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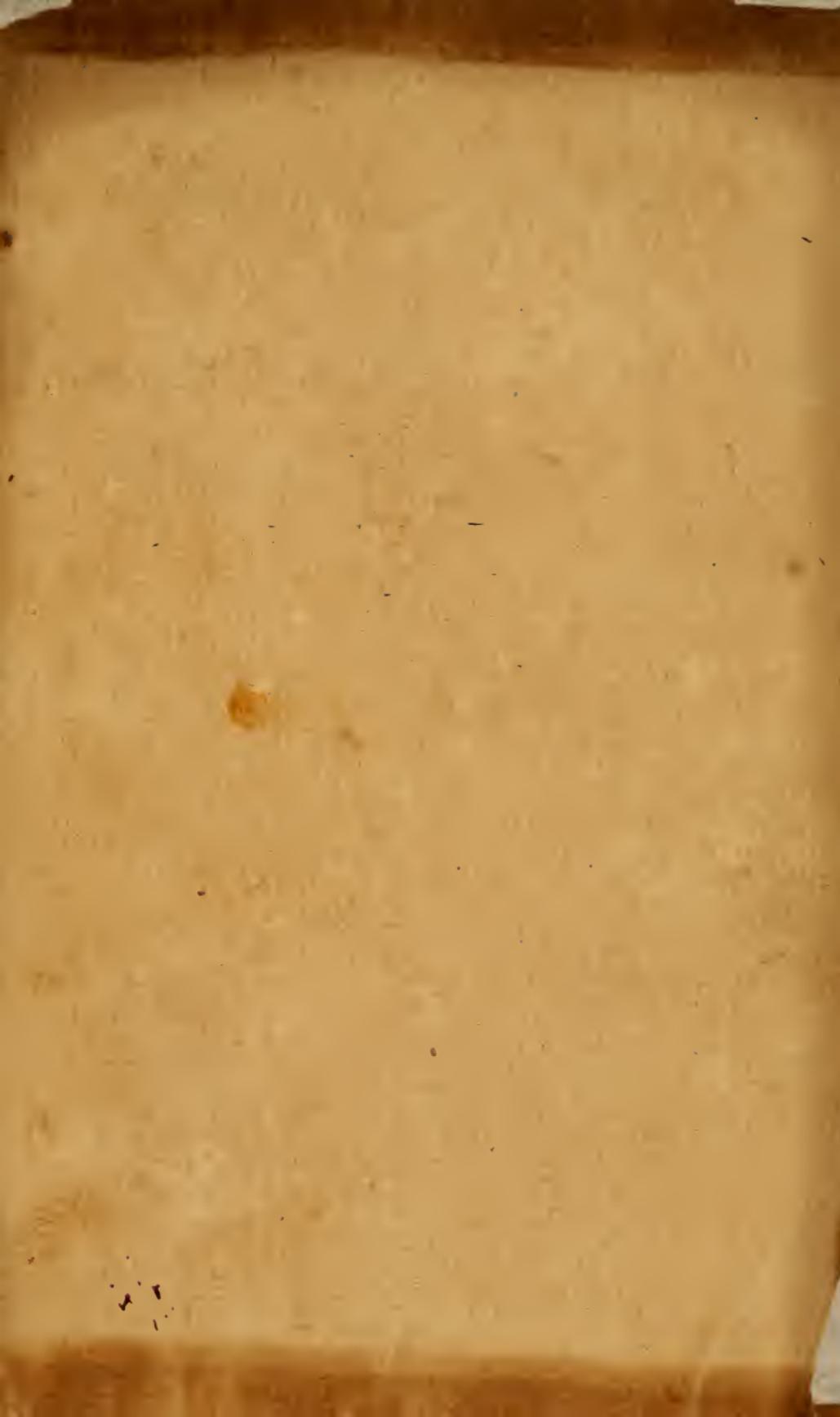
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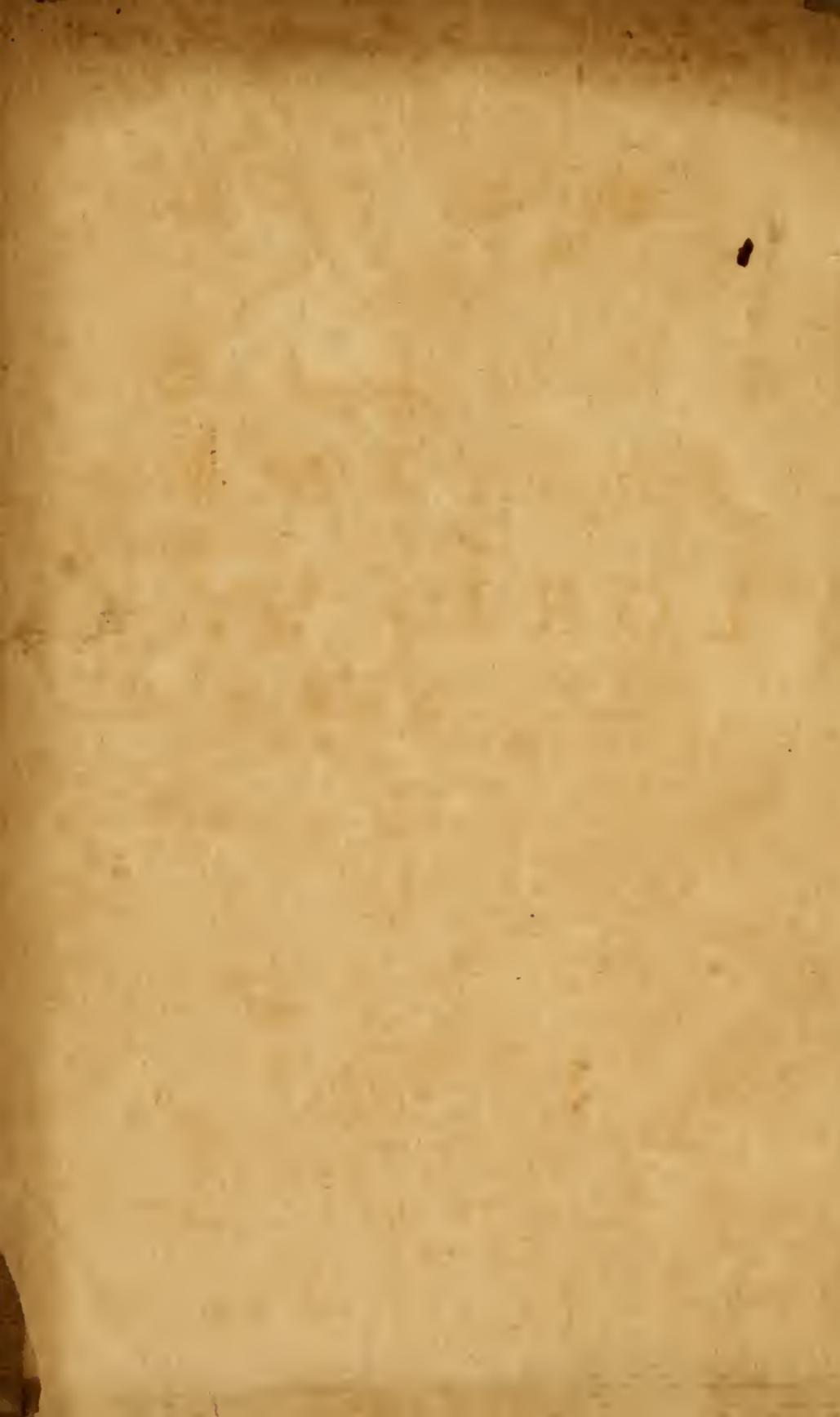
Section

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Number

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THE
Christian Sabbath
EXPLAINED:
WITH
RULES
FOR A
Religious Observation
OF THE
LORD'S DAY,
Both Doctrinal and Practical.

IN TWO PARTS.

Under the following HEADS, *viz.*

- | | |
|--|--|
| I. The Grounds and Reasons of the Observation of the Sabbath and Lord's Day. | III. The Benefits and Advantages, both to the Public, and to private Persons, from the Devout and Religious Observation of the Lord's Day. |
| II. An Account of the Change of the Day from the Seventh to the First Day of the Week. | IV. The Particular Manner in which this Holy Day ought to be observed by all Christians. |

By ALEXANDER JEPHSON, A. B.
Rector of Craike in the Diocese of Durham.

This is the Day which the Lord hath made, we will Rejoice and be Glad in it. PSALM cxviii, 24.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. HINTON, at the King's Arms, in St Paul's Church-Yard.

MDCCLX.

THE HISTORY OF THE

ROYAL NAVY

FROM THE EARLIEST PERIODS

TO THE PRESENT DAY

BY

ADMIRAL LORD BRADSHAW

OF GREAT BRITAIN

AND

ADMIRAL LORD BRADSHAW

OF GREAT BRITAIN



T O T H E

Right Reverend Father in G O D

E D W A R D,

By Divine Providence,

Lord Bishop of *D U R H A M.*

My LORD,



THAT I ascribe the present Discourse to your Lordship, is not in the least owing to a Principle of Vanity ; as if I could possibly imagine that any Performance of mine could

serve your Lordship's Life and Health, for the Good of His Church, and the Happiness and Delight of all Your Clergy, is the hearty Prayer and Desire of,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most Dutiful

And most Obliged

Humble Servant

Alexander Jephson



T H E

P R E F A C E.



HERE will be no need, I presume, of making any Apology for publishing a Discourse upon this Subject, *the Religious Observation of the Lord's Day*, since the Horrible Profanation of this holy Season is now grown so general and common, that no one can possibly be insensible of it. And the Learned Dr *Heylin* hath shewed that he was no *Prophet*, when, in Defense of his vindicating the Lawfulness of Public Sports upon *this Day* he told King *Charles I*, that “ in such a Church as
“ this, so settled in a constant Practice of Reli-
“ gious Offices, and so confirmed by godly Ca-
“ nons for the Performance of the same, there
“ was no fear that ever the *Lord's Day* (the Day
“ appointed by God's Church for His public Ser-
“ vice) would have been over-run by the *Profane*
“ *Neglect* of any Pious Duties on that Day re-
“ quired : But that the Danger rather was, lest

“ by the violent Torrent of some Men’s Affec-
 “ tions it might have been overflown by those
 “ *Superstitions*, wherewith in Imitation of the
 “ *Jews* they began to charge it (a).” We have
 now lived to see the *contrary*, and that the *Lord’s*
Day is *over-run* by *Profaneness* infinitely more than
 ever it was *overflown* by *Superstition*, to use the
 Doctor’s own Expressions. And indeed in so
 shameful a Manner is this *holy Day* now profaned
 by great Numbers of all Orders and Degrees of
 Men among us, not only by the Neglect of at-
 tending upon the Public Worship, but also by
 spending the whole Day in *Travelling*, in *keep-*
ing of Company, and in *wordly Business and Plea-*
sure; that unless some speedy Stop be put there-
 to by those who are in *Authority*, the *Christian*
 Religion will be in great Danger of being lost
 in this Kingdom; and the greatest Part of our
 Youth will be corrupted in their *Principles* and
 debauched in their *Morals*, beyond all Recovery,
 to the Infinite Mischief and Damage of the whole
 Nation. For these Reasons I have long thought
 that an useful Discourse upon this Subject would
 be absolutely Necessary. And I waited a good
 while in hopes that some Person of Worth
 and Eminence would undertake it. But finding
 nothing of this Nature done by any one, I was
 resolved by God’s Grace and Assistance to set
 about it my self. And as I freely acknowledge
 that I am very unequal to the Undertaking, I
 hope the Meanness of this Performance will en-
 gage

gage

(a) Dedication to his History of the Sabbath, p. 2, 3.

gage some other Person to supply the Defects thereof, who is of greater Abilities. And in case any Man of good Learning and Judgment will employ his Pains this way, and publish such a Treatise upon this Subject, as shall prevail with the Generality of *Christians* to observe the *Lord's Day* Religiously, both with regard to the Public and Private Duties thereof; I will make bold so far as to assure him, that he will do as much (if not more) for the Honour of God and the true Interest of Religion, as he can possibly do by writing on any other Subject.

Having observed thus much concerning the Reason and Necessity of the present Undertaking, I think it proper in the next place to give the Reader some Account of the Work itself; that he may the better perceive what he is to expect from it, and that it may be the more useful and beneficial to him. The Book is divided into Two Parts. The first Part consists of Three Chapters. In the first of which I have treated largely and distinctly concerning the Grounds and Reasons of the Obligation of the *Sabbath* and *Lord's Day*. And I am well assured that I have alledged nothing in Defence of my *Hypothesis*, but what is plainly contained in Holy Scripture, and supported by the Authority of the greatest and wisest Men, both of Antient and Modern Times. I am sensible indeed there are some considerable Difficulties upon this Head which (as it hath happened in other Cases) have caused very Learned and Good Men to differ from each other; all which I have endeavoured

to

to clear up and explain as well as I can. But however let Men entertain what Opinion they please in this Matter : Whether the Observation of the *Sabbath* be a Law given to all Mankind in *Gen. ii.* which is the General Opinion ; or, as others think, that It was not given till the Time of *Moses*, and then only to the *Jews* : Whether the Law of the *Sabbath* as delivered in *Exod. xx.* be a *Moral Law* which binds all *Christians* ; or whether we have no Authority for the Obligation of a *Sabbath Day* but from the *New Testament* : And as to That ; whether we are bound to observe the *Lord's Day* by virtue of our Blessed *Saviour's* direct Authority and Command, as some affirm ; or as others, that the *Lord's Day* is enjoined only by Apostolical Institution and Practice ; or as others still assert, that the Obligation thereof is wholly to be resolved into Ecclesiastical Authority and Constitution ; All which *Hypotheses* are fully considered in the said Chapter : I say, whatever Opinion any Man shall be of in this Matter, I will not in the least contend with him ; Provided he will take due Care to observe the *Lord's Day* Religiously, both with Regard to the Public and Private Duties of it (b). For this is
the

(b) Hoc vero ante omnia observandum, ut non tam de investiganda prima Dominici Diei origine sumus solliciti, quam de serâ & sedula ejus sanctificatione. Quamcunque sententiam quis segni voluerit (liberè enim suo quemque judicio frui patimur) hoc arctè & inviolatè omnibus curandum, ut ex præscripto Christi fideles a profanationibus abducti sacris Pietatis exercitiis serio incumbant, & sacrosanctum hunc diem sanctè observent. *Turretin, Institut. Theolog. Part II. Quæst. XIV. p. 105, 106.*

the main Thing that I am concerned about, and which all the Laws of God and Man respecting the *Sabbath* are designed to advance. I have nothing farther to add upon this Head, but that I am sensible the Passages of the *Greek* Poets (in p. 18.) formerly cited by *Aristobulus* an *Alexandrian Jew*, and by *Clem. Alex.* and others, in Proof that the Tradition of the *Sabbath Day* was handed down to their Times, have been thought by some Learned Writers to relate wholly to the seventh Day of the Month, which was celebrated by the *Greeks* in Honour of *Apollo*. It would be of no Consequence to my Argument, if this could be proved never so clearly : Since the Authority of the *Sabbath* does not depend upon the Testimony of the *Greek* Poets, but on That of Holy Scripture. And the only Reason of my urging those Testimonies was to shew (in Opposition to such Persons, who derive the first Institution of the *Sabbath* from the Law given to the *Jews* by *Moses* in the Book of *Exodus*) that the *Sabbath* is not only plainly appointed by God at the Creation of the World in *Gen. ii* ; but also, that on any other Supposition there can no Rational Account be given of that Custom, which prevailed among the most ancient and distant Nations (many of which had no Correspondence with the *Jews*) of computing their Time by *Weeks*, and observing every *seventh* Day and keeping it Holy. And this being a Matter of some Weight and Consequence to my Argument. I could not omit to take notice of those Passages of the *Greek* Poets which plainly favour it;

tho'

tho' I do not think any *great* Stress is to be laid upon them. And because many Learned Men both Ancient and Modern are of Opinion, that those Passages of the *Greek* Poets do all of them relate equally to the Observation of the *Sabbath Day*, I have therefore thought proper to produce them all together, as they are cited by our Learned *Gataker*; tho' I freely own that I think it more than probable, that the first of them (that of *Hesiod*) hath Reference only to the seventh Day of the Month, which was held Sacred to *Apollo* (c). But however that be; the following Testimonies as there cited cannot possibly appertain to that Matter, but relate only to the Custom of Celebrating the seventh Day of the Week in Memory of the Creation, as will clearly be shewn in it's proper Place. And this is in Effect acknowledged by Dr. *Heylin* himself, tho' he hath done all that lies in him to weaken and destroy the Force of those Testimonies; for he grants that the *Gentiles* knew, that the *Seventh Day*, on which the World and all Things therein were made, had a *Privilege*, and was hallowed *above other Days*. But then he contends, that they did not derive this Knowledge from the *Light of Nature*, but from the *Holy Bible*, which he imagines the ancient Poets might have consulted; (d) (which is a Concession of the utmost

(c) Vid. *Hesiod. Oper. & Dier.* l. 770, 771. *cum Clerici Annotat. in loc.*

(d) *Heylin's History of the Sabbath*, Part I. chap. iv. §. 9.

utmost Service and Advantage to my Argument) and that the ancient *Pagans* did not observe the *seventh Day* amongst themselves more than any *other*, which is more than he or any one else can prove (c).

After having thus enquired into the Grounds and Reasons of observing one Day in every Week, in Memory of the *Creation* and of the *Resurrection* of *Jesus Christ*, I proceed in the next Place to shew the Necessity and Obligation of *sanctifying* this Day and keeping it Holy; the Reasons of which are in the same place fully Considered.

In the second Chapter, I have shewn the Grounds and Reasons of the *Change* of the *Sabbath Day* from the *Seventh* to the *First Day* of the Week; the Necessity of which the Reader will there clearly perceive. And in the same Place I have refuted the chief and Principal Objection, which is urged by the *Jews* against the *Christian Revelation*, which is drawn from the *Eternity* and *Unchangeableness* of the *Jewish Sabbath* and *Priesthood*.

In the third Chapter, I have displayed the many and great Advantages, which would redound to the Public, as well as to private Persons, from a Constant and Devout Observation of the *Lord's Day*: Concerning which I have nothing further to add here, but that I hope all Persons will be induced and prevailed upon thereby to the Regular Practice of this great Duty.

From

(c) Vid. *Bishop Stillingfleet's Irenicum*, lib. i. cap. v. p. 97.

From hence I proceed to the second Part, which is to enquire in what Manner this Holy Day ought to be observed by all good *Christians*. And this I have shewn to be by attending Regularly and Constantly upon the Public Worship, and by spending some Considerable Part of the remaining Time in the Private Religious Duties thereof, such as Reading the Holy Scriptures, the Meditation upon Divine Things, the Examination of their Lives and Actions, and the Instruction of their Children and Families. And I have nothing further to observe upon this Head, but only to acquaint the Reader with the Method in which I have drawn up this second Part; which I foresee will be liable to this Objection, *viz.* that since my Design in this Treatise is to Establish the Necessity of a Devout Observation of the *Lord's Day*, by attending upon the Public Worship, and performing the other Religious Duties of the Day, such as Reading the Scriptures, Divine Meditation, and the like; it would have been sufficient to this Design, to have shewn, that all *Christians* are bound to practice *these* Duties at *this* Holy Season, and not to have largely considered the Grounds and Reasons of the Obligation of those Duties, and to prove that they are Necessary and Essential Parts of Religion, as I have done: Which seems to be quite foreign to my Purpose. In answer to which I shall only alledge thus much, *viz.* that there were two Reasons which seemed to me very strong and cogent, which induced me to follow this Method.

The *First* Reason was, That in this Sceptical and Disputing Age, when too many Persons set up their *Reason* as the *Sole* Measure and Standard of Truth, it would be in vain to persuade them to the Practice of these Religious Duties at any Season, unless we can first convince them of the absolute Necessity and Obligation thereof; and that they are of the utmost Consequence and Importance to their true Happiness. And in the *Second* Place, As this Discourse is chiefly designed for the Use of the Common People, I thought that the most likely Means to prevail upon them to apply themselves to these Religious Performances on the *Lord's Day*, who have for the most Part no other Season and Opportunity for the Exercise of them, would be to shew them clearly and plainly, that they are *all* Necessary and Essential Parts of Religion, and as *such* cannot be neglected without the Ruin and Destruction of their Immortal Souls: And also that it would be of great Service to many of them, to give them some plain and useful Directions how and in what Manner they might best discharge those Duties. And moreover there are several Pernicious Doctrines lately advanced among us, which have a very *fatal* Effect and Influence upon Religion; and therefore I considered with myself, that it would be a fruitless Attempt to exhort Men to the Practice of true Piety upon the *Lord's Day*, unless we could clearly shew them the Folly and Absurdity of such Doctrines. Thus for Instance, It is a *Principle* strenuously propagated
and

and greedily received by great Numbers of Men in the Kingdom, and especially by Persons of *Fashion* and *Distinction*, that *Religion* does wholly consist in *Moral* and *Social* Duties, as they call them; and that as God does not want our Prayers, so He does not require them of us. And in virtue of this *Principle* the Public Worship of God is most shamefully neglected by many Persons, and ridiculed and despised by others, to the great Dishonour of God and the Danger of Men's Souls. For this Reason, when in the First Chapter of this Second Part I was treating upon this great Duty of the *Lord's Day* (the Attendance upon the Public Worship) I thought it absolutely necessary in order to make Men sensible of the strict and indispensable Obligation of it, to expose the Weakness and Absurdity of this *Principle*; and to shew clearly, that the Public Worship of God is as Necessary and Essential to Religion as Moral Duties; nay, and to speak properly, that it is even a Chief and Principal Part of *Morality* itself. And consequently that it cannot be neglected and despised by any Man without the manifest Hazard and Danger of Salvation.

And so likewise in the following Chapter concerning the Reading the Holy Scriptures. As there are some Writings lately published which are in great Vogue, which have served the Cause of *Papery* (whether the Authors had any such Express Design in setting them forth I will not say) by vilifying and disparaging the Holy Scriptures, and representing them as *obscure* and *unintelligible*;

intelligible; I thought it would be to little purpose to perswade Men to read the Scriptures unless I could convince them that it would be worth their while to employ themselves in this Exercise, and that by due Care and Diligence they may attain to a true Sense and Knowledge of them. For which Reason I have not only considered the Necessary Duty of Reading the Scriptures, and the Sin and Danger of neglecting it, but have also displayed some of the *many Beauties* and *Perfections* with which the Sacred Writings abound; and have shewn, that (setting aside the Divine Authority and Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures) there are more and greater Excellencies and Perfections to be found in them than in the very *best* of all Human Compositions. And I have also laid down some plain and useful Rules, by the due and careful Observation of which Men may attain to the true Knowledge of them in all such Points as are Necessary to their Happiness and Salvation. And the same Method I have followed in other Parts of this Discourse; *i. e.* I have not only shewn the Reader the Necessity and Advantage of the Duties there recommended to him; but also the more firmly to establish them I have endeavoured to answer and refute the Objections and Cavils, which *Infidels* and profane Writers have urged against them. And I very freely own, that I have not been so much concerned to observe the nice and exact Rules of *Method* in the present Discourse as to render it of Use and Service to those for whom it was chiefly designed. And

if this Treatise should happen to fall into the Hands of any Persons who are of greater Understanding and Experience, to whom the several Rules and Directions therein given may be entirely needless, I hope they will the more readily excuse them, since they may be of great Service and Advantage to other Men: And they may easily pass them by, and dwell the longer upon such Parts of the Book as may be more useful and beneficial to themselves.

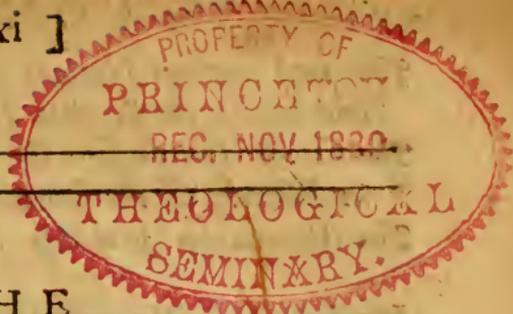
Having thus shewn the Manner in which the *Lord's Day* ought to be observed, both with regard to the Public and Private Duties thereof; that what is here laid down may not seem too harsh and rigorous, I have endeavoured to qualify the seeming Strictness and Severity of it, by shewing with what Restrictions and Limitations it is to be understood: the better to guard against the Extreme of *Superstition* as well as *Profaneness*. And because the Religious Observation of this *Holy Day* is too often charged with *Fanaticism* or *Enthusiasm*; in order to expose the *Rashness* and *Folly* of this Charge I have in the last Place endeavoured to shew that the Doctrine which is delivered in this Discourse is not only plainly founded in the Nature and Reason of Things, and the clear Testimony of Holy Scripture; but is also exactly conformable to the Opinion and Sentiments of the most Learned and best of Men, both in the former and latter Ages of the Christian Church.

As to the several and sometimes large Quotations out of ancient and modern Authors (many

ny of which may perhaps to some Persons seem needless and troublesome) I have only this to say, that they were not produced in the least thro' a Principle of Vanity or Ostentation of Learning (of which I pretend but to a very small Share) but that my Readers, and especially such as are not well affected to Religion, may hereby be the more easily convinced of the Reasonableness of those Principles which are advanced in this Treatise, when they shall perceive that they are perfectly agreeable to the Sense and Judgment of the wisest and greatest Men in all Ages. And for this Reason it is, that I have now and then in the Margin inserted Passages out of the Heathen Philosophers and Poets, and that correspondent even to Texts of Scripture by me cited; not as if I imagined, that the Testimonies of all the Philosophers and Poets both of *Greece* and *Rome* could add one Tittle to the Force and Authority of God's Word; but that many Persons among us, who have but a mean and obscure Notion of the Excellency and Perfection of the sacred Writings, may be the more ashamed to neglect and despise those Instructions in Holy Scripture, which are delivered to them by the most admir'd and celebrated Writers in the *Pagan* World. I have nothing more to add, but to beg of God to give a Blessing to this Work, and to incline the Hearts of all Men, and especially those who are in Authority and Eminent Stations, to use their best Endeavours to promote the Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*: Since there is nothing

nothing which they can do, which will tend more to the Honour of God, and the present and future Happiness of Mankind. And if any of my Readers shall receive so much Benefit from this Discourse, as to be prevailed upon thereby to observe this Holy Day more devoutly and religiously than they had been used to do; let them give God the Praise and Glory, and I have the End which I aimed at in the Publication.





THE
CONTENTS.

The INTRODUCTION:

G OD to be publickly worshipped, as our Creator and Governour,	Page 1
<i>This a necessary Token of our Dependency upon Him,</i>	p. 2
<i>Allowed by Hobbs as well as others,</i>	ibid.

CHAP. I.

Concerning the Obligation of observing one Day in every Week, and keeping it Holy.	
<i>The Lord's Day may be properly called Sunday or the Sabbath,</i>	p. 6, 7
<i>The Law of Nature requires that God should be publickly worshipped.</i>	p. 8
<i>The Time of that Worship may justly be determined by Civil and Ecclesiastical Authority,</i>	ibid.
<i>The Observation of the Sabbath required of all Mankind; in Gen. ii. 3,</i>	p. 9
<i>The true Notion of sanctifying the Sabbath,</i>	ibid.
<i>Archbishop Bramhall's Interpretation of this Text refuted,</i>	p. 10
<i>The Notion that this Command was given by Anticipation refuted,</i>	p. 11
<i>The Silence of Scripture no Proof that the Patriarchs did not observe the Sabbath Day,</i>	p. 14, 15
b	The

- The most antient Nations compute their Time by Weeks, and honour the Seventh Day,* Page 17, 18, &c.
- The Greek Poets affirm the Seventh Day to be held sacred in Memory of the Creation,* p. 18
- The Patriarchs probably observed the Sabbath Day,* p. 15, 17
- In what Sense the antient Fathers affirm, that the Patriarchs did not keep the Sabbath Day,* p. 19
- The Observation of the Sabbath Day not derived from the Number of the seven Planets,* p. 21, &c.
- The seventh Day which was observed by all Nations, not the seventh Day of the Month, but the seventh Day of the Week,* p. 24, &c.
- This proved from Josephus, Philo, and other Writers,* p. 25, 26
- The Law of the Sabbath adopted by Christ into the Moral Law of his Gospel,* p. 27, 28
- No Objection to this that the Command of the Sabbath is not expressly mentioned by our Saviour,* p. 28, 29
- It is usual in Scripture to signify the whole of Religion by a Part of it,* ibid.
- The Reason why our Lord when requiring the Observation of the Ten Commandments, mentioned only those of the Second Table,* p. 29, 30
- By the Commandments there referred to, the whole Decalogue is understood,* p. 30
- That the Law of the Sabbath is binding to Christians, is in Effect allowed by Archbishop Bramhall,* p. 30, 31
- Tho' Christians are obliged to keep the Sabbath, they are not bound to keep it on the same Day of the Week which the Jews did,* p. 31
- The Grounds of the Sabbath, as delivered to the Jews, twofold,* p. 32
- The Law of the Sabbath in Exod. xx. no new Law, but an old Law renewed and re-established,* ibid.
- It is usual with God to renew the Obligation of His Laws in Scripture,* p. 33

In what Sense the Sabbath is said to be a Sign between God and the Children of Israel, Page 34, 35

The Reason why our Saviour did not expressly abrogate the Jewish Sabbath, p. 38

The Church of England vindicated, as to the inserting the Fourth Commandment, and the Petition thereto annexed, into her Communion-Service, p. 39

The Interpretation given of this Matter by Dr Heylin refuted, p. 40, &c.

The Obligation of observing every seventh Day, from the Example of our Saviour and the Apostles, p. 46

The Expression after Eight Days in the Jewish Language, signifies a Week, p. 47, &c.

The Apostles invested with Legislative Authority under the Gospel of Christ, p. 50, 51

Their Universal Judgment and Practice a sufficient Discovery of the Mind and Will of Christ, p. 51, 52

The Judgment of Archbishop Bramhall, Bishop Taylor, and others on this Point, p. 52, 53

The Apostles immediately directed by the Holy Ghost in their Religious Determinations, p. 54

They had the Authority and Directions of Christ, in the Appointment of the Times and Places of Divine Worship; as is affirmed by Clemens Romanus, ibid.

They did not expressly abrogate the Jewish Sabbath, and why, ibid.

The Primitive Christians universally observe the Lord's Day, p. 55

They keep the Day of the Jewish Sabbath also, and why, ibid.

The Sabbath or Lord's Day to be kept holy, p. 56

The Sanctification of this Day does not consist in a bare Rest from Bodily Labour, ibid.

It is to be employed in God's Public Worship and Religious Duties, p. 57

The Jews kept their Sabbath in this Manner before the Babylonian Captivity, p. 58, &c.

- Whether the Jews had any Synagogues or not before the Captivity doubtful,* Page 61
- They had Places for Public Worship and reading the Law, long before that Time,* p. 62
- These thought to be as early as the Times of the Judges,* *ibid.*
- There were probably such Places of Religious Worship in the Days of Abraham,* p. 63
- In what Respects they differed from the Synagogues,* p. 64
- There is mention made of them in the New Testament,* p. 65
- The Law appointed to be read on the Sabbath Day by Moses himself, as attested by Josephus and Philo,* p. 65, 66
- The Jews after the Captivity, and the Primitive Christians very strict in the Observation of the Sabbath and Lord's Day,* p. 67
- The Application,* p. 67, 68, 69

C H A P. II.

- Concerning the Change of the Day from the *seventh* to the *first* Day of the Week.
- The Sabbath not necessarily to be kept on Saturday, as the Sabbatarians suppose,* p. 70, 71
- The Jewish Sabbath grounded on the Deliverance from the Land of Ægypt,* p. 71
- By what Sign the Day of the Sabbath was discovered to the Jews,* p. 72
- The Jewish Sabbath abolished by the Death of Christ,* p. 73
- The Lord's Day henceforward observed in Memory of Christ's Resurrection,* *ibid.*
- The great Reasonableness of that Observation,* *ibid.*
- No Necessity of an express Precept of Christ or His Apostles for the Alroagation of the Jewish Sabbath,* p. 74, 75
- The*

- The Observation of the Sabbath on any Particular Day of the Week above the other only Circumstantial,*
Page. 75
- This in Effect acknowledged by Archbishop Barinhall,*
ibid.
- The Law of Moses not obligatory upon us Christians,*
p. 76
- The Injunction of the Apostles in Acts xv. 29. explained,*
p. 77, 78
- The Objection drawn from the Eternity of the Law of Moses, answered,*
p. 79, &c.
- In what Sense the Jewish Sabbath and Priesthood are said to be everlasting,*
p. 80, 83
- That the Law of Moses was to be abrogated by the Messiah, proved from the Prophecies of the Old Testament,*
p. 80, 81
- The Temple at Jerusalem destroy'd by Titus; and the Jews dispersed according to Christ's Prediction,*
p. 81
- Julian the Apostate endeavours to rebuild the Jewish Temple, and why,*
p. 81, 82
- His Design defeated by a Dreadful Interposition of God's Providence,*
p. 82
- The Word Everlasting often used in Scripture and profane Writers for a finite and short Duration,*
p. 83

C H A P. III.

- Concerning the Benefits and Advantages of a Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*.
- First, *It is the greatest Means under God's Providence of keeping up a Sense of God and Religion in the World,*
p. 85
- Divine Meditation the Life of Religion,*
p. 86
- The Neglect of this the true Cause of the Impiety and Wickedness that abounds in the World,*
p. 87
- An Excellent Observation of Dean Prideaux to this Purpose,*
p. 88; 89
- b 3
- Secondly,

- Secondly, *It is the surest Method to procure the Divine Blessing and Protection,* Page 89
- The Benefit of Prayer, especially Public Prayer, considered,* p. 89 90
- Thirdly, *It does in the greatest Measure promote the Interests of Human Society, as by this Means all Men may be fully instructed in their Christian Duty,* p. 90, 91
- The right Notions of Religion which many even of the common People have, chiefly owing to Public Preaching,* p. 91, 92
- Fourthly, *It is of the greatest Consequence to every Particular Person in the Grand Concernment of his own Salvation: First, On Account of the Benefit of Public Worship,* p. 92. *Secondly, The Opportunity of hearing the Word preached,* p. 93. *Thirdly, The Advantages of Divine Meditation,* ibid.
- Contemplation the greatest Happiness and Perfection of Man,* p. 94
- Without the Exercise of Divine Meditation Religion cannot possibly subsist,* p. 95

PART. II.

I N T R O D U C T I O N.

- Containing a general Account of the Manner in which the Lord's Day it to be observed,* p. 97

C H A P. I.

- Concerning the Duty of attending upon the Public Worship.
- The Reason of the Necessity of insisting upon this Duty,* p. 98. 99.
- The Public Worship of God hath in all Ages of the World been thought essential to Religion,* p. 100
- The Judgment of the ancient Philosophers upon this Point,* p. 100, 101
No

- No Objection to their Testimony that they placed the best and most acceptable Worship of God in Purity of Mind,* Pag. 101
- The Holy Scriptures have judged in the same Manner, tho' they have fully establish'd the Necessity of that Worship,* p. 102
- The Philosophers did not object against the the Gentile Rites and Sacrifices, but on the Account of their Superstition and Impurity,* p. 103, 104
- The Heathen Priests taught no Morality, and why,* p. 104
- The Public Exercise of Religion establish'd in all Nations by Civil Sanctions,* p. 105
- The Necessity and Usefulness of this acknowledged by Atheists themselves,* ibid.
- The remarkable Testimonies of Hobbs, Machiavel and Varro, upon this Head,* p. 106, 107
- God hath made express Provision in Holy Scripture for His Public Worship,* p. 107
- He determined the Jewish Rites and Ceremonies Himself with the utmost Strictness and Punctuality,* p. 107, 108
- God hath not done so under the Gospel, and why,* p. 108
- This no Objection to the Necessity of such Worship,* p. 108, 109
- The Unity of the Church cannot be maintained without Public Worship,* p. 109
- The Injunctions of our Governours, as to the Times and Places of Public Worship, are necessarily to be obey'd,* p. 110
- Morality will not be available to Salvation without Public Worship,* p. 111
- The Necessity of enforcing this Observation,* ibid.
- Mens Honesty justly to be suspected who make no Public Profession of Religion,* ibid.
- The Public Worship of God an Essential Part of Religion,* p. 112
- This demonstrated from the Relation we bear to God,* p. 114
- Natural Religion necessarily requires Public Worship,* p. 114, 115

<i>It is a Principal Part of Morality itself,</i>	Page 115
<i>In what Sense the Exercise of Charity is to be preferred before it,</i>	p. 117, 118
<i>The Neglect of Public Worship will expose Men to the Judgment of God,</i>	p. 118, 119
<i>An Excellent Observation of the Archbishop of Cambray to this Purpose,</i>	p. 119
<i>The Grace of God's Spirit necessary to a good Life,</i>	p. 121
<i>This acknowledged by Jews and Heathens,</i>	ibid.
<i>Public Worship necessary to the obtaining the Holy Spirit,</i>	p. 121, 122
<i>The best and most righteous Men in all Ages have been remarkable for their Attendance on the Public Worship,</i>	p. 122
<i>Our blessed Saviour singularly eminent and remarkable for the Practice of this Duty,</i>	p. 123
<i>Private Devotion and Reading on the Lord's Day, no Excuse for absenting from Public Worship,</i>	p. 125
<i>The great Regard which pious and good Men have always shewn for the Public Worship,</i>	p. 127
<i>The Primitive Christians submit to grievous Persecutions rather than neglect the Public Worship,</i>	p. 129
<i>The Application,</i>	p. 130, &c.

C H A P. II.

<i>Concerning the Duty of Reading the Holy Scriptures.</i>	
<i>The Necessity of this Duty considered,</i>	p. 134, &c.
<i>The ancient Jews had the utmost Veneration for the Holy Scriptures,</i>	p. 138
<i>The great Zeal of the modern Jews in the reading of them,</i>	ibid.
<i>The Primitive Christians very diligent in this Exercise,</i>	p. 138, 139
<i>They submit to the most grievous Persecutions and Deaths rather than surrender their Bibles,</i>	p. 139
<i>The great Value which our Ancestours in this Kingdom set upon the Scriptures,</i>	p. 140
	<i>There</i>

- There are three great Advantages of reading the Scriptures,*
First, we are hereby made acquainted with our whole
Duty, and the Motives to the Practise of it, Page
 141, &c.
- The Ancient Pagans doubtful of a future State, p. 143, 144*
An excellent Passage of Bishop Gibson to this Purpose,
 ibid.
- Secondly, By the reading of the Scriptures we may judge*
of the Truth in Controversies of Religion, p. 144, &c.
This approved of by Christ and his Apostles, p. 145
The true Sense of Scripture to be found out by a sincere
Study of it, p. 146
No Argument against this that many wise and good Men
differ from each other in the Interpretation of Scrip-
ture, p. 147, &c.
- The Church of Rome more peculiarly Faulty in this Par-*
ticular, p. 150
- Rules by which a Man may judge of his own Sincerity in*
the reading of Scripture, p. 157, 158
- Rules to be observed for Understanding the true Doctrines*
of Scripture, p. 160, &c.
- We must not set up our own Reasonings in Opposition*
to express Declarations of Scripture, p. 171, &c.
- A most useful Example given us in this Matter by our*
Blessed Saviour, p. 173
- The third Advantage of reading the Scriptures consists in*
the present Pleasure and Satisfaction in the perusal of
them, p. 175
- The Holy Scripture, besides it's Inspiration, excels all*
other Writings whatsoever, in several Respects, As,
First, the Holy Bible is the most ancient of all other
Books, ibid.
- The Integrity of Moses considered, ibid.*
- The pretended Antiquity of the Egyptians, Chaldeans,*
and Chinese fabulous, ibid.
- The Mosaic History of great Use and Advantage in two*
Respects, First, In clearly discovering to us that God
created this World, p. 176
 The

- The absurd Notions of the ancient Philosophers in this Matter,* p. 177
- Secondly, *In shewing us the true Ground of the Corruption of our Nature and the Remedy thereof,* p. 178, 179
- The Doctrine of the Transmigration of Souls owing to the Ignorance of this Point,* ibid.
- Secondly, *The History of the Bible is more useful and entertaining than any other History,* p. 179, &c.
- It gives us a more sensible Manifestation of God's Providence, and Government of Mankind,* p. 181, &c.
- Thirdly, *We have a more perfect System of Moral Precepts in Holy Scripture than is to be found in any other Writings,* p. 184
- The Weakness of the Old Philosophy in this Respect, considered,* p. 185
- Many horrid Vices justified by the ancient Philosophers, and allowed of by the Laws of Pagan Nations,* p. 186
- The Writings of Philosophers improved and enriched by the Holy Scriptures,* 187, 188
- The Christian Morality compleat and digested into one regular System,* p. 188
- Fourthly, *There is a much greater Strength of Reasoning, and more sublime Thoughts and Eloquent Expressions in Scripture than in any Human Writings,* 188, &c.
- The Excellency of our Saviour's Parables considered,* p. 192, &c.
- The Use of Parables very ancient* p. 195
- The great Sin and Danger of neglecting to read the Holy Scriptures,* p. 203, &c.

C H A P. III.

Concerning the Duty of Divine Meditation.

- The Necessity of Divine Meditation in general, considered,* p. 207
- The Duty of Meditating upon the Word of God when preached to us,* p. 213, &c.
- The small Proficiency of most Men in Piety and Virtue in great Measure owing to the Neglect of this Duty,* p. 215

The

- The Philosophers of old frequently complain on the like Occasion,* Page 216
- An Excellent Observation of St Chrysoftom on this Head* P. 217
- The Necessity of Meditating frequently upon the Being of God and His Perfections,*
- First, *To guard us against the dangerous Impressions of Atheism,* p. 220, &c.
- The Increase of Atheism in the World, considered,* p. 221, 222
- The Proofs and Evidences of the Being of God and His Perfections* p. 226, 227
- The Absurdity of the Epicureans and others in denying Final Causes,* p. 228
- Secondly, *Meditation on the Being of God and His Perfections, necessary to preserve in our Minds such a lively Sense of these Truths as may prevail upon us to the Practice of Virtue,* p. 229, &c.
- The Necessity of Meditating upon Divine Providence shewn, First, To confirm us in the Belief of it, upon which our Happiness depends,* p. 235, &c.
- Secondly, *To make us patient and submissive under the Afflictions of this Life,* p. 248, &c.
- The Necessity of a firm Belief of Divine Providence exemplified,* p. 235, &c.
- The Proofs and Evidences of Divine Providence considered,* p. 238, &c.
- The great Benefit and Advantage of believing a Divine Providence, owned by Epicurus* p. 250
- The Necessity of Meditating frequently upon the Love of God in the Death of Christ,* ibid.
- In what Sense the Sacrifice of Christ's Death was necessary for the Expiation of Sin,* p. 251
- God not obliged to pardon the Sins of Men barely upon their Repentance* p. 253
- The Sacrifice of Christ's Death a powerful Dissuasive from Sin and Wickedness,* ibid.
- The*

- The great Love of Christ in dying for us, considered and illustrated,* Page 254, 255
- The Necessity of Meditating frequently upon a Future Judgment and Everlasting Retributions,* p. 258
- This skewn in general from the Nature and Condition of Mankind,* p. 259
- Meditation upon Future Retributions necessary to convince us of the Truth and Certainty of them,* p. 260, 261
- The absolute Necessity of this Conviction,* p. 261
- Meditation upon Future Retribution necessary to give us a lively Sense of the Nature and Importance of them,* p. 262, 263
- This absolutely necessary to overcome the Force of present Things,* p. 263, 264
- No Objection to the Importance of Future Things, that they are in a great Measure unknown to us,* p. 265, &c.
- The Doctrine of Eternal Punishments taught by the best Philosophers,* p. 270
- The Belief of this Doctrine of great Service to the Cause of Religion and Virtue,* p. 271
- The Beauty and present Rewards of Virtue not sufficient to induce Men to the Practice of it,* p. 273, &c.
- The Difference between the Stoics and Modern Infidels upon this Point* p. 274
- It is no mean and servile Thing to be influenced by the Belief of future Retributions,* p. 278, &c.
- The extraordinary Piety and Goodness of the Primitive Christians owing in great Measure to their frequent Meditation on future Things,* p. 281
- Christians after the Time of Constantine the Great grew very bad and wicked, and why,* p. 282
- The Sentiments of some Eminent Divines concerning the Necessity of Divine Meditation,* p. 283, &c.

C H A P. IV.

- Concerning the Duty of Self-Examination,*
A careful Examination of ourselves necessary to the Repentance of our Sins, p. 286
 This

- This observed and recommended by the old Philosophers,*
 Page 287
- The great Usefulness and Advantage of such Examination,*
 p. 288, 289,
- An Examination of ourselves necessary to the Understanding the true State and Disposition of our Souls,* p. 289
- The Manner in which this Duty of Self-Examination should be performed,* p. 290, &c.
- The Knowledge of the true State of our Souls necessary to the Peace and Quiet of our Minds,* p. 294
- And to our Growth in Grace, and Improvement in Virtue,*
 p. 295
- The Gospel does not require us to be perfect in Holiness but by Degrees,* p. 296, 297
- Our Growth in Grace absolutely necessary to prevent Apostacy and Defection from Piety and Virtue,* p. 297, &c.

CHAP. V.

Concerning the Religious Education of Children.

- In what the Religious Education of Children consists,*
 p. 299, 300
- The Manner in which Parents should instruct them in their Catechism,* p. 300, &c.
- They should early instruct them in the Principles of Religion, and why,* p. 301, &c.
- The Manner in which they should instruct them, First, In their Duty to God,* p. 304, &c. *Secondly, In their Duty towards their Neighbour,* p. 306, &c. *Thirdly, In their Duty towards themselves,* p. 309, &c.
- They should earnestly caution them against keeping bad Company,* p. 315, &c.
- They should shew them the great Advantage of early Piety and constant Virtue,* p. 316, 317, &c.
- More particularly, they should instruct them in the necessary Duty of God's public Worship* p. 321, &c.
- And*

- And in a Reverent Behaviour to the Ministers of God's Word, and why,* p. 326, &c.
The peculiar Worth and Merit of the English Clergy, p. 329
The Manner in which Parents should instruct their Children by the reading of the Scriptures, p. 330, &c.
The great Benefits and Advantages of Childrens early reading the Holy Scripture, p. 334
Parents should carefully instruct their Children in the Doctrine of Christ's Mediation, and why, p. 335, &c.
The absolute Necessity and great Advantage of a Religious Education, p. 340, &c. 350, &c.
The great Difficulty of reforming Vicious Habits, p. 347, 348
In what Sense the Holy Scripture represents it as impossible, *ibid.*
The exceeding Guilt of many Parents in the Neglect of this Duty of Religious Education, p. 349

C H A P. VI.

Concerning the Manner and Measure in which the Religious Duties abovementioned are to be discharged on the *Lord's Day*.

All Men of what Quality and Condition soever bound to attend upon the Public Worship, and to meditate on the Word preached to them on the Lord's Day, p. 355

The Private Duties of the Day to be discharged in greater or less Measure, according as Men spend more or less time in them at other Seasons, p. 359

Yet they are not to be wholly omitted at this Time by any Man whatsoever *ibid.*

The greatest Men bound to observe the Lord's Day religiously, First, On Account of their Families, p. 360

The Necessity of Family Instruction considered, p. 360, 361, &c.
Secondly,

- Secondly, *With Regard to their own Personal Obligation*
 First, *Because God hath commanded it,* p. 365. Secondly, *That they may set a good Example to other Men,* p. 367. And Thirdly, *That they may give no Offence to others,* p. 368
- The great Sin of giving Offence considered,* p. 368, 369, &c.
- The many and great Mischiefs of neglecting the Religious Duties of the Lord's Day,* p. 374, &c.
- King James the First's and King Charles the First's Declarations for Sports on the Lord's Day, the Occasion and ill Consequence of them,* p. 382, &c.
- The absolute Necessity of a Reformation in this Particular,* p. 385
- Superstition on the Sabbath, a wiser Extreme at Present than Profaneness,* p. 387
- The Qualifications with which the Doctrine of the Religious Observation of the Lord's Day is to be understood,* p. 388, &c.
- The Sabbath designed for the Ease and Comfort of Mankind, as well as for the Performnce of Religious Duties,* p. 391
- The same observed by the best Philosophers concerning their Festivals,* p. 392
- The Doctrine of the Religious Observation of the Sabbath when truly stated, not hard and severe,* p. 393, 394

C H A P. VII.

Containing the Testimonies of Pious and Learned Men in the former and latter Ages of the Church, concerning the Religious Observation of the Lord's Day.

- The Religious Observation of the Lord's Day rashly charged with Errour and Superstition,* p. 395
- The Sabbath observed religiously by the ancient Saxons,* p. 396
- The*

<i>The Laws of the Land enjoin the Religious Observation of this Day,</i>	Page 396, &c.
<i>The Primitive Christians make many excellent Laws and Canons for the Religious Observation of this Day,</i>	p. 399, &c.
<i>The Judgment of the ancient Fathers of the Church upon this Head,</i>	p. 403, &c.
<i>The great Regard which the first Christian Emperours shewed for the Religious Observation of the Lord's Day,</i>	p. 406, 407
<i>The Sentiments of the best Divines of the Church of England in this Matter,</i>	p. 408 to 422
<i>The Opinion of the Author of the Fable of the Bees, upon this Point,</i>	p. 423
<i>A serious Application to the Clergy and the Civil Magistrates,</i>	p. 425, 426
<i>The Conclusion,</i>	p. 427, 428

THE Reader is desired to correct the Folio's of the Pages from *Pag. 176 to Pag. 193*, and from *Pag. 368 to 385*.



PART I.

The INTRODUCTION.

GOD as He is our Creator, so is He also our Supreme Lord and Governour, and as *such*, hath an absolute Right to the *utmost* Service and Obedience, which we can possibly pay unto Him. As we depend upon Him in all our Wants, and receive from Him all Things we enjoy ; it is our *bounden* Duty to Acknowledge *that* Dependence by constant and fervent Prayer and Devotion : and in token of His Goodness in Creating us, and the Distinguishing Blessings of His Providence to all (*a*) Mankind ; we are obliged to celebrate His Praise (*b*), and

B to

(*a*) God loveth *a'*l, more than He can be loved of *all*, even every one *individually*, more than *all together* are ever capable of exerting their Love to Him. *Thomas à Kempis on the Imitation of Christ, Vol. II, pag. 256.*

(*b*) Εἰ γὰρ γέν εἴχομεν, ἄλλο τι ἔδει ἡμᾶς ποιεῖν καὶ κοινῆ καὶ ἰδιᾶ, ἢ ὑμνεῖν τὸ θεῖον, καὶ ευχαριστεῖν, καὶ ἐπιξέρχεσθαι τὰς χάριτας ; ἐκ ἔδει σπλαγχνίας, καὶ ἀρετῆς καὶ ἐδιδόντας, ἁδαιεῖν ἢ ὑμνον ἢ εἰς ἢ Θεὸν, μέγας ὁ Θεός, ὅτι ἡμῖν παρέσχον ὕψιστα ταῦτα, δι' ἃν τῷ γῆν ἐργασόμεθα. μέγας ὁ Θεός, ὅτι χάριτας δέδωκεν. ὅτι κατὰ πνοῆν, ὅτι κοιλίαν, ὅτι ἀυξέσθαι λεληθότως, ὅτι καθευδόντας ἀνεπαύσαν ; πάντα ἐφ' ἐκάστῃ ἐρυμνεῖν ἔδει, καὶ ἢ μέγιστον καὶ θεϊότατον ὑμνον ἐρυμνεῖν, ὅτι τῷ δυνάμει ἔδωκε τῷ πρῶτον ἀπολαθῆναι τῶν τέτων καὶ ἔσθ' ἡμεῖς. Ὡς. Arrian, in Epictet. lib. i, cap. xvi.

I N T R O D U C T I O N.

to proclaim the Honour and Majesty of His Name in all Ages and Generations of the World. To suppose otherwise, is to deny ourselves to be *created* Beings: For to allow that we are made by GOD, and depend every Moment upon Him, and yet are not bound to testify That Dependence by the necessary Performance of these Duties, is as great a Contradiction (*c*) as any in the World. As we are therefore bound to worship GOD in general; so likewise are we obliged to a various and different Manner of performing this Duty, according to the different State and Circumstances of our Condition. As we are *private* Persons, we must manifest our Dependence upon GOD in *private*. We must pray to Him for those Things of which we ourselves stand in need; and return Him Thanks and Praise for those many Blessings we enjoy. And as we are considered in a *public* Capacity; we must apply ourselves to GOD in such a Manner, as is agreeable to our *public* State and Condition (*d*): That He would be pleased not only to prosper ourselves, but all Mankind; that He would avert all Judgments due to our Sins, and grant us the public Blessings of Unity and Peace: And that, as the *only* return we can make for His Exceeding Favours; He would accept of our sincere love and Affection, and most hearty Praise and Thankgiving.

(*c*) Dependency in a Creature, without some Mark or Manifestation of such a State, is utterly unintelligible, or to speak more properly a Contradiction; because it is, with regard to that Creature, to all Intents and Purposes a State of Independency. *Revelation Examined with Candour, &c. Vol. I. pag. 87.*

(*d*) Reason directeth not only to worship God in *secret*, but also and *especially* in *public*, and in the Sight of Men; for without *that* (that which in Honour is *most* acceptable) the procuring others to honour him is lost. *Hobbs's Leviathan, chap. xxxi, pag. 192.*

As to Matters relating to the Worship of God, it is the *Voice of Nature*, that God should be publicly worshipped; and that Men should do this in the most convenient way, by appointing amongst themselves, *Time, Place, Persons*, and all other things which require *special* Determination. *Christianity as old as the Creation, pag. 115, 116.*

INTRODUCTION.

giving. Now these being all *necessary* Duties resulting from our State and Condition in this World, do require some *Time* and *Place* for the Performance of them; which by reason of the different Tempers and Inclinations of Men, and the various *Businesses* and Affairs of the World, ought in all Wisdom to be determined by some just and proper Authority; that so there might be no Neglect or Distraction in the Exercise of these Duties: But that all Men, as they should with *one* Heart and *one* Mouth, so they might in *one* Time and *one* Place meet together to glorify God. Accordingly we find that the Divine Wisdom hath taken Care of this Matter, by separating *one* Day in every Week for His Worship and Service, thro' all Ages and Generations of the World: It being (as will be clearly seen hereafter) a Law *everlastingly* obliging the Sons of Men, that they should *Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it Holy. i. e.* That they should remember to observe every *seventh* Day in the Week, as a Rest from bodily Work and Labour; and not only *that*, but also as a Day consecrated to the Worship and Service of God.

In treating upon which Point so necessary to be well understood, and fully considered by all Christians (especially in this profane and degenerate Age) I shall in the following Discourse endeavour to do these four Things.

First, I shall endeavour to shew in *general* the Perpetual Obligation of observing *one* Day in every Week, as a Day of God's *public* Worship and Service.

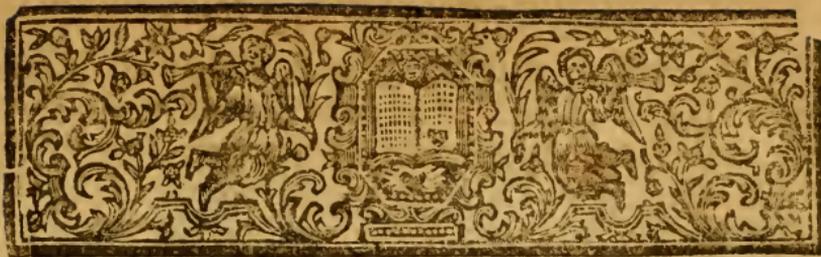
Second'y, I shall give an Account of the Change of the Day from the *seventh* to the *first* Day of the Week.

INTRODUCTION.

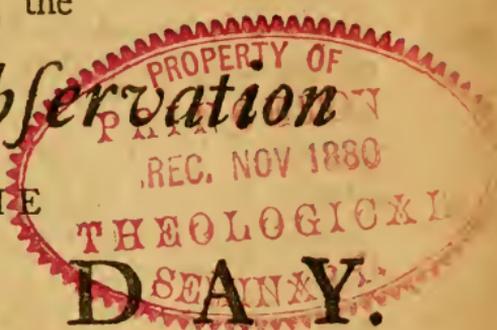
Thirdly, I shall lay before the Reader the *many* and *great* Blessings and Advantages which will redound to the *Publick*, as well as to *private Persons*, from a Devout and Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*. And in the

Fourth and last Place, I shall consider the *particular Manner* in which this *Holy Day* ought to be observed by all Christians. Which points, as they are of the greatest Consequence and Importance to the true Happiness of Mankind; ought not to be *slightly* and *superficially* handled, but to be *thoroughly* and *seriously* treated upon, as with God's Assistance, they shall be in the following Chapters.





A
DISCOURSE
Concerning the
Religious Observation
OF THE
LORD'S DAY.



CHAPTER I.

*Concerning the Obligation of observing one Day
in every Week, as a Day of God's Public
Worship and Service.*



BEFORE I proceed to the Consideration of this point, I think it necessary to premise, that I shall not at present enter into the Dispute, by what Name and Character *that* Day ought to be called, which I am now enquiring about; whether *Sunday*, the *Sabbath*, or the *Lord's Day*: Since it is all one to my Purpose by what Name the Day is called, provided it be
B 3 duly

duly observed in that Pious and Religious Manner that it ought to be. And indeed though the *Lord's Day* is the *true* Appellation of the first Day of the Week which the Christian World observes, and is so called by St *John*, *Rev.* i. 10. yet on the other Side I profess I see no Harm in calling *this* Day by the Name of *Sunday*, or the *Sabbath Day*; and I think the Charge of *Gentilism* or *Judaism*, which hath too often been laid on those who express the *Lord's Day* by either of the two other names, is very *rash* and *unchristian*(e). For as to the *first*, it is certain that the *Lord's Day* was called by the Name of *Sunday* by several of the early Writers of the (f) Church, because it happened on *that* Day of the Week which the Heathens dedicated to the *Sun*; and therefore as it was best known to them by *that* Character, the antient Fathers commonly make use of it in their *Apologies* to the heathen Governours; and it seldom passeth under any other Name in the *Imperial* Edicts of the first Christian Emperours. Besides, as an excellent Author well observes (g), it may properly retain *that* Name as it is dedicated to the Honour of our blessed Saviour; who is by the Prophet called the *Sun of Righteousness*, *Mal.* iv. 2. And as to the *other* Appellation, *viz.* that of the *Sabbath*, it properly signifies *Rest*, and is a Term of very large and general Signification: Sometimes importing the *seventh* Day of the Week, which the *Jews* observed as a Day of Rest from bodily Labour; in which Sense the Word *Sabbath* is most commonly used in the *New Testament*: at other Times the Space of a *Week*, as *Matt.* xxviii. 1. In
the

(e) Vid. Heylin's History of the Sabbath, Part II. chap. ii. §. 12.

(f) Τῆ τῆ ἡλικ λεγομένη ἡμέρα, πάντων κατὰ πόλεις ἢ ἀγροὺς μενούσων ἕπι τὸ αὐτὸ συνέλευσθαι γινέσθαι, &c. Just. Mart. Apolog. i. *Diem Solis lætitiæ indulgemus.* Tertullian. *Apol.* cap. 13.

(g) Nelson on the Festivals, p. 18. See also Bishop Beveridge's Thoughts on Religion, 8vo, Part II. p. 324.

the End of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first Day of the Week, in the Original it is εἰς μίαν σαββάτων (b). And in Luke xviii. 12, where the Pharisee boasting of himself, saith, I fast twice in the Week, in the Greek it is rendered ἡμετέρας δις τὴν σαββάτων. And in Lev. xxv. 8. the Space of seven Years is stiled a Sabbath; and the seventh Year in which the Land was to lie fallow by the Command of God, is likewise called by the same Name, Lev. xxv. 3, 4. And in general, the Word Sabbath may be applied to any Day of Rest whatsoever, that is dedicated (i) to the Worship and Service of God. Thus we find that the Feast of Trumpets, which was to be celebrated upon the first Day of the seventh Month, on what Day of the Week soever it should fall; is called a Sabbath, Lev. xxiii. 24. And so likewise the great Day of Atonement, which was always to be kept on the tenth Day of the same Month, is described by this Name, It shall be unto you a Sabbath of Rest, v. 27, 32. And several other Festivals are also called by this Name, as may be observed in the same Chapter.

Waving therefore all Disputes about the Propriety of those Terms by which the first Day of the Week is expressed, I proceed to the main Thing proposed, viz. to shew the perpetual Obligation of observing one Day in every Week as a Day of God's public Worship and Service. I shall first treat of the particular Observation of one Day in seven. And secondly, of consecrating this Day, thus set apart, to the more immediate Worship and Service of God. And,

B 4

First,

(b) Ut שבתות Hebrais, ita σαββάτα Hellenistis, Multitudinis numero plerumque dicuntur non ipsi dies otio dati, sed tota dierum hebdomas, ab unius Sabbati initio, ad initium alterius; quarum dierum prima, eam ab rem vocatur μία σαββάτων ex Hebraismo. *Græc. in loc.*

(i) Ad festos omnes dies translatum nomen (Sabbatum) est, ut docent Chryf. in Hom. 40. in Matt. Theophil. & Euthym, in Cap. Lucæ 6. Ribera de Templo, lib. v. cap. i.

First, As to the Particular Obligation of observing *one Day* in every Week. Now the Arguments by which this Obligation will be proved, I shall consider in the Order and Method following.

First, It must be confessed that the *Law of Nature* hath made no Determination in this Matter. We are indeed required by that Law to serve and worship God, and consequently to separate some Part of our Time, for the more Regular and Solemn Performance of this Duty; as will be fully shewn in the Sequel. And because we are liable to *continual* Wants and Necessities, and are *daily* receiving Mercies and Blessings from God; therefore these Times of Divine Service and Worship ought to have a *frequent* Return in the Course of their Observation. Thus much the Law of Nature *plainly* requires (*k*). But what *particular* Measure of our Time is to be appropriated to this End, is a Thing which *that* Law hath left Indifferent. In such a Case then, if God hath made no Revelation of His Will and Pleasure about it, the Public Authority in every Country must determine the Matter. And therefore since in all Christian States, *one Day* in *seven* is set apart for this Purpose, by the Command of the Government; it ought to be duly observed by all their Subjects. And the Reason of this is plain; because whatsoever is left Indifferent by the Divine Laws, may very justly be made the Subject Matter of Human Constitutions (*l*). So that supposing there were no other Authority for the Observation of this Day, but only the Order and Appointment of our Governours in Church and State; this *alone* would be sufficient to enforce the Obligation of this Duty upon us: And to use the Words of an
Excellent

(*k*) *Vid.* Puffendorf's Law of Nature and Nations, Book II. chap. iv. with the Notes upon the Place. Woolaston's Religion of Nature delineated, p. 124, 125.

(*l*) See Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, Book III. Bishop Stillingfleet's *Irenicum*, Part I. chap. ii. § 4 and 5.

Excellent Prelate, (m) " He that defrauds God Almighty of *that* Portion of Time, which by the Law of his Country is solemnly consecrated or devoted to Him; may be truly said to sin against God in that Matter, as well as to transgress a Canon, or an *Act of Parliament.*" But this is not all: For in the

Second Place, The Observation of *one* Day in every Week is *expressly* required by God Himself, to be celebrated in Memory of the Creation of the (n) World. Thus *Gen. ii. 1, 2, 3. The Heavens and the Earth were made, and on the Seventh Day God rested from His Work which he had made; and God blessed the Seventh Day and sanctified it. i. e.* He separated it from the *other* six Days for *holy* and *sacred* Uses: For *that is* the constant Sense of this Word, when applied to particular Times and Seasons (o). For as to the Interpretation

(m) Archbishop *Sharp's* Sermons, Vol. IV. p. 260, 261. See the Place.

(n) *Sabbatum ab Initio Mundi destinatum est ad cultum Dei. Luther. Loc. Commun. per Fabricium, Class. iii. p. 85.*

(o) *Sanctificare Sabbatum non est otio ignavo Diem conterere, sed vitare peccata, & opera sancta Sabbato peragere. Aliter Deus, aliter Homines Sabbatum sanctificare dicuntur. Deus Sabbatum sanctificat, quia illud Cultui Divino destinat; Homines illud sanctificant, quando illud in usum a Deo destinatum referunt. Ursini Explicat. Catechet. Part. III. Quæst. 13. Sabbatum sanctificavit Deus, i. e. a Profano usu segregavit, & Cultui Divino dedicavit. Segregavit ex vulgi numero, solennem ac sanctum & venerabilem haberi voluit. Munster. Fag. Oleast. Ainsw. & Vatabl. in Gen. ii. 3. Ut sanctifices (Sabbatum) i. e. Divino cultui totaliter applices. Lyra in Exod. xx. 8. Ut celebres, habens pro sancto & consecrato cultui Dei. Malvend. ibid. Ut separes illum ab aliis diebus profanis, abstinendo ab operibus, & cultui Divino applices. Hæc enim duo importat Chadas. Oleaster, ibid. Ut sanctè colas, id fit lætâ gratâque Recordatione Mundi a Deo conditi. Grot. ibid. Sanctis operibus vult transigi; & cum dicit, Memento ut sanctifices, insinuat veram Sabbati Celebrationem non consistere præcipuè in externa quiete, &c. sed in Meditatione Sanctificationis, &c. Ut Sanctifices; vacando ab opere Servili, ut otium tibi sit Divinis rebus operam dandi. Gerundensis & Menochius apud Poli Synops. Crit. ibid.*

Interpretation of this Text given by a Learned Prelate, viz. *That the Text only tells us, what God did Himself, not what He commanded us to do; God may do one Thing Himself, and yet command us to do the contrary (p); it is of no Force.* For God is not any where said to *sanctify* the Sabbath, with regard to His own *holy* and *sacred* Behaviour thereupon; for in that Respect, every Moment of His Eternal Duration is *equally* sanctified by Him: nor *barely* by His resting from His Works upon *that* Day, as this Author supposes, (q); but by setting it apart to all Mankind, for His Public Worship and Service: which is the only *true* Notion of the *Sanctification* of the Sabbath, as is evident from the Passages just now cited in the Margin, and will more fully appear from what shall be said hereafter. So that *here* is laid an Obligation upon all Men, and that by the *express* Command of God Himself, to observe the *Seventh* Day in Remembrance of the *Creation*: That so all Men might have a *stated* Opportunity of praising God for the Glory of His Works; of reflecting upon their Condition as *created, dependent* Beings; and of considering the Duties and Obligations consequent thereupon. So that tho' we *Christians* are not bound (as will hereafter be clearly shewn) to keep the Particular Day of the *Jewish Sabbath*, because that depended entirely upon the Law of *Moses*, which is now of no Force; yet the Duty of observing *one* Day in *seven* is obligatory upon all Men, who acknowledge the *Bible* to be the Word of God: Because God Himself

hath

(p) Archbishop Bramball's Works, p. 911.

(q) Non potest dici Deus benedixisse diei septimo, & illum sanctificasse nisi per Sabbati Institutionem; non alium enim in finem est benedictus ille dies, nisi ut Dei cultui consecraretur, in Memoriam Quietis Divinæ ab operationibus Creationis: Dicitur ergo Deus *benedixisse & sanctificasse*, quia sanctificando benedixit, a profano & communi usu segregando, & divino cultui dedicando, ut deinceps ab hominibus sanctificaretur per exercitia publica pietatis & solennem Dei cultum. *Turretin. Institut. Part. II. Quæst. 13. p. 87.*

hath expressly enjoined it to be observed in Memory of the *Creation*; and that, *many hundred Years* before the Law of *Moses* was established. And this Sanctification of the Sabbath from the very *Beginning of the World*, was a most wise and necessary Provision for preserving the Regard and Reverence which is due to God; because it naturally “ puts Men in mind of the “ Obligation which lies upon them to celebrate the “ Divine Perfections, which may be learned from “ God’s Works, and the Necessity of some solemn “ and separate Time for this Religious Worship,” as a very learned Prelate has well remarked (*r*).

This seems to be a very *plain* and *clear* Account of this Matter; but it will be more clear and plain, when we consider the Weakness of that Argument which is urged against it: and that is, that *these Words* are here spoken by Way of *Anticipation*; *i. e.* that God is here said to appoint the Observation of the *Sabbath*, because He designed that it should be observed at the *giving of the Law*; so that what was *then* commanded, is *figuratively* said to have been required before, even at the Conclusion of the great Work of *Creation*. And indeed it must not be denied, that not only some of the *Jewish* Writers, but also several learned Modern Critics come into this Sense (*s*). But however it is a manifest Force upon the Words, and such an ill Construction, as cannot be charged upon any Writer of good Sense and Understanding; for do but observe what an odd Sentence
it

(*r*) Bishop *Kidder*’s Preliminary Argument to the Book of *Genesis*, p. 5.

(*s*) *Vid.* Poli Synops. Critic. in Gen. ii. 3. Synopsis Purioris Theologiæ, per *Poliandrum, Rivetum, &c.* Disputat. xxi. § 13. *Heylin*’s History of the *Sabbath*, Part I. chap. i. § 2, 3, 4. Archbishop *Bramhall*’s Works, p. 911, 912. *Limborchi* Theolog. lib. 5. cap. 28. § 8.

it makes (t). *Moses here* says, that God rested from His Works on the *Seventh Day* and *sanctified* it; and *all the Reason* is because about 2500 Years after, when He gave His Laws to the Children of *Israel*, He commanded them to keep and observe *this Day*. An Account very *strange* and *incoherent*, and which is plainly repugnant to the *express* Words of Scripture, which says *that God blessed the Seventh Day and sanctified it, because that in it He rested (u) from all His Work, Gen ii. 2.* So that as long as *this Text* remains in the Bible, it will be a *Demonstrative Proof* of this Point, that all Men to whom the Holy Scriptures have been revealed, are bound to observe the *Sabbath Day* in Memory of the *Creation (x)*; and as
a Time

(t) They do indeed in saying *this*. make *Moses* an *Admirable Orator* as well as an *Historian*; for they make him speak such *strange* Figures, and tell his Story in such a Way, as never any good Author did since his Time. ——— But this is our Comfort, that tho' some of the *Jews* talk after this Manner; yet the *Discreetest*, and those that are *Incomparably* the best and most judicious Writers of that Nation, are of another Opinion, and own the Institution of the *Sabbath* to have been from the very *Creation* of the World. *Archbishop Sharp's Sermons, Vol. IV. p. 271, 272.*

(u) The *Blessing* and *Sanctifying* being (in *Gen. ii. 1, 2, 3.*) subjoined to God's *Seventh Day's Rest*, as *that* is to His perfecting His Work; and *this* to His finishing the *Heavens* and the *Earth*, and all the *Host* of them; and the same copulative (*and*) being used all the Way, without the least Mark of any Difference with regard to the Point in *Dispute*: To believe that this *Blessing* and *Sanctifying* (as well as the other Particulars) were *actual*, and bear the same Relation *they* do, that is, to *Mankind*; is to believe what suits best with the *Nature of History* and the *Circumstances* of the Place. From this Bottom we ought not to stir, without some *Urgent Reason* for it, which is what I could never yet meet with *Hill on the fourth Commandment, Discourse I. p. 27.* Quomodo autem sanctificavit? (Sabbatum) non solum decreto & voluntate, sed reipsa; quia illum diem (ut non pauci volunt, & probabile est) mandavit primis Parentibus sanctificandum. *Zanchius in quartum Decalogi præceptum.*

(x) The first Institution of the *Sabbath* was on purpose that Men *periodically* celebrating the *Creation* of God, might thereby
be

a Time of Reflecting upon the Duties and Obligations which arise therefrom. And it is a vain Attempt of a very (y) earned Person (who opposes the *Antemosaic* Institution of the Sabbath) to destroy the Force of this Reasoning by alledging that God did not sanctify the Sabbath till after the Delivery of the *Israelites* from the *Egyptian* Bondage: but that *then* it was very proper for *Moses* to set before them the *History of the Creation, and God's resting from His Work on the Seventh Day*, that it might be perpetually retained in their Memories as a powerful Means of securing them against Idolatry, and preserving them in the Worship of the true God. For if this had been *all*, and the Sanctification of the Sabbath had concerned the Jews *only*, it would have been sufficient to this End to have inserted it into the Body of his Laws, (as we find done by him in *Exod. xx.* and other

be preserved from Irreligion and Idolatry. *Deut. iv. 19.* Dr *Clarke's* Sermons, Vol. X. p. 53, 54. The Moral Part of the Sabbath, *i. e.* so far as it is a Commandment enjoining the Virtue of Humanity, or of allowing Time to those who are under our Power, to rest from the Labours of their worldly Employments; and so far as it is, according to the *Original Reason of it's Institution in Paradise*, a Time set apart for the Religious Commemoration of God's Work of Creation, and praising Him for the Things that He has made, and serving and worshipping Him, as the Maker of all Things; This Moral Part of the Sabbath, I say, is of *eternal* and *unchangeable* Obligation, *Clarke, ibid.* p. 59. The Ends and Reasons of this (the 4th) Commandment, are, *first*, that Men might contemplate and commemorate the Work of Creation. *For in Six Days the Lord made the Heaven and the Earth*; — for this Reason the Sabbath is a *perpetual Covenant*, *Exod. xxxi. 16, 17.* And not to the Children of *Israel only*, but from the *very Beginning of the World*, was *this* a Sign and Covenant appointed of God, and is therefore of a *Moral Nature* throughout all Generations. Dr *Clarke's Exposition of the Catechism*, p. 173, 174. This Sense of *Gen. ii. 3.* is (as will be shewn hereafter) followed by our Church in the Homily concerning the Time and Place of Prayer, Part I. and by the Generality of Learned Divines both Antient and Modern.

(y) Spencer de Legib. Hebræorum, Edit. Chappelow, lib. i. cap. 5. § 12. p. 87.

other Places) and besides, we cannot imagine but that so wise and judicious an Author as *Moses* was, would have related this Matter in it's proper Place, (*viz. the Redemption of the Israelites*) and not in a History of about 2500 Years extent, and in which the Chronology is very clear and exact, have *immediately* subjoined the Sanctification of the Sabbath, to his Account of God's finishing His Works of the Creation in six Days, and resting on the seventh; as if he had designed *on purpose* to confirm us in the Belief, that the Sabbath was instituted from the very Beginning of the World: Which no Writer of tolerable Sense and Capacity would, I humbly think, otherwise have done. And it is no sufficient Answer to this Argument to urge that the Holy Scripture is silent as to the *Patriarchs* Observation of the *Sabbath Day*. For it is no *strange* Thing at all, that in a History of so *large* an Extent of Time, as about 2500 Years, and yet contained in so *small* a *Compass*, as that of the Bible is from the *Creation* of the World to the *giving of the Law*; the *Chief* Design of which is to shew that God is the *Creator* and Governour of all Things; to manifest the Wonders of His Providence; and to set forth the Genealogy and Succession of the *Jews*: I say, it is no strange Thing at all, that in a History of *this* Kind, many Material Things relating to the Religious Observations and Behaviour of the Antient *Patriarchs* should be omitted. For what a very excellent Prelate hath observed concerning the History of *Moses* before the *Flood*, is true also with regard to the Remaining Part of it, till the Giving of the Law; *viz.* "The Account is very *short*, and conveys but *little* Knowledge to us of the "Religion of those Times (z). And therefore it
can

(z.) Bishop *Sherlock's* Use and Intent of Prophecy, &c. Discourse IV. p. 89. *Quamvis in vita Patriarcharum non fiat mentio expressa Sabbati ab ipsis observati, non sequitur non fuisse cognitum*

can never be *certainly* concluded that the *Patriarchs* did not observe the *Sabbath Day*, merely because the Holy Scripture makes no mention of it. And yet if it were never so certain that they did not keep *this* Day (the Contrary to which is exceedingly probable (*a*), as will be seen presently) yet it will by no means follow from hence, that they were not obliged thereto, as some have imagined. For the Law of the *Sabbath* being *clear* and *express*, as was before taken Notice of, the Authority and Obligation of that Law can never be disannulled and laid aside, by the Neglect of any *Men* how *pious* and *good* soever to keep and observe it.

What hath been laid down under this Head, is, I think, a very sufficient Proof, that there was from the Beginning of the World *one* Day in every Week appointed of God to be kept Holy; and that in Memory of the great Work of *Creation*. For tho' I do not deny but that some Things may be spoken in
Scripture

cognitum vel observatum omnino ab ipsis, quia *compendiosa est Narratio*, in quâ non necesse est omnia reperiri quæ ad ipsos pertinebant. Satis fuit Spiritui sancto ea attingere quæ faciebant ad Ejus Scopum, nimirum confirmare promissiones factas ipsis de Semine Benedicto, & texere Genealogiam ipsorum ad veritatem historię cognoscendam; sic nulla mentio sit Sabbati observati tempore Judicium & Samuelis; unde tamen, quis perperam colligeret, non observatum fuisse. Secundo non legimus Patriarchas ulla stata tempora observasse ad cultum publicum Dei, & tamen Pietas ipsorum nos dubitare vetat certos dies habuisse sacros & solennes cultui Dei consecratos. Tales autem dies non potuerunt commodiores esse, quam dies septimi hebdomales, qui a Deo peculiari ratione benedicti & sanctificati erant ad quietem hominis ad instar quietis Dei. *Turretin. Institut. Part II. Quæst. XIII. p. 91.*

(*a*) Non dubito primos homines populi Dei *hunc diem* coluisse jam inde ab Adamo. *Malevenda* in *Gen. ii, 3.* Neque enim, Adam in Paradyso, si in Innocentia mansisset, vixisset otiosus; Sabbato die docuisset filios, ornasset Deum meritis Laudibus, publica prædicatione & se & alios contemplatione operum Dei excitasset ad gratiarum Actionem. *Lutheri Loc. Commun. Class iii. p. 85.* See also Mr *Hill* on the Fourth Commandment, Discourse the First, in which many Objections relating to this Matter are fully and distinctly answered.

Scripture by way of *Anticipation*, and that Text in *Exod. xvi. 34.* where *Aaron* having fill'd a Pot with *Manna*, is said to have laid it up before the *Testimony* to be kept, may perhaps be so understood, as *Dr Heylin (b)* contends; because as yet, there was no *Ark* nor *Tabernacle* made, and consequently no *Testimony* before which to keep it; yet it was but in the following Year, that the *Ark* and *Testimony* were finished and the *Tabernacle* reared up: and therefore *Moses* having mentioned *Aaron's* filling the Pot with *Manna*, might very naturally at the same Time (*c*) take notice of his placing it before the *Testimony*; because he *actually* did so in a very little Time after, when the *Ark* and *Testimony* were prepared. And besides, *Moses* does not say in the Text, that *Aaron* placed the Pot of *Manna* before the *Testimony*, *immediately* upon his filling it. But sure it must be a very *bold* and *unexampled* Liberty of Speech for *Moses* to say, that God *sanctified* the *Sabbath Day* upon His *finishing the Works of Creation*; and yet, that this Commandment was given only to the *Jews*, and was not to be in Force for above 2500 Years. But yet, if even this could be supposed, there would then certainly have been something laid down in the Commandment itself as the Ground and Reason thereof, which made it *peculiar* to the *Jews*; as we find *expressly* done in *Deut. v. 15.* when God appointed the *Sabbath* to *that People* only: for *there* the Reason of that Appointment is plainly given, *viz.* because *the Lord had delivered them from the Land of Egypt.* Whereas in *Gen. ii.* the *only Thing* that is mentioned as the Reason of the *Sabbath* is this, *viz.* because on *that Day* God rested from all His Work; which is a Reason that all Mankind are concerned in, as well as the *Jews*, and was in

equal

(b) History of the Sabbath, Part I, Chap. i. §. 4.

(c) These (the Tables of God's Law) were given afterwards at Mount *Sinai* and there the *Ark* was made; but *Moses* rehearsed the Thing here, to make a *full End* of the History. *Ainsworth, in loc.*

equal Force and Obligation from the very Beginning of the World, as it was from the Time of the Law of *Moses*. And indeed this Argument for the *Antiquity* of the *Sabbath*, and the *Universality* of it's Obligation, drawn from the Reason laid down in *Gen. ii.* is so very *strong* and *cogent*, that the learned Doctor himself seems in great Measure to be sensible of the Force of it; by allowing that the Text (in *Gen. ii. 3.*) affords a sufficient Intimation of the *Equity* and *Reason* of the *Sabbath*, viz. God's resting on that Day, after all His Works that He had made (*d*). And that which renders it *highly* probable that the *Patriarchs* constantly observed *this* Day (notwithstanding the Silence of Holy Scripture) is, to say nothing of their great Piety and Regard to (*e*) God's Institutions, the Consideration of that Custom of computing Time by *Weeks*; by which Means the Memory of the *seven* Day's Work was preserved, by honouring the *seventh* Day, as *Grotius* expresses it (*f*). Which Custom prevailed *generally*, if not *universally*, in all Ages, and

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amongst

(*d*) *Heylin, ibid. chap. ii. §. 1.*

(*e*) The Command of the *Sabbath* was given by God to Mankind from the Beginning of the World. So *Moses* tells us, *Gen. ii. 2, 3.* and it is not to be doubted, but that accordingly such a *Sabbath* did continue to be observed, so long as any *Sense* of true Religion remained upon the Earth. *Archbishop Wake's Exposition of the Church Catechism, §. 16. p. 101.* Hoc ipsum (Sabbatum observatum fuisse a mundo condito) confirmat Pietas & Religio Patrum veterum, quia cum sit Juris naturalis & perpetui, ut certa tempora separentur ad solennem Dei cultum, fieri non potest quin Adamus & S. Patriarchæ dies aliquos sacros & solennes habuerint, quibus cultus Dei perageretur, in quibus Dei beneficiorum in Creatione cœli & terræ recordarentur. Et si qui fuerint tum dies sacri, consentaneum est Diem hunc a Deo institutum fuisse observatum, potius quam alios quoslibet dies de quibus Scriptura nihil dicit. Frustra regeritur alia potuisse eos habere tempora præter hunc diem. Nam cum hoc nusquam dicitur, eadem facilitate rejicitur quâ proponitur: Nec sine temeritate alia finguntur tempora quæ nusquam memorantur, & præteritur illud tempus cujus Sanctificationis ante Legem tam disertâ sit mentio. *Turretin Institut. Part II. Quest. xiii. p. 89, 90.*

(*f*) *Grot. de Veritat. Relig. Christianæ, lib. i. cap. xvi.*

amongst the most antient Nations, (g) of which we have any Records left; and cannot rationally be derived from any other Source than *Patriarchal* Tradition. This Matter cannot be better expressed than in the Words of an excellent Prelate of our Church. “ What Account, says he, can be given of all the “ World’s computing their Time by *Weeks*; that is, “ counting *seven* Days and *then* beginning again: I “ say, what possible Account can be given of this, but “ that *original* Distribution of Time that God had ob- “ served in the Works of the Creation, and had “ delivered to the *first* Parents of Mankind, and “ *they* to their Children? For Men to reckon Time “ by *Days* and *Nights*, is obvious to Sense; nay, and “ to compute Time by *Months* and *Years*, hath a suf- “ ficient Foundation in it from *Nature*: for Man- “ kind cannot avoid the Observing the Course of the “ *Moon*, and of the *Sun*, which makes *Months* and “ *Years*. But why they should count *seven* Days, “ and then begin again, *That* hath no *Foundation* in “ Nature; but must be taught them from the *Tradition* “ of their Fathers, which could have no other Ori- “ ginal than *that* which I am now insisting upon. “ And

(g) Et intra septem dies peracti operis memoria servata, non apud *Græcos* tantum & *Italos*, honore diei septimi, quod ex *Joseph*, *Philone*, *Tibullo*, *Clem. Alexandrino*, & *Luciano* discimus, (nam de *Hebræis* notissimum est) sed & apud *Celtas* & *Indos*. quibus omnibus per *Hebdomadas* digesta tempora; quod nos docent *Pbi'ostratus*, *Dion Cassius*, *Justinus Martyr*, & vetustissima dierum nomina. *Grot. ibid. vide Annotat. ad loc.*

De septimo die sic loquitur *Aristobulus* Epistola ad *Ptolemaum* apud *Euseb.* Præpar. xiii. 12. Σάββατον ἀνάπαυσις διερμιννευεται (Sabbatum Quietem significat) Septimum autem Diem sanctum esse docent & *Hesiodus* ἡ Ἐβδομὴ ἱερὸν ἡμᾶρ. Et *Homerus* Ἐβδομάτη δ' ἠπίετα κατήλυθεν ἱερὸν ἡμᾶρ, i. e. Venit septimus dies sanctus. Et alibi, Ἐβδομον ἡμᾶρ ἔην, ἡ τῷ τελεεσοῦ ἀπάνια, i. e. Septimus dies erat in quo omnia perfecta sunt. Et *Linus*, Ἐβδομάτη δὴ οἱ (lege δ' ἡοῖ) τελεεστμένα πάντα τέτυκται; & rursus Ἐβδομη ἐν ἀμαρσίῃς ἡ Ἐβδομη ἐστὶ γενέθλη. Ἐβδομη ἐν ἀερότοις ἡ Ἐβδομη ἐστὶ τελείη. *Gataker* apud *Poli Synop. Critic. in Gen. ii. 3.*

“ And yet this Way of computing Time by a
“ Weekly Revolution, obtained throughout all the
“ World, as far as we can judge, from the very
“ Beginning of Time. That the *Patriarchs* did so,
“ some hundreds of Years before the Law of the
“ *Sabbath* was given to the *Children of Israel*, we
“ have sufficient Evidence from sundry Texts of
“ Scripture. That all the ancient Nations of which
“ we have any History, *Egyptians, Chaldeans, Greeks,*
“ *Romans*, nay, and the *Barbarous Nations* too ; I
“ say, that they did so likewise, is proved to us from
“ the ancientest Records that are extant about them.
“ This Practice now that had no Foundation in Na-
“ ture obtaining thus *universally* throughout the whole
“ World, and that from Time *immemorial*, is to
“ me a Demonstration that they had it from the
“ *first Parents* of Mankind, and that it was founded
“ in God's *Institution* of the *seventh* Day, being set
“ apart for his Service. (b).” Thus far that excel-
lent Prelate : and what he hath laid down in this Pas-
sage is I think a very sufficient Proof, at least it ren-
ders it *highly* probable, that the *Patriarchs* did from
the Beginning of the World observe the *Sabbath* Day ;
according to God's Appointment. And whereas it is
said by *Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Eusebius*, and
others of the ancient Writers of the Church, that
the *Patriarchs* who lived before the Time of *Moses*,
did not observe the *Sabbath* Day : This is not to be
understood of their holding religious Assemblies on the
seventh Day of every Week, as some very considerable
Authors have indeed imagin'd (i), but of their
keeping the *Sabbath* consider'd as a *Jewish* Festival ;

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which

(b) *Archbishop Sharp's Sermons, Vol. IV. p. 272, 273.*

(i) *Archbishop Bramhall's Works, p. 912, &c. Heylin's History of the Sabbath, Part I, chap. iii. Spencer de Leg. Hebr. lib. i. cap. v. §. 9. Vol. I. p. 73, 74. Dr Thomas Burnet, in Epist. secunda de Archæolog. Philosoph. ad calcem Tractat. de Archæologiis, p. 497, &c.*

(which was the only Point the ancient Fathers were concerned about; it being their Design to shew that Men were justified by Faith in God, and by the Covenant which God made with all Mankind in *Adam*, and afterwards renewed in *Abraham* without the Works of the *Jewish* (k) Law) or at least it is to be understood of a *rigid* and *strict* Resting upon that Day

(k) See particularly *Justin Martyr*, in *Dialog. cum Trypho*. Tertullian, *adv. Judæos*, *Cap. ii. & iv.* The Chief Objection against this Position seems to be this *viz.* that when the ancient Writers of the Church affirm that the Patriarchs who liv'd before the Times of *Moses* did not keep the Sabbath, it must be very absurd to suppose that they meant the Jewish Sabbath: For how could Men possibly observe an Institution before it was appointed? They must therefore hereby understand the *Sabbath*, which some Learned Men *vainly* imagine to be instituted by God from the Creation of the World: But this Objection will easily be removed, if we consider that the same Difficulty will occur in the Article of Circumcision; of which Institution there are not the least Footsteps to be found in Scripture 'till the Days of *Abraham*. And yet the same Fathers equally observe that the Patriarchs who lived and died several Hundred Years before the Appointment of Circumcision, were justified by God, tho' they were *Uncircumcised*; as the Reader will perceive if he will turn to the Passages of the Fathers, as they lie in the Authors I have now cited in the Margin. Which plainly shews that what those antient Writers say concerning the Patriarchs being justified without Circumcision, and the Observance of the *Sabbath*, hath no Relation at all to the Time and Season when those Institutions were enjoined, but to the Original Covenant which God made with all Mankind in *Adam* immediately after the Fall, of which Covenant Circumcision and the *Jewish Sabbath* were no Essential Parts and Conditions: which was the main Point they endeavoured always to prove in their Arguments against the *Jews*, who insisted upon the Necessity of observing those Ordinances with Regard to Salvation. To which we may add that the Fathers in the same Places frequently speak of the Patriarchs not keeping the *Sabbaths* in the plural Number, (by which as was before remarked (p. 7.) the *Jewish* Festivals are to be understood) and adjoin to them the other *express* Precepts and Institutions of the Law of *Moses*, without keeping of which they affirm (and that very truly) the Patriarchs of old were justified: Which is a Matter entirely foreign to their not celebrating the seventh Day in every Week. as God had commanded them, in Memory of the Creation.

And

Day after the Manner of the *Jews*; as a most learned Writer hath well observed (l).

But I am sensible there are two Objections, which may be made to this Argumentation; the *clear* Solution of which will fully establish the Truth of *that* Point which we are now upon.

The first Objection is this; that supposing it was the Custom of all Nations, and that from the most early Ages, to compute their Time by Weeks; yet *that* Custom might not be derived from any *Patriarchal* Tradition of the *Sabbath Day*, but rather as some learned Men think (m) from the Number of the *seven* Planets, which might be discovered in the Heavens from the very Beginning of Time. In answer to which we may observe,

First, That tho' the Use of *Astronomy* was very ancient among some Nations, and particularly the

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Egyptians

And moreover if the Fathers of the Church could have never so clearly demonstrated, that the *Antemosaic* Patriarchs did not in any wise keep a *Sabbath*, it would have been impertinent to have urged *that* in their Disputes with the *Jews*. For on Supposition that there had been no Sabbath appointed of God before the times of *Moses*, or if there were, that the Patriarchs had universally neglected the Celebration thereof; it would by no means follow from hence, that, when God had instituted the Sabbath by a clear and express Law, in *Exod. xx.* all Men were not strictly bound and obliged to observe it, unless it could be proved by some other Reasons and Arguments that their Obligations to such Observance was vacated and superseded.

(l) *Grotius in Acts xv. 21.*

(m) I suspect that the Foundation of *Weeks* was rather from the *Seven Planets*, than, from the Creation of the World in *seven* Days. *Monsieur Le Clerc's Notes on Grotius de Veritat, &c. lib. i. §. 16.* Though the most Ancient of the *Greek* Poets make mention of the *seventh* Day, as sacred to Religion, yet this might proceed either from some Traditionary Account among them of the *Mosaic* History of the Creation, or rather, as seems *more probable*, from the Order and Number of the *seven* Planets. *Dr Fiddes's Sermons, 8vo. Vol. II. p. 110.* Ex Gentibus quidam septimum similiter diem coluerunt, vel prisco usu vel Judæorum Imitatione, vel — aliam sorte ob causam scilicet ob septem Planetarum Revolutionem. *Synops. purior. Theolog. Disput. xxi.*

Egyptians and *Chaldeans*; yet it is certain, that among others, and even the *Greeks* themselves, it was of *later* Invention (*n*). And therefore it does not appear, that many of those Nations (who yet computed their Time by Weeks) did make any such Observations of the *Heavenly* Bodies, as to be a *sufficient* Ground for such Computation. Or if they did; why they might not have made the same Computation from any other Number of *seven*, which they might have discovered in *Nature*, and particularly from the Seven Stars in the *North* (which I am sure are much more obvious to common Apprehension, than the *Seven* Planets) no good Reason can be given. And indeed the great Folly and Weakness of building any Religious Observations upon the Mysteries of *Numbers* (notwithstanding many great Men have indulged themselves in such *vain* (*o*) Fancies) hath been largely and sufficiently exposed by the Learned Dr *Heylin* (*p*). By saying which, I do not deny what some very learned Men (*q*) have observed from *Herodotus* and other Writers, *viz.* that it was usual with some ancient Nations, and particularly the *Egyptians*, to consecrate the Days of their Week to the Seven Planets, and to Dignify them with their Names; which they might be very easily led to do, since the *Planets* were esteemed and honoured by them as Gods. I only deny that the Computation of Time by *Weeks* was only at the *First* derived from the Number of the Seven *Planets*: It being much more reasonable to think, that this

Manner

(*n*) *Vid.* Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacr. Book ii. chap. ii. Burnetii Archæologiæ cap. viii. p. 100, &c. cap. ix p. 149.

(*o*) See particularly concerning the *Mystery* of the Number *Seven*, *Cyprian*, de Exhortatione Martyrii, & de Spiritu Sancto. Dr Bound de Sabbato Veteris & Novi Testamenti, p. 124. *Practice of Piety*, 12mo. p. 206. &c. *Spencer de leg. Hebr. Lib. I. cap. 5. §. ult.* in Vol I. p. 96.

(*p*) *Hist. of Sabbath*, Part I. chap. i. §. 8. &c.

(*q*) *Spencer de leg. Heb. Vol. I. p. 88. Burnet in Epist. II. de Archæologiis Philosoph. p. 513.*

manner of computing Time was settled in the World for many Ages before the Science of Astronomy was in any Measure cultivated and improved, and the particular Days of the Week had *planetary* Denominations given to them. For there are no just Grounds to think, that the Days of the Week had any *planetary* Names and Titles affixed to them, so early as the Times of *Moses*, as Dr *Spencer* himself allows (r): Whereas we find it customary with the *Patriarchs* long before the Birth of *Moses* (and from them the Custom might easily descend to the several Nations of the Earth) to make this Distribution and Computation of their Time. *Vid. Gen. viii. 10, 12—xxix. 27.* But,

Secondly, Supposing it were more probable, that the Computation of Time by Weeks might be derived from the seven Planets, than from the same Number, which might be taken Notice of in any other Parts of *Nature*; yet that the Number of the Seven Planets was not in *Fact* the true Ground of this Computation, is very evident from hence; *viz.* that it was not only the Custom of all Nations to compute their Days by *Weeks*, but also at the same Time, to observe every *Seventh* Day, and keep it *holy*, as was just now remarked. Now tho' we should allow (which yet is very strange and hard to conceive) that all Nations of the World should agree in computing their Time by *Weeks* from the Order and Number of the Seven Planets, yet all the Wit of Mankind cannot find out the least Reason in *that* Number, for the Observation of *every Seventh* Day in the Week, and keeping it *holy*. And therefore since this Observation of *every seventh* Day prevailed throughout the World, as well as the Custom of computing their Time by Weeks; we must necessarily ascribe it to some other Ground and Original, which cannot rationally be conceived to be any Thing else than *Patriarchal* Tradition. But,

(r) *Spencer*, *ibid.*

Secondly; Admitting that the Custom of observing every *Seventh Day* prevailed throughout the World; yet it is farther objected, that it can never be proved that *this* Custom was derived from the *Patriarchal* Tradition of the *Sabbath*; because it is at least *very doubtful*, whether the *Seventh Day* which all Nations are said to have observed was the *Seventh Day of every Week*, or the *Seventh Day of every (s) Month*, which was consecrated among the *Greeks* to the Honour of *Apollo* (as other Days of the Month were to other Gods) and upon which the Ceremonies of the $\Theta\alpha\rho\rho\upsilon\eta\lambda\acute{\iota}\alpha$ and (t) $\Pi\upsilon\alpha\nu\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\eta\zeta$ were performed. But the Answer to this Objection will be very short and easy. And

First, Supposing it were doubtful which that *Seventh Day* was, which the *Greek Writers* say was kept Holy; whether the *Sabbath Day* properly speaking, or the *seventh Day of the Month* that was consecrated to *Apollo*; yet *this* Doubt cannot extend to many *ancient* and *distant*, and even *barbarous* Nations, who had no Correspondence with the *Greeks*, and yet did all of them observe the *Seventh Day*: Which they could not possibly do by Virtue of the *Grecian* Laws relating to their Festivals; but must draw that Observation from some other *Authority* and *Original*. And besides, since the most *ancient* and *distant* Nations, the *Barbarous* as well as the *Polite*, computed their Time by Weeks, as was before remarked; it will remain an insuperable Difficulty upon

(s) They who make some of these Allegations, (*viz.* concerning the Heathens Observation of the *Seventh Day* as *Festival*) do mistake the Day of the *Month* for the Day of the *Week*. Archbishop *Bramhall's* Works, p. 908. See also *Heylin's* History of the *Sabbath*. Part I. chap. iv. §. 8. Bishop *Stillingfleet's* *Irenicum*, Part I, chap. v. p. 97.

(t) If the Reader hath a Mind to know the Meaning of those Words, and the Ceremonies performed in those Festivals, let him consult Archbishop *Potter's* *Greek Antiquities*, Book ii. chap. xx. p. 400, 428.

upon them, who resolve the Observation of the Seventh Day into the *Grecian* Practice and Custom, to give any *just* and *rational* Account of the Foundation and Ground of *that* Computation: Since there is no doubt at all to be made, but that the Custom of *computing their Time by Weeks*, and that of *observing every Seventh Day* (both which prevailed *equally* in all Ages and Nations of the World) were derived from the *same* Fountain and Original. But,

Secondly, It is very clear and evident, that the *Seventh Day*, which was *observed* and held *sacred* by all Nations, and in all Ages of the World, was the *Seventh Day of every Week*, and not *that* of the *Month* as dedicated to *Apollo*; for *this* very plainly appears not only from the *computing their Time by Weeks*, (which seems to have a necessary Connexion with the *Observation* of the *Seventh Day*, as I just now hinted) but also from the *Account* which many ancient Writers give us of *that* Observation. Thus *Josephus* speaking of this Matter, says, there is no City or Nation, *Greek* or *Barbarian*, in which the Custom of Resting on the *Seventh Day* is not preserved, as it is among the *Jews* (u). The same Thing was taken Notice of before him by *Philo Judeus*, who speaking of the *Seventh Day*, says, It is a Festival celebrated not only in *one* City or Country, but throughout the *Whole* (x) World. Now it is well known to every Body that the *Seventh Day*, which was kept by the *Jews*, was the *seventh Day of the Week*, which they called their *Sabbath*, and which they kept by Virtue of the *Fourth Commandment*: And therefore since according to *Philo* and *Josephus*, the *Gentiles* observed *every* *Seventh*

(u) Οὐδ' ἔστιν ἡ πόλις Ἑλλήνων, ἡδεπσέν, ἡδὲ βάρβαρος ἡδὲ ἔν ἔθνη, ἔθνα μὴ τὸ, τ' ἐβδομάδ' ἢν ἀργαμέν ἡμῶν τὸ ἔθος ἡ διαπεφοίτηκε. Joseph. adv. Apion. lib. ii. cap. xxix.

(x) Εορτὴ γὰρ ἡ μιστὴ πόλεως ἢ χάρας ἐστὶν ἀλλὰ τῷ παντὶς. Philo. de Vita Mosis, lib. ii.

venth Day, and kept it Holy, as the *Jews* did; it is very plain that it must be the Seventh Day of every *Week*, and not *that* of the *Month* (which was sacred to *Apollo*) as some have imagined. And this is farther demonstrable from those Passages of the *Greek* Poets, before mentioned (y); who give this as the Reason why the *Seventh Day* was celebrated and kept Holy, because *all Things were made and finished on that Day*: Which is a Reason that, I am sure, hath not the least Relation to the *Grecian* Festivals observed on the Seventh Day of the Month in Honour of *Apollo*, but is plainly Declarative of the Original Custom of observing the Sabbath Day in Memory of the Creation; because as *Moses* expresses it, *God rested on that Day from all His Work which he had created and made.* Gen. ii. 2. And the *Universality* of this Notion and Practice is often taken Notice of by *Philo*, *Josephus*, and other Authors; and is made Use of by them as an Argument to shew, how the *Pagans* had borrowed their Customs from the *Hebrews*: Though, as an Excellent Divine rightly judges, they might better have said, how *both* had borrowed from the same *common* Fountain of *Patriarchal* (z) *Tradition*. And it will be no Objection at all to this; that, as a most Learned Writer truly intimates (a), it will be very difficult to determine in what Manner the ancient *Pagans* observed the *Seventh Day*, and kept it *holy*; whether by any Public Religious Custom, or by some Private Superstition. It is sufficient to my Purpose, that as they computed their Time by *Weeks*, so they *peculiarly* honoured the Seventh Day in some Respect or other; and that in Memory of the *Creation*, and because all Things were made and finished on *that Day*. And indeed,

(y) See above p. 18.

(z) Archdeacon *Waterland's* first Charge to the Clergy of *Middlesex*, 1731. p. 42. See the Place.

(a) Bishop *Stillingfleet's* *Irenicum*, lib. i. cap. v. p. 97.

deed, as a very learned Bishop of our Church well remarks, " It appears that the Observation of the *Seventh* " Day is a very fit Matter to be fixed by some " *sacred and perpetual Law*, and that from the *first* " *Creation*: Because their being then no other Method for conveying down Knowledge, besides " *Oral Tradition*; it seems as highly congruous to *that* " State as it is agreeable to the Words in *Genesis*, " to believe that God should *then* have appointed *one* " Day in *seven* for commemorating the *Creation*, " and for acknowledging the Great Creator of all " Things (*b*)."

And thus I think it is very *clear and evident*, that the *Sabbath Day* was observed from the Beginning of the World; and that in virtue of God's Command, which *expressly* required that it should be kept and celebrated in Memory of the *Creation*.

Thirdly, We may further take notice, that God in a *particular* Manner commanded the *Jews* to observe the *Sabbath Day*; and in many Places of Scripture is very much displeas'd and offended with them for their Neglect of it. Thus, *Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.* *Exod. xx. 8.* and again, *Keep the Sabbath Day to sanctify it.* *Deut. v. 12.*

It is true indeed, these were Commandments that were given to the *Jews*, and may therefore be said not at all to concern us *Christians*. And so far it is certain, that as the *Sabbath* is a *Jewish Law*, we are not oblig'd by it; and consequently not bound to observe the *Jewish Sabbath*, as will be seen hereafter in it's proper Place. But we are oblig'd to Sanctify *one Day in seven* by the Command of God, as I have before shewn, in Memory of the *Creation*: And moreover, our Blessed Saviour hath laid the same Obligation upon us, by *adopting* the *Ten Commandments* into the *Moral Law* of His Gospel, and making no Ex-
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ception to *that* of the *Fourth*. This is plain from His Answer to the Young Man, *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments: Matt. xix. 17.* And that by *these* are meant the *Ten Commandments*, is very evident, because our Saviour instances in several of them, *ver. 18, 19.* I am well aware, there hath been great Dispute upon this Passage of Scripture, and many curious Enquiries raised therefrom; and particularly, why our Lord, when He plainly referred to the *Ten Commandments*, mentioned *only* those of the Second Table? But I shall not spend much Time in the Consideration of them. If any one hath a Mind to be fully acquainted with those Niceties, let him consult the Commentators upon the Place. At present I shall take occasion to observe, that the Weakness of those Mens Reasoning is very great, who would infer from *that* Passage that Religion consists *entirely* in Moral Righteousness, and that the Duties of the Second Table *only* are of necessary Obligation; since there is nothing more usual in Scripture, as well as in all other Writings, than (*c*) *Synecdoche Partis pro Toto, i. e.* the expressing the *whole* of any Thing by a *Part* of it. Nay, there are innumerable Passages in Holy Scripture, where Religion is signified and described by one single *Grace* and *Virtue*: In the *Old Testament* commonly by the *Knowledge* or *Remembrance* of God. *Prov. xxx. 2. Eccl. xii. 1.* and very often by the *Fear* of God, as in the Book of *Job*, the *Proverbs*, and the *Psalms*. And in the *New Testament* Religion is expressed by *Faith* in God and Christ, and by the *Love* of Them. *Heb. xi. 6. and Rom. viii. 28. & passim.* And our Blessed Saviour well knew the Person
to

(c) Christus hic tantum memorat præcepta secundæ Tabulæ: non quod hæc præceptis primæ Tabulæ sunt potiora; sed quod homini essent faciliora & notiora, ut inde argueret superbiam Pharisæicam: Sub illis tamen Synecdochicè ista intelligi vult, Argumento a minore ad majus, cum longè devinctior Deo sit homo quam proximo. *Luc. Brugens. in loc.*

to whom He spake, and that He was too well acquainted with the *Ten Commandments* to stand in need of a particular Recital of them. And to those, who ask why our Blessed Saviour, when He repeated some of the *Ten Commandments*, mentioned *only* those of the Second Table, and none of the First, we may briefly return this Answer, *viz.* That tho' it is certain that the Laws of the First Table are *equally* binding and necessary, as those of the Second, yet our Saviour might choose to instance at that Time *only* in the latter; and that for these two Reasons.

First, That He might let us know, that the great Duties of *Righteousness* and *Charity* towards our Neighbour are a Main and Principal Part of Religion, and one of the greatest Proofs and Evidences which we can give of our *Love* to (*d*) God; as the Apostle hath well observed, *He that loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?* *John* iv. 20. in which Sense St Paul, when speaking of the Love of our Neighbour, saith that *Love is the fulfilling of the Law.* *Rom.* xiii. 10. And secondly, Our Blessed Saviour might do *this*, the more effectually to convince the *Jews* from their own Law of that great Error and Mistake which they had fallen into; *viz.* of placing Religion in a Rigorous Observation of the *Sabbath*, and in the External Parts of Piety and Devotion, and in imagining that their great Zeal in these Particulars would atone for the Neglect of Moral Duties: Which was a Matter that our Lord often reproved them for in the Holy Gospel (*e*); as the Prophets had also done before him

(*d*) Observatione dignum est, iterum iterumque in Novo Testamento facta mentione totius Legis in Secunda tantum Tabula exemplificari, ut hic, ita & *Rom.* xiii 8, 9. *Jac.* ii. 8, 11. Caritas erga proximum est Religionis apex & signum indubitatum amoris erga Deum. *Lightfoot in loc.*

(*e*) See particularly *Matt.* xxiii.

him (f). These with many other Reasons might be given, why our Blessed Saviour when He referred to the *Ten Commandments* instanced only in those of the Second Table; without detracting by any means from the Divine Authority and Obligation of the First Table. For it is demonstrable that the three first Commandments of *that* Table are of the same Eternal and Indispensable Obligation as those of the *second*; and the fourth Commandment, so far as it relates to the Duty of setting apart some Time for the Public Worship and Service of God, is of the same Nature (g): Excepting the Particular Limitation of that Time, which entirely depends upon Positive Institution. And it would be highly *impious* as well as *absurd* to suppose that our Blessed Saviour by specifying *only* the Commandments of the *second* Table, should thereby design to discharge us from those of the *first*; when they are in themselves of Equal Force and Authority, and when God had confirmed and established them under such severe Penalties. It is very plain then, that by the Commandments here referred to the *whole* Decalogue is meant and signified; and consequently, the *fourth Commandment* is binding to us, as well as the rest: *i. e.* Our Blessed Saviour by requiring the Observation of *this* Law in His Gospel hath *renewed* the Obligation thereof upon us; in the same manner, as by enjoining the great Law of Universal Righteousness (which as He Himself declares *Matt. vii. 21.* was the *Law and the Prophets*) He hath *adopted* it into *Christianity*, and made it *Gospel*; as a most Excellent Prelate very judiciously (h) observes.

But

(f) *Isaiab i. 11. &c. chap. lxvi. 3. Jer. vi. 20. Amos, v. 21, 22.*

(g) See Archbishop Bramhall's Works, p. 908, 909. in which it is clearly shewn how far the Observation of the Seventh Day is founded upon the Law of Nature, and how far it is not.

(h) Archbishop Tillotson's Sermon on *Moral Righteousness*, preached at Cripplegate 1661, p. 14. And what this Excellent

But to this I foresee it will be objected, that if our Blessed Saviour hath adopted the *fourth* Commandment into the *Christian* Religion and made it Part of His *Gospel*, it will follow from hence that we are bound to observe the *Jewish* Sabbath, and consequently to keep the *same* Day of the Week for our Sabbath, which the *Jews* did: Which is in itself very absurd to suppose, and is plainly contrary to several Places of the *New Testament*, and particularly to that in *Coloss. ii. 16, 17.* And indeed it must not be denied, that some very Learned Men have been of that Opinion; and because they could not get rid of this *Consequence*, they have therefore concluded, that our Blessed Saviour and His Apostles have made no Determination about the *Sabbath* in the *New Testament*; but that all its Authority and Obligation is to be resolved into Ecclesiastical and Civil Constitution. But now tho' it is very certain, that if there be no Law in Scripture relating to this Matter, it will properly fall within the Power and Jurisdiction of our Governours both in Church and State, as hath been observed in Part already, and will be more fully shewn in the Sequel: I say, tho' this cannot fairly be disputed; yet the Weakness of those Men's Reasonings, who infer from our Saviour's adopting the *fourth* Commandment into the Moral Law of His Gospel, that therefore we are bound to keep the *Particular* Day of the *Jewish* Sabbath, will be sufficiently discovered even from the *Old Testament* itself. For if we look into
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Person here lays down, is in Effect acknowledged by a very Learned Writer, who is of a different Opinion and Judgment in this Matter; who, tho' he doth not allow that the Fourth Commandment obligeth Christians *legally* and *preceptively*, yet affirms that it obligeth them *equitably* and *exemplarily*; because Christians ought not to come short of the *Jews* in the Performance of Religious Duties. Nay, says he, in another place, we are more bound to God than the *Jews*, and ought at least to pay him as much Moral Duty and Service as they. *Archbishop Bramhall's Works*, P. 931, 915.

the Law of the *Sabbath*, as given by *Moses* in *Exod. xx.* and *Deut. v.* we shall clearly perceive that there were *two different* Grounds and Reasons, for which the *Sabbath* was enjoin'd to the *Jews*. The first Reason of this Institution, as it is given in *Exod. xx.* is no other than *that*, for which the *Sabbath* was appointed from the Beginning of the World, *viz.* that it should be celebrated in Memory of the Works of *Creation*; for that is all that is said in this Place of Scripture, *Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy, &c.* and then the Reason is given at the eleventh Verse, *for in six Days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, the Sea and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh Day; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh Day, and hallowed it.* Now this is exactly the same Reason for the Appointment of the *Sabbath*, as was before given in *Gen. ii. 3.* And therefore in *that* Respect, it concerned the *Jews* no otherwise than it does any other People. And indeed to speak *properly*, the Law of the *Sabbath* as delivered in *Exod. xx.* is not a *new* Law, but a *Renewal* and *Confirmation* of the *old*; as many good Critics have well observed (*i*). For, in the second place, when

(*i*) *Memento diem Sabbati, &c.* Hac voce utitur (*Moses*) ut nos remittat ad *primævam* Sabbati Institutionem *Gen. ii. 3.* cujus Memoriam *renovare* voluit. *Gerundensis in Exod. xx. 8.* Ergo additur in *Deut. v.* sicut præcepit tibi Dominus nimirum jam olim ab *Orbis initio*, nempe *Gen. ii. 3.* Distinguitur enim præceptum *pii cultûs* a præcepto *otii, & causis & temporibus.* Illud causam habuit *mundum conditum, & a conditu rerum fuit; hoc, Ægyptiacam Servitutem, & post eam inceptit: Illud ad genus humanum pertinet; hoc ad Ebræos solos, Exod. xxxi. 13.* Ita & *Iren. Grot. ibid.* Verba Præcepti quarti, (*Recordare diei Sabbati ut sanctifices illum*) non obscure innuunt Legem hanc non tunc *primo* datam fuisse, sed tantum *renovata*, postquam in desuetudinem veluti abierat; ut curam singularem in hac re adhiberent, nec postea traderent hoc mandatum oblivioni, ut antea fecerant: quod verba sequentia confirmant, ubi repetit rationem Institutionis allatam *Gen. ii.* de *Requie Dei & Benedictione ac Sanctificatione diei septimi*, quod satis indicat *Sabbatum* tum institutum fuisse, quando ratio illa locum habuit. *Turretin. Institut. Theolog. Part. II. Quest. 13. p. 88.*

when the Law of the *Sabbath* is given to the *Jews* in particular, *Deut. v. 12, &c.* there we find such a Reason laid down for the Observation of this Law, as was peculiar to That People: for thus it is expressed, *And remember that thou wast a Servant in the Land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty Hand and a stretched out Arm, therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath Day.* And indeed, as Archbishop *Wake* well remarks, “ it became very needful for God to renew “ the Obligation of the Sabbath at the giving of the “ Law by *Moses*; as it was needful for him to renew “ many other Precepts, which yet were cer- “ tainly given by Him, and observed in the “ World long before. No body questions but that “ *Adam* and his first Descendants both knew and “ worshipped the true God; yet this was provided for “ again now. So immediately after the *Flood* the “ Law against *Murder* was solemnly promulged, “ *Gen. ix. 6*; yet nevertheless the same Command “ was here again repeated, *Exod. xx. 13*. As for “ the Case before us; as Men lived farther off from “ the *Creation*, and Wickedness prevailed over the “ Face of the Earth, and the true *Worship* of God “ was corrupted by almost an universal Idolatry; “ so was the solemn Day of His *Worship* neglected “ likewise. And tho’ it may have been in some

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“ Measure

Res in Sacra Scriptura sæpe fieri dicitur, quando *continua- tur vel augetur* — videtur aliquando actio nova, cum sit veteris *Continuatio vel Incrementum*. *Glassii Philolog. Sacr. lib. 3. Tract. 3. Can. 4. p. 352.* Edit. *Amstelæd.* Exempla videas apud Authorem. And the same Sense of this Place is followed by Archbishop *Wake* (*Exposition of the Catechism, § 26.*) Archbishop *Sharp* (*Sermons, Vol. IV. p. 294, 295.*) Bishop *Pearson* (on the Creed, p. 265.) Bishop *Burnet* (on the XXXIX Articles, Art. VII.) Dr *Clarke* (*Exposition of the Catechism, p. 175, 176.*) And by innumerable other Divines of the greatest Learning and Judgment.

“ Measure revived after the *Flood*, and continued in
 “ some Part of *Abraham’s* Family; yet in their
 “ *Egyptian Slavery* it was utterly abolished; so that
 “ the very Memory of it seems to have been lost
 “ among them (k).” Thus far this very Excellent
 Prelate; and from what hath been here observed out
 of him, and the other Writers just mentioned, it fully
 appears that *this* Notion of God’s *renewing* the Sab-
 bath at the Time of His giving the *Law* by *Moses* to
 the *Jews*, is no vain Fancy and Imagination (as Dr
Heylin and others would fain represent it) but is sup-
 ported by the Judgment of the Greatest and Wisest
 Men; and moreover hath a very sufficient Founda-
 tion in the Authority and Example of Holy Scrip-
 ture. And it is no Objection at all to this, that when
 God requires the *Jews* to observe the *Sabbath* in *Exod.*
xxx. 13, &c. and gives no other Ground and Reason
 for it, but only that it should be done in Memory of
 the *Creation*; He yet affirms, that it is a *Sign between*
Him and the Children of Israel, v. 17. This will not
 prove that the Law of the *Sabbath* was given only to
 the *Israelites*, as some *Jewish* Writers (l) did indeed
 suppose; tho’ the most learned and judicious Writers
 of that Nation were of another Opinion, as was before
 taken notice of. For it hath been already clearly
 proved, that the Law of the *Sabbath* was given to
 Mankind from the Creation of the World, and was
 observed by the most ancient and distant Nations of
 the Earth, as well as the *Jews*: and therefore when
 it is said in *Exod. xxx. 17.* that the *Sabbath* was a
Sign between God and the Children of Israel for ever;
 it can mean no more than the *particular* Day which
 the *Jews* were to observe in token of their Deliverance
 from the Land of *Egypt*, as well as in Memory of the
Creation,

(k) Exposition of the Catechism, *ibid.*

(l) *Vid. Ainsworth in loc.*

Creation, and the *strict* and *regular* (*m*) Manner in which they were to keep it. Or if the Passage be supposed to relate *only* to the Remembrance of the *Creation*, since no other Ground of the *Sabbath* is there mentioned; yet it cannot possibly signify any thing farther, than that when the *Jews* should celebrate the *Sabbath* in Memory of the *Creation*, by considering and practising the Duties and Obligations which arise therefrom (*n*); this should be a *full* and *sufficient* Sign and Evidence that they were God's People, and that they acknowledged Him to be the True (*o*) God. This, I say, must be the Sense of that Expression in *Exod.* xxxi. 17, and not that the observing *one* Day in *seven* in Memory of the *Creation* was a Law *peculiarly* given to the *Jews*, or a Sign by which God would distinguish them from all other People, as some of them vainly imagined; and as some *Christian* Writers (*p*) do themselves contend: for this Opinion is utterly irreconcilable with the Truth of Holy Scripture,

D 2

which

(*m*) Signum inter Me & vos (Sabbatum) Quod observari jubeo, ut *totum illum diem* impendatis recognoscendo beneficium *Creationis*, & illum transigendo in Cultu Divino, in auditu verbi, in precibus & Sacrificiis. *Malvenda in Exod.* xiii. 13.

(*n*) This Qualification is very necessary to be observed, (and it will give some Light into the present Argument) since notwithstanding the *Injunction* of the *Sabbath*; if the *Jews* should fall into *Idolatry*, or indulge themselves in Sin and Wickedness (as most of the *Gentiles* did, who yet honoured the seventh Day, and were diligent in the *Externals* of Religion) the *Sabbath* would be so far from being a *Sign* and *Covenant* between them and God, that, as the Prophet tells us, it would be an *Abomination* to Him. *Isa.* i. 13, 14. [*Neomenias vestras & Sabbata & dies festos vestros odit anima Mea*] Hic quidem ubi de Muneribus mandatur, ubi adhuc *nulla peccata sunt*, dies festos meos dicit; ubi autem *peccatum est*, non meos sed vestros dies dicit Dominus. *Origen. in Numer.* cap. 28. *Homil.* 23.

(*o*) Signum inter Me & vos (Sabbatum) Documentum commune inter Nos; Mei, ut Creatoris, Domini, & Sanctificantis; Vestri autem, ut qui creati estis, & populus meus, & Sanctificati. *Idem ibid.*

(*p*) Vid. *Burnet* in *Epist.* II. de *Archæolog.* *Philosoph.* pag. 509, &c. *Spencer.* de *Leg. Heb.* lib. 1. cap. 5. § 7, 8, 9.

which plainly declares that the *Sabbath* was to be kept before the *Law* was given at Mount *Sinai*, even from the very *Creation*, *Gen. ii. 3*; and therefore that it was a Commandment enjoined by God to all Mankind. And it is only the Deliverance from the Land of *Egypt*, which is the true Ground and Reason of the *Sabbath*, as it is a *Jewish* Institution; and this was *that* which determined the *particular* Day which the *Jews* observed (*q*), and which was discovered to them by the *Manna's* ceasing to drop upon *that* Day, as it did on the other six Days of the Week; of which we read in *Exod. xvi.* and shall have occasion to take more Notice hereafter.

Now since there is such a plain Distinction in the Law of the *Sabbath*, as given by *Moses* to the *Jews*; and there were two different Grounds and Reasons of it's Appointment: Our Blessed Saviour might very well Renew the Observation of the *Sabbath* as to the *Primary* Ground of it's Institution, without laying us under any Obligation to keep the *Particular* Day which the *Jews* did; which depended upon such Reasons as were peculiar to *that* People, and with which no other Nation of the World was in the least concerned. And since it is very apparent, that the *Jews* celebrated *one* Day in every Week in Memory of the *Creation*, and that the *Particular* Day kept by them was grounded upon their Deliverance from the
Land

(*q*) Did God therefore command the Observation of the *Sabbath* (*i. e. one* Day in *seven*) because He brought the Children of *Israel* out of *Egypt*? That cannot be; for the Reason is quite otherwise given, both in the Beginning of *Genesis* and in the Delivery of the Ten Commandments in the twentieth of *Exodus*. By both these Places it appears, that God therefore commanded the Observation of *one* Day in *seven*, because that He made the World in *six* Days, and rested on the *seventh*. This therefore must be the Meaning of *that* Text; God therefore commanded the Observation of *that particular* Day in the *seven*, as a Day of Rest to the *Jews*, because that on *that* Day He delivered His People from the Bondage of *Egypt*. Archbishop *Sharp's* Sermons, Vol. IV. p. 294, 295.

Land of *Egypt*; the same *Analogy* will prove that it is in no wise absurd for *Christians* to observe the *Sabbath* upon a two-fold Account (*r*); the First in Remembrance of the Creation of the World; the other in Token of a much Greater Deliverance than that of the *Jews* from the Land of *Egypt*, viz. their Deliverance from the Guilt of Sin and the Power of Death, by the Resurrection of *Jesus Christ* from the Dead (*s*). Which Consideration might have made a very Learned Divine a little more mild and moderate in his Censure, when he affirms those Persons to be guilty of a miserable (*not to say, ridiculous*) Mistake, who contend that *Christians* are bound to observe the Lord's Day, by Dedicating It wholly to a Cessation from Worldly Labours, and to the Duties of Religion (which yet he himself allows to be highly commendable in any one to do) in Virtue, and by the Authority of the Fourth Commandment (*t*). For this is not only asserted by those Excellent Divines of our Nation whom I have just now mention'd, but also (as will be clearly seen hereafter) it is the express Doctrine of our Church in the Book of *Homilies*, and hath been supported and maintained by the Greatest and most Learned Divines, which our Church hath ever had since it was in Being. And yet besides this Distinction of the Ground of the *Sabbath* in the Law of *Moses* itself, there is a very good Reason to be given, why our Blessed Saviour when He referred to the *Ten*

D 3

Commandments

(*r*) *Vid. Ainsworth* in *Exod. xx. 10.*

(*s*) The Moral Law requiring a *seventh* Part throughout the Age of the whole World, to be that way employed; although with us the Day be changed, in regard of a new Revolution begun by our Saviour Christ, yet the same Proportion of Time continueth, which was before; because in Reference to the Benefit of *Creation*, and now much more of *Renovation* thereunto added by Him, who was Prince of the World to come; we are bound to account the Sanctification of *one* Day in *seven*, a Duty, which God's *Immutable* Law doth exact for ever. *Hooker's Eccl. Polity*, Book V. § 70.

(*t*) *Spencer de Leg. Hebr. Vol. I. p. 96.*

Commandments did not make any Exception to the Particular Day of the *Jewish Sabbath*; and that is, because the Obligation of *that* Day was yet in Force; the *Jewish Ordinances* not being abrogated till the Death of *Christ*, when as *St Paul* observes our Saviour *blotted out the Hand-writing of Ordinances that was against us, and took it out of the Way, nailing it to His Cross* (u). *Coloss. ii. 14.* And therefore since God had so plainly commanded us to keep holy the *seventh* Day in Memory of the *Creation*, and *Moses* had as plainly renewed the Observation of this Command at the giving of the Law; our Blessed Saviour might very well in His Gospel refer to the Fourth Commandment, without making any Particular Explication of the Nature and Obligation thereof; leaving that Matter to be fully settled and determined by the Judgment and Practice of the Holy Apostles. Which shews the great Weakness of those Men's Reasoning, who think that if we are *at all* obliged to observe the *Sabbath Day* in virtue of *Christ's* Authority and Command, we are obliged to observe it at the *same* Time, and in the *same* Manner, which the *Jews* did: For *this* depended *entirely* upon their own Laws and Constitutions; and therefore can lay no Obligation upon us, but in such Cases, where there is a Parity of Reason, or where we have received Directions from *Christ* or His Apostles. Of which more hereafter.

And thus much I thought absolutely necessary to be observed upon this Point, in Vindication of the Honour of our Established Church, as to her inserting the *fourth* Commandment into her Communion Service, and adding that Petition after the Rehearsing
of

(u) The Meaning of this Expression is this, It was one Way among the Ancients of cancelling a Bond or Writing, to drive a Nail through it: In Conformity to which Custom, when *St Paul* would signify to us our Freedom from the Obligation of the Law of *Moses*, he expresses it by *Christ's taking away the Hand-writing that was against us, and nailing it to His Cross.* Vid. *Grot. in loc.*

of *that* Commandment, which is done after the others, viz. *Lord have Mercy upon us, and incline our Hearts to keep this Law.* For *this* hath been oftentimes urged against the *Church*, as if hereby she had confirmed the Observation of the *Jewish Sabbath.* The famous Mr *Chillingworth* was once of this Opinion (tho' he did at length get the better of this (x) Scruple) who in his Letter to Dr *Sheldon* (afterwards Archbishop of *Canterbury*) September 21, 1635, gives this as one Reason, why he could not subscribe to our *Church Forms*, viz. "because that to say the *fourth* Commandment is a *Law* of God appertaining to *Christians*, is false and unlawful (y)." And the Learned Dr *Heylin* goes into the same way of Thinking, by alledging that if "*That* Petition (*Lord have Mercy upon us, &c.*) which is to be used after the Repetition of the *fourth* Commandment, be to be understood in a *literal* Sense, according as the Words are laid down *in terminis*; it must *then* be the Meaning of the Common Prayer Book, that we should pray unto the Lord to keep the *Sabbath* of the *Jews*, and that in the *self same* Manner which they did: For, saith he, of the Changing of the Day there is nothing said, nor nothing intimated; but the whole *Law* laid down *in terminis*, as the Lord delivered it." And therefore he could find no other Way to extricate himself out of this Difficulty, but by conceiving that the Intent and Meaning of the Church in that Petition was, to teach her People to pray to the Lord to incline their Hearts to keep *that* Law, so far as it contained the *Law of Nature*, and had been entertained in the *Christian Church*; as also to have Mercy on them for the Neglect thereof in those

D 4

" *Holy*

(x) *Vid.* Bayle's Historical and Critical Dictionary, Vol. IV. p. 320.

(y) The Reader may see this Letter of Mr. *Chillingworth* in Bayle's Dictionary, Vol. IV. p. 319, 320.

“ *Holy Days*, which by the Wisdom and Authority
 “ of His Church had been set apart for God’s Pub-
 “ lic Service.” And he further supposes, “ that *this*
 “ Petition was put into the Common Prayer Book to
 “ crush the Furious Fancies of the *Anabaptists*, in their
 “ not hallowing certain Days and Times to God’s
 “ Public Service (z).” This is the Representation
 which this very Learned Person makes of the Sense
 and Judgment of our Church in this Matter. But
 that he hath not given a true Account of the Sense
 and Judgment of our Church upon this Point, is I
 think very clear and evident. For tho’ the *Law of*
Nature does plainly require, that some Particular Time
 be set apart for God’s Public Worship, as hath been
 already proved; yet there is no more Reason from *that*
Law, why *one* Day in *seven* should be consecrated to
 that Purpose, than *one* in *six* or *eight*, as Dr *Heylin*
 himself observes (a). If therefore the Design of our
 Church in the inserting *that* Petition after the Fourth
 Commandment, be *only*, as Dr *Heylin* first supposes,
 to direct us to pray to God to incline our Hearts to
 keep *that* Law, so far as it contained the *Law of Na-*
ture; then I humbly conceive there would be this
 great Absurdity attending such Petition, *viz.* that we
 should therein pray to God, that we might keep *one*
 Day in *seven* as He had *specialy* determined in *that*
 Commandment; and yet mean no more thereby, than
 that we might serve Him *publickly* at some stated Seasons
 by virtue of the *Law of Nature*, which hath made no *spe-*
cial Determination of one Time more than another:
 For to use his own Words, *the whole Law is laid down*
in the Terms in which the Lord delivered it. And tho’ the
 Church (on whose Authority, according to Dr *Heylin*,
 the Obligation of the Lord’s Day entirely (b) depends)
 hath

(z) History of the *Sabbath*, Part II. chap. viii. § 3.

(a) Part I. chap. i. § 7.

(b) Preface to the History of the *Sabbath*, p. 5, & passim.

hath appointed the keeping of *one* Day in *seven* for our *Christian Sabbath*; yet if, as that Author argues throughout his whole Book, the Law of the *Sabbath* in *Exod. xx.* was given *solely* to the *Jews*, and the Particular Day specified therein (which, as he intimates, was the very same Day of the Week on which God rested from all His (c) Works) then the second Account given by him of our Use of the Petition after the Fourth Commandment, *viz.* “ that therein we “ beg of God to incline our Hearts to keep this Law, “ *so far as it hath been entertained in the Christian “ Church,* is very false and absurd also.” For the *Sabbath Day* (considered as a *Jewish Festival*) was never observed by the *Catholic Church* as a *Law of God*, from the Beginning of Christianity to this Day: Tho’ the *Primitive Christians* did indeed for some Ages observe the *Sabbath* as well as the *Lord's Day*, by holding their public Assemblies thereon, the Reasons of which will be hereafter seen in their proper Place. And moreover in *this* View (since, as I just now intimated, we repeat the Law of God in our Church in His own *express Terms*) we shall pray to God in *this* Petition, *To incline our Hearts to keep holy the seventh Day of the Week*, at the same Time that by the Appointment of our Governours we observe only the *first* Day; which would be a Contradiction. But I hope better Things of our Church, than that she should require us in her Public Offices to pray to God for *one* Thing, and mean quite *another*. And indeed it is absolutely impossible on any other Supposition than what hath been laid down under this Head, to deliver the *Fourth Commandment* and the *Petition* thereto annexed in our Communion Service from that Confusion and Perplexity, which will for ever attend them upon *Dr Heylin's Scheme*. . . But if we attentively consider what hath been delivered in the foregoing Part
of

of this Chapter, it will make the whole Matter very easy and plain. For since, as I have just now remarked, the Law of the *Sabbath* was given by God at the *Creation* of the World, and the Law delivered in *Exod. xx.* is only a *Renewal* and *Confirmation* of the Former; and further, since as I before proved, any public Day of Rest, which is dedicated to God's Worship, may as properly be called a *Sabbath* as the *seventh* Day of the Week, which the *Jews* observed: it very clearly follows from hence, that the Church might require all her Members to celebrate *one* Day in every Week in Memory of the *Creation* according to God's Commandment, by rehearsing to them the fourth Precept of the Law, in which *that* Commandment is contained; without laying them under any Obligation to keep the Particular Day of the *Jewish Sabbath*, which depended upon such Reasons, as were *peculiar* to the *Jews*, and was discovered to them by a remarkable Dispensation of Providence, of which more hereafter. It is therefore very clear and certain, that the Church by the Recital of the *fourth* Commandment and the *Petition* which is subjoined did not mean, that we should beg of God to incline our Hearts to keep the Law of the *Sabbath Day*, so far *only* as it contained the *Law of Nature*, and had been entertained in the *Christian Church*; and much less to declare, as Dr *Heylin* further supposes, that certain Holy Days established by her Authority should be duly observed; since that Man must be very *sagacious* indeed, who can, in the fourth Precept of the Decalogue, discover a Command to celebrate the Festival of *St Peter* or *St Paul*, or any other of the Apostles; and as a Learned Writer well remarks, "No body could ever
 " shew how this *jumble* of certain Holy Days (without regard to the *Christian Sabbath* more than to any other)
 " is countenanced by the *fourth* Commandment (*d*);"
 but

(*d*) *Hill* on the Fourth Commandment, Discourse I. p. 6.

but that *one* Day in every Week should be set apart for God's Public Worship and Service; and that by virtue of a Divine Law. And since, as Dr *Heylin* and others rightly judge, it is absurd to suppose that *this* should be the *Jewish Sabbath*; it must then be the keeping of *one* Day in *seven* in Memory of the *Creation*, which God first required in *Gen. ii.* and afterwards renewed in *Exod. xx.* as was before shewn. And that this is the True Sense and Judgment of our Church in this Matter, seems to me very evident from the Doctrine of our Church upon this Point in the first Part of the *Homily* concerning the Place and Time of Prayer. For after the Church hath there proved, that we are not bound to keep the Particular Day of the *Jewish Sabbath*, she proceeds to shew these two Things. *First*, that by the *fourth* Commandment we are obliged to that which the *Law of Nature* requires of us, which is to set apart some Particular Time for the Manifestation of God's Glory, &c. And *secondly*, that this Time thus set apart ought to be *one* Day in *seven*; and that not barely by way of Conformity to the Example and Practice of Christians, as Dr *Heylin* supposes; but because says the *Homily*, " God hath given Express Charge to all Men, that upon the *Sabbath Day*, which is our *Sunday*, they should cease from their Weekly Labours, &c." for which the *Homily* gives this Reason, *viz.* that " *God wrought six Days, and rested on the seventh and sanctified it:*" which is the very Thing I have been proving. A strange Assertion indeed! if according to Dr *Heylin*, the Law of the *Sabbath* in *Exod. xx.* had been given *only* to the *Jews*, and obliged all those who acknowledge the Authority of *that* Law, to keep their *Sabbath* on the very *same* Day which they did. And the Necessity of observing *one* Day in every Week by God's Command is several times repeated in the following Parts of that *Homily*.

And

And then as to the second Part of the Objection made by Dr *Heylin* and others, *viz.* that if we are obliged to keep the *Sabbath* by virtue of the *fourth* Commandment, we are bound to keep it in the *self same* Manner which the *Jews* did; this is a Consequence that will by no Means follow. For those Words in the *fourth* Commandment, *In it thou shalt do no Manner of Work*, are nothing more than a general Expression, signifying that Men should abstain from their Common and Ordinary Labours, upon a Day, which is set apart for God's Public Worship and Service. For as to the Particular *strict* Manner in which the *Jews* were to keep their *Sabbath*, and the Penalties which were annexed to the Transgression thereof; *that* could not be determined from the *fourth* Commandment, but was declared in several express Precepts and Threatnings delivered to that purpose; as in *Exod. xvi. 29. chap. xxxv. 2, 3*, and other Places. And yet if we put together all that the Scripture hath laid down upon this Head of *Resting* from Labour on the *Sabbath Day*, it is very plain that all Works of Necessity and Charity were excepted; as our Blessed Saviour, the best Interpreter of the Law, hath clearly shewn in several Places of the Gospel. And that the same Allowance was made by the best *Jewish* Writers and Interpreters themselves, Dr *Heylin* hath particularly observed (*e*). Since then the Clause in the *fourth* Commandment, considered by itself, can amount to no more than a general Prohibition of *common* and *ordinary* Works upon the *Sabbath Day* (which is what the Natural Reason of Mankind would of itself (*f*) require

(*e*) History of the Sabbath, Part I, chap. v.

(*f*) Prout enim Judæis ita & Gentilibus sui erant dies ἑργασίμοι, seu rebus agendis idonei, quibus nempe opus aliquod facere per mores & leges licuit; & dies ἑορτάσιμοι seu festi, quibus mos erat (ut ait Strabo lib. 10.) τὰς ἑεργασίας μὴ ἀνέσεως ἑορταστικῆς ποιῆσαι, *satura peragere cum laborum Intermissione festiva.* Nam hujus

quire upon such a solemn Day dedicated to the Service of God and Religion) our Church might very well lay this Injunction upon her People in the Words of the *fourth* Commandment, without obliging them to any of those *Peculiarities* which God required of the *Jews*, and which were not contained in the *fourth* Commandment, but as I just now observed in other Laws delivered to them, with which we are in no wise concerned : and much less without confining us to those *Rigours* and *Austerities*, which the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* had grafted upon the Laws of God by their Traditions (g). And yet it hath always been the *Artifice* of those, who have opposed the Religious Observation of the *Sabbath Day*, to confound those *Pharisaical* Inventions with what the Law of God hath plainly commanded in Holy Scripture. Tho' I should have thought, that of all Men in the World Dr *Heylin* would not have raised an Objection against the keeping of the *Sabbath*, on account of that Rest which is enjoined in the *fourth* Commandment ; since he hath brought many Passages out of Learned Writers, as well *Jewish* as *Christian*, to prove that the Rest from Labour, which God commanded the *Jews* to observe upon the *Sabbath Day*, was not so strict, but that they were allowed to do several kinds of *Work*, and to *travel* on *that* Day, and also at the same Time to have their *Feasts* and *Entertainments*, and to divert themselves all manner of ways, as by *run-*
ning

hujus modi feriæ (uti Romanorum vulgo creditum) multiplices operum genere polluebantur. Quapropter, inquit Servius (ad Georg. lib. i.) Pontifices feriis sacrificaturi, pramittere Calatores suos solent, ut sicubi viderint Opifices assidentes, opus fieri prohibeant ; ne pro negotio suo, & ipsorum oculos & Deorum ceremonias attaminent. Feriæ enim operæ Deorum creditæ sunt. Spenc. de Leg. Hebr. lib. i. cap. v. § 11th Vol. I. p. 89.

(g) If the Reader hath a mind to it, he may see a large Account of these Superstitious Notions in *Munster* as he is cited by *Glassius* in *Pbilolog. Sacr. lib. v. Tract. I. cap. xiv. p. 882-3.*

ning, walking, dancing (*b*), &c. which, I think, is as much as the most Licentious Man could well desire.

Fourthly, The Obligation of observing *one* Day in every Week is further evident from the Example of our Blessed Saviour and His Apostles, who kept every *seventh* Day as a Day appointed for the Worship and Service of God. Thus we read in *John* xx. that on the *first* Day of the Week *Christ* appeared to His Disciples, who were assembled together (as He had often done (*i*) before at the same Season) and shewed them the *Marks* and *Signs* in His Body, by which they might know that He was risen from the Dead, *ver.* 19, 20. And that the Occasion of the Disciples assembling together at *that* Time was for the Worship and Service of God, is evident, not only from those Passages of Scripture where such Assembling is mentioned (some of which will be taken Notice of presently) and from the Account which the Antient Writers of the Church constantly give of their Meeting; but also from the Testimony of *Pliny* himself, who tells us that upon a *certain* appointed Day the *Christians* used very early to meet together, and sing an Hymn to *Christ*, as being *God*, and oblige themselves by a *Sacrament* not to commit any Wickedness (*k*), &c. But *Thomas* not being with the rest of the Disciples at the Time when our Blessed Saviour first came to them declared, he would not believe the Resurrection of *Christ*, unless he should see the Print of the Nails in His Hands, and put his Hands into His Side, *ver.* 25. But tho' our Lord was pleased to gratify this Curiosity (which at the same Time He justly reprov'd, *ver.* 29.) that thereby He might give the *clearer* and more *convincing* Proof of His Resurrection; yet there is no Account of His appearing to him for *that* purpose, 'till that Day
sevensight

(*b*) Heylin *ibid.* § 5. to the End of the Chapter.

(*i*) See *Matt.* xxviii. 9, *Mark* xvi. 9. *Luke* xxiv. 30.

(*k*) *Pliny* lib. x. *Epist.* 97.

sevensight, and then we read that our Saviour came and satisfied him. Thus *ver.* 26: it is said, that *after eight Days*, or (as the Words may be properly rendered) *in, or within eight Days*, again His Disciples were *within*, and Thomas was with them; then came Jesus the Doors being shut, and stood in the Midst of them, &c. I know that some Men have objected to this Interpretation, as thinking it absurd, that the Distance of a *Week's* Time should be signified by this Expression, *after or in eight Days*; for, say they, it might as well signify *any* Time whatsoever, as that of a *Week* (l). But this Objection will appear to be of no Force, if we consider that the *Style* of the *New Testament* is for the most Part accommodated to the Manner of Expression among the *Jews*; with whom it was very usual to signify a *Week's* Time by *this* Saying, μετ' ἡμέρας ὀκτώ, *after, or in eight Days*. An Eminent Instance of which we have in *Josephus*, much like the Expression in the Text we are now upon; who speaking of the *Jewish* Priests in their Courses (who were bound to minister for one *Week* according to their (m) Families) having said that King *David* appointed, that every Family should minister unto God ἐπι ἡμέρας ὀκτώ for *eight Days*; he immediately explains the Phrase by this Expression, ἀπὸ σαββάτου ἐν σαββάτῳ i. e. *from one Sabbath Day to another* (n). And *Glossius*, an excellent *Hebrew Grammarian* of the last Age, upon an exact and accurate Comparison of the several *Hebrew* Passages in the *Old Testament* with the *Septuagint* Version of them writes thus, that the “ Præposition μετ᾽, (*after*), when understood of Time, is “ sometimes used for the Word *intra*, (*within*) “ and does not always signify the *last* Part of that “ Time which it expresses to be *perfectly* expired. “ The Word μετ᾽ does not always declare the Time “ that

(l) *Heylin's History of the Sabbath*, Part II. chap. i. § 4.

(m) See 2 *Kings* xi. 6, 7, 9 — 2 *Chron.* xxiii. 8.

(n) *Josephus Antiq.* lib. vii. chap. xi.

“ that follows, but that which is *intermediate* and “ as yet *subsisting* (o).” - This I own would seem strange to us in Modern Language, but for all that, it is very certain, that it is the *Jewish* Manner of Expression in the Holy Scriptures. This will be evident to any one, who will compare together the several Passages in the *Evangelists* which relate to the Resurrection of *Christ* from the Dead; in which he will soon perceive that the Expression, *after three Days*, is equivalent to that *within three Days*, and that both of them signify the same as *on the third Day* (p), and were so understood by the *Jews* themselves, as a Learned Bishop of our Church observes (q). And if we look into the *Old Testament*, we shall find many Passages, in which the same Manner of Expression is made Use of. That I may not tire the Reader’s Patience, I will mention only two or three which are incontestable. Thus *Deut. xiv. 28.* it is said, *at the End of three Years thou shalt bring forth all the Tythe of thine Increase.* But the *Septuagint* renders it, *after three Years*: and both of them signify the same as *in the third Year*, as is evident from *Deut. xxvi. 12.* Thus again, when *Shalmaneser* besieged the City of *Samaria*, the Scripture tells us that *at the End of three Years they took it, even in the sixth Year of Hezekiah (that is the ninth Year of Hoshea King of Israel)* *Samaria*

was

(o) *M. 7a* post, de Tempore si accipiatur, quandoque pro *intra* accipitur; seu ultimam temporis partem (quam notat) non semper planè exactam & præteritam esse significat. — *7a* non semper declarat consequens tempus sed quandoque interjectum & adhuc vicens. *Glassii Philolog. Sacr. lib. iii. Tract. VI. Canon xi. p. 493.*

(p) Compare together *Matt. xxvii. 63, 64. chap. xvi. 21. Mark viii. 31. chap. x. 34. Luke ix. 22. chap. xxiv. 7. John ii. 19.*

(q) *Smalbroke’s Vindication of our Blessed Saviour’s Miracles, Vol. II. p. 438. See also Miracles of Jesus Vindicated, Part I. p. 12 13, 14*

was taken, 2 Kings xviii. 10. But that this Expression can signify no more in Modern Language than *after two full Years, or in the third Year*, is clear from ver. 9. where it is said that the City was besieged *in the seventh Year of Hoshea King of Israel*. So likewise in Jer. xxxiv. 14. the Prophet requires *that they should let go every Man his Brother that had been sold to them at the End of seven Years*: but how this Expression is to be understood we find in the same Verse, and in Exod. xxi. 2. where the Law of Releasing Servants is laid down; and in both these Places it is said, that he should be released, *when he had served six Years*. And to say no more, in Luke ix. 28. where the Evangelist is speaking of the Transfiguration of Christ, he expresses himself thus, *ὡσεὶ ἡμέραι ὀκτώ*, i. e. it was *about eight Days*, viz. after the Sayings of Christ in the foregoing Verses. But that this could not signify any greater space of Time than that of a Week, is manifest from that Account which St Matthew and St Mark give us thereof, who both say *it was after six Days*; Matt. xvii. 1. Mark ix. 2. it being usual with them to signify the Space of a Week by both these kinds of Expression; sometimes calling it eight Days, as accounting the two Days that were *extreme*, and at other Times six Days, as excluding the two *extreme* Days. And the same Liberty and Manner of Expression is authorised by the Testimony of the Antient Jews, as it is preserved in both their *Talmuds*, and is allowed of by the best *Classic* Writers both *Greek* and *Roman*, as a Learned Prelate hath lately (*r*) shewn. And we may further observe, that the same Manner of Style is taken up by the Physicians, who in their Accounts of Fevers call that by the Name of the *Tertian* or *Quartan* Fever, which hath but *one* or *two* Days Intermission between

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the

(*r*) See Bishop Smalbroke's Vindication, Vol. II. p. 447, 459.

the Fits (*s*). From all which it is very evident, that the Objection made by Dr *Heylin* and others against our Blessed Saviour's appearing to His Disciples upon the *first* Day of the Week (as He had certainly done the Time before) drawn from the Expression, *μετ' ἡμέρας ὀκτώ*, after or in eight Days, is entirely of no Force: and consequently, His appearing again to His Disciples at *that* Time was for the *second* Establishment of *that* Day for the *Christian Sabbath*; as an Eminent Author hath well remarked (*t*). And further, we may clearly perceive, that after our Lord's Ascension *this* Day was duly and constantly observed by the Holy Apostles. Thus St *Luke* tells us, that on the Day of *Pentecost* (which then happen'd to fall on the Lord's Day) (*u*) when the Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles, *they were all with one Accord in one Place. Acts ii. 1.* And what *that* Place was, and what their Employment was therein, the same Evangelist tells us in *chap. i. 13, 14* (*x*). And again in *Acts xx. 7.* we read that upon the *first Day of the Week* (the usual Name of the *Christian Sabbath* after our Saviour's Resurrection) *the Disciples came together to break Bread, and Paul preached unto them until Midnight.* And in *1 Cor. xvi. 2.* there is mention made again of the

(*s*) See *Sma'broke* *ibid.* p. 448. where there are several Instances given of this Matter.

(*t*) *Eckard's* Ecclesiastical History, 8vo. Vol. I. p. 213.

(*u*) *Hic porro dies Pentecostes erat Dies Dominicus, ut facile constat ex computatione Dierum, &c. sic consultum voluit Christus honori Diei Dominicæ, ut prius Resurrectione suâ, ita jam effusione Spiritûs Sancti in illo die. Lightfoot in loc.*

(*x*) The Resurrection of *Christ* upon this (the *first Day* of the Week) and His diverse Apparitions to His Apostles upon this Day, and His sending to them the Holy Ghost upon this Day, and all this at such a Time as they were assembled in their usual Place of Prayer, and in all probability whilst they were performing the Duty of the Day, did at least evidently point out to them this Day for His Public Worship, and ratify their assembling upon this Day to do him Service. *Archbishop Bramhall's Works*, p. 916. See also, *Hammond on Acts i. 13.*

the *first Day* of the Week, in which the *Christians* were to meet together, and lay by their Collections for the Poor by the Command of *St Paul*. And *this Day* we find is called by *St John* by the *peculiar Name* of the Lord's Day. *Rev. i. 10.* And *that* as some Interpreters think, because *Christ* did on that Day rise from the Dead; or as others, because He Himself did appoint that Day; or because He was the Object of that Worship, which the *Christians* offered up Weekly upon that Day. And thus this Text hath always been interpreted by the *Catholic Church*. Now what a very judicious Divine observes upon another Occasion may very properly be applied to the present Argument, *viz.* that "The Positive Laws and Institutions of our Saviour *Jesus Christ* are always to be interpreted according to the Universal and received Practice of the Apostles (y)." And the Reason which he gives for it is very strong and unanswerable, *viz.* "That the Apostles were not only, as Judges and Magistrates in a Civil State, entrusted with the Execution of the Laws and Institutions of our Blessed Saviour; but had also hereby such constant, certain, and even infallible Assistance from the Holy Ghost (*who guided them into all Truth, John xvi. 13. taught them all Things, and brought all Things to their Remembrance whatsoever Christ had said unto them, chap. xiv, 26*) as put them beyond all possibility of Error, to which even the best Magistrates and most learned Judges in Wordly Communities are often subject." And therefore, supposing it could not be proved, that our Blessed Lord had himself appointed the *Lord's Day* (which from what hath been said before is I think very

(y) Archbishop Synge's Divine Authority of Church Government p. 26, 27. See the Place.

clear and plain that He hath) yet the Universal Judgment and Practice of the Holy Apostles in this Particular is of itself sufficient to determine the Matter, and to render the Law concerning it *perpetual*, and *for ever* binding upon all Christians. And what Mr *Calvin* hath observed of Imposition of Hands in Ordination, will hold equally in the present Case; *viz.* that tho' there were no express Precept about it, yet since it hath been *perpetually* observed by the Holy Apostles, this *accurate Observation* of theirs ought to have with us the Force of *Command* and *Law* (z). And the same Acknowledgment is made by many Learned Writers, who were very far from being too strict and rigid in this Matter, or attributing too much to the Observation of the *Lord's Day*. It may not be amiss to recite two or three Passages to this Purpose, in order to shew the great Weakness of those Men's Reasoning, who argue against the Divine Authority and Obligation of the *Lord's Day*, because there is no express Precept of *Christ* or his Apostles for the Observation of it. Thus says Archbishop *Bramhall*, " Tho' the Original Institution
 " of the *Lord's Day* be not Recorded in Holy
 " Scripture *expressly*, yet so much is Recorded as
 " is sufficient to satisfy all Conscientious *Christians*,
 " that there was such an Institution of *Christ* or
 " His Apostles, or of *Christ* by His Apostles;
 " and with the Help of the perpetual Practice and
 " Tradition of the *Catholic Church* ever since the
 " Resurrection of *Christ*, is sufficient to convince
 " all Gainsayers. And he that professeth *Christi-*
 " *anity*, and will not be satisfied with the perpetual
 " and

(z) Licet autem nullum extet certum Præceptum de manuum impositione, quia tamen fuisse in perpetuo usu Apostolis videmus, illa tam accurata Eorum Observatio Præcepti vice nobis esse debet. *Calv. Institut. lib. iv. cap. iii. § 16.*

“ and undoubted Tradition of the Universal Church
“ of Christ, *i. e.* of the whole World of Be-
“ lievers, including the Apostles themselves; is
“ utterly incapable of any real Satisfaction, and
“ buildeth his Religion more upon his own wilful
“ Humour and private Phantasy, than upon true
“ Judgment (a).”

And the judicious Bishop *White* speaking of this Matter, saith, “ It is not necessary to demonstrate
“ out of Scripture that the Apostles ordained the *Sun-*
“ *day* as a Weekly Holiday; &c. for it could not
“ possibly have come to pass, that all and every A-
“ postolical Church throughout the Universal World
“ should so early and in the Beginning of their Plan-
“ tation have consented together to make the *Sunday*
“ a Weekly Festival; unless they had been directed
“ thus by their Founders the Holy Apostles them-
“ selves. And so he concludeth out of *St Austin*,
“ that it is most rightly believed to have been delivered
“ by Apostolical Authority (b).” And for this
Reason the Learned Bishop *Taylor*, who resolves
the Authority of the *Lord's Day* into mere Eccle-
siastical Institution (c), affirms “ that the keeping
“ of *this Day*, besides all the other Reasons de-
“ rived from the Nature of the Thing, yet even
“ for *this alone*, because it is *derived* from the A-
“ postles, is to remain so for ever: because the
“ Reason being at first *competent* for which they
“ kept their Assemblies, and gave *that Day* to Re-
“ ligion, and the same Reason remaining *for ever*,
“ (and another cannot come in place of it, and
“ a greater there cannot be) although the Churches
“ are not in Conscience *directly* bound, yet *colla-*
“ *terally* and *indirectly* they are (d).” And that the
Apostles were not only directed by the Holy Spirit

(a) *Bramhall's Works*, p. 916.

(b) *Bishop White on the Sabbath*, p. 192.

(c) *Ductor Dubitantium*, Book ii. chap. ii. Rule 6. § 51.

(d) *Del. Dubit.* Book iii. chap. iv. Rule 13. § 1.

in Matters relating to Divine Worship and Religion, but also had His immediate Authority in their Determinations upon such Points, is very evident from *Acts* xv. 28. where the Apostles speaking of their Decision in the Affair of the Circumcision, express themselves thus, *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us (e)*. And if we may rely upon *St Clement* (a Companion and Fellow Labourer of *St Paul*, *Phil.* iv. 3.) we may be assured that the Apostles were *personally* instructed by our Lord to do what they did in this Matter of the *Lord's Day*: for he tells us, that they had *Christ's* Authority and Direction concerning the appointed Seasons and Places of Public Worship (*f*). And “ if *Christ* did pre-
“ scribe Rules for the Times and Places of His
“ Worship; there is little doubt to be made, but
“ that the *Lord's Day* was His own Ordination,
“ as a Learned Prelate hath well observed (*g*).” And therefore the Apostles setting apart the *Lord's Day* from the Beginning, was a clear Proof of it's Divine Authority; and there was no Occasion for an *express* Precept of *Christ* or His Apostles for the *Abrogation* of the *Sabbath*, and the *Institution* of the *Lord's Day*, as some have imagined. For this would for several Reasons have been very improper; and particularly, as it would have given the greatest Offence and Displeasure to the *Jews* in regard of the extreme Veneration which they had for their *Sabbath*, and thereby have mightily hindered and retarded their Conversion to the Faith of the Gospel. And upon this Account it was an Act of great *Prudence* as well as *Piety* in the Apostles

(e) *Dicunt, visum est Spiritui Sancto, ne humanum illud negotium esse videretur; addunt, & nobis, ut Ministerii & operæ fidelitas demonstraretur, & ut constaret ipsos non fuisse autores illius sententiæ. Camerarius & Camero in loc.*

(f) *Clem. 1 Ep. to Corinth. § 40. Edit. Wake.*

(g) *Bramball's Works p. 920.*

postles and their Successors to observe the *Sabbath* for some Time, as well as the *Lord's Day*; and afterwards to let it drop and fall *gradually*, as will be shewn hereafter.

Fifthly and lastly, The Observation of the *Lord's Day* is very clear and evident from the Example and Practice of the Primitive *Christians*, who always kept it in a most Devout and Religious Manner; and that so *universally*, that in all Parts of the World, wheresoever the *Christian* Faith was propagated, the Observation of the *Lord's Day* was established with it. This is not only attested by all the ancient Writers of the Church, but acknowledged also by the *Heathens* themselves; who frequently accuse them of adoring the *Sun* (*), because they prayed towards the *East*, and kept the *Sunday* for their Festival. Which hath made many Learned Men, who deny that our Blessed Saviour Himself hath instituted *this* Day, conclude that it was a Matter settled by all the Apostles, and handed down to the Church by Apostolical Tradition. Nay, so notorious was their Practice in this Particular, that in many Churches the ancient *Christians* observed both the *Saturday*, which was the *Jewish Sabbath*, and the *Sunday*, which was the *Lord's Day* (b); (tho' the Preference was given to the latter in many (i) Respects). Whether they were uncertain which was the Right Day, as some have imagined; or as others judge better, because they would give no Offence to the *Jews*, and were willing to embrace any Opportunity of converting them to

(*) Alii solem Christianum Deum esse æstimant, quod innotueri t ad Orientis partem facere nos precationem, &c. *Tertull. ad Nat. lib. i. cap. xiii.*

(b) Vid. Grot. in Act. xv. 21.

(i) Vid. Bingham's Antiquities, Vol. IX. lib. xx. cap. iii. § 3.

Christianity by the Preaching of the Gospel (*k*): Which was the True Reason why the *Sabbath* was much more observed in the *Eastern* Church than in the *Western*; there being a much greater Number of *Jews* in that Part of the World. But be that as it will; it plainly shews thus much, that they thought themselves obliged to celebrate every *seventh* Day, as a Day of the Worship and Service of God.

And thus having considered the Necessity and Obligation of Observing every *seventh* Day, I proceed now to the other Particular, *viz.* to shew that we must keep it *holy*. And one would think there should be no Necessity of insisting upon this; it being a Thing so plain and evident in itself. But yet there have not been wanting some Men who have opposed it, and declared against the Necessity of Divine Worship and Service on this Day; and who affirm that the *Peculiar* Sanctification of the *Sabbath* did consist in *resting* upon that Day, and in the Separation of it from all Bodily Work and (*l*) Labour: Tho' they are indeed willing to own, that God in the enjoining that Rest might have a farther View and Regard to the Actions of Piety and Religion; but they deny that they are comprehended in the Notion of sanctifying the *Sabbath*, or that God hath thereby *formally* required and commanded them. And it is much to be feared that too many Christians have entertained the same Thoughts concerning the *Lord's Day*; as may appear from their gross Neglect of the Religious Duties of the Day both public and private, and their dedicating it entirely to Company and

(*k*) *Vid.* Cave's *Primitive Christianity*, Part I. chap. vii. p. 174.

(*l*) *Vid.* Bonfrerium in Exod. xx. 8. Heylin's *History of the Sabbath*, Part I. chap. vi § 3. Spencer de Leg. Hebr. lib. i. chap. v. § 10. Vol. i. p. 77, &c.

and Drinking and Worldly Pleasure. But now, if this were all; it would have been sufficient to have required the Observation of the *Sabbath Day* without the Injunction of keeping it *holy*; for *that* does of itself signify that it is a Day of *Rest* (*m*): Whereas the Additional Command to keep it *holy* does plainly require something more. And I believe it will be difficult to shew any Place of Scripture, where any *Day* or *Time* is said to be *holy* in such a Sense. The keeping of a *Day holy* does not only imply the Separation of it from all bodily Work and Labour, but also the Dedication of it to the Worship and Service of God; as is very evident from the constant Sense of that Expression in the sacred Writings, as hath been before (*n*) remarked. But however it will not be amiss to consider what is alledged in Defence of their Argument, by those that are of the contrary Opinion. Now these Men alledge that before the Captivity of *Babylon* we have no Account, that the *Jews* kept the *Sabbath* in a Religious Manner by dedicating it to the public Worship of God, the hearing of the Law, Di-
vine

(*m*) And yet perhaps not *barely* a Day of Rest; for the Word *Shabath* from which the Word *Sabbath* is derived doth not, as a Learned Writer observes, signify such a Rest, wherein one sitteth still and doth nothing (as the Word *Noach* doth) but only a resting and ceasing from that which he did before. *Vid.* Leigh's *Crit. Sacr. in voce שבת*. And the Learned Dr *Heylin*, tho' in the Place above cited he affirms, that in reference to the People God commanded only Rest from Labour on the *Sabbath Day*, and the Priests to perform the Sacrifices, &c. yet in another Place (I think inconsistently with himself) when enquiring into the Meaning of the Word *Sabbath*, he says it is used in Scripture to signify some selected Time which God hath deputed unto *Holiness* as well as *Rest*. *Part I. chap. v. § 1.* See also *Spencer de Leg. Hebr. lib. i. cap. v. § 10. in Vol. I. p. 80, 81, 87*, in which he manifests the same Sense and Judgment.

(*n*) See above, p. 9.

vine Meditation, and (o) the like ; tho' they grant that the *Jews* after the Captivity did observe the *Sabbath* very strictly in the Performance of such Religious Duties ; and likewise that in all Ages of the *Christian Church* the *Lord's Day* hath by all pious and good Men been celebrated in the same Manner. And this one would think should be sufficient to determine the Matter : And that supposing it could not be proved that the *Jews* before the Captivity did the like, yet this ought not to be admitted as an Argument against the Religious Observation of the *Sabbath Day* : because if there be no clear Account in Scripture and Antiquity on either Side ; it is from the Nature of the Thing more probable, that the Antient *Jews* did keep their *Sabbath* like the Moderns, than that they did not. But however, I will not leave the Matter so. For if the *Jewish Rabbins* knew any Thing of the Practice of their own Church in this Particular ; it is plain that the Ancient *Jews* understood the Observation of the *Sabbath* to consist, not only in the Rest from Bodily Labour, but also in the Consecrating of it to the Service and Worship of God. For this is expressly affirmed by several of the best and most learned of them. Thus says *Aben Ezra* " The *Sabbath* was appointed that we
 " might contemplate on the Works of God,
 " and meditate on the Law (p)." And *R. D. Kimchi* in *Psalms* xcii. says that " the *Sabbath* is
 " more grateful to God than the other Days of
 " the Week ; because in that a Man is freed from
 " the Businesses of the World, and his Mind from
 " all Bodily Occupations, and he exercises himself
 " in Wisdom and the Service of God." And the
 Words

(o) *Vid.* Heylin's *History of the Sabbath*, Part I. chap. vi.

§ 3 and 4.

(p) *Ab. Ezzr.* apud *Riveti* *Exposit.* Decalog. in *Exod.* xx. 8.

Words of *Rabbi Manasses* are very remarkable to this purpose. "It is, *says he*, a very great Error to affirm that the *Sabbath* was instituted merely for the Sake of Bodily Rest; for *that* being of *itself* the Parent of all Vices, there would thence accrue more Harm than Good from the Observation of the *Sabbath*. But we must necessarily declare, that the *Sabbath* was appointed, that Men being in a greater Readiness, by reason of their Freedom from the Cares of the World might apply themselves to the Study of the Law, might go to the Synagogues and Schools of the Prophets, and there enquire into the Sense of difficult Passages of Holy Scripture; wherefore it is expressly said in the *Jerusalem Talmud*, that the *Sabbaths* and other *Festivals* were not appointed to the *Israelites* but for the *Meditation* of the Law (*q*)."
A very wise and reasonable Determination; and which ought to be well considered by all those, who oppose the Necessity of a Religious Observation of the *Sabbath Day*. And long before him *Philo* acquaints us, "That among the Ancient *Jews* the Custom always was, as Opportunity served, but especially on the *Sabbath Day*, to exercise themselves in Knowledge; the Chief Person going before and teaching, the rest increasing in Goodness, and growing better in their Lives and Manners (*r*)."
And *Josephus* tells us more expressly that "*Moses* commanded the People to meet together for the hearing of the Law; and that not once or twice, or several Times, but on every *seventh* Day; and that laying aside their Works, they should learn it exactly (*s*)."
To which I shall only add, that the Title of the *xcii Psalm*, which is by some ascribed to *David*, by others to *Moses* and

(*q*) R. Manasses ap. Rivet. *ibid*.

(*r*) *Philo de Vit. Mosi* lib. iii.

(*s*) *Joseph. adv. Apion. lib. ii*.

(and which is a joyful Meditation of the gracious Works of God towards His People, whether by way of commemorating the *Creation* and the *Sabbath* following *that* ; or foretelling their Peace and Prosperity in this World, and that Rest which God had promised to give His Church under the *Messiah*) I say that the *Title* of this *Psalms* is *A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath Day*. And this *Title* was given to it, because, as *Dr Hammond* observes in his Paraphrase thereupon, it was appointed to be used in the *Jewish Church* upon the *Sabbath Day*. And as one Eminently skill'd in *Hebrew Learning* takes notice, “ the Ancient *Jews* had “ *proper Psalms* appointed for the Particular Days of “ the Week ; and in the *Talmud* there is an express “ Account of those *Psalms*, which the *Levites* were “ to sing upon certain Days, and that which was “ appointed for the *Sabbath* was the *xcii Psalm* (t)” Nay the *Chaldee Paraphrast* carries this Matter a great deal farther, by affirming that *this Psalm* was sung by *Adam* himself upon the *Sabbath Day*. And for this reason it is called the *Psalm or Song of Adam* by several of the *Jewish Writers* (u). But I own it is more probable (as the Generality of Learned Men think) that it was made by *David* for the use I have now mentioned. And *Mr Calvin* is of opinion, that he composed many others for that purpose (x). And *Josephus* tells us, that he composed several Hymns to the Honour of God, and taught the *Levites* to praise God's Name upon the *Sabbath Days* (y). From all which it very clearly appears, that the Ancient *Jews* did not place the *Sanctification* of the *Sabbath* in

(t) Lud. de Dieu, in loc.

(u) Canticum Adami dicitur ab Hebræis, quod talia dicere potuit Adamus cum primum Res a Deo conditas aspexit. *Græc. in loc.*

(x) Calvin in loc.

(y) Joseph. Antiq. lib. vii. cap. x. See also the same Author above cited p. 47.

in a *bare* Rest from Bodily Labour; but they thought also that it required their Attendance upon the Worship and Service of God. Nay, even *Bonfrerius* himself, who, as was lately remarked, places the Sanctification of the *Sabbath* *entirely* in such Rest, does yet, I think inconsistently with himself, in the same Place allow, (and Dr *Spencer* is much of the same Mind, which seems to me in great Measure to render the Argument of these Persons against the received Opinion very needless and trifling) that the End of the Precept of resting from their Works was the Worship of God, and that the *Jews* were wont to apply their *whole Sabbath* in a most Religious Manner to such Worship. I know indeed that the chief Thing which confirms some Men in this Opinion concerning the Ancient *Jews*, is, that they had no Synagogues for Divine Worship and Reading of the Law, 'till after the *Babylonian Captivity* (z); and therefore say these Men, they could not have any such Thing as public Worship, excepting that in the Tabernacle and the Temple. But this is a very weak Inference. For supposing it were certain that the *Jews* had no Synagogues before the Captivity; yet this will not in the least prove that they had no other Places to meet in for the Worship of God, and the Reading of their Law: Since it is well known that the Primitive *Christians* met together for the like Purposes a good while before they had any public Churches *properly* so called. And the same may be affirmed of the *Jews* with regard to their *Synagogues*. But whether the *Jews* had any Synagogues before the Captivity, or not, the Learned are not fully (a) agreed

(z) *Vid. Heylin's Hist. of the Sabbath, Part I. chap. vi. § 4 and 10. Spencer de Leg. Hebr. ibid. p. 79.*

(a) It is indeed the common Opinion that there were no Synagogues before the Captivity; but then by Synagogues must be understood

agreed ; tho' I grant that it cannot be clearly proved that they had. For whereas it is said in *Pſalm lxxiv. 8. They have burnt up all the Synagogues of God in the Land* ; the original Words (*Moadbe El*) may be interpreted *the ſtated or appointed Times of God's Worſhip* ; and then the Meaning will be, *they have abrogated the Solemn Feſtivals* ; in which Senſe the Words are underſtood by the *Chaldee Paraphraſt*, the *Septuagint*, and ſeveral of the Old Verſions. Or if the Words do rather relate to the Places of God's Worſhip, they may then, as the moſt Learned Dean *Prideaux* truly obſerves, ſignify no more than the *Aſſemblies of God (b)*. And ſuch as theſe that Excellent Author grants the *Jews* had before the Captivity, and allows that they were Places of Divine Service, to which they uſed to reſort for that purpoſe beſides the *Temple*. And there are not wanting ſome Learned Men, who think that the *Jews* had Places appointed for public Prayer and Inſtruction in Religion as Early at leaſt as the Time of the Judges (c) ; by what Name or Title

underſtood, Places of Judicature, rather than of Divine Worſhip. For the Courts of Judicature were anciently held in the Gates of Cities, not in any Places peculiarly deſigned for that Uſe. *Amos v. 12, 15*. But there is no reaſon to queſtion, but the *Jews* had their *Proſeuchas* or Places of Prayer from the Beginning. *Dr Jenkin's Reaſonableneſs and Certainty of the Chriſtian Religion, Vol. I. chap. vi. p. 173. See alſo Purchas's Pilgrimage, Book II. chap. iii. p. 117. Gejerus on Pſalm lxxiv. 4. Thorndyke's Religious Aſſemblies, chap. ii. Godwyn's Antiquities, Book II. chap. ii.*

(b) *Prideaux's Connexion 8vo. Vol. II. p. 556. See alſo Biſhop Beveridge on the Neceſſity and Advantage of public Prayer p. 11.*

(c) *Rugierunt in medio Conventuum vel Eccleſiarum, &c. Pſal. lxxiv. 4.) Scholarum & Synagogarum, quæ paſſim in urbibus erant conſtitutæ, non modo a Captivitate Babylon. ut putat Sigonius ; ſed etiam tempore Judicum & Regum (ut ſtatuunt Becanus Annal. V. & N. T. p. 241. Tolet in Johan. 16. Torniel. A. M. 2594. n. 14) ne populus communibus Orationum atque informationis locis deſtitueretur. Gejerus in Pſal. lxxiv. 8.*

Title foever fuch Places might be called. Nay, there is good Reason to think that fuch Places as thefe were in the Days of *Abraham*: for we read in *Gen.* xxi. 33, that *Abraham* planted a Grove in *Beerſheba*, i. e. as a very able Writer hath well explained it, a Place of Prayer fet round about with Trees (d); and called there on the Name of the Lord. Which makes it highly probable, that this Plantation was for Religious Uſe (e); which before the Law given by *Mofes* might be lawful, as a Learned Annotator obſerves upon the Place (f). And there are many other Paſſages in the Book of *Geneſis*, wherein the *Patriarchs* are ſaid to build *Altars* unto the Lord (g); which *Altars* were not ſolely deſigned for ſacrifice, but alſo for that which is the uſual and neceſſary Concomitant thereof, Devotion and Prayer, as is clear from *Gen.* xiii. 4. It being, as a moſt Learned (h) Prelate well remarks, owing to this *Natural* Principle (the Neceſſity of public Worſhip) that the Ancient *Patriarchs*, who lived abroad in Booths and Tents frequently changing their Places for freſh Paſture, when they came to any new Place of Abode, where they pitched their Tents, their Cuſtom was to erect *Altars*, and encloſe them about, which was uſually done in ſome Mountains, high Places, and Groves. And theſe, before they came to be abuſed by Idolatry, were in general Requeſt among them, being ſtyled by the Name of *Sanctuaries*, or holy Places, to which a Reverence is commanded. *Ye ſhall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my Sanctuaries.*

(d) Shuckford's Sacred and Profane Hiſtory connected, Vol. I.

P. 304.

(e) Hic erat Oratorium, ubi egit cum Deo & de Deo. *Tirinus* in loc.

(f) Ainfworth in loc.

(g) See *Gen.* xii. 7. ch. xiii. 4, 18. ch. xxvi. 25. ch. xxxv. 1.

(h) *Biſhop Wilkins's* Sermons, p. 338.

ries. Lev. xix. 30. However this Matter may be, what the Eminent Dean *Prideaux* lays down is sufficient to my present purpose; it being of the same Consequence to my Argument, that the antient *Jews* had such *Assemblies*, as if they had *proper Synagogues*. These *Assemblies* were called *Proseuchæ*, i. e. *Oratories* or Places of Prayer (i). And they differed from the *Synagogues* in these two Respects. *First*, In that the *Synagogues* were such Houses as were covered at the Top; but these *Assemblies* were open. And *secondly*, That in the *Synagogues* the Prayers were offered up in public Forms, as they are in our Churches; whereas in the *Assemblies* every one prayed *particularly* for himself, as they did in the Temple (*). And they were generally built upon Mountains and high Places; which makes it reasonable to believe that the *high Places* mentioned in the *Old Testament* were oftentimes no other than these *Assemblies*. Which tho' they were frequently condemned by God, by reason of the *Idoltrous* Worship that was offered up in them, yet, as the Learned Dean truly observes, they were not always so; they being often made Use of by Prophets and good Men for Holy Purposes; as appears from 1 *Sam.* ix. 19. where *Samuel* bid *Saul* go before him to the *high Place*, where he should eat with him. And from the fifth Verse of the following Chapter, where he told him that he should meet a Company of Prophets coming down from the *high Place*. These *Proseuchæ* or *Assemblies* were many of them standing in our Saviour's Time. And

(i) Vocabantur a Judæis Græce loquentibus *προσευχῶν* unde nomen Latinum *Proseucha*, pro *Synagoga*; quasi dicas domus Orationis sive *Oratoria*; Has frequentabant potissimum Sabbatis Judæi, causa discendi quæ patriam Religionem spectarent, &c. *Lamy Apparatus Chronologicus in Harmoniam 4 Evangelistarum Vol. I. p. 113.*

(*) *Vid.* *Prideaux* *ibid.*

And our Blessed Lord is thought by some good Interpreters to have been in one of them for a whole Night together. For that which is in our Translation, *Luke vi. 12. He continued all Night in Prayer to God,* is by them rendered thus, He continued all Night in a *Proseucha* or an *Assembly* of God. There is mention of these Assemblies in other Places of the *New Testament, Acts xvi. 13, 16. (k).* And likewise in some of the *Latin Poets (l).* And it was to these *Proseuchæ* or Assemblies that the antient *Jews* repaired for the Worship and Service of God, and before the Building of the Temple offered Sacrifice in them ; as appears from *1 Kings iii. 2.* where it is said, *that the People Sacrificed in these high Places, because there was no House built unto the Name of the Lord.* They resorted also to the Cities of the *Levites* and the Schools of the Prophets for their Instruction and Information *(m)* in Religion, and that chiefly upon the *Sabbath Days* ; as is plain from the Answer which the *Shunamite's* Husband gave her, when she was preparing to go to the Prophet *Elisha* after the Death of her Child. *Wherefore, saith he, wilt thou go to him to Day? it is neither New Moon nor Sabbath, 2 Kings, iv. 23. (n).* And it is the Opinion of some very Learned Men, that *Moses* himself appointed, that

F his

(k) Vid. Hammond in loc.

(l) ——— in qua te quæro Proseuchâ, *Juw. Sat. III. l. 296.*

(m) Vid. Cunnæum de Repub. Hebræorum, lib. ii. cap. xvii. *Thorndyke's Religious Assemblies, cap. ii p. 29. Bishop Bull's Sermons, Vol. II. p. 419.*

(n) His (sive festis) diebus pii homines adibant Synagogas peritotque Legis ad audiendum verbum Dei Legisque Explicationem, ut patet ex Act. xv. 21. *Menochius, Piscator, & Sanctius in loc. Ad Prophetas ibant, quo tempore quibusque locis alii conventus non erant. Grot. ibid.*

his Law should be publickly read every (o) Sabbath Day. This is expressly affirmed by Josephus as was before observed (p). And there is a Fragment of Philo the Jew preserved by Eusebius (q) in which he asserts the same. And this will receive great Countenance from Acts xv. 21. where it is said, *that Moses of Old Time* (in the Original it is *ἐκ γενεῶν ἀρχαίων*, from the Antient Ages) *in every City them that preach him, being read in the Synagogues every Sabbath Day.* And it will be no Objection at all to this, that it is probable the Jews had no Synagogues properly speaking 'till after the Captivity. For it is well known that the Word *Synagogue*, *Church*, (*Ecclesia*) *Assembly*, and the like, are used with great Latitude, both by Sacred and Profane Writers (r). And particularly the Word *Synagogue* is used in Scripture indifferently for any Religious Assembly (s); And is by St James (and others after him) particularly applied to the Christian Churches, or to the Consistories for Judicature, as some Learned Men understand the Text (t); *Jam. ii. 2. If there come into your Assembly, &c.* in the Original it is, *εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν ὑμῶν*, into your Synagogue. But however this be; it is very clear and evident from what hath been before observed, that the Sabbath Day among the antient Jews was not confined to the Rest from Bodily Labour; but that the Celebration of it did also extend to their Instruction in Religion

(o) Creditur à Mose fuisse institutum, ut Lex in Sabbato legeretur. Grot. in Act. xv. 21.

(p) See above p. 59.

(q) Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. viii. cap. vii.

(r) Vid. Philoleuth. Lipsiens. Part II. p. 3. Bishop Montagues Acts and Monuments of the Church, chap. i. § 100, and 101.

(s) Vid. Grot. in Jac. ii. 2. Leigh's Critic. Sacr. in voce συναγωγῆς.

(t) Vid. Hammond in loc.

Religion, and the performing the Duty of public Prayer and Devotion to God. But in the latter Ages of the *Jewish* Church, this Point is indeed more plain and incontestable; the *Jews* being not only accustomed to spend this Day in public Devotions and Religious Duties (*u*), but also having arrived to an *extreme* Degree of Superstition in the Observation of their *Sabbath* (*x*). And with what exemplary Piety and Devotion the *Primitive Christians* observed the Lord's Day, is well known to all those who are acquainted with their Practice. They did not only at that *Time* abstain from Bodily Work and Labour, but (as will be fully shewn hereafter) made a Conscience of attending regularly and constantly upon the Church, to join in the Prayers and Praises of it, to hear God's holy Word, and to receive the Blessed Sacrament of *Christ's* Body and Blood. All which Duties they performed with so true and noble a Zeal, and with such an elevated Strain of Piety and Devotion, as no Age nor Generation of the World can parallel.

And thus I have finished the first Particular which I proposed to treat of, and shewn the Perpetual Obligation of observing the *Sabbath Day*, and keeping it *Holy*. Before I proceed any further, I shall make a brief Application of what hath been already considered. And now that

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we

(*u*) *Agatharchides*, whom *Josephus* reckons to be no Friend, nor on the other Side a malicious Enemy to the *Jews*, gives this Account of their Behaviour on the *Sabbath* "they have "*(saith he)* a Custom of resting on the Seventh Day, without "either bearing of Arms, or Tilling the Ground, or attending "any common Business whatsoever: but they employ it *wholly* "in their Temples and in their Devotions from the Morning "to the Evening." *Joseph. adv. Apion. lib. i.*

(*x*) Vid. i. *Maccab. ii. 34.* *Agatharchid. ap Josephum ibid.* *Dr Prideaux's Connexion*, 8vo. Vol. III. p 285. Vol. IV. p. 620, 621.

we have seen what great Grounds and Reasons we have for the Religious Observation of the *Sabbath Day* ; let us all, my Brethren and Fellow Christians, make a Conscience of this Duty, by applying ourselves to all those Holy and Divine Exercises, for which this Day was instituted and appointed. Let us at *this* Time Contemplate upon God our Great Creator, Preserver and Governour, and the Author of all the Blessings we enjoy : and not only *that*, but moreover as One whose Regard to us extends beyond the Heavens, and reaches to Eternity. Who has not only provided for us in this short Life, but hath also prepared an everlasting State of unspeakable Happiness for us, when this World and all the Pleasures of it shall be at an End. Nay, and whose Love to us was so exceeding Great, that *He sent His only Begotten Son into the World, who died for our Sins, and rose again for our Justification.* *John* iii. 16. *Rom.* iv. 25. Does not so great Love and Kindness as this demand every Moment of our Time, and the utmost which the Powers and Faculties of Soul and Body can perform in Return to so Good and Excellent a Being ? Methinks it would be little enough, if in the Words of *St John*, *Rev.* iv. 8, 11. we should be continually praising God and saying, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty; thou art worthy to receive Glory and Honour and Power, for thou hast created all Things.* But our State and Condition in this World, will not admit of this Perfection. We must provide and labour for the necessary and convenient Things of this Life ; and therefore we cannot always be employed in the Actual Exercise of Religion. This our Good and Gracious God well knows : And because we cannot subsist without these present Things, He therefore allows us six Days in the Week to compass and procure them ; and hath

hath reserved only *one* Day in *seven* for His public Worship and Service. What Thought then must we have of God ; what Notion of His Mercies ; what Sense of our Condition ; of our present Wants and future Existence ; nay what is become of our Religion, or even of our Reason itself ; if we shall think much of so small a Portion of our Time to be Dedicated to His Service ? To His Service, did I say ? I should rather have said to our own (*k*) ; since we can never possibly serve God, but at the same Time we do thereby infinitely more serve ourselves. Oh then ! Let all these Considerations engage us all to serve Him ; and as a Principal Part of That Service, *to remember the Sabbath Day and keep it Holy.*

(*k*) 'Tis a great Condescension and Goodness in God, to accept our Imperfect Praises and Ignorant Admiration of Him ; and were He not as wonderfully Good as He is Great and Glorious, He would not suffer us to sully His Great and Glorious Name by taking it in our Mouths ; and were it not for our Advantage and Happiness to own and acknowledge His Benefits, for any *real* Happiness and Glory that comes to him from it, He could well enough be without it, and dispense with us for ever entertaining one Thought of Him ; and were it not for His Goodness, might despise the Praises of His Creatures with infinitely more Reason, than wise Men do the Applause of Fools. *Tillotson* Vol. II. p. 681.

C H A P. II.

Concerning the Change of the Sabbath Day,
from the Seventh to the First Day of the
Week.

HA V I N G in the foregoing Chapter fully shewn the *perpetual* Obligation of observing the *Sabbath Day*, and keeping it *holy*; I proceed now to the Consideration of the next Particular, which is to give an Account of the Change of the Day from the *Seventh* to the *First* Day of the Week. And this I think very necessary to be done, because, as I remark'd before, it is the Opinion of some Men, that if we are bound to keep the *Sabbath Day* at all by virtue of any Command in Holy Scripture, we ought to keep it on the same Day of the Week, as the *Jews* did. And we have had a Sect of Men in this Kingdom, who called themselves *Sabbatarians* upon this Account, *viz.* because they kept the *seventh* Day of the Week and not the *first* for their *Christian Sabbath*. And it was the known Opinion of the *Ebionites* of Old, that the *Jewish Sabbath* was of necessity to be observed as well as the Lord's Day (*a*). But now that we are under no such Obligation will easily appear, if we consider that we are not bound to the Observation of the *Sabbath* by virtue of the Law which God gave to the *Israelites* by *Moses*; for this is a Matter of a *Jewish* Consideration, and as *such* wholly related to that People; and consequently upon the ceasing of *that Law* it did of itself expire with it. Thus *St Paul* hath determined the

(a) vid. Euleb. Hist. Eccl. l.b. iii. cap. xxvii.

the Case, *Coloss. ii. 16.* *Let no Man judge you in Meat or Drink, or in respect of an holy Day, or of the New Moon, or of the Sabbath Days; which are a Shadow of things to come, but the Body is of Christ.* Indeed so far as the *Sabbath* is of a Moral Consideration, so far does the Command which God gave to the *Jews* lay an Obligation upon us (b); And as God hath required the Observation of the *Sabbath* in Remembrance of the *Creation*, and our Blessed Saviour hath likewise commanded us to keep it in the Law of His *Gospel*, as hath been before taken notice of (*); it certainly doth henceforth receive the Force of positive Institution, and the Obligation of it is for ever binding among *Christians*. But then this Obligation can extend no further than is required by *that* Law, and that is to observe *one* Day in every Week in Memory of the *Creation*, and as a Day of Holy Rest and Divine Worship. This is all that the *Gospel* of *Christ* enjoins us to do with Regard to the *Fourth Commandment*. For as to the Particular Day on which the *Jews* kept their *Sabbath*, *that* was determined by such Reasons, as do no more concern us than any Thing else in the *Mosaic* Dispensation. The Ground and Reason of the *Jewish* Observation of the *Sabbath* was the Remembrance of their Deliverance from the Land of *Egypt*, as hath been shewn before from *Deut. v. 15.* where after the Institution of the *Sabbath*, it is said, *Remember thou wast a Servant in the Land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty Hand and by a stretched out Arm, therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath Day.* This is the true Ground upon which the *Jews* (considered

(b) See Bishop Burnet, Artic. VII. p. 103, 104.

(*) See above p. 9, 27.

as such) did observe this Institution (c). And that which directed them to the Particular Day which they were obliged to keep, we find in *Exod. xvi. 26, 27.* And *that* was the ceasing of the *Manna* to drop on that Day, as it had done on all the other Days of the Week. Thus says *Moses*, *Six Days shall ye gather it, but in the Seventh Day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the People on the seventh Day for to gather, and they found none.* And that *this* was the Sign by which they were to discover the Day of their *Sabbath*, is very evident from hence; that *that* Day seven-night they had gone a long Journey, as appears from the first Verse of this Chapter. Now what are these Reasons to us? or how are we concerned at the dropping down of *Manna* in the Wilderness, or at the Deliverance of the *Jews* from the Land of *Egypt*? So that from hence it is very plain, that we are not bound to observe the *Jewish Sabbath* on the Account of any Law that was given to the *Jews*, and are no further subject to any such Institution, than as it hath pleased God to require it of Mankind in general, or it is to be deduced from the Laws and Precepts of *Christ's Gospel*. And by this, as I have already intimated, we are obliged to no more than to observe *one* Day in every Week, as a Day of God's Worship and Service. Agreeably
to

(c) Now this (the Deliverance from the Land of *Egypt*) could not be any *special* Reason, why the *Jews* should observe a *seventh* Day; *first*, because in reference to their Redemption the Number of *seven* had no more Relation than any other Number. *Secondly*, because the Reason of the *seventh* Day was before rendered in the Body of the Commandment itself. There was therefore a *double* Reason rendered by God, why the *Jews* should keep *that Sabbath* which they did: one *special*, as to a *seventh* Day, to shew they worshipped *that* God, who was the Creator of the World; the other *inindividual*, to signify their Deliverance from the *Egyptian* Bondage, from which *that seventh* Day was dated. *Bishop Pearson on the Creed*, p. 265.

to this we find in Scripture, that upon the Ceasing of the *Jewish* Law at the Death of *Christ* the Obligation of the *Jewish Sabbath* ceased with it; and henceforth, the *first* Day of the Week was observed by our Blessed Saviour and His Apostles, and succeeding *Christians*: and the Reason of it was this, because our Lord *Jesus Christ* did on *that* Day rise from the Dead (*d*), and thereby perfected that Redemption, which He wrought for us by His Death. Hence the Obligation of the *Jewish* Law ceased and expired, as is well expressed by St *Paul*, Col. ii. 14. *Christ hath blotted out the Hand Writing of Ordinances* ——— and took it out of the Way, nailing it to His Cross: herein plainly signifying to us, that by the Death of *Christ* all that was Ceremonial and Figurative in the Law of *Moses* had it's full and final Completion. From this Time, the Particular Day of the *Jewish Sabbath*, was not kept by virtue of any Divine Law and Authority; tho' the *Sabbath Day* itself was often spent in the public Offices of Religion: but there was a Change of the Day from the *seventh* to the *first* Day of the Week. And this was certainly done upon the highest Reason; since if the Deliverance of the *Jews* from the *Egyptian Bondage* be a sufficient Ground for their Observation of a Particular Day in Token of *that* Deliverance, our Spiritual Redemption from the Dominion of Sin and Death by the Resurrection of *Christ* must surely be a much better Reason for our Observation of the *first* Day of the Week in Memory of *that* Resurrection (*e*). And thus we find this Matter determined by our Blessed Saviour.

(*d*) This Account of the Observation of the Lord's Day is given by *Ignatius* in *Epist. ad Magnes.* *Clem. Alex.* in *Strom. lib. vii.* *Justin Martyr* in *Apol. I.* *Origen* in *Hom. V. in Esaiam.* *Aug. de Civitat. Dei lib. xxii. cap. ult.* And by several others of the ancient Writers.

(*e*) Vid. *Pearson* on the Creed, p. 265, 266.

Saviour and His Apostles, who henceforward celebrated the *first* Day of the Week as their *Christian Sabbath*, which we read in *Rev. i. 10.* is called by St *John* the *Lord's Day*, as was before shewn. This is a very sufficient Reason for the Change of the *Sabbath Day*. And tho' I am sensible some Men earnestly contend, that if there was to be a Change in the Day of the *Sabbath*, we ought to have had an *express* Precept of *Christ* or His Apostles for it; yet I cannot think it in any wise Necessary. For since (as hath been already proved) our Blessed Saviour and His Apostles instituted the *Lord's Day*, it is of no consequence in what Way and Method they signified their Mind to us. For to use the Words of a Learned Prelate upon this Occasion, “ Not
 “ only the *formal* Precepts *orally* given of those
 “ who are in Authority, but the certain Intima-
 “ tion of their Pleasure, by what Way soever it
 “ be done, doth oblige their Subjects.———The
 “ Antient or Common Law of *England* doth not
 “ consist in *Statutes*, but in *Old Customs* and *Pre-*
 “ *sidents* grounded upon Practice. And a Custom
 “ *immemorial, uncontrolled*, is a sufficient Proof of
 “ Sovereign Approbation. And Example is a more
 “ compendious Way of Direction than Precepts.
 “ To question now whether there was a *formal* Pre-
 “ cept for that, which all the *Christian* World hath o-
 “ beyed ever since *Christ's* Time, and shall obey until
 “ *Christ's* second Coming, is a strange Degree of Folly
 “ (f).” And this is acknowledged by Bishop *Taylor*
 himself, who speaking of this Matter says, “ It is
 “ true what *Justin Martyr* said, *our Blessed Lord Him-*
 “ *self changed this Day*; that is, by annulling the
 “ *Sabbath*, and by His Resurrection and excellent Ap-
 “ pearances and Illustrations upon that Day; not by
 “ Precept, but by *Indigation*, and remarking that
 “ Day

“ Day by signal Actions and an Heap of Blessings (g), &c.” And indeed, notwithstanding the positive Assurance and intemperate Zeal, which some Men have expressed in this Particular, what a very Learned Prelate hath observed on this Occasion is I think very Judicious and unanswerable; viz. “ that tho’ it seems very clear, that here (in Gen. ii.) a perpetual Law was given the World for the separating the seventh Day;” (which Law as I have before taken notice (h) of was renewed and re-established in Exod. xx.) Yet it was a mere Circumstance, and does not at all belong to the standing Use of the Law in what End of the Week this Day was to be reckoned; whether the first or the last: so that even a less Authority than the Apostles, and a less Occasion than the Resurrection of Christ, might have served to have transferred the Day; there being in this no Breach made on the good and moral Design of this Law, which is all in it that we ought to reckon Sacred and Inviolable (i).” And this is in Effect allowed by Archbishop Bramhall himself, who tho’ in his Treatise of the Sabbath and Lord’s Day he argues, that if we are obliged to observe the Sabbath in Memory of the Creation by virtue of God’s Command in Gen. ii, we should be obliged to keep it on the same Day of the Week on which God rested from His Works; yet in another Part of the same Discourse, when shewing how the Lord’s Day may be said to be Sacred to each of the Divine Persons in the Blessed Trinity, and observing

(g) Ductor Dubitantium, Book ii. chap. ii. Rule vi. § 56.

(h) See above p. 32.

(i) Burnet Artic. VII. p. 104. Lex (de Sabbato Gen. ii) est immutabilis, propter causam immutabilem si causa illa seu finis ille necessario & perpetuo hanc legem tanquam effectum aut medium requirat: non autem, si aliis mediis ad eundem finem rectius perveniatur, aut alia lege eundem finem non minus consequi Legislator potest. Atqui Meditatio & Celebratio operum Dei non minus alio die quam septimo fieri potest. Ea igitur Legem de septimo die non facit perpetuam. Ursini Explicat. Catech. Quæst. 103 § 2.

observing how the *first* Day of the Week may be Sacred to God the Father; he says “ It preserveth the “ *Memorial of the Creation*, as well as the *seventh* Day.” And again, “ that the *first* Day of the Week doth “ preserve the *Memory of the Creation*, as well as the “ *Day after the Creation (k)*,” And thus we have a clear Account of the Change of the *Sabbath Day* from the *seventh* to the *first* Day of the Week, and a very sufficient Reason alledged to vindicate that Alteration. If any one therefore shall think it necessary to keep the *Jewish Sabbath*, we may justly say of such an one, as St Paul did of those who thought they were bound to be circumcised; *viz. Christ shall profit him nothing. Gal. v. 2.* For to imagine a Necessity of observing the *Jewish Sabbath*, is to conclude the Law of *Moses* to be still in Force. And then, as the Apostle says, *If Righteousness come by the Law, Christ is dead in vain. Gal. ii. 21.* 'Tis true indeed, the Apostles after the Resurrection of *Christ* did whilst they conversed with the *Jews* in great Measure observe the Day of their *Sabbath*. Thus we read that St Paul went into the Synagogue of the *Jews* at *Thessalonica*, and three *Sabbath* Days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures. *Acts xvii. 2.* The same likewise we find mentioned in other Places. *Acts xiii. 14, 44. chap. xviii. 4.* And this they did not by virtue of any Obligation to the Law of the *Jewish Sabbath*; but by the Liberty which they had from the *Christian Religion*, and as being glad to embrace any Opportunity of conversing with the *Jews*, that they might thereby the better convert them to the Faith of *Christ* by the Preaching of the *Gospel*; and that the Observation of their Law might expire with the greater Decorum and Respect, as the Antients used sometimes to express this Matter. But when the Apostles turned to the *Gentiles*, and the *Jews* who were amongst them insisted upon the Necessity of

(k) *Bramhall's Works*, p. 924, 928.

of observing their Law, we find that their Practice was quite different. Thus *St Paul*, tho' he had often complied with the *Jews* in many of their Observances, (*vid.* 1 *Cor.* ix. 20. *Acts* xvi. 2. *chap.* xxi. 26.) yet was so far from giving up his *Christian Liberty*, that when the *Jews* endeavoured to infringe upon it, he declared *he would not give Subjection to them even for an Hour.* *Gal.* ii. 5. And tho' it was customary with the *Primitive Christians* in some Churches to celebrate the *Jewish* (l) *Sabbath* as well as the *Lord's Day*, that they might give no Offence to the *Jews*, and have the better Opportunity of bringing them over to the Belief of the *Gospel*, as was before intimated; yet in process of Time, when *Christians* began to judaize in that Point, and to lay some stress upon the Observation of the *Jewish Sabbath*, we find what was the Sense of the Church in that Matter by the *Twenty-ninth Canon* of the Council of *Laodicea*; which was made directly against such *Christians*, as should keep the *Jewish Sabbath*, as thinking themselves under an Obligation to observe *that* as well as the *Lord's Day*. And by this *Canon* they were required to work on the *Sabbath Day*, and to prefer the *Lord's Day* before (m) it. And that which will clearly demonstrate, that we are not obliged to keep the *Jewish Sabbath*, is that solemn Determination which was made by the *Apostles* and *Elders* at *Jerusalem* concerning the Obligation of the Law of *Moses.* *Acts* xv. For when certain Persons which came down from *Judea* had taught the Brethren at *Antioch*, that *except they were circumcised and kept the Law of Moses, they could not be saved*; *ver.* 1. the Council of *Jerusalem* assembled upon this Occasion, and came to this

Resolution

(l) Vid. Socratis Hist. Eccl. lib. vi. cap. viii. Tum (Scilicet sub Hadriano) pene omnes Christum Deum, sub Legis Observatione credebant. Sulpit. Sev. Sacr. Hist. lib. ii. p. 142.

(m) Non oportet Christianos judaizare & in Sabbato vacare, sed operari eos in eadem die dominicam proponendo eidem diei, &c. This Council was held about A. D. 367.

Resolution, viz. that the Gentiles were not obliged to observe the Law of Moses; but that they might give no Offence to the Jews, whilst they lived among them, they enjoined them to observe the Precepts of the Sons of Noah, as they were called, (and which only were required of the Jewish Profelytes of the Gate (n), viz. that they should abstain from Meats offered to Idols, and from Blood, and from Things strangled, and from Fornication. ver. 29 (o). From all which it very clearly appears, that we are not bound by any Law of God to keep our Sabbath upon the seventh Day of the Week as the Jews did; but on the contrary we are obliged to observe the Lord's Day: which hath always been set apart by Christ and His Apostles and the Catholic Church, as a Day of God's Public Worship and Service, and which has accordingly been dignified and celebrated in all Ages of Christianity with great Devotion. And thus I have given an Account of the Change of the Sabbath Day from the seventh to the first Day of the Week. I shall before I shut up this

Head

(n) The Jewish Profelytes or Converts were of two Sorts. First, The Profelytes of Justice, or of the Covenant; these took upon them the Obligation of the whole Law of Moses, by Baptism, Sacrifice and Circumcision; and were in all Respects accounted as Natural born Jews, and admitted into all the Benefits and Privileges of the Mosaic Covenant, excepting that of Intermarriages, from which they were in some Cases excluded. The Second were called Profelytes of the Gate. These were only obliged to observe the seven Precepts of the Sons of Noah, which required them to worship the true God, to avoid Idolatry, Uncleanness, &c. as in the Text. And they were called Profelytes of the Gate, because they were permitted by the Jews to dwell within the Gates of their Cities, which other Heathens were not. And these are the Persons who were called the Strangers within thy Gates in the Fourth Commandment. Vid. Spec. de leg. Hebr. lib. i. cap. v. § 12, in Vol. I. p. 91, 92. And they were allowed also to worship God in the Temple, but not to go any further than the outward Court, called the Court of the Gentiles. If the Reader hath a Mind to know any Thing more concerning these two Sorts of Profelytes, let him consult Dr Hammond on Acts xv. 29. Dr Prideaux's Connexion 8vo Vol. III. p. 434, &c.

(o) Vid. Hammond on the Place.

Head consider the Force of an Objection, which is sometimes urged in Defence of the Observation of the *Jewish Sabbath*. This is taken from *Exod. xxxi. 16, 17.* where God says, *that the Children of Israel shall observe the Sabbath for a perpetual Covenant; and that it is a Sign between Him and the Children of Israel for ever.* And the *Jews* bring the same Objection against the whole *Christian Religion*, on account of the like Expressions which are used in the *Old Testament* concerning their *Law* and their *Priesthood*, viz. *that they are said to be everlasting.* (*Vid. Exod. xii. 14. xxvii. 21. Lev. x. 15. xvi. 34. Numb. xviii. 11. Exod. xl. 15.*) Which Objection, if it be true in that Sense in which they urge it, will undoubtedly establish that Conclusion which is grounded thereupon. It therefore deserves a serious Consideration. Now the whole Force of this Objection depends upon this Supposition, viz. that the Words *for ever* and *everlasting* in these and the like Places of Scripture are used in a *strict* Sense for a Duration, that shall never come to a Period and Conclusion: as much as to say, that as long as the World itself endures, the *Covenant of the Law*, the *Priesthood*, and the *Jewish Sabbath* shall abide and continue. In answer to which, not to mention that no Expressions how solemn soever, when applied to the Positive Laws of God, can put any Limitation upon the Law-giver's Power to abrogate and repeal them at His Pleasure, or can Mean any Thing farther than that the People have no Authority over those Laws to change or alter them when they think fit (*p*); I say not
to

(*p*) By the Phrases of a *Statute for ever* or *throughout all Generations* can only be meant, that such Laws were not Transient Laws, such as were to be observed whilst they marched through the Wilderness, or upon particular Occasions; whereas such Laws which were constantly and generally to be observed, were to them perpetual. But that does not import that the Law giver himself had parted with all the Authority that naturally belongs to Him, over His own Laws. It only says that the People had no
Power

to mention this, that the Words *for ever* and *everlasting*, when attributed to the *Jewish Sabbath* and *Priesthood*, cannot possibly signify any more than this, *viz.* that these Institutions were not Transient and Temporary, but such as should continue as long as the Dispensation of the Law itself. But they could not by any Means abide any longer; because the Law of *Moses* itself, of which they were a Part, was to come to an End and Conclusion. This is very evident from the several clear and incontestable Prophecies of the *Old Testament*, which relate to the *Messiah* that was to come into the World; by whom the Law of *Moses* should have it's full and final Completion. Thus it is said *Gen. xlix. 10.* *that the Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a Law-giver from between his Feet, until Shiloh come*; the plain Meaning of which is this, that the *Jewish Law* and Government should continue 'till the Coming of *Christ* (+). But now it is plain from all History, that the *Jews* have been a scattered and dispersed People for almost 1700 Years; which is a very clear Proof that their Law could not be *everlasting* in the strict Sense of that Word, because it was to have an End and Period put to it by the Coming of the *Messiah*. There are several other Places of Scripture which prove this; and that

Power over such Laws to repeal or change them, they were to bind them always; but that puts no Limitation upon the Law-giver Himself, so that He might not alter His own Constitutions. Positive Precepts, which have no real Value in themselves, are of their own Nature alterable: and as in Human Laws, the Words of Enacting a Law for all future Times do only make them to be a perpetual Law for the Subjects, but do not at all limit the Legislative Power, which is as much at Liberty to abrogate or alter it, as if no such Words had been in the Law. *Burnet Artic. VII. p. 96.* To suppose God unpossessed of a Power to suspend or controul his own Laws, is to suppose him unpossessed of a Right Essential to all Legislative Authority. *Revelation examined with Candour, Vol. II. p. 251.*

(+) Vid. *Poli Synops. Critic. in loc.*

that the *Gentile* World was to be admitted into Covenant with God, which plainly signified the Abolition of the *Jewish* Polity and Government (q). But I shall not spend any more Time in the Consideration of them. I shall therefore only mention that of the Prophet *Daniel*, who not only foretells our Blessed Saviour's Coming into the World, but also the exact and precise Time in which He should come; which was accordingly in the most punctual Manner accomplished; viz. that he should come at the end of 490 Years after the Rebuilding of *Jerusalem* which had been laid waste during the Captivity; that *He should be cut off; and that the City and Sanctuary should be destroyed; and He should cause the Sacrifice and Oblation to cease.* Dan. ix. 24, &c. Now all this happened exactly; our Blessed Saviour came into the World at this very Time; He put an End to the Institutions of the *Jewish* Law, and did Himself in most express Words prophesy the Destruction of the Temple, and declared that *one Stone of it should not be left upon another, which should not be thrown down,* Matt. xxiv. All which came to pass about 40 Years afterwards, when *Vespasian* and his Son *Titus* destroyed the City of *Jerusalem*, and laid the Temple level with the Ground; and not only that, but also killed about 1100000 of the *Jews*, and took about 97000 of them Prisoners. Here the *Jewish* Common-wealth came to an End, and has never since been able to revive in any Kingdom of the World to this Day. And this Judgment was so remarkably inflicted by God upon that obstinate People, that about 291 Years after, when *Julian* the Apostate endeavoured to rebuild the Temple at *Jerusalem*, and restore the *Jewish* Rites (as thinking that would be an un-

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answerable

(q) See particularly Psal. ii. 8. xxii. 27. Isa. xi. 10, &c. xlix. 6. Vid. Burnet Artic. VII. p. 93, &c.

answerable Argument against *Christianity*, since it would invalidate the Predictions of our Blessed Saviour relating to that Matter) we are assured that divine Vengeance would not suffer it; for dreadful Balls of Fire issued out from the Foundation, which destroyed the Work as fast as it was built, and at length forced the Workmen to give over the Attempt, by rendering the Place inaccessible. The Truth of which remarkable Providence is not only attested by *Socrates Scholasticus* (*r*), *Chrysofom* (*s*) and other antient Writers of the Church, but also by *Ammianus Marcellinus* (*t*) himself, a *Pagan* Historian, who served in the Wars under *Julian* in the East, at the very Time when this happened. But,

Secondly, The whole Force of this Objection and all that is built upon it, will very easily be removed by the *Letter* of the *Old Testament* itself; in several Places of which the Words *for ever* and *everlasting* do signify only a limited, and frequently a very short Time. Thus *Gen. xvii. 7, 8.* God says, that He will give to the Posterity of *Abraham* the Land of *Canaan* for an everlasting Possession. Now (not to mention that by the Land of *Canaan* in this Place the Kingdom of Heaven is *typically* signified

(*r*) Socrat. Hist. Eccl. lib. iii. cap. xx.

(*s*) Chrysof. in Hom. IV. in Matt.

(*t*) Ambitiosum quondam apud Hierosolyman Templum, quod post multa interneciva Certamina, obsidente Vespasiano posteaque Tito, ægre est expugnatum, instaurare immodicis sumptibus excogitabat, negotiumque maturandum Alypio dederat Antiochensi, qui olim Britannias curaverat pro Præfæctis. Cum itaque Rei idem fortiter intaret Alypius, juvenetque Provinciæ Rector, Metuendi Globi Flammæ prope fundamenta crebris assultibus erumpentes, secere locum, exultis aliquoties operantibus, Inaccessum, hocque modo Elemento destinatus repellente, cessavit inceptum. *Ammian. Marcell. Histor. lib. xxiii. cap. i.*

signified and represented, as many Learned Men (*u*) have clearly demonstrated) the *Jews* themselves will not suppose that God would be false to His Word and Promise; and therefore since the Posterity of *Abraham* hath, been driven out of that Land for so many Ages, this is a Demonstration that the Word *everlasting* in that Place must be understood in a finite limited Sense, to signify their Possession of that Land during the Dispensation of the Law. This is yet more plain in the Law of Servants *Exod. xxi.* where a Servant that was to be released in the Seventh Year, upon declaring against his Freedom before the Judges, is said to be obliged to serve his Master *for ever, ver. 6.* Now how is that? Why the plain Meaning of the Phrase *for ever* in that Place is this, *viz.* that he should be bound to serve 'till the next *Jubilee*, in which Sense the Phrase is used by the *Targum, Josephus,* and other *Jewish* Writers (*x*), or else the Words *for ever* may be understood to signify, that there should be no Part of his Days in which he should not be a Servant, or that he should serve his proper Master during Life (*y*). And in this Sense the Word *Eternal* or *Everlasting* is used by the best *Classic* Writers (*z*). And this is exactly

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the

(*u*) See particularly *Dr Sherlock* on the Immortality of the Soul, &c. p. 175 to 199. *Dr Clarke's* Connexion of Prophecies, &c. p. 10, 11.

(*x*) *Vid. Joseph Antiq. lib. iv. cap. viii. Ainsworth in loc. Stackhouse's Body of Divinity, p. 717.*

(*y*) *Quædam dicuntur æterna ex hypothesi, quod si res æternæ essent, id quod de iis dicitur æternum esset: ut, Exod. xxi. 6. si nunquam moreretur, semper maneret Servus. Gataker in Levit. xxv. 46.*

(*z*) *Serviet æternum, quia parvis nesciet uti. Horat. Epist. lib. i. Ep. 10. Spero dehinc inter nos æternam gratiam fore. Terent. in Eunuch. Act. v. Scen. 2. Æternumque daret Matri sub pectore vulnus. Lucret. lib. ii. Et in eodem sensu voces ἀίδιον, αἰώνιον a Græcis Scriptoribus frequentius usurpantur. Ita Ludos Seculares*

the Case of the *Jewish Sabbath* and *Priesthood*. They were *everlasting* Covenants between God and the *Jews*; *i. e.* there should be no Time under the *Jewish* Dispensation in which these Things were not to abide and continue. But it is impossible that they should be designed to continue for ever in the strict Sense of that Word; because as hath been before observed, the Law of *Moses* itself of which they were a Part was to come to a Period and Conclusion. The Substance of what has been said upon this Head is this: The *Jewish Sabbath* was of Force so long as the Law of *Moses* continued; but upon the Abolition of *that* Law it ceases to be of any Obligation. Our Blessed Saviour hath commanded us to observe the *Sabbath*; but not the Particular Day which the *Jews* kept in token of their Deliverance from the Land of *Egypt*, which is of no Concern at all to us; but the first Day of the Week, in which he rose from the Dead, and thereby compleated the great Work of our Redemption. This is the *Lord's Day* which we are obliged to observe, not only in Memory of the *Creation* of the World, (which is the first Ground of the Institution of the *Sabbath*) but also in Contemplation of that great Article of our Faith, the Resurrection of *Jesus Christ* from the Dead, and the inestimable Value of that Redemption which He hath wrought thereby. And God grant that we may all make a Conscience of observing it in that Pious and Religious Manner which we ought to do; and that not only from the Reason and Duty of the Thing itself, but also from the many and great Benefits and Advantages of so doing; which is the next Thing to be considered.

a Romanis celebratos Græci vocabant *αἰωνίους*, ut Herodot. testatur lib. iii. & Thucyd. stipendium in vitam duraturum vocat *αἰδίου μισθοφορέν*, lib. vi. § 24.

C H A P. III.

Concerning the Benefits and Advantages of a Religious Observation of the Lord's-Day.

HAVING in the foregoing Chapters shewn the Necessity and Obligation of observing One Day in every Week and keeping it Holy, together with the Grounds and Reasons for so doing; and having likewise considered upon what Accounts there was a *Change* made of the *Sabbath* from the *Seventh* to the *First Day* of the Week, which is called the *Lord's Day*; I proceed now to lay before the Reader the many and great Benefits and Advantages of a Pious and Religious Observation of this Holy Day. Now the Benefits and Advantages of a Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day* are chiefly and principally these Four.

First, It is the greatest Means under God's Providence of keeping up a Sense of God and Religion in the World. *Secondly*, It is the best Method to secure the Protection of God and His Blessing upon all our Endeavours. *Thirdly*, It does in the greatest Measure promote the Happiness and Benefit of Humane Society as it is the Means of instructing all Orders of Men in the several Duties which they owe to God and to one another. And *Fourthly and Lastly*, It is of the greatest Use and Advantage to every Particular Person in the Important Concernment of his own Salvation. And,

First, A Pious and Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day* is the greatest Means under God's Providence of keeping up a Sense of God and Religion

in the World. This is evident at first sight : for considering the great Degeneracy of Piety and Goodness among us, the general Contagion of bad Examples, and the little Care that is taken by most Parents in the Education of Children ; and considering further how *intent* the greatest Part of Mankind are upon the Cares and Buinesses of Life, and the Pleasures and Diversions of it ; I say, considering these Things, what Sense do we think Men would have of God, and what Notion of Religion, if it were not for this pious and holy Institution ? The grand Foundation of Religion is, the Contemplation of God and His Perfections, the Meditating upon Eternity, and the Reflection upon the Important Concernments of the Life to come. These Things are often called by Divines the *Food of the Soul* ; and (as shall be fully shewn hereafter) are as indispensably required to support the Spiritual and Divine Life in us, as Meat and Drink are to support the Natural and Animal Life ; insomuch that if a Man had the largest Understanding and most sublime Knowledge which could reach to the utmost extent of Nature, it would not yet administer the least Benefit and Advantage to his Soul, unless it was applied to a serious and frequent Meditation on these Subjects. For it is not the bare Belief of the Being of God, and the Acknowledgment of a Future State of Rewards and Punishments, that render Men truly Pious and Religious ; since we often observe Men to be very dissolute and flagitious in their Lives and Manners, who yet constantly profess the Belief of these Articles of our Faith ; and who are so far from justifying themselves in their Wickedness, that they own it is a Matter of continual Uneasiness and Vexation to them. But that which prevails upon Mankind to the Practice of Piety and Virtue, is the due weighing these great Truths in their Minds, and seriously and frequently attending to the

Nature

Nature and Consequences of them. The true Reason, why the Generality of Men are so profane and wicked, is not, because they are Atheists and Infidels (for it would be very false as well as uncharitable to pass That Judgment on them) but it is, because they will not allow themselves Time seriously to reflect upon the Nature and Evidence of Religion, and the miserable Consequences of Sin and Wickedness; and because, to use the Words of the Prophet, *Tho' the Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib, yet Israel doth not know, God's People doth not consider.* *Isaiab* i. 3. Since then Religion cannot possibly be preserved in the Minds of Men without a due Contemplation upon God and a Future State, it is absolutely necessary to support that Contemplation in the Generality of Mankind, who are ever engaged in the Cares and Pleasures of Life, that some Public Times be appointed for the Service and Worship of God, and for a more than ordinary Meditation upon Divine Things. For this, if duly and carefully observed, naturally tends to revive a Sense of God and His Perfections, and a future State of Rewards and Punishments upon the Minds of Men (a). This the greatest Politicians of the World, and even *Atheists* themselves have frequently acknowledged; and because they are sensible that Religion is absolutely necessary to the Being and Happiness of any Commonwealth, they have therefore always took Care to provide for that by a solemn Appointment of public Festivals (b). Since then this is the Nature and Condition of Mankind; it is very clear and evident, that if it were not for the Observation of the *Lord's Day*, and the Attendance upon the public Worship, and the hearing the Word of God at that

G 4

Time,

(a) *Vid.* Dr Marshall's Sermons, Vol. I. p. 269, 270. Vol. II. p. 516.

(b) *Vid.* Hobb's Leviathan, chap. xii.

Time, the small Remains of Piety and Religion that are left among us would soon be lost, and we should in a few Years degenerate into a State of *Heathen* Barbarity and Ignorance (c). It is therefore a very great Sin

(c) *Innumerable Passages might be produced out of our best Divines to confirm the Truth of this Observation; but I shall at present only mention One out of the most Learned Dean Pridaux, which is very remarkable. The Doctrines of our Holy Religion, (saith he) having in them the sublimest Principles of Divine Knowledge, and the Precepts of it containing all the Duties of Morality, in the highest Manner improved; nothing can be of greater Advantage to us for the leading of us to the truest Happiness we are capable of as well in this Life, as in that which is to come, than to have these weekly taught and explained unto us, and weekly put home upon our Consciences, for the forming of our Lives according to them. And the Political State or Civil Government of every Christian Country is no less benefited hereby than the Church itself. For as it best conduceth to keep up the Spirit of Religion among us, and to make every Man know his Duty to God, his Neighbour, and himself; so it may be reckoned of all Methods the most conducive to preserve Peace and good Order in the State. For hereby Subjects are taught to be obedient to the Prince and his Laws, Children to be dutiful to their Parents, Servants to be faithful to their Masters, and all to be just and charitable, and to pay all other Duties which in every Relation they owe to each other; and in the faithful Discharge of these Duties doth the Peace and good Order and Happiness of every Community consist. And to be weekly instructed in these Duties, and to be weekly excited to the Obedience of them, is certainly the properest and the most effectual Method to induce Men hereto. And it may justly be reckoned that the good Order which is now maintained in this Kingdom, is more owing to this Method, than to any other now in Practice among us for this End; and that one good Minister by his weekly Preaching and daily good Example sets it more forward, than any two of the best Justices of the Peace can by their exactest Diligence in the Execution of the Laws which they are entrusted with. For these by the utmost of their Coercions can go no farther, than to restrain the outward Acts of Wickedness; but the other reforms the Heart within, and removes all those evil Inclinations out of it, from whence they flow. And it is not to be doubted, but that if this Method were once dropped among us, the Generality of the People, whatever else may be done to obviate it, would in seven Years Time relapse into as bad a State of Barbarity, as was ever in practice among the worst of our Saxon or Danish Ancestors. And there-*

Sin for any Man to neglect the Observation of this Holy Day, and a much greater to despise and run it down; since it is the best Means under Heaven of making Men soberly and seriously Religious, and since the Generality of Mankind have scarce any other Opportunity of Thinking to any good Purpose on the great Affair of another Life, and transacting the important Concern of their Salvation.

Secondly, The Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day* is the surest Method which can be used, to engage the Divine Protection and Blessing upon all our Endeavours. For the Service and Worship of God is the best Means we can take to procure His Favour. (d). This the Holy Scriptures have assured us of in innumerable Places. Thus says the Apostle, *The Eyes of the Lord are over the Righteous, and His Ears are open unto their Prayers.* 1 Pet. iii. 12. And our Blessed Saviour hath let us know that *if we ask, it shall be given to us; if we seek, we shall find; if we knock, it shall be opened unto us.* Matt. vii. 7. And further, that God will give that best of Gifts, *the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.* Luke xi. 13. And once more, for the Encouragement of Prayer and Devotion, our Blessed Saviour hath told us in a distinct Parable, *Luke xviii*, how effectual our Addresses to God will be, if they are offered up to Him with due Faith and Fervency. If then this be
so;

therefore, supposing there were no such Thing in *Truth* and *Reality*, as that Holy *Christian* Religion which the Ministers of the Gospel teach (as too many among us are now permitted with Impunity to say) yet the Service which they do the Civil Government in keeping all Men to those Duties, in the Observance of which it's Peace, good Order, and Happiness consists, may very well deserve the Maintenance which they receive from it. *Dr Prideaux's Connection* 8vo. Vol. II. p. 561, 562. *Sub Anno ante Christum* 444.

(d) Θεοῖς εὐχεσθε οἷς ἐστὶ μέγα χάρις. ἐν ᾧ περ θεῶν,
Γίνεσθαι ἀνθρώποις, ἕτ' ἀδ' ἕτε κακὰ.

Theognid, Sentent, l. 171.

so; if there be so much Good to be expected from the *private* Exercise of Piety and Devotion; and if *where two or three are gathered together in the Name of Christ, there will He be in the midst of them*; *Matt. xviii. 20*, what Blessing may we not expect from the united Prayers of whole Congregations (*e*)? provided indeed, that we did offer them up to God with that Fervour and Zeal which ought always to accompany them, and would bring ourselves off from that Deadness and Coldness, not to say that *indecent* and *ridiculous* Behaviour, which is oftentimes too visible in our Devotions. So that this is one great Advantage of observing the *Lord's Day*, that besides the Benefit of hearing God's Word, which I shall consider presently, we have hereby a constant Opportunity every Week of assembling ourselves together and begging the Divine Protection and Blessing; which, if our Petitions are hearty and fervent, and our Lives and Conversations suitable thereto, God will not fail to pour down upon us in great Abundance. For as a Learned Divine (*f*) well expresses it, *The Hearer of Prayer* is God's favourite Character, when He can hear it with Honour and without Disparagement to His Laws.

Thirdly, Another great Benefit and Advantage of a Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*, is this, *viz.* that it does in the greatest Measure promote the Interest and Happiness of Human Society, as it is the Means of instructing all Orders and Degrees of Men among us, in the several Respective Parts of *Christian Duty*. For one main Part of the Day consists in the Hearing of God's Holy Word, which is duly and constantly preached to the People. And that Men might receive the greater Benefit from this Institution, it hath pleased
God

(*e*) *Vid. Bishop Beveridge on the Necessity and Advantage of Public Prayer p. 33, 34.*

(*f*) *Dr Marshall's Sermons Vol. I. p. 238.*

God in His great Wisdom to set apart a Peculiar Order of Men to this Office and Employment; so that hereby all Persons may learn the Duty which they owe to God, and how they ought to behave themselves one towards another, whatsoever Condition or Relation they are in: whether they be Husbands or Wives, Parents or Children, Magistrates or Subjects, Masters or Servants, or common Brethren one to another. Each of these Relations hath it's Peculiar Duties, which all Persons concerned in them are obliged to perform; and for which they must give a strict Account to Almighty God at the last Day. Now considering how much the Peace and Happiness of Human Society in general, and that of every Neighbourhood and Family in particular, depends upon the Practice of these Relative Duties; and considering farther how little Leisure the Generality of Mankind will allow themselves from the Cares and Diversions of Life, to think seriously on such Things: It must certainly be allowed to be a very *wise* and *beneficial* Institution, which tends to inculcate these and all other Moral Duties upon Men, and by all proper Arguments and Motives to excite and stir them up to the Observation of them. And therefore as an Eminent (g) Writer well remarks, “ if keeping *holy* the “ *Seventh* Day were *only* an *human* Institution, it “ would be the *best* Method that could have been “ *thought of* for the polishing and civilizing of Man- “ kind.” And whatever some Persons may think of their own Talents and Self-sufficiency; yet it is certain, that to this Excellent Ordinance of *public* Preaching that small Pittance of Knowledge, which the Generality of the common People have in the Christian Religion, the Sense which they have of God and His Perfections, and of the Obligation of Moral Duties, and their Belief

(g) Mr Addison in Spectator No. 112.

lief and Apprehension of a future State of Rewards and Punishments, are almost entirely owing.

Fourthly, and, Lastly, The Last Thing which I shall mention at present, as a great Benefit and Advantage of a Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*, is the exceeding Usefulness of it to every Particular Person, in the great Concernment of his Eternal Salvation. For by this Means every particular Person has Ordinarily a constant Opportunity every Week of repairing to God's Church, and joining in the devout Prayers and Offices thereof. And how great a Blessing this is, may easily be judged not only from the apparent Interest and Advantage thereof, but also from the exquisite Delight and Satisfaction which constantly attends it. This the pious and good Men in all Ages of the World have universally acknowledged, and esteemed this *intimate* Communion with God as the most *pleasant* and *delightful* of all Enjoyments. Hear how *pathetic* the Words of Holy *David* are, upon Account of his Absence and Banishment from the Sanctuary. *O how amiable are Thy Tabernacles, Thou Lord of Hosts. My Soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord, my Heart and my Flesh crieth out for the Living God. For one Day in Thy Courts is better than a Thousand. I had rather be a Door-keeper in the House of my God, than to dwell in the Tents of Wickedness. Psalm lxxxiv.* From which we may justly affirm, that when Men can contentedly absent themselves from the Church of God, or if they come thither, are cold and indifferent in the Offices thereof; it is a sure Sign that they have not the true Spirit of Piety and Religion in them, and have not yet tasted of that *heavenly* Delight and Pleasure, which results from the Life and Vigour of Devotion (*b*). But,

Secondly,

(*b*) Devotion warms and opens the Soul, and disposes it to receive Divine Influences. It sometimes raises the Mind into a Heavenly

Secondly, This is not all. For in the next Place, every Person by observing the *Lord's Day* hath the Benefit of hearing One or Two Godly Sermons in a Week, in which the Sense of Scripture is explained, and, generally speaking, some Practical Point of Religion opened and enlarged upon. By which means, if he makes a Conscience of attending constantly upon the Church, and does his best Endeavours to remember and meditate upon what he has heard; if together with this he prays to God for his Grace to enable him to make a right Use and Application of it; he cannot well be ignorant in any Essential Part of *Christian Duty*. Nay, he will by this Means in a little Time, if he constantly joins the Reading of the Holy Scriptures with it, attain to great Perfection in Divine Wisdom; and as far as true *saving* Knowledge goes, he will be a much better Scholar, than many who have studied hard for Years together, and carry a whole Library along with them in their Heads: it being not the Extent of Knowledge in which the Divine Life consists, but the devout Application of it to our spiritual State and Condition. But *Thirdly, and lastly*. The Man I am now speaking of may still reap this farther Advantage from a constant Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*, *viz.* That he has thereby a *glorious* Opportunity at least once in a Week of retiring from the World; and, when the Time of Divine Service is over, of reflecting within himself, and of meditating upon Eternity and the weighty Concernments of the Life to come. This is a Blessing which many sensible Men, who have been unavoidably engaged in the Hurry and Business of this World, have *desired* and *longed* for with the utmost Impatience;

venly Ecstasy, and fills it with a Joy that is not to be expressed. When it is pure, it leaves a strong Impression upon the Heart of Love to God, and inspires us with a Contempt of this World, having tasted the Pleasures of the World to come. *Dr Burnet's Theory of the Earth*, Vol. II. p. 289.

patience; and when the *happy* Opportunity was come, have paid down a great Price for the Purchase of it. For the Sake of Retirement many Princes have resign'd their Crowns, and betook themselves to a private Life (*i*). And indeed let the Men of the World say what they will of Delight and Pleasure, there is no Pleasure on this side Heaven (excepting that of doing Good) that comes any thing near to that of Contemplation (*k*); and no wonder, when the Happiness of Heaven itself does in a great Measure consist therein. All the Pleasures of Sense are *short-liv'd* and *fading*, and soon become *nauseous* and *ungrateful* to us; but the Pleasure of Divine Wisdom, which is the Result of due Contemplation, is continually *growing* and *encreasing*, and the more we have thereof; the more we shall ever wish for and desire. For this is the Character and Description which Wisdom gives of her self, *Ecclus. xxiv. 21. they that eat me shall yet be hungry; and they that drink me shall yet be thirsty.* And indeed for a Man to retire from the Noise and Hurry of this World, to look into Himself, and examine his Heart, and to rectify every Thing there that is amiss; 'till he brings himself to his just Perfection; and particularly to think upon God the Great Creator of all Things; to consider the Glory of His Works (*l*), the Wisdom of His Providence, and His

(i) Vid. Echard's Hist. of England, Vol. I. p. 63,

(k) Τοῖς μὲν γὰρ Θεοῖς ὁ βίος μακάριος. τοῖς δ' ἀνθρώποις, ἐφ' ὅσον ἑαυτῶμα πρὸ τοιαύτης ἐνεργείας ὑπάρχει. ἧς δ' ἄλλον ζῶων ἐδὲν εὐδαιμονεῖ ἐπειδὴ ἕδμε κοινονεῖ θεωρίας. ἐφ' ὅσον δὴ διαλείπει ἢ θεωρία καὶ ἢ εὐδαιμονία, καὶ οἷς μᾶλλον ὑπάρχει τὴ θεωρεῖν, καὶ εὐδαιμονεῖν, ἢ κατὰ συμβεβηκός, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν θεωρίαν; αὐτῇ γὰρ καθ' αὐτὴν πρῶτα, ὡς εἶναι ἢ εὐδαιμονία θεωρία. Aristot. Ethic. ad Nicom. lib. x. cap. viii. Vid. loc.

(l) Τὸν δ' ἀνθρώπον θεωρεῖν εἰσηγαγῆ (ὁ Θεός) αὐτῷ τε καὶ ἧς ἔργον τῷ αὐτῷ, καὶ ἢ μόνον θεωρεῖν ἀλλὰ καὶ διηρηγῆ αὐτῷ. διὰ τῆτο αἰχρον ὅτι πᾶν ἀνθρώπων ἀρχεθεσε καὶ καταλήγειν ὅσα καὶ τὰ ἀλογα. ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἐνθην μὲν ἀρχεθεσε, κατὰλήγειν δ' ἐφ' ὃ κατέληξεν ἐφ' ἁμῶν καὶ ἢ φύσει. κατέληξε δ' ἐπὶ θεωρίαν καὶ παρακολούθησιν, καὶ σύμψυχόν διεξάσθη τῷ φύσει. Arrian in Epictet. lib. i cap. vi.

His infinite Love to Mankind in the Redemption of the World by the Death of His Son: This I say, is not only a necessary Duty which God requires of every Man, but is moreover such a Happiness, as the greatest Pleasures of Sense are never to be compared with. And yet this great Happiness is what the meanest Persons among us may frequently enjoy, if they will but apply the *Lord's Day* to this excellent Purpose. But however Men may judge in this Case, and in what Things soever they place their chief Happiness; it is very certain (as shall be fully shewn in the Sequel) that without a *due* and *frequent* Meditation on Divine Things, it is *impossible* for a Man to become *truly* Religious. He may, I grant, do many good Things in Religion, and yet be far from being a good Man and such as God will accept. He may, I say, do many good Things in Religion, thro' *Custom, Example* and *Education*; when he is no ways *inclined* to do the contrary. But he will never bear up against the Stream of Nature in such Cases where he is *violently* attacked; neither will he be ever able to withstand the Power of *strong* and *extraordinary* Temptations. *Peter* thought he was secure of his Fidelity to his Great Lord and Master. *Tho' I should die with Thee*, saith he, *I will not deny Thee in any wise.* *Mark* xiv. 31. But for want of Dependence upon God and meditating upon the Point, he came off shamefully and denied his Master. And just so will all Men do in the like Cases, if they do not maintain a Communion with God by *devout* Prayer and *frequent* Meditation. Whosoever therefore would be a *Christian* indeed, and desires to approve himself to the *Righteous* Judgment of God, must make a Conscience of hearing His Word, and observing the *Sabbath*; he must *frequently* pray to God for His Grace and Assistance; he must when he hath Opportunity read the Holy Scriptures and other good Books, and especially upon the *Lord's Day*; he must often and
particu-

particularly at *that* Time, retire from the World, and meditate upon Eternity. This will secure him against the Power of Temptations, and keep his Mind in it's true Posture and Condition. And this is one of the great Benefits and Advantages which arise from a Pious and Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*; which, together with the others I have mentioned, should one would think be sufficient to prevail upon all Men to a due and constant Observation thereof.

The End of the First Part.





PART II.

*Concerning the Manner in which the
Lord's Day is to be observed.*

The INTRODUCTION.



HAVING in the former Part of this Discourse shewn the Obligation of observing the *Sabbath Day*, and likewise upon what Accounts the Day was changed from the *seventh* to the *first* Day of the Week, together with the great Benefits and Advantages of a Pious and Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*, I proceed now to consider the Particular Manner in which this Holy Day ought to be observed by all *Christians*. And this I shall endeavour to do these two Ways.

First, From the Nature and Reason of the Thing itself, and the plain Testimony of Holy Scripture. And;

Secondly, From the Sense and Judgment of those Persons who must be allowed to be the best and most competent Judges in this Matter. And,

First, From the Nature and Reason of the Thing itself, and the plain Testimony of Holy Scripture. Now I having shewn in the first Chapter of this Book, that the due Observation of the *seventh* Day does im-

ply not only the Rest from Bodily Labour, but also the Dedication of it to the Worship and Service of God, and to the Duties of Religion; it will hence be no difficult Matter to observe the particular Manner in which the *Lord's Day* ought to be kept and celebrated by us. The Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day* then does at least imply these five Things.

First, A diligent and constant Attendance upon the *Public* Worship of God and the Preaching of His Word, at the stated Times and Seasons thereof.

Secondly, The Reading of the Holy Scriptures and other good Books.

Thirdly, A due and serious Meditation upon Divine Things.

Fourthly, A diligent and careful Examination of our Lives and Actions. And,

In the Fifth and last Place, The Religious Instruction and Education of our Children and Families. Of these in their Order.

C H A P I.

*Concerning the Duty of attending upon the Public
Worship, &c.*

THAT God is to be worshipped in a *Public* Manner I have already briefly hinted in the Introduction to the first Part; wherein I have shewn at large, that He hath appointed a Particular Day in every Week for the due Celebration of *that* Worship. And this is a Truth so clear and evident, that the very *Heathens* themselves in their most corrupt and degenerate State were always duly sensible of it. And indeed it is so plainly founded in Natural Reason, that if
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it were not for the strange Notions of too many Persons among us, and the *gross* and *shameful* Neglect of others in this Particular, it would seem unnecessary and impertinent to treat upon it. But the unhappy *Distinction* that has been made of late Years between *Morality* and *Religion*, and the pernicious Doctrine of some Men, who have resolved *all* Religion into the Practice of *moral* and *social* Duties, hath had such a *fatal* Influence upon many Persons; that it becomes absolutely necessary to speak fully and distinctly to this Point. In order therefore to manifest the great and *indispensable* Duty of attending upon the *public* Worship of God at the stated Times and Seasons thereof, I shall endeavour to shew these three Things.

First, That the public Worship and Service of God hath in all Ages of the World been thought necessary to Religion, and by all wise Law-givers and Founders of States hath been made an Essential Part of their Civil Constitution.

Secondly, I shall shew that God hath made an express and particular Provision in Holy Scripture for His public Worship and Service. And

Thirdly and lastly, That the Practice of *Morality* or a *good Life* (as some Men (*a*) call it) will not without the public Worship and Service of God be available to Salvation.

(*a*) A State of Temperance, Sobriety, and Justice, without Devotion, is a cold, lifeless, insipid Condition of Virtue, and is rather to be stiled *Philosophy* than *Religion*. Mr *Addison* in *Spectator* No. 201.

With all who have a right Understanding of the Law of Nature, Acknowledgment of the one True and Living God, a suitable Veneration of Him, Devotion to Him, and Concern that He have His *due* Honour from us and our Fellow Creatures; and that His Sovereign Authority over all His Rational Creatures, and Right to rule them, as to His unerring Reason shall seem meet, be owned by all; will pass for the *highest* and most *important* Points of *Morality* and Branches of the Law of Nature. *Simon Brown's Defense of the Religion of Nature*, &c. Chap. ii. p. 66.

If these three Points can be clearly made out, I think nothing more can be required to shew the *absolute necessary* Duty of attending upon the public Worship and Service of God. And with the Favour and Candour of the Reader I do not doubt to make them all three very plain and evident. And,

First, I shall shew that the public Worship and Service of God hath in all Ages of the World been thought *necessary* to Religion (*b*). If we look into the Writings of the ancient Philosophers, we shall find them to be of the same Mind and Judgment in this Matter. They ever made the public Worship of their Gods a *material* and *necessary* Part of their Religion. Thus says *Pythagoras*: In the first Place, Honour and Reverence the Immortal Gods (*c*). The Reason of which is given us by the Commentator upon him, because Piety or the Worship of God is the Principal and Foundation of all Virtues (*d*). And *Plato* (*e*), *Cicero* (*f*), *Epicte-*
tus

(*b*) Can we think our Saviour's Meaning (on that Text, *Matt. vi. 6. when thou prayest enter into thy Closet*) to be this, that the Disciples should never pray but in their Closets? No certainly; for it is a Precept of *Natural Religion* that God is to be worshiped in the Societies of Men. *Dr Clagett's Posthumous Sermons*, Vol. II. p. 7.

I believe we may challenge all the Histories in the World of any Credit to name any Civilized People, where there was not always some Form or other of Religious Worship, some *public* Place or other, either Temple, or Grove, or Mountain, or Altar, used and appointed for the Performance of it. *Bishop Leng's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures*, p. 108. Vid. p. 334, 365.

(*c*) *Aur. Carm. 1, 2.*

(*d*) *Hierocl. in loc.*

(*e*) Πρῶτον μὲν σαυὲν πιάς τις μετ' ἑλυμπίας τε καὶ τῶν πόλιν ἔχουσας θεῶν, τοῖς χθονίοις, ἀν τις θεοῖς ἄρπα καὶ δεύτερον καὶ ἀειπαρέμωτον, ὀρθότατα τῶν εὐσεβείας σκοπεῖ τυχεῖνοι. — Μετὰ δὲ τῆς δε, καὶ τοῖς δαίμωνιν ὄντων ἑμφρων ὀργαζοῖτ' αὐ. — Εἰτα καὶ δεῖ δ' αὐτοῖς ἰδρυματὰ ἰδία παλαιοῶν θεῶν κατὰ νόμον ἰδρυματίζουσα. *Plato de Legib. lib. iv.*

(*f*) *Suosque Deos aut novos aut alienigenas coli, confusionem habet reigionum, & ignotas ceremonias etiam sacerdotibus. Nam a Pa-*
tribus

tus (g), and others of the most Eminent Philosophers, are continually exhorting Mankind to Serve and Worship the Gods, according to the Laws of their Country; of which many Passages might be produced out of them, if it were necessary. And it is no Objection at all to this, that we sometimes meet with Passages in the old *Heathen* Moralists, which import that the *best* and most *acceptable* Worship of God is a *pure* Heart and Mind, and the endeavouring to imitate Him in His Moral Excellencies and Perfections (h). For this is

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tribus acceptos Deos ita placet coli, si huic Legi paruerunt ipsi. Cicero de Legib. lib. ii. Jam illud ex Institutis Pontificum & Aruspicum non mutandum est, quibus hostiis immolandum cuique Deo. Id. ibid.

(g) Σπέειδεν δ' ἢ δύνει ἢ ἀπέχεσθαι καὶ τὰ πάτρια (ἐκεί-
 σοι) ἐκείνοις περὶ τῆν. Epictet. Enchirid. cap. xxxviii. *Quomodo
 sint Divi colendi solet præcipi. Senec. Epist. 95. Ἀθανάτους μὲν
 πρῶτα θεὸς, νόμῳ ὡς δὲ ἀνεύσαι, &c. Vid. Marcilii Comment. in loc.*

(h) Cultus Deorum est optimus idemque castissimus atque sanctif-
 fimus, plenissimusque Pietatis, ut Eos semper pura integra incor-
 rupta, & Mente & voce veneremur. *Cic. de Nat. Deorum, lib. ii.*
 Vis Deos propitiare? bonus esto: Satis Illos coluit, quisquis imi-
 tatus est. *Senec. Epist. 95.*

Colitur autem, non taurorum opimis corporibus contrucidatis,
 nec auro argentoque suspenso, nec in Thesauros stipe infusa, sed pia
 & recta voluntate. *Idem Epist. 115.*

*Nec Bove maculato Cælestia numina gaudent,
 Sed, quæ præstanda est, & sine Teste, Fide. Ovid. Epist. 20.*

*Compositum jus fasque animi, Sanctosque recessus
 Mentis & incoctum generoso pectus honesto.
 Hoc cedo ut admoveam templis, & farre litabo.*

Perf. Satyr. 2. in fine.

*Immunis aram si tetigit Manus
 Non sumptuosa blandior hostia,
 Mollibit aceros Penates*

Farre, pio & saliente Mica. Horat. Carm lib. iii. Od. 23.

Ἄου γὰρ τιμήσεις ἢ θεὸν διδύς τ' αὐτῶ, ἀλλ' ἀξίος τῆ λαβεῖν
 τὰ παρ' ἐκείνους χροῦμεν. ὡς γὰρ φάσιν οἱ Πυθαγορεῖοι, τι-
 μήσεις ἢ θεὸν ἀείσα ἐὰν τῶ θεῷ τὴν δίανοιαν ὁμοιωσῆς.
Hierocl. in Carm. Pythag. 24, 25.

no more than what the best *Christian* Writers themselves frequently say, who yet earnestly contend for the Necessity of such Worship (*i*). Nay we find God Almighty Himself often speaking in the same Manner in the Holy Scriptures. Thus *Mic.* vi. 6. &c. *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before him with burnt Offerings, with Calves of a Year old? &c. He hath shewed thee O Man what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? And again, to what Purpose is the Multitude of your Sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. When ye come to appear before Me, who hath required this at your Hands to tread my Courts? bring no more vain Oblations, Incense is an Abomination to me; the New Moons and Sabbaths, the calling of Assemblies I cannot away with; it is Iniquity, even the solemn Meeting, &c. Isa. i. 11. &c. See also chap. lxvi. 3.* Now it would be the highest Absurdity imaginable to suppose, that God should be displeas'd with the *Jews* for their Performance of the External Rites and Sacrifices of their Worship, or that He should not require their Attendance upon these Things; when He Himself had expressly instituted

(*i*) *Hostias & victimas Domino offeram, quas in usum mei proculit, ut rejiciam Ei suum Munus? Ingratum est, cum sit litabilis hostia bonus animus & pura mens & sincera Conscientia. Igitur qui Innocentiam colit, Domino supplicat; qui Justitiam, Deo libat; qui fraudibus abstinet, propitiat Deum; qui Hominem periculo subripit, opimam victimam caedit. Hæc nostra Sacrificia, hæc Dei Sacra sunt: Sic apud nos religiosior est Ille, qui justior. Minut. Felix de Idol Vanitat. p. 94, 95.* In the same manner also speaks the Son of *Sirach*, *Eccl. xxxv. 1, 2, 3.*

A virtuous and good Life is better not only than *Jewish* Rites and Ceremonies, but better even than the best of any other Worship that is paid to God either in Earth or in Heaven. Nevertheless as the one ought above all Things to be done, so the other ought not by any Means to be left undone. *Dr Clarke's Sermons, Vol. IX. p. 437. See also, Tillotson's Works in folio, Vol. II. p. 346.*

instituted and appointed them (k). But the plain Meaning of those Places of Scripture is this; that God prefers the great Duties of Piety, Justice, and Charity, before any External Rites and Institutions of His Worship, and that he has no regard to such External Services when they are offered up by Men of impure Hearts and (l) wicked Lives; by Men whose Hands are full of Blood, and who are guilty of Uncharitableness and Oppression, as the Prophet observes in the Passages above cited.

And the same Judgment is to be passed upon the ancient Moralists. They only signified that true Piety and Charity were more valuable in the Sight of God, than the External Rites and Institutions of Religion. But they did not mean hereby to exclude the Necessity of External Worship; since they had so well provided for that by many express Precepts (m). And if in some few Places of their Writings we find them speaking slightly of External Rites and Sacrifices; this was not, because they disapproved of such Things in Divine Worship (n), but because the Gentile Rites and Sacri-

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(k) See a remarkable Passage of St Origen, above cited, in p. 35.

(l) See this Matter very clearly and judiciously stated, in *Scripture Vindicated*, Part III. p. 37. to 41. p. 67. to 72.

(m) Vide Page 100.

Καθ' ἑαυτῶν δ' ἔρδειν ἐν ἀθανάτοις θεοῖσιν.

Ἄγνων καὶ κενόφωνον, ἐπὶ δ' ἀγλάα μὲν κείν.

Hesiod. *Oper. & Dier. lib. i. l. 334.*

Ὅταν γὰρ ὡς ἕκαστε εὐσεως ἔχει καὶ πίξεως, διαγνώμων, τότε καὶ ἐπιβλέψας τῷ νόμῳ τὴν πηλὴν αὐτοῖς ὠποδύσσοιτο.

Ἐστὶ δὲ τῶν εὐσεῖς κρείττωνων πρῶτις ὁ καὶ ἀειὶς ὁ δὲ δεικνύμενος θεῶν, ἀσχηκίτως τῶν πάντων ἀειμώμων.

Hierocl. *ibid.* p. 38, *Vid. etiam Simplicii Comment. in Epictet. cap. xxxviii.*

(n) Audiatur licet, quemadmodum se gerere in Sacrificiis debeat, quam procul resiliere a molestis superstitionibus; nunquam satis profectum erit, nisi qualem debet, Deum, mente conceperit, &c. *Senec. Epist. 95.* See also *Epictet. Enchirid. cap. xxxviii.* Where tho' he fully shews that the chief and principal Part of Religion is to have right Notions of the Gods, and to conform ourselves to them, &c.

fices were almost every where crowded with *infinite* Superstitions, and in many Places mixed with so much *Filthiness* and *Impurity*, as wou'd justly render them the *Abhorrence* of all wise and good Men (*o*).

Nay, so great a Regard had the ancient *Pagans* to the public Worship of their Gods, that they fell into an Extreme and Fatal Errour in this Matter. For the *Heathen* Priests taught no *Morality* in their Assemblies, but spent the *Whole* Time of their public Service in offering up their Sacrifices, and in performing the Ceremonies of divine Worship, as we are informed both by *Lactantius* (*p*) and *St Austin* (*q*).

This great Neglect might perhaps be owing to the vast Number and Variety of their Sacrifices, of which this was the True Ground and Reason. They generally thought that Sin would not be pardoned by God upon the *bare* Repentance of the Sinner, without offering up some Sacrifice (*r*) in his stead; and being ignorant what kind of Sacrifice God would accept, this gave Occasion to so *great* a Number and Variety of Sacrifices, that the Oblation of them together

Yet at the same Time (as the rest of the Philosophers did) he observes the *necessary* Duty of worshipping them *publickly*, according to the Establish'd Laws of every Country.

(*o*) *Vid.* Jul. Firmic. de Errore Profan. Relig. p. 10. &c. August. de Civitate Dei. lib. ii. cap. iv. and v. lib. iv. cap. xxxi. Arnob. adv. Gentes lib. v. Grot de Veritat. Relig. Christianæ. lib. iv. §. 3. *Bishop* Gibson's *Second Pastoral Letter*, p. 28.

(*p*) *Philosophia & Religio Deorum disjuncta sunt, si quidem alii sunt professores Sapientiae per quos utique ad Deos non aditur. Alii Religionis antistites, per quos sapere non discitur. And again, Nil ibi differitur quod proficiat ad mores excolendos vitamque formandam, nec habet inquisitionem aliquam Veritatis, sed tantummodo ritum colendi, qui non officio Mentis sed ministerio Corporis constat. Lactant. Institut. lib. iv. cap. iii.*

(*q*) *Dicatur in quibus locis hæc docentium Deorum solebant præcepta recitari, & a cultoribus eorum populis frequenter audiri. sicut nos ostendimus ad hoc Ecclesias institutas, quaquaversum Religio Christiana diffunditur. Aug. de Civit. Dei, lib. ii. cap. vi. Vid loc.*

(*r*) *Vid. Dr Marshall's Sermons, Vol. I. p. 443, to 447.*

together with the performing the Rites and Ceremonies of Religion took up the *whole* Time of their public Meetings. Which, tho' it was a great and manifest Errour, yet it plainly shews their Sense of the Necessity of public Devotion; and they could never possibly have fallen into such an extreme neglect of *Moral* Instruction, if they could have been persuaded with some Men in these latter Times, that the *bare* Love of God and the Performance of the Duties which we owe to each other do without the *public* Worship of God make up the *whole* of Religion: and this is all the Purpose for which I bring the Testimony of them. And how *necessary* the Wisest Law-givers and Founders of *States* have thought the *public* Worship of God to be may appear from hence, that they ever made it an essential Part of their *Civil* Constitution; which is evident not only from what has been already observed concerning the Philosophers requiring Men to worship God according to the Laws of their Country, but also from the Laws themselves, which are still to be seen in the Antiquities of all Nations concerning the *public* Establishment of Religion. And this Judgment of the Antient Law-givers is not only applauded by all pious and good Men (*s*), but it also extorts the Commendation of those who are *profest* Adversaries of all Religion. For when the *Atheists* would account for the *first* Introduction of Religion into the World, they commonly tell us it was owing to the Craft of Statesmen and Politicians;

(*s*) Towards keeping Mankind in Order, it is *necessary* that there should be some Religion professed and even established, which cannot be done without some *public* Worship. And were it not for that Sense of Virtue, which is preserved (so far as it is preserved) by National Forms and Habits of Religion, Men would soon lose it all, run wild, prey upon one another, and do what else the worst of Savages do. *Woolaston's Relig. of Nat. delineated*, p. 24. See also, an excellent Passage of Dean *Prideaux* to this Purpose already cited in p. 88, 89.

ticians (*t*); which by the Way is a plain Acknowledgment that the public Establishment of Religion is *advantageous* and *beneficial* to Human Society (*u*). And Mr *Hobbs* hath a peculiar Thought in this Matter. Among other Reasons he gives, why the first Legislators did establish the *public* Excercise of Religion, he mentions this as one, that “in case any Misfortunes should happen upon the Community, the People might lay the Fault on their own Neglect and Errour in the Ceremonies of Religion, and so be less apt to mutiny against their Governours (*x*).” And the same Acknowledgment hath been often made by many great Politicians and Statesmen, who were never thought *partial* to Religion. Thus *Machiavel* observes that “the Grandeur and Success of the Old *Romans* is chiefly to be ascribed to their Piety and Religion; and that *Rome* was more obliged to *Numa Pompilius* for settling the Rites of Religion amongst them, than to *Romulus* the Founder of their State; and the Reason he gives for it is this, because without Religion there can be no such Thing,

(*t*) The curious Reader may see this Notion of the *Attheists* ingeniously described in the *Minute Philosopher*, Vol. I. p. 23. And if he thinks there is any Ground for it, he may find the same judiciously and solidly confuted by the Learned Dr *Cudworth* in his Intellectual System, p. 691, &c. and by Bishop *Leng* in his 5th Sermon at *Boyle's Lectures*, and by Archbishop *Tillotson* Vol. I. p. 18. “Quid? ii qui dixerunt totam de Diis Immortalibus Opinione[m] fictam esse ab hominibus sapientibus Reipublicæ Causa, ut quos ratio non possit, eos ad Officium religio duceret: nonne omnem religionem funditus sustulerunt?” *Cic. de Nat. Deorum. lib. i.*

(*u*) When it is judged convenient for the Purposes of Infidelity, we have *this* (which is indeed the Praise and Merit of Religion) improved into an Argument against the Truth of it; as if it were therefore an *human* Contrivance, because it is found so *serviceable* to Human Life; whereas God the Author of every good Work did indeed contrive it for our Use and Benefit; and the Contrivance is as *ancient* as the Scheme and Model of the *Creation*. Dr *Marshal's Sermons*, Vol. I. p. 49.

(*x*) *Leviath. cap. xii. p. 57.*

“ Thing as Military Discipline ; Religion being the
“ Ground and Foundation of good Laws and Disci-
“ pline (y).” And *Varro* who was one of the most
Learned of all the antient *Romans*, when he had en-
couraged and multiplied the *Roman* Theology, and
shewed them the Gods they were to worship, thought
that thereby he did his Countrymen a *very great* Piece
of Service (z). Which Testimonies to the Excel-
lency and Usefulness of Public Worship ought to
make our Modern *Deists* and *Infidels* ashamed of them-
selves, by reason of those *strange* Liberties they often
take of *ridiculing* the Established Religion of their
Country. And so I proceed,

Secondly, To shew that God Himself hath made ex-
press and particular Provision in Holy Scripture for
His Public Worship and Service. Thus says the
Psalmist, Give unto the Lord the Glory due unto His Name,
worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness. Psalm xcvi.
8, 9. And again, O come let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. xcv. 6. Enter
into His Gates with Thanksgiving, and into His Courts
with Praise, be thankful unto Him and bless His Name.
c. 4. And once more, *Let them exalt the Lord in the*
Congregation, and praise Him in the Assembly of the Elders,
cvii. 32. And indeed as the Words of our Church
well express it (a),” “ Concerning no *other* Matter
“ did God give either more, or more *earnest* and *ex-*
“ *press* Laws to His People the *Jews*, than those
“ that concerned the *true* Worshipping of Him.”
Nay so great a Regard had God to His Public Wor-
ship, that in the Laws which He gave to the antient
Jews, He not only commanded them to build Him a
Tabernacle, but also determined the Time and Manner
of His Service, together with the *Persons* who were to
perform the *Ceremonies* of it, and even the *Instruments*
and

(y) *Machiavel's* Discourses upon *Livy*, lib. i. cap. xi.

(z) Vid. August. de Civit. Dei lib. iv. cap. xxii.

(a) Homily on the Peril of Idolatry, Part I.

and *Vessels* that were to be used therein, with the utmost *Particularity* of Circumstance. 'Tis true indeed, God has not been so *exact* and *punctual* under the Gospel; since such an *Exactness* in the Ceremonies of Divine Worship is not so necessary to *Christians*, as it was to the *Jews*. For the great Design of the *Jewish* Religion, next to it's shadowing out and præfiguring the Death of *Christ*, being to preserve the *Israelites* from any Correspondence with the Idolatrous Nations; It did upon *that* Account require a much *greater* Variety of Ordinances and more *Exactness* in the Institution of them, than was necessary for any other People. And the Reason, why God did Himself appoint all those Ordinances, rather than leave the Institution of them to the Authority of the *Jewish* Church, may perhaps be this; that hereby they might have less Reason to complain of the Difficulty and Burthen of them. For that the *Jewish* Ordinances were thought very grievous and troublesome, is plain from the Testimony of *St Peter* and *St Paul*, who call them a *Yoke of Bondage* which neither they nor their *Fathers* were able to bear. *Acts* xv. 10. *Gal.* v. 1. And this explains the Reason why there is so little said in the Four Gospels concerning the Time and Manner of God's Worship; unless it be to rectify the Mistake of the *Jews* about it, as they placed it too much in External Observations, and to shew that it must be performed *in Spirit and in Truth*. *John* iv. 24. For the *Christian* Religion being of a most *Divine* and *Spiritual* Nature does therefore require but few external Ordinances and Institutions (*b*), which may very well be left to the Wisdom and Prudence of Ecclesiastical Authority. But tho' our Blessed Saviour hath not been so *punctual* and *exact* in the Externals of Divine Worship for the Reason abovementioned; yet he hath taken sufficient Care for the Wor-
ship

(b) Vid. Dr Burnet (*late Master of the Charter House*) on the Faith and Duties of *Christians*, cap. v. p. 97.

ship itself, not only by communicating Himself with the *Jewish* Church, and submitting to the External Ordinances of Religion, which shall be considered hereafter; but also by requiring Men to *worship God in Spirit and in Truth*, *John* iv. 24. and to this End, *not to forsake the Assembling themselves together*, *Heb.* x. 25. By promising that *where two or three are gathered together in His Name, there will He be in the Midst of them*, *Matt.* xviii. 20. By instituting the two *Sacraments* which are of *public* Observation, *Matt.* xxviii. 19. *Luke* xxii. 19, 20. And by appointing an *Order of Men*, whose Peculiar Office it should be to perform the Service of God, and to preach his Word in the Assemblies of *Christians*. *Matt.* xxviii. 19, 20 *Luke* x. 2 *Tim.* ii. 2. And we may farther observe that our Blessed Lord hath united all the Members of His Church into *one Body*, and under *one Spirit*. *Eph.* iv. 4. Which Unity cannot be upheld and maintained by an Agreement only in the same Doctrines, and by Love and Charity for one another, as some have imagined; but it also requires (c) the Assembling of themselves together for *public* Worship; as is evident not only from the Express Doctrine of Scripture, which I have observed already, but also from the Example and Practice of the Primitive Believers; who as *St Luke* tells us, *continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and likewise in breaking of Bread and in Prayers* (d). *Acts* ii. 42. This is a sufficient Provision

(c) See Bingham's Antiquities, Book xvi. chap. i. § 5.

(d) Whatever Worship God requires of any one *alone*, the same He requires also of *all* met together as *one*; being God of the *Body* as a *Church*, as well as of any *one* Member as a *Christian*. *Nelson on the Festivals*, p. 11. All the Promises of the Gospel are originally made to the Christian Church, the Body of Christ, and to Particular Christians as Members of and in Communion with the Christian Church. But those cannot pretend to be in Communion with the Church, who never communicate with it: who tho' they form no Schism, yet withdraw themselves from it's public Assemblies, and will either be no Christians (which I fear is too often the Case) or will be Christians by themselves. Now if they know of any Promises made to them

Provision for the *public Service* of God ; and therefore if it could not be proved that God hath appointed a Particular Day for His *public* Worship, as some Men say He hath not made any such Appointment to Christians in the Holy Scripture (tho' I humbly conceive the Contrary hath in the foregoing Part of this Discourse been proved very clearly) yet that would be no Objection at all to the Necessity of such Worship. For the Institution of the Worship does of itself sufficiently intimate that there must be some Time and Place appointed for it, and some Manner of it's Celebration, either settled by God, or left to the Determination of Authority ; since as Mr *Calvin* well remarks, " unless the Assemblies of the Church " are fixed, and have their proper appointed Days, " they cannot be held and attended upon (e)." And it is certain that in this Case as well as others, whatsoever is determined by just and lawful Authority is as necessarily to be complied with, as the *express* Institutions of God Himself. The Reason of which is not that any Authority can possibly be equal to *that* of God, but because to speak properly all just Authority whether it be Ecclesiastical or Civil is the Authority of God Himself ; it being as plainly declared by God in Scripture that Men should *obey them that have the Rule over them*, as that they should observe His own Commands.

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in this single Capacity, let them take the Comfort of it. For my part I know of none. Those who live in Communion with the Church, and serve God in His House, as oft as Leisure and Opportunity will permit, may expect a gracious Return to their Private Prayers, which are offered to God in the Name of Christ, and in the Communion of the Church : but there is no Encouragement to those who set up private Devotions against public Worship. Dean *Sherlock's Sermons* Vol. I, *Sermon* xiii. p. 396-7. *Vid.* also *Woolaston's Relig. of Nat. delineated.* p. 124.

(e) *Nisi statim sint Conventus Ecclesiastici, & suos habent constitutos dies, quomodo haberi possunt? Calv. Instit. t. lib. ii. cap. viii. § 32.*

It is necessary that some solemn Times should be set apart for full and copious Meditations on these (Divine) Subjects ; this should be *universal*, lest if the Time were not the same *every where*, the Business of some might interfere with the Devotions of others. *Burnet Artic. VII. p. 103. See the Place.*

Rom. xiii. 1, 2. 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14. Heb. xiii. 17.

(f) And what claims soever Men may make to Liberty and Freedom, yet if they do not submit themselves to such Commands of their Superiours as are in no wise contrary to God's Word; they do not I am sure observe the Rules of Holy Scripture, and therefore cannot be accounted good *Christians*. And so I pass on to the,

Third and Last Consideration, which is to shew that a good Moral Life (as some call it) will not without the Public Worship of God be available to Salyation. And indeed, there is the highest Reason for insisting upon this; since there are too many Persons among us who are fallen into a *great and dangerous* (g) Error in this Matter. They argue that Morality is the grand End and Design of all Religion, and therefore they think that if a Man secures that Point, there is no doubt but God will accept him: and then since God is infinitely Perfect and Sufficient for His

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(f) Whatsoever God hath not commanded or forbidden by His own immediate Dictate and Authority. He hath authorized His *Vicegerents* to command or forbid, as they shall judge it most Expedient for the Public. So that when they command what God hath nor forbidden, or forbid what he hath not commanded; *their Will is God's*, who commands us by their Mouths, and stamps their Injunctions with His own Authority. Dr *Scott's Christian Life*, 8vo. Vol. II. p. 2.

(g) The Honour of God has suffered by nothing so much as by Mens making a Difference betwixt *Virtue* and *Religion*; for by Reason of this Distinction it hath come to pass that some have had the Credit to be thought *virtuous* tho' in the mean Time they were *careless* of God, &c. Dean *Young's Sermons*, Vol. II. p. 376.

'Tis a *fatal* Thing both to *Religion* and *Morality* to distinguish so far between them as to imagine that either of them can be *perfect* without the other; for as we have all the Reason in the World to suspect the *Sincerity* of that Man's Profession of Religion who is willingly deficient in *Moral Honesty*; so he that declares himself to be under no Restraint of Conscience from the Belief of any Invi-sible Principle, must excuse us if we doubt whether His *Integrity* may in all Cases be safely depended on. *Bishop Leng's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures*, p. 85.

own Happiness; they cannot see how He can stand in any Need of our Service (b). And so far it is, undoubtedly true, which is urged in this Argument, viz. that *Morality* and a good Life is the great End and Design of *all* Religion, without which all Positive Institutions and Observations will be of no Effect; and likewise that God cannot possibly receive the least Benefit from our Service and Worship of Him (i). But the great Weakness of this Reasoning in excluding the Necessity of God's Public Worship will appear from these three Considerations.

First, Because Piety or the Worship of God is an Essential Part of Religion, as well as *Morality* (k).

(b) The Author of the Discourse on *Free-thinking* hath a strange Passage to this Effect, in which he drolls egregiously upon the *Jewish* and *Christian* Religion, not without a sneering Reflection upon the Church of *England*. "God, says he, being incapable of having any Addition made either to His Power or Happiness, and wanting nothing, can require nothing of Men for His own Sake, but only for Man's Sake; and consequently that all Actions or Speculations which are of no Use to Mankind (as for instance, *singing* or *dancing*, or *wearing of Habits*, or *Observation of Days*, or *eating* or *drinking*, or *slaughtering of Beasts*, [in which Things the greatest Part of the *Heathen* Worship consisted] or the Belief of *Transubstantiation*, or *Consubstantiation*, or of any Doctrines not taught by the *Church of England*) either signify nothing at all with God, or else displease Him, but can never render a Man more acceptable to Him. *Free-thinking* p. 37, 38."

(i) Plurima & maxima beneficia in Nos Deus confert, sine spe recipiendi. quoniam nec Ille collato eget, nec nos Ei quidquam conferre possumus. *Senec de Benef. lib. iv. cap. ix.*

Ὅστις πῶτα τὸ θεὸν ὡς προσδούμενον ἔτρε λέληθεν διόμενον ἑαυτὸν τὸ θεῖν εἶναι κρείττονα. Hierocles in Carm. Pythag. p. 25.

(k) Discite Justitiam moniti & non temere Divos.

Virgil Æneid. vi. l. 620.

The Worship of God is the most excellent Part of Religion, as having God the most Excellent Being for it's Object. *Sberlock's Introduc. to his Discourse on Religious Assemblies.*

Suppose a Man could satisfy himself, as to these two Points of his Duty (viz. towards his Neighbour and himself) yet if he makes no Conscience of the Third, i. e. of Piety towards God, in what Sense or Notion can this Man be said to have done his Duty, or to lead a virtuous Life? Certainly in *no Sense at all*. For as to one third Part of his Duty (which is indeed as *considerable* at least

This is plain from those Positive Precepts of Holy Scripture, which require us to serve and worship God, and from that Care and Provision which He hath made for that Worship, as hath been already observed. And indeed if the Scripture had been silent in this Matter, it would be sufficiently evident from Natural Reason (*l*) ; since nothing can

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if not *more* than either of the other) he is a *notorious* Transgressor. And tho' he be not unjust, tho' he be not debauch'd, yet wanting Piety towards God, he is *impious* ; and that will as *certainly* damn him as either of the other. *Archbishop Sharp's Sermons, Vol. I. p. 467*

What shall we say of the seemingly good Actions of those *Christians*, who are destitute of that *Christian* Principle from which every *Christian* Virtue proceeds ? we will not call them Sins, for that may be thought hard : but surely they are *unavailing* Virtues. And is it not great Pity, that good Actions should be lost for want of a good Principle to recommend them ? and that after we have taken Pains to live *soberly* and *righteously*, we should lose our Reward and be deceived at last, for want of living *godly* too ? Yet how many Men are there, who have outwardly no Fault, and inwardly no Sense of Virtue ! who are very Regular and Orderly in the Discharge of all Duties, except that which they owe to God ! That, which is not only the most necessary of all Duties, but that also, without which the Performance of all Duties is no better than Formality and Pretence ? *Dr Littleton's Sermons, Vol. I. p. 98. See the Place.*

(*l*) Sure they (the *impious*) cannot expect, that in the most Imperfect Sketch of Natural Religion the Worship of the Deity should be omitted. *Woolaston's Religion of Nature delineated. p. 126.*

I cannot allow that Natural Religion should be painted utterly *naked* without any Manner of Dress or Ornament, like a Birth that is newly come from the Womb, or the Earth despoiled by Winter of all the Fruits and Flowers that are wont to adorn it. Natural Religion is rather wont to super-abound in these, and to incline to Superstition ; so that for the most Part something ought to be pruned from these to restrain their Luxuriancy. I would have all that is superfluous and superstitious cast entirely off from it : yet some External Worship will still remain, and those sacred Rites and those wholesome Institutions of Piety, which in *Nature's self* are founded. Such are Spiritual Hymns, and Praises, and Prayers, and solemn Supplications in public Congregations. Such likewise are the Confession of Sins, and Prayers for the averting of Judgments,

be more plain in Reason, than that all Created Dependent Beings are bound to acknowledge their Obligations to their Creator, by all proper Acts of Homage and Devotion (*m*). And indeed since the Obligation of all Moral Duties is founded in the Nature of Things, and the several Relations which they bear to each other; it is *monstrously absurd* to suppose that the Relation, which *finite created* Beings bear to God their Creator, Governour, and best Benefactor, should not be sufficient to establish those Duties which arise from that Relation; as well as the Relation which weak and imperfect Creatures stand in to one another should be deemed sufficient to establish the respective Duties

as likewise the ordinary established Forms and Professions of Faith in God, which in *Nature's self* are founded. All these have Place in Natural Religion, and likewise Festivals set apart for the performing of sacred Rites, and Discourses to the People, and Exhortations to Virtue, to Piety, to Repentance and Reformation; or lastly, whatever may contribute to the averting the Wrath of God, or to the obtaining His Blessings, or may be for public or private Good, according to the best and truest Light of Nature: All these are to be *engrafted* and *adopted* into Natural Religion. *Dr Burnet on the Faith and Duties of Christians, ch ii. p. 16, 17. See also, a very excellent and judicious Discourse concerning the Necessity and Usefulness of Ritual and External Institutions in Religion in Dr Marshall's Sermons, Vol. II. Sermon vii.*

(*m*) We worship God, we praise and pray to Him, not because we think that he is *proud* of our Worship, or *fond* of our Praise or Prayers, or *affected* with them, as Mankind are, or that all our Service can contribute in the *least* Degree to His Happiness or Good, but because it is good *for us* to be disposed towards God, because it is *just* and *right* and suitable to the *Nature of Things*, and becoming the Relation we stand in to our supreme Lord and Governour. *Minute Philosopher, Vol. I. p. 263.*

Give unto the Lord saith, David, *the Honour due unto His Name, Psalm xxix. 2.* intimating it is no *arbitrary* or *voluntary* Act, but the Payment of a *just* Debt; and indeed for *this* very End we were created, that we might praise God. He gave us Eyes to see and Reason to apprehend His wondrous Works, and Tongues to publish the Glory of Him that made them all; which if we shall neglect, we do not answer the End of our Creation; and by withholding this so deserved a Tribute, we divest ourselves of all *right*

Duties which are derived therefrom (*n*). Piety therefore or the Worship of God is essential to Religion, and a necessary Part of that Justice (*o*) which is due to God: And so in a proper Sense may be reckoned a material Branch of Morality (*p*) itself. And Piety towards God not only implies the regular Performance of the Devotions of the Closet, but also a due and constant

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Attendance

to any of God's Gifts, and *are but Thieves and Robbers*, if we use them and do not pay him our *just Acknowledgments*. *Comber's Companion to the Temple*. Part II. § 11.

(*n*) God is the Life of the World, the Spirit that animates and governs the immense Frame of Nature. To him our Relation is *indisputable*, our Obligations are infinite. We cannot exclude Him from the Universe without destroying it, and shall we shut Him out of our Scheme of *Morality*? The Relations we stand in to Men are acknowledged to be the Foundation of various Offices of indispensable Necessity, and the utmost Importance in human Life; and can it be, that our Relations to God constitute no Tie, no Bond of Duty? Is it fit that we should act as if we were born for ourselves without having any Concern for our Fellow-Creatures; and are we at Liberty to live as without God in the World? Nothing can be more absurdly, more *inexcusably* wicked: For it supposes the Universe to be all Creature and no Creator, all *Effect* and no Cause. *Forster's Sermons*, Vol. II. p. 201, 202. See also *Dr Marshal's Sermons*, Vol. III. p. 221 to 225.

(*o*) Est enim Pietas Justitia adversum Deos. *Cic. de Nat. Deorum*, lib. i. cap. xli. To deny or neglect the Worship of God is the highest Injustice; it is to deny God what is His *Natural Right*, what is due from us, what *alone* we are able to give, and what He requires of us. *Sherlock on Religious Assemblies*, Part I. chap. i. § 2.

(*p*) If there be really a God that has any Concern with us and for us, a *complete* Morality must necessarily have respect to Him as well as to our Intercourse with one another. This is what cannot reasonably be denied, unless there should be any who think because God is a Spirit and invisible, that therefore Men who are clothed with Body have no Means of shewing him any Honour or Reverence, or of acting and doing any thing that can have Relation to a Super-eminent Being — If therefore Morality cannot be complete and perfect without acting suitably and becomingly to every Relation in which we stand to any Beings, and especially rational Beings that are known to us; the very chief Parts of it must be in proper Acts of Piety and Religion to the First Being, from whom we derive our Reason itself. *Bishop Leng's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures*, p. 86; 87.

Attendance upon the *public* Worship at the stated Times and Seasons of it. Since by this Means not only the Honour of God is best promoted and advanced (*q*) (as hath been already observed in the Introduction to the first Part, p. 2.) and a good Example of this Duty is set before the World (*r*); but also because as an Eminent Divine (*s*) well expresses it, “ by this
 “ *public* Worship of God are made the properest
 “ Expressions of the Sense we have of our Dependence
 “ upon Him; and by this Manner of expressing it,
 “ is that Sense itself, the Sense of God and Religion
 “ upon the Minds of Men, most effectually kept up
 “ and preserved” And indeed to use the Words of a very Learned Writer, (*t*) “ It is too sad and yet
 “ undeniable, that wherever the Solemn and Public
 “ Worship of God in certain and fixed Places de-
 “ dicated to that use is discontinued; Religion, the
 “ Honour and Reverence of God immediately de-
 “ cays and becomes forgotten. As in all Parts of
 “ the Christian Church it may be observed, that
 “ wherever the Public Worship of God in Churches
 “ hath been taken from Christians as in *Persia* and
 “ *Africa*, the Faith of Christ hath been wholly lost
 “ in one or two Generations: Whereas the Church
 “ of *Greece* by the Advantage of the Use of Churches
 “ permitted to them; hath continued to flourish and
 “ retain her Faith unshaken under the Government
 of

(*q*) Vid. *Psal.* xxix. 1, 2. *Psal.* c. 4.

(*r*) *Psal.* xxxv. 18. The External Worship of God consists in serving and honouring Him not only in Private, but in Public too, and in the Face of all the World: for to do a Thing secretly looks as if we were ashamed of it; whereas Worship publicly paid not only gives Testimony of our own Zeal. but also others by our Example to be as Devout as we are *Spovan's Puffendorf*, Vol. I. p. 162, 163, see the Notes upon the Place.

(*s*) Dr *Clarke's* Sermons, Vol. II. p. 27.

(*t*) *Wharton's* Sermons, Vol. II. p. 427-8.

“ of the *Turks* ; although continually oppressed,
“ discountenanced, injured and persecuted by
“ them.” And therefore, tho’ we must grant that the
external Worship of God at any particular Time
and Season of it may and ought to be omitted,
when any unavoidable Duty of Necessity and
Charity interferes therewith ; yet this is not because
the Worship of God, even as to the external Part of
it, is not Moral and *equally* binding with that necessary
Duty ; but because it may on that Account be well
deferred ’till another Opportunity, which the Duty of
Necessity and Charity cannot be. For otherwise, where
the Case is not so urgent, but that the Moral Duty
may be *fully* and *sufficiently* discharged at another
Time ; the greatest Act of Goodness and Charity
which such a Man can perform will not atone for
one single Neglect of attending upon God’s Worship.
For instance, were I just now going into the House of
God to serve and worship Him, or approaching the
Holy Table of the Lord in order to receive the Blef-
sed Sacrament of His Body and Blood, and at that very
Instant my Neighbour’s House should be on Fire, and
could not be extinguished without my Help ; or should
any thing of the like Nature happen at that Time,
which could not admit of the least Delay : in such a
Case, there is no Doubt, but that I ought to omit the
Worship of God and receiving the Sacrament for that
Season, that I might assist my Neighbour in his Distress.
And I am really of Opinion, that the Omission of the
public Service and Sacrament upon such an Account
would not only be highly pleasing and acceptable to
God, but also that I should for the Sake of my Hu-
manity and Charity receive the *full* Benefit of those
Religious Institutions, as well as if I had attended upon
them. But had I determined with myself to distribute
such or such a Sum of Money among the Poor of this
or that Town or Parish, or to do any other Act of
Charity, which might as well be done on any other

Day as that which is dedicated to the Worship of God; it would be a very great Sin to neglect the *public* Worship of God in His Church, upon account of distributing that Charity; because the Condition and Circumstances of *both* Duties are such, that each of them may be duly and sufficiently discharged in its proper Season. And so likewise, tho' some Moral Crimes, such as *Adultery, Fornication, Slander,* and the like, may be in themselves more sinful and more severely punished at the last Day than the *bare* Neglect of God's Worship and of *Positive Institutions*, because in such Cases there is a Transgression against the Rights of Men as well as God, and so a double Violation of God's Law; yet the one is as *truly* an Instance of Sin as the other, and as *such* will expose Men to the Judgment of God, according to that Determination of the Apostle (which equally holds in all Kinds and Instances of wilful and deliberate Sin) *whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one Point, he is guilty of all. Jam. ii. 10.* And if we look into Scripture we shall find that God often punishes Men, and in as *terrible* a Manner, for the Breach of those Laws which relate to His Worship, and of *Positive* Institutions, as well as for the Violation of Moral Duties (*u*): as appears from several Instances, and particularly from the Case of the Man that was stoned to Death for gathering of Sticks upon the *Sabbath Day* (*x*), *Numb. xv.*

(y) 32,

(u) Quis non misereatur Usæ, qui solo Arcæ non tangendæ tactu cecidit exanimis? Annon exitiabile fuit Saulis factum, quod metu & moræ Samuelis tædio in sacrificandi Munus irruit? Unde non in Samuelis modo, sed Dei funestam Indignationem incidit. Quis Principum non horrescat qui videt Usiam Regem, tentando non tentanda, in lepram incidisse; quæ in vita illum a Regimine, & in Morte a Regum Sepulchris extruist? *Apollonii Grallæ*, p. 357.

(x) *Philo* speaking of this Man's Crime, and his being brought unto *Moses* and *Aaron* and all the Congregation, *ver. 33.* observes that *Moses* was then expounding the Law, as upon the *Sabbath Day*; it being the Custom of the *Jews* to spend Part of their Time on the *Sabbath Days* in Public Assemblies, as was before remembered in a Passage cited out of him, p. 59.

32, &c. (y) and from that heavy Judgment which was executed on *Korab, Dathan* and *Abiram*, for invading the Priest's Office. *Numb. xvi.* Of which severe Proceeding no possible Sense could be made, if the public Worship and Service of God were not an Essential Part of Religion. And in the other World Men shall be punished for the Neglect of God's Worship, as well as for breaking the Rules of Morality. In which Sense we may very properly use those Words of the *Psalmist*, ix. 17. (which as some think are by him applied to (z) another Purpose) *The Wicked shall be turned into Hell. and all the Nations that forget God (a).* For by this Expression is oftentimes meant in Scripture the not Worshipping of God; as is plain from innumerable Passages which might be produced, and particularly from those Places where *Moses* cautions the *Israelites*, *lest when they came into the promised Land and enjoyed*

(y) *Nec Sabbati enim inspicis Legem opera humana non divinaprohibentem. Ideoque qui Sabbatis lignatum ierat, morti datus est, suum enim opus fecerat lege interdictum. Qui verò arcam Sabbatis circumtuleraut, impunè gesserunt; non suum enim opus sed Dei, ex præcepto scilicet ipsius, administraverant. Tertull. adv. Marcion. lib. ii.*

(z) See *Bishop Patrick*, in *loc.* compared with *Dr Sberlock* on the Immortality of the Soul &c. p. 149.

(a) *Telemachus* seeing the Three (Infernal) Judges (according to the Notion of the Poets) passing Sentence upon a Man, took the Liberty to ask them, what were his Crimes; the Criminal immediately taking upon himself to answer, cried out, I never did the least Evil on the Contrary. I placed my greatest Happiness in doing Good; I was ever generous, liberal, just, compassionate; what have they then to charge me with? to which *Minos* answered, we have nothing to accuse thee of with respect to Men; but didst not thou owe to them far less than to the Gods, where is then that Justice thou so much braggest of? thou hast failed in nothing towards Men who are nothing; thou hast been virtuous, but thou hast referred all Virtue to thy self, and not to the Gods who gave it thee; thou hadst a Mind to enjoy the Fruits of thy own proper Virtue, and made it centre in thy self; thou hast been thy own Deity; but the Gods, who were the Creators of all Things, and who have made nothing but for themselves, cannot renounce their Right. As thou didst forget them, so they will forget thee, and surrender thee up to thy self; since for thy self thou livedst, and not for them. *Adventures of Telemachus*, Part II. lib. xviii. p. 185.

the Blessings of it, they should forget God; the Meaning of which he immediately explains, by their walking after other Gods, and worshipping them. Deut. viii. 19. For this is called the forgetting of God, because it is a transferring that Worship upon the Heathen Deities, which God hath strictly appropriated to Himself (b). And how great a Sin this was, may be judged by the Threatning which in that Text is annexed to it. And it shall be, that if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other Gods, and serve and worship them, I testify against you this Day that ye shall surely perish. And so great an Offence to God was this Sin of Idolatry and Worship of false Gods, that as an excellent Divine well observes (c), “ the whole History of the Jewish Nation may satisfy us, that tho’ God many Times spared them when they were guilty of other great Sins, yet they never fell into Idolatry, but Vengeance soon pursued them; and they were either oppressed by their Enemies at Home, or carried Captives into Foreign Countries.”

Secondly, ’Tis to no purpose for any one to separate Morality from Piety or the Worship of God; since we cannot attain to that Perfection of Morality, which shall render us acceptable to God, without attending upon His public Worship and Service. For not to mention that the Performance of the Duties of God’s Worship does of itself naturally call to Mind, and best preserves in our Thoughts (d) a due Sense of the Being

(b) *Vid. Rom. i. 19, &c.*

(c) *Sherlock on Divine Providence, chap. viii. p. 313. 4to. See the Place*

(d) *Some Acts of Worship to be religiously performed at Regular and Stated Periods are not only the genuine Effects, but the best Preservatives of that Religious Awe which we ought to have for the Majesty of God. But such Acts as these cannot well be performed, at least not at all Times with equal Profit, without the Help of some outward Sign. We may indeed sometimes with infinite Delight set our Thoughts a ranging in those boundless Fields of Contemplation on the Attributes of God, ’till they are lost and swallowed*

Being and Providence of God, and the great Concernments of a future State, which are the Life and Support of Religion; it is a Principle which *Christians* are generally agreed in, that without the Grace of God, and the Assistance of the Holy Spirit, we are not able to perform our Duty. This the *Jews* of (e) Old, and the very Heathens themselves (f) were sensible of. But now it is very clear from Holy Scripture, that these Blessings are not ordinarily dispensed to us, but by the Use of the external Administrations of Religion (g). Thus we must pray to God for His Holy Spirit. *Luke xi. 12.* And if we expect the Grace and Assistance of God, we must frequently receive the Blessed Sacrament. Which *Institution*, tho' it is despised by some among us, and too much neglected and disused by others; yet was ever held in the highest Veneration by the Primitive Church, and thought to be of the utmost Benefit and Advantage to all good *Christians*,

lowed up in Wonder. And such an Act as this, when it is a voluntary Act, performed with a fixed and deliberate Design to admire and adore the Deity, is doubtless in His Sight as much an Act of Worship, as when we offer up the Sacrifice of our Lips. But it is not every one that hath this Strength of Mind. Many have no Notion of any Act of Worship, so pure, so abstracted and refined; nor can even those who have be so sure of praising God in an acceptable and proper Maner, when they are left to the Direction of their own sudden Thoughts, as they are by the Help of a set Form of Words, designed to contain and suggest to their Minds proper Matter for their Praise and Worship. *Dr Littleton's Sermons, Vol. II. p. 177, 178.*

(e) Vid. *Poli Synop. Crit. in Psal. li. 13.*

(f) Αἱ δ' αἰεὶ αὖ ψυχῆς οὐσίαι ἀμφοιβητήσιμοι ἐν μεθελεύθῳ ἔκκετος ἀρετῆς, πρὸς τὴν ἐχάτην μοχθηρίαν κερταρισμένοι, δεοντα αναγωγισθὲν δεῦ καὶ συνλήπτορες ἢ ἐπὶ δάπτειν τὰ κρείττω βουτῆς καὶ χειροργίας. *Max. Try. Dissertat. xxii. p. 265. Vid. loc.*

The same is also observed frequently by *Aristotle* in his *Ethics* to *Nicomachus*, by *Seneca* in *Epist. xli.* and by other Philosophers.

(g) As God is to be obeyed, so He is to be worshipped also; nay the worshipping Him is a Part of that very Obedience, and a Means to enable Men to perform more acceptably the other Parts of their Obedience. *Dr Clark's Sermons, Vol. IX. p. 437. See Vol. II. p. 27.*

Christians (b). And indeed well might the *Primitive Church* think so; when it is called by *St Paul*, the *Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ*. 1 Cor. x. 16, &c. that is, as the best Interpreters have always rendered it, the Means whereby we communicate with *Christ*, and receive the Benefits of His Death and Passion (i). And therefore it is *idle and vain Talk* in the Enthusiasts of the present Age to say, *What signifies pouring a little Water upon a Man in Baptism? What signifies eating of Bread and drinking of Wine at the Sacrament? Lead a good Life, if thou expectest* (k) *to be saved!* I say, this is nothing but *idle and vain Talk*; since a Man cannot ordinarily obtain that Grace and Assistance of God, which is necessary to a good Life, without the Use of these external Ministrations (l). But,

Thirdly and lastly, The best and most righteous Men, who have been the most remarkable for the Practice of Moral Goodness and Virtue, have likewise been ever the most eminent for their Attendance upon the public Worship and Service of God (m). This is very evident from

(b) Ἐνα ἄρτον κλώντες ὁ ἕσι σάρμακον ἀθανάσιας, ἀντίδοτον τῆς καὶ ἀποθανόντος, ἀλλὰ ζῶν ἐν Θεῷ διατῆσθαι. Ignat. Epist. ad Ephes. juxt. fin. Caro abluitur ut anima emaculetur, Caro Corpore & Sanguine Christi vescitur, ut & anima de Deo saginetur. Non possunt ergo separari in Mercede, quas opera conjungit. Tertullian de Resurrectione, in principio.

Sacramentorum vis inennarrabiliter valet plurimum, & ideo contempta sacrilegos facit; impie quippe contemnitur, sine qua non perfici potest Pietas. August. contr. Faust. lib. xix. Vid. etiam Cypriani lib. ii. Epist. iii. ad Cæcilium.

(i) See particularly Burnet's Artic. XXVIII, p. 316, 317.

(k) Vid. Barclay's Apol. Prop. 12 § ii. p. 413.

(l) See Dr Goodman, on the Parable of the Prodigal, Part. I. chap. iv. §. 2.

(m) In fact it has always been found that in those Places, where there hath been little Sense of God and Religion, or where the Notions of Religion have been greatly debased and corrupted, so as to have little Effect upon the Minds of Men in their Moral Conduct, there the Manners of Men have been always most brutish and inhuman. And on the contrary, where Men have had the justest and

from the Example of all the righteous and good Men, both among *Jews* and *Christians*; nay, and I will add among Heathens too (*n*). But it is most peculiarly remarkable in our Blessed Saviour Himself. He was *absolute* in Morality and all Goodness: For *in Him was no Sin, neither was Guile found in His Mouth*, 1 Pet. ii. 22. And yet notwithstanding this Perfection, He *punctually* observed the external Ordinances of Religion. Thus, *He was circumcised when He was eight Days Old*, as the Law required. Luke ii. 21. And as *Baptism* was a standing Part of the *Jewish* Constitution, He freely (*o*) complied with it, and told the *Baptist*, *it was the fulfilling of Righteousness*. Matt. iii. 15. (*p*). And He not only served God in *private*, but also communicated with the *Jewish* Church in all it's Offices and Administrations (*q*); and that not only in such Things as were *expressly* appointed by God Himself, but also in such as were *entirely* owing to Human Institution.

For

and most lively Sense of a Deity and a Providence, there all Moral Virtues between Man and Man have flourished, the most worthy and generous Actions have been performed and the Manners of Men have ever been the most human and civiliz'd. Bishop *Leng's* Sermons, p. 75. Vid. loc.

Haud scio an Pietate adversum Deos sublatâ fides etiam & societas humani generis, & una excellentissima virtus Justitia tollatur. *Cic. de Nat. Deorum*, lib. i. in *Proœmio*.

(*n*) Ἀλλὰ Σωκράτης εἰς Πειραιᾶ κατήει προσωζόμενος τῇ Θεῷ, καὶ τὰς ἄλλας προσεβίβηκε, καὶ ὡς ὁ β' Θεὸς Σωκράτης μεσοῦ εὐχῆς καὶ γὰρ Πυθαγόρας ἠνθάλο καὶ Ἰλιάπων, καὶ ὅσις ἀλλ' Θεῶν προσήγορος. *Max Tyrif Dissertat.* xxx. p. 366. See also above, p. 100.

(*o*) Christum nunquam se in actionibus suis exhibuisse vel ostentasse tanquam eximium & singularem Hominem, sed cæteris similem: unde voluit more aliorum circumcidi, in Temp'lo præsentari, & nunc a Johanne baptizari; ut discas in omnibus etiam Spiritu- alibus te aliis accommodare, nec peculiaris privilegia tibi vindicare ob doctrinam, sapientiam, opus, industriam. *Busæi Enchiriidion piarum Meditationum.* p. 320.

(*p*) Vid. Poli Synopf. Critic. in loc.

(*q*) It is very remarkable in the whole History of our Saviour, that in all Cases, where neither any Natural Necessity nor moral Obligation intervened to the contrary, there He was constantly most *exact* and *nice* in fulfilling every Particular even of the Ceremonial Law. Dr *Clarke's* Sermons, Vol. X. p. 45. See also Dr *Marshall's* Sermons, Vol. II. p. 416 to 419. Vol. III. p. 161, &c.

For St *John* tells us that He was present (*r*) at the Feast of *Dedication*. *John* x. 22. Which Feast was not appointed by God in Holy Scripture; but by the Governours of the *Jewish* Church in the Time of the *Maccabees*, upon their restoring and purifying the Sanctuary after it's Pollution by the King of *Syria* (*s*). Which does not only demonstrate the Lawfulness of complying with such Institutions, as are wholly grounded upon Human Authority (*t*), in opposition to some Persons among us who have asserted the contrary; but is more-

over

(*r*) This Festival Christ honoured with His Presence at *Jerusalem*, coming thither on Purpose to bear a Part in the solemnizing of it, which implies His Approbation of it. And therefore from hence *Grotius* very justly infers (*in Comment. ad Job. x. 22*) that Festival Days in Memory of public Blessings may piously be instituted by Persons in Authority without a Divine Command, or (it may be added) the Example of a Person divinely directed observing the same; for the Institution of this Festival was without either, there being neither any Divine Precept, nor the Example of any Prophet for the Observance of it. *Prideaux's Connexion* 8vo Vol. III. p. 278. *Sub. Anno ante Christum*. 165.

(*s*) 1 *Maccab.* ch. iv. And that the Feast of *Dedication* mentioned by St *John*, at which our Blessed Saviour was present, was not either of the two Former Dedications of the Temple which were celebrated before, *viz.* that of *Solomon*, 1 *Kings* ch. viii. and afterwards that of *Zerubbabel*, *Ezra* vi 16. &c. as some early Writers of the Church imagined, (*Vid. Maldonat in loc.*) is very evident from these two Considerations. *First*, That tho' these Dedications were observed in a very Solemn manner, at the Time when they were performed, yet there was no Anniversary appointed in Commemoration of them, as there was of this of *Judas Maccabæus*. And then *Secondly*, This Feast of *Dedication* happened at a quite different Time of the Year, from that of the two Former Dedications. For that of *Solomon* was in the Seventh Month then called *Ethbanaim*, afterwards *Tizri*, which fell about the Time of our *September*. 1 *Kings* viii. 2. And that of *Zerubbabel* was in the twelfth Month call'd *Adar*, which fell in the Beginning of the Spring; but this Festival of the *Maccabees* was appointed to be observed on the twenty-fifth Day of the Month *Cisleu*, which fell in the middle of the Winter. 1 *Maccab.* iv. 59. And that it was observed at that Season of the Year in our Blessed Saviour's Days, St *John* tells us in the Place above cited.

(*t*) See Archbishop *Tillotson*, Vol. III. p. 227. Dr *Marshall's* Sermons, Vol. II p. 519, 520. in which there are two very Excellent Passages to this Purpose, too long to be here inserted.

over a manifest Proof that the public Worship and Service of God is an essential Part of Religion; since it cannot be at all supposed, that our Blessed Saviour, who was infinite in Wisdom as well as Goodness, would have employed so much of His Time in public Devotion and the Worship of God, if it had been such a trifling and indifferent a Matter, as some Persons among us now represent it to be. And thus I have shewn the Necessity and Obligation of attending upon the public Worship and Service of God; in the due Performance of which great Duty the Religious Observation of the Lord's Day does mainly and principally consist. I shall, before I proceed to the next Particular, make one or two useful and necessary Reflections upon what hath been delivered upon this Head. And,

First, From what hath been said concerning the Virtue and Benefit of the *Christian* Institutions, we may see how great a Blessing those Men deprive themselves of, who neglect the public Worship and Service of God. I know the wretched Excuse which many of them make for themselves; and that is, that they can pray as well to God in *private*, and read as good a Discourse at Home, as they can hear at Church (*u*). And what if they can? Does all the Benefit of coming to Church consist

(*u*) Others there are who acknowledge it is their Duty to worship God, but they think they can worship God as well at home as at Church; that it is not the Place which makes their Prayers more or less effectual, but God hears us wherever we pray, and is always pleas'd even with the single and private Devotions of good Men. And the World is so well stored with good Books, that they can spend their Time to as good purpose in reading at Home, as if they went to Church to hear a Sermon. And I need not observe how many there are who Act according to these Principles. *Sherlock on Religious Assemblies*. Part I. ch. ii. p. 111 See Part II ch. iii.

And the Excuse here taken notice of by the Learned *Dean*, as alledged for the neglect of attending upon the Public Worship, we find made as early as the Time of *St Chrysostom*, who makes mention of it, and shews how vain and frivolous it is, by setting forth the many and superior Advantages of Public Devotion; as the Reader may see in an excellent Passage cited out of his Homilies by the Learned *Mr Bingham*, in his *Antiquities*, Book XX. ch. ii. §. 11.

consist in hearing of Sermons? And if such Men do pray to God in private (which is much to be questioned (*x*)) yet is there no Obligation to the Duties of public Prayer and Thanksgiving (*y*)? And is it of no consequence to partake of those Divine Ordinances, which are the *necessary* Means of conveying the Grace of God and His Holy Spirit to us (*z*)? Sure if there had not been some greater Benefit and Advantage in the

(*x*) We shall never find that a truly Wise and Good Man withdraws himself from the Communion of Religious Assemblies. Private Devotion may be a Pretence to justify the neglect of Public Worship, but I dare appeal to these Mens Consciences that it is never the true Cause. For Men who do heartily desire to worship God, will choose to worship Him in the best and most solemn Manner, that is, in the public Assemblies of *Christians*. *Sherlock ibid.* p. 115. God instituted public Times of Worship (among the *Jews*) and such Times as these are described by *calling Assemblies* and *solemn Meetings*; *Isa. i. 13*, because then they met together for *public* Worship. For indeed it seems to be a Contradiction to appoint *public* and *solemn* Times for *private* Worship. If Men are bound to worship God only in *private*, there is no need of *public* Days of Rest dedicated to God's worship; for every Man may take his *own* Time for it, as he finds most convenient and useful. But *fixed* and *stated* Times of Worship do necessarily suppose *public* Worship, and evidently prove that solemn and public Days for Worship are not sanctified *merely* by Private Acts of Worship. *Sherlock ibid* p. 123. They (the Primitive *Christians*) did not think it enough to read and pray, and praise God at *Home*, but made Conscience of appearing in the *public* Assemblies, from which nothing but Sickness and absolute Necessity did detain them: and if Sick or in Prison or under Banishment, nothing troubled them more than that they could not come to Church, and join their Devotions to the common Services. If Persecution at any time forced them to keep a little close, yet no sooner was there the least Mitigation, but they presently returned to their open Duty, and publickly met altogether. No trivial Pretenses, no light Excuses were then admitted, for any ones Absence from the Congregation, but according to the Merit of the Cause severe Censures were passed upon them. *Dr Cave's Primitive Christianity*, Part I. chap. vii.

(*y*) Although God has promised to hear us when we pray *privately*, so it be done faithfully and devoutly, yet by the History of the Bible it appeareth, that *public* and *common* Prayer is most available before God; and therefore it is much to be lamented that it is no better esteemed among us, who profess to be but *one Body in Christ*. *Hemily of the Church concerning Common Prayer and Sacraments*.

(*z*) See p. 121, 122.

the Communion of the Church than many of us are apt to think; we should not have heard Holy *David* complaining so *pathetically* as he does in the *lxxxiv Psalm*, upon his being banished from the *Sanctuary*; *O how amiable are thy Tabernacles thou Lord of Hosts! My Soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord, my Heart and my Flesh crieth out for the Living God* (a) *ver. 1, 2.* And again, *ver. 10. One Day in Thy Courts is better than a Thousand.* Neither would he have expressed so much Zeal for the Building of the Temple (as he had before done in preparing a Tabernacle or Reception for the Ark. *Psalm cxxxii. 1. to 6.*) And tho' God did not approve of his doing it in his own Person, but in that of *Solomon* his Son (b); yet sure we should not have found his good Design so well accepted by God, and so great a Reward and Blessing promised to Him upon that Account, if it had not been a Matter of great Consequence and Importance to His Honour and Glory. *Thy House and thy Kingdom, says God, shall be established for ever before thee. Thy Throne shall be established for ever. 2 Sam. vii. 16.* Neither would the antient Men among the *Jews* have wept with so loud a Voice even at the Building of the second Temple; when they observed how short it came of the Glory of the first Temple: *Ezra. iii. 12.* It being absurd to imagine that they should express so much Zeal and Passion for the outward Fabrick and Structure upon any other Account, than as it had Relation to the *public* Worship and Service of God which was offered up therein. Neither would the *Heathens* themselves, when they were besieged by the Enemy, have been so zealous and diligent in saving their Temples and Places of Gods Worship, at the same Time that they neglected the Care of their own Houses, Families and Fortunes; as an eminent

(a) Devotion opens the Mind to great Conceptions, and fills it with more *sublime* Ideas than any that are to be met with in the most Exalted Science. And at the same Time warms and agitates the Soul more than Sensual Pleasure. Mr *Addison*, in *Spectator*, No. 201.

(b) *Vid. 2 Sam. vii. 1 Chron. xxii. 2 Chron. vi. 8, 9.*

eminent Divine hath well remark'd (c). Nor would the antient Princes and Nations of the World have employed their Riches and most ingenious Inventions of *Architecture* in building and adorning Temples for their Gods; and which is more, would the greatest of their Kings have taken the Priesthood upon them, and thought the Offering up the Sacrifices of their Worship to be a mighty Accession to their Honours; as is every where to be seen in *Pagan History* (d). Neither, in case it so happened (as it must needs do sometimes, through the Desolations of War, and the Iniquity of the Age) that any of their Temples were destroyed, or fell to Decay; would they have reckoned it a Mark of Impiety and Wickedness, to neglect the Rebuilding and Repairing of them (e). Neither would the Primitive Christians have express'd such Exuberant Joy and Thanksgiving at the Building and Consecration of their Churches, when the Persecutions were ended, if the public Worship and Service of God had not been a Concernment of the greatest Importance and Delight to them (f). Our Blessed Saviour would not so earnestly have exhorted Men *to pray always and not to faint*, *Luke xviii. 1.* and by His own Example have shewn them the Necessity and Benefit of Church Communion; if it had been a Matter of so great Indifferency (g). And surely, God Almighty would not have so expressly declared upon the Building of *Solomon's Temple*, that *His Eyes should be open, and His Ears attent unto the Prayers of His People which were made in that Place, and that His Eyes and His Heart should be there perpetually*;

2 Chron.

(c) *Dean Young's Sermons. Vol. I. p. 280.*

(d) *See Dr Scot's Christian Life, Vol. III. p. 131, 132. Archbishop Potter's Antiquities of Greece, Vol. I. p. 7, 187, 203. Edit. 5.* In which there are several remarkable Instances of this Matter.

(e) *Cur eget indignus quisquam Te Divite? Quare
Templa ruunt antiqua Deum? Cur, improbe, caræ
Non aliquid Patri tanto emetiris acerco?*

Horat. Satyr. lib. ii. Sat. ii.

(f) *Vid. Eusebii Eccl. Hist. lib. 10. cap. 2, 3, 4.*

(g) *See above, p. 123.*

2 Chron. vii. 15, 16. if *public* Devotion had not been of the greatest Service and Advantage to Mankind. And doubtless, the *Primitive* Penitents would not with such Showers of Tears have bewailed their Misfortune in being excluded from the Church, and so devoutly begged the Prayers of the Faithful; if they were of so little Value and Esteem (*b*). Neither would the antient Fathers of the Church so constantly have exhorted Men to Church Communion, and to partake of the Divine Ordinances of the Gospel; as the Means to overcome the Temptations of the Devil (*i*). And to say no more; if the public Worship and Service of God had not been a Matter of the utmost Necessity and Advantage, I am sure the *Primitive Christians* were infatuated and bewitched beyond Measure; in exposing themselves to so many Hazards and Dangers, as they repaired to the Places of Divine Service. Of which many Instances are to be met with in Ecclesiastical History during the Ten Persecutions: But one of the most remarkable of all was *that* under *Æmilian*, who was the Roman Governour of *Egypt* in the Reign of the Emperour *Vale-rian*. This Deputy was a bitter Enemy to the *Christians*, and resolved to do the utmost he could to prevent their Meeting at their Assemblies. Many of them he killed with all the Arts of Cruelty; some he kept alive for the Rack and Torture; and others were loaded with heavy Chains, and thrust down into loathsome Dungeons, the Presence of their nearest Relations and Friends being denied to them. And yet notwithstand-

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(*b*) He that without a necessary Cause absents himself from public Prayers, cuts himself off from the Church; which hath always been thought so *unhappy* a thing, that it is the greatest Punishment the Governours of the Church can lay upon the worst Offenders; and therefore it is a strange Madness for Men to inflict it upon themselves. *Whole Duty of Man, Sund. V. § 11. Vid. Tertull. de Pœnitentia.* See also the Homily of our Church, concerning the right Use of the Church, Part II. towards the End.

(*i*) Σπουδαίει: ἐν κοινῶν τε, συνέρχεται εἰς εὐχαριστίαν Θεοῦ καὶ δόξαν ὅταν γὰρ συνεχῶς ὄντι τὸ αὐτὸ γένος, καθαιρόνται αἱ δυνάμεις τοῦ Σατανᾶ, &c. *Ignat. Epist. ad Eph. f.*

ing all these severe Proceedings, *he* could not keep back the *Christians* of *Alexandria* from their Assemblies, nor terrify them from the Performance of that Duty which they owed to God (*k*): which ought to make many Thousand *Christians* among us blush and ashamed of themselves, upon the Account of those *trivial* and *scandalous* Excuses which they often make for absenting themselves from the public Worship.

Thirdly and lastly, What hath been said under this Head of the *public* Worship of God, *viz.* that it is *essential* to Religion, and that without it the Discharge of Moral Duties will not be available to Salvation, is a very severe Reproach to that horrible Profanation of the *Lord's Day* now growing more and more customary in this Kingdom. I am sensible, that Men are much divided in their Opinions about the Obligation of this Holy Day. Some think that the Duty thereof is *sufficiently* discharged by a constant Attendance upon the *public* Service, and a grave and serious Behaviour and Deportment therein; and that after this, Men are *entirely* at their Liberty as upon all other Days to indulge themselves in the Recreations and Diversions of this World. And I would to God that all Men had so much Regard to the *Lord's Day*, as to observe it even thus far. It is to be hoped (and I think there is little doubt to be made of it) that a due Sense of the Obligation of *this* Day in this principal Respect would in Time and by Degrees lead them to acknowledge it's Obligation in all others. But other Persons think that the *whole* Day is holy, and ought to be dedicated to the Service of God and Divine Things; and that after Men have attended upon the Worship of God in His Church, they should retire Home, and spend some *considerable* Part of the remain-

(k) Vid. *Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. vii. cap. xi.* Quotidie obsecramur, quotidie prodimus, in ipsis plurimum Cœtibus & Congregationibus nostris opprimimur. *Tertullian. Apolog. cap. vii.* See also *Bingham's Antiquities, Book XX. chap. ii. §. 8.* in which there are some Remarkable Instances given of the great Sufferings and Persecutions of the *Christians* in the Time of their Assemblies.

remaining Time, in reading the Holy Scriptures, in meditating upon Heavenly Things, and in the Instruction of their Families. I shall not enter now into this Dispute, which will be fully considered in it's proper Place. At present I shall only observe thus much, that the latter is at least the *wisest* and the *safest* Way; and, as will be seen hereafter, not only the antient Fathers of the *Christian* Church, but the most Pious and Learned Men of our own Church have ever been of that Opinion. But be that as it will; all *Christian* Writers allow, that the Attendance upon the public Worship of God at the stated Times and Seasons of it is every Man's *absolute* and *bounden* Duty; and that unless it be in Case of Sicknes or some very necessary Cause no Man can absent himself without Sin. We need not be at any Pains to inform Men of this; the very *Heathens* themselves will acquaint them with it. And if this be true, Good God! what Judgment can we pass upon that *wicked* and *impious* Custom, which prevails among all Orders and Degrees of Men in the Nation, and especially among Persons of Fashion and Distinction, of visiting their Friends and Acquaintance even in the Time of God's Worship; and thereby not only neglecting the Service of God themselves, but keeping others back that would attend upon it? Which is much like the Temper of the *Pharisees*, as our Blessed Saviour observed: *They would neither go into the Kingdom of Heaven themselves, nor suffer those that were entering to go in.* *Matt. xxiii. 13.* I know indeed that Men have something to say in Excuse for themselves in this Neglect, as *viz.* that they have no other Opportunity of seeing their Friends, or that the Business that they go about is of such Consequence that it cannot be deferred to any other Time. This is for the most Part nothing but Pretence. And I would beg of every Man to consider, that there is scarce any Sin so great, for which the Devil will not furnish Men with some Excuse of other, in order to make them easy, and to quiet their Consciences as well as he can. But however Men may for the present sa-

tisfy themselves in such Cases, yet they may rest assured, that God Almighty will not be imposed upon. He hath plainly told us the great Danger of breaking His Laws. He hath let us know that *there is one Thing needful above all others.* Luke x. 42. That we must seek the Kingdom of God and the Righteousness thereof in the first Place, Matt. vi. 33. And our Blessed Saviour has in a distinct Parable shewed us the Folly and Danger of making any *vain and idle* Excuses in the Neglect of the Service and Duty which we owe to God. Luke xiv. 16, &c. When the Men in that Parable refused the Invitation to the good Man's Supper, they thought it a very sufficient Excuse, the one of them, *that he had bought a Piece of Ground, and he must needs go and see it*; the second, *that he had bought five Yoke of Oxen, and he must go and prove them*; and the third, *that he had married a Wife, and therefore he could not come.* These were the Excuses which they made for themselves: and they must at least be allowed to be as good as those, which Men do now commonly make for the Neglect of God's *public* Worship and Service. But yet our Blessed Saviour tells us, they were not accepted by the good Man; but that notwithstanding their Pretences, *He was angry with them,* and resolved that *none of them should taste of His Supper.* And I very much fear, that Men will meet with the same Judgment in the other World for the Neglect of God's *public* Worship which I have been considering, according to that solemn Declaration of Scripture, which God will make good at the last Day; *Them that honour Me, saith God, I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed,* 1 Sam. ii. 30.

And thus I have finished what I proposed to consider upon this Point concerning the Necessity and Advantage of attending upon the *public* Worship and Service of God. I shall only before I proceed any farther beg leave to observe the particular Happiness which those of us enjoy in this Respect, who are the Members of the Established Church. For we have an Excellent and
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well compos'd Liturgy; which is not only agreeable to the best and most primitive Patterns, but is also so fully expressive of all our Wants, and so well contrived and digested in all it's Parts, that whenever we offer up our Devotions to God therein, we may assure ourselves that we worship Him in the best Manner we are able (1); and that we are equally freed from the Idolatry and Superstition, which inseparably adhere to all Popish Compositions, and from the Extravagancies and Indecencies of Extemporary Effusions. And indeed were it not very manifest that Prejudice of Education will incline Men to any Way of Thinking, and make them infinitely zealous in judging of and condemning many Things, which they never understood, nor perhaps once considered in their whole Lives; one would think it impossible that ever That should have been made an Objection against the Church, which is one of the greatest Glories and Ornaments thereof. But however other Persons may judge in this Matter; let all us who are Members of the Establish'd Church, be thankful to God for the great Blessings which we enjoy. To this End, Let us always set a great Value and Esteem upon our public Liturgy, and take all Opportunities of joining in the Offices and Devotions thereof. And whensoever we do apply ourselves to this great Duty of

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(1) The Excellency of our English Liturgy hath been so fully display'd by Dr Comber, Dr Wells, Dr Bisse, Mr Wheatly and Others, that it is needless to add any thing in Commendation thereof; but yet upon this Occasion, I cannot omit to take Notice of one very Remarkable Instance of the greatest Esteem and Value which Learned Foreigners had for the said Liturgy; and that is, that in the famous Quarrel between Pope Paul V. and the Republick of Venice, (which happened in the Reign of our King James I.) when Bishop Bedell, who was then Chaplain to the English Ambassadour, and translated the English Common-Prayer Book into Italian, Father Paul (that Oracle for Wisdom) and the Seven Divines that during the *Interdict* were commanded by the Senate both to Preach and Write against the Pope's Authority, liked it so well, that they resolv'd to have made it their *Pattern*, in case the Differences between the Pope and them had produced the Effect which they hoped and longed for. See Bishop Burnet's Life of Bishop Bedell, p. 8.

God's Worship, let us consider in what Manner we ought to prepare our selves for it: *viz.* by *keeping our Foot, when we go into the House of God, Eccles. v. 1. (m).* and by letting our Hearts and Affections accompany our Devotions (n). Then we need not doubt but that God will hear us, when we *Worship Him in the Beauty of Holiness, Psal. xxix. 2.* and when we *present ourselves a living Sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto Him. Rom. xii. 1.*

C H A P. II.

Concerning the Duty of Reading the HOLY SCRIPTURES.

IT is not my Design in treating on this Particular to enlarge upon the great Weakness and Insufficiency of natural Reason, and thereby to shew the Necessity of a Divine Revelation for the Instruction and Salvation of Mankind. For the present Discourse is directed only to professed Christians, who are satisfied of this Truth, and fully convinced of the Duty and Obligation of reading the Scriptures; tho' by the Cares of the World and the Pleasures of Life they are too often interrupted in the Discharge of it. And besides, it is a Subject that hath been of late compleatly handled by many Excellent Writers, from whom any one that is desirous of it may receive entire Satisfaction in that Matter (a). But that which I propose at this Time is to awaken the Careless and Negligent among us, and by

(m) See a Discourse concerning the great and indispenfable Duty of a Reverent Behaviour in God's Church, written by the late Pious and Learned Dr *Wells*. See also the *Spectator* No. 259, 460, in which there are some very useful Observations to this Purpose; and an Account of the horrible Offence and Scandal, which too many Persons among us give by their Indecent and Ridiculous Behaviour in the Time of God's Public Worship.

(n) Ἐἰς ἱερὸν ἀπιὼν προσκυνῆσαι, μηδὲν ἄλλο μετὰ αὐτὸ βιωπικὼν μήτε λέγει μήτε πράττει. Symbol. Pythag. apud. Hierocel.

(a) See particularly Bishop *Gibson's* second Pastoral Letter. Dr *Samuel Clarke's* Sermons at *Boyle's* Lectures, Vol. II. Prop. 5, 6, 7.

by proper Arguments and Motives to excite them to the Practice of this great Duty of a diligent and constant Reading of the Holy Scriptures. In doing which I shall follow this Method. *First*, I shall shew the Necessity of this Duty of reading the Holy Scriptures. *Secondly*, I shall consider the great Benefits and Advantages thereof. And in the *Third Place*, I shall observe the great Sin and Danger of Neglecting it. And then I shall make a brief Application of the Argument to the Subject of the present Discourse.

And First then, I am to shew the Necessity of this Duty of reading the Holy Scriptures. Now this will plainly appear from these two Considerations.

First, From the Nature and Design of these Holy Writings. For since it hath pleased God to send His Only Begotten Son into the World to make a Discovery and Revelation of His Will, it must certainly be His Design in this Dispensation, that all Men should carefully attend to the Message, and duly examine the Contents of it. To neglect to do this, is to despise the Gift of God, and to render it contemptible: and how great an Affront to God that is, may easily be judged of, not only from the Excellency of the Revelation itself, but also from the Dignity of that Divine Person who is the Dispenser thereof. This Argument the Apostle clearly insists upon, in *Heb. ii. 1, 2, 3*. *Therefore* (saith he) *we ought to give the more earnest heed to the Things which we have heard, lest at any Time we should let them slip. For if the Word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every Transgression and Disobedience received a just Recompence of Reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord.* And our Blessed Saviour in a distinct Parable plainly aggravates the Sin of the *Jews* in their base and ignominious Treatment of Him, on the Account of the Excellency and Dignity of His Person. *Matt. xxi. 33, &c.* Whosoever therefore neglects to read the Holy Scriptures, He not only despises the *best* Philosophy that ever the World

has been acquainted with; but also refuses to hear the *Son of God Himself*, who is *Essential Truth*, and *Eternal Wisdom*: and who not only came down from His Father's Bosom to make a Discovery of His Will to Mankind, but also cloathed Himself in Flesh, and submitted to all the Infirmities and Sufferings of our Nature, in order to render it the more Effectual. And therefore how heinous an Affront it must be unto God, as well as base Ingratitude to our Blessed Saviour Himself, to neglect and despise the gracious Message which He hath brought to us, every one may easily judge. I shall therefore conclude this Point, with those remarkable Words of *St Paul*, *Heb. xii. 25.* *See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh; for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on Earth; much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from Heaven.* But,

Secondly, The Necessity of this Duty of reading the Holy Scriptures will be very clear and evident from many express Directions which are given to this Purpose in the Sacred Writings. Thus *Moses* tells the *Jews*, that he had taught them Statutes and Judgments as the Lord commanded him, and therefore that they should keep and do them, and teach them to their Sons, and their Sons Sons after them. *Deut. iv. 5, 6, 10.* And again, he commands the *Priests*, when all *Israel* was assembled together, to read the Law before them in their hearing. And to gather the People together, Men, and Women, and Children, and the Stranger that was within their Gates, that they might hear and learn, and fear the Lord their God, and observe to do all the Words of their Law. *Deut. xxxi. 11, 12.* And what the same Prophet observed of their King, might be justly applied to every other Person among them. The Law shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the Days of his Life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God. *Deut. xvii. 19.* So likewise the Prophet *Isaiab* required the *Jews* to seek out of the Book of the Law, and to read. *chap. xxxiv. 16.* And *Josua* tells the People, that the Book of the Law shall not depart out

of thy Mouth, but thou shalt meditate thereon Day and Night, that thou mayst observe to do according to all that is written therein. *Josh. i. 8.* And how very exact and circumstantial the Divine Precept was in this Particular is very evident from a remarkable Passage, where God speaks thus to the Jews; *Ye shall lay up these my Words in your Heart, and in your Soul, and bind them for a Sign upon your Hand, that they may be as Frontlets between your Eyes. And ye shall teach them your Children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine House, and when thou walkest by the Way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the Door-posts of thine House, and upon thy Gates. Deut. xi. 18, 19, 20.* And if we look into the New Testament we shall find our Blessed Saviour and His Apostles plainly directing us to this Duty. Thus our Blessed Saviour commands us *to search the Scriptures, John v. 39.* and puts the Proof and Testimony of His Divine Authority and Mission thereupon. And *St Paul commends Timothy, in that he knew the Scriptures from a Child. 2 Tim. iii. 15.* And in another Place, he requires him to *give Attendance to Reading, as well as to Exhortation and Doctrine. 1 Tim. iv. 13.* And to say no more in so plain a Matter; the Necessity of reading the Holy Scriptures is very evident from the Answer which *Abraham* gave to the rich Man in the Parable, when he begged of him to *send Lazarus to his Father's House to testify unto his Brethren, lest they should also come into that Place of Torment; they have, saith he, Moses and the Prophets, let them bear them. Luke xvi. 29.* Hereby plainly signifying the Use of the Holy Scriptures, as a necessary and proper Means to secure Men from Damnation. And as the Holy Scriptures do every where abound with Precept and Exhortations to the People to read and peruse them; so we shall find the Practice of all pious and good Men both among *Jews* and *Christians* to be conformable thereunto. Thus says *Holy David, Lord, what Love have I unto thy Law, all*
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the Day long is my Study in it. *Psalms* cxix. 97. In which Matter his pious and good Example was carefully followed by the ancient *Jews*; who, tho' indeed in our Blessed Saviour's Time they had in a great Measure weakened the Force and Authority of the Holy Scriptures by their Traditions, yet they ever had the utmost Veneration for the *Sacred Writings*, and were so extremely diligent in the Reading of them, and instructing their Children in them; that upon this Account, as *Josephus* informs us (*b*), the People became so skilful in the Laws, that if one asked any of them concerning them, he would more easily tell them all than his own Name. And how exactly the Modern *Jews* have copied after this Pattern is well known to every one (*c*). Their great Zeal in the Study of their Scriptures, their Diligence in the Instruction of their Children in them, and the early Progress and Proficiency which they make therein, are Matters for which they deserve to be highly esteemed and commended; and in which they may be justly said to be a *Shame* and *Reproach* to the Generality of *Christians* (*d*). And if from the *Jews* we pass to the *Primitive Christians*, we shall find that they ever had the highest Esteem and Veneration

(*b*) *Joseph. adv. Apion. lib. ii. See also, Revelation Examined with Candour, Vol. I. p. 232.* in which many Particulars of the *Jews* great Zeal and Regard for the Holy Scriptures are displayed.

(*c*) See *Dr Addison's Present State of the Jews, chap. x. Purchas's Pilgrimage, lib. ii. chap. xiv. p. 193.*

(*d*) It is the only visible Reason of the *Jews* adhering so firmly to their Religion; that during the Ten or Twelve Years of their Education their Youth are so much practised to the Scriptures, to weigh every Word in them, and get them all by Heart: that it is an Admiration to see how ready both Men and Women among them are at it. Their *Rabbies* have it to that Perfection, that they have the Concordance of their whole Bible in their Memories: which gives them vast Advantages, when they are to argue with any that are not so ready as they are in the Scriptures. Our Task is much shorter and easier, and it is a *Reproach*, especially to us *Protestants*, who found our Religion merely on the Scriptures, that we know the *New Testament* so little, which cannot be excused. *Bishop Burnet on the Pastoral Care. chap. viii. p. 160.*

Veneration for the Holy Scriptures. There is no one Point which occurs more frequently in the ancient Fathers, and in which they do more unanimously agree, than in earnestly exhorting the People to a careful and diligent Reading of the Scriptures (e). And so remarkable was the Obedience of the People in this Particular, that they not only duly attended to the *public* Reading of them in their Churches, but also spent a considerable Part of their Time in *private*, in a devout Perusal of them. And by this Means they attained to such a through and perfect Knowledge of the *Christian* Religion, as by the Divine Assistance enabled them to persevere in the Profession thereof, notwithstanding the most cruel and barbarous Sufferings. This their Enemies fully perceived; and therefore among other Methods, which they contrived to bring them over to their Idolatry, and to oblige them to renounce the *Christian* Religion, they at length put out an Order, as particularly under the *Dioclesian* Persecution, that all *Christians* should surrender their Bibles, and that they should be publicly burnt (f). And though indeed it is not to be denied, that there were several Persons who complied with this Order through fear of Persecution; yet the Generality of *Christians* stood firm and immoveable, and did upon this Account as well as others submit to such *tormenting* Deaths and *unspeakable* Sufferings, as are scarcely to be parallel'd in the Records of Time (g). And how odious this Crime of delivering up their Bibles was thought by the Church, may appear from hence, that they branded those who were guilty of it with the infamous Name of *Traditors* (that is to say, Traitors), and refused

(e) See *Dr Scott's Christian Life*, Vol. V. p. 355, &c. in which there are many Passages cited, and many excellent Observations to this Purpose.

(f) *Vid. Eusebii Eccl. Histor. lib. viii. cap. ii.*

(g) See *Echard's Eccl. History*, 8vo. Vol. II. p. 664 to 668. *sub. A. D. 303.*

fused to admit them to their Communion. And how great a Matter of Joy it was to our pious Ancestors in this Kingdom, when the Bible was translated into the Vulgar Tongue (*b*), and recommended to every ones Perusal; what a *high* Esteem and Veneration they had for the Holy Scriptures, and how diligent and constant they were in the Reading of them: are Things well known to every Man, who hath read the History of this Kingdom, and especially *that* of the *Reformation*. I cannot forbear adding upon this Head, that it is a Matter of great Surprise and Astonishment as well as just Reproach and Scandal to us, who profess the same Pure and Reformed Religion which they did, and ground our Doctrine entirely upon the Testimony of the Holy Scripture; that the Generality of us should manifest so great a Neglect and Contempt of the *sacred Writings*, and be more pleased and delighted with the most trifling *Romance* or *Novel* than with the Reading of the Bible: which not only (as we shall see presently) affords Matter of the greatest Pleasure and Instruction

(*b*) That the Bible was very *early* translated into the Vulgar Tongue in this Nation, and the great Zeal and Piety which the Princes and Bishops of those Days manifested in the doing of it, appears sufficiently from our Histories. Upon which Occasion I shall insert the following Passage from a Learned Writer, very worthy of our Notice. “ The *Popish* Priests could not with so much Confidence charge us with a Crime, at least not with Novelty, in having the Scripture in our *Mother* Tongue; did they know that the whole Bible was translated into *Saxon*, our *Mother* Tongue, above 800 Years ago by Priests, great Prelates, and celebrated Kings of *England*, to be seen great Part thereof to this very Day. King *Alfred* with his own Hand translated great Part of the Bible into *Saxon*, which was then the Vulgar Language, and first divided the Scripture into Portions to be read on Festivals. Nay the *Saxon* Kings not only permitted such Translations, and encouraged them by their own pious and great Example; but made Laws for establishing thereof. and for teaching the Scriptures in their own Language.” *Judge Fortescue’s Preface to the Chancellor Fortescue’s Treatise of Absolute and Limited Monarchy,* p. 67.

Instruction, but also contains the *Lively Oracles* of Divine Counsel and Eternal Wisdom. And thus having shewn the Necessity of this Duty of Reading the Holy Scriptures, I proceed, in the *Second Place*, to consider the great Benefits and Advantages of it. Now there are three Things, which I shall mention at present, as great Benefits and Advantages of Reading the Holy Scriptures.

The first Advantage is this, that by this means we are made perfectly acquainted with the *whole* Will and Pleasure of God, and with that Duty which He requires in Order to our Salvation; together with the most Prevailing Arguments and Motives to the Practice of it. Thus says the *Psalmist*, *The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul; the Testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple, Ps. xix. 7.* And St Paul tells *Timothy* that *all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness: that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all Good Works. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.* And again, he observes to him more expressly, that the *Scriptures are able to make him wise unto Salvation. ver. 15.* And this is a Peculiar Excellency of the *Christian* Religion, in which all the Teaching and Instruction of *Heathen* Philosophy was wanting and deficient. Now the Reading of the Holy Scriptures conduces to this End these two Ways. *First*, by *clear* and *plain* Rules of Duty and Obedience; such as are the Laws and Injunctions of God both in the Old and New Testament, and particularly those in our Blessed Saviour's Divine Sermon on the *Mount*, by which we have a true Notion of Moral Duties; and by those wise Corrections which the Wisdom of God hath made in them from the false and absurd Interpretations of the *Jews*, we may plainly perceive the true Sense and Meaning thereof; and from hence may clearly understand *what is that*
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good and acceptable and perfect Will of God. Rom. xii. 2. For this is a Truth that has been always established in the *Christian Church*, (notwithstanding what the Church of *Rome* pretends to the contrary) that all Matters of Faith and Practice are plainly delivered in the Holy Scriptures: so that whosoever reads them with due Attention, and is careful to use the best Means and Helps to understand them, such as catechising, and hearing of God's Word, and reading of good Books and Comments upon them, and the like, cannot well be ignorant in any necessary and essential Part of *Christian Duty* (i). For these are the Books which shew us what is *good*, and what the Lord *doth require of us*; *Mic. vi. 8. which set before us the Way of Life and the Way of Death. Jer. xxi. 8.* And which teach us *what we must do to be saved. Acts xvi. 30.* And this Instruction we receive not only from the Precepts of Duty which are laid down to us in the Holy Scriptures, but also (which is the *Second Way*) by those many *bright and shining Examples of Piety and Virtue*, which are therein propounded to our Imitation; and particularly that of our Blessed Saviour, *who did no Sin, neither was Guile found in His Mouth*; *1 Pet. ii. 22.* and who in every Instance of Holiness and Righteousness as well as Patience and Meekness under Sufferings, *bath left us an Example that we should follow His Steps*; *ver. 21.* And likewise the Example of the Holy Apostles, whose *Faith we should follow considering the End of their Conversation. Heb. xiii. 7.* Which Examples are of great Service and Advantage to us, not only as they give Life and Strength to the Precepts of the Gospel, by clearly shewing us that they are *really practicable*; but also as they tend in their own Nature to excite our Zeal

(i) *Vid. Tillotson, Vol. I. p. 229, 352, 659, 682. Dr Bennet's Confutation of Popery. Part I. chap. xi. Jackson's Remarks on Christianity as old as the Creation, p. 32.*

Zeal, and to animate us with due Vigour and Resolution in the Imitation of them. And then the more effectually to encourage us to the Practice of *Christian* Piety and Virtue, we shall by the Reading of Scripture discover two Things of the greatest Importance and Consequence to our Happiness, which God hath promised us, and which are in a great Measure Peculiar to our Holy Religion. The *First* is the Gracious Gift of God's Holy Spirit, which He hath declared He will bestow upon us, on Condition of our hearty and fervent Prayer, and receiving the Sacrament; as was before observed (k). The *Second* is the Consideration of the Glorious State of Immortality, which the Gospel proposes as the certain Reward of our sincere and faithful Obedience. And this Encouragement is the *Distinguishing* (l) Privilege and Blessing of *Christianity*,
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(k) See above p. 121.

(l) This I know is a Point which is strenuously denied by our Modern Infidels; but nevertheless it hath been clearly demonstrated from several genuine Passages of the best *Heathen* Writers, and by many Learned Defenders of the *Christian* Religion. In saying which we do not mean that the antient *Pagans* did not believe the Immortality of the Soul and a Future State; for this appears undeniably from innumerable Places in their Writings: but we assert that their Belief of this great Point was not so fixed and stedfast as to free them from all Doubts and Uncertainty about the Truth of it. And this, I say, is what many Learned *Christian* Writers have clearly demonstrated. I shall beg leave in this Place to transcribe a Passage from an Eminent Author to this Purpose, that we may the better perceive the inestimable Advantage we enjoy by the *Christian* Revelation, and for the Sake of such into whose Hands this Discourse may fall, who may not be so happy as to have perused that excellent Treatise from which it is taken. *Cicero* (says he) enumerating the Opinions of Philosophers upon this Head, (*Tusc. Quæst.* lib. i.) not only asserts what every one knows to be true, that the whole Sect of *Epicureans* disbelieved the Soul's Immortality but adds, that many of the most Learned Philosophers were of the same Opinion; and he particularly mentions two of great Note among them; one who in his Writings had avowedly argued against it, and another who had professedly written three Books to confute it. He tells us farther that tho' the *Stoics* believed that the Soul remained after Death for some
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in which all *Heathen* Philosophy was *dubious* and *uncertain*: so just is that Observation of *St Paul*, that *Christ hath brought Life and Immortality to light by the Gospel.* 2 *Tim.* i. 10. These are the Benefits of Reading the Scriptures: and to them who understand their own Interest, and the *Value* of Eternal Life and Happiness, they must be esteemed *infinitely* beyond the highest Honours, and the greatest Riches and Pleasures of this World. Well therefore might the *Psalmist* pronounce that Man *blessed and happy, whose Delight is in the Law of the Lord, and who meditates thereon Day and Night.* *Psal.* i. 1, 2. But,

Secondly, Another great Benefit and Advantage of reading the *Holy Scriptures* is this, that hereby we shall be able to find out the Truth in those different and contradictory Doctrines which are taught in the World, and by that Mark to distinguish the *true Church*.

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Time, yet they did not believe it was immortal. And even *Socrates* and *Cicero*, who were peculiarly favourable to the Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul, do yet discover some Doubt and Uncertainty about it.

Socrates, a little before his Death, tells his Friends, he had good Hope of some Sort of Being, when this Life was at an End; but after that he speaks doubtfully, and says, "Tho' he should be mistaken, he did at least gain thus much, that the Expectation of it made him less uneasy while he lived, and his Errour would die with him;" and he concludes, "I am going out of the World, and you are to continue in it; which of us has the better Part, is a Secret to every one but God" (*Vid. Plato in Phæd. & in Apol. Socrat.*) And *Cicero* speaking of the several Opinions concerning the Nature and Duration of the Soul (*Tusc. Quæst. lib. i*) says "Which of these is true, God alone knows; and which is most probable, is a very great Question" And he introduces one complaining, "That whilst he was reading the Arguments for the Immortality of the Soul, he thought himself convinced; but as soon as he laid aside the Book, and began to reason with himself, his Conviction was gone." All which gave *Seneca* just Occasion to say (*Epist. 102*) "That Immortality, however desirable, was rather *promised* than *proved* by those great Men." *Bishop Gibson's Second Pastoral Letter*, p. 17, 18. See also *Dr Sam. Clarke's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures, Part II. P. op. vi. § 3.* *Tillotson, Vol. III. p. 133, 134.* *Grot. de Verit. Christianæ Relig. lib. ii. § 9. cum Annot. in loc.*

We are not bound to believe any Person or Church, let them pretend never so much to Infallibility, 'till we have compared their Doctrines with *Holy Scripture*, and by that judge of their Goodness and Truth. *To the Law and to the Testimony*, as the Prophet speaks; and let Men be never so *positive and confident*, yet if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them, *Isa. viii. 20.* This is likewise the Judgment of St Paul, *1 Thess. v. 21. Prove all Things, i. e.* try and examine all Doctrines and Precepts by the certain Rules of Reason and Revelation: and then it follows, *hold fast that which is good.* And St John directs us, *not to believe every Spirit, but to try the Spirits whether they are of God: because many false Prophets are gone out into the World.* *1 John. iv. 1.* And this is what our Blessed Saviour constantly observed in all His Conversation. He never desired any Man to believe Him *blindly and implicitly* without good Proof and Evidence: So far from *this*, that he often commends Persons for Reasoning upon His Doctrine; as you may particularly observe in the Case of the *Centurion*, *Matt. viii. 8 to 11.* And the *Woman of Canaan*, *Matt. xv. 22 to 28 (m).* And in *John v. 39.* He desires the *Jews* to *search the Scriptures*, and puts the Cause of His Divine Mission upon the Testimony of them. And in another Part of the same Chapter He tells the *Jews*, that the true Reason, why they did not believe in Him, was, because they did not believe the *Scriptures.* *Had you believed Moses, says our Blessed Lord, you would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me: but if ye believe not his Writings, how shall ye believe My Words? ver. 46; 47.* Nay, so far is it from being a *Crime* to read the *Holy Scriptures*, and to compare Doctrines with them, that Persons are therein commended for Examining the Doctrines of the Apostles

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themselves,

(m) See Tillotson's Works, Vol. II. p. 18: Burnet, Artic. XIX p. 183.

themselves, and comparing them with this Rule. Thus when St Paul preach'd the Gospel at *Berea*, we read in *Acts xvii. 11.* *that the Bereans were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of Mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those Things were so.* And therefore it is an arrogant Imposition of the Church of *Rome*, to require us to believe her Doctrines without the Liberty of examining and comparing them with *Scripture*. The Pretence is so very absurd, that it was absolutely necessary to find out some *Invention* to palliate and defend it. And the *only* one, that could answer the Design, was to declare That Church to be *infallible* in all her Determinations and Decisions: which is just as if a confident Man should expect that we should put out our Eyes, or deny our Senses; only that we might take his Word, and be led about by him at his Pleasure. If then we will carefully and diligently read the Scriptures; we shall be able to pass a true Judgment on all those disputed and controverted Doctrines, which are of any Moment and Importance to us. For since God hath given us the Holy Scriptures to be the *Rule* of our *Faith*, as well as for our Instruction in Moral Precepts; it would be highly absurd to suppose that He should express His Will to us in this Matter so *darkly* and *obscurely*, that we should not be able to find out and discover it after the most *sincere* and *perfect* Examination. But I am sensible there is one very great Difficulty in the Point I am now upon, which I think absolutely necessary to clear up and explain before I proceed any farther, in order to take off all Discouragement against the Reading of the Holy Scriptures. The Difficulty is this; if the Holy Scriptures are so clear and *plain* in all Things that are *necessary* and *essential*; as some pretend; how then comes it to pass, that not only the *ignorant* and *unlearned*, and such as are plainly led away by the Violence of Pride and Faction, or the Dominion of Worldly Lusts, should think differently on the Doctrines of Scripture; but that
also

also there should be the same Variety of Opinion and direct Contradiction of Sentiments among those who are *eminently* Learned, and who (as we have all the Reasons in the World to think) are Persons of *absolute* Probity and Sincerity; and who have been very careful and diligent in the Study of the Holy Scripture, and heartily prayed to God to direct them in their Enquiries into the Truth of it. And that this is the State of the *Christian* World at present, and hath been for many Ages, every one must readily grant. How then, may any one say, shall I be *sure* of discovering the Truth in all Points that are Essential by the Study of the Scripture; when so many *wise, honest* and *upright* Men, who have studied it with the utmost Diligence and Attention, have expressly contradicted each other in such Points? This is the Difficulty, and I freely own that it is a very great one. The Fact is very evident, as to the Diversity and Opposition of Sentiments in the *Christian* World: and that Man must be *extremely* uncharitable, who shall judge all those who differ from him in Opinion about Matters of Consequence to be *wilfully* insincere. Now tho' it may be impossible for us ever to conquer this great Difficulty, because we cannot discern the Hearts of Men, nor perceive in all Cases what it is which leads them into false and erroneous Opinions; yet on the other side, there are several Considerations to be offered, which will in a great Measure *extenuate* and *lessen* this Difficulty, and *fully* ascertain the Discovery of the Truth in all necessary and essential Matters, to all such Persons who shall *sincerely* and *diligently* study the Holy Scriptures (*b*). In order therefore to state this Matter clearly, it will be necessary to consider these following Particulars.

First, There are many of those who frequently read the Holy Scriptures, who are of such *mean* Parts and *low* Apprehensions, and who through the want of a fit

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and

(*b*) See Bishop *Atterbury's* Sermons, Vol. III. Sermon IX. X. and XI. in which there are many excellent and judicious Observations on this Head.

and proper Education, are so *little* acquainted with the very Language and Expressions of Scripture which relate to the Controversies of Religion, that they are absolutely unable to pass any Judgment upon them. To such Persons as these, I do not think that the Argument I am now upon is to be directed; nor that the Reading of the Scriptures will be a certain Guide to them in *disputed* Points. The best Advice which I can give to such Persons is this; that they would read the Scriptures as frequently and diligently as they can for their Information in their Duty; that they would stick to that which is *clear* and *plain*, and in all Matters of Difficulty rely upon their Teachers. And then what a most excellent Writer lays down in this Case will certainly hold, *viz.* “ That if the Providence of God hath placed
 “ them under such Guides as do seduce them into Er-
 “ rour, their Ignorance is *invincible*, and God will not
 “ condemn them for it, so long as they sincerely endea-
 “ vour to do the Will of God so far as they know (*i*).”
 But yet, there is thus much to be said even in the Case of these Persons, that if they will read *carefully* and judge *sincerely*, and divest themselves of all Prejudice, they will be freed from many *fatal* and *pernicious* Errours, which corrupt the Minds of other Men. Particularly, they must see the great Sin and Danger of worshipping *Angels*, and *Saints*, and *Images*, which are so *plainly* and *expressly* condemned in God’s Word. *Matt.* iv. 10. *Col.* ii. 18. *Rev.* xix. 10. *Exod.* xx. 4, 5. And they cannot also but discover the horrible Wickedness of *hating* and *persecuting* those that differ from them, which is contrary to innumerable Texts of Holy Scripture, and particularly to those where we are strictly commanded to have love for one another, nay and even for our greatest Enemies. *John* xiii. 34, 35. *Matt.* v. 43, 44. And by the same Method, many other dangerous and pernicious Mistakes in Religion may *easily* be discovered and prevented.

Secondly,

Secondly, Tho' it be *very difficult* in all Cases to determine when Men fall into Errour through Prejudice and Prepossession, and it is very probable that there are *very few* Persons, if *any*, who are not in *some Degree* and Measure affected with it; yet on the other side, it must be owned that there are some Cases in which it is *notorious* and *visible* and *highly culpable*, tho' the Persons who are guilty of it may perhaps not perceive it so *sensibly* as others do. As *first*, Some Men who read the Scriptures frequently, yet never pass any *due* Consideration upon them; nor apply them to the Decision of those Disputes and Controversies which they are sensible are of the greatest Moment and Importance to them. This is a Fault which the Generality of Persons in all Communions are guilty of. They are all too apt to indulge their Laziness and Sloth, and to depend upon the Piety and Judgment of that Church or Party to which they belong; and to say, as *Symmachus* said of old, *Sequimur Majores nostros, qui feliciter secuti sunt suos.* i. e. *We follow our Ancestours, as they happily followed theirs.* But it is in a most *gross* and *shameful* Manner to be ascribed to the Church of *Rome*, who in the Fourteenth Article of her *Creed* set out by *Pope Pius IV.* and established by the Council of *Trent* hath taken effectual Care to prevent a *sincere* Enquiry into the Doctrine of Holy Scripture, by obliging themselves to receive and interpret it in no *other* Sense than that which their Church hath put thereupon (*k*). *Secondly*, Others who read the Scriptures and spend some Thought in the Consideration of them do yet judge very *partially* in this Matter. They lay *great* Stress and Weight upon all such Passages as make for them, and pass over those very *slightly* that make against them: and in Case that any Books are published in the Controversy to clear up and explain the Sense of Scripture, they will be sure to

(k) Item sacram Scripturam juxta eum sensum, quem tenuit & tenet sancta Mater Ecclesia, cujus est judicare de vero sensu & interpretatione Sacrarum Scripturarum admitto, nec eam unquam, nisi juxta unanimum Consensum Patrum accipiam & interpretabor.

read *only* those which are on their own Side. By which it is very evident, that they do not read in order to form a true Judgment upon the Point in Debate, but only to confirm themselves more *stedfastly* in those Opinions which they have already received. This is likewise so *visibly* the Fault of *all* Parties, that it cannot but be observed by every one who hath the least Acquaintance with the World: but yet it is impossible to deny that there is a *manifest* Difference between the Church of *Rome*, and the *Reformed* Churches in this Matter. For whereas the *Roman* Church locks up the Scriptures from her People, and forbids them, and such as are Converts to her, the reading of *Heretical* Books as they call them (l); it is the Glory of all the *Protestant* Churches, that they not only in a strict Manner require all their Members to read the Scriptures, and to examine the Points in Controversy for themselves; but also, as Archbishop *Tillotson* truly observed (m), they do not forbid them the reading of the very best Books which our Adversaries have been able to write against us. *Thirdly*, There are other Persons, who, tho' they often read the Holy Scriptures themselves, and frame Discourses out of them for the Benefit and Edification of the People as they pretend, and to confirm them in the true and sound Profession of the *Christian* Faith; yet are guilty of a most *shameful* Suppression of the Truth of Scripture, in order to obstruct a *right* Judgment upon the Points in Controversy. This is a Fault, which perhaps the Writers of all Parties may be in some Measure guilty of. But the Church of *Rome* is abominably gone astray in this Particular. In many Books which they have published in the Dispute between us, and for the Confirmation of their People and *Profelytes* in the Profession of their Faith, they not only disguise and suppress the *true* and *real* Doctrine of their Church in the most material

(l) Vide *Stillingfleet's* Answer to a *Papist* misrepresented and represented, chap. xxxiv. p. 161.

(m) *Tillotson*, Vol. II. p. 36.

terial and essential Points, that the People, and especially the *Profelytes* to them, might not be *shocked* and *surprized* at it (*n*); but also do frequently ground their Doctrine upon *doubtful* and *impertinent* Texts of Scripture, and at the same Time take no notice of such as *immediately* relate to the Points in Question, and which are most *full* and *clear* and *express* against them. It were very easy to give many Instances of this from the *Popish* Writings; but that I may not be tedious, I will mention only one at present: and that is taken from a little Book lately printed and entituled, *A Profession of Catholic Faith, extracted out of the Council of Trent by Pope Pius IV. and now in Use for the Reception of Converts into the Church, &c.* In this Book, chap. viii. §. 3. concerning the *Worshipping of Angels and Saints*, the Author grounds the Lawfulness of this Practice upon two Texts of Scripture, neither of which do in any wise relate to the Purpose for which he brings them. The first

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Text

(*n*) This is very *visible* in many of the *Popish* Writings, and especially in those which are published in *Protestant* Kingdoms; but it is *peculiarly* remarkable in a famous Book, which came out about the latter End of King *Charles* the II'd's Reign, called *A Papist misrepresented and represented*, in two Parts or Columns, by *F. L.* one of the Church of *Rome*. In the first Column, called *A Papist misrepresented*, the Author gives such an Account of *Poper*y as hath always been given of it by Learned *Protestants*; and this the Author styles a *Misrepresentation of Popery*. In the second Column, called a *Papist represented*, he gives a *quite different* and more *favourable* Character of *Poper*y, in order to reconcile the *English* the better to it, and which he would fain obtrude upon us as the *true* and *real* Doctrine of their Church. Bishop *Stillinfleet* answered the Book, and proved that what the Author called a *Misrepresentation of Popery*, is the *true* Character and Representation of it: which he hath so clearly demonstrated from the *public Offices, Catechisms, Decrees, Sentences, and Councils* of that Church, and particularly the *Council of Trent*, and from the Judgment and Testimony of the most *Learned Writers* in that Communion; that it is impossible any just Reply can be made to it. This Book is very necessary to be read by all such Persons, who would understand the Controversy between us and the Church of *Rome*; since it is in vain to argue against the *Errours* and *Corruptions* of that Church, if we cannot prove that she *really* holds and maintains such *Errours* and *Corruptions*.

Text is that in *Gen. xlviii. 15, 16.* where *Jacob* begging a Blessing upon the two Sons of *Joseph*, *Ephraim* and *Manasseh*, useth these Words, *God before whom my Fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my Life long unto this Day, the ANGEL which redeemed me from all Evil, bless the Lads.* The other Text is in *Rev. i. 4, 5.* where *St John*, speaking to the Seven Churches in *Asia*, says, *Grace be unto you and Peace from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the Seven Spirits which are before His Throne; and from Jesus Christ.* Now tho' it be very certain that in the First of these Texts (as many Learned Writers of the Church of *Rome* will readily allow) by the *Angel who redeemed Jacob* is meant our Blessed Saviour *Jesus Christ*, who presided over the Affairs of the *Patriarchal* and *Jewish Churches* (*o*), who is called the *Redeemer* by the Prophet *Isa. lix. 20.* and by *St Paul*, who shews that *Christ* is the Redeemer mentioned by that Prophet; *Rom. xi. 26.* And whom the same Prophet styles the *Angel of God's Presence*, *chap. lxiii. 9.* And *Malachi* the Messenger, *i. e.* the Angel of the Covenant. *chap. iii. 1.* (compare *Matt. xi. 10. Mark i. 2. Luke vii. 27.*) and who when He is called the *Angel of the Lord* in several Passages of Scripture, yet we may observe in the same Passages that He is often expressly styled *Lord* and *God* (*p*). And as such, there are innumerable Texts in the *Old Testament*, where *God* and *Jehovah* is spoken of, which are by the ancient Writers of the Church applied to Him (*q*); and can be applied to no other Person (*r*). And as to the second Text, tho'

(*o*) *Vid.* Euseb. *Eccles. Hist. lib. i. cap. ii.* Dr *Scott's Christian Life*, Vol. III. chap. vii. p. 233, &c. *Bulli Def. Fid. Nicen. cap. i. § 1.*

(*p*) See particularly, *Gen. xxii. 15, 16. Exod. iii. 2 to 7.* and in *Eccles. v. 6.* what is rendered from the Hebrew, *neither say thou before the Angel*, &c. is read, *say thou before God* in the *Septuagint*, and likewise in several of the *Old Versions*.

(*q*) *Vid.* Dr *Waterland's Second Defense*, *Quer. ii. p. 28. to 33.*

(*r*) *Vid.* *Scott*, *ibid.* p. 239 to 242.

rho' there is no doubt but that, as the best Expositors have rendered it (*s*), by the *seven Spirits* is meant the *Holy Ghost*: yet supposing there had been some Difficulty in the Interpretation of these Texts; if our Author had not suppressed some very *clear* and *plain* Texts of Scripture which relate to this Matter, but had as he ought to have done considered them altogether, it would be *impossible* that any Person of common Sense should ever be drawn away by the Scripture Proofs alledged by him to the great Sin of Worshipping Angels (*t*). For our Saviour expressly observes in His Answer

(*s*) The Holy Ghost is thought by Learned Men to be here described by the Character of the *seven Spirits*, because it would be absurd to suppose that in a Petition for Grace and Peace any Created Being should be joined together with God the Father and the Son. And there is no Instance of the like to be found in all the Scripture: and because St *John* himself, as well as the other Apostles in their Petitions or Wishes for Grace and Peace, &c do always beg it from God only. 2 *John* iii. And it is farther observed by these Interpreters, that the Holy Ghost is called by the Name of the *seven Spirits*, because His many Gifts have given Him the Name of *many Spirits*, as you may particularly observe in *Isa.* xi. 2. and because the Number *Seven* among the *Jews* was a *Sacred* Number importing Perfection (*Vid.* Spenc. de Leg. Hebr. lib. ii. cap. xxvi. §. 3. in Vol. J. p. 497.). And they likewise intimate, that the Holy Ghost may as well be described by His several Gifts, as the Gifts of the Spirit are in Scripture frequently signified by the Spirit Himself, as *Luke* xi. 13. *Galat.* v. 25. 1 *Thess.* iv. 8. *Vid. Poli Synops. Critic. in loc. Burnet Artic. I. p. 39.* Dr *Bennet's* Confutation of Popery, Part II. chap. xiii. Tho' it must not be denied, that there are some very considerable Interpreters, who think that by the *seven Spirits* are meant the *Seven Angels*, who are said in chap. viii. 2. to stand before God. And they understand the Words of this Text not to be a *formal* Prayer, but only to contain a Wish and Desire, that God and Christ would send down Grace and Peace upon the Churches by the Ministration of Angels. (See particularly *Hammond in loc.*) But I think the other Interpretation is much the most *probable* for the Reasons abovementioned. To which we may add this remarkable Observation, that tho' the *Beasts* and *Elders* are said in chap. iv. and v. to *worship Him that sitteth upon the Throne*, yet the *seven Spirits* are never said to do so.

(*t*) This Author is also guilty of another instance of Suppression in this Matter, and that is in suppressing the *true* Doctrine and Practice of the *Roman Church* in the Worship of Angels and Saints: for

swer to the Devil (what the Law of God by *Moses* had before required) *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.* *Matt. iv. 10.* And *St Paul's* Admonition to the *Colossians* was, that they should let no Man beguile them of their Reward — by the *Worshipping of Angels.* *ii. 18.* And when *St John*, in the *Revelations*, fell down at the *Angel's Feet* to worship him, (upon his discovering to him the Blessedness of those who were called to the Marriage Feast of the Lamb) He immediately forbad him, saying, *See thou do it not, I am thy Fellow Servant — worship God.* *Rev. xix. 10.* See also, chap. *xxii. 9.* All which Texts are as full and clear against the *Worshipping of Angels and Saints* as it is possible for any Words to express. Now when in these and the like Cases I affirm, that Men who read the Scriptures and judge of them in this Manner are plainly led away by Prejudice and Prepossession; it is not my Design hereby to pass any harsh Censure and Judgment upon the *Persons* themselves, who maintain such Doctrines as are manifestly false and erroneous; for I do not know how far these Men may be sensible of their Mistake, nor what Allowance God Almighty will make for it. And I verily believe (and I think it would be very hard and uncharitable to deny it) that there have been and are still, even in the Church of *Rome* itself, many pious and learned Men, who are so far from contributing wilfully to the Propagation of Falshood, that they would immediately renounce their Errours if they were made sensible of them. But the great Prejudice of Education which is common to them with all others, and the peculiar Tendency of many of their Doctrines to promote their Temporal Interest and

he denies (and by that Evasion it is that the Church of *Rome* chiefly imposes upon those who are Profelytes to her) that they pay true Divine Worship to them as they do to God; but only pray to them for their Intercession. (*vid.* chap. *viii.* and *ix.*) But whether he has not given a false Account of this Matter. will be evident to any one who will consult chap. *ii.* and *iii.* of *Bishop Stillingfleet's* learned Book abovementioned.

and Dominion, cast such a *strong* Byass upon their Judgments, as hinders them from a *true* and *impartial* Determination in the Controversies of Religion. And above all, their firm and stedfast Belief of the *Infallibility* of their Church hath such a *powerful* Influence upon their Minds, that by this Means, if they happen to meet with any Texts of Scripture which make against them, they do not think it necessary to give them a *full* and *distinct* Consideration: because tho' there might be some Difficulty in reconciling such Texts with the received Opinions, yet they are fully satisfied that there are other Texts that plainly favour them; and since they are sure that the Scripture cannot contradict itself, and the Church which is *infallible* hath considered the Whole Scripture together, and passed a Definitive Sentence thereupon; they think it much safer and wiser to rest upon the Judgment of such a Church than upon the Private Interpretation of declared *Heretics* and *Schismatics*. This is no doubt the Case of many Persons in the Church of *Rome*, with Respect to the Sincerity of their Perswasion, in the many Errours and Corruptions maintained by them. And the like may be applied to many Persons of other Communions. It is no strange Thing to observe Men very *positive* and *peremptory* in their Opinions, notwithstanding the clearest and plainest Texts of Scripture which are urged against them. Either they can find out some plausible Distinction to avoid the Force of such Texts, or else if they cannot answer them *themselves* they make no doubt but the Heads and Leaders of their *Sett* and *Party* can; and so they think it much better to depend upon their Judgment than upon that of any other Persons. This is so visibly the Case of the Generality of Men in *all* Parties and Communions, that no Man who is in any Measure conversant in the World can be insensible of it. And tho' it is culpable in any one who enquires after Truth to be thus governed and led away by Prejudice; yet how far in some Cases Men may themselves discover such

such Prejudice, or what Allowance the Goodness of God will make for it in the great Day of Retribution, is more than I or any one can tell; and therefore it must be left to His Righteous Judgment. But all that is necessary to be proved in the Argument we are now upon is this, *viz.* that the Holy Scriptures are, to all Persons capable of reading them, so clear and plain in all Necessary and Essential Points; that whosoever will read them with that Care and Diligence which he ought to do, and will entirely divest himself of all Prejudice, and free his Mind from the Power of all Worldly Interest and Affections, shall not in the Understanding of those Scriptures fall into any Error that shall be fatal and destructive to him. This is an Assertion which I think the Wisdom and Goodness of God will bear me out in maintaining: since to say that God hath made a Revelation of His Will in Holy Scripture for the Salvation of Mankind, and yet that it is not to be understood in Necessary and Essential Points by the *most sincere* and *diligent* Inquirers, is *worse* than to say that He hath made no Revelation at all. And as the great *Grotius* well observes (u) “ The Goodness
 “ of God will not suffer us to believe, that the Way to
 “ Eternal Salvation cannot be discovered by those who
 “ seek after it without any Regard to Worldly Ho-
 “ nour and Interest; submitting themselves entirely to
 “ His Providence and imploring his Assistance.” And says another (x) Learned Writer, “ I think we
 “ may safely pronounce in this Matter, that the Good-
 “ ness and Mercy of God is such, that He never de-
 “ serts a sincere Person, nor suffers any one that shall
 “ live (even according to these Measures of Sincerity)
 “ up to what he knows, to perish for want of any
 “ Knowledge necessary; and what is more sufficient
 “ to save him.” And as a very Judicious Prelate (y) expresses

(u) *Grotius de Verit. Relig. Christi*, lib. vi. §. 2. See the Testimonies of *Justin Martyr* and *Origen* to this Purpose, in his Annotations upon the Place.

(x) Dr *South's* Sermons, Vol. I. p. 298.

(y) Archbishop *Synges* Gentleman's Religion, Part I. §. 3.

expresses it, " If there be a God, and if He requires
" any Service or Worship (*i. e.* any Religion) from
" us, it is undoubtedly for this End, that it may be a
" Trial of our Faithfulness and Obedience to Him.
" Now, whosoever has a Mind to prove his Servant,
" whether he will be faithful and obedient, he will
" not give him such *dark* and *intricate* Commands as
" shall puzzle him to find out the Meaning of them;
" (for how can a Servant approve himself faithful and
" obedient, if he be uncertain what it is that his Ma-
" ster requires from him?) but he will surely give him
" such Commands and Directions as are *easy* enough
" to be understood, however difficult they may be to
" be enterpriz'd or accomplished. I conclude there-
" fore, that all the Duties of Religion which God re-
" quires of any Man must needs be *easy* enough for
" him to understand, however hard they may be to
" be practised. For otherwise, Religion would be a
" Trial rather of a Man's Wit and Cunning, than of
" his Faithfulness and Obedience." The main Diffi-
" culty which Men commonly apprehend in this Affair
" is this, *viz.* How shall a Man be able *certainly* to know
" whether he is sincere and impartial or not, in his En-
" quiry after the Truth of Scripture. Now tho' I freely
" own there is some Difficulty in this Matter, yet with
" due Care and Caution I cannot think it so *hard* to
" make this Discovery as some have imagined. And a-
" mong many other Rules, by which the Sincerity of
" Men is usually tried, these three following are the chief
" and principal, with a respect to a sincere and impar-
" tial Enquiry into the Doctrine of Scripture. *First*, If
" a Man reads the Scripture diligently, and compares it
" together, and considers coolly and thoroughly what is
" alledged on both sides in any Points that are controver-
" ted, before he comes to a Conclusion. *Secondly*, If
" he carefully examines into the Temper and Disposition
" of his Mind, and upon such Examination can fully as-
" sure himself that he is not led away by any Pride or
" Passion

Passion or vicious Inclination ; but that his Affections are placed on heavenly Things, and that his Love to God is such, that he has a much greater Regard for Him than for any Temporal Considerations, and would choose rather to suffer the greatest Evils in this World, nay and even to lay down his Life itself, than in any wise to oppose His Will and Pleasure. And, *Thirdly and lastly*, If in a due Sense of Human Weakness and Infirmity, He prays frequently and fervently to God for His Holy Spirit to illuminate his Mind, and with Holy *David* to *open his Eyes and to give him Understanding, that he may discover the Things in his Law.* *Psalms* cxix. 18, 34. He that will constantly and diligently read the Scriptures with this due Preparation and Disposition of Mind, may rest assured, that he shall certainly discover the Truth in all Matters that are of Moment and Importance to him. And tho' he may observe many wise and good Men to differ from him in their Opinions upon Essential Points, yet this is no good Reason why he should question his *own* Judgment upon those Points ; since it is in many Cases very *plain* and *visible* that Men are influenced by Prejudice and Worldly Affections, tho' they themselves may not clearly perceive it. And it hath pleased God, as in natural and sensible Things, so also in the Revelation of His Will, to give us such *plain* Marks and Criteria of Truth, by which we may *certainly* find out and perceive it. And the true Reason why there is so *great* a Variety and Contradiction of Opinions amongst Inquisitive Men in the Doctrines of Religion, and so *little* Difference between them in Natural and Sensible Things, is, because the Prejudices and Passions and temporal Interests of Mankind are concerned in the one Case, and not in the other (z). That therefore a truly sincere Person,

who

(z) If the Affections and Interest of Men were as deeply concerned, and as sensibly touch'd in the Truth of *Mathematical* Propositions

who reads the Scriptures with the Preparation above-mentioned, may not be seduced into any Fatal and Destructive Errours; I beg leave to trespass a little longer upon the Reader's Patience, whilst I point out those Marks and Criterions of Truth, by which he may certainly attain to the Knowledge of it. In doing which I shall not mention all those Means and Helps in the Study of the Scriptures, such as an exact Skill in the Original Languages in which the sacred Books are written, the Phrase and Manner of speaking among the *Jews*, the History and Customs of the Times in which the Inspired Writers lived, and the like; all which Things are indeed absolutely necessary to a thorough and perfect Understanding of the Holy Scriptures: Tho' since it hath pleased God in the Revelation of His Will, not only barely to discover to us those Things which are absolutely necessary to our Salvation, but also to deliver Himself to us in great Variety and Ornament of Discourse, and to confirm and strengthen the main Doctrine by many strong and forcible Arguments scattered up and down in the sacred Writings; it is certainly our indispensable Duty by all proper Helps and Assistances to
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Posit ions, as they are in the Principles of *Morality* and *Religion*; we should find that when a Proposition stood in their Way, and lay cross to their Interest, tho' it were never so clearly demonstrated, yet they would raise a Dust about it, and make a Thousand Cavils, and fence even against the Evidence of a Demonstration; they would palliate their Errour with all the Skill and Art they could; and tho' the Absurdity of it was never so great and palpable, yet they would hold it fast against all Sense and Reason, and face down Man'ind in the obstinate Defense of it; for we have no Reason to doubt but that they, who in Matters of *Religion* will believe directly contrary to what they see, would if they had the same Interest and Passions to sway them in the Case, believe contrary to the clearest *Mathematical Demonstration*; for where there is an absolute Resolution not to be convinced, all the Reason and Evidence in the World signifies nothing *Tillotson Vol. II, p. 239. See also Archbishop Synge's Gentleman's Religion, Part I. § 3.*

gain as perfect and compleat an Understanding of them, as our Capacities and Opportunities will admit. And such who are not skilled in the Original Language, nor acquainted with antient History and Customs, may yet arrive to a very considerable Knowledge in Holy Scripture, by the Use of those many Excellent Comments which are published in the Nation. But as this Discourse is chiefly designed for common Readers, I shall do no more than give two or three plain Rules and Directions, by which they may *certainly* find out the Truth in all such Matters as are necessary and Essential, or of great Importance to the Peace and Happiness of their Minds.

The *First* Rule is this; When a Proposition is delivered in as *plain, clear, and express* Words as any Language will admit; we must always adhere to the Truth of such Proposition, though it be never so confidently denied by Men of great Parts and Learning (*a*). This Position depends upon what has been already observed in p. 156, *viz.* that God having made a Revelation of His Will in the Holy Scriptures, it would be highly absurd to suppose, that He should express Himself so *darkly* and *obscurely*, that we should not be able to discern His Sense and Meaning after the most sincere and perfect Examination. And if we cannot do this, especially in such Passages of Scripture as are expressed in as clear and plain Words as any Language will bear, the Consequence will be that the Scriptures are given to us in vain; and it will be impossible for us to make any Use of our Rational Faculties in the Perusal of them, but we must be obliged to sit down in absolute *Scepticism*. Thus, to make an Application of this Rule; it is as clearly and

(*a*) There is nothing more unreasonable than to deny that to be the Meaning of Scripture, which, if it had been the Meaning, could not have been express'd in plainer and more advantageous Words; especially when this is done not in one or two Texts, but very many. *Tillotson*, Vol. III. p. 490.

and plainly expressed in Scripture, as any Thing can possibly be, that *Jesus Christ* came into the World and took Human Nature upon Him, in the Womb of the Blessed Virgin ; that He *truly* suffered and died for our Sins ; &c. and yet it is well known that these Particulars were denied by several Ancient *Heretics*, who did not want good Parts and Apprehension. But I hope these Points are never the *less* true and certain, because those *Heretics* have denied them. And the like may be said of the other Articles in the Creed ; They are all delivered in plain and clear Passages of Holy Scripture ; and therefore it would be no sufficient Reason for us to doubt of the Truth of such Articles, tho' it should so happen that some of the greatest Learning and Knowledge should call them into Question. And the same may be affirmed of the two Sacraments of *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper* ; they are very plainly and expressly required and commanded in God's Word (see *Matt.* xxviii, 19. *Mark* xvi. 16. *John* iii. 5. *Luke* xxii. 17, &c. *1 Cor.* xi. 23, &c.) tho' they are utterly denied and renounced by a whole *Set* among us, in whom there are undoubtedly many sensible and well disposed Persons. And it is a *vain* and *idle* Attempt in them to endeavour to invalidate the Force of these Texts, by alledging that St *Paul* says, that the *Kingdom of God consisteth not in Meat and Drink*, *Rom.* xiv. 17. and that we must not be *subject to Ordinances* (b), *Col.* ii. 20. and that the Sacraments were only *Signs* and *Shadows*, which were to be used for a while for the Sake of *weak Christians*, 'till they should receive more *perfect* Illumination and Strength from the *Spirit of God* (c) : I say, it is in vain to attempt to destroy the Force of those Texts by this kind of Reasoning ; since St *Paul*,

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(b) *Vid. Barclay's Apology for the Quakers*, Prop. xiii. p. 481. Prop. xi. throughout.

(c) *Barclay*, Prop. xiii. p. 478.

in the Passages of Scripture last mentioned, is plainly speaking of the *Ordinances* of the *Jewish Law*, which he is there proving to be of no Obligation under *Christianity*, because they were only *Shadows of things to come* under the Gospel, and *Christ hath blotted them out, nailing them to His Cross*; Col. ii. 17, 14. and since the Scripture very plainly declares of both the Sacraments, that they are to be celebrated until *Christ's Second coming to Judgment*. Matt. xxviii. 20. 1 Cor. xi. 26 (d). Since both our Blessed Saviour and St Paul expressly affirm, that *Baptism by Water* is necessary to Salvation as well as the *Regeneration* of the *Holy Spirit*, John iii. 5. Tit. iii. 5. and since the Illumination of the Holy Ghost is so far from vacating the Necessity of Baptism, that when St Peter came to *Cornelius* and his Friends, who were endued with the Miraculous Gifts of the Spirit of God, he makes that one main Argument *why they should be immediately Baptized*, Acts x. 44, &c. And last of all, because our Blessed Saviour Himself, whose Example is always an *Infallible Comment* upon Scripture, did, as has been before taken notice (e) of, observe the External Ordinances of Religion, notwithstanding He was so *absolutely* perfect, as to be entirely free from (f) all Sin, 1 Pet. ii. 22. and had the *Holy Spirit given to Him without Measure*, John iii. 34. From all which Considerations it is very evident, that the Doctrine of the Necessity of the two Sacraments is *plainly and clearly* delivered in Holy Scripture, notwithstanding the many Cavils and Objections which the Adversaries of that Doctrine have raised against it. This then is the

First

(d) Vid. Tillotson, Vol. II. p. 515, 516.

(e) Vid. p. 123.

(f) Hac de causâ Christus venit ad Johannem, voluitque ab eo baptizari, ut suo Baptismate illius Baptisma approbaret, corroboraret, ac demonstraret Neminem esse quamvis *justum & sanctum* quin eâ foret salutari aquâ abluendus, cum ipse nullius purgationis egens sic lustrari voluit. Polydore Virgil de Rerum Invent. lib. iv. cap. iv.

First Rule to be observed in our Enquiry after the Truth of Scripture, *viz.* that we stick to that which is clearly and plainly express'd, tho' there should be many Persons of *good Sense* and *Probity* who should judge differently from us. If this Rule were carefully regarded, it would of itself secure to Men a right Judgment of Scripture in all Things that are Essential; since, as I have already remarked, whatever is necessary to Salvation, either in Point of Faith or Practice, is plainly and clearly delivered in the Holy Scriptures. And tho' it must be confessed that there are several Passages in Scripture which are difficult and obscure, yet as a very judicious Writer well expresses (g) it, "If you do not understand those Places that are obscure, in a Sense contrary to those that are plain; tho' perhaps you may be in an Error concerning the Interpretation of some of them, yet you can be under no dangerous Error." But,

Secondly, Because there are many fatal and destructive Errors both to the Salvation of Mens Souls, and to the present Peace and Quiet of their Minds, which may receive Countenance from some Texts of Scripture, at least as they are managed and explained by artful and cunning Men; therefore there are two other Rules very necessary to be observed, in order to a true and right Understanding of Holy Scripture. The *First* Rule is this; Never to ground any Doctrine of Moment and Importance upon one or two Texts of Scripture, 'till you have put together and considered what is said in other Parts of Scripture upon the same Point. The absolute Necessity of observing this Rule is very evident; since there are many great and pernicious Errors, which may receive some Umbrage and Support from particular Texts of Scripture, if they are considered *separately* from others in which they

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(g) Dr Clagett, in his Sermon on *Joh. viii. 36.* in the first Vol. of his Posthumous Sermons.

are clearly and plainly confuted. This I have shewn already, both with respect to the worshipping of Angels, and the Doctrine of the Sacraments (*b*); and it would be very easy to give many more Instances of the like Nature, but it is not necessary to do this; since whosoever diligently reads the Scriptures and compares them together, may readily make an Application of this Rule to himself. But, *Secondly*, The other Rule, which I shall mention at present as necessary to a right Understanding of Holy Scripture, is this, *viz.* Never to build any Doctrine of Weight and Consequence upon Figurative and Metaphorical Texts (*i*) of Scripture, when the same Doctrine is frequently and largely treated of in other Passages which are *literal* and *plain*. If this Rule had been duly observed, the Doctrine of *Irresistible Grace*, which is one main Branch of the absurd and monstrous Doctrine of *Predestination*, would have lost it's chief and principal Support. For tho' it is not to be denied, that there have been some very considerable and learned Men, who have engaged in the Defence of that Doctrine, and that with so much Zeal and Confidence, as to be almost impatient of Contradiction (*k*); yet the best Proof and Evidence, which they could give thereof from the Holy Scripture, was from such Passages as are *plainly* Figurative and Metaphorical: the chief and principal of which are these three following. The first Text is in *2 Cor. iv. 6.* where *St Paul* speaking of the great Change which
 God

(*b*) See p. 151, and 161.

(*i*) If Metaphors once come to be insisted on and strained, and Consequences come to be drawn from them, and Doctrines founded and Theories built upon them; they are of very ill Consequence, and serve to no other Purpose but to blind and obscure the plain and simple Notions of Things, and to seduce and mislead the Understandings of Men, and to multiply Controversies without End. *Tillotson, Vol. III p. 478.*

(*k*) See Dr *Clagett's* Dispute with Dr *Owen* upon this Point, in his most Excellent Discourse concerning the Operations of the Holy Spirit.

God Almighty had wrought in the Hearts and Lives of the *Corinthians*, expresses it thus, *God, who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined into our Hearts; to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ.* The same Manner of Expression we may also find in other Parts of Scripture. *Acts xxvi. 18. Eph. v. 8. 1 Peter ii. 9.* The other Two Passages are in *Ephes. ii. 1, 10.* where St Paul speaking of their State and Condition by *Nature*, and comparing it to that which they were in by *Grace*, describes it in this Manner; *And you hath He quickened, who were dead in Trespasses and Sins. And again, We are His Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works.* Now tho' it is very clear and evident, that the Expressions in these Texts are Figurative (1) and Metaphorical, and are used by the Apostle to signify the Miserable State and Condition they were in before their Conversion; as that their Understandings were darkned and obscured, and their Wills so strongly inclined to Sin, that they were in a manner quite dead to any Sense of Good and Evil (*see Ephes. iv. 19.*) and therefore stood in need of a more than ordinary Power of God's Grace to reduce them; I say, tho' this be very plainly the meaning of those Expressions in the Texts abovementioned, yet there have not been wanting some learned Men, who have understood them according to the *strict* Letter, to signify that Men are entirely *passive*, *i. e.* that God *doth all* and Men *do nothing at all*, in the great Business of Regeneration and Conversion: and that, because the Apostle, when he is speaking of such Regeneration, describes it by Similitudes taken from those things, in which the Power of God is *solely* concerned without any Concurrence on their Part. For when God *created* the World, and restored *dead* Bodies to Life

(1) See Dr Clagett's Operations of the Holy Spirit, Part II. chap. v. §. 1.

again; the *Darkness* upon the *Chaos* did not in the least Degree contribute to the *Light* that shined upon it, nor the *dead Bodies* which were raised to the Operation of God's Power upon them. And in the like manner say these Persons, when Sinners are regenerated and converted from the Errour of their Ways, and brought over to the Practice of Righteousness and true Holiness; the Effect is *entirely* owing to the Irresistible Power of God's Grace upon their Minds, and not in any Measure to the Consent and Concurrence of their own Wills thereunto. Now, not to mention that it would be a sufficient Answer to this kind of Reasoning, that though we should allow that God may and does sometimes act in this manner in the Conversion of a Sinner (*m*), yet this cannot possibly be the usual and general Method in which the Divine Grace operates upon the Minds of Men; because then those, who in Virtue of this Grace should repent of their Sins and believe the Gospel, could not hereby be entitled to any Praise and Reward; nor those, who for want of such Irresistible Grace should remain Infidels and continue in their Sins, could justly deserve any Censure and Punishment; the contrary to which the Holy Scripture as well as the common Sense of Mankind plainly supposes (*n*): I say,

not

(*m*) *Vid.* Dr *Mor*'s Grand Mystery of Godliness, Book x. chap. v. § 2 compared with Dr *Clagett*'s Operations of the Holy Spirit. Part II. chap. iv. § 6. p. 219.

(*n*) If the insupportable Weight of Necessity lies upon Men, they are *Patients* rather than *Agents*, and deserve Pity rather than Blame or Punishment. It was a discreet saying of *Porphry* (*De Abst. lib. i.*) Ὁ βιαζόμενος ἐστὶν ἄριστος ἐκείνῳ ὡς εἴπερ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐπιεικὴς. *i. e.* A Man, that is moved by Force only, is properly enough said to be where he was, as if he had not been moved at all. For whatsoever seeming Alteration Necessity and Violence may make for the present, when once the Force is over, every Thing returns to it's own Nature again, and is what it was before; but without doubt in all Moral Consideration, Man is reasonably to be

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not to mention this; it is a manifest Sign of Weakness or Prejudice to ground the Doctrine of Irresistible Grace upon the Metaphors and Allusions in the Texts above-mentioned; when there are innumerable Texts of Scripture which relate to the Conversion and Salvation of Sinners, in which the Freedom of Man's Will, and the Necessity of it's Concurrence with the Operation of God's Grace, are plainly and clearly asserted; as the Catholic Church of *Christ* has truly and wisely determined upon this Point (*o*). It would be tedious and unnecessary to multiply Texts of Scripture in so familiar a Matter, I shall therefore mention only two or three which are very remarkable, and which I defy all the Wit of Mankind to give any rational Answer to upon the Predestinarian Scheme. Thus our Blessed Saviour says of the *Pharisees*, that *they rejected the Counsel of God against themselves. Luke vii. 30.* And *St Stephen* of the *Jews*, that *they always resisted the Holy Ghost. Acts vii. 51.* And again our Blessed Saviour says to *Jerusalem*, *O Jerusalem, How often would I have gathered Thee, even as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not. Matt. xxii. 27.*

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be interpreted to be in that State all the while, where he was by his own Choice, and would have continued, had not Force expelled him. And *Seneca* said very well, *Magnum humane Imbecillitatis patrocinium Necessitas, quæ, quicquid cogit, excusat. i. e. Necessity is the great Sanctuary of human Infirmary; which whosoever can lay claim to obtains Protection; for it perfectly excuses all the Faults it commits.* Whatsoever can justly be pretended to be necessary, if it be Evil, is a *Natural* one and not a *Moral*, and an Unhappiness or Punishment rather than a Sin. *Dr Goodman on the Parable of the Prodigal, Part I. chap. iii. § III. 3.*

(*q*) *Semper hoc Ecclesiæ Catholicæ Judicium fuit, cum gratia, sed sub gratia tamen, conspirare amice Arbitrii Libertatem. Nempe ut B. Augustinus scite dicebat, si non est Dei Gratia, quomodo salvat Mundum? & si non est liberum Arbitrium, quomodo judicat Mundum? Atque ut ait Bernardus, Tolle liberum Arbitrium, non erit quod Salvetur; tolle gratiam, non erit unde Salvetur. Volki Hister. Pelagian, p. 1.*

And again he says to the *Jews*, *ye will not come unto me, that ye might have Life.* John v. 40. Now if Irresistible Grace be absolutely necessary to the Conversion of Sinners, and it is through the want of this Grace that some Sinners are not reformed; upon what Grounds then can our Blessed Saviour blame the *Jews* so severely for not coming to Him and believing in his Gospel? For since Irresistible Grace is in God's Hands, he might as easily have bestowed it upon them as He did upon other Sinners. And to suppose that God should blame and punish Men for not repenting of their Sins and believing in Him, when it is absolutely out of their Power to repent and believe, is the same thing in plain Words, as if we should say, that He blames and punishes them for nothing; which, if it were not out of Reverence to some pious and good Men, who have maintained the Doctrine of Irresistible Grace, I should make no scruple to say, it were Blasphemy to affirm (p). Tho' therefore a Person of weak Judgment should be puzzled with the Metaphorical Descriptions of the Apostle, when He is speaking of the mighty Power of God in the Conversion of Sinners, and should think that they give some Countenance to the Doctrine of Irresistible Grace; yet He would soon be delivered from this Mistake, if he would compare those Passages of Scripture with the Texts last mentioned, and particularly with that solemn Declaration which God makes upon this very Occasion in the Prophet *Ezekiel*, *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his Way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your Evil Ways, for why will ye die, O House of Israel,* Ch. xxxiii. 11 (q). Nay so great is the Folly and Weakness of building any Doctrines of Moment upon

(p) *Vid.* Dr Clagett's Operations of the Holy Spirit, Part II. chap. iii. §. 6.

(q) See more to this purpose. in *Isa.* v. 4. *Luke* xix. 42. *Matt.* xi 21. *Mark* vi. 6. chap. xvi. 14. See also a most excellent Discourse of Archbishop *Tilotson* upon this Point, in Vol. II. *Serm.* liii.

upon Figurative Passages of Scripture in opposition to those that are Literal; that in many Cases the Sense of such Passages may easily be discovered and explained by comparing them with those that are plainly Figurative. Thus for Instance; If a Papist should urge to any Protestant in Defense of Transubstantiation the Words of our Blessed Saviour at the Institution of the Sacrament, *This is my Body*, *Luke xxii. 19*; besides the manifest Absurdity of the Doctrine, and it's Incapability of being proved by Scripture, because it destroys the Evidence of Sense, and consequently subverts the Foundation upon which the Authority of the Scripture itself is established: I say not to mention this, that any Protestant of common Sense might readily confute that pernicious Doctrine, by comparing that Passage of *St Luke* with other Texts of Scripture that are clearly Figurative. For if he hath the least Acquaintance with the Language of Scripture, he cannot but know, that there is nothing more common than to give to the *Sign* of a Thing the Name of that which is signified thereby. Innumerable Instances might be given of this, if it were necessary; but I will mention only one which is very remarkable: Thus *Joseph* in the Interpretation of *Pharaoh's* Dream says, *the Seven good kine are Seven Years, and the Seven good Ears are Seven Years.* *Gen. xli. 26 (r)*. That is, surely (as every Body of common Understanding must perceive) they are the *Sign* or *Signification* of Seven Years. And it is very usual with our Blessed Saviour, when He is speaking of the great Blessings and Benefits which His Disciples should receive from his Person and Doctrine, to deliver Himself in very strong Figurative Expressions. Thus, to give only an Instance or two. In *John x. 9*. He says, *I am the Door*. And chap. xv. 1. *I am the Vine*. And it is as Evident from these Texts, that Christ is *really* and *literally* a *Door* and a *Vine*, as that the Bread in the Sacrament is His *real Natural* Body. Nay, if we were

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(r) See also *Luke viii. 11, &c.*

to judge by the bare *Letter* of Scripture, there seems to be greater Proof and Evidence for the one, than the other. For Christ says, *I am the true Vine*. And tho' the Expression be plainly Figurative (as the Papists themselves can easily discern) yet if He had said the same of the Sacrament, This is my *true* Body, and this is my *true* Blood, they would have triumphed exceedingly, and thought it a Demonstration of the Doctrine of Transubstantiation; as a Learned Author well observes (*s*).

And thus much concerning the Rules of explaining and interpreting the Holy Scriptures, in order to arrive at the true Knowledge and Understanding of them in Matters of Doctrine. And from what has been laid down upon this Head, I hope it fully and clearly appears, that tho' pious and good Men do oftentimes fall into great Mistakes about the Doctrine of Scripture, thro' the Force of Prejudice and the Power of their Affections; yet the Will and Mind of God is so plainly revealed and expressed in the sacred Writings, that whoever will be careful to divest himself of all Prejudice and Passion, and will read them with that Attention, Diligence and Reverence, which he ought to do, need not doubt but that he shall find out the Truth in all Matters that are of any Consequence and Importance to his Salvation. I shall therefore conclude this Point with those remarkable Words of a late Writer (*t*) (tho' they are by him applied to a very different Purpose) *viz.* that “ Tho' if God revealed any Thing
 “ in a Way liable to be mistaken, he cannot be dis-
 “ pleased with sincere People for mistaking it; yet
 “ certainly the End of God's giving any Precepts was
 “ not to deliver them so obscurely, that People might
 “ be *faultless* if they mistook, but to make them so
 “ plain that they could not well mistake. And this
 “ is agreeable to infinite Wisdom directed by infinite
 “ Good-

(*s*) Dr *Bennet* against Popery, Part II. chap. viii. p. 137.

(*t*) Christianity as old as the Creation, chap. x. p. 130.

“ Goodness; which certainly will give us *equal* Degrees
“ of Evidence for Religious Truths which so much
“ concern us, as it has done for Truths of less Impor-
“ tance.”

There is only one Rule more to be observed, in order to a true Understanding of the Holy Scriptures in Matters of Practice (and it must be added to what has been already delivered concerning Matters of Doctrine) and that is, never to trust to our own Reasonings in opposition to *plain* and *evident* Declarations of God's Word. I do not mean that *Reason* is not to be consulted in the Understanding of Scripture, or that the Sense of Scripture is not to be accommodated to the clear and undeniable Principles of Natural Reason (*u*); but I mean, that when God hath expressed His Will and Pleasure in Holy Scripture in plain and direct Terms, we must not recede from it upon such Reasonings as are drawn from our Worldly Interests and Affections. This one would think should be a very needless Rule, if we consider how clearly and expressly all Matters of Practical Duty are laid down in the Word of God. But if we look abroad into the World, we shall find too much Occasion for insisting upon it. There are but few Men so bold and daring as *wilfully* to act in Opposition to what they *believe* to be the Truth of God's Word; but by the Power of their sinful Affections and the Craft and Policy of the *Devil* their Minds are furnished with so many *nice* and *artful* Distinctions, that they think the particular Case with which they are concerned may fairly be exempted from the general Command: and by this Means they do for a while make their Consciences easy and

(u) The Circumstances of Human Life are *infinite*, and depend on a Multitude of Accidents not to be foreseen; and consequently not to be provided against. Hence Laws must run in general Terms, and sometimes the Intent of the Law is best fulfilled by running contrary to the Letter; and therefore Reason and Honesty must guide us to the Fitness of the Thing, and a great Scope must be left to Equity and Discretion. *Dean Stanhope's Sermon at the Commencement at Cambridge, 1697. p. 13. See also, p. 12.*

and quiet in a *manifest* Transgression of God's Law. Innumerable Instances might be given of this, in the Conduct and Behaviour of professed *Christians*; but it is entirely needless: it being impossible for any one to have any Conversation with Mankind, and not to be acquainted with them. I shall therefore only observe at present, that if Men who profess to believe the Holy Scriptures can acquit themselves of the Guilt of Perjury in taking Oaths against their Consciences, or of Fraud and Injustice in cheating the Public or Private Persons; or of any other Crimes which are *expressly* contrary to the Declarations of Holy Scripture; and that by the Strength and Virtue of such Distinctions, as the Interest and depraved Affections of Men commonly suggest in such Cases, and which are too well known to stand in need of a particular Account and Description: (and sorry I am to say it, there are many Persons of grave and serious Behaviour, and who constantly attend upon the (x) *public* Worship, who do by this Means make themselves easy under these Transgressions) I say, if Men can by such Arts and Devices acquit themselves of the Guilt of flagrant and notorious Crimes, *expressly* condemned by God in His written Word; then indeed it will be a vain and fruitless Attempt to lay down any Rules for the true understanding of Holy Scripture; since it is absolutely impossible that any Law of God can be so clear and plain, but it's Authority and Obligation may easily be evaded and set aside by the Help of such Distinctions. It is therefore absolutely necessary to a true and right under-

(x) Neque enim desunt inter Christianos qui pietatem colunt, dum orant Deum, dum Sacrificio tremendo assistunt, dum sacerdotem concionantem audiunt: sed interim vel blasphemant Deum in ludo, vel jurant per Deum sine Causa, vel vota Deo facta non implent. Id vero quid aliud est quam pie colere Deum & impium esse in Deum? Oportet igitur eos, qui cupiunt bene vivere ut de ur illis bene mori, ita pie Deum colere, ut abregent omnem impietatem, immo etiam omnem umbram quamvis tenuissimam impietatis. Parum enim prodest quotidie missam audire, & Christum in Sacro Myserio venerari, si interim impie Deum blasphemet, vel per Deum pejeret. *Bellarmin. de Arte bene Moriend.*, lib. i. cap. vi.

understanding of Holy Scripture, that we do not set up our own deceitful and fallacious Reasonings in Opposition to the *clear* and *express* Determinations of God's Word (y). And it hath pleased God in His Providence to give us this Caution and Instruction in a very remarkable Passage of Holy Scripture; and that is in the Account which we have of our Blessed Saviour's being tempted by the *Devil*, *Matt. iv.* Now upon this Occasion we may observe, that our Lord did not *once* Reason with the *Devil* upon any of those Temptations which he proposed to Him; but only urged the Authority of Scripture. *It is written*, says *Christ*, and then He gives His Answer to the *Devil* in the Words of Scripture. And pray why did He do so? Could not our Blessed Saviour who was infinite in Wisdom have outdone the *Devil* in Point of Reasoning, and offered such Arguments to him as he should not have been able to gainsay or contradict? Yes certainly. But our Blessed Lord chose this Method for our Benefit and Example; and to shew us in what our Security consists, when we are tempted by the *Devil* to depart from the clear and express Declarations of Holy Scripture: and that is, not in trusting to our own Reasonings, but in an absolute Reliance upon God's Word. For if the *Devil* can once prevail with us to *reason* upon *clear* and *express* Declarations of God in Scripture, he will reason with us as long as we please. And he is Master of so much Sagacity and Experience, and knows so well how to adapt himself to our Pride and Vanity, our Interest and Passions; that he will *infallibly* prevail over us by those

(y) We find by Experience how often we are deceived, even in Things before our Eyes and the common Affairs of human Life; and more particularly in the Case of Religion how apt our Judgment would be to follow the Bent of our Passions and Appetites, and to model our Duty according to their Motions and Desires; if God had left this wholly to every ones Reason, and not given us a more plain and express Revelation of His Will, to check and balance that Influence which our Passions and Appetites are found to have over our Reason and Judgment. *Bishop Gibson's Second Pastoral, Letter,* p. 7, 8.

those plausible Reasonings and Insinuations, with which he will colour over and disguise his Temptations. It was by this means that he deceived the first Mother of Mankind thro' his *Subtilty*, 2 Cor. xi. 3. *viz.* by persuading her to argue and *reason* with him upon a plain and peremptory Command which God had given her. Gen. iii. And therefore as a very Learned Writer judiciously observes (z), “ Let the Fatal Example be a “ Warning to others, how they listen to Sophistry in “ opposition to Divine Truths.” And this is the true Reason why some Men, who yet read the Scripture, turn *Atheists*, others *Heretics*; why some deny God's Providence, and others reconcile themselves to flagrant Instances of Sin and Wickedness; *viz.* because in their Enquiries into Divine Matters they set out upon the Foot of their own *Reasoning*, and not, as wise and good Men should do, in an absolute Dependence upon the Truth of God's Word. Whereas, in this Case, if Men would abide by the clear Directions of Holy Scripture, and make them the Rule of Judgment in Matters of Religion; they would be safe and secure from all possibility of Deception. For as Dean *Sherlock* says admirably well (a), “ the Devil cannot deal with the “ Authority of God; but to say, *it is written*, answers “ all his Temptations, and makes him fly.” Let us then constantly observe this Rule in our Enquiry into the Truth of Scripture. And if we will thus study the Sacred Volume with Care and Diligence, with pure and honest Minds, free from all Prejudice and Worldly Interest and Affections; we shall receive such Guidance and Illumination from the Holy Spirit, that we shall in all Cases *know of the Doctrines, whether they be of God.* John vii. 17. And thus much concerning the second Benefit of reading the Scriptures, *viz.* that we are thereby enabled to form a true Judgment in the Disputes and Controversies of Religion. I proceed now to the

Third

(z) Scripture Vindicated, Part I. p. 17.

(a) Sherlock on the Immortality of the Soul, chap. v. §. 1. p. 256. See the Place.

Third Advantage of reading the Scriptures, viz. the Present Delight and Pleasure which arises from the Perusal of them. Now this will easily be perceived, if we consider what those Properties and Qualifications are in any Book, which render it agreeable and delightful to Men of Sense and Wisdom; since we shall find that they are all in a more eminent Degree contained in the Holy Scriptures. And to say nothing at present of the Inspiration of the Bible, let it have but the common Credit of other Books, yet we shall soon see that it excels them all in these four Particulars, which always bring a Book into great Esteem and Reputation with the Generality of Men. And,

First, The Bible (with respect to a great Part of it) is the most (*b*) ancient of all other Books. And we all know there is scarce any Thing which hath more excited the Curiosity and exercis'd the Study of Mankind, than the searching into Antiquity. Now it is certain, that we have no History of the World nor of any of the Affairs thereof for a great many Ages after the Creation, but what is entirely taken from this Holy Book. For tho' indeed it is not to be denied, that there have been several Wise and Powerful Nations, as particularly the *Egyptians*, *Chaldeans*, and *Chinese*, who have laid Claim to a much greater Antiquity, and carried the Accounts of their History for many Thousand Years beyond that of *Moses*; yet (not to mention the clear Proof and Evidence we have of *Moses's* Integrity (*c*)) these Accounts have been proved to be *fabulous*, and to abound with infinite Incoherencies and Absur-

(*b*) Vid. Grot. de Verit. &c. lib. i. §. 15. cum Annot. in loc.

(*c*) Neque vero cuiquam prudenti credibile fiet *Mosem*, qui non *Aegyptios* tantum hostes habebat, sed & plurimas gentes alias, *Idumeos*, *Arabas*, *Pœnicas*, vel de Mundi Ortu & rebus Antiquissimis ea ausum palam prodere, quæ aut aliis scriptis prioribus revinci possent, aut pugnantem sibi haberent persuasionem veterum atque communem: vel de sui temporis rebus ea prædicasse, quæ viventium multorum testimoniis possent refelli. Grot. de Veritat. &c. lib. i. §. 16. Vid. Annotat in loc. See also Dr *Fiddes's* Body of Divinity, Vol. I. p. 189, 190.

Absurdities, by many Learned Writers (*d*). And the *Chinese* themselves who have carried their Accounts the highest of any do not yet, as an eminent Author has lately observed (*e*), give any Credit to their pretended Annals for more than 3000 Years before *Christ*: neither do they pretend to have begun to write History above 4000 Years agoe; and the oldest Books which they have extant in an intelligible Character, are not 2000 Years old. And besides this, there are two Particulars which we have from the *Mosaic* History, which are of very great Moment and Importance to the Benefit and Happiness of Mankind; the full Assurance and Certainty whereof should methinks administer the greatest Pleasure and Satisfaction to their Minds.

The *First* is the clear Discovery which is made to us in that History, that the World and all Things therein were created by God. This one would think were a very needless Observation; since as the Apostle hath well remark'd, *Rom. i. 20.* the Eternal Power and Wisdom of God are plainly discoverable from the *Things which He hath made* (*f*). And it hath been strictly demonstrated by many Learned Men (*g*), that the World could not possibly be *Eternal*, nor exist of itself by Necessity of Nature; but was created in *Time* by an Intelligent and Allpowerful Being: and that, as an excellent

(*d*) Vid. Particularly *Stillingfleet's* Orig. Sac. lib. i. cap. ii. iii. iv. *Bishop Pearson* on the Creed, Artic. I. p. 58. &c. *Dr Nicholls's* Conference. Part I. p. 178, &c. Edit. 3. *Revelation Examined* with Candour, Vol. II. p. 175.

(*e*) *Minute Philosopher*, Vol. II. p. 76, &c.

(*f*) *Videmus enim nihil esse in omni Mundo, quod non habeat in se maximam mirabilemque Sapientiam: Quæ quia supra hominis Sapientiam & Ingenium est, cui rectius quam divinæ Providentiæ tribuenda est? an, cum Simulachrum hominis & statuam ratio & ars fingit, ipsum hominem de frustis temere concurrentibus fieri putabimus? Quisquamne igitur sanus existimat, quod homo ratione & consilio non possit, id concursu atomorum passim cohærentium perfici potuisse? Lactant. de Ira, cap. x.*

(*g*) See particularly *Dr Samuel Clarke's* Sermons at *Boyle's* Lectures, Part I. *Gardner's* Sermons at the same, Discourse III to the XIth

cellent (*) Writer expresses it, " there needs no great
 " Criticism to find out the *true* Author of all the Works
 " of Nature; for the Works themselves shew the Au-
 " thor as plainly, as if His Effigies were drawn upon
 " them." But yet if we consider what Thoughts and
 Sentiments the ancient Philosophers, who were destitute
 of Divine Revelation, had of this Matter, as *viz.* that
 some of them supposed the World existed as it is from
 all Eternity, and was a *necessary* Emanation from God's
 infinite Perfections; which was the Opinion of *Aristotle*
 and his Followers; that others who attributed the For-
 mation of all Things to God, yet conceived so great
 a Difficulty in the Notion of *Creation*, as to assert the
 Pre-existence and Eternity of Matter, which was the
 Doctrine not only of the *Stoics* (†), but also of the Ge-
 nerality of the best Philosophers; and that there were
 others who thought that the World was made by Chance,
 which was the Opinion of the Whole Sect of *Epicureans*;
 If to all this we add further the many Endeavours which
 have been used by Modern Philosophers, such as *Hobbs*,
Spinoza, &c. to propagate their several Atheistical
 Schemes of Philosophy, which, it is to be feared, have
 made an Impression upon too many Persons among us;
 and that it is an easy Transition from supposing *Matter*
 to be Eternal and Necessarily existing, to conclude

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that

(*) Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacr. lib. iii. cap. i.

(†) *What Seneca says of the Stoics, was the general Opinion of the
 other Philosophers in this Particular.* Dicunt ut scis, Stoici nostri
 duo esse in Rerum Natura, ex quibus omnia fiunt, Causam & Mate-
 riam: Materia jacet iners, Res ad omnia parata, cessatura, si nemo
 moveat. Causa autem, id est Ratio, Materiam format, & quocumque
 vult versat, ex illa varia opera producit. *Senec. Epist. lxx. vid. loc.*

Mundum quidem fuisse semper, Philosophia Auctor est, Conditore
 quidem Deo, sed non ex Tempore. *Macrob. in Somn. Scip.
 lib. ii. cap. x.*

Sicut enim inquit (Platonici) si Pes ex æternitate semper fuisset
 in pulvere, semper ei subesset vestigium; quod tamen vestigium a
 calcante factum Nemo dubitaret; nec alterum altero prius esset;
 quamvis alterum ab altero factum esset: sic, inquit, & mundus
 atque in illo Dii creati, & semper fuerunt; semper existente qui fecit
 & tamen facti sunt. *August. de Civ. Dei lib. x. cap. xxxi. Vid. loc.*

that it is the only Self-existent Being, and Original Cause of all Things ; If all this, I say, be put together and duly considered, we must readily own, that, as the Generality of Mankind are of weak Capacities, and too apt to be drawn away by fallacious Reasonings ; it must be a Matter of great Benefit and Advantage to them to have the Creation of the World, and the Manner (*) in which God made all Things, so plainly and particularly described to them, and that in a History of such Antiquity and Authority as that of *Moses* ; and especially, if we suppose it (what it may be very clearly proved to be) a Divine Revelation. For if once this Point is allowed, *viz.* that the World and all Things therein were created by God ; there are such Stupendous Marks of Wisdom, Power and Goodness, every where to be observed in the Works of Nature, as must lay the strongest Foundation for our Homage and Gratitude and Obedience to Him. But

Secondly, The other Particular which we have from the *Mosaic* History (and which it is a Matter of great Benefit and Advantage to us to be duly informed of) is that of the Fall of our First Parents. Now that there is a great Corruption in our Nature, so that, as *St Paul* speaks, *the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and we cannot do the things that we would*, *Gal. v. 17.* (*b*) is so very evident and manifest, that it cannot be denied. Of this the Ancient Philosophers were very sensible, and oftentimes complained heavily about it (*i*). But for want of knowing the true Origin of this Corruption, they were very much perplexed and puzzled in their Philosophy : And it was upon their Ignorance of this Point, that the absurd Doctrine of the Transmigration of Souls, received by the Whole Sect of the *Pythagoreans*, and from them handed down to the *Jews* in our Blessed Saviour's Time,

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(*) See *Dr Fiddes's* Body of Divinity, Vol. I. Book III Part I. chap. iii.

(b) See *Rom. vii.*

(i) *Vid. Dr Clarke's* Sermons at *Boyle's* Lect. Part II. Prop. vi. §. 3.

was entirely grounded. For when they discovered in Mankind, that early Inclination to Vice, and strong Propensity to Sin and Wickedness, which so manifestly prevails in the greatest Part of them; they could not account for it any other way, than by supposing that their Souls had formerly inhabited and sinned in some other Bodies, and brought from them into their present Bodies those Vicious and Corrupt Principles, with which they were tainted and defiled. And that the *Jews* in our Blessed Saviour's Time were of the same Opinion; is evident from *John* ix. 2, 2. (k). And therefore, since we are so unhappy as to labour under such a great and manifest Corruption of our Nature, of which the *Mosaic* History sets before us the true Cause and Origin; it should methinks be a mighty Comfort and Satisfaction to us, that the same History presents to our View a full and compleat Remedy for that Corruption; and that by the Appointment of a *Saviour*, who should *bruise the Serpent's Head*: *Gen.* iii. 15. (l) *That as by one Man's Disobedience many were made Sinners; so by the Obedience of One many might be made Righteous.* *Rom.* v. 19. But,

Secondly, The History of the Bible is more useful and excellent as well as more delightful and entertaining than any other History whatsoever. And we all know, that there is scarce any Study which is more engaging and agreeable to the Generality of Men than that of Ancient History. And indeed with good Reason; since by the reading of History we are not only delighted for the present with the various and different Affairs and Cu-

(k) Vid. *Poli Synops. Critic in loc.* *Prideaux's Connection*, 8vo. Vol. III. p. 479, 480.

(l) That by the *Seed of the Woman*, the *Messias* is here meant, and by the *Serpent* the *Devil* who seduced our first Parents, hath been fully shewn by several Learned Writers. (See *Pool's Synopsis on the Place*). And concerning the Fitness and Propriety of the Expression, to signify our Blessed Saviour's Conquest and Victory over the Devil, the Reader may receive full Satisfaction from *Bishop Sherlock's Discourses of Prophecy*, and from *Revelation Examined with Candour*, Vol. I. *Dissertat.* 4. 5, 6, 7.

stoms of Nations; but do also reap this further Benefit from thence, *viz.* that by observing the Inclinations and Dispositions and Actions of Mankind in former Times, we may be able to pass a pretty good Judgment upon their Conduct and Behaviour in our own. And moreover, as an ingenious Writer (*m*) well remarks, “ a
 “ small Piece of History affords a greater Variety of
 “ Incidents for the Improvement of our Minds, and
 “ the right Conduct of Life, than can be suggested,
 “ within the same Compass, in the Way of Instruction
 “ and Reasoning.” Now besides the Antiquity of the Bible, of which already, there is no History in the World which can be compared to That, both for the Variety of Pleasing and Delightful Affairs with which it abounds, and the many useful and excellent Instructions which we may receive therefrom. To multiply Instances of this Matter is very needless; since no one can read the *sacred* History, with any Care and Attention, but he will be well acquainted with them. However I cannot forbear to observe, that in the *sacred* History the Original Simplicity of the *Patriarchs* in their Feasts (*n*) and Entertainments, and in their mutual Conversation with one another, and particularly that Noble Interview which *Joseph* had with his *Brethren*, *Gen.* xliii. which, to use the Words of an Eminent Writer, “ is a Relation that the Whole Compass
 “ of Human Literature hath never yet pretended to
 “ equal (*o*),” the Prodigious Ages to which they lived, the numerous Progeny which descended from them, and their first Plantation and Settlement in the World, have something in them that is extremely pleasing and delightful. And if from them we descend to the *Jews*, and consider how many astonishing Things God did for them in the Land of *Egypt*; in what a Miraculous
 Manner

(*m*) *Foster's Sermons*, Vol. I. p. 3.

(*n*) See a very Beautiful Passage to this Purpose in *Revelation examined with Candour*, Vol II. p. 204. See also *Blackwall's Sacred Classics*. 4to, Part I. p. 3. Part II. p. 258.

(*o*) *Revelation examined*, *ibid*, p. 243.

Manner He brought them forth from thence into the promised Land, and gave them Victory over their Enemies; how by a continued *Series* of Miracles he supported them in the Wilderness, and watched over them thro' all their Generations by His Care and Goodness; we must needs confess, that the Account which the Scripture gives us of these Particulars is very Solemn and Majestic. And in the following History of their Kings there is a great Variety of Useful and Delightful Transactions recorded, from which every one who reads them may easily draw many excellent Observations both Moral and Political. And particularly in the Reign of *Solomon*, the Account which the Scripture gives us is highly moving and surprizing; The great Wisdom of his Government, the Dignity and Reputation in which he was held by all his Neighbours, the Splendour and Grandeur of his Court (*p*), and above all the Vast Preparations he made for the building of the Temple, the Number of Men who were employed in the Work, the Regularity and Order with which it was carried on, and the amazing Beauty, Riches and Magnificence thereof when finished (*q*): All this put together gives us such a great and noble Idea of his Government, as is not to be parallel'd in the History of any Nation. But besides these things and many others which very well deserve to be enlarged upon, there is one Peculiar Excellence in the *sacred* History which ought highly to indear it to us, since it contains a Matter of the utmost Satisfaction and Comfort to us; and that is, that we have therein a clearer and more sensible Manifestation of God's Providence over the World, and His Protection of righteous and good Men, than we can possibly gain any other way. There is no Man who can read the History of the *Jews* as delivered in the Bible, but he must be immediately convinced of this great Truth. The many Wonders God performed

(*p*) See 1 *Kings*, chap. iv.

(*q*) See Chap. v, vi, and viiith.

in their Behalf in the Land of *Egypt*; the strange Manner of their Deliverance from thence; their safe Passage through the *Red Sea*, in which their Enemies were overwhelmed; His maintaining them in the Wilderness for forty Years together by daily Miracles; His guiding them in their Journeys by a *Cloudy Pillar in the Day*, and by a *Light of Fire in the Night*; His giving them Possession of the Promised Land, by almost a continued Course of Miracles wrought for them; His raising up Deliverers for them, whensoever they were brought into any considerable Danger and Distress; His taking the Administration of their Government upon Himself, and managing the Affairs of it; and even when they foolishly chose to have a King of their *own* to rule over them, and thereby cast off their Regard and Subjection to His Authority, His yet continuing His kind Interposition towards them, by a Visible Manifestation of His Glory and Presence in the Temple (*r*), and by giving them *express* Answers and Directions from Heaven, whensoever upon any Difficulty and Emergency in their Concerns they should consult His *Oracle* concerning them; and to mention no more (which is a very extraordinary Instance of God's Providence) His Protection of the *Jews* from the Invasion of their Enemies, when their Males went up to *Jerusalem* three Times a Year at the stated Seasons to worship the Lord (*s*); *Exod.* xxxiv. 23, 24. These with many
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(*r*) See Dr *Clagett's* Operations of the Holy Spirit, Part I. chap. iv. §. 3. p. 175, &c.

(*s*) What was it that restrained the Enemies of *Israel*, when they knew the Nakedness of their Land, from making a Descent upon it? The Nations that used to meet the *Armies* of the *Living God* in the Field decline the Advantage of entering an open, a defenceless, and an adjoining Country. To what shall we impute a Conduct so irreconcilable with the settled Maxims of Human Wisdom and Policy? To what? But to the special Interposition of the supreme Deity, who *does according to His Will, among the Inhabitants of the Earth*, *Dan.* iv. 35. And *who boweth when He sees fit the Hearts of a whole Nation or People, as the Heart of one Man*, *2 Sam.* xix. 14. Dr *Fiddes's* Sermons, Vol. II. p. 341.

other Things of the like Nature are such plain Indications of a peculiar Providence of God over His People, as I am sure all Profane History in the World cannot furnish us with. And because the Providence of God over the World, and His Particular Favour to and Protection of Righteous and good Persons, is a Matter of exceeding Comfort to Mankind, and a great Motive and Incitement to Virtue; it hath pleased God in the Holy Scripture to give us not only a general View of His kind Providence, with Regard to whole Nations and Kingdoms, but also of His Particular Interposition in Behalf of Private Persons, in order to support them under their Troubles and Afflictions, or to deliver them from their Danger and Distress: Hereby making good that saying of *Hanani the Seer* to the King of *Judah*, viz. *That the Eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the Whole Earth, to shew Himself strong in the Behalf of them whose Heart is perfect towards Him.* 2 Chron. xvi. 9. Many Instances might be given of this; but I shall at present only mention that of *Joseph*, who was not only delivered from the Dungeon whither he was cast by a false Accusation, but also by a most remarkable Providence was made the Lord and Governour of the Kingdom of *Egypt*: by which means he was enabled to supply his Father's House with Corn, during the Time of a great Famine. Gen. xlii. And that none who put their trust in God might despair of His Assistance, to what Extremity soever they may be reduced; He hath also vouchsafed in the sacred History to give us the most amazing Instances of His Providence in delivering His faithful Servants from Destruction, when their Condition seemed to be desperate and past all Remedy. Of which the Prophet *Daniel* in the *Lion's Den*, and the *three Children in the burning fiery Furnace*, will be lasting and memorable Examples, Dan. chap. vi. and iii. And because some Persons are of so perverse a Temper and Disposition, that nothing but *Terrour* and *Severity* can have any Effect and In-

fluence upon them ; it has pleased God for their Sakes to set before them the most *dreadful* and *terrible* Monuments of His Wrath and Displeasure against Sin, in the Punishment of whole Nations and People, as well as particular Persons for their great Impiety and Wickedness. Of the Former of which, the drowning the World with a Deluge of Waters, *Gen. vii.* the burning of *Sodom* and *Gomorra* with Brimstone and Fire from Heaven, *chap. xix.* the Overthrow of the *Canaanites* by the Armies of the Living God, and the final Destruction of *Jerusalem* by the *Romans* (which was plainly described and predicted by our Blessed Saviour in *Matt. xxiv.*) and of the Latter, the peculiar Judgment executed upon *Abab* King of *Israel*, *1 Kings xxii.* and *Belshazzar* King of *Babylon*, *Dan. v.* are very signal and remarkable Instances. So that upon all Accounts, whether we consider the great Variety of pleasing and delightful Transactions, the many Solemn and Majestic Descriptions, the vast Number of wise and useful Examples, or the exceeding Benefit which redounds to Mankind by the clearest Discovery and Manifestation of God's wise and good Providence ; we must needs be fully convinced, that the *sacred* History is of all others the most Entertaining and most Excellent. But,

Thirdly, The Holy Scriptures have given us a better System of Moral Precepts than are to be found in any other Books whatever. And there are no Writings which are so universally esteemed by all wise and judicious Men as those upon Moral Subjects. And indeed with good Reason ; since no other Writings (how pleasing soever they may be in the Perusal) can possibly tend so much to the true Interest and Happiness of Mankind, which is absolutely inseparable from Moral Duties. This the ancient Philosophers well perceived ; and therefore they laid it down as a Rule to their Disciples, that true Happiness did not consist in Riches and Sensual Pleasures, but in the Practice of
Virtue

Virtue (t). And indeed it must not be denied, that many Divine and Excellent Sayings are delivered by *Socrates, Plato, Aristotle* and others upon this Head. But nevertheless, the *Pagan Scheme of Morality* was absolutely insufficient to the great End that was designed thereby, viz. the Reformation of Mankind; not only (which has been observed frequently by Learned (u) Writers) because there were but very few of the Philosophers in Comparison, who set themselves in good earnest about this great Business, and their Philosophy was almost wholly confined among themselves, and consisted more in nice and difficult Points than in Matters of easy and plain Duty, and the greatest Part of the Philosophers were continually contradicting and confuting one another, and delivered their Doctrines rather as Matters of Dispute and Debate, than as the necessary and indispensable Precepts of Holy Living (x); I say, the *Pagan Scheme of Moral Philosophy* was not only upon these Accounts insufficient for the Reformation of Mankind, but also, because the very best of the Philosophers not only vindicated

(t) Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄλλο πρῶτον ἐγὼ παύρομαι, ἢ παύρον ὑμῶν ἢ νεωτέρων ἢ πρεσβυτέρων, μήτε σωματῶν ὀπιμελεῖσθαι, μήτε χρημάτων πλεονεξῆσαι, μήτε ἄλλο πρὸς ἕτω σφόδρα, ὡς τ' ἡλικίας, ὅπως ὡς ἀείνη ἔσαι. λέγων ὅτι ἐκ ἐκ χρημάτων ἢ ἀρετῆς γινέσθαι, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἀρετῆς χρήματα ἢ τ' ἄλλα τάχα τῶν ἀνθρώποις ἀπαντα. Plato in Apolog. Socrat.

(u) Vid. Dr *Clarke's* Sermons at *Boyle's* Lectures, Part II. Prop. vi. § 3. Bishop *Gibson's* Second Pastoral Letter, p. 13, &c.

(x) Inclusos (Philosophos) in Angulis, facienda præcipere quæ ne ipsi quidem faciunt qui loquuntur; & quoniam se a veris Actibus removerunt, apparet eos exercendæ linguæ causa vel advocandi gratia. Artem ipsam Philosophiæ reperisse. *Laudant.* lib. iii. cap. xvi.

Sed hæc eadem (Præcepta Moralia) num censes apud Eos ipsos valere nisi admodum paucos, a quibus inventa, disputata, conscripta sunt? Quotus enim quisque Philosophorum invenitur qui sit ita moratus, ita animo ac vita constitutus ut ratio postulat; qui disciplinam suam non ostentationem scientiæ, sed legem vitæ putet; qui obtemperet ipse sibi & decretis suis pareat. *Cicer. Tuscul. Quæst.* lib. ii. See also, an excellent Observation of *Aristotle* to this Purpose in *Ethic. ad Nicom.* lib. ii. cap. iii.

vindicated and allowed of the grossest Idolatry in the Worship of their Gods, but also of the most horrid and barbarous Vices in Matters of Practice ; such as that of exposing and destroying young Infants in some particular Cases, Self-Murder, Fornication (and *that* very frequently committed in the very Places of Religious Worship) the Sacrificing of Men and Women to their Gods, the Invasion of their Neighbours, and innumerable other Things which deserve the utmost Abhorrence and Detestation of all good Men. And such vile and horrid Practices were not only approved of by many of the greatest and most eminent Philosophers, but also justified and established by the Laws and Consent of many Nations ; as hath been fully shewn by some of the antient Fathers (y), (who have observed, that they departed from those Customs upon their Reception of *Christianity*) and also by several Learned Moderns (z) ; who have given us large Collections of the particular odious and abominable Vices maintained and allowed of by them. And indeed it is no wonder that the Pagan *Moral* should every where abound with so much Corruption, when many of the greatest and most shameful Vices (which

(y) Vid. Tertullian Apologet. cap. xxxix. Cyprian lib. ii. Ep. ii. ad Donatum. Lactant Institut. lib. v. cap. x. Minut. Fel. de Idolorum vanitate ad fin. Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. i. cap. iii. lib. vi. cap. viii. Theodoret. de curand. Græc. Affect. Serm ix. de Lege.

(z) See Polydore Virgil de Rerum Invent. lib. i cap. iv. Bp. Taylor's Ductor Dubitantium, Book ii. chap. i p. 173 &c. Dr Cave's Primitive Christianity, Part I. chap. iii. Grot. de Veritat. &c. lib. ii. § 12. cum Annotat in loc. Nicholls's Conference, Part II. p. 58, &c. Puffendorf's Law of Nature and Nations. lib. ii. chap. iii. § 8. lib. vi. chap. ii. § 6. Galtruchius's History of the Heathen Gods, p. 102, 293. Archbishop Potter's Antiquities of Greece, Vol. I. p. 58, 59, 218, Vol. II. Book iv. chap. xii. p. 298. Dr Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. I. p. 160, 161. Vol. II. p. 39 to 43. Bishop Gibjon's Second Pastoral Letter, p. 27. in which Authors there are very large Collections to this Purpose, made from the Genuine Works of *Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Diogenes Laertius, Plutarch*, and other celebrated *Heathen* Writers.

which cannot be mentioned with common Decency) were not only practised in imitation of their Gods, but were also made the Necessary and Essential Parts of their Religion (a). Nay, there are many of the most monstrous Errours in Doctrine and Worship, and of the most exorbitant Vices in Practice, which are found and discovered in *Heathen* Nations to this very Day (b). All which, being duly considered, should methinks make it very pleasing and delightful to us to read the Holy Scriptures; since therein we are (c) furnished with a compleat System of Moral Precepts which are clearly and plainly delivered to us, and that without the least Mixture of Corruption: by which Means we may be easily and perfectly instructed in all the great Duties of Morality, which we owe to God, our Neighbour and ourselves. This will be so readily acknowledged by all those who have read the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and particularly that Divine and Excellent Sermon of our Blessed Saviour upon the Mountain (d); that I need not spend any Time in the Proof of it. Nay so Excellent is the Holy Scripture in respect of it's Moral Precepts, that as many good Critics (e) have observed, the Writings
of

(a) See above, p. 104.

(b) Vid. *Lock's Essay on Human Understanding*, Book i. chap. iii. § 9. *Bishop Gibson's Second Letter*, p. 33, &c. *Stackhouse's Body of Divinity*, Part III. chap. viii. p. 512, &c.

(c) See *Mr Brown's Defense of the Religion of Nature*, &c. chap. ii. p. 67, &c.

(d) In our Blessed Saviour's plain but instructive Discourse from the Mountain, the Defects of all former Morality are so handsomely touched and so fully supplied; that a Man may form his whole Moral Conduct upon the Plan of the Principles which are there advanced, and may form it with more Advantage, than upon all the Volumes of Human Learning without it. *Dr Marshall's Sermons*, Vol. I. p. 429.

(e) See particularly *Dr Cave's Primitive Christianity*, Part I. chap. iii. *Dr Waterland's First Charge to the Clergy*, p. 32. *Dr S. Clarke's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures*, Part II. Prop. vii.

of *Seneca*, *Plutarch*, *Epietetus*, *M. Antoninus*, and other Philosophers who lived after the Time of *Christ*, have been very much enriched and improved by them. And that *Pythagoras*, *Plato*, *Aristotle*, and other antient Philosophers, as well as the Poets, drew a great Part of their Morality as well as Theology from the Old Testament, and that many of the most considerable Laws of *Minus*, *Licurgus*, and *Solon*, were also taken from thence, hath been fully shewn by *Justin Martyr*, *Tertullian*, *Clem. Alex.*, *Eusebius*, and others of the *Primitive* Fathers; of whose Testimonies upon this Point (with many wise and judicious Observations upon them) a very Learned Writer hath lately given us a large Collection (*f*). And yet tho' we should suppose (which I am far from granting) that there was no Difference between the *Pagan* Scheme of Morality and the *Christian*, as to the Substance and Matter of them; since the great Duties of Morality are not only more clearly and fully delivered by our Blessed Saviour and the Apostles, but also carried to a much greater Degree of Perfection than ever they were by the best *Heathen* Philosophers; (*g*); but however, I say, supposing there was no Difference between the *Pagan* Scheme of Morality and the *Christian*, as to the Substance and Matter of them; yet the latter will always have

(*f*) Dr *Waterland's* First Charge to the Clergy, p. 7, &c. See also *Grot. de Jure Belli & Pacis*, lib. ii. cap. i. § 12 and *Grot. de Veritat.* &c. lib. i. § 15. cum *Grot. & Clerici Annotat.* in loc. In which there are several Instances given of *Grecian* Laws and Institutes, which were borrowed from the *Jewish* Scriptures. And that *Plato's* Commonwealth was in great Measure drawn after the Model of the Laws of *Moses*, was observed long ago by *Josephus* in his Second Book against *Apion*.

(*g*) *Vid.* *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, chap. xiii. p. 341, &c. compared with *Bishop Gibson's* Second Pastoral Letter, p. 29. Mr *Brown's* Defence of the Religion of Nature, &c. p. 442 to 452. See also Mr *Jackson's* Remarks on *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, p. 13, &c. In which the Excellency of the *Mosaic* Laws above those of the best *Pagan* Systems is clearly shewn.

have this Pre-eminence and Advantage above the former, that whereas in the *Pagan* Scheme the great Truths of Morality lie scattered up and down in the several Writings of the Philosophers, and are there delivered with great Uncertainty and Contradiction they are in the *Christian* Scheme brought together in one View, and digested into one regular System (b). And moreover (which is a Matter in which the *Pagan* Religion was entirely deficient) they are enforced upon us by the greatest Authority, and recommended by the most perfect Example (i). For as the *Jewish* Officers, when speaking of *Christ*, told the *Pharisees* that *Never Man spake like this Man*, *John* vii. 46. (compare *Matt.* vii. 29.) so *St Peter* truly said of this great Preacher of Moral Righteousness, *that in Him there was no Sin, neither was Guile found in His Mouth.*

1 *Pet.* ii. 22. But,

Fourthly and lastly, There is a Superiour Strength and Force of Reasoning, and a much greater Majesty and Sublimity of Thought, and more Powerful Oratory to be found in the Holy Scriptures, than in any other Writings whatsoever. And these are Qualifications which have been always highly esteemed and valued

(b) Οὐχ ὅτι ἀλλοτεία ἔστι τὰ Πλάτωνος διδάγματα τῆς Χρῆστος, ἀλλὰ ὅτι ἔστι πάντῃ ὅμοια. ὡς περ ἐδὲ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων. ἕκαστος γὰρ τις ἀπὸ μέρους τῆς σπερματικῆς θεῆς λόγος τὸ συσχημῆς ὁρῶν καλῶς ἐφθέγγετο. οἱ δ' τὰναντία αὐτοῖς ἐν κυριότητι εἰρηκότες, οὐκ ἐπισήμω τῶ ἀπείριστον καὶ γνῶσιν τῶ ἀνέλεστον φαίνονται ἐγκρίναι. *1st. Mart. Apolog.* II. cap. xiii.

Quod si extitisset aliquis qui veritatem sparsam per singulos perfectasque diffusam, colligeret in unum, ac redigeret in Corpus; is profecto non dissentiret a nobis. Sed hæc nemo facere, nisi veriperitus ac sciens, potest. Verum non nisi ejus scire est, qui sit doctus a Deo. *Lactant.* lib. vii. cap. vii.

(i) In supposing an External Revelation, I take it for granted, that there is sufficient Evidence of a Person being sent from God to publish it; nay I further own, that this Divine Person by living up to what He taught hath set us a noble Example. *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, chap. i. p. 9. See the Excellency of our Blessed Saviour's Example admirably described by Mr *Nelson* in his *Festivals*, chap. v. p. 68, &c.

valued in all Human Compositions. As to the First; There is no one that reads the Holy Scriptures with Care and Attention, but he will soon perceive the prodigious Force of Reasoning which is used therein upon several Occasions. But this is particularly to be observed in the Writings of *Moses*, who was a very great Master in this Faculty; and well indeed might he be so, when as *St Stephen* takes notice, *Acts* vii. 22. *he was learned in all the Wisdom of the Egyptians*, who were a very wise and understanding People. Many Instances might be given of this from the *Pentateuch*, but for Example sake I shall at present mention only one, and that is in *Deut.* iv. in which *Moses* exhorts the *Jews* to the great Duty of Obedience to God from several Considerations; as from the great Reasonableness of the Thing, the many distinguishing Favours and Blessings which God had granted to them, and the Regard to their own Dignity and Reputation, &c. and lastly from the manifest and dreadful Consequences of Disobedience, both to themselves and their Posterity; and all this carried on with so much Ease and Smoothness, and yet with such a mighty Strength and Force of Reason and Argument; that I believe it will be hard to find any Thing like it in the best Philosophers of the *Pagan* World. The same Admirable Strength and Force of Reasoning may likewise be plainly discovered in *St Paul's Epistles*, by all such who will read them diligently, and consider the true Occasion and Design upon which they were written. In all which we find the Apostle not only arguing irresistibly from the common Principles of natural Reason, but also proving incontestably to the *Jews* from their own Scriptures, that *Jesus* was the *Christ*. And by this means he confounded the *Jews* which dwelt at *Damascus*, *Acts* ix. 22. as *Apollos* convinced those at *Ephesus*, chap. xviii. 28. And so likewise did *St Stephen* in that most Excellent Defense made by him in *Acts* vii, who so clearly proved the

Truth

Truth of *Christianity* from the Old Testament, that we find when the *Jews* heard these Things, they were cut to the Heart, ver. 54. and the true Reason was, because as it is said, chap. vi. 10. they were not able to resist the Wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake. The Apostle St Paul does also manifest his remarkable Talent in Argumentation, by proving that the *Jewish* Converts were not under the Obligation of the Law of *Moses*, as many of them imagined ; which any one may easily perceive, who will read his Epistles to the *Romans* and *Galatians*. Nay so admirable was St Paul's Sagacity in this Matter, that he not only demonstrates this Exemption from the *Jewish* Rites from the Authority of their own Scriptures ; but also from certain Principles of Reasoning allowed of among themselves. Of which we have a very particular Instance in the Argument drawn from the Allegory of *Abraham's* two Sons, Gal. iv. 21, &c. in which the Apostle's Design is not to prove the Truth of *Christianity* to unbelieving *Jews* from the Old Testament, as a late Author has falsely represented (k) it ; but that the *Jewish* Converts were exempted from the Obligation of the *Mosaic* Rites ; which is so plainly the Subject of this Epistle, that I wonder how it was possible for that Author not to (l) perceive it. And in this View the Apostle's Argument is not only very proper and pertinent, but strong and convincing ; as a most Learned Prelate of our Church well observes (m). And his great Skill in arguing this Way, he hath shewn more largely in his Epistle to the *Hebrews*. And indeed so great and extraordinary were the Talents of this Apostle in Argumentation ; that as a very Learned
Writer

(k) Grounds and Reasons of the *Christian* Religion, p. 11, and 93.

(l) Vid. Dr *Clarke's* Practical Essays, Essay the II^d, cap. iv.

(m) Bishop *Candler's* Defense of *Christianity*, p. 356. See the whole Section.

Writer truly (*n*) remarks, “ They have made him “ the Wonder and Admiration of the whole World.” But above all, the Inimitable Force and Strength of Reasoning which we have in the Holy Scripture is to be found in the Arguments and Discourses of our Blessed Saviour. For He not only proved the Truth of His Mission and the Divinity of His Doctrine, by the many Wonderful Miracles wrought by Him ; but also argued so strongly and convincingly upon all Occasions, that we often read that the *Jews* were amazed and astonished upon this Account; as well as the other (*o*). And this He did, not only in the usual Way of Reasoning, by drawing Conclusions from clear and evident Principles ; but also in the most *admirable* and *surprizing* Manner in His *Parables*. In which He not only frequently entangled and confounded the *Jews*, and obliged them to give Judgment against themselves () which could hardly be done in any other Method) ; but also represented the Truth of His Doctrine in such lively and affecting Colours, and with such prodigious Strength and Force of Reason ; that I am very sure no Human Writings in the World can parallel. And this makes me surprized to find that a Learned Author, who hath lately taken infinite Pains to prove the *Obscurity* of the Holy Scriptures in order to derogate from their Authority and Perfection; should ever draw an Argument to that Purpose from hence, that *the New Testament is full of Parables* (*q*). For tho’ our Blessed *Saviour* might sometimes with good reason deliver Himself obscurely in *Parables*, for the just Punishment of those who despised His plain and clear Instructions

(*n*) *Bingham’s Antiquities of the Christian Church*. Vol. II. 8vo. Book VI, chap. iii § 2.

(*o*) See *Matt.* vii. 28, 29. *Mark* vi. 2. *Luke* ii. 47. chap. iv 32. *John* vii. 46.

(*p*) See particularly *Matt.* xxi. 28 to 32. *Luke* vii. 36 to the End.

(*q*) *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, chap. xiii. p. 332.

Instructions (r); (which is what is meant by that Text in *Mark* iv. 12, as cited by this Author, and by *Matt.* xiii. 13, &c. (s)) And tho' in general *Parables* do require a greater Degree of Attention and Diligence, to find out the Sense and Design of them; than that of plain and literal Precepts: yet with due Care and Application the View and Design of them may be very easily discovered; and when it is so discovered, it comes with double Force upon the Mind, and makes a much stronger Impression, than plain and literal Precepts could possibly do (t). And this is
 O the

(r) When Christ speaks as a Legislator, as in the Sermon on the Mount, He lays down His Rules in plain and direct Terms. But when He speaks of some of the Mysteries of *Christianity*, or the Rejection of the *Jews*, and the Preaching of the Gospel to the *Gentiles*, or the like; He then only makes Use of *obscure Similes*, which some of the Captious *Jews*, who followed *Christ* out of no good Design, might not understand. And herein he did no other-ways, than what *Jamblichus* says *Pythagoras* did; who said 'many things in a hidden and covert Manner, which those who came to learn of him with a pure Mind might understand; but others tho' they heard him, could not perceive his Meaning,' *Dr Nicholls's Conference, Part III. p. 148.*

Our Saviour did not always apply himself to the *Pharisees* in a way of Instruction but rather chose to silence their Arrogance; He answered their Cavilling Questions with Questions; not so much to lead them into the Truth, against which they were absolutely bent, as to check their Insolence, and to leave them speechless, *Matt.* xxi. 23, &c. *Matt.* xxii. 41, &c. But to the humble and meek He always applied Himself, by taking all fit Occasions, and using all proper ways to instruct them. *Dr Clagett's Operations of the Holy Spirit, Part II. chap. ii. § 3. p. 78.*

(s) Vjd. Grot. & Hammond in loca.

(t) Servator ipse noster nulla fere nisi sub Parabolarum involucro Judæis tradit Præcepta. Denique Testis est S. Hieronymus hujus modi Figuris Syros & Palæstinos, cum quibus tamdiu versatus fuerat, in familiari consuetudine uti fuisse solitos, quo, inquit, Similitudinum & Exemplorum Adminiculo Res clarius quam per Præcepta simplicia & nudas Expositiones intelligerentur. *Huetius de Orig. Fabularum, 8vo. p. 26.*

Naked Lessons and Precepts have nothing of the Force that Images and Parables have upon our Minds and Affections. Besides that

the Case of the Generality of our Blessed Saviour's Parables, as they are set forth to us in the Gospels. An ordinary Attention and Regard to the Matter of them and the Occasion, upon which they were spoken, will enable any one to understand the Scope and Meaning of them. But moreover there are many of our Blessed Saviour's Parables, in which such Doctrines are contained as are of the utmost Consequence and Importance in Religion, which are delivered in so clear and sensible a Manner, and in which the Images and Allusions are so natural and agreeable, that His View and Design in them could not have been more evident and intelligible, tho' it had been declared in simple and literal Propositions. It were easy to give many Instances of this; but at present I shall mention only these three; *viz.* the Parable of the Lord and his Servant, in *Matt.* xviii. 21, &c. that of the good Samaritan in *Luke* x. 25, &c. and lastly, that of the Progal Son in chap. xv, 11, &c. which is the most beautiful of all (*u*). And I appeal to any Man of common Sense, whether the great Duties of Forgiving Injuries, and of Charity to such as are in Distress, which are the Subjects of the two first Parables, and the Infinite Mercy and Goodness of God in forgiving the greatest Sinners upon their true Repentance, which is the Design of the last, be not as clearly understood and as fully displayed; nay, whether thro' the great Strength of Reasoning, upon which these Truths are founded, and the lively affecting Manner in which they are represented, they do not enter into our Minds with more Conviction, and operate more powerfully upon our Passions, than if they had been delivered

that the very Study to unriddle a Mystery furnishes the Memory with more Tokens to remember it by; a Tale in Emblem sinks deeper, where the Life and Spirit of it is insinuated by a kind of Pits and Surprize. *Lestranger's Fables*, Vol. I. p. 124, 125.

(*u*) Inter omnes Christi Parabolas eximia, plena affectuum, & pulcherrimis picta Coloribus. *Grot. in Luc.* xv. 20. See also Blackwall's Sacred Classics, 4to. Part II. p. 303, &c.

delivered to us in bare and naked Precepts. The Use of *Parables* therefore in Religion is so far from being a just Objection against the Gospel, that it is one very great Excellency and Perfection of it. And indeed the Use of *Parables* for the enlightning and illustrating of Moral Truths, and to make them enter into the Mind with greater Force and Penetration, have been ever approved of and esteemed by the wisest Men in all Ages of the World (x). And for this Reason, the Writings of *Æsop* were

(x) Apud antiquos nondum captabatur plausibilis Oratio. Illi, qui simpliciter & probandæ rei causâ loquebantur, Parabolis referti erant; quas existimo necessarias, non ex eadem Causâ qua Poëtis, sed ut Imbecillitatis nostræ adminicula sint, & differentem & audientem in rem præsentem deducant. *Senec. Epist. 59.* Πάντες ἐν ὡς ἔπθ' εἰπεῖν, οἱ θεολογῆσαντες, βάρβαροι τε καὶ Ἕλληνες, τὰς μὲν ἀρχαῖς τῶν παραγμάτων ἀπεκρύψαντο· τὴν δ' ἀλήθειαν ἀνιγμάσι καὶ συμβολοῖς, ἀλληγορίαις τε αὐτῶν καὶ μεταφοραῖς, καὶ τισὶ τοῖσι ἢσι τῆσπις παρεδεδόκησι. *Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. v.* Familiare est Syris & maxime Palæstinis, ad omnem Sermonem suum *Parabolas* jungere: ut quod simplex Præceptum teneri ab auditoribus non potest, per Similitudinem Exempla que teneatur. *Hieron. in Matt. xviii. 23.*

We that are accustomed to another Way of Learning think these Things strange; (*viz.* Parabolical Narrations) but this was a very common Way in the *Elder Times*, and it is to this Day much used in the *Eastern Countries*, to represent Duties to some under the *Parables* of Things as really done by others; as may be seen in *Locman* and *Perzoës*, besides what *Clem. Alex.* and others have said concerning the *Antiquity* and common Use of this *Parabolical* Way of Teaching. *Stillingfleet's Letter to a Deist. p. 132.* See the Place.

Fables were the first Pieces of Wit that made their Appearance in the World; and have been still highly valued, not only in Times of the greatest Simplicity, but among the most polite Ages of Mankind. *Jotham's Fable of the Trees* is the Oldest that is extant, and as beautiful as any which have been made since that Time. *Nathan's Fable of the Poor Man and his Lamb* is likewise more antient than any that is extant, besides the abovementioned; and had so good an Effect as to convey Instruction to the Ear of a King without offending it, and to bring the Man after God's own Heart to a right Sense of his Guilt and his Duty. We find *Æsop* in the most

so much read and studied by the best *Greek* Philosophers, and held in such prodigious Value and Estimation by them (y). But,

Secondly, There is much greater Majesty and Sublimity of Thought, and more powerful and moving Oratory to be found in the Bible, than in any human Compositions whatsoever. This every one must be sensible of, who is in any Measure conversant in the Sacred Writings; tho' such Persons who are well skilled in the Original Languages of Holy Scripture will more clearly perceive it: there being so great a Difference between the *Oratory* and *Sublime* of the Eastern Nations, and that of *Greece* and *Rome*, from the latter of which most of the *European* Languages are derived, that [as learned Men have observed] many of their greatest and most shining Beauties will be very much obscured and impaired by being translated into any other Tongue (z). But however, for Example Sake, it may not be amiss to set before the Reader some peculiar Instances of this Matter, as they are to be found in our present Translation. Now the first that I shall take notice of at this Time is the fourth Chapter of *Deut.* above-mentioned, which

most distant Ages of *Greece*. And if we look into the very Beginning of the Commonwealth of *Rome*, we see a Mutiny among the common People appeased, by the Fable of the Belly and the Limbs: which was indeed very proper to gain the Attention of an incensed Rabble, at a Time when perhaps they would have torn to Pieces any Man who had preached the same Doctrine to them, in an open and direct Manner. As Fables took their Birth in the very Infancy of Learning, they never flourished more than when Learning was at it's greatest Height. To justify this Assertion, I shall put my Reader in Mind of *Horace* the greatest Wit and Critic in the *Augustan* Age; and of *Boileau* the most correct Poet among the Moderns: not to mention *la Fontaine*, who by this Way of Writing is come more into vogue than any other Author of our Times. *Mr Addison* in *Spectator* N^o 183.

(y) Vid. Dr *Croxall's* Preface to his *Æsop's* Fables.

(z) See Dr *Nicholl's* Conference, Vol. IV. p. 126, &c.

which is not more remarkable for the great Strength of Reasoning which I before observed, than for the mighty Force and Power of Oratory and Eloquence which is displayed therein (a). The Author's summing up the many great Favours and Blessings, which God had bestowed upon that People, in such a natural and beautiful Order; His exhorting them to Obedience from a due Regard to their Credit and Reputation in the sight of their *Neighbours*; at ver. 6. and his appealing to the superiour Excellency and Dignity of their Nation; in ver. 7, 8. are extremely moving and perswasive. And above all, the prodigious Concern which he shews for them throughout the Chapter, and particularly at ver. 26, adds such a commanding Power and Influence to his whole Discourse; that I believe it will be hard to find any Thing equal to it in the best *Pagan* Authors. And the like may easily be observed in several other Parts of *Moses's* Writings, and particularly in his Description of the Character of *Abraham*; in which we see not only an uncommon Piety, Prudence, and Moderation, the most remarkable Generosity, Humility, and Fortitude, with many other great and excellent Endowments: but all these "set off with such
" Light of Reason, such Integrity of Heart, such
" Simplicity of Manners, and such Beauty and
" Skill of Address; as enabled him to expostulate
" with his Maker (b), not only with a Decency,
" but also with a Dignity not to be described;" as an Eminent Author well expresses it (c).

(a) If *Moses* is not admitted to be a Writer inspired by God, yet he must be allowed upon many Accounts the greatest Genius this World ever saw. *Revelation Examined with Candour*, Vol. II. p. 204.

(b) See *Gen.* xviii.

(c) *Revelation examined with Candour*, Vol. II. p. 203.

The same Perswasive Oratory and Eloquence we often meet with in the Book of *Job*, and particularly in that Account which he gives of his Prosperity; *chap. xxix. xxx. and xxxi.* which if it be consider'd only as a Human Composition, it is, says an Admirable Writer, "a finer Picture of a Charitable and Good-natured Man, than is to be met with in any other Author (*d*)." And the *Lamentations* of *Jeremy* are, as an excellent Critic expresses it, "A Piece of superlative Beauty, and in one Thought (*chap. i. 12.*) he comprises all the Eloquence of Mourning (*e*)." The same Force of Oratory and Eloquence we may often observe in the Writings of *St Paul*. His celebrated xvth Chapter of *1 Cor.* is a Master Piece in this Kind, as all good Critics have acknowledged (*f*). And in the several Speeches and Defenses made by him in the *Acts* of the Apostles (*g*), he shews that he could not only talk pertinently to his Subject; but also that he understood Human Nature well, and could touch the Passions with much Art and Address, as an Eminent Author well remarks (*b*). But the great Eloquence of this Apostle is more particularly observable in his Epistle to *Philemon*; which, as a great Critic intimates (*i*), is very much to be admired for it's mighty

Strength

(*d*) Mr *Addison* in *Spectator*, No 177. See also, *Blackwall's Sacred Classics*, 4to. Part I. p. 5, 6.

(*e*) *Blackwall*, *ibid.*

(*f*) See particularly, *Blackwall's Sacred Classics*, 4to. Part II. p. 315, &c.

(*g*) See Chapters the xiiiith, xviiith, xxth, and xxivth.

(*b*) *Brown's Defence*, &c. chap. iii. p. 149.

(*i*) Si quid in genere Suasorio admirandum est, certe hoc Epistolum est. In ista enim brevitate singulis fere verbis singula Argumenta sunt subjecta. *Scultet. in Prolegom. ad Epist.* See also, *Blackwall's Sacred Classics*, 4to. Part II. p. 271, &c. *Dr Marshall's Sermons*, Vol. II. p. 329, 330. in which there are many useful Observations to this Purpose.

Strength and Force of Perswasion. But above all, the sacred History gives us in one Circumstance a convincing Proof of St Paul's Eloquence, when the Men of *Lystra* called him Mercury, because he was the chief Speaker, *Acts* xiv. 12, 13. and would have paid Divine Worship to him, as to the God who invented and presided over Eloquence. "Which
 " one Account of our Apostle (as an Excellent Writer well (*k*) observes) sets his Character, considered
 " as an Orator only, above all the celebrated Relations of the Skill and Influence of *Demosthenes* and
 " his Cotemporaries. Their Power of speaking
 " was admired, but still was thought Human: Their
 " Eloquence warmed and ravished the Hearers, but
 " still it was thought the *Voice of Man*, not the *Voice*
 " *of God.*" And what a noble Idea of that Courage and Joy, which results from *suffering for Righteousness Sake*, is given to us in that Passage of St Luke, (lately taken notice of by a very great Critic), where speaking of St Stephen he observes, "That the goodness of his Cause, and the Sight of his Saviour at
 " the Right Hand of His Eternal Father, made him so
 " undaunted and so full of Joy even in Expectation
 " of a cruel Sentence and bloody Execution," that *his Face appeared as it had been the Face of an Angel*, *Acts* vi. 15. (*l*)? Nay, there are many single Sentences in the Bible which carry a much greater Force and Beauty in them, than whole Discourses of the best *Pagan* Writers. That remarkable Saying of *Job* in the Account of his Behaviour abovementioned, *viz. The Blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me.* chap. xxix. 13. hath been thought of this Kind. And of the

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same

(*k*) Spectator, No. 633. see the Place. Δια τὴν γὰρ Λυκάωνες αὐτὸν ἐπέλαβον εἶναι Ἑρμῆν; τὸ μὲν γὰρ θεῶν αὐτῶν νομιθεῖνται ἀπὸ τῶν σημεῖων ἐγένετο, τὸ δὲ τῆτον Ἑρμῆν, οὐκ ἐν ἀπ' ἐκείνων ἐγένετο ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τῆς λόγου. Chrysoft de Sacerdotio. Edit. Cantab. 1712, 8vo. lib. iv. p. 190. Vid. loc. in quo multa alia de Insigni S. Pauli Eloquentia diferte narrantur.

(*l*) *Blackwall*, Part. II. p. 187.

same Nature are those Passages in *St Paul's* Epistles, *Rom.* viii. 32. *Eph.* iii. 19. *2 Cor.* iv. 17. which the Reader may consider at his Leisure; and to which many others may be added without Number: in all which there is such a Sublimity of Conception and Majesty of Thought and Rapture of Expression, as infinitely surpasses the most celebrated Productions of *Greece* and *Rome*. And it was a Remark of a very Learned Divine (*m*) on that Sentence, in *Prov.* xix. 17. *He that bath Pity upon the Poor lendeth unto the Lord*; that there is more *Rhetoric* in that one Sentence, than in a Library of Sermons. And yet as the excellent Mr *Addison* truly says (*n*), “ the same Thought is carried much farther
 “ in the *New Testament*, where our Blessed Saviour tells
 “ us in a most pathetic Manner, that He shall here-
 “ after regard the Cloathing of the Naked, the Feed-
 “ ing of the Hungry, and the Visiting of the Imprisoned, as Offices done to Himself, and reward them
 “ accordingly.” That God should be pleased with our Services to our poor Brethren performed by His Just Authority and Command, is in Him very great and undeserved Goodness: but that the Majesty of Heaven and Earth should put Himself in their *stead*, and accept of our Charity to them as done to Himself, and thereby tell us in a Manner how we may lay an Obligation upon His own Person; This is so *great* and *noble* a Thought, as could scarce ever enter into any Human Mind, and such an Instance of moving and persuasive Oratory, as I am well assur'd is not to be found in the whole World. And indeed, we often find our Blessed Saviour not only arguing with the most amazing Strength and Force of Reasoning, but also delivering Himself with such Beauty of Thought and Expression, as no one among the Sons of Men can imitate. This is very plainly to be seen in several Pages

(*m*) Dr *Scott's* Christian Life, Vol. IV. p. 170.

(*n*) Mr *Addison*, in *Spectator*, No. 177.

sages of the Gospel (o), but chiefly in the *Parables*, and particularly in those three abovementioned (p. 194); in which, as I before observed, the Images and Allusions are so natural and agreeable, so lively and affecting, and the Discourse which is grounded thereupon so moving and powerful; that the like I am confident is not to be met with in any Human Writings. And then in the last Place, as to *Sublime* and *Majestic* Thoughts and Descriptions; there is nothing of this Kind in the very best Human Authors, that comes any Thing near to what we find in Holy Scripture. This may be discovered more or less throughout the whole *Sacred Volume*, but particularly in the *Poetical Books*; and chiefly in those Places, where the Attributes and Perfections of God are displayed to us. To give some few Instances of this Matter. Thus when the Holy Scriptures speak to us of the Omnipresence, Power, Majesty, and other Perfections of God, they set them forth to us in these and the like sublime Descriptions. *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy Presence? If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there: If I make my Bed in Hell, behold thou art there. If I take the Wings of the Morning, and dwell in the uttermost Parts of the Sea; even there shall thy Hand lead me, and thy right Hand shall hold me.* Psal. cxxxix. 7, to 11. *The Lord looketh to the Ends of the Earth, and seeth under the whole Heaven.* Job xxviii. 24. *At His Presence the Mountains quake and the Hills melt; the Earth is burnt, yea the World and all that dwell therein.* Nahum, i. 5. *At His Reproof the Pillars of Heaven tremble and are astonished.* Job, xxvi. 11. *Who sitteth upon the Circle of the Earth, and the Inhabitants thereof are as Grasshoppers. Who counteth the Nations as a Drop of the Bucket, and as the small Dust of the Balance, and the Inhabitants of the Earth as Nothing. Who measures the*
Waters

(o) If the Reader hath a Mind to see particular Instances of this Matter, let him consult Mr *Blackwall's Sacred Classics*, Part II. where he will find many that are most Excellent and Admirable.

Waters in the Hollow of His Hand, and meteth out Heaven with a Span, and comprehends the Dust of the Earth in a Measure; who weighs the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Balance. Isa. xl. 22, 15, 17, 12. Who covers Himself with Light as with a Garment, and stretcheth out the Heavens like a Curtain; who layeth the Beams of His Chambers in the Waters, and maketh the Clouds His Chariot, and walketh upon the Wings of the Wind. Psal. civ. 2, 3. These are the Descriptions which the Holy Scriptures give us of the Attributes and Perfections of God; and to the Instances here produced many others might be added without Number. And now may we not challenge the Adversaries of our Faith, who are ever expressing a mean and contemptible Opinion of the *Sacred Writings*, to shew any Thing in the most celebrated Authors, Ancient or Modern, that comes any ways near to the Sublimity and Majesty of these Scriptural Descriptions, as well as to the other Excellencies and Perfections abovementioned? And indeed, tho' it was not the Design of God in Holy Scripture to allure Men to the Belief and Practice of Religion by the Force of Words and the Power of Eloquence; but to deliver His Mind in all Essential Points with great Plainness and Perspicuity, and to confirm them with the most abundant Evidence; and therefore as *St Paul* observes, *the Gospel was not preached with the enticing Words of Man's Wisdom, but in Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power: 1 Cor. ii. 4.* Yet on the other side it is certain, that in the *Descriptive Parts* (where there is Room for it) there is no Oratory and Eloquence that can be compared to that of the Holy Scripture, neither are there any where to be found such *Sublime and Majestic Descriptions* as we meet with therein; and that with respect to many Particulars, but chiefly to the Divine Attributes and Perfections. And I think it could not well be otherwise; since when God Almighty speaks of His own Perfections, it is scarce possible, but that he must *speak like Himself*; and that

that must needs be in such a Manner, as no Created Beings can imitate. And thus much concerning the Superiour Excellency of the Holy Scripture to that of any Human Writings. By observing which, it is not my Design to cast the least Disparagement and Reflection upon any Authors either of the former or latter Times; in many of which, there are with regard to the great Strength of Reasoning, the Sublimity of Thought and Eloquence of Expression, the Usefulness of Precepts and Entertainments of History, many Things to be found that are truly noble and admirable, and very worthy of our Enquiry and Esteem. The Excellencies and Perfections of these Writers I can compare to nothing better than to the *Stars* in the Firmament. They shine forth with a peculiar and distinguishing Brightness; but bring the Holy Scriptures into View, and the *Sun* immediately rises in his *full* Majesty and Strength, and all the lesser Lights vanish and disappear, and are not able to stand before him. And thus having shewn the great Benefits and Advantages of reading the Holy Scriptures, and that with respect to the present Delight and Satisfaction which we may receive thereby, as well as to our Instruction and Confirmation in Religion; I proceed in the

Third Place, to consider the great Sin and Danger of neglecting this Duty. But because this must needs be very easily perceived from what hath been already laid down in this Chapter, concerning the Necessity of this Duty, and the many great Benefits and Advantages of it; I shall therefore be very short upon this Head. Now the great Sin and Danger of neglecting to read the Holy Scriptures will be very plain and evident from these three Considerations.

First. The Holy Scriptures are a Revelation of God's Will to Mankind, and as such are designed to instruct us in our Duty: they are therefore in the Nature of a *Talent*, which God hath put into our Hands, and for the Use of which we must give a strict Account

to Him at the Great Day. If therefore we neglect to read them and apply them to that Purpose for which they were given to us; we abuse the Talent, which God has entrusted us with; and not only so, but we do also despise the Gift of God, and render it contemptible. And how great an Affront that is to God, will appear not only from the Excellency of the *Scriptures* themselves, which are nothing less than the *Words of Eternal Life*, *John vi. 68.* but also in the

Second Place, From the Dignity of That Person, who is the Messenger of this Blessed Revelation. And this is *Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God.* *God hath at sundry Times and in diverse Manners spoke unto the Fathers by the Prophets, but in these Last Days He hath spoken unto us by His Son. Heb. i. 1.* And therefore a Neglect of This Divine Messenger will encrease and inflame our Guilt, in proportion to the Dignity and Excellence of His Person; as I before observed (p). But moreover, in the

Third and last Place, The Neglect of reading the Holy Scriptures is not only an Abuse and Contempt of the Gift of God, and our Blessed Saviour the Dispenser of it; but it is also of the utmost Damage and Prejudice to our own selves. For by this Means we are kept in Ignorance of that Duty, which is of Necessity to be done in order to our Salvation. And this is such an Ignorance as will not admit of the least Excuse; since it is altogether owing to our own Fault and Negligence. The Scriptures do indeed plainly intimate that Men's Crimes shall be differently punished, in Proportion to the Light and Knowledge which they enjoy. And our Blessed Saviour Himself tells us, that *That Servant which knew not his Lord's Will shall be beaten with few Stripes*, in comparison of him that *did know it.* *Luke xii. 48.* But then, this is always to be understood of such Ignorance, as it is not
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in a Man's Power easily to avoid. This is made by *St Paul* the Excuse for the *Athenian's* Mistake in their Divine Worship, viz. that they lived in the *Times of Ignorance*. *Acts* xvii. 30. But the Scripture in many Places informs us, that God will not so judge of Men, now that *Light is come into the World*. If Men will not be guided and directed by it, but *love Darknes rather than Light*, our Blessed Saviour says, *it shall be to their Condemnation*. *John* iii. 19. God will make all reasonable Allowance for the Mistakes and Weakness of Men; and provided they will but sincerely endeavour to discharge their Duty, He will accept of them, notwithstanding their many Frailties and Imperfections. But if Men will be idle, and squander away their precious Time in Vanity and Sin; He will deal with them as they deserve. If when He hath put a noble and excellent Talent into their Hands, which they may improve to the Purchase of Immortal Life, they will yet be slothful with it, and bury it in the Earth; He hath told them beforehand what shall be their Doom, *Cast ye the Unprofitable Servants into outer Darknes, there shall be Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth*. *Matt.* xxv. 30. And thus I have considered the Necessary and Indispensable Duty of reading the Holy Scriptures and the great Benefits and Advantages thereof, together with the Sin and Danger of Neglecting it. I should now, *in the Fourth and last Place*, apply what hath been laid down upon this Head to the Subject of this Discourse, by shewing the Necessity of discharging this Duty of reading the Holy Scriptures upon the Lord's Day. But I shall first treat of the other Religious Duties of the Day, and then make an Application of them altogether.

C H A P. III.

Concerning the Duty of Divine Meditation.

THAT God in the Creation of Man hath endued him with a Rational and Immortal Soul, capable of thinking and reflecting upon Him and the many and great Duties which he owes to Him; and that in the due and proper Exercise of his Understanding not only the Dignity and Excellency of his Nature above that of the *Brutes*, but also his true and real Happiness and Perfection consists (*a*); is a Matter that has been largely shewn by many ancient Philosophers (*b*), as well as what frequently occurs in Modern Writers. And indeed it is so very clear and plain in itself, that there is no Necessity of using many Arguments in Proof of it. But however, it is not my Design at present to treat of this Particular, but to shew the absolute Necessity of a serious and frequent Meditation upon the great Points of Religion, in order to enable us to lead a truly *Christian* Life and Conversation; such as will make us like to God here, and eternally happy with Him hereafter. These Points are what every one may soon be made sensible of; Would to God they could be as easily perswaded to a due Consideration of them! They are chiefly and principally these following, *viz.* the Being and Attributes of God; His Providence and Govern-

(*a*) Pronaque cum spectent Animalia cætera Terram,
Os Homini sublime dedit; cælumque tueri
Jussit, & erectos ad sidera tollere Vultus.

Ovid. Metamorph. lib. i. Fab. 2.

(*b*) See particularly, Aristot. Ethic. ad Nicom. lib. x. cap. viii.
Arrian in Epictet. lib. ii. cap. viii.

Man alone of all Animals hath Understanding to know his God; what availeth this Knowledge, unless it be to enoble Man, and to raise him to an Imitation and Participation of the Divinity? *Minute Philosopher*, Vol. I. p. 328.

Government of the World ; His Infinite Goodness and Love to Mankind manifested in our Creation and in the innumerable Blessings which we enjoy, but above all, in the sending His only Begotten Son into the World for our Redemption ; the Shortness and Uncertainty of this present Life ; the Vanity of all Earthly Enjoyments ; the great Delight and Pleasure of Religion and a good Conscience ; the Uneasiness and Torment of a guilty Mind ; the great Evil and Danger of Sin ; the Necessity and Terrour of Death ; the Considerations of a Future Judgment, and Eternal Happiness and Misery in the World to come. These are what I call the great Points of Religion. And if a Man would really desire to lead the truly *Christian* Life and Conversation, it is absolutely necessary not only that he believes and is persuaded of the Truth of these Things ; but also that he does so frequently and seriously think of and revolve them in his Mind, that they have a Constant and Regular Effect and Influence upon his Affections : for otherwise (as will be fully shewn hereafter) he will never be able to maintain his Integrity and preserve a good Conscience, against the Force and Power of Temptation. He may indeed be very much charmed with the Beauty of Virtue, and transported with the Rewards that are annex'd to it, and thereupon seem firmly resolved to observe and practice it ; but unless his Resolutions are grounded upon a deep Sense and thorough Conviction of the strong Motives of Religion, and by that means he has a much greater Love for God and Heavenly Things, than for the Things of this Life ; he will infallibly give way, whenever the Delights and Pleasures of the World stand in Competition with his Duty (c) : and the Belief and

Perswa-

(c) Quidam ad magnificas voces excitantur, & transeunt in affectum dicentium, alacres vultu & animo : — Rapit illos instigatque rerum pulchritudo. — Juvat protinus quæ audias, facere. Afficiuntur illi & sunt quales jubentur, si illa animo forma permaneat, si non impetum insignem protinus populus honesti dissuasor excipiat. Pauci illam quam conceperant Mentem, domum perferre potuerunt. *Senec. Epist.* 108.

Perswasion of another World will have no Effect, if his Heart and Affections are wholly set upon this. We see this made good by every Days Experience. Men believe and profess Religion, and talk of and defend it with great Earnestness and Zeal, and are many times infinitely nice and scrupulous in performing the Rites and Ceremonies of it; and yet for want of duly considering the Nature and Consequences of Things, the *Sin which so easily besets them* commonly gets the Victory over them; and with the *Natural Man* described by St Paul, Rom. vii. they find, *that the good that they would they do not, but the Evil which they would not that they do.* And that tho' they delight in the Law of God after the *inward Man*, yet they see another Law in their *Members warring against the Law of their Mind, and bringing them into Captivity to the Law of Sin.* ver. 19, &c. It is therefore absolutely necessary to the Practice of Piety and Virtue, that the great Motives of Religion be frequently thought upon, and duly imprinted upon the Minds of Men; and that they allow themselves some *fixed and stated* Seasons and Opportunities for a more than ordinary Reflection and Meditation upon Divine Things. And as an eminent Divine (d) well expresses this Matter, "It will not be enough to give
 " the Belief of those Things a cold Entertainment in
 " the Understanding; it must be warmly received
 " into the Heart; it must be habitually fixed and
 " deeply impressed there; it must be confirmed by
 " repeated Acts and enlivened by frequent Recollection; it must be called in at all Turns in Aid of
 " our weak Reason and wavering Affections, and
 " laid home to the Conscience, whenever we are beset
 " with any pressing Temptation." The Necessity of this I might easily shew with Respect to all the Motives of Religion beforementioned. But because many of these are very plain and obvious to common Apprehension;

(d) Dr Moss's Sermons, Vol. VI. p. 254. 255.

hension, and the Force and Power of them in some Measure perceived by every ones Experience; I shall therefore at present say but little of them, but shall insist more largely on three or four of those Motives, which are of the utmost Consequence and Importance; and to which, tho' in themselves very plain and easy to be apprehended, yet thro' extreme Carelessness and Stupidity, and the many Cavils and Objections of the Adversaries of our Faith, Men are apt to give but little Heed and Attention, or to fall into fatal Errors and Mistakes about them; by which Means they have little or no Effect and Influence upon their Minds. Now concerning many of those Considerations before mentioned, such as the Shortness and Uncertainty of this Life, the great Evil and Danger of Sin, the extreme Uneasiness of a guilty Conscience, and the like, there will be no Occasion to say much; since every Man by his own Sense and Experience must in a good Measure be acquainted with these Things. But nevertheless it will be of great Service to Mankind, both to secure them against the Power of Temptation, and to confirm them in the Practice of Virtue, frequently to think and meditate upon them. If Men are really desirous to get above this World, and all the alluring Pleasures of it, and to have their *Conversation in Heaven*, as the Apostle expresses it; *Pbil. iii. 20.* it will be highly proper and necessary to this End, that they often sit down and consider seriously with themselves, how short and uncertain the Life of Man is (*); that *he fleeth as a Shadow and continueth not. Job. xiv. 2.* That his Days are swifter than a Post. chap. ix 25. That his Life is even as a Vapour

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that

(*) Fugit irreparabile Tempus. *Virg. Georg. lib. iii.*

Vitæ summa brevis spem nos vetat inchoare longam.

Horat. lib. i. Od. 4.

Non est, crede mihi, sapientis dicere, vivam;

Sera nimis vita est Crastina, vive hodie.

Martial. lib. i. Epig. 162

that appeareth for a little Time and then vanisheth away. Jam. iv. 14. And that as David said in another Case, there is but a Step between every one of us and Death. 1 Sam. xx. 3. That they often consider the Vanity of their present Condition, how every Man walketh in a vain Shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain. Psalm xxxix. 6. And how little Profit he hath of all his Labour which he taketh, and of the Vexation of his Heart wherein he hath laboured under the Sun. Eccl. i. 3. chap. ii. 22. How different Things appear in the Enjoyment from what they did in Expectation (e). How little true and sincere Pleasure (f) there is in this Life, and how soon it passeth away (g), and Sicknes, Old Age, and Death come upon us. And when we have obtained those Things which we eagerly sought after, how presently we become tired of them, and think every other State and Condition of Life better than our own (b), with many other Considerations which fully manifest the Weakness and Insufficiency of our present Condition; and that when we have looked upon all the Works which we have laboured to do, behold all is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit. Eccles. ii. 11. That they often consider the great Happiness and Security of Virtue and a good Conscience. That the Ways of Religion are Ways of Pleasantness, and that all her Paths are Peace. Prov. iii. 17. And that the Work

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(e) See this very beautifully described by Solomon, in *Eccles. ii. 4 to 12.*

(f) ——— Nulla est sincera voluptas,
Sollicitumque aliquid lætus inter venit.

Ovid. Metamorph. lib. vii. l. 453-4.

(g) Optima quæque dies miseris Mortalibus ævi
Prima fugit: subeunt Morbi tristisque senectus:
Et Labor, & duræ rapit inclementia Mortis. *Virg. ibid.*

(b) Qui fit, Mæcenas, ut Nemo, quam sibi sortem
Seu Ratio dederit, seu Fors objecerit, illa
Contentus vivat: laudet diversa sequentes.

Horat. lib. i, Sat. I.

of Righteousness shall be Peace, and the Effect of Righteousness Quietness and (i) Assurance for ever. *Isa. xxxii. 17.* and on the other Side consider the extreme Uneasiness and Torment of a Guilty Mind (k). *That the Wicked are like the troubled Sea when it cannot rest; and that there is no Peace (saith my God) to the Wicked (l).* *Isa. lvii. 20, 21.* And further yet, consider the great and manifest Danger of Sin and Wickedness; since the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men. *Rom. i. 18.* And that Death will soon come upon us all without

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Exception

(i) Integer vitæ scelerisque purus
 Non eget Mauri Jaculis neque arcu,
 Nec venenatis gravida sagittis,
 Fusce, pharetrâ. *Horat. lib. i. Od. 22.*
 Justum & tenacem propositi virum
 Non Civium ardor prava Jubentium,
 Non vultus instantis Tyranni,
 Mente quatit solida; neque Auster
 Dux inquieti turbidus Adriæ:
 Nec fulminantis magna Jovis Manus.
 Si fractus illabatur Orbis,
 Impavidum ferient ruinæ. *Id. lib. iii. Od. 3.*

O vitæ Philosophia Dux! O virtutum Indagatrix, expultrixque vitiorum! Unus dies bene, & ex Præceptis tuis actus, peccanti Immortalitati anteponeendus est. *Cic. Tusc. Quest. lib. v.*

(k) See Archbishop *Dawes's* Sermon on a wounded Spirit, p. 13, 14. and Bp. *Atterbury's* Sermons, Vol. IV. Sermon IV. in which there are many useful Observations, and several remarkable Instances given of this Matter.

(l) ——— Hic murus aheneus esto,
 Nil conscire sibi, nullâ pallefcere culpâ.
Hor. lib. i. Epist. 1.
 Exemplo quodcunque malo committitur, ipsi
 Displicet Auctori. *Juvenal Sat. xiii.*
 Pœna autem vehemens, ac multo sævior illis,
 Quas & Cæditius gravis invenit aut Rhadamanthus,
 Nocte dieque suum, gestare, in Pectore Testem. *Id. ibid.*

*Ο γδ τὸ ἦδὺ μετὰ τῷ αἰσθῆ ἐλόμενθ, εἰ καὶ πρὸς ὀλίγον δελεασθεῖν τῷ ἦδοντι διὰ γέν τὸ αἰσθῆν εἰς μεταμέλειαν ἐπώδνον ἐρχεταί. *Hiero. l. in Pythag. Aur. Carm. p. 178.*

Exception (*m*), and carry us to Judgment *Heb.* ix. 27. and that if we die in our Sins without Repentance, we fall into the Hands of the Living God, *Heb.* x. 31 who is a *Jealous God*, *Exod.* xx. 5. and a *Consuming Fire*, *Heb.* xii. 29. I say, if Men are really and heartily desirous to get above this World, and to have their Conversation in Heaven, it will be highly necessary and expedient that they frequently entertain their Minds with these and such like Reflections. And it is so far from being a Matter of great Uneasiness and Terror to meditate upon (*n*) Death and (*o*) Judgment, as some Men imagine; that on the contrary the Best and most Effectual Means to deliver ourselves from the Fear and Dread of them is frequently and habitually to consider and Reflect upon them. But these reflections will not of themselves be sufficient to secure Men against the Power of Temptation,

(*m*) Pallida mors æquo pulsat pede Pauperum Tabernas
Regumque Turres. *Horat. lib. i. Od. 4.*

Intactis opulentior

Thesauris Arabum & divitis Indiæ,

Cæmentis licet occupes

Thyrrhenum omne tuis & mare Apulicum;

Si figit adamantinos

Summis verticibus dira necessitas

Clavos; non animum metu,

Non Mortis laqueis expedies caput. *Idem lib. iii. Od. 24.*

(*n*) Tu tamen mortem, ut nunquam timeas, semper cogita.
Senec. Epist. xxx.

(*o*) In like manner the future Judgment of Mankind is in itself far from being an Object of Terrour. For that we are moral accountable Creatures is owing to our Superior Capacities, which are the Distinguishing Honour and Dignity of our Nature; and nothing can be a more Comfortable Reflexion to a well dispos'd Mind, than that it's Integrity will be tried and rewarded by a Being of Unerring Wisdom, Inflexible Justice and Unlimited Goodness. — The Future Judgment is not revealed with a view to alarm and confound the Mind; but to restrain those Irregular Practices which are the surest Ground of Melancholly Suspicions, and inward Horror: *Foster's Sermons*, Vol. I. P. 21, 22.

tation, and to preserve them in their Integrity. If they design to lead the truly *Christian* Life and such as will render them acceptable to God, there are several other important Points of Religion, which will require a very serious and frequent Consideration; and particularly these following, *viz.* the Being and Attributes of God; His universal Providence and Government of the World; His Infinite Love and Goodness to Mankind, manifested in the Redemption of the World by the Death of his Son; and last of all, the Everlasting Bliss and Happiness which shall be conferred on Righteous and Good Men, and the Everlasting and unspeakable Torments which shall be inflicted on the Wicked in a Future State. The absolute Necessity of frequently thinking and reflecting upon which Points I shall now proceed distinctly to shew, not only upon the account of the great Influence which a due Consideration of them has upon Religion, but also because (tho' they are sufficiently clear and evident in themselves, yet as I before observed) thro' the extreme Carelessness and Inadvertency of Mankind, and the crafty Insinuations and Cavils of Infidels, many Persons are apt to fall into dangerous and fatal Errors, or at least into great Doubts and Suspicions about them. But before I proceed to the Consideration of these Points, there is one Particular which must never be forgot, when we are treating of the Duty of Divine Meditation upon the *Lord's Day*; because it is a necessary and Essential Part of the Duty of that Day, and cannot admit of any Relaxation and Indulgence, as many other Particulars may sometimes do, as will be seen hereafter: and that is the Duty of reflecting and meditating upon the *Word of God* which we have on *that* Day heard in His Holy Church. Now the Necessity of this Duty will very plainly appear from the End and Design for which the Word of God is preached to us, which is exactly the same as that for which the

Holy Scriptures were first written; *viz.* to instruct us in the Knowledge of our Duty, and by proper Motives and Arguments to stir us up to the Practice of it. And therefore if we rest satisfied with the bare *bearing* of God's Word, without duly thinking and meditating upon it, and making an Application of it to the true State and Condition of our Souls; we not only abuse this Noble and Excellent Talent, by defeating the great End and Design for which God hath given it to us; but we also entirely lose the Benefit and Advantage of what we have heard, and render it unfruitful: Since how judicious and eloquent soever the Discourses may be which are delivered to us, they are nothing but a *vain* and *idle* Amusement, if they are not carefully considered and reflected upon, and a proper Use and Application be not made of them. In Order to inspire us with a Sense of which Truth, the Holy Scriptures have in many Places exhorted us to a due and serious Meditation upon the Word of God, in order to the Practice of it. Thus says *Joshua*, *The Book of the Law shall not depart out of thy Mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein Day and Night. Josh. i. 8,* and *St Paul*, *we ought to give the more earnest heed to the Things which we have heard, lest at any Time we should let them slip. Heb. ii. 1.* And again, what the same Apostle enjoined *Timothy* may in a good Measure be applied to all *Christians*, *viz.* *Give Attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine; Meditate upon these Things, give thyself wholly to them. 1 Tim. iv. 13, 15.* And in the Practice of this great Duty, the *Psalmist* sets before us his own Example, *Thy Word, O Lord, have I hid in my Heart, that I might not sin against Thee. I will meditate in thy Precepts, and have Respect unto thy Ways. I will delight myself in Thy Statutes, I will not forget Thy Word. Thy Testimonies also are my Delight and my Counsellors. And Thy Commandments are ever with me. Psal. cxix. 11, 15, 16, 24, 98.* And farther, our Blessed Saviour has

has given us a very exprefs Caution in this Matter, *Take heed*, says He, *how ye hear*; i. e. not only with what Attention, but with what Profit (p). For *who-soever hath*, i. e. who constantly and stedfastly retains my Doctrine (q), *to him shall be given* (r); and *who-soever hath not*, *from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have*. Luke viii. 18. The Meaning is, that in Proportion to the Diligence and Affection with which Men hear the Word of God, and the Use and Improvement which they make of It, shall the Knowledge and Advantage be which they shall receive therefrom. And that Men cannot make a just and proper Improvement of God's Word without duly considering and meditating upon it, our Blessed Saviour shews very fully in a distinct Parable, upon which that Text is grounded: in which he observes, that the true Reason why the Preaching of God's Word hath so little Effect upon the Generality of Mankind, is, because they satisfy themselves with the bare *hearing* of it without seriously *reflecting* upon it, and making an Application thereof to the State and Condition of their Souls. For, says He, when the *Seed is sown*, *which is the Word of God*, *the Devil cometh and taketh away the Word out of the Hearts of some*, *lest they should believe and be saved*. And others when they have heard go forth, and are choaked with Cares, and Riches, and Pleasures of this Life, and bring no Fruit to Perfection. ver. 11, 12 14. i. e. Tho' Men do attend to the Word of God when preached to them,

P 4

yet

(p) *Videte ergo quomodo audiat, i. e. quo affectu & quo fructu Bez. in loc*

(q) *Qui enim habet, i. e. qui constanter retinet Doctrinam meam. Vatabl in loc.*

(r) *Mensura Carnis & Sanguinis hæc est, vas vacuum recipit, plenum non recipit amplius. At Mensura Dei hæc est, Plenum recipit, vacuum non recipit. Deus non dat Sapientiam, nisi Ei cui est sapientia. Lightfoot ex Rabbis in Hor. Hebr.*

vet they do not seriously consider and meditate upon it, nor suffer it to gain upon their Hearts and Affections ; but they content themselves with the bare hearing of the Word, and immediately betake themselves to the Riches and Pleasures of this Life ; by which Means it becomes unfruitful, and hath not the least Effect and Influence upon them. This is a very fatal and dangerous Errour ; and yet it was what Men have been too apt to fall into in all Ages of the World. The antient Philosophers do frequently and bitterly complain upon this Head ; that the Generality of their Disciples came to their Schools rather to please and gratify their Curiosity, and to furnish themselves with Matter for Dispute, than seriously to regard and diligently to practise the Instructions and Precepts there delivered to them (s). Which Conduct *Aristotle* elegantly compares to that of sick Men, who should expect to be healed of their Distempers by hearing their Physicians discourse to them, tho' they should observe none of their Directions : and without Doubt, says he, the Minds of the Disciples were as much improved by such Kind of Philosophy, as the Health of the others Bodies by such Physick. And the same Complaint has been continually made by all *Christian* Writers in all Ages of the Church. *St Chrysoptom* has a very fine Homily upon this Subject (t) ; in which he tells

(s) Ἄλλ' οἱ πολλοὶ ταῦτα μὲν ἔσπευτίζουσιν. ὅτι δ' ἢ λόγον κηλασεύρουσι, οἷον ἅμ φιλοσοφῆν καὶ ἔτιως ἐσεσθαι σπευδαῖοι ὁμοίαν πεισύνες πῆς κήμνεσιν, οἱ τῆς ἰατρῶν ἀκύνσι μὲν ὀπιμελῶς, ποῖσσι δ' ἐθὲν τῆς σπεσσασπομένων. ὡσπερ ἔν ἐδ' ἐκείνοι εἰ ἔξισι τὸ σῶμα ἔτω δεραπεύμενοι ἐδ' ἔτοι τὴν ψυχὴν ἔτω φιλοσοφῆσαι. *Arist. Ethic, ad Nic. lib. ii. chap. iii.*

Non novimus quosdam qui multis apud Philosophiam annis perfederint, & ne colorem quidem duxerint? — Quidam veniunt ut audiant, non ut discant : sicut in Theatrum voluptatis Causa ad delectandas aures Oratione vel Voce vel Fabulis ducimur. Magnam hanc Auditorum Partem videbis, cui Philosophi schola Diversorium otii sit. Non id agunt ut aliqua illic vitia deponant, ut aliquam legem vitæ accipiant, ad quam mores suos exigant, sed ut oblectamento aurium perfruantur, *Senec, Epist. 108.*

(t) *Hom. V. in Matt.*

tells the People of his Time, that tho' they carefully and diligently attended to the Word of God when preached to them; yet as soon as they were departed from the Congregation, with the Change of Place they did many of them immediately change their Minds, and quite extinguish that Fire of Devotion which the Word of God had kindled in their Hearts. The Cause of which this eloquent Preacher ascribes to their betaking themselves immediately to the Cares and Pleasures of this Life, and the *pernicious* Conversation of corrupt and wicked Men. And therefore to prevent this great Mischief, he earnestly advises them, when the Service of the Church is over, to retire home and to read the Holy Scriptures with their Families, and diligently compare what they have heard at Church with them; that by this Means it may be the more deeply imprinted on their Minds, and *that they may make the Preacher's Discourses their own by a due and careful Meditation.* The absolute Necessity of which, in order to receive any Benefit and Advantage by hearing of the Word, he shews at large in that Homily, and confirms it by several excellent Arguments and Similitudes, which those who have a Mind to it may see at their Leisure. If therefore we are really desirous to reap any Profit from the Preaching of God's Word, we must be infinitely careful, that we attend upon it with due and proper Qualifications of Mind; that we do not come to Church to gratify our Curiosity, nor to make Observations upon the Gifts and Qualifications of the Preacher; but with the sole View of being instructed in the Will of God in order to our Salvation. To this End, as our Blessed Saviour advises us, *Luke viii. 18.* we must *take heed how we hear.* And as St Paul observed of the *Thessalonians*, when the Word of God is preached to us, we must receive It *not as the Word of Men, but (as it is in Truth) the Word of God. 1 Thes. ii. 13.* and when we have devoutly attended upon the
hearing

hearing of God's Word, we must not think that we have sufficiently discharged our Duty in this Particular; but we must diligently reflect and meditate upon it, and make a due Application of it to the State and Condition of our Souls. Thus, if any Point of *Christian* Doctrine has in the Preacher's Discourse been enlarged upon, we must consider with ourselves whether we really believe that Doctrine as it is revealed in Holy Scripture; and if we do, whether the Belief of it has it's proper Effect and Influence upon our Lives and Conversations. If not, we must never give over thinking and meditating thereupon, till it has gained this Effect upon our Minds: since otherwise, the most zealous Profession of any Part of *Christ's* Doctrine will be of no Use or Service to us; *For Faith without Works is dead. Jam. ii. 20.* And in *Christ Jesus* no Faith availeth any Thing, but *that which worketh by Love. Gal. v. 6.* And *Love*, saith the Apostle, *is the fulfilling of the Law, Rom. xiii. 10.* And so likewise, if any Practical Point of Religion is discoursed upon, any *Christian* Virtue recommended to our Observation; we must diligently examine ourselves, whether we are endued with it; and if not, we must never give over our Endeavours, till we have attained to it: or if we are possessed of that Qualification, we must enquire whether we are not wanting in some others, which are equally necessary to procure God's Love and Favour: since *whosoever shall break one of the least of His Commandments, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven, Matt. v. 19.* Or, if the Preacher's Discourse be levelled against any particular Kind of Sin and Wickèdness, we must look into our Hearts and see whether we are guilty of that Vice; or if not, of any other which will as surely expose us to the Anger and Judgment of God. *For the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men; Rom. i. 18.* And

If

If any Man shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one Point, he is guilty of all. *Jam. ii. 10.* And when we have thus found out the Corruption and Iniquity of our Manners, we must continually watch over ourselves, 'till we have subdued and reformed it. And particularly we must attack the *Sin which does most easily beset us*, *Heb. xii. 1.* with the utmost Vigour and Resolution; and in that Case especially *put on the whole Armour of God, that we may be able to stand against the Wiles of the Devil.* *Eph. vi. 11.* And to say no more, if the great Motives to a Religious Life be laid before us, particularly those drawn from the Consideration of a Future Judgment, and the Everlasting Happiness and Miseries of another World; we must carefully examine ourselves and see, whether we do really believe this Doctrine. If not, we must with the utmost Seriousness and Diligence weigh and consider the Proofs and Evidences which both Natural and Revealed Religion give us of a Future State; 'till we come to be thoroughly and firmly perswaded of the Truth of it. And if we do believe this great Article of our Faith, we must enquire into the Sincerity and Reality of this Belief, by seeing whether we live and behave in such a Manner as those Persons may in all Reason be expected to do, who are possessed with this Perswasion, *viz. that as it is appointed unto all Men once to die, so after Death will come the Judgment.* *Heb. ix. 27.* And that when the Great Judge of the World shall appear, *all that are in the Graves shall bear His Voice and come forth; they that have done Good to the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done Evil to the Resurrection of Damnation.* *John v. 28, 29.* And whether in Expectation of that Glorious Reward which God hath promised, *such as Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it ever entered into the Heart of Man to conceive,* *1 Cor. ii. 9.* we become indifferent and unconcerned for the Things of this World, and demean ourselves here as *Strangers and Sojourners*

Sojourners before the Lord. 1 Chron. xxix. 15. Who, because we have here no continuing City, do therefore seek one which is to come. Heb. xiii. 14. And as the necessary Means of doing so, do set our Affections on Things above, not on Things on the Earth. Col. iii. 2. And have our Conversation in Heaven. Phil. iii. 20. And whether we are resolved upon this Account to observe not only the easy and delightful Precepts of Religion, but also such as are most uneasy and ungrateful to Flesh and Blood; to fight the good Fight, to finish our Course and to keep the Faith; because there is laid up for us a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the Righteous Judge shall give us at that Day. 2 Tim. iv, 7, 8. And so on the other Side, we must carefully examine ourselves, whether the Apprehension of those terrible Punishments which shall be inflicted upon the Wicked, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty Angels in Flaming Fire, taking Vengeance of them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with Everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of His Power. 2 Thess. i. 7, 8, 9. And who shall be cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, where they shall have no Rest Day nor Night, but the Smoak of their Torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. Rev. xxi. 8. chap. xiv. 11. I say, we must carefully examine ourselves, whether the Apprehension of this dreadful Misery does constantly deter us from all Sin and Wickedness; and whether upon this Account we be infinitely less concerned to displease the Greatest among the Sons of Men, who have only Power to kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do, than to offend Him, who after He hath killed hath Power to cast both Soul and Body into Hell-fire. Luke xii, 4, 5.

This is the Use and Application which we should make of the Doctrine of a Future Judgment and everlasting Retributions, when delivered to us by the Ministers

Ministers of the Gospel ; since otherwise, how much soever we may be moved and affected by it, even tho' at the Hearing thereof we should fall into a *Fit of Trembling*, as *Felix* did when *St Paul* discoursed to him upon that Subject, *Acts* xxiv. 25. it would not be of the least Use and Service to us : It being not sufficient to the Purposes of Religion barely to discover the Truth of these Points, unless, as a Learned Author well expresses (*u*) it, we do by frequent Meditation “render them familiar to our Minds
“ when discoverd, pursue them thro' all their proper
“ Consequences, and suffer them to have such an
“ Effect upon our Conduct and Behaviour, as they
“ have a direct Tendency to produce.” And in this Manner we should well consider and observe the View and Design of every Discourse we hear, and make a due Application and Improvement of it. And when we have received Instructions from God's Word, we must, as a most Excellent Writer observes (*x*), “lay
“ them up in our Memory ; and that not so *loosely*
“ and *carelessly* that they shall presently drop out again,
“ but we must so fasten them there by *often* thinking
“ and meditating on them, that we may have them
“ ready for our Use.” For as a most judicious Divine very well remarks, (*y*) “ No Man ever became a
“ good *Christian*, merely because he *once* knew why
“ he should be so ; but because he *often* considered it.
“ And it is by such Meditation that good Men grow
“ better ; and therefore they must often converse with
“ the same Divine Truths.” Otherwise, the Gospel is preached to us absolutely in vain, and we manifest as great a Contempt of *Christ* (if not greater) in not duly considering and observing the Gracious Words
delivered

(*u*) Dr *Coneybear's* Defense of Reveald Religion, cap. i. p. 10.

(*x*) Whole Duty of Man, chap. ii. § 23.

(*y*) Dr *Clagett's* Operations of the Holy Spirit, Part II. chap. vii. § 4. See also a most Excellent Passage to this Purpose in Dr *Scott's Christian Life*, 8vo. Vol. I. chap. iv. § 3.

delivered by Him, as if we had not heard them at all. And indeed, to say no more upon this Head, if, as a very Learned Prelate justly observes (z), “Men will go to Church merely for Form, and hear Sermons only as set Discourses, which they will censure or commend as they think they see Cause, but are resolved never to be the better for them, all the Preaching in the World signifies nothing.” I would to God that were the Worst of it, and that Men did not by this Means entail upon themselves a very heavy Degree of Guilt; by neglecting and despising one of the Noblest Institutions, which the Wisdom of God has contrived for the Salvation of Mankind. And thus having shewn the Necessity of this Duty of Meditating upon God’s Word, whensoever we have heard it preached to us in His Holy Church, I proceed to consider the absolute Necessity of a due and serious Meditation upon the Chief and Principal Points of Religion above-mentioned, in order to the leading such a truly *Christian* and *Virtuous* Life, as will recommend us to the Love and Favour of God.

And *First*, concerning a due Meditation upon the Being of God and His Divine Perfections. Now this is absolutely necessary to be done upon these two Accounts. *First*, To guard us against the dangerous Impressions of *Atheism*, which entirely subverts the Ground and Foundation of all Religion.

And *Secondly*, To preserve in our Minds such a quick and lively Sense of these great Truths, as may constantly engage us to the Practice of Piety and Virtue. And,

First, A due Meditation upon the Being of God and His Divine Perfections is absolutely necessary to guard us against the Dangerous Impressions of *Atheism*.

This

(z) Bp. *Barnet* in the Preface to his History of the Reformation, 2vo p. 10.

This one would think should be a very needless Observation ; since the Existence and Perfections of God are Notions which are naturally ingrafted in the Minds of all Men, as some conceive ; or if not, the Proofs and Evidences of this Great Article of our Faith are so very clear and easy, that one would think it almost impossible that any one should entertain the least Doubt and Suspicion of it. But yet, if we consider with what Zeal and Diligence many Persons of considerable Parts and Learning, both ancient and modern, have propagated their pernicious Schemes of Atheism and Infidelity, which are still read and studied by great Numbers with Delight and Pleasure, and that there are too many Men among us, who go into the same Measures thro' the Vanity and Affectation of Wit, and are continually breaking their bold and impious Jest upon God and Religion, to the Apparent Mischief and Corruption of all they converse with (x). Nay, if we consider further that not only the *Atheists* themselves boast of their Numbers ; but also that many of the most Learned Advocates and Defenders of Religion do heavily complain, that “ *Atheism* and *Impiety* are daily gaining Ground, not only among us, but indeed all *Europe* (y) over.” I say, if we duly reflect upon all this, we must needs be fully convinced, that it is a Matter of the utmost Consequence to every *Christian*, to be well fortified and guarded against such dangerous Impressions. Or if we should suppose, that there are not so many *Atheists* in the World upon fixed and settled Principles, as some think, but that Learned Men have complained more upon this Head than there is just Occasion for (which for my Part I

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(x) Vid. *Scott's Christian Life*, Vol. II. 8vo, chap. iii, § 5. p. 99, &c.

(y) Bishop *Burnet* in the Preface to his Pastoral Care, p. 15. See also *Nichols's Conference*, Part I. in Pref. Dr *Waterland's* second Charge to the Clergy, p. 2, &c. *Tillotson*, Vol. III. p. 464, *Scott's Christian Life*, 8vo; Vol. II. p. 109, 117.

own I am in great Measure ready to (c) believe) yet what a very pious and excellent Author lays down upon this Point, is certainly true and to be depended upon, viz. "that the Generality of Men, who are
 " ever intent on Business or Pleasure, and little used
 " to fix or open the Eye of their Mind, have not
 " all that Conviction and Evidence of the Being of
 " God, which might be expected in Reasonable
 " Creatures. And that it is to be feared that too
 " many of Parts and Leisure, who live in *Christian*
 " Countries, are merely thro' a supine and dreadful
 " Negligence sunk into a Sort of *Demi-Atheism* :
 " They cannot say there is not a God, but neither
 " are they convinced that there is (d)." Now since such a Doubtfulness and Irresolution in the Belief of this Capital Doctrine must needs be very fatal and (e) destructive to Religion, as well as fixed and settled
Atheism ;

(c) Health chiefly keeps an *Atheist* in the Dark ;
 A Fever argues better than a Clerk ;
 Let but the Logic in his Pulse decay,
 The *Græcian* he'll renounce, and learn to pray ;
 While C——— mourns with an unfeigned Zeal
 Th' Apostate Youth who reason'd once so well.
 C——— who makes so merry with the Creed,
 He almost thinks he disbelieves indeed ;
 But only thinks so ; to give both their due,
Satan, and *be*, Believe and Tremble too.

Love of Fame, &c. Sat. iv. p. 66. 67.

Tum maxime Deus ex Memoria hominum elabitur, cum Beneficiis fruentes Honorem dare Divinæ Indulgentiæ deberent ; at vero siqua Necessitas gravis prefferit, tum Deum recordantur, &c. *Laët. Instit. lib. ii. cap. i.*

Many Instances might be given of this from the Histories of all Ages ; but I shall at present only mention those of *Metrodorus*, *Caligula* and *Bion Borysberites* ; Of all which Persons it was observed, that they were remarkable for their Impiety and Contempt of God, and yet in Times of Sickness and Danger, the most sensibly afraid of Him. *Vid. Cic de Nat. Deorum lib. i. Sæton. in Calig. cap. li. Diog. Laert. in Vit. Bionis juxta finem.*

(d) Bishop *Berkeley's* Principles of Human Knowledge,
 § 154, 155.

(e) See an Excellent Passage to this purpose in *Tillotson*, Vol. III.
 p. 462.

Abcism ; it must certainly be highly beneficial and advantageous to all Men to be freed from these Doubts, and to have a lively and effectual Sense of God and His Perfections constantly imprinted upon their Minds. But this cannot otherwise be gained than by a frequent and serious Meditation upon these great Truths and considering the Proofs and Evidences of them. Those therefore, who would live under a constant and prevailing Sense of God and His Perfections, must often employ themselves in this Exercise. And because the Generality of Men have not sufficient Parts and Abilities of themselves to discover these Important Principles of Religion (at least not so completely and perfectly as is necessary to give them their full Force and Influence upon their Affections) therefore they should be careful to assist their Meditations by reading the Holy Scriptures, in which the Being and Attributes of God are largely discovered and beautifully displayed to us, and also some of the best Books that have been written upon that Subject : since, as an eminent Author well remarks (c), “ He that wants the proper Materials of Thought may think and meditate “ for ever to no Purpose.” And I believe all Persons will readily own, that any Man (especially one of common Education) will have quite different Notions and Sentiments of God and His Perfections, by carefully reading the Holy Scriptures, and by attending to those noble Discoveries which have been made upon those Points by such Men as *Cudworth, Stillingfleet, Tillotson, Boyle, Bentley, Ray, Clarke, Derham, Gurdon, Woolaston, &c.* than he could ever possibly have attained to by the bare unassisted Thoughts and Reasonings of his own Mind. It is therefore incumbent upon all Men in their Meditations upon this Subject, to assist their Meditations by

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reading

reading the Holy Scriptures and other good Books which are written thereupon. And what I here observe of this Particular, I would be understood to extend to all the other Points of Divine Meditation mentioned in this Treatise, *viz.* that Men should not only think and contemplate upon these Things of themselves, but should also enlarge and improve their Thoughts by reading the Scriptures, and the best Books which are published on those Subjects, according to their several Capacities and Opportunities.

Now the Proofs and Evidences of the Being and Attributes of God are of two Sorts. *First*, Such as are purely Intellectual and Metaphysical. And *Secondly*, Such as arise from a Contemplation of the visible Works of Nature. As to the *First*, Those, who are able to go thro' the Depths of Metaphysical Enquiries, will find the Being and Attributes of God clearly and fully proved this Way by several of our learned Writers; and particularly by Dr *Samuel Clarke* in the first Part of his *Boyle's Lectures*, in which they are strictly demonstrated. And what Mr *Gurdon* and Mr *Woolaston* have since offered upon that Subject is admirable and excellent, and highly worthy of any one's Reading. If any Man will study these Books with due Care and Attention, it will be impossible for him to entertain any Doubts concerning the Being of God and His Perfections, unless his Judgment is byassed and corrupted by vicious Affections; and then all the Evidence in the World would not prevail with him. But because there are but very few Persons (at least of those into whose Hands this Discourse is likely to fall) who are able to attain to such Metaphysical Discoveries, therefore I shall pass them by, and proceed to the

Second Way, By which the Being and Attributes of God may be proved and made known to us; And that
that

that is, by a Contemplation of the Visible Works of Nature. Now there are such plain and evident Marks of Wisdom, Power and Goodness to be seen in all Parts of the visible Creation, that a Man of ordinary Capacity, who will duly and carefully attend to them, may easily discern that this World did not exist of itself, nor was made by Chance; but that it is the Product of an Intelligent Being of Infinite Perfection. For as the *Psalmist* well observes, xix 1. *The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth His Handy-work.* And says the Apostle, *The Invisible Things of Him from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, even His Eternal Power and Godhead.* Rom. i. 20. It is therefore a Matter of great Necessity and Advantage, in order to confirm us the more stedfastly in the Acknowledgment of the Being and Perfections of God, frequently to study and contemplate upon the Works of Nature. And such Persons, who are not able to procure Books written upon that Subject, or have not sufficient Capacity to read them, must be so much the more diligent in employing their Minds upon these Points, and improving their Thoughts by the reading of the Holy Scriptures. But as for others of greater Ability and Apprehension, it will be of the utmost Service to them in this Enquiry, to peruse some of the many Excellent Treatises upon this Point, which are published among us. For the Being and Attributes of God have not only been sufficiently proved by the Authors of those Books, but they have moreover made so many Noble Discoveries to this Purpose from *Natural Philosophy, Anatomy and Astronomy*; that by this Means Men will not only be freed from the least Doubt concerning these Necessary and Important Truths, but they will also make a much deeper Impression upon them, and enter into their Minds with the strongest Conviction. And

whosoever will be careful and diligent in the Study of these Books, will soon be made sensible, not only that the World is the Effect of an Intelligent and Wise Being; but also that there is a most exact Harmony and Correspondence between the several Parts of it, and that all the Works of Nature are made with particular *Views* and *Designs*, and contrived and adapted to those *Designs* with the most surprizing Beauty and Perfection. I shall not at present give any Instances of this Matter. They who will carefully peruse some of the Many Excellent Treatises, which are written upon that (*d*) Subject, will soon be convinced of it, and will hereby have such a strong and lively Idea of God's Wisdom, Power and Goodness imprinted upon their Minds, as nothing will be ever able to efface and obliterate. This is an Argument, of the Strength of which Atheistic Writers have been ever sensible; and they could find no other Way to evade the Force of it, but by confidently asserting that there are no such Things as *Final Causes*, nor any Thing in *Nature* that was made for *Particular* Ends and *Designs*; but that all Things happened by *Chance*, or existed of *themselves* in the Manner we now observe them, and that their several and respective Uses were afterwards found out and discovered. This was the Opinion of the *Epicureans*, (*e*) which they borrowed from the Old *Atheistic* Philosophers (*f*). And in Consequence of this

(*d*) There are so many excellent Books published upon this Subject in our own Language, that it will be no great Difficulty for any one to make a good Choice; yet I humbly conceive that these following are the most fit and proper for general Use, *viz.* *Boyle of Final Causes*, *Ray's Wisdom of God in the Creation*, and *Derham's Physico and Astro-Theology*.

(*e*) ——— Nil ideo natum est in Corpore, ut uti Possimus, sed quod natum est, id procreat usum.

Lucret. lib. iv.

(*f*) *Vid. Cudworth's Intellectual System*, p. 670, 671.

this, they expressly assert, that the Eyes were not made to see with, nor the Tongue to speak with, nor the Feet for walking, nor the Sun to shine, &c. (g). And herein they are followed by *Spinoza* the most Learned of all our Modern *Atheists*, who in direct Words affirms the same (b). But now that this Supposition is infinitely absurd and ridiculous, every Man of common Sense must readily allow: and indeed that there are not only such Things as Final Causes in Nature, but that all Parts of the *Creation* are contrived and adapted to their respective Uses and Designs, with the most astonishing and surprizing Beauty, and thereby give us a clear Proof and Evidence of the Being of God and His Divine Perfections, hath been fully demonstrated by several of our Learned Writers, particularly by *Cudworth*, *Boyle*, *Benley*, *Ray* and *Derham*, to the everlasting Shame and Confusion of all *Atheists*. And this is the first Benefit and Advantage which Men receive from a serious and diligent Meditation upon the Being and Perfections of God, viz. that they are hereby effectually guarded and secured against the dangerous and destructive Impressions of *Atheism* and *Infidelity*.

The second Use and Design of such Meditation, is to preserve in the Minds of Men such a quick and lively

(g) Nec fuit ante, videre, Oculorum lumina nata,
Nec dictis orare, prius, quam Lingua creata est;
Sed potius longe Linguae præcessit origo
Sermonem, multoque creatæ sunt prius aures
Quam sonus est Auditus; & omnia inique Membra,
Ante fuisse, ut opinor, eorum quam fuit usus
Haud igitur potuere Utendi crescere causa.

Lucret. ibid.

(b) Thus in the Appendix to his Thirty Sixth Proposition of his *Ethics*, Part I, he lays it down as a Maxim, viz. *Naturam finem nullum sibi præfixum habere; & omnes causas Finale, nihil nisi humana esse Figmenta*. And then he proceeds to laugh at those who were so childish, as to imagine that the Eyes were made to see with; the Teeth for chewing; Food for Nourishment; the Sun to shine, &c. *Vid. loc.*

lively Sense of these Great Truths, as may constantly prevail upon them to the Practice of Piety and Virtue. If we consider the Nature of God and His Divine Perfections, particularly His Infinite Power and Goodness to the Sons of Men, one would be apt to think that there should be a certain and infallible Connection between the Belief of those Perfections, and the Practice of Piety and Virtue. But if we look abroad into the World, we shall find the Case to be quite otherwise; and that there are many Persons who really acknowledge the Being and Attributes of God, and earnestly dispute and contend for the Certainty thereof; and yet are extremely careless and negligent of their Duty and Behaviour to Him. And the Reason of this is very plain, *viz.* because tho' they do really believe in God and His Perfections, yet their Belief is only speculative, and they do not attend to the proper Consequences of it; neither do they so seriously and frequently meditate upon these Points, as to let them have their due Force and Influence upon their Minds (*i*). And therefore it is no Wonder at all, that their Faith should be barren and unfruitful; since the Truths of Religion do not operate upon the Mind *Mechanically*, but *Morally*, *i. e.* Men do not become Religious, by barely believing that such and such Doctrines of Religion are true, but by being made duly sensible of the Weight and Importance of them. But this is what they can never be, unless they will allow themselves Time seriously and thoroughly to reflect upon them. For as a great Writer (*k*) well observes, “ A Man is never entirely reformed, till a new Principle governs his Thoughts; and nothing makes that Principle so strong, as deep and frequent Meditations of God. — And he

(*i*) Vid. Dr *Marshall's* Sermons, Vol. I. p. 453 to 456.

(*k*) Bishop *Burnet's* Life of the Lord *Rochester*, p. 53. Edit. 6.

“ he that thinks often of God, and considers Him
 “ as governing the World, and as ever observing
 “ all his Actions, will feel a very sensible Effect of
 “ such Meditations, as they grow more lively and
 “ frequent with him.———And the frequent Re-
 “ turns of these are necessary; least if we allow of
 “ too long Intervals between them, these Impressi-
 “ ons may grow feeble, and other Suggestions may
 “ come in their Room.” And for this Reason no
 Doubt it is, that the Holy Scriptures are continually
 representing to our Minds the Wisdom, Power, Jus-
 tice and Goodness of God; and particularly (which
 is necessary to give all other Perfections their due
 Force) His Omnipresence and Omniscience; as, *That*
He looketh to the Ends of the Earth, and seeth under the
whole Heaven. Job. xxviii. 24. That the Eyes of the
Lord are in every Place, beholding the Evil and the Good.
Prov. xv. 3. That He knoweth our Downsitting and
our Uprising, and understandeth our Thoughts afar off.
Psa. cxxxix. 2. That all Things are naked and open to the
Eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Heb. iv. 13.
And that there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed;
and hid, that shall not be known (1). Matt. x. 26.
 That a Sense of these Perfections may engage us to
 set the Lord always before us. *Psal. xvi. 8.* and to be
 perfect in every good Work, to do His Will, working
 that which is well pleasing in His Sight. *Heb. xiii. 21.*

Q 4

And

(1) *Sed enim Deus actum hominis ignorat, & in caelo constitutus non potest aut omnes obire aut singulos nosse. Erras, ô homo, & falleris; unde enim Deus longe est, cum omnia caelestia terrenaque & quæ extra istam orbis provinciam sunt, Deo cognita, plena sunt? Ubique, non tantum nobis proximus, sed infusus est. In Solem adeo rursus intende, Cælo affixus, sed terris omnibus sparsus est: pariter præsens ubique interest & miscetur omnibus; nusquam enim Claritudo violatur. Quanto magis Deus, auctor omnium ac Speculator omnium, a quo nullum potest esse Secretum, tenebris interest, interest cogitationibus nostris, quasi alteris tenebris? Non tantum sub Illo agimus, sed & cum Illo, ut prope dixerim, vivimus; Minut. Felix de Idol. Vanitat. p. 96.*

And the like we find done by the *Heathen* Philosophers. They are frequently putting us in Mind that God is infinitely Wise, Holy, Just and Good, and particularly that he is every where present, and knoweth all Things (*m*); that in Virtue of these great Attributes, we might be prevailed upon to obey and imitate Him in the constant Practice of Religion and Virtue. If then we really desire to lead the truly *Christian* Life, and to attain to that Perfection of Piety and Goodness which God requires of us, it will not be sufficient to this Purpose, that we really believe there is a God, and that He is endued with all possible Perfections; unless we do so frequently and seriously think and contemplate upon these Perfections, that they have gained their due Effect and Influence upon our Minds, and we live under a Constant and Habitual Sense of them. The *Devils* believe and tremble, as the Apostle observes, *Jam. ii. 19.* And many Men, who do not deny the Being and Attributes of God, do yet continually abound in all Manner of Impiety and Wickedness. And the Reason of this is, because, as I just now observed, tho' they do really believe these Truths, yet they never reflect in their Thoughts how and in what Manner they ought to be affected by them; nor consider seriously with themselves, since there is a God infinitely Wise, Knowing, Just and Holy, *who will bring every Work into*

into

(*m*) Homines existimare oportere Deos omnia cernere, Deorum omnia esse plena. *Cic. de Legib. lib. ii.* Ubique & omnibus present est (Deus). *Sen. Epist. 95.* Quocumque te flexeris, ibi illum videbis occurrentem tibi, Nil ab illo vacat, opus suum ipse implet. *Idem. de Benef. lib. iv. cap. viii.*

Όταν κλείσῃτε τὰς θύρας, καὶ σκίασῃ ἡ ἔνδον πικρὸν ἰεὺς, μὲννηθε μὴ ἐπιτε λέγειν ὅτι μῖνοι ἐσε. ἀλλ' ὁ Θεὸς ἔνδον ἐστὶ, καὶ ὁ ὑμεῖς ἴκεος δαίμων ἐστὶ καὶ τίς τέτοις χρεῖα φώδης, εἰς τὸ βλέπειν τὴ πικρῶτε; *Arrian in Epictet. lib. i. cap. xiv.*

Όυτε ὁ Θεὸς ποτὲ μὴ πάρεσι, ποτὲ δ' ἀπείσι σωμασμα γδ ταῦτα. ἀλλ' αὐτὸς τε ἀειπῶσι πάρεσι, παρῶν ἐξηγημένῃ. *Simplicius in Epictet. cap. xxxviii. pag. 216.*

into Judgment with every Secret Thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Eccl. xii. 14. and will then render to every Man according to his Deeds, Rom. ii. 6. *What Manner of Persons they ought to be in all Holy Conversation and Godliness.* 2 Pet. iii. 11. And thus much concerning the Necessity of frequent and serious Meditation upon the Being and Perfections of God, in order to secure us against the Dangerous Impressions of Atheism, and to confirm us in the stedfast and habitual Practice of *Christian Virtue.* Before I proceed to the next Particular, it will be very proper to take Notice of one Thing, which must never be forgot when we are contemplating upon the Infinite Perfections of God, and particularly upon His Wisdom, Power and Goodness manifested in the Works of the Creation, (and indeed it is a necessary Part of the Business (n) of the *Sabbath Day*, and one main End and Design for which it was first (o) instituted) and that is the Duty of returning Praise and Thanksgiving both publickly and privately to God, *who by Wisdom hath founded the Earth, and by Understanding hath established the Heavens,* Prov. iii. 19. When we consider the Works of God, and survey the Exquisite Beauty and Magnificence which shines forth in every Part of the visible *Creation*, and call to mind how *Good the Lord is to all Men*, and that *He giveth us richly all Things to enjoy*; 1 Tim. vi. 17, we should raise up our Hearts to the highest Strains of Gratitude and Devotion, and should cry out

(n) It may be for ought I know (and some Divines have thought) Part of our Business and Employment in Eternity, to contemplate the Works of God, and give Him the Glory of His Wisdom, Power and Goodness manifested in the Creation of them: I am sure it is Part of the Business of a *Sabbath Day*; and the Sabbath is a Type of that Eternal Rest: For the Sabbath seems to have been first instituted for a Commemoration of the Works of the Creation, from which God is said to have rested upon the seventh Day. *Ray's Wisdom of God in the Creation, Part I. p. 170. Edit. 9.*

(o) See chap. i. of this Treatise in the Beginning.

out with the *Pfalmist*, O Lord how manifold are Thy Works ! in Wisdom hast Thou made them all. The Earth is full of Thy Riches, &c. *Pfalm* civ. 24. And we should never contemplate upon any of the wonderful Works of Nature, but our Affections should immediately kindle in us, and we should take Occasion from them to ascribe due Praise and Glory to God, the Great Author of them ; as we find the *Pfalmist* does at large in the cxlviii *Pfalm*. And we should say with him in ver 13. *Let them praise the Name of the Lord: for His Name alone is Excellent, and His Glory above the Earth and Heaven.* And thus an Eminent Poet of our own Nation in a most Ravishing Strain of Poesy (as a great (p) Critic justly styles it) introduces *Adam* under the Joyful Surprize of his first Existence, calling upon the more early Natures with which he was encompassed to inform him of his Original, and to direct his Gratitude and Worship. And what he here puts into the Mouth of our first Progenitor, ought to be the constant Language and Sentiment of ourselves and all Mankind, whensoever we are taking a View of the Glories of the Creation.

—————
 Thou Sun fair Light,
 And thou enlighten'd Earth, so fresh and gay ;
 Ye Hills and Dales, ye Rivers, Woods and Plains ;
 And ye that live and move, fair Creatures tell,
 Tell, if ye saw, how came I thus, how here ?
 Not of myself ; by some great Maker then,
 In Goodness and in Pow'r Pre-eminent.
 Tell me, how may I know Him, how adore ;
 From whom I have that thus I move and live,
 And feel that I am happier than I know.

Milton's Paradise Lost, Book viii.

But, *Secondly* : Another Principal Point of Religion, upon which it is absolutely necessary for us frequently
 to

(p) Dr Basil Kennet's Introduction to *Puffendorf*, p. 9.

to think and meditate in Order to the truly *Christian* Life and Conversation, is that concerning the Wisdom and Goodness of Divine Providence. Now a due Meditation upon the Wisdom and Goodness of God's Providence is necessary to confirm us in the Belief thereof; upon which our Present Comfort in Life, and our Future Hopes in Death entirely depend. And then, *Secondly*, It is likewise necessary to furnish us with Patience and Submission to the Will of God under the Calamities and Afflictions of this Life, to which all Men are in a greater or less Degree exposed. And *First*, A due Meditation upon the Wisdom and Goodness of God's Providence is necessary to confirm us in the Belief thereof; upon which our Present Comfort in Life, and our Future Hopes in Death entirely depend. That the Comfort of Man's Life relies wholly upon the Providence of God, is such a clear and certain Truth; that none but the most hardened *Infidels* can possibly deny it. For Man of himself is absolutely insufficient for his own Happiness. He is, as an Excellent Prelate admirably (g) expresses it, "able to many Evils and Miseries, which he can neither prevent nor redress: He is full of Wants which he cannot supply, and compassed about with Infirmities which he cannot remove, and obnoxious to Dangers which he can never sufficiently provide against: He is secure of nothing that he enjoys in this World, and uncertain of every thing that he hopes for: He is apt to grieve for what he cannot help, and eagerly to desire what he is never likely to obtain." In which miserable and forlorn Condition it is impossible for him in any Measure to support himself, without the Providence of God watching over him. For without this he cannot know *what is good for him* in this Life, *Eccl. vi. 12.* but must continually *walk in a vain Shadow, and disquiet himself*

himself in vain. *Psal.* xxxix. 6. Nay, and so far would Life itself be from being a Blessing in these Circumstances (r), that it would only be the Foundation of perpetual Misery and Trouble. And then, that all our Hopes of Happiness after Death depend upon the Truth of God's Providence, is very clear and certain; since *Providence* and a *Future State* do necessarily stand or fall together. And if God does not govern the World at present, and observe and regard the Actions of Men (s); it is impossible that he should judge them hereafter, and reward Men for them. And therefore we find that the *Epicureans* and all other *Infidels* after them, who have denied a Providence, have constantly denied a Future State. Now it being one Main and Principal Part of our Duty to God, to trust in Him with all our Heart, and at all Times, *Prov.* iii. 5. *Psal.* lxii. 8. to be careful for Nothing. *Phil.* iv. 6. but to cast all our Care upon Him, who careth for us. 1 *Pet.* v. 7. to acquiesce in all the Dispensations of His Providence, to think that always the best for us which happens, and to say in all Cases with the Disciples concerning St Paul, *Acts* xxi. 14. the Will of the Lord be done; it will be impossible for us ever to bring ourselves to this submissive Temper and Disposition, unless we are stedfastly confirmed in the Belief of a Wise and Good Providence over the World by frequent and serious Meditation. And the Reason of it is very evident; because there are scarcely to be found in any one Point of Religion Greater Difficulties, and Things

(r) Εἰ δ' ἢτε ἕκ εἰσιν (Θεοὶ) ἢ ἔ μέλει αὐτοῖς ἢ ἀνθρώπων· τί μοι ζῆν ἐν κόσμῳ κενῷ Θεῶν, ἢ παρονοίας κενῷ; *Marc. Anton. de Seipio*, lib. ii. § 8. Si maxime talis est Deus, ut nulla gratia, nulla hominum charitate teneatur, valeat: quid enim dicam, propitius sit? *Cic. de Nat. Deorum*, lib. i.

(s) Prope est a te Deus tecum est, intus est. Ita dico, Lucili, Sacer intra nos Spiritus sedet *malorum bonorumque nostrorum Observator & Custos*: Hic prout a nobis tractatus est, ita nos Ipse tractat. *Senec. Epist.* 41.

Things more unaccountable to our Natural Reason, than in this Article of Divine Providence. The Government of God over Mankind, both with respect to public Societies and private Persons, is in many Particulars nothing else but *Mystery* and *Wonder*. And the History of the Fall of our first Parents, the Extreme and Universal Corruption which ensued, the Redemption of Mankind which was grounded upon the Fall, the many Ages which passed before the promised Messiah came, and the many Nations which are still left in *Pagan* Darknes since His Coming, are Matters, which (tho' there is sufficient to be said upon every one of them to silence the Cavils and Objections of (*t*) *Infidels*) must be allowed to carry great Difficulty in them, and such as the most Learned Men will perhaps never be able fully to clear up and explain in this World. And particularly, the great Impiety and Wickedness of the Generality of Christians under the Assistance of an Infinite and All-Powerful Spirit (*u*), the Innumerable Evils and Afflictions of this present (*x*) Life, and above all the Extreme Sufferings of the best and most righteous Men in this World, and that oftentimes for the sake of their Piety and Virtue, whilst many of the most profligate and abandoned Sinners have flourished and abounded in all Manner of Worldly Happiness and Prosperity (*y*),
are

(*t*) See Dr *Coneybear's* and Mr *Brown's* *Answers to Christianity as old as the Creation*, in which all that Author's Objections against Revelation under these Heads are fully answered and confuted. And as to the main Objection of that Author concerning the Christian Revelation not being in fact universal, see particularly Dr *Clarke's* Sermons at *Boyle's* Lectures, Part II. Prop. 7. § 4. *Gurdon's* Sermons at *Boyle's* Lectures, p. 412. &c. Dr *Coneybear's* *Defense*, chap. viii. *Sherlock on Providence*, chap. iv. p. 133. 4to.

(*u*) Vid. *Tillotson*, Vol. II. pag. 459, &c.

(*x*) See this Matter well described by Mr *Woolaston* in *Religion of Nature delineated*, p. 201, &c.

(*y*) Nec hic tempora nostra querimus, ut solent infelices, aut sæculum hodiernum præ aliis Ferreum dicimus: Antiquum obtinet
Mundus

are Things which have raised great Doubts and Suspicions in the Minds of Men, and have made them entertain hard Thoughts of God and His Good Providence. And indeed “ The Management of Providence (in the Government of the Moral World) is, as an Eminent Author rightly judges, such as requires much Thought and Observation to clear up Difficulties ; and to shew that, upon the Whole, it is really better to act virtuously in every Instance than otherwise (z).” And since many Important Actions of God’s Providence, in the Government of Mankind in this Life, do plainly refer to and are manifestly grounded upon His Distributions in the next ; it is therefore unavoidable, that there must be
such

Mundus. Consule omnium temporum, omnium gentium Fastos, Romanos, Græcos, quoscunque velis : ubique reperies *Socratas & Catones*, viros eximios, moribus animique dotibus & indole singulares, iniqua forte oppressos. Hos odit vulgus prophanum & obstreperum : Calumniis infestantur invidi : Nec facile patiuntur liberale ingenium, virtutis & veritatis tenax, rerum potentes & Tyranni. Hic rerum nostrarum status. *Burnet de Statu Mortuorum & Resurgentium, chap. ii. p. 4.*

Dies deficiat, si velim numerare quibus bonis male evenerit ; nec minus, si commemorem, quibus improbis optime. *Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. iii.*

Of this we find the *Psalmist* complaining heavily in the seventy third *Psalms*. And though this Distribution of Providence is a very strong Argument from Natural Reason for a future State (*Vid. Woolaston, p. 204.*) yet we find it hath too often given occasion to Men to call in question the Truth of God’s Providence. *Εἰσὶ γὰρ πῶς οἱ νομίζουσιν εἶναι τὰ θεία, καὶ τοιαῦτα οἰᾶσθαι περὶ ὃ λόγος αὐτὰ ἐξέφηεν, ἀσάθα καὶ δύναμιν ἔχοντα τὸ ἀκροβόλω, καὶ γνώσιν τὸ τελειοτάτων τῶν μύθοι ἀνθρωπίνων κἀσφραγεῖν, ὡς μικρῶν καὶ εὐέλων ὄντων, καὶ ἀναξίων τὸ εὐελῶν ἐπιμελείας τῶν δὲ πάσης τὸ πᾶν ὑπὸ τὸ δόξης αὐτοῖς τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων παρὰ τῶν αἰσθημάτων ὅταν κακὸς δοκῶντας ἴδωσιν ἀρχοντας καὶ πλεῖντας, καὶ ὑψιάνοντας, καὶ μέχει δαΐατε γνησιῶς εὐεργέτας, καὶ πᾶσι τὸ εὐεργετῆν ἐνίοτε παρὰ τῶν δόξων, ὡς δὲ ἀσάθους ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνάγκων πάσης, μηδὲ μᾶς ἐπαρκῆς, ὡς νομίζουσιν, ἐκδήσεως, &c.* *Simplicius in Epictet. cap. xxxviii. p. 212. Vid. loc.*

(z) *Dr Coneybear’s Defense, chap. vii. p. 384.*

such Difficulties, as we can give no Account of without another Life, as Dean *Sherlock* well observes (a). And indeed, as a very Learned Person well expresses it, “ The Governing of Moral Agents in a Way
“ suitable to their Liberty, and to God’s unspotted
“ Holiness, Wisdom and Purity, is one of the
“ finest and most Mysterious Parts of the Divine
“ Conduct, and will be the Admiration both of
“ Men and Angels to all Eternity (b).” Since then, there are such Difficulties in God’s Government of the World, which we shall never be able to Account for in this Life ; it is therefore absolutely Necessary to a due Submission to the Wisdom and Goodness of Divine Providence, that we be stedfastly confirmed in the Belief and Acknowledgment thereof : Otherwise every great Difficulty in the Management of Things will shock and confound us, and bring us in great Hazard and Danger of Infidelity. Now the Truth and Certainty of Divine Providence may be clearly proved and established these three Ways. *First*, By Abstract and Metaphysical Reasoning from the Being and Perfections of God. For if there be a God existing in Nature, Intelligent and Omnipresent, of Infinite Wisdom, Power and Goodness, as I have already proved, it is absolutely impossible, but that as His Knowledge is Infinite, He must know in all Cases what is most conducive to the Happiness of the World in general, and to the Good of every Particular Person ; and since He is Infinite in Power, and all Things depend entirely upon Him, it is impossible but that He must be able to accomplish all those Things, which He knows to be for the Benefit and Advantage of Mankind. And then since He is Infinite in Goodness, He must consequently be willing to
make

(a) Discourse on Divine Providence, chap. iv. p. 119, 4to. See also *Sherlock on Death*, 8vo, chap. iii. § 4, p. 159, &c.

(b) Scripture Vindicated Part I. p. 21.

make all His Creatures as Happy as their Respective Natures, Capacities and Stations, and the General Good of the Universe considered together, will admit. For to use the Words of a very Judicious (c) Writer upon this Occasion, “ Either these Perfections of God are active where-ever there are proper Objects to employ them, or they are nothing but empty Sounds; so that if God cannot be conceived without them, they must every where have their proper Energy and Influence, and all the Creation must be replenished with them (d).” This Reasoning is so very clear and strong, that we find that the *Heathens* themselves did readily infer and conclude, that there was a Wise and Good Providence over the Affairs of this World, from a Consideration of the Being of God and His Perfections (e). And they not only thought it reasonable upon this Account to acquiesce in the Dispensations of Providence in the Government of the World, but also to submit patiently to the Will and Pleasure of God under the Afflictions and Calamities of this present Life (f). And it was owing to nothing else than a Mistake of the Nature and Perfections of God, in *Epicurus* and his Followers, when they thought it was inconsistent with His

(c) Dr *Marshall's* Sermons, Vol. I. p. 15.

(d) This Matter has been clearly and fully demonstrated by several of our Learned Writers. See particularly, Dr *Clarke's* Sermons at *Boyle's* Lectures. Part I. Prop. xii. Part II, in the Introduction. *Woolaston's Religion of Nature, &c.* § 5. 18.

(e) Quo concessio (Deos esse) consistendum est eorum Consilio Mundum Administrari. *Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. ii.* Deorum Providentia Mundus administratur, iidemque consulunt rebus humanis, neque solum universis, verum etiam singulis. *Cic. de Divinat. lib. i.* Ἄλλὰ καὶ εἰσι (θεοὶ) καὶ μέλει ἑωυτοῖς τῶν ἀνθρωπείων, &c. *Marc. Anton. de Scipio lib. ii.* § 8. See also *Simplicius* in *Epicet.* chap. xxxviii. In which there are many Excellent Things said upon this Head of God's Providence.

(f) Vid. *Senec. Consolat. ad Polybium. cap. xxix.* *Marc. Anton. lib. i.* § ult. *lib. v.* § 25. *lib. vi.* § 8. *lib. xiii.* § ult. *Arrian. in Epicet. lib. iii. cap. xxvi.*

His perfect Ease and Happiness to concern Himself with the Affairs of Mankind (g). And indeed the Argument for a Providence drawn from the Being and Perfections of God is so very strong and cogent, that we don't find that any of the Philosophers (except the *Epicureans*) who owned the Being of God, did ever deny His Providence. And *Cicero* observes of *Epicurus*, that however in Words he acknowledged a God, yet in Truth and Fact he denied Him (b). But,

Secondly, Because all Persons are not able to discover a Providence this way, therefore I shall mention another Proof and Evidence thereof, which is more plain and sensible: And this arises from a View and Contemplation of the visible Works of the Creation. For as the amazing Beauties and Perfections in Nature do clearly prove, that the World was made by an infinitely Wise and Perfect Being (i); so the continuing the World in that Order, Beauty and Regularity, in which we observe it, is a manifest Indication that it is managed by His Providence (k). The Diurnal and Annual Motion of the Earth, by which the Revolu-

R

tions

(g) Omnis enim per se Divûm natura necesse est,
 Immortali ævo summa cum pace fruatur,
 Semota a nostris rebus, sejunctaque longè.
 Nam privata dolore omni, privata periclis,
 Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri,
 Nec bene promeritis capitur, nec tangitur ira.

Lucret. lib. i.

(b) *Epicurum* ne in offensionem Atheniensium caderet, verbis reliquisset Deos, re sustulisset. *Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. i.* Quo fit, ut nihil ab *Epicuro* absurdius dici possit; si enim Deus talis est, ut ait, non utique *Deus* appellandus est, sed immane Monstrum: quapropter ex animis hominum radicatus Religionem extraxit. *Polydore Virgil de Rerum Invent. lib. i. cap. i.*

(i) Vid. *Woolaston*, § 5. Prop. xiv. p. 79. &c.

(k) Cœlestem ergo admirabilem ordinem incredibilemque constantiam ex qua Conservatio & salus omnium oritur, qui vacare Mente putat, is ipse Mentis expertus habendus est *Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. ii.*

tions of Night and Day (*l*), and the Vicissitudes of the Seasons are regularly brought about ; The Generation of Mankind, Animals and Plants ; The proportioning the Number of the different Sexes to each other, in order for the better Propagation of the several Species ; the Plentiful Provision which is made for all Creatures in the World according to their kind ; *Psal.* cxlv. 15, 16. cx'vi. 8, 9. 1 *Tim.* vi. 17 (*m*) and to say no more, the Increasing or Withdrawing the Blessings of Life in order to reward or punish the Nations of the World according to their Deserts (*n*) *Psal* cvii. 34, &c. These, with many other things which might be named, are such plain and clear Proofs and Evidences of a Wise and Good Providence over the World ; that a Man must be utterly void of Common Sense, who can withstand them. And then,

Thirdly, and lastly, We may be fully assured of the Truth and Certainty of God's Providence from the Testimony of Divine Revelation. The Government of the *Jewish* Nation furnisheth us with a Demonstration of this, as I have already observed, (p. 175, &c.) and the same is also very Evident from the Whole Bible. And all those Arguments whether they are drawn from *Prophecy, Miracles,* or any other Considerations, which prove the Divine Authority of the

(*l*) Jam Diei Noctisque vicissitudo conservat animantes, tribuens aliud agendi tempus, aliud quiescendi. Sic undique omni ratione concluditur mente consilioque divino omnia in hoc mundo ad salutem omnium, conservationemque admirabiliter administrari. *Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. ii.*

(*m*) See *Eccles.* xliii.

(*n*) We see that Nature hath always conspired with Providence as it's Associate and Confederate, and that the Natural World does so incline to and answer to the Moral, that the one appears to be the Servant and Minister of the other, *viz.* to execute the Vengeance of the Wrath of God upon a sinful Age, or to proclaim His Blessing upon a Virtuous One. Dr *Thomas Burnet of the Faith and Duties of Christians chap. viii p. 217.* See also a very Excellent and Judicious Discourse on this Point, in Dr *Fiddes's Sermons, Vol. II. Sermon XIV.*

the Holy Bible, do also prove the Truth of God's Providence which is contained therein. And no Man can possibly evade those Proofs, especially that which is drawn from the *Miracles* of our Blessed Saviour, without giving up the Faith of all History : Since the Miracles of Christ were such plain incontestable Facts, wrought publickly in the Face of the World and for several Years together ; that the greatest Adversaries of our Faith, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, have not presumed to deny the Truth of them. These are the Proofs and Evidences which we have of a Wise and Good Providence over the World ; and whosoever will carefully attend to them, and frequently and seriously think and meditate upon them, will assuredly be convinced of this great Article of Religion. I do not mean that he will by this Means be able to explain the Difficulties of Providence, or to account for many Parts of the Divine Conduct in the Government of the World. For after our utmost Study and Enquiry into this Matter, what the Apostle observes will still hold good ; viz. *that the Judgments of God are unsearchable, and His Ways past finding out.* Rom. xi. 33. And indeed it would be very strange, if the Counsels of Infinite Wisdom could be fully understood and comprehended by us ; and if such imperfect shortsighted Creatures as we are should by the utmost searching be able to find out God, to find out the Almighty to Perfection. Job xi. 7. *For hardly do we guess aright at Things that are upon Earth, and with labour do we find the Things that are before us : but the Things that are in Heaven, who hath searched out ?* Wisd. ix. 16. But what I mean is this ; that a due and frequent Consideration of these Arguments will give us such a strong and full Conviction of a Wise and Good Providence over the World, as will make us think it highly reasonable, to commit our ways unto the Lord, and to trust in Him, Psal. xxxvii. 5. to rest satisfied with all the Divine Dispensations, and in all Cases to submit ourselves to

His Blessed Will. It is for want of Understanding this matter right, that many Persons do so often question and deny the Truth of God's Providence, and are impatient under His Government and Discipline. They first lay down a certain *Rule* and *Scheme* of Things, according to which, they vainly imagine an Infinitely Wise and Good Being must *necessarily* act and conduct Himself; and when they find Matters happen in the World, in direct Contradiction thereto, then they are too apt to suspect (*o*) the Truth of God's Providence, or at least to conclude that such Things cannot possibly be owing to God's Appointment and Designation. This hath been the fatal Error of some late Writers against *Christianity*, who might have proved excellent Reasoners, if they had been endued with more Humility. Notwithstanding those Demonstrative Proofs and Evidences which God hath given us, of the Truth of the *Christian* Religion; yet they are very positive and confident that it cannot be a Divine Revelation; because it was not promulgated so soon, nor propagated to such an Extent, as in their great Wisdom they conclude a Revelation from God would certainly have been. And to the same Principle, of making our weak and shallow Reason the Rule and Measure of the Divine Counsels, many false and heretical Doctrines which have risen in the Church have been entirely owing, as a very
 Learned

(*o*) Which of us will not readily confess that our Knowledge is finite? And yet, when we come to use it, we behave as if we thought it infinite. Known unto *us* are all *God's Counsels* from the Foundation of the World. We arraign and acquit His Providence as best suits with our own Schemes of Government; and the *secret Things* which belong to him, we explain in so clear a manner that they seem to be no Secrets at all to us! It is a Reflection we think upon our Understandings, not to be able to give some Account of every thing. Solutions, Subtleties, and Distinctions are found out to palliate our Ignorance; and rather than renounce one favourite Error, we entrench ourselves within a thousand others.
 Dr Littleton's *Sermons*, Vol. I. p. 108.

Learned Writer truly remarks (p). And the same mischievous Principle has not only discovered itself in some rare and extraordinary Dispensations of Divine Wisdom, but also in the common and ordinary Events which happen in the World. The *Manichean Heresy* of two *Independent Principles* was founded in this ; that since God cannot possibly be the Author of Evil, and it is plain in Fact that there are innumerable Evils in the World, both Natural and Moral, there must therefore be an *Evil Principle* in the Universe as well as a *Good* one. And, as a Learned Divine well observes, there are too many Persons to be found among us, who quarrel with God's Providence on the Account of the Evils and Afflictions of this present Life. " Could they, *says he*, see such a World, " in which there were no lamentable Sight's nor dole- " ful Complaints to move our Pity, nor to terrify " us with the melancholy Presages of our own Suf- " ferings ; nor to make frightful Impressions on us " of a severe and inexorable Deity ; they would then " thankfully own the Divine Goodness, and rejoice " in it : but, say they, the World wherein we live " gives us a very different Prospect ; we see a great " many miserable People, and feel a great many Mife- " ries ourselves, and many Times expect and fear " a great many more ; and how unlike is this World " to what we should have imagined the World to " have been, had we never seen it, but only heard " of a World made and governed by infinite and " perfect Goodness (q)." And, as the same Ex- cellent Author elsewhere expresses it, " I cannot " without some Indignation reflect upon the Baseness " and Ingratitude of Mankind, who *live and move*

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and

(p) Scripture Vindicated. Part II. p. 67, 68.

(q) *Sherlock* on Divine Providence, chap. vii. p. 217.

“ and have their Being in God ; who know how little
 “ they deserve of Him ; and feel every Day how
 “ many Blessings they receive from Him ; and yet
 “ seem never better pleased than when they can find
 “ or ignorantly invent some plausible Pretence to re-
 “ proach His Goodness (r).” Now the only Remedy
 that I know of in these Cases, either to secure our
 Piety towards God under the hard and intricate Dis-
 pensations of His Providence, or to furnish us with
 Patience and Submission to His Will under sharp and
 grievous Afflictions, is to confirm ourselves in a sted-
 fast Belief of Divine Providence, by a frequent and
 serious Meditation upon the Proofs and Evidences
 thereof. And when we are thus confirmed in this Be-
 lief, to be peremptorily resolved to lay aside all our
 Doubts, and to give up all Difficulties, upon the Ac-
 count of God’s Infinite Goodness and Unerring Wis-
 dom. Otherwise, every great Difficulty which we
 meet with in the Management of Things will shock
 our Faith, and endanger our Constancy ; and we
 shall be too apt to murmur and complain of God and
 His Providence, whensoever any great Calamity and
 Distress shall fall upon us. And this Judgment upon
 the Point is I think highly just and reasonable : for
 since we have abundant Demonstration in many Parti-
 culars, that a Wise and Good Providence governs the
 World ; we may very safely conclude that he does so
 in all (s). And since we are sure that God made the
 World for our Sakes, and hath put all Creatures there-
 in under our Dominion (t), and hath enriched us on
 every

(r) *Sherlock*, *ibid.* p. 267.

(s) Ἐπι δ’ εἰ τῶ ὅλκ κόσμῳ ὁ Θεὸς ἐπιμελεῖται, ἀνάσκει καὶ τῶν
 μερῶν αὐτῆ προνοεῖν, ὡσπερ καὶ αἱ τέχναι ποιῶσι. καὶ γὰρ ἰατρός τῶ
 ὅλκ σώματι ἐπιμεληθῆναι προσέμεν, ἐκὶ ἀνάμελίσσει τῶ μερῶν
 ἐδὲ στρατηγός, ἐδὲ οἰκονόμος ἢ πολίτης ἀνὴρ. τῶ γὰρ μερῶν
 ἀμελεμένων, ἀνάσκει χειρόνως τὸ ὅλον διαλίθεσθαι. *Simplicius* in
Epicet. cap. xxxviii. p. 214.

(t) *Vid.* *Psal.* viii.

every side with the Blessings of His Goodness ; it would argue a great Want of Understanding, as well as Gratitude, if we should question his kind Providence towards us (*u*) ; because He hath not granted us every Particular Thing which we desire (*x*), or hath sent some Affliction upon us which is necessary for our Good. The Force of this Reasoning is exceedingly well expressed by a very great Philosopher in an excellent Similitude, applied by him to the Refutation of the *Manichean Heresy*, and it will hold equally in the present Argument. “ If, *says he*, there
 “ are Evils of which Men know not the true
 “ Origin ; yet if they would but seriously reflect upon
 “ the many Marks of Reason, Wisdom and Goodness,
 “ every where to be observed in Instances which
 “ they do or may understand, they could scarce
 “ doubt but the same Things prevailed in those
 “ which they do not understand. If I should meet
 “ with a Book, the Author of which I found had
 “ disposed his Matter in beautiful Order, and treated
 “ his Subjects with Reason and Exactness ; but at
 “ last, as I read on, came to a few Leaves written
 “ in a Language which I did not know ; in this Case
 “ I should close the Book with a full Perswasion, that
 “ the same Vein of good Sense, which shewed itself
 “ in the former and much greater Part of it, ran thro’
 “ the other also (*y*).” But,

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Secondly,

(*u*) Quem vero Astrorum ordines, quem Dierum Noctiumque vicissitudines, quem Mensium Temperatio, quinque ea quæ gignuntur nobis ad fruendum, non Gratum esse cogant, hunc Hominem omnino numerare quî decet ? *Cic. de Legib. lib. ii.*

(*x*) Bona fortunæ & felicitas externa non adhærent Virtuti & sapientiæ in hâc vitâ : His non minus gaudent nec infrequentius inulsi pravique homines. Quod si in his sita esset ultimò felicitas humana, & hic penitus terminanda, hunc perturbatum rerum ordinem minime ferret summus Mundi Rector, idemque judex æquissimus. *Burnet de Statu Mortuorum & Resurgentium. chap. ii. p. 3.*

(*y*) *Woolaston's Relig. of Nat. deliv. § v. 7. p. 72. See the Section itself, in which there are many Excellent Things said to clear up the Difficulties of Divine Providence.*

Secondly, A due and serious Meditation upon the Proofs and Evidences of Divine Providence is absolutely necessary to furnish us with Patience and Submission to the Will of God, under the Calamities and Afflictions of this present Life. There will be no Necessity of insisting long upon this ; since what hath been laid down under the former Head may very easily be applied to this. I shall therefore only at present observe thus much, *viz.* that if the Common Difficulties in the Management of Things, and the Calamities of Life to which Mankind are generally subject, do. often tempt Men to suspect and question the Truth of God's Providence ; they must certainly be in much greater Danger of this Temptation, when they are exercised themselves with such Afflictions, as are most grievous and terrible. And indeed there are some Afflictions of this Life so heavy, and some Pains and Sufferings so sharp and severe, that there must be great Allowance made for the Weakness and Infirmary of Men in their Complaints under them. And we find in Fact, that the very best of Men, who really and heartily believed the Providence of God, could not forbear expostulating with Him on the Account of their Sufferings. Thus the *Psalmist* in *Psalm lxxii* complains of the *Prosperity of the Wicked*, whilst he says that *he himself was punished all the Day long, and chastened every Morning. ver. xiv.* And Holy *Job*, who was so eminent for his Patience, and in such emphatical Words expressed his Submission to the Will and Pleasure of God, *chap. i. 21. ii. 10.* yet was so cast down and dejected by his extreme Afflictions, as to curse the Day of his Birth, to wish that he had died ever since he was born, and to think the Continuance of his Life a great Burthen and Misfortune to him, as you may read at large in the Third Chapter. If therefore such extraordinary Persons, who firmly believed the Providence of God, and had the utmost Reliance and Dependance thereupon, were apt to complain

plain so heavily under their Sufferings; we must needs think those Men to be in a bad Condition, who when they are cast into the *Furnace of Affliction*, *Isa.* xlvi. 10. are yet not endued with this Belief, or at least have considerable Doubts in their Minds concerning it. It is therefore of the utmost Necessity in order to support Men under the Troubles of this Life, that by due and frequent Meditation upon the Proofs and Evidences of Divine Providence they confirm themselves stedfastly in the Belief thereof: that so when any extraordinary Calamity and Affliction shall fall upon them, they may have Confidence and Comfort in Him, who is a *Strength to the Needy in their Distress*, *Isa.* xxv. 4. *And whose Eyes run to and fro in the Earth, to shew Himself strong in the Behalf of them whose Heart is perfect toward Him.* 2 *Chron.* xvi. 9. For otherwise there are many Conditions of this Life which would be absolutely intolerable, and it would be impossible for the bravest Men in the World to keep up their Spirits under them. Nay, I fear, if Men are not supported by a firm Belief of God's Wise and Good Providence, they will not be able to bear the common and ordinary Afflictions of Life with due Patience and Submission. And indeed it is only owing to the Want of this Belief; that we observe so much Complaint and Murmuring in the Generality of Mankind under them. The great Uneasiness of Men under their Sufferings the antient Philosophers fully perceived, and therefore they invented many strange Arts and Devices to divert the Sense and Apprehension of them. To this End some of them asserted, that there was no such Thing as Pain and Misery, but that it was altogether owing to Fancy and Imagination. But because the Complaints of these Men under their Afflictions was a Demonstration of the Falseness of this Suggestion, therefore others maintained, that tho' Pain was Real, yet it was no Evil, and that it was unbecoming a Wise
Man

Man to be concerned about it, with many other Notions (z) which were too ridiculous to gain any considerable Reception: Since as a most Excellent Prelate well expresses it (a), “ all Philosophy that will
 “ not acknowledge Loss and Pain and Suffering to
 “ be Evils, and troublesome and terrible, is either
 “ obstinate Sullenness or gross Hypocrisy.” But those who were the best and wisest of them endeavoured to persuade Men to be patient under Afflictions, from a Consideration of the Wisdom and Goodness of Divine Providence; as I have just now observed. And *Epicurus* himself, tho’ he denied a Providence, yet was so sensible of the Necessity of Providence to support and comfort Men under their Afflictions, that he could not help saying, that “ he thought it
 “ much better for Mankind to believe the *Fable* itself
 “ of the Heathen Gods, than that the World should
 “ be governed by a blind *Necessity*.” And he gives an admirable Reason for it, *viz.* “ because, *says he*,
 “ there is Hopes that the *Gods* may be prevailed upon
 “ by Worship and Prayer, but *Necessity* is absolutely
 “ deaf and inexorable (b).” But,

Thirdly, Another Point of Religion, which it is necessary for us frequently to think and meditate upon, is That concerning the Infinite Love and Goodness of God to Mankind, in the Redemption of the World by the Death of *Christ*. Now I shall not upon this Head enquire whether the Death of *Christ* was a True, Real and Meritorious Sacrifice for the Sins of the whole World; for as this is expressly asserted in innumerable

(z) Vid. *Tillotson*, Vol. I, p. 65, 66.

(a) *Tillotson*, Vol. III, p. 402.

(b) Κρῆττον ἢν τὰ πρὸς θεῶν μύθῳ κατακολληθῆν, ἢ τῆ σφόδρα φυσικῶν εἰμαρμένῃ δουλεύειν. ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἐλπίδα παραίτησεως ὑποφέρει θεῶν δια πρῆξις, ἢ δ’ ἀπαραιτήσιον ἔχει τῷ ἀνάγκῃν.
Epicuri Litera ad Menecæum apud Diog. Laert. in Vita Epicuri.

numerable Texts of Holy Scripture (*c*), so it hath been clearly proved and demonstrated by several Learned Writers beyond all Contradiction (*d*). Neither shall I at present enter into the Question, whether the Death of *Christ* was so absolutely necessary to the Redemption purchased thereby, as that God could not consistently with His Perfections have, without such Satisfaction, pardoned the Sins of Men upon their true Repentance. For it does not become us (neither do I believe it is in our Power) to determine in such a Case, what God absolutely might or might not do. But as the Holy Scriptures have plainly told us, that it is upon the Account of *Christ's* Death, that God hath pardoned the Sins of Mankind, and that it is only *through His Blood that we have obtained Redemption*; *Ephes. i. 7.* we may safely venture to assert thus much, that no other Method of Reconciliation, as far as we are able to conceive, could have been so suitable to the Holiness and Justice (*e*) of God, as well as necessary to support the Honour and Dignity of his Government (*f*). But tho' we dare not presume to say that Satisfaction to God's Justice was so absolutely necessary to the Pardon of Sin, that he could
not

(*c*) See a very large Collection of Texts to this Purpose in *Tillotson*, Vol. III, p. 489.

(*d*) See particularly *Grotius de Satisfactione Christi*. *Stillingfleet* on the Sufferings of *Christ*. *Sherlock* on the Immortality of the Soul, &c. chap. v. § 4. *Tillotson*, Vol. III. p. 490.

(*e*) Certainly next to exacting the Punishment due to our Sins at our own Hands, the most dreadful Severity God could have expressed, was to resolve not to remit it upon any other Consideration, than that of His own Son's undergoing it in *our Stead*; by which He hath given us the greatest Reason that *Heaven* and *Earth* could afford to *tremble* at His Justice, even whilst we are inclosed in the Arms of His Mercy. *Dr Scot's Christian Life*, 8vo. Vol. I, chap. iv. § 1. p. 202, 203.

(*f*) Vid. *Sherlock* *ibid.* *Coneybear's* Defense, &c. p. 114, & *Brown's* Defense, p. 471, &c.

not possibly (g) pardon Sin without it ; yet on the other side, we are very certain, that it can never be proved from God's Perfections (notwithstanding a late Author is very positive (b) thereof) that God is obliged without such Satisfaction to forgive Men their Sins immediately upon their Repentance. For, as a great Prelate truly observes, if our Obedience for the Time to come were never so perfect, “ yet, *says he,*
 “ Obedience for the future could make no Reparation to the Justice of God for our past Sins and Transgressions ; and therefore we cannot hope for our own Righteousness to be justified and accepted with God, and upon the Merit of it to have our Sins pardoned, much less to be rewarded with Eternal Life (i).” To which I will beg Leave to add the very Excellent Words of a late judicious Writer : “ The Relation between the Creator and the Creature as such, continuing thro' all Parts of the Creature's Existence the same ; it is clear, that an absolute Obedience in every Particular must be always due : Obedience therefore for the future must as really be due, as Obedience was in the past, and Repentance itself (compleat Repentance I mean) is nothing else but a future Obedience succeeding a past Transgression. This Obedience which would have been his Duty on Suspicion of past Innocence, can make no amends for past Transgression : The mere View of this cannot be a Reason, why such Transgression should be pardoned : It may commend the present, but cannot excuse the past (k).” And indeed, as a very learned Author
 justly

(g) See Archbishop Synge's *Gentleman's Religion*, Part II,

§ 34.

(b) *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, chap. xiv. p. 417, &c.

(i) *Tillotson*, Vol. III, p. 175.

(k) Dr *Coneybear's* Defence, chap. ii, p. 117. See from p. 114 to 131.

justly remarks, "It cannot positively be proved from
" any of God's Attributes, that He is *absolutely obliged*
" to pardon all Creatures all their Sins at all Times,
" barely and immediately upon their Repenting.
" There arises therefore from Nature no sufficient
" Comfort to Sinners, but an anxious and endless *So-*
" *licitude* about the Means of appeasing the Deity.
" Hence those diverse ways of Sacrificing and number-
" less Superstitions which overspread the Face of the
" Heathen World, &c. (l)." Since then the Necessity of a Sacrifice in order to satisfy the Justice of God, as well as to maintain the Honour of His Government, is very evident from Natural Reason itself, and the Sense and Judgment of Mankind in all Ages of the World (m): We may therefore hence discover the Infinite Love and Goodness of God, in sending his only Begotten Son into the World for our Redemption. And we should frequently and seriously think and meditate upon it, as a most strong and powerful Motive of our Obedience and Gratitude towards Him. Upon which Account the Holy Scriptures so frequently represent this Matter to us, and ascribe our Redemption by our Blessed Saviour's Death to the great Love which God and *Christ* had for us. *John* iii. 16. 1 *John* iv. 9. *Rom.* v. 8. *Ephes.* v. 2. *John* xv. 13. 1 *John* iii. 16. And as the Holy Scriptures often put us in Mind of the Love of God in this Dispensation, as a forcible Argument of our Love and Obedience to him, so likewise do they earnestly urge the same Consideration, to excite us to the great Duty of Love and Charity for one another. Thus says St *John*, *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.* 1 *Ep.* iv. 11. And St *Paul* lays it down as a very good Reason against the Sin of giving Offence to others,
viz.

(l) Dr *Samuel Clarke's* Sermons at *Boyle's* Lectures, Part II, Prop. 6. § iii 2. See the Place.

(m) See Dr *Marshall's* Sermons, Vol. I, p. 443, &c.

viz. Destroy not him with thy Meat for whom Christ diea. Rom. xiv. 15. See also I Cor. viii. 11. And for this Cause, no doubt, among others the Blessed Sacrament of *Christ's* Body and Blood was instituted, that a Sense and Remembrance of His Inestimable Love in dying for us might the more powerfully engage us to have Love and Charity for one another. For this is the Doctrine in which our Blessed Saviour instructed His Disciples immediately before his Sufferings, at the Time when this Holy Ordinance was celebrated and appointed by Him. Thus says our Lord, *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.* And then it immediately follows, *Greater Love bath no Man than this, that a Man lay down his Life for his Friends.* *John xv. 12, 13.* If then we are desirous to attain to that Perfection of Piety and Virtue, which our Holy Religion requires of us, we must often employ our Minds in a Devout and Serious Meditation upon the Great Love of *Christ* in dying for us. A Reflection upon the Being and Attributes of God, His Wisdom and Goodness in creating this World, and preserving and governing it by His Providence, will indeed furnish us with sufficient Arguments and Motives of our Obedience and Gratitude towards Him. But nothing can work so powerfully upon our Affections, nor inspire us with such an exalted Sense of God's Infinite Love and Goodness towards us, as the Consideration of our Blessed Saviour's Sufferings (*n*). Imagine then, kind Reader, that thou now see'st thy Dear Saviour's Body stretched upon the Cross; His Head crowned with Thorns; His

His

(*n*) The great Points of the Incarnation and Sufferings of our Saviour produce naturally such Habits of Virtue in the Mind of Man, that supposing it were possible for us to be mistaken in them, the Infidel himself must at least allow, that no other System of Religion could so effectually contribute to the heightening of Morality. *Mr Addison in Spectator, N^o 186.* See the Place.

His Hands and Feet nailed to the Wood ; His Side pierced with a Spear ; His Flesh rent and torn with Scourges ; and His Precious Body overwhelmed with Blood ! Think that thou hearest Him now in an Intolerable Agony, under the Heavy Burthen of the Sins of the whole World, tormented by all, and even abandoned by His Father Himself, who did withdraw His Gracious Presence from Him for a while, and suspend those Comforts with which all His other Servants are commonly supported and refreshed in their Afflictions, which forced from Him that Melancholy Complaint, *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me.* Couldst thou, I say, behold this *Dismal Sight*, and hear this *Mournful Voice* without the greatest Grief and Concern of Mind ; considering that *Christ* suffered all this for thy Sake ? When our Dear Saviour was hanging upon the Cross, *Nature* was in Convulsions, and seemed to be approaching towards it's Dissolution. The *Sun* hid himself and withdrew his Light, as if he could not behold such a Prodigy of Wickedness transacted ; *The Veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the Top to the Bottom ; the Earth did quake, and the Rocks rent, and the Graves were opened, and many Bodies of Saints which slept arose.* *Matt.* xxvii. 45, 51, 52. And surely then we must be wholly stupid and insensible, and our Hearts *harder than the nether Milstone*, *Job* xli. 24, if we can seriously reflect upon these Amazing Sufferings of our Blessed Redeemer, and not be moved and prevailed upon thereby to the most Ardent and Inflamed Love and Devotion towards Him. We shall think nothing too much to be done for *Christ's* Sake, no ; although we should lay down our Lives for Him, if we will but call to mind His infinite Love to us in dying for us : Especially if, besides the Unparalleled Barbarity and Indignity of His Sufferings, we shall duly consider these three Things, which do exceedingly enhance and increase His Love. *First,*
The

The Excellency and Dignity of His Person. He was no Common Ordinary Sufferer, not a mere Man like ourselves ; the *Son of Man* indeed, but at the same Time the *Son of God* ; the *Brightness of His Father's Glory*, and the *Express Image of His Person* ; One who was *in the Form of God*, and thought it no *Robbery to be equal with God*, and yet made *Himself of no Reputation*, &c. *Phil. ii. 6, &c.* and to say no more, He is one who, as the same Apostle speaks, *is over all God Blessed for ever*, *Rom. ix. 5. (o)*.

Secondly, It is a great Enhancement of our Blessed Saviour's Love to consider the Persons for whom He died. They were not Righteous and Good Men, such as had deserved any Favour from Him ; but vile and unworthy Wretches, *Enemies to God*, as the Apostle calls them, *Rom. v. 10*. And so far from having any Remains of Goodness in them, that they were *quite dead in Trespasses and Sins*. *Eph. ii. 1*. And yet so great and astonishing was the Love of *Christ*, as to be willing to lay down His Life for them. This Argument the Holy Scriptures frequently take notice of ; and particularly in *Rom. v. 7, 8*, where *St Paul* observes

(o) The Force of this Argument and the Necessity of a Divine Person to make Satisfaction for the Sins of the World, is admirably expressed by our excellent Poet *Milton*, in a Passage where he introduces God the Father, enquiring of the Holy Angels which surrounded His Throne, whether any of them would undertake the great Work of Man's Redemption, *viz.*

“ Say Heavenly Powers, where shall we find such Love ?

“ Which of you will be mortal to redeem

“ Man's mortal Crime, and just th' Unjust to save ?

“ Dwells in all Heaven Charity so dear ?

He ask'd, but all the Heavenly Choir stood mute,

And Silence was in Heaven on Man's Behalf,

Patron or Intercessour none appear'd ;

Much less that durst upon his own Head draw

The deadly Forfeiture and Ransom set.

observes, that *scarcely for a Righteous Man will one die, yet peradventure for a Good Man some would even dare to die; but God commendeth His Love towards us, in that, while we were yet Sinners, Christ died for us (p).*

And in the *Third and last Place*, It mightily increases the Love of *Christ* in dying for us, to consider the easy Terms and Conditions which He requires on our Part. So Transcendent is the Goodness of *Christ* to us miserable Sinners, and so many and great are our Obligations to Him, that as the Servants of *Naaman* said to him in another Case, *if he had bid us do some Great Thing, ought we not to do it?* 2 Kings, v. 13. Should he require the hardest Things of us, to spend every Moment of our Lives in His Service, to be continually exposed to Labours and Persecutions, and at last to shed our Blood for the Benefit of His Church, we ought to do it with the utmost cheerfulness. For as the Apostle well argues, *Hereby perceive we the Love of God, because He laid down His Life for us: and we ought to lay down our Lives for the Brethren.* 1 John iii. 16. And it is very certain in such a Case, that after all we could do, we should still be *unprofitable Servants*, and should never be able to compensate the Infinite Value of *Christ's* Sufferings, nor to merit that Immense and Glorious Reward which by His Death He hath purchased for us. And yet so Great is the Love and Goodness of our Redeemer, that he hath enjoined us nothing in the general Course and Tenour of our Duty, but what is easy and delightful, as well as just and reasonable, and most beneficial to ourselves. He hath in a Manner commanded us only to *wash and be clean*; to repent us truly of our former Sins, and to turn to Him in Newness of Life (q). And if all

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that

(p) Vid. Grot. in loc.

(q) Deus Summus per Filium Jesum Christum Dominum nostram volentes liberat, & pœnitentibus libenter ignoscit, Nec multa exigit,

that He hath done and suffered for our Sakes, cannot prevail upon us to do this ; it must surely be, either because we despise His Death and Sufferings, or that we do not allow ourselves Time seriously to reflect upon the Inestimable Value and Merit of them. But,

Fourthly and lastly, Another Principal Point of Religion upon which it is absolutely necessary for us frequently to think and meditate, in order to the truly *Christian* Life and Conversation, is That concerning a Future Judgment, and the Everlasting Happiness and Miseries of another World. Now the Necessity of this will plainly appear, if we consider the State and Condition of Mankind, and what are the main and most prevailing Principles of their Actions. And if we look upon them in this View, we shall soon perceive that the greatest Part of them are governed by their Passions, and by a close Regard to worldly Interest and Pleasures. There are indeed some few Persons, who are regularly determined to the Practice of Virtue from the Happiness of their Temper, and the Goodness of their Education. But with respect to the Generality of Men the Case is quite otherwise: They are too eagerly and violently bent upon Present and Sensible Gratifications ; and even those, who are the most exact and regular in the Practice of Virtue, have their Peculiar Temptations, which they sometimes find it very hard and difficult to withstand. And many of the best and most pious Men do not in many Cases act religiously so much, because their Reason and Conscience require them to do so ; as because they find a great Pleasure and Satisfaction in such Actions at present, as well as hope to be rewarded for them hereafter. Let the *Stoic* pretend what he will, the Present State of Mankind is plainly

plainly a State of Appetite and Passion; and therefore it is in vain to think that Men will ever be governed in such a State by Abstracted Rules of Reason, such as are suitable only to a State of *Paradise* and *Angelical* Perfection. Every Man in the World is naturally determined to his own Happiness; tho' different Men pursue their Happiness by different Ways and Methods. But whatsoever any Man pitches upon as the Object of his Happiness, he naturally pursues those Means which tend towards the Enjoyment of it. But now the first Step to be Happy, is not to be Miserable; but this is what every Man thinks himself to be, whensoever he is debarred the Enjoyment of those Things in which he places his chief Happiness. In such a Case he feels a great Uneasiness and Disquietude in his Mind, which nothing but the Enjoyment of his Beloved Object can possibly remove. And therefore since the Generality of Men have so earnestly set their Affections upon the Riches and Pleasures of this present Life; it is no wonder that we should always find them so uneasy and impatient whensoever they are deprived of them. Now the Case being so; the Question is, How shall a Man get rid of this Inconvenience? And when the Temptations of Interest and Worldly Pleasure exert their full Strength and Force upon his Affections; by what means shall he be able to deliver himself from that Uneasiness of Mind, which will certainly arise from not complying with them? Now I am well assured, this cannot possibly be done any other way but this, *viz.* by having his Affections so strongly engaged upon other Things of greater Consequence and Importance to his Happiness; as that it shall be a much greater Uneasiness to him to lose and forfeit those Things, than to withstand the utmost Rage and Importunity of Temptations. For otherwise, he will certainly and infallibly comply with them; since every Man is determined to remove the greatest Uneasiness, as the Necessary

Means of making himself happy. And therefore if a Man hath not a greater Value for the Favour of God and Eternal Life, than he has for the Riches and Pleasures of this World, and it be not a much greater Trouble and Uneasiness to him to relinquish his future Happiness, than to resist the Temptations and Allurements of Sin; it will be impossible to persuade him for the Sake of that Happiness to renounce his sensual Desires and Inclinations. And on the other side, if a Man hath not a greater Dread and Terror of Future Punishment than of any Temporal Sufferings, to which he may be exposed upon the Account of Religion; he will never in Order to avoid that Punishment submit himself to the present Sufferings. But now it is impossible for a Man's Affections to be thus engaged; *i. e.* that he should have a greater Esteem and Value for the Favour of God and the Happiness of Heaven, than for the Interests and Pleasures of this present Life; And on the other side, that he should have a greater Dread and Terror of Future Punishment, than of any Temporal Sufferings and Afflictions; unless he frequently and seriously thinks and meditates upon them. For there are two Conditions and Qualifications, absolutely necessary to give the Things of the next Life a commanding Power and Influence upon our Affections; neither of which can be obtained without frequent and serious Thought and Consideration of them. The *First* is, That we are firmly convinced of the Truth and Certainty of them; the *Second*, that we have a quick and lively sense and Apprehension of the Nature and Importance of them. And,

First, That the Things of another Life may have a Commanding Force and Influence upon our Affections, it is necessary that we be firmly convinced of the Truth and Certainty of them. This is a Position that will not stand in need of any long Proof; it being so plainly supported by the Reason and Experience of
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all Mankind. For if those Persons, who are firmly possessed of the Belief of a Future Judgment and Eternal Retributions, do yet in many Cases find it hard and difficult to resist Temptations, and the Things of this World do notwithstanding their Belief take too great Hold of them; we may easily imagine that they must have a very strong and powerful Effect upon those Men, whose Faith and Belief of future Things is weak and wavering, or who have any Considerable Doubts in their Minds concerning them. And indeed one main Reason, why there is so little Piety and Virtue to be found among us, and that the Generality of Mankind are so violently attached to the Interests and Pleasures of this present Life; is because they are not firmly possessed of the Belief of the Endless and unspeakable Rewards and Punishments in the Life to come. And truly in such a Case it cannot be expected that they should act otherwise: Since Men do not love to act upon Hazards; and much less then will they be willing to relinquish the present Enjoyment of such Things, as are most agreeable and delightful to them, for the Sake of future Things that are precarious and uncertain. And therefore it is of the utmost Necessity and Importance to the Practice of Piety, that Men confirm themselves in a fix'd and stedfast Belief of this Doctrine by serious and frequent Meditation. For tho' Men may imagine that they have not the least doubt in their Minds concerning this main Article of their *Creed*, especially since they contend and dispute for it with so much Earnestness and Zeal; yet there is nothing more easy than to delude themselves in this matter. And the only Way to know the Strength and Power of Religious Principles, is to put them to the Trial. And therefore if Men fail in the Hour of Temptation (as many of the most Zealous Defenders of Religion too frequently do) it is a sure Sign that their Faith and Belief of Future Things is weak and

infirm, or (which will be considered presently) that they have a greater Love and Affection for the Things of this Life than for those of the next. For this is the Character and Property of True *Faith*, as the Apostle observes, 1 *Job*. v. 4. that *it overcometh the World*. But especially, there is the greater Necessity that Men should confirm themselves stedfastly in the Belief of Christian Principles, by duly considering and weighing the Proofs and Evidences of them in these latter Times, when they are in the utmost Hazard and Danger of Infidelity: And that not only from the Innumerable Evil Examples among us (and those sometimes of very Knowing and Learned Men, as well as such as are Weak and Ignorant) but also from the Craft and Subtilty of seducing Spirits, who are continually spreading their Poison throughout the whole Kingdom; and who with the utmost Art and most indefatigable Industry have endeavoured to obscure and perplex every Part of the *Christian Faith*, and to invalidate and destroy all the Proofs and Evidences thereof. Which surely must render it a Matter of the utmost Necessity and Importance to all Persons among us, that they frequently consider and examine those Proofs and Evidences according to their several Abilities and Opportunities. And indeed, there can be no other Reason assigned, why so many Men of good Natural Parts and Understanding go into the Measures of Infidelity, and entertain a Mean and Contemptible Opinion of the *Christian Faith*; but because they will not study both Sides of the Question impartially, nor allow themselves time seriously and thoroughly to weigh and consider the many strong and unanswerable Arguments, which may be urged in Defense of our Holy and Excellent Religion. But,

Secondly, That the Things of another Life may have a Commanding Force and Influence upon our Affections; it is necessary that we have a quick and lively

lively Sense and Apprehension of the Nature and Importance of them; *i. e.* that we become so duly sensible and throughly convinced of the great Difference between Things *Temporal* and Things *Eternal*; that we take a much greater Pleasure in the Hopes of God's Favour and the Happiness of Heaven, than in the best and choicest Delights which this World affords: And on the other Side, that we have a much greater Dread and Terror of Future Punishments, than of the very worst Evils and Calamities which can befall us in this World. Unless we are thus disposed in our Minds, it is ridiculous to pretend to any Religion; since the very Nature of Religion consists in being prevailed upon by the Superior Motives and Considerations of the next Life, to get the better of the Temptations of this. And unless we are thus affected by the Belief of future Things, whatever Professions of Religion we may make, *we have*, in that Case, *nothing but the Form of Godliness*, and at the same time deny the Power of it, 2 *Tim.* iii. 5. But now it is very difficult to obtain this close Regard to the Things of another Life, and to give them the Preference in our Esteem and Value before those of this Life. And the Reason of it is this; because the Things of this Life, are present with (*r*) us, and operate strongly upon our *Senses*; we see and taste and feel the Pleasures of it: Whereas the Things of the next Life are remote and distant, and operate only upon the *Imagination*, which is a much weaker and more ineffectual Principle. And upon this Account I know the Enemies of Religion boast and triumph;

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and

(*r*) Self-Love still stronger, as it's Object's nigh,
Reason's at Distance, and in Prospect lye;
That sees immediate Good by present Sense,
Reason the Future and the Consequence.

and when we would persuade Men to live a Heavenly and Divine Life from the Hopes of a Future Immortal Inheritance, they look upon the Attempt as Impracticable, if not Impossible. And for this they appeal not only to the Nature of Things, and the Manifest Difference between the Powers of *Appetite* and *Perswasion*, but also to the known Conduct and Example of the greatest Part of *Christians*; who tho' they do indeed talk much and often about Religion, and their great Love of God and Heavenly Things, yet do visibly and undeniably set their Hearts and Affections almost entirely upon this World. But tho' the great Coldness and Indifferency of the Generality of *Christians*, with respect to the Things of the next Life, gives the Enemies of Religion the utmost Advantage against us, and it be indeed very difficult to get such a Taste and Relish of Future Things, as to esteem them in all Cases above Things present; yet on the other Side it is by no means Impracticable, (s) but may in Time and by Degrees be attained to

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- (s) Thicker than Arguments Temptations throng,
 At best more watchful this, but that more strong;
 The Action of the Stronger to suspend,
 Reason still use, to Reason still attend,
 Attention Habit and Experience gains,
 Each strengthens Reason, and Self-love restrains.

Essay on Man, ibid.

The Cast of Mind, which is natural to a discreet Man, makes him look forward into Futurity; and consider what will be his Condition Millions of Ages hence, as well as what it is at present. He knows that the Misery or Happiness, which are reserved for him in another World, lose nothing of their Reality by being placed at so great a Distance from him. The Objects do not appear little to him, because they are remote. He considers that those Pleasures and Pains, which lye hid in Eternity, approach nearer to him every Moment, and will be present with him in their full Weight and Measure; as much as those Pains and Pleasures which he feels at this

to with due Care and Consideration. For if once Men are throughly perswaded of the Immortality of the Soul and a Future State, they must needs be sensible that as they are to exist for ever in another World; so they cannot possibly be said to be happy, unless they are made happy for ever. But it is very plain that the Things of this Life cannot make them so; because in a little time they will cease and come to an End. And tho' the Happiness of the Future State be in a great Measure unknown; yet that is no Objection at all to the Value and Importance of it. Many Things may be very Excellent in themselves, and administer the greatest Delight and Pleasure to us, tho' at present we are unacquainted with them. A Man that is born blind can never have the least Sense and Notion of Sight, and of the exceeding Delight which the Use of that Faculty affords to us; and yet surely for all that, the *Light is sweet, and a pleasant Thing it is for the Eyes to behold the Sun.* Eccl. xi. 7. and to take a View of all the Glories of this Visible Creation. We did not know
what

this very Instant. For this Reason he is careful to secure to himself that, which is the proper Happiness of his Nature, and the ultimate Design of his Being. He carries his Thoughts to the End of every Action, and considers the most distant as well as the most immediate Effects of it. He supersedes every little Prospect of Gain and Advantage which offers itself here, if he does not find it consistent with his Views of an hereafter. In a Word, his Hopes are full of Immortality, his Schemes large and glorious, and his Conduct suitable to one, who knows his true Interest, and how to pursue it by proper Methods.

Mr Addison in Spectator, No. 225.

To a Wise and Considerate Man a great Good or a great Evil which he believes will certainly befall him according as he manageth his Affairs well or ill, tho' it be at some distance, is of greater Force, than a far lesser Good or Evil which is present and nearer at Hand. Tillotson, Vol. III, p. 520.

See also a most Excellent Passage to this purpose in Mr Lock's Essay on Human Understanding, lib. ii. chap. xxi. § 70. too long to be here inserted.

what the Pleasures of this Life were, before we enjoyed them; and yet we must all readily acknowledge, that many of them are very agreeable and delightful to us. And for the same Reason, the Things of the next Life may give us an Infinitely greater Pleasure and Satisfaction than all other Things; tho' at present we are not able to perceive and comprehend it. Nay to speak properly, it is so far from derogating from the Happiness of the next Life, that it is in a great Measure unknown to us; that this very Consideration highly raises and encreases the Value of it. For did we perfectly know what it is, and were it like to any Thing which we enjoy in this World; we might then be sure that it could not be very great (*t*). For what the Wise Man hath observed of all the Pleasures of this Life is certainly true, *Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity. Eccl. i. 2.* And for this Reason the most Sublime Account of the Happiness of Heaven, which is to be found in the Whole Scripture, is set forth in Negative Characters and Descriptions. *Eye hath not seen (saith St Paul) nor Ear heard, neither have entred into the Heart of Man the Things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. 1 Cor. ii. 9.* But tho' the Happiness of the next Life be in a great Measure unknown to us, and therefore the more excellent (*u*) and desirable; yet since we are too apt to form our Judgments of Things from Sense and Experience, it hath pleased God to condescend so far to our Weakness, as to set forth the Nature of our Happiness, by Characters and Descriptions taken from such Things as are of the greatest Value and Esteem

(*t*) See Dr *Sherlock* on Death. chap. i. Sect. 3. p. 76, 77. 8vo.

(*u*) We are dazzled indeed with the Glory and Grandeur of Things here below, because we know no better; but I am apt to think that if we knew what it was to be an Angel for one Hour, we should return to this World, tho' it were to sit on the brightest Throne in it, with vastly more loathing and reluctance, than we would now descend into a loathsome Dungeon or Sepulchre. *Minute Philosopher*, Vol. I. p. 260, 261.

Esteem with us. Thus the Happiness of Heaven is described in Scripture by the Name of a *Crown*. *1 Cor.* ix. 25. Sometimes it is called a *Kingdom*, *Matt.* xxv. 34. and an *Inheritance*, and that *Incorruptible* and *Undeified*. *1 Pet.* i. 4. and at other Times it is said to be *Eternal Life*, *Matt.* xxv. 46. than which surely nothing can be more desirable. It is to *see God* the Great Author and Fountain of all Happiness and Perfection; *Matt.* v. 8. to live *for ever* in His *Presence*; *Psal.* xvi. 11. *Job.* xiv. 2, 3; to enjoy the Blessed Conversation of *Jesus Christ* our Dear Saviour and Redeemer; to have the delightful Company of the *Holy Angels*, and the *Spirits of Just Men made* (x) *Perfect*; *Heb.* xii. 22, &c. and to be *Kings and Priests to God for ever*. *Rev.* i. 6. and to say no more, It is to be in a State of absolute Ease and perfect Freedom, where there *shall be no more Sorrow, nor crying, nor pain*, *Rev.* xxi. 4. and where *we shall die no more, but shall be equal unto the Angels, and shall be the Children of God, as being the Children of the Resurrection*. *Luke* xx. 36. Now tho' these Descriptions of our future Happiness do no doubt come vastly short of the Perfection thereof; yet they are sufficient to shew, that it is infinitely beyond any Thing which this World can afford. And by what we even at present know of that Happiness, and much more by the Knowledge we shall have thereof when we come to have the Enjoyment of it (which God in His Mercy grant we all may) I don't know how we shall ever be reconciled to ourselves for that manifest Neglect and Contempt which we now express towards it: unless it may be some Excuse to every one of us to say in that Case, as *St Paul* did in another, *when I was a Child I spake as a Child, I understood as a Child, I thought as a Child,*

(x) O præclarum diem, cum ad illud divinorum concilium cœtum-
que proficiscar; cumque ex hac turba & colluvione discedam, &c.
Cic. de Senectute.

Child; but when I became a Man, I put away childish Things. I Cor. xiii. 11.

What is here observed of the Happiness of the next Life holds equally true of the Miseries thereof. It is no Encouragement to bad Men, saith an Eminent Writer, (y) “ That the Miseries of the other World
 “ are unknown. For it is known, that God hath
 “ threatened very terrible Punishments against bad
 “ Men; and that, what these Punishments are, is un-
 “ known, makes them a great deal more formidable.
 “ For who knows the Power of God’s Wrath? Who
 “ knows how miserable God can make bad Men? ”

Since then the Things of the next Life cannot have a Commanding Force and Influence upon our Minds, unless we are not only firmly persuaded of the Truth of them, but also have a due Sense and Apprehension of the Nature and Importance of them; we may hence clearly see the absolute Necessity of frequently thinking and meditating upon them; for by this means only can we be in any due Measure affected by them. For let Things be of never so great Consequence in themselves, yet they will seem to be but of little Value and Esteem with us, if we do not employ our Thoughts and Minds about them. Tho’ we do not understand the Nature of thinking, nor in what Manner Thoughts arise in our Minds; yet this we all fully know by Experience, *viz.* that the oftener we think upon any Objects, the oftener they come into our Minds, and we are in a greater Measure affected by them. Whereas, when we neglect to think upon them, we do as it were remove them at a Distance from us, and then like all other Things in that Condition they will appear light and inconsiderable. If then we frequently and seriously meditate upon the Joys of Heaven, they will as frequently come into our Minds; and the oftener they come into our Minds, the more we shall be pleased and delighted with them; till at length

(y) *Sherlock on Death*, p. 77.

length our Hearts and Affections will be entirely set upon them: And when once we have attained to this Temper and Disposition, we shall soon despise the Temptations of worldly Riches and Pleasure; and shall say of the greatest Delights which this Life affords, what the Apostle did of the Present Sufferings, *viz. they are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that shall be revealed in us. Rom. viii. 18.* And on the other side, if we would often employ our Thoughts on the Punishments of the next World, and seriously reflect upon the astonishing Miseries of the Damned; they would often arise in our Minds, and would raise such a prodigious Dread and Terrour therein, as would sufficiently outweigh the Force of any Temporal Sufferings and Afflictions to which we may be exposed. And we shall think nothing in this Life so dreadful to us, as to fall into the Hands of *the Living God. Heb. x. 31.* And as our Blessed Saviour directs us, we shall *not fear them that can kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do; but we shall fear Him who, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into Hell. Luke xii. 4, 5.* And thus much may be sufficient to shew the absolute Necessity of a frequent and serious Meditation upon the Everlasting Retributions in a future State; in order to enable us to overcome the Power of Temptation, and to live as *becometh the Gospel of Christ.* And that which will fully confirm us in the Belief of this Necessity, is the Consideration of the Restless and Unwearied Endeavours of the Enemies of Religion in all Ages to destroy and eradicate these Principles, or to weaken their Force and Influence upon the Minds of Men. And to this purpose they have used several Methods, but I shall at present mention only two which are of the most dangerous Consequence. The *First* is, Their ridiculing the Belief of Future Punishments, or at least denying the Eternal Duration of them; notwithstanding that the Doctrine of Eternal Punishments is not only plainly delivered

delivered in the Holy Scriptures, but has also been held and maintained by many of the best Philosophers in the *Heathen* World; as several of our Learned Writers have clearly shewn (z). This was the great Aim and View of *Epicurus* and his Followers, to remove the fear of Future Punishments, and particularly of the Eternity of them; well knowing, as *Lucretius* acknowledges (a), what a prodigious Influence the steadfast Belief of that Principle must needs have upon the Minds of Men. And a late noted Writer among ourselves hath gone into the same Measures, endeavouring all that lies in him to confute and overthrow (b) it. And the Author of the *two Letters from a Deist to his Friend* (as an Eminent Divine hath lately observed from (c) them) gives this Account of himself in denying this Doctrine, that he intends to “save a Soul from
 “ the Dismal Apprehensions of Eternal Damnation;
 “ or to relieve a Person from labouring under that
 “ Uneasiness of Mind which he is often under, when
 “ *Pleasure* and *Christianity* come in Competition.” And it is well known, that the Doctrine of Everlasting Punishments is the great Point, at which all our Modern Infidels are so much offended, and which they constantly treat with the utmost Contempt and Ridicule.

Now it is not my Design to offer any Arguments in Vindication of this Doctrine; for this hath been sufficiently confirmed and defended by several of our
 Learned

(z) Vid. Dr *Clark's* Sermons at *Boyle's* Lectures, Part the II. Prop. xiii. Sect. 14. *Minute Philosopher*, Vol II. p. 49.

(a) Nam si certum finem esse viderent
 Ærunnarum Homines, aliquâ ratione valerent
 Relligionibus atque minis obistere vatum.
 Nunc ratio nulla est restandi, nulla facultas,
 Æternas quoniam Pœnas in morte timendum. *Lucret. lib. i.*

(b) *Christianity* as old as the Creation, p. 42, 43.

(c) *Scripture Vindicated*, Part I. *Intro.* p. 5, 6.

Learned (*d*) Writers, from whom any one that wants it may receive compleat Satisfaction in that Particular. And much less shall I raise any curious Enquiries concerning the Nature of Future Misery; as whether the Fire of Hell be material or immaterial; and if it should be *material*, how the Bodies of the Damned can possibly for ever subsist under it, and how the fallen Angels and the Souls of impure and wicked Men can be affected by it (*e*). All that I shall observe at present is, that it must be of the most mischievous Consequence to the Souls of Men, to endeavour to remove the Belief and Apprehension of Eternal Punishment out of their Minds; since, as hath been already shewn, it is impossible upon any other Principle to prevail with the Generality of Mankind to forsake their Sins, and to attain to the Habits of Righteousness and
Virtue.

(*d*) See particularly Dr *Clark* in the Place last cited. Dr *Nicholls's* Conference, Part III. p. 304, &c. Bishop *Burnet's* XXXIX Articles, p. 29, 30. Dr *Scott's* Christian Life, 8vo. Vol. V. p. 91, &c. Dr *Moss's* Sermons, Vol. I. Sermon 14, and 15. Archbishop *Dawes's* Fourth and Sixth Sermons on Hell Torments, in which Places there are many solid and judicious Things observed upon this Point.

(*e*) If the Reader desires to be satisfied how Immaterial Beings can be affected by the Pains of material Fire, let him consult St *Austin de Civitate Dei*, lib. xxi. cap. 10. And as to the other Particulars, it will administer no Ground of Comfort to Sinners, if it could be never so clearly proved that Hell-Fire is not *material*. For on Supposition that the Words *Fire and Brimstone*, which are used in Scripture to describe the Nature of Future Punishment, be Metaphorical, we should (in the Judgment of many Learned Divines) have great reason to conclude, that there is something more severe and terrible than real actual Fire understood and signified by them: It not being the Method of the Holy Spirit in Scripture (when speaking of Future Things) to describe them by such Metaphors as are greater than the Things themselves which are represented thereby. See particularly *Sherlock* on Death, 8vo. chap. i. Sect. 3. p. 77, 78. And a late Author, who hath wrote upon this Subject (and who I am sure is not too strict and rigorous in his Notions of Religion) tho' he denies the Fire of Hell to be Material, yet expressly allows that it will be as pungent and afflicting to the Damned as if it were Material. See the *Political History of the Devil*, p. 211, &c.

Virtue. And if Men who are educated in the Belief of this Doctrine, and make no Doubt of the Truth of it, do yet find it so hard to resist Temptations, and are so frequently drawn away by the Pleasures of Sin; what a Deluge of Profaneness, Iniquity and Debauchery would abound in the World, if Men were entirely or in a great measure freed and discharged from this Apprehension? I am sensible of indeed, and acknowledge what the *Roman* Orator asserts (and it will in great measure hold in the Case we are upon, as well as in that to which he applies it, *viz.*) that *Shame* and *Ingenuity* have a greater Effect and Restraint upon good Men, than *Fear* (*f*). But yet this will be but of little Service towards reforming the World; since the greatest Part of Mankind are not good. And therefore what *Aristotle* (whom a late Eminent Writer (*g*) justly styles *the most accurate Observer of all Mankind*) hath laid down, is true, and to be depended upon; *viz.* that the Generality of Men are perswaded to their Duty; not so much from the Considerations of Shame and Disgrace, as of Fear and Punishment (*b*). And particularly the Argument drawn from the Eternal Miseries of another World, is, to use the Words of an Excellent Prelate (*i*), that “ which taketh the fastest and “ surest hold upon Human Nature, and will many “ Times move and affect, when no other Considera- “ tions will work upon us. Many Men that could “ not be wrought upon by the Love of God and Good- “ ness, nor by the Hopes of Everlasting Happiness, “ have

(*f*) Validius bonos inhibet Pudor, quam Metus. *Quintilian. Institut. Orator. lib. ix. cap. ii.*

(*g*) Revelation Examined, &c. Vol. I. p. 103.

(*b*) Τὸς δὲ πολλὰς ἀδυνασίαις πρὸς καλοκαταθίαν πειρῆσθαι εἰ γὰρ περυσίαν αἰδοῖται περὶ ἀρχαίαν, ἀλλὰ φέρεται ἔτι ἀπέχεσθαι ἢ δὲ παύλων διατὸ ἀίχρην ἀλλὰ διατὸς πτωχείας. *Aristot. Ethic. ad Nicom. lib. x. cap. x. Vid. loc.*

(*i*) *Tillotson*, Vol. III. p. 352. See also p. 642, in which there are many excellent Things said upon this Head.

“ have been affrighted and reclaimed from an Evil
“ Course by the Fear of Hell and Damnation, and
“ the Awe of a Judgment to come. To think of ly-
“ ing under the terrible Wrath and Displeasure of Al-
“ mighty God to Eternal Ages, of being extremely
“ and for ever Miserable, without Intermission and
“ without End, must needs be a dismal Consideration
“ to any Man, that can think and consider: *For who*
“ *knoweth the Power of God's Anger? who can dwell*
“ *with everlasting Burnings?*” And that this is a true
Judgment upon the Point is very clear from *St Paul*,
who observes that the *Gospel of Christ is the Power of*
God unto Salvation; because therein the Wrath of God is
revealed from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unright-
eousness of Men (k). *Rom. i. 16, 18.* And therefore
when our Modern *Infidels* endeavour to disprove, and
much more when they ridicule the Doctrine of Eternal
Punishments, this is not to consult the Comfort and
Happiness of Mankind, as they vainly pretend; but
(to use the Words of a very Learned (l) Writer) “ It
“ is to ease every Libertine, if possible, of his just and
“ well grounded Fears, and to steel his Heart against
“ à Judgment to come. It is not to secure him against
“ the Danger of Hell (that is impracticable) but it
“ is to tell him how to fence with Subtilties or So-
“ phistries against the *Dismal Apprehensions of it*; Not
“ to preserve him from it, but to lead him blindfold
“ into it.” But,

Secondly, Another Artifice, which the Adversaries of
Religion frequently make Use of in order to destroy or
weaken the Force of Future Considerations, is their
recommending the Observation of Virtue from the

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Beauty

(k) See *Dr Fiddes's Sermons*, Vol. II. p. 161, 162.

(l) *Scripture Vindicated*. Part I. *Introd.* p. 6.

(m) See this Notion ingeniously described by the *Freethinker* in
Minute Philosopher, Vol. I. p. 161, 162.

Beauty (*m*) thereof, and the present Rewards which are annexed to the Practice of it. This was the Opinion of the *Stoics* and *Epicureans*; and this they carried so far as to assert, that Virtue was sufficient to the Happiness of Men under the greatest Afflictions and Sufferings (*n*). But the *Stoics* did not hereby design to disparage and weaken the Cause of Virtue, as the *Epicureans* did; who came into this Notion only by way of Refuge, and to screen themselves from the popular Odium and Censure, that when they had cast off the Belief of a Providence and a Future State, they had left no proper Incitement to Religion and Virtue (*o*). For tho' the *Stoics* do indeed sometimes speak doubtfully of a Future State, (as the best of the Philosophers likewise did) and tho', as an Excellent Divine truly observes (*p*), "their Style was often high above Truth" "and Nature; yet it cannot be said that they so resolved every Motive to a Virtuous Life into the sole Beauty of Virtue, as to endeavour to destroy the Belief of the Immortality of the Soul, and a distributive Providence;" since these two Points, as this Author takes Notice, are expressly asserted by them in their Writings. But the Design of our Modern *Infidels*, in so earnestly recommending the Practice of Virtue from the forementioned Principles, is the same with that of the Ancient *Epicureans*; as is evident from their urging them separately from and exclusive of Future Retributions. And for this Reason it is that they are so fond of them (*q*). But now, allowing as much Beauty as you please to the Practice of Virtue (as it is certain, that

(*n*) Sapiens, inquit Epicurus, semper beatus est, & vel inclusus in Phalaridis Tauro hanc vocem emittet, suave est & nihil curo. *La. Sa. t. Institut.* lib. iii. cap. xxvii. See also *Woolaston's Religion of Nature*, p. 181.

(*o*) See *Scripture Vindicated*. Part II. p. 132, 133:

(*p*) *Minute Philosopher*, Vol. I. p. 195, 196.

(*q*) See *Dr Waterland's Second Charge to the Clergy*. p. 45 to 49. *Scripture Vindicated*, Part II. p. 133, 134.

that many excellent Things have been said by some of the best Philosophers upon this (*r*) Head) and supposing that in all Cases of Life it was of itself sufficient to it's own Reward; yet surely it must give a great additional Force to the Obligation of it, that the blessed Effects thereof should extend to Futurity, and should not only make us happy in this short Life, but also for ever so in that which is to come (*s*): unless we could be so absurd as to think, that "the Charms of Virtue would diminish, as her Dowry increaseth" (as an Eminent Writer beautifully expresses it (*t*);) or that we could be so stupid as to imagine, that there is no Future State after this Life (*u*); or if there be, that we could be more stupid in despising the glorious Thought of being made happy for ever (*x*). But the Principle itself is false and deceitful. For tho' there is no doubt a great Beauty in Virtue, and much Pleasure and Delight does often arise from the Exercise of

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it,

(*r*) "Αὐτὴ μὲρ ἔν ἡ διαίονον ἀρετὴ μὲρ ὅτι τελεία. — κ) ἔθ' "Ἐσπερ⊕ ἔθ' 'Ἐω⊕ ἔτω θαυμαστός. *Aristot. Ethic. ad Nicom.* lib. v. cap. iii. Formam quidem ipsam — & tanquam faciem honesti vides; quæ si oculis cerneretur, mirabiles amores, ut ait Plato, excitaret sapientiæ. *Cicero de Officiis* lib. i. in principio.

(*s*) Etsi satis in ipsa Conscientia pulcherrimi facti fructus erat, tamen Mortali Immortalitatem non arbitror contemnendam. *Cic. Philip. Orat.* 2.

(*t*) Minute Philosopher, Vol. I. p. 187.

(*u*) Præclarum nescio quid adepti sunt, qui didicerunt se, cum tempus Mortis venisset, totos esse perituros. — Quid habet ista res aut lætabile aut gloriosum? *Cic. Tusc. Quæst.* lib. i.

Qui vero præter Tellurem hodiernam (Atomum, si parvitatem spectes, si spurcitiâ, sterquiliniam) nullum agnoscunt mundum habitabilem, nullos incolas: nec quicquam futurum extinctâ hâc vitâ: næ illi Majestati Divinæ graviter officiant; & Deum sibi fingunt homine magnanimo minorem. *Burnet de Statu Mortuorum & Resurgentium.* cap. ii. p. 5.

(*x*) Sed Nemo me de Immortalitate depellet. *Cic. ibid.* Quod si in hoc erro, quod Animos hominum immortales esse credam, libenter erro; nec mihi hunc errorem, quo delector, dum vivo, extorqueri volo. *Idem de Senectute ad fin.*

it, as the Holy Scriptures testify in several Places (y); and tho' there is no question, but that upon the *whole*, it is much better for a Man even in this World to act Virtuously than Wickedly; yet on the other side it is very certain, that Virtue is not sufficient to it's own Reward (z), and that however the present Delightfulness and Pleasure of some Virtues may engage Men to the Observation of them; yet they will never be induced from this Principle to practise the severe and painful Duties of Religion; nor will they discover so much Beauty and Pleasure in Virtue, as upon that Account to think themselves happy in a State of great Poverty (a) and Hardship, and much less to be willing to suffer Persecution for God's Sake; unless the Considerations of a Future State are taken in (b). Whoever therefore recommends the Practise of Virtue from the Beauty and present

(y) See *Prov.* iii. 17. *Isa.* xxxii. 17. 1 *Tim.* iv. 8.

(z) ——— Virtutem quis enim amplectitur ipsam,
Præmia si tollas. *Juvenal. Sat. X.*

Nec facile invenias Multis è Millibus unum,

Virtutem pretium qui putet esse sui.

Ipse decor recti, facti si præmia desint,

Non movet, & gratis pœnitet esse probum.

Ovid. de Ponto, lib. ii. Epist. 3.

Quæ porro Pietas Ei debetur, a quo nihil acceperis? aut quid omnino, cujus nullum Meritum fit, Ei deberi potest? *Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. i.*

Quis est vel tam ineptus vel tam otiosus, ut aggrediatur aliquid facere frustra, ex quo nullam utilitatem, nullum commodum speret. *Laëtant. Institut. lib. vii. cap. iv.*

(a) Τὴν δ' ἀρετὴν μὴ εἶναι αὐτάρκη πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν; πρὸς δ' αἰδοῦναι γὰρ ἧστ' τε ἀπὸ σῶμα καὶ ἧστ' ἐκτὸς ἀσθεῶν ὡς κηροδαιμονίῃ συνίθ' τὰ σφῆ, καὶ ἐπὶ νότοις ἢ, καὶ ἐν πενίᾳ, καὶ τοῖς ὁμοίοις. *Aristot. apud Diog. Laert. in Vita Aristotelis.*

(b) Altho' it be true, that as Things now stand, and as the Nature of Man is framed, good Men do find a strange kind of inward Pleasure and secret Satisfaction of Mind in the Discharge of their Duty, and in doing what is Virtuous; yet every Man that looks into himself and consults his own Breast, will find that this Delight and Contentment springs chiefly from the Hopes which Men conceive

present Pleasure thereof, in exclusion of the Rewards which God hath prepared for good Men in the next Life, instead of serving and promoting the Cause of Virtue he secretly undermines and betrays it. And, as an Eminent Divine well observes (c), "He, who sees not that the destroying the Principles of good Actions must destroy good Actions, sees nothing: and he, who seeing this shall yet persist to do it, if he be not wicked, who is?" And that this Thought is not peculiar to the *Christian* Priests, as some may imagine, I shall add an Excellent Observation which the same Writer makes from the *Roman* Authors; viz. "That they themselves often suggest, that even their Virtues and magnanimous Actions rose and fell with a Sense of Providence and a Future State (d):" so Necessary have the Sanctions of the next Life been ever thought to the Establishment of Virtue. And how dangerous and destructive to the Cause of Piety and Virtue the other Principle we have been speaking of is, many Learned Men have particularly Remark'd in the Case of the *Sadducees*; upon which Point I will beg Leave to insert a most excellent Passage from an Eminent

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nent

ceive, that a Holy and Virtuous Life shall not be unrewarded: and without these Hopes, Virtue is but a dead and empty Name. And notwithstanding the Reasonableness of Virtuous Actions compared with the contrary of them; yet when Virtue came to be encumbered with Difficulties, and to be attended with such Sufferings and Inconveniencies, as were grievous and intolerable to Human Nature, then it would appear unreasonable to chuse that for a Happiness, which would rob a Man of all the Felicity of his Life. For tho' a Man were never so much in Love with Virtue for the Native Beauty and Comeliness of it, yet it would strangely cool his Affection to it, to consider that he should be undone by the Match; that when he had it, he must go a begging with it, and be in danger of Death for the Sake of that, which he had chosen for the Felicity of his Life
Tillotson, Vol. III. p. 121.

(c) *Minute Philosopher*, Vol. I. p. 273, 274.

(d) *Idem* *ibid.* p. 293. See also an excellent Passage to this Purpose in *Bishop Smalbridge's* Sermons, fol. Edit. 2. p. 436.

nent Prelate (e) of our Church. “ The Consequence
 “ of this dry Doctrine does sufficiently appear in the
 “ Sect of the *Sadducees*, which had it’s Rise from this
 “ Principle of *Sadoc* the Master of the Sect; who out
 “ of an indiscreet Zeal to teach something above others,
 “ and indeed above the Pitch of Human Nature, in-
 “ culcated this Doctrine upon his Scholars, that Reli-
 “ gion and Virtue ought to be loved for themselves,
 “ tho’ there were no Reward of Virtue to be hoped,
 “ nor Punishment of Vice to be feared in another
 “ World; from which his Disciples inferred that it
 “ was not necessary to Religion to believe a Future
 “ State, and in process of Time peremptorily main-
 “ tained that there was no Life after this. For they
 “ did not only deny the Resurrection of the Body, but
 “ as *St Paul* tells us, they said, *that there was neither*
 “ *Angel nor Spirit*; that is, they denied that there
 “ was any Thing of an Immortal Nature, that did
 “ remain after this Life. And what the Consequence
 “ of this was, we may see in the Character which *Jo-*
 “ *sephus* gives of that Sect; for he tells us that the
 “ Commonalty of the *Jews* were of the Sect of the
 “ *Pharisees*, but most of the great and rich Men were
 “ *Sadducees*; which plainly shews, that this dry Specu-
 “ lation of loving Religion and Virtue for themselves,
 “ without any Expectation of Future Rewards, did
 “ end in their giving over all serious Pursuit of Reli-
 “ gion; and because they hoped for nothing after this
 “ Life, therefore laying aside all other Considerations,
 “ they applied themselves to the present Business of this
 “ Life, and grasped as much of the present Enjoyments
 “ of it’s Power and Riches, as they could by any means
 “ attain to.” I shall only add upon this Head, that
 it is so far from being a *mean* and *servile* Thing to act
 Religiously,

(e) *Tillotson*, Vol. III. p. 121. See also *Prideaux’s Connexion*,
8vo. Vol. III. p. 95. *Sub Anno ante Christum*, 263.

Religiously, to avoid being punished, or in Hopes to be rewarded hereafter (f), as some Writers have suggested (g ; that we find the very best of Men in all Ages of the World have been determined to the Practice of Virtue from those very Considerations. Innumerable Instances might be given of this, both from the Scripture and Ancient History ; but I shall mention only two or three which are very remarkable. Thus the great Apostle of the *Gentiles* gives this Account of himself. *1 Cor. ix. ult. I keep under my Body, and bring it into Subjection ; lest that by any Means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away (h).* And what Effect the glorious Reward of Eternal Life had upon him, he tells us in another Place, *I have fought a good Fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith ; henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, &c. 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.* And we may observe of *Moses* and *Christ*, the two best Men and greatest Lawgivers that ever lived, in how great a Measure they were moved and influenced by the same Principle. Thus *St Paul* tells us of *Moses*, that he refused to be called the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter ; choosing rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season, &c. For he had respect unto the Recompense of the Reward. *Heb.*

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xi.

(f) However Spirits of superficial Greatness may disdain at first sight to do any Thing but from a noble Impulse in themselves, without any future Rewards in this or another Being ; upon stricter Enquiry they will find, that to act Worthily and expect to be rewarded only in another World, is as *Heroic* a Pitch of Virtue as human Nature can arrive at. *Spectator* No. 356. See also an excellent Passage to this Purpose in *Dr Scott's Christian Life*, 8vo. Vol. II. chap. vi. p. 334. And *Dr Littleton's Sermons*, Vol. I. Sermon the Second, in which there are several very ingenious Observations on this Head.

(g) See Christianity as old as the Creation, p. 367.

(h) Ἀσκήσιμος ἄσπωμα. Abjiciar & damner tanquam reprobus sine salute indignus. *Esius in loc.* Æternum damner, atque ita reprobus esse declaret. *Piscat. in loc.*

xi. 24, 25, 26. And the same Apostle observes of *Christ*, that *He endured the Cross and despised the Shame, for the Joy that was set before Him. Heb. xii. 2.*

And thus much concerning those Artifices and Methods, which the Adversaries of our Faith make Use of, in order to destroy and weaken the Force of Religious Principles: the great Danger and Deceitfulness of which does more fully confirm the Necessity of fixing those Principles stedfastly in our Minds, by serious and frequent Meditation.

What has been laid down upon this Head, as evident from Reason and the Nature of Things, every Person will find to be true and certain from his own Experience. Let any Man say, whether, when he hath retired for a while from the Business and Diversions of this World, and spent some considerable Time in the Study of the Scriptures and other good Books, and in a serious Meditation upon the great Points of Religion; he has not a quite different Sense and Notion of Matters, and a much greater Taste and Relish of Divine Things, than he had before; and whether, the more he thinks upon the Joys of Heaven, they do not gain the more upon his Heart and Affections, and render him more indifferent and unconcerned for the Things of this Life. And on the contrary, when he has employed little or no Time in these Exercises, but hath applied himself wholly to the Businesses and Pleasures of this World, and to the Entertainments and Diversions of Company; whether he does not soon find the Heavenly and Divine Life decay and languish, and his Affection for Spiritual Things abate and decrease in his Mind, and that the Temptations of Riches and Worldly Pleasures gain the greater Power and Dominion over him. And what may easily be observed of Men in general, we find more particularly verified in the Case of such Persons, who by the Mercy of God have been recovered from a dangerous Sickness, or some Extraordinary Calamity and Affliction.

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Such Persons are often by this Means brought to Repentance, and to a perfect Change and Reformation in their Manners. Now this does not happen, because they were Sick or Afflicted; for that rather disables Men for Religious Exercises, than contributes any thing to the Performance of them. But it is, because Sickness and Affliction bring Men to *Consideration*; and *Consideration* makes the Things of another Life *present* to their Minds, and thereby gives them their due Force and Influence upon their Affections. The Primitive *Christians* are likewise a Notorious and Memorable Instance of this great Truth. For during the three first Centuries, whilst they chiefly employed their Time in reading the Holy Scriptures, and in meditating upon Divine Things, and met together in private Assemblies, not only for the Performance of Religious Offices, but also for the better Instruction and Confirmation of each other in the *Christian Faith* (i); we find that they arrived to such an eminent Degree of Piety and Virtue, as hath been the Wonder and Admiration of all succeeding Ages. And so great was their Love of God and their Affection for Heavenly Things, that the utmost Rage and Fury of Men and Devils under the Ten Persecutions could not draw them from their Integrity; but they patiently submitted to the most cruel Deaths and Inexpressible Sufferings with the most remarkable Courage and Constancy, and that in such great Numbers of all Ages and both Sexes; that, as a Learned Prelate truly (k) observes, “ We do not find in all Ages of the World so many
“ Instances of Patience and constant Suffering for Re-
“ ligion, as happened even in the first Age after
“ Christ.” But when *Christianity* was taken into the Protection of the State, and it became the Temporal Interest of Men to embrace the Gospel, and the Riches and

(i) Vid. *Plin.* lib. x. Epist. 97.

(k) *Tillotson*, Vol. III. p. 122.

and Honours of this World flowed into the Church ; *Christians* soon began to set their Hearts and Affections upon them. And then, as by this means they neglected to read the Scriptures, and to meditate upon Divine Things, the Case was quite otherwise with them than it had been with the *Christians* of the Three Former Ages, and they soon degenerated from their Piety and Perfection. This the Writers of the Fourth Age frequently lament ; and particularly St *Chrysofom* mentions it in several Places of his Homilies, and ascribes it plainly to their neglect of reading the Holy Scriptures, and of Meditating upon Divine Things (*l*) ; for which he tells them he knew no other Reason, but that their Hearts were too much set upon this World, and they could not relish the Things of God. And the Famous Presbyter of *Marseilles*, who flourished about Fifty Years after him, complains heavily upon this Occasion ; and observes that the greatest Part of *Christians* in his Time were sunk into the very lowest Degree of Corruption, and that they were grown worse and more wicked than the worst of *Heathens* (*m*) and *Barbarians*. All which is a clear Proof and Demonstration of the Point we are now upon, *viz.* that a serious

(*l*) See particularly his Fifth Homily in *Matt.*

(*m*) *Ipsa Dei Ecclesia, quæ in omnibus debet esse placatrix Dei, quid est aliud quam exacerbatrix Dei, aut præter paucissimos quosdam qui mala fugiunt, quid est aliud pene omnis cœtus Christianorum quam sentina vitiorum ? Quotum enim quemque invenies in Ecclesia non aut ebriosum aut helluonem, aut adulterum, aut fornicatorem, aut raptorem, aut ganconem, aut latronem, aut homicidam ? Et quod his omnibus pejus est, prope hæc cuncta sine fine Sakian. de Gubernatione Dei, lib. iii. p. 87. Ubi enim, aut in quibus sunt, nisi in Romanis tantum hæc mala ? Quorum Injustitia tanta, nisi nostra ? Franci enim hoc scelus nesciunt, Hunni ab his sceleribus immunes sunt. Nihil horum est apud Vandalos, nihil horum apud Gothos. Tam longe enim est, ut hæc inter Gothos barbari tolerant, ut ne Romani quidem qui inter eos vivunt ista patientur. Idem, lib. v. p. 168. The same also this Author shews more largely in several other Places of these Books.*

rious and frequent Meditation upon Divine Things is absolutely necessary to the very Being of Religion. And thus I have finished all that I proposed to consider upon this great Subject of Divine Meditation. It would be easy to add Innumerable Passages out of our most Learned Writers, in which they manifest the same Sense and Judgment of this Matter. But that I may not be too tedious to the Reader, I shall at present produce only Two or Three from very Eminent and Celebrated Divines. The First Testimony is that of the Learned Bishop *Atterbury*, whose Words are these.

“ We are prone by Nature to engage ourselves in too
“ close and strict an Acquaintance with the Things of
“ this World, which immediately and strongly strike
“ our Senses ; with the Business, the Pleasures, and
“ the Amusements of it ; we give ourselves up too
“ greedily to the Pursuit, and immerse ourselves too
“ deeply in the Enjoyment of them ; and contract at
“ last such an Intimacy and Familiarity with them, as
“ makes it difficult and irksome for us to call off our
“ Minds to a better Employment, and to think inten-
“ tently on any Thing besides them. To check and
“ correct this ill Tendency, it is requisite that we
“ should acquaint ourselves with God, that we should
“ frequently disengage our Hearts from Earthly Pur-
“ suits, and fix them on Divine Things ; that we
“ should apply ourselves to study the Blessed Nature
“ and Perfections of God, and to procure lively and
“ vigorous Impressions of His Perpetual Presence with
“ us, and Inspection over us ; that we should con-
“ template earnestly and reverently the Works of Na-
“ ture and Grace, by which he manifests Himself to
“ us ; the inscrutable Ways of His Providence, and
“ all the Wonderful Methods of His Dealings with
“ the Sons of Men ; that we should inure ourselves
“ to such Thoughts, till they have worked up our
“ Souls into that filial Awe and Love of Him, that
“ humble

“ humble and implicit Dependence upon Him, which
 “ is the Root and Principle of all manner of Good-
 “ ness; till we have made our Duty in this respect
 “ our Pleasure, and can address ourselves to Him on
 “ all Occasions with Readiness and Delight; impart-
 “ ing all our Wants, and expressing all our Fears,
 “ and opening all our Grievs to Him, with that holy
 “ Freedom and Confidence, to which the Saints and
 “ true Servants of God are entitled, having received
 “ *the Spirit of Adoption, whereby they cry Abba Father.*
 “ In this Sense ought we to acquaint ourselves with
 “ God, to *set Him always before us*, as the Scripture
 “ elsewhere speaks, *to draw near to Him*, and to *delight*
 “ in approaching (n) Him.”

The other Testimony, which I shall mention upon
 this Occasion, is that of the Learned Dr *Samuel Clarke*,
 who expresses himself very judiciously in the Words
 following, “ Seeking any Thing heartily and effectually
 “ implies that we fix our Attention continually
 “ *i. e.* habitually upon it. ’Tis not sufficient that our
 “ Judgment be convinced of the Importance and
 “ Necessity of Religion, unless our Passions and Af-
 “ fections likewise be in some Measure interested;
 “ nor is it enough that our Affections be moved once
 “ or seldom, but our Zeal must be renewed by fre-
 “ quent Meditation. We must *give earnest heed to the*
 “ *Things which we have heard, lest at any Time we should*
 “ *let them slip.* Heb. ii. 1. For as in Matters of Sense,
 “ Objects at a Distance appear small and imperfect,
 “ and nothing but Reasoning and Judgment can cor-
 “ rect the Errours and Deceptions of our Sight; so
 “ in Matters of Religion and of Spiritual Concern,
 “ nothing but *frequent Consideration and earnest and*
 “ *serious Meditation* can represent those Things as *pre-*
 “ *sent* to us, so as to cause them to make vigorous
 “ and

(n) Bishop *Atterbury's* Sermons, Vol. II. p. 187, 188, 189.

“ and lasting Impressions upon our Minds, which yet
“ we all know cannot be very far distant from (o) us.”
To which I shall add those Excellent Words (p) of
Archbishop *Tillotson*, viz. “ Because the Matters of
“ Faith do not fall under our Senses, and the Things
“ of another World are invisible and at a Distance,
“ and consequently not so apt to affect us, as present
“ and sensible Things; we should take the more
“ pains with ourselves, that by revolving frequently
“ in our Minds the Thoughts of God, and repre-
“ senting to ourselves the Happiness and Misery of
“ another World, they may have as great an Effect
“ upon us, as if they were present to us, and we saw
“ them with our bodily Eyes.”

(o) Dr *Clarke's* Sermons, Vol. II, p. 371, 372. See also a very
Excellent Passage to the same purpose in his Practical Essays on Bap-
tism, &c. Essay II. chap. ii. §. 20, 21, 22.

(p) Works, Vol. III. p. 467.



C H A P. IV.

Concerning the Duty of SELF-EXAMINATION.

THAT a due and careful Examination of ourselves is one necessary Means of Religion, is so frequently asserted in the Holy Scriptures; that he must be an utter Stranger to them, who is ignorant of this Point. I shall therefore at present only observe the Necessity thereof upon these two Accounts. *First*, In order to bring us to a true Repentance of our Sins. And *Secondly*, That we may thereby be enabled to understand the true State and Condition of our Souls. And,

First, A due and careful Examination of ourselves is necessary to bring us to a true Repentance of our Sins. This is very clear and evident at first sight; for unless we know our Sins, it is impossible to repent of them; and we cannot know what our Sins and Offences have been, if we do not carefully examine our Hearts about them. If then we would desire to repent of our Sins, in order to obtain the Pardon of them, we must earnestly *bethink ourselves*, 1 Kings, viii. 47. and examine with holy Job, *How many are our Iniquities and our Sins?* And pray with him to God, that He would *make us know our Transgression and our Sin*. Job xiii. 23. *We must search and try our Ways, that we may turn again unto the Lord*. Lam. iii. 40. *We must enter into our Chamber, and shut our Doors about us*. Isa.

xxvi. 20. We must *commune with our own Hearts*, *Pfalm iv. 4.* And let our Spirits make diligent search, *Pfalm lxxvii. 6.* that we may find out all our Iniquities, whereby we have sinned, and whereby we have transgressed against the Lord. *Jer. xxxiii. 8.* And this Examination of ourselves, in order to the Discovery and Repentance of our Sins, is so very useful and necessary; that upon this Account we should not let a Day pass without discharging this Duty in some Measure. And this is what we are frequently exhorted to by the best Writers both *Pagan* and *Christian*. Thus *Pythagoras* (or whoever else was the Author of those Golden Verses ascribed to him) requires of his Disciples, that they should every Night, before they went to sleep, thrice recollect every single Action of the Day past, and enquire of themselves what Good they had done that Day, or had neglected to do. Run over these Things, *saitb he*, in your Minds, beginning from the first; and then, if you have done Evil, be sorry for it; if Good, rejoice (*a*). The like Practice is also frequently recommended to us by *Seneca*, *Epiſtetus*, *Marcus Antoninus*, and others of the best Philosophers. And the Passages, which might be produced out of *Christian* Writers, which enjoin the same as necessary and proper for all *Christians*, are innumerable (*b*). We should therefore duly and carefully exercise ourselves in this great Duty; and by this Means we shall attain to a
perfect

(*a*) Μήδ' ὕπνον μαλακοῖσιν ἐπ' ὀμμασι, &c. *Pythag. Aur. Carm. Vid. Hierocl. in loc. p. 206, 207.*

(*b*) Deinde completo die, antequam cubile suum dormiturus ascendat, discutiat Conscientiam suam, & rationem a seipſo petat, an Deum offenderit, cogitatione, locutione, opere, desiderio: & si offensionem aliquam Dei. præsertim lethalem invenerit; non audeat oculos claudere ad nocturnam quietem captandam, nisi Deo primum per veram pænitentiam reconciliato, & vero ac certo proposito concepto de custodiendis viis suis, ut non delinquat in lingua sua, nec in operibus aut appetitionibus suis. *Bellarmin. de Arte bene Moriendi lib. i. cap. xvi.*

perfect and exact Knowledge of all our Transgressions ; and shall be assured, that no Sin which we have committed shall, unrepented of, rise up in Judgment against us at the Great Day of Accounts. And moreover by this careful and frequent Examination of our selves we shall reap this further Advantage ; *viz.* that we shall not only hereby be enabled to repent of our Sins, but shall also be more effectually preserved and restrained from the Commission of Sin for the future. For we cannot call to Mind those Sins which we have truly repented of without being made sensible at the same Time of the great Uneasiness and Torment of a guilty Conscience, the terrible Hazard and Danger to which we had exposed ourselves by our Offences, and the infinite Mercy and Goodness of God in so freely forgiving us for *Christ's* Sake. And surely if we have any Regard left for ourselves, or any due Sense of the Love and Goodness of God towards us ; we shall be more cautious and circumspect for the future, and not readily engage again in such Courses, as we know by Experience were so afflicting and dangerous to ourselves, as well as displeasing and provoking to God. Of this we have an Eminent Example in Holy *David*, *I thought on my Ways*, saith he, *i. e.* I considered the Sins and Iniquities of my past Life, together with their particular Circumstances and Aggravations, and the great Evil and Danger of them ; and then it follows, *I turned my Feet unto thy Testimonies ; I made haste and delayed not to keep thy Commandments.* *Psal.* cxix. 59, 60. And when we are thus recounting and recollecting our Sins, in order to our Repentance of them ; we must more especially examine ourselves and consider, what that Sin is which doth most *easily beset us*, *Heb.* xii. 1. and in what Respects either by Nature or Custom we are most liable to Temptation : since, as an excellent Writer well observes (c),

“ The

(c) *Ne'son* on the Feasts and Fasts, p. 616.

“ The Devil like a skilful General will attack us
“ where we lie most exposed ; hoping by gaining
“ that Post, to make the Town quickly surrender ;
“ therefore in surveying the State of our Minds we
“ should have an Eye to those Places that will least bear
“ an Assault, those Appetites or Passions that most
“ frequently occasion our Fall.” And this close
Inspection into ourselves will be of great Use and
Service to us, not only as thereby we shall be the more
effectually secured from the Danger of falling ; but
also as we shall reap this great Comfort and Satis-
faction of Mind from it, *viz.* that when we are con-
scious to ourselves, that we have watched diligently
against our Favourite Vices, and done our best En-
deavours to subdue and overcome them ; we may be
the more fully satisfied and assured of our Sincerity
in all other Parts of *Christian Duty*. But,

Secondly, It is not sufficient to the Purposes of Re-
ligion barely to enquire into ourselves, in Order to
the Discovery and Repentance of our Sins ; but it is
further incumbent upon Us frequently and diligently
to examine our Hearts, that we may understand the
true State and Disposition of our Souls. For it is in
vain to repent of what is past, unless we amend and
reform (*d*) our Lives for the future, and attain to the
Habits of Universal Righteousness and Holiness, with-
out which we cannot be saved. And the Examination
of our selves in this respect will require much more
Time and Pains, than in the former ; it being not so
difficult to find out in what respects we have offended
against the Laws of God, as it is to discover the true

U

Temper

(*d*) Scelerum si bene pœnitet,
Eradenda Cupidinis
Pravi sunt Elementa : & teneræ nimis
Mentes asperioribus
Formandæ Studiis.

Temper and Disposition of our Minds, and upon what Principles our Religious Actions and Performances are grounded. For to use the Words of the Prophet on this Occasion, tho' they are undoubtedly applied by him to another Purpose (*), *The Heart is deceitful above (e) all things, who can know it? Jer. xvii. 9.* But nevertheless, if we will search diligently into our Hearts, we may attain to a true and exact Knowledge of them. And there are several Rules to be observed, which will enable us to make this Discovery. But the chief and principal of them are these two. *First*, If upon Enquiry we can assure ourselves that we have no corrupt Ends nor worldly Designs in any of our Religious Actions; but that we perform them out of a sole view to the Glory of God, and our own Salvation. And *Secondly*, if our Love to God and a Regard to His Authority be such, as determines us to a Perfect and Universal Obedience to His Commandments. Now upon these Principles we should carefully examine into the State and Condition of our Souls; and see whether our Performances in Religion are grounded upon their true and proper Motives, and whether our Lives and Manners are perfectly agreeable to the Laws of God. Thus in general we should enquire of ourselves, and see whether our *Conversation is in Heaven*; *Phil. iii. 20.* whether our *Affections be set on Things above, and not on Things on the Earth*; *Col. iii. 2.* and whether our whole Behaviour and *Conversation be such as becometh the Gospel of Christ*? *Phil. i. 27.* And as we make Profession of *Christ's Gospel*, we should *examine ourselves, whether we be in the Faith*; *2 Cor. xiii. 5.* and whether we have maintained the *Christian Doctrine* in all Parts thereof, in
it's

(*) See Archbishop *Sharp's Sermons, Vol. III. Sermon xiv.* in which there are many excellent and judicious Observations upon this Head.

(e) See Dean *Young's Sermons, Vol. II. p. 99. &c.*

it's Purity and Perfection: not only as by this means we shall be secured from the Guilt and Danger of *Heresy*, Gal. v. 20. but also upon the Account of that Effect and Influence, which a true and right Faith hath upon our Lives and Actions (*f*). And as we should thus examine ourselves in general, so we should extend this Examination to every Part and Branch of that Duty, which we owe to God, our Neighbour and ourselves.

First, Thus with respect to God, we should carefully examine ourselves, whether we have a fixed and stedfast Belief of His Being and Attributes; since *without such Faith it is impossible to please Him*. Heb. xi. 6. and particularly of His Omniscience and Omnipresence, Acts xv. 18. Heb. iv. 13. Psal. cxxxix. 7, &c. and the Righteousness and Goodness of His Providence; Psal. cxlv. 17. Gen. xviii. 25. And whether upon this Account we submit ourselves to His Will in all Things; and are patient under all those Sufferings and Afflictions which he is pleased to send upon us. Job i. 21. Heb. xii. 5, &c. Whether we duly reverence all His Divine Excellencies and Perfections; Psal. xxxiii. 8. Heb. xii. 28. and endeavour to imitate them in our Lives and Conversations. Matt. v. 48. Eph. v. 1. and whether in Virtue of His Right in creating us, Isa. xliii. 7, 21. and His supreme Authority and Dominion over us; Dan. iv. 17. Psal. xxii. 28. we be careful to observe all the respective Duties which we owe to Him, and walk in *all His Ordinances and Commandments, blameless*, Luke i. 6. Whether we love God above all Things, Matt. xxii. 37. and have a greater Fear of His Displeasure than of the worst and most dreadful Evils, Luke xii. 4, 5. And when we are thus considering our Duty to God, we should more particularly examine ourselves, whether we have a due Regard to the Honour and Majesty of God, in these Two Respects.

U 2

spects.

(*f*) Male enim vivitur, si de Deo non bene creditur. Aug. de Civitate Dei, lib. v. cap. x.

spects. *First*, In diligently and constantly attending upon His Public Worship at the stated Times and Seasons of it; *Psal.* xcvi. 8. since Piety towards God is not only a Necessary and Essential Duty of Religion, but also the Principal and Foundation of all Virtues (g); as hath been before fully shewn (b). And in the Performance of this Duty of Public Worship we should carefully examine ourselves as to the Manner of performing it, *Psal.* lxxxix. 7. and see that we offer up no corrupt Sacrifices unto Him, *Mal.* i. 14. and that we do not pretend to honour Him with our Lips, while our Hearts are far from Him, *Matt.* xv. 8. And *Secondly*, we should examine this our Regard to the Majesty and Honour of God, by duly enquiring whether we have been inviolably true to all those Oaths and Vows which we have made in His Name; *Numb.* xxx. 2. *Matt.* v. 33. and whether, as a powerful Means to restrain and prevent the Guilt of Perjury, we watch diligently and constantly over ourselves, that we do not profane the Holy Name of God by rash and common Swearing (i). *Exod.* xx. 7. *Matt.* v. 34. And

Secondly, with respect to our Neighbour, we should diligently examine ourselves, whether we duly discharge all the Duties which we owe to him. More particularly, we should enquire of ourselves, whether we sincerely love him, *Rom.* xii. 20. 1 *John* iv. 21. and pay him that Honour and Respect which thro' the

(g) Πασῶν τῶν ἀρετῶν ἡγεμὼν ἐστὶν εὐσέβεια Hierocl. in Pythag. Aur Carm. p. 10.

(b) See above p. 100.

(i) "Οὕτω γὰρ ἂν τῆς αἰεὶ εὐορκίᾳ, εἰ μὴ χαλαχρησόμεθα τοῖς ὀρκίοις καὶ γὰρ ἐν τῇ συνεχείᾳ τῆ ὀμνύειν, ῥαδίως ἂν μελαπίσει τις εἰς ἑπορκίαν. *Idem* p. 34. And it is very remarkable, that that saying of St James, chap. v. 12. Swear not, lest ye fall into Condemnation; is in some of the best Copies and several of the old Versions rendered thus; lest ye fall into Hypocrisy: as if the Sin of frequent and common Swearing naturally tended to involve Men in the Guilt of Lying and Perjury. *Vid. Grot. Bez. & Estium in loc.*

the Superiority of his Age and Station is due to him ; 1 *Pet.* v. 5. *Rom.* xii. 10. chap. xiii. 7. whether we live in Peace and Friendship with him, *Rom.* xii. 18. whether we are punctually just and honest in all our Dealings with him ; *Matt.* vii. 12. and not only abstain from the grosser kinds of Injustice, as Murder, Adultery, and the like, but also from all inferiour Instances and Degrees of it ; such as Theft and Damage, *Exod.* xx. 15. chap. xxii. 5. Oppression and Fraud, *Lev.* xxv. 17. *Luke* iii. 13. 1 *Thess.* iv. 6. and every thing else that approaches thereunto ; 1 *Thess.* v. 22. whether we keep ourselves from all Slander and false Witness, *Exod.* xx. 16. and inviolably observe the Truth in all our Assertions and Declarations ; *Eph.* iv. 25. whether we have Charity in relieving his Wants, *Rom.* xii. 20. Mercy in pitying his Misfortunes, *Luke* vi. 36. *Col.* iii. 12, 13. and Candour in the Interpretation of his Actions ; *Matt.* vii. 1, 2. And whether we contribute all that lies in our Power to the Happiness and Salvation of Mankind, by instructing the Ignorant, 2 *Tim.* ii. 25. by reprovng the Wicked, *Lev.* xix. 17. and by propounding to the Imitation of all Men a bright and shining Example of Piety and Religion in our own Persons. *Matt.* v. 16. And then,

In the *Third* and last place, with respect to ourselves, we should carefully enquire whether we have attained to a perfect and compleat Victory over all our Passions ; more particularly, whether we are truly humble in our Thoughts, *Rom.* xii. 3. meek in our Tempers, *Matt.* v. 5. temperate in our Enjoyments, *Luke* xxi. 34. 1 *Cor.* ix. 25. chaste in our Hearts, *Prov.* iv. 23. and modest in our Language and Behaviour, *Eph.* iv. 29. 1 *Thess.* iv. 3. diligent in our Callings, *Eph.* iv. 28. and contented in our Condition. *Heb.* xiii. 5. And whether we make a good Use and Improvement of all the Talents which God hath committed to our Management ; such as Time, Health, Riches, Learning, Power, &c. *Matt.* xxv. 14. to 31. and employ

them as far as we are able to the Honour of God, 1 Cor. x. 31. and the Benefit of Mankind. Gal. vi. 10. And last of all; we should examine ourselves, whether, in order to the due Discharge of all Christian Duties, and that we may the better repent of what we have done amiss, and encourage and comfort ourselves when we have done well, we be careful to improve our Minds in Divine Knowledge, by reading of pious and good Books, and particularly by a constant and diligent Study of the Holy Scriptures. *John* v. 39. *2 Tim.* iii. 16, 17 (k). This is what the great Duty of Self-examination requires of us; and we must be sure that we perform it frequently and diligently, if we would understand the true State and Disposition of our Souls. And to understand this is absolutely necessary upon these two Accounts.

First, In order to obtain the Peace and Tranquillity of our Minds, and a reasonable and well grounded Hope of God's Favour. As to the Peace of our Minds: This so naturally depends upon the Practice of Virtue, that it is impossible to secure it upon any other Principle, as hath been already observed (l). And so necessary is the constant Practice of Piety and Virtue to obtain the Love and Favour of God, that a Man cannot possibly fall into a greater Mistake and Delusion than to expect it upon any other Terms. For it is the Voice of Nature, as well as the Express Declaration of Holy Scripture, that *without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord.* *Heb.* xii. 14. For, as a
Learned

(k) Πόθεν γὰρ ὁ ὀφλοισμὸς ἔξει δεινὰ μὴ εἰρησασμένους ἡμᾶς ὀπιτωπλεῖν, χρῆσά δ' ὑπὸ ἀξάντας ἐπαινεῖν, εἰ μὴ ὁ φρολοισμὸς νόμους τινὰς λάβοι, καθ' ἕς φροσῆκει τῶν ζῶν τὰ τέλει, καὶ φροσ τῆς τῆς σωματικῆς ταμείον, ὡς φροσ πῶτα σκοπὸν, ἀπυθύνειν τὸν ὅλον ἡμῶν βίον; Hierocl. in Pythag. Aur. Carm. pag. 206.

(l) See p. 210, &c.

Learned Writer well (*m*) observes, “ The Expectation and Hope of any Man for Life and Immortality and Glory, without previous Holiness, can be built on no other Foundation but this, that God will rescind His Eternal Decrees, and change His Purposes, that is, cease to be God, merely to comply with them in their Sins ; and who knows not what will be the End of such a cursed Hope and Expectation ?” And to use the Words of an Excellent Prélate, “ The Terms of our Happiness are firmly and immutably fixed, like the *Foundation of the Earth*, which *cannot be moved* ; Nay sooner may *Heaven and Earth pass away* than a wicked Man enter into the Kingdom of Heaven (*n*). If then we would upon good Grounds procure the Peace and Tranquillity of our Minds, and ascertain our selves of the Love and Favour of God ; we must carefully examine into the State and Disposition of our Souls, that we may see whether we are entitled to these great Blessings, by a sincere Repentance of all our Sins, and by the constant Practice of Religion and Virtue. And,

Secondly, To enquire into the State and Disposition of our Souls is absolutely necessary in order to discover our Growth in Grace, and Improvement in all Christian Virtues. This is what the Holy Scriptures require of us in many Places. Thus says the Apostle, *Grow in Grace and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* 2 Pet. iii. 18. And St Paul commands that *our Love should abound yet more and more in Knowledge and in all Judgment ; that we may be filled with the Fruits of Righteousness, &c.* Phil. i. 9, 10, 11. And again, says he, *Leaving the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ, let us go on to Perfection,* Heb. vi. 1. In which

(*m*) Dr Owen's *Pneumatologia*, p. 521.

(*n*) *Tillotson*, Vol. III. p. 199.

he gives us his own Example, *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. Phil. iii. 13, 14.* Now this Growth in Grace is absolutely necessary upon these two Accounts.

First, In order to attain to that Perfection of Piety and Virtue which our Holy Religion requires of us. Thus says our Blessed Lord, *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is Perfect. Matt. v. ult.* And the Apostle, *as He which hath called you is Holy, so be ye Holy in all Manner of Conversation. 1 Pet. i. 15.* If we should consider the Clearness and Plainness of those Precepts which are laid down to us in the Scripture; the mighty Aids and Assistances of God's Grace and Holy Spirit; and the great Strength and Force of those Arguments which are propounded to us in the Gospel, particularly those which are taken from the Eternal Rewards and Punishments of another World: We might be apt to think, that in virtue of these great Motives and Considerations God might reasonably expect, that we should immediately forsake all Manner of Sin and Wickedness, and at once attain to the perfect Habits of Piety and Virtue. And it is certain that the Christian Faith had this Effect upon many of the Primitive Converts, who were at once reclaimed from a very wicked and profligate Course of Living to a most Eminent Degree of Holiness and Piety (*o*). But the great Weakness and Impotency of our Nature since the Fall, the Universal Corruption which ensued thereupon, the strong Propension and Inclination of all Men to Sin and

(*o*) *Da mihi virum, qui sit iracundus, maledicus, effrænatus; paucissimis Dei verbis tam placidum quam ovem reddam. Da libidinosum, &c. Numquis hæc Philosophorum aut unquam præstitit, aut præstare, si velit, potest? Lactant. Institut. lib. iii. cap. xxvi. See also Dr Scott's Christian Life, 8vo. Vol. III. chap. vii. p. 78, 79. in which there are several remarkable Passages cited out of St Origen to this Purpose.*

and Wickedness, and above all the mighty Power and Dominion of Evil Habits, under which the greatest Part of Mankind are unhappily fallen, are a sufficient Bar to this Expectation. And therefore, tho' in the first Ages of Christianity, when the Faith of Christians was supported in it's full Vigour by daily and constant Miracles, and an uncommon Degree and Measure of God's Spirit was shed abroad upon the Church, something Extraordinary might be expected; yet in the general State and Condition of the Church the Case is quite otherwise. And God in His great Mercy and Goodness is ready to make all reasonable Allowances for our Frailties and Imperfections. And therefore He does not expect that we shall at once get the Victory over our sinful Habits, and advance to the Perfection of Christian Virtue. But He requires only, that we diligently consider and attend to the great Arguments and Motives of the Gospel, and in Virtue of them be determined to abstain from all known Sin and Wickedness; that we carefully watch over ourselves to discover our Infirmities and Corruptions; that we use our best Endeavours to reform and amend our Lives, till by degrees we arrive at the Height of *Christian Perfection*: till we *attain to the Measure of the Stature of the Fullness of Christ, Eph. iv. 13.* and become *perfect, even as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect. Matt. v. 48.* And,

Secondly, Our Growth in Grace is absolutely necessary to prevent our Apostacy and Defection from Piety and Virtue. For Religion is a *Progressive (p)* Work,
and

(p) A Man is never so good as he ought to be, who doth not heartily desire and design to be as good as he can be, and breathe and pant after Perfection itself even in this Life, tho' he be satisfied that it is not fully attainable, but in another; since withal he is satisfied, that the more uniformly and vigorously he presses toward the Mark of Perfection in this Life, the nearer still he shall approach to it, tho' he shall never reach it: and the nearer he is toward reaching

and requires a *continual* Increase and Improvement in all *Christian* Graces and Virtues. And it is in vain to think that we can attain to such Perfection of Holiness and Virtue, as that we shall have no Occasion to proceed any further. For unless we move forward in a Course of Piety and Religion, we shall necessarily go backward, till at length we shall fall from our Stedfastness. And accordingly we find that the Apostle prescribes this very thing, as the Means to prevent our Apostacy: *Take heed, says he, lest ye fall from your own Stedfastness*; and then follows the Remedy, *but grow in Grace and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* 2 *Pet.* iii. 17, 18. If then we have any Regard to the Peace and Tranquillity of our Minds, and to the Love and Favour of God, and would know upon good Grounds whether we are justly entitled to these great Blessings; we must diligently examine our Hearts, and see in what Manner we have behaved ourselves; whether we have reconciled ourselves to God by a true Repentance, and have endeavoured to please Him in all Things, and to *walk in all His Commandments and Ordinances blameless*; and whether we have duly discharged all the Duties which we owe to our Neighbours and ourselves. We must carefully enquire into the Tempers and Dispositions of our Minds, whether our Affections are *set on the Things that are above, and our Conversation*

reaching it here, the more glorious shall be his Crown, and the more exalted his State of Perfection hereafter. And therefore if any one find himself inclined to circumscribe his Practice within such or such Limits of Duty, beyond which he never intends nor expects to go, to hold fast the Pleasures of Life, and to enjoy as much of them as ever he can consistently with the Principles of Religion, arguing always for the utmost Extent of his Christian Liberty, and desiring to make his Obligation as narrow as may be: Such an one hath Reason to conclude, that he is as yet short of those Qualifications which are necessary to recommend him to the Judge of all Hearts and Discerner of Spirits.

versation be in Heaven; and whether we die daily unto Sin, and live unto Righteousness; and whether the longer we live in the World, we become more sensible of the Vanity thereof, and do more despise the Riches, Honours and Pleasures of it; and whether as we have received of the Lord, how we ought to walk and to please God, so we endeavour to abound more and more; 1 Thess. iv. 1. till at length we arrive at that Perfection of Piety and Virtue, which our Holy Religion requires of us. For this, as hath been shewn, is not only highly reasonable and necessary, but is moreover of the utmost Benefit and Advantage to ourselves; since as the Apostle observes, Rom. vi. 22. *If our Fruit be unto Holiness, our End shall be Everlasting Life.*

CH A P. V.

Concerning the Religious Education of Children.

I SHALL not in treating upon this Point spend any Time in shewing the Benefit and Advantage of a good Education, neither shall I describe at large the many and several Particulars, in which the Religious Education of Children doth consist, such as the bringing them to be baptized in the Congregation of *Christ*, and afterwards to be confirmed by the Bishop; the having them publickly Catechized in the Church; the setting a pious and good Example constantly before them; with other Things of the like Nature, which, tho' they are very Necessary and Essential Parts of *Christian* Education, yet lie out of my present Design. For this hath been fully done by many excellent Writers, from whom any one may

may receive sufficient Information in this Matter (a). But all that I shall do at present is to observe as briefly as I can, wherein the Pious and Religious Education of Children doth chiefly and principally consist. And then in the *second* Place, to consider the absolute Necessity and unspeakable Advantage of such Education. And *first*, Wherein the Pious and Religious Education of Children doth principally consist. Now this in general consists in Instructing them early and fully in all the Doctrines and Duties of the *Christian* Religion, and in using all possible Means to ground and confirm them in the Belief and Practice of them. And this is chiefly and principally to be done these three Ways. *First*, By instructing them early in some short Summary and Catechism, containing the Principles and Duties of *Christ's* Gospel. *Secondly*, By often inculcating the same Points upon them by Word of Mouth, and in their Discourse and Conversation. And *Thirdly*, By obliging them frequently to read pious and good Books, and especially the Holy Scriptures.

And *First* then, The Religious Education of Children implies the Instructing them early in some short Summary and Catechism, containing the Principles and Duties of *Christ's* Gospel. And of this kind there are several to be found in the Nation; but that which is appointed for this purpose by our own Church, is of all others the best and most excellent. And in this Catechism all Parents should early and diligently instruct their Children, and make them get it all by heart and remember it exactly. And in order to their better understanding of it, they should make them read it with some short and plain Exposition; in which the Sense and Meaning thereof is explained, and every Part illustrated and confirmed by Proofs
from

(a) See particularly Archbishop *Tillotson*, Bishop *Fleetwood*, and Mr *Lock* upon this Subject.

from Holy Scripture, of which there are so many Excellent ones published in our Language, that a Man may easily make a good Choice. And in the Use of these Expositions a Parent should assist the Weakness of his Childrens Judgment, by explaining every Part to them, as far as their Capacities will admit, and making them understand it perfectly. And more particularly, they should make them fully acquainted with the true Sense and Meaning of every Petition in the *Lord's Prayer*, and of every Article in the *Creed*, and should let them know distinctly the View and Design of them, and what Effect and Influence the Use of those Petitions and the Belief of those Articles ought to have upon their Lives and Conversations : and This, because the *Lord's Prayer* and the *Creed* are by every Member of our Church constantly recited in our Public Worship, and therefore ought not to be used and offered up to God by any one by Rote only, and as a mere Customary Form of Words (as it is much to be feared it is the Practice of too many Persons to do) but with due Understanding and proper Affections : since otherwise, his offering up those Petitions to God, and making Profession of his Faith in Him, will be so far from being well pleasing and acceptable to God, that it must rather be offensive and displeasing to Him. And so likewise when they proceed to the *Christian Sacraments* of *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*, they must be careful to explain to them the true Nature and Design of them ; and must let them know, that they are not mere Forms and Ceremonies, as too many Persons now falsely represent them, but Matters of the utmost Consequence and Importance to the truly *Christian Life* and Conversation (b). That *Baptism* is the Great Sacrament of Initiation into the Gospel, as *Circumcision* was

(b) See above p. 121, 122.

was into the *Jewish* Dispensation. And as every Person that was *circumcised* did thereby become a Debtor to do the whole Law; Galat. v. 3. So whosoever is baptized into the *Christian* Religion, does thereby lay himself under a most solemn Obligation to observe all the Terms and Conditions of the Gospel-Covenant. Rom. vi. 3, 4. (and for this Reason the *Circumcision* of *Christ*, mentioned by St Paul, Col. ii. 11. is by some good Interpreters (c) understood of the *Christian* Baptism). And that *Baptism* does not save us by putting away the Filth of the Flesh, but by the Answer of a good Conscience towards God; 1 Pet. iii. 21. and consequently if they do not answer the End and Design of their Baptism, by fulfilling the Terms of the Gospel-Covenant, and living in Universal Holiness and Goodness, their Baptism will be so far from being a Blessing and Advantage to them, that on the Contrary it will prove the greatest Infelicity and Curse which could possibly have befallen them: Since it would have been better for them not to have known the Way of Righteousness, than after they had known it to turn from the Holy Commandment delivered unto them. 2 Pet. ii. 21. And so with regard to the *Lord's Supper*, it should be well and frequently imprinted on their Minds, that the receiving this Holy Sacrament is not a bare eating of Bread and drinking of Wine in Remembrance of *Christ's* Death, but a most Solemn and Sacred Institution; in which the Infinite Love of our Dear Saviour in dying for us is in a most lively Manner displayed and represented to our Minds, and by which all the Benefits of His Death and Passion are conveyed and administered to us. For the Sacramental Bread and Wine is the *Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ*, as St Paul observes, 1 Cor. x. 16 (d) and therefore they

(c) Gomarus in loc. Nelson on the Festivals, p. 115.

(d) See Burnet, Artic. XXVIII. p. 316, 317.

they should not only regularly and constantly receive this Blessed Sacrament, in Virtue of *Christ's* Command requiring them to do so, but also with the highest Gratitude and most Inflamed Affections towards Him, and from a due Sense of His Amazing Love in dying for us, with a True and Perfect Love and Charity for all Mankind. And in like Manner when Parents are Catechizing their Children in the Moral Precepts of Religion, they must make them fully sensible that they are not only strictly bound to practice all Moral Duties, because God hath expressly enjoined them, but also because they are Absolute Necessary Qualifications, without which the Happiness of Heaven cannot possibly be enjoyed (*e*). Nay, and moreover, that they are Indispensably requisite to their Peace, Comfort, and True Happiness even in this present Life (*f*). And therefore as they have any Regard to their true Interest and Happiness in this World, and to the Salvation of their Souls in the World to come, they must be exceedingly careful, that they regularly and constantly live in the Universal Practice of Moral Virtue. In this Manner should *Christian* Parents instruct their Children in their Catechism; since if they only make them learn it by Rote (as the General Custom is to do) without explaining the Sense and Meaning thereof to them, and acquainting them with the View and Design of every Part, and deeply imprinting it upon their Minds and Understandings, they might to all the Intents and Purposes of Religion, as well not instruct and catechize them at all. But,

Secondly, Because the Understandings of Young Persons are weak, and their Apprehensions of Things very imperfect and obscure; it is further Necessary to the Religious Education of Children, that Parents instruct

(*e*) See Tillotson, Vol. I. p. 96.

(*f*) See above p. 210, 211.

instruct them in the great Points of *Christian* Knowledge (g) by Word of Mouth, and in their Discourse and Conversation. And this must be done frequently and carefully, upon all proper Occasions and Opportunities. For, as an Eminent Writer hath well observed (b), “ The Impressions of Piety and Virtue on
 “ the Minds of Men must be in Proportion to the
 “ signal Force with which those Impressions are made,
 “ and the Frequency with which they are repeated.”

And therefore if Parents heartily desire that their Children should be duly improved in *Christian* Knowledge, they must use all possible Diligence, and lay hold of every Opportunity to instruct them in every Part of it. More especially, they should be careful frequently to instruct them in the Three General Heads of *Christian* Duty, viz. their Duty to God, their Neighbour, and Themselves; for these will naturally and by Degrees lead them to the Practice of all the Particular Duties, which are derived therefrom.

As to the *First*, They should frequently put them in Mind, that God not only created them out of nothing, but that He also supports them continually by his Good Providence, and supplies them with all the Necessaries and Conveniencies of Life; and which is infinitely beyond this, that He hath prepared a State of Eternal and Inconceivable Happiness for them, when this Life shall be at an End; and hath
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(g) The Difficulty of keeping young and hot Blood in order does mightily enforce the Necessity of an early Care for the Training up of Children, and giving them a Tincture, before it be too late, of those Doctrines and Principles, by which they are afterwards to govern the whole Frame of their Lives. For in their tender Years they are more susceptible of profitable and virtuous Impressions than afterwards, when they come to be solicited by the Impulse of common and vulgar Inclinations. *L'Esfrange's Fables*, 8vo. Vol. I. *Fab.* 184. p. 198.

(b) Revelation examined with Candour, Vol. II. p. 165.

sent His only Begotten Son into the World to assure them of it, who hath shed His most Precious Blood to redeem them from Death, and to purchase Eternal Life for them: and consequently that they ought in the highest Degree to Love, Honour, and Adore so Good and Excellent a Being (i), and to manifest their continual Dependance upon Him by Hearty and Constant Prayer and Devotion, both Public and Private. And that they may better discharge this Necessary Duty, they should furnish them with some fit and proper Form of Private Devotion, and see that they Regularly make use of it; and should from the Beginning instruct and train them up under a Due Sense of the Absolute Necessity of attending upon the Public Worship. And if they are hearty and sincere in this Instruction, they must be extremely careful, that they set before their Children a Good Example in this Particular; and that they never neglect the Public Worship Themselves for the Sake of any Company or Worldly Pleasure, but only in Case of Sickness or unavoidable Necessity. And further, when they are thus instructing their Children in their Duty to God, they must not only make them sensible of His Being, but also of all His Excellencies and Perfections; and must distinctly shew them what Effect and Influence the Belief of these Divine Perfections ought to have upon their Lives and Manners. More particularly, they should frequently put them in Mind, that *God is every where present*, *Psal. cxxxix. 7, &c. and knoweth all Things, ver. 2, 3. Heb. iv. 13:* even the secret Thoughts of the Heart. *1 Chron. xxviii. 9.* And therefore in all their Actions they should *set the Lord always before them*, and behave themselves as being ever under His immediate Eye and Inspection. *Psal. xvi, 8.* And this more especially, because as

X

God

(i) See above Part I, Introduction, p. 1 and 2.

God sees and discovers all their Actions, so He is of absolute Holiness and inflexible Justice, and will not at all *acquit the Wicked*, *Nabum. i. 3.* nor by any means *clear the Guilty*; *Exod. xxxiv. 7.* and for the more solemn Manifestation of His Justice *hath appointed a Day, in which He will judge the World in Righteousness*, *Acts xvii. 31.* and will bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret Thing, whether it be good or evil; *Eccl. xii. ult.* a Day, when all Men shall be sentenced to a State of everlasting and inconceivable Happiness or Misery according to their Deserts. *Matt. xxv. 46.* And because the Doctrine of a Future Judgment and Eternal Retributions is of the utmost Consequence to Religion, without a Firm and Steadfast Belief of which the Practice of Piety and Virtue cannot possibly be supported and maintained, as was before observed (*k*); for this Reason all Parents should endeavour early to instil this Great Principle into their Children; should frequently talk and discourse to them of Heaven and Hell, and by the most lively Images and sensible Descriptions should represent to them, as far as they are able, the exceeding Happiness of the Righteous, and the astonishing Miseries of the Damned: since a strong and deep Impression of this Great Truth must needs be of unspeakable Benefit and Advantage to them throughout their whole Lives, as it will the most powerfully restrain them from Wickedness and Vice, and encourage them to the Practice of Piety and Virtue. And,

Secondly, As to their Duty towards their Neighbour, Parents should not only barely inform their Children that they ought to be just, Righteous, and Charitable to their Fellow-Creatures, but they ought also to make them acquainted with the true Ground and Foundation of these Duties; as, *viz.* that every
Man

(*k*) See p. 258, &c.

Man is born a Member of a large Society, the Happiness of which he is as truly and sincerely bound to consult as that of his own ; and consequently since the Happiness of Human Society (which is inseparable from that of private Persons) entirely depends upon the due Performance of all social Duties, every Man should think himself strictly oblig'd to the Discharge of those Duties ; and should not look upon himself as born only for his own Sake, to please and delight himself, but for the Sake of all Mankind, who are Members of the same Society with himself, and to whom he should not only be just and righteous in his Dealings, but should also, as far as he is able, extend all Instances of Humanity, Charity, and Benevolence. (1). And when Parents are instructing their Children upon this Head of Righteousness and Charity, which all the Members of Society owe to each other, they should not fail more especially to caution them against that odious and horrid Vice of Calumny and Evil-speaking, which is now become of general Fashion in all Parts of the Kingdom. And they should not only shew them, that this Sin is expressly condemned by God in Holy Scripture, and rank'd there with the very worst of Crimes, which will certainly exclude Men from the Kingdom of Heaven : (See Matt. xii. 36. Tit. iii. 2. Jam. iv. 11. Rom. i. 30. 1 Cor. vi. 10) (m). but they should also make them sensible that it is a most base and vile Practice in itself, unworthy of a Man, and scandalous

X 2

in

(1) *Homines Hominum causa generati sunt, ut ipsi inter se alii aliis prodesse possent.* Cic. de Offic. lib. i. See also Puffendorf's *Law of Nature, &c.* lib. iii. chap. 3. §. 1. in which there are many excellent Passages to this Purpose cited out of ancient Authors.

(m) *Maledici* (inquit Sermo Divinus, 1 Cor. vi. 10). *Regnum Dei non possidebunt* ; hinc intelligere possumus quam gravis sit & perniciosa Maledictio, quando, etiamsi alia bona adfuerint, sola excludit a Cœlo. *Salvian de Gubernatione, Dei.* lib. iii. p. 81.

in a Christian. And this upon several Accounts, which I shall at present only briefly mention, leaving all Parents to enlarge more fully upon them, as they may find Occasion. As in the first Place, because this Sin of Evil-speaking is a monstrous Perversion of that noble Gift and Talent of Speech, with which we are endued, and by which we are distinguish'd from the Brutal World (*n*). *2dly*, Because to sacrifice the good Name and Reputation of our Neighbours (which is many times dearer to them than their Lives) to the Mirth and Diversion of Company, and that, as is most usually done upon the sole Ground and Principle of common Fame (which is in itself a very uncertain and fallacious Rule whereby to judge of Mens Actions and (*o*) Conduct) is such an Instance of Injustice and Cruelty, as will in the end prove fatal and destructive to our Souls. *1 Cor. vi. 9.* *3dly*, Because this Vice of Calumny is most notoriously subversive of that great Duty of Christian Charity, which our Lord hath made the very Mark and Character of his Disciples, *John xiii. 35.* and without which all our Attainments in Religion will avail nothing. *Jam. i. 26. 1 Cor. xiii.* *4thly*, Because it tends the most of any Thing to break Love, and to dissolve Friendship, and to promote Quarrels and Contentions amongst Men. (*See Prov. xvi. 28. chap. xvii. 9. Ecclus. xix. 8, 9. chap. xxii. 21, 22.*) And
in

(*n*) *Mutos nasci & egere omni ratione fatius fuisset, quam Providentiæ munera in mutuam perniciem convertere. Quintilian Instit. lib. xii. cap. 1.*

(*o*) Nil spernat Auris, nec tamen credat statim,
 Quandoquidem illi peccant, quos minime putes,
 Et qui non peccant, impugnantur fraudibus.
 Hoc admonere simplices etiam potest,
 Opinione alterius ne quid ponderent :
 Ambitio namque diffidens mortalium
 Aut Gratiaë subscribit, aut odio suo.
 Erit ille notus, quem per te cognoveris.

Phædrus, lib. iii. Fab. 10.

in the 5th and last Place, because there is this peculiar Malignity in this Sin of Slander and Evil-speaking, that tho' a Man should afterwards become sensible of the Guilt thereof, and bitterly repent of it, and sincerely endeavour to repair the Injury which he hath hereby done to his Neighbour; yet he shall for the most Part be unable to accomplish it in any measure, to remove those Suspicions out of Mens Minds, which by this Means he hath rais'd therein (p). And in the

Third Place, with Regard to themselves, Children should be early and fully instructed that they ought to preserve their Bodies in Temperance, Sobriety, and Chastity; not only, because all Bodily Excesses are very injurious and detrimental to Mens Health, and destructive of their Fortunes (which one would think should be sufficient to restrain all Men therefrom) but also, because they do in a most horrid Manner efface and destroy the Image of God in which He created Mankind, and are a most shameful Abuse of and Affront to the Holy Spirit, which God hath sent down into the Hearts of all Christians, (See 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17), and must therefore be a high Dishonour and Contempt cast upon Him; and do moreover render Men entirely unable to perform many of those Duties which God hath in the strictest Manner required of them (q); and as such, must

X 3 be

(p) There is a most beautiful Passage to this Purpose in the Writings of *Ovid*; he tells us of one *Claudia*, a Virgin, who was falsely accused and suspected of Unchastity, and upon praying to the Goddess *Cybele* was enabled to work a most astonishing Miracle in Vindication of her Innocence: And yet the Poet wisely observes, that there were several Persons who could not be induced to believe her innocent, tho' Heaven itself had born Witnesses to and confirm'd the Truth of it.

*Claudia præedit læto celeberrima vultu,
Credita vix tandem Teste pudica Deâ.*

Fæstor. lib. 4. l. 343, 344.

(.) It is very rational to allow our selves a moderate Taste of lawful and innocent Pleasures, without suffering them to overwhelm and

be extremely fatal and dangerous to their Salvation, And therefore if they have any Regard to the Health of their Bodies, and the Peace of their Minds; if they are desirous to support themselves and Families in Order and Decency, and to live in Esteem and Reputation among their Neighbours; if they would not degrade the Dignity of their Natures, by which they are distinguished from the Beasts that perish; and to say no more, if they would not wilfully affront Almighty God, and expose themselves to His Wrath and Vengeance, by transgressing His Commands; they are bound to forbear all Excess of Bodily and Sensual Pleasures, and to live in the Practice of Temperance and Moderation. In the next Place, when Parents instruct their Children by way of Discourse and Conversation, they should earnestly and frequently caution them against those Sins and Vices, to which Youth is generally subject; and particularly those of hard Drinking, Idleness, Lying, and Swearing, all which are of the most pernicious and destructive Consequence to them.

As to the ill Effects of hard Drinking, I have just now touched upon them; and therefore shall only add what a great Judge (*r*) hath observed upon this Point, *viz.* “That Parents should carefully have their Eye
 “ upon this Practice, and restrain it with all the Skill
 “ and Industry they can, there being nothing which
 “ lays a surer Foundation of Mischief both to the Body
 “ and Mind.”

As to the *second*, Children should be frequently and fully instructed, that Men ought to be diligent and industrious in Business, not only by Virtue of God’s express Command, *Exod. xx. 9. Rom. xii. 11.* and that they may consult the Benefit of
 Human

and drown us; but this is to be fixed as an *inviolable Rule*, that no Pleasure must be purchased at so dear a Rate as the Neglect or Transgression of our Duty. *Puffendorf, lib. ii. chap. iv. §. 11.*

(*r*) *Lock on Education, Sect. 19.*

Human Society which they are bound to do; but also, because God hath most solemnly declared that He will require of all Men a just Improvement of their Talents, and that Men shall be condemned at the last Day and severely punished for neglecting to improve their Talents, as well as for misapplying and abusing them. *Matt.* xxv. 24 to 31. And to make Men the more sensible of this Duty, the Scripture represents an Idle Person to be in a State of Sleep; as if to be entirely bereaved of Sense and Perception, and to be Useless and Unactive, were the very same Thing. *Prov.* xix. 15. (s). And moreover Children should be well and thoroughly informed, that Idleness not only of itself naturally leads Men into other Vices; *Prov.* xviii. 9. (t). But also, that without great Pains and Industry it is impossible to attain to a due Skill and Knowledge in any Art or Profession whatsoever. And therefore if they do not diligently employ themselves in the proper Business of their Callings, they will unavoidably fall into Poverty and Want. *Prov.* vi. 11. *chap.* xix. 15. And Poverty (when brought upon themselves by their own Negligence and Sloth) will expose them to the Reproach and Contempt of all Mankind (*). And consequently as they are desirous to avoid the great Miseries and Hardships of Poverty; as they would not be justly scorned and despised by all Men, as useless and destructive Members of Society; and above all, if they would not willingly be cast into outer Darkness, *Matt.* xxv. 30. for neglecting to improve that noble and precious Talent of Time;

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they

(s) Mors nobis Tempus habetur iners. *Ovid de Ponto, lib. i. Ep. vi.*

(t) Habetur ignavus ac si perderet ipse, quia multa perdit. & dum non acquirit unde vivat, eo adigitur ut Scelus exerceat. *Mex. cerus in loc.*

(*) Nil habet Infelix Paupertas durius in se,
Quam quod ridiculos homines facit.

they are bound to employ their Days wisely and usefully, to the Honour of God and the Good of Mankind, and especially by being industrious and diligent in the proper Business of their Profession. And,

Thirdly, As to the Sin of Lying, which as an Eminent Writer observes (*), “Is so ill a Quality and the Mother of so many ill ones that spawn from it, and take shelter under it; that a Child should be brought up in the greatest Abhorrence of it imaginable.” I say, as to this Vice, Children should be frequently put in Mind, that Lying is not only expressly forbidden by God in Scripture, *Eph. iv. 25.* and ranked with the worst and most heinous Vices, and threatned with the severest and most dreadful Punishment; *Rev. xxi. 8.* but also, that it is very vile and scandalous in itself, an Argument of a mean and base Spirit, and accompanied with so many bad Properties and Qualities; that when a Man is once discovered to be guilty of this Vice, he is forever after suspected and mistrusted, and becomes odious (x) and hateful to all Mankind. And therefore if they would not be exposed to the utmost Abhorrence and Detestation of all Men, if they are desirous to be esteemed and received with Trust and Confidence among their Neighbours, and above all, as they would hope to escape the unspeakable and everlasting Torments of Hell-fire; they must diligently and carefully avoid and refrain this base and evil Practice of Lying and Falshood, and constantly and resolutely speak the Truth in all their Assertions and Declarations. And,

Fourthly and lastly, With respect to the great and horrid Sin of profane Swearing (which is one of the reigning and crying Sins of the Nation) Children should

(*) *Lock on Education, Sect. 124.*

(x) Ἐχθρὸς ὅμοιος αἰῶνος πύλησιν, &c. said *Achilles* in *Homer, Iliad. ix. i. e.* Like Hell I hate the Man that lies.

should be early and severely cautioned against this Vice, not only because the Sin of common Swearing naturally and frequently leads Men into the Guilt of Perjury (y), but also because it is in itself a most heinous Transgression, highly provoking to Almighty God, and threatned in Scripture with the severest Punishment. *Exod. xx. 7. (z)*. (See also, *Ecclus. xxiii. 9. &c*). And indeed no Wonder, when it is a most impious degrading and vilifying the Sacred Majesty of God's Name, a due and reverent Regard to which is the main Foundation of Religion: THAT NAME, which, as an Excellent Divine of our Church admirably expresses it (a), "All Heaven with the profoundest Submission doth adore, which the Angelical Powers, the brightest and purest Seraphims, without hiding their Faces and Reverential Horrour cannot utter or hear. *Isa. vi. 2.*" And moreover Children should be well informed, that common Swearing is a very rude and unmannerly Practice, inasmuch as it is extremely offensive and disagreeable to all pious and sober People with whom we happen to converse: and that it is so far from adding any Thing to the Weight and Force of our Words, that
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(y) If the Devil himself was to study and contrive a Way for the disarming Mankind of that natural Reverence and Veneration they have for Oaths, and bringing them without much Scruple of Conscience to swear any Thing at any Time, whether true or false, as their own Interests or the Importunity of others did tempt them to it; he could not in the World pitch upon a more effectual one than this, to make Oaths familiar to them upon all Occasions, to bring them into customary Use in ordinary Conversation.

Archbishop Sharp's Sermons, Vol. IV. p. 387, 388.

(z) *Will not hold him guiltless.* The Words are a *Meiosis*, i. e. a Figure of Speech in which less is expressed than is meant and signified; and the Meaning of them is, he shall be punished severely. *Grot. in loc.* It is very usual in Scripture to speak after this Manner, of which the Reader will find many Instances, if he will consult *Mr Pool's Synopsis Criticorum* on this Text.

(a) *Dr Barrow's Works, Vol. I. p. 210.*

on the contrary there is nothing which so much impairs and diminisheth the Credit of our Assertions; and that the best way for a Man to gain an easy and ready Belief to every Thing he says, is to behave himself with Inviolable Probity and Sincerity in all his Conversation (b). And because a due Reverence for the Name of God is of the utmost Consequence to Religion; therefore Children should be early and frequently instructed to express a fit and becoming Respect to that Holy and Sacred Name, whenever it is pronounced (c) by themselves or others, and particularly they should be diligently watched and cautioned, that they do not mention the Venerable Name of God or LORD in their common Discourse in a light and idle Manner, as many sober and well-meaning People oftentimes inconsiderately do; especially if they happen to be surprized or transported with Anger. For this is not only of itself a manifest Impiety (d) and Irreverence, but will also naturally and insensibly lead them into greater and more heinous (e) Profanations of

(b) Of this, History hath furnished us with a most Eminent Example (highly worthy of the Notice and Imitation of all *Christians*) in the Person of *Xenocrates* the *Platonist*; a Man of no great Parts, but of such absolute Probity and Sincerity, that the *Athenians* gave him this singular Privilege, that in all Cases, where all other Persons were obliged to give their Testimony upon Oath, he himself should be believed upon his bare Word. *Vide Diog. Laert. in Vita Xenocratis.*

(c) See the *Spectator*, No. 531. in which there are some very Excellent Observations to this Purpose.

(d) Swearing unnecessarily by God is but profaning of His Name. *Hobbs's Leviath. Folio, Part 1. chap. xiv. p. 71.* And tho' this Author adds, (in the Words immediately following) "that Swearing by other Things, as Men do in common Discourse, is not Swearing, but a Custom which Men get by too much Vehemence of Talking." yet he expressly says it is an *impious Custom*.

(e) Customary Swearing, beside the ill Consequences it has in making Oaths cheap, &c. is a great Instance of Disregard and Irreverence. For they, who use themselves to it, do at least make the

Tremendous

of God's Name. And therefore as they would willingly be esteemed in the World as civilized and well-bred Persons; as they would not be uneasy and offensive to every Pious and Devout Man they converse with; as they have any Regard to their Credit and Reputation among Men; and above all, as they tender the Honour and Reverence which is due to God, and would not expose themselves to the Severity of his Wrath and Vengeance by the Abuse and Profanation of His Holy Name; they should be very careful and watch diligently over themselves, that they never use the Sacred Name of God but in a grave and serious and devout Manner; lest by degrees they should fall into the great and heinous Sin of profane and common Swearing.

And as Parents should thus admonish and guard their Children against the common Sins and Vices of Youth; so, as the best and most effectual Means to preserve them from being infected thereby, they should earnestly caution them against keeping Company with lewd and dissolute Persons, than which there is nothing which is of more Fatal and Pernicious Consequence to Young Men (*f*). And they should more particularly renew and inforce this Caution, when they are going from them into the World in order to be educated and instructed in their proper Trade or Profession. Then as they should diligently remind them of all the pious and good Instructions which they have ever given to them; so they should urge and press this Point upon them with more than ordinary Fervency and

Tremendous Name of God to serve for an *Expletive* only, and commonly to Rude, Passionate, or Debauched Discourse. (*Δόξαν ἀναπλήρωμα ποιούμενοι τὸ ἀγνόησον καὶ θεῶν ὄνομα. Ph. Jud.*)
Woolaston's Relig. of Nat. delineated, p. 126.

(*f*) Nullum adolescentiæ gravius impendet Periculum, quam ab amicis & sodalibus; qui lubricam istam & ceream ætatem nimio sæpius in vitia propellunt. *Littleton, Prælect. de Juventute, Oxon. p. 72.*

and Zeal; and earnestly conjure them, as they tender the Ease and Comfort of their Parents; as they have any Regard to their own Credit and Worldly Interest, or any Concern for their Virtue and their true Happiness both in this Life and the next; that they be extremely careful what Company they keep, and that they shun and avoid the Conversation of all lewd and wicked, profane and debauched Persons, as they would the most loathsome and dangerous Diseases. And, as the best Means to prevent this Fatal Mischief, they should represent to them the necessary Duty of being diligent in their Studies, or minding their Master's Business in Point of strict Justice as well as Prudence; and should if it were possible (at least for the two or three first Years of their Time, in which they are most subject to Danger) bring them to a fixed Resolution of going abroad as seldom (g) as may be, and of never keeping any other Company, but what their Masters and Tutors expressly allow and approve of. Which Point, if it were seriously considered by all Parents and Masters as it ought to be, we should not have so many lamentable Instances of young Persons, who by going abroad too early into the World, and meeting with bad Company, are ruined and undone beyond Recovery. But,

Thirdly, Another Thing, in which Parents should frequently instruct their Children (and which is a Matter of the greatest Consequence to their Happiness)

is

(g) They (Youth) should be kept out of *Distance* of either seeing or hearing Ill-Examples; especially *in an Age* that is governed more by Precedent than by Reason. *Lestrangle, ibid.* Ill Examples corrupt even the best Dispositions, ——— and above all Things, Children should not be betrayed into the Love and Practice of any Thing that is amiss, by setting Evil Examples before them; for their Talent is only Imitation; and it is ill trusting methinks in such a Case, without a Judgment to distinguish. *Lestrangle, Vol. I. p. 241.*

is the absolute indispensable Necessity of Piety and Virtue, in order to obtain the Favour of God in the Life to come; for *without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord, Heb. xii. 14.* And the Reason why I mention this again, and that under a distinct Head, is not that Parents may inform their Children of the Necessity of Religion, which I have before taken Notice of, but that they may hereby represent to them that vast and inestimable Blessing which they have now in their Hands, if they will hold fast to those pious and good Principles in which they are Educated; if they do not *leave their first Love, Rev. ii. 4.* nor *defile their Garments, chap. iii. 4.* but shall be careful to preserve that Innocence which they are now possessed of. That Innocence; which, as an Eminent Writer (*b*) well expresses it, is a “Jewel, which no Man understands the Value of; and no Man knows what he does, when he first parts with it.” For let Men pretend what they will, there is a great Uneasiness and Disquietude of Mind, and a secret horrible Dread of God's Wrath and Vengeance naturally arising from the Practice of Sin (*i*). This an extraordinary Penitent of our Nation freely acknowledged of himself; “that tho' he suffered extreme Pains in his Body, yet the Agonies of his Mind sometimes swallowed up the Sense of what he felt in his Body; and declared, that tho' there were nothing to come after this Life, yet all the Pleasures he had ever known in Sin (and perhaps he had known as many as any Man that ever lived) were not worth that Torture which he felt in his Mind (*k*).” And therefore whenever a Man engages in the Practice of Sin and Wickedness, he must either (which is too (*l*) often done
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(*b*) Dr Clark's Practical Essays, Part II. chap. ix. §. 1.

(*i*) See above p. 211.

(*k*) Bishop Burnet's Life of the Lord Rochester, p. 98.

(*l*) Vide Dr Scott's Christian Life, 8vo. Vol. II. p. 375, &c.

in this Case) have Recourse to the Principles of *Atheism*, *Infidelity*, and *Superstition*, in order to reconcile his Actions to his Opinions; or else he must bring himself to Repentance, as the only Means to quiet his Conscience, and to deliver his Mind from the Guilt and Burden of his Sins. But now (as will be seen hereafter) it is oftentimes very hard and difficult for Sinners to repent, tho' they should never so sincerely desire to do so; and in case Men do become Penitent, yet they cannot attain to a true Repentance without such Labour and Sorrow, such Grief and Trouble of Mind, as all the Pleasures of Sin can never compensate. This every sincere Penitent will readily acknowledge: and many pious and good Men, who have been unhappily surprized into some foul Transgressions, have wept bitterly upon this Occasion. (See *Matt. xxvi. 75.*) And as such Persons have a juster Notion of the Guilt of Sin, and more lively Apprehensions of God's Justice and Goodness than other Men; it hath sometimes happened, that the Remembrance of their Miscarriages hath eaten up and destroyed the Sense and Relish of all their Virtues, and hath lain so heavy upon their Minds as to embitter the Delights and Comforts of their whole Lives. This was remarkably the Case of Holy *David* after his Transgression in the Matter of *Uriah*, as may be seen in *Psalms* li. which he composed upon this Occasion. *I acknowledge my Faults*, saith he, *and my Sin is ever before me, ver. 3.* And in another *Psalms* recounting the Sins and Iniquities of his Life, he expresses himself thus, *I am weary of my groaning, every Night wash I my Bed, and water my Couch with my Tears; Psalm vi. 6.* as much as to say, "the Agonies of my Mind are
 " so great, that the Consideration of my horrible
 " Sins, the Causes of them, gives me not one Minute
 " of Intermiſſion," as an Excellent Paraphrast (m) upon

(m) *Hammond in loc.*

upon the Text expresses it. But now young Persons may easily prevent all this Trouble and Mischief, if they will abide by the Principles of their Education, and go on in that pious and good Course which they have been brought up in. They may by this Means deliver themselves from the Anxieties of Guilt and the Trouble of Repentance, and purchase to themselves a settled Peace and Tranquillity of Mind; and they will hereby be so secure of the Love and Favour of God, that it will render any State and Condition of Life easy and pleasant to them. They will upon this Account be always happy in themselves, and may labour with Delight, and live with Comfort, and die with Joy. And moreover, they will gain this inestimable Advantage by a strict and constant Practice of Virtue, that they shall hereby be entitled to the greatest and most ample Rewards in the Kingdom of Heaven. For tho' Repentance of Sin and Reformation of Life will procure to a Man the Mercy and Favour of God, if such Repentance be early and effectual; yet as a learned Divine (*n*) observes, "All
" that a Late Penitent can hope for, is to obtain For-
" giveness, and to be admitted into Heaven; but
" the Bright Crowns will be reserved for those, who
" have *fought the good Fight, and overcome the World.*"
And therefore as Parents should always duly instruct their Children in the indispensable Necessity of Holiness and Virtue; so when they are going from them into the World in order to be fixed in their proper Trade or Profession, they should be more than ordinary careful and diligent to imprint this Matter well upon their Minds. Then they should most earnestly exhort them, as they would escape the intolerable Pains and Agonies of a guilty Conscience, which no one knows the Misery of but they that feel it; as they

(*n*) *Clarke, ibid.* §. 4.

they would always be secure and free from the Fear and Dread of God's Wrath and Vengeance; as they would desire to enjoy a settled Peace and Tranquillity of Mind, which is the greatest Blessing this World affords; and lastly, as they would be admitted to any considerable Share of that unspeakable Happiness and Glory, which is reserved for Righteous and Good Men in the Kingdom of Heaven; that they would be extremely watchful over themselves, that they do not swerve from the pious and good Instructions which have been given to them, nor make them lose the Effect and Benefit of all their Labours by plunging themselves into the Guilt of Sin; but that they proceed regularly and uniformly in the constant Practice of Religion and Virtue. And, to use the Words of the Excellent Author (o) last mentioned, They should mightily entreat and beg of their Children “ seriously to consider what a Prize they now
 “ have in their Hands, and to be Zealous that *no*
 “ *Man take their Crown.* To consider, that if God
 “ and Angels rejoice at the Conversion of an old and
 “ great Sinner, much more must they be pleased to
 “ see a *Young* Person amidst the alluring Glories
 “ and Pleasures of the World bravely resisting all
 “ it's Temptations. To consider, that *that* Time,
 “ which a dying Sinner would, if it were possible,
 “ give Millions of Worlds to redeem, is now in their
 “ Hands, and they may make a glorious Use of it.
 “ To consider, that they are yet cloathed with the
 “ white Robe of Innocence; and if they be careful
 “ never to *defile that Garment*, they may attain to a
 “ Portion among those *few, who shall walk with*
 “ *Christ in white; for they are worthy, Rev. iii. 4.*
 “ To consider, that if they Zealously continue to
 “ maintain their Innocence and their good Works for

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(o) *Clark, ibid.*

“ a few Years, they will soon be almost out of the
“ Danger of Temptation; they will escape the bitter
“ Pangs of Remorse and Repentance; they will
“ be wholly above that greatest of human Miseries,
“ the Dread and Horror of Death; and may not
“ only without Fear, but even with exceeding Joy,
“ expect the *Appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ*
“ at the Judgment of the Great Day, and in the
“ Glory of the World to come. And lastly, to
“ consider that if they *hold fast the Confidence and*
“ *Rejoicing of their Hope, from unto the End, Heb.*
“ *iii. 6.* they shall be intitled to all those great and
“ inconceivable Promises, which our Saviour has made
“ to those who shall overcome. *Rev. ii. 7, 11. chap.*
“ *iii. 5, 12, 21.*”

In this or the like Manner should all Parents instruct their Children by way of Discourse and Conversation. And here I would have finished what I had to say upon this Head, and proceeded no further, if there were not Two Things of the Greatest Consequence and Importance to Religion, about which the Growing Profaneness and Impiety of the Age should render all of us deeply concerned, and which should more Particularly engage all Parents to use an Uncommon Diligence and Industry, in duly instructing and firmly grounding their Children in the Knowledge and Practice of them; and therefore I hope the Reader will the more readily excuse me in putting him in Mind of them.

The *First is*, Concerning the Duty of attending diligently and constantly upon the Public Worship of God at all the stated Times and Seasons, but especially upon the *Lord's Day*, which is Dedicated to this Purpose. The absolute Indispensable Necessity of this Duty, the Inestimable Benefits and Advantages of observing it, the great Sin and Danger of neglecting it, together with the Weakness and Folly of those Reasons which are urged for such Neglect, I have before con-

sidered at large in this Discourse (p); and therefore shall not mention any thing of them at present, but refer the Reader to what hath been there delivered. And the Shameful Manner in which the Public Worship on the *Lord's Day* is now neglected by all Orders and Degrees of Men, especially by Persons of Fashion and Distinction, by applying that Holy Season to the paying of Visits, to the keeping of Company, and to Worldly Pleasure, is too Visible to be deny'd; and is a Matter which deeply shocks and confounds the Ignorant, and sorely grieves all that are Pious. And therefore, if Parents are heartily desirous that their Children should not fall into this Snare, nor split upon this Rock, whereon they will surely make Shipwreck of their Immortal Souls, they should be more than Ordinarily Diligent and Industrious to instruct them well and throughly in this Point; and especially, when they are a going from them into the World, they should give them most strictly in Charge, that they keep constantly to their Church, and never once omit the Public Worship upon the *Lord's Day*, unless it be on Account of Sickness, or absolute Necessity. And in Case any of their Companions should entice them to neglect the Public Worship at that Time, for the Sake of Company or Worldly Pleasure; they should Peremptorily refuse to comply with them, and look upon such Persons as the most Dangerous Enemies they have in the World, and avoid their Acquaintance and Conversation, as they would the Plague. And in order to confirm them in the Practice of this Necessary Duty they should not only sufficiently inform them, that the Public Worship of God is an *Essential* Part of Religion, but they should also make them perfectly

(p) See above, Part the II. chap. i.

perfectly acquainted and convinced that the Laws of God are absolutely Indispensable, and that we cannot Willfully *break the least of His Commandments* but at the Peril of our Salvation, that we must *Love God with all our Hearts and all our Souls*, and in all Cases prefer His Worship and the Service we owe to Him before any Temporal Authority, Relation, Interest and Worldly Pleasure. And Consequently, unless we address ourselves to Him with this Sincerity of Heart and Purity of Intention, our Prayers and Services and every Thing we do in Religion will be so far from rendering us well pleasing in His Sight, that they will be an Abomination to Him : all which the Reader will easily perceive, who will consult the Passages of Scripture cited in the Margin (q). And because it often happens that Men are drawn into this Impious Practice, not so much thro' any Vicious Inclinations of their own, as because they have not Courage and Resolution enough to withstand the Importunity and Example of their Friends and Acquaintance, lest they should be thought to affront them, and to be Precise and Singular in their Opinions; therefore Children should be earnestly cautioned against this Dangerous Compliance, and should be frequently put in Mind of that Wise and Excellent Law of God, *Thou shalt not follow a Multitude to do Evil*; *Exod. xxiii. 2.* (r)

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and

(q) Psal. ciii. 19. 1 Tim. vi. 15. Jam. iv. 12. Matt. v. 19. Jam. ii. 10. Matt. xxii. 37, 38. Luk. x. 42. Psal. xxvii. 4. Matt. xvi. 24. *Ibid.* x. 33, 37. Luk. xiv. 26. 1 Cor. x. 31. Luk. xi. 34, 35. Prov. xv. 8, 9. chap. xxviii. 9.

(r) Let us again and again assure ourselves of this great Truth and always keep it in Mind, *viz.* that no Custom or Fashion, no common Practice or even Authority in the Whole World, can render any thing innocent, or be a just Excuse for it, if it be found to be contrary unto any Part of that Law (rightly understood) which God hath given us as a Constant Rule to walk by. *Archbishop Synges Rule of Self-Examination, &c. p. 27.*

and how solemnly our Lord hath declared, that *who-soever shall be ashamed of Him in this Adulterous and Sinful Generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of His Father with the Holy Angels; Mar. viii. 38.* and also that in the Dreadful Account, which the Apostle gives us of Future Punishment, the *Fearful* (*i. e.* those who renounce the *Christian Faith*, or decline any Necessary and Essential Part of their Duty, thro' fear of human Punishment, Censure and Disgrace) are ranked first in the Black and Dismal Catalogue of the Damned. *Rev. xxi. 8.* And to say no more, since the main Artifice and Device, by which the Devil draws Men into this Neglect, is the Pretence that God does not want our Prayers, and that the Discharge of *Moral* and *Social Duties* will sufficiently recommend us to His Favour; therefore they should shew their Children the great Weakness of this Pretence, and that it comes with an Ill Grace from those who habitually neglect God's Public Worship, who are so far from being entitled to a Greater Perfection in Moral Duties than their Neighbours, that for the most Part they are most shamefully and notoriously Wanting and Deficient in them (*s*). And moreover it should be well and deeply imprinted upon their Minds, that Piety or the Worship of God is an

(*s*) Those who have neglected all External Religion have been so far from improving (as might reasonably be expected, since they profess to have nothing else to mind) that, except in a few Instances, they rather decline in their Zeal for the Practice of that *Moral Virtue*, which they are so forward to magnify to, the utter *Disparagement* of every thing else; they have, I say, rather declined in their Zeal for the Practice even of *Moral Virtue* in Proportion as they have grown cold and remiss with respect to the Solemn Worship of their Maker, and the Instrumental Duties of Piety. *Foster's Sermons*, Vol. 1. p. 153, 154. See also p. 122, 123. of *iki. Treatise*.

an Essential Part of Religion as well as Morality; nay, to speak more properly, is a Chief and Principal Point of Morality itself. And therefore how great soever their Attainments may be in Temperance and Sobriety, and in all Social Duties, yet without a Constant and Regular Attendance upon the Public Worship they will be utterly in vain, and Ineffectual to their Salvation (*t*). Innumerable Passages might be produced out of our most Learned Writers to this Purpose; but I will not trouble the Reader with them at present, having said enough of this Matter already. I shall only mention the Excellent Words of a most Eminent and Judicious Divine upon this Occasion; who (with some others of his Time) was thought to insist and enlarge upon the Necessity and Importance of Moral Duties, to the Disadvantage of the peculiar Doctrines and Duties of the Holy Gospel. And after having in a most lively Manner described the Necessity and Excellency of Moral Duties, he proceeds thus; “The positive Parts of Religion are our Duty, as well as these; and God by His Sovereign Authority exacts them at our Hands, and unless when *Jesus Christ* hath been sufficiently proposed to us, we sincerely believe in Him;— Unless we strike Covenant with Him by *Baptism*, and frequently renew that Covenant in the *Lord's Supper*;—Unless we diligently attend on the Public Assemblies of His Worship;—there is no Pretence of Morality will bear us out, when we appear before His Dread Tribunal (*u*).”

Secondly, The next Particular, in which the Growing Profaneness and Impiety of the Age renders it highly Necessary for all Parents with more than Ordinary Care

(*t*) See above, p. 111, &c.

(*u*) Dr *Scott's* Christian Life, Vol. II. p. 63. See also *Bishop Gibson's* Second Pastoral Letter, p. 64, to 68.

Care and Diligence to instruct their Children, is the Honour and Reverence which they owe to the Ministers of God's Word. This is a Point which all Nations in the World both *Jews* and *Heathens* did for many Ages observe; there being nothing in which they more universally agreed, than in having the Priests in great Estimation (x); and this out of a Due Regard and Reverence to God Himself, according to that Wise Instruction of the Son of *Sirach*, *Fear the Lord, and Honour the Priest, Ecclus. vii. 31.* And this God hath expressly required and well provided for, both under the Old and New Testament (y). Now the Reasons, upon which we are to pay this Honour and Reverence to the Ministers of God's Word, are chiefly these two. *First*, The Consideration of that great Master to whom they belong. Thus says *St Paul*, *Let a Man so account of us, as of the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God. 1 Cor. iv. 1.* And our Blessed Saviour observes upon this Account, that God will take those Affronts and Injuries, which are offered to His Ministers, and as heinously resent them, as if they were immediately put upon Himself; *He that despiseth you, despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me. Luke x. 16.* And the Prophet *Jeremy* long before, lamenting the heavy Anger of God against the *Jews*, mentions this as one great Cause of it, *viz.* that they *Respected not the Persons of the Priests, nor favoured the Elders (z).* *Lam. iv. 16.* But,

Secondly,

(x) If the Reader wants any Information in this Matter, let him consult *Dr Hickes's* Excellent Treatise on the Christian Priesthood, &c. *Scott's* Christian Life. Vol. III. chap. vii. § 3. p. 130. &c. *Nelson* on the Feasts and Fasts, p. 550, &c. in which there are many good Collections out of Holy Scripture and antient Authors to this Purpose.

(y) See *Nelson*, *ibid.*

(z) *Hæc Gentes exprobrabant Hebræis; nulla, dicebant, spes est illis reductis: Etiam in bonos sacerdotes sævierunt. Grot. in loc.*

Secondly, The other Ground and Reason of honouring and reverencing the Ministers of God's Word is the Consideration of that Glorious and Blessed Office which they are employed in. Thus *St Paul* requires the *Thessalonians* to esteem their Ministers very highly in Love for their Works Sake, 1 *Thess.* v. 13. and tells *Timothy*, that the Elders that rule well should be accounted worthy of double Honour, especially they who labour in the Word and Doctrine. 1 *Tim.* v. 17. And the same Apostle exhorting the *Philippians* to receive *Epaphroditus*, on the Account of his Extraordinary Zeal and Diligence in the Christian Ministry, directs them at the same time to hold such in Reputation. *Phil.* ii. 29, 30. And this is the true Reason why I take Notice of this Matter at present, and earnestly recommend it to the Thoughts and Consideration of all Parents: since, if they cannot bring their Children to have a due Esteem and Reverence for the Persons of the Clergy, they will infallibly despise their Instructions, and lose all the Benefit of their Labours. The Connexion between Reverence to Mens Persons and a Regard to their Advice and Counsel is so very obvious and manifest, that we find it hath been the Sense and Judgment of all Nations to demand an uncommon Degree of Respect ev'n to the Teachers of Human (a) Learning, in order to give the greater

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Force

(a) *Dii Majorum umbris tenuem & sine pondere terram,
Spirantesque crocos & in urnâ perpetuum Ver,
Qui præceptorem Sancti volu ere parentis
Esse loco.*

Juvenal Sat. VII. l. 206, &c. Vid. Lubini Annotat in loc.

All Persons in the happy Ages of *Rome* had the same Honour and Respect for their Teachers, as *Persius* had for his Master *Cornutus* the *Stoic*; to whom addressing himself in his Fifth Satyr, he thus admirably describes his own Love and Piety to his Governour, and the strict Friendship that was between them. *Cumque iter ambiguum est, &c.* l. 34 to 53. See the Place. *Kennet's Essay on Roman Education*, prefixed to his *Antiquities*, p. 19.

Force and Weight to their Instructions. And the Reason holds more strongly in the Affair of Religion, on account of the mighty Opposition which is made to the Influence of it's Precepts both from the Corrupt Inclinations of Nature, and from bad Example. And the true Reason of that great Contempt which is cast upon the Clergy by the Libertines of the Present Age (and it is none of the least of Satan's Devices to inspire them with such Measures) is that hereby they may defeat the Success and Efficacy of those good Instructions, which their People may receive from them: Well knowing, that if Men can once be prevailed upon to respect their Ministers and to be guided by their Counsel, they will soon be brought over to such a steady and regular Practice of Virtue, as will be an Infinite Disparagement and Reproach to themselves (b). And therefore if Parents would have their Children receive any Benefit and Advantage from the Preaching of God's Word; if they would not have them drawn aside into the Fatal Destructive Paths of Vice and Wickedness; if they desire that they may escape the Heavy Anger and Displeasure of God for despising and neglecting an Institution, which Infinite Wisdom hath contrived for the Salvation of Mankind; let them train them up from the Beginning in a great Respect and Reverence for the Ministers of Religion, and be more than ordinarily careful to set before their Children a good Example of this Matter in their own Persons. Let them shew them frequently how much God insists upon this Duty in Holy Scripture, and how necessary it is to render the Public Instructions useful and beneficial to them; and moreover, that it has been duly and constantly observed by wise and good Men in all Ages of the World: and therefore that it will not only be of the utmost Prejudice and

Damage

(b) See Wisdom, ii. 12, &c.

Damage to their Souls, but will also bring their good Sense and Judgment highly into Question, if they are found wanting and deficient therein.

I am sensible indeed, notwithstanding the manifest Necessity and Advantage of this Duty, that great Modesty hath for the most Part restrained the Clergy from treating upon it, lest they should be thought hereby to preach for themselves; which is the injurious Turn which too many Persons would be apt to give to their Instructions upon this Point. But nevertheless as Respect and Reverence to the Clergy is an Essential Duty of the *Christian* Religion, and of great Consequence to the Practice of Virtue, I think it should not be altogether passed over in Silence; but that the People should *now* and *then* be put in Mind thereof, and that Parents more particularly should be exhorted to educate their Children in the Observation of it. And whereas Parents and Magistrates are not blamed for requiring Respect and Obedience from their Subjects and Children, if Men will censure the Ministers of *Christ*, and falsely interpret their pious Design in the inculcating a plain Gospel Duty upon their People; their Injurious Misrepresentations are to themselves, and no one should be in the least uneasy and disturbed at them. And yet methinks if the Clergy of this Kingdom had some small View and Regard to themselves in their Demands of Respect from their People, they would not claim any more than justly belongs to them: since the infinite Service which they have done to this Nation in several Respects; the many noble Foundations of Piety and Charity which have been established by them; the innumerable and excellent Books which they have published in all Parts of Useful Learning, as well Classical and Historical, Philosophical and Mathematical, as Theological and Moral; the restless and unwearied Labours and Endeavours of many of them for the Good of Souls; and particularly, the brave and generous

Stand which they made by their *Immortal Writings* and Invincible Courage and Patience in a late *Critical Juncture*, when our *Religion, Laws, and Liberties* were in *extreme Danger*, should be most gratefully remember'd by the People of this Land, and for ever endear and recommend that *Sacred Order* to the Love and Esteem, the Honour and Veneration of all true *Protestants* and *Englishmen*. And so I proceed to the

Third Way and Method which Parents should make Use of in the Religious Education of Children ; and that is, by obliging them frequently to read pious and good Books, and especially the Holy Scriptures. And the Advantages of this Method are great and unspeakable, not only on the Account of those early Instructions which Children will receive from such Books, which will make a deeper and more lasting Impression upon them ; but also, inasmuch as being from the Beginning accus'd to read them, and being made sensible of the Benefit and Delight in so doing, they will be naturally dispos'd and inclined to read them for ever afterwards ; for the want of which, several Persons who employ many Hours in reading have contracted an Aversion to such Books, as thinking them to be of small Moment and Importance, and can never be brought throughout their whole Lives to spend any considerable Time in the Perusal of them. And that Children may reap the greater Profit and Advantage from reading the Holy Scriptures, Parents should oblige their Children as often as may be to read the best and most useful Portions thereof in their own Presence, and as far as they are able should explain the Sense and Meaning thereof to them, and raise proper and suitable Thoughts and Observations from every Part of them. Thus when they read the History of the *Creation* in *Gen. i.*, they should briefly represent to them the Infinite Wisdom, Power and Goodness of God, in making this Excellent Frame
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of Things out of Nothing, in the Enriching it every where with His Blessings, and in adapting all the Parts thereof to their respective and noble Uses and Designs; and thereby they should put them in Mind how much they ought to *love* and *fear* and *adore* so Great and Excellent a Being. When they read the dreadful Account of God's Wrath and Vengeance against Sin, in drowning the Old World with the *Flood* *Gen. vii.*, in the burning of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* with *Brimstone* and *Fire* from Heaven, *Gen. xix.*, and in the terrible Destruction of *Jerusalem* predicted and described by our Saviour in *Matt. xxiv.* and in *Luke xxi.*, they should make them sensible of the great Danger of Sin, and that without a speedy and effectual Repentance it is impossible for Wicked Men to escape the Severity of God's Justice. When they read the Account of the strange Deliverance of the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*, their wonderful Passage thro' the *Red Sea*, and the many and great Miracles which God wrought for them in the Wilderness, as they are recorded in *Exodus* and the following Books of Scripture; they should put them in Mind of the great Power and Goodness of God in protecting and supporting them that serve and fear Him: and consequently that if they will constantly depend upon His Good Providence in a Faithful Discharge of their Duty, there is no State and Condition of this Life so adverse and calamitous, but God will for the present comfort them under it, and in His own good Time deliver them out of it; for *He hath never once failed them that seek Him. Psalm ix. 10.* When they read of *Abraham's* great and ready Faith in going out of his own Country at *God's Appointment*, tho' he knew not whither he went; *Gen. xii. Heb. xi. 8.* they should well inform them of God's Supreme Wisdom as well as Sovereignty and Dominion; and that it is not only our bounden Duty to obey God always without Re-

serve

serve, but in all Cafes to think that to be best for us which he appoints, tho' we may not be able to discover the Reasons and Fitness of it. And from the surprizing Faith and Piety of the same Person in chearfully offering up his *only Son* at God's Command *Gen. xxii.*, they should not only instruct them in the indispensable Duty of Obedience to the Commands of God, but also that they should be at all Times ready and willing to sacrifice their dearest Interests in this World to His Will and Pleasure. When they read the History of *Joseph's* being sold into a Foreign Country, his hard Fate and cruel Treatment there in the Prison, and his future glorious Advancement in the Kingdom of *Egypt*, described in *Gen. xxxvii.* and the following Chapters; they should well display and represent to their Minds the Wisdom and Goodness of Divine Providence in the Protection and Blessing of Righteous and Good Men, and in bringing Good out of Evil; and they should more particularly shew them from this remarkable Instance, that many times in those Things, which seem to Men to be most unfortunate and calamitous, the truest and greatest Happiness does consist. And from the firm and stedfast Resolution of this Excellent Person in withstanding the Temptation of his Mistress *chap. xxxix.* and the Heroic inflexible Courage of the Three Worthies of *Babylon Dan. iii.* they should let them see the absolute Necessity and Wisdom of trusting in God in the greatest Extremities, and that it is the Height of Folly and Madness to have Recourse to any Sinful Compliances, in order to deliver themselves from the Fear and Power of Men. And as Parents should from these and such like Passages in Scripture-History instruct their Children in the Necessity and Wisdom of serving God and depending upon His Providence, and living in the Practice of Religion and Virtue, so from the several and remarkable Examples of God's Wrath and Vengeance

geance against Sinners they should caution them against those particular Sins and Vices, which they observe there to be so visibly and severely punished. Thus from the terrible Punishment inflicted upon the Man that gathered Sticks on the Sabbath Day, *Numb. xv. 32, &c.* they should represent to them the much greater Guilt and Danger of profaning the Lord's Day (as it is now too commonly done) by the Neglect of God's Worship, and by the Pleasures of Sin. From the heavy Judgment executed upon *Corah* and his Accomplices *Numb. xvi.* and the remarkable Punishment of *Uzziab* King of *Judab* for invading the Priest's Office, *2 Chron. xxvi. 16, &c.* they should shew them the great Sin and Danger of Usurping the Sacred Offices and Functions without Divine Warrant and Authority. When they read the History of *Abab* in desiring *Naboth's* Vineyard *1 Kings xxi.* they should shew them the great Sin and Danger of Coveting their Neighbour's Goods. And from the remarkable and signal Manner of his Punishment *ver. 19.* and that of *Adonibezek*, *Judges i. 5, &c.* they should manifest to them the Righteousness and Justice of God in the Retaliation of Evil. From the Examples of *Achan*, *Joshua vii.* and *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, *Acts v.* they should make them sensible of the heinous Sin of Sacrilege. And from the exemplary Judgment of *Belshazzar*, King of *Babylon*, for using the Vessels of the Temple at a Common Feast *Dan. v.* they should shew them the great Sin and Danger of profaning Holy Things. And because it is thro' the Want of Divine Grace and Assistance, that Men are exposed to the Power of Temptation; therefore from the Fatal Example of *Peter's* Fall, and the bitter Repentance it cost him to be recovered from it *Matt. xxvi.* they should earnestly represent to them the great Folly and Danger of trusting to their own Strength, without a constant and humble Dependence upon God,
and

and the Grace of His Holy and Blessed Spirit. It would be an endless Thing to set before the Reader the many great and famous Examples of God's Love and Favour to good Men, and His Severe and Exemplary Punishment of the Wicked, which are recorded in the Sacred Writings for our Instruction and Admonition. From what hath been here observed all Parents may clearly perceive in what Manner they should instruct their Children in the Knowledge of Holy Scripture, *viz.* not only by obliging them barely to read the Bible in their Presence (which is all that is commonly done in this Case) but also by raising proper and suitable Inferences and Observations from the chief and principal Parts of them. And of how great Service and Benefit to Youth these early Instructions must be, is evident to every one: What an Eminent Writer (*c*) hath observed upon one particular Instance of Scripture-History being justly applicable to every Part of it. "The serious Reader (*saieth he*) will reflect how obvious it is to infer upon this Occasion (the History of *Sodom*) the great Wisdom of early instructing and enuring Children to read the Scriptures; especially those Historical Parts of them, which render the Examples of Piety and Virtue so very amiable, and the Examples of Vice and Irreligion so detestable; that whilst they are delighting their Hearts with the most pleasing, the most engaging Histories that ever were penned, they are at the same Time filling them with the Love of every Virtue, and the Abhorrence of every Vice, they are at the same Time enlarging and ennobling their Souls." And thus Parents should duly and carefully instruct their Children

(*c*) Revelation Examined with Candour, Vol. II. p. 213,
214.

dren in the Knowledge of Religion by way of Catechizing them, and by frequent Discourse and Conversation with them, and by obliging them diligently to read the Holy Scriptures. I shall only, before I proceed to shew the Necessity and Advantage of such Instruction, briefly take Notice of one Particular, which Parents should be exceedingly careful to Instill into their Children by all Manner of Ways possible, and which they should deeply imprint upon their Minds; because it is Essential and Fundamental to the *Christian* Religion, and because their Ignorance and Mistake in this Matter will be Fatal, and render all their Instructions in other Points of *Christian* Knowledge of no Use and Service to them; and that is, the Doctrine of our Blessed Saviour's Mediation, which consists in this, that He is the Surety or Mediatour of the New Covenant *Heb.* xii. 24, by which He hath obtained of His Father the Pardon of our Sins, the Grace of the Holy Spirit, and Eternal Life *Acts* iii. 19. *Luke* xi. 13. *Rev.* ii. 10. on Condition of our Repentance, Faith, and sincere Obedience: and that this Gracious Covenant so obtained of God for us He hath purchased with His own most precious Blood. *Acts* xx. 28. *Heb.* ix. 15 (d). I shall not at present enlarge upon these Points, having before shewn the Necessity (e) of *Christ's* Death for the Atonement and Expiation, of Sin and to support the Honour and Dignity of God's Government; and also briefly intimated how forcibly the Inestimable Value of His Sufferings, (they being the Sufferings of one, who was as truly God as He was truly Man, *Acts* xx. 28. 1 *John* iii. 16,) represents to us the great Heinousness and Danger of Sin (f), as well as the amazing Love of

(d) *Vid.* *Scott's Christian Life*, Vol. III. p. 19.

(e) See above, Part II. chap. iii p. 250, &c.

(f) If the Relation between Sin and Punishment had not been strict and indissoluble; one of our Saviour's *Consequence*, the Brightness

of *Christ* in dying for us. And the Great Blessings of this Covenant which *Christ* hath purchased with His Blood, and the unspeakable Advantages (g) of His Intercession which is grounded thereupon, *Rom.* viii. 34. *Heb.* ix. 11, 12. are so very evident and manifest, that no Man who believes the Holy Scriptures and is in any Measure acquainted with them, can possibly be insensible thereof. All therefore that I shall observe upon this Occasion is the absolute Necessity of early instructing Children, and throughly grounding them in the Belief of this Doctrine of *Christ's* Mediation; and that upon the Account of some *Dangerous* Doctrines and Principles lately advanced and industriously spread throughout the Kingdom, which place the *whole* of Religion in *Morality*, and which represent our Blessed Saviour to be no more than a Prophet, who was sent to reform the Errors and Corruptions of the *Jews*,
and

Brightness of the Father's Glory and the express Image of his Person, had never in all likelihood been made a Sacrifice. If a little Matter would have made up the Breach between *Heaven* and *Earth*, some one among the Sons of Men, distinguished for Wisdom and Virtue, might have been employed in the *Ministry of Reconciliation*: but since (as the *Psalmist* speaks, xlix. 7) *none of them can redeem his Brother, nor give unto God a Ransom for him*; the Terrors of Guilt are greatly magnified by the present Method of Forgiveness. Or however at least, if the Sons of Men were all too much Partakers of their common Corruption, to be duly qualified for this *Mighty Office of Mediation and Atonement*; yet some of those *Ministring Spirits*, those *Sons of the Morning*, who stand round about the *Throne of God continually*, might one would imagine have engaged with Success in it. But in admitting a *Vicarious Satisfaction*, the Wisdom of God singled out for Himself an Offering of the very purest Sort, the First in Rank and Dignity within His Court, and one whom all His *Angels worship*. Wherefore tho' with respect to any Payment made by us or by our Procurement we were *Redeemed without Money*; yet the Price of our *Redemption*, as paid by the *Saviour of the World*, should mightily enhance to us both the *Magnity of Sin*; and the Holiness of God it's *Avenger*. *Dr Marshall's Sermons Vol. III. p. 43, 44.*

(g) See *Scott's Christian Life*, Vol. III. p. 33, 34, in which there is an Excellent Passage to this Purpose.

and to instruct Mankind more fully and perfectly in *Moral and Social Duties*. The great Danger and Mischief of which *Scheme* of Religion consists in these three Things. *First*, That hereby we destroy one of the most powerful and prevailing Motives to the Practice of Virtue, which is drawn from th Dignity of (*b*) *Christ's* Person, and the Inestimable Value and Merit of his Sufferings (*i*), together with the Necessity and Advantage of His Death and Intercession; the Force and Efficacy of which Motives have been before considered. *Secondly*, In the placing the whole of Religion in *Moral and Social Duties*; Whereas it is very clear and plain from Holy Scripture, that Faith in *Christ* and in the Doctrines which He hath revealed is as necessary to (*k*) Salvation, as the Performance of Moral Duties; and moreover that Men are not only unable to discharge their Duty without the Grace and Assistance of *Christ*, *John xv. 5. Phil. iv. 13*, but also, that since God hath made a new Covenant with Mankind by a Mediatour of His own Appointment, *Acts ii. 36. v. 31. Phil. ii. 9, &c.* in which He hath heightened the Practice of Moral Virtue, and established our Duty upon new Principles and Motives thereto; there is no other Obedience will be acceptable to God (from such I mean, to whom the Gospel of *Christ* is duly preached) but what is grounded upon and derived from these Motives and Principles, and is offered up to God thro' Faith in *Christ*, and in an humble and grateful Reliance upon the Merits of his Death and

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Passion.

(*b*) Tho' the Condition of the Person alters not the *Nature* of the *Authority* he is vested with; yet in the Estimation of Men the same Authority is more or less venerable, according as the *Quality* and Condition of the *Persons* cloathed with it is more or less *considerable*. *Dr Scott's Christian Life Vol. III. p. 26.*

(*i*) See *Rom. xiv. 15. Phil. ii. 5. &c.*

(*k*) See *Matt. x. 32, 33. Mark viii. 38. John iii. 16, 1 John v. 10. Acts iv. 12 to 21.*

Passion (l). And then, in the *Third Place*, There is this great and fatal Mischief attends this Scheme of Religion, *viz.* that supposing the Discharge of Moral Duties would of itself recommend us to the Love and Favour of God, yet we cannot perform those Duties in such Perfection, as the Law of God requires of us. The Obedience of the best Men is accompanied with many Failings and Infirmities, and sometimes with great Sins and Transgressions: it being in some Measure true of the most Virtuous Men, that their Righteousness in God's Sight is but as *filthy Rags*, as the Prophet speaks; *Isa.* lxiv. 6. and as the Wise Man observes, *there is not a just Man upon Earth that doth good and sinneth not.* *Eccles.* vii. 20 (m). And therefore their best Performances cannot entitle them to God's Favour upon any other Principle than That perfect and compleat Obedience, which *Christ* paid to the Law of God: Which perfect Obedience shall be imputed unto all Men, who *sincerely* and *faithfully* endeavour to serve God, and to keep His Commandments. For thus the Apostle observes; *As by one Man's Disobedience many were made Sinners, so by the Obedience of one shall many be made Righteous.* *Rom.* v. 19. By which Obedience is not only meant the Death of *Christ*, which the Apostle elsewhere calls by this Term, *Phil.* ii. 8, and by the Merits of which we are absolved from the Guilt of our Sins; but also the *absolute* Righteousness of *Christ*, His *actual* and *perfect* Obedience to the Divine Law, for the Sake of which God will accept of our weak and imperfect Obedience,

(l) *Vid.* *Scott's Christian Life*, Vol. III. p. 2, 3. *Bishop Gibson's Second Pastoral Letter*, p. 64. to 68.

(m) *Quoniam peccatum esse non potest nisi quod libere fit, ab omni tamen omnino peccato & semper abstinere supra humanam est conditionem; unde cognatum homini esse peccare, inter Philosophos Sopater, Hierocles, Seneca, inter Judæos Philo, inter Historicos Thucydides, inter Christianos plurimi prodiderunt.* *Grot. de Jure Belli & Pacis. lib. ii. cap. xx. § 19. Vid. loc.*

Obedience, if it is offered up to Him in Faithfulness and Sincerity (*n*). For otherwise it would be but of little Service to us to be absolved from our Sins, and to have them *washed away in the Blood of Christ*, Rev. i. 5, if afterwards God should *rigorously* insist upon that *Perfect Obedience* which the *Law* requires, and should not upon the Account of *Christ's absolute Righteousness* connive at our Failings, and accept of our *sincere* tho' *imperfect* Obedience. And therefore, if Parents heartily desire that their Children should receive any true Benefit and Advantage from their Religious Education of them, they must not content themselves with barely exhorting them to be honest and good Men in their Dealings with the World ; but must also instruct them thoroughly and ground them deeply in the Belief of the Doctrine of *Christ's* Mediation ; and let them know, that as they ever hope to obtain the Pardon of their Sins, and the Grace of the Holy Spirit, and to have their *weak* and *imperfect* Endeavours accepted by God and rewarded by Him, they must firmly believe in *Christ* the Saviour of the World, and offer up all their Prayers, Services and Obedience to God through Faith in Him, and in the Infinite Merits of His Death and Passion : and that because *there is no other Name under Heaven* (*o*) *given among Men, whereby we must be saved*. Acts iv. 12. And thus much concerning the first Particular,

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viz

(*n*) See Bishop *Beveridge's* Thoughts on Religion, Part I. Article VIII.

(*o*) If it be true that the Blessed Jesus is the Son of God, and the Saviour of Mankind (and wo' to us Men, if it should be otherwise) then to deny this Truth, is to deny our God, and to renounce our Salvation ; a Crime of so high a Nature, as all our evil Works cannot equal, and all our good Works cannot excuse. For all other Faults may be expiated by Virtue of our Saviour's Blood ; but to deny the Merits of his Blood is a Fault for which there can be no Probability of Expiation. Bishop *Hickman's* Sermons, Vol. II. Sermon, II. pag, 70.

viz. wherein the Religious Education of Children doth consist. I proceed in the

Second Place, To shew the absolute Necessity and unspeakable Advantage of such Education. Now the great Benefit and Advantage of a Religious Education of Youth is in general very evident and manifest; since hereby they are brought up in that good Way which they should walk in, and instructed in those good Principles, and trained up in those Habits of Virtue, upon which their Happiness entirely depends. But this we shall the more fully and clearly perceive, if we consider the Advantage of such Education in these three particular Respects.

First, In that the Knowledge and Learning, which is usually conveyed to Children by a good Education, does very much strengthen (*p*) and improve the Natural Talents and Faculties of the Mind, which God hath planted there for our Direction and Proficiency in Moral Virtue. And how great soever our Natural Capacities and Abilities may be, yet unless they are duly improved and enlarged by good Education and Exercise, they will enable us to make but very few Discoveries which are of any Use and Importance to us. And tho' the Natural Inclinations of Men to Vice are strong and powerful, insomuch that it is a Matter of some Difficulty to instruct and exercise Youth in Moral Virtue, and render the Practice of it delightful to them (*q*); yet this Difficulty is mainly owing to a bad Education, and to the Strength and Force of
Vicious

(*p*) Doctrina sed vim promovet infitam,

Rectique cultus pectora roborant:

Utcunque defecere mores.

Dedecorant bene nata culpa.

Horat. lib. iv. Od. iv.

(*q*) Ἐκ νέεσ δ' ἀγωγῆς ὀρθῆς πυχῆν πρὸς ἀρέτῃ, χαλεπὸν, καὶ ὑπὸ τοιάτοις τροφήσιν νόμοισι τὸ γὰρ σωφρόνως ζῆν καὶ καρτερικῶς ἔχει ἡδὺ τοῖς πολλοῖς, ἀλλ' ὡς τὸ καὶ νέεσ. *Aristot. Ethic. lib. x. cap. 10.*

Vicious Habits, which are the greatest Obstacle and Impediment to the Success and Efficacy of good Counsel. And notwithstanding the melancholy Complaint of the great Number of Vicious and Profligate Youth in the Nation; yet I verily believe the greatest Part of them are grown bad for want of well knowing how to behave better, and have contracted strong and powerful Habits of Sin and Wickedness thro' their Parents Neglect of early and duly instructing them in the Necessity and Advantage of Moral Virtue. And tho' the Corruptions of Nature are indeed great and visible, yet " More People are lost for " want of good Education and Institution, than for " want of honest and honourable Inclinations," as an Eminent Writer (*r*) hath well observed. And therefore it must be of the greatest Importance and Advantage to Youth to be early acquainted with all those Parts of Knowledge, which are necessary for the future Conduct and Government of their Lives and Actions. Especially, if we consider in the

Second Place, That the Instructions, which are given to Men in their Youth, are apt to abide the longest with and to be the most carefully observed and remember'd by them. For this is the Time most susceptible of lasting Impressions, as a great Judge (*s*) in this Matter hath truly remarked. And that mighty *Earnestness* and *Zeal*, which all *Seets* and *Parties* manifest for their *Opinions* (how *absurd* and *monstrous* soever) is by the famous (*t*) Author justly ascribed to the Force and Prejudice of Education, and to the deep Impression which is made of those Errours upon their Minds in the Time of Youth (*u*). And a Man must have

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but

(*r*) *L'Esrange's Fables*, 8vo. Vol. I. p. 186.

(*s*) *Lock on Human Understanding*, Book II. chap. xxxiii. §. 8.

(*t*) *Lock* *ibid.* § 18.

(*u*) *Cum vero Parentibus redditi, id est, Magistris tradi, ti sumus: tum,*

but little Experience of the World, who does not see that there is nothing more hard and difficult than to root out the fixed and settled Opinions and Perswasions of Mens Minds, and to divert them from those Courses, to which they have been long used and strongly inclined. And therefore it must be highly servicable and beneficial to Youth to have the Notions of Religion and Virtue deeply and (*) early imprinted upon their Minds, and to be educated from the Beginning in the Practice of Piety and Goodness: since Men are naturally prone to think and act, as they have been for some Time accustomed to do. And to use the Words of a late noted Author (x), “ Education is justly esteemed a Second Nature, and it’s Force so strong, that few can wholly shake off it’s Prejudices, even in Things unreasonable and unnatural: and must it not have the greatest Efficacy in Things agreeable to Reason, and suitable to Human Nature? And then,

Thirdly and lastly, The Religious Education of Children is not only of the most Eminent Service and Advantage to them, as hereby their Minds are stored with Necessary and Useful Knowledge, and they are trained up from the Beginning in the Practice of Virtue; but also, as by this Means they are effectually preserved from the Contagion and Mischief of *bad Habits*, which (as will be seen presently) is the greatest Danger (y) to which

tum ita variis imbuimur Erroribus, ut vanitati veritas, & opinioni confirmatæ Natura ipsa cedat. *Cic. Tusc. Quæst. lib. iii. cap. ii.*

(*) Quò semel est imbuta recens servabit Odorem

Testa diu.

Horat. lib. i. Epist. ii.

(x) *Christianity as old as the Creation, chap xi. p. 166.*

(y) Natura nobis parvulos dedit igniculos, quos celeriter malis Moribus opinionibusque depravatis sic restringimus, ut nusquam Naturæ lumen appareat; sunt enim ingeniis nostris Semina innata virtutum, quæ si adolescere liceret, ipsa nos ad beatam vitam natura perduceret. Nunc autem simul ac in lucem editi sumus, in omni continuo pravitate & in summa opinionum perversitate versamur. *Cic. Tusc. Quæst. lib. iii. cap. ii.*

which Youth is exposed, and from the Power of which very few Persons ever perfectly recover themselves. And moreover, as by this good Instruction they are timely enured and gradually exercised in the Practice of Religion, they will reap this double Advantage thereby; *viz*, that it will not only be easy (z) and delightful to them to discharge their Duty (as it is to Men in all other Cases to act according to settled Habits and Customs) but they will also promote and advance their true Happiness and Pleasure in a greater Measure and Degree. For that Religion naturally tends to make Men happy even in this present Life, and that much greater and truer Pleasures arise from the Practice of Virtue than from any Sensual and Sinful (a) Enjoyments whatsoever, is not only very evident from the Nature of Things and the Testimony of all History, both Sacred and Profane, but also from the Judgment of those Persons, who have had the Tryal and Experiment of both of them, and who have been reclaimed from a Course of Vice and Wickedness to the constant and regular Observation of Religion and Virtue: all which Persons have readily acknowledged, that it was not only more wise and reasonable in itself to act *virtuously* than *vitiously*; but also that it administered an infinitely greater Comfort and Delight to them. Nay many wicked Men will themselves freely own, that they have been much better pleased, when they have discharged a single Instance of their Duty, than ever they were by any Sinful Compliance; and have therefore earnestly wished that they could attain

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tain

(z) Το γδ σωφρόνως ζῆν κ; καρτερικῶς, ἔχ' ἰδὸ τοῖς πολλοῖς, ἄλλως τε κ; νέοις, διὰ νόμοις δεῖ τελεῖσθαι τῶν τεσσάρων κ; τα ἐπιηδευμάτων, ἔκ' ἔσαι γδ λυπηρὰ συνήθη γινόμενα. Aristot. ibid.

(a) O Vitæ Philosophia Dux — unus dies bene & ex Præceptis tuis actus peccanti Immortalitati anteponeendus est. Cic. Tuscul. Quest. lib. v.

tain to the Blessedness and Perfection of good *Christians*; but being long accustomed and enslaved to vicious Habits, they have found all Attempts in vain to deliver themselves from the Strength and Dominion of them. From all which Considerations the great Benefit and Advantage, which accrues to Children from a Religious and Virtuous Education of them, does very plainly appear. And hence we may see the Wisdom of that Observation of King *Solomon* (which like other Proverbial Sentences is to be understood to hold true only in the General) *Train up a Child in the Way he should go, and when he is Old he will not depart from it. Pro. xxii. 6.* And,

Secondly, As a Religious Education of Children is of the utmost Benefit and Advantage to them, so likewise it is absolutely and indispensably necessary to their true Happiness. And that upon these four Accounts: *First*, Because without such Religious Education of Youth they cannot possibly be endued with that Knowledge and Learning, which is necessary to their Instruction and Direction in Moral Virtue. And to the want of this Knowledge the bitter Complaints of the Many vicious and Profligate Youth in the Nation are in great Measure owing, as was just now observed. Inasmuch that the heavy Charge, which God made against the *Jewish* Priests by the Prophet *Hosea*, may too justly be applied to the Generality of Parents with regard to their Neglect in the Education of their Children; *My People are destroyed for lack of Knowledge. chap. iv 6.* And indeed, if young Persons are not made acquainted with their Duty, it is impossible they should put it in Practice; neither can it in reason be expected but that they should soon abandon themselves to all manner of Vice and Wickedness, unless they are early and duly instructed in the Necessity and Advantage of Piety and Virtue. And this upon account of the *second* Thing, which renders the Religious Education of Children absolutely necessary, *viz.* the Natural Dispositions

positions and Propensions of the Mind, which all Men bring into the World with them, and which very strongly incline and sollicit them to evil. This the *Psalmist* acknowledges of himself, *Behold*, says he, *I was shaven in Wickedness, and in Sin hath my Mother conceived me.* *Psal.* li. 5. And this every Man finds to be true, more or less by his own Experience (b). This the ancient Philosophers clearly perceived and frequently complained of; tho' they were not able to give any other Account of it, but that the Souls of Men had formerly contracted this Corruption (†), and were therefore sent down into these gross and earthly Bodies by way of Punishment for Sins committed by them in a State of Pre-existence. And tho' this Corruption be not so strong (as Infidels and Libertines represent (c) it to be) but that it may thro' the Grace of God be effectually subdued and overcome by Discipline and good Habits; yet unless timely Care be taken to restrain the Influence and Effects of this Corruption by Religious Instruction and by the Exercise of Virtue, it will soon grow Exorbitant and Irresistible, and will by degrees bring a
Man

(b) - - - - - video meliora, proboque,

Deteriora sequor. *Ovid. Metamorph. lib. vii. Fab. I.*

Quid est hoc, Lucili, quod nos aliò tendentes aliò trahit? & eò unde recedere cupimus impellit? quid colluctatur cum animo nostro, nec permittit nobis quicquam semel velle? fluctuamus inter varia consilia, nihil libere volumus, nihil absolute, nihil semper. *Senec. Epist. 52.*

(†) See above, pag. 178.

(c) *The celebrated Verses of a late Noble Poet of this Nation are very remarkable to this Purpose, which as Archbishop Tillotson observes are frequently in the Mouths of many, who are thought to bear no good Will to Religion.*

O wearisome Condition of Humanity,
Born under one Law, to another bound;
Vainly begot, and yet forbidden Vanity;
Created sick, commanded to be sound.
If Nature did not take delight in Blood,
She would have made more easy ways to Good.

Tillotson, Vol. I. pag. 329. See the place.

Man into such a miserable State and Condition, that he shall have but little Power to do good, tho' he should desire it never so earnestly; and will say with the natural Man described by *St Paul, Rom. vii. That which I do I allow not; for what I would that I do not; but what I hate that do I. ver. 15.* And then *thirdly*, That which will add very much to the Force and Strength of Mens natural Inclinations, and give them the greatest Opportunity and Advantage to exert and discover their evil Propensions (and does therefore further shew the absolute Necessity of Religious Education) is the Multitude of vicious and corrupt Examples, which prevails in the World; and to the Fatal Influence and Power of which all young Persons must unavoidably be in some Measure exposed. And how dangerous such Patterns are to Youth by reason of their being so very prone and liable to Imitation, hath been already observed (*d*). And since bad Examples become dangerous to Youth chiefly thro' the want of good Judgment to conduct themselves (upon which Account they have oftentimes too pernicious an Influence upon grown Persons, as *St Paul* observes, *1 Cor. xv. 33.*) we may hence perceive the absolute Necessity of early inculcating upon them the strict Obligations and inestimable Advantages of Religion, and training them up in the Practice of Virtue; since otherwise thro' the evil Inclinations and Propensions of Nature they will infallibly be drawn aside and corrupted by bad and vicious Examples. But, *fourthly and lastly*, That which will more clearly and fully shew us the indispensable Necessity of this Religious Education of Youth, is this Consideration, *viz.* that unless they are early instructed in their Duty, and trained up in the Regular Practice of it, all Attempts *afterwards* to make them sensible of the Importance and

(*d*) Vid. pag. 315, 316.

and Advantage of Religion and Virtue will be in vain and ineffectual. For if thro' the want of good Judgment in the Conduct of themselves their evil Inclinations and Propensions are indulged, and the Power of them be increased and strengthened by Practice and by corrupt Conversation; they will soon lose all Sense of Religion and Virtue, and delight themselves only in sensual Pleasures, till by degrees they will be entirely accustomed and habituated to Vice and Wickedness. And when once they are settled and confirmed in Habits of Vice, it will be the most difficult Thing in the World to deliver them from the Dominion of them, and to recover them to sober Thought and serious Consideration. This every one hath fully experienced, who hath been concerned in the Care and Management of such Persons; and the Holy Scriptures represent the Conversion of Habitual Sinners to be so very difficult, that they describe it by the Terms of a Natural Impossibility. Thus says the Prophet, *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin, and the Leopard his Spots? then may ye also do good, who are accustomed to do evil, Jer. xiii. 23.* Not, that the Prophet means, that it is *impossible* for habitual Sinners to be converted and become good Men; for that is contrary to Reason, and sometimes, God be praised, to Experience; but only that it is a very hard Matter to be accomplished. And it is usual in Scripture (e) and profane Authors to (f) speak in this Manner, and to signify and express great Difficulties by Terms and

(e) See *Mark* x. 23 to 28.

(f) Sic Aristot, Impossibile, inquit, dicitur, aut quod omnino fieri non potest, aut non facile, nec cito, nec bene. Sic Jurisconsulti impossibile vocant, quod juxta communem legem aut usum fieri non potest, etiamsi privilegio vel voluntate Principis fieri queat. Sic in Moribus impossibile dicitur, quod usum communem egreditur. *Ribera in Heb.* vi. 4.

Αδύνατον. Hic intelligitur, admodum difficile, nec sine insolito Divinae gratiae auxilio possibile. *Er. & Riber. ibia.*

and Descriptions of Things that are *impossible*. And indeed such Expressions are very properly used, since of all Things that are possible to be done the Conversion of habitual Sinners is the most Difficult; and especially of such Sinners, who have been *long* and *early* enured to Vice and Wickedness, and are destitute of any Measure of Knowledge and Judgment to discover the Deceitfulness and Danger of Sin. For to use the Words of an Eminent Writer (g), “When Vicious Inclinations are brought once by Custom and Practice to be habitual, the Evil is *desperate*; for Nature will be true to herself through all Forms and Disguises: And *Custom* is a *second Nature*.” And as another Ingenious (h) Person hath observed, “It is a most *certain Truth*, that without a *particular Assistance* from Heaven the Vices of Youth follow a Man to his Grave.”

And thus much concerning the Duty of a Religious Education of Children, together with the absolute Necessity and great Advantages thereof. I have nothing farther to add upon this Head but to exhort all Parents seriously to consider this Matter, and earnestly to entreat them, as they tender the Welfare and Happiness of their Children, as they desire that the Fruit of their own Bodies should not perish and come to Destruction (i), nor the Blood of their Children cry out at the last Day for Vengeance against them, that they be very careful and diligent in the Religious Education of them, and that they early and duly instruct them in the Necessity and Advantage of Piety and Virtue, and train them up regularly in the Habit and Practice of it. And indeed it is
apparently

(g) *L'Estrange, Vol. I. Fab. 188. p. 202.*

(h) See the Enquiry concerning Virtue, in Answer to the *Fable of the Bees*, p. 216.

(i) Quid prodest homini filium habere, nutrire, amare, si æterni cum nutriat tormentis? *Auguſt. de Temp. Serm. 247.*

apparently owing to the Neglect of Parents in this Particular, that Vice and Wickedness does so much abound in the Nation, and that we have so many deplorable Instances of young Persons utterly abandoned to Lewdness and Debauchery, and at their first setting out into the World undone and ruined beyond all Recovery. And so great and shameful is this Neglect, that to use the Words of a most Pious (k) and Excellent Prelate of our Church, "When I seriously consider how supinely remiss and unconcerned many Parents are, as to the Religious Education of their Children; I cannot but think of that Saying of *Augustus* concerning *Herod*, *Better be his Hog than his Child*. I think it was spoken to another Purpose (l), but it is true likewise to the Purpose I am speaking of: Better to be some Mens *Dogs*, or *Hawks*, or *Horses*, than their Children: For they take a greater Care to breed and train up these to their several Ends and Uses, than to breed up their Children for Eternal Happiness." And yet surely there is nothing more astonishing, than that the Generality of Parents should act in this Manner; and should take so much Care and Pains in having their Children well acquainted with the proper Skill and Knowledge of the several Professions for which they are designed, and think no Expence of Time or Money too great to instruct them in a little *Latin*, *Greek*,

(k) Archbishop *Tillotson*, Vol. I. p. 636.

(l) The Occasion of these Words of *Augustus* was this; When he heard that among the Infants under two Years Old, whom *Herod* the King had commanded to be slain, *Herod's* own Son was killed; he said, it was better to have been *Herod's* Hog than his Son. This Relation is given to us by a *Pagan* Writer, who lived towards the End of the IVth Century. Cum audisset (*Augustus*) inter pueros, quos in *Syria Herodes Rex Judæorum* intra bimatum jussit interfici, filium quoque ejus occisum; ait. Melius est *Herodis* porcum esse quam filium. *Macrob.* lib. ii. cap. iv.

Greek, French, Philosophy, Mathematics, History, Music, Dancing, or any other Part of necessary and useful Knowledge; and at the same Time in the Grand Affair of Religion, which is of all others the most *Important*, should be so stupidly Careless and Inconsiderate; as if they had no Regard for the Good of their Children beyond this present, short and uncertain Life, nor were in the least concerned what shall become of them after Death, but it were a Matter altogether indifferent to them, whether they be for ever Happy, or for ever Miserable.

It is therefore highly fit and necessary, that Parents should be frequently admonished and put in Mind of this great Duty of the Religious Education of their Children. And there are four Considerations which may be urged upon this Head of great Moment and Consequence; which I shall only at present briefly mention, leaving all Parents to think and reflect more fully upon them at their Leisure. And,

First, The Religious Education of Children is a *Natural Duty*. The first Thing, which Nature dictates to all Parents, is that they have a Tender Regard to the Preservation and Happiness of their Offspring; and therefore since Religion is absolutely necessary to the Happiness of Mankind (as hath been shewn in the foregoing Part of this Chapter) it is a *natural* Obligation upon all Parents to use their best Endeavours to instruct and educate their Children therein. And when we consider that strong Love and Affection which the very Brute Creatures have for their Young, and what Care they take in bringing them up till they are able to defend and provide for themselves (*m*), we may justly think those Men to be worse than Brutes, who are the Instruments of
bringing

(*m*) Quid dicam quantus amor bestiarum fit in educandis custodiendisque iis quæ procreaverint, usque ad eum finem dum possint se ipsa defenderè? *Cic. de Nat. D.orum, lib. ii.*

bringing Children into the World, and yet are entirely Negligent to instruct them in that, upon which their Well-Being and Felicity both in this World and the next does absolutely depend.

Secondly, If a Religious Life and Conversation be absolutely necessary to the Happiness of Children, then the Religious Education of Children must be the Indispensable Duty of all Parents; Since without such Education it will be impossible for them to attain to a due and competent Knowledge of their Duty, or to be influenced and trained up in the Practice of it; as I have already fully shewn in this Chapter.

Thirdly, As the greatest and truest Happiness of Parents does commonly result from the Happiness of their Children; I would therefore beg of them earnestly to consider, that no Happiness can possibly be greater than that which is derived from a rational and well grounded Hope, that all their Children are in the Favour of God at present, and shall be eternally rewarded by Him hereafter in His Glorious Kingdom. Let them imagine they could be fully assured, that all their Children should *die in the Lord*; and that when they shall appear with them before the Tribunal of God, they could say to the Great Judge concerning their Children, as He Himself did to His Father concerning His Disciples, *Of them, which Thou gavest Me, have I lost none*, *John xviii. 9*, there would spring up in their Minds such Rapturous Joy and Delight, as no one can conceive, nor the Tongue of Men and Angels express. And therefore I hope, that for their own Sake, as well as with Regard to their Children, they will be careful to advance and secure their Eternal Happiness and Salvation; since they cannot possibly do any Thing that will prove more advantageous and beneficial to themselves, and in the End administer such an unspeakable Comfort and Delight to their Minds.

In the *Fourth and last Place*, Let all Parents frequently and seriously consider, that God will demand a strict Account from them in what Manner they have used and employed all their Talents; and particularly, whether they have spent their Time in doing Good, and applied their Knowledge to the *Instruction of the Ignorant, and them that are out of the Way.* Heb. v. 2. And much more then certainly will He require, that they spare a few Hours from the pursuit of Worldly Interest and Pleasure, and take some reasonable Pains in communicating their Knowledge to their own Children, and in the Instructing them in those Things, which are absolutely necessary to their Well-Being and Happiness. Otherwise they may expect, when their Great Lord shall come to Judgment, to fall under the heavy Sentence of the *unprofitable Servant, to be cast into outer Darknes, where there is weeping and Gnashing of Teeth.* Matt. xxv. 30. And moreover I would have them often think with themselves, that the Religious Education of Children is one of the Greatest and most important Trusts, which Providence hath ever committed to Mankind; and therefore if Parents shall be found unfaithful to this Trust, they will render themselves guilty of the very worst Kind of Unrighteousness and Perfidy. And if no *unrighteous Man shall inherit the Kingdom of God*, as the Apostle observes, 1 Cor. vi. 9. surely those Persons shall be removed at the greatest Distance from thence, who are unrighteous and unfaithful towards their own Children. And since all *Christians* are bound to seek after the Benefit and Advantage of all Mankind, 1 Cor. x. 24, and *every one* in particular to please his Neighbour for his Good to Edification, Rom. xv. 2. there must certainly be a much higher and stronger Obligation upon all Parents, to have a tender Regard to the Welfare of their own Offspring; and to be careful and diligent to instruct them in the Knowledge of those Things, which are necessary and essential to their Happiness.

And

And in Case any Parent shall neglect to do this, we may very justly apply to him those Words of *St Paul*, which were spoken with Relation to the Temporal Provision for Mens Families; *If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own House, he hath denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel, 1 Tim. v. 8.*

And thus I have finished what I have to say upon this Point of the Instruction and Education of Children; and thereby have considered those Religious Duties, in the Observation of which the *Lord's Day* ought to be employed. Before I proceed any farther, it will be proper and necessary to make an Application of what hath been laid down in this and the foregoing Chapters to the Subject of this Discourse; and to prove that Men are bound to discharge these Duties upon the *Lord's Day*, and also to shew in what Measure and Proportion they ought to perform them at this holy Season: And this because, as was before taken notice of, tho' they are all Essential Duties of Religion, yet they are not all of them of equal Necessity to be observed at any *particular* Time, but do some of them admit of more Relaxation and Indulgence in the Discharge thereof than others. I shall therefore endeavour to state this Matter as plainly and clearly as I can, and as I have before proved that the Attendance upon the Public Worship, the Reading of the Scriptures, the Meditation upon Divine Things, &c. are necessary Duties of Religion, I shall now proceed to enquire how far Men are obliged to the Practice of these Duties upon the *Lord's Day*, and in what Degree and Measure they should observe them. But this shall be done in the following Chapter.

CHAP. VI.

Being an Application of what has been laid down in the Five foregoing Chapters to the Subject of this Discourse, and in which is considered how far, and in what Measure, Men are bound to discharge the Religious Duties abovementioned upon the Lord's Day.

HAVING in the foregoing Chapters laid before the Reader the Obligation of attending upon the Public Worship, of Reading the Holy Scriptures, of Meditating upon Divine Things, of Examining into our Lives and Actions, and the Religious Education of Children: in order to apply what hath been therein delivered to the Subject of this Discourse, and to shew the Necessity of discharging these Duties upon the Lord's Day, and in what Degree and Measure Men are bound to discharge them, we must consider Mankind under these two Heads and Distinctions. *First*, Such as being obliged to attend all the Week upon the Labours of their Callings, for the Maintenance and Support of themselves and Families, have little or no other Time
but

but upon the Lord's Day for the Exercise of these Religious Duties. And *Secondly*, Such as being exempt from the Necessity of weekly Labour, have their Time more entirely at their own Command; and consequently have more Leisure and Opportunity for the Discharge of these Duties at other Seasons. For the Obligation of performing these Duties upon the *Lord's Day*, and the Measure and Degree in which they are to be performed, will in some Respects vary and differ, according as we apply them to Men under these Distinctions. And,

First then, Let us consider the Obligation of discharging these Religious Duties upon the *Lord's Day* with Regard to those Persons, who are ordinarily bound throughout the whole Week to attend upon the proper Works and Labours of their Callings. Now with Respect to the two first Religious Duties before-mentioned, *viz. the Attendance upon the Public Worship of God, and a due Reflection and Meditation upon the Word which hath been preached to us at this Time*, there is no difference, as to the Obligation of these Duties upon the *Lord's Day*, between the Poorest and the Greatest Man living: but all Men are equally obliged to observe these Duties at this Season (unless some Act of Necessity or Charity intervene) from the *Prince that sits upon the Throne, to the Beggar that is on the Dunghil*, as the Scripture speaks, 1 Sam. ii. 8. For since the Public Worship and Service of God is a necessary and essential Duty of Religion, and God hath appointed a Particular Day in every Week for the Performance thereof; since the positive Laws of God *are* indispensable; and God requires us to serve Him *with all our Hearts*, and to prefer our Duty to Him before all Temporal Considerations whatsoever; and hath expressly declared, that unless we serve Him with this Sincerity and Purity of Intention, all our Religious Performances will be unacceptable and displeas-

ing to Him : (all which Things have been clearly and fully proved in the foregoing Discourse (l)) I say, since God doth so strictly require us to serve and worship Him on the *Lord's Day*; it must therefore certainly be the necessary and indispensable Duty of all Men (of what Quality and Station soever they be) to attend diligently and constantly at this Time upon the Public Worship ; and it cannot be neglected by any Man for the Sake of *Company, Interest, or Worldly Pleasure*, without the manifest Hazard and Danger of his Salvation. And the like may be said with regard to the Duty of Meditating upon God's Word, and of making a due and careful Application of it to the State and Condition of our Souls. For since our Blessed Saviour hath plainly required this Duty of us, as hath been before observed (m) ; if we do not *take heed how we hear*, and for want of the proper Qualifications and Dispositions of Mind shall *choak the Word* and render it *unfruitful* ; we shall be chargeable before God with all the Effects and Consequences of such Neglect. And thus far the Condition of all Men is alike, and they are all equally bound to the Performance of these Duties at this Holy Season. And then,

Secondly, With respect to the other Duties above-mentioned, *viz. the Reading the Holy Scriptures, the Meditation upon Divine Things, Self-Examination, and the Education of Children*, as I have before proved that they are all of them necessary and essential Duties of Religion, they must needs require some Time and Season to be set apart for the due and proper Exercise of them. And this Exercise is, as will be seen presently, not only a very fit and proper Employment for the *Lord's Day*, but it is also the necessary and

(l) See Part I. chap. i. Part II. chap. i. and chap. v. p. 223, &c.

(m) See Part II. chap. iii. p. 213, &c.

and indispensable Duty of such Persons to perform it at this Season, who are intent all the Week long upon the Works and Labours of their Callings ; because they have *ordinarily* no other Time but this, in which they can perform these great Duties to any good Purpose ; and therefore, if they neglect the Performance of them upon the *Lord's Day*, they must neglect it altogether, to the Eternal Ruin and Destruction of their Souls. And I am apt to think that these Persons will find by Experience, that to discharge these Religious Duties in the Manner they ought to be done, *i. e.* to read the Holy Scriptures sufficiently to their Instruction and Edification in *Christian* Knowledge ; to meditate so frequently and thoroughly upon the great Points of Religion, that they may gain a due and regular Influence upon their Affections ; to examine so carefully into their Lives and Actions, as to understand the true State and Condition of their Souls, and to be ascertained of their sincere Repentance, and their Progress and Improvement in Piety and Virtue ; and so perfectly to Instruct and Educate their Children, as to make them fully sensible of the absolute Necessity and Advantage of Religion, and habitually prepared and disposed to the Practice of it : I say, that such Persons, who are confined all the Week long to the Labours of their Callings, will find by Experience, that to perform these Religious Duties in that Manner which they ought to do will at least require, that some considerable Part of every *Lord's Day* be *ordinarily* employed to this Purpose. And because the due Performance of these Duties is of the utmost Necessity and Consequence to Religion, as hath been before shewn ; therefore such Persons as have little or no Opportunity but upon the *Lord's Day* for Reading the Holy Scriptures, and Meditating upon Divine Things, &c. should be extremely careful and solicitous to apply themselves to these Divine Exercises at this Time ; and as a most pious and excellent Prelate hath

well observed (n), “ The less Leisure Men have upon
 “ other Days for this Purpose, the *more entirely* should
 “ they consecrate this Day to the Purposes and Duties
 “ of Religion.” (o) And thus much concerning the
 Manner in which such Persons ought to spend their
 Time upon the *Lord’s Day*, who are bound to attend
 all the Week long upon the Labours of their Cal-
 lings. I proceed,

Secondly, To apply the Argument to those, who by
 not being obliged to Work and Labour for their Liv-
 ing have more Leisure at other Seasons for the Pra-
 ctice of these Religious Duties, and have their Time
 and Opportunity more entirely at their Command.
 Now in the *first Place*, with respect to the Duties of
attending upon the Public Worship and of *Meditating upon*
the Word of God when preached to them, there is no
 Difference in this Matter between the Greatest and the
 Poorest Men living ; but they are all equally bound

to

(n) *Tillotson* Vol. II. p. 277.

(o) Dost Thou require of me, O Lord, but one Day in seven for Thy more especial Service, when as all my Time, all my Days are Thy due Tribute, and shall I grudge Thee that one Day ? Have I but one Day in the Week, a peculiar Season of nurturing and training up my Soul for Heavenly Happiness, and shall I think the Whole of this too much, and judge my Duties at an End, when the public Offices of the Church are only ended ? Ah ! where in such a Case is my Zeal, my Sincerity, my Constancy and Perseverance of Holy Obedience ? Where my Love unto, my Delight and Relish in pious Performances ? Would those that are thus but half-Christians be content to be half-saved ? Would those, who are thus not far from the Kingdom of Heaven, be willing to be utterly excluded thence for arriving no nearer to a due Observance of the Lord’s Day ? Am I so afraid of *Sabbatizing* with the *Jews*, that I carelessly omit keeping the Day as a good Christian ? Where can be the Harm of overdoing in God’s Worship, suppose I could overdo ? But when my Saviour has told me, after I have done all, I am still an unprofitable Servant, where is the Hazard, where the Possibility of doing too much ? Whereas in doing too little, in falling short of performing a due Obedience on the *Sabbath*, I may also fall short of Eternal Life. *Supplement to Archbishop Dawes’s Duties of the Closet in his Works*, Vol. III. p. 44, 45.

to the Performance of these Duties upon the *Lord's Day*, as was just now observed. And all the Difference between some Men and others, with regard to the Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*, relates entirely to the Private Duties of the Day, and consists in this, that the more Leisure and Opportunity Men have at other Times for these Religious Exercises, if they faithfully and honestly employ it to this good Purpose, they will have Occasion to spend less of their Time in these necessary Duties upon the *Lord's Day*; but not that they can safely omit them *altogether* at this Holy Season, or that it is lawful for the Greatest among the Sons of Men to spend the remaining Part of the *Lord's Day* when Divine Service is ended (as is now too commonly and shamefully done) in *Drinking* and *Gaming*, and in *keeping of Company*, and in *Worldly Pleasure*. For since, as hath been before fully proved, God hath appropriated the *Seventh Day* to His Worship and Service, and commanded us to keep it holy; the Command must certainly extend to all Mankind, and there is no one who is exempt from the Force and Obligation of it: and therefore how great soever any Man's Station or Quality may be, if he shall profane the *Lord's Day* by the Neglect of God's Public Worship, or by dedicating this Holy Season to Mirth, and Company, and Worldly Pleasures, he shall be highly answerable to God for such Transgression. And it will be no Excuse at all to alledge, that he may read good Books, and sufficiently meditate upon Divine Things, and instruct his Children, at other Times; since, as the *Lord's Day* is appointed of God Himself for these Purposes, it ought to be observed and employed accordingly in some Measure and Degree by all Mankind; and it can never be "wholly neglected without *Indevotion*, or even without *Scandal*," as an Eminent Writer truly observes (p). And tho' the Persons we are now speaking

of, if they frequently and seriously apply themselves to these Exercises of Religion at other Opportunities, may not be required to spend *so many* of their Hours upon the *Lord's Day* in this Employment, as other Men; yet they cannot at this Time safely omit and neglect them altogether: But they are strictly bound, as to attend duly and constantly upon the Public Worship; so, after the Service of the Church is ended, to employ some Part of the remaining Time in Reading of Good Books, in Meditating upon Divine Things, and in the other Offices of Piety and Religion, according to their different Station, Circumstances and Condition. And this they are obliged to do upon these two Accounts.

First, On the Account of their Families. And, *Secondly*, With Regard to their own proper and personal Obligations. And,

First, On the Account of their Families. Now these are under the Care of their Masters, and committed by God to their Charge; and they have a direct and immediate Authority over them. And, as a most Excellent Prelate well remarks, “ All
 “ Authority over others is a Talent, intrusted
 “ with us by God for the Good and Benefit of o-
 “ thers, and for which we are accountable, if we
 “ do not improve it and make use of it to that End.
 “ We are obliged by all lawful Means to provide
 “ for the *temporal* Welfare of our Family, to feed
 “ and cloath their *Bodies*, and to give them a Com-
 “ fortible Subsistence here in this World; and surely
 “ much more we are obliged to take Care of their
 “ *Souls*, and to consult their *Eternal* Happiness in an-
 “ other Life, in Comparison of which all temporal
 “ Concernments and Considerations are as nothing (q).
 And moreover, God expressly requires all *Masters to*
give

(q) *Tillotson* Vol. I. p. 599.

give unto their Servants that which is Equal, Col. iv. 1: And that this extends to Spiritual Things and to the Masters Care and Concern about Family Religion, as well as to Matters of *temporal* Provision, is evident not only from what was just now observed concerning the Nature of this Trust, but also from those Examples which we find in Holy Scripture recorded to this Purpose. Thus *Josbua* declares to the *Israelites*, that whomsoever they should choose to serve, it was his firm Resolution, that *he himself and his House would serve the Lord*, *Josb. xxiv. 15*. Which Words, as the Excellent Prelate last mentioned rightly judges, do imply “ The pious Care of a good Master and Father of a Family, to train up those under his Charge in the Worship and Service of the true God (r).” And the same pious Regard to the Spiritual Welfare of his Family was before remark'd of faithful *Abraham* (and for this Reason God Almighty declared that He would discover to him His Design concerning the Destruction of *Sodom*): *For I know him, saith God, that he will command his Children and his Household after him, and they shall keep the Way of the Lord to do Justice and Judgment. Gen. xviii. 17, 19*. It is therefore incumbent upon all Masters of Families to take Care of the Religious Instruction and Spiritual Welfare of them, as well as to provide for their temporal Support and Maintenance. And this clearly shews the Obligation that lies upon all Masters to observe the *Lord's Day*, and keep it *religiously*; not only because it is the Indispensable Duty of all Servants to keep this Day *holy* as well as their Masters, and that, by attending upon the Public Worship,

(r) *Tillotson*, *ibid.* p. 595. *Ego & domus mea*, &c. Efficacissimum argumentum erat Exemplum Imperatoris, præsertim prudentissimi, sanctissimi, & felicissimi. Exemplum hic proponitur gubernandæ familiæ nostræ. *Mafius in loc.*

ship, and by reading the Scriptures and performing the other Exercises of Religion, when they are not otherwise detained by such Services as are *absolutely necessary*; but also, because whatever Leisure their Masters may have at other Times for the Discharge of these Religious Duties, it is very certain that the Generality of Servants have little or no Time and Opportunity but this, in which they can perform them in due Measure and to any good Purpose: And therefore, if they neglect them at this holy Season, they must neglect them altogether, to the apparent Hazard and Ruin of their Souls. For if all Servants are bound, not only to attend upon the Public Worship, but also to read the Scriptures, and to mind the other Duties of Religion upon the *Lord's Day*, when Divine Service is ended; it must certainly be the Indispensable Duty of all Masters to be present in their Families at this Time, to watch carefully over them, and see that they be well instructed, and that all the Religious Duties of the Day be duly and regularly performed by them. But this is absolutely impossible for them to do; if at this very Time (as the too General Custom now is) Servants shall be required to wait upon their Masters in Public Houses, or other Places, where they are engaged in Drinking, Gaming, Company or worldly Pleasure. Neither can it reasonably be expected, if at this Season Men's Families are left to themselves, that any considerable Number of Servants will employ these precious Hours in reading of the Scriptures, or in the other necessary Exercises of Religion, if they are not earnestly exhorted and induced thereto by their Masters Counsel and Authority, and encouraged and animated by his Presence and Example. I shall not spend any Time in describing, neither would I willingly display the exceeding Guilt of many Masters in this Respect, and what a manifest Injury is hereby done to their Servants in thus neglecting the

the Care of their Souls, and defrauding them of that Time which by the Law of God does justly belong to them, and what a Heavy and Dreadful Account they must give to God at the last Day for this great Crime. I shall only observe at present, that it is in a great Measure owing to the Neglect of Masters in this Particular, that we have so many Complaints every where of *idle, wicked and unfaithful* Servants. And unless Masters will more carefully execute their Charge in this Particular, they should cease to complain upon this Head, and would do well to consider how much of this Blame may justly be laid upon themselves, by their shameful Neglect of this Necessary Duty of Family Instruction. For since it is impossible that Men can be honest in their Dealings and faithful to their Trusts, unless they are endued with a good Conscience; (and it is *ridiculous* so much as to *talk of a good Conscience*, that is not grounded upon and supported by the Principles of Religion) (s) it is therefore in vain for Masters to expect, that the Behaviour of their Servants should be influenced by a *good Conscience* and govern'd by *Religious Principles*, if at the same Time the Servants shall discern that there is little or no Religion in themselves; and particularly, that they can be guilty of so great Impiety, as to neglect the Public Worship of God upon the *Lord's Day*, and spend that Holy Season

(s) If moral Virtues are acknowledged necessary to social Felicity, Religion must be so too; because no other Principle can offer an equal Inducement to the Practice of them, or equally restrain Men from the opposite Vices. 'Tis vain to imagine that the Fear of the Magistrate or political Laws can effectually govern the Actions of Men without the Aid of Religion; for the Duty of obeying those Laws must be derived from a Superior Principle: And he who looks no higher for the Motives of his Conduct than the Resentment of Human Justice, whenever he can presume himself cunning enough to resist it, will be under no Restraint from any Action of Treachery, or Lust, or Violence which his Passions suggest. *Dr Rogers's Sermons. Vol. II. p. 360 1.*

son in *journeying about, in paying of Visits, in keeping of Company, in Drinking or Gaming, and in Mirth and Worldly Diversions*; as is now notoriously and frequently done (every Day more and more) by almost all Orders and Degrees of Men among us throughout the whole Kingdom. As bad and unfaithful therefore as many Servants are found to be; yet it would become all Masters before they pass Sentence on them to examine themselves thoroughly, and see whether they have not contributed to this great Evil, by neglecting this Duty of Family Instruction. And if they have; they have too much Reason to fear, that the Providence of God may punish them for this gross Neglect in the Plague and Torment, the Uneasiness and Vexation, which the Unfaithfulness and Misbehaviour of Servants administers to their Minds. I will not urge this Matter any farther, but will rather conclude this Head with an Excellent Passage of Archbishop *Tillotson*, relating to this Duty of Family Religion; which, because it comes from so wise and good a Man, will therefore I hope have the greater Effect and Influence upon my Readers. “ When the Public Worship (saith he) of the *Lord’s Day* is over, “ our Families should be instructed at Home by having the Scriptures and other good Books read to them, and Care likewise should be taken that they do this themselves; this being the Chief Opportunity that most of them, especially those that are Servants, have of minding the Business of Religion, and thinking seriously of another World. “ And therefore I cannot but think it of very great Consequence to the Maintaining and keeping alive of Religion in the World, that *this Day* be Religiously observed, and spent as much as may be in the Exercises of Piety and in the Care of our Souls. For surely every one that hath a true Sense of Religion will grant, that it

“ is necessary that some Time should be Solemnly
“ fet apart for this Purpose, which is of all other our
“ greatest Concernment ; and they, who neglect this so
“ proper Season and Opportunity, will hardly find any
“ other Time for it ; especially those who are under
“ the Government and Command of others, as Chil-
“ dren and Servants, who are seldom upon any other
“ Day allowed to be so much Masters of their Time,
“ as upon this Day (t).” To which I will add an
Excellent Observation of another very Pious and
Learned (u) Writer. “ Whereas God (saith he) re-
“ quired of the *Jews* such a Portion of Time to be
“ solemnly dedicated to Religion and Mercy ; we
“ who are under greater Obligations should think our
“ selves bound to consecrate as much or more Time
“ to the same Intents, should be content to withdraw
“ ourselves more frequently from the Pursuit of our
“ own Profits and Pleasures to the Remembrance
“ and Celebration of His Favours, and to allow a
“ *greater Relaxation* to our Dependents, that in some
“ Proportion we may exceed the *Jews* in Piety and
“ Gratitude, as we surpass them in the Matter and
“ Causes thereof.” And as Rich and Great Men are
obliged to observe the *Lord's Day*, and keep it Re-
ligiously for the Sake of their Families ; so likewise
are they obliged to do the same with Regard to
their own Persons. And that upon these three
Accounts.

First, Because God hath commanded *all* Men to
observe the *Lord's Day*, and to *keep it holy* ; as hath
been clearly shewn. And the keeping this Day holy
implies not only the Separation of it from Bodily
Works and Labours ; but also the Dedication there-
of to the Public Worship of God, and to the Offices
and

(t) *Tillotson*, Vol. I. p. 598.

(u) *Dr Barrow's Works*, Vol. I. p. 529.

and Duties of Religion. This I have before sufficiently proved (x); and Dr *Heylin* (whose Notions upon this Subject are I am sure not too rigid) does in some Measure allow the same: for he saith, “the Word “*Sabbath* is used in Scripture to signify some selected “Time, by God Himself deputed unto Holiness as “well as *Rest* (y).” And this Acknowledgment is also made by the Learned Dr *Spencer*, who warmly espouseth the Notions of *Heylin* on this Subject; who declares it to be highly commendable in any one to rest on the *Lord’s Day* from all worldly Thoughts and Labours, and to dedicate it wholly to Divine Things (z). And tho’ these Authors earnestly contend, that the *Sabbath* was not instituted from the *Creation* of the World, but was first appointed to the *Jews* at the Giving of the *Law* (in which Position they have been sufficiently confuted by many Learned Men) (a) yet they expressly allow that God appointed it for this Reason, that “after His Example they “might learn to Rest from their Worldly Labours, “and be the better fitted to Meditate on the Works “of God, and to Commemorate His Goodness manifested in the World’s *Creation* (b).” And therefore tho’ such Persons, as have their Time entirely at their Command, may not, if they apply themselves diligently at other Seasons to the Private Exercises of Religion, be bound to employ so many of their Hours therein upon the *Lord’s Day* as others, who are confined all the Week long to the Labours of their Callings; yet they cannot be wholly excused from them, but

(x) See above, Part I. p. 9.

(y) History of the Sabbath, Part I. p. 86.

(z) In summa quidem laude ponendum est, die Septimanæ primo divinis tantum vacare, & ab omni terrestrium studio feriari. *Spenc. de Leg. Hebr.* Vol. I. p. 96.

(a) See above, Part I. chap. i. p. 9, &c.

(b) *Heylin*, *ibid.* p. 28. *Spenc. de Leg. Hebr.* lib. i. cap. v. § 10. p. 80, 81, 87.

but are obliged to spend some considerable Part of *that Day* in Reading and Meditation, and the other Duties of Religion; which the very Nature and Design of the *Christian Sabbath*, and the Obligation of keeping it Holy plainly demands and requires of them. And in case they shall neglect to do so (as it is now too common for rich and great Men to do) they shall answer as severely to God at the Last Day for this Neglect, as the poorest and meanest amongst Men. And,

Secondly. They are obliged to this Duty of Religiously observing the *Lord's Day*, that they may set a good Example of Piety and Goodness to the World. This is indeed what all *Christians* are bound to do; since it will be in vain to instruct Men by Advice and good Counsel, if at the same Time we set a bad Copy and Pattern before them. For, as a most Judicious and Learned Prelate truly observes,“(c) Men speak “to each other by their Actions, as well as by their “Words: There is a kind of Language in what we “do in the Sight of each other, as well as in what we “speak in the Hearing of each other.” But it is more especially the Duty of all those Persons who are of Eminent Station and Dignity; inasmuch as their Example is apt to have the greatest Influence and Effect upon the Rest of Mankind. And therefore how perfectly soever such Persons should be instructed in their Duty, and tho’ they should apply themselves diligently at other Times to the Reading of Holy Scripture, the Meditation upon Divine Things, the Education of their Children, and the other Exercises of Religion; yet they ought to spend some Part of the *Lord's Day* in the same Holy Employment, that they may set a good Pattern before them, who have for the most Part no other Opportunities for the discharging these Religious Duties, and as much as lies in them

them encourage them to imitate and copy after it. And to such Persons is that Precept of our Blessed Saviour principally to be directed, *Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.* Matt. v. 16. And in the

Third and last Place, They are obliged to the Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*, that they may give no Scandal or Offence to their *Christian Brethren*. This is a Duty which the Apostle plainly requires of all Men; *Let no Man put a Stumbling-block or an Occasion to fall in his Brother's Way.* Rom. xiv. 13. And again, *Give no Offence neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God.* 1 Cor. x. 32. And how great the Danger of this Sin is, our Lord hath very severely admonished us, *Wo (saith he) unto the World because of Offences; but Wo unto that Man, by whom the Offence cometh,* Matt. xviii. 7. And in the Verse foregoing, *Whofo shall offend one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a Millstone were hanged about his Neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the Sea.* And that this Duty of not giving Offence to others holds not only in Things Essential, but also in such as are Indifferent, is demonstrable from that famous Decision, which St Paul hath made of the Case of eating Meats that were offered to *Idols.* 1 Cor. viii. Which tho' the Apostle had proved to be lawful and innocent in itself (since an *Idol was Nothing*, and consequently there was no true Consecration) yet because there were many others who thought it unlawful to eat those Meats, it was therefore Sinful for them to do it in their Presence, lest they should give Offence and Scandal to such Persons, and by their Example draw them into Sin. And in the last Verse of this Chapter we have an Account of the admirable Charity of the Apostle in this Particular; *Wherefore, saith he, if Meat make my Brother offend, I will eat no Flesh while the World standeth,*

standeth, lest I make my Brother offend. And therefore if the Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day* were in itself Indifferent (the contrary to which has been fully and clearly proved) yet all Men ought to forbear the open Profanation of this Day; lest they should give Offence and Scandal to others. And whosoever shall profane this Holy Day, either by the Neglect of *God's Public Worship*, or by spending the remaining Time in *Visiting of Friends*, in *Drinking*, *Gaming*, and *Wordly Pleasures and Diversions*, and thereby shall cause the Weak and Ignorant to fall into Sin, and to neglect the Religious Duties of the *Season*, That Man shall be justly chargeable with the Crime here condemned by the Apostle; *he wounds the weak Conscience of his Brethren, and thereby sins against Christ, v. 12.* and is guilty of the Sin of *destroying those for whom Christ died. Rom. xiv. 15.* I am sensible indeed that Men are apt to complain very much upon this Head, and think it very hard that they must be debarred of what they account their Just Liberties; lest the Minds of ignorant and superstitious Persons should be disturbed thereby. But I do not know how to find any Relief for them under this Hardship. And tho' I freely own there may at sometimes be some Inconvenience in acting according to this Rule; yet on the other Side it is certain, that much greater Mischief and Inconvenience would ensue, if this Restraint upon the Minds of Men were wholly taken away, and Men were in all Cases left to themselves, to act according to what they esteem their Just Liberties. All that I am concerned about at present is to shew that the not giving Offence to others, even in Things *indifferent* (and much more then surely in such as are *necessary* and *essential*) is the true Doctrine of the Holy Scripture: and let those Men look to themselves, who will not be guided and directed by it. And this I have fully and clearly done from those several Passages of Scripture I have now mentioned. And from hence

it is very plain and evident, that tho' in such Cases where we have the Warrant of God's Authority, or the exprefs Injunctions of our Superiours, we not only may but are bound to act as we are commanded, let Men be never so much offended and displeas'd with us for so doing ; and tho' in such Respects, which are of great Importance and Consequence to ourselves or to the Public, and which are so plain and obvious, that Men cannot but perceive the Lawfulness of our Actions, if they be not grossly wanting to themselves, we may stand fast in and contend for our Liberty, tho' other Men should be uneasy and disquieted thereat: Yet in such Cases as are doubtful and obscure, and in which wise and good Men may easily differ one from another ; in such Cases where Men are led into Errours and Mistakes by the strong Prejudices of Education, and in which we may easily comply with them without any great Inconvenience and Damage to ourselves, it is certain that we ought to have a Regard to the Peace and Quiet of other Men in our Moral Actions, and should forbear the Use even of just Liberties, rather than give any Offence and Scandal to others, and be the Means of drawing them into Sin. And tho' I have often heard this Doctrine misrepresented and ridiculed (and especially when apply'd to the Religious Observation of the *Sabbath*) as the Idle Dreams only and Suggestions of *Fanatical* Men, yet I am fully assured it hath been the constant Sense and Judgment of the best and greatest Divines, which our Church hath had since it was in Being. It would be easy to produce innumerable Citations from our most Learned Writers to this Purpose ; but it will be needless to trouble the Reader with them. I shall therefore only mention two Passages from two noted Divines, whose great Zeal and Affection for the Established Church was never doubted or called in Question. The first is the Testimony of a very Learned and Pious Prelate, and singularly Eminent

nent for his great Skill and Knowledge in Casuistical
 Divinity. This excellent Author, when speaking of
 the Ways by which we may abuse our Liberty, hath
 these Words: "When we use our Liberty, so as to
 " *stumble the weak Consciences of our Brethren thereby,*
 " 1 Cor. viii. 9. and will not remit in any Thing
 " the Extremity of that *Right and Power* we have in
 " Things of an indifferent Nature to *please our Neigh-*
 " *bour for his Good to Edification,* Rom. xv. 2. at least
 " so far as we may do it without greater Inconve-
 " nience, we *walk not charitably,* Rom. xiv. 15,
 " and if not *Charitably,* then not *Christianly.*—
 " This I say, that where without great Inconvenience
 " we may do it, it is not enough for us to *please our-*
 " *selves,* Rom. xv. 1, and to satisfy our own *Consciences,*
 " that we do but what we *lawfully* may; but we ought
 " also to *bear one anothers Burthens,* Gal. vi. 2, and to
 " forbear for one anothers Sakes what otherwise we
 " might do, and so to *fulfil the Law of Christ.*—
 " It was an excellent Saying of Luther (in Gal. v.)
 " *Omnia libera per Fidem, omnia serva per Charitatem.*
 " We should know and be *fully perswaded* with the
 " Perswasions of *Faith,* that all things are *lawful*;
 " and yet withal we should purpose and be fully re-
 " solved for *Charity's* Sake to forbear the Use of
 " many Things, if we find them *inexpedient.* He
 " that will have his own Way in every Thing he
 " hath a *Liberty* unto, whosoever shall take Offence
 " at it; maketh his *Liberty* but a *Cloak of Malicious-*
 " *ness* by using it *Uncharitably* (d)." Thus far that
 Learned Prelate. The next Testimony, which I
 shall produce on this Occasion, is that of a late
 Divine, whose Character and Zeal for the Church
 is well known to every one; and speaking of this
 Matter he expresseth himself thus; "We may

B b 2

" partake

“ partake of other Men’s Sins by giving Of-
 “ fence or scandalous Example. As Men are *Mem-*
 “ *bers of Society*, they stand *responsible* not only for
 “ the *Positive Legality* of their Actions, as considered
 “ in themselves and their own *Natures*, solely with
 “ respect to the *Subject Matter* of them ; but also for
 “ their *relative Consequences*, as they may affect the
 “ *Consciences* of others ; to which we are bound by
 “ the *Laws of Charity* to give no *Violation, Di-*
 “ *sturbance*, or Occasion of Transgressing ; and in all
 “ our *Department* to consult not only it’s *Lawfulness*,
 “ but it’s *Decency* and *Expediency* with regard to our
 “ Brethren ; against whom we *may Sin*, (as *St Paul*
 “ says in the admirable State of this Case *1 Cor.*
 “ *viii. 12.*) *and wound their weak Consciences, and Sin*
 “ *against Christ*. Thus the Abuse even of an Inno-
 “ cent Liberty cannot be justified by a good Intention ;
 “ and we are liable to answer for the Fall of those,
 “ to whom we become a *Stumbling-Block* and a *Rock*
 “ *of Offence (e)*.” From all which it clearly appears,
 that Men are to consult the Peace and Quiet and Edi-
 fication of others in all their Moral Actions ; and to
 forbear even the Use of their just Liberties, rather
 than give any Scandal and Offence to their Neigh-
 bours. And therefore if the Religious Observation of
 the *Lord’s Day* were in itself Indifferent, yet all Per-
 sons would be obliged to avoid the Profanation of this
 Day, out of a Principle of Tendernefs and Charity to
 other Men ; and much more then certainly are they
 bound to do so, when, as hath been clearly shewn,
 the Religious Observation of this Holy Day, and
 that both publickly and privately, is the absolute in-
 dispensable Duty of all *Christians*. And I have in-
 sisted the longer upon this, in Hopes that if Men
 cannot be perswaded of the Necessity of this Duty,
 cn

(e) Dr *Sacheverell’s* Sermon at the Assizes at *Derby*, 1709. p. 12.

on account of their own Personal Obligations ; they may be induced and prevailed upon to put it in Practice, out of regard to the Ease and Quiet, the Happiness and Edification of their fellow-*Christians*. And indeed there is the greatest Reason and Necessity for our putting them in Mind of it ; since the horrible Profanation of the *Lord's Day*, which is now grown customary among us, not only gives the greatest Scandal and Offence to the World, but hath also a most fatal Effect and Influence upon the Morals of the Nation. For by this means, in the *First* Place, the publick Worship of God is for the Sake of Company and Wordly Pleasure frequently neglected ; which is not only in itself a Necessary and Essential Duty of Religion, but also, if duly and constantly attended to, would tend very much to render Men pious and good ; as it naturally calls to mind the Being and Providence of God and the Concernments of Religion ; and as the frequent and regular Confession of their Sins, and their hearty Prayers to God for the Forgiveness of them, must needs make them in some Measure sensible of the great Danger of Sin and Wickedness, and the Absolute Necessity of Holiness and Virtue. But *Secondly*, This is not all the Mischief of Profaning the *Lord's Day*, as hereby the publick Worship of God is forsaken ; but by this Means also the private Duties of the Day are omitted, to the great Damage and Prejudice of the Kingdom. For,

First, As many of those Persons, who frequently profane the *Lord's Day* by dedicating it to Company and Wordly Pleasures ; will for the most Part, before they partake of their Pleasures, come to Church to join in God's Service and to hear His Word : it happens on this Account, that the great and necessary Duty of meditating upon the Word preached to them is dis-regarded, and so the *good Seed* for want of falling into *good Ground*, i. e. being received into the Heart and Affections of Men, and duly applied to the true

State and Condition of their Souls, but on the contrary being *choaked with the Cares and Riches and Pleasures of this Life, becomes unfruitful, Luk. viii. 14.* And this proves fatal and destructive to Men in a double Respect, not only as through the want of Meditation the Preaching of the Word hath no Effect and Influence upon them; but also as by this means they frustrate and defeat the End and Design of one of the Best and most Excellent Institutions, which infinite Wisdom hath contrived for the Salvation of Mankind. And,

Secondly, Upon the same Account also the great Duty of Reading the Holy Scriptures is almost entirely neglected: By which means not only many Children and Servants are unacquainted with their Duty, but Parents and Masters themselves are often kept in extreme Ignorance of it, and so are like to be *destroyed for lack of Knowledge, Hos. iv. 6.* And indeed the Ignorance of the Generality of the Common People in *Scripture Knowledge* and in the Essential Doctrines of the *Christian Religion* is such (and I would to God that many of the better Fashion might not be taken into the Account) that no one, who is not obliged to know it, can possibly apprehend it. I will not enter into a more particular Description of this Matter, lest I should give the *Jews* and other Adversaries of our Faith too great a Handle of Reproach against us. I shall rather lay before the Reader the Words of a very pious and learned Divine of our Church upon this Occasion, who complaining of the great Neglect of this Duty of reading the Scriptures expresses himself thus, “ God
 “ knows a great many very ignorant People there are
 “ among us, who know *little more* of God than the
 “ *Heathens* did; who sit in *Darkness* and in the *Valley*
 “ *of the Shadow of Death*, in the very *Regions of Light*,
 “ *when the Day-spring* from on high hath visited us, to
 “ give *Light* to them that sit in *Darkness*—and to guide
 “ our

“ *our Feet into the Ways of Peace.*” And how great the Danger of this Neglect will be, the same excellent Author well describes in the Words immediately following. “ Will it not (*saiſt he*) be “ an Impudent Thing for ſuch Men to plead Ignorance at the Day of Judgment, who would not look “ into the Bible, nor attend public Inſtructions to “ learn their Duty ; who had the Means and Opportunities of Knowledge, but would not uſe them ; “ who took a great deal of Pains to be ignorant, and “ to keep out of the way of Knowledge, which ſo “ often croſſed them, that they had much ado to “ eſcape it ? Whatever may be pleaded in excuſe of “ the Ignorance of *Heathens*, there can be no Excuse “ for *Chriſtians*, who have the moſt perfect Revelation of the Will of God, and wil! not look into it. “ This is a great Contempt of God ; it is in Effect “ to ſay to God, *Depart from us, for we deſire not the “ Knowledge of thy Ways, Job. xxi. 14.* And it is “ hard to ſay which is the moſt provoking Sin, to “ deſpiſe the Knowledge of God, or to break his “ Laws : Not to think it worth our while to know “ the Will of God, or through the Power of Temptation to tranſgreſs our Duty (*f*).” Thus far this Excellent Writer. And it is apparently owing to the Neglect of Reading the Scriptures, of which this Author ſo juſtly complains, that the Generality of *Chriſtians* receive ſo little Improvement and Advantage from the Preaching of the Goſpel. For being almoſt wholly unacquainted with the Scriptures, and in great Meaſure ignorant of the very Principles of the *Chriſtian* Doctrine ; they are unable to diſcern the Force and Strength of thoſe Reaſons and Arguments which are grounded upon them, and thereby to be inſtructed and ſtrengthened in the *Chriſtian* Faith, and

influenced to the Practice of Religion and Virtue. And this is one great Mischief, which the Profanation of the *Lord's Day* hath brought upon us, viz. that thro' the Neglect of reading the Holy Scriptures and other good Books at this Time many *Christians* become utterly unqualified for the hearing of God's Word, and are by that means kept in great Ignorance of their Duty, to the manifest Hazard and Danger of their Salvation. And how heavy and dreadful the Account will be, which those Men shall give to God at the last Day, who thus contribute to the Eternal Ruin and Destruction of Mankind by profaning the *Lord's Day* for the Sake of a little Sensual Pleasure and wordly Diversion, I profess I tremble to think. And,

Thirdly, It happens also upon the same Account, that That great and necessary (*g*) Duty of Religion, *Divine Meditation*, is almost wholly omitted. And this proves of the most Pernicious and Destructive Consequence to the Souls of Men; and that in these three Respects.

First, In that by this Means the Things of another Life, tho' of infinite Moment and Importance in themselves, have little or no Effect and Influence upon the Minds of Men, and are rendered Insufficient to enable them to overcome Temptations, and to overbalance the Force and Power of present Things. And hence it comes to pass, that the Generality of *Christians*, notwithstanding their Profession of Religion and

(*g*) Very few Persons I doubt are sufficiently sensible how much Thought and Consideration, how much Care and Vigilancy, how firm a Resolution and earnest Contention of Mind is necessary to the Business of Religion. — Few I fear consider, how much Pains is necessary to the storing of our Minds with good Principles, and to the fixing and riveting in our Souls all the proper Motives and Considerations to engage us to Virtue, that in all Occasions of our Lives they may have their due Force and Influence upon us. *Tillotson, Vol. III. p. 383.*

and Belief of another Life, have their Hearts and Affections too much set upon the present World, and are almost entirely given up to the Riches, Honours, and Pleasures of it. And tho' many times they will talk much about Religion, and zealously perform the External Duties thereof; yet have really but little more in them than the *Form of Godliness*, at the same Time that they *deny the Power of it*, as the Apostle speaks. *2 Tim. iii. 5.* And how fatal this is to Religion, and how destructive to Mens Souls, is so very clear and evident to every one, that there is no Need to spend any Time in Proof of it. And that it is a certain and necessary Effect of the Neglect of this Duty of *Divine Meditation*, hath been before fully shewn in the Chapter upon that Subject. And,

Secondly, The Neglect of meditating upon Divine Things on the *Lord's Day* is also extremely Pernicious and Fatal to the Generality of Mankind, inasmuch as through the want of this they are not thoroughly grounded in the Faith and Acknowledgment of Divine Providence; a due and stedfast Belief of which is absolutely necessary to the very Life and Being of Religion, and to render Men Contented in their Stations, and Patient under those Calamities and Afflictions which it shall please God to send upon them. For, as was before fully (*i*) observed, there are many and great Difficulties in the Administration of Providence, which the wisest of Men cannot possibly clear up and explain; and it requires a more than ordinary Attention to the Proofs and Evidences of a Divine Providence, to be thoroughly perswaded and deeply grounded in the Belief thereof. And unless Men are thus firmly convinced of this Important Truth (which as I there shewed they cannot be without a frequent and serious Consideration of the Proofs
of

(i) See above, Part II, chap. iii. p. 236, &c.

of it) every Difficulty which they meet with in the Government of the World will shock and confound their Faith, and every uncommon Affliction and Misfortune which befalls them will unavoidably fill their Minds with Uneasiness and Impatience under it. And it is apparently owing to the want of a serious and frequent Meditation upon this great Point of Religion (and this is another Mischief which the Profanation of the *Lord's Day* hath brought upon us) that the Generality of *Christians*, notwithstanding their Profession of Faith in God and Acknowledgment of a Future State, are yet many Times so very discontented in their Condition, and so much disturbed at the Inequalities of Fortune; and particularly are very apt to murmur and complain, and to be extremely impatient under Sicknes and Pain, or any other Calamity and Vexation which happens to them. All which Evils would in a great Measure be prevented, if Men were firmly convinced and satisfied by due and careful Meditation, that all the Affairs of this World are managed and conducted by an Infinitely Wise and Good Providence. For this would make them fully sensible, that *that* State and Condition of Life is best for them in which God hath placed them; and in Case it should please God to lay his afflicting Hand upon them, they would submit thereto with Chearfulness and Patience, as well knowing that *Affliction cometh not forth of the Dust, neither doth Trouble spring out of the Ground; Job. v. 6. but that all Things work together for good to them that Love God; Rom. viii. 28. and that their light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory, 2. Cor. iv. 17.* And,

In the Third and last Place, The Neglect of Meditating upon Divine Things on the Lord's Day hath farther this pernicious and destructive Effect and Influence upon too many Persons among us; that for

want

want of being well grounded in the Principles of the *Christian* Religion, and sufficiently instructed in the Demonstrations of it's Divine Authority they are almost continually subject to great *Doubts* and *Suspensions* concerning the Truth and Certainty of it. That this is in *Fact* the Case of many *Christians*, no one who hath the least Conversation with the World can possibly deny. And it is in great Measure owing to the Nature of that Discourse, which now too generally prevails among us, *viz.* the Ridiculing and Reflecting upon Religion, and raising all manner of Objections against the Truth of it. By which means it very frequently happens, that many *Christians*, who for want of diligently reading the Holy Scriptures and other good Books which are wrote in Confirmation of their Religion, are not well acquainted with the Proofs and Evidences of it, and are therefore very much shocked and disturbed in their Faith and Profession; Insomuch that tho' such Reflections upon and Objections against the *Christian* Religion are not sufficient to convince them that it is false; yet they manifestly hinder them from being firmly perswaded that it is true, and fill their Minds with continual Doubts and Suspensions concerning the Truth and Certainty of it. And how fatal such Doubts and Suspensions are to the Cause of Religion, any one may easily judge; since, as the Apostle observes, a *double-minded Man is unstable in all his Ways*, *Jam. i. 8.* And as the greatest Part of Mankind are violently bent upon the Interests and Pleasures of this present Life, it will be absolutely impossible ever to divert them from the Pursuit of these Things, unless their Affections are strongly pre-engaged with the Things of another Life; which it is as much Impossible for them to be, if they are not firmly and beyond all doubt perswaded and convinced of the Truth thereof. And this is another great Mischief which the Profanation of the *Lord's Day* hath brought upon us, *viz.* that by debarring Men

of

of this glorious Opportunity of reading the Scriptures and other good Books, which would stedfastly fix and ground them in the *Christian* Profession, they are subject to perpetual Doubts and Suspicions concerning the Truth of their Religion, which are of the most dangerous and destructive Consequence to their Piety and Virtue.

Fourthly and lastly, It is also owing to the Profanation of the *Lord's Day*, that the Great Duty of the *Religious Education of Children* is almost entirely neglected by the Generality of Christians. The absolute and indispensable Necessity of this Duty, and the many and inestimable Advantages which redound from it to the Children themselves, have been shewn at large in the foregoing Chapter. And considering how much Time will Necessarily be required for a due and faithful Performance of this Duty; it is evident at first sight, that the Greatest Part of *Christians*, who are bound to attend all the Week long upon the Labours of their Callings, have no other Season and Opportunity but *this*, in which they can discharge it to any good Purpose; and therefore if they neglect to perform it at this Time, they must neglect it altogether. And that this Neglect is of the most pernicious Consequence to Young Persons, I need not spend any Time to prove. For by this Means they are not only unacquainted with the Principles and Doctrines of the Gospel (a due Knowledge of which is absolutely necessary to the Practice of *Christian* Piety and Virtue) but are also not made in any Measure sensible of the Obligation and Advantage of Moral Duties. And so for want of being early instructed in Religion and trained up in the Practice of it, they are suffered to contract Habits and Customs of Sin and Wickedness, which for ever stick by and remain with them. And hence it comes to pass, that when they go abroad into the World, before they are well fixed and settled in their proper Business and Profession, they are too often made a *Prey to Crafty Seducers*, and drawn away
into

into all the Excesses and Extravagancies of the Age; till by Degrees they are so hardened and confirmed in Impiety and Debauchery, that it is impossible by any *Human* Art and Means to recover them from it: an Irreparable Damage *this* to human Society, as well as Matter of the greatest Grief and Vexation to many Parents and Families. And this is another great Mischief which is derived from the Profanation of the *Lord's Day*, viz. that thro' the Neglect of Instructing Children at this Time in *Christian* Knowledge many Young Persons are brought up in extreme and shameful Ignorance of their Duty; and by that Means, for want of good Sense and Conduct in the Government of themselves, are entirely abandoned and given up to wicked Habits, to the utter Ruin and Destruction both of Body and Soul. Which great Evil, with all the others before-mentioned, might be in great Measure prevented; if Men could once be perswaded to observe the *Lord's Day Religiously*, by a regular and constant Attendance upon the public Worship, and by a diligent Reading of the Holy Scriptures, and the Meditation upon Divine Things, and by discharging the great Duty of Family Instruction. And That Man must be altogether stupid and insensible, who does not discern that the Devout and Religious Observation of *this* Day (if once it was become of general Practice and Custom) would apparently tend not only to the Benefit and Advantage of private Persons, but also to the Public Good and Happiness of Society; as it would be a most powerful Means to amend and rectify the Morals of the Nation, and to improve all Orders and Degrees of Men in true Piety and Virtue. And indeed when I seriously consider the many and inestimable Advantages, which would manifestly arise from the Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*; I am astonished to find, that there should be so many Persons among us of good Sense and Judgment, and in no wise prejudiced against *Christianity*, who should esteem

esteem it to be a *light* and *trivial* Matter to profane this *Holy Day*, by frequently neglecting the Public Worship; or when they do attend upon it, by dedicating the *remaining Time* to *Company* and *Drinking* and *Worldly Pleasure*, to the great Offence and Prejudice of Mankind. And it is lamentable to think how horribly the *Lord's Day* hath been for a long Time and is at present profaned, not only among ourselves, but almost throughout all *Europe*. In Foreign Countries, *Protestant* as well as *Popish*, it is the general Custom every *Lord's Day* to have their *public Sports, Plays* and *Pastimes*, in the Houses and the Fields, immediately after Divine Service. And it was so in this Nation in the Beginning of the last Century, when it was publickly ordered by King *James I.* and afterwards by King *Charles I.* that every one, who was not a *Recusant*, and could prove his Attendance upon his Parish Church on the *Lord's Day*, should have free Liberty after Evening Service to join in any of the common Sports and Pastimes which were allowed by Authority. And many godly Ministers, for refusing to read the *Declarations* published by those Princes for such *Liberty of Sports*, were suspended from their *Offices* and *Benefices*, and others severely treated in the Court of *High Commission* (k). It is not my Design in the Mention of this to detract in the least from the Goodness and Piety of either of these Princes. For tho' I am far from thinking with Dr *Heylin*, that the publishing of this Declaration by King *Charles I.* (and the same may be applied to that of King *James*) was in Him "a *Pious* and *Princely Act*, nothing inferiour to that of *Constantine* or any other King or Emperor, &c. (l)." or, as he elsewhere

(k) Vid. *Echard's History of England*, Vol. I. p. 944. *Rapin's History*, 8vo. Vol. XI. p. 70. *Echard* Vol. II. p. 109. *Collier's Eccl. History*, Vol. II. p. 758-9.

(l) *History of the Sabbath*, Part II. p. 269.

where expresse himself (*m*), “ that it justly deserves
“ to be recorded among the Principal Monuments
“ of his Zeal and Piety ;” since I verily believe that
the Publication of them both was highly improper
and unbecoming, and not only expressly contrary to
the True Doctrine (*n*) of the *Christian Sabbath*, but
also such as gave the greatest Offence (*o*) and Displea-
sure to many Pious and Religious People, and was
of the most fatal and pernicious Consequence to the
Peace and Security of King *Charles* the First's Go-
vernment (*p*). I say, tho' I am far from being able to
discover any great Piety in this Act of King *Charles* I.
yet

(*m*) Dedication to his History of the *Sabbath*, p. 2.

(*n*) This New Encroachment upon the *Sabbath* gave both King
and People more Liberty to profane the Day, tho' the Archbishop
and several of the Bishops took the Liberty to declare against such
Practices. *Echard*, Vol. I. p. 944.

(*o*) Mr *Echard* speaking of King *James's* Declaration, and the
Penalties which many Persons incurred by refusing to read it, says,
“ All which gave great Offence to many pious and conscientious
“ Persons.” *ibid.* And speaking of the Declaration of King
Charles I. he expresses himself thus, “ The Publication of this,
“ however piously intended, (*meaning to withstand by this Means*
the Notions of the Puritans, as he had observed in the Words
immediately foregoing) gave Offence to many of no small De-
votion, by reason of the Ministers being suspended, &c. “ This
“ one Thing caused more specious Grounds of Complaint against
“ the King and the Archbishop, than any other Part of the
“ public Administration ; as having such outward Appearance of
“ Irreligion and Profaneness. For tho' such Liberties may be so
“ limited in the Notions of Learned Men as to make them law-
“ ful, yet it is hardly practicable so to confine them to the Actions
“ of the People, as to keep them from degenerating into Licen-
“ tiousness ; so that the King's Declaration after a while died of
“ itself, and it was wished by many wise and sober Men that it
“ had never been revived.” *Echard*, Vol. II. p. 109.

(*p*) This (the Declaration of King *James* I.) was one Cause of
the many Mischiefs in the succeeding Reign. *Echard*, Vol. I. p. 944.
And now (*A. D.* 1633) as if the *Leslinies* had conspired against the
King and the Peace of the Realm, his Majesty was periwaded to
renew his Father's Declaration about Sports on the *Lord's Day*,
&c. *History of England* in 2 Vols. 8vo. Vol. I. p. 471.

yet on the other Side I freely acknowledge that neither this Declaration of King *Charles* nor that of his Royal Father were designed in the least to discourage and discountenance the Pious and Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*; but only to obviate and refute the false Notions of the *Puritans*, who really *judaized* very much in that Point, and extended the Obligation of the *Sabbath* a great deal too far (q). And I verily believe that such Persons even in *those Times*, who kept *this Day* Religiously without Affectation and without Superstition, were always best thought of and most esteemed by both those Princes. But however *Zealous* and mistaken the *Puritans* might be in this Matter, yet still the publishing of these Declarations was extremely imprudent; and it would have been much better to have born the too great *Strictness* of those Men, which Time and Experience would by Degrees have worn off, than by relaxing *that* to detract and derogate from the Veneration of the *Sabbath*, which hath so great an Influence upon the *Morals* of the Nation. For from this Time the pious Observation of the *Lord's Day* hath declined in this Kingdom, and is at present resolved into little more than a bare formal Attendance upon the Church at the Stated Seasons (and this

(q) Vid. *Rapin's History of England*, 8vo. Vol. IX. p. 403. *Echard* Vol. II. p. 109. *History of England*, 8vo. Vol. I. *ibid.* And what is asserted in those Places by these Historians, is not only laid to the Charge of the *Puritans* by Dr *Heylin* (*History of the Sabbath*, Part II. p. 253, &c.) but also is generally to be observed in the *Puritan* Writers, and even in Dr *Bound* himself, who is one of the most Learned and Judicious of them all; and who not only frequently argues from such Texts of Scripture as relate solely to the *Jews*, but also contends for such a *Strictness* and Severity in the Observation of the *Sabbath*, as cannot be supported and justified by the Gospel of *Christ*; and the Reader will plainly perceive, if he will consult his Discourse, *de Sabbato Vet. & Nov. Testamenti*. lib. i. p. 124, 245, 247. lib. ii. p. 366.

this itself very often neglected by great Numbers) without any other Appearance of Order and Devotion. And instead of that good *Provision* for the Souls of Men, which pious Parents and Masters of Families used formerly to make, by *reading the Holy Scriptures* on the *Lord's Day* by *meditating* upon and *discoursing of Divine Things*, and by *instructing their Children and Servants* in *Christian Knowledge*; it is now become the too general Custom to spend these precious Hours in *visiting of Friends*, in *keeping of Company*, and *drinking*, and *Worldly Pleasure*. And (sorry I am to say it) That, which was observed by a very Pious and Learned Prelate of *his Times* as a remarkable Instance of the scandalous and immoral Lives of the *Irish Papists*, is now too frequently exemplified in the Practice and Behaviour of too many Persons of great Quality and Distinction among us, *viz.* “ If they had (*says he*) any signal Entertainment to make, any Journey or weighty Business to begin, they commonly chose the *Lord's Day* for it (*r*).” And indeed in so *shameful and horrible* a Manner is the *Lord's Day* now profaned by all *Orders* and *Degrees* of Men among us, and that by neglecting the *Public Worship* itself, as well as the other *Religious Duties* of this *holy Season*, that unless some *speedy Stop* be put to this *wicked Practice* by those that are in *Authority*, the *Christian Religion* will be in great Danger of being lost in this Kingdom; and we shall soon be reduced to such a *stupid and insensible* State and Condition; that nothing but the dreadful and terrible Judgments of God will be able to awaken us out of it. And sure it is a *melancholy* Consideration of any Man to reflect upon the present State of Religion in this Nation, to observe how fast *Atheism* and *Infidelity* are breaking in upon us, and what a *Deluge of Profaneness*,

C c

Impiety

(r) Archbishop King's State of Ireland under King James the Second, p. 233.

Impiety and Debauchery abounds among us; and how few there are in comparison, whose *Conversation is such as becometh the Gospel of Christ*, *Phil. i. 27*, and who in any *Measure* live up to those Heavenly and Divine Principles which they profess: and on the other side to call to mind how *solemnly* God Almighty hath declared in Scripture, that *without Holiness no Man shall ever see Him*, *Heb. xii. 14*, and that in the Words of an excellent Prelate before remembred, “ Sooner
 “ may *Heaven and Earth pass away*, than a Wicked
 “ Man enter into the Kingdom (s) of Heaven:” and Consequently that there cannot be the least Hopes entertained upon *Gospel Principles*, but that *the greatest* Part of Mankind will be finally doomed to Eternal Perdition (t). This, I say, is a very Melancholy Consideration; and it is enough to make the Heart of any good Man bleed seriously to think and reflect upon it. And sure that Man must be utterly void of all *Humanity* (not to say any *due Sense* of God and Religion) who can see so many of his Fellow-Creatures going on headlong to everlasting Destruction, and will not do what lies in him, and much more will not deny himself a little trifling Pleasure (which yet he might freely enjoy at any other Opportunity) in Order to prevent it. And this Consideration should methinks engage all Persons, who are well affected to Religion, to use their best Endeavours to revive a true Spirit of *Christianity* among us,
 by

(s) *Tillotson*, Vol. III. p. 199.

(t) See *Mutt* vii. 13, 14. It is a sad Thing to consider what a Multitude of Souls, for which the Blood of *Christ* was shed, are continually lost for want of that Knowledge, which it was the Business of His Life to teach. How can our Charity be exerted better than by copying the Example of our Lord and Master, in scattering and dispelling those Clouds of Ignorance which overcast the Minds of Men; giving Light to them that sit in Darkness and in the Shadow of Death, and guiding their Feet into the Way of Peace? *Dr Littleton's Sermons*, Vol. II. p. 224, 225.

by all Ways possible, and especially by a Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*; which of itself would be a most *powerful* and *effectual* Means and Instrument to this good Purpose: And from a Sense of the *present State* and *Posture* of Religion should incline all wise Men to the *Extreme* of observing *this Day* with a little more Strictness than they may perhaps be (*u*) obliged to, rather than to contribute to the Infidelity, Impiety and Debauchery of the Age by the Profanation of it. But however there is no Necessity of running into any Extremes: All that we desire of any Man is, that he would observe the Duties of the Day within the just Bounds of Sobriety and Moderation. And I am sensible that many well disposed *Christians* will not without the greatest Difficulty be perswaded even to this; lest they should be despised and ridiculed for so doing, and incur the Censure and Reproach of *Fanaticism* or *Enthusiasm*. But yet on the other Side I would earnestly beg of such Persons to consider, that where the *Honour of God* and the *Salvation of Mens Souls* lie at Stake, every good *Christian* ought to be endued with so much Courage as to be above Contempt, and upon no Account whatsoever to *follow a Multitude to do Evil*, *Exod. xxiii. 2.* And particularly upon this Occasion I would recommend to them that

C c 2

Wife

(*u*) A late Learned Prelate, who was far from being over strict and rigid in his Notions of the *Sabbath* and *Lord's Day*, seems to be entirely of this Opinion; and what his Grace observed in his Days, will I am sure hold much more strongly with Regard to ours. "Though, saith he, there are Mathematical and other Arguments (which truly I could wish were well answered) against the *Morality*, there can be none against the *Offices*, the *Piety*, and *Charity* of the *Lord's Day*; and these certainly render our Persons more acceptable, tho' perform'd on *Superstitious Grounds*, than the Omission of them can do; especially if the Duty be shut out by any *Secular Employment* or *Recreation*, unless *Mercy* bring the Dispensation for the Want of *Sacrifice*." *Archbishop of Tuam's Life of Primate Bramhall, prefixed to his Works*, p. 33. And the Primate himself seems to manifest the same Sense and Judgment in this Matter, as the Reader will perceive in his *Works*, p. 934.

Wife and Excellent Observation of an Ingenious Writer, *viz.* that how Ridiculous soever a Pretence and mere Ostentation of Religion may be, yet “ Care “ must be taken however not to let the Scandals of “ *Theatrical Appearances* divert or deter us from the “ Practice of Holy Offices within the Bounds of “ *Piety and good Conscience*; after the Example of “ those who set up for *Albigists*, for fear they should be “ taken for *Enthusiasts* (x).” And what I have just now observed concerning the Deplorable Effects and Consequences of profaning the *Lord’s Day*, will I hope be a sufficient Apology with all my Readers for my first undertaking this Work, and for insisting so much upon the absolute Necessity and Inestimable Advantages of a Religious Observation of this Holy Season. And yet God forbid, that I should in the least endeavour to lay a heavy and unnecessary Burthen upon my Fellow-*Christians* and Brethren, or to debar them of any of those just Liberties which are indulged them by the *Gospel*. And therefore the better to qualify the seeming Severity of the Doctrine which hath been advanced upon this Subject, and to prevent any Censure and Misrepresentation to which it may be liable, I desire that it may be received and understood with these following Restrictions and Limitations. As,

First, When a Man hath duly and devoutly attended upon the public Worship of the *Lord’s Day*, I do not think it will be any Sin and Transgression in him to call upon a Neighbour at his Return from Church, to pay a decent Civility and Respect for a little Time; Provided he does not stay too long, and by that Means neglect the necessary Affairs of Family-Instruction and Divine Meditation. Neither,

Secondly, Do I esteem it to be unlawful for a Man that hath no *Charge* upon him to repair at this Time to some sober and discreet Family, where he may have

(x) *L’Estrange’s Fables*, Vol. I. p. 262.

have the Opportunity of spending some Part of the Evening in pious and good Conversation ; Provided he does not by this Means neglect the Duties of Reading the Scriptures and of Divine Meditation himself, nor hinder the Family where he goes from discharging of theirs. Neither,

Thirdly, Do I think That Man is to be blamed, who upon an extraordinary Occasion (when he has no other Opportunity of meeting with him) shall go at this Time to see a Particular Relation or Friend ; Provided that upon this Account he does not neglect the Public Worship either in his own or in the Neighbouring Church where he goes, nor be the Means of detaining and hindering any other Persons from attending thereupon. Nay I will not condemn that Person, who upon a very *Urgent Necessity* shall absent himself for the *whole Day* from the Service of the Church, and also employ little or none of the Remaining Time in private Reading and Meditation ; Provided the Case is absolutely Necessary and of such importance, that all wise and reasonable Men will justify his Conduct and Behaviour therein. And,

In the Fourth Place, When Men have diligently attended upon the Public Worship, and in due Measure reflected and meditated upon the Word of God preached to them (which I have before shewn to be the absolute and bounden Duty of all Men) tho' they cannot be excused from the Private Religious Duties of the *Lord's Day*, such as Reading, Meditation, and the like ; yet they must in great Measure be left to their own Liberty, in what Manner and what Proportion and Degree they shall practise them. And no Man in this Case is to tie up another to those Rules and Methods which he thinks fit to prescribe to himself. And after all that hath or can be said upon this Subject, the Observation of a very pious and Excellent Prelate hereupon will hold good, *viz.* " That the

" Laws both of God and Man have in this matter

“ left a great deal to Men’s own Discretion, and the
 “ Circumstances they are in (y).” And if Men will
 have a due Regard for God’s Public Worship, and
 sufficiently discharge the other Duties of Religion,
 such as *Reading the Holy Scriptures, Meditation upon
 Divine Things, Self-Examination, and the Education of
 their Children*, we will not in the least contend with
 them concerning the Season and Manner in which
 they shall discharge them ; but the more they employ
 themselves in these Religious Exercises on the *Week
 Days*, the less they may apply themselves to them on
 the *Lord’s Day*, and may then perform them in such
 Manner and with such Variety, as is most proper
 and expedient for them. And even as to such Persons,
 who being confined all the Week long to the Labours
 of their Callings have no Opportunity but that of
 the *Lord’s Day* for the Exercise of these Reli-
 gious Duties, they also must be partly left to
 themselves as to the Degree and Manner in which
 they shall observe them. They may read the Scrip-
 tures and other good Books more upon one *Lord’s
 Day* than they do upon another : They may spend
 more of their Time on one of these Holy Seasons in
 Self-Examination, Meditation on Divine Things, and
 the Instruction of their Children, than they do on
 another. And Provided they discharge these Du-
 ties in such Measure as the Nature and Design of
 Religion requires of them, *i. e.* if they read the
 Scriptures and other good Books, so as to be fully
 confirmed in the Belief of *Christianity*, and sufficiently
 instructed in the Duties of it ; if they meditate so much
 and often upon the great Points of our Faith, and parti-
 cularly that of a Future Judgment and Everlasting Re-
 tributions, that they have a due and regular Effect and
 Influence upon their Minds, by convincing them of
 the

the great Danger of Sin, the Vanity of all Earthly Enjoyments, and the Necessity of setting their Hearts and Affections upon Heavenly Things; if they examine themselves so much as to understand the true State and Condition of their Souls, and to be the more effectually excited thereby to Repentance of their Sins, and the Reformation of their Lives; if they spend so much of their Time in the Religious Education of their Children, as that they are sufficiently instructed in *Christian* Knowledge, and confirmed in the Practice of Religion and Virtue: I say, if Men will thus perform these Duties of Religion, so as to answer the End and Design for which they were appointed; they may be assured that they perform them in such a Manner as will be well pleasing and acceptable unto God. And when Men have thus observed the *Lord's Day Religiously*, by a due and regular Attendance upon the Offices of the Church, and by discharging the private Exercises of Religion; they may reasonably apply to themselves those Words of our Saviour concerning the *Christian Sabbath*, which were spoken by Him concerning the *Jewish*, viz. *the Sabbath was made for Man, and not Man for the Sabbath*, Mark ii. 27. And particularly what an excellent Prelate remarks with Regard to the Generality of *Mankind*, is very Just and Pertinent, viz. "That they, who on all *other* Days
" are confined to hard Labour, or are otherwise ob-
" liged to a close Attendance on their Wordly Af-
" fairs, must be allowed in some *Measure* to consi-
" der *this* as a Day of Ease and Relaxation from
" Thought and Labour, as well as a Day of Devo-
" tion; provided it be in a Way that is innocent and
" inoffensive, and that the publick Offices of Reli-
" gion be duly attended, and the Duties of a more
" private Nature be not neglected (z)." And what

(z) Bp. *Gibson's* first Pastoral Letter, p. 46.

his Lordship here observes of the *Christian Sabbath*, was formerly applied by the best *Pagan Writers* to the *Heathen Festivals*, *i. e.* they thought they were not only instituted and appointed for the *Honour and Worship* of their Gods, but also for the *Ease and Comfort*, the *Refreshment and Delight* of Mankind (*a*). And therefore if Men will be careful and diligent in the Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*, both with Respect to the Public and Private Duties of it, they are at full Liberty to spend the Remainder of this Day as they think fit, either by walking in their Gardens or the Fields, or by conversing with their Friends, or in any other Way which is most pleasing and agreeable to them (*b*); Provided they be careful not to abuse their *Liberty* by turning it into *Licentiousness*; and that they do not indulge themselves in such Pleasures, nor partake of such Diversions, as are inconsistent with the *Dignity* of the *Season*, the *Piety* and *Gravity* of good *Christians*, and afford just Matter of Offence and Scandal to good Men (*c*). And I think

no

(*a*) Θεοὶ δ' οὐκ εἴσαντες τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπίπονον περικλῆδες γέρας, ἀναπαύλας τε αὐτοῖς τῶν πόνων ἐπέταξασθε, τῶν ἑορτῶν ἀμοιχᾶς τις θεοῖς. *Plato de Legibus. lib. ii.*

Nascitur ex Assiduitate laborum, animorum hebetatio quædam & languor. — Legum Conditores Festos instituerunt dies, ut ad Hilaritatem homines publicè cogerentur, tanquam Necessarium Laboribus interponentes Temperamentum. *Senec. de Tranquil. Animi. cap. xv.*

(*b*) Neque tamen omnis corporis recreatio hic omnino prohibetur, ut quæ etiam inter fines Sabbathi est; scilicet quæ divinum cultum non impedit, & sacris peractis, honeste, decenter, moderate, & sine Offensione & Scandalo fit. *Synopsis purioris Theologiæ Disputat. xxi. §. 58.*

(*c*) Nothing at all should be admitted (on the *Lord's Day*) which is directly an Enemy to Religion, or no Friend to it; not only because Natural Reason does abhor all Irreligious Actions, especially upon a Day of Religion, but because all the pious Men and Law-givers of the *Christian Church* have made Complaints and Restraints respectively of all Criminal or Scandalous Actions upon *that Day*; witness *St Ignatius*, *Tertullian*, *St Gregory*, *St Austin*, &c.

all

no one, who hath any true Regard and Concern for the Honour of God and Religion, can possibly esteem it a hard and severe Burthen to observe the *Lord's Day* in the Manner which hath been laid down, by performing the Religious Duties thereof both public and private; when at the same Time all due Allowance is made for the Ease and Relaxation from Thought and Labour, and for the moderate Refreshment and Recreation of Mankind. If indeed we should require Men to turn *Hermits*, and to sequester themselves altogether from the Conversation of the World, that they might give themselves up wholly to Devotion and Prayer, and to Divine Study and Meditation (as hath been done for many Ages in the Church of *Rome*) they would have sufficient Cause and Ground of Complaint against us. But such a State as this is not only unsuitable to Human Nature (*d*) (being compatible only to a Being that is absolutely perfect, and as such is beyond the want and need of Conversation; or to a Brutal Creature which is utterly insensible of the Benefits (*e*) thereof) but it is moreover entirely inconsistent with the Trial
and

all which complain of and forbid the evil Usages of the Profaner Men, who spend the *Lord's Day* (which by the Church of God in Imitation of God Himself, and in Celebration of the greatest Mystery of our Redemption, was appointed for the solemn Service of God) in riotous Eating and immoderate Drinking, vain Feasts and wanton Dancings, Enterludes and Songs. *Bishop Taylor's Ductor Dubitantium, Book II, chap. ii. p. 278.*

Graviter incessimus Dominicæ diei prophanatores, qui non modo non necessariis & alienis actionibus, ut spectaculis, ludis, scenisque, sed & Intemperantia, Luxu, omnique genere flagitiorum, eam violant, in irreparabile Infirmorum scandalum, & horrendum dedecus Christiani Nominis. Synopsis purioris Theologiæ, ibid. §. 60.

(*d*) Ut aliarum nobis rerum iunata dulcedo est, sic Amicitia. Quomodo Solitudo in odio est, sic in dulcedine appetitio Societatis. Quomodo hominem homini Natura conciliat, sic inest huic quoque rei stimulus, qui nos amicitiarum appetentes faciat. *Senec. Epist. ix. vid. loc.*

(*e*) Ὁ δὲ μὴ συνάδειται κοινωνεῖν, ἢ μηδὲν δαίρειται δὲ αὐτάρκειαν, ἔστιν μέγας πόντος, ὡς ἢ δυνεὶ ἢ θεῷ. *Aristot. Polit. lib. i. cap. 2.*

and Probation of Men, and with the Nature and Condition of Moral Virtue (not to say the exprefs Precepts and Example of our Blessed Saviour and his Apostles. See *Matt. v. 16. Acts x. 38. Rom. xii. 17. 1 Pet. ii. 12.*) which does not consist in being placed out of the Reach of the Temptations of the World, and being wholly insensible of the Interests and Pleasures of it; but in conversing with Mankind, and living in the World, and yet getting the Victory and Mastery over it (*f*). But since we do not require of any Man, with Regard to the *Lord's Day*, any more than what the Holy Scriptures plainly demand of all *Christians*, and which (as hath been clearly shewn in the foregoing Discourse) is not only their indispensable and bounden Duty, but is moreover absolutely necessary to their true Happiness: I hope they will all be induced and prevailed upon by these Considerations to a due and regular Observation thereof. And thus much concerning the Manner in which the *Lord's Day* ought to be observed, as appears from the Nature and Reason of the Thing itself, and the plain Testimony of God's Word. Nothing now remains but that in the last Place I proceed to shew, that what hath been delivered upon this Subject, as the clear Suggestions of Natural Reason and the Evident Testimony of Holy Scripture, is farther supported and confirmed by the Sense and Judgment of those Persons, who must be allowed to be the best and most competent Judges in this Matter. And this I shall endeavour to do in the following Chapter.

CHAP.

(*f*) Οὐδὲ δὲ διηγεῖται πούτος ἀνὴρ σώφρων ἕσται ὅπως ἔχων, ὡς ἐκινδύνει ὑπὸ μαῶς ἢ τῶν τοῦτον ἡδονῶν μηδὲν πείσσειν, (ὁ μὲν γὰρ τῶν τῶν αἰσθησῶν) ἀλλ' ἡδὲ ὁ σώφρων, καὶ μὴ ἀγλαῶν ὡς ἐκινδύνει ὑπερβολὴν αὐτῶν, ἀπολαύων, παύσατ' ἀλλὰ ποιῆσαι παρηγοῖα, &c. *Aristot. Mag. Moral. lib. i. cap. 22.*

He that renounces the World and retires from the Conversation of Men in order to preserve his Holiness, gives it but a very indifferent Commendation; he shews that his Retirement is not the Effect of his Faith, but his Diffidence: He dares not venture his Virtue abroad, dares not depend upon his Religion, but like a covetous distrustful Miser locks all his Treasures up, and so in Effect he loses them indeed for Fear they should be lost. *Bishop Hickman's Sermons. Vol. I. Sermon V. pag. 134.*

C H A P. VII,

Containing the Testimonies of Pious and Learned Men, both in the former and latter Ages of the Church, concerning the Manner of religiously observing the Lord's Day.

I N the foregoing Chapters I have shewn the Manner in which the *Lord's Day* ought to be observed, both with respect to the public and private Duties of it; and that from the Nature and Reason of the Thing, and from the Testimony of Holy Scripture. I proceed now, in the *last Place*, to shew that what hath been delivered upon this Head, is supported and countenanced by the Authority and Judgment of those Persons, who must be allowed to be the best and most competent Judges in this Matter. And this I think very necessary to be done at this Time; because the Religious Observation of this Day in the Manner which hath been laid down is now confidently asserted to be a great Errour and Mistake of some *Over-Zealous* and *Superstitious* Men; who without any just Grounds and Reasons would fain obtrude their own Notions upon others, and lay a heavy and unnecessary Burthen upon their *Christian* Brethren. But from what has been considered already, and from the Testimonies which I shall now produce, I believe it will be very easy to determine on which side the Errour and Ignorance lies; whether on the side of those who contend for the Pious and Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*, or of such who accuse them of too much Zeal and Superstition upon that Account. And indeed there are so many Testimonies to be found

to this Purpose in all Ages of the *Christian Church*, and that amongst Divines of all Communions and Perswasions, that it would be an endless Thing to recite them all. I shall therefore only mention such of them as are the Chief and Principal, and which ought to have a more especial Effect and Influence upon us. Now not to mention the many wise and excellent Laws, which have been made in this Kingdom to prevent all Worldly Labour and Business (*a*), and to prohibit all vain *Sports* and *Pastimes* &c. upon the *Lord's Day*, in order that it might be the more Religiously observed both publickly and privately: And many of these Laws are to be found as early as the *Saxon Kings*, both in the Civil and Ecclesiastical Constitutions (*b*). And many Excellent Laws there are to the same Purpose made since the Reign of King *James I.* to our Times (*c*), which upon certain Fines and Penalties therein mentioned forbid all manner of Bodily Works and Labour on the *Lord's Day* (Works of Necessity and Charity only excepted) all Sale of Goods on *this Day* (unless in one or two particular Cases where the Necessity of the Thing makes it reasonable) all driving of Cattle on *this Day*, all Entertuludes, Common Sports and Pastimes, and resorting

(*a*) They (the *Saxon Princes*) prohibited by an express Law, not only to exercise any Calling, but to do or transact any Worldly Business on the *Sabbath Day*; and this Law not being ever repealed that we know of, nor (as it is to be hoped) ever grown into such Universal Disuse, as to induce a Probability of a Repeal; why should it not be the Common Law of *England*? So strict were our pious Ancestours in keeping this Day *holy*, &c. Judge Fortescue's *Preface to Chancellor Fortescue's Treatise of Absolute and Limited Monarchy*, p. 48. See the Place.

(*b*) Vid. *Spelman Concil. &c. Vol. I. p. 183, 195, 249, 269, 377, 404, 445, 556.*

(*c*) If the Reader hath a mind, he may see these Laws collected together in one View in Dr *Prideaux's Direction to Church Wardens*, §. 12, 13. and in Dr *Grey's System of Ecclesiastical Law. Tit. 10. p. 96, &c.*

ing to Public Houses of Entertainment, and the like. Which Instances I do not here alledge to shew what the Laws of our Land have enacted upon this Occasion (for that is foreign to my present Design) but only to shew what hath been the Sense and Judgment of the wisest and greatest Men both in Church and State, who made up those Councils and Assemblies in which these Laws were established; and that how great a Conceit soever any Persons among us may have of their own Knowledge and Judgment, there is yet surely so much Regard and Reverence due to the Legislators of the Land, as should render us *extremely* careful how we charge them with *Ignorance* and *Superstition*. But I will not pass over this Matter without taking Notice of a most Excellent Passage in the Speaker of the House of *Commons's* Speech to King *Charles II.* when he presented the Bills to him for his Royal Assent in the third *Session* of the Second *Parliament*. “The Foundations, *saieth he*, of true Happiness are from *above*. We have therefore in the *first* Place perused the Laws which enjoin the Observation of the *Lord's Day*, and where we found any Defect, either in *Rules* or *Penalties*, we have with great Care supplied them; well knowing, that he *who doth not remember on the first Day of the Week to observe a Christian Sabbath, will hazard before the Week comes round to forget that he is a Christian (d).*” But, I say, not to mention the many Wise and Excellent Laws which have been enacted in this Land for the more devout and religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*, I shall only at present in Confirmation of this

(d) *Echard's History of England*, Vol. III. p. 108. The *Sabbath*, if it were duly observed and kept with as much Reverence as it ought, would have an Influence on the Whole following Week, and tend to keep at all Times and Places that awful Regard for the *Majesty of God*, in which the Life of all Piety consists. *Dr. Lisleton's Sermons*, Vol. II. p. 184.

this Matter, *First*, Lay before the Reader the Sense and Judgment of the Primitive Church in the purest Ages of it. And *Secondly*, I shall produce the Testimonies of some of the most Pious and Learned Writers of our own Church. And if it can be clearly shewn, not only that the Laws of the Land (which ought to be the Rule of our Obedience) are founded upon that Notion of the Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*, which I am now contending for; (of which I have taken Notice already) but also that the Primitive Church in the purest Ages of it and the greatest Men of our own Church have been exactly of the same Mind and Judgment upon this Question, I think nothing more can be necessary to expose the Folly and Rashness of those Persons, who charge this Notion with Error and Superstition. And,

First then, I will lay before the Reader the Sense and Judgment of the Primitive Church of *Christ* upon this Point. And an Eminent Writer on this Subject, who was far from being too strict and rigorous in his Notion, hath laid it down for a Rule in this Matter, "That the best Grounds that a Devout *Christian* can go upon to know what the Law of Nature and the Evangelical Law do prescribe as necessary for the right Observation of the *Lord's Day*, is the Practice of the Primitive uncorrupted Church, and the Examples of devout and discreet *Christians* (e)." Now in representing the Sense and Judgment of the ancient Church in this Particular, it will be needless to spend much time in shewing the constant and universal Practice of the Primitive *Christians* in attending upon the Church on the *Lord's Day*, in order to join in God's public Worship, to hear his Holy Word preached, and to receive the Blessed Sacrament, and the like; for this many Persons

(e) Archbishop Bramhall's Works, p. 930.

sions among us will not deny, but will readily acknowledge the Necessity of this Duty, who are yet very loose and corrupt in their Opinions and Sentiments concerning the Religious Observation of this Day. But because there are too many others (who yet profess themselves *Christians*) who are so far from being sensible of the Obligation of this Duty, that they rather make a Jest and Ridicule thereof; it may not be amiss once again to put them in Mind, that the Duty of attending upon the public Worship at the stated Seasons is not only expressly required by God in Holy Scripture, as being of the utmost Importance and Consequence to Religion, and recommended by all wise Lawgivers and good Men in all Ages of the World, but is also farther enforced upon us by the constant and universal Example of the Primitive *Christians*; as hath been before shewn at large (f). And therefore I earnestly beg of such Persons to consider, how they can reconcile it with the Name and Character of *Christians* to act (and especially in a Case of so great a Moment) contrary to the constant Judgment and Practice of all good *Christians*, and particularly those of the best and purest Ages of the Church. But because the greatest Part of those, who are lax and remiss in their Behaviour upon this Day, do not (it is to be hoped) object against the Necessity of God's public Worship, therefore I shall say no more of it at present; but shall proceed to shew the great Regard which the Primitive *Christians* had to the Pious and Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day* in Performance of the private Duties thereof. And indeed so eminent and remarkable were the Primitive *Christians* for the Religious Observation of this Holy Season, that, as a very good Judge (g) in this Matter

(f) See above Part II. chap. i.

(g) Bishop of Clogher's Sermons at Tunbridge Wells, 1714, p. 9.

Matter truly remarks, “ The *Lord’s Day* was among
 “ them *most solemnly* observed ; and not only private
 “ and public Devotion, and a constant Attendance
 “ upon the House of the Lord, but also the Exer-
 “ cise of *every Christian Virtue*, were the *whole Em-*
 “ ployment of it.” And to use the Words of our
 most learned *Antiquary*, “ The *Lord’s Day* was obser-
 “ ved in the ancient Church from the very Time of
 “ the Apostles with great Veneration (*b*).” But that
 the Reader may the more fully perceive the great Zeal
 and Care, which the Primitive *Christians* manifested
 for the Religious Observation of this *Holy Day*, it may
 not be improper to represent it to him under these
 three several Heads and Distinctions. *First*, The
 many Wise and Excellent *Laws* and *Canons* which
 were made by them to this good Purpose. *Secondly*,
 The pious and useful Instructions, which are given to
 the same End by the Fathers of the Church, both by
 Precept and Example. And *Thirdly*, The great and
 uncommon Piety and Goodness of the first *Christian*
 Emperours in this Particular. And *First*, The great
 Zeal and Care, which the Primitive *Christians* mani-
 fested for the Religious Observation of the *Lord’s Day*,
 will appear from the many Wise and excellent *Laws*
 and *Canons* which were made by them to this good
 Purpose. And many of these *Laws* are still preserved
 in the *Theodosian* and *Justinian Codes* ; and the *Canons*
 of the Church are to be seen in the History of the
 Councils. And out of both of them there are many
 good Collections made by Dr *Carve* (*i*), Mr *Bingham*
 (*k*), and several other Learned Writers. It may not
 be improper to set before the Reader some of the Chief
 and Principal of them. Thus, in the *First* Place, that
 the

(*b*) *Bingham’s Antiquities*, Vol. IX. *lib.* xx. cap. ii. §. 1.

(*i*) *Primitive Christianity*, Part I. chap. vii.

(*k*) *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, Vol. IX. *lib.* xx.
 cha. ii.

the *Lord's Day* might be observed with the greater Solemnity and Veneration the first *Christian* Emperours ordered all the *Heathen* Courts to be shut up, and forbad all Judicial Proceedings at this Time, except in some Cafes of great Necessity and Charity (*l*).

Secondly, They prohibited all Secular and Servile (*m*) Works and Labours, except in Cafes of the like Nature. And whereas it was allowed by *Constantine the Great*, that Country-men might at *this* Time follow their Works of Husbandry, especially in the Seasons of *Ecring* and *Harvest*; yet this was afterwards in a great Measure restrained, and condemned by many of the Fathers (*n*), and also by several of the ancient Councils.

Thirdly, All public *Shews* and *Spectacles* were on this Day forbidden by the ancient *Christian Emperours*, *Fathers* and *Councils*; and all Ludicrous *Sports*, *Games*, and *Recreations* were restrained by them. And whereas many of the *Jews* of their Times did use to spend their *Sabbath* in *singing* and *dancing*, and in *sensual Pleasures*, such as *drinking*, *banqueting*, and the like, (*o*) instead of spending it in Sobriety and Modesty and hearing of the Word; there are many Passages of the ancient Fathers, in which they are severely reprov'd for so doing (*p*): And this I choose to observe at this Time, not only as an Eminent Expression of the Zeal and

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Piety

(*l*) Cave *ibid.* Bingham *ibid.* §. 2.

(*m*) Bingham *ibid.* §. 3.

(*n*) *A vespera diei Sabbati usque ad Vesperam diei Dominici sequestrati a Rurali opere & ab omni negotio, soli cultui divino vacemus.* Aug. de Tempore, Serm. 251. See also Bingham, *ibid.* in which there are many other Citations out of the Ancients to this Purpose.

(*o*) Vid. Spenc. de Leg. Hebr. Lib. i. cap. v. §. 10. in Vol. I. p. 79.

(*p*) Vid. Ignat. Ep. ad Magneſianos, and Bingham *ibid.* in which the Reader may find many Passages quoted by him on this Occasion.

Piety of the antient *Christians*, but also because it will incontestably refute an absurd and pernicious Position of Dr *Heylin* (in which I believe there are very few Persons of the *least* Degree and Measure of Piety and Devotion who will join with him) *viz.* that *whatever thing is fit for any Day, is of itself as fit for Sunday* (q). For certainly *Public Sports, Games, Spectacles, Singing, Dancing,* and the like, may be in themselves very lawful and innocent, though they may not be proper and seasonable on the *Lord's Day*; not only as they would too frequently interrupt the Religious Duties of the Day, but also as by the very Nature of them they are "too apt to dissolve the Minds of Men" into Mirth and Pleasure, and to carry them "off from all serious Thoughts of God and Religion, and from the Meditation of another World," as a very pious Prelate has justly observed (r). And the Ancient Writers of the Church did not only condemn such Public Sports, Games, Spectacles, Pastimes, &c. upon the *Lord's Day*, on the Account of their *Excess* and *Extravagancy*, and the *indecent* and *shameful* Manner in which they were too often represented, as Dr *Heylin* suggests (s); but also as they were subversive of the Religious Duties of the *Day*, and manifestly inconsistent with that *Spiritual* and *Divine* Manner in which It ought to be celebrated; as the Reader will fully perceive, if he will consult the Passages cited by Dr *Heylin* himself, and those produced by Mr *Bingham* (t) on this Occasion. And what *that Manner* was, the same very Learned and Pious Writer hath truly informed us in his Account of the Behaviour of the Primitive *Christians* upon *this Day*:

(q) *Heylin* on the *Sabbath*, Part II, p. 128.

(r) *Tillotson* Vol. I, p. 460.

(s) *Heylin* *ibid.* p. 87.

(t) *Bingham* *ibid.* §. 36.

Day: " They, *saieth he*, paid a ready and constant Attendance upon all the Offices and Solemnities of public Worship; and did not only rest from Bodily Labour and Secular Business, but spent the Day in such Employments as were proper to set forth the *Glory* of the Lord, to whose *Honour* the Day was dedicated (u)." And as the Primitive *Christians* did manifest their great Regard to the *Lord's Day* by the many Excellent Laws and Canons made by them for the Religious Observation of it. So in the,

Second Place, There are many pious and useful Instructions given to the same Purpose by the Fathers of the Church, both by way of Precept and Example; some few of which it may not be amiss to set before the Reader. Thus *Ignatius* (or whoever (x) else be the Author of the Epistle to the *Magnesiensians*, which by *Eusebius* and *Ferom* and some Learned Modern Critics (y), is reckoned among the Genuine Works of this Apostolical Father) having censured the Manner in which *many of the Jews* (z) kept their *Sabbath* (which,

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as

(u) *Bingham* *ibid.* §. ult.

(x) Μνηστὶ σαλταρίζοντες Ἰουδαίων. &c. Nec hic quicquam quod non sæculo *Ignatiano* applicari possit; Quo, sine dubio, ut *Judaicæ* quietis *Sabbatiquæ* *Mosaici* Observatio abrogata rite credi debuit; sic & *Spiritualis* *Sabbatizandi* ratio, *Meditatio legis*, *Creationis* grata *Cogitatio* diei *septimo* satis consentanea opera visa sunt ut & *Diei* *Dominicæ* (aliis omnibus, imo ipsi *Sabbato* præferendæ) *Festiva* *Celebratio*, *Resurrectionis* *Christi* *Commemoratio* nec tristis, nec ingrata. *Hammond. adv. Blondel, Dissert. II. cap. iv.*

(y) *Vid. Cave Hist. Literar. Vol. I. p. 26.*

(z) I say *many of the Jews*; since it cannot be thought that those Passages of *Ignatius*, *Justin Martyr*, *Augustin* or other ancient Fathers of the Church, who accuse the *Jews* of spending their *Sabbath* in Drinking, and Banqueting, and Dancing, and other Temporal Delights and Recreations, are (as some Persons may imagine) to be understood of the whole Body of that People, or the greatest Part of them. For in the first Place there are several of the *Roman* Writers (*V. d. Suet. in Octav. cap. 76. Pers. Sat. 5. l. 184 Just. lib. 36.*) who particularly observe, that it was customary with the *Jews* to fast upon

as was before remember'd, was frequently observed by the first *Christians* together with the *Lord's Day*) viz. by spending the Time in Eating, and Drinking, and Bodily Pleasures; shews them how and in what Manner such a Holy Day, which is dedicated to God's Honour and Worship, ought to be celebrated by them.

“ Let every one of us (*says he*) keep the *Sabbath Spiritually*, delighting in the Meditation of the Law, not in the Ease of the Body, admiring the Works of God, not indulging ourselves in delicious Banquets, in softer Drinking and Dancings, which do not improve the Understanding (a).” So also *Justin Martyr* tells us, that the Manner in which the Primitive *Christians* celebrated the *Lord's Day* was “ in Assembling together, in reading the Holy Scriptures, in preaching and hearing of the Word, in Divine Meditation, in Praises and Thanksgivings, and in Charitable Collections for the Poor, according to every

upon their *Sabbath*. And tho' indeed a very learned Man and great Critic (*Casaubon in Annot. in Suet. ibid.*) is of Opinion, that by the *Sabbath* in those Places is not to be understood the *seventh Day of the Week*, but the *whole Week* itself; which in *Luk. xviii. 12.* and other Texts of Scripture is often called by that Name, as was before observed in p. 6, 7. (notwithstanding he acknowledges that the *Sabbath Day* was celebrated by the *Jews* with great Veneration) yet I see no Reason at all to be of his Mind, neither does *Dr Heylin* himself understand them so, but thinks they relate to that Custom of the *Jews*, which was to fast on their *Sabbath Days*, until their Religious Assemblies were dismissed; which as *Josephus* intimates, was usually done about Noon. (*Vid. Hist. of Sabb. Part. I. chap. v. §. 8.*) And then *Secondly*, It appears plainly from the Testimony of *Agatharchides* before cited (in p. 67.) that it was the general Practice of the *Jews* to employ their *Sabbath* in Devotion and Prayer. And *Philo* (in *lib. 3. de Vit. Mosi*) takes Notice, that the Custom received from their Ancestors of consecrating that Season to the Study and Contemplation of Heavenly Things continued to his Days. And it does not seem to me to be agreeable to the History of that People to think otherwise of them in any Age of the World ever since that Time.

(a) *Epist. ad Magnesianos.*

“ every ones Ability (b).” And in another Place, observing the Errour of some *Jews* in thinking that they had sufficiently performed the Religion of their *Sabbath* by spending the whole Day in Idleness and Rest ; he tells them, that “ they did not understand “ the End and Design for which the *Sabbath* was instituted and appointed (c).” *Clemens Alexandrinus* shewing how a good *Christian* observes the *Lord's Day* according to *Christ's* Gospel, tells us it is by casting out of his Mind all evil Thoughts, and entertaining all such as are good (d). And *St Origen* speaking of the Manner in which the *Christians* should keep their *Sabbath* says, “ it is by abstaining from all “ Worldly Works and Labours, and giving themselves up to Spiritual Exercises ; by repairing to “ the Church, and attending to Divine Reading and “ Instruction ; by thinking of Heavenly Things, and “ being concerned for their Future Happiness ; and “ letting their Thoughts dwell earnestly and intently “ upon a Future Judgment (e).” *St Jerom* commends the *Egyptian Monks*, “ in that they had designed the *Lord's Day* wholly to Prayer and the “ Reading of the Scriptures (f).” *St Austin* speaking of the *Lord's Day* says, “ This Day is called “ the *Lord's Day*, that in it Refraining from all “ Earthly Works and Worldly Pleasures we should “ only give up ourselves to the Service of the Lord. “ Let us therefore, says he, Brethren, observe the “ *Lord's Day* and sanctify it, as it was of Old commanded them concerning the *Sabbath* (g).” And to say no more, *St Chrysoptom*, who is one of the best

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and

(b) *Apolog. I.*

(c) *Dialog. cum Trypho. Part I.*

(d) *Clem. Alex. Strom. lib vii.*

(e) *Origen in Numer. cap. xxviii. Homil. XXIII.*

(f) *Hieronym ad Eustochum.*

(g) *Aug. de Tempore. Serm. 251.*

and most valuable of all the Fathers, expresses himself thus; “ God hath from the Beginning given us
 “ this Instruction, to separate one whole Day in
 “ every Week to Divine and Spiritual Exercises (b).”
 And again, “ Let us prescribe this as an *immoveable*
 “ Law to ourselves, our Wives and Children, to set
 “ aside one Day in the Week to hearing and to the
 “ laying up of Things heard (i).” And in the same
 Homily (as was before taken Notice (k) of) he blames
 the People of his Time very severely for betaking
 themselves immediately, when Divine Service was ended
 to Secular Cares and Worldly Pleasures; instead
 of reading the Scriptures, and Meditating upon the
 Word and comparing it with them, and making a
 due Application thereof to the State and Condition
 of their Souls. These were the pious Thoughts and
 Sentiments of the Ancient Fathers of the Church
 concerning the Religious Observation of the *Lord’s Day*;
 to which Testimonies many more might be added,
 if it were necessary. And in the

Third and last Place, We shall find the same Regard
 and Veneration paid to *this Day* by the first
 Christian Emperours. This may appear in some
 Measure from what hath been just now observed,
 concerning the many wise and good Laws made by them
 for the more devout Celebration of this Holy Season.
 And to these I will only add an Observation or two
 of our Learned Dr *Cave* (l), which he hath taken
 from *Eusebius’s* fourth Book of the Life of *Constantine*,
 and from the *Codes of Theodosius and Justinian*.
 Thus says he, “ No sooner was *Constantine the Great*
 “ come over to the Church, but his Principal Care
 “ was about the *Lord’s Day*; he commanded it to
 “ be observed *solemnly*, and that by all Persons what-
 “ soever.

(b) *Chrys. in Hom. II. & X. in Genes.*

(i) *Hom. V. in Matt.*

(k) Part II. p. 217, which see.

(l) *Cave’s Primitive Christianity*, Part I. chap. vii.

“ soever. He made it to all a Day of *Rest*; that
“ Men might have nothing to do but to Worship
“ God, and be better instructed in the Christian
“ Faith, and to spend their whole Time, without
“ any thing to hinder them in Prayer and Devotion,
“ according to the Custom and Discipline of the
“ Church. And because, there were many in his
“ Army who yet remained in *Heathenism*, he com-
“ manded them upon the *Lord's Day* to go out into
“ the Fields and pray to God. And that they might
“ not pretend they were unable to perform *that* Duty,
“ he himself composed and gave them a short *Form*
“ of *Prayer*, which he commanded them to use every
“ *Lord's Day*: So careful was he that *this* Day should
“ not be *dishonoured* or *mis-employed* by those who were
“ yet Strangers and Enemies to Christianity. He
“ likewise ordained, that there should be no Courts of
“ Judicature open on *this* Day (as they had used to
“ be) nor any Suits and Trials at Law; tho' for
“ Works of Mercy and Necessity he made allow-
“ ance, as several of the Antient Writers likewise
“ did. His Pious Example was herein followed by
“ *Theodosius the Great*, who expressly by Law prohi-
“ bited all public *Shews* upon the *Lord's Day*; that
“ the Worship of God might not be *confounded* with
“ those Profane Solemnities. Which Law was a few
“ Years after confirmed and enlarged by *Theodosius the*
“ *Younger*; who enacted, that on the *Lord's Day* (and
“ on some other Festivals there mentioned) not only
“ *Christians* but even *Jews* and *Heathens* should be
“ restrained from the Pleasure of all *Sights* and *Specta-*
“ *cles*, and that the Theatres should be shut up in
“ every Place. And whereas it might so happen,
“ that the *Birth-day* or *Inauguration-day* of the Empe-
“ ror might fall upon *that* Day; therefore to let the
“ People know how *infinitely* he preferred the Honour
“ of God before the Concerns of his own Majesty
“ and Greatness, he commanded that if it should so
“

“ happen, that *then* the Imperial Solemnity should
 “ be put off and deferred till another Day : So great
 “ a Regard had this and the other *Christian* Empe-
 “ rors to the Honour and Worship of God, and the
 “ Religious Observation of this Holy Season.” And
 the same Care, that the *Lord’s Day* should be duly ce-
 lebrated and in no wise profaned, either by secular
 Business or by vain Sports and Pastimes, was taken by
Valentinian, Arcadius, and others, who succeeded them
 in the Empire, as may be seen in *Codice de Feriis*.

And thus much concerning the Sense and Judgment of
 the Primitive *Christians* in the first and purest Ages with
 Relation to the *Manner* of observing and celebrating
 the *Lord’s Day*. There is nothing more remaining
 but to lay before the Reader the Thoughts and Sentiments
 of the Divines of our own Church upon the
 same Point. Now that which I think might be suffi-
 cient in this Case is one of the *Canons* of our Church,
 (N^o. 3.) which requires not only an “ Attendance upon
 “ the Church on all *Sundays* and other Holy Days,
 “ and receiving the *Sacrament* when administred ;” but
 also “ the Private Exercise of Devotion, the acknow-
 “ ledging of our Sins to God, and amendment of the
 “ same ; the reconciling ourselves charitably to those
 “ whom we have offended ; the visiting the Sick and
 “ Poor, and using all *sober and goldly Conversation*.” All
 which Instances of Duty, whether they can possibly be
 consistent with the common Custom of spending the
Lord’s Day in Company, and Drinking, and Worldly
 Pleasure, I leave it to any Man to judge. And that
 which ought in all Reason to render this *Canon* of
 greater Force and Obligation with us, is this Consi-
 deration ; *viz.* that it is not the Sentiments of a few
 Divines only of a particular *Sett* or *Party*, but the
 Judgment of the whole Representative Body of the
 Clergy assembled in Convocation, approved and con-
 firmed by the Royal Authority. But I will not leave
 the Testimony of our Church wholly upon this *Ca-*

non; but shall proceed farther to observe, that the best and most Learned of our Writers have ever manifested the same Sense and Judgment in this Matter. And here I could easily shew, if it were necessary that many of those Learned Persons, who have been thought to detract too much from the Divine Authority and Institution of the *Lord's Day*, have yet declared it to be very meet and proper that *Christians* should on *this Day* abandon their Worldly Affairs, and dedicate it wholly to the Honour of God; and that they who observe the *Lord's Day* in that Manner are highly to be esteemed and commended; and that since the Church has commanded it to be kept holy in Imitation of the Apostles, it ought therefore to be spent in pious Offices and in godly Conversation: Which is the Judgment of the Learned *Brerewood*, Archbishop *Bramhall*, Bishop *Taylor* and others. But I will not trouble the Reader with any Passages out of them at present. If he hath a Mind to know their Opinion and Judgment upon this Point, let him consult the Passages cited in the Margin (*m*). I shall only produce the Testimonies of such Learned Writers of our Church, who acknowledge the Divine Authority and Institution of the *Lord's Day*, and contend for the Religious Observation of it in the Manner I have laid down. And there are so many Testimonies to be found in them to this Purpose, that it would be an endless Thing to recite them all. I shall therefore mention only some of the chief and principal of them, and such as are taken from those Writers which are most commonly known and esteemed among us.

I will begin with Dr *Hammond*, a Person of the greatest Piety as well as Learning. And this excellent Author after he had shewn the *Fitness* of setting apart some Time for the due Celebration of Divine Offices, and had

(*m*) Vid. *Brerewood* Tract. I. *Bramhall's Works*, p. 917, 934. *Taylor's Duct. Dubitant* Book II. chap. ii. p. 276, &c. *Spence de Leg. Hebr.* Vol. I. p. 96.

had manifested the Obligation of the *Lord's Day*, proceeds to enquire how this Day ought to be observed? And his Answer is, "to the Practice and Advancement of Piety, not only in public Worship, but also in private Reading, Prayers, Thanksgiving and Meditation (n), &c." The next Author that I shall mention upon this Occasion is the Pious and Learned Dr *H. More*. After he had been shewing the great Benefit and Advantage of Retirement from the Business of the World, and the Opportunity of searching more closely into the State and Condition of Mens Souls, he proceeds thus; "And for this Purpose the Observation of every *Seventh Day* should be *inviolable*, not to be profaned by either Secular Employments or Foolish Pastimes; but spent in Religious Exercises either Public or Private: Not as placing any Sanctity in *Days*, but in laying hold of so good an Opportunity for the compleating the Work of Godliness in us, and Meditating upon the Infinite Goodness of God in the *Creation* and *Redemption* of Mankind (o)." The next Testimony that I shall produce is that of the very Learned and Pious Dr *Barrow*; who not only observes that it is fit that certain Times should be allotted for the public and solemn Performance of Religious Duties, but also tells us in what Manner we should keep the *Sabbath Day*, viz. "In frequently calling to mind and considering the great and glorious Works of God in the *Creation* of the World and the *Redemption* of Mankind. In restraining ourselves in the Prosecution of Wordly Business, allowing ourselves sufficient Time for the Exercise of the Mind, &c. In using the same Indulgence towards our Children
" and

(n) *Hammond's Practical Catechism*, Book II. § 12 p. 196. See also, a Passage to the same Purpose in his *Dissertations against Blondel* before cited. p. 403.

(o) *Grand Mystery of Godliness*, Book x. chap. xiv. § 15.

“ and Servants, that their Lives may be easy and
 “ comfortable here, and that they may also have
 “ the Means of obtaining for themselves a Happy
 “ Immortality hereafter. Nay, and even in being
 “ tender towards the dumb Beasts ; for this Reason
 “ among others, *viz.* because God made them (*p*),
 “ &c.” An excellent Observation indeed ! and which
 too many Persons among us have the greatest Reason
 to take Notice of, on Account of their shameful Barba-
 rity and Cruelty towards the poor dumb Creatures, and
 their exposing them frequently to unnecessary Hard-
 ships and Severities even upon the *Lord's Day*. The
 next Testimony that I shall urge is that of the very
 pious and judicious Dr *Scott*, in his incomparable
 Treatise of the *Christian Life* ; who, after he had
 shewn the Necessary Duty and Inestimable Ad-
 vantages of attending upon the public Worship on
 the *Lord's Day*, adds these Words ——— “ Ef-
 “ pecially, if when the public Offices are over we
 “ would not *let loose* ourselves all the rest of the Day
 “ (as we too frequently do) to our Secular Cares and
 “ Diversions, and thereby *choak* those good Instru-
 “ ctions we have heard, and stifle those devout and
 “ pious Affections which have been raised and ex-
 “ cited in us ; but instead of so doing we would de-
 “ vote at least some good Portion of it to the *Instru-*
 “ *ction* of our Families, and to the *private* Exercise
 “ of our Religion, to *Meditation* and *Prayer*, to the
 “ Examination of ourselves concerning our past Be-
 “ haviour, and the re-inforcing our Resolution to be-
 “ have ourselves better for the future ; If, I say, we
 “ would thus spend our *Lord's Day*, we should doubt-
 “ less find our selves *better* Men for it all the *Week af-*
 “ *ter* ; we should go into the World again with
 “ much *better* Affections and *stronger* Resolutions,
 “ with

“ with our Graces more *vigorous*, and our bad
 “ Inclinations more *reduced* and *tamed*; and whereas
 “ the *Jews* were to gather *Manna* enough on the *Sixth*
 “ *Day* to feed their Bodies on the ensuing *Sabbath*
 “ we should gather *Manna* enough upon our *Sabbath*,
 “ to feed and strengthen our *Souls* all the *Six Days* af-
 “ ter (q).”

The next Author whom I shall cite on this Occasion is the great and renowned Archbishop *Tillotson*, whose Exemplary Piety and Learning are well known. His Words are these:

“ The Magistrates of the Land are much to be
 “ blamed for not putting the good and whole-
 “ some Laws made against Vice in Execution; as
 “ against the Profanation of the *Lord's Day* by se-
 “ cular Business, by vain Sports and Pastimes,
 “ which by the very Nature of them are apt to
 “ dissolve the Minds of Men into Mirth and Plea-
 “ sure, and to carry them off from all serious
 “ Thoughts of God and Religion, and from the
 “ Meditation of another World; and to give the
 “ Devil an Opportunity (which he never fails to
 “ take) to steal the *good Seed*, the Word of God,
 “ which they have heard *that Day*, out of their
 “ Hearts, and to make it of none Effect; and which
 “ is yet worse, by lewd and sinful Practices, which
 “ are unlawful at any Time, but upon this Day are
 “ a *double* Breach and Violation of God's Law (r).”

In which Words you see how *justly* severe this eminently pious and good Man is against the Sin of profaning the *Lord's Day*. What Opinion he likewise had of the strict Necessity of a Religious Observation of this Holy Day is evident from another Passage of his Writings in these Words following.

“ Seeking the
 “ Kingdom of God and the Righteousness thereof
 “ implies incessant Care and Diligence that we make
 “ Religion our Business at all Times, but especially
 “ on

(q) Christian Life, Vol. I. p. 293, 294.

(r) Tillotson, Vol. I. p. 460.

“ on the *Lord's Day*; which God hath taken to
 “ Himself, and set apart for the Duties of His
 “ Worship and Service. Not that we are excused
 “ from minding Religion at other Times; but that
 “ those who are prest and straitned by the neces-
 “ sary Cares of this Life may be sure to mind' it
 “ then, and may have no Colour of Excuse for
 “ the Neglect of it at *that* Time, which God hath
 “ allotted for that very Purpose, and which it is un-
 “ lawful to employ about our *Worldly* Affairs. God
 “ expects that we should serve Him at other Times,
 “ that we should live in an habitual Sense of Him,
 “ and as *Solomon* expresth it (*Prov. xxiii. 17*) *be in*
 “ *the fear of the Lord all the Day long*; so as to be
 “ careful not to offend or transgress in any Thing, and
 “ so as to redeem all Opportunities for the Exercise
 “ of Piety and Devotion. But this Day He *peremp-*
 “ *torily challenges* to Himself; and expects that we
 “ should employ it in His Service, and dedicate it to
 “ Religion, to the Contemplation of God and Hea-
 “ venly Things, and the Care of our Immortal
 “ Souls, with the same Seriousness and Diligence,
 “ as we do upon other Days Labour for the Bread
 “ that perisheth; and the *less* Leisure we have
 “ upon other Days for this Purpose, the more
 “ *entirely* should we consecrate *this* Day to the
 “ Purposes and Duties of Religion (s).” The next
 Author whose Testimony I shall cite is that very Ex-
 cellent and Judicious Prelate Archbishop *Sharp*,
 whose Words are these: “ The Design of setting a-
 “ part the *Lord's Day* is, that all Men should join in
 “ the solemn Worship of God, that they should be in-
 “ structed in the Doctrine of the Gospel, that they
 “ should be taught from God's Word what they are to
 “ believe, and what they are to practice in order to their
 “ Salvation. That they should have the Motives and
 “ Arguments

“ Arguments which the Gospel offers for their living
 “ a *Holy Christian* Life fairly proposed to them, that
 “ they should have an Opportunity of seriously think-
 “ ing upon these Things, and examining the State
 “ of their own Souls, and making new Resolutions of
 “ living according to their *Christian* Profession, and
 “ humbly imploring the Grace of God, that they
 “ may practice what they resolve (1).” And a little
 lower, observing the great Sin and Danger of such
 Persons who notoriously violate and profane the *Lord’s*
Day, he expresses himself thus ; “ Those Persons
 “ that make no Conscience of observing the *Lord’s*
 “ *Day*, as they *rarely* ever attain to a true Sense of
 “ Virtue and Piety, so most commonly they are given
 “ over to a Reprobate Mind, and do grow worie and
 “ worse (u).” The next Testimony which I shall
 bring upon this Occasion is that of the most Learned
 and Judicious Primate *Wake*, who in his Excellent Ex-
 position of our Church Catechism to the Question,
How are we to keep our Sabbath Day ? Returns
 this Answer, “ We are to consecrate it to a *Religious*
 “ *Rest*, by attending upon the *Public* Service and
 “ Prayers of the *Church*, and bearing God’s Word
 “ read and preached there : By participating, as we
 “ have the Opportunity, of the *Holy Sacrament* : By
 “ *Private Prayer, Meditation, and Reading* : By Works
 “ of Charity and Mercy : By taking all the Care we
 “ can to improve our own Piety, and to help other
 “ Men in the enlivening of theirs (x).” The next
 Testimony I shall produce is that of that Learned and
 Excellent Preacher Bishop *Atterbury*. “ No Man
 “ (*saieth he*) ought to be so deeply immersed in the
 “ Affairs of this World, as not to be able to
 “ retire from them *now* and *then* into his Closet, there
 “ to mind the Concerns of another. Every Day of
 “ his Life *early* or *late* some Moments he may and
 “ must

(1) *Sharp’s Sermons*, Vol. IV. p. 317,(u) *Ibid.* p. 322.(x) *Wake*, p. 104.

“ must find to bestow this Way. The *Lord's Day*
“ particularly is a *Great Opportunity* of this Kind,
“ which can never be wholly neglected without
“ *Indevotion* or even without *Scandal* (y).” And how
absolutely necessary Divine Meditation is to a Religious
Life in the Judgment of this Author, hath been
already shewn in an Excellent Passage of his before
remembered (z). And that he thought the Religious
Observation of the *Lord's Day* does not only require
of every one personally to read the Scriptures, to med-
itate on Divine Things and the like, but also to have
a due Regard to the great Duty of *Family Instruc-*
tion, is evident from a Remarkable Passage in his
Character of the *Lady Cutts*, with Relation to the
devout and religious Observation of the *Lord's Day* ;
an Example highly worthy of being followed by all
the *Nobility* and *Gentry* in *Great-Britain*. His Words
are these : “ And in this Book of God (the Bible)
“ she was more particularly conversant on *God's Day* ;
“ a Day ever held sacred by her, and which there-
“ fore always in her Family wore a Face of Devo-
“ tion suitable to the Dignity of it. It was truly a
“ Day of *Rest* to all under her Roof : her Servants
“ were then dismissed from a good Part of their At-
“ tendance upon her, that they might be at Liberty
“ to attend on their great Lord and Master, whom
“ both she and they were equally bound to obey.
“ There was such a *Silence* and *Solemnity* at that Time
“ observed by all about her, as might have become
“ the House of Mourning ; and yet so much *Ease*
“ and *Serenity* visible in their Looks (at least in her
“ Looks there was) that they who were in the House of
“ Feasting were not better satisfied. Thus did she
“ prepare and dispose herself for the Enjoyment of
“ that Perfect Rest, the Celebration of that Endless
“ *Sabbath*

(y) *Atterbury's Sermons*, Vol. I. p. 351, 352.

(z) See above, Part II, chap. iii. p. 283.

“ *Sabbath* she is now entered upon (a).“ The next Author, whose Testimony I shall produce is the Learned Dr *Fiddes*, who having shewn the Indispensable Necessity of attending upon the Public Worship, with regard to the Private Religious Duties of the Day, expresses himself to this purpose; “ We ought
 “ also (*saieth he*) on the *Lord's Day* to employ our-
 “ selves constantly in the *Private* Exercises of Re-
 “ ligious; in conversing with God by *Prayer* and
 “ *Meditation*, in *reading* good Books, and examining
 “ into the *State* of our Souls, and forming good Re-
 “ solutions for our future Conduct. And,

“ *Secondly*, As the *Lord's Day* is a Day of Thank-
 “ giving for the Public or Private Mercies we have
 “ received from God; it is a proper Exercise of it,
 “ to perform Acts of Mercy and Charity to others, and
 “ both with respect to their Souls and Bodies: To their
 “ Souls, by teaching them the Fear of the Lord, by
 “ instructing, by advising, and admonishing them;
 “ especially such of them, as are under our more
 “ Immediate Charge and Direction. Tho' this indeed
 “ is not to be considered barely as an Act of Charity,
 “ but as Matter of strict and indispensable Duty,
 “ which Parents and Masters of Families can by no
 “ means excuse themselves in the Breach or Omission
 “ of. But I would on this Public Day of Joy and
 “ Thanksgiving to God for His Manifold Mercies,
 “ recommend to you also Acts of Mercy and
 “ Benevolence to the Poor, &c.

“ *Thirdly*, As the *Lord's Day* is a Day devoted to
 “ the Service of God and Religion, let us take Care
 “ to sanctify it by a Godly and Religious Conversation.
 “ The Rule of the Apostle, *Eph. iv. 29. Let no cor-
 “ rupt Communication come out of your Mouth, but such
 “ as may tend to the Use of edifying*, ought to be more
 “ carefully

(a) *Atterbury's Sermon at the Funeral of the Lady Cutts, in*
 Vol. I. p. 214, 215.

“ carefully observed on a Solemnity (*); one great
“ End in the Institution whereof was to free us from
“ the *Corruption which is in the World through Lust*, and
“ to promote universal Piety and Happiness. I do
“ not hereby intend, that it is not incumbent on us
“ at all Times and in all our Discourses to keep
“ with great Strictness and Nicety to the Rules of
“ our Holy Religion, so as never to offend by any
“ *idle Word* or *Levity* of Expression against them: But
“ my meaning is, that if we would sanctify this Holy
“ Day as we ought, and agreeably to the End of it's
“ Institution; we should not only avoid all Occasion
“ of Offence by a loose or profane Conversation,
“ but endeavour to promote the Sanctification of
“ others, by making one proper and useful Truth of
“ Religion or other the Subject of our Discourses,
“ &c. (b) The next Testimony I shall produce is
“ that of the most Learned and Excellent Dean *Pri-*
“ *deaux*, whose Words are these; “ Because such Times,
“ as are devoted to the Service and Worship of God,
“ ought not to be profaned by being employed to any
“ other Work; but all ought *then* to exercise them-
“ selves in the Duties of Religion both *publicly* and
“ *privately*; the Church-Wardens are to see that all
“ such Times be duly observed, especially the *Lord's*
“ *Day*, which hath by God Himself been consecrated
“ to His Worship from the Beginning of the World.
“ And because many, instead of employing the *Lord's*
“ *Day* in the Duties for which it was set apart, are
“ apt to spend it in Idleness and Looseness at *Ale-*
“ *houses* and *Taverns*, and other public Places of De-
“ bauchery;

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“ bauchery;

(*) *Verum non publice modo, sed & privatim hunc ipsum (diem dominicum) sanctis pietatis exercitiis, &c. Transgendum censemus, secundum illud Clementis, Neque Diebus Dominicis, qui sunt hilaritatis, præter sanctitatem aliquid dicere aut facere concedimus.*
Synop. purior. Theolog. Disp. XXI. §. 58.

(b) *Dr Fiddes's Sermons, 8vo, Vol. II. p. 116, 117, See the Place.*

“ bauchery ; for the preventing hereof the Church-
 “ Wardens ought frequently on the said *Lord’s Days*
 “ to visit such Houses both in time of Divine Service
 “ and also out of it. And if they find any tippling in
 “ the said Houses, they are to make them pay (c) &c.
 And then the Doctor proceeds to shew the Legal Forfeitures and Penalties for such Transgressions. The next Author whom I shall quote at present is that very pious and excellent Person Mr *Nelson*, whose useful Book upon the *Feasts and Fasts* of our Church is deservedly esteemed by every one. And to the Question, *How Christians ought to observe the Lord’s Day?* this truly devout and pious Man returns Answer in these Words. “ It is not enough that we rest from
 “ the Works of our Callings, but our Time must
 “ be employed in all such Religious Exercises as
 “ tend to the Glory of God and the Salvation of our
 “ Souls. We must regularly frequent the Worship
 “ of God in the Public Assemblies, join in the Prayers
 “ of the Church, hear His holy Word, receive the
 “ Blessed Sacrament when administred, and contribute
 “ to the Relief of the Poor, if there be any Collection
 “ for their Support. In private we ought to enlarge
 “ our Ordinary Devotions, and to make the Subject of
 “ them chiefly to consist in Thanksgiving for the
 “ Works of Creation and Redemption, withal considering all those particular Mercies we have received from the Bounty of Heaven through the
 “ whole Course of our Lives ; To improve our
 “ Knowledge by reading, and meditating on Divine Subjects ; to instruct our Children and Families ; to visit the Sick and the Poor, comforting them by some seasonable Assistance. And if we
 “ converse with our Friends or Neighbours, to season
 “ our Discourse with prudent and profitable Hints for
 “ the Advancement of Piety, and to take Care that
 “ no

“ no Sourness and Moroseness mingle with our serious
“ Frame of Mind (*d*).” The next Testimony which I
shall produce is that of the very Learned Dr *Samuel
Clarke*, who speaking of the *Lord's Day* expresses himself
thus ; “ The Manner in which *this Day* ought to be
“ observed among *Christians* is, in attending the
“ Public Worship of God, in hearing the Word, in
“ reading the Scriptures, in instructing and assisting
“ those over whom we have any Influence in the
“ Knowledge and Practice of their Duty. In a
“ Word, It is to be spent in Works of Necessity
“ and in Works of Charity ; and in whatso-
“ ever tends without Superstition and without
“ Affectation to the Real Honour of God, and to the
“ true Interest and promoting of Religion and Virtue
“ in the World. ——— The Extremes to be avoided
“ are on the one Hand (and which in the present Age
“ is by much the most *usual* and *dangerous* Extreme)
“ That Habit of spending great Part of the *Lord's*
“ *Day* in Gaming, and in other *loose* and *debauched*
“ Practices ; which has been encouraged by *Popeery*,
“ and which has to numberless Persons been the Cor-
“ ruption of their Principles, and the entire Ruin of
“ their *Morals*. On the other Hand an affected *Ju-*
“ *daical* or *Pbarisaical* Preciseness, which usually pro-
“ ceeds from Hypocrisy or from a want of under-
“ standing rightly the true Nature of Religion (*e*).”

The next Testimony that I shall cite is that of the pre-
sent most Learned and Pious Bishop of *London*, who in
his Pastoral Letter to the People of his Diocese hath
given them a most Useful and Excellent Direction in
this Matter. “ The *Lord's Day* (*saieth he*) is to be ef-
“ teemed *sacred*, as being sanctified and set apart for
“ ceasing from our Worldly Care and Labour, and
“ meditating upon God, and paying that Honour and

E e 2

“ Adoration,

(*d*) *Nelson* on the Festivals, &c. p. 20. 21.

(*e*) Dr *Clarke's* Exp. of the Catechism, 8vo p. 178, 179.

“ Adoration, which He requires of us, and which
 “ belongs to Him, as the Creator, Preserver and Re-
 “ deemer of Mankind. The Devout and Serious
 “ Observation of *this* Day is one of the most Effec-
 “ tual Means to keep alive Religion in the World,
 “ both in the outward Face of it and in the Hearts
 “ and Lives of *Christians*. And nothing is more cer-
 “ tain, than that it would be quickly lost and extin-
 “ guished among the Generality of Mankind, if it
 “ were not kept alive by the Appointment of this
 “ Day for reviving upon their Minds a Sense of God
 “ and their Duty. Wherefore let this be a Day not
 “ only of Rest from Labour, but also of Medita-
 “ ting upon God and Heavenly Things; partly in a
 “ Devout Attendance upon the Public Offices of Reli-
 “ gion, and partly by allowing a Reasonable Portion
 “ of the Day to the private Duties of reading the
 “ Holy Scriptures and other good Books, and in-
 “ structing your Children and Servants, and examin-
 “ ing your own Lives, and praying to God for a
 “ Supply of your own private Necessities, Spiritual
 “ and Temporal. I say, a *Reasonable* Portion of the
 “ Day, according to the *Condition* of particular Per-
 “ sons and Families. For they, who on all other Days
 “ are confined to hard Labour, or are otherwise ob-
 “ liged to a close Attendance on their Worldly Affairs,
 “ must be allowed in *some Measure* to consider *this*, as
 “ a Day of Ease and Relaxation from Thought and
 “ Labour, as well as a Day of Devotion; provided
 “ it be in a Way that is Innocent and Inoffensive, and
 “ that the Public Offices of Religion be duly attended,
 “ and the Duties of a more Private Nature be not neg-
 “ lected. But there are many others, whose Quality
 “ and Condition have freed them from the Necessity
 “ of a constant Attendance upon Worldly Business,
 “ and to whom all other Days are equally Days of
 “ Ease and Diversion; and from them it may well
 “ be expected, that they abstain from their Diversions

“ on *this* Day, and employ it more strictly in the Duties of Religion ; for which indeed they have greater Need than others to arm themselves against the manifold Temptations to which they are daily exposed by Ease and Plenty. And when they have better Opportunity and greater Need than the rest of Mankind, to give a strict Attendance upon the Duties of Religion on this Day ; if they do it not, it is much to be feared that they have a greater Relish for the Delights and Business of this World than for Exercises of a Spiritual Nature (f).” The next Testimony I shall mention is that of that Excellent Preacher Dr *Littleton* ; who among other Instances of the Reverence which we ought to shew for Things sacred observes, “ That we should particularly pray to God, that He would enable us by His Grace to preserve an awful Regard to His *Sabbath* ; however it is now prostituted and profaned by the Management of our secular Concerns, or by the *no more innocent* tho’ *less censured* Custom of employing it in idle and impertinent Visits, and thereby spending it in vain and unprofitable, if not wicked and uncharitable Discourse (g).” The last Person whose Testimony I shall produce upon this Occasion (and who indeed on Account of the Order of Time in which he lived, as well as the Peculiar Esteem and Veneration which is due to him, should have been mentioned among the First, but whom I purposely chose to reserve to the last Place, that what he says may be the more observed and better remember’d by the Reader) is the most Excellent and Pious Author of the

E e 3

Whole

(f) First Pastoral Letter, p. 45, 46,

(g) Sermons, Vol. II. p. 190. And what a mighty Effect the Religious Observation of the Sabbath would (in the Judgment of this Author) have upon the Moral Behaviour of Mankind, hath been before observed in an Excellent Passage cited out of him, p. 197.

Whole Duty of Man, that *best of Books*, as a very great Critic (*b*) hath truly called it; a Book that hath ever been approved of by all good Judges, and universally esteemed by all pious and good *Christians* of what Opinion or Perswasion soever. And observe now what are the Thoughts and Sentiments of this very Excellent Person concerning the Matter which I am now speaking of. His Words are these; “ The *Lord’s* “ *Day*, thus set apart, is to be employed in the Wor- “ ship and Service of God; and that, *First*, More “ solemnly and publickly in the Congregation, from “ which no Man must then absent himself without a “ just Cause. And, *Secondly*, Privately at Home, in “ praying with and instructing our Families, or else “ in the yet more private Duties of the Closet, a Man’s “ own Private Prayers, Reading, Meditation, and the “ like. And that we may be at Leisure for *these*, a Rest “ from all Worldly Business is commanded; there- “ fore let no Man think that bare Rest from Labour is “ all that is required of him on the *Lord’s Day*, but “ the Time which he saves from the Works of his “ Calling he is to lay out in those Spiritual Duties. “ For the *Lord’s Day* was never ordained to give us a “ Pretence of Idleness, but only to change our Em- “ ployment from Worldly to Heavenly; much less was “ it meant, that by our Rest from our Callings we should “ have more Time free to bestow upon our Sins, as “ too many do who are more constant on that Day at “ the *Alehouse* than at the Church: But this Rest was “ commanded, *First*, To shadow out to us that Rest “ from Sin, which we are bound to all the Days of “ our Lives. And, *Secondly*, To take us off from our “ Worldly Business, and to give us Time to attend “ the Service of God and the Need of our Souls (*i*).”

Thus far the Author of the *Whole Duty of Man*. And

to,

(*b*) *Tillotson*, Vol. I. p. 268.

(*i*) *Whole Duty of Man*, chap. ii. § 17.

to the Testimonies here alledged out of the Learned Writers of our Church many others might be added without Number; but I will not trouble the Reader with any more of them. I shall only add upon this Head a very Remarkable Passage out of a late *noted* Writer, who I am sure was not *partial* to Religion; and which will be a great Reproach to the Practice of many Thousands among us, who will oftentimes profess a great Zeal and Concern for *Christianity*. This Author speaking of *Sunday* says thus; "It is the *Sabbath*, the most *useful* Day in Seven, "that is set apart for Divine Service and Religious Exercises, as well as resting from Bodily Labour; "and it is a Duty incumbent on all Magistrates to "take Particular Care of *that* Day. The Poor more "especially and their Children should be made to go "to Church on *it* both in the Fore- and Afternoon, "because they have no Time on any other. By Precept and Example they ought to be encouraged and "used to it from their very Infancy. The wilful "Neglect of it ought to be accounted *scandalous*; and "if downright *Compulsion* to what I urge might seem "too *harsh* and perhaps *impracticable*, all *Diversions* "at least ought *strictly* to be prohibited, and the Poor "hindered from every Amusement abroad that might "allure or draw them from it (k)."

And thus I have gone thro' all that I proposed to consider upon this *Great Subject*, and have fully shewn the perpetual Obligation of observing *one* Day in every Week and keeping it *holy*; and that in Memory of the Creation of the World and of our Blessed Saviour's Resurrection from the *Dead*. I have also shew'd the many and great Benefits and Advantages of a Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*: And have
farther

(k) Essay on Charity Schools, published with the *Fable of the Bees*, p, 35².

farther considered the particular Manner, in which this *holy Day* ought to be observed and celebrated by all *Christians*; and that from the Nature and Reason of the Thing, and the plain *Declarations* of Holy Scripture; from the Testimony and Practice of the Primitive *Christians* in the purest Ages; from the particular Appointment and Constitution of our own Governours both in Church and State; and from the Sense and Judgment of many of the *wisest* and *greatest* Men, which our Church hath ever had since it was in Being. All that I have now to add is to beg of all my Readers to take what hath been discoursed of into their most serious Consideration. And if there be any *Truth* in Religion (as we are all at one Time or other ready to profess and acknowledge) I earnestly entreat them to remember, that the *Profession* of Religion without the *Practice*, the *Form of Godliness* without the *Power* of it, will avail nothing. And since, as hath been clearly and fully shewn in the foregoing Discourse, Religion *necessarily* requires some *Considerable* Portion of our Time, not only for the Public Worship of God, but also for the Exercise of the Private *Duties* thereof; therefore all Persons, who are well disposed and affected to Religion, should gladly lay hold of all Advantages and Opportunities for these good Purposes, and especially that of the *Lord's Day*. And moreover the *horrible* and *growing* Profaneness and Impiety of the present Age should engage all *such Persons* to use their utmost Endeavours to put a *Stop* to it. And as nothing will do *this* so *Effectually*, nor tend so much to amend and reform the Manners of Men, as setting them a good Example, and *letting their Light shine before them*; so there is not any one Instance, in which their good Example will be of greater Benefit and Service to the World than in the Constant Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*, both in the Public and Private *Duties* of it: especially if their Lives and Conversations in all other Respects be
suitable

fitable to those, who make such an Outward and Solemn Profession of Religion and Piety. And since the *Devout and Religious Observation of this Day* would certainly have a Considerable Effect upon the Morals of the Nation and mightily tend to the reclaiming of Sinners and bringing them over to the Practice of Virtue, if it were once encouraged and countenanced by Numbers of Men, and especially those of Authority and Influence; Methinks all Persons should be the more readily induced to such Religious Observation, not only as it is highly instrumental and subservient to their own Improvement in Piety and Virtue, but also as they will hereby be entitled to that Exceeding and Immense Reward, which God hath promised to those who turn many to Righteousness, *viz. they shall shine like the Stars for ever and ever. Dan. xii. 3.* And as all Persons among us should be thus zealously concerned for the Religious Observation of the *Lord's Day* for the Ends and Reasons before mentioned; so there are two Orders of Men, upon whom this Obligation is more especially Incumbent, and who are more than *ordinarily* bound to take Care, that this Holy Season be duly celebrated, and that it be not in any wise profaned either by Secular Business or Worldly Pleasure. And I hope they will not take it amiss, that I lay hold of this Opportunity to put them in Mind of this great Duty. And these are the *Clergy*, and the *Magistrates* of the Land. And,

First, As to the *Clergy*. As they are the public Ministers of *Christ's Gospel*, they must needs be sensible, that they are under the highest and strictest Obligations to promote the Cause of Piety and Religion in the World; and therefore since the *Devout and pious Observation of the Lord's Day* is so great a Means and Instrument of Religion, that they ought more *particularly* to take Care to instruct their People in the Necessity of this Duty, and to set them a good Example

ple of it in their own Persons. For otherwise, if any of that *Sacred* Order should be so indiscreet and imprudent as to spend this *holy* Day in keeping of Company and in Worldly Pleasure; it will be in vain for them to expect, that it will ever be duly and religiously observed by any Considerable Number of their People. And for want of *this* the Public Instructions of the Church will not only be *entirely* lost upon them, but they will debar themselves of the glorious Opportunity of Reading the Scriptures, and Meditating upon Divine Things, and other Religious Exercises, to the Apparent Ruin and Destruction of their Souls. . And therefore since to *sanctify* the *Lord's Day* and to keep it *devoutly* is a Matter of so great Importance and Consequence to Religion; it is to be hoped that the *Clergy* (and especially in this Degenerate and Licentious Age) will use their utmost Endeavours to persuade all Men to the Pious and Religious Observation of it. And then,

Secondly, As to the Magistrates of the Land. As they are entrusted with the Execution of the Laws made against Profaneness and Immorality; it may very reasonably be expected, that in this Case *especially* they should be more than *ordinarily* active and vigilant, where the Honour of God and the Interest of Religion are so deeply concerned. And indeed if the Magistrates of the Land would Resolutely in their several Districts put in Execution the Laws against profaning the *Lord's Day* (which is now most shamefully and horribly violated in almost every Town and Village in the Kingdom) *This* would of itself go a very great way towards restraining the Licentiousness and Impiety of the Age, and amending and reforming the *Morals* of the Nation. And therefore I fear they will have a heavy Account to give to God at the *last* Day, if they neglect to do it. A very Learned Writer (who was as good a Judge of the Obligation of Moral Duties as ever lived) hath laid it down for a *Rule* and *Maxim*, that *they, who have the Power of punishing Vice, are wanting*

wanting in their Duty, if they only reprove it (1). If this be true (as it certainly is in general) if Men become guilty by *only* admonishing of the Wicked, when they have Authority to punish them : How exceedingly great must be the Guilt and Blame of many Persons among us of Eminent Authority and Station, who are so far from *punishing* or even *ensuring* Men for their *heinous* Crime in profaning the *Lord's Day*, that they too often set them an Example of so doing in their own Persons. But however Men may behave themselves in Public Stations, since, as the Apostle speaks, *every Man must bear his own Burthen*; Gal. vi. 5. let this engage us all to be very careful and watchful over ourselves, that we do not injure our own Souls, nor contribute to the Ruin and Destruction of other Mens, by the Contempt and Profanation of this *Holy Season*.

And since the Observation of *this Day* is a Point, in which the Honour of God and the very Life and Being of Religion are so *nearly* concerned; therefore, *kind Reader*, I beg of you to excuse me, if I once more *earnestly* exhort you to consider this Matter seriously: since if what hath been delivered in the foregoing Discourse, both from Scripture and Reason, and confirm'd by the Judgment of the *wisest* and *greatest* Men, should at last prove Right and well founded; you will not only render yourself highly Criminal by your Profanation of *this Day*, but will also increase and aggravate your Guilt by giving Offence and Scandal to your *Christian Bretheren*; the great Sin and Danger of
which

(1) Qui puniendi jus habent, ii monendo tantum, non desuntur Officio. *Grot. in 1 Sam. ii. 23.* To which I will add a remarkable Saying of an ancient Writer of the Church, *viz.* Potestas magna & potentissima, quæ inhibere scelus maximum potest, quasi probat debere fieri, si sciens patitur perpetrari. In cujus enim manu est ut prohibeat, jubet agi, si non prohibet admitti. *Salvian de Gubernat. Dei, Lib. vii, p. 272.*

which hath been before fully represented. Nay, if we should suppose the Case were Doubtful; it would surely be an Argument of greater Wisdom and Prudence, as well as Piety, to err on the safest Side (*m*). And as for those who are apt to be led into a Neglect of this *Duty*, in Contradiction to their own Opinion, merely thro' the Custom and Example of those they converse with; it is highly necessary to let such Men know, that it is an Argument of a *mean* and *base* Spirit for a Man thro' Custom and Complaisance to act contrary to the settled Perswasion and Judgment of his own Mind, and that it is a plain Transgression of that Wise and Excellent Law which God hath given us, *Exod. xxiii. 2. Thou shalt not follow a Multitude to do Evil.* And not only in this, but in all other Instances of sinful Compliance, Men should be put in Mind of that *dreadful* Observation of *St John* before remember'd, *viz.* that the *Fearful, i. e.* they who thro' fear of human Punishment, Censure, or Contempt shall transgress any Part of God's Law, are placed first in the *Dismal Catalogue* of those who *go down* to Perdition. *Rev. xxi. 8.* And to say no more, if Men were sure and certain, that they might *lawfully* partake of their *usual* Pleasures and Diversions on the *Lord's Day*; yet since so many of the most Pious and Learned Men think otherwise, and not only the Constitutions of the Established Church, but the Laws of the Land also (which certainly *ought* to be the Rule of their Obedience, *Rom. xiii. 1, 2. 1 Pet. ii. 13, &c.*) have determined the Contrary; I think all Men *ought* to shew so much Reverence and Regard for such Public *Judgments*, as to be content at such Time with the private Enjoyment of their Pleasures in their own Houses, and to forbear the *Public Exercise* of them, lest they should *give* Offence, and their Example should prove of pernicious

(*m*) See above, p. 368, 369.

cious Consequence to other Men. But however Men may think fit to act in this Particular; the Time is soon coming, when we shall all be of one Mind and Judgment in this Matter. And tho' he, who now profanes the *Lord's Day* in any Respect, will, I doubt not, repent of it *severely* when he comes to die; yet no Man will ever repent at that Time that he observed this Day *too religiously*; that he went to Church too often; that he spent too much of his Time in *Reading* the Holy Scriptures, in the Instruction of his Children and Family, in *Meditating* upon *Divine Things*, and [in *preparing* himself for Eternal Life.

F I N I S.



A short Prayer which may be used by any good Christian on Sunday Morning, immediately before he goes to Church.

O MOST Gracious and Merciful Lord God; I beseech Thee pardon all my Sins, and grant me Thy Grace sincerely to repent, and to serve and fear Thee in Newness of Life, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord. *Amen.*

And particularly at this Time I beseech Thee to assist me with Thy Holy Spirit, that I may behave myself acceptable in thy Sight. And now that I am going to join in thy Worship, and to hear thy Holy Word preached to me, grant that I may *keep my Foot (a)*, when I enter into the House of God, and consider in whose Presence I shall appear; and in a just Sense of Thy great Majesty and Perfections may approach Thee with due and suitable Affections, and hear Thy Word with Attention and Reverence, and *present my Body a living Sacrifice holy and acceptable unto Thee.* Make all Orders of Men among us duly sensible of the Obligation of this Day, and grant that it may no longer be profaned by Secular Business and Diversions; but that we may all make a Conscience of repairing at this Time to Thy Holy Church, and may do our best Endeavours to worship Thee with the utmost Purity and Perfection. Grant me the
Grace

(a) The Phrase of *keeping the Foot* signifies that Reverence of Behaviour, which we should manifest in the House of God, and is so used by *Solomon*, *Ecc. v. 1.* in which Place he alludes to the Custom of the *Eastern Nations*, which was to put off their Shoes; when they approached the more immediate Presence of God; of which see *Exod. iii. 5.* *Josh. v. 15.*

Grace of thy Holy Spirit, to preserve me at this time from all wandering Thoughts and sinful Imaginations, and let not the Temptations of the Devil nor the Infirmary of my own Nature abate the Warmth and Fervour of my Devotions. Deliver me from all Carelessness, Sensuality and Pride; and grant that I may give an humble and diligent Attendance upon thy Holy Word. And that it may have the better Effect upon me, grant, I beseech Thee, that I may have a due Esteem and Reverence for it, and that I may treasure it up in my Heart, and bring forth the good Fruits of it in my Life and Conversation. And when I have humbly offered up my Devotions to Thy Divine Majesty, and been comforted with the Hearing of Thy Holy Word, grant that I may retire from the World, and spend the Remainder of the Day in thinking upon Thee, and mediating upon Eternity, and in forming in myself that blessed and divine Temper, which alone will make me well-pleasing and acceptable unto Thee; that so, when I have ended this short transitory Life, I may through thy Mercy be received into Thy Heavenly Kingdom, for the Sake and through the Merits of thy Dear Son *Jesus Christ*, our Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.

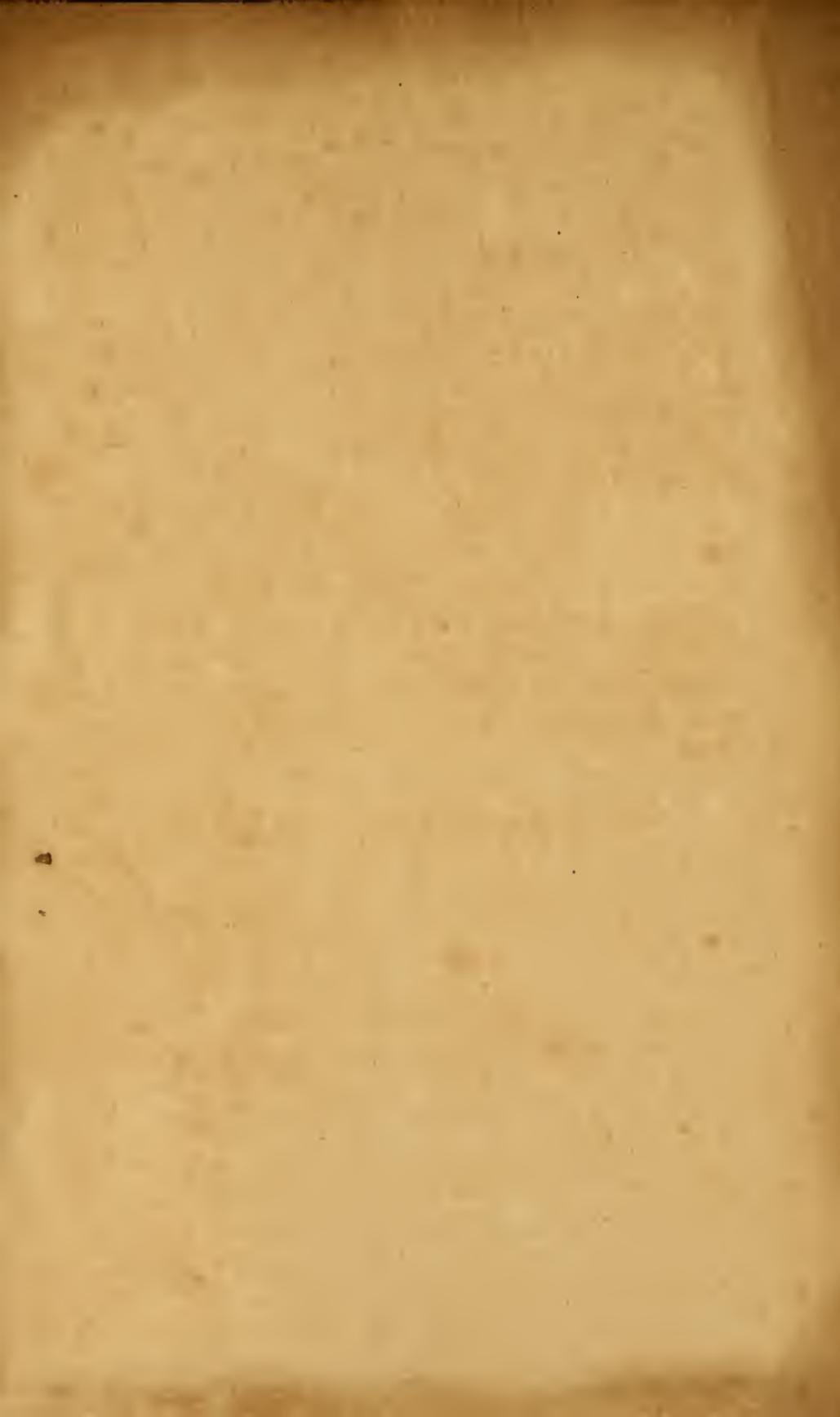
A short Prayer to be used on Sunday Evening immediately after Divine Service.

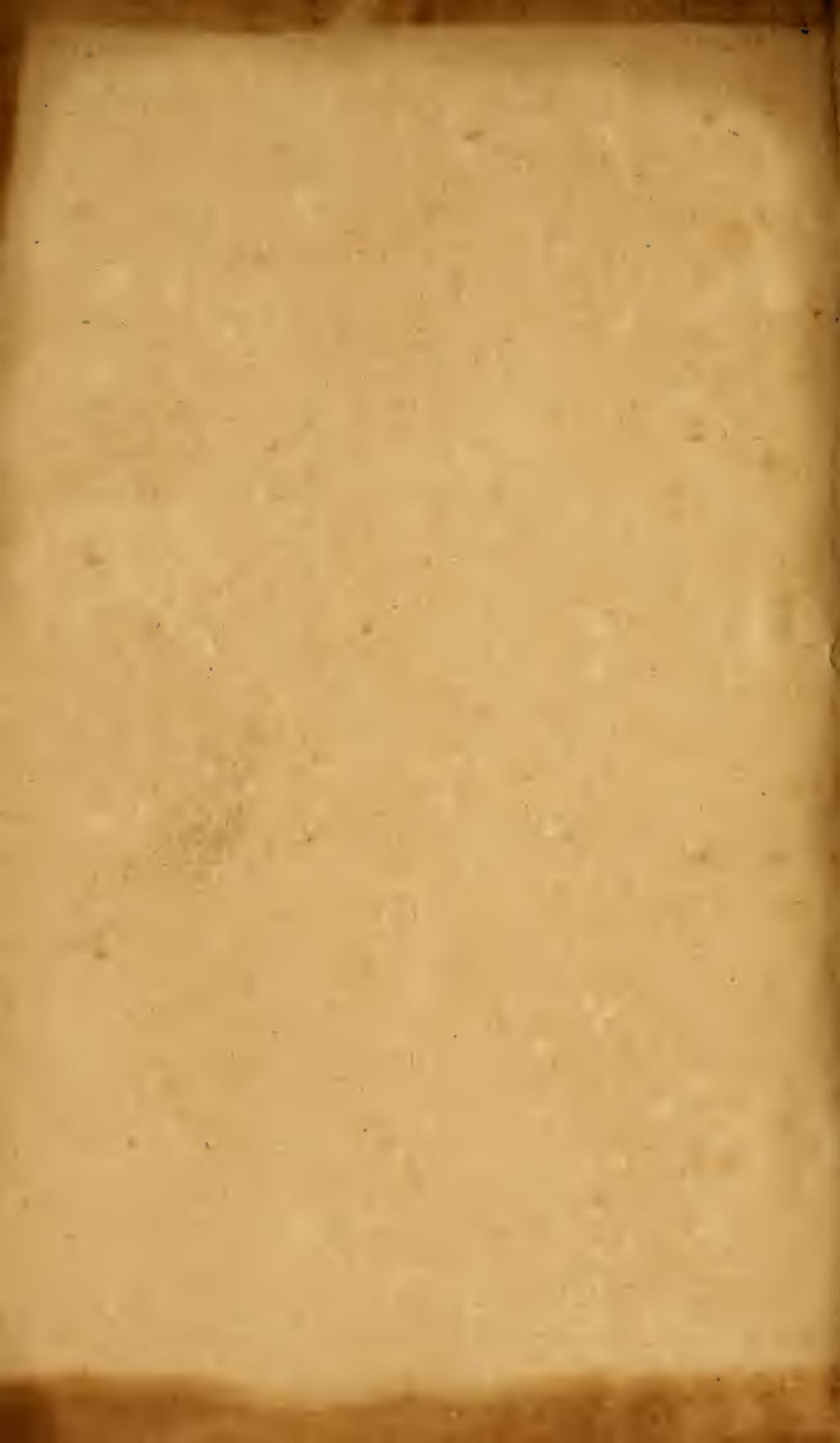
O MOST gracious and Merciful Lord God, I beseech Thee pardon all my Sins, and grant me Thy Grace sincerely to repent, and to serve and fear Thee in Newness of Life, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord. *Amen.*

Make me duly thankful to Thee for all Thy Mercies, but above all for Thine Inestimable Love in the
Redemption

Redemption of the World by the Death and Passion of Thy Dear Son. And particularly at this time I praise thy Name for the glorious Opportunity Thou hast this Day afforded me of hearing Thy Holy Word, and joining in the public Service of Thy Church. Pardon, I beseech Thee, my wandring Thoughts and Imperfect Devotions ; give a Blessing to the Word this Day preached to us, and grant that no Pride, nor Carelessness, nor Sensuality may hinder the Success and Efficacy of it ; but that it may sink deep into our Hearts, and bring forth good Fruits in our Lives and Conversations. Make all Orders of Men among us duly sensible of the Obligation of this Holy Day, and grant that it may no longer be profaned by secular Business and Diversions ; but that we may all make it a Constant Season of serving Thee, and Meditating upon the Concernments of the Life to come ; that so from serving and fearing Thee in this World we may be translated to the praising Thee Eternally in Thy Glorious Kingdom, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord.
Amen.

Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.





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