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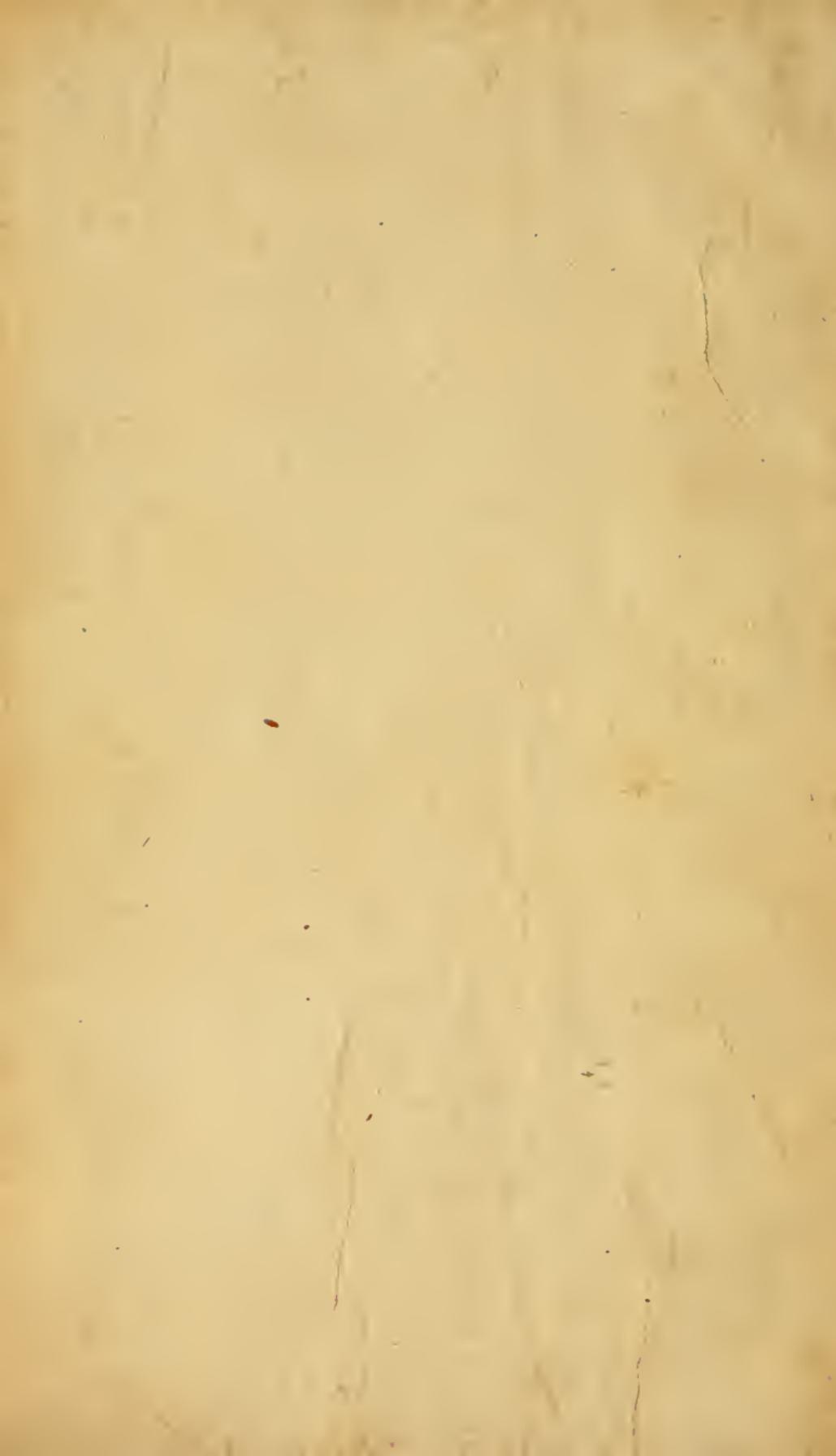
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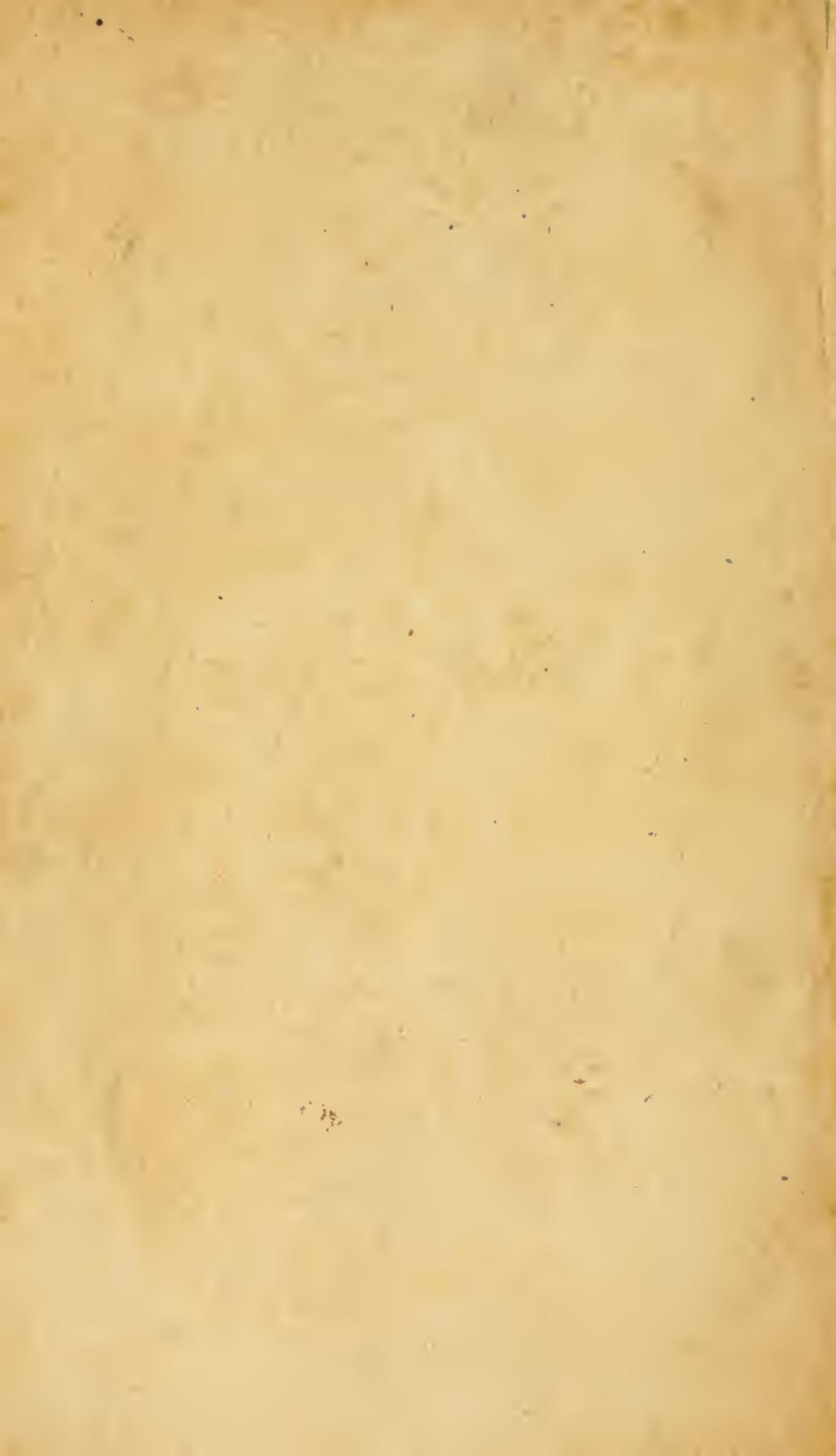
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THE  
DEMONSTRATION  
OF

True RELIGION,

In a Chain of Consequences from certain and undeniable Principles;

WHEREIN

The Necessity and Certainty of Natural and Reveal'd RELIGION, with the Nature and Reason of both, are Proved and Explain'd:

And in particular, the Authority of the Christian Revelation is establish'd, not only from the Natures, and Reasons of things, but also from the Relation it bears to the Scriptures of the *Old Testament*.

In Sixteen SERMONS,

Preach'd at BOW-CHURCH,

In the YEARS 1724, and 1725;

For the LECTURE founded by the Honourable ROBERT BOYLE, Esq;

---

In TWO VOLUMES.

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By THOMAS BURNETT, D. D. Rector of *Westkington* in *Wiltshire*, and Prebendary of the Cathedral Church of *SARUM*.

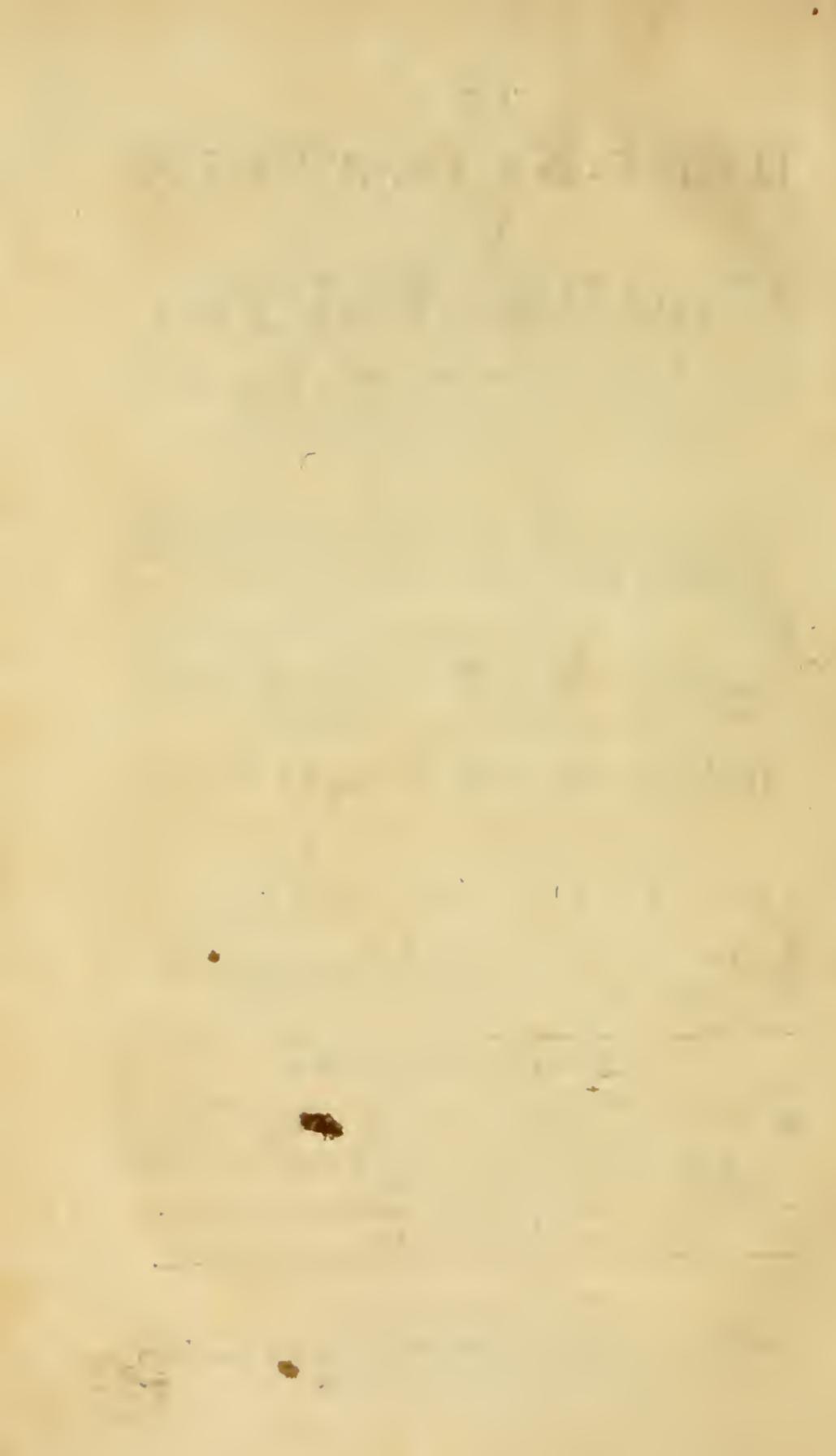
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VOL. I.

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LONDON:

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T H E

# P R E F A C E.



*S* Religion is of the highest Importance to Mankind, as being that, without which we can have no true Comfort, even in this World, as well as no Assurance of a better; it closely concerns us all, as we naturally desire Happiness, not only seriously to enquire into it, to see upon what foot it stands, but also to form such a rational Notion of it, as may be a just Ground of Hope and Comfort, and such as we may rest upon with Confidence.

iv      The PREFACE.

*The many different, and inconsistent Schemes, that some Persons have drawn of it, have given occasion to weak and unthinking People to suspect, that the whole is a meer human Invention, set up as an Engine, by cunning Men, to carry on their private Ends.*

*And indeed I am apt to think, that the greatest Part of our Errors are so, especially those, that are maintain'd with the greatest Heat.*

*Truth ordinarily lies plain enough to be seen by every sincere Enquirer after it; and when we are drawn away from it, there is generally some private carnal End at the Bottom, that governs us, and gives our Minds a wrong Biass.*

*The only way to prevent or correct this, is, to form our Ideas from the Natures of things: This is a certain  
foundation*

# The PREFACE. v

*foundation to build upon: And if Religion shall appear to be founded in Nature, as this will be a Demonstration of its Truth and Certainty; so the Notions that are clearly deduced from hence, are such as we may depend upon.*

*This is the Method I have taken in the following Treatise, and I have done it impartially. I had no Scheme that I desir'd to establish, no Hypothesis to support, but I both began, and pursued my Meditations with a desire only of Truth.*

*And as I have all along follow'd Nature, so the Consequences I have drawn from it are purely natural, such as came of themselves, and have propagated one another, without any foresight or design of mine.*

*I began my Inquiry at the Existence of God, which may be demonstrated several Ways:*

vi      The PREFACE.

*The usual Method of Divines is, to reason from his Works to his Being, and from the visible Characters of Goodness and Wisdom in the World to infer a wise Author of it: And the Argument is good and strong.*

*But I have chosen to proceed in the metaphysical Way, which, the Notion of God consider'd as a self-existent Being, naturally led me into: And having prov'd the Necessity of such a Being, and the Perfection that must necessarily be ascrib'd to him, I thence form'd my Notion of his Works.*

*The Existence of God I have consider'd, as briefly as I could, not only, as it is a Subject abundantly confirm'd by others, from whose learned Labours every Difficulty will find a proper Resolution, but also as it is what our modern Infidels pretend to agree with us in. But upon the Nature and Per-*  
*fections*

## The PREFACE. vii

*fections of God I have been more large and particular, as being that upon which my whole after Reasoning is built.*

*I have endeavour'd to establish a right Apprehension of every Attribute of the divine Nature, and from thence I have drawn a Scheme of the Creation and Government of the World:*

*And as the Notions I have form'd of God, and his Operations are such, as are founded in Nature, they may be call'd The Creed of Nature.*

*And as I have from hence shewn, the practical Obligations that Mankind are indispensibly engag'd in the Nature of things to live by, these I call The Laws of Nature.*

*These I have largely explain'd, and distinguish'd, and shewn the different Nature and Reason of them, according as Mankind are differently consi-*

viii      The PREFACE.

*der'd, either in a pure or corrupted State.*

*From these two different States, which I have particularly consider'd, I have likewise given the Reader a different View of the Government of the World, and shewn the Necessity of various Revelations in both, and what those Revelations must be: And from hence, I hope, I have sufficiently establish'd not only the Certainty of the Christian Revelation, but also the general Nature of it.*

*As I was willing to bring my Argument as near to Demonstration, as the Nature of the thing would bear, I have proceeded all along in a Chain of Consequences from (I think) certain and undeniable Principles.*

*As the Chain is long, and the Use I make of the several Parts of it, sometimes at a Distance, it frequently requires*

## The PREFACE. ix

*quires a long Stretch of Thought and Observation, before the Reader will come in sight of it: And this I'm sensible will make it heavy and tedious to many.*

*This is a way of Reasoning, that is agreeable to few. Few are capable of carrying on a Thread thro' a long Succession of Consequences, and especially where they do not immediately see the Use of them.*

*And few can relish an Argument that is metaphysical, where nothing is to be look'd for but bare Truth:*

*This is what is seldom sought after: Most People are fond of Words, and Phrases, and read only for what they call Pretty things: But there is nothing of that kind to be expected here. These Treatises are calculated for another Taste: I aim at Truth only, and as I thought it improper to crowd up the  
Way*

x      The PREFACE.

*Way to it by any needless Incumbrances, or impertinent Avocations; so I have purposely avoided every thing but what is necessary to my Design; and have not scrupled very often, even to repeat what I had said, where I thought it might be useful for the better Apprehension of my Meaning, or my Argument.*

*My Concern is only to be understood, and for that Purpose I affect to be, as plain as possible, that I may convey those Speculations in a proper Light to others, that have afforded great Satisfaction to myself. And this I desire only, as they appear to be Truths, and those of the highest Importance.*

*'Tis a sufficient Evidence to me, that they are Truths, not only as they are (when considered separately) the necessary Consequences, (as I said before) from certain and undeniable Principles; but also, as they do, (when consider'd together, make a rational and*  
*consistent*

## The PREFACE. xi

*consistent Scheme, the Parts of which are naturally connected to, and mutually illustrate, and support one another.*

*And if they are Truths, they are such as cannot but be of the highest Importance, as being the Foundation of all true Religion, and the Rules by which we are to form our Notions of it, and judge of all Pretences to it.*

*I have already met with one Objection, which is hardly worth observing, viz. That many things here are new, whereas Truth must be old.*

*But how novel soever any thing appears to us, the Truth of it is not to be judg'd by that, but by the Nature of things: And if what I have said be agreeable to the Nature of things, it is a Truth, and was always so, how long soever it has lain hid from us, and it ought to be no Objection, that it was thought of no sooner. But*

*But whatever the Reader shall find of that Nature here, I can assure him it was not sought for, as such, out of Affectation of Novelty, nor can it be a just Offence to any one, when he will find every thing here of what kind soever, made subservient to the Honour of God, and the Support, and Confirmation of True Religion.*

*I ought to beg Pardon for taking Notice of such poor low Stuff: But as the Objection has been made, and probably will be made by many more of those who dare not think but under Licence from Authority, I conceiv'd it proper to say something to it, being willing to remove every, even the smallest Prejudice, out of my Way, where so great a Concern as the Demonstration of True Religion is in View.*



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T H E  
D E M O N S T R A T I O N  
O F  
T R U E R E L I G I O N .



Y design in the following Sheets is to demonstrate, that there is such a thing, as true Religion, and what that Religion is.

In order to this, it will be necessary to inquire, what Principles we have to build upon: For in all Disputes there must be something granted, before any certainty can be attain'd by Argument.

B

I know

I know it has been taught by the celebrated *Cartesius*, as the first Principle of true Philosophy, and the only true method of Science, to doubt of every thing, and to take nothing for granted but what is prov'd;

But this can be a Rule in such things only, as are really capable of Doubt and Proof; whereas there are many Propositions so evident in themselves, as to admit of neither.

I conceive it impossible for any Man to doubt of his own Existence, or if we could doubt of it, it would be impossible ever to resolve that Doubt; unless we could be able to find out something to prove it by, that we could be more certain of, than we are of our own Being.

To prove that I am, because I think, is to prove that I am, by supposing that I am, and taking it for granted, that I think, which according to this Rule I ought to doubt of.

And

And certainly he, that can doubt of his own Being, has the very same reason to doubt of his Thinking, and 'twill not be possible to prove, that he thinks, by any thing, that he will not have the same reason still to doubt of.

And therefore, unless there be allow'd some self-evident Propositions that cannot be doubted of, this method of philosophizing will be so far from a just method of Science, that 'tis only a Foundation for everlasting Scepticism, without any possibility of knowing any thing.

Something therefore must be granted in all Disputes; and all that I shall desire to be granted in this, is, only such things, as are, either self-evident, and so plain, that they cannot be doubted or prov'd; or else such, as tho' they may in their own nature be doubted, are yet so universally known and allow'd, that they need not be prov'd.

As First, I shall take for granted all the explications of the Terms and Defi-

nitions here made use of, as being such as are universally agreed on; as likewise all those things, that are necessarily and obviously implied in the very notion of those Terms and Definitions.

Secondly, I shall take for granted all those Propositions, the truth of which depends upon the evidence of Sense, or universal Experience; or else are plain to every understanding, that apprehends the terms of the Propositions; and these things being allow'd, I shall upon this Basis endeavour to build the whole Fabrick of true Religion.

And this I will do in the plainest, and most simple manner possible, purposely avoiding all dress and ornament; which, tho' they may please, and entertain the Reader, they seldom fail to darken the reasoning, and draw off his attention from the force of the Argument.

And as I purpose to proceed in the way of Demonstration, I shall make use of no arguments in the course of my reason-

reasoning, but such as are naturally connected with, and mutually dependent upon one another, carried on in a regular chain of Consequences from certain, and undeniable Principles, till I come to the point I aim at.

In order to this end, it will be necessary in the first place to explain, what is to be meant by Religion.

In the explication of this, we must observe, that if it be consider'd in general, it is not a simple thing, and therefore cannot be represented under a simple notion.

But it is a System, or chain of Principles, which being receiv'd, as true, are the reasons, or motives obliging us to the performance, or non-performance of such and such Actions.

And therefore in treating upon true Religion, the proper method would be to demonstrate the truth of those several Principles, with the obligations that result from them.

But for as much as they all depend upon one great and fundamental Article, which is,

That there is a self-existent, absolutely perfect Being, on whom all Creatures have an intire dependence, as he is the Creator, and Governor of the World, which Being we call God ;

Here it will be necessary to begin our work, by endeavouring to evince the truth of this Article, by proving the existence of such a Being; and then to shew you what religious obligations will naturally arise from it.

As for the existence of a self-existent, absolutely perfect Being, who made and governs the World, considering this is a point that has been so often, and so abundantly demonstrated by several learned Persons, it may seem impertinent to say any thing on a subject so beaten, and exhausted: But my design, and method require me to consider it, that my thread may be regular, and intire: However I shall be as short upon it,

it, as I can, and shall only draw out such a chain of reasonings, as are sufficient for a general notion of it, and for a foundation to build my after design upon.

And that I may do this with the greater perspicuity and exactness, I will proceed in the following method.

*First*, I will demonstrate, that there cannot but be some self-existent Being.

*Secondly*, That this self-existent Being cannot but be absolutely perfect.

*Thirdly*, That this absolutely perfect Being was the Creator of the World.

*Fourthly*, That this absolutely perfect Creator must be the Governor of the World.

P R O P. I.

As to the first of these, that there cannot but be some self-existent Being;

it is necessary to observe, that by a self-existent Being, I do not mean a Being that exists of it self, as the cause and maker of it self. For this is a manifest impossibility, as supposing his being, and not being, at the same time: He must be, as the cause producing; and not be, as the effect to be produced; and so must necessarily be, before he was, which is an evident, and undeniable contradiction.

But by a self-existent Being, I mean, a Being without a cause, or beginning; or a Being, who has not his existence from another, but from himself, or his own Nature; or a Being, that exists, because it is his nature to exist.

These are all but different expressions for the same thing; and as they do imply each other, so they may be indifferently us'd one for the other.

For to exist without a cause, is to exist without beginning, and to exist without cause, or beginning, is to exist of his own nature, or because it is his nature to exist.

Now,

Now, that there is such a Being, is our next business to prove, which how much soever it may pose our understandings to conceive, how 'tis possible, yet we are as certain it cannot but be so, as we are sure that any thing does exist :

Because without such a Being, it would have been impossible for any thing to be.

For if there was not some Being without beginning, there was a time, when there was no Being; and if so, it must have been impossible for any thing ever to have come into being, unless something be suppos'd to make it self, which is already shewn to be impossible.

And therefore the Atheist's own argument is in this sense most undoubtedly true, that *out of nothing, nothing can proceed*; that is, where there is neither Patient to be acted on, nor Agent to act, there must be an everlasting nothing.

So

So that, let the Atheist take what Hypothesis he pleases, he must necessarily allow the truth of this proposition, that there cannot but be some self-existent Being. And if so, from hence it will follow, that there cannot but be some independent, eternal, necessary, everlasting, immutable, omnipresent Being.

For to exist without a cause, supposes in the very notion of it independency, and to exist without beginning, is to exist from all Eternity, and to exist naturally and independently, is to exist necessarily, or to exist, because 'tis impossible for it not to exist: For that a thing be possible, it must be the object of some Power, and therefore if we can conceive it possible for a Being, that exists of his own nature independently, not to exist; we must at the same time conceive some power that can make it not exist: And if there be any such Power conceivable, it must be either something in its own nature,  
or

or something without: But as it is a contradiction in terms, that a Being, whose very nature it is to be, should have a nature not to be; so, it is on the other hand, no less a contradiction to suppose a Being that exists independently, subject to any other Power, or Being, whether it shall exist, or not.

A self-existent therefore is a necessary Being, and whatever exists necessarily, must exist everlastingly, and immutably.

For as it is self-evident, that that, which cannot but be, and whose non-existence is impossible, cannot have an end; so 'tis as evident, that whatever a necessary Being is, he is necessarily, and therefore cannot be otherwise, than he is, in any respect whatsoever; and by consequence as he always actually was, whatever he is, or can be from all Eternity past; so he will continue to all Eternity to come, without any possibility of being more or less, better or worse, or in any respect otherwise than

he is, and by consequence without succession or improvement, interruption or decay.

And whatsoever is all this, must be omnipresent. For whatsoever is self-existent, as it is its nature to be, without respect to place; so it will follow, that it is equally its nature to be in one place, as well as another; and as its nature is the ground, and reason of its Being, there is by consequence the same reason for its being every where, as any where: And as a self-existent necessary Being cannot but be, so it cannot but be, whatever it is its nature to be, and therefore it cannot but be in one place, as well as another; and if it might be absent from one place, it might by the same reason, be absent from another; and by consequence would not be necessarily in any place;

A self-existent Being therefore, must be omnipresent.

PROP. II.

## P R O P. II.

Now that this self-existent, independent, eternal, necessary, everlasting, immutable, omnipresent Being is absolutely perfect, is our next business to prove.

The word Perfection, in the metaphysical sense of it, signifies no more, than Being; but in the common use of it, it denotes some determinate degree of Being, according to the different natures of things, consider'd simply in themselves, or in the relation they bear to one another. For the same thing may be said to be perfect in one respect, and imperfect in another at the same time.

A thing may be said to be perfect in its kind, which wants nothing to make it intire, and compleat, according to its nature; and yet it may be said to be imperfect in comparison of something else, as wanting some degree of Being, which that other has. Thus for instance :

A Plant is said to be more perfect than a mere substance, such as earth, or sand, because 'tis a substance indued with a vegetative life, or a power of growth; and yet it is imperfect, in comparison of a Beast, which is a substance indued with an animal Life and Sense: And tho' a Beast is in this respect more perfect, than a Plant, yet it is still imperfect in comparison of a Man, who is indued with Life, Sense, and Reason:

So that things are said to be more or less perfect, according as they have a more or less excellent degree of Being:

And therefore when we say that a Being is absolutely perfect, we must mean, that he has all possible degrees of Being, so as not to be capable of any addition, whereby he may become more excellent than he is.

Now that whatsoever is self-existent is thus perfect, is abundantly evident from various considerations, but I shall chuse to deduce it only from what I have already prov'd. And

And therefore first, as I have shewn (*p.* 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.) that a self-existent Being exists by his nature, necessarily, and independently, and immutably, and therefore is all, that his nature is capable of being, without any possibility of limitation or addition, of being more or less, better or worse than he is, and therefore must be all that it is possible for it to be.

So we have likewise shewn (*p.* 8.) that nothing could have come into Being, without allowing something self-existent; and if this be true,

As it will hence follow on the one hand, that nothing does exist but what is self-existent, or had its Being originally from something self-existent, and by consequence whatever perfection any Being has, a self-existent Being must have, because their whole Being is deriv'd from him :

So it will likewise follow on the other hand, that what a self-existent Being has not, cannot come into Being,

ing, and therefore is impossible to be.

And from hence it appears that a self-existent Being, must have all possible degrees of Being, which is what we mean, when we say he is absolutely perfect:

And a Being thus perfect, eternal, necessary, immutable, omnipresent, without beginning or ending, without succession or improvement, interruption or decay, I call an infinite Being.

Thus have I demonstrated the absolute Perfection of God in general: But because we cannot, by reason of the weakness of our finite capacities, conceive this Perfection, but under distinct, and inadequate Ideas, which we call particular Attributes, and Perfections; here it would be proper to inquire particularly, what those Attributes, and Perfections are, under which the divine Nature is conceived, and how far they ought to be ascribed to him:

But

But, as this would give too great an interruption to the thread of my reasoning, and render it more dark and intricate, I shall beg leave to postpone it a while, till I have dispatched the two remaining Propositions concerning the Creation, and Government of the World; it being at present sufficient for my purpose, that I have demonstrated that absolute Perfection in general, in which all particulars are comprehended.

But before I proceed, it will be proper to draw some few inferences from what I have said.

### I N F E R E N C E I.

First then, since there is, as has been proved, a self-existent Being, or a Being, whose Nature it is to exist; (*p. 8.*) as it will hence follow on the one hand, that whatever he is, he is by his Nature, and it is his very Essence so to be; and by consequence, whatever we conceive to be in God, is his very Essence, really, and truly God:

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So on the other hand, since we have shewn his Nature to be independent, eternal, necessary, everlasting, immutable and omnipresent, (*p.* 10.) it will likewise follow, that whatever he is, he is every where, independently, eternally, necessarily, everlastingly, and immutably.

## I N F E R E N C E II.

Secondly, since whatsoever is self-existent is absolutely perfect; (*p.* 14, 15.) then, since every thing we conceive to be in God, is his very Essence, and therefore self-existent, it will follow, that every Perfection, we conceive to be in God, must be absolutely perfect, because self-existent:

And by consequence, when we speak of God, as having many different Perfections belonging to his Nature, we must not be supposed to mean,

Either that these Perfections are common accidents, really distinct from the Divine Essence; because there is nothing  
in

in God, but what is his Essence, really and truly God:

Or that they are really distinct from each other. For then there must be as many Gods, as there are different Perfections, every Perfection having the Essence of God, and by consequence must be self-existent, and absolutely perfect.

And if these Perfections be neither distinct from the Divine Nature, nor one another, it will follow,

### I N F E R E N C E III.

Thirdly, That the Nature of God is simple, and indivisible: So that tho' the Divine Nature be conceiv'd sometimes under one notion, sometimes under another; yet it is but one entire Perfection, one simple and indivisible principle of Action, consider'd under different operations, and exercis'd upon different objects, so as to form in us those different notions of him; whilst there is no real difference, or distincti-

on in him, but in our apprehensions only.

#### I N F E R E N C E IV.

Fourthly, since whatsoever is self-existent is absolutely perfect, and whatsoever is in God, is God; (*p.* 18.) from hence it will follow, that there can be but one God.

For if there were more than one, they must be different, the one from the other, and that accidentally, or essentially: But they cannot differ accidentally, because a self-existent Being can have no accidents; (*p.* 18.) and if they differ essentially, one must have some degree of Being, which the other has not; whereas they are both suppos'd to have all degrees of Being, as they are suppos'd to be absolutely perfect: And by consequence there can be no more self-existent, absolutely perfect Beings than one.

PROP. III.

P R O P. III.

Now that this one self-existent, absolutely perfect Being was the Creator of the World, is the next Proposition to be prov'd.

This, I think, will not need any great matter of argument, if what I have said be true.

I have already prov'd, that nothing could have come into Being without something self-existent; and therefore either the World was self-existent, or it had its Being from some other, that is self-existent.

All therefore that we have to inquire after is, whether the World be self-existent, or not.

And for the resolution of this question, I will take it for granted, that all that is in the World is, either Matter or not Matter: What is not Matter, we call Spirit.

If then it can be prov'd, that there is nothing, either material, or spiritual

in that System of Beings, which we call the World, that is self-existent; it will compleatly prove the question in dispute, namely, that the World cannot be self-existent, and by consequence was made.

Now this I will demonstrate by such arguments only, as are already prov'd.

First, I will begin with the material part of the World, and it will not be difficult to prove, that this cannot be self-existent.

For since we have already shewn, (*p.* 10, 11.) that whatever is self-existent is necessary, and immutable, and cannot be in any respect otherwise than it is :

Since we have likewise shewn, (*p.* 19.) that whatever is self-existent is simple, and indivisible without any possible parts, or properties really distinct from its Essence, or from each other:

And since we have further shewn, (*p.* 12.) that whatever is self-existent, is omnipresent, and therefore incapable of limitation,

limitation, or circumscription; these are arguments abundantly sufficient to demonstrate, that Matter cannot be self-existent, because these are all Perfections incompatible to Matter.

For 'tis evident to Sense, that there is nothing material, but what is in its own nature mutable, and capable of being otherwise, than it is in many respects :

It is evident to Sense, that there is nothing material, that can be conceiv'd without parts, and propertiés in their own nature divisible and distinct:

And 'tis equally evident, that if all Matter be compos'd of distinct and divisible parts, all Matter must be limited, and circumscrib'd; the several parts are mutual bounds and limitations to each other; and as one part cannot be where another is, all Matter cannot be omnipresent, which it must necessarily be, if self-existent\*.

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\* There are several other and better arguments against the omnipresence of Matter, which prove it more directly, as they demonstrate a vacuum, or some space without matter; such as are taken from the Gravitation of Bodies accord-

And if all this be not sufficient, since we have further shewn, (*p.* 15.) that whatever is self-existent is absolutely perfect; as no one can pretend to know any Matter that is, and 'tis self-evident, that all Matter is not absolutely perfect; it is equally evident, that Matter cannot be self-existent, and therefore was made by some other Being, that is self-existent.

#### I N F E R E N C E. V.

And if so, from hence we must infer, that whatsoever is self-existent is immaterial.

And this brings me to inquire in the next place,

Secondly, Whether there be any thing immaterial in that System of Beings,

*ing to their solid content of Matter; the motion of Comets, and the vibration of pendulums. But I was willing to argue from what I had before proved, that I might preserve the several parts of my argument in due connexion to each other, and therefore thought it more proper to refer the reader to those other considerations; if there should be anyone, who is not satisfied about it, and thinks it necessary to inquire further. Dr. Clark's Notes on Rohault's Physics may be consulted on this head, ch. 8. p. 25,*

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which we call the World, (without supposing a God) that can be self-existent.

In answer to which we must inquire, what immaterial Beings are conceiv'd to be in the World, and whether self-existence can belong to all or any of them.

Now of this sort of Beings Mankind have generally conceiv'd the rational Souls of Men to be : Whether they be so, or not, does not belong to this argument, and whether there be any other, we do not know by bare Reason.

The Scriptures indeed give us an account of a higher order of spiritual Beings; but the Scriptures must not be of any authority in this place, where we are disputing that, upon which their authority depends.

Besides we need not concern ourselves about those immaterial Beings, we are there inform'd of; because at the same time, that we are there told of their Being, they are manifestly represented, as dependent Creatures.

And

And by consequence, we cannot doubt, whether those spiritual Beings, the Scripture speaks of, be self-existent, for whose Creation we have the same authority, as we have for their Existence.

All the spiritual Beings therefore that we know, whose Self-existence can possibly be pretended, are the human Souls:

Whether they be self-existent, or not, I believe never was, and probably never will be a dispute: But as I ought to mention it for method sake, so 'tis clear to demonstration that they are not so, from what we have already said.

For if every one has, as is universally suppos'd, and in the very question is implied, a distinct Soul; and if every one's Soul be self-existent; then since it does already appear, that what soever is self-existent is absolutely perfect, it will follow,

First, That there are as many self-existent Beings, as there are human Souls; whereas we have already shewn, (*p.* 20.) there can be but one.

Secondly,

Secondly, That every one's Soul is absolutely perfect, which is contrary to every one's experience, and therefore there can be no pretence of Self-existence here.

And if so, then since neither the material, nor the immaterial part of what we call the World, and which is all that can be meant by it, is self-existent; it will follow, that the World was made by some other cause, which is self-existent, which was to be demonstrated.

#### P R O P. IV.

We come now to the last Proposition, namely,

Fourthly, That this self-existent absolutely perfect Creator is the Governor of the World.

And for the clear proof of this we may observe, what we have already shewn, (*p.* 12.) that whatever is self-existent is omnipresent, and we shall hereafter shew, that whatever is absolutely

lutely perfect, must be absolutely powerful, wise, and good; and if so,

Then since it does already appear, (*p.* 17.) that whatever is in God, is God, and by consequence, whatever he is, he is every where; it will from hence follow,

That, as God is present with all things, so he must be present in the Perfection of Power, Wisdom and Goodness, and by consequence must govern all things:

For by Power I mean an ability to act; and by Goodness, an inclination, or disposition to do good; and by Wisdom, a faculty of understanding, that has relation to means, and ends.

And as it is evidently the Perfection of every faculty to be exercis'd upon its proper objects; and by consequence the Perfection of every powerful, wise and good Being to be exercis'd in doing all that good, that Wisdom directs to be done:

And as it is likewise self-evident, that that is the most perfect Wisdom, that proposes

proposes the best ends, and prosecutes those ends by the best means, and in the best manner;

So since God is necessarily in every place in the perfection of Power, Wisdom and Goodness, he must necessarily be every where doing such acts of Goodness for such ends, and by such means, and in such manner, as his absolute Wisdom judges best.

And in this the whole notion of government is absolv'd, in whatsoever sense we understand it, in respect as well of the conservation, as the ordering and disposal of all things.

And if so, from all these premises put together, it does abundantly appear,

That there is a self-existent, absolutely perfect Being, that made and governs the World, which was the thing to be demonstrated.

Thus have I laid the first great principle, upon which the whole structure of Religion stands.

But, tho' we are sure of our point thus far, that there is a self-existent Being, absolutely perfect, the Maker and Governor of the World; yet since we have no notion of the perfection of this Being, but under particular, and distinct ideas, this will not be a sufficient foundation for true Religion, unless we can be assur'd those ideas are right and true.

I will therefore proceed in the next place to inquire,

First, what those particular ideas are, under which the Divine Nature is to be conceiv'd, as he is an absolutely perfect Being. And

Secondly, Whereas I have shewn, that the World was made, and must be govern'd by this absolutely perfect Being; I will in the next place inquire what notions we are to form of the Creation, and Government of the World, considering it, as made, and govern'd by a Being, to whom these ideas belong.

*Of the Perfections or Attributes of God.*

As to the ideas, under which the Divine Nature is to be conceiv'd, as God is an absolutely perfect Being, we are to recollect, that by absolute Perfection, I have already shewn, is to be meant all degrees of Being.

And therefore the most natural way to discover and explain the particular ideas of the Divine Nature is, to enquire what degrees of Being we can conceive possible, and to attribute them to God in the highest degree, separating all defect, and imperfection from them:

And since we have already observ'd, that there are four several degrees of Being, that we know; as some Beings are mere substance; some substances with life; some with life and sense; some with life, sense and reason; if God has all possible degrees of Being, we must not only conceive him under the notion of a substance indued with life, sense, and reason, but also with

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the highest degrees of these possible, without any defect, or imperfection.

If then we inquire what degrees of Perfection we can conceive possible of substance, life, sense, and reason, and ascribe them to God in the highest degree, that we can conceive it any Perfection or Excellency to have them; we have then the highest notion of God, that we are capable of attaining to.

Or, Secondly, since we have already prov'd, that whatever God is, he is essentially, and is every where, spiritually, independently, necessarily, eternally, immutably, and infinitely, (*p.* 18.) If God be a substance indued with life, sense, and reason, it must be such a life, sense, and reason, as is omnipresent, spiritual, independent, necessary, eternal, immutable, and infinite:

And therefore, if we rightly apprehend the several terms of substance, life, sense, and reason, and annex those ideas of Omnipresence, Spirituality, Independency, Necessity, Eternity, Immutability

tability, and infinity to them, we have then not only another way of finding out the Perfections of God, but we have likewise the highest proof, and assurance of the truth of those perfections, that we are capable of attaining to.

So that either of these ways will bring us to the same end, *viz.* the knowledge of the nature of God: But because the former is the less metaphysical, and to meaner understandings the more intelligible, I choose to proceed in that method, *viz.* by inquiring, what are the highest perfections that we can conceive possible of substance, life, sense, and reason, and thence to form our notions of the Divine Nature.

*The Perfections of God consider'd as a Substance.*

We will begin with the perfections of substance simply, without regard to life, sense, or reason.

By a substance I mean a Being, in opposition to a mode or manner of being.

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That which expressees the manner how any thing is, as black, white, long, short, good, bad, and the like, we call a mode, or accident.

And since every thing is either a being, or a mode of being, what is not a mode of being, we call a substance.

Now as to the perfections of substance, or being simply, all Mankind conceive it a higher and more excellent degree of being, to be without beginning, than to be made: To be independent, than dependent: To be stable and fixt, certain and necessary, than evanid and transitory, precarious and contingent: To be unchangeable, than changeable: To be infinite, than finite: To be immaterial, than corporeal: To be in all places, rather than confin'd to one, or few: To last for ever, than for a time.

These are all evident, and allow'd perfections of substance, simply consider'd; such as are as obvious to every understanding, as that being is better,  
than

than not being, or something is better, than nothing;

And therefore, when we conceive God to be an absolutely perfect substance, we must in this way of reasoning conceive him to be an eternal, independent, necessary, immutable, spiritual, omnipresent, everlasting Being, as we have before prov'd in another manner, (p. 10.)

We come now in the next place to consider the perfections of a substance indu'd with Life.

*The Perfections of God consider'd as a living Substance.*

By life is meant a principle of activity, or self-motion, or an ability to act; and therefore according to the degree of this activity, such is the perfection of life.

Now all Mankind conceive, that it is a higher and more excellent degree of activity, to be able to do all things, that are possible to be done, than only to do some things: To do what we

are able to do in an instant, than by degrees; by bare thought, or will, than by dependence upon means: To do it without labour and difficulty, without opposition and resistance, than otherwise: To have this active capacity all at once, than by a successive and gradual improvement: To have it last for ever, than for a time:

These are all evident and allow'd perfections of activity, or life, which we commonly call power:

And therefore whilst we conceive God, as absolutely perfect in life, we necessarily ascribe to him the utmost degrees possible of power, and must by consequence conceive,

That he is able to do all things, and that in an instant, by his bare Will, without labour or difficulty, without opposition and resistance, without improvement, or decay of his Power, and that he never was, nor ever can be more or less powerful than he is.

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But yet it is here to be observ'd, that since whatever God does, he does by his Will, when we say, that he can do all things, it must be understood, that he can do all things, that he can will to be done: And therefore the true extent and notion of his Power will be best conceiv'd, when we have explain'd the Perfections of the Divine Will, which shall be done hereafter in its proper place.

The next thing to be consider'd is the perfections of Sense.

*The Perfections of God consider'd as a Substance or Being, indued with the highest Perfection of Sense.*

By Sense is sometimes meant a faculty of perceiving Objects by the mediation of our Senses: And the Perfection of this faculty consists in its acuteness, and sagacity: But this has relation only to material Beings; and since 'tis a greater Perfection to be spiritual, than material as we have shewn, (p. 23, 24.)

in that materiality is inconsistent with Self-existence; and since it must therefore be, as it evidently and allowedly is a greater Perfection to discern things spiritually, than by the mediation of, and dependence upon Matter: So since God is already prov'd to be a Spirit, the Perfection of this Faculty in him must consist in a most exquisite Perception of things without the mediation of material Organs, or Senses.

And this is nothing but Understanding, which is a faculty of Reason: For 'tis the Soul only that apprehends, and perceives Objects, and this Perception is call'd Sense, in relation only to material things, which our Souls can no otherwise perceive, than by the help of our bodily Organs; which we therefore call the Senses, as they are the necessary instruments of Sensation, or Perception.

This notion of Sense, as it signifies Understanding, does not belong to this place, but must be consider'd under the Perfections of Reason. That

That which I mean here by sense, is a sensation or perception of Pleasure, or Pain.

And as a life of Pleasure is evidently, and indisputably more valuable and excellent, than that of Pain, which always arises from some imperfection, and defect;

And as it is evidently more eligible to be actually sensible of Pleasure, than only to be capable of it;

And as it is undoubtedly better to have always been in Pleasure, and always to continue so, and to have all degrees of it, than otherwise:

So in ascribing to God the Perfections of Sense, we must conceive him to be indued with the most exquisite and actual perception of all possible degrees of Pleasure, without any possibility of Pain, or of having more or less Pleasure, than he actually has, or ever had, or always will have.

And this we call the Happiness of God.

The last thing to be inquired into is the Perfections of Reason.

*The Perfections of God consider'd as a Substance indued with the highest degrees of Reason.*

By Reason we usually mean a principle of thought, which according as it exerts its self differently, is conceiv'd under the different names of Understanding, and Will.

By the Understanding is meant, that operation of the Mind, by which we not only simply apprehend Objects, and the natures of them, as they lie severally, and jointly before us, but also can compare, and judge of their several relations, and from thence draw inferences, and raise observations, and propound designs, and provide for the consequences of them:

All this is comprehended under the general notion of Understanding:

But that part of it more particularly, which relates to the apprehending  
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and judging of the natures and relations of things, we call Knowledge :

And that by which we propound designs, and find out proper means for the attainment of them, we distinguish by speculative Wisdom, in opposition to practical Wisdom, which belongs to the Will, as shall be shewn by and by.

So that if we are to conceive of God, as absolutely perfect in Reason, we must conceive him to have all possible degrees of Knowledge and Wisdom, without any degree of Imperfection.

And therefore, whereas 'tis evidently an imperfection of Knowledge to know, but in part, or to attain to our Knowledge by steps and degrees, by study and time, by inference and observation : To be liable to error, confusion, or forgetfulness :

And as it is an apparent, and allow'd defect of Wisdom, to propose no End, or to aim at a foolish, or unreasonable End, or to prosecute a right End by improper means, in an improper manner, or season: So

So if we would rightly conceive of God, we must separate all these Imperfections from him; and must conclude, that he not only understands all things, that are possible to be known, and therefore all things that are, or are possible to be; but that he knows them all at once, without any possibility of improvement or mistake, alteration or decay: And that he cannot act without an End, or be mistaken in it, or in the means, manner, or season of pursuing it: And as he knew, as much as he does, and was as wise as he is from all Eternity past; so he is as wise as he can be, and knows as much as he can know to all Eternity to come.

*The Perfections of the Will.*

The other faculty of Reason, which we call the Will, is, that by which we determine our operations in the way of Choice.

This is likewise represented by various names, which we call Passions, according

according to the different manner of its actings, and the different consideration of the objects, that it acts upon, or has relation to.

These we will consider by and by ; but first, it will be necessary to understand rightly the nature of the rational Will in general, and what are the Perfections of it.

By the Will then, I mean that faculty, by which we choose and determine our operations :

But then, as it is in the very nature of it suppos'd to be a faculty of Reason, so it is by consequence necessarily to be suppos'd, that it must naturally choose and determine upon Reason ; unless we could be so absurd, as to say, that 'tis the nature of a rational faculty to act without Reason.

And tho' 'tis certain, that Mankind do not always follow the best, and truest Reason, but very often act directly contrary to it, yet the Will is never determin'd without some Reason or  
other,

other, how impertinent or insufficient soever it be in its own nature.

And as it is evident, that the reasons, or motives that incline the Will to choose may be various, we must therefore conceive it to be such a faculty, by which we can choose variously, according to the various reasons, or motives, that are offer'd to us:

I say, according to the various reasons, or motives: For unless we suppose some rational motive to influence the choice, we have nothing to distinguish the operations of rational Creatures, from those of Brutes.

For they can determine their operations variously, as well as we; but yet, as they do not seem to act upon comparative consideration, and as we do not perceive they know their own operations, or propose any Ends to themselves in them; so they cannot properly be called choice.

We commonly conceive, that they are moved only by sensitive impressions,

ons; and that which strikes their present Sense with strongest impulse, their appetites are, as it were, necessarily inclin'd to. And could we suppose a Brute placed between two objects equally striking his Sense, and therefore equally inviting the appetite, it has been made a doubt, whether he could determine himself to either, but whether like a Needle between two Loadstones, he would not equally incline to both.

But be this as it will, unless we suppose him to be moved to action by some rational consideration, he cannot be said to choose:

And as that which cannot choose its own operations, must by consequence be supposed under a natural necessity of acting only in such and such a manner, and measure, according to the efficiency of those natural causes, upon which its operations depend:

So in opposition to this necessity, that which has a faculty of choosing is said to be free. And

And tho' this term may be very properly applied to persons, who choose; or to the actions, which are the Effects of such a choice, so that they may both be said to be free; yet it is very improperly said of the Will itself, that it is free: Because Freedom, and Will, are but different words for the same thing; and when we say a Man is free, we mean, that he has a Will, and can choose, and determine his own operations, and is not under any necessity of acting so, or so, but can act this way, or that way, according as he has reason for it.

This I take to be the true notion of this faculty, which we call the Will, as likewise of the liberty of it.

And if this be true, that the nature of the Will, and of that Freedom we ascribe to Mankind in respect of it, consists in choosing upon reason; from hence it will follow, that the more reason we have for the choice of any thing, as our choice is the more rational and  
perfect,

perfect, so is it likewise the more free: And by consequence, when our Wills choose nothing but what is reasonable to be chosen, and those things most, that are most reasonable, and when our actions are exactly conformable to our Wills, then we are in a true state of rational and perfect Freedom.

This is the highest Perfection of Freedom, consider'd in its self; and tho' this be an excellent and eligible state of Being, yet it would be still more eligible, and excellent, to be sure of its continuance, without any possible hazard of an End, or Alteration:

And therefore if we would conceive of God, as we ought to do, in ascribing to him the perfections of Reason, we must conceive him to be indued with an absolute Freedom, or Power of self-determination upon principles of Reason; that he is not bound down to this, or that object, or manner, or measure of acting, by any thing, but Reason; but can act variously, accord-

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ing as he has Reason for it; that is, he can act differently upon different objects, and contrarily upon contrary objects; and that too, in different manners and degrees, according as he has different or contrary Reasons:

And this we call the Freedom of God.

But then Secondly, as he has a Power of determining his operations differently, according as his Reason directs, so we must conceive he has this in the highest degree possible; and therefore he must be incapable of determining his operations otherwise, that is, either without, or contrary to Reason, or otherwise than according to the measure and degree of Reason he has for his operations: And by consequence he cannot but incline to those things most, that he has most reason for, and that without any possibility of the discontinuance of this, or of its alteration or decay, or any other defect or imperfection.

This is the perfection of rational Freedom; and this perfection of Freedom, which we see consists in an immutable conformity of the Will to the dictates of Reason, we call Holiness.

But yet here it is to be observ'd, (for the right understanding of the several terms, by which we commonly speak of the Divine Nature) that, as Reason has different names according to its different objects, and by consequence, that which is in general call'd Understanding, is, at other times, call'd Wisdom, when consider'd, as having relation to ends, and means; so it is here;

And therefore, tho' this perfect conformity of the Will, to the dictates of Reason, be in general call'd Holiness; yet when Reason is consider'd, as directing any thing, as a means to an end, and the Will is determin'd to pursue that end, by those means; then the conformity of the Will, to the dictates of Reason, in this case, may be call'd the Wisdom of the Will.

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And as that Wisdom, which we before have taken notice of, as an act of the Understanding, which considers only the natures, and relations of things, without any determination toward them, is therefore call'd speculative Wisdom; so this Wisdom, which is here said to be an act of the Will, may be call'd practical Wisdom.

And as this determination of the Will in God is invariable; so this is sometimes call'd, when spoken of the Divine Nature, the immutability of God; that is, the moral immutability in contradistinction to the natural immutability of the Divine Nature, which we have before taken notice of, (*p. 11.*)

But nevertheless, when we consider the Will only and simply, as acting in conformity to the dictates of Reason, without respect to any thing else, it is then properly call'd Holiness, however we may in different respects represent it under different names.

And

And as the Will of God is always invariably determin'd by Reason, and the Reason of God is always right, and cannot possibly be mistaken; so this invariable determination of the Divine Will, according to the dictates of his infallible Reason, is what we mean by the Holiness of God.

*Corollaries from the Holiness of God.*

From this notion of the Holiness of God, several things will follow: For,

If the Will and Operations of God are immutably conformable to his Reason, it is natural to infer, that he cannot will, or act any thing contrary to his Knowledge and Wisdom, which are included in the notion of Reason.

First, He cannot will or act any thing contrary to his Knowledge.

By Knowledge is meant the perception of things, as they are, whether in respect of their own nature, consider'd simply in themselves, or in the relation they stand in to others; and by consequence,

sequence, Knowledge supposes the reality, or in some sense the existence of the thing known, so far as it is known.

And therefore, as it is plain, that nothing, or that which has no being, cannot be perceiv'd, and therefore not known to be; so it is as plain, that those things, that have a being, cannot be perceiv'd, and therefore not known to be, what they really are not; because this is to perceive, and know what is not, or nothing.

And therefore, as God knows all things, he must know them only, as they really are; and he cannot know them to be otherwise, that is, he cannot know things past, but as really past, nor otherwise, than as they were when present; nor things future, but as future, nor otherwise, than they will be, when they come to pass; nor things possible, but as possible, nor otherwise, than they shall be, when brought into actual being.

And

And if so, then if his Will, and Operations be always conformable to his Knowledge, they must be always conformable to the reality of things, as they are; so as not to be capable of willing any thing in its nature to be, what he at the same time knows it not to be, either simply, or relatively consider'd; or of doing any thing contrary, to what he knows the natures and relations, and by consequence, the reasons of things require.

And if so, since the reality of things, as they are in their natures, and relations, is the very notion of Truth; it will follow, that he cannot will, or act any thing contrary to Truth; so that if God be Holy, he must be immutably True.

Secondly, as God cannot will, or act any thing contrary to his Knowledge; so neither can he to his Wisdom.

Wisdom, in the very nature of it, supposes an End, and an End as naturally implies some Good: For by an

End is meant that Reason or Motive, that inclines an Agent to act; and that which right Reason approves, as convenient for an Agent to aim at, and act for, is the very notion of Good: And therefore, if God cannot will, or act any thing, but what is agreeable to his Wisdom, he must always will, and act with an intention of some Good; and as it is self-evident, that an absolutely perfect Being can want no Good to himself, it must therefore follow, that it must be some Good to his Creatures.

So that from the Holiness of God, we are assur'd of his Goodness, that he never wills, or acts any thing, but for the Good of his Creatures.

But then, as Wisdom supposes an End, so does it a wise and rational End; that is, such an End, as is suitable to the nature of things, and such, as is capable of being attain'd:

And therefore, tho' God be immutably dispos'd to do Good to his Creatures,

tures, and cannot will, or act any thing but for that End; yet as his Goodness is a wise Goodness, he cannot be suppos'd to will, or do Good to his Creatures, but in such manner, and degree, as they are capable, and shall best answer the End of doing Good.

So that when we speak of the Goodness of God, we must mean an immutable disposition of the Divine Mind, to do Good to his Creatures, according to their several natures, and capacities.

Now according as the circumstances, and capacities of Mankind are different; so this attribute is distinguish'd by different names:

When it has relation to Punishment, we call it Justice; to Pardon, Mercy; to Moderation in Punishment, Equity; to Slowness, Patience and the like: But yet, as all these are but so many several ways of doing Good, and so many different operations intended for that End; so they are all com-

prehended under the general notion of Goodness:

And as Goodness, we see, is the necessary result of Holiness, and these several operations the natural result of Goodness; so we must as necessarily conceive the Divine Nature to be dispos'd to these several operations of Justice and Mercy, &c. as we conceive him to be holy, and good.

But then, as Holiness always acts according to Reason, and Goodness disposes the Divine Nature to do good to his Creatures, in such manner and degree, as they are capable; so we must conceive of his Justice and Mercy; namely, that tho' God be dispos'd to punish, or pardon, as there is occasion, and the natures of things require; yet it must be only in such manner, and measure, and season, as his Wisdom sees best for the good of his Creatures.

And if so, from all this we see the absurdity of those notions, that are commonly

monly drawn from the absolute Sovereignty of God, as an Attribute of the Divine Nature, denoting a Power of dealing with his Creatures, as he pleases, without any regard to right, or wrong.

For according to these reasonings, we plainly see there is no such Attribute belonging to the Divine Nature.

Sovereignty is not properly a Perfection of the Divine Nature in itself, but only an extrinſick denomination, arising from the relation he bears to the World, as his Creatures; and it properly signifies no more, than a right of Dominion, or Government; which, as God is holy, can be only a Right of disposing, or dealing with his Creatures, according to his infallible Reason: that is, as we have now shewn, according to his Knowledge of the natures, and capacities of his Creatures, and according as his Wisdom judges best for their good.

And thus we are to conceive of the Perfections of the Divine Will.

And

And from hence we may be able to explain the true extent of God's Power: For as we have already observ'd, (*p.* 36.) that whatever he does, he does by his Will, and therefore can do, whatever he can will; so we may say, on the other hand, that what he cannot will, he cannot do; and that not for any defect of Power, but because 'tis contrary to his Reason to will it:

And therefore, First, as God cannot will any thing contrary to his Knowledge; so he cannot make any thing not to be, at the same time that he knows it is; nor any thing to be, what he knows it not to be: He cannot make Good Evil, nor Evil Good; Truth to be Falshood, nor Falshood Truth: In a word, he cannot make a thing to be, and not to be; to be so and so related, and not to be so, and so related at the same time, and in the same respect; which is what we call a Contradiction.

Secondly, As he cannot will any thing contrary to Truth, so it is impossible

possible for God to lye; to do or say any thing that is false.

Thirdly, As he cannot will any thing contrary to Wisdom, and therefore to Goodness; so 'tis impossible for God to make any Creature, that it should be miserable; or after it is made, to make it miserable, merely for the sake of misery.

These seem to be certain, and undeniable conclusions; which not only shew us the notion of God's Power, but also the reason of the bounds we set to it.

And thus much might suffice upon this head, *viz.* the Perfections of the rational Will, and how far they belong to God;

But because the various operations of the Will are usually distinguish'd under different names, which we call Affections, or Passions; it will not be amiss to inquire a little into the nature of these Passions, and how far they ought to be ascrib'd to God.

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*Of the Passions.*

And here it is to be observ'd, that, tho' these operations, which we call Passions in us, are really the motions of the rational Will; yet they chiefly shew themselves in the sensitive part, as being usually attended with an extraordinary commotion of our Spirits:

And they are call'd Passions, either because they are effects sometimes excited in the Mind, by the operation of the Blood and Spirits; or, because there is usually a commotion excited in the Blood and Spirits by these inward operations of the Mind; in both which respects they agree with the usual notion of Passion, which is to receive the effect of an Agent.

Now because these Passions are very often occasion'd by, or attended with these bodily commotions, Men are generally cautious, how they ascribe them to God, as seeming to imply some imperfections; and when they do

it, 'tis usually understood to be spoken after the manner of Men.

Whereas, if they be, as certainly they are, real motions and affections of the rational Soul, there can be no doubt, but that there is something in the nature of God, consider'd as a perfectly rational Being, analogous to these affections in us, tho' infinitely remov'd from those imperfections, with which they are attended in us: And we may as well refuse to ascribe the faculty of Knowledge to God, because we know by ratiocination; as deny all rational Affections to him, because they are excited in us by Passion: We have no room to boggle at the one more than the other; but, provided we separate all Imperfections from them, we may as safely ascribe them to God, as any other faculty of the Mind. For indeed they are but the several modifications of the Will, or so many various modes, or ways of representing its operations in the pursuit of good, and avoiding evil;  
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for according as any object appears to the understanding to be good or evil, grateful or ungrateful; so the Will is inclin'd or averse to it, embraces, or rejects it: And this inclination of the Will to good, we call Love, and the aversion to evil, Hatred: and according as the good, or evil, is variously consider'd, either as present, or future; so these dispositions of the Will receive various denominations.

If the good, or evil, be consider'd as present, because the Will cannot embrace what the Understanding approves, without some complacency in it, nor shew its aversion to a present evil, without some disturbance at it, therefore that general inclination of the Will to good, which is called Love, is then called Delight and Joy; and that general aversion to evil, which is call'd Hatred, is then distinguish'd by Grief, or Anger.

If the good, or evil, be consider'd, as future, then the Love is call'd Desire,  
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doubtless something in the Divine Nature, as I said, analogous to these operations in us, tho' altogether without our imperfections :

And therefore, as we love what appears good to us with a sensitive complacency; so God has such a disposition to all good, as to take a rational pleasure in it.

And tho' God cannot be said to grieve, or be angry, as they imply a discomposure, and disturbance in us; yet there is doubtless such an aversion to all evil in the Divine Mind, as to produce in his operations such effects, as are the tokens of those Passions in us : There is a real dislike, tho' without disorder; there is a rational motion, tho' without disturbance.

Thus far therefore we may ascribe these Affections to God.

But then we must remember, that these Affections are, as I said before, (*p.* 60.) but the various motions of the Will; and by consequence, as it is the  
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the perfection of the Divine Will, to be immutably conformable to the dictates of Reason; so must these affections in God be always conceiv'd to be: And therefore,

First, As God cannot will; so we must conclude, that he cannot love, or hate without Reason; nor in any degree, but what he has Reason for: And therefore, as he cannot be said, even to love himself, merely because he will, but because he has Reason for it, as being perfect, and worthy to be belov'd; so he must love himself infinitely, because he is infinitely perfect, and every thing else in such degree, as it comes nearer to his Perfection.

And thus likewise he must be said to hate, not because he will, but because the thing he hates is evil; and by consequence he hates it, only in such a degree, and proportion, as it is so.

Secondly, As his Will is, so we must conceive his Love and Hatred to be immutably conformable to his Know-

ledge and Wisdom, and by consequence to Truth, and Goodness ; so as to love and hate every thing, so far as it is agreeable, or disagreeable to Truth, and so far as it is beneficial, or hurtful to his Creatures.

And thus we are to conceive of God, with respect to the Affections or Passions ; and with this we shall conclude, what we propos'd to say concerning the perfections of the Divine Nature ; from all which put together we have as clear a view, and as full a discovery of it, as our finite powers are capable of attaining to, by the principles of Reason only.

And if all this whole Series of conclusions be true, as they appear to be demonstratively so ; from hence I may draw this general Corollary, *viz.*

*Corollary.*

That whatsoever notions of God are deliver'd to us, contrary to these, are so far contrary to truth ; and so far as they

they

they are agreeable to these, so far we have reason to think them true.

And if so, from hence it will follow, that, since we have a Book, we call the Scriptures, wherein the Nature of God is exactly represented, agreeable to these notions here demonstrated, as a self-existent, independent, necessary, immutable, incorporeal, indivisible, infinite, omnipresent, everlasting, omnipotent, happy Being, indued with the utmost perfection of Knowledge, Wisdom, Holiness, Goodness, and Truth; so far it is worthy to be receiv'd as true.

Thus I have dispatch'd the first thing to be consider'd, *viz.* how we are to conceive of God, as an absolutely perfect Nature, or Being.

And these notions I lay down, as my Postulata, which I shall take for granted all along; and upon this Basis I will endeavour to erect, in a chain of certain, and easy consequences, the whole fabrick of true Religion, whether natural, or reveal'd.

And in order to this, whereas I have shewn that this Being, to whom these Perfections belong, is the Creator, and Governor of the World, I will, in the next place, proceed to inquire,

Secondly, What notions we are to form of the Creation and Government of the World, considering it, as made and govern'd by this absolutely perfect Being.

And in discoursing upon this, I will not trouble you with any of those impertinent subtilties, that idle, and vain Men puzzle, and confound their own, and others understanding with.

We must expect to meet with many things of this kind in every speculation, we exercise our thoughts upon: There is something in every thing that we do not, and cannot understand: But much more must we expect this, when we contemplate the nature, and operations of God, whose *thoughts* must necessarily be *above our thoughts, and his ways above our ways.*

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As he is an infinite Being, he must be, know, and do infinitely beyond what we can conceive: And therefore, when we are surpriz'd with difficulties about self-existence, omnipresence, prescience, the decrees of God, his immanent, and transient actions, and his permission of evil, and the like, 'tis a sufficient answer to them all, that God is infinite, and therefore incomprehensible. These things lie in the dark, because we have not faculties sufficient for them; and 'tis not to be expected, that we should see, where we have neither light, nor eyes.

As we are finite Creatures, these difficulties cannot but be, and God would not be infinite, if it were not so. That which we are concern'd in, is, what we know, and are sure of, and we know enough for our purpose: And as I have already given you an account of what we know concerning God, as to his Nature, and Perfections, and shewn you what we are to conceive of him,

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consider'd, as a Being absolutely perfect; I will now proceed to the point in hand, namely, to consider his operations, and what notions we are to form of his several works of Creation, and Government of the World, as it was made, and is govern'd according to these Perfections.

*Of the Creation of the World.*

I will begin with the Creation of the World. By the World I have already shewn, is meant all things, visible and invisible, material and immaterial; except that one self-existent, absolutely perfect Being, whom we call God.

And by the Creation of the World is meant, that all things receiv'd their whole, and intire Beings, and all that they are, from him.

Now since 'tis plain, that this one God, the Creator of all things, cannot, as he is absolutely perfect, act contrary to his nature; and therefore must do every thing suitably to his own perfections;

fections; if we do but reflect upon these several perfections, under which his nature is conceiv'd, and which we have shewn are necessarily to be ascrib'd to him; and consider him, as acting according to them in the Creation of the World; this will set this great Work in an open, and easy light, and conduct us on from one thing to another, into a clear and distinct apprehension of all things, necessary to be known concerning it, for the discovery, and establishment of true Religion.

And therefore first, as the World was the effect of God's Almighty Power, here we will begin; and if we look back, and consider what the notion of this Power is, and what consequences will follow from it, this will furnish us with several useful observations.

Now by the Power of God, if you remember, I have already shewn, (*p.* 36.) is meant, his being able to do all things, in an instant, by the operation of his bare Will; and that as

he can do, whatever he can will; so what he cannot will, he cannot do.

And if so, what is the natural consequence from hence, but that, as nothing could come into being without his willing it to be; so all things must have been immediately produced, so soon as he will'd they should be? And therefore, as the World was an effect, purely voluntary, and no necessary emanation from the divine Substance; so it requir'd no other principles to raise its being from, but the bare Will of the Creator only.

When this mighty Work was wrought, Reason alone cannot inform us: As it is a matter of fact, 'tis knowable only by Tradition, or Revelation: We have no principles in nature to reason from, by which it can be assign'd to any determinate time.

We can only say in general, that the novelty of History, the known rise and progress of Arts, and Sciences, the late cultivation, and civilizing of Nations,  
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and the small increase of Mankind, are undeniable arguments, that the World has not been of any long continuance: But how lately soe'er it might have been made, we are thus far sure, there is no point of time, beyond which it might not have been made, if God had so determin'd it to be.

And if this be true, that God could have made the World, howsoever, and whensoever he pleas'd, by his bare willing it to be; then, as all things are equally easy to God, that he can will, and by consequence it is as easy to God to make a World, as make a Fly; so he could, as easily, make ten thousand worlds, as one.

And as there can be no certain bounds assign'd, beyond which his works might not have been extended; so 'tis no wise unreasonable to think, that God has made more worlds, than this, that we our selves live, and inhabit in: And as he has made us, and all other creatures here, with such natures, powers,  
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and properties, as are suitable to our terrestrial System; so he may, for ought we know, have fill'd the vast field of space beyond us, with various species of other Beings, with different natures, powers, and properties, and under different regulations and œconomies.

But how reasonable soever it may be to think this, yet 'tis what we cannot be sure of: However, I thought it not amiss to mention it, as it is highly honourable to God, and tends to very good purposes of Religion; as it enlarges our ideas, and begets in us very awful thoughts of his unbounded Power, Wisdom, and Goodness; whilst we consider them display'd in such a vast and indefinite extent of Beings.

And thus we may reason from the Power of God.

But here it is to be observ'd, that when we resolve this great work of the Creation into the bare Power and Will  
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of God, we must not conceive, that it was the effect of mere Will without Reason. No, as God is absolutely holy, and cannot act but in conformity to the dictates of his infallible Reason; so we must conclude, that in the Creation, he was guided by his Reason, and that the World by consequence was not a mere arbitrary production, but the effect of a free, and rational election.

And therefore, that he made the World no sooner, was not without Reason; and that he made it, when he did, at that time, and in this form, and order, was not merely, because he would, but because he saw it most reasonable, and fit to be done: He saw that to be the fittest time, and this the properest form, and order for it to be made in.

Reason is the rule of all his operations; and if we consider God, as acting always according to this rule, which is the notion we have before given of his Holiness; (*p. 50.*) since we have be-

fore shewn, that under this is comprehended, and by this it is implied, that he must always be directed in all his operations by his Knowledge and Wisdom, Truth and Goodness; as we must conceive him acting in the Creation, according to these several perfections, as his rules; so these several perfections are the natural rules to us to form our notion of his Creation by.

And therefore first, let us consider God as acting in the Creation, according to his Knowledge; and if this be allow'd, that his Knowledge is infinite, that he could never begin to know any thing, and shall never cease to know every thing; (*p.* 42.) from hence it will follow, that he made nothing by chance, nothing, but what he eternally knew, and had a perfect, and intire Idea of, before he made it; and that every thing was made according to those eternal, and perfect Ideas of his infinite Mind.

And if so, from hence we may conclude, that every thing must have been  
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made perfect in its kind; and therefore, as there was nothing in any being superfluous, or redundant, useless, or unnecessary on the one hand; so there was nothing lame, or weak, or defective on the other: But on the contrary, as God made various species, orders, and classes of Beings, every Creature must have been made with nothing more, or less, than that order, or class of Beings requir'd to its perfection, according to the Divine Idea.

And therefore every Creature, that God made, must have been at that very instant, after it was made, as perfect, as that species of Creatures would admit of: And by consequence, every Creature must not only have had all the parts, and powers, and properties of the Species intire, as to their number, nature, order, and use; but also all these in such a measure of strength, vigor, and activity, as the perfection of that Species requir'd.

This must be true of all the Creatures in the world; and if we apply this particularly to Man, we must conceive, that when God made Man, as soon as he was made, he must have been of necessity a perfect Man; not wanting in any thing, that the perfection of his nature, and species required, according to the state in which he was Created :

And by consequence, since the human nature is compounded of a reasonable and sensitive principle, which we call Soul, and Body, he must have been made perfect in both these. And therefore,

First, as Man is indued with a reasonable Principle, or Soul, he must be made perfectly reasonable; that is, his understanding must have been inform'd, or at least, capable of knowing by reason every thing necessary to be known, so far as reason can discover it; and that too so soon, as his occasions should require it: And his will, and affecti-  
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ons, must have been in a regular subordination to his understanding, so as not to choose, or reject any thing but as reason should direct, and approve ; this being evidently the perfection of the rational nature, which we call Holiness.

Secondly, As the Body is made up of several parts in a certain number, order, and proportion, with such, and such faculties, and powers, adapted to such, and such ends, and uses, all which are put in conjunction with, and under the direction, and government of reason; so it must have been made perfect in these respects: And therefore, the Body of the first Man must have been perfect, not only in its integrant parts, as to their number, order, and use, so as to have the most healthful, and vigorous constitution, the most regular crasis and disposition of blood, and humours, the most equal motion of the animal spirits, with the utmost exactness of symmetry, and

and proportion : As likewise all its faculties and powers, its appetites and senses intirely suited to their ends, and objects, which I call the natural perfection of the Body : But it must also have been perfectly subject to the Soul, so as not to be naturally carried towards any thing, that reason disallowed, nor in any other manner or measure, than as reason approv'd, which I call the moral perfection of the Body.

This must be so, if the divine operations are agreeable to his Knowledge ; for otherwise he must have had an imperfect idea of his works.

But further, if God made all things according to his Knowledge, since he cannot begin to know any thing, he must have made every thing with a certain Fore-knowledge, how it would act, when it should come into being, and what the event of its several actings would be.

But

And as 'tis evident, that he made all material things, mutable; and all living beings, mortal; and all rational creatures, fallible; and all free creatures peccable, or liable to sin; so he must have, not only foreseen all the various possible changes of the former, and all the deaths, and errors, and sins of the latter, with the cause, the manner, and circumstances of them; but also, all the possible effects, that those changes, deaths, and errors would produce for ever: And if all things were made according to this idea, he must have order'd all things so, as to answer all these several events for ever, that his work should not be disorder'd, nor his design defeated by them.

These are natural consequences from the Knowledge of God.

Secondly, As the World was made according to the Knowledge, so must it likewise be according to the Wisdom of God.

And therefore, as wisdom has relation to ends, and means, and he is only truly wise, that proposes to himself the best ends, and pursues those ends by the best, and properest means; so in making the world, we must conclude, that God made nothing in vain, but every thing for some end: And that he indued all his Creatures with such natures, and put them in such orders, relations, and circumstances, as were best suited to, and most proper for the attainment of that end.

And if so (to apply and illustrate this) when we see God has made various kinds, and species of creatures to live upon the face of the Earth; if this was done according to our notion of Wisdom, he must not only have made all its various inhabitants, of such natures, organs, and dispositions, as are suited to this terrestrial Region; but he must likewise have made the Earth of such a nature, form, and magnitude, as was best, and most proper  
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for their reception; so as that there should never be more Creatures, than it should be capable of receiving, nor any natural necessity, but what it should be capable of supplying :

And by consequence, as it is self-evident, that Animals cannot live without proper Food; so God must not only have made enough of this for every living Creature in the world, and that too such Food, as was most proper for their use, and nourishment; but he must likewise have given them proper faculties to distinguish, and suitable powers to attain it; so as that by acting according to those faculties and powers, the life of each creature might be preserv'd, in that manner, and for that duration, which the end of their Creation requir'd.

And as 'tis evident, that God intended, that these inhabitants of the Earth should come upon it by degrees, by the generation of one thing from another; he must not only have given

every kind, and species of his Creatures, such natural dispositions, tendencies, and powers, as were adapted to this end, and purpose; but such likewise as were necessary for the preservation, and nourishment of their several offsprings :

And as these various species of Creatures were to be disperst into the different parts of the Earth, and live under different climates; so he must not only have suited the several natures of his Creatures to their different situations, but the Earth likewise must be furnish'd with all such necessaries, as those different climates should require.

And if among all these inhabitants of the Earth we consider Mankind, as sociable Creatures, and visibly intended to live together in society, as they must be made of a nature fitted for it, and dispos'd to it, and therefore, with a natural principle of Association : So they must likewise be form'd in such a manner, as Society required; and by  
consequence

consequence must be made with proper organs of Speech, by which they might communicate their thoughts to one another; and such an evident distinction of Faces, and Voices, by which their Persons might be certainly known from one another, because without this no Society could be maintain'd.

And lastly, As this Earth, and the various Inhabitants of it, have so manifest a dependance on the heavenly Bodies, in order to their several ends, that the one cannot be attain'd without the influence of the other; so we must conceive, that the nature he has given, and the position, order, and motion, that he has placed these heavenly Bodies in, is best for the Earth, and the several Creatures living on it: So that if they had been put in any other position, order, or motion, those ends could not be naturally, or at least, not so well, or so effectually, or easily attain'd.

And by consequence, as the heat, and light of the heavenly Bodies is

communicated differently, to the different parts of the Earth, according to their different situations, we must conclude, that this is best for those places, and that it would not have been so well for them to have more light, and heat, or in any other manner, than it is now imparted to them.

These are all plain, and natural consequences, which I intend only as hints, that the Reader may improve in his private Meditations : These are sufficient for my purpose, without further enlargement; and as we are taught by these, how to think of the Creation, considering it as made by a wise Being; so 'tis a wonderful satisfaction to a considering mind, to find the World answering in all these respects, so far as we are able to see into it; by which every reasonable Man must be convinced, that it was the effect of a wise contrivance, as being such a work, as even according to our notions of Wisdom, ought to have been made in this  
very

very manner, that we now actually find it made in, in respect of the general nature and design of it.

I might now dismiss this Meditation, but that I think it proper to draw one observation more from it, for the confirmation of what I have before taken notice of, *viz.* that all things were made perfect in their kind.

For if all things were made for some end, and indued with such a nature as was best suited to that end; it will hence follow, that all things must have not only been made with all that the end of their several species required, and therefore, with the whole nature of the Species; but also, that they must have had it in such manner, and degree, as was best suited to the end of the several Species, and by consequence must have been perfect in their kinds.

This is a point, I shall make great use of hereafter; and therefore am the more concern'd to see it well establish'd beyond all possibility of objection.

And thus much shall suffice upon this head.

We come now, Thirdly, to consider what notions we are to form of the Creation of the World, as it was made by a God of Truth.

And in order to this, we must look back, as before, and consider what is meant by Truth. Now by this nothing more is meant, but the reality of things, as they are, either in themselves, or as they stand related to one another.

And if all things must have been made according to Truth, since there is evidently a natural relation between the idea of all things in the Divine Mind, and the things to be form'd by it; we must conceive that all things were made accordingly; and by consequence, as God could not have an imperfect idea of his Works; so all things must be made perfect in their kind, as I said before.

And

And so likewise, since there is a manifest relation between the things themselves, consider'd either as means and ends, causes and effects, faculties and objects; we must by consequence conceive, that nothing was made of this nature, but what was agreeable to these relations.

And therefore, first, as has been observ'd before, (*p.* 82.) whatsoever natural end God made any thing for, he must in the Creation have provided suitable means for attaining it; and there must have been such a necessary agreement between those means, and that end, that the end should certainly be attain'd by those means.

And as every thing had its nature in order to an end, and therefore, by acting according to its nature, must attain its end; so from hence it will follow, that so far as we can know the natures of things, so far we may be able to judge of their ends: and on the contrary, so far as we can find the end of  
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any thing, so far we may certainly conclude, as to its nature, if we are able to discover what nature is necessary to that end. As there must be this agreement between natural means, and their ends; so

Secondly, There must likewise be between natural causes, and effects: so that whatever natural powers are indued with a natural principle of causality, or an aptitude to produce such, and such effects; we must conceive, that these powers were so dispos'd, that whenever they were put into action, according to their nature, their respective effects would be naturally produc'd, and that too in proportion to their respective powers, and operations, so as that there should be a natural agreement between them.

And therefore, as no effect can be produc'd without a cause, nor a cause be without an effect; so whatever natural effects there are, or are possible to be, they must have a cause, or power proportion'd

portion'd to them; and those effects must be such, as are suitable to the nature, and power of their causes.

And as 'tis evident to Sense, that nothing can give naturally, what it has not in its nature to give; and therefore no cause can produce any natural effect contrary to, or above its nature; so no natural effect can receive what the cause has not, or be in its nature what the cause is not.

And therefore, rest cannot naturally produce motion, nor motion rest: Mere matter cannot produce any thing, but mere matter; nor matter and motion any thing, but matter and motion; and that too in such manner, and degree, as are suitable to the natural laws of motion.

And so by the same reason, a substance without Life, Sense, or Reason, cannot produce a living, sensible, or rational Creature; nor can a living sensible, or rational Creature produce any other, or higher order or species of Creatures, than itself. And

And if this be true, from hence it will follow, that no living, sensible, much less rational Agent, can be produc'd by mere matter, and motion.

For by Life, as it signifies animal life is meant a principle of activity, or self-motion; and as 'tis evident to all observation, that matter, as matter, cannot move itself, and therefore has no principle of life in itself; so it cannot give a principle of self-motion, or life to another.

And so likewise, as 'tis evident to every understanding, that neither matter, nor motion separately, or conjunctly do in their own nature imply, nor are in their nature indued with Sense, or Reason; so neither can they separately, or conjunctly, produce Sense, or Reason, in another.

And if so, from hence it will follow by necessary consequence, that every rational, sensible, and living Creature must be indued with some immaterial principle, which is the cause of all their rational, sensible, or animal Operations. And

And by consequence, tho' we see living, sensible, and rational Creatures produced by corporeal generation; yet there is nothing naturally produc'd by that generation, but matter so and so dispos'd, according to the nature of its cause: Which being united to an immaterial principle, and that principle being by that union fitted with proper organs of operation, it is thereby render'd capable of producing such effects, as are suitable to those organs, and those ends, for which those organs were appointed.

If any one should ask in this case, as 'tis natural enough to do, what the nature of that immaterial Principle is, that actuates a living, and sensible Being, and what becomes of it, when it dies; it ought to be a sufficient answer to say, we cannot tell; and 'tis very unreasonable in this case to expect any other answer, than this. For we can know nothing of it, but either by Revelation, Reason, or Sense: But Revelation

velation we have none concerning it : Sense it is not the object of : And as Reason can know nothing, but by the consideration of the natures, and reasons of things ; so there is nothing in the natures of things that we can reason from to form any certain Judgment by : So that to expect we should give an account of this, is to require us to know what we have not Faculties for ; which is as absurd, as to expect that a blind Man should understand colours, or a deaf one sounds.

But thus much we may say with safety, that it is not inconsistent with Reason, that there may be several degrees, and orders of immaterial Beings, with different powers, and faculties, according to their different ends ; and that such of these as are made to actuate bodies, may be put into different bodies, according to their different capacities ; and when those immaterial Beings are separated from these bodies, so that the bodies are  
dead,

dead, it is not inconsistent to imagine, that they may transmigrate into other bodies; and when they have finish'd that course, they were made for, they may, either at last be annihilated, or if they are capable of any reward, God may have provided proper recompences for them, according to their several natures, and capacities.

There is nothing in all this, but what is reasonable. But be this as it will, 'tis nothing to us: We are only concern'd in the thing itself, whether those operations of Life and Sense in Animals, proceed from mere matter and motion, or not, which we have already shewn, they cannot do; and therefore must proceed from something immaterial, how little soever we know of such Beings.

I have been the longer upon this point, not only because it is an useful meditation in general, and often comes into dispute; but also as it is particularly necessary to my design: For in  
this

this Discourse I have frequent occasion to speak of the rational Soul, as a principle distinct from the Body; and I think it ought not to be taken for granted, especially when any argument is built upon it.

Thirdly, As there is such a necessary relation between natural causes and their effects; so is there likewise between natural faculties, and their objects: And if the world was made accordingly, from hence it will follow:

That whatever faculty God made, he must have provided a suitable object for it, and for every object a suitable faculty, and there must be a natural agreement between them:

And if so, as we may from hence conclude on the one hand, that whatever object he saw necessary by any Creature to be desir'd, in order to the enjoyment of it; or fear'd in order to the shunning it, he must have given his Creatures suitable appetites to desire, and suitable fears to shun: And what-  
ever

ever is necessary to be perceiv'd, or understood, he must have given them Faculties to perceive, and understand; and that too in such proportion, and degree, as their nature, order, and necessities require.

So, on the other hand, we may likewise conclude, that whatever our natural appetites crave, or our natural fears suggest, must not only have a correspondent Being; but also are proper to be desir'd and fear'd :

And that whatever the senses of all sensible Beings perceive, and the understandings of all reasonable Beings dictate at all times, and all places alike, must not only be; but be as they are perceiv'd, and understood to be; that is, must be certainly, and undoubtedly true.

And if so, we have here a reason in the nature of things for the truth of that common, and known maxim, That an uniform, and universal consent of all mankind, concerning any  
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thing which is the proper object of their faculties, must be a certain and undeniable argument of the truth of that thing, they consent in.

Thus we see in general what notions we are to conceive of the Creation of the world, considering it, as made by a God of truth.

We come now fourthly to consider the Creation, as the effect of the goodness of God, and what notions we are to form of it in this respect.

And if we look back, and consider, that the goodness of God consists in an immutable disposition to do good to his creatures, according as their natures are capable of it; from hence we must conclude, that he made every creature to do them good, and with a design they should be happy according to their natures; and he must have given them such means, and put them in such a state, as was most proper to attain their happiness: And by consequence, that every thing, by acting

according to the nature it was made of, and that state of being it was placed in, must be as happy as it was capable of being: And if so, then to apply, and illustrate this.

First, since 'tis evident there are several degrees and kinds of creatures, it will follow; That they must have been made for such kinds and degrees of happiness, as they are naturally capable of: And therefore,

As there are some kinds of creatures, that are not capable of happiness themselves, as having neither Life nor Sense; so we must conclude, that they must be intended for the happiness of others; and that, as there was nothing made of this kind, but was some way or other proper for, and capable of contributing to this End; so by being us'd according to their Natures, that End would be effectually attained, so far as they could contribute towards it.

Again, As there are other creatures, which, tho' they are indued with Life and Sense, yet seem absolutely necessary for the happiness of Man; so we must conclude, that such creatures were so far intended for his Use.

But as they are capable of some degrees of happiness themselves, we must as necessarily conclude, That it was their Maker's intention, that they should be happy in such kind, and degree, so far as should consist with that higher End of their being useful to the happiness of Man.

And as there was nothing made of this kind, but was made of such a nature, and provided with such means, and placed in such a state, as was suitable to its End; so every thing, by acting according to its Nature, would not only attain its own happiness, but also by being us'd by Man, according to its Nature, in such manner, as is suitable to the Nature of Man, it must effectually contribute to the happiness of Man.

Again,

Again, As Man, considered in himself, is composed of two Natures, a sensitive Body, and a rational Soul, join'd together, having different faculties, fitted for different objects, each capable of different kinds of happiness:

So we must conclude, That God made Man, that he should be happy both in Body and Soul, according to their different natures and capacities; that is, the Body in such an enjoyment of a sensitive, and the Soul in such an enjoyment of a rational happiness, as their nature and state of conjunction is capable of: And that he was, not only provided with such proper means, and placed in such a proper state, as was suitable to this happiness; but by acting according to his nature, and using those means in a natural way, according to the state in which he was placed, he would effectually attain his happiness:

And if so, then first, as 'tis evident, that the rational nature has a faculty, by which it can consider, and apprehend the natures and reasons of things; and another faculty of self-determination, that is, of chusing and acting, according as reason judges any thing fit to be chosen, or done; so it will follow,

That Mankind, as being rational creatures, and made, as we have before shewn, in a state of perfection, must not only have been provided, so soon as they were made, with all the necessary means of every thing necessary to be known; and furnish'd with sufficient power, with suitable rules and motives to do whatever Reason should direct to be done, if they would consider, and do them; but also by considering and acting accordingly, they must have been as happy in their rational nature, as such a nature is naturally capable of.

And

And so secondly, As the bodily nature of Man is composed of several Faculties, and Powers, having senses, and appetites suited to, and carried towards certain objects; so it will follow, That in the Creation, God not only made objects for those Powers, and Faculties, as we before observed, (p. 96) and put Man in such a state, as was most proper for the enjoyment of them; but also, that in the enjoyment of those objects, he must have been as happy, in respect of his body, as his bodily nature is capable of being.

But then, as the state, in which Man was made, was not only a state, wherein these two natures were united; but so united, as I have shewn before, that one part was put in a subordination to the other; the powers and operations of the Body being placed under the superior direction of the Mind, which is the moral perfection of his nature: So it will follow,

That Man could no otherwise attain his end of being happy, but by acting according to that subordination, and keeping all the operations of the Body in their subjection to the Mind; but on the contrary, so far as this moral perfection of his Faculties should be at any time wanting, so far he must be wanting of perfect happiness.

Lastly, If all this be true, that Mankind were made for happiness, according to their nature, and therefore a happiness both of Body and Soul; the Soul in the exercise of its rational Faculties, on rational objects, in a rational manner; the Body in the exercise of its Faculties upon sensitive Objects, in a due subjection to Reason:

And if it be true that Mankind were made in such a state, and furnish'd with such means, as were most proper for their happiness; and by acting accordingly, might attain their happiness:

**If**

If all this, I say, be true; then, if it shall appear hereafter, as shall be proved in its place, that this happiness of the Body and Soul of Man was to be everlasting; from hence it will follow, that Man was not only immortal, as to his Soul, made of such a bodily strength of constitution, as was naturally capable of being continued for ever; But also, that, if there was any natural means necessary for its preservation and continuance, he must have been furnish'd with them; and by a due application of those means, for that end, he must have reaped the benefit of them.

These are the notions we cannot but receive, whilst we consider the happiness of human nature simply, and in itself. But

Secondly, Man may likewise be considered, as he stands in relation to others: And as in this respect he has not only Faculties fitted for Society; but finds that Society is necessary to his

his happiness; so we must conclude, that he was not only made, and intended for Society; but provided with such Society, as his happiness requir'd; and made of such a nature, and put in such a state, and furnish'd with such means, as were most proper to make that Society a happiness.

And if so, then since 'tis evident, that Mankind were not only made with faculties of speech, by which they might converse one with another; and therefore must have been furnish'd with proper language; but also with another faculty, by which their species might be multiplied; and therefore must be supplied with proper means for this: From hence we must conclude, that the first Society of Mankind, at the Creation, was not of Man with Man, but of Man with Woman; and that too in such proportion of number, as was best for this end of increasing the Species, and most for the happiness of Society.

And

And as no Society can be happy without mutual benevolence, or a disposition to assist, and do good to one another; so we must conceive, that Mankind must not only have been made with this natural disposition, but was placed in such a state, as was suitable to it; that is, such a state as was best fitted for the cherishing, and preservation of this natural disposition.

And therefore since all Mankind, be they more or fewer, were originally made of the same nature, with the same natural desires, and necessities; by the means of which they might not only desire, and stand in need of the same things at the same time, from whence there might arise contention, and misery; so from hence we must conclude, that whatever number of Men and Women were made, as they were all made for happiness in Society, there must have been enough of every thing made to satisfy the desires and necessities of every one; so as that no  
one

one should want what another had, which could be necessary to his happiness.

But then, as Man is a rational creature, and by consequence his happiness a rational happiness, and such as depends upon a due subordination of his Appetites to reason; (*p.* 102.) so tho' God made enough of every thing to satisfy the desires and necessities of every Man; yet this could no otherwise contribute to his happiness, than as his desires and necessities should be regulated by Reason.

And if so, then since we have already shewn (*p.* 82.) that every thing had a nature suited to its end; we must conclude, that Mankind were originally made of such a nature, as not to desire any thing but what they wanted; nor any thing in any other manner, measure, or season, than their wants required, or should be consistent with that natural disposition they were created with, of mutual benevolence to one another. And

And if all this be true, from hence it will follow, that the natural state of Man, by which I mean that state in which he was first made; tho' it was a state, wherein all things must necessarily have been common; yet it could not be a state of war and contention, but the most contrary to it possible. For if want was the rule of their desires, since there was enough of every thing, for every body's wants, there could in nature and reason be no need of Strife; and as every one had a natural love to every one, there could be no inclination to it.

This doubtless must have been the natural state of Mankind, supposing there were ever so many persons made; but considering what we have already said, it is more than probable, and very natural to conceive, that there was but one Man and Woman originally made.

For since Mankind were to be placed in such a state of life as was best for  
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for the preservation of mutual benevolence; it seems to be naturally proper for this purpose, that the race should be derived from one Man and Woman; that being all children of the same common Parents, and all join'd in the same common Relation; as they were undivided in their Original, so they should be as undivided in their Affections. For we find by experience, that the affection that is seen among single persons, does by degrees beget a friendship of Families, and this as naturally spreads, and enlarges itself into Societies of Towns, and Cities, and Nations. And therefore as this was the most likely way to promote, and preserve mutual love in the world, especially in the first beginning of it; we may naturally conceive, that this was the first state of Mankind; and that there was, at the first Creation of the world, but one Man and Woman made, from whom all Mankind were to descend.

Thus

Thus we see how we are to conceive of the Creation of the world, considering it as made by the goodness of God; and with this I shall conclude my observations upon this head, from the perfections of the divine Nature.

There are a great many other considerations which this method of reasoning would furnish us withal; but these I take to be the most material, and such as in my following Discourse will be most useful; and therefore I will not be tedious beyond what is necessary: But supposing these deductions to be true, as founded upon certain and undoubted principles, we will infer, as has been done before,

That so far as we have any history, or tradition of the Creation, which is found to agree with these Conclusions; so far we have reason to conclude it true.

Now such a history we have deliver'd by *Moses*, which is the only book  
we

we know of in the world, that gives us any account of this; and in this history of the Creation, we are not only told, that every thing was made by the power of God; but that this power was exerted, and every thing made, as we have before shewn, it ought to be, by the bare act of the divine will, or internal word of God, saying, Let such a thing be, and it was so.

And that he made every thing good, that is, every thing perfect, every way suited to its End, and naturally capable of attaining it:

And that when he made Man, he not only made him good, but after his own Image or Likeness; under which is comprehended all, that can be meant by Perfection and Happiness:

And as this Happiness was to be, as shall be shewn, a Happiness both of Body and Soul for ever, and therefore there was a necessity of some

means, by which the Body might be preserv'd in being; so we are here told of a Tree of Life, which we may reasonably think might be intended, as a preservative against all decays of Nature, and a remedy for all accidental injuries, if any such can be suppos'd in so pure and perfect a state of Being.

And as it was necessary that Man, as a sociable Creature, made in a state of Perfection, and therefore capable of Society so soon as he was made, should be provided with Society proper for him: And as we have shewn, that this ought to be a Society, not of Man with Man, but of Man with Woman; and that too, of one Man with one Woman; so we are here told it was accordingly: And therefore this account being agreeable to our foregoing Reasonings, which appear to be demonstratively true; so far we have reason, from the nature of things, to conclude this account of *Moses* to be true.

Thus have I done with the two first Points, namely, the absolute Perfection of God, and the relation he bears to the World, as its Creator: And before I proceed to the next thing, it may be proper to shew what obligations of Duty arise from hence; and how these two Considerations, properly applied, will bring us to the Law of Nature, which is so much talk'd of, and sought after. For

First, As God is absolutely perfect, and as we have already shewn, loves every thing only in such a degree, as it comes nearer to his Perfection; so by consequence, the only way to please God, is to be like him; and therefore it must be in the Nature of things our Duty to endeavour to be perfect, as he is perfect.

And as those Perfections, which are imitable in him, are his Wisdom and Holiness, Truth and Goodness, it is a natural Duty to endeavour to be Wise and Holy, True and Good, as he

he is; and by consequence, whatever is implied in these Perfections in God, which we are capable of imitating him in, is a natural Duty requir'd of us, if we would be acceptable to him.

And so likewise Secondly, As God is the Creator of the World, it is natural to infer, that all the Powers, and Faculties, God has given us, should be employ'd in such a Way, as is suitable to the End they were given for: And as they were made in a due subjection to Reason; (and therefore it must be the will of God, that this subjection be preserv'd, and so far as it is lost, recover'd) so from hence it will follow, that our Faculties should not be exercis'd on any other objects, or in any other manner, than Reason approves; and when we find in ourselves any tendencies to the contrary, it must be our Duty to suppress and subdue them.

And so again Thirdly, As God has put us in several Relations, not only to

himself, but one another, it is his will that we should behave ourselves suitably to those Relations; and therefore whatever Actions those Relations naturally require of us, are so many natural Laws impos'd on us.

So that if we do but consider what the several Relations, we bear to one another, are, and what Actions necessarily arise from those Relations, this will give us a view into those Laws, which Nature obliges us to in this respect.

This is a natural and proper method of proceeding on this Subject; but this will not answer my design; and therefore I will go on as I at first propos'd, namely,

Thirdly, To inquire what notions we are to form of the government of the World, considering it as govern'd by an absolutely perfect Being.

And in this inquiry I must proceed in the foregoing method: And, since God, as an absolutely perfect Being, cannot act contrary to his Nature and  
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Perfections, we must here again consider his Perfections, as so many Rules, by which to form our notions of his operations in the Government, as we have already done in the Creation of the World; and this will afford us as clear a notion of it as Reason alone can furnish us withal.

*Of the Government of the World.*

I will begin my Observations from his Knowledge and Wisdom; and if we reflect upon what has been already prov'd, (*p.* 41.) That he cannot begin to know any thing, and can never cease to know every thing; and that he cannot do any thing weakly, or erroneously, in respect either of the End, the Means, the Manner, or Season of acting;

From hence we must conclude, that nothing can happen in the World by chance; that is, nothing without his Knowledge foreseeing it, and his Wisdom disposing it for some End: And

howsoever he orders it, it must be, all things consider'd, always for the best; not only in respect of the End itself, but also in respect of the suitableness of the Means, and the seasonableness of the Time; So that whatever God does, we must conceive nothing could have been better; howsoever 'tis brought about, no means could have been more proper; and whensoever it comes to pass, no time could be more convenient.

How hard soever it may be to our weak and shallow understandings to comprehend this; yet we are certain it must be so, if we have right notions of the Divine Knowledge and Wisdom.

For there can be no room to doubt, but that he who knows the Natures and Ends of things, as perfectly as he knows any thing, and cannot possibly be mistaken, is equally capable of governing all things, as any thing; because his Knowledge and Wisdom being infinite,  
 supposing

supposing even the World to be so, there would be but the same proportion between them, as of one to one: So that if he is qualified to order one, he is equally so for all.

Secondly, As God is shewn to be in his Nature true; so must he be also in his Government, so as not to do any thing contrary to Truth.

And therefore as Truth is the reality of things, as they are, considered simply, and in their own Natures, or as they stand related to one another, as to Agreement or Disagreement; we must conceive, that in the Government of the World, he will not act contrary to the Natures and Relations of things.

As therefore (setting aside all other considerations) as we have already observed, (*p.* 89.) that there is a natural Relation of Agreement between Means and Ends, Effects and Causes, Faculties and Objects; so he must be conceiv'd to govern the World accord-

ing to these natural Relations, so as that there shall be an Agreement maintain'd between them.

And therefore as on the one hand we must conceive, that he will not bring about natural Ends by extraordinary, when ordinary Means will do; nor produce natural Effects by supernatural, when natural Causes will do; but on the contrary, will leave natural Causes to work according to their Natures, so far as they can serve his Ends: So on the other hand we must conceive, that the Relation between Faculties and their Objects shall be maintain'd; so that, as no object can be enjoy'd, but by the Means of a suitable Faculty, so every Faculty shall be provided with a suitable Object.

And therefore for instance; as God in the Creation made various living Creatures, with natural Appetites, to preserve the *Individuum*, (as we say) by eating and drinking; and by consequence must have made a suitable provision,

provision, that there may be a sufficiency for the Supply of all: So we must conceive in the Government of the World, that there shall be always a like suitable provision continued, so as that nothing shall want any thing to its necessary Preservation.

And as all living Creatures are likewise made with natural Appetites and Faculties, for the preservation of their Species; as it does hence follow, that as there must have been an equal number of Males and Females, of every Species made, that there might be an Object suitable to every Faculty; so we must conceive, that there shall be always an equal number of every Species continued:

And (if we apply this particularly to Mankind) considering the state we are in at present; since the Males are expos'd to greater dangers than the Females, in the common and ordinary way of Life; and since vast numbers of them are destroy'd by War, by Sea,  
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and other Accidents, by which there must arise a vast disproportion; from hence we must conclude, that in the Government of the World, there will be always a provision made for this; and by consequence that there shall be more Males born into the World than Females; and that too in such proportion as to answer this Defect, so as to preserve the equality of one to one; that as all are indued with a natural Faculty of multiplying their Kind, no Faculty should want a proper Object.

And as we are thus to conceive of the Government of the World, in respect of natural Truth; so must we likewise, as to moral Truth: For as there are Relations of Agreement, and Disagreement of one thing to another, in Nature; so there are likewise instituted Relations of one thing to another in Society; and by consequence, as God is true, we must conceive, that if he shall think fit to condescend to treat with us in our own way,  
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he will act suitably to these Relations.

And therefore as there are certain known Signs, Words, and Actions, that are agreed upon by every Society to be the outward Expressions of our inward Thoughts; from hence we must conclude, that if God shall think fit to treat with Mankind, and for that purpose shall make use of any Sign, Word, or Action, either to express his own Will, or represent any other thing by; That Sign, Word, or Action is a true declaration of his Will, and a certain representation of the Thing; so as that his Will cannot be otherwise than they express, nor the thing really otherwise than they represent, according to their natural and usual meaning.

And therefore whatever he delivers to be believed, is really as he delivers it; and whatever he expresses a desire of, he does really desire it.

If

If he should prefigure any thing to come, or promise any thing to be done, or threaten any thing to be inflicted, or require any thing to be observ'd, or command any thing to be avoided; we must conceive, that he certainly knows the Thing prefigur'd shall come to pass, and as certainly designs the Thing promis'd shall be perform'd, the Judgment threaten'd shall be inflicted, the Duty injoin'd shall be observ'd, the Sin forbidden shall be avoided; and that too in such a manner as he expresses and represents it.

This must be so, if God be true, and we have right notions of his Truth.

Thirdly, As God is true, so is he good; and if this be another rule in the Government of the World, he must not only intend, but order every thing, so as shall be best for the happiness of his Creatures, according to their several Natures and Capacities; and whatever methods he uses for it, must

must be not only design'd, but suited to this End.

And if so, then as I observ'd before, (p. 99.) since there are several Kinds of Creatures, all made for Happiness, some of which are not capable of Happiness themselves; it will follow, that if Happiness be the end of the divine operations relating to them, they must be so order'd as is best for the Happiness of others.

And since there are other Creatures capable of some degrees of Happiness themselves, and yet are necessary to the Happiness of Man, it will follow, that tho' their Happiness shall be provided for in the Government of the World, it shall be only in such a manner, and degree, as is consistent with their Subordination to Man.

And therefore tho' their Natures, as they are indued with such, and such Faculties, require that they be provided with suitable Objects; yet the manner, and measure of their enjoyment  
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of them for their Happiness, must depend upon the reason and judgment of Man, how far it may be consistent with his Happiness; and if so, from hence it will follow,

That as we have before observed, (*p.* 82.) that all things were originally put in such a state, as was suitable to the end they were made for; so all things that are necessary to the Happiness of Man, were originally put in subjection to Man.

And lastly, As the Happiness of Man does not only require a suitable Enjoyment, of suitable Objects, for the several Faculties both of Body and Mind; but likewise the Assistance of one another in Society; so we must conclude, that as he hath in the Creation, so he will in the Government of the World, take a suitable care for both; and not only provide for his Happiness in his private and personal, but also in his relative and social Capacity.

But

But as for the method of doing this, that will be best understood from the next consideration, by proper inferences from the Holiness of God. For

Fourthly, As God is holy in his Nature, this must be also another rule of his Government ; and as his Holiness is before shewn, ( *p.* 50.) to consist in an immutable conformity of his Will, and operations to the dictates of his infallible Reason; and as the natural rule of Reason is the Natures and Reasons of things : So this must likewise be the rule of his operations, so as not to do any thing without Reason, tho' we do not know what that Reason is, or contrary to Reason; and therefore nothing but what the Natures and Reasons of things direct.

And if so, then first we must conceive on the one hand, that God cannot will, or act any thing out of a mere arbitrary humour, merely because he will; but because 'tis most

fit and reasonable : So that when we resolve things, as we commonly do, into the sole Will and good Pleasure of God, we must not understand them as acts of mere Will without Reason : But on the contrary we must conceive, that whatever he does, he had an infallible Reason for, otherwise he would not have done it, and whatever he wills had a natural goodness in it, in the order of conception antecedent to his will, otherwise he would not have will'd it :

And therefore whatever he does, is not therefore reasonable because he does it; but he does it because 'tis reasonable and fit to be done. And whatever he commands to be done, is not therefore good, merely because he commands it, but he commands it, because it is in its own Nature good, either simply or relatively consider'd.

For tho' the thing commanded be in its own Nature indifferent, and have no intrinsick goodness in it ; yet it may

be good in order to an End; and so far as it is in its Nature fitted to that End, so far it is in its own Nature good, as a Means; and so far as the End is good, and fit to be pursu'd, and aim'd at, so far the Means are good, and fit to be commanded.

And therefore as God cannot act without an End; and by consequence not command any thing, but as a Means to an End, nor any thing, but what is fitted for that End; so whenever he commands indifferent things, this must be the natural Reason of them, that they are naturally fitted to attain some End, which that command is intended for; tho' we may not be able always to find it out.

For tho' tis reasonable to suppose, that at the time when such commands are given, the End and Reason of them may easily be discover'd, from the relation they bear to the particular circumstances of the People, and the suitableness there is between them; yet it

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does not thence follow, that it shall be always so, when the particular circumstances of the People are forgot, and the things, which the laws related to, are intirely unknown.

It would therefore be very unreasonable in any one, to argue against the authority of antient laws, injoining indifferent things, merely because we are not able at this distance of time and place, to account for the particular reason, and thereby the natural fitness of them; when we are otherwise sure that they came from God, and therefore must have been appointed for some proper End and Reason, how much soever it may be hid from us.

Secondly, As God cannot act without Reason, so neither can he act contrary to Reason; and therefore not otherwise than as the Natures and Reasons of things direct:

And if so, then first we must from hence conceive, that he will govern all things according to their Natures

tures and Reasons; natural things in a natural way, in and according to their natural Relations, so as to work natural Ends, ordinarily by natural Means, and produce natural Effects by natural Causes; and not to act without them, or against their Natures.

And therefore tho' the goodness of God orders all things so, as shall be most for the Happiness of his Creatures, as has been shewn (*p.* 124.) yet so far as this Happiness depends upon the use of natural Means, or the operation of natural Causes, we must conceive that it cannot naturally be attain'd without them.

And by consequence (if we apply this to ourselves) tho' Man in his rational capacity shall be provided as we have shewn (*p.* 101.) with all things necessary to his Happiness, in respect of the means of knowing, whatever is necessary to be known; as likewise in respect of a suitable power, with suitable rules and motives to do,

whatever is necessary to be done: Yet, as it is necessary in the Nature of the thing, that those means of Knowledge, and those rules and motives of Practice should be consider'd, and that Power be put forth into Action, before any thing can be known or done; so we cannot expect any Happiness should arise from any provision of means, and rules, and motives, notwithstanding the goodness of the divine Government unless we will consider and act accordingly.

And so again Secondly, Tho' Man be furnish'd with all things necessary to his Happiness in his bodily Nature, in a due provision of proper objects, suited to its several Faculties; yet since the Happiness that arises from this provision depends upon ourselves, and since there is a necessity in the Nature of things, that our Faculties be exercis'd upon these objects, in a proper way; and that we apply ourselves to such means, as are proper for this End,

or else we shall never be the happier for it ;

So in the Government of the World we must expect no Happiness will arise to us from this, unless we will do accordingly : But on the contrary, as no effect can be produced without a suitable cause, and every natural cause will produce its natural effect; if Mankind do things contrary to their Happiness, they will be made unhappy by them.

And so likewise Thirdly, As the Happiness of Man, consider'd as a rational Creature, must be a rational Happiness, and must consist not only in the use and enjoyment of such things, as are suited to his Faculties, but such an use and enjoyment as is suitable to Reason; so there can be no Happiness expected from them in the Government of the World, unless we will use and enjoy them accordingly: But on the contrary, we must not only expect such mischiefs to insue, as

the Nature of things so abused will produce; but such also as will arise from their contrariety to Reason, in guilty reflections and reproaches of the Mind.

And so again Fourthly, Tho' God provides all things, that may be for the Happiness of Society; yet since the natural dependance of Mankind upon one another is such, that, as they cannot be happy without one another, so they may be the occasion of one another's Misery, according as their actions are; it is impossible in the Nature of things, but the Happiness of Mankind must depend upon their actions: And if we are furnish'd by the goodness of God, with all things necessary to our doing, what our Happiness requires to be done; this is all that can be requir'd on God's part; and there can be no Happiness expected by us, unless we will do accordingly.

And so Secondly, As God governs natural things in a natural way; so we  
must

must conceive, as was just now said, that he will govern rational agents in a rational way; that is, in such a way as is suitable to a rational Nature.

And therefore, as Man is an understanding, and a free Creature, not only capable of apprehending the Natures and Reasons of things, how far they are fit to be chosen and done, but also has power of self-determination; if such a Creature be govern'd according to its Nature, it must be in such a way, as is suitable both to his understanding and freedom.

And by consequence, as God governs Man for his Happiness, and for that End, as we have shewn, (*p.* 102.) will provide him with such Means, as are necessary to inform his Knowledge; and such rules and motives as are necessary to direct and incline his Will to practice; yet those Means must be such as his understanding can apprehend; and those rules must be such, as are possible and reasonable to

be observed, and those motives likewise, such as may be sufficient to influence and incline his Will to observe them; and by consequence such, as shall make it more for his Happiness to observe, than not observe them.

And then, as he is a free Agent, he must be left to his own determination to chuse, or refuse, as he sees fit, whether he will make use of those means, or regard those motives, or observe those Rules or not; and by consequence whether he will be happy in himself, or in Society.

And according to the good, or ill use that Mankind are suppos'd to make of their Liberty, and according to the different Nature of their Actions; so must we form different notions of the divine Government.

And therefor First, As every thing by acting according to its Nature, will attain the End it was made for, (p 98. 106) and by consequence Mankind, by acting according to their Reason,

Reason, will not only attain their own private Happiness, but the Happiness of one another in Society:

So had all things continued in that state, in which they were made, and shou'd we suppose Mankind always acting according to their Reason; in such case we cou'd conceive no other Government necessary to the Happiness of the World, but this, *viz.*

To preserve all things in their proper Natures and Orders, and to enable them to exert their Faculties and Powers, according to their several Ends and Uses: And if so,

Then, as there is the same reason for their Preservation as there was for their Creation, so long as they act according to their Natures; so we must in reason conclude, That till Mankind should act contrary to their Nature, or Reason, which we call Sin, they shou'd not only be preserv'd; but preserv'd in that Nature, and that State

in which they were created; and by consequence shou'd not only be immortal and everlasting, but immortally and everlastingly perfect; and happy both in Body and Soul in this World, without expectation of any thing to come.

From whence it will follow, That the Unhappiness, Imperfection and Mortality of Mankind, as likewise the expectation of a future state must originally have risen from Sin.

This is the notion, and as far as I can see, the only notion we can form of the divine Government, whilst we consider Mankind as acting according to their Reason.

But if Mankind be consider'd as acting contrary to Reason, and therefore contrary to, not only their own Happiness, but it may be the Happiness of others; then as they act contrary to the end of their Creation, and by consequence the end of their Preservation; so it may be natural to conceive,

ceive, that in such a case, such persons, so acting, shou'd not be preserved :

And if so, then as the Reason of their suppos'd destruction is their Sin, and by consequence as there wou'd be a Reason for their destruction, so soon as they shou'd sin: So we might conclude from hence, That Mankind must be liable to destruction upon the very first act of Sin.

But then again, on the other hand, it is to be observ'd, that as God made Mankind for such degrees of Happiness, as their Nature is capable of; so we may conclude, that as long as they are capable of Happiness, so long they are capable of Preservation.

And since every one is capable of Happiness, that acts according to his Reason; it will follow, that tho' a Man has acted contrary to Reason once, he shall yet be capable of Preservation so far as it may be prevented for the future :

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And if so, then whatsoever is necessary in the Nature of the thing to prevent the first sinners disobedience for the future, seems to be necessary to the Government of the World.

But here it is further to be observed, that since Mankind were not only made for Happiness, consider'd simply, but in Society, it is reasonable to conceive, that in the Preservation of a Sinner, God wou'd provide for the Happiness of Society:

And therefore, tho' the Sinner is preserv'd, that he may act according to his Reason for the future, and by doing so, will not only contribute to his own private Happiness, but also the Happiness of the Society; yet as the very Preservation of the first Sinner, might tend to the making many others sin, and so tend to the Unhappiness of Society, by making them think God regardless of their Actions; there seems a necessity, that in the Preservation of the first Sinner, some further method

Method shou'd be taken, to prevent the ill consequences of that Preservation.

So that here are two things necessarily to be provided for upon the first act of Sin in the World; and what methods are most proper for these purposes, the infinite Wildom of God knows best: But if we might be permitted to conjecture by our Reason, according to the Natures and Reasons of things, we might conclude,

First, That since God governs rational Creatures, in a rational way, the most rational method of bringing a Sinner off from disobedience, and of influencing his Will to act otherwise for the future, is, to convince his understanding that he is in the wrong, and to make him sensible, that he has done what in Reason, he ought not, and what it were better he had not done; that is, in one word, to bring him to Repentance.

Now the least that we can think necessary for this purpose, is, to let  
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the Sinner feel some ill effect of his Sin.

And as for the method of convincing the World, that he is not regardless of the actions of Men, when they act contrary to Reason; the least that we can conceive necessary in this case, is, to shew some token of his displeasure at it, by inflicting some suitable punishment for it.

Now That I call a suitable punishment, which is naturally proper to answer the end for which it was design'd, namely, to discourage others from following the Sinner's Example.

And therefore from these considerations we must conceive, that tho' God shou'd not destroy the first Sinner, upon the very first act of Sin; yet that he wou'd punish him in such a Manner, as to convince the rest of Mankind, that he was not unconcerned at their actions, and that they shou'd have no encouragement to tread in the Sinner's steps, or run into the like disobedience with him. This

This is the first notion we can form of the divine Government of the World, consider'd properly as a thing distinct from preservation.

And this, as it owes its original to Sin; so we must conceive it wou'd cease with it.

And therefore, cou'd we suppose Mankind, after the first Sin, acting according to their Reason for the future, we can suppose no Reason for any other sort of Government for the future, but Preservation;

Because, as I said before, every thing has a Nature suited to its End, and by acting according to its Nature must attain its End, (*p.* 89.)

And since 'tis evident, nothing has a natural power, of acting contrary to its Nature, as being all necessary agents, but Man; it will follow, that if Man shall act agreeably to his Reason, the End of all things will be naturally attain'd:

And by consequence there can be no need of any other Government, than to let things act according to their Natures.

But then still, as Mankind, in the natural method of Government, must be naturally left to their own freedom, and notwithstanding all these divine methods for prevention, may yet act contrary to their Reason, and thereby may disturb the order of Nature, according to the Nature of their actions; so if they are suppos'd to have done thus after the first Sin, as there must thence arise new, and further occasion; so we must suppose new, and different methods and operations of Government, in such manner, and measure, as Mankind were capable of, and as God saw necessary for their Happiness, according to their different circumstances.

And tho' whilst things act according to their Natures, we can see no reason why God shou'd, and by consequence

quence cannot reasonably conceive, that he wou'd act contrary to the Natures of things: Yet, when things happen to be alter'd, and are fallen into a different or contrary state to that they were created in; then,

As there may be reasons for different, or contrary methods of Government; so

Fifthly, as God is absolutely free, he may act differently or contrarily, according to those different or contrary Reasons, (*p.* 49.) and by consequence may act differently from, or contrary to the Natures of things, according as he has Reason for it.

And if so, then, tho' God governs natural things in a natural way, and a natural order, as being the most natural method to attain their End: Yet when things happen to be altered so, as that it shall best serve the Ends, for which they were made, to act contrary to their primitive Nature and Order; he may do it in such manner

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and measure, as he sees fit: He may either act without natural causes, or against them; he may suspend their powers, or over-rule them; and when he permits things to go on in a natural way, he may direct when, how, and in what proportion they shall exert their operations.

And so likewise Secondly, tho' he ordinarily governs rational Creatures in a rational way; yet when he sees fit, he can supernaturally inform, or infatuate their understandings; and he can determine their Wills, and either actuate or restrain their Passions, by such an irresistible influence, as to make them do that good they wou'd not have done; and keep them from doing that evil they wou'd have done: Whether God does this or not, in such an irresistible way, we cannot tell without a Revelation; but according to our principles we must conceive, that he may, according as he shall have reason for it.

And

And so again Thirdly, tho' God be dispos'd to do good to his Creatures, according to their several Natures and Capacities: Yet, when the Natures and Capacities that he gave them are alter'd, or when they act contrary to them, he may then alter his methods of doing good; and if they are not capable of receiving good one way, he may do it another: He may do it either by Kindness or Correction, by Prosperity or Adversity, by Pleasure or Pain, or whatever other methods of Government he sees fit; and that too in what manner, and measure, and season, his Wisdom shall direct for their good.

And so Lastly, tho' God be absolutely true, and can make no outward declaration but what is real; yet when the Reason of such declaration is alter'd, he may either revoke, or alter his declaration, or may act otherwise than he declared.

But then we must remember, that this freedom is both a wise and holy freedom; (*p.* 54.) and by consequence, as wisdom will do nothing in vain, and therefore nothing by extraordinary and supernatural, when ordinary and natural, means will do:

So holiness will do nothing contrary to the natures and reasons of things any farther, than as their natures and reasons are altered; nor any farther than that alteration does require it.

And by consequence, so far as the wisdom of God shall see, that by acting according to the natures of things, the end of the Creation may be equally attain'd; so, tho' the natures of things are altered, so far we may reasonably conceive, he will not act contrary to their natures.

And therefore First, we may conclude, that tho' he may act contrary to the nature of natural causes and rational agents; and tho' he may suspend, or over-rule the powers of the former;

former; and he may supernaturally inform, or infatuate the understandings, or actuate or restrain the wills of the latter: Yet he will never do it, but in such a case, where there is a necessity in the nature of things, and where the Happiness of the World cannot be attain'd without it.

And so, tho' God may do good in what manner he sees fit, either by Kindness or Correction, by Pleasure or Pain; yet, as Pleasure is most agreeable to the natures of Mankind, so far as they are capable of Happiness by Pleasure, so far we must conceive, he will not give them Pain or Correction.

And Lastly, tho' God may revoke and alter his declarations, or, as he sees fit, may act contrary to them; yet it must be only so far as the natures and reasons of things are alter'd.

And therefore when God promises a favour, or threatens or foretels

a judgment upon a certain Reason; tho' God cannot be obliged, when that Reason is ceas'd, to perform his promise, or inflict the judgment;

And tho', when God gives laws of a mutable Nature for mutable Reasons; when the Reasons of such laws are alter'd, he may alter his declarations concerning them; and may either command what he forbad, or forbid what he commanded:

Yet so long as the Natures and Reasons of things are the same, so long we must conclude, his declarations and operations will be the same:

And by consequence, when God commands any thing to be observed or avoided, or denounces or threatens any thing to be inflicted; the Reason of which is founded in the Nature of things, such laws and threatnings cannot be disannull'd, so long as the Natures of things continue; and we must conceive, that in such cases God will neither revoke nor act contrary to them. Thus

Thus far then have we discover'd the Nature of God, both in his perfections in themselves, and the outward manifestation of them in acts of Creation and Government.

And these being sufficiently demonstrated, I shall take these likewise for granted all along, and upon this Basis I shall proceed in my design; and by necessary and rational conclusions, shall endeavour to demonstrate the general Body of all Religion: So that whosoever shall allow (as I think no man can deny) the foregoing Reasonings, shall not with any shew of Reason reject any other part of Religion whatsoever.

But that we may do this more clearly and convincingly, it will be proper to look back a little, and reflect upon what we have before prov'd.

*What is the true State of Nature.*

And the first thing that I think ne-

cessary to be call'd to mind, is, that the original state of Mankind is, as we have prov'd (p. 76. 77.) a state of perfection.

*Corollary.*

From whence we may be able to form a right notion of a true and proper state of Nature; a point so much controverted amongst us.

For as it is self-evident, that that must be the true and proper Nature of things, which they receiv'd when they were made :

So by consequence, nothing can be properly said to be in a state of Nature, any farther than it can be said to be in a state of Perfection:

And therefore, so far as Mankind are fallen from the Perfection, they were originally created in, so far they are in an unnatural and corrupted state.

And if we will call this a state of Nature, it ought to be done under this distinction of a state of imperfect

and corrupted Nature; in opposition to that, which was the true and primitive state of Nature, which was a state of Perfection and Purity.

And this is so necessary a distinction, that without this we shall hardly be able to speak of this matter without confusion.

And the want of this, as it has been a grand flaw in many treatises on Natural Religion; so it has been the foundation upon which those extravagant Tenets of the Leviathan were built; which when this necessary distinction is made, do, of themselves, all fall to the ground.

For since it does appear, that a state of corruption is not the natural state of Man, whatever inferences are drawn from this Hypothesis, that this is the natural state of Man, must by consequence necessarily be false.

*What Mankind stood in need of in a State of pure Nature.*

Secondly, As we have shewn that Mankind were made in a state of Perfection and Purity:

So 'tis in the next place necessary to be observ'd, as we have already prov'd, that they were made by the Wisdom of God for some End, and by the Goodness of God for Happiness; and that they were put in such a state as was proper for the attainment of it, (p. 101.)

And by consequence that they must be inform'd of this End and Happiness, and the means of attaining it; that is,

That they must be provided with the necessary means of knowledge of every thing necessary to be known; and furnish'd with sufficient Power, with suitable Rules and Motives to do whatever was necessary to be done. And if so, then

First,

First, since the End and Happiness of Man consists, as shall be shewn in being partaker of the divine Nature; from hence it will follow, that if there be a necessity, that Man shou'd be inform'd of his End and Happiness; there is the same necessity that he shou'd be inform'd of the Nature of God, in which his End and Happiness consists. And if so, then

Secondly, As it is self-evident, that the reason of his being inform'd of his End and Happiness, and the means of attaining them, with the necessary Rules and Motives of Action, is, that those Motives shou'd be complied with, and those Rules be followed, and those Means employ'd in the attainment of this End and Happiness; from hence it will follow,

That so soon as Mankind were capable of understanding and enjoying Happiness; so soon as they were capable of considering those Motives, of observing those Rules, and using those

those Means; so soon must they have had this information given them: And if so, then

Thirdly, since Mankind were created perfect in their Nature, and therefore naturally capable of all this, so soon as as they were made; it will follow, that they must have had this information, so soon as they were made.

So that from all this put together, we are abundantly assur'd of the necessity of some means of information to be given to Mankind, so soon as they were made, of every thing necessary to be known concerning the End and Happiness for which they were made; the Nature of God, in which that Happiness consists; as likewise those Rules, or Means, and Motives of doing whatever is necessary to be done in order to the attainment of it. Thus far I think the argument is clear beyond any reasonable objection.

*The Means of Knowledge in a State  
of pure Nature.*

The next thing now to be enquir'd into, is,

Secondly, what Means of information those were, which Mankind had, so soon as they were made.

As to this we must conceive, from the holiness of God, that as he always acts according to the Natures and Reasons of things;

So the means of information must be such, as the Nature of the things to be known, and the Reason of the knowledge of 'em requir'd :

And by consequence, as those things, that are necessary, but cannot be known, so far as to answer the End of knowing them in a natural way, do require a supernatural :

And as those things, that can be known in a natural way, do require no more than natural means;

So from hence we must conclude,  
First,

First, that if there was any thing necessary to be known, which our first Parents cou'd not know by Reason, in a natural way; so soon as their occasions did require the knowledge of it, it was certainly made known by a supernatural Revelation : But

*The Rule of Reason.*

Secondly, As for those things that lay within the compass of Reason, as they were to be known by the exercises of Reason, in the use of such natural means of knowledge, as were afforded for that purpose ;

So we must conclude, they had nothing more, no other revelation concerning them.

Now by the natural means of knowledge, I mean the Natures and Reasons of things :

For knowledge is the perception or apprehension of things as they are.

Now things may be consider'd, either as they are simply, and in their  
own

own particular Natures, or as they are related to each other, in respect of agreement or disagreement.

And as those things, which we apprehend to agree or disagree, we therefore judge to be fit, or unfit for such, and such purposes :

So that fitness, or unfitness, for such, and such purposes, is a Reason, arising from the Nature of things for the fitness, or unfitness of such, and such operations.

And when we make a right judgment of things, or, in other words, when the Natures and Reasons of things agree with our apprehension and judgment of them, and are as we apprehend and judge them to be; as we are then said to know those things, and as our Reason is then said to be right :

So by consequence, if we wou'd form a right knowledge of things, the natural Rules or Means to form our notions and judgment by, is, to con-

sider the Natures and Reasons of them.  
And if so,

Then as every thing had its Nature from God; so whatever Means of information our Reason finds out by considering the several Natures which God has made things of, and the Relations he has placed them in; this we may very properly call, the natural Revelation of God; and the matter of such Revelation, natural Religion.

*The Substance of natural Religion.*

Since then we have prov'd the necessity of Man's being inform'd, so soon as he was made,

First, Of the Nature of God, and his own Happiness.

Secondly, Of the Means and Rules to attain this Happiness by,

Thirdly, Of the Motives to inforce the Observation of those Means and Rules.

Since

Since, I say, we have already prov'd this, as this must be the Substance of natural Religion, so far as it is discoverable by Reason; so here it will be proper to inquire,

First, how far the knowledge of these several particulars is capable of being discover'd by Reason; and so far as we find them to be so, so far we must conclude our first Parents had no other Revelation concerning them.

Secondly, we will inquire, whether there was any thing further necessary to be known, which our first Parents, in a state of Purity, cou'd not know by Reason, and therefore requir'd a supernatural Revelation.

As to the first of these, how far the knowledge of God and our Happiness, the Means and Rules to attain this Happiness by, and the Motives to inforce those Means and Rules, are discoverable by Reason: It will be necessary for a clear apprehension of this matter, to examine distinctly every

one of the foremention'd particulars, and consider each article by itself.

And therefore we will take a view,  
 First of the Nature of God, how far it is discoverable by Reason. What Reason may find out concerning this, I have already consider'd at large; and all that I have hitherto said upon this head, has been the result of bare Reason.

If there be any thing necessary to be added, it can be only to inquire; whether it can be reasonably suppos'd, that Man, at his Creation, cou'd be capable of finding out all those speculations, that we have deliver'd concerning God.

In answer to which, it may safely be affirm'd, and we have already shewn it to be certain, that, if all this was necessary to be known, his Reason was either capable of finding it out, or else it was otherwise discover'd to him:

But that his Reason alone was sufficient for this purpose, I think, cannot reasonably

reasonably be doubted; whilst we reflect upon what we have before prov'd, *viz.*

That he was made perfect in his Kind, and therefore perfect in his rational Faculties; and by consequence capable of knowing every thing by Reason, that Reason, in its perfection, is capable of knowing.

And if so, then as it is self-evident, that Reason, in perfection, must necessarily be suppos'd capable of knowing more, and more clearly, than Reason in imperfection, Reason corrupted, cramp'd, and bias'd by false Prejudices, and ill Impressions:

So we must necessarily conclude, That whatever knowledge of God, we are by Reason capable of attaining to; the same he must have had much clearer, and fuller; than we, in our state of imperfection, can pretend to:

And by consequence, whatsoever we have shewn in the foregoing part of this Treatise, that we can discover by

the bare principles of Reason only, concerning the divine Nature and Operations; nay, I may say, whatever we shall hereafter shew to be discoverable by us, concerning any thing else, by mere rational Principles; so far as it was necessary for him to know it, so far at least we must conclude he knew it.

Nay further, from the perfection of his rational Faculties, I think, it will follow, that he must be capable of understanding every thing necessary, as perfectly, as we understand any thing.

Now there are some things that ev'n we discover upon the first operation of the Mind, as nimbly as the eye perceives colours; and therefore, in that state of perfection he was in, where there were no false prejudices, nor ill impressions to warp his judgment, or obstruct his reasonings, he may very well be suppos'd to discover all necessary truths, as nimbly as we discover any; and be let into the knowledge of such things, as it were by intuition

tuition upon the first opening of the Mind.

But be this as it will, that he knew them is certain and undeniable, that is sufficient for my purpose; and therefore from hence I will proceed in the next place to inquire, what notions Reason wou'd furnish him withal concerning,

Secondly, the true End and Happiness of Man;

Both these must be consider'd together, as being but two different expressions for the same thing;

For we have already shewn, that the End for which God made all things, was the good of his Creatures; (*p.* 98.) and by consequence, that which is the true Good, must be the true End of Man.

Now the only good that God cou'd aim at in the Creation, was himself: For since he is the Creator of the World, as he is therefore the sole fountain of being and perfection, and by

consequence of all good ; so before the Creation of the World, he was the only being, and therefore the only good ; and by consequence the only end, and the only good, he cou'd intend in the Creation, must be himself.

But yet, since he is a being absolutely perfect, as he cou'd not want, and therefore cou'd not aim at the receiving any good to himself : So it will follow, that it must be some good to be imparted to his Creatures ; and by consequence, the good that he intended for Man in the Creation, was the imparting of himself, or the communication of his perfections to him :

And if so, then, since Happiness is nothing else but the enjoyment of good, as God is the highest good, it must be the highest Happiness of Man to have the divine Nature communicated to him in the highest degree that he is capable of.

And therefore if we wou'd perfectly understand the true Happiness of Man,  
we

we must reflect a little upon what we have said concerning the Nature and Perfections of God; and how far they are communicable to Man.

Now as to the Nature of God, we have shewn, that he is an independent, necessary, immutable, infinite, omnipresent, everlasting, spiritual Substance, or Being; endued with life, or the utmost degree of power and activity; with sense, or the utmost enjoyment of pleasure; with reason, or the utmost degree of knowledge, wisdom and holiness; it must therefore be the Happiness of Man to have this Nature communicated to him; and to be as like God in these perfections of substance, life, sense and reason, as his state and condition is capable of.

Here then the only question is, what degrees of these perfections the state and condition of Man is capable of.

Now as to the perfections of substance, such as independency, necessi-

ty, immutability, omnipresence, and infinity, these human Nature are not capable of; they are not communicable to a Creature, but can only belong, as we have shewn, (*p.* 8, 9.) to a self-existent being.

But to be spiritual and everlasting are not so, these may be imparted to a Creature; for it does not appear that it is any wise inconsistent for God to create an everlasting Spirit, or, in other words, a Creature, that is not matter, which shall last for ever.

And as we may from thence infer, that we have, so we are generally suppos'd, upon very good reason, to have such a spiritual and everlasting Nature imparted to us; which is that principle that actuates and informs our bodies, which we call the human Soul. But whether this be so or not, is not of importance to this present argument.

So likewise as for the perfections of life, sense, and reason, these are not  
 2 only

only communicable to a creature, but we find by experience we have them all in some degree :

For as we have a principle of Reason, capable of knowledge, wisdom, and holiness :

So we have a body endued with life and sense, that is, with Power and activity; with a faculty of perception and sensation of pleasure; which body is compos'd of such a number of parts, fram'd in such order, and proportion, as to be a fit instrument to these powers and faculties, in the exercise of their several operations.

If then the Happiness of Man consists in being like God in these several perfections, we must form our conceptions of this Happiness of Man, according as we conceive of these perfections in God.

And therefore, as we have shewn that the perfection of life in God, consists in doing all that is possible for him to will; and the perfection of sense,

sense, in enjoying all the pleasure that is possible for him to enjoy ; and the perfection of Reason in the absolute comprehension of the Natures and Reasons of things, in respect both of knowledge and wisdom ; and such an immutable holiness of will, as never to chuse or act any thing, but according to the Natures and Reasons of things :

So the Happiness of Man must by consequence consist in the highest degree of these perfections, that his Nature is capable of.

And therefore when Man, in respect of his rational Nature, knows the Natures and Reasons of things, as fully, and as clearly, as he is capable of knowing them ; and his will is intirely govern'd by his Reason, so as never to chuse, or reject any thing, but according as his Reason apprehends the Natures and Reasons of things require :

And when in respect of his bodily  
Nature,

Nature, which was made to be an instrument of the Soul, in subjection to, and under the direction of Reason; he has his Faculties of operation perfect, and regularly employ'd upon their proper objects; so as to do all those things, and those things only, which his Reason thinks fit to be done; and to enjoy all those pleasures, and those pleasures only, which his Reason judges fit to be enjoy'd; then he is in a true state of natural and perfect Happiness.

So that in one word, the chief Happiness of a rational Nature consists in right Reason and Holiness: For the clear knowledge, and the right apprehension and judgment of the Nature, and Reasons of things, we call right Reason; and the government of our wills, and other powers and faculties by right Reason, we call Holiness:

And as right Reason and Holiness are the highest perfections of a reasonable Nature; and as we are most like  
God,

God, when our Knowledge and Holiness are in the greatest perfection; so, when we speak of the Happiness of Man, sometimes as consisting in the perfection of his Nature, sometimes in right Reason and Holiness, and sometimes in the enjoyment of God, and being like God; it is to be observ'd, that these are all but different expressions, that naturally imply the same thing.

The notion of our Happiness being thus explain'd, from hence we may be able to discover,

*How Happiness is to be attain'd.*

Thirdly, What those means, or rules, or laws are, by which this Happiness is to be attain'd.

By means, or rules, or laws, the same thing is to be meant: For whatsoever is a necessary means to an End; the same is a necessary rule to be observ'd in order to the attainment of that End: And whatsoever God has  
made

made necessary to be observed, as a rule, it is undoubtedly his will we shou'd observe it; and whatsoever it is his will, we shou'd observe as a Rule, that is certainly a law, by which we are to act.

And therefore the means that are necessary to the attainment of this Happiness, may likewise be call'd the laws of our Happiness; the necessity of which being founded in the Natures of things, and thereby signified to be the will of him, who is the author of that Nature and Necessity; they are likewise call'd the laws of Nature.

But then, as the means that are necessary to the Happiness of Mankind are different, as we shew hereafter, according as they are consider'd in a state of Purity, or Corruption, there being many things to be done in the latter state, which wou'd have been needless and unknown in the former :

So in treating upon the laws of  
Nature,

Nature, if we wou'd speak without confusion, it will be proper to carry this distinction along with us :

And as the state of Purity was the first state of Mankind; so those laws, that oblig'd in that first state, we call *primary* laws of Nature :

And those, whose obligation arose from our Corruption, tho' they are founded in the Nature and Reason of things, as they are at present; yet this not being their primitive and original state, we will call them for distinction *secondary* laws.

To find out these laws has been the work of many learned pens, and a great deal of pains has been spent about it; and by the usual method of managing the question, one would think it were a point very abstruse and difficult; whereas it is really, as I shall shew, of all things one of the most obvious and easy.

For since 'tis plain, that these laws of Nature are nothing else, but the means  
that

that are necessary to our Happiness, in the very natures of things; there needs nothing more to the discovery of those laws, than to see what the nature of our Happiness requires, in order to the attainment of it.

Our Happiness then we have already shewn to consist in our being like God in the perfection of Knowledge and Holiness; that is, in a right apprehension and judgment of the natures and reasons of things, which is call'd right Reason; and in being intirely govern'd, both in our will and operations, by right Reason.

This is the notion of our Happiness, and by this it will be an easy matter to discover, what are the natural and necessary means to this Happiness; and by consequence, what are the natural rules and laws, by which Man was to act in a state of Nature.

*The Laws of Nature.*

For First, If Man cannot be happy  
without

without right reason, or a right apprehension and judgment of the natures and reasons of things, whatsoever is a necessary means to right Reason, must be a necessary means to Happiness; and by consequence, the first thing necessary to be done, in order to a right apprehension and judgment of things, must be the first law of nature, and that is

General Laws. To consider the natures and reasons of things, how far they are fit to be chosen, or done, before we pretend to chuse or act.

Secondly, if Man cannot be happy without Holiness, that is, without chusing and acting, according as his reason in the consideration of the natures and reasons of things, apprehends them worthy to be chosen, or done; then, as it is another necessary means to our Happiness, so it is another general law of nature.

2<sup>d</sup> General Law. Not to chuse, or act any thing without, or  
con-

contrary to reason, nor in any other manner, or measure, than reason judges fit, but to chuse, and act every thing, that reason directs; and in such manner, and degree, as reason apprehends the natures and reasons of things require.

These are the two general laws of Nature, and in these two, the whole body of natural law is comprehended, as we shall see by the following deductions: As for instance,

First, if we must not chuse, or act without reason, since the reason that moves the agent to act is the very notion of an end; we are hereby oblig'd not to act without some end:

And since that which reason approves, as proper, and convenient to be chosen, or done, is the very notion of Good, and by consequence whatever reason proposes, as an end, must be some Good:

As we are here obliged not to act without an end; so we are by conse-

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quence

quence obliged not to act without an intention of some Good, either to ourselves or others :

And as the rule of Reason is the natures and reasons of things; so we are by consequence oblig'd to do nothing, but with an intention of such Good, as our Reason apprehends the natures and reasons of things require.

So that by this we are oblig'd to the general laws of Prudence and Goodness.

Secondly, if we must not chuse or act contrary to reason, that is, to our conceptions and judgments of things, by this we are taught the great laws of Truth and Sincerity.

Thirdly, if we must not chuse, or act, but according as our Reason apprehends the natures and reasons of things require; here we have the great laws of Moderation and Fortitude, by which our passions and operations are to be govern'd, in respect of the difference that there is in things :

And therefore to apply this;

First, as there are evidently many things made of the same Nature, and for the same End, which we therefore call Equals:

So it will follow, that we must behave ourselves towards them equally alike; because as they are of the same Nature, whatsoever is in respect of that Nature necessary, or fit to be done to any one, is equally necessary, or fit for every one:

And by consequence, as all Mankind by being made for the same End, and of the same Nature, are so far naturally Equals; they must be so far esteem'd, and lov'd, and dealt with equally; and whatsoever Reason directs to be done to any one, in respect of his Nature, the same it must direct to be done to all.

And therefore if our own Nature be worthy our esteem, and love; so likewise is the Nature of every other Man:

If our Nature as such requires good

offices from others; the same Nature in others requires the like good offices from us.

And if by our Nature we have such relations to others, as require, that they be true, and just to us; the same relation in them to us, requires the same from us to them; and so likewise of all other things of this kind.

Secondly, as there are many other things, which, tho' they are made for the same End, are yet different in their Natures: As some, for instance, more perfect, than others in themselves, some more suitable to us, and more directly conducive to our Happiness, than others, which we call Good. By this general law we are not only oblig'd to prefer those things in our affections, and our operations, which our Reason prefers in its judgment; but also to do it in such proportion, as it judges them worthy to be prefer'd, according to the measure of that Perfection, or the degree of that  
 Good,

Good, which it apprehends to be in them.

And therefore as those things, that are perfecter, and better than others, are more worthy to be known, and consider'd, to be desir'd and hoped for, to be lov'd, and delighted in than others:

So we are hereby oblig'd, not only to consider, and know, to desire, and hope for, to love, and delight in those things first, and above others; but also to do this, so far as they are worthy of it, according to the different degrees of their Perfection and Goodness.

And by consequence, since reason tells us, that God is not only the most perfect Being in himself, and the highest Good and Happiness, we are capable of, but also, that he is an absolutely perfect Good; it will follow,

That we must not only endeavour to consider, and know, to desire, and hope for, to love, and delight in him

first, and above all; but also, that we must consider him with all possible degrees of Consideration; and know him with all possible degrees of Knowledge; and love him with all possible degrees of Love; that is, with all our Heart, with all our Mind, and with all our Strength.

Thus we are taught how to regulate those passions, that we commonly call concupiscible, which virtue we usually distinguish by Moderation.

By the same rule we are taught, how to manage those passions, which we commonly call irascible, such as Hatred and Fear, Grief and Anger: The regulation of which is commonly call'd Fortitude:

But these cou'd have no place in a state of pure Nature:

For in that state we have shewn, that Mankind must have been intirely govern'd by their Reason, and the natures and reasons of things; and as they were in a state of Happiness, so  
they

they knew, that so long as they continu'd to act according to Reason, their Happiness shou'd be continu'd to them, (*p.* 137.)

And therefore in such a state, as there cou'd be no manner of reason, or occasion for Hatred, or Fear, or Grief, or Anger :

So we must conclude, they arose from Sin.

And by consequence, that our first Parents, in a state of Purity, cou'd have no more notion of these passions, than we can have of such things, that we never saw, or heard of :

But when Sin came into the World, there was soon reason enough for them all ; and by this rule we are taught how to regulate them all, *viz.*

That we hate, fear, grieve, or be angry, only according to the natures and reasons of things ; that is, that these passions be directed towards their respective objects in such manner, and measure only, as our Reason, upon a

due consideration, apprehends they are naturally worthy of our Hatred, or Fear, our Grief, or Anger. Thus we are taught to regulate our passions.

Fourthly, if we must not chuse, or act any thing, but as Reason apprehends the natures and reasons of things require, here we have a general law of Justice and Equity, which will branch itself out into several different particulars, according to the different natures and reasons of things. And accordingly,

First, since 'tis self-evident, that there are several sorts, or degrees of Beings; some mere Substances incapable of Happiness themselves, and therefore made for the Happiness of others; if we must act according to the natures and reasons of things, we are hereby oblig'd, in respect of such Beings, not to use them in any other measure, than is necessary to the end they were made for:

And by consequence, so far as they appear to be intended for the Use and  
Happi-

Happiness of Man, they must be us'd only in such a degree, as his Happiness requires their Use :

So that here we have a law against prodigality, and excess in the use of inanimate Creatures.

Secondly, as 'tis evident there are other Beings indued with a principle of life, and sensation of Pleasure and pain; which, tho' they appear to be made for the happiness of others, are yet capable of some degrees of happiness themselves; if we must not act contrary to the natures and reasons of such things, here is an absolute necessity, that they be not depriv'd of their lives or senses; or hinder'd in their natural pleasures; or put to pain, but with an eye to their end; nor any further, than is necessary to their end; which is the happiness of those others, they were made for.

So that here we have a law against all cruelty in the needless destruction of such Creatures, and the barbarous manner of doing it : And

And from hence we must conclude, that in a state of pure Nature, where Men were intirely govern'd by the natures and reasons of things, they never eat flesh, 'till there were no other things that were fit to be eaten; because the necessity of killing them for the happiness of Man, could be the only natural reason of doing it.

And by consequence, that the first killing of Beasts must have arisen from a sense of such a Necessity, or from Revelation.

Thirdly, another order of Beings we find in ourselves, who being made for happiness according to our Nature, which is compos'd of two parts, a sensitive Body, and a rational Soul, each capable of a different happiness; if we must act according to the natures and reasons of things, we are hereby oblig'd to act according to the nature both of the Soul and Body: And therefore,

First, as it is the nature of the rational

rational Soul; so it is the duty of every Man to consider, and chuse, and act according to his Reason: as was before observ'd.

And as every one has a rational Soul of his own, it must be the natural duty of every one, not only to consider and chuse according to his nature, but also to consider and chuse for himself.

Secondly, as the Body is compos'd of a certain number of parts, indued with a principle of life; since we must not act contrary to the nature of the Body, we are by consequence hereby oblig'd not to deprive ourselves, or any other person, of any part of the Body, much less to take away our own, or any other's life:

And as the Body has likewise several powers and faculties suited to several objects and operations; so if we must act according to the nature of the Body, it is absolutely necessary to our happiness, and by consequence a natural law; That

That we apply ourselves to such objects, and such operations, as our powers and faculties require.

But then as all the powers and faculties of human nature were made in a natural subjection to Reason; so they must not be gratified in any other manner, nor exercis'd upon any other object, or in any other measure, than Reason shall allow to be consistent with the natures and reasons of things; that is, with the nature of those several faculties; and the reason of the exercise and gratification of them.

And therefore, as we have several faculties, so we are hereby directed to several duties according to the several natures and reasons of them. And accordingly,

First, as we have some natural faculties, that we call appetites, which naturally tend to eating and drinking, tho' our happiness requires, that these appetites be gratified, yet it must be only so far, as is consistent with Reason;

son; by which we are oblig'd not to eat or drink any thing but what our Reason approves, as fit to be eaten or drank, nor in any other measure, than the reason of eating and drinking requires.

And therefore, as the natural reason of eating, or drinking, is hunger and thirst; so in a state of pure Nature Men were naturally oblig'd not to eat or drink longer, than 'till their natural hunger and thirst shou'd be allay'd:

The same likewise will hold as to all other faculties, and all other things, that human nature cou'd stand in need of.

For as the natural reason of desiring and enjoying such things, as they needed, was their need of Sin; so they ought not to desire or enjoy them any further, or any longer than they needed them:

So that here we have a general rule of Temperance.

And

And so likewise,

Secondly, as we have several faculties fitted for, and such as cannot be exercis'd, but in Society; and as there are many things that our faculties require, which cannot be had but in Society :

So we are hereby oblig'd, not only to enter into such Society, as our faculties require; but also to exercise those faculties in such operations, as the natures and reason of things require.

So that here we have the great law of Humanity. And this may likewise be divided into as many particular duties, as we have natural faculties, and necessities, relating to Society.

Now then, those natural faculties, and necessities, upon which the necessity of Society is founded, are three ;

The faculty of Speech, of multiplying our Species, and the helplessness of our Nature without the assistance of some other ;

And

And as these things made Society always necessary to the happiness of Mankind, that they might have objects suitable to their faculties, and assistance suitable to their necessities:

So 'twas always equally necessary to the happiness of Society, that these faculties shou'd be exercis'd on their proper objects; and such assistance afforded as those necessities require.

So that Conversation, Multiplication, and mutual Assistance, were duties that came in with our very Nature:

But then, as all our faculties and operations were originally put in subjection to Reason, (*p.* 80.) and by consequence were to be regulated by Reason, according to the natures and reasons of things, here we are directed to a general rule for the due regulation of these duties.

And therefore first, as our conversation must be regulated according to the natures and reasons of things:

So

So it will follow, that it must be not only agreeable to the nature and reason, or end of Speech, and by consequence such as shall truly express our thoughts to one another; but also such as is agreeable to the nature of such things as we have to speak on, so as to talk with one another of those things most, that are most worthy in themselves, and most conducive to our happiness to be spoken of;

And by consequence, that our discourses be chiefly upon God, and such things as relate to him.

This was the Rule, and this was the Practice undoubtedly in a state of Purity.

Secondly, as to the duties relating to Multiplication, if our faculties must be regulated according to the natures and reasons of things, it will follow,

First, that our natural powers of Multiplication, must not be us'd in any other manner, nor upon any other object, than is suitable to the nature  
of

of Man, by which all bestial familiarity is forbid.

Secondly, that they must not be used, but for the reason, or end of those powers, or faculties, *viz.* Multiplication.

And by consequence no longer, than till reason apprehends this end is attain'd by a conception: By which, as all acts of Sodomy, or other uncleanness, that do not tend to Multiplication; so all excess of carnal familiarity is forbid.

And if so, from hence we may conclude,

That in a state of Purity, as every thing had a nature suited to its end, (*p.* 82.) so our first Parents had no other appetites one to another in this kind, but what were agreeable to these Laws.

And by consequence, that had they continued in that state, there must have been some certain times and seasons, for carnal familiarity amongst Man-  
O kind

kind then, as we see in other Creatures now.

Thirdly, as the faculties of Multiplication ought not to be used, but for the end, for which they were design'd, *viz.* Multiplication; so by the same reason, it will follow,

That Multiplication ought not to be endeavour'd, but for the attainment of the end of Multiplication:

And by consequence, since tis evident, (*p.* 106.) that the end of Multiplication is the happiness of Society, it ought not to be endeavour'd in any other way, than the happiness of Society will allow :

And if so; then from hence we may conclude,

That since every thing was, as we have shewn, (*p.* 82, 83.) not only made of such a nature, but put in such a state, as was best, for the end it was made for; and by consequence, since Mankind were, not only made with faculties of Multiplication, for the hap-  
4
piness

pineness of Society; but also were provided with such objects, as were most suitable to the nature and end of those Faculties, it will follow,

That whatever provision was made for Multiplication in the first beginning of the World, the same must be the best way for the happiness of the World; and therefore, if it can be made appear, that at first there was but one Man and Woman made, appropriated to each other in that way of Marriage, this must necessarily be best for the happiness of the World:

[And 'tis very observable, to those that believe the holy Scripture, that in the case of Divorces, when the question was put to be decided by our Saviour, whether they were lawful, or not; he draws his argument against it from this very consideration, that from the beginning it was not so.] But this by the by.

Lastly, as to the third duty, which is necessary to the happiness of Society,

*viz.* mutual assistance; if this must be regulated by the natures and reasons of things, it will follow,

That it must be not only such, as is agreeable to the nature of Man, and the nature of those necessities, which are the end, and reason of such assistance; but also must be given in such manner, and degree, as is most for the happiness of those that need it.

These are the general laws of Society, which are commonly call'd the laws of Humanity; and these, as I said, are such as came in with our very Natures; and such therefore I call *primary* laws of Nature:

But there are other things equally necessary to the support, and happiness of Society, besides these, which came in only with what we call the Fall; and which, tho' we are obliged to observe, and submit to, yet the obligation arises only from the corruption of our Nature:

Such, for instance, as the determi-  
nation

nation of property, and the settlement of coercive government, and all those means, and laws, which are absolutely necessary to the security and support of property, and government.

And tho' these are all truly laws of Nature, as being absolutely necessary, in the nature of things, to the happiness of Mankind, considering the state they are now fallen into; yet, as this was not the first state of Mankind, so I call these, as I said before, *secondary* laws of Nature.

And as they would not have been laws, had not Mankind fallen into such a state by Sin, as to make them necessary to their happiness; so neither by consequence were there any such laws, even after they fell into Sin, 'till they had sinn'd in such a manner, and to such a degree, as to make them, in the nature of things, necessary. For 'tis, we see, the necessity of them to our happiness, that makes them obligatory; or in other words, that makes

them laws founded in nature, or natural laws.

And therefore, so soon as we can reasonably suppose, so pure and perfect a Creature, as Man was in his primitive state, could be capable of sinning to such a degree as to make inclosure, or property, and the settlement of coercive government, necessary to the happiness of Society; so soon, and no sooner must we begin the date of their original.

This I take to be clear beyond dispute, supposing it true, that property and government were occasion'd by the Fall: Now that they were so, I think will be equally evident, if we reflect upon the following considerations.

As first, for Property.

By this is meant some peculiar right, that one, or more persons have to any thing, whereby they claim it, as their own, exclusive of all other's pretences to it. And,

By

By Right is meant a power, or privilege of having, or enjoying any thing granted by a law :

This is the definition allow'd, even by Mr. *Hobbs*.

And therefore according to this, as it is certain, that, where there is no law, there can be no right, and by consequence no property; so by the same reason, if there were any such thing, as natural property, there must be some natural law, which gives the person the privilege of enjoying the thing he has a property in, exclusive of any other's pretences to it :

But this cannot be, as we have shewn. For by the laws of Nature, we see, (*p.* 108.) that no man hath, in a state of purity, any natural right to any thing he wants, any further, or any longer, than he wants it :

And as 'tis self-evident, that all Mankind were originally made of the same nature, and therefore liable to the same natural wants; so by conse-

quence they must be all made with the same natural right to every thing they wanted; and therefore could not justly exclude one another from enjoying any thing they had, so soon as their own natural wants were supplied :

And therefore in a pure state of Nature 'tis demonstratively evident, that there could be no such thing, as property.

The same likewise will appear concerning coercive government, if we consider, what we have already prov'd, namely,

That the state of Man's innocence was a state of perfection, wherein, as reason was to be his guide; so all his powers and faculties, his rational will and bodily operations were intirely subject to its directions, (*p.* 78, 79.)

So that whatever reason should require to be done, or avoided, whilst he continued in this state; every one must naturally have observ'd of his own voluntary motion; and no sooner

would the understanding have approv'd any thing, as necessary, but his will would have prompted him to action.

This was the true state of Man's innocence, (*p. 78, &c.*) and in such a state, as this is, all other government would be absolutely useleis, but that in our own bosoms :

And as there could be no need of any other laws, than those, our reason would direct us to, in such things as are knowable by reason; so there can be no reason to think, there would have been any other laws but these.

If there were, it must be either from God, or from Man: The former cannot be suppos'd, unless the wisdom of God can be thought to do any thing in vain, doing that by extraordinary, which may be done as well by ordinary means :

Neither can it be the latter, unless the reason of Man, which was then intirely govern'd by the natures and reasons of things, can be suppos'd to  
direct

direct them to the making of such laws, as in the nature of things, there was no need of; and therefore cou'd be no reason for.

Thus much I thought it proper to observe in this place concerning that nice, and so much controverted point, (Government) in which it is very necessary to know its true original; that we may be able to distinguish, what is to be meant by the laws of Nature, so often talkt of on that subject, whether those of pure, or corrupted nature; the different consideration of which, will give a quite different turn to that dispute\*.

Thus we see, what laws we are directed to, by the consideration of the natures of the several orders of Beings, that we observe in the World thus far :

But fourthly, there is another Being above all these, that we have now

\* See *An Essay upon Government, and the natural Notions of it demonstrated.* By Dr. Burnet.

consider'd,

consider'd, who is absolutely perfect, in whom our happiness consists, and upon whom we, and all other things depend, as the Creator, and Governour of all, which Being, we call God:

And if we are to act according to the natures and reasons of things; and by consequence must behave ourselves, in respect of God, in such a manner as is agreeable to the nature of his perfections, and our dependance upon him; here we have a new scene of laws open'd to us, which we call the duties towards God. And therefore,

First, as God is absolutely perfect, we have already shewn, (*p.* 182.) that it is a natural duty, to contemplate, and know the nature of God, and to love and delight in him; and that to the utmost degree that we are capable of: And

Secondly, as our happiness consists in being like God, and by consequence,  
the

the more like God we are, the more happy we must be ; so it will follow,

That if we would attain that happiness we were made for, we ought to endeavour to be, as like God as our nature is capable of being ; and by consequence to imitate him in all, that he is capable of being imitated in, 'till we are perfect, as he is perfect ; not wanting in any degree of Knowledge, Wisdom or Holiness, that our nature is capable of.

And if so, then since holiness consists, (*p.* 50.) in a conformity, not only of our wills, but our actions to reason ; from hence it will follow,

Thirdly, that as it is our duty to know and love God, so our actions must be such, as our reason apprehends are suitable to our knowledge of him ; or in other words, suitable to the notions we have of him ; and suitable to that esteem, and respect, which is necessarily implied in the very nature of loving and delighting in him :

Fourthly,

Fourthly, as God is a Being, upon whom we intirely depend; and to whose will we are, in our nature, absolutely subject, in respect of our whole Beings, Souls and Bodies, and all the powers, and faculties of 'em:

So if we wou'd act according to the natures of things, we must act suitably to this subjection; and by consequence must, in all respects, be obedient to His will, whensoever, or howsoever made known to us. And

Fifthly, as the natural reason of this moral obedience to his will, is, that we are naturally subject to his will; so if we will act according to the reasons of things, it must be our duty, not only to act according to his will, but the reason of doing it must be a sense of our subjection to him:

And if so, then,

Sixthly, since it was the will of God to make us, that we might be happy, not only in ourselves, but in one another, it must be his will, and our duty,  
not

not only to employ all the powers and faculties of the Body and Soul, in doing those things, that are necessary to the happiness of ourselves and others; but also to do it out of a sense of our duty, and out of obedience to his will.

These are the duties that Mankind were obliged to, even in a state of Purity :

But as for those duties to God, that arise from a sense of want or weakness, danger or affliction, and the like; these came in only with the fall, or depravation of our Nature.

For in a state of Purity, as Mankind were perfect in their Natures, and therefore without weakness:

So they were provided with every thing necessary to their happiness, with suitable powers and faculties to enjoy them, and therefore without want :

And as they were sure, so long as they acted according to their natures, of the continuance of this perfection  
and

and happiness to them, ( *p.* 80. )

So they could have no manner of reason to fear, either danger or affliction :

And by consequence, they cou'd be under no natural obligation to any such duties, the reason of which is founded only upon these, and such like natural occasions.

And therefore however harshly it may sound, yet it is certain, from what we have before prov'd, that such duties, as Prayer, which betokens want and patience, which implies Suffering and Affliction, were not duties belonging to a state of Purity; but these, as well as a long train of others, had their rise from the corruption of Mankind, which introduced a croud of wants, and afflictions amongst us.

And tho' they are, as we said before in another case, ( *p.* 174. ) properly laws of Nature, as being founded in the nature of things, and necessary means to the happiness of Mankind,

as they are at present; yet they must be reckon'd under that order, which we have distinguish'd by *secondary* laws; as being such as we should not have been oblig'd to in the first state Mankind; which as it was a state of perfection, seems capable of no other outward act of devotion towards God but Praise.

Thus have I given you a general draught of the laws of Nature, which Mankind were to be govern'd by in a state of Purity; the obligation to which is founded, we see, in the natures and reasons of things, as they are the necessary means to that happiness we were originally made for; in respect of which, as they are sometimes call'd the laws of nature; so they may as well be call'd, as they likewise usually are, the laws of reason: And that too, not only, as they are founded in the natures and reasons of things, but also as they are the natural dictates,  
and

and inferences of reason, from the consideration of the nature of things.

These things being thus clear'd, and set in order, we have a perfect view of the foundations of the civil law, and may be able, from hence, to fix the just bounds of natural Right, and Wrong. For,

By Right is meant by every one, ev'n by Mr. *Hobbs* himself, a Power or Privilege of acting, or enjoying any thing granted by a law :

And therefore whatsoever the laws of Nature oblige Men to act, or enjoy, in order to their happiness, the same do they, by consequence, give them a natural right to act, and enjoy.

And therefore, as by the knowledge of the several laws, and obligations of Nature, we must, at the same time, so far understand the rights of Nature; so by acting contrary to those natural laws, and obligations, as we shall act contrary to natural Right, and there-

fore must necessarily do wrong; so this Wrong must be differently aggravated, according to the nature of those laws, and the different degrees of our obligations.

And if so, from all this put together we abundantly see the absurdity of those Men, who shall maintain any of these following positions, *viz.*

That there are no laws in a state of Nature :

That the obligation to moral Duties is wholly owing to the Scriptures :

That the rules Mankind had to walk by before the Scriptures, were alterable at the will of the civil Sovereign :

That whatsoever one Man doth to another, is no injury in such a state :

That this state is a state of War, and that all mutual compacts of Fidelity are void in it.

These are all tenets professedly maintain'd by Mr. *Hobbs*, and I think, 'tis sufficiently evident, nothing can be more false, if the foregoing reasonings be true; For,

For, to sum up all in one word, if that, by which God signifies his will to us, is a law; and if the nature and end of every thing be a signification of God's will, as to that thing; then, we have shewn, there are laws of Nature. And,

If the natures and ends of things were determin'd before the Scriptures were reveal'd; then the obligation to moral duties does not depend upon the Scriptures: And if the natures and ends of things be not alterable at the will of the civil Sovereign; so neither can the laws of Nature be; that is, unless the civil Sovereign can cause, that happiness shall not be the end of our Creation; and that such, and such actions shall not be the necessary means to our happiness; he cannot alter the rules that Men are naturally obliged to walk by. And,

If what God has made necessary to our happiness be a Good to us, and the contrary an Evil; then 'tis abundantly

plain, that there are many things good and evil. And,

If what God has made necessary to our happiness, we have a right to ; and to deprive any one of his right be to do wrong ; then every Man is capable of injury in a state of Nature, so far as he is capable of being depriv'd of any thing necessary to his happiness. And,

If we are oblig'd, in a state of Nature, to Love and Goodness, Justice and Truth ; then a state of Nature cannot be a state of War ; nor can mutual compacts of fidelity be void in it, unless War and Hostility be reconcileable with Love and good Works, and Unfaithfulness be consistent with Justice and Truth.

Thus we see from the foregoing reasonings the falshood of these, and such like assertions as these ; and thus much shall suffice for the laws of Nature.

We come now to consider the next thing to be inquir'd into, *viz.*

*Motives*

*Motives to enforce the Laws of Nature.*

Lastly, the motives, by which the observation of these laws were enforced.

Now, that there were such motives annex'd to these laws, is as evident, as the laws themselves :

For since it does appear, that Mankind were made for everlasting happiness, (*p.* 138.) and that these laws are nothing, but the necessary means for the attainment of that happiness, with which we must necessarily, and without which we cannot possibly be happy; then here is a suitable motive annex'd to these laws, to enforce the observation of them. For,

That I call a suitable motive, which is in its nature sufficient to incline a reasonable will to chuse one thing rather than another; and as the object of a reasonable choice is good; so that only can be sufficient to incline a reasonable will to chuse obedience, which

makes it more for our interest to obey, than disobey.

Now such a motive, 'tis evident, we have in this case.

For to be happy everlastingly, as it is the utmost end; so we find by experience, 'tis the utmost desire of all Mankind; and to be excluded from happiness, as it is contrary to the end; so 'tis contrary to the desire of all Mankind.

And therefore, since we are assur'd upon certain principles, that we shall attain this happiness, by the observation of these laws, and shall never attain it by the contrary; our reason must necessarily be convinced, that it is more for our interest to obey, than disobey them; as it is more for our interest to be happy than otherwise.

And by consequence, here is a sufficient motive to enforce the observation of these laws, without any other consideration whatsoever.

But if we add to this, what we have already urg'd, and if it be allow'd, as it has been sufficiently prov'd, (*p.* 140, &c.) that a sinner should, upon the first transgression, either be destroy'd; or if not, must undergo such methods of providence, as are not only proper to bring him to Repentance, but also to affrighten others from following his example; then here was a farther motive to Obedience.

For if Mankind, in a state of Purity, had this notion of the event of Sin, as they necessarily must; it being already prov'd, that they could by the Perfection of their faculties discover, at least as much, as we, in our state of Imperfection can attain to the knowledge of; then here was a most powerful consideration to incline 'em to their duty, when they knew, that they could never be happy without it; but on the contrary must, on the very first transgression, be either totally destroy'd; or if not, were sure to feel

some such ill effect of their disobedience, as should be sufficient to convince them of their folly; and be punish'd in such a manner, as to make them an Example of terror, and discouragement to others.

Thus have I dispatch'd the several particulars, I propos'd to enquire into, and have shewn how far the nature of God, and the happiness of Man, the means, or rules, and laws by which Mankind were to act in order to this happiness, and the motives to enforce those rules and laws, were naturally discoverable by Reason.

These are the main body of natural Religion; and so far as it appears they are discoverable by Reason, so far we must conclude, that our first Parents, in a state of pure Nature, had no other Revelation concerning them.

We come secondly, to enquire, whether there was any thing further necessary to be known in a state of Purity, which our first Parents cou'd

not know by Reason; and therefore requir'd a supernatural Revelation.

*Several Revelations necessary in a State of Purity.*

Now there were three things of this kind, which requir'd a Revelation: One relating to Man in his personal, the other two in his social Capacity; the former concerning Food, the two latter concerning Marriage, and Language.

As to the former, it is to be remember'd, as we have already prov'd, that 'tis absolutely necessary to the happiness of Man, that he have objects suited to his faculties.

And by consequence, as he has such faculties, which we call appetites, which encline him to the operations of eating and drinking, it is absolutely necessary, that there be provision made of such things, as are necessary to be eaten, and drunk. This we have already prov'd above; but then, as the Body was  
made

made subject to the Mind; (*p.* 108.) so we have likewise prov'd, that tho' 'tis necessary to his happiness, that these appetites be gratified; yet it must be only so far, as is consistent with Reason; by which he is oblig'd not to eat, or drink any thing, but what reason does approve, as convenient, and proper to be eaten, and drunk. This we have likewise already prov'd; (*p.* 189.) but this, as we will shew, could not be known by Reason, at the first formation of Mankind; and therefore requir'd a higher Revelation.

A Revelation necessary in a State of Purity, concerning Food.

Indeed as for drinking, since there was a necessity of a supply of that kind, and taking it for granted, that there was nothing made, that was capable of being drunk, and by consequence nothing, that the appetite cou'd desire to drink, but water; it needs no great strength of Reason to infer, that, as that must necessarily be the thing design'd, so it must be convenient, and proper to be drunk: And

And therefore there cou'd be no need of a Revelation, as to that.

But in the case of Food, 'tis evident, there was a great variety of things, which, as they were capable of being eaten, the appetite might indifferently be inclin'd to eat; and tho' it was certain, something must be eaten, yet Reason cou'd not possibly judge according to the natures of things, so soon as it was necessary for Man to know it, whether all these things were good for Food, or not.

For tho' Reason might conclude in general, that whatever God made was good in some respect, or other, or for some Creature, or other; yet it cou'd not be thence rationally infer'd, that it was good for Food, or good for Man; neither is it conceivable how such a thing is discoverable in a natural way, without long observation, and experience.

For whether a thing be naturally good, or bad for Food, can be known  
only

only by its agreement, or disagreement with the Body; and to find out this by Reason, we must first know the several parts, and properties, and operations of 'em both apart; and then what effects they will have on each other, when united.

But in what possible method can we conceive this to be discoverable by bare Reason? From what principle can we guess the most perfect, and acute understanding cou'd penetrate into the natures of all things about him; as likewise into the nature of his own body, with all the ends and uses of every part, with all their several motions and dispositions, their powers and properties; and that too in so short a time, as nature can be suppos'd to subsist without Food?

And yet, as I said, Man was not oblig'd to eat any thing, 'till his Reason was satisfied 'twas fit to be eaten; that is, 'till he cou'd know all this; because without knowing this, he cou'd not be  
rationally

rationally satisfied, whether 'twas fit to be eaten or not :

And if so,

From hence we must conclude, that either Man, who was made perfectly rational, and whose happiness consists in acting according to right Reason, was put under a necessity of acting irrationally, by being forc'd to chuse his Food without knowing whether 'twas fit to be chosen, or not; which is abundantly shewn to be contrary to the wisdom, truth, and goodness of God;

Or else that there must have been some extraordinary Revelation to direct him in the choice of proper Food.

But then again, it might be argu'd on the other hand, that since he found in himself such natural appetites, as requir'd a suitable supply of Food, he might thence conclude, that whatever those natural appetites carried him to, must be naturally proper to be enjoy'd.

And tho' he cou'd not certainly find  
out

out by Reason, merely from the nature of the things themselves, what was fit to be eaten, and what was not; yet since there was a necessity of eating something, if there was any thing bad, and unfit to be eaten, his happiness requir'd some information, or Revelation of it.

For otherwise he, who was made for happiness, was put under a necessity of doing that, which might be contrary to his happiness, by being under a necessity of eating that, which, for ought he knew, was dangerous to be eaten.

And therefore, if there was no such Revelation given, Reason wou'd naturally thence conclude, that what was not prohibited, was necessarily allow'd; and that then Man might lawfully, and safely eat of every thing, his appetites inclin'd him to.

And by consequence, tho' according to our former argument, we infer'd a necessity of some Revelation  
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to direct our first Parents in the choice of proper Food; yet according to this latter way of arguing, there seems to be no such Revelation necessary, unless there was something made that was bad for Food, and some way or other dangerous to be eaten.

And if so, from hence we must conclude, that either there was no Revelation at all given to our Parents concerning what they shou'd eat:

Or if there was, there was something bad for Food, something that was dangerous to be eaten.

Now whether there was any such Revelation, or not, is matter of fact only, and cannot be known, unless it be by history, or tradition. And therefore,

If any such history, or tradition shou'd be found, that gives us any account of this matter, so far as it agrees with the foregoing reasonings, so far we must in reason conclude it true.

Now such a history we have in the  
first

first book of *Moses*, where he has no sooner told us of the Creation of Man, but he presently informs us of a Revelation, and that not concerning religious principles, or moral duties.

As for any thing relating to God, or ourselves, there is nothing said; and I take it to be a particular mark of the credibility of this history, that there is nothing said of these things:

For that any thing shou'd be said of 'em, is not, we see, necessary in the nature of the thing.

But as natural means were, as we have shewn, sufficient, and by consequence, as our first Parents could need nothing more; so 'tis very probable, that whilst they continu'd in their Purity, they had nothing more, but were left to the improvement of those natural means, which were the natures and reasons of things.

But as it was absolutely necessary, that they should be inform'd concerning their Food; at least, if there was  
any

any thing dangerous to be eaten; so here we are told of such a Revelation.

And as Man is represented, as plac'd upon his Creation in a garden, the fruits of which were to be his Food; so God is represented, as giving him directions, of which of those fruits he might safely eat, *viz:*

That he might eat of every tree, excepting one, which he was order'd to avoid, as he valu'd his life; because in the day, that he shou'd eat thereof, he shou'd surely die, or shou'd be sure to die.

This is the account that *Moses* gives us; and this account being exactly agreeable to those foregoing reasonings, which appear to be undoubtedly true; as we must so far conclude this history to be true; so we may likewise conclude, that the fruit forbidden in this history, was therefore forbidden, because it was bad for Food, and in its Nature dangerous to be eaten.

Now what a different idea does this

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account

account of the first state of Mankind give us, consider'd in the view, that I have here set it, from that which is commonly conceiv'd of it? What an odd notion must a Sceptick, or an Infidel have of the history of *Moses*; when he considers it as pretending to be a divine book? and yet in the very entrance of it, where he reads an account of the Creation of the first Parents of Mankind, just come out of their Maker's hands, and receiving instructions for their behaviour; when one would naturally expect to find a general transcript of the divine Will, as a rule for their future lives; there is not the least hint of any moral duty, but only a command about eating of an Apple, it may be, or some such paltry fruit; and yet the whole fate of the World is made to depend on this? What an odd notion must such Men have of this history, when they consider it in this view? But when we consider the first state of Mankind

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in the light, that I have here represented it from the natures and reasons of things; and when we consider how thoroughly furnish'd our first Parents were with the knowledge of every thing necessary to be known, that was naturally knowable by Reason; and therefore that all further Revelation was needless; and by consequence, in reason, not to be expected: And when we consider the fruit here forbidden, not forbidden merely as an act of God's arbitrary Will, but out of mere goodness to Mankind; and that the fate of Mankind did not depend on this any otherwise, than as in the nature of the thing it would be fatal to them; here is nothing in all this, but what is agreeable to the Nature of God, and suitable to the reason and understanding of Man.

Secondly, another thing there was, necessary to be known by Man in a state of Purity, which related

A second Revelation necessary in a State of Purity concerning Marriage.

to his social Capacity; and that was concerning the Multiplication of his Species; which as it cou'd not be known by natural Reason, requir'd a supernatural Revelation.

For the proof of which, we may observe, what has been already urg'd, (*p.* 96.) that as Mankind have faculties, by which they are capable of increasing their Species; so they ought to have objects suited to those faculties; and by consequence, as they must be naturally made for Society, so it must be such Society as those faculties require. And as we have shewn that the end, and reason of these faculties is the increase of the Species, and the end of such increase the happiness of Society; (*p.* 194.) so we have likewise shewn, that those faculties ought to be us'd no longer, than 'till the end, *viz.* Generation is attain'd; nor in any other way, than as Reason apprehends is best for the happiness of Society, (*p.* 194.)

Now

Now there are but two ways possible for the Multiplication of Mankind, *viz.* either by such an appropriation of persons to persons, as we call Marriage :

Or else by an undetermin'd liberty of all to all :

And therefore, if either of these ways wou'd be prejudicial to Society, or one more for its happiness than the other, it is necessary Mankind shou'd be inform'd of it.

And whether Reason is capable of discovering this, is the question.

Now for a light into this matter, it wou'd not be improper to enquire, according to the principles of Reason, what number of persons might originally be created for the first increase of Mankind.

In order to which it may be observ'd, according to what we have already prov'd, (*p.* 77.) that whatever number was made, be it greater or less, they were all made perfect in

their kind; and therefore as they were all equal in their natural faculties, so they were all equally capable of increasing their Species.

And as we have likewise shewn, (*p.* 96.) that they must have had objects suited to their faculties; so they must be all equally provided with such objects.

And if so, as it will follow from hence, that there must have been an equal number of Men and Women made, that every one might have one: So from hence likewise we may conclude,

That Mankind was originally increas'd by Pairs, by which I mean, that there must have been, either two at a time born, or if not, there must have been a regular Succession of the Sexes; so that if the Male was born first, the next must have been a Female.

And since we observe in Nature an aptitude, or power in the Female Sex, by which they are *capaces generationis*



☉ *speciei propagandæ* sooner than the Males by a year at least, we may thence conclude, that the first child was a Male.

And this gives us an account from the nature of things, of the early maturity of Women before Men; for if but one was born at a time at first, that must be near a year older than the next; and by consequence, if the elder were a Male, he would, when arrived at a due age, want a proper object for his natural faculties, unless the next were a Female, and made to ripen so much sooner in proportion. But this by the by.

But yet, tho' the nature of every person requir'd, and by consequence, had a natural right to one, for the increase of the Species; it does not thence follow, that they had any natural right to any particular one, or that they must always be confin'd to the same one.

Indeed if we suppose only two persons

sons made, they had a natural right the one to the other, as being under a natural, and necessary confinement to each other.

But as the reason of their confinement to each other was, that there were no other persons to multiply the Species by, but themselves; so Reason could not thence conclude, from the nature and reason of the thing, that they should continue under such confinement, when the nature of the case should be alter'd, and there should come to be more persons capable besides themselves.

But much less cou'd it conclude, as to their posterity, that because their first Parents were confin'd to one another by necessity, that they must therefore be so confin'd, who were under no such necessity.

All that the nature and reason of things requires, is, that every one have such an object suited to his faculties, as to answer the end and reason of those

those faculties, which is the increase of the Species; and so long as it is thus, the nature and reason of things is so far answer'd, whether by one object, or another; and there is so far nothing in reason to make it necessary, and by consequence, nothing to give a right to one more than another.

No, on the contrary, we have before shewn, that in the first and natural state of Mankind, all things were in their nature common, and that no one cou'd have any natural right to any thing, any farther, or any longer, than he wanted it :

And therefore tho' Mankind, as having natural faculties and appetites for the increase of the Species, had a natural right to one another's assistance, in the gratification of those appetites for that end; yet it cou'd be no longer, than those appetites continu'd, nor than, 'till that end was attain'd.

And therefore since in that state, as we have shewn before, they had no  
appetites

appetites to one another any longer than 'till Generation was effected; it will follow, that after Generation, as they cou'd in this respect have no further want of one another; so neither cou'd they have any further right to one another; and by consequence must be naturally free, and unconfi'd to one another.

'Tis true indeed, we have already prov'd that, as ev'ry one has a rational principle of his own, so every one must judge and chuse for himself; and what any Man is oblig'd to do, so far we have shewn before, he has a right to do.

And by consequence, any two persons, as having this Right, might agree to appropriate themselves to each other.

But then, as reason is the guide of a rational choice, so the natures and reasons of things are the guide of Reason; and therefore unless we can conceive something in the nature and rea-  
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son of things, to determine Mankind in their state of Purity always to chuse the same person for the increase of the Species, any more than the same food to eat, when all things were perfect in their several kinds, equally agreeable, equally beautiful.

And unless we can find out something, that might determine them to think, that it wou'd be more for the happiness of Society for one to be appropriated to one, than for all to have a liberty to all; we must conclude, that in such a state, they cou'd not incline to such a choice:

Now that it wou'd manifestly tend to the prejudice of Society, shou'd Mankind be permitted to multiply their Species without any confinement to one another is universally acknowledged by all civiliz'd nations, by the laws, which are every where made against it.

But yet whether this was discoverable by natural Reason, in a state of  
pure

pure nature, is a matter of reasonable dispute.

For tho' they knew, no doubt, much more by their Reason, than our Reason is capable of attaining to; yet that we know this is not owing to our Reason, but to our Experience and Observation.

We do not discover, that it is prejudicial to Society, by any inconsistency, that there is in such a liberty in itself, to the nature of things, or to the nature of the happiness of Mankind in their primitive and original state.

For the happiness of Mankind, we have shewn to consist in being govern'd by right Reason, and had they continu'd in their primitive state, all their faculties and appetites had been subject to Reason, as to the object, the manner, and measure of their enjoyments; and by consequence, as this cou'd not be naturally prejudicial to Mankind, so Reason cou'd not possibly think it so; because the exercises of our

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faculties,

faculties, upon their proper objects, in subjection to Reason, falls in with the notion of Happiness.

And since it was not naturally prejudicial to Society, if it be enquir'd, how it comes to be so now; it is because we are not in our natural state.

That was, as we have shewn before, a state of Perfection; but we are now (as shall be shewn) in a state of Corruption. And,

As that was a state, wherein all the operations of Nature were govern'd by Reason:

So this is a state where our appetites and passions are too strong for Reason; so that, if they were not under some confinement, by what we call Marriage, Society must sink into the utmost confusion.

This, I say, we know by observation, and experience of our corrupted state, and 'tis by this only, that we are capable of knowing it.

And since 'tis self-evident, that in a  
state

state of Purity, Mankind cou'd not possibly have this experience; and therefore cou'd not know the necessity of such Marriages; it will follow,

That so far as this is necessary to be known, as it could not be discover'd by Reason; so it ought to be made known by Revelation.

And therefore here is evidently some Revelation necessary to the institution of Marriage: And if so,

Then as the Reason of the institution of Marriage is to prevent the ill consequences, that the want of such an institution must bring upon Society, upon the corruption of Mankind; it will follow, according to the reason of the thing,

That this institution shou'd be establish'd before that Corruption.

Now whether there was any such Revelation in a state of Purity, concerning the institution, and appointment of Marriage, is again a matter of fact, which, as I observ'd in the former

former case, can only be known by history; and if we have any such history of the first state of Mankind, which agrees with the foregoing reasonings, we have, so far, no reason to doubt its truth.

In this then likewise the history of *Moses* agrees, where we are no sooner told of the Creation of Man, but there is provision made of a help meet for him, that he might have an object suited to his faculties.

And as it is necessary in the nature of things, that there shou'd be an equal number of Men and Women made, that the World might be encreas'd by pairs; so here we are told of only two persons made.

And as it was necessary to the happiness of the World, that the Species should be encreas'd in the way of Marriage, and that too of one to one; so here, as we are told, but of two persons made, we are likewise told of a divine appointment, that they shou'd  
be

be so appropriated one to the other, as to be esteem'd but one flesh. And,

That whoever shou'd, from thenceforth, take to himself a Wife, he shou'd cleave to her, and not be separated from her, no, not by the strongest obligations, that nature lays upon him, even to his Father and Mother.

And thus far right Reason, and Scripture agree.

Thirdly, another thing necessary

A third Revelation necessary in a State of Purity, relating to Language.

to be made known to Man by a supernatural Revelation, ev'n in a state of Purity, was Language.

For we have already shewn, that ev'ry thing was put in such a state, at the Creation, as was suitable to its nature and end.

And therefore, as Mankind was made with a natural faculty of Speech, by which they were naturally capable of Society, and Conversation; so they must have been placed in such a state of

of Society, as was suitable to that faculty; and by consequence, such a Society as they were capable of conversing with.

And since this faculty was made perfect in its kind, and therefore perfectly capable of being exercis'd in Conversation, so soon as they were made; it will follow, that, if they were put in such a state, as was suitable to their faculties, it must be such a state as they cou'd converse together in, so soon as they were made.

But how this cou'd be without a Language, and how they cou'd come by a Language, in a natural way, so soon as they were made, is the question.

If we can conceive, that they might attain this in an instant by the acuteness of their faculties, then they cou'd have no need of any further assistance.

But if it be not conceivable, as certainly 'tis not, how they cou'd attain this so soon, in a natural way, we must

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then conclude, they had it in a supernatural ; and what they cou'd not do by Reason, was done by some extraordinary internal Revelation, such probably, as we commonly distinguish by Inspiration.

Now whether 'twas thus, or not, we are not told, in any history we know of ; nor is it of any consequence that we are not.

The history of *Moses* so far agrees, as to shew us, they had a Language at that time ; and how they came by it is not material to be known :

But yet according to the best Reason, 'tis more than probable, it was by Revelation.

Thus we see what extraordinary Revelations there were, ev'n in a state of Purity.

*Corollary.*

And from hence we may infer the falshood of that notion, which is commonly receiv'd, and by which Men frequently

frequently define a state of Nature, as a state without a Revelation.

For from what has been said, 'tis abundantly evident, that there never cou'd be any such continu'd state; but that there must have been very early Revelations, made not long after the Creation.

If indeed by Revelation be understood, what we Christians, by way of excellency call so, the holy Scriptures; and if by being without a Revelation, be meant only, a being under the government of Reason, as the general rule, and guide of our actions; this may indeed, in a limited sense, be call'd a state of Nature, inasmuch as it agrees with the true notion of a state of Nature, in this particular respect.

But it wou'd be much plainer to call it a state of Reason, that being a term, that wou'd much better distinguish it from a state of Revelation, and such, as wou'd not be so liable to mistake, or exception.

And this I have been the more careful to take notice of, that nothing may be omitted, that will give any light to what I am sensible is very rarely understood :

For tho' there be nothing more common in all our writings, and nothing more familiar in all our discourses, than to talk of a state of Nature, and the laws of Nature, and the principles of natural Religion; yet there is nothing that I have yet had the happiness to meet with, that has given us any rational account of that so much talk'd of State; or shewn us what those laws and principles are, so as to prove 'em to be purely natural.

By which expression I do not understand their being innate, and born with us, as if they were something in our very natures; but I mean their being founded in the original natures and reasons of things.

I say, original natures of things; for tho' we have several learned Treatises

to prove Religion from the natures of things; yet they have generally this flaw, as I observ'd before, that they have not distinguish'd the original, and perfect, from the present corrupted state of things; by which means they speak of several duties, as natural, which are not purely, but accidentally so, their obligation only arising from the natures of things, as they are now, and not from what they were at first:

So that, tho' they have done great service to Religion, by their learned labours; yet they have not taught us to think so clearly; nor have they prov'd it so plainly, and so easily, as they otherwise might have done.

This Error therefore I have been careful to avoid, and as I have endeavour'd to fix a right notion of things thus far; so I think I have given you an open view into a true state of Nature, and all things relating to it.

And from what has been said, we may be able to form a more perfect

idea of the divine government of the World, in respect not only of its natural, but corrupted State.

*A further view into the government of the World, considering it, as in a State of Corruption.*

Government is nothing else but the guidance, or direction of things to their end.

And as the end of all things is the happiness of the World; so the way, or means, by which God guides the World to happiness, is the true notion of the government of it.

And if so, then, as that which is necessary to the happiness of the World, is necessary to the government of it:

So if we would form a perfect notion of the government of the World, we must consider what we can conceive necessary to the happiness of it.

Now this we have already done in part, so far as relates to a state of Nature, in which, as the happiness of the  
World,

World consists in being govern'd according to the natures of things; so this may be call'd the natural government of God

But then, as a state of Nature was such a state, wherein every thing had a Nature suited to its end, and was provided with means for the attainment of it:

So we have shewn before, that by acting according to their Nature, in the use of those means, all things must certainly have attain'd their ends.

And by consequence there could be no other operation of God, necessary to the everlasting happiness of the World in a state of Nature, besides what was done at the Creation, but Preservation.

And therefore if we suppose any further operation of God necessary to the happiness of the World now, than what was done at the Creation; we must necessarily suppose, that the World is not now in its original state of

Nature, or in that state it was created in; but that things are either altered in their Natures, or do not act according to their Natures :

And if so, then if we would form a rational view of the nature and necessity of the government of the World, we must consider,

First, how far things are fallen from that original state, in which they were created.

Secondly, what we can conceive necessary in the nature of things to the happiness of the World, considering the circumstances they are fallen into.

### *Of the Fall of Man.*

As to the first of these, that all things are not in that original state, in which they were at first created, is as certain, as 'tis evident, that all things are not now so perfect in their kind, as their several kinds were originally made.

And that they are not so, we ourselves,

selves, alas, are but too too sensible, by a woful experience, in our own Natures:

For we find ourselves vastly different from our original, that is, from the perfection of our first Parents:

We find that we have not only a great weakness in our understandings, and a strange disorder in our wills and affections; but we likewise see a woful corruption of our bodily faculties, both as to their moral, and natural perfection.

For there is now no longer that just proportion and crasis of blood and humours; nor that lasting stability of constitution, which the natural perfection of the body requires; nor is there that absolute subjection of its appetites and passions to Reason, in which its moral perfection consists; both which our first Parents were originally created with.

But on the contrary, there is too visibly *a law in our members, waging war*

*war against the law in our minds, the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and we find ourselves not only liable to sorrows, and sicknesses, pains, and diseases, but at last under an unavoidable necessity of death.*

So that there is an evident change wrought upon our Natures; and we are but too plainly degenerated, and miserably sunk, very far below that primitive perfection, which our first Parents had, when they came out of their Maker's hands.

And this change, and imperfection of human Nature, I call the corruption, or depravation of it, in that it is thereby become in a worse condition, than it was made in.

And if so, then since the human Nature was created in a perfect state, as being necessary to a perfect happiness; from hence it will follow, that so far as we are wanting of that original perfection, so far we are want-  
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ing of the means that are necessary to our happiness; and there must be more requir'd to make us happy, since this alteration of our Nature; and by consequence another method of government necessary to the World, than there was at first, before that alteration happen'd.

And since the natural reason of this government is, that things are not, as they ought to be, but are altered from what they were; it will follow,

That according to the different degrees of this alteration, so must there be different methods of government.

And since government is nothing else, as has been observed, but the ordering of things to their ends, so as shall be most for their happiness, according to their Natures; if we can discover from the circumstances the World is fallen into, what means may be necessary in the nature of things, to the happiness of the World, we shall be so far able to form a right notion

of the means, that are necessary to the government of it.

Now this we may be able to do in some degree: For since we have already shewn, that the happiness of Mankind requires the perfection of their faculties, both of body, and Mind; and that not only in respect of the faculties themselves, but likewise of their moral subjection to right Reason:

And since we have likewise shewn before, that Mankind were originally, not only made for this happy state, but made in such perfection, as was suitable to it:

As it will follow hence on the one hand; that so far as they are fallen from this state of original perfection, so far they are fallen from happiness, and by consequence can never be capable of perfect happiness, without being restored to this original perfection:

So it will likewise follow on the  
other

other hand, that this restoration must be the great end of that government, that designs our happiness.

And by consequence, that whatever is a necessary means to this restoration, is a necessary means of the government of the World:

And if so, then since Mankind are, as we have shewn, so far fallen from their original state, that,

First, in respect of their bodily Nature, instead of a natural perfection of its faculties, which we have shewn in a primitive state, was such, that it was naturally capable of continuing for ever, and therefore in a state of immortality; instead of this, I say, since they are now become corrupted, and mortal, and labour under an unavoidable necessity of death; it will follow,

That if this natural perfection of our bodily faculties be necessary to our happiness, (*p.* 79, 82, 87, &c.) it must be the design of that government,

ment, which orders all things for the happiness of the World, to restore us to such a natural perfection again, as that *this corruption shall put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality.*

Secondly, since Mankind are so far fallen from the moral perfection of their Nature, that the inferior faculties are now no longer in their primitive subjection to the mind; it will follow,

That as this subjection is necessary to our happiness; (*p. 103.*) so it must be the design of that government, that orders things for the happiness of the World, that our faculties be restored to their subjection again.

And thus we see, according to the natures of things, the general design of the government of the World.

But if we further consider, what we have before shewn, that God governs all things according to their Natures, natural things in a natural way, and rational things in a rational way; from

from hence we may be able to discover further the general methods, that appear to be necessary for the compassing of these general designs. And therefore,

First, tho' it is the general design of providence, that Mankind be restored to a state of immortality; yet as God governs natural things in a natural way; since the Nature of Man is now become mortal, and under a natural necessity of dying; we must thence conceive, that the general method of restoring Mankind to immortality, will be, such as consists with this natural necessity of Death; so as that, in the general method of Providence, Mankind must die according to their nature, before they shall be made immortal.

And if, so, then since the restoration of Mankind to life, after death, is the very notion of a Resurrection; it will follow,

That the general method of restoring Mankind to immortality will be a Resurrection from the dead. Second-

Secondly, though it is the general design of Providence, that Mankind be restored to the moral perfection of their Nature, in the subjection of their inferior faculties to Reason; yet as God governs rational Creatures in a rational way, so we must conclude, that the general method of doing this, will be such, as shall consist with their rational Nature, that is, their understanding and freedom; and by consequence, that it shall be ordinarily effected.

First, by furnishing the understanding with necessary knowledge, and by directing it to proper and suitable means, for the attainment of that end it aims at.

Secondly, by influencing the will to determine itself to them by suitable and sufficient motives, and leaving it to chuse according to Reason.

And if, notwithstanding all these methods on God's part, and the strictest endeavours, and compliance on  
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ours, it shall be found at last to be naturally impossible to attain that perfection in this life, which we were originally created in, and which is necessary to a perfect happiness, we may then conclude,

Thirdly, that God will bestow what Man cannot attain: for 'tis self-evident, that what is necessary to be done, and yet cannot be effected in a natural way, does, in the nature of things, require a supernatural;

And therefore since this perfection is necessary to our happiness, and is the end of that Providence, which intends our happiness, it will follow,

That so far as it is beyond the natural power of Man; so far it is necessary to be supply'd by the supernatural operation of God. And by consequence,

First, if there be any thing necessary to be done, which exceeds our natural powers to do, in order to the attainment of this perfection; we must  
S conclude,

conclude, he will supply us with supernatural assistance here: And,

Secondly, if when we have done our best, we shall still fall short of that intire perfection, which is absolutely necessary to our happiness; we must then conclude,

That at the raising of the dead, he will fill up what is wanting of perfection hereafter; and by consequence, the state of the happy, in another life, must be such a one, wherein not only *mortality shall be swallow'd up of life, but all imperfection shall be done away.*

But then, as the natural reason of these operations is, their being necessary to the happiness of the World; we may thence rationally conclude, that he, who governs all things according to their natures and reasons, will proportion these several operations according to the nature and reason of them.

And therefore, tho' God will supply

ply us with a supernatural assistance, where it is wanted; yet as the natural reason of that assistance is, the necessity or want of it, by reason of our weakness; so we may conclude, that this assistance will not only be given in the course of Providence, in such measure and degree, as is suitable to that weakness, or want, that makes it necessary; but also that it shall not be given in any other measure, than it is necessary, or wanted, that is, not in such a measure, as to do for Men, what they have a natural power to do for themselves; or such as shall force them to do, what they can, but will not do for themselves: And by consequence, if Men will not do that for themselves, which they have a power to do, and is necessary to their perfection and happiness, as we may conclude, that they shall be left without a supernatural assistance here; so they shall be likewise left in a state of imperfection, and unhappiness hereafter.

And as this unhappiness is the natural consequence of their imperfection, and this imperfection is in their very Nature; so this unhappiness must, in the nature of things, be as lasting as their Nature; and therefore if the one be immortal, the other must be everlasting.

And so likewise secondly, tho' God, in the course of his providence, will, as we have shewn, give the World such means of knowledge, and instruction; and such suitable, and sufficient motives to practice, as are necessary to their circumstances; yet we must conceive, that this will be done only in proportion to their necessity.

And therefore, according as the circumstances, and occasions of Mankind have been, or shall be different; so we may conclude, there have been, or will be different methods of the divine providence, according as those different circumstances, and occasions have, or shall require.

And

And if so, then, as we may conclude on the one hand, that if Mankind have ever been under absolute necessity of a Revelation, there has been some such Revelation made; so on the other hand, since the necessities of different ages, and nations may be different; and that may be absolutely necessary to one age, or nation, which is not so to another: Nay since even in the same age, and nation, some things may be necessary at one time, which are not so at another; and some things more necessary at one time, than at another; (as sometimes Mankind may want instruction, and knowledge; sometimes motives to inforce what they already know; sometimes assistance to act accordingly; and that too in different natures, and different measures) we may hence conclude, that if there has been any Revelation, there may, for ought we know, have been many, and that what God has thought fit to reveal to the World, has

not probably been delivered all at once, but at different times, and in divers manners, according to the different occasions of Mankind.

I say, 'tis very probable, and for ought we know there may have been many: But yet we can never be sure by bare Reason, that there have; because we can never be sure what is absolutely necessary.

Many things may appear to us to be necessary, which may not be so; and many things may be really necessary, which may not appear to us to be so. And therefore we must naturally conceive, that, as God may reveal himself, where we may not see any necessity in the nature of things to call for such a Revelation; so he may, in many cases, suspend the Revelation of his will, where, to our weak Reason, the particular circumstances of Mankind, may seem to require the contrary.

Beside, tho' from the necessity of  
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any thing to the happiness of Mankind, in such, and such circumstances, we may certainly conclude, that God, in his goodness, is disposed to act accordingly ; yet as the reason of his inclination to do so, is their happiness ; so we must conceive he will do it, or not do it, according as he sees it will contribute to their happiness.

His goodness disposes him to do good to his Creatures, only according to their Natures and Capacities ; and if his wisdom sees they are not capable of what he is otherwise disposed to do for them ; because he sees, they will not receive good by it, but the contrary ; he may, very wisely, forbear the doing it, merely for the sake of goodness.

And therefore, as the immediate end of God's Revelation to his people, is, their instruction , 'tis the greatest wisdom to make his Revelations in such time, and manner, as shall best answer this design ; and that is, not barely

according as they are wanted most, but also according as the people are best disposed to receive instructions by them. And this God alone is judge of.

And therefore, tho' in many cases we may think there is reason to expect such, and such dispensations of Providence, as being suitable to such, and such particular necessities; yet, if things do not fall out according to our expectations, 'tis not for us to *charge God foolishly*, and say his operations are not just, and right, because *his thoughts are above our thoughts, and his ways above our ways*.

But however, tho' we cannot make a certain judgment in this case; yet as we are sure, that in the general method of Providence over Mankind, God will suit his dispensations so, as shall be most necessary to their happiness; so if we can by any means discover what necessities Mankind may have been under in time past, and what means might be necessary to their  
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happinefs in thofe neceffities, this is as good a foundation to build our notions of Providence upon, and as clear a rule to fquare them by, as Reason alone can furnifh us withal.

But then, as we can know nothing certainly of what has paff in former times, but by hiftory; fo we muft have recourfe to this for our fatisfaction, as to what God has done in this particular: And if we have any credible hiftory, that gives an account of the divine Providence, we fhall have as much affurance in this matter, as the nature of the thing will bear, becaufe 'tis capable of no other proof.

Now that I call a credible hiftory in its own nature, which relates matters of fact, agreeing with the natures and reasons of things: And as the natures and reasons of things have been the Rule, by which we have here form'd our notions of Providence; fo far as any hiftory of Providence agrees with thofe notions, fo far we  
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must esteem it to be a credible history.

*The general Credibility of the Scripture History prov'd.*

Now such a history we have in that book which we call the *Holy Scriptures*; which is apparently an history of Providence; and not only gives an account of God's transactions, with our first Parents, in a state of Purity, but of the origin and progress of Sin, and the several consequences of it; and the different circumstances Mankind were brought into by it; and the various methods of God's dealing with them according to those circumstances, agreeable to what we have before demonstrated.

The account it gives us of a state of Purity has been already consider'd; and as for what it says of Mankind after their depravation, we find it correspond in every instance.

For since we have before shewn,  
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that it was Sin alone that gave occasion for all the various dispensations of Providence; we have here not only an account of the rise and progress of Sin, and the various methods used to stop the encrease, and repair the inconveniences of it; but we are here told, what was before prov'd, that it is the whole design of Providence to make Mankind happy, and that by this the only means of making them holy.

And as this holiness cannot be attain'd without proper rules to walk by, and proper means to prevent Sin, and disobedience; so we have here in this book such laws prescrib'd as are reasonable and holy, such as in their own nature tend to holiness; and we have likewise an account of such methods taken, and such motives offer'd, as are naturally fitted to prevail upon every reasonable Man to order his conversation by them.

And as the happiness of Mankind cannot be attain'd in this World, in  
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this state of imperfection and mortality ; so 'tis here set forth as the general design of Providence, (according to what we have before prov'd) to bring them to a state of perfection and immortality in another World, according as they shall be capable of it ; where after a joyful resurrection, *this mortal shall put on immortality, and the spirits of the just shall be made perfect.*

And as the particular end of all God's particular dispensations is before shewn, to be the happiness of those particular persons they are intended for, and vouchsaf'd to according as their particular necessities call for them : And as the particular circumstances of people must be different, at different times ; and therefore must, in the nature of things, require different dispensations ; so we have here an account of various methods taken, at different times, according to their different necessities :

And as we have already shewn, that Mankind may have been in such circumstances as to need a Revelation; and if so, that it is highly credible God may have vouchsafed some suitable Revelation to them: And as there may be different Reasons, for different Revelations, at different times, according as the necessities of Mankind are different: So we have here an account in this book not only of various Revelations, all tending to promote the wise ends of Providence in making the World happy; but such also as were given, not all at once, but *at sundry times, and divers manners*, according to the different occasions and capacities of those, whom they have been all along given to.

And upon this account it seems to carry in it a very strong evidence of the general credibility, both of the history itself, and of the Revelations contain'd in it; as being of such a Nature, and given for such an end, and in such a  
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manner, as according to our foregoing reasonings, 'tis reasonable to expect they should be.

But because the credibility of this book is of the last importance, to Religion, and ought therefore to be thoroughly establish'd, I will not content my self with this general proof of it; but consider it in a more particular manner, and examine the several parts of it distinctly.

And whereas it seems, as I said, to be a history of Providence, the whole design of which, towards Mankind, is to consult their happiness according to their necessities, I will examine the history step by step, to see what account it gives us of the World; and what particular circumstances it represents Mankind to have been in from time to time; and what methods of Providence, we may reasonably think, such circumstances might stand in need of; and whether it informs us of any such provision made for them, as was  
suitable

suitable to their necessities: And if we find it answer in these particulars, we have all that is requisite in the nature of the thing, to demonstrate it a consistent, and credible history.

But as this will take up a great deal of time, and will better answer my design in another place, I will beg leave to postpone it a while, till I have made some observation from what I have before said, relating to the Christian Religion. For as I have deduced from the foregoing reasonings the credibility of the Scripture History in general; so they likewise afford us a strong and evident proof of the Christian Religion in particular.

For, if what I have already prov'd be true, that God is dispos'd to do good to his Creatures according as their natures and necessities require; and by consequence, when they are under a necessity of a Revelation, we must conceive, he is disposed to grant such a Revelation to them:

Then

Then from hence it will follow, that if the World was fallen into such a condition, before our Saviour came, as they could not be happy in, and had no possibility of being deliver'd from, by the power of natural Reason only; and therefore requir'd a supernatural Revelation, there has been some suitable Revelation given.

And if Christianity came to assist the World in this, and has actually furnish'd Mankind with all things necessary; there can be no stronger proof than this, from the nature and reason of the thing, that this is the Revelation of God, as being what agrees with our foregoing notions of his Providence, and what we may in reason expect from him.

Now, whether the World was in such circumstances, as to need a Revelation, and whether Christianity is such a Revelation, as their circumstances requir'd, is our next business to consider.

*The Necessity of a Revelation before  
the coming of Jesus Christ.*

What circumstances the World was in, is matter of fact, and can be known only by history; and as 'tis a particular providence of God to us, to preserve many ancient Books, which are universally allow'd to be written about that time; so we are sufficiently inform'd from them, of such a sad and degenerate state of Mankind, as we cannot in reason think, they could have ever been able to deliver themselves from; and yet could not possibly have been happy in.

The World was then divided into two sorts of people, *viz.* the Jews, who worship'd the one true God, and the Heathens, who were all Idolaters.

As for the Jews, what state they were in, and what necessity they were under of a new Revelation, shall be consider'd in another place.

As they built their Religion, on what

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we call the Scriptures of the *Old Testament*, it will be first proper to inquire into the Nature of those things recorded there, and what influence these had upon them; before we can fairly determine, what farther helps their circumstances might stand in need of; and this shall be particularly consider'd hereafter.

That which I shall here employ my meditations on, is the necessity of a Revelation to the Heathen World.

And this I think will abundantly appear, if the want of almost every thing necessary to the happiness of Mankind, as rational Creatures, will be allow'd a sufficient proof of it.

*The State of the Heathen World consider'd.*

The first thing necessary to the happiness of the World was to know, wherein happiness lies, and the proper means to attain it by: But this was so little understood in those days, that  
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it was matter of continual dispute, even among the learned themselves; and their notions about it were so various, and unsettled, that St. *Austin* tells us out of *Varro*, of 288 different opinions concerning it.

And whereas we have before shewn, (p. 165, 166.) that the ultimate happiness of Man consists in the enjoyment of God, and that the way to enjoy God is to be like him; and that this likeness is to be attain'd only by Virtue and Holiness, (p. 167, &c.) it is absolutely necessary, that Mankind should not only be inform'd of the true Nature of God, with the true notion of Virtue and Holiness; but also be encourag'd in the practice of them:

And whereas in order to this end, 'tis absolutely necessary that a due sense of God, and our dependance on him be firmly settled, and preserv'd in our minds, by proper acts of outward worship; so 'tis equally necessary, that

the World should be inform'd in this, so as always to do it acceptably.

But how necessary soever the knowledge of these things was, the Heathens knew little of them.

What notions they had of the divine Nature, we may judge by that rabble of Deities, they paid their adorations to; and those absurd superstitions, and sometimes cruel and inhuman rites, that were every where publicly practis'd, and approv'd of.

Instead of one, they worship'd innumerable Gods, of various kinds, and different orders: They had their celestial and terrestrial, aerial and infernal, their national and domestick, their good and bad, their male and female Deities. Of these Deities some were only evil spirits; others Men and Women of evil lives; some were brute beasts, and those too of the most vile and noxious kinds; some were things without Life, and some without Being; nay, so low were they  
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sunk in this respect, as to worship such things, as modesty forbids to name.

These are such facts, as every body knows, and whilst they were thus corrupted in their notions of God, we cannot expect to find them otherwise in their worship: And it ought to be no surprize to us to read of many odd, and foolish rites celebrated to the most ridiculous, and contemptible objects: Of cruel and inhuman Sacrifices offer'd to evil and blood-thirsty Deities: Nor can it be strange to find a drunken *Bacchus*, a lewd *Flora*, a lascivious *Venus*, a thievish *Mercury*, an adulterous *Jupiter*, and such like, worship'd in such practices, as were suitable to their respective characters.

This was the way of the Heathen worship, as all ancient histories inform us; and under such ideas of the divine Nature, and his Worship, what can we expect their morals to have been?

'Tis one of the first principles of Religion to imitate the Deity, and

whilst they had such notions of their Gods, as these; as they could have no true principles of morality; so they could have little of it in their practice: And 'tis no wonder to find, what we read of them, that they were universally sunk into the very dreggs of corruption and debauchery.

St. *Paul's* account of the Sins that reigned among the *Corinthians* in his time, is, that they were *Fornicators, Idolaters, Adulterers, Effeminate, Abusers of themselves with Mankind, Thieves, Covetous, Drunkards, Railers and Extortioners,* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. And of the *Ephesians* he says, that they walk'd in the vanity of their mind, having their understanding darken'd, being alienated from the life of God, thro' the ignorance that was in them, because of the hardness of their hearts, and being past feeling, they had given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness, Eph. iv. 17, 18, 19.

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And in the Epistle to the *Romans*, *ch. i.* we have such a frightful catalogue of horrid vices, as is hard for a modest person to read without a blush.

And this testimony of the Apostle, whom I here consider only upon the level with other ordinary writers, is abundantly confirmed by their own Poets, and Historians.

*Horace*, *Juvenal*, *Martial* and *Petronius* abound with the grossest impurities, agreeable to the deprav'd relish of the times: And we are inform'd of their abominable dissolution of manners, not only by *Tacitus* and *Suetonius*, but all others that have occasion to take notice of their morals.

And whilst we consider this wretched state of Mankind, so ignorant both of the Nature of God and themselves; and so abominably deprav'd both in Mind and Manners; when their very worship was vice, and they could serve their Gods, and their lusts in the same

act; how was it possible for them to attain true happiness, whilst they continued in a condition so directly inconsistent with the very notion of happiness?

There could be no possibility of it in the nature of things, but by a Reformation, and how this could be effected is the question.

It must be either by Reason, or Revelation, and that it could not be by Reason, and that therefore there was a necessity of a Revelation, is my next business to demonstrate. That is, I am to prove, that Reason alone, without the help of Revelation, was not sufficient to reform the World, and bring them out of that state of ignorance and immorality, they had then fallen into, and labour'd under, before Christianity appear'd.

I am the more careful to repeat the question, and set it in a full, and proper light, that it may be rightly understood; for want of which this  
argue

argument is generally perplex'd. 'Tis common for people to lay a mighty stress upon the power of natural Reason, to discover all things necessary to the happiness of Man; and thence to infer the needlessness of Revelation.

But let the natural power of Reason be what it will, this is nothing to the purpose: Reason may have a natural power to do, what it cannot do in such, and such circumstances: And the point in question is, not what is knowable by Reason, or what Reason can discover in its purity, or in that enlighten'd state we are now in, under the assistance of Revelation; but what it could do towards the reformation of the World, and the bringing them out of that ignorant, dark, and wicked state they were then plung'd into, before Christianity appear'd.

The very reason of a Revelation is the necessity of it to the happiness of Mankind, considering these circumstances: And 'tis no argument against  
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the necessity of a Revelation to tell us what Reason could do without regard to those circumstances, but what it could do for their recovery out of them.

'Tis with Reason, as it is with the Eye, which has a natural power to see, and therefore can naturally need no help to discern such things as are the proper objects of it, all requisite circumstances suppos'd: But yet if any of these requisite circumstances be wanting, if the faculty itself be impair'd by any defect in the nerve, or the distance be too great, or the medium too thick, our eyes may be of no use to us; and we may want a guide to direct us in the plainest things, as much as if we had no such natural faculty.

This was the case with the World: They were not in their natural state, they had their understandings darken'd, and had strong prejudices to master, and they wanted a guide in many respects,

spects, as if they had no reason at all : So that the question, as I said, is not what Reason could do of its own Nature, but what it could do for the World, in the circumstances they were fallen into, towards their recovery out of them : And if I can demonstrate that the World could not possibly recover themselves out of those sad circumstances by the bare use of their Reason only, I shall sufficiently demonstrate the necessity of a Revelation.

Now in order to this, we may first consider, that whatever the natural power of Reason was in a state of purity and perfection, there was little remaining of it in that degenerate state of Mankind we speak of : If there had been any such power amongst them, one would naturally expect to find some fruits of it : When they found what condition they were reduced to, methinks they should have seen the necessity of a reformation, and set themselves

selves with all their might to compass it: And what is the consequence of this, but that some body would have drawn out some intire scheme of Religion and Morality, from the natures and reasons of things, as a guide to the people in those days, as we do from Scriptures under Christianity? This, I say, one would naturally expect, if it lay so readily within the reach of Reason: But there is nothing of this kind has yet appear'd in the World.

'Tis indeed an easy matter for Christians, with the light of Revelation shining round them, by which they are taught every thing necessary, to shew how they agree with Reason; but it would not have been so easy to discover those things by Reason only, without that light.

Many attempts have been made by learned Men, even in our enlighten'd state, to draw out a scheme of natural Religion; but we have never yet  
seen

seen one, that is purely natural, or that is sufficient to answer all the occasions of Mankind, as to Faith, Worship, and Practice: And 'tis very probable they would not have been able to have gone half so far in it, as they have done, had it not been for the light of the Christian Revelation.

But suppose some lucky thinkers have hit upon it, after various unsuccessful attempts of others; 'tis very unreasonable to make this the standard to judge of human Reason by in general, as if all people were able to do the same; whereas on the contrary, it should rather be a convincing argument from experience, that Mankind in general are not able to do, what either has not been done at all in any age; or if at all, it may be by very few, and that too after many unsuccessful attempts, tho' it has been wanted many thousand years.

But whatever has been done by any under the influence of Christianity,  
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'tis certain, there was nothing like this before it, and whatever bright genius's might do, reasoning is not the talent of the common herd: The bulk of Mankind are very little capable of making discoveries: Tho' they have a faculty of Reason; yet 'tis very evident, that they ordinarily make but little use of it, and are very little dispos'd to think, or reason of any thing, but what concerns the common affairs of life; they receive their opinions generally by education, tradition, custom, example, interest, or authority; and as they seldom suspect they are in the wrong, where they agree with other people; so they are usually tenacious of those notions, they have already taken up, especially if they have been bred up in them; and are so far from disputing the truth of them themselves, that they can seldom bear others to doubt of them.

This is the known temper of the generality of the World, but 'tis much more

more to be expected among people given up to their vices : They have no end to aim at, but their pleasures; and as they have no other pleasures, but those of this World, 'tis their business to make the best of them, and to avoid every thought, that may disturb, or interrupt them.

And therefore for them to think of God, or Religion, to harbour any notions, or give way to any reasonings that may be inconsistent with those pleasures they place their happiness in, is very unnatural and unlikely.

And if so, considering how wicked the world was, whatever Reason was naturally capable of doing, there was little to be expected from it, whilst they were so little able, or dispos'd to make use of it.

They, who are most likely to find out Truth, and Error, must be Men of speculation and learning, that have leisure, and application, and liberty of thought : And there were many of

this sort in those days, who made it their business to seek after wisdom, and enquire into Nature; and these Men, perhaps some people may imagine, might have been able to teach the rest of Mankind, and so have been the instruments of a Reformation.

But even these Men were able to do little in it, and that not only, because they were but few, in comparison of the whole Heathen World; but also, because the things to be reform'd were such, as they could not find how to mend; or if they had, they were not sufficient to reform them, having difficulties to master, which they were not equal to: And there were several things necessary to this Reformation, which their Reason could not discover, at least not in such a manner, as was necessary for the end of Reformation.

First, the things to be reform'd were such, as they could not find how to mend.

I have already taken notice of several

ral things to be reform'd, relating both to their minds, and manners :

As to their minds, I have shewn, they were ignorant of the happiness of Man, and how to attain it; the nature of God, and his worship: And as there was a necessity in the nature of things, in order to their happiness, that the World should be recover'd out of this ignorance, there was by consequence a necessity that they shou'd be thoroughly instructed in these things.

But the Philosophers of those times were not able to give them instructions, as being ignorant themselves: For after all their nice enquiries after Truth, they could not arrive at any certainty about it.

I have already taken notice what little agreement there was amongst them about the *Summum Bonum*, or happiness of Man: And they were no less uncertain about the nature of God. *Diogenes Laertius* gives us an account of many strange opinions, they held

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about it : And *Cicero* tells us there was such dissention amongst them upon this head, that it was hard to reckon up their different sentiments ; and he sets down the notions of above twenty of them, and those too Men of worth and character, all equally extravagant and absurd.

And tho' some Philosophers hit upon the truth, in some respects, and had juster, and more noble thoughts of God, than others ; yet they were all mere conjectures at the best, such as they themselves could not depend upon : For even *Plato*, and *Cicero*, two of the best and wisest of them acknowledg'd, there was nothing certain ; and the celebrated *Socrates* ingenuously confess'd, that all he knew of God was, that he knew nothing. And 'twas for this reason no doubt, that he endeavour'd, as we are told, to draw Men off from divine, and celestial contemplations, as being what he found too high for human Reason to attain  
to

to the knowledge of, and to betake themselves to the study of civil life:

So that Reason could do little here.

And as to the worship of God, which was another thing to be reform'd; tho' it must be confess'd, that many of the Philosophers saw the vanity and folly of the customary superstitions, and the fabulous stories of the Poets, and severely inveigh'd against them; yet it does not appear that they condemn'd Idolatry, for they were Idolaters in practice, and not only conform'd to the customary rites of worship themselves; but gave it out, as a standing Rule, that all people ought to do so.

And tho', as I said, they saw the vanity of that worship; yet, as they knew nothing better to set up in the room of it, they thought it reasonable to stick to what they had; as being establish'd by the laws of their Country, and as such, confirm'd by their

sacred Oracles, which oblig'd all to worship according to that Rule: And upon this foot, the wisest Men amongst them, *Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Plutarch, Epictetus,* and *Cicero*, condemn all dissention from the accusom'd rites, as a thing that ought not to be allow'd.

Thus it was with the Philosophers, as to Idolatry; which, as it was evident, they had no desire to reform; so it does not appear they knew how to do it.

But suppose they had been ever so well inform'd of the true worship of God, and had been ever so zealous for the reformation of the false one; yet there was no moral possibility of succeeding in it, by the power of Reason only, there being several obstacles to it to be remov'd, which Reason was not sufficient for.

For the worship then in use had not only been establish'd by law, and confirm'd by their Oracles, which they esteem'd

esteem'd the voice of God ; but it was what had been long receiv'd, and what the people had been bred up in : It had been handed down to them from their Fathers, and was justified by universal practice : So that it had Antiquity, Universality, legal Establish-ment, and divine Authority (as they conceiv'd) to inforce it.

And can we think that all this could, in the nature of things, be set aside by the bare speculations of a few thinking Men, without any authority to support them, but bare argument ?

We all know what power the prejudice of Education has with us, and how hard it is to part with any Opinion, or alter any Custom, or Habit, we have been bred up in : And we all know what a natural affection all people have to the customs of their Country, and what regard to the judgment of their Ancestors ; and by consequence what weight a Religion establish'd, and that establishment back'd

with Antiquity, must carry with it : We know this by our own experience.

And what hopes could the wisest Men have, even of being so much as heard against this ?

But when this was confirm'd by their Oracles, and these Oracles were esteem'd the voice of God, what could all the reason in the World signify against this ? Is Man wiser than God ? And yet every one must appear to them to set his wisdom above God's, that should pretend to oppose, what, in their opinion, had been confirm'd by God.

And therefore nothing, but an undeniable evidence of a divine Authority, and such as was sufficient to overthrow the authority of their Oracles, could possibly convince them of their error : So that there was a necessity in the nature of things of a divine Revelation, for the reformation of Idolatry ; and that Revelation shou'd be confirm'd by God, in proper tokens  
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of his almighty Power: And as Miracles are what all Mankind allow to be the proper evidences of such a power, there was, by consequence, such a necessity of Miracles, that no Revelation could have been sufficient without them.

And since the Philosophers pretended to no such thing, there could be no reformation expected from them, whatever other qualifications they might have had.

But besides, this Religion had not only the prejudice of education, the weight of long prescription, the sanction of civil, and, as they thought, divine authority to confirm it; but it was supported by publick, and private interest.

What the Atheist unreasonably objects against all Religion, was, in a great measure, true of the Heathen, that it was the invention of Priests and Politicians.

And tho' 'tis very probable, that a

great part of it had its beginning from evil spirits; for the Scripture, if it shall appear to be of any authority, says, that they worship'd Devils, by whom all their cruel, and inhuman rites, might, in all likelihood, have been impos'd: Yet it is very evident, that some part of it was of human invention, and set up only with a politick view. The deifying of great and famous Men, was invented for the raising up a spirit of Ambition; thereby to incline Men to noble actions, for the benefit of the Commonwealth: \* And whatever was the origin of their Auguries and Oracles, (which sometimes likewise probably might be under the influence of evil spirits) as shall be shewn hereafter; yet 'tis certain, they were made use of at proper times, to serve the occasions of the Publick; and in cases of emer-

\* Cic. de N. D. lib. 3. *In plerisque civitatibus intelligi potest augenda virtutis gratia, quo libentius reip. causa periculum adiret optimus quisque, virorum fortium memoriam honore decorum immortalium consecratam.*

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gency, they commonly receiv'd their instructions from the Government, what judgments to make, and what answers to give out, according as the state requir'd. *Cicero* tells us, that *Demosthenes* had observ'd this of the *Pythian Oracle* in his time; and we have reason, says he, to suspect the like corruption in others: \* And in the same book he tells us, that, tho' their Ancestors had err'd in many things, yet the ancient Religion, and particularly the *Jus Augurum*, (how little truth soever there was in them) were retain'd, for the many advantages of them to the Commonwealth. † ‡

\* Cic. de Divin. lib. 2. *Demosthenes quidem, qui abhinc annos prope 300 fuit, jam tum Φιλιππίῳ Pythiam dicebat, id est, quasi cum Philippo facere, hoc autem eo spectabat, ut eam a Philippo corruptam diceret, quo licet existimare in aliis quoq; Oraculis Delphicis aliquid non sinceri fuisse.*

† Ibid. lib. 2. *Errabat in multis rebus antiquitas, quam vel usu jam, vel doctrinâ, vel vetustate immutatas videmus. Retinetur autem & ad opinionem vulgi, & ad magnas utilitates Reip. mos, religio, disciplina, jus augurum, collegii auctoritas.*

‡ Ibid. postea. *Existimo jus augurum, etsi Divinationis opinione principio constitutum sit, tamen postea Reip. causâ conservatum, ac retentum.*

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And if this was the reason for the retaining them so long, the same reason would hold for the continuing of them; and for the opposing all endeavours for their abolition, if there were no other reason for it but this.

But as this Religion was calculated for the service of the Publick, and on that account would probably be supported by it; so was it no less for the interest of particular persons, who would be equally desirous to preserve it on their part. 'Tis certain the whole Priesthood subsisted by it, and innumerable families of other people, whose livelihood depended on those arts, which furnish'd their Temples with Images, Utensils, and Ornaments; and the superstitious with consecrated Bables and Trinkets.

And considering this, we cannot think it could be easy, for bare Reason, to abolish this Religion: If we could suppose the state would have been patient under the opposition,  
which

which no reasonable Man can think; yet we cannot suppose this of the Priests, and the People, who had their whole subsistence from it: We cannot think, that they would suffer themselves to be talk'd out of their Maintenance, by a few (seemingly) forward and assuming Men, that set up to be wiser than all the World.

And as there were known laws against innovations in Religion, we may be sure that they would not be wanting to put them in execution, with the utmost rigour and severity.

We see how it was in the Apostle's days, in this very case, what usage they met with every where; and it must have been so for the same reason with the Philosophers, had they pretended to Reformation, as the Apostles did.

*Socrates* was an instance of it, who, tho' he did not oppose their Polytheism, and Idolatry, but only some of their more ridiculous fictions and superstitions,

perstitutions, yet he fell a sacrifice to their fury, and lost his life.

And if this was the case, as it evidently was, it requires a great deal more zeal to undertake such difficulties; more courage and resolution to disregard such dangers, and more patience to undergo such persecutions, than the Philosophers probably were indued with, or Reason could furnish them withal.

Had their reason been clear in every point, so as perfectly to see the truth themselves, (as 'tis evident they did not) yet few have such a love to truth as to venture their lives for it, when they may avoid it; especially when they have no assurance of a better World.

But if some might have been so hardy, as to try the experiment, they probably would have been but very few, not sufficient for number for an universal Reformation: And if we suppose them to escape all danger, and meet with no opposition,  
but

but to have a free liberty to speak their sentiments; yet it must be an incredible strength of Reason, that must not only prevail upon all the World, to part with their most inveterate prejudices, but also inspire Men with such a love of Truth, as that they would be content to starve, or beg, merely for the sake of it.

And yet thus it must have been with vast crowds of families, and all the Priesthood upon the Reformation of Religion; so that there could be no probability of any such thing.

And if no probability, when we suppose the best, that is when we suppose no hazard to be run, no opposition to be struggled with: When we suppose the Reformers perfectly instructed in every necessary truth themselves, so as not only to discern all the errors to be corrected, but also what truths to introduce in the room of them:

If, I say, there was no probability  
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of a Reformation in this case, what possibility could there be of it under the utmost danger and opposition, when the wisest of them could be sure of nothing, and were so far from opposing the erroneous worship, that they actually conform'd to it, and encourag'd it?

From these considerations the argument is clear for the invalidity of Reason, and the necessity of a Revelation for the Reformation of the Heathen World, as to their Minds, and Notions, in respect of the nature of God, and his worship; and the nature and means of their own happiness.

And from all these things put together, we hence are taught, what kind of Revelation that must be, which should be given to reform the World, in the circumstances it was at that time in; namely,

First, that it inform Mankind of the true notion of happiness, and how to attain it, of the nature of God, and  
how

how to worship him, as God; and likewise that it be not only intended for, but suited to the effectual overthrow of Idolatry.

Secondly, that it be supported by the power of Miracles, and such Miracles as should be fitted to convince the World of the falshood, and delusion of their Oracles.

Thirdly, that it be deliver'd by proper persons, with suitable zeal to undertake all difficulties, suitable courage, and resolution to disregard all dangers, and suitable patience to undergo all persecutions.

*The Necessity of a Revelation to the Reformation of the Manners of the World.*

We come now to consider the next thing to be reform'd, which was their manners; and how far Reason alone was capable of doing this.

And here I will demonstrate, that Reason was not capable of doing this,

in that there were several things necessary for it, which Reason could not discover; or at least could not discover in such a manner, as was necessary for the end of Reformation.

The first thing necessary for the reformation of the World, was a standing sufficient rule of life, by which they might be taught what to do, and avoid, and how to amend what was amiss: For without such a rule it could not be, but the World must grow every day worse, and worse; because in such case, they must be govern'd only by example; and in a World abounding with bad examples, 'tis impossible but vice must every where encrease; and as they could not know, what was amiss, they could not by consequence know how to mend.

Now whether Reason could discover such a rule of life in the state, that the World was then in, is the question.

And in answer to it, 'tis very certain, that there are some things so apparently

parently good and evil, that they lie within the reach of every one's understanding, and for those particular instances, there could need no other light, or rule, but Reason: But the World might be very bad for all this, for this could be a rule no farther than it went: And whereas morality is necessary to the happiness of Man, in order to a compleat and perfect happiness, the rule of morality ought to be compleat, and perfect.

Now this, I say, is what Reason could not discover. If it could have done it, we may expect to find something of it, remaining in the writings of their learned Men.

But 'tis certain, there is no such thing in fact: And 'tis impossible, even now, for the wisest Man to pick up an intire and perfect system of Morality from them altogether: Because there are some eminent and shining virtues, that they knew nothing of, but rather accounted vices; such as Humility, Meekness,

ness, and Patience of injuries; and some great and heinous sins, that many, and some, that most of them allow'd; such as gladiatorial Homicide, exposing of Children, Fornication, Incest, Sodomy, and community of Wives; and some sins, that all of them accounted virtues, or at least not vices; such as Ambition, Revenge, and Self-Murder.

I need not quote authorities to prove this, as being known to every one, that reads their writings; and if reason could not find out such obvious things, and that too in the wise, and the learned, it must be a very weak and insufficient guide.

But suppose some few of them had hit upon the truth, and could have reduced it into a regular and perfect system; yet this could never have been of use to the reformation of the World, till it was receiv'd, as a standing rule; and it could never be receiv'd as such, till all people should be convinc'd it

was the truth; yet even the Philosophers themselves were so far from any probability of this, that there was nothing about which they were more divided, than their notions, even of good and evil.

This was a matter of so universal dispute, that *Maximus Tyrius* tells us, there was no coming to any agreement about it; *neither Nation agreed with Nation, nor City with City, nor Family with Family, nor one Man with another, nor any one with himself about these things.*

And if the wise and the learned could not find out this, what could Reason do in vulgar people? They must be taught by others, and who were sufficient for it? The Philosophers could not teach, what they did not know, and their disputes would rather perplex, than satisfy; and instead of making them wiser, make them worse.

And tho' some of them should have

happen'd to have hit the point, yet how should vulgar people know how to find it among so many divided Sects? This could not be done without examining the dispute, and turning over, it may be, many learned Volumes, and runing over a maze of tedious subtleties, which they had neither opportunity, nor capacity to do.

And, if they could not chuse what Sect to be of by their Reason, what must the consequence of this be, but that every one would chuse by his inclination, or interest? And therefore their notions would be most espous'd, and adhered to, which would make them most easy in their vices, and best serve their worldly ends and purposes :

And in this case the *Epicureans* had vastly the advantage, whose principles denied the Providence of God, and made bodily pleasure the happiness of Man.

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And as this Sect was therefore in the greatest vogue, and reputation, most adher'd to by the Great, and most countenanced by the Wits ; this alone would have been sufficient to defeat all hopes of reformation ; this Sect not only being the most likely to spread, but its principles directly destructive of morality.

But suppose all the Philosophers had agreed in their opinions, and fix'd upon a certain rule of life ; to make it sufficient to the end of reformation, 'twas necessary, the world should submit to it, as such, but how could they possibly compass this ? They could but reason with the World at best ; and we all know, how little Reason can prevail against Inclination, Habit, Lust, and Interest.

There is no reforming the World, but by Authority, and such Authority, as can govern, and influence the World. Human governours may do much in particular Societies, towards

the restraint of vice, and preventing the outward practice of it: But they cannot prevent such vices, as may be committed without their knowledge, much less can they make Men virtuous; that is, they cannot reform their minds, nor subdue their passions, nor awe their consciences, nor plant good dispositions in their hearts; without which there can be no true virtue.

Nothing could do this, but the authority of God; and therefore nothing can be a sufficient rule of life, but what is founded upon this Authority.

This all the celebrated lawgivers of the ancients were so thoroughly sensible of, that they all pretended they had their laws from heaven: As *Numa* from the Goddess *Egeria*, *Lycurgus* from the *Pythian Oracle*, *Minos* from *Jupiter*, &c. And tho' these were all mere pretences, to delude the people into Obedience; yet this plainly shews, that they thought the belief of a divine authority the only proper means

means for this; and there was no regard to be expected to their laws without it. And if this was necessary to the reformation of the World, there could be no such Authority; and therefore no reformation possible without a Revelation.

'Tis true indeed, it may be said, that the laws of Nature are the laws of God; and as these laws are discoverable by the light of Reason, so soon as they are discover'd, and made known to the World, they carry their own authority and obligation along with them; and there needs no other Revelation to enforce them.

'Tis very right: But they must be first discovered, and made known to the World, and that too to be the laws of God, before they can, or ought to be received, as such; and in what method could the wisest Philosophers do this?

Tho' the laws of Nature are discoverable by Reason, yet this is what

the ancient Philosophers did not, and what it is impossible they should discover; as being ignorant of the two great hinges, upon which the laws of Nature turn, *viz.* the Nature of God, which is the measure of all perfection, and the right notion of the happiness of Man, which is the great end, to which all our actions ought to be directed, and by which they are to be adjusted.

And tho' many of them have talk'd excellently well of virtue, and advanced morality to a great pitch, considering the times they lived in; yet they did it chiefly upon principles of honour, and generosity, and convenience to the welfare of civil life.

They never urg'd their precepts, as the laws of God, nor did they require the observance of them, out of duty to, or for the glory of God: They consider'd them only, as fit, and reasonable to be observ'd, and that who-soever acted according to them, was deserving

deserving of the praise of a wise, a great, or a good Man; but we never find them pressing any duty as a natural law to be observ'd in obedience to the God of Nature, and in the nature of things necessary to happiness in the enjoyment of him.

This is the foot, as I have shewn before, upon which the law of Nature stands; and since they never pretended to any thing like this, we have reason to conclude, they knew nothing of it.

But suppose they had discover'd this, and could have drawn out a system of moral laws upon this foot, how was it possible to make the World receive them, and submit to them, as the laws of God? And yet this was necessary to be done, before they could be of use to the reformation of Mankind.

This could be done only by reason and argument, and this reason and argument ought to be so clear, that  
every

every understanding should be able to comprehend it; and that too deliver'd with such force of persuasion, as to leave no possible room for doubt: And yet how was it possible to do this?

The subject itself is dark, and intricate, and requires a long train of close and abstracted reasoning to make it out, which lower understandings are not judges of, and therefore are not affected with.

And if they had capacities to understand this, they cannot be supposed to have leisure, inclination, or opportunity, to attend to it: And considering how deprav'd the World was, how confirm'd, and harden'd in wickedness, we cannot think the most prevailing reasonings would be regarded, that came to disturb them in their darling vices, and teach them what they had no desire to know.

This some of the Philosophers themselves complain of, and we have it  
confirm'd

confirm'd by daily experience, even in Christian countries; where, tho' Men do not want to be inform'd of their duty, yet we find it the hardest matter in the World to persuade them to the practice of it, when once they are engag'd in a vicious course of life, and we must reason against Lust, and Interest.

But suppose there had been no difficulty in this respect, in the reformation of the World; that is, suppose the people had been ever so well dispos'd to hearken to instruction, and ever so desirous of doing their duty; yet the wise Men of those times were not equal to the work.

It was a work of inconceivable difficulty, and vast extent, that requir'd many hands, and great zeal, and application.

If all were to be reformed, all were to be instructed, and what was a small handful of Men to all the World? And what could the wisest Men have  
done

done in the ordinary and human way of instruction, (supposing them ever so many, and ever so knowing) where every thing to be taught was to be demonstrated to the satisfaction of every person concern'd? What abilities, what time, what art must it require to apply themselves to every person, in a manner suited to their several tempers, and capacities; and that too with such persuasive force, as to root out all their prejudices, correct all their errors, subdue all their passions, conquer all their evil habits, and customs, and draw them off from the irregular bias of a bad education, and a wicked life.

What progress may be expected in such a case, we may judge by what we see among ourselves: Tho' we are deliver'd from Heathen darkness, and the people in general know the will of God, and want little instruction in the rules of life; and tho' we have a guide appointed for every parish, and one day in seven set apart  
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for holy things, and appropriated to religious worship, and instruction, besides what is done in private, yet still we see, but little reformation: Tho' the chief thing wanted is not demonstration, but only to be reminded of their duty, and excited to practice what they already know, and allow to be so; yet few Men have the comfort to say with any assurance, that they have ever made one convert from a wicked, to a truly Christian and holy life: And if we can do so little in these days of light, and knowledge, where sufficient numbers are provided for the work, and that work so little in comparison of what was necessary in Heathen darkness, what possibility could there be of any success from the best improvements in Philosophy, in the hands of a few Men only; and they here, and there scatter'd up and down in places only of great resort for Learning?

Had they travel'd up and down to  
teach

teach the World their duty, and should we suppose them to have made many converts; yet this would do but little to the bettering of Mankind, without a constant attendance, and a continued succession, not only to make a further progress, but to cherish the seed already sown: For 'tis natural to conceive, that many things would be wanted, which could not be provided for all at once: Many errors would arise, that must be corrected, many doubts, that must be satisfied, and many would waver and fall away, that must be reduced, and this probably in every place:

And therefore, as there was a necessity of a standing ministry, so unless there were a provision made for this, little could be done in Reformation. And yet there could be no probability of any such thing, unless the Philosophers would undertake it of themselves: And how is it possible to suppose this? That is, to suppose that

that they could all agree to leave their habitations, and worldly affairs; and transplant themselves and families to distant places, and countries; and those of the cold and barren, as well as the rich and the warm situations; and all this upon their own mere motion, and pure zeal.

No Man can be so wild, as to think this possible. But especially, if he considers the account we have of them, that they were not Men of this reforming temper. They consider'd things only as Philosophers, and not as Reformers, out of a love of wisdom, and fame, rather than virtue, or the love of Mankind.

St. *Paul* tells us, that the Philosophers of his time, in the famous *Athens*, met together only *to tell*, or *to hear some new thing*: And *Tully* says, they made their several institutions *an ostentation of science, rather than a rule of life*.

But suppose it had been otherwise,  
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and that they had all been intent upon Reformation, and for that purpose had bent their whole study to convince the World of the necessity of it; that they could give them a perfect rule of life, and were able to prove it to be the law of God, from the natures and reasons of things; yet the World would not easily have believed what they said, unless they had lived suitably to this themselves. To pretend that what they taught was the law of God, and that by virtue of that law all vice must be abandon'd, whilst they themselves lived in contradiction to it, was not a likely way to reform the World: And yet thus it was with the Philosophers. *Diogenes Laertius* gives us an account of many, and those too, great and scandalous vices, that most of them were guilty of: And *Tully* says, there were very few, whose lives were not a contradiction to their precepts, which is also confirm'd by *Seneca*, and others.

But suppose there had been no objection in this respect; that is, tho' they had been ever so zealous for the reformation of the World; and ever so exemplary in their lives; yet there was one thing still wanting, which was so necessary to the work, that without it no reformation could be possible, and that is, Language.

For as all the World was to be reform'd, as I said before, all must be instructed: And as this instruction must be given in a human way, and by consequence in the respective languages of the several countries, these languages must first be learn'd by all, that would engage in this undertaking: Unless we could suppose, that every part of the World was furnish'd with sufficient genius's of their own, endued with all the necessary gifts for the reformation of their respective native countries. But this would be too wild a supposition.

For tho' *Greece* and *Italy* abounded

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with great Men, yet there were many other parts in the utmost ignorance, and barbarity, without the least glympse of light; and 'tis hard to conceive how so much light, as was necessary to a reformation, shou'd in a natural way arise from so much darkness.

Their instruction therefore must come from other people, and their teachers must necessarily be first instructed themselves in the languages of the people to be taught by them.

Now this in the nature of the thing requires a vast deal of time, and application; and is a thing of the utmost difficulty for Men of years to attain to, so as to be able to discourse with that readiness, and clearness, which is necessary for the conveying a new set of notions into people's minds.

So that if we could suppose all the Philosophers of the learned nations, unanimously resolving to transplant themselves into the several corners of the World; and that there was such a  
sufficient

sufficient number of them, as the nature and extent of the work requir'd; and that they all would have had zeal, and patience enough to apply themselves to the learning of the necessary languages; yet unless we can suppose, that they could attain to such perfection in them, as to be able to carry on their undertaking readily, no benefit could be expected from them.

But this is what cannot reasonably be supposed, and what never was, nor was ever likely to be attempted.

But suppose still further, that there was no want of language, nor of any of the forementioned qualifications; yet there could be no possibility of the reformation of the World, whilst the Religion then establish'd, and universally practis'd, continued in force.

For this alone had a tendency to corrupt Mankind, not only, as it set up wicked Men, and Women, as the objects of divine Worship; but also, as it authoriz'd the worst of vices, as

devotion, such as Lewdness, Drunkenness, and Cruelty.

And yet this Religion was so far from being oppos'd by the Philosophers, that as I said before, they universally conform'd to it, and encourag'd it.

So that from all these things consider'd together, it evidently appears, beyond all reasonable doubt, that there could be no reformation, as the World then was, by the bare power of Reason only; and by consequence, as we are hence assur'd of the necessity of a Revelation; so we are hence further taught, what kind of Revelation it must be, *viz.*

First, that it offer to the World a perfect, and sufficient rule of life, built upon the authority of God.

And as nothing ought to be received, as coming from God, without a proper evidence of his authority; so,

Secondly, it was necessary that this rule of life should be attended with,  
and

and confirm'd by some such proper tokens of a divine attestation, as that it might certainly be known to come from God.

And as the end of all this must be naturally defeated, by the ill lives of those who deliver it to the World, if God should make use of human instruments ; so,

Thirdly, there is a necessity in the nature of things, that they, who should be chosen, and appointed for this work, should be persons of exemplary virtue and holiness.

And as all this would not answer the end of reformation, without a due zeal in the persons employ'd, and the gift of languages to fit them for the undertaking ; so from hence we may expect,

Fourthly, in a general Revelation, that these things be found attending it.

And thus have I done with the first consideration, *viz.* the necessity of a sufficient rule of life, in order to a ge-

neral reformation of manners; and the invalidity of Reason to discover this.

Secondly, another thing necessary for the same end was, an assurance that God would pardon sin. For when the will of God should be open'd to the World in a perfect standing rule of life; and when by comparing their lives with that rule, they should see how they had offended God; it would be in vain for them to think of Reformation, unless they could be assur'd of a Reconciliation: And yet whether God would be reconcil'd, or not, and what must be the means of that Reconciliation, was impossible for bare Reason, at that time, to know. For this must depend upon the will of God; and how could this be known without a Revelation?

Reason would tell them, that God was good: This is visibly seen in the whole Creation, in that ample provision, which is every where made for the comfort, and well-being of all his Creatures. The

The same Reason would tell them, he is good to sinners in his wonderful patience, and long-suffering towards them, under the daring, and multiplied provocations they are every day guilty of.

But this would not shew them how long this patience would last, nor how far this goodness to sinners would go.

The same Reason that would assure them of God's goodness, and patience, would likewise inform them of his wisdom and holiness; and as these must agree in the same perfect Nature, Reason can admit of no other notion of his goodness, but such as is consistent with his wisdom and holiness; And the natural consequence of this must be, that God will shew himself, as good to sinners, as his wisdom, and holiness shall direct. And who can tell, when the wisdom, and holiness of God shall call for harsher methods of dealing with them?

It may be said indeed, and that

very plausibly, that the reason of God's displeasure against sinners is their sin; and by consequence, to prevent, and remove that displeasure, the way is to repent, and forsake sin.

And indeed the best thing a sinner can do is to repent; but still this will not make the sinner innocent: And we are sure, that in good, and wise governments, there may be good reason to punish malefactors, however penitent they be; and if repentance be not always sure of pardon, how can it be depended on?

It is certain, of itself it cannot; and the Heathen World never did depend upon it: Nay, it does not appear, they ever had any notion of it; for I do not find it once mention'd in any of their writings.

Their chief dependence was upon sacrifices of expiation, which would have been needless, if repentance had been thought of; or at least had been thought sufficient.

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And yet, even in these, their Reason was at a loss, how far they would be accepted by God. For as 'twas natural to think, that great, and many sins would require more, and greater expiations; so they must be involved in continual doubts, about the value, and merit of their sacrifices.

And accordingly we read, how they sometimes offer'd Beasts; sometimes Men, and of these sometimes the lowest, and basest of the people; sometimes the higher, and more honourable: 'And from Men, that had forfeited their lives to the Publick, they were carried on to the more innocent Virgins, and Children, whom they sometimes offer'd up in horrid multitudes.

This was more or less the practice of all nations, even the most polite and civiliz'd; and in this practice both learned and ignorant agreed.

And there can be no stronger evidence given of the uncertainty they were  
under,

under, as to the means of reconciliation with God, by the help of bare Reason only.

And therefore as we may conclude on the one hand, that so far as it was necessary to be inform'd of this, so far there was a necessity of a Revelation: So likewise it will follow on the other hand, that if God should vouchsafe a Revelation for the reformation of the World, this must be another qualification of it.

Thirdly, another thing necessary to the reformation of the World, which Reason could not discover, was, to be assur'd they should be able to do their duty, in such manner as to be acceptable to God; so that if they had a rule to walk by, and the means of pardon made known to them, they might be encourag'd to act accordingly: But without such an assurance, 'twou'd be in vain. For what signifies a rule if we cannot follow it; and to be sure of pardon, if we repent and reform; if it be not in our power to  
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do it? And yet the World had reason enough to suspect this. For considering the dismal depravation of Mankind, Reformation was the hardest thing imaginable.

'Tis difficult to bring a harden'd sinner, even but to resolve to part with his sins; because 'tis to part with what is dearest to him: And when he first comes to try the experiment, and put his resolutions into practice, he will find so many rubbs, and obstructions in his way, so many passions struggling with him, and so many temptations fawning on him, that it will be no easy matter to resist them: And as 'tis natural to conceive he will be often overcome, how sincere soever he may be, these instances of his weakness, inconstancy, and unsuccessfulness, will be apt to incline him to suspect his strength, and prompt him to quit what he has begun, as a thing he is not able to go through with: And therefore there seems to be a necessity  
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of some encouragement in this case, and some hope of assistance to be given.

Or if he should be supposed to continue stedfast, and resolve to go on as well as he can; yet so much corruption will still cleave to him, and his best obedience will be so mixt, and imperfect, that if he were to attend to Reason only, he could take but little comfort in it, as being a just doubt, whether God would accept it.

For if God be a holy Being, that hates iniquity, as every one must believe, before he will part with his sins; how can any Man think, that this holy Being will accept such impure, and imperfect services, mixt with so much sin and folly?

It may be said indeed, we do our best; and this is as much as any one can do: But we ought to be very sure of this, before this can be of any comfort to us: And I believe there are few but are conscious to themselves, that

that they may do better than they do.

But supposing this plea to be really true, that we can do no better, than we do, thro' our past wicked habits, that we have contracted; yet who is the cause of this inability, but ourselves? So that this is but in effect to make our past, an excuse for our after faults, and who in reason could depend on this, as sufficient for the favour, and acceptance of God.

If God has a right to all we can do, and we have made ourselves incapable of doing what he had given us power to do, our own mismanagement will deserve his resentment, as much as our weakness may call for his mercy: And which of these must fall to our lot, depends intirely upon the will of God, which he alone can make known to us.

And if there be a necessity of knowing this, in order to the reformation of the World, as there is a necessity of a Revelation of it; so this likewise must be another character of that

Revelation, that comes to reform the World, that it give them some hope of assistance, and acceptance.

Fourthly and lastly, another thing necessary to the reformation of the World, was, to be assur'd of a future state, where they should be rewarded, or punish'd hereafter according to their behaviour here.

For if there be nothing to be look'd for beyond the grave, 'tis but reasonable to make the best of the present life: *Let us eat, and drink, for to-morrow we dye*, is but a natural resolution; and we cannot think, that a dissolute World, in such a case, would have had any other concern upon them, but only to *make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof*.

So that without the assurance of another World, there could be no reformation reasonably expected.

But how necessary soever the knowledge of this was, Reason was not able to attain to it.

There was indeed in all the World, so far as history informs us, some general, confused, imperfect notion of it; but they could never come to any such certainty about it, as to make it of any use to the conduct of human life.

'Tis well known, how the learned disagreed about it, some doubting of it, others absolutely denying it; and even they who favour'd the opinion most, could never rise higher, than a bare perhaps.

The Poets, who were the Prophets of those days, are the only persons that speak of it with confidence; and yet they represent it under such gross, and extravagant ideas, as one would think must have been intended to make it matter of ridicule to reasonable and considering Men; and if they really believed their own descriptions, this alone is a sufficient evidence, what darkness human nature labour'd under, and how little they were able to deliver themselves out of it, by the power of unassisted Reason only. And

And therefore so far as it was necessary to the reformation of the World, that Mankind be inform'd of a future state, as there was a necessity of a Revelation; so this likewise must be another character of that Revelation, that comes to reform the World.

So that from these considerations, we are further inform'd of these three qualifications of a divine Revelation, *viz.* the assurance of pardon of sin; of the acceptance of honest tho' imperfect endeavours; and of a future state of rewards, and punishments.

And whereas all these depend on the will of God; and there can be no assurance given of God's Will, but by himself; from hence we have a further proof of what has been before mention'd, *viz.* the necessity of some such proofs to attend this Revelation, as are a sufficient evidence of its coming from God.

And since miracles are universally look'd upon, as such an evidence, we have here a reason in the nature of things,

things, that this Revelation should be confirm'd by miracles: And from hence we likewise further see, that miracles, in this case, are not to be esteem'd mere arbitrary acts, that God condescends to do, out of his good pleasure only, but as acts so necessary to the reformation of the World, that no Revelation for that end could have been sufficient, nor could reasonably be depended on without them.

Thus we see the several characters of such a Revelation, as was necessary to the reformation of the manners of the Heathen World, considering the state they were fallen into, which may be reduced in a more regular order to these four.

*The several characters of such a Revelation, as was necessary to the Reformation of the Manners of the World.*

First, that it deliver a perfect rule of life, built on the authority of God,

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and inforc'd by the example of the first teachers of it.

Secondly, that it give them full assurance of pardon and reconciliation, assistance and acceptance, and a future state.

Thirdly, that it be confirm'd by the power of miracles.

Fourthly, that the first preachers of it be endued with proper zeal, and particularly with the gift of languages.

These things are, I think, abundantly demonstrated, and with these I shall conclude what I propos'd to say, concerning the corruption of the Heathen World; and what was necessary to their recovery out of it.

And as we have thus seen, what they stood in need of, for the reformation of their minds and manners; the next thing which comes in course to be consider'd, is, whether Christianity answers to all this, and may reasonably be esteem'd a divine Revelation.

*That*

*That Christianity is a Divine Revelation.*

From the necessity of a Revelation, we may naturally conclude, that there has been some suitable Revelation given: And as Christianity was offer'd to the World, as such, we have nothing more to do in the examination of this matter, but to see how it agrees with the foremention'd characters, by which such a Revelation was to be known.

I will begin with those that relate to the reformation of the World, in respect of their minds, and notions; and the first thing, that I shew'd was necessary to a Revelation, which comes with this design, is, that it teach Mankind a true notion of happiness, and how to attain it; as likewise a true notion of God, and how to worship him, as God; and that it be not only intended, but fitted for the effectual overthrow of Idolatry.

And this is so apparently evident in the Christian Religion, that no Man can be ignorant of it, that reads the *New Testament*.

As for the happiness of Mankind, every one must know, that it is not to be had in this World: As we are liable to crosses, losses, afflictions, sicknesses, and death, we need no other arguments to convince us, that this is not the place of rest to Man, as abounding with *vanity and vexation of spirit*.

The Gospel therefore has not placed our happiness here, but in another region beyond the grave, where all imperfection shall be done away.

And as our happiness consists, as I have before shewn, in the perfection of our faculties, and in a due exercise of them on their proper objects; and since we are indued with the faculties of Understanding, the object of which is Truth; and of Will, the object of which is Good; and by consequence, it must be our highest happiness

ness to have our understandings exercis'd on the highest, and most excellent Truth; and our wills upon the highest, and most perfect Good, which is God: So the Gospel places our ultimate happiness in him.

And as we are to expect this happiness beyond the grave; so it is to be in a place, where we shall *dwell with God*, and *see God*; that is, shall be admitted to all the delights, that the knowledge of him, and all other truths by him, and the enjoyment of him, and all those comforts we are capable of receiving from him, can afford us.

And as it is impossible in the nature of things to be happy, and take pleasure in God, or be admitted to dwell with him, without being like him; and therefore in order to our happiness in God, we must be holy, true, good and merciful, as he is; so the Gospel, not only in general requires us to be imitators of God, as dear Children, and to be perfect, as our

Father in heaven is perfect; but also has given us such rules to walk by, in order to the attainment of this happiness, as, if we will but act accordingly, will work this divine likeness in us, and make us partakers of the divine Nature.

So that whilst we are walking according to these rules, we are all the time travelling to our rest, and fitting ourselves for those satisfactions, which, as they are prepared for, so they are only capable of being enjoyed by such, as are thus previously dispos'd for them.

This is a rational scheme of happiness; and this is what the Gospel teaches.

And as it thus provides for our happiness in another World; so it has not been wanting to us, even here: For the very things that are prescrib'd us, as the necessary condition, and preparatory qualification for the glory above, are absolutely necessary for our welfare here: For there is nothing commanded, but what is in its own nature productive of some good, and nothing forbid, but what

what is really hurtful: So that what is injoin'd, as an act of duty, is intended only, as an instance of favour, and friendship; and a means of promoting our own advantage. And if we will but follow the Gospel rules, which is wanting in nothing, that our welfare can require, we must be as happy as we are capable of being.

And whereas there are several misfortunes, which cleave to us here; and which are natural to our condition in this World, and we cannot be deliver'd from; and therefore want some relief to support us under them, to make our lives easy, and comfortable to us, that we may want nothing, that is necessary to our happiness; Christianity has likewise provided for us in this respect, and furnish'd us with such considerations, as are sufficient for us; that is, not sufficient to remove the burthens themselves, because they are natural, but sufficient to comfort and support us under them;

so that, tho' we are weary, and heavy laden by them, we may yet find rest, and refreshment to our souls.

This is so plain to every understanding, that I need not go about to prove it: 'Tis enough that we know how to conduct our meditations to consider the point in a proper method; and if we know any thing of Christianity, our own thoughts will readily suggest the rest.

And as it has thus provided for the happiness of Man; so has it likewise instructed us in the true nature and worship of God.

As for the nature of God, it is now no longer debas'd by those ignoble, and gross ideas, that possess'd the minds of the poor ignorant Heathens, representing him under the image of corruptible things: But he is now known to us, as he is, and as we have before demonstrated him to be; that is, as one self-existent absolutely perfect Being, who made, and governs all things; who

who tho' he is the high and lofty one, that inhabits Eternity, yet he humbly himself to behold the things that are in Heaven and Earth, and that not as an idle, and indifferent Spectator, careless of the affairs and actions of Men, but as a Governor every where acting, and in every thing.

All things are said to be his, and that he disposes them according to his will; and that not an arbitrary, and imperious will, but a will directed by the best wisdom, in Holiness, Truth, and Goodness.

He is set forth to us, as a Father to his Creatures, that does not neglect the meanest works of his hands, but is desirous of the good of all: But he is more especially the preserver, the Saviour of Men, who, if they will but behave themselves to him, as dutiful, and obedient Children, he will not only give them all things, they stand in need of, but in all their distresses, he will advise and comfort them;

them; and either mercifully deliver them out of them, or make them work together for their good.

And with all this he is represented to us as a Judge, to whom we must one day give an account of all we have, and all we do, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

This is the general notion of the God of the Christians; and this is not only such an idea, as is great and awful, but lovely and delightful; such as is not only agreeable to reason, and suitable to the nature, and necessities of Man, but productive of the highest honour, and esteem of God, the only true foundation of worship, and obedience.

And with this likewise agrees the Christian Worship.

For as the Gospel has taught us to know God; so has it likewise to glorify him, as God, suitably to his nature and relation to us: As God is our Creator, and Governor, the giver of  
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all good things, and the disposer of all events, as in the nature of things we ought; so the Christian Religion requires, that we come to him for what we want, and acknowledge his bounty in what we have, *being careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer, and supplication with thanksgiving, making our requests known unto God*: And this in such a way as is suitable to his nature: And therefore, as *he is a spirit*, it must be done *in spirit and in truth*; that is, not barely in a bodily exercise, or outward forms of godliness, but in a serious application of our Minds, and the sincerity of our Hearts: So that whatever we do, it must be done with an awful sense of God, and our duty to him; and an inward desire to please him; and therefore not only with fervency of spirit, and hearty zeal, but with the utmost reverence, and humility agreeable to our dependent state, and the distance there is between God and

And this we are to do to him, and him only, the one Creator and Governor ; the one all-sufficient God, and Father ; without any corporeal image ; or similitude of him, without rival, or co-partner with him.

This is such a notion of worship, as is a holy and reasonable service ; such as all must allow to be right, and true ; such as cannot but be agreeable to every reasonable Nature, and acceptable to a wise and holy God.

But to make all this truly Christian, it must be done in the name, and thro' the mediation of Jesus Christ ; because it is thro' him alone, that we hope to be accepted.

For as we are all sinners, and are therefore unworthy thro' our manifold transgressions to offer any sacrifice to God, who is *of purer eyes than to behold the least iniquity* ; so to keep up a due sense of our unworthiness in our minds, and of the heinous nature of sin, that it renders us odious in the  
sight

sight of God, he will not admit us to approach his presence, to present any petitions to him, but what are, as it were, brought by a holy, and undefiled hand: And therefore he has appointed an Advocate for us, Jesus Christ the righteous: Who, as he came into the World for our salvation, bore our infirmities, and died for our redemption; so he now sits at God's right hand, and *ever lives to make intercession for us.*

Thro' him therefore we are requir'd to come unto God, and to ask every thing in his name, and for his sake.

'This is the only article that distinguishes the Christian from a pure natural Worship, regulated by the dictates of mere Reason, conducted by the natures and reasons of things: And tho' this is matter of mere Revelation, yet it is such an institution, as Reason itself approves of, as worthy of God to appoint: As being not only highly useful to Religion in general, as it tends

tends to preserve in us a due sense of our unworthiness as sinners; and of the holiness of that God, we sin against; and at the same time to comfort us in the assurance of his mercy thro' the intercession of a holy Saviour; but also as it was particularly necessary at the time of its appointment to the reformation of the Idolatry of the World.

For a great deal of this was evidently owing to a want of some Revelation of this kind: For all Mankind have had a notion (from what principles it came, it matters not) of the necessity of a Mediator.

They thought their Gods must be applied to, as great Men, and earthly Princes are, by the intercession of their favourites: And having no certain guide to direct their Reason in the choice of proper persons for this office, they set up to themselves various intercessors according to their bewilder'd fancies.

And as this begat a great many  
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foolish superstitions, and blind devotions; so for the cure, and prevention of this, there was a necessity of some Revelation in this case, from the want of which, so much mischief had ensued.

'Tis therefore a particular mark of the Divinity of this Revelation, relating to the worship of God, that it is appointed to be offer'd up thro' a Mediator; and that too such a Mediator as is sufficient for us : For he is such a Mediator, as is not only highly favour'd of God, as being his *only beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased*, and is our friend, and brother, that bears our Nature, and has felt our infirmities; but he is such a one, as we know by sufficient evidence, *sits at the right hand of God, and has all power given him both in heaven, and in earth*; so that he is not only willing, but *able to do to the uttermost for all those, that come unto God by him.*

So that after this Revelation, there, was no longer need of that crowd of  
 Mediators,

Mediators, which the Heathens sought out for themselves among their Dæmons, or Angels, and Souls departed, having one, who was all-sufficient for them, on whom they might depend with confidence; and therefore this was a most effectual way of rooting out that Idolatry, which had so universally prevail'd amongst them, and was by consequence a wise, and reasonable institution of worship, had it serv'd no other end, but this.

If it be any objection to this Christian scheme of Worship, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is commanded to be honour'd as we honour the Father, by which he seems to be set up as a partner in his Father's worship, we must consider, that this makes no real difference.

For the Son is represented, as having the Godhead dwelling in him; so that when he is worship'd, it is not the manhood, but the Godhead that is worship'd in him, or thro' him.

And as the *New Testament* says, that to the Christians, *there is but one God*, and that God, *the Father*; and since our Saviour himself says, that the Godhead, which *dwelt in him*, was *the Father*, to whom he was so united, as to be *one with him*, viz. *the Father*; it must follow, that that which is worship'd in the worship of the Son, must be the Father; who, in other places, is said to be *manifested in the flesh*, or human Nature of Christ, and to be *in Christ Jesus reconciling the World unto himself*. \*

In this view of that matter, deliver'd in plain Scripture words, understood in their plain, obvious, and natural meaning, the difficulty vanishes; and it is so far from favouring Idolatry in itself, that this likewise seems to have been appointed for the destruction of it.

For as God is an invisible being, 'tis a hard matter for Men, inured only to

\* See *The Scripture Trinity intelligibly explain'd*.

material objects, to address themselves to him, but under some material phantasm: And this, as it is in itself an Idolatry of the mind; so it was probably the origin of a great deal of the more refined Idolatries of the Heathens; who perhaps at first might worship the true God only, but under sensible and visible representations, according to those material imaginations, they had form'd of him in their mind: And by this 'tis probable, they might be led by degrees to think, that God was in himself, what those images represented him to be: And being thus carried on from one thing to another, they at last came to such a degenerate state, that the true notion of God was intirely lost.

Now as Christianity came to reform the World, and to rooe out Idolatry from amongst them, it was necessary to that end, that this should be prevented: And it might probably be for this reason among others, that God  
was

was pleas'd to exhibit himself under the veil of human Nature, to restrain their roving imaginations from hunting after other unbecoming similitudes, and thereby fix their thoughts upon, and determine their worship to himself alone. \*

If this be a right, as it is a rational account of this great mystery of Godliness, God manifested in the flesh, *a mystery kept from ages, and generations, and now made known unto us*; we must conceive Jesus Christ, not only as a Mediator, as he is an advocate with the Father; but God seems to have consecrated to himself his very flesh, as the medium whereby we must come unto him; as if he intended thereby to be distinguish'd by the character of God in Christ Jesus; to whom, as he is so united, as to become one with him, so he will therefore be worship'd thro' him.

\* See *Dr. Scot's Christian Life*, Vol. II. Part II. p. 569, &c.

If it be any difficulty with any one in the reception of Christianity, that he cannot conceive, how Jesus Christ can be so united to the Godhead, and yet act as a Mediator between God and Man, we must consider what this mediation is; his mediation, or advocacy is founded in Scripture on his being a *propitiation for our sins*; and his *intercession* is represented to us by his going to heaven to present the blood of his sacrifice before God, (as the High Priest us'd to do in the Holy of Holies) who, tho' he dwells in Jesus Christ bodily, and acts in him, yet he displays his majestatick presence there.

So that his intercession is not any vocal intercession, but the presenting that body before the throne of God, which God had prepar'd for him, whereby to make an atonement for Mankind; in this consists his Advocacy, and Intercession for us, as it shews before God the work done, and the  
price

price paid for our redemption. And therefore when we pray to God, thro' the mediation of Christ, we must mean only thro' the merits of that expiation he has made for us ; and in this sense, which appears to be the Scripture sense, is easily conceivable, how he may be a Mediator, and Intercessor for us, tho' he is united with the Godhead, and one with God.

Thus we see how Christianity answers to this first character of such a Revelation, as was necessary to reform the idolatrous World, in giving them right notions of the happiness of Man, and the means of attaining it ; and true notions of the nature of God and his worship.

But as all this could signify but little to the reformation of the World, as I have shewn, whilst they believed their own way of Worship divine, as having been confirm'd by Oracles, which they conceiv'd to be the voice of God: So,

The next thing necessary to a Re-

velation, was, such an apparent evidence of a divine authority accompanying the first preachers of it, as was sufficient to convince the World of their mistake, and shew them undeniably, that the Gods they worship'd were no Gods, and that their Oracles were mere Delusions.

And this is such a character that so evidently agrees to the Christian Religion, that it cannot be doubted by any one, that considers that wonderful series of miraculous Works, which were wrought by our Saviour, and his Apostles, in confirmation of their mission, and their doctrine: Works not only in their own nature good, but also according to the universal experience, and observation of the World, exceeding the power of natural causes; done in open view, before crowds of people, in the name of the one supreme God, the Creator, and Governor of all things; and that too in confirmation of a Religion, in its na-

ture reasonable, and holy, that rejects all other Gods, as false, and all Hea-then superstitions, as abominable, that can serve no wicked end, indulges no carnal lust, or interest, but is calculated for the promotion of the glory of God, and the happiness of all the World: And withal, these works by persons of no art, or base design, that could have no possible prospect of advantage by endeavouring to delude Mankind, and that shew'd no tokens of any inclination, or desire to do it.

Such works one would think shou'd be a sufficient proof of the authority of those that do them, and yet upon this foot Christianity stands.

The Scripture, and ecclesiastical History give us amazing instances of such works, which in former days were never denied, even by the enemies of it: The instances were so many, and so apparent every where, that they must deny their senses, before they could deny the Facts: For this power was not

like a flash of lightning, that vanish'd as soon as it appear'd, but it continued several ages in the Church; and the effects of it shew'd themselves in such a publick manner, and upon every occasion, and among all sorts of people; and that with circumstances so surprizing, as must not only raise the wonder, but excite the curiosity of all to examine them carefully, that they might not be deluded by them: So that it is not strange to find, even the wisest adversaries of Christianity, such as *Celsus*, *Porphyry*, *Hierocles*, and *Julian*, acknowledging the facts as true.

And if they be true, they are an abundant proof, not only of the divine authority of the Christian Revelation, but of the falshood of those Gods, and the vanity of those superstitions, which it came to deliver the World from.

But whatever evidence the Christian Revelation received from these works,  
yet

yet there seems to be something more requir'd in this case, than bare miracles in general : For as the oracles gave authority to the Heathen worship, and were esteem'd by the people, as the voice of God; there seems to be a necessity of some such works, as had an immediate relation to this matter, and were fitted to convince them of their mistaken notion in esteeming them the voice of the true God.

And 'tis worthy our observation how remarkably this character shew'd itself in the first beginnings of Christianity : For no sooner was this Revelation open'd to the *Gentiles*, but where-ever it came, it silenc'd their oracles, and forced their Gods from their Temples, so that the people sued in vain for their council, and assistance; and this it did in so remarkable a manner, that their own writers acknowledge and wonder at it,

*Plutarch* has left a book on this very subject; in which, tho' he does  
not

not impute this effect to Christianity, but, among other silly things, to the death of those Dæmons, which had the conduct of their oracles: Yet *Porphyry*, a known, and profess'd enemy of our Religion, ascribes it to the prevalence of this alone: " For since *Jesus* began to be worship'd, he says, " no man has receiv'd any publick " help from the Gods, but the cities " are for many years over-run with " diseases; *Æsculapius*, and the rest " of the Gods having withdrawn their " converse with Men. \*

And tho' 'tis very probable, he thought this subduction of themselves, was not the effect of force, but choice; and that perhaps, as a punishment for the wickedness of the people, in following after their new admired *Jesus*; yet the Christians of those ages gave sufficient evidence, that they were forced from their Temples, and ora-

\* Euseb. Præp. Evang. l. 5. c. 4.

cular recesses by this very *Jesus* only.

For they prov'd to the peoples senses, that the Gods they worship'd, were Devils; and therefore their oracles, delusions; and this they made the Devils themselves confess, and that even in the presence of their own votaries.

The ancient writers speak of this, as a thing frequent, and well-known: *Tertullian* mentions it in his apology for the Christian Religion; and offers the *Roman* governors at any time to make the experiment at the hazard of every Christian's life, that could not do the same before their eyes; *Let anyone,* says he, *be brought of those whom you think inspir'd by God, be it the God, that promises you rain, or Æsculapius, your Physician, if he dare to lye before a Christian, or if, being ask'd, he does not confess himself to be a Devil, let the Christian lose his life for his presumption. \**

\* Ter. Apol. c. 23.

The like challenge we have in another writer: *Believe your own Gods,* says he, *or if you will, believe yourself.*—— *You yourself shall see those very beings, whom you look upon, and reverence, as Lords, stand trembling under our hand as Captives:—— You shall see and hear them betraying themselves to us, telling us, what they are, as soon we shall ask the question, not able, even in your own presence, to conceal their fallacies, and delusions from us. ‡*

A like instance to these we read in *Lactantius*, who delivers his challenge in the like pompous manner, *If you set,* says he, *here a man before us, who appears to be possess'd with a Devil, and a Priest of the Delphick Apollo with him, they shall be both equally frighted at the name of God, and both make equal haste to be gone; Apollo out of his Priest, and the spi-*

‡ Cypr. Epist. ad Demet. Sec. 12.

*rit out of the Dæmoniack; and the God of the Priest being put to flight, the Oracle shall cease for ever. \**

These appeals of the Christians are of so much the greater weight, as they are address'd to adversaries, who, as they could make experiment every moment, and would be sure to make the utmost advantage of it, to the shame of the Christians, if it were false; so the Christians would not have dared to put the credit of their Religion upon such an uncertain foot, if the fact had not been notoriously true; and had it not been well-known, even to their enemies, that they could, and had often done, what they pretended in these appeals to do.

And if these things were so as history reports them, what greater proof could there be given of the falshood of the Heathen Gods, and worship, and the oracles, that supported them, than

\* Lact. 1. 4. c. 27.

to see the latter struck dumb at the appearance of Christianity; and the Gods, whom they believ'd to give answers by them, prov'd to their very senses to be only evil spirits, subject to the power of the meanest Christian? And what greater proof could there be of the authority of the Christian Revelation?

One would think such an evidence of the power of God should not be capable of resistance; and that all people should immediately have submitted to it, and accordingly we read of the vast success it had:

But how reasonable soever it may be to expect this effect, yet considering the prejudices of education, and the arts of cunning Men, the power of interest, and the force of laws, and punishments to discourage innovations, this must meet with great difficulties at first; and it would require, as I said before, a great, and uncommon zeal in the first Preachers of this  
new

new Religion, to undertake so hard a work, a great and more than ordinary resolution, and courage to venture out upon so much danger; and an unparallel'd patience and resignation to bear up under so much opposition, that would be made against them, and the punishments that would naturally be inflicted on them.

This I observed already was another qualification of such a Revelation, as should come to reform the Religion, and root out the Idolatry of the Heathen World.

And this likewise was so remarkable in the first preachers of Christianity, that they seem'd regardless of every thing, but the glory of God, and the salvation of Mankind: They left all they had for the sake of the Gospel, which tho' it was but little, it was their All; and were content to travel from city to city, from country to country, without acquaintance, and without friends, and without the necessary

cessary supports of life; depending intirely upon the providence of God, that he who had sent them upon this errand, would graciously supply them with what was convenient.

And tho' they knew beforehand what reception they must meet with from a wicked and ungrateful World, tho' they knew that *in this World they must have tribulation, that Men would deliver them to be afflicted, and kill them, and that they should be hated of all men* for the sake of Christ, who had foretold them, that the time would come, that they *who should put them to death, would think, they did God service* by it, yet they were not discouraged by this prospect.

And tho' they found all this true by experience; *even to this hour, says St. Paul, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and have no certain dwelling place, and labour with our hands, being revil'd, persecuted, and defam'd, and made the filth and off-scouring*

*scouring of all things unto this day :*  
 Tho' this was their sad condition of  
 life, yet they behav'd themselves with  
 great patience under it; *being revil'd*  
*we bless, being persecuted we suffer*  
*it, and being defam'd we intreat,*  
 says St. Paul.

How great soever their ill treat-  
 ment was, and however terrible their  
 sufferings; yet they were so far from  
 being frighted with, or murmuring at  
 them, that they look'd upon them as  
 a privilege. When they were beaten,  
 they *departed rejoicing, that they were*  
*thought worthy to suffer for the name*  
*of Christ, and they took joyfully the*  
*spoiling of their goods, counting all*  
*things but loss, for the excellency of*  
*the knowledge of Christ Jesus their*  
*Lord, for whom they suffer'd the loss*  
*of all things.*

Such were the first preachers of the  
 Gospel Revelation, and such the no-  
 ble spirit, by which it was carried on;

a spirit that seems to have something, more than human in it.

We see nothing like this in human Nature: All Men are apt to shrink away from difficulties, and naturally afraid of dangers, especially where necessity does not force them to them; and whatever other things they are capable of bearing, yet all are impatient of contempt: All evils, even death itself, are generally more tolerable than this:

And yet we see these Men not only despising, but even rejoicing in this, and all other miseries, that they might be instrumental to the happiness of the World, even of those very persons, by whom they suffer'd.

This was such a spirit, as was never before heard of, nor has ever since been seen in any, but these persons, and their followers, who were acted by the same principles, and engag'd in the same work with them.

And if such a spirit was so necessary  
to

to the reformation of Idolatry, that in the nature of things it could not be expected without it, it is a strong confirmation of the Divinity of the Christian Revelation, that this spirit attended it in so eminent a degree, that it cannot reasonably be imputed to any other cause, but a divine power, and assistance only.

Thus have I done with the first part of my argument, and have demonstrated the agreement of the Christian Religion with all those foremention'd characters of a divine Revelation, which were necessary for the reformation of the notions of Mankind.

I come now to consider the next thing to be reform'd, which could not be done without a Revelation, *viz.* their manners: And as I have before shewn, what characters were necessary to such a Revelation; if these likewise agree to the Christian Religion, this must be the Revelation we inquire after.

Now the first character of such a Revelation, as was necessary to reform the manners of the World, is, that it give them a perfect rule of life, built upon the authority of God, and enforced by the example of the teachers of it.

And this appears very eminently in the Gospel, and that not only, as it proposes to us the pure, and holy Nature of God, as the rule of our imitation, directing us to be holy, as he is holy, and perfect, as our Father in Heaven is perfect; but also, as it prescribes the best, and most natural method to make us so; teaching us not only to live *soberly, righteously, and godlily*, but *to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness, both of flesh and spirit.*

And in order to this, as it gives us a general transcript of our duty to God, our Neighbour, and Ourselves; so it forbids us every irregular passion,

every vicious inclination, every unclean desire, and directs us to *bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*

'Tis true indeed, we have not every duty, and every sin particularly named to us, but we are taught such topicks to reason from, by which we may be led to the knowledge of them.

For as we are commanded *to love God with all our heart, and to glorify him with our bodies, and with our spirits, which are his,* we are hereby commanded every thing that is a natural expression of this Love, and every thing, whereby the perfections of the divine Nature can be display'd, and his honour advanc'd by us.

So likewise, as we are commanded *to love one another, as we love ourselves; and to shew this by doing to others, as we would they should do unto us;* so this must shew itself differently according to our different relations: And by consequence, whatever

relations we can be consider'd under, we are hereby oblig'd to all those duties, which those relations naturally require of us.

And with all this 'tis requir'd of us, that whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are virtuous, lovely, and of good report, these we should study and endeavour after. And sure there is nothing fit for a reasonable Man to do, but what is comprehended under one, or other of these considerations.

But to carry this still higher, we are farther taught to do every thing in the most eminent, and exemplary manner, that as we know better than other people, we should *do more*, than they; letting our *light shine*, that they seeing our good works, should *glorify our father, which is in heaven*: Nay we are not only requir'd to exceed others, who have not the same light with us, but we are to *study to excel* even one

another : So that as we stand in various relations, which naturally require various duties of us; so we must endeavour to excel one another in those duties, studying who shall be the best governor and subject, the best husband and wife, the best parent and child, the best master and servant, the best friend to his friend, both in doing and returning, not only the best acts of these duties, but in the best, and most laudable manner; striving who shall be first in the Christian race, and all running with such zeal to exceed all others, as if one only were to gain the prize.

And to make this still the more perfect, whatever is press'd upon us, as a duty, is not, as the Heathen morality was, from the consideration of convenience, prudence, profit, pleasure, decency, or reputation, but as the will of God.

For tho' 'tis true, there is no duty commanded in the Gospel, but what

is really for our advantage, and no sin forbid, but what is hurtful to us in one or other of these respects; yet this is not to be the prime motive of our obedience, nor is this to be the foot, upon which we are to act, but we are to do all for the love, and to the glory of God, and in obedience to the will, and authority of God.

This is the Gospel rule of life, than which nothing can be conceiv'd more full, and compleat in all respects.

But how perfect soever this rule of the Christian life is, it was not likely to gain upon a wicked World, unless enforced by the examples of those that taught it; for the World would never think they believed what they taught, whilst their lives were a contradiction to their doctrines.

As therefore an exemplary life was a circumstance necessary to the reformation of the World; so this was what the first preachers of the Gospel were particularly distinguish'd by.

Our

Our Saviour Christ is said to have lived without sin, and not only to have appeal'd to the consciences of his adversaries, whether they could convince him of any, but to have been acquitted even by his Judge, as having no fault to be found in him, even then, when he condemn'd him, as a malefactor.

His life, as it is set before us, was one continued course of the most substantial, and most excellent virtues, a life of singular piety, and charity, justice, meekness, humility, self-denial, contentedness, patience and contempt of the World: And as he left his Disciples this example, that they should tread in his steps; so we read how carefully his Apostles copied after it; insomuch they excite others to follow them, as they follow'd him.

They appeal to God and the World, for their good conversation in Christ Jesus: *Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, how justly, how unblameably we behaved ourselves among you:*

*We*

*We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by the manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every Man's conscience in the sight of God, 1 Theff. ii. 10.*

And this they make their comfort in their afflictions, *that in simplicity and godly sincerity they have had their conversation in the world*: This account indeed we have only in the *New Testament*, but it is not denied by the adversaries of Christianity, who doubtless would not have overlook'd the smallest pretence for reflection, had there been the least handle for it.

And whilst Christianity was thus recommended by such illustrious examples, this must naturally tend to the reformation of the World, so far as their light and influence could reach; for by this they demonstrated, that the things they taught, were not mere speculative but practical truths, not intended

tended only to amuse, and entertain the mind, but to regulate and amend the life; and that they were not beyond the reach of human Nature, when they themselves lead the way before them, and that too in the highest, and most exalted degrees even of the most difficult, and discouraging duties, of patience, self-denial, and contempt of the World: And this must naturally shew what their intention was, and that they could have no other design upon Mankind, but to make them truly good and happy.

But whatever advantage Christianity might receive from the exemplary lives of the first teachers of it; yet as they preach'd to a World over-run with wickedness, there could be no hope of reformation, as I have shewn, without some assurance of pardon, and reconciliation.

And this is another character of a divine relation so remarkable in Christianity, that the very end of our Saviour's

viour's coming into the World was *to save sinners, to seek and to save that which was lost*; and the whole Gospel is nothing, but a declaration of the mercy of God to them, and the means by which it was to be attain'd by them. And as the reformation of the World is the design and reason of the Revelation; and therefore we must in reason expect, that the mercy offer'd in such a Revelation, must be in such a way, as is suitable to this end; and by consequence not to give the least encouragement to sin; so we find this particularly taken care of in the Christian method of reconciliation with God, where the means propos'd for this end are such, as not only tend to convince us of the highest love of God to sinners, but at the same time to shew us the heinous nature, and raise in us the utmost abhorrence, of sin.

For it teaches us that God is a holy Being, that *hates iniquity and loves righteousness*; but nevertheless that he  
so

so loves the World, that *he is not willing that any should perish.* And to prevent this, he offers them pardon upon their repentance, that is, upon condition that they part with their sins, and become new Creatures, *turning from the wickedness that they have committed, and doing that which is lawful and right.*

And tho' God is represented upon such a repentance, to be as ready to receive us into the embraces of his mercy, as a tender and compassionate father is to receive his penitent, tho' prodigal son; yet we are taught, that even this repentance shall not be accepted, but thro' the sacrifice of the death of Christ; thereby to convince us of the necessity of forsaking all sin, when the pardon of it could not be procur'd, but at so great and inestimable a price.

This sacrifice Jesus Christ has offer'd for us, voluntarily laying down his life, which, tho' it was in one respect, as  
a confir-

a confirmation of his mission; yet it was also done, as an expiation for us: And as God laid on him the iniquities of us all, so he has declar'd his acceptance of his blood, as a propitiation for the sins of the whole World; so that if they will but do their part *in turning from the wickedness which they have committed, and doing that which is lawful and right,* (there needs no more sacrifice for sin) *they shall save their souls alive.*

And to assure us of his acceptance of the death of Christ, he not only raised him from the dead, and has given us a privilege upon our repentance, to plead the merit of his sacrifice for us, as a price paid to him for our redemption; but he has also taken him into Heaven, *and set him at his own right hand, where he ever lives to make intercession for us;* and he has given him *all power, both in heaven and in earth,* that we may rest satisfied, that *he is able to save to the uttermost those, that come unto God by him.* This

This is the Gospel Scheme of Reconciliation, and this we see, is so wonderfully contriv'd, as to shew the greatest love to sinners, and yet the severest indignation against sin: It gives us the most comfortable assurance of pardon, and yet the greatest discouragement to disobedience. And the condition on which this pardon is offer'd is such, as is not only so reasonable in itself, that no reconciliation ought to be had without it, but also so necessary, that in the nature of things no reconciliation can be had without it: So that at the same time that it offers pardon to the World, to invite them to reform their lives, it does it in such a way, as to put them under the strongest obligation to it.

So that the Christian Religion ought not only to be esteem'd a divine Revelation, as it agrees with this general character of such a Revelation; that it proposes a means of reconciliation to sinners, in order to their reformati-  
on

on; but also that the scheme itself is so wonderfully contriv'd, as to shew the divine hand that form'd it.

But the wisdom of this contrivance will be still more remarkable, if we add one consideration more, *viz.* that this method of reconciliation propos'd in the Gospel, was particularly suited to the notions of Mankind; and was fitted not only to the reformation of their manners, but also their idolatrous, and barbarous worship.

All the World had a notion of the necessity of an expiation by sacrifice, in order to the reconciliation of God to sinners: No age, nor nation has been without it, that history informs us of: And as they knew no rule to regulate their expiations by, but the nature of their sins, which might reasonably be suppos'd to require different, and greater atonements according to their different degrees of guilt; so this not only begat a very costly, and burthensom worship, and expos'd  
Men

Men to great abuses from their Priests, who had the sole direction of it; but it also produced a savage practice, even in the most civiliz'd countries, of sacrificing Men, Women, and Children, and that too in prodigious multitudes at a time; imagining that the dignity of human Nature, and the innocence, and purity of Children, would be of so much the greater efficacy to their purpose.

Now, as we are all convinced of the barbarity of this, and of the necessity of the abolition of it; it is a great instance of the wisdom of this scheme of reconciliation; that it not only proposes pardon in such a way, as is agreeable to this general notion of the World, by a sacrifice of expiation for their sins; but also such a sacrifice, as must render all others needless, and oblige them to lay them all aside: This expiation being wrought by such a person, of such perfect purity, and so high a dignity, as to be

sufficient for the sins of the whole World: So that after this all sacrifices, both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, were, in their own nature, abolish'd and done away, as serving to no end, or purpose; *the Son of God*, having by *this one sacrifice of himself once offer'd, perfected for ever those, that are sanctified, and obtain'd eternal redemption for us.*

If this scheme be liable to objection, that this expiation is wrought by the sacrifice of the Son of God, and that 'tis strange, that God should suffer his Son to die;

This, we must confess, is a great mystery: But the difficulty of this does not seem to lie in the Death, so much as in the Incarnation of the Son: For if we can conceive, that God might condescend to have a person born in our Nature, in such a manner, as to be his own production, truly, and properly his Son: And if there be any reason, that we can discover (and we can discover many

many great, and wise ones) why he should live in a human way; there is no difficulty in supposing, that God might permit him to be put to death; and that, not only because this likewise might serve many wise ends, but because he might be capable of a recompence for it.

And if there might be wise reasons for his death, it is easily conceivable, that he might voluntarily choose, and agree to this, in order to those ends to be serv'd by it; and that God might accept of that voluntary suffering, as a sacrifice for the sins of the World. This carries nothing shocking to my apprehension; and there is nothing, but what is easy, and intelligible in it.

And yet this is the Gospel notion of it: For the *New Testament* seems to set it forth, as the contrivance of God the Father, declar'd to his Son, in his preexistent state; that in order to the redemption of Mankind, he should take human nature upon him; and the

Son is represented, as voluntarily submitting to his Father's will, in these words, which are applied to Jesus Christ by the Apostle, *Sacrifice and burnt-offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepar'd me: Lo! I come to do thy will, O God; yea I am content to do it, thy law is within my heart.*

And as in this body he came, and made himself of no reputation, but died the death of a slave; so God has highly exalted him in that very Nature, in which he suffer'd; and has not only declar'd, that he will accept of his death, as a price paid for our redemption; but that no one shall be accepted by him, but in, and thro' his intercession for us.

Why God should think fit to be reconciled to the World in this way, rather than any other, we are not concern'd to enquire; but even we are able, as I said, to see several wise ends of providence it might serve.

But

But whatever the reason of this dispensation was, 'tis enough for us, that it was so: If we have sufficient proof of the Christian Revelation, we are to take our Religion, as it is reveal'd: And as it is sufficient for us, that it was the will of God, that we should be saved in this way; it will be great presumption, and folly, in any one to boggle at Christianity upon the account of this difficulty, when we know 'tis reveal'd by God; because we poor ignorant Creatures think, that God might have pardon'd us without it, and are not able to find out all the reasons, why he chose, rather to do it thus.

Thus have I done with this character of a divine Revelation, relating to the declaration of pardon of Sin.

The next thing requir'd in a divine Revelation is the assurance of assistance, and acceptance; and this is so evident throughout the *New Testament*, that he that runs may read it.

We have there the promise of a divine assistance by the communication of his Spirit to us; which, as it came down, as I shall shew hereafter, upon the first preachers of the Gospel, in an eminent and extraordinary manner to lead them into all truth, and enable them to teach that truth to others; so this same Spirit *shall abide with us for ever, to work in us both to will, and to do according to his good pleasure.*

And as this assistance is promis'd upon the easy condition of asking it of God, with an honest desire to make a due improvement of it; so our Saviour tells us, that in such a case God will be as ready to answer our prayer, as a Father is to give bread to his hungry Child, who, when he asks bread, will not give him a stone.

This is the assurance we Christians have, and this the assistance we may rely upon: And when this holy Spirit is set forth to us, as a divine person  
of

of almighty power, this is a vast encouragement to set about a reformation, when we know, let our difficulties be what they will, we may *be more than conquerors, thro' him that strengthens us.*

And when we are further told, on the other hand, that how powerful soever this assistant is, yet we must not expect, he will do all for us; but only that he will help our weak endeavours, when we do what we can for ourselves: That if we resist his motions, he will leave us; and if we do not improve the aid he gives us, it shall be withdrawn from us; this gives no encouragement to vain presumption, but is a strong motive to take heed to ourselves, that we *receive not the grace of God in vain, and work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.*

This is the Gospel promise of assistance, and this is all that is consistent with a rational Nature:

But yet notwithstanding this wise provision; because thro' the weakness of our mortal Nature, we cannot always stand upright, but *in many things we shall offend all*; that we should not be dishearten'd by our daily failings, and so be tempted to despair of success, we have a further gracious assurance given us, that God will not be *extreme to mark what is done amiss*.

Tho' he requires the most perfect obedience of us, as what we are to endeavour after; and for that reason has given us the most perfect rule to walk by, and the most perfect pattern to copy after; yet it is a sincere obedience only, that is made the condition of our salvation.

It is impossible for us to attain intire perfection in this World; *there is no one that lives and sinneth not*: But if we be sincere in our endeavours, we shall not, and if we hope for salvation, we must not allow ourselves in any sin; but as we must do all

we can against it, in the utmost watchfulness, humility, and suspicion of ourselves, and daily prayer for God's assistance; so this is all that is requir'd of us: And tho' we are not as good as we shou'd be; yet if we labour sincerely to be as good as we can, *our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.*

And what can there be wanting in this respect to invite a wicked World to repent, and amend, that the Christian Revelation has not here propos'd to them?

But yet that nothing might be omitted whereby it was possible to work upon them, and in a human way persuade them to reform, and betake themselves to a better life; we have

Lastly, another consideration added; which is another character, of a divine Revelation, the assurance of a future state: And that too laid open in the plainest and the fullest manner, with such particular circumstances, and under

der such affecting representations, as are best fitted to the end of reformation.

We are told in general, that as *it is appointed for all Men once to die ; so after that there will come a judgment, when we shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, who is appointed judge of quick and dead, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to what he hath done, whether good, or evil.*

And in order to this, that we may have our whole Nature, and therefore may appear before him in our bodies as well as souls, *the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be rais'd : And they who shall be found alive, shall be chang'd, and caught up into the air to meet their Redeemer in the clouds, who shall come in the glory of his Father, with the holy Angels, and then shall sit upon the throne of his glory.*

What can there be more awful, and grand than this ? What can be more reasonable, than that Jesus Christ should  
be

be thus glorified, who was so ignominiously treated, and crucified? that he, who has promis'd salvation to us, should actually confer it on us? What more gracious, and condescending in God, than that Man should be judg'd by Man; and that he should be our Judge, who is our Brother, and Mediator, *touch'd with the feeling of our infirmities, sin only excepted.*

Before him therefore we must stand in judgment, all nations far and near, *all the dead, both small, and great, and the books shall be open'd, and we shall be judg'd out of those books:* And as *there is nothing cover'd which shall not be reveal'd, and nothing hid, that shall not be known;* so there is nothing, which shall not receive a just recompence of reward, suitable to its Nature, whether good, or evil.

*To those who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality, shall be given eternal life.* A reward worthy of God, who, as he is eternal, rewards like himself with Eternity,                      4                      And

And this reward is set forth to us, under such ideas, as are most likely to invite our hope, and excite us to endeavour after it.

There is nothing more desireable than life; and one would think there is nothing should so forcibly work upon human Nature, as the hopes of everlasting life. And yet to give it more weight, this promise is made with the addition of every thing, that can make such a life a blessing. It is set forth to us by all such things, as we are commonly most affected with, as a Crown, a Kingdom, a Treasure, and Inheritance, undefiled, that fadeth not away, and a state of everlasting joy and pleasure.

And whereas our bodies shall be rais'd again, even those shall be chang'd; and by the power of him, who *is able to subdue all things to himself*, shall be fashion'd into spiritual, powerful, glorious, incorruptible and immortal bodies.

And

And to make this more effectual to our reformation, this happy state is not only represented, as the reward of our obedience; but our obedience is required, as the condition upon which, and which only it can be attain'd.

And to convince us of the reasonableness of this condition, it is not impos'd upon us arbitrarily, merely because God will have it so, but only, because it can't be otherwise; this condition being, in the nature of things, so necessary to our happiness, that it is impossible to be happy without it.

This is the Gospel account of a future state of happiness, which is to be the portion of true Christians; and in this we see nothing mean, and frivolous, nothing vain and frothy, like the romantick fictions of the Poets; but the whole is solid, and substantial, the ideas great, and noble, agreeable to the nature of God, and Man.

And

And as this Religion thus provides for the happiness of the good; so it has taught us likewise what will be the portion of the bad; that, as *the righteous shall have life eternal; so the wicked shall have indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, and that too, both in body and soul in hell, in everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.*

And as this is intended for the reformation of the World, there is nothing can be imagin'd more proper for that end, than this: For what can work upon Mankind, if this will not? Our very Nature starts, and draws back from misery, and how must we be affected with the assurance of misery everlasting? *If we fear those, that can kill the body, how much more should we fear him, who can destroy both body and soul in hell?*

But that this might take the faster hold of us, and work more effectually upon us, this misery is set forth to

us under such representations, as are most terrible, and affrighting to human Nature: By *a worm, that will never dye*: by *a fire that will never be quenck'd*: By a thirst, that will never be allay'd.

And lest all this should be imagin'd only an artful contrivance to awe Mankind into obedienc, 'tis worth our observation, that the misery here threaten'd is founded in Nature, and these similitudes have a natural suitability in them to the thing they are intended to represent.

As for the misery here threaten'd to sin, 'tis such as naturally arises from it: For as our happiness consists in the enjoyment of God; so by being banish'd from God, we must be miserable; and yet this is the natural consequence of sin: For sin is a contradiction to holiness; and a sinful Nature, and a holy God are as irreconcilable, as light and darkness: And whilst a sinner continues in this opposition to God, there must be

be a perpetual separation between them, and 'tis impossible but he must be miserable.

And when he comes to find himself irrecoverably lost, as his conscience will gaul him with the inward torment of bitter and sad reflections, this is very livelily express'd by the similitude of a *worm, that dieth not*; this being a torment that works within him, like a worm gnawing at the heart.

And as every one has a natural desire of happiness, which can never be separated from us, but will be always pushing itself forth, so long as we have a being; so when the sinner shall find himself in misery, impatiently desiring happiness, and yet under an utter incapacity of attaining it; this is very naturally represented by a fire, tormenting him with burning heat, like a Man in a fever parch'd with thirst, and yet not able to procure a drop of water to cool his tongue.

So that as nothing can be more certain from the nature of things, than the punishment here threaten'd to sin; so there is nothing can be more just, and natural, than those ideas it is represented under.

If any difficulty arises in our minds, that this punishment is said to be everlasting; as seeming inconsistent with the goodness, and justice of God to punish finite sins with everlasting sufferings, we may consider,

First, that this suffering is founded in the nature of things, and is not properly an act of God, but the natural effect of a natural cause: And when this suffering is threaten'd by God; as a punishment, 'tis really nothing more, than a fore-warning to sinners of what will be the consequence of their folly, and what their sins will naturally bring upon them: This he does out of mere goodness to prevent their ruin.

And if Men will not regard his admonition, but notwithstanding all his promises of assistance to our weakness, his acceptance of our sincerity, and the vast recompence of reward, he has laid up for us, will, in spite of all, pursue their own wills, they have no reason to complain, that they are miserable: It cannot be otherwise without a Miracle: And we have no more reason to expect that the goodness of God should work Miracles to prevent our misery in this case, than that he should do it every moment of our lives to prevent all the effects of other natural causes that are mischievous, and hurtful to us.

But if we secondly consider this suffering, as a punishment, how terrible soever it is in itself, there is nothing inconsistent with the goodness, or justice of God in it.

For as Man is a rational Creature, capable of laws, we may reasonably expect from the goodness of God,  
that

that he will give us such laws, as are for our happiness: And as laws must be enforced by rewards and punishments; those punishments are most suitable to the goodness of God, as a wise and holy law-giver, which are best fitted to produce obedience, and thereby to make us happy: And therefore the right and just proportion of punishment to be annex'd to laws, is not to be measur'd by the nature of sin, but by the suitability of it to the end, it is intended for; which is the prevention of sin; and by consequence that must be the right and just measure of punishment, which is best fitted for this purpose:

And since 'tis plain to every one's observation, that the threatening of everlasting misery is not more, than enough for this purpose; because Men will not be wrought into obedience, even by this, it will hence follow, that the goodness of God (consider'd as under the direction of wisdom and

holiness) could not have appear'd so conspicuously in any less punishment than this.

And if it be goodness in God to threaten such punishments, thereby to affright Men into happiness, it cannot be inconsistent with his goodness, or justice to execute those punishments; so long as there are any beings capable of sinning, which that execution may be a terror to : And since the Gospel tells us, that Angels, and good Men shall live for ever ; who, as they are free beings, will, as such, be always naturally capable of sinning; and therefore will stand in need of proper motives to obedience, to preserve them innocent and happy, it will follow, that there will be always reason for the execution of these punishments; because there will be always free agents to be terrified from sin, and preserv'd in obedience, and happiness by them.

These reasonings seem plainly to demonstrate to us the necessity of everlasting

lasting punishments in the nature of things: So that, tho' the word *everlasting* is in Scripture meant, sometimes only of an indeterminate duration, which may be capable of an end; yet from these arguments it seems more reasonable to understand it here in the strictest sense, for a duration without end.

But be that, as it will, in whatever sense we understand the word, it carries in it an awful consideration to awaken sinners to repentance; and nothing less than this could have been sufficient to rouse the unthinking World out of that stupid insensibility, they were fallen into before Christianity appear'd, and out of which they were to be deliver'd.

And 'tis a great addition to the credibility of the Christian Revelation, that it not only reveals to us a future state; but that the account, it gives us of it, is such, as is founded in the nature of things, and wisely

fitted to the only end, for which such a Revelation was wanted, *viz.* the reformation of the World.

But how credible soever it may be in this respect, yet all this would signify but little; unless it were attended with another character of a divine Revelation, and that is, the power of Miracles.

This power, as now I have already observ'd, appear'd in a wonderful and amazing manner, both in our Saviour and his Apostles, who did such works in confirmation of their Mission, as were abundantly sufficient to demonstrate to the World, that they were teachers sent from God; and that all which they taught was true: And by consequence, that the rules they prescrib'd, were the will of God; and the assurance they gave of pardon, and reconciliation; assistance, and acceptance; and a future state might be rested on, as the Revelation of God.

This

This general evidence of a divine power attending them, was sufficient for this purpose: But that there might be nothing wanting to fix our faith, and give us the utmost satisfaction we are capable of; we read of some particular Miracles wrought for the confirmation of some of the more important articles. Thus for instance,

As our Saviour Christ came into the World to save sinners, that is, to reform the World; and as the first step to a reformation is repentance; and the first motive to repentance is the hope of pardon; so he was not content to put the belief, and assurance of this pardon, upon the general credit of his other Miracles only; but we read of a Miracle particularly wrought to shew, that he was able to procure this pardon, that *he had power on earth to forgive sins.*

And as he laid down his life as a sacrifice for sin, that *in him we might*

*have Redemption thro' his blood, so, that we might be sure of God's accepting his sacrifice for us, he rose again from the dead, as a testimony of it.*

And as he had given us the assurance of a future state, wherein we should live again in our bodies, by a resurrection from the dead; he gave an instance of the possibility, and certainty of this by his own resurrection.

But because his resurrection was only a rising to a life in this World; and could not therefore in its own nature be a proof of another; and because the happiness of a Christian is to be in heaven, that we might have evident proof of such a place, he miraculously ascended thither.

He had before told his Disciples, that *in his father's house are many mansions, and that he would go to prepare a place for them, and as he took them out with him in open day, to make them eye witnesses of his Ascension;*

cession; so, that they might not doubt of his being in heaven, they had not only the testimony of Angels for it, to give them assurance of his going thither; but he also sent the Holy Ghost upon his Apostles, to shew his high power there: That, whereas they were chosen to be *Witnesses* of him, and to *preach the Gospel to all nations*, they might be endued with the gift of Languages, and all other gifts and powers that were necessary for the work, they were chosen for, and appointed to.

And these gifts, and powers they so display'd, in a manner so extraordinary, surprizing, and convincing, that, tho' they were but twelve poor Men, ignorant and uneducated, *the scorn and off-scouring of the world*; yet these *foolish things confounded the wise, and the mighty, and brought to nought the things that were*; that is, they baffled the wisdom of the learned, and defeated the opposition of the mighty,

mighty, and in spite of all the arts of the former, and the persecutions of the latter, they overthrew all the establish'd Religions of the World; abolishing the legal ceremonies of the *Jews*, and rooting out all the superstitions of the *Gentiles*; not only *turning them from darkness to light, but from the power of Satan unto God*: That is, they did what a Revelation was wanted for, and what the Christian Revelation was intended for; they reformed Mankind wherever they came.

Thus we see the nature and evidence of Christianity, what the design of it was, and what necessity there was for it, in order to the reformation and happiness of the World; and how it furnishes us with all things necessary for this reformation, and agrees with all the characters of such a Revelation, as might reasonably be expected from God. We see here a regular consistent scheme :

But there is one thing to be particularly observed in this place, which is a wonderful confirmation of it, namely, that it is the very scheme of Providence before demonstrated from the nature and reason of things.

For we have already shewn, that the general end of the government of Mankind, is, to bring them to everlasting happiness, both in body and soul, by a resurrection from the dead: And in order to this happiness to restore them to their natural and moral perfection, in which they were originally made.

And in order to this perfection we have likewise shewn, that God will furnish their understandings with necessary knowledge; and their wills with proper motives; and then leave them to their liberty.

And if they cannot attain to perfection of themselves, in a natural way, he will vouchsafe a supernatural assistance which shall be proportion'd according

according to their necessities, and continued according to their improvements.

And as on the one hand, if they make proper use of this assistance; and endeavour to be as perfect as they are capable of being here; we have shewn, that God will fill up what is wanting of perfection hereafter, when this corruption shall put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality, and the spirits of the just shall be made perfect;

So on the other hand we have likewise shewn, that if Men neglect the use of this assistance, and disregard the means of perfection here; they will be left in a state of imperfection, and everlasting unhappiness hereafter.

This is the notion of providence, I have before demonstrated; and every one that knows Christianity, knows this to be the very scheme deliver'd there.

And

And if it be true, as we have likewise before shewn; that notwithstanding all the means of instruction, and motives to practice, that God may at any time have given Mankind; he may yet be further dispos'd to do them good, according to their different necessities, and capacities; and by consequence, if they have been, or shall be in want of a Revelation, that he has, or will, in his good time, vouchsafe such a Revelation to them: If, I say, this be true, as has before been shewn, then, since it has been already prov'd, that the World was in such an apparent necessity of a Revelation, in order to the reformation of it, that they could not possibly be happy without it; and that no Revelation could be sufficient for their reformation, but such, as should be attended with those several characters, which have been already taken notice of, all which Christianity punctually agrees withal;

withal; we may hence conclude, with great assurance, that christianity must of necessity be a true Revelation; and by consequence the true Religion, which was what I propos'd to enquire after, and regularly demonstrate to you.

And since the proof that I have all along given of it, has been drawn from the natures and reasons of things; and the natural notions we have of God, consider'd as the Creator, and Governor of the World; if there should be any objections rais'd in your Mind, from the relation that Christianity bears to the *Old Testament*, and the difficulty that some pretend there is, in understanding the prophecies there, and making out the correspondence of Christianity with them, you need not perplex your thoughts about them.

You have already seen Christianity is true by its own internal evidence without regard to the *Old Testament*,

*tament*; and would have been so, had it never been written, and will be so, tho' those books should happen to be lost.

But I nevertheless hope to demonstrate to you, in the course of my following reasonings, that Christianity has sufficient evidence of its truth, from the relation it bears to that book.

And as I have shewn the credibility of that book in general, I will now proceed to examine it particularly, and shall endeavour not only to demonstrate to you the credibility of the several relations there; but also such a relation between them, and Christianity, that if the history of the Facts be true, Christianity cannot possibly be false.

F I N I S.



## ERRATA.

Page 165. Line 4. before *that* read *and*. p. 186. l. 5. instead of *Eat* r. *ate*. p. 230. l. 7. for *object* r. *objects*. p. 284. l. 8. before *Scriptures* r. *the*; p. 267. l. 11. dele *the*. p. 291. l. 14. before *Idolaters* r. *all*. p. 294. l. 24. before *that* r. *that*. p. 367. l. 7. before *Experiment* r. *the*.

The Reader is desired more particularly to take Notice of the following *Errata*, because the Sense is spoil'd by them.

Page 105. l. 7. before *made* r. *and*. p. 189. l. 20. instead of *Sin* r. *them*. p. 207. l. 13. after *want* place a *Comma*. Ibid. l. 14. for *patience* r. *Patience*. p. 220. l. 21. instead of *not oblig'd* r. *oblig'd not*. p. 359. l. 8. after *works* r. *done*.



They, however, let into captivity to the  
blackness of it. Glorify how in your  
7 years of prison, which are free.





