John B. Yolton
Feb 1957

A

DISCOURSE

Concerning the

RESURRECTION

OF

JESUS CHRIST.

In THREE PARTS.

WHEREIN,

I. The CONSEQUENCES of the *Doctrine* are Stated Hypothetically.

II. The *Nature and Obligation* of MORAL EVIDENCE, are explain'd at large.

III. The *Proofs* of the FACT of our Saviour's Resurrection, are Propos'd, Examin'd, and fairly Demonstrated, to be *Conclusive*.

Together with

An APPENDIX concerning the Impossible Production of *Thought*, from *Matter and Motion*: The Nature of *Human Souls*, and of *Brutes*: The *Anima Mundi*, and the Hypothesis of the TO ΠΑΝ; as also, concerning *Divine Providence*, the *Origin of Evil*, and the *Universe* in General.

Ἠγέρθη ὁ Κύριος ὄντως. Luke xxiv. 34.

By HUMPHRY DITTON, Master of the New Mathematical School in *Christ's-Hospital*.

The Second Edition.

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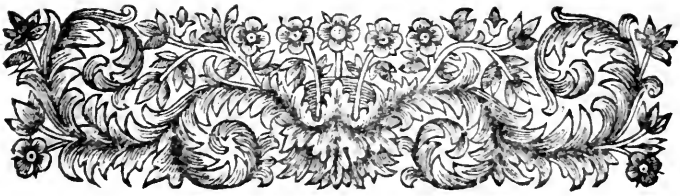


TO THE

Right Reverend Father in God,

JOHN,

Lord Biſhop of *Ely*.

My LORD!

I Know not to whom a Diſcourſe of *this Nature*, could be more properly inſcrib'd, than to a Prelate of the Chriſtian Church, ſo conſpicuous, for a pious Zeal for the *Subject*

it treats of, and of ſuch known Abilities plac'd in an *eminent Station*, as your Lordſhip is. And I have this peculiar Satiſfaction, in having obtain'd the Favour of Your Lordſhip's Patronage; that tho I am conſcious, the Defects in the Performance, cannot eaſily lie conceal'd from Your Lordſhip's *Judgment*; yet I am under the Protection of ſo much *Goodneſs and Candour*, that I dare be eaſy, even when I repreſent Your Lordſhip to my ſelf, in the ſeverer Poſture of an Examinant.

My Deſign in the following Papers (My Lord) does not go ſo *low*, as a bare *Vindication* of Chriſtianity; and I ſhould have thought it almoſt a Crime, to have given them *that Name*. Your Lordſhip knows, Chriſtianity does not need to be merely *Defended*, after ſuch a Courſe of *Miraculous* Triumphs, as *Divine Providence* has given it over all the vain *Reaſon* and *Philoſophy*, as well as the *Power* and *Malice* of the World.

Indeed, when the Religion was *Young*, and lay open to Publick Slander and Calumny, then, the humble Method of *Apology*, was every way the moſt proper and uſeful. But I know of no Reaſons that oblige us, at this time of the day

day, to *apologize* for our *Faith*, to the Enemies of Chriſtianity; who tho they have a Right to *civil Uſage*, yet are not to be treated with *Form* and *Ceremony*. Not ſo much, becauſe Chriſtianity has now the *Civil Power* on its ſide; as becauſe it has victoriouſly made its way thro all Oppoſition, by the *bright Evidence of Truth* it carries along with it, and for ſo many Ages put to ſilence all the Ignorance of *Gainſayers*. It was for this Reaſon (My Lord) that I propos'd to do nothing elſe in this Treatiſe, but to ſet *the great Argument of our Saviour's Reſurrection*, in a fair Light before them; to ſhew them upon what unqueſtionable Principles, they may, if they will, aſſure themſelves that the Doctrine is true; and ſo leave it entirely to them, to make the *Concluſion* as they ſhall think fit.

Your Lordſhip very well knows, *what ſort of Anſwers* uſe to be return'd, to all Undertakings of this kind; which, as far as I could ever yet find, are reducible, either to *Banter and Ridicule*, or *ſlight Reflection, upon Matters remote from the grand Point in Diſpute*. By theſe Methods indeed, a Controverſy may be made *Perpetual*; but then they who make uſe of them, plainly ſhew, that it is neither

their *Interest*, nor their *Desire* to have it decided.

I have often thought, My Lord, how *lucky* it is for the Enemies of Christianity under Christian Governments, that the prudent Care of the *Magistrate*, has made it *unsafe* for them to say all, they pretend they have to say, against Reveal'd Religion. For by this means, they not only avoid the Discredit of coming off poorly, after very loud and insolent Boasts; but also get the Reputation of having some very shrewd Objections in *Reserve*, which now 'tis alledg'd, they are forc'd to suppress, for fear of *affronting the Publick*. This is a most happy Co-incidence! And those Gentlemen may think themselves indebted to a *Government*, for such a Favour, as that of refusing them the Liberty, of *Speaking* and *Writing*, as freely as they *think*. Nor does such a *necessary Restraint* as this, any more deserve the odious Name of *Persecution*; than Persecution it self, merits the glorious Title, of *pure Zeal for the Gospel*.

However, My Lord, tho the *very indecent Liberties* that have been taken with Christianity, have justly induc'd those, who have Power in their hands, to take

take proper Meaſures for its Defence, from *open and rude Aſſaults*; yet I can ſcarce perſuade my ſelf, that any Chriſtian *Proteſtant* State, would deny Unbelievers of Reveal'd Religion, *who ſhew'd a ſincere Deſire of being better inform'd*, the Liberty of propoſing *the real Scruples of their Minds* in a *convenient*, ſober and modeſt way. And till they have tried to obtain ſuch a Liberty, and been *ſolemnly refus'd it*; I think it is to no purpoſe for them to pretend, that their Mouths are ſtop'd by *the Laws of the Country*. For they may argue without Spleen and ſcurrilous Reflections; and no impartial Perſon would be angry, to ſee Men fairly endeavouring after a ſatisfactory Reſolution of their Doubts, in a Caſe wherein their *Everlaſting Happineſs* was ſo nearly concern'd.

May Your Lordſhip long continue, an *Ornament* and *Support* to True Religion and uſeful Learning, the *ſure Friend* of the *Poor* and Diſtreſs'd, and a vigorous Promoter of all that concerns the Intereſt and Glory of your *Country*.

And may the Church of *England* ever have, as it has now, ſuch *Paſtors* at the Head of it, whoſe chief Ambition it ſhall be, to imitate the Sublime Ex-

ample, of the *Great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls.*

I am,

My LORD,

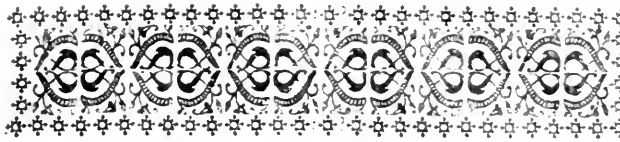
With all Humble and Sincere Respect,

Your LORDSHIP'S

Most Obedient, and

Devoted Servant,

Humphry Ditton.



PREFACE TO THE READER.

FTER I had resolv'd upon this Undertaking, and thrown the Materials *of which it was to consist, into some Order and* Method; *the next thing was to consider, in* what sort of Form and Dress, *it would be most advantageous to present it to the World: Whether I should proceed all along in so very strict, and abstracted a Way, as to say nothing, but what should be either* Lemma, Proposition, Scholium *or* Corollary; *or else should take the agreeable Liberty, of mixing the* Declamatory, *with the* strict *way of Reasoning, in such Parts of the Discourse, where it should be to some good and useful Purpose, so to do.*

And I quickly concluded, that the latter *Method would be the most Useful and Advantageous in a Design of this Nature. For as all those who are Judges of sound Argument and Reason would as easily find it out, and trace it through all the Parts of a Discourse*

course compos'd after this manner, as if all was put into the severest and most rigorous Mathematical Form, *that could be; so the doing of it that way, would infallibly have given it such a frightful and forbidding Look, that my main End and Scope in the Publication of it, must necessarily have been lost, with respect to the greatest Part of our Readers. The Design I propos'd to my self, was to examine, and enquire into the Truth of this very important Doctrine (the* Resurrection *of* Jesus Christ) *in* a strict and accurate Way; *aud at the same time, to render that Enquiry* truly useful to all Persons whatsoever. *And this End I could never have obtain'd, had I tied my self up, to the strict Form of* Proposition, Lemma, *&c. in every particular Thing I had occasion to say. For as the* Nature and Use of those Things, are known but to very few People, *comparatively speaking; so when a Man is wholly confin'd to them, there's many an Opportunity lost, of* urging and pressing an Argument home, *and making such Applications of it, as tend much more to the enforcing it on the Mind, than the bare proposing of it in a* Theorematical Way, *ever will or can do.*

Every Judicious and Intelligent Person knows, that strict Reasoning it self, *and the* strict Form *of Reasoning, are two very different Things. They do by no means necessarily suppose, or infer one another. Strict Reasoning may as well be without the* Form, *as the Form is often without the just Consequence and Connection of Parts, which alone makes it* strict Reasoning. *A* Declamatory *Discourse may be so set together, that by a mere Change of the Dress, it shall become a* rigorous Demonstration. *As on the other hand, the* latter, *taken out of the Severities of its own proper Form, may be made to appear with all the soft and pleasant Airs of a Declamation, and yet at the same time preserve the Chain of solid Argument and Truth, strict and entire.* *In*

In the following Discourse, I have made it my Business, to examine that great and fundamental Article of the Christian Faith, which is the Subject of it; with the same Impartiality and Care, that I would have done, had I not believ'd it at all; but been only an indifferent and unconcern'd Person, *neither prejudic'd on one side in favour of it, nor on the other, with wrong Notions and Dislike. Upon this score, I have not any where scrupled, to make what Concessions appear'd to me to be intrinsically Just and Reasonable, and agreeable to Truth and Matter of Fact. I have no where industriously stifl'd or suppress'd any Objections of the adverse Party, which I was conscious of, and really believ'd to deserve Notice. And as I have not conceal'd any Part of their Strength, to make them appear* weaker than they are; *so neither have I represented any Part of their Strength to a Disadvantage, or set their Reasonings in a false Light, with a design to make them appear* worse Reasoners than they are. *I have made use of no arbitrary precarious Hypotheses, to build or establish any Conclusions upon; but on the other hand, have studiously avoided arguing upon any such Topicks as are really doubtful and questionable, and endeavour'd all along to keep closely to these two, as my MAIN FOUNDATIONS,* viz. *PLAIN MATTER OF FACT, AND THE LAWS AND CONSTITUTION OF HUMAN NATURE. And whatever Consequences I have drawn, either against the* Deists, *or in favour of the* Christians, *I have drawn them only there, where according to the best of my Judgment, the Eternal Laws of Nature and Reason oblig'd me so to do; and that without any forcing or straining of things, beyond those Bounds, to which the Genuine Scope and Extent of the Principles I argue from, would allow me to carry them.*

And

And for the Proof of this fair and equal Management, I appeal to the Book it ſelf. They that will take the Pains to examine that, *with unprejudic'd Judgment and Care, I am ſure will acquit me; and they that will not do ſo, cannot condemn me, without fixing a Reproach upon themſelves. I have no more any ſort of Motives to byaſs me to miſrepreſent, and ſet Things in a wrong Light; than I have Intereſt to keep me from owning of Truth, when 'tis evidently made out to me. And therefore, I deſire no better Quarter than this,* that the Book be read, and maturely conſider'd: *Nor am I under Apprehenſions of any thing ſo much, as I am of* Ignorance, *and raſh and haſty Judging.*

In the mean time, I'll offer a few things, to the Conſideration of thoſe Perſons, who being Unbelievers of the Doctrine *here aſſerted, may probably read this Diſcourſe with Prejudices, and perhaps with a Deſign of quarrelling and contending.*

I deſire them therefore to take notice, in the firſt Place, that towards the cloſe of Part III. after I have ſumm'd up all the Evidence, and concluded from thence, the certain Truth of the Fact of our Saviour's Reſurrection; *I have likewiſe* enumerated all the poſſible juſt ways, by which they can proceed to attack the Argument, in order to ſhew that it does not conclude rightly and truly: *by which means, I have both ſhorten'd their Labour, in giving them a general View of all the Methods of oppoſing me (that ſo they may chuſe which they think the moſt effectual) and alſo ſhewn how ready and willing I am to bring this Point to an Iſſue with them, in a rational and ſober way, if they think fit ſo to do.*

Another *thing is; I muſt deſire, they will always remember to* diſtinguiſh between the Argument it ſelf, and any Mode or Circumſtance, of what kind or nature ſoever it be, which has not a direct and neceſ-

necessary Dependance upon, or which does not properly and immediately influence the Conclusion. *The* second and third Parts *of the Book, are but one entire Chain of Reasoning; the* Former *being only the* General Premises, *which the* Latter *concludes from.* If they can find any defect or flaw in the Reasoning, that will make the Conclusion to be unjust and wrong; *then they gain their Point: if not, as I never lov'd disputing upon trifling and frivolous Matters, so they who have* Time *and* Temper *for such mean Exercises, shall, for me, engage in them by themselves.*

Again, *I expect likewise, that whatever they have to propose at any Time,* be propos'd in an accurate, distinct and methodical way; *that they offer no precarious* Surmises *and* Conjectures, *no mere* Criticisms, *no* Similies *or* Illustrations, *instead of plain downright Argument: but that they oblige themselves to the business of* Reasoning, *and not of making* flourishes; *and that when they have once fix'd upon a Point, they be sure to run it to a head, and not leave it ingloriously, for a Subject of future Animadversions.*

I won't so much as offer at an Apology, *for a Book of this kind; considering the present state of Things in the Christian World. What is talk'd of more, and believ'd less, than the Doctrine here propos'd? We call Jesus Christ Lord and Saviour, we repeat the Articles of the* Creed, *and bow at his Name, with an hundred more such like Instances of outside Reverence and Devotion; when at the same time there are Multitudes amongst us that are so far from either adoring his Person, or believing his Gospel, that 'tis a question whether the worst Enemies he has in the World, can outdo us in heinous Contempt of both. The* Profession *of Christianity, is for the most part nothing but mere Pageantry; and People take it upon them*

out

out of a Compliment to their Country, and to be civil to the Government under which they live.

To call all Reveal'd Religion *into question, is now-a-days almost as necessary a Step towards the compleating of a* Gentleman; *as nice Breeding and Behaviour, or a good Dress. And he that can't (at least) doubt and demur whether the* Prophets *and* Apostles *were not mere deluded Enthusiasts, or wicked designing Impostors; makes as ill a Figure in a genteel modish Company, as he who wears a Habit, that has been out of use for two or three Centuries. A Wretch that can scarce hammer out the Sense of an Author of the Lowest Class (perhaps even in his own native Tongue) sets up now-a-days for a* Critick *upon the Gospel; and every* little Tyro, *that is just advancing to his first Degree in* Mathematicks, *thinks he is able to* demonstrate *all to be a Cheat. But surely, if the Great* Masters *and Patrons of* Deism, *who were better furnish'd for all the Purposes of* Argument and Enquiry, *could never carry their Oppositions to Christianity higher than impotent Slander and Reproach: This inferiour Train of* raw unexperienc'd Disciples *(who, whatever they have to say, can never pretend, that their* Reason *and* Philosophy *are affronted) ought never to attack Religion in insolent and positive Terms; but, tho it were out of mere Complaisance and Regard, to the Examples of their* Teachers, *should be contented to make their Efforts against Christianity, in* a way more worthy of themselves, *and let all Pretences to* Argument *and* Reason *alone. Scarce ever was any Age so degenerate as ours, wherein People get* Interest, Favour, Credit, *nay even a bare* Livelihood and Subsistence *(as some of our exploded* Itinerant Deists *have done) and all this, upon the pure Merits of* Infidelity.

But the Cure of all these Disorders, we must leave to the Care and good Providence of God Almighty.

While

While the Publication *of this Book has been defer'd thro many unforeseen Interruptions and Avocations, I have been surpriz'd sometimes, to find how indiscreetly some Persons, who pretend to stand by the Doctrine here asserted, have talk'd of an Undertaking of this Nature. However, I can certify the Reader, that to the best of my Knowledg, they were only such, to whom I was vastly more indebted for their* Dislike, *than I should ever have been for their* Approbation, *had they been any thing* busy *in telling the World, how much they either approv'd the Design, or valued the Author.*

There have not been those wanting, who have been so wise, as to think I must rather betray, *than* vindicate, *the Doctrine of the Resurrection; because I do not prove it all along from the New Testament, as* a Divine Revelation. *And one particularly (who ought to have known better things) could not possibly beat it out of his Head, but the* Resurrection was actually to be demonstrated by Lines and Figures; *I suppose, because he had met with such unlucky hard Words, as* Scholium, Corollary, *&c. in the* printed Proposals: *and did therefore very gravely declare, that 'twas a Shame, an Article of the Christian Faith, and one of such Consequence too, should ever be treated after such a manner. And tho Persons thus rash, are seldom much addicted to* Blushing, *yet I won't put it to the Trial whether they can or no, by telling them,* Who, *and* What Sort of Persons, *have been of a very different Opinion from them, not only as to the* Design, *but the* Performance *too.*

As for my own Part, as I had nothing but the Service and Advantage of a Cause, of most Important Truth, *in view, and which I was fully certain could never suffer, by being set in the clearest Light that could be; so having taken some Pains to do so, I have hopes that this Treatise may be of some Use, to*

Know-

Knowing, Candid *and* Unprejudic'd *Readers of all Sorts*; *and that they may find some important Points relating to NATURAL RELIGION, settled to their Satisfaction in the* Appendix, *as well as that* Great *one of REVEAL'D RELIGION, in the* Body of the Book.

THE

THE

DEIST's Concern

To enquire into the

TRUTH

OF

Christ's Resurrection.

PART I.

The CONTENTS.

SECT. I.

E that well conſiders the Force of thoſe Arguments, which are brought to eſtabliſh the Truth of *Chriſtian Religion*; that ſees how they all (tho drawn from different Topicks) conſpire in the moſt perfect manner, to convince the World of the Divine Original of this Faith; would ſcarce think it poſſible, that the Reaſon and Underſtanding of Mankind ſhould ever oppoſe it; and therefore conclude, there is ſomething more than pure Infidelity at the bottom, and that they are not mere Scruples of the Mind, which create ſo long and violent Contention.

If he thinks on the Excellency of the Precepts of the *Chriſtian Religion*, he finds them of the fitteſt Nature poſſible, to perſuade him to receive it as the Contrivance of Heaven: They are all ſo worthy of God, ſo beneficial and improving to Human Nature, and ſo conducive to the Welfare and Happineſs of Society.

When he conſiders the ſtrange and ſpeedy Propagation of this Faith through the World, with its triumph over the Wit and Policy, the Force and Malice of its formidable Enemies; and all this accompliſh'd by ſuch Methods, as the Reaſon of Mankind would have pronounc'd the moſt fooliſh and abſurd: He ſees here the over-ruling Hand of God, which alone could give it ſuch aſtoniſhing Succeſſes; by thoſe very Ways and Means, from which its utter Confuſion was to be expected.

The

The exact Accomplishment of express and unquestionable Prophecies, concerning the most remarkable Events of the World; is a solemn Appeal to all reasonable Nature, whether that Revelation be not truly Divine, which contains such plain and wonderful Predictions.

Lastly, The Miracles wrought by *Christ Jesus* and his *Apostles*, in Confirmation of this Faith and Doctrine, are such Proofs of the near Concern which Heaven had therein; that he who considers them, and at the same time calls *Christianity* an Imposture, must either take pains to avoid knowing the Finger of God, when he sees it, or else do infinitely worse, by ascribing the manifest Effects thereof to mean Artifice, or Diabolical Power.

From these Topicks, the Truth of *Christianity* has been so substantially argu'd, and so clearly prov'd; that by all the Rules of right Reason in use amongst Mankind, 'tis render'd plainly absurd and irrational to reject it. One need not wish to see an Adversary reduc'd to worse Extremities, than one of these Arguments well-manag'd and press'd home, would reduce him to; provided he were kept from Excursions, and oblig'd to return no Answers but what were directly to the Purpose.

SECT. II.

HOwever, waving all these, as being more commonly and largely handled already, I shall at present make choice of another Argument, to establish the Divine Authority of the *Christian Religion*, (one which will, with some particular

Advantages, answer the Design I propose to my self in making use of it) and that is, *The Resurrection of* Jesus Christ, *the Author of this Religion in the World.*

This is the great *Doctrine of Christianity*, which serves as a Foundation to all the rest; and from which alone, indeed, the Truth of all the rest may be infer'd.

If this Article be taken from a *Christian*, he will find no difficulty in parting with any other you shall ask of him: Of so great Importance is it to his present Comfort and Satisfaction, and to his future Happiness, both in Soul and Body.

I am very sensible how ridiculous a Topick this is, in the Opinions of those Gentlemen (the *Deists*) with whom I am now concern'd. Tho few Articles of the *Christian Faith* meet with any such Treatment from them, as may be call'd civil; yet *This* is treated with a particular Severity: And whatever 'scapes them, this is sure to have no Quarter, in their *free Discourses and Conversations* about *Religion.* My Business here being to argue with them, and not to make Reflections on their *Conduct*; I shall content my self with only observing two Things.

First, That besides the possible Danger of taking such Liberties with a Doctrine of such grand Consequence to them, as well as to us; besides the Indiscretion and Ill-breeding of exposing, in Terms so very malignant and invidious (as they do sometimes) That which the Country they live in, owns as a *Fundamental Article of its Faith*, and which many Men, of no less Wisdom and Sagacity than these Gentlemen, do lay the whole *Stress of their Salva-*

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tion upon: Besides all this (I say) there is a Point of Honour to be consider'd, which one would think, should bear some sway, and prevail with them to take those Measures, which Prudence, and a Sense of Decency cannot. For these Gentlemen would do well to remember, that as free as they are of their *Satyr* and *Invectives*, they have hitherto been extremely sparing of their Arguments. It is with so much caution that they conceal, and keep all kinds of reasoning to themselves, that nothing short of *Christian Charity* (which always thinks the best) can possibly be genteel and good-natur'd enough, to pay them the Compliment of believing, they have Arguments as well as Raillery, to assault *Christianity* withal. Now, I say, 'tis ungenerous to play upon a Subject with Wit (as some People very guiltily call it) when it demands a fair Trial by Reason and Argument. It looks but poorly for Men to stand at a distance, pelting Religion with little *Jests* and *Reflections*; when they have liberty to come up as close as they please, and end the Dispute in a more honourable way.

For where Men discover Spleen and hearty Concern in opposing a Cause, those that stand by, will naturally conclude (since they see them in earnest) that they exert their best Strength, and do as much Mischief as they can.

But then another Consideration, which I think very much lessens the Honour of this way of proceeding, is, That all the Wit that serves to expose Religion, is so scandalously cheap, and costs a Man so very little. I don't say, but it may possibly cost the Authors of it dearer hereafter; but what I intend is, that it is not a very chargeable thing at present, since a little of

it, with ſuch good and frugal Management as they commonly beſtow on it, will go a great way.

For let theſe Gentlemen but conſider, That as Mens vicious Lives do too commonly make it their Intereſt and Concern, that the *Chriſtian Religion* ſhould be a Cheat; ſo they are extremely ready and willing to believe it is really ſo: And when once a Subject is nicely ſuted to Peoples Humours and Inclinations, there needs not abundance of Wit to make a Diſcourſe of it very palatable, and bring the Speaker off with Reputation and Applauſe. The Mirth and Pleaſure of the unthinking Part of Mankind (which is by far the greateſt Part) is almoſt as blind and mechanical, as the very Motion of a Piece of Clockwork. They are ſtir'd and *delighted*; tho they ſcarce know *with* what, or *for* what Cauſe, or *to* what End and Purpoſe. But if you ſtrike them, they move as other Matter does; and that too, as long as the Impulſe laſts. Eſpecially if the String of Religion be touch'd ſomething roughly, by the hand of an Enemy; wicked Nature, or Prejudice (like a *Chord in Uniſone)* preſently dances to the Motion, and returns the ſame Sound. Men, whoſe Underſtandings are otherwiſe dull enough, can feel, by a ſort of ſympathetick Pleaſure, when *Chriſtianity* is inſulted and abus'd; and perceive a rude Jeſt paſs'd upon the Preachers of the Goſpel, tho they don't know *Satyr* from *Complement*, upon another occaſion. And ſo great is the Power of Prejudice and Averſion, even in ſome who are maſters of more Reaſon and Sagacity than the common Sort, that *manifeſt Sophiſtry* frequently goes down with them for *Demonſtration*; and the moſt *inſipid Things* (when level'd at

at Religion) pass for *Beauties and delicate Turns of Thought*.

Now these are but poor Triumphs; because 'tis not to the Reason and Understanding of Mankind, but to their Passions and Appetites (which are pre-ingag'd against Religion) that all this Talk is address'd. Reason is a nice and scrupulous Thing, and will be pleas'd with nothing but what is solid and just; but Passion and Prejudice swallow every thing that is offer'd, and you can't avoid gratifying them, provided you consult their Bent and Tendency, and do but fall in with them in the Way that they go. But then, as there is some Satisfaction and Glory, in pleasing the *noble rational part* of a Man; so methinks to sooth and flatter the *brutal Part*, should be scorn'd and despis'd. A Man that considers things well, would much sooner take it as a heinous Affront, to be charg'd with saying such fine things as these are; than think it a Credit to him, for other People to say, that he was the Author of them. However, as the Case stands, 'tis no great wonder that so many who set up against *Christianity*, get the Reputation of being Wits. The Price of the Character is not so dear, but we may suppose multitudes able enough to lay it down. Yet it would mortify a thoughtful Man to consider, that he should be beholden to the Vices and Follies of Mankind for a Reputation, and not to Judgment and sober Sense: And that better Judges would very much question his Understanding, upon the score of those very things which procure him the Name of a Wit, amongst People who either can't contradict him, or are so devoted to him by a blind implicit Faith, that they could vouch for the Truth

of what he says, even before he speaks it.

Secondly, It may be farther observ'd, *That this way of assaulting Christianity, is not at all a new thing.* The *modern Deists* may perhaps have improv'd it considerably; however, their Predecessors, in the more early Ages of *Christianity*, manag'd the Controversy much after the same manner. They banter'd the Doctrine of the *Resurrection*, pursu'd it with * Scoffs and Laughter, instead of fair Reasonings against the Credibility of it. They did not think it enough to deny it themselves, but they endeavour'd to render it as infamous to all the World as they could: And therefore loaded it with the opprobrious Names of † *Absurd*, *Abominable*, and *Impossible:* As if a Torrent of hard Words and Reproaches, without any Arguments, had been sufficient to bear down all the Credit of the Doctrine; and persuade those who had believ'd it, to treat it with the same Contempt, that the profess'd Enemies of it did.

I am sensible, that in the last mention'd Passage out of *Origen*, the Criminator *Celsus* brings in some *Christians*, as asperſing the Doctrine of the *Resurrection* in these vile Terms; and makes them talk after this manner, of the grand fundamental Article of their own Religion. But this being so far from all Probability, and only asserted in general Terms, without particular Proof; and besides, the very Notion of a *Resurrection* being (in the same Place) so abominably misrepresented and perverted into quite another Sense, than the *Christians* ever took it in:

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* Μυσήεσον γελώμενον τ' ἀπτῶν. Orig.

† Ἀπόπτυστον ἅμα καὶ ἀδύνατον. Cels. apud Orig. Lib. 5. *Pag.* (mihi) 240.

'Tis

'Tis plain, that this was *Celsus*'s own Calumny; or at least 'twas what other Enemies (as inveterate, and as little conversant in what they oppose, as he was) had vented, to render the Doctrine contemptible amongst Mankind.

Nor were they more sparing of their Invective against that of the *Resurrection* of *Jesus Christ* in particular. And therefore they represented the whole Scene, as mere *Illusion* and *Dream*; and those who believ'd it, as Persons possess'd with a phanatical Fury, or under the Power of some magical Incantation.

The Appearances of *Christ* after his *Resurrection*, they compar'd to those of * *Spectres* and *Apparitions*, which, how much soever believ'd by the Vulgar, were notwithstanding only the Diversion of those, who had the Character of being wise and sensible Men. And so they expos'd the Disciples, who affirm'd they had seen and convers'd with *Jesus Christ*; if not as wilful Lyars and Impostors, yet as weak crazy People, that made a noise of strange Things, which had no existence but in their own Imaginations.

And these are some of the same Things, which our *modern Deists* say now. But Reproaches and precarious Assertions, are (as I said before) of all the Arguments in the World, the least expensive, both to those who oppose, and those who defend a Cause.

Now the *Use* which (I think) we may justly make of so *early* an Opposition to *Christianity*, carried on after this manner; is very conside-

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* Κοινοποιεῖν πρὸς ἕτερα φαντάσματα, καὶ ἄλλους φαντάζεσθαι, τὰ κατ' αὐτὸν Ἰησοῦν, καὶ τοὺς ἐφόντας αὐτὸν, μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν. *Pag.* 98. Ibid.

rable,

ſiderable, and ought not to be paſs'd by without notice. For did the Enemies content themſelves with bare ſcolding and railing, *at that Time of the Day?* Did they go this way to work, when the Religion was ſo *young*, when the main Matter of Fact was *new and freſh in the World*, when it was ſo eaſy to trace Things, and run them up to a Head, by careful and accurate Enquiries? Was this all they thought fit to do ſo near the *very Time*, and (as I may ſay) upon the *very Spot*, when all Mankind were full of the Diſcourſe, and the Thing lay open to every Body's Examination; when the learned *Greek* and the invidious *Jew*, might both have had their fill of ſearching, and the World would have thank'd them for the Diſcovery of the Impoſture? What (I pray) could this be the Effect of, *but only their having nothing elſe to ſay?* For would they have ſpar'd *Chriſtianity*, had it lain at their Mercy? Did they ſhew ſuch a Fondneſs for it by all their unwearied Malice and Calumny, that they would have forborn telling *dangerous Truth*, out of a concern for its Reputation? One ſubſtantial Argument that ſhould fairly have ſhewn, that our Saviour's Miracles and Reſurrection were nothing but mere Juggle, and the Apoſtles a Company of Impoſtors, would have done the Buſineſs. Nay, an Argument that ſhould (upon ſolid and rational Grounds) but have made out a *juſt Suſpicion* to Mankind, that they were Cheats; would have done it to incomparably more Advantage, than all the falſe *Philoſophy*, the bad *Logick*, and the worſe *Rhetorick*, that *Celſus*, *Porphyry*, *Julian*, or any of that Tribe employ'd againſt *Chriſtianity*, ever did, or could poſſibly do. And therefore, I ſay, 'tis one good Confirmation of the

Faith

Faith of a *Christian*, That the worst Enemies, *in those Times when they should and might have said most*, said only that which made it plain to all the World, that they had *nothing to the purpose* to say.

SECT. III.

HAVING premis'd these things, I shall now proceed to observe; That this Argument drawn from the *Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, as 'tis *concise*, and brings the whole Controversy into a very *small Compass*; so it is very *positive* and *decretory*; and will so fully determine it, that there will be no room left for any farther Dispute. To evince this, and at the same time to persuade each of the contending Parties to examine, with the utmost Care, a Doctrine which so nearly concerns them; I shall here enumerate those Consequences, which will affect either the *Christians* or the *Deists*, according as we suppose the *Resurrection of Christ* to be either *true* or *false*. I am willing to put it both ways, that I may proceed in every step of this great Enquiry, in so fair and impartial a Manner, that the Gentlemen of the contrary Opinion may have no just Reason to object any thing of unequal Proceeding, or a voluntary sly Concealment of what may seem to make for the Disadvantage of the *Christian Cause*. I declare, that I know of no danger *Christianity* is in, by any Freedom which can be us'd, consistent with Truth and Justice: If I did, I would abandon the Profession of it. For no *Religion which is Divine*, can ever possibly need *Falshood* and *Deceit* to support it.

False

false Colours, and pious Frauds, may possibly be very useful or needful in the Management of some Religions, that are, or have been in the World; which, without such Helps, would discover themselves too far, to attract the Zeal and Devotion of Mankind any longer. The Poet tells us, that such Services as these were * acceptable to his *Jupiter*; and there would be a Time, when the Doers of them would be † rewarded.

But *Christianity* neither needs or encourages any such Methods, nor would the Author of it think himself serv'd by them. As his Religion is all plain and sincere, so it needs nothing but Truth to defend it. I shall therefore not scruple at any time to make such Concessions, be they what they will, as Justice, Truth, and right Reason require should be made.

SECT. IV.

IF *the Resurrection of Jesus Christ be a Truth: Then it follows,*

First, *With respect to the* Christians;

(1.) That the great Dispute concerning the Divine Authority of the *Christian Religion*, must be decided entirely in favour of them. For if *Christ* rose from the Dead, then he was a Person sent from *God*, to do that Work in the World, which he pretended he came about: Because the Majesty of Heaven would never have

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* Ἀπάλης δικαίας ἐκ ἀποστατεῖ ΘΕΟ'Σ.

† Ψευδῶν δὲ κερδῶν ἔσθ' ὅποι τιμῇ ΘΕΟ'Σ. Æschyl. Vid. Opuscul. Mytholog. D. Gale. *Pag.* 720.

given

given an Impoſtor ſo glorious Credentials, as a *Reſurrection from the Dead*; a Work which nothing but *Omnipotency* could poſſibly accompliſh. For this would have been to have ſet his *own Seal* to the Deluſion, and have made it paſs for credible amongſt Mankind, by the *Authority of Heaven.*

If *Jeſus Chriſt* had a *Divine Miſſion*, then all *his Doctrine is true*, and *his Laws Obligatory to Mankind*, where they are promulg'd and known. For a *Miniſter from Heaven*, who muſt needs be a Perſon of *perfect Sincerity and Truth*, could not poſſibly teach or impoſe any thing on Mankind, but *what ſhould be exactly agreeable to the Mind and Will of Him* that ſent him.

(2.) *All the Promiſes of the Goſpel*, relating to the Enjoyments and Bleſſings of a future Life, *will certainly be fulfill'd to them.* For the ſure and certain Performance of thoſe Promiſes, will be infer'd from the *Sincerity* and *Veracity* of Him who made them: And he being (by the *Hypotheſis*, or what follows from it) a *Perſon ſent from God*; 'tis plain, that whatever he has ſaid, may be *depended upon and truſted to*, as certain to come to paſs.

(3.) From whence it follows, that the *Chriſtians* are not only *perfectly ſecure*, in ſubmitting to the Laws and Inſtitutions of *Jeſus Chriſt*; but they are alſo the *wiſeſt Men in the World* in ſo doing. Becauſe, whatever Inconveniencies an honourable and faithful Diſcharge of their Duty may be attended with at preſent; they are ſure of an abundant Recompence in a *future State*, where deſpis'd or oppreſs'd *Vertue* and *Piety* will be crown'd with all thoſe Rewards, which are now promis'd in the Goſpel. In a word, the *Reſurrection of Chriſt* is a compleat

Secu-

Security to all *good Christians*, for the enjoyment of such Privileges as are by far too great for all our Conceptions in this World, and therefore much more beyond *Description*.

Secondly, *With respect to the* Deists.

(1.) They do not only *lose their Argument and their Cause*, but are in danger also of losing *Eternal Happiness in the next World*. Because, while they persist in their Infidelity, they stand liable to all the Threatnings which the Gospel denounces against the finally impenitent Despisers of it; and which must (upon this *Hypothesis*) as certainly be executed, as the Promises be fulfill'd. And this they ought to take notice of, that Jesus Christ has not been more liberal in his Promises of *inconceivable Happiness* and *Bliss*, to all who sincerely love and obey him; than he has been severe and positive in his threatnings of *extreme Misery*, to those who slight his Authority, and the Method of Salvation he has reveal'd.

I do not determine any thing here concerning the Gospel, whether it be *Divine Truth*, or *mere Imposture*: But this, I say, that since the Threatnings of it are denounc'd in so dreadful and positive a manner as they are, Men ought to take care that they do not venture too far, and should therefore think with themselves, that the Matter we are enquiring into, deserves the most serious Thoughts and Reflections they can possibly bestow upon it.

(2.) Again, if the *Resurrection of Christ* be certain, then in order to free themselves from all this Danger, these Gentlemen will be oblig'd to receive the Doctrines of the Gospel as *Divine Truths*, and submit to the Laws and Injunctions of it; and therefore should set themselves with

all

all the Zeal and Application they can, to throw off all those Prejudices and Aversions, which have hitherto hinder'd them from so doing.

They must leave off all their Quibbling and Disputing, and take whatever they find plainly reveal'd in the Gospel; remembring, *That tho infinite Wisdom and Goodness can never possibly oblige them to believe any thing that is really absurd and contradictory, or do any thing which is unreasonable; yet they may be oblig'd to believe and practise many things, which unconquer'd Prejudice may tell them are absurd and unreasonable, and which they may think to be so, by using themselves to judg of the Ways of God too much by* human Rules and Measures.

These Inferences, I hope, will be allow'd to be just and good, upon the *Hypothesis*, that *the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is a certain Truth.*

SECT. V.

NOW from hence follows this *Corollary*: That since the Danger these Gentlemen are in (upon the *Hypothesis of the Truth of Christ's Resurrection)* is so very great; they must either have very clear and convincing Proofs *to themselves*, that that Doctrine is neither true, nor even *probable and likely* to be true; or else the Peace which they enjoy under an uncertainty about that matter, is not the *Peace of wise Men*. The Reason is, because otherwise their Ease and Quiet have no Foundation that is truly rational, to support them.

The Peace which wise Men enjoy, is a quiet and compos'd Temper of Mind, resulting from mature

mature Thought, and a serious Consideration of Circumstances. When all accounts being carefully ballanc'd, and things duly compar'd on every side, a Man finds nothing that sticks, sufficient to raise a just Scruple, or cause any degree of Pain or Remorse; this is a rational Repose: And whatever Quiet proceeds not from this Cause, deserves no better Name than that of *Mechanical*; as owing its rise either to Ignorance, or Contempt of Danger, or to some Arts and Management of the Body, used to divert the Mind from the Sense of it. But how wretched a Shift is this! Men must be very hard put to it indeed, when things are brought to that pass, that their Ease and Quiet must be the mere Effect of a voluntary Incapacity to judg of the Reasons they have to be uneasy. Methinks a Man who manages himself after this manner, is in no better a Case, than he whom the Power of Wine has thrown into a sound sleep on the Top of a Precipice; who is secure for no other reason, but that he has lost his Senses. 'Tis not difficult for Men, by tampering with the *Machine*, to induce a fatal *Stupor* or *Listlessness* upon their Minds, and so bring themselves into a *pleasing Insensibility* of all things that tend to frighten or disturb them, tho they are the most necessary in the World to be thought of: So a guilty Malefactor, by the Charms of an *Opiate*, forgets the Horrors of an *Execution-Day*, and enjoys all the Pleasures of a Fool's Paradise, till Death comes to awaken him.

But who reckons such a one any other than desperate, in all the false Pleasure he enjoys? Or who thinks it a rational Repose, for a Man in any Circumstance whatsoever, to banish Thought and Fear, and give himself up to Mirth and Diver-

Diverſion, when his Caſe is doubtful, and there is but a Chance for his 'ſcaping ſome fearful Calamity, which may ſurprize him the next Hour?

And I cannot ſee, but that the Gentlemen, who reject the *Chriſtian Revelation*, are very liable to be charg'd with the ſame ſort of Folly (tho in a Caſe of infinitely greater Danger, than any that can happen in the preſent World) unleſs they are able to prove, *to the entire Satisfaction of their own Minds*, That there is no Truth in this *Hiſtory of the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt*: For if it be true, they know what follows, if they perſiſt in their Infidelity to the laſt. And if they have Reaſons to prove it not true, and ſuch as will bear Examination; 'tis matter of ſome wonder they were never fairly propos'd, and made out: Becauſe this might have been done with much leſs offence to the World, and diſparagement to themſelves, than what thoſe bad Methods they have made uſe of, inſtead of Argument, have been the juſt Occaſions of. If they have affronted the Religion of their Country, with *Impunity*; they might have reaſon'd ſoberly (like Men deſirous of Truth, and willing to be rightly inform'd) with as little danger. Since therefore the Subject is of ſo much Importance; ſince there have been ſo many Occaſions and Opportunities for arguing in the beſt manner upon it; ſince modeſt and fair Reaſonings would have been leſs obnoxious to Cenſure, and far more advantageous, with reſpect to the Conviction of others, than Banter and Raillery can ever be ſuppos'd to be: 'tis rational for any Man to conclude, *That they have no ſuch Reaſons, by which they can, with an entire Satisfaction, aſ-*

ſure themſelves, that the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt *is not true.* And this *Concluſion*, which now is highly rational, I hope to make undoubtedly certain, by thoſe Reaſons which I ſhall hereafter propoſe, in order to ſhew, that the Doctrine of the *Reſurrection*, is actually true.

But farther, I ſay, that if this *Doctrine* be but ever ſo little probable, theſe Gentlemen cannot be allow'd a rational Eaſe and Repoſe in that Caſe neither. For ſo far forth as this is probable, it is alſo probable, *That they are obnoxious to all the Puniſhments threatned to Unbelievers in the Goſpel.*

And is a bare probability of ſuch Danger to be born with any eaſe, by Men who are truly awake? Suppoſe a Man ſo far expos'd, that not only his Liberty and Fortune, but his very Life depended upon his Concealment: Do you think that ſuch a Perſon would lie free from Pain, in a Place where it ſhould be ſaid to him, *Here you may be ſecure, but yet 'tis probable you may be taken?* Would not this wretched likelihood of a Diſcovery, produce anxious Thoughts in the Breaſts of any of theſe Gentlemen themſelves, if this were their own Caſe? Would it not excite Fears and Cares, and paſſionate Deſires after a better and ſafer Retreat? Nothing could be ſo agreeable to a Perſon in ſuch a Circumſtance, as a *Certainty of eſcaping.* And is Uncertainty a tolerable thing, when *Everlaſting Life and Felicity lie at ſtake?* Let but theſe Gentlemen intermit their Mirth and gay Thoughts for a few Moments, while they conſider how hard a Task they will have to prove, *That it is not at all probable, that the Hiſtory of* Chriſt's Reſurrection *is true.* The Diſſi-

Difficulty is ſuch, that I dare venture to engage, whoever promiſes to go through with it, is not as good as his Word; and beſides, runs into ſome manifeſt *Paralogiſm*, which his own common Notions and Opinions, in other matters, ſhall fairly convict him of.

I ſhall not prevent my ſelf, by alledging any thing here, to evince the Probability of this *Doctrine*, which may afterwards be made uſe of (to much better purpoſe) to infer the certain Truth of it. 'Tis ſufficient to have put theſe Gentlemen in mind of the Work incumbent on them; to free themſelves from the Imputation, of paſſing their Days here in the World in a blind mechanical Tranquillity. If they think that the ſame Argument I have us'd againſt *them*, may be as fairly turn'd againſt the *Chriſtians*, and ſhould therefore reaſon after this manner, *That if the* Reſurrection of Chriſt *ſhould not be true, the* Chriſtians *would be as much in Danger, as They ſhould be if it were true; and conſequently, can no more enjoy the Peace of wiſe Men, whilſt under an uncertainty about it, than they can be ſuppos'd to do in the other Caſe:*

I anſwer; Firſt, We ſhall ſee by the Sequel of this Diſcourſe, whether or no the *Chriſtians* have ſuch Proofs for the Truth of this *Doctrine*, as are ſufficient to make it ſtrictly juſt and rational for *them* to believe it. For if they have, then they may in the mean time enjoy the *Peace of wiſe Men*.

Secondly, I ſhall by and by conſider, in a very particular manner, that Danger which theſe Gentlemen object to us, and bid us beware of, in caſe we are deceiv'd in the matter of *Chriſt's Reſurrection*. And if it be ſo, that they are fully determin'd to draw no poſitive Conclu-

ſions, but where they have plain and evident Principles to infer them from; I am in ſome hopes to preſent them with an Occaſion of putting ſo good a Reſolution in practice, by deſpiſing this Objection for the time to come; as having no Foundations but what are perfectly arbitrary and precarious; and (to ſay all at once) being nothing but mere *Words* and *Sound*, without any *Force* or *Weight*.

We have hitherto conſider'd the Conſequences of the ſuppos'd Truth or Probability of the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt:

I ſhall now *put the Caſe the other way*, and ſee what will follow, as fairly and truly, upon *that Suppoſition alſo*.

SECT. VI.

IF *the* Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt *be not a Truth: Then it follows*,

Firſt, That the *whole Cauſe of Chriſtianity* is to be given up; as that which neither *deſerves*, nor is *capable* of any farther Defence.

For if that *Doctrine* (which is the Foundation on which all depends) be *falſe* and *deluſory*, all the reſt can be but Deluſion; and ſo may be parted with, without any Scruple or Difficulty at all. And therefore,

Secondly, As the *Deiſts* have nothing to fear from the Threatnings, ſo neither have the *Chriſtians* any thing to hope from the Promiſes of the Goſpel: Becauſe neither Promiſes nor Threatnings can (in this Caſe) ſignify any thing; the whole Contexture being (by the *Hypotheſis*) a mere Impoſture.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Upon the present *Hypothesis*, it must be granted likewise, *That those Persons who reject the Christian Revelation, are much wiser and happier, in many respects, than those who embrace it.*

To speak of things according to the Rules of strict and impartial Reason; Wisdom and Happiness are not to be measur'd by *present Circumstances and Appearances*, but by the *last Issues or Results* of Things.

That is best, which ends best: He is the most prudent and happy Person, that provides the most durable Felicity for himself.

Now if the *Resurrection of Christ* were certainly true, and the Gospel (consequently) a *Divine Revelation*, whose Promises are all sure to be fulfill'd; then in whatever Circumstances the *Christians* are suppos'd to be in the present World, they would yet be the Wisest and Happiest of all Men. The Happiest, because they would be in the way of receiving all those glorious Rewards, which sincere Faith and Obedience are entitl'd to in a future State: And the Wisest, because it would be an infinitely more just and rational Course, to endure some present Inconveniences, and be oblig'd to the most laborious Duties, upon such a Prospect hereafter; than to hazard the Loss of a never-ending Felicity, for the sake of a short-liv'd Pleasure, or some little Freedom here in the World.

But if the *Doctrine* of the *Resurrection of Christ*, and the *Religion* founded thereon, be nothing but mere Cheat and Imposture; and by consequence there be no Hopes nor Prospect of that transcendent Bliss in the next World, which the *Christians* make use of, to encourage themselves to a chearful Submission to all the Laws

of the *Dispensation* they are under: Then, I think, it is evident, that (in general) they have a much harder Fate of it, than the Gentlemen on the other side; who by seeing through the Imposture, and wisely avoiding being caught by it, do by that means secure their Repose, and make themselves perfectly easy, during the short Period of Human Life.

For the Proof of this, let us consider;

SECT. VII.

First, THE *Miseries and Sufferings of all sorts, attending the Profession of* Christianity *in the World.*

Our Saviour *Jesus Christ* (who deluded no Man by little Artifices into the Profession of his *Religion*) fairly told his Disciples at first, what they were to expect upon that account. He let them know in very plain and express Terms, that a sincere and stedfast Adherence to him, would cost them very dear, by drawing the Hatred and Malice of the whole World upon them. This we find in several places up and down in the *Gospels*. And the Apostles afterwards continu'd to inculcate the same thing in all their Sermons and Writings; declaring, there was no worldly Gain or Reputation to be expected from the Profession and Practice of *Christianity*; but so far the contrary, *That all those who would live Godly in* Christ Jesus, *must suffer Persecution.* And we find accordingly, that these Predictions have been abundantly fulfill'd; tho the fulfilling of them has been as terrible, as it has been punctual and exact. Whatever could

could be accomplish'd by a Confederacy of such Passions, which (when they prevail) spread Confusion and Plagues amongst Mankind, and make the Earth a Picture of Hell; has been done against the Disciples of *Christ*. No sooner was *Christianity* planted, but the jealous World took the Alarm; storm'd at the Encroachment, and set to the rooting of it out. All sorts of Men put their Hands to the Work, and made it their Business to render this Profession infamous and wretched to the last Degree. The Men of *Power and Grandeur* oppos'd it with open *Force and Violence*. The Men of *Wit and Learning* assaulted it in their own Way: The *Philosophers*, by crafty and subtle Disputations: The *Orators*, by Harangues full of malicious Eloquence: The wise *Politicians* and *States-men*, by cruel and severe Decrees. So that what by one way and the other, what between the Persecutions of the *Sword* and the *Tongue*; it has been the most deplorable Case in the World for a Man to be a *Christian*. Indeed the *latter* of these two Persecutions, tho very grievous and troublesom in it self, was yet never capable of producing such frightful Effects as the *former*. *Sarcasm and Reproach* are very great Trials of Mens Patience and Resolution; but not near so great as *Tortures and Executions*. And here I may safely say, that Human Invention has scarce ever been so *luxuriant* in any one Instance, as in contriving ways to shed *Christian Blood*. Nor would any Art be sufficient to paint out Images of so much Horror, in Colours that should bear any tolerable Proportion to the Life. 'Tis enough, and instead of all Descriptions, to say, *they suffer'd*. But Oh! With what Charms of Meekness and good

Temper, with what admirable Patience and Composedness of Mind? They softned the Rage of their most savage Persecutors by Prayers and Forgiveness: They rejoic'd in *Him for whose Name* they endur'd all, and concluded all their Triumphs in this World, with triumphing over Death it self.

All these things are so well known to be true, that there is no need of Authorities to support what I say. A good part of the History of 17 *Centuries*, is sufficient proof for it, and at hand for every one to consult.

However, it may not be amiss (for the sake of those, whose Faith goes no farther than a *Roman* or *Greek* Writer) to mention * *one*, who has spoke freely enough on this Subject, and I am sure can never be suspected of any thing of Partiality in favour of the *Christians*. 'Tis true, this Author (who, tho an excellent *Historian*, plainly enough shews himself to have been a Man of *Spleen and Passion)* represents the *Christians* as a wicked and flagitious sort of People. But the Account he has given (in another † *part* of his Writings) concerning the *Jews*, and their Journy out of *Egypt*, under the Conduct of *Moses*; is, I think, a sufficient proof, that his Word may well be question'd, as to what he here reports of the *Christians*.

Now this being the true State of their Case, one may easily conclude, that no Men endow-

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* *Ergo abolendo Rumori, NERO subdidit reos, & quæ sitissimis pœnis affecit, quos per flagitia invisos Vulgus CHRISTIANOS appellabat.—Et pereuntibus addita Ludibria, ut ferarum tergis contecti, laniatu Canum interirent, aut Crucibus affixi, aut flammandi: atque ubi defecisset dies, in usum Nocturni Luminis urerentur.* Tacit. Annal. Lib. 15.

† *Tacit.* Histor. Lib. 5.

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ed with *common Sense and Prudence*, or those Principles of *Self-love and Preservation* which Nature has put into all other Creatures, would ever render themselves obnoxious to such Miseries as they have done, were it not upon the Prospect of a future Recompence.

But where is this Reward, if the Doctrine of *Christ's Resurrection* be not true? 'Tis this Doctrine which proves the Truth of the Gospel, and secures the Performance of the Promises made therein. So that if *this* be a Delusion, all is wrong; and the splendid Descriptions of a future Happiness given there, to encourage Mankind to Patience and Constancy in Sufferings, are but Jest and Cheat, or mere enthusiastical Amusement. The Heaven of the *Christians*, is every whit as imaginary, as that of the *Poets*; and on both sides no more than *conceited Elysian Shades and Groves*, if we are out in this Article of our *Christian Faith*. How sad a disappointment then must those Persons meet with, who have undergone such Calamities in this World, for the sake of an Imposture; and been led by the hopes of mere fancy'd Bliss, to make themselves the most wretched of all Men?

To expect Salvation from one who is not a Saviour, and depend upon Rewards that shall never be bestow'd! To pass the few Moments of Life in Pain and Sorrow, rejoicing in hope of a bright Scene of Glory, to make up for all in the next World; and then to find all vanish, and their best Expectations frustrated for ever! Who are deplorably unhappy, if these Persons are not? And with what reason did St. *Paul* (a Writer whom the *Christians* believe to be *divinely Inspir'd*) conclude, *That if in this Life only they have Hope in* Christ, *they are of all Men the most miserable?*

'Tis

'Tis true, the Scene is chang'd, and *Christianity* is not now a-days that persecuted thing it formerly was, being under the Protection and Encouragement of the Secular Powers. But what then? 'Tis the same Religion still, and there's the same Enmity in the World against it; and this Enmity would produce the very same Effects, if *He who stills the raging Sea, and bridles the Fury and Madness of the People*, did not set Bounds to it, by his wise all-governing Providence. Farther, Those who believe the Gospel, are bound (by a general Law) to expect and prepare for Sufferings: Nor is any Man (whatever he pretends) a real Disciple of *Christ Jesus*, till he has in some measure learnt that great Lesson, of *denying himself, taking up his Cross and following him*, through what rugged or dangerous Way soever he shall be led.

And therefore, if we take all this into the Account, I cannot see but the Argument may very well be press'd in the general; tho the *Christians* sometimes live in Sunshine, and enjoy the Smiles of the World.

SECT. VIII.

Secondly, AS the *Christians*, by owning the Divine Authority of the Gospel, are *thus expos'd*, so they are bound also *to perform all the Duties, and submit to all the Discipline*, which the Gospel enjoins: Whereas the *Deists* (by their very Principles) escape all this Toil and Labour, and keep themselves free from any sort of Impositions, that would clog and confine them in the present World.

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As much Wisdom and true Reason as there is in the *Christian Institution*, which would effectually recommend it to all that should examine it with *unprejudic'd* Judgment and Care; yet 'tis no wonder that it appears so hard and severe to the greatest part of the World, who look superficially into it, and never consider whither its grand Design and Tendency is.

The Laws of *Christ Jesus* command a strict Government of our Thoughts and Passions, as well as of our outward Actions and Behaviour. Those secret Motions of our Souls, which are beyond the Cognizance of any earthly Tribunal, are curiously inspected, and impartially censur'd here. To contrive Sin, is Sin, in the Sense of the Gospel, as well as to execute it. Covetous Desires are Injustice; and revengeful Thoughts, a Degree of Murder, Calumny and Reproach; Backbiting and Slander are rank'd amongst the blackest Works of the Flesh. To wound the good Name of our Neighbour, is as great an Injury, as by Force or Fraud to deprive him of his Right. To deny our Selves, and that in very difficult instances, is a fundamental Duty, without the Practice of which, no Man can be admitted into the Number of *Christ's Followers*. And what a Task is it, to silence clamorous Passions, and make Flesh and Blood truly quiet after Injuries and Affronts? How hard is it to baulk the Appetite of Revenge, when 'tis in our Power to satisfy it; to do Good for Evil; and with relenting Bowels of Charity, embrace the Object which Nature shuns and starts at? But more than this, *Christianity* requires a great and generous Temper of Soul, which is directly contrary to all the Principles of that base and stingy Self-love, which

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we are so prone to indulge. By the Gospel-Laws, our Thoughts and Cares are not to be centred solely in our Selves; but a Share of both to be allow'd to our Neighbour, whom we are oblig'd to *love as our Selves*; and therefore to rejoice in his Good, to consult and promote his Interest; and help either to deliver him from his Burdens, or put our own Shoulders to the bearing of them.

Nor is it less to live above the present World, as the Gospel obliges us, and to be equally unshaken by the Terrors and Allurements of it: To stand intrepid in the midst of Dangers, and despise the loss of all things, even the most near and dear to us; when Fidelity to our Lord, and a good Conscience, can't be preserv'd together with the Enjoyment of them. On the other hand, to guard our Affections from the pernicious Influences of those enticing Objects that surround us, and pass through all the Scenes of worldly Pomp and Pleasure here presented to our View, with the Unconcernedness of Strangers and Pilgrims, whose Desires are towards another Country. In short, how sublime a thing is it, to live by Faith, and not by Sense? To depend upon a Promise of things unseen, under a thousand Discouragements and Temptations to Infidelity? To submit our Understandings with a becoming Humility, to Mysteries that are intirely above them; our Wills to the Divine Pleasure and Disposal; and make it our Delight to do, and to be in all Cases, just what infinite Wisdom shall think fit to determine.

And tho there's no Man that comes up to so strict an Observance of these Evangelical Precepts, as he ought to do; yet every Man is oblig'd

oblig'd (under the ſevereſt Penalties) to do his utmoſt; and with an undiſſembled Zeal and Reſolution, to preſs towards Perfection, as far as the unavoidable Infirmities of Human Nature will permit. Not that Men are hereby oblig'd to endeavour to diveſt themſelves of the Paſſions and Inclinations of Human Nature; or to run into a ſullen Contempt of the uſeful and innocent Enjoyments of Life; affecting ſuch Severities, as would render Religion frightful to Mankind: But to make all their Pleaſures, for Kind and Degree, ſuch as the Rules of the Goſpel allow of; to chuſe Objects with religious Judgment and Prudence, and give no more looſe to the Paſſions when employ'd about them, *than what is truly conſiſtent with the great End of all earthly Comforts; which is only to refreſh us, while we are in purſuit of better.*

SECT. IX.

BUT now as all theſe ſublime abſtracted Duties are plainly calculated for, and adapted to, the great End of preparing us for a future Happineſs, ſuch as the Goſpel reveals; ſo if the Goſpel be an Impoſture, and all the Rewards it promiſes come to nothing, then theſe Duties themſelves (loſing their main End and Uſe) become burdenſom Impoſitions on Mankind.

'Tis true indeed, the *Chriſtian Religion* (be it a Truth or a Fiction) is ſo contriv'd, as to be in all reſpects admirably ſerviceable to the Ends and Purpoſes of a temporal Felicity. For thoſe Principles of generous Love and Charity, that

that ſuperiour Temper of Mind, that devout and awful Regard to God, and a future Life, which it tends to inſpire Mankind withal; theſe are contrary, in the higheſt degree, to all thoſe mean and baſe Affections, which are the ſole Diſturbers of the Peace and good Order of the World. If Pride and Envy, if Covetouſneſs and Ambition, if Malice and Revenge, if Falſhood and Deceit; if ſuch Paſſions as theſe are the true Cauſes of all thoſe Calamities and Miſfortunes which Men make ſuch heavy Complaints of: then the Goſpel, which ſtrikes ſo directly at all theſe, even in Mens Hearts and Tempers, as well as Converſation and outward Behaviour, does undoubtedly lay the ſureſt Foundations poſſible for a quiet and comfortable Life in the preſent World.

Add to this: *That the Goſpel of* Chriſt *ſtrengthens the Obligations of the Law of Nature.*

It furniſhes Men with far nobler Motives, to perform all the Duties of that Law; and threatens ſeverer Puniſhments, for the Breach of it: and thus it highly conduces to the Welfare of Society and Government, and diſpoſes Men of all Ranks and Stations, to be duly obſervant of, and beneficial to one another.

But when all is ſaid and done, what ſhall we ſay to thoſe ſublime and retir'd Duties, of abſolute Reſignation to the Divine Will, of crucifying the Fleſh, and living by Faith; if *Chriſtianity* be a Cheat, and there be no future State of Rewards? This is the Point I am enquiring into. Of what Significancy would theſe be, upon the preſent *Hypotheſis?* I do not think a Man is the leſs qualify'd for publick Buſineſs and Employment, or for the private Offices of Life, by being intimately converſant in theſe Duties.

Duties. But what I insist on, is, That *if* Christianity *be an* Imposture, *the Advantage redounding from these Duties, will not answer the Cost and Pains Men must be at, before they acquire an Habit of performing them, in that manner, which the Gospel obliges the* Christians *to.* For there must be a great deal of Application, Care and Watchfulness, and a Man must make it the commanding Business of his Life, or he will be able to do but very little good at it. And when all is done, 'tis certain, it is what is absolutely unnecessary with respect to any mere temporal Felicity or Advantage.

An exact and punctual discharge of Moral Duties, will be sufficient to preserve all Societies in a happy and flourishing Estate; and to establish a Man's own private Peace and Repose in the World. If you suppose the Gospel to be true, and such a sort of Happiness as it reveals, to be certain hereafter; then indeed all *this Discipline* of *Christianity*, presently becomes necessary in the highest Degree; and at the same time, appears to be the most wise and excellent Contrivance, that can possibly be imagin'd. Upon the *Supposition of a glorious Life in the World to come*, 'tis plain, why Faith and Mortification and Self-denial, should be so strictly enjoin'd in the present Life; namely, because by the Practice of these Duties, Mens Minds are disingag'd from the base and sordid Objects of this World, and brought to a Relish suitable to the Nature of the heavenly State, where all their Joys and Delights will be pure, and no Objects will ever be presented to entertain them, but what are truly noble and sublime. But if you make the Gospel a vile Cheat and a Fiction, and take away the Hopes of that blessed

Life,

Life, to prepare Men for which, these inward and abstracted Duties of *Christianity* are (in their very Nature) plainly calculated; then they are all of them apparently useless and insignificant, as to any valuable End or Purpose: And therefore (being so very difficult to perform) they are a heavy Load, and a mighty Disadvantage on the side of those Persons, who believe themselves bound to live in the constant Practice of them. Nor is this at all inconsistent with what I asserted before, *viz. That* Christianity *(whether true or false) does exceedingly conduce to the temporal Welfare and Felicity of Mankind.* For the Principles which this Religion puts into Men, may be, and ('tis plain) actually are such as tend to make all the World easy and secure: and yet at the same time, the Discipline and the Duties of it, may be very hard upon those, who have given themselves up to the Practice thereof.

To conclude then: Who are the *happy Men*, (upon the present *Hypothesis)* Those who live free from the severe Labours and Toils of a multitude of very costly Duties, giving their *Passions and Appetites* all the Scope that the *Law of Nature will fairly allow*; or those who are thus bridled and confin'd, and spend precious Time in the Duties of a rigorous *Service*, which will never be of any Advantage to them? Surely Ease and Freedom, in conjunction with Safety, are enough to make Mens Lives truly happy. And (upon the present *Hypothesis)* these Gentlemen are as secure, as they are free; provided they do but keep within the Bounds, prescrib'd by the eternal Law of Nature and Reason. Because, how much soever they transgress the Rules of the Gospel, yet they have

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no danger to apprehend upon that ſcore; ſince the Authority of all the Goſpel-Laws, vaniſhes with the Doctrine of *Chriſt's Reſurrection.*

So that it is paſt all doubt, the *Deiſts* have by much the Advantage, of thoſe that believe the Goſpel, with reſpect to the preſent World; if it be ſo, that the latter lie under a Deluſion, as to this great Article of their Faith.

SECT. X.

I Hope what I have advanc'd here, will not be miſunderſtood; and that no Man will think, I am for throwing off all Regard to the *Laws of Nature* in the preſent Life, upon the Suppoſition, that we have no Rewards to expect hereafter: *That Men may be as extravagant and licentious as they pleaſe, and live like Beaſts while they are here; if all views of future Happineſs and Immortality be taken away.*

The very Thoughts of this ſtrike a Man with Horror; and no *Chriſtian* (to be ſure) will ever entertain, much leſs ſtand by ſuch a ſort of Notion.

For my own part, I declare, I am far from imagining, *That our Obligations or Encouragement to any of the common Duties of Morality and Natural Religion, would, upon this Suppoſition, be either weakned or taken away.* For, *Firſt*, 'Tis in it ſelf eternally fit and reaſonable, that we ſhould own the Sovereign Author of our Being, and thank him for the innumerable Benefits we receive in the preſent Life, even without Expectations of future Rewards from him. We owe him Praiſe and Acknowledgment for the Good we actually receive at his hands; and a Proſpect or no Proſpect of more Mercies behind, has nothing to do with our thank-

ful Returns for those that are present. 'Tis true, if we have a View of more Blessings coming to us, we may be more chearful and enlarg'd in our Thanksgivings to so kind a Benefactor. But however, by receiving from him, we become infinitely indebted to him; and therefore to praise him for what we have, is our indispensible Duty. These Duties therefore, which are founded upon God's *Creation*, and Preservation of us, and providential Disposal of the Blessings of the present Life, are of a sure and lasting Obligation; and while Human Nature continues, they must needs be of Force. And the taking away the Hope of a future Reward, can no more take off our Obligations to the Practice of these, than the having no Prospect of a second or third Mercy, can discharge us from the Duty of being thankful for a first, which we now actually enjoy.

And then, *Secondly*, as for the Practice of moral Vertues; a Man's own temporal Felicity, and the Well-being of Human Society, do necessarily require a nice and strict Observance of these. For example; *Temperance* is absolutely necessary, both to our longer Enjoyment of the Comforts of the World, and to our sweeter and more exquisite Relish of them. Without *Prudence and Discretion* in the Management of the Affairs of Life, we can neither secure our selves in the Possession of any Good we enjoy, nor make the best of it, to improve it as Opportunity shall offer, for a farther increase of our Happiness here: In a word, without this, we can neither avoid Dangers, live free from Abuses and Impositions, nor with any tolerable Reputation amongst Men. To be *affable and courteous* in our Deportment towards others, is the way to gain an universal Affection and Esteem, and to engage Men to be ready to do us any good

Offices

Offices that lie in their Power, when we may have an urgent Occasion for them. To be *just and righteous in our Dealings with all Men*, is the way to be free from Injuries and Assaults, and never to make any of our Fellow-Creatures our Enemies: And consequently, there's no living safely and quietly in the World without it: *Since there's no Man whatsoever, so mean and little, but if provok'd by bad and unjust Usage, may, some time or other, have it in his Power to give very costly and dangerous Proofs of his Resentments.* And so to have *due Reverence, and a loyal Regard for our Superiors*, is what even good Breeding, Honour, Interest, and Self-preservation, will oblige us to. We can't transgress due Bounds here, without apparent Hazards; and to be good Subjects (if there were no other Reasons for being so) is the directest way, either to make or mend our Fortunes in the World. And the same Principles will engage us, not only to be quiet and faithful, but also useful and industrious Members of the Communities in which we live; zealous to promote their Good, and careful to prevent all Mischief that threatens them, as far as we can. *For our own private Interests and those of the Publick, are very closely link'd together*; and when the whole Body suffers, 'tis much if each Member has not its share in the common Calamity. 'Tis true, that Men who have dar'd to be guilty of such unnatural Baseness and Treachery, as to intrigue with Enemies, and sacrifice the Interests of the Publick to them, may have sometimes come off without their deserv'd Punishment. But this rarely happens: And such Crimes are so hateful both to God and to Mankind in general, and even to those who can be glad to make use of them to serve their own Turn; that they most commonly come home, either sooner or la-

ter, with ſufficient Vengeance to the Committers of them. Divine Providence, which diſpoſes all Men in the World, where they ſhould be uſeful and ſerviceable in their Places, rarely fails to find ſuch out; and *the very Tempters to the Treaſon, often become the Diſpenſers of a juſt Puniſhment to the Traitors.*

So that without any Proſpect of future Rewards, here are ſtrong and undeniable Obligations to the Practice of all theſe moral Duties. As long as the preſent State of the World laſts, and Men live together in Communities, there will be urgent Reaſons why ſuch Rules ſhould be carefully obſerv'd, both in their Management of themſelves, and their Deportment towards one another.

SECT. XI.

THUS we have ſeen, what Circumſtances, both of Duty and Danger, the *Chriſtians* are plac'd under in the preſent World, in conſequence of their Adherence to the Religion taught by *Chriſt Jeſus.*

I ſhall now make two or three general Reflections, upon what has been diſcours'd under this Head, concerning the Nature of the Chriſtian Religion.

Firſt, 'Tis plain, that this Inſtitution is in itſelf admirably well adapted to the Deſign of rectifying all the Diſorders of Human Nature, and the improving it with all ſuch Vertues and Qualifications as are neceſſary (in the very Nature of the thing) to render it truly beautiful and excellent. Nor would I be underſtood here, to ſpeak only of what the *Chriſtian Religion* it ſelf makes to be Vertue or Vice; but of that, which the common Senſe and Reaſon of Mankind pronounces

nounces to be so, abstracting from all Revelation or positive Law, either to approve or condemn it as such.

SECT. XII.

Secondly, THAT it will appear to every Man, who considers it impartially, to have a direct Tendency to fit and qualify us for a future blessed State; *Such a one, as we our selves, if we think any thing worthily of God, shall judg it the most consonant to his Perfections, to prepare for reasonable Creatures, whom he delights to make happy:* And that this is the great Drift and Scope of all the Gospel-Discipline and Precepts, how useful soever they are otherwise, to promote a temporal Felicity. And tho this may be infer'd easily enough, from that short Account before given, of the Nature of the *Christian Institution*; yet I think it worth while to illustrate it a little particularly, by a brief *Rationale* of the three principal Duties enjoin'd therein.

SECT. XIII.

AND, *First* of all, as to a *Life of Faith*. If it be so, that we are design'd for another State hereafter, so very different from that we are now in, and where we shall be dispos'd of for ever; then how fit and reasonable is it, that we should accustom our selves to serious Thoughts of it before-hand? That our Minds should be thorowly convinc'd in general, of the certain

Truth and Reality of ſuch a State; and particularly, of the glorious and happy Circumſtances, which righteous and holy Perſons are plac'd in there? *For ſuch a Conviction of the Mind is the moſt natural way to ſet all other good Principles at work; and thereby to bring us to ſuch a ſort of Temper and Converſation, as may be in ſome meaſure conformable to the Manner of Life we ſhall live in that World.*

The Underſtanding muſt always be perſuaded, before we can proceed to any juſt and regular Action: And therefore, whether the Goſpel-Revelation be true or no, that Doctrine of the *Chriſtians* is certainly true; That Obedience and good Works are the certain Corollaries of a ſound and true Faith.

Beſides, a Habit of ſerious believing Meditation, is the propereſt means that can be, to make the future State familiar to us, and ſo to wear off the frightful gloomy Apprehenſions, of paſſing into a World wholly unknown. And is not this infinitely better, than taking a Leap in the Dark (with our modern Unbelievers) or going off the Stage in a Fog of Doubts, whether Annihilation, or ſome new and ſtrange Mode of Being, will not be the very next Step to dying here? I do not ſay, but *Chriſtians*, as well as other Men, have, and may die under Doubts and Fears. For ſuppoſing that the Goſpel is a Divine Revelation; yet it is not preſently neceſſary, that all thoſe who believe it, ſhould be as different from other People in their Dying, as the Precepts of it, if ſtrictly obſerv'd, would make them to be in their Living. But what I ſay, is, that if the Goſpel be a Divine Revelation, we have then a ſure Proviſion made for Dying ſafely, and a ſufficient Antidote too againſt Dying uncomfortably. And if matters ever

happen

happen otherwise with a sincere *Christian* (as for many Reasons, both natural and moral, it may be, by the Sufferance of Divine Providence) yet there is enough in the Promises of the Gospel, to answer for all that, and secure a Man, that he shall be no loser by it in the World to come.

SECT. XIV.

Secondly, IT cannot be imagin'd, that in a State where God designs to make Men perfectly happy, *They shall ever be taken up in mean and pitiful Conversations with things of so vile and unsatisfying a Nature, as they are employ'd about here in this World.* And therefore, that Human Nature (when put into the Possession of such a Felicity) shall not retain any of those base ignoble Passions, which tend so much to the Disturbance of a happy Life both in Publick and Private; and set those who are Slaves to them, upon a level with the Beasts themselves. If we can find any Reasons to persuade our selves, that the Author of our Beings will make us happy in another Life; we may be satisfy'd that he will never do it in so sordid and inferior a way, as *such Objects and such irregular Affections* would make it to be.

How reasonable a Duty then is *Mortification?* What is this but curbing the Extravagancy, and altering the Bent of sinful Dispositions? And is it not the right way to begin now; since our Inclinations must be so refin'd, and our way of Converse and Fruition so chang'd hereafter? Let us but think in what manner we shall live Above! Substantial Truth will be the Repast of our Minds, and every Act of Love and Desire bestow'd on

ſuch things, as will be *worth the Attention of a reaſonable Soul, and fill it with a laſting Satisfaction.* But then our Tempers muſt be fitted and proportion'd to this before-hand. The Songs of Angels would be but unpleaſant Muſick, to a Man that never lov'd or thought of God in this Life. That quick and chearful Diſpatch of Duty, that ready Obedience to the Divine Commands, which muſt be the great Delight of all the heavenly Inhabitants; how ſhocking and ungrateful would this be to the Humour of a vicious Perſon, *who had always made his own Will his Law, and never known any ſort of Pleaſure, ſuperior to that of gratifying his Luſts?* To promote this Thought a little; let us but conſider, *How ſtrangely uncouth and diſagreeable ſome particular Converſations and Modes of living here in the World are to Men, whoſe Intereſts, Tempers, Educations or Endowments, have given them quite another turn, and diſpos'd them the contrary way.* Nay, tho ſuch Methods of Living are in reality ever ſo much better than others are, yet they are infinitely worſe to thoſe Perſons who have been always us'd to manage themſelves after a different manner.

All the Learning and good Manners, the genteel Cuſtoms and noble Exerciſes of the moſt polite Nation upon Earth, would afford no Entertainment to a wild unhewn Savage, brought out of the Herd by mere Force, and pining with Deſire to be there again. Nor would a Sinner, unprepar'd by the Grace of the Goſpel, have more pleaſing Senſations, *were he to be ſet down with all his irregular Paſſions and Diſpoſitions, in that bright and holy Aſſembly above.* Every thing would be out of his Sphere, and quite beſide his Taſte and Reliſh. He would be ſick of thoſe Divine Pleaſures, and tormented with not knowing how to behave, and where to beſtow himſelf.

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And therefore, ſince we cannot ſuppoſe, that God will ever bring us to ſuch a Place as Heaven, to make us uneaſy and miſerable there; how juſt and fit is it that we ſhould now mortify all thoſe fleſhly Affections, which are ſo incompatible with it, and cannot (in the very nature of the thing) every be carry'd thither along with us?

SECT. XV.

AND, Thirdly, *The Exerciſe of that univerſal Love and Charity*, which the Goſpel obliges us to, has likewiſe a direct Tendency to the great End we are ſpeaking of: Becauſe this naturally tends to carry off all that Sourneſs and Malignity of Temper, that baſe and ſelfiſh Diſpoſition, which is ſo contrary to the heavenly State. By the Practice of theſe Vertues our Souls are enlarg'd, and our Diſpoſitions render'd ſweet and benign. We become more like to God our heavenly Father, *whoſe Mercy and Goodneſs are over all his Works.* We are conform'd more to the Spirit and Genius of that World, *where we ſhall be united by the ſtricteſt Bonds of Love, to all that ſhare with us in the ſame Felicity.* For whatever evil Affections reign in our Breaſts, and break forth amongſt us, to the Diſturbance of Peace and brotherly Love, and our very great Eſtrangement from one another in this World; 'tis certain, we ſhall live together in a far better Underſtanding in the next. There all Jealouſy and Suſpicion, Envy and Emulation, Wrath and Contention, will ceaſe for ever. 'Twill be the delightful Work of all that come thither, to rejoice in God, and one another's Happineſs; and conſpire together in the

the most perfect manner, to obey and glorify Him. And what then, should any thing of a base and sordid, or a sour invidious Temper do in such a State, and amongst such Company? And how should we ever be freed from the prevalence of such Principles and Habits, as plainly tend to render us uncapable of this blessed Life; but by being train'd up under the *Gospel-Discipline, which does both enjoin and teach us, how to subdue and get rid of them?*

SECT. XVI.

Thirdly, FROM what has been discours'd of the Nature of the *Christian Religion*, arises *a very plain and easy Account of the Origin of* Deism.

All that the incredulous People say, and all that they do, by way of Opposition to the *Christian Religion*, will follow so naturally from one simple Principle (which no body can make a difficulty of allowing) that one would almost be tempted to conclude, without any further Inquiry, *that this must be the true and genuine Cause of all.* For only suppose a Person to go so far, as to make such a Conclusion as this with himself:

I will endure no Curb nor Restraint upon me, in the Prosecution of my Design of being happy in this World; but whatever I shall at any time believe to make for my Repose, or the Entertainment of my Passions (by what Names soever other People may call it, whether allowable or forbidden) I will endeavour to gratify my self with the Enjoyment of it, to the utmost of my Power.

Now all the Phenomena of *Deism* will be solv'd by this, without any more ado. For from hence it pre-

presently follows, That *whatever stands in the way to cross this Resolution, must be vigorously and heartily oppos'd.* Let it otherwise be ever so rational and just, yet if it thwarts the grand Design, of a free and uninterrupted Enjoyment of the present World; it must be treated as things always are, which pretend to deprive Men of what is most grateful and agreeable to them; that is, be expos'd in all respects, as far as possible.

And therefore the Gospel, which pretends to abridg Men of so much Liberty, and obliges them to a strictly abstemious and self-denying Life, and a ready Submission to all Sufferings, which the Power and Malice of the World may at any time inflict for the Profession of it; must of course be deny'd to be a Divine Revelation, and made the mere Invention of a Set of crafty designing Men, who were proud to be the Heads of a new Religion, and fond of making Mankind stoop to such Laws as they should think fit to impose on them. And hence the *Christians* must be represented too, as a credulous bigotted sort of People, who have not Sense nor Sagacity enough to see thro the Imposture; but are held fast in their fond Belief, by the Artifices and Management of those Persons, whose Business and Interest it is, and has been always, to maintain and propagate the Cheat. All this will follow, from one stated Resolution, to be under no Restraints, in the Pursuit and Enjoyment of the Pleasures of the World. How unreasonable soever the Inferences are in themselves; yet they naturally follow, upon the making such a Conclusion in a Man's own Mind.

SECT.

SECT. XVII.

HOwever, tho all this be very plain and clear, yet I would by no means be thought to aſſert, *That this is the only poſſible Cauſe of* Deiſm; or that all who disbelieve the *Chriſtian Revelation*, do it upon this Principle alone.

I believe it not impoſſible for a Man to be a *Deiſt* upon Theory, or mere ſpeculative Principles. Natural Pride and Conceit, wrong Notions of Human Nature, and particularly of the Power of the Underſtanding; by which Men ſet it up for an abſolute and unlimited Judg of all things, and lay this down for a Rule (which is demonſtrably a fallacious one) *That nothing is true which the Mind cannot comprehend by its own native Force*; (As if an infinitely wiſe and profound Being ought never to ſay any thing to ſuch Creatures as we are, but what we ſhould preſently take, and penetrate into all the Reaſons of; and as if it were any more unfit in the nature of things, or unbecoming the Perfections of God, to propoſe unſearchable Myſteries to the Underſtanding, than to impoſe *Laws on the Will and Affections*:) Theſe, I ſay, and ſuch like Cauſes, may lead ſome Men (who have otherwiſe a regard to Vertue and common Morality) into inveterate Prejudices againſt *Chriſtianity*. For ſetting themſelves to try the Doctrines and Myſteries of it by their own falſe Rules, and finding they will not ſquare with them, they preſently condemn them as abſurd and irrational, and therefore impoſſible ever to come from God; and ſo all the reſt is rejected of courſe. And thus by the means of one fundamental Blunder, the Goſpel

Gospel is thrown by, the whole *Christian Religion* made an Imposture in a trice, and they set up for profess'd Enemies and Opposers of it. But I imagine this to be the Case but of few. 'Tis possible that others (who may, for all that I know, approve of the Morality of the Gospel, and practise it too, as far as it keeps pace with the Law of Nature) may yet think the inward and abstracted Duties which it enjoins, too cumbersom, and perhaps such an unreasonable Tax upon Mankind, as an infinitely merciful God (according to their Notions of infinite Mercy and Goodness) would never impose. And tho the Error of this sort of *Deists* takes its rise from a Principle very different from that of the former, yet it is as bad, and sticks as fast: Wrong Notions of the Government of God over rational Creatures, are not less pernicious, nor may they do less Mischief to some, than an over-weaning Conceit of the Power of Human Understanding, may to others. I can only say, with respect to these Gentlemen on both sides, *That when they have carefully corrected their Notions of the Supreme Being, by what is demonstrable of his infinite Perfections; and when they have likewise rectify'd their Schemes about Human Nature, according to what plain Fact and Experience shew us to be undeniably true of it:* That then these Objections against *Christianity* will cease; and those on one side, will no more think the sublimest Doctrines unfit to be believ'd, than those on the other, the most abstracted Duties unreasonable to be perform'd.

And this is all the Answer I think is owing to that sort of Men.

SECT.

SECT. XVIII.

BUT notwithstanding all these Concessions of things that are possible, and may be; the Case is quite alter'd, when we come to speak of what is probable, and most likely to be. And here, tho the *Libertine* and sensual *Deist*, and the seemingly speculative or rational ones, do all unanimously agree, *in exclaiming against some Doctrines and Mysteries of the* Christian Religion, *which, they say, are absurd and contradictory, and affront all the Reason of Mankind; or else pretend to take offence at some trivial Corruptions and Abuses of the Canon; little Difficulties which they call insolvable, because they know not how, or do not care to attempt the Solution of them; and greater than the greatest of which, they easily pass over, and pardon every day in profane Authors:* Yet after all, to deal freely and plainly with them, I must say, that there are Reasons enough to make People firmly believe, *That the Precepts and Prohibitions of the Gospel are the Parts of it which give the main Offence.*

SECT. XIX.

FOR, *First*, Few People *resent Affronts offer'd to their Reason*, so much as they do *Confinement* and Impositions on their Liberty. Because Passion and Appetite govern more Men, and most Men more, than Reason and Understanding do; and so are much more likely to be the occasion of the Quarrel.

Secondly,

Secondly, Where pure Scruples of the Mind are the occasion of a Controversy, it seldom proceeds with so much Malignity and Virulence, as this Dispute has always been manag'd on their side withal. Close Reasoning is the proper and genuine Revenge of an affronted Understanding: As on the other hand, Satyr and Raillery always betray Interest and Passion, and shews they are far more concern'd in the matter than Reason and Judgment.

Thirdly, But in the next place, If the great Offence taken against *Christianity*, were occasion'd by the Difficulties of some Doctrines propos'd by it; *Why should the* Christian Religion *meet with so much worse treatment in general from these Gentlemen, than another Religion does, which in their Judgments as well as ours, is full of manifest Absurdities, and carries all the plain Marks of an Imposture along with it; but at the same time does not restrain and tie Men up, so as the* Christian Religion *does?* They easily conclude, that the Religion I intend here, is that of *Mahomet*; which abstracting from all the false and invidious Representations made of it by the misguided Zeal of some *Christians*, is undoubtedly an Institution unworthy of God to appoint, and unfit for *reasonable Creatures* to receive. If this be question'd, there are plentiful Demonstrations of it to be fetch'd, from such Accounts and Records of that Religion, as the most learned Professors thereof do themselves own to be Genuine and Authentick. I must not enlarge much on this Head (which is something foreign to my present purpose) and shall therefore only suggest a few things briefly.

SECT. XX.

Firſt, 'TIS beyond Diſpute, that *Mahomet*, the Author of this Religion, was a Perſon of a vicious profligate Life, and ſo far from behaving himſelf like a Meſſenger ſent from God, to teach Mankind Piety and Devotion; that he was in his whole Converſation a ſignal Example of the contrary.

Secondly, That the Canon of his Religion, beſides many Impertinences and Abſurdities, which are plainly nauſeous, contains groſs and palpable Falſities, both in Matter of Fact and Doctrine too. Some perhaps who have a very great Opinion of the Moral Part of this Religion, may think this latter Charge, as to the Doctrines, unjuſt: But thoſe Perſons may be very eaſily ſatisfied, if they pleaſe. For when Doctrines are propos'd as Divine, which are evidently inconſiſtent with the Divine Perfections (as many of *Mahomet*'s were) ſuch Doctrines as theſe are very properly and juſtly call'd falſe ones.

Thirdly, That this Religion was evidently calculated to ſerve a carnal worldly Intereſt. The *Alcoran*, which is the ſtandard of it, being ſhap'd and moulded according to Opportunity and Occaſion, and fitted in all reſpects to anſwer the ſordid Ends of the Writer thereof; who for that Reaſon added and ſubſtracted, alter'd and mended, upon every Emergency, as his own Affairs and the uncertain Humour of the People requir'd; and then at laſt threw all upon the Angel *Gabriel*, who was pretended ever now and then, to bring him down freſh Diſpatches and Advices from Heaven.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, That as the first Contrivance, so all the great Steps towards the Propagation of this Religion, while in its Infancy, were made entirely by Fraud and Artifice; which wrought upon the Ignorance, and accommodated it self to the Temper and Vices of the People; and was shelter'd from Discovery, not only by their Illiteratenes, but the Distance of Places, and the want of all Communication with the learned World.

Fifthly and Lastly, That 'tis a Religion in it self injurious and oppressive to Mankind, as it came afterwards to be planted and establish'd in the World by Force and Violence, and never offer'd any other Arguments to persuade Men of the Truth of it, but the Sword, or heavy Taxes and Exactions; not only persecuting and extorting what was not due from other Men, but also thereby depriving them of their natural Right and Liberty of judging for themselves, and using their Reason in matters of the greatest Concern to them.

These things are plain Fact, as every Man may satisfy himself that will but enquire. Now I beg leave of these Gentlemen to put a Question or two to them, upon the score of what I have been saying.

SECT. XXI.

First, DID they ever demonstrate the Charge of Imposture against *Christianity*, with that undeniable Evidence that these Articles I have mention'd do demonstrate it against the Religion of *Mahomet?* Nay to come as low as possible, did they ever shew a tolerable Probability

that the Religion of *Jeſus Chriſt*, as contain'd in the New Teſtament, ſhould be ſuch a ſort of Contexture as the other is; either upon the account of its Author, its Ends, its Propagation, the Rewards it promiſes, the Precepts it gives, or the Principles it inſpires Men withal?

If they have ever fairly done this, then it may ſome way or other be made to appear.

If they have not: Then,

SECT. XXII.

Secondly, *WHY is there ſo loud a Cry of Juggle and Impoſture, ſet up againſt* Chriſtianity *(againſt which the Charge has ſcarce ever been attempted to be made out) rather than the Religion of* Mahomet, *where they grant the Forgery to be paſt Diſpute?* I would not be thought to encourage Inſults and Affronts to any Religion, how falſe and prepoſterous ſoever it be. Men whom we believe to be in a wrong Way, ſhould be better inform'd and argu'd with: But their Religion ſhould not be treated in ſcandalous Terms; for this always heightens Prejudice, and breeds ill Blood. But what I ſpeak of, is the arbitrary Proceeding of theſe Gentlemen, to pick out the *Chriſtian Religion*, and only that, for the common Subject of their Banter and Raillery; when there is another at hand, which they know and own to be a Cheat; and at the ſame time 'ſcapes with very little Notice: At leaſt they don't make a Trade, a ſtated Work of expoſing this, as they do *Chriſtianity*. If there be a little Fling, ſometimes by Chance, at the *Alcoran*; the *Criticks* are always exer-

exercising their Wits upon the Gospel, and finding out little Flaws and Contradictions there, *which none else, who use the same sort of Senses and Faculties that they do, could ever yet discover.*

If the subtle Management of the pretended Prophet of the *Sarazens*, and his Comrades, happen once and again to be started as an Argument of Discourse, yet *Christ* and his *Apostles* are daily brought upon the Stage to entertain the most ludicrous Conversations: And when they are spar'd, the Preachers of the Gospel (who minister by a Commission from *Christ Jesus*, for carrying on the same Work in the World) are sure to pay for all, by the worst of Affronts and Reproaches; enduring herein, a part of that Persecution, which our Saviour had foretold, and which the Apostles themselves began to feel, who were made as the Dross and Offscouring of all things. Now, I say, *Why all this Noise and Stir about* Christianity? Here are two Religions before you, Gentlemen; the one of which you can demonstrate to be a Cheat, and the other you cannot (for if you could, you have sufficiently shewn your Inclinations that you would have done it) Why do you single out the Latter, and not the Former, to discharge all your Spleen and Choler against? Why *Jesus Christ* more than *Mahomet?* Is it because he is the *Prophet* whom the Country worships and adores? Most People for that very Reason (if they have no other) would think themselves oblig'd in good Manners, to keep their Resentments to themselves. Is it out of a charitable Regard to the Welfare of Mankind, because they should not be led away by a Delusion? Men are made to be wrought on by Arguments, and not by Scurrility and Reproach:

And 'tis certain, that if any Perſons are perſuaded to relinquiſh an Opinion, merely by hearing it abus'd and expos'd, they act irrationally, even tho they change their Minds ever ſo much for the better.

In ſhort, whatever ſecret Reaſons theſe Gentlemen may have for acting after this manner, this muſt be ſaid, *That it will always look very ſuſpiciouſly, to ſee Men* (who ſet up for the Diſcovery of Impoſture) *touch ſo lightly upon a Religion, which makes amends for Abſurdities, by plentiful Indulgences granted to Fleſh and Blood; and take all Occaſions to bear ſo hard upon* Chriſtianity, *which ſtrictly enjoins the Practice of all Vertue and Piety, and prohibits whatever is contrary thereto under the ſevereſt Penalties.*

SECT. XXIII.

WHAT has been ſpoken hitherto, relates to the *Chriſtian Law*, by which the *Deiſts* (according to their own Principles) are not at all bound; and have for that Reaſon a much eaſier Life of it in the preſent World, than the *Chriſtians* have. But there is ſomething ſtill to be ſaid, with reſpect to the *Law of Nature*, to which all the great Pretenſions of theſe Gentlemen are. And tho I do not urge this at all, as an Inſtance of their being more happy than the *Chriſtians*, in the preſent Life; yet I urge it as an Argument with them to conſider, *Of what ſignal Advantage* Chriſtianity *would be to them in the Practice even of their own Natural Religion.* And therefore I would here lay down this Propoſition: *viz. That thoſe who*

who reject the Gospel-Revelation, are not so firmly bound by the Law of Nature it self, to the Practice of all those Duties which fall within the compass of that Law; as the Christians *are, by virtue of the Principles they proceed upon, in Consequence of their Belief of the Gospel.* This is an undoubted Truth, whatever Opinion they have concerning the Law of Nature; or what Notion soever it is that they take it in.

First, They may look on it, not as a Divine Law or Institution, in which the all-wise Creator has signify'd his Will concerning our Duty to himself, and Deportment towards one another; but only as something resulting from Education, Example, Custom, or the like: And consequently believe no other Sanction to be annex'd thereto, besides that of the present good and bad Consequences of the Observance or Neglect of it. Now in this Case, 'tis plain, that it is but a very slender Guard upon a Man's Actions and Conversation in the World. With such Notions as these, he is left at full liberty to determine Right and Wrong, Good and Evil, just as his Inclination or Interest, or Opportunity shall prompt him. And we know that some of the modern Opposers of *Christianity* have espous'd these Principles; being led to it by the Necessity of their Scheme, which naturally draws on one Invention or *Hypothesis*, to support another before advanc'd. They have gone so far, as to take away all absolute intrinsecal Distinction between Good and Evil; making no other difference between them, than what Time or Convenience, or the Humours and Practices of Men do make: So that Good is chang'd into Evil, or Evil into Good, by the mere alteration of external Circumstances. And tho it must be allow'd, that this *Hypothesis* is of a

pretty antient Date, and that some * *Poets* and *Philosophers* for many Ages ago, have talk'd after this manner; yet 'tis true also, that others of superior Sense and Reputation, have detested these Notions, and propagated others more worthy of God and Human Nature. And indeed there is just Reason, why such Schemes as these should be abhor'd of all Mankind, that make any pretences to live soberly and rationally. Because there can be no manner of Defence or Security, where such Principles as these take place. For at this rate, Men may be guilty of the worst Crimes that can be committed, and yet bring themselves off as innocent when they have done. For they have nothing but Punishment from the Laws of the Society whereof they are Members, to keep them in awe; and if they can but secure themselves from that Danger, they are ready prepar'd to trample all other Obligations under foot; even those, which in the Opinion, and by the common Consent of all Nations whatsoever, ought to be held the most Sacred and Inviolable.

And then, another thing to be consider'd too, is, That (whatever these Gentlemen make of the Law of Nature) they have it all entirely in their own keeping, and consequently at their own dispose; because by their Principles they are for no *reveal'd* or written Laws. 'Tis all lock'd up in their own Breasts, where 'tis liable to any Management they shall think fit to bestow on it,

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* ——— Οὐδὲν ἀν πάντη καλὸν
Οὐδ' αἰσχρὸν. ἀλλὰ ταῦτ' ἐποίησε λαβὼν
Ὁ ΚΑΙΡΟΣ αἰσχρὰ, καὶ διαλλάξας καλά. Opusc. Mythol. *Pag.* 715.

Τὰ δὲ καλὰ καὶ τὰ δίκαια περὶ ὧν ἡ πολιτικὴ σκοπεῖται, τοιαύτην ἔχει διαφορὰν καὶ πλάνην, ὥστε δοκεῖν νόμῳ μόνον εἶναι, φύσει δὲ μή. Aristot. Ethic. *l.* 1. *c.* 1.

either

either by way of Dispensation, Abrogation, Exposition, or Accommodation to a present Case. Now methinks, as the larger Government of Kingdoms and Countries, which are thus administred, are by all People justly call'd Tyrannical and Arbitrary; so there is as much Reason for the Use of the same Terms, when the Government of a Man's Life and Passions stands upon the same precarious Foundation. It may well be call'd an Arbitrary one, because it is left entirely to a Man's own Pleasure, how he will behave and dispose of himself.

Nor can I see why People should pretend to cry out against such Forms of Government amongst Mankind; why they should argue so freely against the Danger and Unreasonableness of them; and at the same time set up for absolute unlimited lawless Monarchs over themselves, and approve such a Regimen in their own Breasts, as they abhor and condemn in the World.

Now tho it must be granted, that Men (who are willing to transgress) may abuse *written* as well as unwritten Laws, and expound them so as may best serve their own Turn upon Occasion; yet it must be allow'd, that in the nature of the thing Revelation is a better Guard, than a bare Scheme of Principles without it.

For Men must take more Pains to conquer the Sense of a standing written Law, which is ready to confront them upon all Occasions; they must more industriously tamper with their Passions, and bribe their Understandings, before they can bring themselves to believe what they have a mind to believe, in contradiction to the Words of an express and formal Declaration of God Almighty's Will; than there can be any Pretence or Occasion for, when they have no more than their own Thoughts

and Ideas to manage. These are flexible Things, and a Man may much more easily turn and wind them as he pleases, than he can evade a plain and positive Law; *which determines the Kinds and Measures of his Duty, and threatens Disobedience in such Terms as require long Practice and Experience, to make handsom Salvos and Distinctions to get over.*

SECT. XXIV.

ON the other hand, if we consider the state of the Case with respect to the *Christians*, we shall find a very great difference. For, as to the *Law of Nature:* First, They believe it be a * *Divine Impression* on the reasonable Nature of Man, by which he is inform'd what is good and evil, and directed how to behave himself after such a manner, as a Creature so made and endow'd as he is, ought to do. Now when 'tis look'd on as a *Law of God*, such a Sense of it is more likely to awe Men into a serious regard to it, and to produce good Effects in their Lives and Conversations, than that slight Opinion of it before mention'd.

Secondly, They believe this Law to have a Sanction of Rewards and Punishments, which respect not only *This*, but a *future Life* also: And this is a Consideration of infinitely greater moment, than *that* of all the temporal Advantages or Disad-

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* *This was the Notion of some of the wiser* Heathens, *as well as of the* Christians. Archytas, *speaking of* Man (*in* Libr. Sapientiæ) *and his Advantages above all the rest of the Creatures, adds these Words*; Ἐνεχάραξε καὶ ἐπεσημήνατο τὸ ΘΕΙΟΝ αὐτῷ, τὸ τῶ παντὸς λόγω ΣΥΣΤΗΜΑ. Opusc. Mythol. *Pag.* 732.

vantages,

vantages, which can possibly redound from a Man's Obedience or Disobedience thereto.

Thirdly and Lastly, It is expresly written in a Book, which they esteem as a Divine Revelation; and therefore can't be so easily eluded, nor render'd subject to such Management, as a wandring Notion in a Man's Mind may be.

SECT. XXV.

BUT, *Secondly*, Suppose these Gentlemen to take the Law of Nature in that Sense, which of all others will give it the most Authority over them; that is, to believe it a *Divine Law:* Yet still the Obligations of it are much stronger on the *Christians*, than they can possibly be on *them*. For the Law of Nature is it self taken into the Body of the Laws of *Christ Jesus*, and composes one Part of that Institution which the *Christians* have receiv'd from him, and believe to be of Divine Authority. Besides all those sublime Doctrines and Precepts, which are specifically distinct from, and superlatively transcendent to those of the Law of Nature; the Gospel contains the entire substance of that Law it self, together with divers excellent Improvements and Explications thereof, made by *Jesus Christ*, and enforc'd and urg'd by him, upon all that embrace his Religion. So that over and above that Obligation, which is common to others with them, consider'd merely as Men; here's a new one resulting from their Belief and Acknowledgment of the Gospel-Revelation: Insomuch that the Duties enjoin'd even by the Natural Law, are now to be perform'd by them, out of a devout regard

to

to God, not only as the Author of *Nature*, and the bountiful Benefactor of Mankind; but also as the Author and Fountain of all those inexpressible Benefits, which (as *Christians*) they believe they are made Partakers of by *Jesus Christ*. Now in the Nature of the thing it self, the strength of all Obligations does increase proportionably to the Value and Moment of those things, which are the Foundations of them; and consequently, this new Obligation which lies on the *Christians* (as such) must be as much more powerful than that which respects them and others, consider'd only as Men; as the Blessings of Redemption purchas'd and bestow'd by *Jesus Christ*, are superior in their Notions to the common Blessings of Nature. And therefore this Obligation added to the former, must have as much more force to engage the *Christians* to a strict and conscientious regard to the Law of Nature, than the Former alone can have to produce the same effect on those Gentlemen who reject the Gospel: As much more (I say) as the Benefits of Redemption added to those of Nature and Providence, do transcend the Latter taken by themselves. So that, even allowing these Persons to receive and obey the Law of Nature as a Law of God, and out of a Sense of Duty to him (which Concession notwithstanding may be more kind than just) yet still their Obligations fall exceedingly short of those which the *Christians* lie under. But if they have no regard to it as a Law of God, but perform Natural Duties from such Principles only, as Education, Custom, Interest, Affectation, Fear, Gratitude, or the like: Then, I think, the Odds are almost beyond Comparison; and it cannot well be express'd, how much more firmly the *Christians* are bound to these Duties, than those who disown the Gospel-Revelation.

SECT.

SECT. XXVI.

Coroll. 1. There is a better Security for the exact and punctual Discharge of all moral Duties, from those who believe the Gospel of *Christ*, than from those who do not. For there must needs be the best Security (in Reason, and the Nature of the thing) where the strongest Obligations lie: And 'tis apparent, that they lie on the side of those, who own the Gospel to be a Divine Revelation. I don't say here what *Christians* actually are, but what by their Principles they ought to be, and what may rationally be expected from them, as just and due by virtue of their Profession. Many indeed, who call themselves *Christians*, do scandalously transgress the Laws of Nature and the Gospel too. But (by their own Principles) their Obligations to do otherwise, are unchangeably fix'd; and they run infinite Hazards, by being guilty of such Enormities; for their own Law condemns them to everlasting Punishments, without true Repentance and Amendment. Now what Men cannot do without exposing themselves to the last degree of Danger and Inconvenience, they may be said (in a Moral Sense) not to be able to do. And therefore, whatever Duties I expect the Performance of, from Men in any Place or Station; I may be more secure of them, who must expose and endanger themselves to so high a degree, if they are false and unfaithful; than I can of those, who have no such Principles to be a Guard upon them, and prevent the Breach of their Duty and Trust. If they are sincerely such as I take them for, their Principles will govern them;

them; and the Danger they are expos'd to, will be a Guard upon them, to keep them from habitual Excursions: If they are not such, they don't fall within the Bounds of the present Question. Nay, tho I make the Supposition, that the *Christians* are deluded, in taking the Gospel for a Divine Revelation, yet the Argument will proceed all one as before. For since the Belief, that it is a Divine Revelation, is so firmly rooted in their Minds; then till the contrary is plainly demonstrated to them, they must needs discharge all Duties and Offices whatsoever, just in the same manner, and with the same care, as they would do, if the Case were otherwise, and they were not deceiv'd at all.

Coroll. 2. As far as the strongest Engagements to the Practice of Moral Duties, can be suppos'd to have an Influence on the Peace and good Order of the World, or the Welfare of any particular Society; so far is it likely, that those who embrace the *Christian Religion*, should be better Members of Society, and more useful in all Relations, than those who disown the Divine Authority thereof.

SECT. XXVII.

I Have now shewn in the foregoing Particulars, all that I think will follow without Exception; upon the *Hypothesis*, *That the* Christians *are deceiv'd as to the Matter of Fact of* Christ's Resurrection.

The *Deists* (I know very well) go farther yet, and draw another Inference, which is very much to our Disadvantage, *viz. That the* Christians *will be liable to as severe and terrible Punishments, if the Gospel should be found to be an Imposture at last; as they*

they themſelves, on the other ſide, ſhall be, if it ſhould prove to be a Divine Revelation.

For ſay they, *If it ſhould be ſo, then here you have affronted the Majeſty of Heaven to a very high degree, in believing him to be the Author of ſo vile an Impoſture, as your whole Religion in that Caſe muſt be: Beſides, you have paid Divine Honours, and given religious Worſhip to* Jeſus Chriſt, *who was never inveſted with any Authority by God Almighty, nor had any Commiſſion from him, either to teach thoſe Doctrines, or eſtabliſh that Diſcipline in the World which you have receiv'd as Divine, and laid all the Streſs of your Salvation upon.*

And therefore, as you have reflected on the Attributes of God, and robb'd him of his Glory to ſuch a degree, by embracing this Deluſion as his Contrivance and Appointment; ſo to vindicate the Honour of his injur'd Perfections, and expreſs his infinite Abhorrence of ſuch Crimes, he can do no leſs than ſeverely puniſh thoſe who have committed them.

'Tis well known, that theſe Gentlemen do talk after this rate; and this is their ſtated Anſwer now-a-days, to a Man who urges the dangerous Conſequences of Infidelity upon them. There was no manner of Reaſon why I ſhould conceal or diſſemble any part of what they ſay upon this Occaſion.

For as 'tis but giving them fair play, ſo the Cauſe of *Chriſtianity* can't ſuffer any Prejudice by it; nor will any of its Profeſſors, I believe, be ſcar'd, to hear theſe Gentlemen bid them expect the moſt diſmal Puniſhments in the next World that Almighty Juſtice can inflict, *if the Doctrine of* Chriſt's Reſurrection *be not true.*

SECT.

SECT. XXVIII.

HOwever, as theſe Gentlemen ſeem very fond of this Notion, and object it with a Briskneſs, that argues they eſteem it a Difficulty not eaſily to be ſolv'd; 'tis reaſonable that we beſtow a little Pains upon the Examination of it: That we may ſee whether it carries any thing of ſtrict and juſt Argument along with it; or whether it be ſomething ſtarted, purely to evade the force of the Argument, drawn from the Conſideration of the Danger theſe Gentlemen are in; and ſo to amuſe thoſe People, who otherwiſe might be inclin'd to think, that the *Chriſtians* reaſon with too much Advantage upon that Topick. There are three things therefore, that are to be reply'd (in the general) to this Objection of theirs.

Firſt, That ſuppoſing it to be ever ſo certain and true, *it is nothing at all to the purpoſe.*

Secondly, That it is (as to them) *abſolutely Doubtful and Precarious*; becauſe they have no *Principles* to make any poſitive Inference from.

Thirdly, That it is (in it ſelf) *palpably Falſe and Wrong*, as will appear upon an exact compariſon of the Circumſtances of the Caſe on both ſides, according as we ſuppoſe the Goſpel to be either a mere Fiction, or a Divine Revelation.

SECT.

SECT. XXIX.

First, I Say, That *their Objection of Danger to the* Christians, *is nothing at all to the purpose.* For in the way of Argument, nothing is to the purpose, but what has a real Tendency some way or other to help or benefit the Cause of that Party, who have a Difficulty press'd on them; either by shewing that it is not so far expos'd, as the Adversary's Argument makes it to be, or else that the Adversary cannot argue in that manner he does, in making the Assault upon it. Now pray, how does this any way help the Cause of the *Deists* (who are evidently in very great Danger, if the *Resurrection of Christ* be true) that the *Christians* are obnoxious to as much Punishment, if the *Resurrection* be not true? Suppose what they alledg to be granted, does it render their Condition less miserable and perplex'd? Does it take off any thing from the Force of what the *Christians* say, or hinder them from concluding what they intend? If it does not, to what End do these Gentlemen talk thus? Is this a Subject to be trifled with; and should not Men speak to the Purpose (if they ever intend to do it) when their Souls are concern'd in the Argument? Were a Dispute to be manag'd purely for a Trial of Skill; then to shuffle and digress from the Matter in hand, so as by any means whatsoever to blunder an Adversary, and stop the Progress of his Argument, were a more pardonable piece of Folly. But in a matter so grave and serious as this, to talk off from the Point, and urge what can neither help on one side, nor hinder on the other; is acting a Part, that I am

am ſure all the right Reaſon and Prudence in the World muſt neceſſarily condemn.

SECT. XXX.

BEſides, I muſt ſay, that this Proceeding of theirs is as *diſingenuous*, as it is foreign to the Buſineſs in hand. For the Caſe ſtands thus.

The *Chriſtians* ſhew how very terrible and peremptory, the Threatnings of the Goſpel are againſt the finally impenitent Deſpiſers of it: and they do this, not with a deſign to frighten theſe Gentlemen into Bigotry and Superſtition, as they pretend to imagine; but to excite them to a due Care of themſelves, that they may eſcape that poſſible Danger, of which the Goſpel gives them ſo very diſmal a Proſpect. Now the moſt prudent and ingenuous way for theſe Gentlemen to go to work, after ſuch warning, would be to argue and enquire, and bring the matter to a ſtrict Examination; that ſo, if they found the *Chriſtians* had good Grounds and Reaſons for what they ſay, they might ſet themſelves to the Uſe of proper Means, in order to make all things ſafe and ſecure on their own Side; or if not, then indeed having prov'd all to be mere Juggle and Deluſion, they might boldly charge the Fallacy upon the *Chriſtians*, and deſpiſe the Danger they were threatned with, as the mere Bugbear of an Impoſture.

Whereas, inſtead of this, they immediately retort a Charge of Idolatry and Irreligion upon us; and tell us, that if we are miſtaken, our Damnation will be as ſevere as theirs: As if they could be contented to be liable to be damn'd, upon one *Hypotheſis*, ſo the *Chriſtians* be but as much expos'd upon

upon another. If a Man (whose Life were really believ'd to be in danger, and were accordingly warn'd of it by his Neighbour, out of pure Love and Charity) should reply after this fashion, *That he should rest satisfy'd about that matter, since the Monitor himself, and a thousand more, would be in as much danger of losing their Lives, if such and such things should happen to come to pass:* Every one would say, this were surly and disingenuous; and it might well be question'd, whether the Man were in his right Wits or no. How nearly the Case I am speaking of approaches to this, any Person may judg. However, what I would remark under this first Head, is, *That these Gentlemen go very far out of the way of the Argument, to find an Occasion to return an unkind Answer, to a kind and friendly Admonition.* And there is certainly much more Reason, why the *Christians* should begin to give them the Caution, than they should give it to the *Christians*; because the latter have been in possession of this Doctrine for so long and uninterrupted a Succession of Ages, and it has all along been inculcated as a first Principle, *That a State of Unbelief is very dangerous.* But the *Hypothesis* these Gentlemen advance, is a modern Fiction, and seems plainly to owe its rise to an Apprehension of the Necessity of having such a kind of Answer as should make some Noise, ready to return to those Persons, who alarm them with a frightful Objection of everlasting Punishments in the next World.

SECT. XXXI.

Secondly, *THIS Reaſoning of theirs is abſolutely precarious.*

If the Goſpel ſhould be an Impoſture, *you ſhall be puniſh'd* (ſay they) *for believing it, and for paying a religious Worſhip to* Jeſus Chriſt.

But I would fain know upon what Grounds they adventure to conclude this? They will not pretend to *Revelation* for it; for ſuch Proof as that is quite out of their way. And if they have no Revelation, we have none that ſays any ſuch thing.

Again, as they have no Revelation to argue from, ſo neither can they argue from the Divine Perfections, for the Neceſſity of ſuch Puniſhment. Some Sins, they allow, God will graciouſly forgive: Elſe what would become of *them*, as well as of *us?* And they believe alſo, that God Almighty will do it, without any thing of Satisfaction or Atonement to his infinite Juſtice: for otherwiſe, their Caſe were ſtill as bad, as if he would never forgive any Sins at all. Becauſe they declare againſt all Salvation, by the *way of Saviours and Sacrifices for Sin:* And they may be ſure of this, that if there be a *Saviour*, he will not make them happy againſt their Wills.

Now then, ſince every Sin whatſoever is an infinite Affront to the Perfections of the great Creator; and ſince theſe Gentlemen firmly believe, *that ſome Sins ſhall be pardon'd*; and laſtly, Since they cannot pretend to be let into the Secrets of the Divine Counſels, to know what Sins will be forgiven, and what will not; 'tis impoſſible they ſhould

ſhould ever be able juſtly to draw this peremptory Concluſion, *That the* Chriſtians *will be obnoxious to the Divine Vengeance upon the ſcore of that Sin, which they here lay to their Charge.*

For they cannot conclude, that it ſhall be puniſh'd, either becauſe, and as it is a Sin; or becauſe, and as it is a Sin, of ſuch a particular Kind or Degree: And there is no third Way for them to conclude. They cannot argue the firſt Way: Becauſe in that caſe, Puniſhment muſt be co-extenſive with Sin, and ſo there would be no room for the Pardon of any. Nor can they argue the ſecond Way: Becauſe they cannot poſſibly determine what Kinds and Degrees of Sin the infinite Mercies of God will extend to forgive, and what ſhall be excepted from Pardon. We know that he will make gracious Allowances for the unavoidable Infirmities of his Creatures: And where Men go wrong, not out of Preſumption, or wilful affected Ignorance, and neglect of the Means that ſhould enable them to go right, but out of pure Miſfortune and Miſtake, which 'tis not in their power to free themſelves from; in ſuch caſes, there's good ground to hope for Favour from thoſe tender Compaſſions of his, to which all that is kind and good, both in Angels and Men, bears no more Proportion than their Being does to his incomprehenſible Eſſence, which is no Proportion at all. And as the *Deiſts* can't poſſibly imagine, *that we deſign and chuſe to be deluded in a matter that ſo nearly concerns us, as the Doctrine of* Chriſt's Reſurrection *does:* ſo joining this Conſideration with that of the *unbounded Goodneſs and Mercy of God*, they may find ſufficient Reaſon to forbear that harſh Sentence they pronounce upon us, in caſe we ſhould find our ſelves deceiv'd at laſt.

SECT. XXXII.

'TIS natural to conceive, that they will be ready to ask here, *Why it may not as well be ſuppos'd, that they ſhould be excus'd from Puniſhment upon the ſame ſcore, if matters ſhould be otherwiſe than they now imagine, and the* Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt *ſhould in the Iſſue appear to be a Truth?* For it may be alledg'd, *That they are no more willingly miſtaken, than we are; and that the infinite Mercy and Goodneſs of God, may as eaſily pardon a Deluſion on the one ſide as on the other.* To which, I ſay, may they have all the Intereſt in the Favour and Compaſſion of Heaven, that their own moſt enlarg'd Deſires and Wiſhes can extend to; and I add, infinitely more!

But they muſt of neceſſity allow this, that we can be much ſurer, upon one *Hypotheſis*, how matters will go with them, if they are miſtaken, than they can pretend to be, of what will be the Conſequence of our Deception! For if the Doctrine of the *Reſurrection* be true, then here is a Divine Revelation, which pronounces the Sentence of Unbelievers; ſo that if theſe Gentlemen continue in ſuch a State, they may know what their Doom ſhall be, from the expreſs Words of the great and awful Judg of Heaven and Earth himſelf. But on the other ſide, whether that Doctrine be true or falſe, there is no Revelation to ſhew what the *Chriſtians* are to expect at the hands of Divine Juſtice. The *Deiſts* indeed ſay, they ſhall be puniſh'd ſeverely; but there is only their Word for it, without any manner of Reaſon or Authority to ſupport what they ſay: For I have already

already ſhewn, that the Argument they offer to prove it, will not, nor cannot poſſibly conclude what they intend. By all the Laws of right Reaſon in the World, their Concluſion is unjuſt, and will never follow. And therefore they ought not to make it, unleſs they reſolve to allow themſelves to affirm, right or wrong, juſt what ſerves their own Turn. So that here's a Certainty of the Event or Conſequence, in one *Hypotheſis*; and no more than bare Gueſs and Conjecture in the other. And I hope upon this Account, we may be much more poſitive in the former Caſe, than they (without diſclaiming all Reaſon and Modeſty) can pretend to be in the latter.

SECT. XXXIII.

I Know that theſe Gentlemen are very apt to entertain themſelves with fine Notions of the Mercy and Goodneſs of God; as if theſe lovely Attributes were a full and perfect Security againſt all the Effects of Anger and Diſpleaſure; and that Threatnings are given out for no other purpoſe, but only to keep Men in awe, and engage them to their Duty: So that even tho the Goſpel ſhould prove true at laſt, yet God, out of his infinite Tenderneſs for his Creatures, would forbear to execute that Vengeance which is there threaten'd to Unbelievers, and reckon it enough to have ſcar'd them a little in the preſent World. But it will by no means be ſafe or prudent for them to truſt to ſuch an *Hypotheſis* as this. For ſince they have not been kept in awe, nor been engag'd to the Performance of what will appear to have been their

Duty; I think they have all the Reason in the World to fear, lest the Threatnings should lay hold of them, unless they believe their Maker design'd only to jest and trifle with Mankind, by possessing them with vain and ridiculous Fears, and amusing them with false Prospects of things.

Besides, what business have we with the *secret* Will of God? 'Tis plain, that by arguing upon this, we only wade into a Depth which is infinitely beyond our Fathoming; and where, after all our vain searches, we can find no Bottom to raise any Schemes or *Hypotheses* upon. If God has reveal'd his Mind and Will, we have something to trust to there: And I think, 'tis as unpardonable a Presumption, to fancy he will not do what he has positively said he will do, as 'tis to suppose, that he will do a thousand kind indulgent things in favour of us, which he has never given us the least Encouragement to hope for. We ought to consider him as the just and holy Governor of the World, (and as such, infinitely tender of the Honour of his Government) as well as the gracious Author of our Beings, and the liberal Dispenser of good things to us: And therefore, when he gives Laws to Mankind, and annexes Threatnings (as well as Promises) to enforce the Obedience of them; that he no more design'd to terrify Men by mere imaginary Punishments, than to allure and intice them by the hopes of empty chimerical Rewards. Amongst us Men, Rewards and Punishments are equally necessary to support the Credit and Reputation of a Government. For as the one is needful to give Vertue its due Encouragement, and to engage the Brave and the Good to all those Offices that may be of publick

Benefit

Benefit and Service; so is the other as necessary to secure the Laws and Legislator from that Contempt, which the continual Encroachments of unpunish'd (and therefore successful) Vice, would infallibly expose both unto. And tho 'tis not to be imagin'd, that the infinite God should be tied up to the Rules and Measures of Creatures; yet we ought to remember, *that nothing is impossible to him, but what involves some real Imperfection.* Now in the nature of the thing, it involves no Imperfection to punish a Sinner. It may be a Perfection to pardon in many Cases, where Punishment is deserv'd; but it can be no Imperfection to inflict Punishment in any Case, where the Sentence of a most righteous and equitable Law (as whatever is enacted by the Divine Authority, must be) pronounces it to be due. And tho it be a much more soft and pleasing Notion of infinite Goodness, to consider it apart from infinite Justice and Holiness, and from all the other Attributes that tend to possess us with Dread and Astonishment; yet all these in God, are but his pure and simple Essence: And if we divide them from one another in our Conceptions, we think no longer of the true and living God, but of some imperfect Idol of our own making. 'Tis no less true of him (and therefore no less to be thought of by us) that he is strict and impartial Justice, as well as boundless and inexhaustible Love.

SECT. XXXIV.

Thirdly, WHAT the *Deists* object, is so far from being true, that the contrary to it is most apparently true and certain, *viz. That they are vastly more and worse expos'd, if the Doctrine of* Christ's Resurrection *be true; than the* Christians *can be, upon any Account whatsoever, if that Doctrine be false.*

I here make the hardest Supposition that can be made on the side of the *Christians*, viz. *That if the Gospel be an Imposture, they should be liable to Punishment for believing it.* However, I chuse to argue upon it, that these Gentlemen may see, that whatever Concessions we make, their Condition remains infinitely involv'd and perplex'd; and that they don't rightly consult the Advantage of their own Cause, by giving us an Occasion to enquire so far into these matters.

SECT. XXXV.

First, IF this Doctrine be true, *These Gentlemen are obnoxious to the Sentence of the Law of Nature, and the Gospel too: And if they suffer, must suffer as Transgressors of both.*

Let them have the slightest Notions possible of the Law of *Nature*, yet the Gospel establishes the Divine Authority of it, and also makes it a Law specifically distinct; tho it be comprehended, together with the *Evangelical* Law, in that Volume, which makes up the Christian Revelation.

velation. And therefore, if it prove true at laſt, that our Bible was a divinely inſpir'd Book, it will be true alſo, that this Law of Nature was in full force; and therefore that theſe Gentlemen were ſtrictly oblig'd to the Practice of all the Duties enjoin'd thereby, and muſt conſequently be anſwerable to God for the Neglect of the ſame. But as the Goſpel is a Diſpenſation of a far nobler nature, and teaches ſo many Doctrines and Duties of the utmoſt Conſequence to the Glory of God, and the Welfare of Mankind; here's a more diſmal and terrible Charge to be brought in from hence againſt theſe Perſons, who inſtead of receiving it with the Reverence and Humility owing to a Revelation from Heaven, and giving up themſelves to a ſincere and faithful Obedience to the Precepts of it, have made it all Cheat and Impoſture, deſpis'd the Threatnings, vilify'd the Duties, and turn'd all the Myſteries of it into Jeſt and Ridicule. Surely if unpardon'd Sins againſt the Law of Nature will bring down heavy Vengeance upon the Sinner's Head; theſe Sins of ſo deep a Dye againſt the Goſpel, will call for ſevenfold. If ſuch (whoſe only Accuſation at the Bar of the Supream Judg, is, that they have abus'd the Light of Reaſon) ſhall be thought worthy of the Chaſtiſement of Whips; what leſs than *Scorpions*, ſharp Arrows of the Almighty, with Coals of *Juniper*, can they expect, who have ſhut their Eyes againſt the brighteſt Manifeſtations of God's Will, that they might expoſe them with more Confidence in the Dark? And if the former Guilt alone will be ſo exceedingly heavy, what will it be when added to this, which is of ſo much more heinous and complicated a Nature? When the Sentences of Law and Goſpel,

ſhall

ſhall both conſpire to condemn a Man to Puniſhment; ſuch Condemnation muſt needs be ſad, and ſuch Doom intolerable! And tho theſe Gentlemen have yet time before them to prevent all this, nay and time to render their Conditions truly happy, if they will themſelves; yet 'tis neceſſary to be thus plain and free with them, that they may ſee in what poſture their Matters will ſtand, upon the *Hypotheſis* of the Truth of the Goſpel.

SECT. XXXVI.

NOW on the other hand, if the *Chriſtians* be miſtaken, and the Goſpel be not a Divine Revelation, they can be accountable by no Law, but that of *Nature* only. For tho, if the Goſpel were true, they muſt then ſtand or fall, according as their Behaviour has been conformable or diſconformable to the Tenour thereof; yet if it be a Deluſion, 'tis moſt certain that it will never be made the Rule of Divine Judgment. And therefore, I ſay, that upon this *Hypotheſis* the *Chriſtians* are entirely upon the Foundation of the pure Law of Nature: and the great Enquiry that will proceed at laſt with reſpect to them, will be, *how they have diſcharg'd their Duty with reſpect to the Injunctions of that Law.* So that the very miſtake of receiving the Goſpel as a Divine Revelation, when it was not ſo; and all the Conſequences of that Miſtake, in the ſeveral Rites and Services they have perform'd; together with whatever Guilt they have incur'd by tranſgreſſing the Rules of the Goſpel, which they erroneouſly believ'd they were

were indispensably oblig'd to observe: All these will fall under the Cognizance of the Natural Law; not only for the Cause above mention'd, *that the Gospel* (in the present Supposition) *can have nothing at all to do in the trying and judging of Men*; but also, because 'tis what the Law of Nature does properly and immediately consider; in that all depends upon the just Use of a Man's Reason and Understanding, and runs up to this Question at last, *Whether he has behav'd himself as a Creature, endow'd with a Principle of Judgment and Choice, ought to have done*. For when a thing is propos'd as a Revelation from God, it ought to be carefully consider'd and examin'd, whether it carries a stamp of Divine Authority along with it or no, which is not the Work of *Faith*, but of Reason and Thought. And when afterwards a Man's Conscience is convinc'd, and he has actually embrac'd a Doctrine or Dispensation as from Heaven, he is oblig'd (tho thro Ignorance he be mistaken in it) to conform himself to the Rules of it: and he is guilty of an Abuse of his Conscience and Reason, when he does not, as long as the Conviction of his Mind continues; because he subverts the Order that God has establish'd in the reasonable Nature of Man, by offering Violence to a Power set up by God himself, to be a Guide to, and a Guard upon our Actions. So that 'tis as clear as any thing can be, that the *Christians* upon one *Hypothesis*, are accountable only by the Law of Nature; and therefore, have a much less perplex'd and dangerous reckoning to make, than these Gentlemen have, who upon the other *Hypothesis*, must answer whatever Charges are brought in against them, both by *Law* and *Gospel* too.

SECT.

SECT. XXXVII.

Secondly, *THERE are some heinous and very aggravating Circumstances attending the Incredulity of the* Deists, *which are wholly impossible in the Case of the* Christians: And therefore the Danger they are expos'd to, is proportionably greater.

They can't but be conscious to themselves of what I mean, since they know well enough, what horrid Work has been made amongst them, with all things that relate to the Gospel of *Jesus Christ*. I shall not need to tell them, how far they have presum'd to go in their Remarks, upon the Birth and Life, the Death, Resurrection and Ascension of our Blessed Saviour; the Mission of the Holy Ghost, and the Inspiration of the Apostles, together with all the Miracles wrought to seal the Truth and Divine Authority of the Christian Faith. In some of these Articles I believe, they have out-done the very *Scribes* and *Pharisees*. However, I make no doubt to say, that in *Christian* Countries *Christ* has suffer'd, at least as much as from those that crucify'd him. These indeed nail'd his Body to the Tree; but that direful Action was committed but once, whereas the others repeat the Crime, crucifying him to themselves afresh every Day, and putting him to open shame. The *Mahometans*, who honour him with the venerable Titles of the * *Word and Power of God*; would not hear, without an Excess of Horror, how he is treated by those who

* *Elmacin. Hist. Saracen.* C. 7. P. 3. *Edit. Ludg. Batav.*

are

are baptiz'd into his Name. And tho they believe very differently from what we do, yet their own *Prophet* has taught them so much Respect, and so high an Esteem for ours; that should they be witnesses to the Affronts we offer him here, they would be ready to revenge them upon us. This is certain, that the Enemies of *Christ Jesus* must not talk of him to those People at the rate they do to one another. And I think 'tis very hard, that *Turks* and *Arabians*, that *Moors* and other People, upon whom we so freely bestow the Name of Barbarians and Infidels, should need to be call'd in for Monitors, to teach Men (that call themselves *Christians)* good Manners in such a Case as this.

Now these Gentlemen should consider, *That if they happen to be in the Wrong, here's all this, over and above the grand Mistake, to be accounted for.* It is not only the bare Deception, that will be laid to their Charge; that is, taking the Gospel for an Imposture, when it was indeed a Divine Revelation, and believing *Christ Jesus* to be a Deceiver, when he was in reality the Saviour of Mankind: But besides that, there's the Spleen and Malignity of their Unbelief, the virulent Satyr and Reproach with which they have persecuted his Name and Character, and blasted the Religion he has establish'd in the World. They have not been contented to deny the Divine Authority of the Gospel themselves, but have propagated their Prejudices in the most invidious and disgraceful manner, made Parties to flout and scoff at *Christianity*, and open'd as many *Mouths* to rail at the Author of it, as they possibly could. Now this is flagrant, beyond all possibility of Excuse. Men may be Enemies to an Opinion, without Rancour and Injurious

Malice,

Malice; and an Error is prodigiouſly heightned, by being accompany'd with ſuch Circumſtances as theſe. But on the other hand, if we ſuppoſe the *Chriſtians* to be deluded in this grand Point, there's nothing of this black and heinous Nature in their Miſtake. It conſiſts in a wrong-plac'd Zeal and Devotion, but 'tis infinitely remote from all evil Affections. Such Aggravations as Inſult and Defiance of Heaven, are utterly incompatible with it. If the Doctrine of *Chriſt's Reſurrection* be falſe, the *Chriſtians* have paid Divine Honours where they were not due; and if the Doctrine of *Chriſt's Reſurrection* be true, have not theſe Gentlemen refus'd to pay them where they were due? If the former be Idolatry, what ſort of Name muſt we give the latter? Is it leſs than Sacrilege to rob God of his Honour? Is it ſhort of Blaſphemy, to make his Son and Meſſenger an Impoſtor? Now ſuppoſe theſe Charges on each ſide to ballance one another; yet there are diſmal Circumſtances on the part of the *Deiſts*, which will infallibly turn the Scale. Let miſtaken *Blaſphemy* be oppos'd to miſtaken *Idolatry*; yet the endleſs Catalogue of Outrages and Affronts, which comes in with the former, and is impoſſible in the latter Caſe, does, I think, make the ſcores very far from being equal on both ſides. In ſhort, their Sin is of a terrible Complexion, and fearfully aggravated; which can never be ſaid with any Truth of the Crime which they object to the *Chriſtians*.

And therefore they muſt pardon us, if we inſiſt upon it; *That for this very Reaſon, the Conſequences of their Deception, muſt needs be incomparably more dangerous and fatal, than thoſe of ours.*

SECT.

SECT. XXXVIII.

BESIDE all this, 'tis to be consider'd too, That *the* Christians (upon the *Hypothesis* that they are deceiv'd) *have never made any Advantage by their Mistake, with respect to the present World; but instead of gaining more Pleasure and Liberty, have expos'd themselves to incomparably greater Sufferings, and endur'd more ungrateful Confinements than any other sort of Men.* But Matters are quite otherwise with the *Deists*; *for they make their Belief that the Gospel is an Imposture, turn to a very good Account, and serve them to many useful Purposes in the present Life:* And this makes their Case much less compassionable, if the Gospel should prove to be a Divine Revelation, than that of the *Christians*, if it should be an Imposture. For those that have been miserable under a Mistake, are vastly greater Objects of Pity, than those who have made use of that Error, to enjoy a World of Pleasures, which without it they could never have done.

SECT. XXXIX.

BUT to conclude, the great Point that should employ our best Thoughts and Cares on both sides, is, *Who have the most solid and rational Grounds to support the Belief they adhere to; whether they who take this Doctrine for a Delusion, or we who receive it as a Divine Truth?* For this Rule must be laid down as a thing of the utmost

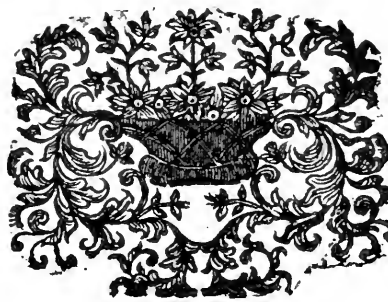
utmoſt Conſequence both to them and to us, *viz.* that by the eternal Laws of Juſtice and right Reaſon, which the Author of all things (who is abſolute eſſential Reaſon and Juſtice) will obſerve in dealing with all his Creatures, the Puniſhments inflicted on Men, for their bad Conduct in the Matters of their Salvation, will be proportion'd to their want of Care and Diligence to inform themſelves aright, and to argue rationally upon thoſe Informations. And therefore, that thoſe Perſons are certain to fare the worſt, who have examin'd things the leaſt, made the leaſt obvious and natural Deductions from them; and who have gone the fartheſt out of the way, of all the Methods of Reaſoning univerſally receiv'd amongſt Mankind; either to believe what they ought not to have believ'd, or to make themſelves Unbelievers, in a Caſe where their Faith was requir'd.

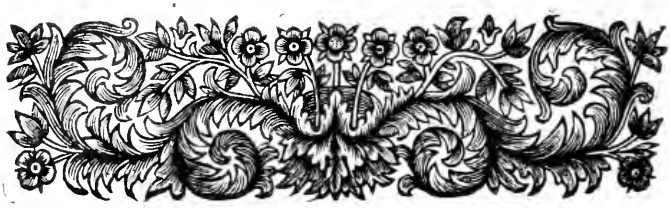
From whence we'll draw this *Coroll. That if the* Chriſtians *have a more fair and rational Plea to make at laſt, before the Divine Tribunal, for their Belief of the* Reſurrection of Chriſt *(ſuppoſing it to be a Fiction) than the* Deiſts *can make for their Infidelity, (ſuppoſing the* Reſurrection *to be a real Truth) Then theſe Gentlemen will be more ſadly expos'd if the* Reſurrection of Chriſt *be a Truth, than the* Chriſtians *can be if it prove to be otherwiſe.*

Therefore, what remains for them to do, is, to enquire with all poſſible Care, into the Grounds of their Denial of this ſo important a Point, the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt:* And, comparing thoſe Reaſons with the others, upon which the *Chriſtians* are perſuaded to believe it, to ſee whether they don't deviate vaſtly more, from all the Methods of Reaſoning univerſally approv'd

prov'd and eſtabliſh'd among Men, by their Denial, than the *Chriſtians* do by their Aſſent: For if they do, their Danger is as much greater, as the Irrationality of their Proceeding is more. And if the *Chriſtians* in believing this Doctrine, are found to argue upon thoſe *ſure Principles*, which the unprejudic'd Reaſon of Mankind, and the Laws of the World we live in, do both conſpire to juſtify; then ſince thoſe Gentlemen cannot poſſibly proceed upon the ſame Principles, to disbelieve it, 'tis plain, that they are moſt deſperately expos'd, as long as they continue in their Unbelief. Let them therefore bring this matter that I propoſe to a fair Trial, and do it with infinitely more Zeal and Application, than they would ſearch after any Truth in *Philoſophy*, from the Diſcovery of which, they could expect the greateſt Glory, and the Applauſe of all the learned World. And I hope the following Diſcourſe may be of ſome uſe, to help them to make this great Experiment without Prejudice; and as becomes Men, who have only Truth in view, and believe it is a Matter of ſome Importance, to find it out in the preſent Caſe.

The End of the Firſt Part.





Part the Second,

Containing the General Principles, on which the Doctrine of Christ's Resurrection *is establish'd.*

CONTENTS.

SECT.

SECT. I.

AVING hitherto prepar'd the way to our great Design, by some short Discourses on such Heads, as seem'd fit to possess both *Christians* and *Deists*, with a just Sense of the Importance of the Matter in Dispute: I shall now proceed to shew these Gentlemen, what Principle I intend to make use of, in order to evince to them, the unquestionable Certainty of the *Resurrection of Jesus Christ*.

And this Principle, in general is, *The Evidence afforded for it, from whence the Truth of this Doctrine may be fairly and justly infer'd.*

And therefore in the first Place, I argue thus, *That there is such an Evidence for the* Resurrection of Jesus Christ, *as actually induces an Obligation on all Men* (to whom that Evidence is fairly propos'd, and who are capable of arguing upon it, after a due and regular manner) *to give their Assent to it as a certain Truth.* Having laid down this Proposition, my next Step is to the Consideration of the infinite Perfections of the *great Author and Governour of the Universe*; which these Gentlemen (by their Principles) are no less forward to own and adore, than the *Christians* themselves are.

And here I must advance this Proposition, *That 'tis utterly impossible, that the Supreme Governour of the World* (whose just and wise Providence presides over all things, and more especially over the Affairs and Concerns of reasonable Beings) *should ever countenance a notorious Falshood, with*

such an Evidence, as should lay an indispensible Obligation on rational Creatures, to give their Assent to it, as a real Truth.

SECT. II.

NOW from both these together, we shall be able to infer the main Conclusion, with all the Force and Perspicuity that can be. For if there be *such an Evidence*, for the *Resurrection of Jesus Christ*; and if the Perfections of God Almighty will not suffer or allow, that a Delusion should be recommended to the World with *such an Evidence:* It will fairly follow, *That this Doctrine of* Christ's Resurrection, *is not a Delusion, but a certain Truth*; or that it was undoubted Matter of Fact, *that he did rise from the Dead.* For if it had not been Matter of Fact, it had been impossible, that a Being of infinite Truth, Justice and Goodness (such as the *Deists* tell us they believe God to be) should ever have suffer'd it to pass amongst Men, with *such an Evidence*, as by all the Laws of Human Nature, and the World wherein we live, *should lay an indispensable Obligation on every capable Subject (to whom this Doctrine is represented, with its proper Evidences) to receive it as a certain Truth.*

This is the Scheme I intend to proceed upon, and the Consequence of it will be this; That if I produce solid and truly rational Proof, for the Propositions I have laid down, these Gentlemen will be oblig'd, either at once to throw off all Natural Religion, and rank themselves among those Unbelievers of the lowest Form, who deny the Being and Perfections of a God; or

or else by granting these Propositions, to grant the Conclusion likewise, and so admitting the Truth of this Doctrine, give us an Occasion of rejoicing with them, upon the score of the happy Change of their Minds.

To set this Argument therefore in a clear and convincing Light, these four things must be distinctly done.

First, *To shew what is meant by such an Evidence, as does infallibly oblige every capable Subject to whom it is justly and duly represented, to receive a thing as Truth and Matter of Fact, for the Proof of which, such Evidence is alledg'd.*

Secondly, *To demonstrate, that an Evidence so qualify'd, as I shall now explain, and represented in such manner, and to such a Subject, as I have already suppos'd; does actually oblige, to a full and firm Belief of a thing propos'd, as real Truth and Matter of Fact.*

Thirdly, *That 'tis impossible the Divine Providence should ever countenance an Imposture* (or which is the same thing, permit or suffer it to be countenanc'd) *with an Evidence of such a Nature as this.*

Fourthly, *That there is actually such an Evidence for the* Resurrection of Jesus Christ, *as does fully come up to all the Characters and Conditions of an Evidence, which directly obliges Human Understanding to yield its Assent.* I shall allot this Second Part of this Treatise, to the three first of these Heads; and bestow the third entirely, upon the fourth and last of them.

SECT. III.

FOR the *First*, The Evidence I here intend, may be thus deſcrib'd.

'Tis ſuch, as being impartially weigh'd and conſider'd, by the free Uſe of a Man's Reaſon, in all the common and allow'd ways of uſing it; does not only more powerfully perſuade him to a Belief of the Thing propos'd, than any Objections to the contrary, when duly ſtated and ſet in a fair Light, can diſſuade him from the Belief of that thing; but alſo ſuch, which if a Man ſhould diſown and reject, he muſt neceſſarily be forc'd upon ſuch ſort of Conſequences, as the genuine and diſintereſted Senſe of Mankind would condemn as Abſurd and Wrong; and which even the Perſon himſelf concern'd (without making uſe of ſome bad Arts, by which his Underſtanding may be ſuppos'd to be manag'd, contrary to its native Tendency) would not be able to digeſt, when he came to examine and reflect upon them, in a cool and well-diſpos'd Temper. So that upon a juſt and cautious ballancing of the *Momenta* on both ſides, *viz.* The *Force of the Evidence, and that of the Objections*; a Man finds the former ſufficient to furniſh all thoſe Reaſons for the Aſſent of his Mind, that the Nature and Conditions of the Caſe propos'd will admit of; and that the latter are not ſufficient to take off or invalidate ought of thoſe Reaſons: and that therefore, in a fair and regular way of Proceeding, without Sophiſtry, Prejudice, or any unnatural ſtraining for a Concluſion, he may proceed to conclude matters

matters to be in reality, according as the Evidence propounded does repreſent them to be.

In a word, Whatſoever Evidence in any Caſe, affords all thoſe Media, which are neceſſary to make a perſpicuous natural Concluſion, and to ſolve whatever Difficulties occur, upon ſuch Principles as (in all reſembling Caſes) Mankind univerſally agree, to argue themſelves into a juſt Aſſurance and Satisfaction by: Such an Evidence, I ſay, does actually oblige every Perſon, who is duly inform'd of the Nature of it, and is capable of arguing in a juſt and regular manner thereupon; to aſſent to the thing propos'd, as real Truth and Matter of Fact.

SECT. IV.

AS to the Evidence I have here deſcrib'd, there are theſe things to be obſerv'd concerning it.

Firſt, *That this is not the Evidence which accompanies ſtrict and perfect Demonſtration; as Demonſtration is underſtood by the Logicians or Mathematicians.* For tho all accurate Demonſtration muſt neceſſarily have ſuch Properties as theſe; yet every kind of Proof that has theſe Properties, is not accurate Demonſtration: Becauſe compleat Demonſtration does in its own Nature, involve and require ſome peculiar Conditions, which can by no means agree to ſome other ſorts of Proof, which yet may come up to all thoſe Conditions, that the Evidence I have deſcrib'd does comprehend.

SECT. V.

Secondly, *AND therefore, an Evidence of this Nature does not force or extort the Assent of the Understanding, as that of rigid Demonstration does.*

How the Mind is influenc'd by Demonstration, and how by other sort of Proof; I shall discourse more at large by and by: In the mean time, this must be laid down as an undoubted Rule, *That some Proofs may oblige us to yield the Assent of our Understandings, which yet do not extort that Assent from us*; *or* (speaking in the common Sense of the Philosophers) *inevitably compel us to yield it.* Every one will know what sort of Compulsion it is that I do, and must intend here: *It is such as the Understanding suffers, when a just and accurate Demonstration is propounded to it.* The Power of such Proof as this is plainly irresistible. It will not suffer the Mind to remain in doubt or suspence, but with a superior Authority exacts its assent, and reduces it to a Compliance. Instead of exerting a contrary Act of Dissent, we cannot abide indifferent in such a case as this; but yield we must, even tho it be ever so contrary to our Inclinations. The Reason of this is, from the *specifical Nature* of those sort of Proofs we call Demonstrations; which proceeding from such Principles as are most deeply radicated in our Minds, and perfectly congenial with them, they assault us with something drawn from the inmost Recesses of our own Constitution, and so make their way into us with infinite Speed and Facility.

Other

Other Proofs there are, whose Principles, tho strictly congruous and sutable to our rational Natures, yet are not so near a-kin to them as the former; and therefore do not insinuate themselves into us with that wonderful Ease and Advantage, that those of strict Demonstration do. From whence it comes to pass, that there is more scope left us to argue and enquire about them; to examine the Congruity and just Connection of the Premises one with another, and their Tendency to infer a convincing legitimate Conclusion: which Disquisition is incomparably abridg'd, and even almost quite prevented, in the Case of rigid Demonstration, by the naturalness of the Principles, and the bright easy way of disposing and linking them with one another. However, these other Proofs (I will not say may persuade, for that is not the Case, but) may peremptorily oblige the Assent of our Minds; tho they do not command it in that magisterial way, that scientifical or demonstrative Ones do. For they may present Truth to us, by such a concatenation of Steps and Consequences, as may render it absolutely Just and Rational for us to acknowledg and receive it as such; tho the Process be different from those, which are form'd by the strict Rules of Logick or Mathematicks. And if they may do this, they may oblige: For we are under an *eternal Obligation* to act justly and rationally.

I have hitherto shewn (in these two Particulars) what is not intended or asserted in the Evidence mention'd.

To shew therefore what I do intend by it; I say,

SECT.

SECT. VI.

Thirdly, *THAT which I have describ'd, is such an Evidence in general, as obliges the Understanding of a reasonable Creature to yield its assent, in all Cases where we have not the Testimony of Sense or rigorous Demonstration, to convince us of the truth of things.*

And I say farther, that no sort of Evidence below or short of this, is sufficient to engage the Assent of our Minds; has Force or Authority enough to challenge us as rational Creatures, to receive that as Truth, for the Proof of which, such Evidence is alledg'd. An Evidence of an inferior Character may represent things so far plausible and credible, as to be a sufficient ground for us to proceed upon in ordinary Cases; but it does not lay an *Obligation*, or make it strictly just and necessary for us to yield the Assent of our Understandings, and receive those things as positively true and real. Because no Considerations can be sufficient grounds for the entire Acquiescency and Repose of our Minds, in any thing as Truth; but such as are plain and perspicuous, will hold firm and good under all Examinations, and are no way liable to solid rational Exceptions.

SECT. VII.

I Shall now in the ſecond Place, demonſtrate the obligatory Nature of an Evidence which is thus qualify'd, or which comes up to theſe Conditions. And this I ſhall do, from theſe *two general Conſiderations*, viz. *The Conſtitution of Human Nature*; *and the ſtrict Obligations we lie under, to own or ſubmit to moral Proof and Evidence.* Theſe Topicks will abundantly furniſh us with matter, to conclude the indiſpenſable Obligation ſuch an Evidence lays on Mankind.

I ſhall begin the Argument from the firſt of theſe Conſiderations, namely, *The Frame and Conſtitution of Human Nature.* And that I may do this with more advantage, it will not be amiſs to divide the Work into theſe three Branches.

Firſt, I ſhall ſhew, *that the infinitely perfect and glorious Author of our Beings, muſt needs have eſtabliſh'd a certain Law or Order, in the reaſonable Nature of Man, with reſpect to the Acts and Operations of his Mind*; *according to which he ſhould be oblig'd to exert his Faculties upon proper Motives and Inducements, when preſented to him.* That he would not fail, in our very Creation, to make ſutable Impreſſions upon our Natures for that End and Purpoſe; and conſequently not leave us to acquire Diſpoſitions and Inclinations, to act as intelligent Creatures ſhould do; merely from Art and Education, from Cuſtom and Practice, or the Examples of others.

Secondly, *That Human Nature is however ſo made and conſtituted, that it is in our Power to invert*

invert that Order, or to proceed contrary to the Obligation of that Law, which God has eſtabliſh'd in us.

Thirdly, *I ſhall evince, that it is apparently agreeable to that Order, which God has eſtabliſh'd in the reaſonable Nature of Man; and that it muſt of neceſſity be according to his original Intent and Deſign* (in giving us ſuch a Power, as that we call Underſtanding) *that we ſhould yield the Aſſent thereof, or receive things as true, upon ſuch an Evidence as I have already deſcrib'd.*

And from hence it will be an unavoidable Conſequence, that an Evidence of this Nature, whenever propounded to us, ought not to leave us heſitant and indifferent; but (as it does, in the Nature of Things oblige us) ſo it ſhould fully determine us, actually to yield our Aſſent.

SECT. VIII.

I Begin with the firſt of theſe *Propoſitions*, which being the Foundation on which the preſent Argument is built, requires that we beſtow ſome particular Care and Application upon the proof of it.

Whether it be what the *Deiſts* would ſolemnly and poſitively deny or no (at leaſt *all* of them) I will neither affirm, nor am I concern'd to know. I am ſure 'tis of great Importance to me, and (how plain ſoever it may appear) it is not ſelf-evident; and theſe are ſufficient grounds to juſtify a formal Proof of it. Beſides, 'tis a common practice with ſome People, to be as ready to deny, whatever is not made manifeſtly abſurd for them to deny; as to diſclaim all doubt about it, when once they ſee it ſo well prov'd,

prov'd, that it must be ridiculous for them to do so. In order to the clearing this Point therefore, I shall offer the following Considerations.

First, *It casts an Imputation of downright Folly and Imprudence, or of Weakness and Impotence on God, to suppose him to make any sort of Being so, as to be unfit to answer what must be his End in creating such a Being, if we allow him to have any End at all therein.*

For what End and Purpose (for example) is such a Creature, as what we call a rational one, made? Every one must grant, *that it was to act Rationally and Intelligently, as a Creature of such a Rank and Order ought to do.* But for any Being to act without proper Qualifications for Action, is a contradiction. And Principles of Action, are indispensably necessary Qualifications for it. And original Dispositions or Inclinations to act, are the certain and undoubted Principles of Action. If so; then I ask in the next place, *Would the Author of Nature have obtain'd the proper and direct End of creating such a Creature as Man, by giving him a bare rational Capacity, and sending him into the World, wholly unfurnish'd of all those determinate Principles of Action, which belong to him* (not as an Animal only, but) *as an intelligent Creature?* No: but he would have left the most *beautiful and excellent part of his Work undone:* Because *Being or Capacity*, fitted to display it self by suitable *Acts and Operations*, includes something infinitely more Noble, than still inactive Being or Capacity without it. Add to this, *That all wise Agents do not only propose a certain Scope and Design to themselves, in what they do, but intend also to render the Effects of their Skill, actually useful and serviceable for something; by putting them out of their Hands, in such*

a

a Condition, that that Usefulness may discover it self. And will he who is perfect in Wisdom, do less? A rational Nature, undispos'd, unfitted to exert and display it self in a course of suitable Operations, is an imperfect unaccountable Something: 'Tis not a finish'd Creature, but the Outlines or rude Draught of one. 'Tis such an Embryo, as could never come out of the Hands of that God, who is wise in Heart, and wonderful in Counsel; who leaves none of his Works for our after-polishing and correcting; but makes them all at first, worthy of our highest Praise and Admiration. But this leads me to consider,

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SECT. IX.

Secondly, THAT *'tis a farther particular Reflection upon the infinite Perfections of God, to suppose that he has left us to acquire Dispositions and Inclinations to act as intelligent Creatures should do; by such uncertain despicable, and precarious Means, as Education, Custom, and the Examples of others here in the World.*

For at this rate, 'tis not God, but *we* that make up the Man. He only furnishes a proper Substance, but (according to this *Hypothesis*) leaves it intirely to our disposal, to infuse Principles into it, and dress it up for a rational Agent, as we shall think fit. That which renders our Nature truly noble and lovely, is its exerting it self in so many fine and wonderful ways of Operation. The various Acts of the Understanding about *Truth*, the Efforts and Tendencies of the Will to *Good*; how excellent are they, and how admi-

admirably fitted to the End of making us easy and happy? And can our Teaching, or all the Examples we give, mould Human Nature into so beautiful a Frame; shew the Mind how to argue and conclude, and direct the other Powers to their several Objects? 'Tis the highest degree of Impiety and Presumption, to imagine, *that any such Work as this was ever intended, for our Art and Industry to perform.* And besides, if we consider the Folly and Weakness, the Rashness and Precipitancy, the Partiality and ill Management, that has all along prevail'd amongst Mankind; we shall easily be induc'd to conclude, without any more ado, *that God never design'd to leave us in one anothers Hands.* To adorn and furnish out a reasonable Creature, who is to glorify his Maker, and bear a useful part in the Employments of Life, by the means of those Qualifications; is an Office of too much Importance ever to be committed to Parents, Nurses, and School-masters, or any other inferior Managers of Human Nature.

SECT. X.

Thirdly, 'TIS farther to be consider'd, *That this Hypothesis quite takes away the moral Government of God, and supposes him to rule Men by no other Laws, than those by which he commands the Brutal or Inanimate part of the Creation.* For if he that is the Author of our Nature, does not make such Impressions on it, as should dispose and prompt us to a sutable and regular Behaviour of our selves; we cannot be imagin'd either to please or displease him by any

any ſort of Actions that we perform, let them be what they will. Becauſe (by this *Hypotheſis)* all the Inclinations and Diſpoſitions which belong to us, as intelligent Creatures, are the mere reſult of the *Management and Inſtitution*, we have had from our Fellow-Creatures about us. What they pleaſe to put into us, we take, and we act accordingly. If they ſet us right, and we do ever ſo well, there is no Obedience to God in the Caſe; for we do but as we were taught, and becauſe we were taught to do ſo by them. If on the other hand, we act ever ſo wrong, we break no Laws of God, we go contrary to no Manifeſtations of the Will of our Creator; and therefore, we can no more juſtly incur his Diſpleaſure by this means, having no Orders nor Injunctions from him to obſerve; than we can pleaſe and honour him, by that mechanical Regularity of Action, which we derive merely from the Authority or the Impulſes of other Men: For if no Law, then no Tranſgreſſion on the one hand, as well as no Obedience on the other. We are not capable either of Vertue or Vice; and therefore neither of receiving any Moral Good or Evil, at the Hands of our Creator. We ought never to ſuppoſe, that God either rewards or puniſhes, in the preſent Life: That the moſt ſignal Bleſſings beſtow'd on us are Favours, or the moſt direful Calamities, Expreſſions of his Wrath and Indignation. We ſhould conclude, that he is neither pleas'd or diſpleas'd, when any of theſe things happen to the World; but that as we are perfectly indifferent to him, ſo is he to us; never concerning himſelf about any of our Actions or Affairs, nor caring how things go on, whether well or ill, here below.

And

And thus God Almighty is fairly excluded, from all Interest in the Government of the Rational (and therefore the most Excellent) part of the Creation; or at least made to administer it with respect to Men, just as to the viler Animals, or even insensible Bodies themselves. These are all of them subject to his general Dominion and Providence, and so are we, and that is all. Such a Scheme would be much more tolerable in a profess'd * *Epicurean*; than in Men, who may pretend, by the advantage of wonderful modern Discoveries, to demonstrate the Being and Perfections of a God, after another sort of manner, than any of the antient *Philosophers* ever could do.

I shall only say this, that if the *Deists* can fancy a Divinity to themselves, capable of acting after this imprudent fantastical manner, they are at liberty to do what they please; but I declare for my own part, that I should never think him worthy of my Service and Adoration: Nor are they the Men they would pass for in the World, if they have such despicable Notions of God as these are; since 'tis strictly demonstrable, from the necessary Attributes of his Nature, that he cannot be such a one, as this horrid *Hypothesis* represents him to be.

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* Omnis enim per se Divûm Natura necesse est
Immortali Ævo summâ cum Pace fruatur,
Semota a rebus nostris, sejunctaque longè,
Nam privata Dolore omni, privata Periclis
Ipsa suis pollens Opibus, nihil indiga nostri,
Nec bene Promeritis capitur, nec tangitur Irâ.
Lucret. Lib. 1.

Quod beatum est, & immortale, id nec habet negotium, nec exhibet cuiquam. *Cic. de Nat. Deor. Lib.* 1.

SECT. XI.

Fourthly, I Shall conclude this *Head*, with a Question concerning the *First Man*, which I must desire these Gentlemen to resolve; and if I mistake not, let them answer which way they will, they'll find some perplex'd Consequences attending the Solution they shall think fit to offer us. In proposing this Question, I take it for granted, *that they believe there was a First Man; or that the World has not gone on at this rate, in a Succession of Fathers and Sons, from all Eternity.* For otherwise, they are not the Persons I am (in this Discourse) concern'd withal. And besides, this is not a Point of pure *Christian Theology*; for if it were, I would not impose it upon them, without particular Proof. It is not only *Moses*'s Doctrine, but that of the * *Poets* too; and this Authority, I hope, is sufficient to put

* *Præterea si nulla fuit Genitalis* Origo
Terraï & Cœli, semperque Æterna *fuere*, &c.
Lucret. Lib. 5.
——*Ut his Exordia* Primis
Omnia, & ipse tener Mundi concreverit Orbis.
Virg. Eclog. 6.
Cum prorepserunt Primis *Animalia Terris*,
Mutum & turpe Pecus, &c. Horat. Lib. 1. Sat. 3.
Ante Mare & Terras, & (quod tegit omnia) Cœlum,
Unus erat Toto Naturæ Vultus in Orbe,
Quem dixere Chaos——&c. Ovid. Metam. Lib. 1.
Ἤτοι μὲν πρώτιστα Χάος γένετ', αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
Γαῖ' εὐρύστερνος, &c. Hesiod. Theogon.
Ἐν δὲ Γαῖαν ἔτευξε, ἐν δ' οὐρανὸν, ἐν δὲ θάλασσαν,
Ἠέλιόν τ' ἀκάμαντα, σελήνην τε πλήθουσαν.
Homer. Iliad. 18.

— Μῆνον

put it out of all doubt with them: Tho I must add, *That all that the* Poets *say upon this Head, as well as several others that make a very beautiful Figure in their Compositions*, are plain Transcriptions from *Moses*, the most antient Historian in the Universe. And this *Justin Martyr* has perspicuously made out; and in the same Discourse as plainly asserted and prov'd (to his Countrymen the *Greeks)* the * *Antiquity* of the *Mosaick* Writings, before those of all their own *Historians*, *Poets*, *Philosophers*, or *Legislators* whatsoever.

However, to pass by these things at present, I am concern'd only in the supposition of some *First Man*; not caring in what manner, or how long ago he was created, or what his Name was: tho *Justin* refers the *Greeks* to one of their own † *Oracles*, which call'd him by the Name of *Adam*, as *Moses* had done long before.

Now the Question I would propose here, is, *Whether this first Parent of Mankind was created with Dispositions and Inclinations to exert his Facul-*

——— ———Μῆνον δ' ἐσόρα κόσμοιο ἀνακλᾶ·
Εἷς ἔς, ἀυτογενής, ἑνὸς ἔκγονα πάντα τέτυκται,
Orph. apud Just. de Monar. *P.* 156.

Εἷς ταῖς ἀληθείαισιν, εἷς ἐστιν Θεὸς,
Ος οὐρανὸν πέπηγεν, καὶ Γαῖαν μακρὰν, &c. Sophocuti apud Justin. in Cohor. ad Græcos. *P.* 83. Et de Monarch. *P.* 154.

* ——Ἵνα γνῶτε ὅτι πάντων τῶν παρ' ὑμῖν, εἴτε συγγρῶν, εἴτε ποιητῶν, εἴτε ἱστοριογράφων, ἢ φιλοσόφων, ἢ νομοθετῶν, πολλῷ πρεσβύτατος γέγονεν, ὁ πρῶτος τῆς θεοσεβείας διδάσκαλος ἡμῶν Μωϋσῆς γεγονὼς, ὡς δηλοῦσιν ἡμῖν αἱ τῶν Ελλήνων ἱστορίαι. Justin. Mart. Cohort. ad Græcos. *Pag.* 62. Edit. Oxon.

† Ὃν πρῶτον πλάσας μεθ' ὅπων, Αδὰμ δὲ κεκλήκασι. Justin. Ibid.

ties, as an intelligent Creature ought to do, upon proper Motives and Inducements; or whether he was not? That is in other words, *Whether a certain determinate Law, was impreſs'd on his reaſonable Nature, for this End or Purpoſe, by his Creator, or no?*

If it be ſaid, that there was not: I muſt ask then, how did he come to obtain Principles and Diſpoſitions, proper for a Rational Nature to act and govern it ſelf by? There are but theſe three ways poſſible in the very Nature of the thing, *either ordinary Teaching and Tradition; extraordinary Infuſion by God; or the Influence of External Objects:* I mean the various Works of God in the viſible Creation, preſenting themſelves to the Senſes, and giving Occaſion to the Mind to exert it ſelf, and by that means to fix ſuch a Biaſs or Tendency to Action in Human Nature, as we call an original impreſs'd or congenial Law.

SECT. XII.

NOW the firſt of theſe Methods, *could not poſſibly take place here.*

The ſecond, *impeaches the Divine Wiſdom and Prudence.*

And the third, *amounts to a plain begging of the Queſtion.*

Firſt, 'Tis plain, that the firſt of theſe Methods could never take place in this Caſe. For we are ſpeaking of the firſt Man; in which caſe, Parents and Nurſes, and all other Human Inſtructors, are totally excluded. And we cannot imagine, that the venerable Head of our Race

Race ſhould be ſent to the *Birds*, *Beaſts* and *Fiſhes*, to know how to uſe his own Underſtanding, and learn the Deportment fit for a reaſonable Creature.

Secondly, To create a bare Rational Nature firſt, and then to impart thoſe neceſſary Principles of Action afterwards, by *extraordinary Infuſion*; is going ſo far about, to do what was ſimply neceſſary to be done, and might have been done by an infinitely wiſe and powerful Agent, with as much Facility, at the very firſt Formation of a Creature: I ſay, 'tis taking ſuch a Compaſs, and is ſuch an indirect unaccurate ſort of proceeding; that we cannot make our ſelves ſo guilty, as to aſcribe it to God, who cannot but know and chuſe the moſt perfect and lovely ways of working, in all that he does. And ſurely, to accompliſh noble Ends by the moſt compendious Methods of Operation, is in the very Nature of the thing, a principal Perfection. 'Tis infinitely more conciſe and beautiful (and therefore more worthy of God) to ſet out a Creature, finiſh'd and compleat at firſt; than to make a Maſs of Being, to be tun'd and diſpos'd to proper Modes of Action, by ſome after Effects of Divine Skill and Omnipotence.

SECT. XIII.

Thirdly, I Say, that to ſuppoſe, *theſe Principles were acquir'd or contracted, by Contemplation of the Works of God in the viſible Creation; is manifeſtly to take the grand Point in Diſpute for granted.* The reaſon is, becauſe it ſuppoſes that Law in Human Nature (which I ſpeak of) to

be already fix'd and ſettled. For what is Contemplation, that includes no kind of Argumentation or Reflection? And where Argument and Reflection are; muſt there not be a Law eſtabliſh'd, by virtue of which a Creature who contemplates (and in that Contemplation argues and reflects) ſhould be inclin'd or prompted to argue and reflect in that manner, upon ſuch external Motives and Appearances? Of what uſe would ten thouſand Worlds of Objects be to an intelligent Creature, or a Being of a Rational Nature, which yet were purely paſſive, and void of all Diſpoſitions to exert that Nature, after a proper and ſutable manner? Tho Objects can impreſs the outward Organs, they can't work themſelves into the Subſtance of the Thinking Power (whatever it be) and create Efforts and Tendencies therein, to act after this or that manner, or to draw theſe Concluſions rather than others; if ſuch Principles of Operation were not there before.

And this is true to a Demonſtration, whatever we make the Human Mind to be; whether an immaterial Subſtance, or elſe a mere Syſtem of Matter.

SECT. XIV.

FOR ſuppoſe the Mind (firſt of all) to be *a Subſtance quite diſtinct from Matter, or of another kind of Eſſence, than thoſe Beings we call Bodies, are of.*

Then, I hope, it will be allow'd, that the Action of External Matter (that is, *Objects*) upon the *Incorporeal Senſories*, cannot poſſibly produce

duce in the *Incorporeal Mind*, ſuch ſort of *Phenomena* as thoſe are, which we call by the name of *Inclinations and Diſpoſitions*, to *remember*, *think*, and *judg* after this or that particular manner. For how ſhould the Impulſes of Matter be receiv'd, where no Matter is; or what effect ſhould they produce, upon a Being ſo infinitely Heterogeneal to Matter?

Suppoſe (in the ſecond place) *the Mind to be a mere Syſtem of Matter; and Thought to be nothing elſe but the Revolutions or Agitations of ſome finer Particles thereof. When the Organs of the Senſes are ſtruck by ſome Motions propagated from Objects abroad; we will ſuppoſe the Motions or Vibrations excited there, to be likewiſe continued to the Parts within.* So that whether by the means of the *Liquidum Nervorum* (contain'd in the Canals diſpers'd up and down the Machine) or by any other corporeal Medium or Inſtrument whatſoever; the Impulſe at laſt reaches that Orb, Vortex, or Syſtem of Matter, in the Motions of which, Thought doth peculiarly conſiſt. Here then we have Thought produc'd. This Object (be it what it will) has ſet the Particles a moving, and this Motion (I'll ſuppoſe) is my actual Cogitation or Knowledg of this Object.

But now Experience farther aſſures me, *that this Cogitation of ſuch an Object, is the occaſion of my making ſome Inferences or Concluſions therefrom; and all Concluſions are Propoſitions really diſtinct from the Premiſes which beget them.*

Therefore, the firſt Motions of actual Thought muſt generate other Motions really diſtinct from themſelves. For what rate of diſtinction there is between Premiſes and Concluſion, the ſame muſt of neceſſity be, between the Species of Motion which form Premiſes, and thoſe which ge-

nerate Conclusions. But the Parts of Matter, moving according to any possible determination, *cannot change their Directions, but by the Impulse of some External Force.* And therefore it is necessary, that we have some foreign Impulse to change their Direction in this case, that so we may have a distinct sort of Motion generated, that may produce a Conclusion.

Now this external Mover in the present Case, is either the first Object which struck the Senses, or some other different from it.

If it be the first, then it will produce the very same Agitations as before, and consequently there will be no different Motion generated to form a *Conclusion.* If it be another Object; how should that ever produce a Motion, which should be the occasion of my making some Inference concerning the first Object, which is totally different from it? How should the Vibrations excited by an Horse, lead me naturally to think of a Fleet of Ships; or some creeping Plant, to run into a Conclusion about the Properties of the fixed Stars?

So that then upon this *Hypothesis*, it were impossible ever to draw any Conclusions from External Appearances, or to infer one thing from another. And yet Experience shews me, that I am able to do this. As for Example:

I think a double Inference follows from this present Discourse, about the Operations of the Human Mind, *viz. That we are not compos'd of mere Matter and Motion; and that if we were, there yet would be something more than the bare Presence and Action of external Objects, requir'd to effect a proper Bias or Tendency in our Faculties, to exert themselves conformably thereto.* For by what has been said, 'tis demonstrable, that it can never be done

done by mere Matter and Motion, or blind Mechanical Impulſe.

So that now I ſay, to argue at this rate, is plainly to beg the Queſtion, and to take the great thing in Diſpute for granted.

From hence it follows, *That in the Caſe of the Firſt Man, an original impreſs'd Law muſt neceſſarily be allow'd.*

Now I ſay, if it were neceſſary and fit he ſhould be made ſo, why ſhould not the ſame reaſons hold with reſpect to us? We have all the need of ſuch an Inſtitution that he could poſſibly have, and more; as being otherwiſe entirely at the Mercy of our Fellow-Creatures, who are moſt of them but poorly qualify'd to impart Principles of Underſtanding, and give Laws for rational Beings, to govern themſelves by. It is beyond all things Abſurd and Precarious, to ſuppoſe, that the *Firſt Man* alone ſhould be thus happily qualify'd by his Maker; and all the reſt of his Offſpring, created under ſuch very deſpicable and miſerable Circumſtances.

And from theſe Conſiderations, I hope, the truth of the *firſt Propoſition* may be fully evinc'd, to all, who have any ſuch Notions of God, as will not ſuffer them to charge him with thoſe imprudent and indecent ways of Proceeding, which we ſhould be aſham'd to be charg'd with our ſelves.

SECT. XV.

THE ſecond thing propos'd, was to ſhew, *That tho a certain Law be eſtabliſh'd by God, in our reaſonable Natures, 'tis in our power notwith-*

withſtanding to act contrary to the Tenor thereof, or to exert our Minds after quite another manner, than that Law obliges us to.

And this we ſhall preſently find to be true, by reflecting but a little upon our own Conſtitution. Tho God has made us intelligent rational Beings, he has not made it eſſential to us to act rationally, and as we ought to do. He has not created us under a Mechanical Neceſſity, of conforming our ſelves perpetually to that wiſe Order, which is preſcrib'd to us in the Frame of our reaſonable Nature: Nor are we compel'd thereto, by any predetermining Force or Influence from him, as the Supreme Author and Agent of the Univerſe. To take this aright, we muſt conſider, that beſides *Underſtanding*, or a Power of Knowing, Arguing, and Reflecting upon things; God has endow'd us with another, which is of a very different Nature; and ſo adapted, as to be either extremely Beneficial, or Harmful to us, according to the Uſe we make of it. *This is Liberty, or free Will*, the Root of Moral Good and Evil, the Foundation of all Rewards and Puniſhments, the diſtinguiſhing Perfection of Man from the Creatures below him, and the genuine Cauſe of an infinite variety of Appearances in the Rational World. By the means of this Power, we can diſpoſe our ſelves to act, either in, or out of that Order and Decorum, which our wiſe and good Maker has appointed us to obſerve. We can conſider, what Law he has enjoin'd us to go by as reaſonable Creatures; and we can excite our ſelves to a juſt and ready Compliance with it: And on the other hand, we can *forbear* all that Thought and Conſideration; or if we do think, we can do it *careleſly* and negligently;

gently; either never come to rational Conclusions and Determinations at all, or (if we please) when we have made them, not put them in practice. The establish'd Order of Nature is, *That the Will should always act, in a just and regular subordination to the Dictates of the Understanding:* That the Mind as a sure Guide should go before, determining what is fit to be done and pursu'd, or omitted and avoided; and by that means, direct and lead on the Operations of this Faculty, which ought to chuse or refuse accordingly. And the Understanding being suppos'd to be rightly inform'd, we always act rationally and well, when things go on in this Course; the Mind duly prescribing, and the Will sweetly yielding to its Prescriptions, each Power keeping its proper Place and Office. But whether the Mind be duly inform'd or no, the same Law of Nature must always take place. Some sort of Conclusions must be made (whether they be just or unjust ones; whether plain and express, or only tacit and by Consequence) before the Will formally consents, and gives Orders to the executive Powers to exert themselves. Otherwise the Will of Man were not a noble rational Appetite, but a blind irrational one. For therefore we call it *Appetitus Rationalis*, because it is made to act *sub ductu Rationis*.

However, the Resolutions of the Understanding, even the most sound and positive ones, impose no manner of Necessity on the Will. For even the *last Dictate* it self, is but one of the Prerequisites to Action, and leaves the Will an intire and perfect Dominion over its own Act; which it may therefore either proceed to exert,

exert, or may ſuſpend and forbear, by its own formal native Liberty: Nay, except only in theſe two Caſes, *viz.* When the Object under Conſideration, is either Univerſal Good, or the Supreme and Chiefeſt Good *(Bonum in Communi*, or, *Summum Bonum)* the former of which is the *Adequate*, and the latter the *Principal* Object of the Will: I ſay, in all other caſes but theſe, where the thing propos'd is any particular or ſubordinate Good, not neceſſarily connected with that which is the Supreme; our Liberty extends here, not only to acting, or not acting, but alſo to the exerting of ſpecifically different, or contrary Acts: we can chuſe or refuſe, chuſe this or the contrary, as well as chuſe or ſuſpend the act of Choice. And this is what the Schoolmen, in their way of talking, mean by their diſtinction of Liberty, into *Libertas Contrarietatis, ſive Specificationis, & Contradictionis, vel Exercitii.* The Terms perhaps may ſeem obſcure (as moſt of theirs do) but they are juſt; and we all know by conſulting our ſelves, that there is ſomething in our Natures that has really laid a Foundation for the Uſe of them.

But to proceed; When the Underſtanding, well inſtructed and inform'd of the ſeveral Circumſtances of a Caſe, has drawn ſuch Concluſions from them, as are convenient and proper for us to manage our ſelves by, it has then done its Office; and what ought next to follow, is a ſutable compliance of the Will and Paſſions. But inſtead of this, the Decrees of the Mind are too often ſlighted; the Will anſwers by Averſion and Reluctancy, and prompts the inferior Powers to finiſh a Rebellion, begun by its own Obſtinacy. The Underſtanding is made to ſhift and alter its Reſolutions, to paſs from

one

one Sentence and Opinion to another, till it has fix'd on ſome one that will be grateful and pleaſing. So that altho it be the eſtabliſh'd Law in Human Nature, that the Dictates of this Faculty ſhould ſtill precede the Motions of the Will; yet in ſuch Caſes, the Underſtanding acts its part, as a Guide under abſolute Command, who muſt lead that Way only which is pointed out to him by another.

SECT. XVI.

IF it be enquir'd, how it comes about that we act after ſo prepoſterous and diſorderly a manner? That the Underſtanding which ſhould govern, comes to be thus govern'd and impos'd upon?

I anſwer, By the ill Uſe of our *Liberty*; by the undue Encouragements we can give, if we pleaſe, to the brutal Powers, our Paſſions and Affections; which were deſign'd to be the Servants, and not the Maſters of our Reaſon. The caſe lies here, *we can give our ſelves more ſcope than we ought to do, in our reliſh of ſenſible and corporeal Impreſſions.* We can be more pleas'd and affected with them than we ſhould be; and thereupon give a greater looſe to the Paſſions, than is conſiſtent with the Rules of that Government which we ought to keep up in our ſelves. By this means the Authority of the Mind is weakned, its Taſte vitiated and depraved; and 'tis diſpos'd to a tame and eaſy Compliance, with whatever is agreeable to the Bent of the ignobler Powers. The Conſequence of all is, *That by ſuch Encroachments as theſe, the*

Paſſions

Passions grow upon us, and work themselves more and more beyond due Bounds and Government. They importune and sollicit against the Resolves of the debilitated Mind; and by those unaccountable, tho powerful Charms, come to make the Understanding of a Party with them, and bribe it to pronounce on their side.

So that tho the Understanding, upon due deliberation in the Case propos'd, does at first make a just and right Conclusion, *Ex. Gr. This thing in the present Circumstances ought to be done, and the other should be forborn*; yet by the secret Influences of these Powers, which will recoil against the wholesom Determinations of right Reason, and reverse them too, if not carefully and vigorously defended; it comes to pass, that the former rational Sentence begins to lose its Authority, comes to be more faintly and languidly made, and is at last entirely drop'd; being exchang'd for another, more favourable on the side of the Passions.

SECT. XVII.

FROM what has been said, we may gather some useful *Corollaries*.

Coroll. 1. *'Tis plain from hence, how Men may be said to offend against Light and Knowledg.*

To hate Truth as Truth; that is, purely and formally under that Notion, is to be sure, impossible to any Rational Nature (even the *Diabolical* Nature, is not to be excepted in this case; at the bottom of all whose opposition to God and Goodness, eternal Falshood and Delusion lie.) But to hate Truth, as it may be very contrary

contrary to a Man's particular Interests and Affections, is not only possible, but very easy and common. And when Men suffer such Aversions as these to get ground in them, which they ought not to suffer, and which by a better use of their Liberty, they may prevent; when they render their Passions insolent and unruly by faulty Indulgence, or slackning the Reins of Government; and so debauch their Judgments into a corrupt and partial way of pronouncing, contrary to all foregoing sound Conclusions made concerning their Duty, when their Thoughts were serene and cool, and Reason maintain'd its Authority in their Souls: This, I say, is sinning against Knowledg to some purpose. And the Guilt of it lies here, that 'tis so much in a Man's power to take other Measures: He can think, he can look over and consult the solemn Decrees of an enlightned Practical Judgment, registred in his own Breast, from whence his Duty may be clearly known, whenever the Performance of it is disputed. There is no question, but the Aggravations which attend such Practices, are in some certain Cases, exceedingly more heinous than in others; so far, that according to the *Scripture-stile*, Men may be said to act *maliciously*, and in a peculiar Sense to sin *wilfully*, after they have receiv'd the Knowledg of the Truth. However, this is in some degree, more or less, the true State of the Case, with respect to all Men, who proceed in any vicious Course, contrary to the sober Dictates of their own Minds, or to any written or reveal'd Law of God. They are all wilful Sinners against the Truth. And the Source of all the Mischief is from hence, *That they will betray their Understandings, to the Insults and base Management of the*

the inferior Powers. Hence all the contradiction of their Actions to their ſtated Principles, their continual baffling and confuting themſelves, ſaying one thing and doing quite another:

——*Video Meliora, Proboque,*
Deteriora Sequor.

Things become Good and Evil to them by turns; and what they are forc'd to condemn at one time, they find Reaſons to approve and chuſe at another: That is, tho there are no Reaſons in the nature of the thing, yet the manag'd Judgment muſt make Reaſons for the preſent Occaſion; and when its own *Deterius* is the *Melius* of the Paſſions, muſt alter its Vote, and pronounce *Melius* too.

Coroll. 2. *The cauſe of all the wrong ſteps we make in Practice, is Immediately an erroneous Sentence of the Underſtanding; but Originally and Principally, the ill Uſe of Liberty, or the Power of the Will.*

Coroll. 3. *From hence appears, the Danger of not checking the Violence and Importunity of the ſenſitive Powers, in the firſt Aſſaults tending to a breach of Duty.*

SECT. XVIII.

COroll. 4. *The only Method to prevent or remedy theſe Evils, is an Habit of ſerious Thought and Conſideration.*

Not barely to think, but to dwell upon thoſe things that tend to impreſs the deepeſt Senſe of Duty and Danger upon the Mind. The neglect of

of this, is certainly the most fatal and pernicious Distemper of Mankind; that which creates all their Trouble and Uneasiness, brings on all their Danger, and sometimes terminates in absolute irretrievable Misery in this World, whatever happens in the next.

Now the performance of this great Duty, is the Joint-Business of the Understanding and the Will. To consider, is a proper Act of the Understanding; but a Man cannot consider, without being willing to do so. I don't speak of occasional or accidental Thought, but of solemn Meditations, such as the present Affair requires. Here, to be sure, the Will is deeply concern'd. A Man must both purpose and design it, and be dispos'd and enclin'd to it too. He must see just Reasons for doing it, and then submit to those Reasons; that is, chuse and embrace the Work; after which he actually applies to the Performance of it. So that the Understanding, first rouz'd by proper Motives, represents the Reasonableness, and presses the Necessity of the Duty; but then 'tis by a good Use of our Liberty, that we are determin'd to the doing of the thing it self, and break thro all the Difficulties that lie in our way.

Now 'tis a plain case, that we have a Power to do this: We can engage our Understandings in serious Contemplation, if we will; that is, we can determine and settle our selves to think, provided our Wills are dispos'd and inclin'd that way. And this appears from hence, *That if we begin to think of a Subject, we can stop, and put an end to that particular Contemplation when we please. And if we are pursuing one Thought, we can break off, and immediately divert to another very different from the former.* This we all know

to be true, and 'tis an Experiment that we can try at any time: However, as common and as cheap as it is, it ſhews us the command we have of our Minds, and to how good as well as how ill a Purpoſe we may manage them, if we think fit.

And therefore, I ſay, ſince by exerting our ſelves as we ought to do, we may bring our ſelves to a Habit of ſerious Conſideration; how juſt and reaſonable a thing is it that we ſhould ſet to it, when the Advantages of ſuch a Practice, as well as the Inconveniences we prevent by it, are ſo many and ſo great? For Conſideration impreſſes the Arguments to Duty, and makes them ſink deep into the Mind; and therefore, by this means, we encreaſe the Force, and ſtrengthen the Authority of the governing Faculty; which, to be ſure, muſt be of vaſt advantage. Whereas on the other hand, the neglect of this diſarms the Mind, renders it heedleſs and incautious, and ſo prepares the way for all thoſe Miſchiefs that follow upon its Subjection to the baſer and inferior Powers.

SECT. XIX.

BY what has been ſaid upon this ſecond Head, it appears, how capable we are of uſing our Minds otherways than we ought to do, as Rational Beings. If we are not capable of variety of Action, it could not be preſs'd upon us as matter of Duty and Obligation, to act after this or that particular manner: But 'tis in our Power to manage our ſelves as we ſhould not do. For God has made us free, as well as intelligent

telligent Creatures. But I come now to the last Head propos'd, *viz.*

Thirdly, To shew, *That 'tis perfectly agreeable to that original Law or Order which God has establish'd in our reasonable Natures (with respect to the Operations of our Minds) and to the very Design of such a Faculty as Understanding is; that we should receive those things as true and real, for the Proof of which, such an Evidence as that before describ'd, is alledg'd.*

SECT. XX.

IN order to the making out of this Proposition, let us first consider, *What our own Knowledg and Experience of our selves, assures us to be plain Matter of Fact in this case.*

We know, that where Proofs of this Nature, and of these Conditions, are offer'd to evince the Truth of things to us, we do actually receive those things as true, and rest in them as such: And that it is not only by Accident, or upon extraordinary Occasions that we do thus; but 'tis our stated Practice, and the Practice of Mankind universally. We are conscious to our selves, of such an Aptitude or Disposition to act after this manner, that we make our selves calm and easy, by yielding and giving way to it. It produces such a pleasing sort of Tranquillity in our Minds, as ought to arise, and does arise from all such Acts, wherein we conform our selves duly to the Impulses of pure unadulterated Nature. On the other hand, we feel that such Evidence of Truth is not to be withstood without Pain and Remorse. There

are ſome Principles within us, which will recoil upon us, when we ſet our ſelves to baffle it: 'Tis ſwimming againſt the Stream, labouring againſt Biaſs and Conſtitution, the Reluctancies of which ſhew the very Attempt to be faulty and injurious.

Farther, we know very well, *that we are not taught nor train'd up, to this way of uſing and exerting of our Minds.* 'Tis true, that we are taught particular Methods of ſearching out, and proving Truth. But we have never any need of being inform'd in the general, that when things are clear, as made out by that ſort of Proof which agrees to their Nature, we ſhould aſſent to the Truth of them; or that we ſhould not doubt, when after accurate Searches, we find nothing to be a juſt Cauſe of doubting, in the Nature of things, abſtracting from all our own Notions and Hypotheſes. No Parent or Tutor ever infus'd theſe Principles; tho they may (and ought to) inculcate and improve them. The earlieſt diſplays of Human Nature, evidently ſhew, that they are lodg'd within, before any of our Inſtructors begin the kind Office of our Education.

And for the proof of all this, I appeal to Human Nature and common Experience, of which every Man is a Judg: So that the caſe is as eaſy to be thorowly ſifted and examin'd, as any can poſſibly be. 'Twould be a Crime to be ſolicitous about anſwering ſuch Perſons, as ſhould bluntly deny what I have here ſaid, to be Matter of Fact. I would beſtow the ſame Pains upon their Conviction, that I would in a rational Confutation of that Man, who ſhould tell me in good earneſt, that *Ice and Fire* are the ſame ſort of Bodies; or that 'tis *dark Night* in that very

very Place, where my own Eyes and those of all other Men upon the Spot, see the Sun in his *Meridian Lustre.*

The result of the Argument therefore is this: Since (by what has been said here) it appears, that there is a disposition in Human Nature to act after this manner, such as does not, nor cannot proceed from Instruction and Education, but is most certainly *inbred* and *congenial* with it: Also since (by what was shewn before) it must of necessity be granted, that there is some certain Law or Order establish'd in the reasonable Nature of Man, which should dispose him to use and exert his Mind, after a manner becoming an intelligent Creature, upon proper Motives and Inducements: It follows, *That to act after this manner; that is, to yield the Assent of our Understandings to such Evidence of Truth, is plainly to act in Conformity to the Tenor of that Law.*

SECT. XXI.

Secondly, *IT must needs be our wise Creator's Purpose and Intent, in endowing us with such a Power as Understanding, that we should assent to those things as true, which are recommended to our Belief, by an Evidence of this Nature.* And that we may be the more thorowly appriz'd of the Truth of this, let us trace this matter from the very Original.

'Tis plain, *That we have a Power, by which we are enabled to believe, or assent to some Propositions, as true.*

And as 'tis certain, that the infinitely wiſe Author of our Beings, would not give this or any other Principle or Power *for nothing*; that is, not intending it ſhould ever be exerted or brought to act: ſo 'tis as certain, he could never deſign that it ſhould be brought into act *by nothing*; or that it ſhould exert it ſelf arbitrarily, and fortuitouſly, or out of pure Spontaneity, without the Influence of ſome preceding Motives to rouze and excite it thereto. For otherwiſe, a rational Creature would be a mere whimſical unaccountable ſort of *Automaton*. That which we call the beſt Workmanſhip of God Almighty, in the viſible Creation, would be fram'd with infinitely leſs Prudence and Skill, than the meaneſt pieces of Art here amongſt our ſelves, which are made to obſerve elegant Order, and to act from fixed Laws and Principles.

Since then 'tis neceſſary, that ſome ſort of Motives or Reaſons, ſhould always lead on the Operations of this Power of believing, or aſſenting to things as true; the next Queſtion is, *Of what Kind and Nature they ought to be?* What ought to be the exciting Principle to ſuch a ſort of Action, as that which we call Belief? It cannot be Obſcurity and Confuſion in the Things or Propoſitions we conſider; or Doubt and Uncertainty in our own Minds. It could never be deſign'd, that theſe ſhould be the Foundations of our Belief and Aſſent. For this caſts ſtill a more heinous Reflection upon the infinite Perfections of God, to imagine him to have made Man ſo aukward and perverſe a Creature; a thing of ſo crooked and contrary Diſpoſition, that Obſcurity ſhould excite his Faculties, and Uncertainty it ſelf ſhould determine him to Action.

And

And therefore, it muſt needs be his Purpoſe and Intent (ſince we cannot doubt but he has fram'd our Natures with the moſt exact Wiſdom and Counſel) *that we ſhould exert this Power upon ſuch Motives or Conſiderations, as ſhould ſet Matters in a fair and clear Light before us, and be ſufficient to prevent all rational Doubt and Uncertainty about them.* Not only that confus'd precarious Evidence ſhould not procure the Aſſent of our Minds; but alſo that all Evidence of a contrary Nature, ſhould do it. For ſince the plain Uſe of that Faculty we call Underſtanding, is to ſubſcribe and aſſent to Truth; it would be as monſtrous and irregular, to ſuppoſe the Author of Nature had ſo fram'd it, that bright and unexceptionable Repreſentations of Truth ſhould not excite it to yield that Aſſent; as it would be to imagine, that he had made Darkneſs natural to it, and fitted it to be wrought on, only by the Motives of Intricacy and Confuſion. But now, we are under an abſolute Neceſſity of receiving many things as true and real, where we can neither have the Teſtimony of *Senſe* nor accurate *Demonſtration*, to aſſure us of the Truth of thoſe things. We muſt believe them, and yet cannot have the Proof of them by either of theſe ways. And therefore it follows, *That an Evidence of ſuch a Nature, as was before deſcrib'd, does lay a direct and poſitive Obligation upon us, to yield our Aſſent in all thoſe Caſes, wherein we cannot have ſenſible or demonſtrative Proof.*

SECT. XXII.

WE have hitherto prosecuted the first Argument, drawn from the Constitution of Human Nature, to prove the Obligatory Nature of the Evidence before describ'd; which Argument has this Advantage, *That there is plain and obvious Matter of Fact in our selves to support it.*

And I hope, that which follows, will not be without some peculiar Advantages likewise.

Secondly, *The disowning an Evidence of this Nature, has a direct tendency to take away all Moral Certainty, and leaves no room for our Belief of any thing, but what is either an Object of Sense, or Matter of pure Demonstration.*

And therefore, we are bound not to reject it, but to assent to those things as true, for the Proof of which, such Evidence is propounded to us.

To set this Argument in a clear Light, two things are to be done.

First, To shew, *That the rejecting of an Evidence of this Nature has a direct Tendency to take away all Moral Certainty; or to render Moral Evidence, from whence that Certainty arises, wholly useless and insignificant in the World.*

Secondly, To shew, *That Moral Evidence is not to be taken away, nor things to be brought to that pass; that sensible or demonstrative Proof should be requir'd or given, for every thing that is to be relied on as Truth amongst Men.* It neither can be so, nor ought to be so: 'Tis neither possible or convenient, according to the Constitution and State of the World we live in.

From

From both these together, the Reason of the Consequence will appear, *viz. That therefore an Evidence of this Nature, makes it strictly just and rational for us to yield the Assent of our Minds.*

SECT. XXIII.

THE first of these *Propositions*, is easily made out. *For there is no more necessary, in order to the highest Degree of Moral Certainty that we can attain to; than an Evidence of such Qualifications and Conditions, as I have already explain'd.* Let any one consider the Description given of it, and see whether there can be any thing farther requir'd, to give us a compleat Satisfaction of the Truth of any thing, in a Case where Demonstration is wanting, or our own Eyes are not to be us'd to convince us thereof. And after a sober Examination of the Matter, I make no question but he will find, that such a Proof is sufficient to give us all the Assurance, that we can rationally desire, or really need to have, or that the very Nature of such Cases will allow of. Therefore I infer, *All sorts of Evidence requisite to produce Moral Certainty, will be sure to fall within the Limits determin'd in that Description.*

And therefore, if the Evidence we have describ'd, may be rejected in any one Case propos'd; by a Parity of Reason, all other Proofs of the same kind may, and must be rejected too, if we act consistently with our selves. For when things are alike, and in their own Natures do not allow any Difference to be made; if we make a Difference, it must be resolv'd intirely into

into Humour and Self-Will. Therefore upon this *Hypothesis, all Moral Evidence and Certainty are at once thrown out of the World, and we must never believe nor depend upon any thing as true, but what is fairly demonstrated to us, or attested by our Senses.* Now if the gross Absurdity and Falshood, if the wretched and intolerable Consequences of such a Supposition be well demonstrated; 'twill be certain beyond Dispute, *that we are firmly oblig'd to acquiesce in an Evidence of the forementioned Characters.*

SECT. XXIV.

I Come therefore now to shew,

Secondly, *That Moral Evidence is not to be taken away; or that Proofs of this nature, are of the utmost Consequence and Importance to the World, and carry something along with them, which is highly satisfactory and convincing to the Understanding of Mankind.*

And in order to the clearing of this, I shall do these two things distinctly.

First, Enquire into the Nature of Moral Evidence; see what, and whence the Obligation of it springs; how far it may be compar'd with Mathematical Evidence, and does agree therewith, in producing the very same Effects on our Minds.

Secondly, Consider the Usefulness and Necessity of these sorts of Proofs in the World, and the horrible Consequences that would follow upon the Supposition, *That Men were not to be govern'd by them.*

First,

First, I ſhall compriſe the Subſtance of what I have to ſay upon the former of theſe Heads, (*viz. Concerning the Nature of Moral Evidence and Certainty*) in the following *Propoſitions*.

PROP. I.

THERE are certain ſtated Laws and Rules of Action, which Men, conſider'd not only as rational Agents, but as Members of Society, as ſtanding in various ſorts of Relations, and tied by many Bonds one to another, have Univerſally a ſtrict and neceſſary Regard to.

Affection, Inclination, Temper, Endowments, Intereſt, External Circumſtances, and Condition in the World; are general Motives which fail not to influence Mankind, to act in their ſeveral Places, after this or that manner, upon proper Occaſions, as they have Power and Opportunity.

That theſe things are ſo in Fact, we are aſſur'd by all our Knowledg and Experience of the World. 'Tis as plain, that Men are acted and influenc'd by theſe Principles in all their Converſation and Affairs, as that they exiſt, or move, or do any thing here.

Why ſuch Principles as theſe (which I have mention'd) ſhould be eſtabliſh'd, as the grand Springs of Motion in the Rational World; why Men ſhould be prompted to act and move by theſe, and not by others of another Nature: This is to be reſolv'd intirely into the wiſe and

and ſovereign diſpoſals of our great Creator. He knew perfectly well, how to adapt the World and Human Nature to each other, after the beſt and fitteſt manner. He knew how to eſtabliſh Laws for Men to proceed by, that their acting in ſuch or ſuch a ſort, ſhould be the moſt beautiful for Creatures of their Frame and Make, in ſuch a State, and under ſuch Circumſtances, as he deſign'd to place them here.

Whatſoever we are ſure is true in Fact, with reſpect to the general Laws and Conſtitution of the World, we may be certain was moſt wiſely conſulted and determin'd. And conſequently, that theſe Laws and Principles we ſpeak of (which do obtain in Fact) are the fitteſt and moſt ſutable, to the Nature and Circumſtances of Mankind, in the preſent State.

But I muſt add; *It was neceſſary, that ſome certain Laws and Principles of Action or other, ſhould be eſtabliſh'd in the rational World, as well as in that of Matter.*

And that, when theſe were once exactly adjuſted by infinite Wiſdom and Prudence to Human Nature, in all its Relations and Capacities in the preſent Life; it was requiſite they ſhould always be maintain'd, and ſhould ſtatedly influence Men throughout their whole Practice, when they act as reaſonable and ſociable Creatures.

For a World of intelligent Creatures, acting from no ſtated Laws and Principles, would have been as poor an Argument of Wiſdom and Counſel, as a rough ill-ſhapen Lump of Matter, or a vaſt Syſtem of Bodies tumbling about each other, in the utmoſt Hurry and Confuſion, inſtead of a beautiful and well-order'd Fabrick.

Nor is the Honour of the wiſe, great, and good Governour of the Univerſe, a jot leſs concern'd

concern'd *in preſerving and keeping up* a general Order and Decorum amongſt reaſonable Beings; than in preſerving Method and Regularity in the Works of Nature, or in appointing them at firſt. And therefore, what Motives and Principles of Action, he in his infinite Wiſdom thought fitteſt for Men to proceed by, ought to be ſtanding and laſting: So that they ſhould not be mov'd uncertainly and precariouſly, ſometimes by one ſet of Principles, and at other times by thoſe directly contrary, or which have no manner of Affinity or Relation to them; but always from the ſame general Grounds and Reaſons, and for the ſame general Ends and Purpoſes; whatever different Appearances the Actions of different Men may ſeem to make in the World. This is like the Diſpoſal and Contrivance of an infinitely knowing and prudent Being. Whereas, the other way of proceeding, would repreſent him as a Being void of Counſel and Penetration, and make as if he had ſet the World together as well as he could; tho not well enough, to demonſtrate the high and glorious Perfections of his own Nature.

PROP. II.

BY virtue of theſe Laws, ſo conſtantly and univerſally obtaining in the reaſonable World, it follows, that ſuch and ſuch things will of Courſe be brought to paſs; and on the contrary, that others as certainly will not.

We deduce the certainty of *Phyſical* Events and Appearances, from thoſe fix'd and eſtabliſh'd

Laws

Laws of the Natural World, by the means of which they are to be brought about, and which muſt be ſuſpended or violated, if they are not brought about. And tho the Author of Nature, who has eſtabliſh'd theſe Laws, can with infinite Eaſe, whenever he pleaſes, put a ſtop to them, and turn things out of their ordinary Courſe; and moreover, tho we cannot demonſtrate, or by any other ſound Proof aſſure our ſelves, that theſe Appearances ſhall proceed and go on for the time to come, after the ſame manner as they have done for the time paſt: Yet ſince we know of no Reaſons, to induce us to believe that things will be put out of their uſual Order; we expect and depend upon them as certain. Accordingly, when we ſee the Sun ſet at Night, we aſſure our ſelves without Demonſtration, that he will riſe again the next Morning. We make no doubt, but Vapours will aſcend up into the Atmoſphere, that Rains and Dews will fall, that Vegetation will go on, that the ſeveral Seaſons of the Year will regularly ſucceed one another; tho he that firſt impreſs'd, and therefore continually preſerves all theſe Motions (by which our World is maintain'd in this happy Order) can with a word ſpeaking, make all ceaſe again, and we are at no time *Mathematically* certain that he will not do ſo.

Now if we are rationally, tho not demonſtratively ſure, of theſe Events in Nature, upon the account of the eſtabliſh'd Laws on which they depend; we may be rationally, tho not demonſtratively ſure, of ſuch or ſuch Events in the Moral or Rational World, upon the ſcore of the ſtated Laws, on which they depend, and by virtue of which they are to be brought to paſs.

Upon

Upon what pretence can I think or imagine, that Men will neglect purſuing what they believe to be their true and real Intereſt, in ſuch Caſes where they muſt ſee and know, that their Intereſt is nearly concern'd? Why ſhould I believe, that they will lay aſide all the common Paſſions and Inclinations of Human Nature, and take Meaſures quite contrary to thoſe, which Mankind always proceed by in the like Caſes? If I find matters to be ſo, that here are all the proper Inducements, that uſe to ſtir and engage Men to act after this or that manner, and never fail to produce the Effect; I muſt ſuppoſe after a very arbitrary and precarious manner, if I ſuppoſe them to forget, what is ſo much rooted in Human Nature, and is ſo conſonant to all the Laws and Modes of Human Action; by going out of the common Road, and acting juſt the Reverſe of what Men ordinarily do. Nor do Men ever do thus, while they keep in the right mind; unleſs they have ſome ſuperior predominant Reaſons for ſo doing. And in that caſe, to ſacrifice a leſs Intereſt, for what they really believe to be a greater, is ſtill acting by the ſame general Law, that always did, and ever will govern Mankind. To go contrary to Temper, Inclination, and all the apparent Obligations of worldly Circumſtances, upon weighty and valuable Conſiderations of another Nature; is only changing a Man's Motives and Inducements, and proceeding upon the ſame common Principles as before.

But where I find no Appearance of any ſuch Reaſons, as ſhould ſuſpend or alter the uſual Courſe of Mens Actions; I have as juſt ground to expect that the ſame Effects will come to paſs, which always do in the like Caſes; as to believe, that Night and Day, Summer and Winter, will come

come on in their wonted Order, when I ſee no ill Symptoms in Nature, that threaten the contrary.

Coroll. *Hence may be underſtood, the Nature and true Origin, of what we call Moral Certainty and Impoſſibility.*

When I find matters to be ſo, with reſpect to any caſe propos'd, that ſome groſs Abſurdities or Inconſiſtences, ſome plain and manifeſt Contradiction to theſe eſtabliſh'd Laws of the World, muſt neceſſarily be involv'd, if ſuch and ſuch Effects do or do not come to paſs amongſt Men: I am then *morally certain*, that they will not or will come to paſs; being aſſur'd that the ſtanding Laws of the World, do prohibit ſuch Repugnances or Contradictions, and therefore are a ſufficient guard to ſecure me in my Belief, that things will work, according to the rational Concluſions I have drawn concerning them. And upon the ſame ſcore, we juſtly and properly uſe the Term *Impoſſibility* in theſe caſes; not meaning a ſimple abſolute Impoſſibility, no more than a ſimple abſolute Certainty: But *ex Hypotheſi*, upon ſuppoſition that Men are influenc'd, in their Actions, by the ſame Principles and Motives, which never fail to govern them, where plain and extraordinary Reaſons for their doing otherwiſe, do not interpoſe. And this is the very ſame ſort of Impoſſibility in the Rational World, with that which we call *Phyſical*, in the World of Nature. The one is as ſtrict and proper as the other, with reſpect to the Laws on which it depends. And therefore, for example, ſpeaking of ſome extraordinary great and publick Event, we make no ſcruple to ſay, *'tis impoſſible that the Memory of it*

ſhould

ſhould be totally loſt: Or that an Impoſture, wherein a whole Nation, or many Nations are concern'd, ſhould be carry'd on ſucceſsfully in the Face of Thouſands of the moſt inveterate Enemies, who have Policy, Sagacity, Power and Opportunity, to do all things, that can be imagin'd neceſſary for the Diſcovery of it. Or that a Party or Society of Men, having all Advantages in their Hands, to eſtabliſh their own moſt valu'd Intereſt, and (without any Danger or Prejudice to themſelves) effectually to ruin that of their Adverſaries, which is fundamentally deſtructive of theirs; ſhould yet neglect to do this, and make way for the others to over-top and cruſh them. Theſe things are impoſſible. Not that they involve any thing of pure *Phyſical* Contradictions; but *Political* Conſiderations, working on the Tempers and Paſſions of Men, will make them act otherwiſe. Common Intereſt, is Political Good. And Political or Civil Good, bears the ſame proportion to Society, that Natural Good does to an Individual. Nor is it a jot leſs abſurd, to imagine a Community or Body of Men, thus acting againſt (or not acting for) their darling Intereſt, when 'tis in their Power to do ſo; than to ſuppoſe a Man as an Animal, or a Rational Agent, ſhunning the Good, and embracing the Evil, which relates to him in either of thoſe Capacities.

PROP. III.

IN ſome Caſes, where there is only Human Teſtimony alledg'd to evince the Truth of things; thoſe univerſal Laws of the World be-

fore mention'd, may be ſo far concern'd, and from the very Nature of the Caſe, it may be neceſſary to have ſo great a regard to them; that we may have full ſecurity of the Truth and Reality of thoſe things, as made out to us by Human Teſtimony alone, without any other Proof.

Teſtimony is undoubtedly a neceſſary Article, in the Buſineſs of Moral Evidence; but we conclude wrong, when we make it to be the *whole* of that Evidence, or that which gives it its main Force and Strength. To ſtate the matter fairly; Teſtimony, in its regard to Moral Evidence, is as one Propoſition towards a Syllogiſm, which requires two, either expreſs or imply'd, in order to the making of a Concluſion.

I do not affirm this, of every trifling inconſiderable Caſe that happens in the World; but I do of Multitudes that frequently occur in Fact, and of others, whoſe Circumſtances may be ſimilar to theſe.

Now here, I ſay, that to compleat a Proof of this kind, and do the Argument that Juſtice, which (in the Nature of things) ought to be done it; beſides bare Authority or Teſtimony, we are to argue upon *Human Nature*, and the Laws which Mankind obſerve, in their ſeveral Relations and Obligations to each other.

So that theſe ſort of Proofs, to repreſent them as they ought to be, do indeed run after this manner: *Ex. Gr. If in this caſe propos'd, Circumſtances be really thus and thus; then this or that Effect will certainly follow* —.

But Circumſtances are really ſo —— *Therefore*, &c.

In

In this Argument, the Sequel of the Major Propoſition, is grounded upon the aforeſaid general Principles. For becauſe I know the Diſpoſitions and Tendencies of Human Nature, and what the ſtated Practice and Methods of Procedure amongſt Mankind are; therefore I know, that ſuch and ſuch Effects will follow regularly, upon certain Suppoſitions made.

The Minor Propoſition, I take as Teſtimony; I am certified by another Perſon, that Circumſtances are really ſo and ſo.

Now tho the Truth of my Concluſion, depends partly upon the Truth of this Propoſition, and I cannot aſſure my ſelf of the one, unleſs I am perfectly ſatisfy'd of the other; yet the Caſe may be ſo, that I may have ſuch a Degree of Security, of the Truth of my Minor Propoſition, as to be free from the leaſt imaginable doubt of the Truth of my Concluſion; and that upon ſuch Principles, as are abſolutely unexceptionable.

For beſides the *Honour* and known *Veracity* of the Perſon teſtifying, ſuch Circumſtances as theſe may alſo concur. There may be an utter *Impoſſibility* of any manner of Advantage, redounding to this Perſon, by impoſing a Falſhood on me: So that I can be ſure, he could have no kind of Motive or Temptation, to incline him to act ſo fraudulent and diſhoneſt a part. Again, matters may be ſo, that the Cheat muſt infallibly be *diſcover'd*, by ſome other Methods quickly after, in caſe he ſhould abuſe me, by a falſe Repreſentation of things at preſent. I cannot perhaps, be long without knowing the right of the matter, whether this Perſon tells it me or no; and if he does not, he draws (it may be) a thouſand Cenſures and Reproaches upon

himſelf, and makes himſelf odious and contemptible to all Mankind, that have any Knowledg of him. Now where the Caſe is ſuch, that theſe (and it may be, other weighty and convincing) Circumſtances do plainly concur; tho I ground one of the Propoſitions of my Syllogiſm, upon Human Teſtimony, yet I am at no Uncertainty at all about the Truth of my Concluſion.

For I know, that all Men are influenc'd in their Actions by ſome Motives or other.

And I know, that they naturally abhor ſuch Effects as Hatred, Shame and Contempt, from the reſt of their Fellow-Creatures. And therefore, when matters are brought to that paſs, that I muſt either contradict theſe plain Notions, and proceed upon ſuch as are the very Reverſe of them; or elſe receive a Teſtimony that is alledg'd, as what gives me a true and ſincere account of things: I am then determin'd to admit that Teſtimony as true; and I forfeit all Pretenſions to right Reaſon, and even to common Senſe and Underſtanding, if I do not.

Coroll. 'Tis plain therefore, *that we are oblig'd to conſider ſomething more in many Caſes of Teſtimony, than the bare Word and Report of him, who delivers that Teſtimony.*

Becauſe (by the very Circumſtances of the thing) we may be oblig'd to conſider, the *Authority* of the Speaker or Writer, in conjunction with all thoſe Reaſons, founded upon the *general Laws* of the World; by which we may argue our ſelves into a juſt Aſſurance, of the Truth of what is thus reported to us.

PROP.

PROP. IV.

STRICT and perfect Demonstration, proceeds from such Premisses (and such only) *as are true, first, immediate, more known, prior to, and Causes of the Conclusion.*

By this I mean, what we commonly call the *Demonstration*, τὸ δι' ὅτι, or *Propter quid*; in which we always argue from a proper immediate Cause, either Intrinsecal to the Subject, as Matter, Form, or some predemonstrated Affection; or else Extrinsecal to it, as an efficient or final Cause.

The Assent we yield to such sort of Proof, or the Knowledg of Conclusions infer'd from Premisses thus qualify'd, is firm and certain in the highest Degree possible; and by way of Eminence and Distinction from all others, is call'd *Scientia*. *To know*, in this Sense, is clearly to understand the Cause for which a thing is; that it is the Cause of that thing, and that it cannot be otherwise. So that in such Cases as these, the Certainty we arrive at, concerning the Truth of things, is not only Indubitable, but Infallible too; not simply and absolutely Infallible, for the Divine Knowledg only is such, but Conditionally, or upon Supposition, that our Faculties are not misled or deceiv'd.

As for the other sort of Demonstration, *viz.* The ὅτι, or *Quod sit*; here the *Terminus Medius*,

instead of being an immediate nearest Cause, is either a remote one, or some necessary Effect. And therefore, it being impossible, that the Premisses in this kind of Demonstration, should come up to the Conditions of the former; it is somewhat less advantageous, and in the Order of things, to be reckon'd of an inferior and more imperfect kind.

However, a Demonstration of this nature, may give us all the Assurance of the Truth of things, that the δι' ὅτι it self does or can do; and our Conclusions here, are in some sense *Scientifical* as well as there. The difference is, that the former shews us the prime Causes and Reasons of things, and that they *must necessarily* be so as we know them to be; but the latter only assures us, that they *are so* in Reality, either by some genuine Consequences of them, or some Causes which lie at a farther Distance. But they are sufficient to extort the Assent of the Mind, and leave us, as I said, compleatly satisfy'd and convinc'd. Of this kind, are mostly those Demonstrations which are us'd in *Physical*, *Metaphysical*, and some *Theological* Matters. Our Demonstrations, for example, of the Existence of a God, being all of them ὅτι, and *à Posteriori*, as proceeding from the Effects. Ostensive Mathematical Demonstrations, are all of them of the former sort, *viz.* δι' ὅτι, or *Propter quid.* For they proceed from predemonstrated Affections, which run up at last into plain self-evident Principles or Propositions, which (for the Dignity and Importance of them) the *Mathematicians* call by the Name of *Axioms.*

But besides the direct or *ostensive* Demonstration, either δι' ὅτι or ὅτι, in which the Conclusion

cluſion is evidently and directly infer'd, from Premiſſes of all, or only ſome of the forementioned Conditions; there is another ſort, which we call *Demonſtratio ducens ad Abſurdum vel Impoſſibile:* Wherein we argue, *That the Concluſion infer'd from ſuch or ſuch Premiſſes, muſt needs be true, becauſe the Contradictory to it, is apparently Falſe and Abſurd.* Now tho this be the loweſt of all Demonſtrations, as not directly and immediately inferring the thing it ſelf to be prov'd, and therefore is not to be choſen, where an oſtenſive Demonſtration can be had; yet 'tis univerſally allow'd to be ſound and good, and accordingly it paſſes current amongſt the *Mathematicians* themſelves, who frequently uſe it in making out the Truth of many of their Propoſitions, and that not only in the mix'd or concrete Sciences, but alſo in the pure or abſtracted ones. And in the Nature of the thing it ſelf, this *reductio ad abſurdum*, is good and ſufficient Proof. For we are under eternal Obligations to avoid Contradictions and Abſurdities; and that not only in matters capable of Demonſtration, but thoſe of any other Nature alſo. But of this more by and by.

Coroll. 'Tis plain therefore, *how Moral Proof differs from ſtrict and perfect Demonſtration.* 'Tis impoſſible that the Premiſſes made uſe of in this ſort of Proof, ſhould come up to the Conditions, which accurate Demonſtration requires. However,

PROP. V.

SOME Propositions admitting only of Moral Proof, may be as evident, as others capable of perfect Demonstration.

Evidence, I take to be the clear appearance of Truth to the Mind, producing a ready Assent to it as such. So that Evidence may always be taken, as proportional to the *Quickness* of the Assent; an higher Degree of Evidence, producing a more sudden and speedy Effect on the Understanding, than a lower Degree does. This I believe will hardly be disputed.

We know likewise, that the Propositions or Premisses in Mathematical Demonstration, derive their Force from some others before demonstrated, and these from others; and so at last we come up to Axioms, or First Principles, for which we have no Demonstration at all: For if we had, then there must be other Principles, prior to, and more known than them; and consequently, they would not be first Principles, which is contrary to the *Hypothesis*. In like manner, these other Principles are either demonstrable, or not: If they are, then we run on at this rate, *ad Infinitum:* If they are not, then we must necessarily stop at some that are not capable of Demonstration.

The like may be said of Moral Propositions, and the Principles they are ultimately resolv'd into.

Now if some *Moral* Principles may be as evident as some of the plainest in *Mathematicks*, then

then the first or second, *&c.* Step of Genuine Consequence, deriv'd from the *Moral* Principles, will be as evident as the first or second, *&c.* Step of Genuine Consequence deriv'd from the *Mathematical.* For the just Consequences of equally evident Principles, at equal removes from those Principles themselves, must needs be equally evident.

But some Moral Principles, are as evident as some of the plainest in *Mathematicks.* Therefore the Propositions may be so too. For instance, *That Society could not be maintain'd in the World, without a mutual Trust of one Man in another,* is as evident, as this Axiom in *Geometry*; *That if equal things, be added to, or substracted from equals, the Sums or Remainders will be equal.* For let them both be propos'd to any Person, capable of understanding the Terms on both sides; and he shall as speedily assent to the former as the latter.

If we were to judg by *Numbers*, more Persons would admit the former for a Truth without Difficulty, than would be latter. Those that have no Notion of Sums and Remainders, would readily grant you, that the World must fall in pieces, if Men could not trust one another.

Ocular Demonstration, is full as plain on one side as the other. A Man may as well see, that People converse and deal together in the World, upon this Principle; as he may see, that when six Inches are taken off on each side, from two Lines of twelve Inches a piece, there will be six Inches remaining in each Line.

Farther, tho the one be an *absolute abstracted* Verity, a Principle of eternal Truth; and the other of a *mix'd and concrete* Nature, relating

to

to the Frame and Conſtitution of the World; yet theſe Conſiderations are in their own Natures foreign to the matter of Evidence, and have no direct Tendency to render it either greater or leſs. Tho by accident, Application to Matter and ſenſible things, may contribute to the encreaſe of Evidence, and remove ſome Difficulties, which a total abſtraction from Matter may leave the Mind involv'd in. However, we know, that many Principles in *Concrete Mathematicks*, are fully as evident to us, as others in the pure abſtracted Parts; and that is ſufficient to bear me out in aſſerting, *That unleſs ſome other particular Reaſon can be aſſign'd, the Moral Principle is not therefore leſs evident than the Geometrical one* (before mention'd) *becauſe the former is a mix'd, and the latter a ſimple abſtracted Verity.*

The Compariſon made in this Example, may be made in like manner in various others. So that the preſent Propoſition, I hope, is ſufficiently clear.

Coroll. *Therefore it may be as abſurd to deny ſome Propoſitions, which admit only Moral Proof, as to deny others capable of ſtrict Geometrical Demonſtration.*

For Abſurdity is heightned in proportion to the Evidence of the Propoſition deny'd. So that if two Propoſitions of an equal Evidence, tho of a different Nature, are propos'd; the Abſurdities of denying them will be equal. And ſince ſome Moral Propoſitions may be equally evident with ſome *Geometrical* ones, 'twill be as abſurd to deny the former as the latter. Becauſe, I ſay, 'tis the Evidence or Plainneſs of Propoſitions, and not the Subject Matter, which makes it abſurd to deny them.

Schol.

Schol. It will not follow from this Propoſition, *That we may have the ſame infallible Certainty, of the Truth of Moral Propoſitions, that we have of thoſe in* Mathematicks. Two Propoſitions may be equally evident, that is, *The Underſtanding may yield the ſame Degree of quick and eaſy Aſſent to the Truth of them; and yet being infer'd from Premiſſes of a very different Nature, the Certainty we have of them both, may not be the ſame, but very much different.* In accurate Demonſtration, the Premiſſes are of ſuch a Nature, as to make us *infallibly* certain of the Concluſion. In ſome Moral Proofs, the Premiſſes are of ſuch a Nature, as to render us *indubitably* certain of the Concluſion; that is, *we can acquieſce (without any rational Doubt or Scruple) in the Truth of it, tho we don't infer it to our ſelves after that ſtrict and very exact way, in which we infer a* Mathematical *one.* So that equal Evidence, or the equally ready appearance of two Propoſitions of different kinds (and therefore infer'd from Principles of a different Nature) will never conclude the ſame Modus of Certainty in thoſe Propoſitions.

PROP. VI.

AS in Geometrical Reaſonings, Truths are many times infer'd by the indirect Method of Demonſtration, or Deduction to Impoſſibility; ſo the ſame ſort of Argumentation takes place, in matters only capable of Moral Proof; where by fair Chains of Conſequence,

groſs

groſs and palpable Abſurdities are the laſt Reſult of ſuch and ſuch Hypotheſes laid down.

I ſhall not need to ſubjoin any particular Proof of this Propoſition; the Reaſon of which is ſo plain, from what has been ſhewn already at PROP. I. and II.

All that I ſhall obſerve, is, *That there will be a Proof of it, I hope, ſufficiently convincing, in the Third Part of this Diſcourſe; where we ſhall have an occaſion to purſue in a pretty cloſe manner, ſome Enquiries, relating to the Books which contain the* Chriſtian Revelation.

PROP. VII.

A Reduction to Abſurdity, in ſome Proofs of the Moral Kind, is much more to be avoided, than the falling into any Inconvenience, conſequent upon the denial of Phyſical or Mathematical Propoſitions.

There's no doubt to be made, but a greater Inconvenience is more carefully to be avoided by us at any time, than a leſs. And we muſt needs allow that to be a greater Inconvenience, according to the real Nature of things, in which a Man is oblig'd to ſtand by Conſequences, which taken in their full extent, involve the moſt Intricacy and Diſadvantage.

And thoſe Conſequences are certainly the moſt wretched and perplex'd, which do not only affect the Perſon himſelf, who is forc'd to ſtand by them; but have alſo a Tendency to *publick* Miſchief

Mischief and Disorder. He that obstinately persists in an Assertion, which will at last end in this Conclusion, *that he has no Sense*; is not driven to such Extremities, as he who gives his Adversary scope to conclude, *that he has neither Sense, nor Principles, that render him fit for Human Conversation.*

The Character of a Fool, added to that of an Enemy to the Interests of Mankind, is intrinsecally worse than an Imputation of bare Folly, or want of Understanding.

Now the Case lies here. Tho the Denial of *Physical* or *Mathematical* Theorems, leads to some Conclusions, the standing by which, shews a Man to be invincibly Obstinate or Stupid; yet all the ill Consequences of this, terminate in himself, and spread no farther: He gets an ill Name by it; but the Publick is never the worse for any particular Man's being, or making himself a Fool.

On the other hand, there is all this and more, consequent upon the Denial of some *Moral* Arguments. They may be resolv'd into Principles, as evidently true as any Axioms in *Geometry*. Therefore there is equal Folly and Impertinency, in the denial of them. And then, because they relate to the Actions and Affairs of Mankind; the Consequences may be such, as to destroy the Peace and Order of the whole World, if Men should generally proceed after the same manner. So that there is no room for any rational Dispute, on which side the worst and most perplex'd Absurdities lie. However, if we were to abate this Article of equal Folly and Stupidity; yet the other of the Consequences, would still vastly preponderate.

For

For I would fain know, which of these two, a Man should most rationally scruple; *To be cramp'd and puzzl'd in a Point of pure Theory; or to be forc'd upon plain and open Contradictions to all the Laws of Society, and Human Nature it self?* Certainly, Inconveniences of such a kind as affect Life and common Practice (tho they should not be so extremely gross and ridiculous as some others may be) are yet in the Nature of the thing, and in the Judgment of all wise Men, far more to be avoided, than those which relate to mere Speculation, and only reduce the Understanding to a Distress.

Coroll. 1. *If therefore a Proposition, in* Physicks *or* Mathematicks, *be universally allow'd to be fairly prov'd; when the contradictory Proposition thereto, plainly appears to be absurd: Then* à fortiori, *when a* Moral *Proposition is denied, and the Contradictory thereto, appears plainly to involve Absurdities of that worse sort; the Proof of that Proposition should be acknowledg'd to be just and legitimate.*

Coroll. 2. *And therefore those Persons act a most ridiculous part, who scruple running upon Inconveniences in a Point of Science; and will venture upon the grossest Absurdities that can be, by an irrational denial of Moral Proofs.*

For the better understanding the scope of the two following Propositions, I would premise, That there are two distinct things to be consider'd, with respect to the Issue or Result of Demonstration.

One is, *The bare evincing, or making out the Truth of such or such a thing, which was propos'd to*

to be clear'd or made out thereby. The other is, *The Satisfaction or Acquiescency of the Mind in the Demonstration offer'd to it:* By which means it comes to pass, that the Mind not only subscribes to the Truth of the Demonstration, and allows it to be sound and good; but does it also with a peculiar Pleasure, and finds it self wonderful easy, and free from all Scruples in so doing.

This premis'd, I say in the next place,

PROP. VIII.

SOME Moral Proofs go as far, in evincing the Truth of things to us, as some sort of Demonstration can possibly do.

The Premisses in some Moral Proofs, may have such Conditions as may be sufficient to produce a full Conviction in our Minds, *that such and such things are actually Matter of Fact.*

But the *Demonstratio* ὅτι, or *quod sit*, does only prove, *that things are really so or so.*

Therefore, as to the Point of evincing Truth, some Moral Proofs may go as far as just Demonstration.

Coroll. 1. Therefore we ought not to discredit Moral Evidence, upon any such account as this, *viz. That it does not shew us from immediate Causes, why things must needs be so and so, and cannot possibly be otherwise.*

For if it be to be rejected upon this score, then all our Demonstrations *à Posteriori*, must be thrown out of doors too.

Besides,

Besides, to disown it for this Reason, is to quarrel with Moral Evidence, because it is not the same with rigorous Demonstration *à Priori*; which alone, is able to give us such an Assurance, as what the *Corollary* speaks of.

Coroll. 2. *Moral Proofs go as far, in the way of convincing and satisfying our Minds, as is for the most part either Necessary, Useful, or Possible, in the Nature of things.*

For there are vastly fewer Cases, in which we can demonstrate *à Priori*; than such in which we can proceed the other way, and shew that things are really thus and thus in Fact. And then, 'tis likewise manifest, that in most Cases, 'tis enough with respect to all the Ends and Purposes of our Knowledg, that we have undeniable Proof, that things are actually and really true. This might easily be evinc'd beyond all Contradiction, by enquiring into the true Ends of the several kinds of Human Knowledg, and shewing, that such an Assurance (as I now speak of) is in all respects sufficient to answer those Ends. And therefore, since Moral Proofs are sufficient to give us that Assurance, they are sufficient to do all, that is either Necessary, Useful, or (for the most part) Possible to be done.

PROP. IX.

THE Assent of our Minds to some Moral Conclusions, is attended with as little hesitation and doubt of the Truth of them; as that which we give to such Conclusions,

ſions, as are infer'd à Priori, *in the moſt ſtrict and rigorous way.*

There is plenty of Caſes ready at hand, to put this Propoſition out of all Diſpute.

Such for example, are thoſe of innumerable *Places*, *Things*, *Perſons*, *Affairs* and *Events*, which we never had, nor can poſſibly have, any direct perſonal Knowledg of; and yet we are as far from calling the Truth of any of them in queſtion, or being at all uneaſy upon that account, as we are from ſuſpecting the Truth of thoſe Concluſions, which the *Geometricians* do in their clear way of reaſoning demonſtrate to us. I don't ſay, we have the ſame ſort of Certainty in both Caſes; or that the Certainties on both ſides, are produc'd by the ſame ſort of Principles, or after the ſame manner: But I aſſert, *That we have no more doubt in many Caſes on one ſide, than we have in any on the other.*

Men reſt as well ſatisfied, they expreſs as much Aſſurance, they are as little apprehenſive of any ill Conſequences which may poſſibly follow upon their being deluded in ſuch Inſtances as theſe: In ſhort, they ſhew by Words, by Practice and Conduct, by Temper and Reſentment, all the ſigns of a perfect Security, that they are right in their Truſt and Dependance; that any skilful *Mathematician* can do, in his Repoſe upon the Truth, of what *Euclid* and *Archimedes* have prov'd in their Writings.

And the reaſon is plain: For there are ſo many abſurd and contradictory things that muſt come to paſs, if a Man be deceiv'd in his Belief, in many of theſe common Caſes; there muſt have been ſuch Confederacies, Contrivances and

Designs carry'd on amongst some particular Men, in order to cheat all the rest of Mankind, and secure the Delusion everlastingly from Discovery; that one may safely say, such things were impossible ever to have been brought about; or that they could not have come to pass, unless the stated Course of things were alter'd, and the Laws by which the World is usually govern'd, were intirely abolish'd, to make way for others of a quite contrary nature.

Now this shocks a Man at the first hearing. The bare Imagination of such an arbitrary and uncertain State of the World *(made and govern'd by an infinitely wise Being, and for infinitely wise and good Purposes)* is enough to confound any thoughtful Mind.

And therefore, I say, tho we don't assure our selves in these Cases, by the same Media, that we do in strict Demonstration; yet we have reason to depend upon the Truth of them, with as much composure and steddiness of Mind as we should do, if they were fairly demonstrated to us: And accordingly 'tis Matter of Fact, that we do so in the common Affairs of Life.

PROP. X.

WHERE any sort of Proof is adapted to the Nature of all Cases, which are of one and the same kind in general; we ought to make use of, or apply the same kind of Proof, as well as to those particular Cases, which are of the highest and greatest Importance;

tance; as to those which are of a more trivial and vulgar Nature.

It is the specifick Difference in the Nature of things (which are the Objects of our Knowledg) that necessarily produces a proportional Difference in our Methods of proving, or knowing the Truth of those things. If they were all of one kind, we should prove Truth in all sorts of Cases by one and the same way. But as the Properties of things differ, so of course must that Order which we observe, in ascertaining our selves about the Truth of them, be various likewise. *Geometrical Truths* are evinc'd by direct Demonstration, *à Priori*; *Physical ones*, *à Posteriori*, or by Experiment; *Moral ones*, by Testimony, the Principles of Human Nature, and the Laws of the World. To each * *Class* or Species of Truth, its own peculiar Method of Proof does belong. And all Truths of the same Class, are therefore to be evinc'd by the same sort of Principles, or by the same general Method of Proceeding. We can't have one Set of Principles, to prove Propositions of greater moment, and another to prove those which are of less. For at this rate, all Nature must be run into Confusion, and the just Order and Distinction of things be totally subverted and taken away. So that let a Proposition be of what Dignity and Consequence it will, yet if the Matter or Subject of it, be re-

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* Λέγοιτο δ' ἂν ἱκανῶς εἰ κατὰ τὴν ὑποκειμένην ὕλην διασαφηθείη; τὸ γὰρ ἀκριβὲς οὐχ ὁμοίως ἐν ἅπασι τοῖς λόγοις ἐπιζητητέον. Aristot. Ethic. ad Nicomach. Lib. 1. Cap. 1. Edit. Aurel. Allobrog. 1606.

Τὴν δ' ἀκριβολογίαν τὴν μαθηματικὴν οὐκ ἐν ἅπασιν ἀπαιτητέον. Id. Metaphys. Lib. 2. Cap. 3.

ducible to the ſame Head or Claſs, with the Matter or Subject of a Propoſition of a ſlighter and more trivial Nature; 'tis certain, that we are to proceed in the Proof of the former, after the ſame general manner, and by the ſame ſort of Principles, that we would proceed to prove the other by.

From hence therefore it follows,

Coroll. 1. *Moral Evidence is not to be rejected, when 'tis alledg'd for the Proof of Matter of Fact, even of the greateſt Moment and Conſequence poſſible.*

For all Matter of Fact, of which we are not aſſur'd by the Teſtimony of Senſe, muſt needs be made out to us by Moral Proofs.

Therefore, ſince all Propoſitions of the ſame kind, are to be evinc'd by Principles of the ſame common Nature; it would be infinitely abſurd, to make the Value and Importance of the Subject-matter of any Propoſition, a Reaſon for our diſowning that Moral Proof, which is produc'd to make out the Truth of it to us.

Coroll. 2. And therefore, *As we uſe our Reaſon in worldly Affairs, ſo we muſt, in thoſe of our Salvation.* All the difference is, that we are to argue with more Care, in thoſe Caſes which depend upon Moral Evidence, if our Salvation be concern'd in them; than would be neceſſary for us to do, if the Queſtion were only about ſome Intereſt or Advantage in the preſent World. We muſt conſider the Evidences which are offer'd to us, with the cooleſt Thought, and the utmoſt Sagacity we can; reſolving to be neither irrationally Obſtinate, nor fondly Credulous and Eaſy; but with a juſt and fixed Reſolution of Mind,

Mind, purſue the Enquiry after a fair and rational Proof, ſuch as Creatures endow'd with Underſtanding and Diſcretion ought to expect in a Matter of great Concern.

And when we have found ſuch Proof as this, I ſay, that tho even our Eternal Felicity be concern'd in the Enquiry, we ought to yield our Aſſent, with as much Eaſe and Security, as we would do in the moſt familiar Buſineſſes of Human Life. For the Reaſon of this, I refer to the foregoing Propoſition.

PROP. XI.

IN ſpeaking of the Doubt or Suſpicion we have, concerning the Truth of Teſtimony; we ought always to diſtinguiſh, between ſuch a Suſpicion as is founded on a bare Phyſical Poſſibility, *that a Witneſs may impoſe upon us in what he teſtifies; and a Suſpicion founded on ſome actual poſitive Cauſe, relating to the ill Character or Manners of that Witneſs, or ſome apparent Defect in the Teſtimony it ſelf.*

Theſe are two very different kinds of Suſpicion, and care ought to be taken not to confound them one with another. If a Teſtimony wants any of thoſe Conditions, that Reaſon and univerſal Cuſtom have made requiſite to its Credibility; if it be obſcure; if it ſeems inconſiſtent with it ſelf; if it be contradicted by other Teſtimonies of more Value and Authority;

if it be deliver'd by a Perſon of a doubtful and ſuſpicious Reputation, or one who has forfeited all juſt Pretenſions to a ſhare in the Confidence of Mankind, by known Forgery, by ſcandalous Credulity and Partiality, or intolerable Negligence and Careleſneſs in his Enquiries into Matters, and the Repreſentations he makes of them to other People: In theſe and ſuch like Caſes, Suſpicion of a Teſtimony is but juſt and reaſonable, and all wiſe Men will (at leaſt) ſuſpend their Judgments, till the Matter can be decided by other Proofs, not liable to ſuch Exceptions.

But when none of all theſe things can be alledg'd, with any face of Reaſon or Truth, after the moſt exact Scrutiny that can be made into all the Circumſtances of a Caſe; then there remains nothing for a foundation of Suſpicion, but a pure *Phyſical* poſſibility of Deception: The Nature of which, as alſo what regard we ought to have thereunto, the following Propoſitions will ſhew us.

PROP. XII.

Concerning the Nature, and various Reaſons or Foundations, of a pure Phyſical *Poſſibility of Deception.*

WHAT I underſtand by this Notion of a *Phyſical* Poſſibility of Deception, amounts to no more than this, *viz. That in a ſtrict and abſtracted Senſe, or in the intrinſick Nature of things, it is not any way Abſurd, Impoſſible or Contradictory, that a Man ſhould be impos'd on by another,*

ther, in a matter of Testimony; even tho there are no Reasons to suspect an actual Deception; nay, and strong ones, on the other hand, to believe the contrary.

Now there are various Considerations, upon which this *Physical* Possibility of Deception is founded: some of them (I must needs say) plainly ridiculous; yet however, such as ought to be mention'd amongst the rest, that it may the better appear, in how narrow a compass this Notion (taken even in *Theory*) does lie, when a Man has par'd off all that is ludicrous and foolish.

The Grounds of it, as I conceive, may be reduc'd to these Heads.

That it is not Physically *impossible, that he whom I take to be a Man of Vertue, by the fair and florid Character he appears with in the World, may secretly be vicious and insincere; and notwithstanding, for all that I know, form a Design to abuse me.*

'Tis not impossible, that he should be misinform'd and abus'd himself, and so cheat me, tho without Design. *Falsum dicere*, and *Mentiri*, are two different things; for tho in both Cases, a Man is abus'd with Falshood instead of Truth, yet in the latter Case, he is abus'd with wicked Purpose and Contrivance.

Again, *It is not simply impossible, that a Man by mere Negligence, Heedlesness, and Inattention to what he says himself, may accidentally give a wrong account of things.* This is not so strange as another Case is, which notwithstanding is known to be Matter of Fact in the World, *viz. That some People, by a long Habit and Custom of telling Untruths, grow to such a Degree of Insensibility, that they do not know when they speak true, and when they do not.*

Lastly, *It is not* Physically *impossible, that at the very Moment I am going to receive an Information, from a Person whose Judgment and Integrity I have not the least doubt of; he may be struck with some secret Distemper, that may alter the whole Scheme of his Thoughts, and make him tell me a thing quite different from the Truth, and what he intended otherwise to do.* He may grow suddenly and insensibly Mad or Enthusiastical; or some unlucky turn may be given to his Animal Spirits; or the whole Texture of his Brain may be alter'd in a Moment; or a thousand other Accidents may happen, which I am no more aware of, than I am fearful of being impos'd upon, by means of the Effects of them. Nor do I believe there are any People, who live in apprehensions of being deceiv'd by the Reports of other Men, upon the account of any such odd Changes as these are, which may possibly intervene.

However, as these and all the forementioned Cases, must be own'd to be in themselves *Physically* possible; so they are in that sense equally possible with respect to all Men, of what Characters soever. There is as much intrinsick Natural Possibility, that a Man of a very fair Reputation should deceive and act a fraudulent part, or rave and grow whimsical; as that one of no Reputation, or of a very bad one, should do so. For all Men as Creatures, are equally defectible.

But then, 'tis as certain, on the other hand, that there are some Considerations to be drawn from the different Characters of Men, in conjunction with other collateral Circumstances; which tho they cannot diminish the *Physical* Possibility of Deception it self, yet they vastly diminish

minish our Apprehensions of it, and make it just and necessary for us, to have either no regard to it at all, or that which is equivalent to none.

If the Person who testifies a thing, be one whose Character I have just Reasons to suspect, or know that it is very bad; then besides a *Physical Possibility*, there is in this Case also, a *Moral Probability* of my Deception: And if there should be over and above, any particular Reasons inducing me to believe it may be the Interest of this Person to deceive me; then will this Probability be heightned in the Proportion compounded of those Reasons, and the just Suspicions I have concerning his Integrity.

But if, on the other hand, I have good Reasons to conclude, he thinks it his Interest not to deceive me; then I have no more Moral Probability of Deception in the Case, than that which is in proportion to my just doubts of his Sincerity, founded upon the ill Reputation of the Man.

If I am not appriz'd of any thing, that on the one hand tends to the Prejudice of the Testifier's Character, nor on the other hand, to the Advantage of it; but the Case be so, that I am in a perfect *Equilibrium* or Indifferency, as to any Notions either of his Sincerity, or the contrary: Then (unless the Consideration of other collateral Circumstances intervene) I have no more than only a pure *Physical* Possibility of Deception.

But if any of those Reasons or Circumstances are superadded; then some degrees of Moral Probability, either of my being deceiv'd, or not being so, will be added to the aforesaid *Physical* Possibility of Deception, to render the Case proportionally more or less doubtful.

But

But farther, 'tis far from being impoſſible in this Caſe (and I will ſay, even in the former too) that the *Momentum* of the other Circumſtances, may ſo far exceed that Circumſtance of my Ignorance of a good Character, or Knowledg of a bad one, with reſpect to a Perſon who teſtifies a Matter of Fact; that I may have a ſufficient Degree of *Moral Certainty*, that I am not impos'd on, notwithſtanding the *Phyſical Poſſibility* that I may be ſo.

If the Perſon who avouches a thing for Truth, be a Man of known Reputation for Prudence and Integrity; one who has not only never been attack'd in his Character upon that ſcore, but has alſo had every one's good Word and Applauſe, for all thoſe Vertues which recommend a Man as fit to be truſted and depended upon; then here is a high degree of Moral Probability, that I am not deceiv'd: As much more, than there is in the two laſt Caſes; as a Character of bright Vertue is ſuperior to no Character at all, or to a deſpicable and vicious one.

But if other ſtrengthning collateral Reaſons and Circumſtances, are brought in over and above; I may have in ſuch a Caſe, all the Degrees of *Moral Certainty* that can be attain'd, to ſecure me that I am not deceiv'd.

For tho (if all other Circumſtances were alike) it might ſtill make more for my Security, if the Teſtifier were a Perſon, of whoſe Wiſdom and Veracity, I had had actual Experience my ſelf on many Occaſions; tho I ſay, this may be thought a better Security than if I were only ſatisfy'd of it by other Mens Experiences, which ſupport his good Character; yet 'tis very poſſible for a Caſe to be ſo circumſtantiated, that other Conſiderations may over-ballance even this

this Advantage, and leave me under a more compleat degree of Moral Certainty, that I am not deceiv'd, than if I had had ever ſo much *perſonal Experience* of his Honeſty and Prudence, without the concurrence of thoſe other Circumſtances. And that this is ſo, would be fairly demonſtrable, ſhould a Man enter upon a particular Diſcuſſion of the Circumſtances, which are incident to Caſes of this Nature. However, from what has been ſaid, we may judg, *how this* Phyſical *Poſſibility of Deception, according to the variety of Caſes that happen, is attended with Conſiderations of a Moral Nature, which tend to alter the Momentum of it, with reſpect to us.*

And thus much may ſuffice, for a more general and abſtracted Conſideration of that Principle.

I ſhall now proceed to conſider it, in a more immediate relation to the World and Human Affairs.

PROP. XIII.

A *Bare* Phyſical *Poſſibility of Deception, in the Caſe of Teſtimonies alledg'd, for the Proof of Matter of Fact, is not* (in the nature of things) *a juſt and rational Ground, for any ſuch Suſpicion concerning the Truth of that Matter of Fact, as ſhould at all influence Mankind in their practice, with reſpect thereunto.*

By influencing the Practice of Mankind, I mean, its being the Occaſion of their doing, or forbearing to do, what they would not have done,

done, or would not have forborn doing, provided they had believ'd that thing to be true.

Now the Reason of this Proposition is apparent.

Because it can never be just and rational, for Men to proceed upon a Principle, the genuine Consequences of which would be destructive of the Interests of Mankind, and introduce unavoidable Confusion all the World over.

But now this would be the Case, if Men were to be influenc'd in their Practice by this Principle of a *Physical* Possibility of being deceiv'd in Matters of Testimony.

For as there is no Human Testimony whatsoever, but what may possibly (in this Sense of Possibility) be deceitful; so all Human Testimony would be equally affected by this natural Possibility of its being deceitful. Because the foundation of it lying in the Defectibility of Human Nature, 'tis evident, not only that there can be no possible Cure for it, but also that it is such a Distemper as admits of no Degrees; the best and wisest of Men being equally defectible, with the rest of Mankind.

From hence it follows, *That whatever Informations Men receive by Testimony, they must not suffer themselves to be influenc'd in their Actions thereby.* For if they are either encourag'd to act, or are deter'd from acting by any such Motive; then they are not influenc'd in their Practice by a *Physical* Possibility of Deception; which is contrary to the *Hypothesis.*

Now if this Conclusion be notoriously False and Absurd, as we shall hereafter see it is; then (by PROP. VI. and *Corolls.*) the Truth of the present Proposition is sufficiently made out.

Coroll.

Coroll. 1. *When therefore the Truth of Testimony is call'd in question, or the Belief of it is scrupled, upon the account of a pure* Physical *Possibility of Deception; Men are led in such a Case, by an arbitrary Irrational Principle, which owes its rise intirely to their own Imaginations, as being the Result of some Notions or Suppositions, which according to Nature and Truth ought not to be made.*

Coroll. 2. And therefore likewise, *all pretended Estimations of the Doubtfulness of Testimony, upon this Principle, are no more than mere* Fiction *and* Hypothesis.

For the Question that is to be put here, is very short and plain.

Is this Notion, of a Physical *Possibility, of being impos'd on in Matters of Testimony, a sufficient ground to proceed upon in Practice; or is it not?*

If you say it is, then stand by the genuine Consequences of it, which have been urg'd in the Proof of the Proposition.

If it be not, then it is but a Notion, and a vain and idle one too.

The end of Testimony is some Use or Service, with respect to the Conduct of our Actions, or some Management of our Affairs in Life. Now if it be demonstrable, by all the Laws of right Reason, that this Principle cannot or must not be extended to Practice; then 'tis demonstrable, that it serves no real End, or is to no real Purpose, except that of filling up some room in a Man's Head, perhaps to his Prejudice, by keeping out other Notions that are better.

And I believe, I may venture to conclude, that it has been demonstrated, *that Men are not to govern themselves by this Principle.* However, for

for a more abundant Confirmation of it, I ſhall add the following *Scholium*.

Schol. 'Tis plain, from conſtant Experience, in the ordinary Tranſactions and Buſineſſes of Life; *that Men actually overlook this* Phyſical *Poſſibility of Deception, and have no manner of regard to it.* And in innumerable Caſes, they are likewiſe compell'd to do ſo, by invincible Neceſſity. From whence, we may argue again after this manner.

That could never poſſibly be intended, for a Principle to guide Men in their Actions and Judgments of things; which (by the very Conſtitution and Laws of the World) *they are inevitably conſtrain'd to have no regard to.*

But the Caſe lies thus, with reſpect to a pure *Phyſical* Poſſibility of Deception, in Matters of Teſtimony.

Therefore, *&c.*

PROP. XIV.

THOSE prudential Conſiderations, upon which Men ſometimes proceed in the World, in order to their better Security from Dangers and Inconveniences; will by no means infer a Neceſſity that they ſhould be guided by this Principle, of a pure Phyſical *Poſſibility of Deception; or prove that they actually are ſo.*

I have added this Propoſition, for no other End, than only to prevent the miſtaken Conſequences,

quences, which ſome People may be ready to draw, from the Obſervations which may be made of Mens Conduct, in ſome particular Caſes that occur in worldly Affairs and Concerns. They ſee, for example, *That under the moſt promiſing Circumſtances, of Care and Aſſurance from other People; Men will however, uſe their own Hands, and Eyes, and Ears, as far as they can poſſibly; and tho they employ their moſt intimate Friends and Confidents, yet ſeem for all that, to diſtruſt them, in ſpite of all the good Opinion, which they themſelves, and the World in general, have of their Vertues.*

Now ſuppoſing all this to be true, what Inference is to be made from thence?

You will ſay perhaps; Why therefore it follows, *That Men do ſometimes guide themſelves by this Principle of a* Phyſical *Poſſibility of Deception.*

I anſwer; I ſhall preſently ſhew, *That it is manifeſtly from* other Cauſes, *and not from* this, *that all theſe Effects do proceed.* But ſuppoſe I allow that it is from *this*, what follows upon that?

If ſome Men do actually proceed by this Principle, will that make it a Rule to the reſt of Mankind? Will their Practice warrant it to be juſt and rational, in oppoſition to a Demonſtration, which ſhews, *That it tends directly and immediately, to the Confuſion of the whole World?*

This is certain, *That no particular Practice can be juſt and warrantable, which if it became general, would introduce univerſal Ruin and Diſorder.*

For what Obligation lies upon Men, to avoid any End which is fatal and pernicious; the ſame lies upon them, to avoid all the Steps and Means that naturally lead to that End.

Now,

Now, what Right or Reaſon you have to govern your ſelf by this Principle, the ſame Right has any other Man to do ſo likewiſe: And the ſame Right have all Mankind in general; who may therefore as reaſonably conclude, they ought to act thus as well as you.

Therefore, this way of proceeding has a direct and natural Tendency, to deſtroy the Order and happy State of the whole World.

And therefore, Men are bound to abſtain from it.

And conſequently, all that follows from the ſuppoſition, that ſome Men do otherwiſe, is, *that they act unjuſtly and irrationally.*

But the true State of the Caſe lies here.

Men uſe Precautions to guard themſelves, notwithſtanding all the Securities which they may ſeem to have, from the Vigilance, Care and Fidelity of other Perſons; not from the pure *Phyſical* Poſſibility of their being betray'd and impos'd upon: but either becauſe their own *Induſtry and Perſonal Management*, are ſometimes abſolutely neceſſary, and more effectual, in order to the obtaining of their Ends, than the endeavours of other Men, would be alone without them; or elſe becauſe they have not ſo perfect an Opinion, of the *Sincerity and Diſintereſtedneſs* of thoſe they are to rely on, as to think it fit to reſign themſelves intirely to their Care; whatever good Character they may compliment them with, in their publick Talk and Addreſs.

Nor indeed are Men to be blam'd for this Warineſs, provided it be kept within the Bounds of Prudence and Decency; ſince the Wickedneſs of Mankind has made ſome Degree of it very neceſſary, in order to our better going thro the World.

But

But then, what is really the Effect of this Cause, we must not attribute to another; and call that a pure *Physical* Possibility of Deception, which is indeed the mere Effect of our *not sufficiently abstracting, from the Faults and Vices of our Fellow-Creatures.* Men who have been us'd to see, and have much consider'd, the many ill Practices which are too common in the World, and it may be, have had a hand in them too; may by so doing, fix a Notion in their Minds, of a general Probability of being deceiv'd by every body. Nay, we know 'tis a fundamental Principle with some, *That all Men are Knaves and Cheats, or would be so if they could; and that therefore, no Man is to be trusted, or believ'd to be Honest, any farther than he is made to be so, with good watching and looking to.*

Whether the Gentlemen who are of this Opinion, do leave *themselves* out, when they give such a Description of Mankind, or no; is what I dare not say.

If they do, why may not other People be Honest as well as they?

If they do not; then their Testimony is bad: We are not to take their Word, because (by their own *Hypothesis*) they design to impose upon us.

However, upon these Considerations, which I have here offer'd, I think it very evident, *That there is nothing in all the common Practice of Mankind, that can with any shew of Reason be alledg'd, in defence of their acting upon this Principle, of a pure* Physical *Possibility of Deception.*

PROP. XV.

WHEN we ſpeak concerning the decreaſe of the Credibility of Teſtimony (whether Oral *or* Written) *we ought to diſtinguiſh thoſe Cauſes of it, which have their Riſe in our own Minds and Notions; from thoſe which are founded on the Nature and Circumſtances of things without us.*

The Credibility of a Teſtimony, is then really diminiſh'd, when it is (by any means whatſoever) robb'd or depriv'd of any of thoſe Circumſtances, which once it was attended with, and which all together concur'd to the giving of it ſuch a Degree of Authority and Credit amongſt Men, as was proportional to the intrinſick Value and Momentum of thoſe Circumſtances.

What theſe Circumſtances are, may (partly at leaſt) be known from PROP. XI. and therefore I ſhall not repeat them in this place. All that I ſay here, is, *That no Teſtimony is really and in the Nature of things, render'd leſs credible, by any other Cauſe; than the loſs or want of ſome of thoſe Conditions, which firſt made it* (rationally) *credible in ſuch or ſuch a degree.* 'Tis this alone that is ſufficient to make it, a leſs fit or proper Object of any Man's Belief: For that is what I mean, by its being really, or in the Nature of things, leſs credible than before. And therefore, the juſt and real Decreaſe of the Credibility of Teſtimony, will always be proportional,

tional, to the Loſs, or Diminution of the Momentum of theſe Circumſtances. So that where they continue as they were, the Credibility of that Teſtimony, is not really diminiſh'd. But then, as there is a great deal of difference between the Credibility of Teſtimony, conſider'd with reſpect to the *juſt intrinſick Cauſes and Reaſons of that Credibility*; and with reſpect to *the Notions and Apprehenſions of the Perſon*, to whom that Teſtimony is propos'd; ſo there is as great a difference between the Decreaſe of the Credibility of Teſtimony, in theſe two Reſpects.

A Teſtimony may be leſs credible, in the Thoughts and Opinion of a Man, that conſiders it; when at the ſame time (in the Nature of things) it is not become at all, a leſs fit and proper Object of Belief; as having ſtill, all the ſame Qualifications and Conditions, which once gave it the Stamp, of ſuch a Degree of rational Credibility amongſt Men.

This may ariſe from ſeveral Cauſes, *which lying all within our ſelves*, we our ſelves are reſponſible for all the Conſequences of it, as far forth as we have contributed to it, by any ſort of irrational Management. If we make a Teſtimony leſs credible to our ſelves, by any wrong Notions or *Hypotheſes*, by ſlight and ſuperficial Conſideration, or neglect and diſregard of any of the material Circumſtances of it; the Blame of this redounds to our ſelves, and it would be abſurd for us to cry out in ſuch a Caſe, *that the Credibility of this Teſtimony, is almoſt dwindled away.*

And therefore, I ſay, we ought in theſe Matters, to diſtinguiſh very nicely, what is real and true in the Nature of things abroad, from

what is the mere Effect of our own unjust and partial Reasonings.

PROP. XVI.

THERE is no Decrease of the Probability or Credibility of Testimony, deliver'd by faithful, careful, and knowing Witnesses; tho propagated through a Series of Ages, ever so far continu'd.

By the foregoing PROP. XV. a Testimony continues equally credible, when it is transmitted with all those Circumstances and Conditions, which first procur'd it such a degree of Credit amongst Men, as was proportional to the intrinsick Value of those Conditions.

By the *Hypothesis*, the Testimony is transmitted by such Witnesses, as are every way well qualify'd; *viz. able to determine the just Circumstances and Conditions of a Testimony; honest, to represent them fairly, when so determin'd; and diligent and careful, to make all necessary Enquiries in order hereto.*

Therefore it is transmitted intire and compleat, as to all the intrinsecally necessary Conditions of its Credibility.

Therefore 'tis (at least) still equally credible.

Coroll. 1. *All such Calculations therefore, are utterly to be rejected, which pretend to establish and determine the decreasing Credibility of Testimony, in general; without distinguishing Cases, as they ought*

ought to be diſtinguiſh'd, according to the Tenor of this, and the foregoing Propoſition.

Perſons would do well, when they talk of the vaniſhing Credibility of Teſtimony, to tell whether they mean it is become leſs credible in *it ſelf* (that is, really leſs deſerving of Credit and Belief) or only leſs credible in *the Notions* of the Perſon, to whom that Teſtimony is propos'd, or by whom it is conſider'd.

I allow, a Man may make an *Hypotheſis*, and calculate *ad Infinitum* upon it: but then, if that *Hypotheſis* be a wrong one, his Calculations will be all perfectly chimerical; how juſt a dependance ſoever there may be of one Step upon another.

Now there is no *Hypotheſis*, in the Nature of things, upon which the decreaſing Credibility of Teſtimony, can be juſtly and truly calculated; but that of the Diminution of Loſs, of ſome of thoſe Circumſtances, which firſt gave it ſuch or ſuch a Degree of Credibility.

And this Conſideration will always terminate in that other, of the Truth and Abilities of the Witneſſes.

And therefore, I think, it fairly follows, *that no Calculation of the Decreaſe of the Credibility of Teſtimony, wherein at leaſt, a Man pretends to talk to the World of Realities, and not of the mere Fictions of his own Brain, can ever proceed upon any other Principle, than that of the Characters and Qualifications of the Witneſſes.*

Upon which account, all thoſe Calculations in particular, which go upon a *Phyſical* Poſſibility of Deception, are Calculations of pure Whimſies and Chimeras; the very Foundation of them being totally wrong, and that which never did, nor can affect Mankind: as has been

expreſly ſhewn, at PROP. XIII. and its *Corollaries*.

Coroll. 2. *As far as the Credibility of any Matter of Fact, depends upon pure Teſtimony; thoſe who live at remoteſt Diſtances of Time, may have the ſame Evidence of the Truth of it, with thoſe Perſons, who receiv'd the Teſtimony firſt of all, or who liv'd the neareſt to the Time, wherein the thing was ſaid to be done.*

Schol. 1. *What has here been prov'd* directly, *is abundantly confirm'd by the common Notions and Experience of Mankind; which therefore may be fitly urg'd, as a plain Demonſtration* à Poſteriori, *of the ſame Truth.*

A Matter of Fact, which has once had ſuch Evidence, as Cuſtom and common Conſent have determin'd to be reaſonable, and ſufficient to recommend it as a proper Object of Belief; does not become leſs credible to remoter Ages (for that Reaſon that they are more remote) than it was to the Ages which approach'd more nearly, to the Time when it was ſaid to be tranſacted.

We, for example, do not now leſs firmly believe all thoſe Actions of *Alexander*, *Hannibal*, *Pompey*, *Cæſar*, &c. (which ever were believ'd by any learned and wiſe Men in the World) than thoſe in the laſt Age did believe them; nor had they any more doubt about them, than the Age before them; nor that Age, than the foregoing one, *&c.* For there never were any Symptoms of ſuch a Diſtruſt arising amongſt Men. We hear no body complain of a *Decay* of Evidence; no body wiſhing, that they had liv'd ſeveral Ages before, that they might have had

had more or better Proof, that *Darius* was beat in ſeveral Battles by *Alexander*, that *Hannibal* was intirely routed by *Scipio*, or *Pompey* by *Julius Cæſar*. All Men believe the *Authors*, that have committed the Stories of theſe Events to Writing; with the ſame Eaſe and Satisfaction of Mind, that they did for ſeveral Ages ago: And therefore, all Men tell the Stories of theſe great Events with the ſame Confidence. We *inſtruct our Youth* in the Knowledg of theſe things, without putting any Suſpicions into them, of the decreaſing Probability of the Truth of what we teach them. And tho we live in Places and Times, ſo very remote from the true Scenes and Originals of theſe Affairs; yet we bluſh no more than our Forefathers did, when we revive the *Hiſtories* of ſuch Events, and publiſh *freſh Editions* of them to the World. We do it without the leaſt Caution or Scruple, upon the ſcore of the Age wherein we live; and never tell Mankind, that their Belief ought to be (in ſome proportion) reciprocal, to the Length of Time, that has paſs'd, ſince the things were ſaid to be done.

Whereas, to deal fairly and ingenuouſly with the World, this is what we ought to do, if we were poſſeſs'd with any ſuch Notions our ſelves. We ought to paſs Sentence upon all the Authors we have, according to the ſeveral Ages in which they liv'd and writ: Declaring which are ſtill in *full force*, which upon the *Declenſion*, and which *quite gone*; their Credibility being irrecoverably loſt, by the exceſſive Length of the Time ſince they wrote. For in ſhort, either the Credibility of Hiſtory conduces to the good Impreſſions, it was deſign'd to make on the Minds of Men; or it does not.

If it does not, then Hiſtories may ſtill be read with as much profit; tho the Probability of their being true, be intirely vaniſh'd: and conſequently, we need not ſtifle the matter, upon the ſcore of any Damage accruing to Mankind thereby.

If it does, then ſince the Notion of decreaſing Credibility cuts off all the old Hiſtory at once, and ſets it upon the ſame foot with common Romances; we are bound to tell People plainly, that Time and Pains ought never to be waſted in the Study of Antiquity; becauſe, by the *Hypotheſis*, it follows, *That no good or valuable End can ever be obtain'd thereby.*

Schol. 2. It will be farther uſeful to conſider here, *the Difference between real Evidence, or the juſt and true Grounds for the Belief of an Hiſtory, at any time; and the ſenſible Impreſſion, or Influence which that Hiſtory may have, or make upon Mens Minds.* I make no doubt, but the ſenſible Impreſſion, or the Effects of Matter of Fact, do wear off and abate, in proportion to the diſtance of Time. As the Fate of *Carthage*, or the Reſult of the Conteſt between *Anthony* and *Octavius*, about the Empire of the World, were undoubtedly more hotly and generally diſcours'd in all Countries, at the latter end of the ſame Age, or one or two Ages after; than they are now in our Time: and touch'd the Paſſions of Men proportionally more. But the *Romans* now at this Day (or any other learned Nation beſides) are not leſs certain of the Truth of theſe Events; than any of their or our Anceſtors were, who liv'd a thouſand Years ago. *Evidence* is one thing, and *Affection* or *Concern* quite another: However, 'tis eaſy for People to mix them

them together, and ſo run into Miſtakes. We are apt to think our ſelves ſureſt of thoſe things, which impreſs us the moſt feelingly; as all thoſe do, which lie neareſt to us, either in *Time or Place*. On the other hand, we tell our ſelves, that things tranſacted a great way off, or many Centuries ago, are of little Importance to us, at ſo vaſt a remove from them; by which means it comes to paſs, that we make but cold and careleſs Reflections upon them, and neglect many things that tend to clear up the Evidence of them to us, or convince us that they were really true. And this Inattention, by degrees, throws a kind of a Miſt upon the things themſelves, and makes them appear ſomething obſcure, and therefore doubtful to us (as all things muſt of neceſſity do, the Reaſons of which, we never, or but ſeldom conſider) till at laſt we come to either down-right Uncertainty about the Reality of them, or elſe to think, that we want ſome Degrees of Evidence in our Time, which the People in former Ages might fairly pretend to. And I make no doubt, but this is one main thing, at the bottom of that Notion (which ſome People have) of *decreaſing Evidence or Credibility*.

Schol. 3. To what has been hitherto ſaid, we may alſo add this, *viz. That tho we cannot ſay in a ſtrict and proper ſenſe, that the Credibility of Teſtimony really increaſes, or becomes more than it was, at any given time, (unleſs new Circumſtances and Conditions are ſtill ſuperadded to it)* yet we may ſafely aſſert, *That with the Increaſe of Time, Reaſons may alſo increaſe, to confirm Mankind more in their Belief, and to aſſure them further of the Truth of that Teſtimony*. So that by Conſequence, an

an Evidence may be ſtronger to ſome, who are more remote in Time, from the firſt Teſtimony concerning a Matter of Fact; than to others, who liv'd nearer thereto.

For tho every Man is to uſe his own Reaſon, in judging of the real Credibility of a Teſtimony; yet 'tis a Conſideration of no little moment, *That it has ſtood the Trials and Examinations of many Ages, ſucceſſively; and that vaſt numbers of Men, of Candor and Integrity, of the politeſt Parts, the greateſt Sagacity, and equal Learning and Application, have, after the profoundeſt Search and Enquiry into the Matter, unanimouſly ſet their Hands to it, and voted it a rationally credible Teſtimony, according to all the Laws of Reaſoning* (in theſe Caſes) *ever us'd amongst Mankind.* Now this is the Advantage, which *ſucceeding* Generations have, above thoſe which went *before.* 'Tis granted, the Truth of the thing is apparent to them, upon the intrinſick Merit of the Proof that is offer'd for it: But then, they conclude that Truth, in conſort with ſo many Thouſands that have argu'd upon the very ſame Premiſſes, and drawn exactly the ſame Concluſion, before their Days; that 'twould be prodigious and next to impoſſible, that ſuch multitudes of different Times, Countries, Educations, Tempers and Prejudices, and Men that knew how to argue rightly too, ſhould all fall into the very ſame Paralogiſm, and blunder preciſely after the ſame manner. Now where a Caſe of Teſtimony is thus circumſtantiated, I ſay, it adds a conſiderable Value and Force to the Proof it ſelf; *in that it gives a Proſpect of ſtrange unaccountable Difficulties that attend the Suppoſition of its not being a juſt and rational one.*

For

For here a Man is presently lost in the Thought, when he attempts to reconcile these difficulties to the common Notions and Sense of Mankind. How should these Men all come to join in such a Mistake? To suppose them to be ignorant, credulous, heedless, not to examine things, and argue upon them; is contrary to the *Hypothesis.* To suppose them to do it by Combination and Design, is likewise contrary to the supposition of their Candor and good Manners; and is besides, unsufferable Nonsense, when we are speaking of the different Ages and Countries of the World. What can be suppos'd then, for the reason of so universal a Blunder (if it be a Blunder) but as universal an Infatuation or Madness; that these Men were all under the Power of some malignant Charm, Planet-struck, and out of their Wits? And I think no Man can well make that supposition, without bringing himself in for a share of the same Calamity. So that I think, we may safely lay down this for a Rule, *That some Matters of Fact may be attended with such Circumstances of Evidence, that they may not only be equally, but also* (all things consider'd) *more credible, to those who live in remoter Ages; than to those, who only liv'd nearer to the Time wherein the things were said to be done, but were not themselves Eye-Witnesses of the same.*

SECT. XXV.

THUS I have shewn, in the foregoing *Propositions*, what I think necessary (with regard to our present Design) concerning the

Foun-

Foundation, *Nature* and *Properties* of *Moral Evidence*.

This was the firſt thing I propos'd to do, under that Head of Argument we are now upon.

Secondly, I ſhall now enquire particularly, into the *Uſe and Neceſſity* of this ſort of Evidence in the World; and ſhew, by the wretched and perplex'd Conſequences, which follow upon the taking it away, what Obligations we lie under to ſubmit to it, where the Conditions and Circumſtances of a Caſe, make it fair and rational (in the Nature of the thing) for us ſo to do.

SECT. XXVI.

Firſt, WE are all ſenſible, *That the Adminiſtration of Juſtice, and conſequently the Support and Preſervation of Government, depends intirely upon this kind of Evidence.*

For thoſe that have the Power of making and executing Laws, cannot be preſent in all Places, to be Eye-Witneſſes themſelves, of the evil Actions of Offenders, or the excellent and praiſeworthy Behaviour of thoſe, who ſerve the Publick well. And therefore, that there may be way made for Juſtice to proceed, in diſpenſing Rewards and Puniſhments to Good and Bad, according to their ſeveral Merits; 'tis neceſſary, that other Mens Eyes ſhould be ſubſtituted in the room of thoſe of Legiſlators and Governors; who ſhould themſelves (if it were poſſible) ſurvey every Place, and take account of what is done by every Perſon. What other Men have ſeen or heard, or can collect by fair and

and rational Circumſtances, muſt be alledg'd and laid before them: And this, when done in ſolemn Form and Manner, is reckon'd by *all the Wiſdom and Juſtice of Nations*, to be ſufficient Evidence; even where things of the greateſt Conſideration do lie at ſtake, as the Lives and Fortunes of Men and Families. And if Teſtimony were not current Proof in ſuch Caſes, what a miſerable Condition would the World quickly be in? How bold would Men of ill Principles make with Laws, and the Honour of the Lawgivers too? How ſecurely would they play their miſchievous Pranks, when out of the Reach of the awful Eye of Juſtice? All Safety and Protection were loſt, and every Perſon and Thing expos'd to all manner of Inſults and Depredations. Enemies might plot without controul, threaten high, make inſolent Preparations, and bring matters at laſt to irretrievable Extremities; if Teſtimony were not a Check upon them, and other Mens Eyes and Ears did not guard the Publick. And therefore, if this ſort of Evidence were to be thrown out of the World, the Conſequence would not only be a final ſtop to the Execution of all Law and Juſtice; but no neceſſary Precautions could ever be taken, towards the warding off any Miſchiefs, that either threaten'd the Publick, or were ready to diſturb a Man's own private Peace and Repoſe. Nor could any means ever be us'd, to promote the common Welfare and Happineſs, or to render our own Conditions more eaſy and proſperous in the World. But inſtead of this, all things muſt be ſuffer'd to go on, whether for better or for worſe, juſt as they will and can of themſelves, without any Care or Concern of ours. Tho God has endow'd

dow'd us with Judgment and Discretion, by which we are capable of *consulting and contriving* for our own Advantage, and providing against Events, which would render us unhappy, if they befel us; yet we are (upon this *Hypothesis*) to make no use of our Reason for these Ends and Purposes, but stand still, as if we were intirely void of such a Principle; waiting for Revolutions and Turns of things, which may be either favourable or unfortunate to us, according as it happens.

For Reason can be of no Advantage to us (in Cases of this nature) without the *Knowledg and Conversation of the World*; and the Knowledg and Conversation of the World can signify nothing, if *Moral Certainty* be taken away. Because, whatever Knowledg or Information we may gather concerning the State of the World, by our conversing with Mankind; yet if we can repose no manner of Confidence, in what we thus inform our selves of, we lose all the necessary Motives and Encouragements to Action, and consequently are not a jot the better, or the nearer to any good Purpose, for all the Notices we can get, of Men and Things in the present Life.

SECT. XXVII.

Secondly, *NOR is it only the Destruction of Government in particular, but the Dissolution of all Society in general; which is an immediate and necessary Consequence, upon the taking away this sort of Evidence.*

For

For a mutual Confidence and Dependance of one Man upon another, is one of the great Bands which holds all Communities together, and unites the particular Members of them in the ſtricteſt Obligations one to another. And therefore, if this be taken off, ſo that no Truſt can be repos'd, nor no Credit given, that Men may be eaſy and ſecure in ſo doing; then everlaſting Jealouſy and Suſpicion muſt reign in all Places. Men muſt be every where upon their guard, looking upon all thoſe about them, either as dangerous Enemies, watching for Opportunities to betray and ruin them; or elſe as ſuch, whoſe Friendſhip and Fidelity are by no means ever to be relied on. And take it either way, the Effects will be much the ſame. For in ſuch a State as this, there is no poſſibility of ſuch a thing, as one *common Intereſt*, or a firm Conjunction of Deſigns and Endeavours to promote it. Becauſe, this perfect Harmony of Temper requires Men to be free and open, and to have a juſt regard to each other, upon the Principles of Honour and Credit. But if they were always to live under Apprehenſions, of baſe Cheats and Impoſitions from one another; and no Man could adviſe or act, but the reſt about him muſt preſently ſuſpect ſome wicked Deſign at the bottom of it; as they would have all the reaſons in the World to fear and hate one another, ſo they could not but think themſelves happieſt, when fartheſt aſunder. Thus all Zeal and Concern for the Intereſts of the Publick, would be intirely ſwallow'd up by anxious Thoughts and Cares, continually working in Mens Breaſts, about the Defence of themſelves and their own private Fortunes. And when matters were brought to this

this paſs, a general Disbanding of Mankind would follow thro the World. We ſhould ſee *Societies* melt away into nothing; the largeſt and moſt auguſt Bodies of Men (as well as the leſs and more deſpicable ones) confuſedly diſperſing and flying from one another. All *Trade and Commerce* would be at an end (as well as Honour and Diſtinction) amongſt Men.

As Princes and Subjects, would be all upon a level; ſo would *Friendſhip* and Correſpondence amongſt the latter, be as impoſſible, as *Government* to the former.

Every Man muſt ſtand upon his own Legs, and ſhift for himſelf as well as he could; and therefore (without Conſideration or Regard to any thing above or below him) attend only to the grand Buſineſs, of looking out after Shelter for himſelf, where he might be ſafe. The next Step to this (for what ſhould hinder, when all gentle Affections were baniſh'd from the World?) would be open Violence and Hoſtility; as Opportunity ſhould put an Advantage into any Man's Hands, who, together with ſuperiour Strength, had Malice enough to be an Aggreſſor.

This ſort of State, ſome have call'd by the Name of a *State of Nature*, and painted Men like ſo many Beaſts of Prey, hunting and worrying one another, and committing all the barbarous Ravages that brutiſh Appetite and Force could be imagin'd to make them capable of. As if they had believ'd the * *Poet* to be in good earneſt

* Cum prorepſerunt primis Animalia Terris,
Mutum & turpe Pecus, Glandem atque Cubilia propter
Unguibus & Pugnis, dein Fuſtibus, atque ita porro
Pugnabant Armis, quæ poſt fabricaverat Uſus.

Donec

earneſt, in that Picture he drew of the Primitive State of the World; and thought they were oblig'd to copy the Images of his Fiction, to compoſe a regular Scheme for Mankind to go by.

From hence, *Fear*, *Diſtruſt*, and other hoſtile Paſſions, have been made the Cauſes of Mens forming themſelves at firſt into *Societies*. That is, *The Cauſes of their living decently and in good Order, and having a due regard to one another, according to their ſeveral Stations and Conditions:* For that is the meaning of living together in *Society*.

A moſt noble Effect, to proceed from ſo baſe and vile a Cauſe!

However, 'tis plain enough, *That theſe Principles tend to the deſtruction of Society; and if they did prevail, would actually deſtroy it.*

And I muſt needs ſay, it looks ſomething odd, *That the Riſe and Origin of Society ſhould be that very Principle, which we are ſure, tends to the utter Ruin and Confuſion of it.*

SECT. XXVIII.

Thirdly, I Might add, in the next place, *That many of our Civil Liberties and Privileges in the World, are ſo far founded upon this ſort of Evidence, that without it, we could never poſſibly make out any Title to them; and not only*

Donec Verba, quibus Voces Senſuſque notarent
Nominaque invenêre, dehinc abſiſtere Bello,
Oppida cœperunt munire, & ponere Leges, *&c.*
Horat. Sat. 3.

so, but it is by this alone (abstracting from all other kinds of Proof) that we are able to justify the Claim we lay to them, and consequently owe the Enjoyment of all the Advantages flowing from thence, intirely to this sort of Evidence.

To give full Proof of this, 'tis enough to hint those common Cases of *Birth and Parentage, and Succession to Inheritances, by Will and Testament:* Arguments which cannot lose their force with any wise Man, for being vulgar ones, and occurring to us every day.

I presume, it will be allow'd, *That as in some Cases, Personal* * *Knowledg, or the Testimony of Sense is utterly impossible, and in others, is not requir'd and insisted on by Mankind:* So also, *that there is no room for pure Demonstration to come in, in any of them all, neither the* Demonstratio ὅτι, *nor* δι' ὅτι, ostensivè, *nor* ad absurdum; and therefore, *that all our Belief and Assent in these Cases, must stand intirely upon the Basis of Moral Evidence.*

The matter being so plain, I shall go no farther in the Consideration of it, but only observe two or three things, that may be infer'd from this sort of Arguments.

First, *That some Matters of Fact, may be so convincingly made out by Testimony; as to leave Men under a compleat assurance of the Truth of them.* Or (which is equivalent to it) *That Circumstances may be so mix'd and complicated in some Cases of Testimony, that there can be no room to suspect any Fraud or Deceit; and it must be extravagantly ridiculous and absurd, to imagine things not to be, as they are represented to be.*

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* Ὅτ γδ πω τις ἐν γῇ ἀυτὸς ἀνέςνω. Hom.

Secondly,

Secondly, *What a ſtreſs is laid upon the Faith and Credit of Men, in matters of very great Importance, to the Peace and Welfare of Societies.*

For it would be eaſy to ſhew, that the Caſes I have mention'd are of great Conſequence to the publick Welfare; and that Uncertainty, or the want of ſure and ſtanding Proofs in theſe matters, would involve all Nations in Tumult and Diſorder.

Thirdly, *How effectually all the Notions, of the uſeleſs and precarious Nature of Moral Evidence, are confuted by the very Conſtitution of the World, and the unavoidable Circumſtances of Human Nature therein.*

So far, that every Man by being born, prepares full Conviction for himſelf, againſt the time that he comes to diſpute the Validity of this ſort of Evidence. Nor is there a ſtep he takes in Life afterwards, wherein it is not ſerviceable to him, and (even while he is railing againſt it) does not ſome way or other contribute to his Comfort and Felicity here.

SECT. XXIX.

Fourthly, I Might ſhew here in the laſt place, *How far the taking away of Moral Evidence, would (in a particular manner) affect the learned World.*

'Tis plain, that a great part of our Knowledg, and ſuch as is very uſeful in Human Life, muſt be given up as wholly uſeleſs and inſignificant to us, if matters were to be brought to this paſs.

In a word, whatever can be comprehended under the general Name of Hiſtory, is cut off

at once; whether that which informs us, of the Actions and Customs of Men, or of the Works of Nature; or the Bounds and Dimensions of Countries; or Celestial Observations; or the Computations of Time and Events, with whatever has been introduc'd amongst Men in order thereto.

This is all lost, as far as it depends upon the Credit and Testimony of other Men; and therefore *Geography*, *Chronology*, and a good part of *Natural History* (which are little else but a Series or Concatenation of Testimonies) become all as useless as mere Fable and Romance, and should be thrown out of our Libraries as such.

In short, no sort of Discovery, no Experiment or Observation that a Man does not make himself, or see with his own Eyes; nay, nor no demonstrable Truth neither, which a Man is not able to demonstrate himself; is ever to be admitted, or made use of, either by way of Argument in Discourse, or as a Premisse in any Demonstration, in order either to Theory or Practice.

Every Man must stand upon the Basis of his own proper Knowledg, without Light and Information, without Hints and Suggestions from other Persons; being neither *Physician*, *Philosopher*, *Cosmographer*, nor *Historian*, any farther than he is beholden to pure Nature and Industry, to good Luck or Chance, or to all together. And I must say, that were matters brought to this pass, that Men were to make a Figure in the World, with those Ornaments only, which they themselves had thus fairly and legitimately acquir'd: Should every Author that has contributed to the dressing of them up, appear again upon the Stage, each to pluck off his

his own Feather; the Shew would be much less fine and pompous than now it is; and Multitudes who have drawn the admiring Eyes of Mankind after them, would be left in the same bare Condition, with the ridiculous Bird in the Fable.

All that I shall infer from the present Head, is this: *That since we take so many things in Cases of this Nature, for granted, and receive them as true, upon no other Proof, than the Testimony of other Men; when we meet with other things, which upon a just comparing of Circumstances, appear to be in all respects as well attested, and to have (at least) as good an Evidence, as those which we ordinarily receive, without the least Scruple; when we find all the Marks of Sincerity and Veracity, all the Agreements and Coincidences of things, that Freedom from reasonable Exceptions, and that Prospect of unanswerable Difficulties, attending the refusal of our Assent, which are the Motives that commonly determine us to yield it in these Cases:* That then, I say, *we ought not to reject such Testimony, but receive it, as we do other Testimony, propos'd under the like Circumstances of Evidence; or else, if we disown that on one side, to disown all on the other likewise.*

Much less should we ever make use of Testimony, in order to expose and run down the Credit of Testimony; or quote Authorities, to prove other Men Fools for depending upon them.

To cry up at one time, and explode at another, the very same sort of Argument, attended with the same Advantages, and press'd under the same Conditions; is a Practice so arbitrary and inconsistent, and shews so much Humour and Self-will; that no Man can be guilty of it, without declaring plainly, that it is not

Truth, but ſome other Intereſt that has the Aſcendant over him.

SECT. XXX.

HAVING thus finiſh'd what I thought neceſſary to be ſaid here, concerning the *Nature and Uſe of Moral Evidence*; I ſhall now ſubjoin one general *Corollary*, to the whole Diſcourſe: And then propoſe ſome few things, which (if well conſider'd) may, I hope, be ſerviceable, as well to prevent or remove Difficulties, as to ſet us right in our Thoughts, and direct us in all our Enquiries into Subjects, where this ſort of Evidence muſt be depended upon.

And with this I ſhall conclude the Second of thoſe four general Heads, which I propos'd to go thro, at the Beginning of this part of the Book: *viz. The Demonſtration of the obligatory Nature of an Evidence, that comes up to the Characters which were before deſcrib'd.*

Coroll. *From what has been ſaid, we may ſee how much thoſe Men, who expoſe Moral Evidence as a precarious, uncertain, deceitful thing, do abuſe the World by ſuch ſort of Suggeſtions; and what Enemies they are to the Peace and Happineſs thereof.*

I take in here, all thoſe ſorts of People, who agree in the ſame common Deſign and Practice of ridiculing this kind of Evidence; how different ſoever the Methods may be, which they take to accompliſh their End.

Some

Some (who I muſt confeſs, are the moſt brave and generous Adverſaries of the two) uſe no manner of Ceremony at all in the matter; but talk openly and bluntly, and thereby put us out of all poſſible doubt of their meaning, and what they wonld be at.

They don't ſtick to ſay, in plain intelligible Language, *That theſe ſorts of Proofs are fit for none but Fools and Bigots, to be perſuaded by —— That we can be ſure of nothing, we take for Truth this way —— And that all that we have to depend upon, is only our being told ſo and ſo, by Men who may as probably have been Knaves, and put an egregious Cheat upon us, as not.*

There are others, who go more warily to work, and make the Attack by *Queries* and *Surmiſes*, by little Doubts and Jealouſies, ſtarted about the Uncertainty of all thoſe Reaſonings, that do not come up to ſtrict and perfect Demonſtration.

Theſe Gentlemen, who, to be ſure, are deeply concern'd for the Welfare of *Chriſtianity*, ſeem to be in pain for it, when they conſider, how little Credit it meets with in the World; and how ſlightly ſome People (whom they fear to be very bad Men) will talk of the Evidences that are offer'd, to recommend it to the Belief of Mankind. —— *There is no doubt, but* Chriſtianity *is ſufficiently well prov'd —— And no rational conſidering Man, ever offer'd to diſpute the Truth of it —— But —— There are thoſe, who will talk very oddly ſometimes, of the Doubtfulneſs of Human Teſtimony; and intimate, as if ſome things were very queſtionable upon that ſcore —— They will not allow us to have any more, than a Peradventure, or a May-be, for the Truth of all things which reſt upon Moral Proof —— But alas! Infidelity and*

Scepticiſm, do much prevail in this wicked Age—— And People are mighty apt to doubt, in Caſes where they have not Demonſtration to make them ſure.

Admirably well argu'd indeed! The *Chriſtian Religion* is very much beholden to theſe Gentlemen, for their great Care, to ſupport the Credit of it, in an Age of prevailing Scepticiſm and Infidelity. Such ſort of Inſinuations are like to do it ſervice; or rather to inſtil the moſt inveterate Prejudices againſt it, into the Minds of Men, and prepare them for a more ſound and thorow Inſtitution in *Deiſm*.

A Man that openly raves and ſtorms at *Religion*, calls it *Impoſture and Prieſtcraft*, and expreſſes himſelf in all the rough Terms, commonly us'd by the leſs well-bred Enemies of *Chriſtianity*; is nothing in compariſon to theſe maſquerading People, that talk modeſtly and calmly, and (while they ſeem to be ſpeaking handſomly on the behalf of *Religion)* are trying to undermine the very Foundations of it.

The former Perſon fairly ſounds an Alarm, threatens what he will do, and bids you beware of him. Tho he intends only to expoſe, yet in effect, he ſerves *Chriſtianity* by his very Calumny and Reproaches: becauſe he tells the World plainly, he has no Arguments againſt it, but what are of this diſreputable kind; and that if he had Reaſons, he would not fail to make uſe of them.

But the others, inſinuate themſelves into a Man before he is aware, work him off from his Guard, tincture and ſeaſon him with the moſt pernicious and deſtructive Principles; and have in effect, run down and made all *Chriſtianity* a Cheat; by that time a Man comes to ſuſpect or imagine, they had any Deſigns againſt it.

For

For in ſhort, do but artfully poſſeſs Men with a Notion of the doubtful and precarious Nature of Moral Evidence, and you may eaſily bring them to believe what you pleaſe, about the Goſpel of *Jeſus Chriſt*. That is, *do but repreſent Matters to them, under falſe and deceitful Colours; give them crude undigeſted Notions, and a mere ſuperficial Account of things; and by this means, you may make them fit to ſet up againſt the* Chriſtian Religion. An odd way of inſtituting and accompliſhing Men! But that this is the true State of the Caſe, will plainly appear upon a little Examination of it.

SECT. XXXI.

THE great Cry amongſt theſe Gentlemen, is —— *You can't be ſure* —— *You muſt needs be under miſerable Uncertainties in all Caſes of this Nature* ——&c.

Now I would fain know, what they mean by this: for 'tis certain, that if they would but explain themſelves, the Caſe is ſo obvious, that either they or we, muſt preſently be run up to ſome grand Abſurdity, if we ſtand fairly to the Argument on both ſides.

Firſt, Do they mean (by our not being ſure) that we cannot be *Mathematically Certain?* If they do, Who ever ſuppos'd, or talk'd of *Mathematical Certainty* (or ſuch ſort of Certainty, as that which reſults from ſtrict Demonſtration) in theſe matters?

We ſay indeed, that in innumerable Caſes of this kind, we have an Aſſurance or Satisfaction of Mind, ariſing from Moral Proofs, equivalent

to

to that which arises from perfect *Geometrical Demonstration* it self: And this is fairly demonstrable. See PROP. IX.

But I dare say, that no Man ever fancy'd, much less asserted a Certainty of the same kind, with that in *Mathematicks*; and the contrary is expresly shewn, with the Reasons of it, at *Schol.* PROP. IV.

So that if they mean this, they mean that which no body ever said or thought of; and therefore, is nothing to the purpose.

Or, *Secondly*, Do they intend (by talking thus) *that we have no solid and substantial Grounds, upon which we may safely proceed, to argue our selves into a Belief of the Truth of things?* Do they mean, *That there are no valuable Considerations in the Nature of things, which are sufficient to make it strictly just, rational, and necessary for us, to yield the Assent of our Minds, in such Cases as these are?*

If this be what they would have; I must needs say, that I think they are oblig'd, by all the Rules of Honour and good Breeding in the World, to ask pardon of those Persons (on whom they impose such absurd and manifest Untruths) for complimenting of them, with so little Sense and Understanding.

For every Man that has any Degree of either, is able to shew, that this is wrong in Fact, from his own Knowledg of the World. And if these Gentlemen must needs divert themselves, with making unjust Representations of things; one would think, they might have chosen their Subject a little more prudently, and not have fix'd upon one, which lies so much within the reach of all common Observation and Experience, which may be produc'd to confute them every

every Day, nay, and by which, they are eternally confuting and contradicting themſelves.

So that whatever they mean (ſince it will be hard to pitch upon any meaning, that will not be reducible to one of theſe two Heads) I think I may fairly conclude, *that it is either manifeſtly wrong in point of Fact, or elſe nothing to the purpoſe.* And this being the true and impartial State of the Caſe, they may (if they think it wiſe ſo to do) go on with the cry of——*You cannot be ſure.*

SECT. XXXII.

TO conclude, I would deſire theſe Gentlemen to conſider the following Argumentation.

We can be ſure, *That Order and Government, Society and Commerce, muſt be preſerv'd in the World, as long as there is a Race of reaſonable and ſociable Creatures therein.* And therefore, *That ſomething muſt be credible between Man and Man.*

From hence we can be ſure, *That there muſt neceſſarily be ſome juſt Marks of that Credibility.*

And therefore, *That we are bound to have a due regard to them, wherever they appear.*

Not only, becauſe it is equitable and rational, in the Nature of the thing ſo to do; but alſo, becauſe intolerable Inconveniences would certainly follow, upon our diſowning the Truth of things, the Evidences for which come up to thoſe Characters.

From hence we may be ſure (if we are not antecedently reſolv'd to live in Doubt and Uncertainty) *That we are oblig'd, by all the Laws of*

Human

Human Nature, and the World wherein we live, to yield the Assent of our Minds in all such Cases, where we should infallibly run upon some of those forementioned Inconveniences, provided we refuse it.

And because the Author of Nature has not made the World after such a manner, nor cannot permit that we should be deceiv'd, in Cases where it is made strictly just and rational for us to yield the Assent of our Minds: Therefore, we can be sure, *That in all Cases (especially in those of great Importance) where the Evidences come up to those Conditions; we shall not be deceiv'd, in assenting to the Truth of things, as made out to us by those Evidences.*

And from all this, we can fairly conclude, *That the Foundations of Moral Evidence* (and consequently the Reasons of our dependance upon it) *are not precarious and uncertain, but most securely laid, in the Nature and Order of things.* Q. E. D.

SECT. XXXIII.

LET me now add some few *Rules* or *Directions*, to Persons of sincere and honest Minds, in order to the inforcing what has been said upon this Subject, and the better preparing of them to defend it, against whatever they may hear at any time advanc'd, by way of opposition to it.

First, *Remember that there is no Argument ever to be drawn, against the Goodness and Sufficiency of Moral Proofs, from the Consideration of that Corruption, Treachery, and Falshood, which is so common in this degenerate World.* And therefore, if this

this ſhould be inſiſted on, you may ſafely allow the Objection to be true *(viz. That there is, and always has been, abundance of Fraud and Deceit in the World)* and at the ſame time, deny the Conſequences that are infer'd from it; if they are carry'd ſo far, as to conclude generally, *That Moral Evidence is fallacious, and ought not to be depended upon.*

SECT. XXXIV.

Secondly, YOU ſhould not be ſtartled, when you hear People tell you, *That Moral Proofs do not ſhew you, that things cannot poſſibly be otherwiſe than they are prov'd to be; or that they do not ſhew, that things muſt neceſſarily be ſo as theſe Proofs do make them out to be; and conſequently, that you can have no ſatisfaction in depending upon them.*

For this is manifeſtly a Paralogiſm. It does not follow, that a Proof which does not ſhew a Man, that things cannot poſſibly be otherwiſe (or muſt in the ſtricteſt Senſe, neceſſarily be ſo as they are repreſented to be) muſt therefore leave him under Doubt and Uncertainty.

It is not true; it is contrary to plain Fact and Experience in ten thouſand Caſes, that we are conſcious of our ſelves. And therefore, here I refer to PROP. VII. and VIII. with the *Corollaries* of the ſame, for farther ſatisfaction.

And becauſe this is a Point of great Importance, and ſuch as, if a Man thought ſeriouſly and deliberately of, he would (I dare be confident) preſently ſee thro, and demonſtrate the Shallowneſs of the moſt (ſeemingly) frightful Objec-

Objections against *Moral Evidence*: I shall therefore (in pursuance of what I have deliver'd at *Coroll.* 2. of PROP. VII.) add this farther Direction.

SECT. XXXV.

Thirdly, IN all your Arguings for, or hearing other Peoples Arguings against *Moral Evidence*; *be sure to keep to that, which in reality is your true Scope and Design, and the Point you ought mainly to be concern'd about.* Remember that your great End in making use of this sort of Proofs, is, to be well satisfy'd, *of the Truth and Reality of things*; to know that they are so in Fact, as they are represented to be, or that they are not otherwise.

But to consider, whether it be impossible or contradictory, that they should be otherwise, or possible that they should not be at all; this is perfectly foreign to the true Scope and Design of all these Enquiries. And this is plainly demonstrable from hence, *That the End of Moral Evidence being not pure Speculation, but Practice, or the better qualifying our selves, to regulate and conduct our Actions in Life; this End may be perfectly attain'd, by pursuing the Enquiry, about the Truth and Reality of things.* For when we are satisfy'd, upon strictly just and rational Grounds, that they are either actually so, or not so as they are represented to be; then we have all the Information that is necessary, in order to the Management of our Affairs; and know how we are to proceed, whether by doing this or the other thing, or by letting it alone. But it would

would be of no manner of Use or Service to us, with respect to Practice (even if the Nature of these Cases would bear it) to have such Proof of the Truth of things, as should convince us at the same time, that it was strictly impossible they should be otherwise. For the Ground of all our Actions, being the Consideration of the Importance or Concern, which things are of, to our Welfare and Happiness; 'tis manifest, that this Circumstance, of the absolute Possibility or Impossibility, of their not being or being otherwise than these Proofs represent them to us; does not at all tend to heighten our Sense of the Value and Importance of them, provided we have but convincing Proof, *that they really are.*

Therefore, this Circumstance is of no moment at all, with respect to Practice.

And consequently, the want of it, is not a Foundation for any just Objection against *Moral Evidence.*

SECT. XXXVI.

Quest. SINCE 'tis a Point of such Importance, to avoid being deceiv'd, in many Cases where Men are to trust intirely to Moral Evidence; *We desire to know, what Method a Man ought to observe, that he may be sure to distinguish the Right from the Wrong, and form such a Judgment of an Evidence propos'd, as is necessary, in order to the making of a just and true Conclusion?*

Answ. It is indeed a matter of very great Importance, to judg and to go right in some Cases of this Nature; for 'tis plain, *That no less a thing*

thing than our Salvation it ſelf, depends upon the forming of a right Judgment, in a ſingle Caſe of Moral Evidence.

I ſhall therefore, here propoſe ſome few Rules and Directions, which if Men would carefully put in practice, I make no doubt to aſſure them, *That their Endeavours will be attended with the deſired Succeſs.*

SECT. XXXVII.

AND, *Firſt*, I think the firſt ſtep of all ſhould be, *An humble and ſincere Addreſs to the great Author of your Being, for his favourable Aſſiſtance and Concurrence with you.*

In all your Enquiries after Truth, but eſpecially in thoſe which are of great Concern, it is but reaſonable, that you ſhould acknowledg Him who is Truth it ſelf, and the Fountain of Truth to all intelligent Creatures. It is by the kindly Influences of his Providence, that your Faculties are preſerv'd, in a juſt degree of Strength and Vigour; and that you are capable of exerting them to any good Purpoſe, in any of the Affairs or Buſineſſes of Life. And if it be your Duty at all times to acknowledg this, to praiſe him for his Goodneſs, and implore the Continuance of it to you; how much more devoutly ſhould you ſeek his Aſſiſtance, when you are going to purſue an Enquiry, in the Iſſues of which your everlaſting Felicity is concern'd? In ſhort, this is a Duty of *Natural Religion*; ſo that thoſe who do not believe the Goſpel by their own Principles, need not ſcruple the Practice of it.

SECT.

SECT. XXXVIII.

Secondly, *Propose it to your selves, as the only Design of all your Reasonings and Enquiries, to find out Truth.*

Because, if you have any other End in View, it will infallibly so biass you in all your Proceedings, that you will not be able to think, argue, or judg, in that free and impartial manner that you ought to do, and would otherwise do, if you were wholly disinterested, and had only propos'd to your selves, to find out the Truth of the matter.

Besides (unless you think it a piece of needless Ceremony, to ask the Direction of Heaven, in a Case of great Moment) you cannot, without horrid Hypocrisy, desire God to assist you in your Business, where 'tis not your Design to be truly and rightly inform'd.

SECT. XXXIX.

Thirdly, IN pursuance of this great Design, of finding out Truth (which is what all Men of Wisdom and Sincerity will have in their Eye) *Endeavour as much as in you lies, to divest your selves of all those Prejudices, which any Notions or Opinions, contrary to that which lies before you to be examin'd, may very probably have fix'd in your Minds.*

That is, abstract from them so far, that they may have no Influence upon you in the Inquiry you

are making, and the Conclusion you are afterwards to draw, from your Reasonings upon the Case in hand.

Now this is very possible for you to do.

For 'tis in your Power to govern your Fancies, and let genuine Reason take place.

You can (if you will) look upon things without those false Colours, that the Imagination is too apt to disguise them withal, and which represent them to you, as very much different from what they really are in themselves. I confess, it is a work of Time and Labour, for Men to *conquer their Prejudices thorowly*; but to prevent their governing and swaying the Mind, while a matter of the highest Importance is under Examination, is what every Man may do, that will exert himself, and use his Liberty well.

SECT. XL.

Fourthly, *Examine all the Circumstances of the Case propos'd, in the most careful and deliberate manner that you can.*

Do not let your Thoughts be employ'd upon things of little moment, while you pass by those that deserve your best Attention, and most serious Regard. Select all those Circumstances, and those only, which are material with respect to the Conclusion; and when you have done so, give them their due Force and Weight: And let them influence your Understanding according to what they plainly appear to be (in your most abstracted Views of them) and not as they tend to carry the Conclusion, either this or that particular way, whether for or against

against the Notions you have hitherto entertain'd.

SECT. XLI.

Fifthly, HAVING thus accurately weigh'd and consider'd the Circumstances of the Case, *Make such Inferences from them, as your soberest Reason, without any Art or Management, does it self freely prompt you to make.*

Conclude in such a manner, as to leave your Mind truly serene and compos'd under what you have done; and that upon cool Reflections, it may tell you afterwards, you have drawn a *Conclusion, reasonable and fit to stand by.*

SECT. XLII.

Lastly, YOU ought to make and keep to this Resolution, *Not to drop the Enquiry till you have brought it to some determinate Issue; even tho you meet with considerable Difficulties in the way.*

For tho you may not be able to pass a clear and satisfactory Judgment, at one time; yet you may at another, when the Mind is more dispos'd to be fix'd and attentive, and the Body (perhaps) in better Temper. We all know, by every Day's Experience, that we are not at all times equally capable or ready Judges, even of the very same things. There are some lucky Seasons, wherein Difficulties do, as it were, explain themselves to us, which at other times

would not yield to the greateſt Labour and Importunity.

As ſometimes on the other hand, things that are not very myſterious, will force a Man to give over his ſearch, and wait a more favourable Opportunity.

And therefore, we are not preſently to throw aſide ſo neceſſary and important a Work as this is, becauſe we do not at the firſt or ſecond Attempt (it may be) bring it to ſo happy a Concluſion as was expected.

SECT. XLIII.

TO this I may add alſo (as another very neceſſary piece of Advice) *That if you cannot come to a ſatisfactory Concluſion by your ſelves, you would not ſcruple to conſult thoſe, who may be able to put you in the right way of doing ſo.*

It is not unlikely, that ſome People, who have been us'd to think of a particular Subject, ſhould be able to reaſon with more Eaſe and better Method upon it, than thoſe who are perfect ſtrangers to it. And it is no more ſhame to a Man to make uſe of the Counſel and Aſſiſtance of others, in ſuch a Caſe as this, where the Peace of his Mind is concern'd; than to ask the Advice of a *Phyſician*, in order to the Removal of any bodily Diſtemper.

SECT.

SECT. XLIV.

IT will be objected perhaps, *That it will cost a deal of Time and Pains, to put these Rules in Practice; and that Men will rather be frightned from, than encourag'd to the Practice of so difficult a Work.*

Answ. First, *Consider how little you are discourag'd, at the Prospect of a vast deal of Pains and Labour, in other Affairs which are of infinitely less Moment.* You can rise early, and sit up late, to contrive for a worldly Interest, without any of these Complaints. You can bend your Thoughts, even to the endangering of your Life or Health, and slave and drudge without Intermission, upon any little matter that is to set you off, and purchase you a Reputation amongst Men. And if you can be so indefatigably diligent and resolute in those Concerns, and must presently be tir'd and dispirited in Affairs of this nature, upon every Difficulty that lies in your way; the Reason is plainly, because *you will not apply your selves to them, and therefore, all the ill Consequences of the Neglect, must lie intirely at your own Doors.*

SECT. XLV.

Secondly, WHatever Pains it costs you, to go thro this Work, you ought to remember, *That if you ever make your Mind easy, you must be forc'd to proceed after this, or some such way as this is.* For in the very Nature

of the thing, there is no other way to come to a Certainty, but this of diſtinguiſhing, examining, and making juſt and natural Inferences, from the Circumſtances of a Caſe.

SECT. XLVI.

BUT, Thirdly, *Is there not enough in the Success and good Effects of the Enquiry, to recompense you for all the Pains you are at in the making of it?*

Conſider, that to manage this Affair well, is what is abſolutely neceſſary, in order to your forming a right Judgment of things, and to prevent your running into Inconveniences, which may make you uneaſy in this Life, and perhaps miſerable in the next.

And would not every wiſe Man therefore, reſolve to think and argue as cloſe as poſſible, and run Conſequences as far as they will fairly go; when the Reſult of his doing thus, tends ſo much to his preſent Peace and Quiet, as well as his Everlaſting Security?

SECT. XLVII.

YOU will be ready to ask now, *Suppoſe a Man to have gone this way to work, with all the Care and Caution imaginable, what will be the Iſſue of it, and what may he depend upon at laſt for his ſatisfaction?*

Anſw. If after ſuch faithful and diligent Management of the Enquiry (which lies before you)

you) you find your self fairly induc'd, to conclude, *The Evidence to be of such a Nature, as obliges the Understanding of a rational Creature to yield its Assent:* I say, you may safely yield your Assent thereto, depending upon it, that you shall not find your self deceiv'd in so doing.

But then observe, that it lies upon you your self, to be at a Certainty about these two Points. First, *That you have carefully observ'd the forementioned Rules, in your Enquiry and Examination of things.* Secondly, *That you have taken Care to see, whether the Evidence in the present Case, comes up to the Characters and Conditions of such an Evidence, as was before demonstrated, directly and positively to oblige Mankind to yield their Assent.* For if you are uncertain about either of these particulars, we cannot pretend to answer for the Consequence; otherwise we dare assure you, that you may be easy in the Conclusion you draw.

SECT. XLVIII.

Quest. *BUT upon what just Grounds may a Man be assur'd, that he shall not be deceiv'd in passing such a Judgment; supposing these two things you speak of, to be done?*

Answ. The Grounds you have for such an Assurance, are these.

First, *That the bountiful and wise Author of Nature, has furnish'd you* (as a rational Agent) *with Faculties, by which you are enabl'd to distinguish Right from Wrong, and Truth from Falshood, in all Cases that are of real Concern to you.*

For without ſuch a Power as this, 'tis utterly impoſſible, that you ſhould ever behave your ſelf as an *intelligent* Creature ought to do. Becauſe, to act in due Order and Decorum, neceſſarily requires *a Capacity of knowing* and diſtinguiſhing things. And therefore, if you are deſtitute of ſuch a Capacity, you are under no *Moral* Obligations either to God or Man. For you cannot be oblig'd to impoſſibilities: And 'tis abſolutely impoſſible to act rightly, unleſs it be by mere Accident, without knowing what is Right, and what is not.

So that the Conſequence will be this, *viz. That you muſt either ceaſe to own your ſelf a rational intelligent Being (and be content to be rank'd with ſome lower Species of Animals, for the future)* or elſe you muſt ſtand by this as a certain Truth, *That God has made ſuch a Proviſion in the Conſtitution of your reaſonable Nature, that you are thereby made really capable of doing what I ſay.*

SECT. XLIX.

Secondly, YOU may be certain likewiſe, *That God Almighty is not, nor cannot be, the Author of any of your Deluſions or Miſtakes.*

He will neither deceive your Faculties with falſe and wrong Objects; nor miſlead them in their Operations, about right and proper Objects.

He will not preſent Impoſture to you, under the ſpecious appearance of Truth; nor alter the Nature and Order of things, on purpoſe to make you out in your Concluſions about them.

If

If you do not firmly believe these things of your Maker, you cannot believe his Moral Perfections. And if you deny those (or any of his) Perfections, you deny his Existence.

And if you believe no God, it is not to be expected, that you should believe any thing else. And if you once come to such a Degree of *Scepticism*, you are indeed out of the reach of this Argument, and of all others whatsoever.

SECT. L.

Thirdly, OBserve now from hence, *What assurance you may have with respect to the matter we are speaking of.* For if you are qualify'd with sufficient Abilities, for the Search and Discovery of necessary Truth; also if the Author of Nature, will be neither the Cause or Occasion of your running into any Mistakes: It follows, *That you may come to a determinate Conclusion, about the Truth or Falshood of a Case, wherein you are deeply concern'd; provided you be not wanting to your self, and will use a regular Method in the Enquiry.* And consequently, when you are come to such a Conclusion, you may be at a certainty, as to the Point of your own Deception. For you will never be deceiv'd by any thing else, if you do not deceive your selves, but take care to use the Helps, and exert the Powers which God has given you, in such manner as you are bound to do, and are capable of doing.

SECT.

SECT. LI.

Fourthly, NOR will the acknowledg'd Fallibility of Human Nature, or its Liableneſs to Deception, or the actual Miſtakes and Deceptions of People at any time, in Enquiries of this nature; be any juſt Ground at all, for you to pretend, you cannot be at a Certainty, and ſo by that means think to excuſe your ſelf from the Labour of trying.

For the Caſe plainly terminates in this ſhort *Dilemma*, one ſide of which you muſt of neceſſity chuſe.

Either the Fallibility of Human Nature is really ſuch, that you are conſtrain'd thereby to remain always doubtful of the Truth of the Concluſions you draw: Or it is not.

If you ſay it is, *Then you either diſown all Obligations to any ſort of Duty, which a reaſonable Creature ſhould perform:* Or elſe, *You fall foul upon the Perfections of God, in ſuppoſing him to have bound you to the diſcharge of various Duties; and yet to have made you incapable of ſuch an Exerciſe of your Faculties, as is abſolutely neceſſary in order thereto.*

If you confeſs it is not, *Then all the Defectibility, or Liableneſs to Deception, that is in Human Nature, can never be a Reaſon, why you ſhould pretend to be always in ſuſpence about the Concluſions you draw; but will only be a Reaſon, why you ſhould uſe your utmoſt Care and Caution in the drawing of them:* Which is the very thing that we moſt earneſtly perſuade you to.

And

And then, as to the actual Mistakes that some People may have made in Disquisitions of this kind, or the gross Delusions they may have been led into, by depending upon the Truth of things, as made out to them by *Moral Evidence:* These sure cannot be Stumbling-blocks in the way of any Man, that is not willing to lay hold of every slight Occasion, to deter himself from the doing of his Duty.

That some People who have trusted to Moral Evidence, have been deceiv'd in so doing, I hope you think no more an Argument against Proofs of this nature in general; than you think Blunders and Paralogisms, to be a Scandal to the Nature of *Demonstration*; or the Intemperance of some particular Persons, an Argument against the Use of those necessary Blessings of Life, which they so faultily abuse.

SECT. LII.

BUT being now upon this Head, it may perhaps be of some use, to point out in concise Terms, *the more general Causes and Springs of Mistake in matters of Argumentation*; or to shew by what means it is, *That Men become accessary to their own Delusions, in the Conclusions they draw, as the Result of their Enquiries into things.*

Now this may be,

First, *By arguing with* Media, *which in their own Nature are not just, or proper to afford a positive Conclusion to be drawn from them.*

And therefore a Man may be mistaken this way, if he argues with *Data*, which are either—

Foreign and impertinent to the Business in hand.

Or

Or too few and defective; and therefore, insufficient to furnish him with matter for a fair Conclusion.

Or *more than are needful*; by which means the Mind is perplex'd and confounded, and a Man is sometimes led into Conclusions which contradict one another: in which Case 'tis very likely, that he fixes upon that part of the Contradiction, which most favours his own prejudic'd and mistaken Notions, and so comes to impose upon himself.

SECT. LIII.

Secondly, AS a Man may be deceiv'd (as to his main Conclusion) by arguing even truly and justly, from *Data* that are unjust and improper; *so he may likewise go as wide of the Truth, by arguing after an irregular manner, upon* Data *which* (in their own Nature) *are ever so just, adequate, and pertinent to the Matter which is enquir'd into.*

The most obvious Causes of this, are *Ignorance*, *Inconsideration*, *Precipitancy*, *Partiality* (arising from prejudicate Notions and Opinions) and whatever else may be reduc'd to, or are cognate with these.

Nor is it a Jot more strange, for Men to draw wrong Conclusions, from just and natural Premisses, than to infer things from such Principles, as will never fairly afford them any Conclusion at all.

However, it may be sufficient, in order to the end of our going Right, in these sort of Enquiries, to have shewn as well the general Causes

ſes of Miſtakes, as a plain and practicable Method, by which we may avoid them.

SECT. LIV.

THE third general Head propos'd, was the Conſideration of the Impoſſibility, *That Providence ſhould ever countenance, or ſuffer any ſort of Impoſture to be countenanc'd, with an Evidence of ſuch Qualifications and Conditions, as we have been hitherto diſcourſing of.*

And this can need no Proof to thoſe who pretend to believe the Exiſtence of ſuch a Being, as he that made and governs the World, muſt neceſſarily be: So that this Labour is ſaved. All that can conclude, *That God is Eternal Truth, infinite Love and Goodneſs, unſpotted Juſtice and Holineſs; that he could not make Creatures to delude and tantalize, nor give them Faculties, which ſhould never be of any uſe to them:* All I ſay, that can conclude this (as all may, that can conclude that God is) may alſo from thence preſently infer, the ſimple abſolute Impoſſibility, of his ever dealing after this manner, with a Race of reaſonable Creatures.

So that nothing remains for me to do upon this Head, but only to deduce a few *Corollaries*; and ſo conclude the *Second Part* of this Diſcourſe.

SECT.

SECT. LV.

IF Delusions and Impostures can never be pass'd upon Mankind, with Evidences of such a Nature as has been describ'd; then it follows,

Coroll. 1. *Wherever we can be sure of an Evidence thus qualify'd, there we may be sure, we shall not be deceiv'd, in giving our Assent thereto.*

Coroll. 2. *Where the Events of things do not answer to our Schemes of Reasoning upon them; the Evidences upon which we proceeded to argue in those Cases, were not, in their Nature, sufficient to afford us such a Conclusion.*

So that some Fallacies or Mistakes, must be committed; tho not then perceiv'd or suspected by us.

Coroll. 3. *Where we are sure of an Imposture, by the plain and undeniable Marks of it; there we can be certain, that the Evidences offer'd to persuade Men of the Truth of it, would, if thorowly examin'd, appear to be weak and frivolous.*

Coroll. 4. Where things of great Importance are to be believ'd by Mankind, we may be certain, *That Divine Providence will order the matter so, that they shall be propos'd to us with such Evidences, as will be sufficient to oblige our Understandings* (as we are reasonable Creatures) *to assent to them as true.*

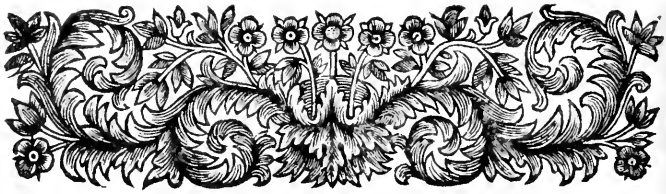
Tho this does not follow directly from the PROP. it self, yet it follows immediately from that

that which is the grand Reason of the PROP. *viz. The infinite Perfection of the Supreme Author of the Universe.*

For the Divine Mercy and Goodness, are every whit as much concern'd, to give important Truths, a Degree of Evidence, fit to recommend them to us, as every way proper Objects of Belief; as those, and other Divine Perfections are, to deny such Evidence to Impostures, that they may not be believ'd by us. And therefore, I infer, *That as for all things, which any way relate to the Salvation of Mankind, and are to be prov'd by* Moral Evidence; *we shall be sure to find, upon Examination, that they have a Degree of Evidence, proportional to the intrinsick Weight and Importance of them, and in all respects sufficient to convince our Judgments of their Truth and Reality.*

And I shall now proceed to enquire (according to the fourth and last Article of the Method propos'd) whether there be not such an Evidence as this, for the *Resurrection of* Jesus Christ.

The End of the Second Part.



Part the Third,

Containing the Proofs, for the Fact of Christ's Resurrection.

CONTENTS.

SECT.

SECT. I.

N the Management of this Part of the Design, which now lies before us, there will be these three things in the general to be done.

First, To shew upon what Foundations, the *Christians* ground their Belief of the *Resurrection of Christ Jesus*; or what *Mediums* those are, by which they argue themselves into this Persuasion, *That it was real Matter of Fact, that he rose again from the Dead.*

Secondly, To enquire, whether these Reasonings of theirs upon this Subject, are strictly fair and just; that is, *Whether the Evidence upon which they receive this Doctrine as true, has all those Qualifications, which render it directly and positively Obligatory to our Understandings, by all the known Laws of reasonable Nature, and the Constitution of the World we live in.*

Thirdly, *Having diligently examin'd and compar'd the Grounds upon which the* Christians *believe, and the* Deists *reject this Doctrine; I shall impartially shew the Result of all, and then make such Inferences as are proper to be made from thence.*

SECT. II.

IN arguing this great Point, after a Method so natural and fair, as that which is here propos'd, and upon such Principles as are laid down, and, I hope, sufficiently demonstrated, in the

foregoing part of this Treatise: It must needs be, *That either the* Christians *who maintain and defend it, or the* Gentlemen *on the other side, who deny it; must, in so doing, be forc'd upon something very absurd and irrational; the Standard to judg by, being the plain Reason and common Practice of Mankind.*

If, whilst we attempt to infer the *Truth of the Resurrection of Christ*, we run counter to any truly rational and allow'd Principles; if the Arguments we make use of, when thorowly sifted and trac'd, are found to terminate in that which the sober Sense of Mankind must condemn, as sophistical, false, or impertinent; and this, not as the Effect of bare Inadvertency or Mismanagement (because a very good Argument may possibly be badly handled, and yet ought not for that Reason, to lose any thing of its Credit) but of the very Constitution and Nature of the Argument it self. And if this be the Result of all, and every one of those Arguments, which can be produc'd in Defence of this Doctrine, or in order to prove the certain Truth of it: *Then the Controversy is at an end, and the* Christians *must give up the Cause.* Because Truth can never possibly run Men into any real Absurdities in the Defence of it; nor can God oblige us to receive any Point of Doctrine, to the utter overthrowing of that Reason he has given us, to guide our selves by; tho he may oblige us to receive that, which our Reason can't solve all the Difficulties of.

If on the other side, those who oppose this Doctrine, can neither do that, nor defend themselves, without being oblig'd to stand by such Conclusions, as the common Sense of Mankind, would upon a fair hearing, condemn as irrational;

tional; if they are necessitated to have recourse to Principles that are either manifestly false and contradictory, or doubtful and precarious, in order to solve the Difficulties that are propos'd to them; or can no way guard themselves against such Difficulties, but by artful Evasions and Excursions from the matter in hand: In a word, if in the natural Course of the Argument, they are forc'd upon things that tend to darken or blunder the Cause, and do not terminate in a direct and positive Answer to what is urg'd upon them: In this Case, it will be very evident, *That Truth cannot be on their side, and that therefore (to act as they ought to do) they should, without any more ado, yield the great Point in Dispute.*

What therefore remains to be done, is to make this Comparison between their Argumentations and ours. 'Tis certain, they must be as opposite one to another, as the Opinions they are produc'd in favour of: and therefore, cannot be sound and true on both sides. The *Paralogism*, the *Absurdity*, or whatever it be, must be found either with them, or with us; and consequently, where it lies, will infallibly point out who is in the right, and who in the wrong.

And tho a *Christian* may possibly have other Arguments, tending (in conjunction with those which are purely rational) to assure him of the Verity of the *Christian Faith* and *Doctrine*; yet (these being no more than mere *Fancy* and *Enthusiasm*, in the Opinions of these *Gentlemen*) they are not to be so much as mention'd in this place. 'Tis to *Reason* they appeal; and therefore, to plain downright Reason we must go.

SECT. III.

THAT we may proceed the more methodically, and not dispute about things, wherein we are on both sides agreed; it will be requisite to take notice of some Points, relating to the Person and History of *Jesus Christ*, which the *Deists* (together with the greatest part of Mankind besides) do as freely subscribe to the Truth of, as the *Christians* themselves.

And, *First*, I believe it will be allow'd without much difficulty, *That there was such a Person as* Jesus Christ, *who was born at* Bethlehem *in* Judæa, *in the Reign of* Augustus Cæsar, *and crucify'd at* Jerusalem *in the Reign of* Tiberius; Pontius Pilate *being then the Roman Governour.*

This is what most Sects and Parties of Men, who have ever heard of *Christianity*, do unanimously agree in. The *Mahometans* indeed differ from all the rest, as to the latter part of the Proposition: for out of an excess of Respect to *Jesus Christ*, they will by no means allow of his infamous Crucifixion and Death; but affirm, *That he was taken up into* * *Heaven, and some Image of him only left upon the Cross in his room, by which the* Jews, *as well as his own* Followers, *who pretended to be Witnesses of the Fact, were impos'd upon, and made to believe that he suffer'd, when in reality he did not.* But we shall not need to be much sollicitous about their Testimony in this matter, since they deny it,

* Adrian. Reland. de Relig. Mohamed. *Lib.* 1. *Pag.* 35. Edit. Ultrajec.

upon

upon so honourable an Account, and are so clear and express in all the rest, relating to the Life and Character of our *Saviour*; and especially, since there are such abundant Concessions made of it, by Men of all other Persuasions, and particularly by those, with whom we are principally concern'd.

For the *Deists* have prov'd to some purpose, *That they believe all that we have here said of* Jesus Christ.

And the *Jews* know it to be true, and are as free to own it as the former.

The reproachful Name of תלוי (or the Person who was hang'd) which they so commonly bestow on him, as also that of עובדי תלוי (the Servants of him who was hang'd) which they give the *Christians*, shew sufficiently, if there were no more, *That they are no Unbelievers in this Point.* But they have other Proofs of it amongst themselves, which we hope there will be a time for their so seriously considering, *That they shall come to talk of him whom they crucify'd, in a more respectful manner, and instead of* תלוי, *by way of Reproach, shall call him* משיח, *in profound Honour and Devotion.*

The Testimony of their fam'd Countryman * *Josephus*, concerning our Saviour, is well known to all the learned World; who are sensible also, how plain and express it is, not only as to the Life, Miracles, and Crucifixion of *Jesus Christ*, but his *Resurrection* also, and the fulfilling of Prophecies in him, and the wonderful Conversion both of *Jews* and *Gentiles* to the Faith of his Gospel. I am aware how much

* Antiq. Judaic. *Lib.* 18. *Cap.* 4. *Pag.* 621. Edit. Genev. 1635.

the Genuineneſs of this Paſſage is diſputed by ſome, as alſo how vigorouſly 'tis defended by others. And tho I do not know, but that on one ſide, there may be thoſe, who perhaps are over-fond and zealous for having it genuine; yet I doubt too, there are others, who are *afraid* leſt it ſhould be ſo. As for my own part, I freely own, I believe it to be as much *Joſephus*'s, as any thing in all the *Book of Antiquities:* And becauſe I would not willingly be rank'd amongſt the People that are irrationally fond of it, and will have it genuine, right or wrong, without inquiring into the matter; I ſhall therefore give my Reaſons, why I believe it is not a Forgery.

SECT. IV.

FIRST of all; *This Teſtimony is recorded, and taken notice of, as* Joſephus'*s, by many old* Writers *of unqueſtionable Credit.* To begin with one who was early enough; *Euſebius* gives it at large in his * *Demonſtr. Evangel.* Lib. 3. Pag. 124. *Edit. Pariſ.* 1628. He likewiſe repeats the ſame, *Hiſtor. Eccleſiaſt.* Lib. 1. Cap.

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* Γίνεται δὲ καθ' ἐκεῖνον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς Σοφὸς ἀνήρ, εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή. Ἦν γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής, διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων τ' ἀληθῆ δεχομένων. Καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν τῶν Ἰουδαίους, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ Ἑλληνικὰ ἐπηγάγετο. Ὁ Χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν. Καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν ἀρχόντων σταυρῷ ὑπηρετησάντος Πιλάτου, οὐκ ἐπαυσαντο οἱ τὸν πρῶτον ἀγαπήσαντες. Ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς τρίτην ἡμέραν πάλιν ζῶν, τῶν θείων προφητῶν ταῦτά τε καὶ ἄλλα μυρία περὶ αὐτοῦ εἰρηκότων. Ὅθεν εἰς ἔτι νῦν ἀπὸ τῶν δὲ τῶν Χριστιανῶν οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φύλον.

11. Pag. 30. *Edit. Paris.* 1659. [in vita Tiberii.]

We have the same Testimony recorded and quoted by *Nicephorus Callistus*, *Histor. Eccles.* Lib. 1. Cap. 39. Pag. 84. & 85. *Edit. Paris.* 1574. And *Sozomen* introduces it with a particular Elogy of *Josephus* himself, *Histor. Eccles.* Lib. 1. Cap. Pag. 399. *Edit. Par.* 1668. καὶ ἰώσηπος ὁ ὁ μαθὶας ὁ ἱερεὺς, ἀνὴρ ὢν τε ἰουδαίοις καὶ ῥωμαίοις ἐπιδοξότατος γενόμενος, ἀξιόχρεως ἂν εἴη μάρτυς τῆς περὶ χριστοῦ ἀληθείας—— And then he goes on, and repeats exactly to the same purpose, what we find in *Eusebius*, and *Callistus*, and the *Josephus* we have at present. *Suidas* also sets down the very same, in the word ἰώσηπος, with this particular Remark, that *Josephus* gives it in the 18*th Book of his Antiquities* [*Edit. Cantab.* 1705.] And this agrees perfectly with the Account given by St. *Jerom*, *De Scriptor. Ecclesiast.* where he refers us to *Josephus* for the forementioned Account of our Saviour.

Lastly, We find it repeated by *Isidorus Pelusiota* to the same purpose, as in all the rest, Lib. 4. *Epist.* 225. Pag. 549. *Edit. Paris.* 1638. These are those which I have taken notice of; tho I know there are more reckon'd up, who attribute this Testimony to *Josephus*, and have put it out of all doubt, *that they firmly believ'd it to be his.*

On the other hand, it is objected, That this Passage is not taken notice of at all, by those antient Defenders of the *Christian Cause*, *Justin Martyr*, *Origen*, *Tertullian*, &c. who one would think, should not have fail'd, upon some Occasion or other, to have put the Adversaries they dealt with (which were of all sorts, *Jews* as well as *Gentiles*) in mind of so remarkable a Testi-

mony as this, and that from ſo remarkable an Author too, and one who was not a *Chriſtian*. So that here is poſitive Teſtimony alledg'd on one ſide; and the want or defect of it on the other. And tho it be true, that the want of Teſtimony, from ſome Perſons, in ſome particular Circumſtances, may be look'd upon as a pretty ſtrong Preſumption, that a thing was not ſo or ſo, as 'tis reported to be; yet all things being well conſider'd, on both ſides, in this Caſe; I think 'tis plain, *that this defect is not in Reaſon to be eſteem'd equivalent to all the poſitive Teſtimony, which is, and may be produc'd; eſpecially, ſince it may be ſhewn upon ſome good grounds, that this Paſſage of* Joſephus *may be genuine, and yet that thoſe* Chriſtian *Writers beforemention'd, ſhould not take notice of it neither.* In a word, if this Teſtimony be a Forgery, foiſted in by any *Chriſtian* Hand, all that we can ſay, is, *That ſuch Practices are infinitely unworthy of the* Chriſtian *Name, and hateful to the Divine and Holy Author of it, who has condemn'd all manner of Fraud and Deceit by the Laws of his Religion, and will puniſh it (by whomſoever committed, and upon what Pretence ſoever, without ſincere Repentance.)* But if it were really penn'd by *Joſephus* himſelf, and extant in the firſt Copies of his Hiſtory; yet for all that, there is a fair Account to be given, of the *ſilence of the forementioned* Chriſtian *Fathers concerning it.*

If you ask *how?* I anſwer; from the Abuſe of the Copies they chanc'd to make uſe of, in which this famous Teſtimony was very probably wanting. And if you ask ſtill, *How it ſhould come about that ſuch a Paſſage ſhould be wanting in thoſe Copies?* I anſwer; that in all likelihood it was raz'd out of as many Copies, by the *Jews*

(or

(or those in Confederacy with them) as they could get fair Opportunities to debauch: By the *Jews*, I say, from whose known Malice and Hatred to *Christianity*, nothing less than so vile a Practice was to be expected. For *Josephus* liv'd in the very Times of the Apostles themselves, when the Story of *Christ Jesus* and his mighty Works, was fresh in the World. And, besides being an Author of so great a Reputation, he was one of their own Country and Religion too.

Now let any Man but think with himself, under what Notion these People must be represented to the World, when one of their Countrymen should come and give such a Character of a Person, whom they had treated with the utmost Indignity, and put to death as a vile Malefactor. Would it not set them out as a most forlorn and execrable Generation of Men, and justify all that our Saviour had said of them before, in the several sharp Rebukes he had given them? How could it be imagin'd that they would ever suffer the Seal of such an Author as this, to be set to the Truth of *Christianity*, and to go along with it thro the World; if Pains and Watching, if Falshood and Bribery; in short, if any sort of Artifice possible to be made use of, could avail to the taking of it away? There is no doubt to be made therefore, but they did the utmost that their Power and Policy could effect. And as they could not compass the razing this Testimony, out of all the Copies dispers'd up and down the World; so they took care to do it in those, which they and their Emissaries had the Opportunity of managing. For what they could not do by themselves openly, and as *Jews*, they might accomplish by other hands, less suspected and fitter to do that work,

work, than theirs. Nor have there ever been wanting amongſt Mankind, ſome ſo degenerate, as for worldly Conſiderations, to yield to be employ'd in ſuch baſe Work.

Again, This ought to be conſider'd too, *That 'tis a far eaſier way of abuſing an Author, to rob him of ſomething he has ſaid, than 'tis to foiſt any thing into him, and make that paſs for his which he never did ſay.* For beſides the Care incumbent on ſuch Impoſtors, to obſerve exactly the Laws of Tranſition and Connection, in order to make their Forgeries all of a-piece with the Author's Text, that they may look neatly and handſomly, and not diſcover the Fraud by the Botch: Beſides this, they muſt have ſtudied the Author ſo well, as to be perfect Maſters of his Stile and Diction, and be able to expreſs themſelves with that ſort of Air, and in that Mode which is peculiar to the Author they pretend to counterfeit. Which I look upon to be a difficulty ſuperable, but by very few; I mean ſo as not to leave the Cheat diſcoverable, by ſome Criterions or other afterwards. However, 'tis apparent, *That this would be a far more difficult and troubleſom piece of Knavery, than barely to omit or leave a Sentence out of a Set of Copies, and by that means repreſent the Author (to ſuch Perſons as had the Fortune to light on them) as never having written any ſuch thing at all.* In ſhort, if upon Examination it ſhould appear, *That there is the very Spirit of* Joſephus's *Stile and Diction in this famous Teſtimony concerning our Saviour; then I hope the Genuineneſs of it will be out of Diſpute with all conſidering Perſons, whatever plauſible Objections have been, or ever may be urg'd againſt it.*

SECT.

SECT. V.

BUT I must say farther, it is the more credible, *That this noted Testimony, concerning* Jesus Christ, *may have been raz'd out of some Copies, by some wicked Hands; because there are plain Indications of such foul Practices, in other Cases relating to the same Author.*

For it is notorious, that *Josephus* is actually quoted and refer'd to, for Passages which do not now appear in him. Now 'tis never to be imagin'd, that Men who had the least Sense of Honour and Reputation, if they had no regard to common Honesty and Truth, nor to the Cause they maintain'd, which was so much disputed and despis'd in the World; would ever have quoted a celebrated Author, (in the Face of all Mankind, and in the midst of Foes as well as Friends, and those very acute and learned ones too) I say, that they would ever have appeal'd to such a Person, as saying such and such things; if those things had not been actually in the Copies they made use of, and been universally receiv'd as genuine in their Days. For as such an egregious Piece of Knavery could not possibly 'scape being discover'd, by some one or other of the contrary side; so the Discovery of it must have fix'd such a Blot of Scandal and Reproach on those Persons, as no Time could ever have wip'd off, but would have been remembred by all Posterity, with Indignation and Contempt.

What I shall mention to this purpose, in the first place, is that Testimony of *Josephus*, concerning *James* the Brother of *Christ*. This we have

have in *Euſebius*, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* Lib. 2. Cap. 23. Pag. 65. And he does not only quote *Joſephus* for it, but tells us expreſly his very words.

For having ſhewn (in words of his own) how juſt and righteous a Man *James* was, and that the ſober and more conſiderate Men amongſt the *Jews* believ'd the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* to be a Puniſhment inflicted on them, for murdering of him: He then brings in this famous Author, ſaying the very ſame thing in theſe Words. ταῦτα ὃ συμβέβηκεν ἰȣδαίοις, κατ' ἐκδίκησιν Ἰακώβȣ τȣ̃ δικαίȣ, ὅς ὢν ἀδελφὸς ἰησȣ̃ τȣ̃ λεγομένȣ χριστȣ̃. ἐπειδήπερ δικαιότατον ἀυτὸν ὄντα, οἱ ἰȣδαῖοι ἀπέκτειναν.

But *Origen*, a more antient Writer, gives the very ſame Account of the matter, for which he refers to *Joſephus*, *Antiq.* Lib. 18. And this he does, *Contr. Celſ.* Lib. 1. Pag. 35. And St. *Jerom*, *De Script. Eccleſiaſt.* refers to the ſame Author and Book of him, for the Paſſage quoted by the other two.

Now I think, all People are agreed, *That no ſuch Paſſage as this is to be found in* Joſephus *now a-days.* 'Tis true indeed, he does not paſs over in ſilence the Death of a Perſon ſo remarkable for Piety and Vertue, as St. *James* was. For he tells us (*Antiq.* Lib. 20. Pag. 698.) *That this Fact was highly diſpleaſing to all the juſt and good People; and that Application was made to the King, to lay his Commands on the High Prieſt* Ananus, *that no ſuch things might be done for the future.* But there is no ſign of any ſuch Account, as we have out of *Origen* and *Euſebius*; which however they came by, I think 'tis plain to any Man, *that they did not, nor could not invent it.*

SECT.

SECT. VI.

I Know it is said, *That they made use of corrupt and vitiated Copies of* Josephus.

But this is *gratis dictum*, and they have nothing that I could ever see, like Proof, to support it. And 'tis plain, they espouse the most improbable and unnatural *Hypothesis* of the two, by far; for 'tis easier to abuse an Author by taking from him, than by adding to him. However, I think it is intolerably precarious, and in short downright trifling, to suppose, as some do, that *Origen*, in mentioning this Passage, trusted his Memory too far, and quoted what he had never at all read in *Josephus*. For at this rate, what Author is to be depended upon, if such Suppositions as these are to take place, without plain and particular Proof, of such a degree of Heedlesness in a Man that writes? And I would fain know, what Privilege these *Moderns* who talk after this manner, have, to escape this Distemper of dreaming, and fancying they read what they do not read; any more than the Antients? 'Tis true, there are strange things laid to the Charge of some of the old *Christian Writers:* for *Heathen Philosophers and Historians* are easily pardon'd for whatever they do amiss; nay, their very Blunders are made Beauties, and serve to discover something very rare and excellent. But let those *Writers* be what they will, I make no doubt, but there are *Modern Authors* who have vastly out-done them, in all Points of *Whimsy*, *Fanaticism*, and *Enthusiasm*, or whatever else can be call'd vain and extravagant.

After

After all is ſaid, I ſhall mention one more, who (like *Origen)* truſted his Memory too far, with reſpect to this very Paſſage; and that is *Suidas.* He (in Ἰώσηπος) tells us, that *Joſephus* (in the 18th Book of his *Antiq.)* aſſerts, *That that terrible Judgment, the Deſtruction of* Jeruſalem, *was brought upon the* Jews *for the Murder of St.* James.

And theſe Perſons all of them, ſeem to me, to talk of the matter, not as if they had borrow'd the Quotation one from another; but as if they were ſure, their Author had ſaid thoſe things they quoted from him: *Euſebius* eſpecially, who ſpeaks with an Aſſurance, as if his Author was then lying by him: ὁ γοῦν Ἰώσηπος, ὃν ἀπώνησε καὶ τοῦτ' ἐγγράφως ἐπιμαρτύρεσθαι, δι' ὧν φησι λέξεων, in Loc. citat.

SECT. VII.

THERE are other Paſſages alſo, for which *Joſephus* is quoted by ſome of thoſe that we have mention'd; but do not appear in him at preſent. Such is that of St. *John Baptiſt*, whom *Joſephus* is ſaid, expreſly to have confeſs'd to have been a Prophet; and that in the Book ſo often mention'd *(Antiq.* Lib. 18.) This is particularly recorded by St. *Jerom*, *De Script. Eccleſiaſt.* Nor can I forbear obſerving, what the ſame Author ſays too there, tho it be not with reſpect to *John Baptiſt*, but to *Jeſus Chriſt.* He tells us, that *Joſephus* himſelf owns, *That* Chriſt *was ſlain by the* Jews, *for the Multitude of his Miracles.* And *Suidas* (in Ἰώσηπος) affirms both the ſame things, *viz. That concerning* John Baptiſt, *and that concerning*

cerning the Occasion of our Saviour's Death; and refers to the same place for them.

'Tis true indeed, *Josephus* says not a few things of *John Baptist*. He tells us (pag. 626.) *That the* Jews *believ'd* Herod *was overcome by* Aretas *(King of the* Arabians) *for taking away the Life of that Person: That he was a good Man, and one who stir'd up the* Jews *to the study of Piety and Justice*, &c. But all this is nothing to his being call'd a *Prophet*; which is what the forementioned Authors declare *Josephus* expresly confesses.

We have another Example of this also, from *Suidas*, relating to *Jesus Christ* himself. This Author (in Ἰησοῦς) tells us, by way of Quotation from *Josephus*, *That* Jesus *sacrific'd with the Priests in the Temple.* Ἐυρομεν δὲ Ἰώσηπον τὸ συγγραφέα τοῦ ἁλώσεως Ἱεροσολύμων (ὃ μνήμιω πολλῶ Ἐυσέβιος ὁ Παμφίλος ἐν τῇ Ἐκκλησιαςικῇ αὐτὸ Ἱςορία ποιεῖται) φανερῶς λέγοντα ἐν τοῖς τοῦ Ἀιχμαλωσίας αὐτὸ ὑπομνήμασιν, ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ μετὰ τῶν ἱερέων ἠγίαζε. What put *Suidas* upon searching *Josephus*, to find whether it were true, that he had thus asserted, *That our Saviour sacrific'd with the Priests in the Temple*; this, I say, may be seen in the forementioned place. The Story is remarkable, as well for the very plain and particular manner in which it is told, as for the subject Matter of it. However, being a very long one, and not directly to my purpose, I shall forbear inserting it here; tho I think it well worth every curious Man's reading.

And thus much may suffice, as to this celebrated Testimony of *Josephus*. My Business was, to relate Matter of Fact, as I have found it. Every Man may draw what Conclusions from thence, he thinks fit. At the same time, I shall take the liberty to offer what appears reasona-

ble

ble to me in this matter; which others may either aſſent to, or diſſent from, according as they find juſt cauſe.

Firſt, *There are fewer Difficulties, in ſuppoſing this Teſtimony to have been ſome time or other, ſtruck out of ſome Copies by the* Jews; *than in ſuppoſing, that it was ever deceitfully foiſted into any, by the* Chriſtians.

Secondly, That it is (at leaſt) as eaſy to anſwer that Queſtion (which ſome ſeem to lay ſo much ſtreſs upon) *viz. Why ſhould thoſe Copies of* Joſephus, *which* Origen, &c. *made uſe of, want the Teſtimony concerning* Chriſt, *and have that of* James; *when our Copies want that of* James, *and have that concerning* Jeſus Chriſt? as it is to anſwer the following Queſtion: ——

Why ſhould ſo many credible *Writers*, who do not appear to have taken the thing upon Truſt from one another, and ſome of whom muſt needs have expos'd the Cauſe they maintain'd, to the laſt degree of Inſult and Contempt, by aſſerting a thing which all Mankind could have confuted them in: Why, I ſay, ſhould they all agree, in appealing to an Author, and that in the moſt particular manner that can be, for ſuch or ſuch a Paſſage; if they had not really found thoſe words in him, which they recited?

SECT. VIII.

TO the forementioned Teſtimonies concerning *Jeſus Chriſt*, we may add thoſe of ſome of the *Pagan* Writers themſelves.

Sueto-

* *Suetonius* takes notice of him, under a Name better known to the *Latins* and *Greeks*, than *Christus* was; and therefore, instead of that, we find him call'd in this Author's History, by the Name of *Chrestus*.

The Account we have from † *Tacitus*, is much more express and particular; for he mentions the Death of *Christ*, as also the Emperor *Tiberius*, and the Governor *Pontius Pilate*, under whom he suffer'd.

‖ *Pliny*, who takes no notice of these things, shews however, *what Divine Honours were paid to* Jesus Christ, *by the* Christians *in his Days*; whose Manners he makes to be strictly regular and inoffensive; their worst Fault, being only an invincible Obstinacy in adhering to their Religion.

But (leaving these which are more vulgarly quoted upon this Occasion) we find the Fact of the Crucifixion of *Jesus Christ*, expressly taken notice of by ** *Lucian*, who jears both him and the *Christians* his Worshippers, on that account: ἣν ὃ ἀνεσκολοπισμένον ἐκεῖνον σοφιστὴν, &c. This Man seem'd to reckon it an unaccountable piece of Nonsense and Stupidity, that they should have no regard to such a pompous Train of Gods and Goddesses, as he and his *Greeks* (a wise and learned People) ador'd; but instead of that, should turn all their Devotion, to a Person, who was distinguish'd from the rest of Mankind, by an infamous and accursed Death.

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* Sueton. in Claudio.

† Tacit. Ann. Lib. 15.

‖ Plin. Lib. 10. Epist. 97. ad Trajan.

** Lucian. de Morte Peregrini, *Pag.* 996. Edit. Par. 1615. *Speaking of the* Christians —— Θεοὺς μὲν τοὺς Ἑλληνικοὺς ἀπαρνήσωνται, τὸν δὲ ἀνεσκολοπισμένον ἐκεῖνον Σοφιστὴν αὐτῶν προσκυνοῦσι, καὶ κατὰ τοὺς ἐκείνου νόμους βιοῦσι.

Julian (who had reason to know more of *Christ* and *Christianity*, than *Lucian* did) goes much beyond him, in his Accounts of this matter. Instead of ridiculing *Christ*'s Death and Passion, he endeavours to lessen the Reputation of his Life and Miracles: * But how does he do this? Why by telling the World, *That* Jesus Christ *did nothing worthy of Note all the while he was here upon Earth (after all the Noise that was made about him) except a Man will reckon it a great Work, to open the Eyes of the Blind, to restore Limbs to the Lame, and deliver Persons possess'd, from the Power and Enchantments of Devils.*

These were but trifling things; and *Jesus Christ* did nothing worth talking of. But how came it about, that *Julian* set so light by these Works of our Saviour, which the greatest part of Mankind would undoubtedly call mighty and wonderful? Why, because he pretended (at least) to believe, that some of his Heathen *Virtuoso*'s could do as strange Feats as these; and (if occasion were) bestow a pair of Eyes or Legs upon them that wanted them?

So that *Christ* did nothing but what could be match'd by some of them, and therefore deserv'd no more notice than what they did. A pretty Account! But, how did *Julian* come to be assur'd of the Truth of these Facts? for 'tis notoriously plain, *that he takes them all for granted.* There can be no other reply made than this, *That the Evidence was such, as extorted that Con-*

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* Ἐργασάμενος παρ' ὃν ἔζη χρόνον, ἔργον οὐδὲν ἀκοῆς ἄξιον, εἰ μὴ τις οἴεται τοὺς κυλλοὺς καὶ τυφλοὺς ἰᾶσθαι, καὶ δαιμονῶντας ἐφορκίζειν ἐν Βηθσαϊδὰ καὶ ἐν Βηθανίᾳ ταῖς κωμαῖς, τῶν μεγίστων ἔργων εἶναι. Cyril. Alexandr. contra Julian. *Lib.* 6. *Pag.* 191. Edit. Par. 1638.

fession

fession from him. If so, 'tis certain, *That there was the same Evidence for other Facts, as for these.* The same Proof that assur'd *Julian* it must needs be true, *That* Christ *cur'd the Possess'd, Blind and Lame*; would also satisfy him, *That he rais'd the Dead to Life, and fed several Thousands, with what would not have been a competent Allowance for so many Scores.* Nay, some of those most miraculous Actions of our Saviour, being also the most open and publick ones; have a far more convincing Evidence to go along with them, than many others of less Fame.

But the Business lay here: These Problems *of Raising the Dead*, &c. were infinitely too sublime for any of the Emperor's juggling Philosophers, even to pretend to meddle with. For there was no room for *Legerdemain and Trick* in such Cases as these, since the World must presently discover it; and all Natural Arts and Skill could signify nothing to the Production of Effects of so grand a Nature. So that the only way was, never to make any mention at all of these Works of *Christ Jesus*, but pass them by in silence. Whereas those which Human Art could shew some sort of Resemblances of, such as making the Blind see, and the Lame walk, *&c.* these, *that crafty Adversary of Christianity* (since he must own something) *thought it advisable enough to take notice of.* For at the same time, that he paid a little kind of Compliment to manifest Truth; he took care to own no more than what he could have the Advantage of comparing, to some effects of curious Knowledg and Skill, abroad in the Heathen World. No wonder then, he gives so slight an Account of the Miracles of *Christ Jesus.* Indeed, all the smarter Enemies of *Christianity*, were well aware of

the Neceſſity there was, to make thoſe Miracles appear as little as poſſible. And one way to do that, was to make them cheap and vulgar, by pretending many other Perſons, who could or did do the ſame things.

And therefore it was, *That* Philoſtratus *and* Hierocles, *not being able otherwiſe to eclipſe the Glory of* Chriſt's *Miracles, ſet up* Apollonius Tyanæus *againſt him.* And we know the *Jews* were arriv'd to that pitch of Extravagancy, as to ſay, *That he did all his wonderful Works, by virtue of the ſacred* Tetragrammaton. In ſhort, whatever ſurprizing things were reported to be done by any of the *Heathen Sages*; were they but fairly to be compar'd, with the ſame ſort of Operations done by *Jeſus Chriſt:* I make no queſtion, but it would appear to every one of common Senſe and Judgment, *That at the ſame time, that they acted the Parts of good Phyſicians or Chirurgeons; he behav'd himſelf as the Lord of Nature, and acted like one, who not only underſtood her, but could command and diſpoſe of all her Motions at Pleaſure.* And thus much for *Julian*'s Conceſſions.

But above all the reſt, *Celſus* makes the largeſt and moſt particular Conceſſions, about *Jeſus Chriſt*; as confeſſing the Truth of his *Nativity, his Journy into* Ægypt, *his paſſing from Place to Place with his Diſciples, the Fact of his Miracles, his being betray'd,* and laſtly, *his Death and Paſſion.* 'Tis true, theſe Conceſſions are all made, in order either to pure Scoff and Ridicule, or to vain and impertinent Jangling. However, made they were, and the things were ſo evident, that they could not be denied. But as for *Celſus*'s railing or jeſting with any of them, that is little to the preſent Purpoſe; and his Chaſtizer *Origen*, has ſufficiently expos'd him upon

on all those Accounts; tho not in his own way, but that of plain Reason and Argument.

I shall not need to refer to the particular Places, where these things are to be found; they being obvious to every one, who has that Author in his hands.

SECT. IX.

Secondly, BEsides these Particulars, concerning the Life and Passion of *Jesus Christ*; I believe, it will be granted likewise, without much difficulty, *That quickly after the Death of* Christ, *there was a Party of Men, in that same Country of* Judæa, *who pretended he was risen again; which thing they testified with the utmost Assurance, and in the most publick manner, to all sorts of Persons wherever they came, even to the* Jews *themselves, the profess'd and most inveterate Enemies of this* Jesus *and his Followers.* I am not here offering any thing to prove the *Resurrection of Christ* to be true, or to justify these Men, in the Report they made thereof; but only relate a thing as a bare Point of History, which I think will not be deny'd, *viz. That there were such People in those Days, who did spread abroad this strange Doctrine in the World; That that very Person, who was crucify'd before the Eyes of so vast a Croud of People at* Jerusalem, *did a few Days after rise again, and converse in the World for some time, amongst those who had perfectly well known him before.*

SECT. X.

NOW this account we have from those *Primitive Writers* of the *Christian* Affairs, whom the *Christians* themselves commonly call by the Name of *Evangelists* and *Apostles*. 'Tis true, these Persons are look'd upon by those who receive the *Christian* Faith, as Men who were divinely inspir'd, and their Writings as from God, and publish'd to the World by his Authority: However, I suppose nothing of all that at present; but appeal to them barely as the Works of some antient Historians, telling upon their own Knowledg, that such and such things concerning *Christ Jesus*, were very positively asserted, and no less firmly believ'd, by vast multitudes of People in their days. All that I have therefore to be satisfy'd in, is, *Whether these Writings be really theirs or no?* Whether the Books we attribute to them, and which we find to bear their Names, contain a sincere and genuine Account, of what they first declar'd to the World concerning these great Matters? If we can persuade our selves, upon sure and undoubted Principles, that it is so; then we may make some very good use of the Relations they give us, in the after Process of the Argument. But if the World be merely impos'd upon, with spurious and supposititious, or corrupt and adulterated Pieces, instead of the true and native Compositions of these original *Christian Writers*, from whence we might be inform'd, what their genuine Sentiments were; then they are of no significancy at all, in the present Enquiry, but must be e'en laid by and neglected,

neglected, as other false and illegitimate Pieces use to be, when known and discover'd to be such.

SECT. XI.

NOW in order to the attaining a just and reasonable satisfaction in this Point, let us see the Impossibilities that attend the contrary *Hypothesis*, and at once give a fair Demonstration of the Truth of our PROP. V. Part II.

First, The first Teachers of the *Christian* Faith, who would not fail of using the most effectual Means, for the propagating and perpetuating a Doctrine, which they so zealously espous'd themselves (whether because *they knew it to be from God*, or for any other Reason, I do not here inquire) would not upon that score, neglect so direct and necessary a Method, for obtaining their End; as that *of committing their Doctrines to writing*, must in common Reason be allow'd to be.

This indeed, is what may be rationally expected from the Policy and Care of the first Founders of any *Sect*; as being a step so Fundamental, in order to the Preservation and Progress thereof, that without it (things being left intirely to rest upon the precarious bottom, of Memory, Tradition, Fancy and Humour, in representing those things, which were first deliver'd) nothing could follow but such Jangling and Confusion, as would soon terminate in the utter Ruin and Dissipation of that *Sect*. I need not say, that all the *Sects* we know of, that have ever made any Figure in the World, have

not fail'd to take this Course. And there are such Proofs, to evince, *That the first Founders of* Christianity, *did in Fact proceed after this manner*; that if they may be deny'd, a Man may as rationally deny, that there was ever such a Person as *Christ Jesus* in the World; and so put a quick end to all the Controversy about his *Resurrection*.

SECT. XII.

Secondly, WHILE *the Apostles themselves were living*; it was impossible that any thing should be put upon the World, as their Doctrine, which was contrary to it; or should be receiv'd, as their Writing, which was not so.

For, since Innovations of this kind, could not be carry'd on, without being detected and found out by them, who were so intent upon spreading the Gospel, as to travel far and wide thro the World, and take Cognizance themselves of the State of *Christianity*, in every Place where they came; 'tis plain, *That no Upstarts or Counterfeits could ever perfect their juggling Designs, while these first Teachers of the Gospel liv'd to have an Eye upon them, and were ready to expose the Fraud.* For, whatever Cheat of this kind, any false and perfidious Hand might possibly have attempted; yet the first Founders of the *Christian* Sect (who must be allow'd to be the best Judges of their own Doctrines and Opinions) would, I hope, be heard by the rest of Mankind, before all other Pretenders whatsoever. Their Assertions in such a Case, would be decisive; and

and every body would take it for granted, *That those Tenets were none of theirs, which they should solemnly disclaim, and openly protest against, in the face of all the World, from whence such Multitudes of Witnesses might be call'd out to attest the Doctrines they had both preach'd and written.* 'Tis true indeed, the Authors of a *Sect*, may outlive the Credit and Reputation of their own *Sect*. Their Doctrines may be suppres'd by Force, or overturn'd by superior Argument, while the Preachers themselves are in being. But that others, which are either quite contrary, or which they never thought any thing of, should be coin'd and foisted into the room of them, and pass universally for the genuine Institutes of such and such Men, while they themselves are alive, and have it in their power to detect the Forgery; is a thing so absurd and impossible, that a Man may well be thought to have quite lost his Taste, that does not relish it as such.

SECT. XIII.

Thirdly, *THE same is to be said, of that space of Time, during which, the* Autography *or* Original Manuscripts, *of the* Apostles *and* Evangelists, *were preserv'd in the* Christian Church.

For while these were at hand, to be search'd and consulted, the Case would be the same, as if the very Authors themselves had been alive, to give their own determinations in Person. How long time after *Christ*, the Church had these venerable Writings in possession, is not very

very material to the preſent Argument. I am only concern'd to ſhew, that the Attempts of *Impoſtors* muſt needs have been vain and fruitleſs, while the *Autographa* themſelves were extant; whether it were a greater, or a leſs ſpace of Time that they were ſo. However, 'tis obſervable, that * *Tertullian* intimates, as if they were (ſome of them at leaſt) preſerv'd till the Age wherein he liv'd, and to be ſeen at that time: which is far from being incredible, if we conſider the prodigious Zeal and Veneration of the *Chriſtians* in thoſe days, for whatever they eſteem'd Divine and Sacred; as alſo, that this Writer flouriſh'd at the latter end of the Second, or the very beginning of the Third *Century*.

Beſides, I believe the learned World can furniſh ſome Examples of this kind, and ſhew, by unanſwerable Proofs, that the very Hand-Writings of ſome Authors, have been preſerv'd (I will not ſay, only for as long, but even) for a longer time, than what we are now ſpeaking of, amounts to.

SECT. XIV.

Fourthly, NO *one particular* Party *or* Sect *of* Chriſtians, *or pretended* Chriſtians, *could ever poſſibly have manag'd matters ſo, as to impoſe on the reſt of the World, by any grand For-*

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* Age jam, qui voles Curioſitatem melius exercere in negotio ſalutis tuæ, percurre Eccleſias Apoſtolicas, apud quas ipſæ adhuc Cathedræ Apoſtolorum ſuis Locis præſident, apud quas ipſæ Authenticæ Literæ eorum recitantur. *De Præſcript. adverſus Hæreticos.*

gery,

gery, or Adulteration, of the Writings of the New Testament.

For whatever *Sect* should have attempted such a thing, could never have made any Progress in it; but all the other *Sects* and *Persuasions* of *Christians*, which were contrary to them, must have been conscious of the base Design. And if a *Zeal and Veneration* for these Writings, as divinely inspir'd, had not been sufficient to prevail with some of them, to bestir themselves, and proclaim so notorious an *Imposture* to the World; yet the *Enmity and Quarrels*, arising from contrariety of Interests and Opinions, would have been such a guard upon these Books, as the utmost Care and Policy of any ill designing Party, would never have been able to elude. Where Men indeed are all of a Mind, and their Schemes on all sides perfectly agree; there being no room for Jealousy and Suspicion, there is likewise no Reason for their having an Eye upon one another. But where they run out into *Parties and Factions*, and *Disputes rise* high betwixt them, about the Sense and Meaning of the Doctrines they have receiv'd; each Party justifying their own Opinions, from the Copies they have amongst them; in this Case, every side will be sure to observe their *Antagonists*, and see that they have Justice done them in all the Appeals made to that Book; by whose Authority they all agree, to have the matters in Debate amongst them decided. So that if those on one side, should have recourse to any unfair Artifices, either in order to the recommending their own Opinions to the Belief of Men, or else for the sake of Victory over their Adversaries; the others who would never bear such foul Play, to be sure would

not

not keep their Counſel, but paint them out in their proper Colours, of Knavery and Deceit, to all Mankind. For the Rage about Opinions (eſpecially if thought to be of great Conſequence) is like that of the *Sea*; and a *Tide* may as ſoon be ſtop'd, as Revenge in ſuch Caſes, if there be but Opportunity to exert it. In a word, tho Diviſions and Animoſities, are in themſelves, contrary to the Nature, Deſign, and Precepts of the *Chriſtian Religion*; yet there is no doubt, but that Divine Providence, which often brings the greateſt Good out of Evil, has made ſignal uſe, even of theſe Contentions, in order to its ſecurity. For by this means, one Party has been a ſure Guard upon another, and all of them animated to look ſo ſharply about them, that nothing of dangerous Conſequence, to the common Intereſts of *Chriſtianity*, could ever be tranſacted any where.

SECT. XV.

Fifthly, IT is ſtill more incredible, (and I think, what the fondeſt Credulity in Nature can ſcarce admit of) *That theſe Books ſhould be abus'd, or new ones coin'd in the room of them, by a Confederacy of all the Parties, and Sects of* Chriſtians *throughout the World.*

This therefore, we will let paſs as a piece of Abſurdity, which ſufficiently diſcovers it ſelf at firſt ſight.

SECT.

SECT. XVI.

Sixthly, NOR will it require much more Pains, for any considering Person to assure himself, *That this could never possibly be done, by any Party of Men, who were open and avow'd Enemies to the* Christian Religion.

For if there be Reason to conclude it absurd and impossible, that any Party, of or in the *Christian* Church, should ever accomplish such a Design, notwithstanding all the Care and Jealousy of the rest; there is much stronger Reason to conclude, that a Cheat of this Nature, could never be carry'd on by *a Club of profess'd Enemies*, in spite of the Sagacity and Zeal of the whole Body of *Christians* in all Nations; who were deeply concern'd upon many Accounts, to see that they were not impos'd upon, in matters of such Importance.

SECT. XVII.

Seventhly, TO compleat the Argument, let any reasonable Man lay the following Considerations together, and then tell me, *Whether he can seriously believe, that the* Christian *World is abus'd, in taking the Books of the* New Testament, *for what they are generally believ'd to be.*

As these Books were first written in the most celebrated Language, then in the World; so they were quickly dispers'd abroad, and *translated* into a vast number of other Languages, very different

different from that, in which they were originally compos'd.

They have not been kept in private hands, as myſterious things, which Mankind were not to be acquainted with; but in *publick Repoſitories*, where all Perſons might ſearch and look into them.

The *Chriſtians* have ever eſteem'd them, as the grand Charter of all their Privileges, and the Foundation of their Hopes of Happineſs in another Life.

They have been publickly cited and refer'd to, by the earlieſt *Writers* and *Apologiſts*, for the *Chriſtian* Cauſe, nay, and by Enemies themſelves; which had been intolerable Folly and Stupidity on both ſides, if the World had not been well aſſur'd they were genuine.

They were (many of them) *directed* to large Bodies and Societies of Men, in different Parts of the World.

They have been *conſtantly rehears'd* in ſolemn Aſſemblies, beſides being privately ſtudied and diſcours'd of; by all which means, they muſt neceſſarily be impreſs'd on the Minds and Memories of Men.

All Factions and Parties of *Chriſtians*, have unanimouſly agreed, to appeal hither, and decide their Controverſies by this *Rule*.

No Notion of Forgery or Corruption, was ever advanc'd by ſuch Delinquents as were excommunicated, and cut off from the Body of the *Chriſtian* Church: Which Perſons, as they could not avoid being led into the Secret, if there had been any ſuch thing, while they continu'd Members; ſo they had the moſt urgent Provocations to reveal it afterwards.

The

The Doctrines they contain are not only new, but are of an *extraordinary Nature*, and such as challenge the Attention and Regard of all Mankind; and therefore in Reason, very likely both to attract the Curiosity of indifferent Persons, and to rouze the ill Nature of carping and contradicting Enemies, to inquire into them, and sift them thorowly.

Besides, the Doctrines which these Books now shew us, are all of them such as sute perfectly well with the Design of such a Religion, as the *Christian* Religion is. They suppose a *crucify'd Saviour*, and Salvation by *Faith* in him; and administer such Comforts and Supports, as in the Nature of the thing, are the most agreeable and proper, for Persons who devote themselves, to the seeking of future Happiness, in such a way as the Followers of *Jesus Christ* do.

Lastly, Let a Man who doubts in this Case, put this Question to himself, and endeavour to resolve it fairly.

Would those, who corrupted the Old, or forg'd a New Gospel, ever have made such a System of it, as that which is at this Day, and has been for so many Ages, receiv'd in the World?

I dare say, no Man in his right Wits, can ever persuade himself to believe this: But from the very Scope and Matter of these Writings, as well as other Indications, will conclude, *that they cannot be the Work of any Impostor or Impostors, whatever.* But more of this by and by. So that upon the whole, from what has been said, I think we may (with sufficient Advantage) infer,

Coroll. 1. *That since these Books could not be counterfeited nor corrupted, the Matters of Fact, and*

and the Doctrines contain'd in them, are the very same with what those antient Christian *Writers, the Authors of them, did first give an account of to the World.*

Coroll. 2. *That there are no Writings any where extant* (let them be of any Authors whatsoever) *whose Purity and Genuineness are to be prov'd, by Arguments of so grand a Nature, and those so many in number, as may be produc'd in favour of the Books of the* New Testament.

SECT. XVIII.

BUT there are those, who will be ready to ask, how this Discourse is reconcilable to what some have pretended to shew in Fact, *viz. That the Books of the* New Testament *have been tamper'd with, and abus'd, in many respects, since the time of their first Publication to the World.*

I answer, tho there have been some, who have taken no little Pains to lessen the Credit of these Books, by raking up all the little Faults they could possibly light on; nay, and even mentioning more than they dare stand by, were the matter to be well look'd into: However, my Assertions are no way inconsistent with the Discoveries, resulting from their laudable Endeavours; but may very well be reconcil'd to them, as will be sufficiently plain, by comparing the utmost they can pretend to prove, with what we make no scruple of granting.

For when I speak of these Writings being genuine and uncorrupt, I don't intend hereby, that they have undergone no Alteration or Corruption,

tion, in trivial Matters; that is, in things which are not of the Substance of them. I don't suppose, that every Letter, Syllable, or Word, is exactly the same, as when the last Hands of their respective Authors were set to them. The Learned know well enough, that there are multitudes of ways, by which Books may be abus'd, and that perhaps no Book in the World, of any moment, has ever scap'd this Fate, but had its share of Corruption (the common Calamity) at one time or other, either more or less. They know how Writings may be worn out, and *defac'd by Time*, the great Consumer of all things; as well as to what Injuries they may be expos'd, by the other ordinary Accidents of Life: How easy 'tis for Mistakes to arise, from the bare *Omission of Points of Distinction*; or from the *Use of Symbols and Characters*, or any sort of Contractions and Abridgments in Writing: How he that dictates to another, may possibly not *judg rightly* of several Letters, whose Beauty is either lost by Age, or perhaps were but basely written at first: How we may *mistake those Letters*, which are of a resembling Figure and Shape, one for another: How unaccurately and imperfectly he may *pronounce his Words*, and so lead him who transcribes into an Error; or perhaps seeing the very same Word or Words, various Times repeated, might heedlesly skip from one to the other, and so *leave out* all in the Author, that was between them; or perhaps, for want of Skill and Judgment in the matter he is concern'd in, may *transfer ordinary Notes and Glosses from the Margent, into the Text or Body of the Book.* The Learned know likewise, that those who write, as well as those who dictate, may fall into many sorts of Blun-

ders and Miſtakes. They may *hear* what is dictated to them, imperfectly and by halves; they may be more intent upon ſome Notions in their own Minds, than the Buſineſs lying before them; and ſo write, not ſo much what they hear, as what they are at that time thinking of; or at leaſt, may poſſibly ſhape and modify what they hear, too much according to *their own way of ſpeaking and thinking*; but above all, by want of Skill in *Grammar*, and eſpecially the Knowledg of the antient *Orthography* (by which means, all the changes in the Forms of Letters, would be unknown to them) 'tis not unlikely that many ſuch Errors ſhould be committed, as would require ſome Skill and Judgment to diſcover and correct afterwards.

I need not add, that the Careleſſneſs of thoſe who have the Inſpection of Libraries, the raſh and preſumptuous Attempts of *Criticks*, the ſly and villanous Practices of *Impoſtors* (in ſome Circumſtances) may be the occaſion of Miſchief and Diſorder this way.

All theſe things muſt be allow'd, becauſe they are certainly true in Fact, as might eaſily be prov'd, if this were a proper place for it. Now, upon theſe and ſuch like Conſiderations, I very eaſily allow, that the Writings of theſe old *Chriſtian* Authors, might in proceſs of Time, be expos'd in ſome meaſure, to the ordinary Fate of the World. I mean, that ſome ſuch σφάλματα may have crept into them, as are very poſſible, and likely to ariſe from ſome or other of the forementioned Cauſes. But what will any Man infer from this? We all agree, that this derogates nothing from the Credit and Authority of any Writing. We don't reject a Book as ſpurious, becauſe we have ſome Proofs of

of its having suffer'd in matters of less moment. For if we should proceed upon that Principle, 'tis demonstrable in Fact, *That we should leave our selves no Authors to read or quote; but must abandon them by whole Catalogues to the Flames, even those whose Authority we now lay the greatest Stress upon, and think it infinitely ridiculous to question.*

I must therefore make a stand here, with this Conclusion, before I proceed any farther, *viz. That we must either not reject the Writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, as spurious, or fundamentally corrupted; upon the account of such Faults as we find to be common with them, and the Works of other Authors, which we receive as genuine:* Or else, *We must agree to reject both one and the other; and so, together with the* New Testament, *deny the Credit of all Books, that we cannot demonstrate to have been less abus'd, than that System of the* Christian *Religion has been.* And if so, I believe I may safely ask the Criticks, and all those Men, whose Learning lies only in great Reading: What is become of all your boasted Knowledg, and to what purpose have you spent your Time, in poring upon a parcel of old Authors, which you are perfectly cheated in, and who never talk'd any of those things, which you so much value and admire in them?

So that therefore, laying all these matters together, the many ways that there are, by which Writings may come to contract Faults, as also what has actually come to pass in the certain Abuse and Corruption of Books, which celebrated Men of Old * have so freely own'd, and so much

* Βιβλιοπῶλαι τινες ΓΡΑΦΕΥΣΙ ΦΑΥΛΟΙΣ χρώμενοι, καὶ οὐκ ἀντιβάλλοντες, &c. Strabo *speaking of the Works of* Aristo-

much complain'd of: It would be an indiſcreet and ridiculous piece of Zeal, to ſay, that every Letter and Word of theſe Evangelical and Apoſtolical Books, had been preſerv'd in the ſame good Order and Purity (with which they were at firſt compos'd) thro all the ſucceeding Ages and Revolutions of the World, down to the preſent Time. On the other hand, I am very ready to allow, *That they may in length of Time, have ſuffer'd ſome of thoſe common Misfortunes, which Books have always been expos'd to, ever ſince there have been Books in the World.*

But then, what I affirm is this, *viz. That thoſe Writings, which are now in our Hands, are the very Writings which the* Apoſtles *and* Evangeliſts *left behind them; and that not only as to the main Matter and Subſtance of them; but alſo as to all Circumſtances of neceſſary Moment, to* Chriſtian *Doctrine and Practice: So far are they from being the Inventions of other Perſons, impos'd upon the World in their Name and Stead.*

And this appear'd to be ſuch plain and undeniable Matter of Fact, in ſome of the paſt Ages of *Chriſtianity*, that the moſt virulent Enemies then in being, cou'd not poſſibly refuſe granting it; or at leaſt intimating it in ſuch manner, as evidently ſhew'd they took it for a certain Truth. Thus * *Julian* (who ſeem'd deſirous to ſay ſomething, that might render the

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Ariſtotle *and* Theophraſtus, *and the Abuſes they had ſuffered.* Lib. 13. Pag. 419.

De Latinis vero [Libris] quo me vertam neſcio, ita MENDOSE & ſcribuntur, & veneunt. *Cicer.* ad Fratrem Quintum. *Lib.* 3. *Epiſt.* 5.

* Τὸν γὰρ Ἰησοῦν ὅτε Παῦλος ἐτόλμησεν εἰπεῖν Θεὸν, ὅτε Ματθαῖος, ὅτε Λουκᾶς, ὅτε Μάρκος, ἀλλ' ὁ χρηστὸς Ἰωάννης, &c. Cyril. contra Julian. *Lib.* 10. *Pag.* 327.

Divinity

Divinity of *Jesus Christ* suspected) argues, That neither *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, nor *Paul* himself, ever presum'd to call him God; but 'twas St. *John* (ὁ χρυσὸς Ἰωάννης) that talk'd after this manner. Now how wrong soever he was in his Observation, yet his Concession deserves to be particularly taken notice of. For he lets us know here, that he took those Writings, which in his Time bore the Names of *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, *John*, *Paul*, to be the genuine Products of those Authors; or else there had been very little Sense, in his quoting them, to the purpose that he does quote them in this Passage. Now the *Emperor* was no Fool, whatever other ill Characters he justly deserv'd; and he was certainly very sensible, that the Evidences for the Genuineness of these Books, were at that time of day in the World, so very clear and convincing, that it would have been plainly scandalous for a Man to have call'd them in question: Or else he had run upon the *Christians* after another manner, and instead of citing these Books in so tame and innocent a way as he has here done, he would have expos'd them as so many Pieces of horrid Imposture, and the *Christians* as the worst of Fools for thinking otherwise.

All that I shall remark upon what has been said, is only this, *viz. That if these Books were look'd upon as Authentick, even by the smartest and most industrious Enemies of* Christianity, *at that time* (which was about the middle of the fourth Century) *there is less Reason to suspect, their being either counterfeited, or fundamentally corrupted since.* Because, as there have been fewer Persecutions, and much less profess'd Enmity to the *Christian* Religion in the World, since that time, than was before; so there have been more Occasions

caſions for Mankind to ſearch and enquire into them, as well as better Opportunities to vindicate and defend them.

SECT. XIX.

I Know the idle Curioſity of ſome People, prompts them to argue here, from the common Opinion of the *Chriſtians*, concerning the *Divine Authority* of theſe Writings.

Don't you think that Providence ſhould have preſerv'd Books of ſuch a Character, as you ſay theſe are, free from all manner of Corruption? Should there not have been a Guard ſet upon them, that they might have paſs'd pure and ſincere, thro all the Accidents and Revolutions of the World, even to the laſt Generation of Men? *Other Books are of no Importance to the Salvation of Mankind, as 'tis pretended theſe are*; and therefore one would think, theſe ſhould never have been ſuffer'd to be treated ſo rudely as the reſt, but have ſhone always in their own native Luſtre and Purity, convincing the World thereby, of God's Care of them, and conſequently of their Divine Original.

Anſw. I confeſs indeed, this Objection looks plauſible; but a Man would abuſe it highly, that ſhould complement it with the Name of a rational one, as reaſonable as it appears.

Providence, I allow, would be concern'd to preſerve a Divine Revelation, from all ſuch Blemiſhes as ſhould repreſent it *unworthy of God*, or render it *unfit for the Service of Mankind*, by abuſing and diſguiſing it ſo, that the Divine Will and their Duty, ſhould not be known and collected

collected from thence with ſufficient Plainneſs and Certainty. But when this is ſaid and granted, there is all.

I hope theſe Gentlemen do not ſuppoſe, that God is oblig'd to be always working new Miracles, to do that which may be done in an ordinary way, by the bare Induſtry and Care of Mankind.

The firſt Publiſhers of a Divine Revelation to the World, ought to be inſpir'd from Heaven; but that Inſpiration was not to be continu'd to every *Librarian* or *Amanuenſis*, to prevent their making Blunders, and ſtumbling upon one Letter, or Word, or Sound, inſtead of another. For Men may avoid theſe things of themſelves, if they will but be Thoughtful and Diligent; and if they are not, I preſume, we are not to throw their Faults upon Providence, and blame that, becauſe theſe Men have neglected, either to ſtudy Languages, or to learn to read and write well, or to look after the Books committed to their Cuſtody and Management, as they ought to have done.

Infinite Wiſdom having adjuſted and ſettled the general Laws of the World, and reſolv'd upon ſuch a Chain of Events, as ſhould be the moſt beautiful and agreeable; permits things to go on, according to the ordinary Tenor of thoſe Laws, without any miraculous Interpoſitions, except where it is requiſite ſo to be, in order to the obtaining of ſome very valuable End, which cannot otherwiſe be obtain'd, or would be beſt obtain'd by the way of Miracles. And therefore, it was not neceſſary, that all thoſe who ſhould dictate or tranſcribe the Copies even of Divine Writings themſelves, ſhould be render'd infallible: That the Parchments they were writ-

ten on, ſhould wear like Braſs, and the Ink never loſe its Strength and Colour: That any falſe Hand, attempting to abuſe them, ſhould be ſtop'd by a ſudden Convulſion or Palſy; or that the great Turns and Revolutions of the World ſhould be prevented; leſt by ſuch Combuſtions amongſt Men, thoſe Books ſhould come by any Prejudice. Such effects as theſe are quite beſide the Order and Conſtitution of the World, as God has been pleas'd to make, and does ordinarily govern it. What we may depend upon, from the Care and Direction of *Divine Providence*, in ſuch an Affair, is this, *viz. That if God ſent a Revelation of his Mind into the World, he would order matters ſo, that it ſhould be preſerv'd and continu'd, in ſuch Circumſtances, as 'twas fit and neceſſary a Divine Revelation ſhould be continu'd in; as long as he determin'd to make uſe of it, for the Ends of Teaching and Inſtruction amongſt Men.* And this well conſider'd, will, I hope, be enough to make the Objection propos'd, appear to be no more than barely plauſible.

But beſides this, there is ſomething elſe to be ſaid in this matter, which I am apt to think, we ought to have ſome regard to. God, who has endow'd us with ſuch excellent Powers of *Reaſon and Judgment* (which we are capable of uſing in ſo nice and critical a manner, in natural Enquiries, and all the common Affairs of Life) might very juſtly oblige us, to exerciſe that Reaſon to as good purpoſe, in the matters of our Salvation. He deals with us undoubtedly, according to the Capacities and Abilities he has furniſh'd us withal; and having made us rational Beings, would have our Faith it ſelf to be (in the ſenſe I am now ſpeaking of) a truly rational one. Why then, ſhould we not

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be put to use our Reason, in judging of those Books which pretend to be *Divine*; as well as in judging of others? We can, in some Circumstances of Evidence, conclude a *profane* Author to be genuine, notwithstanding all the Corruption we are sure he has suffer'd. And Providence might very wisely and equitably appoint us to do the same Work, with respect to a Divine Revelation.

For by such a Dispensation, God shews, that he requires nothing of us, in order to a Conviction of his Truth; but that we act like Men, and use the Powers he has given us in such a manner, as they were plainly design'd for.

SECT. XX.

HAving thus shewn, upon what Grounds we may satisfy our selves, of the Purity of the Writings of the *New Testament*; as also, that they are the genuine and undoubted Works of such and such Authors, whose Names they bear, and who liv'd in the most early Times of *Christianity*: I may now safely proceed to make use of them under this Notion, as I have occasion; *not appealing to them, as Books that contain any thing of Divine Revelation, but as ordinary Writings*, which I may consult and refer to, in the way of Discourse, as I would those of any other Author whatsoever. And tho the same things which these Writers say, be also said by many others besides them; yet they being the first, and those consequently, from whom all other *Christian* Historians have had their Accounts; it is most expedient, that we go to the Fountain-head, and

and take our Informations immediately from them.

And now the Buſineſs which lies before us, is to propoſe, examine, and argue, upon the Evidences, which are brought to perſuade the Belief of the Fact of *Chriſt's Reſurrection.*

SECT. XXI.

AND the firſt general Head that I ſhall inſiſt on, ſhall be that, of the *Characters, Qualifications, and other Circumſtances relating to thoſe Perſons, who declar'd themſelves the Witneſſes of this Fact.*

Now here are many things to be conſider'd, which I ſhall therefore propoſe, with as much Clearneſs and Brevity as I can, without doing the Argument an Injury.

SECT. XXII.

First, BEſides *the Apoſtles (who were in a more eminent manner, the Witneſſes of the* Reſurrection of Chriſt) *there were divers others, who did unanimouſly agree, in teſtifying that thing to be true.*

Their number was ſo far from being ſmall, and deſpicable, that one of the Chriſtian Writers (who ſtiles himſelf the *Apoſtle of the Gentiles)* aſſures us, That in his Time there was ſtill remaining the greater part, of more than five hundred, who did all at one time, ſee *Jeſus Chriſt* after his riſing again.

Now

Now tho this Article (of the *Number* of Persons who are the Witnesses of a Matter of Fact) abstracting from all other Considerations, is not in it self absolutely convincing and conclusive; yet it carries something along with it, that makes a mighty Impression on a Man's Mind that considers it well. For tho an Imposture may lie conceal'd for a while, in a few Hands; yet 'tis next to impossible, that it should lie long undiscover'd in a great many. It shocks a Man to think, that so many Persons should agree in all the Punctilio's of a notorious Lye, and that they should agree to stand by it in so peremptory a manner as these Persons did: That such a number of false Hearts and Tongues should so exactly keep time with one another, and never clash in any Instance whatsoever; but by a perfect Harmony and Consent, delude the World into a Belief of the Truth of what they affirm'd. It's commonly observ'd, that Plots never thrive so well, as when there are but few let into the Secret; and large Cabals of Knaves and Lyars, seldom fail to tell Tales of one another.

However, all that I insist upon from hence, is this, *That there is at least a good degree of Probability, that the Testimony concerning* Christ's Resurrection *was not a false one, arising from this Consideration; That it was not one or two only who gave this Testimony, but a Number far superior, to what the Credit of some of the most valuable accounts of Matters of Fact in the World have depended upon.*

This is what I don't beg, since 'tis easy enough to make out the Truth on't; and I believe, these Gentlemen will hardly demand of me, a Proof they know to be so very obvious and near at hand.

I am well contented therefore, to have advanc'd thus much, in the firſt place. If they think it but a little, I deſire they would have patience, to go on calmly to the ſucceeding ſteps; and I am much miſtaken, if they don't find the Argument to run on to a ſufficient Length, by that time we have done with it.

SECT. XXIII.

Secondly, *THE Teſtimony of thoſe Perſons deſerves the more regard, in that they teſtify'd a thing which they declar'd they had perſonal Knowledg of.*

Now in any Caſe, when a Man pretends to ſenſible Demonſtration for the Truth of what he ſays, he is to be heard with a great deal of Attention; and unleſs he has upon ſome other accounts, given Mankind juſt ground, either to ſuſpect or deſpiſe him, 'tis enough to make all ſober People conclude, that there is ſomething in the matter which deſerves to be ſeriouſly enquir'd and look'd into. But when a great Number of Perſons ſhall come, and atteſt with one accord, that they were actually Eye-Witneſſes to ſuch or ſuch a thing, and are as much aſſur'd of the Truth of it, as they can be of any thing which their Eyes diſcover to them every Day in the World: This will make all Men in their right Senſes, ſee an abſolute Neceſſity, either of receiving their Report as true, or elſe of alledging ſome very ſubſtantial Reaſons for the rejecting of it. Now this is the Caſe here. Theſe Perſons did not only ſee *Jeſus Chriſt*; but many of them declare, that they ſaw him frequently

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and familiarly, and that for ſuch a term of Time, as can leave no room to doubt, whether Fancy and Imagination had any thing to do in the Buſineſs or no. They convers'd with him for forty Days; they eat and drank with him; they ſaw him do ſeveral wondrous Works; they receiv'd Orders and Inſtructions from him, about the Inſtitution and Government of his Church: he bid them *go teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, teaching them to obſerve all things that he had commanded*; and in ſo doing, he promis'd them his Preſence and Bleſſing; *that he would be always with them to the End of the World, and ſend the Promiſe of the Father upon them*; and therefore commanded them, *to tarry in the City of* Jeruſalem, *till they were endu'd with Power from on high:* He told them expreſly, that Signs ſhould follow thoſe that believe; *that in his Name they ſhould caſt out Devils, ſpeak with new Tongues, take up Serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it ſhould not hurt them*; that they ſhould have the Gift of miraculous healing, ſo that *if they laid their Hands on the Sick, they ſhould recover:* They declare that he upbraided them with *their Unbelief and Hardneſs of Heart*, in not believing the Reality of his *Reſurrection*, upon the Teſtimony of thoſe who had ſeen him; and that one particularly, who was incredulous beyond all the reſt, was indulg'd ſo far, as to have all the Demonſtration, that ſeeing, hearing, and feeling could afford him, in order to his ſatisfaction: That they were bleſs'd and comforted by him, and after they had receiv'd his laſt Commands and Directions, ſaw him actually taken up from them, and aſcend into Heaven; and that after this they return'd to

Jeruſa-

Jeruſalem, and waiting there according to his Appointment, they were endu'd with Power from above, receiving the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt, according to his Promiſe. This is what theſe Perſons teſtify'd.

Now, here is no room for *Imagination* and Dream, in all this Account. Men could never fancy that they ſaw a Perſon for ſo many Weeks together, whom they never ſaw at all; that he eat and drank in their Preſence; that he argu'd and expounded the Scriptures to them, convinc'd them of ſeveral Errors and Miſtakes, gave them Promiſes, Rules and Inſtructions for their own Comfort, and the Government of a Church in the World; and after all, went up into Heaven in their ſight, whilſt Angels ſtood by and told them, *that he which was taken up into Heaven, ſhould come in like manner again, as they had ſeen him go from them:* This, I ſay, could never poſſibly be Dream and Fancy. So that if this Teſtimony of theirs were falſe, nothing remains but they muſt be notorious Cheats, and all this Story a pure Forgery, a mere Lye from one end to the other. And therefore, what we have farther to do, is to ſee what Reaſons we have to believe, or not believe, *That they were really Men of ſo profligate a Character, and did abſolutely abuſe Mankind in this Account they gave, of the* Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt.

SECT. XXIV.

Thirdly, *THerefore the manner in which this Teſtimony was deliver'd, engages a high Degree of Attention to it.*

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There could be nothing more *solemn and awful*, than the way wherein the Apostles address'd themselves to Mankind, when they testify'd the *Resurrection of Christ Jesus.*

They declar'd they did this not of themselves, or from any inferior Motives and Incitements, but by God's Order and Appointment. They invok'd his tremendous Name, and beg'd his Assistance and Blessing. They appeal'd to him, as the Omniscient Judg of the World, concerning the Sincerity and Integrity of their Hearts. They propos'd their Doctrine, as the Word and Law of God, by which they themselves, as well as those that heard them, were to be sav'd. And as all this was done with the utmost possible Gravity and Seriousness; so for a Confirmation of the Truth of all, they declar'd they had receiv'd from Heaven, *a Power of working Signs and Wonders*; to the plain and visible Effects of which, they refer'd their Hearers; as Proofs that God was with them of a truth, and that they were authoriz'd by him to do what they did.

Now such solemn Appeals to, and Invocations of the Divine Majesty, so publickly, so frequently, and so devoutly made; are certainly, at least, equivalent to any thing of religious Oaths or Swearing, ever us'd amongst Mankind, in order to procure a Belief of the Truth of what is asserted. And we know, that such Forms of Address to God Almighty, are held so sacred amongst all People; that they pass for undisputed Proof in Cases of Fact, where plain and evident Reasons to the contrary do not appear. And very good Reason there is, why it should be so; for it is not to be presum'd, that Men would be so wicked, as to *disavow the Divine*

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Mercy and Clemency, and imprecate the Divine Vengeance on themſelves, upon any ſuch little Motives as they can have preſented to them, in any of their Concerns and Dealings with one another. There is indeed no doubt to be made, but ſome Men have been actually thus profane and irreligious, as having no Notions at all of the Divine Being, or his fearful Judgments: But this is no Objection at all. For as the ſecret Atheiſm and Wickedneſs of Mens Hearts, can be known only to God himſelf; ſo unleſs we ſee ſome manifeſt Signs, or have ſome ſufficient Proofs of ſuch a vile Temper, by which thoſe Perſons have juſtly forfeited our good Opinion of them; we are not to preſume it, but on the other hand to ſuppoſe, they have a juſt Regard to God Almighty, and do conſequently ſpeak the Truth, when they make uſe of his Holy Name, upon ſuch important Occaſions.

Now, I ſay, this being the Caſe here, the Apoſtles Teſtimony concerning the *Reſurrection of Chriſt*, deliver'd with ſuch Confirmations to the World, does certainly deſerve the higheſt Attention and Regard; and what I plead for on this ſcore, is what is allow'd to be juſt and reaſonable, amongſt all Nations whatſoever.

SECT. XXV.

Fourthly, 'TIS to be conſider'd too, *That theſe Perſons did not talk of a matter that was tranſacted at a Diſtance from the Place where they gave their Teſtimony, nor a long Time after the thing it ſelf was ſaid to be done.*

I

I confess, a Story concerning some strange and wonderful thing, reported to be done in a remote Country, and a considerable number of Years, before the Account of it was publish'd to the World; may in some Circumstances, be justly liable to Objections, upon the score of the want of Opportunity, to make the necessary Enquiries into it: But the Case is quite otherwise here. These Men appear'd upon the very spot, that was the Scene of the Action, and told the *Jews* they might be satisfy'd of the Truth of it, even at their own Doors. *Jerusalem*, the very Place of our Saviour's Crucifixion and Death, they constantly affirm'd to be the Place, where he rose again. And as they did not send People a great way to enquire, so neither did they defer the Publication of it till *Jesus Christ* was forgotten, and his Story worn out, in the Country where they preach'd his *Resurrection*. But instead of that, they did it while it was fresh, and in the Mouths of all Men, and while those Persons, who could easily convict them for Cheats and Impostors (if they had been so) were ready to be produc'd, if occasion serv'd. I will not prevent my self here, by saying what will come with more Advantage under another Head. Only this I shall say, that *the Death of* Christ *was so publick a thing*, and there were so many acquainted with all the Circumstances of that Tragedy, some of whom were deeply concern'd too, to have prevented his rising again, if any Human Art or Care could have hinder'd it; that Men who made so much haste, to preach that surprizing and unwelcome Doctrine of his being actually risen again, would have found Enemies enough to confront them, and prove them Lyars, if they had not had evident Truth of their side.

SECT. XXVI.

Fifthly, *THEY did not make a Secret of this Business, but declar'd it in the most publick and open manner that could possibly be.*

It was not a Story privately whisper'd amongst themselves, or communicated only to those of their own Party; but they proclaim'd it in the Ears of all the People, and chose such a Time to begin, wherein *Jerusalem being crouded with Foreigners of all Nations*, there was no want of Persons, able and curious enough, to enquire into the Truth of the strange Report they made. So far were they from any sly and clandestine Management in this Case, that they went into the *Synagogues* of the *Jews*, nay, into the *Temple* it self (where there was no likelihood of a thin Auditory) and preach'd the *Resurrection of Christ*. And as if it was intended, that all possible Objections should be taken off, which might seem to intimate their being afraid of great Men, and that they address'd themselves only to the Mob upon this Occasion; they appear'd in the most august Councils of the *Jews*, and testify'd to the Faces of the High Priests and Rulers, what they had taught the common People before. 'Twas a very remarkable Speech, which St. *Peter* made to this purpose, in one of those grand Assemblies: *Ye Rulers of the People, and Elders of* Israel! *If we be this Day examin'd of the good Deed done to the impotent Man, by what means he is made whole; Be it known to you all, and to all the People of* Israel, *that by the Name of* Jesus Christ *of* Nazareth, *whom ye crucified, whom*

whom God raised from the Dead, even by Him, doth this Man stand here before you whole. This is the Stone, which was set at nought of you Builders, which is become the Head of the Corner. Neither is there Salvation in any other; for there is no other Name under Heaven, given amongst Men, whereby we must be sav'd.

What Freedom and Spirit appears in every Line of this Discourse? No Man sure can charge the Apostles, with making a Secret of *Christ's Resurrection*, when they dar'd proclaim it with so much briskness, to those who had been the Authors of his Death. A Man can scarce forbear thinking, how the Council look'd, upon this bold Charge; so many grave, wise and learned Seniors, as there were of them, to be thus attack'd by two ignorant and illiterate Men! The Author of that History tells us, *that they marvell'd:* And well they might; for, besides that the Subject of the Discourse was very ungrateful to them, they expected, as Men of Figure and Grandeur, to be address'd to with more Ceremony and Respect. Yet this was all the Complement they had, to be told, *They were the Murderers of* Christ; *and that God has rais'd him up from the Dead, to be the universal Lord and Saviour of the World.* Sad Tidings to those who stood in defiance of him! And the more provoking too, in that they were told of it in the Presence of all those People, who following their Example, had condemn'd him for an Impostor.

And very strange it was, that the Council should let the matter pass as they did. Could not they have reply'd to the Apostles? ——*You make a Noise about a thing, which the whole Nation knows to be an egregious Cheat* —— *You pretend that* Christ *rose from the Dead, when here is*

plain and undeniable Proof, which shall presently be produc'd to you, that there were was no such matter, but you by some deceitful Arts, convey'd his Body away! Such a Declaration as this, back'd with answerable Proof, and such bold Management, as always accompanies Truth and a clear Conscience; would have effectually silenc'd these Preachers, and put a final stop to the Progress of their Religion. But instead of this, they sneak, and grow cool upon the matter; the whole Council is confus'd, and they order the Apostles to withdraw, while they lay their Heads together, and agree upon some proper Answer to be return'd to them. And at last, as the result of all their Consultations, they command them to speak no more in the Name of *Jesus*, threatning them with their Resentments if they did, and so thought fit to dismiss them: Which is the very thing, that Men conscious of the Truth, and Self-condemn'd, would have done in the same Case. However, the Apostles, little regarding these Injunctions, went on with their Work; and quickly gave the Council a fresh Occasion to call them in question, for their Disobedience. And St. *Peter* (as the Mouth of the rest) gave such Reasons why they disobey'd, as those great Men could by no means digest, but were extremely uneasy under. *We ought to obey God, rather than Men. The God of our Fathers raised up* Jesus, *whom ye slew and hanged upon a Tree. Him hath God exalted with his right Hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance to* Israel, *and forgiveness of Sins. And we are his Witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.*

This short Sermon (says the Historian) *cut them to the Heart, and they took Counsel to slay them.* A most

most effectual way of answering Arguments, to *execute* those, who drive them on too far! However, they contented themselves with less Severities for that time; and having beaten the Apostles, sent them out of the Council, *rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name of* Jesus; and assur'd even by the Confession of the High Priests themselves, that they had *fill'd all* Jerusalem *with their Doctrine.*

SECT. XXVII.

Sixthly, THESE *Persons were such, whose* * *Probity and Vertue, their worst Adversaries never did* (and therefore for certain never could) *pretend to call in question.*

That they were reproach'd and vilify'd by the World, is indeed very certain; but this was what they were forewarn'd of, what they expected themselves, and what their Doctrine would naturally produce. But what I intend is, that no Adversary whatever, ever made an offer to shew the World, *that they were ill Men.* And I think, I rightly infer from thence, *that therefore they could not.*

For Men in such Circumstances, as the first Preachers of this Doctrine, were not to expect any thing of Ceremony or Compliment; but had there been any grounds to suspect their good Manners and Veracity, we may conclude, Mankind had not fail'd to know it. Because all

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* Τὸν βίον ἄκρως κεκαθαρμένοι, καὶ ἀρετῇ πάσῃ τὰς ψυχὰς κεκοσμημένοι. Euseb. de Apostol. Hist. Eccles. *Lib.* 3. *Cap.* 24.

imaginable Reaſons of Intereſt and Policy, engag'd their Enemies to do what could be done, to ſtop the Progreſs of *Chriſtianity*; which if it proſper'd, would infallibly † ſubvert all the Laws and Cuſtoms which they and their Anceſtors, had ſo great a Fondneſs for. Now nothing would more effectually have daſh'd this *New* Religion, and conſequently have ſecur'd the *Old* ones from the Encroachments of it; than to have made it apparent, that the firſt Spreaders thereof, were Men of vicious Lives and Principles, and in reality, infinitely far from all that Sanctity and Devotion they ſo much pretended to.

Beſides, 'tis a remarkable Inſtance, that we have in particular, of the Integrity and Candour of theſe Perſons, that they do not ſcruple to take notice of the common Infirmities of Human Nature, in one another: that they ſpeak ſo ſparingly in their own Praiſe, and enlarge ſo little on the Vices of their Adverſaries, under all the Provocations they had to the contrary.

They needed not to have told the World, their own Doubts and Fears, about the Truth of *Chriſt's Reſurrection*; how they doubted before, and how they doubted afterwards, even while they were looking on him: Nor would they have done thus, if they had been arrant Cheats and Impoſtors. No! They would have kept all that to themſelves, as not poſſible to be of any uſe to an impious Cauſe. Whereas, theſe and other Inſtances, of their free, open, and impartial Management, evidently diſcover good Temper, Modeſty, and a ſtrict regard to Truth, which are the Qua-

† *Odio dignus eſt (videlicet Chriſtus) quod ex orbe religiones expulit, quod ad Deorum cultum prohibuit accedi. Ita Ethnicus apud* Arnob. Lib. 2.

lifica-

lifications we always look after, in order to the reposing a Confidence in any Person.

SECT. XXVIII.

Seventhly, *THEY were Persons of mean and vulgar Circumstances, in all respects.*

I speak here chiefly of the Apostles, of whom we have the largest and most particular Accounts.

They were not bred up in Courts, or ingag'd in such a way of living, wherein the Arts and Intrigues of the World were either taught or practis'd.

They were not Men of polite Conversation, that by the Helps of Philosophy and Elegancy of Speech, were able to insinuate a Fondness, and raise an esteem of themselves, in the rest of Mankind. But their Discourses were plain and homely *; as well as their Education and Condition in the World, such as could neither prompt their Ambition, nor qualify them for great Attempts.

'Tis true indeed, there was one particularly (I mean St. *Paul*) who must be excepted; as being a Man of very polite Learning, and well acquainted with the World: But this shews, that as *Christianity* was far from being incompatible with refin'd Sense and Knowledg; so the Author of it, tho he would make no use of Human Learning it self, in the Propagation of

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* Τῶν δὲ γλῶτταν ἰδιωτεύοντες, τῇ γε μὴν πρὸς τὴν Χριστοῦ αὐτοῖς δεδωρημένῃ θείᾳ καὶ θεοδοξοποιῷ δυνάμει διαρρήδην, τὸ μὴ ἐν πειθοῖ καὶ τέχνῃ λόγων τὰ τῆς Διδασκάλου μαθήματα προσβάλειν ὅτε ἤδεσαν ὅτε ἐνεχείρουν. Euseb. Loc. ult. citat.

his Religion, yet was pleas'd to take away a ſtumbling Block from the perverſe and froward World, by making uſe of a learned Man.

SECT. XXIX.

Eighthly, *THEY could not poſſibly have any ſecular Intereſt in view, by preaching ſuch a Doctrine as this to the World.*

This is ſo true, that it is very evident on the other hand, that to act ſuch a part as they did, was going againſt all the Rules of worldly Intereſt and Policy: And 'tis impoſſible, they ſhould ever have had any Proſpect before them from the World, but what muſt be very frightful and diſcouraging. Here was a Company of Men (who made as mean and ordinary a Figure, by the accompliſhments of their Minds, as by their outward Port and Behaviour) and they come and give a ſtrange account of *Jeſus Chriſt*, viz. *How that after a cruel Death, which the* Jews *put him to at* Jeruſalem, *he was raiſed up again, by the mighty Power of God, and after ſome Time, carry'd up into Heaven, where he ſat inveſted with Divine Glory and Majeſty, having all things put in Subjection to him.* In purſuance of this Account, they challenge the Obedience of all Mankind to the Laws of this *Jeſus*; declaring there's no Salvation but by Faith in him, and denouncing Threatnings, as well as promiſing eternal Rewards in his Name, to influence the World to give heed to their Meſſage. They tell the *Jews*, they muſt believe on him, whom they had but a little before treated with the laſt Degree of Outrage and Contempt, and crucify'd as a Malefactor:

lefactor: That they muſt enter upon a new Worſhip and Service, of his Inſtitution; be ſtrip'd of all the Privileges of a ſeparate and peculiar People, and compoſe one Church, in common with the Gentile World. They tell the *Greeks*, they muſt ſubmit all their admir'd Wiſdom and Philoſophy, their Arts and Politeneſs, their Wit and Reaſonings, to the Rudeneſs and Simplicity of the Goſpel; and renouncing all the Ceremonies and darling Superſtitions of their Religion and Education, hearken to the Fooliſhneſs of preaching about a crucify'd Saviour *.

Now, ſuch a Report as this, was not like to procure them the Favour and good Opinion, of any of thoſe Perſons they addreſs'd themſelves to. There was nothing in it that could ſerve to recommend them, either as Men of *Wit and fine Parts*, or of profound *Knowledg and Learning*, or of delicate Art and Invention. Indeed, had they come with a pleaſant Story, that would have gratify'd the Curioſity, or flatter'd the Paſſions of Mankind; had they preach'd ſome refin'd Speculations in *Philoſophy*, taught Men how to acquire Fame and Renown, or directed them to ſome extraordinarily grateful and pleaſant ways, of paſſing their Time here in Life; it would have been natural to think they drove at ſome worldly Advantage, by feeding Men up with Fancies that would have been ſo entertaining to them. But inſtead of this, they advanc'd Notions that appear'd abſurd and ridicu-

* *How great a ſtumbling Block, the infamous Death of our Lord was to the World, and how much objected to the* Chriſtians; Juſtian Martyr, Origen, *and others have abundantly ſhewn.*

lous,

lous, in point of *Theory*; and with respect to *Practice*, were the most strict and severe imaginable. They told of nothing but Afflictions and Tribulations in the present Life, as the certain Portion of those, who should receive their Message. They laid down this for a fundamental Rule, which they publish'd without scruple, to all the World; That as the great Rewards of *Christianity* were in another Life, so no Man should ever be admitted to the Possession of them, who would not (when call'd to it) forgo all temporal Pleasures and Enjoyments, upon that score alone.

So that 'tis plain, to a Demonstration, these Men could not propose to themselves, by preaching this Doctrine, either to gain *Reputation* and Esteem, or to advance their *Fortunes*, or to make themselves any way *great and considerable* in the present World; and therefore, that they could have no secular Interest in doing what they did.

SECT. XXX.

Ninthly, IT is to be consider'd too, *That these Persons were all of them brought up, under the Prejudices of a Religion, vastly different from that which they pretended to establish in the World.*

It is well known, that the Apostles were all of them *Jews* originally; and as such, they had quite other Notions of the *Messiah*, than that he should ever die, or consequently rise from the Dead. 'Tis true, that they might have had different Notions concerning him, from the Writings

Writings of the Prophets, and particularly, the Book of *Esaias*; who has, in the most lively and affecting manner possible, describ'd his humble State and Sufferings. However, the common Opinion of the People of the *Jews*, was quite another way; and they look'd for a *Messiah* that should come with outward Pomp and Splendour, to make them the most happy and flourishing Nation of the Universe. And accordingly, 'tis notorious in Fact, that the Apostles and Disciples of *Jesus Christ*, had no manner of Apprehension, that he was to suffer things as he did, from the *Jews*; and were every whit as hard to be persuaded of the Truth of his *Resurrection*. Nay, tho it was affirm'd, upon the Testimony of Sense, by some of their own Company, that he was risen again, yet they continu'd incredulous, or at best doubtful and wavering: And it appears, that after all the repeated Assurances from those, who declar'd they had seen him, they were not satisfy'd, till frequent and familiar Conversation with *Jesus Christ* himself had dissipated all their Fears, and given them full Assurance of the Reality, of what they were afterwards to publish to the World. Now, when a Case goes no farther than barely this, *That those Persons, who are to be heard in a matter, are not prepossess'd and prejudic'd in favour of the Notions they deliver*; it is a very great advantage to the Argument, and adds a special Force to what they say. But when these same Persons *shall be prejudic'd on the contrary side, and by their Education and Profession have entertain'd Hypotheses of quite another Nature and Tendency, than that which they advance*; this goes a very great way towards the compleat Satisfaction of a Man's Mind, as to the Reality and Truth

of

of what they offer: in that it perfectly rids him of all apprehensions of Bigotry and Superstition, of fond regard to Teaching and Tradition, or the Opinions of those that went before, by which Men are frequently very much byass'd, and sometimes led to profess Opinions, which their Judgments never solemnly approv'd of.

But this is not all; for by preaching *Christianity*, they did not only go against the Prejudices of their Education, but also took a course, that had a direct and immediate Tendency, to subvert all the Religion and Discipline they had been brought up under. For tho *Christ* came not to destroy the *Law and the Prophets*; yet he came to abolish the Rites and Ceremonies of the Law, and to substitute another kind of Worship in the room of them. And therefore, as *Judaism* and *Christianity* could not stand together, but the one must fall, if the other kept its ground; so those Men are vastly less obnoxious to suspicion in this Case, in that they did not vent Notions that made for the Honour of their own Law and Institution, but such as would infallibly undermine and ruin both, if ever they got ground in the World.

SECT. XXXI.

Tenthly, BUT then it is farther to be consider'd, *How severe the Laws, both of the* Jewish *and* Christian Religion, *are against all kinds of Deceit, and particularly, against Forgery and false Testimony.*

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A false Witness shall not be unpunish'd, and he that speaketh Lyes, shall not escape. And (in the same Chapter again) ——*A false Witness shall not be unpunish'd, and he that speaketh Lyes, shall perish.*

Lying Lips are an Abomination to the Lord, but they that deal truly, are his Delight.

Wherefore, *Putting away Lying, speak every Man Truth with his Neighbour*——

Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in, through the Gates, into the City; for without, are Dogs and Sorcerers, and Whoremongers, and Murderers, and Idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a Lye.

So that if these Men did bear a false Testimony, in this Case, 'twas in plain and open defiance, not only of the Religion of their Education, but of that Religion likewise, which they took upon themselves, to be the Preachers of to Mankind, and by which (according to their own Doctrine) they were condemn'd to *everlasting Punishments*, for doing what they did. For they persisted in this Testimony to the very last; and if it were a Lye, they went out of the World with that horrible Lye in their Mouths. Horrible indeed! Since it was not bearing false Witness in an ordinary Case, between Man and Man, but bearing false Witness of the Great and Glorious God; in that they testify'd, he rais'd up *Jesus Christ* from the Dead, and gave them Power and Commission to preach that Doctrine to the World: All which (upon this *Hypothesis*) were notorious Untruths. And therefore they could have no hope of finding Mercy and Forgiveness at his hands; because, whatever Encouragements are given, by either of these Religions, to repenting

penting Sinners, there is nothing but Wrath and Indignation threatned, as the Portion of those, who continue obstinate and impenitent. From whence it must follow, that (if they asserted, and stood in so vile a Falshood, in contradiction to Laws so very express and severe, as these and many more to the same purpose are; and this too, in a Case of so great and important a Nature, wherein the Glory of God, and the Welfare of Mankind were so deeply concern'd) they could be no other than downright *Atheists*; Men that had no regard to God, nor no Notions of his Laws; no Sense of Right and Wrong, or Vertue and Vice; but Persons of the most deprav'd Tempers and Principles imaginable; and in a word, such, whom no Time or Age of the World ever could pretend to match for consummate Impiety.

SECT. XXXII.

NOW, that they were not Men of such loose and degenerate Principles, is evident from this Consideration especially, *viz. That had they been such, they would never have given Mankind such Notions of God Almighty, nor taught such Rules of Duty and Behaviour, both towards him and the rest of their fellow-Creatures, as they did.*

For why should Men, who were so remote from any religious Sense of God themselves, be so very zealous and industrious to impress it upon the Minds of others; and teach them to love and fear him, with so much Care and Exactness, as the scope of all their Sermons and Writings shews us plainly they made it their Business to do? Can

Can there be any thing more lovely, than *their Descriptions of the Divine Goodness and Mercy*, and the Preparations made to render those, who are truly Pious and Good, compleatly happy after this Life? Can there be any thing more terrible, than what they have denounc'd of the Divine Justice and Vengeance against Sinners?

Let us but consider *the awful Solemnities of a Judgment-Day*, the final Separation of the Good from the Bad, with the impartial Distribution of Rewards and Punishments, so often talk'd of in the Gospel. Did they not tell the World, by these Doctrines, that God is Just and Holy, as well as Bountiful and Good; and that he is not to be trifl'd with, tho he infinitely values the Ease and Happiness of his Creatures? They represented him, as the Searcher of the Thoughts and Counsels of the Heart, and of purer Eyes than to behold the least Iniquity; tho of so much Grace and Condescension, as to accept of Sincerity, and even to be pleas'd to dwell with the *humble and contrite Spirit*. They press'd it as his Will and Pleasure, that Men should deny all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and live Soberly, Righteously, and Holily here: That they should be fruitful in good Works, and enjoying this World as if they enjoy'd it not, have their Affections and Conversations in Heaven: In short, that they should govern themselves by the exactest Rules of Integrity, Justice, Temperance and Charity, paying Love and due Regard to all; yea, seeking the Good of all, and even recompensing Good for Evil, to the worst of Enemies; that so by the practice of these Vertues, they might shew forth the Divine Purity and Benignity, and prove themselves to be the Children of God.

Now,

Now, I leave it to any Man to judg, whether *Atheism and forlorn Impiety*, would ever have produc'd such sort of Doctrines and Precepts as these are. Men that had been wicked enough to forge a Religion, and publish it in God's Name; would also have been wise enough to have made up their System after another sort of manner. For it was wholly at their own Choice, to make whatever they pleas'd of it at first; but why they should make such a thing of it, as they have, is what no Sense can ever account for. A *profane irreligious Disposition* could never possibly dispose Men to talk of God, and to recommend Vertue and Piety, with that Ardour and Concern which they do. And to clog a *new Invention* with such Duties, such Commands, and such Threatnings, as we find their Writings abound with; was not at all the way to make it grateful and palatable, to the corrupt Affections of Mankind. Nor could such Rules of Living and Behaviour, as they enjoin'd, ever possibly serve to promote the *Interest of Vice*, or to make Men loose and irregular; had they any such Intention as that. For these Rules are actually calculated, for the Suppression of Vice and Wickedness: and where they take place, so that Mens Tempers and Manners are duly influenc'd by them; it's plain they are made, what we must call Vertuous and Good; that is, they are fitted and dispos'd to behave themselves as reasonable Creatures ought to do, both towards God, and towards their Neighbour; and to manage their own Conversations decently and soberly in the World.

So that they could neither gratify their own Humour, nor please and flatter the World, nor obtain any wicked Purposes upon Mankind, by putting

putting their Religion into ſuch a Dreſs as this. And therefore, from the very Matter and Scope of the Goſpel, I conclude, *That the firſt Writers and Preachers of it, could not be Men of wicked and irreligious Principles or Deſigns; becauſe, I ſay, they could have no poſſible End* (upon that ſuppoſition) *in doing what they did.* And to make them act without ſome End, is to make them Machines, and not Men.

SECT. XXXIII.

Eleventhly, IT is plain to a Demonſtration, *that theſe Perſons heartily believ'd the Doctrines they preach'd to the World.*

The Proof of this ariſes from the Conſideration *of the Dangers and Sufferings they expos'd themſelves to, upon that ſcore*; which, I judg, will be ſufficient to clear the Point to all that are not obſtinately bent, to think juſt the Reverſe of what the generality of Mankind muſt and will conclude, in a Caſe of this nature. For, is it not an Argument, that Men are in good earneſt, when they dare venture upon Torments and Death it ſelf, to confirm what they ſay? I would fain know, what Motives an *Impoſtor*, plac'd in ſuch Circumſtances as the Apoſtles were, can poſſibly have, to perſuade him to run upon ſuch Extremities, in the Defence of what he knows to be a notorious Lye. I grant indeed, that a Man quite loſt to all ſenſe of Vertue and Goodneſs, and given up to reprobate and licentious Principles, may poſſibly bid defiance to ſome Dangers, in the way of maintaining a Notion, he even knows to be falſe; provided at

the ſame time, he has a fair Proſpect of gaining ſome very conſiderable Profit, or Reputation and Honour by it. And the reaſon is plain; for ſuch a one, *having no fear of Puniſhment in a Future State, and being poſſeſs'd with a mighty Opinion of the preſent World*, may be induc'd to run ſome Hazards, in order to the obtaining thoſe Advantages, which appear ſo very great and charming to him. But even ſuch a Man as this, would certainly ſtop at Hazards; and not think it worth his while to run upon unavoidable Deſtruction in ſuch a Cauſe. * For when Life is gone, all is gone with him; and tho he has no Evil to dread, yet on the other hand, he has no Good to expect. And the Laws of Human Nature are ſo ſtrong and binding, in this Caſe, *that no Man can ever perſuade himſelf, to be willing to exchange a State of Good, he is in actual poſſeſſion of, for a State, wherein he aſſures himſelf, he ſhall not be in a Capacity to reliſh either Good or Evil.* Upon which account, I believe, I may ſecurely challenge any one, to produce out of any Age or Hiſtory of the World, a ſingle Inſtance of a Perſon, *not Lunatick or Diſtracted*; who ever carry'd the Jeſt ſo far, as to throw away Reputation, Fortune, Pleaſure, and Life itſelf, to propagate a Cheat, which there was undeniable Proof, that he himſelf own'd and knew to be ſo. The Caſe is quite otherwiſe, with reſpect to ſuch Perſons, *who* (howſoever deceiv'd and prejudic'd, yet) *firmly believing their Opinions to be true*, make no ſcruple to expoſe themſelves to the worſt Extremities in the Defence of them. For the *Schemes* they have form'd to themſelves,

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* Τίς γὰρ φιλήδονος καὶ ἀκρατὴς, δυναίτο ἂν θάνατον ἀσπάζεσθαι, ὅπως τῶν αὐτῷ ἀγαθῶν στερηθῇ. Juſt. Mart.

fur-

furnish them with Notions that tend to their Comfort and Support; and tho other People think them grosly deluded, yet they may please themselves with the hopes of an After-Recompence, for what they go thro here. But a known wilful *Impostor* can have no *Scheme*, no Principles that he dare venture out of this World upon, as long as it is in his power to keep in it; and therefore, he will never be bold enough to act such a Part, as the first Preachers of the *Christian* Faith did, who had a thousand Terrors and Deaths in prospect every Day, and at last seal'd their Testimony with their Blood.

Now this being the Case, and it being evidently made out before, that the Apostles could not be Men of profane and irreligious Principles; but on the contrary (as appears both by their Doctrine and their Manners) Persons of most devout and serious Minds; no reasonable Man can avoid making this Conclusion, *That their Judgments were thorowly convinc'd of the Truth of what they deliver'd, and their Hearts, as well as their Tongues, were engag'd in that Work.* And therefore now, we have but one thing more to inquire into, with respect to their Characters; and that is, whether there be sufficient Grounds to believe, *That they were Men of competent Natural Understanding, and were not acted by Principles of Whimsy and Enthusiasm, but had a free Command of their Minds, by which they could manage themselves coolly and soberly, as other Men might do.* For when this Point is likewise clear'd, we shall have laid together all the *Data* which are necessary, in order to argue with Strength and Advantage, upon the Testimony they gave, concerning the *Resurrection of* Jesus Christ.

Therefore——

SECT. XXXIV.

Twelfthly, AND Laſtly, *As theſe Perſons were no* Impoſtors, *ſo neither were they Fooliſh and Stupid, or Enthuſiaſtical and Diſtracted; ſo that the Teſtimony they deliver'd, ſhould fall under any manner of Suſpicion, upon either of thoſe Accounts.*

I take it for granted, that the way to determine, whether a Perſon be a *Fool* or a *Lunatick*, is to conſider his Words and Speeches, his Actions and Deportment; and ſee whether they come up to that Standard of Sobriety and good Underſtanding, which is commonly allow'd of amongſt Mankind, and by which Men are ordinarily judg'd, to be either ſenſible and in their right Wits, or elſe to be otherwiſe. And therefore, if upon a careful Examination, of what paſs'd of this nature, amongſt the Apoſtles, we find nothing but what will fairly ſtand the Teſt; we ſhall be oblig'd, by all our common Practice, and Notions of Things and Perſons, to pronounce, that they were neither *Idiots* nor *Madmen*; but were at leaſt ſo far the contrary, as was neceſſary, in order to prevent any Objections that might be ſtarted againſt their Doctrine upon that ſcore. Let us therefore put the Queſtion, *Did theſe Men ever do, or ſay any thing, which betray'd a Conſtitution, that might juſtly be ſuſpected of any Defects of this kind?*

Are not their Diſcourſes grave and well compos'd, full of Life and perſuaſive Eloquence; tho without elaborate Art and Study?

Did

Did they not converſe with, preach to, and diſpute amongſt all ſorts of People, even the moſt learned and polite, as well as the rude and ignorant? And was not this the way for Fools and Madmen to diſcover themſelves, and let the World ſee what they were? 'Tis much, that no Perſon (amongſt all thoſe Crouds of *Jews*, *Romans*, *Greeks* and others, which daily ſurrounded them, in the Diſcharge of their Office) ſhould have Senſe and Sagacity enough to find out their weak Side; and by expoſing the Idleneſs and Incoherence of their Talk, repreſent them as Subjects only for Mirth and Diverſion, to the reſt of Mankind. Inſtead of this, we find, that they expos'd the Follies and Errors of their moſt learned Adverſaries to their very faces; and that in ſuch a manner, as left them no room to anſwer or defend themſelves. If at any time they undertook an Argument, they manag'd it with ſuch Succeſs, that thoſe they had to do with, either chang'd their Opinions, and fairly own'd their Judgments convinc'd; or elſe, by their furious Reſentments, expreſs'd in the way of *railing*, *ſlandering*, *and raiſing Mobs*, plainly ſhew'd, they had been gravel'd and reduc'd to the laſt Diſtreſs. And what wonderful Effects had their Sermons upon the Minds of Men? At the ſame time, that they deliver'd their Doctrines, with a ſuperior Authority and Command, they touch'd the ſofteſt Paſſions of Human Nature, and made ſuch Alterations in the Tempers and Lives of their Auditors (the moſt of whom heard them, with a ſufficient degree of Prejudice) that it may well be ſaid of them, *Never Men ſpake like theſe*. Never did any *Philoſopher*, *Orator*, or *Rhetorician*, ſpeak to ſuch purpoſe: Never had Wit and Learning ſuch prodigious Triumphs, as the

Plainness and Simplicity of these Preachers. But as plain as they were, these things evidently shew, *that they neither rav'd, nor talk'd Nonsense to those about them.* For if it would not require clear and cool Heads, for Men to behave themselves at the rate they did, it is impossible to think, what Deportment could ever require such a Temper. So that upon the whole, no Man that knows how to judg of sober Sense and Capacity, by the common Rules of the World; can ever question, whether these Men were well qualify'd even in that respect, for the Work they were employ'd in.

SECT. XXXV.

THUS we have enquir'd pretty largely, into the Characters and Qualifications of those Persons, who set up for publick Witnesses of the *Resurrection of Jesus Christ.* Let us now see, what use is to be made, of what has been said.

The *Christians* therefore proceed to argue from these Particulars, after the following manner.

First, They say, *This Testimony of the Apostles, concerning the* Resurrection of Christ, *has all the plain Marks and Characters of Truth and Sincerity that any Human Testimony can possibly have.*

The Vertue and Probity of these Men, was beyond all Dispute. They were ignorant of the World, and unacquainted with the Methods of Wheedling and Intrigue; yet they discover'd neither Folly nor Lunacy in their Behaviour. They went against all the Prejudices of Education, and the Laws of worldly Interest. They never contradicted each other in their Accounts,

or

or ſhrunk from their Teſtimony, for Fear or Favour. They were fair and open in all their Proceedings, and had no Followers, but thoſe whom a convinc'd Judgment made to be ſo. They refer'd their Hearers to *Time*, *Place*, *Perſons*, and all other Circumſtances that could poſſibly make for their Satisfaction. In a word, what they teſtify'd, was not a matter of Tradition, but of *Senſe and Experience*; and as they loſt the preſent World, ſo they laid *Eternity* it ſelf at ſtake, upon the Truth of their Teſtimony.

SECT. XXXVI.

NOW the Caſe lies here: Since 'tis demonſtrated in general, at SECT. III, IV, V, VI. Part II. *That we are oblig'd to aſſent to ſome things as true, in Caſes, where we have neither Senſe nor rigorous abſtracted Demonſtration, to aſſure us of the Truth of them:* Alſo ſince 'tis ſhewn (PROP. III. Part II.) *That Teſtimony may be ſo circumſtantiated, as to afford us a ſufficient Degree of juſt and rational Security, that things are really ſo as they are repreſented to us:* And again, at PROP. VIII. *That our Aſſent in many of theſe Caſes, may be, and is, attended with as little Doubt and Heſitation, as in thoſe, where we have perfect and rigorous Demonſtration, for the Truth of Things:* Since theſe things are ſo, the Queſtion is, *Why ſhould any Man refuſe his Aſſent, in the preſent Caſe; or what valuable Reaſons can be produc'd, for not admitting the Proof here offer'd, as juſt and ſufficient?*

Is there any Circumſtance, relating to the Account given by the Apoſtles, that renders it liable to a reaſonable Suſpicion?

Is there any one Circumſtance wanting, which was ever requir'd by Mankind, in this ſort of Proof? Should we look into the Practice of Nations, even the moſt polite and beſt taught in the World; we ſhall find, that their utmoſt Demands, in all matters concerning *Witneſſes and Teſtimony*, fall vaſtly ſhort of what the Caſe in hand furniſhes us withal. Nay, 'tis evident, without farther Proof, than only comparing what has been already ſaid, with plain Matter of Fact abroad in the World, *That amongſt all the vaſt variety of Caſes, wherein Teſtimony is ever made uſe of; there is no Caſe, wherein there is ſuch a Concurrence of weighty and undeniable Circumſtances, to perſuade the Truth of a thing, as there is here.*

What then ſhall we ſay? There can be no Objection (that will hold) drawn, from any Topick that relates to the Characters or Management of theſe Witneſſes. And 'tis abſurd and irrational, to reject their Teſtimony, upon a bare *Phyſical Poſſibility of Deception* (by PROP. XII. Part II.) And Laſtly, (by PROP. IX. of the ſame) *The Subject being of ſuch a nature, as admits only of Moral Proof, altho it be of the greateſt Moment and Conſequence poſſible; yet we are not to make that a Reaſon, for refuſing our Aſſent to ſuch Proof alledg'd for it, as has all the Conditions ever requir'd, or made neceſſary by common Conſent, and the Laws of the World, in order to our firm Belief, and Acquieſcency in ſuch a thing as true.*

And therefore, the *Chriſtians* conclude here, *That if their Adverſaries will not admit this Teſtimony, 'tis becauſe they are govern'd by Humour and Self-will:* They will not, becauſe they will not; or becauſe they have Reaſons to themſelves (ſuch as can never ſtand the Teſt of a fair and impartial Examination) for their doing otherwiſe.

And

And this is indeed what must ever be suspected to be the true State of the Case, and what lies at the bottom of all the Controversy, between them and the *Christians*.

SECT. XXXVII.

BUT, *Secondly*, they say, *That to disown such a Testimony as this, is by Consequence to take away the Validity of all* Moral Evidence.

Now, by what has been shewn, in various Particulars, at Part II. it's certain and clear, beyond all Dispute, *That this sort of Evidence, is not to be taken away, nor the World ever to be brought to that pass, that Men shall admit of nothing as true, but what they have Sensible or Demonstrative Proof for.* And therefore, our Business is to see, whether any such Consequence will follow, from the disowning a Testimony, attended with such Circumstances, as that which we are now speaking of. For if it does, then I think there will scarce be room, for any farther arguing upon the matter.

Now that such a Consequence will follow, is thus plainly made out, from what was hinted occasionally in the *foregoing Section*. For if no Case occurring in Human Life and Affairs, wherein we are necessarily oblig'd to assent to things as true, be ever attended with Circumstances more considerable, both for Number and Quality, than this Case is; then to disown Moral Proof in this Case, will infer a necessity of disowning it in all others.

But the *former* is true: And therefore the *latter*.

There

There can be but two ways in Nature, to overthrow this Reasoning. The *one*, by shewing, that there are Cases, wherein we assent to the Truth of Things, as made out to us by *Moral Proof*; the Circumstances of which are superior, in both respects mention'd, to those of the *Resurrection of Jesus Christ*.

The *other*, by shewing, that altho it should be granted, that there are no such Cases to be produc'd; yet that it will not follow, that to reject the Proof in the Case here alledg'd, will infer a necessity of doing it in all others, which are to be made out by the same sort of Proof.

It is indifferent to me, which end of the Argument, the incredulous Gentlemen please to take.

If they can shew any Case (or Cases) which has more Advantage in point of Circumstances, than this; I allow then, that it will not follow, *That to disown* Moral Proof, *in this Case, will infer a necessity of disowning it in all others.* Because, a superior Evidence may be admitted, when an inferior one is rejected. However, even supposing they could prove this; yet thus much will follow still, *viz. That* Moral Evidence *must be disown'd, in all Cases, whose Circumstances were but equal to those of the Case in hand, and much more in those, whose Circumstances were less considerable.* And these are so many, that I make no scruple to say, *That all Society and Commerce amongst Mankind, would be totally destroy'd; were* Moral Evidence *to be rejected, but in a very small number of them:* Nay, were *Moral Proof* to be disown'd, but in such Cases, where the Circumstances had not the hundredth part of the Advantage, which those, of the *Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, have been shewn to have; it might be demonstrated, *that no Business, Government, or Conversation, could be*

be any where maintain'd, or carry'd on in the World. So that this Point, if it were possible to be gain'd, would signify but little.

As for the other, *viz. The Sequel of the Argument*; I guess there may be some good Reasons, why that should pass without any Molestation, or Attempt to disprove the Truth of it. And indeed, it would be an Undertaking, very wonderful and odd, for a Man to endeavour to shew, *That tho there are no such superior Cases to be produc'd, yet it will not follow, that to disown the Proof in the Case here alledg'd, will infer a Necessity of doing it in all others, which are to be made out by the same kind of Proof.* For the plain English of this is, *I will not have it so, and therefore it shall not be so —— I allow the Antecedent, but 'tis not for my turn to grant the Consequence.*

This indeed, puts an end to all Argument; and a Man that is come so far, must be complimented with the Character of Invincible.

SECT. XXXVIII.

AND thus much may suffice for this first Head of Argument. However, before I enter on a second, I think it expedient to clear one Point by the way, relating to the Matter or Subject of the Apostles Testimony, which was a *Resurrection from the Dead*; a thing not only strange, but impossible to be effected by any mere natural Power. It is not my Province here, to enter upon any Discourse, of a *Resurrection* in general; or to shew the Folly and Blunders of the common Objections, that are started against it. May those People, who

who amuſe themſelves and others, with idle prating, of Contradictions and ſimple Impoſſibilities in this Caſe, come to a better Underſtanding, and learn to think more juſtly and decently, of the infinite Wiſdom and Power of their Maker. My Concern is with the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt*, which according to the Accounts of the *New Teſtament*, was the third Day after his Death and Burial. And as the *Chriſtians* believe his Body ſaw no Corruption, and the *Deiſts* will not pretend to prove it did; ſo the Caſe is clog'd with no other Difficulty, than barely that, of his being reſtor'd to Life again. And I believe it will be much at one to theſe Gentlemen, whether the Body of *Jeſus Chriſt* did, or did not, ſee Corruption; if it be ſo, that the Apoſtles ſpoke Truth, in ſaying he roſe from the Dead.

Now, what I would offer here is this, *viz.* *That tho the matter of this Teſtimony, were of the moſt wonderful and ſurprizing nature; nay, a thing utterly impoſſible for any mere* Phyſical Agent *to bring about; yet this is not, in right Reaſon, any juſt ground for a Man's refuſing to give Credit to it.* I gueſs, the matter may ſtick pretty much hereabouts; and therefore, I ſhall endeavour to ſet this *Propoſition* in a very clear Light.

For this end, I muſt beg theſe Gentlemen's Attention to the following Particulars, and the Argument deduc'd from them.

SECT.

SECT. XXXIX.

First, *THE thing here spoken of, was infinitely easy for an Almighty Power to effect.*

Secondly, *There is no Medium or Principle, by which it can be shewn antecedently, that it was inconsistent with, or any way unbecoming, the Divine Perfections, for God to raise* Jesus Christ *from the Dead.*

As for the *First of these*, I conclude, they will not make any words about it; because, how strange soever the thing be in it self, or however impossible to any second Cause; yet it is not of such a kind, as does in its own nature involve any thing of *Absurdity and Contradiction.* The Case of raising a Person from the Dead, or of re-animating a dead Body, does not amount to that, of making a thing to be, and not to be, at the same time; nor does it imply or infer, any thing that can ever be reduc'd thereto. So that these Persons have no room or pretence to object, that this Effect is to be reckon'd amongst those, which even Almighty Power it self cannot bring to pass *. Tho by the way, I must say, we ought to be very cautious, when we talk of Impossibilities to God; as remembring, that many of those things, which are impossible to our utmost Power to effect, and to all our Saga-

* Τὲ μὲν ἡ τ δύναμιν, ὡς ἔςιν ἀρχαῖα θεὸς τ τ σωμάτων ἀνάςασιν, δείκνυσιν ἡ τότων αὐτων γνῶσις. Athenag. de Mort. Resurrect. *Pag.* 151. Edit. Oxon. 1706. *And the same again,* Pag. 155. *where he argues from the Divine Power and Wisdom.*

city

city and Penetration, to conceive the Nature or Manner of; are very possible and easy with him.

SECT. XL.

Secondly, *THERE is no possible Medium, by which it can be shewn, that it was any way unbecoming the Perfections of the infinite God, to raise* Jesus Christ *from the Dead.*

That either God's *Holiness*, *Justice*, *Wisdom*, *Mercy*, *Goodness*, or *Truth*, must, or ought to have been a bar against this Work.

The old *Christians* reason'd after this manner, upon the Subject of a *Resurrection* in general; and I may as well apply it, to the *Resurrection of Jesus Christ* in particular; arguing with * *Athenagoras*, if God would not do this Work, it must be because it was some way or other *unjust and unworthy of him.*

I grant indeed, if it could be fairly prov'd, that the *Christian Religion* were an Institution unworthy of God; that then it might be demonstrated *à priori*, that *Jesus Christ* could not be rais'd from the Dead, to authorize such a Religion in the World: because upon this *Hypothesis*, it must have been a mere *Imposture*, and therefore impossible ever to have had any Countenance from Heaven. But since the Religion it self is so far from being contrary to the Nature of God, that 'tis manifestly most agreeable to all his Perfections, as discover'd to us, *by the Light*

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* Τὸ γὰρ ἀδύνατον, ἢ ὡς ἄδικον αὐτῷ ἐστιν ἀδύνατον, ἢ ὡς ἀνάξιον, &c. Athenag. *Pag.* 168.

of

of Nature, and the Government of the World; 'tis plain, that no ſuch Demonſtration can ever be form'd. And therefore, I preſume, we argue rightly, that there's no antecedent Concluſion to be drawn from any of the Divine Attributes, againſt the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt*.

SECT. XLI.

NOW from hence ariſes the Proof of the Propoſition.

For were the Caſe put, concerning the Credibility of any Effect in general, pretended to be wrought by ſome certain Cauſe or Agent; if it were demonſtrable, that this Effect were vaſtly ſhort, of what the Virtue and Power of the Cauſe could produce; if it were demonſtrable, that no Reaſons *à priori* could be given, to ſhew that this Cauſe ſhould not, or ought not to produce ſuch an Effect: And Laſtly, If there were plain and poſitive Teſtimony (unexceptionable in all other reſpects) aſſerting that this Effect was actually and really produc'd; there would be no juſt and valuable Reaſons remaining, for any Man's disbelief, in ſuch a Caſe. And therefore, how much ſoever this Effect might be above the Power of any Cauſes of an inferior Rank; it would be notoriouſly abſurd and irrational, upon that ſcore, to reject the Evidence, atteſting the actual Production of it, by that other and more powerful Cauſe.

I need not make a formal Application of this, to the Caſe in hand; for every body will ſee, that it muſt hold with as much Reaſon here, where the Effect ſpoken of, is the *Reſurrection*

of

of Jesus Christ, and the Agent concern'd, an Infinite and Almighty Being: This Consideration being likewise taken into the Account, *That 'tis impossible to shew, why infinite Power should not have been ingag'd in this Work; and that 'tis a palpable begging of the Question, to suppose any such thing, without first demonstrating* Christianity *to be an* Imposture. And this, I hope, may be sufficient to make out, that 'tis absurd and unreasonable, and a manifest Breach of the Laws of good arguing, to make the strangeness of the thing testify'd by the Apostles, a Reason for rejecting the Testimony it self. And this Consideration, added to those which went before, will compleat the first Argument.

SECT. XLII.

Secondly, ANother Head of Argument, which the *Christians* go upon, is, that *of the certain and necessary Discovery of the Fraud*, if the Testimony given by the Apostles, concerning the *Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, had been false.

If it be ask'd, how they prove, *That the Cheat must needs have been discover'd, if so be, this Account of* Christ's Resurrection *had not been a real Truth, but a mere Forgery of the Apostles:* I reply, they give the following Reasons for it, which all put together, will manifestly infer what they say. They argue therefore,

First, That the Apostles did immediately declare the thing.

Secondly, That they made this Declaration, upon the very Spot, where the thing was pretended to be done.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, That they did not whisper the matter, but proclaim'd it in the most open and publick manner that was possible.

Fourthly, That they did not begin to make this Report in some secret Corner, but in one of the most famous and publick Places of any in the World at that time.

Fifthly, That they made Choice of such a Season, wherein there was the greatest Concourse and Resort of all sorts of People thither; and therefore the greatest number of Hearers, and Inquirers into what they affirm'd.

Sixthly, That the profess'd Adversaries of this Doctrine, had many urgent and weighty Reasons, to persuade them to make their utmost Efforts, for the proving it false.

Seventhly, That they had as much Time and Opportunity, as could ever be desir'd, in order to the Discovery of the *Imposture*, if there had been any.

Eighthly, That they had likewise Power in their hands, by which they were enabled to examine all Persons and Things, which might any way conduce to the giving them Light into the matter.

As for the Truth of these Particulars, the *Christians* believe their Adversaries themselves are so thorowly appriz'd of it, or at least are sensible, that there are no Objections to be made in the Case, but what would be plainly scandalous, for Men that pretend to Reason, to make; that they have little apprehension of any Dispute arising upon that score. And indeed, I think, those Gentlemen (with all their Heat against *Christianity*) have hitherto been *so prudent, and so just to themselves*, as never to venture solemnly to call any of these matters into question: Nor do I believe, that any of them will ever think

it worth their while so to do. Especially, since there is so profound a silence as to these Points, amongst all the more antient Enemies of the *Christian Religion*; none of whom (that I could ever hear of) made the least doubt, whether Circumstances were really so or no.

SECT. XLIII.

NOW the Question which arises here, is this, *viz. Whether some Testimony concerning Matter of Fact, may not be attended with such Circumstances; that if that Testimony be false, it should be morally impossible, but the Falshood should be discover'd?*

If it be deny'd, that any Testimony of Matter of Fact, may be attended with such Circumstances; then 'tis ask'd, *What there is in the nature of things, according to the present Constitution and Establishment of the World, that should be a Reason, why some Cases of Human Testimony, may not be thus circumstantiated?*

Those that affirm there are such Reasons, are oblig'd to shew them: The *Christians* say, there can be no such.

If it be granted, that some Testimony concerning Matter of Fact, may be attended with such Circumstances, *That if that Testimony be false, it should be morally impossible, but the Falshood should be detected*; then here are these two Questions farther, to which a distinct Answer is requir'd.

First, *What are the Qualifications or Conditions necessary, to render a Testimony such, as is here spoken of?*

Secondly,

Secondly, *What does this particular Testimony, concerning the* Resurrection of Jesus Christ, *want of those necessary Conditions or Qualifications?* If it wants any, shew what they are; if it does not, then assign some Reason, why you believe, *That there were all the Conditions requisite to render the Discovery of the Fraud morally necessary and certain; and yet that it was not actually discover'd.*

SECT. XLIV.

IN the mean time, depending upon the force of the Circumstances mention'd, we lay down this Conclusion, *viz. That there was in this Case, a Concurrence of all such Circumstances, as are in the nature of the thing, necessary and conducible, to the laying of a Cheat open to the World; and not only so, but they were such, as would have render'd the Discovery of the Fraud unavoidable, if there had been any to be discover'd.* And we are the more confirm'd in this Conclusion, upon these two Accounts.

First, Because the common and constant Experience of the World shews, *That fraudulent Intrigues and Cheats, are actually discover'd, in Cases, where the Advantages for laying them open, bear no proportion to what we find in the Case of our Saviour's* Resurrection.

Secondly, Because *the* Deists *cannot give an Instance of an* Imposture, *set afoot in any Age of the World, and attended with Circumstances of equal Moment to these, which ever yet scap'd being discover'd.*

So that the Result of the Argument, amounts to thus much.

First, That there is the *highest Degree of Moral Impossibility*, that the Testimony given by the Apostles, concerning the *Resurrection of Christ*, should have been a false one.

Now what grounds we have, for security in all Cases of this nature, where we argue (for example) *that 'tis morally impossible, that such or such a thing should ever be, or come to pass*; has been abundantly shewn, at PROP. II. Part II. to which I refer. And therefore, the stress of the Argument resting mainly there, I am under no doubt at all, of the intrinsick Goodness and Sufficiency of it. Nor indeed is there room left for any other Dispute in the Case; than *whether Mankind be led by such and such Principles, or be govern'd by such and such Laws, when they act as reasonable and sociable Creatures, yea or no?* Which is a Question, that I hope may easily be decided.

Secondly, That since the Reasons (why we assert, it was morally impossible in the highest Degree, that this Testimony should be false) are plainly deduc'd from the very nature of the Case it self, and moreover, back'd with Experience and evident *Matter of Fact*; the *Deists* will be oblig'd to coin a Set of new Principles, in order to give a fair and distinct Answer to what the *Christians* urge upon this Head.

For to do it upon any Principles, hitherto receiv'd amongst Mankind, they'll find not only *Morally*, but *Physically* impossible. And I guess, the difficulty will not be less, for them to invent, and introduce *new Principles* in their stead, such as the World will think fit to submit to. However, what remains for them to do, is either to invent *new Principles*, or else to solve the Business, by those hitherto receiv'd amongst Man-

Mankind: which are Tasks pretty nearly equal to one another.

SECT. XLV.

Thirdly, A Third Topick which the *Christians* argue upon, is, *The Demonstrable Conviction, which the Jewish Nation lay under at that time, that* Jesus Christ *was really risen again.*

The Consequence of this Argument lies here, *viz.* That if a Body of People, who were the Murderers of *Jesus Christ*, and the avow'd Enemies of his Religion; who had so many Reasons to wish he might not rise again; so many Interests concern'd to engage them to hinder Mankind, from believing that he was risen again: And lastly, Who had all Advantages in their hands, that could be desir'd, to inform and assure themselves, whether he was risen again or no: If these Persons gave plain proofs, of their being convicted of the Truth of *Christ's Resurrection*; the rest of Mankind can have no rational pretence, for the least Doubt or Scruple about it. And the Reason is, because no part of Mankind besides, can ever possibly have either the *Motives* or the *Advantages*, for inquring into the matter, that the *Jewish* Nation had. Therefore, their Conviction, is a just Argument to us.

SECT. XLVI.

NOW 'tis easy to shew, upon plain and obvious Principles, *That the* Jews *were infallibly convinc'd of the* Resurrection of Christ.

In order to this, I suppose it will be granted, *That when two Parties of Men stand at the highest degree of Opposition to each other, if the one asserts and publishes a Matter of Fact, which is of the highest Moment, and absolutely destructive of the Interests of the other, and is not so palpably false, as to carry the plain Marks of Spite and Revenge, or study'd Slander and Scandal along with it; that then, if that other Party, upon whom this Charge is made, does not in as solemn and publick manner refute that Charge, or do something in their own Vindication; which in the Judgments of Persons, not biass'd or prejudic'd either way, shall bear some proportion to the Attack made upon them: That then (I say) they tacitly acknowledg the Truth of what the accusing Party alledg against them, and so by Consequence give up the Cause.*

For the reason of this, I refer to what is discours'd at the latter end of PROP. II.

Now the Case lies here: The Writers of the Gospel-History, did in express Terms publish to the World, *That the* Jews *brib'd the Soldiers to report, that the Body of* Jesus Christ *was stolen away by his Disciples.*

This was a home Charge; and such as, if true, shew'd the *Jews* to be the most degenerate Wretches under Heaven.

For here they trampled upon all the Obligations of Conscience and Religion, and set themselves

ſelves to fight againſt Truth, and even againſt God himſelf, that they might carry on their Prejudices againſt *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the *New Religion* inſtituted by him.

Now for the Evangeliſts to record it in their Hiſtory (and that, but a very little Time too, after *Chriſt*'s Death) that the *Jews* were guilty of this horrid and abominable piece of *Forgery and Bribery*; to tell the World, that they acted ſo foul and ſo ſordid a part, as to tamper with the Soldiers, and put them upon ſpreading about a thing, which they knew in their own Hearts to be a notorious Lye: This was to paint them out to the World, in the very worſt Colours that Men could be painted in, and expos'd the Cauſe they maintain'd, as deſperate and forlorn to the laſt degree.

Now that this Charge was neither ſo evidently falſe, as to carry its own refutation along with it, nor yet the Effect of Spleen and Revenge, becauſe the *Jews* had crucify'd *Jeſus Chriſt*; will be apparent to all People, that will but uſe their Underſtandings as they ought to do, in looking over the Circumſtances of the Caſe, and the *Jews* Management upon this Occaſion.

The thing, as recorded by the Hiſtorian *Matthew*, was thus.

The Watch who were ſet to guard the Sepulcher of Chriſt, *being terrify'd by the awful Appearance of an Angel of God, and the Earthquake which attended his Deſcent from Heaven; come into the City, and tell the Chief Prieſts, what things had paſs'd.* Upon this, a Council was immediately call'd, and finding themſelves under a preſſing Neceſſity of ſtopping theſe Soldiers Mouths, they reſolv'd to try the Power of Mony for that purpoſe; the

reaſon of which, in all probability, was becauſe thoſe Men were *Romans:* For otherwiſe, 'tis no Breach of Charity to ſuppoſe, that that Aſſembly could have made bold with the Law of *Moſes*, in a Caſe of Extremity, and found other ways to diſpoſe of Men, that were like to tell dangerous Truth, if they could have ventur'd the *Civil* Conſequences of ſo doing.

However, they propos'd the Reward to them, and told them what they were to do for it: *Say ye, his Diſciples came by Night, and ſtole him away, while we ſlept.* Very odd Directions to be given, by a Council of Doctors, and Heads of the People! Sure they muſt be under ſome terrible Conſternation, and their Wits perfectly confus'd, to put a parcel of Men upon *giving the World a formal Account, of what was done, while they were faſt aſleep!* But if this Advice of theirs was wiſe, that which follow'd next was every whit as honeſt and pious: *And if this come to the Governour's Ears, we will perſuade him, and ſecure you:* That is, do you tell the Lye roundly, and we will juſtify you in it, and back what you ſay; ſo that the Governour, if he ſhould enquire, ſhall be effectually cheated and abus'd, and you come to no manner of Damage. And this (as the Hiſtorian tells us) did the Buſineſs. The Men thus tempted, and thus ſecur'd from Danger, yielded not only to conceal the Truth, but alſo to ſet about a contrary Story: *They took the Mony, and did as they were taught.* Nor was it any wonder, that People of their Profeſſion ſhould be charm'd with a large Bribe, eſpecially being wheedled by an Aſſembly of grave and learned Men; who would ſay a thouſand things to them (and it being in their own Defence, to be ſure they did) to work off the Apprehenſions they

they had conceiv'd, upon the ſurprizing things they ſaw at the Sepulcher.

This is the Account of the Matter: And therefore the next thing to be enquir'd into, is, *What Defence the* Jews *made, againſt this heavy Charge.*

Any indifferent Perſon, that ſhould hear the Caſe, would conclude no leſs, than that the whole Nation (a People that prided themſelves in Character, ſo much as they did) ſhould have been in a Tumult upon it: At leaſt, that the Chief Prieſts and Fathers of *Iſrael*, ſhould have exerted themſelves after ſome very extraordinary manner, to clear themſelves of this Aſperſion; being the Perſons who ſuffer'd moſt deeply by it.

And certainly, there were very valuable Reaſons for their ſo doing. For, beſides that their Cauſe and Religion lay at ſtake, and this Account of their Proceedings was ſure to be publiſh'd thro the World, and tranſmitted even to the lateſt Poſterity; the Party which made this Aſſault upon them, was too conſiderable to be deſpis'd, and not counted worthy of an Anſwer; tho at the ſame time, neither their *Principles*, nor their *Circumſtances* in the World, were ſuch, as could ſtrike their Adverſaries with any dread or fear of them; ſo that they ſhould forbear doing themſelves Juſtice upon that ſcore.

One would expect therefore to have heard, that the *Chriſtians* were ſolemnly call'd to an Account, for this provoking piece of Hiſtory: That they were challeng'd to make it good, with all that Zeal and Concern, which injur'd Innocence, in a People of ſuch Reſentments as the *Jews* were, would naturally have inſpir'd: That Perſons and Records were appeal'd to and examin'd,

examin'd, and the matter preſs'd ſo cloſe, that the *Chriſtians* ſhould have been oblig'd to make out to the World, what Grounds they had for affirming ſuch a thing. Such ſtirring, and ſuch endeavours as theſe, would have been but what the Caſe well deſerv'd, to have had beſtow'd upon it. But inſtead of this, alas! what do we find? The *Jews* contented themſelves with private tattle, and thought it enough to ſet that Story about, which the Council had before extorted from the Soldiers. This Saying (ſays the Hiſtorian) *is commonly reported amongſt the* Jews *until this Day*. It went about from one to another amongſt themſelves; but they never offer'd to make the leaſt ſtep, towards bringing the Cauſe in queſtion, upon the publick Stage. And what ſignifies tatling to the Conviction of Mankind, where examining and proving are the things requir'd? To what purpoſe is ſpreading a Report, and teaching People privately what they ſhould believe; when a Cauſe lies at ſtake, and muſt ſink for ever, without ſome very extraordinary Defence? Men don't uſe to take up with ſuch Methods as theſe, when they have evident Truth of their ſide; nor they don't uſe to ſuffer ſuch Attacks, in Matters of ſuch Conſequence, without making another ſort of Oppoſition, than ever the *Jews* thought fit to do in this Affair.

And therefore, we conclude, *That they were conſcious to themſelves, of the Truth of the Charge, and knew that they had brib'd the Soldiers to make that Report.*

And conſequently, *That they were fully ſatisfy'd, that* Jeſus Chriſt *was indeed riſen; otherwiſe they had not offer'd Bribes to conceal it.*

Nor indeed can any Man (that does but allow himſelf to think, what Motives and Principles Man-

Mankind are govern'd by, and how things are always manag'd in Cases of the like nature) ever bring himself to believe, but *that the* Jews *would in some signal manner have vindicated themselves in a Point of this Importance, upon which the whole stress of the Controversy lay; if they had not procur'd that egregious piece of Forgery, and known it very easy to be prov'd upon them.*

SECT. XLVII.

BUT then there is another thing, which plainly shews likewise, that they were Self-condemn'd; and that is, the *way in which they always manag'd the Controversy with the* Christians.

And he that shall but take the Pains, to compare their way of opposing *Christianity*, with the Apostles Method of propagating it; will surely see the Signs of a very bad Cause in all their Proceedings, if he has any Eyes at all.

The *Apostles* deliver'd their Message in very plain and simple Terms; they told the World what Authority they had to deliver that Message, and put every body upon searching and enquiring into the Grounds and Reasons of what they said. The *Jews* (who had the Writings of *Moses and the Prophets* in their hands, which they firmly believ'd to be all of Divine Inspiration) they exhorted, to a careful and serious perusal of those Writings; that they might assure themselves, whether those things which they testify'd of *Jesus Christ*, were agreeable to the Scope and Tenour of them or no. As for the rest of the World, who pretended to no *written or positive Revelation*, of God's Mind and Will;

Will; they put them upon using their *Reason* and their *Senses*, as Men ought to do, in order to their being convinc'd of the Truth of any Doctrine. And for that end, *they inform'd them of all Circumstances* that were any way necessary for their Conviction, in this particular Case; giving such exact and punctual Accounts of things, as could not be imagin'd to be given by any, but Men who were sure they had Truth on their side. And all this they did, in so *candid, meek, and good-natur'd a way*, with so much Tenderness and Forbearance towards their Enemies, temper'd with a just Zeal and Concern for the Cause which they maintain'd; that their Management, *tho without the least shews of Art and Affectation*, could not but be very agreeable to all Persons, who propos'd to themselves, to consider things, with sober and unprejudic'd Judgment.

The *Jews* took a Course, which was just the Reverse of this. They run out into Heat and Passion, and instead of Argument, threw dirt at the Apostles. For all the good and mild Treatment which they had from them, they could never find in their hearts to make any other return, than Slander and Reproach. They stigmatiz'd them with the infamous Names of *pestilent Fellows, Ringleaders of Sedition, Men that turn'd the World up-side-down, and were Enemies to* Cæsar *and his Government*. And these Notions they buzz'd into the Ears of the Magistrates, and great Men; nay, and into the Ears of the common People too, in all Places where the Apostles came to preach the Gospel. So that sometimes whole Cities were up in Arms against them, and Mobbs (consisting of the *leudest and most profligate* Wretches, that could be got together) were

were rais'd upon them, and inflam'd to the highest Degree; even to the assaulting the Houses where the Apostles had taken shelter, and lying in wait for them, in order to execute the Revenge of those, who had set them a-work. And as the *Jews* labour'd hard, to get their very Lives (which they would have been glad to have purchas'd at any rate whatsoever) so they many times did prevail so far, as to get them thrust into *Stocks and Prisons*, and sent out of Towns with Disgrace; with many other such little effects of Spleen and Malice, as they had Power to bring about.

Now what was all this a sign of, but, *That they were conscious to themselves, that the Apostles were not to be born down in their Testimony, by any other Methods, than those of Fury and Violence?* For do such Proceedings as these, so void of all common Justice and Humanity, look with any face of Truth or Innocence? Was that the right way to confute the *Christian Religion*, to arm the Rabble against it; to provide Whips and Shackles for the Preachers of it, and represent them as Traitors and Enemies to the State? To set up a loud Cry, *These Men are Rebels against* Cæsar, *and the Roman Government is in Danger by them*; and then lash and persecute them upon that imaginary Hypothesis? Who would ever think, that this should be a proper Course, to stop the Progress of a Doctrine, that came with such good Testimonials into the World? That Railing and Scolding, that Outrage and Tumult, should ever persuade any thoughtful Man, that the *Jews* were in the Right, and the Apostles in the Wrong, in what they maintain'd? Certainly, as Persecution can never convince any By-stander, of the Merits a Cause, except it be

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an abſolute Bigot (that is one, *who having quitted all Pretenſions to ſee and underſtand for himſelf, has left it to other People to do both for him)* ſo neither can it ever ſerve inſtead of Reaſon, to thoſe Perſons themſelves, who ſuffer under it. For *Fleſh* and *Mind* are two very different things; and tho Blows will make Impreſſions on the former, yet no Man can be beaten into a new *Scheme of Thoughts.*

The Underſtanding is not temper'd to be wrought on by Arguments of *Wood and Steel*; nor will *Fire* melt down an Opinion, which challenges a Trial by fair and rational Methods. And therefore, thoſe who go that way to work, don't ſo much as pretend to treat Mankind as reaſonable Creatures; but deal with them as *mere Machines*, that are to be govern'd only by rude Force and Impulſe.

And what Credit this is to a Cauſe, all the World will eaſily judg. 'Tis ſo irrational and abſurd, in the nature of the thing, and ſo contrary to all the uſual procedures of Mankind, that have Truth and right Reaſon of their ſide; that unleſs a Man be ſtrangely biaſs'd, he cannot forbear ſuſpecting Falſhood and Impoſture, where he ſees ſuch Courſes taken. And for this Reaſon, we ſay, that the *Jews*, who carry'd matters to ſuch an extravagant height, ſometimes by open, and ſometimes by clandeſtine Management, and under all the Opportunities and Provocations they had to the contrary, would never bring the great Point in Diſpute to any other Iſſue; *gave evident Proofs of a bad Cauſe*, and ſhew'd there was ſome grand Truth ſpoken by the Apoſtles, which they were afraid the World ſhould believe.

SECT.

SECT. XLVIII.

Fourthly, THE *Christians* argue farther, *That it must needs be, that* Jesus Christ *was miraculously rais'd from the Dead; since it is so very plain and evident, from all the allow'd Circumstances of the Case, that there could be no fraud or trick, in conveying his Body away.*

We shall do well to bestow some Time, in a critical and rigorous Examination of this Argument; and the rather, because the *Deists* content themselves with making use of the same slender Artifice, which the *Jews* contriv'd to their hands, so many Ages ago; I mean *chatting and talking,* that the Body of *Jesus Christ* was stolen away by his Disciples. This is the general Cry of all these People; and 'tis the first Word that is put into the Mouth of a *young Deist,* by those that have the Charge of his Education. *Christ Jesus never rose again* —— *'Tis all a Cheat* —— *The Disciples carry'd off his Body, and then publish'd to the World, that he was risen again* —— *And all this in order to the carrying on their own secular Designs.* At this rate, are they taught to open against *Christianity,* at their first setting out, into the *World of Reason and Free-Thinking.* Now, tho I propose to argue upon the matter, by and by; yet at present I'll make a stand, with this Question to these Gentlemen, *viz. How they come to know, or by what means they will prove, that any Fraud of this nature was really transacted, with respect to the Body of* Jesus Christ?

They affirm it, and it is but fair for other People to demand the Proof of it. They'll not take

take any thing *gratis dictum* from the *Christians*. Why ſhould the *Chriſtians* take any thing from them, upon thoſe Terms? If one ſide muſt have Reaſon, why ſhould not the other? Beſides, the Character of *rational and free-thinking Men*, which they ſo liberally aſſume to themſelves, obliges them to ſhew ſome Grounds for what they aſſert: And they can't come off without doing it, as other People may, whoſe Minds are ill turn'd by Education, or cramp'd with Bigotry and Superſtition.

We ask therefore, *How they make out the Point, which they aſſert with ſo much Confidence?* Have *They*, or the *Jews* (for *Jews* and *Deiſts* are all one in this Cauſe, whatever other Differences there are between them) any authentick Records, any Proofs from allow'd and genuine Antiquity; to ſhew the Truth of what they ſay? Or can they demonſtrate it, in the ſtricteſt Senſe of that Word; without having recourſe to any thing of *Moral Evidence?* I am apt to believe, that Teſtimony will do them the moſt Service upon this Occaſion; tho we ſhall be contented with *Moral*, *Metaphyſical*, *Mathematical*, or any Proof; provided we have any at all that's fit to be heard. I declare, that I never heard of any thing offer'd by them for this purpoſe, *that could, with the moſt liberal and indulgent Conceſſions, poſſible to be made within the Limits of rank Abſurdity, ever pretend to pass for a Proof.* And that we may not miſtake one another, nor blunder the Cauſe, upon the *Notion of Abſurdity*; I declare likewiſe, that by *Abſurdity*, I mean nothing elſe, but what the general Senſe of Mankind votes to be ſo, *and what the* Deiſts *themſelves ſtatedly call and allow to be ſo, in all Caſes, except where Religion is concerned.* By this Rule, let it be

be try'd, whether they have any thing to offer, fit to persuade a reasonable Creature, *of the Reality of that Fraud*, which they assert (and breed up their *Pupils* in the Belief of) with as much assurance, as if they had stood by and actually seen it committed. But if it be found, that they have no sufficient Grounds to bear them out, in this matter, the Question is, *On which side does the Knavery lie?* Is not this tricking and imposing upon Mankind, to tell a precarious Story, in as solemn and magisterial a way, as if it were a demonstrable Truth? To talk upon a Subject as dogmatically, as if they could make it out *by Lines and Figures*; and after all, have nothing to alledg (when the matter comes to be fairly inquir'd into) but some poor *Hypothesis*, or some random Guesses and Conjectures of their own, which a sensible Man could not hear without Indignation: This, I think, must be call'd deluding Mankind. Yet by such Arts as these, has the Cause of *Deism* been all along carry'd on in the World: Or if it has not, and the Patrons of it are sure I slander it in saying so, they'll do well to bring their best Evidences in Vindication of it.

In the mean time, I shall propose, what is urg'd by the *Christians*, upon this Head, which we have under Consideration at present.

SECT. XLIX.

TO shew therefore, *That there was not, nor could not be any kind of Fraud or underhand Management in this Affair; but that this is all the mere arbitrary and ridiculous Clamour of a Party of*

Men, whose Case is such, that they are bound not to consult either Truth or Probability, in what they assert in their own Defence: I say, in order to the evincing of this, there are several things to be consider'd; which relate, First, *To the* Jews: Secondly, *To the Disciples of* Jesus Christ *themselves.*

First of all, with respect to the *Jews.*

'Tis plain, that they cut themselves off from all manner of Pretensions, to object against the *Truth of Christ's Resurrection*; by the exact Care they took beforehand, to prevent any Fraud or Cheat.

For the Great Men of the Nation, that had been concern'd in the Death of our Saviour, went in a Body to the *Roman* Governour; and told him, that *Jesus Christ* having signify'd in his Life-time, that he should *rise again*, it would be necessary to make all things as secure as possibly could be, by sealing up the Tomb, and placing a strong Guard about it. This the forementioned Historian, St. *Matthew*, records particularly: —— *The next Day* (says he) *that follow'd the Day of the Preparation, the Chief Priests and Pharisees came together unto* Pilate. And the Speech they made to him, was very remarkable, for the mighty Concern, it shew'd they were under, about this Matter. —— *Sir, we remember, that that Deceiver said, while he was yet alive, after three Days I will rise again.* —— *Command therefore, that the Sepulcher be made sure until the third Day, lest his Disciples come by Night, and steal him away, and say unto the People, he is risen from the Dead; so the last Error shall be worse than the first.*

We find they own here, in as plain and express Terms as can be, not only that our Saviour had given them warning of his *Resurrection*, and conse-

consequently prepar'd them for it long beforehand; but also that they were perfectly well aware, from *what Quarter* the Fraud was to be expected, and *what dismal Consequences* would follow upon it, if thro want of due Care, the Disciples should have an Opportunity of bringing it about. Well: the Favour they came to ask of the Governour, is readily granted them; they are left intirely to their own Liberty, to do whatever they think necessary, by way of Precaution, against any Cheat of this nature. Pilate *said unto them, ye have a Watch, go your way, make it as sure as you can. So they went, and made the Sepulcher sure, sealing the Stone, and setting a Watch.*

I believe it was never pretended by any body, that the *Jews* were slander'd by the Writer of this History; and that this Account of their Proceedings, was false in Fact. As for their own parts, *they never offer'd to appeal to the World, of any Abuse in this matter*; any more than in that other Case of *bribing the Soldiers:* And there is no question to be made, but the Reason of their silence, was in both Cases the same. If then it be true in Fact, that they did do thus, *that they made the Sepulcher sure, sealing the Stone, and setting a Watch:* The Question is, What have they to complain of? What have they to object, or raise a Difficulty upon? Was not every thing of their own doing, and therefore done to their compleat Satisfaction? Did the Governour snub them, or oppose their Design? Did they want Power to command a Watch? Did they want Mony to hearten them, to the most exact and punctual Discharge of their Duty? Did they want Malice to *Jesus Christ*, that a Man should imagine them to be remiss and cool, in such an

Affair upon that ſcore? How ſtrict and ſevere a Charge, would they certainly give thoſe Men, whom they appointed to the important Work, of guarding the Sepulcher? No Man can doubt, but the utmoſt Power of Words, in *Promiſes, Threatnings, and the moſt ſolemn Adjurations poſſible*, was employ'd and made uſe of on that occaſion; both to ſtrike them with a deep Senſe of the weight of the Buſineſs committed to them, and to engage them to be diligent.

So that the Matter reſts here.

The *Jews* had *Power and Authority*, they had *Malice and Deſire*, they had all the *Reaſons and Obligations*, that could poſſibly be incumbent on Men; to prevent this Trick, of ſtealing away the Body of *Jeſus Chriſt*. And therefore, I ſay, *Either they took ſuch Care to prevent it, that it ſhould be impoſſible, for any Human Art or Induſtry, to accompliſh ſuch a Piece of Fraud, or they did not.*

If they did not, I ask, Why they did not? What hinder'd them? What Reaſon is to be given, for their Neglect to do ſo; when *Opportunity, Intereſt and Inclination*, all conſpir'd to ingage them to it?

If they did, (and ſure it was very poſſible for them to do it) then why ſhould not their Mouths have been for ever ſtop'd? With what Face could they pretend, to diſpute a thing; which the utmoſt Power and Wit of Man, had laid the moſt effectual Bar againſt, that could be; and therefore, could not be brought about, but by the miraculous Power of Almighty God? Certainly, they ought to have acknowledg'd an Interpoſition of Divine Providence in the Caſe. For Men may be ſure (if they will) of Effects, that are altogether within their own Reach and

and Command: and when they know, they have done all that Men can do, and find just the contrary to what they resolve upon, and must have come to pass according to the ordinary Course of things; 'tis a daring piece of Insolence, not to acknowledg the Agency of a superior Cause.

However, there is nothing more evident, than that they have left themselves no room, nor shadow of Pretence, to object against the *Truth of Christ's Righteousness*. And therefore, this shews the horrid Aggravation of their Sin; when in spite of all this Conviction of their own Consciences, attesting what they had done themselves, and what so many Tongues proclaim'd about them, the Veracity of which they could not call in question; they should yet offer, to debauch a parcel of Men, into a Consent, to spread about such a Report as this, *that the Body of* Jesus *was stolen away, by his Disciples, while they slept.*

But the *Christians* have so much Charity for them, as to hope, that the Blood of that *Jesus*, on whom they have endeavour'd to fix this Reproach, will avail, to the making an Atonement, even for this Sin also.

SECT. L.

AND thus we see, that by all the Laws of *common Justice, Truth, and right Reason*, the *Jews* are excluded, from all concern in the present Argument.

That is, they have no Right nor Claim to be heard in the Case. No Exception ever made by them, or any of their Forefathers, since the Time of *Christ*'s Death; ought to be allow'd

the Privilege of common Attention or Consideration: and that for the Reasons I have alledg'd. Nor indeed was it ever known or heard, *That where Men had an absolute uncontroulable Power, of making whatsoever Provisions they should think fit, against a Case, as the* Jews *had; they should ever be indulg'd a Liberty of arguing and pleading in that Case afterwards, or suffer'd to pass this, for an Excuse, upon Mankind, that they had not done what they should have done, in order to the making all things sure on their own side.*

What has been said, affects our modern Unbelievers no less than the others. For if the *Jews* must be utterly silent in this Cause, to what purpose should they undertake the Argument? Do they think, they could have taken more sure and effectual Courses, in order to the Discovery of the Imposture, than what the *Jews* actually did? Certainly, unless they can give some very substantial Reasons to persuade the World, that if they had been the Managers of that Affair, they would have us'd better Methods for the preventing this Fraud, than those most inveterate Enemies of *Christ Jesus* ever thought of, or could put in practice; 'tis evident, that they cannot object any thing of that kind, with a better *Face of Modesty and good Sense*, than the *Jews* themselves.

SECT. LI.

BUT we shall consider now, Secondly, *Some Circumstances relating to the Disciples of* Jesus Christ: and see what Reasons arise from thence, to convince every Man, who is dispos'd to think calmly

calmly and impartially of the Matter; that they were not, nor could not be concern'd, in so vile and horrible a piece of Fraud as this.

And, First, we say, *They could not have accomplish'd it, if they had been so wicked as to design and contrive it.* And the reason is, Because *there were such Precautions taken against their doing so, as render'd it impossible:* Impossible, either to open Force and Violence, or to any clandestine Arts and Treachery. The *Jews* would no more have left things at such an uncertain rate, that any thing the Disciples were able to do, should have depriv'd them of the Body of *Jesus Christ*; than they would have set their Hands to the Subversion of their own Religion and Laws, and the establishing of *Christianity* in its stead. For they had reason enough to believe, that this would be the Effect of it, if a firm persuasion of *Christ*'s being risen from the Dead, should once come to obtain generally in the World. Because this would make all Men see, that a Religion introduc'd by so strange and surprizing an Event, must needs be of God: And therefore, that whatever Manifestations of himself, he might before-times have made, either to the *Jews*, or any other People upon Earth, signifying in what manner he would be worship'd by them for a Season; yet this new and solemn Discovery of his Mind and Will, would undoubtedly ingage the devout Attention of Mankind to it, and determine them to worship and serve him in that way, which he had therein reveal'd. And this the Chief Priests were sensible of, when they told *Pilate*, *That the latter Error would be worse than the first.* And for that very Reason, I say, they would not fail to make it impossible for the Disciples of *Christ*, or any employ'd by them,

to put any ſuch Trick as this upon their Nation and Religion.

SECT. LII.

THE *Story of carrying off the Body of* Jeſus Chriſt, *while the Watch was aſleep, is ſo very groſs, that it will ſcarce bear a telling:* And thoſe that do it in good earneſt, and hope at the ſame time to be believ'd; muſt either have a very little Opinion of the Senſe of thoſe they talk to, or a very great one, of their own Credit with Mankind.

Let us conſider the Matter a little: The Diſciples did this, while the Men were aſleep!

And how then did the Trick come to be known? Did the Diſciples tell it themſelves? Or were the Guard conſcious of what paſs'd in their *Sleep?* 'Tis not common for Men to be ſo. Moſt People need to be inform'd by others, who are *awake*, what is done by this or that Perſon, at a time when their own Senſes cannot give them an account of it. But theſe Men affirm poſitively what is done, and by whom; when at the ſame time, by their own Confeſſion, they were in their Midnight Dreams. This is very odd! Nor could they ever have known it, if they had not firſt conſulted the Chief Prieſts and Phariſees. And 'tis a marvel, that the Wit of a whole *Sanhedrim* could not invent ſomething for Men to ſay, that ſhould at leaſt have reſembl'd Truth, a little more than this Account does. In ſhort, whether one ſuppoſes the Watch to have been aſleep or awake, while this thing was done, a Man ſees nothing but a wide Field of Nonſenſe, and ridiculous

diculous Consequences before him: such, that I'll venture to say, that he that is not lost in it, must have been well us'd to such sort of way before. I am weary with arguing upon such Trifles. The Subject is grave and serious; and the ludicrous Impertinences of this Objection, apt to force a Man into an Air of talking, that may not be so sutable to the Seriousness of it; or at least incline him to insist on some vulgar things, which tho very true, and very good circumstantial Evidences, may yet make it look little and despicable to its Enemies. 'Tis sufficient, that the Story is such, as presently discovers it self, and shews a Man at first View, a bare face of Absurdity, without putting him to the trouble of a long Chain of Argument to find it out.

SECT. LIII.

BUT Secondly, *Had the Disciples been concern'd in so vile a piece of Imposture, with what Spirit or Courage, could they ever have enter'd upon so solemn and publick Ministry, as they afterwards did enter upon?*

How could they ever preach Remission of Sins, and Everlasting Life, in the Name of a Person; who instead of rising again, and enduing them with Grace and Power for so arduous an Undertaking, had left his Body to be convey'd away by base and mean Arts of their Contrivance? They must know perfectly well, that as he could not deliver himself from Death at first (for if he was an Impostor, to be sure he would have done it if he could) nor yet conquer it afterwards by

by a *Resurrection*; so he was not a proper Person for them to expect any *Assistance* from. If he could not save himself, how should he be a Saviour to them and others? How should he ever protect them from the Power and Malice of the World, and carry them safe thro all Enemies and Dangers, to a blissful State in the next Life, who had left them so miserable and destitute here? Much less could they ever hope for any Countenance from Heaven; or to have the *Assistance of the Divine Spirit* to work Signs and Wonders, while they were propagating a notorious Cheat. They might have justly fear'd, to be overtaken by the *Divine Vengeance*, every step they took in such a Business; but (with the utmost Presumption Mankind can be guilty of) they could never expect *Divine Supports* and Consolations. From the World they had nothing but Shame and Contempt, Persecution and Distress, and all these in the highest degree, to expect. For as they preach'd a most amazing and ungrateful Doctrine, and came all unpolish'd to the Work, having nothing to fix the Attention, or attract the Esteem of Mankind; so they could neither hope to make Converts, nor meet with any good Quarter where they went. And therefore, they were of all Men in the World, the most forlorn and miserable. They had neither Heaven nor Earth on their side; but both engag'd against them. All the ill Usage that could be in this World, and severe Punishments in the next, for their horrible Profanation of the sacred Name of God, in declaring he sent them to publish this Imposture; was all that they could have a Prospect of. And therefore, being destitute of all Motives, that could possibly encourage them to such an Undertaking, as preaching the Gospel;

Gospel; I say, they would never have gone about it, but the whole Design had drop'd, and the World never heard of the *Christian Faith*. But they did do it, and that with indefatigable Zeal and Industry; with a Spirit, *far transcending all that ever was known in Human Nature before*: Such as knew no Baulk nor Despondency, no Wearinesſ nor Remission; but held it out thorow all Storms, and was even wrought up to greater Heights, by Persecution it self. And a Man may with as much Reputation to his Sense and Understanding, affirm the grossest and most palpable Contradictions in Nature; as that Men who were conscious to themselves of so vile a Cheat, should ever manage things after this manner *.

SECT. LIV.

Thirdly, *As they could not, nor would not have any personal immediate Concern, in so abominable an Enterprize; so neither would they engage, or would any other Persons be engag'd by them therein.*

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* *This wonderful Spirit of Courage and Resolution, appear'd in the Sufferings of the* Christians, *after the Apostles Time: of which there are many surprizing Instances on Record.*

Ὑπομένομεν τὰς ἐσχάτας τιμωρίας, καὶ θανατούμεθα χαίρομεν. Just. Mart. Dial. cum Tryph.

And Eusebius *tells us they did* — μετὰ χαρᾶς καὶ γέλωτος καὶ εὐφροσύνης τοῦ υἱάτου ὑπόφασιν τοῦ θανάτου καταδέχεσθαι. Hist. Eccles. Lib. 8. c. 9.

—*That they were wont*, Εἰς αὐτοῦ τὴν τελευταίαν ἀναπνοὴν, τὸ ἄλυπον καὶ ἀτάραχον καὶ ἀπτόητον διατήρειν χαρτερίαν, ὥστε ψάλλειν καὶ ὕμνους καὶ εὐχαριστίας εἰς τὸν τῶν ὅλων Θεὸν ἀναπέμπειν. Id. Loc. citat.

Let

Let us put the Case for Argument sake, and see what common Sense will allow a Man to suppose to be done, by Persons in their Circumstances, with respect to this matter. For we must not make ridiculous and extravagant suppositions, and fancy the Apostles to do what Men in their right Wits never did, or would do in the like Case; and then go and argue to the Disadvantage of the *Christian Cause*, from those unjust and chimerical suppositions of our own making.

Now the true State of the Case is thus:

Here was a small number of Men, who having closely adher'd to Jesus Christ *(whom the* Jews *had crucify'd) and professing to live after his Laws; had render'd themselves obnoxious to the same Ill-will and Resentments, which had appear'd so remarkably against their Master.*

They were poor, and could give no Bribes.

They could make no tempting Promises to allure Men into their Interest, having nothing but Ruin and Misery before them.

But besides, common Prudence it self would never have suffer'd them to trust any body with this important Secret. For whoever they should have made so infamous a Proposal to, as that *of stealing away the Body of* Jesus Christ; would either out of *pure detestation of so gross a Villany*; or to *curry Favour with the* Jews, *by so signal a piece of Service done to their Cause*; or lastly, *out of hope of some very great Reward*, for the Discovery of a Plot of such Consequence as this: for one, or other of these Reasons, I say, would infallibly have divulg'd the matter. If they were Persons of Probity, their Abhorrence of so foul a Crime, would have made them do it: If not, the Prospect of certain Gain and Advantage, would

would have charm'd them to the Discovery. From the Apostles they could expect nothing; from the *Jews* they might expect every thing, that could be a Temptation to Mankind. They had no imaginable Motives, to persuade them to keep the Apostles Counsel; but they had Reputation, Applause and Rewards from the *Jews*; nay, and a Reward to expect from God too (if they had an Eye to his Glory, and the general Good of Mankind) in the laying open of so vile an Imposture.

How is it credible then, that Men in such Circumstances as the Disciples were, should (if they had attempted it) ever have succeeded in their Attempt, *of engaging a Company of Men in so desperate a Design, as that of stealing the Body of* Jesus Christ? And how is it credible, that any others but Men, who were desperate and mad even to Extremity; should ever engage themselves in it, under all the Precautions taken by the *Jews*, to frustrate their Attempts; and the many Arguments arising both from *Sense and Reason*, to dissuade them from it? And supposing a Set of such Wretches could have been got ready, and ty'd fast to the Undertaking; yet how is it credible, that they should be able to break thorow all the Obstacles, which the *Power and Policy of the* Jewish *Nation had laid in their way?* In a word, what is there in this whole *Hypothesis*, that is credible; according to the common Rules and Measures of Credibility amongst Men?

Let us bring the Case down to plain *Fact and Experience* in the World; and see where any Attempt *of this kind*, by *such Persons*, and in *such Circumstances*, was ever accomplish'd and brought to Perfection. Nay, let us but find out, where

there

there are a Set of Men, whose Heads are turn'd after such a manner; that they can heartily believe, that such an Exploit as this, was ever to be perform'd by Men in the Condition of *Christ*'s Disciples; in opposition to all the Efforts of a forewarn'd, malicious, potent, watchful Nation of Adversaries, whose Interest, Temper, Policy, and Religion, all oblig'd them to prevent it.

But I shall close this Argument, with one Question to the unbelieving People; which being a Question of Fact, and of modern Fact too, pretty notorious and very pertinent to our purpose; it will deserve the more Consideration.

They know very well, that in a certain Country, not many Years ago, there were a Set of Men, who pretended to the Gift of *Prophecy*, *and Divine Inspiration*; and accordingly gave out many Speeches and Warnings, which they declar'd were from God.

They remember also, that one of this Number *dying*, it was given out by the rest of the *Sect*, that he would *rise again*. And this was done with such an Air of Confidence and Assurance, that no little Commotion was rais'd in a great City by that means.

I need not say what the *Event* was, after prudent Care was taken, to prevent foul play; and matters were order'd so, that if the defunct Person did quit his Grave, at the appointed Time, it should appear to all the World, to be a true and real *Resurrection*, and that the Voice of the *Omnipotent* had indeed call'd him from thence. But after all, suppose it had been pretended by the People of this *Sect*, that their *Fellow-Prophet* did in truth rise from the Dead, on the Day that was set: That the Power of Almighty God had exerted

exerted it self on their behalf, and given full Testimonials of the Truth of their Mission, by restoring that Person to Life again, whom so many Eyes had seen truly and really dead but a little before. And put the Case, *That this Story had been propagated with such Success, that there were Reasons to fear, lest a good part of the Country should by Degrees be proselyted over to the Belief of it, and so great Changes and Confusions in the Publick arise there-from:*

I would ask these Gentlemen, *What Course they themselves, being upon the Spot, would have taken, in order to their being compleatly satisfy'd of the Right of this Matter? And whether they don't believe they could have come to a final positive Conclusion about it, one way or other; after such Search and Application for that End, as the World would expect from Men, who set up for the nicest Judges of Truth and right Reason?*

I believe they'll take the wisest and most prudent part of the Answer (which is the *affirmative)* and allow, that it was very possible and practicable for them, to come to such a determinate Resolution, about the Truth of this Case.

Very well then: And why should not People seventeen hundred Years ago, have been as curious and inquisitive, and as well able to satisfy themselves fully about the *Resurrection of Jesus Christ*; as our *Deists* at this time of Day, about the *Resurrection* of this pretended Prophet? They cannot pretend to have either the *Power, or the Opportunity, or the Reasons for enquiring*, which the *Jews* had: And to think that they have better Eyes to see thro an *Imposture*, than the rest of the World, is unsufferable Vanity and Arrogance.

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Had our modern Prophet been convey'd out of his Grave, by any ſlight or trick of his Companions; how warm and eager would theſe Gentlemen have been, in the purſuit of them, when they had once ſcented the matter! They would not have been diverted by frivolous Stories and Pretences; they would not have been ſatisfy'd with groundleſs and precarious Reports. But having begun the Chace, they would have held it on, till they had run the Impoſtors down, and laid the Plot open to the World. They would never have contented themſelves with common Story and Fame, *his Companions came by Night, and ſtole him away*; but they would have ſatisfy'd Mankind, that they did ſo; as the *Jews* would have done in the like Caſe, if there had been the ſame Reaſon for it.

And 'tis a wonder to me, theſe Gentlemen ſhould not be ſo civil to the *Jews*, as to believe, that they were both able and willing, to do as much towards the diſcovery of an Impoſture in that Caſe; as themſelves could and would have done, in that we are now ſpeaking of.

I hope they'll allow one of the Perſons to be much more famous and remarkable than the other; and the Conſequence of his *Reſurrection* to be of proportionably greater Moment. So that I can give my ſelf no manner of account, why they ſhould not conclude, *That there was all the Care taken, both to prevent and find out the Cheat, which they themſelves would have taken, had they been upon the Spot; or would have done in this Caſe of the modern Prophet, before they would have been impos'd upon by a new Reſurrection.* If they fancy they have more Wit and Sagacity than the *Jews:* I ſay, tho this be very vain and idle; yet I hope they will not ſet up to rival them, in point

point of Spleen and Malice. And they know very well, that Hatred and Revenge will ſharpen People's Wits, and make up, in many Caſes, for the Defects of Underſtanding. However, the *Jews* were not that ſtupid People, that ſome of theſe Gentlemen have repreſented them to be.

After what has been ſaid upon this *fourth* Head of Argument, I would hope theſe Gentlemen may, upon cool Thoughts, find it reaſonable to make leſs Noiſe about *Frauds* and *Impoſtures*, and other ſtrange things, commonly talk'd of amongſt them: which having never made any attempt at proving, or ſhewing how it was ſo much as probable they ſhould be brought about; we muſt conclude the Deſign of it, is either to amuſe People with ſome ſhew of Objections againſt *Chriſtianity*; or elſe purely to make an Experiment, how far the Credit of their Word will go amongſt Mankind inſtead of Demonſtration.

SECT. LV.

Fifthly, AND Laſtly, *The horrid and intolerable Abſurdities, conſequent upon the Suppoſition, that* Chriſt Jeſus *did not riſe from the Dead; ſhall cloſe the Proof offer'd on the ſide of the* Chriſtians, *to evince the Truth of it.*

I have ſhewn already at PROP. VI. Part II. that Abſurdities of the *Moral* Kind, are in the nature of things, worſe and more wretched than any that relate to matters of *Science*; and therefore, that it is not only fair and juſt, to pronounce that Propoſition falſe, from whence ſuch manifeſt Impoſſibilities are legitimately infer'd;

but alſo, that the Caſe is much worſe, for a Man to be reduc'd and driven to a Neceſſity of ſtanding by them, than to be forc'd to the like Extremity, in the courſe of any other ſort of Argument whatſoever.

Let us ſee therefore, what a Man muſt be oblig'd to believe, who makes this Doctrine of *Chriſt's Reſurrection*, to be all Cheat and Deluſion.

He muſt believe——

That a deſpicable Company of wilful *Impoſtors* and Deceivers, Men of a hated Nation and Religion, without Learning and Diſcipline, without Skill and Experience, without any of the Arts of pleaſing and recommending themſelves to Mankind, ſhould run down all the Wit, and Power, and Policy of the World; and preaching a moſt deſpiſed, incredible, and ſeemingly ridiculous Doctrine, directly contrary to all the worldly Intereſts and Humours of Men, to their Religion and Cuſtoms, and to their Reaſon and Philoſophy too; ſhould propagate the Belief of it * *far and wide thro the Earth*, ſo that there was ſcarce a Nation in the whole Compaſs of

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* Οὐδὲ ἕν γὲ ὅλως ἐστὶ τὸ γένος ἀνθρώπων, εἴτε βαρβάρων, εἴτε ἑλλήνων, εἴτε ἁπλῶς ὁτινοῦν ἐνόμαζε προσαγορευόμενον, ἐν οἷς μὴ διὰ τε ὀνόματος τε σταυρωθέντος Ἰησοῦ εὐχαὶ καὶ εὐχαριστίαι τῷ πάλαι καὶ ποιητῇ τῶν ὅλων γίνονται. Just. Dial. cum Tryph.

Μόνος ἀνὰ πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην χριστὸς ᾠδὴ τοῖς πᾶσι βεβόησται, καὶ τὸ ἐξ αὐτοῦ χριστιανῶν προσηγορίας, τὴν σύμπασαν ἔπλησεν οἰκουμένην. Euſeb. Demonſt. Evang. Lib. 5.

But 'tis endleſs to reckon up the Teſtimonies that might be brought under this Head. 'Tis remarkable, that the Enemies of Chriſtianity *themſelves gave it the Name of the* prevailing Doctrine. *So* Porphyry, *who call'd it ἡ κρατοῦσα διδαχὴ; which (as I remember) is taken notice of by* Euſebius.

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the Globe, but what in whole, or in part, receiv'd this Fiction as the most sacred Truth of God, and laid all the stress of their Salvation upon it accordingly.

Or if he has so much Charity for the Apostles, as not to think them crafty and designing *Impostors*; he must believe that all this was done by *Lunaticks* and *Madmen:* That Men hurry'd by the Impetus of a wild extravagant Fancy, were Masters of all that *Conduct and Management*, that *Argument and Address*, which was requisite to bring these astonishing Effects about. Or if he finds it too hard to suppose, that a Company of distracted Men should ever be able to argue with so much Art and Force, as to overpower all the Wisdom and Learning of the World; then he must think the rest of Mankind who believ'd them, to be mad as well as they: That they were convinc'd and persuaded by mere Enthusiasm, that they mistook downright Raving for the strongest Reason, and a Chain of absurd incoherent Falsities, for bright and evident Demonstrations of Truth: That all the Sages, Statesmen and Philosophers, who embrac'd *Christianity*, in great numbers, as well as the Poor and Illiterate, believ'd they had Proofs which they had not; thought things were plain and clear to them, which were not; fancy'd irresistible Strength, Majesty and Eloquence, in an empty Noise and Sound of Words, made by a Company of poor distemper'd Men, who neither knew nor car'd what they said.

Or Lastly, He must believe,

That the greatest and most remarkable Revolution that the World ever knew or heard of, was effected without either any proper and ne-

ceſſary *Natural* Means, or any *Supernatural* Help and Aſſiſtance.

For all the *Natural* Means that can be thought of, are reducible to the Heads of *Compulſion*, or *Perſuaſion*; whether by Reaſon and Rhetorick, or Bribes, and other Temptations of that kind. Theſe are all, and the only ways, that Men can make uſe of, to accompliſh any Deſign of this nature. And I challenge all the World to ſhew me in a ſingle Inſtance, which of them all, was made uſe of by the Apoſtles, in the Propagation of the *Chriſtian* Faith.

Then, as for *Supernatural* Aſſiſtances; 'tis paſt all Doubt, that they could have none, even in the Opinion of the *Deiſts* themſelves.

For *God* would not, nor could not afford them any Help; and that, whether they were wilful *Impoſtors*, or mere undeſigning crack-brain'd Enthuſiaſts. For the Work they were engag'd in, being a horrible Cheat upon Mankind in the matters of their Salvation, it would be Blaſphemy, to ſuppoſe him to have concurr'd to the Succeſs of it. And as for *Demons and evil Spirits*, theſe Gentlemen laugh at all the Stories of their Exiſtence and Operations. Magick Arts and Enchantments, Conjuration and Witchcraft, are things quite out of the way of their Belief. And therefore to be ſure, they will not ſo much as ſuſpect there were any Artifices of this kind made uſe of to delude Mens Underſtanding, and ſo help on this ſtupendous Revolution in the World. However, ſince theſe Gentlemen will not hear of Demons in other Caſes; they ſhall not be allow'd to bring them in here, to help at a dead lift, for the Solution of a Difficulty. And if other People muſt be ridicul'd, as credulous ſuperſtitious Fools, for aſſerting upon unanſwerable

ble Testimonies of Fact, Confederacies between such Beings, as evil Spirits and wicked Men in this World; we ought to take care, that they have not the Liberty of supposing any Combinations of that kind, when 'tis only to serve their own Purposes in an Argument. So that here, I say, was the most surprizing Turn that was ever given to the Affairs of the World, given by nothing at all; brought about by no body knows or can guess, or pretend to assign, and determine what it was. Neither Heaven nor Hell was concern'd in the matter. There was nothing in or of Mankind, that can be shewn to be capable of producing such an Effect, according to the ordinary Laws of Nature, and the known Experience of the World.

Neither Wit and Learning, nor Arts and Intrigues, nor Mony and Interest, nor open Force and Violence; and I dare say, these Gentlemen can tell us of no other ways besides these, by which Parties and Factions are ever made in the World.

But we will go on.

The *Deists* must believe farther——

That twelve poor Fishermen were not only able, without any sort of Assistance, to compass that vast Design, of making the World stoop to the Laws they impos'd; but also, that they laid their Plot so deep, that the Effects of it should be permanent and lasting, and no succeeding Age or Generation, ever be able to fathom it, and shew where the Cheat lay. That a Company of rude untaught Mechanicks, out-did the profoundest Wisdom and Sagacity of Mankind; and concerted matters so artfully, that none of all the penetrating and inquisitive Genii of the World, for a Succession of so many Centuries, should after their deepest Researches and

Examinations, find it possible to discover the least Fault or Flaw in the Contrivance.

He must believe——

That these Men had absolutely divested themselves of all the *Principles of Self-love*, Tenderness, Care, and Regard to their own Preservation or Happiness. That they despis'd all the Comforts and Enjoyments of Life. That they ventur'd upon Poverty and Misery, upon Obloquy and Shame, upon Persecution and Torments, upon Death, and Damnation it self in the next World, and all for nothing; for no End or Purpose that can be imagin'd or thought of. That they bid defiance to all that Human Nature can ever dread or shun in this World, without having any Design in view, without being acted by any Motives, or having any Grounds and Reasons for what they did.

For a Design, that bears no proportion to Men's Actions, is no Design at all; just as an Agent or Cause, that is wholly uncapable to produce such or such an Effect, is, with respect to that Effect, no Cause at all. And that is demonstrably the Case here. For 'tis manifest from all the Circumstances of the Matter, that these Persons could have no End in view, that bore any proportion to the Actions they did, or the Dangers they ventur'd upon. Nay, they had none but dark and dismal Prospects before them; and (instead of quickning Motives) they had the greatest Discouragements to Action, that Men could ever possibly lie under.

And therefore there is no Remedy, but we must suppose them to be a sort of Men, specifically distinct from all others in the World; to be made after such a manner, and endow'd with such Tempers and Dispositions, as no other Men besides

besides themselves ever were. Because (as we have shewn PROP. I. and II. Part II.) Mankind are influenc'd by such Motives, as Hope and Fear. They are led by Prospects of Interest, Gain, Honour, or Favour amongst their Fellow-Creatures; or else by Principles of Piety and Devotion; so that what they do, is the Effect either of a superstitious and mistaken, or else of a truly religious Zeal for God.

Whereas all these, are evidently excluded from the present Case; and consequently it must run up to this monstrous Conclusion at last, *viz. That God Almighty had made a Set of preposterous irregular Creatures, fit to carry on a wretched Design in the World, that requir'd something very extraordinary and particular, in the Constitutions of those that were to have the Management of it.* But to go on.

He must believe——

That those very Persons, who but a few Hours before, had so little Spirit and Courage left them, that they forsook their Master in his greatest Extremities; and after all their Protestations of inviolable Constancy and Fidelity to him, were yet so over-power'd by terrible Apprehensions, that they durst not own themselves his Disciples, no nor scarce shew their Heads by Day-light, for fear of the Jews; *that these Men, I say, should all of a sudden grow so resolute, as to venture upon that bold and hazardous Undertaking, of* forcing the Sepulcher, and carrying off his Body.

Nay, that they did not only venture, but did actually do it. And that not a Man of all the Guards, plac'd there by the *Jews*, was ever alarm'd or disturb'd, but slept on securely till the Design was executed; and yet after all, could

tell very punctually when they awak'd, that the Disciples had been there, and stolen the Body away.

He must believe this to be possible and true, or else, that the Guards themselves favour'd the Attempt, and only counterfeited a Sleep, to give the Impostors an Opportunity of finishing what they came about.

He must believe——

That Men thus Rash and Desperate, busied in an Enterprize of so much Danger, and which therefore requir'd all the Expedition and Dispatch possible to be made; would spend precious Time in unaccountable Niceties and Ceremonies, and do such things as could be of no manner of Use or Service to them; but on the other hand, evidently expose them to the Danger of being surpriz'd and caught.

That, instead of taking a dead Body away, wrap'd up and cover'd as they found it, they would first divest it of its Burial-Clothes, and then dispose them in several Parcels by themselves, some in one Place, and some in another; and not rather chuse to carry off all together, as Thieves would infallibly have done, who were in haste, and knew not but the next Minute might bring the Guards about them.

And certainly those Persons, who could have found a safe and private Repository for the Body of *Jesus Christ*, after they had so artfully gotten it out of the Tomb; could also have found a way to dispose of the *Burial-Clothes*, that they might never have been seen more, to discover the Trick: And therefore, infallibly would never have left them where they were actually found.

Lastly, Such a Man must believe——

That a Company of the greatest Impostors that ever the World had, and who therefore, must necessarily be

be the worſt Men that ever were; did notwithſtanding, furniſh Mankind with the moſt exact Syſtem of Morality that ever was; and taught ſuch Rules of Living, as were never to be expected from all the Schools of Philoſophy in the World.

That Men, whoſe only Purpoſe and Deſign was to cheat and abuſe the World, ſhould yet induſtriouſly lay the ſureſt Foundations, for the Peace and Happineſs of it, that ever were or could be laid.

That the vileſt and moſt notorious Hypocrites, would ſpend all their Time, and their very Lives too, in indefatigable Labours, to make other Men upright and ſincere; and tho their whole Buſineſs (upon this *Hypotheſis*) was nothing elſe but Lying and Deceiving, would yet denounce Everlaſting Damnation, and inſiſt upon it, that no leſs than this ſhould be the Puniſhment of all thoſe who allow'd themſelves in ſuch Practices.

That having themſelves no Notions at all of the Great and Glorious God, they ſhould yet impart the moſt rational and becoming Notions of him, to the reſt of Mankind; and by no other Principles but thoſe of pure Atheiſm and Irreligion, kindle a Flame of Deſire in the Hearts of Men, to ſerve and worſhip him.

In a word, that they took infinitely more Pains, to contradict and confute themſelves, nay, to expoſe themſelves to all the World, as the moſt abandon'd Sinners that ever came into it; than they needed to have done, to have eſtabliſh'd the beſt Reputation, and gotten an immortal Fame amongſt Men.

That they compil'd their Syſtem of Religion, as a ſtanding Monument to their own Shame; and that all their Sermons and Writings, were but ſo many Satyrs and Lampoons upon themſelves.

SECT.

SECT. LVI.

NOW *these are some (and but some) of those Extravagancies, which must pass for certain and unquestionable Truths amongst the* Deists.

These are some Articles of their Belief, resulting from their grand *Hypothesis*, of Cheat and Imposture in the Matter of *Christ's Resurrection.*

'Tis true, that by artful and plausible Turns, a *Deist* may seem to avoid the Odium of these Consequences, and make People believe, he is chargeable with no such Absurdities, as we pretend to fasten upon him. This may easily be done, by the Power of Words, which those Gentlemen sometimes make very happy uses of this way. But after all, there is a Right and a Wrong; there is a difference between real Truth, and Sophistry well disguis'd and dress'd up in imitation of it. And the *Former* will stand, in spite of all the false and deluding Appearances of the *Latter.*

And as these Inferences are plain and naked Truth, so I make no doubt, but they will ever be so, to all Men who have no Interest to keep them from owning it.

Coroll. 1. *The* Deists, *by denying the Fact of* Christ's Resurrection, *must believe things, which are, beyond Comparison, more prodigious and incredible, than all that the* Christians *who own and profess the Truth of this Doctrine, are bound to believe, by virtue of such their Profession.*

For

For all that the *Christians* pretend to in the matter, is this, *viz. That* Jesus Christ *having suffer'd an ignominious and painful Death upon the Cross, was on the third Day after, rais'd up again, by the Power of Almighty God; and that having spent some time here on Earth, after his Resurrection, he was then carry'd up into Heaven, by the same Divine Power, where he still resides, being crown'd with Honour and Glory.*

Now I desire to know what there is that can be call'd *incredible* in this Account; what there is, that thwarts any establish'd Law or Principle of Reason, for a Man to believe it? *'Tis not an incredible thing, that God should raise the Dead.* And 'tis not incredible, that he should raise and glorify such a Person as *Jesus Christ*, who had liv'd a perfectly holy and blameless Life, and died a cruel and miserable Death, by the implacable Malice of his Enemies.

'Twas not inconsistent with any of the Divine Perfections, nor is there any Reason possible to be given *à priori*, which should shew that God ought not to have done this: As I have particularly demonstrated before.

So that here is no manner of Absurdity or Inconvenience, consequent upon the Belief and Profession of this *Christian* Doctrine.

But the *Hypothesis* of the *Deists*, is loaded with infinite Absurdities and Contradictions. They must be forc'd, as we have seen already, to make such wretched Suppositions, in order to salve plain and evident Matter of Fact; as are not to be heard and endur'd by any Man, that has the least degree of common Sense; and which they themselves would hoot a Person for making, in any other Case. They are oblig'd to contradict all the *Knowledg and certain Experience* of the World;

to

to fall foul upon all the *Laws of Human Nature*; and make Men to be, and to do ſuch ſort of things, as they never were nor can be, nor never did nor can do, while they continue to be Men. And all this is the natural and genuine Conſequence of their avow'd *Hypotheſis*, without any ſtraining of it, or unfair Management whatſoever. And therefore I infer in the next place,

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SECT. LVII.

Coroll. 2. *THAT all their Pretenſions to juſt and impartial Thinking* (in theſe matters at leaſt) *are vain and idle; that their ſo much boaſted Averſion to all kind of Bigotry and Credulity, is mere Jeſt and Scene; and that they are in reality either ſome of the moſt fondly credulous Perſons in the World, or elſe* (which is infinitely worſe) *wilfully and obſtinately ſet, to overlook Truth which is againſt them.*

For if to be credulous, be to believe the moſt prodigious things, without any ſhew of Reaſon or Proof for them: If it be Bigotry, to take the moſt abſurd and ridiculous Stories for certain Truths, upon the bare Word and Authority of another Perſon, who dictates to a Man's Underſtanding, and ſettles the Articles of his Faith for him: Then are the *Deiſts* fairly chargeable with both theſe, and that in an extraordinary Degree.

The *little People* amongſt them, who never examine and ſearch into things themſelves, but are led on by others, and make uſe of their Eyes inſtead of their own; theſe are Bigots, that is, Men who are groſly abus'd and impos'd upon by others,

others, to believe things that are not true, but only serve the Turn of a Party. This is the same thing, with what they call in their Language, being *Priest-ridden*; when they would intimate how the common People are govern'd, and led on in a blind Road of Belief, by the *Christian* Clergy. All the difference is, that the *Christian* (the Protestant *Christian)* Teachers, give their People the Grounds and Reasons of their Faith, and require no Man to believe them upon their Word, without substantial Evidence and Proof for what they say. But the Gentlemen, on the other side, won't trust the People under their Institution, with such things as Reasons; but think it sufficient to order and prescribe the matter of their Belief: well knowing, that *Ignorance* is as much the Mother of Irreligion in Principle, as of false Religion and Devotion in Practice.

As for the *leading and governing Men of the Party*, those who pretend to argue and reason upon the matter; if they heartily believe their own Scheme, they are credulous to a Prodigy: in that such absurd and ridiculous things as the Consequences of it, will go down with them without Offence. Nor can I guess why they should stop here, and not go on to the Fictions of a *Popish Legend*, or a *Turkish Alcoran*. 'Tis true, some of those Stories appear more ludicrous and comical, or more despicable and sordid; and so incline a Man either to contemn, or laugh at them: But I dare say, they do not involve more Inconsistencies and Impossibilities, in the Nature and Order of things; than what the *Deists*, if they act a sincere part, must believe in making the *Christian* Religion an *Imposture*.

It

It would perhaps give a Man more Diversion, to hear of Birds and Beasts, cringing and paying their Adorations to a *consecrated Wafer*, when brought within sight of them; but it would shock him with a deeper Sense of Impossibility, *to hear of a whole World of rational Creatures, adoring a crucify'd* (reputed) *Malefactor, as the Son of the Eternal God, and the Great Judg of the World; and all upon the Testimony of twelve poor Fishermen, without any concurrence of Divine Power and Providence, or any Human Arts to dispose them thereto.* Nay, no Arts of Man ('tis plain) could ever possibly have wrought Effects, any thing comparable to these! Or if these Gentlemen think otherwise, let them make the Experiment, and satisfy themselves. Let a Company of them go forth, and propose some strange and new Doctrine to the World; let them set it off with all the Advantages of Eloquence and Wit; let them argue and persuade, promise and threaten; and and try if by any or all of these ways, they can propagate their Opinion thorow all the Kingdoms of the Universe; and impress such a Sense of it on the Minds of Men, that they shall all agree to make it a fundamental Article of their Faith, and commit it to writing, and translate it into all Languages, and recommend it as an invaluable Treasure to succeeding Generations. I doubt they would find this hard Work; and I as firmly believe, that they would never venture Reputation, Pleasure, Fortune and Life it self, upon such a Design. And I think it may fairly be urg'd, as a very good Argument to *them* (if there were nothing else to be said in the Case) *that there must be something very extraordinary in the matter, when a few despis'd illiterate Men, should be able to do that in two or three Years space, which*

more

more than so many thousands of these Gentlemen, such great Masters of Reason, Wit and Policy, as they set up for, would never be able to accomplish the hundredth Part of, were they to be allow'd as many Centuries, as the others had Months and Weeks, to do it in.

But if on the other hand, they see into all these Consequences, and know how bad and perplex'd they are, and yet resolve in seeing, not to see, and in knowing, not to know them; the Case is infinitely worse: And I shall chuse rather to let it pass without Reflections, than to make any upon it that may seem harsh and invidious.

SECT. LVIII.

WE have now seen upon what Grounds the *Christians* proceed to assure themselves, *That this Doctrine is true.* What the Result of all is, we shall see by and by.

However, before I enter upon that matter, of summing up the Evidence, and demonstrating what it will amount to, by virtue of the Principles laid down and establish'd, in Part II. of this Treatise; I think it very reasonable and expedient to consider, *What the* Deists *have to say to the contrary.*

For this will help much to the increase and strengthning of the Evidence; and we shall draw our Conclusion with far more Advantage, when we shall have evinc'd, *That these Gentlemen have not any thing that is fine and truly plausible to object.*

For I cannot call any Objection so, in which the Sophistry is not pretty artfully hid, and does not

not imitate Truth ſo well, as to produce a little kind of ſhock upon the hearing of it, and require ſome pains in order to the finding it out. Now I do not apprehend any thing of this nature, in any Objection of theirs, againſt *the Fact of our Saviour's Reſurrection.*

I ſpeak of what they have hitherto thought fit openly to declare of their Minds, as to that matter. For all the reſt ſtands for nothing; and the ſtrongeſt Objections poſſible, are no Objections to any Party, till they are propos'd and made known.

But we will conſider them diſtinctly.

SECT. LIX.

FIRST then, as for the *Diſciples ſtealing away the Body of* Jeſus Chriſt, I have conſider'd that very particularly already; and ſhewn, *That if there be any Methods and Rules eſtabliſh'd amongſt Mankind, for judging when a thing is extravagant and abſurd, we muſt conclude and pronounce that Suppoſition to be ſo.* But then that which cuts off all that ſort of talk at once (and which is all I ſhall ſay more upon that Head) is this, *viz. That tho they could ſhew ever ſo unexceptionably in* Theory, *how ſuch an egregious Fraud as that, might have been fairly practicable; tho they could form the moſt regular and conſiſtent* Hypotheſis, *which ſhould ſolve all the* Phenomena, *and make us ſenſible how all the Parts and Steps of ſuch a Deſign might have gone on, without any appearance of Contradiction, or falling foul upon any Laws of Human Nature and the World: yet unleſs they went on to actual Truth and Matter of Fact, and ſhew'd that things were really*

manag'd

manag'd thus and thus, in this particular Case of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ; *unless, I say, they did this, all their* Theory *would be but so much Banter and Trifle.* For what have we to do with *Hypotheses?* I hope an arbitrary fictitious Scheme is not to be impos'd upon Mankind, instead of clear and satisfactory Proof; especially in a Case of such Consequence as this is! And therefore, if they could set that Affair in ever so pretty a Light, in the way of *May-be's* and *Peradventures*; yet if they do not come to Realities and plain Fact, we have no more to say. Nor are they to be heard any otherwise than we would hear some Romantick Philosopher, who should offer us the Fictions of his own Brain, instead of Truth and Experiment, for the solving of a Difficulty in *Nature.*

But to proceed; *Secondly,* 'Tis evident, *That the* Deists *cannot object against the Doctrine of* Christ's Resurrection; *that the thing it self is absurd and contradictory, and so could not possibly have been brought about upon that account.* They have no room nor scope to urge any thing of this kind.

Nor can they argue, *That it was any way unfit and indecent, or any more unbecoming the Moral Perfections of God to permit and allow of, than it was beyond the reach of his Wisdom and Power to effect.* And having demonstrated this already, in a place by it self, there will be no occasion to insist any farther on that Point neither.

And indeed I could wish, that all the Controversy between the *Christians* and these Gentlemen, was reduc'd only to one of the Heads now mention'd; and that they would pick out, and stand by one of these three, as a Point on which they would lay the stress of the Cause, *viz. Either*

the Impossibility or the Unfitness of the thing; or the fraudulent Management of the Disciples.

But I fear they won't bring Matters so near to an Issue, as this comes to.

SECT. LX.

I Must beg pardon now, if I say, that I think there can be but one thing more behind, to be offer'd as a Difficulty. I would by no means be thought to limit the Fancy and Invention of other Men; or to suppose, that they can say no more than I say for them. But I speak of Objections that carry something of a tolerable Face with them, and court the Understanding to a little Attention. Otherwise indeed, there's Scope enough in this, or any other Question whatsoever, to gratify an obstinate disputing Humour; and People that are fond of talking out of the Bounds of just Argument, may find Matter to talk upon, till they have weary'd themselves, and all the World about them.

But the Business is this, and I dare say, 'tis a Point our *Deists* will not deny; but they sometimes think of, and fancy we are not a little perplex'd how to get over it.

Why was not the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, *as open and publick a thing as his Death? Why did he not come out of the Grave in the Face of all the World, that People might have been satisfy'd by their own Eyes, that he was indeed miraculously rais'd? Or if he had but shewn himself in publick, and convers'd with Mankind as freely and commonly as he did before; there could have been no Dispute in the Case, and all Men would have believ'd on him.*

him. But instead of this, here are only his Disciples and some few others, who pretend to have seen and convers'd with him for some Days, and then declare, that at the end of that time, he ascended up into Heaven.

I remember, that the *Jews*, amongst other Insults offer'd to our Saviour in his Agonies on the Cross, propos'd an Experiment, not much unlike to this.

Thou that destroyest the Temple, and buildest it in three Days; save thy self. —— *If thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross.*

And it was not the common People only who did this; but the Chief Priests and Elders join'd with them in the same Mockery. *He sav'd others, himself he cannot save.* —— *If he be the King of* Israel, *let him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe him.*

These People were for a publick Experiment of our Saviour's Power and Divinity; and offer'd to believe, provided he would but extricate himself at that Moment, in the Eyes of all the People. And the *Deists* (whose Demands run every whit as high) would be contented to believe, if the *Resurrection* had but been a publick Spectacle, or *Christ Jesus* had shewn himself in Places of common Resort, preaching and teaching the People, as he us'd to do before his Crucifixion. This it seems, would have been full Conviction to them! For they could have taken the *Jews* Word for it, *that he really did do so*; and notwithstanding *the doubtful and precarious Nature of Human Testimony*, would have subscrib'd to the Evidence, if it had but been thus fairly represented to them.

But let us examine this matter a little.

SECT. LXI.

IF our Saviour's not rising publickly, or not appearing in the Face of the World, after his *Resurrection*; be a just and real Ground of Exception to these Gentlemen: they must then make use of it, one or other of these ways.

First, *They must take it either as a direct and conclusive Argument; or at least as a Ground of very shrewd Suspicion, that he did not rise from the Dead at all.*

Or, Secondly, They must reason thus: *That it would have been every way better and more advantageous, with respect to the Conviction, and consequently, the general Good of Mankind; if* Christ Jesus *had in his own Person, given some publick and undeniable Proofs, of his being alive again, after his Death upon the Cross, which was so notorious to all the World at that time.*

One or other of these must needs be their meaning, if they have any Objection at all to make upon this score. And I make no doubt to shew, *That no Inference can be made, with any tolerable good Sense, either way.*

SECT. LXII.

FIRST of all, I think we may be pretty secure, *That they will not offer this to us, as a direct conclusive Argument.*

Because it will be extremely hard, to justify such a Consequence as this: *Christ Jesus did not shew*

ſhew himſelf in Publick; therefore he did not riſe from the Dead: The Generality of the People did not ſee and converſe with him, as was uſual before his Death; therefore his Diſciples, nor no others did do ſo.

I take it for granted they'll not reaſon thus.

But then I ſay farther, they can't urge this neither, as any Ground of rational Suſpicion, *That our Saviour's* Reſurrection *was not real, but the mere Fiction of his Diſciples.* For tho we could give no account at all of the matter; yet an *infinitely wiſe Being*, who does not ſee things in our falſe Lights, nor judg of them in that fond and partial way that we do; might ſee it beſt and fitteſt, for Reaſons known only to himſelf, to order the matter ſo, *That this wonderful Event ſhould not be brought about in ſo open and pompous a manner, as in our ſhallow Schemes we may imagine it ought to have been.*

They'll ſay perhaps, *That this is all but Suppoſition and Surmiſe; and that we only tell them of what God may ſee fit to do, upon ſome occult and myſterious Reaſons, which we have nothing to do to meddle with, and therefore ought not to argue upon them.*

Very well; let it paſs for granted at preſent, *That this is but* Hypotheſis *and Conjecture.* Pray is not this enough to confront a *Suſpicion* with? We are talking now about their *Suſpicion, That* Chriſt *did not riſe, becauſe he did not appear in Publick.* For I have ſhewn already, *That there is no Inference to be made, in the way of direct Argumentation*; ſo that there is nothing left for us to conſider in the Caſe, but a bare *Suſpicion.* And if we go no farther than bare Surmiſe in our Reaſonings, but let the Matter reſt there; I can't ſee what they can demand farther, nor what Reaſon there is to expect poſitive Argu-

ment, where there is nothing but pure Doubt and Diſtruſt, oppos'd on the other ſide.

However, if I ſhew, *That what I alledg here, is not mere* Hypotheſis *and Conjecture, but ſomething ſupported by Experience and plain Matter of Fact*; then, I hope, this *Suſpicion* of theirs muſt vaniſh, and ſtand for nothing; at leaſt, unleſs they can find Reaſons that ſhall be in all reſpects, of equal *Value and Authority* to ſupport it. That is, they muſt produce Reaſons founded upon as plain and clear Matter of Fact and Experience, to juſtify them in *ſuſpecting*, *That* Chriſt *did not riſe from the Dead, becauſe he did not ſhew himſelf publickly after his* (pretended) *Reſurrection:* as I am oblig'd to produce, in order to ſhew, *That Almighty God might not ſee fit to gratify us, with ſo publick a Demonſtration of the Truth and Reality of our Saviour's* Reſurrection, *as we might think, would have been the moſt ſerviceable and advantageous to Mankind.*

This I think is ſtating the Matter fairly on both ſides. And therefore, I ſhall proceed directly to the Work incumbent on me; leaving theſe Gentlemen to take care of their own Part, which they muſt do to very good purpoſe, or otherwiſe, quite give up their *Suſpicion* in the preſent Caſe.

SECT. LXIII.

NOW in order to this, I muſt conſider what force there is, in that other Reaſoning of theirs, *viz. That the great Ends of the Conviction and Satisfaction of the World, and conſequently, of God's Glory in the Propagation of the Goſpel and Salva-*

Salvation of Mankind, would have been far more effectually obtain'd, if Jesus Christ *had shewn himself as openly and familiarly amongst Men, after his Death, as he us'd to do before.* For since matters were not order'd thus, they think they have Scope enough to conclude the whole Story to be a mere Jest; and that upon this Pretence, *viz. That 'tis not to be imagin'd, that an infinitely wise and good Being, should not take the most direct and effectual Methods, both for the Advancement of his own Glory and the Good of Mankind.*

And they are certainly in the right of it, when they argue, *That God Almighty would be sure to chuse the propereſt Methods for the Advancement of his own Glory and the Happiness of his Creatures.* Not that I think they are in reality much concern'd about that matter, because I firmly believe, and indeed 'tis scarce possible, but that some very mean and little Notions of the *Divine Being*, must be at the bottom of that so vigorous and warm Opposition to *Christianity*, which these Gentlemen make. However, this may serve them for a Pretence, in the way of Argument; and for that Reason, I am oblig'd to have as much regard to it, as if they spoke the very Sense of their Hearts, and had the most becoming Notions of God imaginable. And upon the same score likewise, they lie as open to our Arguments; as they would do, if they had really the same thoughts of the Divine Power, Wisdom, Omnipresence, Goodness, Holiness and Truth, which the *Christians* themselves have. For since they pretend to have the same in the main, it is one and the same thing, in the way of Reasoning, as if they had; because we can proceed only upon the bottom of what Men pretend to, and must draw our Consequences accordingly.

SECT. LXIV.

LET them therefore resolve this Question. *Would it not be infinitely easy, for the Supreme Being, to discover himself with so much brightness to the World; that no part of Mankind should ever doubt of his Existence, or form a wrong Notion of his glorious Perfections, or worship and serve him in a profane and irreverent, or a ridiculous and fantastical manner?*

By what these Gentlemen themselves profess to know and believe of the Nature of God; they cannot think that the barbarous Rites and Customs of the *Pagan* World, are either agreeable to, or any way worthy of him: That he should think himself honour'd by such a Jargon of impertinent Ceremonies, or be pleas'd to see Mankind pour out one another's Blood at his Altars: That he delights to be thought of so oddly and indecently by the various People of the World, who do not glorify him as God, but abound in vain and foolish Imaginations, *changing his Glory into an Image made like to corruptible Man, to Birds and four-footed Beasts, and creeping things.*

In a word, whatever wrong Notions there are of God in the World; whatever Irregularities and Indecencies in Worship; whatever Deviations from *that simple and genuine way of serving him, according to the Principles of pure Natural Religion, after these Gentlemens own Mode:* how might all these Evils have been prevented, or at least perfectly cur'd, by some open and publick Manifestations of God to Mankind; which he could as easily make, as he can bring about any

any other Event whatſoever, in the World of Nature?

Alas! may we ſay, if this were but ſo, What excellent Order would the World be in? What Reverence and devout Regard to that God, who ſhould thus convincingly diſcover himſelf, would there be in all Places? The Fool that now ſays in his Heart, *There is no God*, would then think after quite another manner. And thoſe Fools likewiſe, who ſay, *The Lord has forſaken the Earth*, and neither minds nor cares what is done by the Children of Men; would be ſtruck with an awful Senſe of his Preſence, and Inſpection of their Ways. Pure Religion and Vertue, Harmony and Peace, would flouriſh and abound all the World over; and thereby an infinite deal of Miſchief and Diſorder be prevented (upon this *Hypotheſis*) according to our beſt Judgment and Apprehenſion of things. What a fine Scheme is this! If we poor ſhallow Beings might be allow'd to argue, and draw up our own Propoſals for the Regulation of the World; what delicate Syſtems, in our own Conceit, ſhould we compoſe?

But let us tremble at the Thoughts of that Preſumption, of calling the Ways of God, our Supreme Lord and Sovereign, into queſtion.

We dare not ſo much as think, it would have been better, if he had order'd Matters thus, with reſpect to the whole Race of Mankind; than now it is, and ſhall be, even tho he is pleas'd to permit ſo much Confuſion and Diſorder at preſent. And therefore, 'tis infallibly certain, he has infinitely wiſe and holy, and infinitely gracious and good Reaſons too, in this particular Diſpenſation to the World. But thoſe Reaſons are above us, and we muſt not inquire. His Ways are unſearchable, and

his

his Judgments paſt finding out. As the Heavens are high above the Earth; ſo are all his Thoughts and Ways above ours. We may highly diſhonour and diſpleaſe him by our Curioſity; but we can never give our ſelves the leaſt Satisfaction by it. Our Buſineſs is to be humble and modeſt; to look after things that are *plain and reveal'd*, and leave all *ſecret* things to God, to whom alone they belong.

SECT. LXV.

NOW from hence we proceed to argue thus:

If the great Ends of God's Glory, and the Good of Mankind, are ſufficiently conſulted and provided for, as we know for certain they are, in this Diſpenſation of things; wherein Men are oblig'd to argue from the mere Light of Nature and Reaſon, upon the Works of God in the Creation, and thereby form their Notions of him, and their Duty to him, and what ſort of Service they ſhould pay him; tho at the ſame time 'tis plain, that in ſo doing, they run into infinite Abſurdities and Inconveniencies, groſly abuſing Human Nature it ſelf, and reflecting on the Majeſty of Heaven: And if they are left thus without any ſuch helps, as *Revelation*, *Prophecy*, *Inſpiration*, or any other ſorts of Notices from Heaven, to put them into the right way, and direct them how to glorify God, as he ſhould be glorify'd by them; *according to the avow'd Principles and Notions of our* Deiſts: In a word, if God ſees fit to withhold all ſuch *open Demonſtrations* of himſelf, as would be a preſent and effectual Remedy for all theſe Evils; and are as eaſy to him, as to make his

his Sun to ſhine, and his Rain to fall upon this Earth: If theſe things be ſo, *Then how is his Glory, or the Good of Mankind concern'd, tho the World had not a publick Demonſtration of the Truth of* Chriſt's Reſurrection? I deſire they would fairly ſhew us that.

In ſhort, either the *Deiſts* believe, *God Almighty to be ſuch a Being, that he does not care how and in what manner he is ſerv'd by reaſonable Creatures; and provided they do but perform ſome Acts of Homage and Devotion to him, is pleas'd with what they do, let it be ever ſo unſeemly, or ever ſo ridiculous and fantaſtical; and that he matters not, whether they believe his Exiſtence, or have right or wrong Notions of his Perfections; and conſequently, that ſutable Notions and Apprehenſions of his Nature, or a regular and ſeemly Worſhip of him, are of no conſequence at all to the Happineſs of Mankind:* Or elſe they believe the contrary of all this.

If they believe the *former*, then how can they ever offer to tell us, of the *Concern of God's Glory, and the general Good of Mankind*, in the publickneſs of the Demonſtration of the Truth of *Chriſt's Reſurrection?* For (were it poſſible, that the infinitely wiſe and good God ſhould be ſuch a ſort of Being as this) pray might he not be as negligent of the Affairs of Mankind in one Caſe, as in the other? Might he not make the Cure for Mens *disbelief of the Goſpel*, as little pompous and extraordinary; as that for their *Atheiſm*, their *Blaſphemy*, their horrid *Idolatry and Superſtition?* Let theſe Gentlemen think of that, and tell me which of the Divine Perfections, is more deeply concern'd in one of theſe Caſes, than the other.

If

If they believe the *latter*, then let them ſhew me, how they account for the *Care*, *and Love*, *and Goodneſs of God*, *and his Regard to his own Glory*, in this preſent Diſpenſation towards the World; which is left in ſuch a wretched Condition, for want of that Light which he could ſo eaſily impart to it, even without Miracles: That I may try, whether I cannot upon the very ſame, or upon Principles in all reſpects as juſtifiable, ſhew them how I account for the Care, and Love, and Goodneſs of God, and his Regard to his own Glory, in that other Diſpenſation of his Providence towards the World, in not giving ſuch a publick Demonſtration of the Truth of *Chriſt's Reſurrection*, as ſuch wiſe Creatures as we are, might think fitting and neceſſary. One of theſe two things they muſt believe, and 'tis equal to me which of them 'tis.

SECT. LXVI.

HOwever, if theſe Gentlemen conſider'd the matter a little, they would find an exact Uniformity and Agreement in the ways of God, in both theſe Diſpenſations; I mean with reſpect both to *Natural* and *Reveal'd Religion*. On one ſide, they have all his glorious Works in External Nature, the Wonders of his Providence and Government of the World, the admirable Frame and Conſtitution of their own rational Natures; all theſe, to furniſh them with Premiſſes, for juſt and fitting Concluſions, concerning the Nature of God, and the Obligations his Creatures lie under to him.

On

On the other ſide, he has order'd matters ſo, that we have all the *Data* requiſite to a ſtrictly rational and convincing Evidence; ſo that we can conclude the *Reſurrection of Chriſt* to be true, by all thoſe Rules and Methods of Reaſoning, which we depend upon as juſt and ſound in all other Caſes, and which if they are not ſo, the whole World is nothing elſe but mere Scene and Colluſion. But on neither ſide, are there *ſuch kinds or degrees of appeal to our Senſes*, as we in our Notions might think the moſt advantageous, nay, and certain, to do the great Work of opening the Eyes of all Mankind. But as well, with reſpect to his own Being and Perfections, as the *Reſurrection* of his Son *Jeſus Chriſt* from the Dead; God having endow'd us with moſt excellent Powers and Faculties, has thought fit to leave us to exerciſe and employ them, in the drawing ſuch Concluſions about theſe matters, as the Laws of our own reaſonable Natures put us upon making, from the *Data* or Premiſſes he preſents us with, in the Nature of things abroad. And thus he obliges us to act as Men, and makes our Faith to be, in all ſenſes, a moſt rational Duty. Not that we are thus abſolutely given up into our own hands, ſo that the Succeſs depends ſolely and intirely upon our own Application. *For as God is ſo merciful and compaſſionate, that he will expect no more of us, than the Powers and Helps, and favourable Circumſtances he places us in, will enable us to perform; ſo he is ready to ſuperadd ſpecial Grace and Aſſiſtance, to all the ordinary Advantages he affords us; for the clearing up of our Doubts, and helping us to ſurmount the Difficulties that lie in our way*; provided we be but tractable and induſtrious, and do what Creatures ſo made as we are, ought to do, and may do, by common Helps alone, with-

without the Assistance of that extraordinary Grace to carry us farther.

And thus I have said, what I hope may be a full and compleat Answer, to what is or may be alledg'd by the *Deists*, concerning the Privacy of our Saviour's *Resurrection*, or his not appearing to the World in publick as before.

SECT. LXVII.

BUT after all, there are these two things still to be said, which I could wish these Gentlemen would take some notice of. And indeed, 'tis all the Answer that need ever be given to this Objection of theirs: Only I was willing to trace the matter a little, and by that means shew them, 'tis a Point they ought never to insist upon, because they can never possibly conclude any thing from it.

First, *They must never pretend to make the* Christians *believe, that this is any real Difficulty with them*; or that they would have been a Jot more dispos'd, to have believ'd the Gospel, if *Christ Jesus* had shewn himself ever so publickly and familiarly after his *Resurrection*.

For even in that Case, their Belief of the Truth of this great Article of the *Christian* Faith, must have stood upon the very same Foundation of *Moral Evidence*, that it must do now in the present Circumstances.

If every thing had been manag'd in this Affair exactly to their own Hearts wish, yet still they must have had recourse to those very Proofs which they now despise, and call ridiculous and insufficient. And who that sees them explode and run

run down all Evidence of this kind, and (with infinite Absurdity) demand Demonstration for every thing they believe; can be so weak as to imagine, they would have had any manner of regard to it, in this Case? Yes, say they—— *If Christ had appear'd in the Temple, and other Places of publick Resort, as he us'd to do before his Death, the* Truth of his Resurrection *had been plain to every body; and it would have rais'd so publick and general a talk in the World, and impress'd the thing so deep on the Minds of Men, that the belief of it would never have worn out, and no body could have deny'd it.*

Well argu'd! *If Christ had appear'd in Places of publick Resort*, &c. then so and so.

But how must you have known, that he did appear in those Places of publick Resort? You see the matter sticks there, and there it will stick.

Pray how should you *Deists* who live seventeen hundred Years after all this, come to be assur'd, *That there were such familiar Appearances of* Christ, *that there was such a general Talk, such a prevailing Conviction, such a firm Persuasion of the Truth of the thing at that time?* You pretend you would have believ'd, if it had been so; but how would you have satisfy'd your selves that it was so? Must you not have done the very same thing then, that you must do now, if you ever believe the *Christian* Religion; that is, *Examine the Accounts of Witnesses, search into their Characters and Qualifications, and at last depend upon their Testimony as true, when you have found it to have all the Marks of rational Credibility?*

Whatever Evidence, whatever convincing Proofs of the Reality of our Saviour's *Resurrection*, Mankind at that time might have; yet with respect to you, at this time, all the Advantage and Efficacy

ficacy of that Proof, ſtands upon the ſame Foundation exactly, that the Force and Efficacy of the Proof, which we offer you now in the preſent Circumſtances, does ſtand upon. And therefore, upon the ſame ſcore that you pretend to be diſſatisfy'd, and plead the Uncertainty and precarious Nature of the Evidence, you now have for the Truth of *Chriſt's Reſurrection*; you might, and you muſt have been diſſatisfy'd, with the Evidence offer'd you in thoſe other Circumſtances. For Evidences of the ſame nature, and convey'd after one and the ſame manner, muſt and will have the ſame ſort of Effect. And conſequently, all your Talk upon this Head is but jeſt, and you *act a Part*, when you tell us, you ſhould have believ'd, if things had been thus and thus.

And to put this yet farther (if poſſible) out of diſpute; I'll ſhew you, that you can be Unbelievers, in Caſes that were actually as publick and notorious, as (you pretend) you could wiſh the *Reſurrection* had been.

SECT. LXVIII.

FOR, *Secondly*, you reject all the Miracles of *Chriſt Jeſus*. And it is not credible, that you would have had regard to any Teſtimonies concerning the *Reſurrection*; when you make ſo very light of all the Accounts of thoſe wonderful Works of our Saviour; which had they been Lyes and Forgeries, 'tis demonſtrable, *That* Chriſtianity *muſt have been hooted out of the World many Ages ago.*

You

You won't believe (tho it ſtands atteſted in ſuch Records, as you have none any way comparable to them, for the Truth of any thing elſe that you believe) —— *That* Jeſus Chriſt *went about all* Galilee, *teaching in their Synagogues, and preaching the Goſpel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of Sickneſs, and all manner of Diſeaſes amongſt the People.*

——*That his Fame went throughout all* Syria, *and the Regions round about; and they brought unto him all ſick People, that were taken with divers Diſeaſes and Torments, and thoſe who were poſſeſs'd with Devils, and thoſe who were Lunatick, and thoſe who had the Palſy; and he healed them.*——*That great Multitudes follow'd him, and ſought to touch him; and there went Virtue out of him, and he healed them all.*——*That when the Inhabitants of a Country had notice of his approach, they publiſh'd it thro all the Region round about, and began to carry about in Beds, thoſe that were ſick, where they heard he was; and wherefoever he enter'd, into Villages, or Cities, or Countries, they laid the Sick in the Streets, and beſought him that they might touch, if it were but the Border of his Garment; and as many as touched him, were made whole.* ——*That he wrought theſe Wonders in the Preſence of the Phariſees and Doctors of the Law, who came out of every Town of* Galilee *and* Judæa; and did themſelves partake of the Salutary Effects of his Power; *and were amaz'd, and glorify'd God, and being fill'd with fear, cry'd out, They had ſeen* (παραδοξα) *ſtrange and unaccountable things.*

You won't believe theſe matters upon *Teſtimony*, tho declar'd to be done in the moſt open and publick manner imaginable.

Even when you are told, *That the Multitude proclaim'd the wonderful Works of* Christ Jesus; *that they glorify'd God, who had given such Power to Man; cry'd out, astonish'd* ——*He hath done all things well, he maketh the Deaf to hear, and the Dumb to speak,* &c. *and with Authority he commandeth the unclean Spirits, and they come forth:* nay, tho great Numbers of those who beheld his Works, actually believ'd on him, and became his Followers, declaring to all Men, that *God had now visited his People, and that a great Prophet was risen up amongst them.*

You are not mov'd with those many Appeals which the Apostles did with the utmost Confidence and Assurance, make to the World, concerning the Truth of these Facts; tho they did it ever so publickly, and refer'd to them, as things that were commonly known, and pass'd undisputed every where. *Jesus of Nazareth* (says St. *Peter*, speaking to a very numerous Assembly) *was a Man approv'd of God amongst you, by Miracles, and Wonders, and Signs, which God wrought by him, in the midst of you; as you your selves also know.* And in another place, *You know* (the τὸ γενόμενον ῥῆμα) *the thing that was done throughout all* Judæa, *&c.* viz. *How God anointed* Jesus *of* Nazareth, *with the Holy Ghost and with Power; who went about doing Good, and healing all that were oppress'd of the Devil; for God was with him.*

Now this had been the most prodigious Degree of Folly and Stupidity, that Men could ever have been guilty of; if the Facts they appeal'd to had not been notorious, and impossible ever to be deny'd, with any Face of Modesty and Truth.

And accordingly you find, or may find if you please, *That there never was an Unbeliever of the Old Times, who ever dar'd solemnly to dispute, or call*

call the Truth of them in question; but they all own'd and took them for granted.

And as 'tis certain, they would never have done this, if they had had a Prospect of any possible Success, from their Attempts to render the Facts themselves questionable; so 'tis plain, that all their little shuffling endeavours to eclipse the Reputation of them, were the genuine Effects of the same Cause. 'Twas this Conviction, that put them upon those pitiful and wretched Evasions, to solve the Business something tolerably to the unthinking part of Mankind, and excuse themselves from the Imputation of downright *irrational* Infidelity.

We have observ'd before, what a sort of account *Julian* gave of these matters to the World.

Nor does *Celsus* solve them a jot better, but rather worse (if possible:) for by supposing our Saviour, to have made use of * *Magick Arts*, in the working of his Miracles; he takes all the Facts themselves for granted, and plainly shews they were such, as the World made no question of the Truth of.

And the *Jews* likewise, who sometimes ascrib'd those Miracles to the Virtue of the שם בן ארבע אותיות, the *Nomen quatuor literarum*; at other times thought fit to ascribe them to the same Arts of *Incantation*; as *Origen* expressly tells us.

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* Κατηγορεῖ δ' ἐν τοῖς ἑξῆς καὶ τοῦ Σωτῆρος, ὡς γοητείᾳ δυνηθέντος ἃ ἔδοξε παραδοξα πεποιηκέναι. Orig. adv. Cels. *Lib.* 1. *Pag.* 7.

And again —— Αὐτὸν (Ἰησοῦν) σκόπον τραφέντα, μιαιφονήσαντα, εἰς Αἴγυπτον δυνάμεων τινων πειραθέντα, ἐκεῖθεν ἐπανελθεῖν, Θεὸν δὲ ἐκείνας τὰς δυνάμεις ἑαυτὸν ἀναγορεύοντα. Lib. prædict.

And those who set up *Workers of Miracles and Prodigies, in the Heathen World*, in opposition to *Jesus Christ*; did evidently allow the truth of what he did, by those very endeavours to find out some to match him.

I say, they were certainly appriz'd of the truth of the things themselves. Otherwise * *Hierocles* would never have talk'd of those ὀλίγαι τερατείαι, for which our Saviour was reckon'd to be a God in the *Christian* World. Nor would others of them have made such a Blunder, as to say, that their *Apuleius*, † *Apollonius*, and others besides, did things as great, or even greater, than our *Jesus*.

In a word, there could be no doubt amongst Mankind in those days, whether *Christ Jesus* did really perform such astonishing Works or no; since the *Christians* so frequently and openly appeal'd to the *publick Acts and Monuments of the Roman Empire*, in which they were recorded. Thus some of the antient Apologists, ‖ *refer'd to*

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* Ἡμεῖς δ' τιαῦτα πεποιηκότα ὐ θεὸν ἀλλὰ θεοῖς κεχαρισμένον ἄνδρα ἡγούμεθα, οἱ δὲ δι' ὀλίγας τερατείας τινας, τὸν Ἰησοῦν θεὸν ἀναγορεύουσι. Hierocl. de Philostr. apud Euseb. adverſ. Hierocl.

† *Nil amplius Dominum* (*Iesum*) *quam alii Homines facere potuerunt, fecisse vel gessisse mentiuntur:* Apollonium *siquidem suum nobis*, & Apuleium, *aliosque Magicæ artis Homines in medium proferunt, quorum majora contendunt extitisse Miracula.* Marcell. Epist. 4. ad August.

‖ Tertul. Apol. C. 21. & 5.

I am sensible these Acts of Pilate *are call'd in question. But tho there be nothing of that kind now in the World; yet that there were in reality such genuine* Acta *once in being, I believe is not reasonably to be doubted. For it appears from* Eusebius, Hist. Eccles. Lib. 9. *that there were some false and spurious Acts set about, in order to sink the Credit of the true ones. And* Epiphanius, de Quartadecimanis, *mentions (I think) some Appeals made by Heretics, to these* Acta Pilati.

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the Acts of Pontius Pilate, and the Account given by him concerning our Saviour, to the Emperor *Tiberius*. Which Appeals, had they not had visible and notorious Matter of Fact to have supported them; the *Acta* themselves, or some very authentick Copies of them, being as easy to be produc'd, as they were readily quoted; *Christianity* would have needed no worse blow, than such Apologies (which were not made to overturn, but to vindicate and defend it) would certainly have given it.

So that now I say, whatever else is to be alledg'd against the Miracles of *Christ Jesus*, 'tis plain, that underhand Management and *Secrecy*, can never be objected. They were all done in the open Light, in the Face of the Sun, while multitudes of all Comers, Enemies and Friends, Foreigners and Natives, Learned and Unlearned, look'd on and beheld with wonder.

Yes, they'll say, —— But then the Question is, *Whether all this was not Juggle and Legerdemain; either mere Slight and Artifice, or else the Peoples Senses some way or other impos'd upon, with Fiction and Shew, instead of Realities?*

Answ. There can be no Fence against extravagant Suppositions and Surmises. When Men *reason*, they are under some Laws and Rules: but when they come to doubt, and query, and suppose, without any manner of Ground or Occasion for so doing, from the Nature and Circumstances of things; they as good as declare to all the World, that they will not be dealt with in the way of Argument: And by so doing, they shew plainly enough, upon what foot it is the Controversy stands.

But if they could once venture to let themselves be guided by that, which Mankind have

agreed to call ſincere and unprejudic'd Reaſon; they would ſoon renounce all thoſe little Refuges and Evaſions, and forbear to make a Defence, ſo very trivial, in a matter of ſuch grand Importance.

In the mean time, we can't have ſo little an Opinion of the Underſtanding of theſe Gentlemen, as to imagine, that whatever they ſay, they do in good earneſt believe ——

That Perſons afflicted with the moſt tormenting Maladies and Diſeaſes, ſhould be juggled into perfect Eaſe and Health, and cur'd by mere Legerdemain.

That blind Men ſhould ſee, the Lame walk, the Deaf hear, the Dumb ſpeak, Lepers be cleans'd, and dead Men come to Life; by mere Fancy and Imagination.

Or that the Senſes of whole Multitudes, ſhould be impos'd upon to ſuch a degree, that they ſhould all fancy together, they ſaw, heard, ſpake, eat and drank, and repeated theſe Actions many times over, and that in different Places and Circumſtances too; and yet after all did nothing of all this, but were either aſleep, or in an Extaſy, or under the Power of ſome Charm or Witchcraft all the while.

For example: *That five thouſand Men at one time, and four thouſand at another* (beſides Women and Children) *ſhould perſuade themſelves, they fed only upon a* few Loaves and Fiſhes, *and ſhould publiſh it to all the Country that they did do ſo, and refer them to Time, Place, and Perſons preſent; and yet all the while in reality, have been at a magnificent Feaſt, where Plenty and Variety of all Proviſions, fit to entertain ſuch vaſt Multitudes, was ſet before them.*

If theſe things may be ſo, what are the Senſes of Mankind good for? Or how are they ever to

to be depended upon? Or who will or can ever believe a *Deist*, attesting any thing as matter of *Sense and Experience*; when by his own Principles, People can't believe their Senses; no, not thousands of them together, and that in the most *common and vulgar Actions* of Human Life?

Indeed, if it were in a matter any thing remote and out of the way, or that requir'd nice Reason and Philosophy, for People to assure themselves by; there might be some room for a Difficulty to be started: but when it comes so low as to *eating and drinking, to the distinguishing of Foods, and knowing that a Man has this, and not the other thing before him; or that he has only so much, and not a Quantity ten thousand times greater:* then if Men can't be allow'd to make use of their Eyes and Taste, so as to be out of all doubt, whether things be so or no, as those Senses represent them; we had e'en as good be without them, and say, *That God Almighty has endow'd us with deceitful and precarious Faculties, that can never be of any service to us; and so quit all Pretensions to the use of them for the time to come.*

In short, there are but these following Conclusions possibly to be made in the Case, and a Man must of necessity come to one or other of them; and he can come but to one.

Either, First, *These accounts of the Miracles of* Christ Jesus, *were absolute Fictions in their very Principle and Foundation; he never pretending or attempting to do any of those mighty Works in publick, which are reported of him; but was only falsly said to do so, by some who had a mind to impose upon Mankind.*

Or, Secondly, *That he did not work any true Miracles; but the Peoples Senses were some way or*

other abus'd, so that they believ'd he really did work Miracles, when in truth he did not.

Or, Thirdly, *That the Spectators were not any way deluded, and knew very well he wrought no Miracles; but were all* (both Enemies and Friends; nay, the very *Jews* themselves, who daily sought occasions against him) *united in a close Confederacy, to make the World believe, that he did do the strangest and most surprizing things. So that while some blaz'd the Report of them abroad, the rest kept their Counsel, and never offer'd to discover the Trick, but manag'd the matter with so much Craft, and such an exact harmonious Correspondence amongst themselves; that the Story should go current about, that* Christ Jesus *was a Worker of Miracles and Prodigies, and no body ever be able to disprove it.*

Or else, Fourthly, *That* Christ Jesus *did really perform these wonderful Works, and that the Accounts given of them by the* Christian *Writers, are true.*

This is all that can be concluded, with respect to the present Affair. And he that does not conclude the *last*, will find but small odds, whichsoever of the *other three* he chuses. For—

It will be a very difficult and arduous Undertaking, to shew, *That there is nothing but mere Romance and Forgery in all those Accounts we have, of the Miracles of* Jesus Christ.

And for these Gentlemen to bring *their own Senses* off, with any tolerable Reputation, after such a Scandal thrown upon the Senses of Mankind in general, by supposing Multitudes of People together, to be impos'd upon, in some of the *most common* Actions of Life; and that not for once or twice, but in a *continued Series*, for Years together: I say, to do this solidly and well, I believe will not be a Task less difficult than the former.

Nor

Nor will it be less than either of the other two, to set in a clear Light, that *strange Confederacy*, by which such Numbers of People, so variously affected, temper'd and principl'd; were all link'd together in one common Design, of keeping the matter to themselves, and baffling all the Artifices and Endeavours of the rest of Mankind; some of whom lay under all the Obligations that Men could possibly lie under, to enquire into the true state of the Case, and satisfy themselves effectually, whether *Christ Jesus* was an Impostor or no.

And thus I have shewn, for what Reasons the *Christians* believe, that how publick soever the Appearances of *Christ Jesus* after his *Resurrection* had been; yet their Adversaries would still have made matter of Cavil and Exception, and (in a word) have been the very same Unbelievers that now they are.

I shall be ready to own a Breach of Charity, when I find it is prov'd to be one: In the mean time, I have shewn them our Reasons for't.

And this was the *First* of those two things I offer'd to propose, to cut off all their Objection upon this Head.

SECT. LXIX.

BUT, *Secondly*, these Gentlemen should remember, *That all this talk about our Saviour's publick Appearance after his* Resurrection, *is quite from the main Point in hand.*

For our great Concern, is about the *Resurrection* it self; whether it *were true in Fact or no:* Whether *Christ* did really rise from the Dead, or was

was only falſly and deceitfully ſaid, and reported to do ſo. And therefore, if there be ſufficient Evidence to make that Point clear; we are not concern'd about his ſhewing, or not ſhewing himſelf openly to the World; nor have we any thing to do, to offer Reaſons either one way or the other. Let us keep to the great Queſtion that lies before us, and not fly off to a Circumſtance that is of little ſignificancy, and from whence 'tis demonſtrable, nothing is to be infer'd. The Buſineſs is, have we Evidence, or have we not? Are the Proofs we go upon *Concluſive*, or are they not? *Let us decide this Point, and then all is decided.* 'Tis here that the ſtreſs of the matter will lie; and hither muſt be our laſt Reſort. If the Evidence be *good*, *by all the Laws of Human Nature*; I do not care for ten thouſand Difficulties, if they were ever ſo inſuperable, provided they are not ſuch as infer ſimple Impoſſibility, or palpable Abſurdity. When I am ſure of Fact, I am ſure of all that is of any moment to me. Indeed, if I have ſufficient *Data* to argue out more, well and good; if not, I'll hold faſt the main Point, and bid defiance to all Objections whatſoever. And therefore, if theſe Gentlemen amus'd the World, with ſtarting ever ſo many odd Queries and Surmiſes, about *Why* and *How*, and *to what Purpoſe*, and all the other Modes and Circumſtances they can poſſibly think of, with reſpect to this matter of our Saviour's *Reſurrection*; and if they were ſo intricate and perplex'd, that I could not diſcover the Fallacy, or demonſtrate the Abſurdity of any one of them all (the very Reverſe of which, is apparently true, as to any of their Objections, from what Topick ſoever deriv'd) yet *with Circumſtances of convincing Evidence, according*

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ing to the Nature of things, for the Truth of the Fact; I ſhould be at a Certainty: nor would all thoſe Difficulties give me the leaſt degree of uneaſineſs.

SECT. LXX.

PErhaps theſe Gentlemen may think, *A Man would do very ill, to make no more of inſolvable Difficulties attending a Matter of Belief; and therefore, notwithſtanding the Evidence talk'd of, for the Proof of the thing, it may be, they call his Belief in ſuch a Caſe, by the ill Names of* Credulity, *and* Bigotry, *or* obſtinate Reſolution, *to believe things only of his own ſide.*

But they muſt not do thus: For if they do, the Charge will come home upon themſelves; and they will, without remedy, be prov'd by their own Rule, to be credulous and bigotted beyond Example. The *Chriſtians* will not be obnoxious in this Caſe, becauſe they do not form any ſuch Notions of Bigotry and Credulity; ſo that all the burden of the Argument will lie upon themſelves, and they'll not find it eaſy, fairly to throw it off.

I ſuppoſe theſe Gentlemen (ſome of them at leaſt) can't but know, that there are abundance of Problems in *Phyſical* matters, the Solutions of which are reckon'd deſperate, even by thoſe who are the moſt ſeen in thoſe Studies. Indeed, to ſpeak the plain truth of the matter, there's ſcarce any thing at all in Nature, which we do know the *Modus* of, or can explain from its firſt Principles. *Motion* it ſelf in general, *Gravitation*, *Senſation*, the *Formation of an Animal*

mal Body; are demonſtrably above all Solution, by any Mechanical Laws whatſoever. And to enter into a detail of *particular* Phenomena, that are ſo likewiſe; would be an endleſs Work. In a word, all our Knowledg of the *Univerſe*, is but a Collection of ſome particular Circumſtances of Fact, with the Conſequences reſulting from them; ſome of which lie nearer, and others more remote from view; without any penetrating or looking into the prime Cauſes and Reaſons of them.

Now I would ask of theſe Perſons, whether they can ſatisfy our demands here, and ſhew *the exact Modus and Ratio of all, or any of thoſe Appearances in Nature*, which were juſt now mention'd? Can they ſolve all the Difficulties, that ſhall be propos'd to them upon thoſe Heads?

I take it for granted, *they'll ſay they cannot*; nor is there any great degree of Modeſty in confeſſing ſuch Ignorance.

Very well: But notwithſtanding this confeſs'd Ignorance, and Inability to ſolve the Difficulties of theſe Appearances; you are fully aſſur'd of the Truth and Reality of them: You don't think the Exiſtence of them is queſtionable, becauſe you find it impoſſible to account for the *Modus and Ratio* of them.

No, they'll eaſily allow that.

I ask then, in the next place, *Are not you Deiſts, who lay down ſuch a Rule as this, wretched Bigots, by your own Principles?* Are not you obſtinate and credulous beyond all Men, to ſtand ſo peremptorily to the Truth of thouſands and thouſands of things, when you can't ſolve the leaſt Difficulty belonging to any of them all?

No! they'll ſay: *For the things you are now talking of, are plain and evident Matter of Fact to our Senſes:*

Senses: and no Difficulties whatsoever, can be of any Consideration, in such a Case as that.

Our Eyes tell us, *That Bodies do gravitate and move; that such sort of Beings as those which are call'd Animals, do actually exist and perform their Operations: and therefore, tho we can give no Answer to all the mysterious Questions that may be propos'd upon these and other Heads; yet because the things themselves are obvious to Sense, so that we are sure of the Reality of them; for this reason we have no regard to the Difficulties that may possibly be urg'd, with respect to the Modus or Reasons of them.*

Who would not think now, at first sight, that there was really something very pertinent and strong, in this Reply? It seems to leave a Man under a sort of Necessity of concluding, or at least very handsomly to incline and dispose him to conclude, *That tho in matters of plain Sense, we may fairly overlook Difficulties that are impossible to be solv'd; yet that in some other Cases, insuperable Difficulties may be ground enough for calling the Truth of things in question; and it may be fond Credulity to believe them, notwithstanding the Evidence offer'd for the Proof of their being real and certain.*

If this be not the meaning of it, it has no meaning at all, that's any way contrary to what I have been advancing. For if insuperable Difficulties are not a sufficient Ground for calling in question the Truth of some things, for which notwithstanding we have all the Evidence that the intrinsick Nature of those things does allow of: then I was right in saying, *That the Stress of all our Dispute, lying upon the Point of Evidence; it was no matter, if there were ever so many perplex'd and intricate Questions started about it, which we could give no manner of answer to.*

And

And I was in the right likewise in asserting, *That it was not Bigotry and Credulity, firmly to adhere to the Belief of a thing, tho attended with such Difficulties; when there was such Evidence for it, as in the Nature of things, is just and proper, for a matter of that kind.*

And consequently, the Reply carries nothing along with it that thwarts any thing which I have laid down.

But on the other hand, if that be the true Scope and Meaning of it, which I have represented; then I say, it is absolutely false, and is fit to satisfy none, but those that will be satisfy'd with Sophistry and Paralogism.

The Proof of which, is thus plainly made out.

For since (by PROP. IX. Part II.) the intrinsick difference, in the Natures of those things which are the Objects of our Knowledg, infers a proportional necessary Difference in our Methods of proving, or assuring our selves of the Truth of them: since also, *by virtue of the Constitution of the World, and the Circumstances of Human Nature therein, we are under a strict Necessity of assenting to some things as true, upon bare* Moral Proof; *as well as of assenting to rigorous Demonstration, or believing the Testimony of our Senses:* Lastly, since 'tis equally inconsistent with the Perfections of God Almighty, and therefore equally impossible, that he should give a Delusion, in any Case whatsoever, all the Evidence which the Nature of things requires; that he should impose upon our Understandings, in a Case of *Moral Proof*, any more than make all our *Mathematical* Demonstrations to be false and wrong, or that our Senses should give us a quite contrary account of things, to what they really are: since 'tis as contrary to his Justice, Goodness and Vera-

Veracity, to do the one of these, as the other; *Therefore when in any Case whatsoever, we have such Evidence for the Truth of things, as is agreeable to matters of that Rank and Order; and when we have all that Evidence likewise, which the intrinsick Nature and Condition of those things, do require or allow of; we are under a direct and positive Obligation, to assent to those things as true and real, and to stand by them as such, if there were ever so many Difficulties attending them, and those ever so insolvable.*

And this irrefragably demonstrates the Vanity of all that plausible Talk, on the other side, and shews it to be but Talk.

So that now I must tell these Gentlemen, that those Instances of the mysterious Problems in Nature, are valid and good; and that their Pretence of overlooking those Difficulties, *upon the score of the obviousness of the things themselves, to Sense*; is nothing but mere Amusement. And therefore, those Difficulties are to be urg'd upon them; and they are oblig'd to solve them, if they can, or else for ever to give over the Talk of Bigotry and Credulity, where People admit things as true, upon plain and rational Evidence of Fact; tho at the same time, the Reason and Modus of them are not to be accounted for.

However, all this reasoning is *ex abundanti*, and to let them see, how far the utmost Consequences they can draw, will run. For I think, 'tis sufficiently plain, that there are no insolvable Difficulties (tho for the advantage of the Argument, we have put the Case the other way, and suppos'd there were) attending the present Question, concerning the *Resurrection of Jesus Christ*.

So that (as I said before) all the Dispute centers in this Question, *viz. Whether the Evidence*

for

for the Truth of the Fact be strictly just, and in all respects sufficient to oblige us, as reasonable Creatures, to yield the Assent of our Minds thereto. And this is the Enquiry, that now lies before us. And as 'tis that which crowns and concludes all; so I shall endeavour to bestow an answerable Degree of Care in the Management of it, that the way to our *great Conclusion* may lie fair and open to us.

SECT. LXXI.

I Come now therefore, to the *fourth and last general Head*, of the Method propos'd, *viz.* to shew ——

That there is actually such an Evidence, for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, *as does fully come up to all the Characters and Conditions of an Evidence, which obliges Human Understanding:* Or that it is such, as lays an indispensable Obligation on every capable Subject, to whom that Doctrine is fairly represented, with its proper Evidences; to receive it as a certain Truth.

Two things therefore are here to be done.

First, *We will state in order, the several Conditions of the Evidence we speak of; as what directly obliges the Understanding of Mankind.*

Secondly, *We will demonstrate, that the Evidence we have, for the* Resurrection of Jesus Christ, *does fully come up to those Conditions.*

And, I suppose, this is all that can be demanded reasonably, in order to a Conclusion.

In

In order to the *First* of these, I must refer to what has been said, concerning the Nature of the Evidence here intended; at SECT. III. Part II.

I have there given such an account of it, as contains all that is either needful to the present Purpose, or to make any Person of tolerable Understanding know what I mean.

So that there is nothing remaining for me to do, with respect to that matter; but only to branch out, what lies there summ'd up together, into proper Heads for our present Design.

And this I shall do, in the following Particulars.

First, *This Evidence is such, as being impartially weigh'd and consider'd, by the free Use of a Man's Reason, in all the common and allow'd ways of using it; would more powerfully incline him to the Belief of a thing propos'd, than any Objections to the contrary, when duly stated, and set in a just Light, would dissuade him from the Belief of that thing.*

Secondly, Not only so: but 'tis such likewise, *That if a Man should reject it, he must necessarily be forc'd upon such sort of Consequences, as the genuine and disinterested Sense of all Mankind, would condemn as absurd and wrong; and which even he himself, without making use of some bad Arts for managing his Understanding, contrary to its native Biass and Tendency, would not be able to digest; but must disown as irrational and absurd, when he came to reflect upon them, in a cool and serious Temper.*

Thirdly, 'Tis such, *as furnishes a Man with all those Media, which according to the Nature of the Case propos'd, are necessary to the making a perspicuous natural Conclusion; and by the help of which, he may*

likewise solve whatever Difficulties occur, upon such Principles, as Mankind in all resembling Cases, universally agree to argue themselves into a just Satisfaction and Assurance of the Truth of things by.

This is, in short, the Substance of that Account. So that the Conditions requir'd therein, and which therefore we must shew exactly to agree, to the Evidence we have for the *Resurrection of Christ*; are these:

The Arguments alledg'd, must weigh down whatever Objections are started on the contrary side.

Those Arguments ought to be of such a kind and such only, as is proper and sutable to the Nature of the Case propos'd.

They should be such, that a Man may be made as sure of the truth of a thing, by them; as he ever is or can be, in any Case of the like Nature.

Absurd and irrational Consequences, must be the Result of the Denial of them.

Whatever Difficulties are propos'd, may be solv'd upon such Principles as the common Practice and Consent of Mankind has establish'd, and to which resort is always had in Cases of a similar Nature.

And in judging of all this, 'tis requir'd also, *That a Man should use his Reason in the most free and disinterested manner, and let his Understanding conclude, what by the Laws and Constitution of Human Nature, ought to be concluded from such and such Circumstances of things propos'd to it.*

This

This Point thus ſtated and ſettled, I ſhall now demonſtrate——

Secondly, *That the Evidence we have, for the* Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, *does fully come up to theſe Conditions.*

In order to this, let the following ſteps be well conſider'd.

I have demonſtrated at large, in Part II. the Validity and Obligatory Nature of *Moral Evidence*, together with the abſolute Neceſſity we lie under, of admitting ſuch kind of Evidence as this; and that not from uncertain Gueſſes and Surmiſes, but from *what is plain Matter of Fact, in Human Nature, and of Experience in the World.*

I have ſhewn, that according to the *Nature of things*, this ſort of Proof is to be apply'd and made uſe of, for evincing the Truth of things, in Caſes of the higheſt and *greateſt Importance*, all one, as in thoſe that are of leſs Moment, at PROP. IX. And therefore, that as there can be no Ground nor Pretence, for requiring any other ſort of Proof, in this particular Caſe of the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt*; ſo 'tis ſtrictly Juſt and Rational, fully to acquieſce therein; provided it be ſuch as carries every thing along with it, that the Laws and Conſtitution of the World, and the Circumſtances of Human Nature in it, have made neceſſary, in order to our full Satisfaction and free Aſſent, in Caſes of this kind.

I have farther made it appear, that the Teſtimony for the Fact of *Chriſt's Reſurrection*, is ſo circumſtantiated; that if it may be rejected, no Evidence of that nature is ever to be admitted amongſt Mankind; but all *Moral Proof* muſt at once be thrown out of doors, and either *Senſi-*

ble Proof or *Mathematical Demonſtration* be demanded and given, for every thing that is propos'd as a matter of Belief.

That it was as impoſſible, as any thing which is not *phyſically* and ſimply impoſſible, can be; that there ſhould have been any Fraud committed by the Friends and Diſciples of *Jeſus Chriſt*: and that by all the Rules and Meaſures known in the World, for judging of Events of this kind; if there had been any fraudulent Management on the part of the Diſciples, it muſt infallibly have been diſcover'd and laid open.

That all the plain and allow'd Marks of egregious Falſhood and Impoſture, appear'd thro the whole Behaviour and Conduct of the Enemies of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

That they did, what guilty and ſelf-condemn'd Men ought to have done, muſt neceſſarily do, and always actually do, in ſuch Caſes, to skreen Malice and Wickedneſs from Diſcovery, and to run down Truth that would expoſe them to the World.

Moreover, I have ſhewn, that the Suppoſition of Cheat and Impoſture, in the matter of *Chriſt's Reſurrection*, is attended with *the groſſeſt Abſurdities*, with ſuch plain and manifeſt Contradictions, to all the known Experience, the ſtated Principles of Action, and Methods of procedure amongſt Mankind; that a Man that ſhould ſeriouſly advance, or ſtand by any ſuch Notions as thoſe, in any of the Affairs and Concerns of Human Life, would be given up, as loſt to all common Senſe and Underſtanding, and thought incapable of any rational intercourſe with, or treatment from the reſt of his Fellow-Creatures.

And

And these Consequences are evidently not strain'd or forc'd, but the native and genuine Result of the Hypothesis it self.

Lastly, I have shewn likewise, that if there be any certain Rules agreed to and receiv'd amongst Men, by which it may be known when an Objection carries weight and force along with it, and when it does not; that then, by all those Rules, there is no weight nor force, in any Objection offer'd by the *Deists*, against the Doctrine of *Christ's Resurrection.*

Now I say, *That all this laid together, amounts to an Evidence of the Conditions and Qualifications before-mention'd.*

And I demonstrate, that it does do so; by making the Application to each of those Condition, *severally and distinctly.*

First of all, I say, *That the Arguments alledg'd, to evince the Truth of* Christ's Resurrection, *do outweigh whatever Objections are started on the contrary side:* And not only so, but I affirm likewise, *That there is no manner of Proportion, and therefore no Comparison to be made, between the one and the other.*

For in those Arguments, there is nothing suppos'd; but what was either *plain and notorious Matter of Fact*, and own'd and allow'd to be such by all the Enemies of *Christianity*; or what *constant and vulgar Experience* justifies to be true, or what is perfectly agreeable to the most *impartial Reason and unanimous Sense of Mankind.*

If there be any thing else suppos'd, which is either contrary, or not fairly reducible, to one of these three Heads; let these Gentlemen, upon Examination, tell me where it lies. In the mean

time, the matter must rest there; and they may be sure, I would not put it upon that Issue, if I were not well assur'd, that they could never demonstrate me to be in the wrong in this Assertion, in any Point, of considerable Consequence to the Argument.

As for their *Objections*, 'tis certain, that they cannot possibly be founded on such Principles, as *Matter of Fact*, *Experience*, *Human Nature*, and *general Consent*; if our Arguments stand upon those Foundations: And I hope it is not vain to say, that they are propos'd in so perspicuous a manner; that any Person of tolerable Capacity, may presently see, whether they do stand upon those Foundations or no.

And therefore, the Conclusion is unavoidable, *That the Arguments do beyond comparison outweigh the Objections*; for Reasonings that have no solid and allow'd Principles to support them, can bear no proportion to those, which are supported by all that are solid and substantial.

And indeed, if a Man does but seriously consider, what is to be objected on the *Deists* side, with respect to our Saviour's *Resurrection*; if he does but set, what they say upon *the stealing away of the Body*, *the natural Impossibility of a* Resurrection, *and the want of publick ocular Demonstration*, in a clear Light; he will easily see, that all amounts to no more than mere Harangue, or Words adapted to the Purposes of Amusement and Deception; since by all the Laws of right Reason and Argument, there's nothing to be infer'd from them. And so apprehensive am I, *of the intrinsick Goodness and Validity*, of those Evidences which Divine Providence has given us, for the Ground and Support of our Belief in this Case; that I'll venture to affirm this, not only of any

any Objection, that they ever have propos'd for the time past, but of any likewise, that they ever shall for the time to come, invent, contrive and start, against this Doctrine. Nor is this at all more peremptory and bold, than what ought to be, or is consistent with Decency. And the reason is, because I can fully assure my self, *that God Almighty will never change the Nature and the Order of things*; so that that which is now intrinsically unjust and unreasonable, shall ever come to be just and reasonable; or on the other hand, that Arguments, which at one time do positively and directly conclude the Truth of a thing, should at another time become weak and sophistical. And unless he does do thus, whatever shall at any time be objected against the Truth of this Fact, must necessarily be insignificant and vain; because (I say) he has furnish'd us with such Reasons to conclude it, as can never possibly lose their Force, being founded on Principles, as stable as the World and Human Nature it self.

Secondly, 'Tis evident likewise, *That the Arguments alledg'd for the Truth of this Doctrine, are of such a kind, as is sutable to the Nature of the Subject; and that therefore it would be infinitely irrational and foolish, to expect or demand any other sort of Proof than that for it.*

The Case in Dispute, is a *Matter of Fact*; that is, a Point in its own nature not capable of *Mathematical* Demonstration, which therefore is not to be requir'd for it.

And as for *ocular* Demonstration, or *sensible* Proof; 'tis certain indeed, that the Truth of a Matter of Fact may be thus incontestably made

out, to those who are *Contemporaries* with it, and are on the Spot where, and when, it was brought to pass. But 'tis Nonsense and Contradiction, for others who come after, to talk of being convinc'd this way. And therefore, *sensible* Proof is to be excluded, from all Cases of this kind, where the Question is concerning *one individual Matter of Fact*; no less than strict *Demonstration* is, from all Matter of Fact in general; and that upon the same score too, *viz. simple Impossibility.*

However, as it is notoriously evident, and I have expresly shewn at PROP. VIII. that we may be fully and indubitably assur'd of the Truth of some Matters of Fact, whereof we are not our selves Eye-Witnesses; *and that this is not only true in common Experience and Observation, but 'tis a Principle likewise, upon which all the Business, Commerce, Affairs and publick Management of Mankind, do absolutely depend:*

So 'tis certain, that by the Arguments we have, to conclude the Truth of *Christ's Resurrection*, a Man may be made as sure of it, as he can be of the Truth of any thing else, that he does not see with his own Eyes.

Let any Person tell me, by what Methods or upon what Principles, he assures himself of the Truth of any thing that he has not *ocular* Demonstration for; whether in the way of *History*, or *Civil Policy*, or *Trade and Dealing* in the World: and I'll shew him, that upon the very same sort of Principles (but strengthned with Circumstances of incomparably more Force and Advantage) he *may* believe, he *ought* to believe, and must be invincibly stubborn, or stupid, if he does not believe, *That* Jesus Christ *was really rais'd from the Dead.* And this would be a short way of bringing the Dispute to an Issue, if these Gentlemen

Gentlemen would but ſubmit to it: For there are but theſe three Points to be examin'd.

First, *Whether they have not a full and compleat Aſſurance of the Truth of ſome Matters of Fact, whereof they themſelves never were, nor could be, Eye-Witneſſes?*

Secondly, *What Principles thoſe are, upon which they reaſon themſelves into this Aſſurance?*

Thirdly, *Whether upon the very ſame Principles, we cannot with equal Juſtice and much more Strength, aſſure our ſelves that it was Matter of Fact, that* Jeſus Chriſt *roſe from the Dead?*

I would deſire no more than this. But—

Thirdly, The Arguments offer'd to prove the Reality of our Saviour's *Reſurrection*, are ſuch; *that by the Denial of them, a Man is forc'd upon Conſequences, that are palpably falſe, and moſt intolerable abſurd and ridiculous.*

He muſt ſuppoſe things, that not only never were done, but never can be done likewiſe, whilſt the Conſtitution of the World, and Human Nature, remain unchang'd. He muſt lay down ſuch Concluſions for true and certain, which every day's Experience and Acquaintance with Mankind, will ſhew him to be manifeſtly falſe and impoſſible. To juſtify this, we need only review that train of Conſequences that attend the grand Deiſtical *Hypotheſis*, viz. *That there was nothing but mere Juggle and Cheat, in all the matter of* Chriſt's Reſurrection; and which I have already endeavour'd to ſet in a clear Light, before the Reader, in another place. I ſhall not repeat here, what I have ſaid there or elſewhere; but only add this, That the Conſequences I have drawn upon theſe Gentlemen, with reſpect to this Matter, are ſo far from being

being any of them unfairly drawn, or deceitfully represented; that they'll bear more and worse Aggravations still, than any I have loaded them withal: And that 'tis out of a decent Regard to the grave and serious Nature of the Subject, that I have forborn to lay open the Fanaticism and despicable Nonsense of *Deism*, in such a sort of way as it deserves.

Fourthly, It is plain likewise, *That by the Principles which the* Christians *go upon, they can solve whatever Difficulties are propos'd to them in this matter, and that in the same easy and natural way, which Men always proceed in, to give themselves a just Satisfaction, in all Cases of the like kind.*

For this end, let the Answers we have been oblig'd to return, up and down in several parts of this Treatise, to any Doubts, or Queries, or direct Objections propos'd on the side of the *Deists*; let them I say, be impartially weigh'd and examin'd by any Person, who is fit to be a Judg in such a Case; and let such a one determine, whether what I assert on this Head be not true. Have we wrongfully conceal'd any part of their Strength, or made their Objections appear foolish and ludicrous, on purpose to have an occasion of exposing them? Or rather have we not given them all the Scope and Advantage in the way of proposing them, that can fairly be desir'd or expected from any Adversary; and taken every Opportunity to express their Sense, in opposition to our own, where there was room for any thing of Value and Consequence to be said? Farther, have we ever been oblig'd to make use of any little Artifices, to avoid the Force of a Conclusion on their part; or any indirect round-about

about Methods, in making a Reply to what they propose; or any quibbling ambiguous Terms, to blunder the Cause, and leave the Reader involv'd in Doubts, whether we speak to the purpose, and fight with the *Deists* or with our own Shadows?

Have we been forc'd to advance any arbitrary precarious *Hypothesis*; to lay down, or stand by any sort of Position, which is alien from the common Sense and Notions of Mankind, which thwarts general Usage and Practice, or subverts the establish'd Laws and Order of things?

Has any thing of this kind been done, in order to evade, or to get loose from any Objection of theirs, which we have had upon our hands?

If there has not, then this Article is clear. If there has, then it is incumbent on them, to shew us where this ill Management lies, and make it out that it is so.

In the *last* place, From all this, as well as from a Review of the thing it self, I hope 'tis sufficiently manifest, that our way of arguing has been all along disinterested and free; that we have not concluded, from Humour and Prejudice, but from *Nature and the Necessity of things*; and that if those Conclusions are in reality for us, and do serve our turn, and not that of the *Deists*; yet that it is not because we will have it to be so, or do make those Conclusions to run this way, against their own natural Drift and Tendency; but because God Almighty, in the *Order and Constitution of things*, has made it strictly rational, and therefore necessary for us to conclude after this manner: Nor can we do otherwise, without offering manifest Violence, to the Faculties he has endow'd us with.

Thus

Thus we have *apply'd* the Conditions and Qualifications of the Evidence deſcrib'd at SECT. III. Part II. to the ſeveral Parts and Steps of the Evidence we have, for the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt*; and upon the *Application* we have found, that they exactly agree to it: Or that the Evidence we have for the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt*, does in all reſpects fully come up to thoſe Conditions.

From hence I infer——

Therefore there is ſuch an Evidence for the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, *as actually induces an Obligation on all Men; to whom that Evidence is fairly propos'd, and who are capable of arguing upon it, after a due and regular manner; to give their Aſſent to it as a certain Truth.*

But it is utterly impoſſible, that the Supreme Governour of the World (whoſe juſt and wiſe Providence preſides over all things, and more eſpecially over the Affairs and Concerns of reaſonable Beings) *ſhould ever countenance an* Impoſture, *with ſuch an Evidence, as ſhould lay an indiſpenſable Obligation on rational Creatures, to give their Aſſent to it as a real Truth.*

Therefore this was not an Impoſture: *But it was certain and undoubted Matter of Fact*, that Jeſus Chriſt did riſe from the Dead. *Q. E. D.*

SECT.

SECT. LXXII.

BEfore I come to draw the proper *Inferences* from this moſt important *Concluſion*, I would put theſe Gentlemen in mind of one thing: and that is, That I expect ſomething more than bare Aſſertion and Conjecture, to be offer'd on their part, in order to the anſwering of this Argument. For as I have not proceeded upon any ſuch uncertain Foundations with them; they are not to proceed upon any ſuch with me, in any Defence they ſhall think fit to make.

In ſhort, to overturn my Argument, they muſt of neceſſity do one of theſe two things; and if it be ſo, that they can do neither of them, then all their other Efforts whatſoever, muſt neceſſarily be vain.

Firſt, *They muſt either ſhew the Scheme I have gone upon, to be wrong in it ſelf, or inſufficient for my purpoſe: That the Principles I have made uſe of, are foreign to the Buſineſs, and will not in their own nature, ſerve for that End and Deſign which I have apply'd them to.*

Or Secondly, *Allowing the Scheme to be juſt and right in it ſelf, they muſt evince, that I have been guilty of ſome fundamental Miſtake in the Management of it.*

I ſay, a *fundamental* Miſtake: for 'tis not a bare Slip or Inadvertency, if they diſcover any thing of that kind in the performance, that will break the Force of the Argument, as *to them*;

them; no more than an unaccurate Step in the Series of a Demonstration, will spoil the Conclusion, and make it of no Effect. What they are to do, is to find out some Error that's *essential* to the Business: and such as really makes the Conclusion faulty and irregular; that is, influences it so far, that it is indeed no Conclusion at all.

And this is what all Men ought to make their Aim and Scope, in all matters of Dispute, *viz. to look to the Foundation-Principles, and see whether they be right or no*: Because this is the shortest and most direct way to bring the matter to a Decision, and also shews a just regard to the great End of all Controversy, which is the Discovery of Truth, and that Men do not dispute for mere disputing sake.

These are the only possible ways of attacking the Argument; and they may make it either way, or if they please, both ways.

To prove the *Scheme it self* to be wrong or insufficient, they must shew, that it was a wrong or an insufficient way of going to work in this matter, to proceed after the following Method, *viz.*

First, To state the Nature of an Evidence, which obliges Human Understanding to assent to a thing as true——

Then to evince that an Evidence, of such Conditions as those describ'd, is certainly Obligatory——

Next to shew that God Almighty can never suffer us, to have such Evidence for an Imposture——

And lastly, That there is actually such an Evidence, for the *Resurrection of Jesus Christ*.

This is the Method I have us'd, and let them demonstrate 'tis an ill one.

In

In order to ſhew my *Management* of this Scheme, to be fundamentally wrong, or to be faulty in ſome Point of neceſſary Moment to the Concluſion; it will lie upon them to make out one of theſe four Points——

Either *Firſt*, That I have not rightly ſtated the Nature and Conditions of an Evidence, which obliges the Underſtanding of Mankind to yield its Aſſent.

Or *Secondly*, That tho thoſe Conditions are rightly ſtated; yet I have come ſhort in my Proof, of the Obligatory Nature thereof; or have not gone the right way to work, to ſhew that an Evidence ſo qualify'd, is obligatory.

Or *Thirdly*, That notwithſtanding I have ſufficiently prov'd, that an Evidence of thoſe Conditions does infallibly oblige the Underſtanding of Mankind to yield its aſſent; yet however, it is not inconſiſtent with the *Divine Perfections*, to ſuffer Impoſtures to come recommended to us, with ſuch an Evidence.

Or *Laſtly*, That tho the Evidence be truly ſtated, its Obligatory Nature prov'd, and it be impoſſible God ſhould ever ſuffer an *Impoſture* to come thus recommended to us; yet that there is a failure in the laſt Article, and that the Evidence offer'd to prove the *Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt*, does not come up to thoſe Conditions.

If they attack the *firſt* Article, let them give us their Notion of an Obligatory Evidence, fairly and fully ſtated; and at the ſame time, be ſure to make their Account of it really different from what I have given.

If the *ſecond*, let them ſhew me the inſufficiency of the Principles I have proceeded upon, in order to demonſtrate the Obligatory Nature of the Evidence deſcrib'd; as alſo, what other

Princi-

Principles I ought to have proceeded upon, instead of those I have actually made use of.

If the *third*, let them give us an Account of *their God Almighty*, that we may know what sort of Being he must be, that can suffer notorious *Delusions and Impostures* to be presented to the Understandings of reasonable Creatures, with such sort of Evidence, for the truth of them.

If the *last*, let them effectually make out one, or both of these Articles——

Either *First*, That the Matters of Fact, on which the Arguments for the *Truth of Christ's Resurrection* are grounded; are not true, but fictitious and imaginary.

Or *Secondly*, That *my Application and Use of them, is wrong*; and that the Evidence arising from them, does not in reality come up to the Conditions and Qualifications requir'd in our Scheme.

And here the way lies very plain and open before them: for I having summ'd up all those Conditions *separately and distinctly*, it will be an easy matter to find out a gross Blunder, provided I have made any in the Application.

Thus I have done all, that I think can be fairly expected or requir'd, in order to the settling this great Point between *Us* and *Them*. I have propos'd the Method of Proof on our side; and I have shewn them all the possible ways of overturning it: and it is not without a very clear Prospect of the utmost Issue and Result of all their Attempts, that I have done this.

In the mean time, let us see, *what follows from the Doctrine of* Christ's Resurrection *thus establish'd.*

General

General Corollary.

All those Consequences which are drawn, in the First Part *of this Discourse, relating to the* Divine Mission, Dignity and Office of *Christ Jesus*, to the Truth of the Gospel Revelation, the Happiness of sincere *Christians*, and the Dangers to which Unbelievers are expos'd; *and which were drawn upon Supposition*, that the Doctrine of *Christ's Resurrection* was true: *These Consequences (I say) are now no longer* Suppositions; *but* Propositions, *or Theorems of infallible Truth.*

We can say now assuredly——

That Christ Jesus *was a Divine Person; the great Prophet, Messenger and Son of God; the only Saviour and Mediator between God and Sinners; an authoriz'd Legislator, and Revealer of the Divine Will and Purposes to the World; and who by the Father's Appointment and Constitution, is the Sovereign Judg of all.*

That his Gospel is actually a Revelation of the Mind and Pleasure of God, for the Instruction and Government of Mankind, in order to their Eternal Salvation; and ought accordingly to be receiv'd and depended upon, as the great Rule of Faith and Practice, wherever it is promulg'd.

That Contempt of this Revelation, is a direct Contempt of God himself; and Rebellion against the express Orders of Heaven, by which the Authority of it is establish'd.

That the Case of wilful obstinate Unbelievers, is infinitely hazardous; and of such as continue impenitent to the last (in spite of all the merciful Calls of the Gospel, and the Provision made for their rational Satisfaction and Conviction, in order to their Cure) for all that we can know of the matter, is forlorn and desperate: the Threat-

nings of the Gospel, being delivered in the most plain and peremptory Terms, and God having given us no manner of ground to believe or hope for any Relaxation of them, or that he has provided any other Remedy, than that which he has here reveal'd, *viz. By Faith in* Christ Jesus, *and sincere Obedience to his Laws.*

That the *Deists* therefore, must necessarily represent themselves, as Persons given up to Humour and Prejudice, and resolv'd not to think nor examine things to the bottom, but pass their Days here in the World, in a *blind mechanical Repose*; till they take this matter into deep and serious Consideration; and setting themselves to reason upon it, as Men should and may do; come, by the Help of God's Grace (which will certainly assist sincerely industrious, humble, and honest Minds) to this good Conclusion, *viz. That they ought to believe and obey the Gospel of* Jesus Christ, *and that their Happiness in another Life, depends upon their so doing.*

And may they all come, to make this Conclusion!

May they know *Christ Jesus*, as the Son of God; and as their Lord and Saviour: *Having their Hearts warm'd with his Love, and their Mouths open'd, to show forth his Praise.*

For every hard Speech and unworthy Thought of him, let them feel the deepest Sorrow and Compunction of Soul; even that godly Sorrow, *which works Repentance to Salvation, never to be repented of.*

May the Blood of *Jesus* be their Atonement; and through him, let them offer up to God, *that Sacrifice of a broken and contrite Heart, which he will not despise.*

May the Gospel be honour'd, by their Faith and Obedience; and the rest of the unbelieving World

World led on to *Jesus Christ*, by their happy Example.

And when their Conversion has made Joy both in Heaven and on Earth; and they have tasted liberally, the blessed Fruits of the Faith of the Gospel, in solid Vertue, Peace and Comfort here; may they reach the Perfection of all, in the Heavenly Kingdom, where *Jesus Christ who died and rose again*, now sits at the right Hand of God, and has prepar'd Entertainments for those that love him, *such as Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor has it enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive, what and how great they are.*

And this is what all good *Christians* will say *Amen* to.

SECT. LXXIII.

BUT there are some other Inferences, from this Doctrince of our Saviour's *Resurrection*; which relating to the *Christians* only, I thought proper to subjoin here by themselves. Nor could I omit mentioning of them, without a very faulty Neglect; since they make so much for the solid Comfort of those who sincerely believe the Gospel.

The Uses which such may make of this great Article of the *Christian Faith*; are many and very considerable.

From hence they may assure themselves, of *Pardon and Justification before God.*

For Christ *was deliver'd for our Offences, and rais'd again for our Justification.*

And, *Him hath God exalted with his right Hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance to* Israel, *and Forgiveness of Sins.* Again ——

This is a ſure and never-failing Foundation, upon which they may ſafely bottom all their Faith and Hope.

He (ſays the Apoſtle *Peter*, ſpeaking of our Lord) *was verily fore-ordain'd before the Foundation of the World, but was manifeſt in theſe laſt Times for you; who by him do believe in God, that rais'd him from the Dead, and gave him Glory; that your Faith and Hope might be in God.*

And the ſame Apoſtle tells us, in another part of his Divine Epiſtle, that *We are begotten again to a lively Hope, by the* Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt *from the Dead; to an Inheritance, incorruptible, undefil'd, and that fadeth not away, reſerv'd in the Heavens for us.*

Our Lord's *Reſurrection* is likewiſe ſet forth in Holy Writ, as the Pattern, or Example of our Deliverance from the Power of Sin, and leading a new and holy Life.

Therefore (ſays the Apoſtle *Paul) are we buried with him by Baptiſm into Death; that like as* Chriſt *was rais'd up from the Dead, by the Glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in Newneſs of Life.* And again———

Knowing that Chriſt *being rais'd from the Dead, dieth no more (Death hath no more Dominion over him)———Likewiſe reckon ye alſo your ſelves to be dead indeed unto Sin; but alive unto God, thro* Jeſus Chriſt *our Lord.*

And from hence the Practice of Holineſs and Mortification is immediately preſs'd and enforc'd. ———*Let not Sin therefore reign in your Mortal Body, that you ſhould obey it in the Luſts thereof; neither yield ye your Members as Inſtruments of Unrighteouſneſs unto Sin: But yield your ſelves unto God, as thoſe that are alive from the Dead; and your Members as Inſtruments of Righteouſneſs unto God.*

And

And the Apostle makes use of the same sort of Argument, to persuade *Christians* not only to a righteous and holy, but a more generous, pure and exalted *Conversation*; to a Temper that should raise them beyond this Sphere of earthly things, and dispose them to seek all their Pleasures and Felicities above. —— *If ye be then Risen with* Christ, *seek those things which are above, where* Christ *sitteth at the right Hand of God: Set your Affections on things above, not on things on the Earth: For ye are dead, and your Life is hid with* Christ *in God.*

So that we see, all the *Graces*, the *Enjoyments*, the *Duties* and *Offices* of the *Christian* Life; are deriv'd from hence (I mean the *Resurrection* of our blessed Saviour) as their native and genuine Spring.

SECT. LXXIV.

BUT there is yet another Use to be made of this Doctrine; which tho it relates to the *Body*, the vilest and most ignoble Part of us, is not for that reason to be despis'd; but on the other hand, highly to be priz'd and valu'd, by every true *Christian*: And that is this, *viz. That the* Resurrection of Jesus Christ, *is a certain and undoubted Pledg, to all sincere Believers, of their own* Resurrection *to a glorious Immortality.*

For now is Christ *risen from the Dead, and become the First-Fruits of them that slept.* Which Expression of the *First-Fruits*, intimates a particular Connection, between the *Resurrection of Christ*, and that, of those who believe on him: It represents both the one and the other, but as *Parts of the same great Design*, or the Beginning and End of the same Work: The *Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, being

the first leading Step, towards that Universal Triumph over Death and the Grave; which our *Resurrection* will, in due time, render perfect and compleat.

For as in *Adam all die, even so in* Christ *shall all be made alive; but every Man in his own order:* Christ *the First-Fruits, afterward they that are* Christ's *at his Coming.*

And the Apostle is so very clear and express, in arguing the Certainty of our *Resurrection*, from that of our Saviour's; that he puts it upon us, if we believe the one, to depend upon the other as certain also. *For if we believe* (says he) *that* Jesus *died, and rose again; even so them also which sleep in* Jesus, *will God bring with him.* Nay, he does not only *directly* infer one from the other, but he argues *per impossibile*, the Nullity of *Christ's Resurrection*, and the Falsity of the whole Gospel-Revelation, from the *Hypothesis* of our not being rais'd; and consequently, leaves that *Hypothesis* expos'd, as an infinitely false and absurd one. *For if the Dead rise not, then is not* Christ *rais'd. And if* Christ *be not rais'd, your Faith is vain, you are yet in your Sins: Then they also which are fallen asleep in* Christ *are perished: Yea, and we are found false Witnesses of God; because we have testified of God, that he rais'd up* Christ; *whom he rais'd not up, if so be that the Dead rise not.*

'Tis observable, that the Apostle repeats this Argument, *per impossibile*, three or four times in that Chapter; and to be sure, it was not by chance, nor to no purpose, that he does do so.

It might have been thought a sufficient Security to us, to have been assur'd, that because *Christ* was risen, we should rise also, in our proper Order and Season. But 'tis much more still, to have the Point carry'd thus, *viz. that* Christ *himself is*

is not risen, nor his Gospel! true, if it be so, that we rise not from the Dead. This does not make it only a fair Consequence, that we shall rise again, but a plain Impossibility that we should not.

All the Arguments, that serve to prove the *Resurrection of Christ*, and the Truth of the Gospel-Revelation, and which we know to be of infallible Truth, and Certainty; are thus by Consequence made Arguments, to infer the Certainty of our *Resurrection.*

So that this Privilege is establish'd on so sure a foot, to all that believe the Gospel of *Christ Jesus*; that it can never become doubtful to them, tho they come to question all the Principles and Foundations of their Faith.

SECT. LXXV.

NOW this Doctrine of a *Future Resurrection*, is of the greatest Use and Service to us, upon many important Accounts.

For from hence we may derive ——

First, *The best Supports, under the Prospect and Apprehensions of Death.*

Secondly, *The best Reasons, to endure all the Calamities of Life, with Patience and Fortitude.*

And, Thirdly, *The most powerful Motives to Diligence and Perseverance, in all the Duties enjoin'd by our Holy Religion.*

For the *First*, What tho after a few Days more, we leave the Light of this World, and go down into the gloomy Mansions of Death! What tho we cease from Action and Business here; are laid out of Sight and Remembrance, and our Bodies turn to Dust and Rottenness?

This is indeed a Melancholy Scene to Flesh and Blood; and 'tis the more affecting too, because we know 'tis what we can't possibly avoid, and a few Turns more in the World, will bring us to it.

However, a *Christian* may view, even this dark and dismal Scene, with Comfort.

For tho Soul and Body must part, yet *the Separation is but for a Season*; and that in order to a more happy Union, such as shall never be dissolv'd.

The Grave is not to be our Everlasting Prison: And the Time will come, when *Death it self shall be swallowed up in Victory.*

And what can have more Influence, to alleviate those Agonies, which the Prospect of an approaching Dissolution, may throw weak Flesh and Blood into; than to consider, that this is but a Step to Eternal Life and Liberty? That this Gate once pass'd, we are for ever out of the Reach of all Danger and Trouble; and enter'd upon a State, where Death shall have no Power, nor the Terrors of the Grave ever fright us any more?

On the other hand, How sad and painful a thing must it be, to die without these Hopes! I mean, to die in a State of absolute Infidelity: For a true *Christian* may go off (and many do, no doubt) without the Comfort of those Hopes, which their own sincere Faith in *Christ Jesus*, might entitle them to. But what I say, is, that it must needs be doleful, for a Man to die with sceptical Fears and Doubts, about Futurity, and the Consequences of the Separation of Soul and Body! When he does not know what he shall be next, or where he shall go, or how he shall be dispos'd of: Whether *Annihilated*, or *Metamorphos'd*, or condemn'd to wander in Eternal Night (a dark unknown some-where, worried with restless Thoughts, and without

without prospect of Release. And therefore, that those Persons who believe and obey the Gospel of *Christ Jesus*, are infinitely happy; in that they have so sure a Bottom and Foundation for chearful Hope, at their going out of this World; by the many repeated Assurances of a future joyful Re-union of Soul and Body, and a glorious Immortality consequent thereupon.

SECT. LXXVI.

Secondly, AS *to all the Miseries and Calamities of Human Life*; this Doctrine serves mightily to encourage us, and to fortify our Patience and Resolution in the enduring of them.

We find by Experience, that in all sorts of Trouble and Distress, nothing is so grateful and refreshing to us, as a Prospect of After-Ease and Deliverance. When a Man looks round him, and sees nothing but Calamity on every side, and no appearance of Help or comfortable Retreat; no likelihood of the End of his Troubles, or that things will be better with him in time to come: This tends either quite to damp the Force and Vigour of the Spirits, or to introduce Phrensy and wild Despair. And either way, it renders a Man wholly uncapable, of a just and regular Management of himself, under his Affliction.

But to have *Hope* in Misery, and much more a Prospect of certain escape from all, in due time: How does this strengthen and invigorate every Power, and excite us to do all that is possible, to throw off the Burden from us, or to keep our selves from sinking under it?

And

And if so, What Comfort then may true *Christians* draw, from the believing foresight of a blessed Resurrection, and all the joyful Consequences of it?

Alas! Our greatest worldy Deliverances, are but from some particular Troubles and Misfortunes, which as soon as remov'd, may return again; or be succeeded by others, as bad or worse. And if it be not so, yet all the Joy and Pleasure resulting from such Deliverances, are but for a little time: They are gone with the fleeting Vapour of Life, almost as soon as we begin to perceive and relish them.

But here we have *Universal* Freedom and Felicity before us! A perfect Exemption from all Evil, sweetned by *Eternity*, and join'd with *positive* Happiness (which a *Resurrection* will let us into) fit to be describ'd, only in that Heaven, where it shall be enjoy'd!

Now I say, here is a Scene of things so transcendently Glorious and Beautiful, presented to our View, that were our *Faith* but such as it ought to be, no Melancholy or Despondency whatsoever, would be able to interrupt our Peace and Quiet.

SECT. LXXVII.

BUT it may be worth while to descend to particular Instances, *And shew the Use of this Doctrine, as it serves for our Support and Comfort, under the most ordinary Trials of Human Life.*

First therefore, *Suppose we are oppress'd with bodily Pains and Diseases, which deprive us of the Pleasure and*

and Contentment of Life: 'Tis no ſmall Relief (in ſuch a Caſe as this) to think, that the *very Principles of all theſe Diſorders*, ſhall be left behind us in the Grave.

That hereafter we ſhall put off *Mortality and Corruption*, and exchange a drooping frail Conſtitution, for *immortal Strength and Vigour*. At preſent, 'tis a vaſt deal of Art and Attendance, that is requiſite, to keep thoſe *tender Machines*, we carry about with us, in any tolerable good Order. How many Methods do we uſe to compoſe and ſettle them, under the painful Senſations they are here liable to? What Recruits are we oblig'd to lay in, for their daily Expences and Decays? And when a Diſorder happens, what troubleſom Applications, what coſtly Experiments are made, before 'tis remov'd, and the labouring Springs of Nature are reſtor'd to free Action again? And after all, how often is the beſt Art in the World non-plus'd and baffl'd, and miſerable we, with all Helps and Remedies about us, are left groaning under our Burdens.

But notwithſtanding, there is a never-failing Cure in view, which will at once carry off all theſe Maladies, and prevent their Return for ever. At Death, we may bid farewell to all Infirmities: *For our outward Man, tho ſown in Weakneſs, ſhall be rais'd in Power; tho ſown in Diſhonour, it ſhall be rais'd in Glory.* Bodies will hereafter be prepar'd for us, moſt exquiſitely wrought and temper'd, by the wiſe and powerful Hand of God; compos'd on purpoſe for the noble Service, and fit to ſhare the Joys of a State of Immortality: Free from all the Impurities and baſer Mixtures of this Terreſtrial Compoſition, and temper'd into a Fineneſs for the Heavenly World; where nothing groſs and corruptible can dwell.

And

And with what Eaſe and Pleaſure, ſhall we then feel our ſelves, when beſides the compleat Cure wrought upon our *Souls*, our *Bodies* ſhall be ſo admirably diſpos'd too? When all the reproachful Marks which Sin hath imprinted on them, being utterly effac'd; they ſhall be form'd into a Reſemblance to the *Glorious Body of our Lord? Who will change our vile Bodies, that they may be faſhion'd like to his own Glorious Body, by the working, whereby he is able to ſubdue all things to himſelf.* And therefore, let us look upon them, under all their preſent Diſorders; *with a Patience and Conſtancy, becoming the Expectation of ſo bleſſed a Change.* And when they clog and diſcompoſe our Minds, and hinder us from a free and chearful Diſcharge of our Duty; let it be a Relief to us, to think of the Joys of a *Reſurrection Day*, which are ſecur'd to us by the Promiſe of our bleſſed Saviour.

SECT. LXXVIII.

Secondly, *Suppoſe we meet with Diſaſters and Troubles, abroad in the World, whether Loſſes and Diſappointments, or unjuſt Violence and Oppreſſion, or Calumny and Reproach*: of all which the World generally affords no little Plenty to thoſe, who will approve themſelves the ſincere Diſciples of the *Holy and Bleſſed Jeſus.*

We ought to conſider with our ſelves, in ſuch Caſes as theſe, *That this troubleſom Condition of the World without us, is ſutable enough to the preſent unſettled and divided State, that we our ſelves are in here below.*

Our *Bodies* are in poor and miſerable Circumſtances; quickly diſcompos'd and put out of Tune; full

full of the Seeds of Distempers, and wearing every Day towards a Dissolution.

The Peace of our Minds, is frequently disturb'd, by *irregular Passions and Affections*; by the Dulness and Heaviness of the distemper'd Machine; by cloudy Vapours, and a thousand other malignant Influences of the Corporeal Part; with which the Mind it self is affected, *by virtue of the Laws of the Union.* 'Tis seldom that we have a *serene and truly pleasant* Enjoyment of our selves, that lasts long; some Care or Labour, some Anxiety or Disquietude, in the Circle of Life, breaking in upon us to interrupt it.

We seldom keep to a Pitch, either in our *Temper*, our *Apprehensions*, or *Relish* of things. And whether things about us, change or no; we can be *foolishly Happy and Miserable*, by mere Conceit and Imagination. We often *betray our selves*, into the greatest Dangers, by our Folly and Imprudence, or Rashness and Obstinacy: So that the worst Enemies we have, *can't do us that Mischief, which sad and common Experience assures us, 'tis in our Power to do our selves.*

Now I say, 'tis no great matter whether all things go on smoothly and easily abroad, since Affairs are in so ill a Posture at home. For our own *vitiated Constitution*, would be always a Fountain of Trouble and Uneasiness to us. If we could make the World go just as we would have it; *yet unless a perfect Cure were likewise wrought upon our selves*, all the Pleasure arising from thence *would be sadly imbitter'd to us.* Besides, such a State of perfect Quiet, and freedom from all external Trouble, might be of very dangerous Consequence to us, with respect to the next World; how much soever it might please and gratify us in this. For we find that very great Crosses and Afflic-

tions,

tions, are ſometimes hardly ſufficient, to keep Men in the way of their Duty: And that they can make hard Shifts, to tread forbidden Ground, tho every ſtep be amongſt Thorns. What would it then be, if there were nothing to give a check to Sin and Extravagance, or to put us in mind of our Duty and Danger? What would it be if the World did nothing but ſmile and tempt, and our way was all Pleaſure and Softneſs? So that all theſe things well conſider'd, we may eaſily convince our ſelves, *That there is no need of a State of more Reſt and Quiet than this is, for us, ſuch as we now are, to enjoy our ſelves, that little time we have to ſtay here.*

But then on the other hand, *So glorious a Change as will one Day be wrought in us, is a full Aſſurance (even to our Reaſon) of a proportional Change of all Circumſtances without us.* God who will hereafter join pure and ſpotleſs Minds, to exactly temper'd and harmoniz'd Bodies; will make us enjoy the Comfort of ſo advantageous a Union, in a Life of perfect Pleaſure and Tranquillity.

'Tis a ſurprizing Work to raiſe Human Nature, from its preſent mean and frail Condition, to a State of glorious and perfect Health. And therefore God, who will do that Work, will undoubtedly ſute all things ſo, that all the Ends and Purpoſes of it ſhall be obtain'd. He will not make us capable of perfect Felicity, without beſtowing perfect Felicity upon us. And this is certain, *That no Joys within, can make a Happineſs perfect, which is liable to Aſſault and Diſturbance from without.* And therefore, in that World to which a *Reſurrection* will introduce us, *there will be no Enemies to oppreſs, nor no diſaſterous Events to make us uneaſy, and take off from our Enjoyments.* Theſe are the proper Trials of this World, where

where Sin and Corruption live, which neceſſarily produce Trouble and Sorrow, and render them alſo very uſeful to us. But when our Natures are refin'd from all that baſe Allay, and the Work of God is compleated both in Soul and Body; there will be no room for any Diſcipline or Exerciſe of this ſort. Trouble and Confuſion would be more diſagreeable to ſuch a State, than perfect Reſt and Liberty to this.

Now 'tis a Motive, *to invincible Courage and Reſolution in bearing all the Evils we meet with in this World*; to conſider there is ſuch a State before us, in which we ſhall be out of the reach of all, and enjoy an everlaſting undiſturb'd Repoſe. That in a few Days more, when Death ſhall come to give us a Diſcharge from hence, we may ſay, of all things troubleſom and afflictive here, as the *Iſraelites* of their Enemies, at the brink of the *Red Sea*; *we ſhall ſee them no more for ever.*

SECT. LXXIX.

THirdly and Laſtly, *This Doctrine is the moſt effectual Encouragement to the Exerciſe of all Grace and Vertue, and the Diſcharge of every Duty incumbent on us, in our* Chriſtian *Courſe.*

'Tis a ſufficient Proof of the Truth of this Propoſition, *That the Doctrine of the* Reſurrection *is made uſe of for this Purpoſe, by the Holy Apoſtle St.* Paul; *who knew perfectly well, from what Topicks,* Duty *and* Diligence *ought to be preſs'd upon us.* For after he has infer'd our certain Victory over Death, by Steps of clear and undeniable Evidence; and repreſented the Triumphs of that Glorious Day, in which we ſhall put on *Immortality* and *Incorruption*:

tion: He gives a most pathetick Exhortation, to Zeal and Constancy in God's Service; and plainly enforces it from that very Consideration of the *Resurrection*, and the blessed Consequences of it. *Therefore (my beloved Brethren) be ye stedfast, immovable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your Labour in the Lord, shall not be in vain.*

I think 'tis evident, beyond all possibility of just and rational Question, that the Apostle does here make use of the Doctrine of a future *Resurrection*, as an Argument to godly Diligence and Perseverance, in the Duties of a *Christian* Life. And indeed, in the nature of the thing it self, *the Promise and Prospect of a Glorious Reward hereafter*, is a most powerful Incitement to Piety and Obedience. So far, that without the *former*, I cannot see, but we should want our main and greatest Encouragement (as rational Creatures) to the *latter*. I hope I shall not be misunderstood: *I speak here of the pure abstracted Duties of* Christianity, *as distinct from all those of the Natural Law.* For I have expresly shewn already, Part I. SECT. X. that our Obligations to all the Duties of *Morality and Natural Religion*, would continue fix'd and unshaken, if all Views of future Happiness and Immortality were taken away from us. And the Grounds upon which I have proceeded, to establish that Doctrine, I am very secure, are such, as can never be questionable to any, but those Persons only, who believe that God Almighty in making Man, made a Creature, under *no Moral Relations nor Obligations* to himself, but left at full Liberty, to range and rove up and down the World, in which he plac'd him, as wild and thoughtless, as the very Brutes themselves.

But

But as to the Rules and Duties of the *Christian Religion*, as such; I think 'tis a very clear Case, *That our main Encouragement to the Practice of them, were utterly lost, if we had no Prospect of future Rewards.*

And the reason is, because (as we have shewn, Part I. SECT. IX, XII, XIII, XIV, XV.) these Duties are plainly calculated for a future State; the very Scope and Drift of them, is to prepare us for such a Happiness as the Gospel reveals. That is, this is the *ultimate*, the *grand* Scope and Design of the *Christian* Institution; *how improving soever it may be to Human Nature, or beneficial to Society*, in other respects. And indeed, if we do but compare the Description given in the *New Testament*, of the Heavenly State; with that sort of Life and Temper, which the Rules and Precepts of the Gospel, tend to bring Men unto in this World; we shall easily be convinc'd of the Truth of this. We shall find, *that Heaven is but the Perfection of our* Christianity; tho such a Perfection as we cannot now comprehend.

Purity, Tranquillity and Love, chearful Service of God, and delightful Zeal in doing his Will, are the Beauties of the present *Christian* Life, as well as of that glorious one which is to come. These are the Essentials of both States, how much soever they differ in Circumstances and Degrees.

Here indeed our Devotion is mix'd with Infirmity, and our Enjoyments allay'd by many necessary Trials of *Christian* Vertue; which the World above knows nothing of. However, when we live and act as *Christians* should do, 'tis plain by all the Accounts we have in the Gospel, that we then begin that sort of Life, which, when freed from all Mixtures of Sin and Sorrow, will constitute the Heaven we look for.

SECT. LXXX.

AND therefore now I say, *If a future blessed Life, be the Perfection of our* Christian *Graces; if the Tendency of all these Duties be thithermards, and the Practice of them be so direct and proper a means to prepare us for that Felicity, and so peculiarly adapted to that Design, as it evidently is:*

Then if that main and great End be taken away; of what Value are the Means, whose Direction is to, and whose Center is in that End? And what Motives or Encouragements, have we to put us on to apply our selves to the Use of them? That very Supposition, which takes away the End it self; takes away all their *fitness and usefulness* to us, and therefore consequently, all our *Springs of Desire and Endeavour*, to put them into practice. Whereas, do but lay down a State of future Rewards as sure and certain; and then we have (both as *Men and Christians*) the highest Encouragements imaginable, to a constant, careful and zealous Discharge, of all the most sublime and abstracted Duties which the Gospel enjoins us.

SECT. LXXXI.

I Am afraid, *this Doctrine will seem too Legal and Mercenary, to some good* Christians, *who can't digest Discourses of this kind, so easily as they may some others contain'd in this Treatise.*

They'll

They'll be apt to think, here's more regard had to *our own Felicity and Advantage*, and less to the *Glory of God*; than what the noble and generous Spirit of the Gospel allows of. For I confess, I have intimated very plainly and freely, *That I firmly believe, we ought to have an Eye to the Reward, in all our* Christian *Duty and Service; and are not oblig'd to proceed, upon any sublime abstracted Views, of the Glory of God, without the Consideration of our own Felicity:* And therefore, *That we should lose our main Encouragements to the Practice of the Duties of* Christianity, *if the hopes of a future Reward were taken away.*

And I must needs say, that as long as I consider *Human Nature*, and *Divine Revelation*, in a just regard to each other; I have no Prospect of ever coming to any other Scheme of Thoughts. It seems to me, to be so unavoidable and necessary, from the joint Consideration of *these two*; that I can't forbear thinking, those that are in the contrary Opinion, do forget either the one or the other, in the Conclusions they draw, towards the maintaining of *their own Scheme.*

And if after all, they will still go on, to decry such a Practice as this, as *base*, *mercenary*, and *un-evangelical*; they must do so: For there is no Remedy against a licentious Humour, of calling things by wrong Names, or of branding them with infamous ones, when they do not please People, or are not agreeable to a Set of Notions they have entertain'd.

I shall not be guilty of painting out the Opinion I oppose, in any hateful and invidious Colours: but leaving the Patrons of it to their Liberty of exposing all Parties who differ from them; *as People under the Bondage and servile Spirit of the Law, and wholly unacquainted with the Ease and Free-*

dom of a Gospel State; I shall offer them some good Reasons, why they ought to do otherwise, and leave the Result of all to themselves.

And *First* of all, As for *Scripture-Authority* (for I am now speaking to such, whose Principles make it no begging of the Question, to make use of this Argument) I shall confine my self to that Passage of the Apostle St. *Paul*, before-mention'd: For what plenty soever there be, of very plain and positive Texts to this purpose, in the *New Testament* besides; yet I shall keep to this one, as being sufficient, and that which relates the most immediately to my present Business and Design.

Wherefore (or ὥστε, so that) *my beloved Brethren, be ye stedfast, immovable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know* (or knowing, εἰδότες) *that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

If these Words were not dropt by Chance (and sure we can't think the Pen of an Apostle to be so impertinently luxuriant) then there is some Argument and Design in them.

And if there be so, then the Question is, what the Apostle's Scope and Design in these Words is; or to what End and Purpose it is, that he uses them here? 'Tis a plain Case, that here is a *Duty* (and a very important one too) recommended, *viz. Diligence and Perseverance in the Works of Piety and Religion.* And every Man that is not wilfully blind, may see, that there is a Motive, or an Inducement made use of, to stir *Christians* up to the Performance of this Duty.

And this Motive is evidently *the Prospect of a future Reward*; which is as easy to be seen, as the very Words of the Text themselves.

For to be assur'd, that our *Labour shall not be in vain*; is to be assur'd, *that it shall be rewarded.*

And

And to be urg'd to Duty, from this Consideration, that our *Labour shall not be in vain*; is to be urg'd to Duty, from the *Prospect of a future Reward*; and to be encourag'd to abound in God's Service for that very Reason, and from that Principle.

And therefore, for the Apostle to express himself after such a manner, as he does in this place, is manifestly, *to press Duty from this Consideration, that our Labour shall be rewarded*; and thereby to authorize and warrant the Practice of *Christians* in having an eye thereto, not only as lawful, but also as truly *spiritual and evangelical* too. Nor do I believe it possible for any Person fairly to avoid this Conclusion, without falling foul upon Grammar and good Sense, and losing the Respect owing to a divinely inspir'd Writer.

SECT. LXXXII.

Secondly, BY *all the Discoveries we have, of the infinitely merciful and gracious Nature of God, we are sure, that he has join'd his own Glory and our Good together; and thereby made it a positive Duty, incumbent on us, to direct our Aims to the one as well as the other.*

All his Institutions are calculated and contriv'd, for the promoting of our Felicity. He does not command Duty, out of pure Sovereignty, or merely for Duties sake; but to train us up by a course of Holy Service and Obedience, for the Fruitions and Employments of a happy Life hereafter; that we may shew forth the Praises of his Divine adorable Perfections, with those exalted Powers and Capacities, we shall then be endow'd

with. And this, God out of his gracious Condescension, is pleas'd to look upon as our *glorifying of him*, and does accordingly set it forth to us in Scripture as such; nor is it possible in the nature of the thing, that we, or all created Nature besides, can glorify God any other way, or in any other sense than this.

And therefore, rightly to aim at our own Felicity, in the use of those Means which he has appointed us; is to aim at his Glory, since that is the great End of all our Happiness; and every Joy and Perfection we arrive at in Heaven, speaks the Praises of him, who brought us thither.

'Tis scarce to be believ'd, that any Person that has a Notion of the Gospel, should have such gross Conceptions of Heaven, as to look on it only as a Place of Ease and Pleasure to himself; without any Views of Praise and Glory to that God, from whose immense and unmerited Goodness all his Happiness flows. This would be to make worse than a *Mahometan* Paradise, of the *Christian* Heaven, and to think of Happiness in so sottish and stupid a manner, and so little agreeable to the Nature of Man, which is sensible and tender, and spreads into Love and Gratitude, for Benefits receiv'd; that I say, 'tis not to be imagin'd, that any Person who knows any thing of *Christianity*, can ever frame such a slavish irregular Notion of the Happiness it promises. So that when such Persons talk at any time of *Eyeing the Reward*, it's scarce Humanity, but for certain it's far from *Christian* Charity, to suppose them to abstract intirely from the Consideration of God's Glory, and to intend nothing but their own Advantage and Felicity in what they do. On the other hand, all that understand the Gospel in its genuine Simplicity, with-

without the forc'd Interpretations and deceitful Glosses, which Men put upon it to bring it to speak the Sense of their own Schemes and Systems; do constantly profess to believe, that the Glory of God is the *ultimate* End of all their godly Endeavours, Attainments and Enjoyments, whether on Earth or in Heaven; but that their own Happiness and Benefit is likewise an End, tho a *subordinate* one, which they are to have a regard to: and that as God has inseparably connected these two with each other, so they serve and please him, by pursuing them both in conjunction; and cannot more effectually aim and design to glorify God, than by aiming and designing to obtain his Grace, and prepare themselves for future Happiness, in and by the use of those means, which he has appointed, and *expresly commanded* them to use for that End.

SECT. LXXXIII.

BUT, Thirdly, *Those Persons who call it base and mercenary, to act from the Hopes of a future Reward; seem to me, quite to forget the Temper and Constitution of Human Nature, and to set the Gospel and That at variance with each other.*

For God, as the Author of Nature, has undoubtedly implanted that Affection of *Hope*, in our Breasts; to serve us for very excellent Ends and Purposes.

'Tis this which puts Life and Sweetness into every thing, and is the great Spring of all Action and Endeavour. If any valuable Good be set before us, which we are put into a fair way of attaining, and our Minds are touch'd with a lively

Sense of the Excellency and Agreeableness of it to us; *this Principle* is naturally rouz'd and set a-work, and influences all the Powers of our inward and outward Man, into proper and suitable Motions. And to say, that in such a Case as this, we do not eye and respect that Good, and are not prompted to do our utmost, and encounter all Difficulties that lie in the way, from the Hopes we have of obtaining it; is to give the Lye to our own Constitution, which plainly tells us, that we do do so. We are all conscious to our selves, *That our Warmth and Inclination to vigorous Action, does in all Cases rise and fall, in proportion to our just and rational Hopes:* And on the other hand, that nothing so effectually chills all our Faculties, and induces a remiss and careless Disposition of Mind, which ends in a total neglect of the Use of Means; as the loss of Hope does. And if this be our *Constitution as Men*, I am sure it is not overturn'd or alter'd by *Christianity*. The Grace of God which makes us new Creatures, does not do it in this sense, to divest us of the Passions and Inclinations of Human Nature. But whatever happy change be wrought upon us, in correcting the Vices and Distempers of our Faculties; they themselves are preserv'd intire in their several Natures and Tendencies to their proper Objects. The *same Springs of Motion and Action* continue in us as before, and must therefore work as before; only after a more regular manner, and to more noble Ends and Purposes.

And therefore, when our Minds are duly enlightned and convinc'd, by the salutary Operations of the Divine Spirit; so that we see the superlative Excellency of the heavenly Rewards, propos'd to us in the Gospel, to be obtain'd in the

the way of a *patient Continuance in good Works:* To ſay that the hope of this, ſhould not influence us to Zeal and Perſeverance in the diſcharge of our Duty; is to ſay that we ſhould throw off Human Nature, and own our ſelves to be Creatures of a different Species from what we were before our Converſion. For as long as we continue to be Men, and are in the way towards the Enjoyment of any Good, which we have juſt and pleaſing Apprehenſions of; becauſe we hope, and hope reaſonably, therefore we are inſpir'd with Reſolutions to uſe all neceſſary means to come to the poſſeſſion of it. And this is the certain and neceſſary Reſult, of that innate deſire after our own Good and Felicity, which we can no more diveſt our ſelves of, than we can divide our ſelves from our ſelves, or put off our very Eſſence. Let any Man conſult his own Conſtitution, and ſee if he does not find it ſo.

From hence therefore we may argue: If it be thus, with reſpect to all the inferior Good this World affords us, can it be otherwiſe, *when the higheſt Good our Natures are capable of, is ſet before us?* Can the hope of ſome trifling Enjoyment here, engage all our Diligence and Care? And when the Object comes to be as great as Heaven, and charming as the Pleaſures of an immortal Life, and theſe duly repreſented and believ'd by us; can our Hope then only be a languid feeble Affection, and not able to do what it does in other Caſes? By what Laws ſhould Human Nature exert it ſelf ſo vigorouſly in one Caſe, upon poor and deſpicable Motives; and forbear to do ſo in another, when the Motives to Action are heightned beyond all poſſible Compariſon? This is to make it below even a piece of Clockwork, which will mend its Pace with a bigger Weight.

SECT.

SECT. LXXXIV.

FROM hence therefore I conclude, *That that Religion which is cry'd up for so much Purity and Spirituality, upon pretence of abstracting from all Encouragements to Duty, given by a Promise of future Rewards; is not only contrary to the Gospel, which does both enjoin and commend it, but also to the very Constitution, and most essential Laws of Human Nature.*

That it is absolutely impracticable, whilst we continue Men, and before it can obtain amongst us, we must be taken to pieces and set together after a different manner from what we now are. And therefore, that those Persons who pretend to act in this manner, do by some Inadvertencies to the bent of Human Nature in themselves, or by some false Arguings, impose upon their own Weakness, and by degrees manage themselves into a Persuasion, *That they perform Duty without respect to a Reward, when indeed there is no such matter.* And how far a Set of wrong Notions, or inveterate Prejudices, or ill Management of Reason and Religion both, may contribute to Peoples forming a wrong Notion, even of what they do themselves; common Experience will shew those who converse much with Mankind.

SECT. LXXXV.

BUT Fourthly and Lastly, *This Doctrine is besides attended with dangerous Consequences.*

For to cry up that for pure evangelical Piety, in which Men take no Encouragement to Duty, from

from the Hope of the Reward, which the Gospel promises; and to run down all the rest as the Effect of a *legal*, *mercenary*, and slavish Temper: This has a plain tendency to introduce a Neglect and Disregard of Duty, or at least to abate our Zeal and Resolution in the Performance. And tho I don't charge all the ill Consequences that follow from these Notions, upon those who entertain them; yet I say, several very bad ones do follow fairly from them, nor is there any thing but what is sufficiently plain, necessary to the Proof of it. For in that weak and degenerate State into which Mankind is fallen, there's need of all the Motives that can be to confirm us in our Love of God and Goodness. And he therefore who made us, and knows both our natural and contracted Infirmities, has mercifully join'd his own Glory and our Felicity together; made Religion our Interest as well as our Duty, and order'd it so, *that in the way of answering the great Ends of our Creation* (which are to set forth his Praises) we should also secure an Everlasting Happiness to our selves. And since he has join'd both these together, 'tis certain, *that infinite Wisdom saw just Reasons for so doing.*

'Tis to no purpose, to dispute of what God might have done, in the way of absolute Power and Sovereignty. He might have made a Race of Creatures only to have serv'd him, without advancing their own Happiness, and this without the least Wrong or Injustice. But 'tis infinitely more agreeable to that *immense*, *rich*, and *diffusive Goodness* we adore in him, to render his Creatures happy by their Duty and Obedience. And 'tis Matter of Fact, that God has actually dispos'd things so, that our Obedience is the way

to

to our Happineſs; and conſequently, *has made the latter a powerful Motive to the former.*

And as this is moſt worthy of infinite Mercy and Goodneſs, and moſt agreeable to Human Nature in general, as thus made and conſtituted; ſo 'tis eſpecially moſt agreeable to the preſent imperfect and deprav'd State of Mankind, in which after all the Reparations made by the Grace of God, our Meaſures of Goodneſs are too little and weak to allow us to act upon ſo ſublime a Principle, as *that of God's Glory abſtracted from our own Felicity.* That would require another Conſtitution, and other Circumſtances than what we dare pretend to. For thoſe who act with all ſincere Zeal and Care, from both theſe Principles in conjunction, find Temptation enough, to render it extremely difficult, to hold on in the way of their Duty notwithſtanding.

And therefore, to take away the one of theſe Motives; that is, *the Conſideration of our own Felicity*; beſides contradicting *the Divine Appointment and the Conſtitution of Human Nature* (in both which they are firmly united) is ſo far to take us off from the Performance of Duty, as the loſs of a moſt powerful and engaging Motive can be ſuppos'd to do. And if this be not to take a conſiderable ſtep towards the total Neglect of it, I leave all the World to judg. And when Men are once come to a Neglect of their Duty, 'tis no wide ſtep from thence to Immorality and Profaneneſs. Which thô I believe not deſign'd by many that advance theſe Notions, is yet the genuine Reſult and Conſequence of them.

And thus I have briefly propos'd, the chief Uſes to be made, of this great Doctrine of our Saviour's

Saviour's Resurrection; *and of* our own Resurrection, *as it follows from his.*

The Resurrection of the Body is indeed a very sublime and mysterious Subject; and 'tis for that very Reason (no doubt) that the sceptical Humour of some People, puts them on, to pry so very nicely and curiously into it.

Men love to be busy about things that are beyond them, instead of bestowing their Pains usefully upon such Matters as are within their reach. I speak this of those Persons, that seem to triumph in the Unaccountableness of the *Resurrection* of the Body, from pure *physical* Principles; and insult *Christianity* with their little Queries upon that Head: *How are the Dead rais'd; and with what Body do they come?* For my part I think, the fittest Answer to be return'd to them, is that which the Apostle *Paul* gave to the Fools of his time, that ask'd the same Question: *Thou Fool! That which thou sowest, is not quickned except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that Body which shall be —— But God giveth it a Body, as it pleaseth him.*

I think this is all that need be said in the Case. 'Tis enough to me, that infinite Wisdom and Power have undertaken to accomplish the Work. I am not sollicitous about the Way or *Modus*, in which it shall be brought to pass; but rest contented with the Assurance given me, *that the thing it self shall be.* For *he is faithful that hath promis'd*; God hath said it shall be so, and he is true, and able to make his Word good. And upon this Foundation, and this alone, I defy all the Objections, that *Wit* or *Philosophy* can make to the contrary. The Credibility of the *thing*, depends upon the Credibility of the *Revelation.*

If

If the *New Teſtament*, which plainly reveals this Doctrine, be a *Divine* Book; then I have all the Satisfaction I need in the matter. After all the *Tranſmutations*, and *Revolutions* poſſible to happen to a Syſtem of Matter, in this ſublunary World; yet the Buſineſs is ſtill within the Reach of Omnipotence: and he that firſt ſet the Syſtem together, can do it again, after infinitely more Separations and Changes, than our ſhallow Intellects can ever form a Notion of. And what if our Bodies are in a State of *continual Flux and Alteration*, ſo that they are (*phyſically* ſpeaking) no Day nor Hour, the ſame that they were before? That God, to whoſe Power, Wiſdom, and Faithfulneſs, we entirely leave the Work of a *Reſurrection*, we are ſure, will order the matter ſo; that it ſhall be truly and properly ſaid, that *This* and *That*, and the other Perſon, by Name, who were once dead, are now reviv'd and rais'd again. No matter what the *Identity* is, or in what ſenſe the rais'd Body may be ſaid to be the ſame.

Philoſophy has nothing to do here, and our *unbelieving* Criticks know ſo little of the common Works of God in the World, that they may well enough quit all Pretences to explain thoſe that are miraculous and extraordinary.

Preſent Nature will afford them Matter enough for their Enquiries; and they need not look ſo far as the *Day of Judgment*, for a Problem that ſhall have Difficulty enough to puzzle them.

FINIS.

REFERENCES *to ſome Paſſages quoted in the foregoing Treatiſe.*

HAVING obſerv'd that in ſome few Places, I have neglected mentioning, *what Page* in an Author, the Paſſage I quote, is to be found in (which is what I all along propos'd to my ſelf to do, as making moſt for the Eaſe and Satisfaction of the Reader) I was willing to beſtow a Page or two (which I hope the Reader will think not ill beſtow'd) here at the End of the Book, for the ſupplying that defect.

Pag. 234. That Paſſage of *Tertullian*, is *pag.* 240. Edit. Colon. Agrip. 1617.

Page 261. Place in *Euſebius*, is *pag.* 94. of Cap. Lib. & Edit. antea citat.

Page 262. *Arnob.* Lib. 2. Cont. Gent. *pag.* 52. Edit. Par. 1605.

Page 274. *Juſt. Mart.* Apol. 1. *pag.* 50. Ὁρῶν δὲ ἀφόβους πρὸς θάνατον καὶ πάντα τὰ ἄλλα νομιζόμενα φοβερὰ, ἐνενόουν ἀδύνατον εἶναι ἐν κακίᾳ καὶ φιληδονίᾳ ὑπάρχειν αὐτοὺς· τίς γὰρ φιλήδονος, &c. Edit. Par. 1636.

Page 315. *Juſt. Mart. pag.* 265. Lib. & Edit. citat.

Page 322. *Juſt. Mart. pag.* 345. Lib. & Edit. citat.

—Ibid.

——Ibid. *Euseb. pag.* 218. Lib. citat.

Page 356. *Euseb. pag.* 512. Lib. citat.

——Ibid. *August.* Epist. citat. *pag.* 7. Tom. 2. Edit. Par. 1635.

And St. *Austin* himself, Epist. 5. ad *Marcell.* even laughs at that pretended Comparison of *Apuleius* and *Apollonius*, with *Jesus Christ* —— *Quis autem vel risu dignum, non putet, quod* Apollonium, Apuleium, *cæterosq; Magicarum artium peritissimos, conferre* Christo, *vel etiam præferre conantur!* pag. 11.

Upon this account, *Arnobius* challenges the Enemies of *Christianity*, to produce but any one in the whole Heathen World, that ever did by the help of all those Arts, but the thousandth part of what our Saviour did —— *Potestis aliquem nobis designare, ex omnibus illis Magis, qui unquam fuere per secula, consimile aliquid* Christo, *millesima ex parte qui fecerit?* Lib. 1. *pag.* 31. Edit. citat.

——Ibid. *Tertul.* Apol. Cap. 21. *pag.* 37. Edit. citat. —— *Ea omnia* (viz. concerning the Miracles, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of *Christ Jesus*, before mention'd) Pilatus *& ipse pro sua Conscientia Christianus* Cæsari *tunc* Tiberio *nuntiavit.*

And Apol. Cap. 5. *pag.* 23. —— Tiberius, *cujus tempore nomen Christianum in seculum introivit, annuntiata sibi, ex* Syria, Palæstina, *quæ veritatem illius divinitatis revelaverant; retulit ad* Senatum, *cum prærogativa suffragii sui: Senatus, quia non ipse probaverat, respuit.* Cæsar *in sententia mansit, comminatus Periculum accusatoribus Christianorum.*

These Accounts the aforesaid Father appeals to, with as much assurance, as he does to those, concerning the *Miraculous Eclipse* at the Passion of our Saviour; which wonderful Phenomenon, he tells them (Apol. Cap. 21. *pag.* 37. Edit. citat.)

tat.) they had recorded in *their own Archives:* And this is very probable; since *the preternatural Darkness, as also the Convulsions of the Earth at that time*, are particularly taken notice of by *Phlegon* in his Chronicle (as *Origen* tells us) in the 13*th* or 14*th* Book (of the same) Περὶ δὲ τ ὅπ Τιβερίε Καίσαρος ἐκλείψεως, ἐ βασιλεύοντος καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἔοικεν ἐσαυρῶσθαι, καὶ ὡς τὰ μεγάλων τότε γιγνομένων σεισμῶν τ γῆς, ἀνέσεισε καὶ φλέγων ἐν τῷ τεσσαρεσκαιδεκάτῳ ὄρεσι τ χερνικῶν· Orig. Lib. 2. Contr. Cels. *pag.* 80. Edit. *Cantab.* 1677.

Eusebius also, as well as *Origen*, repeats the said Testimony of *Phlegon*, in his *Chronicon*; *An.* 2040. And *Scaliger*, in his Annotations upon the same, besides the concurrent Testimonies of profane Authors, as to the Business of the *Earthquakes*; shews there were Medals struck in *Tiberius*'s Time, that confirm'd it.

The *Acts of Pilate*, are directly quoted and appeal'd to, by *Justin Martyr*, Apol. 2. *pag.* 84. Edit. citat. —Θεραπεύειν πάσας νόσους ὁ ἡμέτερος Χριστὸς προεφητεύθη· ὅπ δὲ ταῦτα ἐποίησεν ἐκ τ ὅπ Ποντίε Πιλάτε γινομένων μαθεῖν δύνασθε· And so again expressly, *pag.* 76. of the *same Apology*. And it seems but a very poor way of answering so plain and publick a Testimony of Fact, to say, that *Justin* was too credulous in this Case; as he is suppos'd to be, in that of the *Sybilla Cumana*. All that I shall say to that matter, is, that he tells us in his *Cohortatio ad Græcos*, that he was there in the Country, saw the Place with his own Eyes, and had his Informations concerning the *Sybil*, from the Inhabitants, amongst whom the Account had pass'd as an unquestionable Truth, from Generation to Generation. And I can't see, what more can be requir'd or expected of any Person, who gives any sort of Narration; in order to

his being protected from ill Treatment, and the scurrilous Charge of Credulity. Besides, if he was mistaken in his Opinion of this *Sybil*, he had several very antient Writers to bear him Company in the Mistake; and amongst the rest no less a Person than his Master *Plato*, who, as he makes out in the same place, had quite another Opinion of the *Sybil*, than some of the Moderns have. And I never heard this *celebrated Grecian Philosopher*, reflected upon, for his Credulity in this Case: But now I remember; *Plato* was a *Heathen*, and *Justin* a *Christian*, and an Apologist for *Christianity*, and a most invincible one too; and this (with some People) is ground enough, for a partial Severity towards him. However, as the Learned Dr. *Grabe* observes, in his Annotations upon this Passage of *Justin* (it being a Work also which he himself had intended) the Learned *Gerardus Joannes Vossius* has vindicated this excellent Father from all those frivolous Criticisms, *Lib.* 1. *Cap.* 13. de Historicis Græcis.

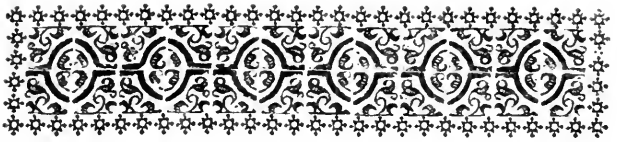
As for those *false and spurious Acts of* Pilate, we have an Account of them in *Epiphanius*, De Quartadecimanis, Hæres. 50. Lib. 2. Tom. 1. Edit. Par. 1622.

And *Eusebius* tells us, that even the Children were made to learn them by heart, and repeated them in the Schools every Day: "Ὅτε παῖδες ἀνὰ τὰ διδασκαλεῖα, Ἰησοῦν καὶ Πιλάτου τὰ καὶ ἐφ' ὑβρει πλασθέντα ὑπομνήματα, διὰ στόματος καὶ πᾶσαν ἔφεσιν ἡμέραν. Hist. Eccles. Lib. 9. Ch. 7. But at Ch. 5. of the same Book, he gives a more ample and particular Account of that matter. Πλασάμενοι δὲ τὰ Πιλάτου καὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ὑπομνήματα, πάσης ἔμπλεα κακῆς βλασφημίας, &c. "Having feign'd certain Records, "concerning *Pilate* and our Saviour, full of all "manner

" manner of Blasphemy against *Christ*; by the " Command of the Governour, they were dispers'd into all the Territory under his Jurisdiction; ordering by Letters, that they should " be made publick to all Persons in every Place, " as well in the Country as Cities; and that " School-masters should take care to teach them " to their Boys, and make them get them by " heart, instead of other Learning." [Τοῖς τε παισὶ τὸς γραμματοδιδασκάλοις ἐντὶ μαθημάτων ταῦτα μελετᾶν, καὶ διὰ μνήμης κατέχειν παραδιδόναι.] And then he goes on, and gives an account of some abominable Practices, of forcing certain profligate abandon'd Wretches, by threatnings of Torment, to own themselves *Christians*, and to accuse themselves as guilty of whatever Crimes the Managers should think fit to dictate to them. Now as to what *Eusebius* says, of these *Acta Pilati*; was he credulous too? Was he mistaken? Was he impos'd upon in his Accounts? What an odd Coincidence 'tis, that *Justin Martyr*, and *He*, and *Epiphanius*, should all happen to be out, in a Case of so notorious a nature, and so very likely to be true as this was, *viz. That a Roman* (Governour, or, if you will, a) *Procurator should give an Account to the Emperor and the Senate, of things so very extraordinary* (and that happen'd in his own Province too) *as the Life and Actions of such a Person as* Jesus Christ; *whom* Pilate *knew personally, had seen at his Tribunal, and condemn'd to Death at the earnest Request of the* Jewish *Nation; and was upon the Spot, when the surprizing News of his Resurrection first came abroad, and began to spread thro the World:* In short, if these Accounts are authentick and good (and I believe there's no body will scarce pretend to a *decisive* Proof to the contrary) the Enemies of *Christia-*

nity have *fully quitted Scores, and are at least even* with the *Christians*, for whatever Frauds ſome People (how juſtly, I ſhall not now determine) ſurmiſe and conjecture, they have been guilty of, in concealing or ſuppreſſing what ſome of their ſmarter Adverſaries have objected againſt them. Thoſe Practices for certain, are infinitely hateful, and they could ſcarce be good *Chriſtians* (I think) that were guilty of them; and whatever good Deſigns they might pretend, they were (if thoſe Alledgments are true) the greateſt Enemies to *Chriſtianity*; in that they open'd the Mouths of its Enemies, *and repreſented it as if it were not Proof againſt any, or all poſſible Objections that could be made, and reflected upon the invincible Evidence it carries along with it ſelf*, by attempting to ſupport it by ſuch baſe and degrading Artifices.

AN



AN

APPENDIX,

Containing a DISSERTATION on that QUESTION,

Whether Conſciouſneſs and Thought, *can be the Reſult of mere* Matter and Motion.

With ſome REFLECTIONS, *concerning the* Nature of God, *of* Human Souls, *and the* Univerſe *in General.*

By HUMPHRY DITTON.

SECT. I.

AS one Truth naturally infers, and leads to another; ſo likewiſe does one Error or Abſurdity, tend to uſher in and make way for another: inſomuch, that we often ſee Men are drawn in to eſpouſe ſuch Notions and Opinions, as at firſt they never intended nor thought of;

merely in consequence of some *Hypothesis* they have already advanc'd, and which must be defended, whatever Inconveniences it runs them upon.

Having first set out with *one wrong Principle* (I mean wrong in it self, whether they argue upon the matter, and know it to be wrong, or not) they find that in order to the making of that good, they must necessarily have recourse to *another*, and from thence to a *third*, and so on; till they have drawn out a long Chain of wretched Notions and Hypotheses, each Link of which, has notwithstanding, a certain and regular Dependance, upon that which goes before, and that which comes after.

I make no question, but that idle Notion of *Matter's Thinking*, which has been so industriously propagated by our *Modern Deists*; is in reality no other, than one of the Links of such a Chain.

For suppose we were to begin with the Notion of a *Future State*.

This is certainly a very disagreeable one to Men, who by being entirely at their own dispose in this World, have made it their Interest, that there should be no World to come; and do therefore undoubtedly, passionately desire there may not be any such State; and take as much pains to persuade themselves that there is not: Tho I am apt to believe, they do for the most part strive to very little purpose.

To overturn (therefore) this ungrateful Scheme, according to which it is not only possible, but very probable, that Men may be punish'd in *another State*, for their irregular Conduct and Behaviour in this; the *first Step* must be, to deny, that the *Soul exists separately from the Body*.

And

And becauſe this can't be done with any tolerable ſhew of Reaſon, while it ſtands granted and allow'd, that the Soul and Body are *two diſtinct Subſtances*; therefore you muſt of courſe *take away all ſpecifical and eſſential Diſtinction, between it and the Body*, and make the whole of Man of a piece. So that as the one part, *viz.* that which is called *Body*, is evidently nothing but a Machine, or mere Syſtem of Matter; ſo likewiſe the other, *viz.* that which is call'd *Mind, muſt be made the ſame kind of Subſtance too.*

But becauſe 'tis impoſſible that this ſhould be, unleſs *both* have the ſame eſſential Powers and Properties; therefore you muſt likewiſe inveſt them *both* with the ſame Properties and Attributes.

And from hence the next Step is plain, *viz.* *That Matter muſt be aſſerted to be a Thinking Subſtance*; capable of *Joy*, *Deſire*, *Argumentation*, *and Reflection*, with whatever elſe is commonly attributed to a Soul.

But then becauſe the Actions of the Mind imply *Vigour and Livelineſs*, which the mere Parts of Matter, conſider'd in themſelves, promiſe nothing of; therefore, you muſt ſuppoſe them to be *briskly mov'd* and agitated: then a Syſtem of them may become a Soul, and be capable of performing all thoſe Actions of Thinking Subſtances, which are comprehended under the general Names of *Thought* and *Volition*.

And now there is no danger of a *Future State*, nor no room for the Talk of Heaven and Hell! For tho Matter diſpos'd in a *Regular Syſtem*, may think and reflect; yet at Death, when the whole Syſtem it ſelf is put into the utmoſt Confuſion; to be ſure, there is an end of all Thought and Reflection. So that the Joys and Miſeries

of an After-State, if they are not all of them impossible in the very nature of the thing; yet at best, they are but the Fictions and Inventions of a Set of Unphilosophical Priests, who know not the *Powers of Matter and Motion*, and how Thought and Reason depend upon them; but tell People these Tales of a Life to come, only to over-awe and frighten them, and by that means to have an Opportunity of doing whatever they please with them, in the present Life.

Here now is a Scheme, each step of which naturally leads to another. Nor can a Man well take one of them, without being tempted to go through all the rest. Let him begin, with making *Matter and Motion think*; and he shall end, with making *the Gospel an Imposture*. Or let him lay down this for his first Principle, *That the* Christan Religion *is a Cheat*; and he will miss his way very strangely, if he does not come to this Conclusion at last, *That Matter is a Thinking Substance*.

Nor are we to imagine, that the modern *Deists* have cultivated and set about this Notion of *Matter's Thinking*, with any other Design or View, than that of undermining the very Foundations of *Christianity*. They are sensible, that the *Christian Religion* is not to be *directly and immediately* attack'd, with any Prospect of Success; but there might be something done by *remote and covert Methods*; such as that of broaching *Hypotheses*, which under a seeming *Philosophical Disguise*, should do all the fatal Execution, which naked Arguments could never accomplish. And such a one is that, which we are now considering. It looks like a mere piece of Philosophick Theory, and as if 'twere calculated only to solve the wonderful Phenomena of *Human Nature*: To shew us upon clear and intelligible Principles, what 'tis

'tis to *understand*, to *will*, and to *remember*; without being oblig'd to have recourse to such canting Terms, as *Soul*, *Immaterial Substance*, and the like; which carry as little Sense and Meaning along with them, as *Aristotle*'s ἐντελέχεια, or *Occult Qualities*.

But what assistance this *Hypothesis* can afford us, towards the Solution of *those Mysterious Problems* of *Human Nature*; we shall see by and by. We shall see how consistently, with the Principles of *True Philosophy*, these Gentlemen can shew us how we may *perceive*, *argue* and *reflect* upon things, by the help of their *Matter and Motion*. In the mean time, I shall only say thus much; That I am well satisfy'd, this *Hypothesis* never yet did, nor never will do any harm; by the *Philosophy* it carries along with it. And that I know of nothing that can be so great a Temptation to a Man to doubt, whether it may not be true, or no; as to consider, that some People have been capable of believing it. For if any way of thinking at all, could ever possibly be the effect of *pure Mechanism*; so sluggish and irregular a one as this, bids as fair for being so, as any whatsoever.

SECT. II.

BUT after all, to speak my Mind freely in the Case, I must needs say, I look upon all this Talk, of *Matter and Motion's Thinking*, to be mere *Banter* and *Pageantry*; and not the effect of any real Opinion or Belief, in the major part of them, that set up for the Defence of it. I am afraid, 'tis no Breach of Charity to believe, that

that the reason why they advance it, is not so much because they conclude it to be *true*; as because they find it *fit and convenient* to serve a Turn.

'Tis true indeed (as we have observ'd already) the Notion it self, is in one *Sense* a regular and consequential step enough; and follows very fairly, from some other Principles laid down. But then, 'tis one thing to maintain a Notion, *in relation to a Scheme* that requires it; and another thing, to do it, *upon the score of the clear Evidence of Truth*, which it carries along with it; by which the Understanding is fully convinc'd, and compel'd to give its assent thereto. And the reason, why I cannot defend my self from believing, that the Understandings of our *Deists* are not laid under very strong Convictions of the truth of this *Hypothesis*, is, because it is really so very vain and ridiculous a one, that it is not to be imagin'd, that Men of good Sense and Learning (as many of these Gentlemen are) and those such profess'd Enemies to all Bigotry and Credulity, and that rally others so freely as they do, for a slight and perfunctory Examination of the Matters of their Belief; should ever be serious in the Defence of such a System as this is. Indeed, People that are train'd up in *Superstition and Implicit Faith*, and are taught from their very Cradles, to believe every thing that is told them by the Guides of their Souls, tho ever so repugnant to common Sense and Reason; these may by virtue of such mighty Prejudices, possibly bring themselves by degrees, to believe very odd and extravagant things, tho otherwise they be Persons of Sagacity and good Understanding, and such as would be very able to find out their own Mistakes, did they but allow themselves the

the Liberty of arguing upon them. But this is not the Caſe of the Gentlemen we are now talking of. For as it was never any Rule amongſt them, to believe as any Church or Party believes, or to ſhape their own Notions and Opinions, by the Model of other People's; ſo they have always ſet up for quite another ſort of Management; as appears by the laudable Titles of *Rationaliſts*, *Free-Thinkers*, and others of that ſort, which they have dignify'd themſelves withal. And tho they'll not allow the *Chriſtians* to take any ſuch rational Courſes; yet it has ever been (as they tell us) a Maxim amongſt themſelves, *to admit nothing as true, but what is evidently and manifeſtly prov'd to be ſo, upon Principles of indiſputable Force and Authority.*

Now I ſay, to ſee Men of ſuch a Character, Men ſo fond of Truth, ſo ſtrict and rigorous in their Enquiries after it, and ſo nice and cautious in giving their Aſſent; to ſee theſe ſtand in the Defence of ſo *very obnoxious* an *Hypotheſis* as this is; is enough to make a Man queſtion, whether they are or can be, in good earneſt or no. However, I leave that matter to themſelves; and if I am out in my ſurmiſe, I crave their Excuſe for't: but 'tis plain, they give a handle to the Miſtake, if it be one. In the mean time, theſe Gentlemen themſelves think it no breach of Charity to ſuſpect, that ſome Perſons of a certain Church (who ſtand in it, *That a Bit of dry Bread is real Fleſh and Blood*, and are ſo poſitive and hot in the matter, that they would ſacrifice all the World about them, that won't belye all the Senſes and Faculties of Human Nature, in ſaying as they ſay: that theſe People) do indeed know better things, and are much wiſer, than they would be taken to be, *in that reſpect.* And when

when a Man ſhall come and tell me, that a Portion of ſluggiſh *Matter*, in which (by all the *Obſervations*, and *Experiments* I can make of it) I can find no more *Signs of Thought and Counſel*, than I can of *Fleſh and Blood*, in a Conſecrated Wafer; that this Lump (I ſay) *reaſons*, and *makes Syllogiſms*, and has ſuch ſort of Faculties as Mankind have: I muſt confeſs, I can't forbear telling my ſelf, that this Man *acts a Part*, and talks of things that he no more believes, than thoſe Gentlemen do, who aſſure me, that what I conclude to be mere Bread, by its *Colour*, *Taſte*, *Smell*, *Specifick Gravity*, and all poſſible Methods of Trial, is, for all that, no more *Bread*, than it is *Iron*, or *Gold*, or any other Subſtance in the World. I don't ſay, that the Contradiction is ſo *palpably and notorious groſs*, in one Caſe, as in the other: but I ſay, I ſhould think a Man to be as much *in Jeſt*, in one Caſe, as in the other; becauſe in either Caſe, he tells me, what no Man in his right Wits can believe.

And really, the *very Language* of this *Hypotheſis*, is almoſt as offenſive as that of *Tranſubſtantiation* it ſelf.

It ſhocks a Man, to hear *Underſtanding* coupled, with *Round and Square*; and *Thoughts* talk'd of, in ſuch a ſort of Stile, as the *Geometricians* do, of their Lines and Figures. I can no more imagine, how *Prudence and Sagacity* can be the Reſult of a Whirlpool of Fluid Matter; or *Temper* and *Diſpoſition*, the mere Effect of ſome Motion, propagated in ſuch or ſuch *Directions*; than I can conceive how *Accidents* can exiſt ſeparately from their *Subjects*, or a Body which my Eyes tell me is confin'd to this or that Place, to be in ten thouſand others at the ſame time. If a Man ſhould tell me, that all the fine Flights in

Poetry,

Poetry, or the Steps of the moſt elaborate *Mathematical Demonſtrations*, were nothing but the rolling of little Cones or Spheres in the Brain; That this Man was a *Linguiſt*, the other a *Philoſopher*, and a third a *Stateſman*, by the mere *Velocity, Size and Figure of Particles:* I ſhould not think he talk'd much more intelligibly than the forementioned Gentlemen do, upon the Myſteries of the *Wafer*.

There is ſomething ſo intolerably awkard and diſagreeable, ſo perverſe and repugnant, in this ſort of *Dialect*; that one would conclude, even from thence (if there were no more) that God and Nature never intended it ſhould be us'd amongſt Mankind; and therefore never laid any Foundation for the uſe of it, by making of us after ſuch a manner as ſhould require it.

It will be objected here perhaps, *That People don't uſe themſelves, to connect and compare theſe Terms, of Thought, Matter, and Motion together; and that 'tis owing only to that diſuſe, and the Prejudice ariſing there-from, that they form Notions of them, as repugnant and inconſiſtent with one another.* But pray, are there not as many Prejudices, that ariſe from too much uſe and familiarity with certain Notions and Phraſes; as do from too little uſe, or a total diſuſe of them? Don't ſome Men, by *long Cuſtom and Practice*, bring themſelves to believe that ſuch and ſuch things are juſt and true, which yet in their own nature are far from being ſo; and they only apprehend them to be ſo, becauſe they have us'd themſelves to go on in ſuch a particular Road and Method of Thinking? If ſo, why mayn't it as well be a mere Prejudice, on one ſide; to apprehend a *Sutableneſs and a Conſiſtency* between the Notions we are ſpeaking of; as it may be on the other,

to

to apprehend an *Unſuitableneſs* and Repugnancy between them?

For Men to throw all the Prejudice and Prepoſſeſſion upon their Adverſaries, and take none at all to their own Share; is a ridiculous Piece of Vanity, and deſerves no other Anſwer but Silence and Contempt.

However, we ſhall effectually diſcover, on which ſide the Prejudice lies, when we have found out, on which ſide the Impoſſibility, and the Abſurdity lies. For 'tis certain, that no Man can ever be led, by fair Steps, to an impertinent or impoſſible Concluſion.

Now we ſhall eaſily ſee where the Abſurdity lies, when we have thorowly diſcuſs'd the Queſtion lying before us, *viz. How Matter and Motion can ſolve or account for the Phenomena of Thought and Conſciouſneſs.*

SECT. III.

TO prevent all cavilling upon Words and Terms, I deſire it may be obſerv'd, that by *Matter*, I underſtand what Mankind generally underſtand by that Term; *viz. A ſolid Subſtance, capable of Diviſion, Figure and Motion.*

And when I ſpeak of accounting for the Phenomena of Thought and Perception by *Matter* and *Motion*, I would not be thought to exclude any of the other Properties of it; but ſuppoſe them all to be taken into the Account, as far forth as they can conduce, in the Opinion of any Defender of this *Hypotheſis*, to the Solution of the Phenomena of *Intelligent Subſtances.*

Whatever

Whatever Service can be done by *Solidity*, *Divisibility*, *Figure* and *Motion* (all in conjunction) towards a satisfactory Account of these Appearances; let it be done. I mention *Motion* only, not because I leave the others out, but because I include them in the Notion of *Matter*, whose Properties they are. For the same reason likewise, I do not mention, in so many words, *the Effects or Results of the various Compositions of these Properties with one another:* Because they are all included under the *Properties* themselves, from the *Compositions* of which they result. All the possible Compositions and Variations of Figure and Motion, *Ex. Gr.* are and will be for ever, nothing else but Figure and Motion. So that when I enquire, whether *Matter* and *Motion* can produce Thought; I would be understood to enquire, *Whether what we call Thought in an Intelligent Substance, can be the mere Result of Matter, with any or all of its Properties, or any or all the possible Changes and Combinations of them and their Effects?* And because after all, there may still seem to be room left for Quibbles, *founded upon some (pretended) possible, unknown, Powers and Properties of Matter, by which it may be able to think and will*; as also, *upon the Infinite Power of God, who may* (as we are told) *endow some Systems of Matter, with a Power of Thinking, as he himself shall please or think fit:* I shall take these Notions into the Question too; and therefore, to render it as full and compleat as may be, shall divide it into these *three distinct Parts.*

First, *Whether Thinking and Willing, can possibly be the Effect of any, or all the known Properties and Affections of Matter.* I say the *known* Properties of *Matter:* For I think it well worth my while to enquire into this in the first Place, and that very

very particularly too; becauſe I am ſenſible that (whatever is or may be pretended, of any poſſible Effects of *Almighty Power*, *and the unknown Properties of Matter*, yet) the main ſtreſs of the Controverſy reſts here, and here only.

Secondly, I ſhall conſider, what is to be ſaid, with reſpect to *thoſe poſſible unknown Qualities and Affections of Matter*, from whence we are told, Thought and Volition may ariſe; ſuppoſing it to be allow'd, that they cannot proceed from thoſe Affections and Properties, which are known to us.

Thirdly, What is to be ſaid, with reſpect to that other Notion, *Of God Almighty's endowing ſome Portions of Matter, with theſe Faculties of Thinking and Willing.*

SECT. IV.

FOR the *Firſt* of theſe.

It will inevitably follow, that thoſe Actions or Operations of Intelligent Subſtances, (which are comprehended under the general Name of *Thought*) cannot be the Reſult of any mere Properties or Affections of Matter, if it be demonſtrated, *That ſuch Actions or Operations are abſolutely repugnant to, and inconſiſtent with, thoſe fix'd and eſtabliſh'd Laws, which Matter it ſelf, with all its Properties and Affections, and in all its Parts and Syſtems, is evidently ſubjected to.*

If thoſe Laws will not allow or permit ſuch Effects to come to paſs, as muſt neceſſarily come to paſs, in order to the Production of ſuch Phenomena, as thoſe which we call by the Names of *Reaſoning*, *Reflection*, *Volition*, and the like; 'twill be

be certain to a Demonſtration, That they cannot be the Reſult of any of the aforeſaid Properties or Affections of *Matter*. For no Affection, which is incompatible with the conſtant and certain Laws a Subject is plac'd under, can ever reſult from that Subject, or any thing eſſentially belonging to it.

So that the Point now to be demonſtrated, is this, *viz. That the Actions or Operations of Thinking Subſtances* (or the Phenomena obſervable in ſuch Subſtances) *are utterly incompatible with the Laws, to which Matter, with all its known Properties* (that is, a *ſolid, figur'd, diviſible, movable* Subſtance) *is ſubjected.*

And this will be abundantly made out, in the following Propoſitions.

PROP. I.

TO ARGUE, or INFER one thing from another, is wholly irreconcilable to, and ſimply impoſſible to be effected by any mere Mechanical Laws.

I have occaſionally ſpoken ſomething to this Point already, Part I. SECT. XIV. However, it being ſo very clear and convincing a Demonſtration, of the utter Impoſſibility of all *Mechanical Thought and Reflection*; I ſhall purſue it a little more particularly in this Place: Tho I muſt needs ſay, the whole Controverſy is ſo perfect a Jeſt, that I am almoſt aſham'd to talk ſeriouſly upon it. But the extravagant Whimſies of Mankind have made it neceſſary. In order to this therefore, I muſt premiſe (what I am ſure there can be no difficulty of allowing) *viz. That the ſame Parts of Matter, cohering together after the ſame manner, moving in the ſame Direction, and with the ſame Impetus or Velocity, in the ſame Space or Syſtem; will continue to produce the very ſame*

Effect, whatever that Effect be, which was once produc'd by them. And therefore, that if Thought and Reflection, in intelligent Subſtances, be the Reſult of any ſort of Motion or Agitation, of any Preſſure or Contranitency of the ſolid, figur'd, diviſible Parts of Matter; it's neceſſary, that in the Production of *different ſorts of Acts, of Thought and Reflection*, if all *other* Circumſtances continue the ſame, the Circumſtance of Motion, ſhould be ſome way diverſify'd, either as to *Velocity*, or *Direction*, or both: And *vice verſa*, if in different Acts of Thought and Reflection, the Circumſtance of Motion continues unvaried, as to Velocity and Direction; there muſt needs be ſome Variation in the other Circumſtances.

Becauſe, I ſay, all things continuing the ſame, the ſame Effects in a Caſe of *mere Mechaniſm*, muſt neceſſarily reſult; and by conſequence, it would be impoſſible, that there ſhould be any *Variety or Diverſity* of Thought and Reflection; which yet in plain Fact and Experience we find there is. This premis'd, the Propoſition is thus made out. When I collect or *infer*, one thing from another; I am conſcious to my ſelf of two diſtinct Modes, or Kinds of Cogitation [I do not care by what Name 'tis call'd, provided the thing intended be but allow'd, *viz. a real Diverſity in the Mode or Manner of my Cogitation.*] By the one of theſe I perceive an Aſſent to the Truth of thoſe Propoſitions (commonly call'd *Premiſes)* from whence I am to make what I call an Inference. By the other, I perceive and aſſent to the Truth of a certain Propoſition, reſulting from the former, which is call'd the *Concluſion*, or the Inference it ſelf; and becomes the Object or Matter of my Aſſent, upon the Perception

tion I have, of the necessary Relation and Connection between it and those Premises, which I had before found to be perfectly *suitable and agreeable to my Reason.*

These Acts, or Modes of Cogitation, wherein I assent to the *Premises*, and to the *Conclusion* drawn from them; are evidently of a *quite different Kind and Nature.* Because in the Conclusion, I perceive the Agreement of *two things* with one another, by the means of *the prior distinct Agreement* of each of those things, to some *third thing*; which third thing is not actually found in the Conclusion, tho it were so in both the Premises.

And therefore I say, there is a quite different Sort or Mode of Cogitation, in these two Cases. Because there is a *real Intrinsick* Difference, between perceiving the *separate* Agreement of two Things with a third Thing; and perceiving the Agreement of those two Things with one another, by the Intervention of that third Thing.

Now then since, according to the present *Hypothesis*, all this is to be deriv'd from the mere *solid, figur'd, divisible, movable Parts of Matter*; it's absolutely necessary, in order to account for this manifest Diversity of Effects, that the said Parts of Matter *should have undergone some Change of State and Circumstance.* For all things continuing in the same state, the same Effects must arise, as was shewn just now; aud consequently, there could be no *Conclusion* drawn from the *Premises* laid down.

Now, whatsoever Change of State or Circumstance has been, must of necessity have been, with respect either to the Solidity, the Division, the Figure, or the Motion of the Parts of Matter, or all these together. For we are arguing

now upon the *Known* Properties of Matter; and I presume, these are all that we do know. So that the *Change of State* we look for, must necessarily be found in some, or all of these, if it be found at all: and if not, *then either 'tis not Matter of Fact, that we argue and reason; or if it be, then those Operations are impossible ever to be effected by these Principles.*

Now, I believe, I may take it for granted, that no *Materialist*, whatsoever, will suppose in this Case, any Change in the *Solidity*, *Cohesion*, or *Configuration*, of the Parts of Matter; but think a Change, in the Point of *Motion*, sufficient to do the Business. And indeed, I believe, it will be the best way to lay the stress of the Matter there: for besides that all the same Difficulties which press them, in the Supposition of a Change of Motion, will also press them, in the Supposition of a Change of Solidity, Cohesion, or Configuration; there will, as I take it, be some new ones accruing over and above.

Upon which account therefore (whether they are aware of any such Difficulties or no) I'll fix upon the Article of *Motion*; and demonstrate the Impossibility of any *new State*, in that respect, to account for the different Acts, Modes, Sorts, or Kinds of Cogitation, in the Business of *Argumentation*.

It's past all doubt now-a-days, amongst Men of any Taste in *true Philosophy*, That as the Parts of Matter which are at *Rest*, can't exchange that State for the contrary one of *Motion*, unless determin'd thereto, by the Influence of some *external Agent*; so those which are actually determin'd to move in any sort of Direction, will *continue* to move therein, till they are likewise compel'd to exchange that Direction for another, into

into which they are put, by *ſome other Mover from Abroad:* And that the Change of Motion, in ſuch a Caſe, is always *proportional* to, and propagated in the *ſame Direction* with the Force impreſs'd. So that therefore, when any ſort of Motion is once commenc'd, amongſt the Parts of Matter; if theſe Laws are true, it can neither be propagated with a *new Impetus*, nor in a *new Direction*, without the Intervention of a *new Mover*, qualify'd in both reſpects to introduce ſuch an Alteration.

Now, ſince 'tis plain, that in *Ratiocination* (where I infer one thing from another, and another thing from that Inference, and a third from thence, and ſo on) there's an Infinity of different Modes of Cogitation; and likewiſe ſince theſe are all, by the *Hypotheſis*, but the different States of the (ſolid, figur'd, diviſible) Parts of Matter, with reſpect to *Velocity and Direction:* therefore 'tis neceſſary, that they ſhould have been put into theſe different States, by the Impulſe of ſome foreign Mover. *For they cannot change their own Condition, and throw themſelves out of one Motion and Direction into another.*

Let this Mover now be what it will, it muſt ſtill be Matter; for (by the *Hypotheſis*) we have to do with nothing elſe but Matter. But then, ſince this Mover is the Cauſe of Motion otherwhere, it muſt be mov'd or acted on it ſelf; for otherwiſe it could not produce a Change of Motion in other contiguous Parts of Matter.

Therefore there muſt needs be ſome other *prior* Mover ſtill, according to the forementioned Laws. And for the ſame Reaſon there muſt be another *prior* to the former, and ſo on to *Infinity*; and this muſt be the Caſe, in every individual Act of Reaſon and Argumentation: which is

ſuch horrid unphiloſophical Nonſenſe, that it is no more to be endur'd, than the running upon it is poſſible to be avoided, in bringing *ſuch a Phenomenon* as this, to the Teſt of the rigorous Laws of Matter and Motion.

And therefore it is beyond all poſſible rational Doubt true, as the Propoſition aſſerts, *viz. That Inference and Argumentation are wholly inconſiſtent with, and ſimply impoſſible ever to be effected by any mere mechanical Laws.* Q. E. D.

Schol. 'Tis plain, that the Matter turns here, *upon the Impoſſibility of a Change of Motion and Direction, in the pure mechanical Production of one Thought from another.* This will ever be the invincible Difficulty, and the certain Confutation of that vain *Hypotheſis.* For as long as Matter is ſubject to ſuch Laws as it is; 'tis certain this can never be. Each new Mode of Thought is a *new State of Motion, Coheſion, Figure, or Diviſion*; which cannot be effected but by the real Action of ſome other Matter. And this will inevitably lead us on to an *infinite Progreſſion of Agents and Movers*; nor is there any ſtopping at a certain *determinate* Number, without involving equally great Abſurdities, as in running on *ad Infinitum.* Perhaps theſe Gentlemen may be apt to think otherwiſe; but if they conſider the Matter well, they'll find it to be ſo.

PROP. II.

THE Exerciſes of WILL, in thinking Subſtances, conſpicuous in an ARBITRARY Suſpenſion, Succeſſion, and Repetition of THOUGHTS; are utterly impoſſible, in a Syſtem of mere Matter and Motion.

I hope there will be no Misunderstanding arising here, from my use of the Term WILL; as being what a *Materialist* (some at least) would perhaps make a very great difficulty of allowing. But (that we may on neither side hide our selves in a Mist of Words) I mean here by WILL nothing but *that Principle or Power in thinking Substances, by which they are enabled, either to do a thing, or to let it alone.* And sure we have such a Power as this: Else all the *Deists*, *Hobbists*, and *Materialists* in the World would be of our Opinion, in Matters which now they pretend to dispute with us. For we find they have a Power to chuse and embrace *their own* Notions, and to let ours alone. And tho they may call this by what Name they please; yet Mankind have generally agreed to call it by the Name of WILL; and by that Name I shall also call it, because I know of none, more proper and expressive of our Conceptions in this matter, than this Term is. However, I mean no more by it, than what I have already explain'd; nor can any Man deny it, without *demonstrating the Truth on't, by his very Denial.* So inevitable is the Necessity of running upon flat Contradictions, when Men set up to dispute plain Matter of Fact, in their own Natures and Constitutions.

As for the Proof of the *Proposition*, it follows easily from what was demonstrated in the *Last*. For to SUSPEND a Thought, in this *Hypothesis*, is to *put an End to that particular State of Motion, wherein the Being and Exercise of that Thought consisted.* To CHANGE or DIVERT, from one to another, is to alter one State of Motion, or another: and to REPEAT the same Thought again, is to bring the Parts of Matter

into the *ſame Circumſtances* of Velocity and Direction, that they were once in, after divers intervening Changes and Interruptions.

Now theſe Phenomena are abſolutely inconſiſtent with any Laws of mere Mechaniſm in the Univerſe.

For as no Motion can be *deſtroy'd*, without the poſitive Action of *contrary Movers*, or the Reſiſtance of Impediments: ſo neither can the Parts of Matter be turn'd from one Direction to another; or, after various Succeſſions and Changes of Motion, ever poſſibly recover the ſame State and Circumſtances again; unleſs upon one of theſe two accounts following.

For either there are *material Agents at hand, ready determin'd to produce theſe particular Effects, of ſuch and ſuch Velocities and Directions:* Or we muſt ſuppoſe, the mere Parts of Matter, by ſome *innate or inherent Power*, able to determine themſelves to the Production of theſe Effects. If there be material Agents, ready determin'd to the Production of theſe Effects; they muſt needs be determin'd thereunto, by *other* Agents or Movers: and then there is no remedy, but we muſt run on into an *Infinite Progreſſion*, as before. If they determine *themſelves*, to theſe Actions; then, *Matter is made a ſelf-moving ſelf-directing Subſtance, capable of acting, without being acted upon*; which (tho as boldly, as ignorantly and precariouſly aſſerted by ſome modern Philoſophaſters, yet) at once deſtroys all, that the World has ever call'd by the name of NATURAL PHILOSOPHY; ever ſince they have left mere *Cant* and Talk in theſe matters, for ſolid *Experiment and Demonſtration.* The Conſequence therefore is, *That there is nothing in all the known Powers and Affections of Matter, from whence there is any Poſſibility of deducing*

thoſe

those Instances of Arbitrary and Voluntary Determination, that shifting and changing, those strange and sudden Returns, Reflections, and Transitions in Thought; which by Experience we find 'tis in our power to make. And therefore, I rightly conclude, that these Phenomena are utterly impossible ever to be, in a System of mere Matter and Motion. *Q. E. D.*

Schol. That MATTER IS NOT A SELF-MOVING SUBSTANCE, is without many words, thus palpably evident.

If Matter has a Power of Self-Motion, then *'tis either according to some one particular and determinate Direction.*

Or else, *Equally to all Directions in general.*

Or else, *To such and such Directions alone, as shall be determin'd, by its own innate Judgment and Choice, as most proper and convenient for it to move in, upon any Emergency that happens.*

If its Power of Self-motion were only according to some one determinate Direction; then, *most certainly, it would never move in any other but that.* But now our Senses testify to us, that Matter moves in an infinite Number of various and different Directions. And therefore, the first *Hypothesis* is false.

Again, a Power to move in any or all Directions in general, *is to be absolutely indifferent and undetermin'd as to any:* which is to have no Power of Self-motion at all; because a Power of Moving every way equally and alike, is a Power of Moving no way; that is, a Power of not Moving: which makes the second *Hypothesis* an absolute Contradiction.

Lastly, That the Self-moving Power of Matter does not respect certain Directions, upon set *Counsel and Choice*, according to particular Emergencies

gencies and Occasions; is demonstrable upon these two accounts.

First, That in *Fact*, Matter does ever obey this Universal Rule, of accommodating it self to the Motion and Direction of the Mover; and not to the Requirements of any particular Occasion or Emergency.

Secondly, That in an infinite number of Cases, 'tis plain, either that Matter does not act from Judgment and Choice at all; or else, *that God has endow'd it with a Power of Judging and Chusing, only that, which is worse and most inconvenient for it self:* and this amounts in Consequence to as much as the former.

Now for this reason I affirm, that Matter is not, nor cannot possibly be a self-moving Substance: and let any of our *Materialists*, who have, without any face of Proof, as confidently affirm'd that it is, shew me wherein the Argument I have made use of, is in any respect defective.

PROP. III.

A Power of SENSATION or PERCEPTION of Objects, is never to be accounted for, by any Pressure or Endeavour, any Action, Reaction or Resistance, of the Corporeal Organ.

This is directly contrary to Mr. *Hobbs*'s Doctrine, as we find it in his *Leviathan*, and his *Physicks* too.

Phantasma (says he) *est sentiendi actus.*

And that we may know what this *Phantasma* is, he philosophizes upon the matter, and gives us this account of the Nature and Production of it: *Ex quo intelligitur, sensionis immediatam causam esse in eo, QUOD SENSIONIS ORGANUM PRIMUM*

MUM TANGIT ET PREMIT. Si enim Organi pars extima prematur; illa cadente, premetur quoque pars quæ versus interiora illi proxima est; & ita propagatur pressio, sive motus ille, per partes Organi omnes, usque ad intimam. This is the *External* Cause or Origin of the *Phantasma*; as for the *Internal* and more immediate one, he describes it thus: *Quoniam antem motui ab objecto, per media, ad Organi partem intimam propagato, sit ALIQUA TOTIUS ORGANI RESISTENTIA SIVE REACTIO, per motum ipsius Organi internum naturalem; fit propterea conatui ab Objecto, conatus ab Organo contrarius: Ut cum conatus ille ad intima, ultimus actus sit eorum qui fiunt in actu sensionis; tum demum, EX EA REACTIONE aliquandiu durante, IPSUM EXISTIT PHANTASMA; quod propter conatum versus externa, semper videtur tanquam aliquid situm extra Organum.* [Hobbs *de Sensione & Motu Animali.*]

And he does the same again in his *Leviathan*, Cap. 1. where he talks of the Counterpressure or Resistance of the *Heart*, to the continu'd Motion, propagated from external Objects; which Reaction or Conatus tending *ad extra*, appears it self to be *(aliquid externum)* something without us, and so (according to this *Hypothesis)* constitutes our Sensation or Perception of those Objects.

This is his Account of the matter. And indeed those that read his *Phœnomena Naturæ*, will scarce find any one considerable *Phœnomenon* there, solv'd more intelligibly or philosophically, than this of *Sensation:* So unlucky a Hand had he, at solving *Physical*, as well as *Mathematical* Problems.

Nor have any of the rest of the modern *Materialists*, been more fortunate than he, in their Explications of *Nature.* A remarkable Instance of which, we have in Monsieur *Des Cartes*, who tho

tho a moſt skilful and excellent *Mathematician*, has yet done little elſe, than carry'd on one continu'd Chain of Blunder and Paralogiſm, thorow his whole *Principia*; and but little better neither, in his *Tractatus de Homine*. But as fondly as that Philoſophy of his has been hugg'd and receiv'd in the World, I make little doubt, but the ſubtle Author intended it either as a *pure Romantick* Entertainment (and ſo has horribly impos'd upon his ſerious Admirers) or as a Foundation for ſomething worſe.

But this by the by: Our Buſineſs now is to ſhew, how far ſhort all the Mechanical Action and Reaction of Matter, comes of a genuine Explication of the *Phenomenon* of *Perception*.

The truth of it is; it is no Solution, no Explication of the Matter at all; but leaves it ſtill, in all reſpects, as much in the dark as ever.

A Motion or Preſſure propagated from an Object, produces a Counter-Preſſure or Reaction in my Organ. True! But what's this to the Buſineſs of Perception? *How does this puſhing outwards, tend to make me conſcious, knowing, or apprehenſive of this Object?* 'Twere to be wiſh'd, that ſome of Mr. *Hobbs*'s Followers would explain this matter a little. For without this, they had as good ſay nothing; becauſe they don't come up to the Caſe, nor ſpeak to the main point in hand. How is this reciprocal Agitation of an *Eye* or an *Ear*, my Apprehenſion of the thing ſeen or heard? I can eaſily conceive what a Man means, when he tells me of *Reaction*: but when he tells me, that that mere Endeavour of the Parts of the material Organ *ad extra*, is my perceiving of a thing; he leaves me utterly ignorant of what Perception is: *becauſe I can find no Similitude nor Relation, between mere Vibrations or Undulations of*

ſome

ſome fine Threds or Fibrillæ in the Machine, and that Acquaintance which I have with an Object, in what I call an Act of Perception.

And I ſhould underſtand him every whit as well, if he told me, that *Motion* was Green or Blue, or *Sound* Triangular or Square; as that *Senſation* is Reaction, and *Conſciouſneſs of an Object* the mere *Conatus* of the trembling Organ towards it.

But then that which (I take it) does moſt effectually ſhew the Vanity and Falſity of this Hypotheſis, is this, *viz. That the Reaction of the material Organ, can never poſſibly account for that Perception, which we have of Objects, as ſpecifically different from each other.*

For the Act of Perception being (according to this Hypotheſis) the mere Reaction of the *Senſory*; 'tis moſt evident, that our different Senſations of Objects muſt be deriv'd from the different Reactions of the Senſory. And conſequently, in whatſoever reſpects the *latter* may be different, in the ſame reſpects, and thoſe only, can the *former* be ſo.

Now the Differences to be conſider'd in the Reaction of the Organ, can be only theſe: Either, *Firſt*, the *Repercuſſion* is *ſtronger or weaker*, according as the *Pulſe* propagated from the Object is ſtronger or weaker: Or, *Secondly*, *More* or *Fewer* Parts of the Organ do react, according as more or fewer in Quantity and Extent are impreſs'd by the Object: Or, *Laſtly*, there may be a difference in reſpect of *Poſition* and *Situation*; ſo that ſometimes *theſe*, and ſometimes *the other* Parts of the Senſory, are put into this ſtate of Reaction, according to the *Shape* and *Figure* of the Object which is preſented.

Now let us conſider theſe diſtinctly.——— By a more *vigorous and forcible* Reaction of the Senſory,

Sensory, I can only have *a stronger and more lively* Sensation of an Object.

By the Reaction of *more Parts* of the Organ, I can only perceive the Object to be *greater or more extended.*

By the Reaction of *differently posited* Parts of the Organ, I can (at most) only perceive a difference of *Shape* or *Figure* in the Object.

But suppose now, there were presented to me two Objects of *two different sorts* of Matter, but exactly *equal* in Bulk, and *similar* in Figure. 'Tis certain in Fact, that I do perceive the one of these to be vastly different from the other. And yet 'tis demonstrable, that the Reactions of the Sensory, produc'd by both of them, must be *exactly the same*, with respect both to *Position and Extent.*

If therefore there be not a Difference arising from the other Cause (*viz.* that of the *Strength and Force* of the Vibrations) such as is capable of answering that Apprehension I have of these two Objects, as *specifically* different from one another; then 'tis demonstrable, that this Hypothesis of Sensation is false.

Now there can be no Difference arising from *that other Cause*, capable of doing this: and that for this evident Reason, *viz.* Because the Act of Sensation being (in this Hypothesis) the *Phantasma*, or Reaction of the Sensory; *a more violent Reaction, can be no more than a more brisk and vigorous Perception:* It can but make me perceive the *same* Object *more strongly and forcibly*; but it can never possibly make me perceive, that *This* Object is really different from *That*; or, that *This is not That*, but something of quite another Nature and Kind.

And therefore since 'tis Fact, that I do perceive this Difference, and that *in the very Act of Sensation*

tion it ſelf, while the Object ſtrikes the Senſory, and by that means produces my Perception of it; it's plain, that this *Hobbian* Hypotheſis is infinitely falſe and wrong. *Q. E. D.*

Schol. 1. It is not by any concomitant *Act of Ratiocination*, that we come to be appriz'd of the Differences of the common Objects of Senſe; but we find them to be different *in and by the pure Act of Senſation it ſelf.*

We have *in* and *by* this very Act, ſuch a Repreſentation of things made to us, that we apprehend *this* is not *that*, nor *one* the *other*.

'Tis true, that by *Reaſon* and *Reflection*, we come to a more *compleat* and *particular* Knowledg of the Agreements and Differences of Things; but we have not our *firſt* Apprehenſions of thoſe Agreements and Differences, from thence. 'Tis not by *Reaſon*, that I know this *Cube* is *Stone*, and that *Wood*, and the other *Lead*; but 'tis by *Senſation*, or *Perception*; whatever it be, that I call ſo: Let that be what it will, I find, that I am thereby appriz'd of the Differences of things; and am conſcious alſo, that *this Act* is not of the ſame nature with that which I call by the name of *Reaſoning*, *Arguing*, or *Collecting one thing from another*.

So that there is no *poſſible Salvo* to be made for this Hypotheſis, by pretending that 'tis *Reaſon*, and not *pure Senſation*, that ought to give us an account of that Difference of Objects we are ſpeaking of.

And my Deſign in adding this *Scholium*, was partly to ſhew, that there is *plain Matter of Fact in Human Nature*, to confront thoſe, that ſhould pretend to evade the Force of the Argument this way.

Schol.

Schol. 2. Our Perception of *Colours* will serve admirably well to illustrate this Argument. That the Rays of Light are *originally* tinctur'd, or (as we call it) colour'd, *Red*, *Yellow*, *Green*, and *Blue*; and that Bodies appear of such and such Colours to us, accordingly as they do more copiously reverberate this or that particular sort of *Colour'd Light* to our Eyes; is now a Point that no body calls in question, since the noble Discoveries of the *best Philosopher of the Age*, relating to this matter, have been made publick.

But whatsoever *intrinsick and essential* Difference there be in the Beams of Light; and how variously soever they *affect and strike* the Organ of Vision; yet there can be no possible account of our Perception of their *different Colouredness*, from the Mechanism of Reaction (nor indeed from any other Mechanism whatsoever.) For were the Parts of *differently colour'd* Lights, of ever so different *Magnitudes* or *Figures*, or reflected from Bodies upon the Organ with ever so different a Force; yet all that could be *Mechanically* effected from hence, would be, that the vibratory Reactions of the Sensory, would be *quicker* or *slower*, *stronger* or *feebler*, perform'd by *fewer* or *more Fibrillæ* in conjunction; or something reducible to the one or the other of these. And the utmost Result of all this, with respect to the matter of *Sensation*, cou'd be only thus much; that *we shou'd perceive one Light more brisk and vivid, or more copious and extensive, than another:* But we could never possibly perceive *Blue* and *Yellow*, or any other distinction of (what we call) *Tincture* and *Colour*; either in the Rays of Light themselves, or the Bodies that reflect them to us. For this *Distinction of Tincture*, is what in the nature of things suits no

no more with *ſwift* and *ſlow*, or *great* and *leſs*, than it does with *Space* or *Time*, or with *Length*, *Breadth*, and *Thickneſs*. And therefore I ſay, that our Perception in this Caſe, is *a Phenomenon, that's infinitely foreign, and remote from all Re-action or Modification of a corporeal Organ.* A Perception we have; but *what* 'tis, and *of what*, and *how* produc'd, we know not: only this we know, that we find a difference as to *ſomething*. And this is but one Inſtance of many, relating to plain Matter of Fact in Nature, which I could produce (if 'twere worth while) to demonſtrate how *impoſſible and abſurd this Hypotheſis of Senſation is.*

But there's enough ſaid of a *Blunder:* and all that I have to excuſe my ſaying ſo much upon it, is, that I think 'tis one of the moſt celebrated ones that has appear'd upon this Subject; and that I hope ſomething or other that has been hinted here, may lay a Foundation for a Confutation of other Attempts, towards a Mechanical Solution of this ſort of Problems.

I ſhall only obſerve further upon this head; *viz.* That if SENSATION it ſelf cannot be the mere *Phantaſma*, or effect of the Re-action of the Senſory, that is, its *Motion ad extra*; then neither can MEMORY be the mere Reſult of *an apt Diſpoſition of Organs, to preſerve or retain the Motion impreſs'd by external Objects*; but muſt neceſſarily be a Power, far tranſcending all the Actions, Efforts, or Affections of Matter, either to cauſe, or account for it. Upon what ſcore ſoever, it is impoſſible that we ſhould PERCEIVE mechanically; upon the ſame (at leaſt) it is impoſſible, that we ſhould REMEMBER, by virtue of the ſame Principles.

PROP. IV.

IF Matter be capable of Thought and Volition, then innumerable Properties and Affections relating to the Motion and Action of Bodies, which now paſs for Demonſtrated Truths, may poſſibly be, all of them, precarious and falſe.

We demonſtrate in *Mechanicks*, that ſuch and ſuch Portions of Matter, with ſuch *Forces*, or at ſuch *Diſtances* from a *fixed Point*, ought exactly to ballance one another, and remain *in Equilibrio*. And in *Hydroſtaticks*, that *Liquids* ought to ſtand at ſuch determinate Heights in *Tubes*; or that *Solid* Bodies *immers'd* in them, ought to keep preciſely ſuch or ſuch Places and Poſitions.

It has been demonſtrated likewiſe (with no leſs Evidence than either of the former) that the *larger Syſtems of Matter in the Univerſe*, obſerve exact Order and Method in their Revolutions; and that, as from certain Laws and Principles, they ought to deſcribe *Curve-lines of ſuch and ſuch Figures and Dimenſions, and be liable to ſuch and ſuch particular Irregularities*; ſo they do in Fact always continue to deſcribe the ſame Lines, and preſent us with the *ſame Set of Phenomena*.

Now if Matter be a Subſtance that can *Think and Will*, then all theſe things which paſs as the Subjects of common Obſervation, and certain Demonſtration too, may notwithſtanding be altogether doubtful and uncertain, nay abſolutely falſe and wrong. For the *Intelligent and Deſigning* Parts of Matter may ſhift their *Poſitions*, or put themſelves out of thoſe Directions, which by the receiv'd Laws of Motion they ought to keep in. They may make arbitrary Efforts a-

gainſt

gainſt the Preſſures and Endeavours of neighbouring Particles; and by thoſe inteſtine Colluctations with each other, prevent or alter the Effects that ought to ariſe. They may diſpoſe themſelves to Stops and Pauſes, or to *irregular Accelerations and Retardations of their Motions, going on with degrees of Velocity, infinitely diſproportional to the Forces impreſs'd.* So that the World may be notoriouſly out in all that relates to the *Ponderation*, the *Colliſion*, and *Reſilition* of Bodies, the *Impreſſion and Communication* of Motion, the Tracks or *Semitæ* which Bodies deſcribe, and the *Forces* they move with therein; if Matter be endow'd with *Counſel and Deſign.* And the plain truth on't is, he that ſees how oddly the Parts of Matter do in ſome certain Caſes diſpoſe of themſelves, how they joſtle and ſqueeze one another, and force themſelves into the way of the *rudeſt Strokes and heavieſt Preſſures*; would be tempted to think their *Underſtanding* but little, and their *Prudence* leſs.

If any one ſhould argue here, that Matter may be a thinking Subſtance, and yet all the demonſtrated Laws of the Motion and Action of Bodies on one another, may notwithſtanding be infallibly and univerſally true; namely, becauſe God Almighty has appointed and ordain'd, that they ſhould always take place, and has ſet the great Machine of the World together in ſuch a manner, that they muſt neceſſarily do ſo:

I anſwer in one word, The plain meaning of that is this; *viz. That God has made Matter a Thinking Subſtance, and yet diſpos'd things ſo, that all the neceſſary Effects of Thought and Counſel, ſhould be for ever impoſſible. He has made it capable of willing and contriving; but to no other purpoſe, nor no other end, than barely to be able to will and con-*

trive, in a sluggish inactive State, under invincible Confinements and Restraints. Let those that think to solve the Argument this way, therefore, consider how they will reconcile this, to *that infinite Wisdom and Prudence*, of which they have such plentiful Demonstrations in the whole Frame of Nature; where, after all their exactest and most curious Enquiries, they'll not be able to find the least Appearance of any such imprudent Step, as *making one thing to thwart and cross another; or giving Powers to any Being, that should be actually frustrate and void, by virtue of some other general Law.*

If they can do this, I shall easily give up the Argument as lost: otherwise there is no Remedy, but it will and must conclude, *that* (in Fact) *Matter is not a Substance endow'd with Thought and Counsel.* Q. E. D.

SECT. V.

AND thus we have consider'd what Matter and Motion are able to do, towards the Production of the *Phenomena* of *Intelligent* Substances; and *what signs there are in the Universe*, of its being a thinking Substance it self.

In short, by all *Observations and Trials*, Matter does not think; and by *Demonstration*, it cannot think, by virtue of any of the *known Properties* of it. Nay, Matter is evidently subjected to such Laws, as make it impossible *that it should think*, by virtue of any of those Properties or Affections which are actually discover'd to us. So that I hope, the *first Article* propos'd, may be pretty well clear'd: And this (as I said before)

fore) is the main point of all, and that which will give the most effectual stroke towards the compleat Determination of the Question in hand. I shall now therefore, according to the Order of the Method propos'd, enquire,

2. *What Strength and Weight there is in that Alledgment, of certain possible UNKNOWN Powers or Affections of Matter, from whence Thought and Volition may arise; tho it be allow'd that they cannot proceed from those Properties and Affections which are KNOWN to us.*

And the plain truth of the matter is, there is nothing but mere Shuffling and Evasion in't. 'Tis an absolute downright precarious Assertion, and seems to be calculated purely for a *Refuge*, when the former part of the Hypothesis, should plainly appear to be no longer defensible. What an egregious Jest is it, for a Man to reply, and say in such a Case as this, *Matter may have innumerable Properties that we are perfectly ignorant of; and by virtue of those Properties it may be able to think?* I would fain know what Argument there is, that may not be evaded by such a *licentious way of supposing* as this! A Man might make mad work in *Philosophy*, and advance the most monstrous Paradoxes in the World, under the Protection of this Method of appealing to the UNKNOWN POWERS *and* PROPERTIES of Bodies. If I had a mind to assert the oddest and most surprizing things that can be thought of, concerning some *natural* Bodies; provided they were such as did not contradict either *plain Sense* or *Demonstration*, I would go this very way to work, arguing from the hidden Properties and Virtues of Matter, *which might be able to produce such and such Effects, tho all that we knew of Matter could not do it.* And at that rate, all *Nature*

might be turn'd into Banter; and a Man might make any thing of any thing, according to his own Fancy: Nor cou'd any *Deist* that stands by *this Hypothesis*, ever possibly answer one of those Arguments, tho ever so ridiculous.

I make no difficulty of allowing these Gentlemen, that it is indeed a thing simply *possible in it self*, that Matter may be endow'd with some other Properties, than are actually known to, or discover'd by us. For as we do not see into the *intrinsick Natures and Essences of things*; so neither do I know of any *strict and perfect Demonstration*, by which the simple Impossibility of this can be made out. But what then? I hope the *bare Possibility* that it may be so, is not, in the nature of things, a warrantable ground for *Surmise and Suspicion* that it is so. Perhaps you'll say, you don't suspect that it *is actually so*, but only that it *may possibly* be so. But what an idle and useless Suspicion is that? How ridiculous is it, for People to amuse themselves and others, with mere Peradventures and Surmises of this, and that, and t'other thing, that *may possibly be?*

The Question is, Have you any *Hints or Intimations* from the Universe, or any thing in it, that Matter has Properties, quite different from those which we are acquainted with? Do you see any thing like a *Sign or Symptom* of it, in the nature of things abroad? This indeed would give your Conjectures some tolerable face of Reason: whereas to go on guessing and surmising, upon *bare simple Possibility*, and your own *Ignorance*, or rather *Nescience*, of what neither concerns you to know, nor perhaps is ever possible to be known by you, or any other Creature besides (I mean *the inward Essences of Things*;) this is all over *Humoursom and Arbitrary*, nor is there

there any other account to be given for't, but ſuch a one as will never ſtand good in Nature and Reaſon; *viz. that you do it, becauſe you will do it.*

But after all, ſuppoſe we allow you your Suſpicions of ſeveral poſſible *unknown, and quite different Properties of Matter, from any that we are now appriz'd of:* You come on again with a freſh Suſpicion, *that theſe Properties may ſome of them be ſuch, that Matter may be able to think by virtue of them.* Whereas the Diſcourſe being of Properties that neither you nor we know any thing of, you can have no more ground to ſuppoſe, that any of all the unknown Properties of Matter are ſuch as are *juſt fit for your turn*, namely to make Matter a thinking Subſtance; than we can have to ſuppoſe the contrary. *Matter may poſſibly be inveſted with ten thouſand Properties, different from all that we know of; and yet none of them all may be ſuch, as may render it capable of Thought and Reflection.* But your Buſineſs requires you to ſuppoſe ſuch Properties and Affections in Matter, as are capable of rendring it a *conſcious thinking Subſtance*, as you would have it to be; that is, *you'll ſuppoſe every thing that's proper to anſwer your own purpoſe, without offering any thing that looks like Reaſon or Proof for it:* in which you can expect no more Credit from the reſt of Mankind, than the reſt of Mankind believe *you give to your ſelves*, while you offer ſuch wretched precarious Hypotheſes (as theſe are) to their Conſideration.

SECT. VI.

3. AS for the next thing alledg'd, *viz.* That *God Almighty, by his infinite Power, and out of his own Good-pleasure, may or does endow Systems of Matter with the Faculties of Thinking and Willing:* It appears to me, to be so very little to the purpose, that I can't but wonder that any Persons should ever insist on it.

In the first place, 'tis an idle and a vain thing to go to disputing upon the *possible Effects* of Divine Power; and it looks as if Men were conscious to themselves, that they had nothing left to say, that could signify any thing; when they put an Argument upon such a foot as this, that *Omnipotence* may make things to be as they affirm.

Besides, this is a *Quibbling and Ambiguous way of Talking*; and at best, seems intended only to puzzle the Cause.

God may endow Matter with a Power or Faculty of Thinking!

The meaning of which must necessarily be one of these two. Either——

First, *That Matter continuing only what it is, according to our best and clearest Ideas of it* (viz. a solid Substance, capable of Division, Figure, Motion, and the Effects of these, and their Compositions or Combinations) *God Almighty may, by his Infinite Power, cause Thought and Volition to arise or result from these very Properties and Affections; or from the Nature of Matter, as endow'd with these Properties:* And so, in that Sense, be said to invest it with a Power of Thinking.

Or,

Or, *Secondly*, That the Faculty of Thinking and Willing, is not any thing resulting from, or educed out of the mere Powers of Matter; *but something of a distinct and separate Nature, super-induc'd or superadded to it, by God:* who in this Sense therefore, makes it a Thinking Substance, only as he joins along with it a Power of Cogitation, which is quite *foreign to Matter*, and all its Properties.

As for the *First* of these, I argue thus; It does not at all derogate from Infinite Power, to say, *That it cannot make both Parts of a Contradiction to be true.*

Now Matter continuing to be only what it is, according to our best and clearest Ideas of it, viz. *a solid Substance, capable of Figure, Motion, and Division*, with the Effects and Combinations of these: It is impossible, by all the Laws of the Universe, that Matter should Think and Will; as we have already demonstrated.

And therefore, since God Almighty, as the Author of Nature, has establish'd such Laws, that by virtue of them, and while they continue in force, it is absolutely impossible, that such *Phenomena* as Thought and Volition, should result from any of the Properties and Affections of Matter: We may safely conclude, whilst Matter continues to be such as it is, according to our best Ideas of it (that is, endow'd with such Properties, and subject to such Laws) that even Almighty Power it self cannot make it to be a Thinking Substance, in this *first Sense: For that would be the same thing, as to make it a Thinking Substance, at the same time, and by virtue of the very same Principles, that it is made impossible for it to be a Thinking Substance by.*

Secondly,

Secondly, If a Thinking Power or Faculty, *essentially distinct* from all the Properties and Affections of Matter, or any possible Effects and Compositions of them; be *superinduc'd, or superadded thereto by God:* I would ask then, Why these Gentlemen can't as well allow a THINKING SUBSTANCE, *specifically distinct from Matter?*

Where are the odds; but only in the Consequences of this latter Concession, with respect to a FUTURE STATE? And in that respect, I confess there are some odds. For 'tis easier to conceive, how a THINKING SUBSTANCE may be liable to *Pain and Punishment*; than how a mere POWER or FACULTY should be subject to any such thing. This (a Man may fondly tell himself) may be lost, and dissolve into nothing, he does not know how; whereas, the Notion of a *real Cogitative Substance*, seems to involve a sort of Stability and Permanency, that gives a much worse prospect with respect to HEREAFTER, than the former does.

But notwithstanding all the Absurdity and Unintelligibleness of the Talk of a Power or Faculty, that is not actually the Power or Faculty of *some particular Being or Substance, of the same Specifick Nature with that Power:* yet this very Concession, of a Thinking Capacity or FACULTY, *essentially distinct from all the Properties and Affections of Matter*, does as effectually thwart and overturn all the Schemes of a *Materialist*; as that of a Thinking SUBSTANCE would do. For this being granted, 'tis evident then, that there is something in Nature (call it *FACULTAS, VIS, POTENTIA*, or by what other Name you will) that IS NOT MATTER, nor does not result from any of its Properties, *nor is not any way allied or related to them:* And that this is

is likewiſe the *ſole Cauſe* of an infinite Number of ACTIONS and OPERATIONS, which are beyond compariſon more noble and curious than any that we ſee perform'd by *Bodies* about us. And he that will call this a POWER, and grant nothing of a SUBSTANCE in the Caſe, may trifle and play with Words if he pleaſes; but all Mankind beſides, will plainly ſee, it is *but playing with Words.* However (I ſay) even upon *this Suppoſition*, the Cauſe of Matter and Motion is entirely at an end, and we muſt hear no more of thoſe *fine Speculations and Hypotheſes*, that us'd to be advanc'd to us upon this Subject. *Something there is ſpecifically diſtinct from Matter, in the Univerſe:* and that being granted, there is enough granted, both to ſpoil all their *Syſtems*, and ſhew that they do but trifle, when they deny the Exiſtence of an IMMATERIAL SUBSTANCE.

In ſhort, as for this Notion, of *God's endowing Syſtems of Matter, with the Powers of Thinking and Willing*; we ſee that it amounts to juſt nothing at all.

Take it *one way*, and it is *impoſſible*, even to Infinite Power it ſelf; while the preſent Frame and Conſtitution of the World are maintain'd.

Take it the *other way*, and you do by Conſequence give up the whole Cauſe. Now in one of *theſe two Senſes*, it muſt unavoidably be taken; for there is no third Senſe, nor no poſſible Mean betwixt theſe two.

But after all, without laborious arguing upon the Buſineſs; ſuppoſe I ſhould ask any one, that told me in the general, that God did of his own good Pleaſure, endow Matter with the Faculties of Thinking and Willing; I ſay, ſuppoſe I ſhould demand the Grounds and Reaſons of his Aſſertion, *and how he would make it out to me*

that

that it was so: What account would he give me of the matter? Should I have any thing that look'd like Proof for't? I dare say no Man would pretend to convince me of it, by ACTUAL EXPERIMENT; and I am very sure, he cannot give me DEMONSTRATION for it. And must I take the arbitrary fantastical Guesses and Surmises of a Person (that has a mind Matter should think, and the Gospel be a Cheat) for Proof, in such a Case as this? With all the same Right and Reason that he tells me, *God has superadded such Faculties as these, to Systems of Matter*; I may tell him, that some sort of Matter can *Think*, and not *Will*; that another has *Inclination*, but no *Judgment*; that another has both the former, but no *Reflection nor Remembrance:* That one body has *three*, another *ten*, and another *two hundred* several Modes or Ways of *Sensation*. And who (upon our *Deists Principles*) could ever disprove a Man, that should insist upon such whimsical Notions as these are? Nor do I think that it would be at all, any thing of an immodest Challenge, to offer to make out any one of them all, that should be demanded; when they have given fair and satisfactory Proof, *that God Almighty has* (in any of those Senses that we oppose) *endow'd Systems of Matter, with the Faculties of Thinking and Willing*.

And thus much may suffice for that *third* Thing also.

SECT.

SECT. VII.

HAVING now ſhewn, that *Matter cannot Think*, by virtue of any of thoſe Properties and Affections, which compoſe our Idea of the Nature of it; as alſo, that what's alledg'd, about ſome *poſſible unknown Properties* of it, by which it may be able to *think and will*; and of *God Almighty's inveſting it* with thoſe Faculties, by his Supreme and Sovereign Power; that this (I ſay) is nothing but *mere arbitrary Hypotheſis* and *Subterfuge*, and for that Reaſon, to be allow'd no farther Place nor Conſideration in the Argument, than only to be as poſitively deny'd, as it is precariouſly aſſerted: I ſhall now deduce ſome *Corollaries*, that follow more immediately from the foregoing Diſcourſe; and then proceed, to make ſome farther Application of it another way.

Coroll. 1. *A THINKING Subſtance, as ſuch, cannot poſſibly be a MATERIAL one.*

Coroll. 2. *Unleſs therefore, there be any MEAN ſort of Subſtance between MATERIAL and IMMATERIAL, or ſome, that is SPECIFICALLY DISTINCT from both; it is ſo far from being Impoſſible, that there ſhould be ſuch a thing as IMMATERIAL Subſtance; that on the other hand, it is certain to a Demonſtration, that there are ſuch Subſtances; and that THINKING and WILLING are neceſſarily the Powers of IMMATERIAL, and ONLY of Immaterial Subſtances.*

And

And becauſe, I believe, no Man will pretend to demonſtrate, either the *Actual Exiſtence*, or the *Poſſibility* of a MEAN ſort of Subſtance between MATERIAL and IMMATERIAL, that is, between MATERIAL and NOT MATERIAL; or any, that is SPECIFICALLY diſtinct from both: Therefore we may put the *Corollary*, out of the *Hypothetical* Form, and ſay *abſolutely*, that there are *Immaterial* Subſtances, and that *Thinking* and *Willing* are neceſſarily the Powers of ſuch, and ONLY of ſuch Subſtances.

Coroll. 3. *THINKING Subſtances, cannot be liable to the ſame Changes and Viciſſitudes, that MATERIAL Ones are liable to.*

I enter not at all into the Enquiry, *What Changes, Thinking Subſtances may in any reſpect be liable to*; but I ſay, that they can't be liable to ſuch, as *pure Material Ones* are obnoxious to.

Coroll. 4. *Therefore if a THINKING Subſtance be join'd to a SYSTEM of MATTER; the Diſſolution of the one, is by no means a Conſequence of the Diſſolution or Deſtruction of the other: But the FORMER may continue, not only to EXIST, but to ACT and OPERATE, when the Union between IT and the LATTER ceaſes.*

Coroll. 5. *Brutes are not mere AUTOMATA, or MACHINES.*

The reaſon is, *becauſe their Actions plainly ſhew Thought and Deſign:* and one may venture to account, every whit as well, for moſt of the ordinary Actions of Mankind, by *mere Clock-work*; as for ſome Actions of theſe Creatures, which we call *Irrational.*

* *Natu-*

* *Natural History* (nay, *common Observation and Experience*) will furnish sufficient Proofs of this. And I dare say, a Man that consults these, will find Arguments enough in one silly Animal; to confute all the Systems of the wisest Philosophers, that have written Books to prove them to be *mere Machines.*

A noted Disciple of *Des-Cartes* (following therein his Master's Steps) has taken the pains to do this, in a peculiar Treatise †; but methinks there is some want of *Reason* in the *Book*, as well as of *Sense* in the *Subject* 'tis writ of.

There have been *Poets* ||, that have had better Notions of *these Creatures*, and treated them much more civilly, than some of our modern *Philosophers* have done. And if they don't expressly attribute *Reason and Understanding* to them (at least *such* Reason and Understanding, as *Man*

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* *Ælian.* Var. Hist. lib. 1. cap. 2, 3, 4, &c. *and abundance of* Modern Authors, *have given very particular and surprizing Relations, of the* Ingeny, Prudence, and subtle Contrivance, of divers Sorts of Animals.

† Le Grand, *de carentia sensus in Brutis.*

|| *Esse* Apibus *partem* Divinæ Mentis, *& haustus*
Ætherios *dixere.* Deum *namq; ire per omnes*
Terrasq; Tractusq; Maris, Cœlumq; Profundum.
Hinc Pecudes, Armenta, Viros, Genus omne Ferarum,
Quemq; sibi tenues Nascentem arcessere Vitas.
Virg. Georg. 4.

So again,—*Principio Cœlum & Terras, camposq; liquentes*
Lucentemq; Globum Lunæ, Titaniaq; Astra
Spiritus *intus alit; totamq; infusa per Artus*
Mens *agitat Molem, & magno se corpore miscet;*
Inde Hominum Pecudumq; Genus, vitæq; Volantum,
Et quæ Marmoreo fert Monstra sub æquore Pontus.
Igneus *est illis* Vigor, *& Cœlestis Origo*
Seminibus.——Virg. Æn. 6.

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is endow'd † with) yet they ſhew plainly enough, that they believ'd them not to be mere Matter, aptly ſet together with Springs and Wheels, and other Inſtruments of Motion; but to be really inform'd, by ſome *Principles of Celeſtial Life and Vigour.* And I obſerve, by the way too, that thoſe People, who are ſo fond of making MEN as well as BRUTES, nothing but mere Matter and Motion; have the Senſe of *Former* || *Ages* againſt them, as well as the Reaſon and Demonſtrations of the *preſent* Age.

Nor do I at all believe, that the reaſon why any of the moſt conſiderable of the old Poets or Philoſophers talk'd upon this Subject of *Human Nature*, in a Stile ſo very different from that of our modern *Deiſts*; was, becauſe they were leſs wiſe and knowing than the latter are; but becauſe, together with (at leaſt) as much Know-

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† ——*Atqui adeo Venerabile ſoli*
Sortiti Ingenium, divinorumq; Capaces,
Atq; exercendis, capiendiſq; Artibus apti,
Senſum à Cœleſti demiſſum traximus arce,
Cujus egent prona & Terram ſpectantia; Mundi
Principio, indulſit communis Conditor illis
Tantum ANIMAS, nobis ANIMUM quoq;——
Juv. Sat. 15.

|| *Hipparchus* nunquam ſatis laudatus, ut quo nemo magis approbaverit cognationem cum homine ſyderum, *Animaſque noſtras partem eſſe Cœli.*
Plin. lib. 2. cap. 26.

——*Divinæ particulam Auræ.* Horat.

Nam cum cæteras animantes abjeciſſet ad paſtum ſolum hominem erexit, ad cœlique quaſi cognationis & domicilii priſtini conſpectum, excitavit.
Cic. de Legib. lib. 1.

Which Lines are (as one may ſay) only put into Verſe by Ovid, *where he ſays,*

Pronaque cum ſpectent animalia cætera terram,
Os homini ſublime dedit, cœlumque tueri
Juſſit, & erectos ad ſydera tollere vultus. *Met.* 1.

ledg

ledg and good Sense, they had more Liberty of Thought, and were not cramp'd and biass'd (at least in this Affair) by a *Scheme or System*, as these People are; who having once set up against Christianity, must go thro thick and thin in the way of opposing it, nay even to the very making *Men* and *Posts* the same sort of Substances.

However, 'tis certain they are equally mistaken, both in the case of Men and Brutes too.

Even those inferior Animals, are demonstrably of quite another sort of make, than they would have them to be.

Those *Comparisons and Reflections upon things*, which 'tis plain they make, tho but obscure and indistinct, with respect to ours; do yet amount to what we must call *Reason and Argumentation*, in some degree.

And it is as much as serves all the Uses and Purposes of Creatures, which hold such a Rank in the Creation as they do. 'Tis enough to qualify them for all those Offices of Life, which tend either to their own Ease and Good, or the Advantage of Mankind who make use of them.

Notwithstanding this, together with some share of *Mind* or *Intelligence*, they have a much larger degree of *Appetite* and *Inclination*. This is the most prevailing * Principle in their Composition, and is by far too strong for the other Faculty to govern and restrain. Nay, *Knowledg* and *Perception* in these Creatures, as to all that appears to us, seem to be intended chiefly for *guiding the Appetite to its proper Objects, and not for tempering and regulating the Motions of it.*

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* ——— *Pecora*, quæ Natura, prona atque *ventri obedientia* finxit. *Salust. Bell. Catalin. in princip.*

The Case is quite otherwise, with respect to † *Man*; who being endow'd with a brighter *and vastly more capacious Intellect*, is thereby qualify'd, to make *more exact and speedy Reflections* upon things, and to *run Consequences out to a far greater Length*; and being able to dictate and prescribe what should be pursu'd, in a more *distinct* and *methodical* manner, as also to enforce those Prescriptions with a *more masterly Authority* than the other Creatures can; is hence, better fitted for the Government of his *Passions and Appetite:* and does then, and then only, maintain the Dignity and just Prerogative of his Nature above the Brutes, when he keeps them in due subjection to his Reason. On any occasion, to give the upper hand to these unruly Powers, is making a Step towards *another Species*; but to be *habitually* given up to the Conduct of them, is only to be a Brute of *finer Airs*, and *better Shape*, than the common ones are.

SECT. VIII.

BUT to proceed a little further in this Enquiry: As the Operations of Brutes are the *certain Effects* and *manifest Signs*, of some Powers, *which are not nor cannot be the Powers of mere Matter*, nor any thing resulting from any of its Properties and Affections; so, there remains but one or other of these two Conclusions to be fix'd

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† Bestiis autem *sensum* & *motum* dedit, & cum quodam *Appetitu*, accessum ad res salutares, a pestiferis recessum; *Homini* hoc amplius, quod addidit *Rationem*, qua regerentur animi appetitus, qui tum remitterentur, tum continerentur. *Cic. de Nat. Deor.* 2.

upon,

upon, in order to the ſettling of the point, about their real Nature and Conſtitution.

For either, they are only pure Machines, acted and inform'd, by one common or *general Soul of the World*, *which perceives*, *and thinks*, *and deſires in them*, as ſo many diſtinct and ſeparate Parcels or Syſtems of Matter:

Or elſe, together with a Syſtem of corporeal Organs, they conſiſt of a *real immaterial Subſtance*, which is individuate and numerically diſtinct, for each Animal; which immaterial Principle or Subſtance, acting in and by the Springs and Organs of the Body, produces all that variety of *Phenomena*, which we obſerve in their Operations; juſt as that which we call our *Soul* does in our ſelves.

As for the *Firſt* of theſe; to ſuppoſe Brutes to be in themſelves mere ſenſleſs Machines, acted and invigorated by a *Common Soul*, that unites itſelf to all *organiz'd* Syſtems of Matter, and produces variouſly (according to the various Diſpoſition and Texture of that Matter) what we call *Perception*, *Apprehenſion*, *Inclination*, and the like: This is ſuch an intolerably whimſical ſort of Hypotheſis, that it ſcarce deſerves to be argu'd againſt.

Let him that can *prove* it, produce his Arguments for it: Nay, let him but give ſome Reaſons that may make it only *probable*, that it is ſo.

In the mean time I ſhall offer one, that I believe will make it more than probable, that it is not ſo.

I take it to be a very plain and clear Caſe, that WE MEN are not ſo many particular Machines, inform'd by one common Anima Mundi.

In that we *Think* and *are Conſcious*, we can be ſure of ſome Principle that is not *Matter*, which

is the alone Agent or Cause of that Thought and Consciousness. But then I add;

In that we are not mutually conscious, of each other's Thoughts and Consciousnesses; our particular Thought and Consciousness, is not nor cannot be the effect of some common intelligent Principle, which thinks, and is conscious in us all.

For I would fain know, why or how *the suppos'd Universal Soul*, merely by thinking and acting, in one particular System of Matter, should come to be *not conscious*, of what it thinks and acts in another System of Matter? 'Tis it self, and it self only, that thinks, here, and there, and every where. This and that and the other Man's Thought and Consciousness, is but the *Common Anima* thinking and reflecting upon it self, within so many several *Enclosures or Partitions of Matter.*

I grant indeed, that in this Hypothesis, a Man might with some little shew of Reason, attempt to account for some Differences, in the particular *Ways and Modes of Thinking*, in particular Persons; *viz.* upon the score of the different Disposition, Texture, and Configuration of the Organs, which even the same common Soul might be suppos'd to influence very variously, and thereby produce all the *Phenomena* of Slowness and Confusion, of Vivacity, Brightness, and Regularity of Thought, in those distinct Parcels of Matter that are inform'd by it, and are thus variously built and fram'd.

But there's no manner of account to be given, how a *common Soul*, by informing various Systems of Matter, should lose its *General Consciousness*; or be made not conscious, of what it thinks and acts it self, in each of those Systems.

And

And 'tis not only *unaccountable* how it ſhould be ſo (for that is not in it ſelf any Argument againſt the Poſſibility or Reality of things) but it is *ridiculous and abſurd*, to all the impartial Reaſon in the world, that it ſhould be ſo; and that I take to be a ſufficient Argument againſt it.

For the *actual numerical Diſtinction, or Diviſion*, of thoſe innumerable Syſtems of Matter, which the (ſuppos'd) *Anima Mundi* cohabits with, and exerts it ſelf in, can't *part or divide it from it ſelf*, or (if I may uſe ſuch a Phraſe) make any *Chaſm* in its Eſſence.

It's ſtill the ſame *ſimple undivided* Subſtance, when thus incorporated with all the Animal Machines in the Univerſe, that it is or would be, out of that State of Union and Cohabitation with Matter. Otherwiſe, it were no longer *one Univerſal Soul*, but an indefinite Aggregate of diſtinct particular Souls. And for a Man to own that, is not only utterly to relinquiſh the *preſent Hypotheſis, of a common Soul*, but likewiſe to grant as much, as was at firſt aim'd at in the oppoſing of it.

If therefore this *General Informing Principle*, or Soul of the World, notwithſtanding the actual numerical Diſtinction of the ſeveral Portions of Matter, it animates and dwells in; be the ſame ſimple undivided Subſtance, that it would be, out of that State of Cohabitation with Matter; then I ſay, *there cannot poſſibly be any Interruption of its Conſciouſneſs.*

Matter will be no Impediment, no Bar againſt an Univerſal Perception and Senſation, throughout all the Syſtems of it.

That ſame Univerſal Principle of Thought and Conſciouſneſs, which thinks and is conſcious, in this or that particular Syſtem; will infallibly be conſcious to

it ſelf, in another Syſtem, that it does actually think and is conſcious, in the former.

And therefore we muſt neceſſarily, all of us, be conſcious of each other's Conſciouſneſſes and Perceptions.

I don't ſay, that we muſt neceſſarily have the very ſame *Modes* or *Kinds* of Thought and Reflection; or that one Thinking Being muſt needs be conſcious of the very ſame *Objects*, and after the ſame *manner*, that another is.

But what I ſpeak of, is a *Univerſal Senſation, or a being conſcious of others Conſciouſneſſes*, and that upon this ſcore; *that* (according to this *Hypotheſis) there is one ſimple thinking conſcious Principle, which runs thorow all the Univerſe; and the Conſciouſneſs of any particular intelligent Being, is but the Conſciouſneſs of that ſimple Principle, reſiding in ſuch or ſuch a Syſtem of Matter.* And a general Perception or Conſciouſneſs is, I am ſure, a fair and neceſſary Conſequence from thence. But I am ſure likewiſe, that it is an infinitely falſe one, and contrary to all Experience, and Matter of Fact in *Human Nature.*

And therefore I ſay, that with reſpect to *Mankind*, one may be ſecure enough, that this *Hypotheſis* of an *Anima Mundi*, is a mere Dream.

And thoſe Philoſophers (if it be not an *abuſe* of the Name, to call them ſo) who talk at that rate; and pretend to illuſtrate the matter by little vulgar Similes, ſuch as that of an *Organ*, where the ſame *Blaſt* produces a great Variety of Sound, by the mere different Make of the *Pipes*, that receive and emit it: would employ themſelves much better, in ſtudying *certain and demonſtrated Truths*, than in inventing, and amuſing the World, with ſuch idle Paradoxes.

The

The different Modifications of Matter (if they consider the thing well) will do them no manner of service here; as I have prosecuted the Argument.

For let Matter be modify'd, or divided, how it will; yet still that will have no influence, to prevent the general Consciousness of a simple Substance, specifically distinct from Matter, and which at most (to talk in these Gentlemens Dialect) only *tunes* those several Systems variously, according to their different Textures and Dispositions.

And I would fain know how or why, *this Tuning of Bodies*, the Difference of whose *Notes* arises only from their own Structure; should hinder the *Intelligent Principle*, which gives the *Blast*, from being every where conscious of its own *Musick?*

If they can set this Point in a clear light, I shall be ready to acknowledg the *Anima Mundi* they talk of; and for the future, look upon my self, only as one of the Pipes of the great Organ of the Universe: which at present I confess I do not.

Now the Use that I make of this Discourse, of a *Universal Soul*, with respect to *Brute Animals*, is this:

Since I find their Structure to be, in the main, the same with that of *Mankind*; in that, besides a Corporeal Machine, they give plain Indications of Powers and Faculties, which cannot result from mere Matter, and must therefore necessarily be the Powers of some *Immaterial Substance*, whatever it be: Moreover, since I can, upon very evident Principles, conclude, that *Men*, a superior Order of Intelligent Creatures, are not inspir'd by one *common Soul*; but on the other hand, that each of those most noble Machines, is animated by its *own proper Soul or Spirit*, which is the undoubted

Principle of all Thought and Conſciouſneſs in them: I have all the reaſon in the World to conclude, that it is thus with *Brutes* likewiſe; and to acknowledg in their Compoſition, as well as in that of Mankind, *a particular informing Subſtance, eſſentially diſtinct from, tho cloſely united to, a Syſtem of Matter.*

And in thus inferring the general Nature and Conſtitution of theſe Creatures, from what appears in thoſe of a *higher Claſs*; I do no more, than what all the *Philoſophical People* of the World agree to do, in the like Caſes; when from ſome general Coincidences and Agreements, in the Conſtitutions and Properties of *Natural Bodies*, they argue them to agree in the reſt, or to be, in the main, of the ſame nature; tho they do not, or cannot aſſure themſelves, by *any deciſive Experiment*, that it is really ſo. If the Reaſoning on one ſide be juſt, 'tis ſo on the other likewiſe.

Perhaps ſome may think this Doctrine liable to Difficulties, upon the account of its ſeeming Tendency, *to infer the Souls of Brutes to be Immortal, or to exiſt ſomewhere elſe, when they ceaſe to act and inform their reſpective Machines here amongſt us.*

But we ought ever to diſtinguiſh between pure *Difficulties*, and manifeſt *Abſurdities*; and rather chuſe that ſide, which is attended with the *former*, than adhere to that, which is unavoidably preſs'd with the *latter*.

To ſolve the Actions of Brutes by any *Laws of Mechaniſm*, or without a *Cogitative*, (and in ſome degree *Rational*) Subſtance; is plainly impoſſible. And he that attempts it, goes about the ſame abſurd and ſenſleſs Work, as that Man does, who at once pretends to explain all the Phenomena of *Thought*, by Matter and Motion.

What-

Whatever Notion therefore I adhere to, concerning *these Creatures*, I am sure I am not to adhere to this; because *Experience*, *Reason*, and *Philosophy*, do all with one accord remonstrate the contrary.

On the other hand, I make no scruple to own, *that as I know not all the Ends and Purposes, for which Brutes are made, nor all the Uses, which the All-wise and Powerful Creator makes of them in the great System of Nature; so neither do I know, how he disposes of them, when they cease to live, and do us service in this lower World.*

Those that say, they *do not exist, or do not retain their Individuation*; can no more prove what they affirm, than those can, who assert the contrary.

So likewise those, who would suppose them *to pass successively into other Bodies, and make various Revolutions and Circulations thorow the Universe*; have (as far as I can find) no more solid Grounds for what they suppose, than those who believe no such Transmigrations; *but leave them all, in some sort of State, wherein they may more effectually answer the Ends of their Creator's Glory, and the general Perfection of the Universe, than in their present base and servile Condition, they are capable of doing.*

As to these Points (I say) we are all in the dark; only one thing we can be sure of, *viz. that they are not mere Machines*; and another we may be as good as sure of, *viz. that they are not acted by a common Soul.*

SECT.

SECT. VIII.

AT *Coroll.* 4. foregoing, we have infer'd, *the undoubted Possibility of the separate Existence and Operation of Thinking Substances, after the Dissolution of those Systems of Matter, which they once inform'd, and were united to.*

And indeed, if *Thinking* Substance be *in the Nature of things*, intrinsecally and essentially different from *Material* Substance; and (consequently) *not liable to be affected with those Changes and Vicissitudes, which Material Substance is liable to:* then 'tis not only *possible*, but 'tis also very *probable and likely*, that the *one* may continue, both to *be* and to *act*, when the *other* is no longer a sutable Companion, or rather a proper *Organ or Habitation* for it.

For as none of all the Irregularities or Indispositions, *a System of Matter* can be obnoxious to, or even its crumbling into Dust and Atoms, can ever have any direct and proper influence, upon a Substance of so very different a Nature and Properties, as a *Thinking* one is, so as either to deprive it of its Powers of Thinking and Willing, or to render it uncapable of an actual Exercise of those Powers: so there is not the least shadow or appearance of Reason to suspect, *that the Author of Nature has any way tied the Being, or Activity, of Thinking Substance*, to the Being, or regular State and Condition of *Matter*; so that the former should depend upon the latter, and without it should entirely cease.

And

And if there be neither any *Physical* Connection or Dependance, of one of these upon the other, as to Operation or Existence; nor any that is of *Divine Positive Ordination* (as we have no manner of grounds to believe there is) then I think, the least that can be said, is this, *viz. That it is much more than probable, that a Thinking Substance should exist, and retain all its Powers and Faculties, when a System of Matter which it was once lodg'd in, ceases to be in a condition fit for it to exert and display it self in, as it had done before.*

And the truth on't is, the Assurance we may have of this, is the nearest a-kin to strict *Certainty*, of almost any that I know.

Nay, thus far we have absolutely *Positive Certainty* in the case, *viz.* that it must be so, for any influence, MATTER, OR ANY OF ITS LAWS, can have to the contrary.

As for the rest, *it depends entirely on the Sovereign Will and Pleasure of Almighty God.* He indeed is able in point of *Power*, and may in point of *Right* and *Justice*, do with us whatsoever he pleases.

But the Question is, What reason there is to expect the Destruction of a Thinking Substance from HIS WILL? Without some Discoveries of this, 'tis mere Humour and Whimsy, to pretend to believe or surmise it. We should reckon it infinitely vain and foolish, *to argue a thousand strange Events, in the World of Nature, from God's Absolute Power, without any Reasons to believe that it was his Will, to do so and so.*

And is it not as vain to do it in this Case?

What more reason have I to believe, that *God* will destroy a *Thinking Substance*, or deprive it of its Powers of Thinking and Willing, when it ceases to inform a diminutive System of Matter here;

here; than to believe, *that he will invert the wise establish'd Order of the Universe, or deprive a vast Number of Bodies, of all their beneficial Properties and Qualities, and render them mere useless and unprofitable Lumps in the Creation, to the unhinging of all the other Parts of Nature, that depend upon their Influence?*

No Man can *demonstrate*, that he won't do so; and yet no Man (I presume) believes he will: or troubles himself so far, as to question whether he will or no.

We sit secure and easy as to all Events of this kind, because we can find no manner of Ground or Reason to persuade our selves, that things will be so; but, on the other hand, have many good Reasons to assure our selves, that they will not.

And tho our Reasonings in this Case, do not amount to *strict and absolute Certainty*; yet we are under no more Apprehensions, than if we had certain and demonstrative Knowledg, how things would go in the World of Nature, as long as Nature lasts.

And I say, we have all the same Security *with respect to God Almighty, as to the Continuation of the Being and Powers of Thinking Substances:* and this added to the positive Certainty we have of their not being affected by any Changes, Vicissitudes, or Dissolutions of Matter; *we have an Assurance, which is ONLY NOT equal to a strict and absolute Certainty of their future Existence and Operation.*

Thus far the Argument runs, upon Principles of *pure Natural Reason.*

The *Gospel-Revelation* indeed fully decides the Question, and sets the matter beyond all dispute. But I am now concern'd with those, who will hear no Arguments of that kind: tho with how

how much Reason 'tis that they refuse them, I hope I have sufficiently shewn in *the foregoing Treatise.*

SECT. IX.

THERE's another sort of People, who with respect to the matter of the present Argument, are a sort of *Trimmers, between* Christians *and* Deists; as not wholly disbelieving a Resurrection and a Future State, with the *Latter*, nor yet allowing Souls to be either happy or miserable, upon the Dissolution of the Body, with the *Former.* These Persons will have it, that the Soul falls into a DEEP SLEEP AT DEATH, *or remains in a still inactive sort of State*, till the Resurrection; and then they tell us, it shall awake out of that Sleep, and be again united to a Body, and enter upon a State of Bliss or Punishment, according to its demerits.

I won't call this *Hypothesis* a Mixture of *Christianity* and *Scepticism*; but methinks 'tis such an ambiguous one, that a Man scarce knows which way to attack it. Here you have the *Elysian* Fields and *Lethe*; the Joys of a future Life set before you, at the end of a long Night of Silence and Forgetfulness. And indeed, if one could be sure the *Hypothesis* were true, the next Question would be, whether it might not be suppos'd, that some of those People were got into their midnight Dreams, or at least began to *nod* before-hand.

It is no strange thing at all, to find even wise and great Men of old, who were strangers to the Gospel-Discoveries, at a loss, what Resolutions to come to, with respect to a Future State. To find

find ſome of them, either wholly denying *, or elſe ſpeaking in the moſt doubtful and timorous manner, of the Exiſtence of Souls after Death; others *queſtioning*, whether there will be any Senſation of † Good or Evil; and others, allowing Souls to continue for a ſeaſon ||, but yet to be *Mortal*, tho at the ſame time confeſs'd to be but Parts of the *Immortal Soul of the Univerſe*. (And yet after all, it muſt be confeſs'd, there are ſome ||||, who have expreſly aſſerted the Immortality, and future Operations of ſeparated Souls.)

But whatever the Opinions of any of thoſe Writers were, whether Right or Wrong, to hear Men (who pretend ſome Regard to a Revelation, in which LIFE and IMMORTALITY are ſo clearly brought to light) arguing for ſuch a ſort

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* Φοβερώτατον ὁ θάνατος, ὥστε γὰρ καὶ οὐδὲν ἔτι τῷ τεθνεῶτι δοκεῖ οὔτε ἀγαθὸν οὔτε κακόν.

Ariſtot. Lib. 3. de Morib. cap. 9. *And ſo again to the ſame purpoſe*, Lib. 1. cap. 11.

Lucan. Lib. 3. *Aut nihil eſt ſenſus animis a morte relictum,*
Aut Mors ipſa nihil.——

Marc. Antonin. Imper. Lib. 3. §. 3. Edit. Cantab. 1652. Ἐκβήσῃ εἰ μὴ ἐφ' ἕτερον βίον, οὐδὲν θεῶν κενὸν, οὐδὲ ἐκεῖ· εἰ δὲ ἐν ἀναισθησίᾳ, παύσῃ πόνων καὶ ἡδονῶν ἀνεχόμενος. Lib. 7. §. 32. Περὶ θανάτου, &c. ἢ τοι σβέσις, ἢ μετάστασις. *Et alibi paſſim.*

† *Senec.* Epiſt. 63. Pag. 491. Edit. *Antwerp.* 1632. *Fortaſſe, ſi modo ſapientum vera Fama eſt, recipitque nos* locus alius; *quem putamus periiſſe, præmiſſus eſt.* And much to the ſame purpoſe again, in Epiſt. 24. *Mors nos aut conſumit, aut emittit: Emiſſis meliora reſtant, onere detracto. Conſumptis nihil reſtat; bona pariter malaque ſubmota ſunt.* Pag. 430.

|| Τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν ἀιδιοτικήν, ταύτην δὲ εἶναι τὸ συμφυὲς ἡμῖν πνεῦμα, διὰ τὸ καὶ σῶμα εἶναι, καὶ μετὰ θάνατον ὑπομένειν, φθαρτὸν δὲ ὑπάρχειν, τὴν δὲ ἡλίου ὅλων ἄφθαρτον, ἧς μέρη εἶναι τὰς ἐν τοῖς ζώοις. Diog. Laert. in Zenon. Lib. 7. Pag. 201. Edit. *Lond.* 1664.

|||| *Salluſt. Philoſ.* Cap. 8, 21. Lib. περὶ θεῶν καὶ κόσμου.

of

of Scheme as this, does, I confess, appear to me to be very odd and strange. However, to make short of this matter, I shall lay down the *following Conclusions*.

First of all, *That this Doctrine of the Soul's sleeping at Death, is certainly contrary to the plain and express Discoveries of the* New Testament: *and therefore, that if that Book be a Divine Revelation, the said Doctrine is undoubtedly false; and consequently, those who believe it, do, whatever they pretend, in reality either not believe the Divine Authority of the* New Testament, *or else are not well appriz'd (either thro Ignorance, Inconsiderateness, or inveterate Prejudices) of the Weight and Force of those Proofs, by which the contrary Doctrine is there establish'd.*

This Point will be effectually made out, by evincing the Truth of *this Proposition*; which might be easily and abundantly done, from various Texts of Scripture, *viz. That the Writers of the* New Testament, *do in their Reasonings so far suppose and take for granted, not only the bare* EXISTENCE, but also THE ACTIVITY, and UNIVERSAL OPERATION, OF SEPARATE SOULS, BEFORE THEIR REUNION TO THEIR RESPECTIVE BODIES AT THE RESURRECTION; *that without this, there is neither any Force or Consequence in their Arguments, nor any good Sense to be made of what they say.*

I shan't stand either to repeat and transcribe, or to make long Arguments here, upon those Texts of Sacred Writ, which serve to clear up this Point. 'Tis enough for my purpose, just to hint, and make some short Application of a few of them: as remembring, and desiring these People to remember too, that one single evident Text is enough to decide the Controversy.

How

How therefore, in the first place, could St. *Paul* say (upon the *Hypothesis* of *Sleeping*, or lying in a lethargick unactive State, till the *Resurrection*) that *for him to die, would be GAIN?* Let it be consider'd:

That the Period of Time between his Death and the Resurrection, was a *fix'd* and *settled* Period, tho the Duration or Length of it was ever so much unknown to him.

That the more time he got from the *General Sleep*, to serve in the great Work of the Gospel here, the more Opportunities and Advantages he had, for increasing his Reward, and adding to his Crown of Glory hereafter.

That he had our Saviour's Presence, and the Comforts of the Holy Ghost in all his Work and Labours, and that in a very eminent and high Degree.

Lastly, That tho he knew perfectly well all the Defectibility, and all the actual Defects and Imperfections of human Nature, and even of God's Grace as implanted therein; as likewise all the Dangers and Temptations he was liable to: yet 'tis plain, by all the Tenour of his Writings, that he had a firm and settled Persuasion, that he should triumph over all at last, and obtain the blessed End of his Faith and Hope.

Now, if this be so; I would fain know, How could it be GAIN: or rather, How could it be otherwise than LOSS to him to *die*; since Dying was sinking into a State of utter *Insensibility and Incapacity* either of doing or enjoying here in the present World, or making any Steps towards heightning his Felicity in the World to come? It's evident, that if I must be debar'd of the Enjoyment of an Happiness for such a Term of

of Years, be it what it will, and in the mean time, have *two ſeveral States* or Conditions before me; *one* wherein I can beſtir and exert my ſelf, and together with taſting many refreſhing Comforts, contribute to the Increaſe of my future Fortune and Advantages; and *another*, wherein I muſt lie wrapt up in profound Sleep and Silence: It's evident, I ſay, that the more Time I get to ſtay in the former of thoſe Conditions, the more I advance and get ground upon the grand Period of Sleep and Inactivity, and am therefore in reality ſo much the more a GAINER.

And yet the Apoſtle ſays expreſly, that for him to *die*, that is to go away, even from ſuch a State and ſuch Circumſtances, would be GAIN. For which Reaſon, I conclude, he had no Notions at all of a *long Sleep* in this literal Senſe.

The only Anſwer that I am apprehenſive of here, is this, *viz. That while the Apoſtle was in the World, he was under a Poſſibility of falling away from God's Grace, and ſo of loſing all; whereas, by Dying, tho he neither acted nor enjoy'd any thing, yet he was ſecure from the very Poſſibility of a Defection.*

But I am apt to believe, this Reply involves and ſuppoſes ſomething, which no Perſon, if it were put upon him, could ever fairly make out. We know nothing of the Degrees of Poſſibility or Impoſſibility, with reſpect to any State of Vertue or Goodneſs whatſoever. 'Tis Foundation enough for me, to ſhew the Invalidity of this Reply upon; *that ſuch Supplies of Divine Grace and Strength, may go along with good Men in their Work here in the World, as may effectually correct and prevent all the ill Effects of thoſe Principles in them, that naturally tend to a Defection,*

 not-

notwithſtanding all the allow'd Poſſibility of the thing it ſelf: and I hope there is nothing that either reliſhes of *Fatality*, or tends any way to the Prejudice of *Human Liberty*, in ſuch an Aſſertion as this.

And therefore, notwithſtanding that ſuch an Event as a Defection was *ſimply poſſible in the nature of things*; yet the Apoſtle all along in his Writings, *evidently expreſſing a moſt chearful Dependance on, and firm Expectation of the ſtrengthning and preſerving Grace of God, to the Period of all his Labours here*; and being to quit ſuch very advantageous Circumſtances, as thoſe of the Goſpel-Service, and the Enjoyment of Divine Comforts, for an inſenſible lethargick State; which, *how ſhort ſoever* it might ſeem to have been at the Morning of the Reſurrection, *was yet notwithſtanding, really and intrinſecally, a Loſs or Deprivation, of ſo much poſitive Good, which might have been enjoy'd in the mean time:* I take it to be very clear, laying all theſe Circumſtances together, that the Apoſtle would never have call'd Death a GAIN to him, if he had had any Notions of ſuch a Conſequence of it, as what the preſent *Hypotheſis* ſuppoſes.

I'll only ask farther;

Is to DEPART and TO BE WITH CHRIST, to enter into a profound Sleep?

Or is BEING PRESENT WITH the LORD, which the ſame Apoſtle makes an immediate Conſequence of BEING ABSENT FROM THE BODY; the ſame thing, as lying ſtill, and being depriv'd of all Knowledg, Reflection and Senſation? I don't propoſe to accumulate Texts of Scripture here, and I am fully ſatisfy'd, that theſe are ſo expreſs and full to the purpoſe, that after a thouſand Quibbles and Evaſions, it

it will remain unqueſtionable, that the contrary Doctrine ſtands *clearly reveal'd in the* New Teſtament.

SECT. X.

BUT, *Secondly*, Abſtracting from all that the GOSPEL has diſcover'd in reference to the matter; I ſay, *That this Notion, of A SOUL'S ENTRING INTO A DEEP SLEEP; is in it ſelf groundleſs, and unſupported by any thing of ſolid Reaſon and Proof.*

For, *1ſt.* That THINKING Subſtance is eſſentially and ſpecifically diſtinct from all MATTER; is evident to a Demonſtration. And therefore the ſole Riſe and Spring of all the Action and Operation of ſuch Subſtance, *quatenus* THINKING, being ſolely and purely ITS OWN FORMAL NATURE and POWERS (MATTER, which is an infinitely Heterogeneal Subſtance, neither contributing nor concurring, any way as an *Efficient*, to the Production of any Action of Thought and Volition, *as ſuch)* 'tis an unavoidable Concluſion; *That the Diſunion of a Thinking Subſtance, from a Portion or Syſtem of Matter, cannot poſſibly influence or cauſe, that that cogitative Subſtance, ſhould ceaſe to exert any Act of Intellection or Volition, which it even was capable of exerting, in its State of Union to that Matter.* Indeed (as was hinted before) the *Author of Nature*, may, if he pleaſes, make a thinking Subſtance, to be no longer a Thinking, Volitive, or Active Subſtance, or any Subſtance at all; but either annihilate, or reduce it to a ſenſleſs torpid State, by withholding *that vital Influx*, which is deriv'd

from himſelf, and is the Life and Soul of all Creatures whatſoever: And this he may do now, or at any time, while our Souls are hous'd in *groſs* Matter; and that every whit as well as at Death, when they are ſeparated from it. But to talk of any thing of this kind, as the Effect or Reſult of the loſs of a Syſtem of groſs Matter; or to ſuggeſt as if THE OPERATIONS OF THINKING SUBSTANCE, WITHOUT BODILY ORGANS, WERE DOUBTFUL AND QUESTIONABLE, IF POSSIBLE TO BE AT ALL; is ſuch *idle Unphiloſophical Cant*, that 'tis not to be accounted for, but by an extreme Ignorance, or an extreme Fondneſs for an *Hypotheſis*, that pleaſes, tho at the ſame time it be demonſtrably falſe. It were a much more pardonable Blunder, if a Man ſhould tell me, *that the Spring of a Watch, taken out of its Relation to a Syſtem of little Wheels* (which are plac'd in a certain Order and Poſition one to another) *that this, I ſay, would utterly loſe its Elaſtick Force, and tho ever ſo much bent and compreſs'd, yet would not reſtore it ſelf, becauſe it had not the former little Machines, to exert it ſelf upon, and impart Motion to.* For tho this be evidently falſe, and I know, that the Spring will ſtill retain its Property of reſtoring it ſelf, whether it be put to, or taken from a Syſtem of Wheels; *becauſe this Property reſults from its own native Temper and Form, and not from any Relation that it bears to that Syſtem, or from the Influence or Agency, of any of the Parts of it:* yet however, 'tis demonſtrably more irrational and abſurd, to tell me, *that a Soul muſt ſink into a State of Inactivity, for want of a Syſtem of Organs, it us'd to exert it ſelf by*; becauſe I am certain, not only that the Actions of Intellection and Volition, *as ſuch*, do not ariſe from any Relation to, or any Influence

ence and Agency of Matter; but alſo, that *the very Subſtance it ſelf which thinks and wills*, is eſſentially and ſpecifically diſtinct from Matter; and therefore infinitely leſs obnoxious, to any Change of Property, or Ceſſation of the Action, of any eſſential Power, upon its Separation from a Syſtem of *groſs* material Organs; than the Machine juſt now mention'd *(which is of the ſame Subſtance and ſpecifick Nature, with every Part it moves)* is to loſe its *Temper*, when it no longer performs the Office of a *Spring*, in the Syſtem it once gave Motion to. If the one of theſe would be ſuch a Paradox in *Phyſicks*, that I ſhould conclude the Man who propos'd it to me, had no other end in view, than only to try whether I were awake, or how credulous I was: the other, I am ſure, is ſuch a ſtrange Piece of *Metaphyſicks*, and implies ſuch wrong Notions, both of the *Nature of Matter and thinking Subſtance*; that 'tis a wonder how Men ſhould venture upon ſuch bold Surmiſes and Conjectures, in a Caſe where the Nature of things is plainly againſt them, and all their Reaſonings about it, are founded upon a mere Blunder.

2dly. Suppoſe I granted theſe People, that a *Syſtem of Matter was abſolutely neceſſary, in order to the Operation and Perception of a thinking Subſtance*; yet there were no manner of neceſſity or occaſion for running upon this Hypotheſis, of the *Soul's ſleeping at Death*. So far from that, that I ſay, there may be not only a far better account given of the future State of Souls, than what this Hypotheſis can pretend to give, but alſo one that will not be liable to any Objections, either from *Revelation* or *Philoſophy*. For pray, where's the Harm or Abſurdity of ſuch a Concluſion as this? *viz*. That *when thoſe groſſer and more terreſtrial*

Machines, we call our Bodies, by and thro which our Souls exert themſelves in this World, and converſe with the various Objects of it; when theſe (I ſay) *are depoſited at Death, that then they are cloth'd upon with other Syſtems of Matter, which tho very different from theſe, are yet in all reſpects adapted and accommodated to the Regions they are placed in, and to their State and Circumſtances therein*; even as the Frame and Texture of our preſent Bodies is exactly fitted to the Nature, Uſes, and Requirements of the World we here inhabit. I am ſure there's no *Hereſy* nor *Falſe Philoſophy* in this; there's nothing little or unworthy of God, nor nothing improbable or unlikely to be, conſidering the various Succeſſions of Change and Improvement, in all the Works of God throughout the Frame of Nature. And the truth on't is, I can ſcarce defend my ſelf from believing, that there is no *Thinking Subſtance*, except the *infinite Being* alone, but what is incorporated with ſome Syſtem of Matter; and that 'tis *his*, and only his Prerogative and Perfection, to be abſolutely exempt there-from, and to be in *that Senſe*, as well as others, *a Pure Simple Eſſence*.

So that I ſay, the Aſſertors of the Hypotheſis we are ſpeaking of, might, without involving themſelves in any Difficulties of moment, have kept to the Point of *the Soul's not acting without Matter*, and at the ſame time have avoided ſuch Inconveniences, as now they will never be able to free themſelves from.

SECT.

SECT. XI.

I Shall leave this Head, after I have made one short Remark more relating to it; *viz. That there is nothing at all to be infer'd, with respect to the Future Sleep, or insensible unactive State of the Soul upon its Separation from this Body; nothing of this* (I say) *to be concluded from those common Instances of People that lie in Swoons and Apoplexies, and such like Distempers; which to all appearance deprive them of all Sense and Knowledg of external Objects, and seem to intimate as if the very Soul it self were become Lethargick, and the Intellectual Powers quite sunk and lost.* I know very well these sort of Examples are sometimes urg'd and made use of this way; but I must needs say, as precariously as all the rest of the Scheme, and to as little purpose. All that can be infer'd with any Truth and Justice from such Instances, is this; *viz. That while the Thinking Substance we call our Soul continues here, at the Will and Pleasure of God, to animate a Machine compounded of such a vast variety of Parts and Organs as our Body is; it's necessary that all the Parts of the Frame should be regularly dispos'd, so as to be capable of discharging their several Functions, according to their proper End and Design, in such a Machine, in order to the Soul's exerting it self as an Intellectual or Thinking Substance, BY, AND THRO, SUCH A CONTEXTURE OF ORGANS: and that when any of those Parts of the System, which are of the most immediate Use for this end, are so far vitiated and deprav'd, or clog'd and encumber'd, that they are no longer capable of doing the Offices they were intended for;*

then those Operations of the Soul, which by the Laws of its present Union and Cohabitation with Matter, ought to be perform'd thro the Ministration of such and such Organs, cease to be perform'd after that Mode or Manner: and that we do not understand Human Nature well enough, to find out in what manner 'tis that they are perform'd, during that confus'd and irregular State of things in the Machine. This is all that any Man (who proposes to observe any thing of Rule and Reason in his Conclusions) can infer, from the Cases of *Apoplectick* or other like affected Persons. I say, it will certainly follow, that *that Substance which perceives and thinks, can't in such a case make use of the vitiated Organs of the Body, in Acts of Thought and Perception, so modify'd, as when all was in good order.* But that it sinks into a Slumber, or becomes uncapable of all Action *as a thinking Substance*, because it wants an *Apparatus* of well-dispos'd Organs, is so far from being any thing of a just Consequence, that it is a very irregular and wrong one.

SECT. XII.

THAT some NECESSARY, SELF-EXISTENT, INDEPENDENT, and INFINITELY PERFECT BEING, must have been from ALL ETERNITY, is a Truth that every Man may be as sure of, as he can be of his own Existence.

That the same Being is likewise INFINITELY INTELLIGENT, PRUDENT, SAGACIOUS, and THOUGHTFUL, is not only as inevitably necessary a Consequence as either of the former, but

but likewiſe a thing as palpably evident in its *Effects*, as any thing can poſſibly be.

Now from hence let us conſider what will follow farther.

If it be true in general, that *Thinking Subſtance* is, and muſt be, eſſentially and ſpecifically diſtinct from *Matter*———

If the *Divine Being* be infinitely and eſſentially Intelligent — ——

If *Abſolute Simplicity* be a neceſſary Attribute of an infinitely compleat and perfect Being——

If to conſiſt or be made up *of two Subſtances, eſſentially and ſpecifically different from one another*; be demonſtrably inconſiſtent with abſolute Simplicity———

Then MATTER CANNOT POSSIBLY BE ANY ATTRIBUTE OF THE DIVINE BEING, or any thing of, or belonging to the Divine Eſſence, *as ſuch* ———

Nor can it poſſibly be true, THAT GOD IS THE TO ΠΑΝ, or the UNIVERSE——

Or, That there cannot be ANY OTHER SUBSTANCE, but God———

Or, That what we vulgarly ſtile CREATURES, or PARTICULAR FINITE BEINGS, are only PARTS, APPENDAGES, MODES, or MODIFICATIONS OF THE DIVINE SUBSTANCE———

Or, That one Subſtance cannot CREATE or PRODUCE another——

Or, That one Subſtance is NECESSARILY INFINITE, and does NECESSARILY EXIST— With a vaſt number of other ſuch like Conſequences.

Theſe, I ſay, can none of them all be true, if the foregoing Argument be true, and its Parts firmly knit together.

And

And let those People, who make any of *these Conclusions* Articles of their Faith, find out where the Defect of it lies. If they will let the whole Dispute turn upon the Business of *Matter and Motion's Thinking*, or of *Thinking Substance not being essentially and specifically different from Matter*; I declare I am most heartily willing to leave it there; and believe these Gentlemen can't do more prudently, than to let the Stress of the Matter lie upon that Head. If they don't fix upon that Article, then what they have to do, will be either to deny——

That the *Divine* Being is an *Intelligent* one——

Or, that *absolute Simplicity* is a necessary Perfection of his Nature ——

Or else to affirm——

That it is not inconsistent with *Absolute Simplicity*, to be made up of two Substances, *essentially and specifically distinct* from one another: Nay, *to be an immense or infinite Aggregate, of an infinitely infinite Number of numerically distinct Substances, under each of the two different Species.*

'Tis equal to me, whether they insist upon either of *these three* Points, or else put the Issue of the whole Cause upon the *essential Distinction of Thinking and Material Substance:* provided they do but let it rest somewhere, and will be sure to keep to the Point when they have done.

I shall only add further, that this monstrous System (of *God's being the* Τὸ Πᾶν, *or the Complexion of the whole Universe)* how much soever illustrated and improv'd by *Spinoza* and his Followers; is but a piece of *Antique Philosophy* reviv'd. I don't say, that any Opinions are the worse for being *old* ones, but allow, that in some respects, they may on that account deserve more Credit;

Credit; but what I ſay is, that the World has only been amus'd with an exploded Figment of ſome particular Philoſophers in former Ages (ſomewhat cultivated, and put into modern Dreſs) inſtead of wonderful Diſcovery, and demonſtrable Truth.

Juſt as ſome of our other late Writers, in ſome particular Doctrines relating to the *Soul*, have only preſented the World with another Edition of the *Epicurean* or *Lucretian* Syſtem. 'Tis well known that there were People in former days, whoſe Stile was very near a-kin to that of *Spinoza*, upon the Subject we are talking of. They made us all to be mere * PARTS and MEMBERS OF GOD; not only to be *from* Him, and *of*

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* *The Human Soul is ſtiled by* Epictetus, Διὸς μέρος. Diſſert. lib. 1. cap. 1.

Plutarch *explains this yet more particularly:* Ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ νοῦ μετέχουσα καὶ λογισμοῦ, οὐκ ἔρρον ἐστὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ μέρος· οὐδ' ὥσπερ αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ γέγονεν. Quæſt. Platonic. lib. 1. pag, 1001. Edit. Par. 1624.

Marcus Antoninus Imp. *is evidently of the ſame Mind*— Ὁ δαίμων ὃν ἑκάστῳ παρεστάτων καὶ ἡγεμόνα ὁ Ζεὺς ἔδωκεν, ἀπόσπασμα ἑαυτοῦ, ὅτος δὲ ἐστιν, ὁ ἑκάστου νοῦς καὶ Λόγος. Lib. 5. §. 27. Edit. Cantab. 1652.

Id. lib. 12 §. 26.——Ὁ ἑκάστου Νοῦς, καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ἐρρύηκε.

Seneca *is as expreſs as any of them all:* Nemo improbè eò conatur aſcendere, unde deſcenderat. Quid autem eſt, cur non exiſtimes, in eo Divini aliquid exiſtere, qui *Dei pars eſt? Totum hoc, in quo continemur. & Unum eſt, & Deus*; & Socii ejus ſumus, & Membra. Epiſt. 92. pag. 587.

And Cicero *to the ſame purpoſe,* De Nat. Deor. lib. 1.

But methinks thoſe celebrated Lines of Aratus *expreſs a much better Notion of the* Deity, *than any we find in the forecited Paſſages. At the ſame time that he excellently ſhews the* Omniprefence and Immenſity of the Divine Being, *he eſtabliſhes a juſt Notion of our* Dependance upon, *and* Derivation from him, *without making us* Parts of his Eſſence.

Ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχώμεσθα, τὸν οὐδέποτ' ἀνδρες ἐῶμεν
Ἄρρητον· μεσταὶ δὲ Διὸς πᾶσαι μ' ἀγυιαὶ

Πᾶσαι

of Him (which is true in one Sense) but also to be *of his very Being and Substance.*

And 'twas not a remote Step from hence, to the essential *Unity and Identity* of all Substance, or the *Improducibility* of one Substance by another. For tho these Principles may seem more naturally to infer the former Doctrine of *being Parts of God*, than to be themselves infer'd from it; yet 'tis not uncommon for Men to make *fundamental Propositions*, from certain Conclusions hinted to them; and so by improving and running a Notion up higher, to make the appearance of an entire new Scheme.

As for *this System*, it is not only the *Christian* Religion, but all Religion in general, that is at one stroke overturn'd by it. If there be *no distinction of Being in the Universe*; if all and every thing be *God*, and we are only *Parts or Modifications* of his Substance; then what absolute Nonsense is all the Talk of *Vertue and Vice*, of *Good and Evil*, of *Religion and Impiety*, of *Rewards and Punishments?* What possible meaning can such Terms have, or what room can there be for the use of them in such an Hypothesis as this? Are some Modifications of the Divine Being *Good*, and others Hateful and *Evil?* Is *this Particle* of Him a *Saint*, and the *other* a *Sinner?* Can the distinction of Happiness and * Misery be in

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Πᾶσαι δ' ἀνθρώπων ἀγυρεαὶ, μεσὴ δὲ θάλασσα
Καὶ λιμένες· πάντη δὲ Διὸς κεχρήμεθα πάντες·
Τοῦ γὰρ καὶ ΓΕΝΟΣ ἐσμεν. Arat. *Phænom.*

* *Pythagoras*, qui censuit animum esse, per naturam rerum omnium intentum & commeantem, *ex quo nostri animi carperentur*; non videt, distractione humanorum animorum, DISCERPI ac DILACERARI DEUM, & cum miseri animi essent, quod plerisque contigeret, tum DEI PARTEM ESSE MISERAM; quod fieri non potest. *Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib.* 1. *p.* 7.

his

his *One* Subſtance? Does God preſcribe *Laws* and give Revelations of his own Will, to himſelf? Or is he *worſhip'd*, and ador'd, and ſerv'd by himſelf? How can there be any ſuch thing as *Violence and Injuſtice* in the World? Can one Spark of the Divinity be injurious to another? What Scope is there for Complaint, Accuſation, Revenge, or Puniſhment? Is there War and Confuſion in *God?* How is it poſſible there ſhould be any thing elſe but Order, Regularity, and perfect decorous Management, amongſt the *Parts* of that Being; who if he be at all, muſt be All Good and Perfect? And if there can be nothing elſe but what is ſo; why then does *one Part* correct, chaſtiſe, or lord it over another? If no real Faults and Diſorders; why is there Smart and Pain? If there be; what then is that BEING, which is made up of ſuch very irregular Members?

In ſhort, there is no poſſible room, I won't ſay only for any ſort of *Religion*, but not for any Acts of what we commonly call *Morality*, *Government*, or *Law*, amongſt Mankind, if this Scheme were to be taken as *rigorouſly true*, and to be truly and cloſely purſued. And let thoſe People who profeſs it, diſtinguiſh and qualify, and try to evade the Conſequence, how they will or can; yet 'tis unavoidable, and they can never fairly get off from it.

I make no doubt, but many Perſons in this Scheme are Men of great Probity and Virtue, and prove excellent Members of Society, in whatſoever Station of Life they are: But they muſt pardon me, if I deny it to be the Effect of the Principles of their Hypotheſis; and ſay, that tho they are very good *Men*, yet they are very bad Scholars of their Maſter *Spinoza*.

Nor

Nor do I urge this matter of the CONSEQUENCES, as AN ARGUMENT with those Gentlemen, so much, as to shew, how far the Subversion of all Religion may, without any Breach of Charity, be suppos'd to have been the wretched End and Design of the modern Patrons of this Hypothesis, in their proposing it to the World with so much Pomp and Ceremony as they have done.

SECT. XIII.

GOD is not the entire System or Comprehension of ALL BEINGS together; but A BEING, within the absolute Infinity of whose simple Essence, all other Beings are comprehended and contain'd; not as PARTS or MODIFICATIONS of his Substance, but distinct EFFECTS of his Power and Will, receiving all from him, and continually dependant on him.

It may perhaps be a considerable Inducement with some People, to admit that odd Scheme of God's being the whole and every part of the Universe; *that it does not appear how he can be said to be strictly and absolutely infinite, if there be any OTHER Being but himself, or any Being, which in a proper sense is not himself, or is really distinct from his own Essence or Substance.* So that finding it necessary upon other accounts to allow the Attribute of *Infinity*, and not seeing how this can consist with a *distinction* or *diversity* of Substance, they from hence are inclin'd to think themselves secure of the Truth of the other Hypothesis.

But this is all founded upon a palpable Mistake. For, It

It is not incompatible with ſtrict and *abſolute Infinity*, that there ſhould be Subſtance *diſtinct from God*, or ſome Subſtance *which is not God*.

The Notion of Infinity does not imply BEING EVERY THING, but BEING WITHOUT ANY POSSIBLE BOUNDS OR LIMITS OF ESSENCE and PERFECTION.

And therefore, if the Suppoſition *of other Subſtance diſtinct from God*, does not naturally and neceſſarily involve and imply any thing that is fundamentally contrary to, or deſtructive of this; then the ſaid Suppoſition may conſiſt perfectly well with *that* of abſolute Infinity: And conſequently thoſe who adhere to the Hypotheſis of the TO' ΠΑ̃N, are cut off from all poſſibility of arguing from that Topick, of the *Inconſiſtency or Incompatibility* of them.

Now I'll venture to aſſert, that the Suppoſition of *other Subſtance diſtinct from God*, does not naturally and neceſſarily involve or imply any thing fundamentally contrary to, or deſtructive of a true and juſt Notion of *Infinity*; in ſhort, that there's no manner of Repugnancy or Inconſiſtency between them.

And the reaſon of it is plainly thus: Becauſe the *Being or Exiſtence* of OTHER SUBSANCE, does neither imply any *Circumſcription*, *Contraction*, or *Limitation*, nor any ſubjecting of the Divine Being to a poſſibility or capacity of *Meaſure or Comprehenſion*; nor any *Excluſion* of its Eſſence, Preſence, or Activity, in any conceivable or poſſible UBI whatſoever:

And therefore it's not incompatible with abſolute Infinity.

I grant indeed, that if NOT BEING THE VERY INWARD ESSENCE OR SUBTANCE OF A THING, would neceſſarily imply or infer

fer SIMPLE ABSENCE or EXCLUSION; or if it would infer the utter Impossibility of an *intimate essential Presence, or COEXISTENCE with the entire Essence of that thing*; that then in this case we should consequentially deny the *Infinity* of God, by asserting the possibility of the Existence of OTHER SUBSTANCE, distinct from himself. But since *not being the very inward Essence* or Substance of a thing, will by no means infer Limitation or Circumscription, Absence or Exclusion; nor will it ever infer the Impossibility, of an *intimate essential Presence*, or *Co-existence with the entire Essence of that thing:* Therefore we conclude the Possibility of the Existence of *other Substance*, distinct from God; and at the same time, with equal Truth and Consistency, maintain his *Infinity*, in the strictest and most absolute Sense.

On the other hand, 'tis as clear as the Day, that *the Hypothesis of the* TO ΠΑΝ *directly overturns the Notion of the Infinity of God*, and consequently subverts that of his *Existence*, and so point-black establishes *Atheism*.

For if TO CONSIST OF PARTS, if TO BE DIVISIBLE, MOVABLE, LIABLE TO CHANGE, ALTERATION, and CORRUPTION, yea to innumerable varieties of *Changes, Vicissitudes, Transmutations, and Corruptions:* If this be in the nature of the thing, inconsistent, or impossible ever to consist with STRICT AND ABSOLUTE INFINITY; then 'tis evident to a Demonstration, that the INFINITE BEING CANNOT BE THE COMPLEX OF THE WHOLE UNIVERSE. And consequently those who assert he is so, do (whether ignorantly, or with set design, they know best) set up a Scheme, that has a direct and immediate tendency to subvert all Notions of a Deity, and banish the Belief of his Existence out of the World.

SECT.

SECT. XIV.

GOD, *who is infinite and essential Reason*, or a *THINKING SUBSTANCE, of Infinite and Absolute Perfection; as such, is essentially and intimately present, or does in the most perfect manner co-exist, with the entire Essence of every created Substance.* Upon this account, he is as far from being any *how* limited or circumscrib'd, or any *where* shut out or excluded, as if he were the very inmost Essence or Substance, of those created Beings themselves.

The Presence therefore of this *Great Being*, is by no means confin'd to Heaven, or the superior and more noble Regions of the Universe, as *Aristotle* and his Followers made it to be.

Nor is he, as the School of *Epicurus* represented him, *mindless of the Concerns of this lower World*, or an idle Spectator of the Actions and Affairs of Mankind.

Nor has he wholly left the Government and Administration of things to inferior *Demons*, as the *Platonists* and *Pythagoreans* would have it; whose avowed Tenet it was, *quòd nullus Deus misceatur homini.* For,

As the KNOWLEDG OF AN INFINITE MIND, IS INFINITE, so likewise are ALL ITS THOUGHTS and CARES.

If there were any Object or Thing, how seemingly mean and despicable soever, that had not a share of its Care and Contrivance, or Government and Disposition; it were no longer an infinite, but a limited contracted MIND, and therefore not a GOD.

There is therefore moſt certainly, *a PROVIDENCE in the World*, from whoſe Laws no Creature or Thing can be exempted; by which all things are regulated, order'd, and diſpos'd, in the whole Frame of Nature; as well in the *material Syſtem*, as amongſt *Rational and Intellectual Subſtances.*

This *Providence* is no other than the unſearchable *Wiſdom*, the unalterable *Rectitude*, the impartial *Juſtice*, the immenſe *Goodneſs* and *Benignity* of the Divine Nature, diſplay'd in the Government of created Beings.

As therefore 'tis ſimply impoſſible, that there ſhould be *any intrinſick Unfitneſs or Irregularity* in any of its Diſpenſations, how ſtrange or obſcure ſoever they appear to us; ſo 'tis evident that all the Objections or Difficulties which ever were, or ever can poſſibly be ſtarted againſt this Doctrine, are entirely founded upon, muſt neceſſarily ariſe from, and be ultimately reſolv'd into, *the Shallowneſs and Debility of a poor finite Mind*, which can no more penetrate into the myſterious Reaſons of the CONDUCT OF AN INFINITE UNDERSTANDING, than it can ſpread into *Infiniteneſs and Almightineſs*, or become a God it ſelf.

Moreover, all things whatſoever being originally adjuſted, ordered, and diſpoſed, by the infinitely wiſe and profound Thought of the ſupreme Being; and being afterwards brought forth in *Time*, in their various Orders and Seaſons, under his *Direction* or *Permiſſion*, according to, and in purſuance of, his own moſt divine and perfect Scheme: Hence we are neither on one ſide to reckon any Event, to be *a pure Accident or Contingency*; nor on the other, to derive it from *blind mechanical Neceſſity*, or inexorable FATE in the vulgar Senſe; but in all caſes to acknowledg and have an Eye to *the Divine Counſels and Diſpoſals*, within the Verge of

of which, all kinds of Events are comprehended, how casual and fortuitous, or how necessary and inevitable soever they may seem to us to be.

Nothing has tended more to eradicate all Sense of a Deity out of the Minds of Men, and to extinguish all devout and religious Affections in their Breast towards him; than the wretched Schemes and Notions that have been advanc'd in the World, upon this Subject of a *Providence*. * *Tully* indeed charges the *Epicurean* Scheme in particular with this; but those of many other Philosophers were certainly as bad. I will not stand to dispute here, whether *Heraclitus*, *Empedocles*, *Democritus*, *Pythagoras*, *Parmenides*, I may add *Leucippus*, *Chrysippus*, and many more besides, did in reality make all human Actions to be the Result of a severe *inexorable Fate:* Some Doctrines of this kind were advan'd amongst them; and 'tis as certain likewise that the *Pythagoreans* and *Platonists*, out of a Fondness for the *Egyptian* and *Chaldean* Philosophy; and in general, all the Admirers of *Astrology*, did too much subject human Actions and Affairs to the *Power and Influence of the Stars*.

The *Stoicks* are commonly charged with binding up the very Deity it self in the Chains of Fate, and consequently destroying all his MORAL GOVERNMENT; and the *Peripateticks* did no better, when they made him either not to act at all, or else to do it, from an *absolute Necessity of Nature*. The *Grand Platonick Year*, and the *Revolution* or *Circulation*, talk'd of by some of the *Stoicks*, with other Fancies of that kind, all tended to suggest and establish the same loose Notions of a Deity, and his Government amongst Mankind. But put

* Cicer. de Nat. Deor. lib. 1.

them all together, and they need no other Refutation than this, that GOD IS AN INFINITELY PERFECT INTELLIGENT BEING. For from hence follows, *an infinitely exact and particular, free, wise, righteous, and merciful Administration of the Affairs of the World.*

This Inspection and Presidency of the Deity, in and over the lower World, was expresly and very consistently acknowledg'd by that same Philosopher before mention'd, * who argued for the Immortality, and future happy State of separate virtuous Souls. But that a professed *Stoick* † should do it, tho a very great and excellent Man, is I think hardly agreeable to the rigid Principles of the Sect, as they are commonly understood and explain'd. Tho I must needs say, I cannot but think, the Doctrines of that Sect have been much misrepresented, and particularly in this very point of God's Concern about the Affairs of Mankind; since it appears from many Passages in *Epictetus* and *Seneca*, as well as from those just now refer'd to in *Antoninus*, that they firmly believ'd this Doctrine. And the truth on't is, there is (generally speaking) a nearer approach to Christianity, in the *Morals*, *Discipline*, and *Dogmata* of that noble Sect, than in those of any other Sect whatsoever.

However, let who will assert it or deny it, it is a most certain and necessary Corollary, from the *Demonstrable Perfections*, and *Attributes* of a Deity: begin but there, and this of his *Providence* and *Government* will follow of course.

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* Sallust. Cap. 9.

Phurnutus *likewise in his Book* περὶ τῆς τῶν Θεῶν φύσεως, cap. 2. *discourses well upon this Subject, and shews in particular, how upon this very account the Deity was called* Anima Mundi.

† Marc. Antonin. Lib. 2. §. 11. Lib. 1. §. 17.

SECT.

SECT. XV.

SInce the *Supreme Being* muſt needs be *infinitely and eſſentially good*, as well as *wiſe*, *powerful*, &c. it has been eſteem'd no little difficulty to ſhew how EVIL came into the World. *Unde malum*, has been a mighty Queſtion.

There were ſome, who in order to ſolve this, ſuppos'd (as *Diogenes Laertius*, ſpeaking of the *Magi*, tells us from *Ariſtotle*) *two ſupreme Governing Principles* or *Demons*, the one a GOOD, and the other an EVIL and pernicious one: which *latter* was made independent on, and of equal Power with, the *former*, and the Author of all that was irregular and bad in the Univerſe. This monſtrous Scheme, the *Manichees* in the Times of Chriſtianity, fell into, and much improv'd; but were ſufficiently confuted herein, as well as divers other horrid Abſurdities which they maintain'd, by a *Father*, who had reaſon to be particularly well acquainted with their Tenets, and was extremely well able to expoſe the Folly of them; I mean the Great St. *Auguſtine*.

But the plain truth of the Caſe is, the Hypotheſis requires no more in order to its Confutation, than the bare propoſing of it. *Duo Summa Principia*, TWO SUPREME INDEPENDENT PRINCIPLES, is next door to a down-right expreſs Contradiction in Terms. 'Tis certain there can be nothing of a *Dogma* more impoſſible or more abſurd. 'Tis the very ſame Thing in Reſult and Conſequence, as ſaying TWO ABSOLUTE INFINITES; and he that ſays *Two*, had as good ſay *Ten*, or *Fifty*, or any other Number whatſoever.

Nay, if there can be *Two essentially distinct absolute Infinites*, there may be an Infinity of such absolute Infinites; that is as much as to say, none of them all would be an *absolute Infinite*, or that none of them would be properly and really Infinite; for *real* Infinity, is *strict* and *absolute* Infinity, and only that. But 'tis not worth while to argue against so barefac'd an Absurdity as this.

From what has been said in Part II. concerning the nature of *Liberty and Free Will*, we may deduce a very possible and satisfactory (I had almost said, the only just and possible) account, of *the Origin of Evil.*

There are and must necessarily be, *some original intrinsick Agreements and Disagreements, Fitnesses and Unfitnesses of certain Things and Circumstances, to and with each other; which are antecedent to all positive Institution and Law*, and founded on the very natures of those Things and Circumstances, consider'd in themselves, and in their Relations to each other.

As these all fall within the Comprehensions of an *infinite discerning Mind*, who is likewise *infinite essential Rectitude and Reason*; so those on one side must necessarily (to speak after the manner of Men) be chosen or approv'd of by him, as the other dislik'd and disapprov'd: and this upon the score, of *the Eternal Intrinsick Agreeableness and Disagreeableness* of them.

Farther, It was no way inconsistent with, or derogating from, any one Perfection of an Infinite Being, *to endow other Beings which he had made, with such a Power as what we call Liberty:* That is, to furnish them with such Capacities, Dispositions and Principles of Action, that it should be possible for them either to observe, or to deviate, from those Eternal Rules and Measures of Fitness

and

and Agreeableneſs, with reſpect to certain Things and Circumſtances, which were ſo conformable to the Infinite Rectitude of his own Will, and which *Infinite All-comprehending Reaſon and Penetration*, muſt neceſſarily ſee and diſcover in the Profundity of its own Eſſence. Now EVIL is a Deviation, from thoſe Meaſures, of unerring ETERNAL ORDER and REASON. This is EVIL; not to chuſe and not to approve, what is in it ſelf agreeable, and therefore worthy to be choſen, and is accordingly choſen and approv'd of, by SUCH A MIND, and SUCH A WILL, as the Divine. So that, together with a Breach of Intrinſick Original Right and Order; it includes, *a Contradiction or Oppoſition, to the Reaſon and Rectitude of an Infinite Mind*, which judges and neceſſarily approves of that Order.

Now for the bringing this about, there is no more neceſſary, than the exerting certain Acts of that Power, which we call by the Name of FREE-WILL.

For by this we are enabled to *chuſe* or to *refuſe*, and can determine our ſelves to Action and *Practice* accordingly. And when our Choice is made one way, we do what is GOOD; when the contrary, we do EVIL. And therefore, without having recourſe to any ill *Genius* or *Demon*, we may fairly and ſolidly account for the *Origin of Evil*, from the *Poſſibility of a various Uſe or Application of our Liberty:* even as that Capacity or Poſſibility it ſelf, is ultimately founded on the *Defectibility and Finiteneſs of a Created Nature.*

I can by no means ſee any juſt and regular Steps, by which a Man ſhould come to any ſuch Concluſion as this; *That 'tis the Divine Will alone, that MAKES RIGHT and GOOD; or that Things are fit and agree-*

able, only becauſe God wills them, and not that he wills them, becauſe they are really and intrinſically ſo.

'Tis a mere Jeſt, to alledg, *that otherwiſe there would be ſomething Prior to, Independent on, and ſo a Cauſe of, the Will of God.*

GOD's WILL, IS HIS PURE, PERFECT, AND SIMPLE ESSENCE; in the Immenſity of which alone, he beholds all Truth, Order, and Fitneſs; nor can he poſſibly have any *Reaſon or Motive* out of himſelf, ſince all is comprehended in his own *Abſolute Infinity.* So that to argue any thing of Priority to, or Cauſality upon, the Will of God; if he *wills* Things becauſe of their Fitneſs, and does not make them ſo by *Willing*; amounts to the making a Suppoſition, that is a flat Contradiction, to the Nature of an Infinite All-comprehending Eſſence.

For it intimates as if thoſe Agreeableneſſes or Fitneſſes, were ſomething that was intrinſick or foreign to God, and not what he comtemplates in his own Eſſence. Whereas, 'tis here, in this boundleſs Perfection, this abſolute Immenſity, that he diſcovers all the poſſible Relations and Agreements of Things; here, I ſay, where nothing is or can be *prior* or *poſterior*, *cauſing* or *cauſed*; but all is comprehended in *one view*, and by *one ſimple perfect Act.* Take the Matter thus, which is certainly the right and genuine Way of taking it; and then I think, there's no room for any Objection that deſerves any notice, upon this head.

SECT.

SECT. XVI.

IN what Sense soever it can be said or understood, that *Infinite Reason and Infinite Goodness* MUST NECESSARILY contrive, make, and dispose, all things in the BEST Manner, and to the BEST advantage, and for the BEST Ends and Purposes; in that same Sense, and *that only*, can it be said, *that it was NECESSARY, the World should be such as it is*; or that God should contrive, make and dispose of it, and all particular Beings and Events, in and relating to it, in that Order and Manner, that he has contriv'd, made and does actually dispose of it, and them: and in that same Sense likewise, and that only, can it be said, that the Structure and Contrivance of the whole, IS OF ALL, THE BEST, THAT COULD BE; or *that it could not be any otherwise than it is*; with many other such like Consequences. A Man may without any Scruple or Hesitation, own and assert *such a Necessity* as this; and give any *Atheist*, *Deist* or *Fatalist* leave, to make their best Earnings of the Concession. For *Necessity which proceeds from PERFECT KNOWLEDG of what is fittest to be done, and from PERFECT GOODNESS and WILL, to chuse what is known to be fittest*; is infinitely remote from all BLIND MECHANICAL Necessity, and from FATE and DESTINY, in the vulgar Sense and Acceptation of those Words. And as nothing of the *Eternity*, or *Self-existence* of MATTER, can ever possibly be infer'd from it; *so neither does it involve any thing inconsistent with a compleat and perfect LIBERTY; the Notion of Liberty being duly stated, and abstracted from all Imperfections.*

There-

Therefore none of all those People, can ever make any use (in the way of fair and just Reasoning) a Concession of SUCH NECESSITY as this, in order to establish any Notion or Scheme, with respect to the OPERATIONS OR PRODUCTIONS OF A FIRST CAUSE; that will at all clash with any Article that we profess to believe, concerning the Being and Perfections of God: I say, they can't do it, in the way, of *fair and just Reasoning!* For when they once come to *Guesses and Hypothesis*, or mere *Probabilities*, *Verisimilitudes*, and the like; the Argument is at an end, and we have no more to say. But let them infer what they will, in the *strict and allow'd way* of drawing Consequences; and I believe we need not scruple offering to stand by them.

It is most certain, that the Formal Nature, or Essence of *Liberty*, does not lie in A SUSPENSE, AN INDIFFERENCE, OR INDETERMINATION AD OPPOSITA.

There is no doubt to be made, but that there is such a Phenomenon in Human Nature, as this *Indifference or Indetermination:* And I have shewn expressly in PART II. what Uses we are able to make of it, and how far we can extend and carry it, with respect to Objects that are propos'd to us.

But then, 'tis one thing to speak of an *Effect* or *Branch*, or perhaps an *Imperfection* or *Defect* of Liberty; and another, to speak of the very *Formality* or *Intrinsick Nature* of Liberty it self.

Now we are assur'd, from the *Knowledge and Experience we have of OUR OWN CONSTITUTIONS*, that in a vast Number of Cases that occur, wherein we act from a RATIONAL NECESSITY, and are determin'd only *one way*, by the prevailing Motives of FITNESS, GOODNESS, AND AGREEABLENESS; that yet we ACT FREELY,

FREELY, or with a *true and proper Liberty*; and that, because there is all the *Complacency and Delight, all the pleasing Tendency and Acquiescency of Mind, all the Harmony and Consent of Thought*, that we ever experience on any Occasions, wherein we can reckon our selves to act with the truest *Freedom*, or that we can conceive to be necessary, in order to the making or denominating a Power, to be a Power of ACTING FREELY.

If the real Intrinsick Nature of *Liberty*, does not lie here or hereabouts; if this be not sufficient, in the Nature and Reason of Things, to denominate ACTIONS FREE; then no Actions that WE can ever exert, let them be what they will, can possibly be either justly REWARDABLE OR PUNISHABLE, BY GOD OR MAN: and if we once come to that, we need not dispute about *Liberty*, or any thing else.

So that I say, here we must fix, and sit down with this Conclusion, *That the Divine Being, who acts from Perfect Knowledg, and Perfect Goodness and Rectitude of Nature; is also the most perfectly and compleatly Free, in all his Operations, and Productions.*

After what has been said here, and in other Parts of this Discourse, I need not spend time in demonstrating, that MATTER CANNOT BE A NECESSARY SELF-EXISTENT SUBSTANCE: Nor that the MATERIAL WORLD, WAS NOT PRODUCED BY A MERE SIMPLE OR ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF NATURE.

For *if there be in the Nature of Things, such a Power or Principle, as Liberty:* If this could no more arise from, or be the Effect of *Absolute Necessity*, than *Figure* can be the Effect of *Motion*, or Material Extension of simple *Indivisibility*, or a Power of Thinking can arise from, or be made up of, *that*

that which is not thinking: then 'tis certain, that there is *Liberty*, in a Supreme and most Perfect Degree, in that Being which made us Free; even as 'tis also demonstrable, he must be *Thoughtful and Intelligent*, because he has made us so. And if this be true, then I need not say any more to prove, that this Notion of *producing by mere Absolute Necessity of Nature*, is false and impossible, as being utterly inconsistent with the Perfection of that Being.

And then, as to the *Necessary Self-existence of Matter*; the Phenomena of the Universe, are palpable Demonstrations, of the Infinite Absurdity of such a Supposition. I shall only mention one, *viz. The different Specifick Gravity of Bodies.*

Portions of Matter of the same Bulk, are unequally Heavy.

Therefore under the same *Dimensions*, there is not the same *Quantity* of Matter.

Therefore there are *Vacuities*; or Spaces not replete with Matter.

Therefore Matter does not exist *every where*.

Therefore Matter does not *necessarily* exist: For what necessarily exists, must exist every where, and every where *alike*.

Therefore neither is it, a *Self-existent* Substance; nor did it exist from *Eternity*; nor is it any Part or Attribute of the Divine Essence.

The *Mechanical* People, have been often nibling at this Argument, for proving a *Vacuity*, drawn from the different Specifick Gravities of Matter: but it concludes with too much Evidence and Strength, ever to be shaken, by all their little unphilosophical Attempts; and I make no scruple to assert, that that Phenomenon of the *different Weights of Bodies*, can never be solv'd, by any Me-

Mechanical Hypothesis of *Gravitation* whatsoever, let them go which way to work they can.

SECT. XVII.

TO conclude all: Such a Being as God is; Infinitely Perfect, *Immense*, *Intelligent*, *Just*, *Free*, *Good*, *Provident and Careful*, of all his Creatures; deserves our highest Praise and Admiration, our Love and Gratitude, our Fear and Obedience, our Trust and Dependance.

It's reasonable that we direct all our Actions to his Glory, and make the Serving of Him, the chief Business of Life.

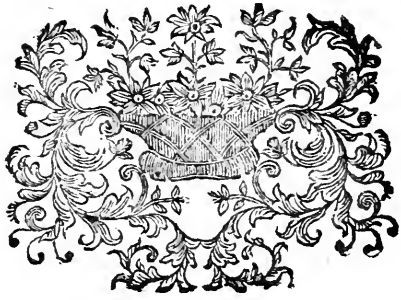
That we be Humble and Modest, in all our Speeches and Conceptions of Him, in all our Reasonings about his *Incomprehensible Essence*, and our Enquiries into his *Ways* and Dispensations.

That we do not oppose our own Understandings, to his *Unsearchable Wisdom*, bring him down to our Schemes and Measures; or conclude that is fittest and most worthy of him to do, that we judg to be best and fittest, in our shallow Capacities, or our *byass'd and prejudiced Judgments*.

The undoubted and demonstrable Perfections of his Nature, are the only sure NATURAL Foundation for us to go upon, in the way of Thinking and Conceiving of him, and of behaving our selves aright towards him.

And if from a due and serious Consideration of those demonstrable Attributes and Perfections of his Nature; we shall find it highly agreeable and reasonable to believe, that SUCH A BEING AS HE, should out of his Infinite Love and Care of his Creatures, make any SUPERNATURAL REVELA-

VELATIONS OF HIS MIND AND WILL, in order to the retrieving the Disorders of the World, and making Mankind fully and compleatly happy: then we should be exceeding cautious, how we set up any Schemes or Notions of our own, in opposition to *such Revelations or Discoveries*; and if we have any of us begun to do so, should withdraw from all such Methods in good time, that we may not lose the BENEFIT of what he has REVEAL'D.



FINIS.