turning his wandering Look into that *Height* and *Depth* which was *not Creaturely*, but hid in God ; namely, into the *Might* and *Strength* of Eternity, that he might know *how* the creaturely Life was *kindled* by it ; and thinking himself by his exalted Nature, to be as near to this *great Power*, and as capable of *entering* into it, as *Adam* thought himself near to, and capable of knowing the Good and Evil of the earthly Life ; and as *Adam* thought to be like God in this

new Knowledge, so the Angels imagined to be like God, could he enter into *this Knowledge*, how the *Might* of God kindled the creaturely Life, for then he himself should have the Power of creating or kindling the creaturely Life; and as *Adam's* Imagination brought forth a Lust and longing, which could not be stopped, till the earthly Knowledge, and earthly Life, had opened itself in him; so the Angel's Imagination begot such a *Lust* and *Longing* to know the *Ground* and *Original* of Life, as would not be stopped till the *Ground* and *Original* of Life, namely, that *Depth of Darkness and Fire*, in and from which every creaturely Life must begin, was totally opened in him, and he as much swallowed up by Hell, as *Adam* was by the earthly Life. Thus you may see, how the same aspiring Imagination (but with regard to different Matters) rising in the same Manner, and from the same Cause in both these Creatures, and working itself up into a *Lust* and *Longing*, brought the one from Heaven into Hell, and the other from Paradise into a bestial World.

Now as the Lust of *Adam*, when it had obtained its Desire, opened all the Properties and Tempers of the bestial Life in him; so the Lust of the Angel, when it got what it wanted, *viz.*, the *Ground* and *Original* of the creaturely Life, which is *Darkness* and *Fire*; immediately opened all the dreadful Properties of Darkness and Fire in him, which at once swallowed up or extinguished the angelic Nature. Hence Wrath, Hatred, Pride, Envy, Malice, and every Enmity to Light and Love, are the *only* Life of the fallen Angel; and he can will and act nothing else, but as these Properties of Darkness and Fire drive him.

To ask therefore, Why the fallen Angels continue in their State, is to ask, why *Darkness* is not made to be *Light*? For the *Root* and *Ground* of Nature is *unchangeable*; it keeps its *own Nature*, or it could not be the *Ground*; it must stand always in its *own Place*, and be only the *Ground* and *Root*; it cannot rise higher than the *Root*, no more than the *Root* of the Tree can be its *Branches* and *Fruit*. The Angels, therefore, being fallen into the *Ground* and *Root* of Nature, have only the working Life of the *Ground* and *Root* of Nature in them; and therefore seem to be as *unchangeable*, and incapable of having any other, as the *Root* itself is.

To ask therefore, why the fallen Angels were not helped by the Mercy and Goodness of God, as fallen Man was; is like asking, why the refreshing Dew of Heaven does not do that to *Flint*, which is does to the vegetable Plant? For as the Nature of the *Flint* is too hard, and too much compacted, to receive any Alteration from the sweet Softness of refreshing Water; so the fallen Angel, like the *Flint*, being shut up in the wrathful Working of

its own hard Darkness and Fire, the Goodness of God can have no Entrance into it.

For what are we to understand by the *Mercy* and *Goodness* of God? His *Mercy* is his *Patience*. And his *Goodness*, is his *Light*, and *Word*, and *Holy Spirit*. Now every Creature has the Benefit of Divine *Patience*; but no Creature can have his *Goodness*, but that which is capable of receiving his *Light*, and *Holy Spirit*.

And his *Light*, and *Holy Spirit*, cannot enter into a Creature, as an external, additional Thing, that may be given to it, whether it will, or not, but must be brought forth as a *Birth* in it. For the *Light*, and *Spirit* of God, can be nowhere, but as a *Birth*, whether it be in God, or the Creature. And therefore the *Goodness* of God can be imparted to no Creature, but that which is capable of a *Birth* of the *Light* and *Spirit* of God, or, in the Words of Scripture, unless it be *born of the Word and Spirit of God*.

This therefore you may rest upon, as a certain Truth, that the *one only* Reason, why the fallen Angels have as *yet* had nothing of the *Spirit* or *Light* of God breathed into, or born in them, is, because they are as *yet* utterly incapable of such a *Birth*, or of being helped by the Divine *Goodness*. For as *Flame* cannot communicate itself to *Flint*, nor the *Spirit* of God to a *Beast*; because the *Flint* stands in the utmost *Contrariety* to *Flame*, and the *Beast* in a total *Incapacity* of *Holiness*; so the fallen Angel is in its working *Life* altogether incapable of receiving the *Spirit* and *Life* of God into it. Were it not thus, Angels had been helped, as early as *Man*: For the *Goodness*, or the *Light* and *Spirit* of God, loses no *Time*, but stands always in the same *Fulness* of *Communication* of itself to every Creature, that is capable of receiving it.

And therefore it is, that fallen *Man* was immediately helped, because he fell only into earthly *Flesh* and *Blood*, in which the *Light* of this *World* is kindled, which *Light* has something of *Heaven* in it, and was kindled by the *Light* of *Heaven*.

And therefore the *Goodness* of God, or his *Light* and *holy Spirit*, could come to *Man's* Assistance in the *Light of his Life*, and therein begin a *Covenant* of *Redemption* with him. For in this *Light* of his *Life*, which is a *Ray* of *Heaven*, the *inspoken Word* in *Paradise* could enter, and have *Communion* with it, and make itself to be a *Beginning* of *Salvation* to all those, who by *Faith* and *Hope* would lay hold of it, and endeavour after a new *Birth* from it. Thus stands the *Ground* and *Reason* why *Men*, and not *Angels*, were immediately helped at their *Fall*.

As to your last Question, whether I believe the final *Restora-*

tion of all the fallen Angels? I shall only say, that neither ancient nor modern Writers, on either Side of the Question, have touched the true Merits of the Cause, or spoken to that Point, on which the Decision of the Matter wholly rests.

For it can neither be sufficiently affirmed, nor sufficiently denied, by any Arguments drawn either from the Divine Attributes, or Texts of Scripture; for they cannot come up to the Point in Question. But the true Ground and Merit of the Cause, lies solely in the *Possibility* of the Thing, which no one has attempted to prove, nor perhaps is anyone able to do it; namely, to show from a true Ground, that the diabolical Nature is possible to be altered. Darkness can by no Omnipotence be made to be Light; it can only be suppressed, or overcome by it, or forced to be hid under it, as Heaven hides or overcomes Hell; but still the Darkness has its first Nature, never to be changed.

Now if anyone can show, that the Devils are not *essentially* evil, as Darkness is essentially dark, but have only such an *accidental* Difference from Goodness, as *Ice* has from Water, or a Flint from transparent Glass; then their Restoration is possible, and they will infallibly have all their Evil removed out of them by the Goodness of God.

But unless it could be shown from a true Ground in Nature, that the fallen Angels must have something of the heavenly Life in them, though shut up in a thousand times harder Death, than Fire is in the dark Flint, no Length of Time, or anything else, can produce any Alteration, or Cessation of their evil Nature.

For Time cannot alter the Nature or Essence of Things; it only suffers that to come to pass which is possible, and consistent with the Nature of Things. No Length of Time can make a *Circle* to have, or give forth, the Properties of a *right Line*.

Now if the fallen Angels have nothing heavenly in them, but stand in as full a Contrariety to all that is heavenly, as the Circle does to the Properties of the *right Line*; then Goodness is as impossible to be ever awakened in them, as in a Beast. The Beast must always be what it was at first; and for this Reason, because nothing but the bestial Nature is in it: If therefore the fallen Angel is totally hellish, as the Beast is bestial, it must always be what it is.

But we have launched far enough in a Deep that does not belong unto us; and which cannot be sufficiently affirmed, or denied, but from the known Possibility, or the known Impossibility of the Thing, which does not yet appear. If it is possible, I am heartily glad of it; and am also sure enough, that it will then come to pass in its own Time. For if he could not be thought to be a good Man, who did not do all that he could to make Sinners

become holy and happy in Goodness, we may be sure enough that the boundless Goodness of God, will set no Bounds to itself, but remove every Misery from every Creature that is capable of it. But let me now return to *Humanus*, and ask him, That supposing he could not convince a Man of the Certainty of his fallen State, how he would further proceed with him.

Humanas. Truly, *Theophilus*, I would proceed no further at all; and for this good Reason, Because I should then have nothing to proceed upon. Did I certainly know of an infallible Remedy for every Disorder of the Eyes, only to be had by going to *China* for it, I should not attempt to persuade a Man, who believed his Eyes to be sound and good, to leave all that he had, and go to *China* for this infallible Remedy for bad Eyes.

Now to press a Man to deny himself, and to leave all that he hath in the Enjoyments of Flesh and Blood, in order to be reconciled to God, who believes himself to be in the *same good* State, in which God created him, seems to be as wild a Project, as to desire him who is well pleased with the Goodness of his Sight, to go to the *Indies* to be helped to see.

And indeed, I very well know, from former Experience, that all Discourses about the Reasonableness of Christianity, the Doctrine of the Cross, the exceeding Love of God in giving so great a Saviour, with many more Things of the Like Nature, were mere empty Sounds, heard with the greatest Indifference, and incapable of raising the least Seriousness in me, merely because I had not the least Notion or Suspicion of the Truth and Greatness of my fallen State, and therefore was not the Man who had any Fitness to be affected with these Matters. And thence it was that *Christ* said, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you'; as plain as if he said, No one else can come to me, nor anyone else be refreshed by me.

Here therefore, in my humble Opinion, should all *begin*, who would propagate Christianity, or make true Converts to it, and *here stop*, as *Christ* did. It is only the weary and heavy laden, that are fitted to be Converts, or refreshed; and therefore we can no way help a Man to be a Christian, or fit him to be refreshed by *Christ*, but by bringing him into a full Sensibility of the Evil, and Burden, and Vanity of his natural State. And if he cannot be made sensible of this, we are to leave him to himself in his natural State, till some good Providence awakens him out of it; and not make Proposals to him of the Reasonableness of believing the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the Necessity of his Sufferings and Death, &c., for this Method is full as absurd, as to enter into solemn Debate

with a confessed Atheist, about the Reasonableness of worshipping God in Spirit and Truth ; for, as the Existence of a God is the only Ground of proving that he ought to be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth, so the Certainty and belief of our fallen State, is the only Ground for showing the Reasonableness of the Mysteries of Redemption. And he that disowns the fall of Man from a Divine Life, has all the same Reasons for rejecting the Mysteries of our Salvation, as the Atheist has to reject the Doctrines of a spiritual Worship of God. Therefore, to expose the Mysteries of our Salvation, to the Wrangle of a Debate with an Unbeliever of the Fall of Man, which Mysteries have no other Ground to stand upon, is not only helping him to an easy Triumph over you, but is the most likely Method to prevent his ever being a Christian. For seeing how easily he can ridicule Mysteries, which, to him in his present State, can have no Reasonableness in them, he is put into the most likely Way of living and dying in a hardened Contempt of them. Whereas if you stick close to the One true Ground of Christianity, and only proceed as that proceeds, and make the Unbeliever no Offers of any other Christianity, but that which is to begin with the acknowledged Sensibility of the Fall of human Nature from its first Divine Life ; you stop where you ought to stop, and rob him of all Power and Pretence of meddling with the other Mysteries of Salvation.

The One Business then upon his Hands, if he will hold out against you, must be to deny his Reason and Senses, and maintain, in spite of both, that Man is not fallen, but is by Nature holy, just, good, and happy both in Body and Soul ; and that Mankind, and the World they are in, have all that Goodness and Happiness, which they could be supposed to have from an infinitely good and happy God ; and who can will nothing in the Creature but Goodness and Happiness. Here you bring the Deist to his proper Work, and all the Contradiction to Sense and Reason will lie on his Side : You set Christianity upon its true Ground ; and whoever thus defends it, as it ought to be defended, not only does Justice to the Christian Cause, but acts the most kind and friendly Part towards those who oppose it, merely through a Misunderstanding of its *true Ground and Nature* ; which I will venture to say is the Case of all the sober well-meaning Deists. For *Deism* has no natural Foundation, or Ground of its own, to stand upon ; it does not grow from any Root or Strength within itself, but is what it is merely from the *bad State* of Christendom, and the *miserable Use* that heathenish Learning, and worldly Policy, have made of the Gospel. If it (Deism) seems to itself to be *strong and well-grounded*, it is

merely because it can so easily object to Church-doctrines, and scholastic Opinions: If it seems to itself to be *good*, it is because it can so easily lay open the Evils which Christians and Churches bring upon one another: If it seems to itself to be *highly rational*, its Reason is, because it is free from that Number of Absurdities and Contradictions, which Christian Churches lay to the Charge of one another. Lastly, if it keeps off all fearful Forebodings of the Consequences of not receiving the Gospel, it is because it so plainly sees, that Christians say, *Hail, Master*, kiss the Gospel, and then break every Part of it.

This is the true Height, and Depth, and total Strength of Deism or Infidelity, it never had any other Support in myself but this; nor did I ever converse with a Deist, who carried the Matter higher or further than this, to support the Cause. Hence it is, that you made so speedy a Convert of me, by showing me such a Christianity as I never heard of before; and stripped of every Thing that gave me Power to oppose it. Had you proceeded in the Way practised by most Defenders of the Gospel, you had left me just as you found me, if not more confirmed in my old Way. But as you have justly removed all Controversy about Doctrines from the Merits of the Cause, and shown that it all lies in this one short, plain, and decisive Point, namely the Fall of Man; a Fall proved and demonstrated to all my Senses and Reason, by every Height and Depth of Nature, by every kind of Misery, Evil, and Sin in the World, by everything we know of God, Ourselves, and the World we live in; the Ground and Foundation of Christianity is undeniable, and no one can be too speedy a Convert to the Belief of it. And as you have also shown, that the whole Nature of the Gospel Redemption means nothing but the one, true, and only possible Way of delivering Man from his miserable State in this World; Christianity is shown to be the most intelligible and desirable Thing that the Heart of Man can think of. And thus, contrary to all Expectation, the Tables are quite turned; *Deism* can no longer be founded on Argument, and Christianity is as self-evident as our Senses; All Learning on both Sides, either for or against it, is insignificant; Christianity stands upon a Bottom quite superior to it, and may be the sure Possession of every *plain Man*, who has Sense enough to know whether he is happy or unhappy, good or evil. For this natural Knowledge, if adhered to, is every Man's *sure* Guide to that *one Salvation* preached by the Gospel. Which Gospel stands in no more need of Learning and critical Art *now*, than it did when *Christ* was preaching it upon Earth. How absurd would it have been for any Critics in *Greek* and *Hebrew*, to have followed *Christ* and his Apostles, as

necessary Explainers of their hard Words, which called for nothing in the Hearers but penitent Hearts turned to God; and declared, that they only who *were of God, could hear the Word of God!* How strange, that *Christ* should choose only illiterate Men to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, if only great Scholars could rightly understand what they said! Again, supposing learned Men to have only the true Fitness to understand the Word of Scripture, and that the plain Man is to receive it from them, How must he know which are the Scholars that have the right Knowledge? From whence is he to have this Information? For no one need be told, that ever since Learning has borne Rule in the Church, learned Doctors have contradicted and condemned one another in every essential Point of the Christian Doctrine. Thousands of learned Men tell the Illiterate, they are lost in this or that Church; and Thousands of learned Men tell them, they are lost, if they leave it.

If therefore Christianity is in the Hands of Scholars, how must the plain Man come at it? Must he, though unable to understand Scripture, for want of Learning, tell which learned Man is in the right, and which is not? If so, the unlearned Man has much the greatest Ability, since he is to do that for Scholars, which they cannot do for themselves.

But the Truth of the Matter is this; Christian Redemption is God's Mercy to all Mankind; but it could not be so, if every fallen Man, *as such*, had not some Fitness and Capacity to lay hold of it. It must have no Dependence upon Times and Places, or the Ages and several Conditions of the World, or any outward Circumstance of Life; as the First Man partook of it, so must the last; the learned Linguist, and the Blind, the Deaf and Dumb, have but one and the same common Way of finding Life in it. And he that writes large Commentaries upon the whole Bible, must be saved by *something* full as different from Book-knowledge, as they were, who lived when there was neither Book nor any Alphabet in the World.

For this Salvation, which is God's *Mercy* to the fallen Soul of Man, merely as fallen, must be something that *meets* every Man; and which every Man, as fallen, has *something* that directs him to turn to it. For as the Fall of Man is the Reason of this Mercy, so the Fall must be the Guide to it; the Want must show the Thing that is wanted. And therefore the Manifestation of this one Salvation, or Mercy to Man, must have a Nature suitable, not to this or that great Reader of History, or able Critic in *Hebrew* Roots and *Greck* Phrases, but suitable to the common State and Condition of every Son of *Adam*. It must be something as grounded in human Nature, as the Fall itself is,

which wants no Art to make it known; but to which the common Nature of Man is the only Guide in one Man, as well as another. Now this *something*, which is thus obvious to every Man, and which opens the Way to Christian Redemption in every Soul, is *a sense of the Vanity and Misery of this World; and a Prayer of Faith and Hope to God, to be raised to a better State.*

Now in this *Sensibility*, which every Man's own Nature leads him into, lies the Whole of Man's Salvation; here the *Mercy* of God and the *Misery* of Man are met together; here the *Fall* and the *Redemption* kiss each other. This is the Christianity which is as old as the *Fall*; which alone saved the First Man, and can alone save the last. This is it, on which hang all the Law and the Prophets, and which fulfils them both; for they have only this End, to turn Man from the Lusts of this Life, to a Desire, and Faith, and Hope of a better. Thus does the whole of Christian Redemption, considered on the Part of Man, stand in this Degree of Nearness and Plainness to all Mankind; it is as simple and plain as the feeling our own Evil and Misery, and as natural as the Desire of being saved and delivered from it.

This is the Christianity which every Man must first be made sensible of, not from Hearsay, but as a Growth or Degree of Life within himself, before he can have any Fitness, or the least Pretence to judge or speak a Word about the further Mysteries of the Gospel. But here I stop.

Theophilus. Well, *Humanus*, I have now pushed the Matter with you, as far as I intended; and you have given me full Proof of the Truth and Solidity of your own Conversion, and your Ability to do good amongst your old Brethren. You must now enter the Lists with them; not to charge them with Ignorance, Ill-will, or Profaneness of Spirit, but only to try, in the Spirit of Love and Meekness, to undeceive them, in the Manner you have been undeceived; and to show them, that Christianity is by no means that Thing, which you and they have so long disliked.

Nothing can be more right than your Resolution not to enter into Debate about the Gospel Doctrines, or propose the Reasonableness of them to anyone, till he owns himself sensibly convinced of the forementioned Fall of Man; and stands in a full Desire to be saved, or delivered from it. And if that Time never comes, you must leave him, as in the same Incapacity to hear or judge of the Doctrines of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation of the Son of God, the Operation of the Holy Spirit, as *Epicurus* would be. For every Man that cleaves to this World, that is in Love with it, and its earthly Enjoyments, is a disciple of *Epicurus*, and sticks in the same Mire of Atheism, as he did,

whether he be a modern Deist, a Popish or Protestant Christian, an *Arian*, or an orthodox Teacher. For all these Distinctions are without any Difference, if this World has the Possession and Government of his Heart. For the Whole of the Matter lies solely in this, whether Heaven, or Earth, hath the Heart and Government of Man. Nothing divides the Worshippers of the true God from Idolaters but this: Where Earth possesses and rules the Heart, there all are of *one* and the *same* Religion, and worship one and the same God, however they may be distinguished by Sect or Party.

And wherever the Heart is weary of the Evil and Vanity of the earthly Life, and looking up to God for an heavenly Nature, there all are of the one true Religion, and Worshippers of the true God, however distant they may be from one another, as to Time or Place. But enough has been said of this Matter.

Let me now only, before we break up, observe to you the true Ground and Nature of *Gospel Christianity*: I call it so, by way of Distinction from that *original universal* Christianity, which began with *Adam*; was the Religion of the Patriarchs, of *Moses* and the Prophets, and of every penitent Man in every Part of the World, that had Faith and Hope towards God, to be delivered from the Evil of this World.

But when the Son of God had taken a Birth in and from the human Nature, had finished all the Wonders that belonged to our Redemption, and was sat down at the Right Hand of God in Heaven, then a heavenly Kingdom was set up on Earth, and the Holy Spirit came down from Heaven, or was given to the Flock of *Christ* in such a Degree of Birth and Life, as never was, nor could be given to the human Nature, till Christ, the Redeemer of the human Nature, was *glorified*. But when the Humanity of Christ, our Second *Adam*, was *glorified*, and become all heavenly, then the heavenly Life, the Comfort, and Power, and Presence of the holy Spirit, was the Gift which he gave to his Brethren, his Friends and Followers, which he had left upon Earth.

The Holy Ghost descended in the Shape of cloven Tongues of Fire on the Heads of those, that were to begin and open the new Powers of a *Divine Life* set up amongst Men. This was the Beginning and Manifestation of the whole Nature and Power of *Gospel Christianity*, a Thing as different from what was Christianity before, as the Possession of the Thing hoped for, is different from Hope, or Deliverance different from the Desire or Expectation of it. Hence the Apostles were new Men, entered into a new Kingdom come down from Heaven, enlightened with new Light, inflamed with new Love, and preached not any

absent or distant Thing, but *Jesus Christ*, as the *Wisdom and Power* of God, felt and found within them, and as a Power of God ready to be communicated in the same Manner, as a new Birth from above, to all that would repent and believe in him. It was to this Change of Nature, of Life and Spirit, to this certain, immediate Deliverance from the Power of Sin, to be possessed and governed by Gifts and Graces of an heavenly Life, that Men were then called to, as true Christianity. And the Preachers of it bore Witness, not to a Thing that they had heard, but to a Power of Salvation, a Renewal of Nature, a Birth of Heaven, a Sanctification of the Spirit, which they themselves had received. Gospel Christianity then stood upon its own true Ground; it appeared to be what it was. And what was it? Why, it was an *awakened Divine Life* set up amongst Men; itself was its own Proof; it appealed to its proper Judge, to the Heart and Conscience of Man, which was alone capable of being touched with these Offers of a new Life.

Hence it was, that Sinners of all Sorts, that felt the Burden of their evil Natures, were in a State of Fitness to receive these glad Tidings. Whilst the rigid Pharisee, the orthodox Priest, and the rational Heathen, though at Enmity with one another, and each proud of his own Distinction, yet all agreed in rejecting and abhorring a Spiritual Saviour, that was to save them from their carnal selves, and the Vanity of their own rational Selfish Virtues. But when, after a while, Christianity had lost its first Glory, appeared no longer as a *Divine Life awakened* amongst Men, and itself was no longer its own Proof of the Power and Spirit of God manifested in it; then heathenish Learning, and temporal Power, was from Age to Age forced to be called the Glory and Prosperity of the Church of Christ; although in the *Revelation of St. John*, its Figure is that of a scarlet Whore riding upon the Beast.

Here therefore, my Friend, you are to place the true Distinction of Gospel Christianity from all that went before it, or that is come up after it. It is purely and solely a *Divine Life awakened, and set up amongst Men*, as the *Effect and Fruit* of Christ's *Glorification in Heaven*; and has no other Promise from him but that of his Holy Spirit, to be with it, as its Light, its Guide, its Strength, its Comfort, and Protection, to the End of the World. Therefore as *Gospel Christians*, we belong to the *new Covenant of the Holy Spirit*, which is the Kingdom of God come down from Heaven on the Day of *Pentecost*; and therefore it is, that there is no Possibility of seeing or entering into this new Kingdom, but by being born again of the Spirit. The Apostles and Disciples of Christ, though they had been baptized with Water, had fol-

lowed Christ, heard his Doctrines, and done Wonders in his Name; yet as then, stood only *near* to the Kingdom of God, and preached it to be *at hand*. They had only seen and known Christ according to the Flesh; had followed him with great Zeal, but with little and very low Knowledge either of him or his Kingdom; and therefore it was, that they were commanded to stand still, and not act as his Ministers in his new glorified State, till they were endued *with Power from on high*: Which Power they then received, when the Holy Ghost with his cloven Tongues of Fire came down upon them, by which they became the illuminated Instruments, that were to diffuse the Light of an heavenly Kingdom over all the World. From that Day began *Gospel Christianity*, with its true Distinction from every thing that was before it; which was the *Ministration of the Spirit*; and the Ministers of it called the World to nothing but Gifts and Graces of the same Spirit, to look for nothing but Spiritual Blessings, to trust, and hope, and pray for nothing but the Power of that Spirit, which was to be the one Life and ruling Spirit of this newly-opened Kingdom of God. No one could join himself to them, or have any Part with them, but by dying to the Wisdom and Light of the Flesh, that he might live by the Spirit, through Faith in *Jesus Christ*, who had thus called him to his Kingdom and Glory. Now this Christianity is its own Proof; it can be proved from nothing but itself; it wants neither Miracles, nor outward Witness; but, like the Sun, is only its own Discoverer.

He that adheres only to the History of the Facts, Doctrines, and Institutions of the Gospel, without being born of its Spirit, is only such a Christian, and is no nearer to Christ, than the Jew, who carnally adhered to the Letter of the Law. They both stand in the same Distance from Gospel Christianity.

It is in vain therefore for the modern Christian, to appeal to Antiquity, to History, and ancient Churches, to prove that he belongs to Christ; for he can only belong to him, by having the Power of Christ, and the Spirit of God living and dwelling in his renewed inward Man.

But a learned Christianity, supported and governed by Reason, Dispute, and Criticism, that is forced to appeal to Canons, and Councils, and ancient Usages, to defend itself, has lost its Place, stands upon a fictitious Ground, and shows, that it cannot appeal to itself, to its own Works, which alone are the certain and only Proofs, either of a true, or a false Christianity.

For the Truth of Christianity is the Spirit of God living and working in it; and where this Spirit is not the Life of it, there the outward Form is but like the outward Carcase of a departed Soul.

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For the Spiritual Life is as much its own Proof, as the natural Life, and needs no outward, or foreign Thing to bear Witness to it. But if you please, Gentlemen, we will end for this time, and refer what remains to the Afternoon.

The End of the First DIALOGUE.

THE SECOND DIALOGUE.

ACADEMICUS. I Must take the Liberty, Gentlemen, of speaking first this Afternoon; for though I have been much pleased with what passed betwixt *Humanus* and *Theophilus* in the Morning, yet I must own to you all, that I was quite disappointed; for I came in full Expectation of hearing everything, that I wish, and want to know concerning *Jacob Behmen*, and his Works. For though I have been reading, for more than two Years, some one or other of his Books, with the utmost Attention, and I everywhere find the greatest Truths of the Gospel most fundamentally asserted, yet presently I am led into such Depths, as I know not where I am, and talked to in such new, intricate, and unintelligible Language, as seems quite impossible to be comprehended. Sometimes I almost suspect, that the Author understood not himself: For I think, if I knew any Truths, though ever so deep or uncommon; yet, if I understand them plainly myself, I could set them before others in the same Plainness, that they appeared to me.

All my Acquaintance have the same Complaint that I here make; but some hope, and others say, that if you live to publish any of his Books, you will remove most of his strange and unintelligible Words; and give us Notes and Explications of such as you do not alter. Surely a kind of Commentary upon him, would reconcile many to the reading of him, who in the State he is in, cannot have Patience to puzzle their Heads about him.

Rusticus. Oh this impatient Scholar! How many Troubles do I escape, through the want of his Learning? How much better does my old Neighbour *John* the Shepherd proceed? In Winter Evenings, when he comes out of the Field, his own Eyes being bad, the old Woman his Wife puts on her Spectacles, and reads about an Hour to him, sometimes out of the Scriptures, and sometimes out of *Jacob Behmen*; for he has had two or three of his Books some Years. I sat by one Evening, when my old Dame, reading *Jacob*, had much ado to get on: *John*, said I, do you understand all this? Ah, says he, God bless the Heart of the dear Man, I sometimes understand but little of him; and mayhap *Betty* does not always read right; but that little which I often do understand, does me so much Good, that I love him where I do not understand him.

John, said I, shall I bring a Man to you, that knows the Meaning of all *Jacob's* hard Words, and can make all his high Matters as plain to you, as the plainest Things in the World? No, no, replied *John*, I do not want such a Man, to make a talking about *Jacob's* Words; I had rather have but a little of his own, as it comes from him, than twenty times as much at second-hand. Madam, the *Squire's Wife*, of our Town, hearing how *Betty* and I loved the Scriptures, brought us, one Day, a huge *expounding Book* upon the New Testament; and told us, that we should understand the Scripture a deal better, by reading it in that Book, than the Testament alone.—The next Lord's Day, when two or three Neighbours, according to Custom, came to sit with us in the Evening; *Betty*, said I, bring out Madam's great Book, and read the fifth Chapter of *St. Matthew*. When she had done that, I bid her read the fifteenth Chapter of the first Epistle to the *Corinthians*. The next Morning, said I to *Betty*, carry this *expounding Book* again to my Mistress, and tell her, that the Words of Christ, and his Apostles, are best by themselves, and just as they left them.

And, as I was that Morning going to my Sheep, thought I to myself, This great *expounding Book* seems to have done just as much Good to this little Book of the Testament, by being added to it, and mixed with it, as a *Gallon* of Water would do to a little Cup of *true Wine*, by being added to it, or mixed with it. The Wine indeed would be all there; but its fine Taste, and cordial Spirit, which it had, when drank by itself, would be all lost and drowned in the Coldness and Deadness of the Water.

When my *Betty* used to read this, or some such Words of Christ, 'Blessed are the Poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven;' she used to stop a little, that my Heart might have time to be affected with them, to love the blessed Thing there spoken of, and lift up itself to God in Desire of it. But this great Book takes this good Work from my Heart; and only calls upon my Mind, to behold the *many Parts* which the Text may be split into, and the *many Meanings*, some better and some worse, some higher and some lower, that every Part has, and may be taken in by some Doctor of some Church or other. Therefore, *Rusticus*, I sent the great Book to Madam again; and am, for the same Reason, utterly against hearing your *Expounder* of *Jacob Behmen*. If *Jacob* has more Truths than other Folks, he is the best able to tell me what they are; and if he has some Matters too high for me, I do not desire any lesser Man to make them lower.

When he, like an *Elijah*, in his *Fiery Chariot*, is caught up into such Heights, and sees and relates such Things, as I cannot yet

comprehend ; I love and reverence him for having been where I never was ; and seeing such Things as he cannot make me see : Just as I love and reverence *St. Paul* for having been caught up into the third Heaven, and hearing and seeing Things not possible to be uttered in human Words.

As I have but *one End* in hearing the Scriptures read to me, to fill me with the Love of God, and every Kind of Goodness ; so every Part of Scripture, whether plain or mysterious, does me the same Good, is alike good to me, and kindles the same heavenly Flame in my Soul. Thus these plain Words, ‘Learn of me, for ‘I am meek and lowly of Heart ; and ye shall find Rest unto your ‘Souls ;’ give me, without any Expounder of their Meaning, such an Aversion and Dislike of all Vanity and Pride, fill me with such sweet Contentment in every Lowliness of Life, that I long to be the Servant of every human Creature. On the other hand, these lofty Words of Scripture,—‘Behold, a Throne was set in Heaven ; ‘and he that sat thereon, was, to look upon, like a Jasper-stone ; ‘and there was a Rainbow round about the Throne ; and four- ‘and-twenty Seats ; and upon the Seats, four-and-twenty Elders ‘in white Raiment, and Crowns of Gold upon their Heads : And ‘out of the Throne proceeded Lightnings, and Thunders, and ‘Voices : And before the Throne were seven Lamps of Fire, which ‘are the seven Spirits of God : And before the Throne there was ‘a Sea of Glass like unto Crystal : And in the midst of the Throne, ‘and round about it, were four Beasts full of Eyes before and ‘behind : And the first Beast was like a Lion, the second like a ‘Calf, the third had a Face as a Man, and the fourth was like ‘a flying Eagle : And the four Beasts had each of them six Wings, ‘and were full of Eyes ; and they rest not Day and Night, saying, ‘Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is ‘to come. And when these Beasts give Glory, and Honour, and ‘Thanks, to him that sat on the Throne, the four-and-twenty ‘Elders fall down before him that sat on the Throne, and cast their ‘Crowns before the Throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to ‘receive Glory and Honour, for thou hast created all Things,’ &c.*

Now these lofty and mysterious Words, instead of puzzling my Head, lay hold of my Heart, which, all inflamed with them, rises up with the Eyes and Wings of the Beasts in their Song of Praise and Honour ; and bows down with the Elders that worship the high and mighty Lord of Heaven and Earth. And thus I want no *Hebrew* or *Greek* Scholar to tell me this or that, what are the seven Spirits of God, why four Kinds of Beasts, why neither more nor less than six Wings, who were the Elders, and why

* Rev. iv. 2, &c.

twenty-four; but the *whole Matter*, as if a Glance of the Majesty of Heaven had just passed by me, strikes my Heart with such good Transports of Wonder and Joy, as make me all Longing and Desire to be one of those, who are always singing the Praises and Wonders of the Majesty of God. And thus, *Rusticus*, all that the Scriptures give me to drink, whether high or low, is equally a Cup of Blessing to me, and equally helps forward the Growth of Heaven in my Soul.

Bring not therefore your cunning Man, that has Skill in Words, to me; for Words are but Words; and though they be spoken even by the Messengers of God, as Angels, or Prophets, or Apostles; when they do their best, they can only do, as *John the Baptist* did bear Witness to the Light: But the Light itself, which can only give Light to the Soul, is God himself. And therefore not he that can best speak with the Tongues of Men and Angels, but he that most loves God, that is, that most loves the *Goodness of the Divine Nature*, he has most of God, and the Light of God within him.

Thus ended honest old *John* the Shepherd. And now, *Academicus*, if your learned Curiosity could be as much affected with what he has said, as my ignorant Simplicity is, you would drop all that you had said, as the Effect of such Impatience, as is much fitter to bring Darkness than Light into your Soul. You own, that, in the Works of *Behmen*, the greatest Points of Christianity are most fundamentally opened. And how can you be more self-condemned, than by desiring more?

But the Truth is, you have only heard these fundamental Matters; you have only received them as good *Notions*; are content with the *Hearsay* of them; and are therefore impatient to have more of this hearsay Knowledge, that you may become more learned in high Matters; and more able to talk about the Ground and Depth of Christian Doctrines. You know, as well as I can tell you, that this is your Joy in *Jacob Behmen*; and thence it is, that you have no Patience, when you cannot come at his Meaning, so as to add it to your Number of Notions. And thus you forget how often he tells you, and how fundamentally he proves to you, that this *notional* Knowledge, the Treasure of *human Reason*, is the very Builder of *Babel*. Whilst you are under the Guidance of our own *Babylonian Reason*, you can have no Good either from the Scriptures, or the Writings of *Jacob Behmen*; but will be hunting after *Notes* and *Commentaries* to help you to Notions, which only delude your Mind with the empty Shadows of Knowledge. Would you know the Truths of *Jacob Behmen*, you must see that you stand where he stood; you must begin where he began, and seek only, as he tells you he

did, the 'Heart of God, that he might be saved from the Wrath 'of Sin and Satan'; and then it was, that the Light of God broke in upon him. But you, full of Power of your own Reason, want to stand upon the Top of his Ladder, without the Trouble of beginning at the Bottom, and going up Step by Step. But I believe you had rather have *Theophilus* speak than me; and therefore I shall now leave you to him.

Theophilus. Truly, *Academicus*, I am much of the same Mind with honest *Rusticus*, though perhaps I might not have spoken it so bluntly as he has done. You seem to be in the same Error, that most of my learned Friends are in, with regard to *Jacob Behmen*, who, though they greatly admire him, yet, of all People, receive the least true Benefit from him. They have been trained up in Dispute and Controversy, accustomed to determine everything by the Light of their own Reason, and know no other Guide to Truth. And therefore, till, sooner or later, they come to know the Falseness of this Guide, they can have no Entrance into the Region of Divine Light; but must be forced to take their Part, not of Truth, but of some such System of Opinions, as their Birth and Education has placed *them* in. Thus, a learned *Papist* has one Creed, and the learned *Protestant* has another; not because Truth and Light have helped him to it; but because Birth and Education have given to the one Popish, to the other Protestant Eyes. For *Reason*, which is the *Eye* or Light of both, finds as much to its Purpose, and as many good Tools to work with, in Popish, as in Protestant Opinions. *Learning* and *Criticism* are an open Field to both; and he only has the greatest Harvest, who is best skilled in Reaping.

Academicus. I perceive then, that I must renounce all my Learning and Reason, if I am to understand *Jacob Behmen*. I cannot say, that I am resolved to purchase it at so great a Price. I hope the Knowledge to be had from the Scriptures, will be sufficient for me, without his deep Matters. I did not expect to find you so great an Enemy to Learning.

Theophilus. Dear *Academicus*, be not so uneasy; I am no more an Enemy to Learning, than I am to that Art which builds Mills to grind our Corn, and Houses for ourselves to dwell in. I esteem the liberal Arts and Sciences as the noblest of human Things; I desire no Man to dislike or renounce his Skill in ancient or modern Languages; his Knowledge of Medals, Pictures, Paintings, History, Geography, or Chronology; I have no more Dislike of these Things in themselves, than of the Art of *Throwing* Silk, or making *Lace*. But then, all these Things are to stand in their proper Places, and everyone kept within its own Sphere.

Now all this Circle of Science and Arts, whether liberal or

mechanic, belongs solely to the *natural Man*; they are the Work of his *natural Powers and Faculties*; and the most wicked, sensual, unjust Person, who regards neither God, nor Man, may yet be one of the ablest Proficients in any or all of them. But now Christian Redemption is quite of another Nature; it has no Affinity to any of these Arts or Sciences? it belongs not to the outward natural Man, but is purely for the Sake of an *inward, heavenly Nature*, that was lost, or put to Death, in Paradise, and buried under the Flesh and Blood of the earthly, natural Man. It breathes a Spark of Life into this inward, hidden, or lost Man; by which it feels and finds itself, and rises up in new awakened Desires after its lost Father, and native Country.

This is Christian Redemption; on the one side, it is the *Heavenly Divine Life offering itself again to the inward Man, that had lost it*. On the other side, it is the *Hope, the Faith, and Desire of this inward Man, hungering, and thirsting, stretching after, and calling upon this Divine and Heavenly Life*.

Now, whether this awakened, new Man, breathes forth his Faith and Hope towards this *Divine Life*, in *Hebrew, Greek, or English Sounds*, or in no one of them, can be of no Significancy: A Man that can do it only in one, or in all these Languages, is neither further from, nor nearer to, this *redeeming Life of God*. Or can you think, that the *heavenly Life* must more willingly enter into, and open itself in, a Man that has many Languages, than in him, who knows only one? Or, that a Man, who can make *High Dutch, Welsh, or Greek Grammars*, must have a stronger Faith, a more lively Hope, and a more continual Thirst after God, than he who can but poorly spell in his Mother Tongue? But now, if this is too absurd to be supposed; then, my Friend, without the least Injury done, or the least Enmity shown to *Learning, Science, Reason, and Criticism*, you must place them just where I have done, amongst the Things and Ornaments of this earthly Life, and such Things as, in their own Nature, are as easy to be had, and as highly enjoyed, by Men that despise all Goodness, as by those who fear God, and eschew Evil.

And therefore, Sir, no Truths concerning the *Divine and Heavenly Life* are to be brought for Trial before this learned Bar, where both Jury and Judges are born and bred, live and move and have their Being in another World, which have no more Power of feeling the Divine Life, than an *Eagle's Eyes* can look into the Kingdom of God. If you, my Friend, having read many old *Greek and Latin Books*, should intend to publish *Homer, or Cæsar's Commentaries*, with critical Notes, I should have nothing to object to your Ability; you might be as well qualified by such Means for such a Work, as one Man is to make *Baskets*, or

another *Traps* to catch Flies. But if, because of this Skill in old *Greek* and *Latin*, you should seem to yourself, or others, to be well qualified to write Notes upon the Spirit and Meaning of the Words of Christ, I should tell you, that your Undertaking was quite unnatural, and as impossible to be free from Error, as when a blind Man undertakes to set forth the Beauty of different Colours.

For the Doctrines of Redemption belong no more to the natural Man, than the Beauty of Colours to him, that never saw the Light. And from this unnatural Procedure it is, that the Scriptures are as useful to the *Socinian* or *Arian*, the *Papist* or the *Protestant*; and they can as easily, by the Light of Reason, charge one another with Absurdities, and confute each other's Opinion, as two blind Men can quarrel, and reject each other's Notions of *Red* and *Green*.

Jesus Christ is the Light of that heavenly Man that died in Paradise; and therefore nothing in Man, but that awakened Seed of Life, that died in Paradise, can have the least Sensibility or Capacity for receiving the redeeming Power of *Jesus Christ*. But *Light* and *Life* have no Dependence upon Words or Phrases; they both can only proceed from a *Birth*, whether it be the Light and Life of God, or the Light and Life of this World. How absurd would it be, to suppose, that a Man, naturally blind, must be taught Grammar or Logic, to fit him for the Reception of the Light of the Sun, and the Knowledge of Colours? Yet not less absurd, than to think, that Skill in *Hebrew* and *Greek* Words can open the Light of God and Heaven in the Soul. If you now, *Academicus*, can set this Matter in a juster Light, I am ready to hear you.

Academicus. Standing upon the Ground, that you, *Theophilus*, stand upon, all that you have said of *Reason*, *Science*, *historical Knowledge*, or critical Skill in Words, is unanswerable. For what can all these Things avail, if Redemption is purely a Birth of the Divine Nature, Light, and Spirit of God, offered to fallen Man; which Birth can only be received by the Faith, Hope, and Desire of *that* inward Man, which is Divine in us? For nothing else can have any Hunger or Thirst after the Divine Nature, but *that* which is itself born of it.

Now this true Ground of the Christian Redemption, gives the greatest Glory to God, and Comfort to Man. It explains the Fact, why plain and simple Souls, having their inward Man kindled into Love, Hope, and Faith in God, are capable of the highest Divine Illumination; whilst learned Students, full of Art and Science, can live and die without the least true Knowledge of God and Christ, and Slaves to all the Lusts of the Flesh.

For thus, this Redemption belongs only to one Sort of People, and yet is common to all. It is equally near, and equally open, to every Son of Man. There is no Difference between Learned and Unlearned, between *Jew* or *Greek*, Male or Female, *Scythian* or Barbarian, Bond or Free; but the same Lord is God over all, and equally nigh to all that call upon him. It is told us, as the Glory of the Divine Goodness, that *it giveth Fodder to the Cattle; and feedeth the young Ravens that cry unto it.* What Cattle? Surely not only to the Cattle of *Jacob*; or only to the young Ravens that cry in the Land of *Judah*. Yet this would be much more consistent with the Goodness of the One universal God, than to hold, that only the Sons of *Jacob*, or the Children of the Circumcision, were in the Covenant of God's Redemption.

But now, though this one Ground of Christian Redemption stands in the highest Degree of Plainness from Scripture, and is absolutely certain from the very Nature of the Thing; yet, till I met with honest *Rusticus*, I never conversed with any Man, or read any Book, that gave me the least Hint of it. When I had taken my *Degrees*, I consulted several great Divines, to put me in a Method of studying Divinity. Had I said to them, 'Sirs, 'What must I do to be saved?' they would have prescribed *Hellebore* to me, or directed me to the Physician as a vapoured Enthusiast. And yet I am now fully satisfied, that this one Question ought to be the sole Inquiry of him, who desires to be a *true Divine*. And was our Saviour himself on Earth, who surely could do more for me than all the Libraries in the World, yet I need have asked no more Divinity-Knowledge of him, than is contained in this one Question.

It would take up near half a Day, to tell you the Work which my learned Friends have cut out for me. One told me, that *Hebrew* Words are all; that they must be read without Points; and then the old Testament is an opened Book. He recommended to me a Cart-load of Lexicons, Critics, and Commentators, upon the *Hebrew* Bible. Another tells me, the *Greek* Bible is the best; that it corrects the *Hebrew* in many Places; and refers me to a large Number of Books learnedly writ in the Defence of it. Another tells me, that Church-History is the main Matter; that I must begin with the first Fathers, and follow them through every Age of the Church, not forgetting to take the Lives of the *Roman* Emperors along with me, as striking great Light into the State of the Church in their Times. Then I must have recourse to all the Councils held, and the Canons made, in every age; which would enable me to see with my own Eyes the great Corruptions of the Council of *Trent*. Another, who is not very fond of ancient Matters, but wholly

bent upon *rational* Christianity, tells me, I need go no higher than the *Reformation*; that *Calvin* and *Cranmer* were very great Men; that *Chillingworth* and *Locke* ought always to lie upon my Table; that I must get an entire Set of those learned Volumes wrote against Popery in King *James's* Reign; and also be well versed in all the Discourses which Mr. *Boyle's* and Lady *Moyer's* Lectures have produced: And then, says he, you will be a Match for our greatest Enemies, which are the Popish Priests, and modern Deists. My Tutor is very Liturgical; he desires me, of all Things, to get all the Collections that I can of the ancient Liturgies, and all the Authors that treat of such Matters; who, he says, are very learned, and very numerous. He has been many years making Observations upon them, and is now clear, as to the Time, when certain little Particles got Entrance into the Liturgies, and others were by Degrees dropped. He has a Friend abroad, in Search of ancient Manuscript Liturgies; for, by the by, said he, at parting, I have some Suspicion that our Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is *essentially* defective, for want of having a little Water in the Wine, &c. Another learned Friend tells me, the *Clementine Constitutions* is the Book of Books; and that all that lies loose and scattered in the New Testament, stands there in its true Order and Form; and though he will not say, that Dr. *Clarke* and Mr. *Whiston* are in the right; yet it might be useful to me to read all the *Arian* and *Socinian* Writers, provided I stood upon my Guard, and did it with Caution. The last Person I consulted, advised me to get all the Histories of the Rise and Progress of Heresies, and of the Lives and Characters of Heretics. These Histories, he said, contract the Matter; bring Truth and Error close in View; and I should find all that collected in a few Pages, which would have cost me some Years to have got together. He also desired me to be well versed in all the casuistical Writers, and chief Schoolmen; for they debate Matters to the Bottom; dissect every Virtue, and every Vice, into its many Degrees and Parts; and show, how near they can come to one another without touching. And this Knowledge, he said, might be useful to me, when I came to be a Parish-Priest.

Following the Advice of *all* these Counsellors, as well as I could, I lighted my Candle early in the Morning, and put it out late at Night. In this Labour I had been sweating for some Years, till *Rusticus*, at my first Acquaintance with him, seeing my Way of Life, said to me, Had you lived about Seventeen hundred Years ago, you had stood just in the same Place as I stand now. I cannot read; and therefore, says he, all these Hundreds of Thousands of disputed Books, and Doctrine-Books,

which these Seventeen hundred Years have produced, stand not in my Way; they are the same thing to me, as if they had never been. And, had you lived at the Time mentioned, you had just escaped them all, as I do now; because, though you are a very good Reader, there were then none of them to be read.

Could you, therefore, be content to be one of the primitive Christians, who were as good as any that have been since, you may spare all this Labour. Take only the Gospel into your Hands; deny yourself; renounce the Lusts of the Flesh; set your Affections on Things above; call upon God for his Holy Spirit; walk by Faith, and not by Sight; adore the holy Deity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in whose Image and Likeness you were at first created, and in whose Name and Power you have been baptized, to be again the living Likeness, and holy Habitation, of his Life, and Light, and Holy Spirit.

Look up to *Christ*, as your Redeemer, your Regenerator, your second *Adam*; look at him, as truly he is, the *Wisdom and Power of God*, sitting at his Right Hand in Heaven, giving forth Gifts unto Men; governing, sanctifying, teaching, and enlightening with his Holy Spirit, all those that are spiritually-minded; who live in Faith, and Hope, and Prayer, to be redeemed from the Nature and Power of this evil World. Follow but this simple, plain Spirit of the Gospel, loving God with all your Heart, and your Neighbour as yourself, and then you are Christ's Disciple, and have his Authority to 'let the Dead bury their Dead.'

God is a Spirit, in whom you live and move and have your Being; and he stays not till you are a great Scholar, but till you turn from Evil, and love Goodness, to manifest his holy Presence, Power, and Life, within you. It is the Love of Goodness, that must do all for you; this is the Art of Arts; and when this is the ruling Spirit of your Heart, then Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, will come unto you, and make their Abode with you, and lead you into all Truth, though you knew no more of Books than I do.

So ended *Rusticus*. It is not easy for me, *Theophilus*, to tell you, how much Good I received from this simple Instruction of honest *Master Rusticus*; for so I may well call him, since he, in so few Words, taught me a better Lesson of Wisdom, than ever I had heard before.

What a Project was it, to be grasping after the Knowledge of all the Opinions, Doctrines, Disputes, Heresies, Schisms, Councils, Canons, Alterations, Additions, Inventions, Corruptions, Reformation, Sects, and Churches, which 1,700 Years had brought forth through all the Extent of the Christian World! What a Project is this, in order to be a *Divine*, that is, in order to bear *true*

Witness to the Power of *Christ*, as a Deliverer from the Evil of Flesh and Blood, and Hell, and Death, and a Raiser of a New Birth and Life from above! For as this is the Divine Work of *Christ*, so he only is a *true* and *able Divine*, that can bear a faithful Testimony to this *Divine Work of Christ*.

How easy was it for me to have seen with *Rusticus*, that all this Labyrinth of learned Inquiry into such a dark, thorny Wilderness of Notions, Facts, and Opinions, could signify no more to me now, to my own Salvation, to my Interest in *Christ*, and obtaining the Holy Spirit of God, than if I had lived before it had any Beginning! But the blind Appetite of Learning gave me no Leisure to apprehend so plain a Truth. Books of Divinity indeed I have not done with; but I will esteem none to be such, but those that make known to my Heart the *inward Power* and *Redemption* of *Jesus Christ*. Nor will I seek for anything even from such Books, but *that* which I ask of God in Prayer; *viz.*, how better to know, more to abhor and resist the Evil that is in my *own Nature*; and how to attain a *supernatural Birth* of the Divine Life brought forth in me: All besides this is *Pushpin*. The shipwrecked Man wants only to get to Shore. Did we see the Truth of our State as he does, we should have but one Want, and that would be, to get Possession of our first created State. There is no Misery but in the Evil that is in our own fallen State; this is our Shipwreck, and great Distress; nor is there any Happiness, but in having the first Life of God, and all Goodness, opened again in the Soul. He that is not intent upon this one Thing needful, is not a wise Christian, much less a *Divine*, or one qualified to make known to others the Mystery of the Power of *Christ* in the Work of Redemption.

But I now go back to that which I first spoke of; and though I give up all that I said of putting out *Jacob Behmen* in new Language, with Comments, &c., yet I must still desire, that, some way or other, he may be made more plain and intelligible; call it by what Name you please.

Theophilus. Jacob Behmen may be considered, (1.) As a Teacher of the true Ground of the Christian Religion. (2.) As a Discoverer of the false Antichristian Church, from its first Rise in *Cain*, through every Age of the World, to its present State in all, and every Sect of the present divided *Christendom*. (3.) As a Guide to the Truth of all the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God. In these Three respects, which contain all that anyone can possibly want to know or learn from any Teacher; he is the strongest, the plainest, the most open, intelligible, awakening, convincing Writer, that ever was. As to all these Three Matters,

he speaks to everyone, as himself saith, *in the Sound of a Trumpet*. And here to pretend to be an Explainer of him, or make him fitter for our Apprehension, in these great Matters, is as vain, as if a Man should pipe through a *Straw*, to make the Sound of a *Trumpet* better heard by us.

Further, he may be considered, (4.) As a Relater of Depths opened in himself, of Wonders which his Spirit had seen and felt in his *Ternario sancto*. Now in this respect he is no Teacher, nor his Reader a Learner; But all that he saith is only for the same End, as *St. Paul* spoke of his having been in the Third Heaven, and hearing Things not possible to be spoken in human Words. And yet in these Matters it is, that most of his Readers, especially if they are Scholars, are chiefly employed; everyone in his way trying to become Masters of them. Thus, when he first appeared in *English*, many Persons of this Nation, of the greatest Wit and Abilities, became his Readers; who, instead of entering into his *one only* Design, which was their *own Regeneration* from an earthly to an heavenly Life, turned *Chemists*, and set up Furnaces to regenerate *Metals*, in Search of the Philosopher's Stone. And yet, of all Men in the World, no one has so deeply, and from so true a Ground, laid open the exceeding Vanity of such Labour, and utter Impossibility of Success in it from any Art or Skill in the Use of Fire. And this must with Truth be affirmed of him, that there is not any possible Error, that you can fall into in the Use of his Books, but what he gives you Notice of beforehand, and warns you against it in the most solemn Manner; and tells you, that the Blame must be yours, if you fall into it. Neither is there any Question that you can put, nor Advice or Direction that you can ask, but what he has over and over spoken to; telling you, in the plainest Manner, what the *Mystery* is which his Books contain; *how*, and by *whom*, and for what *End*, they are to be read.

There are Two Sorts of People to whom he forbids the Use of his Books, as incapable of any Benefit from them, and who will rather receive Hurt, than any Good from them. The First Sort he shows in these Words: 'Loving Reader, if thou lovest 'the Vanity of the Flesh still, and art not in earnest Purpose on 'the Way to the New Birth, intending to be a New Man, then 'leave the above-written Words in these Prayers unnamed, or 'else they will turn to a Judgment of God in thee.'* *Again*, 'Reader, I admonish you sincerely, if you be not in the Way of 'the Prodigal, or lost Son, returning to his Father again, that 'you leave my Book, and read it not; it will do you Harm.—

* *Repentance*, page 42.

‘But if you will not take Warning, I will be guiltless; blame ‘Nobody but yourself.’*

In this Advice, so different from that of other Writers, he shows the Truth and Reality of his own regenerated State; and that the very same Spirit speaks in him, as formerly said, ‘Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.’—‘Unless a man deny himself, and forsake all that he hath, he cannot be my ‘Disciple.’—‘No Man can come unto me, except the Father draweth him.’—‘Except a Man be born again from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.’—‘He that is of God, heareth ‘God’s Word.’—‘Come unto me, all ye that labour, are weary ‘and heavy-laden.’ For all these Texts of Scripture say that very self-same thing that *Jacob Behmen* doth, when he absolutely requires his Reader to be in the Way of the returning Prodigal. It is not Rules of Morality observed, or an outward blameless Form of Life, that will do: For Pride, Vanity, Envy, Self-love, and Love of the World, can be, and often are, the Heart of such a Morality of Life. But the State of the *lost Son* is quite another thing; and must be the State of every Man: As soon as he comes to himself and has seeing Eyes, he will then, like him, see himself far from home; that he has lost his first Paradise, his heavenly Father, and the Dignity of his first Birth; that he is a poor, beggarly Slave in a foreign Land, hungry, ragged, and starving, amongst the lowest Kind of Beasts, not so well fed and clothed as they are: When thus finding himself, he saith, ‘I will arise, and go to my Father,’ &c., then has he his first Fitness for the Mysteries opened in *Jacob Behmen’s* Writings; for they are addressed to Man only in this supposed State; they have no Fitness to him but in this State; and therefore no one, whether Jew, Christian, or Deist, who does not find and feel himself to be the *very lost Son* described in the Parable, has any Capacity to receive Benefit from them; but they will be a continual Stumbling-block to him. And it is just thus with the Gospel itself; wherever it is received and professed, without something of this Preparation of Heart, without this Sensibility of the lost Son, there it can only be a Stone of stumbling, and help the earthly Man to form a Religion of Notions and Opinions, from the unfelt Meaning of the Letter of the Gospel.

Secondly, The other Sort of People, whom he excludes from his Books, and for whom he has writ nothing, are the Men of *Reason*, who give themselves up to the Light of Reason, as the true Touchstone of Divine Truths. To these he declares over

* *Three Principles.*

and over, that he has not his Light from Reason ; and that he writes nothing to Reason. ‘The rational Man,’ saith he, ‘understands nothing in reference to God ; for it is without, and not in God.’ Again, ‘The true Understanding must flow from the *inward Ground*, out of the living Word of God. In which *inward Ground*, all my Knowledge concerning the Divine and natural Ground, hath taken its Rise, Beginning, and Understanding. I am not born of the School of this World, and am a plain simple Man ; but by God’s Spirit and Will am brought, without my own Purpose and Desire, into Divine Knowledge in high natural Searchings.’* Again, ‘He that will learn to understand the true Way, let him depart from and *forsake his own Reason.*’† ‘If my Writings,’ says he, ‘come into your Hands, I would that you should look upon them as of a Child’s, in whom the Highest has driven his *Work* ; for there is that couched therein, which no Reason may understand or comprehend.’‡ Again, ‘Reason must be blinded, *kept under, and not allowed to stir.*’§ Again, ‘Reason must yield up its own Hearing and Life, and give itself up to God, that God may live in the Understanding of Man, else there is no Finding in the Divine Wisdom. All that is taught and spoken concerning God, without the Spirit of God, is but *Babel.*’|| Again, ‘We must wholly reject our own Reason ; it is not available to help us to the Light, but is a mere leading astray, and keeping us back. This we intimate to the Reader, that he may know what he reads. Let none account it for a Work of outward Reason.’ Again, ‘Speaking of the Mystery,’¶ he saith, ‘Pray to God, the most High, that he would be pleased to open the Door of Knowledge, without which no Man will understand my Writings ; for they surpass the astral Reason ; they apprehend and comprehend the Divine Birth ; and therefore only the like Spirit can understand them aright. No Reasoning or Speculating reacheth them, unless the Mind be illuminated from God, to the finding of which the Way is faithfully shown to the seeking Reader.’**

And now, *Academicus*, you may see how needless it is to ask me, or anyone else, to help you to understand his Works : He himself has given you all the Assistance that can be given : He has laid open before you, in the utmost Plainness, both the Nature of the *Mystery*, and the *one only* possible Way that you can partake of it.

* *Epistles*, page 121.

† Page 138.

‡ Page 141.

§ Page 68.

|| Page 9.

¶ *Three-fold Life*, pages 68, 88** *Epistles*, page 138.

Academicus. You speak often of the *Mystery*: Pray, What am I to understand by it?

Theophilus. You are to understand by it, the *deep and true Ground* of all Things. A *Mystery*, in which the Birth and Beginning of *eternal Nature*, or the first Workings of the *inconceivable God*, opening and manifesting his hidden Triune Deity in an outward State of Glory, in the Splendour of united Fire, Light, and Spirit, all kindled and distinguished, all united and beatified by the *hidden Three*. In this eternal Nature, all inward Powers, all the *hidden Riches* of the incomprehensible Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are from Eternity to Eternity brought forth into outward Majesty, and visible Glory. In which Triune Opening of heavenly Glory, Power, and Majesty, the Triune God beholdeth himself as in his *own Manifestation*, is clothed as with his *own Garment*, dwelleth as in his *own Habitation*, and worketh all his Wonders of Wisdom and Omnipotence, in and by, and according to, the *possible Powers* of this eternal Nature. For this eternal Nature is the *first Possibility* of all After-beings and Things; for before, or without this eternal Nature, all is an eternal, silent, still, unmovable, unperceivable Nothingness; and this eternal Nature is the first Manifestation, the first Opening of the Divine Omnipotence: and in it are included, in its own infinite Bounds all the Height and Depth, and Extent, of the Divine Wisdom and Powers. All that God is, and can do, or bring forth from himself, is done in and by the Working of his Triune Spirit in this eternal Nature.

This is the great Scene of his eternal Wisdom and Omnipotence, in which new Wonders are eternally rising up, and declaring the fathomless Depths of the Riches of the invisible Triune Deity. And to say, that God can do no more, than what he can do through and by the possible Powers of this eternal Nature, is only saying, that he can do no more than what he can do by himself, because this eternal Nature is the eternal Manifestation of the total God, or an Out-birth of that which the Deity is, in its invisible Power and Deity.

Out of this transcendent eternal Nature, which is as universal and immense as the Deity itself, do all the highest Beings, Cherubims and Seraphims, all the Hosts of Angels, and all intelligent Spirits, receive their Birth, Existence, Substance, and Form. They are all so many different, finite, bounded Forms of the heavenly Fire and Light of eternal Nature, into which creaturely Beings, the invisible Triune God breathes his invisible Spirit, by which they become both the true Children and Likeness of the invisible Deity, and also the true Offspring of his eternal Nature; and are fitted to rejoice with God, to live in the

Life of God, and live and work, and have their Being, in that eternal Nature, or Kingdom of Heaven, in which the Deity itself liveth and worketh. And they are one, and united in one, God in them, and they in God, according to the Prayer of Christ for his Disciples ; ‘ That they, and he, and his Holy Father, might be united in one.’*

This is in Part, what you are first to understand concerning the Mystery.

But, *Secondly*, It is a *Mystery*, in which the Creation and Fall of Angels, with all its Consequences in them, and their Kingdom ; in which the System of this visible Universe, *why*, and from *what*, and how it came to be as it is ; the Birth of the Sun and the Planets, why and how they come to have such Difference in Nature, Place, and Office, and also of all the Stars ; the Nature of every creaturely Life, and Ground of its vast Variety ; the Cause of every inanimate dead Thing ; a Mystery in which the Creation, Dignity, and Perfection, of the first angelic Man in Paradise ; the whole Kingdom of Nature, and Kingdom of Grace ; their Connection, Difference, and mutually affecting and working upon one another under the Providence of the invisible Spirit of God, from the Beginning to the End of Time ; are all unfolded from their first Root and Cause.

Thirdly, It is a *Mystery*, in which the Ground of Christian Redemption, its whole Nature, absolute Necessity, and the working of all its Parts both in the Redeemer and in the Redeemed, are set forth in the utmost Degree of Clearness ; where the whole Process of *Christ*, as incarnate, living, suffering, dying, rising from the Dead, ascending into Heaven, and sitting at the Right Hand of God, and governing his Church on Earth by his Holy Spirit ; and all the practical Duties of the Gospel, whether of Faith and Hope, or of Self-denial ; dying to this World, and strict Conformity to the Life and Spirit of Christ ; are all demonstrated, from the deepest Ground of the Nature of Things, to be absolutely necessary to the Recovery and Redemption of the fallen human Nature.

This, Sir, is, in some Degree, the *Mystery* which it has pleased the Spirit of God to open in this plain and unlearned Man.

Academicus. Well, *Theophilus*, I entirely consent to this Account you have given of it, and think it is sufficiently supported by what is to be found in his Books ; they seem to mean all these great Matters which you mentioned. But then, Sir, give me Leave to tell you, that I think it is impossible for you to defend what you have said above concerning *Reason*, or to show the

* John xvii.

Unreasonableness of my demanding *rational* Illustrations and *Comments*. For if this is the Truth, that his Works contain the *Ground* and *Philosophy* of all Nature, and all Creatures; surely they must not only allow the Use of our Reason, but call for the highest and most acute Exercise of it. For what can enter into the Reasons and Philosophy of Things, but Reason? Or what do all these great Matters appeal to, but to our Reason? I see no Possibility of denying this; and if this be granted, all that has been said about silencing our Reason, must be given up.

Theophilus. The Conclusion, my Friend, that you here think to be so just and strong, as not possible to be denied, is so far from being so, that it is a glaring Absurdity; and the quite contrary to that one only true Conclusion, which you should have made, and which so easily and naturally flowed from what was said. For if the *Mystery is the deep Ground* of all Things, of all Nature, and all Creatures, &c., then the one Conclusion that infallibly flows from it, is this, that no Acuteness or Ability of natural Reason can so much as look into it. For natural Reason is no older than Flesh and Blood; it has no higher a Nature or Birth than *natural Doubting*; it had no Existence when Nature begun its first Workings, and therefore can bear no Witness to them. It was not present, had no Eyes, when Things first came forth; it never stood in the Centre, from whence the Birth of everything must arise; it never saw the Forming of the first Seeds of every Life: And yet the *Mystery*, you see, contains all this: And therefore the one plain and necessary Conclusion is this; That natural Reason is, and must be, as incapable of entering into this Mystery, as Flesh and Blood is incapable of entering into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Behold, now, what a flagrant Proof you have given of the Vanity, Weakness, and Blindness of natural Reason in Divine Matters. Your Reason saw, with the utmost Certainty, that the Mystery must be an Appeal to Reason, merely because it contained such an Height and Depth of a Divine Philosophy; and yet the Height and Depth of its Matters is the *one full* Proof, that Reason can have nothing to do with it. This may show you, by what means *Babel* has built itself all over the Christian World. For, by the Light of this *Babylonian* Reason, the Defenders and Opposers of Doctrines, confute one another with such a Certainty and Strength of Reason, as you saw, that Reason must be the only Judge of the Mystery, from which it is just as much excluded by its own Nature, as the *Mole* under ground is, by its Nature, excluded from the Flight and Sight of the towering Eagle.

Academicus. Pray then tell me, How a Man is to attain the Knowledge of the Mystery, or have any Share in the Light of it.

Theophilus. There is but one possible Way, and that is this : It must be born in you. All true Knowledge, either of God or Nature, must be born in you. You cannot possibly know anything of God, but so far as God is manifested in you ; so far as his Light and Holy Spirit is born in you, as it is born in him, and liveth and worketh in you, as it liveth and worketh in him. A distant, absent, separate God, is an unknown God. For God can only manifest God, as Light can only manifest Light, and Darkness make Darkness to be known.

Again, you can have no real Knowledge of Nature, and its inward working Power, but so far as the Workings of Nature, and the Birth of Things, are Working and a Birth in yourself. Natural Reason may trade in the Outside of Things ; it may measure, and make Draughts of Magnitude, Height, and Distance of Things on the Earth, and above the Earth ; it may make many and fine Experiments of the Powers of every Element : But then this is going no further into the Ground of Nature, than when the *Potter* makes curious Vessels with his Clay and Fire.

To count the Stars, to observe their Places or Motions, is just the same Height of natural Knowledge, as when the Shepherd counts his Sheep, and observes their Time of Breeding.

This World, with all its Stars, Elements, and Creatures, is come out of the invisible World ; it has not the smallest Thing, or the smallest Quality of anything, but what is come forth from thence ; and therefore every Quality of everything, is what it is, and worketh *that* which worketh, by a secret Power and Nature in and from the invisible World. *Bitter, sweet, sour, hard, soft, hot, cold, &c.*, have all of them their first Seed and Birth in the invisible World, called eternal Nature. The irrational Animals of this World feel all these Things : The rational Man goes further ; he can reason and dispute about their outward Causes and Effects : But the Mystery of eternal Nature must first be opened in Man, before he can give the Divine Philosophy of them. For as they all come from thence, have their Nature, Birth, and Growth, from thence ; so no Philosophy, but that which comes from thence, can give the true Ground of them.

If Man himself was not all these Three Things ; *viz.* (1) A Birth of the holy Deity ; (2) A Birth of eternal Nature ; and (3) Also a Microcosm of all this great outward World ; that is, of everything in it, its Stars and Elements ; and if the Properties of every creaturely Life were not in an hidden Birth in him ; no Omnipotence of God could open the Knowledge of Divine and natural Things in him.

For God can only manifest *that*, which there is to be mani-

fested ; and therefore only open *that*, which before lay unopened, and as in a State of Hiddenness or Death. Nothing can come forth from Man, or any Creature, but that which first had its Seed in him ; and to think, that any Knowledge can be put into him, but that which is a Birth of his own Life, is as absurd as to think, that the Tree and its Branches may first grow, and then be brought to the Root.

We are led into Mistakes about this Matter, from the common Practice of the World, which calls everything Knowledge, that the Reason, Wit, or Humour of Man, prompts him to discourse about ; whether it be Fiction, Conjecture, Report, History, Criticism, Rhetoric, or Oratory : All this passes for Sterling Knowledge ; whereas it is only the Activity of Reason, playing with its own empty Notions.

From this Idea of Knowledge it is, that when this *rational* Man turns his Thoughts to the Study of Divinity, he is content with the same Knowledge of Divine Matters, as he had in these Exercises of his Reason ; and he proceeds in the same Manner, as when he studied History and Rhetoric.

He turns his Mind to Hearsay, to Conjecture, to Criticism, and great Names ; and thinks he is then a Member of the true Church, when he knows it as plainly, as he knows the ancient Commonwealth of *Rome*. His Knowledge of the Being of God stands upon the same Bottom, and is made known to him by the same Means and Methods of Proof, as he comes to be assured, that once upon a Time there was a *First* Man, and his Name was *Adam*. His Knowledge of the Kingdom of Heaven is looked upon to be sufficient, as soon as he knows it, as he knows that there is such a Place as *Constantinople*. When he turns his Inquiries into the Mysteries of Christian Redemption, he looks as much out of himself, as when he is searching into the Antiquities of *Greece* ; and appeals to the same Helps for this Knowledge, as when he wants to know the inward Structure of *Solomon's* Temple, and all its Services, &c.

This is the great Delusion which has long overspread the Christian World ; and all Countries, and all Libraries, are the Proof of it. It is this Power and Dominion of Reason in religious Matters, that *Jacob Behmen* so justly calls the *Antichrist in Babel* ; for it leads Men from the Life and Truth of the Mysteries of *Christ*, to put a carnal Trust in a confused Multitude of contrary Notions, Inventions, and Opinions. And the thing is unavoidable, it cannot be otherwise with *Reason* ; it cannot do more Good with, or make a better Use of Gospel Doctrines ; it is *Antichrist*, as soon as ever it is admitted to debate and state the Nature of any Divine Truth. And that for these Two great

Reasons: *First*, Because it has absolutely the same Incapacity for it, as the Man that is born blind hath for the Light. Wherein now lieth the Incapacity of the blind Man, to speak or think anything truly about Light? It is because he is born and bred in another World, where nothing of Light ever did or can enter; it is because there is the *Gulf* of a whole Birth betwixt him and the Light of this World; and therefore, though he lives ever so long, reasons ever so much, or hears ever so many Speeches about the Light, all that he gets by it is only more false Ideas of the unknown Thing.

Now this is strictly the Incapacity of Reason, to speak, or think anything truly of the Divine Life. It is because it is born and bred in another World, in the Darkness of Flesh and Blood, into which no Perception or Sensibility of God and Heaven can enter; it is because there is the *Gulf* of a whole Birth betwixt it, and the Light of God and Heaven; and therefore, let Reason, from Age to Age, hear, read, and dispute ever so much about the Light of God and Heaven, all that it can get by it, is only to be enriched with more and more Fictions and Falsities about the unknown Thing.

Secondly, Natural Reason, whenever judging, or ruling in Divine Matters, must be *Antichrist*, because it cannot make any other Use of the Mysteries of Religion, or do anything else with them, but in the *same Spirit*, and for the *same Ends*, that it receiveth and useth the Things of this World. It matters not, what are the Names or Natures of the Things, whether you call them spiritual or temporal: Natural Reason can make but one and the same Use of them; it can only turn them to an earthly Use, to worldly Prosperity, to private Interest, Honour, Power, or Distinction. And the Thing is unavoidable, it is impossible to be otherwise; it is not a Fault that Reason might amend, if it would: but is as much its own Nature, as it is natural to Flame to ascend. Now everything must act according to its Nature; every Kind of Life must be for itself, for its own Good. Now Reason has no higher a Birth and Nature, than the Spirit of this World; it must be as worldly as its Birth is, and cannot possibly have anything else but worldly Views, and the Interests of its own Flesh and Blood, in everything that it can make any use of. This is as essential to the natural Reason of Man, as to the natural Subtlety of every Beast; for they have both the same Original from the Light and Life of this World, have both the same earthly Nature, and can act only in an earthly Manner, to serve the same Ends of an earthly Life. The Reason of the one has no more of God and the Divine Nature in it, than the Subtlety of the other. And hence it is, that Man, following only

the Cunning of his natural Reason, is often more mischievous than the worst of Beasts. And thus, you see how Reason, ruling in Divine Things, is, and must be *Antichrist*: First, As it turns the living Mysteries of God into lifeless Ideas, and vain Opinions: and, *Secondly*, As it sets up a worldly Kingdom of Strife, Hatred, Envy, Division, and Persecution, in Defence of them. And therefore it is a fundamental Truth, that Man has no Capacity for Divine Knowledge, till the Particle of Divine Life, lost in the Fall, is awakened; in which alone, the Mystery of God and the Divine Nature can have a Birth.

Academicus. You have carried your Point, *Theophilus*, with a high Hand, and I rejoice in seeing this Matter so well proved.—But still I would ask you something, that I know not how to express; I would fain understand more clearly, how this Mystery of God, and eternal Nature, is to be *born* in me.

Theophilus. Everything, *Academicus*, is, and must be, its *own Proof*; and can only be known from and by itself. There is no Knowledge of anything, but where the Thing itself is, and is found, and possessed. Life, and every Kind and Degree of Life, is only known by Life; and so far as Life reaches, so far is there Knowledge, and no further. Whatever Knowledge you can get by the Searching and Working of your own active Reason, is only like that Knowledge, which you may be said to have got, when you have searched for a Needle in a Load of Straw, till you have found it.

For nothing that is brought into the Mind from *without*, or is only an Idea beheld by our reasoning Faculty, is any more *our Knowledge*, than the seeing our natural Face in a Glass, is seeing *our own Selves*. And all the Ideas or Images that your Reason can form of any absent, unpossessed Thing, is no more a Part of your own Knowledge, than your drawing a Picture of your own Hand is making a Member of your own Body. It is therefore a vain and fruitless Inquiry, to be asking beforehand for the Knowledge of any *unpossessed* Matters; for Knowledge can only be yours, as *Sickness* and *Health* is yours, not conveyed into you by a Hearsay Notion, but the Fruit of your own Perception and Sensibility of that which you are, and that which you have in yourself. How often have you been warned against this Procedure, in Words like these? ‘Therefore let the Reader be warned, not to dive further into these very deep Writings, nor Plunge his Will deeper, than so far as he *apprehendeth*: He should always rest satisfied with his *Apprehension*; for in his Apprehension, he standeth yet in that which hath its Reality; and therefore he erreth not, how deep soever the Spirit leadeth him: For to one more will be given than to another. And this

is the *only Mark* to be observed, that everyone continue steadfast in Humility towards God, and submit himself, that he may make the Will and the Deed as he pleaseth. When you do that, you are in yourself as dead; for you desire nothing but God's Will, and the Will of God is *your Life*, which goeth inward even to the Opening of the highest Mysteries.*

One would have thought, *Academicus*, that this Advice, if only from the uncommon Nature of it, should have had more Effect upon you. For it is not only new to you, but to every Reader; there being nothing like it, either for the Sense, the Sobriety, or the Depth of its Matter, ever given by the wisest of Philosophers to their Readers.

Truth, my Friend, whatever you may think of it, is no less than the *Saviour* and Redeemer of the World.

Hear therefore its own Language: 'If any Man will be my Disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and come after me.' He does not say, Let him get a clear and distinct Idea of me, what, and how I am God and Man in the Unity of my Person; he only tells him what he is to part with, what he must put off, to be made a Child of the Light. Search and look where you will, this Denial of Self is the one only possible Way to the Truth. For nothing has separated us from Truth, nothing stands betwixt us and Truth, but this Self of an earthly Life, which is not from God, but from our wandering out of our first created State.

God created us in and for the Light; and had *Adam* kept his first State, he had not been an ignorant, blind Pilgrim in the Darkness of this World, but the illustrious Opener of all its Wonders in the Light of God. But as this Light and Knowledge was lost in *Adam*, so it can only be recovered by him who came to restore all that was lost, and who justly called himself *the Light of the World*. Would you therefore be a Disciple of Truth you must not, with *Pilate*, ask, *What is Truth?* or consult the Schools, how you shall form an Idea of it: But you must alter your Life, put a Stop to all earthly Lusts, renounce all that you are, and have from Self; give up all the Workings of your own Reason, and your own Will; and then, and then only, are you fitted for that *Unction from above*, which can teach you all Things. But till Christ, who is the one Fountain of Life and Light, be opened in you; it is in vain, that you rise up early, and late take Rest, in Quest of Truth; for he himself hath said, 'Without me, ye can do nothing.' And every Son of earthly *Adam*, however naturally enriched with the Spirit, and Light, and Arts

* *Threefold Life*, page 158.

of this World, is born, and must remain, a *Spirit in Prison*, till Christ is found to be an inward Preacher, and Light within him. As he is the one Resurrection from the Dead, so is he the one Deliverer from everything that has the nature of Death, Darkness, and Ignorance. And to expect seeing Eyes, hearing Ears, and Sensibility of Heart, from anything but that *eternal Word*, by which we were at first made, is robbing God and Christ of more Honour, is a more idolatrous Departure from the true Worship and Dependence upon him, than if we sometimes hoped to have Good from this or that Saint's praying for us. For this is a Truth, that admits of no Restriction, but reaches from one End of the Earth to the other, that as no Man can come unto the Father, but through the Son; so no one can come at any Divine Knowledge, either in Grace or Nature, but through him alone.

The *Schools* of this World are of no higher a Nature, than the *Markets* of this World; and when rightly used, serve only to the Ends of this earthly Life. But as Markets and Traffic seldom keep within their just Bounds, but become serviceable to Vanity, earthly Lusts, and all the Luxury of Life; so it mostly happens in our learned Labours; we grow old and blear-eyed, in Studies that nourish Pride and Envy, Division and Contention; and only help our old Man to be content with the Riches of his fallen Nature, and feel no Necessity of being born again.

Would you therefore be a *Divine* Philosopher, you must be a *true Christian*; for Darkness is everywhere, but in the Kingdom of God; and Truth nowhere to be found by Man, but in a *New Birth* from above. Man was created in and for the Truth; that is, he was created in the Truth of the Divine Light, to see and hear, to taste and feel, to find and enjoy, all Things in the Truth of the Divine Life brought forth in him. And therefore it is, that for fallen Man there is but one Remedy; it is only the *Truth* that can make him free. Truth is the only *Resting-place* of the Soul; it is its *Atonement* and *Peace* with God; all is, and must be Disquiet, a Succession of lying Vanities, till the Soul is again in the Truth, in which God at first created it. And therefore said the *Truth*, *Learn of me; for I am meek, and lowly of Heart; and ye shall find Rest unto your Souls.*

Academicus. Pray *Theophilus*, stop a while: Surely your Zeal carries you too far. All Ages of the World have seemed to agree in this, that the Gospel teaches purely the Simplicity of a godly Life; calls no Man to be a Philosopher, nor gives the smallest Instruction in Matters that relate to Philosophy.

Theophilus. All this, *Academicus*, is very true; but then, this very Simplicity and Plainness of the Gospel, turning Man only

from this World, to a Faith, and Hope, and Desire of God, is the *one* Reason, and *full Proof*, that it alone is a true Guide into the highest School of Divine Wisdom and Philosophy ; not only because Goodness is our greatest Wisdom, but because the Mysteries of God, of Grace, of Nature, of Time and Eternity, can no other possible way be opened in Man, but by this Simplicity of a godly Life taught in the Gospel ; because *only* the godly Life hath Knowledge of God ; just as the creaturely Life hath only Knowledge of the Creature, and the painful Life hath Knowledge of Pain. The Scripture saith, *that only the Spirit of God knoweth the Things of God*. And indeed, how can it possibly be otherwise ? For since the Spirit of God is the Spirit and Life that goeth through all Nature and Creature, and only openeth its *own hidden* Powers therein ; since it is that which is the Former of everything ; that which makes everything to have the Life that it hath, and to work as it worketh ; nothing but the Spirit of God, can possibly know the Things of God : And therefore, of Necessity, this Spirit of God must be in Man, and work in Man, as it is in Nature, and worketh in Nature, before Man can enter into the Knowledge and Working of God in Nature. And therefore here you have two immutable, and fundamental Truths : (1) That all our Ignorance of God and Nature is, and must be, purely and solely, the *Want of the Spirit and Life of God in us* : And, (2) That therefore the one only Way to Divine Knowledge, is the Way of the Gospel, which calls and leads us to a New Birth of the *Divine Nature brought forth in us*.

Academicus. I have nothing that I can, or would object to what you have said. But still I must say, that I do not enough apprehend, how the *Spirit and Life of God* must thus, of all Necessity, be born in us ; nor indeed, do I entirely comprehend how it is done. Human Reason, or human Instruction, I see plain enough, cannot help me to any Divine Light. But suppose God should send an Angel to instruct me, and that frequently, would not Divine Knowledge be then imparted to me ? And yet this would not be a Birth of God in me. Or, will you say, that God cannot sufficiently instruct me, even by the highest of his Angels ?

Theophilus. An Angel, Sir, may instruct you, as the Scriptures instruct you ; but it is only such an Instruction, as may direct you where and how to obtain that Light, which neither the Letter of Scripture, nor the Voice of an Angel, can bring forth in you. The highest Angel neither hath, nor ever can have, any more of a redeeming Power in it, than the dead Paper on which the Scriptures are written. But you are to observe, and mark it well, that you cannot have Divine Light from any other

Thing, but that which hath full Power to redeem you: For Light is not only Life, but the Perfection, and highest State of it; and therefore nothing can bring forth Light, but that which can bring forth the Truth and Perfection of Life.

Every other Thing, besides the Life and Light of God, stands only in a State of *ministerial Service* towards you: Whether it be Words of a Message from God, written on paper, engraven on tables of Stone, or spoken by the Mouth of an *Angel*, a *Prophet* or *Apostle*; be it which it will, it is only a creaturely Thing; and its creaturely Service can rise no higher, nor go any further, than to show the true Way to Him, who only himself can be the Truth, the Life, and the Light in you. For the Light of God cannot, even by God himself, be communicated to you by any Creature; and the Reason is, because the Light of God is God himself: It is the Light of his own Life: And therefore only himself can bring it forth wherever it is; and no Creature can possibly partake of his Light, but by having a Birth in and from the Divine Nature: For the Light of God can never be separate from the Divine Nature, or be anywhere but where the Divine Birth is. And thus you fully see, that all that can be divinely known, either in Heaven, or on earth, can only be known in that *one Way*, and by that *one Means*, by which fallen Man can be saved; namely, by a New Birth of the Light and Spirit of God within us. And therefore the simple Way of the Gospel, is the one only Way to attain all the Knowledge of all that, which can be known of God and Nature: For nothing can manifest God and Nature, but the Spirit of God working in Man, as he worketh in Nature, which can only be done by a New Birth of the Divine Nature, brought forth in Man: But when Man is thus born again of God, then the Life and Spirit of God is in him, and worketh in him, as it doth in Nature. And thus it is, that Man can only be a Divine Philosopher, when Christ, who is the Light of God, and the Light of Nature, is revealed in him. Then he is in that living *Word*, and that living Word is in him, by which all Things were at first made; and which maketh, createth, and worketh in him, as it worketh in all Things, both in Heaven and Earth.

Academicus. I never expected to have seen the Gospel New Birth proved to be the only open Gate to all that *Divine Knowledge*, which any Son of *Adam* ever had, or can have. But you have proved it to be so, beyond all Possibility of Denial. And I now only want to have you go on in this Doctrine of the New Birth; for I am persuaded, you can still add something to *that*, which has already been said upon it, both as to the Ground, and Nature, and Fruits of it.

Theophilus. You must remember, *Academicus*, that all that I can by Discourse, from the Beginning to the End of this Matter, do for you, amounts only to thus much : It is like giving you a full Assurance of a wonderful Pearl of glorious Virtues, hidden in the Ground of a certain Field, and showing you every Step of the Way you must take to find it. Now, if from Month to Month, you should be inquiring and hearing of some new Powers and Virtues of this heavenly Pearl ; what Good does all this Discourse and Hearsay do you ? You are just as far from the Pearl itself, and have no more of it, than when you first heard of it ; and would be in the same Distance from it, though you were always, to the End of your Life, loving to hear and talk about it. I have had no other End in all that is said of the New Birth, but to assure you of the Truth of the Thing, and the true Way to it. Now the Way to the New Birth lies wholly in your Will to it ; and every Step that you can take, consists in a continual Dying to the selfish corrupt Will, which you have from Flesh and Blood. Nothing can make any Change in you, but the Change of your Will. For everything, be it what it will, is a Birth of that Will, which worketh in you. You have nothing therefore to inquire after, nor anything that you can judge of yourself by, but the State of your Mind, the Working of your Will and Desire. These will give you more Light, than all the Men or Books in the World can give you : Where these are, there are you ; and what these are, that are you : There you live, and to that you belong ; and there you must have all the Good or Evil that can be called yours.

For nothing leads or carries you anywhere, nothing generates either Life or Death in you, but the Working of your Mind, Will, and Desire. If your Will is angelic, you are an Angel, and angelic Happiness must be yours. If your Will is with God, you work with God ; God is then the Life of your Soul, and you will have your Life with God to all Eternity. If you follow an earthly Will, every Step you take is a Departure from God, till you become as incapable of God, and the Life of God, as the Animals of this World. If your Will worketh in Pride and Self-exaltation, in Envy and Wrath, in Hatred and Ill-will, in Deceit, Hypocrisy, and Falseness, you work with the Devil, you are generating his Nature within you, and making yourself ready for the Kingdom of Hell. And thus it is, that *our Works follow us* ; and that *everyone will be rewarded according to his Works* ; and none can reap anything else but that which he hath sown. And the Seed of everything that can grow in us, is our Will. The Will maketh the Beginning, the Middle, and the End of everything ; it is the only Workman in Nature ; and everything

is its Work. It has all Power ; its Works cannot be hindered ; it carries all before it ; it creates as it goes : and all Things are possible to it. It enters wherever it wills, and finds everything that it seeks ; for its seeking is its finding. The Will over-rules all Nature, because Nature is its Offspring, and born of it ; for all the Properties of Nature, whether they be Good or Evil, in Darkness or in Light, in Love or in Hatred, in Wrath or in Meekness, in Pride or Humility, in Trouble or Joy, are all of them the Offspring or Birth of the Will ; as that liveth, so they live ; and as that changeth, so they change. So that whatever you are, or whatever you feel, is all owing to the working and creating Power of your own Will. This is your God or your Devil, your Heaven or your Hell ; and you have only so much of one, or the other, as your Will, which is the first Mover, is either given up to the one, or to the other.

For where the Will of Man is not, there he hath nothing ; and where his Will is, there is all that *Something* which he hath, be it of what Kind it will ; and it is inseparable from him, till his Will worketh contrary to it.

Academicus. Whence hath the Will of Man this mighty Power that it can have nothing, but that which itself hath willed ?

Theophilus. You might as well ask, why a *Circle* must be perfectly round, or a straight Line free from every Degree of Crookedness. For as it is not a Circle till it is perfectly round, nor a straight Line till it is free from Crookedness, so the Will is not in Being, but so far as it is free, is its own Mover, and can have nothing but that which it willeth. *Secondly,* The Will is not a made Thing, which is made out of something, or that came out of some different State, into the State of a Will. But the free Will of Man is a true and real Birth from the free, eternal, uncreated Will of God, which willed to have a creaturely Offspring of itself, or to see itself in a creaturely State. And therefore the Will of Man hath the Nature of Divine Freedom ; hath the Nature of Eternity, and the Nature of Omnipotence in it ; because it is what it is, and hath what it hath, as a Spark, a Ray, a genuine Birth of the eternal, free, omnipotent Will of God. And therefore, as the Will of God is superior to, and ruleth over all Nature ; so the Will of Man, derived from the Will of God, is superior to, and ruleth over all his own Nature. And thence it is, that as to itself, and so far as its own Nature reacheth, it hath the Freedom and Omnipotence of that Will from which it is descended ; and can have or receive nothing, but what itself doth, and worketh, in and to itself.

And herein consisteth the infinite Goodness of God, in the Birth of all intelligent Creatures ; and also the exceeding Height,

Perfection, and Happiness of their created State: They are descended from God, full of Divine Power; they can will and work with God, and partake of the Divine Happiness. They can receive no Injustice, Hurt, or Violence, either from Nature or Creature; but must be only that, which they generate, and have no Evil or Hurt, but that which they do in and to themselves. All Things stand in the Will, and everything, animate or inanimate, is the Effect and Produce of that Will, which worketh in it, and formeth it to be that which it is. And every Will, wherever found, is the Birth and Effect of some antecedent Will; for Will can only proceed from Will, till you come to the first working Will, which is God himself.

And here, my Friend, you have an easy Entrance into the true Meaning of many important Passages in the Books of *Jacob Behmen*, like those that follow: 'All,' says he, 'is magical; the 'Eternity is magical:—Magic is the Mother of all Things.—I 'speak from a magic Ground.—Here the Reader must have 'magical Eyes.—This hath a magical Understanding,' &c. Vulgar Reason is offended at these Expressions, because the Word *Magic* has, for many Ages, been mostly used in a bad Sense. But do not you be frightened at the Sound of these Words; they are not only innocent, but truly good and wise, and deeply founded on the Truth of Things. They have the most Christian and Divine Meaning; are strictly conformable to the Spirit of the Gospel, as shall be shown by-and-by; and are used for the best of Ends; namely, to open the true Ground of eternal and temporal Nature, and the Birth of Creatures in each of them. They are to show how the hidden, invisible Deity acteth and worketh all its Wonders in both these Worlds, in one and the same uniform Way; as also, how everything in Religion, whether it be a Mystery of God, a Grace of God, or a Duty of Man, hath its whole Ground, and Nature, and Efficacy, therein.

Now *magic Power* meaneth nothing but the *Working of the Will*, whether it be the Divine, or the creaturely Will; and everything that is the Work of the Will, and is produced by it, is called its magic Work, which only means, that it is generated by and from the Will, as a Birth brought forth by it. The Will is the Workman, and the Work is that, which it bringeth forth out of itself. So that by these Words, you are always to understand these two Things, the *Working, and the Work of the Will*. And now, you may already sufficiently see, that their Meaning is not only innocent and good, but as necessarily, and divinely, to be ascribed to God, as the Power of bringing Things into Existence by the Working of his Will. For here you have the true Ground and Original of the creating Power of God; how

everything that is not God, is yet come from him, and out of him, as so many Births of his invisible Power, breaking forth into Visibility, and sensible Qualities of an outward Life.

The first Manifestation of the invisible God is that which is called, and is, *Eternal Nature*; which is the Eternity of all possible Powers and Qualities of Life, the first Source of every natural Power that can be in any Creature. All these Qualities of Life, in their eternal Birth, and rising from one another by the working Will of God, are the Out-birth, or outward Glory of God, in which he manifests his Triune, invisible Deity in a threefold Life of Fire, Light, and Spirit; which are the Ground of all the Qualities of Life, Sensibility, Power, and Spirit, that ever were, or can be found in any Creature. Everything that exists, or thinks, or moves, or finds itself in any Kind or Degree of Sensibility, is from, and out of, this glassy Sea of these united Powers of Life. And this whole Manifestation of all the possible Powers, and Perfection of Life and Glory, is called that Kingdom of Heaven, in which God dwelleth; and is, as it were, his Divine Workhouse, out of which he is perpetually giving forth new Works, and Forms of Wonder.

This Manifestation of God, is a *magic Birth* from the Triune *working* Will of the hidden Deity, which willed to see itself in this opened, outward Show of all the possible Powers of Life and Glory; and from whence new Worlds of finite Divine Beings, as so many living Images of God, might have a Possibility of coming forth. For without Nature, God must be by himself, and continue an unmanifested God. For no *Form* or Creature can be, unless there be something antecedent to it, that can be *formed*. *Life* must be, before there can be any finite living Creatures; just as *Light* must be, before there can be any *seeing* Eyes. And therefore the Manifestation of God in an outward Glory of all the possible Powers, Qualities, and Perfections of Life, called eternal Nature, must be, or there could be no Possibility for the Existence of any Creature.

Now this same working Will of the Triune Deity, which manifested itself in an eternal Nature, manifesteth itself in creaturely Forms, all generated from, all enlivened and animated with, that same Trinity of Fire, Light, and Spirit, that constitutes eternal Nature. So that all intelligent Creatures are that in their finite Being, which eternal Nature is in its infinite State. And thus all of them are from God, and from Heaven, live in God, and may work with God, as God is in Heaven, and Heaven in him; one Life, one Power, one Will, and one Happiness with God.

Now everything that is not God, but after him, and distinct

from him, must be that which it is, from the working Will of the Deity. For since it cometh into Being, only because it is *willed* to be, it can have nothing in it, or be any other Thing, but that which the working or creating Will brought forth. And as all Things began in and from this working Will, so all Things must go on in it; and there can be no other Creator, Worker, or Former of Things to all Eternity, but the working Will of God, either mediately or immediately. Nor can there be any other Nature in anything, but that which is the Birth, or magic Effect, of a working Will within it. And everything that is done by the Creature, everything which it seeks and likes, or abhors and resists, is all driven on by a working Will, or magic Power, which stirs, and generates, and works within it.

Would you know now the true Ground of all this? It is this: It is because *Will* is the first Original of all Power, and the Omnipotence of God consisteth in nothing else but his *working Will*; and therefore no Power ever was, or ever can be, anywhere else, but as it is in God; and if the Creature hath any Power, it must have it, as God hath it, in the working Will. For since all Nature, with all its Qualities, Births, and Creatures, are all brought into Being by the working Will of God, it evidently follows, that every Creature, with every Quality, Power, and Property in it, is magically born, and therefore must have a magic Nature, that is, a Nature that cometh from, and standeth in a working Will.

And now, Sir, you are come into a full View of the most important Matter of the Mystery of all Things; a Matter which, if rightly apprehended in the inward Ground of your Soul, puts an entire End to all the Jargon of a false Philosophy, and to all those Fictions of Doctrines and Disputes, which Reason has built upon the written Word of God.

For nothing is effected by Fiction and Invention, by any contrived Arts or Searchings of rational Inquiries; all this is nothing, because it toucheth not Nature, but leaveth it to itself; which carrieth on its own Works by its own Power, and can only work in its own Way; and must bring forth its own Births, independent of everything but its own working Life. But all lieth in the Will and working Desire of the Soul, because *Will* began and brought forth all that Nature that lives in the Soul, and is the only Life in it; and this Life can work and grow from nothing else, but that which first brought it forth. Hence you see the full Meaning of these Words of our Author, 'All is magical; and 'that Magic is the Mother of all Things;' and consequently, the only Opener of all Divine Knowledge. All which Expressions only imply thus much, that the *Will*, whether in God, or the

Creature, is the Ground and Seed of every Thing ; is the generating working Power, which maketh and worketh all Things to be in that State and Condition which they are ; and that every Thing begins, goes on, and ends, in the Working of the Will ; and that nothing can be otherwise, than as its Will worketh ; and therefore Eternity and Time are magical ; and Magic is, and must be, the Mother of all Things.

Now here you see, in the utmost Degree of Clearness, how all true and false Religion divide from one another. For if nothing worketh but the Will, if nothing else carries on the Work of Nature, then all is false and vain in Religion, but the Working of the Will ; and nothing is saving, or redeeming the Life of the Soul, but that which helps the Will to work towards God.

Hence it is, that our Author so often tells his Reader, that when he sees and finds this magic Birth of Things, he is *delivered from Babel* ; not by running from one Place to another, or from one System of Opinions to another, but by *inwardly leaving* all the Workings of earthly Self, all the Paper-Buildings of natural Reason, and turning to God with the whole Will and working desire of his Heart. This is the right coming out of our own *Babel* of vain Opinions into the *Truth and Reality of Nature*, where the living God of Nature is found ; not in Notions, but in the living Working of the Soul, and worshipped in Spirit and in Truth.

I said, into the *Truth and Reality of Nature*, because Nature is the Standard of Truth, and all is *Babel* but that which worketh with Nature ; that is, with eternal Nature ; for as eternal Nature is the Manifestation of the unchangeable God, so it must be as unchangeable in itself, and its own Workings, as God is ; because it hath nothing in it, but what is in and from the unchangeable God. And therefore, God cannot be manifest, or work in any Creature, but as he is manifest, and worketh in eternal Nature ; and therefore all that the Creature doth, is Labour lost, and a vain Beating of the Air, but that which it worketh with, and according to eternal Nature. Because God never was, nor ever can be, or be found, anywhere else but in his own Heaven, or eternal Nature. And no Soul can by any one possible thing find, or be found by God, but by standing before him in the same Will and Working as eternal Nature doth. And therefore all is Fiction and *Babel* but the Working of the Will, because nothing but the Will can work with Nature ; and that for this Reason, because all Life, and all Nature, eternal and temporal, is what it is, merely and solely, from the Working of the Will. All things in Heaven and in Earth stand in this magic Birth ; and nothing can change its State, either for better or worse, but as the Work-

ing of its Will changes. Justly therefore is it said, that where this Truth is found, there is a full and true Deliverance from *Babel*, that is, from all Strife, and Zeal, and Division about Opinions, Sects, and Churches; since the *one Thing* that works either to Life, or to Death, the one Thing that alone opens Heaven or Hell for us, is with every *individual Man*, in every Place, and in every Age of the World; and that one Thing is the *Working of the Will*. And when, in any such Man, his Will is turned from his own earthly Self, and this earthly Life, and worketh with its Desire to God, then all these Sayings of the Scripture are true of him; *viz.*, 'That he is redeemed from this 'evil World—that he has his Conversation in Heaven—that he 'is of God, and heareth God's Word—that he is saved by Faith—that Christ is revealed to him—that he is Christ's, and Christ is 'his—that Christ is in him of a Truth—and that he is led by 'the Spirit of Christ.' All these Texts would be true of him though he had never seen, nor heard, a Syllable of the written Word of God.

For the *Word* of God which saveth and redeemeth, which giveth Life and Light to the Soul, is not the Word printed on Paper, but is that eternal, *ever-speaking Word*, which is the Son of God, who in the Beginning was with God, and was the God by whom all Things were made. This is the universal Teacher and Enlightener of all that are in Heaven, and on Earth; who from the Beginning to the End of Time, without Respect of Persons, stands at the Door of every Heart of Man, speaking into it not human Words, but *Divine Goodness*; calling and knocking, not with outward Sounds, but by the *inward Stirring* of an awakened Divine Life. And therefore, as sure as that is true, which St. *John* saith, That this eternal Word 'is the Life of 'Men, and the Light that lighteth every Man that cometh 'into the World,' so sure is it, that our Saviour and Salvation, our Teacher and Enlightener, from whom we have every good Thought, is *Christ within us*; not within this or that Man, but in every Man wherever born, and in whom the Light of Life ariseth. And indeed how can it be otherwise? For if God is the God of all Men; and the *Word* of God the Life and Light of all Men; and all Men are capable of Goodness; and all Goodness can only be from God; and no Goodness can belong to Man, but that which is *within* him, then every Man must have the *Word*, or *Christ* of God within him, and can have it nowhere else. All Teachers therefore, who teach Men to look for Life or Salvation in anything but the *Word* and Spirit of God within them, stand chargeable with the Blood and Death of Souls; because, in all the Possibility of Things, nothing can overcome

that Death which is in the Soul, but the *Word*, or *Christ* of God, living and working in it. For observe, Man must have Goodness in the same Way as God hath Goodness, that is, from the Divine Nature; for Goodness is nowhere else, neither is anything else capable of it; and therefore, if Goodness is to be in Man, the Divine Nature must, of all Necessity, be first brought to Life *within him*. But this cannot be, till the working Will of our Heart turns and gives up itself wholly to the Word and Spirit of God *within us*. For we can have nothing but that, towards which the Earnestness of our Will goeth.

Again, see here in a still higher Degree of Proof, the absolute Necessity, and unspeakable Benefit of the *Spirit of Prayer*; how it does, and must, in spite of all Opposition, raise the fallen Soul out of the Poverty of Flesh and Blood, into the Riches of an heavenly Nature brought forth in it. For since all Things in Heaven and Earth stand in a magic Birth, or Working of the Will; the Will is that, which hath all Power; it unites all that is united in Heaven or on Earth; it divides and separates all that is divided in Nature; it makes Heaven, and it makes Hell; for there is no Hell, but where the Will of the Creature is turned from God; nor any Heaven, but where the Will of the Creature worketh with God. Therefore, as we pray, so we are; and as our Will-Spirit secretly worketh, so are we either swallowed up in the Vanity of Time, or called forth into the Riches of Eternity. And therefore the Spirit of Prayer is most justly conceived, and most simply expressed, when it is said to be the Rising of the Soul out of the Vanity of Time into the Riches of Eternity: For all the Vanity which the Soul hath, is from its living in, and loving the Things of Time; and therefore it can only come out of the Vanity of its State, by loving and living in the Truths, which are the Riches of Eternity: For the Spirit of Prayer is the Hunger of the Soul; and as every Hunger is, so it eats; it always eateth that which it hungereth after, and hath a Life suitable to the Nature, State, and Condition, both of its Hunger, and its Food. If it hungereth after the Things of Flesh and Blood, it eateth nothing else, and only groweth in the bestial Life; and of the Flesh must reap the Corruption that belongs to Flesh: And if it hungereth after God, it eateth the Food which giveth Life to the Angels; it eateth the Bread that is come down from Heaven; namely, the real heavenly Body and Blood of *Christ*, which surely may be called the Riches of Eternity.

All the Mysteries of Religion, and the Necessity of the whole Process of *Christ* in our Redemption, have all of them their Ground, and Necessity, and Efficacy, in this *magic Nature* of Things, and are all of them only for this one End, to help fallen

Man to have a *working Will* towards that first Life, which he has lost. And therefore no one joins with the Mysteries of Redemption, or can have any Share in them, but he whose Will turns wholly from this World, and hath all its Working towards God and Heaven. And now, Sir, you see the plain, and easy, and certain Deliverance from all Perplexity and vain Labour in the Disputes and Divisions of Religion. It is but opening your natural Eyes, that is, letting simple Nature work with its own Power, and all Difficulties are removed; and the Way to God and Goodness is as natural, and as free from all Perplexity, as the opening our Eyes to see the Light of the Sun. For what is so natural to Man as the Working of the Will; And yet he can have nothing, or be anything, different from that, to which his Will worketh.

Nor does this at all too much exalt the human Will, or make our Salvation not to be the *pure Grace and Gift* of God to us, but quite the contrary. For the Will here spoken of, is not the Will of Flesh and Blood, but that heavenly Will, which is the only Spark of the Deity in us, given by the free Grace of God to all Mankind, as soon as fallen, and called in Scripture the *inspoken Word* of God in Paradise; which was the Beginning of the Redemption, when God first entered into a Covenant of Salvation with *Adam*, and all his Posterity. This *inspoken Word* is *Christ*, or the Spark of the Divine Nature, which is the Light that lighteth every Man that cometh into the World. And here, in this *Christ in us*, lieth the *Will* that hath the *Power* of Salvation in it; and all its Salvation is the Salvation of *Christ*. For it is the Will of this heavenly Nature, hid in every Man, that is the working Will, that bringeth forth the New Birth of Heaven in us; and therefore is the *pure free* Salvation of *Christ*, given to be a Redeemer within us. So that all our Salvation, though wrought out by this working Will within us, is, from the Beginning to the End, the pure Grace of God to us, and no Salvation of our own.

And thus, Sir, you see, that every Soul of Man is partly human, and partly Divine; and is united to an earthly and an heavenly Nature; and so not only can, but must, always work either with one or the other, and has nothing else to work with; and must and can be, or have nothing else, but as he followeth or worketh with either of these Wills. So that, infallibly to know both your present and future State, what you are, and to what you belong, you need only to see, what you cannot help seeing, *how*, and *where*, and to *what*, your Will worketh.

And thus, from this Knowledge of the magic Nature of Things, which all are that which they are, solely from the Working of

the Will in everything, you are delivered from all vain Labour and Party-Zeal; and are brought back to that true and safe Ground; on which God has placed you to work out your own Salvation, without any Hindrance from any Builders of *Babel*, of whatever Denomination.

The Short is this: The whole Matter of Religion relates only to *Life and Death*. But Life and Death are both of them immutable, and founded in the unchangeable Nature of Things. Nothing can alter them, or invent a new Way, either to or from either of them. To what purpose then, is all this dividing into so many Parties? Why all this Strife and Zeal about Opinions? Death and Life go on their own Way, carry on their own Work, and stay for no Opinions. Does the *Stone* stop, or alter its Tendency towards the Earth? Do the Sparks and Flame cease to fly upwards, because Philosophers dispute and quarrel about the Reasons of one or the other? No; Nature goes on in its own Way, let Reason say what it will. Now *Death* and *Life* have their own unchangeable Nature and Working in and from themselves; and are just as distinct from, and independent of, all Opinions of Men about them, as the Things just now mentioned: So that to will and work, as *Life* willeth and worketh, and to will and work, as *Death* willeth and worketh, is the one only possible Way to partake either of Life or Death. What a Delusion is it therefore, to grow grey-headed in balancing ancient and modern Opinions; to waste the precious uncertain Fire of Life in critical Zeal, and verbal Animosities; when nothing but the kindling of our working Will into a Faith, that overcometh the World, into a steadfast Hope, and ever-burning Love, and Desire of the Divine Life, can hinder us from falling into eternal Death!

Academicus. Oh! *Theophilus*, you have led me into a Depth, that I never thought of seeing into.

For this magic Power of everything, that works in all Nature and Creature, shows me everything in a new View. You might well say, that Reason has no Power in this Mystery; that nothing is proposed to it: For since Life and Death have their own Working within themselves, and must at last, when Time is at an End, divide and take Possession of everything, according as its Will has worked either with one or the other, it signifies no more to them what Reason has been all this time discoursing about, than in what Language a Man used to talk. But before you go any further, I beg a Word or Two on these Matters. *First*, How I am to understand our Author, when he says, 'Here the 'Reader must have magical Eyes;' and, 'This or that hath a 'magical Understanding.' And, *Secondly*, That you would, as

you promised, show, how the speaking thus of this magical Power of Life, is strictly conformable to the Spirit of the Gospel.

Theophilus. As to your First Matter, concerning *magical Eyes*; I should have thought the Thing plain enough already. But you may understand it thus. When a *Carpenter* cuts Timber into various Shapes and Forms, and then joins one Piece to another, till it is formed into the Shape of a House; this is no magical Work, because one Part does not grow from the other, till the Whole is brought forth, and therefore there is no need of magical Eyes to see what this Work is. But when an Oak groweth from an Acorn, or a Plant from a Seed in the Ground, here the Work is magical; that is, it is a Birth or Product generated from the working Will in the Acorn and Seed, from whence the Stem, and all its Branches and Fruits, grow forth; which working Will continueth, till the Plant or Tree hath reached its Limit, that is, till the working Will in the seed hath spent itself. Now all this is a magical Work, and therefore can only be seen by such magical Eyes, as can see into the Beginning, and go on with the Working of that which works and generates in the Tree or Plant.

As to your other Matter, How this Language of the magical Working of the Will, is 'entirely conformable to the Spirit of the 'Gospel;' the Answer is easy, because the Thing is plain. For the first possible Beginning of the Christian Life, is, by the Founder of it, expressly laid in a *New Birth* from above, and therefore plainly declared to be a magical Work, and to have no other Nature; because a generating Work, and a magical Work, are only different Expressions for the same Thing. And as the Beginning, so every following Advancement in the Christian Life, is as really and truly only a Growth of Life, or magical Birth from the Powers of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, upon the working Will in the Soul, as the Plant, from its first Stirring in the Seed, to its last State, is only a Growth from the Powers of the Sun, Stars, and Elements, upon the working Will in the seed.

Everything that is outward in Religion, whether it be *Men* or *Things*, *planting* or *watering*, is only for the sake of this inward Birth; either to direct Man to it, to help him to work in it, or warn him of that eternal Death, which the Will, working according to Flesh and Blood, must inherit as its own genuine Fruit. And whoever fancies the Christian Life to be anything else than a Birth growing up in God, till it comes to the Perfection of the Divine Life, by the same Way of a gradual Growth, and in the same Reality, as the finished Flower has all its Perfection by way of a gradual Growth from the Seed, has not a Syllable in the Gospel, nor an Instance in Nature, to plead in Excuse of his fanciful Error.

For nothing worketh in all Nature or Grace, but what worketh as a Birth, or magical Growth of Life. For nothing can come from the living God but Life, nor for any other End, but to manifest some Kind or Degree of Life. There are no dead Forms, or lifeless Inventions to be found, till you come to the mechanic Works of Men's Hands, and the cobweb Schemes of dead Knowledge, brought forth by human Reason. For Reason is the old Serpent called Subtlety, the first and the last grand Deceiver of Mankind, that takes them from the powerful Workings of Nature, to follow the Shadows of empty Sounds, till all is swallowed up either by final Life or Death, which will at last reap everything into its own unchangeable Barn.

Again, *Faith*, and *Hope*, and *Love*, and *Desire* towards God, are the only Gospel Means of bringing forth the New Birth; and therefore all that the Gospel requires, is a magical Working of the Will.

For all these Powers, whether of Faith, Hope, Love, and Desire towards God and the Divine Life, are only so many different Powers of the Working of the Will, and have all their Efficacy, as so many Parts of it; and only alter, raise, and bring forth a New Life, because the Working of the Will is magical, and generates as it works, and unites with that which it willeth. And thus *Christ*, or the New Man in *Christ Jesus*, is formed in us, from a Seed of Heaven, which is the Will that can work towards God, till it becomes a godly Birth, as the Seed works towards the Sun, till it is changed into the Birth of a beauteous fragrant Flower.

Again, Hence it is, namely, from this magic Power of the Working of the Will, that our blessed Lord speaks so often of the Omnipotence of Faith; *viz.*, 'That all Things are possible to him that believeth.—Whatsoever ye shall ask in Prayer, believing, ye shall receive.—If ye had Faith but as a Grain of Mustard-seed, ye Might say to this Tree, Be thou plucked up by the Root; and to this Mountain, Be thou cast into the Sea; and it should be done.—Thy Faith hath saved thee.—According to thy Faith, so be it done unto thee.'

Hence all these Truths plainly follow: *First*, That *Faith*, which is in itself only the Working of the Will, is the Source of all Power; and that all that is done in Nature is done by it alone; and that therefore all Nature standeth in a magic Working of the Will. For *all Things could not be possible to him that believeth*, but because Faith, or the Working of the Will, is the true Source of all Power in or over Nature. *Secondly*, Here is a full Demonstration of the high and powerful State, in which Man was at first created! A Lord over all this outward World; who could, by

the Working of his Will, command the Obedience of all things about him.

This was the Dominion he had over all the Creatures on the Earth, in the Sea, and in the Air ; not such a poor power as invented Weapons, or the Strength of his Hands and Feet, could help him to ; but a Power here mentioned, of standing still, and, by the Faith or Will of his Mind, making every Creature to come or go, just as the faithful Disciple of *Christ* was, by his Faith, to have Power over every outward Thing of this World.

Now all this high State of his first Power, is undeniable from the Words of our Saviour. For it is not to be supposed, that he would turn Men's Thoughts to any such Powers, as to have *all Things obedient to their Faith*, or the working Will of their Minds, if this had not been Man's first created State, or such Powers as did then belong to it. For no Man or Creature can have any higher Power, than that which belongs to his first created State.

And therefore all Gospel Faith, however wonderful in its Power, can only have *somewhat* of that first powerful Faith, which Man had when he first came out of the Hands of God. And Faith *now* in a Redeemer, can only be the Means of obtaining Salvation, for this Reason ; because Faith was *then* that original high Power in Man, which could have preserved him in his first Perfection and Glory of Life. Thus, when *Christ* saith, 'Thy Faith hath saved thee,' it is the same thing as if he had said, Faith had always such Power ; that Faith was the *Strength* and *Glory* of the First Man, that could have saved him from falling under the Power of the Stars and Elements ; that it was Faith alone which could and did put an End to his first paradisaical Glory, by turning its Strength and Desire into the Life of this World. *Again*, when our Lord saith, 'According to thy Faith, so be it done unto thee ;' this was no new Thing, or new Operation in the Power of Faith, but was only a Declaration of a Truth as old as Nature and Creature, and was in Reality so much said of the powerful Faith of the First Man ; and infallibly shows, that as *now*, so *then*, nothing was done to him in his Fall, but that which was done according to the Faith and Working of his Will. For this is God's immutable righteous Procedure with Man, that nothing but his own Works can follow him ; and that, from first to last, whether standing or falling, according to his Faith, and working Will, so must it be done unto him. And therefore Man's Faith and working Will, was his Divine Power of living superior to, and independent of all the Stars and Elements of this World, in his own angelic Perfection of a Divine Life.

For if the Revival of Faith, in so small a Degree, as to be compared to a Grain of Mustard-seed, could bring forth in Man such a Divine Power over all the Things of this World, is it not a sufficient Proof of the high Power of his first lost Faith, which only thus coming again, as the smallest of Seeds, yet comes with such mighty Power over all outward Nature, the Flesh and the Devil? And thus, all that is said in the Gospel, of the Power of Faith, is, in the strictest Truth, so much said of the Power and Perfection of our first Father, over whom this earthly System had no Power: But whether he stood, or fell, or was to rise again, all was, and is, and must be done, by his Faith, or the Working of his Will.

And thus also, you see, that all that was said of the Nature and Extent of the *magic Power* of the Will, is not only conformable to, but is the *very Spirit* of the Gospel, and all the written Word of God. For from the first Promise made to *Adam*, to the last written Words of Scripture, Man is only called and directed to the true Exercise of these *magic, generating Powers* of the Will; namely, to *believe*, to *hope*, to *trust* in God; to *love*, *desire*, and *expect* the Renewal of a Divine Life from the Goodness of God.

Humanus. Give me leave only to add, that in these Words of our Saviour, 'According to thy Faith, so be it done unto thee,' and other such like Sayings, he has not only opened the true Nature and Power of Faith, but has discovered more of the true Philosophy of Nature, than ever was told the World before. Faith is generally considered as a speculative Thing, as an Assent of the Mind to the Credibility of Things related. This may sometimes, as well in the Scriptures, as in any other Books, be called Faith, as the same Word may be used in various Senses. But the Faith in Question, about which our Saviour speaks, and to which he ascribes so much Power, and which alone can do a Man any real Good or Harm, is quite of another Nature: I say, Good or Harm; because all that is good or bad proceeds from it, and carries its Power, which way it will: As it can work all Wonders, and overcome the World; so it alone has Power over Life and Heaven in the Soul, can drive them out, and set up the Kingdom of Hell and Death instead of them.

Now this Faith may be thus understood; it is that *Power by which a Man gives himself up to anything, seeks, wills, adheres to, and unites with it, so that his Life lives in it, and belongs to it.* Now to whatever the Soul gives itself up; whatever it hungereth after; and in which it delights, and seeks to be united; there, and there only, is *its Faith*; that Faith which can work either Life or Death, and according to which Faith, everything is, and must be done to Man.

Now this Faith is not a Matter of Choice, so that a Man may live without it, if he pleases ; but essential to his Life, and altogether inseparable from it. For whatever the Life drives at, to whatever it is given up, there is its *living* and *powerful* Faith. Therefore, be a Man given up to what he will, seeking, delighting, and acquiescing in whatever it be, temporal or eternal, whether it be Christianity, Idolatry, Deism, or Atheism ; this is a certain Conclusion, that every Man in the World is a Man of Faith, lives by Faith, and that equally so ; because every Man's Life is equally given up to the seeking, and delighting in, and uniting itself to, something or other ; and therefore every Man equally lives by Faith, and that in its highest Degree. It matters not, whether a Man delights and acquiesces in the Philosophy of *Epicurus*, or *Spinoza* ; whether he be *given up* to Luxury and Sensuality, or to Syllogisms and Definitions, to Mysteries of Redemption, or Mysteries of Atheism : He is neither more nor less a Man of Faith for all this ; but is equally under the Power of Faith, whether it be Divine, earthly, sensual, or devilish. For which way soever the Life of Man tends, or drives ; to whatever he gives up himself ; there he is, and lives by Faith, and that in its highest Degree ; for no Faith can rise higher than this. Nor can a Man's Faith be anywhere, but where his Life is, and to which it belongs ; nor can he be said to live to anything, but by Faith. For Faith is as much the one working Power of Life, as Thought is the one working Power of the Understanding ; and the Understanding of Man may as easily proceed without being led by Thought, as the Life of Man go on without being led by *Faith* ; that is, without *giving itself up to something*, or other, with which it would be united, and to which it would belong, as its desired Good ; which, as I said before, is the highest Degree of the most living Faith.

The Debate therefore, set up by the Deists, about *Reason* and *Faith*, as two Principles of Life ; the one appropriated to Christians, and the other to themselves, is founded on the grossest Ignorance of both their Natures ; as great as that of supposing, that there are two Principles of seeing and smelling ; *viz.*, *Reason* and the *Senses*. And the Deist, who turns from all Faith, to have a Life of Reason, proceeds as much according to Nature, as if he were to leave it to Christians, to see and smell by their Senses ; but himself and Brethren to see and smell by the Power of Reason. For Reason is no more the Power of Life, than it is the Power of the Senses ; it can no more enter into, mix, or co-operate with *Life*, than with the Senses ; but must stand below them both, and follow them both, in the same Degree of Inability to alter, increase, or lessen the natural Power of either of them,

as the Eye hath to alter the Vegetation, or Colour, or Smell, of the Plant on which it looks. For Reason like the Eye, is only an outward Looker on; and can no more form, or model, or alter the Life of the Soul, than it can alter the Life and Vegetation of the Body. But this Saying, 'According to thy Faith, so 'be it done unto thee,' contains the unchangeable Ground, and true Philosophy of *Life*, and the Power of Life. And this Saying takes in every Individual of human Nature; and the Deist may as well think of turning Death over to the Christians, and reserving Immortality for himself, as to think of being anything else, either here or hereafter, but purely and solely that, which his Faith has brought to pass in him. He may, indeed, easily enough keep himself free from all Christian Faith; but, whether he will or no, a Faith must do all in him, and for him, just in the same Degree, as it does for the Christian. Let him make ever so many Declarations against the Superstition and Blindness of Faith; ever so many Encomiums upon the Beauty of Axioms, Syllogisms, and Deductions of Reason; his Life is just as far from being a Life of Reason, as the Christian's is, who declares only for a Life of Faith. For as the *Eye* and the *Nose* have just the same Nature, Office, and Power, in a Man, whether he be Deist, or Christian; and he cannot, as such, have either more or less from them, or be more or less helped by them; so Reason and Faith have just the same Nature, Office, and Power in a Man, and are always in him, and will always do the same for him, whether he be Christian or Deist. And was the Deist to change Sides, he would be neither more nor less a Man of Faith and Reason, than he was before; nor have got or lost any Power either of Faith or Reason. He would only be under a Divine, instead of an earthly and sensual Faith; and his Reason would not have changed its State, or Office, or Power, but only be the Servant of a better Master; that is, of a Divine Faith.

Now, was not Faith the Power of Life in *every* Man, no Man could live by Faith, nor could it be the Principle or Power of Life in *any* Man. But seeing every Man, whether earthly or heavenly, is that which he is, by Faith; and Faith will and must have its Work in every Man; and he cannot live without it, or free from it; hence is the absolute Necessity of the *one right* Faith, in order to Salvation, and the Impossibility of anything else to avail in the stead of it. Thence also it is, that Christianity applies not to the Reason of any Man, because Reason is not the Principle of Life, or the Former of it; but it calls the Heart to a right Faith, because Man is only lost and separate from God and Heaven, by his Faith in the Things and Powers of this World. And therefore all Salvation does, and only can,

arise from a Faith turned to God ; and also all Damnation from Faith in the Things of this World. And no Man can turn either to God, or to this World, but by Faith ; that is, by giving up himself either to the one, or the other ; which is the *highest* Act or Power of Faith. For there is nothing that works either to Life or Death, in any Man, but *that* to which he is given up, by *Faith* in it. And Reason never had, nor ever can have, or do anything else, but one and the same *Under-work*, or Office, let Faith take which way it will.

The Delusion of the Deist lies here : He refuses an Assent to the *History of Facts and Doctrines* of the Gospel ; and this is *his Proof* to himself that he lives by Reason, and that it is the real Principle of his Life. On the other hand, he that assents to the History of Facts and Doctrines of the Gospel, is, by the Deist, reckoned to be a Man of Gospel Faith, and that lives by it. But this is all Mistake on both Sides. For this Assent on one Side, and Dissent on the other, touches not the Matter either of Reason or Faith. For both these Persons, notwithstanding this Difference of assenting, may not only be equally governed by Faith ; but have strictly one and the same Faith. For if the Things of this World have the Heart of both of them, which very easily may be, then they have but *one* and the same Faith, and are equally governed by it ; for they both equally *live by a Faith* in this World.

The Deist therefore hath no other possible way of showing, that he is not as much a Man of Faith, as any Christian can be, but by showing that he has no Will, no Desire, no Inclination of Heart left in him ; that his Life drives no way, is given up to no one thing, as its End and Good ; but that Reason, without *Affection*, carries him only from Syllogism to Syllogism, in Quest of nothing. Then it is, that he may deem himself to be a Man of Reason, but not till then ; for if he has any Heart that hath any Inclination to be *united with or belong to anything*, then he becomes a Man of Faith, and he lives by Faith in that, to which he is given up, as much as any Christian does, who is given up to the Mysteries of Christian Redemption.

I could not help saying thus much on this Delusion, in which I have been so long ensnared myself, and therefore have the utmost good Will and Earnestness to help others out of it. And, to this End, I shall add the following Passages, taken from a Book, where this whole Matter is justly said to be examined to the Bottom. ‘ We have no Want of Religion, but *so far* as we ‘ want to *better our State* in God ; or so far as we are *unpossessed* ‘ of God, or less possessed of him than we might be, and our ‘ Nature requires. This is the true and only Ground of Religion ;

' *viz.*, to alter our State of Existence *in God*, and to have more
 ' of the Divine Nature and Perfections communicated to us.
 ' Nothing therefore is our *Good* in Religion, but *that* which *alters*
 ' our State of Existence in God for the better, and puts us in
 ' Possession of *something* of God; or makes us Partakers of the
 ' Divine Nature, in such a Manner and Degree as we wanted it.
 ' Everything that is in Life, has its Degree of Life in and from
 ' God; it lives and moves and has its Being in God. This is as
 ' true of Devils, as of the highest and most perfect Angels.
 ' Therefore, all the Happiness or Misery of all Creatures consist
 ' only in this; *viz.*, as they are *more* or *less* possessed of God, or
 ' as they differently partake of the Divine Nature or according
 ' to their *different State* of Existence in God. But if this be a
 ' Truth (and who can deny it?) then we have the Certainty of
 ' Demonstration, that nothing can be *our Good* in Religion, but
 ' that which *communicates* to us *something* of God, or the Divine
 ' Nature, or that which *better*s our State and Manner of Existence
 ' in God.

' For if Devils are what they are, because of their State and
 ' Manner of *Existence in God*; if blessed Angels are what they are,
 ' because of their State, and Manner of Existence in God; then
 ' it undeniably follows, that all that is betwixt Angels and Devils,
 ' all Beings, from the Happiness of the one, to the Misery of the
 ' other, must and can have no other Happiness or Misery, but
 ' according to their *State* and Manner of Existence in God, or
 ' according as they have more or less of the State of Angels, or
 ' the State of Devils, in them. Therefore nothing can be our
 ' *Good* in Religion, but that which *alters* our State and Manner
 ' of Existence in God, and renders us possessed of him in a
 ' different and better Manner.

' Now, if you were to send to the fallen Spirits of Darkness all
 ' the Systems of your *Religion of Reason*, that have been pub-
 ' lished, to let them know that they have the Power of their own
 ' Restoration and Happiness within themselves; that they need
 ' seek to nothing, but their own natural Reason and Understand-
 ' ing, and the Strength and activity of their own Powers, to raise
 ' them to all the Happiness they are capable of; such a Religion
 ' would be so far from altering or mending their State of Exist-
 ' ence in God, or doing them any Good, that it would add Strength
 ' to all their Chains; and the more firmly they believed and relied
 ' upon it, the more would they be confirmed and fixed in their
 ' Separation from God. And yet, a Religion that must neces-
 ' sarily keep them in Hell, is the *only Religion*, that you will have
 ' to carry you to Heaven. May God deliver you from this Error!

' Hence it sufficiently appears, that your Way of *natural*

‘ *Reason*, cannot be the Way of Salvation ; because the Want of
 ‘ Salvation is nothing else, but the wanting to have *our State and*
 ‘ *Manner of Existence in God altered for the better*, or to have
 ‘ *something of God communicated to us, which we want*, and are
 ‘ capable of receiving. But if this is, and must be, the Nature
 ‘ of Salvation ; then no Religion can *save us*, or do us our proper
 ‘ Good, or supply our proper Want, but that which has Power to
 ‘ *alter our State of Existence in God, or to communicate to us*
 ‘ *that of God, which we want, and are capable of*. And there-
 ‘ fore, nothing but that same Power of God, which created us,
 ‘ which gave us our State and Manner of Existence in God, and
 ‘ communicated to us that which we possess in him, can redeem
 ‘ us, or help us to that State and Manner of Existence in him,
 ‘ which we have lost, and are in Want of.

‘ There never could have been any Dispute, about the Possi-
 ‘ bility of saving ourselves by our own natural Faculties, had not
 ‘ Men lost all true Knowledge both of God and themselves. For
 ‘ this Dispute cannot happen, till Men suppose God to be some
 ‘ *outward Being* ; that our Relation to him is some *outward Rela-*
 ‘ *tion* ; that Religion is an *outward Thing*, that passes between
 ‘ God and us, like Terms of Behaviour between Man and Man ;
 ‘ that Sin hurts, and separates us from God, only as a Misdemeanour
 ‘ hurts, and separates us from our Prince ; that an offended
 ‘ God either gives or refuses Pardon to us, as an angry Prince does
 ‘ to his Subjects ; and that, what gives or forgives to us, is some-
 ‘ thing as distinct or different from himself, as when a Prince, sit-
 ‘ ting upon his Throne, gives or forgives something to an Offender,
 ‘ that is an hundred Miles from him.

‘ Now all this is the same total Ignorance of God, what he is
 ‘ in himself, and what he is in relation to us, and the Manner of
 ‘ his being *our Good*, as when the old Idolaters took Men to be
 ‘ Gods. And yet nothing is more plain, than that your Religion
 ‘ of Reason is *wholly founded* upon all these gross and false
 ‘ Notions of God. You have not an Argument in its Defence,
 ‘ but what supposes, that our Relation to God is an *outward*
 ‘ *Relation*, like that of Subjects to their Prince ; and that what
 ‘ we do to and for God, as our Service to him, is, and must be
 ‘ done, by our own Power, as that which we do to and for our
 ‘ Prince, must be done by our own Power. And from these
 ‘ Errors it is, that you draw this false Conclusion, that if our own
 ‘ Reason and natural Power were not sufficient to obtain for us
 ‘ all that we want, and God requires of us ; God must be less
 ‘ good than a good earthly Prince, who requires no more of us,
 ‘ than that which we have a natural Strength to do, or can do by
 ‘ our own Power. And yet all this is pure Absurdity, and has

‘ all the Grossness of Idolatry in it, as soon as you know, that
 ‘ God is no *outward* or *separate* Being ; but that we are what we
 ‘ are, have what we have, and do that which we can do, because
 ‘ he has brought us to this State of Life, Power, and Existence
 ‘ in *himself* ; because he has made us, so far as we are made,
 ‘ Partakers or Possessors of a Life *in him*, and has communi-
 ‘ cated to us, such a Life in himself ; or in the Words of Scrip-
 ‘ ture, because, *in him we live and move and have our Being*, and
 ‘ consequently have no Life, Motion, or Being, *out of him*. For
 ‘ from this State of our Existence in God, it necessarily follows ;
 ‘ *First*, That, by the Nature of our Creation, we are only put
 ‘ into a Capacity of *receiving* Good. A Creature, as such, can
 ‘ be in no other State ; it is impossible for him to enrich himself,
 ‘ or communicate more Good to himself, as it was to create
 ‘ himself. *Secondly*, That nothing but God can do us any Good.
 ‘ *Thirdly*, That God himself cannot do us any Good, but by the
 ‘ Communication of himself, in some manner, to us. Hence it is
 ‘ plain, that your Religion of Reason, which suppose, that we have
 ‘ natural Powers, that can put us in Possession of that which we
 ‘ want to be possessed of in God ; or, that we need no more
 ‘ Divine Assistance to recover what we have lost of God, than
 ‘ to obtain a Pardon from a Prince ; or, that God need communi-
 ‘ cate no more of himself to us in our Reconcilement to him,
 ‘ than a Prince communicates of himself to his pardoned Sub-
 ‘ ject ; has all the *Mistakes, Error*, and Ignorance of God, that is
 ‘ in *Idolatry*, when it takes God to be something that he is not ;
 ‘ and has all the false Devotion that is in Idolatry, when it puts
 ‘ the same Trust in, and expects the same Benefit from, its own
 ‘ Powers and Faculties, which Idolaters did in and from their
 ‘ Idols. Your Religion of Reason, therefore, which you esteem
 ‘ as the modern Refinement of the human Mind, and more excel-
 ‘ lent and rational, than the Faith and Humility of the Gospel,
 ‘ has all the Dregs of the grossest heathen Idolatry in it ; and
 ‘ has changed nothing in Idolatry, but the Idol ; and only differs
 ‘ in such a Degree of Philosophy, as the Religion of worshipping
 ‘ the *Sun*, differs from the Religion of worshipping an *Onion*.

‘ For as soon as it is known and confessed, that God is all in
 ‘ all ; that in him we live and move and have our Being ; that
 ‘ we have nothing *separately*, or at a *Distance*, from him, but
 ‘ everything in him ; that we have no Degree of Being, nor any
 ‘ Degree of Good, but in him ; that the Almighty can give us
 ‘ nothing, but that which is *something* of himself ; nor any De-
 ‘ gree of Amendment or Salvation, but in such Degree as he
 ‘ communicates *something more* of himself to us ; as soon as this
 ‘ great immutable Truth is known, then it is known with the

‘ utmost Certainty, that to put our Trust in the *Sun*, or an *Onion*,
‘ or our *own Reason*, if not equally absurd, is yet equally idola-
‘ trous, and equally prejudicial to our Salvation.’*

And now, *Theophilus*, if you please, you may proceed in the
Matter you were upon.

Theophilus. We have discoursed long enough for this time.
Let Silence, Recollection, inward and outward Retirement, have
their Work for a few Days. They purify the Heart; they
weaken and disarm Self; they strengthen the Spirit of Prayer,
and help us not only to pray, but to find, to love, and live in
God. Let us all desire such an Interval as this; and then we
shall be fitter to meet again for our mutual Benefit. My Friends,
adieu.

The End of the Second DIALOGUE.

* *A Demonstration of the Gross and Fundamental Errors of a late Book,*
entitled, ‘ A plain Account of the Sacrament,’ &c., page 82, &c., &c.

THE THIRD DIALOGUE.

ACADEMICUS. If you please, *Theophilus*, pray go on, just where you left off at our last Meeting. For this Mystery seems to be at Daybreak with me; and the Approach of its Light leaves me no Power to be content without it.

Theophilus. You have seen, that all Nature begins and stands in a *magic* Birth; and is only a large Display of its working Power in every kind of Creature. You now want to see further into this Mystery, how Eternal Nature begins; and how God, the first, hidden, imperceptible Cause of all After-Things, manifests himself in the Properties of a visible and working Nature. Now I would, to the best of my Power, gladly assist you in this Matter, if I could find out a Way of doing it, by opening in your Heart a Knowledge of God, of Nature, and yourself, without helping you to a *mere Opinion*, or increasing your Thirst after Ideal Speculation. Tell me, therefore, what you propose by the Gratification of this Desire; or what Effect you expect from such Knowledge, as you here seek.

Academicus. All that I desire by it is, to strengthen and confirm the Ground on which I stand; that, seeing the true Philosophy of Religion, I may have nothing to fear from all that Variety of Attacks which now, more than ever, are made upon it by infidel Reason. I hope, therefore, it is no vain Curiosity, to desire to enter into the Depth of this Mystery, since I only desire thereby Strength to resist all the Enemies of Religion.

Theophilus. All this is right, and very well; provided you do but know who, and what, are the great and powerful Enemies of Religion. But this, perhaps, you do not so well apprehend, as you may imagine. Your own Reason, born, and bred, and governed, by your own Flesh and Blood, is the most powerful Enemy of Religion that you have to do with, and whom you have the most to fear from.

The Men of speculative Reason, whom you seem most to apprehend, are powerless Enemies, that cannot strike at your Religion with the Strength of a Straw. Did you but rightly see what their Power is, you would see it as ridiculous, as that of a few Water-Engines trying to quench the fiery Globe of the Sun: For Reason stands in the same Inability to touch the Truth of

Religion, as the Water-Engines to affect the Sun. Nay, its Inability is much greater; for could the Water, thrown from the Engine, be made to reach the Sun, it would have some, though an insignificant Effect upon it; but Reason can no more affect the Truth of Religion, than *Nothing* can affect *Something*. If Reason seems to have any Power against Religion, it is only where Religion is become a dead Form, has lost its true State, and is dwindled into Opinion; and when this is the Case, that Religion stands only as a well-grounded Opinion, then indeed it is always liable to be shaken; either by having its own Credibility lessened, or that of a contrary Opinion increased. But when Religion is that which it should be, not a Notion or Opinion, but a *real Life growing up in God*, then Reason has just as much power to stop its Course, as the barking Dog to stop the Course of the Moon. For true and genuine Religion is *Nature*, is *Life*, and the *Working* of Life; and therefore, wherever it is, Reason has no more Power over it, than over the Roots that grow secretly in the Earth, or the Life that is working in the highest Heavens. If therefore you are afraid of Reason hurting your Religion, it is a Sign, that your Religion is not yet as it should be, is not a *self-evident Growth of Nature and Life within you*, but has much of mere Opinion in it.

Observe the Word *self-evident*; for there lies the Truth of the Matter; for you have no more of the Truth of Religion, than what is *self-evident* in you. A blind Man may be rich in Notions and Opinions about the Nature, Power, and Good of Light; and in this Case, one blind Man may perplex another, and unsettle his Notions; but when the Light manifests itself, and is become *self-evident*, then he is at once delivered from an Uncertainty about it. Now Religion is Light and Life; but Light and Life can only manifest themselves, and can nowhere be known, but where they are *self-evident*.

You can know nothing of God, of Nature, of Heaven, or Hell, or yourself, but so far as all these Things are *self-evident* in you. Neither could any of these Things be of any Concern to you, but because they can all of them be *self-evident* in you. For the bare History, or Hearsay of any one thing, signifies no more to you, than the Hearsay of any other thing. And if God and Heaven, Hell and the Devil, the World and the Flesh, were not all of them *self-evident* in you, you could have no more Good or Hurt from any Hearsay about them, than from the Hearsay of pleasant Gardens, and dismal Prisons, in the World of the Moon.

Let it be supposed, that your ingenious Reason should suggest to you, that there are no Devils or Hell, and therefore no Occasion to believe that Revelation that gives an Account of *them*:

In this Case, do but turn to that which is *sensible* and *self-evident* in you, and then you must know, in the same Certainty as you know yourself to be alive, that there is *Wrath, Self-torment, Envy, Malice, Evil-will, Pride, Cruelty, Revenge, &c.* Now say, if you please, there are no other Devils but these, and that Men have no other Devils to resist; and then you will have said Truth enough, have owned Devils enough, and enough confessed, that you are in the Midst of them; that you are everywhere tempted by them; and that Flesh and Blood is too weak to resist them, and therefore wants some kind of Saviour, of so contrary a Nature, as has Power to destroy these Works of the Devil in you.

Now this is the only Knowledge that you can possibly have of an outward Hell, and outward Devils; and this Knowledge is as *self-evident* in you as your own Thoughts, and is as near to you as your own Life. But to see and know an outward Hell, or outward Devils, that are outward living Creatures, can never be your own Case, till all that is Divine and human in you is extinguished; and then you will have Knowledge enough, how Hell is a Place, and how the Devils of Rage, Wrath, Envy, and Pride, &c., are living Creatures.

Again, Let it be supposed, that your sceptic Reason had brought you into Doubt about the Being and Providence of God in you: you have no Occasion to consult the Demonstrations which heathen Philosophers, School Divines, Deists, or Atheists, have produced about it, from the Existence of Things; all concluding, as well Christians, as Deists and Atheists, that there must be some eternal first Cause from which all has proceeded.

For what a God is this, that is only proved to be, because something now is, and therefore something must always have been, an infinite, eternal Something, with infinite Power to bring forth all that is come into Being? What a God, I say, is this, which the *Arian*, the Deist, the Atheist, is as willing to own as the Christian; and which is as serviceable to the Cause of *Arianism*, Deism, Idolatry, and Atheism, as it is to Christianity? For the Atheist has his omnipotent, eternal, first Cause, as well as all the Disputers for a God.

But now, if you turn from all these idle Debates and Demonstrations of Reason, to *that* which is *sensible* and *self-evident* in you, then you have a *sensible, self-evident* Proof of the true God of Life, and Light, and Love, and Goodness, as manifest to you as your own Life. For with the same self-evident Certainty, as you know that you think, and are alive, you know that there is *Goodness, Love, Benevolence, Meekness, Compassion, Wisdom, Peace, Joy, &c.* Now this is the *self-evident* God, that forces himself to

be known, and found, and felt, in every Man, in the same Certainty of Self-evidence, as every Man feels and finds his own Thoughts and Life. And this is the God, whose Being and Providence, thus self-evident in us, call for our Worship, and Love, and Adoration, and Obedience to him: And this Worship, and Love, and Adoration, and Conformity to the Divine Goodness, is our *true Belief* in, and *sure Knowledge* of, the self-evident God. And Atheism is not the Denial of a first omnipotent Cause, but is purely and solely nothing else but the disowning, forsaking, and renouncing the Goodness, Virtue, Benevolence, Meekness, &c., of the Divine Nature, that has made itself thus self-evident in us, as the true Object of our Worship, Conformity, Love, and Adoration. This is the *one true God*, or the Deity of Goodness, Virtue, and Love, &c., the Certainty of whose Being and Providence, opens itself to you in the self-evident Sensibility of your own Nature; and inspires his Likeness, and Love of his Goodness, into you. And as this is the only true Knowledge that you can possibly have of God and the Divine Nature, so it is a Knowledge not to be debated, or lessened by any Objections of Reason, but is as self-evident as your own Life. But to find or know God in reality, by any outward Proofs, or by anything but by God himself made manifest and self-evident in you, will never be your Cause either here or hereafter. For neither God, nor Heaven, nor Hell, nor the Devil, nor the World, and the Flesh, can be any otherwise knowable in you, or by you, but by their own Existence and Manifestation in you. And all pretended Knowledge of any of these Things, beyond or without this self-evident Sensibility of their Birth within you, is only such Knowledge of them, as the blind Man hath of that Light, that never entered into him.

And as this is our only true Knowledge, so every Man is, by his Birth and Nature, brought into a certain and self-evident Sensibility of all these Things. And if we bring ourselves by Reasoning and Dispute into an Uncertainty about them, it is an Uncertainty that we have created for ourselves, and comes not from God and Nature. For God and Nature have made that which is our greatest Concern, to be our greatest Certainty; and to be known by us in the same Self-evidence, as our own Pain or Pleasure is. For nothing is Religion, or the Truth of Religion, nothing is good or bad to you, but that which is a self-evident Birth within you. So that if you call that only God, and Religion, and Goodness, which truly are so, and can only be known by their self-evident Powers and Life in you, then you are in the Truth, and the Truth will make you free from all Doubts; and you will no more fear or regard anything, that talkative Reason

can discourse against it, than against your own seeing, hearing, or sensible Life. But if you turn from *Self-Evidence*, to *Reason* and *Opinion*, you turn from the *Tree of Life*, and you give yourself up to certain Delusion.

Wonder not therefore, my Friend, that though the Mystery under Consideration contains the greatest of Truths, yet I am unwilling to help you to reason and speculate upon it; for if you attempt to go further in it, than Self-evidence leads you, you only go so far out of it, or from it. For the End of this Mystery, is not to furnish new or better Matter for Reason and Opinion, but to bring Man home to that *Sensibility*, which is self-evident in himself, and to lead him only by self-evident Principles, to see, and find, and feel the Difference between true and false Religion, in the same Degree of self-evident Certainty, as he sees and feels the Difference between Fire and Water. This, I say, is the great Intent of this Mystery, to bring Man into a Sensibility of God and Nature, to know and feel, that Good and Evil, Life and Death, are a self-evident Growth and Birth of Nature in Man, according as his Will enters into, and works with that which is unchangeably good, or unchangeably evil, in the Working of Nature. Now as the Workings of Nature are unchangeable in their Effects, and that which is naturally good or evil, must be always so; and seeing Man's Life standeth in Nature, and must work with it, must have only that Good or Evil which is unchangeable in Nature; and seeing his State in Nature, whether good or evil, is, and can be, *only that*, which the sensible, self-evident Powers of his own Life manifest to him; then you see the Fitness and Necessity of your keeping steadily to that, which is *self-evident* in you, as the very *Tree of Life*, the Criterion of all that Truth and Goodness that belongs to you. *Secondly*, you see with what good Reason *Jacob Behmen* so often tells you, That all that he has written, was only to 'help Man to seek and 'find himself,' to see and know his *Place* and *State* in Nature, and how to co-operate with God and Nature in generating a Birth of Heaven within himself. *Thirdly*, you may see how you and I should abuse this blessed Mystery, should we, instead of only and truly seeking and finding its Birth within us, make it a Matter of Reasoning and Opinion.

Academicus. I have neither Power nor Inclination to object to anything that you have said. But still I must desire you to assist me, in your own Way, and such as you judge to be suitable to the Intention of this Mystery. I plainly see, that the whole Ground of Religion lies in the Knowledge of what God is in himself, as distinct from Nature; what Nature is in itself; what I have from God, and what I am in and from Nature; and how

I am to work with it, as God himself is and worketh in Nature. For if this Knowledge can be opened in me, then the *Why*, and the *How*, of every Mystery of Redemption must be seen to the Bottom.

Theophilus. By Nature are Meant, *all the working, stirring Properties of Life*, or all the various Sensibilities which Life is capable of finding and feeling in itself. And therefore you need only look at the working Sensibilities of your own Life, the several Kinds and Ways of feeling and finding your own State, to know by a *self-evident* Certainty, what Nature is in itself. And thus also, in the same self-evident Certainty, you may know, that Nature is not God. For as you find, that Nature is opened in you; that all its Properties have their Existence in you; and yet that none of these Properties of Life are their own Happiness, or can make themselves to be happy, full of Peace, Delight, and Joy, and free from every Want; so you have a full self-evident Proof, that God is not Nature but entirely distinct from, and superior to Nature; and that, as considered in himself, he is *That* which alone can make Nature happy, free from Want, and full of all delightful Satisfaction. And thus you know, not from Hearsay, but from a self-evident Certainty in yourself, that God, considered as in himself, is the *Happiness*, the *Rest*, the *Satisfaction*, the *Joy*, the *Fulfilling* of all the Properties and Sensibilities of Nature; and also that Nature, in itself, is that working Life of various Properties and Sensibilities, which *want* to be made happy, which *reach* after something that they are not, and have not, and which cannot be happy or fulfilled, till something of an higher Nature than themselves be united with them; that is, the Working of Nature must be in Want, in Pain, and Dissatisfaction, till God (the Blessing and Fulfilling of Nature) is manifested, found, and enjoyed in it.

Now suppose you knew no more of what God is in himself, distinct from Nature, and what Nature is as thus distinguished from God, than is already opened in you, you would know enough to be a Key to all that which *Jacob Behmen* speaks of God, and of Nature; and enough also to show you how to co-operate with God and Nature, in bringing forth a New Birth of the Divine Life within you. For as soon as you know, that Nature in itself is only a working Life of various Sensibilities, which wants something distinct from itself, and higher than itself, to make it happy, then you have a self-evident Certainty of these following Truths: *First*, That God, considered as in himself, is the Blessing, the Satisfaction, the Heaven, and Happiness, of all and every Sensibility of Nature. *Secondly*, That therefore, as the Gospel teaches, only the *Word*, the *Light*, the Son of God, or *Jesus Christ*, can

redeem fallen Nature, restore it to its first State of Blessedness in God. *Thirdly*, That therefore, as the Gospel teaches, you have but *one Thing* to do, and *that* one Thing absolutely necessary to be done; *viz.*, to *deny yourself*; that is, to turn this fallen Nature from itself, from all its own Wills and Workings in the Vanity of this Life, to give up itself in Faith, in Hunger and Thirst after that Light, Word, Son, or *Jesus Christ* of God, who is the Fulness, the Satisfaction, the Joy, and Blessedness, of all Nature; who alone can turn every Working and Sensibility of Nature into a Participation of heavenly Satisfaction and Joy. Now what can you desire, or need you to know of God, of Nature, and the Mystery of Christian Redemption, more than this? And yet all this is a self-evident Knowledge, born within you as soon as you turn to it.

Academicus. Oh! Sir, you quite transport me with this short, easy, and yet full Explication of so great a Matter, which has often perplexed me. But now I shall never be at a Loss, how to understand the Distinction between God and Nature, and also the absolute Necessity of it; which, when rightly known, sets all the Doctrines and Mysteries of Christian Redemption upon such a Ground, as cannot be removed. But still I must beg of you, to help me to the same Self-evidence of the Birth and Generation of the Properties of Nature, as they are set forth by *Jacob Behmen*, especially of the Three first Forms, which I perceive to be the Ground of all; and yet their Birth and Generation, their Union with, and Distinction from, one another, I do not enough comprehend, as he sets them forth. Thus, the first *Form* of Nature is said to be *Desire*; which is the Ground and Foundation of all Things. This *Desire* (the first Property) he saith, is 'astringing, drawing, shutting up, compressing, hardening,' &c. Now all this is evident enough; for I have a sufficient Sensibility, that this is the Nature of *Desire*; that, in its spiritual Way, it attracts, draws, compresses, and would shut up, or inclose, &c. But then, it is immediately said, that the Second Property is 'Attraction, Drawing, Sting, and Motion,' &c. Now if the First is *Attraction* and *Drawing*, how can the Second be different from it, and yet be *Attraction* and *Drawing*?

Theophilus. The *Desire* is not one *Property*, but is in itself all the Properties of Nature; it is the Ground in which they all dwell, and the Mother out of which they are all born: So that all that is said of the Three First Forms of Nature, is only so much said of Three Forms or Properties of the *Desire*. For the *Desire* is not the First Property of Nature; but every Property hath all that it hath in and from the *Desire*. The First Property of the *Desire*, or that which is the Peculiarity of its Nature, as

distinguished from the Second, is, to *compress, inclose, shut up, &c.* whence cometh *Thickness, Darkness, Hardness, &c.* But no sooner does the Desire begin to compress, shut up, but it brings forth its own greatest Enemy, and the highest Resistance to itself: For it cannot *compress* or *thicken*, but by drawing or attracting; but drawing and attracting is quite contrary to shutting up, or compressing; because drawing or attracting is *Motion*, and every Motion is contrary to shutting up or compressing together.

And thus your Difficulty is removed: Attraction or Drawing is rightly ascribed to the Desire, and rightly called its Second Property, because it is born of it; and yet is directly contrary to that which is the Desire's First Property or Intention; *vis.*, to *compress, to hold in Stillness, &c.*

Now as these Two Properties are Two Resistances, not in Two different Things, but are one and the same Thing in this Contrariety in and to itself, as they are inseparable, generate each other, are equal in Strength, and can neither of them overcome the other, so as to go one Way, but each of them stops the other in the same Manner; and seeing this Desire cannot cease to be these Two contrary Things; *vis.*, a *Holding-fast*, and *Moving-away*, a *Shutting-in*, and a *Going-out*, both in the same Degree of Strength; neither able to shut up, nor to go out, nor able to cease from either; these Two Contrarieties become a *whirling Anguish* in itself, and so bring forth a *Third Property of Nature*. And in these Three Properties lies the true Ground of all Sensibility of Life and also of every created Thing. Matter, Motion, Darkness, Fire, and every natural Power or Quality of anything, has its Beginning from them. Considered in themselves, they are the working Powers of that great and strong creaturely Life, which cannot be broken, because it begets itself, and every Property is included in, and generates each other. It is a Band or Knot of Life, that can never be loosed; nor is capable of Annihilation, because it is a Birth of eternal Nature, which is as unchangeable as God himself. And as it arises from no outward Thing, but is generated in and from itself, its Work is eternal, and can never be made to cease. For as one Property has no Power over the other, but that of *forcing* it to exist; as one Property does not weary the other, but always gives Strength to it; so there can be no Cessation of their working, but they must do, as they do, to all Eternity.

Now the Life of these Three Properties, is a Life of Three contrary Wills, equally strong and powerful against each other; and therefore is a Life of the highest Disquiet, Torment, and Anguish, full of the most horrible Sensibility. It is a Life that can feel nothing but its own tearing Contrariety, that reigns

within it. And this is the Life of Nature separated from God ; it is the Life of Hell, and the Devils ; and is that Life of dark, raging Distraction, which every living Creature must be in, whose first Properties of Life are not softened and quieted, either by the Light of God, or the Light of this World, dwelling and making Peace in them. And he that will only seek to his Reason, to cool the Flame of these raging first Properties of Life, acts as wisely as he, whose House being on Fire, would only have it extinguished, by reading a Lecture upon the Nature of Water to it.

And now, Sir, you have seen plainly enough the Birth, Nature, and Difference of these three first Properties. But let it be supposed, that you have no feeling, or inward Sensibility, of these Three Properties, in the Manner they have been here described, according to *Jacob Behmen* ; yet you have no Reason to be troubled at it, or put your Brain upon the Rack how to conceive it, or fear that you must want the Benefit of this Knowledge, till you have it as above described ; for you have in yourself a most self-evident Proof, that the Thing is really so ; and that Desire hath *all that* in it which he so deeply declares, from its first Seed, or Root.

For it is a Thing self-evident to you, that every Desire, as such, is in itself a restless Torment ; that it hath Pain, Disquiet, and Anguish, in itself ; and, as to itself, consists of nothing else. Now, whether you can, with *Jacob Behmen*, divide this restless, anguishing Desire into its Three essential Parts, of which it consists, matters not, as to the Reality of the Thing itself ; for you have Sensibility enough, that the Desire is made up of Pain and Anguish, till the thing desired is obtained : And therefore you have all the Certainty and Benefit of this Knowledge, and it serves the same End, as if you knew the Ground of it, with the same Exactness as he has set it forth.

You have yourself for a Proof, that Desire and Pain begin together ; and this is a full Proof of what was said ; *viz.*, that Desire Begins with *Two Properties* that resist and strive against one another. Again, you have the same Evidence in yourself, that the Desire, left to itself, that is, without the least Glimpse of any Possibility of having that which it desires, is a Degree of Hell, and quite intolerable to itself : And this is a self-evident Proof of what was said ; *viz.*, that the Third and last Property of the Desire, is that whirling Anguish, brought forth by the Two first Properties : For these Three Properties are the Whole of the Desire ; it has nothing more in it. And when your Desire cannot cease, and yet has nothing but itself, without the least Mixture or Feeling of Hope in it, then you have a full Self-evidence of *all that* which the Desire is, in its Three essential, inseparable

Properties, and that strictly according to the Letter of *Jacob Behmen*.

Now all that is Nature, or natural Life within you, is only the working of Desire in this painful State; and *that* which can set this painful Life at Rest in you, is so much of God, or the Divine Nature, manifested in you, and changing your restless Properties of Life into Peace and Happiness. And as the working Properties of Desire are your natural Life, so the same working Properties are the Life of eternal Nature; from whence, as out of the Womb, your natural Life is brought forth, and hath neither more nor less in it than that which is in eternal Nature.

And if the working Properties, which constitute the Life of eternal Nature, could be supposed to be without God in them, eternal Nature would be a mere eternal Hell: But as the eternal Desire, with all its working Properties, is brought forth by the magic Power of the Divine Will, only for this End, that the holy Deity may manifest a Heaven of Glory in them; so eternal Nature always was, and always must be, a Kingdom of Heaven, or the unchangeable Manifestation of the invisible God in an outward Sensibility of Life, Happiness, Glory, and Majesty.

Academicus. I am fully satisfied as to this Point; and all that you have said, has the Evidence of Light at Noon-day. And I hope you will now go on in the Birth of the Four remaining Properties; and show me, in the same Degree of Evidence, how these Three Properties bring forth the Four following ones, which turn Nature into a Kingdom of Heaven.

Theophilus. These Three Properties of Nature, cannot bring forth the Four following ones. They can bring forth nothing but themselves to all Eternity, nor can ever be anything else in themselves, but what they were at first. Nature can rise no higher than this painful State; and its painful working Contrariety must always be the Ground of all Life, and all Sensibility of Life. For if (1) This Shutting-up, or Compressing; and (2) This Resistance to it; and (3) This Whirling arising from both, was ever to cease, there Life, and all Sensibility, must cease with them; and therefore these Three Properties must always do as they do, as the only possible Ground of every Kind and Degree of every creaturely Life, both in Heaven, and on Earth.

But if Life is to be happy, something else must come into them, not to destroy their natural Working, but to make every Contrariety in them a strife of Joy, and delightful Sensibilities. Thus, (1) Compressing, or Shutting-up, must find itself only to compress and keep in Light and Love; (2) The Attraction or Drawing-motion, must find itself to be the Drawing and Motion

of Love ; and, (3) The whirling Anguish must whirl still, but as a *Transport of Joy*, unavoidably brought forth from the Strife of Love in the Two Properties of which it is born. And thus Nature remains in its full Strength ; it compresses, it attracts, and it whirls, as it did at first ; and nothing is lost, or taken from it, but its Hatred, Wrath, and Misery. Now here you are to observe, that every Thing or Creature, either in Heaven, Hell, or this World, hath its Substance, or all that is Substantially in it, solely from these Three First Properties of Nature. The creaturely Substance of an Angel, a Devil, or a dead Flint, all stand in these Three First Forms of Nature. And all the Difference betwixt high and low, spiritual and material, in the Creatures, arises from their different Participation of the Four following Forms of Nature. But the Four following Forms cannot exist, or manifest themselves, but in the Three first ; and therefore the Three First are, and must be, as well in the highest as in the lowest of Creatures : They are the first *Something*, or *Substantiality* of Nature, in which the Light, and Love, and Spirit of God could manifest itself ; for Spirit cannot work without something to work in and upon, and in which it may be found ; nor could *Light* shine, unless there was *something* in Nature *thicker* than itself, to receive and reflect it : And therefore, *Thickness* or *Darkness* is, and must be, as eternal as the *visible* or *shining* Light. *Darkness* is so far from being a mere *Negation*, or only an *Absence* of the Light, that it is the *first* and *only* Substance, and the Ground of all the possible *Substantiality* in Nature, and the substantial Manifestor of Light itself, which could have no *Visibility*, *Shine*, or *Colour*, but in, and through, and by the *Substantiality* of *Darkness* or *Thickness*. This *Darkness*, *Thickness*, or *Substantiality*, is not co-existent with, or independent of God, but is the *compressing*, *astringing*, *thickening* Work of the first Property of the Desire ; which Desire comes eternally from God, only as a magic Birth from the Will of the Deity, which willeth to come out of its *Hiddenness*, into an outward *Visibility* of a working Life. And therefore the Desire is the Beginning of Nature ; it compresses and thickens. But what does it compress and thicken ? Why, Nothing but itself ; *viz.*, its own Three Properties. And these Three Properties thus brought forth, tied and bound in one another, are, from Eternity to Eternity, all the *Substantiality* and *thickness*, that is or ever can be in Nature, or any Creature, from the Highest to the Lowest. And they are thus brought forth, in this indissoluble Band in and by the Desire, that the invisible Light and Life of the hidden Deity, may have its *Something* to move and shine in ; his hidden Spirit have *Something* to work and manifest itself in ;

his hidden Love have *Something* into which it may give itself ; and his hidden Life have *Something* in which it can open itself in a Variety of Births of Life. And *this Something* is the *working compressing Desire*, which includes in itself, (1) A continual Thickening, which is Darkness and Substantiality ; (2) Motion or Resistance to this Thickening, which is the Ground of all Sensibility ; And, (3) A restless State of Whirling from these two Properties, which is the very Nature and Power of Life. And thus these three Properties of the Desire, are that *sufficient Something*, in which the Deity, by entering into it, can manifest his hidden Power in all the Substances and working Properties of Nature, by turning them all in their different Workings, into an endless Variety of delightful Forms and Sensibilities of the creaturely Life.

Now this first Thickness, Darkness, or Substantiality, brought forth in the Desire, though it is not Matter, as Matter is seen and found in this World ; yet these two Things must be affirmed of it : *First*, That it stands in the same Place, answers the same Ends, and is distinguished from Light and Spirit in the eternal World, just as Matter in this World stands distinguished from the Light and Spirit of this World. *Secondly*, That all the *Darkness*, Thickness, and Matter of every Kind in this World, is nothing else in itself, but the first Thickness, Darkness, and Substantiality in the Desire, brought down by various Steps into such Kinds of Materiality as are here to be seen. Look at what Kind of Materiality you will in this World ; it is, in its whole Nature, nothing else but the Darkness or Thickness of the eternal World, brought into a further Degree of Thickness and Compression. And now we are come to see the true Ground ; (1) How the Angels could destroy their Kingdom, or lose all the Light and Happiness of Heaven in it : And, (2) How also, their wasted, spoiled, darkened Habitation in the divided Properties of Nature, could be turned, and created by God, as it is, into this new Form of a material World.

The first Three Properties of Nature were never to have been seen or known, as they are in themselves, by any Creature ; their Thickness, Strife, and Darkness, were brought forth by God, in Union with the Light, and Glory, and Majesty of Heaven ; and only for that End, that the holy Deity might be made manifest in them. And therefore their own Nature, as they are in themselves, without God in them, could only then be first known, when the Angels turned their Desire backwards, to search and find the Ground and Original of Life, which could not be found, till these Properties were found, in which the original Ground of Life lay hid. This turning of their Desire into the Origin of

Life, was their whole turning from the Light of God ; and therefore they found themselves where they had turned their Desire ; that is, in the Centre of Nature ; *viz.*, in the first Properties of Nature, which is the *Dark Centre*, or Ground of Life, which never should have been known or manifest to any Creature. For by the Centre of Nature, or the *Dark Centre*, you are always to understand these three first Properties ; which, when without or separate from the Light and Goodness of the Deity in them, are in themselves only the Thickness, and Rage, and Darkness, of an omnipotent *Compressing*, an omnipotent *Resistance* to it, an omnipotent *Whirling* from these two omnipotent Contrarieties. I call them all omnipotent, because they cannot be stopped, but do all that they would ; and though they are contrary to one another, yet each of them gives Strength to the other ; so that the Omnipotence of the one, is the Omnipotence of the other.—And this is the boundless, incessant, strong Rage, Darkness, and Strife, of the hellish Life, which only is that, which these Three properties of Nature, when left to themselves, can feel or find. Now the Angels, which turned their Desire into this Centre of Nature, fell into the Life and working Power of these Three Properties : they felt nothing else in themselves, but these Properties ; they had no other Will or Power of Working, but as these Properties worked ; and therefore, as living and active Creatures, they could only live, and act, and co-operate, or unite with that Ground of Nature without them, which was the *same* and *one* with their own Nature ; and therefore, all that they could do, was to stir up, awaken, call forth, and act with that Thickness and Darkness, and Strife, that was hidden in Nature, just as the Toad, in a fine Garden, only sucks the Poison that is hid in a good Herb. So the fallen Angels, though in Heaven, having only the Centre of Nature in themselves, could only find and work with that Centre and Root of Darkness, on which the heavenly Glory stood. But from this Power which they had of working in the Centre of Nature, hence came forth a *dark, wrathful Substantiality*, separated from the Light and Glory of the holy Deity ; and thus a *new Kind* of Substantiality appeared in their Kingdom ; and their outward Habitation was like their inward Life ; *viz.*, a *Manifestation* of Nature fallen from God. And here now, you clearly see, how the First Thickness or Compression of the First Property of Nature, which was only the *hidden Substantiality* of the Light and Glory of Heaven, came into a *more outward* State, and made its first Approach or Step towards *Matter*, as you now see it. For there was now a *Thickness*, a *Darkness*, and *Hardness* which never had been before ; for the Light being lost, then the First Property of

Nature lost its beatified State of Meekness, Transparency, and spiritual Fluidity ; and became stiff, rigid, dark, and hard ; and this, as I said, was its *first* Step or Descent towards the Hardness and Darkness of the Matter of this World, till it came to be Earth and Stones, by the creating Power of God. And thus it came to pass, as *Moses* speaks, *that Darkness was upon the Face of the Deep*. A State, that had no Possibility of Existence, till the Sin of Angels had manifested the hidden Centre of Nature, in the Working of its Three Properties, without the Light of God in them.

Now as a new Thickness of Darkness, Hardness, or Substantiality, was manifested by the strong working Powers of the Angels in the Centre, or the first Properties of fallen Nature ; so God, to Manifest his Wisdom and Goodness towards this fallen Nature, took all these Properties in their own working Way ; and made them in their own way of Working, to stop and overcome the Evil that was brought forth by them. For the Will of God joining with the wrathful *Astringency* of the first compressing Property of Nature, became the *Divine Fiat*, which increased this compacting Property to such a Degree, as created or compacted the darkened Substantiality into a Globe of Earth and Stones. And this same *Divine Fiat*, or creating Power, which coagulated the Grossness into Earth and Stones, compressed or coagulated all that was substantial, or belonged to Substantiality through their whole Kingdom, as well the heavenly as the earthly Part of it ; so that all their Kingdom, as to its Substantiality, lost its Spirituality, and entered into a new created or compacted State of Thickness, as well the spoiled, as the unspoiled Part of their Kingdom. And as soon as this was done, the Angels lost all their Power in it, and over it. They could kindle no more Wrath in its heavenly Part, nor make any Use of that which they had spoiled, because all was shut up together in this new Compaction, with which the Spirituality of their Nature could have no Communication. And so they were left prisoners in their own Chains of Darkness, unable to stir up Wrath anywhere but in themselves. All this was done in the first Day of the Creation, when the *Fiat* of God compressed or created their whole Kingdom into a Heaven and Earth. Hence it is ; *viz.*, from a Compaction of their whole Kingdom into a new-created Heaven and Earth ; that all Things in this World, all its Elements and Stars, are a Mixture of Good and Evil, have something of the Goodness of Heaven, and something of the Wrath and Evil of Hell in them. Hence is the great Variety of metallic Ores and precious Stones in the Earth ; the good and bad Qualities in Fire, Air, and Water. It is because the Divine

Fiat, or compacting Power, came at once in the utmost Swiftness upon their whole Kingdom, as the Good and Evil stood in Strife against each other, and compressed all into a State of Cessation and Conjunction with one another, as in the Prison of this new-created Materiality. And thus the heavenly and hellish Part of their Kingdom, Light and Darkness, Fluidity and Hardness, Meekness and Wrath, Good and Evil, were all shut up together in the same sudden Compaction; in which they lay, as in a State of Death, till the Divine *Fiat* should awaken a Life in it.

Now the Three First Properties of Nature; the First, a *Shutting up*; the Second, a *Running out*; and the Third, a *Whirling*; were by the Divine *Fiat*, in the three first Days of the Creation, become the Ground of an earthly, a watery, and airy Materiality, all according to the working Nature of the Three Properties; and all of them having something of an heavenly Nature shut up in them, which wanted to be delivered from its Bondage. Hence this threefold Materiality of Earth, Water, and Air, became a Subject fit for the Birth of the fourth Property of Nature. And therefore, on the fourth Day of the Creation, the Divine *Fiat* kindled in this *anguishing* Materiality, out of that very *Fire* and *Light* that was compacted and hid in it, the fourth Property of Nature (the eternal Fire) as a Globe of Fire and Light, which was to stand as an Out-birth of the eternal Fire, in the midst of this new-created Materiality, and become the Opener of all the astral Life and Light in this World. And as the eternal Fire, the fourth Property of eternal Nature, is not a moveable Thing that can change its Place, but must be always in the Place of its Birth, standing for ever, as a Birth, in the Midst of the seven Properties, for ever changing the three first Properties of Nature into the three last Properties of the Kingdom of Heaven; so the Sun, the true Out-birth of the eternal Fire, and having the same Birth and Office in this material World, as the eternal Fire hath in eternal Nature, is not, cannot be, a *moveable* Thing, or be in any *other Place* in this World, than where it is; but is, and must be, the *Centre* or Heart of this whole System, ever separating the three first Properties of this material World, from the three that follow, and ever changing the three first Forms of material Wrath, into the three following Forms of terrestrial Life, Light, and all delightful Sensibilities; in strict Conformity to that, which the eternal Fire does in eternal Nature, changing the Root, or first Properties of Nature, into a Kingdom of God, and heavenly Glory. For the *Sun* is not a Body of Fire brought into the Place where it is; but the *kindled Place* is its Body and Birth; and therefore it is as immoveable as Place is, and must be as it is;

viz., a Place giving forth Fire and Light till all material Nature is dissolved. The Place is kindled, not by any foreign Fire, but thus: In the first Compaction of the whole angelic Kingdom into this new Materiality, the good and bad Part, that is, the spoiled and unspoiled Substantiality of their whole Kingdom, was shut up in this new Compression or Materiality, in one and the same State of Death. *Secondly*, In the Beginning of the Creation, God said, 'Let there be Light, and there was Light;' not a *shining* Light, for that came first from the Birth of the Sun, but a Power or Virtue of heavenly Light, not yet in a *visible, material Shine*, but as an *uncreated* Power of Light, entering into this whole Materiality, to stir up, and awaken the good Part of the heavenly Substantiality, that was shut up in the Compaction of this new Materiality.

Without these two Things, material Nature must have continued in its Darkness, and no fourth Form of Fire could ever have come forth in it. But from these two Things, *viz.*, the heavenly Substantiality, stirred up by the Power of Light entering into it, the three first Properties of Darkness were brought into a mere anguishing State; from whence, by the Divine *Fiat*, the fourth Form of material Nature kindled itself, as a Fire, and *broke forth* in the Place of the Sun, and must be ever burning and flaming in the Midst of the material System; because it is born of the three first Properties of Darkness, and brings forth the three last Properties of Light, and Life, and the Joy of Nature; and therefore must always be in the Midst of the six Properties of Nature, itself making the Number to be seven. And thus the Sun, as the fourth Form of Nature, must always stand in the Midst of the whole material System. And this proved, not as *Copernicus* has proved it, from reasonable Conjectures, and outward Arguments, but from the internal Nature of its Birth, the first Root from which it proceeds, and the absolute Impossibility of its being otherwise. And thus it is, that the Truth and Depth of Nature is opened by the Spirit of God, in the Mystery made known to our illiterate Shoemaker. And thus you have a short Sketch, how this World came to be as it is. It is descended as an Out-birth of the eternal World, and all the seven Properties of eternal Nature work in it, as they work in Eternity; and the Eternity is manifested in the temporary Working of a new World, which is only to stand in this State of Thickness or Compaction for a time, till the Goodness of God towards fallen Nature has been sufficiently manifested thereby.

For as this material System of Things may, in a good Sense, be said to be an unnatural State, occasioned by the Disorders

which the Fall of Angels brought into Nature ; and as it had no Beginning, but from the Will of God, commanding the first Property of Nature to coagulate and compress their disordered Kingdom into a new Thickness or Materiality, only as a Remedy to stop, remove, and overcome the Evil in Nature ; so when this Remedy shall have had its Trial, and the Will of God shall no longer will this compressing together ; then all that has been brought together by it, must fall back again into its first Eternity. And then, without any Possibility of being otherwise, every Birth in this World, that belongs to the Root or Centre of Nature, and has worked with it, must fall down into that eternal Abyss of Darkness, on which the Light of God for ever stands, unknown to it. And every Life that is born of Heaven, and has worked with it, must ascend into the Kingdom of God, or Abyss of Divine Glory and Majesty.

Oh *Academicus* ! Look now (whilst these Thoughts are alive in you) at worldly Greatness, fleshly Wisdom, and earthly Schemes of Happiness ; and tell me, if you can, what a Nothingness, what a Folly and Delusion, there is in them ? Look again at the Apostle's Pilgrim, abstaining from worldly Lusts, desiring to know nothing but Christ, and him crucified ; living in the Spirit of Prayer, and Thirst after God ; striving in everything after the fullest Conformity to the Tempers, Spirit, Life, and Behaviour of Christ in this World ; and then tell me, whether Heaven and Earth, God and Nature, and all that is great, and wise, and happy, does not call upon you to be this Pilgrim.

Academicus. Truly, Sir, I enough see, that all worldly Wisdom, and ambitious Views of a Glory of Life in the Things and Concerns of this World, are no better than vain Attempts to be blessed and happy from the Ruins of the angelic Kingdom. For this World is only a Thickness and Materiality of the bestial Life, built upon the Ground of Hell ; that is, upon the first Properties of fallen Nature, brought into a harder, more compacted State of Existence than they have in Hell, and kindled into an astral, terrestrial, bestial Life, by the Power of the Sun. The bestial Life, therefore, is the highest Good and Happiness in it ; and the Creatures of this World have nothing that they seek for further in it. But Man being not created for it, but by Sin fallen into it, is the only Creature that makes an unnatural Use of it, and seeks for that in it, and by it, which cannot be found in it. Man, having been wise, great, and happy in his Creation, though they are all lost, has yet some remaining Sensibility of them, though fallen into a World, that cannot help him to them. Hence it is, that he would be wise, and great, and happy in a World, that has no Happiness but for Beasts ; and

can only help Man to know, that he is poor and miserable, and banished from his true native Country.

But, instead of learning this one Lesson of Truth, from the World he is in, which is all the Wisdom, Greatness, and Happiness, that can be had from it, he gives himself up to a Wisdom that is Foolishness, a Greatness that is all Meanness, and a Happiness that begins and ends in Torment and Delusion. Would you see all his greatness, Wisdom, and Happiness united, the Sum total of earthly Glory! It is, when he has in his Cap the Feathers of some Birds, wears a painted Riband, laced Clothes, is called by some new Name, and drawn from Place to Place by a Number of Beasts. Now, poor, and mean, and unnatural as this Fiction of earthly Glory is, yet this is the powerful Idol, that carries all before it! that destroys all Sense of Goodness, and Divine Virtue! and keeps the Heart of Man so earnestly devoted to it, that he has no Sense of the Eternity that is in him; that Eternity brought him forth, and Eternity will take him again!

Theophilus. It is true, *Academicus*, that the highest Good of this World is its bestial Life; and therefore it has no more, or other Happiness for a Man, than for a Beast; can give no more to one, than to the other; *viz.*, Food and Raiment; with which the bestial Life in Man ought to be content, as well as in the Beast. But seeing Man, in spite of the Nature of Things, will have an earthly Glory of Life; thence it is, that the Wisdom of this World is, and must be, Foolishness with God, and will be Foolishness with Man, as soon as he gets but a moderate Knowledge of himself. But give me leave just to observe, that though this material World has no higher Happiness than the bestial Life; yet God hath much higher Ends in creating it. For though the dark wrathful Properties of fallen Nature could only, in their Compaction, be made the Ground of a vegetable and bestial Life; yet you are to observe, that in the Creation of this World, *viz.*, in the Compaction of the whole angelic Kingdom, the unspoiled heavenly Part thereof was shut up with that, in which the Wrath was kindled: And that for these two great Ends; *First*, That, by this Compaction, it might be taken out of the Power of the evil Angels, that they might not go on in kindling Wrath in it. *Secondly*, That this reserved good Part of their Kingdom, might be the Foundation and Ground of an heavenly paradisaical Life, and a new Host of heavenly Creatures, instead of the fallen Angels. Now, to do this, God created an human Angel, who was to call forth the paradisaical Life out of the compacted heavenly Substantiality, as the Sun opened a vegetable bestial Life, out of the gross Substantiality of the material World.

God breathed the Triune Spirit of the holy Deity into a Body taken out of the Earth, that is, into a Body of that *Heavenly Substantiality*, that was shut up in the Earth, as well as in every other Part of this material System ; and therefore his Body is rightly said to be taken or formed out of the Earth, because it was formed of that Substantiality, that was shut up in the Earth.

But when his wandering Eye had raised a longing Desire to know what the earthly Life was in its Good and Evil, and took the certain Means of knowing it ; then, as his Soul lost the Light and Spirit of God, so it lost also that heavenly luminous Body, in which the Light and Spirit of God could dwell, as it dwelleth in Heaven. And when this heavenly luminous Corporeity was lost, and shut up again in that earthly Bondage and Compaction in which it lay, before it was his Body ; then the poor fallen Soul was only clothed with the gross Corruptibility of bestial Flesh and Blood. You are to understand this Matter thus : When his Body was formed out of that heavenly Substantiality, that was in the Compaction of the Earth, it was not entirely separated from all earthly Materiality (because he was to have a Body of this World, as well as of the heavenly World), but its *State* in the earthly Materiality was *entirely changed* ; it was till then shut up in the earthly Compaction, but now it is called out of that *earthly Death* into a State of Life ; it is set free from the Power of the Earth, in a Superiority over it, to be its Happiness, and open its own Glory in it, and through it.

And thus you see the *Possibility*, the *Truth*, and the *Manner* of the Thing ; how his heavenly Body was taken out of the Earth at his Creation, set in Freedom from it, and in a living Superiority over it ; how, at the Fall, it was swallowed up, or compacted again in *its own first Earth* ; *viz.*, the earthly Body, or Materiality of *Adam* : For as it was not separated from this earthly Materiality, but only brought to Life in it, and Superiority over it ; so when the Divine Light, which was the Life of this Body, was lost, it then fell again into a State of Death in that gross Materiality, under which it lay before. And thus in the strictest Truth, the Body of *Adam* returned again to that very Earth, or Dust, from whence it was taken.

Now, when this happened, the fallen Angels entered again into some Power in their lost Kingdom. There was then something found, with which they could work, and join their own Power. For as the Soul of Man had lost the Light and Spirit of Heaven, so the same *dark Centre* of Nature, or the Three first wrathful Properties, were opened in it, as are opened in the fallen Angels. And thus they got Entrance into the awakened Hell

in Man, and can work in it. For as often as Man stirred, followed, or worked with his Will according to these Properties, the Devil could enter into, and work with him; and so the first Son of fallen Man was made a Murderer. And hence it is, that Sin and Wickedness have known no Bounds; it is because it is the joint Work of fallen Angels, and fallen Man.

Stay a while, Sir, in View of these Truths: Here you see the Seat and Ground, the Birth and Growth, of all Sin and Evil; it lies in these Three dark, selfish, self-willed, wrathful, hellish Properties of the fallen Soul. This is the *dark Centre* of Nature, in which the Devils have all their own Power in themselves, and all their Power in you;—and till you resist this Hell within you, till you live in Contrariety to it, the Devils will not flee from you.

Here also you see, in a self-evident Light, the deep Ground, and absolute Necessity, of *that one* Redemption, which is called, and is, the *Meekness of the heavenly Blood of the Lamb of God*. For these Words in their true Ground, mean only the Changing of the Three first dark wrathful Properties of fallen Nature, into the Three last Properties of the heavenly Life, Light, and Love, which is the Life of God restored to the Soul, or the Light, and Spirit, or Word of God born again in it. Let me only add this one Word; Turn from Wrath of every Kind, as you would flee from the most horrid Devil; for it is his, it is he, and his Strength in you. Whether you look at Rage and Anger in a Tempest, a Beast, or a Man, it is but one and the same Thing, from one and the same Cause; and therefore your own Wrath is to be turned from, as the same with that of Hell; and which has its Birth and Strength from that Hell or Centre of Nature, which the Fall of Angels hath made known; and which only worketh thus differently, whether it be in a Man, a Beast, or the Elements of this World. And this must be, till the Centre of Nature is again in its Place of Hiddenness, by being wholly overcome by Heaven. Embrace therefore every Meekness of Love and Humility, with the same Eagerness as you would fall down at the Feet of *Jesus Christ*; for if it is his, it is he, and his Power of Salvation in you. Enter into no Strife, or Self-defence against anyone, that either reproaches you, or your Doctrine; but remember, that if you are to join with *Christ* in doing Good, your Sword of natural Wrath must be locked up in its own Sheath; no Weapons of Flesh are to be used; but you must work only in the Meekness, the Sweetness, the Humility, the Love and Patience of the Lamb of God; who, as such, is the only Doer of Good, the only Overcomer of Wrath, and the one Redemption of fallen Nature. If you are reproached as an *Enthusiast*, do not take Comfort in

thinking, that it is the Truth of your own Piety, or the Want of it in others, that gives Occasion to the Charge ; for though both of these should happen to be the Case, yet they are not proper Reflections for you ; and if you take your Peace from them, it is not the Peace of God in you : But as in good Report, you are to be as though you heard it not, ascribe nothing to yourself from it ; so in evil Report, Self is just as much to be forgotten ; and both of them are to be used, only as an Occasion to generate Humility, Meekness, Love, and the Spirit of the Lamb of God, both in yourself, and all that speak either well or ill of you. For this is the Will and Working of Heaven ; it has but one Will, and one Work ; and that is, to change all the Wrath, Evil, and Disorder of Nature, into a Kingdom of God. And therefore he that would be a Servant of God, and work with Heaven, must will all that he willeth, do all that he doth, and bear all that he beareth, in that one Spirit, and one Will, with which Heaven ruleth over all the Earth.

You rejoice to think, that you know the true Ground of your Redemption ; how Heaven comes again into the fallen Soul, when that Property of Light and Love, which is called the *Fifth* Property of Nature, is generated in it. It is indeed a blessed Knowledge ; but its Blessedness is only then yours, when yourself are this *Fifth Property*, that is, when your Life is a Life of this Fifth Property ; when, whatever you do, wherever you go, or whatever you meet, you only do as this Fifth Property doth, give nothing but that which it giveth ; *viz.*, its gentle Light and Love to every Man, and every Thing, whether it be good or bad. For this Property hath nothing else to give, and yet is always giving ; its Nature is, to communicate and impart itself, not here or there, but always and everywhere ; it has no other Will. When therefore this Property (the *Christ* of God, the Life of Heaven) is born in you, Friend and Foe will have the same from you ; you will have lost all Resentment ; you will love your Enemies ; bless them that curse you ; pray for them that despitefully use you ; and have but one Will towards every Man, and that is, that Light and Love may do that for him, which they have done for you.

Academicus. Oh ! *Theophilus*, you have given me more than I know how to contain ; and yet have increased my Thirst after more still. You have so touched the Cord of Love within me, that all my Nature stands in a trembling Desire after it ; I would fain feel nothing else but the gentle godlike Power of Love, living in my Heart. Pray *therefore*, of all Things, help me to understand how the Fire, the Fourth Property of Nature, is born ; and how it turns the Three first wrathful Forms into the Three following Forms of heavenly Joy, Triumph, and Happiness ; the

First of which Three Forms, is this *Fifth* of Light and Love : Therefore, help me here, I beseech you.

Theophilus. What a *Therefore* have you here drawn? That therefore, of all Things, I must needs help you to an *Opinion*, or *notional* Knowledge, *how* the Fire is born, and *how* it turns Nature into a Kingdom of God. For were I to join with you in forming Notions of *this How*, I should only help you to lose all, by being content with the Shadow, instead of the Substance.

You say, that your Nature stands in a *trembling Desire* after the Birth of this Light and Love: If so, you stand in the very Place of its Birth, and must stand there till it is born in you. It can be born nowhere else, nor in any other Manner; and all that *Jacob Behmen* has written, is only to direct and bring you to this Place of its Birth. He himself has given you all the hearsay Knowledge that you can have of it; for he can give you no more from the plainest Words. And therefore, to help anyone to work with his Brain for clear Notions, and rational Conceptions, of what he has written, is helping him to do and be that, which all his Works, from the Beginning to the End, absolutely declare against, as contrary to the whole Nature and End of them. Which speak, as he saith, with the Sound of a Trumpet; and chiefly to awaken Man out of the Dream and Death of rational, notional, and hearsay Knowledge; and to show him, that his own inward Hunger and Thirst after God, is that alone which can and must open the Fountain of Light and Divine Knowledge in him.

But to speak a Word or Two of the *Fire*, whose Birth you want to know. You know already, better than any Words can tell you, from a self-evident Knowledge, that *Nature is in you*; that it is not God, *but is* that which *wants* God, or its true Good; and must be an Emptiness, a Pain, and Want, till God is manifested in it. If you ask, Why Nature is only a State of Want and Disquiet, and unable to be content with itself? It is because the eternal, uncreated, incomprehensible Light, which no Creature can enter into, is that which gave Birth to all Nature, and from whence all Nature hath its Hungering, and State of Want. For Nature had never come into Being, but that the eternal, incomprehensible Light, longed to be manifested in an *outsoken* Life of Nature and Creatures, and in a *Visibility* and *Shine* of Glory: Therefore, as Nature came forth from this first Longing of the Light to be manifested in it, so Nature is in itself only a Want and Hungering, which the Light alone has raised, and can only satisfy.

Now from this Longing on both Sides, Nature wanting God, and God wanting to be manifested in Nature, the Union of both

is effected; which is the Birth of that eternal Fire, or Fourth Form of Nature, which is always burning in the same Degree, that is, always doing the *same Thing*; *vis.*, always overcoming and shutting up the Three first Forms of Nature, and making them to be the hidden Root and Centre of Nature; and always bringing forth out of them the Three following Properties of Light and Love, and every joyful Sensibility of Life; that is, changing Nature into a Kingdom of Heaven. Now *that* which makes this Change in the Properties of Nature is, and is rightly called Fire, in the strictest literal Meaning of the Word; because all that we can conceive as Fire in this World, hath its whole Nature, Power, and Existence, from it. Not only the Fire of Life in Animals and Vegetables, but the Fire in the Kitchen, and the Candle, is each of them kindled as it is kindled, and doth all that it doth from this Fourth Property, or Fire of eternal Nature. The Thickness and Darkness in the Wood, and the Candle, have Fire kindled in them, and Light from that Fire, in no other Way, than as the Fourth Property is a Fire from the Thickness and Darkness of Nature, kindled by the Light of God entering into Union with it. Had the Wood, and the Candle, no *Water* or *Oil* in them, neither of them could give forth Fire and Light. Now Water and Oil have the Properties of Light in them: When therefore the Properties of Nature in the Wood, and the Candle, are put into Strife, and begin to work in Blackness and Darkness (which is the Beginning of every Fire), they by this Strife open an Entrance for the Properties of Light in the Water, and the Oil, to mix and unite with them; and by this Union of Darkness and Light, that Fire is kindled, which turns the Darkness of the Wood and Candle into a Shining and Light. And thus does every Fire kindled in this World, bear an infallible Witness to the *Kindling*, the *Nature*, and *Power*, of that eternal Fire, which, kindled by the Oil of Divine Light, changes the first dark Properties of Nature into the Light and Majesty of Heaven. Now what would you know more of Fire, or its Birth, than that it is, and only can be, kindled by the Light of God entering into, and uniting with, the first Properties of Nature in the Soul? Leave off therefore all working with your Reason in the Way of Notions; empty your Heart of all vain Satisfactions in earthly Things, that so the first Properties of Nature in your Soul, finding their Misery, and Want of God, may make you to be all Hunger, and Faith, and Desire of him. And then the Fire must kindle, nothing can hinder it; God will then infallibly come as a Fire and Light into your Soul, changing all the wanting, empty, restless Properties of your natural Life, into a Sweetness of a New Birth of Rest and Peace in him.

For nothing *works* either in God, or Nature, or Creature, but *Desire*. And as God created Angels and Men out of eternal Nature, only through a longing Desire of manifesting his own Goodness and Happiness in them, so every Angel and Man must find God, as a Life of Happiness and Goodness in him, as soon as Nature, either in Angel or Man, is become a Hunger after God. For Hunger does all in all Worlds, and finds all that it wants, and hungers after. Every Thing had its Beginning in it, and from it; and every Thing is led by it to all its Happiness.

Academicus. I am quite satisfied in all my Demands, and will ask for no more Help, as to the Use I am to make of our Author's Writings. Only tell me when they will all come forth in a new Edition, or which will be published first; for I want several of them, which I could never get.

Theophilus. If you have but Two or Three of his Books, it is enough; for every one of them has all in it that you need be taught, and sufficiently opens the Grounds of the whole Mystery of the Christian Redemption. He himself thought his Books to be too numerous; and expressed his Wish, that they were all reduced into one. As he wrote without any Art, and had no Knowledge of Regularity of Composition; so whatever particular Matter he occasionally entered upon, he always began again afresh from the same first Ground, and full Opening of the Mystery of Nature, from whence he explained and determined the Matter he was upon. And it was this frequent, and almost constant Repetition of one and the same Ground, that swelled his Writings into so many Volumes, though it may be said, that there is nothing separately in any of his Books, but what is to be found in almost every other, though not so largely set forth. You have no need therefore, to run with Eagerness through all his Books; but the Thing that you are to intend and look for, is the *Ground* and Foundation on which all his Doctrines are built, which contain the true Philosophy, or *fundamental Opening of all the Powers that work both in Nature and Grace*; and that by this Knowledge you may become a true Workman yourself; and know how to conform to, and concur with, all that the working Powers, either of Nature or Grace, require of you. Now this Ground and Foundation of all is (as far as Words can do it) opened to you in every one of his Books: And you have been already also sufficiently brought into the Knowledge of it, by what has been said of the *Birth* of Nature; what it is, how it works, how it came into Being, how it is distinct from God, how it wants God, how God is manifested in it, how every After-thing is from and out of it, is all that it is, and hath all that it hath, in it, and by it, and must have all its Happiness or Misery, accord-

ing as it works with, or contrary to Nature. From this fundamental Ground, or Opening of the working Powers of Nature, you have seen how Angels could, and did, lose their first State in Nature; and how a Second new Creation could, and did, come out of their fallen State and Kingdom, all according to the Powers of fallen Nature, over-ruled, and governed, and put into a new Way by the good *creating Fiat* of God. You have seen how this new Creation, with Man its Lord, could, and did, lose also their First created State in Nature; and how God, overruling fallen Nature again, did, by his merciful *redeeming Fiat*, or by the Means of the holy *Jesus*, put this fallen new Creation in a State of Recovery, and all done according to the Powers, and Workings, and Possibilities of Nature. So that nothing is done arbitrarily, or by mere Will, but everything in Conformity to the unchangeable Workings and Powers of Nature; only directed, assisted, and helped, by the Mercy of his *redeeming Fiat*, so far as Nature was capable of being helped. This, Sir, is the true and fundamental Ground of all his Doctrines; and, standing upon this Ground, you stand in the Centre of Truth, whence everything that you need to know of God, of Nature, of Heaven, of Hell, of the Fall of Man, of his Redemption only and solely in and by the Word or Son of God, is known in such self-evident Certainty, as you find and know the Workings of your own Life: And also, that Happiness or Misery, Life or Death, can only be had, or not had, lost or found, solely as a *Birth in Nature*, brought forth by the Faith, or magic Power of the Will of Man, working either with, or contrary to, the *redeeming Fiat* of God.

To make therefore a right Use of his Writings, you should, for a sufficient Time, keep solely to that Part of them, which opens the Ground and Foundation of the Powers that work in Grace and Nature, till by a self-evident Sensibility it is opened in you, and your Heart stands in a Conformity to it, and true Working with it: For it is your own Heart, as finding the working Powers of Nature and Grace in itself, and simply given up in Faith to work with them, that is to be your Key and Guide to that Knowledge you are to have of them; whether it be from the Holy Scripture, or the Writings of this Author. For to this End, he tells you, he has written all; *viz.*, to help Man to *seek* and find himself; what is his Birth, his State and Place in Nature; what he is in Body, Soul, and Spirit; from what Worlds all these Three Parts of him are come; how they came to be as they are at present; what his Fall is, and how he must rise out of it. And therefore, if, in order to seek and find this Ground in yourself, you were, for some sufficient time, to read only to the 10th or 12th Chapter of his *Three Principles*, or to the 6th or 8th

Chapter of his *Threefold Life*; and proceed no further, till this Ground had made itself manifest in you, and your Heart stood in a strict Conformity to it, and Working with it; you would then be in a true Fitness to read further, and reap the full Benefit from any other of his Books, that should fall into your Hands; whether it was the *Way to Christ*, or the Book upon the *Incar-nation*. But, above all Things, remember this Advice, as of the last Moment to you, *Be no Reasoner upon the Mystery*; seek for no Commentaries, or rational Explications of it, to entertain your Reason with: For, as soon as you do this; then, however true and good this Mystery may be in itself, it is, with regard to you, of no better Use than that very vain *Philosophy, and Science falsely so called*, condemned by the Apostle. It will only be the same Snare and Delusion to you, that other Learning and Philosophy is to other People. For if there is nothing good or Divine in you but the Faith, and Hope, and Love, and Desire of your Heart turned to God; if nothing can do any Good, be any Blessing or Happiness to this Faith, and Love, and Desire turned to God, but only God himself in his *holy Being*; and if nothing can communicate God to you, but God himself; and if God cannot communicate himself to you under a *Notion*, or an *Idea* of Reason, but a Degree of *Life, Good, and Blessing*, born or brought to Life in your Soul; then you see, that to give yourself up to Reasoning, and notional Conceptions, is to turn from God, and wander out of the Way of all Divine Communication.

Academicus. But if it be strictly thus, *Theophilus*, had it not been better, that these deep Matters had not been communicated to the World, since it is so natural to Man to make a wrong Use of them?

Theophilus. This Objection, *Academicus*, comes with the same Strength against the Scriptures themselves. For, excepting the *Seven thousands* unknown in every Age, as in the Days of *Elijah*, and a few spiritual Fathers and Writers in almost every Age of the Church, bearing faithful Witness to the truth and Mysteries of Religion, it must be said, that human Learning, governed by human Reason, hath, from Age to Age, to this very Day, not only mistaken the true End and Use of the Scriptures, but hath turned them into an Occasion of much Evil and Mischief. The Scriptures speak only to the Heart and Conscience of Man, not to amend or enlighten it with Notions and Opinions formed from the written Letter of the Word; but solely to make the *Being* and *Power* of God known and adored, and to awaken in Man a Sensibility of his Want of God; and to turn all the Power, and Strength, and Will of the Heart wholly to God, to receive Light, and Life, and Rest, in his *holy Being*.

But to speak now directly to your Objection : If I knew of any Person, who stood in the Faith and Simplicity of the first Christians, free from all carnal Adherence, or vain Trust, to Party-Notions, Doctrines, and Errors, brought forth by the Contention of Sects and Churches ; whose Soul was dead to the earthly Nature, and all the Rudiments of this World, seeking only Light, Life, and Salvation, from God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, living and dwelling in him, redeeming and sanctifying his whole Body, Soul, and Spirit ; To such a one I could freely say, this Mystery was needless ; as having all that already, which this Mystery would do for him. For its only End is, to bring Man out of all the Labyrinths of false and notional Religion, to this very first State and Simplicity of the Gospel-Faith and Life.

And this may pass for a good Reason, why this Mystery was not opened by God in the first Ages of the Church ; since there was then no Occasion for it. For Religion began, and went on, rightly, in its own true Way ; it had the Faith and Heart of Man ; it stood in its own proper Strength and Glory, and was an awakened Divine Life of Faith, simply given up with Joy and Gladness to the Mysteries of the Gospel ; not wanting any *Whys* or *Wherefores*, because in the real Possession of all the *Good*, and *Blessing*, and *Power*, of every Mystery of Salvation.

But seeing a *worldly Spirituality*, called in Scripture the Whore riding upon the *Beast*, has had its Thousand Years in the Church ; since not only every Kingdom, but almost every Corner of Christendom, has a *Babel* of its own, built upon some rational Interpretation of the Letter of Scripture ; since learned Reason, *within* the Church, knows no other Use of Scriptures, but to reproach and condemn all other *Babels*, and to find Materials to strengthen its own ; since Reason, *without* the Church, finds it as easy to reproach and condemn *all Revelation*, as it is to reproach all these *Babels* built upon it ; since this is the finished Confusion, brought forth by the *Reason* and fleshly *Wisdom* both of those that defend, and those that oppose the Gospel ; how adorable is the Goodness of God, in vouchsafing to these last Ages of the World such a Remedy (*viz.*, the Opening the Ground and Mystery of all things) as is suitable to the distressed and confused State of Religion in the World ! And how easy is it also to see the greatest Reasons, why this Remedy was not afforded sooner ! For as true Faith did not want it, and learned Reason, whilst pleased with itself, could not be in a Condition to receive it ; so it was highly suitable to the Goodness and Wisdom of God, not to give forth this Mystery, till Reason, or fleshly Wisdom, had made Shipwreck of Faith ; and had so filled up the Measure of its Folly, as to stand in its last and highest State of Distress,

Perplexity, and Confusion. For any Remedy is only then likely to be rightly received, when Distress and Perplexity make the Want of it to be sensibly felt.

Let not therefore the genuine, plain, simple Christian, who is happy and blessed in the Simplicity of Gospel-Faith, take Offence at this Mystery, because he has no Need of it. For it is God's Goodness to the distressed State of the Church, fallen from the Life and Power of Gospel-Faith, and groaning under the Slavery, Darkness, and Perplexity, of bewildered Reason and Opinions.

Neither let the orthodox Divine, who sticks close to the Phrases and Sentiments of Antiquity, reject this Mystery as heretical, because it opens a Ground of Man, and the Divine Mysteries, not known or found in the primitive Writers. For this is the very Reason, why he should thankfully receive it with open Arms, as having, and being that very Thing, which the distressed divided State of the Church now so greatly wants; and yet did not want, till it was fallen from its first Simplicity of Faith. For whilst Faith and Life defended the Mysteries of Religion, the Ground and Philosophy of it was not wanted. But when Orthodoxy had given itself up to Reason, and had nothing else for its Support but Reason and Argument from the Letter of Scripture, without the least Knowledge of the first Ground of Doctrines; then it could only be defended, as it is defended in every Sect and Division of the Christian World. For if Reason will defend the Mysteries of Redemption, without knowing the true Ground on which they stand, or why they must be as they are, from the Nature of the Thing; the more zealous and learned any Man is, the more Errors must he fall into in the Defence of them. For the greater the Strength is, that works without Light, the more Extravagancies it must produce. This is too visible in all the Controversies that have risen in the Church. Now, that learned Reason, as presiding in the Divinity-Schools, never yet had, nor could have, any Knowledge of the Ground of Man, and the Mysteries of Redemption, is plain from this one generally received Opinion, of every Age to this Day; *viz.*, *That all Things were created out of Nothing.* For this Maxim entirely excludes *all Possibility* of giving any Account of the Ground and Reason of anything, either in the Nature of Man, or Religion; and is the same thing as saying, that Nothing has any Ground or Reason. For if that which begins to be, comes out of Nothing, it can only have the Nature of that out of which it comes; and therefore can have no more said about it, why it is this or that, than can be said of that Nothing, from whence it comes. And if the Mystery, or Life of

the human Nature, is out of Nothing, has no Reality of any antecedent Ground in it, out of which it came to be such as it is, and to have that which it hath; then it is most certain, that all the Mysteries of the Religion of Man must come forth from the *same Nothing*, and have no antecedent Ground from whence they come, that requires them to be as they are. For Man, created out of Nothing, cannot have a Religion that is of any higher Descent than himself, unless he is to have a Religion that is quite unnatural to him. But a Religion that has its Ground in Eternity, must be an unnatural Religion to Man that comes up in Time, and out of Nothing. If therefore you will hold Man to be out of Nothing, you must of all Necessity hold all the Mysteries of the Religion of Man to be also out of Nothing; and that therefore no possible Account can be given, either of the Ground of Man, or his Religion, or why there can be either Right or Wrong, Good or Evil, in either of them.

Hence you may see, why the Truth has always suffered in every Controversy of the Church; Thus, if you begin with that of St. *Austin* and *Pelagius*, about the Freedom of the human Will; do but suppose, what is Fact, that they both of them held the human Will to be created out of Nothing; and then you need not wonder at that Number of Volumes and Systems of Errors, which this Dispute has brought forth. For who can say, what the Will is, or is not; what Nature or Power it must have, if it is created out of Nothing? Whereas, if either of these Disputants had known, from a true Ground, what the human Will is; that it cannot be a made Thing, much less made out of Nothing; but that the Will of Angel or Man, is the eternal uncreated Will become creaturely, as a true direct Birth from the Divine Will, descended from it, born out of it, and from thence come into a creaturely State: then they had known, that the Will of Angel or Man, must have the Nature and Freedom of the eternal Will; and that its Freedom not only consisted in its Self-motion, but chiefly and most gloriously in this, that it could neither receive, nor have, nor be anything, as to its Happiness or Misery, but according to its own Working: And then all that Predestinarian Learning of Decrees, &c., that has tormented the Church ever since the Time of St. *Austin*, had been prevented.

Look next at the *Socinian* Controversy. The *Socinians*, and their Opponents, met in the Field of Reason, to debate about the Fall, Original Sin, its Guilt, the vindictive Wrath of God, and the Necessity of satisfying the Divine Justice; the Necessity of the Incarnation, Sufferings, Death, and Satisfaction, of Christ, These were the great Points to be tried at the Bar of Reason. Now all these Disputants stood upon the old Ground; *vis.*, that

the Soul of Man, as well as all other Things, was created out of Nothing. And therefore they all stood absolutely excluded, from every Possibility of touching the true Ground or Reason of any one Doctrine in Debate. For the Soul, created out of Nothing, leaves no room to affirm, or even to suppose. that anything can be affirmed of the Ground and Reason of Christian Redemption. For surely, if the Soul of Man is created out of Nothing, it may and must with as much Sense be affirmed, that it may be *redeemed by Nothing*; and he that affirms the one, can have no Pretence to deny the other.

Just the same may be said of the present Controversy, betwixt the Christians and Infidels, concerning Christianity itself. You need not wonder, that so many learned Volumes have had so little Effect; or that the Defenders of Christianity seem to lose Ground, though the Infidels, at the same time, get no Advantage to their Cause, but that of increasing their Numbers. For as neither Side can go any higher, than a Creation out of Nothing; so neither Side can say anything from a true Ground, either for or against the Mysteries of the Gospel. If therefore Infidelity increases, it is not because it has got more Light, sees further into the Depths of Nature, or stands upon a more rational Ground; but merely because the Vanity and Blindness of the Dispute, has a natural Tendency to beget Indifference and Infidelity in the Hearts of Men.

Observe this Proposition; *viz.*, 'In God we live and have our Being.' Now, how easy is it for anyone to see, that no one can say anything as to the Ground and Reasons of the Mysteries of the Gospel, either for or against them, till he can go to the Bottom of this Proposition, and plainly show, either how we do, or do not, live and move, and have our Being, in God! For the Truth or Falseness of every Mystery of the Christian Redemption, plainly depends upon this Matter. If the Christian therefore will speak to the Purpose, in Defence of the Ground of the Gospel; he must be able to show, that we so are in God, so have our Life in him and from him, and so move in him, as to prove, from thence, the Ground, the Necessity, and Certainty, of the Christian Means of Redemption. On the other hand, the Deist cannot take one rational Step, or have any true Ground to stand upon, but so far as he can show, that we are not so from God, have not such a Nature in and from him, do not so live and move in him, as to have any *Want* or any *Fitness* for that Method of Redemption, which the Gospel teaches. But as neither Side did this, though the one Thing necessary to be done; so you also see, that neither Side had any Possibility of Doing it. For the Soul, created out of Nothing, allows of no Inquiry, whether any-

thing of God be in it, or how it has its Life in him, or stands related to him. It admits of no searching after any Ground or Reason of its Good or Evil, or how it must have its Happiness or Misery from the Nature of the Thing. For if the *intelligent Life* itself must be supposed to come from no Ground, but to be created out of Nothing; then it is certain, that its Good and Evil, its Happiness or Misery, with everything else, must be supposed to have no Ground or Reason for being as it is, but to be created out of Nothing; and may go again into Nothing, just as the Creator pleaseth.

And now, Sir, you may enough see how all Controversy, both within and without the Church, has been so vain a thing. For Reason was to support Doctrines and Mysteries, without the least Knowledge of the Ground on which they stood; and Reason was to oppose them in the same Ignorance. You see also, why in these last Ages, where literal Learning has made so great a Figure, that the Matter has only been made worse, and Division and Error more triumphant. For as the Ground of the Truths was still wanted, and nothing appealed to, but the Letter and Phrase of Scripture; so the more artful and learned the Disputants were in Reasoning and Criticism, the more Absurdities must be defended on both Sides. Why is not the learned Papist shocked at Transubstantiation, or the Protestant at Predestination and Reprobation? Is it because each of them have enough of the *Truth* of Reason, and the *Goodness* of Criticism, to draw the Letter of Scripture to his Side. And this you may be assured of, that Reason, and literal Learning, have just as good Eyes in every other religious Matter, and will give just such an Account of every other Doctrine, when it comes into Dispute, as the Papist and Protestant have done in these two Points. And the thing cannot be otherwise: As the Deist and Christian both hold a Creation out of Nothing, they must both have only an arbitrary God, and arbitrary Religion, that has no antecedent Ground to stand upon, but is left to the arbitrary Proof or Reason of both of them. What Thanks, therefore, are due to the Goodness of God, for opening this great Mystery of all Things in our Author, wherein the Right and Wrong, the True and False, in Religion, is as manifest as any Thing can be to our Senses! Let no one therefore take Offence at the Opening of this Mystery, as if it brought anything new into Religion; for it has nothing new in it; it alters no Point of Gospel-Doctrine, nor adds any Thing to it, but only sets every Article of the old Christian Faith upon its true Ground, and in such a Degree of Light, as, when seen, is irresistible. It disturbs no one, who is in Possession of the Truth, because it points at nothing, drives to nothing, but to the opening

the heavenly Life in the Soul. It calls no Man from any outward Form of Religion, as such ; but only shows, that no outward Form can have any Good in it, but so far as it only means, and seeks, and helps, the renewed Life of Heaven in the Soul. 'A 'Christian,' says he, 'is of no Sect, and yet in every Sect'; a Truth which all Sects, as such, will dislike; and therefore a Truth equally wanted to be known, and equally beneficial to all Sects. For the chief Hurt of a Sect lies in this, that it takes itself to be necessary to the Truth ; whereas the Truth is only then found, when it is known to be of no Sect, but as free and universal as the Goodness of God, and as common to all Names and Nations, as the Air and Light of this world.

Suffer me now, before we part, once more to repeat what I have so often said, that you would not receive this Mystery as a System of rational Notions ; nor do with it, as the World has, for the most part, done with the Bible, only gather Opinions of Reason and Speculation from it. For it opens no Depth of Nature or Grace, but to help you to the Heart and Spirit of the returning prodigal Son, and to show you the Blindness and Vanity of Reason and Opinions ; and that Truth can have no possible Entrance into you, but so far as you die to your earthly Nature. The Gospel saith all this to you in the plainest Words ; and the Mystery only shows you, that the whole System of the Universe saith the same thing. To be a true Student or Disciple of the Mystery, is to be a Disciple of Christ ; for it calls you to nothing but to the plain Letter of the Gospel ; and wherever it enters, either into the Height or Depth of Nature, it is only to confirm the Truth of these Words of *Christ* ; viz., 'He that followeth not me, walketh in Darkness : And unless a Man deny 'himself, and forsake all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple.' This is the Philosophy opened in this Mystery. It is not to lead you after itself, but to compel you, by every Truth of Nature, to turn to *Christ*, as the one Way, the one Truth, the one Life, and Salvation of the Soul ; not as notionally apprehended, or historically known ; but as experimentally found, living, speaking, and working, in your Soul. Read as long or as much as you will of this Mystery, it is all Labour lost ; if you intend anything else by it, or would be anything else from it, but a Man dead to this World, that you may live unto God through *Christ Jesus*, in the Power of Faith, and the Spirit of Prayer. With these Words upon our Minds, my Friends, let us now end this Conversation.

The End of the Third DIALOGUE.

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THE
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PART the FIRST.

In a LETTER to a Friend.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

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THE SPIRIT OF LOVE.

My Dear Friend,

YOU had no Occasion to make any Apology for the Manner of your Letter to me ; for though you very well know, that I have as utter an Aversion to waste my Time and Thoughts in Matters of Theological Debate, as in any Contentions merely of a worldly Nature, as knowing that the former are generally as much, if not more hurtful to the Heart of Man, than the latter, yet as your Objections rather tend to stir up the Powers of Love, than the Wrangle of a rational Debate, I consider them only as Motives and Occasions of edifying both you and myself with the Truth, the Power, and Divine Blessedness of the *Spirit of Love*.

You say, ' There is nothing in all my Writings that has more affected you than that Spirit of Love that breathes in them ; and that you wish for nothing so much, as to have a *living Sensibility* of the Power, Life, and Religion of Love. But you have these two Objections often rising in your Mind : *First*, ' That this Doctrine of pure and universal Love may be too refined and imaginary, because you find, that however you like it, yet you cannot attain to it, or overcome all That in your Nature which is contrary to it, do what you can ; and so are only able to be an Admirer of that Love which you cannot lay hold of. *Secondly*, Because you find so much said in Scripture of a *Righteousness* and *Justice*, a *Wrath* and *Vengeance* of God, that must be *atoned* and *satisfied*, &c., that though you are in Love with that Description of the Deity which I have given, as a Being that is *all Love*, yet you have some Doubt whether the Scripture will allow of it.'

Thus stand your Objections, which will fall into nothing as soon as you look at them from a right Point of View : Which will then be, as soon as you have found the true Ground of the Nature, Power, and Necessity of the blessed Spirit of Love.

Now the Spirit of Love has this Original. God, as considered in himself, in his holy Being before anything is brought forth by him, or out of him, is only an *eternal Will to all Goodness*. This is the *one eternal immutable* God, that from Eternity to Eternity changes not, that can be neither more nor less, nor anything else, but an *eternal Will to all the Goodness* that is in himself, and can come from him. The Creation of ever so many Worlds or Systems of Creatures adds nothing to, nor takes any-

thing from, this immutable God : He always was, and always will be, the same *immutable Will to all Goodness*. So that as certainly as he is the Creator, so certainly he is the Blessor of every created Thing, and can give *nothing* but Blessing, Goodness, and Happiness from himself, because he has *in himself* nothing else to give. It is much more possible for the Sun to give forth Darkness, than for God to do, or be, or give forth anything but Blessing and Goodness. Now this is the *Ground and Original* of the Spirit of Love in the Creature, it is and must be a *Will to all Goodness* ; and you have not the *Spirit of Love* till you have this Will to all Goodness, at all Times, and on all Occasions. You may indeed do many Works of Love, and delight in them, especially at such Times as they are not inconvenient to you, or contradictory to your State, or Temper, or Occurrences in Life. But the Spirit of Love is not in you, till it is the Spirit of your Life, till you live *freely, willingly, and universally* according to it. For every Spirit acts with Freedom and Universality, according to what it is. It needs no Command to live its *own Life*, or be what it is, no more than you need bid Wrath be wrathful. And therefore when *Love* is the Spirit of your Life, it will have the *Freedom and Universality* of a Spirit ; it will always live and work in Love, not because of *This* or *That, Here* or *There*, but because the Spirit of Love can only love, wherever it is, or goes, or whatever is done to it. As the *Sparks* know no Motion but that of flying upwards, whether it be in the Darkness of the Night, or in the Light of the Day, so the Spirit of Love is always in the same Course ; it knows no Difference of Time, Place, or Persons ; but whether it *gives*, or *forgives*, *bears* or *forbears*, it is equally doing its own delightful Work, equally blessed from itself. For the Spirit of Love, wherever it is, is its own Blessing and Happiness, because it is the *Truth and Reality* of God in the Soul, and therefore is in the same Joy of Life, and is the same Good to itself, everywhere, and on every Occasion.*

Oh! Sir, would you know the Blessing of all Blessings, it is this *God of Love* dwelling in your Soul, and killing every Root of Bitterness, which is the Pain and Torment of every earthly selfish Love. For all Wants are satisfied, all Disorders of Nature are removed, no Life is any longer a Burden, every Day is a Day of Peace, everything you meet becomes a Help to you, because everything you see or do is all done in the sweet gentle Element of Love. For as Love has no By-Ends, wills nothing but its *own Increase*, so everything is as Oil to its Flame ; it

* *Spirit of Love*, Second Part, page 177.

must have that which it wills, and cannot be disappointed, because everything naturally helps it to live in its *own Way*, and to bring forth its *own Work*. The Spirit of Love does not want to be rewarded, honoured, or esteemed; its only Desire is to propagate itself, and become the Blessing and Happiness of everything that wants it. And therefore it meets Wrath, and Evil, and Hatred, and Opposition, with the same *one Will*, as the Light meets the Darkness, only to overcome it with all its Blessings. Did you want to avoid the Wrath and Ill-will, or to gain the Favour of any Persons, you might easily miss of your Ends; but if you have no Will but to *all Goodness*, everything you meet, be it what it will, must be forced to be assistant to you. For the Wrath of an Enemy, the Treachery of a Friend, and every other Evil, only helps the Spirit of Love to be more triumphant, to live its *own Life*, and find all its own Blessings in an higher Degree. Whether therefore you consider *Perfection*, or *Happiness*, it is all included in the Spirit of Love, and must be so, for this Reason, because the infinitely perfect and happy God is mere Love, an *unchangeable Will to all Goodness*; and therefore every Creature must be corrupt and unhappy, so far as it is led by any other Will than the *one Will to all Goodness*. Thus you see the Ground, the Nature, and Perfection of the Spirit of Love. Let me now, in a Word or two, show you the Necessity of it: Now the Necessity is absolute and unchangeable. No Creature can be a Child of God, but because the Goodness of God is in it; nor can it have any Union or Communion with the Goodness of the Deity, till its Life is a Spirit of Love. This is the one only Band of Union betwixt God and the Creature. All besides this, or that is not this, call it by what Name you will, is only so much Error, Fiction, Impurity, and Corruption, got into the Creature, and must of all Necessity be entirely separated from it, before it can have that Purity and Holiness which alone can see God, or find the Divine Life. For as God is an *immutable Will* to all Goodness, so the Divine Will can unite or work with no creaturely Will, but that which wills with him only that which is good. Here the Necessity is absolute: nothing will do instead of this Will; all Contrivances of Holiness, all Forms of religious Piety, signify nothing, without this *Will to all Goodness*. For as the Will to all Goodness is the *whole Nature* of God, so it must be the *whole Nature* of every Service or Religion that can be acceptable to him. For nothing serves God, or worships and adores him, but that which wills and works with him. For God can delight in nothing but his *own Will*, and his *own Spirit*, because all Goodness is included in it, and can be nowhere else. And therefore every-

thing that follows an *own Will*, or an *own Spirit*, forsakes the *one Will* to all Goodness, and whilst it does so, has no Capacity for the Light and Spirit of God. The Necessity therefore of the *Spirit of Love* is what God himself cannot dispense with in the Creature, any more than he can deny himself, or act contrary to his own holy Being. But as it was his *Will to all Goodness* that brought forth Angels and the Spirits of Men, so he can will nothing in their Existence, but that they should live and work, and manifest that *same Spirit* of Love and Goodness which brought them into Being. Everything therefore but the *Will* and *Life* of Goodness is an *Apostasy* in the Creature, and is Rebellion against the *whole Nature* of God.

There is no Peace, nor ever can be, for the Soul of Man, but in the Purity and Perfection of its first-created Nature ; nor can it have its Purity and Perfection in any other Way, than in and by the *Spirit of Love*. For as Love is the God that created all Things, so Love is the Purity, the Perfection, and Blessing of all created Things; and nothing can live in God but as it lives in Love. Look at every Vice, Pain, and Disorder in human Nature, it is in itself nothing else but the Spirit of the Creature turned from the *Universality* of Love to some *self-seeking*, or *own Will* in created Things. So that Love alone is, and only can be, the Cure of every Evil; and he that lives in the Purity of Love is risen out of the Power of Evil into the Freedom of the one Spirit of Heaven. The *Schools* have given us very accurate Definitions of every Vice, whether it be Covetousness, Pride, Wrath, Envy, &c., and shown us how to conceive them, as *notionally* distinguished from one another. But the Christian has a much shorter Way of knowing their Nature and Power, and what they all are, and do, in and to himself. For call them by what Names you will, or distinguish them with ever so much Exactness, they are all, separately and jointly, just that *same one* Thing, and do all that *same one Work*, as the Scribes, the Pharisees, Hypocrites, and Rabble of the *Jews*, who crucified Christ, were all but *one and the same Thing*, and all did *one and the same Work*, however different they were in outward Names. If you would therefore have a true Sense of the Nature, and Power of Pride, Wrath, Covetousness, Envy, &c., they are in their whole Nature nothing else but the *Murderers* and *Crucifiers* of the true Christ of God; not as the High-Priests did, many hundred Years ago, nailing his outward Humanity to an outward Cross, but crucifying afresh the Son of God, the holy *Immanuel*, who is the Christ that every Man crucifies, as often as he gives way to Wrath, Pride, Envy, or Covetousness, &c. For every Temper or Passion that is contrary to the new Birth of Christ, and keeps the holy *Immanuel* from coming to Life *in the*

Soul, is in the strictest Truth of the Words a *Murderer* and *Killer* of the Lord of Life. And where Pride, and Envy, and Hatred, &c., are suffered to live, there the same Thing is done as when Christ was killed, and *Barrabas* was saved alive. The Christ of God was not then first crucified when the *Jews* brought him to the Cross ; but *Adam* and *Eve* were his first real Murderers ; for the Death which happened to them, in the Day that they did eat of the earthly Tree, was the Death of the Christ of God, or the Divine Life in their Souls. For Christ had never come into the World as a Second *Adam* to redeem it, had he not been originally the *Life*, and *Perfection*, and *Glory* of the First *Adam*.* And he is our Atonement and Reconciliation with God, because by and through him, brought to *Life in us*, we are set again in that *first State* of Holiness, and have Christ *again* in us, as our first Father had at his Creation. For had not Christ been in our first Father as a *Birth of Life* in him, *Adam* had been created a mere Child of *Wrath*, in the same *Impurity* of Nature, in the same *Enmity* with God, and in the same *Want* of an atoning Saviour, as we are at this Day.—For God can have no *Delight* or *Union* with any Creature, but because his well-beloved Son, the express Image of his Person, is *found* in it.—This is as true of all unfallen, as of all fallen Creatures ; the one are redeemed, and the other want no Redemption, only through the Life of Christ *dwelling in them*. For as the Word, or Son of God, is the Creator of all Things, and by him every Thing is made that was made, so every Thing that is *good* and *holy* in unfallen Angels, is as much through his *living* and *dwelling* in them, as every Thing that is good and holy in *redeemed* Man is through him. And he is just as much the *preserver*, the *Strength*, and *Glory*, and *Life* of all the Thrones and Principalities of Heaven, as he is the *Righteousness*, the *Peace*, and *Redemption* of fallen Man.†

This Christ of God has many Names in Scripture ; but they all mean only this, that he is, and alone can be, the *Light*, and *Life*, and *Holiness* of every Creature that is holy, whether in Heaven or on Earth. Wherever Christ is not, there is the *Wrath* of Nature, or Nature left to itself and its own tormenting Strength of Life, to feel nothing in itself but the vain restless Contrariety of its own working Properties. This is the one only Origin of Hell, and every kind of Curse and Misery in the Creature. It is Nature without the Christ of God, or the *Spirit of Love*, ruling over it. And here you may observe, that *Wrath* has in itself the Nature of Hell ; and that it can have no Beginning, or Power in any Creature, but *so far* as it has lost the Christ of God. And

* *Spirit of Love*, Second Part, page 34.

† See *The Way to Divine Knowledge*, page 153.

when Christ is *everywhere*, Wrath and Hatred will be *nowhere*. Whenever therefore you *willingly* indulge Wrath, or let your Mind *work* in Hatred, you not only work *without* Christ, but you *resist* him, and *withstand* his redeeming Power over you; you do in reality what those *Jews* did, when they said, 'We will not have 'this Man to reign over us.' For Christ never was, nor can be, in any Creature, but purely as a *Spirit of Love*.

In all the Universe of Nature, nothing but Heaven and heavenly Creatures ever had or could have been known, had every created Will continued in that State in which it came forth out of and from God. For God can will nothing in the Life of the Creature, but a creaturely Manifestation of his *own Goodness, Happiness, and Perfection*. And therefore where this is wanted, the Fact is certain, that the Creature has *changed* and *lost* its first State that it had from God. Every Thing therefore which is the *Vanity*, the *Wrath*, the *Torment*, and Evil of Man, or any intelligent Creature, is solely the Effect of his Will *turned* from God, and can come from nothing else. Misery and Wickedness can have no other Ground or Root; for whatever wills and works with God, must of all Necessity partake of the Happiness and Perfection of God.

This therefore is a certain Truth, that Hell and Death, Curse and Misery, can never cease, or be removed from the Creation, till the *Will of the Creature is again* as it came from God, and is only a *Spirit of Love* that wills nothing but Goodness. All the whole fallen Creation, stand it never so long, must groan and travail in Pain, this must be its *Purgatory*, till every *Contrariety* to the Divine Will is *entirely* taken from every Creature.

Which is only saying, that all the Powers and Properties of Nature, are a Misery to themselves, can only work in Disquiet and Wrath, till the *Birth of the Son of God* brings them under the Dominion and Power of the *Spirit of Love*.

Thus, Sir, you have seen the original, immutable Ground, and Necessity of the Spirit of Love. It is no imaginary Refinement, or speculative Curiosity, but is of the highest Reality, and most absolute Necessity. It stands in the *Immutability* and *Perfection* of God; and not only every intelligent Creature, be it what and where it will, but every inanimate Thing, must work in *Vanity* and *Disquiet*, till it has *its State in*, and works under, the Spirit of Love. For as Love brought forth all Things, and all Things were what they were, and had their Place and State, under the *working Power of Love*, so every Thing that has *lost* its first-created State must be in restless Strife and Disquiet till it finds it again. There is no sort of Strife, Wrath, or Storm in outward Nature, no Fermentation, Vegetation, or

Corruption in any Elementary Things, but what is a full Proof, and real Effect of this Truth, *viz.*, That Nature can have no Rest, but must be in the Strife of Fermentation, Vegetation, and Corruption, constantly doing and undoing, building and destroying, till the *Spirit of Love* has *rectified* all outward Nature, and brought it back again into that *glassy Sea* of Unity, and Purity, in which St. *John* beheld the Throne of God in the Midst of it. For this *glassy Sea*, which the beloved Apostle was blessed with the Sight of, is the transparent, heavenly Element, in which all the Properties and Powers of Nature move and work in the *Unity* and *Purity* of the one Will of God, only known as so many endless Forms of triumphing Light and Love. For the Strife of Properties, of *Thick* against *Thin*, *Hard* against *Soft*, *Hot* against *Cold*, &c., had no Existence till Angels fell, that is, till they turned from God to work with Nature. This is the Original of all the *Strife*, *Division*, and *Materiality* in the fallen World.

No *Fluid* in this World ferments, but because there is some Thickness and Contrariety in it which it would not have. And it ferments only for this Reason, to have an *Unity* and *Clearness* in itself which its Nature wants to have. Now when you see this in any Fluid, you see the *Work* of all fallen Nature, and the *same* that every Thing else is doing, as well as it can, in its own Way ; it is in a restless Working and Strife after an *Unity* and *Purity*, which it can neither have, nor forbear to seek. And the Reason why all Things are doing thus is this, because all the Elements of this World, before they were brought down into their present State, had their *Birth* and *Existence* in the *Unity* and *Purity* of the heavenly *glassy Sea*, and therefore must be always in some Sort of *Strife* and *Tendency* after their first State, and doomed to Disquiet till it is found.

This is the Desire of all fallen Nature in this World ; it cannot be separated from it ; but every Part must work in Fermentation, Vegetation, and Corruption, till it is restored to its first *Unity* and *Purity* under the Spirit of Love.

Every Son of fallen *Adam* is under this *same Necessity* of working and striving after *something* that he neither is nor has, and for the same Reason, because the Life of Man has lost its first *Unity* and *Purity*, and therefore must be in a working Strife, till all Contrariety and Impurity are separated from it, and it finds its *first State* in God. All *evil* as well as *good* Men, all the *Wisdom* and *Folly* of this Life, are equally a Proof of this. For the Vanity of wicked Men in their various Ways, and the Labours of good Men in Faith and Hope, &c., proceed from the *same Cause* ; *viz.*, from a *Want* and *Desire* of having, and being *something*, that they neither are nor have. The Evil seek Wrong,

and the Good seek Right ; but they both are *Seekers*, and for the same Reason, because their present State has not *That* which it wants to have. And this must be the State of human Life, and of every Creature that has fallen from its first State, or has something in it that it should not have. It must do as the *polluted Fluid* does ; it must ferment, and work, either *right* or *wrong*, to mend its State. The muddled Wine always works right to the utmost of its Power, because it works according to Nature ; but if it had an *intelligent free Will*, it might work as vainly as Man does ; it might continually *thicken* itself, be always stirring up its *own Dregs*, and then it would seek for its Purity, just as well as the Soul of Man seeks for its Happiness, in the Lusts of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life. All which must of the *same Necessity* fall away from the Heart of Man, before it can find its Happiness in God, as the Dregs must *separate* from the Wine before it can have its Perfection and Clearness.

Purification therefore is the one Thing necessary, and nothing will do in the stead of it. But Man is not purified till every earthly wrathful, sensual, selfish, partial, self-willing Temper, is taken from him. He is not dying to himself till he is dying to these Tempers ; and he is not alive in God till he is dead to them. For he wants Purification only because he has these Tempers ; and therefore he has not the Purification which he wants till they are all separated from him. It is the Purity and Perfection of the Divine Nature that must be brought again into him, because in that Purity and Perfection he came forth from God, and could have no less as he was a Child of God, that was to be blessed by a Life in him and from him. For nothing impure, or imperfect in its Will or Working, can have any Union with God : Nor are you to think that these Words, the *Purity* and *Perfection* of God, are too high to be used on this Occasion, for they only mean that the Will of the Creature, as an *Offspring* of the Divine Will, must *will* and *work* with the Will of God, for then it stands and lives truly and really in the Purity and Perfection of God ; and whatever does not thus is at *Enmity* with God, and cannot have any Union of Life and happiness with him and in him.

Now nothing *wills* and *works* with God but the *Spirit of Love*, because nothing else works in God himself. The Almighty brought forth all Nature for this only End, that boundless Love might have its *Infinity* of Height and Depth to dwell and work in ; and all the striving and working Properties of Nature are only to give *Essence* and *Substance*, Life and Strength, to the *invisible hidden Spirit of Love*, that it may come forth into out-

ward Activity, and manifest its blessed Powers ; that Creatures born in the Strength, and out of the Powers of Nature, might communicate the Spirit of Love and Goodness, give and receive mutual Delight and Joy to and from one another. All below this State of Love is a *Fall* from the one Life of God, and the only Life in which the God of Love can dwell. *Partiality, Self, Mine, Thine, &c.*, are Tempers that can only belong to Creatures that have *lost the Power*, Presence, and Spirit, of the *universal Good*. They can have no Place in Heaven, nor can be anywhere but because Heaven is lost. Think not therefore that the Spirit of pure universal Love, which is the one Purity and Perfection of Heaven and all heavenly Natures, has been, or can be carried too high, or its absolute Necessity too much asserted. For it admits of no Degrees of higher or lower, and is not in Being, till it is absolutely pure and unmixed, no more than a Line can be straight till it is absolutely free from all Crookedness.

All the design of Christian Redemption is to remove every Thing that is *unheavenly, gross, dark, wrathful, and disordered*, from every Part of this fallen World. And when you see Earth and Stones, Storms and Tempests, and every kind of Evil, Misery, and Wickedness, you see *that* which Christ came into the World to remove, and not only to give a *new Birth* to fallen Man, but also to deliver all *outward Nature* from its present Vanity and Evil, and set it again in its first heavenly State. Now if you ask, How came all Things into this Evil and Vanity ? It is because they have lost the blessed *Spirit of Love*, which alone makes the Happiness and Perfection of every Power of Nature. Look at *Grossness, Coldness, Hardness, and Darkness*, they never could have had any Existence, but because the Properties of Nature must appear in *this manner*, when the Light of God is no longer dwelling in them.

Nature is at first only *spiritual* ; it has in itself nothing but the spiritual Properties of the *Desire*, which is the very Being and Ground of Nature. But when these spiritual Properties are not *filled, and blessed*, and all held in *one Will*, by the Light and Love of God ruling in them, then *something* is found in Nature which never should have been found, *vis.*, the Properties of Nature in a State of visible palpable *Division and Contrariety* to each other. And this new State of the Properties of Nature is the first Beginning and Birth, and Possibility, of all that Contrariety that is to be found betwixt *Hot and Cold, Hard and Soft, Thick and Thin, &c.*, all which could have had no Existence, till the Properties of Nature lost their first *Unity and Purity* under the Light and Love of God, manifested and working in them. And

this is the one true Origin of *all the Materiality* of this earthly System, and of every *Struggle* and *Contrariety* that is found in material Things. Had the Properties of Nature been kept by the Creature in their first State, blessed and overcome with the Light and Love of Heaven, dwelling and working in them, no *Wrath* or *Contrariety* could ever have been known by any Creature; and had not *Wrath* and *Contrariety* entered into the Properties of Nature, nothing *Thick*, or *Hard*, or *Dark*, &c., could ever have been found or known in *any Place*. Now every Thing that you see and know of the Things of this World, shows you that *Matter* began only in and from the Change of the *spiritual Properties* of Nature; and that *Matter* is changed and altered, just as the Light and Purity of Heaven is more or less in it. How comes the *Flint* to be in such a State of hard dark Compaction? It is because the *Meekness* and *Fluidity* of the Light, and Air, and Water of this World, have little or no Existence in it. And therefore as soon as the Fire has unlocked its hard Compaction, and opened in it the Light, and Air, and Water of this World, it becomes transparent Glass, and is brought so much nearer to that first *glassy Sea* in which it once existed. For the *Light*, and *Air*, and *Water* of this World, though all of them in a material State, yet have the most of the first heavenly Nature in them; and as these are more or less in all material Things, so are they nearer or further from their first heavenly State. And as the Fire is the first Deliverer of the Flint from its hard Compaction, so the last universal Fire must begin the Deliverance of this material System, and fit every Thing to receive that Spirit of Light and Love, which will bring all Things back again to their first *glassy Sea*, in which the Deity dwells, as in his Throne. And thus as the earthly Fire turns Flint into Glass, so Earth will become Heaven, and the *Contrariety* of the *four* divided Elements will become *one transparent Brightness* of Glory, as soon as the last Fire shall have melted every Grossness into its first undivided Fluidity, for the Light, and Love, and Majesty of God, to be all in all in it. How easy and natural is it to suppose all that is Earth and Stones to be dissolved in Water, the Water to be changed into Air, the Air into *Æther*, and the *Æther* rarefied into Light? Is there any Thing here impossible to be supposed? And how near a Step is the next, to suppose all this changed or exalted into that *glassy Sea*, which was *everywhere* before the Angels fell? What now is become of hard, heavy, dead, divisible, corruptible Matter? Is it annihilated? No: And yet nothing of it is *left*; all that you know of it is gone, and nothing but its *shadowy Idea* will be known in Eternity. Now as this shows you how Matter can lose all its *material Properties*, and go back to its *first spiritual*

State, so it makes it very intelligible to you how the Sin of Angels, which was their sinful Working in and with the Properties of Nature, could bring them out of their *first Spirituality* into that *Darkness, Grossness, and Chaos*, out of which God raised this material System. See now, Sir, how unreasonably you once told me, that our Doctrine must suppose the *Eternity* of Matter ; for throughout the Whole you might easily have seen, that it neither does nor can suppose it, but demonstrates the *Impossibility* of it; it shows the *true Origin* of Matter, that it is no *older* than Sin, could have no possibility of *beginning* to be but from Sin, and therefore must entirely *vanish* when Sin is entirely done away.

If *Matter*, said you, be not made *out of nothing*, then it must be *eternal*. Just as well concluded, as if you had said, If *Snow, and Hail, and Ice*, are not made of *nothing*, then they must be *eternal*. And if your Senses did not force you to know how these things are created out of *something*, and are in themselves only the Properties of Light, and Air, and Water, brought out of their first State into such a Compaction and Creation, as is called Snow, Hail, and Ice, your *rational Philosophy* would stand to its noble Conclusion, that they must be made *out of Nothing*. Now every time you see Snow, or Hail, or Ice, you see in Truth and Reality the *Creation of Matter*, or how this World came to be of *such a material* Nature as it is. For Earth and Stones, and every other Materiality of this World, came from some *antecedent Properties* of Nature, by that *same creating Power*, or *Fiat* of God, as turns the Properties of *Light, and Air, and Water*, into the different Materialities of *Snow, Hail, and Ice*.

The *first Property* of Nature, which is in itself a *constraining, attracting, compressing, and coagulating* Power, is that working Power from whence comes all Thickness, Darkness, Coldness, and Hardness ; and this is the *Creator* of Snow, and Hail, and Ice, out of *something* that before was only the *Fluidity* of Light, Air, and Moisture. Now this same Property of Nature, directed by the will of God, was the *Fiat* and *creating Power* which on the first Day of this World compacted, coagulated, or created the *wrathful Properties* of fallen Nature in the Angelic Kingdom into such a new State, as to become *Earth, and Stones, and Water, and a visible Heaven*. And the new State of the created Heaven, and Earth, and Stones, and Water, &c., came forth by the *Fiat* of God, or the Working of the first Property of Nature, from the Properties of fallen Nature ; just as Snow and Ice, and Hail, come forth by the same *Fiat* from the Properties of Light, Air, and Water. And the *created Materiality* of Heaven, Earth, Stones, and Water, have *no more Eternity* in them, than there is in Snow, or Hail, or Ice, but are only held for *a time* in their

compacted, or created State, by the same first astringing Property of Nature, which for a *time* holds Snow, and Hail, and Ice, in their compacted State.

Now here you see with the utmost Certainty that all the *Matter*, or *Materiality* of this World, is the Effect of Sin, and could have its *Beginning* from nothing else. For as Thickness, Hardness, and Darkness (which are the Essence of Matter) are the Effects of the wrathful predominant Power of the *first Property* of Nature, and as no Property of Nature can be predominant, or known as it is in itself, till Nature is *fallen* from its harmonious Unity under the *Light and Love* of God dwelling in it, so you have the utmost Certainty, that where *Matter*, or which is the same Thing, where *Thickness, Darkness, Hardness, &c.*, are found, there the Will of the Creature has *turned* from God, and opened a disorderly Working of Nature without God.

Therefore as sure as the *Materiality* of this World stands in the *predominant Power* of the first attracting, astringing Property of Nature, or in other Words, is a *Thickness, Darkness, Hardness, &c.*, so sure is it that the *Matter* of this World has its *Beginning* from Sin, and must have its *End* as soon as the Properties of Nature are again restored to their first Unity, and blessed Harmony under the Light and Spirit of God.

It is no Objection to all this, that Almighty God must be owned to be the true Creator of the Materiality of this World. For God only brought, or created it into this Materiality out of the *fallen sinful* Properties of Nature, and in order to *stop* their sinful Working, and to put them into a State of Recovery. He created the confused Chaos of the *darkened, divided, contrary* Properties of spiritual Nature into a further, *darker, harder Coagulation* and *Division*, that so the fallen Angels might thereby *lose* all Power over them; and that this *new Materiality* might become a Theatre of Redemption, and stand *its Time* under the Dominion of the *Lamb of God*, till all the *Wrath, and Grossness, and Darkness*, born of the Sin of Angels, was fitted to return to its first heavenly Purity.

And thus though God is the Creator of the Materiality of this World, yet seeing he created it out of that *Wrath, Division, and Darkness*, which Sin had opened in Nature, this Truth stands firm, that Sin alone is the *Father, first Cause, and Beginner* of all the Materiality of this World; and that when Sin is removed from Nature all its Materiality must vanish with it. For when the Properties of Nature are again in the Unity of the *one Will* of Light and Love, *then Hot and Cold, Thick and Thin, Dark and Hard*, with every other Property of Matter, must give up all their Distinction, and all the divided Elements of this World *lose* all

their *Materiality* and *Division* in that first heavenly Spirituality of a *glassy Sea*, from whence they fell.

Now as all the whole Nature of *Matter*, its Grossness, Darkness, and Hardness, is owing to the *unequal predominant* Working of the first Property of Nature, which is an *attracting, astringing, and compressing* Desire, so every *spiritual* Evil, every wicked Working, and disorderly State of any intelligent Being, is all owing to the *same disorderly predominant* Power of the first Property of Nature, doing all that *inwardly* in the Spirit of the Creature which it does in an outward Grossness, Darkness, and Hardness. Thus when the *Desire* (the first Property of Nature) in any intelligent Creature, leaves the *Unity* and *Universality* of the Spirit of Love, and *contracts* or *shuts* up itself in an *own Will, own Love, and Self-seeking*, then it does *all that* inwardly, and spiritually in the Soul, which it does in outward Grossness, Hardness, and Darkness. And had not *own Will, own Love, and Self-seeking*, come into the Spirit of the Creature, it never could have found or felt any *outward* Contrariety, Darkness, or Hardness: For no Creature can have any *other outward* Nature but that which is in the same State with its inward Spirit, and belongs to it as its own *natural Growth*.

Modern *Metaphysics* have no Knowledge of the Ground and Nature either of *Spirit* or *Body*, but suppose them not only without *any natural* Relation, but *essentially* contrary to one another, and only held together in a *forced* Conjunction by the *arbitrary Will* of God. Nay, if you were to say, that God first creates a Soul *out of nothing*, and when that is done, then takes an *understanding Faculty* and puts it into it, after that adds a *Will*, and then a *Memory*, all as independently made, as when a Tailor first makes the Body of a Coat, and then adds Sleeves, or Pockets to it, were you to say This, the Schools of *Descartes, Malebranche* or *Locke*, could have nothing to say against it. And the Thing is unavoidable; for all these Philosophers were so far from knowing the *Ground* of Nature, how it is a *Birth* from God, and all Creatures a *Birth* from Nature, through the working Will of God in and by the Powers of Nature, as they were so far from knowing this, as to hold a Creation *out of nothing*, so they were necessarily *excluded* from every fundamental Truth concerning the *Origin* either of Body or Spirit, and their true Relation to one another. For a Creation *out of nothing* leaves no room for accounting why any Thing is as it is.—Now every wise Man is supposed to have Respect to Nature in every Thing that he would have joined together; he cannot suppose his Work to succeed unless this be done. But to suppose God to create Man with a Body and Soul, not only not *naturally* related, but naturally *impossible* to be

united by any Powers in either of them, is to suppose God acting and creating Man into an *unnatural State*; which yet he could not do, unless there was such a Thing as Nature *antecedent* to the Creation of Man. And how can Nature be, or have any Thing, but what it is and has from God? Therefore to suppose God to bring any Creature into an unnatural State, is to suppose him acting *contrary* to himself, and to that Nature which is from him.

Yet all the Metaphysics of the *Schools* do this; they suppose God to bring a Soul and a Body together which have the *utmost natural* Contrariety to each other, and can only affect, or act upon one another by an *arbitrary Will* of God, willing that Body and Soul, held together by *Force*, should *seem* to do that to one another, which they have no *natural* or *possible* Power to do. But the true Philosophy of this Matter, known only to the Soul that by a new Birth from above has found its first State in and from God, is this: *Namely*, that Nature is a Birth, or Manifestation of the triune invisible Deity. And as it could only come into Existence as a *Birth* from God, so every Creature, or beginning Thing, can only come forth as a *Birth* from and out of Nature by the Will of God, willing it to come forth in such a Birth. And no Creature can have, or be any Thing, but by and according to the working Powers of Nature; and therefore, strictly speaking, no Creature can be put into an *unnatural State*. It may indeed *lose*, or *fall* from its *natural Perfection*, by the wrong Use or Working of its Will; but then its *fallen State* is the *natural Effect* of the wrong Use of its Will, and so it only has *that* which is *natural* to it. The Truth of the Matter is this: There neither is, nor can be any Thing, nor any Effect in the whole Universe of Things, but by the *Way of Birth*. For as the *working Will* is the first Cause or Beginner of every Thing, so nothing can proceed *further* than as it is *driven* by the Will, and is a *Birth of it*. And therefore nothing can be in any Thing but what is *natural* to its *own working Will*, and is the true *Effect* of it. Every Thing that is outward in any Being is only a *Birth* of its own Spirit; and therefore all Body, whether it be heavenly, or earthly, or hellish, has its whole *Nature* and *Condition* from its *own* inward Spirit; and no Spirit can have a Body of any *other Properties* but such as are *natural* to it, as being its *own true outward State*. For Body and Spirit are not two *separate independent* Things, but are *necessary* to each other, and are only the *inward* and *outward Conditions* of *one* and the *same Being*.

Every *creaturely Spirit* must have its *own Body*, and cannot be without it; for its Body is *that* which makes it *manifest* to itself. It cannot be said to exist as a *Creature* till in a Body, because

it can have no *Sensibility* of itself, nor feel nor find either that it is, or what it is, but in and by its own Body. Its Body is its first Knowledge of its *Something* and *Somewhere*.

And now, Sir, if you ask why I have gone into this Detail of the *Origin* and *Nature* of Body and Spirit, when my Subject was only concerning the Spirit of Love, it is to show you, that *Grossness*, *Darkness*, *Contrariety*, *Disquiet*, and *Fermentation*, must be the State of the Body and Spirit, till they are both made *pure* and *luminous* by the Light and Love of Heaven manifested in them. All *Darkness*, *Grossness*, and *Contrariety* must be removed from the Body before it can belong to Heaven, or be united with it; but these *Qualities* must be in the Body till the Soul is totally dead to *Self*, *Partiality*, and *Contrariety*, and breathes only the Spirit of universal Love, because the State of the Body has nothing of *its own*, or from itself, but is solely the *outward Manifestation* of nothing else but that which is *inwardly in the Soul*. Every Animal of this World has nothing in its outward Form or Shape, every Spirit, whether heavenly or hellish, has nothing in the Nature and State of its Body, but that which is the Form and Growth of its own *inward Spirit*. As no *Number* can be any Thing but that which the *Unities* contained in it make it to be, so no *Body* of any Creature can be any Thing else but the *Coagulation*, or *Sum total*, of those *Properties* of Nature that are coagulated in it. And when the *Properties* of Nature are formed into the Band of a *creaturely Union*, then is its Body brought forth, whether the Spirit of the Creature be earthly, heavenly, or hellish.

Nature or the *first Properties* of Life are in a State of the highest *Contrariety*, and the highest *Want* of *something* which they have not. This is their whole Nature, and they have nothing else in them. And this is their true *Ground* and *Fitness* to become a Life of triumphing Joy and Happiness, *viz.*, when united in the Possession of that which they seek for in their *Contrariety*. And if Life, in its first Root, was not this Depth of Strife, this Strength of Hunger, and Sensibility of Want, the Fulness of heavenly Joy could not be manifested in it.

You are not a Stranger to the Mystery of the *Seven Properties* of Nature, which we have often spoken of; and therefore I shall shorten the Matter, and only say so much of them as may be of Service to our present Subject.

Nature, whether eternal or temporal, is *That* which comes not into Being for its own Self, or to be *That* which it is in itself, but for the Sake of *Something* that it is not, and has not. And this is the Reason why Nature is only a *Desire*; it is because it is for the Sake of *something else*; and it is also the Reason why

Nature in itself is only a *Torment*, because it is only a strong Desire, and cannot help itself to that which it wants, but is always working against itself.*

Now a *Desire* that cannot be *stopped*, nor get That which it would have, has a *threefold* Contrariety, or Working in it, which you may thus conceive, as follows: The first and *peculiar* Property, or the *one only* Will of the Desire, as such, is to *have* That which it has not; and all that it can do towards *having* it is to act as if it were *seizing* it; and this is it which makes the Desire to be a *magic Compressing, Inclosing, or Astringing*; because that is all that it can do towards *Seizing* of that which it would have. But the Desire cannot thus magically *astringe, compress*, or strive to inclose, without *Drawing* and *Attracting*: But Drawing is *Motion*, which is the highest Contrariety and Resistance to *compressing, or holding together*. And thus the *Desire*, in its magical Working, sets out with *two contrary* Properties, inseparable from one another, and equal in Strength; for the Motion has no Strength but as it is the *Drawing* of the Desire; and the Desire only *draws* in the *same Degree* as it wills to *compress* and *astringe*; and therefore the Desire, as *astringing*, always begets a *Resistance* equal to itself. Now from this great and equally-strong Contrariety of the *two first Properties* of the Desire, magically pulling, as I may say, two contrary Ways, there arises, as a necessary Birth from both of them, a *third Property*, which is emphatically called a *Wheel, or whirling Anguish* of Life. For a Thing that can go neither inward nor outward, and yet must *be* and *move* under the equal Power of both of them, must *whirl, or turn round*; it has no Possibility of doing any Thing else, or of ceasing to do that. And this *whirling Contrariety* of these inseparable Properties is the *great Anguish* of Life, and may properly be called the *Hell of Nature*: and every lesser Torment which any Man finds in this mixed World has all its Existence and Power from the Working of these *three* Properties: For Life can find no troublesome Motions, or Sensibility of Distress, but so far as it comes under their Power, and enters into their whirling Wheel.

Now here you may observe, that as this *whirling Anguish* of Life is a *third State*, necessarily arising from the Contrariety of the *two first* Properties of the Desire, so in this material System, every *whirling, or orbicular* Motion of any Body, is solely the Effect or Product of the Contrariety of *these two* first Properties. For no material Thing can whirl or move round, till it is under the Power of these *two Properties*, that is, till it can neither go

* See *The Way to Divine Knowledge*, page 196.

inwards nor outwards, and yet is obliged to *move*; just as the whirling Anguish of the Desire then begins, when it can neither go inwards nor outwards, and yet must be in *Motion*.

And this may be again another strict Demonstration to you, that all the *Matter* of this World is from *spiritual Properties*, since all its Workings and Effects are according to them: For if *Matter* does nothing but according to them, it can be nothing but what it is, and has from them.

Here also, that is, in these *three Properties* of the *Desire*, you see the Ground and Reason of the *three* great Laws of *Matter* and *Motion* lately discovered, and so much celebrated; and need no more to be told, that the illustrious Sir *Isaac* ploughed with *Behmen's* Heifer when he brought forth the Discovery of them. In the mathematical System of this great Philosopher these three Properties, *Attraction*, equal *Resistance*, and the *orbicular Motion* of the Planets as the Effect of them, &c., are only treated of as *Facts* and *Appearances*, whose Ground is not pretended to be known. But in our *Behmen*, the illuminated Instrument of God, their *Birth* and *Power* in Eternity are opened; their eternal Beginning is shown, and *how* and *why* all Worlds, and every Life of every Creature, whether it be heavenly, earthly, or hellish, must be in them, and from them, and can have no Nature, either spiritual or material, no kind of Happiness or Misery, but according to the working Power and State of these Properties.

All outward Nature, all inward Life, is what it is, and works as it works, from this unceasing powerful *Attraction*, *Resistance*, and *Whirling*.

Every Madness and Folly of Life is their immediate Work, and every good Spirit of Wisdom and Love has all its Strength and Activity from them. They equally support Darkness and Light: The one could have no Powers of Thickness and Coldness, the other no Powers of Warmth, Brightness, and Activity, but by and through these three Properties acting in a different State. Not a Particle of *Matter* stirs, rises, or falls, separates from, or unites with any other, but under their Power. Not a Thought of the Mind, either of Love or Hatred, of Joy or Trouble, of Envy or Wrath, of Pride and Covetousness, can rise in the Spirit of any Creature, but as these Properties act and stir in it.

The next and following Properties, *viz.*, the fourth, called *Fire*, the fifth, called the Form of *Light and Love*, and the sixth, *Sound*, or *Understanding*, only declare the *gradual Effects* of the Entrance of the Deity into the three first Properties of Nature, changing, or bringing their strong wrathful *Attraction*, *Resistance*, and *Whirling*, into a Life and State of triumphing Joy, and Fulness of Satisfaction; which *State* of Peace and Joy in one

another is called the *Seventh Property* or State of Nature. And this is what *Behmen* means by his *Ternarius Sanctus*, which he so often speaks of as the only Place from whence he received all that he said and wrote: He means by it the holy Manifestation of the Triune God in the *seven Properties* of Nature, or Kingdom of Heaven. And from this Manifestation of God in the seven Properties of Nature, or Kingdom of Heaven, he most wonderfully opens, and accounts for all that was done in the *six first working Days* of the Creation, showing how every one of the six active Properties had its *peculiar Day's Work*, till the whole ended or *rested* in the sanctified *paradisaical Sabbath* of the *seventh Day*, just as Nature does in its *seventh Property*.

And now, Sir, you may see in the greatest Clearness, how every Thing in this World, every Thing in the Soul and Body of Man, absolutely requires the *one Redemption* of the Gospel. There is but *one Nature* in all created Things, whether spiritual or material; they all stand and work upon the same Ground, *viz.*, the *three first Properties* of Nature. That only which can illuminate the Soul, that alone can give *Brightness* and *Purity* to the Body. For there is no Grossness, Darkness, and Contrariety in the Body, but what strictly proceeds from the *same Cause* that makes *Selfishness*, *Wrath*, *Envy*, and *Torment*, in the Soul; it is but one and the same State and Working of the same three first Properties of Nature. All Evil, whether natural or moral, whether of Body or Spirit, is the sole Effect of the *Wrath* and *Disorder* of the Spirits of Nature working in and by themselves. And all the Good, Perfection, and Purity of every Thing, whether spiritual or material, whether it be the Body or Spirit of Man or Angel, is solely from the Power and Presence of the supernatural Deity *dwelling* and *working* in the Properties of Nature. For the Properties of Nature are in themselves nothing but a mere *Hunger*, *Want*, *Strife*, and *Contrariety*, till the Fulness and Riches of the Deity, entering into them, unite them all in *one Will*, and *one Possession* of Light and harmonious Love; which is the *one Redemption* of the Gospel, and the one Reason why nothing else but the *Heart*, or *Son*, or *Light* of God, can purify Nature and Creature from all the Evil they are fallen into.

For nothing can possibly deliver the Soul from its *selfish* Nature, and *earthly Passions*, but that *one Power* that can deliver *Matter* from its present material Properties, and turn Earth into Heaven: And that for this plain Reason, because Soul and Body, outward Nature and inward Life, have but one and the same Evil in them, and from one and the same Cause.

The *Deist* therefore, who looks for Life and Salvation through the Use of his Reason, acts contrary to the whole Nature of

every Thing that he sees and knows of himself, and of the Nature and State of this World. For from one End of it to the other, all its material State, all its gross divided Elements, declare that they are what they are, because the Light and Love of Heaven are not working and manifest in them, and that nothing can take Darkness, Materiality, Rage, Storms, and Tempests from them, but that same heavenly Light and Love which was made Flesh to redeem the fallen Humanity first, and after that the whole material System.

Can the Deist with his Reason bring the Light of this World into the Eyes of his Body? If not, how comes it to be less absurd, or more possible, for Reason to bring heavenly Light into the Soul? Can Reason hinder the Body from being heavy, or remove Thickness and Darkness from Flesh and Blood? Yet nothing less than such a Power can possibly help the Soul out of its fallen and earthly State. For the Grossness of Flesh and Blood is the *natural State* of the fallen Soul; and therefore nothing can purify the Soul, or raise it out of its earthly corrupt State, but That which has all Power over all that which is *earthly* and *material* in Nature.

To pretend therefore that Reason may have sufficient Power to remove all hellish Depravity, and earthly Lusts from the Soul, whilst it has not the least Power over *Sweet* or *Sour* in any one Particle of Matter in the Body, is as highly absurd, as if a Man should pretend that he has a full Power to alter the inward, invisible, vegetable Life of a Plant, but none at all over its outward State, Colour, Leaves, or Fruit. The *Deist* therefore, and not the Christian, stands in need of continual Miracles to make good his Doctrine. For Reason can have no Pretence to amend or alter the Life of the Soul, but so far as it can show that it has Power to amend and alter the Nature and State of the Body.

The unbelieving *Jews* said of our Lord, 'How can this Man 'forgive Sins?' Christ showed them *how*, by appealing to that Power which they saw he had over the Body: 'Whether,' says he, 'is it easier to say, Thy Sins are forgiven thee, or to say, 'Arise, take up thy Bed and walk?' But the Delusion of the unbelieving Deist is greater than that of the *Jew*. For the Deist sees, that his Reason has no Power over his Body, can remove no Disease, Blindness, Deafness, or Lameness, from it, and yet will pretend to have Power enough from his Reason to help the Soul out of all its Evil; not knowing, that Body and Soul go hand in hand, and are nothing else but the inward and outward State of *one and the same* Life; and that therefore he only who can say to the dead Body of *Lazarus*, *Come forth*, can say to the Soul, *Be thou clean*. The *Deist* therefore, if he pleases, may style

himself a natural, or a moral Philosopher, but with no more Truth, than he can call himself a *Healer* of all the Maladies of the Body. And for a Man to think himself a moral Philosopher, because he has made a choice Collection of Syllogisms, in order to quicken and revive a Divine Goodness in the Soul, or that no Redeemer need come from Heaven, because human Reason, when truly left to itself, has great Skill in chopping of Logic, may justly be deemed such an Ignorance of the Nature of Things, as is seldom found in the Transactions of illiterate and vulgar Life.* But this by the Bye.

To return to our chief Subject: The Sum of all that has been said is this: All Evil, be it what it will, all Misery of every kind, is in its Birth, Working, and Extent, nothing else but Nature left to *itself*, and under the divided Workings of its own *Hunger, Wrath, and Contrariety*; and therefore there is no *Possibility* for the natural earthly Man to escape eternal Hunger, Wrath and Contrariety, but solely in the Way as the Gospel teaches, by denying and dying to Self. On the other hand, all the Goodness and Perfection, all the Happiness, Glory, and Joy, that any intelligent Divine Creature can be possessed of is, and can be, from nothing else, but the *invisible uncreated Light and Spirit* of God manifesting itself in the Properties of the creaturely Life, *filling, blessing, and uniting* them all in *one Love* and Joy of Life. And thus again, there is no Possibility of Man's attaining to any heavenly Perfection and Happiness, but only in the Way of the Gospel, by the *Union* of the Divine and human Nature, by Man's being born again from above of the *Word and Spirit* of God. There is no Possibility of any other Way, because there is nothing that can possibly change the first Properties of Life into an heavenly State, but the Presence, and working Power, of the Deity united with and working in them. And therefore the *Word was made Flesh*, and must of all necessity be made Flesh, if Man is to have an heavenly Nature. Now as all Evil, Sin, and Misery, have no Beginning, nor Power of Working, but in the Manifestation of Nature in its *divided contrary* Properties; so it is certain, that Man has nothing to turn to, seek or aspire after, but the lost *Spirit of Love*. And therefore it is, that God only can be his Redeemer, because God only is Love; and Love can be nowhere else, but in God, and where God dwells and works.

Now the Difficulty which you find in attaining to this Purity, and Universality of the Spirit of Love, is because you seek for it, as I once told you, in the Way of Reasoning: You would be possessed of it only from a *rational* Conviction of the Fitness

* *Spirit of Love*, Second Part, page 22.

and Amiableness of it. And as this clear Idea does not put you immediately into the real Possession of it, your Reason begins to waver, and suggests to you, that it may be only a *fine Notion* that has no Ground but in the Power of Imagination. But this, Sir, is all your own Error, and as contrary to Nature, as if you would have your Eyes do That, which only your Hands or Feet can do for you. The *Spirit of Love* is a Spirit of *Nature and Life*; and all the Operations of Nature and Life are according to the working Powers of Nature; and every Growth and Degree of Life can only arise in its *own* Time and Place from its *proper* Cause, and as the genuine Effect of it. Nature and Life do nothing by Chance, or accidentally, but every Thing in one uniform Way. *Fire, Air, and Light*, do not proceed sometimes from one Thing, and sometimes from another; but wherever they are, they are always born in the same Manner, and from the same Working in the Properties of Nature. So in like Manner, Love is an *immutable Birth*, always proceeding from the *same Cause*, and cannot be in Existence till its own true Parents have brought it forth.

How unreasonable would it be, to begin to doubt whether *Strength and Health* of Body were real Things, or possible to be had, because you could not by the Power of your Reason take Possession of them; Yet this is as well, as to suspect the Purity and Perfection of Love to be only a *Notion*, because your Reason cannot bring forth its Birth in your Soul. For Reason has no more Power of altering the *Life and Properties* of the Soul, than of altering the Life and Properties of the Body. That, and that only, can cast Devils and evil Spirits out of the Soul, that can say to the Storm, *Be still*, and to the Leper, *Be thou clean*.

The Birth of Love is a *Form or State* of Life, and has its *fixed Place* in the *fifth* Form of Nature. The three first Properties or Forms of Nature are the *Ground or Band* of Life, that is in itself only an extreme Hunger, Want, Strife and Contrariety. And they are in this State, that they may become a proper Fuel for the *fourth* Form of Nature, *viz.*, the *Fire*, to be kindled in them. You will perhaps say, What is this *Fire*? What is its *Nature*? And how is it kindled? And *how* is it, that the Hunger, and anguishing State of the Properties, are a Fitness to be a *Fuel* of this *Fire*? It may be answered, This Hunger and Anguish of Nature, in its first Forms, are its Fitness to be changed into a Life of Light, Joy, and Happiness: And that for this Reason, because it is in this Hunger and Anguish only because God is *not in it*. For as Nature comes from God, and for this only End, that the Deity may manifest Heaven in it, it must stand in an Hunger and anguishing State till the Deity is manifested in it.

And therefore its Hunger and Anguish are its *true Fitness* to be changed into a better State; and this is its *Fitness* for the Birth of the Fire: For the Fire means nothing, and is nothing else, but *That* which changes them into a *better State*. Not as if Fire was a *fourth, distinct* Thing, that comes into them from *without*, but is only a fourth *State* or Condition into which the same Properties are brought.

The Fire then is *that* which changes the Properties into a *new* and *heavenly* State: Therefore the Fire does two Things; it alters the State of Nature, and brings Heaven into it; and therefore it must work from a *twofold* Power; the *Deity* and *Nature* must both be in it. It must have some Strength from Nature, or it could not work in Nature; it must have some Strength from the Deity, or it could not *overcome*, and *change* Nature into a Divine Life. Now all this is only to show you, that the Fire can only be kindled by the *Entrance* of the Deity or *supernatural* God into a *Conjunction* or *Union* with Nature. And this Conjunction of the Deity and Nature makes or brings forth that *State*, or *Form* of Life, which is called, and truly is, *Fire*: *First*, Because it does *that* in the spiritual Properties of Nature, which Fire does in the Properties of material Nature; and *Secondly*, Because it is that alone, from which every Fire in this World, whether in the Life of animal, or vegetable, or inanimate Matter, has its Source, and Power, and Possibility of Burning. The Fire of this World overcomes its Fuel, breaks its Nature, alters its State, and changes it into Flame and Light. But why does it do this? Whence has it this Nature and Power? It is because it is a *true Out-birth* of the *eternal Fire*, which overcomes the Darkness, Wrath, and Contrariety of Nature, and changes all its Properties into a Life of Light, Joy, and Glory. Not a Spark of Fire could be kindled in this World, nor a Ray of Light come from any material Fire, but because material Nature is, in itself, nothing else but the *very Properties* of eternal Nature, standing for a Time in a *material State* or Condition; and therefore they must work in Time as they do in Eternity; and consequently there must be *Fire* in this World, it must have the *same Birth*, and do the *same Work*, in its *material Way*, which the eternal Fire has and does in spiritual Nature. And this is the true Ground and Reason why every Thing in this World is delivered as far as it can be from its earthly Impurity, and brought into its *highest* State of Existence, only by Fire; it is because the eternal Fire is the *Purifier* of eternal Nature, and the *Opener* of every Perfection, Light and Glory in it. And if you ask why the eternal Fire is the *Purifier* of eternal Nature, the Reason is plain; it is because the eternal Fire has its *Birth*, and *Nature*, and Power,

from the *Entrance* of the pure supernatural Deity into the Properties of Nature, which must change their State, and be what they were not before, as soon as the Deity *enters* into them. Their *Darkness, Wrath, and Contrariety*, are driven out of them, and they work, and give forth only a Life, and Strength of Light, and Joy, and Glory. And this twofold Operation, *viz.*, on one hand taking from Nature its *wrathful* Workings, and on the other hand opening a glorious Manifestation of the Deity in them, is the *whole Nature and Form* of the Fire, and is the Reason why from Eternity to Eternity it is and must be the *Purifier* of eternal Nature; namely, as from Eternity to Eternity changing Nature into a Kingdom of Heaven. Now every Fire in this World does, and must do, the same Thing in its low Way, to the utmost of its Power, and can do nothing else. Kindle Fire where, or in what you will, it acts only as from and by the Power of this *eternal purifying Fire*; and therefore it breaks and consumes the *Grossness* of every Thing, and makes all that is pure and spirituous to come forth out of it; and therefore *Purification* is its one only Work through all material Nature, because it is a real *Out-birth* of that *eternal Fire* which purifies eternal Nature, and changes it into a mere Heaven of Glory.

The eternal Fire is called a *fourth Form*, or State of Nature; because it cannot exist but from the first Three, and has its Work in the *fourth Place*, in the Midst of the seven Forms, changing the three first into the three last Forms of Nature, that is, changing them from their natural into an heavenly State. So that, strictly speaking, there are but three Forms of Nature, to answer to the threefold Working of the Triune Deity. For the three last are not three new or different Properties, but are only the three first brought into a new State, by the *Entrance* of the Triune Deity into Conjunction with them. Which Entrance of the supernatural Deity into them is the *consuming* of all that is bad in them, and turning all their Strength into a working Life of Light, Joy, and heavenly Glory; and therefore it has the justest Title to be called *Fire*, as having no other Nature and Operation in it but the known Nature of Fire, and also as being *That* from which every Fire in this World has all its Nature and Power of doing as it does.

You once, as I remember, objected to my speaking so much in the *Appeal, &c.*, of the *Fire of Life*, as thinking it too gross an Expression to be taken in its *literal* Meaning, when mention is made of the eternal Fire, or the *Fire* in animal Life. But, Sir, Fire has but *one Nature* through the whole Universe of Things; and material Fire has not more or less of the Nature of Fire in it, than that which is in eternal Nature; because it has

nothing, works nothing, but what it has and works from thence. How easy was it for you to have seen, that the Fire of the Soul and the Fire of the Body had but *one Nature*? How else could they *unite* in their Heat? How easy also to have seen, that the Fire of animal Life was the same Fire that burns in the Kitchen? How else could the Kitchen Fire be serviceable to animal Life? What Good could it do you to come to a Fire of Wood, where you wanted to have the Heat of your *own Life* increased? In animal Life the Fire is kindled and preserved in such a *Degree*, and in such *Circumstances*, as to be *Life*, and the *Preservation* of Life; and this is its Difference from Fire kindled in Wood, and burning it to Ashes. It is the *same Fire*, only in a *different State*, that *keeps up* Life, and *consumes* Wood; and has no other Nature in the Wood than in the Animal. Just as in Water that has only so much Fire in it as to make it warm, and Water that is by Fire made boiling hot, the same Nature and Power of Fire are in both, but only in a different State. Now will you say, that Fire is not to be *literally* understood, when it only makes Water to be warm, because it is not *red* and *flaming* as you see it in a burning Coal? Yet this would be as well as to say, that Fire is not *literally* to be understood in the animal Life, because it is so different from that Fire which you see burning in a Piece of Wood. And thus, Sir, there is no Foundation for any Objection to all that has been said of Fire in the *Appeal, &c.* It is one and the same great Power of God in the spiritual and material World; it is the Cause of every Life, and the Opener of every Power of Nature; and its one great Work through all Nature and Creature, animate and inanimate, is *Purification* and *Exaltation*; it can do nothing else, and that for this plain Reason, because its Birth is from the Entrance of the pure Deity into Nature, and therefore must, in its various State and Degrees, be only doing *that* which the *Entrance* of the Deity into Nature does. It must bring every natural Thing into its *highest State*. But to go back now to the *Spirit of Love*, and show you the *Time* and *Place* of its Birth, before which it can have no Existence in your Soul, do what you will to have it.

The *Fire*, you see, is the first *Overcomer* of the hungry, wrathful, self-tormenting State of the Properties of Nature; and it only overcomes them, because it is the *Entrance* of the pure Deity into them; and therefore *That* which overcomes them is the *Light* of the Deity. And this is the true Ground and Reason, why every right-kindled Fire must give forth Light, and cannot do otherwise. It is because the eternal Fire is only the Effect or Operation of the *supernatural Light* of the Deity *entering* into Nature; and therefore Fire must give forth Light,

because it is itself only a *Power* of the Light ; and Light can be nowhere in Nature but as a *fifth Form*, or *State* of Nature, brought forth by the Fire. And as Light thus brought forth is *the first State* that is *lovely* and *delightful* in Nature, so the Spirit of Love has only its Birth *in the Light* of Life, and can be nowhere else. For the Properties of Life have no *common Good*, nothing to rejoice in, till the Light is found ; and therefore there is no possible Beginning of the Spirit of Love till then.

The Shock that is given to the three first Properties of Nature by the amazing Light of the Deity breaking in upon them, is the *Operation* of the Fire, that consumes, or takes away, the wrathful Strength and Contrariety of the Properties, and forces each of them to shrink, as it were, away from itself, and come under the Power of this new-risen Light. Here all Strife of Enmity and wrathful Contrariety in the Properties must cease, because all are united in the *Love of the Light*, and all equally helping one another to an higher Enjoyment and Delight in it. They are all one Triune Will, all doing the same Thing, *vis.*, all rejoicing in the one Love of the Light. And here it is, in this delightful Unity of Operation, that the *Spirit of Love* is born, in the *fifth Property*, or Light of Life ; and cannot possibly rise up in any Creature till the Properties of its Life are brought into this *fifth State*, thus changed, and exalted into a new Sensibility of Life. Let me give you this Similitude of the Matter : Fancy to yourself a Man shut up in a deep Cave underground, without ever having seen a Ray of the Light, his Body all over tortured with Pain, his Mind distracted with Rage, himself whirling and working with the utmost Fury and Madness he knows not what ; and then you have an Image of the first Properties of Life, as they are in themselves, before the Fire had done its Work in them.

Fancy this Man suddenly struck, or all surrounded, with such a Glare of Light, as in the Twinkling of an Eye stopped, or struck dead, every Working of every Pain and Rage, both in his Body and Mind ; and then you have an Image of the *Operation* of the Fire, and what it does to the first Properties of Nature. Now as soon as the first Terror of the Light has had its fiery Operation, and struck nothing dead but every working Sensibility of Distress, fancy this Man, as you now well may, in the sweetest Peace of Mind and bodily Sensations, blessed in a new Region of Light, giving Joy to his Mind, and Gratification to every Sense ; and then the Transports, the Overflowings of Love and Delight in this new State, may give you an Image how the *Spirit of Love* is, and must be born, when Fire and Light have overcome, and changed the State of the first Properties of Nature ; and it never,

till then, can have any Existence in any Creature, nor proceed from any other Cause. Thus, Sir, you may sufficiently see, how vainly you attempt to possess yourself of the Spirit of Love by the Power of your Reason; and also what a Vanity of all Vanities there is in the Religion of the Deists, who will have no other Perfection, or Divine Life, but what they can have from their Reason: as great a Contradiction to Nature, as if they would have no Life or Strength of Body, but that which can be had from their Faculty of Reasoning. For Reason can no more alter or exalt any *one Property* of Life in the Soul, and bring it into its *perfect State*, than it can add one Cubit to the Stature of the Body. The Perfection of every Life is no way possibly to be had, but as every Flower comes to its Perfection, *viz.*, from its own Seed and Root, and the various Degrees of Transmutation which must be gone through before the Flower is found: It is strictly thus with the Perfection of the Soul: All its Properties of Life must have their true natural Birth and Growth from one another. The first, as its *Seed* and Root, must have their natural Change into an higher State; must, like the Seed of the Flower, pass through Death into Life, and be blessed with the Fire, and Light, and Spirit of Heaven, in their Passage to it; just as the Seed passes through Death into Life, blessed by the Fire, and Light, and Air of this World, till it reaches its last Perfection, and becomes a beautiful sweet-smelling Flower. And to think that the Soul can attain its Perfection any other Way, than by the *Change* and *Exaltation* of its first Properties of Life, just as the Seed has its first Properties *changed* and *exalted* till it comes to have its Flower, is a total Ignorance of the Nature of Things. For as whatever dies cannot have a Death *particular* to itself, but the same Death in the same Way, and for the same Reasons, that any other Creature, whether animal or vegetable, ever did or can die; so every Life, and Degree of Life, must come into its State and Condition of Life in the same Way, and for the same Reasons as Life, and the Perfection of Life, come into every other living Creature, whether in Heaven, or on Earth. Therefore the Deist's Religion, or Reason, which is to raise the Soul to its true Perfection, is so far from being the Religion of Nature, that it is quite unnatural, and declared to be so by every Working in Nature. For since Reason can neither give Life nor Death to any one Thing in Nature, but every Thing lives, or dies, according to the Working of its own Properties, every Thing, dead and alive, gives forth a Demonstration, that Nature asks no Counsel of Reason, nor stays to be directed by it. Hold it therefore for a certain Truth, that you can have no Good come into your Soul,

but only by the *one Way* of a Birth from above, from the *Entrance of the Deity* into the Properties of your own soulish Life. Nature must be set right, its Properties must enter into the Process of a new Birth, it must work to the Production of Light, before the Spirit of Love can have a Birth in it. For Love is Delight, and Delight cannot arise in any Creature till its Nature is in a delightful State, or is possessed of that in which it must rejoice. And this is the Reason why God must become Man; it is because a Birth of the Deity must be found in the Soul, giving to Nature all that it wants, or the Soul can never find itself in a delightful State and only Working with the *Spirit of Love*. For whilst the Soul has only its *natural Life*, it can only be in such a State, as Nature, without God, is in, *vis.*, a mere *Hunger, Want, Contrariety, and Strife for it knows not what*. Hence is all that Variety of *blind, restless, contrary* Passions, which govern and torment the Life of fallen Man. It is because all the Properties of Nature must work in *Blindness*, and be doing *they know not what*, till the *Light* of God is found in them. Hence also it is, that That which is called the *Wisdom, the Honour, the Honesty, and the Religion* of the natural Man, often does as much Hurt to himself, and others, as his *Pride, Ambition, Self-Love, Envy, or Revenge*, and are subject to the same Humour and Caprice; it is because Nature is *no better* in one Motion than in another, nor can be so, till *something supernatural* is come into it. We often charge Men both in Church and State, with changing their *Principles*; but the Charge is too hasty; for no Man ever did, or can change his Principles, but by a Birth from above. The *natural*, called in Scripture, the *old Man*, is steadily the same in Heart and Spirit in every Thing he does, whatever Variety of Names may be given to his Actions. For *Self* can have no Motion but what is *selfish*, which Way soever it goes, or whatever it does, either in Church or State. And be assured of this, that *Nature* in every Man, whether he be learned or unlearned, is this *very Self*, and can be nothing else, till a Birth of the Deity is brought forth in it. There is therefore no Possibility of having the Spirit of Love, or any Divine Goodness, from any Power of Nature, or Working of Reason. It can only be had in its own Time and Place; and its Time and Place is nowhere, but where Nature is *overcome* by a Birth of the Life of God in the Properties of the Soul. And thus you see the infallible Truth, and absolute Necessity, of Christian Redemption; it is the most demonstrable Thing in all Nature.—The Deity must become Man, take a Birth in the fallen Nature, be united to it, become the Life of it, or the natural Man must of all Necessity be for ever and ever in the Hell of his own Hunger, Anguish, Con-

trariety and Self-Torment; and all for this plain Reason, because Nature is, and can be, nothing else, but this Variety of Self-Torment till the Deity is manifested and dwelling in it.

And now, Sir, you see also the absolute Necessity of the Gospel-Doctrine of the Cross, *viz.*, of *dying to Self*, as the one only Way to Life in God. This Cross, or Dying to Self, is the *one Morality* that does Man any Good. Fancy as many Rules as you will of modelling the moral Behaviour of Man, they all do nothing, because they leave Nature still alive, and therefore can only help a Man to a feigned hypocritical Art of concealing his own inward Evil, and seeming to be not under its Power. And the Reason why it must be so is plain; it is because Nature is not possible to be reformed; it is immutable in its Workings, and must be always as it is, and never any better or worse, than its own untaught Workings are. It can no more change from Evil to Good, than Darkness can work itself into Light. The one Work therefore of Morality is the one Doctrine of the Cross, *viz.*, to resist and deny Nature, that a *supernatural Power*, or Divine Goodness, may take Possession of it, and bring a new Light into it.

In a Word, there are, in all the Possibility of Things, but two States, or Forms of Life; the one is Nature, and the other is God *manifested in Nature*; and as God and Nature are both within you, so you have it in your Power to live and work with which you will; but are under a Necessity of doing either the one or the other. There is no standing still, Life goes on, and is always bringing forth its *Realities*, which Way soever it goes. You have seen, that the Properties of Nature are, and can be, nothing else in their own Life, but a *restless Hunger, Disquiet, and blind Strife, for they know not what*, till the Properties of Light and Love have got Possession of them. Now when you see this, you see the *true State* of every natural Man, whether he be *Cæsar* or *Cato*, whether he gloriously murders others, or only stabs himself; blind Nature does all the Work, and must be the Doer of it, till the *Christ of God* is born in him. For the Life of Man can be nothing else but an Hunger of Covetousness, a Rising up of Pride, Envy, and Wrath, a medley of contrary Passions, doing and undoing *it knows not what*, because these Workings are *essential* to the Properties of Nature; they must be always hungering, and working one against another, striving to be above one another, and all this *in Blindness*, till the *Light of God* has helped them to *one common Good*, in which they all willingly *unite, rest, and rejoice*. In a Word, Goodness is only a *Sound*, and Virtue a mere Strife of *natural Passions*, till the *Spirit of Love* is the Breath of every Thing that lives and moves in the Heart. For

Love is the one only Blessing, and Goodness, and God of Nature; and you have no true Religion, are no Worshipper of the one true God, but in and by that Spirit of Love, which is God himself living and working in you.

But here I take off my Pen, and shall leave the remaining Part of your Objection to another Opportunity.

I am, &c.

King's Cliff, June 16,
1752.

THE
SPIRIT
OF
LOVE.

PART THE SECOND.

IN DIALOGUES.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M.A.

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THE FIRST DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

Theogenes, Eusebius, and Theophilus.

THEOGENES. Dear *Theophilus*, this Gentleman is *Eusebius*, a very valuable and worthy Curate in my Neighbourhood; he would not let me wait any longer for your second Letter on the Spirit of Love, nor be content till I consented to our making you this Visit. And indeed, we are both on the same Errand, and in equal Impatience to have your full Answer to that Part of my Objection, which you reserved for a second Letter.

Theophilus. My Heart embraces you both with the greatest Affection, and I am much pleased at the Occasion of your Coming, which calls me to the most delightful Subject in the World, to help both you and myself to rejoice in that adorable Deity, whose infinite Being is an Infinity of mere Love, an unbeginning, never-ceasing, and for ever overflowing Ocean of Meekness, Sweetness, Delight, Blessing, Goodness, Patience, and Mercy; and all this, as so many blessed Streams breaking out of the Abyss of universal Love, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, a Triune Infinity of Love and Goodness, for ever and ever giving forth nothing but the same Gifts of Light and Love, of Blessing and Joy, whether before or after the Fall, either of Angels or Men.

Look at all Nature, through all its Height and Depth, in all its Variety of working Powers, it is what it is for this only End, that the hidden Riches, the invisible Powers, Blessings, Glory and Love of the unsearchable God, may become visible, sensible, and manifest in it and by it.

Look at all the Variety of Creatures, they are what they are for this only End, that in their infinite Variety, Degrees, and Capacities, they may be as so many speaking Figures, living Forms of the manifold Riches and Powers of Nature, as so many Sounds and Voices, Preachers and Trumpets, giving Glory and Praise and Thanksgiving to that Deity of Love, which gives Life to all Nature and Creature.

For every Creature of unfallen Nature, call it by what Name

you will, has its Form, and Power, and State, and Place in Nature, for no other End, but to open and enjoy, to manifest and rejoice in some Share of the Love, and Happiness, and Goodness of the Deity, as springing forth in the boundless Height and Depth of Nature.

Now this is the *one Will* and Work of God in and through all Nature and Creature. From Eternity to Eternity He can will and intend nothing towards them, in them, or by them, but the *Communication* of various Degrees of His own Love, Goodness, and Happiness to them, according to their State, and Place, and Capacity in Nature. This is God's unchangeable Disposition towards the Creature; He can be nothing else but all Goodness towards it, because He can be nothing towards the Creature but that which he is, and was, and ever shall be in Himself.

God can no more begin to have any *Wrath, Rage, or Anger* in Himself, after Nature and Creature are in a fallen State, than He could have been infinite Wrath, and boundless Rage everywhere, and from all Eternity. For nothing can *begin* to be in God, or to be in a *new State* in Him; every Thing that is in Him, is essential to Him, as inseparable from Him, as unalterable in Him, as the triune Nature of his Deity.

Theogenes. Pray, *Theophilus*, let me ask you, Does not *Patience, and Pity, and Mercy* begin to be in God, and only *then begin*, when the Creature has brought itself into Misery? They could have no Existence in the Deity before. Why then may not a *Wrath and Anger begin* to be in God, when the Creature has rebelled against him, though it neither had, nor could have any Existence in God before?

Theophilus. It is true, *Theogenes*, that God can only then *begin* to make known his Mercy and Patience, when the Creature has lost its Rectitude and Happiness, yet nothing then begins to be in God, or to be found in him, but that which was always in him in the same infinite State, *viz.*, a *Will to all Goodness*, and which *can will nothing else*. And his Patience and Mercy, which could not show forth themselves, till Nature and Creature had brought forth Misery, were not new Tempers, or the Beginning of some *new Disposition* that was not in God before, but only *new and occasional Manifestations* of that boundless *eternal Will to all Goodness*, which always was in God in the same Height and Depth. The *Will to all Goodness*, which is God himself, *began* to display itself in a *new Way*, when it first gave Birth to Creatures. The same *Will to all Goodness began* to manifest itself in another *new Way*, when it became Patience and Compassion towards fallen Creatures. But neither of these Ways are the Beginning of any *new Tempers* or Qualities in God, but

only new and *occasional Manifestations* of that true eternal Will to all Goodness, which always was, and always will be, in the same Fulness of Infinity in God.

But to suppose that when the Creature has abused its Power, lost its Happiness, and plunged itself into a Misery, out of which it cannot deliver itself, to suppose that then there begins to be *something* in the holy Deity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that is not of the Nature and Essence of God, and which was not there before, *viz.*, a Wrath, and Fury, and vindictive Vengeance, breaking out in Storms of Rage and Resentment, because the poor Creature has brought Misery upon itself, is an Impiety and Absurdity that cannot be enough abhorred. For nothing can be in God, but that which He is, and has from Himself, and therefore no Wrath can be in the Deity itself, unless God was in Himself, before all Nature, and from all Eternity, an Infinity of Wrath.

Why are Love, Knowledge, Wisdom, and Goodness, said to be infinite and eternal in God, capable of no Increase or Decrease, but always in the same highest State of Existence? Why is his Power eternal and omnipotent, his Presence not here, or there, but everywhere the same? No Reason can be assigned, but because nothing that is *temporary, limited*, or bounded, can be in God. It is his Nature to be that which He is, and all that He is, in an infinite, unchangeable Degree, admitting neither higher nor lower, neither here nor there, but always, and everywhere, in the same unalterable State of Infinity. If therefore Wrath, Rage, and Resentment could be in the Deity itself, it must be an unbeginning, boundless, never-ceasing Wrath, capable of no *more* or *less*, no *up* or *down*, but always existing, always working, and breaking forth in the same Strength, and everywhere equally burning in the Height and Depth of the abyssal Deity. There is no medium here. There must be either all or none, either no Possibility of Wrath, or no Possibility of its having any Bounds. And therefore, if you would not say, that every Thing that has proceeded, or can, or ever shall proceed from God, are and can be only so many Effects of his eternal and omnipotent Wrath, which can never cease, or be less than infinite, if you will not hold this monstrous Blasphemy, you must stick close to the absolute Impossibility of Wrath having any Existence in God. For nothing can have any Existence in God, but in the Way and Manner as his Eternity, Infinity, and Omnipotence have their Existence in him. Have you any Thing to object to this?

Theogenes. Indeed, *Theophilus*, both *Eusebius* and myself have been from the first fully satisfied with what has been said of this

Matter in the *Book of Regeneration*, the *Appeal*, and the *Spirit of Prayer, &c.* We find it impossible to think of God as subject to Wrath, or capable of being inflamed by the Weakness, and Folly, and Irregularity of the Creature. We find ourselves incapable of thinking any otherwise of God, than as the *one only Good*, or as you express it, an *eternal immutable Will to all Goodness*, which can will Nothing else to all Eternity, but to communicate Good, and Blessing, and Happiness, and Perfection to every Life, according to its Capacity to receive it.

Had I an hundred Lives, I could with more Ease part with them all, by suffering an hundred Deaths, than give up this lovely Idea of God. Nor could I have any Desire of Eternity for myself, if I had not Hopes, that by partaking of the Divine Nature, I should be eternally delivered from the Burden and Power of my *own Wrath*, and changed into the blessed *Freedom* of a Spirit, that is *all Love*, and a *mere Will* to Nothing but Goodness. An Eternity without this, is but an Eternity of Trouble. For I know of no Hell, either here or hereafter, but the Power and Working of Wrath, nor any Heaven, but where the God of Love is all in all, and the working Life of all. And therefore, that the holy Deity is all Love, and Blessing, and Goodness, willing and working only Love and Goodness to every Thing, as far as it can receive it, is a Truth as deeply grounded in me as the feeling of my own Existence. I ask you for no Proof of this; my only Difficulty is how to reconcile this Idea of God to the Letter of Scripture. *First*, Because the Scripture speaks so much and so often of the Wrath, the Fury, and vindictive Vengeance of God. *Secondly*, Because the whole Nature of our Redemption is so plainly grounded on such a supposed Degree of Wrath and Vengeance in God, as could not be *satisfied*, *appeased*, and *atoned* by any Thing less than the Death and Sacrifice of the only begotten Son of God.

Theophilus. I will do more for you, *Theogenes*, in this Matter than you seem to expect. I will not only reconcile the Letter of Scripture with the foregoing Description of God, but will show you, that every Thing that is said of the Necessity of Christ's being the only possible *Satisfaction* and *Atonement* of the vindictive Wrath of God, is a full and absolute Proof, that the Wrath of God spoken of never was, nor is, or possibly can be in God.

Eusebius. Oh! *Theophilus*, you have forced me now to speak, and I cannot contain the Joy that I feel in this Expectation which you have raised in me. If you can make the Scriptures do all that which you have promised to *Theogenes*, I shall be in Paradise before I die. For to know that Love alone was the Beginning of Nature and Creature, that nothing but Love encompasses the

whole Universe of Things, that the governing Hand that overrules all, the watchful Eye that sees through all, is nothing but omnipotent and omniscient Love, using an Infinity of Wisdom, to raise all that is fallen in Nature, to save every misguided Creature from the miserable Works of its own Hands, and make Happiness and Glory the perpetual Inheritance of all the Creation, is a Reflection that must be quite ravishing to every intelligent Creature that is sensible of it. Thus to think of God, of Providence, and Eternity, whilst we are in this Valley and Shadow of Death, is to have a real Foretaste of the Blessings of the World to come. Pray, therefore, let us hear how the Letter of Scripture is a Proof of this God of Love.

Theophilus. Before I do this, *Eusebius*, I think it requisite to show you, in a Word or two, the true Ground and Nature of Wrath in all its Kinds, what it is in itself, whence it has its Birth, Life, and Manner of Existence. And then you will see with your own Eyes, *why*, and *how*, and *where* Wrath or Rage can, or cannot be. And till you see this fundamentally in the Nature of things, you cannot be at all qualified to judge of the Matter in Question, but must only think and speak at random, merely as your Imagination is led by the Sound of Words. For till we know, in the Nature of the Thing, what Wrath is in itself, and *why*, and *how* it comes into Existence, wherever it is, we cannot say, where it can enter, or where it cannot. Nor can we possibly know what is meant by the *Satisfaction*, *Appeasing*, or *Atonement* of Wrath in any Being, but by knowing *how*, and *why*, or for what Reason Wrath can rise and work in any Being, and then only can we know how any Wrath, wherever raised, can be *atoned* or made to *cease*.

Now there are two Things, both of them visible to your outward Senses, which entirely open the *true Ground* and *Nature* of Wrath, and undeniably show what it is in itself, from whence it arises, and wherein its Life, and Strength, and Being consist. And these two Things are, a *Tempest* in the Elements of this World, and a *raging Sore* in the Body of Man, or any other Animal. Now that a Tempest in the Elements is Wrath in the Elements, and a Sore in the Body of an Animal a Wrath in the State or Juices of the Body, is a Matter, I think, that needs no Proof or Explanation. Consider, then, *how* or *why* a Tempest arises in the Elements, or an inflamed Sore in the Body, and then you have the *true Ground* and *Nature* of Wrath. Now a *Tempest* does not, cannot arise in the Elements whilst they are in their *right State*, in their *just Mixture* or Union with one another. A *Sore* does not, cannot break forth in the Body, whilst the Body is altogether in its true *State* and *Temperature*

of its Juices. Hence you plainly see, that Wrath has its *whole Nature*, and *only Ground* of its Existence, in and by the *Disorder*, or bad *State* of the Thing in which it exists and works. It can have no Place of Existence, no Power of breaking forth, but where the Thing has *lost* its proper Perfection, and is not as it ought to be. And therefore no good Being, that is in its *proper State* of Goodness, can, whilst it is in such a State, have any Wrath or Rage in it. And therefore, as a Tempest of any kind in the Elements, is a sure Proof that the Elements are not in their right State, but under Disorder, as a *raging Sore* in the Body is a certain Indication that the Body is *impure* and *corrupt*, and not as it should be; so in whatever Mind, or intelligent Being, Wrath or Rage works, and breaks forth, there, there is Proof enough, that the Mind is in that same *impure, corrupt, and disordered State*, as those Elements that raise a Tempest, and that Body which gives forth an inflamed Sore. And now, Gentlemen, what think you of a supposed Wrath, or Rage in God? Will you have such Things to be in the Deity itself as cannot have Place or Existence even in any Creature, till it is become *disordered* and *impure*, and has lost its *proper State* of Goodness?

Eusebius. But pray, *Theophilus*, let me observe, that it does not yet appear to me, that there is but *one* Wrath possible to be in Nature and Creature. I grant there is such a Likeness in the Things you have appealed to, as is sufficient to justify Poets, Orators, or popular Speakers, in calling a Tempest Wrath, and Wrath a Tempest. But this will not do in our present Matter; for all that you have said depends upon this, whether, in a philosophic Strictness in the Nature of the Thing, there can only be *one* Wrath, wherever it is, proceeding strictly from the *same Ground*, and having everywhere the *same Nature*. Now if you can prove this Identity, or Sameness of Wrath, be it where it will, either in an intelligent Mind, the Elements of this World, or the body of an Animal, then your Point is absolutely gained, and there can be no Possibility for Wrath to have any Existence in the Deity. But as Body and Spirit are generally held to be quite contrary to each other in their most essential Qualities, I do not know how you can sufficiently prove, that they can only have *one* Kind of Wrath, or that Wrath must have *one* and the *same* Ground and Nature, whether it be in Body or Spirit.

Theophilus. Wrath can have no *better*, or other Ground and Nature in Body, than it has in Spirit, for this Reason, because it can have no *Existence* or *Manner* of working in the Body, but what it has *directly* from Spirit. And therefore, in every Wrath that is visible in any *Body* whatever, you have a true Manifestation of the Ground and Nature of Wrath, in whatever Spirit it is.

And therefore, as there is but one Ground and Nature of Wrath in all outward Things, whether they be animate or inanimate, so you have Proof enough, that so it is with all Wrath in the Spirit or Mind. Because Wrath in any *Body*, or *outward* Thing, is nothing else but the *inward working* of that Spirit, which manifests itself by an outward Wrath in the Body.

And what we call Wrath in the *Body*, is, truly and strictly speaking, the Wrath of the Spirit in the Body.

For you are to observe, that *Body* begins not from itself, nor is any Thing of itself, but is all that it is, whether pure or impure, has all that it has, whether of Light or Darkness, and works all that it works, whether of Good or Evil, *merely* from Spirit. For nothing, my Friend, *acts* in the whole Universe of Things but *Spirit alone*. And the State, Condition, and Degree of every Spirit, is only and solely opened by the State, Form, Condition, and Qualities of the Body that belongs to it. For the Body can have no Nature, Form, Condition, or Quality, but that which the Spirit that brings it forth gives to it.

Was there no *eternal universal* Spirit, there could be no eternal or universal *Nature*; that is, was not the Spirit of God everywhere, the *Kingdom of Heaven*, or the visible Glory of God in an outward Majesty of Heaven, could not be everywhere. Now the Kingdom of Heaven is *that* to the Deity, which every *Body* is to the Spirit, which lives, works, and manifests itself in it. But the Kingdom of Heaven is not God, yet all that it is, and has, and does, is only an outward Manifestation of the Nature, Power, and Working of the Spirit of God.

It is thus with every creaturely *Spirit* and its *Body*, which is the *Habitation* or *Seat* of its Power, and as the Spirit is in its Nature, Kind, and Degree, whether heavenly, earthly, or hellish, so is its Body. Were there not creaturely Spirits, there could be no creaturely Bodies. And the Reason why there are creaturely Bodies of such various Forms, Shapes, and Powers, is because Spirits come forth from God in *various Kinds* and *Degrees* of Life, each manifesting its own Nature, Power, and Condition, by *that Body* which proceeds from it as its *own Birth*, or the Manifestation of its *own Powers*.

Now the Spirit is not Body, nor is the Body Spirit; they are so *essentially* distinct, that they cannot *possibly* lose their Difference, or be changed into one another; and yet all that is in the Body, is from the *Nature, Will* and *Working* of its Spirit. There is therefore no possible Room for a Supposition of *two Kinds* of Wrath, or that Wrath may have *two Natures*, the one as it is in Spirit, and the other as it is in Body; *first*, because nothing can be wrathful but Spirit, and *secondly*, because no Spirit can exert,

or manifest Wrath, but in and by its Body. The kindling its *own Body* is the Spirit's *only Wrath*. And therefore, through the whole Universe of Things, there is and can be but *one possible* Ground and Nature of Wrath, whether it be in the *Sore* of an animal Body, in a *Tempest* of the Elements, in the *Mind* of a Man, in an *Angel*, or in *Hell*.

Eusebius. Enough, enough, *Theophilus*. You have made it sufficiently plain, that Wrath can be no more in God Himself, than Hell can be Heaven. And therefore we ask no more of you, but only to reconcile this with the Language and Doctrine of the holy Scriptures.

Theogenes. You are in too much Haste, *Eusebius*; it would be better to let *Theophilus* proceed further in this Matter. He has told us what Wrath is in itself, be it where it will; I should be glad to know its *one true* Original, or how, and where, and why it could possibly begin to be.

Theophilus. To inquire, or search into the Origin of Wrath, is the same Thing as to search into the Origin of Evil and Sin: For Wrath and Evil are but two Words for one and the same Thing. There is no Evil in any Thing, but the Working of the Spirit of Wrath. And when Wrath is entirely suppressed, there can be no more Evil, or Misery, or Sin in all Nature and Creature. This therefore is a firm Truth, that nothing can be capable of Wrath, or be the Beginning of Wrath, but the Creature, because nothing but the Creature can be the Beginner of Evil and Sin.

Again, the Creature can have *no Beginning*, or Sensibility of Wrath in itself, but by *losing* the living Power, the living Presence, and governing Operation of the Spirit of God within it; or in other Words, by its losing that heavenly State of Existence in God, and Influence from Him, which it had at its Creation.

Now no intelligent Creature, whether Angel or Man, can be *good* and *happy*, but by partaking of, or having in itself, a *twofold* Life. Hence so much is said in the Scripture of an inward and outward, an old and a new Man.—For there could be no Foundation for this Distinction, but because every intelligent Creature, created to be good and happy, must of all *Necessity* have a twofold Life in it, or it cannot possibly be capable of Goodness and Happiness, nor can it possibly lose its Goodness and Happiness, or feel the least Want of them, but by its breaking the *Union* of this twofold Life in itself. Hence so much is said in the Scripture of the quickening, raising, and reviving the inward, new Man, of the new Birth from above, of Christ being formed in us, as the one only Redemption and Salvation of the Soul. Hence also the Fall of *Adam* was said to be a *Death*, that he died the Day of his Sin, though he lived so many hundred Years after it: it

was because his Sin broke the *Union* of his twofold Life, and put an End to the heavenly Part of it, and left only *one Life*, the Life of this bestial earthly World in Him.

Now there is, in the Nature of the Things, an absolute Necessity of this *twofold Life* in every Creature that is to be *good* and *happy*; and the twofold Life is this, it must have the Life of *Nature*, and the Life of *God* in it. It cannot be a Creature, and intelligent, but by having the Life and Properties of *Nature*; that is, by finding itself to be a Life of *various Sensibilities*, that has a Power of *Understanding*, *Willing* and *Desiring*: This is its *creaturely* Life, which, by the creating Power of God, it has in and from Nature.

Now this is all the Life that is, or can be *creaturely*, or be a Creature's *natural own Life*; and all this creaturely natural Life, with all its various Powers and Sensibilities, is only a Life of *various Appetites*, *Hungers*, and *Wants*, and cannot possibly be any Thing else. God Himself cannot make a Creature to be in *itself*, or as to its *own Nature*, any Thing else but a State of *Emptiness*, of *Want*, of *Appetite*, &c. He cannot make it to be good and happy *in* and *from* its natural State; this is as impossible, as for God to cease to be the *one only Good*. The highest Life therefore, that is natural and creaturely, can go no higher than this; it can only be a *bare Capacity* for Goodness and Happiness, and cannot possibly be a good and happy Life, but by the Life of God dwelling in, and in *Union* with it. And this is the twofold Life, that of *all Necessity* must be *united* in every good and perfect and happy Creature.

See here the greatest of all Demonstrations of the absolute Necessity of the Gospel Redemption and Salvation, and all proved from the Nature of the Thing. There can be no Goodness and Happiness for any intelligent Creature, but in and by this twofold Life; and therefore the *Union* of the Divine and human Life, or the Son of God incarnate in Man, to make Man again a Partaker of the Divine Nature, is the *one only* possible Salvation for all the Sons of fallen *Adam*, that is, of *Adam* dead to, or fallen from his first *Union* with the Divine Life.

Deism therefore, or a Religion of Nature, pretending to make Man good and happy without Christ, or the Son of God entering into *Union* with the human Nature, is the greatest of all Absurdities. It is as contrary to the Nature and Possibilities of Things, as for mere *Emptiness* to be its own Fulness, mere *Hunger* to be its own Food, and mere *Want* to be its Possession of all Things. For Nature and Creature, without the Christ of God, or the Divine Life in *Union* with it, is and can be nothing else but this mere *Emptiness*, *Hunger*, and *Want* of all that which can alone

make it good and happy. For God himself, as I said, cannot make any Creature to be good and happy by any Thing that is in its own created Nature; and however high or noble any Creature is supposed to be created, its Height and Nobility can consist in nothing, but its higher Capacity and Fitness to receive a higher Union with the Divine Life, and also a higher and more wretched Misery, when left to itself, as is manifest by the hellish State of the fallen Angels. Their high and exalted Nature was only an enlarged Capacity for the Divine Life; and therefore when this Life was lost, their whole created Nature was nothing else, but the Height of Rage, and hellish Distraction.

A plain Demonstration, that there can be no Happiness, Blessing, and Goodness for any Creature in Heaven, or on Earth, but by having, as the Gospel says, Jesus Christ made unto it, *Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Peace with God.*

And the Reason is this; it is because Goodness and Happiness are absolutely inseparable from God, and can be nowhere but in God. And on the other Hand, *Emptiness, Want, Insufficiency, &c.*, are absolutely inseparable from the Creature, as such; its whole Nature cannot possibly be any Thing else, be it what or where it will, an Angel in Heaven, or a Man on Earth; it is and must be, in its *whole creaturely* Nature and Capacity, a mere Hunger and Emptiness, &c. And therefore all that we know of God, and all that we know of the Creature, fully proves, that the *Life of God* in Union with the *creaturely Life* (which is the Gospel Salvation) is the one only Possibility of Goodness and Happiness in any Creature, whether in Heaven or on Earth.

Hence also it is enough certain, that this *twofold Life* must have been the *original State* of every intelligent Creature, at its first coming forth from God. It could not be brought forth by God, to have only a *creaturely Life* of Nature, and be left to that; for that would be creating it under a *Necessity* of being in Misery, in Want, in Wrath, and all painful Sensibilities. A Thing more unworthy of God, and more impossible for Him to do, than to create numberless earthly Animals under a *Necessity* of being perpetually pained with Hunger and Thirst, without any Possibility of finding any Thing to eat or to drink.

For no creaturely Life can in itself be any higher, or better, than a State of Want, or a seeking for something that cannot be found in itself; and therefore, as sure as God is good, as sure as He would have intelligent Beings live a Life of Goodness and Happiness, so sure it is, that such Beings must of all *Necessity*, in their first Existence, have been blessed with a *twofold Life*, *viz.*, the Life of God dwelling in, and united with, the Life of Nature, or created Life.

Eusebius. What an important Matter have you here proved, in the *Necessity* and *Certainty* of this *twofold* Life in every intelligent Being that is to be good and happy; for this great Truth opens and asserts the certain and substantial Ground of the spiritual Life, and shows, that all Salvation is, and can be nothing else, but the *Manifestation* of the Life of God in the Soul. How clearly does this give the solid Distinction between inward Holiness, and all outward, creaturely Practices. All that God has done for Man by any particular Dispensations, whether by the *Law*, or the *Prophets*, by the *Scriptures*, or *Ordinances* of the Church, are only as Helps to an Holiness which they cannot give, but are only suited to the Death and Darkness of the earthly, creaturely Life, to turn it from itself, from its own Workings, and awaken in it a Faith and Hope, a Hunger and Thirst after that *first Union* with the Life of the Deity, which was lost in the Fall of the first Father of Mankind.

How unreasonable is it, to call *perpetual Inspiration* Fanaticism and Enthusiasm, when there cannot be the *least Degree* of Goodness or Happiness in any intelligent Being, but what is in its *whole Nature*, merely and truly the *Breathing*, the *Life*, and the *Operation* of God in the Life of the Creature? For if Goodness can only be in God, if it cannot exist *separate* from Him, if he can only *bless* and *sanctify*, not by a *creaturely* Gift, but by *Himself* becoming the *Blessing* and *Sanctification* of the Creature, then it is the highest Degree of Blindness, to look for any Goodness and Happiness from any Thing, but the *immediate Indwelling Union*, and *Operation* of the Deity in the Life of the Creature. Perpetual Inspiration, therefore, is in the Nature of the Thing as necessary to a Life of Goodness, Holiness, and Happiness, as the perpetual Respiration of the Air is necessary to animal Life.

For the Life of the Creature, whilst only creaturely, and possessing nothing but itself, is Hell; that is, it is all *Pain* and *Want* and *Distress*. Now nothing, in the Nature of the Thing, can make the *least Alteration* in this creaturely Life, nothing can help it to be in *Light* and *Love*, in *Peace* and *Goodness*, but the Union of God with it, and the Life of God working in it, because nothing but God is Light, and Love, and heavenly Goodness. And, therefore, where the Life of God is not become the Life and Goodness of the Creature, there the Creature cannot have the least Degree of Goodness in it.

What a Mistake is it, therefore, to confine Inspiration to *particular* Times and Occasions, to Prophets and Apostles, and extraordinary Messengers of God, and to call it *Enthusiasm*, when the common Christian looks, and trusts to be *continually led* and inspired by the Spirit of God! For though all are not

called to be Prophets or Apostles, yet all are called to be *holy*, as He who has called them is *holy*, to be perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect, to be like minded with Christ, to will only as God wills, to do all to his Honour and Glory, to renounce the Spirit of this World, to have their Conversation in Heaven, to set their Affections on Things above, to love God with all their Heart, Soul, and Spirit, and their Neighbour as themselves.

Behold a Work as *great*, as *Divine* and *supernatural*, as that of a Prophet and an Apostle. But to suppose that we ought, and may always be in this Spirit of Holiness, and yet are not, and ought not to be *always moved and led by the Breath and Spirit of God within us*, is to suppose, that there is a Holiness and Goodness which comes not from God; which is no better than supposing, that there may be true Prophets and Apostles who have not their Truth from God.

Now the Holiness of the common Christian is not an *occasional* Thing, that begins and ends, or is only for such a Time, or Place, or Action, but is the Holiness of *that*, which is always *alive* and *stirring* in us, namely, of our Thoughts, Wills, Desires, and Affections. If therefore these are always alive in us, always driving, or governing our Lives, if we can have no Holiness or Goodness, but as this Life of Thought, Will, and Affection, works in us, if we are all called to this inward Holiness and Goodness, then a *perpetual, always existing Operation of the Spirit of God within us*, is absolutely necessary. For we cannot be inwardly led and governed by a Spirit of Goodness, but by being governed by the *Spirit of God himself*. For the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Goodness are not two Spirits, nor can we be said to have any more of the one, than we have of the other.

Now if our Thoughts, Wills, and Affections, need only be now and then holy and good, then, indeed, the moving and breathing Spirit of God need only now and then govern us. But if our Thoughts and Affections are to be always holy and good, then the holy and good Spirit of God is to be always operating, as a Principle of Life within us.

The Scripture says, 'We are not sufficient of ourselves to think a good Thought.' If so, then we cannot be chargeable with not thinking, and willing that which is good, but upon this *Supposition*, that there is always a *supernatural* Power within us, ready and able to help us to the Good, which we cannot have from ourselves.

The Difference then of a good and a bad Man does not lie in this, that the one wills that which is good, and the other does not, but solely in this, that the one concurs with the living inspiring Spirit of God within him, and the other resists it, and is and can be *only chargeable* with Evil, because he resists it.

Therefore whether you consider that which is good or bad in a Man, they equally prove the *perpetual Indwelling*, and *Operation* of the Spirit of God within us, since we can only be bad by resisting, as we are good by yielding to the Spirit of God; both which equally suppose a perpetual Operation of the Spirit of God within us.

How firmly our established Church adheres to this Doctrine of the Necessity of the *perpetual Operation* of the holy Spirit, as the one only Source and Possibility of any Degree of Divine Light, Wisdom, Virtue, and Goodness in the Soul of Man, how earnestly she wills and requires all her Members to live in the most open Profession of it, and in the highest Conformity to it, may be seen by many such Prayers as these, in her common, ordinary, public Service.

‘O God, for as much as without Thee we are not able to please Thee, grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all Things direct and ‘rule our Hearts.’ Again, ‘We pray Thee, that thy Grace may ‘ALWAYS prevent and follow us, and make us CONTINU-‘ALLY to be given to all good Works.’ Again, ‘Grant to us, ‘Lord, we beseech Thee, the Spirit to think and do ALWAYS ‘such Things as be rightful, that we, who cannot do ANY-‘THING that is good WITHOUT Thee, may by Thee be en-‘abled to live according to thy Will.’ Again, ‘Because the ‘Frailty of Man, WITHOUT Thee, CANNOT BUT FALL, ‘keep us EVER by thy Help from all Things hurtful, and ‘LEAD us to all Things profitable to our Salvation, &c.’ Again, ‘O God from whom all good Things do come, grant to us thy ‘humble Servants, that by THY holy INSPIRATION we may ‘THINK those Things that be good, and by thy merciful ‘GUIDING may PERFORM the same.’—But now, the *true Ground* of all this Doctrine of the Necessity of the perpetual Guidance and Operation of the holy Spirit, lies in what has been said above, of the Necessity of a *twofold Life* in every intelligent Creature that is to be good and happy. For if the creaturely Life, whilst alone, or left to itself, can only be *Want*, *Misery*, and *Distress*, if it cannot possibly have any Goodness or Happiness in it, till the Life of God is *in Union* with it, *as one Life*, then every Thing that you read in the Scripture of the Spirit of God, as the *only Principle* of Goodness, opens itself to you as a most certain and blessed Truth, about which you can have no doubt.

Theophilus. Let me only add, *Eusebius*, to what you have said, that from this absolute Necessity of a *twofold Life*, in every Creature, that is to be good and happy, we may, in a still greater Clearness see the Certainty of that which we have so often spoken

of at other Times, namely, that the *inspoken Word* in Paradise, the *Bruiser* of the Serpent, the *Seed* of the Woman, the *Immanuel*, the holy *Jesus* (for they all mean the same Thing) is, and was the only possible Ground of Salvation for fallen Man. For if the twofold Life is necessary, and Man could not be restored to Goodness and Happiness but by the *restored Union* of this twofold Life into its first State, then there was an absolute Necessity, in the Nature of the Thing, that every Son of Adam should have such a *Seed of Heaven* in the Birth of his Life, as could, by the *Mediation* of Christ, be raised into a Birth and Growth of the first perfect Man. This is the one original Power of Salvation, without which, no *external Dispensation* could have done any Thing towards raising the fallen State of Man. For nothing could be raised, but what *there* was to be raised, nor Life be given to any Thing, but to that which was capable of Life. Unless, therefore, there had been a *Seed of Life*, or a smothered Spark of Heaven in the Soul of Man, which wanted to come to the Birth, there had been no *Possibility* for any *Dispensation* of God, to bring forth a Birth of Heaven in fallen Man.

The *Faith* of the first *Patriarchs* could not have been in Being, *Moses* and the *Prophets* had come in vain, had not the Christ of God lain in a *State of Hiddenness* in every Son of Man. For *Faith*, which is a Will and Hunger after God, could not have *begun* to be, or have any Life in Man, but because there was something of the Divine Nature *existing* and *hid* in Man. For nothing can have any longing Desire but after its own Likeness, nor could any Thing be made to desire God, but that which came from Him, and had the Nature of Him.

The Whole mediatorial Office of Christ, from his Birth to his sitting down in Power at the right Hand of God, was only for this End, to help Man to a Life that was fallen into *Death* and *Insensibility* in him. And therefore his mediatorial Power was to manifest itself by Way of a *new Birth*. In the Nature of the Thing nothing else was to be done, and Christ had no other Way to proceed, and that for this plain Reason, because Life was the Thing that was lost, and Life, wherever it is, must be raised by a Birth, and every Birth must, and can only come from its *own Seed*.

But if Christ was to raise a new Life like his own in every Man, then every Man must have had *originally*, in the inmost Spirit of his Life, a *Seed of Christ*, or Christ as a Seed of Heaven, lying there as in a State of *Insensibility* or *Death*, out of which it could not arise but by the *mediatorial Power* of Christ, who, as a second Adam, was to regenerate that Birth of his *own Life*, which was *lost* in all the natural Sons of the first Adam.

But unless there was this *Seed of Christ*, or Spark of Heaven *hidden* in the Soul, not the least Beginning of Man's Salvation, or of Christ's mediatorial Office could be made. For *what* could begin to deny *Self*, if there was not something in Man *different* from *Self*? What could begin to have *Hope* and *Faith* and *Desire* of an heavenly Life, if there was not *something of Heaven hidden* in his Soul, and lying therein, as in a State of Inactivity and Death, till raised by the Mediation of Christ into its first Perfection of Life, and set again in its true Dominion over Flesh and Blood.

Eusebius. You have, *Theophilus*, sufficiently proved the Certainty and Necessity of this Matter. But I should be glad if you knew how to help me to some more distinct Idea and Conception of it.

Theophilus. An Idea is not the Thing to be here sought for, it would rather hinder, than help your true Knowledge of it. But, perhaps, the following Similitude may be of some Use to you.

The *ten Commandments*, when written by God on Tables of Stone, and given to Man, did not then first begin to belong to Man; they had their *Existence* in Man, were *born* with him, they lay as a *Seed* and *Power* of Goodness, *hidden* in the Form and Make of his Soul, and altogether inseparable from it, before they were shown to Man on *Tables of Stone*. And when they were shown to Man on Tables of Stone, they were only an *outward Imitation* of that which was inwardly in Man, though not *legible*, because of that Impurity of Flesh and Blood, in which they were drowned and swallowed up. For the earthly Nature, having overcome the Divinity that was in Man, it gave Commandments of *its own* to Man, and required Obedience to all the Lusts of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life.

Hence it became necessary, that God should give an *outward* Knowledge of such Commandments as were become inwardly *unknown, unfelt*, and as it were shut up in Death in the Soul.

But now, had not *all* that is in these Commandments been *really* and *antecedently* in the Soul, as its *own Birth* and *Nature*, had they not still *lain therein*, and, although totally suppressed, yet in such a *Seed* or *Remains*, as could be called forth into their first living State, in vain had the Tables of Stone been given to Man; and all outward Writing, or Teaching of the Commandments, had been as useless, as so many Instructions given to *Beasts* or *Stones*. If therefore you can conceive, how all that is *good* and *holy* in the Commandments, laid *hid* as an *unfelt, unactive* Power, or *Seed* of Goodness, till called into *Sensibility* and *stirring* by Laws written on Tables of Stone, this may help your Manner of conceiving, and believing, how Christ, as a *Seed* of

Life, or *Power* of Salvation, lies in the Soul as its *unknown hidden Treasure*, till awakened and called forth into Life by the *mediatorial* Office and Process of the holy Jesus.

Again, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, ' with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength, and thy Neighbour ' as thyself.' Now these two Precepts, given by the written Word of God, are an absolute Demonstration of the *first original* Perfection of Man, and also a full and invincible Proof, that the same original Perfection is not quite *annihilated*, but lies in him as an *hidden suppressed Seed* of Goodness, capable of being raised up to its first Perfection. For had not this Divine *Unity, Purity, and Perfection* of Love towards God and Man, been Man's *first natural* State of Life, it could have nothing to do with his present State. For had any other Nature, or Measure, or kind of Love begun in the first Birth of his Life, he could only have been called to that. For no Creature has, or can have a Call to be above, or act above its own Nature. Therefore, as sure as Man is called to this Unity, Purity, and Perfection of Love, so sure is it, that it was, at first, his natural heavenly State, and still has its *Seed, or Remains* within him, as his only Power and Possibility of rising up to it again. And therefore all that Man is called to, every Degree of a new and perfect Life, every future Exaltation and Glory he is to have from the Mediation of Christ, is a full Proof, that the same Perfection was originally his natural State, and is *still* in him in *such a Seed, or Remains* of Existence, as to admit of a perfect Renewal.

And thus it is, that you are to conceive of the holy Jesus, or the WORD of God, as the *hidden Treasure* of every human Soul, born as a *Seed* of the WORD in the Birth of the Soul, immured under Flesh and Blood, *till, as a Day-Star, it arises in our Hearts*, and changes the Son of an earthly Adam into a Son of God.

And was not the WORD and SPIRIT of God in us all, antecedent to any *Dispensation* or *written* Word of God, as a *real* Seed of Life in the Birth of our own Life, we could have no more Fitness for the Gospel-Redemption, than the Animals of this World, which have nothing of Heaven in them. And to call us to love God with all our Hearts, to *put on Christ*, to walk *according to* the Spirit, if these Things had not their *real Nature* and *Root* within us, would be as vain and useless, as to make Rules and Orders how our Eyes should smell and taste, or our Ears should see.

Now this Mystery of an *inward Life hidden* in Man, as his most precious Treasure, as the Ground of all that can be great or good in him, and hidden only since his Fall, and which only can be opened and brought forth in its first Glory by Him to

whom all Power in Heaven and on Earth is given, is a Truth to which almost every Thing in Nature bears full Witness. Look where you will, nothing appears, or works *outwardly* in any Creature, or in any Effect of Nature, but what is all done from its *own inward invisible Spirit*, not a Spirit brought into it, but its *own inward Spirit*, which is an inward invisible Mystery, till made known, or brought forth by outward Appearances.

The Sea neither is, nor can be moved and tossed by any other Wind, than that which has its Birth, and Life, and Strength, in and from the Sea itself, as its *own Wind*. The Sun in the Firmament gives Growth to every Thing that grows in the Earth, and Life to every Thing that lives upon it, not by giving or imparting a Life *from without*, but only by stirring up in every Thing its *own Growth*, and its *own Life*, which lay as in a *Seed* or *State* of Death, till helped to come out of it by the Sun, which, as an Emblem of the Redeemer of the spiritual World, helps every earthly Thing out of its own Death into its *own highest State* of Life.

That which we call our Sensations, as *seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, and smelling*, are not Things brought into us from without, or given to us by any external Causes, but are only so many *inborn, secret States* of the Soul, which lie in their *State of Hiddenness* till they are occasionally awakened, and brought forth into Sensibility by outward Occurrences. And were they not *antecedently* in the Soul, as *States* and *Forms* of its own Life, no outward Objects could bring the Soul into a Sensibility of them. For nothing can have, or be in any State of Sensation, but that which it is, and has from itself, as its own Birth. This is as certain, as that a Circle has only its *own Roundness*.

The *stinking Gum* gives nothing to the Soul, nor brings any Thing into Sensibility, but that which was before in the Soul, it has only a Fitness to awaken, and stir up *that State* of the Soul, which *laid dormant before*, and which when brought into Sensibility, is called the Sensation of bad Smelling. And the *odoriferous Gum* has likewise but the same Power, *viz.*, a Fitness to stir up *that State* of Sensation in the Soul, which is called its delightful Smelling. But both these Sensations are only *internal States* of the Soul, which *appear* or disappear, are *found*, or not found, just as Occasions bring them into Sensibility.

Again, the greatest Artist in *Music* can add *no Sound* to his Instrument, nor make it give forth any other Melody, but that which lies *silently hidden in it*, as its own inward State.

Look now at what you will, whether it be animate, or inanimate, all that it is, or has, or can be, it is and has in and from itself, as its *own inward State*; and all outward Things can do

no more to it, than the Hand does to the Instrument, make it show forth its *own inward State*, either of Harmony or Discord.

It is strictly thus with ourselves. Not a Spark of *Joy*, of *Wrath*, of *Envy*, of *Love*, or *Grief*, can possibly enter into us from *without*, or be caused to be *in us* by any *outward Thing*. This is as impossible, as for the Sound of *Metals* to be put into a *Lump* of Clay. And as no *Metal* can possibly give forth any other, or higher Sound, than that which is enclosed within it, so we, however struck, can give forth no other or higher Sound, either of *Love*, *Hatred* *Wrath*, &c., than that *very Degree*, which laid before shut up within us.

The *natural State* of our Tempers has Variety of Covers, under which they lie concealed at Times, both from ourselves and others; but when this or that Accident happens to *displace* such or such a Cover, then that which laid hid under it breaks forth. And then we vainly think, that this or that outward Occasion has not shown us how we are within, but has only *infused*, or *put* into us a *Wrath*, or *Grief*, or *Envy*, which is not *our natural State*, or of our *own Growth*, or has all that it has from our own inward State.

But this is mere Blindness and Self-Deceit, for it is as impossible for the Mind to have any *Grief*, or *Wrath*, or *Joy*, but what it has all from its *own inward State*, as for the Instrument to give forth any other Harmony, or Discord, but that which is within and from itself.

Persons, Things, and outward Occurrences may strike our Instrument improperly, and variously, but as we are in ourselves, such is our outward Sound, whatever strikes us.

If our inward State is the *renewed Life* of Christ within us, then every Thing and Occasion, let it be what it will, only makes the *same Life* to sound forth, and show itself; then if one Cheek is smitten, we meekly turn the other also. But if Nature is alive and only under a *religious Cover*, then every outward Accident that shakes or disturbs this Cover, gives Leave to that *bad State*, whether of *Grief*, or *Wrath*, or *Joy*, that *laid hid* within us, to show forth itself.

But nothing at any Time makes the least Show, or Sound outwardly, but only that which laid ready within us, for an outward Birth, as Occasion should offer.

What a miserable Mistake is it therefore, to place religious Goodness in outward Observances, in Notions and Opinions, which good and bad Men can equally receive and practise, and to treat the *ready real Power and Operation of an inward Life of God in the Birth of our Souls*, as Fanaticism and Enthusiasm; when not only the whole Letter and Spirit of Scripture, but every Operation in Nature and Creature demonstrates, that the Kingdom of Heaven

must be *all within* us, or it never can possibly belong to us. Goodness, Piety, and Holiness, can only be ours, as thinking, willing, and desiring are ours, by being in us, as a Power of Heaven in the Birth and Growth of our own Life.

And now, *Eusebius*, how is the great Controversy about Religion and Salvation shortened.

For since the *one only* Work of Christ as your Redeemer is only this, to take from the earthly Life of Flesh and Blood its usurped Power, and to raise the smothered Spark of Heaven out of its State of Death, into a powerful governing Life of the whole Man, your *one only* Work also under your Redeemer is fully known. And you have the utmost Certainty, *what* you are to do, *where* you are to seek, and in *what* you are to *find* your Salvation. All that you have to *do*, or can do, is to oppose, resist, and, as far as you can, to renounce the evil Tempers, and Workings of your own earthly Nature. You are under the Power of no other Enemy, are held in no other Captivity, and want no other Deliverance, but from the Power of your *own earthly Self*. This is the one Murderer of the Divine Life within you. It is your own *Cain* that murders your own *Abel*. Now every Thing that your earthly Nature does, is under the Influence of *Self-will*, *Self-love*, and *Self-seeking*, whether it carries you to laudable, or blamable Practices, all is done in the Nature and Spirit of *Cain*, and only helps you to such Goodness, as when *Cain* slew his Brother. For every Action and Motion of *Self*, has the Spirit of *Anti-christ*, and murders the Divine Life within you.

Judge not therefore of your Self, by considering how many of those Things you do, which *Divines* and *Moralists* call Virtue and Goodness, nor how much you abstain from those Things, which they call Sin and Vice.

But daily and hourly, in every Step that you take, see to the *Spirit that is within you*, whether it be Heaven, or Earth that guides you, And judge every Thing to be Sin and Satan, in which your *earthly Nature*, *own Love*, or *Self-seeking* has any Share of Life in you; nor think that any Goodness is brought to Life in you, but so far as it is an *actual Death* to the Pride, the Vanity, the Wrath, and selfish Tempers of your fallen earthly Life.

Again, here you see, *where* and how you are to seek your Salvation, not in taking up your travelling Staff, or crossing the Seas to find out a new *Luther* or a new *Calvin*, to clothe yourself with their Opinions, No. The *Oracle* is at Home, that *always*, and *only* speaks the Truth to you, because nothing is *your Truth*, but that Good and that Evil which is yours within you. For Salvation or Damnation is no outward Thing, that is

brought into you from without, but is only *That* which springs up within you, as the Birth and State of your own Life. What you are in yourself, what is doing in yourself, is all that can be either your Salvation or Damnation.

For all that is our Good, and all that is our Evil, has no Place nor Power but within us. Again, nothing that we do is bad, but for this Reason, because it *resists* the Power and working of God *within us*; and nothing that we do can be good, but because it conforms to the Spirit of God *within us*. And therefore, as all that can be Good, and all that can be Evil in us, necessarily supposes a God *working within us*, you have the utmost Certainty, that God, Salvation, and the Kingdom of Heaven, are nowhere to be sought, or found, but within you, and that all *outward Religion*, from the Fall of Man to this Day, is not for itself, but merely for the Sake of an *inward* and *Divine* Life, which was lost when *Adam* died his first Death in Paradise. And therefore it may well be said, that *Circumcision is nothing*, and *Uncircumcision is nothing*, because nothing is wanted, and therefore nothing can be available, but the *new Creature*, called out of its Captivity under the Death and Darkness of Flesh and Blood, into the Light, Life, and Perfection of its first Creation.

And thus also, you have the fullest Proof in *what* your Salvation precisely consists. Not in any historic Faith, or Knowledge of any Thing absent or distant from you, not in any Variety of Restraints, Rules, and Methods of practising Virtues, not in any *Formality* of Opinion about *Faith* and *Works*, *Repentance*, *Forgiveness of Sins*, or *Justification*, and *Sanctification*, not in any Truth, or Righteousness, that you can have from yourself, from the best of Men or Books, but wholly and solely in the *Life of God*, or Christ of God *quicken'd* and born again in you, or, in other Words, in the Restoration and perfect Union of the first *twofold Life* in the Humanity.

Theogenes. Though all that has passed betwixt you and *Eusebius*, concerns Matters of the greatest Moment, yet I must call it a Digression, and quite useless to me. For I have not the least Doubt about any of these Things you have been asserting. It is visible enough, that there can be no *Medium* in this Matter. Either Religion must be all *spiritual*, or all *carnal*; that is, we must either take up with the Grossness of the *Sadducees*, who say there is neither Angel nor Spirit, or with such Purification as the *Pharisees* had from their washing of Pots and Vessels, and tithing their Mint and Rue, we must, I say, either acquiesce in all this Carnality, or we must profess a Religion that is *all Spirit and Life*, and merely for the sake of raising up an *inward spiritual Life* of Heaven, that fell into Death in our first Father.

I consent also to every Thing that you have said of the Nature and Origin of Wrath. That it can have no Place, nor Possibility of Beginning, but solely in the *creaturely Nature*, nor even any Possibility of Beginning there, till the Creature has died to, or lost its *proper State* of Existence in God ; that is, till it has lost that Life, and Blessing, and Happiness, which it had in and from God at its first Creation.

But I still ask, What must I do with all those Scriptures, which not only make God capable of being provoked to Wrath and Resentment, but frequently inflamed with the highest Degrees of Rage, Fury, and Vengeance, that can be expressed by Words ?

Theophilus. I promised, you know, to remove this Difficulty, and will be as good as my Word. But I must first tell you, that you are in much more Distress about it than you need to be. For in the little Book of *Regeneration*, in the *Appeal*, in the *Spirit of Prayer, &c.*, which you have read with such entire Approbation, the whole Matter is cleared up from its true Ground, how *Wrath* in the Scriptures is ascribed to God, and yet cannot belong to the Nature of the Deity.

Thus you are told in the *Appeal*, *After these two Falls of two Orders of Creatures* (that is, of Angels and Man), *the Deity itself* came to have new and strange *Names*, new and unheard of *Tempers* and *Inclinations* of Wrath, Fury, and Vengeance ascribed to it. *I call them new*, because they began at the *Fall* ; *I call them strange*, because they were foreign to the *Deity*, and could not belong to *God in Himself*. Thus, *God is said to be a consuming Fire. But to whom ? To the fallen Angels and lost Souls. But why, and how, is He so to them ? It is because those Creatures have lost all that they had from God, but the Fire of their Nature, and therefore God can only be found and manifested in them, as a consuming Fire. Now, is it not justly said, that God, who is nothing but infinite Love, is yet in such Creatures only a consuming Fire ? And though God be nothing but Love, yet they are under the Wrath and Vengeance of God, because they have only that Fire in them, which is broken off from the Light and Love of God, and so can know or feel nothing of God, but his Fire of Nature in them ? As Creatures, they can have no Life but what they have in and from God ; and therefore that wrathful Life which they have, is truly said to be a Wrath, or Fire of God upon them. And yet it is still strictly true, that there is no Wrath in God Himself, that He is not changed in his Temper towards the Creatures, that He does not cease to be one and the same infinite Fountain of Goodness, infinitely flowing forth in the Riches of his Love upon all and every Life.* Now, Sir, mind

what follows, as the true Ground, how Wrath can and cannot be ascribed to God. God is not changed from Love to Wrath, *but the Creatures have changed their own State in Nature*, and so the God of Nature can only be manifested in them, according to their own State in Nature. And, *N.B.*, this is the true Ground of rightly understanding all that is said of the Wrath and Vengeance of God in and upon the Creatures. It is only in such a Sense, as the Curse of God may be said to be upon them, not because any Thing cursed can be in, or come from God, but because they have made that Life, which they must have in God, to be a mere Curse to themselves. For every Creature that lives, must have its Life in and from God, and therefore God must be in every Creature. This is as true of Devils, as of holy Angels. But how is God in them? *N.B.* Why only as He is manifested in Nature. Holy Angels have the Triune Life of God, as manifested in Nature, so manifested also in them, and therefore God is in them all Love, Goodness, Majesty, and Glory, and theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Devils have nothing of this Triune Life left in them, but the Fire, or Wrath of eternal Nature, broken off from all Light and Love; and therefore the Life that they can have in and from God, is only and solely a Life of Wrath, Rage, and Darkness, and theirs is the Kingdom of Hell.

*And because this Life, though all Rage and Darkness, is a Strength and Power of Life, which they must have in and from God, and which they cannot take out of his Hands, therefore is their cursed, miserable, wrathful Life, truly and justly said to be the Curse and Misery, and Wrath, and Vengeance of God upon them, though God Himself can no more have Curse, Misery, Wrath, and Vengeance, than He can have Mischief, Malice, or any fearful Tremblings in his holy Triune Deity.**

See now, *Theogenes*, what little Occasion you had for your present Difficulty. For here, in the above-cited Words, which you have been several Years acquainted with, the true Ground and Reason is plainly shown you, *how* and *why* all the Wrath, Rage and Curse that is anywhere stirring in Nature, or breaking forth in any Creature, is and must be in all Truth called by the Scriptures the Wrath, and Rage, and Vengeance of God, though it be the greatest of all Impossibilities for Rage and Wrath to be in the Holy Deity itself.

The Scriptures therefore are literally true in all that they affirm of the Wrath, &c., of God. For is it not as literally true of God, that Hell and Devils are his, as that Heaven and holy

* *Appeal to all that Doubt, &c.*

Angels are his? Must not therefore all the Wrath and Rage of the one, be as truly his Wrath and Rage burning in them, as the Light and Joy and Glory of the other, is only his Goodness opened and manifested in them, according to their *State in Nature*.

Take Notice of this fundamental Truth.

Every Thing that works in Nature and Creature, except Sin, is the working of God in Nature and Creature. The Creature has nothing else in its Power but the free Use of its Will; and its free Will has no other Power, but that of concurring with, or resisting the Working of God in Nature. The Creature with its free Will can bring nothing into Being, nor make any Alteration in the working of Nature, it can only change its *own State* or Place in the working of Nature, and so feel and find *something* in its State, that it did not feel or find before.

Thus God, in the *Manifestation* of himself in and by *Nature*, sets before every Man *Fire* and *Water*, *Life* and *Death*; and Man has no other Power, but that of entering into, and uniting with either of these States, but not the least Power of adding to, or taking any Thing from them, or of making them to be otherwise than he finds them.

For this Fire and Water, this Life and Death, are *Nature*, and have their unchangeable State in the *uniform Working* of God in Nature. And therefore, whatever is done by this Fire and Water, this Life and Death in any Creature, may, nay, must, in the strictest Truth, be affirmed of God as done by Him. And consequently, every breathing forth of Fire, or Death, or Rage, or Curse, wherever it is, or in whatever Creature, must be said, in the Language of Scripture, to be a *provoked Wrath*, or *fiery Vengeance of God*, *poured forth upon the Creature*. And yet, every Thing that has been said in Proof of this Wrath of God, shows, and proves to you at the same Time, that it is not a Wrath in the Holy Deity itself.

For you see, as was said above, that God sets before Man *Fire* and *Water*, *Life* and *Death*; now these Things are not God, nor existence in the Deity itself; but they are that which is, and is called *Nature*, and as they are the only Things set before Man, so Man can go no further, reach no further, nor find, nor feel, or be sensible of any Thing else, but that which is to be felt or found in this *Nature*, or Fire and Water, Life and Death, which are set before Him. And therefore all that Man can find or feel of the Wrath and Vengeance of God, can only be in *this Fire*, and *this Death*, and not in the Deity itself.

Theogenes. Oh, *Theophilus*, you have given me the utmost Satisfaction on this Point, and in a much better Way than I imagined. I expected to have seen you glossing and criticising

away the *literal Expression* of Scriptures that affirm the Wrath of God, in order to make good your Point, that the Deity is mere Love.

But you have done the utmost Justice to the *Letter* of Scripture, you have established it upon a firm and solid Foundation, and shown that the Truth of Things require it to be so, and that there can be no Wrath *anywhere*, but what is and must be called the Wrath and Vengeance of God, and yet is only in *Nature*.

What you have here said, seems as if it would clear up many Passages of Scripture, that have raised much Perplexity. Methinks I begin to see how the *Hardness of Pharaoh's Heart*, how *Eyes* that see not, and *Ears* that hear not, may, in the strictest Truth, be said to be *of* or *from* God, though the Deity, in itself, stands in the utmost Contrariety to all these Things, and in the utmost Impossibility of *willing*, or *causing* them to be.

But I must not draw you from our present Matter. You have shown, from the Letter of Scripture, that nothing else is set before Man but Fire and Water, Life and Death; and therefore, no Possibility of Wrath or Love, Joy or Sorrow, Curse or Happiness to be found by Man, but in *this State* of Nature set before him, or into which at his Creation he is introduced, as into a *Region of various Sensibilities*, where all that he finds or feels, is truly God's, but not God himself, who has his supernatural Residence above, and distinct from every Thing that is Nature, Fire or Water, Life or Death.

But give me Leave to mention one Word of a Difficulty that I yet have. You have proved that Wrath, Rage, Vengeance, &c., can only exist, or be found *in Nature*, and not in God; and yet you say, that Nature is nothing else but a Manifestation of the hidden invisible Powers of God. But if so, must not that which is in Nature be also in God? How else could Nature be a Manifestation of God?

Theophilus. Nature is a true Manifestation of the hidden, invisible God. But you are to observe, that Nature, as it is *in itself*, in its *own State*, cannot have the least possible Spark, or Stirring of Wrath, or Curse, or Vengeance in it: But, on the contrary, is from Eternity to Eternity, a mere Infinity of heavenly Light, Love, Joy and Glory; and thus it is a true Manifestation of the hidden Deity, and the greatest of Proofs, that the Deity itself can have no Wrath in it, since Wrath only then begins to be in Nature, when Nature has lost its first State.

Theogenes. This is Answer enough. But now another Thing starts up in my Mind. For if the Deity in itself, in its supernatural State, is *mere Love*, and only a *Will* to all Goodness, and if Nature in itself is only a Manifestation of this Deity of

Love in heavenly Light and Glory, if neither God nor Nature have, or can give forth Wrath, how then can *Fire* and *Water*, *Life* and *Death*, be set before Man? What can they come from, or where can they exist, since God in himself is all Love; and Nature, which is the Kingdom of Heaven, is an Infinity of Joy, Blessing, and Happiness.

Theophilus. I will open to you all this Matter to the Bottom, in as few Words as I can.

Before God began any Creation, or gave Birth to any Creature, He was only manifested, or known to himself in his own Glory and Majesty; there was nothing but Himself beholding Himself in his own Kingdom of Heaven, which was, and is, and ever will be, as unlimited as Himself.

Nature, as well as God, is and must be antecedent to all Creature. For as no *seeing* Eye could be created, unless there was, antecedently to it, a *natural Visibility* of Things, so no Creature could come into a *Sensibility* of any natural Life, unless such a State of Nature was antecedent to it. For no Creature can begin to be in any *World*, or *State* of Nature, but by being created out of that World, or State of Nature, into which it is brought to have its Life. For to live in any World, is the same Thing as for a Creature to have all that it is, and has, *in* and *from* that World. And therefore, no Creature can come into any other Kind of Existence and Life, but such as can be had *out of* that World in which it is to live. Neither can there possibly be any other Difference between created Beings, whether animate or inanimate, but what arises from that out of which they were created. Seeing then, that before the Existence of the first Creatures, there was nothing but God and his Kingdom of Heaven, the first Creatures could receive no other Life but that which was in God, because there was nothing *living* but God, nor any *other Life* but his, nor could they exist in any other Place or outward State, but the Kingdom of Heaven, because there was none else in Existence; and therefore, the first Creatures must, of all Necessity, be Divine and heavenly both in their inward Life and outward State.

Theogenes. Here then, *Theophilus*, comes my Question. Where is that *Fire* and *Water*, that *Life* and *Death*, that is set before the Creature? For as to these first Creatures, nothing is set before them, nothing is within them, or without them, but God and the Kingdom of Heaven.

Theophilus. You should not have said, There is nothing *within* them, but God and the Kingdom of Heaven. For that which is their own *creaturely Nature* within them, is not God, nor the Kingdom of Heaven.

It has been already proved to your Satisfaction, that no Creature can be Divine, good and happy, but by having a *two-fold* Life united in it. And in this twofold Life of the Creature, is Fire and Water, Life and Death, unavoidably set before it. For as its Will works with either of these Lives, so will it find either Fire or Water, Life or Death. If its Will turns from the Life of God, into the creaturely Life, then it enters into a *Sensibility* of that which is meant by Death and Fire, *viz.*, a wrathful Misery. But if the Will keeps steadily given up to the Deity, then it lives in Possession of that *Life* and *Water*, which was its first, and will be its everlasting heavenly Joy and Happiness.

But to explain this Matter something deeper to you, according to the *Mystery* of all Things opened by God in his chosen Instrument, *Jacob Behmen*.

You know we have often spoken of *eternal Nature*, that so sure as there is an eternal God, so sure is it, that there is an eternal Nature, as universal, as unlimited as God Himself, and everywhere working where God is, and therefore, everywhere equally existent, as being his Kingdom of Heaven, or outward Manifestation of the invisible Riches, Powers, and Glories of the Deity.

Before, or without Nature, the Deity is an entire hidden, shut up, unknown, and unknowable Abyss. For Nature is the only Ground, or Beginning of *something*; there is neither *this* nor *that*, no Ground for *Conception*, no Possibility of *Distinction* or *Difference*; there cannot be a Creature to *think*, nor any Thing to be *thought* upon, till Nature is in Existence. For all the Properties of Sensibility and sensible Life, every Mode and Manner of Existence, all Seeing, Hearing, Tasting, Smelling, Feeling, all Inclinations, Passions, and Sensations of Joy, Sorrow, Pain, Pleasure, &c., are not in God, but in Nature. And therefore, God is not knowable, not a Thought can begin about Him, till He manifests himself in, and through, and by the Existence of Nature; that is, till there is *something* that can be seen, understood, distinguished, felt, &c.

And this is *eternal Nature*, or the *Out-Birth* of the Deity, called the *Kingdom of Heaven*, *viz.*, an Infinity, or boundless Opening of the Properties, Powers, Wonders, and Glories of the hidden Deity, and this not *once done*, but ever doing, ever standing in the *same Birth*, for ever and ever breaking forth and springing up in new Forms and Openings of the abyssal Deity, in the Powers of Nature. And out of this Ocean of manifested Powers of Nature, the Will of the Deity, created Hosts of heavenly Beings, full of the heavenly Wonders introduced into a Participation of the Infinity of God, to live in an

eternal Succession of heavenly Sensations, to see and feel, to taste and find new forms of Delight in an inexhaustible Source of ever-changing and never-ceasing Wonders of the Divine Glory.

Oh *Theogenes*! What an Eternity is this, out of which, and for which thy eternal Soul was created? What little crawling Things are all that an earthly Ambition can set before Thee? Bear with Patience for a while the Rags of thy earthy Nature, the Veil and Darkness of Flesh and Blood, as the Lot of thy Inheritance from Father *Adam*, but think nothing worth a Thought, but that which will bring thee back to thy first Glory, and land thee safe in the Region of Eternity.

But to return. Nothing is before this eternal Nature, but the holy supernatural Deity, and every Thing that is after it, is *Creature*, and has all its creaturely Life and State in it, and from it, either mediately or immediately.

This eternal Nature has seven *chief* or *fountain* Properties, that are the Doers, or Workers of every Thing that is done in it, and can have neither more nor less, because it is a Birth from, or a Manifestation of the Deity in Nature. For the Perfection of Nature (as was before said of every Divine and happy Creature) is an Union of *two Things*, or is a *twofold State*. It is Nature, and it is God manifested in Nature. Now God is Triune, and Nature is Triune, and hence there arises the Ground of Properties, three and three; and *That* which brings those three and three into Union, or manifests the Triune God in the Triune Nature, is another Property; so that the glorious Manifestation of the Deity in Nature, can have neither more nor less than seven *chief* or *fountain* Properties, from which every Thing that is known, found and felt, in all the Universe of Nature, in all the Variety of Creatures either in Heaven or on Earth, has its only Rise, or Cause, either mediately or immediately.

Theogenes. You say, *Theophilus*, that the Triune Deity is united or manifested in *Triune Nature*, and that thence comes the glorious Manifestation of God in seven heavenly Properties, called the Kingdom of Heaven. But how does it appear that *this Nature*, antecedently to the Entrance of the Deity into it, is Triune? Or what is this Triune Nature, before God is supposed to be in Union with it?

Theophilus. It is barely a DESIRE. It neither is, nor has, nor can be any Thing else but a *Desire*. For Desire is the *only Thing* in which the Deity can work, and manifest itself; for God can only come into *That* which *wants* and *desires* Him.

The Deity is an infinite Plenitude, or Fulness of Riches and Powers, in and from itself; and it is only WANT and DESIRE, that are excluded from it, and can have no Existence in it. And

here lies the true immutable Distinction between God and Nature, and shows why neither can ever be changed into the other ; it is, because God is an UNIVERSAL ALL ; and Nature or *Desire* is an UNIVERSAL WANT, *viz.*, to be filled with God.

Now, as Nature can be nothing but a *Desire*, so nothing is in, or done in any natural Way, but as *Desire* does it, because *Desire* is the *All* of Nature. And, therefore, there is no Strength or Substance, no Power or Motion, no Cause or Effect in Nature, but what is in itself a *Desire*, or the Working and Effect of it.

This is the true Origin of *Attraction*, and all its Powers, in this material World. It gives Essence and Substance to all that is *Matter*, and the Properties of *Matter*, it holds every Element in its created State ; and not only Earth and Stones, but *Light* and *Air* and Motion are under its Dominion. From the Centre to the Circumference of this material System, every Motion, Separation, Union, Vegetation, or Corruption, begins no sooner, goes on no further, than as *Attraction* works.

Take away *Attraction* from this material System, and then it has all the Annihilation it can ever possibly have.

Whence now has *Attraction* this Nature ?

It is solely from hence ; because *all Nature*, from its Eternity, has been, is, and for ever can be, only a DESIRE, and has nothing in it but the Properties of *Desire*.

Now the essential, inseparable Properties of DESIRE are *three*, and can be neither more nor less ; and in this you have that *Triunity* of Nature which you asked after, and in which the Triune Deity manifests itself. I shall not now prove these three Properties of the *Desire*, because I have done it at large, and plainly enough elsewhere.*

But to go back now to your Question, Where, or how this *Fire* and *Water*, &c., can be found, since God is all Love and Goodness, and his *Manifestation* in Nature is a mere Kingdom of Heaven. They are to be found in the *twofold State* of Heaven, and the *twofold State* of every heavenly Creature.

For seeing that the Perfection of Nature, and the Perfection of the intelligent Creature, consists in one and the *same twofold State*, you have here the plainest Ground and Reason, why and how every good and happy and new created Being, must, of all Necessity, have *Fire* and *Water*, *Life* and *Death*, set before it, or put into its Choice.

Because it has it in its Power to turn and give up its Will to either of these Lives, it can turn either to God, or Nature, and therefore must have *Life* and *Death*, *Fire* or *Water* in its Choice.

* *Way to Divine Knowledge ; Spirit of Love*, First Part.

Now this twofold Life, which makes the Perfection of Nature and Creature, is, in other Words, signified by the *seven* heavenly Properties of Nature; for when God is manifested in Nature, all its seven Properties are in an heavenly State.

But in these seven Properties, though all heavenly, lies the Ground of Fire and Water, &c., because a *Division* or *Separation* can be made in them by the Will of the Creature. For the three first Properties are as distinct from the four following ones, as God is distinct from *That* which *wants* God. And these three first Properties are the Essence or whole Being of that *Desire*, which is, and is called *Nature*, or that which *wants* God.

When therefore the Will of the Creature turns from God into *Nature*, it breaks, or looses the Union of the seven heavenly Properties; because Nature, as distinct from God, has only the three first Properties in it. And such a Creature, having broken or lost the Union of the seven Properties, is fallen into the *three first*, which is meant by *Fire* and *Death*. For when the three first Properties have lost God, or their Union with the four following ones, then they are *mere Nature*, which, in its whole Being, is nothing else but the Strength and Rage of Hunger, an Excess of Want, of Self-Torment, and Self-Vexation. Surely now, my Friend, this Matter is enough explained.

Theogenes. Indeed, *Theophilus*, I am quite satisfied; for by this Account which you have given of the Ground of *Nature*, and its true and full Distinction from God, you have struck a most amazing Light into my Mind.

For if Nature is *mere Want*, and has nothing in it but a *Strength* of Want, generated from the three self-tormenting Properties of a *Desire*, if God is all Love, Joy and Happiness, an infinite Plenitude of all Blessings, then the Limits and Bounds of Good and Evil, of Happiness and Misery, are made as visibly distinct, and as certainly to be known, as the Difference between a Circle and a straight Line.

To live to *Desire*, that is, to *Nature*, is unavoidably entering into the Region of all Evil and Misery; because *Nature* has nothing else in it. But, on the other Hand, to die to *Desire*, that is, to turn from *Nature* to God, is to be united with the infinite Source of all that is good, and blessed, and happy.

All that I wanted to know, is now cleared up in the greatest Plainness. And I have no Difficulty about those Passages of Scripture, which speak of the Wrath, and Fury, and Vengeance of God. Wrath is *his*, just as all Nature is *his*, and yet God is *mere Love*, that only rules and governs Wrath, as He governs the foaming Waves of the Sea, and the Madness of Storms and Tempests.

The following Propositions are as evidently true, as that two and two are four.

First, That God in his holy Deity is as absolutely free from *Wrath* and *Rage*, and as utterly incapable of them, as He is of *Thickness*, *Hardness*, and *Darkness*; because *Wrath* and *Rage* belong to nothing else, can exist in nothing else, have *Life* in nothing else, but in *Thickness*, *Hardness*, and *Darkness*.

Secondly, That all *Wrath* is *Disorder*, and can be nowhere but in *Nature* and *Creature*, because nothing else is capable of changing from *Right* to *Wrong*.

Thirdly, That *Wrath* can have no *Existence* even in *Nature* and *Creature*, till they have lost their first *Perfection* which they had from *God*, and are become *that* which they should not have been.

Fourthly, That all the *Wrath*, and *Fury*, and *Vengeance*, that ever did, or can break forth in *Nature* and *Creature* is, according to the strictest *Truth*, to be called and looked upon as the *Wrath* and *Vengeance* of *God*, just as the *Darkness*, as well as the *Light* is, and is to be called his.

Oh! *Theophilus*, what a *Key* have you given me to the right understanding of *Scripture*!

For when *Nature* and *Creature* are known to be the *only Theatre* of *Evil* and *Disorder*, and the holy *Deity* as that governing *Love*, which wills nothing but the *Removal* of all *Evil* from every *Thing*, as fast as infinite *Wisdom* can find *Ways* of doing it, then whether you read of the raining of *Fire* and *Brimstone*, or only *Showers* of *heavenly Manna* falling upon the *Earth*, it is only one and the *same Love*, working in such different *Ways* and *Diversity* of *Instruments*, as *Time*, and *Place*, and *Occasion*, had made wise, and good, and beneficial.

Pharaoh with his hardened *Heart*, and *St. Paul* with his *Voice* from *Heaven*, though so contrary to one another, were both of them the chosen *Vessels* of the same *God* of *Love*, because both miraculously taken out of their *own State*, and made to do all the *Good* to a blind and wicked *World*, which they were capable of doing.

And thus, *Sir*, are all the *Treasures* of the *Wisdom* and *Goodness* of *God*, hidden in the *Letter* of *Scripture*, made the *Comfort* and *Delight* of my *Soul*, and every *Thing* I read turns itself into a *Motive*, of loving and adoring the wonderful *Working* of the *Love* of *God* over all the various *Changings* of *Nature* and *Creature*, till all *Evil* shall be extinguished, and all *Disorder* go back again to its first harmonious *State* of *Perfection*.

Depart from this *Idea* of *God*, as an *Infinity* of *mere Love*, *Wisdom*, and *Goodness*, and then every *Thing* in the *System* of

Scripture, and the System of Nature, only helps the reasoning Mind to be miserably perplexed, as well with the Mercies, as with the Judgments of God.

But when God is known to be *omnipotent Love*, that can do nothing but *Works of Love*, and that all Nature and Creature are only under the Operation of Love, as a distempered Person under the Care of a kind and skilful Physician, who seeks nothing but the perfect Recovery of his Patient, then whatever is done, whether a severe *Caustic*, or a pleasant *Cordial* is ordered, that is, whether because of its Difference, it may have the different Name of *Mercy* or *Judgment*, yet all is equally well done, because Love is the *only Doer* of both, and does both, from the same Principle, and for the same End.

Theophilus. Oh *Theogenes*, Now you are according to your Name, you are born of God. For when Love is the Triune God that you serve, worship, and adore, the only God, in whom you desire to live and move and have your Being, then of a Truth God dwells in you, and you in God.

I shall now only add this one Word more, to strengthen and confirm your right understanding of all that is said of the Wrath, or Rage of God in the Scriptures.

The Psalmist, you know, says thus of God, 'He giveth forth *his Ice* like Morsels, and who is able to abide *his Frosts*?' Now, Sir, if you know how to explain this Scripture, and can show how *Ice* and *Frost* can truly be ascribed to God, *as His*, though absolutely impossible to have any Existence in Him, then you have an easy and unerring Key, how the Wrath, and Fury, and Vengeance, that anywhere falls upon any Creature is, and may be truly ascribed to God, *as his*, though Fury and Vengeance are as inconsistent with, and as impossible to have any Existence in the Deity, as Lumps of Ice, or the Hardness of intolerable Frosts.

Now in this Text, setting forth the Horror of God's *Ice* and *Frost*, you have the whole Nature of Divine Wrath set before you. Search all the Scriptures, and you will nowhere find any Wrath of God, but what is bounded in *Nature*, and is so described, as to be itself a Proof, that it has no Existence in the holy supernatural Deity.

Thus says the Psalmist again, 'The Earth trembled and 'quaked, the very Foundations also of the Hills shook, and 'were removed, because he was wrath.' No Wrath here but in the Elements.

Again, 'There went a Smoke out in his Presence, and a consuming Fire out of his Mouth, so that Coals were kindled at it. 'The Springs of Water were seen, and the Foundations of the

'round World were discovered at thy Chiding, O Lord, at the 'blasting of the Breath of thy Displeasure.'

Now every Working of the Wrath of God, described in Scripture, is strictly of a Piece with this, it relates to a Wrath solely confined to the Powers and working Properties of Nature, that lives and moves only in the Elements of the fallen World, and no more reaches the Deity, than *Ice* or *Frost* do.

The Apostle says, 'Avenge not yourselves, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.'

This is another full Proof, that Wrath or Vengeance is not in the holy Deity itself, as a Quality of the Divine Mind; for if it was, then Vengeance would belong to every Child of God, that was truly born of Him, or he could not have the Spirit of his Father, or be perfect, as his Father in Heaven is perfect.

But if Vengeance only belongs to God, and can only be so affirmed of Him, as *Ice* and *Frost* are *His*, and belong to Him; if it has no other Manner of Working, than as when it is said, 'He sent out his Arrows and scattered them, He cast forth 'Lightnings and destroyed them'; then it is certain, that the Divine Vengeance is only in *fallen Nature*, and its *disordered Properties*, and is no more in the Deity itself, than *Hailstones* and *Coals* of Fire.

And here you have the true Reason, why Revenge or Vengeance is not allowed to Man; it is because Vengeance can only work in the evil, or disordered Properties of *fallen Nature*. But Man being Himself a *Part* of fallen Nature, and *subject* to its disordered Properties, is not allowed to work with them, because it would be stirring up Evil in Himself, and that is his Sin of Wrath, or Revenge.

God therefore reserves all Vengeance to Himself, not because wrathful Revenge is a Temper or Quality that can have any Place in the holy Deity, but because the holy supernatural Deity, being free from all the Properties of Nature, whence partial Love and Hatred spring, and being in Himself nothing but an Infinity of Love, Wisdom, and Goodness, He alone knows how to over-rule the Disorders of Nature, and so to repay Evil with Evil, that the highest Good may be promoted by it.

To say, therefore, that Vengeance is to be reserved to God, is only saying, in other Words, that all the Evils in Nature are to be reserved and turned over to the *Love* of God, to be healed by his *Goodness*. And every Act of what is called Divine Vengeance, recorded in Scripture, may, and ought, with the greatest Strictness of Truth, to be called an Act of the Divine Love.

If *Sodom* flames and smokes with stinking Brimstone, it is the

Love of God that kindled it, only to extinguish a *more horrible Fire*. It was one and the same infinite Love, when it preserved *Noah* in the Ark, when it turned *Sodom* into a burning Lake, and overwhelmed *Pharaoh* in the Red Sea. And if God commanded the Waters to destroy the old World, it was as high an Act of the same infinite Love towards *that Chaos*, as when it said to the first Darkness upon the Face of the Deep, 'Let there be Light, and there was Light.'

Not a Word in all Scripture concerning the Wrath, or Vengeance of God, but directly teaches you these two infallible Truths. *First*, That all the Wrath spoken of, works *nowhere*, but in the wrathful, disordered Elements and Properties of fallen Nature. *Secondly*, That all the Power that God exercises over them, all that He does at any Time, or on any Occasion with, or by them, is only and solely the one Work of his unchangeable Love toward Man.

Just as the good *Physician* acts from only one and the same *good Will* towards his Patient, when he orders bitter and sour, as when he gives the pleasant Draughts.

Now, suppose the good Physician to have such intense Love for you, as to disregard your Aversion towards them, and to force such Medicines down your Throat, as can alone save your Life; suppose he should therefore call himself your *severe* Physician, and declare himself *so rigid* towards you, that he would *not spare* you, nor *suffer* you, go where you would, to *escape* his bitter Draughts, till all Means of your Recovery were tried, then you would have a true and just, though low Representation of those bitter Cups, which God in *his Wrath* forces fallen Man to drink.

Now as the bitter, *sour, hot, &c.*, in the Physician's Draughts, are not Declarations of any the like Bitterness, Heat, or Sourness in the *Spirit* of the Physician that uses them, but are Things quite distinct from the *State* and *Spirit* of his Mind, and only manifest his *Care* and *Skill* in the right Use of *such Materials* towards the Health of his Patient; so in like Manner, all the Elements of fallen Nature are only so many *outward Materials* in the Hands of God, formed, and mixed into Heat and Cold, into fruitful and pestilential Effects, into Serenity of Seasons, and blasting Tempests, into Means of Health and Sickness, of Plenty and Poverty, just as the Wisdom and Goodness of Providence sees to be the fittest to deliver Man from the miserable Malady of his earthly Nature, and help him to become heavenly-minded.

If therefore, it would be great Folly to suppose *Bitterness*, or Heat, &c., to be in the Spirit of the Physician, when he gives a

hot, or bitter Medicine, much greater Folly surely must it be, to suppose, that Wrath, Vengeance, or any pestilential Quality, is in the Spirit of the holy Deity, when a Wrath, a Vengeance, or Pestilence is stirred up in the fallen Elements by the Providence of God, as a proper Remedy for the Evil of this, or that Time, or Occasion.

Hear these decisive Words of Scripture, 'Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth.' What a Grossness therefore of Mistake is it to conclude, that Wrath must be in the Deity, because He chastens and threatens Chastisement, when you have God's own Word for it, that nothing but his Love chastens? Again, Thus saith the Lord, 'I have smitten you with Blasting and Mildew. Your Vineyards, and your Fig-Trees, and your Olive-Yards, did the Palmer-Worm devour,' and then the Love that did this makes this Complaint, 'Yet ye have not returned to me.' Again, 'Pestilence have I sent among you; I have made the Stink of your Tents come up even in your Nostrils,' &c. And then the same Love that did this, that made this Use of the disordered Elements, makes the same Complaint again, 'Yet have ye not returned to me.'*

Now, Sir, How is it possible for Words to give stronger Proof, that God is mere Love, that he has no Will towards fallen Man but to bless him with works of Love, and this as certainly, when he turns the Air into a *Pestilence*, as when he makes the same Air rain down *Manna* upon the Earth, since neither the one nor the other are done, but as Time, and Place, and Occasion, render them the fittest Means to make Man return and adhere to God, that is, to come out of all the Evil and Misery of his fallen State? What can infinite Love do more, or what can it do to give greater Proof, that all that it does proceeds from Love? And here you are to observe, that this is not said from human Conjecture, or any imaginary Idea of God, but is openly asserted, constantly affirmed, and repeated in the plainest Letter of Scripture. But this Conversation has been long enough. And I hope we shall meet again To-morrow.

The End of the First DIALOGUE.

* Amos iv. 9, 10.

THE SECOND DIALOGUE.

EUSEBIUS. There is no Occasion to resume any Thing of our Yesterday's Discourse. The following Propositions are sufficiently proved.

First, That God is an abyssal Infinity of Love, Wisdom, and Goodness; that He ever was, and ever will be one and the same unchangeable *Will to all Goodness, and Works of Love*, as incapable of any *Sensibility* of Wrath, or acting under it, as of falling into Pain or Darkness, and acting under their Direction.

Secondly, That all Wrath, Strife, Discord, Hatred, Envy, or Pride, &c., all Heat and Cold, all Enmity in the Elements, all Thickness, Grossness, and Darkness, are Things that have no Existence but in and from the Sphere of fallen Nature.

Thirdly, That all the Evils of Contrariety and Disorder in fallen Nature, are only as so many Materials in the Hands of infinite Love and Wisdom, all made to work in their different Ways, as far as is possible, to one and the same End, *viz.*, to turn temporal Evil into eternal Good.

So that whether you look at Light or Darkness, at Night or Day, at Fire or Water, at Heaven or Earth, at Life or Death, at Prosperity or Adversity, at blasting Winds or heavenly Dews, at Sickness or Health, you see nothing but *such a State* of Things, in and through which, the *supernatural* Deity *wills* and *seeks* the Restoration of fallen Nature and Creature to their first Perfection.

It now only remains, that the Doctrine of Scripture concerning the *Atonement*, necessary to be made by the Life, Sufferings, and Death of Christ be explained, or in other Words, the true Meaning of that *Righteousness* or *Justice* of God, that must have Satisfaction done to it, before Man can be reconciled to God.

For this Doctrine is thought by some to favour the Opinion of a *Wrath*, and Resentment in the Deity itself.

Theophilus. This Doctrine, *Eusebius*, of the Atonement made by Christ, and the absolute Necessity, and real Efficacy of it, to *satisfy* the Righteousness, or Justice of God, is the very Ground and Foundation of Christian Redemption, and the Life and Strength of every Part of it. But then, this very Doctrine is so far from favouring the Opinion of a Wrath in the Deity itself, that it is an absolute full Denial of it, and the strongest of

Demonstrations, that the Wrath, or Resentment, that is to be pacified or atoned, cannot possibly be in the Deity itself.

For this Wrath that is to be *atoned* and *pacified*, is, in its whole Nature, nothing else but *Sin*, or *Disorder* in the Creature. And when Sin is *extinguished* in the Creature, all the Wrath that is *between* God and the Creature is *fully atoned*. Search all the Bible, from one End to the other, and you will find, that the Atonement of *that* which is called the Divine Wrath or Justice, and the *extinguishing* of Sin in the Creature, are only different Expressions for *one and the same* individual Thing. And therefore, unless you will place Sin in God, that Wrath, that is to be atoned or pacified, cannot be placed in Him.

The whole Nature of our Redemption has no other End, but to remove or extinguish the Wrath that is between God and Man. When this is removed, Man is *reconciled* to God. Therefore, *where* the Wrath is, or where *that* is which wants to be atoned, *there* is that which is the *blamable Cause* of the Separation between God and Man; *there* is that which Christ came into the World to extinguish, to quench, or atone. If therefore this Wrath, which is the *blamable Cause* of the Separation between God and Man, is in God Himself; if Christ died to atone, or extinguish a Wrath that was got into the holy Deity itself; then it must be said, that Christ made an Atonement for God, and not for Man; that He died for the Good and Benefit of God, and not of Man; and that which is called *our Redemption*, ought rather to be called the Redemption of God, as saving and delivering Him, and not Man, from his *own Wrath*.

This Blasphemy is unavoidable, if you suppose *that* Wrath, for which Christ died, to be a Wrath in God Himself.

Again, The very Nature of *Atonement* absolutely shows, that *that* which is to be atoned cannot possibly be in God, nor even in any good Being. For Atonement implies the *Alteration*, or Removal of something that is not as it ought to be. And therefore every Creature, so long as it is good, and has its *proper State* of Goodness, neither wants, nor can admit of any Atonement, because it has nothing in it that wants to be *altered*, or *taken out* of it. And therefore Atonement cannot possibly have any Place in God, because nothing in God either wants, or can receive Alteration; neither can it have Place in any Creature, but so far as it has lost, or altered *that* which it had from God, and is fallen into Disorder; and then, that which brings this Creature back to its first State, which alters that which is wrong in it, and takes its Evil out of it, is its *true* and *proper Atonement*.

Water is the proper Atonement of the Rage of Fire; and that which *changes* a Tempest into a Calm is its true Atonement.

And therefore as sure as Christ is a *Propitiation* and an *Atonement*, so sure is it, that *that* which he does, as a Propitiation and Atonement, can have no Place, but in altering that Evil and Disorder which, in the State and Life of the fallen Creature, wants to be altered.

Suppose the Creature not fallen, and then there is no Room nor Possibility for Atonement; a plain and full Proof, that the Work of Atonement is nothing else, but the altering or quenching that which is Evil in the fallen Creature.

Hell, Wrath, Darkness, Misery, and eternal Death, mean the same Thing through all Scripture, and these are the only Things from which we want to be redeemed; and where there is nothing of Hell, there there is nothing of *Wrath*, nor any Thing that wants, or can admit of the Benefits of the Atonement made by Christ.

Either, therefore, all Hell is in the Essence of the holy Deity, or nothing that wants to be atoned by the Merits and Death of Christ, can possibly be in the Deity itself.

The Apostle says, that 'we are by Nature Children of Wrath'; the same Thing as when the Psalmist says, 'I was shapen in Wickedness, and in Sin hath my Mother conceived me.' And therefore that Wrath which *wants* the Atonement of the Sufferings, Blood and Death of Christ, is no other than that *Sin*, or *sinful State*, in which we are naturally born. But now, if this *Wrath* could be supposed to be in the Deity itself, then it would follow, that by *being by Nature Children of Wrath*, we should thereby be the *true Children* of God, we should not want any Atonement, or new Birth from above, to make us *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, because that Wrath that was in us would be our Dwelling in God, and he in us.

Again, All Scripture teaches us, That God *wills* and desires the Removal, or Extinction of *that Wrath*, which is *betwixt* God and the Creature; and therefore, all Scripture teaches, that the Wrath is not in God; for God cannot will the Removal, or Alteration of any Thing that is in Himself; this is as impossible, as for Him to *will* the Extinction of his own Omnipotence. Nor can there be any Thing in God, contrary to, or against his own Will; and yet, if God *wills* the Extinction of a Wrath that is in Himself, it must be in Him, contrary to, or against his own Will.

This, I presume, is enough to show you, that the Atonement made by Christ is itself the greatest of all Proofs, that it was not to atone or extinguish any Wrath in the Deity itself; nor, indeed, any Way to affect, or alter any Quality, or Temper in the Divine Mind, but purely and solely to overcome and remove all that Death and Hell, and Wrath, and Darkness, that had opened itself in the Nature, Birth, and Life of fallen Man.

Eusebius. The Truth of all this is not to be denied. And yet it is as true, that all our Systems of Divinity give quite another Account of this most important Matter. The *Satisfaction* of Christ is represented as a Satisfaction made to a wrathful Deity; and the Merit of the Sufferings and Death of Christ, as *that* which could only avail with God, to give up his *own Wrath*, and think of Mercy towards Man. Nay, what is still worse, if possible, the Ground, and Nature, and Efficacy of this great Transaction between God and Man, is often explained by *Debtor* and *Creditor*: Man, as having contracted a Debt with God that he could not pay, and God, as having a Right to insist upon the Payment of it; and, therefore, only to be satisfied by receiving the Death and Sacrifice of Christ, as a valuable Consideration, instead of the Debt that was due to Him from Man.

Theophilus. Hence you may see, *Eusebius*, how unreasonably Complaint has been sometimes made against the *Appeal*, the *Spirit of Prayer, &c.*, as introducing a Philosophy into the Doctrines of the Gospel, not enough supported by the Letter of Scripture; though every Thing there asserted has been over and over shown to be well grounded on the Letter of Scripture, and necessarily included in the most fundamental Doctrines of the Gospel.

Yet they who make this Complaint, blindly swallow a Vanity of Philosophy in the most important part of Gospel Religion, which not only has less Scripture for it than the Infallibility of the Pope, but is directly contrary to the plain Letter of every single Text of Scripture that relates to this Matter: As I will now show you.

First, The Apostle says, 'God so loved the World, that He gave his only begotten Son, that all who believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting Life.' What becomes now of the Philosophy of *Debtor* and *Creditor*, of a Satisfaction made by Christ to a Wrath in God; Is it not the grossest of all Fictions, and in full Contrariety to the plain written Word of God? 'God so loved the World;' behold the Degree of it? But when did He so love it? Why, before it was redeemed, before He sent, or gave his only Son to be the Redeemer of it. Here you see, that all Wrath *in God*, antecedent to our Redemption, or the Sacrifice of Christ for us, is utterly excluded; there is no Possibility for the Supposition of it, it is as absolutely denied as Words can do it. And therefore the infinite Love, Mercy and Compassion of God towards fallen Man, are not *purchased*, or *procured* for us by the Death of Christ, but the Incarnation and Sufferings of Christ come from, and are given to us by the infinite antecedent Love of God for us, and are the gracious Effects of his own Love and Goodness towards us.

It is needless to show you, how constantly this same Doctrine is asserted and repeated by all the Apostles.

Thus says St. John again, 'In this was manifested the Love of God towards us, because He sent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him.' Again, 'This is the Record, that God hath given unto us eternal Life; and this Life is in his Son.' Again, 'God,' says St. Paul, 'was in Christ, reconciling the World unto Himself, not imputing their Trespases to them.' Which is repeated, and further opened in these Words, 'Giving Thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light, who hath delivered us from the Power of Darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son.'* And again, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places in Christ.†

How great therefore, *Eusebius*, is the Error, how total the Disregard of Scripture, and how vain the Philosophy, which talks of a Wrath in God *antecedent* to our Redemption, or of a *Debt* which he could not forgive us, till he had received a *Valuable Consideration* for it, when all Scriptures from Page to Page tells us, that all the Mercy and Blessing and Benefits of Christ, as our Saviour, are the *free antecedent* Gift of God Himself to us, and bestowed upon us for no other Reason, from no other Motive, but the Infinity of his own Love towards us, agreeable to what the Evangelical Prophet says of God, 'I am He that blotteth out Transgressions for my own sake,‡ that is, not for any Reason or Motive that can be laid before me, but because I am Love itself, and my own Nature is my immutable Reason, why nothing but Works of Love, Blessing, and Goodness, can come from me.

Look we now at the Scripture Account of the Nature of the Atonement and Satisfaction of Christ, and this will further show us, that it is not to atone, or alter any *Quality*, or *Temper* in the Divine Mind, nor for the Sake of God, but purely and solely to atone, to quench, and overcome that Death, and Wrath, and Hell, under the Power of which Man was fallen.

'As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.' This is the whole *Work*, the whole *Nature*, and the sole *End* of Christ's Sacrifice of Himself; and there is not a Syllable in Scripture, that gives you any account of it: It all consists, from the Beginning to the End, in carrying on the one Work of *Regeneration*; and therefore the Apostle says, 'The first Adam was made a

* Col. i. 12, 13.

† Eph. i. 3.

‡ Isa. xliiii. 25.

‘living Soul, but the last or Second Adam was made a Quicken-
‘ing Spirit,’ because sent into the World by God, to quicken and
revive that Life from above which we lost in *Adam*. And he is
called our *Ransom*, our *Atonement*, &c., for no other Reason, but
because that which He did and suffered in our fallen Nature,
was as truly an *efficacious Means* of our being born again to a
new heavenly Life, of Him, and from Him, as that which *Adam*
did, was the *true* and *natural Cause* of our being born in Sin, and
the Impurity of bestial Flesh and Blood.

And as *Adam*, by what He did, may be truly said to have *pur-
chased* our Misery and Corruption, to have *brought* Death for us,
and to have *sold* us into a Slavery under the World, the Flesh,
and the Devil, though all that we have from him, or suffer by
him, is only the *inward working of his own Nature and Life
within us*; so, according to the plain meaning of the Words,
Christ may be said to be our *Price*, our *Ransom*, and *Atonement*,
though all that He does for us, as Buying, Ransom, and Re-
deeming us, is done wholly and solely by a Birth of his *own
Nature and Spirit* brought to Life in us.

The Apostle says, ‘Christ died for our Sins.’ Thence it is,
that He is the great Sacrifice for Sin, and its true Atonement.
But how and why is he so? the Apostle tells you in these
Words, ‘The Sting of Death is Sin.—But Thanks be to God,
‘who giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.’ And
therefore Christ is the Atonement of our Sins when by and from
Him, living in us, we have Victory over our Sinful Nature.

The Scriptures frequently say, Christ *gave himself for us*. But
what is the full Meaning, Effect, and Benefit, of his thus *giving
Himself for us*? The Apostle puts this out of all Doubt, when
he says, ‘Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might
‘redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify to Himself a peculiar
‘People;—that He might deliver us from this present evil World,—
‘from the Curse of the Law,—from the Power of Satan,—from
‘the Wrath to come:’ or as the Apostle says in other Words,
‘that He might be made unto us, Wisdom, Righteousness, and
‘Sanctification.’

The whole Truth therefore of the Matter is plainly this, Christ
given *for us*, is neither more nor less, than Christ given *into us*.
And he is in no other Sense, our full, perfect, and sufficient
Atonement, than as his Nature and Spirit are born, and formed
in us, which so purge us from our Sins, that we are thereby in
Him, and by Him dwelling in us, become new Creatures, having
our Conversation in Heaven.

As *Adam* is truly our *Defilement* and *Impurity*, by his Birth in
us, so Christ is our *Atonement* and *Purification*, by our being

born again of Him, and having thereby quickened and revived in us that first Divine Life, which was extinguished in *Adam*. And therefore, as *Adam purchased* Death for us, just so in the same Manner, in the same Degree, and in the same Sense, Christ *purchases* Life for us. And each of them solely by their *own inward Life* within us.

This is the one Scripture Account of the whole Nature, the sole End, and full Efficacy of all that Christ did, and suffered for us. It is all comprehended in these two Texts of Scripture. (1) 'That Christ was manifested to destroy the Works of the 'Devil.' (2) 'That as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be 'made alive.' From the Beginning to the End of Christ's atoning Work, no other Power is ascribed to it, nothing else is intended by it, as an *Appeaser* of Wrath, but the destroying of all that in Man which comes from the Devil; no other *Merits*, or *Value*, or infinite *Worth*, than that of its infinite Ability, and Sufficiency to *quicken again* in all human Nature, that Heavenly Life that died in *Adam*.

Eusebius. Though all that is here said, seems to have both the Letter and Spirit of Scripture on its Side, yet I am afraid it will be thought not enough to assert the infinite Value and Merits of our Saviour's Sufferings. For it is the common Opinion of Doctors, that the Righteousness or Justice of God must have Satisfaction done to it; and that nothing could avail with God, as a Satisfaction, but the infinite Worth and Value of the Sufferings of Christ.

Theophilus. It is true, *Eusebius*, that this is often, and almost always thus asserted in human Writers, but it is neither the Language, nor the Doctrine of Scripture.

Not a Word is there said of a Righteousness or Justice, as an *Attribute in God*, that must be satisfied; or that the Sacrifice of Christ, is that which satisfies the Righteousness that is in God Himself

It has been sufficiently proved to you, that God wanted not to be reconciled to fallen Man; that He never was anything else towards Him but Love; and that his Love brought forth the whole Scheme of his Redemption. Thence it is, that the Scriptures do not say that Christ came into the World to procure us the Divine Favour and good Will, in order to put a Stop to an *antecedent* righteous Wrath in God towards us. No, the Reverse of all this is the Truth, *viz.*, that Christ and his whole mediatorial Office came *purely* and *solely* from God, already so reconciled to us, as to bestow an Infinity of Love upon us. 'The 'God of all Grace,' says the Apostle, 'who hath called us to his

‘eternal Glory by Jesus Christ.’* Here you see, Christ is not the *Cause* or *Motive* of God’s Mercy towards fallen Man, but God’s *own Love* for us, his *own Desire* of our eternal Glory and Happiness, has for that End given us Christ, that we may be made Partakers of it. The same as when it is again said, ‘God ‘was in Christ reconciling the World to Himself;’ that is, calling, and raising it out of its ungodly and miserable State.

Thus, all the Mystery of our Redemption proclaims nothing but a God of Love towards fallen Man. It was the Love of God, that could not behold the Misery of fallen Man, without demanding and calling for his Salvation. It was Love alone, that wanted to have *full Satisfaction* done to it, and such a Love as could not be *satisfied*, till all that Glory and Happiness that was lost by the Death of *Adam*, was fully restored and regained again by the Death of Christ.

Eusebius. But is there not some good Sense, in which Righteousness and Justice may be said to be *satisfied* by the Atonement and Sacrifice of Christ?

Theophilus. Yes, most certainly there is. But then it is only *that* Righteousness or Justice that *belongs* to Man, and ought to be *in Him*. Now Righteousness, wherever it is to be, has *no Mercy* in itself; it makes *no Condescensions*; it is *inflexibly rigid*; its Demands are *inexorable*; Prayers, Offerings, and Entreaties have *no Effect* upon it; it will have nothing but itself; nor will it ever cease its Demands, or take any Thing *in lieu* of them, as a Satisfaction instead of itself. Thus, ‘Without Holiness,’ says the Apostle, ‘no Man shall see the Lord.’ And again, ‘Nothing ‘that is defiled, or impure, can enter into the Kingdom of ‘Heaven.’ And this is meant by Righteousness being *rigid*, and having no *Mercy*; it cannot *spare*, or have *Pity*, or hear *Entreaty*, because all its Demands are righteous, and good, and therefore must be satisfied, or fulfilled.

Now Righteousness has its *absolute Demands* upon Man, because Man was created *righteous*, and has lost that *original* Righteousness, which He ought to have kept in its first Purity. And this is the *one, only Righteousness*, or Justice, which Christ came into the World to *satisfy*, not by giving some highly valuable Thing, as a Satisfaction to it, but by bringing back, or raising up again in all human Nature, that Holiness or Righteousness, which originally *belonged* to it. For to *satisfy* Righteousness, means neither more nor less than to *fulfil* it. Nor can Righteousness *want* to have Satisfaction in any Being, but in that Being, which has *fallen* from it; nor can it be satisfied, but by restoring, or fulfilling Righteousness in that Being, which had

* 1 Peter v. 10.

departed from it. And therefore the Apostle says, that 'we are created again unto Righteousness in Christ Jesus.' And this is the *one* and *only* Way of Christ's expiating, or taking away the Sins of the World, namely, by restoring to Man his *lost* Righteousness. For this End, says the Scripture, 'Christ gave Himself for the Church, that He might sanctify and cleanse it, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having Spot, or Wrinkle, or any such Thing, but that it should be holy, and without Blemish.'*

This is the one Righteousness, which Christ came into the World to satisfy, by fulfilling it himself, and enabling Man by a new Birth from him to fulfil it. And when all Unrighteousness is removed by Christ from the whole human Nature, then all that Righteousness is satisfied; for the doing of which, Christ poured out his most precious, availing, and meritorious Blood.

Eusebius. Oh *Theophilus*, the Ground on which you stand must certainly be true. It so easily, so fully solves all Difficulties and Objections, and enables you to give so plain and solid an Account of every Part of our Redemption. This great Point is so fully cleared up to me, that I do not desire another Word about it.

Theophilus. However, *Eusebius*, I will add a Word or two more upon it, that there may be no Room left, either for misunderstanding, or denying what has been just now said of the Nature of that Righteousness, which must have *full Satisfaction* done to it by the *Atoning* and *Redeeming* Work of Christ. And then you will be fully possessed of these two great Truths. *First*, That there is no righteous Wrath in the Deity itself, and therefore none to be atoned there. *Secondly*, That though God is in Himself a mere Infinity of Love, from whom nothing else but Works of Love and Blessing and Goodness can proceed, yet sinful Men are hereby not at all delivered from *That* which the Apostle calls the *Terrors of the Lord*, but that all the *Threatenings* of *Woe*, *Misery*, and *Punishment*, denounced in Scripture against Sin and Sinners, both in this World, and that which is to come, stand all of them in their *full Force*, and are not in the least Degree *weakened*, or *less* to be dreaded, because God is *all Love*.

Every Thing that God has created, is right and just and good in its Kind, and has its *own* Righteousness within itself. The Rectitude of its Nature is its *only Law*; and it has no other Righteousness, but that of continuing in its first State. No Creature is subject to any Pain, or Punishment, or Guilt of Sin,

* Eph. v. 25—27.

but because it has departed from its *first right* State, and only does, and can feel the painful Loss of its own first Perfection. And every intelligent Creature, that departs from the State of its Creation, is *unrighteous*, evil, and full of its *own Misery*. And there is no Possibility for any disordered fallen Creature to be free from its *own Misery* and *Pain*, till it is again in its first State of Perfection. This is the certain and infallible Ground of the absolute Necessity, either of a perfect Holiness in this Life, or of a *further Purification* after Death, before Man can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now this *Pain* and *Misery*, which is inseparable from the Creature that is not in that State in which it ought to be, and in which it was created, is nothing else but the painful State of the Creature for Want of its *own proper Righteousness*, as Sickness is the painful State of the Creature for Want of *its own proper Health*.

No *other* Righteousness, or other Justice, no *other* severe Vengeance, *demands* Satisfaction, or *torments* the Sinner, but that very Righteousness, which once was *in Him*, which still *belongs* to Him, and therefore will not suffer Him to have any Rest or Peace, till it is again in Him as it was at the first. All therefore that Christ does, as an *Atonement* for Sin, or as a *Satisfaction* to Righteousness, is all done in, and to, and for Man, and has no other Operation, but that of *renewing* the fallen Nature of Man, and *raising* it up into its first State of *original Righteousness*. And if this Righteousness, which belongs solely to Man, and wants no Satisfaction, but that of being *restored* and *fulfilled* in the human Nature, is sometimes called the Righteousness of God, it is only so called, because it is a Righteousness which Man had originally from God in and by his Creation ; and therefore, as it comes from God, and has its whole Nature and Power of Working as it does from God, it may very justly be called God's Righteousness.

Agreeably to this Way of ascribing that to God, which is only in the *State* and *Condition* of Man, the Psalmist says of God, 'Thine Arrows stick fast in me, and thy Hand presseth me sore.' And yet nothing else, or more is meant by it, than when he says, 'My Sins have taken such Hold of me, that I am not able to look up.—My Iniquities are gone over my Head, and are like a sore Burden too heavy for me to bear.'

Now, whether you call this State of Man the *Burden* of his Sins and Wickedness, or the *Arrows* of the Almighty, and the *Weight* of God's Hand, they mean but one and the same Thing, which can only be called by these different Names, for no other Reason but this, because Man's *own* original Righteousness,

which he had *from* God, makes his sinful State a Pain and Torment to him, and lies heavy upon him in every Commission of Sin. And when the Psalmist again says, 'Take thy Plague away from me, I am even consumed by means of thy heavy Hand;' it is only praying to be delivered from his *own Plague*, and praying for the *same Thing* as when he says, in other Words, 'Make me a clean Heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me.'

Now this Language of Scripture, which teaches us to call the Pains and Torments of our Sins, the *Arrows, Darts, and Strokes* of God's Hand upon us, which calls us to own the Power, Presence, and Operation of God, in all that we feel and find in our own inward State, is the Language of the most exalted Piety, and highly suitable to that Scripture which tells us, That 'In God we live, and move, and have our Being.' For by teaching us to find, and own the Power and Operation of God in every Thing that passes within us, it keeps us continually turned to God for all that we want, and by all that we feel within ourselves, and brings us to this best of all Confessions, that Pain, as well as Peace of Mind, is the Effect and Manifestation of God's infinite Love and Goodness towards us.

For we could not have this Pain and Sensibility of the Burden of Sin, but because the Love and Goodness of God made us *originally righteous and happy*; and, therefore, all the Pains and Torments of Sin come from God's *first Goodness* towards us, and are in themselves merely and truly the Arrows of his Love, and his blessed Means of drawing us back to that first righteous State, in and for which his first and never ceasing Love created us.

Eusebius. The Matter, therefore, plainly stands thus. There is no *righteous Wrath*, or *vindictive Justice* in the Deity itself, which, as a *Quality*, or *Attribute* of Resentment in the Divine Mind, *wants* to be contented, atoned, or satisfied; but Man's original Righteousness, which was once his *Peace*, and *Happiness*, and *Rest* in God, is by the Fall of *Adam* become his *Tormentor* his *Plague*, that continually exercises its *good Vengeance* upon him, till it truly regains its first State in him.

Secondly, Man must be under this *Pain, Punishment, and Vengeance* to all Eternity; there is no Possibility, in the Nature of the Thing, for it to be otherwise, though God be all Love, unless Man's lost Righteousness be fully again possessed by Him. And therefore the Doctrine of God's being all Love, of having no Wrath in Himself, has nothing in it to abate the Force of those Scriptures which threaten Punishment to Sinners, or to make them less fearful of living and dying in their Sins.

Theophilus. What you say, *Eusebius*, is very true; but then it

is but half the Truth of this Matter. You should have added, that this Doctrine is the one Ground, and only Reason, why the Scriptures abound with so many Declarations of *Woe*, *Misery*, and *Judgments*, sometimes executed, and sometimes only threatened by God; and why all Sinners, to the End of the World, must know and *feel*, 'That the Wrath of God is 'revealed from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness, and that Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish, 'must be upon every Soul of Man that doth Evil.'*

For all these Things, which the Apostle elsewhere calls 'the 'Terrors of the Lord,' have no *Ground*, nothing that *calls* for them, nothing that *vindicates* the Fitness and Justice of them, either with Regard to God or Man, but this one Truth, *viz.*, That God is in Himself a mere infinity of Love, from whom nothing but outflowings of Love and Goodness can come forth from Eternity to Eternity. For if God is all Love, if he wills nothing towards fallen Man but his full Deliverance from the blind Slavery and Captivity of his earthly, bestial Nature, then every kind of *Punishment*, *Distress*, and *Affliction*, that can extinguish the Lusts of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of this Life, may, and *ought* to be expected from God, merely because he is all Love and good Will towards fallen Man.

To say, therefore, as some have said, If God is all Love towards fallen Man, how can he *threaten*, or *chastise* Sinners? This is no better than saying, If God is all Goodness in Himself, and towards Man, how can He do that in and to Man, which is for his Good? As absurd as to say, If the able Physician is all Love, Goodness, and good Will towards his Patients, how can he blister, purge, or scarify them, how can he order one to be trepanned, and another to have a Limb cut off? Nay, so absurd is this Reasoning, that if it could be proved, that God had no Chastisement for Sinners, the very Want of this Chastisement would be the greatest of all Proofs, that God was not all Love and Goodness towards Man.

The meek, merciful, and compassionate Jesus, who had no Errand in this World but to bless and save Mankind, said, If thy *right Eye*, or thy *right Hand* offend thee, pluck out the one, cut off the other, and cast them from thee. And that He said all this from mere Love, He adds, It is *better for thee* to do this, than that thy whole Body should be cast into Hell. Therefore, if the Holy Jesus had been wanting in this Severity, He had been wanting in true Love towards Man.

And therefore the pure, mere Love of God, is *that alone* from

* Rom. i. 18; ii. 8.

which Sinners are justly to expect from God, that no Sin will pass unpunished, but that his Love will visit them with every Calamity and Distress, that can help to break and purify the bestial Heart of Man, and awaken in him true Repentance and Conversion to God. It is Love alone in the holy Deity, that will allow no Peace to the wicked, nor ever cease its Judgments, till every Sinner is forced to confess, That it is *good for him that he has been in Trouble*, and thankfully own, That not the Wrath, but the Love of God, has plucked out that *right Eye*, cut off that *right Hand*, which he ought to have done, but would not do, for himself and his own Salvation.

Again, This Doctrine that allows of no Wrath in the Divine Mind, but places it all in the evil State of fallen Nature and Creature, has every Thing in it that can prove to Man the dreadful Nature of Sin, and the absolute Necessity of totally departing from it. It leaves no Room for Self-Delusion, but puts an End to every false Hope, or vain seeking for Relief in any Thing else, but the total Extinction of Sin. And this it effectually does, by showing, that Damnation is no foreign, separate, or imposed State, that is brought in upon us, or adjudged to us by the Will of God, but is the inborn, natural, essential State of our own disordered Nature, which is absolutely impossible, in the Nature of the Thing, to be any Thing else but our *own Hell*, both here and hereafter, unless all Sin be separated from us, and Righteousness be again made our natural State, by a Birth of itself in us. And all this, not because God will have it so, by an arbitrary Act of his sovereign Will, but because he cannot change his own Nature, or make any Thing to be happy and blessed, but only that which has its proper Righteousness, and is of one Will and Spirit with Himself.

If then every Creature that has lost, or is without the true Rectitude of its Nature, must as such, of all Necessity, be absolutely separated from God, and necessarily under the Pain and Misery of a Life that has lost all its own natural Good; if no *Omnipotence*, or *Mercy*, or *Goodness* of God, can make it to be otherwise, or give any Relief to the Sinner, but by a total Extinction of Sin by a Birth of Righteousness in the Soul, then it fully appears, that according to this Doctrine, every Thing in God, and Nature, and Creature, calls the Sinner to an absolute Renunciation of all Sin, as the *one only possible* Means of Salvation, and leaves no Room for him to deceive himself with the Hopes that any Thing else will do instead of it. Vainly therefore is it said, That if God be all Love, the Sinner is let loose from the dreadful Apprehensions of living and dying in his Sins.

On the other Hand, deny this Doctrine, and say, with the current of scholastic Divines, That Sin must be doomed to eternal Pain and Death, unless a supposed Wrath, in the Mind of the Deity, be first atoned and satisfied; and that Christ's Death was that valuable Gift, or Offering made to God, by which alone he could be moved to lay aside, or extinguish his own Wrath towards fallen Man; say this, and then you open a wide Door for Licentiousness and Infidelity in some, and superstitious Fears in others.

For if the Evil, the Misery, and sad Effects of Sin, are placed in a Wrath in the Divine Mind, what can this beget in the Minds of the pious, but superstitious Fears about a supposed Wrath in God which they can never know when it is, or is not atoned? Every Kind of Superstition has its Birth from this Belief, and cannot well be otherwise. And as to the Licentious, who want to stifle all Fears of gratifying all their Passions, this Doctrine has a natural Tendency to do this for them. For if they are taught, that the Hurt and Misery of Sin, is not its *own natural* State, not owing to its *own Wrath* and *Disorder*, but to a Wrath in the Deity, how easy is it for them to believe, either that God may not be so full of Wrath as is given out, or that he may overcome it himself, and not keep the Sinner eternally in a Misery that is not his own, but wholly brought upon him from without, by a Resentment in the Divine Mind.

Again, This Account which the *Schools* give of the Sacrifice of Christ, made to atone a Wrath in the Deity by the infinite Value of Christ's Death, is that alone which helps *Socinians*, *Deists* and Infidels of all Kinds, to such Cavils and Objections to the Mystery of our Redemption, as neither have, nor can be silenced by the most able Defenders of that scholastic Fiction. The Learning of a *Grotius* or *Stillingfleet*, when defending such an Account of the Atonement and Satisfaction, rather increases than lessens the Objections to this Mystery: But if you take this Matter as it truly is in itself, *viz.*, That God is in Himself all Love and Goodness, therefore can be nothing else but all Love and Goodness towards fallen Man, and that fallen Man is subject to no Pain or Misery, either present or to come, but what is the natural, unavoidable, essential Effect of his own evil and disordered Nature, impossible to be altered by himself, and that the infinite, never-ceasing Love of God, has given Jesus Christ in *all his Process*, as the highest, and only possible Means, that Heaven and Earth can afford, to save Man from himself, from his own Evil, Misery, and Death, and restore to him his original Divine Life; when you look at this Matter in this true Light, then a God, all Love, and an Atonement for Sin by Christ, not

made to pacify a Wrath in God, but to bring forth, fulfil, and restore Righteousness in the Creature that had lost it, have every Thing in them that can make the Providence of God adorable, and the State of Man comfortable.

Here all Superstition and superstitious Fears are at once totally cut off, and every Work of Piety is turned into a Work of Love. Here every false Hope of every Kind is taken from the *Licentious*, they have no Ground left to stand upon: Nothing to trust to, as a *Deliverance* from Misery, but the *one total* Abolition of Sin.

The *Socinian* and the *Infidel* are here also robbed of all their Philosophy against this Mystery; for as it is not founded upon, does not teach an *infinite Resentment*, that could only be satisfied by an *infinite Atonement*, as it stands not upon the Ground of *Debtor* and *Creditor*, all their Arguments which suppose it to be such, are quite beside the Matter, and touch nothing of the Truth of this blessed Mystery. For it is the very Reverse of all this, it declares a God, that is all Love; and the Atonement of Christ to be nothing else in itself, but the highest, most natural, and efficacious Means, through all the Possibility of Things, that the infinite Love and Wisdom of God could use, to put an End to Sin, and Death, and Hell, and restore to Man his first Divine State or Life. I say, the most natural, efficacious Means through *all the Possibilities* of Nature; for there is nothing that is *supernatural*, however mysterious, in the whole System of our Redemption; every Part of it has its Ground in the Workings and Powers of Nature, and all our Redemption is only Nature set right, or made to be that which it ought to be.

There is nothing that is *supernatural*, but God alone; every Thing besides Him is from, and subject to the State of Nature: It can never rise out of it, or have anything contrary to it. No Creature can have either Health or Sickness, Good or Evil, or any State either from God, or itself, but strictly according to the Capacities, Powers, and Workings of Nature.

The Mystery of our Redemption, though it comes from the supernatural God, has nothing in it but what is done, and to be done, within the Sphere, and according to the Powers of Nature. There is nothing supernatural in it, or belonging to it, but that supernatural Love and Wisdom which brought it forth, presides over it, and will direct it, till Christ, as a second *Adam*, has removed and extinguished all that Evil, which the first *Adam* brought into the human Nature.

And the whole Process of Jesus Christ, from his being the inspoken *Word*, or *Bruiser* of the Serpent given to *Adam*, to his Birth, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension into Heaven, has all

its Ground and Reason in this, because nothing else in all the Possibilities of Nature, either in Heaven or on Earth, could *begin*, *carry on*, and *totally* effect Man's Deliverance from the Evil of his own fallen Nature.

Thus is Christ the one, full, sufficient Atonement for the Sin of the whole World, because He is the one *only natural* Remedy, and *possible* Cure of all the Evil that is broken forth in Nature, the one *only natural* Life, and *Resurrection* of all that Holiness and Happiness that died in *Adam*. And seeing all this Process of Christ is given to the World, from the supernatural, antecedent, infinite Love of God, therefore it is, that the Apostle says, 'God 'was in Christ reconciling the World to Himself.' And Christ in God, is nothing else in his whole Nature, but that same, *certain*, and *natural* Parent of a Redemption to the whole human Nature, as *fallen Adam* was the *certain* and *natural* Parent of a miserable Life to every Man that is descended from him: With this only Difference, that from fallen *Adam* we are born in Sin, whether we will or no, but we cannot have that new Birth which Christ has all Power to bring forth in us, unless the Will of our Heart closes with it.

But as nothing came to us from *Adam*, but according to the Powers of Nature, and because he was that which he was with Relation to us; so it is with Christ, and our Redemption by Him: All the Work is grounded in, and proceeds according to the Powers of Nature, or in a Way of natural Efficacy or Fitness to produce its Effects; and every Thing that is found in the Person, Character, and Condition of Christ, is only there as his *true* and *natural* Qualification to do all that He came to do, in us, and for us. That is to say, Christ was made to be that which He was; He was a *Seed* of Life in our first fallen Father; He lived as a *Blessing of Promise* in the Patriarchs, Prophets, and *Israel* of God; He was born of a Man of a pure Virgin; He did all that He did, whether as suffering, dying, conquering, rising and ascending into Heaven, only as so many Things, which as *naturally*, and as *truly*, according to the Nature of Things, qualified Him to be the Producer, or Quickener of a Divine Life in us, as the State and Condition of *Adam* qualified him to make us the slavish Children of earthly bestial Flesh and Blood.

This is the comfortable Doctrine of our Redemption; nothing in God but an Infinity of Love and Goodness towards our fallen Condition; nothing in Christ, but that which had its *Necessity* in the Nature of Things, to make Him able to give, and us to receive our full Salvation from Him.

I will now only add, That from the Beginning of Deism, and from the Time of *Socinus*, to this Day, not a Socinian or Deist

has ever seen or opposed this Mystery in its true State, as is undeniably plain from all their Writings.

A late Writer, who has as much Knowledge, and Zeal, and Wit in the Cause of Deism, as any of his Predecessors, is forced to attack our Redemption by giving this false Account of it.

‘That a perfectly innocent Being, of the highest Order among intelligent Natures, should personate the Offender, and suffer in his Place and Stead, in order to take down the Wrath and Resentment of the Deity against the Criminal, and dispose God to show Mercy to him,—the Deist conceives to be both unnatural, and improper, and therefore not to be ascribed to God without Blasphemy.’

And again, ‘The common Notion of Redemption among Christians, seems to represent the Deity in a disagreeable Light, as implacable and revengeful, &c.’*

What an Arrow is here, I will not say, shot beside the Mark, but shot at nothing! Because nothing of that, which he accuses, is to be found in our Redemption. The God of Christians is so far from being, as he says, *implacable* and revengeful, that you have seen it proved, from Text to Text, that the whole Form and Manner of our Redemption comes wholly from the free, antecedent, infinite Love and Goodness of God towards fallen Man. That the *innocent Christ* did not suffer, to quiet an angry Deity, but merely as *co-operating, assisting, and uniting* with that Love of God, which desired our Salvation. That He did not suffer in *our Place or Stead*, but only *on our Account*, which is a quite different Matter. And to say, that He suffered in *our Place or Stead*, is as absurd, as contrary to Scripture, as to say, that He rose from the Dead, and ascended into Heaven in *our Place and Stead*, that we might be excused from it. For his Sufferings, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, are all of them equally on *our Account*, for our Sake, for our Good and Benefit, but none of them possible to be in our Stead.

And as Scripture and Truth affirm, that He ascended into Heaven *for us*, though neither Scripture nor Truth will allow it to be in *our Place and Stead*, so for the same Reasons, it is strictly true, that He suffered, and died *for us*, though no more in our *Place or Stead*, nor any more desirable to be so, than his Ascension into Heaven for us should be in *our Place and Stead*.

I have quoted the above Passage, only to show you, that a Defender of Deism, however acute and ingenious, has not one Objection to the Doctrine of our Redemption, but what is founded on the grossest Ignorance, and total Mistake of the

* *Deism Fairly Stated and Fully Vindicated*, page 41.

whole Nature of it. But when I lay this gross Ignorance to the Deists' Charge, I do not mean any natural Dulness, Want of Parts, or Incapacity in them to judge aright, but only that something or other, either Men, or Books, or their own Way of Life, has hindered their seeing the true Ground and real Nature of Christianity, as it is in itself.

Eusebius. I would fain hope, *Theophilus*, that from all that has been said in the *Demonstration of the fundamental Errors of the Plain Account*; *The Appeal to all that doubt, &c.*, and the rest that follow, to these Dialogues; in all which, Christianity and Deism, with their several Merits, are so plainly, and with so much good Will and Affection towards all Unbelievers, represented to them, all that are serious and well-minded amongst the Deists will be prevailed upon to re-consider the Matter. For though some people have been hasty enough to charge those Writings with Fanaticism, or Enthusiasm, as disclaiming the Use of our Reason in Religious Matters, yet this Charge can be made by none, but those who, having not read them, take up with hearsay Censures.

For in those Books from the Beginning to the End, nothing is appealed to but the natural Light of the Mind, and the plain, known Nature of Things; no one is led, or desired to go one Step further. The *Use of Reason* is not only allowed, but asserted, and proved to be of the *same Service* to us in Things of Religion, as in Things that relate to our Senses in this World.*

The true Ground, Nature, and Power of *Faith* is opened, by fully proving, that this Saying of Christ, 'According to thy Faith, so be it done unto Thee,' takes in every Individual of human Nature; and that all Men, whether *Christians, Deists, Idolaters, or Atheists*, are all of them equally Men of *Faith*, all equally, and absolutely governed by it, and therefore must have all that they have, Salvation, or Damnation, strictly and solely according to their Faith.† All this is so evidently proved, that I cannot help thinking, but that every considerate Reader must be forced to own it.

Theogenes. All this is well said. But let us now return to the finishing of our main Point, which was to show, that the Doctrine of a *God all Love*, not only does not destroy the Necessity of Christ's Death, and the infinite Value and Merits of it, but is itself the fullest Proof and strongest Confirmation of both.

Theophilus. How it could enter into anyone's Head, to charge this Doctrine with destroying the *Necessity*, and Merits of Christ's Death, is exceeding strange.

* *Demonstration of the Errors of the Plain Account.*

† *Way to Divine Knowledge.*

For look where you will, no other Cause, or Reason of the Death of Christ, can be found but in the Love of God towards fallen Man. Nor could the Love of God will or accept of the Death of Christ, but because of its absolute Necessity, and availing Efficacy to do all that for fallen Man, which the Love of God would have to be done for him.

God did not, could not love, or like, or desire the Sufferings and Death of Christ, for what they were in themselves, or as Sufferings of the highest Kind. No, the higher and greater such Sufferings had been, were they only considered in themselves, the less pleasing they had been to a God, that wills nothing but Blessing and Happiness to every Thing capable of it.

But all that Christ *was*, and *did*, and *suffered*, was infinitely prized, and highly acceptable to the Love of God, because all that Christ was, and did, and suffered in his own Person, was *That* which gave him full Power, to be a common Father of Life to all that died in *Adam*.

Had Christ wanted anything that he was, or did, or suffered in his own Person, he could not have stood in that Relation to all Mankind as *Adam* had done. Had he not been given to the first fallen Man, as a *Seed of the Woman*, as a *Light of Life, enlightening every Man that comes into the World*, He could not have had *his Seed* in every Man, as *Adam* had, nor been as universal a Father of Life, as *Adam* was of Death. Had he not in the Fitness, or Fulness of Time, become a Man, born of a pure Virgin, the first Seed of Life in every Man, must have lain only as a Seed, and could not have come to the Fulness of the Birth of a new Man in Christ Jesus. For the Children can have no other State of Life, but that which their Father first had. And therefore Christ, as the Father of a regenerated human Race, must first stand in the Fulness of that human State, which was to be derived from him into all his Children.

This is the absolute Necessity of Christ's being all that He was, *before* he became Man; a Necessity arising from the Nature of the Thing. Because he could not possibly have had the Relation of a Father to all Mankind, nor any Power to be a Quickener of a Life of Heaven in them, but because He was both God in himself, and a Seed of God in all of them.

Now all that Christ was, and did, and suffered, *after* He became Man, is from the same Necessity founded in the Nature of the Thing. He suffered on no other Account, but because that which he came to do in, and for the human Nature, was and could be nothing else in itself, but a Work of Sufferings and Death.

A crooked Line cannot become straight, but by having all its Crookedness given up, or taken from it. And there is but one Way possible in Nature for a crooked Line to lose its Crookedness.

Now the Sufferings and Death of Christ stand in this kind of Necessity. He was made Man for our Salvation, that is, He took upon Him our fallen Nature, to bring it out of its *evil crooked* State, and set it again in that Rectitude in which it was created.

Now there were no more two Ways of doing this, than there are two Ways of making a crooked Line to become straight.

If the Life of fallen Nature, which Christ had taken upon Him, was to be overcome by Him, then every Kind of suffering and dying, that was a giving up, or departing from the Life of fallen Nature, was just as necessary, in the Nature of the Thing, as that the Line to be made straight must give up, and part with every Kind and Degree of its own Crookedness.

And therefore the Sufferings and Death of Christ were, in the Nature of the Thing, the only possible Way of his acting contrary to, and overcoming all the Evil that was in the fallen State of Man.

The Apostle says, 'the Captain of our Salvation was to be 'made perfect through Sufferings.' This was the Ground and Reason of his Sufferings: Had he been without them, He could not have been perfect in Himself, as a *Son of Man*, nor the Restorer of Perfection in all Mankind. But why so? Because his Perfection, as a *Son of Man*, or the Captain of *human Salvation*, could only consist in his acting in, and with a Spirit suitable to the first created State of perfect Man; that is, He must in his Spirit be as much above all the *Good* and *Evil* of this fallen World, as the first Man was.

But now, He could not show that He was of this Spirit, that He was above the World, that He was under no Power of fallen Nature, but lived in the Perfection of the first created Man; He could not do this, but by showing, that all the Good of the earthly Life was renounced by Him, and that all the Evil which the World, the Malice of Men and Devils, could bring upon Him, could not hinder his living wholly and solely to God, and doing his Will on Earth with the same Fulness, as Angels do it in Heaven.

But had there been any Evil in all fallen Nature, whether in Life, Death, or Hell, that had not attacked Him with *all its Force*, He could not have been said to have overcome it. And therefore so sure as Christ, as the Son of Man, was to overcome the World, Death, Hell and Satan, so sure is it, that all the

Evils which they could *possibly* bring upon Him, were to be *felt* and *suffered* by Him, as absolutely necessary, in the Nature of the Thing, to declare his Perfection, and prove his Superiority over them. Surely, my Friend, it is now enough proved to you, how a God all Love towards fallen Man, must love, like, desire, and delight in all the Sufferings of Christ, which alone could enable Him, as a Son of Man, to undo, and reverse all that Evil, which the first Man had done to all his Posterity.

Eusebius. Oh, Sir, in what an adorable Light is this Mystery now placed. And yet in no other Light than that in which the plain Letter of all Scripture sets it. * No Wrath in God, no fictitious Atonement, no Folly of Debtor and Creditor, no suffering in Christ for Sufferings' sake, but a Christ suffering and dying, as his *same Victory* over Death and Hell, as when He rose from the Dead, and ascended into Heaven.

Theophilus. Sure now, *Eusebius*, you plainly enough see wherein the infinite Merits, or the availing Efficacy, and glorious Power of the Sufferings and Death of Christ consist; since they were that, in and through which Christ himself came out of the State of fallen Nature, and got Power to give the same Victory to all his Brethren of the human Race.

Wonder not, therefore, that the Scriptures so frequently ascribe all our Salvation to the Sufferings and Death of Christ, that we are continually referred to them, as the Wounds and Stripes by which we are healed, as the Blood by which we are washed from our Sins, as the Price (much above Gold and precious Stones) by which we are bought.

Wonder not also that in the Old Testament, its *Service Sacrifices* and *Ceremonies* were instituted to typify, and point at the great Sacrifice of Christ, and to keep up a continual Hope, strong Expectation, and Belief of it. And that in the New Testament, the Reality, the Benefits, and glorious Effects of Christ our Passover being actually sacrificed for us, are so joyfully repeated by every Apostle.

It is because Christ, as suffering and Dying, was nothing else but Christ conquering and overcoming all the false Good, and the hellish Evil, of the fallen State of Man.

His Resurrection from the Grave, and Ascension into Heaven, though great in themselves, and necessary Parts of our Deliverance, were yet but the Consequences, and genuine Effects of his Sufferings and Death. These were in themselves the Reality of his Conquest; all his great Work was done, and effected in them and by them, and his Resurrection and Ascension were only his

* See the *Collection of Letters*, Letter iv.

entering into the Possession of that, which his Sufferings and Death had gained for Him.

Wonder not then, that all the true Followers of Christ, the Saints of every Age, have so gloried in the Cross of Christ, have imputed such great Things to it, have desired nothing so much, as to be Partakers of it, to live in constant Union with it. It is because his Sufferings, his Death, and Cross, were the *Fulness* of his Victory over all the Works of the Devil. Not an *Evil* in Flesh and Blood, not a *Misery* of Life, not a Chain of Death, not a *Power* of Hell and Darkness, but were all baffled, broken, and overcome by the Process of a suffering, and dying Christ. Well therefore may the Cross of Christ be the Glory of Christians.

Eusebius. This Matter is so solidly and fully cleared up, that I am almost ashamed to ask you any Thing further about it. Yet explain a little more, if you please, how it is, that the Sufferings, and Death of Christ, gave Him Power to become a *common Father* of Life to all that died in *Adam*. Or how it is, that we, by Virtue of them, have Victory over all the Evil of our fallen State.

Theophilus. You are to know, *Eusebius*, that the Christian Religion is no *arbitrary System* of Divine Worship, but is the one true, real, and only Religion of Nature; that is, it is wholly founded in the Nature of Things, has nothing in it supernatural, or contrary to the Powers and Demands of Nature; but all that it does, is only in, and by, and according to the Workings and Possibilities of Nature.

A Religion that is not founded in Nature, is all Fiction and Falsity, and as mere a nothing as an *Idol*. For as no Creature can be, or have any Thing, but what it is and has from the Nature of Things, nor have any Thing done to it, Good or Harm, but according to the unalterable Workings of Nature, so no Religion can be of any Service, but that which works with and according to the Demands of Nature. Nor can any fallen Creature be raised out of its fallen State, even by the Omnipotence of God, but according to the Nature of Things, or the unchangeable Powers of Nature; for Nature is the Opening and Manifestation of the Divine Omnipotence; it is God's *Power-world*; and therefore all that God does, is and must be done in and by the Powers of Nature. God, though omnipotent, can give no Existence to any Creature, but it must have that Existence in *Space* and *Time*.—Time comes out of *Eternity*, and Space comes out of the *Infinity* of God.—God has an omnipotent Power over them, in them, and with them, to make both of them set forth and manifest the Wonders of his supernatural Deity. Yet time can only be subservient to the Omnipotence of God,

according to the Nature of Time, and Space can only obey his Will, according to the Nature of Space ; but neither of them can, by any Power, be made to be in a supernatural State, or be any Thing but what they are in their own Nature.

Now Right and Wrong, Good and Evil, True and False, Happiness and Misery, are as unchangeable in Nature, as Time and Space. And every State and Quality that is creaturely, or that can belong to any Creature, has its own Nature, as unchangeably as Time and Space have theirs.

Nothing therefore can be done to any Creature *supernaturally*, or in a Way that is *without*, or *contrary* to the Powers of Nature ; but every Thing or Creature that is to be helped, that is to have any Good done to it, or any Evil taken out of it, can only have it done so far, as the Powers of Nature are able and rightly directed to effect it.

And this is the true Ground of all Divine Revelation, or that Help which the supernatural Deity vouchsafes to the fallen State of Man. It is not to appoint an arbitrary System of religious Homage to God, but solely to point out, and provide for Man, blinded by his fallen State, that *one only* Religion, that according to the Nature of Things can possibly restore to him his lost Perfection. This is the Truth, the Goodness, and the Necessity of the Christian Religion ; it is true, and good, and necessary, because it is as much the *one only natural* and *possible* Way of overcoming all the Evil of fallen Man, as Light is the one only natural possible Thing that can expel Darkness.

And therefore it is, that all the Mysteries of the Gospel, however high, are yet true and necessary Parts of the *one Religion* of Nature ; because they are no higher, nor otherwise, than the *natural State* of fallen Man absolutely stands in Need of. His Nature cannot be helped, or raised out of the Evils of its present State, by any Thing less than these Mysteries ; and therefore they are in the same Truth and Justness to be called his *natural Religion*, as that *Remedy* which alone has full Power to remove all the Evil of a Disease, may be justly called its *natural Remedy*.

For a Religion is not to be deemed natural, because it has nothing to do with *Revelation*, but then is it the *one true Religion of Nature*, when it has every Thing in it that our *natural State* stands in need of ; every Thing that can help us out of our present Evil, and raise and exalt us to all the Happiness which our Nature is capable of having. Supposing therefore the Christian Scheme of Redemption to be all that, and nothing else in itself, but that which the *Nature of Things* absolutely require it to be, it must, for that very Reason, have its *Mysteries*.

For the fallen, corrupt, mortal State of Man, absolutely

requires these two Things as its only Salvation. *First*, The Divine Life, or the Life of God, must be revived in the Soul of Man. *Secondly*, There must be a Resurrection of the Body in a better State after Death. Now nothing in the Power of Man, or in the Things of this World, can effect this Salvation. If therefore this is to be the Salvation of Man, then some Interposition of the Deity is absolutely necessary, in the Nature of the Thing, or Man can have no Religion that is *sufficiently natural*; that is to say, no Religion that is sufficient, or equal to the Wants of his Nature.

Now this necessary Interposition of the Deity, though doing nothing but in a *natural Way*, or according to the Nature of Things, must be mysterious to Man, because it is doing something *more* and *higher* than his Senses or Reason ever saw done, or possible to be done, either by himself, or any of the Powers of this World.

And this is the true Ground and Nature of the Mysteries of Christian Redemption. They are, in themselves, nothing else but what the Nature of Things requires them to be, as natural efficacious Means of our Salvation, and all their Power is in a *natural Way*, or *true Fitness* of Cause for its Effect; but they are mysterious to Man, because brought into the Scheme of our Redemption by the *Interposition* of God, to work in a Way and Manner above, and superior to all that is seen and done in the Things of this World.

The Mysteries therefore of the Gospel are so far from showing the Gospel not to be the one *true* Religion of Nature, that they are the greatest Proof of it, since they are that alone which can help Man to all that Good which his *natural State* wants to have done to it.

For Instance, if the Salvation of Man absolutely requires the *Revival*, or *Restoration* of the Divine Life in the human Nature, then nothing can be the *one, sufficient, true* Religion of Nature, but that which has a natural Power to do this.

What a Grossness of Error is it therefore to blame that Doctrine which asserts the Incarnation of the Son of God, or the Necessity of the Word being made Flesh, when in the Nature of the Thing, nothing else but this very Mystery can be the *natural efficacious* Cause of the Renewal of the Divine Life in the human Nature, or have any natural Efficacy to effect our Salvation?

Having now, *Eusebius*, established this Ground, that nothing is, or can be a Part of true, natural Religion, or have any real *Efficacy*, as a Means of Salvation, but only that which has its *Efficacy* in and from the Nature of Things, or in the *natural Fitness* of Cause to produce its Effect, you are brought into the clear

View of this Truth, *viz.*, That the Religion of *Deism* is *false*, and *vain*, and *visionary*, and to be rejected by every Man as the mere *enthusiastic*, *fanatic* Product of pure Imagination; and all for this plain Reason, because it quite disregards the *Nature* of Things, stands wholly upon a *supernatural* Ground, and goes as much *above*, and as directly *contrary* to the Powers of Nature, as that *Faith* that trusts in, and prays to a *wooden* God.

I say not this (as is too commonly done) in the Spirit of Accusation, or to raise an Odium. No, by no Means. I have the utmost Aversion to such a Procedure. I would no more bring a false Charge against the *Deist*, than I would bear false Witness against the *Apostle*. And I desire to have no other Temper, Spirit, or Behaviour towards them, but such as the loving God with all my Heart, and loving them as I love myself, require of me. And in this Spirit of Love I charge them with *visionary* Faith, and *enthusiastic* Religion; and only so far, as I have from Time to Time proved, that they trust to be saved by that, which according to the unchangeable Nature of Things can have no Power of Salvation in it.

For a Religion, not grounded in the Power and Nature of Things, is *unnatural*, supernatural, or *superrational*, and is rightly called, either *Enthusiasm*, *Vision*, *Fanaticism*, *Superstition*, or *Idolatry*, just as you please. For all these are but different Names for one and the same religious Delusion. And every Religion is this Delusion, but that one Religion which is required by, and has its Efficacy in and from the unchangeable Nature of Things.

And thus stands the Matter betwixt the Deists and myself: If I knew how to do them or the Subject more Justice, I would gladly do it; having no Desire, either for them or myself, but that we may all of us be delivered from every Thing that separates us from God, all equal Sharers of every Blessing that He has for human Nature, all united in that Spirit of Love and Goodness for which he created us, and all blessed with that Faith and Hope to which the God of Love has called us, as the one, only, possible, natural, and full Means of ever finding ourselves saved, and redeemed from all the Evils both of Time and Eternity.

And now, *Eusebius*, upon this Ground, *viz.*, (1) That there is but one true Religion, and that it is the Religion of Nature. (2) That a Religion has no Pretence to be considered as the Religion of Nature, because it rejects Divine Revelation, and has only human Reason for its Guide, but wholly and solely because it has every Good in it that the *natural State* of Man wants, and can receive from Religion. (3) That nothing can be any re-

ligious Good, or have any real Efficacy, as a Means of Salvation, but only that which has its Efficacy in and from the natural Power of Things, or the Fitness and Sufficiency of Cause to produce its Effect. (4) That the Religion of the Gospel, in all its Mysteries and Doctrines, is wholly grounded in the natural Powers of Things, and their Fitness to produce their Effects. Upon this Ground I come to answer your Question, *viz.*, How it is that the Sufferings and Death of Christ gave Him full Power to become a *common Father of Life* to all those that died in *Adam*? Or how it is that we, by Virtue of them, are delivered out of all the Evils of our fallen State?

The Sufferings and Death of Christ have no *supernatural* Effect that is above, or contrary to Nature; because the Thing itself is impossible. For a Thing is only therefore impossible, because the Nature of Things will not allow of it.

The Fall of all Mankind in *Adam* is no *supernatural* Event or Effect, but the natural and necessary Consequence of our Relation to him. Could *Adam* at his Fall into this earthly Life have absolutely overcome every Power of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, in the same Spirit as Christ did, he had been his own Redeemer, had risen out of his Fall, and ascended into Paradise, and been the Father of a paradisaical Offspring, just as Christ, when He had overcome them all, rose from the Dead, and ascended into Heaven. But *Adam* did not do this, because it was as impossible, in the Nature of the Thing, as for a Beast to raise itself into an Angel. If therefore Man is to come out of his fallen State, there must be something found out that, according to the Nature of Things, has Power to effect it. For it can no more be done *supernaturally* by any Thing else, than it could by *Adam*.

Now the Matter stood thus: The Seed of all Mankind was in the Loins of fallen *Adam*. This was unalterable in the Nature of the Thing, and therefore all *Mankind* must come forth in his fallen State.

Neither can they ever be in any State whatever, whether earthly or heavenly, but by having an earthly *Man*, or a heavenly *Man* for their Father. For *Mankind*, as such, must of all Necessity be born of, and have that Nature which it has from a *Man*. And this is the true Ground and absolute Necessity of the one Mediator, the *Man* Christ Jesus. For seeing *Mankind*, as such, must have that Birth and Nature which they have from *Man*; seeing they never could have had any Relation to Paradise, or any Possibility of partaking of it, but because they had a paradisaical *Man* for their Father, nor could have had any Relation to this earthly World, or any Possibility of being born earthly, but

because they had an earthly Man for their Father ; and seeing all this must be unalterably so for ever ; it plainly follows, that there was an utter Impossibility for the Seed of *Adam* ever to come out of its fallen State, or ever have another, or better Life, than they had from *Adam*, unless *such a Son of Man* could be brought into Existence, as had the *same Relation* to all Mankind as *Adam* had, was as much *in them all* as *Adam* was, and had as full Power, according to the *Nature of Things*, to give a heavenly Life to all the Seed in *Adam's* Loins, as *Adam* had to bring them forth in earthly Flesh and Blood.

And now, Sir, that Christ was this very *Son of Man*, standing in the *same Fulness* of Relation to all Mankind as *Adam* did, having *his Seed* as really in them all, as *Adam* had, and as truly and fully qualified, according to the Nature of Things, to be a *common and universal* Father of Life, as *Adam* was of Death to all the human Race, shall in a Word or two be made as plain and undeniable, as that two and two are four.

The Doctrine of our Redemption absolutely asserts, that the *Seed* of Christ was sown into the first fallen Father of Mankind, called *the Seed of the Woman*, the *Bruiser* of the Serpent, the *ingrafted* Word of Life, called again in the Gospel, *that Light which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World*. Therefore Christ was in all Men, in that *same Fulness* of the Relation of a Father to all Mankind, as the first *Adam* was. *Secondly*, Christ was born of *Adam's* Flesh and Blood, took the human Nature upon him, and therefore stood as an human Creature in the *same Relation* to Mankind, as *Adam* did. Nothing therefore was further wanting in Christ, to make him as truly a *natural Father of Life* to all Mankind, as *Adam* was at first, but God's Appointment of him to that End.

For as *Adam* could not have been the natural Father of Mankind, but because God created and appointed him for that End, so Christ could not have been the natural Regenerator, or Redeemer of an heavenly Life that was lost in all Mankind, but because God had appointed and brought him into the World for that End. Now that God did this, that Christ came into the World by Divine Appointment, to be the Saviour, the Resurrection and Life of all Mankind, is a Truth as evident from Scripture, as that *Adam* was the first Man.

And thus it appears, in the utmost degree of Plainness and Certainty, that Christ in his *single Person* was, according to the Nature of Things, as fully qualified to be a *common Redeemer*, as *Adam* was, in his single Person, to be a common Father of all Mankind. He had *his Seed* in all Mankind, as *Adam* had. He had the human Nature, as *Adam* had. And He had the same

Divine Appointment, as *Adam* had. But Christ, however qualified to be our Redeemer, could not be actually such, till He had gone through, and done all that, by which our Redemption was to be effected.

Adam, however qualified, could not be the Father of a paradisaical Offspring, till he had stood out his Trial, and fixed Himself victorious over every Thing that could make Trial of Him. In like manner, Christ, however qualified, could not be the Redeemer of all Mankind, till he had also stood out his Trial, had overcome *all That* by which *Adam* was overcome, and had fixed Himself triumphantly in that Paradise which *Adam* had lost.

Now as *Adam's* Trial was, Whether he would keep Himself in his paradisaical State *above*, and *free* from all that was Good and Evil in this earthly World? So Christ's trial was, Whether as a *Son* of Man, and loaded with the *Infirmities* of fallen *Adam*, sacrificed to all that which the Rage and Malice of the World, Hell, and Devils could possibly do to him; whether He in the midst of all these Evils, could live and die with his Spirit as contrary to them, as much above them, as unhurt by them, as *Adam* should have lived in Paradise?

And then it was, that every Thing which had overcome *Adam*, was overcome by Christ; and Christ's Victory did, in the Nature of the Thing, as certainly and fully open an Entrance for Him, and all his Seed into Paradise, as *Adam's* Fall cast him and all his Seed into the Prison and Captivity of this earthly bestial World.

Nothing *supernatural* came to pass in either Case, but Paradise lost, and Paradise regained, according to the Nature of Things, or the real Efficacy of Cause to produce its Effects.

Thus is your Question fully answered; *viz.*, How and why the Sufferings and Death of Christ enabled him to be the Author of Life to all that died in *Adam*? Just as the Fall of *Adam* into this World, under the Power of Sin, Death, Hell, and the Devil, enabled him to be the common Father of Death, or was the natural, unavoidable Cause of our being born under the same Captivity; just so, that Life, and Sufferings, and Death of Christ, which declared his breaking out from them, and Superiority over them, must in the Nature of the Thing as much enable Him to be the common Author of Life, that is, must as certainly be the *full, natural, efficacious* Cause of our inheriting Life from Him. Because, by what Christ was in Himself, by what He was in us, by his whole *State, Character*, and the *Divine Appointment*, we all had that *natural Union* with Him, and *Dependence* upon Him, as our Head in the Way of Redemption, as we had

with *Adam* as our Head in the Way of our natural Birth. So that as it must be said, that because *Adam* fell, we must of all Necessity be Heirs of his fallen State, so with the same Truth, and from the same Necessity of the Thing, it must be said, that because Christ our Head is risen victorious out of our fallen State, we as his Members, and having his Seed within us, must be and are made Heirs of all his Glory. Because in all Respects we are as *strictly*, as *intimately* connected with, and related to Him as the *one Redeemer*, as we are to *Adam* as the *one Father* of all Mankind. So that Christ by his Sufferings and Death become in all of us our Wisdom, our Righteousness, our Justification and Redemption, is the same sober and solid Truth, as *Adam* by his Fall become in all of us our Foolishness, our Impurity, our Corruption and Death.

And now, my Friends, look back upon all that has been said, and then tell me, Is it possible more to exalt or magnify the infinite Merits, and availing Efficacy of the *Sufferings* and *Death* of Christ, than is done by this doctrine? Or whether every Thing that is said of them in Scripture, is not here proved, from the very Nature of the Thing, to be absolutely true? And again, Whether it is not sufficiently proved to you, that the Sufferings and Death of Christ are not only consistent with the Doctrine of a God all Love, but are the fullest and most absolute Proof of it.

Eusebius. Indeed, *Theophilus*, you have so fully done for us all that we wanted to have done, that we are now ready to take Leave of you. As for my Part, I want to return Home, to enjoy my Bible, and delight myself with reading it in this comfortable Light, in which you have set the whole Ground and Nature of our Redemption. I am now in full Possession of this glorious Truth, that God is *mere Love*, the most glorious Truth that can possess and edify the Heart of Man. It drives every Evil out of the Soul, and gives Life to every Spark of Goodness that can possibly be kindled in it. Everything in Religion is made amiable, by being a Service of Love to the God of Love.

No Sacrifices, Sufferings, and Death, have any Place in Religion, but to satisfy and fulfil that Love of God, which could not be satisfied without our Salvation. If the Son of God is not spared, if He is delivered up to the Rage and Malice of Men, Devils, and Hell, it is because, had we not had such a Captain of our Salvation made perfect through Sufferings, it never could have been sung, 'Oh Death, where is thy Sting, Oh Grave, where is thy Victory!' It never could have been true, that 'as by one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin, so by one Man came the Resurrection of the Dead.' It never

could have been said, 'that as in Adam all die, so in Christ 'shall all be made alive.'

Therefore, dear *Theophilus*, adieu: God is Love, and He that has learnt to live in the Spirit of Love, has learnt to live and dwell in God. Love was the Beginner of all the Works of God, and from Eternity to Eternity nothing can come from God, but a Variety of Wonders, and Works of Love, over all Nature and Creature.

Theophilus. God prosper, *Eusebius*, this Spark of Heaven in your Soul. May it, like the *Seraphims' Coal taken from the Altar*, purify your Heart from all its Uncleanness! But before you leave me, I beg one more Conversation to be on the *practical Part* of the Spirit of Love, that so Doctrine and Practice, hearing and doing, may go Hand in Hand.

The End of the Second DIALOGUE.

THE THIRD DIALOGUE

EUSEBIUS. You have shown great Good-will towards us, *Theophilus*, in desiring another Meeting before we leave you. But yet I seem to myself to have no Need of that which you have proposed by this Day's Conversation. For this Doctrine of the Spirit of Love cannot have more Power over me, or be more deeply rooted in me; than it is already. It has so gained and got Possession of my whole Heart, that every Thing else must be under its Dominion. I can do nothing else but love; it is my whole Nature. I have no Taste for any Thing else. Can this Matter be carried higher in Practice?

Theophilus. No higher, *Eusebius*. And was this the true State of your Heart, you would bid fair to leave the World as *Elijah* did; or like *Enoch* to have it said of you, that you lived wholly to love, and *was not*. For was there nothing but this Divine Love alive in you, your fallen Flesh and Blood would be in Danger of being quite burnt up by it. What you have said of yourself, you have spoken in great Sincerity, but in a total Ignorance of yourself, and the true Nature of the Spirit of Divine Love. You are as yet only charmed with the Sight, or rather the Sound of it; its real Birth is as yet unfelt, and unfound in you. Your natural Complexion has a great deal of the animal Meekness and Softness of the *Lamb* and the *Dove*, your Blood and Spirit are of this Turn; and therefore a God all Love, and a Religion all Love, quite transport you; and you are so delighted with it, that you fancy you have nothing in you but this God and Religion of Love. But, my Friend, bear with me, if I tell you, that all this is only the *good Part* of the Spirit of this bestial World in you, and may be in any unregenerate Man, that is of your Complexion. It is so far from being a genuine Fruit of Divine Love, that if it be not well looked to, it may prove a real Hindrance of it, as it oftentimes does, by its appearing to be that which it is not.

You have quite forgot all that was said in the Letter on the Spirit of Love, that it is a *Birth* in the Soul, that can only come forth in its proper Time and Place, and from its proper Causes. Now nothing that is a Birth can be taken in, or brought into the Soul by any notional Conception, or delightful Apprehension of it. You may love it as much as you please, think it the most

charming Thing in the World, fancy everything but Dross and Dung in Comparison of it, and yet have no more of its Birth in you, than the blind Man has of that Light, of which he has got a most charming Notion. His Blindness still continues the same ; he is at the same Distance from the Light, because Light can only be had by a *Birth* of itself in seeing Eyes. It is thus with the Spirit of Love ; it is nowhere, but where it rises up as a Birth.

Eusebius. But if I am got no further than this, what Good have I from giving in so heartily to all that you have said of this Doctrine? And to what End have you taken so much Pains to assert and establish it?

Theophilus. Your Error lies in this ; you confound two Things, which are entirely distinct from each other. You make no Difference betwixt the *Doctrine*, that only sets forth the Nature, Excellence, and Necessity of the Spirit of Love, and the *Spirit of Love* itself ; which yet are two Things so different, that you may be quite full of the former, and at the same Time quite empty of the latter. I have said every Thing that I could, to show you the Truth, Excellence, and Necessity of the Spirit of Love ; It is of infinite Importance to you to be well established in the Belief of this Doctrine. But all that I have said of it, is only to induce and encourage you to buy it, at its own Price, and to give all that for it, which alone can purchase it. But if you think (as you plainly do) that you have got it, because you are so highly pleased with that which you have heard of it, you only embrace the Shadow, instead of the Substance, of that which you ought to have.

Eusebius. What is the Price that I must give for it?

Theophilus. You must give up all that you are, and all that you have from fallen *Adam* ; for all that you are and have from him is that Life of Flesh and Blood, which cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

Adam after his Fall had nothing that was good in him, nothing that could inherit an eternal Life in Heaven, but the *Bruiser of the Serpent*, or the Seed of the Son of God that was reserved, and treasured up in his Soul. Every Thing else in Him was devoted to Death, that this *incorruptible Seed of the Word* might grow up into a new Name in Christ Jesus.

All the Doctrine of God's *Reprobation* and *Election* relates wholly and solely to these two Things, *viz.*, the *earthly bestial Nature* from *Adam*, and the *incorruptible Seed of the Word*, or the *Immanuel* in every Man.

Nothing is *elected*, is *foreseen*, *predestinated*, or *called according to the Purpose of God*, but this *Seed of the new Man*, because the

one eternal, unchangeable *Purpose* of God towards Man is only this, namely, that Man should be a heavenly Image, or Son of God. And therefore nothing can be elected, or called *according to the Purpose* of God, but this Seed of an heavenly Birth, because nothing else is able to answer, and fulfil the *Purpose* of God. But every Thing else that is in Man, his whole earthly bestial Nature, is from Sin, and is *quite contrary* to God's Purpose in the Creation of Man.

On the other Hand, nothing is *reprobated, rejected,* or cast out by God, but the *earthly Nature* which came from the Fall of *Adam*. This is the only *Vessel of Wrath*, the Son of *Perdition*, that can have no Share in the Promises and Blessings of God.

Here you have the whole *unalterable* Ground of Divine *Election* and *Reprobation*; it relates not to any particular Number of People, or Division of Mankind, but solely to the two Natures that are, both of them, without Exception, in every Individual of Mankind. All that is earthly, serpentine, and devilish in every Man, is *reprobated* and *doomed* to Destruction; and the heavenly Seed of the new Birth in every Man, is *That* which is *chosen, ordained* and *called* to eternal Life.

Election therefore and Reprobation, as respecting Salvation, equally relate to every Man in the World; because every Man, as such, has *That* in him which *only* is elected, and that in him which only is reprobated, namely, the earthly Nature, and the heavenly Seed of the Word of God.

Now all this is evident, from the very Nature of the Thing. As soon as you but suppose Man at his Fall to have a Power of Redemption, or Deliverance from the Evil of his fallen Nature, engrafted into him, you then have the *first unchangeable* Ground of Election and Reprobation; you are infallibly shown what it is that God elects and reprobates, and the absolute Impossibility of any Thing else being reprobated by God, but that *fallen evil* Nature from which he is to be redeemed, or of any Thing else being elected by God, but that Seed of a new *Birth*, which is to bring forth his Redemption.

Here therefore you have a full Deliverance from all Perplexity upon this Matter, and may rest yourself upon this great, comfortable, and most certain Truth, that *no other* Election or Reprobation, with Regard to *Salvation*, ever did, or can belong to any one individual Son of *Adam*, but that *very same* Election and Reprobation, which *both of them* happened to, and took Place in *Adam's* individual Person. For all that which was in *Adam*, both as *fallen* and *redeemed*, must of all Necessity be in every Son of *Adam*; and no Man can possibly stand in any other Relation to God than *Adam* did, and therefore cannot have

either more or less, or any other Divine Election and Reprobation, than *Adam* had. For, from the Moment of Man's Redemption, which began at the Fall, when the *incorruptible Seed of the Word* was given into *Adam*, every Son of *Adam*, to the End of the World, must come into it, under one and the same Election and Reprobation with Regard to God. Because the whole earthly Nature, from which Man was to be redeemed, and the Seed of the Word, by which he was to be redeemed, were both of them in every Man, one as certainly as the other.

Now this being the inward, essential State of every Man born into the World, having in himself all that is elected, and all that is reprobated by God, hence it is, that in order to publish the Truth and Certainty of such Election and Reprobation, and the Truth and Certainty of that twofold Nature in Man, on which it is grounded, that the Spirit of God, in holy Scripture, represents this Matter to us by such outward Figures, as are yet in themselves not figurative, but real Proofs of it.

This is first of all done under the Figures of *Cain* and *Abel*, the two first Births from *Adam*, where the one is murdered by the other, hereby demonstrating to us, by this Contrariety and Difference of these two first Births, the inward real State of the Father of them, namely, that the same twofold Nature was in him, that discovered itself in these two first Births from him.

The same Thing is, Age after Age, set forth in Variety of Figures, more especially in *Ishmael* and *Isaac*, in *Esau* and *Jacob*. And all this, only further to confirm and establish this great Truth, *viz.*, That such Strife and Contrariety as appeared in the Sons of the same Father, were not only outward Representations, but full Proofs of that inward Strife and Contrariety, which not only existed in their Fathers, but universally in every human Creature. For *Cain* and *Abel* had not come from *Adam*, but because both their Natures were antecedently in him, and in the same State of Opposition and Contrariety to each other. And as *Cain* and *Abel* were no other than the genuine Effects of the twofold State, which *Adam*, as *fallen* and *redeemed*, was then in, so every Man, descended from *Adam*, is in himself infallibly all that which *Adam* was, and has as certainly his own *Cain* and *Abel* within himself as *Adam* had. And from the Beginning to the End of the human Race, all that which came to pass so remarkably in the Births of *Cain* and *Abel*, *Ishmael* and *Isaac*, *Esau* and *Jacob*, all that same, some Way or other, more or less, comes to pass in every Individual of Mankind. In one Man, his own *Abel* is murdered by his own *Cain*, and in another, his own *Jacob* overcomes his own *Esau* that was born with him.

And all the Good, or the Evil that we bring forth in our Lives, is

from nothing else, but from the Strife of these *two Natures* within us, and their Victory over one another. Which Strife, no Son of *Adam* could ever have known anything of, had not the free Grace and Mercy of God *chosen* and *called* all Mankind to a new Birth of Heaven within them, out of their corrupt and fallen Souls. No possible War, or Strife of Good against Evil, could be in fallen Man, but by his having from God a Seed of Life in him, *ordained* and *predestinated* to overcome his earthly Nature. For that which is put into him by God, as the Power of his Redemption, must be contrary to that from which he is to be redeemed.

And thus a War of Good against Evil, set up within us, by the free Grace and Mercy of God to us, is the greatest of all Demonstrations, that there is but one Election, and but one Reprobation, and that all that God rejects and reprobates, is nothing else but that *corrupt Nature* which every individual Man, *Abel* as well as *Cain*, has in himself from *Adam*, as *fallen*; and that all that God *elects*, *predestinates*, *calls*, *justifies* and *glorifies*, is nothing else but that heavenly Seed, which every individual Man, *Pharaoh* as well as *Moses*, has in himself from *Adam*, as *redeemed*.

And thus you have an unerring Key to all that is said in Scripture of the Election falling upon *Abel*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, &c., and of the Reprobation falling upon *Cain*, *Ishmael*, and *Esau*; not because God has Respect to Persons, or that all Men did not stand before him in the same Covenant of Redemption; but the Scriptures speak thus, that the true Nature of God's Election and Reprobation may thereby be made manifest to the World.

For the *earthly Nature*, which God only reprobates, having broken forth in Predominance in *Cain*, *Ishmael*, and *Esau*, they became proper Figures of that which God reprobates, and were used by God as such. And the heavenly Seed, which is alone elected to eternal Glory, having broken forth in Predominance in *Abel*, *Isaac*, *Jacob*, &c., they became proper Figures of that which God only elects, and were used by God as such.

Nothing is here to be understood personally, or according to the Flesh of these Persons on either Side; but all that is said of them, is only as they are Figures of the earthly Nature, and heavenly Seed in every Man. For nothing is reprobated in *Cain*, but that very same which is reprobated in *Abel*, *viz.*, the *earthly Nature*; nor is anything elected in *Jacob*, but that very same which is equally elected in *Esau*, *viz.*, the *heavenly Seed*.

And now, Gentlemen, you may easily apprehend, *how* and *why* a God, in whose holy Deity no Spark of Wrath or Partiality can possibly arise, but who is from Eternity to Eternity only flowing

forth in Love, Goodness, and Blessing to every Thing capable of it, could yet say of the *Children, before they were born, or had done either Good or Evil*, 'Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.' It is because *Esau* signifies the earthly bestial Nature, that came from Sin; and *Jacob* signifies the *incorruptible Seed of the Word*, that is to overcome *Esau*, and change his Mortal into Immortality.

But now I stop, for you may perhaps think that I have here made a Digression from our proposed Subject.

Eusebius. A Digression you may call it, if you please, *Theophilus*, but it is such a Digression, as has entirely prevented my ever having one more anxious Thought about God's Decrees of Election and Reprobation.

The Matter stands now in open Daylight, notwithstanding that Thickness of learned Darkness, under which it has been hidden, from the Time of *St. Austin* to this Day. And now, Sir, proceed as you please, to lay open all my Defects, in the Spirit of Love; for I am earnestly desirous of being set right in so important a Matter.

Theogenes. Let me first observe to *Theophilus*, that I am afraid the Matter is much worse with me, than it is with you. For though this Doctrine seems to have got all my Heart, as it is a Doctrine, yet I am continually thrown out of it in Practice, and find myself as daily under the Power of my old Tempers and Passions, as I was before I was so full of this Doctrine.

Theophilus. You are to know, my Friends, that every Kind of Virtue and Goodness may be brought into us by two different Ways. They may be taught us outwardly by Men, by Rules and Precepts; and they may be inwardly born in us, as the genuine Birth of our own renewed Spirit. In the former Way, as we learn them only from Men, by Rules and Documents of Instruction, they at best only change our outward Behaviour, and leave our Heart in its natural State, and only put our Passions under a forced Restraint, which will occasionally break forth in spite of the dead Letter of Precept and Doctrine. Now this Way of Learning and attaining Goodness, though thus imperfect, is yet absolutely necessary, in the Nature of the Thing, and must first have its Time, and Place, and Work in us; yet it is only for a Time, as the *Law* was a Schoolmaster to the *Gospel*. We must first be Babes in Doctrine, as well as in Strength, before we can be Men. But of all this outward Instruction, whether from good Men, or the *Letter* of Scripture, it must be said, as the Apostle says of the *Law*, *that it maketh nothing perfect*; and yet it is highly necessary in order to Perfection.

The true Perfection and Profitableness of the holy written

Word of God is fully set forth by St. *Paul* to *Timothy*: 'From 'a Child,' says he, 'thou hast known the Scriptures, which are 'able to make thee wise unto Salvation, which is by Faith in 'Christ Jesus.' Now these Scriptures were the *Law and the Prophets*, for *Timothy* had known no other from his Youth. And as they, so all other Scriptures since, have no other Good or Benefit in them, but as they lead and direct us to a Salvation, that is not to be had in themselves, but from Faith in Christ Jesus. Their Teaching is only to teach us, where to seek and to find the Fountain and Source of all Light and Knowledge.

Of the Law, says the Apostle, *it was a Schoolmaster to Christ*: Of the Prophets, he says the same. 'Ye have,' says he, 'a more 'sure Word of Prophecy, whereunto you do well that ye take 'Heed, as unto a Light that shineth in a dark Place, until the 'Day dawn, and the Day-Star ariseth in your Hearts.' The same Thing is to be affirmed of the Letter of the *New Testament*; it is but our Schoolmaster unto Christ, a Light like that of Prophecy, to which we are to take great Heed, until Christ, as the Dawning of the Day, or the Day-Star, arises in our Hearts. Nor can the Thing possibly be otherwise; no Instruction that comes under the Form of Words can do more for us, than Sounds and Words can do; they can only direct us to something that is better than themselves, that can be the true Light, Life, Spirit, and Power of Holiness in us.

Eusebius. I cannot deny what you say, and yet it seems to me to derogate from Scripture.

Theophilus. Would you then have me to say, that the *written Word* of God is that Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever; that Word, which is the Wisdom and Power of God; that Word, which was with God, which was God, by whom all Things were made; that Word of God, which was made Flesh for the Redemption of the World; that Word of God, of which we must be born again; that Word which lighteth every Man, that cometh into the World; that Word, which in Christ Jesus is become Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification in us; would you have me say, that all this is to be understood of the *written Word* of God? But if this cannot possibly be, then all that I have said is granted, namely, that Jesus is alone *that Word* of God, that can be the Light, Life, and Salvation of fallen Man. Or how is it possible more to exalt the Letter of Scripture, than by owning it to be a true, outward, verbal Direction to the one only true Light, and Salvation of Man.

Suppose you had been a true Disciple of *John the Baptist*, whose only Office was to prepare the Way to Christ, how could you have more magnified his Office, or declared your Fidelity

to him, than by going from his Teaching, to be taught by that Christ to whom he directed you? The *Baptist* was indeed a *burning and a shining Light*, and so are the holy Scriptures; 'but he was not that Light, but was sent to bear Witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every Man, 'that cometh into the World.'

What a Folly would it be, to say that you had undervalued the Office and Character of *John the Baptist*, because he was not allowed to be the Light itself, but only a true Witness of it, and Guide to it? Now if you can show, that the written Word in the Bible can have any other, or higher Office, or Power, than such a *ministerial* one as the *Baptist* had, I am ready to hear you.

Eusebius. There is no Possibility of doing that.

Theophilus. But if that is not possible to be done, then you are come to the full Proof of this Point, *viz.*, that there are two Ways of attaining Knowledge, Goodness, Virtue, &c., the one by the Ministry of outward, verbal Instruction, either by Men or Books, and the other by an inward Birth of Divine Light, Goodness, and Virtue, in our own renewed Spirit: and that the former is only in order to the latter, and of no Benefit to us, but as it carries us further than itself, to be united in Heart and Spirit with the Light, and Word, and Spirit of God. Just as the *Baptist* had been of no Benefit to his Disciples, unless he had been their Guide from himself to Christ.

But to come now closer to our Subject in Hand.

From this twofold Light, or Teaching, there necessarily arises a twofold State of Virtue and Goodness. For such as the Teacher, or Teaching is, such is the State and Manner of the Goodness, that can be had from it. Every Effect must be according to the Cause that produces it. If you learn Virtue and Goodness only from outward Means, from Men or Books, you may be virtuous and good according to *Time*, and *Place*, and outward *Forms*; you may do Works of Humility, Works of Love and Benevolence, use Times and Forms of Prayer; all this Virtue and Goodness is suitable to this Kind of Teaching, and may very well be had from it. But the *Spirit* of Prayer, the *Spirit* of Love, and the Spirit of Humility, or of any other Virtue, are only to be attained by the Operation of the Light and Spirit of God, not outwardly teaching, but inwardly bringing forth a new-born Spirit within us.

And now let me tell you both, that it is much to be feared that you as yet stand only under this outward Teaching; your good Works are only done under Obedience to such Rules, Precepts, and Doctrines, as your Reason assents to, but are not the Fruits of a new-born Spirit within you. But till you are thus

renewed in the Spirit of your Minds, your Virtues are only *taught Practices*, and grafted upon a corrupt Bottom. Everything you do will be a Mixture of good and bad; your Humility will help you to Pride, your Charity to others will give Nourishment to your own Self-Love; and as your Prayers increase, so will the Opinion of your own Sanctity. Because, till the Heart is purified to the Bottom, and has felt the Axe at the Root of its Evil (which cannot be done by outward Instruction) every Thing that proceeds from it partakes of its Impurity and Corruption.

Now that *Theogenes* is only under the Law, or outward Instruction, is too plain from the Complaint that he made of himself. For notwithstanding his Progress in the Doctrine of Love, he finds all the Passions of his corrupt Nature still alive in him, and himself only altered in Doctrine and Opinion.

The same may be well suspected of you, *Eusebius*, who are so mistaken in the Spirit of Love, that you fancy yourself to be wholly possessed of it, from no other Ground, but because you embrace it, as it were, with open Arms, and think of nothing but living under the Power of it. Whereas, if the Spirit of Love was really born in you from its own Seed, you would account for its Birth, and Power in you, in quite another Manner than you have here done; you would have known the Price that you had paid for it, and how many Deaths you had suffered, before the Spirit of Love came to Life in you.

Eusebius. But surely, Sir, imperfect as our Virtues are, we may yet, I hope, be truly said to be in a State of Grace; and if so, we are under something more than mere outward Instruction. Besides, you very well know, that it is a Principle with both of us, to expect all our Goodness from the Spirit of God dwelling and working in us. We live in Faith and Hope of the Divine Operation; and therefore I must needs say, that your Censure upon us seems to be more severe than just.

Theophilus. Dear *Eusebius*, I censure neither of you, nor have I said one Word by Way of Accusation. So far from it, that I love and approve the State you are both in. It is good and happy for *Theogenes*, that he feels and confesses, that his natural Tempers are not yet subdued by Doctrine and Precept. It is good and happy for you also, that you are so highly delighted with the *Doctrine* of Love, for by this means each of you have your true Preparation for further Advancement. And though your State has this Difference, yet the same Error was common to both of you. You both of you thought, you had as much of the Spirit of Love as you could, or ought to have; and therefore *Theogenes* wondered he had no more Benefit from it; and you

wondered that I should desire to lead you further into it. And therefore, to deliver you from this Error, I have desired this Conference upon the practical Ground of the Spirit of Love, that you may neither of you lose the Benefit of that good State in which you stand.

Eusebius. Pray therefore proceed as you please. For we have nothing so much at Heart, as to have the Truth and Purity of this Divine Love brought forth in us. For as it is the highest Perfection that I adore in God, so I can neither wish nor desire any Thing for myself, but to be totally governed by it. I could as willingly consent to lose all my Being, as to find the Power of Love lost in my Soul. Neither Doctrine, nor Mystery, nor Precept has any Delight for me, but as it calls forth the Birth, and Growth, and Exercise of that Spirit, which does all that it does, towards God and Man, under the one Law of Love. Whatever therefore you can say to me, either to increase the Power, manifest the Defects, or remove the Impediments of Divine Love in my Soul, will be heartily welcome to me.

Theophilus. I apprehend that you do not yet know what Divine Love is in itself, nor what is its *Nature* and *Power* in the Soul of Man. For Divine Love is *perfect Peace* and Joy, it is a *Freedom* from all Disquiet, it is all *Content*, and mere *Happiness*; and makes every Thing to rejoice in itself. Love is the Christ of God; wherever it comes, it comes as the Blessing and Happiness of every natural Life, as the Restorer of every lost Perfection, a Redeemer from all Evil, a Fulfiller of all Righteousness, and a Peace of God which passeth all Understanding. Through all the Universe of Things, nothing is *uneasy*, *unsatisfied*, or *restless*, but because it is not governed by Love, or because its Nature has not reached or attained the *full Birth* of the Spirit of Love. For when that is done, every Hunger is satisfied, and all complaining, murmuring, accusing, resenting, revenging, and striving, are as totally suppressed and overcome, as the Coldness, Thickness, and Horror of Darkness, are suppressed and overcome by the breaking forth of the Light. If you ask, Why the Spirit of Love cannot be *displeased*, cannot be *disappointed*, cannot *complain*, *accuse*, *resent* or *murmur*? It is because Divine Love desires nothing but itself; it is its own Good, it has all when it has itself, because nothing is good but itself, and its own working; for Love is God, and he that dwelleth in God, dwelleth in Love. Tell me now, *Eusebius*, are you thus blessed in the Spirit of Love?

Eusebius. Would you have me tell you, that I am an Angel, and without the Infirmities of human Flesh and Blood?

Theophilus. No: But I would have you judge of your State

of Love by these angelical Tempers, and not by any Fervour or Heat that you find in yourself. For just so much, and so far as you are freed from the *Folly* of all earthly Affections, from all Disquiet, Trouble and Complaint about this, or that, just so much, and so far is the Spirit of Love come to Life in you. For Divine Love is a new Life, and new Nature, and introduces you into a new World ; it puts an End to all your former Opinions, Notions and Tempers, it opens new Senses in you, and makes you see high to be low, and low to be high ; Wisdom to be Foolishness, and Foolishness Wisdom ; it makes Prosperity and Adversity, Praise and Dispraise, to be equally nothing. ‘ When ‘ I was a Child,’ says the Apostle, ‘ I thought as a Child, I spoke ‘ as a Child, but when I became a Man, I put away childish ‘ Things.’ Whilst Man is under the Power of Nature, governed only by worldly Wisdom, his Life (however old he may be) is quite childish ; every Thing about him only awakens childish Thoughts, and Pursuits in him ; all that he sees and hears, all that he desires or fears, likes or dislikes, that which he gets, and that which he loses, that which he has, and that which he has not, serve only to carry him from this Fiction of Evil, to that Fiction of Good, from one Vanity of Peace, to another Vanity of Trouble. But when Divine Love is born in the Soul, all childish Images of Good and Evil are done away, and all the *Sensibility* of them is lost, as the Stars lose their *Visibility* when the Sun is risen.

Theogenes. That this is the true Power of the Spirit of Divine Love, I am fully convinced from my own Uneasiness at finding, that my natural Tempers are not overcome by it. For whence could I have this Trouble, but because that little Dawning that I have of the Spirit of Love in me, makes just Demands to be the one Light, Breath, and Power of my Life, and to have all that is within me overcome and governed by it. And therefore I find, I must either silence this small Voice of new risen Love within me, or have no Rest from Complaints and Self-condemnation, till my whole Nature is brought into Subjection to it.

Theophilus. Most rightly judged, *Theogenes.* And now we are fairly brought to the one great *practical Point*, on which all our Proficiency in the Spirit of Love entirely depends, namely, *that all that we are, and all that we have from Adam, as fallen, must be given up, absolutely denied and resisted, if the Birth of Divine Love is to be brought forth in us.* For all that we are by *Nature* is in full Contrariety to this Divine Love, nor can it be otherwise ; a Death to itself is its only Cure, and nothing else can make it subservient to Good ; just as Darkness cannot be altered, or made better in itself, or transmuted into Light,

it can only be subservient to the Light, by being *lost* in it, and *swallowed* up by it.

Now this was the first State of Man; all natural Properties of his creaturely Life, were hid in God, united in God, and glorified by the Life of God manifested in them, just as the Nature and Qualities of Darkness are lost and hid, when enlightened and glorified by the Light. But when Man fell from, or died to the Divine Life, all the natural Properties of his creaturely Life, having lost their Union in and with God, broke forth in their own natural Division, Contrariety, and War against one another, just as the Darkness, when it has lost the Light, must show forth its own Coldness, Horror, and other uncomfortable Qualities. And as Darkness, though in the *utmost Contrariety* to Light, is yet absolutely necessary to it, and without which no *Manifestation* or *Visibility* of Light could possibly be, so it is with the natural Properties of the creaturely Life; they are in themselves all Contrariety to the Divine Life, and yet the Divine Life cannot be communicated, but in them and by them.

Eusebius. I never read, or heard of the Darkness being necessary to Light: It has been generally considered as a *negative* Thing, that was nothing in itself, and only signified an *Absence* of Light. But your Doctrine not only supposes Darkness to be something *positive*, that has a Strength and Substantiality in itself, but also to be *antecedent* to the Light, because *necessary* to bring it into Manifestation. I am almost afraid to hear more of this Doctrine: It sounds harsh to my Ears.

Theophilus. Do not be frightened, *Eusebius.* I will lead you into no Doctrine, but what is strictly conformable to the Letter of Scripture, and the most orthodox Piety. The Scripture says, 'God is Light, and in Him is no Darkness at all'; therefore the Scripture affirms Light to be *superior*, absolutely *separate* from, and eternally *antecedent* to Darkness; and so do I. In this Scripture you have a noble and true Account of Light, what it is, where it is, and was, and always must be. It can never change its State or Place, be altered in itself, be anywhere, or in another Manner, than as it was, and will be, from Eternity to Eternity. When God said, 'Let there be Light, and there was 'Light,' no Change happened to eternal Light itself, nor did any Light then begin to be; but the Darkness of this World then only *began* to receive a Power, or Operation of the eternal Light upon it, which it had not before; or Eternity then began to open *some Resemblance* of its own Glory in the dark Elements, and Shadows of Time, and thus it is, that I assert the *Priority* and *Glory* of Light, and put all Darkness under its Feet, as impossible to be any Thing else but its Footstool.

Eusebius. I am quite delighted with this. But tell me now, how it is that Light can only be manifested in, and by Darkness.

Theophilus. The Scripture says that 'God dwelleth in the Light, to which no Man can approach': Therefore the Scripture teaches, that Light in itself is, and must be *invisible* to Man; that it cannot be approached, or made manifest to him, but in and by *something* that is not Light. And this is all that I said, and the very same Thing that I said, when I affirmed, that Light cannot be manifested, or have any *Visibility* to created Eyes, but in and through and by the Darkness.

Light, as it is in itself, is only in the *Supernatural* Deity; and that is the Reason, why no Man, or any created Being, can approach to it, or have any Sensibility of it, as it is in itself. And yet no Light can come into this World, but that in which God dwelt before any World was created. No Light can be in Time, but that which was the Light of Eternity. If therefore the *Supernatural* Light is to manifest *something* of its incomprehensible Glory, and make itself, in *some Degree*, sensible and visible to the Creature, this supernatural Light must enter into *Nature*, it must put on *Materiality*. Now Darkness is the *one only Materiality* of Light, in and through which it can become the Object of creaturely Eyes; and till there is Darkness, there is no possible Medium, or Power, through which the *Supernatural* Light can manifest *something* of itself, or have *any* of its Glory visible to created Eyes. And the Reason why Darkness can only be the *Materiality* of Light, is this, it is because Darkness is the *one only Ground* of all Nature, and of all Materiality, whether in Heaven or on Earth. And therefore every Thing that is creaturely in Nature, that has any Form, Figure, or Substance, from the highest Angel in Heaven to the lowest Thing upon Earth, has all that it has of Figure, Form, or Substantiality, only and solely from Darkness. Look at the glittering Glory of the *Diamond*, and then you see the *one Medium*, through which the Glory of the incomprehensible Light can make *some* Discovery or Manifestation of itself. It matters not, whether you consider Heaven or Earth, eternal or temporal Nature, nothing in either State can be capable of visible Glory, Brightness, or Illumination, but that which stands in the State of the *Diamond*, and has its *own Thickness* of Darkness. And if the Universe of eternal and temporal Nature is everywhere Light, it is because it has Darkness everywhere for its Dwelling-Place. Light, you know, is by variety of modern Experiments declared to be *material*; the Experiments are not to be disputed. And yet all these Experiments are only so many Proofs, not of the *Mate-*

riality of Light, but of our Doctrine, *viz.*, that *Materiality* is always along with *visible* Light, and also that Light can only open, and display something of itself, in and by Darkness, as its Body of Manifestation and Visibility. But Light cannot possibly be material, because *all Materiality*, as such, be it what and where it will, is nothing else but so much Darkness. And therefore to suppose Light to be material, is the same Absurdity, as to suppose it to be Darkness; for so much Materiality is so much Darkness; and it is impossible to be otherwise. Again, All *Matter* has but one Nature; it admits of neither more nor less, but wherever it is, all that is material is equally there. If therefore Light was material, all the Materiality in the World must be Light, and equally so. For no Materiality could be Light, unless Light was essential to Matter, as such, no more than any Materiality could be extended, unless Extension was essential to Matter, as such.

Eusebius. What is it then, that you understand by the Materiality of Light?

Theophilus. No more than I understand by the Materiality of the *Wisdom, Mercy, and Goodness* of God, when they are made intelligible and credible to me, by the Materiality of *Paper, and Ink, &c.* For Light is as *distinct* from, and *superior* to all that *Materiality*, in and by which it gives forth *some Visibility* of itself, as the *Wisdom, Mercy, and Goodness* of God, are distinct from, and superior to all that *written Materiality*, in and through which they are made in some Degree intelligible, and credible to human Minds.

The incomprehensible Deity can make no *outward Revelation* of his Will, Wisdom, and Goodness, but by *articulate Sounds, Voices, or Letters* written on Tables of Stone, or such-like Materiality. Just so, the visible, inaccessible, supernatural Light can make no *outward Visibility* of itself, but through such Darkness of Materiality, as is capable of receiving its Illumination. But as the Divine Will, Wisdom, and Goodness, when making outward Revelation of themselves, by the Materiality of Things, are not therefore material, so neither is the Light material, when it outwardly reveals something of its invisible incomprehensible Splendour and Glory, by and through the Materiality of Darkness.

All Light then, that is *natural, and visible* to the Creature, whether in Heaven, or on Earth, is nothing else but so much Darkness *illuminated*; and that, which is called the Materiality of Light, is only the Materiality of Darkness, in which the Light incorporates itself.

For Light can be only that *same visible* unapproachable Thing,

which it always was in God, from all Eternity. And that which is called the Difference of Light, is only the Difference of that *Darkness*, through which the Light gives forth *different Manifestations* of itself. It is the same, whether it illuminates the Air, Water, a Diamond, or any other Materiality of Darkness. It has no more Materiality in itself, when it enlightens the *Earth*, than when it enlightens the Mind of an Angel, when it gives *Colour* to Bodies, than when it gives *Understanding* to Spirits.

Sight and Visibility is but *one Power* of Light, but Light is *all Power*, it is *Life*; and every joyful *Sensibility* of Life is from it. 'In Him,' says the Apostle, 'was Light, and the Light was 'the Life of Men.' Light is all Things, and Nothing. It is *Nothing*, because it is *supernatural*; it is all Things, because every good Power and Perfection of every Thing is from it. No Joy, or Rejoicing in any Creature, but from the Power and Joy of Light. No Meekness, Benevolence, or Goodness, in Angel, Man, or any Creature, but where Light is the Lord of its Life. Life itself begins no sooner, rises no higher, has no other Glory, than as the Light begins it, and leads it on. Sounds have no Softness, Flowers and Gums have no Sweetness, Plants and Fruits have no Growth, but as the Mystery of Light opens itself in them.

Whatever is delightful and ravishing, sublime and glorious, in *Spirits*, *Minds*, or *Bodies*, either in Heaven, or on Earth, is from the Power of the *supernatural* Light opening its endless Wonders in them. *Hell* has no Misery, Horror or Distraction, but because it has *no Communication* with the supernatural Light. And did not the supernatural Light stream forth its Blessings into this World, through the *Materiality* of the Sun, all outward Nature would be full of the Horror of Hell.

And hence are all the Mysteries and Wonders of Light, in this material System, so astonishingly great and unsearchable; it is because the *natural Light* of this World is nothing else but the Power and Mystery of the *supernatural Light*, breaking forth, and opening itself, according to its Omnipotence, in all the various Forms of elementary Darkness which constitute this temporary World.

Theogenes. I could willingly hear you, *Theophilus*, on this Subject till Midnight, though it seems to lead us away from our proposed Subject.

Theophilus. Not so far out of the Way, *Theogenes*, as you may imagine; for Darkness and Light are the *two Natures* that are in every Man, and do all that is done in him.

The Scriptures, you know, make only this Division, the Works of Darkness are Sin, and they who walk in the Light are the

Children of God. Therefore Light and Darkness do every Thing, whether good or evil, that is done in Man.

Theogenes. What is this Darkness in itself, or where is it ?

Theophilus. It is everywhere, where there is *Nature* and *Creature*. For all Nature, and all that is *natural* in the Creature, is in itself nothing else but Darkness, whether it be in Soul or Body, in Heaven or on Earth. And therefore when the Angels (though in Heaven) had lost the *supernatural Light*, they became imprisoned in the Chains of their *own natural* Darkness. If you ask, Why Nature must be Darkness? It is because Nature is not God, and therefore can have no Light as it is Nature. For God and *Light* are as *inseparable*, as God and *Unity* are inseparable. Every Thing therefore that is not God, is and can be nothing else in itself but *Darkness*; and can do nothing but in, and under, and according to the *Nature* and *Powers* of Darkness.

Theogenes. What are the Powers of Darkness ?

Theophilus. The Powers of Darkness are the Workings of Nature or Self: For *Nature*, *Darkness*, and *Self*, are but three different Expressions for one and the same Thing.

Now every evil, wicked, wrathful, impure, unjust Thought, Temper, Passion, or Imagination, that ever stirred or moved in any Creature, every Misery, Discontent, Distress, Rage, Horror, and Torment, that ever plagued the Life of fallen Man or Angel, are the *very Things* that you are to understand by the *Powers* or Workings of Darkness, Nature, or Self. For nothing is evil, wicked, or tormenting, but that which Nature or Self does.

Theogenes. But if Nature is thus the *Seat* and *Source* of all Evil, if every Thing that is bad is in it and from it, how can such a Nature be brought forth by a God who is all Goodness ?

Theophilus. Nature has *all* Evil, and *no* Evil in itself. Nature, as it comes forth from God, is Darkness without any Evil of Darkness in it: for it is not Darkness without, or *separate* from Light, nor could it ever have been known to have any *Quality* of Darkness in it, had it not lost that State of Light in which it came forth from God, only as a Manifestation of the Goodness, Virtues, and Glories of Light. *Again*, It is Nature, *viz.*, a *Strife* and *Contrariety* of Properties, for this only End, that the *supernatural Good* might thereby come into *Sensibility*, be known, found and felt, by its taking *all the Evil* of Strife and Contrariety from them, and becoming the *Union*, *Peace*, and *Joy* of them all. Nor could the *Evil* of Strife, and Contrariety of Will, ever have had a Name in all the Universe of Nature and Creature, had it all continued in *that State* in which it came forth from God. Lastly, It is *Self*, *viz.*, an *own Life*, that so, through such an *own Life*, the universal incomprehensible Goodness, Happiness, and

Perfections of the Deity, might be possessed as Properties and Qualities of *an own Life* in creaturely finite Beings.

And thus, all that is called *Nature*, *Darkness*, or *Self*, has not only *no Evil* in it, but is the only true Ground of all possible Good.

But when the intelligent Creature turns from God to *Self*, or Nature, he acts *unnaturally*, he turns from all that which makes Nature to be *good*; he finds Nature only as it is in *itself*, and *without* God. And then it is, that Nature, or *Self*, has all Evil in it. Nothing is to be had from it, or found in it, but the Work and Working of every Kind of Evil, Baseness, Misery, and Torment, and the utmost Contrariety to God and all Goodness. And thus also you see the Plainness and Certainty of our Assertion, that Nature or *Self* has all Evil, and no Evil in it.

Theogenes. I plainly enough perceive, that *Nature* or *Self*, without God manifested in it, is all Evil and Misery. But I would, if I could, more perfectly understand the precise Nature of *Self*, or what it is that makes it to be so full of Evil and Misery.

Theophilus. Covetousness, Envy, Pride, and Wrath, are the four Elements of *Self*, or *Nature*, or *Hell*, all of them inseparable from it. And the Reason why it must be thus, and cannot be otherwise, is because the *natural Life* of the Creature is brought forth for the Participation of some *high supernatural* Good in the Creator. But it could have no *Fitness*, or possible *Capacity* to receive such Good, unless it was in itself both an Extremity of *Want*, and an Extremity of *Desire* of some high Good. When therefore this *natural Life* is deprived of, or fallen from God, it can be nothing else in itself but an Extremity of *Want*, continually *desiring*, and an Extremity of *Desire*, continually wanting. And hence it is, that its whole Life can be nothing else but a Plague and Torment of Covetousness, Envy, Pride, and Wrath, all which is perfectly *Nature*, *Self*, or *Hell*.

Now Covetousness, Pride, and Envy, are not three different Things, but only three different Names for the restless Workings of *one* and the *same Will* or Desire, which, as it differently torments itself, takes these different Names; for nothing is in any of them, but the working of a *restless Desire*; and all this because the natural Life of the Creature can do nothing else but work as a Desire. And therefore, when *fallen* from God, its *three first Births*, which are quite inseparable from it, are Covetousness, Envy, and Pride: It must *covet* because it is a Desire proceeding from *Want*; it must *envy*, because it is a Desire turned to *Self*; it must *assume* and *arrogate*, because it is a Desire founded on a real Want of *Exaltation*, or a higher State.

Now *Wrath*, which is a *fourth Birth* from these three, can have no Existence, till some or all of these three are *contradicted*, or have something done to them that is *contrary* to their Will; and then it is that *Wrath* is necessarily born, and not till then.

And thus you see, in the highest Degree of Certainty, what *Nature* or *Self* is, as to its essential constituent Parts. It is the *three* forementioned *inseparable Properties* of a Desire thrown into a *fourth* of *Wrath*, that can never cease, because their Will can never be gratified. For these four Properties generate one another, and therefore generate their own Torment. They have no outward Cause, nor any inward Power of altering themselves. And therefore all *Self*, or *Nature*, must be in this State, till some *supernatural Good* comes into it, or gets a Birth in it. And therefore every Pain or Disorder, in the Mind or Body of any intelligent Creature, is an undeniable Proof that it is in a fallen State, and has lost that *supernatural Good* for which it was created. So certain a Truth is the fallen State of all Mankind. And here lies the absolute indispensable Necessity of the one Christian Redemption. Till fallen Man is born again from above, till such a *supernatural Birth* is brought forth in him, by the eternal *Word* and *Spirit* of God, he can have no possible Escape or Deliverance from these four Elements of *Self* or *Hell*.

Whilst Man indeed lives among the Vanities of Time, his Covetousness, Envy, Pride, and *Wrath*, may be in a tolerable State, may help him to a Mixture of Peace and Trouble: they may have at Times their Gratifications, as well as their Torments. But when Death has put an End to the Vanity of all earthly Cheats, the Soul that is not born again of the *supernatural Word* and *Spirit* of God, must find itself unavoidably devoured, or shut up in its own, insatiable, unchangeable, self-tormenting Covetousness, Envy, Pride, and *Wrath*. Oh! *Theogenes*, that I had Power from God to take those dreadful Scales from the Eyes of every *Deist*, which hinder him from seeing and feeling the infinite Importance of this most certain Truth!

Theogenes. God give a Blessing, *Theophilus*, to your good Prayer. And then let me tell you, that you have quite satisfied my Question about the Nature of *Self*. I shall never forget it, nor can I ever possibly have any Doubt of the Truth of it.

Theophilus. Let me however go a little deeper in the Matter. All Life, and all Sensibility of Life, is a *Desire*; and nothing can feel or find itself to exist, but as it finds itself to *have* and *be* a *Desire*; and therefore all Nature is a *Desire*; and all that Nature does, or works, is done by the *Working* of *Desire*. And this is the Reason why all Nature, and the natural Life of every Creature, is a State of *Want*, and therefore must be a State of

Misery and Self-Torment, so long as it is *mere Nature*, or left to itself. For every Desire, as *such*, is and must be made up of *Contrariety*, as is sufficiently shown elsewhere.* And its essential *Contrariety*, which it has in itself, is the one *only possible* Beginning, or Ground of its Sensibility. For nothing can be *felt*, but because of its *Contrariety* to *that* which feels. And therefore no creaturely Desire can be brought into Existence, or have any possible Sensibility of itself, but because *Desire*, as such, is unavoidably made up of *that Contrariety*, from whence comes all *Feeling*, and the Capacity of being *felt*.

Again, All natural Life, is nothing else but a mere Desire founded in *Want*; now *Want* is contrary to *Desire*; and, therefore every natural Life, as *such*, is in a State of *Contrariety* and *Torment* to itself. It can do nothing but work in, and feel its own *Contrariety*, and so be its own unavoidable incessant Tormentor.

Hence we may plainly see, that God's bringing a sensible Creature into Existence is his bringing the *Power of Desire* into a *creaturely State*; and the Power and Extent of his own working Desire is the *Bounds* or *Limits* of its own creaturely Nature. And therefore every intelligent Creature, of whatever Rank in the Creation, is and can be nothing else, in its creaturely or natural State, but a State of *Want*; and the *higher* its natural State is supposed to be, the higher is its *Want*, and the greater its *Torment*, if left only in its *natural* State. And this is the Reason of the excessive Misery and Depravity of the fallen Angels.

Now the *Contrariety* that is in *Desire*, and must be in it, because it is a Desire, and the only Ground of all Sensibility, is plainly shown you by the most undeniable Appearance in outward or material Nature. All that is done in outward Nature is done by the working of *Attraction*. And all *Attraction* is nothing else but an *inseparable* Combination, and *incessant* Working of *three contrary Properties*, or Laws of Motion. It draws, it resists its own Drawing; and from this Drawing and Resisting, which are necessarily *equal* to one another, it becomes an orbicular, or *whirling* Motion, and yet draws and resists just as it did before.

Now this *threefold* *Contrariety* in the Motions, or Properties of *Attraction*, by which all the Elements of this material World are held and governed, and made to bring forth all the Wonders in all Kinds of animate and inanimate Things, this *Contrariety*, being the only possible *Ground* of all material Nature, is a full

* *Way to Divine Knowledge; Spirit of Love.*

Demonstration, (1) That *Contrariety* is the one only possible Ground of Nature and all natural Life, whether it be eternal or temporal, spiritual or material. (2) That no *other Contrariety* is, or can be in the Properties or Laws of Attraction in this material Nature, but *that one* and the *same* Contrariety, which was from Eternity in spiritual Nature, is inseparable from it, and can be nowhere but in it. For Time can only partake of Eternity, it can have nothing in it but the Working of Eternity, nor be any Thing but what it is by the *Working* of Eternity in it. It can have nothing that is its own, or peculiar to it, but its *transitory* State, and Form, and Nature. It is a mere *Accident*, has only an *occasional* Existence, and whatever is seen, or done in it, is only so much of the *Working* of Eternity seen and done in it.

For Attraction, in the material World, has not only nothing material in it, but is impossible to be *communicated* to Matter; or rather Matter has no *possible Capacity* to receive Attraction. It can no more *receive* or *obey* the Laws of Attraction, than it can *make* Laws for Angels. It is as incapable of moving, or stirring itself, as it is of making Syllogisms. For Matter is, in itself, only Death, Darkness, and Inactivity, and is as utterly incapable of moving itself, as it is of illuminating or creating itself; nothing can be done in it, and by it, but that which is done by *something* that is not material.

Therefore, that which is called the Attraction of Materiality, is in itself nothing else but the Working of the *spiritual Properties* of Desire, which has in itself those *very three* inseparable Contrarieties, which make the three Contrarieties in the Motions of Attraction. Material Nature, being an *accidental, temporary, transitory* Out-Birth from eternal Nature, and having no Power of existing, but *under* it, and in Dependence upon it, the spiritual Properties of eternal Nature do, as it were, *materialize* themselves for a Time, in their temporary Out-Birth, and *force* Matter to work as they work, and to have the *same contradictory* Motions in it, which are essential to eternal Nature.

And thus the three inseparable contrary Motions of Matter, are in the same Manner, and for the same Reason, a true Ground of a material Nature in Time, as the three inseparable, contrary, contradictory Workings of *Desire*, are a true Ground of a *spiritual Nature* in Eternity. And you are to observe, that all that is done in *Matter* and *Time*, is done by the *same Agents*, or spiritual Properties, which do all that is *naturally* done in Eternity, in Heaven or in Hell. For nothing is the Ground of Happiness and Glory in Heaven, nothing is the Ground of Misery, Woe, and Distraction in Hell, but the Working of these *same contrary*

Properties of Desire, which work Contrariety in the Attraction of Matter, and bring forth all the Changes of Life and Death in this material System. They are unchangeable in their Nature, and are everywhere the same ; they are as spiritual in Hell, and on Earth, as they are in Heaven. Considered as in themselves, they are everywhere equally good, and equally bad ; because they are everywhere equally the *Ground*, and *only* the Ground, for either Happiness or Misery. No possible Happiness, or Sensibility of Joy for any Creature, but where these *contrary* Properties work ; nor any Possibility of Misery but from them.

Now *Attraction*, acting according to its three invariable inseparable Contrarieties of Motion, stands in this material Nature, exactly in the *same Place*, and for the same *End*, and doing the *same Office*, as the three first Properties of *Desire* do in eternal or spiritual Nature. For they can be, or do nothing with Regard to Earth and Time, but *that same* which they are, and do in Heaven and Eternity.

In eternal Nature, the three contrary Properties of Desire, answering exactly to the three contrary Motions of material Attraction are in themselves only *Resistance*, *Rage*, and *Darkness*, and can be nothing else, till the *supernatural* Deity kindles its Fire of *Light* and *Love* in them ; and then all their raging Contrarieties are changed into never-ceasing Sensibilities of Unity, Joy, and Happiness.

Just so, in this material System, suppose there to be nothing in it but the *contrary Motions* of Attraction, it could be nothing else but Rage against Rage in the Horror of Darkness.

But when the *same supernatural Light*, which turns the *first fighting* Properties of Nature into a Kingdom of Heaven, gives forth *something* of its Goodness into this World, through the kindled Body of the Sun, then all the fighting contradictory Motions of Attraction, serve only to bring new Joys into the World, and open every Life, and every Blessing of Life, that can have Birth in a System of transitory Matter.

Theogenes. Oh *Theophilus*, you quite surprise me, by thus showing me, with so much Certainty, how the Powers of Eternity work in the Things of Time. Nothing is done on Earth, but by the unchangeable Workings of the same spiritual Powers, which work after the same Manner both in Heaven and in Hell. I now sufficiently see how Man stands in the midst of Heaven and Hell, under an absolute Necessity of belonging wholly to the one, or wholly to the other, as soon as this Cover of Materiality is taken off from him.

For *Matter* is his only Wall of Partition between them, he is equally nigh to both of them ; and as Light and Love make all

the Difference there is between Heaven and Hell, so nothing but a Birth of Light and Love in the Properties of his Soul, can possibly keep Hell out of it, or bring Heaven into it.

I now also see the full Truth and Certainty of what you said of the *Nature* and *Power* of Divine Love, *viz.*, 'that it is perfect Peace and Joy, a Freedom from all Disquiet, making every Thing to rejoice in itself; that it is the Christ of God, and wherever it comes, it comes as the Blessing and Happiness of every natural Life; as the Restorer of every lost Perfection; a Redeemer from all Evil; a Fulfiller of all Righteousness; and a Peace of God, which passes all Understanding.' So that I am now, a thousand Times more than ever, athirst after the Spirit of Love. I am willing to sell all, and buy it; its Blessing is so great, and the Want of it so dreadful a State, that I am even afraid of lying down in my Bed, till every working Power of my Soul is given up to it, wholly possessed and governed by it.

Theophilus. You have Reason for all that you say, *Theogenes*; for were we truly affected with Things, as they are our real Good, or real Evil, we should be much more afraid of having the *Serpents* of Covetousness, Envy, Pride, and Wrath, well nourished and kept alive within us, than of being shut up in a Pest-house, or cast into a Dungeon of venomous Beasts. On the other Hand, we should look upon the lofty Eloquence, and proud Virtue of a *Cicero*, but as the Blessing of Storm and Tempest, when compared with the heavenly Tranquillity of that meek and lowly Heart, to which our Redeemer has called us.

I said the *Serpents* of Covetousness, Envy, Pride, and Wrath, because they are alone the *real, dreadful, original* Serpents; and all earthly Serpents are but transitory, partial, and weak Out-Births of them. All evil earthly Beasts, are but short-lived Images, or creaturely Eruptions of that hellish Disorder, that is broken out from the fallen spiritual World; and by their manifold Variety, they show us that *Multiplicity* of Evil, that lies in the Womb of that Abyss of dark Rage, which (*N.B.*) has *no Maker*, but the three first Properties of Nature, fallen from God, and working in their own Darkness.

So that all evil, mischievous, ravenous, venomous Beasts, though they have no Life, but what begins in and from this material World, and totally ends at the Death of their Bodies, yet have they no Malignity in their earthly temporary Nature, but from those *same wrathful* Properties of fallen Nature, which *live* and *work* in our eternal fallen Souls. And therefore, though they are as different from us, as Time from Eternity, yet wherever we see them, we see so many infallible Proofs of the *Fall*

of Nature, and the *Reality* of Hell. For was there no Hell broken out in spiritual Nature, not only no evil Beast, but no bestial Life, could ever have come into Existence.

For the Origin of Matter, and the bestial earthly Life, stands thus. When the Fall of Angels had made their Dwelling-Place to be a *dark Chaos* of the first Properties of Nature left to themselves, the infinite Wisdom and Goodness of God created, or compacted this spiritual Chaos into a *material* Heaven, and a material Earth, and commanded the Light to enter into it. Hence this Chaos became the Ground, or the *Materiality* of a new and temporary Nature, in which the heavenly Power of Light, and the Properties of Darkness, each of them *materialized*, could work together, carrying on a War of Heaven against Earth ; so that all the evil Workings of fallen spiritual Nature, and all the Good that was to overcome it, might be equally manifested both by the good and bad State of outward Nature, and by that Variety of good and bad living Creatures, that sprung up out of it ; to stand in this State, *viz.*, of a *spiritual Chaos* changed into a *Materiality* of Light striving against Darkness, till the omnipotent Wisdom and Goodness of God, through the Wonders of a *first* and *second Adam*, shall have made this *Chaotic Earth* to send as many Angels into the highest Heaven, as fell with *Lucifer* into the hellish Chaos.

But to return. I have, I hope, sufficiently opened to you the malignant Nature of *that Self*, which dwells in, and makes up the *working Life* of every Creature that has lost its *right State* in God ; *viz.*, that all the Evil that was in the first Chaos of Darkness, or that still is in Hell and Devils, all the Evil that is in material Nature and material Creatures, whether animate, or inanimate, is nothing else, works in and with nothing else, but those *first Properties* of Nature, which drive on the Life of fallen Man in Covetousness, Envy, Pride, and Wrath.

Theogenes. I could almost say, that you have shown me more than enough of this Monster of *Self*, though I would not be without this Knowledge of it for half the World. But now, Sir, what must I do to be saved from the Mouth of this *Lion*, for he is the Depth of all Subtlety, the *Satan* that deceiveth the whole World. He can hide himself under all *Forms* of Goodness, he can watch and fast, write and instruct, pray much, and preach long, give Alms to the Poor, visit the Sick, and yet often gets more Life and Strength, and a more *immovable Abode*, in these *Forms* of Virtue, than he has in Publicans and Sinners.

Enjoin me therefore whatever you please ; all Rules, Methods, and Practices, will be welcome to me, if you judge them to be necessary in this Matter.

Theophilus. There is no need of a Number of Practices, or Methods in this Matter. For to die to Self, or to come from under its Power, is not, cannot be done by any *active* Resistance we can make to it by the Powers of Nature. For Nature can no more overcome or suppress itself, than Wrath can heal Wrath. So long as Nature acts, nothing but natural Works are brought forth, and therefore the more Labour of this Kind, the more Nature is fed and strengthened with its own Food.

But the *one true* Way of dying to Self is most *simple* and plain, it wants no Arts, or Methods, no *Cells, Monasteries, or Pilgrimages*, it is equally practicable by every Body, it is always at Hand ; it meets you in every Thing, it is free from all Deceit, and is never without Success.

If you ask, What is this one true, simple, plain, immediate, and unerring Way? It is the Way of *Patience, Meekness, Humility, and Resignation* to God. This is the *Truth and Perfection* of dying to Self ; it is nowhere else, nor possible to be in any Thing else, but in this State of Heart.

Theogenes. The Excellence and Perfection of these Virtues I readily acknowledge ; but alas, Sir, how will this prove the Way of *overcoming Self* to be so *simple, plain, immediate, and unerring*, as you speak of? For is it not the Doctrine of almost all Men, and all Books, and confirmed by our own woeful Experience, that much Length of Time, and Exercise, and Variety of Practices and Methods are necessary, and scarce sufficient for the Attainment of *anyone* of these four Virtues?

Theophilus. When Christ our Saviour was upon Earth, was there any Thing more simple, plain, immediate, unerring, than the Way to Him? Did Scribes, Pharisees, Publicans, and Sinners, want any Length of Time, or Exercise of Rules and Methods, before they could have Admission to him, or have the Benefit of Faith in him?

Theogenes. I do not understand why you put this Question ; nor do I see how it can possibly relate to the Matter before us.

Theophilus. It not only relates to, but is the very *Heart and Truth* of the Matter before us : It is not appealed to, by way of Illustration of our Subject, but it is our Subject itself, only set in a truer and stronger Light. For when I refer you to *Patience, Meekness, Humility, and Resignation* to God, as the one simple, plain, immediate, and unerring Way of dying to Self, or being saved from it, I call it so for no other Reason, but because you can as *easily and immediately*, without Art or Method, by the mere Turning and Faith of your Mind, have all the Benefit of these Virtues, as Publicans and Sinners, by their turning to Christ, could be helped and saved by him.

Theogenes. But, good Sir, would you have me then believe, that my *turning* and *giving* up myself to these Virtues is as certain and immediate a Way of my being directly possessed and blessed by their good Power, as when Sinners turned to Christ to be helped and saved by him? Surely this is too short a Way, and has too much of Miracle in it, to be now expected.

Theophilus. I would have you strictly to believe all this, in the fullest Sense of the Words, and also to believe, that the Reasons why you, or any others are for a long Time vainly endeavouring after, and hardly ever attaining these First-rate Virtues, is because you seek them in the Way they are not to be found, in a *Multiplicity* of human Rules, Methods, and Contrivances, and not in that *Simplicity* of Faith, in which, those who applied to Christ, immediately obtained that which they asked of Him.

‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.’ How short and simple and certain a Way to Peace and Comfort, from the Misery and Burden of Sin! What becomes now of your Length of Time and Exercise, your Rules and Methods, and round-about Ways, to be delivered from Self, the Power of Sin, and find the redeeming Power and Virtue of Christ? Will you say, that turning to Christ in Faith was *once* indeed the Way for *Jews* and Heathens to enter into Life, and be delivered from the Power of their Sins, but that all this Happiness was at an End, as soon as *Pontius Pilate* had nailed this good Redeemer to the Cross, and so broken off all *immediate* Union and Communion between Faith and Christ?

What a Folly would it be to suppose, that Christ after his having finished his great Work, overcome Death, ascended into Heaven, with all Power in Heaven and on Earth, was become less a Saviour, and gave less certain and immediate Helps to those, that by Faith turn to him now, than when he was clothed with the Infirmary of our Flesh and Blood upon Earth? Has He less Power, after he has conquered, than whilst he was only resisting and fighting with our Enemies? Or has He less good Will to assist his Church, his own Body, now he is in Heaven, than he had to assist Publicans, Sinners, and Heathens, before he was glorified, as the Redeemer of the World? And yet this must be the Case, if our *simply turning* to Him in Faith and Hope, is not as sure a Way of obtaining immediate Assistance from him now, as when he was upon Earth.

Theogenes. You seem, Sir, to me, to have stepped aside from the Point in Question, which was not, Whether my turning or giving myself up to Christ, in Faith in him, would not do me as much Good as it did to them, who turned to him when He was upon Earth? But whether my turning in Faith and Desire, to

Patience, Meekness, Humility, and Resignation to God, would do all that as fully for me now, as Faith in Christ did for those who became his Disciples?

Theophilus. I have stuck closely, my Friend, to the Point before us. Let it be supposed, that I had given you a Form of Prayer in these Words. *O Lamb of God*, that takest away the Sins of the World; Or, *O Thou Bread that camest down from Heaven*; Or, *Thou that art the Resurrection, and the Life, the Light and Peace* of all holy Souls, help me to a living Faith in Thee. Would you say, that this was not a Prayer of Faith in and to Christ, because it did not call Him *Jesus*, or the *Son of God*. Answer me plainly.

Theogenes. What can I answer you, but that this is a most true and good Prayer to Jesus, the Son of the living God? For who else but He was the *Lamb of God*, and the *Bread* that came down.

Theophilus. Well answered, my Friend. When therefore I exhort you to give up yourself in Faith and Hope to *Patience, Meekness, Humility, and Resignation to God*, what else do I do, but turn you directly to *so much* Faith and Hope in the true Lamb of God? For if I ask you, what the Lamb of God is, and means, must you not tell me, that it is, and means, the *Perfection* of *Patience, Meekness, Humility, and Resignation to God*? Can you say, it is either more or less than this? Must you not therefore say, that a Faith of Hunger and Thirst, and Desire of these Virtues, is in Spirit and Truth the one *very same* Thing, as a Faith of Hunger, and Thirst, and Desire of Salvation through the Lamb of God; and consequently, that every sincere Wish and Desire, every inward Inclination of your Heart, that presses after these Virtues, and longs to be governed by them, is an *immediate direct* Application to Christ, is *worshipping* and *falling down* before him, is *giving up* yourself unto him, and the very *Perfection* of Faith in him?

If you distrust my Words, hear the Words of Christ himself; 'Learn of me,' says He, 'for I am meek and lowly of Heart, and ye shall find Rest unto your Souls.' Here you have the plain Truth of our two Points fully asserted, *First*, That to be *given up to*, or stand in a *Desire* of *Patience, Meekness, Humility, and Resignation to God*, is strictly the *same Thing*, as to *learn of Christ*, or to have Faith in Him. Secondly, That this is the *one simple, short, and infallible* Way to overcome, or be delivered from all the Maligancy and Burden of *Self*, expressed in these Words; 'and ye shall find Rest unto your Souls.'

And all this, because this simple Tendency, or inward Inclination of your Heart to *sink down* into *Patience, Meekness,*

Humility, and Resignation to God, is truly giving up all that you are, and all that you have from fallen *Adam*, it is perfectly leaving all that you have, to follow and be with Christ, it is your highest Act of Faith in him, and Love of Him, the most ardent and earnest Declaration of your cleaving to him with all your Heart, and seeking for no Salvation, but in him and from him. And therefore all the Good, and Blessing, Pardon, and Deliverance from Sin, that ever happened to anyone from any Kind, or Degree of Faith and Hope, and Application to Christ, is sure to be had from this State of Heart, which stands continually *turned to him* in a Hunger, and Desire, of being led and governed by his Spirit of Patience, Meekness, Humility, and Resignation to God. Oh *Theogenes*, could I help you to perceive or feel what a Good there is in this State of Heart; you would desire it with more Eagerness, than the thirsty Hart desires the Water-Brooks, you would think of nothing, desire nothing, but constantly to live in it. It is a Security from all Evil, and all Delusion; no Difficulty, or Trial, either of Body or Mind, no Temptation either within you, or without you, but what has its full Remedy in this State of Heart. You have no Questions to ask of any Body, no new Way that you need inquire after; no Oracle that you need to consult; for whilst you shut up yourself in Patience, Meekness, Humility, and Resignation to God, you are in the very Arms of Christ, your whole Heart is his Dwelling-Place, and He lives and works in you, as certainly as he lived in, and governed that Body and Soul, which he took from the Virgin *Mary*.

Learn whatever else you will from Men and Books, or even from Christ Himself, besides, or without these Virtues, and you are only a poor Wanderer in a barren Wilderness, where no Water of Life is to be found. For Christ is nowhere, but in these Virtues, and where they are, there is He in his own Kingdom. From Morning to Night, let this be the Christ that you follow, and then you will fully escape all the religious Delusions that are in the World, and what is more, all the Delusions of your own selfish Heart.

For to seek to be saved by Patience, Meekness, Humility of Heart, and Resignation to God, is truly coming to God through Christ; and when these Tempers live and abide in you, as the Spirit and Aim of your Life, then Christ is in you of a Truth, and the Life that you then lead, is not yours, but it is Christ that liveth in you. For this is following Christ with all your Power: You cannot possibly make more Haste after Him, you have no other Way of walking as he walked, no other Way of being like Him, of truly believing in him, of showing your Trust in him, and Dependence upon him, but by wholly giving up

yourself to *That*, which He was, *viz.*, to Patience, Meekness, Humility, and Resignation to God.

Tell me now, have I enough proved to you, the short, simple, and certain Way of destroying that Body of Self, which lives and works in the four Elements of *Covetousness, Envy, Pride, and Wrath.*

Theogenes. Enough of all Reason. But as to *Covetousness*, I thank God, I cannot charge myself with it, it has no Power over me, nay, I naturally abhor it. And I also now clearly see, why I have been so long struggling in vain against other selfish Tempers.

Theophilus. Permit me, my Friend, to remove your Mistake. Had *Covetousness* no Power over you, you could have no other *selfish* Tempers to struggle against. They are all dead, as soon as *Covetousness* has done working in you. You take *Covetousness* to relate only to the Wealth of this World. But this is but *one single* Branch of it, its Nature is as large as *Desire*, and wherever *selfish Desire* is, there is all the evil Nature of *Covetousness*.

Now *Envy, Pride, Hatred, or Wrath*, can have no Possibility of Existence in you, but because there is *some selfish Desire* alive in you, that is not *satisfied*, not *gratified*, but *resisted* or *disappointed*. And therefore so long as any *selfish Tempers*, whether of *Envy, Uneasiness, Complaint, Pride, or Wrath*, are alive in you, you have the fullest Proof, that all these Tempers are *born and bred* in and from your *own Covetousness*, that is, from that same *selfish bad Desire*, which when it is turned to the Wealth of this World is called *Covetousness*. For all these four Elements of Self, or fallen Nature, are tied together in one inseparable Band, they mutually generate, and are generated from one another, they have but one common Life, and must all of them live, or all die together. This may show you again the absolute Necessity of our *one simple and certain* Way of dying to Self, and the *absolute Insufficiency* of all human Means whatever to effect it.

For consider only this, that to be *angry* at our own Anger, to be *ashamed* of our own *Pride*, and *strongly* resolve not to be *weak*, is the Upshot of all *human Endeavours*; and yet all this is rather the Life, than the Death of Self. There is no Help, but from a *total Despair* of all human Help. When a Man is brought to such an inward full Conviction, as to have no more Hope from all human Means, than he hopes to see with his Hands, or hear with his Feet, then it is, that he is truly prepared to die to Self, that is, to give up all Thoughts of having or doing any Thing that is good, in any *other Way* but that of a meek, humble,

patient, total Resignation of himself to God. All that we do before *this Conviction*, is in great Ignorance of ourselves, and full of Weakness and Impurity. Let our Zeal be ever so wonderful, yet if it begins sooner, or proceeds further, or to any other Matter, or in any other Way, than as it is led and guided by this Conviction, it is full of Delusion. No Repentance, however long or laborious, is *Conversion* to God, till it falls into this State. For God must do all, or all is nothing; but God cannot do all, till all is expected from Him; and all is not expected from Him, till by a true and *good Despair* of every human Help, we have no Hope, or Trust, or Longing after any Thing, but a patient, meek, humble, total Resignation to God.

And now, my dear Friends, I have brought you to the very Place for which I desired this Day's Conversation; which was, to set your Feet upon sure Ground, with Regard to the *Spirit of Love*. For all that Variety of Matters through which we have passed, has been only a Variety of Proofs, that the *Spirit* of Divine Love can have no Place, or Possibility of Birth in any fallen Creature, till it wills and *chooses* to be dead to *all Self*, in a patient, meek, humble Resignation to the good Power and Mercy of God.

And from this State of Heart also it is, that the *Spirit* of Prayer is born, which is the Desire of the Soul turned to God. Stand therefore steadfastly in *this Will*, let nothing else enter into your Mind, have no other Contrivance, but everywhere, and in every Thing, to nourish and keep up *this State* of Heart, and then your House is built upon a Rock; you are safe from all Danger; the Light of Heaven, and the Love of God, will begin their Work in you, will bless and sanctify every Power of your fallen Soul; you will be in a Readiness for every Kind of Virtue and good Work, and will know what it is to be led by the Spirit of God.

Theogenes. But, dear *Theophilus*, though I am so delighted with what you say, that I am loath to stop you, yet permit me to mention a Fear that rises up in me. Suppose I should find myself so overcome with my own Darkness and selfish Tempers, as not to be able to *sink* from them into a *Sensibility* of this meek, humble, patient, full Resignation to God, what must I then do, or how shall I have the Benefit of what you have taught me?

Theophilus. You are then at the very Time and Place of receiving the fullest Benefit from it, and practising it with the greatest Advantage to yourself. For though this patient, meek Resignation is to be exercised with Regard to all outward Things, and Occurrences of Life, yet it chiefly respects our own inward State, the Troubles, Perplexities, Weaknesses, and Disorders of our own fallen Souls. And to stand *turned* to a patient, meek,

humble Resignation to God, when your own Impatience, Wrath, Pride, and Irresignation, attack yourself, is a higher and more beneficial Performance of this Duty, than when you stand turned to Meekness and Patience, when attacked by the Pride, or Wrath, or disorderly Passions of other People. I say, *stand turned* to this patient, humble Resignation, for this is your true Performance of this Duty at that Time; and though you may have no comfortable *Sensibility* of your performing it, yet in this State you may always have *one full Proof* of the Truth and Reality of it, and that is, when you seek for Help no other Way, nor in any Thing else, neither from Men nor Books, but wholly leave and give up yourself to be helped by the Mercy of God. And thus, be your State what it will, you may always have the *full Benefit* of this short and sure Way of resigning up yourself to God. And the greater the Perplexity of your Distress is, the nearer you are to the greatest and best Relief, provided you have but *Patience* to expect it *all* from God. For nothing brings you so near to Divine Relief, as the *Extremity* of Distress; for the Goodness of God has no other *Name* or *Nature*, but the Helper of all that wants to be helped; and nothing can possibly hinder your finding this Goodness of God, and every other Gift and Grace that you stand in Need of, nothing can hinder or delay it, but your *turning from* the only Fountain of Life and living Water, to some cracked Cistern of your own Making; to this or that *Method, Opinion, Division, or Subdivision* among Christians, carnally expecting some mighty Things either from *Samaria*, or *Jerusalem, Paul, or Appollos*, which are only and solely to be had by worshipping the Father in Spirit and in Truth; which is then only done, when your whole Heart and Soul and Spirit trusts *wholly* and *solely* to the *Operation* of that God within you, in whom we live, move, and have our Being. And be assured of this, as a most certain Truth, that we have neither more nor less of the Divine Operation within us, because of this or that outward Form, or Manner of our Life, but *just* and *strictly* in that Degree, as our Faith, and Hope, and Trust, and Dependence upon God, are more or less in us.

What a Folly then to be so often perplexed about the Way to God? For nothing is the Way to God, but our Heart. God is nowhere else to be found; and the Heart itself cannot find Him, or be helped by any Thing else to find Him, but by its *own Love* of Him, *Faith* in Him, *Dependence* upon Him, *Resignation* to Him, and Expectation of all from Him.

These are short, but full *Articles* of true Religion, which carry Salvation along with them, which make a true and full Offering and Oblation of our whole Nature to the *Divine Operation*, and

also a true and full Confession of the holy Trinity in Unity. For as they look wholly to the *Father*, as blessing us with the *Operation* of his *own Word*, and *Spirit*, so they truly confess, and worship the *holy Trinity* of God. And as they ascribe all to, and expect all from this Deity *alone*, they make the *truest* and *best* of all Confessions, that there is no God but one.

Let then *Arians*, *Semi-Arians*, and *Socinians*, who puzzle their laborious Brains to make Paper-Images of a Trinity for themselves, have nothing from you but your Pity and Prayers; your Foundation stands sure, whilst you look for all your Salvation through the *Father*, working Life in your Soul by his *own Word*, and *Spirit*, which dwell in Him, and are one Life, both in Him and you.

Theogenes. I can never enough thank you *Theophilus*, for this good and comfortable Answer to my scrupulous Fear. It seems now, as if I could always know how to find full Relief in this humble, meek, patient total Resignation of myself to God. It is, as you said, a Remedy that is always at hand, equally practicable at all Times, and never in greater Reality, than when my own Tempers are making war against it in my own Heart.

You have quite carried your Point with me. The God of Patience, Meekness, and Love, is the one God of my Heart. It is now the whole Bent and Desire of my Soul, to seek for all my Salvation in and through the *Merits* and *Mediation* of the meek, humble, patient, resigned, suffering Lamb of God, who alone has Power to bring forth the blessed Birth of these heavenly Virtues in my Soul. He is the Bread of God, that came down from Heaven, of which the Soul must eat, or perish and pine in everlasting Hunger. He is the *Eternal Love* and *Meekness*, that left the Bosom of his Father, to be Himself the Resurrection of Meekness and Love in all the darkened wrathful Souls of fallen Men. What a Comfort is it, to think that this Lamb of God, Son of the Father, Light of the World, who is the Glory of Heaven, and the Joy of Angels, is as near to us, as truly in the midst of us, as He is in the midst of Heaven; and that not a Thought, Look, and Desire of our Heart, that presses towards Him, longing to catch, as it were, one small Spark of his heavenly Nature, but is in as sure a Way of finding Him, touching Him, and drawing Virtue from Him, as the Woman who was healed, by longing but to touch the Border of his Garment?

This Doctrine also makes me quite weary and ashamed of all my own natural Tempers, as so Many Marks of the Beast upon me; every Whisper of my Soul that stirs up Impatience, Uneasiness, Resentment, Pride, and Wrath within me, shall be rejected with a *Get thee behind me, Satan*, for it is his, and has

its whole Nature from him. To rejoice in a Resentment gratified, appears now to me to be quite frightful. For what is it, in reality, but rejoicing that my *own Serpent* of Self has new Life and Strength given to it, and that the precious Lamb of God is denied Entrance into my Soul. For this is the strict Truth of the Matter. To give into Resentment, and go willingly to gratify it, is calling up the Courage of your own Serpent, and truly helping it to be more stout and valiant, and successful in you.—On the other Hand, to give up all Resentment of every Kind, and on every Occasion, however artfully, beautifully, outwardly coloured, and to sink down into the Humility of Meekness under all Contrariety, Contradiction, and Injustice, always turning the other Cheek to the Smiter, however haughty, is the best of all Prayers, the surest of all Means to have nothing but Christ living and working in you, as the Lamb of God, that takes away every Sin that ever had Power over your Soul.

What a Blindness was it in me, to think that I had no Covetousness, because the Love of *Self*, was not felt by me! For to covet, is to desire. And what can it signify whether I desire This or That? If I desire any Thing but that which God would have me to be and do, I stick in the Mire of Covetousness, and must have all that Evil and Disquiet living and working in me, which robs *Misers* of their Peace both with God and Man.

Oh sweet Resignation of myself to God, happy Death of every selfish Desire, blessed Unction of a holy Life, the only Driver of all Evil out of my Soul, be thou my Guide and Governor wherever I go! Nothing but thou canst take me from myself, nothing but thou canst lead me to God; Hell has no Power, where thou art; nor can Heaven hide itself from thee. Oh may I never indulge a Thought, bring forth a Word, or do any Thing for myself or others, but under the Influence of thy blessed Inspiration!

Forgive, dear *Theophilus*, this Transport of my Soul: I could not stop it. The Sight, though distant, of this heavenly *Canaan*, this *Sabbath* of the Soul, freed from the miserable Labour of Self, to rest in Meekness, Humility, Patience, and Resignation under the Spirit of God, is like the joyful Voice of the Bridegroom to my Soul, and leaves no Wish in me, but to be at the Marriage-Feast of the Lamb.

Theophilus. Thither, *Theogenes*, you must certainly come, if you keep to the Path of Meekness, Humility, and Patience, under a full Resignation to God. But if you go aside from it, let the Occasion seem ever so glorious, or the Effects ever so wonderful to you, it is only preparing for yourself a *harder Death*. For die you must to all, and every Thing that you

have worked or done under any other Spirit, but that of Meekness, Humility, and true Resignation to God. Every Thing else, be it what it will, has its Rise from the Fire of *Nature*, it belongs to nothing else, and must of all Necessity be given up, lost, and taken from you again by *Fire*, either here, or hereafter.

For these Virtues are the only *Wedding Garment*; they are the *Lamps*, and *Vessels* well furnished with Oil.

There is nothing that will do in the Stead of them; they must have their *own full* and *perfect* Work in you, if not before, yet certainly after the Death of the Body, or the Soul can never be delivered from its fallen wrathful State. And all this is no more than is implied in this Scripture Doctrine, *viz.*, that there is no Possibility of Salvation, but in and by a Birth of the meek, humble, patient, resigned Lamb of God in our Souls. And when this Lamb of God has brought forth a real Birth of his own Meekness, Humility, and full Resignation to God in our Souls, then are our Lamps trimmed, and our Virgin-hearts made ready for the Marriage Feast.

This *Marriage Feast* signifies the *Entrance* into the highest State of *Union*, that can be between God and the Soul, in this Life. Or in other Words, it is the *Birth-Day* of the Spirit of Love in our Souls, which, whenever we attain it, will feast our Souls with such Peace and Joy in God, as will blot out the Remembrance of every Thing, that we called Peace or Joy before.

In the *Letter* on the Spirit of Love, you have been shown, according to the *Mystery* of all Things opened by the Goodness of God in the blessed *Behmen*, the *Time* and *Place* of its Birth. That it neither does, nor can possibly begin any sooner, than at the *Entrance*, or *Manifestation* of the Divine Light, in the *three first* wrathful, self-tormenting Properties of Nature, which are and must be the Ground of every natural Life, and must be Darkness, Rage, and Torment, till the Light of God, breaking in upon them, changes all their painful working into the strongest Sensibilities of Love, Joy, and Triumph, in the Perception and Possession of a new Divine Life.

Now all that we have said To-day, of the Necessity of the fallen Souls *dying to Self*, by *Meekness, Patience, Humility, and full Resignation to God*, is strictly the *same Thing*, and asserted from the *same Ground*, as when it was then said, that the *three first* Properties of Nature must have their wrathful Activity taken from them, by the Light of God breaking in upon them, or manifesting itself in them. Now this was always the State of Nature, it never was a State of Wrath, because it never was without the Light of God in it. But the natural, creaturely

Life, having a Possibility of falling, and having actually fallen from God, has found and felt, what never ought to have been found and felt, *viz.*, what Nature is in itself, without the Manifestation of the Deity in it.

Therefore as sure as the Light of God, or the Entrance of the Deity into the *three first* Properties of Nature, is absolutely necessary to make Nature to be a heavenly Kingdom of Light and Love, so sure and certain is it, that the creaturely Life, that is fallen from God under the wrathful *first Properties* of Nature, can have no Deliverance from it, cannot have a Birth of heavenly Light and Love, by any other possible Way, but that of dying to Self, by Meekness, Humility, Patience, and full Resignation to God.

And the Reason is this. It is because the *Will* is the Leader of the creaturely Life, and it can have nothing but *that* to which its Will is *turned*. And therefore it cannot be saved from, or raised out of the Wrath of Nature, till its Will *turns* from Nature, and wills to be no longer driven by it. But it cannot *turn* from Nature, or show a *Will* to come from under its Power, any *other Way*, than by turning and giving up itself to that Meekness, Humility, Patience, and Resignation to God, which so far as it goes, is a *leaving, rejecting, and dying* to all the Guidance of Nature.

And thus you see, that this *one simple* Way is, according to the immutable Nature of Things, the *one only possible* and absolutely *necessary* Way to God. It is as possible to go two contrary Ways at once, as to go to God any other Way than this. But what is best of all, this Way is absolutely *infallible*; nothing can defeat it. And all this Infallibility is fully grounded in the twofold Character of our Saviour; (1) As he is the *Lamb of God*, a Principle, and Source of all Meekness, and Humility in the Soul. And (2) As he is the *Light of Eternity*, that blesses eternal Nature, and turns it into a Kingdom of Heaven.

For in this twofold Respect he has a Power of redeeming us, which nothing can hinder; but, sooner or later, he must see all his and our Enemies under his Feet, and all that is fallen in *Adam* into Death must rise and return into a Unity of an Eternal Life in God.

For, as the Lamb of God, he has *all Power* to bring forth in us a *Sensibility* and a Weariness of our own wrathful State, and a *Willingness* to fall from it into Meekness, Humility, Patience, and Resignation to that Mercy of God, which alone can help us. And when we are thus weary and heavy laden, and willing to get Rest to our Souls, in meek, humble, patient Resignation to God, then it is, that He, as the *Light of God* and Heaven, joy-

fully breaks in upon us, turns our Darkness into Light, our Sorrow into Joy, and begins that Kingdom of God, and Divine Love within us, which will never have an End.

Need I say any more, *Theogenes*, to show you how to come out of the Wrath of your evil earthly Nature, into the sweet Peace and Joy of the Spirit of Love? Neither Notions, nor Speculations, nor Heat, nor Fervour, nor Rules, nor Methods, can bring it forth. It is the *Child* of Light, and cannot possibly have any Birth in you, but only and solely from the *Light* of God rising in your own Soul, as it rises in heavenly Beings. But the Light of God cannot *arise*, or be *found* in you, by any Art or Contrivance of your own, but *only* and *solely* in the Way of that Meekness, Humility, and Patience, which waits, trusts, resigns to, and expects all from the inward, living, life-giving Operation of the Triune God within you, creating, quickening, and reviving in your fallen Soul that Birth and Image, and Likeness of the holy Trinity, in which the first Father of Mankind was created.

Theogenes. You need say no more, *Theophilus*; you have not only removed that Difficulty which brought us hither, but have, by a Variety of Things, fixed and confirmed us in a full Belief of that great truth elsewhere asserted, namely, 'That there is 'but one Salvation for all Mankind, and that is the *Life of God* 'in the Soul. And also, That there is but *one possible* Way for 'Man to attain this Life of God, not one for a *Jew*, another for a '*Christian*, and a third for a *Heathen*. No, God is one, and the 'Way to it is one, and that is, the *Desire* of the Soul turned to 'God.*

Therefore, dear *Theophilus*, adieu. If we see you no more in this Life, you have sufficiently taught us how to seek, and find every kind of Goodness, Blessing, and Happiness, in God alone.

The End of the Third DIALOGUE.

FINIS.

A
SHORT but SUFFICIENT
CONFUTATION
Of the Reverend
Dr. *WARBURTON'S*
Projected DEFENCE
(*As he calls it*)
OF
CHRISTIANITY,
IN HIS
Divine Legation of MOSES.
IN A
LETTER
To the RIGHT REVEREND the
Lord Bishop of LONDON.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

LONDON:
Printed for J. RICHARDSON, in *Pater-noster*
Row. 1757.

A Short Confutation of Dr. Warburton's Defence.

My LORD,

THE Reason of my humbly presuming to write to your Lordship on the following Subject is, because it is a Matter on which your Lordship has employed your most excellent, and much admired Pen, greatly to the Instruction, and Benefit of the World.

And the Reason of my Writing at all, is owing to a Book newly published* in Defence of Doctor *Warburton*, in which your Lordship is with much Freedom, and more Injustice, charged with a Multitude of Contradictions, and Inconsistencies relating to this Point, in your *Sermons*, and other *Discourses*.

It is not my Design to enter here as an Assistant to your Lordship, or with any View of adding further Light or Strength to your Arguments, or to show the Weakness and Insufficiency of this Author's Attempt to puzzle and invalidate them : For either of these, is equally, and quite needless.

My intention is, as mentioned in the Title Page. And because Doctor *Warburton* has owned this Writer, as a most able Defender of his Scheme, and from whom He looks even for the *Establishment* of it, I have taken Occasion from his Book, to show, that it is a Scheme so contrary to Scripture, and the Truth of Things, as no Art of Words, or Stretch of Genius, however powerful in Paradox, can ever be able to support.

The Author of this Book, as Doctor *Warburton* assures us,† is too modest to make his Name known to the World; a Quality, which from the Reading of his Book, one would not suspect to be so predominant in Him.—But though Modesty has forced him to conceal his Name, yet he has given us some Information of his Character. He begins thus; ‘I, who am a bare Looker-on, and absolutely disengaged from all that Bias of Affection, which is so wont to warp the Followers of an old System, or the Inventors of a new, have done my best to examine this Question, with all Impartiality.’‡

Had one of the ancient Writers of *Greece* said this of himself,

* *Free and Candid Examination of the Bishop of London's Sermons, &c.*

† *Preface to Critical Inquiry, &c.*

‡ *Examination*, page 2.

how clear, and positive, might an able, modern *Critic* have been, from the decisive Words, a *bare Looker-on*, that he had never wrote upon the same Subject *before*. And that therefore, any Book of that Kind ascribed to him, must *infallibly*, and according to the best, and safest Rules of *Criticism*, be pronounced to be false and spurious. And yet, to the Confusion of *Criticism*, this Author, who unasked, and of his own free Motion, declares, that he begins this Work as a *bare Looker-on*, has for more than ten years *before* he made this Declaration, been sweating in the thickest Dust, and Heat of Doctor *Warburton's* most ardent Contention for *Novelties*.*

I have the Doctor's own Words for this, both for the *Novelties*, and this Gentleman's wonderful Zeal, and Skill shown in the Defence of them, so many Years ago.

'Notwithstanding, says the Doctor, all that can be said, much 'Clamour will ever attend *Novelties*, though never so strongly 'proved.—But Truth seldom thrives the worse, for unreasonable 'Opposition; and it would seem (N.B.) *not to be far from its* 'Establishment, when such Writers, as the following, appear in its 'Defence.—He hath established what he undertook to defend, 'with such Extent of Learning, and Force of good Argument, 'that I dare become responsible for all he says; and am willing, 'that those of my Opinions here debated, may stand, or fall, by 'the Strength, or the Invalidity of this Defence.†

This Compliment, so very hearty, as well as elegant, puts me in mind of another, which the learned Doctor made some Time since, to the whole Clergy of this Nation; 'a Body of Men,' says he, 'the most learned, virtuous, and truly Christian, that ever 'adorned a Church, or State.‡

These two Compliments are of so very high a Strain, that were it not for the Gravity of the Doctor's Character, and the Seriousness of the Subject, the Reader might have thought himself obliged to understand them both *ironically*. But if the Doctor meant no more by this, than to buy a Peace with the Clergy, it must however be said, that he gave more for the Purchase of it, than a Man of a *scrupulous* Conscience would have given.

However, the Compliment paid to this modest Gentleman (who to be sure, will now never be able to let the World know his Name) seems to have been comfortably received in secret, by the ample Return he has made the Doctor for it, in his new Book. Where, speaking of a Part of the Doctor's Performance, he says, 'For this Answer, I must refer the Reader to the *D. L.* where he

* *Critical Inquiry*, &c., published 1746.

† *Preface to the Critical Inquiry*, page 10.

‡ *D. L.*, vol. ii., Preface, page 6.

'will find the Subject handled with that Force, Solidity, and Precision of Argument, which so *eminently distinguish* the Author from *all his Co-temporaries*.'

I shall now only just observe, that the *Compliment* made by the Doctor to the Clergy, has here very much Abatement made to it, by his great *Ally*.—For as Matters now stand, if this very Clergy, Good, Learned, and Christian, beyond anything ever heard of in the World before, should one and all unite in opposing the Doctor, all that they could possibly get by their Pains, would be only to show, how *eminently he stands distinguished* by Force, Solidity, and Precision of Argument from *all his Co-temporaries*.

But no more of this. Doctor *Warburton* grounds his Scheme upon the Doctrine of the Old, and the New Testament. But seeing he affirms that to be of the *greatest Weight*, which is taken from the New Testament, and this Author also begins there, I shall do so likewise.

First, I shall clearly evince, that there is not in all the New Testament, one single Text, which either in the Letter, or the Spirit proves, or has the least Tendency, or Design to prove, that the *Immortality* of the Soul, or its *perpetual Duration* after the Death of the Body, was not an *universal, commonly* received Opinion in, and through every Age of the World from *Adam* to Christ. *Secondly*, that this Doctrine, or Belief of a future State, was not *designedly secreted*, or *industriously hidden* from the Eyes of the People of God by *Moses*, neither by the Types and Figures of the Law, nor by any other Part of his Writings.—From whence I shall occasionally show, that the true *Ground, Method* and *Power* of Christian Redemption to eternal Life, preached by the Apostles, began with *Adam*, was the Religion of *Adam*, and all his Descendants. And also, that the Writings of *Moses*, and the Patriarchal Faith, give the *very same full* Proof of the Immortality of the Soul, or a future State, as the Gospel doth.

It must be needless, I think, to observe that the whole Merits of the Debate, betwixt Doctor *Warburton* on the one Side, and the whole Christian Church of all Ages, on the other Side, lie wholly in these Particulars, which, if they can be made good, the whole costly Fabric of the Doctor's *projected Defence of Christianity* (as he calls it), built at the Expense of such immense Treasures of Learning, fetched from all Quarters of the ancient, and modern World, must have the Fate which always happens to Castles built in the Air.

This learned Writer, to show, that the Immortality of the Soul, or its perpetual Duration in a future State, was entirely unknown in all the former Dispensations of God, until the coming of Christ, begins with this Passage of *St. Paul*. 'God

‘hath saved us according to his own Purpose, and his Grace which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the World began. But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished Death, and hath brought Life and Immortality to Light, through the Gospel.’

On which Words he thus proceeds: ‘We are told, that God, before the World began, had decreed to restore Mankind, to that lost Inheritance of eternal Life, which they should forfeit by the Disobedience of our first Parents. It is added, that this secret Purpose, and Design, was now at last made manifest, by the appearing of Christ, who hath abolished Death, and brought Life, and Immortality to Light by the Gospel. The Apostle mentions two Periods, one, when it was originally formed in the secret Counsels of God, the other, when it was published and revealed. The Opposition between these two States, seems necessarily to imply, that during the Interval, it remained a Secret.—If the Apostle may be allowed to be his own Interpreter, it will be easy to establish this Exposition by a parallel Passage in the Epistle to *Titus*. *In hope of eternal Life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the World began, but hath in due Time manifested his Word through Preaching.* Agreeably to this, the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, assures us, that the *great Salvation of the Gospel*, that is, the *Promise of eternal Life, first began to be spoken by the Lord*. But how could He be the first who taught this Doctrine, if *Moses* and the Prophets had taught it long before? Or how did He *begin* to speak of that, which so many others had been commissioned to teach before? Sometimes we are told, that Life and Immortality are brought to Light, sometimes that it was made manifest, sometimes that it first began to be spoken by Jesus Christ. The bringing to Light, and making manifest, are equivalent to the other of beginning first to teach. And if so, the Publication ascribed to Jesus Christ, must have been the first, and original Publication, and not merely the illustrating, or giving new Splendour to a Doctrine, by the Addition of one, or more Circumstances, unknown before. However, an eminent Writer (meaning your Lordship) assures us, that Jesus Christ did not give the first Notice of this Doctrine. All that I need remark upon it, is, that this Assurance seems directly to contradict the Word of Inspiration.’

Your Lordship has also said, that the ancient Revelations afforded a good Proof of a future State. This Writer makes great show of Triumph over this most true and well-grounded Assertion, and is continually bringing it forth as a Proof of your Inconsistency, both with yourself, and the Apostles.

But to follow him further: 'St. Paul,' saith he, 'observes, that Jesus Christ was sent to show Light to the People, that is, to the Jews, and to the Gentiles. It is plain from hence, that he was a Light to the first, in the same Sense, in which he was a Light to the last; and therefore as he was a Light to the Gentiles, by Revealing the Mystery of Redemption, in a Restoration to Life and Immortality, to them absolutely unknown, it seems to follow, that he also enlightened the Jews, by the Manifestation of a Truth equally unknown.—Agreeably to this Account of Things, Zacharias, in his Prophecy upon the Birth of John Baptist, says, "The Day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give Light to them that sat in Darkness, and in the Shadow of Death, to guide our Feet into the Way of Peace." A Description, which will by no means permit us to suppose, that they were enlightened with a good Proof of a future State. If they had been enlightened with such a Proof, they would have been in the Region of Life and Immortality, and not in the Verge and Shadow of Death. They would not have been sitting in Darkness, but walking in the Light, if they actually saw the grand Object in Question: How consistent it is, to assign a good View of an Object, to a People sitting in Darkness, must be left to the Judgment of others. However, this seems to be the necessary Consequence of affirming, that the Jews had a good Proof of a future Life.'

This is the glaring Contradiction, which he is continually charging upon your Lordship throughout his whole Book. Again he attacks your Lordship thus, from your own Words: 'St. Peter, says his Lordship, tells all Christians, that they are called out of Darkness into a marvellous Light. Ask the Evangelists, they will tell you, "The Day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give Light to them that sit in Darkness, and in the Shadow of Death." Ask any, or all the Apostles, and they will tell you, their Commission is, to open the Eyes of the People, and turn them from Darkness unto Light. But how could the Jewish People have a good View or Prospect of Life, and Immortality, if their Eyes were not opened? How could they be called out of Darkness, if their Situation presented them with a good View of an Object, which they were now first invited to behold? And how could they sit in the Shadow of Death, if they had been favoured with a good Proof of a future State?

'It would be ridiculous to say, that they sat in Darkness, or that they had not their Eyes, merely, because they did not see the Object in its full Proportions, or Extent, or had not an exact View of every distinct and minute Part, and the Oppor-

'tunity of examining and surveying it quite round. The sitting 'in Darkness and the Shadow of Death, evidently implies a total 'Absence and Want of Light, by which the People thus circum-'stanced, were to be enlightened ; it being impossible to express 'the most absolute and entire Ignorance in more significant, and 'emphatic Terms.'*

I have here, my Lord, made these large Quotations from this Author, containing all his chief Texts of Scripture, and his comments upon them, in his own Words, that there might be no Complaint of my robbing his Arguments of any of their Force, or of leaving out anything material ; for all that he further says on this Subject, whether in defence of the Doctor, or against your Lordship, is but mere Repetition.

I shall now show, that all his Reasoning upon these Texts is false in itself, and nothing *at all* to the Purpose, as not touching in the *least degree* the *one great Point* in Question, which is the *Doctrine or Belief of a future State*, or the Immortality of the Soul in a Life after this.—And this I shall do, by making it evidently plain, that not one of the Texts he has appealed to, nor any other in all the New Testament, proves, or has the *least Tendency or Design* to prove, that the *Doctrine or Belief of the Soul's Immortality*, and a *future State*, was not known in and through every Age of the World, before the coming of Christ in the Flesh.

This will be sufficiently done, by showing, that the Doctrine of the *Immortality* of the Soul, or the *Certainty of its future Existence* in some kind of Happiness or Misery in another Life, is a *Matter* about which these Texts say not a Syllable, but leave it as untouched as the Doctrine of the Pre-existence of Souls.

If it be asked then, What is the great *Discovery*, new *Light* and *Knowledge*, declared in these Texts, as *newly made known* to the World by the Gospel? It is answered, that the *one only* Thing meant both by the Letter and Spirit of all these, and every other the like Passages of Scripture, speaking of that *Mystery*, new *Light*, *Discovery* or *Knowledge made known* by the Gospel, and *unknown* before, is *strictly* and *absolutely* nothing else, means nothing else, points at nothing else, and has nothing else implied in it, but the *one whole Process* of Christ, in his *Personality*, his *Birth*, his *Life*, his *Sufferings*, his *Death*, his *Resurrection*, and *Ascension* into Heaven. This, and this alone, namely, The whole Process of Christ, in all these important *Particulars* of it, is the *great Salvation*, the *great Mystery*, the *hidden Wisdom* of God, &c., kept *secret* from the Foundation of the

World, and not manifested, nor *possible* to be manifested, but by Christ himself *entering* into, and going *through* all the Parts of this Process.—Of this Process *alone* it is, that the Apostles speak, when they declare the Mystery opened in the Gospel, to have been a Mystery kept secret since the World began; and the Reason why it was so is plain, because it must be a Secret, and continue such, till what was contained in it came into *actual Existence*, and thereby manifested itself. For as Light can only manifest itself by coming into Existence, so the Mystery implied in Christ's Process, could only manifest itself, and nothing but its full actual Existence in all its Parts, could possibly be its Manifestation.

Of this Process alone, and its wonderful Effects, it is that the Apostles speak, when they glory of the *Abolishment* of Death, and of that *Life* and *Immortality* brought to Light through the Gospel. Because it is the Gospel alone, that manifests the *actual Existence* of this Process of Christ in all its Parts, in and by which *alone* Death has its *Abolishment*, and Life its true *Resurrection*. Nor do they ever speak of any *Light*, *Life*, or *Knowledge*, as *formerly* the hidden Wisdom of God, and *now* made manifest to the World, but *solely* that *Light*, that *Life*, and that *Knowledge*, which arises from, or is contained in some one or other, or all the Parts of our Saviour's Process, as the one *only possible* and actual Redeemer of the World, in and by, and through *that* Process.

That this is, and must be the plain full Truth of the Matter, *viz.*, That the *one only* Thing, or Mystery discovered to the World by the Light of the Gospel, is *solely* the one *whole Process* of Christ, must be acknowledged by every considerate Man, even from the Nature of the Thing itself.—For what can the Mystery of the Gospel be, but the Mystery of Christ, as a Saviour, made known to the World? And what can the Mystery of Christ, as a Saviour made known be, but the Manifestation of *what* He is in himself, in the Power of his *Personality*, in the Efficacy of his *Birth* in our Flesh, in the blessed Effects and Consequences of his *Life*, his *Sufferings*, his *Death*, *Resurrection*, and *Ascension* into Heaven, as our *second Adam*, or Father of a new, heavenly Birth of the Divine Nature, derived into us by his wonderful Process in all its Parts.

Now as all these Particulars make up the *whole Manifestation* of the Mystery opened in the Gospel, so there is not in any of these Parts of our Saviour's Process, the least *Implication*, or most distant *Hint* given, that the Doctrine of a *future State*, was not as *soon*, as *universally*, and *constantly* known and believed, as the *Fall* of Man was. Nor do they any more imply, or suppose *such Ignorance*, than they imply, or suppose the Fall of Man

not known, till Christ came in the Flesh.—Now that which is not taught in, and by the *Process* of Christ, cannot be taught by the Manifestation of the Gospel Mystery. But in all our Saviour's Process, there is not the least Possibility of making any Part of it to prove, that the *natural Immortality* of the Soul, or its *certain Destination* to a future Life after this, was not the common Belief, and Expectation of every Age of the World from *Adam* to Christ.

For this wonderful Process of Christ, which is the whole Mystery opened in the Gospel, is about quite *another kind* of Life in the Soul, than that which is implied, or consists in its *bare Immortality*. For Immortality, considered in itself, as a *physical Necessity* of its continuing in Life for ever, may as well be a Curse as a Blessing, and have Heaven or Hell for its Portion. But this is not the Life and Immortality that the Gospel boasts of. It leaves such *natural Immortality*, which belongs as well to the Spirits of Devils as of Men, as wholly untouched, as it does the Original of the Alphabet. And all for this Reason, because the *one Knowledge* which the former World wanted, and the Christian World got, is by all the Evangelists and Apostles solely *confined to that*, which Christ, as God and Man, *was, did, suffered, purchased, and obtained*, in and through the Power, Efficacy and Merits of his Process, till as a second *Adam*, he was placed at the right Hand of God in Heaven, with full Power of drawing all Men to himself.

It is the *living Knowledge*, the real *Participation* of all these efficacious, meritorious *Parts* of our Saviour's Character and Process, as a God incarnate, that contains *all that Life and Immortality*, all the glad Tidings of Salvation, and Light out of Darkness, made known to the World by Christ and his Apostles. Nor do they ever call the Attention of Mankind to any *other new* Light or Knowledge, but that of *seeing and knowing*, how every *Part* of Christ's Process had its particular and joint Efficacy, to destroy the Works of the Devil, and the Power of Hell in fallen Man.

This was the good News of *Life and Immortality* brought to Light by a glorious Gospel, which showed the whole Counsel of God towards fallen Men; how they were before the Foundation of the World seen in Christ Jesus, *predestinated to be made conformable to his Image*, who by all that He *was, did and suffered*, from his first coming down, to his Ascension into Heaven, was the *one, only possible and infallible* means of their *partaking again of the Divine Nature*.

Christ by his Process, became the Lord and Redeemer, the *Quickener* and Reviver of fallen Man, an *over-ruling Principle* of

a Divine Life in all faithful Souls, by which, of Children of Wrath, and Heirs of *eternal Death*, they became Sons of God, and true Heirs of Christ's Glory and Ascension into Heaven, in and by the same Reality of a Divine Birth from him, as they were by Nature really born in *Adam's Sin*, and Heirs of his Misery in a cursed World.—This is the *one Life and Immortality first* made known by the Gospel.—Every Step of our Saviour's Process from first to last, was only so many necessary Steps of our Progress out of *the eternal Death* of Sin and Misery, into a Participation of an heavenly Life in Christ Jesus. And in the Boundary of this Process is solely contained all that Christian Theology, which makes up the whole Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles.—The Matter therefore plainly stands thus. *First*, the whole Mystery opened in the Gospel, neither is, nor can be any Thing else, but the *Existence and Knowledge* of this Process, and the Necessity and Efficacy of every Part of it, to change and purify the whole sinful State and Nature of fallen Man, and to bring again the eternal WORD, and SPIRIT of God into the *natural Life* of his Soul.—This is the *one Immortality* of Christians, which whether it be called the *one new Birth*, the *one Salvation*, matters not, for the Thing solely meant by everyone of these three Expressions is but one and the same.—Not one jot either more or less is meant by *Life and Immortality*, than is meant by the *new Birth* from above, nor is *Salvation* any Thing else in itself, but the new Birth of the WORD and SPIRIT of God in our Souls.—And every Soul that obtains not this *one new Birth*, obtains nothing of the *one Immortality* preached by the Gospel, but abideth in *that Immortality* of fallen Angels, which is, and is called *eternal Death*.—It is by this wonderful Relation between God and Man, *begun and finished* by the Process of Christ in our Flesh, that we by Faith are united with him, He in us, and we in Him. And this *Union* with Christ, not for a Time, but to all Eternity, purchased for us by all that He *was, did, suffered and obtained*, this *essential Union* with Christ, is our *Participation* of that *one Life and Immortality* made known by the Gospel. Which Life and Immortality is quite different from that natural immortal Duration of Souls, whether good or bad, and means nothing else, consists in nothing else, but in an *acquired Birth* of the heavenly Nature, and Righteousness of Christ in our Souls, begun by his Power in us in this World, and to abide in us, as the Glory of our Life, to all Eternity.—It is this our *real, vital, essential Union* with an eternal Jesus Christ dwelling in us, and we in him, that is the *new Immortality* which the Gospel alone could, and has made known to us.

Not a Word of any Life, but the *one Life* of God, not a Word

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of any Immortality, but the *one* immortal, heavenly Nature, and Holiness of Christ brought to Light in our Souls, is ever thought of or mentioned through all Scripture, as purchased for us by the precious Blood, and Merits of Christ.

And the Reason of this is very plain, for it was solely the Loss of the *Light, Life* and *Spirit* of God in the Soul, it was this State of the Soul fallen from a Life of God, into an *endless* Slavery under its own *immortal, satanical* Nature, that wanted, and only could be helped by such a Process of a God incarnate; not to continue the Soul in its *Immortality*, or *perpetual Duration*, not to inform the World of *such a Duration*, but to make known to Man, that by a *new Grant of a new heavenly Birth*, obtained by the Process of Christ, his *natural State of Duration* should be made an immortal, never-ceasing *Participation*, and *Fruition* of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, dwelling again in Man, as their redeemed Image and Likeness to all Eternity.

No Power of Reasoning, no Art of Criticism, can force one single Text of the New Testament to speak, or so much as hint at any *other* Life or Immortality but this, *as first* made known to the World by the Gospel.—The *natural Immortality* of the Soul, or its *physical Necessity of never ceasing to live*, whether happy or miserable, is no Part of its Redemption, but belongs to it as it belongs to all Angels, whether in *Heaven* or in *Hell*, and is an Immortality no more purchased for Man by the Incarnation of the Son of God, than the Immortality which belongs to *Lucifer* and his Angels, is purchased for them by it.—Therefore *that* Immortality which is *natural* and *essential* to the Creature, and is one and the *same Thing*, from one and the same Cause, in *Angels, Devils*, and the *Souls of Men*, cannot be *that* Immortality, which is the *Gift* of God through Jesus Christ. And therefore nothing that is said of *that* Immortality, which *comes* to fallen Man *first*, and *only* by Jesus Christ, can be the least Proof, that the Doctrine or Belief of the Soul's perpetual Existence in a future State came *first*, or *only* by Him, and was not always held by every Age, from the Beginning of the World.—For these two Immortalities are so different and distant from one another, in their whole Nature, that nothing that is said of the one, can be understood of the other. They are as contrary to one another, as Happiness and Misery.

Natural Immortality has its *full* Nature and *Perfection* in the fallen Angels, it cannot be *better* or *higher* in itself than it is in them; but the *one Immortality* that comes by Jesus Christ, is the *Glory* of the holy Trinity dwelling and manifesting itself in the *immortal creaturely Nature* of the Soul, as it does in the immortal Nature of Angels in Heaven.

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For this is a certain Truth, founded in the immutable Nature of Things, that all *that is Divine and God-like* in any Creature, dwells as a *supernatural Gift* or Operation of God in it ; which may be lost, as it was in Angels, and *Adam* ; and can be kept by no other Power but that of *Faith, Adherence* and *Resignation* to God ; nor regained, when lost, but by the Return of that same Faith, and full Resignation to God. So that the *natural Immortality* of Angels or Men, is nothing else but their Capacity or Fitness to receive the never-ending, but always increasing Manifestation of Divine Glory in, and through all their natural Powers. And this is the one Immortality made known, and purchased for us through the blessed Jesus, being and doing what he *was* and *did*, in our poor *immortal* Nature, that had *lost* its God.

But to consider now the Texts of the New Testament, on which this Author has endeavoured to establish Dr. *Warburton's* Opinion. The first and chief of these is that of St. *Paul*, in these Words : ' God hath saved us, according to his own Purpose, and ' his Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the World ' began. But is now made manifest by the appearing of our ' Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished Death, and brought ' Life and Immortality to light through the Gospel.'

Now every Word in this Passage excludes all Thought and Regard to the *natural Immortality* of the Soul, and necessarily *leads* and *confines* us to that *one* Life and Immortality above mentioned, namely, to a Life and Immortality of the *heavenly Nature* and *Goodness* of Christ, born and brought forth in our Souls, as their *immortal Treasure*.—For the Life and Immortality here granted to us, or obtained by us, is expressly affirmed to be effected by Christ's *Abolishment* of Death. Therefore as is the *Death* here *abolished*, such must be the *Life* that is contrary to it, or brought forth in the Stead of it.

The *Death* here abolished is not the *natural Mortality* of Body or Soul, but is that same individual Death, whose Destruction is declared in these Words of the Apostle, ' Christ was manifested ' to destroy the Works of the Devil ' ; the Destruction of which is the *one true* Abolishment of the Death here spoken of, and from that Destruction comes forth the *one true Life* and *Immortality*, which is an *eternal Union* of *Righteousness* in and with Christ, as a *Principle* of a Divine Life eternally dwelling in us. That this is the *one* only meaning of the Death abolished by Christ, is evident from the whole Letter and Spirit of Scripture.—For the Death that Christ has abolished, or delivered us from, is the *deadly* Nature of Sin in the Soul.—Death and the Evil of Sin in the Soul, are everywhere considered as one and the same Thing, and *Life* and *Immortality* as *coming from Christ*, are

everywhere considered as the *holy* and *heavenly* Nature of Christ *begotten* in us, and triumphing over *this Death* or *evil of Sin* in our Souls, for ever and ever.

Thus, 'There is no Condemnation' (that is, no Sentence or Power of Death) 'to them which are in Christ Jesus.' Therefore, *to be in Christ Jesus*, is to have *that Life and Immortality* which is brought forth by *his Abolishment* of Death; which Life, and Immortality of Life, is neither more nor less than what is expressed in these Words of the Apostle, 'Christ in us, the Hope 'of Glory.' The Apostle goes on, 'For the Law of the Spirit of 'Life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the Law of Sin 'and Death.' Sin therefore and Death are one and the same Thing, and Life and Immortality mean only and solely the *Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, dwelling* in us.

Therefore, the Life and Immortality here said to be brought to Light by the Gospel, hath no reference to the *natural Duration* or *Immortality* of Souls, but only and solely to a *new Birth* and *Life* of the holy Jesus, brought forth in the Soul by the Abolishment of the Death, or Power of Sin in it.

Again, 'To be carnally minded,' saith the Apostle, 'is Death,' this is the *one Death* that Christ is here said to abolish; 'but to 'be spiritually minded is Life and Peace;' and this is the *one Life* and *Immortality* of Life that Christ sets up in the *Stead* of Death, by making us *spiritually* minded, or as St. Peter words it, 'Partakers of the Divine Nature, by which we are made Children of 'God, and if Children, then Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with 'Christ.'

Therefore to be *joint Heirs with Christ*, by having the *Nature* of Christ brought *to Life* in us, is the *one Life, and Immortality* of Life *first* made known by the Gospel; not an Immortality considered as a Duration of the Soul's Existence, but an *immortal Participation* of, and ever *enduring Union* with the one Life, Light and Spirit of Christ.

The Nature of the *Death* said to be abolished, and the Nature of the *Life and Immortality* that was contrary to it, is fully set forth by that Contrariety which is between the State of the Law, and the State of Grace, which came by Jesus Christ.

The State of Man under the Law is called *the Ministration of Death*, and *the Ministration of Condemnation*, and this is the *Death* and *Condemnation*, abolished by Christ, as the Apostle expressly affirms, saying, 'The Law of the Spirit of Life in 'Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the Law of Sin and 'Death;' therefore the Death abolished, is the one Death of Sin, and the one Immortality, is the *Spirit of Life*, or ever enduring Holiness of Christ brought to Life in us.

Again, the Apostle says, 'if there had been a Law given, which could have given Life, Righteousness should have been by the Law.'

A plain Demonstration, that *Life* and *Righteousness* are put for one another, and are only two Words for *one and the same* Thing; and that therefore Life and Immortality of Life given us by Jesus Christ, is *strictly* and *absolutely* the one Life and Immortality of Righteousness, in, and from Christ's *Nature* and *Spirit* brought to *Life* in us.

Again, 'If by one Man's Offence, Death reigned by one, much more they which receive the Gift of Righteousness, shall reign in Life by one, Christ Jesus.' Therefore to *reign in Life* with Christ Jesus, or to have the everlasting Gift and Power of his Righteousness in us, is *one* and the *same* Thing, and the *one only* Life and Immortality of Life, that was *first* made known to the World by the Gospel.

Further, St. *John* saith, 'This is the Record, that God hath given unto us eternal Life,' surely this is the *one Immortality* brought to Light by the Gospel. But to show us *what*, and *wherein* this immortal, or eternal Life consists, the Apostle adds, 'and this Life is in his Son: He that hath the Son, hath Life, and he that hath not the Son, hath not Life.'

Therefore this Immortality, or eternal Life given unto us of God, not only has nothing in it concerning the *natural Immortality* of Souls, but is necessarily to be understood of quite another Matter.

For they only can have *this* eternal Life given to them of God, who *have the Son*; therefore it has no relation to the *natural* Immortality of Souls, and they can *only have the Son*, of whom it can be truly said, that 'Christ is of God become Wisdom and Righteousness, and Sanctification to them.'

From all these Passages, the Proof is as strong, as words can make any Thing to be, that the *one Immortality of Life first made known* by the Gospel, is, and can be in itself, nothing else, but the *one* immortal *Life, Spirit* and *Righteousness* of Christ, *begotten* and *brought to Light* in our Souls, in, and by, and through the efficacious Power, and availing Merits of all that he was, did, suffered and obtained in our Nature.

This Truth is further confirmed to us by Christ himself, who in a Variety of the strongest Forms of Expression, has confined *all Life* to himself, and shown us, that nothing is, or can be eternal Life *given unto us of God*, but solely that Life, which we have from him, by our *full Union* with, and *Existence* in Him, as the Branch is, and has its Life in and from the Vine, on which it grows.

Thus, 'I am the *Way*, the *Truth* and the *Life*,' therefore *no other* Life manifested by Him, but the *one Life*, that is in Him, no other Immortality offered, or made known to *his*, but the ever *enduring Union* of his immortal Holiness of Life, brought forth by a Birth of his Nature, and Spirit in them.

Again, 'He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet 'shall he live.' How dead? Why in the Death of Sin? How live? Why in a *Life* free from the *Death* of Sin, obtained by the righteous Life of Christ begotten in Him. Therefore *Christ in us*, is the *one Immortality* of Life, which we have from Him.

Again, 'Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and 'drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you.' Therefore no Life, or Immortality of Life brought to Light by Christ Jesus, as a *new Doctrine*, first made known to the World by Him, but the *one Immortality*, which is only to be had by *eating his Flesh*, and *drinking his Blood*.

'Whoso eateth my Flesh and drinketh my Blood, hath eternal 'Life.' Surely *this* eternal Life, is the *one Immortality* of Life, brought to Light by the Gospel, and consequently no possibility of its being understood of the *natural Immortality* of Souls, or their *physical* Power of perpetual *Duration* in their creaturely Life.

For how ridiculous would it be, to say, that Souls, or Spirits, could have no Life of *Natural Duration*, *except they did eat the Flesh and drink the Blood* of Christ? And yet this must be said both of the Devils, and damned Souls, if the immortal Life here spoken of, as only possible to be had from this eating of Christ's Flesh and Blood, could possibly mean a *natural Duration*, or *Immortality* of Souls.

Further, the Reason given by our blessed Lord, for this eating, &c., is a still further Proof of all that has been urged above. 'He 'that eateth my Flesh and drinketh my Blood, dwelleth in me, 'and I in Him.' Therefore the eating the Flesh of Christ, is *Eternal Life*, for this only Reason, because by such eating, *Christ dwelleth in us, and we in Him*.

Therefore our *dwelling* in Christ, and *He in us*, is the *one eternal*, or *immortal Life*, *only* and *first* made known by the coming of Christ; further asserted in these other words: 'as I live by the 'Father, so He that eateth me, even He shall live by me.' Therefore no Life or Immortality of Life offered to Christians, but such an *intimate essential Unity*, or Oneness of Life, in and with Christ, as is that of the Son, in and with the Father. Agreeable to this Unity is the Prayer of Christ for all that are, or shall be 'his, that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in 'Thee, that they also may be one in us:—I in them, and Thou 'in me, that they may be made perfect in one.'

As another full Proof of all that has been said, it may be added, that the Life and Immortality brought to Light by the Gospel, is *purely conditional*, and only offered to Mankind, as a *Gift of God*, upon *certain Terms*. And therefore does not, cannot mean an Immortality of the Soul's *creaturely Life*, or its *perpetual natural Duration* in a future State.

Thus, 'God gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life. Ye will not come to me, that ye may have Life.' Therefore the Immortality of Life revealed by the Gospel, is *purely conditional*, and *adventitious* to the Soul, such as may be received, or not received, and consequently cannot possibly be, or mean a *natural Immortality*, or perpetual Existence of the Soul, for such Immortality, if belonging to the Soul, is the Immortality of its own creaturely Life, which it has no Power of freely receiving, or not receiving upon *Terms*.

'My Sheep,' saith Christ, 'hear my Voice, and I give unto them eternal Life, and they shall never perish.' Now if by eternal Life, was here meant the *eternal Duration* of the Soul's creaturely Life, then it would certainly follow, that those who *perish*, because they have not this eternal Life, would be proved to lose their natural Existence, and become totally annihilated. So plain is it in the highest Degree, from all Scripture, that the Gospel does not *first* make known to the World an Immortality of Life, considered as the *perpetual Duration* of its creaturely Life, but *only* and *solely* sets forth such an *Immortality of Life*, as has no necessary Connection with the creaturely Life of the Soul; but may belong to it, or not belong to it, be received, or not received by it, according to its Faith, or want of Faith in God and Christ.

For if the natural Duration of the Soul, was not a Thing entirely distinct from, and independent of *this Immortality* made known by the Gospel, how could the Soul be capable either of receiving such a Promise, or the Thing promised? Must not that which receives, be distinct, and different from that which is received? Therefore the Immortality, made known as the Gift of God to the Soul, is, and must be a Life quite *distinct*, and *different* from the *natural, creaturely Life* that receives it. It has only, and solely the Nature of a Blessing; therefore as that which wants, and is capable of being blessed, must have its own Nature and Existence in itself, of quite a different Kind from the Blessing, that may, or may not be bestowed upon it; so it is with the *natural Life* of the Soul, it must have an Existence in itself, entirely different in Nature and Kind, from that Blessing of a heavenly *Immortality*, freely given by God to it, which is

nothing else but a celestial *Holiness, Purity, and Perfection* brought forth in the Soul, by its having the eternal WORD and SPIRIT of God again restored to, and united with it; called *Immortality*, not because of its *eternal Duration*, but because *eternally free from all that, which is Death*, or the deadly Evil of Sin in the Soul; called also so, in Opposition to that *natural Immortality*, or Duration of Devils, and damned Souls, which though never ceasing, is only an *eternal Death*, not because it wants Life, but because the *Image and Likeness of God* is no longer living in it.—So that no Argument, from what is said of the Life and Immortality made known by the Gospel, can be drawn into a Proof, that the Doctrine, or Belief of a future State, was not the general Belief of the World before. Because the Immortality preached by the Gospel, is a Thing quite distinct and different from the natural, perpetual Duration of the Soul, and means neither more, nor less, than that *Glory, and Perfection of a Divine Life*, to which *Adam* died the very Day that He did eat of the forbidden Tree, and which is quickened and revived again, in and by the whole Process of Christ in our Nature. Which *Glory of a Divine Life*, whether it be called, the *Image and Likeness of God*, as in the Creation of *Adam*, or a being *born again* of the SPIRIT, and WORD, as in our Regeneration, or *Life and Immortality*, as by *St. Paul*; only one and the same Thing is meant by all these three different Expressions. For it is just one and the same Divine Truth to say, that *Life and Immortality* was brought to Light by the Creation of *Adam*, as to say that *Life and Immortality* was brought to Light by Jesus Christ; for as Christ came only to *seek, and restore* that which was *lost*, so the Life and Immortality which came by him, is that *same Life and Immortality*, which first *came to Light* in and by the Creation of *Adam*, or He could not have fallen from it, or wanted the Restoration of it by Jesus Christ. Therefore all that is meant by Life and Immortality coming *only* by Jesus Christ, is only this, that He, by all that He *was and did*, and suffered, and obtained by his Process, was the *first and only possible Restorer* of that heavenly Purity and Perfection in Man, which was *first* brought to Light in and by the Creation of *Adam*.—And to say, that this Life and Immortality was *first* made *known*, and *published* from Heaven, by the Creation of *Adam*, is the same Divine and indubitable Truth, as to say, that *Adam* was created in the *Image and Likeness of God*.

I come now, my Lord, to my second Proposition, namely, to show, that the *Doctrine of a future State*, or the Immortality of the Soul, was not *designedly secreted*, or *industriously hidden* from the Eyes of the People of God by the Types and Figures of the

Mosaic Dispensation.—My Reasons for it are as follow. *First*, because it is a groundless Fiction and highly unworthy of God, to suppose, that it was, or could be the Nature and End of those Types and Figures, designedly to *secrete*, or industriously to *hide* from the People of God, the Knowledge or Perception of *any Truth*, natural, or Divine, much less the Knowledge of a Truth, absolutely *necessary*, and essential to the very Possibility of any spiritual Relation, or religious Communication between God and Man, as that of the Immortality of the Soul, is, and must be.—For though the Mosaic State, may be justly called a *Shadow of Death*, because the Power of Death, or Sin, was not destroyed in it, and a *Region of Darkness*, when compared to that *Light* which has arisen from the *Process* of Christ; yet considered as it was in itself, and so far as it went, and could go, and with regard to the People under it, it was a Degree of *Light*, and a Degree of *Life*, it was *some Progress* in the Victory over Death, it was *some opening* of Divine Light, a true Help to such kind of Knowledge, as could be had in such a State, as was only formed to support, and keep up a Faith, and Hope, and Expectation of such a Redemption to come, as had been promised from the Beginning of the World, but could have no open Manifestation in, or through any Age, till its *own Existence* manifested itself.—It is therefore a gross Mistaking the *whole Nature* of the Law, to consider its Types and Figures as *designedly* covering, or hiding any Thing from the Knowledge of Man.—Their Design was quite the Contrary, namely, to convey *new Light*, and *further Information*. And though they may be said to be a *shadowy*, and imperfect Representation, yet its whole Meaning, and Intent is, to lead to, and give some Knowledge of the Substance; and by its Marks and Signs to make the Things to come be more expected, than they would have been without such Types and Figures.

Doctor Warburton, speaking of typical Representation, saith, 'it necessarily implies the throwing a Thing into Shade, and 'secreting it from vulgar Knowledge.'

Typical Representation, in the *Law*, is not, cannot be the *Throwing a Thing into Shade*, or *secreting* it from *vulgar Knowledge*. For this supposes the Thing typified to have been already *in Existence*, or it could not be *thrown* into Shade, or *secreted* from vulgar Knowledge. But all this hath no Place in the Mosaic Types and Figures, they are not the putting any Thing *already Existent*, under a Cover from Inspection, but are a *Degree* of Light cast upon such a Matter, as had *never shown* itself, and which could therefore only be typically intimated, or pointed at, till it came into actual Existence.

Again, that typical Representation does not *necessarily imply, the throwing a Thing into Shade, and secreting it from vulgar Knowledge*, is plain from hence.—Water-Baptism, and Bread and Wine in the Sacrament, are certainly, and merely corporeal Types and Figures of spiritual Things; but if it was *necessarily essential* to typical Representation, *to throw Things into Shade, and secrete them from vulgar Knowledge*, it would necessarily follow, that these two Sacraments could have no other End, but to cast the spiritual Things of the Gospel into Shade, and Darkness, and secrete them from vulgar Knowledge. Type, Figure, and human Language, with regard to spiritual Things, have the same *kind* of Imperfection, though not in the same *Degree*, but yet teaching and informing, is the End and Design of both of them.

Of the Mosaic Types therefore it may justly be affirmed, that they were so far from *designedly* hiding, or covering any Truths from Man, that their whole Nature and Intent was, to *uncover*, and make *less hidden* (as far as they could) such Things as at that Time, could not be *seen*, or *known* as they were in themselves.—For nothing could possibly manifest the real Nature, Power, Operation and Efficacy of Christ's Process (the one only Thing typified) but its own real Nature, its own full Power, and redeeming Efficacy, come into *actual Existence in all its Parts*.—Therefore through every Age of the World, from the first Promise made to *Adam*, of a *Seed of the Woman to bruise the Head of the Serpent*, to that Time, all the religious Goodness of Mankind consisted in their *walking before God* in an *implicit Faith* of a full Redemption, made known to them under the Representation of a Seed of the Woman, overcoming the Mischief that the Serpent had done to them.—And through this *Faith alone* it was, that all the holy Men of old had their Righteousness, and Peace, and Union with God. And 'God was not 'ashamed to be called their God, inasmuch as having received 'the Promises, and seen them afar off, and embraced them, they 'confessed they were Strangers and Pilgrims on Earth, desired 'a heavenly Country, and through Faith looked for a City whose 'Builder and Maker is God.'

Hence are the following great Truths of Religion undeniably evident, (1) That *Faith in Christ*, has always been, and always must be, the *one only* Ground of all Righteousness, and Salvation possible to Man, in any Age of the World, past, present, or to come. (2) That *this Faith* itself, and all its Power and Efficacy, has *always*, as fully proceeded from Christ *alone*, as the Faith of those who believed in him, when come in the Flesh. For as then Christ truly said of himself, *without me ye can do nothing*, so it was equally true of the first promised Seed of the Woman, *that*

without it, nothing good could have been done by fallen Man. No *Abel*, no *Seth*, *Enoch*, or *Noah*, &c., could have appeared amongst Mankind. (3) Not a Son of *Adam*, but has the *first Seed* of the Woman within him, the very same *seed* and *Power* of Christ in his Soul, from whence all the Saints of God, both before, and since the Birth of Christ, have had all their Holiness, Purity and Perfection.

Therefore, (4) the Covenant of God with all Mankind through Christ, is a *living, operative* Covenant of *Life* and *Immortality*, not *first* begun, or first made *known*, when Christ was on Earth, and died for us, but a Covenant as *ancient* as our first Parents, as *universal* as their Offspring; everywhere, and in all Ages of the World, *vitally present* to, and actually *operative* in every Man that is born of a Woman, from the Beginning to the End of Time.—And what the Apostle saith, that ‘God was in Christ’ Jesus reconciling the World unto himself,’ tells us a Truth and Goodness of God, that equally respects, and extends itself to every Nation, People, and Language, that ever hath been, or ever shall be upon the Face of the Earth.—*Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*, Heathens, Turks, Jews, and Christians, are all from one Parent, and all in *one* and the *same* Covenant of Life. For the *Seed* of the Woman, the true and only Source of a heavenly Birth of Life, is with, and in them all, however they may in their several, and different Ways, act and rebel against it.—Yet this is an eternal Truth, that God’s Covenant standeth sure and steadfast, and no Man, wherever born, can possibly *be separated from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus*; it will always be *active*, and *operative* in every Individual of human Nature, till the last, great Separation of all that is Good, from all that is Evil, and the *End* shall be again in the *Beginning*.

But to return. As an *implicit Faith* in a promised Redemption, was all the Religion of the old World, and their *true Union* with all the *whole Process* of a Christ to come; so on the other Hand, all that could be done by the infinite Wisdom and Goodness of God, was according to the Fitness of Times, Seasons and Occasions (only known to Himself) to give forth such typical and prophetic Intimations of this Redemption, as should more and more direct and confirm their Faith, and prepare them and the World to see, and find, and know, that the whole Process of Christ, when finished, was that *very Redemption* first promised to all the World, in the Promise made to the first and common Father of all Mankind, and through succeeding Ages kept constantly in View, by a Train of Types and Prophecies pointing at it.

Secondly, As the History and Ritual of *Moses* did not, could not possibly *design* to take away Light or Knowledge of any

Divine Truths from the People of God, so least of all could they *designedly* hide, or secrete from them a *Sense*, and *Belief* of the natural Immortality, or perpetual Duration of the Soul's Life. A Truth absolutely *necessary* and *essential* to the very Possibility of any spiritual Relation, or religious Communion between God and Man.

And indeed, *Moses* is as entirely free from any such *Design*, as the Apostles themselves.

For to say, that the Mosaic History, and Types of the Law have *designedly* hid, and secreted from the People of God, all Thought and Sense of the *natural Immortality* of the Soul, is as false, as bold, and extravagant, as to say the same Thing of the Gospel.

For in the New Testament, not a Word is to be found, that expressly affirms the Soul to be *naturally Immortal*; in this Respect the Law and the Gospel are equally silent; and yet neither of them *secrete*, or *hide* it from the People of God, but both of them do *equally* and *fully* prove, and with the same Kind of Proof, the absolute Necessity of believing it.

For as in the Gospel it is never expressly mentioned, or asserted, and yet is *fully proved*, because *unavoidably* supposed, and *necessarily* implied in and by the *open*, and *plain* Doctrines of the Gospel: so it is with the Books of *Moses*, they never mention, or *expressly* affirm the *natural Immortality* of the Soul, and yet give *one*, and the *same* full Proof of it, as the Gospel doth. Because the open and express Doctrines of the Mosaic, and every other Dispensation of God, from *Adam* to Christ, do openly teach Doctrines, which not by *Inference* and *Deduction*, but in the first and plain Nature of the Thing, *unavoidably* require, and necessarily imply, a real, natural Immortality, or never-ceasing Duration of the human Soul, and the common Belief of it in all Ages of the Church before the coming of Christ.

That the Gospel never *expressly* asserts any Thing about the *natural Immortality* of the Soul's Life, is enough shown in the above Establishment of my first Proposition. Where it is proved in the fullest Manner, that the *one Immortality* brought to Light by the Gospel, is nothing else in its whole Nature but that *immortal new Birth of Holiness*, brought forth and quickened again in the *natural Life* of the Soul, in and by, and through the all-powerful, life-giving Process of Christ in our fallen Nature. Which Immortality is nothing else in itself, but our *eternal Union* in, and with the heavenly Life and Spirit of Christ.

But the Gift of this Immortality in, and with Christ living in us, is a full Demonstration of the *natural Immortality* of the Soul, because it must be *necessarily* implied, and unavoidably

supposed in the Power that we have to receive it. For an ever-enduring Holiness, and heavenly Perfection of Life, can only be given to, or received by an ever-enduring Creature.

For that which can lose, or again receive an *immortal Union*, or Fellowship with Christ, must of all Necessity be immortal in its *own creaturely* Life, and have a *natural* Life of its own, entirely independent of, and distinct from that immortal Union with Christ, which it may, or may not receive.

Now according to the Tenor of the Gospel, this want of Union with Christ, is, and is called *eternal Death*: Therefore the Soul must have an *ever-enduring Nature* in itself, or it could not be capable of an eternal Death.

On the other Hand, the obtaining of this Union with Christ, is the *one Life* and Immortality brought to Light by the Gospel, therefore this Immortality also *unavoidably* requires, and *necessarily* implies the perpetual Duration of the Soul's natural Life. For surely it may be affirmed, that nothing but an ever-enduring Life, or Creature, is capable of possessing and enjoying an eternal or everlasting Gift.

Therefore the Gospel, though never once expressly asserting, yet continually demonstrates the *natural* Immortality of the Soul.

And this is the whole Truth of the Matter, with regard to the Mosaic History and Types; they just *hide* it, in the same Manner as the Gospel hides it, that is, not at all; and they fully prove it, in the same Manner as the Gospel proves it, by Doctrines which *necessarily* require, and absolutely imply it, in the first Conception of them.

For the History of the Creation and the Fall of Man, contains an express Covenant of a Redemption, promised to *Adam* and all his fallen Posterity, in which a *Seed of the Woman* should do away the Evil, which the Serpent, or first Deceiver, had brought into the human Nature, that is, should restore the *first, lost, heavenly Life* of Paradise to all Mankind.

But this Covenant with God, and the immediate Benefit and Blessing of it, could neither be *wanted* nor *received*, but by *immortal* Creatures, that *believed* themselves to have an Immortality of Life, which had lost that Glory and Perfection which belonged to it at the first. Nor could such immortal Creatures have any Power of receiving, or entering into this Covenant any other way, than by an *absolute, implicit, unlimited* Faith in God. For it was a Covenant of an *assured Redemption*, or return of their *first Glory* of Life, without the *least Intimation* of the Time, or Age, *when*, or the Means, or Manner, *how*, it was to be brought to pass. Therefore such a Covenant, and such a Faith, in the

very first Conception of them, without the least Reasoning or Deduction, *absolutely* imply, and *necessarily* require a *full Belief* of a future State.

And how could Almighty God better keep up a full Sense and Belief of it, or more fix and radicate it in the Hearts and Consciences of Men, than by placing, and fixing all their *Faith, Hope, Life, and Comfort*, in a Redemption *certainly* to come upon all the World, and yet might or might not come, till half the World was dead?

Or how could Mankind possibly give into this Faith, had they had the least *Doubt* or *Suspicion* of the Certainty of a Life to come? For their Faith in such a promised and expected Redemption, could not in the smallest Degree, be either more or less, than their Faith in, and Dependence upon a future State.

Therefore God's teaching, and requiring this Faith of them, was in the highest Degree his teaching, and requiring them to believe the *natural, ever-enduring* Life of their Souls. Consequently, in the first Revelation of God to Man, Life and Immortality, as it means an ever-enduring State of the Soul, was as *fully*, and in the *same Degree* brought to Light, as in the Revelation of the Gospel. For the Proof of it is just the same in one, as in the other.

In the Gospel it is proved, because an Immortality of a *heavenly Life* is made known, purchased and given by Christ, which necessarily supposes, and implies an immortal *Nature* in Man, or He could not *receive*, or *partake* of it.

In the first Revelation, it is equally proved, because a *Redemption to come*, that was to be waited for, and obtained by an *implicit Faith*, without any Regard to, or *Knowledge* of the Time when it was to appear, whether before or after many and many Generations of Men were dead and gone, unavoidably requires, and necessarily implies a *full Belief* of a State belonging to Man, that is beyond Time, and the Death of the Body.

This Proof of the *natural Immortality* of the Soul, thus inseparable from the first Revelation of God, is so strong, that nothing need, or hardly can be added to it. For how could God more fully assert the Immortality of our Nature, than by requiring our Faith in *such a Redemption*? Or how could Man more strongly declare his *full Belief* of, and Dependence upon such Immortality, than by his Faith in a Redemption that had nothing to do with *Time*, or the *Life*, or *Death* of the Body in this present World?

Again, The Murder, or rather the Martyrdom of *Abel*, and the Translation of *Enoch* into Heaven, both recorded by *Moses* for the Instruction of the People in this very Point, are two un-

deniable Examples, or rather *first Fruits* of the Redemption promised to *Adam*, and all Mankind; two invincible Proofs, that this *first Covenant* was certainly a Covenant of *Life and Immortality* in a future State, confirmed to Mankind by *Facts* strong and convincing, like those of Christ's Resurrection from Death, and Ascension into Heaven.

For immediately after a Covenant of Redemption was made with all Mankind, the *First good Man* after it, in the very Beginning of the World, and the *Beginning* of his own Life, after his *first Act* of Divine Worship, and as soon as God had declared his *good Pleasure* in it, this first good Man was slaughtered like a Beast, and his Blood poured out upon the Earth.

Now can there possibly be a fuller Demonstration, that the Covenant of Redemption made by God with Man, was for a Life and Immortality in *another* or *future State*? Otherwise it must follow, that the first good Man in the World lost all the Benefit of God's Covenant, merely *because* he was *good*; that He lost all the Life that he had to lose, and all that was dear and precious both to Body and Soul, *merely* through the *Devotion* that he showed towards God, and the *Favour* which God showed towards him.

Therefore either *Abel's* Blood cries aloud the *absolute Certainty* of a future State, or *Abel* must be said to have been *undone*, *ruined*, and utterly *deprived* of all that was, or could be *any good* to him, purely because of a Friendship *discovered* between God and him.

This Fact therefore, recorded by the Spirit of God through *Moses*, tells, and assures all the Mosaic Generations in the strongest Manner, that *another Life* and *another World* belonged to *Abel* and to them, besides that which *Abel* lost by his Death. Does it not as directly, and openly declare this to them, as when Christ said, his 'Kingdom was not of this World?' Does it not say the same Thing to them, as when Christ said to his Disciples, 'fear not them that can only kill the Body'? The same Thing, as the Voice from Heaven, which cried, 'Blessed are the Dead that die in the Lord'?

Again, Another Proof of the same Force and Kind, is the Translation of *Enoch*. The Spirit of God saith by *Moses*, 'Enoch walked with God, and was not, for God took him.' Now, could any the most expressive Form of Words, have told the ancient World with more Certainty than this Fact does, that God's Covenant with Man, was for a Kingdom of Heaven?

Our blessed Lord, when speaking of his own Departure out of this World, saith to his Disciples, 'I go to prepare a Place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also.' And does not

Enoch's Translation into Heaven, directly and fully say as much, as if he had been sent again by God to say, 'God has taken me 'from this World into Heaven, to make it manifest to you, that 'where I am gone, there are ye to come also.'

Behold here the adorable Goodness of God to the first and succeeding Ages of the World! These two great Articles of Faith, which are now the Comfort and Support of the Christian World, namely, Victory over Death, and Ascension into Heaven, had the utmost and most convincing Proof given to them by God.

The old World, from the first Man, were all in a Covenant of Redemption.—Life and Immortality was in the fullest Manner, both by Doctrine and Example, made known to them, and nothing remained as a *Mystery* or *Wisdom hidden* in God, to be revealed in *the last Times*, but that *one only* Thing which could not be manifested, till by its own *actual Existence* it manifested itself, namely, the wonderful, efficacious, meritorious Process of Christ in our fallen Nature. By which Process alone it was, that all the Faith as well before as after Christ, had all its Efficacy to a full obtaining of that heavenly Life, which the human Nature had lost.

Thus stood the Faith of the Patriarchal World, which Faith in itself, or its true Root and Ground, was an incorruptible Seed, or Power of the WORD of God in their Souls, a Pledge of the heavenly Birth from above, a Tasting of the Powers of the World to come, *which having not seen, yet believing, they rejoiced with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory.*

For as every Son of fallen *Adam* hath the Seed of the *Serpent*, the *Tree of Death*, the Power of *Satan* and Darkness made alive in him, from all which he has his Faith, his Hope, and Love of this World, his ever-working Covetousness, Ambition, and Pride of Life; so every Son of *Adam*, from the first Covenant of Life restored in Paradise, is born into this World with the *Seed of the Woman*, the *Tree of Life*, and the Power of Christ, and Light from above in his Soul; whence alone, and from no other possible Thing else, he hath all his Faith, Hunger, Love and Desire of God and heavenly Goodness, that he ever can have.

Hence it is, that the Faith and Religion of the first World was in Substance, Truth, and Reality, the very Christian Faith and Christian Religion, one and the same Way, Means, and Power of Salvation; which Oneness consists unchangeably in this, that *Christ, the same Yesterday, to Day, and for ever*, was the same one Mediator between God and Man from the Beginning of the World, one and the same Power of Life and Salvation to murdered *Abel*, as to martyred *Stephen*.

This Faith from this Original, was their true Peace, and Re-

union with God through Jesus Christ, the very same Faith of which Christ saith, 'He that believeth in me shall never die.' The same Faith of which He again saith, 'If any Man thirst, let 'him come unto me and drink; he that believeth in me, out of 'his Belly shall flow Rivers of living Water.' The very same Faith of which He saith, 'He that drinketh the Water that I 'shall give him, shall never thirst. He that eateth my Flesh, and 'drinketh my Blood, dwelleth in me and I in him.'

That this was the Nature and Power of the catholic, living, saving Faith, common to all the patriarchal Ages, we are fully assured by the Spirit of God in the Epistles to the *Corinthians* and *Hebrews*, telling in express Words, 'That they did all eat 'the same spiritual Meat, did all drink the same spiritual Drink, 'for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and 'that Rock was Christ.'

Are we not here told expressly by the Spirit of God, that very *same Thing* of the patriarchal Generations, which the Christ of God said to those that believed in Him, that by eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood, they have eternal Life.

In the eleventh Chapter of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, the same Spirit of God, speaking of the patriarchal Ages, saith, 'All 'these died in Faith, not having received the Promises, but having 'seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced 'them, and confessed they were Strangers and Pilgrims on Earth, '—who desired a better Country, that is, an Heavenly.'

Dr. *Warburton* is so out of Humour with this whole Chapter, thus full of patriarchal Light and Glory, that he gives it the heathenish Name of the *Palladium of the Cause*, which he had undertaken to demolish. And he accordingly attacks it with a Number of critical Inventions, that may as truly be called heathenish; for they are in direct Opposition to all Christian Theology.

For he thus begins; He will have it, that the Faith set forth in this whole Chapter, is concerning a *Faith in the Abstract*, and not a *specific Faith* in the Messiah. An Invention, as little grounded in the Gospel, as Goodness *in the Abstract*, in opposition to *specific* Goodness. Goodness in the *Abstract*, if it hath any meaning, is all Goodness, and therefore must have every Species of Goodness in it; so Faith in the *Abstract*, if it hath any meaning, is all Faith, and therefore must have every Species of Faith in it. Now if the Doctor will have the Apostle speak of a Faith in the Abstract, which yet wants the specific Faith in the Messiah, his Faith in the Abstract, is but like that Goodness in the Abstract, which keepeth the whole Law, and yet offendeth in one Point.

His first Reason, why this whole Chapter is concerning a Faith in the *Abstract*, and not a Faith in the Messiah, is taken from that Definition of Faith there given, namely, 'The Substance of Things hoped for, the Evidence of Things not seen.'

And yet this very Definition, if it had been ever so much intended, to give the most precise and distinct Idea of the Nature of Faith in the Messiah, could not have been better expressed, for there is every Thing in it, that can fully and truly set forth that very Faith above all Mistake. For if Faith in a Messiah to come, must be a Faith in Things hoped for, and a Reliance and Dependence upon the Certainty of Things not seen, if this, and nothing but this, can be a true Faith in a Messiah to come, how could it possibly be more precisely described, or more directly pointed at, than by making it to be 'the Substance of Things hoped for, the Evidence of Things not seen'?

For in this Definition, not only the true *Object*, but the true *Efficacy* of Faith in the Messiah is fully set forth, in that it is made to be such a real, vital Foretaste, and Participation of Things hoped for, and not seen, as is justly called, the very *Substance* and *Evidence* of them.

Again, the Doctor appeals to the following Words, as another Proof, that the Faith described in this Chapter, is not a Faith in the Messiah, *viz.*, 'He that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of all those that diligently seek Him.' Which Words contain neither more nor less, than if it had been said, 'He that cometh to God, must believe that He is 'a Fulfiller of his Promises to all those that truly believe in Him, 'and them': For God cannot be considered as a *Rewarder* of Mankind, in any other Sense, than as He is a *Fulfiller* of his Promises made to Mankind in the Covenant of a Messiah. For God could not give, nor Man receive any Rewards or Blessings, but in and through the one Mediator Christ Jesus.—Without Him no possible Intercourse, or Reconciliation between God and fallen Man. Therefore to trust, or believe in God, as a Rewarder, and Blessor, is the very Truth, and Reality of a right Faith in the Messiah.

The Doctor has another Proof, which He says, puts the Matter *out of all Doubt*, which is this. In this Chapter it is said, by Faith *Rahab* the Harlot escaped, by Faith the *Israelites* passed through the Red Sea, by Faith the Walls of *Jericho* fell down. *But was any of this*, saith the Doctor, *a Faith in Jesus the Messiah?*

Now not to rob this Argumentation of any of its Strength, it must be allowed to proceed thus.

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Joshua's Faith could not be in the Messiah, or the Promises of God made to his Forefathers. But why so? Because by his Faith the *Walls of Jericho* fell down.

Just as theologically argued, as if it had been said, *Abel's* Faith could not possibly be a Faith in the Seed of the Woman, promised to his Parents; because by his Faith 'he offered unto God a more acceptable Sacrifice than Cain.'

Enoch's Faith could not be in a Messiah to come, because by his Faith he was immediately taken up to God.

Abraham's Faith could not be in the Messiah, because by his Faith, 'He sojourned in a strange Country, chose to dwell in 'Tents, and looked for a City that hath Foundations, whose 'Builder and Maker is God.' His Faith could not be in a Messiah to come, in a Redeemer given to all Mankind, because by his 'Faith he offered up Isaac, his only begotten Son.'

Having set the Doctor's Argument in its best Light, no more need be said about the Worth of it.

At last comes his invincible Argument, which if it were as strong, as he gives out, all that went before might have been spared.

'To evince it impossible,' says the Doctor, 'that Faith in the 'Messiah, should be meant by the Faith in this eleventh Chapter, 'the Apostle expressly saith, that all those, to whom he assigns 'this Faith, had *not received the Promises*, therefore they could 'not have Faith in that, which was never proposed to their Faith. 'For how should they believe on him of whom they had not 'heard?'

Now if this Argument has any good Logic, or true Theology in it, it must necessarily follow, that no one, whether Patriarch or Prophet, before, or after the Law, ever had, or could have *Faith* in the Messiah, for all who died before the Birth of Christ, must have died *without receiving the Promises*, which only could, and were then *first* received, when good old *Simeon* could sing, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace, for mine 'Eyes have seen thy Salvation.' Till this Time, there was no *Receiving* of the Promises.

St. Paul, speaking to the *Jews*, saith, 'Behold, we declare 'unto you glad Tidings, how that the Promise, which was made 'unto the Fathers, God hath fulfilled the same to us their 'Children.'

Here, by the Spirit of God himself, is made known to us, the true Difference between receiving, and not receiving the Promises. The Fathers, to whom the Promises were *only made*, and who could *only see them afar off*, are those who died without receiving the Promises, that is, without receiving the Things promised.

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And their Children who lived to see the Promises *fulfilled*, are they that can be only said to have received the Promises, that is, the Things promised.

Further, the Spirit of God saith, 'All these died in the Faith, 'not having received the Promises.'

But *why*, or *how* could they die in this Faith? It was for this *only Reason*, because they had *not received* the Promises, that is, the Things promised. For if they had, they could not have died in Faith, but in the Enjoyment of the Things promised.

The Doctor therefore has unluckily pitched upon That, as an Argument against the *Possibility* of their Faith in the Messiah, which is in itself the only true Reason, why they could possibly *die in the Faith of Him*. For the holy Spirit saith, they all died *in the Faith*; and then the Reason is added, why they did, and and could, *namely*, because *not having received the Promises*, therefore their not having received the Promises, is the Reason why they could die in the Faith of them. And their Faith had this Foundation, because they had seen the Things promised, as *afar off*, that is, long after their own Deaths, and therefore to be *fulfilled*, or made good in a future Life. Consequently, their Faith was in a Redemption to come in a Life after this; which surely may be affirmed to be a true and right Faith in the promised Messiah, or in *all That*, which had been promised, or could be expected from the first joyful Notice, and absolutely infallible Assurance which God gave of Him, 'in a Seed of the Woman to 'bruise the Head of the Serpent.' Which in Gospel Language is called, 'destroying the Works of the Devil,' and bringing all that to Life and Immortality again, which died in *Adam's* Transgression.

It is added of these holy Men dying in the Faith of Promises *seen afar off*, that they 'were persuaded of them, and embraced 'them, and confessed they were Strangers and Pilgrims on the 'Earth; and they that say such Things, plainly declare, that they 'seek a better Country, that is, an Heavenly.'

What an Extravagance is it therefore in the learned Doctor, to say in the Words of the Apostle, 'How should they believe in 'Him of whom they have not heard'; as in the least Degree applicable to those departed Saints of the old World? For their Faith was in Promises *made* to them, but not *fulfilled* before their Deaths, which they beholding as *afar off*, died in the fullest Faith and Expectation of a blessed Life and heavenly Country in Virtue of them. Therefore they believed in *That*, of which they had *heard*, they knew what it was that they believed, *namely*, a Redemption from all the Evil of their fallen State, or Pilgrimage on Earth, to a Life in Heaven; which surely may be allowed not

only to be a Faith in Him, who was to redeem them, but such a Faith, as had all the Properties, and every Perfection, that the truest Faith in the Messiah to come, could possibly have. For as a Messiah to come, could only be acknowledged by an implicit Faith in *That*, which was to be done by Him; which was the Redemption of Mankind, or a Restoration of their first, lost State of Life, so their Faith, however good and true, could only be a Fulness of Faith in the *Thing itself*, without knowing *what*, or what *manner* of Person, their Redeeming Messiah was to be. Which could only then be *first* known, when this promised Redeemer should manifest Himself, as was done in the Wonderful Birth, and whole Process of Christ in all its Parts.

Our blessed Lord said to the *Jews*, 'Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my Day, and he saw it, and was glad.' Surely then *Abraham* had Faith in the Messiah, and yet he is numbered by the Apostle amongst those, who died not having received the Promises, that is, not having seen them *fulfilled*.

But now, though *Abraham's* rejoicing at the Sight of that Day, was a sufficient Proof, that his Faith was in the Messiah, yet the *implicit* Faith of the more ancient, patriarchal World in *That*, which they had not seen, as *Abraham* had, was as *right*, as *full*, and *blessed* a Faith in the Messiah, as *Abraham's* was. This point is absolutely determined, in the following Words of Christ. 'Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they, which have not seen, and yet have believed.'

This, and this alone, is the only real Difference between the Religion of the Faithful before, and after Christ. *Before Christ*, the Living Faith, and Substantial Hope, was in a Messiah to come in some wonderful, but unknown way of Power and Victory, over every Misery into which Man was fallen. By this Faith, they stood under the blessed Power of the *Seed of the Woman*, and from Generation to Generation were kept in the one true Covenant of Grace, of Life, of Love and Union with God, through that very Cross of Christ, which is now the Faith and Glory of Christians.

After Christ, the same Living Faith, and Substantial Hope, rejoiced in a Messiah made known by a miraculous, and Divine Birth, in the fallen human Nature, leading it through a necessary Process of an efficacious Purification, redeeming and raising it out of every Evil of Life, of Death, of Sin and Hell, till it was placed, as God and Man in one Person, at the right Hand of God in Heaven.

Now when in Process of Time, the one true Covenant of Life between God and all Mankind, had lost much of its Effect, and the People of God had greatly fallen away from the Faith and

Piety of the first Patriarchs, and perhaps not more remarkably than the Christian World is fallen from the Truth and Faith of the first apostolic Ages) it pleased God by his Servant *Moses*, to introduce the Descendants of the Patriarchs into a new and further *Covenant of Care, and Protection over them*.

Which Covenant was not a *succeeding true Part of*, or a *new progressive State* of that first one true Religion, that alone unites God and fallen Man, but was in its whole Nature, merely a Covenant of *outward Care and Protection*; not given for its own Sake, or because of any intrinsic Goodness in its Washings and Purifications, but an Indulgence granted to the *Hardness of their Hearts*, as a *temporal Means* of keeping a fallen People from falling further under the Blindness and Vanity of their earthly Minds.

The first Covenant was so perfect that nothing could be added to it, but the Manifestation of that which was promised in it, because it contained *all the Power of Life*, that could work out Salvation, from the first to the last Man. It was a *Promise* of Life and Redemption to all Mankind, to be *fulfilled* in and by the *Seed of the Woman*. Now the *Promise*, and the *Fulfilling* of it, are not (as in human Matters) two *distant, separate* Things, that begin at different Times, nor can the one ever be without the other. They both began together, and must exist together. The *End*, that is, the *Fulfilling*, grows out of the *Beginning*, goes along with it, and has all its Efficacy from it; and the *Beginning*, that is, the *Promise*, is only so much of the *End*.

As these two cannot be separated, so nothing can come between them, as dividing the one from the other. The *Promise* and the *Fulfilling* are but one *Thing*, one *Operation*, one *Gift* of God, the one only Redemption, Reconciliation, Satisfaction, and Atonement, that ever did, or ever can help fallen Man to Peace, Blessing and Union again with God. Nothing else can do it. Every Thing besides the living Power, and Working of this first promised, or rather first given Seed of the Woman, is destitute of Life.

It is therefore a great Truth, that all that is said in the Gospel of the *Power* of Christ, and the *availing Efficacy* of his whole Process, from his Divine Birth to his Ascension into Heaven, is in *Truth* and *Reality* so much said of the *Why*, and the *How*, the Seed of the Woman has *worked* from the *Beginning*, and been the *one Power* of Salvation through every Age of the World.

For though the Visibility and outward Manifestation of Christ's Process, was and only could be first and *fully* known at his Ascension into Heaven, yet its inward spiritual Power, in all its Parts, began with the first Covenant of Life, made with *Adam*

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and *Eve*. And though all was then as a hidden Life, under the Name of a *Seed of the Woman*, yet it had its Divine *Power and Working* within, and brought Men to God by *that Spirit* of Christ, which manifested itself through all his Process.

For as the holy Jesus is but One, the very *same Yesterday, to Day, and for ever*, so his Mediatorial, Redeeming Spirit in fallen Man, is but one, namely, the Spirit of his Process, which is one and the same, always working in one and the same Manner, where it is submitted to, as well before, as after his Incarnation; that is, whether it be called the *Seed* of the Woman, or *Jesus Christ* born of the *Virgin Mary*. For the one is only the first, the other, the last Name of one and the same Redeeming Son of God. In the first Name, it was the Power of Jesus, *living* in Man, in the last Name it was Jesus Himself become Man.

Not the smallest Spark of Goodness ever sprung up in fallen Man, no kind of Faith, Hope, or Trust in God, no Patience in Adversity, no Self-denial, no Love of God, or Desire of doing his Will, no Truth of Humility, Meekness, and Compassion, ever did, or could work in the Heart and Spirit of any Son of *Adam*, but solely for this Reason, because all *these Tempers* were the Spirit of Christ's Process, *which Spirit* was inspoken, or ingrafted into fallen Man, *as soon* as God looked with Pity, Compassion, Love and Relief towards *Adam* and *Eve*.

For this *Looking* of God with Compassion, Love and Relief at Man, was in Truth the *very Beginning* of the Incarnation of the Son of God; for it was not something *without* or *separate* from Man, (because God is not without or separate) but it was Divine Compassion, Love and Relief, *inwardly working* in the inmost Ground of the Life of Man; which blessed Power of the *redeeming Love* of God in the Soul, was at first called the *Seed of the Woman*, till by all kind of Evidence it was known, and found to be the Eternal Son of God born of a Virgin.

Now that which Christ did, suffered, and obtained in and through his Process in our Flesh, calling all to turn to God, to deny themselves, to be of his Spirit, to enter into the strictest Union with Him, giving heavenly Birth, and Life, and all Divine Graces to Men, and yet only and solely *according to their Faith in Him*; That very same, the *Seed* of the Woman did, and from the Beginning was always doing in the same Way of Life, and Blessing, and heavenly Graces, yet only and solely *according to their Faith in it*.

The Loss of *this Faith* in the first Ages of Mankind, gave Birth to that which is called the *heathen*, or *rational* World, for they both began together, and are the same Thing, and brought forth a Race of People, full of Blindness, Wickedness, and

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Idolatry. For *so far* as they departed from *Faith*, so far they *fell from* God, under the Dominion and Government of their *Reason, Passions, and Appetites*. And thence began the Kingdom of this World, and the *Wisdom* of this World, which had and ever must have full Power over every Man, as soon as he ceases to *live by Faith*.

For to live by Faith, always was, and always will be, living in the Kingdom of God; and to live by Reason, always was, and always will be, living as a Heathen, under the Power of the Kingdom of this World.

Reasoning instead of Faith, brought about the first Fall, and dreadful Change in the human Nature, no less than a real Death to God, and the Kingdom of Heaven. And nothing but *Faith* instead of Reasoning, can give any one fallen Man Power to become again a Son of God. Now to the End of the World, this will be the *unalterable* Difference between *Faith* in God, and *Reasoning* about the Things of God; they can never change their Place, Nature, or Effects; That which they were, and did to the first Man, that they will be, and do to the last.

Faith in God, is nothing else but a *full adhering* to God; and therefore it is one with God, and God with it, and all that is holy, Divine and good, may well be found in it.

Reasoning, is nothing else, but a *full adhering* to ourselves; and therefore, all that is *selfish, perverse, corrupt, and serpentine* in fallen Man, must be kept up, and nourished by it.

It matters not in what *Age*, or under what *Dispensation* of God we live; the *Necessity, the Nature, and Power* of Faith, is always the same; that *simple, illiterate, unreasoning* Faith, that helped *Abraham* to Righteousness, Life, and Union with God, is the *one Faith* that alone can be Justification, Life and Salvation to Christians; or, which is the same Thing, can *alone be Christ in us, the Hope of Glory*. For Faith is nothing else, but so much of the Nature, and Spirit of Christ, *born and living* in us. 'I came,' says Christ, 'not to do my own Will, but the Will of Him that sent me. My Meat and Drink is to do the Will of Him that sent me.' This is the *whole Nature, and Perfection* of Faith. And as no one but Christ had Power to say this of Himself, so no one can have, or live in this Faith, but because the Divine Nature of Christ is truly born, and formed in him, and is become the Life of his Life, and the Spirit of his Spirit.

Again, It matters not, how much the *Revelations* and Precepts of God are *increased*, since the first *single* Command given to *Adam*; for no more is offered to our *reasoning* Faculty by the whole *Bible*, than by that single Precept. And the Benefit of the whole Bible is lost to us, as soon as we reason about the

Nature and Necessity of its Commands, just as the Benefit of that first Precept was lost in the same Way.

'Hath God indeed said, ye shall not eat of every Tree in the 'Garden.' This was the first Essay, or beginning of *Reasoning* with God. What it was, and did then, that it will always be, and do. Its Nature, and Fruits will never be better, or any other, to the End of the World. And though in these last Ages, it hath passed through all Schools of Quibbling, and is arrived at its utmost height of Art, Subtlety and *Precision of Argument*, yet as to Divine Matters, it stands just where it stood, when it first learnt that Logic from the *Serpent*, which improved the Understanding of *Eve*. And at this Day, it can see no deeper into the Things of God, can be no Wiser, give no better Judgment about them, than that Conclusion it at first made, that *Death* could not be in the Tree, which was 'so good for Food, so 'pleasant to behold, and to be desired for Knowledge.'

In short, these two, Faith and Reasoning, have, and always will divide all Mankind, from the Beginning to the End of the World, into two Sorts of Men fully distinct from each other.

The *Faithful*, through every Age, are of the Seed of the Woman, the Children of God, and sure Heirs of his Redemption through Jesus Christ.

The *Reasoners*, are of the Seed of the Serpent, they are the Heathens through every Age, and real Heirs of that Confusion, which happened to the first Builders of the Tower of *Babel*.

To live by Faith, is to be truly and fully in Covenant with God; to live by Reasoning, is to be merely and solely in Compact with ourselves, with our own Vanity, and Blindness.

To live by *Faith*, is to live with God in the Spirit and Power of Prayer, in Self-denial, in Contempt of the World, in Divine Love, in heavenly Foretastes of the World to come, in Humility, in Patience, Long-suffering, Obedience, Resignation, absolute Trust and Dependence upon God, with all that is temporal and earthly under their Feet.

To live by *Reasoning*, is to be a Prey of the old Serpent, eating Dust with him, groveling in the Mire of all earthly Passions, devoured with Pride, embittered with Envy, Tools and Dupes to ourselves, tossed up with false Hopes, cast down with vain Fears, Slaves to all the good and evil Things of this World, to Day elated with learned Praise, to Morrow dejected at the unlucky Loss of it; yet jogging on Year after Year, defining Words and Ideas, dissecting Doctrines and Opinions, setting all Arguments and all Objections upon their best Legs, sifting and refining all Notions, Conjectures, and Criticisms, till Death puts the same full End to *all the Wonders* of the ideal Fabric, that the cleansing

Broom does to the Wonders of the Spider's Web, so artfully spun at the Expense of its own Vitals.

This is the unalterable Difference between a Life of *Faith*, and a Life of *Reasoning* in the Things of God; the former is from God, works with God, and therefore it saveth, it maketh whole, and all Things are possible to it; the latter is from the Serpent, works with the Serpent, and therefore vain Opinions, false Judgments, Errors and Delusions are inseparable from it, and can only belong to it.

Every Scholar, every Disputer of this World, nay, every Man, has been where *Eve* was, and has done what she did, when she sought for *Wisdom* that did *not* come from God. All Libraries of the World are a full Proof of the remaining Power of the first sinful Thirst after it: they are full of a Knowledge that comes not from God, and therefore proceeds from that first Fountain of Subtlety that opened her Eyes. For as there cannot possibly be any Goodness in Man, but so far as the Divine Goodness is living and working good in Him, so there cannot be any Divine Truth, or Knowledge in Man, but so far as God's Truth and Knowledge is opened, living and working in him, because God alone is all Truth, and the Knowledge of it.

But to return from this short Digression, to my main Subject, namely, the *Unity*, or the *Sameness* of the Patriarchal and Christian Religion; of which *Adam* was as truly a Member as *St. Paul*.

For the Spirit of Christ, or which is the same Thing, the Spirit and Power of his Process, did not begin to be, but only came into outward Manifestation in the Gospel Age, but was, and had been invisibly the *one only possible* Source of Goodness in Man, as well before, as after his Incarnation.

It made all the Saints and Martyrs of the Old Testament, as truly and solely as of the New; and all the Miracles of that Time, of what kind soever, were as truly in the one Name, and by the sole Power of his victorious Spirit dwelling in them, as when *Peter* said to the lame Man, 'In the Name of Jesus Christ, rise up and Walk.'

Abel had not lived a Saint, and died a Martyr, but because the Spirit of Christ, as dying a Sacrifice for Sin, was living and working in him. No *Enoch* could have been taken up to God, no *Elisha* have ever ascended into Heaven, but because Ascension into Heaven, was a Part of Christ's victorious Process in the human Nature.

Abraham could not have been willing to Sacrifice his Son, nor content to be only a Pilgrim and Sojourner upon Earth, but because Christ was as truly living in Him, as He was in *St. Paul*, when he 'counted all Things but Dung, that he might win Christ, and be found in Him.'

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The Spirit of God has expressly told us, 'that Moses esteemed 'the Afflictions of Christ greater Riches, than the Treasures of 'Egypt': was not therefore *Moses* as true a Christian, as truly under the blessed Power of the Cross of Christ, and as fully confident in it, as *St. Paul*, crying out, 'God forbid that I should 'glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the 'World is crucified unto me, and I unto the World.'

Nor was there ever any Man in the World, either before, or after Christ's Manifestation in the Flesh, that ever had the least Faith, Hope, or Desire of God, or any possible Access, or Communion with Him, but so far as the Spirit of Christ's Process, was *begotten, living, and working* in him.

For as Christ was the only possible Redeemer of the fallen human Nature, because He was that which He was, did that which He did, suffered, died, rose from Death, and ascended into Heaven, with *that* fallen, but by him redeemed Humanity, which He had taken upon him, so no one Man, or Member of the fallen human Nature, from first to last, can have any Righteousness, or Sanctification brought forth in it, but because the Spirit of Christ lives, and works in it, as it did in that fallen human Nature, which He took from the *Virgin Mary*.

And thus it is, that the *availing Efficacy* of Christ's Mediation, Reconciliation, &c., reached backward to the first Man in the World, not by an *arbitrary Imputation* of it, or because God would account it as there, though it were not there, but the true Reason is, because the Spirit of Christ's Process, which alone reconciles God to Man, *began to work* from the Beginning, was as *really and vitally operative* in the first Man, and his Descendants, as it was in that human Soul and Body, which Christ took from the *Virgin Mary*. For as nothing but the Spirit of Christ's Process, could have overcome, or redeemed that fallen Soul and Body, which Christ took upon him, so nothing can possibly overcome and redeem the fallen Body and Soul of any Son of *Adam*, but that same overcoming and redeeming Spirit, really living and operating in it, in the same Manner as it did in the Humanity of Christ. Goodness cannot come into Man, or belong to him two different Ways, or from two different Causes; That alone from which he had his original Goodness at his *Creation*, from that alone can he have Goodness in his *Regeneration*. Nor can fallen Man be made really good by the Imputation of an *absent Goodness*, any more than a blind Man can see, by having Sight only *imputed* to him. And a Spirit and Power of Christ, not *possessed*, but only *imputed* to the Soul, in which it is not, is but like a Christ only imputed to, but not really born of the *Virgin Mary*. And indeed, to suppose Christ to be, *where* his Spirit is *not living*,

that his Salvation was in *Paul*, because Christ lived in Him, and his Salvation was in *Abel* and *Enoch*, though his Spirit was absent from them, has as much Sense and Divinity in it, as if it were said, Christians *live, and move, and have* their Being in God; but the former Ages did not live, and move, and have their Being in God, but it was only imputed to them.

So plain is it, that nothing but the one Spirit of Christ, living and working in Man, from the Beginning to the End of the World, can possibly be the Source, or Cause of any Goodness, Holiness, or Redemption of Man.

The Scriptures abound with Proof of this. What can be more decisive than the following Words? 'If any Man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.—If Christ be not in you, ye 'are Reprobates.' Must not this be equally true of every Man in the World, as true of all Men in the Patriarchal as in the Gospel Ages? *If any Man*, says the Apostles, therefore no Regard had to Time or Place, but where there is *any Man*, there this Truth is affirmed of him by the Apostle, that unless he hath the Spirit of Christ he is none of his, but is a Reprobate. But if none can be Christ's, but because they have his Spirit living in them, and none can be God's, but because they are Christ's, it necessarily follows, that if Christ was not the Spirit and Power of *that* first, universal Covenant made by God with fallen *Adam*, if He was not only and solely that which was meant by the *Seed of the Woman*, if his Spirit and Power was not then from that Time the real Bruiser of the Serpent's Head, or the Power of *Satan* in the Nature of every Man, it necessarily follows, both that *Adam*, and all his Posterity, for much more than three thousand Years, lived and died mere Reprobates, and that by an unavoidable Necessity, because they had not the Spirit of Christ living in them.

Again, 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are 'the Children of God'; therefore if the first Ages of the World were not led by the Spirit of God, they were all cut off from being Children of God. And to say, that though they were without the Spirit of Christ, yet his Merits might be *imputed* to them, is no better than saying the same Thing of fallen Angels. For Man, without Christ *living* in Him, is as far from him, as the fallen Angel can possibly be. For the fallen Angel hath no Darkness, and Depravity of Nature, nor any other Contrariety to God, or Separation from Him, but only for this one Reason, because nothing of the Spirit and Power of Christ *liveth* and worketh in him.

Further, of Christ it is said, 'Neither is there Salvation in any 'other. For there is none other Name under Heaven given 'amongst Men, whereby we may be saved.'

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What a Folly to think, that all the World is not included in this? *None other Name under Heaven*, is surely extensive enough to take in every Part of the Earth, and every Time of Man. And what is here said, is evidently grounded in the Nature of the Thing, for Salvation must be one and the same Thing, effected by one and the same Power through all Ages, because the Fall of Man, or *that* which he wants to be saved from, is one and the same Thing in all Men; therefore one and the same Saviour is equally and absolutely necessary to all Men, in every Age of the World. Salvation is nothing less in itself, than our being created again unto Righteousness, by such a Power of God united with our Nature, as can quicken and renew that first heavenly Life, to which *Adam* died. How then can such a Salvation have any Difference either in itself, or the Saviour that effects it? How can it be one Thing at one Time, and another at another; in one Age no Possibility of having it, but because Christ's redeeming Spirit is *really living*, and *operating* in Men, in another Age effected by something else instead of it?

Such Absurdities as these, are unavoidable, unless we hold, that *Adam, Abel, Seth, &c.*, were saved by the same Spirit of Christ, *living*, and *working* Faith, Hope, Goodness, and every Virtue in them, as truly and solely, as he is Wisdom and Righteousness, and Sanctification in those who believe in Him after his Birth in our Flesh.—The Bruising the Head of the Serpent, could only and solely belong to Him, who could destroy the Works of the Devil. Therefore the Seed of the Woman was as truly *Immanuel* with *Adam*, as the Son of the Virgin was *God with us*; and so named, because He was that God, who from the Covenant made with *Adam*, had *always been with Men*.

To this the holy Spirit beareth full Witness, saying, 'Jesus Christ, the same Yesterday, to Day, and for ever.' Therefore, if to Day, He alone is, and can be the *one Power* of a Divine Life in Man, that *same* He certainly was from the Beginning, and will be to the End. A Truth asserted by Himself in the strongest Form of Words, saying, 'I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the first and the last.' Therefore He is the Beginning of every Thing that ever was Good in any Man, and the End and Finisher of every Good, that can ever grow up in him. How else could it be an eternal Truth, what Christ says of Himself, *that without Him we can do nothing*, that unless *He be in us, and we in Him*, we are but as *dead Branches* broken off from the Vine. For if the former Ages could do *something* that was good without Him, if they could be living Branches, though he *lived not* in them, what Force is there left in our Saviour's Words?

And now, my Lord, I think I have sufficiently proved not only my two Propositions, but also that the first Covenant with *Adam*, in and by the Seed of the Woman, was the *Truth* and *Reality* of the one Christian Means, Method and Power of Salvation, so wonderfully manifested by the whole Process of Christ revealed in the Gospel. Therefore it is a theological Truth of the utmost Certainty, and greatest Comfort, that from the Beginning of the World to the End of it, there never was, nor ever will be any more, or any other, but one and the same true Religion of the Gospel, which began with *Adam* and *Eve* through Jesus Christ, the one Mediator and Reconciler of God to Man, who was as certainly the Life, Strength and Salvation of all the Faithful in the old World, as he was in after Times, when the Son of the Virgin *Mary*, *The Way, the Truth, and the Life*, to all that had Faith in him.

And indeed a Plurality of Religions, or Means of Salvation, is as gross an Imagination, as a Plurality of Gods, and can subsist upon no other Foundation.

A better Religion necessarily supposes a better God, and a Change in Religion a Change in that God, that makes it.—A partial God, not giving the only right Religion to all Men, but withholding the *one true Power* of Salvation, till the last Ages of the World, is as atheistical as *Epicurus* his God.

In sundry Times, and in divers Manners, it may please the Wisdom and Goodness of God, to vary that which is only an *outward Help*, or *Direction* to the Truth of Religion; but the inward Spirit and Truth of that, which only is, and can be Salvation, is as unvariable, as God Himself.

The Law therefore of *Moses*, as consisting of *carnal Ordinances*, &c., not only *makes nothing Perfect*, but it brings nothing *new* into the *one Covenant* of Life and Redemption, but was only a temporary, provisional Help, *added because of Transgressions, till the promised Seed should come*; that is, till the whole process of Christ, signified by the promised Seed, should openly, and in its last and highest Degree of Evidence manifest itself in all its Parts.

This Law then no more belonged to the *true Religion* of the Old Testament, than of the New, neither did it ever stand *between* these two Dispensations, as in *their stead*, or as separating, and suspending their Union *for a Time*. No: It was purely, and merely on the *outside* of both, had only a temporary, external Relation of Service to the true Religion, either before or after Christ, but was no more a *Part*, or *instead* of them *for a Time*, than the *Hand* that stands by the Road, directing the ignorant Traveller, is itself a Part of the Road, or can be instead of it to him.

Now though the Reason of Man, ought not to pretend to fathom all the Depths of Divine Wisdom and Goodness, in the whole Form and Manner of this *additional Covenant of outward Care and Protection*, yet two most gracious and excellent Ends of it, are very apparent.

First, to bring this corrupted People of *Israel* into a new State of such Observances, religiously to be kept, as might best preserve them from the gross Superstitions and Idolatries, to which they were too much inclined. And this, by a *Ritual* of such Condescensions to their carnal Minds, as might nevertheless be a School of Restraints and Discipline, full of such Purifications, Types, and Figures, as give much spiritual Light and Instruction, both backwards and forwards. *Backwards*, as truly significative of their fallen State, plain, daily Memorials of their lost Purity and Perfection: *Forwards*, as truly foretelling, and variously pointing at that *promised* Victory over the Serpent, Death, and the Curse of this World, which had been the constant Faith and Hope of all their pious Forefathers from *Adam* to that Day.

Secondly, That by a *Theocracy* added to this Ritual, which showed itself in a Covenant of continual *Care and Protection* in all Temporal Things, openly blessing their Obedience, and punishing their Rebellion, and working all kinds of Miracles in the Overthrow of their Enemies, not only they themselves, but all the Rest of the World, might be forced to see and know, that there was no God, that had all Power in Heaven and on Earth, but the one God of *Israel*.

As to the *Israelites* themselves, this Temporal Covenant of *Care* by outward Rites, and extraordinary outward Protection, was a great Instance of God's Goodness towards them. For they were thus called out of Idolatry, separated from the Rest of the World, forbid to have any Communication with them, built into an holy Church of God, put under a most amazing Theocracy, full of every Proof that God was with them; indulged for a Time with a Ritual of carnal Institutions, because of the Hardness of their Hearts, which Ritual was full of every Instruction by Doctrines, Types, Figures and Miracles, all showing in the strongest Manner, that they were to be Heirs of the heavenly Promises made to their Forefathers.

And as to the rest of the World, no particular Message, or Messenger, though new risen from the Dead, and sent by God amongst them, could preach or proclaim to them in so powerful a Manner, the Vanity of their Idols, the Knowledge of the one true God of all the World, as this remarkable Body of People set up in the midst of the World, impossible to be unknown, did. So that the Law and its Theocracy, though nothing else in its

whole Nature, but a temporal Covenant of *outward Care and Protection*, was not only most divinely contrived to preserve the Faith of the first Holy Patriarchs, and guide them to the Time and Manner of receiving the Promises made to their Fathers, but it was all Mercy and Goodness to the rest of the World, being no less than one continual, daily, miraculous Call to them, to receive Blessing and Protection, Life and Salvation in the Knowledge and Worship of the one true God of Heaven and Earth.

Now when the Children of the Patriarchs, were to be entered into this new Covenant of *outward Care and Protection*, the utmost Care was taken by the Spirit of God, that to Eyes that could see, and Ears that could hear, enough should be shown and said, to prevent all *carnal Atheism* to temporal and outward Things, and bring forth a spiritual *Israel*, full of that Faith and Piety, in which their holy Ancestors, as Pilgrims on Earth, had lived and died devoted to God, in hope of everlasting Redemption from the Fall of *Adam*.

To this End, *Moses*, though bringing them, as their State required, under a Ritual of carnal Ordinances, bodily Washings and Purifications, yet that they might use them only as outward Confessions and Memorials of an inward spiritual Pollution, and as sure Types and Figures of their being to be cleansed, and delivered from it; he is led by the Inspiration of God, not only to insert in the Books of the Law, the most sublime Doctrines and heavenly Precepts of Patriarchal and Christian Holiness, but to lay before them, for their daily Instruction, a History of the most deep, and affecting Truths: Truths that had every Thing in them fitted to awaken, and keep up that Divine, strong Faith and Hope of an eternal Redemption, under the Power of which, the most holy Patriarchs had overlooked every Thing in Time for the Sake of Eternity.

I mean, the most wonderful and affecting History of the Creation and Curse of this World, of the high Origin of Man, and his dreadful Fall from it, his Redemption, and Covenant of Life restored in a Seed of the Woman, the Lives and Deaths of the most holy Patriarchs, their Patience under all Sufferings, their Contempt of worldly Pleasures and Advantages; their heavenly Visions, Revelations and Speeches from the invisible, incomprehensible God, keeping them thereby in an holy Union and Intercourse with the *invisible World*, full of Faith and Hope of the good Things of Eternity.

To mention one or two of those great Doctrines of *Moses*, which set forth the original Perfection, and heavenly Nature of Man, as created by God.

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God said, 'Let us make Man in our own Image and Likeness.' Is not this as high, and Christian a Doctrine of *Immortality*, does it not give the same Instruction, raise the same Hope, and call for all the same Sentiments and Elevations of the Heart to God, as when *St. John* saith, 'Beloved, it does not yet appear 'what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we 'shall be LIKE Him'? Just the same Truth, and fitted to have the same Effects, as when *Moses* said, God made Man in his own LIKENESS?

St. Peter writes thus to all Christians; 'Grace and Peace be 'multiplied unto you, through the Knowledge of God, and of 'Jesus our Lord.—Whereby are given unto us exceeding great 'and precious Promises, that by these ye might be Partakers of 'the DIVINE NATURE.' A truly warm and affecting Address of the Apostle, enough to inspire into his Readers, the most exalted Thoughts, and earnest Desires after God, and a Divine Life. Yet what is there more in these Words, to raise in us a Thirst and longing Desire after the *Divine Nature*, than when *Moses* preaches, that God made Man in *his own Image and Likeness*? Is not this directly telling them, that they were at first Partakers of the *Divine Nature*? Is it not the same direct and powerful Call to a *Faith* and *Hope* of being again *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, as that of *St. Peter*?

St. Paul says, 'God was in Christ Jesus, reconciling the World 'unto Himself.' A comfortable Doctrine indeed, and full of Hope of *Immortality*, yet only the same Comfort, and Hope of *Immortality* which had been as openly preached by *Moses*.

For the *Satan* of all Subtlety, called the old Serpent, is by *Moses* set forth as insinuating himself into our first Parents, deceiving them into their Fall, or Death to the Divine Life, which whether it be called the Evil of the Serpent brought to Life in us, or our Loss of the Divine Nature, is the same Thing.

When therefore *Moses* bringeth in the Deity, as saying, 'The 'Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Head of the Serpent'; He preaches *that* very same Gospel, and in the same Manner, as the Apostle did. For his Words as plainly teach, that 'God was in 'the Seed of the Woman reconciling the World unto Himself,' as 'when *St. Paul* says, 'that God was in Christ Jesus reconciling the World to Himself'; for the Difference is in nothing else, but in two different Names given to our Redeemer.

Now though *Moses* was the first *Recorder* of the Gospel Salvation in a written Book, yet was He not the first *Preacher* of it. For it was proclaimed in *Adam's* Day, from Heaven itself, like as the Birth of Christ in the Flesh in the Days of *Herod*. For when God said, 'The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Head

‘of the Serpent,’ the same good Tidings of Salvation were *proclaimed from Heaven* by God Himself, as when the Angel said to the Shepherds, ‘Unto you is born this Day in the City of David, ‘a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.’

For the Day that God said this to *Adam* and *Eve*, the ‘Power ‘of the Highest overshadowed them,’ and that which *was born in them*, was the *bruising Spirit* of Christ, who from that Time began his same great Office of a Destroyer of the Works of the Devil, which He fully completed by his Death, Resurrection, and Ascension into Heaven.

Again, *Moses* saith, ‘God breathed into Man the Breath of ‘Life, and Man became a living Soul,’ that is, by the Breath of God living in Him. Now the Breath that comes from God, must have the Nature and Properties of God, and therefore that which lives in and by the Spirit of God breathed into it, must be a Creature made in the Image and Likeness of God. Every Child of Man, hath the Nature of Man, only for this Reason, because the Spirit of Man is brought to Life in Him. Therefore no Creature can be a Child of God, or made in his Image and Likeness, but because the Spirit of God is born, and living in it.—Therefore what is said by *Moses*, declares the highest Relation that can be between God, and an *immortal* Creature, and shows, that Man’s created Nature, had a *Birth* and Participation of the Divine Nature; beginning its Life in this World, by that same Spirit of God living in it, which is the Spirit and Life of Angels in Heaven.—And as Angels can have no higher a Principle of Life in them, cannot be more above Time and Mortality, cannot be nearer to God, have more of the Divine Nature, Image, and Likeness, than by having their Life breathed into them from the Breath of God, so Man is openly said by *Moses* to be created by God, in and for all that *Union, Fellowship*, and Immortality with God, as the holy Angels were. Nor is he in any Respect a little lower than the Angels, but because his angelic Nature is created into *that* Union with Flesh and Blood, which the Deity in Christ vouchsafed to enter into.

Now in all the New Testament, where Life and Immortality, and all the Glories of a *new Birth*, Union, and Fellowship with God through Christ Jesus, are so manifestly brought to Light, yet is there Nothing higher, or more Divine concerning Man’s Nature, said, or indeed can be said, than in these Words of *Moses*.—In the Gospel, there is nothing to be found that more exalts the Nature of Man, than when our Lord says, ‘Except a ‘Man be born again of the Spirit, born again from above, he can’t see, or enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.’—Yet all that is here said, is only a Divine Confirmation, or Testimony given by

the Son of God to that high Account of the Dignity of Man, and his Divine Destination to Heaven and Immortality, which *Moses* teacheth, by his first created State.—All likewise which the Apostles say of the Necessity of 'being led by the Spirit of God,' by the *Spirit* of Christ, neither had, nor could have had any Ground, or Reason, but because, as *Moses* teacheth, the Spirit of God was breathed into Man at his first Creation, and gave him *that Life*, which made him to be in the Image and Likeness of God.—For if the Spirit of God had not been the blessed Life of Man by virtue of his Creation, he never *afterwards*, could possibly have had any Communion with it, but must have lived, though it had been ever so long, not only without any want of it, but without any Possibility of receiving it. For no Creature can be, or have, or want to have any Thing, but that which it was, and had at its Creation.—Its first created Nature is its unalterable Bounds.—No Desire, Love, Pleasure, Knowledge, or Sensation of any kind, can be in Angel, Man, or Beast, but so far as they are grounded in its natural State.—Nothing but that which began with its Life, and is essentially involved in its first created State, can ever possibly be found in it. This is as certain, as that a Circle can never have either more or less than its own first Properties.

Divine Love, Delight, Knowledge, Sensation, and Capacity for further Happiness in God, may, and certainly will *increase* to all Eternity, but nothing can increase in Man, but that which was in him *before* it increased.

Permit me, my Lord, in passing, just to observe, that here, and nowhere else, lies all our true Knowledge and absolute Certainty, both of the *Being* of God, and our *own* Immortality.—To come at the Knowledge of outward Things, a Man must look outwards, because nothing can be seen, or found, but where it is, and therefore for the same Reason, all that concerns Man's Life, or has Relation to or Connection with his Life, can only be found and known, by his finding out *That*, which *lives* in him.—We could know nothing of God, or our own Immortality; but because they have both manifested themselves in us, both came forth in our first created Nature, so *that* the Life which we received, was a Participation of them. Otherwise no Possibility of our Knowledge, or Sensibility of them. For as we can have no other Knowledge of ourselves, but that which our *Nature* manifests to us, so we can have no Knowledge of God, and Immortality, but so far as the Nature of God, and the Nature of Immortality make themselves to be *livingly* felt, and found within us. And to seek for a Proof of them, by *abstract Reasoning*, is but like seeking in the same Way for a Proof of our Thinking, Seeing, and Feeling.

For as these Qualities of Mind can only manifest themselves, so to seek for a Proof of them, from any Thing else, but our own Sensibility of them, can only proceed from Ignorance both of them and ourselves.—Now God, and Immortality, if they belong to us, must be as near to us, as essentially within us, and as truly inherent in our own Life, as our own Thinking, Seeing, and Feeling; neither can they come into our Knowledge any other Way, than as our own Seeing, and Feeling does.—And as soon as we seek for any other Proof of them, but their own Manifestation sensibly found in ourselves, we demonstrate both our Ignorance of them, and of that which is to prove them. For nothing can prove, or be a Proof of any Thing, but that which *partakes* of the Nature of the Thing to be proved. Therefore all *abstract Reasoning*, or ranging of Ideas into a Form of Argument, cannot be any Proof of a God, or Immortality *found* in Man, because they *partake not* of the Nature of the Things to be proved, and so must be as false and fictitious, as that *Conclusion*, which has nothing of the Nature of the Premises in it.

As Life can only manifest Life, so no *particular* Form of Life can be manifested but by itself.

Now Mortality, and Immortality are two *essential* Forms of Life, and are what they are, from that which is peculiarly essential to them, they are so immutably distinct, that the one cannot be changed into the other, and neither of them can be proved by abstract Reasoning to be, or not be, anywhere.—They have no Proof but their own Existence.—A Life that is *Mortal*, or only for a Time, can only be so, because it has its Existence and Form from transitory and perishable Things, and therefore all *its Tempers* are transitory, it can live to nothing else, love nothing else, partake of nothing else, but such Gratifications, as *transitory* and *perishable* Things have for it.—*Immortality* is another Form of Life, and no Life can have this Form, but because it is a *Birth* from that which is *everlasting*. And as every Form of Life must manifest itself according to that, which is *peculiarly essential* to it, so this Form of Life does, and always must unavoidably manifest itself according to that which is essential to it, and give forth the same, full, indubitable Proof of itself, as the fleshly, mortal Life does.—It must have its *Thoughts*, its *Cares*, its *Fears*, its *Hopes*, and *Expectations*, about eternal Things, whether it will or no, just as the earthly, mortal Life must have its Cares, its Fears and Desires about earthly Things, whether it will or no.

And thus it is, that we have the *same infallible* Certainty of our own Immortality, that we have of our earthly and fleshly Life. For the Desires and Appetites peculiar to, and inseparable from each Nature, are in both Cases, the same Demonstration of

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the *Reality* of each Form of Life. And thus also it is, that our Immortality is *revealed* to us by God, in a Way much superior to any outward Information that could possibly be given to us. Therefore to expect or require *any other* Revelation of it, from God, is as groundless, as to expect, or require a Revelation, to tell us, that we are Flesh and Blood, and have Hunger and Thirst after earthly Nourishment.

To turn therefore to Argumentation upon metaphysical, or logical Principles, as the only right Way of *trying*, whether Immortality be *natural* to us, is no better, can come no nearer to the Truth of the Matter, than if we were to appeal to the Doctrines of *muscular Motion*, as the only right Way of *trying*, whether we *live, and move, and have our Being in God*.—For as Tempers, Affections, and Desires must unavoidably show, and make us feel, what *kind* of Life they proceed from; so our Cares, Fears, Hopes, Joys, &c., relating to an Immortality, unavoidably show, and make us feel, that an Immortality is *living and working* in us.—Hence it is, that neither in the Old, nor the New Testament, are we ever expressly told, that our *Nature* is in itself *Immortal*, any more than we are told, that we exist in Flesh and Blood. But as the Scriptures only inform us, how to live *wisely* in Flesh and Blood, so all the Instruction they give us concerning our Immortality, is only how to live wisely with regard to the Consequences of it.—Thus, ‘these shall go away into everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life eternal,’ is not a *first Notice*, or Revelation given of our Immortality, but is a Declaration that proceeds upon the Supposition of it, and is only a Divine, awakening Assurance given of *That*, which must be the Consequence of our having it, *namely*, that according as we live, it must inevitably bring us into a Happiness, or Misery, as everlasting as itself.

Again, a *Divine* Life, or a Life in Union with God, is another *Form* of Life, which wherever it is, wants no outward Proof, but is its own full Manifestation. Which Form of Life cannot be, or be found in any Creature, but so far as God is living and operating in it.—And from this Life *alone* it is, that any Creature, whether in Heaven, or on Earth, can have any true and real Knowledge of God. For nothing can be truly known of God by the Creature, but that which God makes known of Himself in the Life of the Creature.—So far as God is living and operating in the Creature, and manifesting Himself in it either by Light and Love, or Reproof, so far it truly knows, and *is taught of God*.—Any other Knowledge of God, however learned, high, or deep it may pretend to be, is as vain and spurious, as *that Goodness*, which proceeds from something else, than God's good Spirit living in us.

Genius, Parts, and Literature, however set forth with Wit and Rhetoric, have no Affinity with Divine Knowledge, they are as different from it, and can no more give it, than the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, can generate Humility and Purity of Heart. These Accomplishments live, and act in a Sphere of their own, and have no more Power of taking to themselves, any living Knowledge of God, than the Art of Painting to the Life, can give the Power of *creating* Life.

Now, that this *Form of a Divine* Life is in every Man, and that no Man is without this Witness of God in Himself, is a Truth as evident as any Thing, that can be affirmed of human Nature. For was not God in Man, as a *Principle* of Life, and Man in God, as a *Birth* of Him, and in him, or in Scripture Words, did He not *live, and move, and have his Being in God*, He could no more *begin* to form a Thought of Enquiry after God, or have the least Desire of knowing any Thing about him, than the Worms in the Earth can *begin* to hunger after the Power of *Syllogisms*, and crawl about in quest of them.—But as all Instincts, Appetites, and Inclinations are, and can be nothing else, but the various Workings of that *kind of Life*, which is in the Animal, so the Cares, Fears, Hopes, &c., relating to God, and inseparable from Man, are and can be nothing else, but the various Workings of a *Life* and Power of God essentially existing, as a *Birth* in the Soul of Man.

Had Mankind been created to live without the Use of *any Food*, and absolutely free from the least Sensibility of Hunger and Thirst, can it be supposed, that a Search and Enquiry after the *Nature* of Food, *what* it was, and *how* to be found, should have been the great Contention of all Men in all Ages of the World, and that divided as they were in their Opinions about it, yet none could live at Rest, till satisfied with some Notion, or Idea, which they had got of it? Now, absurd, and impossible as this is, yet it is more so, to suppose all Mankind, from the Beginning of the World, busy and earnest, as they have always been, about the *Nature* of God, *what* He is, and *how* to be worshipped, and though unable to agree in their Opinions, yet unable to drop the Enquiry, or to have any Content, till they had found a God, to be worshipped some Way or other.—All this must be said to be the highest Absurdity, and Impossibility, had not the LIFE and POWER of God come forth as a *Birth* in the Life of the human Nature.—Therefore the *Cares*, the *Inquiries*, the *Hopes*, *Fears* and *Joys* of Man, concerning God and Religion, which ever did, and ever will, in some Degree or other, manifest themselves in the Hearts of all Men, give forth not only a convincing Proof, but an infallible Certainty, (1) of the *Being* of God,

(2) of his *living* in all that which lives and *working* with all that which works, in the Hearts, Souls, and Spirits of all Men.

The Blindness, and Follies which have overrun both the ancient and modern World in Matters of Religion, make nothing at all against this.—They are only a full and irresistible Proof of the most capital Doctrines of Divine Revelation, *namely*, that Man (now the defaced Image of God) is so miserably changed and fallen from his first created State, that nothing less than a new Birth from above, can bring him again into the Region of Divine Truth, or the Kingdom of Heaven.

And hence it is, that though Religion has its deepest Ground in the Nature of Man, though God be *essentially, vitally* present in the Souls of all Men, yet from the Fall of *Adam*, to the End of the World, it will be an immutable Truth, that *Strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way that leadeth* unto Divine Knowledge, and none but the *simple* of Heart, the *poor in Spirit*, or the real Followers of Christ through *all his Process*, can possibly find it.

And here, my Lord, may be plainly seen why the *Wisdom of this World*, always was, and always must be, *Foolishness with God*. It is because the Wisdom of this World, be it of what kind it will, in whatever Form, or Shape it appears, has nothing of the *Process* of Christ in it, is not only without it, but contrary to it. Therefore let a Man be doing what he will, however great, wise, and distinguishing, it may seem to be, yet since it has not its Rise and Growth in, and from the *one Spirit* of Christ's Process, it is but mere Foolishness with God, and has all the Loss and Misery in it, to Man, that can be the Effect of any Folly. For since the one great Want, or the *one Thing needful* to Man, is to come out of the Evil, the Blindness, and Misery of his fallen Nature, and nothing either in Heaven, or on Earth can possibly do this for him, but the *one Spirit of Christ's whole Process*, nothing else can possibly be his Wisdom.—This State of Things is unalterable, it equally takes in every Man, and every Age of the World.—The Law, the Prophets, the Gospel, may be all embraced, honoured, and defended with Zeal, in their respective Times ; but if the one Spirit of Christ's whole Process is not the *one Thing* sought, the one Thing found, and kept alive by them, Law, Prophets, and Gospel, however Holy, Spiritual and Good in themselves, will be made to set up a Kingdom of that worldly Wisdom, which is Foolishness with God.

For all the Dispensations of God, have but one Wisdom, and one Meaning, they mean nothing, seek nothing, but to bring forth a true, and real Resurrection of the Life, Spirit, and Power of Christ in the fallen human Nature.

A *carnal* Mind always was and always will be the same Death to the Soul, the same Separation from God, whether it be found under the Law, or under the Gospel. And this ought well to be observed, that every Man is, and must be *carnally minded*, till his whole Heart, and Soul, and Spirit, is led and governed by the *one Spirit of Christ's whole Process*; every Thing but Christ in Man, is carnal, and governed by the Law of impure Flesh and Blood. A Truth sufficiently told us, as in all Scripture, so by these Words of Christ, 'He that followeth not me, walketh in 'Darkness.' Confirmed by the Spirit of God, saying, 'If any 'Man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.'

Christianity without the Spirit of Christ, and Christianity with the Spirit of Christ, began in the two first Sons of *Adam*. These two Brothers, *Cain* and *Abel*, had no other Difference, they were both entered into the one Christian Covenant of Salvation, they both began to worship God outwardly according to it.—The Spirit of Christ's Process dwelling in *Abel*, made his Sacrifice acceptable to God, and crowned him with Martyrdom.—Outward Worship performed without the Spirit of Christ had no Interest with God, but brought forth in *Cain* a Spirit of *Envy*, *Hatred*, and *Murder*.

That which happened to these two Brothers, will unavoidably happen to two Lines of People, which will both of them be incessantly kept up, so long as the War lasts between the Seed of the Woman, and the Serpent. So long *Cain* and *Abel* will have their genuine Posterity. That which was true of *Abel*, namely that his outward Sacrifice was pleasing to God, will be true of every Man, whose outward Worship of God, is done, in and through the *Spirit of Christ's Process*. And that which was true of *Cain*, namely, that He was filled with *Envy*, *Hatred*, *Self-seeking*, and *Ambition*, will in a certain Degree be true of every Man, of every Church, whose outward Religion has the Wisdom of this World cloaked under it.

But it is Time to have done. I shall now only trouble your Lordship with the few following Remarks.—Dr. *Warburton* says, 'He has proved that the Doctrine of a future State of Rewards, 'and Punishments is not to be *found in*, nor did make a *Part* of 'the Mosaic Dispensation.*' The Mosaic Dispensation means nothing else, but a *temporal* Ritual, and a *temporal* Theocracy of worldly Blessings, and Curses to support it. These are its fixed Bounds within which it is confined.—Therefore, to prove that a State *beyond* Time and this World, was not to be *found in*, nor did make a *Part* of a State, that is confined to Time, and this

* *D. L.*, vol. ii., page 474.

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World, is as easily, and as vainly done, as to prove, that the *Garden of Eden* is not to be *found in*, nor makes a *Part* of a Map that is confined to *England*. And to infer that the *Israelites* therefore had no Notion, or Belief of an Immortality, because it was not a *Part* of their Ritual, is no better, than to infer, that the People of *England* can have no Notion, or Belief about the *Garden of Eden*, because nothing of it is to be seen in the Map of this Island.—For though not the *Ritual*, yet *Moses* in other Parts of his Books, written by Inspiration of God, and for the Instruction of those, to whom He gave the Ritual, has in the plainest Words given them the fullest Notice, and highest Proof of that *godlike* and *immortal* Nature, they received at their Creation, showing them to be the Children of the *Patriarchal Covenant*, Heirs of all the Promises of eternal Redemption, made to their Fathers from the Beginning of the World. Nay, the most heavenly Doctrines and Precepts given by the Apostles to the Redeemed of Christ, as *Heirs of Immortality*, are to be found in the Books of *Moses*.

Dr. *Warburton*, takes much Pains to get rid of the best, and only true Sense of the following Texts of *Moses*. Thus, 'Let us 'make Man in our own Image and Likeness.' From these Words, he says, *it is inferred, that the Soul is immaterial*. But he thinks, *Moses intimated quite another Matter*. And so do I; for to intimate the *Immateriality* of the Soul, by saying, that Man was made in the *Image and Likeness* of God, is quite short of the Sense of the Words; for to say, that the Soul is *immaterial*, is saying no more, than that it is not a *Circle*, or a Piece of *Clay*, it is saying nothing at all of it, but only of something that it is not. Therefore *Moses* cannot be supposed to intimate such a *Nothing* as this, by the *Image and Likeness* of God. But he asserts a much higher Matter, namely, that being created in the *Image and Likeness* of God, he was made a Partaker of the Divine Nature, had the triune Life, Likeness, and Spirit of God, living in his own *creaturely* Life, and therefore had not only Immortality, but the Riches and Perfections of the Deity grounded, and growing up in *That*, which was *living* in him. For as it was the *Life* of Man that had this *Image and Likeness* of God in it, so the unfathomable *Riches, Powers, and Perfections* of the Divine Nature, came forth in a *creaturely* State in the *Birth* of the human Life. And this is the true Ground of our eternal Happiness, that is, of that *eternal Increase* of Union, Perfection and Glory, which the redeemed Soul will find in God; it is because the *Image and Likeness* of God, being as a *Seed* sown into it, at its *Creation*, it will to all Eternity, after its Admission into Heaven, be made to open more and more its Divine

Nature, and spring forth in new and further Fruits and Growths of *Glory, Beatitude* and *Union* with God.

And as it is a certain Truth, that no Fruits, Flowers or Virtues can be, or come forth in any Vegetable, but what were first in its Seed, or Root, so no Divine Glory, Perfection, or Power, can ever come forth in any Creature in Heaven, but what arises from that *Seed* of the Deity sown into it, at *its Creation*. Therefore, as sure as the heavenly Soul will to all Eternity increase in new Openings, and Enlargements of Divine Union, Enjoyment, and Perfection in God, so sure is it, that in the Centre, or inmost Birth of the Soul's Life, lies the Riches of the *Divine Nature*, as a Seed, or Root of Glory, given into it, by its first created Image, or Likeness to God.

Every Thing that is endless, numberless in the Depth of Eternity, is endless and numberless in the Essence of the Soul; what *Seeing* is, what *Hearing, Feeling, &c.*, are in their boundless Variety, and ever increasing newness of Delights in Eternity, these, with all their Wonders, are the innate Birthright, and sure Inheritance of every immortal godly Soul; the Things 'which Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor hath the Heart of Man conceived,' nor will conceive, till all *that* belongs to Time is separated from it. And on the other Hand, the same boundless, numberless Depth and Growth of every tormenting, painful, frightful Sensation, will open itself in every Soul, *that* has lost its God, and is left to its own immortal Life within itself.

Vain therefore, and entirely to be rejected, is that *Principle* published to the World, by a celebrated Philosopher of the last Century, *namely*, that the Soul in its *first created State*, has *nothing* in it, but is a mere *Rasa Tabula*, or *blank Paper*. A Fiction, that is contradicted by all that we know of every created Thing in Nature.

For every Creature of this World, animate or inanimate, is in its Degree, a *Microcosm* of all the Powers, that are in the great World, of which it is a Part. And every Thing, or Creature is *That*, which it is, because the *Powers* of this World, or Properties of Nature, are in such, or such a Combination *included*, or *treasured* up in its Essence, and give it its Difference from other Things.—But nothing through all this Universe, has in its Essence, only the Nature of a *Rasa Tabula*, or blank Paper, but is in its kind, full of the Riches, and Powers of all outward Nature.

In like Manner must it be with the eternal World; every Thing which comes from it, or is born of it, must be in its Degree, a *Microcosm* of all the *Powers* and *Glories* of Eternity.—And it ought well to be observed, that nothing can possibly be called into an *Enjoyment* or *Participation* of the Powers, Glories,

and Perfections of the eternal World, but only *That* which has its Birth from it. Therefore, if the Soul of Man is to enter into the Kingdom of God, and partake of its Glories and Beatitudes, it must of all Necessity have its *Birth* and *Nature* from thence, as a *Microcosm* of its Riches and Perfections, or in the Words of *Moses*, be at *first* created in the Image and Likeness of God.

Further, Let it be said, that the *Matter of this World*, was in its *first created State*, *free* from all *Extension*, *Solidity* and *Parts*, and this would be as *grave* a saying, and as much founded in *Nature*, as the *Rasa Tabula* of the Soul; say again, that by Degrees it got a *Materiality* of Length, Breadth and Parts, *from without*, and this would be no greater a Wonder, than that a Soul, created *inwardly* destitute of *any Principle* of Knowledge, and Wisdom, should from *outward Causes* grow up into a profound Philosopher. *Again*, say that the Soul was *at first*, in itself, but a *blank Paper*, till the Organs of the Body began to act upon it; and may not all the Enemies of Religion, as justly say, that it must be the *same* blank Paper again *at the last*, when the Body shall be broken off from it?

If therefore the *Essay upon human Understanding* (which the Doctor calls the most original Book that ever was published) has produced a Metaphysics, in many Points dangerous to Religion, and greatly serviceable to *false*, and *superficial* Reasoning, it is not to be wondered at, since so eminent an Error, is the fundamental Principle on which it proceeds. For to consider the Soul as devoid and empty in itself, as a Piece of blank Paper, is placing it below every *material Substance* that exists, even lower than the *Caput Mortuum* of the Chemists. For there is not a Clod of Earth, but what as such, has its *Fulness* of invisible Riches and Powers, *innate* and *essential* to its Nature, which it gives forth, in and through the Qualities, Beauties, and Varieties of Vegetables, which have their roots in it.

Strange indeed! that every Clod of Earth should be a mystery of almost *infinite Powers*, and *Qualities* hid, and treasured up in its own Essence, but the *thinking spiritual Substance*, created to live, and rejoice in the Delights and Blessings of Knowledge, Wisdom, and Goodness, should be only a Mystery of Emptiness, having in itself, neither *Spark* nor *Seed* of that Life, for which it was created. An Absurdity beyond all Comparison, except it be that, of making *Nothing* to be the Father of *Something*!

The pernicious Nature of this Principle, obliged me in this Place, to expose the Falseness of it.

But to return to the Doctor: He says, 'The Divine Image and Likeness must consist in something that is peculiar to Man,—' that the two Things *Peculiar* to Man, are his *Shape* and his

‘Reason, that it cannot be in his Shape, therefore it must be in his Reason.’*

The Divine Image and Likeness cannot consist in something that is *peculiar* to Man, it might as well consist in his *Shape*, as in his *Faculty* of making *Syllogisms*; but on the contrary, it must, in every Part of it, consist in *That*, and *only* in that, which is, and must be *peculiar* to God. Nor could Man possibly be created in the Image and Likeness of God, unless something *peculiar* to God, and not possible to be *appropriated* to Man, had come forth, as the *Divine Glory* and *Perfection* of His creaturely Life. For the creaturely Life, and all that is *peculiar* to it, is at the utmost Distance from God, and can only have a Likeness to that, which is to be found in Creatures.—God dwelling in a *supernatural Way* in the Creature, is the only possible Image and Likeness of God that can be in it. The fallen Angels have every Thing that was creaturely *left* in them, but they are horrible Devils, because they have lost the *supernatural* Image and Likeness of God, which dwelt in them at their Creation. They have still Reason, Craft and Subtlety; but because they have nothing, but that which is creaturely, or *peculiar* to the Creature, they are all Rage, Torment and Misery.

The Doctor therefore, instead of appealing to *two* Things in Man, his Shape and his Reason, as his true Distinction from Beasts, should have said, by the Authority of *Moses*, that *only one* Thing was *peculiar to Man*, as his glorious Distinction both from fallen Angels, and terrestrial Animals, and *that one* Thing is, his being created in the *Image and Likeness* of God. As to his outward Shape, when considered only as different from other Animals, there is but little of a Distinction in it, because they are as different in Shape from one another, as Man is from them all. But when his *Shape* is considered, as it truly is, the *natural Effect*, and *Form* of his *heaven-born* Spirit, and Life, then it is a glorious Distinction from all the animal Creation. For if Man at his Creation had had no higher a Guest within him, than his Reason, his Shape would never have been better, than that of a Fox, or a Serpent. For Reason, when considered alone, and not under the Government of a higher Principle, is that same selfish Craft, Subtlety and Cunning, *that* is visible in Variety of Beasts; and is often, and for the most Part, as selfish, as earthly an Instrument of mischievous Passions, and Lusts in Men, as it is in Beasts. And what is more, it must be so, till it comes under the Government of *That*, which was the *Image and Likeness* of God, in the first Creation of Man.

What is the Difference between Reason in St. Paul, a *Spinosa*, a *Hobbes*, or a *Bolingbroke*? None at all, or no other than in their outward Shape. Therefore if Reason be the Divine Image and Likeness of God in Man, a *Hobbes* and a *Bolingbroke*, had as much of it as St. Paul. And a Man that is all his Life long reasoning himself into *Atheism*, and the Wisdom of Living according to *his own Lusts*, must be allowed to give *daily continual* Proof of his having the Image and Likeness of God, very *powerfully* manifested in Him.

The Doctor's great Proof, that Reason is the Image and Likeness of God, is because *Moses* immediately adds, 'Let them rule over the Fish of the Sea, and over the Fowls of Heaven, and over the Beasts of the Earth,' &c. 'For what, says He, could invest Man with this Dominion *de Facto*, as well as *de Jure*, but his Reason?'

Our blessed Lord, at leaving the World, saith, 'These Signs shall follow them that believe; in my Name they shall cast out Devils, they shall speak with new Tongues, they shall take up Serpents, and if they drink any deadly Thing, it shall not hurt them.' Now let it here be asked, *what could invest the Believers in Christ with this Dominion de Facto as well as de Jure, but their Reason?* Now both this Question, and the Solution of it, is just as sound, and theological as the Doctor's.

For it was not any Thing of their own, or within themselves, but only and solely the *Name*, that is, the Strength and Power of Christ dwelling, and operating in them, that invested them with this Dominion over Devils, Serpents, Diseases, and all outward deadly, or hurtful Things. Now *That* which gave this Power, and Authority to the Believers in Christ, was *that very same*, which gave to the first created, perfect Man, a *Power of ruling* over all the Creatures of this World, and of living in full Superiority and Dominion over all that was, or could be hurtful, and deadly, in Fire, or Water, Heat or Cold, or any Elementary Things. So that *Adam* whilst standing in his first State of Glory, and Power, had the same full Reason to say of all *that* he was, and did, that which St. Paul said, yet *not I, but Christ that liveth in me*. And had not Christ, or the WORD, been *in Man* at his Creation, the WORD made Flesh, had not been his Redemption.

And how the Doctor came to think of any other Power, as the *Ability* of Man to *rule* over the Creatures, and all *other outward Things* of this World, is very strange, since the Gospel has so plainly told him, that *they are only the Children of God, who are led by the Spirit of God*. If therefore the first Man, created in the Image and Likeness of God, may be supposed by his Creation

to have been a *Child* of God, then as the Gospel is true, so sure is it, that he had the *Spirit of God*, living and working in him. And that surely may be allowed to have been his *true* and his *only* Qualification, to have and exercise a Dominion over the rest of the Creation, that had only the Spirit of this World in them.

But if we suppose him to have this Power, and right of Dominion, only because of his *Faculty of Reasoning*, it would only be like that which crafty Tyrants get over their fellow-Creatures, or skilful Hunters over Wolves, and Foxes.

The Doctor, in order to find out *that* Image, and Likeness of God in Man, of which *Moses* writes, looks into the Constitution of that *two-legged* Animal, who is *the Disputer of this World*. As well done, and as likely to succeed, as if in order to find out *that Paradise*, of which *Moses* writes, he should search for it in the *Hundreds of Essex*, or in the *Wilds of Kent*.

For *Moses*, to prevent the Folly of looking for the Divine Image and Likeness in any Thing, that is *natural* to the *present* State of Man, has given us the most undeniable Assurance, that *this first* Man, created in the Image and Likeness of God, *died the very Day* that he did eat of the forbidden Tree. And that nothing of this Divine Man remained, but Terrors within, and such an outward bestial Figure of himself, as filled him with Shame and Confusion at the Sight of it.

And a greater than *Moses* has also told us, that Man, in his present *natural State*, is so certainly dead to that first Divine Glory, which he had at his Creation, that He has no Possibility of entering into the Kingdom of God, till he is born again from Above, of the *Word and Spirit* of God.—Proof enough, surely, that Man has lost the State of his *first Birth*; and also, that the Birth which he lost, was *that Spirit and Life from Above*, which He must, and only can have by being *born again*, in, and by the Power of Christ. This might have sufficiently shown the learned Doctor, that He who will find out, in what the *Image and Likeness* of God in Man, consisted, must of all Necessity, as the Apostle saith, *walk by Faith, and not by Sight*.

The next Text of *Moses*, which the Doctor most miserably injures, is thus quoted by him. ‘The Lord God formed Man of ‘the Dust of the Ground, and breathed into him the Breath of ‘Life, and Man became a living Soul; that is, say the Objectors, ‘had an Immortal Soul.’

Who the Objectors are, I know not, but the Truth of the Text, requires us to say, that therefore Man had a Divine and godlike Soul, a true Offspring, or Partaker of the Divine Nature. Because the Breath or Spirit of the holy triune God, was that

Breath, by which he was made a living Soul.—And therefore the Riches of this first Life in Man, were the Riches of the Divine Nature manifesting itself in the creaturely Life of the Soul. And had not the first Life of Man been thus an *Offspring* of the Holy Trinity, neither the Belief of the Trinity, nor the Operation of the Trinity could have had any Connection with our Redemption, nor could there have been any Thing in fallen Man, that had deserved Redemption, much less any Thing that could require the Incarnation of the eternal Son of God, as the only Thing that could effect it.

But the Doctor will have it, that only an unlearned *English* Reader, can collect any Thing to be Divine in the Soul, from the Words of *Moses*, as not knowing, that what is translated, a living *Soul*, signifies, in the Original, only a living *Animal*. But this every *English* Reader may know to be a vain Criticism; for no Stress is laid upon the Expression, a *living Soul*, no more than if it had been said, a living *Creature*, or *Animal*. But the true and full Proof of the Divine Greatness, and Riches of the human Soul, lies *solely* in this, that the Breath, or Spirit of the holy Trinity was breathed into it, and was that which made it to be a *living Soul*, and therefore the Life that arose in it, was the Life of God in the Soul.

The Doctor thus comments upon the Words of the Text. 'God, the great plastic Artist, is here represented, as making and shaping out a Figure of Earth and Clay, which He *afterwards* animates, or inspires with Life. He breathed into this Statue the Breath of Life, and the Lump of Clay became a living Creature.'

Had this elegant, and most graphical Description been only found in some *Minor* Poet, or *School* Declamation, it might have been overlooked, but in a Prose Treatise of Divinity pretending to set forth the Truth of the Matter, it ought not to pass uncensured. I know of nothing that can equal it, unless it be supposed that some ingenious Anthropomorphite, reading these Words, 'and the Lord God did unto Adam and Eve, make Coats of Skins, and clothed them'; should thus describe the Matter, 'Here, God, the great Artist, is represented, as having the Skins of Beasts before him, and with his Divine Hands, cutting, shaping and joining them together in Forms of Garments, fitted to the Size, and Distinction of the first Man and his Wife.'

I may defy anyone to show, that this Comment, does not pay as great Regard to the Letter, and do as much Honour to the Sense of this Scripture, as the Doctor's doth to the other Text.

The sacred Text, 'God formed man of the Dust of the

'Ground, and breathed into him the Breath of Life,' is a short and full Declaration of a most important and Divine Truth, namely, that Man was brought into Being, *in a twofold Nature*, having the Nature of this outward World, and the Nature of Heaven in the Birth of his Life; the former signified by his being formed of the Dust of the Ground, the latter, by the Breath of God breathed into Him, as his Life.—To be formed out of the *Dust of the Ground*, is the same Thing, as if it had been said, that He was formed out of all the *Riches, Powers* and *Virtues* that are in this whole visible World. For every Property of Nature, that is in the Sun, the Stars and Elements, is hidden in the Earth, and every Thing that cometh out of the Earth, cometh *out of all* the Properties, that work in the whole outward World.—Nay, all the heavenly Powers of Paradise are in the Earth, or Paradise could never have sprung up in *Eden*. Now Man was formed out of this paradisaical State of the Earth, when Paradise was in its full Glory, and that which He received, was the good Powers of paradisaical Earth, which were to be his Entrance into, or Union with this outward World, created for paradisaical Glory.—The *Tree of Life*, in the midst of the Garden in *Eden*, may as truly be said to have been formed out of the Dust of the Earth, as Man was. And Man, so far as he was designed to be a Creature of this outward World, is therefore said to be formed out of the Earth, because the Earth is not only the Treasure-house of all that is in outward Nature, but is the *Mother*, as of all the three other Elements, so also of the Sun and Stars themselves. For all that is visible and bodily in every Thing, whether it be Sun, Stars, Light or Air, is from the Dust of the Earth, that is, from the earthly Nature, for nothing else can give an outward, and visible Body, or Form of Existence. And as all Things of this World, whether animate or inanimate, are from the Earth, as their Mother, so in the Earth is there every Power, and Blessing of Life, to sustain every Thing that has its Body from it; as appears by that fruitful Power, which is continually giving forth itself in all kinds of vegetable Food, fitted to the Wants of every Life.

What therefore can it be called, but a most deplorable Blindness in learned Reason, to consider Man as making his first Entrance into Paradise in no better a State, than *that* of Dust and Clay formed into a dead lumpish Figure of a Man, for this Reason, because he was said to be formed out of the Dust of the Ground? Blindness indeed! when it is so fully evident, that even now, after the Curse is in the Earth, yet every Thing, even the poorest *Weed* that comes out of the Dust of the Ground, is in a much higher State, and enters into this World with a Degree

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of Life from its Mother, *the Earth*.—Had the Doctor never seen, or heard of any other Thing formed out of the Earth, but such as our Potters, and Dealers in Clay can make out of it, there might have been some sort of Excuse for his *Adam* of dead Clay formed out of the Earth. But when every Day of his Life has shown him that almost infinite Variety, and Plenty of fruitful Powers, Virtues and Wonders in the Kingdom of Vegetables, all coming out of the Earth, and nourished by it, when the Scripture has told him *that* the Beasts and Cattle of all Kinds were formed out of the Earth, had their Flesh and Blood from it, and their daily Sustenance from its fruitful Womb; it is strange to a Degree of Astonishment, that he should hold, that out of this *rich* Earth, when in its *paradisaical* State, when Man, the Glory of the Creation, was *formed* out of it, and God the *Former*, that nothing should come forth, but a dead Lump of Clay in the Figure of a Man.

For this very Thing, *viz.*, Man's being *formed out of the Earth*, which the Doctor makes the Reason of his being only a Statue of dead Clay, ought to have been received as a full Proof of his having all the Perfections of Life, and Glory, that are to be found in this whole outward, visible World.—For what higher Proof can there possibly be, that all the Riches, and Powers of this whole material Universe, are treasured up in the Earth, than that all kinds of Life under the Heavens, whether animal or vegetable, have their Being, and Nourishment from it?—And the Reason why the inspired Text, when teaching us, that Man, as to *one Part* of him, had his Birth from this World, says, that He was *formed out of the Earth*, is not, because *Fire* and *Air*, and *Water*, and *Sun*, and *Stars*, had not as *full*, and *necessary* a Share in the Formation of him, but because the Earth being the *Ground*, or *Mother*, not only of all the other Elements, but of the Sun and Stars also, is justly put for all of them.

Again, What a total Disregard has the Doctor here shown to the very Letter of Scripture. The Text saith, 'God formed Man out of the Dust of the Ground,' nothing else is ascribed to God, as *his Work* in this Matter; but the Doctor adds quite another Matter as the *Work of God*, namely, shaping and forming lumpish Clay into a dead Figure of a Man.

And then follows another Fiction equally against the Letter of Scripture. For He says, that AFTERWARDS, God breathed Life into it. But in the Scripture Account, there is not a Syllable of any *First*, or *Afterwards*, nor indeed any Room for either.—Two Things are spoken of the Birth of Man, and as they cannot be spoken both at once, so one must come after the other in the Relation of them. The Scripture mentions them as two

distinct Things, which they certainly are in a very great Degree, and the Reason of mentioning them thus distinctly, is not to teach us, they were done at two different Times, the one first, and the other afterwards, but to give us the fullest Assurance, that Man came into the World in a *twofold* Nature, the one from the heavenly Breath of God, and the other from this visible World.

But the Meeting, or Union of these two Natures in the Formation, or Birth of Man, was owing to one, and the same undivided *Fiat*, or Operation of God.—There is no sooner, or later, in the Beginning of the Soul, and of the Body; the Beginning of one, is the Beginning of the other, and Life as creaturely is equally from them both.

When it is said, that ‘God breathed into him the Breath of Life, and Man became a living Soul,’ the *Truth* really signified under this Form of Words, is this, namely, that God *willed* the Breath of his own Life, to become creaturely in such a Form, as Man. And from this *Fiat*, or Will of God, it was, that Heaven and Earth, Time and Eternity, brought forth the human Creaturely Life, kindled from both of them.

All Life is from the *invisible* World, and in order to its Entrance into the visible World, it neither *wants*, nor can *possess* a Place *prepared* for it.—Spirit can have no Place, but its *own Body*, nor can be anywhere but in *That*, which proceeds from itself. The Life of the Soul is generated in, and from the Body, and the Body has its Birth, and Growth in and from the Soul, and therefore neither of them can be before the other, in the Formation of the Creaturely Life.

And to suppose with the Doctor that Man was first made a dead Image, and afterwards had Life breathed into it, is no better a Philosophy, than to suppose, that God first created the vegetable Creature, and afterwards added a vegetable Life to it; that He first created the Globe of the Sun, and afterwards added Heat and Light to it.

‘God said, Let the Earth bring forth the living Creature,’ &c. What a Folly to suppose, that the Creature, and its Life, are two separate Things, that the one came first, and the other afterwards? No better, than supposing, that a *Circle* and its *Roundness*, are two separate Things, that first comes forth the Figure, and afterwards its Roundness.—Life is not, cannot be a *second* or *posterior* Power in the *Formation* of the living Creature, and if its Body (which is only another Name, for its creaturely State) could begin to be formed *without Life*, it never could have any Communion with Life. For nothing can have any Communion with Life, but that which proceeds from it. Nor can the Body

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have Communion with any other Soul, but that which came to Life in, and through, and by the Body.

In Eternity, or *before* the Creation, the *Spirit of Life* is unfathomable, incomprehensible ; but the Spirit of Life, coming by the Divine *Fiat*, to be *creaturely*, is Life *generating* a Body ; for *Body, Form, and Creature*, are synonymous Terms ; for nothing can be *creaturely*, but because it is *bodily*, and under some *Form*.

The Spirit of Life cannot come into any Creature *from without*, nothing can be its Life, but that which arises as a *Birth* within itself. And as *Life*, so every *Quality, State, or Condition* of every Creature, whether good, or bad, is from a *Birth, or magical Power* working in it, for Birth, and *magical Power* is the same Thing.

Every Vegetable, and Animal of this World demonstrates the Truth and Certainty of this magical Power ; they are all, both as to their Existence, Qualities and Conditions, whether good or bad, so many full Proofs of it, they are what they are, and have what they have, as so many *Births, and Growths* of a magical Power.

We cannot in the Nature of the Thing, have any higher Proof, that this *same magical Power* works in the same Manner in the Birth, and Growth of all intelligent Beings, than that which our blessed Lord has given us in the following Words, ' Except a Man be born again, He cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven ;' for this would not have been said, namely, that we can be heavenly *no other way* than by a *Birth*, but because it is the *one Way* of our Nature, to have and be only that, which we are, and have, by a *Birth, or Growth* in us. *Again*, ' That which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit.' The very same Thing, as if it had been said, that Man cannot be either fleshly, or spiritual, but so far as the *Birth* either of the one, or of the other, is in Him. But a Birth there must be, and of no other Kind than as the Will-Spirit worketh. When it worketh with God, it is in Scripture called that Divine ' Faith, to which all Things are possible :' That, to which it is said, ' According to thy Faith, so be it done unto Thee.' When it worketh contrary to God, it is that magical Power, which bringeth forth a Birth of the diabolical Nature in the Soul, and is described in Scripture in these Words, ' Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the Works of your Father ye will do.' Plainly showing us, that all that is in us, and proceeds from us, has a magical, generating Power, and that as our Will-Spirit worketh, so a Birth either of Heaven, or Hell, making us to be either Sons of God, or Children of the Devil, is unavoidably brought forth.

The *Will-Spirit* in God, is the Beginner, or first Cause of all

that is in Nature and Creature, it is that Mysterious, and Abyssal Power of the Deity, which generateth, and bringeth forth Nature with all its Properties, is always in them, and with them, as the Cause of all that they are, and work. And hence it is that the Apostle saith, that 'of him, and through him, and to him, are all 'Things, and by him all Things subsist.' For that which God willed in Nature, and all its Creatures, is inseparable from them, worketh with them, and is the highest Relation, or Connection, that the Creature hath with the Deity.

The *Will-Spirit* in the Creature, called in Things inanimate, *Attraction*, and in Animals, *Instinct*, coming from the *Will-Spirit* of the Creator, as a Ray from it, is that which keeps up the whole System of Stars and Elements, with all its Creatures, vegetable and animal, in their full Conformity to the first working Will of God in their Creation, which is never separate from them.

The *Will-Spirit* in the intelligent Free Creature, is of a much higher Nature, it has the *never-beginning* Eternity in it, and is a genuine Offspring of the Will-Spirit of God, and therefore in its Degree, partakes of the Power of God *over* Nature. And were it not so, that is, had it not something in it, *higher* than Nature, it would be as right, and fitting in every Man to follow his *natural* Lusts and Appetites, as it is in Beasts; neither could it be any Part of Man's Glory and Perfection to imitate the Divine Goodness, or strive to 'be perfect, as his Father in Heaven is perfect.'—All which is the highest Demonstration, that the Will-Spirit of the intelligent, Free Creature, has its Birth, and Power, out of that Abyss of Eternity, which is *before*, and *superior* to Nature, and that all that it hath in, and from Nature, must work, and generate, according as this superior Will-Spirit worketh. It is this alone, that can either unite, and work with God, or depart from him, and the Soul of Man hath no other *Near* or *Far* from God, but as its Will-Spirit worketh.

All outward Life, with all its Forms of Wisdom, Knowledge, Learning, or religious Distinction, all the highest Appearances of Prudence in Behaviour, are but mere *temporal* Things, and have no *eternal* Good in them, but so far, as the Will-Spirit, which governs all, is *holy* and *Divine*, and works in that heavenly Goodness, and Love, which God bears towards all the Creation. 'My 'Meat and Drink,' saith the holy Jesus, 'is to do the Will of Him 'that sent me.' A sure Proof, that nothing can minister Food to the *eternal Life* of the Soul, but *only That*, which is done in, and from the Will of God working in us, and governing all, that proceeds from us.

The Will-Spirit therefore is justly called the great magical Power of the Soul, because, though working secretly, and without

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any Materials, yet it never is, nor can be without its real and vital Effects. It always generates, and a Birth must be brought forth, either from above, or below. For our Nature standeth in the Growth, for a Life out of Time into Eternity.—As fallen Men, we are born, only to be born again, and according to our Faith, such must be our Birth. When Christ said, 'According to thy Faith, so be it done unto Thee,' nothing was said, as particular to *that* Person, and Occasion, but the whole Nature and Power of Faith, or the Will-Spirit given up to God, was declared, with Respect to all Persons, and all Times. For as *Truth* and *Lies* have the same Nature, and the same Effects, do the same Good, and the same Hurt to every Man, that is wholly given up to them, so the same Faith hath the same Effects upon every Man, that it has upon any Man.

And here, my Lord, permit me to say to every perplexed Seeker after God, and religious Goodness, and to every eager Dealer in Notions, Opinions, and new-modelled Forms, that we neither want nor can receive any other Good from Religion, but that of being brought wholly under the continual indwelling Influence of the Spirit of God; and nothing can hinder, or help us to this, but *solely* our Faith, or the Working of our own Will-Spirit. For from the Beginning of the World, a *common, universal* Saviour was given to the first Father of Sinners, who says of Himself, that He stands knocking at the Door of Man's Heart. And nothing did, or could hinder *Cain* from having the same full Benefit from Christ that *Abel* had, but only his Faith, and Will-Spirit working another Way.—To turn to God with our whole Will and Desire, is to find the Life-giving Power of his holy WORD and SPIRIT within us.—To ask, is *certainly* to receive, but then, it is as *certain*, that nothing does, or can either *ask*, or *receive*, but the Faith, or Will-Spirit of the Soul; which may therefore in a certain, true and good Sense, be said to be our *Creator*, our *Governor*, and will be our final *Judge*. For according as our Faith, or working Will hath been *here*, to such a God, and such a World, Death and Judgment will deliver us up *hereafter*.

No *go ye Cursed*, but to Those whose Will-Spirit hath chosen to unite, and work with the Curse, and Disorders of fallen Nature. No *come ye Blessed*, but to Those whose living Faith and working Will, is itself become that *blessed Purity of Heart*, which alone can *see God*.

Thus all lieth in the working of the Will, a domestic, innate Power, which if rightly turned, helps us to all that we want, and is every Man's sure Guide to God, and Happiness. And all our religious Delusion, Perplexity of Life, and little Progress in a Victory over ourselves, arises from our seeking to something else

than God, in order to be godly, who has his *own Seed* within us, which would infallibly grow up unto a perfect Man in Christ Jesus, did we but in an undivided Faith *call* solely to, and *rely* wholly upon the Operation of God, inwardly *Drawing*, inwardly *Redeeming*, and inwardly *Sanctifying*, in the Name of Father, Son, and holy Spirit, all that is, or can be Divine within us. This is the short and sure Way of being born again of God, which in the Nature of the Thing is as necessary to our Salvation *now*, as our being created in the Image and Likeness of God, was to our *first* Perfection.

And the Reason, why it must be so, is because there is nothing else but *Birth*, and *Growth*, through all Nature and Creature. For whatever begins to be, *out of* something else, must be That which it is, by way of Birth; and as this is the State both of eternal, and temporal Nature, of eternal and temporal Creatures, to *begin* to be, *out of* something, that was before them, so from the highest intelligent Creature to the lowest Vegetable, every Thing must begin, and go on to its highest State only by way of Birth, or magical Growth. Neither could there be any such Thing as the *Birth* of any Animal, or the *Growth* of any vegetable Life in *this World*, but because in *all Worlds*, and through *all Nature*, all Things come forth, as so many *Births* and *Growths* of a Variety of Life, through the *Fiat* of the Divine Will. Man therefore neither hath, nor can have any Goodness or Perfection of a Divine Life, but as a Birth and Growth of the Divine Nature in his Soul. Hence it is, that *Adam's* turning his Faith, or working Will into the Life of this World, had the Fulness of a *real Death* in it to the Divine Life, and is so called by *Moses*; and the Deliverance from this Death, can be only by that which is in Reality a new Birth from Above, and is so called by Jesus Christ.

To what End therefore, is that Multiplicity of Sects, Reformations, and Divisions, that Learned Labour in Grammatical, Critical Distinctions of Words, Notions and Opinions; to what End is all this, when the *Perfection* of every Life, stands only and solely in a *Birth*, and *Growth*; no Life, vegetable, animal, or Divine, grows, but by its *innate Hunger* after its proper Food of Life? The *Flint* lies dead under the generating Influence of the Sun, because it has no Hunger after the good Powers of the Sun. —The *Seed* rises up into a perfect Vegetable, because it Hungers after the Riches *that* are in the Sun.

And thus it is that Man, as a Heaven-born Plant, must have all his Growth of Goodness from God, as the Vegetables of the Earth have all their Growth of Perfection from the Sun. But as *Hunger* alone helps every Thing to find and eat that Food, which its Life wants, so *Faith*, or the Will-Spirit, is *alone* that Hunger

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of the Soul which can either find, or eat that Flesh and Blood, which is its eternal Life.

But to return once more to the *D. L.* the Design of which, is to establish this most horrible Doctrine, that *Moses designedly* and *industriously* secreted from God's chosen People of *Israel*, all Thought, and Apprehension of any eternal Relation that they had with God; which is the same Thing, as saying, that He designedly suppressed the one only possible, and necessary Foundation of true Religion. For the Immortality, or perpetual Existence of the human Nature, is the only Ground of Homage and Regard to an *invisible* and *eternal* God. And unless Man was by Nature essentially related to God, and the invisible eternal World, it would have been as unnatural and unreasonable for the invisible God of the eternal World, to call Man to an heavenly Adoration of him, as to bid earthly Flesh and Blood, *be*, and *do* that, which Angels are, and do in Heaven. For, from whence is it, that the Beasts, however apprehensive and teachable, are utterly incapable of Religion? It is because they have nothing in them, but what began from this World, and therefore cannot hear, understand, or have the least Sensibility of any Thing that is higher than this World.—Therefore the *first Notice* from an eternal invisible God, given to Man of a religious Homage due to Him, and the *bare Capacity* of Man to receive and embrace such Notice, is the greatest of Proofs, that Man has something of the *eternal* and *invisible* God in him. For as nothing can Hunger, but that which by Nature, both wants and has a Capacity to eat; so nothing can possibly receive a Religion relating to the eternal God, but that which has within itself, both a Want, and Capacity to partake of the eternal World. And had not Man an eternal Spirit in him, as an Offspring of the eternal God, He could no more want to have any Intercourse with the eternal World, than a Fish can want to be out of the Water. Nor could any taught Adoration of the one eternal, incomprehensible God, enter any further into his Heart, or be of more use to him, than so much Religion taught to a Parrot. For Man being, or entirely believing himself to be, as merely a Creature of this World, as the Parrot is, could no more regard any Thing, but what his earthly Nature has a Fondness for, than the Parrot doth. *Let us eat and drink, for To-morrow we die*, would be the highest and truest Philosophy, if there is no more of a Divine Life, or heavenly Nature in Man, than in the chattering Sparrow. In this Case, worldly Craft, or Cunning, whether in a Fox, or a Man, is the highest Use of its natural Powers. For if the earthly Life and Nature, is equally *the All* of both of them, earthly Wisdom must be *equally* the Perfection and Praise of them both. For it

can no more be the Duty of an *earthly* Creature to be *heavenly* minded, than of a *celestial* Creature to be *carnally* minded.

If therefore the *Israelites* under *Moses*, were by Him led, and directed to consider themselves merely as Creatures of this World, having nothing to enjoy, or hope for, but the good Things of this Life, it must be said, that He did all that well could be done, to make them an *earthly, covetous, envious, rapacious, stiff-necked, and brutal* People. And all the Complaints which the Prophets have brought against them, on that Account, were unjust, and ought to have been made only againt *Moses* himself, and the Religion *that* was set up by Him. For a Religion *only* offering, and *wholly* confining People to earthly Enjoyments, may surely be said, not only to *make*, but even *require* them to be wholly sensual and earthly minded. And every hearty Believer of such a Religion, is by his very Faith called upon, to make the most that He can, of the *Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life.*

Moses saith, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord ; 'and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and 'with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength.' Now to these *Israelites*, looking *backwards* to God's Covenant of Life and Redemption, made with their Forefathers, of which they were the *undoubted, and recorded* Heirs in the inspired Word of God ; and *forwards* to this new Covenant of a Theocracy, added, as God's *peculiar Mercy* to them in this Life, to keep them to himself, to support them under their Afflictions, and Trials from the idolatrous World, and to arm them with Patience in waiting for *that* eternal Redemption, in the Faith of which, their Ancestors had died so full of Joy and Comfort. In this *double View* of their State under God, and which *Moses* had so fully set before *them*, and with the strongest Injunctions, to be daily teaching them to their Children, they had the highest Reason to rejoice in God, and to love Him with all their Heart and Soul and Strength, who had shown such Wonders of Goodness to them, and their Forefathers.

But to suppose this *Moses*, as *designedly* secreting from them, the Knowledge of that *eternal Relation* they had to God, on which the Hopes of their Forefathers were founded, and on which He himself was made able to choose rather the Afflictions of Christ, than the Glories of the Egyptian Court, has something very shocking in it. For if *Moses* was that Good Man, that He was, because He knew in whom He had believed, and had a Fulness of Faith in the eternal Redemption promised from the Beginning, can there be a more religious Cruelty, than in supposing him, *designing* by his religious System, *wholly to obliterate* all Thought

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and Remembrance of God's *universal, unchangeable Covenant of Life*, and extinguish all Sense, and Hope of a Redemption to come hereafter? To what Purpose is it to say to such a People, shut up in earthly Hopes, and worldly Expectations of a carnal Life, 'Thou shalt love the one God of Heaven with all thy Heart,' &c. For if He had succeeded in his *Design*, and fixed them in the Belief, that they had *no Treasure* but in this World, we have Christ's Word for it, that the Affections of their Hearts could go no where else, saying, as an eternal Truth, that 'where our 'Treasure is, there must the Heart be also.' So that in this Case, no Love of God, and therefore no other Divine Virtue, could have any Place in those, who conformed to the *Design of Moses* in his Religion.

The Doctor with some Indignation, tries to evade this unavoidable Consequence, in a Passage upon *Peter Baro*. 'But 'those, *says He*, who will talk after him in this Age, must have 'lost both *Sense* and *Shame*. The true Foundation of Morality 'is the Will of God. But is not the Distinction between Right 'and Wrong, perpetually enforced by the Law of *Moses* on this 'Principle? This then is the Spring and Origin of all Virtue, 'and to give it the greatest Efficacy, the Love and Fear of God 'is *there* likewise incessantly inculcated. But how does a long, 'or short Existence, a Life here, or elsewhere, at all affect the 'Practice of Virtue so founded?*

All this is quite beside the Point, and leaves the *Jews* under the same Incapacity of every Divine Virtue, as has been above asserted. For a *short* or *long* Existence of the Creature is here never thought of, or urged as a *Reason*, why it should, or should not be morally Good. For *Duration*, considered in itself, whether short or long, is only a *natural* Consequence of *that kind* of Life, which the Creature hath. For, such as its *internal* Nature and *Birth* of Life is, *such* is its Duration. And again, such as its internal Nature, and Birth of Life is, such is the Good, and Evil that belongs to it, without any Regard to its longer, or shorter Duration.

Now it is the *internal* State, and Nature of Man's Life, not considered as *short*, but as *wholly earthly*, and created for only *earthly Goods*, that is the Reason, why *such a kind* of Life is incapable of any Divine Virtue, and cannot possibly have any other Love, Affections or Tempers, but such as are confined to this World. And also, why every kind of Envy, Greediness, Selfishness, Craft, and Contrivance how to get the most of every earthly Thing, that he likes best, must govern every Man, that

* *D. L.*, page 587.

has only the earthly Nature of this World in him, as unavoidably, as they govern Birds, and Beasts. And to tell such a People of a *Goodness*, to which their earthly Nature does not lead them, as it leads every other Animal to that which it likes, is as vain, as to preach to the *Sparks*, not to fly upwards. Nor can a Nature, *wholly earthly*, any more sin, by coveting *only* earthly Things, than the *Lion* sins, by having all his Heart set upon his Prey.

But the Doctor has a Maxim, by which he proves, that the *Jews*, though having *only* the earthly Life of this World in them, and wholly confined to earthly Hopes, and Enjoyments, yet might and ought to have been heavenly minded, *namely*, because *the true Foundation of Morality, is the Will of God*. And yet so it is, that this very Maxim is itself a sufficient Proof, that an earthly People, created only for earthly Goods, are by *the very Will* of God directed to be earthly minded. For the *Will* of God, is only *so far* the *Law* of every Creature, as his Will is *in it*; and his Will is, and can be, no other *in* the Creature, but that which is manifested by *that kind* of Nature, which it hath only from the Will of God. Therefore earthly Creatures, by being earthly minded, pay as full Obedience to the Will of God, as pure heavenly Spirits by their being heavenly minded. Therefore if Man is only an Animal of this World, by the *Will* of God, distinguished only from other Creatures, by superior Skill, Subtlety, and Contrivances (as they are from one another), he neither is, nor can be, under any other Law, or Rule relating to his Good and Evil, but that which is the Law and Rule of all other Animals, that have all their Good and Evil from this World. And as it is as good in the *Wolf*, to be ravening, as in the *Lamb* to be harmless, because they both follow their created Nature; so if Man is as merely a Creature of this World, as they are, when he, by his superior Subtlety, in order to make the most of his worldly Life, either feigns the Innocence of the Lamb, or puts on the ravening Wolf, he follows *his* Nature, as they do *theirs*, and is just as good and as bad as they are. And to tell such a Man of the Beauty of Holiness, or call him to the Denial of his *own Will*, for this Reason, because *the true Foundation of Virtue, is the Will of God*, would be to as much Purpose, as *heartily* received, and as *fully* observed, as if you were *only* to require him never to sleep any more, for this Reason, because holy Angels never slumber, nor sleep in Heaven. For what can Earth have to do with Heaven, or a Creature that can have no Good, all its Life, but that which is like the good of Milk and Honey, have to do with the Goodness of any Divine Virtue?—If therefore *Moses* *designedly*, and *effectually* fixed the *Israelites* in

a firm Belief, that they had no Good to receive, or hope for, but that which Flesh and Blood could find in earthly Things, they were by him taken out of the Sphere of every Virtue, that can be called godly or Divine, could have no other Fear of God, but like That, which they might have towards Him, or the Giants, nor any other Love of God, but that which they had to their Bellies.

Further, that the Doctor has not at all entered into any right Conception of the Subject, He is upon, is plain from his asking, 'But how does a short or long Existence, a Life here or elsewhere, at all affect the Practice of Virtue so founded?'—It just so much affects it, as *Place*, or *Space* affects the Existence of Bodies, they are not brought forth by Place or Space, but they could have no Possibility of Existence, but in Place or Space. And thus it is, that *Duration* affects the Practice of all Divine Virtue, that it could have no Possibility of Existence, but in a Nature incapable of dying.—*Corruptibility*, and Divine Goodness, are as impossible to be united, as Life and Death.—And a *perishable* Creature, full of *Divine Love*, is as absurd, as a *Storm* or *Tempest* full of heavenly Serenity.—Death may as well exert all the Functions of Life, as a mortal Creature breathe forth the Spirit of heavenly Tempers and Affections. How comes it that Flesh and Blood cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven? It is because nothing that is *mortal*, can be *heavenly*, and therefore if all that is in Man, is mortal, nothing in Man can possibly be heavenly minded. For though the *Duration* of the Creature is not the Ground, or Reason of any Divine Virtue, yet no Creature can be capable of it, but that, which by the *Divinity* of its Birth, is born immortal.—*Again*, As no *Divine Goodness*, so also no sin *against God*, can have Place in any Creature that is subject to Death. For nothing can Sin *against God*, but that which hath truly, and essentially the Nature and Life of God *in it*; as nothing can act contrary to *Sense* and *Reason*, but that which hath Sense and Reason in its Nature. If therefore Angels and Men, were not Partakers of the Divine Nature, in the Birth of their Lives, they could no more sin against God, than a Man born blind can sin against the Light of the Eyes.

For where the Divine Nature is not in the Creature, it could no more commit *one Sin* against God, though it should live a thousand Years, than *Adam* could have fallen from God, a thousand Years *before* He was created in the *Image* and *Likeness* of God. The one, is the same Absurdity as the other.

Now the true Origin of Immortality in the Soul of Man, lies in its *Will-Spirit*, which is not a created Thing, but is a *generated* Birth, or real Offspring of the eternal, unbeginning *Will-Spirit*

of God, of the same Nature with it, coming from God, as the Thoughts of the Mind, are generated from the Mind, are of the same Nature with it, as Births, and Issues out of it. And no Creature can have *Freedom of Will*, but that which has this *Will-Spirit* of God *in it*. For no Will is, or can be *free*, but the Will of God, and where the Will-Spirit of God is not, there is, and can be nothing, but the Instinct of Nature, which can only go on in one Way, as Nature works. Therefore so sure as Angels and Men have a Freedom of Will, so sure is it, that the Will-Spirit of God, has its Birth in them.

And this is the Ground, and Reason, why the Soul of Man, is, and must inevitably be *immortal*. It is because the Will-Spirit of the Soul, the Leader, and Former of its Life, being *generated* from the Will-Spirit of God, Death can have nothing to do with it, or have any Relation to it. It must *always* live, because it has nothing but *Life* in it. Neither can its Works die, or depart from it, because whatever it works, it works from itself, and every Thing it brings forth, is its *own Offspring*, or rather a *Growth* of itself. All therefore that the Will-Spirit hath done, though in a temporal World, must go along with it into its own Eternity. It can no more depart from its own Works, than it can depart from itself, and therefore the Scripture saith, that *our Works follow us*.

In this free Divine Will-Spirit of the Soul, lies all Man's Capacity for Divine Goodness. For, to choose to *will* that, which God wills, and to love that which God loves, is the whole Essence and Spirit of all Divine Morality. But nothing can do this, where the Divine Nature is not, any more than there can be *bestial* Appetites, where there is no *bestial Nature*.—To have *Freedom of Will*, is the same Thing, as to be *born of God*, and to be born of God, is the same Thing, as to have a *Capacity* for Divine Virtue.

What a Weakness therefore is it in the learned Doctor, to suppose, that a *long*, or *short Existence*, hath nothing to do with Divine Virtue, when nothing can have a short or long Existence, but according to the *Birth* or *Quality* of its Nature? But if the Birth, or Quality of its Nature has nothing to do with the Capacity for Divine Virtue, then *every kind* of Nature, whether it hath Freedom, or no Freedom of Will, a Birth, or no Birth of the Divine Nature, is equally capable of Divine Virtue. But if *Freedom of Will*, if a Birth of the Divine Nature in the Soul, are the only possible Ground of Divine Goodness in the Creature, then no creaturely Nature can be Good, or capable of Goodness, but that which is as incorruptible, and immortal as that Will-Spirit which is an immediate Birth out of the ever-living God.

What an Inconsistency, to say of a Creature of a *short Existence*, or whose Life is vanishing away, that its true Father is in Heaven, and that it ought therefore *to be perfect as its heavenly Father is perfect*? Can That which is daily tending to *Non-existence*, be daily growing up in the Perfection of God, or that which is always approaching towards Death, be a true Child of the ever-living God? As well might it be said of the *Mushroom*, that it has the Angels in Heaven for its true Brethren, as of Man, beginning to exist to Day, and ending his Existence Tomorrow, that He is a true Birth or Child of his everlasting Father in Heaven.

Now as nothing can have any moral Goodness in it, but so far, as the Goodness of the Divine Nature is brought to Life in it, so neither can it have any *free Will*, but because the free Will of God is born in it. For nothing has Power over Nature, or any Possibility of ruling its Workings, but the *one free Will* of God, which brought forth Nature. Therefore, so sure as Man has any Freedom of Will *over his Nature*, so sure is it, that the Divine free Will hath a Birth in Him. And so sure as he has any Possibility of *loving God*, and Goodness, so sure is it, that he is born of God. And therefore of all Truths, none can be more evident than that the Immortality of the Divine Nature is *essential* to, and *inseparable* from the Soul of Man.

Hence may be seen the great Impropriety of speaking of a future State, as a *Sanction* to the Laws of God, and of asking as the Doctor, and this Author doth, 'If the Doctrine of a future State, was intended for a Sanction of the Jewish Religion, why 'is it not plainly to be found there?' Since all agree, 'that the Sanctions of a Religion, should be delivered in as open and explicit a Manner, as the Precepts of it.'*

I have sufficiently shown, that a Future State was as evidently the *one Foundation* of the Patriarchal, as it is of the Gospel Religion; but to call it a *Sanction*, under either State, and Reason upon it under that Idea, is a most gross Mistake of the whole Nature of the Thing. For a Sanction is *purely That*, which may be *discretionally*, or *arbitrarily* given, or not given, done or not done to those, who are called to obey a Law.

But a future State, whether of Happiness, or Misery, has nothing of this Nature in it, it is nothing *discretionally* or *arbitrarily* done, or given to the Soul, but is only the Soul's Continuance in the Possession of That, which this Life hath done in it, and to it.

Therefore to speak of future Happiness and Misery, as

* *Free Examination*, pages 75, 82.

Sanctions, and such Sanctions as are to be found in one Divine Religion, and not in another, is as absurd, and contrary to the Nature of the Thing, as to call our *free Will*, and *natural Understanding*, Sanctions, and *such* Sanctions, as are in one Dispensation of God, and not in another.

For Happiness, and Misery are as essential to our Life, are as daily with us, make as much a Part of us, and are as inseparable from our Nature, as the Workings of our *Will* and *Understanding* are, and we have neither the one, nor the other, but just as the *Workings* of our Will, and Understanding proceed. And a future State is nothing else but a going on, or Increase of *that same* Happiness or Misery which we had here, just as it is the Increase, or Progress of that same Working of the Will and Understanding, that we had here. But if a Sanction, is in its whole Nature, a *discretionary*, and *arbitrary* Thing, to call a future State a Sanction, because it may and ought to be considered, as a Motive to Holiness, is as much mistaking the Nature both of a Sanction, and a future State, as to call our *Will* and *Understanding* Sanctions, because they are, and ought to be considered, as powerful Motives to eschew Evil, and cleave to that which is Good.

There are some other most egregious Errors which I intended to have remarked upon, but I am already got beyond the proper Bounds of a Letter.—But holy *David's* Case, I cannot but mention, as sufficient to have deterred the Doctor from an Hypothesis, which has obliged him to place this Divine sweet Singer of *Israel* amongst those, who had not the least Sense, or Thought of any eternal Relation, they had to God. This holy *David*, the Man after God's Heart, the Type of Christ, the Royal Prophet, 'who knowing that God had sworn with an Oath, that out of the Fruit of his Loins according to the Flesh, 'He would raise up Christ to sit on his Throne'; this great Prophet, who foretold the Resurrection of Christ, 'that his Soul 'was not left in Hell, neither did his Flesh see Corruption,' this *David*, thus deep in the Counsels of God, and acquainted with the great Article of the Resurrection, whose inspired Psalms are, and have been chanted in all Ages of the Christian Church, as the pious Breathings of the Holy Spirit, this holy, spiritual, typical, prophesying *David* is, for the sake of the Doctor's Project, crowded amongst those, who were not allowed to have any other Relation to God, or any Thing else to hope from Him, or Thank Him for, but the Blessings of a temporal Life, till Death had put the same End, to the *All* of *David*, as it did to those few Sheep, that He had once kept. And what is still worse, this same *David* is made the most zealous Preacher up

of the Folly of fearing, or hoping for any Thing after Death. And is, as such, appealed to by the Doctor, and his Assistant, as giving the most full Evidence against all Happiness, but that of this Life, and represented in his Divine Transports, as setting forth the Wisdom of Believing that the Life of Man ends like that of rotten Sheep, in a Death *that* brings him into the dark *Land of Forgetfulness*; singing gloriously, 'the Dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into Silence. In Death 'there is no Remembrance of Thee: in the Grave, who shall 'give thee Thanks?'

Thus it is, that *David*, by these Gentlemen is made a Preacher against a future State; not considering, that such Infidelity would have been worse in *David*, than it possibly can be in any modern Infidel. But the Truth of the Matter is this, the Holy Prophet in all Passages of this kind, is only calling upon God for the *Continuance*, and *full* Manifestation of the *Blessings* of *that* temporal Theocracy, which could only be given by God, or received by Man, whilst He was on this side Death, and the Grave. And the *Darkness, Silence, or Insensibility* affirmed of Death, has no Relation to a *total End* of all Life and Sensibility, but only and solely to a total End of all *Enjoyment, Sight, or Sense* of the Wonders and Blessings promised by the Divine Theocracy. Thus, 'Shall thy Lovingkindness be showed in the 'Grave? Shall thy Wonders be known in the Dark? Or thy 'Faithfulness in Destruction?' Plainly shows, that He calls Death, a State of Darkness and Insensibility solely with Regard to God's temporal Wonders and Blessings, and only sets forth this plain, and innocent Truth, that temporal Death puts a full End to all temporal Enjoyments. And thence it is, that He calls upon the Divine *Faithfulness* either to make good that Covenant of temporal Blessings in this Life, or it could not be made good at all; because a Death to this Life, must be an absolute Death to all the good Things of this Life.—*David*, as a *Son of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, had their Faith and Piety, and as such, his Psalms are as full of heavenly Devotion, as flaming with Divine Love, as if composed by an Angel. But *David*, as a *Son of the Covenant* made with *Moses*, was also an Heir of the temporal Blessings of the Theocracy; and in this Capacity, the heavenly, angelic Psalmist, had a Right to say, 'Why do the Wicked prosper? My Tears have been my Meat, 'while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?—Wilt 'thou show thy Wonders in the Grave?' That is, canst thou perform thy promised temporal Blessings, when Death has taken away all Possibility of receiving them?

And thus the holy *David*, though full of the Faith of *Abraham*,

and knowing that Christ, his Son according to the Flesh, should die, and rise from Death, to effect the Redemption, promised to his Fathers, could with the Fulness of this Belief, call temporal Death, an utter Insensibility, and Incapacity to receive the temporal Blessings of that Theocracy under which God had placed him. And this is the Ground of rightly understanding all that is said, by the other holy Penmen of Scripture in the Language of *David*.

But if it could be supposed, that *David* by the foregoing Expressions, meant to give up the Promises of eternal Redemption made to all his Forefathers, and called the World to look for no more, but what they could get in this Vale of Misery, what Excuse can be made for the Christian Church, which from first to last, has made such heathenish Songs a Part of the Gospel Service? For in this Case, these Psalms may be justly esteemed profane, as having a more direct Tendency to beget, and fix Infidelity in the Hearts of Men, than the Hymns of the heathen Poets.

In haste, as I am, to have done troubling your Lordship, I must yet add a Word, upon the Doctor's most theological Account of Man's first Ability to speak articulate Words.

'In judging,' says He, 'only from the *Nature of Things*, without 'the surer Instruction of Revelation, one should be apt to embrace 'the Opinion of *Diodorus Siculus*, that the first Men lived for 'some Time in Woods, and Caves, after the manner of Beasts, 'uttering only *confused Sounds*.* And yet it is hardly possible for a Man to make a Judgment more contrary to the Nature of Things. For does not the Nature of almost all Animals, Beasts, and Birds show us, that they have all of them, a natural untaught Language, not consisting of *confused Sounds*, but altogether distinct by an articulate Difference, and highly intelligible to everyone of the same Species? If therefore the Nature of Things will *allow* us to suppose, that Man was created as perfect in his Kind, as the Animals were in theirs, then the Nature of Things will *oblige* us to affirm, that the first of Mankind had from Nature, an untaught Language, as suitable to the Ends of their Creation, as useful, as distinct, and intelligible to themselves, as that of Birds, or Beasts, is to them in their several Kinds. Now it must not be said, that the Doctor has adopted the *whole* Opinion of *Diodorus*, though so highly (as he thinks) conformable to the Nature of Things; for he has given up that of Man's living *in Woods and Caves, &c.*, and has only chosen to stand by that, which is much the worst Part of it, namely, his

* *D. L.*, vol. ii., page 81.

natural Inability to utter any Thing *but confused Sounds*.—However, to make Amends for all this Poverty of Speech, in which Man was brought forth by God, the Doctor has a *Conjecture*, how it soon came to be better with Him. In Scripture, says He, 'we find that God taught the first Man, *Religion*, and can 'we think, He would not at the same Time, teach him Language? 'Again, when God created Man, He made Woman for his Companion, and Associate, but the only Means of enjoying that 'Benefit, was the use of Speech. Can we believe that He would 'leave them to get out of the *forlorn Condition of Brutality* as 'they could?*'—Shocking and even blasphemous Words! For how little short can it be of that, to say, that Man, created in the Image and Likeness of God, was created in a *forlorn Condition of Brutality*? Has, or can any Infidel more despise and ridicule all that is said both in the Old, and New Testament, concerning Man's Creation, his high Birth, and Destination, his Fall, and Redemption, than is here done?

In the Scripture we are told, that Man in the first, perfect State of his Creation, came forth a living Image, and Likeness of the all-perfect God; that He came forth in this distinguished, and exalted State of Perfection, above all other Animals of this World, in order to be a Lord, and Ruler over them. Can there be a more open Ridicule made of all this, than to hold, that this first glorious Image of God, came forth in a *forlorn brutal Condition*, unable to utter any Thing, but dumb, and *confused Sounds*? Or what can be more unbecoming a Christian Doctor, than to espouse such a paltry Notion from the Authority of a Pagan *Greek*, in full Contradiction to all, that *Moses*, Christ and his Apostles, have said of the first heavenly Nature, Divine Birth and glorious Prerogatives of Man? What a Mockery is here made of the whole Christian System, which supposes Man to have fallen from such a high Degree of heavenly Union with God, that nothing less than the Birth of the Son of God in fallen Man, could restore him to that Perfection, which He had at first? What a Folly to talk of the Fall of Man, or his Possibility of sinning against God, if he came out of the Hands of God in a *forlorn Condition of Brutality*? For supposing him to be such, he must have wanted a new Birth, before He fell, or could possibly be guilty of falling from any heavenly Perfection, unless in such a *good Sense*, as a Creature born without *any Eyes*, may be charged with the Guilt of having renounced the Perfection of Sight.

But the Doctor comes now to his full Proof, that Man had at

* *D. L.*, vol. ii., page 81.

first no articulate Speech, and that He was actually taught it afterwards by God, from these Words of *Moses*; 'God brought 'every Beast of the Field, and every Fowl of the Air, unto 'Adam, to see what He would call them.'

And yet, so unlucky is the Doctor, that no Words in the World can give a higher Proof, that *Adam* had not only an articulate Speech, but in such a Degree of Perfection, as none of his Natural Sons, not the whole Tribe of Linguists, Critics, and Grammarians, ever had, or can possibly have. For if it could be supposed, that any Man was a hundred Times more knowing than the Doctor is, in what He calls his *Enigmatic, Curiologic, Hieroglyphic, Emblematic, Symbolic, &c., &c.*, Profundities, yet if all the Beasts of the Field, and all the Fowls of the Air, were to be brought before him to be distinguished from one another, by articulate Sounds of his Voice, even such a Man would be as unequal to the Task, as a *Tom Thumb*. And of all the Absurdities, *that* ever were heard of, surely none can equal that, of supposing, that *Adam* had not an articulate Speech, but had it to learn at a Time, when he was called to the highest Exercise of the highest Perfection of Language, namely, to *distinguish* such an infinite Number of Creatures, by different articulate Sounds of his Voice. It is like supposing, that a Man whose Eyes had no *natural Power* of distinguishing one Thing from another, should therefore, and on that Account, have all the Creatures in the World, brought before him, that He might describe every Difference in Form, and Figure, that belonged to them. And yet the Doctor is so charmed with this Sense of the foregoing Words, that He fathers it upon *Moses*, as an *uncommon Elegance*.—He proceeds next to censure a *generally* received Opinion, *viz.*, that *Adam* gave every Creature a Name suitable to its Nature. And yet the inspired Text directly affirms this, saying, 'And whatsoever *Adam* called 'every living Creature, that was its Name,' that is, *That was true* of it; for surely the Text would not have said, '*That* was its 'Name,' if it had not been *true* of it, which it could not have been, if it had mistook, or misrepresented its Nature.—But, however, in Favour of the Doctor let it be supposed that *Adam* neither *did*, nor *could* name the Creatures suitable to their Natures, and then it will follow, that they were all brought before him in vain, that He might as well have named *them* before He saw them, as *afterwards*; that He was called to do That, which had neither *Right*, nor *Wrong* in it, to say *something*, which was no better, than if He had said the Contrary, and to distinguish Creatures by different Names, but not according to their different Natures.

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But of *Adam's* Divine Ability to give Names to the Creatures suitable to their Natures, much greater Things are to be said, which must be left to some other Occasion.—The Language of every Creature is natural, and not taught; it is as much the Effect of its *whole Nature*, the joint Operation of its Soul, Spirit and Body, as its *Life* is; and is articulate, or not articulate, good or evil, harmonious or horrible, just as the Life of the Creature has more or less of the Perfection of a Divine, or earthly Harmony in it.—And these Words of our Saviour, though spoken on a particular Occasion, that ‘out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh,’ contain the *whole Philosophy* of the Language of all Creatures, whether in Heaven, on Earth, or in Hell. And no Creature wants any more Teaching, how to *speak* its own Language, than it wants to be taught how to *hear*. And if Man is the only Creature in this World that wants to be sent to School, it is the greatest of all Proofs that he has lost the original Perfection of his Nature, and is dead to that living WORD of God, which he had at his Creation, and so must learn an A, B, C, Language that is neither natural to him, or any Man else. And if it were not thus, that He was dead to his first heavenly Power of speaking, it would be as impossible for one Man born in this Climate to speak unintelligibly to a Man born in another Climate, as for one Angel to speak unintelligibly to another, nor could there be any more two Languages amongst Men on Earth, than there are two Languages amongst Angels in Heaven.

Hence the shining Sons of verbal Literature, whether Critics, Linguists, or grammatical Orators, may see, if they will, that the mighty Province in which they make such Figure, is procured for them, by Man's having lost all that was good, Divine and heavenly in the Language of his first perfect Nature. Otherwise the Prince and the Peasant all round the Globe, had had but one Language on Earth, as Angels have in Heaven, as sure as they had but one Nature.

The Doctor has by strength of Genius, and great Industry, amassed together no small Heap of learned Decisions of Points, Doctrines, as well Heathenish, as Christian, much the greatest Part of which, the Christian Reader will find himself obliged to drive out of his Thoughts, as soon as he can in right, good Earnest say with the Jailor, ‘What must I do to be saved?’—This Collection of Decisions, he calls his *projected Defence of Christianity*, which if it was *such*, Christianity must have been but poorly provided for its Support by the four Gospels. I shall make no Doubt of his intending, what he says, by them. But a *Project* in Defence of Christianity, is not more promising,

than a *Trap* to catch Humility. The Nature of Things allows no more of the one, than of the other. To be a Defender of Christianity, is to be a Defender of Christ, but none can defend Him in any other Sense, or Degree, than so far as he is his Follower. To be with Christ, is *to walk as He walked*, and He *that* is not so with him, is *against Him*, and is rejected as an Enemy, though He should say, *that* He had *prophesied* and *wrought Miracles* in his Name.

There are *two Ways* of embracing Christianity, the one is, as a *Sinner*, the other as a *Scholar*; the former is the Way taught by Christ and his Apostles, the latter is the Invention of Men, fallen from the first Spirit and Truth of the Christian Life under the Power of natural Reason, and verbal Learning.—A Change, which has some Likeness to that, which happened to the good Light of the Heathen World: The Original *Philosophers*, who lived what they said, were succeeded by a Race of *Sophists*, who had no Wisdom of Philosophy, but that of Descanting, Disputing, and Writing about what the Philosophers had taught.—Now, the two Ways above-mentioned, are not to be considered, as only the one better than the other, but in such a Difference, as *Right* and *Wrong*, true and false, bear to one another. For there is no Possibility of entering, or taking one progressive Step in Christianity, but as a *Sinner*, for it has no Errand but to the Sinner, has no Relief but for Sin, and nothing can receive it, but the Heart wounded, and wearied with the Burden of its own Sin. All the Gospel is but a foreign Tale, a dead Letter to the most logically learned Man in the World, who does not feel and find in the Depth of his Soul, that all the Reasonableness, and Excellency of Gospel Truth, lies in that Fund of Sin, Impurity, and corrupt Tempers, which are and must be inseparable from Him, till in Christ Jesus he is born again from Above.—Every other Confession of the Reasonableness and Excellency of the Christian Religion, but that which the *Conviction* of Sin and Misery in the Soul, makes of it, is but like the Praise of a *Stander-by*, who commends something in which he has no Concern. And if the Doctor, in his Application to the Deists, had pressed home this affecting Truth, which stands at the Door of every Man's Heart, and is the only Ground of Christian Redemption, he had shown a better Care and Concern for their Souls, and had done more to awaken them out of their Infidelity, than by all *that Wit* and *Satire* in his *Dedication* of his Book to them. For Like begets Like; Love and Seriousness in the Speaker, begets Love and Seriousness in the Hearer; and He *that* has no Earnestness towards Unbelievers, but that of persuading them not to lose their Share of the *Love* and *Mercy* of

God in Christ Jesus, towards helpless, fallen Man, must and can only do it, in the Spirit, and Language of that Love and Goodness, in whose Arms, He longs to see them embraced.

But as no Man ever came to Christ, but because he was weary, and heavy laden with the Burden of his own Natural Disorder, and wanted rest to his disturbed Soul, so nothing can help Man to find the Necessity of coming to Christ, but that, which helps him to find and feel a Misery of Sin and Corruption, which in some, the Care and Pleasures of this Life, and in others, the Happiness of finding themselves Wits, and polite Scholars, never suffered them to feel before.

Our Lord's Parable of the *Prodigal* Son, contains the whole Matter between God and fallen Man, it relates nothing particular to this, or that Person, but sets forth the strict Truth of every Man's State, with regard to his heavenly Father. For every Son of *Adam* has every Thing in Him, that is said of *that* Prodigal, he has lost his first State and Condition, as he did, is wandered as far from his heavenly Father and Country, has abused, and wasted his Father's Blessings, and is that very poor Swineherd, craving Husks in a Land of Famine, instead of living in the paradisaical Glory of his Father's Family; and of every Reader of that Parable, it may be justly said, 'Thou art 'the Man.' And no Son of *Adam*, do what he will, can possibly come out of the Poverty, Shame, and Misery of his fallen State, till he finds, and feels, and confesses from the Bottom of his Heart, all that, which the penitent Prodigal found, felt, and confessed.

I should have had much Uneasiness, my Lord, in exposing so many gross Errors both in the Matter, and Manner of the Doctor's Books, did not my Heart bear me full Witness, that no want of Good-will, or due Respect towards him, but *solely* a Regard to That, which ought only to be regarded, has directed my Pen.

I am, My LORD,
With all dutiful Respect and Veneration,
Your Lordship's most Obedient,
Humble Servant,

King's Cliffe,
Mar. 14, 1757.

WILLIAM LAW.

FINIS.

OF
JUSTIFICATION
BY
Faith and Works.
A
DIALOGUE
BETWEEN
A *METHODIST*
AND
A *CHURCHMAN.*

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M.A.

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A
DIALOGUE
BETWEEN
A *Methodist* and a *Churchman*.

METHODIST. Say what you will, Sir, I must still stand to it, that almost all the Sermons of your Bishops and Curates, for these last hundred Years, have been full of a Soul-destroying Doctrine.*

Churchman. Pray, what is that Doctrine ?

Methodist. It is the Doctrine of Salvation, 'partly by Faith, and partly by Works ; or Justification by Faith and Works.'†

Churchman. Salvation by *Faith and Works*, is a plain, and very intelligible Scripture-Truth. But Salvation *partly* by Faith and *partly* by Works, is a false and groundless Explication of the Matter, proceeding either from Art, or Ignorance.—What sounder Gospel-Truth, than to say, that we are saved by *Jesus Christ*, God and Man ? But, what falser Account could be given of it, than to say, that if so, then we are saved, partly by Jesus, and partly by Christ ; that Jesus does something, and Christ adds the rest. For is not Jesus Christ, as such, the one undivided Saviour, with one undivided Operation ? And who can more endeavour to lose the Meaning, and pervert the Sense of this Gospel-Truth, than he, who considers Jesus, as separately, and Christ as separately, doing their Parts one after the other, the one making up what was wanting in the other, towards the Work of our Salvation ?

Now to separate Faith from Works, in this manner, the one partly doing this, and the other partly doing that, is in as full Contrariety to Scripture, to all Truth, and the nature of the thing, as to separate Jesus from Christ. For as the *one Saviour* is manifested in and by Jesus Christ, one undivided Person ; so the *one Salvation* is manifested, when Faith is in Works, and Works are in Faith, as Jesus is in Christ, and Christ is in Jesus.

Again, how plain and good a Scripture-Truth is this, that the loving of God with all the Powers of Heart, Soul, and Spirit, and the loving our Neighbour as ourselves, is the one true ful-

* *Mr. Berridge's Letters*, page 20.

† *Ibid.*, page 13.

filling of the whole Law and Prophets. But how falsely would this be set forth by him, who should say, that it is *partly* the Love of God, and *partly* the Love of our Neighbour, the one adding that which the other wanted, and doing that which the other could not do; as if they were two separate Things, which with their different Powers make up the fulfilling of the Law.—For these two Loves, or rather two Names of Love, are, in the strictest Truth, but one Thing, one Divine Spirit of Love, from one Ground, full of one and the same Operation, no more different, or separable from one another, than *Flame* is different, or separable from its *flying upwards*.—Thus St. John, ‘If a Man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a Liar;’—but he could not therefore be a Liar, if the Love of God was a different, or separate Thing from the Love of our Neighbour.

Yet this is your Friend’s false and mistaken way of setting forth Justification, if so be, it is by Faith and Works; namely, his dividing them asunder from one another, and ascribing his own invented *partlys* and *partlys*, first to one, and then to the other; all which is as mere Fiction, and full of the same Absurdity, as if some other Scholar, should with the like *partlys* set forth the State of a living Creature; *viz.*, that if it is in a living State, it must be so, partly by *Life*, and partly by its *living Operations*, as if *Life* and its *living Operations* were two distinct and separate Things, that contributed their separate Powers, and joined in their different Actions, to make and keep up a *living Creature*.—This, and not one jot less, is the Absurdity of your *partlys* and *partlys*, ascribed to a Justification, supposed to be the Effect of Faith and Works.—For Christian Faith and Christian Works, are as much one and the same indivisible Thing, as *Life* is one and the same indivisible Thing with its *living Operations*.

Methodist. I can call all this nothing else but quibbling about Words, and mere running away from the one only Thing, which ought to be debated, and that is, whether St. *Paul* hath not, over and over, placed the whole of Justification *in and by Faith alone*?

Churchman. Let me ask you, did you ever hear or read of a dead Faith, and a living Faith, or do you think the difference between them to be nothing at all, but that the one has as much of Justification in it as the other?

Methodist. This is a trifling Question, since you know, as well as I do, that our awakened Preacher has expressly declared, that there is dead Faith, and that it is then dead, when it *worketh not by Love*.

Churchman. Well then, if so, the Matter stands thus; *Works* prove Faith to be living; Want of Works prove Faith to be

dead; and thence you conclude, that it is a Soul-destroying Doctrine, to teach Christians, that they are to be saved by Faith and Works.—Surely, Sir, you are not quite awake.

Methodist. You are growing hot, my Friend, but be as hot as you will, I must tell you in the Words of Mr. B—— ‘That be ‘you ever so sober, serious, just, and devout, you are still under ‘the Curse of God, provided you have any allowed Reliance on ‘your own good Works, and think that they are to do something ‘for you, and Christ to do the rest.’

Churchman. In Answer to this, I only say, that be you and your Friend ever so full of *Faith*, so that you could remove Mountains, you are still under the Curse of God, provided you have any *allowed Reliance* upon your *own Faith*, and think that it is to do *something* for you, and Christ to do the *rest*.—For a *Reliance* upon our *own Faith*, and a *Reliance* upon our *own Works*, are just that same *good Thing*, and equally contrary to the Truth of Faith, and the Truth of Works.

Methodist. What true Methodist ever called true Faith our *own Faith*? Does not the Scripture say, it is the Gift of God?

Churchman. What true Christian ever called good Works our *own Works*? Does not the Scripture say, ‘it is God who worketh ‘in us, both to will, and to do?’—Now if your Faith may be called *good* and *saving*, because it is God’s Gift, and Power within you; then a Christian’s Works may be called *good* and *saving*, or such as work out his Salvation, because they are all wrought in God, and by his Power working in him.—But now, suppose one Man to rely on his own Faith, and another to rely upon his *own Works*, they then are both of them carnally minded, and the Faith of the one, and the Works of the other, are equally the same worthless, filthy Rags.—On the other hand, do but (as plain Scripture requires you) ascribe good Works of the same Original, and Divine Power, as a right Faith must be ascribed to, and then Faith and Works are equally one Power of God to Salvation, because equally the same saving, redeeming, and sanctifying Work of God in our Souls.

Methodist. I wonder you should thus strive to puzzle and darken one of the greatest, and most plain Truths of the Gospel. Can anything be more plain than the Case of the Pharisee, ‘God, ‘I thank Thee, that I am not as other Men are; I fast twice in ‘the Week, I give Tithes of all that I possess,’ &c.? Here you have Works pleading their Cause.—Now how came the Publican without any Works, saying only, ‘God be merciful to me a ‘Sinner,’ to be justified *rather* than this good working Pharisee? Can anything be more decisive than this?

Churchman. Let it then be supposed that the Pharisee had

said, God, I thank Thee, that my *Faith* is not like other Men's Faith, it needs not the help of fasting and praying, &c. I ask you, had this been a better Pharisee than the other? Had this boasting of a Faith been better than that boasting of Works? Or might not Christ have here justly said, that the Publican's 'God be merciful to me a Sinner,' had more of God and Goodness in it, than the Pharisee's boasting of his solitary Faith?—But now, if such a Passage as this, of a Pharisee boasting of a *Faith* without Works, was to be found in Scripture, and condemned by Christ, surely it would be great Delusion to appeal to it, as a full and decisive Proof of the *Vanity* and Insignificancy of *Faith*, and of its being rejected by Christ, as of no Avail.—Yet this would be full as well, as to appeal to what Christ said of the Pharisee's boasted Works, as a full Proof that *Works* are rejected by Christ, as worse than nothing.

Methodist. Say what you will, I am fully assured of this great Truth, thus expressed by our Friend, 'That the Moment a Man seeks to be justified by his *own Obedience* to God's Laws, that Moment he falls from Christ, and ceases to have an Interest in him.'

Churchman. Here just the same Answer as before will be sufficient, *viz.*, that the Moment a Man seeks to be saved or justified by his *own Faith* in God, that Moment he falls from Christ, and ceases to have an Interest in him.—This is just as good an Argument against *Faith* itself, as your Friend's is against Works. For *own Faith* and *own Obedience* are at the same Distance from God, and are as mere Works of the Flesh, as Self-seeking and Self-love.—But if your Friend would have spoken to the Purpose of the Matter in hand, he should have expressed himself thus, *viz.*, that the Moment a Man seeks to be justified, or made acceptable to God, by Works wrought by the Spirit of Christ living in him, that Moment he falls from Christ, and ceases to have an Interest in him.—Had he thus expressed himself, you see what an Absurdity there had been in it, and yet, without thus expressing himself, his Words are quite foreign to the Matter, and touch not those Works, which are affirmed to be essential to a Justifying Faith.—For the true Christian Man never thinks, or talks of being justified by any *own Obedience*, any more than of being washed and saved by his *own precious Blood*.—But though he has no *own Obedience*, no *own Works*, any more than he has an *own Will*, and *own Love*, yet he has an Obedience and Works, and Will and Love that reach Heaven, and unite with God. How so? It is because by the supernatural WORD and SPIRIT of God, come to a Fulness of Birth in him, his Obedience, his Works, his Will, his Love,

are that which they are, and do that which they do on Earth, to the Glory, and by the same Spirit of God, as Angels do in Heaven.—This is the new Creature that is justified by Faith and Works. Suppose Faith to be not from Christ, or Works not from Christ, and then they are both of them but Works of the Flesh.—But add Christ to Faith, and Christ to Works, and then they are but one and the same *Power of God to Salvation*, and all Difference between Faith and Works is lost, and nothing remaineth, but ‘Christ in us the Hope of Glory.’ But your Friend forgetting, or not knowing, that no Works, are called Salvation Works, or pleaded for as such, but those that Christ worketh in us, considers, and confounds all Works as *own Works*, and *selfish Works*, and so condemns Christian Works, and the Necessity of them, upon no other Ground, but because *own Works*, which proceed from self, are false, vain, and unprofitable to our Salvation.—Whereas our blessed Lord, has in the plainest Manner distinguished them from one another, and shown us, *when* and *how* Works are our *own*, and of no Avail before God, and also *when* and *how* Works are good and godly, and Works of Salvation, Justification, and Sanctification. ‘When thou dost ‘thine Alms,’ saith he, ‘do not sound a Trumpet before thee, as ‘the Hypocrites do in the Synagogues, and in the Streets, to be ‘seen of Men. Verily I say unto you, they have their Reward.’ Here you see what an *own Work* is, and why it has no Salvation-Goodness in it, it is because it is done only to trumpet forth its own Glory. Now where anything like this Trumpet goes along, either with that which we call Faith, or Works, though it should have ever so heavenly an Appearance, it has only the Nature, and can have only the Reward of vain-glorious Alms.—God said to a holy Prophet of old ‘Cry aloud, and spare not, lift up thy ‘Voice like a Trumpet.’ Here is one kind of a religious Trumpet. The Pharisees were learned Men, and full of religious Zeal, and they also had their religious Trumpet, which our Lord condemned.—Therefore Zeal and Trumpeting, are not good, and Things to be trusted to, because they pretend Religion, but may be as different from one another, as a Pharisee is from a holy Prophet.—This ought well to be considered by all, who set a Trumpet to their Mouths in God’s cause; for if all that was alive in the trumpeting Prophet, be not alive in them, and all that was alive in the Pharisee, be not dead in them, they will begin too soon, and run before they are sent by God, to preach of the true Life, and the true Death, to a World ignorant, and careless about them.—Again, our Lord saith, ‘when thou prayest, thou shalt ‘not be as the Hypocrites are, for they love to pray, standing in ‘the Synagogues, and in the Corners of the Streets, that they

'may be seen of Men. Verily I say unto you, they have their 'Reward,' and can have no better a Reward, because he that thus prays, makes Prayers an *own Work of own Glory*, and therefore they are but an abomination before God.—But now, will you from hence tell the World, that *Alms and Prayers* are Soul-destroying Things, or at best but mere filthy Rags, that signify nothing to him that uses them, because such Alms and Prayers are said to be so by Christ?

For has not Christ in this very Place taught you the direct contrary, and said as much of the *Salvation-Power* of good Works, as he has said of the Nothingness of pharisaical Works?—'When 'thou dost thine Alms,' saith he, 'let not thy left Hand know 'what thy right Hand doth.' And again, 'When thou prayest, 'enter into thy Closet, and when thou hast shut thy Door, pray 'to thy Father which is in Secret, and thy Father which seeth in 'Secret, shall reward thee openly.'—Why is all this Secrecy? It is, that the whole Work, may be solely from, and to, and for God, and that self may have neither Beginning, nor End, or the least Share in it. — Now I ask, have these Alms and these Prayers nothing of Salvation-Goodness in them, when our Lord therefore commands them, that we may thereby obtain a Reward in Heaven? Can they help us to a Reward in Heaven, without helping forward our Salvation? If a heavenly Reward follows such Works as these, must they not on the same Ground, in the strictest sense of the Words, be called *saving* Alms, saving Prayers, as any *Faith*, from Adam or Abraham to this Day, can be called *saving Faith*?—What are all the Promises made to the *Faith* of the Fathers, of a 'City that hath Foundations, whose 'Builder and Maker is God'? what is that *better* and *Heavenly Country*, which was to be the Reward of their *Faith*, but these very Rewards here promised by Christ to the Works of Christian Alms, and Christian Prayers? Our blessed Lord's whole Divine Sermon on the Mount, is nothing else but a continual Doctrine of good Works, and a continual Doctrine of such Rewards as belong to the faithful, diligent Workers.—No Blessedness is ascribed to a single Faith, but all along to some one or other godly Work. 'Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain Mercy.—Do good 'to them that hate you.—Give to him that asketh you.'—But why all this? It is, 'that you may be Children of your Father, 'which is in Heaven.'—Surely then such Works as make us to be Children of our Father, which is in Heaven, may be said to be *saving Works*.

Methodist. Well, now I fully believe, what a very great Man has often said, that you have not one right Thought or Notion about Justification. But however for once, I must desire you to say, *what*, and *when*, and *where* Justification is.

Churchman. Surely I shall not be much mistaken, if I shall venture to say, it is *then* and *there*, where there is *no* *Condemnation*. Now St. Paul saith, 'there is no *Condemnation* to them 'that are in Christ Jesus.' If you ask him, who are those that are in Christ Jesus? He tells you in the very next Words, they are those 'who walk not after the *Flesh*, but after the *Spirit*.'—But no one doth, or can walk after the *Flesh*, but he who doth the *Works* of the *Flesh*, nor anyone walk after the *Spirit*, but he who doth the *Works* of the *Spirit*.—So then whether you consider *Justification*, or *Condemnation*, *Works* are the whole of the *Matter*. No *Condemnation* but from our evil *Works*, no *Justification* but from our good *Works*.—Evil *Works* are from the *Spirit* of Satan, working and ruling in our animal *Birth* of Adam's poisoned *Flesh* and *Blood*.—Good *Works* are from the *Spirit* of Christ, working in that blessed *Seed of the Woman*, or *incorruptible Seed of the WORD* (common to all Men) till it comes to a *Birth* of the new *Creature*, created unto good *Works* in Christ Jesus.—Thus the *Works* of the Devil in us, are our only *Condemnation*, and the *Works* of Christ in us, are our only *Justification*.—And by thy *Works*, thou shalt be *justified*, is just the same scriptural, immutable *Truth*, as by thy *Works* thou shalt be *condemned*.

Would you see the *Truth* of *Justification*, and the *Truth* of *Condemnation*, free from all Possibility of *Mistake*, look how the righteous *Judge* of all the *World*, will proceed at the last *Day*.—Mankind is then to be divided into two sorts of *People*, the one called *Sheep*, the other *Goats*. To the *Sheep*, saith Christ, 'Come 'ye blessed of my *Father*, inherit the kingdom prepared for you 'from the *Foundation* of the *World*.'—Whence now comes this *Blessedness*, or how came they to be the blessed *Heirs* of such a prepared *Kingdom*? The one sole *Reason* of it, is thus given by Christ, namely because of their good *Works*. 'For I was an 'hungered and ye gave me *Meat*, naked and ye clothed me, sick 'and in *Prison*, and ye visited me.' Here you have the last, full and final *Justification*, ascribed to nothing else but *Works*, done in and by and for Christ.—Is there here any *Room* left for you, or any *Christian* to ask one single *Question*, or have the least doubtful *Thought* about *Justification*, what it is, and how it comes to pass? Can you be taught by an higher *Authority*, or in plainer *Words*, that *Works*, *Christian Works*, are all the *justification* that will stand you in stead at the last *Day*?

Again, to the *Goats* saith Christ, 'Go ye cursed into everlasting *Fire* prepared for the Devil and his *Angels*.' Whence now have these *Goats* their cursed *State*, that casts them into the *Hell* of the Devil? The one sole *Reason* given by Christ, is

because they had not done those Works, by which his Sheep were justified and blessed, and made to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.—Here you have the last, full and final condemnation, ascribed to no one thing else, but the want of Works. And who is it that teaches you, but He who is the Truth itself, and the Father of all Truth, both in Men and Angels.

What occasion then for so many laboured critical Volumes, about Faith and Works in order to Justification? If you hold more or less, or anything else about Justification, than that which Christ has here asserted, the Spirit of Anti-Christ must have helped you to it.—For call any Thing a *justifying* Faith, but good Works, and then you have your Doctrine as surely from Anti-Christ, as if you were to hold, that they were the blessed Sheep, whom Christ called *Goats* and *Cursed*.—Christ is the one great infallible Teacher about Justification, and what He has said in two or three Words about it, can no more have anything taken from it, or added to it, or altered in it, than his last Sentence on his Judgment-Seat.—Deceive not yourself, my Friend, with a Faith, that hath not all its Goodness, its Truth and Perfection, from Works. For what greater Deception can you fall under, than to believe, that any Thing can be your Justification, or your Condemnation, whilst you are in the Body, but that which will be your Justification, or Condemnation, after you are risen from the Dead?—Now after this Determination of Christ, that nothing but *Works* will pass for *Justification* at the last Day, look at the Determination made by your Friend, saying, in the fullest Contradiction to Christ, ‘That Justification by Faith and Works, is a most pernicious, papistical, and damnable Doctrine. Which Doctrine, says he, I am verily assured, no one can hold, and be in a State of Salvation.’*

Is not every Word here, in full Condemnation of Christ’s Doctrine of his Sheep and their Salvation through Works, as a most pernicious and damnable Doctrine, tending to the Destruction of all those who believe it, and walk according to it?

For does he who preaches up Salvation by Faith and Works, teach any Thing else, but that very Doctrine which Christ taught, when he said, Come ye blessed, because of the Works which ye have done, and go ye cursed, because wanting the Works, which ye should have done.—Say no more then, that *Papists*, and *Popish* Protestants, have invented this damnable Doctrine of Faith and Works.—Christ is the Author of it, and he has sealed it with the same Certainty, as the Day of Judgment. Your Friend’s *Verily assured*, is quite as outrageous and frantic, as if

* *Letters*, page 22.

he had said, *I am verily assured*, that Damnation will be the State of all Preachers and Hearers, who do not as fully exclude Works from Justification *now*, as Christ will require them for Justification *hereafter*.

Methodist. But pray, Sir, if I am to give up my Friend's Doctrine, must I not give up *St. Paul* also, as a Deceiver and false Apostle, for so he must be, if Justification is by Works? What are his Epistles to the *Romans*, the *Galatians*, and *Ephesians*, but so much Pains taken, to prove that we are saved, or justified, by *Faith alone*.

Churchman. I am as much for all *St. Paul's* Doctrine, as for any other Scripture, and fully believe that he said nothing about Faith, but what he said by the Inspiration of the holy Spirit.—But if you believe that *St. Paul* ever said one single Word about Faith, as it signifies a *single Act*, or *Operation* of the Mind, or ever ascribed any Good to that, in opposition to Works, or that he ever distinguished, or divided *Christian Faith* from *Christian Works*, you may be said to have read him with Eyes that see not,—and Ears that hear not.

Methodist. Surely your *St. Paul* and mine cannot be the same Person, or you could never talk at this Rate.

Churchman. I would ask you whether *St. Peter* taught a Faith without Works, when he said to the *Jews*, 'This is the Stone, which was set at nought of you Builders, which is become the Head of the Corner. Neither is there Salvation in any other, for there is no other Name under Heaven given among Men, whereby we must be saved,' Acts iv. 11, 12. Now did it ever come into your Head, from reading these Words of *St. Peter*, that he there taught a Salvation through Christ (that is, through the Gospel Religion) by Faith without Works?—See also what Christ himself had spoken before of this very *Stone*, and the Builders that rejected it, therefore, saith he, 'I say unto you, the Kingdom of God,' that is, this very Stone, 'shall be taken from you, and given to a Nation bringing forth the Fruits thereof,' Matt. xxi. 43. Now would you from these Words of Christ, on which *St. Peter's* Words are grounded, have ever thought of proving that the Religion of the Gospel, called by *St. Peter* the *Head Stone* of the Corner, and by Christ the *Kingdom of God bringing forth* its Fruits, must be a Religion of *Faith without Works*. What could be more extravagant than this, and yet not more so, than to pretend to prove it from any Words of *St. Paul*.—For I defy anyone to show, that he hath ever said any more, or other Thing about *Faith alone*, or meant anything else by it, as our Salvation, but strictly and to a tittle, that same which *St. Peter* calls the Stone, or that *Name alone*,

by which Salvation is to be had.—St. *Paul's Faith alone*, is nothing else, means nothing else, but the *Gospel Religion alone*, and only attests that Divine Truth spoken from the Beginning to the End of the new Testament, that the Gospel Dispensation, or Religion, *alone*, can be the Salvation of Men.—When St. *Paul* speaks of *Works*, as quite unprofitable, nay hurtful to Salvation, nothing is meant by them, but *Jewish* and *Heathenish Works*; and by that Faith, which he opposes to them, and sets up in the stead of them, he always means the *whole System* of Gospel Truths, the *whole Process* of Christ, with all the Salvation Doctrines that belong to it.—This is St. *Paul's Faith alone*, by which we can only be saved, just the same thing as St. *Peter's* saying, There is no other *Name* under Heaven but this *alone*, by which we can be saved.—The only Difference between *Peter* and *Paul* is this, that *Peter*, in his short Expression, calls that the *Name alone* by which we can be saved, which *Paul*, in his short Expression, calls *Faith alone*, and both of them mean the *whole* of That, which Christ calls the Kingdom of God with its Fruits thereof; which Kingdom of God is neither more nor less, than the whole Gospel System of Christ's Process, with all the Benefits and Doctrines essential, or belonging to it.

Away then with your idle Fancy of *Paul's* ever distinguishing Christian Faith from Christian Works, or ever giving the smallest Preference of the one to the other.—To the *Jews, who said to Christ*, 'What shall we do, that we may work the Works 'of God?' Christ saith, 'This is the Work of God, that ye 'believe in him, whom he hath sent.'—This is St. *Paul's* sole and whole Doctrine *about Faith alone*, it is to believe in Christ, and that Belief is the whole *Christian Work*, the whole Work that God requires, the whole Salvation Work. But why so? Because to believe in Christ, is to embrace all and the whole of that, which Christ *was, did, suffered, taught, and commanded*, as the one only Salvation of Men.

Methodist. I must confess you have said more than I expected to hear, and more than I can at present answer. But pray show me how it appears, that St. *Paul* by his *Faith alone*, means nothing else but the Christian Religion *alone*, or the System of Gospel Doctrines *alone*.

Churchman. You might as well ask me, how it appears that *Paul* was an Apostle, or Witness of Jesus Christ *alone*; for how could he be an Apostle of Christ *alone*, if he meant anything by his *Faith alone*, but the whole that is meant by the whole Gospel Religion of Christ? Therefore wherever St. *Paul* ascribes Salvation to *Faith alone*, you have the fullest Proof, that he himself could possibly give you, that by *Faith alone*, he means neither

more nor less than the whole Gospel Religion *alone*.—St. Paul has these Words, ‘God forbid, that I should glory in any Thing, ‘save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.’—Here you see, all is rejected but the Cross of Christ *alone*, this alone is his Glory, and a good Glory it was; but would not all that is true and good in this Speech of *Paul’s* be perverted and lost, unless by the *Cross alone*, you understand the *whole Process, Doctrines, and Precepts*, of a crucified Saviour, that is, the whole Christian Religion? Now thus it is with Faith *alone*; and if Paul had said, God forbid that I should glory in any Thing but in Faith alone in Christ, he had said just the same Thing, as when he would have no Glory but in the Cross alone.—For where all that is Christian Joy, or Hope, or Comfort, or Salvation, is ascribed to any one *single Thing*, whether it be called *Faith alone*, or the *Cross alone*, there that Faith, and that Cross, must stand equally, and only for the whole Gospel Religion. And then to say, that a Man is saved by the Cross alone, or by Faith alone, is the same sound, and good Truth.—‘I know whom I have ‘believed,’ saith the Apostle, and if he had said, I know whom I have *followed*, whom I have obeyed, the Thing had been just the same.—For to *follow* Christ, or to be in the *Faith* of Christ, or to be a Disciple of the Cross, are three different Expressions, but the Meaning of them all, is but one and the same.

‘I am not ashamed,’ saith St. Paul, ‘of the Cross of Christ,’ *just the same as* if he had said, I am not ashamed of the *Gospel Kingdom* of Christ. For that he means by the Cross, the whole Religion of the Gospel, he tells you, in saying, that it is the *Power of God to Salvation*; and what is, or can be this *Power*, but that *whole Process, Precepts, and Doctrines* of Christ, which make the whole Religion of the Gospel? Again, ‘I have ‘determined,’ saith he, ‘to know nothing among you but Christ, ‘and him crucified.’ But will you thence infer, that all other Knowledge, whether of the Birth, Life, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ, was rejected by him as quite useless and unprofitable? Yet this would be full as well, as to infer, that because he saith, by *Faith alone* ye are saved, therefore no Works are to be admitted as *saving*, but are to be rejected as vain and quite unprofitable to Salvation.—For the Knowledge of Christ crucified alone, and Faith alone, are then each of them put for the whole Gospel-Religion, and not for Faith, as signifying a *single Power* of the Mind, nor for the Cross, as meaning the *single Crucifixion* of Christ.

Further, drop now for awhile this Consideration of Faith, in which St. Paul has used it for the whole Gospel-Doctrine, and consider Faith in the Sense, in which our Lord and the whole

Scripture most frequently speak of it, as a *living working* Power of the Mind, that *wills*, and *desires*, and *hopes*, and *trusts*, and *believes*, and *obeys*; and in this Sense of the Word, it will be absolutely true, that Works have just the same Salvation in them, that Faith hath, because in the very Nature of the Thing, Works are of the same Nature with, and inseparable from Faith, let the Faith or Works be what they will, because Faith is nothing else, has nothing else, but what its Works are.—This is equally true of every Man, and every Faith in the World, he has no Works, but the workings of his Faith.—For as *Life* has no Existence but in and by its *living Operations*, so Faith hath no Existence, but in its own Workings.—Now if you will have a *Life alone* without its *living Operations*, then you must have a Life that is without Motion, without Will or Desire, without Hearing, Seeing, Feeling, or any Inclination to any Thing, and then you have a Life, that is just as good as a dead Carcase.—So if you will have a Christian Faith that is *alone*, and not made up of Works, you must have a Christian Faith, that has no Penitence, no Humility, no Denial of Self, no Hunger after Righteousness, no striving to enter in at the strait Gate, no Love of God, or your Neighbour. For Faith cannot be *alone*, or without Works, till it is without all these Workings.—And then you have a Faith alone, that is just as able to *fight St. Paul's good Fight of Faith*, as the *dead Carcase* is to take a City.—And let me tell you, that these Works are not only the very Essence of Faith, and inseparable from it, but that Faith itself can have no Beginning, but from some one, or other of them, nor any further Growth, but as these grow more and more. For Faith and its Works beget, and are begotten of one another, for as it must be said, that Humility and Penitence are the true Fruits, or Works of Faith, so it may be as truly said, that Humility or Penitence are the *first* Root, or Seed, from whence Faith gets its Birth—Faith, considered as an Act or Operation of the Mind, is like any other Faculty or Power, it cannot be alone, any more than will, desire, longing, hoping, fearing, wishing, loving, trusting, or rejoicing, can any of them be alone, or in a State of Separation from the rest.—And to ascribe Salvation to any one of these Tempers alone, and by itself, would be as consistent with Scripture, and the Nature of the Thing, as to ascribe it to Faith *alone*, considered as a *single* Thing, and separate from all other Works, or working of the Mind.

But Faith, not considered as the working of the Will, or an Operation of the Mind, but as meaning the whole System of Gospel-Religion, may and must be *alone* Salvation, without any Thing else but itself, and that for the same Reason, as *St. Peter*

says, that Christ *alone*, is the *only* Stone, or the *only* Name whereby we can be saved.

Would you therefore come out of that Thickness of Darkness, which a blind *Babylonish* Spirit of Dispute, has in these latter Ages brought into St. *Paul's* Doctrine of Faith without Works, this must be your Way.

You must take, or put Faith for the whole Gospel-Religion, when he opposes it to, or separates it from Works, and then you will rightly understand why he saith, By Faith *alone* ye are saved.—You must also put *Jewish*, or Heathenish to the Works, which he excludes from Faith, and then you will rightly understand *what Works* he declares to have *no Salvation* in them. This is the true, unerring Key to all his whole Doctrine about Faith without Works.

Methodist. But where has St. *Paul* himself told you, that by Faith alone, he means the whole Gospel-Religion *alone*?

Churchman. He has told it me, as often, and wherever he has said, that by Faith *alone* we are saved. For how could he more show you, that he means neither more nor less by it, than by telling you that it alone is Salvation? Would you have Salvation to be obtained by something *different* from the whole of Gospel-Religion? Fancy now St. *Paul* explaining himself, and saying, when I ascribe Salvation to *Faith alone*, I do not mean by Faith, the whole of Gospel-Doctrine; what greater Absurdity could you charge upon him?

His Doctrine of Faith alone, and without Works, is nothing else but the Gospel-Religion alone, in Opposition to the Religion and Works of Jews and Heathens, and is solely directed to these two sorts of People, and not, as is blindly imagined, to set Christian Faith in Opposition to Christian Works, which would be no better, than teaching a Christian to be good without Goodness.

To the *Jews* he thus speaks, 'We have believed in Jesus Christ, 'that we might be justified by the Faith of Christ, and not by 'the Works of the Law.' Here Faith and Works stand for the two Religions, the one of Christ, and the other of *Moses*. For what are the *Works of the Law*, but the whole of the *Mosaic* Religion, or what the *Faith of Christ*, but the whole new Religion of the Gospel? Therefore to tell these People, that they were to be saved by Faith alone, and without Works, was only telling them, that they were to be saved by leaving or turning from *Judaism* to Christianity, or that they could not enter into the Kingdom of God, or the Gospel-Faith, or the Church of Christ (for they all mean the same Thing) till they had done with, and left off all the Works of the Law? 'I testify,' says

he, 'unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.'

To the *Heathens*, or *Greeks*, he preaches the same Doctrine with Regard to their Religious State, *namely*, that all the Works of their Religion and Lives, must be forsaken and turned from, that by embracing the Religion, or Faith of Christ, they might be saved.—I have, says he, 'kept back nothing that was profitable 'unto you,—publicly, and from House to House, testifying both 'to the Jew and to the Greek, Repentance towards God, and 'Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.'—*Repentance towards God*, signified the Necessity of their having done with their former Religion, Works, and Manner of Life; *Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ*, signified the Necessity of their becoming Members of a new Gospel-Church, or Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Not a Word through all *St. Paul*, that rejects *any Works*, but those which *Jews* and Heathens were satisfied with, and would not give up for the Gospel State of the Kingdom of God, which Kingdom, is called by *Paul*, the *Faith of Christ*. Not a Word of the Sufficiency of *Faith alone*, but where it stands for the whole of Gospel-Doctrine.

Again, *St. Paul* hath himself told me, that by *Faith alone* he means the Gospel-Religion alone, in the following Passages, 'I 'have,' says he, 'fought the good Fight, I have finished my 'Course,' and as a Proof of this, he adds, 'I have kept the Faith.' Must not Faith here stand for the whole Gospel-Religion?—Again, 'Before Faith came, we were under the Law.' Does not *Faith* here as certainly signify the *whole Religion* of the Gospel, as the *Law* signifies the whole Religion of *Moses*? Again, 'If 'they who are under the Law, be Heirs, then Faith is made 'void,' that is, the whole Religion of Jesus Christ, is made needless, and of no Use or Benefit. Can he more plainly tell you, that by *Faith*, as opposed to the Works of the Law, he means nothing else, but the whole of the Gospel-Doctrine? This is said to the *Jews*.—To the Gentiles at another Time, he speaks the same Truth in these Words; 'By Grace ye are saved through 'Faith in Christ, and that not of yourselves, not of Works, lest 'any Man should boast, it is the Gift of God,' the very self-same Gift, of which Christ spoke to the Woman at *Jacob's Well*, saying, 'if thou knewest the Gift of God, and who it is that saith, 'give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and he 'would have given thee living Water.'—Now what is this Gift of God with his living Water, but the Christ of God with all his redeeming Process, from his Birth to his Ascension into Heaven, freely given by God, that Man might thereby be saved. Therefore this *Faith*, or *Gift* of God, by which alone we can be saved,

signifies neither more nor less, than the *whole Gospel-Means* of Salvation.—The Apostle adds, ‘and that not of yourselves, ‘not of Works, lest any Man should boast.’ Here Works are totally excluded. But what Works? Why only Works of *self*, and Works that Man could, or would, *boast of*. But these Works are only therefore excluded from Gospel-Faith or Salvation, that godly Works which have nothing of self, or boasting in them, may come up in their stead.—This the Apostle affirmeth, saying, ‘For we are his Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good ‘Works, which God hath before ordained,’ Eph. ii. How great then is that learned Delusion, which opposes Christian Faith to Christian Works, because *Paul* opposes it to the unchristian Works of *Jews* and Heathens; or because he will not allow their several Works to have any Salvation in them, therefore will have it, that the true Followers of Christ, neither can, nor ought to have any Salvation from their doing the Works, which Christ has taught and commanded them to do.—A *Believer*, or a *Hearer*, without *doing*, is but one and the same self-deceived Person.—In the Gospel, we have a Father bidding his Son go to *Work* in his Vineyard. The Son consents, and saith, ‘I go, Sir, but he went ‘not.’ This consenting and not doing, is the Perfection of a *Faith without Works*.

Methodist. Surely you never minded these Words of St. *Paul*,—‘To him that worketh not, but believeth on him who justifieth ‘the ungodly, his Faith is counted unto him for Righteousness.’

Churchman. Surely you have been deaf to all that has been said, or you could never come now with such a Text as this. For no more is said in it against working, or against any other Works, but that very single Thing, which he saith in these Words, ‘That ‘by the Deeds of the Law there shall no Flesh be justified in his ‘Sight.’—Now if it be the Apostle’s repeated Doctrine, that the Deeds or Works of the Law, must of all Necessity be forborn, or ceased from, must he not for that very Reason say, *to him that worketh not*, that is, to him that ceaseth from working, as the Law, or Religion of *Moses* requires, and turns to the *Faith of Christ*, called the Kingdom of God, this Faith becometh his Righteousness.—But how doth it become his Righteousness? The Apostle tells you, ‘It is through the Redemption that is in ‘Christ Jesus; Whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation ‘through Faith in his Blood.’—Now what is the Redemption through Jesus Christ, but a Redemption by and through *all that*, which Christ, as God-Man, was, did, suffered, obtained, taught, and commanded, that is, through and by the whole of the Gospel-Religion? How is Christ our *Propitiation*, or Peace, but by *that* which he is, and does in the inward Change, and Renewal of our

Nature, in creating us again to good Works, in bringing forth a new Creature, not born of Man, nor of the Will of Man, nor of the Will of the Flesh, but of God?—What is *Faith in his Blood*, but the same Thing as Faith in his Cross, and what is Faith in either Case, but a hearty Willingness, and full Desire wholly to cease, or turn away from all Heathenish, or *Jewish* Works, and to embrace and give up ourselves to all that is meant, taught, and required by the Gospel-Faith, or Kingdom of God?

Would you know the whole of St. *Paul's* Doctrine about Faith, and against Works, or working, you have it all summed up by himself in the following Words, 'Therefore we conclude, that a Man is justified by Faith without the Deeds of the Law.' What room then for one single Word about what he means by *not working*? *Faith* stands here for the Gospel-Religion, and the Deeds of the Law signify the Religion of *Moses*; no Wonder therefore that he saith a Man is justified by Faith, without the Deeds of the Law. So sure therefore as you conclude either more or less, or other than St. *Paul's* own Conclusion, so sure you may be, that you abuse the Apostle, falsify his Doctrine, and sow your *own Tares* amongst his *Wheat*.

Methodist. Let me here ask you, in the elegant Words of a late most amiable Divine, 'Must the *Efficacy* of Christ's Obedience be enforced by the *Accession* of our Works, *maimed* and '*Worm-eaten* Things?'

Churchman. There may, for aught I know, be Elegance enough in these Words, but Truth and Sense is quite wanting.—For what have our good Works to do with the *Efficacy of Christ's Obedience*, either as to the lessening, or increasing of it; or how has his Obedience anything more added to it by our good Works, than it has anything taken from it by the evil Works of those who crucified him?—What careful Doer of good Works, ever said or thought after this Manner? 'I strive to obey thy Will, O God, that thereby Christ's Obedience may be made more perfect, than it was in him.—I lift up my Eyes and Heart towards Heaven, that Christ's sitting there at thy right Hand, may be more powerful than it is in itself.'

On the other hand, what a wise Man of Faith would he be, who should abstain from Prayer, &c., least he should seem by such Worm-eaten Petitions, to be *adding* something to Christ's all-sufficient Intercession in Heaven.—Again, fancy another Man of Faith alone, saying thus, 'I cannot have any Care about denying myself, taking up my daily Cross and following Thee. I cannot do these Things, as *helping forward* my Salvation, because that would be no better, than presuming to help Thee to be a more full and sufficient Saviour, than thou art in thyself, and without my Works.'

Can anything be more absurd, or irreligious than this? And yet all of it is manifestly contained in the elegant Words of your Friend. If we walk as Christ walked, and do the Works of Christ, we shall on *that Account* be rewarded with him.—This is the same good Doctrine, as when the Apostle saith, ‘If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.’—Here you see our own Sufferings are not only required, but made the Ground of our reigning with our suffering Saviour.—But what Man, not intoxicated with the Elegance of Words, would call, or look upon this, as *adding* our maimed, *Worm-eaten* Sufferings, to make the Sufferings of Christ, greater and more valuable than they are in themselves?—As silly a Thought, as to say, that our following of Christ, is helping him to be the Son of God.

Our Blessed Lord keeps our Eye continually upon good Works, or Things that we ourselves are to do. ‘Strive,’ says he, ‘to enter in at the strait Gate; Ask, and ye shall receive; Seek, and ye shall find; Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.’ He does not say, all is already gained, received, found, and opened, by what he has done and suffered.—Now if this striving, asking, knocking, &c., were but *maimed, Worm-eaten* Things, surely it had been better to forbid, than to command them. Or if he had said to his Disciples, that this striving and seeking were such maimed, Worm-eaten Things, surely he had said as much against them, and with the same Intention of turning them from them, as when he bid them ‘beware of the Leaven, of the Pharisees,’ and compared their Goodness to *whited Sepulchres*, full of Stench, Corruption, and dead Men’s Bones.

You vehemently accuse the Clergy, with acting contrary to the *Articles* of the Church, because preaching up Justification by Faith along with Works. But you quite forget, that your making Christian Works no better than maimed, Worm-eaten Things, stands in full Contrariety to many of the best Prayers in our *Liturgy*.—Thus, how many *Collects* are like this, ‘Grant, O Lord, that by thy holy Inspiration, we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same.’—Is this Prayer in vain; or if God hears us, can no better Works come from it, than Worm-eaten Things?—Agreeable to this Prayer, St. Paul saith, ‘I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me’; the same may everyone say as well as he; but according to your new Light, *these all Things*, are but Worm-eaten Things.

Again, what difference is there between the *old Man and his Deeds*, which we are to put off, and the new Man in Christ, that is to be put on, if he has no Deeds, but what are maimed, Worm-eaten Things?—But hear now what Christ saith of *the Necessity*,

the *Excellence*, and *Efficacy* of Christian good Works, in the following Words, 'Whosoever heareth my Sayings and DOETH 'them, is like a Man which built an House, and digged deep, and 'laid the Foundation on a Rock. And when the Floods arose, 'the Stream beat vehemently upon that House, and could not 'shake it, for it was founded upon a Rock.'—Here you see the Excellence, the Power and Efficacy of Christian good Works, compared by our Lord to the Strength and Firmness of a House built upon a Rock, which Floods and Tempests cannot overthrow. How could he more fully show you, that they are the *Beginning*, the continual Strength and Support of the Divine Life, than by comparing them to a Rock on which a House begins, and from which it hath all its Power of standing against all Floods and Tempests? How could he better show you, that *this Rock* of good Works, all proceeding from his Power within us, is that *very Rock*, on which he builds a Church, against which the Gates of Hell shall never prevail?—On the other Hand, call anything Salvation but *Christian Works*, and then you have Christ's Word for it, that you are 'like the Man that without a Foundation built his House upon the Sand, against which the Stream 'did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell, and great was the 'Fall of it.'—Hear again what our Lord saith of Christian Works, 'A good Man,' saith he, 'out of the good Treasure of his 'Heart bringeth forth that which is good'; but how could this possibly be, if Christian Works could be no better than *maimed, worm-eaten* Things?—And here by the by, let me desire you *well to observe*, whence it is, that the *good Man bringeth forth good Things*. Not as your Orator tells you, because Christ's Goodness, or Righteousness is outwardly *imputed* to him, and so made his. No, Truth itself tells you the direct contrary, that it proceeds from the *good Treasure of his Heart*, and therefore is a Goodness born within him. Now, whence has he this good Treasure of his Heart, and what is it? It is that Treasure of a *Divine Life*, or Nature, which *Adam* had at first, and to which he died, and which by the free Grace and Mercy of God, was secured to him and all his Posterity, as a *Seed of the Woman*, a preserved Remains, or Power of his first Divine Nature.—Christ in *Adam*, was his first Glory and Perfection of Life; Christ remaining in fallen *Adam*, as a preserved seed of his first Divine Nature, is the only Ground and Foundation, of his being able to be made again in Christ a new Creature.—This *Divine Seed of the Woman*, is so much of Christ remaining in him; and thence it is, that Christ alone hath Power to be the Mediator and Redeemer of Man, because that which is to be raised from Death into Life in us, is nothing else but the *incorruptible Seed* of himself in us.—This,

Sir, is that *good Treasure of the Heart*, out of which the good Man bringeth forth good Things, and is in itself nothing more or less, than a Seed of *Adam's* first Divine Life within us, preserved by God's never-ceasing Love towards Man, as his *Covenant* of Grace and Redemption within us, which Seed, as it comes through the Mediation of Christ to a new Power of Life in us, causes all those *different Sensibilities*, called Humility, Penitence, Fear, Prayer, Faith, Hope, and earnest seeking after God.

Will you now ever say a Word more, about your Fiction of an *outwardly imputed* Goodness, when Christ has so expressly told you, that its Birth is from within, from the *good Treasure of the Heart*, which is himself within us. And to show, That all must come from this Divine Root, preserved within us, as good Fruit doth from a good Tree, he saith, 'Either make the Tree 'good, and its Fruit good, or make the Tree corrupt, and its 'Fruit corrupt.'—'For (N.B.) the Tree is known by its Fruit.'—No, say your Imputation-Doctors, that need not be; Let some good Hand only hang good Fruit outwardly upon it, and then you will rightly know the Tree by its Fruits.—And it will be more glorious to the Tree, to have a Variety of good Fruit outwardly imputed to it, or hung upon it, than to have good Fruit from its own good Root.

Methodist. Our present Matter is not about the Doctrine of Imputation.—If you will not stick closely to the Point of Faith alone, I must beg leave to depart.

Churchman. The Doctrine of the outward Imputation of Christ's Righteousness, and the Doctrine of Faith alone, is but one and the very same individual Point; for what is your Faith alone, but a Faith in that imputed Righteousness?

The Righteousness of Christ we must have, or he can be no Saviour to us. This is granted on both sides.—But you, for the great Glory of God, and the great Good of Man, are for having it only *outwardly* imputed to us; which is just such a Glory to God, and would be such a Good to a blind Man, as if instead of opening his own Eyes, only the good far-seeing Eyes of an Angel were outwardly imputed to him.

On the other Hand, we believe, and contend for an *inward Birth* of Christ's Righteousness in us, because it was the Birth of our first glorious Father, and because it is to the eternal Glory of God, and the eternal Good of Man, that his inward sinful Nature be quite destroyed, by a Birth of his *original* Righteousness rising up in its Stead; that so, all that was lost in *Adam*, may be found again in Christ.—Can you possibly be told this in stronger Terms, than when Christ saith, 'Except a Man be 'born again from above, of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the

'Kingdom of God?'—St. *John* beareth Witness to this Truth, saying, 'Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit Sin;' the same as saying, till a Man is born of God, he continueth under the Power of his sinful Nature. But why does such a Man not sin? The Apostle tells you, because *his Seed*, that is, the Seed of God, *remaineth in him*.—Had St. *John* the least Thought of a Righteousness of Christ outwardly imputed, when he places all our Freedom from Sin, and Power over it, to a *Seed of God remaining* in us? Or if he had ever heard of such a Thought in other People, how could he more fully condemn it, than in saying, 'Little Children, let no Man deceive you, he that doth Righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.'

Here you see all is Deceit, be they Notions, Opinions, Faiths, Hopes, imputed Righteousness, or whatever else you can name, all is Deceit, till a Man by *doing Righteousness*, is righteous even as he is righteous. Then it is, that Christ's Righteousness is become his Righteousness, and this alone is the Righteousness of Christ that is his full and only Justification in the Sight of God; and that for this one Reason, because it is Christ himself, that is, his Divine and righteous Nature born within him. Which the Apostle thus strongly asserts, 'If ye know that he is righteous;' what follows from this knowledge? The Apostle adds, then, 'ye know, that everyone that doth Righteousness (N.B.) is born of him,' that is, hath a Birth of his Divine and righteous Nature, brought forth in him; and consequently, he that is not born of him, hath nothing of Christ's Righteousness—to be his Salvation.

Methodist. I must say again, that you ramble strangely about with Multiplicity of Words.—Our Doctrine is, that Works have no Share in saving us, because, as our Friend strongly expresses it, 'Christ will either be a whole Saviour, or none at all.'

Churchman. Had your Friend said, We can have no Salvation but in Christ alone, he had said a good Scripture-Truth; but this strange unscriptural Language of a Christ, who will either be a *whole Saviour*, or *none at all*, has the same bad Meaning in it, as if he were to say, Christ will do nothing for us, unless we forbear to concur, or do anything along with him.

Now Christ saith, 'Follow me,—Take my Yoke upon you.' But if following of Christ, if taking his Yoke upon us, is necessary, then something that is to be done by ourselves, is as necessary to our Salvation, as that which is done by Christ for us, and some Works are as truly *Salvation-Works*, as any Acts of Faith are saving.

Methodist. Who ever denied, that we are to follow Christ, and take his Yoke upon us?

Churchman. But will such Works do us any Good, or recommend us to God?

Methodist. I will give you no Answer, but in the decisive Words of our Friend; 'If, says he, you think that you have any 'good Service of your own, to *recommend* you to God, you are 'certainly without any Interest in Christ.'

Churchman. *Own Service* is but like *own Will*, and no more Good can come from it, than from the *natural old Man* with his Deeds. But our Saviour has assured us, that there is a good Man, who out of the good Treasure of his Heart, bringeth forth that which is good.—Now these are the good Works that are pleaded for as absolutely necessary, and essential to a true and saving Faith.

Say now, that if we think such good Works recommend us to God, we are *certainly without* any Interest in Christ, and then it were better, that you should preach such Doctrine to Stocks and Stones, than to Christian Ears.—For who can receive it, without giving up the most constant and repeated Salvation-Doctrines of Scripture?—What more frequent through all our Bible, than Passages of the same Nature with this: 'To do good, and to 'communicate, forget not. (N.B.) For with such Sacrifices God 'is well pleased.'—Now must a Man who believes this, and thinks, that such Things recommend him to God, be therefore certainly without any Interest in Christ?

Hear Christ himself thus calling out for good Works, in all those who expect to have any Interest in him, 'Not every one 'that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom 'of Heaven, but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in 'Heaven.'

Will such a Caller upon the Lord, without good Works, have his sufficient Excuse, by saying, Lord, I thought thou wouldst be my *whole Saviour*, or *none at all*; and therefore, I durst not think of *recommending* myself to God, by doing his Will, lest I should thereby lose all Interest in Thee.

Methodist. If you do not like my Friend's Expression, take the same Truth in other Words of some most excellent Divines. Thus says one, 'Nothing is required in order to our Participation 'of Christ and his Benefits;—there is no clogging Qualification, 'no Worth to be possessed, no Duty to be performed, in order to 'our full Participation of Christ and all his Riches;' for all which he gives this solid Reason, because, 'It is not a Matter of 'Bargain, nor the Subject of Sale, but a *Deed of Gift*, the Gift of 'Righteousness; and Gifts we all know, are not to be purchased, 'but received.'

Churchman. As wild and extravagant Words as ever met

together, as may thus be fully shown.—Christ said to his Disciples, ‘I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life;’ and that they might more fully understand the true Meaning of that, he said also, ‘Strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way that leadeth to life.’—Now, what Christ here saith of the strait Gate and narrow Way, is strictly so much said of himself, and *how* he is the Saviour of the World; for the Way and Gate could not lead to Life, if they meant anything else but Christ himself.—Now Christ and his Benefits, considered as the blessed strait Gate, and narrow Way to Life, provided by God, is wholly and solely the free Grace and Gift of God; here was no Bargain, or Sale of any Thing; Nothing was done on Man’s Part to obtain it, and that for this very good Reason, because Christ was thus given by God before the Foundation of the World, and again, before there was a Man born of a Woman.

See then the miserable Delusion of your Doctors, who, from this Scripture-Truth, that God has *freely*, and out of *mere Mercy* to the fallen State of Man, provided, and given a blessed narrow Way, and strait Gate to eternal Life, thence conclude, that no Pains, or Trouble of striving to get into this narrow Way, and through this strait Gate, need be taken, (N.B.) because, without any Pains of our own, he freely gave it to all Mankind; though there could be no Blessedness in the Gift, but because blessed are they, who with all their Powers, Works, and Endeavours of Spirit, Soul, and Body, strive to walk in this narrow Way, and pass through this strait Gate.—Is not all this as gross a Delusion, and in as full Contrariety to the Nature of the Thing, as to conclude, that because God has *freely* prepared and given us a Cup of Salvation, therefore there is no need that we should drink it; or think that our *own drinking* it, need not be added to make his free Cup of Salvation a Benefit to us.

Now, gross as all this is, it is the strong Foundation-Absurdity, on which alone, your great Divines build all their rhetorical Flourishes of a Salvation that is wholly the Gift of God, without any Works of Man belonging to it.—For they have not a Word to say against Salvation-Works, but that Works did not produce God’s *first free Gift* of a Saviour to us; and therefore, Works can no more belong to this free Gift of a Saviour, after he is given, than they did before he was given to us; being too systematically blind to see, that as a strait Gate and narrow Way were only given to us, that we might do that which we could not do before they were given, or as the Cup of Salvation is only given, that we may drink that, which we could not drink before it was given, so Christ was only and solely given for the sake of Salvation-Works, which we could not do, till in him and

by him we became new Creatures, created again unto good Works.

How easily may you now see the Vanity of these, and such-like flourishing Words; 'The Gifts of the great eternal Sovereign 'are intended, not to recognise our imaginary Worth, but to 'aggrandise our Views of his Mercy and Grace.'

Just as full of Scripture-Truth, and good Sense, as to say, that God's Gifts of *Five* and *Ten* Talents, are not given us with this Intention, that our good Use of them may appear, and that God may have occasion to say to us, '*Well done, good and faithful 'Servant,*' but to show us how great are the Talents and Riches of God. Or again, that God's Gift of a strait Gate and narrow Way to Life, is not given us, that our well striving in it may appear, but only, that the greatness of God's Goodness to us may be shown thereby.

See again, what the same Writer says of the Man who is in the Truth of the Gospel; 'He labours neither first nor last to 'acquire any Requisite to Justification.' When Christ himself has told him, 'By thy Words thou shalt be justified, and by thy 'Words thou shalt be condemned': Surely, this is enough telling him, that from *first* to *last*, nothing but Works have either Justification or Condemnation in them.—See again what another of your excellent Divines saith; 'Do not think by any preparatory Works, to make yourselves worthy of Christ.' What is this but saying, do not believe Christ when he is speaking of Worthiness and Unworthiness, when he says, 'He that taketh 'not his Cross, and followeth me, is not worthy of me.—He that 'loveth Father and Mother more than me, is not worthy of me.'—Do not believe St. *Paul*, when he exhorteth the *Thessalonians*, 'to walk worthy of God, who hath called them to his Kingdom 'and Glory.'—Again, have a care of these Words of Christ, 'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand'; for you may easily be thereby led to think, that Repentance-Works have some Kind of worthy Preparation in them, to make *you fit* for the Kingdom of God.

And now let me tell you, that two or three old Heresies joined together, would not more abuse and contradict the Gospel, than your three Doctrines, (1.) Of Faith without Works. (2.) Of a Righteousness of Christ only outwardly imputed to us. (3.) Of absolute Election and Reprobation. These are the Scandal and Reproach of the Reformation, wherever they are found, and have nothing to support them, but that implicit Adherence, and systematic Obstinacy, which keeps Romish Scholars steady to a *Trent-Creed*.

Gospel-Salvation, is on God's Part, a Covenant of free Grace

and Mercy, and cannot possibly be any Thing else ; on Man's Part, it is wholly a Covenant of Works, and cannot possibly be any Thing else.—For the sake of Works, Man was that which he was by his *Creation* : for the sake of Works, he is all that he is, by his *Redemption*.—Works are the Life of the Creature, and he can have no Life better or worse than his Works : That which he does, that he is.

THIS DO AND THOU SHALT LIVE, is the *Law of Works*, which was from the Beginning, is now, and always will be, the *one Law of Life*.—And whether you consider the Adamical, Patriarchal, Legal, Prophetic, or Gospel-State of the Church, DOING is ALL. Nothing makes any Change in this. Nay, it is not only the one Law of all Men on Earth, but of all Angels in Heaven.—And this as certainly, as our best and highest Prayer is this, 'Thy Will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven.'

'This do, and thou shalt live,' was the only Law of Life given to *Adam* in Paradise.—*Adam* could not have been capable of this Law, but because the Divine Nature, or a Birth of Christ within him, was his first created State.—No Law of doing God's Will could have been given to, or received by any of his Posterity, but because a Seed of the first Divine Life, or Christ in Man, was by God's free Grace and Mercy, preserved and continued in *Adam*, and secured to all his Posterity, as a redeeming *Seed of the Woman*, which through all Ages of the Church, should continue bruising the Head of the Serpent, till this first Seed of Life became a God incarnate, with all Power in Heaven and on Earth, to restore original Righteousness, and to raise again in fallen Man, that first Birth of himself, which was in *Adam* before he fell ; This was the one *Power that he gave them to become Sons of God*.

Methodist. Nothing more need be said against all your Doctrine, but that it is direct *Arminianism*.

Churchman. Do you think then, that no more need be said in Defence of your Doctrine, than that it is *true Calvinism* ? I have appealed to nothing for what I have asserted, but to the Words of Christ and his Apostles, and would no more consult a *Calvin*, an *Arminius*, or a *Zinzendorf*, how I was to understand them, than I would *pray* to God to be led by their Spirit, instead of the Spirit of Christ. Nor is the one a Wit better or worse than the other.—Christ said, 'He that hath Ears to hear, let him hear.'—And again, 'He that is of God, heareth God's Words.'—If therefore you want hearing Ears, or are not of God, to consult a Grammarian how you are to understand the Words of Christ, is as sure a Way as you can take, to be content with spiritual Deafness and Blindness, and never to be taught of God, so long as you live.

If I have called the *Law of Works*, the one Law of Life, it is because Christ hath said the same, to the Lawyer, who asked him, *what he should do to inherit eternal Life*. Christ asked him, 'What is written in the Law?' He answered, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, Soul, Spirit and Strength, and thy Neighbour as thyself.' To which Christ said, 'Thou hast answered right, THIS DO AND THOU SHALT LIVE.' Here you have just the same Thing said of Works, as is said of Faith; 'The Just shall live by Faith.' Therefore you can have no fuller Proof given you, that Faith and Works mean but one and the same Thing, whenever Life is sometimes ascribed to one, and sometimes to the other, and therefore Faith and Works can no more be two Things, than eternal Life can be two Things. Again, hear how St. Paul asserteth the *Law of Works*, to be the one Law of Life. 'For we must all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the Things DONE in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.' Now if you have *your Senses so exercised to discern between Good and Evil*, as to think, that the Law of Works asserted by Christ and his Apostle to be the Law of Life, is fitter to be received, or not received, just as a *Calvin*, or an *Arminius*, are with it, or against it, where must you look for the People, who have Eyes and see not, Ears and hear not?

Methodist. I am quite tired with disputing in this Manner, but yet will add one Thing, which you will not be so able to puzzle, as you have the Scripture, and which must be acknowledged to be decisive, at least with Regard to our awakened Preacher. He heard a Voice (as he really thought from Heaven) saying unto him, *Cease from thine own Works*.

Churchman. Whencesoever the Voice came, it spoke well, and might have been just as beneficial to him, as if it had said, *Cease from thine own Wisdom, thine own Faith, or thine own Projects in Religion*; for all these are not only alike, but the very same Thing. But if he took an Advice to cease from his *own Works*, to be an Advice to cease from Works, that were not his own, it is much to be feared, he misunderstood his Adviser.

If the Voice had said, *Cease from thine own Faith*, would he have taken this to be a sufficient Divine Authority, to call the Christian World to a Religion of Works *without Faith*, and to have told them of the damnable Doctrine of adding Faith to Works? Yet this would be full as well, as to preach against good Works, as having no Salvation-Goodness in them, because he was bid to cease from his *own Works*.

If you knew a *Minister*, so full of Expectation from his own

Works, as to be quite uneasy at their Insignificancy for many Years, both with Regard to himself, and his Hearers, such a Man might well be said to have his Eye too much upon his own Works, to mistake the Nature of them, and to expect that from them, which can only be done by quite another Power.—To such a Man as this, how wholesome would the Advice be, *Cease from thine own Works*. And why so? Because thou canst neither be thine own Saviour, nor the Saviour of them that hear thee, by any Thing that can be called thine own Work. If therefore your fruitless Preacher, instead of making a Division between Faith and Works, in order to preach with Divine Success, had said to himself, and to his Hearers, We have hitherto lived and laboured in vain, because (as the Prophet speaks) ‘we have committed two Evils; we have forsaken the Fountain of living Water, and hewed out to ourselves, broken Cisterns that can hold no Water;’ Now when, or how may we be said to have ‘forsaken the Fountain of living Water’? It is when we expect or seek for Good in any Thing, but that, which God is, and does by his own WORD, LIGHT, and SPIRIT within us.—Look after any Thing but this, have any Trust in, or Dependence upon any Thing else but this Divine Operation, and then be as full of religious Zeal, as you will, you have forsaken the Fountain of living Water. Collect, divide, distinguish, and new model all Doctrines, Notions, and Opinions, as nicely as ever you can, you are only making a new-fashioned, cracked Cistern that can hold no living Water in it. What is the Reason that Sin and Wickedness overflow, like a flood, the whole Christian World? It is because Popish, and Protestant Churches, have been Age after Age, wholly taken up in hewing out of the Gospel-Rock their several Opinion-Cisterns. The Pope has his Infallibility, and therefore his Cisterns can have no Failure, or Crack in them.—Protestants have a *Luther*, a *Calvin*, an *Arminius*, a *Beza*, a *Socinus*, a *Zinzendorf*, &c. And if their Cisterns are free from Cracks, it is because they have *Nouns* and *Pronouns*, *Verbs* and *Adverbs*, *Prepositions* and *Conjunctions*, to cement and strengthen them.—What Infallibility does in Popish, that Criticism does in Protestant Countries, and so (sad Truth!) the one *Fountain of living Water* is everywhere *forsaken*, and quite out of Date. What Wonder then, if Christianity is but an empty Name, a vain Battle of Opinions, instead of the Life and Power of God, born, dwelling, and manifested in our fallen Nature. And here let me tell you, that all that you see, or hear, or read of the best Notions, Truths, or Doctrines, whilst you place any Thing in them, as considered in themselves, are to you only broken Cisterns, that afford you no Water of Life. *Eugenius* said one

Day, how charmed he was at *first* with the Doctrines of the spiritual Life, and the Glories of a new Birth; but that now, after some Years striving to be good by the Knowledge of such Things, he found himself to be but just where he was, before he knew any Thing of them.—But did anyone ever tell *Eugenius*, that *these Doctrines* were the *Fountain of living Water*, and that by drinking of them he would have *eternal Life*?—How good are these Words of Christ, ‘Unless a Man be born again from ‘above, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God’? But how useless are they to him, who is not thereby turned to seek and expect it all from God? How good is it to know that Abyss of Death, into which our Father *Adam* has plunged us; but how unprofitable is this Knowledge, unless it makes us all hunger and thirst after that essential Operation of the Divine Nature in us, which lived in *Adam* before he fell?—All Scripture-Doctrines whether of Life or Death, are nothing in themselves, nor have any Power of Godliness in them, but are only to show us, again and again, this great Truth, that the Departure from God into whatever it be, is the Death of Deaths; and the cleaving wholly and solely to God, is eternal Life.

Think of any Thing but God, as the Cause of Goodness; or that his Goodness can be your Good, but by being born in you, as it was in *Adam* and holy Angels, and then, though you have all the three Christian Creeds, you have turned your Christian-God into an outward Idol.—For a God, not living and working within you all that is, or can be called your good Life, is but an outward Idol of a God.—And be assured of this, that as is the Birth and working Life within, so are you, and can neither *here*, nor *hereafter*, be any Thing else, but *that* which is *born within you*.—Righteousness imputed from without, is but like such imputed Wickedness.—And you may as well frighten yourself with fearing, that the Devil’s Wickedness should be outwardly imputed to you, as to think of having any Righteousness of Christ, but that which of him and by him, is *born in you*.

But to return to *Eugenius*; let it be supposed, that having found himself not sanctified by his former Notions, that he had Recourse to others quite contrary to them; as Faith without Works:—Christ’s Righteousness, not as a new Birth in us, but only outwardly imputed to us:—The number of Saved and Damned to all Eternity, neither greater or less than God’s absolute Decrees had made it. Suppose him now so charmed with the sweet Sound of these Doctrines, to be under such a Sense of their saving Power, as to be forced to come forth as a Preacher of eternal Death and Damnation to all, that would not seek to be saved by them.—Could *Eugenius* possibly give fuller Proof,

that he had forgotten and forsaken the one *Fountain of living Water*, and was calling the Christian World to a *rotten Cistern* instead of it?

Methodist. This kind of reasoning comes too late; God has already set his Seal to the Truth and Goodness of our Friend's preaching: Thousands from far and near flock about him.—Sighs, Groans, Swoonings, Screaming of young and old, proclaim the two-edged Sword, that is in his Mouth. If you will not allow this to be Proof enough, it is in vain to talk any further with you.

Churchman. All this is so far from being Proof enough of the Truth and Goodness of his Doctrine, that it is no Proof at all. If it will do for him, it will do for *Mahomet*, and every successful Deceiver.

Zinzendorf has Plenty of this Proof. Not only these Kingdoms, but great part of *Europe* and *America*, bear Witness to it.—And yet of these *Moravians*, carrying Conviction wherever they go, and gaining such awakened Converts out of every Part of the Reformation, as are ready to sell Lands and Houses, and lay the Price at their Feet, of these, your Friend says, he bears a 'preaching Testimony against their corrupt Principles and Practices, and might as well be called a Murderer, as a 'Moravian.' What becomes now of your Success, as being God's Seal set to the Truth of your Doctrine?

If *Rome* was allowed to send her preaching Missionaries amongst us, to attack with full Liberty of Speech every Protestant Form of Religion, to travel from Place to Place, daily telling all the Men and Women they could get together, on Hills, in Churchyards, or elsewhere, that dreadful Soul-destroying Doctrines had been constantly preached to them ever since the Reformation; that they had lost all Interest in Christ ever since they left the Pope; that Church and Sects, however setting themselves above one another, were all equally in a certain State of Damnation, and must be so, till they had true Priests and true Sacraments, nowhere to be had, but in the one ancient, infallible Mother-Church of *Rome*. If I should say, that Damnation thus thundered out, to awaken People from their Reformation-Dream of Safety, would soon have Converts ten times more numerous, and much greater Crowds of various Followers, than you have yet to boast of, who could have any Show of Reason to deny it?

Methodist. Poor Man! Can you not see the miserable and wretched State of Christendom, that Heathen Wickedness reigns everywhere, that nothing of Christianity is left amongst us, but an outward Profession, destitute of every Goodness but that of

Words and Doctrines? How then ought you to rejoice, that the Mercy of God has here and there raised up awakened Preachers, to shake the hardened Hearts of such apostate Christians? Who that has any Spark of Goodness in him, would endeavour to stop their Course?

Churchman. Whoever would, I am sure I would not.—I wish from my Heart, that not only every Parish, but every House had such a Divine Preacher in it.—Nay, though some should preach Christ out of Envy, and others through Strife, yet I would rejoice, if such contentious Preachers, did but preach the Truth as it is in Jesus.—But now supposing (as is but too true) that we have only the Words and Doctrines, but not the Spirit of the Gospel, what is to be done to this fallen State of Christians, but that which was done to Jews and Heathens, who had not yet embraced the Gospel? For if Christians have lost the Spirit of Christianity, they are in the State of those that never had it, and must be called to that same Change of Life, as they were, before they can be Christians in Spirit and in Truth.

The Gospel thus began, 'REPENT, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand.' This Kingdom was God's free Gift; his own Love was the sole Cause of it; but it was only given to *Repentance*, because Nothing else could possibly receive it. This *Repent*, in order to the Kingdom of God, was the only preaching which Christ set on Foot, and sent into every City and Village.—But what do your Preachers now say? Do they call the present unchristian World, as Christ ordered the unchristian World to be called, to the Kingdom of God? Do they say to Christians become Workers of Iniquity, that have long resisted God's holy Spirit, long abused all Gospel-Blessings, trampled all its Pearls under their Feet, and ever since their Baptism, been wallowing in the Mire of their sensual Lusts; do they cry aloud to these miserable Sinners, Repent, and bring forth Works meet for Repentance, or it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah at the Day of Judgment than for you? So far from this, that they teach and affirm with Vehemence to all these Sinners, that no Repentance, no Qualifications, no Requisite, no Preparation, is necessary to *put them in full Possession of Christ and all his Riches*; and all for this absurd Reason, Because Righteousness, that is, the *Means* of Righteousness is the free Gift of God, and was not procured, or obtained by any Works of Men, therefore Salvation can require no Works of Man.—Who can be blinder than he, who sees not the Difference between a Saviour prepared and given, and that *Salvation* which is to be from him? Or who can more confound the most distinct Things, than he who affirms that of Salvation, which is only true of the

Saviour alone.—It is true of the Saviour to say, that he is freely given of God, to be the Saviour of all Men ; but it is not true to say of *Salvation*, that it is freely given to all Men.

The Works of Man, do no more towards making Christ to be the all-sufficient Saviour of the World, than towards making him to be God and Man ; but to have Salvation from this free-given, perfect Saviour, all is requisite, all is to be worked, laboured, and done, which he commands us to have, and do, and be. Therefore saith St. *Paul* of this perfect Saviour, ‘that he is the ‘Author of Salvation (N.B) to all that obey him.’—Here you see what an Error it is, to speak of Saviour and Salvation, as one and the same Thing, equally free and independent on Man’s Works. The perfect, all-sufficient Saviour, is the free Gift of God, that all Men might be saved : But Salvation is no free Gift, but stands in the utmost Contrariety to it ; it is to be purchased. A Saviour you cannot, you need not buy, he is already given you without Price and without Money ; but all the Salvation that you can have, must be bought of this Saviour, there is Nothing gratis here. But what are you to give for it? All that you have from fallen *Adam*, all that the World, the Flesh, and the Devil have treasured up in you ; nay, Houses, Lands, Fathers, Mothers, Brethren, &c., are all to be forsaken, they must all of them lose that Place and Power, that they had in you, or you have no Salvation, though you never wanted a free-given Saviour.—Think of coming to Christ without these Requisites, these Qualifications, these Preparation-Works, and then you will be just as welcome as the prodigal Son would have been, had he come to his heavenly Father with his Harlots in his Arms, that he and they might have Rings and the best Robes put on them, without their giving or doing any Thing for them.—What now is the Parable of all that Penitence of the Prodigal, his Renunciation of himself, his forsaking his way of Life, his Sense of his great Unworthiness to have his first Sonship, his begging to be admitted to the Labour and Obedience of an hired Servant, what is all this for, but to tell every Son of fallen *Adam*, that he is this very Prodigal, this Keeper of Harlots, living with, and like Swine in a strange Country, till he thinks of going to Christ with all those Qualifications, Preparations, and Changes of Life and Manners, with which the Prodigal Son went to his Father?—May it not now be justly said with St. Paul, ‘Who hath bewitched you,’ ye foolish Preachers, to come forth with Zeal and Vehemence against Qualifications, Preparations, and Requisites to fit us for the Grace and Favour of Christ?—Did the heavenly Father send the *Ring and the best Robe* to his wicked Son, whilst he was content with his Harlots, his Husks, and his

Swine? Was his Eye of Goodness turned towards him, till he saw him upon the Road, a sorrowful Seeker of his Father, with penitential Works, and full Change of Life?

Now if Christ in his Parable hath set forth a Sinner come to his right Senses, how can you more show, that you have lost yours, than by cautioning Sinners against Qualifications, penitential Requisites and Preparations to be received by Christ?—What is the whole Gospel, but one continual Doctrine of all that is to be done, denied, renounced, and suffered, in order to have any Interest in God's free Gift of Christ, as a Saviour of the World?—Hear what the Saviour, who came to save all Men, saith to those who forgot, that Repentance and good Works were the Qualifications, and Requisites to have any Share of Salvation, 'I know ye not, depart from me all ye Workers of Iniquity.'—Is this a Saviour, that calls for no Salvation-Works, but will himself, be *our whole Saviour, or none at all?*

Had Christ begun his Gospel, with saying, I am come to save you all, without putting you to any Pains or Labour to be saved; I bring no Terms with me, nor have any Demands upon you; I look for no Requisites, no Preparatory, no Repentance, and self-denying Works; I and all my Riches are freely yours; inward, inborn Goodness cannot belong to you, but ye shall be the Children of God, not because *ye are led by the Spirit of God*, but because my Righteousness shall be outwardly imputed to you; had this been the Gospel of Christ, your Preachers of no Requisites, no Qualifications to have Interest in Christ, might well be received as faithful Apostles.

You all complain that Christianity is become a mere *outward Profession*, without the inward Spirit of the Gospel. This just and true Complaint, how vain is it in your Mouths? For how can your Christianity in its best State, be any Thing else but bare outward Profession, if Christians neither have nor can have any Righteousness, but that which is outwardly imputed to them? Can you complain, or accuse them of not being inwardly of the Spirit and Life of the Gospel, if Gospel-Goodness cannot be a Birth within them, but only the Goodness of another, that is to be accounted as theirs? Either therefore, give up your outwardly imputed Righteousness, or complain no more that Christians are mere *Formalists*; for both you and all your Preachers, however awakened, can only be *Formalists* yourselves, and can awaken nothing but Formality in others, unless the righteous Spirit of Christ hath its Fulness of a Birth in the inmost Spirit, both of Preachers and Hearers.

St. Paul saith, 'Circumcision is not that which is outward, but 'of the heart.' Is it not full as necessary to say of Righteous-

ness, that it cannot be an outwardly imputed Thing, but must be the Righteousness of the Heart? Had *Paul* told them, that the Circumcision of the Heart could only be outwardly imputed to the Circumcisers of the Flesh, he had preached the Law, as you do the Gospel. Again, 'He is not a Jew,' saith he, 'that is 'one outwardly.' How unlike is this to your Doctrine, which will not allow the Christian to be *one inwardly*, but solely by that which is outwardly imputed to him?—Again, 'the Spirit,' saith he, 'beareth Witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of 'God.' But how could this be, but because the Spirit that is within us, is a Birth of that holy Spirit, whose Witness agreeth with it? For suppose no Birth of the Spirit within us, and then we have only that 'natural old Man, that knoweth not the 'Things of the Spirit, because they are foolishness to him.'

Methodist. Let me before we part, only ask you these two Questions. Would you be glad to see Christianity continued in its present, poor, blind, and apostate State from the Truth and Life of the Gospel? Or can you show me, how it can return to its first Purity and Perfection of Godliness, unless Preachers go forth in such a Spirit of Zeal, calling the World to Christ, as ours do?

Churchman. Take this for a full Answer to every Question of this Kind.

There are but two Spirits that govern every rational and intelligent Life.—The one is the Spirit of God, the other is the Spirit that is fallen from God, and works contrary to him.—Nothing is good in any Creature, but because the good Spirit of God is the Doer of it; nothing is Evil, but that which is done by the Spirit of the Creature fallen off from God, and working in Self-will.—Here you have the infallible Touch-Stone for the Trial of all Spirits, which never can deceive you.—Every Spirit that calls you to be delivered from any Thing, but the Evil that is in your own Spirit, or that turns you to any Thing, as a Deliverance from it, but to the Spirit and Power of God within you, is not of God, but is an Agent under that Spirit, that is fallen off from God.

The Christian Religion has no Ground, or Foundation, but because the Spirit of Man has lost its first State of Union with God, and is unable of itself to recover it.—Hence it is, that Christ, God and Man united, is the one only possible Restorer of Man's first Union with God.—Therefore the whole of our Redemption consists in our being made one with Christ, essentially born of him, that having his whole redeeming Nature come to Life in us, we may be in him, as he is in God, one Spirit, one Life to all Eternity.—'God was in Christ Jesus,' saith *Paul*,

‘reconciling the World to himself.’ But Christ was the Reconciler between God and Man, only and solely by that which he was, did, suffered, and obtained by and through his whole Process. This is his Mediation-Work.—Are you in this Process, you are in the Arms of your Mediator; his Mediation-Work is like a new Creation within you, and what God saw in his beloved Son, that he sees in you; and you must belong to God, as he does, because his Nature, Life, and Spirit, are in you.—Therefore, is anyone reconciled to God, it is because Christ is born in him; but the Seed of Christ, which is in every Son of *Adam*, never comes to the Fulness of the Birth of the new Creature, but through the Process of Christ.—This is the one strait Gate, and narrow Way, out of which, there is nothing but Sin, Death, and Hell, to every Man.—Without Christ, we are without God; but who is without Christ, is told you in the following Words, ‘Unless a Man deny himself, take up his Cross,’ &c., ‘and follow me, he cannot be my Disciple.’ This is the one Term of Union with Christ.

Suppose now a Preacher comes to you from *Rome*, with his invented Doctrines about Saints, Images, Sacraments, and Transubstantiation, &c., threatening certain Damnation to all that do not receive them; suppose another coming from *Geneva*, as full of Damnation for all those, who will not receive his invented Doctrines of *saving* Faith without Works;—of the Righteousness of Christ, not inwardly born, but only outwardly imputed to you;—of a Salvation and Damnation, equally the one sole Work or Gift of God, neither of which you can any more help, or hinder, than you can help or hinder the Duration of the World, or add one *Cubit* to your own *Stature*;—What Gospel-Eyes must he have, who did not see as many Marks of the *Beast*, the *Whore*, and the *false Prophet* in one of these Preachers, as in the other? Or can you think, if *St. Paul* was again in the World, he would give a heartier God-Speed to the one, than to the other?—Had the Apostle been a Preacher of your *Imputation-Doctrine*, he would never have said, ‘What Fellowship hath Righteousness with Unrighteousness?’ as knowing that this was the very Fellowship which Christ had with the Sons of fallen *Adam*; his Righteousness being only outwardly imputed to their *Unrighteousness*. And how could he have cried out, as of an impossible Thing, ‘What Communion hath Light with Darkness, or what Concord hath Christ with Belial?’ For had your *Imputation-Doctrine* been his, he would have known, that if Light was but outwardly imputed to Darkness, then the Darkness would be in Communion with Light; and if Christ’s Righteousness was but outwardly imputed to the Sons of Belial, then

there would be Concord between Christ and Belial.—This is the blasphemous Absurdity of your Imputation-Doctrine ; for unless the whole fallen Nature of Man be born again from above, the Righteousness of Christ outwardly imputed to it, is but like the same imputed to the unchanged Sons of Belial.

‘Without me,’ saith Christ, ‘ye can do Nothing,’ that is, all is in vain without my Process ; for Christ is that, which his Process is.—St. *Paul* saith, ‘No one can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy ‘Ghost.’—In these two short Texts, you have the whole Nature and Substance of Christian Redemption, namely, that it all consists in the Process of Christ, and the coming of the Holy Ghost. Christ’s Process in the Flesh, is the one only way of dying to all that fleshly Evil, that *Adam* brought to Life in us ; Christ came in the Spirit, is the one only quickening of that Divine Life, to which *Adam* died. Trust to any Thing else, seek to any Thing else, but this Process of Christ, and this Power of the Holy Ghost, and then all your leaning upon the Gospel, will be no better than leaning upon a broken Reed.—These two fundamental Truths plainly show, why the first preaching of the Gospel began, and must ever go on, saying Nothing but what is implied in these Words, ‘Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at Hand.’—*Repent*, shows the Necessity of making Christ’s Process the one Way to the Kingdom of God ; for Repentance-Works are in his Process, and nowhere else.—‘For the Kingdom of God is at ‘Hand,’ shows that Christ’s coming in the Spirit, is the one Thing sought for by his Process ; for the Kingdom of God come amongst Men, is Nothing else but Christ come in the Power of the Spirit ; and where this Power is not come in the Likeness of a Kingdom, wherever Plenty there may be of Preachers, the Kingdom of God is yet afar off.

The *Law* ended with Christ come in the Flesh ; his Process was the fulfilling of all its Types, Figures, and Sacrifices.

The coming of Christ in the Spirit, is just the same one only *fulfilling* of all the Gospel-Dispensation.—And as the *Law* would have been all in vain, without Christ’s coming in the Flesh ; so would the Gospel also, without Christ’s coming in the Spirit. And the *Jew* with his Old Testament, rejecting Christ come in the Flesh, is just as true to the *Law*, as the Christian is to the Gospel, who does not own Christ as come in the Spirit, to be the one only fulfilling of all its Doctrines.—For as all the Types, Figures, and Sacrifices of the *Law*, were in themselves but empty Shadows, without Christ being the Life of them, so all Things written in the Gospel, are but dead Letters, till Christ coming in the Spirit quickens a new Creature, to be the Reader, the Rememberer, and Doer of them.—Therefore, where the Holy

Spirit is not sought after, trusted to, and rested in, as the End, the Substance, and living Power of the whole Gospel, it is no Marvel, that Christians, high or low, learned or unlearned, Churchman or Dissenter, should have no more of Gospel-Virtues, than the Jews have of patriarchal Holiness ; or that the same Lusts, Vices, and worldly Craft, which prosper among apostate *Jews*, should break forth with as much Strength in a fallen Christendom.

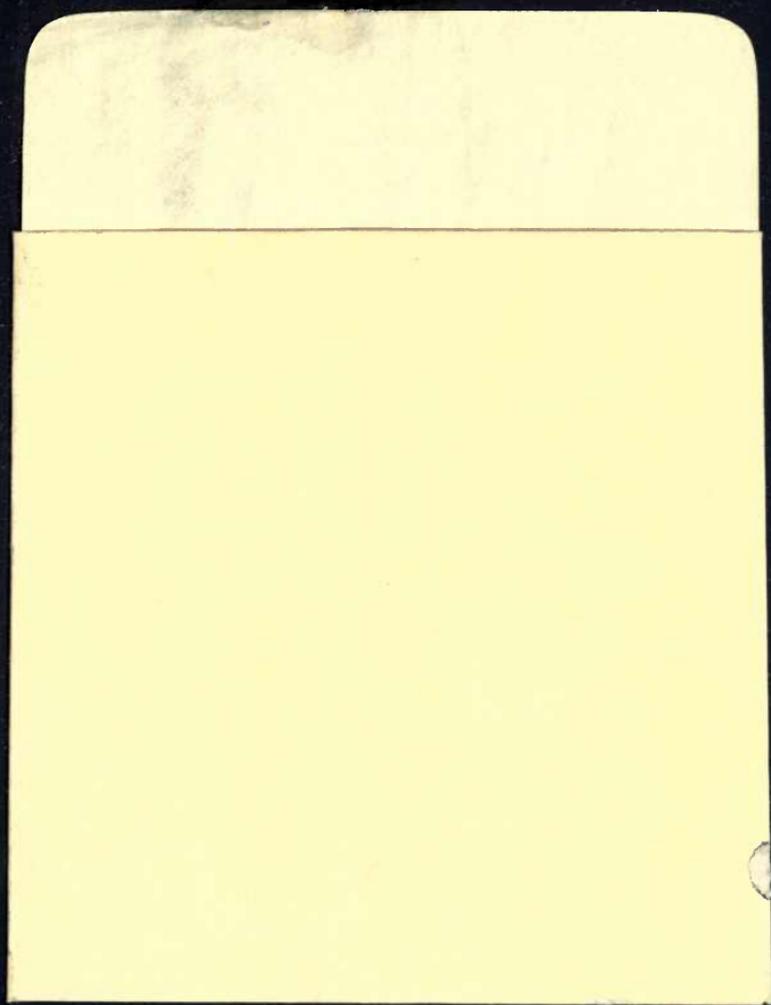
See here then your Work, ye *awakened Preachers*, if God has sent you forth, you can have no other Errand but that, on which Christ sent his Apostles.—Do you preach any Thing but the *Process of Christ*, as the way to the Kingdom of God, or call Men to any Power of walking in it, but that of the Holy Spirit, you are Strangers to, or Deserters from the Truth, as it is in Jesus, for neither Christ, nor his Apostles, ever taught any Thing else but this.—The old Man must die, or the new Man can never be made alive in Christ. But Nothing brings Death upon the old Man, but that one *self-denying Process of Christ*; Nothing gives Life to the new Man, but the *one Spirit of Christ born in it*. This is the Gospel-Language from the Beginning to the End.

With this Language in your Mouths, the whole Gospel is with you, you may cry aloud and spare not ; be as zealous here as you will or can ; go out into the Streets and Lanes, the Highways and Hedges ; compel Hypocrites, Sensualists, Worldlings, and hardened Sinners to tremble at their Ways, to dread every Thing that is contrary to Christ's Salvation-Process ; preach certain Damnation to every sinful Lust of the Flesh, and no possible Power to be delivered from it, but by Christ coming in the Spirit, to set up his own Kingdom of God within you ; and then, every one who has the least Spark of Goodness living in his Soul, will call you the *Sent of God*, will wish Prosperity to all your Labours of Love ; and no one will be against you, but he that is not with Christ.

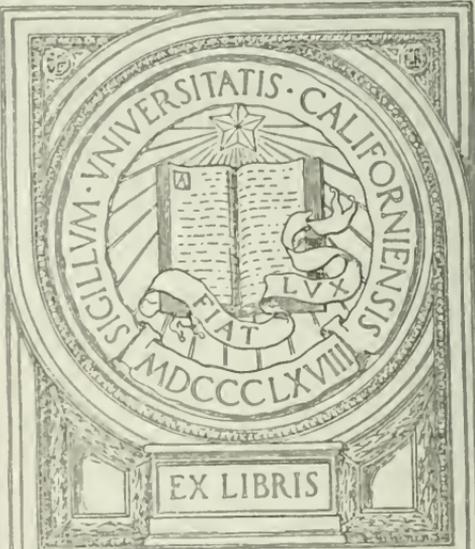
But if you come forth with the new-fangled Ungospel Doctrines of a *Calvin*, a *Zinzendorf*, &c., be your Zeal as great as it will, it only unites you with the Brick and Mortar-Builders of that *Anti-christian Babel*, which the *Prince of the Power of the Air* has set up, in full Opposition to that *Rock*, on which Christ has built his one, Catholic, universal Salvation-Church.

And now, my dear Friend, wishing you, from the Bottom of my Heart, all that Blessing which Christ bestowed upon his Apostles, when he said, ' My Peace I leave with you, my Peace ' I give unto you,' I bid you Farewell.

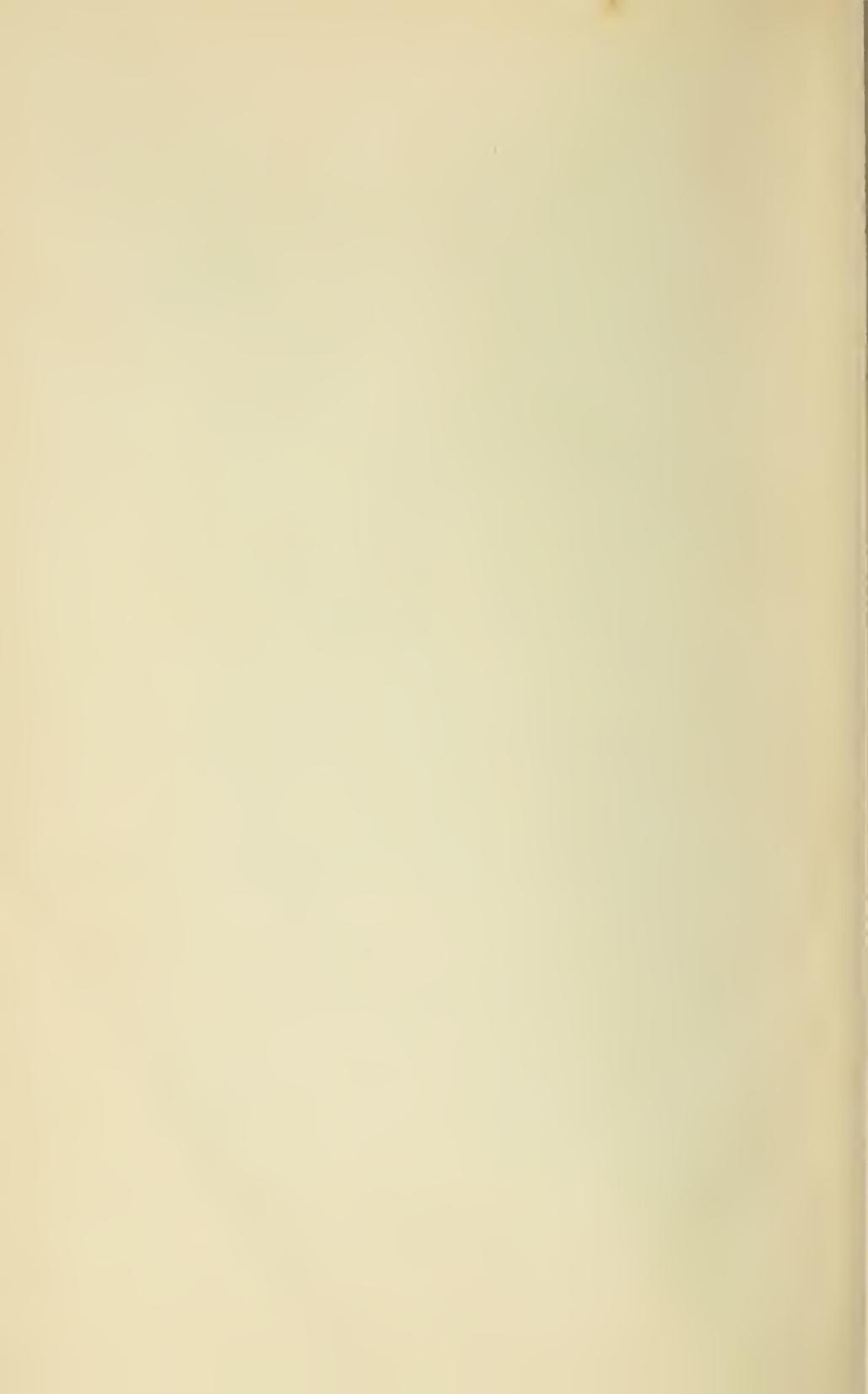
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College, *Cambridge*.

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Prefatory Advertisement.

THE 'Address to the Clergy,' which forms the first work in this volume, was finished a few days before the Rev. WILLIAM LAW'S death (9th April, 1761), and published the same year. Though generally considered to be an excellent work, it is, perhaps, somewhat diffuse in the setting forth of its idea, which might have been amended had its Author lived to see it through the Press.

The 'Collection of Letters' contained in this volume is that arranged for publication under the superintendence of Mr. THOMAS LANGCAKE and Mr. GEORGE WARD during the Rev. W. Law's lifetime. According to Mr. WALTON the letters were adapted from WILLIAM LAW'S correspondence; and therefore in some instances are not in the same form as they were originally written. Mr. WALTON (page 554) of his 'Materials, &c.,' writes: 'The fact is, Mr. WARD and Mr. LANGCAKE, both resident in *London*, *manufactured* (so to speak) a few of these letters from originals or copies which they had by them, cutting off certain portions from one letter and appending them to another, according to their own taste and judgment; finally, perhaps, procuring Mr. LAW himself to touch up the parts which did not well dove-tail in each other; who also was willing to please them and saw a little *providential use* in it.'

The 'Three Letters to a Lady inclined to enter the Romish Communion' are now for the first time included in the Rev. W. LAW'S works. They were written during the years 1731-2; but there is some uncertainty respecting the identity of the person to whom they were originally addressed, which is however a matter of only slight consequence.

For the appearance of these letters in this republication Readers are indebted to the Rev. F. SANDERS, Vicar of *Hoylake*, who kindly lent his copy for this purpose; and whose remark respecting WILLIAM LAW'S works—that he knew of no author so likely to do good in this restless and impatient age—is well worthy of repetition here.

During the progress of this work through the Press, further writings by the Rev. WILLIAM LAW have been discovered; which, together with his other correspondence and various matters of interest in connection therewith will—with an Index or Summary to his complete works—be issued in a volume of Miscellanies, of which due notice will be given.

G. B. M.

Preston House,
Near *Wingham*, *Kent*.
November, 1893.

AN
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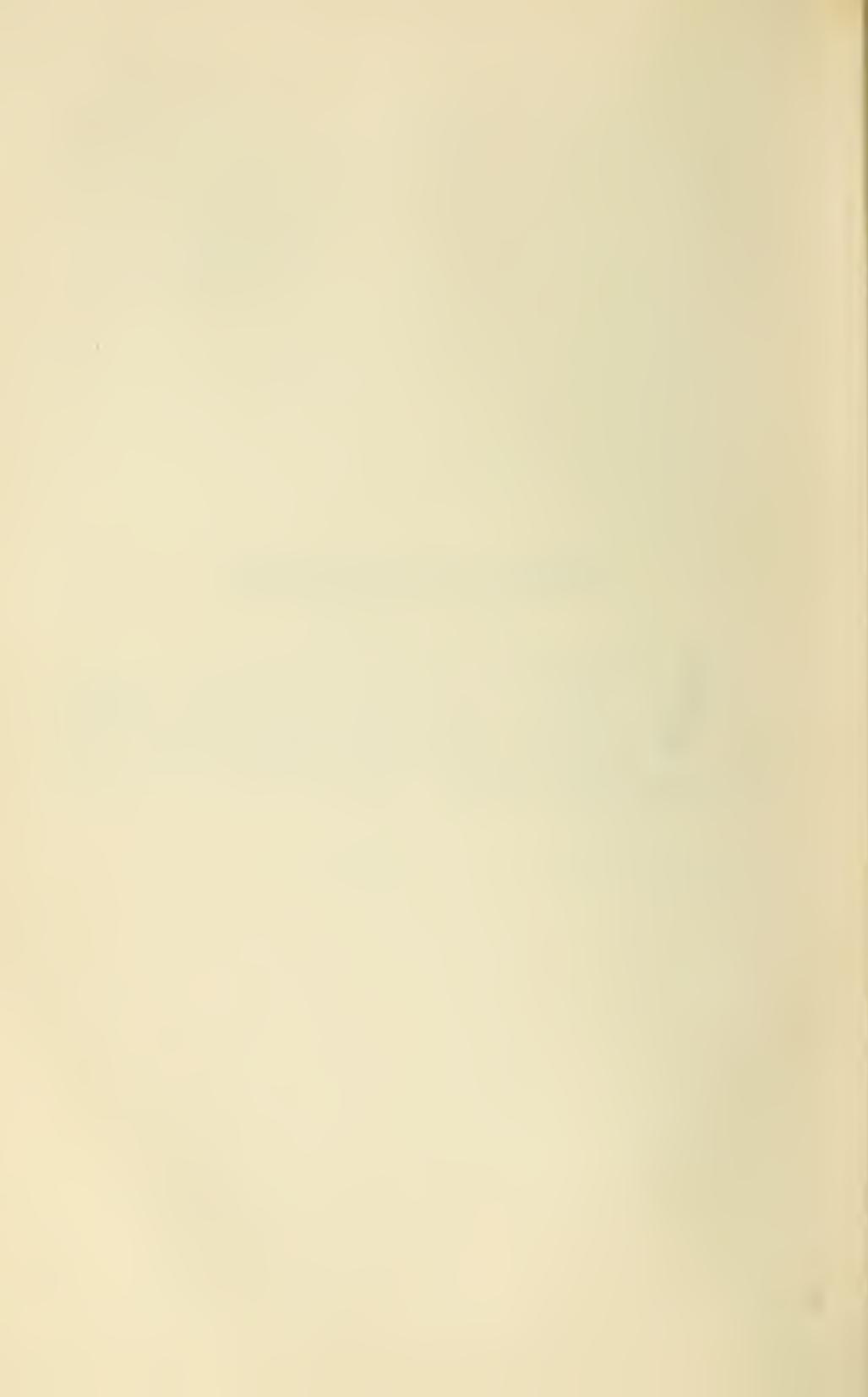
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AS this ADDRESS makes its Appearance after the Decease of the Author, it cannot be thought improper to inform the Reader, that the Whole was sent to the Press by himself, except a few Pages, the last of which was Wrote by him not many Days before his Death.



An Address to the Clergy.

THE Reason of my humbly and affectionately addressing this Discourse to the Clergy, is not because it treats of Things not of common concern to all Christians, but chiefly to invite and induce them, as far as I can, to the serious Perusal of it ; and because whatever is *essential* to Christian Salvation, if either neglected, overlooked, or mistaken by them, is of the saddest Consequence both to themselves and the Churches in which they minister.— I say *essential* to Salvation, for I would not turn my own Thoughts, or call the Attention of Christians, to any Thing but the *one Thing* needful, the one Thing *essential* and only *available* to our Rising out of our fallen State, and becoming, as we were at our Creation, an holy Offspring of God, and real Partakers of the Divine Nature.

If it be asked, What this one Thing is? It is the SPIRIT OF GOD brought again to his FIRST POWER OF LIFE IN US. Nothing else is wanted by us, nothing else intended for us, by the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel. Nothing else is, or can be effectual, to the making sinful man become again a godly Creature.

Everything else, be it what it will, however glorious and Divine in outward Appearance, every Thing that Angels, Men, *Churches*, or *Reformations*, can do for us, is dead and helpless, but so far as it is the *immediate Work* of the Spirit of God breathing and living in it.

All Scripture bears full witness to this Truth, and the End and Design of all that is written, is only to call us back from the Spirit of Satan, the Flesh, and the World, to be again under full Dependence upon, and Obedience to the Spirit of God, who out of *free Love* and thirst after our Souls, seeks to have his *first Power* of Life in us. When this is done, all is done that the Scripture can do for us.—Read what Chapter, or Doctrine of Scripture you will, be ever so delighted with it, it will leave you as poor, as empty and unreformed as it found you, unless it be a Delight that proceeds from, and has turned you *wholly* and *solely* to the Spirit of God, and strengthened your Union with and Dependence upon Him. For Love and Delight in matters of Scriptures, whilst it is only a Delight that is *merely* human, however Specious and Saintlike it may appear, is but the *Self-love* of fallen Adam, and can have no better a Nature, till it proceeds from the *Inspiration* of God, quickening his *own Life* and Nature within us, which alone can have or give forth a *godly Love*. For

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if it be an immutable Truth, that 'no man can call Jesus, Lord, 'but by the Holy Ghost,' it must be a Truth equally immutable, that no one can have any one *Christ-like* Temper or Power of Goodness, but so far, and in such Degree, as he is *immediately* led and governed by the Holy Spirit.

The Grounds and Reasons of which are as follow.

All possible Goodness that either can be named, or is nameless, was in God from all Eternity, and must to all Eternity be *inseparable* from him; it can be nowhere but where God is. As therefore before God created anything, it was certainly true that there was but *one that was good*, so it is just the same Truth, after God has created innumerable Hosts of blessed holy and heavenly Beings, that there is but *one that is good*, and that is God.

All that can be called Goodness, Holiness, Divine Tempers, heavenly Affections, &c., in the Creatures, are no more their own, or the Growth of their created Powers, than they were their own before they were created. But all that is called Divine Goodness and Virtue in the Creature is nothing else, but the *one* Goodness of God manifesting a *Birth* and *Discovery* of itself in the Creature, according as its created Nature is fitted to receive it. This is the unalterable State between God and the Creature. Goodness for ever and ever can only belong to God, as *essential* to him and *inseparable* from him, as his own Unity.

God could not make the Creature to be great and glorious *in itself*; this is as impossible, as for God to create Beings into a State of *Independence* on himself. 'The Heavens,' saith David, 'declare the Glory of God'; and no Creature, any more than the Heavens, can declare any other Glory but that of God. And as well might it be said, *that the Firmament shows forth* its own *Handy-Work*, as that a holy Divine or heavenly Creature shows forth its own natural Power.

But now, if all that is Divine, great, glorious, and happy, in the Spirits, Tempers, Operations, and Enjoyments of the Creature, is only so much of the Greatness, Glory, Majesty, and Blessedness of God, dwelling in it, and giving forth various Births of his own triune *Life, Light, and Love*, in and through the manifold Forms and capacities of the Creature to receive them, then we may infallibly see the true Ground and Nature of all true Religion, and *when* and *how* we may be said to fulfil all our Religious Duty to God. For the Creature's true Religion, is its rendering to God all that is God's, it is its true continual Acknowledging all that which it is, and has, and enjoys, in and from God. This is the one true Religion of all intelligent Creatures, whether in Heaven, or on Earth; for as they all have but *one* and the *same Relation* to God, so though ever so different in their several

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Births, States or offices, they all have but one and the same true Religion, or right Behaviour towards God. Now the *one Relation*, which is the Ground of all true Religion, and is one and the same between God and all intelligent Creatures, is this, it is a *total unalterable Dependence upon God*, an *immediate continual receiving of every Kind, and Degree of Goodness, Blessing and Happiness, that ever was, or can be found in them, from God alone*. The highest Angel has nothing of its *own* that it can offer unto God, no more Light, Love, Purity, Perfection, and glorious Hallelujahs, that spring from itself, or its own Powers, than the poorest Creature upon Earth. Could the Angel see a *Spark* of Wisdom, Goodness, or Excellence, as coming from, or belonging to *itself*, its Place in Heaven would be lost, as sure as *Lucifer* lost his. But they are ever-abiding Flames of Pure Love, always ascending up to and uniting with God, for this Reason, because the Wisdom, the Power, the Glory, the Majesty, the Love, and Goodness of God *alone*, is all that they see, and feel, and know, either within or without themselves.—Songs of Praise to their heavenly Father are their ravishing Delight, because they see, and know, and feel, that it is the *Breath* and *Spirit* of their Heavenly Father that *sings* and *rejoices* in them.—Their Adoration in Spirit and in Truth never ceases, because they never cease to acknowledge the ALL of God;—the ALL of God in themselves, and the ALL of God in the whole Creation. This is the one Religion of Heaven, and nothing else is the Truth of Religion on Earth.

The Matter therefore plainly comes to this, Nothing can do, or be, the *Good of Religion* to the intelligent Creature, but the Power and Presence of God *really* and *essentially* living and working in it. But if this be the unchangeable Nature of that *Goodness* and *Blessedness* which is to be had from our Religion, then of all Necessity, the Creature must have all its *Religious Goodness* as wholly and solely from God's *immediate Operation*, as it had its first Goodness at its Creation. And it is the same Impossibility for the Creature to help itself to That which is good and blessed in Religion, by any Contrivance, Reasonings, or Workings of its own Natural Powers, as to create itself. For the Creature, after its Creation, can no more take any Thing to itself that belongs to God, than it could take it, before it was created. And if Truth forces us to hold, that the Natural Powers of the Creature could only come from the *one Power* of God, the same Truth should surely more force us to confess, that *That* which *comforts*, that which *enlightens*, that which *blesses*, which gives Peace, Joy, Goodness, and rest to its natural Powers, can be had in no other way, nor by any other Thing, but from God's immediate holy Operation found in it.

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Now the Reason why no Work of Religion, but that which is begun, continued, and carried on by the *Living Operation* of God in the creature, can have any Truth, Goodness, or Divine Blessing in it, is because nothing can in Truth *seek* God, but that which comes from God. Nothing can in Truth *find* God as its Good, but that which has the Nature of God living in it; like can only rejoice in Like; and therefore no religious Service of the Creature can have any Truth, Goodness, or Blessing in it, but that which is done in the Creature, in, and through, and by a Principle and Power of the Divine Nature begotten and breathing forth in it all holy Tempers, Affections, and Adorations.

All true Religion is, or brings forth, an essential Union and Communion of the Spirit of the Creature with the Spirit of the Creator: God in it, and it in God, one Life, one Light, one Love. The Spirit of God first gives, or sows the *Seed* of Divine Union in the Soul of every Man; and Religion is *That* by which it is quickened, raised, and brought forth to a Fulness and Growth of a Life in God.—Take a Similitude of this, as follows.—The Beginning, or *Seed* of animal *Breath*, must first be born in the Creature from the *Spirit* of this World, and then *Respiration*, so long as it lasts, keeps up an *essential Union* of the animal Life with the Breath or Spirit of this World. In like manner, Divine Faith, Hope, Love, and Resignation to God, are in the religious Life its acts of *Respiration*, which, so long as they are true, unite God and the Creature in the same living and essential manner, as *animal Respiration* unites the Breath of the Animal with the Breath of this World.

Now as no Animal could *begin* to respire, or unite with the Breath of this World, but because it has its Beginning to breathe begotten in it from the Air of this World, so it is equally certain, that no Creature, Angel or Man, could *begin* to be religious, or breathe forth the Divine Affections of Faith, Love, and Desire towards God, but because a *Living Seed* of these Divine Affections was by the Spirit or God first *begotten* in it.—And as a *Tree* or *Plant* can only grow and fructify by the *same Power* that first gave Birth to the Seed, so Faith, and Hope, and Love towards God, can only grow and fructify by the *same Power*, that begot the *first Seed* of them in the Soul. Therefore Divine *immediate Inspiration* and Divine Religion are inseparable in the Nature of the Thing.

Take away *Inspiration*, or suppose it to cease, and then no Religious acts or Affections can give forth any Thing that is godly or Divine. For the Creature can offer, or return Nothing to God, but *That* which it has first received from him; therefore, if it is to offer and send up to God Affections and Aspirations

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that are Divine and godly, it must of all necessity have the Divine and godly Nature living and breathing in it.—Can any Thing reflect Light, before it has received it? Or any other Light, than that which it has received? Can any Creature breathe forth *earthly*, or *diabolical* Affections, before it is possessed of an *earthly*, or *diabolical* Nature? Yet this is as possible, as for any Creature to have Divine Affections rising up and dwelling in it, either *before*, or any *further*, than as it has or partakes of the Divine Nature dwelling and operating in it.

A religious *Faith* that is *uninspired*, a *Hope*, or *Love* that proceeds not from the immediate Working of the *Divine Nature* within us, can no more do any Divine Good to our Souls, or unite them with the Goodness of God, than an Hunger after earthly Food can feed us with the immortal Bread of Heaven.—All that the *natural* or *uninspired* Man does, or can do in the Church, has no more of the Truth or Power of Divine Worship in it, than that which he does in the *Field*, or *Shop*, through a Desire of Riches.—And the reason is, because all the Acts of the Natural Man, whether relating to Matters of Religion or the World, must be *equally Selfish*, and there is no Possibility of their being otherwise. For Self-love, Self-esteem, Self-seeking, and Living *wholly* to Self, are as strictly the *Whole* of all that is or possibly can be in the *Natural Man*, as in the *Natural Beast*; the one can no more be better, or act above *this Nature*, than the other. Neither can any Creature be in a better, or higher State than this, till something *Supernatural* is found in it; and this Supernatural something, called in Scripture the WORD, or SPIRIT, or INSPIRATION of God, is *that alone* from which Man can have the first Good Thought about God, or the least Power of having more heavenly Desires in his Spirit, than he has in his Flesh.

A Religion that is not wholly built upon this *Supernatural Ground*, but solely stands upon the Powers, Reasonings, and Conclusions of the Natural *uninspired* Man, has not so much as the Shadow of true Religion in it, but is a mere *Nothing*, in the same Sense, as an *Idol* is said to be *Nothing*, because the Idol has *nothing* of That in it which is pretended by it. For the Work of Religion has no *Divine good* in it, but as it brings forth, and keeps up essential Union of the Spirit of Man with the Spirit of God; which essential Union cannot be made, but through Love on both Sides, nor by Love, but where the Love that works on both Sides is of the *same Nature*.

No Man therefore can reach God with his Love, or have Union with him by it, but he who is inspired with that *one same Spirit of Love*, with which God loved himself from all Eternity, and before there was any Creature.—Infinite Hosts of new created

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Heavenly Beings can begin no *new Kind* of Love of God, nor have the least Power of beginning to Love him at all, but so far as his *own Holy Spirit of Love*, wherewith he hath from all Eternity loved himself, is brought to Life in them. This Love, that was then in God alone, can be the *only Love* in Creatures that can draw them to God; they can have no Power of cleaving to him, of willing that which He wills, or adoring the Divine Nature, but by partaking of that *eternal Spirit* of Love; and therefore the continual immediate Inspiration or Operation of the Holy Spirit, is the one only possible Ground of our continually Loving God. And of this *inspired Love*, and no other, it is that St. *John* says, 'He that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God.' Suppose it to be any other Love, brought forth by any other Thing but the Spirit of God breathing his own Love in us, and then it cannot be true, that he who dwells in *such Love*, dwells in God.

Divine Inspiration was *essential* to man's first created State. The Spirit of the triune God, breathed into, or brought to Life in him, was that alone which made him a holy Creature in the Image and Likeness of God. To have no other Mover, to live under no other Guide or Leader, but the Spirit, was that which constituted all the Holiness which the first man could have from God. Had he not been thus at the first, God in him and he in God, brought into the World as a true offspring and real Birth of the Holy Spirit, no Dispensation of God to *fallen* man would have directed him to the Holy Spirit, or ever have made mention of his Inspiration in Man. For fallen Man could be directed to Nothing as his Good, but that which he had, and was his Good, before he fell. And had not the Holy Spirit been his first Life, in and by which he lived, no *inspired Prophets* among the Sons of fallen Adam had ever been heard of, or any *holy men speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*. For the Thing would have been impossible, no fallen Man could have been *inspired* by the Holy Spirit, but because the first Life of Man was a true and real Birth of it; and also because every fallen Man had, by the Mercy and free Grace of God, a *secret Remains* of his first Life preserved in him, though hidden, or rather swallowed up by Flesh and Blood; which *Secret Remains*, signified and assured to Adam by the name of a *Bruiser of the Serpent*, or *Seed of the woman*, was his *only capacity* to be called and quickened again into his first Life, by new Breathings of the Holy Spirit in Him.

Hence it plainly appears, that the Gospel State could not be God's *last Dispensation*, or the finishing of Man's Redemption, unless its whole Work was a Work of the Spirit of God in the Spirit of Man; that is, unless without all Veils, Types, and

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Shadows, it brought *the Thing itself*, or the *Substance* of all former Types and Shadows, into *real Enjoyment*, so as to be possessed by Man in *Spirit*, and in *truth*. Now the *Thing itself*, and for the sake of which all God's Dispensations have been, is that *first Life of God which was essentially born in the Soul of the first Man*, Adam, and to which he died. But now, if the Gospel Dispensation comes at the End of all Types and Shadows, to bring forth again in Man a true and full Birth of that Holy Spirit which he had at first, then it must be plain, that the work of this Dispensation must be *solely* and *immediately* the Work of the Holy Spirit. For if Man could no other possible way have had a holy Nature and Spirit *at first*, but as an Offspring or Birth of the Holy Spirit at his Creation, it is certain from the Nature of the Thing, that fallen Man, dead to his first holy Nature, can have that same holy Nature again no other way, but solely by the Operation of that same Holy Spirit, from the Breath of which he had at first a holy Nature and Life in God. Therefore *immediate* Inspiration is as necessary to make fallen Man alive again unto God, as it was to make Man at first a Living Soul after the Image and in the Likeness of God. And *Continual* Inspiration is as necessary, as Man's Continuance in his redeemed State. For this is a certain Truth, that *That* alone which begins, or gives Life, must of all Necessity be the only Continuance or Preservation of Life. The second Step can only be taken by *That* which gave Power to take the first.—No Life can continue in the Goodness of its first created, or redeemed State, but by its continuing under the Influence of, and working with and by that Powerful Root, or Spirit, which at first created, or redeemed it. Every Branch of the Tree, though ever so richly brought forth, must wither and die, as soon as it ceases to have *continual Union* with, and Virtue from that Root, which first brought it forth. And to this Truth, as absolutely grounded in the Nature of the Thing, our Lord appeals as a Proof and full Illustration of the Necessity of his *immediate* indwelling, Breathing, and Operating in the redeemed Soul of Man, saying, 'I am the Vine, ye are the Branches, as the Branch cannot bear fruit of itself, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much Fruit. If a man abides not in me, he is cast forth as a withered Branch; for without me, ye can do Nothing,' John xv.

Now from these Words let this conclusion be here drawn, *viz.*, That therefore to turn to Christ as a *Light within* us, to expect Life from nothing but his *holy Birth* raised within us, to give ourselves up wholly and solely to the *immediate continual* Influx and Operation of his Holy Spirit, depending wholly upon it for every

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Kind and Degree of Goodness and Holiness that we want, or can receive, is and can be Nothing else, but *proud, rank* Enthusiasm.

Now as infinitely absurd as this conclusion is, no one that condemns *continual immediate Inspiration* as gross Enthusiasm, can possibly do it with less absurdity, or show himself a Wiser Man, or better Reasoner, than he that concludes, that Because *without Christ we can do Nothing*, therefore we ought not to believe, expect, wait for, and depend upon his continual immediate operation in every Thing that we do, or would do well.—As to the *Pride* charged upon this pretended Enthusiasm, it is the same absurdity. Christ says, ‘without me ye can do Nothing,’ the same as if he had said, As to yourselves, and all that can be called your own, you are mere *helpless Sin and Misery*, and Nothing that is good, can come from you, but as it is done by the *continual immediate Breathing and Inspiration* of another Spirit, given by God to over-rule *your own*, to save and deliver you from all your own Goodness, your own Wisdom, and Learning which always were, and always will be, as corrupt and impure, as earthly and sensual, as your own Flesh and Blood. Now is there any *selfish* Creaturely Pride, in fully believing this to be true, and in acting in full Conformity to it? If so, then he that confesses he neither has, nor ever can have a single Farthing, but as it is freely given him from Charity, thereby declares himself to be a Purse-proud vain Boaster of his own Wealth. Such is the Spiritual Pride of Him, who fully acknowledges that he neither has, nor can have the least Spark or breathing after Goodness, but what is freely kindled, or breathed into him by the Spirit of God. Again, if it is *Spiritual Pride* to believe, that Nothing that we ever think, or say, or do, either in the Church, or our Closets, can have any truth of goodness in it but that which is wrought solely and immediately by the Spirit of God in us, then it must be said, that in order to have *religious Humility* we must never forget to take some Share of our religious Virtues to ourselves, and not allow (as Christ hath said) that *without Him we can do Nothing* that is good. It must also be said, that St. Paul took too much upon him when he said, ‘the Life that I now live, is not mine, but Christ’s that liveth in me.’

Behold a Pride, and a Humility, the one as good as the other, and both logically descended from a Wisdom, that confesses it comes not from above.

The Necessity of a Continual Inspiration of the Spirit of God, both to begin the first, and continue every step of a Divine Life in Man, is a Truth to which every Life in Nature, as well as all Scripture, bears full Witness.—A *natural* Life, a *bestial* Life, a *diabolical* Life, can subsist no longer, than whilst they are imme-

diately and continually under the working Power of that Root, or Source, from which they Sprung. Thus it is with the *Divine* Life in Man, it can never be in him, but as a Growth of Life in and from God.—Hence it is, that *Resisting* the Spirit, *Quenching* the Spirit, *Grieving* the Spirit, is that alone which gives Birth and Growth to every Evil that reigns in the World, and leaves Men, and Churches, not only an easy, but a *necessary* Prey to the Devil, the World, and the Flesh. And Nothing but *Obedience* to the Spirit, *trusting* to the Spirit, *walking* in the Spirit, *praying* with and for its continual Inspiration, can possibly keep either Men, or Churches, from being Sinners, or Idolaters, in all that they do. For everything in the Life, or Religion of Man, that has not the Spirit of God for its *Mover, Director, and End*, be it what it will, is but earthly, sensual, or devilish.—The Truth and Perfection of the Gospel State could not show itself, till it became solely a *Ministration of the Spirit*, or a Kingdom in which the Holy Spirit of God had the doing of all that was done in it.—The Apostles, whilst Christ was with them in the Flesh, were instructed in heavenly Truths from his Mouth, and enabled to work Miracles in his Name, yet not qualified to know and teach the *Mysteries* of his Kingdom. After his Resurrection, He conversed with them forty Days, speaking to them of Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God; nay though he breathed on them, and said, ‘receive ye the Holy Ghost,’ &c., yet this also would not do, they were still unable to preach, or bear Witness to the *Truth, as it is in Jesus*. And the Reason is, there was still a *higher Dispensation* to come, which stood in such an *opening* of the Divine Life in their Hearts, as could not be effected from an outward Instruction of Christ himself. For though He had sufficiently told his Disciples the *Necessity* of being born again of the Spirit, yet he left them *unborn* of it, till He came again in the Power of the Spirit. He breathed on them, and said, ‘Receive ye the Holy Ghost,’ yet that which was *said* and *done*, was not the *Thing itself*, but only a *Type* or *outward Signification* of what they should receive, when He, being *glorified*, should come again in the Fulness and Power of the Spirit, breaking open the Deadness and Darkness of their Hearts with Light and Life from Heaven, which Light did, and alone could, open and verify in their Souls, all that he had said and promised to them whilst he was with them in the Flesh.—All this is expressly declared by Christ himself, saying unto them, ‘I tell you the Truth, it is expedient for you that I go away’; therefore Christ taught them to believe the *Want*, and joyfully to expect the *Coming* of a *higher* and more *blessed* State, than that of his bodily Presence with them. For he adds, ‘if I go not away, the Comforter will

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'not come'; therefore the Comfort and Blessing of Christ to his Followers could not be had, till *something more* was done to them, and they were brought into a *higher State* than they could be by his verbal Instruction of them. 'But if I go away,' says he, 'I will send him unto you, and when the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth; He shall glorify me' (that is, shall set up my Kingdom in its Glory, in the Power of the Spirit) 'for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you: I said of mine, because all Things that the Father hath are mine,' John xvi.

Now when Christ had told them of the Necessity of an higher State than that they were in, and the Necessity of such a comforting illuminating Guide, as they could not have till his *outward Teaching* in human Language was changed into the *Inspiration*, and *Operation* of his Spirit in their Souls, He commands them, not to begin to bear Witness of him to the World, from what they did and could in an *human Way* know of him, his Birth, his Life, Doctrines, Death, Sufferings, Resurrection, &c., but to tarry at Jerusalem, *till they were endued with Power from on high*; saying unto them, 'Ye shall receive Power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. And then shall ye bear witness unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and unto the utmost Part of the Earth.'

Here are two most important and fundamental Truths fully demonstrated, *First*, that the Truth and Perfection of the Gospel State could not take Place, till Christ *was glorified*, and his Kingdom among Men made wholly and solely a *continual immediate Ministration of the Spirit*: Every Thing *before* this was but subservient for a Time, and preparatory to *this last* Dispensation, which could not have been the *last*, had it not carried Man above *Types, Figures* and Shadows, into the *real Possession* and *Enjoyment* of that which is the Spirit and Truth of a Divine Life. For the *End* is not come till it has found the *Beginning*; that is, the *last* Dispensation of God to fallen Man cannot be *come*, till putting an End to the 'Bondage of weak and beggarly Elements,' Gal. iv. 9, it brings Man to *that dwelling* in God, and God in Him, which He had at the *Beginning*.

Secondly, That as the *Apostles* could not, so no man, from their Time to the End of the World, can have any *true* and *real* Knowledge of the Spiritual Blessings of Christ's Redemption, or have a *Divine call, Capacity, or Fitness* to preach, and bear Witness of them to the World, but solely by that *Same Divine Spirit* opening all the Mysteries of a *Redeeming Christ* in their inward Parts, as it did in the Apostles, Evangelists, and first Ministers of the Gospel.

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For why could not the Apostles, who had been Eye-Witnesses to all the whole Process of Christ, why could they not with their human Apprehension declare and testify the Truth of such Things, till they 'were baptized with Fire, and born again of the 'Spirit'? It is because the Truth of such Things, or the Mysteries of Christ's Process, as *Knowable* by man, are Nothing else in themselves, but *those very Things* which are done by this heavenly *Fire* and *Spirit* of God in our Souls. Therefore to know the Mysteries of Christ's Redemption, and to know the *Redeeming Work* of God in our own Souls, is the same Thing; the one cannot be *before*, or *without* the other. Therefore Every Man, be he who he will, however able in all Kinds of human literature, must be an entire Stranger to all the Mysteries of Gospel Redemption, and can only talk about them as of any other *Tale he has been told*, till they are brought forth, verified, fulfilled, and witnessed to *by That*, which is found, felt and enjoyed of the *whole Process* of Christ in his Soul. For as Redemption is in its whole Nature an *inward Spiritual Work*, that works only in the *altering, changing, and regenerating* the Life of the Soul, so it must be true, that Nothing but the *inward State* of the Soul can bear true Witness to the Redeeming Power of Christ. For as it wholly consists in altering *That* which is the most radical in the Soul, bringing forth a *new Spiritual Death*, and a *new Spiritual Life*, it must be true, that no one can know or believe the Mysteries of Christ's redeeming Power, by *historically* knowing, or *rationally* consenting to *That* which is said of him and them in *Written* or *Spoken* Words, but only and Solely by an inward experimental finding, and feeling the Operation of them, in that *new Death*, and *new Life*, both of which must be effected in the Soul of Man, or Christ is not, cannot be found, and Known by the Soul as its Salvation. It must also be equally true, that the redeemed State of the Soul, being in itself Nothing else but the Resurrection of a Divine and holy Life in it, must as necessarily from first to last be the *Sole Work* of the Breathing creating Spirit of God, as the first holy created State of the Soul was.—And all this, because the Mysteries of Christ's redeeming Power, which work and bring forth the renewed State of the Soul, are not creaturely, finite, outward Things, that may be found and enjoyed by verbal Descriptions, or formed Ideas of them, but are a *Birth* and *Life*, and *Spiritual Operation*, which as solely belongs to God alone, as his creating Power. For Nothing can redeem, but that same Power which created the Soul. Nothing can bring forth a *good Thought* in it, but that which brought forth the *Power* of thinking. And of every *Tendency* towards Goodness, be it ever so

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small, that same may be truly affirmed of it, which St. Paul affirmed of his highest State, 'yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me.'

But if the Belief of the necessity and Certainty of immediate continual Divine Inspiration, in and for everything that can be holy and good in us, be (as its Accusers say) *rank Enthusiasm*, then He is the only sober orthodox Christian, who of many a good Thought and Action that proceeds from him, frankly says, in order to avoid Enthusiasm, *My own Power*, and not Christ's Spirit living and breathing in me, *has done* this for me. For if *all* that is good is not done by Christ, then *Something* that is good is done by myself. It is in vain to think, that there is a *middle Way*, and that *rational Divines* have found it out, as Dr. Warburton has done, who though denying *immediate continual* Inspiration, yet allows that the Spirit's 'ordinary Influence 'occasionally assists the faithful.'*

Now this *middle Way* has neither Scripture nor sense in it; for an *occasional* Influence or Concurrence is as absurd, as an *occasional* God, and necessarily Supposes such a God. For an *occasional influence* of the spirit upon us supposes an *occasional Absence* of the Spirit from us. For there could be no such Thing, unless God was sometimes with us, and sometimes not, sometimes doing us good, as the inward God of our Life, and sometimes doing us no good at all, but leaving us to be good from ourselves. — Occasional Influence necessarily implies all this blasphemous Absurdity. Again, this *middle way* of an *occasional Influence* and *Assistance* necessarily supposes, that there is something of *man's own* that is good, or the Holy Spirit of God neither would, nor could assist or co-operate with it. But if there was any Thing good in Man for God to assist and co-operate with, besides the *SEED* of his own Divine Nature, or his own WORD of Life Striving to bruise the Serpent's Nature within us, it could not be true, that there is only *one that is good, and that is God*. And were there any Goodness in Creatures, either in Heaven, or on Earth, but the *one Goodness* of the Divine nature, living, working, and manifesting itself in them, as its created Instruments, then good Creatures, both in Heaven and on Earth, would have something else to adore, *besides, or along* with God. For Goodness, be it where it will, is adorable for itself, and because it is Goodness; if therefore any Degree of it belonged to the Creature, it ought to have a share of that same Adoration that is paid to the Creator.—Therefore, if to believe that Nothing godly can be alive in us, but what has *all its* Life from the Spirit

* *Sermons*, vol. i.

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of God living and breathing in us, if to look *Solely* to it, and depend *wholly* upon it, both for the *Beginning*, and *Growth* of every Thought and Desire that can be holy and good in us, be *proud rank Enthusiasm*, then it must be the same Enthusiasm to own but *one* God. For He that owns more goodness than one, owns more Gods than one. And He that believes he can have any good in him, but the *one* Goodness of God, manifesting itself in him, and through him, owns more goodness than one. But if it be true, that God and Goodness cannot be divided, then it must be a Truth for ever and ever, that so much of *Good*, so much of *God*, must be in the Creature.

And here lies the true unchangeable Distinction between God, and *Nature*, and the *Natural Creature*. Nature and Creature are only for the *outward Manifestation* of the inward invisible unapproachable Powers of God; they can rise no higher, nor be anything else in themselves, but as Temples, habitations, or Instruments, in which the *Supernatural* God can, and does manifest himself in various Degrees, bringing forth Creatures to be good with *his own Goodness*, to love and adore him with his *own Spirit* of Love, for ever singing Praises to the *Divine Nature* by *That* which they *partake* of it. This is the Religion of *Divine Inspiration*, which being interpreted, is *Immanuel*, or God *within us*. Every Thing short of this, is short of that Religion which worships God in spirit and in Truth. And every religious Trust or Confidence in any Thing, but the *Divine operation within us*, is but a sort of Image-Worship, which though it may deny the Form, yet retains the *Power* thereof in the Heart. And he that places any religious safety in theological Decisions, Scholastic Points, in particular Doctrines and opinions, that must be held about the Scripture Words of *Faith*, *Justification*, *Sanctification*, *Election*, and *Reprobation*, so far departs from the true Worship of the Living God within him, and Sets, up an *Idol* of Notions to be worshipped, if not instead of, yet along with him. And I believe it may be taken for a certain Truth, that every Society of Christians, whose Religion stands upon this Ground, however ardent, laborious, and good their zeal may seem to be in such Matters, yet in spite of all, sooner or later, it will be found that *Nature* is at the Bottom, and that a selfish, earthly, overbearing Pride in their own Definitions and Doctrines of Words, will by Degrees creep up to the same Height, and become that same fleshly Wisdom, doing those very same Things, which they exclaim against in Popes, Cardinals, and Jesuits. Nor can it possibly be otherwise. For a *letter-learned zeal* has but *one Nature* wherever it is, it can only do that for Christians, which it did for Jews. As it anciently brought forth Scribes, Pharisees,

Hypocrites, and Crucifiers of Christ, as it afterwards brought forth Heresies, Schisms, Popes, papal Decrees, Images, Anathemas, Transubstantiation, so in Protestant Countries it will be doing the same Thing, only with *other materials*; Images of wood and Clay, will only be given up for *Images of Doctrines*; Grace and Works, imputed sin, and imputed Righteousness, Election and Reprobation, will have their Synods of *Dort*, as truly evangelical, as any Council of Trent.

This must be the Case of all fallen Christendom, as well Popish as Protestant, till single Men, and Churches, know, confess, and firmly adhere to this one Scripture Truth, which the blessed *Behmen* prefixed as a *Motto* to most of his Epistles, *viz.*, 'That our Salvation is in the Life of Jesus Christ in us.' And that, because this alone was the Divine Perfection of Man before he fell, and will be his Perfection when he is one with Christ in Heaven.—Every Thing besides this, or that is not solely aiming at and essentially leading to it, is but mere Babel in all Sects and Divisions of Christians, living to themselves, and their *own old man* under a *seeming holiness* of Christian Strife and Contention about Scripture works.—But this Truth of Truths, fully possessed, and firmly adhered to, brings God and Man together, puts an End to every *Lo here*, and *Lo there*, and turns the whole Faith of Man to a Christ that can no where be a Saviour to him, but as *essentially born* in the inmost Spirit of his Soul, nor possible to be born there by any other means, but the *immediate Inspiration* and working Power of the holy Spirit within him.—To this Man alone all Scripture gives daily Edification; the Words of Christ and his Apostles fall like a Fire into him. And what is it that they kindle There? Not Notions, not Itching ears, nor rambling Desires after new and new Expounders of them, but a holy Flame of Love, to be always with, always attending to, that Christ and his holy Spirit within him, which alone can make him to be and do all that, which the Words of Christ and his Apostles have taught. For there is no possibility of being *like-minded* with Christ in anything that he taught, or having the Truth of one Christian Virtue, but by the Nature and Spirit of Christ become *essentially living* in us. Read all our Saviour's Divine Sermon from the Mount, consent to the Goodness of every Part of it, yet the Time of practising it will never come, till you have a new Nature from Christ, and are as vitally in him, and he in you, as the *Vine* in the Branch, and the Branch in the Vine. 'Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see 'God,' is a Divine Truth, but will do us no *Divine* good, unless we receive it as saying neither more nor less, than 'Blessed are 'they that are born again of the Spirit, for they alone can see

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'God.'—For no Blessedness, either of Truth or Life, can be found either in Men or Angels, but where the Spirit and Life of God is essentially born within them. And all *Men* or *Churches*, not placing all in the Life, Light, and Guidance of the Holy Spirit of Christ, but pretending to act in the Name, and for the Glory of God, from *Opinions* which their Logic and Learning have collected from Scripture Words, or from what a *Calvin*, an *Arminius*, a *Socinus*, or some smaller Name, has told them to be right or wrong, all such, are but where the Apostles were, when 'by the Way there was a Strife among them who should be the 'greatest.' And how much soever they may say, and boast of their great Zeal for Truth, and the only Glory of God, yet their own open notorious Behaviour towards one another, is proof enough, that the great Strife amongst them is, which shall be the *greatest Sect*, or have the largest number of Followers. A Strife, from the same Root, and just as useful to Christianity, as that of the Carnal Apostles, who should be greatest. For not numbers of Men, or Kingdoms professing Christianity, but numbers redeemed from the Death of Adam to the Life of Christ are the Glory of the Christian Church. And in whatever *National* Christianity any Thing else is *meant* or *sought* after, by the Profession of the Gospel, but a *new heavenly* Life, through the *mediatorial Nature* and Spirit of the eternal Son of God, born in the Fallen Soul, wherever this *Spirituality* of the Gospel-Redemption is denied or overlooked, there the Spirit of *Self*, of *Satanic* and *worldly* Subtlety, will be Church and Priest, and supreme Power, in all that is called Religion.

But to return now to the Doctrine of Continual Inspiration. The *Natural* or unregenerate Man, educated in *pagan* Learning, and *Scholastic* Theology, seeing the Strength of his Genius in the Search after Knowledge, how easily and learnedly he can talk, and write, criticize and determine upon all Scripture Words and Facts, looks at all this as a full Proof of his own religious Wisdom, Power and Goodness, and calls *immediate Inspiration* Enthusiasm, not considering, that *all the Woes* denounced by Christ against Scribes, Pharisees, and Hypocrites, are so many Woes now at this day denounced against every *Appearance* and *Show* of Religion, that the *natural Man* can practise.

And what is well to be noted, everyone, however high in human literature, is but this very *natural Man*, and can only have the Goodness of a *carnal secular* Religion, till as empty of all, as a new born Child, the Spirit of God gets a full Birth in him, and becomes the *Inspirer* and *Doer* of all that he wills, does, and aims at, in his whole Course of Religion.

Our Divine Master compares the Religion of the learned Phari-

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sees 'to whited Sepulchres, outwardly beautiful, but inwardly 'full of Rottenness, stench, and dead Men's bones.'

Now whence was it, that a Religion, so serious in its Restraints, so beautiful in its outward form and Practices, and commanding such Reverence from all that beheld it, was yet charged by Truth itself with having *inwardly* such an abominable Nature? It was only for this one Reason, because it was a *Religion of Self*.—Therefore, from the Beginning to the End of the World, it must be true, that where *Self* is kept alive, has Power, and keeps up its own Interests, whether in Speaking, Writing, teaching or defending the most *specious Number* of Scripture Doctrines and religious Forms, *there* is that very old Pharisee *still alive*, whom Christ with so much Severity of Language constantly condemned. And the Reason of such heavy Condemnation is, because *Self* is the only Root, or rather the *Sum total* of all Sin; every Sin that can be named is centred in it, and the Creature can Sin no higher, than he can live to *Self*.—For *Self* is the Fulness of *Atheism* and *Idolatry*, it is nothing else but the Creature *broken off* from God and Christ; it is the Power of Satan living and working in us, and the sad Continuance of that first Turning from God, which was the *whole Fall* or Death of our first Father.

And yet, sad and Satanical as *this Self* is, what is so much cherished and nourished with our daily Love, Fears, and Cares about it? How much worldly Wisdom, how much laborious Learning, how many Subtleties of Contrivance, and how many flattering Applications and Submissions are made to the World, that this *apostate Self* may have its Fulness, both of inward Joys, and outward Glory?

But to all this it must yet be added, that a *Religion of Self*, of worldly Glory and Prosperity carried on under the Gospel State, has more of a diabolical Nature than that of the Jewish Pharisees.—It is the *highset* and *last* Working of the Mystery of Iniquity, because it lives to *Self*, Satan, and the World, in and by a daily Profession of *denying* and *dying* to *Self*, of being crucified with Christ, of being led by his Spirit, of being risen from the World, and set with him in Heavenly Places.

Let then the *Writers* against continual immediate Divine Inspiration take this for a certain Truth, that by so doing, they do all they can to draw Man from *That* which is the *very Truth* and *Perfection* of the Gospel State, and are, and can be, no better than pitiable Advocates for a *Religion of Self*, more blamable and abominable *now*, than that which was of old condemned by Christ. For whatever is pretended to be done in Gospel Religion, by any other Spirit or Power, but that of the Holy Ghost bringing it forth, whether it be Praying, Preaching, or practising any

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Duties, is all of it but the *Religion of Self*, and can be nothing else. For all that is born of the Flesh, is Flesh, and nothing is spiritual, but that which has its whole Birth from the Spirit. But Man, not ruled and governed by the Spirit, has only the Nature of *Corrupt Flesh*, is under the full Power and Guidance of fallen Nature, and is that very *natural Man*, to whom the *Things of God are Foolishness*. But Man boldly *rejecting*, and *preaching* against a continual immediate Divine Inspiration, is an Anti-Apostle, he lays another Foundation, than that which Christ has laid, he teaches that Christ needs not, must not, be *all in all in us*, and is a Preacher up of the Folly of Fearing to *grieve, quench, and resist* the Holy Spirit.—For *when, or where, or how* could every one of us be in Danger of grieving, quenching, or resisting the Spirit, unless his holy Breathings and Inspirations were *always* within us? Or how could the *Sin* against the Holy Ghost have a more *dreadful Nature*, than that against the Father and the Son, but because the *continual immediate* Guidance and Operation of the Spirit, is the *last and highest* Manifestation of the holy Trinity in the fallen Soul of Man? It is not because the Holy Ghost is more worthy, or higher in Nature than the Father and the Son, but because Father and Son come forth in their *own highest Power* of redeeming Love, through the Covenant of a continual immediate Inspiration of the Spirit, to be always dwelling and working in the Soul. Many weak Things have been conjectured, and published to the World, about the *Sin* against the Holy Ghost; whereas the whole Nature of it lies in this, that it is a Sinning, or Standing out against the *last and highest* Dispensation of God for the full Redemption of Man. Christ says, 'If I had not come, they had not had Sin,' that is, they had not had such a weight of guilt upon them; therefore the Sinning against Christ *come into the Flesh*, was of a more *unpardonable* Nature, than Sinning against the Father under the *Law*. So likewise Sinning against the *Holy Ghost* is of a more unpardonable Nature than Sinning against the Father under the *Law*, or against the Son as *come in the Flesh*, because these two preceding Dispensations were but preparatory to the *Coming*, or full Ministration of the Spirit. But when Father and Son were come in the *Power and Manifestation* of the Spirit, then he that refuses or resists *this Ministration* of the Spirit, resists *all* that the holy Trinity can do to restore and revive the first Life of God in the Soul, and so commits the *unpardonable Sin*, and which is therefore unpardonable, because there remains no *further, or higher* Power to remove it out of the Soul. For no Sin is pardonable, because of its *own Nature*: or that which it is in itself, but because there is *something* yet to come that can remove it out of the Soul; nor

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can any Sin be *unpardonable*, but because it has withstood, or turned from that which was the *last* and *highest* Remedy for the Removal of it.

Hence it is, that grieving, quenching, or resisting the Spirit, is the *Sin of all Sins*, that most of all stops the Work of Redemption, and in the highest Degree separates Man from all Union with God. But there could be no such Sin, but because the Holy Spirit is *always* Breathing, Willing, and Working within us. For what Spirit can be *grieved* by us, but that which has its *will* within us *disobeyed*? What Spirit can be *quenched* by us, but that which is, and ever would be, a *holy Fire* of Life *within* us? What Spirit can be resisted by us, but that which is, and has its *Working* within us? A Spirit on the *outside* of us cannot be the Spirit of God, nor could such a Spirit be any more quenched, or hindered by our Spirit, than a Man by indignation at a Storm could stop its Rage. Now, dreadful as the above mentioned Sin is, I would ask all the *Writers* against *continual immediate* Divine Inspiration, how they could more effectually lead Men into an *habitual* State of *Sinning* against the Holy Ghost, than by such Doctrine? For how can we possibly *avoid* the Sin of grieving, quenching, &c., the Spirit, but by continually reverencing his holy Presence in us, by continually waiting for, trusting, and solely attending to That which the Spirit of God *wills, works, and manifests* within us? To turn Men from this continual Dependence upon the Holy Spirit, is turning them from all true Knowledge of God. For without this, there is no Possibility of any edifying, saving Knowledge of God. For though we have ever so many mathematical Demonstrations of his *Being, &c.*, we are without all real Knowledge of Him, till his own quickening Spirit within us manifests Him, as a *Power* of Life, Light, Love, and Goodness, *essentially* found, vitally felt, and adored in our Souls. This is the one Knowledge of God, which is *eternal Life*, because it is the Life of God manifested in the Soul, that Knowledge of which Christ says, *No one knoweth the Father but the Son, and He to whomsoever the Son revealeth him.* Therefore this Knowledge is only possible to be found in Him, who is in Christ *a new Creature*, for so it is that Christ revealeth the Father. But if none belong to God, but those who are *led by the Spirit of God*, if we are Reprobates unless the Spirit of Christ be living in us, who need be told, that all that we have to trust to or depend upon, as Children of God and Christ, is the *continual immediate Guidance, Unction, and Teaching of his Holy Spirit within us?* Or how can we more *profanely* Sin against this Spirit and Power of God within us, or more expressly call Men from the Power of God to

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Satan, than by ridiculing a Faith and Hope that look *wholly* and *solely* to his continual immediate Breathing and Operations, for all that can be holy and good in us?

'When I am lifted up from the Earth,' says Christ, 'I will draw all Men to me.' Therefore the *one great Power* of Christ in and over the Souls of Men is *after* he is in Heaven; then begins the true full Power of his Drawing, because it is by his Spirit in Man that he draws. But who can more resist *this Drawing*, or defeat its Operation in us, than he that preaches against, and condemns the Belief of a continual and immediate Inspiration of the Spirit, when Christ's *Drawing* can be in nothing else, nor be powerful any other Way?

Now That which we are here taught, is the whole End of all Scripture; for all that is there said, however learnedly read, or studied by *Hebrew* or *Greek* Skill, fails of its only End, till it leads and brings us to an *Essential God within us*, to feel and find all that which the Scriptures speak of God, of Man, of Life and Death, of Good and Evil, of Heaven and Hell, as *Essentially* verified in our own Souls. For all is within Man that can be either Good or Evil to him: God *within Him*, is his Divine Life, his Divine Light, and his Divine Love: Satan *within Him* is his Life of *Self*, of *earthly Wisdom*, of diabolical Falseness, Wrath, Pride, and Vanity of every Kind. There is no middle way between these two. He that is not under the Power of the one, is under the Power of the Other. And the Reason is, man was created in and under the Power of the Divine Life; so far therefore as he loses, or turns from *this Life* of God, so far he falls under the Power of *Self*, of *Satan*, and *Worldly Wisdom*. When St. Peter, full of an *human good* Love towards Christ, advised him to avoid his sufferings, Christ rejected him with a 'Get thee behind me, Satan,' and only gave this Reason for it, 'for thou savourest not the Things that be of God, but the Things that be of Men.' A plain Proof, that whatever is not of and from the Holy Spirit of God in us, however plausible it may outwardly seem to Men, to their Wisdom, and human Goodness, is yet in itself Nothing else but the Power of *Satan in us*. And as St. Paul said truly of himself, 'By the Grace of God I am what I am'; so every *Wise*, every *Scribe*, every *Disputer of this world*, every *Truster* to the Strength of his own rational Learning, everyone that is under the Power of his own fallen Nature, never free from Desires of Honours and Preferments, ever thirsting to be rewarded for his theological Abilities, ever fearing to be abased and despised, always thankful to those who flatter him with his distinguished Merit, everyone that is such, be he who he will, may as *truly say of himself*, Through my turning and Trusting

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to something else than the *Grace* and *Inspiration* of God's Spirit, *I am what I am*. For Nothing else hinders any Professor of Christ from being able truly to say with *St. Paul*, 'God forbid that I should glory in any Thing but the Cross of Christ, by which I am crucified to the World, and the World to me.' Nothing makes him incapable of finding *That* which *St. Paul* found, when He said, 'I can do all Things through Christ that Strengtheneth me;' nothing hinders all this, but his Disregard of a *Christ within him*, his choosing to have a Religion of self, of *Laborious Learning*, and *worldly Greatness*, rather than be such a *Gospel fool for Christ*, as to renounce all that which he renounced, and to seek no more earthly honour and Praise than he did, and to will Nothing, know Nothing, seek Nothing, but that which the Spirit of God and Christ knows, wills, and seeks in Him. Here, and here alone, lies the Christian's full and certain Power of *overcoming self*, the *devil*, and the *world*. But Christians, seeking and turning to anything else, but to be led and inspired by the *one Spirit* of God and Christ, will bring forth a *Christendom* that in the Sight of God will have no other Name, than a spiritual *Babylon*, a spiritual *Egypt*, and *Sodom*, a *Scarlet Whore*, a devouring *Beast*, and *red Dragon*. For all these names belong to all men, however learned, and to all Churches, whether greater or less, in which the Spirit of this World has any share of Power. This was the Fall of the *whole Church* soon after the Apostolic Ages; and all *human Reformations*, begun by ecclesiastical *Learning*, and supported by Civil Power, will signify little or Nothing, nay often make things worse, till all Churches, dying to all own *Will*, all own *Wisdom*, all own *Advancement*, seek for no *Reforming Power* but from that Spirit of God which converted Sinners, Publicans, Harlots, Jews, and Heathens, into an holy apostolical Church at the first, a Church which knew they were of God, that they belonged to God, by that Spirit which He had given them, and which worked in them.

'Ye are not in the Flesh,' says the Apostle, 'but in the *Spirit*;' but then he adds, as the only Ground of this, 'If so be that the *Spirit* of God dwelleth in you;' surely he means, if so be ye are moved, guided, and governed by that, which the Spirit wills, works and inspires within you. And then to show the absolute Necessity of this Life of God in the soul, he adds, 'If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.'—And that this is the State to which God has appointed, and called all Christians, he thus declares, 'God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts, crying, Abba, Father,' Gal. iv. 6. The same Thing, most surely, as if he had said, Nothing in you can *Cry*, or *Pray* to God as *its Father*, but the Spirit of his son Christ

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come to Life in you. Which is also as true of *every Tendency* in the Soul towards God or Goodness ; so much as there is of it, so much there is of the *seed of the Woman* striving to bring forth a *full Birth* of Christ in the Soul.

‘Lo, I am always with you,’ says the holy Jesus, ‘even to the ‘End of the World.’ How is he with us? Not *outwardly*, every illiterate Man knows ; not *inwardly*, says many a learned Doctor, because a *Christ within* us is as gross Enthusiasm, or Quakerism, as the *Light within us*.—How then shall the faith of the common Christian find any Comfort in these words of Christ’s promise, unless the Spirit brings him into a Remembrance and Belief, that Christ is in him, and with him, as the *Vine* is with and in the Branch. Christ says, ‘Without me ye ‘can do Nothing ;’ and also, ‘If any man loves me, my Father ‘will Love him, and we will come unto Him, and make our ‘Abode with Him.’ Now if without Him we can do Nothing, then all the Love that a Man can possibly have for Christ, must be from the Power and Life of Christ in Him, and from *such a Love, so* begotten, Man has the Father and the Son dwelling and making their Abode in Him. What higher Proof, or fuller Certainty can there be, that the *Whole Work* of Redemption in the Soul of Man is and can be *Nothing else*, but the inward, continual, immediate Operation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, raising up again their own first Life in the Soul, to which our first Father died ?

Again, Christ, after his Glorification in Heaven, says, ‘Behold ‘I STAND at the DOOR and KNOCK.’ He does not say, Behold ye *have me* in the Scriptures. Now what is the DOOR at which Christ, at the Right-hand of God in Heaven, KNOCKS ? Surely it is the *Heart*, to which Christ is always present. He goes on, IF ANY MAN HEARS MY VOICE ; how *hears*, but by the hearing of the Heart, or *what Voice*, but that which is the *Speaking* or *Sounding* of Christ within Him ; He adds, AND OPENS THE DOOR, that is, opens his Heart for me, I WILL COME IN TO HIM, that is, will be a living holy Nature, and Spirit born *within him*, AND SUP WITH HIM, and HE WITH ME.—Behold the last finishing Work of a Redeeming Jesus, entered into the Heart that opens to him, bringing forth the Joy, the Blessing, and Perfection of that first Life of God in the Soul, which was lost by the Fall, set forth as a *Supper*, or Feast of the Heavenly Jesus with the Soul, and the Soul with him. Can anyone justly call it Enthusiasm to say, that this *supping* of the Soul with this glorified Christ within it, must mean something more heavenly transacted in the Soul than that last Supper which he celebrated with his Disciples, whilst

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He was with them in Flesh. For that Supper of Bread and Wine was such, as a *Judas* could partake of, and could only be an *outward Type* or Signification of that *inward and blessed Nourishment*, with which the Believing Soul should be feasted, when the glorified Son of God should as a *Creating Spirit* enter into us, quickening, and raising up his own heavenly Nature and Life within us. Now this *continual Knocking* of Christ at the Door of the Heart, sets forth the Case or Nature of a continual immediate Divine Inspiration within us; it is always with us, but there must be an opening of the Heart to it; and though it is always there, yet it is only felt and found by those, who are attentive to it, depend upon, and humbly wait for it.—Now let anyone tell me how he can believe any Thing of *this Voice* of Christ, how he can listen to it, hear, or obey it, but by such a Faith, as keeps him *habitually turned* to an immediate constant Inspiration of the Spirit of Christ within him? Or how any *heathenish profane* Person, can do more *Despite* to this Presence and Power of Christ in his *own Soul*, or more effectually lead others into it, than that *Ecclesiastic*, who makes a Mock at the *Light* within, a Christ *within*, and openly blasphemes that Faith, and Hope, and Trust, which solely relies upon being *moved by the Spirit*, as its only Power of doing that which is right, and good, and pious, either towards God or Man.—*Let every Man, whom this concerns, lay it to Heart.*—Time, and the Things of Time, will soon have an End; and he that in Time trusts to any Thing but the Spirit and Power of God working in his Heart, will be ill fitted to enter into Eternity; God must be *all in all* in us here, or we cannot be his hereafter.—*Time* works only for Eternity; and Poverty eternal must as certainly follow him, who dies only fully stuffed with human Learning, as he who dies only full of Worldly Riches.—The Folly of thinking to have any Divine Learning, but that which the Holy Spirit teaches, or to make ourselves rich in Knowledge towards God, by Heaps of *Common-Place* Learning crowded into our Minds, will leave us as dreadfully cheated, as that rich *Builder of Barns* in the Gospel, to whom it was said, ‘Thou Fool, this Night, shall thy Soul be ‘required of Thee. And then, whose shall all these Things be?’ Luke xii. So is every Man that treasures up a *Religious Learning* that comes not *wholly* from the Spirit of God.—But to return. To this inward continual Attention to the continual working of the holy Spirit within us, the Apostle calls us in these Words, ‘See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped ‘not, who refused him that spoke on Earth, much more shall ‘not we escape, if we turn from Him, that speaketh from Heaven,’ Heb. xii. 25. Now what is this Speaking *from Heaven*, which it

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is so dangerous to refuse, or resist? Surely not *outward Voices* from Heaven. Or what could the Apostle's Advice signify to us, unless it be such a Speaking *from Heaven*, as we may and must be *always* either obeying or refusing?—St. James saith, 'Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you.' What Devil? Surely not an outward Creature or Spirit, that tempts us by an outward Power. Or what *Resistance* can we make to the Devil, but that of inwardly *falling away*, or *turning from* the Workings of his evil Nature and Spirit within us?—They therefore who call us from *waiting* for, depending upon, and attending to the continual secret Inspirations and Breathings of the Holy Spirit within us, call us to RESIST *God* in the same manner as the Apostle exhorts us to resist the Devil. For God being only a Spiritual Good, and the Devil our Spiritual Evil, neither the one nor the other can be resisted, or not resisted by us, but so far as their Spiritual Operations *within* us are either *turned from*, or *obeyed* by us.—St. James having shown us, that *Resisting* the Devil is the only Way to make him flee from us, that is, to lose his Power in us, immediately adds, how we are to behave towards God, that He *may not flee* from us, or his holy Work be stopped in us. 'Draw near,' saith he, 'to God, and God will draw near to you.' What is this Drawing near? Surely not by any local Motion, either in God or us. But the same is meant, as if he had said, *Resist not God*, that is, let his holy Will within you have its full work; keep wholly, obediently attentive to *That*, which he is, and has, and does within you, and then *God will draw near to you*, that is, will more and more manifest the Power of his holy Presence in you, and make you more and more *Partakers of the Divine Nature*. Further, what a Blindness is it in the forementioned *Writers*, to charge private Persons with the *Enthusiasm* of holding the Necessity, and Certainty of continual immediate Inspiration, and to attack them as Enemies to the *Established Church*, when every Body's Eyes see, that *Collect* after *Collect*, in the *Established Liturgy*, teaches and requires them to believe, and pray for the *Continual Inspiration* of the Spirit, as that *alone*, by which they can have the *least good Thought, or Desire*? Thus, 'O God, Forasmuch as without Thee we are not able to please Thee, mercifully Grant that thy Holy Spirit may *in all Things* direct and Rule our Hearts.' Is it possible for words more strongly to express the Necessity of a *Continual Divine Inspiration*? Or can Inspiration be *higher*, or more *immediate* in *Prophets* and *Apostles*, than that which *directs*, that which *rules* our Hearts, not now and then, but in *all Things*? Or can the absolute Necessity of this be more fully declared, than by saying, that if it is not in this Degree both of Height

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and continuance in and over our Hearts, Nothing that is done by us can be pleasing to God, that is, can have any Union with him?

Now the Matter is not at all about the *different Effects* or *Works* proceeding from Inspiration, as whether by it a Man be made a *Saint* in Himself, or sent by God with a *prophetic* Message to others, this affects not the *Nature* and *Necessity* of Inspiration, which is just as great, just as Necessary in itself to *all true Goodness*, as to *all true Prophecy*.—All Scripture is of Divine Inspiration. But why so? ‘Because holy men of Old ‘spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.’ Now the above Collect as well as Christ and his Apostles oblige us in like manner to hold, that all *Holiness is by Divine Inspiration*, and that therefore there could have been no *holy men* of old, or in any latter Times, but solely for this Reason, because ‘They ‘LIVED as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.’ Again, The Liturgy prays thus, ‘O God, from whom all good Things do ‘come, grant that by thy holy Inspiration we may think those ‘Things that be good, and by thy merciful Guiding may perform ‘the Same.’—Now, if in any of my Writings I have ever said any thing *higher*, or *further* of the Nature and Necessity of *continual Divine Inspiration*, than this Church-Prayer does, I refuse no Censure that shall be passed upon me. But if I have, from all that we know of *God*, of *Nature*, and *Creature*, shown the utter Impossibility of any Kind, or Degree of Goodness to be in us, but from the *Divine Nature living* and *Breathing* in us, if I have shown that all Scripture, Christ and his Apostles, over and over say the same Thing; that our *Church Liturgy* is daily praying according to it; what kinder Thing can I say of those *Churchmen* who accuse me of *Enthusiasm*, than that which Christ said of his blind Crucifiers, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know ‘not what they do.’

It is to no Purpose to object to all this, that these Kingdoms are over-run with Enthusiasts of all Kinds, and that *Moravians* with their several Divisions, and *Methodists* of various Kinds, are everywhere acting in the Wildest Manner, under the Pretence of being called *and led by the Spirit*. Be it so, or not so, is a matter I meddle not with; nor is the Doctrine I am upon in the least affected by it. For what an Argument would this be; *Enthusiasts of the present and former Ages* have made a bad use of the Doctrine of being *led by the Spirit of God*, Ergo, ‘He is enthusiastic, or helps forward Enthusiasm, who preaches up the Doctrine ‘of being led by the Spirit of God.’ Now absurd as this is, was any of my Accusers as high in *Genius*, as *bulky* in Learning, as *Colossus* was in Stature, he would be at a Loss to bring a stronger

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Argument than this, to prove me an Enthusiast, or an Abettor of them.

But as I do not begin to doubt about the *Necessity*, the *Truth*, and *Perfection* of Gospel Religion, when told that *whole Nations* and Churches have, under a Pretence of Regard to it, and for the Sake of it, done all the *bad Things* that can be charged upon this or that *Leading Enthusiast*, whether you call those bad Things, *Schism*, *Perjury*, *Rebellion*, *Worldly Craft*, and *Hypocrisy*, &c. So I give not up the *Necessity*, the *Truth*, and *Perfection* of looking wholly to the Spirit of God and Christ *within me*, as my *promised Inspirer*, and *only Worker* of all that can be good in me, I give not this up, because in this, or that Age, both Spiritual Pride and Fleshly Lusts have prospered by it, or because Satan has often led People into all the Heights of *Self-Glory*, and *Self-Seeking*, under a Pretence of being *inspired* with Gospel *Humility*, and Gospel *Self-denial*.

Another Charge upon me, equally false, and I may say, more senseless, is that I am a declared Enemy to the *Use of Reason* in *Religion*. And why? Because in all my Writings, I teach that *Reason is to be denied*, &c. I own, I have not only taught this, but have again and again proved the *absolute Necessity* of it. And this, because Christ has made it *absolutely Necessary*, by saying, 'Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself,' &c. For how can a Man *deny himself*, without *denying* his Reason, unless Reason be no Part of Himself? Or how can a rational Creature, whose chief Distinction from Brutes is that of his Reason, be called to deny himself any other Way, than by denying that which is peculiar to Himself? Let the Matter be thus expressed, Man is not to deny his Reason. Well, how then? Why, (N.B.) He is only to deny *himself*. Can there be a greater Folly of Words? And yet it is their Wisdom of Words, who allow the *Denying of self* to be good Doctrine, but boggle, and cry out at the *denying of Reason*, as quite bad. For how can a Man deny *himself*, but by denying That which is the *Life*, and *Spirit*, and Power of *Self*?—What makes a man a Sinner? Nothing but the Power and Working of his *Natural Reason*. And therefore, if our *natural Reason* is not to be *denied*, we must keep up and follow That which works every Sin that ever was, or can be in us. For we can Sin nowhere, or in any Thing, but where our *Natural Reason* or Understanding has its Power in us.—What is meant in all Scripture by the *Flesh* and its Works? Is it something distinct, and different from the Workings of our *rational and Intelligent Nature*? No, it is our whole intelligent, rational Nature, that constitutes the *Flesh* or the *Carnal Man*, who could not be criminally so, any more than the Beasts, but

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because his Carnality has all its Evil from his intelligent Nature or *Reason*, being the Life and Power of it. And every Thing which our Lord says of *Self*, is so much said of our *natural Reason*; and all that the Scripture says of the Flesh and its evil Nature, is so much said of the evil State of our *Natural Reason*, which therefore is, ought, and must be denied, in the same manner and Degree as *self* and *Flesh* is, and must be denied.

I have elsewhere shown the Gross Darkness and Ignorance which govern that which is called *Metaphysics* in the Schools, 'that it is so great, that if you were to say, that God first creates 'a Soul out of Nothing, and when that is done, then takes an 'Understanding Faculty and puts it into it, after that, adds a 'Will, and then a Memory, all as independently made, as when a 'Tailor first makes the Body of a Coat, and then adds sleeves, 'and Pockets to it; were you to say this, the Schools of Des-'cartes, Malebranche, or Locke, could have Nothing to say 'against it.'*

And here Truth obliges me to say, that *Scholastic Divinity* is in as great Ignorance about the Most fundamental Truths of the Gospel, as I have again and again shown, in Regard to the Nature of the *Fall of Man*, and all the Scripture Expressions Concerning the *new Birth*; and here also concerning the Doctrine, of a Man's *denying himself*, which modern Learning supposes to be possible *without*, or different from a Man's denying his *own natural Reason*; Which is an Absurdity of the greatest Magnitude. For what is *Self*, but that which a man *is*, and *has* in his *natural Capacity*? Or what is the *Fulness* of his *Natural Capacity*, but the Strength and Power of his Reason? How then can any Man *deny Himself*, but by denying that which gives *Self* its whole Nature, Name, and Power? If man was not a *Rational* Creature, he could not be called to deny himself, he could not need, or receive the Benefit and Goodness of *Self-Denial*: No man therefore can obey the Precept of denying Himself, or have any Benefit or Goodness from it, but so far as he denies, or dies to his *own natural Reason*, because the *Self* of Man, and the *Natural Reason* of Man, are Strictly the same Thing.—*Again*, our Blessed Lord said in his Agony, 'Not my Will, but thine be done.' And had not this been the Form of his *whole Life*, He had not lived without Sin.—Now Thus to deny our own Will, that God's Will may be done in us, is the *Height of our Calling*; and so far as we keep from our own *Natural Will*, so far we keep from Sin. But now, if our own Natural Will, as having all sin and evil in it, is *always* to be denied, whatever it costs us, I would fain know, how our *Natural*

* *Spirit of Love*, First Part.

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Reason can ever escape, or how we can deny our own Will, and not deny that rational or intelligent Power, in and from which the Will has its whole Existence and continual direction? Or how there can be always a *Badness* of our *own Will*, which is not the *Badness* of our *own natural* intellectual Power? Therefore it is a Truth of the utmost Certainty, that as much as we are obliged to deny our *own Natural Will* that the Will of God may be done in us, so much are we obliged to deny our *own natural Reason* and Understanding that our *own Will* may not be done, or followed by us. For whoever lives to his own natural Reason, he necessarily lives to his own natural Will. For our natural Will, in whatever State it is, is nothing else but our Natural Reason *willing* this, or that.

Now hard as this may seem to *unregenerate Nature*, and yet harder to nature highly exalted, and big with the Glory of all That, which *Wits, Poets, Orators, Critics, Sophists, and Historians* have enriched it with, yet true it is, and a Truth as certain as the Fall of Man, that this full Denial of our *own natural Will*, and our *own Natural Reason*, is the only possible Way for Divine Knowledge, Divine Light, and Divine Goodness, to have any Place or Power of Birth in us.—All other *religious Knowledge*, got any other Way, let it be as great as it will, is only great in Vanity, Emptiness, and Delusion. For Nothing but That which comes *immediately* from God, can have any Thing godly in it, and all that which comes from *Self*, and *natural Reason*, however outwardly coloured, can have no better a Nature within, than *Self-seeking, Self-esteem, and fleshly Wisdom*, which (*N.B.*) are those *very works of the Devil* in us, which Christ came into the World to destroy.—For the Efforts of natural Reason, and Self-abilities, to be great in *religious Knowledge* from our *own particular Talents*, are as *Satanical Things* as any we carry about us, and most of all fix us in the highest Contrariety to that State, which our Lord affirms to be absolutely necessary.

‘Except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.’—Now as sure as this is necessary, so sure is it, that no one can be thus converted, or come under the good Influence of this childlike Nature, till *natural Reason, Self, and own Will*, are all equally denied.—For all the Evil and Corruption of our fallen Nature consists in this, it is an *awakened Life of own Reason, own Will broken off from God*, and so fallen into the *Selfish Workings* of its own earthly Nature.

Now whether this *Self* broken off from God, reasons, wills, and contends about the Difference of Scripture Words and Opinions, or reasons against them all, the same evil State of fallen Nature, the same Loss of Life, the same Separation from God, the same

evil Tempers of Flesh and Blood, will be equally strengthened and inflamed by the one as by the other,—Hence it is, that Papists and Protestants are hating, fighting, and killing one another for the Sake of their *different excellent* Opinions, and yet, as to the *Lusts of the Flesh*, the *Lust of the Eye*, and the *Pride of Life*, they are in the highest Union and Communion with one Another. For if you expect a *zealous Protestant* to be *therefore* a new born Creature alive unto God, or a *zealous Papist* to be *therefore* dead to all Divine Goodness, you may be said to have lived in the World without either Eyes or Ears.—And the Reason why it must be so, is because *bad* Syllogisms for Transubstantiation, and *better* Syllogisms against it, signify no more towards the Casting *Satan out of our Souls*, than a bad or better Taste for Painting.

Hence also it is, that Christendom, full of the nicest Decisions about Faith, Grace, Works, Merits, Satisfaction, Heresies, Schisms, &c., is full of all those evil Tempers which prevailed in the heathen World, when none of these things were ever thought of.

A *Scholar*, pitying the Blindness and Folly of those who live to themselves in the Cares and Pleasures of this vain Life, thinks himself Divinely employed, and to have escaped the Pollutions of the World, because he is, day after day, dividing, dissecting, and mending Church-Opinions, fixing Heresies here, Schisms there; forgetting all the while, that a *carnal Self* and *natural Reason* have the doing of all that is done by this learned Zeal, and are as busy and active in him, as in the *reasoning* Infidel, or *projecting* Worldling. For where *Self is wholly denied*, there nothing can be called Heresy, Schism, or Wickedness, but the Want of loving God with our whole Heart, and our Neighbour as ourselves; nor any Thing be called Truth, Life, or Salvation, but the Spirit, Nature, and Power of Christ living and manifesting itself in us, as it did in him. But where *Self* or the *natural Man* is become great in Religious Learning, there the greater the Scholar, the more firmly will he be fixed in their Religion, whose *God is their Belly*. *I write not to Reason*, says the blessed *Jacob Behmen*; O Enthusiasm! says the Mouth of Learning: And yet *Jacob* said as sober a Truth, as if he had said, *I write not to Self* and *own Will*; for *natural Reason*, *Self* and *own Will*, always did, and always must see through the same Eyes, and hear through the same Ears. Now let it only be supposed, that *Behmen* and myself, when we speak of *natural Reason*, mean only the *natural Man* (as is over and over declared by us) and then *Behmen's* saying, that he writes neither *from Reason*, nor *to the natural Reason* of others, is only saying that very same Thing as *St. Paul* says, that 'the natural Man receiveth not the Things of

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‘the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, (N.B.) neither can he know them, (N.B.) because they are Spiritually ‘discerned.’

But that I may fully show the Perverseness of my Accusers, in charging me with denying the *Use of Reason in Religion*, see here a Word or two of what I have said at large, and in the plainest Words, more than twenty-four years ago, which Doctrine I have maintained in all that I have since wrote.—My Words are these.

‘You shall see Reason possessed of all that belongs to it. I will grant it to have as *great a Share* in the good Things of *Religion*, as in the good Things of *this Life*; that it can *assist* the Soul, just as it can assist the *Body*, that it has the *same* Power and Virtue in the *Spiritual*, that it has in the *natural* World; that it can *communicate* to us as much of the one, as of the other, and is of the same *Use* and *Importance* in the one as in the other. Can you ask more?’ All which I thus make out in the following Manner.

‘Man, considered as a Member of this World, who is to have his Share of the *Good* that is in it, is a *sensible*, and a *rational* Creature, that is, he has a certain Number of Senses, as Seeing, Hearing, Tasting, Touching, and Smelling, by which he is sensible of that which the outward World, in which he is placed, can do for him, or communicate to him, and so is sensible of what Kind and Degree of Happiness he can have from it.

‘Now besides these Organs of Sense, he has a Power or Faculty of *Reasoning* upon the Ideas, which he has received from these Senses.

‘Now how is it, that the *good* Things of this World are communicated to Man? How is he put in possession of them? To what Part of him are they proposed? Are his *Senses*, or his *Reason*, the Means of his having so much as he has or can have from this World?

‘Now here, you must degrade *Reason* just as much as it is degraded by Religion, and are obliged to set it as low with Respect to the Things of this World, as it is set with Respect to the Things of the Spiritual World. It is no more the Means of Communicating the good Things of the one, than of the other. And as *St. Paul* says, “The Natural Man cannot receive the Things of the Spirit of God,” for this Reason, *because they are Spiritually discerned*; so you must of Necessity say, the *Rational Man* cannot receive the Things of this World, for this Reason, because they are *sensibly* received, that is, by the Organs of Sense. Reason therefore has no higher Office or Power in the Things of this World, than in the Things of

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‘ Religion ; and Religion does no more Violence to your Reason, ‘ or rejects it any other Way, than all the good Things of this ‘ World reject it ; it is not *Seeing*, it is not *Hearing*, *Tasting*, or ‘ *Feeling* the Things of this Life ; it can supply the Place of no ‘ one of these Senses.

‘ Now it is only thus *helpless* and *useless* in Religion ; it is ‘ neither *Seeing*, nor *Hearing*, *Tasting*, nor *Feeling* of Spiritual ‘ Things ; therefore in the Things of Religion, and in the Things ‘ of this World, it has one and the same *Insignificance*.—It is the ‘ *Sensibility* of the Soul that must receive what this World can ‘ communicate to it ; it is the *Sensibility* of the Soul that must ‘ receive what God can communicate : Reason may follow after ‘ in either Case, and view through its own Glass what is done, ‘ but it can do no more. Reason may be here of the same ‘ Service to us, as when we want any of the Enjoyments of this ‘ Life ; it may direct us how and where they are to be had ; it ‘ may take away a Cover from our Eyes, or open our Window- ‘ Shutters when we want the Light ; but it can do no more ‘ towards *Seeing*, than to make way for the Light to act upon ‘ our Eyes. This is all its Office and Ability in the Things of ‘ Religion ; it may remove that which hinders the *Sensibility* of ‘ the Soul, or prevents the Divine Light’s acting upon it, but ‘ it can do no more ; because the Faculty of Reasoning is only ‘ the Activity of the Mind upon its own Ideas or Images, which ‘ the Senses have caused it to form from that which has been ‘ stirred up in them, but has Nothing of the Nature of that which ‘ it speculates upon by Ideas ; it does not become dark, when it ‘ reasons upon the Cause or Nature of Darkness, nor becomes ‘ Light, when it reasons about it ; neither is it Religion, nor gets ‘ any Thing of the Nature of Religion, when it is wholly taken ‘ up in Descriptions and Definitions of religious Doctrines and ‘ Virtues.

‘ For the *Good* of Religion is like the Good of Food and Drink ‘ to the Creature that wants it. And if instead of giving such an ‘ one Bread and Wine, you should teach him to seek for Relief ‘ by attending to clear Ideas of the Nature of Bread, of different ‘ ways of making it, &c., he would be left to die in the Want of ‘ Sustenance, just as the Religion of Reasoning leaves the Soul ‘ to perish in the Want of that Good which it was to have from ‘ Religion. And yet as a Man may have the Benefit of Food ‘ much assisted by the right use of his Reason, though Reason ‘ has not the Good of Food in it, so a Man may have the Good ‘ of Religion much assisted and secured to him, by the right use ‘ of his Reason, though Reason has not the *Good* of Religion in ‘ it. And as it would be great Folly and Perverseness, to accuse

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‘ a Man as an Enemy to the true Use of Reasoning about Food, because he declares that Reason is not Food, nor can supply the Place of it, so is it equally such, to accuse a Man as an Enemy to the Use of Reasoning in Religion, because he declares that Reasoning is not Religion, nor can supply the Place of it. We have no Want of Religion, but because we want to have more of the Divine Nature in us than we have in our fallen Nature. But if this be the Truth of the Matter (and who can deny it?) then we are sure that nothing can be our Good in Religion, but that which communicates to us something of God, or which alters our State of Existence in God, and makes us Partakers of the Divine Nature, in such a Manner and Degree as we wanted. What a Folly is it then to put any Trust in a Religion of *rational Notions* and Opinions logically deduced from Scripture Words? Do we not see Sinners of all Sorts, and Men under the Power of every corrupt Passion, equally zealous for such a Religion? Proof enough, that it has not the good of Religion in it, nor any Contrariety to the Vices of the Heart; it neither kills them, nor is killed by them. For as Pride, Hypocrisy, Envy or Malice, do not take away from the Mind its Geometrical or Critical Abilities; so a Man may be most logical in his Religion of Reason, Words, Doctrines, and Opinions, when he has Nothing of the true Good of Religion in him.

‘ But as soon as it is known and confessed, that all the Happiness or Misery of all Creatures consists only in this, as they are *more or less* possessed of God, or as they differently partake of the Divine Nature, then it must be equally known, that Nothing but God can do or be any religious Good to us, and also that God cannot do, or be any religious Good to us, but by the Communication of *himself*, or the Manifestation of *his own Life* within us.’

Hence may be seen the great and like Blindness both of Infidels and Christians; the one in trusting to their own Reason dwelling in its own logical Conclusions; the other in trusting to their own Reason dwelling in learned Opinions about Scripture Words and Phrases, and Doctrines built upon them. ‘ For as soon as it is known and confessed, that *God is all in all*, that in him we *live and move and have our Being*, that we can have Nothing *separately*, or *out* of him, but every Thing *in* Him, that we have no Being or Degree of Being but in Him, that He can give us Nothing as our good but Himself, nor any Degree of Salvation from our fallen Nature, but in such Degree as he again Communicates something more of Himself to us, as soon as this is known, then it is known with the utmost Evidence,

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‘that to put a religious Trust in our own Reason, whether Confined to itself, or Working in Doctrines about Scripture Words, has the Nature of that same Idolatry that puts a religious Trust in the *Sun*, a departed *Saint*, or a graven *Image*.* And as *Image-Worship* has often boasted of its Divine Power, because of the Wonders of Zeal and Devotion that have been raised thereby in thousands, and ten thousands of its Followers, so it is no Marvel, if *Opinion-Worship* should often have and boast of the Same Effects.—But the Truth of the whole Matter lies here: As the WORD manifested in the Flesh or become Man, is the one Mediator, or Restorer of Union between God and Man, so to seeing Eyes it must be evident, that Nothing but this one Mediatorial Nature of Christ, *essentially* brought to Life in our Souls, can be our Salvation through Christ Jesus. For that which saved and exalted that Humanity in which Christ dwelt, must be the Salvation of every human Creature in the World. But to return. What poor Divinity Knowledge comes from great *Scholars*, and great *Readers*, may be sufficiently seen from the two following judicious Quotations in a *late Dissertation on Enthusiasm*; the one is taken from Dr. *Warburton’s* sermons, the other from a *Pastoral Letter* of Mr. *Stinstra*, a Preacher among the *Mennonists of Friesland*. That from Dr. Warburton stands thus: ‘By them (that is, by the Writings of the New Testament) the prophetic Promise of our Saviour, that the Comforter should abide for ever, was *eminently* fulfilled. For though his ordinary Influence *occasionally* assists the Faithful, yet his *constant Abode* and *Supreme Illumination* is in the Sacred Scriptures.’† Dr. *Warburton’s* Doctrine is this, that the inspired Books of the New Testament is that *Comforter*, or *Spirit of Truth*, and Illuminator, which is meant by Christ’s being *always* with his Church. Let us therefore put the Doctor’s Doctrine into the Letter of the Text, which will best show how true or false it is.

Our Lord says, ‘It is expedient for you that I go away, or the Comforter will not come;’ that is, it is expedient for you, that I *leave off* teaching you in Words, that sound only into your *outward Ears*, that you may have the *same Words* in Writing, for your *outward Eyes* to look upon; for if I do not depart from this vocal Way of Teaching you, the Comforter will not come, that is, ye will not have the Comfort of *my Words written on Paper*. But if I go away, I will send Written Books, which shall lead you into such a *Truth of Words* as you could not have, whilst

* *Demonstration of the Gross Errors in the Plain Account, &c.*

† *Dissertation*, page 10.

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they were only spoken from my Mouth; but being written on Paper, they will be my *spiritual, heavenly, constant Abode* with you, and the *most supreme Illumination* you can receive from Me.

Christ says further: 'I have many Things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now: howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He shall guide you into all Truth; for He shall not speak of Himself, for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you;' that is, though you cannot be sufficiently instructed from my Words at *present*, yet when they shall hereafter come to you in Written Books, they will give you a knowledge of all Truth, for they shall not speak of themselves, but shall receive words from me, and show them unto you. *Again*, Christ says, 'These things have I spoken unto you in Proverbs; but the Time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in Proverbs, but will show you plainly of the Father.' That is, hitherto you have only had spoken Proverbs from me, and therefore you have not plainly known the Father; but the time cometh when these *spoken* Proverbs shall be put into *Writing*, and then you shall plainly know the Father. *Again*, Christ adds, 'Ye now therefore have Sorrow, but I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice, and your Joy no Man taketh from you.' That is, you are now troubled at my personal Departure from you, but some written Books shall be *my seeing you again*, and in that Visit you shall have such Joy as cannot be taken from you.

Christ also says, 'If any Man loves me, my Father will Love him, and we will come unto him and make our Abode with Him.' That is, according to the Doctor's Theology, certain Books of Scripture will come to him, and make their Abode with him; for he expressly confines the *constant Abode* and *supreme Illumination* of God to the holy Scriptures. Therefore (horrible to say) God's inward Presence, his operating Power of Life and Light in our Souls, his Dwelling in us, and we in Him, is something of a lower Nature, that only may *occasionally* happen, and has *less* of God in it than the dead Letter of Scripture, which alone is his *Constant Abode* and *Supreme illumination*.—Miserable Fruits of a paradoxical Genius!

Christ from Heaven says, 'Behold I stand at the Door, and knock; if any man hear my Voice, and open unto me, I will come into him, and sup with him.' This is his true eminent *Fulfilling* of his prophetic Promise of being a Comforter, and Spirit of Truth to his Church to the end of the World. But according to the Doctor, we are to understand, that not the *heavenly Christ*, but the New Testament *continually* stands and knocks at the Door, wanting to enter into the Heart, and sup with it; which is no better than holding, that when Christ calls

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himself Alpha and Omega, He means not himself, but the New Testament.—Again, ‘I am the Vine, ye are the Branches; as ‘the Branch cannot bear Fruit of itself, except it abide in the ‘Vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me; for without me, ‘ye can do Nothing.’ Now take the Doctor’s Comment, and then the Truth of all these Words of Christ was only *temporary*, and could be true no longer, than till the Books of the *New Testament* were written; for then all this, which Christ has affirmed of himself, of the Certainty and Necessity of his Life and Power in them, ended in Christ, and passed over to the *Written Words* of the New Testament, and they are the true Vine, and we its Branches, they are *That* without which *we can do Nothing*. For thus it must be, if, as the Doctor affirms, the Writings of the New Testament are that, by which we are to understand *the constant Abode and supreme Illumination of God in Man*.—Now absurd, and even blasphemous, as this Interpretation of the foregoing Text is, it must be evident to every Reader, that it is all the Doctor’s own; for the Letter of Scripture is only made here to claim that Divinity to itself, which the Doctor has openly affirmed to be true of it.

‘Rabbi,’ says Nicodemus to Christ, ‘we know that thou art a ‘Teacher come from God.’ Now that which was here truly said of Christ in *the Flesh*, is the very Truth that must be said of the Scripture teaching in Ink and Paper; it is a *Teacher come from God*, and therefore fully to be believed, highly revered, and strictly followed. But as Christ’s Teaching in the Flesh was only preparatory to his future vital Teaching by the Spirit, so the Teaching of Scripture by words written with Ink and Paper is only preparatory, or introductory to all that *inward essential* Teaching of God, which is by his Spirit and Truth within us.—Every other Opinion of the holy Scripture, but that of an *outward Teacher* and Guide to God’s *inward Teaching* and Illumination in our Souls, is but making an Idol-God of it: I say an Idol-God; for to those who rest in it as the *Constant Abode and Supreme Illumination of God with them*, it can be Nothing else. For, if Nothing of *Divine Faith, Love, Hope, or Goodness*, can have the least Birth, or Place in us, but by *Divine Inspiration*, they who think these Virtues may be sufficiently raised in us by the Letter of Scripture, do in Truth and Reality make the Letter of Scripture their *Inspiring God*.—The Apostles preached and wrote to the People by *Divine Inspiration*. But what do they say of their *inspired Doctrine* and Teachings? What Virtue or Power was there in them? Do they say, that their Words and Teachings were the very *promised Comforter*, the *Spirit of Truth*, the *true Abode and Supreme Illumination* of God in the

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Souls of Men? So far from such a blasphemous Thought, that they affirm the direct contrary, and compare all their *inspired* Teachings and Instructions to the *dead Works* of bare *Planting* and *Watering*, and which must continue dead, till *Life* comes into them from another and much higher Power. 'I have planted,' says St. Paul, 'Apollos has watered, but God gave the Increase.' And then further to show that this *Planting* and *Watering*, which was the *highest Work* that an *inspired* Apostle could do, was yet in itself to be considered as a lifeless, powerless Thing, he adds, 'So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the Increase.'—But now, if this must be said of all That which the *inspired Apostles* taught in outward Words, that it was nothing in itself, was without Power, without Life, and only such a *Preparation* towards Life, as is that of *Planting* and *Watering*, must not that same be said of their *inspired Teachings*, when left behind them in Writing? For what else are the Apostolical Scriptures, but those very Instructions and Teachings put into Writing, which they affirmed to be but bare *Planting* and *Watering*, quite powerless in themselves, till the Living Spirit of God worked with them? Or will anyone say, that what *Paul, Peter, John, &c.*, spoke by Inspiration from their own Mouths, was indeed bare *Planting* and *Watering*, in order to be capable of receiving Life from God; but when these apostolical Teachings and Instructions were written on Paper, they were raised out of their first Inability, got the *Nature* of God himself, became *Spirit* and *Life*, and might be called the *great quickening* Power of God, or, as the Doctor says, the *Constant Abode* and *Supreme Illumination of his Spirit with us*?

It would be great Folly and Perverseness, to charge me here with slighting, or lessening the true Value, Use, and Importance of the inspired Apostolical Scriptures; for if the Charge was just, it must lie against Paul, and not against me, since I say nothing of them, but that which He says, and in his own express Words, *viz.*, that all their Labour of Preaching, instructing, and Writing by *Divine Inspiration*, had in themselves no other Nature, Use, or Power, than that of such *Planting* and *Watering* as could not fructify till a higher Power than was in them gave Life and Growth to that which they planted and watered.

I exceedingly love, and highly reverence the Divine Authority of the sacred Writings of the Apostles and Evangelists, and would gladly persuade everyone, to be as deeply affected with them, and pay as profound a Regard to them, as they would to an *Elijah*, a *St. John Baptist*, or a *Paul*, whom they knew to be immediately sent from Heaven with God's Message to them.—I reverence

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them as a literal Truth of and from God, as much the *greatest heavenly Blessing* that can be *outwardly* bestowed upon us.—I reverence them as doing, or fitted to do all that good amongst Christians *now*, which the Apostles did in their Day, and as of the same Use and Benefit to the Church of every Age, as their *Planting* and *Watering* was to the first.

But now, if this is not thought that Fulness of Regard that is due to the holy Messengers of God; if anyone will still be so learnedly wise, as to affirm, that though Paul's Preaching in his Epistles, whilst He was alive, was indeed only bare Planting and Watering, but the same Epistles, being published after his Death, got another Nature, became full of Divine and living Power, such a one has no Right to laugh (as the Doctor does) at the silly *Mahometan*, who believes the *Alcoran* to be *uncreated*. For wherever there is *Divine Efficacy*, there, there must be an *uncreated* Power. And if, as the Doctor says, the Scriptures of the New Testament are the *only constant Abode* and *Supreme Illumination* of the Spirit of God with us, all that is said of the *Eternal* Spirit of God, of the *uncreated Light*, might and ought to be said of them; that they are the WORD that was God, was with God, and are our true Immanuel, or God within us.

I shall now only add this friendly hint to the Doctor, that he has a Remedy at hand in his own *Sermon*, how he may be delivered from thus grossly Mistaking the Spirit of the Gospel, as well as the Law of Moses.—St. *Paul*, (says the Doctor) 'had a 'quick and lively Imagination, and an extensive and intimate 'Acquaintance with those Masters in *moral Painting*, the classic 'Writers, (N.B.) all which he proudly sacrificed to the Glory of 'the everlasting Gospel.'*

Now if the Doctor did that, though it was only from *Humility*, which he says the Apostle did *proudly*, such Humility might be as great a Good to him, as that Pride was to the Apostle.—And indeed, one would have thought, that as soon as the Doctor had discovered these Writers to be only great Masters in *moral Painting*, it should have had the same effect upon him, as if he had found them great Masters in Delusion. For where there is Moral Painting, *there*, there is *moral Delusion*. And the Spirit, the Life, the Purity, and Divine Simplicity of Gospel Truth, is more eluded, lost, and destroyed by *moral Paintings*, whether in Books or Pulpits, than by any material Colourings put upon Images of Wood or Clay, to excite Spiritual Devotion in Churches.—Again, if the everlasting Gospel is now as glorious a Thing, as it was in St. *Paul's* Days; if the highest, most ac-

* *Sermons*, vol. i., page 229.

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complished classic Knowledge is so unsuitable to the Light and Spirit of the Gospel, that it is fit for Nothing but to be cast away, or as the Doctor says, 'to be all sacrificed to the Glory of the 'Gospel,' how wonderful is it, that this should never come into his head from the Beginning to the End of his three long *Legation-Volumes*, or that he should come piping hot with fresh and fresh classic Beauties found out by himself in a *Shakespeare*, a *Pope*, &c., to preach from the Pulpit the Divine Wisdom of a *Paul*, in renouncing all his great Classic Attainments, as mere loss and Dung, that by so doing he might *win Christ*, and be *found in him!*

Let it be supposed, that our Lord was to come again for a while in the Flesh, and that his coming was for this end, to do that for the Christian World *cumbered* with much Learning, which he did to poor *Martha*, only *cumbered with much Serving*, who thereby neglected that *Good Part* which *Mary* had chosen; must we suppose that the Doctor would hasten to meet him with his *Sacred Alliances*, his Bundles of Pagan Trash, and hieroglyphic Profundities, as his full Proof that *Mary's good Part*, which shall never be taken from her, had been chosen for himself and all his Readers? As well might it be thought, that the *Pope* would come richly laden with his blessed *Images*, his heavenly *Decrees*, his Divine *Bulls*, as *infallible* Proofs of his being born again from above, and solely devoted to the *one Thing Needful*.

Let the Doctor figure to himself the gaudy Pageantry of a Divine high Mass in a *Romish Cathedral*; let him wonder at that flagrant daring Contrariety that it hath to that first Gospel-Church of Christ, *viz.*, 'where two or three are gathered together 'in my Name, there am I in the midst of them'; would he not be still fuller of Wonder, if he should hear the *Pope* declaring, that all this heathenish show of invented Fopperies was his *projected Defence* of that first Church of Christ?—But if the Doctor would see a *Protestant Wonder* full as great, he need only look at his own theatrical parading Show of heathen Mysteries, and heathenish Learning, set forth in highest Pomp. To what End? Why to bring forth, what he calls (as the *Pope* above) his *projected Defence* of *Christianity*.

O vainest of all vain Projects! For what is Christianity, but that which Christ was while on Earth? What can it be, but that which it is, and has from him? He is a King, who has all Power in Heaven and on Earth, and his Kingdom, like himself, is not of this World. Away then with the Projects of popish Pomp, and pagan Literature to support it; they are as wise Contrivances, as a high *Tower of Babel* to defend it against the gates of Hell.

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I come now to the Quotation from the pastoral Letter of Mr. *Stinstra*. 'A judicious Writer' (says the Dissertation), 'observes, that *Sound Understanding and Reason* are *That on which*, 'and by which, God *principally* operates (N.B.) when he finds it 'proper to assist (N.B.) our *weakness* by his Spirit.'*

I cannot more illustrate the Sense, or extol the Judgment, both of the *Author*, and *Quoter* of this Striking Passage, than by the following Words.

'A judicious Naturalist observes, that *Sound and Strong Lungs* 'are that *on which*, and *by which*, the Air or Spirit of this World '*principally* operates, when (N.B.) he finds it proper to assist, '(N.B.) the *Weakness* of our Lungs, by his Breathing into them.'—Now if any right minded Man should happen to find his Heart edified, his Understanding enlightened, by the above Passage on *Divine Inspiration*, he will be much pleased at my assuring him, that the Pastoral Letter of Mr. *Stinstra*, and the Dissertation on Enthusiasm by Mr. *Green*, are from the Beginning to the End full as good, in every Respect, as that is.

These two Instances are Proof enough, that as soon as any Man trusts to natural Abilities, Skill in Languages, and common-place Learning, as the true Means of entering into the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom, which is Nothing else but Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost, he gives himself up to *certain Delusion*, and can escape no *Error* that is popular, or that suits his State and Situation in the learned, religious World.—He has sold his Birth-right in the Gospel State of *Divine Illumination*, to make a Figure and Noise with the Sounding Brass and Tinkling Cymbals of the natural Man.

Whence is it, that we see *Genius* and *natural Abilities* to be equally pleased with, and equally contending for the Errors and Absurdities of every System of Religion, under which they are educated? It is because Genius and Natural Abilities are just the *same Things*, and must have the same Nature *now*, as they had in the ancient Schools of the *Peripatetic, Academic, Stoic, and Atheistical* Philosophers.—'The Temptation of *Honour*, which the 'Academic Exercise of Wit' (as Dr. W. says) 'was supposed to 'bring to its Professor,'† has still its Power among Church-Disputants. Nor can it possibly ever be otherwise, till *Parts and Genius, &c.*, do, as the *Blind*, the *Deaf*, the *Dumb*, and *Lepers* formerly did, go to be healed of their *natural Disorders* by the Inspiration of that Oracle, who said, 'I am the Light of 'the World, He that followeth me, walketh not in Darkness.'—'No Man cometh unto the Father but by me.'—Well therefore

* *Dissertation*, page 73.

† *Divine Legation of Moses*, Book I., page 33.

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might St. Paul say, 'I have determined to know Nothing among 'you, but Christ, and him crucified.'—And had it not been for this Determination, he had never known, what he then knew, when he said, 'The Life that I now live, is not mine, but Christ's 'that liveth in me.'—Now did the Apostle here overstretch the Matter? Was it a Spirit of *Enthusiasm*, and not of Christ *living* in him, that made this Declaration? Was He here making Way for Ignorance and Darkness to extinguish the Light that came down from Heaven, and was the Light of the World?—Did he here undermine the true Ground and Rock on which the Church of Christ was to stand, and prevail against the Gates of Hell? Did he by setting up this Knowledge, as the *best* and *only* Knowledge that an apostle need to have, break down the Fences of Christ's Vineyard, rob the Church of all its strong Holds, leave it defenceless, without a Pale, and a ready Prey to Infidels?—Who can say this, but that 'Spirit of Antichrist, that confesseth 'not that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh?' For, as Christ's intending Nothing, knowing Nothing, willing Nothing, but purely and solely *the whole Course* of his crucifying Process, was the whole Truth of his *being come in the Flesh*, was his doing the *whole Will* of him that sent him, was his *overcoming* the World, Death, and Hell, so He that embraces this Process, as Christ embraces it, who is wholly given up to it, as Christ was, He has the *Will* of Christ; and the *Mind* of Christ, and therefore may well desire to know Nothing else.—To this Man alone, is the World, Death, and Hell, known to be overcome in him, as they were in Christ; to him alone is Christ become the *Resurrection* and the *Life*; and he that knows this, he knows with St. Paul that all other Knowledge may, and will be cast away as Dung.—Now if St. Paul, having rejected all other Knowledge but that of a crucified Saviour, which to the *Jew* was a Stumbling-Block, and to the *Greek* Foolishness, if he had afterwards wrote three such *Legation-Volumes* as the Doctor has done, for the Food and Nourishment of Christ's Sheep, who can have no Life in them but by eating the true Bread that came down from Heaven, must they not have been called *Paul's* full Recantation of all that he had taught of a Christ crucified?

The other Instance of Delusion from Book-learning, relates to Mr. Green, who wanting to write on *Divine Inspiration*, runs from Book to Book, from Country to Country, to *pick up Reports* wherever he could find them, concerning Divine Inspiration, from this and that *judicious* Author, that so he might be sure of compiling a *Judicious* Dissertation on the Subject. All which he might have known to be mere Delusion and lost Labour, had he but remembered, or regarded any one single Saying either of Christ or his

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Apostles concerning the *holy Spirit* and *his Operations*. For not a Word is said by them, but fully shows that all *Knowledge* or *Perception* of the Spirit is nothing else but the *Enjoyment* of the Spirit, and that no Man can know more of him than that which the Spirit himself is, and does, and manifests of his Power in Man.

'The Things of God,' says St. *Paul*, 'knoweth no Man, but 'the Spirit of God.' Is not this decisive upon the Matter? Is not this Proof enough, that Nothing in Man but the Spirit of God in him, can know what the Spirit's work in Man is and does? The Fruits of the Spirit, so often mentioned in Scripture, are not Things different, or separate from the Spirit; and if the Spirit is not always working in us, his Fruits must be as absent from us as He is. St. *John* says, 'Hereby we know that he 'abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.' A Demonstration, that the Spirit can no other way make himself *known* to us, but by his dwelling and working in us. St. *James* says, 'Every good and perfect Gift cometh from ABOVE': But now does not he in reality *deny* this, who seeks for the *highest Gift* of Knowledge from BELOW, from the poor Contrivance of a *Common-Place Book*? Again, 'if any Man lacketh Wisdom, 'let him ask it of God'; St. *James* does not say, let him go ask *Peter*, or *Paul*, or *John*, because he knew that Divine Wisdom was Nothing else, but Divine Inspiration.—But Mr. *Green* has got together his *ingenious*, his *eminent* Writers, his *excellent*, *learned*, *judicious* Authors, his *cool*, *rational-morality* Doctors (a Set of Men whose glorious Names we read no more of in the Gospel, than of the profound *Aristotle*, or the Divine *Cicero*) and these are to do that for him, which the whole College of Apostles could do for nobody.—Now this Doctrine, that Nothing but the Spirit can know the Things that be of God, and that the *Enjoyment* of the Spirit, is all the Knowledge we can have of him, is a Truth taught us, not only by all Scripture, but by the whole Nature of Things. For every Thing that can be seen, known, heard, felt, &c., must be manifested by itself, and not by another. It is not possible for any Thing but Light to manifest Light, nor for any Thing but Darkness to make Darkness to be known. Yet this is more possible, than for any Thing but Divine Inspiration to make Divine Inspiration to be known. Hence there is a Degree of Delusion still higher, to be noted in such Writers as Mr. *Green*; for his Collection of ingenious, eminent, rational Authors, of whom he asks Counsel concerning the Necessity or Certainty of the immediate Inspiration of the Spirit, are such as deny it, and write against it. Therefore the Proceeding is just as wise, as if a Man was to consult some ingenious and eminent *Atheists*, about the Truth and Certainty of God's immediate

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continual Providence ; or ask a few select *Deists*, how, or what he was to believe of the Nature and Power of Gospel Faith. Now there are the Holy Spirit's *own Operations*, and there are *Reports* about them. The only true Reports, are those that are made by inspired Persons ; and if there were no such Persons, there could be no true Reports of the Matter. And therefore to consult uninspired Persons, and such as deny and reproach the Pretence to Inspiration, to be rightly instructed about the Truth of immediate continual Divine Inspiration, is a Degree of Blindness greater than can be charged upon the old Jewish Scribes and Pharisees.

The Reports that are to be acknowledged as true concerning the Holy Spirit and his Operations, are those that are recorded in Scripture ; that is, the Scriptures are an infallible History, or Relation of that which the Holy Spirit is, and does, and works in true Believers ; and also an infallible Direction how we are to seek, and wait, and trust in his good Power over us. But then the Scriptures themselves, though thus true and infallible in these Reports and Instructions about the Holy Spirit, yet they can go no further than to be a true History ; they cannot give to the Reader of them the *Possession*, the *Sensibility*, and *Enjoyment* of that which they relate. This is plain, not only from the Nature of a written History or Instruction, but from the express Words of our Lord, saying, 'Except a Man be born again of the Spirit, he cannot see or enter into the Kingdom of God.' Therefore the *new Birth* from above, or of the Spirit, is that alone which gives true knowledge and Perception of that which is the Kingdom of God. The History may relate Truths enough about it ; but the Kingdom of God, being Nothing else but the Power and Presence of God, dwelling and ruling in our Souls, this can only manifest itself, and can manifest itself to Nothing in Man but to the New Birth. For every Thing else in Man is deaf and dumb and blind to the Kingdom of God ; but when that which died in Adam is made alive again by the quickening Spirit from above, this being the Birth which came at first from God, and a Partaker of the Divine Nature, this knows, finds, and enjoys the Kingdom of God.

'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,' says Christ : this Record of Scripture is true ; but what a Delusion, for a Man to think that he knows and finds this to be true, and that Christ is all this Benefit and Blessing to him, because he assents, consents, and contends, it may be, for the Truth of those Words. This is impossible. The *new Birth* is here again the Only Power of Entrance ; every Thing else knocks at the Door in vain : I know you not says Christ to *every Thing*, but the New Birth.—'I am

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'the way, the Truth and the Life;' this tells us neither more nor less, than if Christ had said, *I am the Kingdom of God*, into which Nothing can enter, but that which is born of the Spirit.

Here again may be seen, in the highest Degree of certainty, the *absolute Necessity* of immediate Divine Inspiration through every Part of the Christian Life. For if a Birth of the Spirit is that alone that can enter into, or receive the Kingdom of God come amongst Men, that alone which can find Christ to be the Way, the Truth and the Life, then a *Continual Life* or Breathing of the Spirit in us, must be as Necessary as the first Birth of the Spirit. For a Birth of the Spirit is only to make a Beginning of a *Life* of the Spirit: *Birth* is only in order to *Life*; if therefore the *Life* of the Spirit continues not, the *Birth* is lost, and the Cessation of its Breathing in us is nothing else but *Death* again to the Kingdom of God, that is, to every Thing that is or can be Godly. Therefore the *immediate continual* Inspiration of the Spirit, as the only possible Power and Preservation of a Godly Life, stands upon the same Ground, and is as absolutely necessary to Salvation, as the new Birth.

Take away this Power and working Life of the Spirit from being the *one Life* of all that is done in the Church, and then, though it be ever so outwardly glorious in its Extent, or ever so full of learned Members, it can be Nothing else in the sight of God but the wise *Greeks* and the carnal *Jews* become a Body of water-baptized Christians. For no one can be in a better State than this, the Wisdom of the *Greek*, the Carnality of the *Jew*, must have the whole Government of him, till he is born of and led by the Spirit of God; this alone is the Kingdom of God, and every Thing else is the Kingdom of this World, in which Satan is declared to be the Prince.—Poor, miserable Man! that strives, with all the Sophistry of human Wit, to be delivered from the immediate continual Operation and Government of the Spirit of God, not considering, that where God is not, *there* is the devil, and where the Spirit rules not, *there* all is the Work of the Flesh, though nothing be talked of but Spiritual and Christian Matters. I say *talked of*; for the best Ability of the natural Man can go no further than *Talk*, and *Notions*, and *Opinions* about Scripture Words and Facts; in these, he may be a great *Critic*, an acute *Logician*, a powerful *Orator*, and know everything of Scripture, except the *Spirit* and the *Truth*.

How much then is it to be lamented, as well as impossible to be denied, that though all Scripture assures us, that *the Things of the Spirit* of God are and must, to the end of the World, be *Foolishness to the natural Man*, yet from one end of learned Christendom to the other, nothing is thought of as the true and

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proper means of attaining Divine Knowledge, but that which every *natural, selfish, proud, envious, false, vain-glorious*, worldly Man can do. Where is that Divinity Student who thinks, or was ever taught to think, of partaking of the Light of the Gospel any other Way, than by doing with the Scriptures that which he does with Pagan Writers, whether Poets, Orators, or Comedians, *viz.*, exercise his Logic, Rhetoric, and critical skill, in descanting upon them? This done, he is thought by himself, and often by others, to have a sufficiency of Divine apostolical Knowledge. What Wonder therefore, if it should sometimes happen, that the very same vain, corrupt, puffing Literature, that raises one Man to be a *Poet-Laureate*, should set another in a Divinity Chair?

How is it that the logical, critical, learned Deist comes by his Infidelity? Why just by the same Help of the same good Powers of the *Natural Man*, as many a learned Christian comes to know, embrace, and contend for the Faith of the Gospel. For, drop the Power and Reality of Divine Inspiration, and then all is dropped that can set the Believer above, or give him any Godly Difference from the Infidel. For the Christian's Faith has no Goodness in it, but that it comes from *above*, is born *of the Spirit*; and the Deist's Infidelity has no Badness in it, but because it comes *from below*, is born of the Will of Flesh and of the Will of Men, and rejects the Necessity of being born again out of the Corruption of fallen Nature. The Christian therefore that rejects, reproaches, and writes against the Necessity of immediate Divine Inspiration, pleads the whole cause of Infidelity; he confirms the Ground, on which it stands; and has Nothing to prove the Goodness of his own Christianity, but that which equally proves to the Deist the Goodness of his Infidelity. For without the New Birth, or which is the same Thing, without immediate continual Divine Inspiration, the Difference between the Christian and the Infidel is quite lost; and whether the uninspired unregenerate Son of Adam be in the Church, or out of the Church, he is still that Child of this World, *that* fallen Adam, and mere natural Man, to whom the *Things of the Spirit of God* are and must be Foolishness. For a full Proof of this no more need be seen, than that which you cannot help seeing, that the same shining *Virtues*, and the same glaring *Vices* are common to them both. For the Christian, not made such by the Spirit of God continually inspiring and working in him, has only a Christianity of his own making, and *can* have only such *Appearances* of Virtues, and *will* have such *Reality* of Vices, as *natural Self* wants to have. Let him therefore renounce what is called *natural Religion* as much as he will, yet unless he is a new born and Divinely inspired Christian, he must live and die in all his *natural Corruption*.

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Through all Scripture nothing else is aimed at or intended for Man, as his Christianity, but the Divine Life, nor any Thing hinted at, as having the least Power to raise or beget it, but the holy Life-giving Spirit of God.—How gross therefore is that Blindness, which reading the Gospel, and the History of Gospel Christians, cannot see these two fundamental Truths, (1) ‘That Nothing is Divine Knowledge in Man, but the Divine Life:’ (2) ‘That the Divine Life is Nothing else but a Birth of the ‘Divine Nature within him’?

But this Truth being lost or given up, vain Learning and a worldly Spirit, being in Possession of the *Gospel-Book*, set up Kingdoms of *Strife* and *Division*.—For what End? Why, that the *Unity* of the Church may not be lost. Multiply Systems of empty Notions and Opinions: For what? Why, that Words and Forms may do *that* for the Church *now*, which to the first Church, of Christ’s own forming, could only be done by being *born of the Spirit*.

Hence it is, that the Scripture-Scholar is looked upon as having *Divine Knowledge* of its Matters, when he is as ready at Chapter and Verse, as the Critic is at every Page of *Cicero*. And nothing is looked upon as defective in Divinity Knowledge, but such supposed Mistakes of the Genius of the Hebrew, or Greek Letter, as the sublime Students of the *immortal* Words of a *Milton*, or a *Shakespeare*, charge as *Blunders* upon one another.

Now to call such Scripture Skill *Divine Knowledge*, is just as solid and judicious, as if a Man was said, or thought to *know*, that which St. *John* *knew*, because he could say his whole *Gospel* and *Epistles* by Heart, without missing a Word of them. For a literal Knowledge of Scripture is but like having all Scripture in the Memory, and is so far from being a *Divine Perception* of the Things spoken of, that the most vicious wicked Scholar in the World may attain to the highest Perfection in it. But Divine Knowledge and Wickedness of Life are so inconsistent, that they are mutual Death and Destruction to one another; where the one is alive, the other must be dead.—*Judas Iscariot* knew Jesus Christ, and all that he said and did to his Crucifixion; he knew what it was to be at the Lord’s Table, and to partake of his Supper of Bread and Wine. But yet, with much more Truth it may be said, that he knew nothing of all this, and had no better a Knowledge of it than *Pontius Pilate* had. Now all Knowledge of Christ, but that which is from Divine Inspiration, or the New-Birth, is but as poor and profitless, as *Judas* his Knowledge was. It may say to Christ, as he did, *Hail Master*; but no one *can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Spirit*.—This

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empty Letter-learned Knowledge, which the natural Man can as easily have of the Sacred Scripture and Religious Matters, as of any other Books or human Affairs, this being taken for *Divine Knowledge*, has spread such Darkness and Delusion all over Christendom, as may be reckoned no less than a general Apostasy from the Gospel State of *Divine Illumination*. For the Gospel State is in its whole Nature nothing else; it has but one Light, and that is the *Lamb of God*; it has but one Life, and that is by the Spirit of God. Whatever is not of and from this Light, and governed by this Spirit, call it by what high Name you will, is no more a Part of the Gospel State, nor will have a better End, than that which *entereth into the Mouth, and corrupteth in the Belly*.

That one Light and Spirit, which was only one from all Eternity, before Angels or any heavenly Beings were created, must to all Eternity be that one only Light and Spirit, by which Angels or Men can ever have any Union or Communion with God.—Every other Light is but the Light whence Beasts have their Sense and Subtlety; every other Spirit, is but that which gives to Flesh and Blood all its Lusts and Appetites.—Nothing else but the Loss of the one Light and Spirit of God turned an Order of Angels into Devils.—Nothing else but the Loss of that same Light and Spirit took from the Divine Adam his first Crown of paradisaical Glory, stripped him more naked than the Beasts, and left him a Prey to Devils, and in the Jaws of eternal Death.—What therefore can have the least Share of Power towards Man's Redemption, but the Light and Spirit of God making again a Birth of themselves in Him, as they did in his first glorious Creation? Or what can possibly begin, or bring forth this Return of his first lost Birth, but solely that which is done by this eternal Light and Spirit.—Hence it is, that the Gospel State is by our Lord affirmed to *be a Kingdom of Heaven at Hand, or come among Men*, because it has the Nature of no worldly Thing or creaturely Power, is to serve no worldly Ends, can be helped by no worldly Power, receives nothing from Man but Man's full denial of himself, stands upon nothing that is finite or transitory, has no Existence but in that working Power of God that created and upholds Heaven and Earth, and is a Kingdom of God become Man, and a Kingdom of Men united to God, through a continual immediate Divine Illumination. What Scripture of the New Testament can you read, that does not prove this to be the Gospel State, a Kingdom of God, into which none can enter but by being born of the Spirit, none can continue to be alive in it but by being led by the Spirit, and in which not a Thought, or Desire, or Action, can be allowed to have any Part in it, but as it is a Fruit of the Spirit?

'Thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.' What is God's Kingdom in Heaven, but the Manifestation of what God is, and what He does in his heavenly Creatures? How is his Will done there, but because his Holy Spirit is the Life, the Power, and Mover of all that live in it.—We daily read this Prayer, we extol it under the Name of the Lord's Prayer, and yet (for the Sake of Orthodoxy) preach and write against all that is prayed for in it. For nothing but a continual, essential, immediate Divine Illumination can do that which we pray may be done.

For where can God's Kingdom be come, but where every other Power but his is at an End, and driven out of it? How can his Will only be done, but where the *Spirit* that wills in God *wills* in the Creature?

What now have Parts, and Literature, and the natural Abilities of Man, that they can do here? Just as much as they can do at the Resurrection of the Dead; for all that is to be done here is nothing else but *Resurrection* and *Life*. Therefore, that which gave Eyes to the Blind, cleansed the Lepers, cast out Devils, and raised the Dead, that alone can and must do all that is to be done in this Gospel Kingdom of God. For every the smallest *Work* or *Fruit* of Grace must be as solely done by God, as the *greatest Miracle* in Nature; and the Reason is, because every Work of Grace is the same overcoming of Nature, as when the Dead are raised to Life.—Yet vain Man would be thought to be *something*, to have great Power and Ability in this Kingdom of Grace, not because he happens to be born of noble Parents, is clothed in Purple and fine Linen, and fares sumptuously every Day, but because he has happened to be made a Scholar, has run through all Languages and Histories, has been long exercised in Conjectures and Criticisms, and has his Head as full of all Notions, theological, poetical, and philosophical, as a Dictionary is full of all Sorts of Words.

Now let this simple Question decide the whole Matter here: Has this great Scholar any more Power of *saying to this Mountain*, 'Be thou removed hence, and cast into the Sea,' than the illiterate Christian has? If not, he is just as weak, as powerless, and little in the Kingdom of God as he is. But if the illiterate Man's Faith should happen to be nearer to the *Bulk* of a Grain of Mustard-Seed, than that of the *prodigious Scholar*, the illiterate Christian stands much above him in the Kingdom of God.

Look now at the present State of Christendom, glorying in the Light of Greek and Roman Learning (which an Age or two ago broke forth) as a *Light* that has helped the Gospel to shine with a Lustre, that it scarce ever had before. Look at this, and you

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will see the *Fall* of the present Church from its first Gospel State, to have much Likeness to the *Fall* of the first *Divine* Man from the Glory of paradisaical Innocence and heavenly Purity into an earthly State, and bestial Life of worldly Craft and serpentine Subtlety.

In the first Gospel Church, heathen Light had no other Name than heathen Darkness; and the Wisdom of Words was no more sought after, than that *Friendship* of the World which is *Enmity* with God. In that new born Church, the *Tree of Life*, which grew in the *Midst of Paradise*, took Root and grew up again.—In the present Church, the *Tree of Life* is hissed at, as the visionary Food of deluded Enthusiasts; and the *Tree of Death*, called the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*, has the Eyes and Hearts of Priest and People, and is thought to do as much Good to Christians, as it did Evil to the first Inhabitants of Paradise.—This *Tree*, that brought Death and Corruption into human Nature at first, is now called a *Tree of Light*, and is Day and Night well watered with every corrupt Stream, however distant, or muddy with Earth, that can be drawn to it.

The Simplicity indeed, both of the Gospel Letter and Doctrine, has the Shine and Polish of classic Literature laid thick upon it.—*Cicero* is in the Pulpit, *Aristotle* writes Christian Ethics, *Euclid* demonstrates Infidelity and Absurdity to be the same Thing.—*Greece* had but one *Longinus*, *Rome* had but one *Quintilian*; but in our present Church, they are as common as Patriots in the State.

But now, what follows from this new risen Light? Why, *Aristotle's* Atheism, *Cicero's* Height of Pride and Depth of Dissimulation, and every refined or gross Species of *Greek* and *Roman* Vices, are as glaring in this new enlightened Christian Church, as ever they were in old Pagan *Greece* or *Rome*.—Would you find a *Gospel-Christian* in all this *Mid-day Glory* of Learning, you may light a Candle, as the Philosopher did in the *Mid-day Sun*, to find an honest Man.

And indeed, if we consider the Nature of our Salvation, either with Respect to *That* which alone can save us, or *That* from which we are to be saved, it will be plain, that the Wit and Elegance of classic Literature, brought into a Christian Church to make the Doctrines of the Cross have a better *Salvation-Effect* upon fallen Man, is but like calling in the Assistance of *Balls* and *Masquerades*, to make the *Lent-Penitence* go deeper into the Heart, and more effectually drive all Levity and Impurity out of it.—How poorly was the Gospel at first preached, if the Wisdom of Words, and the Gifts of natural Wit and Imagination had been its genuine Helps? But alas, they stand in the same

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Contrariety to one another, as Self-denial and Self-gratification. To know the Truth of Gospel Salvation, is to know that Man's natural *Wisdom* is to be equally sacrificed with his natural *Folly*; for they are but one and the same Thing, only called sometimes by one Name, and sometimes by the other.

His intellectual Faculties are, by the *Fall*, in a much worse State than his natural animal Appetites, and want a much greater Self-denial. And when own *Will*, own *Understanding*, and own *Imagination* have their natural Strength indulged and gratified, and are made seemingly rich and honourable with the Treasures acquired from a Study of the *Belles Lettres*, they will just as much help poor fallen Man to be *like-minded* with Christ, as the *Art of Cookery*, well and daily studied, will help a Professor of the Gospel to the Spirit and Practice of Christian Abstinence.—To know all this to be strictly the Truth, no more need be known, than these two Things: (1) That our Salvation consists wholly in being saved from *ourselves*, or that which we are by Nature; (2) That in the whole Nature of Things, nothing could be *this Salvation*, or Saviour to us, but such an *Humility of God* manifested in human Nature, as is beyond all Expression.—Hence, the first unalterable Term of this Saviour to fallen Man, is this, 'Except a Man denies himself, forsakes 'all that he has, yea and his own Life, he cannot be my Disciple.' And to show, that this is but the Beginning, or Ground of Man's Salvation, the Saviour adds, 'Learn of me, for I am meek, and 'lowly of Heart.' What a Light is here, for those that can bear, or love the Light! *Self* is the whole Evil of fallen Nature; Self-denial is our *Capacity* of being saved; Humility is our *Saviour*. This is every Man's short Lesson of Life; and he that has well learnt it, is Scholar enough, and has had all the Benefit of a most finished Education. Then old Adam with all his Ignorance is cast out of him; and when Christ's Humility is learnt, then he has the very Mind of Christ, and that which brings him forth a Son of God.

Who then can enough wonder at that Bulk of Libraries, which has taken Place of this short Lesson of the Gospel, or at that Number of Champion Disputants, who from Age to Age, have been all in Arms to support and defend a Set of Opinions, Doctrines, and Practices, *all which* may be most *cordially* embraced, without the *least degree* of Self-denial, and most firmly held fast, without getting *the least Degree* of Humility by it?

What a Grossness of Ignorance, both of Man and his Saviour, to run to Greek and Roman Schools to learn how to put off Adam, and to put on Christ? To drink at the Fountains of Pagan Poets and Orators, in order more Divinely to drink of the

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Cup that Christ drank of?—What can come of all this, but that which is already too much come, a *Ciceronian*-Gospeller, in Stead of a Gospel-Penitent? In Stead of the Depth, the Truth and Spirit of the *humble Publican*, seeking to regain *Paradise*, only by a broken Heart, crying, ‘God, be merciful to me a Sinner,’ the *high-bred Classic* will live in daily Transports at the *enormous** *Sublime* of a *Milton*, flying thither on the unfeathered Wings of high sounding Words.

This will be more or less the Case with all the Salvation-Doctrines of Christ, whilst under Classical Acquisition and Administration. Those Divine Truths, which are no further good and redeeming, but as they are Spirit and Life in us, which can have no Entrance, or Birth, but in the Death of Self, in a broken and contrite Heart, will serve only to help *classic Painters* (as Dr. W.† calls them) to lavish out their Colours on their own Paper Monuments of Lifeless Virtues.

How came the learned Heathens by their Pride and Vanity, by their Inability to come under the Humility of the Cross? It was because the *natural Man* shined in the false Glory of his own cultivated Abilities. Have Wit and Parts, an elegant Taste, any more good or *redeeming* Virtue in Christians, than they had in Heathens? As well might it be said, that *own will* is good, and has a *redeeming Virtue* in a Christian, but bad and destructive in a Heathen. I said a *redeeming Virtue* in it; because nothing is or can be a *religious* Good to fallen Man, but that which has a *redeeming Virtue* in it, or is, so far as it goes, a true Renewal of the Divine Life in the Soul. Therefore, said our only Redeemer, ‘Without me, ye can do nothing.’ Whatever is not his immediate Work in us is at best but a *mere Nothing* with Respect to the Good of our Redemption.—A Tower of *Babel* may to its Builders’ Eyes seem to hide its Head in the Clouds, but as to its reaching of Heaven, it is no nearer to that, than the Earth on which it stands.—It is thus with all the Buildings of Man’s Wisdom and natural Abilities in the Things of Salvation; he may take the Logic of *Aristotle*, add to that the Rhetoric of *Tully*, and then ascend as high as he can on the Ladder of *Poetic* Imagination, yet no more is done to the reviving the lost Life of God in his Soul, than by a Tower of *Brick* and *Mortar* to reach Heaven.

* See Milton’s *Enormous Bliss*.

† As this Address was wrote some time ago, in which are certain Strictures upon Dr. *Warburton*’s Writings, who has lately been consecrated a Right Reverend Lord Bishop; I thought it more candid not to alter my Style, than to take the Advantage of charging such gross Errors on a Bishop of *Gloucester*, which I only found in a Mr. and Dr. *Warburton*.

Self is the Root, the Tree, and the Branches of all the Evils of our fallen State. We are *without* God, because we are *in* the Life of *Self*.—*Self-love*, *Self-esteem*, and *Self-seeking*, are the very Essence, and Life of *Pride*; and the Devil the first Father of *Pride*, is never absent from them, nor without Power in them.—To die to these essential Properties of *Self*, is to make the Devil depart from us. But as soon as we would have *Self-Abilities* have a *Share* in our good Works, the Satanic Spirit of *Pride* is in Union with us, and we are working for the Maintenance of *Self-love*, *Self-esteem*, and *Self-seeking*.

All the Vices of fallen Angels and Men have their Birth and Power in the *Pride* of *Self*, or I may better say, in the *Atheism* and *Idolatry* of *Self*; for *Self* is both *Atheist* and *Idolater*. It is *Atheist*, because it has rejected God; it is an *Idolater*, because it is its own *Idol*.—On the other Hand, all the Virtues of the heavenly Life are the Virtues of *Humility*. Not a Joy, or Glory, or Praise in Heaven, but is what it is through *Humility*. It is *Humility* alone that makes the unpassable Gulf between Heaven and Hell.—No Angels in Heaven, but because *Humility* is in all their Breath; no Devils in Hell, but because the Fire of *Pride* is their whole Fire of Life.

What is then, or in what lies the great Struggle for Eternal Life? It all lies in the Strife between *PRIDE* and *HUMILITY*: All other Things, be they what they will, are but as under Workmen; *Pride* and *Humility* are the two Master Powers, the two Kingdoms in Strife for the Eternal Possession of Man.

And here it is to be observed, that *every Son of Adam* is in the Service of *Pride and Self*, be he doing what he will, till a *Humility* that comes solely from *Heaven* has been his *Redeemer*. Till then, all that he doth will be only done by the *right Hand*, that the *left Hand* may know it. And he that thinks it possible for the *natural* Man to get a better *Humility* than this from his own *right Reason* (as it is often miscalled) refined by Education, shows himself quite Ignorant of this one most plain and capital Truth of the Gospel, *namely*, That there never was, nor ever will be, but *one Humility* in the whole World, and that is the *one Humility* of Christ, which never any Man, since the fall of Adam, had the least Degree of but from Christ.—*Humility* is one, in the same Sense and Truth, as *Christ* is one, the *Mediator* is one, *Redemption* is one. There are not *two Lambs of God* that take away the Sins of the World. But if there was any *Humility* besides that of Christ, there would be something else besides him that could take away the Sins of the World.—‘All that came before me,’ says Christ, ‘were Thieves and Robbers:’ We are used to confine this to Persons; but the same is as true of every

Virtue, whether it has the Name of Humility, Charity, Piety, or any Thing else; if it comes before Christ, however good it may pretend to be, it is but a Cheat, a Thief, and a Robber, under the Name of a Godly Virtue. And the Reason is, because *Pride and Self* have the *all* of Man, till Man has *his all* from Christ. He therefore only fights the good Fight, whose strife is, that the *Self-Idolatrous* Nature which he hath from *Adam* may be brought to Death, by the *supernatural* Humility of Christ brought to Life in him.

The Enemies to Man's rising out of the Fall of Adam, through the Spirit and Power of Christ, are many. But the one great Dragon-Enemy, called *Antichrist*, is SELF-EXALTATION. This is his Birth, his Pomp, his Power, and his Throne; when Self-Exaltation ceases, the last Enemy is destroyed, and all that came from the *Pride and Death* of Adam is swallowed up in Victory.

There has been much sharp looking out, to see *where* and *what* Antichrist is, or by what Marks he may be known. Some say he has been in the Christian World almost ever since the Gospel Times, nay, that he was even then beginning to appear and show himself. Others say he came in with this, or that *Pope*; others that he is not yet come, but near at Hand. Others will have it, that he has been here, and there, but driven from one Place to another by several new risen Protestant Sects.

But to know with certainty, *where* and *what* Antichrist is, and who is with him, and who against him, you need only read this short Description which Christ gives of himself. '(1) I can do 'nothing of myself. (2) I came not to do my own Will. (3) I 'seek not my own Glory. (4) I am meek and lowly of Heart.'—Now if this is Christ, then *Self-Ability or Self-Exaltation*, being the highest and fullest Contrariety to all this, must be alone the *one great Antichrist*, that opposes and withstands the whole Nature and Spirit of Christ.

What therefore has everyone so much to fear, to renounce and abhor, as every *inward* Sensibility of Self-Exaltation, and every *outward* Work that proceeds from it.—But now, at what Things shall a Man look, to see *that working* of Self which raises Pride to its strongest Life, and most of all hinders the Birth of the humble Jesus in his Soul? Shall he call the *Pomps and Vanities* of the World the highest Works of *Self-Adoration*? Shall he look at *Fops and Beaux*, and *painted Ladies*, to see the Pride that has the *most* of Antichrist in it? No, by no means. These are indeed Marks, shameful enough, of the vain, foolish Heart of Man, but yet, comparatively speaking, they are but the Skin-deep Follies of that Pride which the Fall of Man has begotten and brought forth in him.—Would you see the deepest Root,

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and Iron-Strength of Pride and Self-Adoration, you must enter into the dark Chamber of Man's fiery Soul, where the Light of God (which alone gives Humility and meek Submission to all created Spirits) being extinguished by the Death which Adam died, *Satan*, or which is the same Thing, *Self-Exaltation* became the *Strong Man* that kept Possession of the House, till a Stronger than he should come upon him.—In this secret Source of an eternal fiery Soul, glorying in the astral Light of this World, a swelling Kingdom of Poms and Vanities is set up in the Heart of Man, of which, all outward Poms and Vanities are but its childish transitory Playthings. The inward *Strong Man* of Pride, the *diabolical Self*, has his higher Works *within*; he dwells in the Strength of the Heart, and has every Power and Faculty of the Soul offering continual Incense to him.—His *Memory*, his *Will*, his *Understanding*, his *Imagination*, are always at work for him, and for no one else.—His *Memory* is the faithful Repository of all the fine Things that *Self* has ever done; and lest any Thing of them should be lost or forgotten, she is continually setting them before his Eyes. His *Will*, though it has all the World before it, yet goes after Nothing, but as *Self* sends it. His *Understanding* is ever upon the Stretch for new Projects to enlarge the Dominions of *Self*; and if this fails, *Imagination* comes in, as the last and truest Support of *Self*, she makes him a King and mighty Lord of *Castles in the Air*.

This is that full-born natural *Self*, that must be pulled out of the Heart, and totally denied, or there can be no Disciple of Christ; which is only saying this plain Truth, that the apostate *Self-idolatrous* Nature of the old Man must be put off, or there can be no new Creature in Christ.

Now what is it in the human Soul that most of all hinders the Death of this old Man? What is it that above all other Things strengthens and exalts the Life of *Self*, and makes it the Master and Governor of all the Powers of the Heart and Soul? It is the fancied Riches of *Parts*, the Glitter of *Genius*, the Flights of *Imagination*, the Glory of *Learning*, and the *Self-conceited* Strength of *natural Reason*: These are the *strong Holds* of fallen Nature, the Master-Builders of *Pride's Temple* in the Heart of Man, and which, as so many Priests, keep up the daily Worship of *Idol-Self*.—And here let it be well, and well observed, that all these magnified Talents of the natural Man are started up through his miserable *Fall* from the Life of God in his Soul.—*Wit*, *Genius*, *Learning*, and *natural Reason*, would never have had any more a Name among Men, than *Blindness*, *Ignorance*, and *Sickness*, had Man continued, as at First, an holy Image of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.—Every Thing then that dwelt in him, or came from

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him, would have only said *so much* of God, and *nothing* of Himself, have manifested nothing to him but the *heavenly Powers* of the triune Life of God dwelling in him.—He would have had no more Sense or Consciousness of his own Wit, or natural Reason, or any Power of Goodness in all that He was, and did, than of his *own creating Power*, at beholding the created Heavens and Earth.—It is his dreadful Fall from the Life of God in his Soul, that has furnished him with these high *intellectual Riches*, just as it has furnished him with the substantial Riches of his *bestial Appetites and Lusts*. And when the Lusts of the Flesh have spent out their Life, when the dark thick Body of earthly Flesh and Blood shall be forced to let the Soul go loose, all these bright Talents will end with that System of fleshly Lusts, in which they begun; and *that* of Man which remains will have nothing of *its own*, nothing that can say, *I do this*, or *I do that*; but all that it has or does, will be either the *Glory of God* manifested in it, or the *Power of Hell* in full Possession of it.—The Time of Man's playing with *Parts, Wit, and Abilities*, and of fancying Himself to be something *great and considerable* in the intellectual World, may be much shorter, but can be no longer, than he can eat and drink with the Animals of this World.—When the Time comes, that fine Buildings, rich Settlements, acquired Honours, and Rabbi, Rabbi, must take their Leave of him, all the stately Structures, which Genius, Learning, and Flights of Imagination, have painted inwardly on his Brain and outwardly on Paper, must bear full Witness to *Solomon's* Vanity of Vanities.

Let then the high accomplished Scholar reflect, that he comes by his Wit, and Parts, and acute Abilities, just as the *Serpent* came by his Subtlety; let him reflect, that he might as well dream of acquiring angelic Purity to his animal Nature by multiplying new invented Delights for his earthly Passions and Tempers, as of raising his Soul into Divine Knowledge through the *well exercised* Powers of his natural Reason and Imagination.

The finest intellectual Power, and that which has the best Help in it towards bringing Man again into the Region of Divine Light, is that poor despised Thing called *Simplicity*. This is that which stops the Workings of the fallen Life of Nature, and leaves room for God to work again in the Soul, according to the good Pleasure of his holy Will. It stands in such awaiting Posture before God. and in such Readiness for the Divine Birth, as the Plants of the Earth wait for the inflowing Riches of the Light and Air. But the *Self-assuming* Workings of Man's Natural Powers shut him up in himself, closely barred up against the inflowing Riches of the Light and Spirit of God.

Yet so it is, in this *fallen State* of the Gospel Church, that with

these proud Endowments of fallen Nature, the *Classic Scholar*, full fraught with Pagan Light and Skill, comes forth to play the *Critic and Orator* with the simplicity of Salvation Mysteries; Mysteries which mean nothing else but the *inward Work* of the triune God in the Soul of Man, nor any other Work there, but the raising up a *dead Adam* into a *living Christ* of God.

However, to make way for *Parts, Criticism, and Language-Learning*, to have the full Management of Salvation Doctrines, the well-read Scholar gives out, that the ancient Way of knowing the Things of God, taught and practised by *Fishermen-Apostles*, is obsolete. They indeed wanted to have Divine Knowledge from the *immediate continual* Operation of the Holy Spirit, but this State was only for a Time, till Genius, and Learning entered into the Pale of the Church.—Behold, if ever, ‘the Abomination’ of Desolation standing in the holy Place!’—For as soon as the Doctrine is set up, that Man’s natural Parts and acquired Learning have full Right and Power to sit in the Divinity Chair, and to guide Men into that Truth which was once the only Office and Power of the Holy Spirit, as soon as this is done, and so far as it is received, it may with the greatest Truth be said, that *the Kingdom of God* is entirely shut up, and only a Kingdom of Scribes, Pharisees, and Hypocrites, can come instead of it. For by this Doctrine the whole Nature and Power of Gospel Religion is much more denied, than by setting up *the Infallibility of the Pope*; for though his Claim to Infallibility is false, yet he claims it from and under the Holy Spirit; but the Protestant Scholar has his Divinity Knowledge, his Power in the Kingdom of Truth, from himself, his own Logic, and learned Reason.—Christ has nowhere instituted an infallible Pope; and it is full as certain, that he has nowhere spoke one single Word, or given the least Power to *Logic, Learning, or the natural Powers of Man*, in his Kingdom. He has never said to them, ‘Whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven;’ never said to them, ‘go ye and teach all Nations,’ no more than he has ever said to Wolves ‘go ye, and feed my Sheep.’—Christ indeed said of himself, according to the Flesh, It is expedient for you that I go away. But where has he said of himself according to the Spirit, It is also expedient for you that I go away, that your own natural Abilities and learned Reason may have the Guidance of you into all Truth? This is nowhere said, unless Logic can prove it from these Words, ‘With out me ye can do nothing,’ and, ‘Lo, I am with you to the end of the World.’

The first and main Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles was, to tell the Jews, ‘that the Kingdom of God was at Hand,’ or was *come to them*. Proof enough surely, that their Church was

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not that Kingdom of God, though by God's Appointment, and under Laws of his own commanding. But why not, when it was thus set up by God? It was because it had human and worldly Things in it, consisted of carnal Ordinances, and had only Types, and Figures, and Shadows of a Kingdom of God that was to come.—*Of this Kingdom*, Christ says, 'My Kingdom is not of 'this World'; and as a Proof of it, he adds, 'if it was of this 'World, then would my Servants fight for me'; which was saying, that it was so different in Kind, and so superior in Nature to this World, that no Sort of worldly Power could either help, or hinder it. *But of this World*, into which the Kingdom of God was come, the Holy One of God says, 'In the World ye shall 'have Tribulation, but be of good Comfort, I have overcome the 'World.' Now how was it that Christ's Victory was their Victory? It was, because he was in them, and they in Him, 'Because I live, ye shall live also; in that Day ye shall know that 'I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you.'

This was the *Kingdom of God* come to them, the same Kingdom of God in which Adam was born and begun his first glorious Life, when the Image and Likeness of the holy Trinity had an outward Glory, like that which broke through the Body of Christ, when on 'Mount Tabor his Face did shine as the Sun, 'and his Raiment was white as the Light.'—To the Children of *this Kingdom*, says its Almighty King, 'When they bring you before 'Magistrates and Powers, take no Thought how, or what ye shall 'answer, or what ye shall say unto them, for the Holy Ghost shall 'teach you in that same Hour what ye ought to say. For it is not 'ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.'

No higher, or other Thing is here said, than in these other Words, 'Take no Thought, what ye shall Eat, or Drink, or 'wherewithall ye shall be clothed, but seek first the Kingdom of 'God, and his Righteousness, and all these Things shall be added 'unto you.' This is the Truth of the Kingdom of God, come unto Men, and this is the Birth-right Privilege of all that are living Members of it, to be delivered from their own natural Spirit which they had from Adam, from the Spirit and Wisdom of this World, and through the whole Course of their Lives only to say, and do, and be that, which the Spirit of their Father worketh in them.

But now, is not this Kingdom gone away from us, are we not left comfortless, if instead of this Spirit of our Father speaking, doing, and working every Thing in us and for us, we are left again to our own natural Powers, to run to every *Lo here*, and *Lo there*, to find a Share in that Kingdom of God, which once was, and never can be any Thing else but God, the Wisdom and

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Power of God manifested in our Flesh? Had it not been as well, nay better for us, to have been still under Types and Figures, sacrificing Bulls and Goats by Divine Appointment, than to be brought under a Religion that must be *Spirit* and *Life*, and then left to the jarring Interests of the Wisdom of the *Greek*, and the Carnality of the *Jew*, how to be living Members of it? For where the Spirit of God is not the continual immediate Governor of spiritual Things, nothing better can come of it. For the Truth and full Proof of this, no more need be appealed to than all the Libraries and Churches of Christendom for many Ages to this Day.

What is the Difference between Man's *own Righteousness* and Man's *own Light* in Religion? They are strictly the same Thing, do one and the same Work, *namely*, keep up and strengthen every Evil, Vanity, and Corruption of fallen Nature. Nothing saves a Man from his *own Righteousness*, but that which saves and delivers him from his *own Light*.—The *Jew* that was most of all set against the Gospel, and unable to receive it was he that trusted in his own Righteousness; this was the rich Man, to whom it was as hard to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven as for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle.—But the Christian, that trusts in his *own Light*, is the very *Jew* that trusted in his own Righteousness; and all that he gets by the Gospel, is only that which the Pharisee got by the Law, *namely*, to be further from entering into the Kingdom of God than Publicans and Harlots.—How comes it, that a *Beast*, a *scarlet Whore*, a *horned Dragon*, and other the most horrible Descriptions of diabolical Power, have been by the Spirit of God made Descriptions of the Christian Church? How comes it, that the Spirit describes the Gospel-Church as driven into a Wilderness;—the two faithful Witnesses, *Moses* and *Jesus*, as prophesying so many Ages in Sackcloth, and slain in the Streets of spiritual *Sodom* and *Egypt*? It is because Man's *own* natural Light, Man's *own* conceited Righteousness, his serpentine *Subtlety*, his *Self-love*, his *sensual Spirit* and *worldly Power*, have seized the Mysteries of Salvation that came down from Heaven, and built them up into a Kingdom of envious Strife and Contention, for learned Glory, spiritual Merchandise, and worldly Power.—This is the *Beast*, the *Whore*, and *Dragon*, that has governed, and will govern in every private Christian, and public Church, till, dead to all that is *Self*, they turn to God; not to a God that they have only heard of with their Ears, and their Fathers have told them, but to a God of Life, Light, and Power, found *living and working within them*, as the *essential* Life, Light, and Power of their own Lives.—For God is only our God, by a *Birth* of his own Divine Nature

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within us. This, and nothing but this, is our whole *Relation* to, our only *Fellowship* with him, our whole *Knowledge* of him, our whole *Power* of having any Part in the Mysteries of Gospel-Salvation. Nothing can seek the Kingdom of God, or hunger and thirst after his Righteousness, Nothing can cry *Abba Father*, Nothing can *pray*, 'Thy Kingdom come,' Nothing can say of Christ, 'My Lord, and my God,' but *That* which is born of God, and is the Divine Nature itself become creaturely in us. Nothing but God in Man can be a *Godly Life* in Man.—Hence is that of the Apostle, 'The Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth Life.' But you will say, can this be true of the *Spiritual Divine* Letter of the Gospel? Can it kill, or give death? Yes, it *kills*, when it is rested in; when it is taken for *Divine Power*, and supposed to have Goodness in itself; for then it kills the Spirit of God in Man, quenches his holy Fire within us, and is set up instead of it.—It *gives Death*, when it is built into *Systems* of Strife and Contention about *Words, Notions* and *Opinions*, and makes the Kingdom of God to consist, not in *Power*, but in *Words*. When it is thus used, then of Necessity it *kills*, because it keeps from *That* which alone is *Life* and can give Life.—This then is the Whole of the Matter; all the literal Truths, and Variety of Doctrines and Expressions of the *written Word*, have but one Nature, one End, and one Errand, they all say Nothing else to Man but that *one Thing* which Christ said, in these Words, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you'; just the same, as when it is said, 'Jesus Christ, who is of God made unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, and Sanctification'; this is the only Refreshment from Christ. Again, 'But ye are washed, but ye are cleansed in the Name of our Lord Jesus'; just the same as when it is said, 'Except ye abide in me, and I in you, ye have no Life in you.' Again, 'By Grace ye are saved, by Faith ye are saved,' says neither more nor less than this, 'He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, hath eternal Life'; the same as when Christ says, 'Without me ye can do nothing'; the same as the Apostle says, 'Yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me'; the same as 'Christ in us the Hope of Glory'; if Christ be not in you, ye are Reprobates.—Therefore to come to Christ, to have our heavy laden, fallen Nature refreshed by him, to be born Spirit of his Spirit, to have his heavenly Flesh and heavenly Blood made *living in us*, before we put off the bestial Body and Blood of Death which we have from Adam, is the *one only Thing* taught and meant by all that is so variously said in the Scriptures of the Merits and Benefits of Christ to us.—It is the SPIRIT, the BODY, the BLOOD of Christ *within us* that is our whole *Peace* with God, our whole

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Adoption, our whole *Redemption*, our whole *Justification*, our whole *Glorification*; and this is the one Thing said, and meant by that new Birth, of which Christ says, 'Except a Man be born again from above, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.' Now, the true Ground why all that is said of Christ in such a Variety of Expressions has only *one* Meaning, and points only to *one and the same* Thing is this, it is because the whole State and Nature of fallen Man wants only *one Thing*, and that one Thing is a *real Birth* of the Divine Nature made living again in him, as at the first; and then all is done, that can be done, by all the Mysteries of the Birth, and whole Process of Christ, for our Salvation.—All the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel are fulfilled, when there is in Christ a new Creature, having Life in and from him, as really as the Branch has its Life in and from the Vine.—And when all Scripture is thus understood, and all that either Christ says of himself, or his Apostles say of him, are all heard, or read, only as *one* and the *same* Call to come to Christ, in Hunger and Thirst to be filled and blessed with his Divine Nature made *living within us*; then, and then only, the *Letter kills not*, but as a sure Guide leads directly to Life.—But *Grammar*, *Logic*, and *Criticism* knowing nothing of Scripture but its Words, bring forth nothing but their *own Wisdom* of Words, and a Religion of Wrangle, Hatred, and Contention, about the Meaning of them.

But lamentable as this is, the *Letter* of Scripture has been so long the usurped Province of School-Critics, and learned Reasoners making their Markets of it, that the Difference between literal, notional, and living Divine Knowledge, is almost quite lost in the Christian World. So that if any awakened Souls are here or there found among Christians, who think that more must be known of God, of Christ, and the Powers of the World to come, than every Scholar can know by reading the Letter of Scripture, immediately the Cry of *Enthusiasm*, whether they be Priests, or People, is sent after them.—A Procedure, which could only have some Excuse, if these *Critics* could first prove, that the Apostle's Text ought to be thus read, *The Spirit killeth, but the Letter giveth Life.*

The true Nature, and full Distinction between *literal* and *Divine* Knowledge, is set forth in the highest Degree of Clearness in these Words of our Saviour, 'The Kingdom of God is like a Treasure in a Field': Thus far is the true Use and Benefit, and utmost Power of the *Letter*, it can tell us of a Treasure that we want, a Treasure that belongs to us, and how and where it is to be found; but when it is added, that a 'Man goes and sells all that he has, and buys that Field,' then begins the *Divine*

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Knowledge, which is nothing else, but the Treasure *possessed* and *enjoyed*. Now what is here said, is the same that is said in these other Words of Christ, 'Except a Man denies himself and forsakes all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple'; that is, he cannot partake of my *Mind*, my *Spirit*, and my *Nature*, and therefore cannot know Me; he is only a Hearer of a Treasure, without entering into the Possession and Enjoyment of it. And thus it is with all Scripture, the *Letter* can only direct to the doing of that which it cannot do, and give Notice of something that it cannot give.

Now clear and evident as this Distinction is, between a mere literal Direction to a Thing, and a real Participation of it, which alone is a true Perception of it, the generality of Christians seem quite insensible of any other religious Perception, or Knowledge of Divine Things, but such Ideas or Notions of them, as a Man can form from Scripture Words. Whereas *Good and Evil*, the only Objects of religious Knowledge, are an *inward State and Growth* of our Life, they are in us, are a Part of us, just in the same Manner as *seeing and hearing* are in us, and we can have no real Knowledge of them any other way, than as we have of our own *seeing and hearing*. And as no Man can get or lose his seeing or hearing, or have less or more of them, by any *Ideas* or *Notions* that he forms about them, just so it is with that which is the Power of *Good*, and the Power of *Evil* in us; Notions and Ideas have no effect upon it. Yet no other Knowledge is thought of, or sought after, or esteemed of any Value, but that which is notional and the Work of the Brain.

Thus, as soon as a man of Speculation can demonstrate that, which he calls the *Being and Attributes of God*, he thinks, and others think, that he truly *knows* God. But what Excuse can be made for such an Imagination, when plain Scripture has told him, that *to know God is eternal Life*, that is, to know God is to have the Power, the Life, and the Spirit of God *manifested* in him, and therefore it is eternal Life. 'No man knoweth the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son revealeth him.' Because the *Revelation* of the Son is the *Birth* of the Son in the Soul, and this new Creature in Christ has alone *Knowledge* of God, what he is, and does, and works in the Creature.

Again, Another, forming an *Opinion of Faith* from the Letter of Scripture, straightway imagines that he knows what Faith is, and that he is *in the Faith*. Sad Delusion! For to know what Faith is, or that we are in the Faith, is to know that Christ is in us of a Truth; it is to know the Power of his Life, his Sufferings, his Death, his Resurrection and Ascension, made good in our Souls. To be in the Faith, is to have done with all *Notions* and

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Opinions about it, because it is found and felt by its living Power and Fruits within us, which are *Righteousness, Peace, and Joy* in the Holy Ghost. All which are three Names or Powers peculiar to Jesus Christ; He alone is our Righteousness, our Peace, our Joy in the Holy Ghost. And therefore Faith is not in us, by reason of this or that Opinion, Assent or Consent, but it is Christ, or the Divine Nature in us; or its Operations could not be Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost.—*By Faith ye are saved*, has no other Meaning than By Christ ye are saved. And if Faith in its whole Nature, in its Root and Growth, was any Thing else but Christ, or a Birth of the Divine Nature within us, it could do us no Good, no Power could be ascribed to it, it could not be our Victory, it could not overcome the World, the Flesh, and the Devil.—Every Faith that is not Christ in us is but a Dead Faith.

How trifling therefore (to say no worse of it) is that Learning, which sets up a Difference between *Faith* and its *Works*, between a Justification by Faith, and Justification by its Works.—Is there any Difference between Christ, as a *Redeemer*, and his *redeeming Works*? Can they be set above one another in their redeeming Efficacy? If not, then Faith and its Works, which are nothing else but Christ in us, can have no separation from, or excellency above one another, but are as strictly one, as Christ is one, and no more two Things, than our Saviour and our Salvation are two *different* Things in us. Every Thing that is said of Faith, from Adam to this Day, is only so much said of the Power, and Life of a one redeeming Christ, *working within us*; so that to divide Faith from its Works is as absurd, as to divide a Thing from its self, a *Circle* from its *Roundness*. No Salvation would have ever been ascribed to Faith, but because it is, in the strictest Sense, *Christ Himself*, the Power of God, *living and working* in us. It never would have been said of Faith, that every Power of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, must yield to it, but because it is that very Christ within us, *without whom we can do nothing*. But if without Christ we can do nothing, and yet *all things are possible to our Faith*, can there be a fuller Demonstration that our Faith is nothing else but Christ born, and living within us? Whatever therefore there is of Power within us, that tends to Salvation, call it by what Name you will, either *Faith*, or *Hope*, or *Prayer*, or *Hunger* after the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, it is all but *one Power*, and that one Power is Christ *within us*. If therefore Faith and its good Works are but one and the same Christ *living in us*, the Distinction between a good Faith and its good Works, and all the contentious Volumes that have been written about it, are as mere ignorant Jargon, as a Dis-

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inction made and contended for, between *Life* and its living *Operations*.

When the holy Church of Christ, the Kingdom of God came among Men, was first set up, it was the Apostle's Boast, that all other Wisdom or Learning was sunk into nothing. 'Where,' says he, 'is the Wise, the Scribe, the Disputer of this World? Hath not God made them Foolishness?' But now, it is the Boast of all Churches, that they are full of the *Wise*, the *Scribes*, the *Disputers* of *this* World, who sit with learned Pomp in the Apostle's Chair, and have the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God committed to them.

Hence it is, that from a Religion of Heavenly Love, built upon the redeeming Life and Doctrines of a Son of God dying to save the whole World, Division, Bitterness, Envy, Pride, Strife, Hatred, and Persecution, nay every Outrage of War and Bloodshed, breathe and break forth with more Strength in learned Christendom, than ever they did from a Religion of Pagan Idolatry, set up by Satan.

It may perhaps be here said, Must there then be no Learning or Scholarship, no recondite Erudition in the Christian Church? Must there be nothing thought of, or got by the Gospel, but *mere Salvation*? Must its Ministers know nothing, teach nothing, but such Salvation-Doctrines as Christ and his Apostles taught; nothing but the *full denial* of Self, Poverty of Spirit, Meekness, and Humility, and unwearied Patience, a never ceasing Love, an absolute Renunciation of the Poms and Vanities of the World, a full Dependence upon our Heavenly Father; no Joy or rejoicing but in the Holy Ghost; no Wisdom but that which God gives; no Walking but as Christ walked; no Reward or Glory for their Labours of Love, but that of being *found in Christ*, Flesh of his Flesh, Bone of his Bones, Spirit of his Spirit, and clothed with the Wedding-Garment when the Bridegroom comes, 'when the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and with the Trumpet of God, and the Dead in Christ shall rise first'?

To this the first Answer is, Happy, thrice happy are they, who are only the thus learned Preachers of the Gospel, who through all their Ministry, seek nothing for themselves or others, but *to be taught of God*; hunger after nothing but the Bread of Life that came down from Heaven, owning no Master but Christ, no Teacher but his Holy Spirit; as unable to join with the Diggers in Pagan Pits of Learning, as with those that 'Labour for the Wind, and give their Money for that which is not Bread.'

Secondly, with regard to the Demand of *learned Knowledge* in the Christian Church, it may be answered, that all that has been

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said above, is only for the *Increase* and *Promotion* of it, and that all Ignorance and Darkness may be driven quite out of it.—The Church of Christ is the Seat or School of all the highest Knowledge that the human Nature is capable of in this Life. Ignorance is everywhere but in the Church of Christ.—The Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel, are the only Treasures of all that can be called the Knowledge either of God or Man; and He in whom the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel are fulfilled, is the only well-educated Man, and one of the first-rate Scholars in the World. But now, who is he, that has this Wisdom from these rich Treasures? Who is he, in whom all is known and fulfilled which they teach? The Lip of Truth has told us, that it is he, and he alone, ‘who loves God with all his Heart, with all his Soul, with all his Mind, and with all his Strength, and his Neighbour as himself.’ This is the Man that is all Wisdom, all Light, and let into full Possession of all that is meant by all the Mysteries contained in the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel.—Where this Divine Love is wanting, and a diabolical Self sits in its Place, there may be great *Wits*, shining *Critics*, *Orators*, *Poets*, &c., as easily as there may be a profound *Machiavel*, a learned *Hobbs*, or an atheistical *Virtuoso*. But would you divinely know the Mysteries of Nature, the Ground and Reason of Good and Evil in this World, the Relation and Connection between the visible and invisible World, how the Things of Time proceed from, are influenced by, and depend upon the Things and Powers of Eternity, there is but *one only* Key of Entrance; nothing can open the Vision, but seeing with the Eyes of that *same Love*, which begun and carries on all that is, and works in visible and invisible Nature.—Would you *divinely* know the Mysteries of Grace and Salvation, would you go forth as a faithful Witness of gospel Truths, stay till this Fire of Divine Love has had its perfect Work within you. For till your Heart is an Altar, on which this heavenly Fire never goes out, you are dead in yourself, and can only be a Speaker of dead Words, about Things that never had any Life within you. For without a real Birth of this Divine Love in the essence of your Soul, be as learned and polite as you will, your Heart is but the dark Heart of fallen Adam, and your Knowledge of the Kingdom of God will be only like that which murdering *Cain* had.—For every Thing is Murder, but that which Love does.—If Love is not the Breath of your Life, the Spirit that forms and governs every Thing that proceeds from you, every Thing that has your Labour, your Allowance and Consent, you are *broken off* from the Works of God, you have left *his Creation*, you are without God, and your Name, and Nature, and Works, can have no other Name, or Nature, but that which is

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called Pride, Wrath, Envy, Hypocrisy, Hatred, Revenge, and Self-Exaltation, under the Power of Satan in his Kingdom of Darkness.—Nothing can possibly save you from being the certain Prey of all these evil Spirits, through the whole Course of your Life, but a Birth of *that Love* which is God himself, his Light, and Spirit within you.

There is no Knowledge in Heaven, but what proceeds from this Birth of Love, nor is there any Difference between the highest Light of an Angel, and the horrid Darkness of a Devil, but that which Love has made.—But now, since Divine Love can have no Beginning, but from a Birth of the Divine Nature in us, therefore says St. John, we love him because he FIRST loved us, the same as saying, we desire God, because he *first* desired us; for we could not desire God, but because He first desired us, we could not turn to God, but because he first turned to us. And so it is, that we could not love God, but because he *first* loved us, that is, because he *first* by our Creation brought forth, and by our Redemption continued and kept up that same Birth of his own Spirit of Love in us.—For as his Holy Spirit must *first* be a Gift to us, or born in us, and then we have *that* which can *worship God in Spirit*, so his Love must of all Necessity be a Gift to us, or born in us, and then we have *that of God* in us which alone can love him with his own Love.—A Truth absolutely asserted in these Words; ‘Love is of God, and he that loveth, is born of God.’

Let this be my Excuse to the learned World, for owning no School of Wisdom, but where the *one only* Lesson is Divine Love; and the *one only* Teacher the Spirit of God. Let no one call this wild or extravagant; it is no wilder a Step, no more injurious to Man, to Truth and Goodness, than the owning no God but one.—For to be called from every Thing but Divine Love and the Spirit of God, is only being called from every Thing that has the *Curse* of fallen Nature in it.—And no Man can come from under this Curse, till he is born again of Divine Love, and the Spirit of God. For thus to be born, is as much the one sole Happiness, Joy, and Glory of Men, both now and ever, as it is the sole Joy and Glory of Angels eternally in the Heavens.—Believe me then, thou great Scholar, that all that thou hast got of Wisdom or Learning, Day after Day, in any other School but this, will stand thee in as much Stead, fill thee with as high heavenly Comfort at the Hour of Death, as all the long Dreams, which Night after Night, thou hast ever had in thy Sleep.—And till a Man knows this, with as much fulness of Conviction as he knows the Vanity of a Dream, he has his full Proof, that he is not yet in the Light of Truth, not yet *taught of God*, nor like-minded with Christ.

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One of Christ's Followers said, 'Lord, suffer me first to go and 'bury my Father'; the Answer was, 'Let the Dead bury their 'Dead, follow thou me.'—Another said to him, 'Let me first go 'bid them Farewell, that are at Home in my House'; Jesus answered, 'No Man having put his Hand to the Plough, and 'looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God.'—Now let it be supposed that a *Third* had said, Lord, I have left several *deep-learned* Books at Home, written by the greatest Masters of Grammar, Logic and Eloquence, suffer me first to go back for them, lest losing the Light which I had from them, I might mistake the Depth and Truth of thy heavenly Doctrines, or be less able to prove and preach them powerfully to others.—Would not such a Request as this have had a Folly and Absurdity in it, not chargeable upon those two other Requests which Christ rejected?—And yet, what can scholastic, classic, and critical Divinity say for itself, but that very same Thing, which this Requester here said?

The Holy Jesus said, 'I am the Light of the World, he that 'followeth me, walketh not in Darkness.'—Here spiritual Light and Darkness are as immutably fixed, and separated from one another, as the Light and Darkness of this World were divided on the first Day of the Creation. Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, is the one only Light both of Men and Angels.—Fallen Nature, the selfish Will, proud Tempers, the highest Abilities, the natural Sagacity, Cunning Arts and Subtleties, that are or can be in fallen Men and Angels, are nothing else but their fulness of spiritual Darkness, from which nothing but Works of Darkness can come forth.—In a Word, *Darkness* is the whole *natural Man*; *Light* is the *new born Man from above*. Therefore says the Christ of God, 'I am the Light of the World,' because He alone is the Birth of Heaven in the fallen Souls of Men.—But now, who can more reject this Divine Light, or more plainly choose Darkness instead of it, than he who seeks to have his Mind enriched, the Faculties of his fallen Soul cultivated by the Literature of Poets, Orators, Philosophers, Sophists, Sceptics, and Critics, born and bred up in the Worship and Praises of Idol Gods and Goddesses? What is this, but like going to the Serpent to be taught the innocent Spirit of the Dove; or to the elegant Lusts of *Anacreon* and *Ovid*, to learn Purity of Heart, and kindle the Flame of heavenly Love in our Souls? Look where you will, this is the Wisdom of those who seek to Pagans for Skill to work in Christ's Vineyard; who from long Labours in restoring the Grammar, and finding out the hidden Beauties of some old vicious Book, set up for qualified Artists to polish the Gospel *Pearl of great Price*.—Surely this is no better a Proof of their *savouring the Things that are of God*, than *Peter* gave, when his Master said to

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him, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.'—A grave Ecclesiastic, bringing forth out of his Closet skilful Meditations on the Commentaries of a murdering *Cæsar*, or the sublime Rhapsody of an old *Homer*, or the astonishing Beauties of a modern *Dunciad*, has as much Reason to think that he is walking in the Light of Christ, and led by the Spirit of God, as they have who are only *eating and drinking, and rising up to play*.

But to see the exceeding Folly of expecting Ability in Divine Knowledge, from any Thing that is the Wit, Wisdom, or Spirit of the natural Man, you need only read these Words of the holy Messenger of God, the Elias that was to come. 'I indeed,' says he, 'baptize you with Water, but He that cometh after me, whose 'Shoe's Latchet I am not worthy to unloose, He shall baptize 'you with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire.'—Now if this which the Baptist said of Christ is not our *Faith*, if we do not receive it as the Truth in which we are firmly to stand, then, be as learned as we will, we have no better a Faith, or higher Wisdom, than those blind Rabbies who received not the Testimony of John.—A Fire and Spirit from above was the News which he published to the World; this, and nothing else, was his Kingdom of God that was at hand.—Now if this *Fire and Spirit* from above has not baptized us into a Birth of the Life of God in our Souls, we have not found that Christ and Kingdom of God, to which John bore Witness. But if (what is still worse) we are so bewitched through the Sorcery of Learning, as to turn Writers and Preachers against this inward, and only redeeming heavenly Fire and Spirit, we are baptized with the Spirit of those, to whom our Lord said, 'Woe 'unto you Scribes, Pharisees, Hypocrites, for ye shut up the 'Kingdom of Heaven against Men; for ye neither go in your-
'selves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.'

For what is, or can be the *Fall* of a Divine Adam under the Power of Sin, Satan, and Hell, but the Extinction of that heavenly Fire and Spirit, which was his First Union with God and all heavenly Beings.—Say now, that he had not this heavenly Fire and Spirit at the first, that nothing lived or breathed in him but that astral Fire and Spirit which is the Life and Spirit of all earthly Animals, and then you have a Religion as Divine as that of the old Sadducees, who allowed of no Resurrection, Angel, or Spirit.—For, deny the Truth and Fulness of a Divine Life in the first Man, and then his *Fall* and *Redemption* are equally empty Sounds about nothing. For what can he be fallen from, or redeemed to, if he has now all that *Fire* and *Spirit* of Life which he ever had, or ought to have, and if all that is more than this, is but the Fiction and Dream of a distempered Brain? Tell me, why that *burning* and *shining Light*, that Man that was *more than*

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a *Prophet*, should come with his *Water*, and the Son of God, God of God, should come with his *Fire-Baptism*, if Man neither wanted, nor could receive a *higher Water*, and *Fire of Life*, than that which he has in common with the Beasts of the Field? Why is there all this Stir about Religions, Expiations and Atonements, why all these priestly Ordinations, Consecrations, Churches, Sacraments, and Prayers? For if the Fire and Spirit of this World is the one Life, and highest Life, both of Man and Beasts, we have it unasked for, and on the same Terms as the Beasts have it, and can only lose it, as they do when they lose their Existence.

But if *Fire* and *Spirit* from Heaven can alone make heavenly Creatures, and us, to be Children of an heavenly Father; if the Son of God took our fallen Nature upon him, that the first *heavenly Fire and Spirit* might again come to Life in us, if Divine Life, Divine Light, and Divine Goodness, can only come from them, and only in such Degree, as they are kindled in our Souls, what a Poverty of Sense is it in those, who are called to a Resurrection of the first Divine Life, where a new Creature is taught by that same *Unction* from above whence all the Angels and Principalities of Heaven have their Light and Glory, what a Poverty of Sense, I say, in such, to set themselves down at the Feet of a *Master Tully*, and a *Master Aristotle*, who only differ from the meanest of all other corrupt Men, as the *Teaching Serpent* differed from his fellow Animals, by being *more subtle than all the Beasts of the Field*.

Behold then your State, ye Ministers, that wait at Christian Altars, who will have neither Faith, nor Hope, nor Desire of *Heavenly Fire* kindled in your Souls, you have a Priesthood, and an Altar not fit to be named with that, which in Jewish Days had a holy Fire from God descending upon it, which made Priest and Sacrifice acceptable to God, though only Type and Pledge of that *inward celestial Fire*, which Christ would kindle into a never ceasing Burning, in the living Temples of his new born Children from above.

Complain then no more of Atheists, Infidels, and such like open Enemies to the Gospel Kingdom of God; for whilst you call heavenly Fire and Spirit, kindled into the same *essential Life* in us as they are in holy Angels, downright frenzy, and mystic Madness, you do all that infidel Work within the Church, which they do on the outside of it.—And if through a learned Fear of having that done to your earthly Reason, which was done to *Enoch* when God *took him*, you will own no higher a Regeneration, no *more Birth* of God in your Souls, than can be had by a few cold Drops of Water sprinkled on the Face, any of the heathen Gods of Wood and Stone are good enough for such an

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elementary Priesthood.—For let this be told you, as a Truth from God, that till *heavenly Fire and Spirit* have a Fulness of a Birth within you, you can rise no higher by your highest Learning, than to be elegant Orators about Scripture Words.

Our Lord has said, 'The Kingdom of God is within you,' that is, the heavenly Fire and Spirit, which are the true Kingdom and Manifestation of God, are within you. And indeed, where can it be else? Yet what learned Pains are taken to remove the literal Meaning from these Words, as too visionary a Thing for learned Ears.—And yet it is a Truth obvious to common Sense, that even this *outward World* of Stars and Elements, neither does, nor can belong to us, or we to it, but so far as it is, literally speaking, a *Kingdom within us*. For the outward Kingdom or Powers of this World signify nothing to a worldly Man that is dead; but no Man is dead, but because the Kingdom of this World, with all its Powers of Fire, Light, and Spirit, stands only *outwardly* about him, but has lost its Life and Power *within him*.

Say now, out of Reverence to sound Literature, and abhorrence of Enthusiasm, that the Kingdom of God is not really and virtually within, that its heavenly Fire, Light, and Spirit, are not, ought not to be born in a sober right-minded Follower of Christ, and then you have a *good Disciple* of Christ, as absolutely dead to the Kingdom of Heaven, as the *Corpse* that has Nothing of the Fire, Spirit, and Light of this World in it, is dead to all the outward World round about it.

What a Sobriety of Faith and sound Doctrine is it, to preach up a *Necessity* of being living Members of the Kingdom of Heaven, and at the same time the *Necessity* of orthodoxly holding, that a *heavenly Birth* neither is, nor can, nor ought to be within us! For if it either is, or could, or ought to be within us, then it could not be a brain-sick folly to believe, that the literal Words of Christ had no Deceit, Falsity, or Delusion in them, when he said, 'Except a Man be born again from above, he cannot see, or enter into the Kingdom of God.' That is, he cannot possibly have any godlike or Divine Goodness, he cannot be a Child of an heavenly Father, but from the Nature and Spirit of his heavenly Father brought to a real Birth of Life in him.—Now if, without this Divine Birth, all that we have in us is but fallen Adam, a Birth of Sin, the Flesh, and the Devil, if the Power of this heavenly Birth is all the Power of Goodness that is or was, or ever can be in a Son of Adam; and if Logic, Learning, and Criticism, are almost everywhere set in high Places, to pronounce and prove it to be mere Enthusiasm and spiritual frenzy, what Wonder is it, if Folly of Doctrine, Wicked-

ness of Life, Lusts of the Flesh, Profaneness of Spirit, Wantonness of Wit, Contempt of Goodness and *Profession* of Christianity, should all of them seem to have their full *Establishment* among us?

What Wonder, if Sacraments, Church-Prayers, and Preachings, leave high and low, learned and unlearned, Men and Women, Priests and People, as unaltered in all their aged Vices, as they leave Children unchanged in their Childish Follies? For where the *one only* Fountain of Life and Goodness is forsaken, where the Seed of the Divine Birth is not alive, and going forwards in the Birth, all the Difference between Man and Man is as Nothing with Respect to the Kingdom of God.—It matters not what Name is given to the old earthly Man of Adam's bestial Flesh and Blood, whether he be called a zealous *Churchman*, a stiff-necked *Jew*, a polite civilized *Heathen*, or a grave *Infidel*; under all these Names, the unregenerate old Man has but one and the same Nature, without any other Difference, but that which *Time*, and *Place*, *Education*, *Complexion*, *Hypocrisy*, and *worldly Wisdom*, happen to make in him. By such a one, whether he be Papist, or Protestant, the Gospel is only *kept* as a *Book*, and all that is within it is only so much Condemnation to the Keeper, just as the old Man, a *Jew*, has *kept* the Book of the Law and Prophets, only to be more fully condemned by them.

That the Jewish and Christian Church stand at this Day in the *same Kind* of Apostasy, or fallen State, must be manifest to everyone, that will not shut his Eyes against it. Why are the Jews in a fallen State? It is because they have refused Him, who in his whole Process was the Truth, the Substance, the Life, and Fulfilling of all that which was outwardly taught, and prescribed in their Law and Prophets.

But is it not as easy to see, that the whole Christian Church are in a fallen State, and for the same Reason, because they are fallen or turned away from that Holy Spirit who was promised, and given to be the *one only* Power, Life, and Fulfilling of all that which was *outwardly* taught, and prescribed by the Gospel. For the Holy Spirit to come was just the same ALL, and FULFILLING of the whole Gospel, as a Christ to come was the *All*, and the *Fulfilling* of the Law.—The Jew therefore with his Old Testament, not owning Christ in all his Process to be the Truth and Life, and Fulfiller of their Law, is just in that same Apostasy, as the Christian with his New Testament, not owning the Holy Spirit in all his Operations, to be his only Light, Guide, and Governor.—For as all Types and Figures in the Law were but empty Shadows without Christ's being the Life and Power

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of them, so all that is written in the Gospel is but dead Letter, unless the Holy Spirit in Man be the living Reader, the living Rememberer, and the living Doer of them. Therefore, where the Holy Spirit is not thus owned and received, as the *whole Power* and Life of the Gospel State, it is no Marvel, that Christians have no more of Gospel Virtues, than the Jews have of Patriarchal Holiness, or that the same Lusts and Vices which prosper amongst Jews, should break forth with as much Strength in fallen Christendom. For the New Testament not ending in the Coming of the Holy Spirit, with Fulness of Power over Sin and Hell, and the Devil, is but the same, and no better a Help to *Heaven*, than the Old Testament without the Coming of a Messiah.—Need I now say any more, to demonstrate the Truth of that which I first said was the one Thing absolutely essential, and only available to Man's Salvation, namely, the SPIRIT of God brought again to his FIRST POWER of LIFE IN US. This was the Glory of Man's Creation, and this alone can be the Glory of his Redemption.—All besides this, that passes for a *Time* betwixt God and Man, be it what it will, shows only our Fall and Distance from God, and in its best State has only the Nature of a good Road, which is only good, because that which we want is at the End of it.—Whilst God calls us by various outward Dispensations, by creaturely Things, figurative Institutions, &c., it is a full Proof, that we are not yet in our true State, or that Union with God which is intended by our Redemption.

God said to *Moses*, 'Put off thy Shoes, for the Place whereon thou standest is holy Ground.' Now this which God said to *Moses*, is only that very same Thing, which Circumcision, the Law, Sacrifices, and Sacraments, say to Man. They are in themselves nothing else but outward Significations of *inward Impurity*, and *lost Holiness*, and can do no more in themselves, but intimate, point, and direct to an *inward Life* and new Birth from above, that is to be sought after.

But here lies the great Mistake, or rather Idolatrous Abuse of all God's outward Dispensations.—They are taken for the Thing itself, for the Truth and Essence of Religion. That which the learned Jews did with the outward Letter of their Law, that same do learned Christians with the outward Letter of their Gospel.—Why did the Jewish Church so furiously and obstinately cry out against Christ, Let him be crucified? It was because their letter-learned Ears, their worldly Spirit, and Temple-Orthodoxy, would not bear to hear of an inward Saviour, not bear to hear of being born again of his Spirit, of eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood, of his dwelling in them, and They in Him.—To have their Law of Ordinances, their Temple-Pomp *sunk* into

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such a *Fulfilling* Saviour as this, was such enthusiastic Jargon to their Ears, as forced their sober, rational Theology, to call Christ, Beelzebub, his Doctrine, Blasphemy, and all for the sake of Moses and rabbinic Orthodoxy.

Need it now be asked, Whether the true Christ of the Gospel be less blasphemed, less crucified, by that Christian Theology which rejects an inward Christ, a Saviour living and working in the Soul, as its inward Light and Life, generating his own Nature and Spirit in it, as its only Redemption, whether that which rejects all this as mystic Madness be not that very same old Jewish Wisdom sprung up in Christian Theology, which said of Christ when teaching these very Things, 'He is mad, why hear ye him?' Our blessed Lord in a Parable sets forth the blind Jews, as saying of himself, 'We will not have this man to reign OVER us.'—The sober-minded Christian Scholar has none of this Jewish Blindness, He only says of Christ, we will not have this Man to REIGN IN US, and so keeps clear of such mystic Absurdity, as *St. Paul* fell into, when he enthusiastically said, 'Yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me.'

Christian Doctors reproach the old learned Rabbis, for their vain Faith, and carnal Desire of a *glorious, temporal, outward* Christ, who should set up their Temple-Worship all over the World.—Vanity indeed, and learned Blindness enough?

But nevertheless, in these Condemners of rabbinic Blindness, *St. Paul's* words are remarkably verified, *viz.*, 'Wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself, for thou that judgest dost the same Thing.'—For, take away all that from Christ which Christian Doctors call Enthusiasm, suppose him not to be an inward Birth, a new Life and Spirit within us, but only an *outward, separate, Distant* heavenly Prince, no more really in us, than our high Cathedrals are in the *third Heavens*, but only by an invisible hand from his Throne on high, some Way or other raising and helping *great Scholars*, or *great temporal Powers*, to make a Rock in every Nation for his Church to stand upon; suppose all this (which is the very Marrow of modern Divinity) and then you have that very *outward* Christ, and that very *outward* Kingdom, which the carnal Jew dreamed of, and for the Sake of which the Spiritual Christ was then nailed to the Cross, and is still crucified by the new risen Jew in the Christian Church.—If it now be asked, Whence, or from what, comes all this Spiritual Blindness, which from Age to Age thus mistakes and defeats all the gracious Designs of God towards fallen Mankind? Look at the Origin of the *first Sin*, and you see it all.—Had *Eve* desired no Knowledge but what came from God, Paradise had been the Habitation of her and all her offspring.—If

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after Paradise lost, Jews and Christians had desired no Knowledge but what came from God, the Law and Prophets had kept the Jew close to the first Tree of Life, and the Christian Church had been a Kingdom of God, and Communion of Saints to this Day.

But now Corruption, Sin, Death, and every Evil of the World, have entered into the Church, the Spouse of Christ, just as they entered into Eve, the Spouse of Adam in Paradise, in the same Way, and from the same Cause, *viz.*, a *Desire of more, or other Knowledge, than that which comes from God alone.*—This Desire is the Serpent's Voice *within* every Man, which does all that to him, and in him, which the Serpent at the Tree did to Eve.—It carries on the first deceit, it shows and recommends to him that same beautiful Tree of *own Will, own Wit, and own Wisdom*, springing up within him, which *Eve* saw in the Garden; and yet so blind is this Love of Wisdom, as not to see, that his eating of it is in the strictest Truth his eating of the same forbidden Fruits as *Eve* did, and keeping up in himself all that *Death* and Separation from God, which the first Knowledge-Hunger brought forth.

Let then the eager Searcher into *Words* for Wisdom, the Book-Devourer, the Opinion-Broker, the Exalter of human Reason, and every projecting Builder of religious Systems, be told this, that the Thirst and Pride of being *learnedly Wise* in the Things of God, is keeping up the grossest Ignorance of them, and is nothing else but *Eve's* old Serpent, and *Eve's* evil Birth within them, and does no better work in the Church of Christ, than her Thirst after Wisdom did in the Paradise of God.—Speak, Lord, for thy Servant heareth, is the one only Way by which any Man ever did, or ever can attain Divine Knowledge, and Divine Goodness.—To knock at any other door but this, is but like asking Life of that which is itself Dead, or praying to him for Bread who has nothing but stones to give.

Now strange as all this may seem to the labour-learned Possessor of far-fetched Book-Riches, yet it is saying no more, nor any Thing else, but that which Christ said in these Words, 'Except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye can not enter into the Kingdom of God.' For, if classic Gospellers, Linguist Critics, Scripture-logicians, Salvation Orators, able Dealers in the grammatic Powers of Hebrew, Greek, and Roman Phrases, Idioms, Tropes, Figures, &c., &c., can show, that by raising themselves high in these Attainments, they are the *very Men* that are *sunk Down* from themselves into Christ's little Children of the Kingdom of God, then it may be also said, that he who is *labouring, scheming, and fighting* for all the Riches he

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can get from *both the Indies*, is the *very Man* that has left all to follow Christ, the *very Man* that 'labours not for the Meat that 'perishes.'

Show me a Man whose Heart has no Desire, or Prayer in it, but to love God with his whole Soul and Spirit, and his Neighbour as himself, and then you have shown me the Man who knows Christ, and is known of Him;—The best and wisest Man in the World, in whom the first paradisaical Wisdom and Goodness are come to Life.—Not a single Precept in the Gospel, but is the Precept of his own Heart, and the Joy of that new-born heavenly Love which is the Life and Light of his Soul.—In this Man, all that came from the old Serpent is trod under his Feet, not a Spark of Self, of Pride, of Wrath, of Envy, of Covetousness, or worldly Wisdom, can have the *least Abode* in him, because that Love, which fulfilleth the whole Law and the Prophets, that Love which is God and Christ, both in Angels and Men, is the Love that gives Birth, and Life, and Growth to every Thing that is either Thought, or Word, or Action in Him.—And if He has no Share or Part with foolish Errors, cannot be tossed about with every Wind of Doctrine, it is because, to be Always governed by *this Love*, is the same Thing as to be Always *taught of God*.

On the other Hand, show me a Scholar as full of Learning, as the *Vatican* is of Books, and he will be just as likely to give all that he has for the *Gospel-Pearl*, as he would be, if he was as rich as *Cræsus*. Let no one here imagine, that I am writing against all human Literature, Arts and Sciences, or that I wish the World to be without them.—I am no more an Enemy to them, than to the common useful Labours of Life.—It is *literal Learning, verbal Contention, and critical Strife* about the Things of God, that I charge with Folly and Mischief to Religion. And in this, I have all learned Christendom, both Popish and Protestant on my Side. For they both agree in charging each other with a *bad* and *false* Gospel-State, because of *that* which their Learning, Logic, and Criticism do for them. Say not then, that it is only the *iliterate* Enthusiast that condemns human Learning in the Gospel Kingdom of God. For when he condemns the Blindness and Mischief of popish Logic and Criticism, he has all the Learned Protestant World with him; and when he lays the same Charge to Protestant Learning, he has a much larger Kingdom of popish great Scholars, logically and learnedly affirming the same Thing. So that the private Person, charging human Learning with so much Mischief to the Church, is so far from being led by *Enthusiasm*, that he is led by all the *Church-learning* that is in the World.

Again, all learned Christendom agrees in the same Charge

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against temporal Power in the Church, as hurtful to the very Being and Progress of a *Salvation-Kingdom* that is not of this World, as supporting Doctrines that human Learning has brought into it. And true it is and must be, that human Power can only support and help forward human Things.—The *Protestant* brings Proof from a thousand Years' Learning and Doctrines, that the *Pope* is an unjust Usurper of temporal Power in the Church, which is Christ's spiritual Spouse. The *Papist* brings the Learning of as many Ages to show that a temporal Head of the Church is an Anti-Christian Usurpation.—And yet (N.B.) he who holds Christ to be the one, only *Head, Heart, and Life* of the Church, and that *no Man can call Jesus, Lord, but by the Holy Ghost*, passes with the learned of both these People for a brain-sick Enthusiast.—Is it not then high Time to look out for some better Ground to stand upon, than such Learning as this? Now look where you will, through all the whole Nature of Things, no Divine Wisdom, Knowledge, Goodness, and deliverance from Sin, are anywhere to be found for fallen Man, but in these *two Points*; (1) a total entire Entrance into the *whole Process* of Christ; (2) a total Resignation to, and sole Dependence upon the continual Operation of the Holy Ghost, or Christ come again in the Spirit, to be our never-ceasing Light, Teacher, and Guide into all those Ways of Virtue, in which He himself walked in the Flesh.—All besides this, call it by what Name you will, is but dead Work, a vain Labour of the *old Man*, to new create himself. And here let it be well observed, that in these *two Points* consists the whole of that *mystic* Divinity, to which a *Jewish* Orthodoxy at this Day is so great an Enemy. For nothing else is meant, or taught by it, but a total dying to *Self* (called the Process or Cross of Christ) that a new Creature (called Christ in us, or Christ come in the Spirit) may be begotten in the Purity, and Perfection of the first Man's Union with God.—Now, let the Christian World forget, or depart from this *one mystic* Way of Salvation, let anything else be thought of or trusted to but the *Cross* of Christ, and the *Spirit* of Christ, and then, though *Churches*, and *Preachers*, and *Prayers*, and *Sacraments* are everywhere in Plenty, yet nothing better can come of it than a Christian Kingdom of *Pagan Vices*, along with a Mouth-Belief of an *holy catholic Church, and Communion of Saints*.—To this melancholy Truth, all Christendom both at home and abroad bears full Witness. Who need be told, that there is not a Corruption or Depravity of human Nature, no Kinds of Pride, Wrath, Envy, Malice, and Self-love; no sorts of Hypocrisy, Falseness, Cursing, Swearing, Perjury, and Cheating; no Wantonness of Lust in every Kind of Debauchery, but are as common all over Chris-

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tendom, as Towns and Villages?—But to pass these by, I shall only instance in *two or three Particulars*, which though little observed, and less condemned, yet fully show that the *Beast*, the *Whore*, and the *fiery Dragon*, are in Possession of Protestant as well as Popish Churches.

And *First*, can it be said that *Mammon* is less *served* by Christians, than by Jews and Infidels? Or can there be a fuller Proof that Christians, Jews, and Infidels, are equally fallen from God and all Divine Worship, since Truth itself has told us, that we *cannot serve God and Mammon*? Is not this as unalterable a Truth, and of as great Moment, as if it had been said, *Ye cannot serve God and Baal*? Or can it with any Truth or Sense be affirmed, that the *Mammonist* has more of Christ in him than the *Baalist*, or is more or less an Idolater for being called a Christian, a Jew, or an Infidel? Look now at all those Particulars which Christ charged upon the Jewish Priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, and you will see them all acted over again in the fallen State of Christendom. And if God's Prophets were again in the World, they would have just the same Complaints against the *fallen* Christian Church, as they had against the old carnal stiff-necked Jews, *namely*, 'that of their Silver and Gold they had 'made themselves Idols,' Hos. viii. 4. For though figured Idol-Gods of Gold are not now worshipped either by Jews or Christians, yet Silver and Gold with that which belongs to them is the Mammon God, that sits and reigns in their Hearts. How else could there be that universal Strife through all Christendom, who should stand in the richest and highest Place, to preach up the Humility of Christ, and offer spiritual Sacrifices unto God? What God but Mammon could put into the Hearts of Christ's Ambassadors, to make, or want to make a Gain of that Gospel, which from the Beginning to the End means nothing else but *Death* to Self, and *Separation* from every *View*, *Temper*, and *Affection*, that has any Connection with the *Lusts of the Flesh*, the *Lust of the Eyes*, and the *Pride of Life*?—Our Blessed Lord said a Word to the Jews, that might well have made *their Ears to tingle*, when he told them, that they 'had made his Father's 'House a Den of Thieves'; because Sheep and Oxen were sold, and Money-Changers sitting in the outer Court of the Temple.—Now if you will say, that Mammon has brought forth no Profanation like this in our Christian Church, your best Proof must be this, because our *Church-Sale*, is not Oxen and Sheep, but holy Things, *Cures of Souls*, *Parsonages*, *Vicarages*, &c., and our Money-Changers, our Buyers, and Sellers, are chiefly consecrated Persons.

Look at Things spiritual, and Things temporal, and say if you can, that the same Arts, the same Passions, and worldly Wisdom,

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are not as visibly Active in the One, as in the Other.—For if Christ at leaving the World had said to his Disciples, Labour to be Rich ;—Make full Provision for the Flesh ;—Be conformed to the World ;—Court the Favour and Interest of great Men ;—Clothe yourselves with all the worldly Honours, Distinctions, and Powers you can get ; I appeal to every Man, whether Popish and Protestant Churches need do any Thing else, than that which they now do, and have done for Ages, to prove their Faithfulness to such a Master, and their full Obedience to his Precepts. And now, what is all this in Truth and Reality, but the same *Whore* riding upon the *same Beast*, not here or there, but through all fallen Christendom, where God has only, in every Age, People, and Language, his seven Thousands, who have not bowed the Knee to Mammon ?

Again, *Secondly*, ‘Ye have heard,’ says our Lord, ‘that it hath ‘been said by them of Old ; thou shalt not forswear thyself, but ‘shalt perform unto the Lord thine Oaths.’—The *Jews* practised *promissary Oaths*, and thought all was well, when there was a Performance of them.—But this, with Numbers of other Jewish Practices, was not to be allowed in this Kingdom of God, that was then come into the World.—Christ *totally* rejects, and *absolutely* forbids it, saying, ‘I say unto you, swear not at all.’ But instead of it, he appoints and absolutely demands a most perfect Simplicity of Language, to support and adorn the mutual Communication of those, whom He had created again unto Righteousness, and given Power to become Sons of God, saying, ‘Let your ‘Communication be YEA, YEA, and NAY, NAY, for (N.B.) ‘Whatsoever is more than this, cometh of Evil.’—What more could have been done by Christ to prevent the Use, or hinder the Entrance of an Oath into his Church ? What then shall we say of the present Universal Christendom ? For if Christ had commanded the direct contrary, had He said, behold I give you this new Commandment, let not a simple YEA and NAY be of any Avail in all your Communication, but let *Oaths* be *required* of all that bear my Name, as a Proof that they belong to me, and Act in all their Dealings as become Saints ; *for whatsoever is less than this, cometh of Evil.*—Had this been Christ’s new Commandment, all the Churches of Christendom, as well Popish as Protestant, and these reformed Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, might have much to boast of their Obedience to it. For through Town and Country, in all ignorant Villages, in all learned Colleges, in all Courts Spiritual and Temporal, what with *Law-Oaths*, *Corporation-Oaths*, *Office-Oaths*, *Trade-Oaths*, *Qualification-Oaths*, *Simony-Oaths*, *Bribery-Oaths*, *Election-Oaths*, &c., &c., &c., there is more Swearing and For-swearing, than all

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History Reports of any Idol-worshipping Nations.—It was said of Old, 'Because of Swearing, the Land mourneth'; It is full as true to say now, Because of Swearing, the Land rejoiceth in Iniquity, is full of Profaneness, and without any Fear or Awe of the Divine Majesty, daily swallowing down all Manner of Oaths, in the same *good State* of Mind, and with as much *serious Reflection*, as Pot-companions swallow down their Liquor.

'He that despiseth me,' says Christ, 'despiseth not me, but 'him that sent me.'—Can that Church, which absolutely requires That which Christ has absolutely forbidden, be free from the most open and public Despising of Christ, which in full Contrariety to his express Word, refuses the *Sufficiency* of that *Yea* and *Nay*, which He has commanded to be sufficient; and what is still more wonderful, compels all Orders of Christians to swear by that very Book, which says to all, whether high or low, *Prince, Priest, or People*, SWEAR NOT AT ALL?

If the Swearing Law was to order, that instead of kissing the Gospel-Book, the Swearer should say, 'In Remembrance of, and 'in Regard to the Words of Christ, forbidding me to swear, I 'make this Oath,' who would not see the open Contempt of Christ and his Gospel? But the Contempt of both is as truly there, when the Gospel-Book is kissed by the Swearer; for the Book has Nothing relating to Oaths, but those Words of Christ, which absolutely forbid the Use of them.—Instead, therefore, of a SO HELP ME GOD and his HOLY GOSPEL, it might have been much better, if every Swearing Law through all Christendom had obliged every Swearer to *finish* his Oath with these Words, Let God and his holy Gospel PARDON ME IN THIS ONE THING.

If it here be asked, Whether I would have all *private* Christians to beggar themselves, and lose all their Right and Title to House and Land, which by the Laws of Christendom, cannot be preserved without certain promissary Oaths? I say not so.—But my Answer is, that as the *Jews* were of old carried captive into *Babylon*, so as real a Captivity, and full as great, must happen to all private Christians, born and living under a *fallen State* of governing Christendom.—For whether it be a Pope, or a Nebuchadnezzar, popish, or protestant Church Governors, that make the Goods and Properties of private Christians, only possible to be possessed by Obedience to their swearing Laws, the Captivity is the same.—And as God bore with the Want of a Jerusalem-Worship in those Jews, whose Captivity suffered them not to perform it, so it may well be hoped and believed, that he will bear with that Want of Gospel Purity, in the *Yea* and *Nay* of private Christians, which their Captivity under a fallen State of

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Christian Government suffers them not constantly to adhere to.—And also, that the Piety of private Christians, loving and longing after Gospel-Purity of Communication, under their Church-Captivity, will be as acceptable to God, as the Piety of captive Jews was, who though living under Heathen Laws, and forced to say their Prayers in *Babylon*, yet had always their Eyes turned towards, and their Hearts longing after *Jerusalem* and its holy Worship.

What I write, is not to show that Christendom's Oaths, and the Manner of them, are not to be submitted to by any private good Christian, but to show in the plainest Manner, that the Laws of Christendom, which make them necessary, are a full Proof that the Spirit which governs all Christendom, is fallen away from the Spirit of Christ. And also to show, that if gross Impiety runs through all the Christian World, if much and much the greatest Part of Swearing Christians have lost all pious Fear of Oaths and Swearing, it is because the Necessity of Swearing meets every Man, in almost every Thing, at the Peril of losing all that he has, or can have, unless he will Swear.

When the Matter of an Oath is a manifest Lie, or an Engagement to do some wicked Thing, all is to be suffered, rather than take it.—But where there is nothing false or bad, affirmed or promised, nor any Blame chargeable, but that of going further than our Lord's *Yea* and *Nay*, it is plain from Christ's Words, that the *Evil* is only in *That*, and *There*, from whence the Oath comes.

When a Person swears of his own Accord, or wantonly, then the Oath comes of, or from the *Evil* of his own Heart. But when a Christian, in whose Heart the Simplicity and Purity of Gospel-Language is written and loved, when he submits to use more than a *Yea* or *Nay*, compelled by that Authority which makes the Refusal to be the Loss of Goods, and bodily Imprisonment, then such Departure from Gospel-Language comes of and from the Evil in *that Power* which required it, whether it be a *Pope*, a *Kirk*, a *Church*, an *Assembly* of Divines, or a *Nebuchadnezzar*.—All this, I say, is plain from Christ's own Words.—'Let your *Yea* be *Yea*, and your *Nay* *Nay*.' But why so? It is because, *whatsoever* is *more than this cometh of Evil*, that is, is caused by Evil.—Therefore the Evil that is in the Use of an imposed Oath, is by the Words of Christ, charged upon and confined to *That*, which causes or forces it to be done.—For that which the Oath comes from, is that which our Saviour calls the Evil of it; but the Oath comes from that which causes it, therefore, that which causes Swearing, is by our Saviour's Words charged with all the Evil of the Oath.—But (N.B.) all this sup-

posed Freedom from the Evil of an imposed Oath, in the private Christian's Submission to the Use of it, is only *then* and *there*, where what is affirmed, or denied by the Oath, has all that Innocence, Truth, or Righteousness in it, which the true *Yea* or *Nay* of Christ might justly affirm, or deny.

But here let it be well observed, that nothing that has here been said, is intended to blame the Piety of those, who on no Account whatsoever will be prevailed upon to take any Kind of Oath, because our Lord and Master has said, 'Swear not at all.' *I am so far from blaming this, or looking upon it*, as the Effect of a false or blind Piety, that I wish with my whole Heart, it may come to be the Piety of all the three Estates of this Kingdom; and that all swearing, whether in secular or religious Matters, may by all the Authority of the Nation be as utterly condemned, as absolutely renounced, and declared to be as Antichristian, as the Pope's Supremacy.

In a Word, That which calls for, and requires Oaths among Christians, requires That which Christ forbids; but governing Christendom everywhere establishes, requires, and even compels Christians to swear, therefore governing Christendom is fallen from Christ, and acts by and through that Spirit, which being contrary to Christ, is and must be called ANTICHRIST.

But to proceed now to a *third* and *last* Instance, which I shall mention, of the full Power of Antichrist in and through every Part of governing Christendom.

In the darkest Ages of Romish Superstition, a *Martial Spirit* of Zeal and Glory for the Gospel, broke forth in *Kings, Cardinals, Bishops, Monks, and Friars*, to lead the Sheep of Christ, *Saints, Pilgrims, Penitents, and Sinners* of all Kinds, to proceed in Battle Array, to kill, devour, and drive the *Turks* from the Land of *Palestine*, and the old earthly *Jerusalem*. These Bloodthirsty Expeditions were called an *holy War*, because it was a fighting for the *holy Land*; they were called also a *Croisade*, because Crosses and Crucifixes made the greatest Glitter among the sharpened Instruments of human Murder.—Thus under the Banner of the Cross went forth an Army of Church Wolves, to destroy the Lives of those, whom the Lamb of God died on the Cross to save.

The Light which broke out at the *Reformation*, abhorred the bloody superstitious Zeal of these Catholic Heroes.—But (N.B.) what followed from this new risen, reforming Light, what came forth instead of these *holy Croisades*? Why Wars, if possible, still more diabolical.—Christian Kingdoms with bloodthirsty Piety, destroying, devouring, and burning one another, for the Sake of That which was called Popery, and That which was called Protestantism.

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Now who can help seeing, that Satan, the Prince of the Powers of Darkness, had here a much greater Triumph over Christendom, than in all the holy Wars and Croisades that went before? For all that was then done, by such high-spirited Fighters for old *Jerusalem's* Earth, could not be said to be so much done against *Gospel-Light*, because not one in a Thousand of those holy Warriors were allowed to see what was in the Gospel. But now, with the Gospel opened in everyone's Hands, Papists and Protestants make open War against every *Divine Virtue* that belonged to Christ, or that can unite them with that Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sins of the World:—I say against every Divine, redeeming Virtue of the Lamb of God, for these are *the Enemies* which Christian War conquers. For there is not a Virtue of Gospel-goodness, but has its Death-blow from it.—For no Virtue has any Gospel-goodness in it any further, than as it has its Birth and Growth in and from the Spirit of Christ; where his Nature and Spirit is not, there is nothing but the Heathen to be found, which is but saying the same Truth, as when the Apostle said, that He who *hath not, or is not led by the Spirit of Christ, is none of his.*

Now fancy to yourself Christ, the Lamb of God, after his Divine Sermon on the Mount, putting himself at the Head of a blood-thirsty Army, or St. *Paul* going forth with a Squadron of Fire and Brimstone, to make more Havoc in human Lives than a devouring Earthquake.

But if this be too blasphemous an Absurdity to be supposed, what follows, but that the Christian who acts in the destroying Fury of War, acts in full Contrariety to the whole Nature and Spirit of Christ, and can no more be said to be led by his Spirit, or be one with Him, than those his Enemies who 'came forth with Swords and Staves to take him.'

Blinded Protestants think they have the Glory of slaughtering blind Papists; and the victorious Papist claims the Merit of having conquered Troops of Heretics: But alas! the Conquest is equally great on both Sides, both are entitled to the same Victory; and the glorious Victory on both Sides, is only that of having *Gospel Goodness* equally under their Feet.

When a *Most Christian* Majesty, with his Catholic Church, sings a *Te Deum* at the high Altar, for Rivers of Protestant Blood poured out; or an *Evangelic* Church sings Praise and Glory to the Lamb of God, for helping them from his holy Throne in Heaven, to make popish Towns like to Sodom and Gomorrah, they blaspheme God as much as *Cain* would have done, had he offered a Sacrifice of Praise to God for helping him to murder his Brother.—Let such Worshippers of God be told this, that

the Field of Blood gives all its Glory to Satan, who was a Murderer from the Beginning, and will to the End of his Reign be the only Receiver of all the Glory, that can come from it.

A glorious *Alexander* in the heathen World is a Shame and Reproach to the human Nature, and does more Mischief to Mankind in a few Years, than all the wild Beasts, in every Wilderness upon Earth, have ever done from the Beginning of the World to this Day.—But the same Hero, making the same Ravage from Country to Country with Christian Soldiers, has more Thanks from the Devil, than twenty Pagan *Alexanders* would ever have had.—To make Men kill Men, is Meat and Drink to that roaring Adversary of Mankind, who goeth about seeking whom he may devour. But to make Christians kill Christians for the Sake of Christ's Church, is his highest *Triumph* over the highest *Mark*, which Christ has set upon those whom he has purchased by his Blood.—'This Commandment,' says he, 'I give unto you, that ye love one another.—By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another as I have loved you.'

Can the *Duelist*, who had rather sheathe his Sword in the Bowels of his Brother, than stifle that which he calls an Affront, can he be said to have *this Mark* of his belonging to Christ? and may not he that is called his SECOND, more justly be said to be *Second* to none in the Love of human Murder?—Now, what is the Difference between the haughty Duelist with his provided *Second*, meeting his Adversary with Sword and Pistol behind a Hedge, or a House, and two Kingdoms with their high-spirited Regiments slaughtering one another in the Field of Battle? It is the Difference that is between the Murder of one Man, and the Murder of an hundred thousand.

Now imagine the Duelist *fasting* and *confessing* his Sins to God to Day, because he is engaged to fight his Brother To-morrow; fancy again the Conqueror got into his Closet, on his bended Knees, lifting up Hands and Heart to God for blessing his Weapons with the Death of his Brother; and then you have a Picture in *Little* of the great Piety, that begins and ends the Wars all over heavenly Christendom.

What Blindness can well be greater, than to think that a Christian Kingdom, as such, can have any other Goodness, or Union with Christ, but that very Goodness, which makes the private Christian to be one with Him, and a Partaker of the Divine Nature? Or that Pride, Wrath, Ambition, Envy, Covetousness, Rapine, Resentment, Revenge, Hatred, Mischief, and Murder, are only the *Works of the Devil*, whilst they are committed by private or single Men; but when carried on by all the Strength and Authority, all the Hearts, Hands, and Voices of a whole

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Nation, that the Devil is then quite driven out of them, loses all his Right and Power in them, and they become holy Matter of Church Thanksgivings, and the sacred Oratory of Pulpits.

Look at that which the private Christian is to do to his Neighbour, or his Enemy, and you see that very Thing, which one Christian Kingdom is to do to another. Look at that which proves a Man to be not led and governed by the Spirit of Christ, and you see that, which proves a Kingdom to be under the Dominion and Power of Satan.—Wherever *Pride* is, there the Devil is riding in his first fiery Chariot; and wherever *Wrath* is, there he has his first murdering Sword at Work.—What is it, that fallen Man wants to be redeemed from, but *Pride* and *Wrath*, *Envy* and *Covetousness*? He can have no higher Separation or Apostasy from God, no fuller Union with Satan and his Angels, than he has of the Spirit of these Tempers: They constitute that, which whether you call it *SELF*, or *Satan* in him, the Meaning is the same. Now suppose Man not fallen into this *Self* or *Satan*, and then there could be no more War or fighting in him, than there was in the WORD made Man in our Flesh. Or suppose him redeemed from his fallen Nature, by a new Birth of the Lamb of God born in his Soul, and then he can no more be hired to kill Men gloriously in the Field, than to carry a dark Lanthorn by Night to a *Powder-Plot*.

Love, Goodness, and Communication of Good, is the immutable Glory and Perfection of the Divine Nature, and nothing can have Union with God, but that which partakes of *this* Goodness.—The Love that brought forth the Existence of all Things, changes not through the Fall of its Creatures, but is continually at work, to bring back all fallen Nature and Creature to their first State of Goodness. All that passes for a Time between God and his fallen Creature, is but one and the same Thing, working for one and the same End; and though *this* is called *Wrath*, that called *Punishment*, *Curse*, and *Death*, it is all from the Beginning to the End, nothing but the Work of the first creating Love, and means nothing else, does nothing else, but those Works of purifying Fire, which must, and alone can burn away all that dark Evil, which separates the Creature from its first created Union with God.—God's Providence, from the *Fall* to the *Restitution* of all Things, is doing the *same Thing*, as when he said to the dark Chaos of fallen Nature, 'Let there be light'; He still says, and will continue saying the same Thing, till there is no Evil of Darkness left in all that is Nature and Creature.—God *creating*, God *illuminating*, God *sanctifying*, God *threatening* and *punishing*, God *forgiving* and *redeeming*, is but one and the same essential, immutable, never ceasing Working of the Divine Nature. *That*

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in God which *illuminates* and *glorifies* Saints and Angels in Heaven, is that very same working of the Divine Nature, which *wounds, pains, punishes, and purifies* Sinners upon Earth. And (N.B.) every number of destroyed Sinners, whether thrown by *Noah's* flood, or *Sodom's* Brimstone, into the terrible Furnace of a Life, insensible of any Thing but new Forms of raging Misery till Judgment's Day, must through the *all-working, all-redeeming* Love of God, which never ceases, come at last to know that they had lost, and have found again *such a God of Love* as this.

And if *long and long Ages* of fiery Pain, and tormenting Darkness, fall to the Share of many, or most of God's Apostate Creatures, they will last no longer, than till the great fire of God has melted *all Arrogance* into Humility, and all that is SELF has died in the long Agonies and Bloody Sweat of a lost God, which is that *all-saving* Cross of Christ, which will never give up its redeeming Power, till Sin and Sinners have no more a Name among the Creatures of God.—And if *long Ages* hereafter can only do that for a Soul, departing this Life under a Load of Sins, which Days and Nights might have done for a most hardened *Pharaoh*, or a most wicked *Nero*, whilst in the Body, it is because, whilst the Soul is in the Body, it has only the Nature and State of fallen Adam, but when Flesh and Blood are taken from it, the strong apostate Nature of fallen Angels is found in it, which must have its State and Place in that Blackness of Darkness of a fiery Wrath, that burns in them and their Kingdom.

O poor Sinner, whoever thou art, repent and turn to God, whilst thou hast *Adam's* Flesh upon Thee ; for as long as that lasts, the Kingdom of God is *nigh at hand* ; but if thou diest without *Adam's* Repentance, black Lakes, bottomless Pits, Ages of a gnawing Worm, and Fire that never ceases to burn, will stand between Thee and a Kingdom of Heaven afar off.

To prevent all this, and make Thee a Child of the first Resurrection, Jesus Christ, God and Man, the only begotten Son of this infinite Love, came into the World in the Name, and under the Character of infinite *Pity*, boundless *Compassion*, inexpressible *Meekness*, bleeding *Love*, nameless *Humility*, never ending *Patience*, *long suffering*, and Bowels of redeeming *Mercy*, called the Lamb of God, who with all these supernatural Virtues taketh away the Sins of the World.

Now from this View of God's infinite Love and Mercy in Christ Jesus, willing nothing, seeking nothing through all the Regions of his Providence, but that Sinners of all Kinds, the boldest Rebels against all his Goodness, may have their *proper* Remedy, their *necessary* Means of being fully delivered from all that *Hurt, Mischief, and Destruction*, which in full Opposition to their God

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and Creator, they had brought upon themselves; from this View I say, of God and Christ, using every Miracle of Love and Wisdom to give recovery of Life, Health, and Salvation to all that have rebelled against them, look at the *murdering Monster* of WAR. And what can its Name, or Nature be, but a *fiery great Dragon*, a full Figure of Satan broke loose, and fighting against every *redeeming Virtue* of the Lamb of God?

The temporal Miseries and Wrongs which War carries along with it, wherever it goes, are neither to be numbered or expressed.—What Thievery bears any Proportion to that, which with the boldness of Drum and Trumpet plunders the innocent of all that they have? And if themselves are left alive with all their Limbs, or their Daughters unravished, they have many Times only the Ashes of their consumed Houses to lie down upon.—What Honour has War not gotten from its Tens and Tens of Hundreds of Thousands of Men Slaughtered on Heaps, with as little Regret or Concern, as at Loads of Rubbish thrown into a Pit?—Who, but the fiery Dragon, would put Wreaths of Laurel on such Heroes' Heads? Who but He could say unto them, 'Well done, good and faithful Servants'?

But there is still an Evil of War much greater, though less regarded.—Who reflects, how many Hundreds of Thousands, nay Millions of *young Men*, born into this World for no other End, but that they may be Born again of Christ, and from Sons of Adam's Misery become Sons of God, and fellow Heirs with Christ in everlasting Glory; who reflects, I say, what nameless Numbers of these are robbed of God's precious Gift of Life to them, before they have known the one sole Benefit of Living; who are not suffered to stay in this World, till Age and Experience have done their best for them, have helped them to know the inward Voice and Operation of God's Spirit, helped them to find, and feel that *evil, Curse, and Sting* of Sin and Death, which must be taken from within them, before they can die the Death of the Righteous; but instead of all this, have been either violently forced, or tempted in the Fire of Youth, and full strength of sinful Lusts, to forget God, Eternity, and their own Souls, and rush into a *kill* or be *killed*, with as much furious haste, and *goodness* of Spirit, as *Tiger* kills *Tiger* for the sake of his Prey?

That God's Providence over his fallen Creatures is nothing else but a Providence of Love and Salvation, turning through Ways of infinite Wisdom, sooner or later, all kinds of Evil into a *new Good*, making that which was lost to be found, that which was dead to be alive again; not willing that one single Sinner should want *That* which can save him from eternal Death, is a Truth as certain, as that God's Name is, I AM that I AM.

Among unfallen Creatures in Heaven, God's Name and Nature is LOVE, LIGHT, and GLORY.—To the fallen Sons of Adam, that which was *Love, Light, and Glory* in Heaven, becomes infinite PITY and COMPASSION on Earth, in a God clothed with the Nature of his fallen Creature, bearing all its Infirmities, entering into all its Troubles, and in the meek Innocence of a Lamb of God living a Life, and dying a Death, of all the Sufferings due to Sin.—Hence it was, that when this DIVINE PITY suffered its own life-giving Blood to be poured on the Ground, all outward Nature made full Declaration of its atoning and redeeming Power; the Strength of the Earth did Quake, the Hardness of Rocks was forced to Split, and long-covered Graves to give up their Dead.—A certain Presage, that all *that* came by the *Curse* into Nature and Creature must give up its Power; that all Kinds of hellish *Wrath*, hardened *Malice*, fiery *Pride*, selfish *Wills*, tormenting *Envy*, and earthly *Passions*, which kept Men under the Power of Satan, must have their Fulness of Death, and Fulness of a new Life, from that all-powerful, all-purifying Blood of the Lamb, which will never cease washing RED into WHITE, till the Earth is washed into the Crystal Purity of *that Glassy Sea*, which is before the Throne of God, and all the Sons of Adam clothed in *such White*, as fits them for their several Mansions in their Heavenly Father's House.

Sing, O ye Heavens, and Shout all ye lower Parts of the Earth, this is OUR GOD that varies not, whose first *creating Love* for knows no Change, but into a *redeeming Pity* towards all his fallen Creatures.

Look now at *Warring Christendom*, what smallest Drop of Pity towards Sinners is to be found in it? Or how could a Spirit all Hellish, more fully contrive and hasten their Destruction? It stirs up and kindles every Passion of fallen Nature that is contrary to the all-humble, all-meek, all-loving, all-forgiving, all-saving Spirit of Christ.—It unites, it drives, and compels nameless Numbers of unconverted Sinners to fall, Murdering and Murdered among Flashes of Fire, with the Wrath and Swiftmess of Lightning, into a Fire infinitely worse than that in which they Died.—O sad Subject for Thanksgiving Days, whether in Popish or Protestant Churches! For if there is a Joy of all the Angels in Heaven for *one Sinner* that repents, what a Joy must there be in Hell over such Multitudes of Sinners, not suffered to repent? And if they who have 'converted many to Righteousness, shall 'Shine as the Stars in the Firmament for ever,' what *Chorazin's Woe* may they not justly fear, whose proud Wrath and vain Glory have robbed such numberless Troops of poor Wretches, of all Time and Place of knowing what Righteousness they wanted, for the Salvation of their immortal Souls.

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Here my Pen trembles in my Hand; but when, O when will one single Christian Church, People, or Language, tremble at the Share they have in this Death of Sinners!

For the GLORY OF HIS MAJESTY'S ARMS, said once a *Most Christian King*: Now if at that Time, his Catholic Church had called a solemn Assembly to unite Hearts and Voices in this pious Prayer, 'O blessed Jesus, dear redeeming Lamb of God, 'who camest down from Heaven, to save Men's Lives, and not 'destroy them, go along, we humbly pray Thee, with our Bomb-'Vessels and Fire-Ships, suffer not our thundering Cannon to 'roar in Vain, but let thy tender Hand of Love and Mercy direct 'their Balls to more Heads and Hearts of thine own redeemed 'Creatures, than the poor Skill of Man is able of itself to do':—Had not such Prayers had more of the *Man of the Earth*, more of the *Son of Perdition* in them, than the Most Christian King's glorying in his Arms?

Again, would you further see the Fall of the Universal Church, from being led by the Spirit of Christ, to be guided by the Inspiration of the *great fiery Dragon*, look at all *European Christendom* sailing round the Globe with Fire and Sword, and every murdering Art of War, to seize the Possessions, and kill the Inhabitants of *both the Indies*.—What natural Right of Man, what supernatural Virtue which Christ brought down from Heaven, was not here trodden under Foot? All that you ever read or heard of Heathen Barbarity, was here outdone by Christian Conquerors. And to this Day, what Wars of Christians against Christians, blended with *Scalping* Heathens, still keep staining the *Earth* and the *Seas* with human Blood, for a miserable Share in the Spoils of a plundered Heathen World! A World, which should have heard, or seen, or felt nothing from the Followers of Christ, but a Divine Love, that had forced them from distant Lands, and through the Perils of long Seas, to visit Strangers with those glad Tidings of Peace and Salvation to all the World, which Angels from Heaven, and Shepherds on Earth, proclaimed at the Birth of Christ.

Here now, let the *Wisdom of this World* be as Wise as ever it will, and from its learned Throne condemn all this as *Enthusiasm*; it need be no Trouble to anyone, to be condemned by that Wisdom, which God himself has condemned as *Foolishness with Him*. For the Wisdom of this World has all the Contrariety to *Salvation-Wisdom*, that the Flesh has to the Spirit, Earth to Heaven, or Damnation to Salvation. It is a Wisdom, whose Spirit and Breath keep all the Evil that is in fallen Man alive, and which in its highest Excellence has only the full grown Nature of that *carnal Mind, which is Enmity against God*.—It is

a Wisdom that is Sensual, and Devilish, that hinders Man from knowing, and dying all those Deaths, without which there can be no new Life.—It is a Wisdom that turns all Salvation-Truths into empty, learned Tales, that instead of helping the Sinner to confess his Sins, and *feel the Misery* that is hid under them, helps him to an Art of hiding, nay of defending them. For that which the Lusts and Passions do contrary to the Wisdom from above, is proved to be *right Reason* by this Wisdom from below, whose greatest Skill is shown, in keeping all the Powers and Passions of the *Natural Man* in Peace and Prosperity; and so the poor blinded Sinner lives and dies in a total Ignorance of all that Light, blessing, and Salvation, which could only be had by a broken and contrite Heart.—For (N.B.) with Respect to Conscience, this is the chief Office of Worldly Wisdom; it is to keep all Things quiet in the *Old Man*, that whether busied in Things spiritual, or temporal, he may keep up the Lusts of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, without any Disturbance from Religious Phantoms, and Dreams of mystic Idiots, who for want of sober Sense and sound Learning, think that Christ *really meant* what he said in these Words, ‘Except a Man be born again of the Spirit, or from above, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.’—For *this Wisdom*, come to its highest perfection, is a *Classic Moral Painter*, which though it cannot alter the *Nature*, yet can change the *Colours* of every Thing; it can give to the most heavenly Virtue such an outward Form and Colour, as will force the Stoutest of *aged and learned Men* to run away from it; and to a Vice of the greatest Deformity it can pencil such charming Features, as will make every *Child* of this World, wish to live and die with it.—Its *next Perfection* is that of a *flattering Orator*, who has Praise and Dispraise at his own *free Disposal*; for as they are all of his *own making*, so he can dispose them on *whom*, and on *what* he will; not only as *outward interesting* Occasions call for them, but also as the *inward* Necessities, the *Ups* and *Downs* of his own poor *Self* want them. For *Self*, however willing to be always strong, has its weak Hours, and would be ever tottering, unless this *Elbow-Orator* kept him every Day (though perhaps not every Night) free from the disturbing Whispers of a Seed of God in his Soul.—Now join (if you please) *Learning* and *Religion* to act in fellowship with this worldly Wisdom, and make their best of it, and then you will have a Depravity of Craft and Subtlety as high as Flesh and Blood can carry it, which will bring forth a glittering *Pharisee*, with a hardness of Heart, greater than that of the Sinner *Publican*.

‘Demas,’ says St. Paul, ‘hath forsaken me, having loved this present World.’—Here you see all the Good and Blessing that

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is *inseparable* from the Wisdom of this World, it always does the same Thing, and has the same Effect wherever it is; it will do to high and low, learned or unlearned, Clergy or Laity, that same unavoidably which it did to *Demas*; it will make them forsake Christ, turn their Backs on every Grace and Virtue of his Holy Spirit, as certainly as the Love of the World made *Demas* to forsake *Paul*.

This Wisdom has asked me, how it is possible for Christian Kingdoms in the Neighbourhood of one another to preserve themselves, unless the Strength and Weapons of War are everyone's Defence, against such Invasions, Encroachments, and Robberies, as would otherwise be the Fate of Christian Kingdoms from one another.

This Question is so far from needing to be answered *by me*, that it is wholly on *my Side*; it confesses all, and proves all that I have said of the fallen State of Christendom, to be strictly true.—For if this is the governing Spirit of Christian Kingdoms, that no one of them can subsist in Safety from its neighbouring Christian Kingdoms, but by its Weapons of War, are not all Christian Kingdoms equally in the same *unchristian* State, as two neighbouring *bloody Knaves*, who cannot be safe from one another, but as each other's murdering Arms preserve and protect them? This Plea therefore for Christendom's Wars, proves nothing else but the want of Christianity all over the Christian World, and stands upon no better a Foundation of Righteousness and Goodness, than when one Murdering Knave kills another that would have killed him.

But to know whether Christianity wants, or admits of War, Christianity is to be considered as in its right State.—Now the true State of the World turned Christian, is thus described by the great Gospel-Prophet, who showed what a Change it was to make in the fallen State of the World.—‘It shall come to pass,’ says he, ‘in the last Days,’ that is, in the Days of Christendom, ‘that the ‘Mountain of the Lord's House’ (his Christian Kingdom) ‘shall ‘be established in the Top of the Mountains, and all Nations ‘shall flow into it; and many People shall say, Let us go up to ‘the Mountain of the Lord's House, and he will teach us of his ‘Ways, and we will walk in his Paths,’ Isaiah ii. 2.

Now what follows from this going up of the Nations to the Mountain of the Lord's House, from his teaching them of his Ways, and their walking in his Paths? The holy Prophet expressly tells you in his following Words, ‘They shall beat their ‘Swords into Plough-Shares, and their Spears into pruning ‘Hooks: Nation shall not lift up its Sword against Nation, ‘(N.B.) neither shall they learn War any more.’—This is the

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Prophet's true Christendom, with one and the same essential Divine Mark set upon it, as when the Lamb of God said, 'By 'this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye Love 'one another as I have loved you.'—Christ's Kingdom of God is nowhere come, but where the Works of the Devil are destroyed, and Men are turned from the Power of Satan unto God.—God is only another Name for the highest and only Good; and the highest and only Good means nothing else but LOVE with all its WORKS.—Satan is only another Name for the *Whole* and *all* of Evil, and the whole of Evil is nothing else but its whole *Contrariety* to Love.—And the Sum Total of all *Contrariety* to Love is contained in Pride, Wrath, Strife, Self, Envy, Hatred, Revenge, Mischief, and Murder. Look at these with all their Fruits that belong to them, and then you see all the *princely Power* that Satan is, and has in this fallen World.

Would you see when and where the Kingdoms of this fallen World are become a Kingdom of God, the Gospel Prophet tells you, that it is *then* and *there* where all Enmity ceases.—'The 'Wolf,' says he, 'shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard 'shall lie down with the Kid. The Calf and the young Lion and 'the Fatling together, and a little Child shall lead them. The 'Cow and the Bear shall feed, and their young ones shall lie down 'together, and the Lion shall eat Straw like the Ox. The suck-'ling Child shall play on the Hole of the Asp, and the weaned 'Child shall put his Hand on the Cockatrice's Den.'—For, (N.B.) 'they shall not HURT or DESTROY in all my holy Mountain,' that is, through all holy Christendom, Isaiah xi. 6.

See here a Kingdom of God on the Earth; it is nothing else but a Kingdom of mere Love, where all HURT and DESTROYING is done away, and every Work of Enmity changed into one united Power of Heavenly Love.—But observe again and again, whence this comes to pass, that God's Kingdom on Earth is, and can be nothing else, but the Power of reigning Love; the Prophet tells you, it is because in the Day of his Kingdom, 'the 'Earth shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters 'cover the Sea.'—Therefore, O Christendom, thy *Wars* are thy certain *Proofs*, that thou art all over as full of an Ignorance of God, as the Waters cover the Sea.

As to the present fallen State of universal Christendom, working under the Spirit and Power of the great fiery Dragon, it is not my Intention, in any Thing I am here upon, to show how any Part of it can subsist, or preserve itself from being devoured by every other Part, but by its own Dragon Weapons.

But the Christendom which I mean, that neither wants, nor allows of War, is only that where Christ is King, and his Holy

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Spirit the only Governor of the Wills, Affections, and Designs of all that belong to it.—It is my Complaint against, and Charge upon all the Nations of Christendom, that this Necessity of murdering Arms is the Dragon's *Monster*, that is equally brought forth by all and every Part of fallen Christendom; and that therefore all and every Part, as well Popish as Protestant, are at one and the same Distance from the Spirit of their Lord and Saviour the Lamb of God, and therefore all want one and the same entire Reformation.

In these last Ages of fallen Christendom, many Reformations have taken Place; but alas! Truth must be forced to say, that they have been in all their Variety, little better than so many run-away Births of one and the same Mother, so many lesser *Babels* come out of *Babylon* the great.—For among all the Reformers, the one only true Reformation has never yet been thought of.—A Change of Place, of Governors, of Opinions, together with new formed outward Models, is all the Reformation that has yet been attempted.

The *Wisdom* of this World, with its worldly Spirit, was the only Thing that had overcome the Church, and had carried it into Captivity. For in Captivity it certainly is, as soon as it is turned into a Kingdom of this World; and a Kingdom of this World it certainly is, as soon as worldly Wisdom has its Power in it.—Not a false Doctrine, not a bad Discipline, not an usurped Power, or corrupt Practice ever has prevailed, or does prevail in the Church, but has had its whole Birth and Growth from worldly Wisdom.

This Wisdom was the great evil Root, at which the reforming Axe should have been laid, and must be laid, before the Church can be again that Virgin Spouse of Christ, which it was at the Beginning.—‘If any Man,’ says St. Paul, ‘will be wise, let him become a Fool in this World.’ This admits of no Exception, it is a Maxim as universal and unalterable, as that which says, ‘If any Man will follow Christ, let him deny himself.’—For no Man has any more to deny than that, which the Wisdom and Spirit of this World are, and do in him. For all that is in this World, the *Lusts* of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, are the very Things in which alone the Wisdom of this World lives, and moves, and has its being. It can be no other, can rise no higher, nor be any better, than they are and do.—For as heavenly Wisdom is the Whole of all heavenly Goodness, so earthly Wisdom has the whole Evil of all the earthly Nature.

St. *Paul* speaks of a *natural Man*, that cannot know the Things of God, but to whom they are mere Foolishness. This *natural Man* is only another Name for the Wisdom of this World; but though

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he cannot know the Things that be of God, yet he can know their *Names*, and learn to speak that which the Saints of God have spoken about them.—He can make Profession of them, be eloquent in their Praise, and set them forth in such a desirable View, as shall make them quite agreeable to the Children of worldly Wisdom.—This is the natural Man, who having got into the Church, and Church Power, has turned the Things of God into Things of this World.—Had this Man been kept out of the Church, the Church had kept its first Purity to this Day; for its fallen State is nothing else but its Fall into the Hands of the natural Man of this World.—And when this is the State of the Church, the Wisdom of this World (which always loves its own) will be in Love with it, will spare no Cost to maintain it, will make Laws, fight Battles in Defence of it, and condemn every Man as Heretical, who dares speak a Word against this *Glorious Image* of a Church, which the Wisdom of this World has set up.

This is the great Antichrist, which is neither better nor worse, nor any Thing else, but the Spirit of Satan working against Christ, in the Strength and Subtlety of earthly Wisdom.

If therefore you take any Thing to be Church-Reformation, but a full Departure from the Wisdom of this World, or any Thing to be your Entrance into a Salvation-Church, but the *Nature, Spirit, and Works* of Christ, become *living* in you, then, whether Papist or Protestant, Reformation or no Reformation, all will be just as much Good to you, as when a Sadducee turns Publican, or from a Publican becomes a Pharisee.—For the Church of Christ, as it is the *Door* of Salvation, is nothing else but Christ himself.—Christ in us, or we in his Church, is the same Thing. When that is *alive, Wills, and Works* in you, which was alive in Christ, then you are in his Church; for that which he was, that must they be who are his. Without this, it matters not what *Pale* you are in. To every Thing but the new Creature, Christ says, 'I know you not'; and to every Virtue that worldly Wisdom puts on, 'Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou savourest 'not the Things that be of God.' And the Reason why it must be thus, why worldly Wisdom, though under a Religious Form, is and can be nothing else, but that which is called Satan, or Antichrist, is because all that we are, and have from this World, is that very enmity against God, that whole Evil which separates us from him, and constitutes all that Death and Damnation that belongs to our fallen State.—And so sure as the Life of this World is our Separation from God, so sure is it, that a total Departure from every Subtlety and Prosperity of worldly Wisdom, is absolutely necessary to change an evil Son of Adam into a holy Son of God.—And here it is well to be observed, that the

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Church of Christ is solely for this End, to make us Holy as he is Holy. But nothing can do this, but that which has full Power to change a Sinner into a Saint. And he who has not found *that Power* in the Church, may be assured that he is not yet a true Son of that Church. For the Church brings forth no other Births, but holy Children of God; it has no other End, no other Nature, or Work, but that of changing a Sinner into a Saint.—But this can only be done, just as the change of Night into Day is done, or as the Darkness is quite lost in the Light.—Something as contrary to the whole Nature of Sin, as Light is to Darkness, and as powerful over it, as the Light is powerful over Darkness, can alone do this.—Creeds, Canons, Articles of Religion, stately Churches, learned Priests, Singing, Preaching, and Praying in the best contrived Form of Words, can no more raise a dead Sinner into a living Saint, than a *fine System* of Light and Colours can change the Night into Day. For, (N.B.) That which cannot help you to *all* Goodness, cannot help you to *any* Goodness, nor can that take away *any* Sin, but that which can take away *all* Sin.

On this Ground it is, that the Apostle said, 'Circumcision is 'nothing, and Uncircumcision is nothing'; and on the same Ground it must be said, that *Poper*y is nothing, and *Protestantism* is nothing, because all is nothing, as to Salvation, but a Sinner changed into a Saint, or the Apostle's new Creature.—Call nothing therefore your Holy, Salvation-Church, but that which takes away all your Sins; this is the only Way not to be deceived with the Cry about Churches, Reformations, and Divisions.—If it be asked, What is meant by taking away all our Sins? The Whole is fully told us in these Words, 'To as many as believed, to them 'He gave Power to become Sons of God.' This is the true taking away, or Forgiveness of Sins; not a strong Imagination, or Brain-Fancy, that on such an Hour, on such a Day, or in such a Place, you felt and knew assuredly that all your Sins were forgiven you: By such a Forgiveness of Sins, *That* which made you a Sinner is not *destroyed*, but you will have every Day the same Necessity of confessing yourself a *miserable Sinner*, as you had that *Morning*, when your Sins were not forgiven you till the *Afternoon*.—The true Forgiveness of Sins is only then, when *That* which Sinned in us is done away, or become Powerless in us; but nothing can do this, but *That Power* by which we become Sons of God.—A blind Man has then only a Deliverance from his Blindness, when he is put in full Possession of seeing Eyes; this is the only doing away of his Darkness.—Just so, and no otherwise, are our Sins forgiven us, or done away, when the Power by which we become Sons of God, or the new Creature, is

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so given to us, so possessed by us, as seeing Eyes are given to and possessed by the Man, who before that was all Blindness.— And as our *Old Man* can only then be said to be truly *put off*, when the *New Man* in Christ is raised to Life in his Stead, so our Sins are only then truly blotted out, or done away, when an un sinning Nature, or a Birth of God that Sinneth not, is come to be the ruling Life in us.

Many are the *Marks*, which the learned have given us of the true Church ; but be that as it will, no Man, whether Learned or Unlearned, can have any Mark or Proof of his own *true Church-Membership*, but his being dead unto all Sin, and alive unto all Righteousness.—This cannot be more plainly told us, than in these Words of our Lord, ‘ He that committeth Sin, is the Servant of Sin ’ ; but surely that Servant of Sin, cannot at the same Time be a living Member of Christ’s Body, or that new Creature, who dwells in Christ, and Christ in him.—To suppose a Man born again from above, yet under a necessity of continuing to Sin, is as absurd as to suppose, that the true Christian is only to have so much of the Nature of Christ born in him, as is consistent with as real a Power of Satan still dwelling in him.—‘ If ‘ the Son,’ says Christ, ‘ shall make you free, then ye shall be free ‘ indeed.’ What is this, but saying, if Christ be come to Life in you, then a true Freedom from all Necessity of Sinning is given to you. Now if this is hindered, and cannot come to pass in the faithful Follower of Christ, it must be, because both the Willing and Working of Christ in Man is too weak to overcome that, which the Devil wills and works in him.—All this Absurdity, and even Blasphemy, is necessarily implied in that common Doctrine of Books and Pulpits, which teaches, that the Christian can never have done Sinning as long as he lives.—Well therefore may Christendom Sleep as securely as it does, under the Power of Sin, without any Thought, Hope, or Desire of doing God’s Will on Earth, as it is done in heaven ; without any concern at their not being Pure, as he who has called them is Pure, or Walking as he Walked.

The Scripture knows no Christians but Saints, who in all Things Act as becometh Saints. But now if the Scripture Saint did not mean a Man that eschewed *all Evil*, and was Holy in all his Conversation, Saint and no Saint would have only such Difference, as one carnal Man will always have from another.—Preachers and Writers comfort the half Christians with telling them, that God *requires not* a perfect, sinless Obedience, but *accepts* the Sincerity of our weak Endeavours instead of it.—Here, if ever, the *Blind lead the Blind*.—For St. Paul, comparing the Way of Salvation to a *Race*, says, ‘ In a Race all run, but

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'ONE obtaineth the Prize: So run that ye may obtain.'—Now if Paul had seeing Eyes, must not they be Blind who teach, that God accepts of all *that run* in the religious Race, *and requires not* that any should *obtain* the Prize.—How easy was it to see, that the Sincerity of our weak Endeavours was quite a different Thing from that, which alone is, and can be the *required* Perfection of our Lives. The first God accepts, that is, bears with. But why or how? Not because he seeks or *requires* no more, but he bears with them, because, though at a great Distance from, they are, or may be making towards that Perfection, or new Creature, which he *absolutely requires*, which is the *Fulness of the Stature of Christ*, and is that which Paul says, is the ONE that obtains the Prize.

The same which Paul says, is said by Christ in other Words, 'Strive,' says he, 'to enter in at the strait Gate.' Here our best Endeavours are called for, and therefore accepted by God, and yet at the same Time he adds, 'that many shall strive to 'enter in, but shall not be able.'—Why so, whence comes this? It is because Christ himself is the *one Door* into Life.—Here the *Strivers* mentioned by Christ, and those which St. Paul calls *Runners* in a Race, are the very same Persons; and Christ calling himself the *one Door* of Entrance, is the same Thing as when Paul says, that *one only* receives the Prize, and that one, which alone obtains the Prize, or that enters through the right Door, is that new Creature in whom Christ is truly Born. For whether you consider Things Natural or Supernatural, Nothing but *Christ in us*, can be *our Hope of Glory*.

The Pleader for Imperfection further supports himself by saying, No Man in the World, Christ excepted, was ever without Sin.—And so say I too; and with the Apostle I also add, 'That 'if we say we have not Sinned, we make him a Liar.'—But then it is as true to say, that we make *him a Liar*, if we deny the Possibility of our ever being freed from a Necessity of Sinning. For the same Word of God says, 'If we confess our Sins, he is 'faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, and (N.B.) to cleanse us 'from all Unrighteousness.'

But surely he that is left under a Necessity of Sinning as long as he lives, can no more be said to be cleansed from *all Unrighteousness*, than a Man who must be a *Cripple* to his dying Day, can be said to be cured of *all his Lameness*.—What weaker Conclusion can well be made, than to infer, that because Christ was the only Man that was born and lived free from Sin, therefore no Man on Earth can be raised to a Freedom from Sinning; no better than concluding, that because the *Old Man* is every-one's Birth from Adam, therefore there can be no such Thing as a *New Man*, created unto Righteousness, through Christ Jesus,

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living and being all in all in him; no better Sense or Logic, than to say, that because our *Redeemer* could not find us any Thing else but *Sinners*, therefore he must of all Necessity leave us to be *Sinners*.

Of Christ it only can be said, that he is *in himself* the true Vine; but of every Branch that is his, and grows in him, it must be as truly said, that the Life and Spirit of the true Vine, is the Life and Spirit of its Branches, and that as is the Vine, so are its Branches.—And here let it be well noted, that if the Branch has not the Life and Goodness of the Vine in it, it can only be, because it is broken off from the Vine, and therefore a withered Branch, fit for the Fire.—But if the Branches abide in the Vine, then Christ says this glorious Thing of them, ‘Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you,’ John xv. 7. The very same glorious Thing, which he had before said of himself, ‘Father, I thank Thee, that Thou hast heard me,’ and (N.B.) ‘I knew that thou hearest me always,’ John xi. 41. Now say that this new Creature, who is in such Union, Communion, and Power with God, because Christ is in him, and he in Christ, as really as the Vine is in the Branches, and the Branches in the Vine, say that he must be a Servant of Sin, as long as he lives in this World, and then your Absurdity will be as great, as if you had said, that Christ in us must partake of our Corruption.

The sober Divine, who abhors the Pride of Enthusiasts, for the Sake of Humility, says of himself and all Men, We are poor, blind, imperfect Creatures; all our natural Faculties are perverted, corrupted, and out of their right State; and therefore nothing that is perfect can come from us, or be done by us. Truth enough! And the very same Truth, as when the Apostle says, ‘The natural Man knoweth not the Things that be of God, He cannot know them, they are foolishness to him.’ This is the Man that we all are by Nature.—But what Scripture ever spoke of, or required any perfect Works from this Man, any more than it requires the *Ethiopian* to change his Skin? Or what an instructed Divine must he be, who considers this old natural Man as the Christian, and therefore rejects Christian Perfection, because this *Old Man* cannot attain to it? What greater Blindness, than to appeal to our fallen State, as a Proof of a Weakness and Corruption which we must have, when we are redeemed from it? Is this any wiser, than saying, that Sin and Corruption must be there *where* Christ is, because it is *there* where he is not?

Our Lord has said this absolute Truth, That unless we be born again from above, there is no possible Entrance into the Kingdom of God.—What this new Birth is in us, and what we get by

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it, is as expressly told us by his beloved Apostle, saying, 'That which is born of God sinneth not.'—This is as true and unalterable, as to say, that which is born of the Devil can do nothing else but add Sin to Sin. To what End do we pray, that 'this Day we may fall into no Sin,' if no such Day can be had? But if Sinning can be made to cease in us for one Day, What can do this for us, but that which can do the same To-morrow? What Benefit in Praying, that 'God's Will may be done on Earth, as 'it is in Heaven,' if the Earth as long as it lasts must have as many Sinners, as it has Men upon it? How vainly does *the Church* pray for the Baptized Person, 'that he may have Power and Strength to have Victory, and to triumph against the 'Devil, the World, and the Flesh,' if this victorious Triumph can never be obtained; if notwithstanding this Baptism and Prayer, he must continue *committing* Sin, and so be a Servant of Sin, as long as he lives? What Sense can there be in making a *Communion of Saints* to be an Article of our Creed, if at the same Time we are to believe that Christians, as long as they live, must in *some Degree* or other *follow*, and be *led* by the Lusts of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life?

Whence now comes all this Folly of Doctrines? It is because the Church is no longer that Spiritual House of God, in which nothing is intended and sought after, but Spiritual Power and Spiritual Life, that is become a mere human Building, made up of worldly Power, worldly Learning, and worldly Prosperity in Gospel Matters. And therefore all the Frailties, Follies, and Imperfections of human Nature, must have as much Life in the Church, as in any other human Society. And the best Sons of such a Church, must be forced to plead such Imperfections in the Members of it, as must be where the old fallen human Nature is still alive.—And alive it there must be, and its Life defended, where the being *continually moved, and led* by the Spirit of God, is rejected as gross Enthusiasm.—For nothing but a full Birth, and continual Breathing and Inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the new born Creature, can be a Deliverance from all that which is Earthly, Sensual, and Devilish in our fallen Nature.—This New Creature, born again in Christ, of that ETERNAL WORD which created all Things in Heaven and on Earth, is both the *Rock* and *Church*, of which Christ says, 'The Gates of Hell shall never prevail against it.'—For prevail they will, and must against every Thing, but the New Creature.—And every fallen Man, be he where he will, or who he will, is yet in his fallen State, and his whole Life is a mere *Egyptian* Bondage, and *Babylonian* Captivity, till the heavenly Church, or new Birth from above, has taken him out of it.

See how St. Paul sets forth the Salvation-Church, as being nothing else, and doing nothing else, but merely as the Mother of this new Birth.—‘Know ye not,’ says he, ‘that so many of us ‘as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his ‘Death? Therefore we are buried with him by Baptism into ‘Death, that like as Christ was raised from the Dead by the ‘Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in Newness of ‘Life.’—Here we have the one true Church, infallibly described, and yet no other Church, but *the New Creature*.—He goes on, ‘For if we have been planted together in the Likeness of his ‘Death, we shall be also in the Likeness of his Resurrection.’—Therefore to be in Christ, or in his Church, belongs to no one, but because the Old Man is *put off*, and the New Creature risen in Christ, is *put on*.—The same thing is said again in these Words, ‘Knowing this, that our Old Man is crucified with Him, ‘that the Body of Sin might be destroyed, That (N.B.) HENCE-‘FORTH we should not serve Sin’; therefore the true Church is nowhere but in the New Creature, that *henceforth* Sinneth not, nor is any longer a Servant to Sin.—Away then with all the tedious Volumes of Church *Unity*, Church *Power*, and Church *Salvation*.—Ask neither a Council of *Trent*, nor a Synod of *Dort*, nor an *Assembly* of Divines, for a Definition of the Church. The Apostle has given you, not a Definition, but the unchangeable Nature of it in these Words.—But now ‘being made free from ‘Sin, and become Servants to God, ye have your Fruits unto ‘Holiness, and the End everlasting Life.’ Therefore to be in the true Salvation-Church, and to be in Christ that New Creature which Sinneth not, is strictly the same Thing.

What now is become of this true Church, or where must the Man go, who would fain be a living Member of it?—He need go nowhere; because wherever he is, *That* which is to save him, and *That* which he is to be saved from, is always with him.—SELF is all the Evil that he has, and God is all the Goodness that he ever can have; But *Self* is always with him, and God is always with him.—Death to Self is his only Entrance into the Church of Life, and Nothing but God can give Death to Self.—*Self* is an inward Life, and God is an inward Spirit of Life; therefore nothing kills *That* which must be killed in us, or quickens *That* which much come to Life in us, but the inward Work of God in the Soul, and the inward Work of the Soul in God.—This is that *Mystic* Religion, which, though it has nothing in it but that same *Spirit*, that same *Truth*, and that same *Life*, which always was, and always must be the Religion of all God’s holy Angels and Saints in Heaven, is by the Wisdom of this World accounted to be Madness. As wisely done, as to

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reckon him mad, who says, That the Vanity of Things Temporal cannot be, or give Life to the Things that are Eternal; or that the *Circumcision* of the Flesh is but as poor a Thing, as the *Whetting* the Knife, in Comparison of that inward mystic Circumcision of the Heart, which can only be done by 'that WORD of God, which is Sharper than any two edged Sword, 'and pierces to the dividing asunder of the Soul and Spirit,' Heb. iv. 12.—Now fancy to yourself a *Rabbi-Doctor*, laughing at this Circumcision of the two edged Sword of God, as *Gospel Madness*, and then you see that very same Christian Orthodoxy, which at this Day condemns the inward working Life of God in the Soul, as *Mystic Madness*.

Look at all that is outward, and all that you then see, has no more of Salvation in it, than the Stars and Elements.—Look at all the good Works you can think of, they have no Goodness for you, but when the good Spirit of God is the Doer of them in you.—For all the outward Works of Religion may be done by the *natural Man*, he can observe all Church-Duties, Stick close to Doctrines, and put on the Semblance of every outward Virtue; thus high he can go. But no Christian, till led and governed by the Spirit of God, can go any higher than this feigned, outward Formality of this natural Man; to which he can add nothing, but his own natural fleshly Zeal in the Defence of it. For all Zeal must be of this Kind, till it is the Zeal of That which is born of God, and calls every Creature only to that same new Birth from above.—'My little Children,' says St. Paul, 'of whom I travail again in Birth, till Christ be formed in 'you.' This is the whole Labour of an Apostle to the End of the World. He has nothing to preach to Sinners, but the Absolute Necessity, the true Way, and the certain Means, of being Born again from above.—But if dropping this one Thing only necessary, and only available, he becomes a disputing Reformer about Words and Opinions, and helps Christians to be zealously separated from one another, for the Sake of being saved by different Notions of Faith, Works, Justification, or Election, &c., he has forgot his Errand, and is become a blind Leader of all, who are blind enough to follow him.—For all that is called *Faith, Works, Justification, Sanctification, or Election*, are only so many different Expressions of *That* which the *restored* Divine Life is, and does in us, and have no Existence anywhere, or in any Thing, but the New Creature.—And the Reason why every Thing that is, or can be Good in us, or to us, is nothing else but this Divine Birth from above, is because the Divine Nature dead in Adam, was his entire Loss of every Divine Virtue, and his whole Fall under the Power of this

World, the Flesh, and the Devil; and therefore the Divine Nature brought again to Life in Man, in his Faith, his Hope, his Prayer, his Works, his Justification, Sanctification, Election, or Salvation.—And that ELECTION, which systematical Doctors have taken out of its Place, and built it into an absolute irreversible Decree of God, has no other Nature, no other Effect, or Power of Salvation, but that which equally belongs to our *Faith, Hope, Prayer, Love of God, and Love of our Neighbour*; and just so far as these Divine Virtues are in us, just so far are we the *Elect of God*, which means nothing else but *the beloved of God*; and nothing makes us the beloved of God, but his own first Image and Likeness rising up again in us.—Would you plainly know what is meant by being elected of God, the same is plainly meant, as when the Scripture says, ‘God heareth those only who ‘call upon him’; or that he can only be ‘found by those who ‘seek him’; so he only elects Those and That which elect him.—Again, ‘He that honoureth me, him will I honour,’ says God: ‘He that loveth me,’ says Christ, ‘shall be beloved of me and ‘my Father.’ This is the Mystery of Election (N.B.) as it relates to *Salvation*.—At divers Times and in sundry Manners, God may have, and has had his *chosen Vessels* for particular Offices, Messages, and Appointments; but as to *Salvation* from our *fallen State*, every Son of Adam is his *chosen Vessel*, and this as certainly, as that every Son of Adam has the *Seed of the Woman*, the *incorruptible Seed of the WORD* born along with him; and this is God’s unchangeable universal Election, which chooses, or wills the Salvation of all Men.—For the Ground of all Union, Communion, or Love between God and the Creature, lies wholly in the *Divine Nature*.—That which is Divine in Man tends towards God, elects God; and God only and solely elects his own Birth, Nature, and Likeness in Man.—But seeing his own Birth, a Seed of his own Divine Nature is in every Man, to suppose God by an arbitrary Power, willing and decreeing its eternal Happiness in some, and willing and decreeing its eternal Misery in others, is a blasphemous Absurdity, and supposes a greater Injustice in God, than the wickedest Creatures can possibly commit against one another.

But Truth, to the eternal Praise and Glory of God, will eternally say, that his Love is as universal and unchangeable as his Being, that his *Mercy over all his Works* can no more cease, than his Omnipotence can begin to grow weak. God’s *Mark* of an universal Salvation set upon all Mankind, was first given in these Words, ‘The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Head of ‘the Serpent’: Therefore wherever the Serpent is, there his Head is to be bruised. This was God’s infallible Assurance, or omnipotent

Promise, that all that died in Adam, should have its first Birth of Glory again.—The eternal Son of God came into the World, only for the Sake of this new Birth, to give God the Glory of restoring it to all the dead Sons of fallen Adam.—All the Mysteries of this incarnate, suffering, dying Son of God, all the Price that He paid for our Redemption, all the Washings that we have from his all-cleansing Blood poured out for us, all the Life that we receive from eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood, have their infinite Value, their high Glory, and amazing Greatness in this, because nothing less than these Supernatural Mysteries of a God-Man, could raise that new Creature out of Adam's Death, which could be again a living Temple, and deified Habitation of the Spirit of God.

That this new Birth of the Spirit, or the Divine Life in Man, was the Truth, the Substance, and sole End of his miraculous Mysteries, is plainly told us by Christ himself, who at the End of all his Process on Earth, tells his Disciples, what was to be the Blessed, and full *Effect* of it, namely, that the Holy Spirit, the Comforter (being now fully purchased for them) should after his Ascension, come in the Stead of a Christ in the Flesh.—'If I go 'not away,' says he, 'the Comforter will not come; but if I go 'away, I will send Him unto you, and he shall guide you into all 'Truth.' Therefore all that Christ was, did, suffered, dying in the Flesh, and ascending into Heaven, was for this sole End, to purchase for all his Followers a new Birth, new Life, and new Light, in and by the Spirit of God restored to them, and living in them, as their Support, Comforter, and Guide into all Truth.—And this was his, 'LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN UNTO 'THE END OF THE WORLD.'

FINIS.

A
COLLECTION
OF
LETTERS

On the Most
Interesting and Important SUBJECTS,
AND ON
Several Occasions.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M.A.

LONDON:
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An Advertisement to the Reader.

THE Letters in this Collection having been experimentally found of great private Benefit, the consent of the Author has been obtained to their being made Public. And as they contain a rich Treasure of Divine Truths, and come home to the Bosoms of Men, comprehending the Fulness of Religion, and resolving a great Variety of important Points, the Editors have great Pleasure, in being allowed to publish them.

T. L. G. W.

A Collection of Letters.

Letter I.

To Mr. J. L.

My dear and most worthy Friend,

FOR so I must salute you, as having long dwelt in my Heart under that Idea, though personally unknown to me. I shall not trouble you with apologizing for this long Silence, but speak directly to the Matters of yours, concerning your Difficulty to join in any *Church Communion*.

Religion, or Church Communion is in its true Nature, both *external* and *internal*, which are thus united, and thus distinguished; the one is the *outward Sign*, the other is the *inward Truth* signified by it: The one never was, nor ever can be, in its true State, without the other.

The *inward Truth*, or Church, is *Regeneration*, or the Life, Spirit, and Power of Christ, quickened and brought to life, in the Soul.

The *outward Sign*, or Church, is that outward *Form*, or manner of Life, that bears full witness to the Truth of this regenerated Life of Christ, formed or revealed in the Soul.

The *inward Truth* gives forth its outward proper Manifestations of itself, and these Manifestations bring forth the true *outward Church*, and make it to be *visible*, and *outwardly* known.

As thus, everything in the inward Life, and Spirit, and Will of Christ, when it becomes living, dwelling and working in the Spirit of our Minds, or inward Man, is the *inward Church*, or Kingdom of God set up within us: And everything in the *outward Behaviour*, and visible Conversation of Christ, whilst dwelling amongst Men, when practised and followed by us, in the Form and Manner of our Life, makes us the Members of that *outward Church*, which he set up in this World.

Inwardly nothing lived in Christ, but the sole Will of God, a perpetual Regard to his Glory, and one continual Desire of the Salvation of all Mankind. When this Spirit is in us, then are we *inwardly* one with Christ, and united to God through Him.

Outwardly Christ exercised every kind of Love, Kindness and Compassion to the Souls and Bodies of Men; nothing was visible in the outward Form of his Life, but Humility and Lowli-

ness of State in every shape; a contented Want, or rather total Disregard of all worldly Riches, Power, Ease or Pleasure; a continual Meekness, Gentleness, Patience and Resignation, not only to the Will of God, but to the haughty Powers of the World, to the Perverseness, and Contradiction of all the Evil and Malice of Men, and all the Hardships and Troubles of human Life: Now this, and such like *outward Behaviour* of Christ, thus separate from, and contrary to the Spirit, Wisdom and Way, of this World, was that *very outward Church*, of which he willed all Mankind to become visible, and living Members.—And whoever in the Spirit of Christ, lives in the *outward Exercise* of these Virtues, lives as to himself in the highest Perfection of *Church Unity*, and is the true inward and outward Christian.—He is all that he can be, he hath all that he can have, he doth all that he can do, and enjoyeth all that he can enjoy, as a Member of Christ's Body, or Church in this World.

For as Christ was God and Man, come down from Heaven, for no other end, but fully to restore the Union that was lost betwixt God and Man, so *Church Unity* is, and can be nothing else, but the Unity of this, or that Man, or number of Men with God, through the *Power and Nature of Christ*. And therefore it must be the Truth, and the whole Truth, that nothing more is required, nor will anything less be able, to make anyone a true Member of the *one Church* of Christ, out of which there is no Salvation, and in which there is no Condemnation, but only and solely his Conformity to, and Union with the inward Spirit, and outward Form of Christ's Life and Behaviour in this World.—This is *the one Fold under one Shepherd*; though the Sheep are scattered, or feeding in Valleys, or on Mountains ever so distant, or separate from one another.

On the other hand, not only every unreasonable unjust Action, be it done to whom it will, not only every unkind, proud, wrathful, scornful, disdainful inward Thought, or outward Behaviour to any Person, but every *Unreadiness* to do good of all Kinds, to all that we can; every *Unwillingness* to rejoice with them that rejoice, and to weep with them that weep, and love our Neighbour as ourselves; every *Aversion* to be inwardly all Love, and outwardly all Meekness, Gentleness, Courtesy, and Condescension in Words and Actions towards every Creature, for whom Christ died, makes us *Schismatics*, though we be ever so daily gathered together, into one and the same Place, joining in one and the same Form of Creeds, Prayers and Praises offered to God, and is truly a *leaving, or breaking* that *Church Unity*, which makes us one with Christ, as our Head, and unites us with Men, as the Members of his Body.

That the matter is thus ; that the true *Church Unity* consists in our walking as Christ walked, fully appears, as from many others, so from these plain Words of our Lord himself: 'Ye are 'not of this World, as I am not of this World, but I have chosen 'you out of the World.' Therefore to have that Contrariety to the World, which Christ had, is the one necessary and full Proof of our being his, of our belonging to him, and being one with him.

Again, 'Abide in me, and I in you, if ye abide in me, ye shall 'ask what ye will, and it shall be done to you. If a Man abide 'not in me, he is cast forth as a Branch withered, &c. For with- 'out me ye can do nothing.'

Therefore the one true Proof of our being living Members of Christ's Church on Earth, or only dead Branches, fit for the Fire, is nothing else but our being, or not being inwardly of that Spirit, and outwardly of that Behaviour, which Christ manifested to the World.

Again, 'This is my Commandment, that ye love one another 'as I have loved you, and by this shall all Men know that ye are 'my Disciples.'

Therefore the true and sufficient Mark of our outward Church Membership, is there only, and fully, outwardly known, and found in every Man, where the outward Form of Christ's loving Behaviour to all Men, is outwardly seen and known to be in him. These and the like Passages of Christ and his Apostles (though quite overlooked by most modern Defenders of the one Church) are the only Places that speak home to the Truth, and Reality of Church Unity.

It may now be reasonably asked, What is the *Divine Service*, or *Worship* in this Church? For every Church must have its Divine Service and Worship, which is the Life, Strength, and Support of it.

It is answered: 'That no Man can call Christ Lord, but by 'the Holy Ghost.' Therefore nothing is, or can be a Divine Service in that Church, which has Christ for its Lord, but what has the Holy Spirit for its Beginner, Doer, and Finisher. For if it be certain that no one can own Christ as his Lord, but by the Holy Spirit, then it must be equally certain, that no one can serve or worship God through Christ his Lord, in any other Way, Help, Power, or Means, but so far as it is all done, in, and by the Power of the same Holy Spirit. Whatsoever is born of the Flesh is Flesh ; that is, whatsoever proceeds from, or is done by the natural Powers of Man, from his Birth of Flesh and Blood, is merely human, earthly, and corrupt, and can no more do anything that is heavenly, or perform a Service or worship that is

Divine, than our present Flesh and Blood can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Thus saith the Apostle, 'Ye are not in 'the Flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be, the Spirit of God dwelleth 'in you. Now if any Man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is 'none of his.' And consequently if not his, he can perform no Divine Service to him. Nor can any Worship cease to be carnal, or become Divine, but by its being all that it is, and doing all that it doth, by the Power, and Presence of Christ dwelling in our Souls, and helping us by his Holy Spirit to cry in Truth and Reality, Abba Father.

The New Testament never calls us to do, or offer, or allows anything to be done or offered to God, as a Divine Service, or Worship, but what is done in the Truth, and Reality of Faith, of Hope, of Love, and Obedience to God.

But through all the New Testament, no Faith, no Hope, no Love is allowed to be true, and godly, but only that Faith, that Hope, &c., which *solely* proceeds from, and is the Fruit of the Holy Spirit, living, dwelling, and working in our whole Heart, and Soul, and Spirit.

This Spirituality of the Christian Religion, is the Reason why it was first preached to the World under the Name of the Kingdom of God, because under this new Dispensation, freed from Veils, Shadows and Figures of good Things absent or to come, God himself is manifested, ruling in us and over us, as an *essential Light* of our Lives, as an *indwelling Word* of Power, as a *life-giving Spirit* within us, forming us by a new Birth, to become a *chosen Generation*, a *royal Priesthood*, to offer *spiritual Sacrifices to God, through a new and living Way which Christ hath consecrated for us.* The Truth and Perfection of which State, is plainly set forth by the following Prayer of Christ, *viz.*, 'That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in 'thee, that they also may be one in us—I in them and thou in 'me, that they be made perfect in one, and that the Love where- 'with thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them.' Now for the Truth and Certainty of this spiritual Kingdom, in which are only spiritual Worshipers baptized from above, into an Union, and Communion with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, through the mysterious Union of God and Man in the one Mediator Jesus Christ; for the Truth, I say, of this spiritual State of Christianity, we have the plainest Words of Christ, expressly declaring that the *Jerusalem Service*, and consequently every Thing, or Service that *has the Nature of it*, was to have its End in the Establishment of his Church.

'Believe me,' saith he, 'the Hour cometh when ye shall neither 'in this Mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father:

'But the Hour cometh and now is, when the true Worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth: For the Father seeketh such to worship him.'

Therefore it must be certain in the highest degree, that Christ cannot, nor could set up any other kind of Worship, or Worshippers, but such as the Father seeketh; because he and his Father were one, both in Will and Work. And the Reason and Necessity of this kind of Worship, is added by Christ in the following Words, 'God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth.'

Therefore if Christ had not *only* and *solely* set up this Truth of spiritual Worship, he had been but another *Moses*, and though a better Teacher, yet still but as a *Schoolmaster*, to some higher State of Religion, that was *yet wanted*, and *must be revealed*, if so be that Man was to be restored to his true State of Life, Union, and Happiness in and with the Divine Nature. For as God is a Spirit, and our Life is spiritual, so no religious Worship can be in its true Perfection, or bring us into the Possession of our highest Good, till it raises all that is Spirit and Life in us, into Union and Communion with Spirit and Life in God.

If it should here be asked, How we are to become and continue Worshippers of the Father in Spirit and Truth? It is answered; All consists in *turning inwards*, in Attention to that, which is daily and hourly stirring, living, and working in our Hearts.

Now though the Scripture nowhere gives *this Direction in these very Words*, yet, since it is said in Scripture, that God dwelleth not in Temples made with Hands, but in the Temple of our Hearts, since the Kingdom of God is said to be within us, and not to come with outward Observation, but to be in us, as a secret, living Seed of the incorruptible Word; since our Hearts is our whole Life, and we are said to live, and move, and have our Being in God, it is directly telling us that we are to *turn inwards*, if we would turn to, and find God.

It is directly telling us, that in what manner we are within, as the Worship is done there, so is God in such manner within us; and that he is no otherwise our God, our Life, our Rest and Happiness, than so far as the Working of our Hearts, is a willing and choosing, a hungering and thirsting to find, feel and enjoy the Life-giving Power of his holy Presence in our Souls.

To be inwardly therefore attentive to God, showing the Good and the Evil, distinguishing the Light from the Darkness in our own Souls; to listen to the Voice of his *ever speaking Word*, and to watch the Movings of his *ever sanctifying Spirit* within us, waiting and longing in the Spirit of Prayer, of Faith and Hope,

of Love and Resignation, to be inwardly quickened and revived in the Image, and according to the Likeness of that Son, in whom he is well pleased, is the worshipping of God with our whole Heart and Soul, in Spirit and in Truth.

It is living to God, in and through the Power of Christ, as he lived; it is praying with him, and by his Spirit, that continual Prayer which he always had, whether speaking to the Multitude, or healing their Diseases, or alone by himself in the Stillness of Nights, and Loneliness of Mountains. For this inward Prayer, in which the whole Heart, and Soul, and Spirit, loves, worships, and applies to a God, not absent or distant, but to a Trinity of Goodness and Mercy, of Light and Love, of Glory and Majesty, dwelling, and working within us, willing and desiring to do all that in the Temple of our Hearts, which is done and always doing in His own Temple in Heaven, is a Prayer, that only needs outward Words for the sake of others; and of which it may be said, as Christ said: 'Father, I knew that thou always hearest me, but because of the People, which stand by, I said it.'

I begin to apprehend, worthy Sir, that you will think I am gone too far about, and not come close enough to the Matter in hand. But I hope it is not so: I have gone through all that I have said, only to show, that Church Unity or Communion, is not a matter that depends on any particular Society, or outward Thing, but is complete, or defective, in such degree, as we live in Unity with, or Contrariety to the inward Spirit and outward Example of Christ. For no Union signifies anything to us, or our Salvation, but Union with God, through Christ, and nothing unites us to Christ, or makes us to be his, but his Holy Spirit dwelling, and working inwardly and outwardly in us, as it did in him.

This is the only Church Unity, that concerns the Conscience, and when we are in this Unity, we are in Union with Christ, and with everyone who is united to him, however distant, or separated from us, by human Inclosures.

I come now to consider the Church under another, and more common Idea of it, namely as external, and about which, all the Christian World is at enmity, strife, and debate.

After Christianity had been a few Ages in the World, it became national, and obtained the Protection, and Patronage of the Princes of this World.

Hence it was enriched with many Gifts and Privileges, and strengthened by Powers, that were *foreign* to the Nature of it; and Churchmen, beginning to quarrel about Christian Doctrines, were supported in their Strife and Division from one another, by the temporal Powers, under which they lived.

This State of the Church hath continued to this Day, where almost every Age hath multiplied the Number of divided Churches, brought forth, by the Union of the civil and ecclesiastical Power.

This State therefore of external Churches, hath the Nature of Things *merely human*, and is subject to such *Alterations, Changes, and Corruptions*, as the Forms and Revolutions of temporal Government all over the World. And therefore the private Christian, who, as such, is a Member of a Kingdom, that is not of this World, has little or no Concern in it.

Without entering into the Merits of divided Churches, which I shall not do here, or anywhere else; Thus much I think, may with truth be affirmed, that where the Church and the State are incorporated, and under one and the same Power, all the evil Passions, corrupt Views, and worldly Interests, which form and transform, turn and overturn all outward Things, must be expected often to come to pass, as well in the Church, as in the State, with which it is united.

But as private Christians have no Power, or Call to govern the World, or set up Thrones according to the Principles of Truth and Righteousness, but are by the Spirit of the Gospel obliged to submit to, and be contented with that state of Government, good or bad, under which the Providence of God has placed them, so are they in like manner, to exercise a patient Submission, and Resignation under such an imperfect State of the outward Church, which Providence has not prevented, and only to take care, to be inwardly found such Worshippers in Spirit and in Truth, as the Father seeketh.

I mean not by this, as some have done, that any Evil however great in the Beginning, or continuing of usurped Power, either in the Church or State, loses its evil Nature, and may be called right and good, as soon as Providence has suffered it to become successful.

No, by no means. Success, though always to be owned to have God's Permission, leaves all things in their own Nature, neither Good because successful, nor Bad, because defeated and suppressed.

The Wickedness of the Jews conspiring and effecting the Death of Christ, was not only permitted, but suitable to the Designs of Providence, in the Redemption of Mankind.—But that the evil Nature of their Wickedness did not lose its Guilt, because suffered by God to be successful, but still continues, is plain from the Curse of God still abiding upon it to this day.

The Duty of private Christians, with regard to Providence in such Cases, is not to call that Good which before was Evil, or

that Evil which before was Good, but patiently to suffer, and humbly acquiesce under all that bad outward Course of Things, either in Church or State, which the Providence of God has not thought fit to prevent, and that for these Reasons: *First*, as fully knowing that all Things must work together for good, to those who love God; *Secondly*, as piously believing that in all successful Wickedness, whether of Princes against their People, or of People against their Princes, there is always *something hid* under it, which in its *way and degree*, will like the successful Wickedness of the Jews towards Christ, help forward that Salvation, for which Christ hath laid down his Life.

Who can say, what a Good, and Blessing, the Christian World had been deprived of, had the righteous Providence of God not permitted the Princes of the heathen World, to make such bloody Havoc of the first Christians.

But suppose Errors of the following Kind got into the Church, *viz.*, 1. The Scripture Baptism of the whole Body under Water, only as it were mimicked, by scattering a few Drops of Water on a new-born Child's Face. 2. The Supper of the Lord in one Church, held to be Bread and Wine changed into the real Flesh and Blood of Christ: In another, as Bread and Wine, not changed into, but substantially united with the real Flesh and Blood of Christ: In another, mere Bread and Wine, only made Memorials of the Body and Blood of Christ. In one Church this, in another that Form and Manner of Consecration held to be essential; in another, all Priestly Consecration rejected, as rank Superstition. 3. Suppose the original Apostolical Constitution of *Church Assemblies*, where all meet together, that all in their turns, *might prophesy one by one, that all might learn, and all be comforted*, should in some Churches be so changed, that all praying, speaking or prophesying, as from the Power, and Presence of Christ amongst them, was quite prohibited; where one and the same long, tedious, humanly-contrived Form of Worship, is daily, from Year's end to Year's end, to be read by one, who is become their only Speaker and Instructor, not because he alone is daily full of Faith and of the Holy Ghost, but because he is either hired to that Office, or because, by some means or other, the Church and Churchyard are become his Freehold. Is not such a State of Church Assemblies, in full contrariety to the first Assemblies, and to the Apostle's Injunction; *quench not the Spirit, despise not Prophesyings?* 4. Suppose again, that in the settled Service of the Church, certain Prayers and Petitions, not according to Truth and Righteousness, or suitable to the Goodness of the Evangelical Spirit, are read, as Prayers for Success in unchristian Wars, Prayers for the Destruction of our Christian Brethren, called our

Enemies, Thanksgivings for the violent Slaughter and successful killing of Mankind : When these are made Parts of the Church Service, are we in Obedience to the Providence of God, suffering Things in Church Assemblies to come to this pass, to unite and bear a Part in such Church Service ?

My Answer to all this, shall be only personal ; that is, what I would do myself, in these supposed Cases.

First, As to any Defects, Mutilation, or Variations in the outward Form, and Performance of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord in the Church, I am under little, or no Concern about them ; and that for this very good Reason,—Because all that is inwardly meant, taught, or intended by them, as the Life, Spirit, and full Benefit of them, is subject to no human Power, is wholly transacted between God and myself, and cannot be taken from me, by any Alteration made by Man, in the outward Celebration of them.

If the Church, in my Baptism, should sprinkle a little Milk, or Wine, instead of Water, upon my Face, it would be no defective Baptism to me, if I had all that inward Disposition of Repentance, of Faith in Christ, to be born again of Him, which was meant, figured, and implied by such Immersion into Water, as was the first Baptism.

The same may be said of the Supper of the Lord, however altered, or varied in its outward Manner from what it was at first, if the inward Truth, pointed at by it, is in me, is loved and adhered to by me, I have all the Benefit that was meant, or could be had by it, when it was kept to a Tittle in the same outward Form, in which the first Church used it.

And therefore the outward Celebration of these Sacraments is revered by me, wherever they are observed, as standing in the same Place, and significant of the same inward Blessing, as in their first Institution.

As to the fore-mentioned supposed Prayers, though I am present when they are read in the Church, I neither make, nor need I make them, any more my *own Prayers*, than I make, or need to make all the Curses in the Psalms, to be my *own Curses*, when I hear both Priest and People reading them in the Church, as a Part of Divine Service. Nor is there any more Hypocrisy, or Insincerity, in one Case, than in the other.

I join therefore in the public Assemblies, not because of the *Purity*, or *Perfection* of that which is *done*, or to *be found* there, but because of that which is *meant* and *intended* by them : They mean the holy, public Worship of God ; they mean the Edification of Christians ; they are of great Use to many People ; they keep the World from a total Forgetfulness of God ; they help

the Ignorant and Letterless to such a Knowledge of God, and the Scriptures, as they would not have without them.

And therefore, fallen as these Church Assemblies are, from their first spiritual State, I reverence them, as the *venerable Remains* of all that, which once was, and will, I hope, be again, the Glory of Church Assemblies, *viz.*, the *Ministration of the Spirit, and not of the dead Letter.*

And there are two very great Signs of the near Approach of this Day, in two very numerous, yet very different kinds of People in these Kingdoms.

In the one Sort, an extraordinary Increase of new Separations, Particularity of Opinions, Methods, and religious Distinctions, is worked up to its utmost Height. And we see them almost every Day running with Eagerness from one Method to another, in Quest of *Something*, by the Help of a new Form, which they have not been able to find in the old one.

Now, as the Vanity and Emptiness of any Thing, or Way, is then only fully discovered and felt, when it has run all its Lengths, and worked itself up to its highest Pitch, so that nothing remains untried, to keep up the Deceit; so when religious Division, Strife of Opinions, invented Forms, and all outward Distinctions, have done their utmost, have no further that they can go, nor anything more to try, then is their inevitable Fall at Hand; and if the Zeal was *simple and upright*, all must end in this full Conviction, *viz.*, That Vanity and Emptiness, Burden and Deceit, must follow us in every Course we take, till we have done with all our own Running, to expect all, and receive all, from the invisible God dwelling in, and blessing our Hearts with all heavenly Gifts, by a Birth of his eternal, all-creating Word, and life-giving Spirit brought forth in our Souls.

The *other Sign* I mentioned, is to be found in another Kind of a much awakened People, in most Parts of these Kingdoms, who in the Midst of the Noise and Multiplicity of all Church-Strife, having heard the still, and secret Voice of the true Shepherd, are turned inwards, and wholly attentive to the inward Truth, Spirit and Life of Religion, searching after the mystical, spiritual Instruction, which leads them from the outward Cry, of a *Lo here, or there, is Christ*, to seek to him and his redeeming Spirit within them, as the only safe Guide from inward Darkness to inward Light; and from outward Shadows into the Substantial, ever-enduring Truth; which Truth is nothing else, but the *everlasting Union of the Soul with God, as its only Good, through the Spirit and Nature of Christ truly formed and fully revealed in it.*—But to go no further; I shall only add, that as yet, I know of no better Way of thinking or acting, than as above, with regard to

the universal *fallen State* of all Churches ; for fallen they all are, as certainly as they are divided.

Every Church Distinction is more or less in the corrupt State of every *selfish, carnal, self-willed, worldly minded, partial* Man, and is what it is, and acts as it acts, for its *own Glory*, its *own* Interest and Advancement, by that same Spirit, which keeps the selfish, partial Man solely attached to his *own* Will, his *own* Wisdom, Self-regard, and Self-seeking. And all that is wanting to be removed from every Church, or Christian Society, in order to its being a Part of the heavenly *Jerusalem*, is *that* which may be called its *own, human Will, carnal* Wisdom, and *Self-seeking* Spirit ; which is all to be given up, by turning the Eyes and Hearts of all its Members, to an inward Adoration, and total Dependence upon the supernatural, invisible, omnipresent God of all Spirits ; to the inward Teachings of Christ, as the Power, the Wisdom, and the Light of God, working within them every Good, and Blessing, and Purity, which they can ever receive, either on Earth, or in Heaven.

Under this Light, I am neither Protestant, nor Papist, according to the common Acceptation of the Words.—I cannot consider myself as belonging only to one Society of Christians, in separation and distinction from all others.—It would be as hurtful to me, if not more so, than any worldly Partiality. And therefore as the Defects, Corruptions, and Imperfections, which, some way or other, are to be found in all Churches, hinder not my Communion with that, under which my Lot is fallen, so neither do they hinder my being in full Union, and hearty Fellowship with all that is Christian, Holy, and Good, in every other Church Division.

And as I know, that God and Christ, and Holy Angels, stand thus disposed towards all that is Good in all Men, and in all Churches, notwithstanding the Mixture in them, is like that of Tares growing up with the Wheat, so I am not afraid, but humbly desirous, of living and dying in this Disposition towards them.

*I am, worthy Sir,
With much Truth of Love and Respect,
Your faithful Friend,
And hearty Servant.*

*King's Cliffe,
Feb. 28, 1756.*

Letter II.

To the Reverend Mr. S.

My dear Friend and Brother,

I HOPE my long Silence has not occasioned your being offended at me, or any Suspicion, that I have disregarded you, or the Matter you wrote upon. If I were to offer at a Reason in excuse of it, it would be an invented one, for it has never been known to myself. But I was contented to know, that my Heart was right towards you, full of all good Will and Desire to serve you, in the Way that God should lead me to it. And so it is come to pass, that you have not heard from me sooner.

It is a great Pleasure to me to think (as you say) that my Letter to you, will also be to two of your Brethren, who stand in the same State of Earnestness, to know how to be faithful and useful in their Ministry, as you do: I hope God will increase your Number.

The first Business of a Clergyman awakened by God into a Sensibility, and Love of the Truths of the Gospel, and of making them equally felt, and loved by others, is thankfully, joyfully and calmly, to adhere to, and give way to the Increase of this new-risen Light, and by true Introversion of his Heart to God, as the sole Author of it, humbly to beg of him, that all that, which he feels a Desire of doing to those under his Cure, may be first truly and fully done in himself.

Now the Way to become more and more awakened, to feel more and more of this first Conviction, or Work of God within you, is not to reflect and reason yourself into a further and deeper Sensibility of it, by finding out Arguments to strengthen it in your Mind. But the one true Way is, in Faith and Love to keep close to the Presence and Power of God, which has manifested itself within you, willingly resigned to, and solely depending upon the one Work of his all-creating Word, and all-quickening Spirit, which is always more or less powerful in us, according as we are more or less trusting to, and depending upon it.

And thus it is, that by Faith we are saved, because God is always ours, in such Proportion as we are his; as our Faith is in him, such is his Power and Presence in us. What an Error therefore, to turn one Thought from him, or cast a Look after any Help but his; for if we ask *all* of him, if we seek for all in

him, if we knock only at his own Door of Mercy in Christ Jesus, and patiently wait and abide there, God's Kingdom must come, and his Will must be done in us.

For God is always Present, and always working towards the *Life* of the Soul, and its Deliverance from Captivity under Flesh and Blood. But this inward Work of God, though never ceasing, or altering, is yet always, and only hindered by the Activity of our own Nature, and Faculties, by bad Men through their Obedience to earthly Passions, and by good Men through their striving to be good in their own Way, by their natural Strength, and a Multiplicity of seemingly holy Labours and Contrivances.

Both these sorts of People obstruct the Work of God upon their Souls. For we can co-operate with God no other Way, than by submitting to the Work of God, and seeking, and leaving ourselves to it.

For the whole Nature of the fallen Soul, consists in its being fallen from God, into itself, into a Self-government and Activity, under its own Powers broken off from God, and therefore dying to self, as well to our Reason, as our Passions and Desires, is the first and indispensable Step in Christian Redemption, and brings forth that Conversion to God, by which Christ becomes formed and revealed in us. And nothing hinders this Conversion from being fruitful in all Good, and gaining all that we want from God, but the retaining *Something* to dwell in as *our own*, whether it be earthly Satisfaction, or a Righteousness of human Endeavours.

And therefore all the Progress of your first Conviction, which by the Grace of God you have had from above, and from within, consists in the Simplicity of your Faith, in adhering to it, as solely the Work of God in your Soul, which can only go on in God's Way, and can never cease to go on in you, any more than God can cease to be that which he is, but so far as it is stopped by your Want of Faith in it, or trusting to something else along with it. God is found, as soon as he alone is sought; but to seek God alone, is nothing else but the giving up ourselves wholly unto him. For God is not absent from us in any other respect, than as the Spirit of our Mind is *turned* from him, and not left wholly to him.

This *Spirit of Faith*, which not here, or there, or now and then, but everywhere, and in all Things, looks up to God alone, trusts solely in him, depends absolutely upon him, expects all from him, and does all it does for him, is the utmost Perfection of Piety in this Life. The Worship of God in *Spirit* and *Truth*, can go no higher, it does that which is its Duty to do; it hath

all that it Wants, it doth all that it will, it is one Power, one Spirit, one Will, and one Working with God. And this is that Union or Oneness with God, in which Man was at first created, and to which he is again called, and will be fully restored by God and Man being made one Christ.

‘Stephen was a Man full of Faith and the Holy Ghost.’ These are always together, the one can never be without the other.

This was *Stephen's* Qualification for the Deaconship, not because of any Thing high or peculiar in that Office, but because the Gospel Dispensation was the opening a Kingdom of God amongst Men, a spiritual Theocracy, in which as God, and Man fallen from God, were united in Christ, so an Union of immediate Operation between God and Man was restored. Hence this Dispensation was called, in Distinction from all that went before it in outward Types, Figures, and Shadows, a *Ministration of the Spirit*, that is, an immediate Operation of the Spirit of God itself in Man, in which nothing Human, Creaturely, or depending upon the Power of Man’s Wit, Ability, or natural Powers, had any Place, but all Things begun in, and under Obedience to the Spirit, and all were done in the Power and Strength of Faith united with God.

Therefore to be a faithful Minister of this new Covenant between God and Man, is to live by Faith alone, to act only, and constantly under its Power, to desire no Will, Understanding, or Ability as a Labourer in Christ’s Vineyard, but what comes from Faith, and full Dependence upon God’s immediate Operation in and upon us.

This is that very thing, which is expressly commanded by St. *Peter*, saying, ‘If any Man speak, let him speak as the Oracles of God, if any Man minister, let him do it as of the Ability which God giveth.’ For all which he giveth this *Reason*, which will be a Reason as long as the World standeth, *viz.*, ‘That in all Things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.’ A plain and sufficient Declaration, that where this is not done, there God is not glorified by Christians through Christ Jesus.

God created Men and Angels solely for the *Glory of his Love*; and therefore Angels and Men, can give no other Glory to God, but that of yielding themselves up to the Work of his creating Love, manifesting itself in the several Powers of their natural Life, so that the first creating Love, which brought them into Being, may go on creating, and working in them, according to its own never-ceasing Will, to communicate God for ever and ever. This is their living to the Praise and Glory of God, namely by owning themselves, in all that they are, and have, and do, to

be mere Instruments of his Power, Presence, and Goodness in them, and to them; which is all the Glory they can return to their Creator, and all the Glory for which he created them. We can no otherwise give religious Glory to God, than by worshipping him in Spirit and in Truth, seeing Christ has said, that 'the Father seeketh such to worship him.'

But we can no otherwise worship God in Spirit and in Truth, than as our Spirit in Truth and Reality, seeks only to, depends only upon, and in all things adores, the Life-giving Power of his universal Spirit; as the *Creator, Upholder, and Doer* of all that is or can *be Good*, either in Time or Eternity. For nothing can be Good, but that which is according to the Will of God, and nothing can be according to the Will of God, but that which is done by his own Spirit. This is unchangeable, whether in Heaven, or on Earth. And this is the one End of all the Dispensations of God, however various, towards fallen Man, *viz.*, to bring Man into an Union with God. Comply with all the outward Modes and Institutions of Religion, believe the Letter, own the Meaning of Scripture Facts, Symbols, Figures, Representations, and Doctrines, but if you stand in any other use of them, or seek to gain some other Good from them, than that of being *led out of your own Self*, from your *own Will*, and *own Spirit*, that the Will of God, and the Spirit of God, may do all that is willed, and done by you; however fixed, and steadily you may adhere to such a Religion, you stand as fixed and steadily in your own fallen State. For the Restoration of fallen Man, is nothing else but the Restoration of him to his first State, under the Will and Spirit of God, in and for which he was created.

You may here perhaps, my dear Friend, think that I am speaking too much at large, and not closely enough to the particular Matter of your Enquiry. But my Intention hath been, so to speak to you on this Occasion, as to lay a Ground for a proper Behaviour, under every Circumstance of the outward Work of your Ministry. All Things must be set right in yourself first, before you can rightly assist others, towards the attaining to the same State.

I do not mean, that you must be first in a State of Perfection, before you can be fitted to teach others. But I mean that you must first see, *in what* you place your own Perfection, and have the *Witness* in yourself of the *Truth* of it, before you can rightly direct others in the Way to it; otherwise your Instruction would be of such practical Things, of which you had no practical Knowledge.

For this Reason, I have said all that is said above, to help

you to set out under a right Sense of all that, which Religion is to do for yourself, and why, and how, and by what means alone, it can be done in you. When these two Things are not notionally, but practically known, and adhered to, then are you enabled, according to your measure, to speak of Things, and Truths of Religion, to those that are ignorant, or insensible of them.

Hence you may learn, what you are chiefly to drive at, in all your Discourses from the Pulpit, and Conversation; namely, to turn the Attention of Men to a Power of Good, and a Power of Evil, both of them born and living within them. For in these two Things, or States of the Soul of every Man, lies the full Proof of the whole Nature, both of the Fall, and Redemption from it.

Were we not naturally evil, by a Birth of Evil essentially born and living in us, we should want no Redemption; and had we not a Birth of *something Divine* in us, we could not be redeemed. Inward Evil can only be cured, or overcome by an inward Good.

And therefore, as all our Salvation is an inward Work, or Struggle of two Births within us, so all the Work of your outward Instruction, must be to call everyone home to himself, and help every Heart to know its own State, to seek, and find, and feel his inward Life and Death, which have their Birth, and Growth, and Strife against one another, in every Son of *Adam*.

And as this is the one good Way of Preaching, so it is, of all others, the most powerful, and penetrating into the Hearts of all Men, let their Condition be what it will.

For as these two States are certainly in every Soul of Man, however blended, smothered, and undistinguished, in their Operations for a *Time*, yet they have each of them, in some degree, their *hearing Ears*, which though ever so sunk into Dulness, will be forced, more or less, to feel the Power of that Voice, which speaks nothing but what is, and must be in some sort spoken within themselves.

And this is the true End of outward Preaching, namely, to give loud Notice of the Call of God in their Souls, which though unheard, or neglected by them, is yet always subsisting within them. It is to make such outward Sounds, as may reach and stir up the inward hearing of the Heart. It is so to strike all the outward Senses of the Soul, that from sleeping in an inward Insensibility of its own Life and Death, it may be brought into an awakened and feeling Perception of itself, and be forced to know, that the Evil of Death which is in it, will be its eternal Master, unless the Good of Life that is in it, seeks for Victory

in the Name and Power and Mediation of Christ, the only Prince of Life, and Lord of Glory, and who only hath the Keys of Heaven, of Death and Hell in his Hands.

Thus far, and no further, goes the Labour and Ministry of Man, in the Preaching of the Word, whether it be of *Paul*, or *Cephas*.

Hence also you will be well qualified, to open in your Hearers, a right Sense and Knowledge of the Truth and Reality of every Virtue, and every Vice, that you are discoursing upon.

For since all that is Good and Evil, is only so to them, because it lives in the Life of their Heart; they may easily be taught, that no Virtue, whether it be Humility, or Charity, has any Goodness in it, but as it springs in, and from the Heart, nor any Vice, whether it be Pride, or Wrath, is any further renounced, than as its Power, and Place in the Heart is destroyed. And thus the Insignificancy and Vanity of an outward Formality, of a virtuous Behaviour, and every Thing short of a new Heart, and new Spirit in, and through the Power of Christ, dwelling vitally in them, may be fully shown to be Self-delusion, and Self-destruction.

Your next great Point, as a Preacher, should be to bring Men to an entire Faith in, and absolute Dependence upon, the continual Power and Operation of the Spirit of God in them.

All Churches, even down to the Socinians, are forced, in obedience to the Letter of Scripture, to hold *something* of this Doctrine.

But as the Practice of all Churches, for many Ages, has had as much Recourse to Learning, Art, and Science, to qualify Ministers for the preaching of the Gospel, as if it was *merely* a Work of Man's Wisdom, so Ecclesiastics, for the most part, come forth in the Power of human Qualifications, and are more or less full of themselves, and trusting to their own Ability, according as they are more or less Proficients in Science, and Literature, Languages and Rhetoric.

To this, more than to any one other Cause, is the *great Apostasy* of all Christendom to be attributed. This was the Door, at which the *whole Spirit* of the World, entered into Possession of the Christian Church.

Worldly Lusts, and Interests, Vanity, Pride, Envy, Contention, Bitterness, and Ambition, the Death of all that is good in the Soul, have now, and always had their chief Nourishment, Power, and Support, from a sense of the Merit, and sufficiency of literal Accomplishments.

Humility, Meekness, Patience, Faith, Hope, Contempt of the World, and heavenly Affections (the very Life of Jesus in the

Soul) are by few People less earnestly desired, or more hard to be practised, than by great *Wits, classical Critics, Linguists, Historians, and Orators* in Holy Orders.

Now to bring Man to a right practical Knowledge, of that full Dependence upon, and Faith in the continual Operation of the Holy Spirit, as the only Raiser and Preserver of the Life of God in their Hearts, and Souls, and Spirits, it is not enough, you sometimes, or *often* preach upon the Subject, but everything that you inculcate, should be directed *constantly* to it, and all that you exhort Men to, should be required, only as a means of obtaining, and concurring with, that Holy Spirit, which is, and only can be, the *Life and Truth* of Goodness. And all that you turn them from, should be as from something that resists, and grieves that blessed Spirit of God, which always wills and desires to remove, all evil out of our Souls, and make us again to be sanctified Partakers of the Divine Nature.

For as they only are Christians, who are born again of the Spirit, so nothing should be taught to Christians, but as a *Work* of the Spirit; nor any *Thing* sought, but by the *Power* of the Spirit, as well in hearing, as teaching. It is owing to the Want of this, that there is so much Preaching and Hearing, and so little Benefit either of the Preacher or Hearer.

The Labour of the Preacher is, for the most part, to display Logic, Argument, and Eloquence, upon religious Subjects; and so he is just as much *carried* out of himself, and *united* to God by his own religious Discourses, as the Pleader at the Bar is, by his Law, and Oratory upon Right and Wrong.

And the Hearers, by their regarding such Accomplishments, go away just as much helped, to be new Men in Christ Jesus, as by hearing a Cause of great Equity well pleaded at the Bar.

Now in both these Cases, with regard to Preacher and People, the Error is of the same kind, namely, a trusting to a Power in themselves; the one in an Ability, to persuade powerfully; the other in an Ability, to act according to that which they hear.

And so the natural Man goes on preaching, and the natural Man goes on hearing of the Things of God, in a fruitless Course of Life. And thus it must be, so long as either Preacher or Hearers, seek anything else but to edify, and be edified in, and through the immediate Power and essential Presence of the Holy Spirit, working in them.

The Way therefore to be a faithful, and fruitful Labourer in the Vineyard of Christ, is to stand yourself in a full Dependence on the Spirit of God, as having no good Power, but as his Instrument, and by his Influence, in all that you do; and to call others, not to their own Strength or rational Powers, but to a

full Hope, and Faith of having all that they want, from God alone; not as teaching them to be good by Men, but by Men and outward Instruction, calling them to Himself, to a Birth of essential, inherent living Goodness, Wisdom and Holiness from his own eternal WORD, and Holy Spirit, living and dwelling in them. For as God is all that the fallen Soul wants, so nothing but God alone, can communicate himself to it; all therefore is lost Labour, but the total Conversion of the Soul, to the *immediate essential* Operation of God in it.

As to the other Parts of your Office, whether they relate to Things prescribed, or to such as are to be done, according to your best Discretion, there will not be much Difficulty, if you stand in the State as above described.

As to several *outward Forms*, and *Orders* in the Church, they must be supposed to partake, in their Degree, of that Spirit, which has so long borne Rule in all Church Divisions. But the private Man, who has sufficient Call to the Ministry, is not to consider, how outward Things should be, according to the Primitive Plan, but how the inward Truth, which is meant by them, may be fully adhered to.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as differently practised in almost every particular Church, may afford ground of Scruple about them, since almost every Church in these Matters, is condemned by all other Churches.

But the Way to be above, and free from these Scruples, is to keep yourself, and your people wholly intent to that *Spiritual Good*, of which these Institutions are the appointed outward Figures, namely to that spiritual Regeneration, which is meant by Baptism, and to that *spiritual Living in Christ*. and Christ in us, which is meant by the Supper of the Lord. And then, though the Sacraments practised by you should have any outward Imperfection in them, they would be of the same Benefit to you, as they were to those, who used them in their first, outwardly perfect Form. And thus you will be led neither to overrate, nor disregard such use of them, as is according to the present State of the Church. It is only the Inward Regenerate Christian, that knows how to make a right Use of all outward Things. His Soul being in such a *State* of Union with God, and Man, as it ought to be, it takes every Thing by the right Handle, and turns every Thing into a Means of carrying on his Love towards God and Man. To the Pure, all Things are pure.

When you visit the *Sick*, or well *Awakened*, or *dully Senseless*, use no pre-contrived Knowledge, or Rules, how you are to proceed with them, but go as in Obedience to God, as on his Errand, and say only what the Love of God and Man suggests to your

Heart, without any Anxiety about the Success of it; that is God's Work. Only see that the Love, the Tenderness, and Patience of God towards Sinners, be uppermost in all that you do to Man. Think not, that here Severity, and there Tenderness, is to be shown; for nothing is to be shown to Man, *but his Want of God*; nothing can show him this so powerfully, so convincingly, as Love. And as Love is the fulfilling of the whole Law, so Love is the fulfilling of all the Work of the Ministry.

*I am, with my best Wishes
To you and your Brethren,
Your most affectionate Friend,
And willing Servant.*

April 10th, 1756.

Letter III.

To a Clergyman of *Bucks.*

I AM much surprised, my Friend, that you should still want more to be said, about the Doctrine of *Imputation*, whether of *Adam's Sin*, or the *Righteousness* of Christ to his Followers. Our polluted sinful Birth of *Adam*, is all the Sin we can have from him; and our *supernatural* Birth of Christ, is all the Righteousness that we possibly can have from him. Imputation neither hath, nor can have any Thing to do in either Case; Sin and Righteousness are both inward and innate Things, and the sole Work of the Spirit, that lives in us. That which is born of God, is godly, and cannot sin; and that which is born of sinful Man, cannot be without a sinful Nature and Tempers. *Cain* could not possibly have any other *natural* Life, than that which was in *Adam*; and therefore so sure as *Adam* in Soul, Spirit, and Body, was all Sin and Corruption, so sure is it, that all his Offspring must come from him in the same Depravity of Soul, Spirit and Body. And to talk of their having this disordered fallen Nature, not from their natural Birth, but by an *outward Imputation* of it to them, is quite as absurd, as to say, that they have their *Hands* and *Feet*, or the whole Form of their Body, not from their natural Birth, but by an outward Imputation of such a Form, and Members to them.—Suppose it

was said, that *Adam's* evil and polluted Condition of Body and Soul, was not the natural Effect of his Transgression, but independently of that, came upon him from God's imputing it to him, as his, though it was not his. What a Blasphemy would this be? And yet not less than that, of saying, that his Children have their evil Nature, the sinful State of their Wills and Affections, not by their natural Birth from him, but independently of that, solely from God's imputing such a sinful State to them, that is, that God imputed *Adam's* sinful Nature to *Cain*, though he was by Birth free from Sin, and Born in the Purity and Perfection, in which *Adam* was created; for so he must have been, if his Birth had nothing of sinful *Adam* in it. But if *Cain* was not so born, then he had his Sin, not by an Imputation of another's Sin to him, but plainly in the same Way of natural Birth, as every Man has his natural Life and Form of his Body, from Parents of the same Nature and Form. And indeed, to speak of Sin imputed to a Person that has it not, and so made his, is the same Absurdity, as speaking of Will and Affections, imputed to a Person that has them not, and so made his. For Sin is nowhere but in, and from the Will and Affections, and therefore to make Sin to be there by Imputation, where it is not, has no more Sense in it, than to make *Will* and *Affections*, to be by Imputation in a Creature that has them not.

'As in *Adam* all die,' says the Text: Is not this the same, as saying, that all Men have their fallen Nature, because born of *Adam*? Say, this does not follow, and then the Matter will stand thus: 'In *Adam* all die': But *why*, or *how*? Why because no Man hath the Evil of a mortal fallen Nature from his Birth from *Adam*, but merely by God's *free Imputation* of it to him.

But such a free Imputation of *Adam's* sinful State to his Children, when they had it not by natural Birth, is quite blasphemous, and leaves no room for magnifying the *free Grace* of God in Christ Jesus; since *free Grace* comes only to help Man out of a sinful State which he had not by natural Birth, but came upon him, by God's *free Imputation* of it to him, when he had it not. Thus, the adorable Love of God in his free Grace in Christ Jesus, is quite destroyed, upon supposition, that Mankind have not their sinful State from their natural Birth from *Adam*, but by a free Imputation of it by God to them.

Take now the other Part of the Text, so 'in Christ shall all be 'made alive.' Is it not a flat Denial of all this, to say, they are not *made alive* by a Birth of that to which *Adam* died, brought to life again in them, but are *accounted* as if they were alive, by the Imputation of Christ's *Life* to them, but not born in them? Could dead *Lazarus* have been said to have been made alive

again, if still lying in the Grave, he had only been *accounted* as alive, by having the Nature of a living Man, only imputed to him?

Our Lord said to a Leper, whom he had cleansed, 'Go, show thyself to the Priest,' &c. But if instead of *cleansing* him, he had bid him go to the Priest, to be *accounted* as a clean Man, by the Imputation of another's Cleanness to him, had he not still been under all the evil of his own Leprosy? Now this is strictly the Case of the Righteousness of Christ, only outwardly imputed to us, and not inwardly born within us.—A Fiction, that runs counter to all that Christ and his Apostles, have said of the Nature of our Salvation. We want Christ's Righteousness, because by our natural Birth, we are inwardly full of Evil; therefore saith Christ, 'Except a Man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.' Does not this place all in a Birth? But a Birth, and outward Imputation, are inconsistent; that which is born in us, cannot be said, to be outwardly imputed to us. 'I am the Vine,' saith Christ, 'ye are the Branches.' Now if this be a true Representation of the Matter, then these two plain Doctrines of Christ, affirming, (1) The absolute Necessity of a new Birth from above, and (2) Declaring this Birth to be as really brought forth in us, as the Life of the Vine is really in the Branches, do, as far as Words can do it, entirely reject the Notion of a Righteousness imputed to us from without; a Righteousness, that has no more to do with our own Life, after it is imputed to us, than it had a thousand Years before we were born. For that which is not in us, or ours, by a Birth of itself in us, can never be any nearer to us, or have a more real Union with us, after it is *called* ours, than before it was so called. I say *called*, for Imputation, whether of Sin, or Righteousness, if its Power is not living in us, is no more than *mere calling* that ours, which is not ours.

It is needless to cite Places of Scripture, affirming that all consists in a Christ revealed, begotten, formed and living in us. Let this one Word of *Paul* suffice, 'Yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me.' He does not say, a Christ who is only called his, or outwardly imputed to him, but the quite contrary, a Christ *who liveth* in him.

Again, if Christ's Holy Nature, be not a Birth in us, but only outwardly imputed to us, then no Virtue, or Power of an Holy Life, can have any more real Existence, or vital Growth in us, than in the Devils, but are only outwardly imputed to us, and not to them, only called ours, and not theirs, though we have no more of them within us, than they have. Thus, be ye 'holy, for I am holy; be ye perfect, as your Father, which is in Heaven, is perfect; thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart,'

&c. All these are but vain Exhortations to do, and be, that which is not within our Sphere, but entirely inconsistent with it. For these Virtues are, in their whole Nature, nothing else but the *very Righteousness* of Christ, therefore if that can be only outwardly imputed to us, the same must be said of *all these Virtues*, that they can have no real Life or Growth in us, but only outwardly imputed to us. And indeed, unless Christ be truly and essentially born in us, we can have no more of any Christian Virtue, but the empty, outward Name of it: For neither Man, nor Angel ever did, or can thus love God with all his Heart, be holy because God is holy, be perfect as he is perfect, but because there is a Spirit *born and living* in them, which is of God, from God, and partakes of the Divine Nature.

Further, say that the *Holy Spirit* is not born and living in us, that his Operation is not inwardly in us, as the Spirit of our Spirit, the Life of our Life, but only outwardly imputed to us, as if he was in us, though he be not there: What a Blasphemy would this be! And yet full as well, as to say the same of Christ, and his Righteousness. For if Christ was only outwardly imputed to us, the same must, of all necessity be said of the Holy Spirit; for *where* and *what* Christ is, *there* and *that* is the Holy Spirit. How constantly are we told in Scripture, that they *only* are Sons of God, 'who are led by the Spirit of God'; that unless 'a Man hath the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; that if Christ 'be not in us, we are Reprobates.' Now I would ask, can any Man be truly said to be led by the Spirit of the World, the Flesh and the Devil, who has nothing of this Spirit *living* in him, but only outwardly imputed to him? Can any Creature be said to be led by the Spirit of Man, who has not the Nature of Man within him, but only outwardly imputed to him? Yes, just as a *Beast* may be said to be a *Newtonian* Philosopher, by having *Sir Isaac's* System outwardly imputed to him.

Take Notice, Sir, that if Christ's righteous and holy Nature is only outwardly imputed to Christians, then all of them, whether they are called Good, or Bad, are without any Difference as to their inward Man, and all under the same unaltered Evil of their fallen Nature, as much *after*, as they were *before* Christ's Righteousness was imputed to them.—When a good Man has anything *falsely* laid to his Charge, is not this *outwardly imputing* something to him, that is not his, does not belong to him? But is not his own inward Goodness just in the same fulness of Truth in him, *after* such an Imputation of Evil to him, as it was *before* it was so imputed. Now this is the whole Nature of Imputation; and therefore if the righteous Nature of Christ is only outwardly imputed to the Sinner, it leaves him in all the Evil of his fallen

Nature, and can no more make him inwardly good, than a good Man can be made inwardly evil, by having an Evil outwardly imputed to him, that is not his.

The Relation between Christ and the fallen Soul, is thus: Christ is the *one Mediator* between God and Man, and that which his Mediation consists in, is the restoring that Life in Man, which was his first created Union with God. Nothing separated Man from God, or made him want a Mediator, but the Loss of his first Divine Life; and therefore nothing can mediate, or be a means of Union again between God and Man, but that which can, and doth raise again in Man, that Divine Life which was his first Union with God. Everything therefore, that is said of this one Mediator, as *redeeming, ransoming, justifying, sanctifying, making Peace, or Reconciliation, &c.*, however variously expressed, has no other Nature, or Meaning, but that of making fallen Man, *inwardly alive again* in God.—He in *whom* Christ is the *Way, the Truth, and the Life*, has just that *same Change* made in him, just that *same* done to him, as he *that has his Sins washed and cleansed by the Blood of the Lamb*. For these different Expressions mean only *one* and the *same* Thing, and that one Thing, *is Christ in us, our Hope of Glory*. This is Justification, Sanctification, Redemption, Peace, Reconciliation, and everlasting Union with God.—Trifling therefore, to the last degree, is their *Orthodoxy*, who raise Disputes, and set up different Doctrines, on the different Meaning of these Words, and the Danger of not knowing, or not stiffly contending for the blessed Difference between *Justification* and *Sanctification, &c.*, Full as trifling, as to raise Disputes, and set up different Doctrines on the different Names given to *Jesus Christ*, as *Word of God, Son of Man, Lamb of God, Alpha and Omega, Mediator, Immanuel, Atonement, Reconciliation, Resurrection, &c.*, and the great Danger of ascribing that to Christ, as our *Reconciliation*, which only belongs to him, as called the *Resurrection and the Life*.—Figure to yourself such an orthodox Dispute as this, and then you will see the Importance of that pious Zeal, which will not suffer *Justification* and *Sanctification* to encroach upon one another.

What an egregious Folly, to be learnedly laborious in dividing and distinguishing these different Names of Christ, or the different Effects of his purchasing, justifying, or sanctifying our Souls, &c., when all that these Things are told us for, and all the Benefit that we can receive from them, lies solely in this one Word of Christ, 'if anyone will be my Disciple' (that is, if anyone will have the Benefit of all that I am, and of all that is said of me) 'let him deny himself, take up his Cross and follow me.' Then, and then only, all the different Names of Christ, and all

the different Powers ascribed to him, will be, not critically, but blessedly known and understood to be one, as God is one, whether he be called I AM, or the Creator of Heaven and Earth, or the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But to proceed: All that is said of the Nature, Office, and Qualities of Christ, in order to be our Redeemer, is so much said of the Necessity of their being essentially found, and realized in every Soul, that is to partake of his Redemption.—If ‘Christ be ‘not in us, we are none of his.’ But how can Christ be in us, but because all that which Christ was, in the Spirit and Nature of his whole Process, is in us, as it was in him? If the *same Mind be not in us, which was in Christ Jesus*; if that which *loved*, that which *willed*, that which *suffered* in him, be not the same Spirit in us, we shall never reign with him. He may be truly called a Redeemer, but we are not *His redeemed*, for such as the Redeemer is, such are they that are redeemed.

‘To him that overcometh,’ saith Christ, ‘will I grant to sit ‘with me on my Throne, (N. B.) even as I overcame, and am set ‘down with my Father on his Throne.’ What becomes now of the vain Fiction of an outward *Imputation*? Is Christ’s Victory here imputed to us? Is not the Contrary as strongly taught us, as Words can do it? ‘To him that overcometh, even as I also ‘overcame.’

Can we have fuller Proof, that Christ’s righteous Nature must be inwardly born, living and manifesting itself in us, as it did in him; how else can we overcome, *even as he overcame*? That Spirit which overcame in Christ, was manifest in the Flesh, for no other End, but that the same conquering Spirit might be born in us. And when that is done, then all is done, by that *Grace of God, which bringeth Salvation*, Justification, Sanctification, or the new Creature. For whether you call it by one, or by all these Names, it is the *white Stone with the new Name written in it*, which no Man knoweth, *but he that hath received it*. And that for this Reason, because it is no *outwardly imputed* Thing, but is the new Name, the new Nature and Spirit of Christ, become *all in all* in us, and so only to be known by those, who have it brought to Life in them.

Again, ‘This is my Blood, which is shed for many, for the ‘Remission of Sins’; what follows? Why, ‘Drink ye all of ‘this;—If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him;—‘The Blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all ‘Iniquity;—who hath washed us from our Sins in his Blood.’ Now to show you, that all these different Sayings have but one and the same Doctrine, you need only read the following *decisive* Words: ‘These are they that came out of great Tribulation,’

(that is, have trodden the Wine Press with Christ) 'and have washed their Robes in the Blood of the Lamb.' Here you see is no *outward Imputation* of the Sufferings of Christ, but 'their coming out of great Tribulation,' or passing through the whole Process of Christ, was that alone, which made their 'Robes to be Washed in the Blood of the Lamb.' And no other Doctrine is in this Text, than if it had been said, 'these are they, who having denied themselves, taken up their daily Cross, and followed Christ, have thereby washed their Robes in the Blood of the Lamb.' Through all the New Testament, this is the one Doctrine of Salvation through the Blood of Christ, it is 'drinking the Cup, that he drank of,' and not the Bitterness of his Cup outwardly imputed to us.

You tell me, my Friend, that the seraphic *Aspatio* is quite transported with the Thought of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to the Sinner, and that it should in the Account of God, be esteemed as his—It may be so, Transport seems to be as natural to *Aspatio*, as flying is to a Bird. But surely, a more transporting, a more glorious Thing it is, both to the Glory of God, and the Good of Man, that the Sinner is, through the righteous Nature of Christ, born and brought to Life in him, set up again in his first Likeness and Image of God. For if Man's Righteousness is not *essentially* restored in him, as it was essentially in him at the First, has he not less of God in him, by his Redemption, than he had at his Creation? Is it to the Happiness of Man, and the Glory of God, that God has not obtained that *Dwelling* in Man, for which he alone created him?

Is it matter of Transport to think, that fallen Man will to all Eternity live destitute of his first heavenly Nature, his first Divine Life, which he had in, and from God? But this must be the Case, if Christ's Righteousness is only *outwardly imputed* to him, and not *essentially* born in him.

Transports, my Friend, are but poor Proofs of Truth, or of the Goodness of the Heart, from whence they proceed. *Martyrdom* has had its *Fools*, as well as its *Saints*, and Zealots may live and die in a Joy, that has all its Strength from Delusion.

You may see a Man drowned in Tears, at beholding, and kissing a *wooden Crucifix*, and the same Man condemning another, as a *wicked Heretic*, who only honours the *Cross*, by being daily baptized into the Death of Christ.—Nay, so blind is *Opinion-zeal*, that some good Christian Pastors will not scruple to tell you, they could find no Joy in their own State, no Strength, or Comfort in their Labours of Love towards their Flocks, but because they know, and are assured from *St. Paul*, that God never had, nor ever will have, *mercy on all Men*, but

that an unknown Multitude of them, are through all Ages of the World, inevitably decreed by God to an eternal Fire, and Damnation of Hell, and an unknown Number of others, to an irresistible Salvation.

Wonder not then, if the *Inquisition* has its pious Defenders, for *Inquisition-Cruelty*, nay, every Barbarity that must have an End, is mere Mercy, if compared with this Doctrine.—And to be in love with it, to draw sweet Comfort from it, and wish it God Speed, is a Love that absolutely forbids the loving our Neighbour, as ourselves, and makes the Wish, that all Men might be saved, no less than a Rebellion against God.—It is a *Love*, with which, the *cursed Hater* of all Men, would willingly unite and take Comfort; for could he know from *St. Paul*, that Millions, and Millions of Mankind, are created and doomed to be his eternal Slaves, he might be as content with this Doctrine, as some good Preachers are, and cease ‘going about as a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour’; as knowing, that his Kingdom, was so sufficiently provided for, without any Labours of his own.

Oh, the Sweetness of *God’s Election*, cries out the ravished Preacher! Oh, the Sweetness of *God’s Reprobation!* might the hellish Satan well say, could he believe that God had made him a *free Gift* of such Myriads, and Myriads of Men, of all Nations, Tongues and Languages, from the Beginning to the End of the World, and reserved so small a Number for himself. This is the blessed Fruit of the imputation Doctrine.

What a Complaint, and Condemnation is there made in Scripture, of those who sacrificed their Sons and Daughters unto Devils? And yet, this Reprobation Doctrine, represents God, as sacrificing Myriads of his own Creatures, made in his own Image, to an everlasting Hell.

There is not an Absurdity of heathenish Faith and Religion, but what is less slocking than this Doctrine, and yet so blindly are some zealous Doctors of the Gospel bigoted to it, as to set it forth, as the glorious Manifestation of the *supreme Sovereignty* of God.

My Friend, let any old Woman preach to you, rather than these Doctors.

But to end in one Word, Christ’s righteousness is ours, in our Redemption, just in the same manner, as it was *Adam’s* in his first Holy Birth. For *Adam* had then no Righteousness in him, but that which was created in Christ Jesus. And that is the one only Reason, why there could be no other Redeemer but Christ, because the Loss of Christ, was that Death which *Adam* died by his Fall; and therefore no Possibility of coming out of his fallen State, but in, and by a Birth of Christ’s *righteous*

Nature, essentially born and living in him, as it was living in him before he fell.

‘Little Children,’ saith St. *John*, ‘let no Man deceive you’; (N.B.) He that doth Righteousness, is righteous, (N.B.) even ‘as He is righteous.’ Therefore to expect, or trust to be made righteous, by the Righteousness of another, only outwardly imputed to us, is, according to the Apostle, *deceiving ourselves*.

Either Man, by the *Mediation* of Christ, is united again with God, or he is not; if he is not, then he has no more of the *Divine Life* in him, after his Redemption, than he had before he was redeemed. But if he is again united with God, as he was at his Creation, then his Redemption must wholly consist in the Birth of a Divine Nature and Spirit, essentially brought to Life in him.—That which is Spirit in Man, must be godlike, before it can unite with that Spirit, which is God. And was there not a Divine Spirit in Man, truly born of, and proceeding from the Spirit of God, as his real Offspring, no Union of Will, Love, or Desire, could be between God and Man. For this is a Truth, that extends itself through all that is natural, or supernatural, *that Like can only unite with Like*. There is no Separation between Things, but that which is effected by Contrariety. If therefore nothing in Man was a Partaker of the Divine Nature, Man must in his whole Nature, be for ever separated from God, and stand in the same Impossibility of being united with him, that two the most contrary Things, do to one another.—So sure, therefore, as the *Mediation* of Christ, is by himself declared to be for this End, *viz.*, ‘that they all may ‘be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they ‘also may be one in us; I in them, and thou in me, that they ‘may be made perfect in one;’ so sure is it, that an *outwardly* imputed Christ, is as absurd in itself, and as contrary to Scripture, as an *outwardly imputed God*.

Farewell.

Letter IV.

IN ANSWER to a SCRUPLE.

THAT you may have a full Answer to your Scruple, concerning these Words, *the Folly of Debtor and Creditor*, in the Second Part of the *Spirit of Love*, I will set forth the Doctrine from whence it is taken.—Great Part of that Book, is to clear up, and assert the true Scripture Doctrine of the *Nature, Necessity, and Merit* of our

Lord's Sufferings and Death, as an *Atonement*, and *Satisfaction* before God, in the Work of our Redemption.—No Point of Christianity has been more mistaken, in our common Systems of Gospel Doctrine, or given greater Offence than this, and yet nothing clearer, or more reasonably to be believed, when it stands in its own Scriptural Manifestation.

Now the right Ground of understanding the true Meaning of every different Expression, relating to Christ, as our Saviour, or Salvation, lies in these two Things: 1. What Christ is in himself. 2. What he does, or intends to do for us.

The Scripture saith, 'God was manifested in the Flesh;' this describes his whole Nature, what he was in himself, *viz.*, the Deity become Man. What he is, and does in us, to us, and for us, is expressed in the following Words, 'He was manifested to destroy 'the Works of the Devil;' and again, 'as in Adam all die, so in 'Christ, shall all be made alive.'

Now according to this Ground, every Expression concerning our Saviour, is to have its true infallible Meaning fixed. Everything that is said of his *Birth*, his *Life*, his *Sufferings*, his *Death*, his *Resurrection* and *Ascension*, are all of them, both with respect to God, and ourselves, of *one and the same Efficacy*, full of *one and the same Merit*, and all for *one and the same End*, *viz.*, to destroy in Man the Works of the Devil, and to make *all that died in Adam, to be alive again in Christ*.

Suppose now, any one of these to be wanting, and the same will follow from it, as if they were all wanting. Had his *Birth* been otherwise than it was, not God as well as Man, He could have made no Beginning of a Divine Life in us. Had not his *Life been without Sin*, his *Death* upon the Cross could have done us no Good, nor could have been the *one Mediator* between God and *sinful Man*. Had his *Sufferings* been less than they were, had there been any Evil, Trial, or Temptation, which had not attacked him, through the whole Course of his Life, with all its Force, he could not have been said, to have *overcome them*. So sure therefore as Christ, as a Son of Man was to *overcome* all that the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, could do to fallen Man; so sure is it, that all the Evils, which they could possibly bring upon fallen Man, were to be *felt*, and *suffered* by him, as absolutely necessary in the Nature of the Thing, to prove his victorious Superiority over them. Had he not given up his Body to an ignominious Death, in all the *Horrors of a Soul, that had lost its God*: He could not have suffered *That* in, and for Man, which every Man must have suffered, who had died in his *fallen State*.—But Christ dying, and sacrificing himself, as he did, in and through that horrible Death, which was fallen Man's Gate to

eternal Misery, and conquering *this State* of Man, as he had every evil Power of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, then it was, that he could say to those, who were all their Life in Fear of *this Death*, be of good Comfort, I have overcome this Death, and that upon the same Ground, as he said to his Followers, under a Sense of worldly Tribulations, 'be of good Comfort, I 'have overcome the World.' And thus his *Death*, had no *other Nature*, with respect to us, than every other Part of his Process, that was *antecedent* to it, only as it was the last, and greatest, and *finishing* Part of that *redeeming Work*, which was begun by his *Divine Birth*, and carried on in, and through his sinless, perfect Life. And as I said, that the Death of Man *unredeemed*, was his Gate into an *eternal Separation* from God, so Christ's Entrance into this Gate of *Damnation*, and pouring out his Blood, thus forsaken of God, had a Suffering in it, that Thoughts can no more conceive, than Words express.

Hence it is, by way of Eminence, justly said, to be the highest Price, that he paid for us; and that by his Blood it is that we are washed, and redeemed, not only because of its Greatness in itself, but because it finished, and for ever *completed* the whole redeeming Work, which he had to do for us in the Flesh.—Hence it was, that through the Old Testament, this Sacrifice of his Death, is the great Thing mostly pointed at in all its Sacrifices, Types, and Figures; hence also is all the Boast of it in the Gospel. Well therefore may the Church, through all Ages, have ascribed so much to the Merit of his Blood shed for us; well may it have been celebrated, as the one great Price, by which we are ransomed from the Power of Death and Hell; because, though all that he was, and did, antecedently to it, was *equally necessary* to our Salvation, yet all had been without any effect, unless by his so dying, this *damnable Death* had been *swallowed up in Victory*.

In short, had not Christ been real God, as well as real Man, he could have made no Beginning in the Work of our Salvation, and had he not ended his Life in such a Sacrifice, as he did, he could never have said, *It is finished*.—He therefore, who denieth the Truth, the Certainty, and absolute Necessity of these two essential Points, is in the Abomination of *Socinianism*, and is that very *Liar* and *Antichrist* described by St. John in his first Epistle.

Again, though Christ's Death was thus absolutely necessary in the very Nature of the Thing, thus great in its Merits and Effects, yet unless his *Resurrection* had followed, we had been yet in our Sins, nor could he, till risen from the Grave, have purchased a Resurrection for us. *Lastly*, had he not *ascended* into

Heaven, he could not have had the Power of *drawing*, as he said, *all Men to himself*.—Every Part therefore of our Saviour's Character, or Process, has its *full* and *equal* Share in all that, which is said of him, as our *Peace* with God, our *Righteousness*, our *Justification*, our *Ransom*, our *Atonement*, our *Satisfaction*, our *Life* and new *Birth*; for all these different Expressions, have no Difference in Doctrine, but whether separately, or jointly taken, signify nothing else, but this one Thing, that he was the true and full *Destroyer* of all the *Works of the Devil* in Man, and the true *Raiser of a Divine Life*, in all that died in Adam.

And here, Sir, you are well to observe, that all that Christ was, did, suffered, and obtained, was *purely* and *solely* on the Account, and for the sake of *altering*, or *removing* that which was wrong, evil, and miserable in Man, or in Scripture Words, 'God was in Christ Jesus, reconciling the World to himself,' that is, taking away from Man every Property, or Power of Evil, that kept him in a State of Separation from God. Thus it was, and to this End, that 'God was in Christ Jesus' in his whole Process.

Unreasonably therefore have our scholastic Systems of the Gospel, *separated* the Sacrifice of Christ's Death, from the *other Parts* of his Process, and considered it as something chiefly done with regard to God, to alter, or atone an infinite Wrath, that was raised in God against fallen Man, which Infinity of just Vengeance, or vindictive Justice, must have devoured the Sinner, unless an *infinite* Satisfaction had been made to it, by the Death of Christ.

All this, is in the grossest Ignorance of God, of the Reason and Ground, and Effects of Christ's Death, and in full Contradiction to the express Letter of Scripture. For there we are told, that God is Love, and that the Infinity of his Love was that alone, which showed itself towards fallen Man, and wanted to have *Satisfaction* done to it; which Love-desire could not be *fulfilled*, could not be *satisfied* with anything less than Man's full Deliverance from all the Evil of his fallen State. That Love, which has the Infinity of God, nay, which is God himself, was so immutably great towards Man, though fallen from him, 'that he 'spared not his only begotten Son'; and why did He not spare him? It was because nothing but the incarnate Life of his eternal Son, passing through all the *miserable States* of lost Man, could regenerate his first Divine Life in him. Can you possibly be told this, in stronger Words than these, 'God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son'; how did He give him? Why, in his whole Process. And to what end did He give him? Why, 'that all who believe in him, might not perish, 'but have everlasting Life.'—Away then with the superstitious

Dream, of an *infinite* Wrath in God towards poor fallen Man, which could never cease, till an *infinite Satisfaction* was made to it. All Scripture denies it, and the Light of Nature abhors it.—The *Birth*, the *Life*, the *Death* of Christ, though so different Things, have but one and the same Operation, and that Operation is solely *in Man*, to drive all Evil out of his fallen Nature, and delight the Heart of God, that desires his Salvation.—God is Love, and has no other Will towards Man, but the Will of Love. That Love, which from itself began the Creation of an holy *Adam*, from itself began the Redemption of a fallen *Adam*.—The Death of Christ was a Sacrifice from the Love of God the Son towards Man, to overcome thereby that *damnable* Death, which, otherwise, every Son of *Adam* must have died; it was a Sacrifice offered to the same Love, in God the Father; a Sacrifice, equally loved and desired by both of them, because, in the Nature of the Thing, as absolutely necessary to alter and overcome that Evil, which belonged to Man's *State of Death*, as the Incarnation of the WORD, was absolutely necessary in the Nature of the Thing, to make Man to be alive again in God.

This is the one only true, and full Confutation of *Socinianism*.

But to have Recourse to a supposed *Wrath*, or *vindictive Justice*, in a God incensed towards fallen Man, in order to confute the *Socinian*, who denies the Necessity, and Effects of Christ's Death, is only opposing one great Falsity with another.—For *Wrath* has no more Place in God, than *Love* has in the Devil. *Wrath* began with Devils, Hell, and fallen Nature, and can have no possible Existence anywhere, or in any Thing, but where Devils, Hell, and fallen Nature, have their Power of working.

Do not, my Friend, be here so furious, as to say, that if it was strictly true, that there was *no Wrath in God*, you would *burn your Bible*: For if it was not strictly true, you would never have had a Bible to burn; nor any more Messages from Heaven about Man's Salvation, than from Hell.—For if you will have *Wrath* in the most high God, you can have no other, or better a God, than that which the atheistical *Spinoza* invented.

For if *Wrath* is in the Supreme God, then Nature is in God, and if so, then God is Nature, and *nothing else*; for Nature cannot be above itself. Therefore if Nature is in the most high God, then the lowest Working of Nature, is the true Supreme God.—And so instead of a *supernatural* God, who created Heaven and Earth, Heaven and Earth, and all Things else, are the only God.

This is the atheistical Absurdity, that necessarily follows from the supposing a *Wrath* in God; for *Wrath* can no more be any-

where, but in *Nature*, than *Storms* and *Tempests* can be, where there is nothing that *moves*.

Let me here, Sir, observe to you the barefaced Calumny, that Dr. *Warburton* has ventured to cast upon me, in charging my Writings with *Spinozism*, though all that I have wrote for these last twenty Years, has been such a full Confutation of it, as is not to be found in any Book, that has been purposely wrote against it. Had I only proved, as I have done, by a Variety of Proofs, that Wrath cannot possibly be in the true God, I had sufficiently confuted *Spinozism*; for if not Wrath, then nothing of *Nature* is in God. But I have gone much further, and have, in my *Appeal*, the Book of *Regeneration*, the *Spirit of Prayer*, the *Spirit of Love*, and the *Way to Divine Knowledge*, opened the true Ground of the unchangeable Distinction between God and Nature, making all Nature, whether temporal or eternal, its own Proof, that it is not, cannot be God, but purely and solely the WANT of God, and can be nothing else in itself but a restless, painful Want, till a *supernatural* God manifests himself in it.—This is a Doctrine, which the Learned of all Ages have known nothing of; not a Book ancient or modern in all our Libraries, has so much as attempted to open the *Ground* of Nature, to show its *Birth* and *State*, and its essential unalterable Distinction from the one *abyssal, supernatural* God; and how all the Glories, Powers, and Perfections of the hidden, unapproachable God, have their wonderful Manifestation in Nature and Creature. This is a Blessing reserved by God for these last Times, to be opened in his chosen Instrument, the poor, illiterate *Behmen*. And this I will venture to say, that he who will declare War against him, has no Choice of any other Weapons, but Raillery and Reproach. To call the blessed Man, a *possessed Cobbler*, will be doing something; to call his Writings, *senseless Jargon*, may stand his learned Adversary in great stead; but if he tries to overcome him any other Way, his Success will be like his, who knocks his Head against a Post.—But no more of this here.

And now, Sir, what shall I say of my learned, accusing Doctor? Why only this, that if he knows how to forgive himself, then there will be one Thing at least, in which we are both of us like-minded.

A Word or two now to yourself and Friends, who are so loath to own a God who is all Love: Let me tell you, if you will have Wrath in the Supreme God, you must have a God, in whom is Selfishness, Envy, and Pride, with all the Properties of fallen Nature. For as it is impossible for one of these to be without the other in the Creature, so if any one of them was in God, all the other must be there. They are the four essential Elements

of Hell, or fallen Nature, which mutually beget, and are begotten of one another; where one is, there are all of them, and where all are not, there cannot be one of them. Every Pride consists of three Things, Selfishness, Envy, and Wrath. And so of every one of them, take which you will, it consists of the other three, so that to separate them, is to separate a Thing from itself.

Divine Love is just as contrary to them, as God is to the Devil; and where Love is not, there God is not, and where the Work is not *wholly* the Working of Love, it is no Work of God, but the *selfish, wrathful, proud, envious* Working of the diabolical Nature, fallen from its first blessed Subjection to, and Union with the *supernatural God of Love*.

To talk (as some do) of a *good Wrath* in God, which is only so called, because it has a *Likeness* to, and Produces *like Effects* to those that come from Wrath in the Creature, is but calling that a good Wrath, which is like a *bad* Wrath, and is no better, no wiser, than to talk of a good Envy, a good Pride in God, which are only so called, because they have a *Likeness* to that, which is a *bad* Pride, and a *bad* Envy in the Creature. Can any Thing be more profanely absurd than this? Which yet is the best that can be said by those, who will have it the *Glory* of God, to be wrathful, who think all is lost, that the gospel Salvation is blasphemed, if the *same* Love that created Man in Glory, should be his only Redeemer, when he had fallen from it. Not considering, that Salvation could never have come into the World, but because, all that Good and Blessing, which Love can be, and do to the Creature, must be done, and doing for ever and ever, by that first creating God, whose Name and Nature, whose Will and Working, is Love, the same Yesterday, to Day, and for ever.

And now, Sir, need I say much more, to remove your Scruple about the following Passage in the *Spirit of Love*, 'No Wrath in God, no fictitious Atonement, no Folly of Debtor and Creditor, no Suffering for Suffering's sake, but a Christ suffering and dying, as his *same* Victory over Death and Hell, as when he rose from the Dead and *ascended* into Heaven.'*

I said *Folly of Debtor and Creditor*, because Christ's overcoming Man's *damnable Death*, by his victorious Passage through it, has nothing in it that has any *Likeness* to the Transaction of a Debtor paying his Creditor; nothing was done in it by way of *Payment* of a Debt, any more than Christ paid a Debt for *Lazarus*, when he raised him from the Dead, or paid a Debt for the Man born Blind, whom he helped to seeing Eyes. For the Good that

* *Spirit of Love*, Second Part.

is done us by the Death of Christ, is a Good that relates *solely* to ourselves. Nothing in it, is given to, or received but by ourselves; it overcomes, and saves us from our *own Evil of Death*, just as *that*, which Christ did to *Lazarus*, and the *blind Man*, overcame the Death that was *in* the one, and the Darkness that was in the other.

You appeal to a Parable of our Lord's, which has no more Relation to the *Nature* and *Efficacy* of Christ's Death, than the Parable of the *Tares of the Field*. St. Peter saith, 'How oft shall 'my Brother sin against me, and I forgive him, till seven Times?' Christ *answereth*, 'Not until seven Times, but until seventy 'Times seven.' And then he sets forth this Doctrine of continual Forgiveness in the following Parable.

'The Kingdom of God is likened to a certain King, who would 'take Account of his Servants,' &c. Read the whole Parable, and you will be forced to see, that nothing else is intended to be taught by it, but that one Conclusion, which Christ draws from it: 'So likewise shall my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye 'from your Hearts, forgive not everyone his Brother their Tres- 'passes.' All that the Parable saith, is neither more nor less, than is said in these other Words, 'Be ye Merciful, as your Father 'which is in Heaven is merciful': *Again*, the Doctrine of this Parable, quite overthrows *that*, which systematic Doctors intend by *Debtor* and *Creditor*; for their Doctrine is, that the injured Authority of God *must have full Satisfaction* made to it, and thence it is, that they ground the Necessity of so great a Payment, as Christ made to it. Whereas this Parable of the Kingdom of God, sets forth a King, (N.B.) *frankly forgiving*, and not requiring any Payment at all, either from the Debtor himself, or from anyone else for him.—Can there therefore be a greater Folly, than to appeal to this, and the like Scriptures, to make God a *Creditor*, whose vindictive Wrath against his *Debtor*, will not be appeased, till *full Payment* is made to it? And what a blind Persisting is it in the same Folly, to urge the Petition in the Lord's Prayer, *forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors*, as another Proof, that God is that Creditor, who will be fully paid the Debts, that are due to him? For surely, if God requires us to expect, and pray for the *Forgiveness of our Debts*, it is badly concluded from thence, that therefore *full Payment* of them, must be made.—The Truth is, this Petition teaches the same *frank Forgiveness*, as the foregoing Parable, and is utterly inconsistent with the Doctrine of an *infinite Satisfaction*, necessary to be made: For if so, then the Petition ought to have been thus, *forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors*, (N.B.) when *full Payment is made*, either by themselves, or by someone else for them.

In a Word, a *vindictive Wrath* in God, that will not forgive, till a Satisfaction equal to the Offence, is made to it, sets the Goodness of God in a lower State, than that which has been found in Thousands of Mankind. The Truth of the Matter, is this, the *Divinity* of Christ, and his whole Process through Life and Death, was absolutely *necessary in the Nature of the Thing*, to raise Man out of the Death of Sin, into a heavenly Birth of Life. And the Necessity of all this, is grounded upon the Certainty of Man's Fall, from a Divine, into a bestial Life of this World. The Socinian Blasphemy consists in the Denial of these Points, the Deity of Christ, and the Fall of Man, and the Necessity of Christ's Death.—Our scholastic Doctors, own the Fall of Man, but know, or own Nothing of the true Nature and Depth of it. They own the Truth of Christ's Divinity, and the Necessity of his Sufferings; they plead for the Certainty of these Things from Scripture Words, but see not into the *Ground* of them, or in what, the *absolute Necessity* of them consists.—Hence it is, that when opposed by *Socinian Reasoning*, they are at a Loss how to support these great Truths, and are forced to *humanize* the Matter, and to suppose such a *vindictive Wrath* in God, as usually breaks forth in great Princes, when a Revolt is made, against their sovereign Authority.

What a paltry Logic, to say, God is *Righteousness* and *Justice*, as well as *Love*, and therefore his Love cannot help, or forgive the Sinner, till his Justice, or righteous Wrath has Satisfaction?—Every Word here, is in full Ignorance of the Things spoken of. For what is *Love* in God, but his *Will to all Goodness*? What is *Righteousness* in God, but his *unchangeable Love* of his *own Goodness*, his *Impossibility* of loving anything else but it, his *Impossibility* of suffering anything that is *Unrighteous*, to have any Communion with him? What is God's *forgiving* sinful Man? It is nothing else in its whole Nature, but God's making him *Righteous* again. There is no other Forgiveness of Sin, but being made free from it. Therefore the compassionate Love of God, that forgives Sin, is no other, than God's *Love* of his *own Righteousness*, for the Sake of which, and through the Love of which, he makes Man righteous again. This is the *one Righteousness* of God, that is *rigorous*, that makes *no Abatements*, that must be *satisfied*, must be fulfilled in every Creature that is to have Communion with him. And this Righteousness that is thus *rigorous*, is nothing else but the unalterable *Purity* and *Perfection* of the Divine Love, which from Eternity to Eternity can love nothing but its own Righteousness, can will nothing but its own Goodness, and therefore can will nothing towards fallen Man, but the Return of his lost Goodness, by a new Birth of the Divine Life

in him, which is the *true Forgiveness* of Sins.—For what is the sinful State of Man? It is nothing else, but the Loss of that Divine Nature, which cannot commit Sin; therefore the *forgiving* Man's Sin, is in the Truth and Reality of it, nothing else, but the Revival of that Nature in Man, which *being born of God sinneth not*. Lastly, Let me ask these Dividers of the Divine Nature, what different Shares, or different Work, had the *Righteousness*, and the *Love* of God in the Creation of Man? Was there then something done by the Love of God, which ought not to be ascribed to the Righteousness of God? Who can be so weak, as to say this? But if the Love and the Righteousness of God, is one, as God is one, and had but one Work in the *Creation* of Man, it must be the highest Absurdity, to say, that in the *Redemption* of Man, the Love, and the Righteousness of God, must have, not only different, but *contrary* Works, that the Love of God cannot act, till the Righteousness of God, as something *different from it*, is first satisfied.

All that which we call the *Attributes* of God, are only so many human Ways of our conceiving that *Abyssal All*, which can neither be spoken, nor conceived by us. And this Way of thinking, and speaking of God, is suitable to our Capacities, has its good Use, and helps to express our Adoration of him, and his Perfections. But to conclude, and contend, that there must therefore be, *different Qualities* in God, answerable, or according to our different Ways of thinking, and speaking of his Perfections, is rather *blaspheming*, than truly glorifying his Name, and Nature. For *omnipotent Love, inconceivable Goodness*, is that *Unity* of God, which we can neither conceive, as it is in itself, nor divide into this, or that.—The Importance of the Subject I have been upon, has led me further than I intended. But for the full Illustration of it, I refer you to the Second Part of the *Spirit of Love*. And so committing you to a God, who has no Will towards you, but in, and through the Life, and Death, the Spirit and Power of the Holy Jesus, to deliver you from all your natural Evil, and make you his beloved Son, in whom, he can be well pleased to all Eternity, I bid you farewell.

July 18, 1757.

Letter V.

To a Clergyman in the North of *England*.*My dear Brother,*

LIVE as you now do, in such Activity of Spirit, and Multiplied Ways of being good, and though you were to live half an hundred Years longer, you would stick in the same Mire, and end your Life in the same Complaints, as filled your last Letter to me.—You tell me, that after all the *great Change* you have made in *your Life*, you find nothing of that *inward Good* and Satisfaction, which you have so much expected, and more especially since you have been a Reader of the Books, recommended by me.

But, Sir, you quite mistake the Matter, you have not changed *your Life*; for that which is, and only can truly be called *your Life*, is in the same State it was when I first knew you.—Nothing is in your *Life*, whether it be good or bad, but *That* which WILLS and HUNGERS in you; and your *own Life* neither is, nor can be anything else but this.—Therefore nothing reaches your *Life*, or can make a real Change in it, from bad to good, from Falseness to Truth, but the *right Will* and the *right Hunger*.—Practise as many Rules as you will, take up this or that new Opinion, be daily reading better and better Books, follow this or that able man, the *Bread of Life* is not there.—Nothing will be fed in you, but the Vanity and self-conceited Righteousness of your own old Man. And thus it must be with you, till all that is within you is become *one Will*, and *one Hunger* after that which Angels eat in Heaven.

But now, if Will and Hunger are the whole of every natural Life, then you may know this great Truth with the utmost Certainty, namely, that *Eating* is the one Preservation of every Life, from the highest Angel in Heaven, to the lowest living Creature on Earth.—That which the Life eats not, that the Life has not.—Now everything that lives on Earth, is a Birth or Production of the astral, elementary *Fire, Light, and Spirit*, to which Water is always essential, and it continues in Life, tastes and enjoys the Good of its Life, no longer than these Powers and Virtues of the Stars and Elements are *essentially* and continually eaten by it.

It is just so with the immortal, heavenly Life of the Soul, it is a Birth of those same Powers, in their highest Glory, in the *invisible World*; a World, where the Triune Deity of Father, Son

and Holy Ghost, brings forth a triune glorious Habitation for itself, of Fire, Light, and Spirit, opening an Infinity of Wonders, Births, and Beauties in a crystal transparent Sea, called the Kingdom of Heaven.

Out of these Powers, or out of this Kingdom of Heaven, are the Births of all holy, angelic Creatures ; nothing lives or moves in them, but that Fire, Light, and Spirit, which comes as a Birth from Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; and nothing feeds, keeps up, and exalts this heavenly Fire, Light, and Spirit, but the hidden, inconceivable, supernatural Trinity, which is before, and deeper than all Nature, and can only manifest itself, and communicate its Goodness, by such an outward Birth of its own unapproachable Glory.—And here you may find a glorious Meaning of those Words of our Lord, saying, ‘ my Kingdom is not of this World,’ because it is a Kingdom of those heavenly Powers of the Triune God, which give Food and Nourishment, Purity and Perfection to the Fire, Light, and Spirit of those Divine Creatures, which are to be holy as he is holy, perfect as he is perfect, in his own heavenly Kingdom.

Here therefore, in this spiritual Eating of that same *invisible* Food, which gives Life, and Perfection of Life to all the Angels of God, and not in any human Contrivances, or Activity of your own, are you to place your all, as to the Change of your Life ; it all consists in the right *Hunger*, and the right *Food*, and in nothing else.

The Fall of *Adam*, and the Origin of all Sin and Misery, began in his Lust and Hunger after the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Kingdom of this World. By this, he left, and lost the Food which Heaven gives.—He died to all the Influences and Enjoyments of his first Fire, Light, and Spirit, which was his vital Union with God, in the Kingdom of Heaven.—All the Evil that was hid in this earthly Creation, and its numerous Creatures, opened, and diffused itself with all the Power of a poisonous Food, through his whole Soul and Body.—But in all this, nothing more came upon him, or was done to him, than that which his own Hunger had eaten.—Here you have the fullest Demonstration, how every Change in the *Life* of Man is, and only can be made, namely, by *hungering*, and *eating*.—*Adam* had not fallen, had known no Death, or Extinction of that heavenly Fire, Light, and Spirit, which was his first Birth in God, but because he hungered after the State of the animal Life in this World, which has no other Fire, Light, and Spirit in it, but that which gives a transitory Life, of diverse, contrary Lusts and Appetites, to all the Beasts, Birds, and Insects.

This is the Doctrine of the Old Testament, concerning the

Power of Hunger and Eating in the first *Adam*.—On the other hand, in conformity to this, and in full Proof of the Truth of it, that it must have been so; the second *Adam*, the Lord from Heaven, in the New Testament, has declared, that Hunger and Eating is that alone, which can help fallen Man to that first heavenly Fire, Light, and Spirit, with the spiritual Flesh and Blood that belonged to it; saying again and again, in a Variety of the strongest Expressions, this great Truth, That except a Man eat his Flesh, and drink his Blood, he hath no Life in him, that is, no Life of that celestial Body and Blood, which *Adam* lost, and which alone can live in the Fire, Light, and Spirit of Heaven.

Every Spirit that is creaturely, and every Desire of the Spirit, has always something bodily, as its own Birth, No spiritual Creature can begin to be, but by beginning to be bodily.—For creaturely Existence, and bodily Existence, is the same Thing; the Spirit is not, cannot be in the *Form* of a Creature, till it has its Body; and its Body is the Manifestation of Spirit, both to itself, and other Beings.

Live in the Love, the Patience, the Meekness, and Humility of Christ, and then the celestial, transparent, spiritual Body of Christ's Flesh and Blood, is continually forming itself, and growing in and from, and about your Soul, till it comes to the fulness of the Stature in Christ Jesus; and this is your true, substantial, vital eating the Flesh, and drinking the Blood of Christ, which will afterwards become your Body of Glory to all Eternity.—And though your astral Reason, and outward Senses, whilst you are in *Adam's* bodily Flesh, know nothing of this inward Body of Christ, yet there it is, as surely as you have the Love, the Patience, the Meekness, and Humility of Christ; for where the true Spirit of Christ is, there is his true spiritual Body.

On the other hand, live to Selfishness, to diabolical Pride, Wrath, Envy, and Covetousness, and then nothing can hinder these Tempers, from forming within you such a spiritual Body to your Soul, as that which Devils have, and dwell, and work in.

Be as unwilling as you will, through learned Wisdom, or Fear of Enthusiasm, to believe this, your Unbelief can last no longer, than till *Adam's* Flesh and Blood leave you, and then, as sure as your Soul lives, you will, and must have it living, either in the spiritual Body of fallen Angels, or in the spiritual Body of the redeeming Jesus.—Oh, Sir, trifle away no more Time in Many Matters, your first spiritual Body must come again.—Without it, you are the very Man that came to the Marriage Feast, not 'having on a Wedding Garment.'—He was bound Hands and Feet, and cast into utter Darkness, that is, he was

the chained Prisoner of his own dark, hellish, spiritual Body, which had been all his Life growing up in him, from that which his Soul had daily eaten, and hungered after; and so was become those very Chains of Darkness, under which the fallen Angels are reserved unto the Judgment of the great Day.

Now there is no being saved, or preserved from this Body of Chains and Darkness, but by the one Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness that is in Christ Jesus, and by eating that, which begets heavenly spiritual Flesh and Blood to the Soul.—The two Trees of Paradise, with their two Fruits, *viz.*, of Death to the Eater of the one, and Life to the Eater of the other, were infallible Signs, and full Proofs, that from the Beginning to the End of the World, Death and Life, Happiness and Misery, can proceed from nothing else, but that which the Lust and Hunger of the Soul chooseth for its Food.—Now spiritual Eating is by the Mouth of Desire, and Desire is nothing else but Will, and Hunger, therefore, that which you will, and hunger after, that you are continually eating, whether it be good, or bad, and that, be it which it will, forms the *Strength* of your Life, or which is the same thing, forms the *Body* of your Soul. If you have many Wills, and many Hungers, all that you eat is only the Food of so many spiritual Diseases, and burdens your Soul with a Complication of inward Distempers.—And under this Working of so many Wills, it is, that religious People have no more Good, or Health and Strength from the true Religion, than a Man who has a Complication of bodily Distempers, has from the most healthful Food. For no Will or Hunger, be it turned which way it will, or seem ever so small or trifling, is without its Effect.—For as we can have nothing but as our Will works, so we must have always some Effect from it. It cannot be *insignificant*, because nothing is *significant*, but that which it does.

Do not now say, that you have this *one Will*, and *one Hunger*, and yet find not the Food of Life by it.—For as sure as you are forced to complain, so sure is it, that you have it not.—‘Not my Will, but thine be done’; when this is the *one Will* of the Soul, all Complaints are over, then it is, that *Patience* drinks Water of Life out of every Cup; and to every Craving of the old Man, this one Hunger continually says, ‘I have Meat to eat, that ye know nothing of.’

‘Thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done,’ is the one Will, and one Hunger, that feeds the Soul with the Life-giving Bread of Heaven. This Will is always fulfilled, it cannot possibly be sent empty away, for God’s Kingdom must manifest itself with all its Riches in that Soul, which wills nothing else; it never was, nor can be lost, but by the Will, that seeks something else. Hence

you may know with the utmost Certainty, that if you have no inward Peace, if religious Comfort is still wanting, it is because you have more Wills than one. For the Multiplicity of Wills, is the very Essence of fallen Nature, and all its Evil, Misery, and Separation from God lies in it; and as soon as you return to, and allow only this one Will, you are returned to God, and must find the Blessedness of his Kingdom within you.

Give yourself up to ever so many good Works, Read, Preach, Pray, visit the Sick, build Hospitals, clothe the Naked, &c., yet if anything goes along with these, or in the Doing of them you have anything else, that you will and hunger after, but that *God's Kingdom may come, and his Will be done*, they are not the Works of the New-born from above, and so cannot be his life-giving Food.—For the new Creature in Christ is that one Will, and one Hunger that was in Christ; and therefore where that is wanting, there is wanting that new Creature, which alone can have his Conversation, which alone can daily eat and drink at God's Table, receiving in all that it does, continual Life from 'every Word, that proceedeth out of the Mouth of God.'

From what Word, and from what Mouth of God? Why only from that hidden, supernatural Power of the Triune Deity, which *speaks*, and *breathes* continual Nourishment to that heavenly Fire, Light, and Spirit, in and from which, all that are about the Throne of God, have their *inward Joy* above all Thought, and their *outward Glory*, that can only be figured, or hinted to us, by Pearls, Sapphires, and Rainbow Beauties.

It is from this Power of the Triune God, working in the Fire, Light, Spirit, and spiritual Water, or Body of your new-born Creature, that all the Good, and Comfort, and Joy of Religion, which you want, is to be found, and found by nothing, but the Resurrection of that Divine, and heavenly Nature, which came forth in the first Man.

Do not take these to be too high flown Words, for they are no higher, than the Truth; for if that which is in you, is not as high as Heaven, you will never come there.—That heavenly Fire, Light, and Spirit, which makes the angelic Life to be all Divine, must as certainly be your inward Likeness to God; and that which God is, and works in Angels, that he must be, and work in you, or you can never be like to, or equal with them, as Christ has said.—To be outwardly Glorious, as they are, you must stay till this Corruptible shall have put on Incorruption, but to have the same inward Glory of the same celestial Fire, Light, and Spirit, burning, shining, and breathing in your inward Man, as Angels have, belongs to you, as born at first of the triune Breath of the living God, and born again of Christ, out of *Adam's*

Death, to have, and be, all that by a Wonder of Redemption, which was your Divine Birthright at first by a Wonder of Creation.

And now, my dear Friend, choose your Side: Would you be honourable in Church, or State, put on the whole Armour of this World, praise that which Man praises, clothe yourself with all the Graces and Perfections of the *Belles Lettres*, and be an Orator, and Critic, as fast as ever you can, and above all, be strong in the Power of flattering Words.

But if the other Side is your Choice; would you be found in Christ, and know the Power of his Resurrection; would you taste the Powers of the World to come, and find the continual Influences of the Triune God, feeding and keeping up his Divine Life in your triune Soul, you must give up all for that *one Will*, and *one Hunger*, which keeps the Angels of God in their full Feasts, of ever new, and never-ceasing Delights in the nameless, boundless Riches of Eternity.

Think it not hard, or too severe a Restraint, to have but one Will, and one Hunger; it is no harder a Restraint, than to be kept from all that can bring forth Pain, and Sorrow to your Soul; no greater Severity, than to be excluded from every Place, but the Kingdom of God.—For to have but this one Will, and one Hunger, is to have every Evil of Life, and all Enemies put under your Feet. It is to have done with every Thing, that can defile, betray, disappoint, or hurt that eternal Nature, which must have its Life within you.—On the other hand, every Thing that is not the Effect and Fruit of this one Will, and one Hunger, but added to your Life by a selfish Will, and worldly Hunger, must sooner or later, be torn from you with the utmost Smart, or become Food for that gnawing Worm, which dieth not.

Do you ask, how you are to come at this one Will, and one Hunger, I refer you to no Power of your own, and yet refer you to that which is within yourself.

Angels in Heaven, are not good and happy by any Thing they can *do* to themselves, but solely by that which is *done* to them.—Now that Holy Spirit, which does God's Will in Heaven, and is the Goodness and Happiness of all its Inhabitants, that same Spirit is every Man's Portion upon Earth, and the Gift of God within him.—It is but lost Labour, to strive by any Power of your Reason, or Self-activity, to work up this one Will and one Hunger within you, or to kindle the true Ardency of a Divine Desire, by anything that your natural Man can do.—This is as impossible, as for fallen *Adam* to have been his own Redeemer, or a dead Man to give Life to himself.—The one Will, and one Hunger which alone can eat the true Nourishment of the Divine

Life, is nothing else but the *Divine Nature* within you, which died in *Adam* no other Death, but that of being suppressed and buried for a while, under a Load and Multiplicity of earthly Wills.

Hence it is, that nothing can put an End to this Multiplicity of Wills in fallen Man, which is his Death to God, nothing can be the Resurrection of the *Divine Nature* within him, which is his only Salvation, but the CROSS of Christ, not that wooden Cross, on which he was crucified, but that Cross on which he was crucified through the whole Course of his Life in the Flesh. It is our Fellowship with him on this Cross, through the whole Course of our Lives, that is our Union with Him, it alone gives Power to the *Divine Nature* within us, to arise out of its Death, and breathe again in us, in one Will, and one Hunger after nothing but God.

To be like-minded with Christ, is to live in every Contrariety to Self, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, as he did; this is our belonging to him, our being one with him, having Life from him, and washing our Robes in the Blood of the Lamb.—For then, and then only are we washed, and cleansed by his Blood, when we drink his Blood, and we drink his Blood, when we willingly drink of the Cup that He drank of.

Again, not to be like-minded with Christ, is to be separated from him.—To have another Mind than he had, is to be in the State of those, who crucified him. Such as the Redeemer was, such are they that are redeemed.—as *Adam* was, such are they that are born of him.—Life from *Adam*, and Life from Christ, is the one single Thing, that makes the one our Destroyer, the other our Redeemer.—But to have done, cast not about in your Mind, how you are to have the one Will, and one Hunger, which is always eating at God's Table, and continually fed with the Bread of Life; the Thing is already done to your Hands. 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,' saith Christ, the same as if he had said, the *Way* is nowhere, the *Truth* is nowhere, the *Life* is nowhere, but in me. What Room therefore for any learned Contrivances, or further Enquiry about the Matter? Follow Christ in the Denial of *all the Wills of Self*, and then all is put away that separates you from God: The heaven-born new Creature will come to Life in you, which alone knows, and enjoys the Things of God, and has his daily Food of Gladness in that manifold BLESSED, and BLESSED, which Christ preached on the Mount.

Tell me then no more of your new Skill in *Hebrew* Words, of your *Paris* Editions of all the ancient Fathers, your complete Collection of the Councils, Commentators, and Church His-

torians, &c., &c. Did Christ mean anything like this, when he said, 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life'? Did the Apostle mean anything like this, when he said, 'No Man can call Jesus 'Lord, but by the Holy Ghost'?—Great, good, and Divine Teachers, you say, were many of the Fathers: I say nothing to it, but that much more great, good, and Divine is He, who is always teaching within you, ever standing and knocking at the Door of your Heart, with the Words of eternal Life.

You perhaps may ask, why I go on writing Books myself, if there is but one true, and Divine Teacher? I answer, though there is but one Bridegroom, that can furnish the Blessing of the Marriage Feast, yet his Servants are sent out to invite the Guests.—This is the unalterable Difference between Christ's Teaching, and the Teaching of those, who only publish the glad Tidings of him. They are not the Bridegroom, and therefore have not the Bridegroom's Voice. They are not the *Light*, but only sent to bear Witness of it. And as the *Baptist* said, 'He 'must increase, but I must decrease;' so every faithful Teacher saith of his Doctrine, it must decrease, and end, as soon as it has led to the true Teacher.

All that I have written for near thirty Years, has been only to show, that we have no Master but Christ, nor can have any living Divine Knowledge, but from his holy Nature born and revealed in us.—Not a Word in favour of *Jacob Behmen*, but because, above every Writer in the World, he has made all that is found in the Kingdom of Grace, and the Kingdom of Nature, to be one continual Demonstration, that *Dying* to self, to be *born again* of Christ, is the one only possible Salvation of the Sons of fallen *Adam*.

But I will have done, as soon as I have given you a little Piece of History, which your friend *Academicus*, has given of himself: 'When I had,' says he, 'taken my Degrees in the University, I consulted several great Divines to put me in a Method 'of studying Divinity.—It would take up near half a Day to tell 'you the Work, which my learned Friends cut out for me. One 'told me, that *Hebrew* Words are all; that they must be read 'without Points, and then the Old Testament is an opened Book. 'He recommended to me a cart Load of Lexicons, Critics, and 'Commentators upon the *Hebrew* Bible.—Another tells me, the '*Greek* Bible is the best, that it corrects the *Hebrew* in many 'Places, and refers me to a large Number of Books learnedly 'writ in Defence of it.—Another tells me that Church-history is 'the main Matter, that I must begin with the first Fathers, and 'follow them through every Age, not forgetting to take the *Lives* of the *Roman* Emperors along with me, as striking great Light

'into the State of the Church in their Times. Then I must
 'have Recourse to all the Councils held, and the Canons made
 'in every Age: Which would enable me to see with my own
 'Eyes, the great Corruptions of the Council of *Trent*. Another,
 'who is not very fond of ancient Matters, but wholly bent upon
 '*rational* Christianity, tells me, I need go no higher than the
 '*Reformation*; that *Calvin* and *Cranmer* were very great Men;
 'that *Chillingworth* and *Locke* ought always to lie upon my
 'Table; that I must get an entire Set of those learned Volumes
 'wrote against Popery in King *James's* Reign; and also be well
 'versed in all the Discourses, which Mr. *Boyle's*, and Lady
 '*Moyer's* Lectures have produced; and then, says he, you will
 'be a Match for our greatest Enemies, which are *popish* Priests,
 'and modern Deists.—My Tutor is very *liturgical*; he desired
 'me, of all things, to get all the Collections, that I can, of the
 '*ancient* Liturgies, and all the Authors that treat of such Matters,
 'who, says he, are very learned and very numerous. He has
 'been many Years making Observations upon them, and is now
 'clear, as to the Time, when certain little Particles got Entrance
 'into the Liturgies, and others were by Degrees dropped.—
 'He has a Friend abroad in search of ancient MSS. Liturgies;
 'for by the by, said he, at Parting, I have some Suspicion,
 'that our Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is *essentially* de-
 'fective, for want of having a little Water mixed with the
 'Wine.—Another learned Friend told me, that the *Clementine*
 '*Constitution* is the Book of Books; and that all that lies
 'loose, and scattered in the New Testament, stands there in
 'its true Order and Form. And though he will not say, that
 'Dr. *Clarke*, and Mr. *Whiston*, are in the Right, yet it might be
 'useful to me to read all the *Arian* and *Socinian* Writers, pro-
 'vided I stood upon my Guard, and did it with Caution.—The
 'last Person I consulted, advised me to get all the Histories of
 'the Rise and Progress of Heresies, and of the Lives and Cha-
 'racters of Heretics.—These Histories, he said, contract the
 'Matter, bring Truth and Error close in view; and I should find
 'all that collected in a few Pages, which would have cost me
 'some Years to get together. He also desired me to be well
 'versed in all the *casuistical* Writers, and chief *Schoolmen*, for
 'they debate Matters to the Bottom, dissect every Virtue, and
 'every Vice, and show how near they may come together with-
 'out touching. And this Knowledge, he said, might be very
 'useful, when I came to be a *Parish* Priest.

'Following the Advice of all these Counsellors, as well as I
 'could, I lighted my Candle early in the Morning, and put it
 'out late at Night. In this Labour I had been sweating for some

‘Years, till *Rusticus*, at my first Acquaintance with him, seeing
‘my Way of Life, said to me, had you lived about seventeen
‘Hundred Years ago, you had stood just in the same Place, as
‘I stand now.—I cannot read, and therefore, says he, all these
‘hundreds of thousands of Doctrine and Disputing Books, which
‘these seventeen Hundred Years have produced, stand not in my
‘Way; they are the same Thing to me, as if they had never
‘been. And had you lived at the Time mentioned, you had just
‘escaped them all, as I do now, because, though you are a very
‘good Reader, there were then none of them to be read.—Could
‘you therefore be content to be one of the primitive Christians,
‘who were as good as any that have been since, you may spare
‘all this Labour.—It is not easy for me, says *Academicus*, to tell
‘you how much Good I received from this simple Instruction of
‘honest Master *Rusticus*. — What Project was it, to be grasping
‘after the Knowledge of all the Opinions, Doctrines, Disputes,
‘Heresies, Schisms, &c., which seventeen Hundred Years
‘had brought forth, through all the Extent of the Christian
‘World! What Project this, in order to be a *Divine*, that is, in
‘order to bear true Witness to the Power of Christ, as a Deliverer
‘from the Evil of earthly Flesh and Blood, and Death and Hell,
‘and a Raiser of a new Birth and Life from above! For as this
‘is the Divine Work of Christ, so He only is a true and able
‘*Divine* that can bear a faithful Testimony to this *Divine* Work
‘of Christ.—How easy was it for me to have seen, that all this
‘Labyrinth of learned Enquiry, into such a dark, thorny Wilderness
‘of Notions, Facts, and Opinions, could signify no more to
‘me now, to my own Salvation, to my Interest in Christ, and
‘obtaining the Holy Spirit of God, than if I had lived before it
‘had any Beginning. But the blind Appetite of Learning, gave
‘me no Leisure to apprehend so plain a Truth.—Books of
‘Divinity indeed, I have not done with, but will esteem none to
‘be such, but those that make known to my Heart the, *inward*
‘*Power and Redemption of Jesus Christ*. Nor will I seek for any-
‘thing even from such Books, but that which I ask of God in
‘Prayer, *viz.*, How better to know, more to abhor, and resist
‘the Evil that is in my *own Nature*, and how to obtain a *Super-*
‘*natural Birth* of the Divine Life brought forth within me. All
‘besides this is *Pushpin*.’*

God be with you.

March 5, 1753.

Letter VI.

In Answer to a QUESTION.

YOU tell me, Sir, that after a twenty Years' Zeal, and Labour in Matters of Religion, it has turned to so little Account, that you are forced, most earnestly to desire a speedy Answer to this Question, *Where you shall go, or what you shall do, to be in the Truth?*

Let me first premise thus much. Every Man in his fallen State, has all that in him, though in a State of *Death*, and *Hiddenness*, which was the *living* Glory, and Perfection of the first created Man. Just as the *Root* of the *Lily*, in the *Winter's* Cold, hath all that in it, though as in a State of *Death*, which was the *Glory* and *Beauty* of the *Summer's* Flower.—What is hidden in the *Root* of the *Lily*, lies no longer in its seeming *Death*, than till the *Spring-Sun* calls forth its *Life*.—Now, one *Divine Dispensation* after another, is to do that same to the fallen *Soul*, which the *Spring*, and daily advancing *Sun* does to the *Lily* *Root*; namely, to call it out of its State of *Death*, and make something of its first *Glory* come to *life*, and spring forth out of it. Hence it is that *the Kingdom of God* (which was that to which *Adam* died) *is like to Treasure hid in a Field*; and again, *the Kingdom of God is within you*. But this could not be true, unless all that *Glory*, which *Adam* lost, was still preserved, as a *Seed*, or shut-up *Root* of *Life* within him: And all this, through the *Mercy*, and *free Grace* of *God*, who foreseeing the *Fall* of *Adam*, willed, that a *Seed* of his first *Glory*, should be preserved in him; declared, and made known to him, by a *Seed of the Woman*, which through the *Word* made *Flesh*, should, in spite of *Death* and *Hell*, grow up to the *Fulness of the Stature in Christ Jesus*.

And as the *Kingdom of Heaven*, is every *Man's* *Treasure*, as surely within him, as his own *Soul*, so that which hides, and covers it from us, is that *awakened, bestial* *Life*, which is called *Adam* in us, and in which, the *immortal* *Soul*, that was born for *Heaven*, is wedded to the *Lusts of the Flesh*, the *Lust of the Eyes*, and the *Pride of Life*, and subject to the *Workings* of that *Satanical* *Nature*, which our *Lord* calls the *Prince of this World*.—And thus it is, that every *Man* comes into this *World* in a twofold State; *Adam* and *Christ* are both born in him.—And if this was not the State of *Man*, nothing within you, would, or could ask, as you have done, or have any *Anxiety* after the *Truth*. And your being either led from this true *Knowledge* of your

State, or having never been sensible of it, is the Reason of your having made so many religious Inquiries in vain, both from yourself, and other People.—For nothing can tell you the Truth, or establish you in a just and solid Discernment of Right from Wrong, in Doctrines, Opinions, and Practices of Religion, but this home Knowledge of yourself, namely, that Christ and *Adam*, are not only both of them *essentially* within you, but the *whole* of you; that nothing is Life or Salvation, but that, which is the Life and Growth of Christ in you, and that all that is done from the *Life*, the *Power* and *natural* Capacity of the *Adamic* Nature, is heathenish, is mere Vanity and Death, however gloriously set forth by the natural Gifts of Wit and Learning.

Religion has no Good in it, but as it is the Revival, and Quickening of that Divine Nature, which your first Father had from God, and nothing can revive it, but that which first created it. God is no otherwise your God, but as He is the God of your Life, manifested in it; and He can be no otherwise the God of your Life, but as his Spirit is living within you.—Satan is no other Way knowable by you, or can have any other Fellowship with you, but as his evil Spirit works, and manifests itself along with the Workings of your own Spirit.—‘Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you’; but he is nowhere to be resisted, but as a working Spirit *within you*, therefore to resist the Devil, is to turn from the evil Thoughts, and Motions that arise within you. ‘Turn to God, and he will turn to you’: But God is an universal Spirit, which you cannot locally turn to, or from; therefore to turn to God, is to cleave to those good Thoughts and Motions which proceed from his Holy Spirit, dwelling and working in you.—This is the God of your Life, to whom you are to adhere, listen, and attend, and this is your worshipping him in Spirit and Truth. And That is the *Devil that goeth about as a roaring Lion*, who has no Voice, but that which he speaks within you. Therefore, my Friend, be at home, and keep close to that which passes within you, for be it what it will, whether it be a Good, in which you *delight*, or an Evil, at which you *grieve*, you could have neither the one, nor the other, but because a holy God of Light and Love is essentially dwelling in you. Seek therefore for no other Road, nor call any Thing the Way to God, but solely that, which is eternal, all-creating WORD, and SPIRIT worketh within you. For could any Thing else have been Man’s Way to God, the WORD *had not been made Flesh*.

The last Words in your Question, *viz.*, *To be in the Truth*, are well expressed, for to be in the Truth, is the finished State of Man returning to God, thus declared by Christ himself, ‘Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free’; free from

the Blindness and Delusion of your own natural Reason, and free from Forms, Doctrines and Opinions, which others would impose upon you. To be in Truth, is to be, where the first holy Man was, when he came forth in the Image and Likeness of God.—When he lost Paradise, he lost the Truth; and all that he felt, knew, saw, loved, and liked of the earthly, bestial World, into which he was fallen, was but mere Separation from God, a Veil upon his Heart, and Scales upon his Eyes.—Nothing of his *first Truth* could be spoken of to him, even by God himself, but under the Veil of earthly Things, Types, and Shadows. *The Law was given by Moses*; but *Moses* had a Veil upon his Face, the *Law* was a Veil, *Prophecy* was a Veil, *Christ crucified* was a Veil, and all was a Veil, till *Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ*, in the POWER of his HOLY SPIRIT. Therefore to be in the Truth, as it is in *Jesus*, is to be come from under the Veil, to have passed through all those *Dispensations*, which would never have begun, but that they might end in a *Christ spiritually* revealed, and *essentially* formed in the Soul. So that now, in this *last Dispensation* of God, which is the first Truth itself restored, nothing is to be thought of, trusted to, or sought after, but God's *immediate, continual* Working in the Soul, by his Holy Spirit. This, Sir, is the *Where* you are to go, and the *What* you are to do, to be *in the Truth*. For the Truth as it is in *Jesus*, is nothing else but *Christ* come in the Spirit, and his coming in the Spirit, is nothing else but the first *lost Life* of God, quickened, and revealed again in the Soul.—Everything short of this, has only the Nature of outward Type and Figure, which in its best State, is only for a Time.—If therefore you look to any Thing but the Spirit, seek to any Power, but that of the Spirit, expect *Christ* to be your Saviour, any other Way, than as he is *spiritually* born in you, you go back from the *Grace and Truth, which came by Jesus*, and can at best be only a *legal Jew*, or a self-righteous *Pharisee*; there is no getting further than these States, but by being born of the Spirit, living by the Spirit, as his Child, his Instrument, and holy Temple, in which he dwells, and works all his good Pleasure.—Drop this full Adherence to, and Dependence upon the Spirit, act as in your own Sphere, be something of yourself, and through your own Wisdom, &c., and then, though all that you say, or do, is with the outward Words of the *spiritual* Gospel, and in the outward Practices of the *spiritual* Apostles, yet for all this, you are but there, where those were, who worshipped God with the Blood of Bulls and Goats; for (N.B.) Nothing but the Spirit of God, can worship God in Spirit and in Truth.

But you will perhaps say, that you are still but where you were, because you know not how to find the *continual Guidance*

of the Holy Spirit.—If you know how to find your own Thoughts, you need not be at a Loss to find the Spirit of God. For you have not a Thought within you, but is either from the Good of the *Spirit*, or from the Evil of the *Flesh*. Now the Good and the Evil that are within you, and always more or less sensible by turns, do each of them teach you the *same Work* and Presence of the Spirit of God. For the Good, could not appear as Good, nor the Evil, be *felt* as Evil, but because the *immediate* Working of the Spirit of God *creates*, or *manifests* this Difference between them, and therefore be in what State you will, the Power of God's Spirit within you, equally manifests itself to you; and to find the *immediate, continual*, essential Working of the Spirit of God within you, you need only know what Good, and Evil are felt within you. For all the Good that is in any Thought or Desire, is so much of God within you, and whilst you adhere to, and follow a good Thought, you follow, or are led by the Spirit of God. And on the other hand, all that is selfish and wicked in Thought, or Affection, is so much of the Spirit of Satan within you, which would not be known, or felt, as evil, but because it is contrary to the *immediate, continual* Working of the Spirit of God within you. Turn therefore inwards, and all that is within you, will demonstrate to you, the Presence, and Power of God in your Soul, and make you find, and feel it, with the same Certainty, as you find and feel your own Thoughts. And what is best of all, by thus doing, you will never be without a living Sense of the *immediate* Guidance and Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, always equal to your Dependence upon it, always leading you from Strength to Strength in your inward Man, till all your Knowledge of Good and Evil, is become nothing else, but a mere Love of the one, and mere Aversion to the other.—For the *one Work* of the Spirit of God, is to distinguish the Good, and Evil, that is within you, not as in Notion, but by Affection; and when you are wholly given up to this new-creating Work of God, so as to stay your Mind upon it, abide with it, and expect all from it, This, my Friend, will be your Returning to the Rock, from whence you were hewn, your drinking at the Fountain of Living Water, your walking with God, your living by Faith, your putting on Christ, your continual hearing the WORD of God, your eating the Bread that came down from Heaven, your supping with Christ, and following the Lamb wherever he goeth.

For all these seeming different Things, will be found in every Man, according to his Measure, who is wholly given up to, and depending upon the blessed Work of God's Spirit in his Soul.

But your Mistake, and that of most Christians, lies in this;

you would be Good by some outward Means, you would have *Methods. Opinions, Forms, and Ordinances* of Religion, alter and raise your fallen Nature, and create in you a new Heart, and a new Spirit, that is to say, you would be Good in a Way that is altogether *impossible*, for Goodness cannot be brought into you from *without*, much less by any Thing that is Creaturely, or the Action of Man; this is as impossible, as for the Flesh to *sanctify* the Spirit, or for Things temporal, to *give Life* to Things that are eternal.

The Image and Likeness of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are in every Man, *antecedent* to every outward Work, or Action that can proceed from him: It is God thus within him, that is the sole Cause that any Thing can be called Godly, that is done, observed, or practised by him. If it were not so, Man would only have his *Being* from God, but his *Goodness* from himself.

All Man's *outward good Works*, are only like his *outward good Words*; he is not Good, because he is frequent in the Use of them, they bring no Goodness into him, nor are of any Worth in themselves, but as a good, and godly Spirit speaks forth itself in the Sound of them. This is the Case of every outward, creaturely Thing, or Work of Man, be it of what Kind it will, either *Hearing, Praying, Singing, or Preaching, &c.*, or practising any outward Rules, and Observances; they have only the Goodness of the outward *Jew*, nay, are as vain, as *sounding Brass*, and tinkling Cymbals, unless they be solely the Work, and Fruits of the Spirit of God: For the *Divine Nature*, is that alone, which can be the Power to any good Work, either in Man, or Angel.

When a Man, first finds himself stirred up with religious Zeal, what does he generally do? He turns all his Thoughts *outwards*, he runs after *this, or that Man*, he is at the Beck of every *new Opinion*, and thinks only of finding the Truth, by resting in this, or that Method, or Society of Christians. Could he find a Man, that did not want to have him of his Party, and Opinion, that turned him from himself, and the Teaching of Man, to a God, not as historically read of in Books, or preached of in this, or that Society, but to a God *essentially* living and working in every Soul, him he might call a Man of God; as leading him from himself to God, as saving him from many vain Wanderings, from fruitless Searchings into a Council of *Trent*, a Synod of *Dort*, an *Augsberg* Confession, an *Assembly's* Catechism, or a *thirty-nine* Articles. For had he an hundred Articles, if they were any Thing else but a hundred Calls to a Christ come in the Spirit, to a God within him, as the only possible Light, and Teacher of his Mind, it would be a hundred Times better for him, to be without them.—For all Man's Blindness and Misery

lies in this, that he has lost the Knowledge of God, as *essentially* living within him, and by falling under the Power of an earthly, bestial Life, thinks only of God, as living in some other World, and so seeks only by Notions, to set up an Image of an absent God, instead of worshipping the God of Life, and Power, in whom he lives, moves, and has his being.—Whoever therefore teaches you to expect great Things from this, or that sort of Opinions, or calls you to anything as *saving*, and *redeeming*, but the *Manifestation* of God in your own Soul, through a Birth of the holy Nature of Christ within you, is totally ignorant of the whole Nature, both of the *Fall*, and the *Redemption* of Man. For the *first* is nothing else, or less, than a *Death* to the Divine Life, or Christlike Nature, which lived in the first Man; and the *other*, is nothing else, but Christ new-born, formed, and revealed again in Man, as he was at the first. These two great Truths are the most strongly asserted by Christ, saying, ‘If any Man will be my Disciple, let him deny himself, take up his Cross daily, and follow me.’ Let him ‘deny himself,’ is the fullest Declaration, and highest Proof, that he has lost his *first Divine* and heavenly Nature, that he is not *that Self*, which came first from God, or he could not be called to deny it.—Say, if you will, that he has not lost that first heavenly Life in God, and then you must say, that our Lord calls him to deny, crucify, and renounce that holy, and godlike Self, which was the first Gift of God to him.

To read whole Libraries on these Matters, is only to be bewildered in the Strife of Fictions, and Contradictions about them. But to read this one single Line of Christ, is to be led into the open, full Truth of the whole Nature, both of the Fall, and Redemption. And indeed, if we were but freed from the Babel of Opinions, which have so long confounded the first Truths of the Gospels, it would be plain from every Part of it, that nothing could be called the *Fall* of Man but his Loss of the Divine Life, or Nature, nor anything be called his *Redemption*, or the real Means of it, but *solely That*, which God *is*, and *does* in him. For what can be a Good, or work Good in Man, but God, or the Divine Nature in him? All the Divine Truths, that ever came from God, speak only to the *Pearl* of the Divine Nature, that is *hidden* in our *earthly Field* of Flesh and Blood, because nothing else wants them, or has any Capacity to receive them; that which is Divine, can only receive the Divine Things from God. And thence it is, that unless a ‘Man be born again’ from above, it is not possible for him to see, or enter into the ‘Kingdom of God,’ that is, the Divine Life must arise again, in the Power of a new Birth, or there is nothing in fallen Man, that

can partake of the Kingdom of God. And the Reason is, because 'the Kingdom of God is Righteousness, and Peace, and 'Joy in the Holy Ghost,' and therefore not possible to be anywhere, but where it proceeds from the Holy Ghost. 'Thou shalt 'love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, 'with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength.' Now what is this God, that you are thus to love? Is it some *abstract Idea*, that learned Men have helped you to form of him? No such thing. This would be but a poor Fiction of God, and a poor Fiction of Love.—God is *all Good*, the *only Good*, and there is nothing Good besides him, therefore to love God with all your Heart, &c., is to love *all Goodness*, and to love *nothing* else but Goodness, and then, and only then, do you love God with all your *Heart*, and *Soul*, and *Strength*.—But now, to what Purpose could this Precept of such a Love be given to Man, unless *he essentially* partook of the Divine Nature? For to be in Heart, and Soul, and Spirit, all Love of God, and yet have nothing of the Nature of God within you, is surely too absurd for anyone to believe. So sure therefore as this Precept came from Truth itself, so sure is it, that every Man (however loath to hear of any Thing but Pleasures, and Enjoyments in this vain Shadow of a Life) has yet a Divine Nature concealed within him, which, when suffered to hear the Calls of God, will know the Voice of its heavenly Father, and long to do his Will on Earth, as it is done in Heaven.

The Conclusion then, is this, if to love God with your whole Heart, and Soul, is to love *all Goodness*, and *nothing else but Goodness*; and if all that is done without this Love, whether in religious Duties, of common Life, is but mere *Separation* from God, then it must be the grossest Blindness, to believe you can have any Love of God, or Goodness in any Duties you perform, any further, or in any other Degree, than as the Eternal, Holy Spirit of God, lives and loves in you.

Again, to see the Divinity of Man's Original, you need only read these Words: 'Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in 'Heaven is perfect.' For what could Man have to do with the Perfection of God, as the rule of his Life, unless the Truth and Reality of the Divine Nature was in him? Could there be any Reasonableness in this Precept, or any Fitness to call us to be good, as God is good, unless there was that in us, which is in God? Or to call us to the Perfection of an *heavenly Father*, if we were not the real Children of his *heavenly Nature*? Might it not be as well, to bid the *heavy Stone* to fly, as its *flying Father* the Eagle doth?

But this Precept from the Lip of Truth, is another full Proof,

that by the *Fall*, a *Death*, or Suppression is brought upon our first Divine Life, and also that it is yet in a State, capable of being revived again, in us. For if it was not in a State of Death, or suppressed in us, there could be no Need of calling us to live according to it; for every Being naturally acts according to the Life, that is manifested in it. Nor could we be called to be heavenly, but because the heavenly Nature has its Seed in our Soul, in a Readiness to come to Life in us.

Lastly, 'Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy Self,' is another full Proof, that God is in us of a Truth, and that the Holy Spirit hath as certainly, an *essential Birth* within us, as the Spirit of this World hath. For this Precept might as well be given to a *Fox*, as to a Man, if Man had not something *quite Supernatural* in him. For mere Nature, and natural Creature, is nothing else, but mere Self, and can work nothing but to, and for itself. And this, not through any Corruption, or Depravity of Nature, but because it is Nature's best State, and it can be nothing else, either in Man, or Beast.

'I say unto you, love your Enemies, do Good to them that hate you, pray for them that despitefully use and persecute you,' &c. Every Word here is Demonstration, that nothing but the *new Birth from above*, can be a Christian. There is no other Nature, or Spirit that can breathe forth this *universal Love and Benevolence*, but *that same*, which laying aside its own Glory, came down from Heaven, to forgive, to love, to save, and die for a whole World of Enemies and Sinners.

This is the Spirit of Christ, that must as *essentially* live and breathe in you, as it did in him, or all Exhortations, to do as he did, to walk as he walked, are but in vain. The natural Man is in full Separation from this Holiness of Life, and though he had more Wisdom of Words, more Depth of Literature, than was in *Cicero*, or *Aristotle*, yet would he have as much to die to, as the grossest Publican, or vainest Pharisee, before he could be in Christ, a new Creature. For the highest improved natural Abilities, can as well ascend into Heaven, or clothe Flesh and Blood with Immortality, as make a Man like-minded with Christ in any one Divine Virtue. And that for this one Reason, because God, and Divine Goodness, are inseparable.

No Precept of the Gospel, supposes Man to have any Power to effect it, or calls you to any natural Ability, or Wisdom of your own to comply with it. Christ and his Apostles called no Man, to overcome the Corruption and Blindness of fallen Nature, by learned Cultivation of the Mind. The Wisdom of the learned World, was the same pitiable Foolishness with them, as the grossest Ignorance. By them, they only stand thus distinguished,

the one brings forth a *Publican* which is often converted to Christ, the other a *Pharisee*, that for the most part, condemns him to be crucified. They (Christ and his Apostles) taught nothing but Death, and Denial to all Self, and the Impossibility of having any one Divine Temper, but through Faith, and Hope of a new Nature, not 'born of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of 'the Will of Man, but of God.'

To speak of the Operation of the Holy Spirit, as *only an Assistance*, or an *occasional Assistance*, is as short of the Truth, as to say, that Christ shall *only assist* the Resurrection, of our Bodies. For not a Spark of any Divine Virtue can arise up in us, but what must wholly and solely be called forth, by that same Power, which alone can call our dead Bodies, out of the Dust and Darkness of the Grave.

If you turn to your own Strength, to have Christian Piety, and Goodness; or are so deceived, as to think, that Learning, or logical Abilities, critical Acuteness, Skill in Languages, Church-Systems, Rules and Orders, Articles and Opinions, are to do that for you, which the Spirit of Christ did, and only could do for the first Christians; your diligent Reading the History of the Gospel, will leave you as poor, and empty and dead to the Divine Life, as if you had been only a diligent Reader of the History of all the Religions in the World.—But if all that you trust to, long after, and depend upon, is that Holy Spirit, which alone made the Scripture-Saints able *to call Jesus Lord*; if this be your one Faith, and one Hope, the Divine Life, which died in *Adam*, will find itself alive again in Christ Jesus. And be assured, that nothing but this *new Birth*, can be the Gospel Christian, because nothing else can possibly love, like, do, and be that, which Christ preached in his Divine Sermon on the *Mount*. And be assured also, that when the Spirit of Christ, is the Spirit that ruleth in you, there will be no *hard Sayings* in the Gospel; but all that the heavenly Christ taught in the Flesh, will be as Meat and Drink to you, and you will have no Joy, but in walking, as he walked, in saying, loving, and doing, that which he said, loved, and did.—And indeed, how can it be otherwise? How can Notions, Doctrines, and Opinions about Christ, what he was, and did, make you in him a new Creature? Can anyone be made a *Sampson*, or a *Solomon*, by being well versed in the History of what they were, said or did?

Ask then, my Friend, no more, where you shall go, or what you shall do, to be in the Truth; for you can have the Truth, nowhere, but in Jesus, nor in him, any further, than as his whole Nature, and Spirit is born within you.

Farewell.

Letter VII.

To a Person of Quality.

Madam,

I HAD the Honour of your Ladyship's Letter, and no want of true Regard for your Ladyship, or the Subject, has been the Occasion of my delaying this Answer so long. I am in some Hopes, that the Person that wanted it, may, by this Time, have found something better than it, by being left to God and himself, and that I have done more for him by my Silence, than I should have done by my Writing.

To be always tampering with Physicians, upon every Occasion, is the Way to lose all natural Soundness of Health; and to be continually talking, and enquiring about the Nature of Distempers, and the Powers of Medicines, for the Head, the Heart, the Spirits, and Nerves, is the Way to lose all true Judgment, either of our own Sickness or Health.

It is much the same, with regard to our spiritual Health and Constitution, we do much Hurt to it, by running after spiritual Advice on every Occasion, and wanting the Help of some *human Prescription*, for every Fear, Scruple, or Notion, that starts up in our Minds, and to weaken the true Strength of our *spiritual Constitution*, which if left to itself, would do all that we want to have done.

If it be asked, What this *Soundness* of our *spiritual Constitution* is? It may be answered that it is a *State or Habit of such humble, total Resignation of ourselves to God, as by Faith, and Hope expects all from Him alone*. This is the Health, and Strength of our *spiritual Constitution*, and nothing is Health in the Soul, but this State.

And if we left all our incidental, accidental, sickly Notions, and Imaginations that so frequently attack our Minds, if we left them to be overcome, and done away by the Strength of our *spiritual Constitution*, (N.B.) We should never fail of Success.

How this pious and worthy Person came to think of leaving his Parish, or what Scruples occasioned his doubting, whether he should stay in it, I cannot guess, and therefore can say nothing to them. I should have thought, that such a Change as he found in himself, his Parish, and Neighbourhood, should have everything in it, that could render his Situation comfortable to him.

The greatest Danger that new Converts are liable to, especially if they are young, arises from their conceiving something great of their Conversion, and that great Things are to follow from it. Hence they are taken up too much with themselves, and the supposed Designs of God upon them. They enter into Reasonings, and Conjectures how they shall be, and do something extraordinary, and so lose that Simplicity of Heart, which should think of nothing but of dying to *Self*, that the Spirit of God might have time and place to create, and form all that is wanting in their inward Man.

There is nothing more plain and simple than the Way of Religion, if *Self* is but kept out of it; and all the Perplexities, and Scruples which pious Persons meet with, chiefly arise from some Idea they have formed, of a Progress they ought to make in order to be *That*, which *Self* would be. But Piety makes little Progress till it has no Schemes of its own, no Thoughts or Contrivances to be any Thing, but a *naked Penitent*, left wholly, and solely in *Faith* and *Hope* to the Divine Goodness. Every Contrivance for human Help, from this, or that, be it what it will, is at best but dropping some Degree, of that Fulness of Faith and Hope, and Dependence upon God, which only is, and only can be our Way of finding Him, to be the Strength and God of our Life.

Nothing but the Life of God, opened by his Holy Spirit within us, can be the Renewal of our Souls, and we shall want this Renewal no longer, than whilst we are seeking it in something, that is not God. The Faith that ascribes all to God, and expects all from him, cannot be disappointed.

Nothing could hinder the *Centurion* from having, that which he asked of Christ, because his Heart could thus speak, 'Lord 'I am not worthy, that thou shouldest come under my Roof, 'speak the Word only, and my Servant shall be healed.'

He that has *this Sense* of Religion, and *this Faith* in God, is in the Truth and Perfection of Religion: If we knew the Goodness of this State, we should be always content with the Simplicity of it, and let everything else come, and go, as it would; all is well and safe, so long as the Heart rests all upon God alone. Your Ladyship says, this worthy Person *fears his Zeal*, and *yet dreads the Abatement of it*. It would be better, not to indulge a Thought about *his own Zeal*, or to speak a Word of it to any Person. For if it is godly Zeal, it is no more *his* than it is mine, nor comes any more from him, than it does from me; and therefore when he thinks, or speaks of it as *his*, or as something he would be glad to keep in its right State, it is giving Way to Delusion, both with regard to himself, and the Nature of true Zeal: For

as the 'Wind bloweth where it listeth,' so it is with Him, who is driven by true Zeal.

I do not wonder, that his Audience is so much affected, and increased, since he has preached up the Doctrine of Regeneration amongst them. All other Preaching passes away as a Tale that is told, and indeed is nothing better, till it enters into the Things within Man, brings him to a Sensibility of the State of his Heart, and its Want of God's Holy Spirit therein.

How far it may be right for him to comply with their Request of visiting, reading, and expounding the Scripture to them, I pretend not to say:—But only thus much, that it seems to be right to be in no Anxiety about it, or use any Reasoning, either to persuade himself to it, or from it, or to put himself under any *stated Rules* about it, but leave it to be done, as he finds himself inwardly stirred up to it, and able out of the Abundance of his Heart to perform it.

Expounding the Scriptures, has a fine Sound, but I should rather advise such Persons, to read only in Love, and Simplicity of Heart, such Scriptures as need no Expounder, but their own Heart turned to God. Persons who are come to this inward Conviction, that they must live, and die, under the Power of Satan, and of fallen Nature, unless by a Fulness of Faith in Christ, they be born again from above, have nothing more to enquire about, where, or how Christ is to be found.

They have no other Use to make of the Scripture, but that of being refreshed, and delighted with such Passages, as turn, and stir up the Heart, to a Fulness of Faith, Love, and Resignation to the blessed Guidance, and Operation of the Holy Spirit of God.

January 10, 1754.

Letter VIII.

To the Same.

Madam,

MR. WESLEY'S Letter did not at all disappoint me. I had no Expectation of seeing a better, either with regard to the Substance, or to the Style, and Manner of it. If I knew of any kind of Answer, that would do him any real Good, I should advise it. But to Answer it for the Good of anyone else, seems to be quite needless. It does not admit of a serious Answer, because there is nothing substantial, or properly argumentative in it. And to answer it in the way

of Ridicule, is what I cannot come into, being full as averse to make a Mock of him in a religious Garb, as to the doing the greatest bodily Injury to his Person. How far he has answered, or does answer any good Ends of Providence, or is an Instrument in the Hands of God, is a Matter I meddle not with; only wishing, that every Appearance of Good, every stirring of Zeal, under whatever Form it appears, whether in Knowledge, or Ignorance, in Wisdom, or Weakness, may be directed, and blessed by God, to the best Ends it is capable of.

As to myself, I seem to myself to have no other Part to Act, nor any Call to any Thing else, in this Hurry, and Struggle of Zeal against Zeal, in such a Variety of Forms, but only, and fully to assert the true Ground, and largely open all the Reasons, of that one inward Regeneration, which is equally the one Thing needful to every Sect, and the one Thing alone that can make every Sect, or Method, or outward Form, not hurtful to those that adhere to it.

For every outward Form, however specious or promising, will only help us to be carnally minded, till it is in some degree known, to have no other, or better Nature, than that of the Shell, which helps us to the Kernel.

The Doctrines I have published, are in their best State with regard to the Reader, as they stand in my Books, and will be less useful to him, when they are drawn into Controversy. For this Reason, I can lend no Help to that.

This may perhaps seem to your Ladyship, as if I had too great an Opinion of what I had done.—And I believe, such a free Way of speaking sometimes in Conversation of my own Books, may have been suspected of smelling too much of Self-esteem.—But I can with Truth assure you, Madam, that when I speak of the *Fulness* and *Clearness* of my own Writings, I feel no other Sentiments of Self-sufficiency, than when I speak of the Goodness of my own Eyes. Nor do I know how to consider the one, more than the other, to be any Merit of my own; and therefore when any Man, great or little, contemns, reproaches, or asperses me, or my Books, as void of Sense, Truth, and Light; I feel no more inward Uneasiness, or think myself any more hurt, than if he had only told the World, that my Eyes were miserably bad, and I could scarce see to read, even with the best Spectacles. And so have no Desire controversially to defend the one, more than the other, but contentedly leave them both, to be their own Proof of what they are.

I was once a kind of Oracle with Mr. *Wesley*. I never suspected any Thing bad of him, or ever discovered any Kind, or Degree of Falseness, or Hypocrisy in him.

But during all the Time of his Intimacy with me, I judged him to be much under the Power of his *own Spirit*, which seemed to have the Predominancy in every good Thing, or Way, that his Zeal carried him to.

It was owing to his Unwillingness, or Inability to give up his own Spirit, that he was forced into that false, and rash Censure which he published in Print against the Mystics:—As *Enemies to good Works*, and even tending to *Atheism*. A Censure so false, and regardless of Right and Wrong, as hardly any Thing can exceed it; which is to be found in a Preface of his to a Book of Hymns.—But no more of this.

February 16, 1756.

Letter IX.

To the Same.

Madam,

THE Passage in the Letter from a pious and very excellent Clergyman, as you style him, calls for no Regard, either from your Ladyship, or me. More insignificant Words cannot well be put together:—‘I think,’ says he, ‘Mr. *Law* has gone *half a Bow Shot* too far.’ If I have shot so far beyond, or beside the Truth, he should have shown *where*, and *why*, and *how*. Without this, his Words are but a Random Shot at nothing. His Reason for this Censure, is still worse, *viz.*, ‘because I have touched the Heart-String of all systematical ‘Divinity.’ As grievous a Charge, as if he had said, that I had shook the very Foundation of every *Babel* in every Country. For not a System of Divinity, since Systems were in being, whether Popish, or Protestant, deserves a better Name.

His next Reason is, ‘because it should not be touched without Skill from above.’

If this Gentleman ever preaches from the Pulpit, concerning the Ways of God, and the Doctrines of Redemption, without Skill from above, all he says, will be a *whole Bow-Shot* beside the Matter.

If, therefore, in touching this Point, I have touched that, which ought not to be touched without Skill from above, I have taken no bolder a Step, than he does, every Time he mounts the Pulpit, to give forth the Doctrines of Christ.

His third Reason is this, ‘I choose in my present Ignorance,

‘as touching the Necessity and Virtue of an outward Atonement, to bow down before the awful Subject.’

But in Truth, he should have said, I choose to bow down before the awful *Heart String* of all Systematical Divinity, which resolves all the Atonement into an *infinite Wrath*, and *Vengeance*, raised in the Holy Deity itself, and which would not be appeased, or satisfied by any Thing else, but the Sacrifice of an infinite Son of God. It is by reason of his Attachment to this Heart String, or rather his having so *constantly preached* according to it, that he cannot bear a Demonstration of the most glorious Truth, that either Heaven or Earth can proclaim, *viz.*, that God from Eternity to Eternity, is mere, unchangeable, and ever-overflowing Love; and that nothing but this Infinity of never-ceasing, never-changing Love, gave the Birth, the Life, the Sufferings, the Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ, for the Salvation of all Mankind; because in the whole possible Nature of Things, nothing else but this *whole Process* of a God made Man, could have any Ability, to extinguish the Hell, and Wrath of fallen Nature, and give Man a second Birth of such a Life from above, as could for ever and ever, have Union and Communion with the unbeginning, never-ending, never-changing Trinity of Love.

Letter X.

To Mr. J. T.

My dear worthy Friend,

WHOM I much love and esteem, your Letter, though full of Complaints about the State of your Heart, was very much according to my Mind, and gives me great hopes, that God will carry on the good Work he has begun in you, and lead you by his Holy Spirit, through all those Difficulties, under which you at present Labour.

The Desire that you have, to be better than you find yourself at present, is God’s Call begun to be heard within you, and will make itself to be more heard within you, if you give but way to it, and reverence it as such; humbly believing that he that calls, will, and only can, help you to pay right and full Obedience to it.

As to the Advertisement in the public Papers, it deserved no Regard from you, or anyone else. It must have come, either from a very ignorant and weak Friend, or from a very insignificant Enemy to the Writings of J. B. But be it as it will, it

was not an Object of your Attention, nor could be of any Use to you.

But to come to your own State, You seem to yourself to be all *Infatuation and Stupidity*, because your Head, and your Heart are so contrary, the one delighting in heavenly Notions, the other governed by earthly Passions, and Pursuits. It is happy for you, that you know and acknowledge this: For only through this Truth, through the full and deep Perception of it, can you have any Entrance, or so much as the Beginning of an Entrance into the Liberty of the Children of God. God is in this Respect dealing with you, as he does with those, whose Darkness is to be changed into Light. Which can never be done, till you fully know (1) the real Badness of your own Heart, and (2) your utter Inability to deliver yourself from it, by any Sense, Power, or Activity of your own Mind.

And were you in a better State, as to your own thinking, the Matter would be worse with you. For the Badness in your Heart, though you had no Sensibility of it, would still be *there*, and would only be concealed, to your much greater Hurt. For there it certainly is, whether it be seen and found, or not, and sooner or later, must show itself in its full Deformity, or the old Man will never die the Death which is due to him, and must be undergone, before the New Man in Christ can be formed in us.

All that you complain of in your Heart is common to Man, as Man. There is no Heart that is without it. And this is the one Ground, why every Man, as such, however different in Temper, Complexion, or natural Endowments from others, has one and the same full Reason, and absolute Necessity, of being born again from above.

Flesh and Blood, and the Spirit of this World, govern every Spring in the Heart of the natural Man. And therefore you can never enough adore that Ray of Divine Light, which breaking in upon your Darkness, has discovered this to be the State of your Heart, and raised only those faint Wishes that you feel to be delivered from it.

For faint as they are, they have their Degree of Goodness in them, and as certainly proceed *solely* from the Goodness of God *working* in your Soul, as the first Dawning of the Morning, is solely from, and wrought by the same Sun, which helps us to the Noon-day Light. Firmly, therefore, believe this, as a certain Truth, that the present Sensibility of your Incapacity for Goodness, is to be cherished as a *heavenly Seed* of Life, as the blessed Work of God in your Soul.

Could you like any Thing in your own Heart, or so much as fancy any Good to be in it, or believe that you had any Power

of your own to embrace and follow Truth, this comfortable Opinion, so far as it goes, would be your *turning away* from God and all Goodness, and building iron Walls of Separation betwixt God and your Soul.

For Conversion to God, only then begins to be in *Truth*, and *Reality*, when we see nothing that can give us the least Degree of Faith, of Hope, of Trust, or Comfort in any Thing, that we are of ourselves.

To see Vanity of Vanities in all outward Things, to loath and abhor certain Sins, is indeed *something*, but yet as nothing, in comparison of seeing and believing the Vanity of Vanities within us, and ourselves as utterly unable to take one single Step in true Goodness, as to add one Cubit to our Stature.

Under this Conviction, the Gate of Life is opened to us. And therefore it is, that all the preparatory Parts of Religion, all the various Proceedings of God either over our *inward*, or *outward* State, setting up, and pulling down, giving, and taking away, Light, and Darkness, Comfort, and Distress, as independently of us, as he makes the Rain to descend, and the Winds to blow, are all of them for this only End, to bring us to this Conviction, that all that can be called *Life*, *Good*, and *Happiness*, is to come solely from God, and not the smallest Spark of it from ourselves. When Man was first created, all the Good that he had in him was from God alone. N.B. This must be the State of Man for ever.—From the Beginning of Time through all Eternity, the Creature can have no Goodness, but that which God creates in it.

Our first created Goodness is lost, because our first Father departed from a full, absolute Dependence upon God. For a full, continual, unwavering Dependence upon God, is *that alone* which keeps God in the Creature, and the Creature in God.

Our lost Goodness can never come again, or be found in us, till by a Power from Christ living in us, we are brought out of ourselves, and all selfish Truths, into that full and blessed Dependence upon God, in which our first Father should have lived.

What Room now, my dear Friend, for Complaint at the Sight, Sense, and Feeling of your Inability to make yourself better than you are? Did you want *this Sense*, every Part of your Religion would only have the Nature and Vanity of Idolatry. For you cannot come unto God, you cannot believe in him, you cannot worship him in Spirit and Truth, till he is regarded as the *only Giver*, and you yourself as nothing else but the Receiver of every heavenly Good, that can possibly come to life in you.

Can it trouble you, that it was God that made you, and not

you yourself? Yet this would be as unreasonable, as to be troubled that you cannot make heavenly Affection, or Divine Powers to spring up, and abide in your Soul.

God must for ever be God alone; Heaven, and the heavenly Nature are his, and must for ever and ever be received only from him, and for ever and ever be only preserved, by an entire Dependence upon, and Trust in him. Now as all the Religion of fallen Man, fallen from God into himself, and the Spirit of this World, has no other End, but to bring us back to an *entire Dependence* upon God, so we may justly say, Blessed is that Light, happy is that Conviction, which brings us into a full and settled Despair, of ever having the least Good from ourselves.

Then we are truly brought, and laid at the Gate of Mercy: At which Gate, no Soul ever did, or can lay in vain.

A broken and contrite Heart God will not despise. That is, God will not, God cannot pass by, overlook, or disregard it. But the Heart is then only broken and contrite, when all its strong Holds are broken down, all false Coverings taken off, and it sees, with inwardly opened Eyes, every Thing to be bad, false, and rotten, that does, or can proceed from it as its own.

But you will perhaps say, that *your Conviction* is only an uneasy Sensibility of your own State, and has not the Goodness of a broken and contrite Heart in it.

Let it be so, yet it is rightly in order to it, and it can only begin, as it begins at present in you. Your Conviction is certainly not full and perfect; for if it was, you would not complain, or grieve at Inability to help or mend yourself, but would patiently expect, and only look for Help from God alone.

But whatever is wanting in your Conviction, be it what it will, it cannot be added by yourself, nor come any other Way, than as the highest Degree of the Divine Life can come into it.

Know therefore your Want of this, as of all other Goodness. But know also at the same Time, that it cannot be had through your own *willing* and *running*, but through God that showeth Mercy; that is to say, through God who giveth us Jesus Christ. For Jesus Christ is the *one only Mercy* of God to all the fallen World.

Now if all the Mercy of God is only to be found in Christ Jesus, if he alone can save us from our Sins; if he alone has Power to heal all our Infirmities, and restore original Righteousness, what Room for any other Pains, Labour, or Enquiry, but *where*, and *how* Christ is to be found.

It matters not what our Evils are, Deadness, Blindness, Infatuation, Hardness of Heart, Covetousness, Wrath, Pride, and Ambition, &c., our Remedy is always one and the same,

always at hand, always certain and infallible. Seven Devils are as easily cast out by Christ as one. He came into the World, not to save from this, or that Disorder, but to destroy all the Power and Works of the Devil in Man.

If you ask *where*, and *how* Christ is to be found? I answer, in your Heart, and by your Heart, and nowhere else, nor by any Thing else.

But you will perhaps say, it is your very Heart that keeps you a Stranger to Christ, and him to you, because your Heart is all bad, as unholy as a Den of Thieves.

I answer, that the finding this to be the State of your Heart, is the real finding of Christ in it.

For nothing else but Christ can reveal, and make manifest the Sin and Evil in you. And he that *Discovers*, is the same Christ that takes away Sin. So that, as soon as complaining Guilt, sets itself before you, and will be seen, you may be assured, that Christ is in you of a Truth.

For Christ must first come as a Discoverer and Reprover of Sin. It is the infallible Proof of his holy Presence within you.

Hear him, reverence him, submit to him as a Discoverer and Reprover of Sin. Own his Power and Presence in the Feeling of your Guilt, and then he that wounded, will heal, he that found out the Sin, will take it away, and he who showed you your *Den of Thieves*, will turn it into a holy Temple of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

And now, Sir, you may see, that your Doubt and Enquiry of me, whether your Will was *really free*, or *not*, was groundless.

You have no Freedom, or Power of Will, to assume any holy Temper, or take hold of such Degrees of Goodness, as you have a Mind to have. For nothing is, or ever can be goodness in you, but the one *Life, Light, and Spirit* of Christ revealed, formed, and begotten in your Soul. Christ in us, is our only Goodness, as Christ in us, is our Hope of Glory. But Christ in us is the pure free Gift of God to us.

But you have a true and full Freedom of Will and Choice, either to *leave*, and *give up* your helpless Self to the Operation of God on your Soul, or to *rely* upon your own *rational* Industry, and *natural* Strength of Mind. This is the Truth of the Freedom of your Will, in your first setting out, which is a Freedom that no Man wants, or can want so long as he is in the Body. And every unregenerate Man has this Freedom.

If therefore you have not that which you want to have of God, or are not that which you ought to be in Christ Jesus, it is not because you have no free Power of leaving yourself in the Hands, and under the Operation of God, but because the same

Freedom of your Will, seeks for Help where it cannot be had, namely, in some Strength and Activity of your own Faculties.

Of this Freedom of Will it is said, 'According to thy Faith, 'so be it done unto thee'; that is to say, according as thou leavest and trustest thyself to God, so will his Operation be in thee.

This is the real, great magic Power of the first turning of the Will; of which it is truly said, that it *always hath* that which it willeth, and can have nothing else.

When this Freedom of the Will wholly *leaves* itself to God, saying, *not mine, but thy Will be done*, then it hath that, which it willeth. The Will of God is done in it. It is in God. It hath Divine Power. It worketh with God, and by God, and comes at length to be *that Faith*, which can remove Mountains; and nothing is too hard for it.

And thus it is, that every unregenerate Son of *Adam* hath Life and Death in his *own Choice*, not by any natural Power of taking which he will, but by a full Freedom, either of *leaving*, and trusting himself to the *redeeming Operation* of God, which is eternal Life, or of acting according to his *own Will and Power* in Flesh and Blood, which is eternal Death.

And now, my dear Friend, let me tell you, that as here lies all the true and real Freedom, which cannot be taken from you, so in the constant Exercise of this Freedom, that is, in a continual *leaving* yourself to, and *depending* upon the Operation of God in your Soul, lies all your Road to Heaven. No Divine Virtue can be had any other Way.

All the Excellency and Power of Faith, Hope, Love, Patience, and Resignation, &c., which are the true and only Graces of the spiritual Life, have no other Root or Ground, but this *free, full leaving* of yourself to God, and are only so many different expressions of your willing nothing, seeking nothing, trusting to nothing, but the *life-giving Power* of his holy Presence in your Soul.

To sum up all in a Word. Wait patiently, trust humbly, depend only upon, seek solely to a God of Light and Love, of Mercy and Goodness, of Glory and Majesty, ever dwelling in the inmost Depth and Spirit of your Soul. There you have all the secret, hidden, invisible Upholder of all the Creation, whose blessed Operation will always be found by a humble, faithful, loving, calm, patient Introversion of your Heart to him, who has his hidden Heaven within you, and which will open itself to you, as soon as your Heart is *left* wholly to his eternal ever-speaking WORD, and ever-sanctifying Spirit within you.

Beware of all Eagerness and Activity of your own natural Spirit and Temper. Run not in any hasty Ways of your own.

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Be patient under the Sense of your own Vanity and Weakness ; and patiently wait for God to do his own Work, and in his own Way. For you can go no faster, than a full Dependence upon God can carry you.

You will perhaps say, Am I then to be idle, and do nothing towards the Salvation of my Soul? No, you must by no means be idle, but earnestly diligent, according to your Measure, in all good Works, which the Law and the Gospel direct you to, both with Regard to your Self and other People.

Outward good Works to other People, may be justly considered as God's Errand on which you are sent, and therefore to be done faithfully, according to the Will, and in obedience to him that sent you.

But nothing that you do, or practise as a Good to yourself, and other People, is in its proper State, grows from its right Root, or reaches its true End, till you look for no willing, nor depend upon any *doing* that which is good, but by Christ, the Wisdom and Power of God, living in you. I caution you only against all Eagerness and Activity of your own Spirit, so far as it leads you to seek, and trust to something that is not God, and Christ within you.

I recommend to you Stillness, Calmness, Patience, &c., not to make you lifeless, and indifferent about good Works, or indeed with any Regard to them, but solely with regard to your *Faith*, that it may have its proper Soil to grow in, and because all Eagerness, Restlessness, Haste, and Impatience, either with regard to God, or ourselves, are not only great Hindrances, but real Defects of our Faith and Dependence upon God.

Lastly, be courageous then, and full of Hope, not by looking at any Strength of your own, or fancying that you *now know* how to be wiser in *yourself*, than you have hitherto been ; no, this will only help you to find more and more defects of Weakness in yourself ; but be courageous in Faith, and Hope, and Dependence upon God. And be assured, that the one infallible Way to all that is good, is never to be weary in waiting, trusting, and depending upon God manifested in Christ Jesus.

*I am your hearty Friend
and Well-Wisher.*

March 20, 1756.

Letter XI.

To a Person burdened with inward and outward Troubles.

Worthy Sir,

MY Heart embraces you, with all the Tenderness and Affection of Christian Love ; and I earnestly beg of God, to make me a Messenger of *his Peace* to your Soul.

You seem to apprehend, I may be much surprised at the Account you have given of yourself; but I am neither surprised, nor offended at it; I neither condemn, nor lament your Estate, but shall endeavour to show you, how soon it may be made a Blessing and Happiness to you. In order to which, I shall not enter into a Consideration of the different Kinds of Trouble you have set forth at large. I think it better to lay before you the one true Ground and Root, from whence all the Evil and Disorders of Human Life have sprung. This will make it easy for you to see, what that is, which must, and only can, be the full Remedy and Relief for all of them, how different soever, either in Kind, or Degree.

The Scripture has assured us, that God made Man in *his own Image and Likeness*; a sufficient Proof, that man, in his first State, as he came forth from God, must have been absolutely free from all Vanity, Want, or Distress of any Kind, from any Thing either within, or without him.—It would be quite absurd and blasphemous, to suppose, that a Creature beginning to exist in the Image and Likeness of God, should have Vanity of Life, or Vexation of Spirit: A God-like Perfection of Nature, and a painful, distressed Nature, stand in the utmost Contrariety to one another.

Again, the Scripture has assured us, *that Man that is born of a Woman, hath but a short Time to live, and is full of Misery*: Therefore Man now is not that Creature that he was by his Creation. The first Divine and God-like Nature of *Adam*, which was to have been immortally Holy in Union with God, is lost; and instead of it, a poor Mortal of earthly Flesh and Blood, born like a wild Ass's Colt, of a short Life, and full of Misery, is through a vain Pilgrimage, to end in Dust and Ashes. Therefore, let every Evil, whether inward, or outward, only teach you this Truth, that Man has infallibly lost his first Divine Life in

God; and that no possible Comfort, or Deliverance is to be expected, but only in this one Thing, that though Man had lost his God, yet God is become Man, that Man may be again alive in God, as at the first. For all the Misery and Distress of human Nature, whether of Body or Mind, is wholly owing to this *one Cause*, that *God is not in Man*, nor *Man in God*, as the State of his Nature requires: It is, because Man has lost that *first Life* of God in his Soul, in and for which he was created. He lost this Light, and Spirit, and Life of God, by turning his Will, Imagination, and Desire, into a tasting and Sensibility of the Good and Evil of this earthly bestial World.

Now here are two Things raised up in Man, instead of the *Life of God*: *First, Self, or Selfishness*, brought forth by his choosing to have a Wisdom of *his own*, contrary to the Will and Instruction of his Creator. *Secondly*, an earthly, bestial, mortal Life and Body, brought forth by his eating that Food, which was Poison to his paradisaical Nature. Both these must therefore be removed; that is, a Man must first totally die to *Self*, and all earthly Desires, Views, and Intentions, before he can be again in God, as his Nature and first Creation requires.

But now if this be a certain and immutable Truth, that Man, so long as he is a *selfish, earthly-minded* Creature, must be deprived of his true Life, the *Life of God*, the *Spirit of Heaven* in his Soul; then how is the Face of Things changed! For then, what Life is so much to be dreaded, as a Life of worldly Ease and Prosperity? What a Misery, nay what a Curse, is there in every Thing that gratifies and nourishes our Self-love, Self-esteem, and Self-seeking? On the other Hand, what Happiness is there in all inward and outward Troubles and Vexations, when they force us to feel and know the Hell that is hidden within us, and the Vanity of every Thing without us, when they turn all our Self-love into Self-abhorrence, and force us to call upon God to save us from Ourselves, to give us a new Life, new Light, and new Spirit in *Christ Jesus*.

‘O Happy Famine,’ might the poor Prodigal have well said, ‘which, by reducing me to the Necessity of asking to eat Husks with Swine, *brought me to myself*, and caused my Return to my first Happiness in my Father’s House.’

Now, I will suppose your distressed State to be as you represent it; inwardly, Darkness, Heaviness, and Confusion of Thoughts and Passions; outwardly, ill Usage from Friends, Relations, and all the World; unable to strike up the least Spark of Light or Comfort, by any Thought or Reasoning of your own.

O happy Famine, which leaves you not so much as the Husk of one human Comfort to feed upon! For this is the Time and

Place for all that *Good and Life and Salvation* to happen to you, which happened to the prodigal Son. Your Way is as short, and your Success as certain as his was: You have no more to do than he had; you need not call out for Books, or Methods of Devotion; for, in your present State, much reading, and borrowed Prayers, are not your best Method: All that you are to offer to God, all that is to help you to find him to be your Saviour and Redeemer, is best taught and expressed by the distressed State of your Heart.

Only let your present and past Distress make you feel and acknowledge this twofold great Truth: *First*, That in and of yourself, you are nothing but Darkness, Vanity, and Misery; *Secondly*, that of yourself, you can no more help yourself to Light and Comfort, than you can create an Angel. People at all Times can seem to assent to these two Truths; but then it is an Assent that has no Depth or Reality, and so is of little or no Use: But your Condition has opened your Heart for a deep and full Conviction of these Truths. Now give Way, I beseech you, to this Conviction, and hold these two Truths, in the *same* Degree of Certainty as you know two and two to be four, and then you are with the Prodigal *come to yourself*, and above HALF YOUR WORK IS DONE.

Being now in full Possession of these two Truths, feeling them in the same Degree of Certainty, as you feel your own Existence, you are, under this Sensibility, to give up yourself absolutely and entirely to God in Christ Jesus, as into the Hands of infinite Love; firmly believing this *great* and infallible Truth, That God has no Will towards you, but that of *infinite Love*, and infinite Desire to make you a Partaker of his Divine Nature; and that it is as *absolutely impossible* for the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to refuse all that *Good and Life and Salvation* which you want, as it is for you to take it by your own Power.

O drink deep of *this Cup!* for the precious Water of eternal Life is in it. Turn unto God with *this Faith*; cast yourself into this *Abyss of Love*; and then you will be in that State the Prodigal was in, when he said, 'I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son;' and all that will be fulfilled in you, which is related of him.

Make this, therefore, the twofold Exercise of your Heart: *Now*, bowing yourself down before God, in the deepest Sense and Acknowledgment of your own Nothingness and Vileness; *then*, looking up unto God in Faith and love, consider him as always extending the Arms of his Mercy towards you, and full of an infinite Desire to *awell in you*, as he dwells in Angels in

Heaven. Content yourself with this inward and simple Exercise of your Heart, for a while; and seek, or like nothing in any Book, but that which nourishes and strengthens this State of your Heart.

‘Come unto me,’ says the holy Jesus, ‘all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.’ Here is more for you to live upon, more Light for your Mind, more of Unction for your Heart, than in Volumes of human Instruction. Pick up the Words of the holy Jesus, and beg of him to be the *Light* and *Life* of your Soul: Love the Sound of his Name; for Jesus is the *Love*, the *Sweetness*, the *compassionate Goodness*, of the *Deity* itself; which became Man, that so Men might have Power to become the Sons of God. Love and pity and wish well to every Soul in the World; *dwell in Love*, and then you *dwell in God*; hate nothing but the Evil that stirs in your own Heart.

Teach your Heart this Prayer, till your Heart continually saith, though not with outward Words: ‘O holy Jesus: meek Lamb of God! Bread that came down from Heaven! Light and Life of all holy Souls! help me to a true and living Faith in thee. O do thou open thyself *within me*, with all thy holy Nature, Spirit, Tempers, and Inclinations, that I may be born again of thee, in thee a new Creature, quickened and revived, led and governed by thy Holy Spirit.’

Prayer so practised, becomes the *Life of the Soul*, and the true *Food of Eternity*. Keep in this State of Application to God; and then you will infallibly find it to be the true Way of rising out of the Vanity of Time, into the Riches of Eternity.

Do not expect, or look, for the same Degrees of sensible Fervour. — The Matter lies not there. — Nature will have its Share; but the Ups and Downs of that are to be overlooked. Whilst your Will-Spirit is good, and set right, the Changes of creaturely Fervour lessen not your Union with God. It is the Abyss of the Heart, an unfathomable Depth of Eternity within us, as much above sensible Fervour, as Heaven is above Earth; it is *this* that works our Way to God, and unites with Heaven. This Abyss of the Heart, is the Divine Nature and Power within us, which never calls upon God in vain; but whether helped or deserted by bodily Fervour, penetrates through all outward Nature, as easily and effectually as our Thoughts can leave our Bodies, and reach into the Regions of Eternity.

The Poverty of our fallen Nature, the depraved Workings of Flesh and Blood, the corrupt Tempers of our polluted Birth in this World, do us no hurt, so long as the *Spirit of Prayer* works contrary to them, and longs for the first Birth of the Light and Spirit of Heaven. All our natural Evil ceases to be our *own*

Evil, as soon as our Will-Spirit turns from it; it then changes its Nature, loses all its Poison and Death, and only becomes our *holy Cross*, on which we happily die from Self and this World into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Would you have done with Error, Scruple, and Delusion? Consider the *Deity* to be the greatest Love, the greatest Meekness, the greatest Sweetness, the *eternal unchangeable Will to be a Good and Blessing to every Creature*; and that all the Misery, Darkness, and Death of fallen Angels and fallen Men, consist in their having lost their *Likeness to this Divine Nature*. Consider yourself, and all the fallen World, as having nothing to seek or wish for, but by the *Spirit of Prayer* to draw into the Life of your Soul, Rays and Sparks of this Divine, meek, loving, tender Nature of God. Consider the holy Jesus as the *Gift of God* to your Soul, to begin and finish the Birth of God and Heaven within you, in Spite of every inward or outward Enemy. These three infallible Truths, heartily embraced, and made the Nourishment of your Soul, shorten and secure the Way to Heaven, and leave no Room for Error, Scruple, or Delusion.

Expect no Life, Light, Strength, or Comfort, but from the Spirit of God, dwelling and manifesting his own Goodness in your Soul. The best of Men, and the best of Books, can only do you good, so far as they turn you from themselves, and every human Thing, to seek, and have, and receive every Kind of Good from God alone; not a distant, or an absent God, but a God living, moving, and always working in the Spirit and Heart of your Soul.

They never find God, who seek for him by Reasoning and Speculation; for since God is the highest Spirit, and the highest Life, nothing but a like Spirit, and a like Life, can unite with him, find or feel, or know any Thing of him. Hence it is, that Faith, and Hope, and Love, turned towards God, are the only possible, and also infallible Means of obtaining a true and living Knowledge of him. And the Reason is plain, it is because by these *Holy Tempers*, which are the Workings of *Spirit and Life* within us, we seek the God of Life *where he is*, we call upon him with his *own Voice*, we draw near to him by *his own Spirit*; for nothing can breathe forth Faith, and Love, and Hope to God, but that Spirit and Life which is of God, and which therefore through Flesh and Blood thus presses towards him, and readily unites with him.

There is not a more infallible Truth in the World than this, *that neither Reasoning nor Learning can ever introduce a Spark of Heaven into our Souls*: But if this be so, then you have nothing to seek, nor any Thing to fear, from Reason. *Life* and

Death are the Things in Question: They are neither of them the Growth of Reasoning or Learning, but each of them is a State of the Soul, and only thus differ, *Death is the Want, and Life the Enjoyment of its highest Good.* Reason, therefore, and Learning, have no Power here; but only by their vain Activity to keep the Soul insensible of that Life and Death, one of which is always growing up in it, according as the Will and Desire of the Heart worketh. Add Reason to a Vegetable, and you add nothing to its Life or Death. Its Life and Fruitfulness lieth in the Soundness of its Root, the Goodness of the Soil, and the Riches it derives from Air and Light. Heaven and Hell grow thus in the Soul of every Man: His Heart is his Root; if that is turned from all Evil, it is then like the Plant in a good Soil; when it hungers and thirsts after the Divine Life, it then infallibly draws the Light and Spirit of God into it, which are infinitely more ready and willing to live and fructify in the Soul, than Light and Air to enter into the Plant, that hungers after them. For the Soul hath its Breath, and Being, and Life, for no other End, but that the TRIUNE God may manifest the Riches and Powers of his own Life in it.

Thus *Hunger* is all, and in all Worlds, every Thing lives in it, and by it; nothing else eats, or partakes of Life; and every Thing eats according to its own Hunger. Every Thing hungers after its own Mother, that is, every Thing has a natural magnetic Tendency to partake of that from which it had its Being, and can only find its Rest in that from whence it came.—Dead as well as living Things bear Witness to this Truth: The Stones fall to the Earth, the Sparks fly upwards, for this only Reason, because every Thing must tend towards that from whence it came.

Were not Angels and the Souls of Men breathed forth from God, as so many real Offsprings of the Divine Nature, it would be as impossible for them to have any Desire of God, as for Stones to go upwards, and the Flame downwards. Thus you may see, and feel, that the *Spirit of Prayer* not only proves that you came from God, but is your certain Way of returning to Him.

When, therefore, it is the one ruling, never ceasing Desire of our Hearts, that God may be the *Beginning* and *End*, the *Reason* and *Motive*, the *Rule* and *Measure*, of our doing, or not doing, from Morning to Night; then everywhere, whether speaking or silent, whether inwardly or outwardly employed, we are equally offered up to the eternal Spirit, have our Life in Him and from Him, and are united to Him, by that *Spirit of Prayer*, which is the Comfort, the Support, the Strength and Security of the Soul, travelling by the Help of God, through the Vanity of Time into

the Riches of Eternity. For this *Spirit of Prayer*, let us willingly give up all that we inherit from our fallen Father, to be all *Hunger* and *Thurst* after God ; and to have no Thought or Care, but how to be wholly his devoted Instruments ; everywhere, and in every Thing, his adoring, joyful, and thankful Servants. Have your Eyes shut, and Ears stopped to every Thing, that is not a Step in that Ladder that reaches from Earth to Heaven.

Reading is good, Hearing is good, Conversation and Meditation are good ; but then they are only good at Times and Occasions, in a certain Degree ; and must be used and governed, with such Caution, as we eat and drink, and refresh ourselves, or they will bring forth in us the Fruits of Intemperance. But the *Spirit of Prayer* is for all Times, and all Occasions ; it is a Lamp that is to be always burning, a Light to be ever shining ; every Thing calls for it, every Thing is to be done in it, and governed by it ; because it is, and means, and wills nothing else, but the whole Totality of the Soul, not doing this or that, but wholly, incessantly given up to God, to be *where*, and *what*, and *how* he pleases.

This State of *absolute Resignation*, *naked Faith*, and *pure Love of God*, is the highest Perfection, and most purified Life of those, who are born again from above, and through the Divine Power become Sons of God : And it is neither more nor less, than what our blessed Redeemer has called, and qualified us to long and aspire after, in these Words : 'Thy Kingdom come ; thy Will be done, on Earth, as it is in Heaven.' It is to be sought for in the Simplicity of a little Child, without being captivated with any mysterious Depths or Heights of Speculation ; without coveting any Knowledge, or wanting to see any Ground of Nature, Grace, or Creature, but so far as it brings us nearer to God, forces us to forget and renounce every Thing for Him ; to do every Thing in Him, with Him, and for Him ; and to give every breathing, moving, stirring, Intention, and Desire of our Heart, Soul, Spirit, and Life to Him.

Let every Creature have your *Love*. *Love* with its Fruits of *Mee kness*, *Patience*, and *Humility*, is all that we can wish for to ourselves, and our fellow Creatures ; for this is to live in God, united to him, both for Time and Eternity.

To desire to communicate Good to every Creature, in the Degree we can, and it is capable of receiving from us, is a Divine Temper ; for thus God stands unchangeably disposed towards the whole Creation : But let me add my Request, as you value the Peace which God has brought forth by his Holy Spirit in you, as you desire to be continually taught by an *Uction* from above, that you would on no Account enter into any Dispute

with anyone about the Truths of Salvation ; but give them every Help, but that of debating with them ; for no Man has Fitness for the Light of the Gospel, till he finds an Hunger and Thirst, and Want of something better, than that which he has and is by Nature. Yet we ought not to check our Inclinations to help others in every Way we can. Only do what you do, as a Work of God ; and then, whatever may be the Event, you will have Reason to be content with the Success that God gives it. ' He ' that hath Ears to hear, let him hear ' ; may be enough for you, as well as it was for our blessed Lord.

The next Thing that belongs to us, and which is also Godlike, is a true unfeigned Patience, and Meekness, showing every Kind of Good-Will and tender Affection towards those that turn a deaf Ear to us ; looking upon it to be full as contrary to God's Method, and the good State of our own Heart, to dispute with anyone in contentious Words, as to fight with him for the Truths of Salvation.

' Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I ' will give you Rest, ' saith our blessed Lord. He called none else, because no one else hath Ears to hear, or a Heart to receive the Truths of Redemption.

Every Man is a vain Disputer, till such Time as something has disturbed his State, and awakened in him a Sensibility of his own evil and miserable Nature. We are all of us afraid both of inward and outward Distress ; and yet, till Distress comes, our Life is but a Dream, and we have no awakened Sensibility of our own true State.

We are apt to consider Parts and Abilities, as the proper Qualifications for the Reception of Divine Truths ; and wonder that a Man of a fine Understanding should not immediately embrace just and solid Doctrines : But the Matter is quite otherwise. Had Man kept Possession of his first rich and glorious State, there had been no Foundation for the Gospel Redemption ; and the Doctrine of the Cross, must have appeared quite unreasonable to be pressed upon him : And therefore says our Lord, ' To the Poor the Gospel is preached. ' It is solely to them, and none else : That is, to poor fallen Man, that has lost all the true natural Riches and Greatness of his first Divine Life ; to him is the Gospel preached. But if a Man knows and feels nothing of this Poverty of his Nature, he is not that Person to whom the Gospel belongs : It has no more Suitableness to his State, than it had to Man unfallen : And then the greater his Parts and Abilities are, the better is he qualified to show the Folly of every Doctrine of that Salvation, of which he has no want.

Such a Man, though he may be of an humane, ingenuous, generous and frank Nature, of lively Parts and much candour, is nevertheless entirely ignorant of the Depth of the Heart of Man, and the Necessities of Human Nature. As yet (though he knows it not) he is only at Play and Pastime, pleasing himself with supposed deep Enquiries after strict Truth, whilst he is only sporting himself with lively wandering Images of This and That, just as they happen to start up in his mind. Could but he see himself in the State of the poor distressed prodigal Son, and find that himself is the very Person there recorded, he would then, but not till then, see the Fitness of that Redemption, which is offered him by the Mercy of God in CHRIST JESUS. But such a one, alas! is rich; he is sound; Light is in his own Power, Goodness is in his own Possession: He feels no Distress or Darkness; but has a *Crucible of Reason and Judgment*, that on every Occasion separates Gold from Dross: And, therefore, he must be left to himself, to his own *Elysium*, till something more than Argument and Disputation awakens him out of these golden Dreams.

Let us beware also of the religious Pharisee, who raves against *spiritual Religion*, because it touches the very Heart string of all *systematical Divinity*, and shakes the very Foundation of every BABEL in every Country; for not a System of Divinity, since Systems were in being, whether Popish or Protestant, deserves a better Name.

All Preachers of the true spiritual Mystery of the Gospel, of a Birth, Light and Life from above, in and by JESUS CHRIST (which are the Mystic Writers of every Age) ever were, and will be, treated by the reigning fashionable Orthodoxy, as Enemies to the outward Gospel, and its Services, just as the Prophets of God (who were the Mystic Preachers of the *Jewish Dispensation*) were by the then reigning Orthodoxy, condemned and despised, for calling People to a spiritual Meaning of the dead Letter, to a Holiness infinitely greater than that of their outward Sacrifices, Types, and Ceremonies.

Whoever he is that has any Situation of his own to defend, be it that of a celebrated Preacher, a Champion for received Orthodoxy, a Head, a Leader, or Follower of any Sect, or Party, or particular Method; or that seems, both in his own Eyes, and in the Eyes of others, to have made himself significant in any kind of religious Distinction; every such Person, sooner or later, will find, that he has much of that very same to give up, which hindered the zealous, and eminently religious Pharisee from converting to CHRIST, in the Spirit of a little Child.

Nor doth it help the Matter, that such an one abounds with

Piety and Excellency ; for St. *Paul* was governed by a Spirit of great Piety, great Excellency, and Zeal for God. He says of himself, that when he was persecuting the Disciples of Christ, he 'lived in all good Conscience, as touching the Law blameless, 'and according to the straitest Sect of the Jewish Religion': For the Pharisees, though many of them had all that Hypocrisy and Rottenness which Christ laid to their Charge, yet as a Sect, they were an Order of most confessed and resplendent Sanctity ; and yet the more earnest and upright they were in this kind of Zeal for Goodness, the more earnestly they opposed and condemned the heavenly Mystery of a *new Life* from CHRIST, as appears from St. *Paul*.

This Sect of the Pharisees did not cease with the *Jewish Church* ; it only lost its old Name ; it is still in being, and springs now in the same Manner from the Gospel, as it did then from the Law : It has the same Place, lives the same Life, does the same Work, minds the same Things, has the same Goodness at Heart, has the same religious Honour, and claim to Piety, in the Christian, as it had in the *Jewish Church* ; and as much mistakes the Depths of the Mystery of the Gospel, as that Sect mistook the Mystery signified by the Letter of the Law and the Prophets.

It would be easy to show in several Instances, how the Leaven of that Sect works amongst us, just as it did amongst them. 'Have any of the Rulers believed on Him?' was the orthodox Question of the ancient Pharisees. Now we Christians readily and willingly condemn the Weakness and Folly of that Question ; and yet who does not see, that, for the most Part, both Priest and People, in every Christian Country, live and govern themselves by the Folly and Weakness of the very same Spirit which put that Question : For when God, as He has always done from the Beginning of the World, raises up private and illiterate Persons, full of Light and Wisdom from above, so as to be able to discover all the Workings of the Mystery of Iniquity, and to open the Ground, and Truth, and absolute Necessity of such an inward Spirit and Life of CHRIST revealed in us, as Time, carnal Wisdom, and worldly Policy have departed from ; when all this is done, by the weakest Instruments of God, in such a Simplicity and Fulness of Demonstration, as may be justly deemed a Miracle ; do not Clergy and Laity get rid of it all, though ever so unanswerable, merely by the Strength of the Pharisees' good old Question, saying with them, 'Have any of the Rulers believed and taught these Things? Hath the Church in Council or Convocation? Hath *Calvin, Luther, Zwinglius*, or any of our renowned System-makers, ever taught or asserted these matters?'

But hear what our blessed Lord saith, of the Place, the Power,

and Origin of Truth: He refers us not to the current Doctrines of the Times, or to the Systems of men, but to his own Name, his own Nature, his own Divinity hidden in us: 'My Sheep,' says he, 'hear my Voice.' Here the whole Matter is decisively determined, both where Truth is, and who they are that can have any Knowledge of it.

HEAVENLY Truth is nowhere spoken but by the Voice of CHRIST, nor heard but by the Power of CHRIST living in the Hearer. As He is the eternal only Word of GOD, that speaks forth all the Wisdom, and Wonders of GOD; so He alone is the Word, that speaks forth all the Life, Wisdom, and Goodness, that is or can be in any Creature; it can have none but what it has in him and from him: This is the one unchangeable Boundary of Truth, Goodness, and every Perfection of Men on Earth, or Angels in Heaven.

Literary Learning, from the Beginning to the End of Time, will have no more of Heavenly Wisdom, nor any less of Worldly Foolishness in it, at one Time than at another; its Nature is one and the same through all Ages; what it was in the *Jew* and the Heathen, that same it is in the Christian. Its Name, as well as Nature, is unalterable, *viz.*, *Foolishness with God*.

I shall add no more, but the two or three following Words.

I. Receive every inward and outward Trouble, every Disappointment, Pain, Uncasiness, Temptation, Darkness, and Desolation, with both thy Hands, as a true Opportunity and blessed Occasion of *dying to Self*, and entering into a fuller Fellowship with thy Self-denying, suffering Saviour.

II. Look at no inward or outward Trouble in any *other View*; reject every other Thought about it; and then every Kind of Trial and Distress will become the blessed Day of thy Prosperity.

III. Be afraid of seeking or finding Comfort in any Thing, but God alone: For that which gives thee Comfort, takes so much of thy Heart from God. 'Quid est Cor purum? cui ex toto, et pure sufficit solus Deus, cui nihil sapit, quod nihil delectat, nisi Deus.' *That is*, What constitutes a pure Heart? One to which God alone is totally, and purely sufficient; to which nothing relishes, or gives Delight, but God alone.

IV. That State is best, which exerciseth the highest Faith in, and fullest Resignation to God.

V. What is it you want and seek, but that God *may be all in all in you*? But how can this be, unless all creaturely Good and Evil become as nothing in you, or to you?

'Oh Anima mea, abstrahere te ab Omnibus. Quid tibi cum mutabilibus Creaturis? Solum Sponsum tuum, qui omnium est Author Creaturarum, expectans, hoc age, ut Cor tuum ille

'liberum et expeditum semper inveniatur, quoties illi ad ipsum 'venire placuerit.' *That is*, O my Soul! abstract thyself from every Thing. What hast thou to do with changeable Creatures? Waiting and expecting thy Bridegroom, who is the Author of all Creatures, let it be thy sole Concern, that he may find thy Heart free and disengaged, as often as it shall please him to visit thee.

Be assured of this, that sooner or later, we must be brought to this Conviction, That every Thing in ourselves by Nature is Evil, and must be entirely given up; and that Nothing that is creaturely, can make us better than we are by Nature. Happy, therefore, and blessed are all those inward or outward Troubles, that hasten this Conviction in us; that with the whole Strength of our Souls, we may be driven to seek ALL from and in GOD, without the least Thought, Hope, or Contrivance after any other Relief: Then it is, that we are made truly Partakers of the Cross of CHRIST; and from the Bottom of our Hearts shall be enabled to say, with *St. Paul*, 'God forbid that I should Glory in 'any Thing, save the Cross of our Lord JESUS CHRIST: by 'which I am crucified to the World, and the world is crucified 'to me.'

Give up yourself to God without reserve. This implies such a State or Habit of Heart, as does Nothing of itself, from its own Reason, Will or Choice, but stands always in Faith, Hope, and absolute Dependence upon being led by the Spirit of God into every Thing that is according to his Will; seeking Nothing by Designing, Reasoning, and Reflection, how you shall best promote the Honour of God, but in Singleness of Heart, meeting every Thing that every Day brings forth, as something that comes from GOD, and is to be received, and gone through by you, in such an Heavenly Use of it, as you would suppose the HOLY JESUS would have done, in such Occurrences.—This is an attainable Degree of Perfection; and by having CHRIST and his Spirit always in your Eye, and Nothing Else, you will never be left to yourself, nor without the full Guidance of GOD.

Letter XII.

To Mr. T. L.

My dearly beloved Friend,

I BEGIN, as I did my last, with assuring you, that I love to hear from you.

I am in some Concern about the *Activity* of your religious Spirit, which I have often cautioned you against.— You have seen, and as I think deeply apprehended, the true Ground, on which Man's Redemption stands. This Ground has been shown you, not only from the plain Letter of Scripture, but confirmed by the whole Frame of Nature.

Every Thing in Heaven and Earth, every Thing that you inwardly or outwardly feel, or know of your own Soul, and Body, are all shown to bear infallible Witness to these two fundamental Truths of the Gospel: That our first Father died to his first Life in God; and that nothing in the whole Nature of Things, can be our Redemption, but the first Life of God, born again of God in the Soul. You have had the fullest Proof, that Man was created in this high Perfection of Life. You have had the fullest Proof, that *Adam* had no other Way of dying to Heaven, or losing his first State in God, but by the working of his Will; and that every Son of *Adam*, is to this Day, only That which his *Faith*, or the *working* of his *Will*, or the Desire of his Heart (for they are all the same Thing) maketh him to be. *Jesus Christ* is the Divine Nature, which must be alive again in Man. But the Life of the Deity can only arise by a Birth in us, by the Hunger and Faith and Desire of the Heart, or the working of the Will turned to it; and this is the Faith in Christ that does all.

To what Purpose therefore, is so much anxious Enquiry about this or that? Why this running after everyone, to hear the History of Himself, and the Secrets of his own fancied Experience?

If you know a Man to be a *Fatalist*, do you not enough know, that he cannot explain the Mysteries of the Gospel, all which have a quite contrary Ground.

If a Man has no Notion, or Belief of the Fall of Man, can he tell you either the Nature, or the Necessity of Christian Redemption? What Room could there be for the Divine Philanthropy, if it could be supposed, that Man and the World had not a better State, and Life from Him at first, than they have now?

If a Man denies the Necessity of the new Birth from above,

will you believe that this proceeds from an intimate Familiarity with Christ, teaching him in private, the Disbelief of that which he taught publicly when on Earth? What Folly to tell you, that you are only in a *Legal State*, unless he could prove to you, that you have no Aversion to Wickedness, nor abstain from any Sin, but so far as the Fear and Dread of Punishment keep you from it. For this is the Truth of the *Legal State*; but when Sin is disliked, and the Commandments kept through a *Love of God*, and a Desire of Divine Goodness, There is the Man in Christ a new Creature, no longer under the Yoke of the Law, but living in the Freedom, and Spirit of God.

If a Man tells you that Jesus is not God, surely it is Time to have no Fellowship with him. If he tells you, you are not to pray to God, but to Jesus, who is only a Creature, is not this telling you, that it is unlawful for us to pray, as Jesus taught his Disciples? And if it was wrong to pray to God, the Old and the New Testament are, from the Beginning to the End, full of false Religion? Or will he say, that though under the Old Testament Men might rightly pray to the Deity, yet we, by being Christians, have lost this Privilege of Relation to, and Dependence upon God? But surely, I need not expose the Extravagancy of these Things, nor exhort you to be weary of such Entertainment.

You tell me, that you cannot help thinking with Mr. S. 'That all partial Systems of Salvation, are greatly derogatory to the Goodness of God:' But that you would say this to very few, but myself. But dear Soul, why should you say this to me? I have without any Scruple, openly declared to all the World, that from Eternity to Eternity, nothing can come from God but mere infinite Love.—In how many ways have I proved, and asserted, that there neither is, nor can be any Wrath, or *Partiality* in God, but that every Creature must have all that Happiness, which the infinite Love and Power of God can help it to. Can I, or any Creature, possibly say more of an *Impartiality* in God? And is it not quite unreasonable, to ask more about it, or to carry it further? You say 'the seeming Impossibility of the Spirit and Light of God, arising up again in any Creature, that has extinguished it, is, you presume, the strongest Argument that can be offered, in Support of everlasting Misery.' And therefore you say, 'you have chosen, with Submission, to examine the Force of this principal Argument, which runs through the *APPEAL*, and my other Writings.' But, my dear Friend, how came you to say this? For this is so far from being the principal, or any Argument that runs through my *Appeal*, and other Books, that there is not one single Word, in all the *Appeal*, nor any other of my Books, that touches upon this Matter, till you come to the last Book,

viz., *The Way to Divine Knowledge*; and even in that Book, the Impossibility is so far from being *asserted*, that it is there affirmed, that this Impossibility is not proved, nor ever likely to be so. Will you therefore charge me with proving a Thing, that I show cannot be proved? It is my capital Doctrine, That God is all Love, and merely a *Will to all Goodness*; that he must eternally will that to the Creature, which he willed at its Creation.

But, my dear Soul, debate not such Matters as these, either with me, or anyone else. Stop your Ears to all that you hear about them, and turn from everyone that will lead you into them. The Perplexity that you make to yourself in such Matters, is Death to the Divine Life within you, is a great Abuse of God's Goodness towards you, and is a likely Way for you to lose the Peace and Joy of that Divine Light, which has so largely opened itself within you.

Mr. G. and Mr. S. both of them (as they say) come out of the Depths of Hell, full of a New risen Divine Light within them. The first makes me a greater Blasphemer of God, than the Devils are, (N.B.) because I say, God has no other Nature, or Will towards every Creature, but Love and Goodness.

The other calls me Blind, and Ignorant, because I have not a self-evident Knowledge of the Salvation of Devils. Now were you to find out a Third, laying Claim to the same certainty of Divine Light, as these two do, you might perhaps have them both condemned by one who had a *Self-evident Knowledge* of Absolute Election, and Reprobation, and who knew with as great Certainty, that God damns some eternally to make his Power to be known, as Mr. S. knows Christ to be only a Creature, and that Prayer is not to be made to God, but solely to this Creature.

Dear L. Son of my Love, I do not know that ever I wasted my Spirits in Writing, or Thinking in the Manner of this Letter before, and trust I never shall again. But Love towards you, and a hearty Zeal for your true Growth in the Spiritual Life, has compelled me into this Wrangle.

Put away all needless Curiosity in Divine Matters, and look upon every Thing to be so, but that which helps you to die to *yourself*, that the Spirit and Life of Christ may be formed, and revealed in you.

As for the Purification of *all Human Nature*, either in this World, or some after Ages, I fully believe it. And as to that of Angels, if it is possible, I am glad of it, and also sure enough, that it will then come to pass.

Dear Soul,
Adieu.

Letter XIII.

To the same.

My Dear Friend,

I THANK you for the favour of yours. In the Two Extracts, you have sent, the Writer says twice, *He cannot adopt the Dark side of my System.* If what I have wrote may be called a System, it has put a full End to all that was *Dark*, and *Partial*, in every other System. It makes all the Universe both of Nature and Grace, to be an Edifice of Love, kept up and governed by Love. For I allow of no other God but Love, who from Eternity to Eternity, can have no other Will towards the Creature, but to communicate Good; and that no Creature can have any Misery, from which infinite Goodness can deliver it. Where then is the Dark Side? Must I assert God to be more than infinitely Good?

*Dear Soul,
Adieu.*

June 9, 1752.

Letter XIV.

To the same.

My dear L.,

I CANNOT tell you how much I love you. But that which of all Things I have most at Heart, with Regard to you, is the real Progress of your Soul in the Divine Life. Heaven seems to be awakened in you. It is a tender Plant. It requires Stillness, Meekness, and the Unity of the Heart, totally given up to the unknown Workings of the Spirit of God, which will do all its Work in the calm Soul, that has no Hunger or Desire, but to escape out of the Mire of its Earthly Life, into its lost Union and Life in God.

I mention this, out of a Fear of your giving into an Eagerness into many Things, which though seemingly innocent, yet divide and weaken the Workings of the Divine Life within you. For a *Multiplicity of Wills*, is the one only Evil, Disease, and Misery,

both of our Souls and Bodies. That which can make the Soul to have only *one Will*, and *one Love*, is the *universal Tincture*, both for Soul and Body. And nothing else is it. That alone can take the Fall, or Curse out of the Body, which can take it out of the Soul. For the Curse through all Nature, and Creature, is but *one* and the *same* thing, *viz.*, *The Absence of the Heavenly Power*. Heaven is dead in Gold, just as it is dead in Man; and its heavenly Tincture can only be made alive, in the same Manner, and from the same Power, as the inward Man is born again of the Water, and Spirit from above.

Our outward Man must be tormented, crucified, mortified in the *Fire* of our own Flesh and Blood; and then it is as the gross Gold in the Crucible heated by earthly Fire. But as no fiery Torments of our own Flesh and Blood, can glorify our inward Man, and set Him in his first angelic State, so no outward Fire can torment Gold into its first Heavenly State. Our Lord said to the crucified Thief, To Day shalt thou be *with me* in Paradise.

Now no one is a Divine Magus, till he is thus qualified to say to his *Subject*, To Day shalt Thou be *with me* in Paradise. If He himself is not in Paradise, he can do no paradisaical Work. But, my Friend, let not what I here say, put you upon disputing this Point with anyone, for I say it for quite a Contrary End, to show you the Vanity of all such Discourse.

*My dear Soul,
Adieu.*

Oct. 16, 1752.

Letter XV.

To the same.

My dear L.,

I HEARTILY thank you for your Last. Talk no more of obtruding upon me with your Letters. Every Thing that comes from you is welcome. I have no need to write any Thing to you, for you know all that I have to say. You stand upon the same Ground, that I do. And you have Nothing to do, but to be steadfast and unmoveable in that Light, which God has vouchsafed to you.

But, my Friend, take Notice of this, no Truths, however solid and well grounded, help you to any Divine Life, but so far as they are *taught, nourished, and strengthened* by an Unction

from above; and that Nothing more *dries*, and *extinguishes* this heavenly Unction, than a *talkative*, *reasoning* Temper, that is always catching at every Opportunity of hearing, or telling some religious Matters.

You have found enough, to prove to you, that all must be found in God, manifested in the Life of your Soul. And I must say again, shut your Eyes, and stop your Ears, to all Religious Tales.

My dear Soul,
Adieu.

Feb. 12, 1753.

Letter XVI.

To the same.

My dear L.,

YOU have communicated to me several Letters, that you have written to your Friends, and I much approve of the Spirit in which you have written them. Only I must repeat, what I have often said, Have a care of too much Eagerness to set other people right, lest it lead you too far from Home, or too much exhaust that Breath, which is to keep up the Strength of your own inward Life. I believe you understand me.

You want a Remedy, to prevent the Growth of *Suicide*, and *Madness*. They are not to be remedied by any *new Way* of setting forth the Folly, and Extravagancy of them. When the Fruit is evil, there is no Remedy, but in putting the Root of the Tree in a better State.

Pride, is the Father and Mother of *Suicide* and *Madness*. Would you have a share in removing these Evils, you must not cast about for high Speculations, there is but *one Step* to be taken, and that is, to show the Necessity of Dying to *Pride*, and seeking for Salvation only in *Humility*. JESUS CHRIST is the only Peace, and Rest, and Satisfaction of human Life. This is absolute, and admits of no Exception. *St. John the Baptist* was the true Preparer of the Way to CHRIST; if you think of any other Way, it is Labour lost. This Point is absolutely determined where CHRIST says, 'They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them. If they believe not Moses, nor the Prophets,

'neither will they be persuaded though one arose from the Dead.'

Miracles, and Demonstrations, you see, are in vain, till *Moses*, and the Prophets are believed.

Now *Moses* is *Sin*, made known by the Law, and the Prophets, are *Faith* and *Hope* in God. And these two Things must have their State, and work in the Soul, before it can have any Benefit from CHRIST and his Miracles. If you would therefore give some Check to the Growth of Suicide and Madness, it cannot be by attacking them in themselves, or speaking to the Unreasonableness of their *particular* Nature, this is as useless, as a Miracle to Him, that heareth neither *Moses*, nor the Prophets.

Now as *Moses* and the Prophets were of Necessity, before the Coming of CHRIST, so it must be in every human Soul.

And this proves the Truth, of what has been so often asserted, of the Importance of apprehending the Fall of Man, in its true and full Depth. For to hear *Moses* and the Prophets is in Reality only this, *viz.*, Man become truly sensible of his *impure, and fallen* Nature, and *looking up to God* to be delivered from it. Then, whether he has, or has not, ever seen the Bible, he is a true Believer of *Moses* and the prophets, is that Lost Sheep, that is sure of being found, that weary and heavy laden, that must find Rest and Refreshment in CHRIST.

It matters not therefore, my Friend, what you are upon, whether you would save a Man from *Deism, Debauchery, or Suicide*, you must begin in the same Place, from one and the same Ground, and this as unavoidably, as every Fruit must have its Beginning from the Root, and from the Root in its right State.

The Amiableness of any Virtue, or the horrid Nature of any Vice, whilst only considered as in themselves, are but as Pictures set before our Eyes, and have no other Effect upon us. And this is the Unprofitableness of all *Moral Instructions*, whether Heathen, or Christian.

If you can help a Man to seek, and find, and know Himself, and his real Relation to God; to know that he has neither inward, nor outward Evil, but because he has lost his *true State*, and place in God; and that therefore Nothing can be his peace and Happiness, but his first Divine Life, or Nature quickened again in Him, then you have done all that you can for him, whatever his Malady is.—But enough of this.

Dear Soul,

Adieu.

Letter XVII.

To the same.

My dear L.,

YOU have a Scruple about the wondrous Lives of the Fathers in the *Deserts*, because in such Contrariety to his Character, who went about doing good. But if you only consider what you have said of them yourself, that the reading of their Lives, at 'once struck you with the 'deepest Devotion, and made you think what a Noviciate you 'were in the Love of God,' you would have Reason enough to place them amongst the faithful, and true Disciples of Him, who went about doing Good. For what greater Good, than to do that to others, for so many Ages, which they have done for you? They are not written to raise an Emulation in you, to copy after them; nor is there any Reason to think, that their Story is not much exaggerated. But be that as it will, it is certain, they were the Salt of the World for that Time, and that the good Providence of God blessed his Church with them.

They are not for you to read, but as it were *en passant*, or for a little Change of Air, and their Particularity of Life no more concerns you, than that of *John the Baptist*.

God's last Dispensation to the World, is the opening the Ground, and Mystery of all Things, to which every Blindness, and Vanity, and Strife of Human Life must, sooner or latter, be forced to give up itself.

The Children of this Dispensation have no Occasion to look backwards. It is like learning your *A B C*, when you are called and qualified to read.

Be not too fond of Abstemiousness, nor too much attached to a Milk Diet; let nothing be a Reason for your doing, or not doing any Thing of this Kind, but the Health and Strength of your Body. As soon as you are able to bear a stronger Diet, I would have you by all Means to use it. There is no more Harm in getting Strength from good Food, than from sound Sleep. And this Kind of Diet, is only to be used as a Remedy for a Time.

Dear Soul,

Adieu.

Letter XVIII.

To the same.

My dear Friend,

THE Variety of Trials, you have lately met with, are but a Specimen of what you are to expect, in some Form or other, so long as you breathe the Air of this fallen World.—The longer we are without them, the more our Need of them is increased. And they never give great Smart, but where something is to be torn off, that sticks too close to us.—One Reflection upon these sacred Words, ‘My Kingdom is not of this World :—The Son of Man hath not where to lay his Head,’ are sufficient to take not only the Sting out of every Cross, that can here befall us, but even to make us afraid, and ashamed of being pleased with any Thing, that has the Name of Worldly Honour, and Prosperity.

You have no Reason to wonder at any Thing you see, or hear, of the Partiality, Selfishness, Envy, and Enmity, that so often breaks out between Brothers and Sisters of the same Blood.—For if *Blood-Relations*, considered as such, could have any true Goodness, or unselfish Regard to one another, we should not be under the Necessity of being born again from above.

Will it do you any good to tell you, that thus says my Heart, without speaking a Word. ‘Let Nothing live in me, but the Redeeming Power of thy holy Jesus, Nothing pray in me but thy Holy Spirit.’—This is my Ship, in which, I would be always at Sea.—All that I seek, or mean, either for myself, or others, by every Height and Depth of Divine Knowledge, given us by God in his illuminated *Behmen*, is only for this End, that we may be more willing, and glad to become such little Children, as our Lord has told us, are the only Heirs of the Kingdom of God.

The Piercing Critic may, and naturally will grow in Pride, as fast as his skill in Words discovers itself.—And every kind of Knowledge, that shows the Scholar, the Orator, the Disputer, the Commentator, the Historian, his *own Powers*, and *Abilities*, are the *same* Temptation to him, that *Eve* had from the Serpent; and he will get no more good by the Love and Relish of such Knowledge, than she got by her Love of the Tree, that was so desirable to make one wise.

But he whose Eyes are opened, to see into this *Mystery of all Things*, sees Nothing but *Death to himself*, and to every Thing,

that he had called, or delighted in as his own This is the *bold Depth* of his Knowledge. And if you would know its *aspiring Height*, it consists in learning to know, that which the Angels and Twenty-four Elders about the Throne of God, knew, when they cast down their Crowns, before him that sat on the Throne, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, thou art worthy to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power; for thou hast created all Things, and for thy Pleasure they are, and were created.— It is to know that the Triune Majesty of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are the threefold Power, Life, Glory, and Perfection of every Creature, that sings praises to God, in Heaven and in Earth. This is the *proud* Knowledge of those, who are let into the Holy of Holies, opened by the Spirit of God in his chosen Instrument, *Behmen*. Which goes no deeper, than to see the *Nothingness* of Man, ascends no higher, than to know that God is *All*; which begets nothing in Man, but that which was begotten in *Paul*, when he cried out, ‘God forbid, that I should ‘glory in any Thing, but the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.’

Letter XIX.

To the same.

My dear Friend,

YOUR Strictures upon Messieurs of the Foundery, the Tabernacle, &c., are very just. These Gentlemen seem to have no other Bottom to stand upon, but that of Zeal. I hope God will direct it for them, that more good may come from it, than the World is willing to believe.—But I say no more of them.—I would advise you not to enter into Disputes with them, nor any others, in Defence of those Principles, which are the very Life and Heart of the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel.—No one begins to object against them, but on the Account of something that is personal, either with Regard to himself, or the Author of them, or because they are contrary to his Views and Situation in the World. He who could free himself from these Prejudices, would want no one to persuade him of the Truth of them.

Mr. *J. W.* is an ingenious Man; and the Reason why his Letter to me, is such a juvenile Composition of Emptiness, and Pertness, as is below the Character of any Man, who had been serious in Religion but half a Month, is because, it was not *Ability*, but Necessity, that put his pen into his Hand.—He

had condemned my Books, preached much against them, and to make all sure, forbid his People the use of them.—And for a Cover to all this, he promised from Time to Time to write against them.—Therefore an Answer was to be made at all Adventures.—What you happen to hear of Mr. *J. W.* concerning me, or my Books, let it die with you.—Wish him God speed in every Thing that is good.—But this you may easily know, that he, and the *Pope*, have the same Reasons, and are under the same Necessity of condemning and anathematising the Mystery revealed by God, in *J. B.*

Adieu.

Sept., 1756.

P.S. I have no objection to your learning the *French* Language, but think you much in the right, in intending to proceed very leisurely in it, and as it were by the by.—To learn, and Love the Language of the *internal Speaker*, is more than to have the Tongues of Men and Angels.

Letter XX.

To the same.

My dear Friend,

I WAS much concerned at the Account you sent me, of the State of your health, and think it very advisable, to seek out for Help.—But there is the Difficulty where to find it.—All is so very superficial in the Art of Physic, and from so poor a Ground, that one has little to like in one Physician more than in another, but his Personal Tempers and Behaviour.—Air, and gentle Exercise much pursued, must be greatly beneficial to you.—If your Physician be for your Purpose, he will not load you with Shop-Medicines, nor ought you to submit to anyone that does.—Nothing can assist you, but some simple Regimen, that gradually lessens the Hectic in your Blood.

My dear Brother Pilgrim, be of good Comfort, our *Road* of Life is *such*, that Weakness can help us on as fast as Strength.—Use outward Medicines, as if you used them not.—The *Universal* is within you, and whether you find it in a sickly, or a healthy Body, is but a small Matter.

Daily, hourly, thankful Resignation to God in every Thing, is

the best Regimen, you can enter into, both for Soul and Body.—
Every good Wish attends my dear Fellow-Traveller out of Time,
into Eternity.

Farewell.

Oct. 10, 1756.

Letter XXI.

To *G. W.*

THE large Account you have given of yourself, is very affecting, and I hope God will turn all the Variety of your past Distress, into Means of a future solid Peace, and Rest in his Divine Love.

To be weary and heavy Laden, is to have the highest Fitness to receive that Rest, that CHRIST alone can give. These are the persons that he called to him, when he was upon Earth. They who are content with themselves, are in the utmost Danger of never knowing that Happiness, for which they were created.

For a while, consider yourself in such Solitude, as if there was only God and you in the World, free from every Thought, but that of desiring to be wholly and solely his, and looking wholly to his Goodness, to be delivered out of the Misery of your fallen State.

Stand firmly in this Faith, That God and the Kingdom of Heaven are certainly within you, and within you for this only Reason, that they may become your Salvation.—As all therefore is within, so let all your Care be turned inwards, in loving, adoring, and praying to this GOD and CHRIST within you.

Be not too eager about much Reading. Nor read any Thing, but that which nourishes, strengthens, and establishes this Faith in you, of an inward Saviour, who is the Life of your Soul. To grow up in this Faith, is taking the best Means, of attaining to the best Knowledge in all Divine Matters.

Cast away all Reflections about yourself, the World, or your past Life. And let all be swallowed up, or lost in this joyful Thought, that you have found the Messiah, the Saviour of the World, not in Books, not in History, but in the Birth, and Bottom of your own Soul. Give yourself up to this Birth of Heaven within you, expect all from it, let it be the humble, faithful, longing Desire of your Heart, and desire no Knowledge, but that which is born of it, and proceeds from it. Stand only

in this Thirst of Knowledge, and then all that you know will be Spirit and Life.

*With a Heart full of good Wishes to you,
I am,
Yours, &c.*

May 8, 1750.

Letter XXII.

To the same.

My dear Friend,

I KNOW not myself, how to write to the most illuminated Person upon Earth, for Advice, or Instruction. And the more dark, and distressed my State should be, the more I should be averse to seek Counsel of any Creature; not from an Opinion of any Sufficiency in myself, but from a Fulness of Conviction, that I run away from *Relief*, and deprive myself of *true Light*, and *Comfort*, by not seeking, and depending upon God ALONE for it.

All my Writings have no other End, but to communicate *this Conviction* to my Readers, and consequently to teach them to have *done with me*, as soon as I have convinced them, that GOD and CHRIST and the Kingdom of Heaven are only to be found by Man, in his own Heart, and only capable of being found there, by his own Love of them, Faith in them, and absolute Dependence upon them.

What room, therefore, for calling out for Help and Direction, when once it is known, that all consists in an implicit blind Faith, in Purity of Love, and total Resignation to the Spirit of GOD? For where can these be exercised, but in the States and Trials through which Human Life must pass.

And to acquiesce in God, when Things are inwardly, and outwardly easy with us, but to cast about for Help from something that is not God, when Distress and Darkness come upon us, is the Error of Errors, and the greatest Hindrance to our true Union with GOD in CHRIST JESUS.

*I am with much Truth and Sincerity,
Your affectionate Friend.*

Sept. 22, 1754.

Letter XXIII.

To the same.

My dear Friend,

THE Charge of *Spinozism* brought against me by Dr. *Warburton*, has all the Folly and Weakness, &c., &c., that can well be imagined. For as *Spinozism*, is nothing else but a gross confounding of God and Nature, making them to be only one and the same thing, so the full Absurdity, and absolute Impossibility of it, can only be fundamentally proved, by that Doctrine which can go to the Bottom of the Matter, and demonstrate the essential, eternal, and absolute Distinction, between God and Nature; a Thing done over and over, from Page to Page in those Books, from which the Doctor has extracted *Spinozism*, just with as much Acuteness, as if he had spied rank *Warburtonianism*, in my Letter to the Right Reverend the Bishop of *London*.

Now although the Difference between God and Nature, has always been supposed, and believed, yet the true Ground of such Distinction, or the *Why*, the *How*, and in *What*, they are essentially different, and must be so to all Eternity, was to be found in no Books, till the Goodness of God, in a Way not less than that of Miracle, made a poor illiterate Man, in the Simplicity of a Child, to open and relate the deep mysterious Ground of all Things; in which is shown the *Birth and Beginning* of Nature, or the first Workings of the *inconceivable* God, opening and manifesting his *hidden, Triune Deity*, in an outward State of Glory, in the Splendour of united *Fire, Light, and Spirit*, all kindled, and distinguished, all united and beatified, by the hidden, invisible, inconceivable, supernatural Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, working all the Glories in Heaven, and every kind of Life, and Blessing on Earth, by visible, and invisible Fire, Light, and Spirit.

This is the wonderful Gift of God to these last distracted Ages of the World; and as every Purpose of God must stand, and sooner or later produce all that, which God intended by it; so the more the Wise and the Learned in all Churches, reject this Counsel of God, the more they will promote its Success over themselves, and only help it, to come forth with greater Strength, and Glory to God, by being owned, and proclaimed by the Mouths of Babes, and Sucklings.

Babel hath always had *Men* for its Builders; but the Kingdom of God ever was, and ever will be made up of little Children.

Farewell.

April 10, 1757.

P.S. I have read the Pamphlet you sent on *Divinity Studies*. It may be said to be much better, than most of the kind in this and the last Century, and infinitely beyond Mr. *Wesley's* *Babylonish Address to the Clergy*; but yet so wrong, as to be worse than no Advice at all.—We seem to be further from the Gospel, in Point of Spirit, than in Distance of Time.—What shall I say? *Babel* is not a City, it is the whole Christian World. As to all these Directors of Divinity-Students, no more Folly need be laid to their Charge, than is done by our Lord in these Words, 'Without me ye can do nothing; as my Father sent me, so send I you; the Holy Spirit shall guide you into all Truth.' To all which the Apostle subscribeth in these Words, 'Who hath made us able Ministers, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit.'

Now, put these Words of Christ and his Apostle, at the Beginning and End of Mr. *Wesley's* *Address*, and then you will see, that almost all that is betwixt them, is empty Babble, fitter for an old *Grammarians*, that was grown blear-eyed in mending Dictionaries, than for one who had tasted the Powers of the World to come, and had found the *Truth as it is in Jesus*.

Letter XXIV.

To Mr. T. L.

My dear L.,

TAMPER with no Physicians, but content yourself, to have that Share of Health, which a regular and good Life can help you to.—Reflect not upon your predominant Complexion, or how long it will be, before you get from under its Power.—St. *Paul* wanted to be delivered from his Thorn in the Flesh. He had all he prayed for, though the Thorn might continue, when God said to him, 'My Grace is sufficient for thee;' this was better to him, than if his Thorn had been taken from him.—This enabled him to say, 'I will glory in my Infirmities; for when I am weak, then I am strong.' You believe, that if it was not for earnest and continual Prayer, your Turn to Melancholy would get the better of you.—You cannot believe this too much, for nothing else can preserve you,

from being led away by every other evil Temper. But let Resignation to God, be the predominant Part of your Spirit of Prayer; it is not so much ardent Desires, as humble Resignation to be as God pleases, that keeps the Heart in the highest Union with him.—Faith and Hope and Love get their best Strength, and work their highest Work, when Resignation is the Salt wherewith they are seasoned.

You think, if you were to live an hundred Years in an *abstracted Contemplation*, some Property of Nature, would still be occasionally breaking forth in you.—What occasion had you, my Friend, to make this Complaint about such a Contemplation?

You have no Business with it, nor any Reason to expect it should do anything for you.—Had you changed your Words, and said, I believe if I were for a hundred Years to be wholly trusting in, and depending upon God, to do that for me, which He has promised to do for all that trust in Him, it would not be done:—Had you expressed your Complaint in these Words, you would have seen, that neither Faith, nor Hope, nor Love, nor Resignation, would have allowed you to make it.—Look at yourself, at the Power of Time, or anything that this or that Complexion does, and then you may be afraid of everything; but look at God, as him that is to do all for you, and in you, and then you need be afraid of Nothing.—A Thorn, or no Thorn, bad or good Blood, with all its Effects, lose all their Difference, as soon as you know, that you are not your own, nor left to yourself, nor where to seek a Physician, that will not leave you unhealed.

We know that all Things must work together for Good, to *them that love God*. Now what signifies what the Things are, if we are to have the same good from them, be they what they will? Let Complexion show itself, let the dead Ashes of old Sins, seem to be ready to come to Life again, what is all this, but helping us to be more alive unto God? Flesh will be Flesh as long as we live, but every State of the Flesh may help us to grow in the Spirit.—Therefore rejoice evermore, in every Thing give Thanks, and call nothing but this, *abstracted Contemplation*.

Farewell.

Letter XXV.

To a Clergyman of Westmoreland.

Reverend Sir,

CONCERNING the following Texts, God hardened the Heart of Pharaoh;—‘He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth;’—‘Good and Evil are from the Lord;’—‘I create Light, and I create Darkness;’ you ask, how these Things can be consistently affirmed of a God, all Love and Goodness to his Creatures?

I would ask you also, is there any Difficulty of admitting the Truth of this Scripture, ‘In God we live, and move, and have our Being?’ does this clash with the Idea of a God all Love and Goodness to the Creatures?—Now take all the contrary Things that are said of God, with Relation to that which passes between God and Man, and they all imply no more, affirm no more, than the single foregoing Text, namely, that in every State of the Life of Man, be it what it will, either under a Sense and Enjoyment of Good, or the Power and Pain of Evil, it is all owing to this *Divine, original, essential Relation* between God and Man, or because in him we *live, and move, and have our Being*.—For Man, thus come from God, must through the whole Course, or endless Ages of his Life, neither know, nor find, nor feel anything of Good or Evil, Life or Death, Happiness or Misery, but solely because of *That*, which God is in him, and to him, and because of *That*, which he is in God, and hath from him, by his original Birth or Creation.

The earthly Animals, whose Birth is only in and from this World, can have no Evil of Sin, or Misery in their State, from God; and that only for this one Reason, because they are not born of God, or partakers of the Divine Nature. Therefore God’s creating Evil in Man, is the same Thing, as if it were said, the *Divine Birth* in Man, is that which creates his Evil, because he could have no Sin of a wrathful, proud, hardened Heart, these Things could neither exist in him, or be known by him, but because he came into Being by a Divine Birth.—Angels could not be diabolical Spirits of Darkness, fiery Dragons of Wrath, Fury, Malice, Vengeance, Envy, Hatred, &c., &c., but because they were all born of God, to live and move and have their Being in him. This has created all the Evil of every Kind, that they can feel or know in their whole State.

All the Difficulty of reconciling such contrary Things as are

said of God, that He willeth only *Life* and *Good*, and yet that Evil and Death, are said to come from him, arises from our considering the Operations of God in a *creaturely Manner*, or as we should understand the same contrary Things, if they were affirmed of any Creature.—Whereas the Operation of God, in its whole Kind and Nature, is as different from any Thing that can be done by Creatures, as the Work and Manner of Creation, is different, in Power, Nature, and Manner, from that which Creatures can do to one another.—For (N.B.) the Operation of God is never *in* or *with* the Creature in any *other Manner*, or doing any *other Thing*, but that which it *was* and *did* in the Creation of them.—This, and this alone is the working of the Deity in Heaven and on Earth; nothing comes from him, or is done by him through all the Eternity of his Creatures, but that *essential* Manifestation of himself in them, which began the Glory and Perfection of their first Existence.—Now from this one, single, immutable Operation of God, that He can be nothing else in, or towards the Creature, but that same Love and Goodness, that He was to it, at its Creation, it necessarily follows, that to the Creature that turns from him, God can be nothing else to it, but the Cause of all its Evil and miserable State. Hence is that of the Apostle, that ‘Sin cometh by the Law, because where there is no Law, there is no Transgression.’—Now God, or the Divine Nature in Man, is the One great Law of God in Man, from which, all that is Good and all that is Evil in him, hath its whole State and Nature.—His Life can have no Holiness or Goodness in it, but as the Divine Nature within him, is the Law by which he lives. He can commit no other Sin, nor feel any kind of Hurt or Evil from it, but what comes from resisting, or rebelling against *That* of God, which is in him; and therefore the Good and Evil of Man, are equally from God.—And yet this could not be, but because of this Ground, *viz.*, that God is unchangeable Love and Goodness, and has only *one Will and Work* of Love and Goodness towards the Creature.—Just as the Law could not make Sin, or Evil, but because it has no Sin or Evil in itself, but is immutably righteous, holy, and good, and has only *one Will and one Work* towards Man, whether he receives Good or Evil by it.—Therefore the righteous, holy Law, that is so, because it never changes its good Will, and Work towards Man, can truly say of itself these two contrary Things, *I create Good*, and *I create Evil*, without the least Contradiction.—In the like Truth, and from the same Ground, it must be said, that Happiness and Misery, Life and Death, Tenderness and Hardness of Heart, are from God, or because God is that which He is, in and to the Birth and Life of Man.

This is the one true Key to the State of Man *before* his Fall, to his State *after* his Fall, and to the whole Nature of his Redemption. All which three States, are in a few Words of our Saviour, set forth in the clearest and strongest Degree of Light. 'I am the true Vine, ye are the Branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, bringeth forth much Fruit.' This was Man's first created State of Glory and Perfection, it was a living and abiding in God, such a Birth and Communion of Life with him, and from him, as the Branch hath in and from the Vine.

The Nature of Man's fallen State, and whence he has all the Evil that is in it, is set forth in the following Words, 'If a Man 'abide not in me' (the true Vine) 'he is cast forth as a Branch, 'and is withered, and Men gather them, and they are cast into 'the Fire and burned.' This comprehends the whole of Man's fallen State, namely, a being broken off from the Life of God, and therefore become such a poor, withered, helpless Creature, as may have all that done to him, as a Firebrand of Hell and Devils, which Men may do to a broken off, withered Branch of the Vine. And his State is as different from that of his Creation, as a withered Branch, smoking and burning in the Fire, is different from its first State of Life and Growth in the rich Spirit of the Vine.—Again, the whole of Man's redeemed State, is in the following Words,—'I am the Bread of Life, that came down 'from Heaven ;—He that eateth this Bread shall live for ever ;—'Whoso eateth my Flesh and drinketh my Blood, hath eternal 'Life,—dwelleth in me, and I in him.'

This is our whole Redemption, it consists in nothing else, but having the full Life of God, or Birth of Christ begotten, and born in us again.—And thus do these three States of Man fully show, that our first Perfection, our miserable Fall, and blessed Redemption, have all that they have in them, whether of Glory, or Misery, merely and solely because God alone is all that is good, and can be nothing else but good towards the Creature ; and that neither Angel, nor Man can be happy or miserable, but because it either hath, or hath not, this one God of Goodness essentially living and operating in it.

What a Number of Things called Religion, are here cut off at once? since nothing is Life, Happiness, and Glory, but the *one essential Operation* of the Triune God of Love, and Goodness within us ; nothing is Death, Evil, or Misery, but the Departure, or turning from this essential God of our Lives, to something that we would have from ourselves, or the Creatures that are about us.—And how greatly is he deluded, who living among the Throng of religious Schemes, thinks this, or that, or any Thing in Nature, can be his Atonement, his Reconciliation, and

Union with God, but the Spirit, the Body, and the Blood of Christ forming themselves into a new Creature within him. Then, and then only is he that first Man that God created, in whom alone he can be well pleased. But till then, he is that Man, whom the *Cherub's* two-edged flaming Sword will not suffer to enter into Paradise.—How is it now, that we are to regain that first Birth of Christ? Why just in the same Way, as Adam had it at first. What did he then do? How did he help forward God's creating Power?—Now creating again, or restoring a first Life in God, is just the same thing, and the same sole Work of God, as creating us at first; and therefore we can have no more Share of Power in the one, than in the other.—Nothing lies upon us as Creatures fallen from God, or is required of us with Regard to our Growth in God, but not to *resist That*, which God is doing towards a *new Creation* of us.

That which God is doing towards the new Creation of us, had its Beginning before the Foundation of the World.—'In Christ 'Jesus,' saith *St. Paul*, 'we were chosen before the Foundation 'of the World;,' the same as saying, that God out of his great Mercy, had chosen to preserve a Seed of the WORD and SPIRIT of God in fallen Man, which through the Mediation of a God incarnate, should revive into that fulness of Stature in Christ Jesus, in which Adam was at first created. And all this Work of God towards a new Creation, is by that same *essential Operation* of God in us, which at first created us in his Image and Likeness. And therefore Nothing belongs to Man in it, but only to yield himself up to it, and not resist it.

Now who is it, that may be said to *resist it*? It is everyone who does *not deny himself, take up his Cross daily, and follow Christ*. For everything but this, is that *Flesh* that warreth against the Spirit. The whole Life of the *natural Man*, resisteth all that *essential Operation* of God, which would create us again in Christ Jesus.—Further, every Religious Man resisteth it, in and by and through the whole Course of his Religion, who takes anything to be the Truth of Piety, the Truth of Devotion, the Truth of Religious Worship, but Faith, and Hope, and Trust, and Dependence upon *That alone*, which the All-Creating WORD, and All-Sanctifying SPIRIT of God, inwardly, essentially, and vitally worketh in his Soul.

Would you know, how you are to understand this *essential Operation* of the Triune holy Deity in our Souls, and why nothing else is, or can be that Grace or Help of God, which bringeth Salvation, take this earthly Similitude of the Matter.

The *Light* and *Air* of this World, are universal Powers, that are essential to the Life of all the Creatures of this World.

They are *essential*, because Nothing *sees*, till the Light has brought forth a *Birth* of itself in the Essence of the Creature, which Birth of Light can last no longer, than it is essentially united with the Operation of that universal Light which brought it forth:—Air is also essential to the *Life* of the Creature, because nothing lives, till a Birth of the Air is born in it, nor any longer, than its own in-born Air, is in *essential Union* with that universal Air, and Operation of Air, that first brought it forth.—Now from this essential, unalterable Relation between Light and Air, and seeing, living Creatures, it plainly follows, that Darkness and Death, may be ascribed to them, as well as Seeing and Life.

Thus, if Light and Air could say anything of *themselves* in outward Words, of that which they are, and do to all Animals; If the Light was to say, It is I that make *seeing* and *blind* Eyes; If the Air was to say, I create *Life*, and I create *Death*; could there be any Difficulty of understanding, or allowing the Truth of these Words? Or could they be true in any other Sense, but because where Light is not, there is the *Cause* of Darkness, and where Air is not, there is the *Cause* of Death.—And so in the strictest Truth of the Words, *seeing* and *blind* Eyes are from the Light; *living* and *dead* Bodies are from the Air. Because Darkness could not be, but because Light does not shine in it, nor the Body be dead, but because the breathing of the Air is not in it.

It is thus, with the *essential Operation* of the Triune Holy God, in the Life of all Divine and godly Creatures, whether Men or Angels.—The Light and Holy Spirit of God, are universal Powers, and *essential* to the birth of a godly Life in the Creature; which creaturely Birth of a Divine Life, can begin no sooner, than the WORD and SPIRIT of God bring forth a Birth of themselves in the Creature, nor subsist any longer, than it is united with, and under the continual Operation of that Word and Spirit, which brought it forth.—Hence it is truly said, that spiritual Life, and spiritual Death, spiritual Good and spiritual Evil, Happiness and Misery are from God, and that for this one Reason, because there is no Good, but in God, nor any other Operation of God in, and to the Creature, but that of heavenly Life, Light, Love, and Goodness.

When Man, created in the Image and Likeness of God, to be an Habitation and Manifestation of the Triune God of Goodness, had by the Perverseness of a false Will, turned from his holy State of Life in God, and so was dead to the blessed Union, and essential Operation of God in his Soul, yet the Goodness of God towards Man, altered not, but stood in the same good Will

towards Man as at the first, and willed, and could will nothing else towards the whole human Nature, but that every Individual of it, might be saved from that State of Death and Misery in an earthly Nature, into which they were fallen.

Hence, that is, from this unchangeable Love of God towards Man, which could no more cease, than God could cease, came forth that wonderful Scene of Providence, of such a variety of Means, and Dispensations, of Visions, Voices, and Messages from Heaven, of Law, of Prophecies, of Promises and Threatenings, all adapted to the different States, Conditions, and Ages of the fallen World, for no other End, but by every Art of Divine Wisdom, and Contrivance of Love, to break off Man from his earthly Delusion, and beget in him a Sense of his lost Glory, and so make him capable of finding again that blessed essential Operation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in his Soul, which was the essential Glory of his first Creation.

Now, as in this Scene of a Divine and redeeming Providence, God had to do with a poor, blind, earthly Creature, that had lost all Sense of heavenly Things, as they are in themselves, so the Wisdom of God, must often, as it were, humanize itself, and condescend to speak of himself after the Manner of Men. He must speak of his Eyes, his Ears, his Hands, his Nose, &c., because the earthly Creature, the mere natural Man, could no otherwise be brought into any Sense of *That*, which God was to him.

But now, all this Process of Divine Providence, was only for the sake of something higher; the Mystery of God in Man, and Man in God, still lay hid, and was no more opened, than the Mystery of a redeeming Christ, was opened in the Type of a Paschal Lamb.

Pentecost alone was *That*, which took away all Veils, and showed the Kingdom of God, as it was in itself, and set Man again under the immediate, essential Operation of God, which first gave Birth to a holy Adam in Paradise. Types and Shadows ended, because the substance of them was found. The cloven Tongues of Fire had put an End to them, by opening the Divine Eyes, which Adam had closed up, unstopping the spiritual Ears, that he had filled with Clay, and making his dumb Sons to speak with new Tongues.

And what did they say? They said all old Things were gone, That a new Heaven and a new Earth were coming forth, That God himself was manifested in the Flesh of Men, who were now *all taught of God*. And what were they taught? That same which Adam was taught by his first created Life in God, namely, that the immediate, essential Operation of Father, Son, and

Holy Spirit, was henceforth the Birthright of all that were become true Disciples of Christ.—Thus ended the old Creation, and the Fall of Man, in a God manifested in the Flesh, dying in and for the World, and coming again in Spirit, to be the Life and Light of all the Sons of Adam.

Look now at all God's Dispensations to the Day of Pentecost, in this true point of View, as so many Schools of different Discipline and Education of the natural Man, till by a Birth from above, he could bear the Language of Heaven, and be taught of God, and then you will sufficiently see the childish Folly of those gray-headed Doctors, who forgetting that the *last Times* are come, when God will be known only as a Spirit, worshipped only in Spirit, because everything else is but Shadow, and not the Truth, yet set up themselves as Masters, or Rabbies of new Schools of their own, which can only keep up that doting Learning, and Wisdom of Words, which compelled the learned Jews, for the sake of God, and Goodness, for the sake of Law and Prophecy, to crucify the Christ of God, as a Beelzebub, and Blasphemer.

This old Logic and Criticism of Scribes and Pharisees, is that which robs disputing Christians of the Truth as it is in Jesus, and instead of the true Bread that came down from Heaven, feeds their unregenerate Hearts with the dry Husks of *That*, which can be got from Text set against Text in the outward Letter. Nay so wise are these verbal Proficients, as to think the Gospel must be false, and the Bible itself only fit to be burned, if *all That*, is not to be ascribed to God, as true of him, as he is in himself, which in Condescension to the poor, ignorant, fallen, earthly Creature, he speaks of his Eyes, his Ears, his Hands, his turning his Back, and turning his Face, his coming down, and going up, his fiery Wrath, his destroying Fury, everlasting Vengeance, &c., &c.—Whereas all these Things are said, not because of *That*, which God is in himself, in his holy, supernatural Being, but because of that, which Man is, in the Blindness of his fallen State, so ignorant of God, so averse to Godliness, as only capable for a Time, to be instructed by the Impressions of such Language:—That is, till the Threatenings of the Law, and the Word of Prophecy have done their Work, and that *Day-Star ariseth in the Heart*, which knoweth, and teacheth, that CREATOR, REDEEMER, and LOVE, are the one true unchangeable, Triune God, that Father, that Son, and Holy Spirit, which from Everlasting to Everlasting have only *one Will*, and *one Work* of heavenly Life, Light, and Love *in*, and *towards* the Creature.—And as true as this is, so true is it also,

that from the first to the last Man, no one was, or ever will be any further from this essential Operation of the holy Deity in his Soul, but so far as he hath withdrawn himself from it.—‘God ‘hardened the Heart of Pharaoh;’ this saith neither more nor less, than that *Pharaoh* had withdrawn his Heart from God. When God saith to *Moses*, ‘I will harden his Heart, that he will ‘not let the People go;’ it hath no other Meaning, than to give to *Moses* that same full Assurance of *Pharaoh’s* State, which he gave to *Jeremiah* at another Time. ‘Thou shalt’ (saith God) ‘speak all these Words to them,’ (N.B.) ‘but they will not hearken to thee, thou shall call unto them, but they will not answer thee,’ Jer. vii. 27.—God helped *Pharaoh* to his *hardened Heart*, just as he helped *Adam* not to be *afraid* of eating of the evil Tree, by assuring him, that certain Death was hid in it.—But *Adam’s* turning from God, to hear the Voice and Instruction of his own *Reason* and *Imagination*, and the Suggestions of a satanical Serpent, was that which created in him a new hardened Heart, bold enough to eat of the forbidden Tree.—Now here, Sir, I would have you observe, that this Rise of the first Sin, fully demonstrates how the Matter *unalterably* stands between God and every Sinner, to the end of the World; there cannot be the smallest Variation, either on the side of God, or on the side of the Sinner. The *whole Nature* of God, his one unalterable Will and Work, stands in the same full Opposition and Contrariety to every Work, of Sin in every Man, as it did to *Adam’s* first Transgression. Nothing new will ever be in any Sin, it has but one Way of coming into the World, it must always be born out of Self and Satan, as the first was.—And that which God did to prevent the first Sin, saying to *Adam*, *Eat not*, that same miraculous Voice of Love, keeps saying, and saying to every Son of *Adam*, *Sin not*.

Yet so wise in the Ways of God, are some Divinity-Students, as to teach and preach, that the whole World, through its thousands of Years, has been bringing forth its millions of Myriads of Sinners all round the Globe, who as soon as they have done with the Vanity and Misery of this World, are to be roaring in the hottest Fire of an eternal Hell. For what? Why, because they have been just as wicked, as the Decrees of God required and forced them to be. And also through every Age of the World, there hath always been a *little* Number of Righteous, who were to go to Heaven, which Number had no Littleness in it, but because God would not suffer it to be greater.

Can a Charge like this be brought against Satan? Nay, doth

it not even free Satan from all the Evil that is charged upon him, and make him, though going about as a roaring Lion, to be as insignificant a Tool in the Work of Sin, as the Preacher is in the Work of Godliness, though with ever so loud a Voice, he beseeches the *Reprobate* to be reconciled to God, or with Tears in his Eyes, exhorts the *Elect* not to depart from him?

You once, I remember, said to me, that you thought I over did the Matter, in my Censure upon Learning.—Let Learning therefore speak for itself. Let its own Works praise it. What has it done? What has brought forth a *Multiplicity* of Churches, but that very same Acuteness of Learning, which asserts and proves there is but *One*? Whence comes Transubstantiation, Election, Reprobation, Justification of several Sorts, Necessity and Insignificancy of Works, Socinianism, Arianism, &c., but from that Knowledge of History, and critical Skill in Words, which is the Glory of the learned World.

‘Without me ye can do nothing,’ saith Christ.—‘That which a Man soweth, that shall he reap,’ saith the Apostle. Truths like these, of which the Scripture is full, would keep all Believers in the true Church, attentive to the one thing needful, had not a Learning falsely so called, filled all Eyes with the Dust of Darkness.

Now, Sir, be as sober as you will about the Use and Power of Learning, Logic, and Eloquence, in the Doctrines of Salvation; condemn the bad use that Heretics, Schismatics, Arians and Socinians have made of them; yet let me whisper this Truth into your Ear, that you will never be delivered from the Delusion and Cheat of your own Learning, till by a Light of Life risen up within you, you come to see, and know, that you want no more Learning, to change you from a Sinner into a Saint, than *Mary Magdalen* did.

God said to *Abraham*, ‘Walk before me, and be thou perfect.’ This was the *Hebrew* School, in which the Father of the Faithful, was to learn to be perfect.—But here now comes the Scholar-Critic, and finds, that Matters stand not thus now, because the glorious Light of the Gospel (he says) has discovered that all lies in an *Election* and *Reprobation*, and that Salvation and Damnation come from nothing else, the Apostle expressly saying, ‘It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth Mercy.’—What a learned Strife has there been about the Meaning of these Words? And yet they mean not one Jot more or less, than when the Apostle saith, ‘The natural Man knoweth not the Things of the Spirit, neither can he know them.’—All that is in the one Text, is in the

other; and both of them say only this one great and good Truth, namely, that the Creature can have no Divine Life, Light, Goodness, and Happiness, but from *That*, which the holy Triune God is, and operates by a Birth of his holy Nature in it.

Farewell.

FINIS.

LETTERS

TO A

LADY

Inclined to enter into the

COMMUNION

OF THE

CHURCH OF ROME.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M.A.

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Letters to a Lady inclined to enter the Romish Communion.

Letter I.

Madam,

YOUR complaint against the church, as chargeable with permitting the licentiousness of the press, is not just ; for the church, as such, has no more right to regulate or restrain the press, than to make laws about peace or war, or prohibit gentlemen from wearing swords, or corrupting the world with the free use of their riches and power. The licentiousness of the press is certainly a great evil, and has dreadful effects ; but the church has no other support against it, but that which it has against the world, the flesh, and the devil. It may be as suitable to the wisdom and goodness of God, and answer the same ends of his All-wise Providence, to suffer these times to fall under the trial of a persecution from the press, as to suffer former ages to be so dreadfully persecuted by merciless tyrants : and it may be as unreasonable to think the church defective in not restraining the licentiousness of the press, which betrays so many Christians into infidelity, and staggers weak minds ; as to think the Providence of God was defective in suffering tyrants to exercise such cruelty in former ages upon Christians, as forced numbers of them into apostasy.

I cannot pass by one thing in your papers, though it is a digression from the matter in hand. You say, ' You think the Scriptures are in nothing plainer, than in the doctrine of predestination and absolute decrees, in the strictest sense ; nay, you think hardly anything is so plain, as that is : yet you are afraid to think upon that doctrine, it so perplexes you ; you see undeniable reasons for believing it, but cannot answer the difficulties that attend it.' But if it were thus, Madam, would you not see too many undeniable reasons or causes, why your friend was in such a state as he is in, or why this or that church was in such a condition ? For, if all things are effects of absolute decrees in the strictest sense, to inquire why any man or men are in such a state or condition, is to ask why fire is not water ? Suppose you were told, that God sent angels and spirits to exhort trees to be of no shape, or mountains to turn themselves into birds : would not the manifest absurdity of such a thing,

sufficiently prove to you the absolute impossibility of it? could you think it a matter of dispute, or solemn inquiry? But if you are told, that God sends angels and prophets to exhort mankind to forsake their sins and practise holiness, on pain of eternal punishment, when they are under eternal absolute decrees, and fatal necessity of being what they are; is not the absurdity as great as in the former case, heightened with the addition of the highest injustice? Religious duties, and exhortations to them, necessarily suppose some degree of liberty: if, therefore, it be plain from Scripture, that mankind are under absolute decrees, it must be plain also, that there are, in Scripture, no exhortations to religious duties, no suppositions that men are capable of receiving or rejecting good advice, &c., for these things can no more subsist together, than the opposite parts of a direct contradiction. All that is plain in Scripture about predestination, is only this: God has an eternal knowledge of, and exercises an eternal providence over all things that are; the justice, wisdom, and goodness of which, are not possible to be comprehended by creatures of our size, but are to be believed and adored by all that are capable of piety, humility, and faith towards God. And to pretend to know the nature of God's decrees, or the effects of them; how far they ordain, and how far they permit; how far they inwardly or outwardly influence our wills; to pretend to any absolute knowledge in such secrets of Divine Providence, or to state them according to our comprehensions of them; is much more unreasonable, than to pretend to state the methods by which God supports the vegetable and animal world. When we look into the methods of God's predestination or providence, we should only be affected with it, as St. Paul was, when he cried out, 'O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!' But now, Madam, if St. Paul had thought it the plainest thing in Scripture, that all mankind are under absolute decrees in the strictest sense, could he have cried out as he did? could he have said, that 'God's ways were past finding out,' if he had found them to be in absolute decrees? To return:

Another reason for your apprehending a not sufficient safety in the church of England, proceeds thus: you say, 'If people were to live up to the obligations of Christianity, the world would then be only too happy a place, and we should have no temptation to wish for a remove. Whence then, you ask, 'is this great defection?' And then you conclude thus: 'Surely, was our religion, as by law established, such as it ought to be, God's grace would more sensibly attend the use of his ordinances, and we should see all in earnest in things of the greatest con-

'cernment.' It may be answered, First, Had you lived in any of the ages preceding the reformation, I believe the complaint of a general defection might have been more justly made; and, therefore, the reformation cannot be justly charged with it. Secondly, If you were now a member of the Romish church in any nation abroad, perhaps you might have full as great, if not greater reason, to put the same question as you have here. Thirdly, As it would be unreasonable to think, that the Jews so frequent falling into abominable idolatry, was owing to some defect in the state of their church, or the benefit of their ordinances; so it may be as unreasonable, to impute the corruptions of Christians to any defect in their church, as an external means of holiness. And as the rights and institutions of the Jews not having their proper effect upon their hearts, could not be imputed to any defect in their ordinances, but to that which was in their own power; so ordinances of Christians not having their true effect upon the hearts of Christians, ought not to be imputed to any want of God's grace attending his ordinances, but to that liberty which we have of rendering them useless. Fourthly, You think, 'If all Christians were such as their religion requires them to be, the world would be too happy a place to wish for a remove.' This, Madam, proceeds upon mistake; for were Christians such as their religion requires them to be, they could have no happiness but in the hope of a remove: for there is nothing in the nature or design of Christianity, to turn this world into a state of happiness considered in itself. Christian perfection is nothing else, but a continual struggle with the world, the flesh, and the devil; and they that live best up to its rules, must be 'of all men most miserable,' were it not for their faith and hope of a remove. 'They who do not find this life a cross, have not found the way to heaven.' And though morality, as such, has a good influence on the peace and happiness of civil societies; yet Christian piety is to proceed so much further, has so much to oppose both within and without us, our corrupt nature has so much need of fiery trials and purifications, that it is one end of our Saviour's crucifixion and sufferings to show us, that 'all his followers must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.' It is no objection, therefore, against Christianity, or the excellency of any particular church, that it does not put an end to the troubles and vexations of human life. Fifthly, To build any doctrine, or form any judgment, upon a supposed general corruption, is proceeding with great uncertainty: for though we cannot help seeing a great and general corruption of Christians in this part of the world where we live; yet, how general it is, what proportion it bears to the body of Christians, how far it is more or less than in other parts of Christendom, is

not to be known by us. When the prophet complained to God, that 'All Israel was fallen away;' the answer was, that 'There were seven thousand men in Israel, who had not bowed the knee to Baal.' How many hundred thousands there may be in our church, who are receiving the continual benefits of God's ordinances; and have a better right to complain of the defections and corruptions of others, than either you or I may have; is only known unto God, and can by no means be known to either of us. Can you think the state of your own family, an argument of the want of God's grace attending the ordinances of the church? Do you know of no near relations or friends, who are serious Christians, happy in the enjoyment of their religion, and sincerely bent upon doing their duty to God? I persuade myself, you have not been without very strong domestic proofs of the power of religion, and the happy effects of such means as the church affordeth to preserve its members in a state of holiness and piety: and how can you tell what numbers of families may be in the same, or a much better state? Every private person, who has hardly ever been out of the town in which he was born, is apt to think, that he knows the religious state of the world; whereas the greatest experience, founded upon the best means of information, must leave everyone in great ignorance of it: and much more difficult is it, to pretend to state how far the disorders of Christians are owing to the external state of the church, the fitness of its institutions, or to the internal liberty which all have, of rendering the means of grace ineffectual to them. To observe the general corruption of Christians, may be a very useful reflection; but it is only so, when it moves us to a profound humility, excites our zeal in the reformation of our own lives, and fills us with tenderness, charity, and intercession for those who neglect it. Lastly, To ask, 'Why such a state of things?' or, 'How, supposing a sufficiency of Divine Grace, men could be 'in such a state?' is an unreasonable anxiety, and blamable curiosity: for what is there in all the Bible, to make us think ourselves qualified, either to ask or answer such questions; or, that any part of our duty depends upon the knowledge of them? Nay, it is the very end and intent of all Revelation, to silence such inquiries; and to show us how that disorder of heart and mind from whence they proceed, is to be cured. Where could there be any room for that infant simplicity, that profound humility, that implicit faith, that high adoration of the infinite ways and methods of an infinitely wise and good Creator, if such questions as these could be solved by us? How unreasonably should we be told of the blindness and disorder of our nature, if we could measure or fathom such depths of an Infinite Provi-

dence? For what could be a secret to us, if we knew the nature of man, and the nature of God, to perfection? But, without such knowledge, it cannot be possible for us to see how far the Eternal Providence of God, and the liberty of man, have been jointly the cause of so many different states of perfection, or corruption, in human life. You would not think it proper in anyone, to be anxious in his inquiries into the reason of the fall of angels, or why their state seems to be irrecoverable, or why God seems to be represented as treating our fall with more compassion than theirs. You would think it very blamable in a man, to be at a stand in his religion, to doubt whether he should be all zeal, and love, and devotion to God, for his mercies in Christ Jesus, 'for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory,' because he could not resolve these difficulties relating to the state of angels, or the justice of God's dealings with them. Now it is the same unreasonable anxiety, to want to know how so many Christians, in a sufficient state of grace, can fall into such corruptions; as to want to know how angels could fall, or fall as they did. Such anxieties as these, are to have no allowed place in the meek and lowly spirit of the followers of Jesus Christ, but are all to be buried in a profound resignation to the adorable Providence of God: and if, through weakness and infirmity, they sometimes intrude upon our minds, we must resist them, as we do other thoughts that are contrary to piety.

I agree with you, in your opinion of the methods made use of to begin and carry on the reformation; the bare history of it is satire enough. But then, the history of Popes, written by persons of their own communion, the methods of gaining and supporting the papal power, and the frequent unjust executions of it, are as large and undeniable a history of scandal. So that there seems to be little room for private judgment to form any opinion concerning the excellency of one church above the other, on that account; or to think, that God's blessing must be with the one, and not with the other, because of those external means which have been called in to their assistance. You wonder, that God's judgments did not suddenly overtake the reformers; and many seemingly good and learned Christians have often wondered, that the papal tyranny has so long escaped them. From whence, I think, we may collect, how much we are out of our way, when we are guessing at the fitness of God's judgments: and, perhaps, they may then be executing in the severest manner, when we are wondering why they do not fall. I have so much trust and confidence in the Goodness of God in the care of his church, that I hope the means of Christian salvation are fully preserved both in the English and Romish communion, for all such as are disposed

to make a right use of them ; and that the guilt of any sinful proceedings, past or present, of those that either have or had the government of either church, extends no further than to those that either are or have been the causes of such sinful proceedings. Let us suppose that it was the lust of Henry VIII. and the temporal claims and usurpations of the Pope, that occasioned the schism : that Henry, to support himself, commits sacrilege of all kinds, and stops at no injustice ; that the Pope, to preserve his power, excites to rebellion, and calls subjects from their natural allegiance : supposing all this injustice on both sides, does it follow, that communion in either or both churches became unlawful to these, who had not only had no hand in the beginning or continuance of such injustices, but heartily grieved for them, and prayed to God to put an end to them ? Usurpations and false claims appeared on each side, and the King and the Pope seem to be equally blamable in the measures they took to support them. The convocation in England, and the council of Trent, proceeded in such a manner, as to leave it very doubtful, which of them contributed most to establish the schism. But was the church lost, when it became thus divided ? Were baptism, the holy eucharist, and all the sacred offices of Divine worship, no longer of any benefit to the true lovers of Jesus Christ, friends to holiness, purity, and unity ? Did they lose the means of salvation, pray to and worship God in vain, receive fruitless sacraments, not because they were unworthy to receive the benefits of them, not because they had done anything ill themselves, but because they did not govern their governors, and do that which they had neither power nor any right to do ? How comes it to be an uncontested maxim in religion, that the personal vices of the priest do not render the sacraments useless to those who receive them from his hands ? Is it not, because it is too absurd, too contrary to Scripture, to common reason, the goodness of God, and the ends of the sacraments, to suppose the contrary ? Is it not, because all sins are personal ; and only so far chargeable upon any person, as they are his own voluntary acts ?

Should it be objected, ' That there is a contagion in schism ; ' and that all in a schismatical communion are affected with it, ' and as such in a state of schism : ' It is answered, The contagion of schism is just like the contagion of all other sins ; so far as we are accessory to anything sinful, either in aiding, defending, or approving it, so far we are under the contagion or guilt of it : and so far as the cause, or continuance of schism, can be chargeable upon any man, by what he does in a schismatical communion ; so far is he under the guilt or contagion of schism, and no further. And to suppose that schism, the greatest and most dreadful of

any sin, may be imputed to a man, without his having any hand in it, though at the same time it is allowed to be great injustice to charge a man with the guilt of the smallest offence in which he had no concern, is surely too gross an absurdity. Further, to make those people chargeable with the guilt of a schism, which they did not begin or continue by any act of their own; who have every sentiment of humility, charity, and meekness, that is contrary to it; who have nothing in their heart and spirit that is schismatical; to charge such persons with the contagion of schism, only because their governors, spiritual and temporal, make and have made laws prejudicial to the peace and unity of the church; is as absurd, as to conclude a man of an honest and just spirit guilty of injustice, because he lives under a master who makes little or no conscience of what he does, but is very tyrannical and oppressive.

Again, should it be asked, 'How can you communicate with a schismatical church, without partaking of its schism; since your act of communicating is an approbation of its terms of communion, and by that means is a consenting to and partaking of that which is schismatical in it?' It is answered, If I communicate with a church because it has such terms of separation from others, and am glad to see it so divided, and others so excluded from it; then, by communicating with a schismatical church, I partake of its schism. But if I communicate with it, not because it is so divided, or has such terms of communion; but because it is a church, and has the means of salvation in it; because it has an authority, though an abused authority, over me; and because I cannot renounce its communion, and enter into any other church, without making myself a party with those who also schismatically condemn and divide from its communion; if these are the principles that keep me in the communion of any church, neither entering into it because it is divided, nor leaving it because I dare not abet the principles that divided from it; it seems to be against all the principles of equity, reason, and religion, to lay schism to my charge. For what is it that has made the schism, but the unreasonable quarrels, and unjust claims of the governors on both sides? Can I undo what they have done, by my changing sides? can I clear myself of schism, by being a party with one against the other, when both are to blame in what they do? can I be made guilty by schismatical laws, which had none of my consent nor approbation? I stay in the church of England, because Providence has placed me in its communion, and because it has the terms of salvation; I wish everything that is schismatical in it was removed, by those who have a power of removing it; I do not

go over to the church of Rome, because that would be showing my approbation of those reasons on which the governors of that church proceed in their division from others, and would make me guilty of all the wrong steps that they have taken. This is not the case of those who are educated in that church; they may be free from all the schismatical or unjust proceedings of their governors, as the private members of any other church may; but it seems to be the case of those that renounce the church of England for that of Rome: such an act, I think, must make them a party to all that the church of Rome has done in relation to the schism. These seem to be the only principles of piety and religion, for serious Christians to found their peace upon, in this divided state of the church, where the division is wholly owing to the unreasonable claims and uncharitable proceedings of the governors on both sides, and where both retain all that is of the essence of religion. The whole of this matter seems to stand thus:

First, The beginning of this schism could only be charged upon those, on both sides, who began it, and acted as causes of it; it could not take away the means of salvation, or render sacraments useless to those who were no way assistant to it.

Secondly, The continuance and guilt of the schism can only be charged upon those, on both sides, who continue or help to continue it, either as defending what is already wrong done, or by proceeding in further unjustifiable methods; but cannot take away the terms of salvation, on either side, from those who have no hand in continuing it, but wish to see everything removed that is prejudicial to the peace and unity of the church of Christ.

Thirdly, The contagion or guilt of schism is contracted as the guilt of any other sin is, only by personal acts of concurrence in that which is schismatical. And to suppose that the contagion or guilt of schism may be secretly and unknowingly conveyed to those, that are in a state of spirit and life contrary to all that is schismatical; is as absurd as to say, that an innocent man may be secretly and knowingly involved in the guilt of a murder, which with all his heart and hand he desired to prevent.

Fourthly, Supposing churches thus schismatically divided by the unreasonable and unjust proceedings of the governors on both sides, all the private members of each communion are in great danger of being more or less involved in the guilt of schism: 1st, As they are in danger of being educated in schismatical principles, in fury, and party zeal, in hatred and contempt of those who are of a different church, and by that means made blind and furious defenders of unjust and schismatical laws, and so involved in the guilt of them in some degree. 2ndly, As they

are thereby much exposed to the temptation of temporal motives, to take an advantage of the divided state of the church, and, by being clamorous defenders, writers, and preachers of certain principles, make their court either to prince or people. 3rdly, As honest and well-meaning minds are thereby exposed to great mistakes in religion; to be content with their state, because they are zealously affected to certain notions; to be ignorant what spirit they are of; and to place the perfection of Christianity in the exercise of those passions, which Christ came into the world to destroy. These are the miserable effects of schism, to which the private members of each communion are constantly exposed; and whether we look at home or abroad, we shall find equal proofs of this observation. So that, though a man is not necessarily a schismatic, because he lives in a schismatical communion; yet he is in great danger of thereby entering into schismatical principles and passions, and of living in false and erroneous notions of religion; for the religion of the Gospel seems to be unobserved, unthought of, whilst both parties are contending for a national orthodoxy: and though the Unity of the Church of Christ is the common pretence for which all passions and all arms are employed, yet it seems to be schism only that is defended on both sides. A man need only look into the controversy on both sides, to see the miserable effects of division; how sadly time, and parts, and learning, are employed in wrangle, calumny, and misrepresentation, in furnishing fresh matter for the corruption of our hearts, for hatred and schism to subsist upon. To such a height have learning and orthodox labours carried this hatred and schism, that every attempt for clearing up misunderstandings, and showing that Christians need not hate one another as they do, is, by both parties, treated as the attempt of some false brother, or enemy to the Christian religion; and he that should only say unto them, as Moses said unto the Israelites, 'Sirs, ye are brethren, why do ye wrong one to another?' might have Moses's reward for his pains. What is, therefore, left for us to do, Madam, but to devote ourselves to such penitence, piety, and prayer, as the Heavenly Spirit of the Gospel requires of us; and to make the best use of the sacraments and institutions of Christ, that the present state of the church affordeth? We can neither stay in one communion, nor go into another, but we are in the same state, as to the Unity of the Church; every part is in a state of division, and chargeable with contributing to the cause of it. The thing that we are to look for, therefore, is, not to be out of a divided part of the church, which is impossible, till it pleases God to alter the state of Christendom; but, that we may live in these divided schis-

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matical and uncharitable parts of Christendom, free from schismatical principles and passions, and wholly attentive to everything that the most ardent love of God, the most perfect love of our neighbour, and the highest imitation of the Spirit, Life, and Sufferings of our blessed Saviour, require of us.

Observe, Madam, in the first place, All this reasoning proceeds upon a supposition, that the divided state of Christendom is truly chargeable upon that, which every divided part contributes towards it; so that the schism is not the schism of any one part, but of every part of whole Christendom unreasonably and uncharitably at variance in itself: to lay this schism separately either upon the Grecian, Roman, or Reformed church, seems equally unreasonable, and the effect of the same passion and partiality. Secondly, It supposes the means of salvation to be fully preserved in these divided parts. This, as to the church of England, seems to be plainly granted by the church of Rome; since history attests, that the Roman Catholics, for several years after the reformation, contented themselves with our communion. Thirdly, This reasoning does not suppose, that the great divided parts of Christendom are equally to blame as to the schism; or that they have the same number of corruptions, or false demands, that occasion it. Two persons may be both unreasonable, and justly chargeable with a difference betwixt them; but yet one may have more practices or tempers to recede from than the other, in order to peace; and this may be the case of the divided churches. Fourthly, It does not suppose, that each divided communion, though containing the full means of salvation, is equally desirable, or has all the same helps to piety and holiness of life that the others have. If you ask, whether the church of Rome or England has the most helps to a solid and substantial piety, it is more than I pretend to answer; and, perhaps, it is a question, that cannot be absolutely or strictly determined, by considering those churches absolutely in themselves. For as most of the practices and usages, that are not of the essence of religion, but are mutable in their nature, and only appointed by ecclesiastical authority as helps to that which is essential to piety, may be more or less subservient to those ends in some different ages and places of the world, than in others; so that which has the nature of an excellent communion at one time and place, may not have that same excellence at every other time and place: thus, those very same usages, which may serve to carry people of such a climate and time to great perfection and piety, may lead away people of another nature and age from true religion. Had you and I learned our religion in Italy or Spain, perhaps we might not have had half that seriousness in religion, or regard for piety,

that we now have ; and many people that are now saints in those countries, had they been educated in our church, might perhaps have fallen into libertinism. So that the excellency of one communion above another, as to these helps to piety, is very difficult to be stated by us, who know not for whom such things are best, and for whom they are not. In this respect, therefore, we are humbly to submit to the Providence of God ; and piously to believe, that His Goodness overrules this vast disorder and differences in churches, so as to make them subservient to the benefit of all parties that are disposed to make a right use of them. And confused as the world appears to be by the effects of these divisions, yet, for aught we know, Christianity, thus rent and torn, thus condemning and condemned, thus various in its outward forms, may continually present unto God a greater number of souls purified by faith and good works in Jesus Christ, than if the church had continued united in that state it was in before the reformation. The unreformed part of the church seems to have received no small benefit from the reformation itself ; first, as it raised an uncommon spirit of piety in many of their members, on account of the reproaches that were cast upon their communion : and secondly, as it put their governors under a necessity of departing from some practices, of removing some scandals, and of being more careful to prevent those idolatries and superstitions, with which their adversaries charged them in so violent a manner, and with so much appearance of reason.

That which seems sufficient to prevent all scrupulous anxiety in private persons, is this : I am a private member of a church that has the full means of salvation in it ; whether the practices and usages in which it differs from other churches, be fitter for the age and place in which I live, or would have a better effect upon myself and the generality of its members, than those of other churches, I cannot tell ; and as I have no ability, so I have no call or commission to judge in these matters ; they belong to those who, by the Providence of God, have the care of this church : and if, from any supposed betterness of another communion, I renounce this, in order to enter into that, I then quit my private station of safety, and by such an act make myself a party in the schism, and become a defender of the principles and proceedings of those who are and have been the causes of the schism. And if the divisions of Christendom be more or less the common crime of all the divided parts, then private persons cannot get out of a blamable communion by changing sides, but seem to have reason to content themselves with that communion which appears to want nothing, but the union that every other church equally wants. And though it is an easy thing for private

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persons to find books that have determined this point with great positiveness, and make one communion only right, and all others wrong, yet I cannot think in this manner; I see too much to be liked and disliked in every communion, to think that any side is free from objection, or that salvation is only to be had in one communion. And notwithstanding all sides pretend the primitive perfection to be with them, yet I believe all must alter their modern terms of communion, before the causes of the division can be laid to any one divided part exclusive of every other.

You seem much pleased with Dr. Hickes's propositions concerning the Catholic church. Those propositions contain, perhaps, nothing erroneous in them; as they are an ideal description of such a state of order, as is truly consistent with the doctrines and institutions of Christ. But if you consider them any further, than as an ideal or speculative description of what the church might have been; if you consider them as a true description of its necessary state; and of such a church as every Christian must be a member of, in order to be of the true church; then these propositions have nothing to be liked in them, and they can be of no use to any Christian in the world to lead him to the true church. The reformation itself, in which Dr. Hickes received his orders, and of which he was a sufficiently zealous defender, could have no foundation upon these propositions; and it would be the last extravagance to suppose, that the nonjuring church was founded upon these propositions. If there are nonjurors that think the true catholic church is only in their communion, I think they are a thousand times less pardonable, than those that think so of the church of Rome. The nonjurors have no foundation to consider their communion as a distinct church from the established, or in a state of greater purity. Either they consider its laws and doctrines as theirs, or they do not: if they do, then the purity of that church is theirs also; if they do not, then they are new reformers without authority, and deserters of that which they accuse the conforming clergy of having deserted. If I could not communicate with them, but upon the terms of declaring the nullity and invalidity of the sacraments in the church of England, I should sooner communicate with the church of Rome upon the same terms. But if no church would receive me, but upon the terms of unchurching all the rest; I should think my best private prayers would be more acceptable to God in the unity and peace of my own heart, than outward communion with only one part purchased at that rate.

But Dr. Hickes's propositions you take to be a true account of the primitive state of the church, as it was at first instituted; and you suppose that, for the peace and good of the church, this state

might receive alterations, and the Bishop of Rome be invested with that power which he long enjoyed, and now claims. Now, Madam, this concession is sufficient to deliver you from all those scruples you are under, about the claim and authority of the Bishop of Rome over you. For, first, If this authority given him against the primitive constitution, was then just and valid, because it was given for the supposed good of the church; must not the taking away that authority be as just and valid, upon a supposed good of the church? In the giving him that authority, there was primitive institution against it; but in the taking it away, nothing was altered but their own mere human provision. And if great episcopal or national churches came under that authority by their own consent, upon their own reasoning about the good of the church; they must have the same power to recede from such authority, when the good of the church shall seem to them to require it. And if they are right, or wrong, in either of these cases, either as to first giving or afterwards taking away this power; it is a right and wrong that does not affect private Christians, or the church as a means of salvation in Christ Jesus, but wholly relates to themselves. But secondly, Supposing this power thus given, yet what was given was only spiritual power; and if this spiritual power is turned into temporal, and become a temporal tyranny, not only over spiritual persons, but over all temporal princes, and pretends further to exercise this temporal tyranny by virtue of its spiritual power; are not all bishops and churches under the greatest necessity to seek for temporal protection against a temporal tyrant, and to recall that spiritual authority, which was only a human grant, and which had been perverted to such bad ends? Besides, if, as you observe from Dr. Cave, patriarchs were at first instituted, because of the increase of bishops, and the different state of nations, in the first spreadings of the church; does not this sufficiently show, that the institution of patriarchs, or the nature of their power or districts, has nothing Divine in it, or of necessary observation to the nature of the church? Does it not show, that their institution arose from temporal changes in the church, and that the reason of them must follow the nature of the church? If, therefore, the temporal state of the church gave the existence, and the manner of existence, to the first patriarchs, must not the present temporal state of the church be as good reason for any changes in the nature of patriarchs? The temporal state of the church, from the apostolic age to the institution of the first patriarchs, was very little different; but in the present temporal state of the church, and its manner of existence in the established laws of so many kingdoms and nations upon the earth, there is an incon-

ceivable difference from what it was at the first institution of patriarchs ; and is it not against all reason to ask what patriarchs were fifteen hundred years ago, to know what they ought to be now ? Patriarchs were what they were then, because the temporal state of the church required them to be what they were : but the present state of the church is infinitely different from what it was then ; is there not, therefore, the same reason for an infinite difference in the present patriarchs, from those of former times ? If, in the early growth of churches, patriarchs of such a kind were found convenient for peace and good order in the state of the church ; may not a much different alteration in the church be as good a reason either for having no patriarchal power, or of a very different nature from that which has been ratified in primitive councils ? or must we stay, till we can have just such primitive councils as those were ; that is, must we stay for an impossibility, before we can know that it is lawful to make that a rule for us now, which was a rule to them ? If a patriarch, fifteen hundred years ago, was found a convenient president over several churches ; and a patriarch now over several different churches established by civil laws under several different kings and princes, be found inconvenient and prejudicial to the common peace ; can any serious Christian find matter of uneasiness, because of modern changes in patriarchs, or even upon their total abolition ? Can it be any reason for my being afraid of the Bishop of Rome's patriarchal power over me, because an ancient council, before there was any national church in the world established by civil laws, says, ' Let the rights and jurisdictions of ' ancient patriarchs be observed.' Can this possibly be any rule for the rights or pretence of the Bishop of Rome above fourteen hundred years after that council ; or that a decree in favour of ancient patriarchs, suitable to the state of the church at that time, can be of any authority for retaining a patriarchal turned into the greatest temporal tyranny, and when the state of the times has nothing in common with the state of those ancient times ? Lastly, Supposing this patriarchate of Rome to be unnecessarily dissolved, what is the crime, and whose is it ? The crime is a mistake in a human provision concerning the external good government of bishops ; and if this mistake be made criminal through human passions, it is still only the crime and guilt of human passions in our governors. So that I see no foundation for scruples of piety in private persons, on this account.

Another reason for your inclination to the Romish communion, is ' on the account of some excellent books written by persons ' of that communion. You think their persons must have been

'very acceptable to God, and that they had very large assistances 'from him.' I think you judge exceeding right in both respects ; I think the same of a great many more of their writers, and bless God for the knowledge I have had of them. As I consider their church, and all its members, as my brethren in Christ, and as nearly related to me as any Protestants ; so it is the same satisfaction to me, to receive benefit from their church, as from that of England ; and I am as glad to find the increase of piety, or any extraordinary instances of it amongst them, as amongst ourselves. In my own heart I drop and forget all those divisions and distinctions which the enemy hath set up amongst us, and desire God to receive me and my devotions, as united with and recommended by all His Church in Heaven and on earth ; and by this oblation of myself to God, I trust to be received by him as truly of the same communion with all his saints, as if I had been a member of every particular church in which any of them lived. By this means I have the same comfort and joy, from the piety and prosperity of one part of the church, as from another : and being of this particular church, not because it is externally so divided, but because there is no other part free from the same external division, I consider every saint as a proof and testimony of God's blessing upon that church of which I am a member.

If the sentiments that I here send you are errors, I earnestly beg of God to prevent your being deceived by them ; and of his great mercy to pardon and deliver me from them : but if they are agreeable to truth and piety, I hope his Holy Spirit will assist you to find your peace and satisfaction in them. These are the prayers which I make to God both for you and myself, and hope that you will do the same both for yourself and me.

*I am,
Madam,
Your sincere friend,
WILLIAM LAW.*

May 24th, 1731.

Letter II.

Madam,

I PROCEED upon this supposition, that schism and corruption, speculative and practical errors, are more or less the common charge and guilt of all the divided parts of Christendom: and I only consider, how a person, who has no way been the cause of the beginning or continuance of this corrupt schismatical state of the Church, nor has any power of altering it, is to behave in such a state; and how he may escape the guilt of the schism and corruption, and live in truth, and love, and unity, a true member of the One Holy Catholic Church, in the midst of such external confusion and disorder. Here I have frankly and sincerely laid open to you the state of my own mind; and shown you every principle of my own particular conduct, and, as far as the compass of such a letter would permit, the reasons on which it is founded.

This, Madam, is the plain state of my own heart, and the foundation of my own peace and conduct, in the midst of this external division and disorder in the Church of God: I pray to God, in the name of Christ, united in heart and spirit with His Whole Church in Heaven and on Earth; and, therefore, I trust, that the schism, which reigns and runs through the whole Church, no more affects me than any other public or national guilt, in which I am neither an actor or an abettor. I hope, therefore, I may safely recommend it to your practice, to continue a member of one particular part of the Church, upon these principles of union and communion with the whole; to love the Church of Rome or Greece with the same affection, and with the same sense of Christian fellowship, as you love the Church of England; and to consider yourself, not as an external member of one in order to renounce communion with the other, but as necessarily forced into one externally divided part, because there is no part free from external division. And if there should be any mistake or weakness of judgment in this conduct, yet this I think may be said for it, that it seems to have so much foundation in humility, meekness, and Christian charity, and is at the same time so much the support of all those virtues in our hearts; that I think you cannot well be in a better state, either to have your error entirely pardoned, or your understanding better directed by God himself.

The apostle says, 'His commandments are not grievous;' but does he by this mean, that, therefore, he is no longer 'crucified

'to the world, and the world crucified to him'? The short of the matter is this: man fallen from innocence and perfection, can only turn to God as a penitent: he is, therefore, as such, turned out of Paradise, a place of heavenly enjoyment, into a world cursed for his sake, full of cross, and trouble, and burthen, and vanity, that he may there have continual occasion to exercise all the humble tempers of a pious penitence, and meet with every trial that may best purify and prepare his soul for its return to God. And when one considers how poorly and vainly human philosophy has, in all ages, talked about God, and religion; and, on the other hand, what a depth of wisdom and treasure of knowledge is discovered to us in the Scriptures, without any help from human parts, or human learning; it is easy to see from whence our light and knowledge in religion is to be expected, and who are the best qualified to partake of it.

If we look into history, we can hardly find any churchman remarkable for an uncommon extent of human learning, without having troubled the world with some inventions of his own, some fancied improvements upon the Common Christianity. The great Origen was one of the first instances of this kind; he was celebrated as the oracle of learning, as a possessor of all the sciences; along with this, he was of a very pious and mortified life, and full of contempt of the world: but, for my own part, I should have left his conversation, his deep discoveries, and allegorical explanations of Scripture, to have spent my time and learned religion with a poor mechanic that I have somewhere read of, whose heart and life was governed by this spirit: 'I am nothing, I have nothing, I am worth nothing: I desire nothing, but to love, adore, praise and obey God, in everything, and for everything.'

Were the world to see this remark upon learning, they would in all probability impute it to my want of learning; and though they would be very right in judging my pretensions to learning not to be great, yet it would be unjust to think me an entire stranger to the nature of it. But I profess to you, that whatever parts or learning I am possessed of, I think it as necessary to live under a continual apprehension of their being a snare and temptation to me, as of any worldly distinctions, whether of riches or dignity, that I should be possessed of: and I desire no other improvement of science or knowledge, nor to see into any depths, but such as penitence, humility, faith, hope, charity, the pure love of God, and an absolute resignation to his Providence, shall discover to me. These virtues fill the mind with more light and knowledge of God, than all the libraries of human learning in the world; and are a much shorter and surer way to

the possession and enjoyment of Divine Truth, than that of turning over the endless volumes of the learned. They are the keys of Divine Knowledge, and afford an easy entrance to those that keep them: they make us friends of God; and, as such, always in a state of finding his certain care and guidance of us: they are, as it were, so many inward eyes of the soul, always receiving a sufficiency of light from God: and we never are at loss or perplexity, but when some of these Divine Virtues are either too imperfectly practised, or wholly neglected by us. I take the matter to be just thus with relation to the discourses about the restoration of all things, &c., they are about something that we have not the least knowledge of, nor any faculties or foundation for such knowledge: we have nothing certain or plain within ourselves about it, and so have nothing to oppose to anything that is told us; we are, therefore, easily taken by every writer, that has parts and abilities to form an agreeable scheme of it. Again, there is another thing which prepares our minds for a reception of such discourses. The irrecoverable state of men, or angels, is a dreadful thought to us; our sense of misery, tenderness, and compassion for our fellow-creatures, makes us wish that no creatures might fall into it; and we are unable to show how such a state should result from the Infinite Wisdom, Goodness, and Perfection of God; and so we are mightily prepared to think every scheme to be rational and well grounded, that puts an end to such a state. But then we must consider, that we are here governed by our passions and weakness, and only form a God according to our own conceptions: we must consider, that the Infinite Wisdom, Goodness, and Perfection of God, is the fathomless object of our faith and adoration, and not of our comprehension; and to pretend to know what God must do, by virtue of such attributes, in the vast compass of futurity, with regard to his fallen creatures, is as absurd, as to pretend to be infinitely wise ourselves. For as God is so, for this only reason, because he knows what Infinite Wisdom, Goodness, and Perfection, require of him; so if we knew that, we should be in the same state of perfection. The inability to account for the present disordered state of the creation, has made many philosophers turn atheists, and deny an Allwise and Good Providence: but these poor men are self-condemned, and fall into the greatest of all absurdities, only to avoid a difficulty that has no absurdity in it. They deny a Providence of an Infinitely Perfect Being, because they cannot account for such a Providence in the present state of things: and yet, if there was such a Providence, it could not be what it is supposed to be, unless it was infinitely above their comprehension: this is their great self-condemnation and

absurdity. Again, they reject a First and Governing Cause of Infinite Wisdom, and Goodness, because they see so much evil and disorder in the world. But why do they conclude thus? It is from their own sense of wisdom and goodness: they feel such a goodness and benevolence in themselves, that they would not permit what they see permitted in the present state of things; and, therefore, they conclude, that such a state cannot come from, or be under the direction of a Cause of Infinite Wisdom and Goodness. But here they are again in a state of self-condemnation, and taken in the greatest of absurdities: for if they feel wisdom and goodness in themselves, whence have they them? As their existence is an infallible proof, that something did always exist; as everything finite is a proof of something infinite in the same kind; so their own wisdom and goodness is as plain and infallible a proof that the cause from whence they proceed, and under which they subsist, is Infinitely Wise and Good. So that for a being to argue from his own wisdom and goodness that the first Cause is destitute of both, has all the absurdity in it, as if he should conclude from his own power and life, that the First Cause from which he proceeds, and under which he subsists, is destitute of power and life. These absurdities must be embraced by those, who are too reasonable to adore an Infinitely Wise and Incomprehensible Providence. Deep and long thinking upon the Providence of God has an appearance of a very pious exercise; and a zeal to set it in some new light, or confute adversaries in some better way than common texts of Scripture, has often betrayed well-meaning men into measures prejudicial to religion; and that which they intended as a support to religion, has helped the adversary to oppose it with a greater show of argument. I am not against our using all the arguments that reason and learning can furnish us with, in defence of religion; but I think we are much mistaken, when we place our chief strength there, and conclude that Christianity must prosper, or infidelity decline, accordingly as all objections and difficulties are more or less cleared up and solved. For as religion never entered into the fallen world that way, by condescending to explain all the difficulties, or answer the objections that ignorance, malice, self-love, pride, curiosity, wit, or worldly learning, could bring against it; as no Revelation from God ever dealt in this manner, with this kind of adversaries; so it is against reason to think, that it must now, or at any other time, be supported in that manner. For these tempers have no right or claim to be answered or satisfied in their own way; as they are only so many disorders or corruptions of the soul, so they are to have no relief from religion, but that of dying before it.

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To give pride, self-love, or curiosity, the resolutions they require, would be keeping up the disorder of fallen spirits, which, as such, can only be saved by a religion that calls them to self-renunciation, to penitence, humility, faith, and absolute resignation to God. If speculative instructions, and resolutions of doubts, had been the right way of delivering man from the corruption and disorders of his nature; if nice and determinate decisions of the difficulties and depths of Providence, had been a proper requisite for entering into the Spirit of Christianity; can it be thought that our Blessed Lord would have said, 'Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God'? But if an infant simplicity, if self-renunciation, if humility of heart, and a total resignation of ourselves to the Wisdom and Goodness of God, be proper and necessary dispositions of the soul that is to be saved through Christ; it cannot well be thought that Christianity is then best defended, or the hearts of people best assisted for the reception of it, or adherence to it, when speculative decisions of its matters of faith are most studied and appealed to. If all who wish well to Christianity, and are desirous to stop the growth of infidelity, would oppose it with their lives, and produce the practice of true Christian virtues in defence of religion; infidelity would sink into the utmost shame and confusion, and Christianity would be more than mathematically demonstrated to common-sense. But the misfortune is, that, in every attack, we think there is something wanted in point of argument, and so are racking our thoughts for something new in the way of reasoning; whereas the enemy is in his state of strength, and we in our state of weakness, because we are doing nothing but argue, and are contending for a dead Christianity: did we but begin its defence, by entering upon new lives, the old arguments would be sufficient.

You ask, 'When discoveries of this kind are thrown into our way, is it matter of strict duty to reject, instead of giving them entertainment, and not rather be grateful for them? And if we may not give them the credit of Divine Revelation, yet may we not entertain such things as probabilities, as a harmless entertainment of one's busy thoughts, as things that may innocently be believed or rejected?' I do not deny that there are such things. But if I knew of anybody that wanted them, or sought for relief in them, I should caution him against them; for such entertainment of our busy thoughts, is often as dangerous as the entertainment of our restless passions; because the activity and curiosity of our minds is not a little prejudicial to true devotion and piety of heart. If it could be supposed, that these probabilities would be always considered as we at first

received them, there would be very little to be said for them; for why should our mind, which should be always in a state of reverence and adoration of Divine Truths, and feeding itself with solid enjoyment and satisfaction in them, seek for religious amusement in groundless imaginations? for supposing (what is here supposed) that they may be as innocently denied as believed, they can only be groundless imaginations. But when we consider the weakness of our minds, how easily they are affected with what they admit, and how soon that which was thought of only as an amusement or bare probability, is changed into a solid truth or fundamental point, we shall find that such entertainment is a dangerous indulgence of our thoughts. The matter you here propose, seems to be taking this very turn upon your own mind: you propose it as an innocent probability, or speculative amusement of one's busy thoughts; yet, a few lines after, you say, 'This does not, therefore, seem to be a matter of mere speculation, but of great use and benefit:' and perhaps a little longer dwelling upon it, would make you take it for a fundamental point, and that Christianity could not be received without it; and so the entertainment of busy thoughts would drive you upon a rock. Humility, faith, and a total resignation of ourselves to the fathomless depths of the Divine Providence, are our only guard against this danger. As the fall of our first parents, though in innocence, seems to be owing to the desire of a knowledge not suitable to their state; so we sin in the same temper, when our curiosity searches for higher knowledge than that which is revealed to us. It is an excellent saying of the son of Sirach, 'Seek not out the things that are too hard for thee; neither search the things that are above thy strength; but what is commanded thee, think thereupon with reverence. For it is not needful for thee to see with thine eyes the things that are in secret. Many are deceived by their own vain opinion, and an evil suspicion hath overthrown their judgment,' chap. iii.

I hope I shall not offend you by observing of your great and good father, whose memory I esteem and reverence, that his chief foible seems to have lain in a temper too speculative; and perhaps, you may have some reason to resist and guard against it, as a temper to which you have a natural inclination. But be that as it will, thus much I think I may assure you of, that however such curiosity might be innocently indulged, yet, if upon a principle of humility, faith, and resignation to God, you deny it, you will be a much greater gainer by the exercise of these virtues in such an instance of self-denial, than you could possibly be, by any knowledge such curiosity would lead you into. You may perhaps think, that I have too often recourse to these

virtues, and seek for too much support from them: but, Madam, they are the highest virtues of the most enlightened souls; and as they lead the mind farthest into the truest deepest knowledge of the mysteries of God, so the best knowledge of the mysteries of God gives the greatest height and strength to these virtues. And when a Christian is at the height of all the perfection which the Spirit and the Grace of the Gospel leads to, though he has been with St. Paul in the third heavens, he will then be, more than ever, all humility, all faith, and all resignation to God; and will find all language too weak, to express that fulness and extent in which he desires to practise these virtues. As to the matter proposed, it cannot well be looked upon as a harmless probability; because the tenor of Scripture, both as obvious to common-sense, and as interpreted by the constant general belief of the church, is contrary to it; and, therefore, till it shall please God to give some new revelation of this matter, and show its consistency with the Divine Revelation already made, there seems to be no room for an innocent reception of it. As to the relief which is sought for in such discoveries, humility, faith, and resignation, make it needless, and give the mind a comfort and rest in God, which cannot be equalled by any such speculative light. For my own part, this one saying, 'Shall not the judge 'of all the world do right?' is more to me, is a stronger support to my mind, and a better guard against all anxiety, than the deepest discoveries that the most speculative inquisitive minds could help me to. With this one assurance of the infinitely infinite Goodness of God, I resign up myself, my friends, relations, men, and angels, to the adorable and yet incomprehensible disposal of His Wisdom; content and happy with this thought, that myself and all creatures will not only be treated with a goodness and benevolence like mine, but with a goodness so exceedingly superior to it, as no thought can comprehend or language describe.

I do not intend to lessen that tenderness of affection for your brother, which both nature and piety direct us to bear towards our nearest relations: but it must be considered, that there is hardly anything, though ever so good in itself, but may and will become a snare and temptation to us, unless conducted by the principles of piety, and by some higher light than that of nature. The Jews were under the same obligations, both from nature and piety, to love their relations, as we are; but the law of God stood thus with them: 'If thy brother the son of thy mother, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods; thou shall not consent unto him, neither

‘ shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare him, neither shalt thou conceal him. Thine hand shall be the first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hands of all the people ; and thou shalt stone him with stones that he die,’ Deut. xiii. 6, &c. Now if the Jew had been too full of tenderness for his nearest relation, to comply with this law of God, then that affection, which is so just and pious under certain limits, had become a snare and temptation to him, and made him prefer the love of an idolatrous fellow-creature, to the love and honour and glory of his infinitely adorable Creator : he had then been in the state of those, of whom our Saviour saith, ‘ He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.’ It is matter of duty to love all people as ourselves, to show the same affection and good wishes towards them, that you do towards your brother ; and if we want that fulness of affection for them which we show to our relations, it is owing to the infirmity of our nature, and to some degrees of that self-love which unites us most strongly to those whom we consider as parts of ourselves. When the people said unto our blessed Lord, ‘ Thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee ; he looked upon them that sat round him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren ! for whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, my sister, and mother,’ Mark iii. Now our blessed Lord is, in this, as strictly to be considered as our example, as when he says, ‘ Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart ;’ and that spirit by which he was governed, with regard to the relations of flesh and blood, and those which became his kindred by their love and obedience to God, is to be the spirit of those who desire to ‘ walk as he walked.’ And, indeed, the thing considered in itself, without the authority of this infallible example, is highly agreeable and obvious to common reason : for if our relation to God, be our greatest and most important relation ; if it is such a relation, as justly demands all the love, honour, and adoration, that our whole heart and mind and spirit is able to offer ; must not all those creatures be justly considered as nearest and dearest to us, who are most full of love and duty, honour and adoration, of this our common Sovereign Lord and Father ? And if nothing but this can be right in heaven, how can anything contrary to this be right on earth ? The apostle saith, ‘ None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself ; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord : for to this end Christ both died and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the living and the dead,’ Rom. xiv. But now, Madam, if neither you nor I are to be considered as our own, that are to act for ourselves, or to live to

ourselves, but as creatures that are wholly devoted to the love, and honour, and glory of God ; much less are we to live so to any of our fellow-creatures ; or become so much theirs, that we cannot find our peace in God, any satisfaction in his Goodness, or continue our love and service to him, unless such relations or friends join with us. As all our virtues are nothing worth, but as they are acts of love, obedience, and conformity to the Will of God ; so our love to our relations is no virtue of any worth, but as it is under the direction of the same pious spirit. As God is not the object of our love and adoration because we have such relations, but because he is what he is, the sole adorable Lord of all beings ; and as he is equally adorable by us, notwithstanding there are wicked angels and wicked men in the world ; so he is not less the object of our love and adoration, because some that are nearly related to us join with those that have wickedly departed from their love and obedience to him. It is a happiness of constitution to have our nature assist us in those affections, which we owe to our fellow-creatures and relations ; and this seems to be the happiness of your constitution, which gives great strength to this kind of affections. But then this happiness of constitution has, like other things that are natural to us, the weakness of our nature ; and so easily becomes a rock of danger to us, unless we give up ourselves to the directions and assistances of Grace. If you ask Grace and Religion, why you should be more affected with the state of a person that is born of the same parents with you, than with the state of another that has only the same first parents with you, it will not be easy to find an answer. You will there see, that the reasons of flesh and blood, and the principles of kindred, plead as justly for an equal compassion and concern for all that have the same nature, and the same first parents with you, as for those that are related to you by your last parents. And though natural instinct, increased by the familiarity of domestic friendships, fixes our strongest affections on those that received their first breath and nourishment where we received ours ; and though this instinct, thus formed and strengthened, has many good ends in this state of human life, as helping us to that assistance from our relations which we stand in need of ; yet when we examine things to the bottom, and look into the reasons of kindred affections by the light of Grace and Piety, we shall find, that all mankind, as creatures of the same nature, and as children of the same first parents, are, upon the principles of flesh and blood, and kindred affections, all justly entitled to the same affection and compassion from us. And it is on this ground, that the Scripture calls us to an universal charity ; to consider, not our nearest

relations, but all mankind, as 'our brethren, whom we are to 'love as ourselves.' But when we take a step further, and consider mankind in a still higher and better view, not as of the same nature, and descended all from one and the same parent, but as creatures made in the Image of God, as the offspring of the Deity, who are blessed with a nature that represents, and with faculties to love, adore, and rejoice in, the infinite riches and perfections of this adorable Creator and Father of all beings and all worlds; then we shall find, that our love to the creatures, whether born with us or before us, whether above us or below us, whether in heaven or in earth, must be more or less in proportion as God has more or less of theirs. For as, in this consideration of God and the creatures, God is All in All, the beginning and the end, the measure and motive of every duty that can be rendered to him; as we are to consider ourselves, as so many beings issued from him, living in and by his Spirit, in union with the Holy Trinity, members of a holy society of which God is the life, the light, the happiness and perfection; so here, we are to have no will but in the Will of God, no desire but in conformity and union with his Desire, nor any love but what flows from his Love and is the effect of it. This state of holy union and society with God, is thus prayed for in those mysterious words of our blessed Lord, 'That they all may be one, 'as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may 'be one in us, I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be 'made perfect in one.' It was a sense of this high spiritual union with God in Christ, that made the apostle say, 'Henceforth know we no man after the flesh.' Not as if those, who were thus full of 'a life hid with Christ in God,' had lost all affection and concern for their fellow-creatures, or relations in the flesh; on the contrary, they are fuller of this affection and love than ever: but it is, because they now begin to love with a better spirit, and with a better light, as Christ himself loved mankind; they now act upon a new principle, as servants of God, who do nothing but upon a principle of love and obedience to him, to whom all actions of the spiritual rational world are to be wholly directed. They love all, because all are in the Image of God their Father and Creator: they forget the distinctions of friends and enemies, strangers and domestics, relations and countrymen; and as they love all in God and for God, so they love none more or less, but as the pure and perfect Love of God requires it of them. Now, as true Love, enlightened and governed by Grace and the Spirit of God, loves all things and persons in God, and for God, and God more than all things; so it allows of no love, but that which is in some degree an effect

or exercise of the Love of God ; and so is always ready to submit to that which cannot be disapproved, without disapproving something that God either does or permits. A Christian full of this Spirit of Love, if he had as many lives as he has brethren in the world, would freely lay them down for the salvation of his brethren : but as it is an inexpressible height of the Love of God, and not any instinct of nature or human love, that would make him be thus a sacrifice ; so the same height of the Love of God keeps him from the least thought of renouncing God, because the salvation of mankind does not proceed according to his wishes. The more he sees the increase of that part of his brethren and fellow-creatures, that by sin and ingratitude depart from God, and enter themselves amongst those that rebel against him ; the more he is inflamed with a love and desire of living in a more exemplary manner, and higher degree, to the glory and honour of God.

This, Madam, is the spirit and temper you are to have recourse to ; and I make no doubt, but the piety of your heart, and those degrees of holiness to which you have already attained, will by the Grace of God enable you to find your peace and rest in it. How little is it you owe to your brother, or even to your parents, in comparison of that which you owe to God ! so much good as you have in them, is only so much received from God through their hands : there being nothing to give you any affection for any creature, but as it has so much of the Goodness of God in it : it can be nothing in itself, nor anything to you, but as it has so much good derived from God. How unreasonable is it, therefore, to let the love of any creature, or our concern for it, stop the current of our heart and affections to our Infinitely Lovely and Adorable Creator ! since we can have no reason for loving any creature, but because it represents so much of our Creator ; nor any foundation for delighting in it, but for something of God that we see in it, or receive from God by it. So that, whilst there is anything lovely or the least desirable in any creature, we can never want a reason or motive to believe God to be the only object of our love and adoration ; and that all other things are only to be loved in him, and for him, and as related to him. Were you of the same nature and the same birth with some fallen Cherubim, how unreasonable would it be, to let your love for a fallen brother, though of so high a nature, withdraw your zeal, and devotion, and obedience, from God ? For look at the height of their nature, and it is only a faint image of something infinitely more high in God ; look at all that is near and dear in such a relation, and it is but a poor shadow of that infinitely nearer and dearer relation between God and

you, 'in whom you live, and move, and have your being.' And if it was hard to nature, to lay aside the love of so high a brother; must it not be much harder to nature, to lay aside the love of so much higher a Father and Creator? Never, therefore, fancy, that infidelity or distraction must be your lot, whatever you should live to see, though it should be the departure of all your friends from a belief in God: but reject every such thought with as much abhorrence, as you would the worst actions. If it comes upon you unawares, despise and stifle it; and look upon it only as a vain threat from him, who has no power over you, whilst you seek to God for protection; and let it have no other effect upon you, but that of exciting you to more frequent acts of faith and trust in and resignation to God. When, therefore, difficult questions or objections about the Providence of God, are either suggested to you by the activity of your own mind, or from other people; you must look upon it to be as right and just to silence and confute such suggestions by humility, faith, and resignation to God, as it is right to throw water upon a fire that ought to be quenched, or to use any medicine proper to any distemper. And as this is our strength, so it is always at hand, and nothing can take it from us. Every disorder, calamity, or temptation of life, whether within or without us, only helps us to so many occasions of being more eminent in these virtues, and of finding our relief and strength in them. It is always in your power, to express to God your want of these virtues, and your earnest desire to practise them in the most perfect manner, and to find your strength and protection in them; and so long as you do so, you will put yourself into a condition to say, with the apostle, 'When I am weak, then am I strong.'

I am,

Madam,

Your sincere friend,

WILLIAM LAW.

Letter III.

Madam,

I SHALL begin with the latter part of your letter, where you write thus: 'You seem, Sir, to think, that I love my brother too well. It is very true, that I love him extremely; and I think my affection for him must continue, so long as I do in this world. I do not pretend any virtue in it; it seems to be rather necessity. I do not know that it is in my power to love him less; and I think it would be barbarous in me to desire it, only because he stands in greater need of it. He was not mine by choice: had he been so, and I had voluntarily fixed my affections to such a degree upon him, I should have thought, that I had sufficiently read my crime or my folly in my punishment. But God and nature gave him a right and share in my affections, without my own seeking; and if it should now, by accident or my fault, exceed a common share, it may surely be the more excusable.' Again, 'Since then my too well-grounded fear and apprehensions tell me, that it is more than probable, that the so much dreaded hour may overtake me; I think I ought to endeavour to expect that, which I truly think far worse than death; that which will render me a trouble to my Friends, and a useless burthen to the world. I cannot see how it is possible, humanly speaking (and miracles I am sure I have no reason to expect) for me to keep my senses, if it should please God to take him hence before me: I should be very apt to suspect my own sincerity, and to believe there must be some hidden reserves of infidelity in my heart, if I could. Distraction, surely, Sir, cannot be called a sin; nor are we, I suppose, to look upon those many dismal spectacles of that kind, which the world presents us with, as so many criminals; at least, not peculiarly such; not so, upon that very account. If, therefore, I make this greatest of afflictions my ready choice, rather than harbour the least thought of wilfully departing from my God; and endeavour to make the best use I can of the present time allowed me; I think that is all that is in my power to do.'

In your first papers, you seemed to want to be of the church of Rome, that you might be delivered from the anxiety and danger of thinking and reasoning for yourself in matters of religion; and that you might have a sufficient authority, to which you might absolutely resign up yourself. Now, Madam,

if it was in your power to give up the anxiety and private suggestions of your own judgment, as soon as you were in a church that claimed such an authority over you; why do you indulge yourself in such expostulations, as the present? You will, perhaps, say, that you have as yet found no such authority; and, therefore, are left to the reflections of your own mind. But I must take leave to tell you, that your present expostulations are not for want of a proper authority to resign yourself unto; they are determined by an authority much greater in itself, and more certainly made known to you, than any church authority can possibly be: for is there anything more certain, or more undisputed in religion, than this, that an humble submission and constant resignation of yourself, in every circumstance of your life, is a duty expressly required and determined by God's Providence and Authority over you? Can any church make any article of faith, or rule of practice, more known to you than this is? If, therefore, you can lay aside all reasoning and disputing in a church, that required your submission to her authority; if you could so submissively and dutifully resign up yourself to an implicit faith in her determinations; if you wanted such a church, that you might be delivered from the uncertainty and weakness of your own reasonings; pray be so consistent with and kind to yourself, as to acquiesce in a determination made for you by the Greatest of all Authorities. You have all the infallibility in the present case, that can possibly be imagined: if angels were sent from heaven to assure you, that you ought always to be in a state of humility, of resignation and gratitude to God, in everything that happens to you; you could not be more assured than you are at present, that God demands this resignation from you. Is it not, therefore, a great mistake in you, to be so anxious in search of a church, to which you might resign up all your reasonings and reflections; and yet stand by your own reason, indulge yourself in all kinds of anxious reflections, where you know that the authority of God is so full and express for your submission and resignation to him? You somewhere mention your apprehension of the Bishop of Rome's claim to your obedience; and seem frightened at the very possibility of his claim being just. But pray, Madam, why is not this same tenderness of mind awakened in the present case? You have no doubt about God's claim to your resignation and gratitude to him; there is nothing to make this doubtful to you; reason, scripture, all churches, how contrary to one another in other matters, agree in determining this matter for you. And shall the suspicion of a duty to the Pope, have more effect upon your mind, than the certainty of one of the greatest duties that you owe to God? Deal faith-

fully, therefore, with your own heart ; try it to the truth ; make it show itself plainly and openly to you : if it has this tenderness about the Divine Pleasure ; if it would so fain be right in matters of church obedience, and is so fearful of falling short of its duty in that respect ; ask it, why it is so taken up only with one sort of duties ? why it is so tender and fearful of offending in matters where it has only suspicion to proceed upon, and yet so unaffected with the greatest of all duties to God, and in a case that admits of no doubt ? why it is so desirous of finding some new means of pleasing God, that it only suspects to be wanting ; and yet so regardless of that means of pleasing God, which is always at hand, always required, and needs no inquiring after ? Offer to God an humble resignation, a constant gratitude of heart, at all times, and on all occasions ; commit yourself to his Providence by an implicit faith, loving and adoring him in all things, and for all things ; and then you are performing a certain duty ; you are resigning yourself up to a certain and undeniably just authority ; you are offering an acceptable sacrifice unto God, and you are worshipping him on earth as he is worshipped in heaven. Whilst you are in this state of heart, empty of all self-seeking and self-reflection ; full of an implicit faith in God, and of resignation and gratitude to him, in all things, and for all things ; making everything, however dark and inexplicable to your own reason, a fresh occasion of adoring his Goodness, and resigning yourself unto it ; whilst you are in this state of heart, you are in the best of churches ; and by thus giving all to God, you will receive all from him. All the uneasiness and imperfection of your past and present state of life, seems to be owing to your want of this turn of mind. A restless, inquisitive, self-seeking temper, by which you have been prompted to seek for your own ease and happiness, by accounting to yourself, from your own reason, for everything in your own state, the state of religion, and the state of other people ; seems to me to have been plainly the rock on which you have constantly split. Religion was a comfort to you, so long as it offered no difficulties to your mind, or brought nothing to your view, but what you could account for from your own way of thinking : but as soon as anything appeared in your own state, or your reflections upon religion in general, that you could not explain or account for from yourself, or by reasons of your own, immediately you resigned yourself up to discontent, and melancholy views of the Providence and Goodness of God.

‘ Fourteen or fifteen years ago, at the reading of certain ‘ books,’ you say of yourself, ‘ I was in the greatest confusion ; a ‘ deep and fixed melancholy seized me. I thought I saw the

'greatest necessity and impossibility together, in what they recommended: I began to believe every the most innocent thought and word, and the most necessary trifling action, to be a crime, which kept me in continual terror night and day.' Here it is, that this restless, inquisitive, self-seeking temper, betrayed you into error. Those books had their right effect upon your mind; they filled you with a true light; they showed you the true extent of your duty, and your want of strength to fulfil it; they awakened you into a lively sense of the misery and danger of your condition. Thus far all was right; and God had mercifully done that for you by means of those books, which he did for Job, when he said thus of himself: 'God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me; therefore am I troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him.' And again, 'When I say my bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me with visions.' Now, as Job was carried to greater heights of piety by these impressions, so might you have had the same effect from the impressions you received from those books. But it was that restless, inquisitive, self-seeking temper, that drew contrary effects from these impressions; by this temper, you were driven to seek for satisfaction from yourself, from your own reasoning and reflections about your own state. If you could have seen and fully comprehended, with your own reason and senses, how you could have had all that perfection in every part of your life, which those books pointed at, then you could have been easy; that is, if you could have had satisfaction from yourself, then you would have been satisfied. This is the reason why I call this inquisitive, a self-seeking temper. But because you were not to have this matter satisfied, by what you could see with your own eyes, or comprehend with your own reason; because you were to see the extent of your duty, without seeing how you could in every respect perform it; and there was nothing left for you, but a total, implicit, absolute resignation of yourself to the incomprehensible depths of Divine Mercy and Power over you; because you were thus to come out of yourself, lose all self-support, have nothing of your own to rest upon, and be wholly left to what God, in ways above your comprehension, would please to do for you; therefore, you gave up yourself to melancholy: that is, you grew displeased and impatient against God, because you were not sufficient for yourself. But if, when those books had brought you to this point, and shown you such perfection in your duty, and such imperfection in yourself, you had then absolutely resigned yourself up to God, by an humble, implicit, unlimited faith in his incompre-

hensible Power and Goodness over you ; if you had then broken forth into the love and adoration of him for those incomprehensible depths of Mercy in Christ Jesus, which direct us to perfection, and yet save us though imperfect ; which propose to our imitation the love and obedience of angels, and yet accept of the poor endeavours of fallen men ; if you had thus taken hold of faith, you would then no more have felt the want of your own poor reason to support you, than Peter felt the want of his own strength when he ventured to walk upon the water to his Lord and Master. A true implicit faith, and an unlimited resignation of yourself to God, will make you rejoice in books that carry your duty to the greatest height ; you will be glad to see, that all is due to God, that everything is to be done for him from a principle of love and devotion to him ; and yet, at the same time, make you content to be without any security from yourself, entirely dependent upon a dispensation of Divine Mercy, not to be measured by our poor conceptions, but embraced and adored by an humble and implicit faith. The best state of heart that you can be put into, is to have the highest sense of the perfection of your duty to God ; to believe that all your thoughts, words, and actions, are to be consecrated to his honour and glory ; to look upon it as your duty, to do his will on earth, as angels do it in heaven ; and, at the same time, to look upon yourself as so far sunk into the depths of corruption and impurity, that everything you can think, or say, or do, of yourself, is full of weakness and imperfection, unworthy of his acceptance, and far short of that duty which you owe to him. Now this state of mind, so just and good in itself, and so desirable for the effects that might justly be expected from it, this state of mind cast you into melancholy and discontent ; and yet nothing more was required of you to make it a state of peace and consolation in God, than a hearty resignation of yourself to God, to be saved by him in a way of mercy above your own sight and comprehension. And if, after all, you could not have prevented that melancholy which then seized you ; had you then kept close to resignation, and humbly committed yourself to God, in some form of words like the following, all had been safe and well in the midst of melancholy : ‘ O my God ! if it be thy good pleasure to leave me thus to myself, to want the light of thy countenance, to be devoured by dark and gloomy thoughts, I submit ; ‘ ‘ Thy will, not mine, be done ! ’ I adore thy Providence ; I ‘ heartily resign myself up to it, to be everything, to do every ‘ thing, to suffer everything, that can make me most acceptable ‘ unto thee. Let my vain reason and restless imagination ‘ torment me as long as thou permittest ; I humbly accept of

'this cross from thy hands, as a just punishment of my sins. I am unworthy to choose anything for myself; I submit to thy choice, whether in light or darkness, in sickness or health, in desolation of spirit or joy of heart: I desire and resolve, by thy grace, equally to adore thy infinite goodness; I ask nothing of thee, but that, in this, and all other states of my life, I may conform to thy Holy Will; and humbly resign myself up, by a boundless faith, to thy Adorable Providence over me.'

This spirit of resignation to God, which is the truest Spirit of Religion, would then, will now, and at all times, be your sufficient support on all occasions; it will certainly either remove your evil, or make it no evil to you to be under it. This spirit of resignation will secure you from being frightened at any heights of piety, that any books lay before you; and the higher you see your duty raised, the more you will be incited to adore the wonderful Goodness of God, who has appointed a means of redeeming such imperfect creatures, and receiving us, with so many defects in our duty, to a state of perfection and glory in another life.

As to the books you cast aside, I have no intention to recommend any of them to your perusal again, but 'Kempis,* of the 'Imitation of Christ.' Next to the Scriptures, it is, I think, the best devotional book that I know of. If you had a mind to confine yourself to Scripture, I have no objection to it; for no books are of any value, but so far as they are of the same spirit with the Holy Scriptures. Our Blessed Saviour's discourses are a fund of instruction, never to be exhausted; and when they once get possession of the heart, it will not want much other instruction. But as John the Baptist was 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness, preparing disciples for Christ, and by his water-baptism fitting them to be baptized by the Holy Ghost;' so many human writers are still in some degree in John the Baptist's place, crying in the wilderness, exhorting and preparing mankind to become the true disciples of Jesus Christ. With this spirit of faith and resignation, which I have here recommended, a little reading will do; or if more is delighted in and sought after, it is no ill temper. You seem to be affected with my 'Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life.' I pray God you may have benefit by it; and desire you will think the chapter upon resignation to the Will of God, deserves most of your attention. For this implicit faith and total resignation of ourselves to the adorable Providence of God, willing nothing but what he wills, and because he wills it; it is a state of mind,

* Thomas à Kempis, 'Imitation of Christ.'

whose excellency I cannot represent to you ; it covers all our imperfections, sanctifies all our endeavours, makes us holy without any holiness of our own, makes our weakness as serviceable to us as our strength, and renders us acceptable to God at the same time that we do nothing worthy of him. Let me, therefore, intreat you to put on this temper ; to lay hold of it with all your might ; to make everything you hear, or see, or find, in yourself, the world, religion, or Providence, so many fresh occasions, of committing yourself to God by a faith without any bounds, a resignation without any reserve.

You will, perhaps, say, that ' you see the piety and excellency ' of this temper ; but as you cannot remove or prevent your ' doubts and discontents, so you cannot practise this faith and ' resignation.' It is answered, either these doubt or discontents are voluntary, or they are not ; if they are voluntary, such as you strive to raise and support in your mind by your own reasoning and reflections ; then, indeed, they are inconsistent with the faith and resignation here recommended : but if, through the weakness of your nature, they only obtrude themselves upon your mind, as any other involuntary thoughts ; if you are sorry to find them, turn from them with dislike, and do all you can to suppress them, by not suffering your mind to attend to them, or hear their reasons ; then, these involuntary doubts and discontents are so far from being a hindrance of your faith and resignation, that they become certain occasions of giving them a greater perfection. Who can suppose, that Abraham had no inward struggles, no suggestions offered to his mind from reason, nature, instinct, and paternal affection, when he was preparing Isaac for sacrifice ? but his faith and resignation were great and exalted ; not because he could prevent or entirely silence the objections of reason, nature, and instinct ; but because, in the midst of all these objections, he acted as if there had been none ; and by faith and resignation conformed to the Divine Command with the same exactness, as if there had been no contradiction to reason, nature, and instinct in it. In a word, do but love and desire this faith, and then you are in the right way to have it ; dislike every thing that opposes it, and then you live in the exercise of it ; for no one wants this faith, but he that wants the love and desire of it, and deliberately sets himself against it. To return to your case.

As the above-mentioned restless, inquisitive, self-seeking temper (for so it must be called) plunged you then into melancholy, so the effects and workings of the same temper have shown themselves in the succeeding parts of your life. The papers I have received from you, sufficiently show me, into how

many fruitless searches, and uneasy reflections, this temper has led you. At last, it filled you with scruples about the means of salvation in that church of which you were a member. You thought it was the piety of your heart, and a desire of pleasing God, that raised and encouraged this scruple; and so it was; but then it was a piety governed by an inquisitive, self-seeking temper. As this temper had before led you into melancholy, through the apprehension of the impossibility of doing your duty; and as that melancholy proceeded from hence, because you could not see with your own eyes, and comprehend with your own reason, how such duty could be performed; so, under the conduct of the same temper, your uneasiness about church communion seized upon you, because, in the divisions of Christianity, there is not a plain visible evidence and security sufficient to satisfy the demands of this temper, and because the church of which you are a member, does not claim that infallibility, in which it could so contentedly repose itself. And as there was much talk of authority, infallibility, certainty and security of salvation, in the church of Rome; so your desire after that church was much awakened; and this desire, no doubt, was strengthened by the piety of your own mind, disposing you to be of a church so certainly acceptable to God. But then this self-seeking temper had a great share in it. You wanted this security, that this temper might have its self-satisfaction; that your reason and senses might be satisfied in their own way; that, instead of being left to an implicit faith, hope, and confidence in the Goodness of God, you might be, as it were, in possession of visible deeds, bonds, and securities, of your being in a right way. There are, without all doubt, great differences in churches considered as a means of arriving at Christian Holiness; some of them are so merely human and of man's contrivance, as to make it necessary to come out of them. The inquiry, therefore, after a true Christian church, is a rational inquiry; and, without all doubt, good people, by the Spirit of God, have been led out of one communion into another. But the case in which you and I are concerned, relates to the contest between us and the church of Rome; and the way for us to find the true church in this dispute, is, I think, by such humility and resignation of heart to God, as is expressed in the following words: 'My adorable God and Creator! thy Holy Church, which should be one pious society united in the love and adoration of thee, is, by the wickedness of mankind, divided into various communions, hating, condemning, and endeavouring to destroy one another. I made none of these divisions, nor am I a defender of them. I wish everything removed out

‘of every communion, that hinders the Common Unity. As I
‘made no division, so I have made no choice of any divided
‘part, upon my own persuasion that it alone is thy True
‘Church: but as thy Good Providence, which I will always
‘adore, has without my choice educated me in one communion,
‘which according to my best judgment seems to be agreeable
‘in its fundamental doctrines and institutions to the Holy
‘Scriptures; so, I humbly and thankfully continue in it without
‘condemning or hating others, till by thy Good Providence
‘thou shalt afford me some light, that I yet have not. The
‘wranglings and disputings, not only of private men, but of
‘whole churches and nations, and their mutual accusations,
‘condemnations, and misrepresentations of one another, have so
‘confounded all things, that I have no ability to make a true
‘and just judgment of the matters between them. If I knew
‘that any of these communions was alone acceptable to thee
‘I would do or suffer anything to make myself a member of it:
‘for, my Good God, I desire nothing so much as to know and
‘love thee, and to worship thee in the most acceptable manner.
‘And as I humbly presume thou wouldst not suffer thy Church
‘to be thus universally divided, if no divided part could offer
‘any worship acceptable unto thee; as I have no knowledge of
‘what is absolutely the best in these divided parts, nor any
‘ability to put an end to them; so I fully trust in thy goodness,
‘that thou wilt not suffer these divisions to separate me from
‘thy Mercy in Christ Jesus; and that, if there be any better
‘means of serving thee than those I already enjoy, thou wilt,
‘according to thine Infinite Mercy, lead me to them.’ This
disposition of heart, which resolves itself into an humble resignation and confidence in the Goodness of God, is, I think, a better preparation and a more secure guide to the True Church, than the laborious perusal of all the volumes of controversy in the world. And if a person, who is truly of this disposition living wholly unto God with all his heart and spirit, worshipping and adoring him according to his best light, humbly trusting and praying for the continual guidance of his Holy Spirit, without that animosity, strife, pride, hatred, and self-confidence, which divides Christians one from another; if such a person should be in any want of any external means of salvation, it seems not improbable, that he would be favoured by God, as good Cornelius was, who had an angel sent to him to direct him to St. Peter. But to proceed.

The next trouble that you fell into, was occasioned by your brother’s unhappy state. Here that same inquisition, self-seeking temper, got greater power over you, and tormented you in a

greater degree, than it had done before ; and it is visible enough to me, that your greatest distress proceeded from the workings of this temper. As soon as this case falls before you, you begin to be distressed with it, chiefly because you cannot account for it. You look backwards and forwards, into the nature of Providence, the nature of Religion, the state of our church, the corruption of the world, the temper and constitution of your brother, and the manner of his education ; you give yourself up to a restless inquiry into all these things ; and because you cannot, by wandering into these labyrinths, account for your brother's state, therefore you return home wearied and fatigued, a burden to yourself, displeas'd with Providence, with the state of our church, and without any comfort in religion, and ready to wish there were none. This may show you, even to demonstration, that your distress proceeded from your being under the conduct of this temper, which had given you so much trouble on former occasions. Had you been dead to this temper, had you been at that time practis'd in an humble implicit faith, an unreasoning resignation of yourself to God, when this case happened to you, you would then have received it with a true Christian concern ; it would have pierc'd your heart, without hurting it ; you would have mourned for it with such a spirit, as our Saviour mourned over Jerusalem ; and your own piety would rather have been quicken'd into greater vigour, than abated by it. It may be justly supposed, that when the apostles found their Divine Master betray'd by one of their own family, a brother apostle, that their love, and zeal, and devotion to their Lord and Master, was quicken'd and inflam'd by it ; that they wanted to show some new tokens of their love, and to be more devoted to him, who had been so ungratefully betray'd by a brother of theirs. And your piety would certainly have taken this turn, you would have felt some new zeal towards God, you would have wanted to be devoted to him in some higher manner than you ever thought of before ; and the shame and sorrow for such an instance of ingratitude to God in your own family, would have awak'ned in you this new zeal : this would have happen'd to you, had you not been interrupted by the specious pretences of this inquisitive temper ; and, as it never could be indulg'd at any time, without prejudicing the best state of your heart, and taking it out of its true place or position in God, so it is not to be wonder'd at, that it should have its worst effects upon you, when you gave yourself up to it at a time of such affliction. For as your case wanted its proper relief ; as it could be reliev'd by nothing, but an application and conversion of your whole heart and spirit unto God, by new repeated acts of zeal, devotion,

faith and resignation, by new vows of love and duty, new oblations of your whole body and soul and spirit unto him; as this conversion and application of your heart to God, was the one sole relief that could possibly be found for you in the whole nature of things; so, your departure from it, to seek for relief in reflections upon providence, religion, predestination, the state of the church, the constitution and education of your brother, the foundation of his prejudices, the difficulties peculiar to his state, and the probability of others being as bad as he, had the same difficulties fallen in their way; your giving yourself up to these speculations, was not only departing from your proper relief, but creating to yourself as great a variety of torments as you could well do. For all these topics were only so many topics of disappointment and fatigue to your mind; and as it had left its proper resting-place in God, to wander in these labyrinths, so it was left, by God to prey upon itself, and feel all that tormenting emptiness which every soul must feel in such a wilderness of its own imaginations. But, Madam, God, though thus left, is still at hand: he 'stands at the door of your heart, and knocks for 'entrance;' and as soon as you open your heart for so blessed a guest, by an humble resignation to and faith in him, by new vows and oblations of love and obedience to him, with an infant simplicity embracing and resigning yourself up to his Adorable Providence; you will find yourself in the Arms of his Love, restored to that light, and peace, and support in him, which you have lately so much wanted.

To speak now to the affection which you plead for to your brother. The affections which are founded in nearness of blood, are very useful, helping infants, and young and old people, to that assistance from their kindred, which all stand in need of. But if these affections are not made as subordinate to the rules of Piety, as all other temporal things; if they are not considered as mere nothings, when they come into competition with our Duty to God; they become matter of as great sins, as any other unlawful affections; and the love of a relation may be as great an idolatry as the love of money. Speaking of your love to your brother, you say, 'I do not pretend to any virtue in it; it 'seems to be rather necessity.' But, Madam, if virtue is not at the bottom of this affection, if you cannot find it either caused or demanded by virtue, it demands your government of it. And your recourse to a necessity, is only the same plea that anyone may make for any affection of any kind, as soon as he perceives its strength in him. Again, you say, 'I do not know that it is 'in my power to love him less; and I think it would be barbarous in me to desire to do it, only because he seems to stand in

‘greater need of it.’ Here, again, you look upon yourself as having no power over this passion; as being something that is what it is, without your assistance; and yet, in the same breath, show that you do what you can to support it, are unwilling to part with it, and seek for reasons for its continuance: for you say, ‘You think it would be barbarous in you to desire to do it;’ that is, to abate this passion. Does not this show plainly, that this degree of passion is your choice and judgment; that it is supported by your reasoning and reflection; and that you avoid its abatement, as an instance of barbarity? How can you appeal to your want of power to do that, which you avoid out of choice? How can you know your power in any matter, unless it is made the subject of your prayer to God? or how can you be supposed to have prayed to God for that, which you take to be barbarous and inhuman? But what is this degree of love, that you are possessed of, and plead for? It is a degree of passion, that robs you of all peace and comfort in God, that hurries you from one precipice to another, and leaves you without any choice of anything, ‘but either infidelity or distraction;’ and the latter you choose as the lesser evil, and to avoid the ‘necessity of recurring to the other.’ And is this a degree of love, Madam, that it would be barbarous in you to desire to lessen? Would it be barbarous in you, to find God your support between these two precipices? would it be barbarous in you to desire, that the Knowledge and Love of God might have the full government of your heart, and give laws and rules to your love and regard for every fellow-creature? Is the Scripture defective in the doctrine of brotherly love, or that regard we ought to have for the salvation of one another? or is there anything in Scripture, either in doctrine or practice, that gives the least hint of, or makes the smallest approach to this degree of passion which you plead for? Is Adam to be condemned of barbarity, because he seems to have been in none of your straits, either of infidelity or distraction, when his two first sons, who were the only men in the world besides himself, were so taken from him, one murdered, and the other cursed and driven away as a vagabond from the presence of God? You appeal, indeed, to ‘St. Paul’s wishing himself accursed for his brethren,’ as an instance of a particular affection to his relations: but it is a flaming instance of a quite different affection. He calls them, ‘His brethren according to the flesh,’ only to show who they were of whom he was speaking: but the reason of his being so concerned for their conversion, is given in the next words, where he says, ‘Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law,

'and the service of God, and the promises, &c.' It was under this view of them, as a people thus related to God, and as thinking the honour of all God's former dispensations, and the credit of Christianity, depended much upon this people's receiving the Gospel; it was in this view of the sole glory of God, that he wished that this people, 'whose were the fathers,' who had thus been the Channels of all God's mercies and blessings to the world, might receive the Gospel, though it was to be granted on the condition of 'himself being made a curse for 'them.' St. Paul was in the very reverse of that state, in which you suppose him to be: he was so full of the honour and glory of God; God was so All in All to him; he was so out of himself, and all selfish reflections, so above the common instincts and tempers of flesh and blood, that he could look upon his own destruction as desirable, if the glory of God and the honour of his Providence, could be more raised and increased by it. Could a Seraph give you a higher proof of his being all Divine Love, and empty of all partial selfish affection? And yet you appeal to this seraphic instance of Divine Love, as a plea for a gross blind passion, that leads you out of God, destroys the piety of your heart, renders it dead and unaffected with the honour and glory of God, sinks you into flesh and blood and self-seeking reflections, and leaves you a prey either to infidelity or distraction. You argue for the continuance of your love, because your brother 'seems to stand in more need of it:' but, Madam, has he any need of this kind of love? or does this kind of love answer or assist any of his needs? Would he be left in a more helpless state, if you had the piety of an apostle, the devotion of a saint, and was all wrapt up in love and adoration of the Divine Being? Would he be deserted, unkindly treated, if his sister, and all his kindred, were thus attached to God, had such interest in heaven, and could send up such prayers for him as they can whose hearts are thus inflamed with Divine Love? 'Love God 'with your whole heart,' make him yours by an unlimited devotion and oblation of yourself to him, and then your brother will at least have one friend and advocate for him with God. Remember, that you owe him no love, but in God, and for God; and that you can do him no good, but by your example, and the total application of yourself to God; and then your love of him, thus expressed, will be a benefit both to him and yourself.

You say, 'You are satisfied, that, in the next life, all these 'partial regards will be perfectly done away, and that God will 'be All in All.' But, Madam, if it is barbarous to desire, that the Love of God should now moderate and govern the love of your brother; and that you should have no love for him, but

such as the Love of God requires of you; must not this be barbarity in the other life? And if this state of heart must take place, where 'God is All in All;' must it be barbarous in you, to endeavour to imitate this great perfection; to endeavour, as far as you can, by your prayers and desires, that 'God may be All 'in All' to you now; and that, to the utmost of your power, you may do his will on earth, with such a spirit as it is done in heaven? We are commanded to 'love God, in this life, with all 'our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our 'strength;' it is thus, that God is to be 'All in All to us' in this life: and he that is careful to bring his heart under the direction of this first and greatest commandment now, will find himself in the state of those, to whom God is to be 'All in All' for ever. Were you now in the same state of mind as when you put away those books, you might here again be cast into melancholy, at the sight of impossibilities; but I hope you now know how to avoid this rock, and to be contented to be all devoted and resigned to God, without seeing how you are to perform all that is expected of you. 'Love,' in the Scripture phrase, 'is as 'strong as death;' it is omnipotent, it is armed with the whole power of God; and as nothing is impossible with God, so nothing is impossible to those, that truly love, or truly desire to love him. To proceed.

You thus further contend for this degree of passion that possesses you: you say, 'If you could bear your brother's death 'without distraction, you should suspect your sincerity; and 'believe there were some secret lurkings of infidelity in your 'heart.' This is strangely excessive. For supposing God was so far 'All in All to you,' that you could find a sufficient relief in the love and adoration of him; would this just and pious acquiescence in God, give you reason to suspect some lurkings of infidelity in you? Are patience, love, resignation, a holy peace, acquiescence and satisfaction in God, become signs of infidelity? Are you forced to come out of this peace in God, to hang hovering between infidelity and distraction, that you may have in you some visible signs of your being a sincere believer in God? Will you suspect the Saints of infidelity, because they have not gone distracted at the death of impenitent sinners? will you suppose their piety to be insincere, or their hearts not right, because God was their continual centre and place of rest, from which nothing could move them? and yet you are afraid of this, as a sign of infidelity. While you thus think of it as an ill state of mind, how can you pray to God for it? and if you do not hope, and desire, and pray for it, must not your want of it be imputed to your own voluntary choice? You say, indeed,

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'You do not see how it is possible for you to avoid distraction, 'without a miracle from God.' But is this consistent with what is just now said, that you should suspect yourself of infidelity, if you could keep your senses? For can you be said to be doing all that is possible to procure this peace, when you declare, that if you had it, you should suspect yourself of infidelity? Can you look at it as a sign of infidelity, and yet be supposed doing all you possibly can to procure it to yourself? I hope I need say no more to show you the delusion of these reflections, and to persuade you to cast them from you with the utmost contempt and abhorrence. You cannot altogether prevent their sometimes presenting themselves to your mind: but you can turn your mind from them; you can despise them, refuse any attention to them, and make them an occasion of resigning yourself up to God; and then they are no hurt to you, and will by degrees be forced to leave you. You say, 'You cannot have 'this possession of your senses, without a miracle of God.' If it were really so, I would exhort you, Madam, for that very reason, to be the more confident of having it: for if you want that which God alone can give you in a particular way, which no other means can help you to, it is happy for you that your relief is lodged in so good hands; for he is too much a God of Love, to deny that which can only be had from himself. 'All 'things are possible to him that believeth.' Remember him that said, 'If ye had but faith as a grain of mustard seed,' &c. If, therefore, your state really wants a miracle, draw near to God by faith, and then that Scripture will certainly be fulfilled in you, 'By faith ye are saved.' No one can ever be in distress, that will give himself up to God. This I say, upon supposition that a miracle was wanting, or absolutely necessary. But you do not enough consider what you say, in declaring 'that nothing 'less than a miracle can preserve you.' For do you know, what degree of God's Grace and Assistance, is to be reckoned a miracle, and what is not? But if you do not know this (as you certainly do not) you strangely deceive yourself in declaring, that nothing less than his Miraculous Grace can preserve you, when you do not at all know what degrees of it you are to esteem miraculous, and what ordinary or common. It is enough for us to know, without this distinction of miraculous and ordinary, that all necessary degrees of Divine Grace and Assistance, however great, are always given to those that truly pray for them, in right dispositions of heart. Have you no reason to think, that you have hitherto been frequently assisted by extraordinary degrees of Divine Favour? Will you say, that nothing but common instances of God's assistance, has happened to you?

Can you think of no part of your life that has been blessed by a Particular Providence, that you ought never to forget? And though your life may show you instances of this kind, which you cannot help confessing; yet those that you know nothing of, which are only known to that Goodness from whence they flowed, may be more numerous, for aught you know, than those that you look upon as the ordinary and common blessings of Divine Providence. But if God has preserved you, guided you by visible and invisible means, as well when you knew it not, as when you knew it; if he has saved you from dangers that you never apprehended, blessed you with assistances that you could not contrive, nor knew how to seek for yourself; is it not great ingratitude, to distrust his Goodness in those instances, in which you can see your need of it? Has he blessed you so often without your own care, in things where you could not ask his assistance, because you did not see your wants; and do you think such Goodness will forsake you in your known wants, and when you humbly apply to it for help? Trample upon every thought of this kind, with disdain; and never think yourself destitute or in distress, because you have nothing but faith in God to rely upon, nothing to support you but an humble confidence in his extraordinary Goodness; for you may, with infinitely greater security, trust to that, than to all the visible human means that your reason and senses could contrive for you. When you see your help, and depend upon what can be made visible to you, your dependence may easily be disappointed; and that which you take to be your support, may have no support in it; but, when destitute of all visible supports, by an unbounded faith you depend upon God, you are secure from all disappointment. Read the power of faith, Heb. xi. Though all worlds, and all beings in all worlds, should set against you; though your own strength, compared to that of your enemies, should be but as a drop of water compared to the ocean; yet faith in God would 'make you more than conqueror.' Though, therefore, all means of continuing in your senses, were visibly removed from you; though every creature threatened you with it; though you had no more appearance of preserving them, than Abraham had of seeing his seed blessed in Isaac, when he was about to offer him in sacrifice; yet do but you, as Abraham did, commit yourself to God with his faith, and then you will come off with his success.

To come now to the last particular. You say, 'Distraction, surely, cannot be called a sin; nor are we to look upon all the dismal spectacles of that kind, as so many criminals on that account: if, therefore, I make this greatest of afflictions my

'ready choice, rather than harbour the least thought of wilfully 'departing from God, and endeavour to make the best use I can 'of the present time allowed me, I think that is all that is in my 'power to do.' Distraction may be considered as an unavoidable accident; and, as such, it has the nature of all other unavoidable evils, and is not to be looked upon as a state of sin, or that which renders a man a sinner, because he is in it. But when distraction is the effect of our disorderly passions, and owing to our indulgence of them; as distraction then finds us in a state of sin, and is the effect of it, so it may then be called a sinful state, because it continues us in that state of sin in which it found us, and from which it had its being. Though, therefore, distraction is a state that renders us not accountable for what we do in it, yet if we are accountable for those tempers that brought it upon us, our condition is not relieved by it; it is no refuge from evil, but only the sealing up our doom, and presents us before God in that state of sin and disorder in which it found us. If our heart had been in a right state towards God, full of those tempers which render us acceptable to him, when this accident came upon us; then, I conceive, we shall receive no harm from it. But if it was ill tempers, a disordered heart, a forgetfulness of God, a want of faith and trust in him, or an indulgence of irregular passions, that plunged us into it; it would be strange to suppose, that distraction, which is the effect of those sins, should free us from them. Distraction, when it is the effect of ill passions, and for want of right dispositions of heart towards God, differs only from those passions, as an imperfect state or habit differs from one that is more finished and complete of the same kind. Thus, would you know what that distraction is which arises from impatience and discontent; you need only consider what impatience and discontent are, in a more moderate and imperfect state: for if impatience and discontent, when they are short of distraction, are yet great sins; surely, when they proceed to and end in distraction, they are still greater: so that a distraction of that kind, is only those disorderly sinful tempers run out to their greatest length. You, therefore, strangely deceive yourself, Madam, when you talk of making 'that greatest of afflictions your 'choice,' because you take it not to be a sin in itself. For though it may, as I have said, be considered barely as an unavoidable accident, and so only in the nature of an external evil; yet, in this respect, or thus considered, it cannot be an object of your choice; because, as soon as you choose it, it ceases to be an accident, and becomes your sin. If you were ignorantly to sit under a sword, that should drop upon your head, and kill

you, you might then be said to die by an accident that brought no guilt upon you; but if it was your choice to sit under the sword, in expectation that it would certainly fall upon you and kill you, then you would not die by an accident, but by the sin of self-murder: so that a thing, in some supposed cases most innocent in itself, may, by being chosen, be made one of the greatest sins. How can you choose distraction, without choosing those tempers which must cause it? For as you cannot fall into this supposed distraction, so long as your mind is in a state of humility, meekness, and resignation to God, enjoying any comfort or satisfaction in him; so you cannot choose this distraction, without choosing the removal of those tempers that must necessarily prevent it. It is plain, therefore, that you did not at all apprehend what you said, when you talked of 'making this your choice,' and as a means of preserving you from sin; for you cannot choose it, without choosing those sinful tempers that must occasion it. You have no more reason to fear distraction, than I have; your danger is my danger, and my security is yours. When I consider my own weakness, how often my mind is affected and discomposed with trifles, I might justly apprehend, that, if I was left to myself, very common misfortunes might put me beside myself; but when I consider, that I have the Goodness of God to rely upon, and his Preservation of me to trust to, then I can look upon myself as under the Protection and Security, not of human probable means, but of Divine Never-failing Omnipotent Goodness. You are, therefore, no more to prepare yourself for distraction, than for infidelity; nor to look upon one, with any more approbation than the other: it is a crime to fear it, and a much greater to approve of it. It is a strange deception in you, to fancy that you 'choose distraction, to avoid the danger of infidelity:' it is, as if you should choose to renounce your faith in God, for fear of falling into infidelity some time or other. For, what is infidelity, but a departing from that love, faith, acquiescence and satisfaction in God, which Religion supposes? And how can you choose this supposed distraction, without choosing to be thus departed from God, emptied of those tempers which religion supposes? A distraction, therefore, of this kind, does not avoid infidelity, but only lays hold of it in a different way. Though, therefore, there may be much difference between infidelity and distraction, considered in themselves, and in some supposed cases; yet this difference is destroyed, and they are made much the same, when they proceed from the same cause. If the same discontent drives me to distraction, which leads another into infidelity, the difference between us is but small; because we agree in that

which is our common guilt, namely, that neither of us can find any comfort in God. And as we have both departed from God upon the same account, because his Providence is not enough according to our reason and senses, because he does not comfort us in a way that these demand; as we have both departed from God on these same motives, so it matters not much that we are gone different ways. Give the infidel that self-satisfaction in God, which his reason, his senses, his natural tempers and instincts demand, and then you save him from his infidelity: give the impatient, distrustful, unresigned man, that self-satisfaction in God, which his reason, his senses, his temper and natural instincts demand, and then he will have no design of hiding himself, in distraction, from his own thoughts. A distraction, therefore, of this kind, that is the effect of impatience, distrust, and dissatisfaction in God, can no more be innocently made the object of our choice, than we can innocently choose infidelity; because it is formed of, and proceeds from infidelity; it has the whole nature of infidelity; and we cannot choose it, without choosing those tempers which constitute infidelity. To make this supposed distraction look something innocent to you, you propose 'to make the best use of the intermediate time.' But, Madam, is not this as absurd, as to propose to be sober and virtuous only for a certain time? And if you set bounds to your piety, and limit it to a certain time, do you not thereby destroy it? Suppose you should fancy, that you cannot serve God in this intermediate time; would not such a fancy be owing to your own unreasonable imagination? would you have anything to impute it to, but your own distrust of God, and want of application to him? If you intend to make a right use of the present time, by a dependence upon your own strength, your intention would be in vain. And if you intend to live unto God all your life, by a continual dependence upon his continual assistance, is not such an intention as well grounded, and as much within your power, as if you extended it only to one day, or one hour? For is not 'God every day the same,' and full of the same Power and Goodness? And can you think, that, in a partial, poor intention, of a goodness limited to a certain time, God will have the goodness to enable you to perform it; and that, in a better intention of being always devoted to God in all events, God will fail to assist you? Do you think, if you give God only a part of your heart, upon certain terms, and in certain events, that you may expect God's Grace for your present assistance? but if you give him your whole heart, to be all his, at all times, without any regard to any trials that may come upon you, can you think that such

devotion to God will leave you without any hopes of his future assistance? Now, Madam, if this be unreasonable and extravagant, as most certainly it is, then you may see reason to take up a better proposal, than that of acquiescing in the Love and Service of God only for a certain time. God gives his Grace and Assistance, only because we want it; and yet you strangely suppose, that, when your wants shall be greatest, you shall be most of all forsaken by God. Have you any proof of God's dealing thus with you hitherto? Have not all your common and uncommon wants, had an Assistance from God proportioned to them? And is it not strange ingratitude and a departure from every principle of Piety, distrustfully to surmise such a defect in the Goodness of God, and such a want of his Assistance, as is contrary to all that the Scripture teaches you of God, and contrary to all the experience of your whole life? You ought to fear everything without God's Assistance, and to fear nothing with it. Wants and dangers, the greater they are, are only so many greater reasons for an entire confidence and faith in God. In little things, we cannot be sure of God's particular direction of them; but, in fiery trials, where our own strength is as nothing, there it is, that we may look up to God with firm confidence, and have the utmost assurance that our application to him will not be in vain. If to distrust God's Providence for our ordinary sustenance, be a sin; surely, it is a greater, to distrust his preserving us in our senses. 'Ye 'are of more value,' saith our Blessed Saviour, 'than many 'sparrows;' and thence he concludes God's greater care for us. Our senses are of more value than food and raiment; may we not, thence, infer God's greater care to preserve them? and yet, forgetting this good Providence, you imagine, that you must inevitably lose your senses, because you do not know how you shall be able to keep them by your own strength, or without God's Extraordinary Assistance. Would a person, in any other case, be excusable for this despair, because he could see nothing but God's Extraordinary Goodness to depend upon? No, most surely! for the reason why despair is always so criminal, is because God's Extraordinary Goodness is always at hand, is the best and greatest of all supports, and the most to be depended upon. If, therefore, you had said, 'I shall then want God's 'Extraordinary Assistance to preserve my senses, and, therefore, 'by prayer to him, and faith in him, humbly and thankfully 'depend upon having all that I shall want; for, as he cannot 'give me a scorpion when I want a fish, nor a stone when I want 'bread; so, I have the utmost satisfaction and assurance in his 'Goodness, that he will not give me only his Ordinary Assistance,

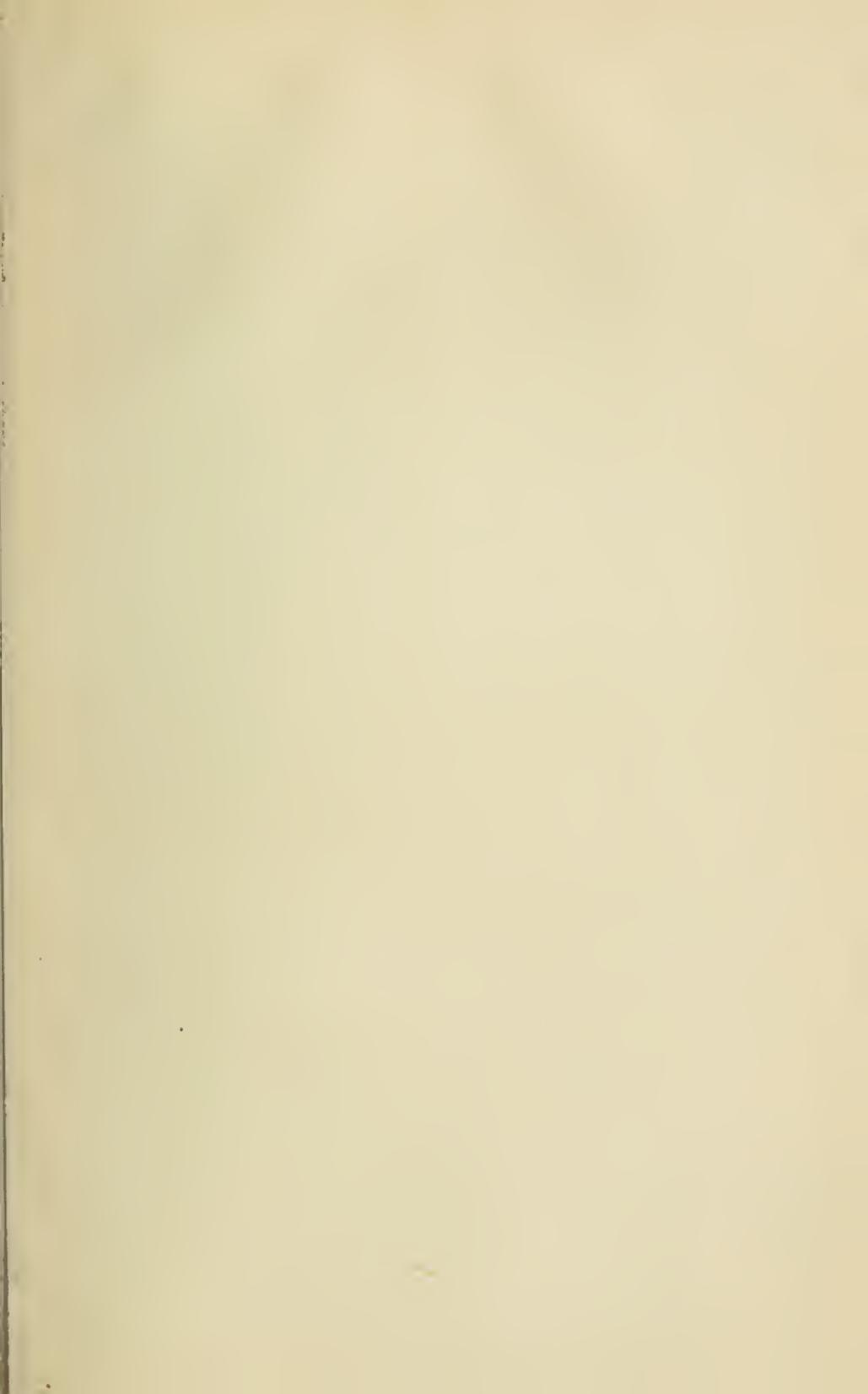
'when my case wants that which is Extraordinary'—had you said thus, you had made a just and pious conclusion; and found a rock to build your peace upon, against which the gates of hell could not prevail. Bury, therefore, all your reasonings and speculations, all your doubts and distrusts, in such resignation, such faith and confidence in the Love and Goodness of God, as this is; and then all trials and temptations will but increase your safety, and give you a more confirmed Repose in God. I am, Madam, with hearty prayers to God for you and your relations,

Your sincere friend and servant,

WILLIAM LAW.

May 29, 1732.

FINIS.



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