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*Effigies Reverendi admodum viri  
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Cestriensis.*

OF THE  
*Principles and Duties*  
OF  
Natural Religion:  
TWO BOOKS.

---

By the Right Reverend Father in GOD,  
Dr. *JOHN WILKINS*,  
Late Lord Bishop of *CHESTER*.

---

To which is added, A Sermon preached at his  
*Funeral*, by *William Lloyd*, D. D. then Dean of  
*Bangor*, afterwards Lord Bishop of *Worcester*.

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The Ninth Edition.

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L O N D O N :

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T H E  
P R E F A C E.

**T**H E ensuing Treatise is sufficiently recommended to the World by the Name of the *Author*, and needs nothing else to make way for its Entertainment. I shall only therefore give a short Account of these *Remains* of that Learned and Excellent *Person*, and of the particular Design and Intention of them.

He was pleased by his *Last Will* to commit his *Papers* to my Care; and out of his great Friendship, and undeserved good Opinion of me, to leave it wholly to my Disposal,

posal, whether any, or what part of them, should be made publick. *This Treatise*, I knew, he always designed for that purpose; and if God had been pleased to have granted him but a little longer Life, he would have published it himself: And therefore, though a considerable Part of it wanted his last Hand, yet neither could I be so injurious, to deprive the World of it, because it was less perfect than he intended it; nor durst I be so bold, to attempt to *finish* a *Piece* designed and carried on so far by so great a *Master*.

The first *Twelve Chapters* were written out for the Press in his Life-time. The *Remainder* hath been gather'd and made up out of his *Papers*, as well as the *Materials* left for that purpose, and the Skill of the *Compiler* would allow: So that it cannot be expected, that the *Work* should be of equal  
Strength

Strength and Beauty in all the Parts of it. However, such as it is, I hope it may prove of considerable use and benefit to the World, and not altogether unworthy of its *Author*.

The *Design* of it is Three-fold.

*First*, To establish the great Principles of Religion, the Being of God, and a Future State; by shewing how firm and solid a Foundation they have in the Nature and Reason of Mankind: A Work never more necessary than in this degenerate Age, which hath been so miserably over-run with *Scepticism* and *Infidelity*.

*Secondly*, To convince Men of the natural and indispensable Obligation of *Moral Duties*; those I mean, which are comprehended by our *Saviour* under the Two General Heads of *the Love of God*  
and

and of our Neighbour. For all the great *Duties* of *Piety* and *Justice* are written upon our Hearts, and every Man feels a secret Obligation to them in his own Conscience, which checks and restrains him from doing contrary to them, and gives him Peace and Satisfaction in the Discharge of his Duty ; or in case he offend against it, fills him with Guilt and Terror.

And certainly it is a Thing of very considerable use, rightly to understand the natural Obligation of moral Duties, and how necessarily they flow from the Consideration of *God* and of *ourselves*. For it is a great Mistake, to think that the Obligation of them doth solely depend upon the Revelation of God's Will made to us in the *Holy Scriptures*. It is plain that Mankind was always under a *Law*, even before God had made any  
external

external and extraordinary Revelation; else, how shall God judge the World? How shall they to whom the *Word of God* never came, be acquitted or condemned at the *Great Day*? For *where there is no Law*, there can neither be *Obedience* nor *Transgression*. see Epist. to Ro  
1:2:

It is indeed an unspeakable Advantage which we, who are *Christians*, do enjoy, both in respect of the more clear and certain Knowledge of our Duty in all the Branches of it, and likewise in regard of the powerful Motives and Assistance which our blessed *Saviour* in his *Gospel* offers to us, to enable and encourage us to the discharge of our Duty. But yet it is nevertheless very useful for us to consider the primary and natural Obligation to *Piety* and *Virtue*, which we commonly call the *Law of Nature*; this being every

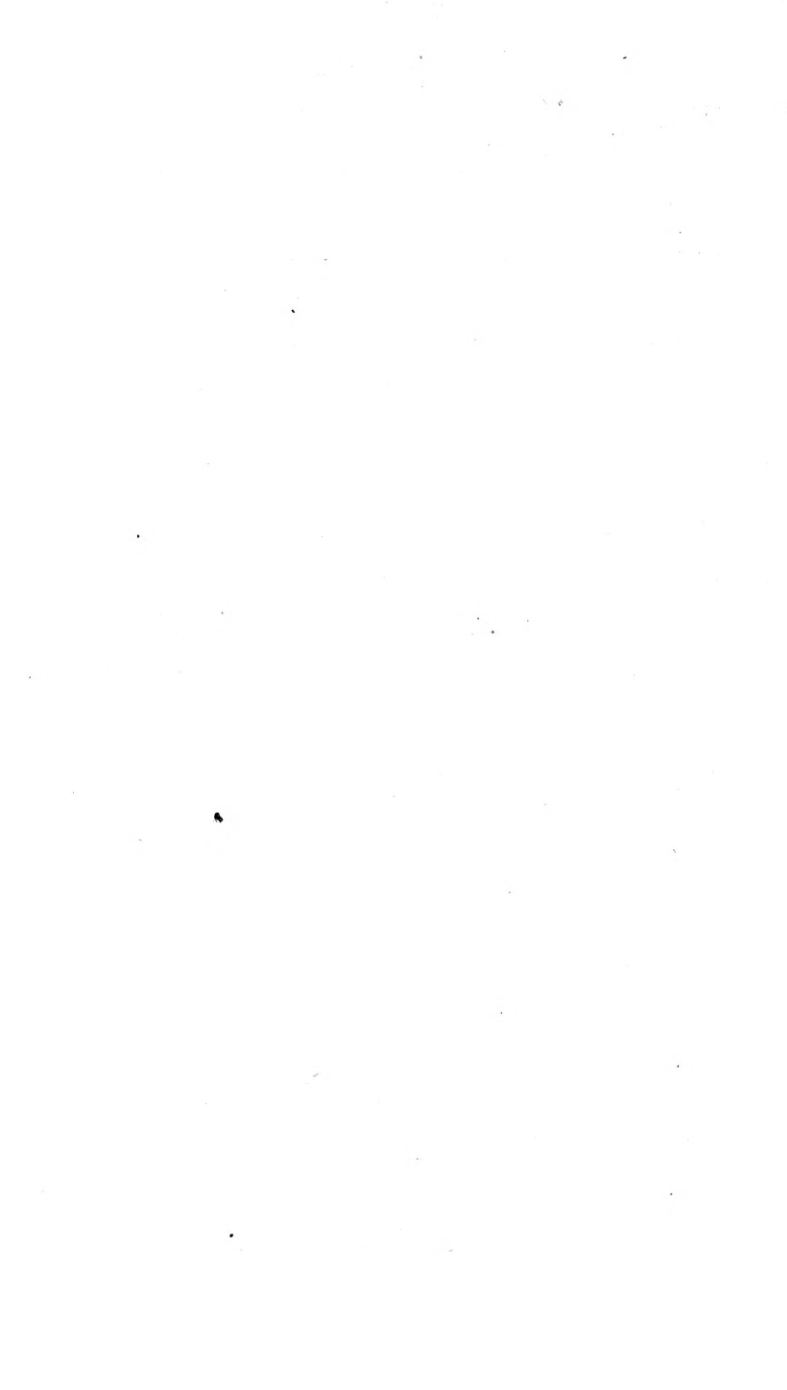
as the *Revelation* of his Will in his *Word*; and consequently, nothing contained in the *Word of God*, or in any pretended *Revelation* from *Him*, can be interpreted to dissolve the Obligation of moral Duties plainly required by the Law of Nature. And if this one Thing were but well consider'd, it would be an effectual Antidote against the pernicious Doctrines of the *Antinomians*, and of all other *Libertine-Enthusiasts* whatsoever: Nothing being more incredible, than that *Divine Revelation* should contradict the clear and unquestionable Dictates of *Natural Light*; nor any thing more vain, than to fancy that the *Grace of God* does release Men from the *Laws of Nature*.

This the *Author* of the following *Discourses* was very sensible of, and wisely saw of what Consequence it was to establish the  
*Princi-*

*Principles* and *Duties* of Religion upon their true and natural Foundation; which is so far from being a Prejudice to *Divine Revelation*, that it prepares the way for it, and gives it greater Advantage and Authority over the Minds of Men.

*Thirdly*, To persuade Men to the *Practice of Religion*, and the *Virtues* of a good Life, by shewing how natural and direct an Influence they have, not only upon our *future* Blessedness in another World, but even upon the Happiness and Prosperity of this *present* Life. And surely nothing is more likely to prevail with wise and considerate Men to become Religious, than to be thoroughly convinced, that *Religion* and *Happiness*, our *Duty* and our *Interest*, are really but one and the same thing considered under several Notions.

J. TILLOTSON.





T H E

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T H E



THE *Evening to*  
FIRST BOOK:

S H E W I N G

The Reasonableness of the Principles  
and Duties of *Natural Religion*.

---

C H A P. I:

*Concerning the several Kinds of Evidence  
and Assent.*



Intend, by God's Assistance, in this First Book, to treat concerning the Reasonableness and the Credibility of the Principles of *Natural Religion*, in opposition to that Humour of Scepticism and Infidelity, which hath of late so much abounded in the World, not only amongst sensual Men of the vulgar Sort, but even amongst those who pretend to a more than ordinary Measure of Wit and Learning.

In my Entrance upon this Work, I am sensible of what ill Consequence it may be, to lay the Strefs of a weighty Cause upon *weak* or *obscure* Arguments, which instead of *convincing* Men, will rather *harden* and *confirm* them in their Errors.

And therefore I cannot but think myself obliged in the management of this Argument, to use my utmost caution and endeavour, that it be done with so much strength and perspicuity, as may be sufficient to convince any Man, who hath but an *ordinary Capacity*, and an *honest Mind*; which are no other Qualifications than what are required to the Institution of Men, in all kind of Arts and Sciences whatsoever.

In order to this, I judge it expedient to premise something concerning the several *kinds* and *degrees* of *Evidence* and *Assent*, and to lay down some common *Principles*, which may serve as a Foundation to the following Discourse.

The several ways whereby Men come to the knowledge or belief of any thing without immediate *Revelation*, are either by such *Evidence of Things* as is more

*Simple*

{ *Simple*, relating to the  
   { *Senses*,  
     { *Outward*.  
     { *Inward*.  
   { *Understanding*, arising either from the  
     { *Nature of the Things* in themselves.  
     { *Testimony of others* concerning 'em.  
 { *Mixed*, relating both to the *Senses* and  
   *Understanding*.

I. By *Senses*, I mean those *Faculties* whereby we are enabled to discern and know such *particular* Objects as are *present*. These are either

1. *Outward*; By which we can apprehend *external* Objects, as when we see, or hear, or touch any Thing presented to us.

2. *Inward*; By which we can discern *internal* Objects, and are conscious to ourselves, or sensible both of the Impressions that are made upon our outward *Senses*, and of the inward Motions of our *Minds*; namely, our Apprehensions, Inclinations, and the Power of determining ourselves, as to our own Actions; and by which we can at any time be assured of what we think, or what we desire or purpose.

II. By *Understanding*, I mean that Faculty whereby we are enabled to apprehend the Objects of Knowledge, *Generals* as well as *Particulars*, *Absent* Things as well as *Present*; and to judge of their *Truth* or *Falshood*, *Good* or *Evil*.

That kind of *Evidence* may be said to arise from the *Nature of Things*, when there is such a Congruity or Incongruity betwixt the *Terms* of a *Proposition*, or the *Deductions* of one Proposition from another, as doth either satisfy the Mind, or else leave it in doubt and hesitation about them.

That kind of *Evidence* is said to arise from *Testimony*, when we depend upon the Credit and Relation of others for the Truth or Falshood of any Thing. There being several Things which we cannot otherwise know, but as others do inform us of them. As namely *Matters of Fact*, together with the Account of *Persons* and *Places* at a Distance. Which kind of Evidence will be more or less clear, according to the Authority and Credit of the Witness.

Besides these, there is a *mixed kind of Evidence* relating both to the Senses and Understanding, depending upon our own Observation and repeated Trials of the Issues and Events of Actions or Things, called *Experience*.

These are the several *kinds* of *Evidence* whereby we attain to the Knowledge or Belief of Things.

The *Kinds* of *Affent* proceeding from them, are reducible to these Two Heads.

I. Know.



I. *Knowledge* or *Certainty*, which may be distinguished into three Kinds, which I crave leave to call by the Names of

- { *Physical.*
- { *Mathematical.*
- { *Moral.*

II. *Opinion* or *Probability*.

I. That kind of *Assent* which doth arise from such plain and clear Evidence as doth not admit of any reasonable Cause of doubting, is called *Knowledge* or *Certainty*.

1. I call that *Physical* Certainty, which doth depend upon the Evidence of *Sense*, which is the first and *highest Kind of Evidence* of which human Nature is capable.

Nothing can be more manifest and plain to me, than that I now see somewhat which hath the Appearance of such a Colour or Figure, than that I have in my Mind such a Thought, Desire, or Purpose, and do feel within myself a certain Power of determining my own Actions, which is called *Liberty*.

To say that we cannot tell whether we have *Liberty*; because we do not understand the manner of *Volition*, is all one as to say, that we cannot tell whether we *see* or *hear*; because we do not understand the manner of *Sensation*.

He that would go about to confute me in any of these Apprehensions, ought to bring a *Medium* that is better known, and to derive

his Argument from somewhat that is more evident and certain than these Things are, unless he can think to overthrow and confute that which is more plain and certain, by that which is less plain and certain; which is all one as to go about to out-weigh a heavy Body by somewhat that is lighter, or to attempt the proving of Ten to be more than Eleven; than which nothing can be more absurd.

2. I call that *Mathematical* Certainty, which doth more eminently belong to *Mathematical* Things, not intending hereby to exclude such other Matters as are capable of the like Certainty; namely, all such *simple* abstracted Beings, as in their own Natures do lie so open, and are so obvious to the Understanding, that every Man's Judgment (though never so much prejudiced) must necessarily assent to them. 'Tis not possible for any Man in his Wits (though never so much addicted to Paradoxes) to believe otherwise, but that the *Whole is greater than the Part*; That *Contradictions cannot be both true*; That *three and three make six*; That *four is more than three*.

There is such a kind of Connexion betwixt the Terms of some Propositions, and some Deductions are so necessary as must unavoidably enforce our Assent: There being an evident Necessity that some Things must be so, or not so, according as they are affirmed or denied to be, and that supposing our Faculties

culties to be true, they cannot possibly be otherwise, without implying a Contradiction.

3. I call that *Moral Certainty*, which hath for its Object such Beings as are *less simple*, and do more depend upon mixed Circumstances. Which though they are not capable of the same kind of Evidence with the former, so as to necessitate every Man's Assent, though his Judgment be never so much prejudiced against them; yet may they be so plain, that every Man whose Judgment is free from prejudice will consent unto them. And though there be no natural Necessity, that such things must be so, and that they cannot possibly be otherwise, without implying a Contradiction; yet may they be so certain as not to admit of any reasonable Doubt concerning them.

Under each of these Heads there are several Propositions, which may be stiled *Self-evident* and *first Principles*.

*Self-evident*, Because they are of themselves so plain, as not to be capable of proof from any Thing that is clearer or more known.

*First Principles*, Because they cannot be proved *à priori*; That which is first can have nothing before it.

Only they may receive some kind of *Illustration* by *Instances* and *Circumstances*, and by such universal *Effects* as do proceed from them;

them ; and from the monstrous *Absurdities* that will follow upon the denial of them.

Such *Deductions* as do necessarily flow from these Principles, have the same kind of Certainty, whether *Physical*, *Mathematical*, or *Moral*, with the Principles themselves from which they are deduced.

The two first of these, namely, *Physical* and *Mathematical* Certainty may be stiled *Infallible*; and *Moral* Certainty may properly be stiled *Indubitable*.

By *Infallible Certainty*, I do not mean *absolute* Infallibility, because that is an *Incommunicable Attribute*. And it were no less than a blasphemous Arrogance, for any Man to pretend to such a perfect unerring Judgment on which the Divine Power itself could not impose. But I mean a *Conditional Infallibility*, that which supposes our Faculties to be true, and that we do not neglect the exerting of them. And upon such a Supposition there is a necessity that some things must be so as we apprehend them, and that they cannot possibly be otherwise.

By *Indubitable Certainty*, I mean that which doth not admit of any reasonable Cause of doubting, which is the only certainty of which most Things are capable ; and this may properly be ascribed both to that kind of Evidence arising from the *Nature of Things*, and likewise to that which doth arise from *Testimony*, or from *Experience*.

I am,

I am, from the Nature of the Things themselves, *Morally* certain, and cannot make any doubt of it, but that a *Mind free from passion and prejudice, is more fit to pass a true Judgment, than such a one as is biassed by Affections and Interests.* That *there are such Things as Virtue and Vice.* That *Mankind is naturally designed for a sociable life.* That *it is most agreeable to Reason and the common Interests of those in Society, that they should be true to their Compacts, that they should not hurt an innocent Person, &c.*

And as for the Evidence from *Testimony* which depends upon the Credit and Authority of the Witnesses, these may be so qualified as to their *ability* and *fidelity*, that a Man must be a fantastical incredulous Fool to make any doubt of them. And by this it is that I am sufficiently assured, That there was such a Person as Queen *Elizabeth*; That there is such a Place as *Spain*.

And so for the Evidence of *Experience*, I am by that to a great degree assured of the succession of Night and Day, Winter and Summer; and have no such reason to doubt, whether the House wherein now I am, shall this next Minute fall upon me, or the Earth open and swallow it up, as to be in continual fear of such Accidents.

II. That kind of Assent, which doth arise from such Evidence as is less plain and clear,  
is

is called *Opinion* and *Probability*. When though the Proofs for a Thing may preponderate any Thing to be said against it; yet they are not so weighty and perspicuous as to exclude all reasonable doubt and fear of the contrary.

And this doth arise from a more imperfect and obscure representation and conception of Things, either by our Senses or Understandings, by Testimony or by Experience.

When the Evidence on each side doth equi-ponderate, this doth not properly beget any Assent, but rather a *Hesitation*, or Suspension of Assent.



C H A P.



CHAP. II.

*Two Schemes of Principles relating to Practical Things, whether Natural or Moral, proposed in the Method used by Mathematicians of Postulata, Definitions and Axioms.*

**H**AVING premised these Things in general concerning several kinds of Evidences and Assents; I shall in the next Place offer some particular Schemes of Principles relating to practical Things, whether Natural or Moral, in the same Way and Method as is used in the Mathematicks, consisting of *Postulata, Definitions and Axioms.*

Vid. Dr. H. More.

*A Scheme of Natural Principles.*

*Every thing is endowed with such a natural Principle, whereby it is necessarily inclined to promote its own preservation and well-being.*

Postulatum.

*That which hath in it a fitness to promote this End, is called Good. And on the contrary, that which is apt to hinder it, is called Evil. Amongst which there are several degrees, according as things have more or less fitness, to promote or hinder this End.*

Defin. 1.

*The*

Defin. 2. *The lessening or escaping of Evil is to be reckoned under the Notion of Good.*

*The lessening or loss of Good is to be reckoned under the Notion of Evil.*

Axiom. 1. *That which is good is to be chosen and prosecuted, that which is Evil to be avoided.*

2. *The greater Good is to be preferred before the Less, and the lesser Evil to be endured rather than the Greater.*

3. *Such kinds of Things or Events, whether Good or Evil, as will certainly come to pass, may fall under computation, and be estimated as to their several degrees, as well as things present.* Because when such a space of time is elapsed, that which is now *future*, will become *present*. Which is the Ground of Men's dealing for *Reversions*.

4. *And thus likewise is it for such Things as may probably come to pass; Though this probability should be somewhat remote, it is counted a valuable Thing, and may be estimated at a certain Rate, for a Man to be one amongst four or five equal Competitors for a Place, to be the fourth or fifth Expectant of an Inheritance; tho' in such Cases there be the odds of Three or Four to One, yet the Price that is set upon this, may be so proportioned, as either to reduce it to an equality, or make it a very advantageous Bargain.*



*A present Good may reasonably be parted with, upon a probable expectation of a future Good which is more excellent.* Which is the Case of Merchants, who have large Estates in their own possession, which they may safely keep by them; and yet chuse to venture them upon a thousand Hazards, out of an apprehension that there is a greater Probability of their gaining, than of their losing by such Adventures.

And this would be much more reasonable, if besides the probability of gaining by these Adventures, there were the like probability of their being utterly undone and ruined, if they should neglect or refuse to venture.

The greater the Advantage is, the more reasonable must it be to adventure for it. If it be reasonable for a Man to run the venture of Twenty Pounds for the gain of a Hundred Pounds, much more for a Thousand.

The Reason why Men are moved to believe a probability of gain by adventuring their Stocks into such foreign Countries, as they have never seen, and of which they have made no Trial, is from the Testimony of other credible Persons, who profess to have known those Places, and the Advantages of Traffick thither by their own Experience. And this is generally accounted a sufficient Argument to persuade others unto the like Trials.

The Reason which moved Men to adventure for the first Discovery of unknown Countries, is, because they had fair probabilities to persuade them, that there were such Places, which would probably afford very gainful Traffick.

And upon the same Ground, if any considerable number of Men, such whom we esteem the most wise and the most honest, should assure us, that they did firmly believe (though they did not know it by experience) that there was such an undiscovered Country, to which if Men would make any Ventures, their Gains would be a thousand Times more than could be expected by any other way of Traffick ; and that upon this persuasion, they themselves did resolve to venture their Estates, and should withal offer such Arguments for the reasonableness of what they assert, as to any Men, whose Judgments were unprejudiced, would render it much more probable than the Contrary : In this Case, he that would act rationally, according to such Rules and Principles as all Mankind do observe in the government of their Actions, must be persuaded to do the like, unless he would be counted foolish, and one that did affect Singularity.

6. *A present Evil is to be endured for the avoiding of a probable future Evil, which is far greater.* Which is the Reason of Mens undergoing the mischiefs and hardships of War ;

War; the charges and vexations of Law-Suits; the trouble of Fasting and Physick. A Man will endure the Pain of Hunger and Thirst, and refuse such Meats and Drinks as are most grateful to his Appetite, if he be persuaded that they will endanger his Health; especially if he believe that they are poisoned. He will chuse to take nauseous offensive Physick, upon a probable expectation that he may thereby prevent or cure a dangerous Sickness.

*The greater the Evil is, the more reason is there to venture the loss of a less Good, or the suffering of a less Evil, for the escaping of it.*

7.

### A Scheme of Moral Principles.

There are several *kinds* of Creatures in the Postula; World, and several *degrees* of dignity amongst tum. them; some being more excellent than others, *Animate* more than *Inanimate*; *Sensitives* more than *Vegetives*; and *Men* more than *Brutes*. It is a greater preheminance to have *life*, than to be without it; to have *life* and *sense*, than to have *life* only; to have *life*, *sense* and *reason*, than to have only *life* and *sense*.

That which doth constitute any Thing in Defin. 1. its Being, and distinguish it from all other Things, is called the *Form* or *Essence* of such a Thing.

That

Defin. 2.

That State or Condition by which the nature of any thing is advanced to the utmost Perfection of which it is capable according to its rank and kind, is called the *chief end* or *happiness* of such a Thing.

The *Nature* of *Plants* doth consist in having a *Vegetative* Soul, by which they receive nourishment and growth, and are enabled to multiply their kind.

The utmost Perfection, which this kind of Being is capable of, is to grow up to a state of Maturity, to continue unto its natural Period, and to propagate its kind.

The *Nature* of *Brutes* (besides what is common to them with *Plants*) doth consist in having such Faculties, whereby they are capable of apprehending external Objects, and of receiving Pain or Pleasure from them.

The *Perfection* proper to these doth consist in sensitive Pleasures, or the enjoying of such Things as are grateful to their Appetites and Senses.

The *Nature* of *Man* (besides what is common to him with *Plants* and *Brutes*) doth consist in that faculty of Reason, whereby he is made capable of Religion, of apprehending a Deity, and of expecting a future State of Rewards and Punishments. Which are Capacities common to all Mankind, notwithstanding the utmost endeavours that can be used for the suppressing of them; and which no other Creature in this visible World, except Man, doth partake of. The

The *happinefs* of Man doth confist in the perfecting of this Faculty ; that is, in such a ftate or condition as is moft agreeable to reafon, and as may entitle him to the divine Favour, and afford him the beft affurance of a bleffed Eftate after this Life.

That which every Man doth, and muft propofe unto himfelf, is the being in as good a Condition as he is capable of, or as is reafonable for him to expect: And the defire of this is not properly a *Duty* or a *Moral Virtue*, about which Men have a liberty of acting; but 'tis a *Natural Principle*, like the defcent of heavy Bodies, it flows neceffarily from the very Frame of our Natures; Men muft do fo, nor can they do otherwife.

The customary Actions of Men, confider- Defin. 3<sup>d</sup>  
ed as *voluntary*, and as *capable of Reward* or *Punishment*, are ftiled *Moral*.

As That, which hath a fitnefs to promote the Defir. 4<sup>th</sup>  
welfare of Man, confider'd as a *fenfitive* Being, is ftiled *Natural Good*; fo That which hath a fitnefs to promote the welfare of Man, as a *rational, voluntary and free Agent*, is ftiled *Moral Good*: and the contrary to it, *Moral Evil*.

That, which is morally *good*, is to be *defired* Axiom 1<sup>st</sup>  
and profecuted; That, which is *evil*, is to be *avoided*.

The greater *Congruity* or *Incongruity* there Axiom 2<sup>d</sup>  
is in any thing to the Reafon of Mankind, and the greater tendency it hath to *promote* or *hinder* the Perfection of Man's Nature, fo

much greater degrees hath it of moral *Good* or *Evil*. To which we ought to proportion our *Inclination* or *Aversion*.

There is in some things such a natural Decency and Fitness, as doth render them most agreeable to our Reason, and will be sufficient to recommend them to our Practice; abstracting from all considerations of reward: As in loving those who are kind to us, and from whom we receive benefit: In compensating Good with Good, and not with Evil.

It is most suitable both to the Reason and Interest of Mankind, that every one should submit themselves to him, upon whom they depend for their Well-being, by doing such things as may render them acceptable to him.

It is a desirable thing for a Man to have the assistance of others in his need and distress. And 'tis not reasonable for him to expect this from others, unless he himself be willing to shew it to others.

Axiom 3. The *rational* Nature and the *Perfection* belonging to it being more noble than the *Sensitive*: Therefore *Moral* Good is to be preferred before *Natural*; and that which is *Morally* Evil is more to be *hated* and avoided, than that which is *Natural*.

Axiom 4. A *present natural* Good may be parted with upon a probable Expectation of a *future Moral* Good.

Axiom 5. A *present natural* Evil is to be endured for the probable avoiding of a *future moral* Evil.



## C H A P. III.

*Some Propositions necessary to be premised for the removing of several Prejudices in debates about Religion.*

**B**ESIDES what hath been already suggested concerning the first Foundations to be laid, in order to a Discourte about Natural Religion, I shall in the next place offer to Consideration these Seven following Propositions, as being very proper to prevent or obviate the Cavils of sceptical captious Men.

1. *Such things as in themselves are equally true and certain, may not yet be capable of the same kind or degree of Evidence as to us.* As for Instance, *That there was such a Man as King Henry the Eighth; that there are such Places as America, or China.* I say, these things may in themselves be equally true and certain with those other Matters, *That we now see, and are awake; That the three Angles in a Triangle are equal to two right ones.* Though for the First of these we have only the Testimony of others, and human Tradition; whereas for the other we have sensitive Proof, and mathematical Demonstration. And the reason is, because all

Truths are in themselves equal, according to that ordinary Maxim, *Veritas non recipit magis & minus*. And therefore nothing can be more irrational than for a Man to doubt of, or deny the Truth of any thing, because it cannot be made out by such kind of Proofs of which the Nature of such a thing is not capable. A Man may as well deny there is any such thing as *Light* or *Colour*, because he cannot hear it; or *Sound*, because he cannot see it, as to deny the truth of other things because they cannot be made out by sensitive or demonstrative Proofs. The kinds of Probation for several things being as much disproportioned, as the objects of the several Senses are to one another.

2.  
Aristot.  
Eth. lib. 1.  
cap. 3.  
Metaph  
lib. 1. cap.  
ult.

2. *Things of several kinds may admit and require several sorts of proofs, all which may be good in their kind.* The Philosopher hath long ago told us, that according to the divers Nature of things, so must the Evidences for them be; and that it is an Argument of an undisciplin'd Wit, not to acknowledge this. He that is rational and judicious will expect no other kind of Arguments in any case than the subject-matter will bear. How incongruous would it be for a Mathematician to persuade with Eloquence, to use all imaginable Insinuations and Entreaties, that he might prevail with his hearers to believe that *three and three make six*? It would be altogether as vain and improper in matters belonging to an Orator



Orator to pretend to strict Demonstration. All things are not capable of the same kind of Evidence. Though the Conclusions in *Mathematicks*, by reason of the *abstracted* nature of those Sciences, may be demonstrated by the clearest and most unquestionable way of Probation to our Reason; yet it is not rational to expect the like Proof, in such other matters as are not of the like nature. This he himself applies to *Moral* things, which being not of such *simple abstracted* Natures, but depending upon *mixed* circumstances, are not therefore capable of such kind of demonstrative Proofs. 'Tis a Saying of *Jamblicus*, That Demonstrations are not to be expected in matters concerning God and divine things. Nor is this any greater prejudice to the certainty of such things, than it is that God is invisible. And thus likewise it is, for the same reason, with many particular Conclusions in *Natural Philosophy*. And as for *matters of Fact*, concerning Times, Places, Persons, Actions, which depend upon *Story* and the relation of others, these things are not capable of being proved by such scientific Principles as the others are. Now no sober Man can deny but that several things in *Moral* and in *Natural Philosophy* are in themselves as absolutely and as certainly true, and as firmly believed by us, as any Mathematical Principle or Conclusion can be. From whence I infer this, That it is not, ought not

Protrept.  
in Sym-  
bol. 25.

to be, any prejudice to the Truth or Certainty of any thing, that it is not to be made out by such kind of Proofs, of which the nature of that thing is not capable, provided it be capable of satisfactory Proofs of another kind.

3. *When a thing is capable of good proof in any kind, Men ought to rest satisfy'd in the best evidence for it, which that kind of things will bear, and beyond which better could not be expected, supposing it were true.* They ought not to expect either sensible proof, or Demonstration for such Matters as are not capable of such Proofs, supposing them to be true: Because otherwise nothing must be assented to and believed, but that which hath the highest Evidence: All other things being to be looked upon as uncertain and doubtful, and wholly excluded from all possibility of being known. And at this rate, Men must believe nothing at all in Story; because such things cannot be demonstrated; and 'tis possible that the rest of Mankind might have combined together to impose upon them by these Relations. And how abhorrent such Sceptical Principles must needs be to common Reason, I need not say. Those who will pretend such kind of grounds for their disbelief of any thing, will never be able to persuade others, that the true Cause why they do not give their assent, is; because they have no *reason* for it; but because they have  
no

no mind to it. *Nolle in causa est, non posse pretenditur.*

And on the other side, when we have for the proof of any thing, some of the highest kinds of Evidence ; in this case it is not the suggestion of a mere possibility that the thing may be otherwise, that ought to be any sufficient cause of doubting.

To which I shall only add, that we may be unquestionably sure of many things as to their *existence* ; and yet we may not be able to explain the nature of them. No Man in his wits can make any doubt, whether there be such things as Motion, and Sensation, and Continuity of Bodies : And yet these things are commonly esteemed inexplicable. So that our not being able to see to the bottom of things, and to give a distinct account of the *Nature* and *Manner* of them, can be no sufficient cause to doubt of their *being*.

4. *The Mind of Man may and must give a firm assent to some things, without any kind of hesitation or doubt of the contrary ; where yet the Evidences for such things are not so infallible, but that there is a possibility, that the things may be otherwise. (i. e.)* There may be an *indubitable* Certainty, where there is not an *infallible* Certainty. And that kind of Certainty, which doth not admit of any Doubt, may serve us as well, to all intents and purposes, as that which is infallible : A Man may make no doubt, whether he himself were

4.

baptized, whether such persons were his Parents, of which yet he can have no other Evidence than Tradition, and the Testimony of others. Who is there so wildly Sceptical as to question, whether the Sun shall rise in the *East*, and not in the *North* or *West*, or whether it shall rise at all, because the contrary is not impossible, and doth not imply any Contradiction? Suppose that in digging of the Earth, amongst some ancient Ruins, a Man should find a round flat piece of Metal, in the exact shape of an old Medal, with the Image and Inscription of one of the *Roman* Emperors. Or suppose he should dig up a large Stone, of the shape of an ancient Tombstone, with a distinct Inscription upon it, of the Name and Quality of some Person said to be buried under it; Can any rational Man doubt, whether one of these were not a piece of Coin, and the other a Grave-stone? Or should a Man be bound to suspend his assent and belief of this, barely upon this ground, because 'tis possible that these might have been the natural shapes of that particular Metal and Stone, and that those which seem to be Letters or Figures engraven or embossed upon it, may be nothing else but some casual dents or cavities, which by the various motions and temper of the matter did happen to them, amongst those many millions of other Figures which they were capable of? Who would not think such a Man  
to

to be strangely wild, and irrational, who could frame to himself any real Scruples from such Considerations as these? Why, 'tis the same kind of absurd dotage that Scepticks in Religion are guilty of, in suspending their assent merely upon this Ground, because some Arguments for it do not so infallibly conclude, but that there is a Possibility things may be otherwise. He that will raise to himself, and cherish in his mind, any real doubts, according to the mere possibility of things, shall not be able to determine himself to the belief or practice of any thing. He must not stay within Doors, for fear the House should fall upon him, for that is possible: Nor must he go out, lest the next Man that meets him should kill him, for that also is possible. And so must it be for his doing or forbearing any other Action. Nay, I add farther, *that* Man is sure to be deceived in very many things, who will doubt of every thing, where 'tis possible he may be deceived.

I appeal to the common Judgment of Mankind, whether the Human Nature be not so framed, as to acquiesce in such a *Moral Certainty*, as the Nature of Things is capable of; and if it were otherwise, whether that Reason which belongs to us, would not prove a Burthen and a Torment to us, rather than a Privilege, by keeping us in a continual Suspence, and thereby rendring our Conditions perpetually restless and unquiet? Would  
not

not such Men be generally accounted out of their Wits, who could please themselves, by entertaining *actual hopes* of any thing, merely upon account of the possibility of it ; or torment themselves with *actual Fears* of all such Evils as are possible? Is there any thing imaginable more wild and extravagant amongst those in *Bedlam*, than this would be? Why, *Doubt* is a kind of *Fear*, and is commonly stiled *formido oppositi* ; and 'tis the same kind of Madness for a Man to *doubt* of any thing, as to *hope for*, or *fear* it, upon a mere Possibility.

5. 'Tis sufficient that matters of Faith and Religion be propounded in such a Way, as to render them highly credible, so as an honest and teachable Man may willingly and safely assent to them, and according to the rules of Prudence be justified in so doing. Nor is it either necessary or convenient, that they should be established by such cogent Evidence, as to necessitate Assent : Because this would not leave any place for the virtue of *Believing*, or the freedom of our Obedience ; nor any ground for Reward and Punishment. It would not be thank-worthy for a Man to believe that which of necessity he must believe, and cannot otherwise chuse.

Rewards and Punishments do properly belong to *free* Actions, such as are under a Man's power either to do or forbear ; not to such as are *necessary*. There is no more reason

son to reward a Man for believing that four is more than three, than for being hungry or sleepy; because these things do not proceed from *Choice*, but from *natural Necessity*. A Man must do so, nor can he do otherwise.

I do not say, that the Principles of Religion are merely *probable*, I have before asserted them to be *morally certain*. And that to a Man who is careful to preserve his Mind free from prejudice, and to *consider*, they will appear *unquestionable*, and the *deductions* from them *demonstrable*: But now because that which is necessary to beget this certainty in the Mind, namely, *impartial Consideration*, is in a Man's power, therefore the *Belief* or *Disbelief* of these things is a proper Subject for *Rewards* and *Punishments*.

There would be little reason for the Scripture so much to magnify the Grace of *Faith*, as being so great a Virtue, and so acceptable to God, if every one were necessitated to it, whether he would or no. And therefore God is pleased to propose these Matters of Belief to us in such a Way, as that we might give some Testimony of our teachable Dispositions, and of our Obedience by our assent to them. *Ut sermo Evangelii tanquam lapis esset Lydius, ad quem ingenia sanabilia explorarentur*, as Grot. de Verit. lib. 2a the learned *Grotius* speaks concerning the Doctrine of the Gospel, whereby God was pleased as with a Touchstone to prove and try what kind of tempers Men are of, whether

ther they are so ingenuous as to accept of sufficient Evidence, in the Confirmation of a holy Doctrine. And the Scripture doth in several places make use of the word *Faith*, according to this Notion of it, as it consists in a readiness of Mind to close with, and give assent unto things upon such Evidence as is in itself sufficient. To which purpose is that expression of our Saviour to *Thomas, Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed*, Joh. xx. 29. Signifying it to be a more excellent, commendable, and blessed thing for a Man to yield his assent, upon such Evidence as is in itself sufficient, without insisting upon more: It denotes good Inclinations in Men towards Religion, and that they have worthy Thoughts of the Divine Power and Goodness; when they are willing to submit unto such Arguments in the Confirmation of a holy Doctrine, as to unprejudiced Persons are in themselves sufficient to induce Belief. It was this Disposition that was commended in the *Bereans*, for which they are stiled *ἐπιμαθηταί*, more ingenious, teachable, and candid, *more noble* than others, *Because they received the word with all readiness of Mind: (i. e.)* Were ready and willing to assent to the Gospel, upon such Evidence as was in itself sufficient to convince reasonable and unprejudiced Men.

Acts xvij.  
11.

And on the other side, it was the want of this Disposition which is condemned, *Mat.*  
xiiij. 58.



xij. 58. where 'tis said that our Saviour *did not many mighty works in his own Country; because of their unbelief: (i. e.)* That prejudice, which there was upon them, by their knowledge of his mean Parentage and Birth, and their ignorance of his divine Commission and high Calling, did indispose them for an equal judgment of things, and render them unteachable. And having tried this, by doing *some* mighty Works amongst them, he would not do *many*, because of their incapacity of receiving benefit by them.

Wicked Men are in the Scripture-phrase Eph. ij. 2, styled *ὑποὶ ἀπειθείας*, *fili insuasibilitatis*, un-<sup>5, 6.</sup>persuadable Men, such as no reason can con-Col. iij. 6.vince. And elsewhere they are styled *ἄτοπτοι*,<sup>2.</sup> which we translate unreasonable Men. But the word may signify absurd, contumacious Persons, who are not to be fixed by any Principles, whom no *Topicks* can work upon, being directly opposite to this Virtue of Faith, as appears by the next Clause, *For all Men have not Faith.*

Supposing Mankind to be endowed (as all other things are) with a natural Principle, whereby they are strongly inclined to seek their own preservation and happiness; and supposing them to be *rational* and *free* Creatures, able to *judge* of, and to chuse the Means conducing to this end; nothing can be more reasonable in this case, than that such Creatures should be under the Obliga-  
tion

tion of accepting such Evidence, as in itself is sufficient for their Conviction.

6. *6. When there is no such evident certainty, as to take away all kind of doubting; in such Cases, a Judgment that is equal and impartial must incline to the greater Probabilities.* That is no just Balance, wherein the heaviest side will not preponderate. In all the ordinary affairs of Life, Men use to guide their Actions by this Rule, namely, to incline to that which is most probable and likely, when they cannot attain to any clear unquestionable certainty. And that Man would be generally counted a Fool, who should do otherwise. Now let it be supposed, that some of the great Principles in Religion, should not seem to some Men altogether so evident as to be wholly unquestionable; yet ought their assent still to incline to the greater probability.

When it is said to be a Duty for Men to believe any thing, or to acquiesce in such kind of Evidence as is sufficient for the Proof of it; the meaning is not, as if there were any moral Obligation upon the *Understanding*, which is proper only unto the *Will*; but the meaning is, that Men should be careful to preserve their Minds free from any wilful prejudice and partiality, that they should seriously attend to, and consider the Evidence proposed to them, so as to take a just Estimate of it. For though it be true, that the  
 Judgments

Judgments of Men must, by a natural Necessity, preponderate on that side where the greatest Evidence lies; supposing the Mind to be equally disposed, and the Balance to be just; yet must it withal be granted to be a particular Virtue and Felicity, to keep the Mind to such an equal frame of judging. There are some Men, who have sufficient Abilities to discern betwixt the true difference of things; but what through their vicious Affections and voluntary Prejudices, making them unwilling that some things should be true; what through their Inadvertency or Neglect to consider and compare things together, they are not to be convinced by plain Arguments; not through any Insufficiency in the *Evidence*, but by reason of some defect or corruption in the *Faculty* that should judge of it. Now the neglect of keeping our Minds in such an equal frame, the not applying of our Thoughts to consider of such matters of moment, as do highly concern a Man to be rightly inform'd in, must needs be a Vice. And though none of the Philosophers (that I know of) do reckon this kind of *Faith* (as it may be stiled) this teachableness and equality of Mind in considering and judging of matters of importance, amongst other *intellectual Virtues*; yet to me it seems, that it may justly challenge a Place amongst them; and that for this reason, because the two Extremes of it, by way of *Excess* and *Defect*, I mean the  
‡ † assenting

assenting unto such things upon insufficient Evidence, which is called *Credulity*, and the not assenting unto them upon sufficient Evidence, which is called *Incredulity* or *Unbelief*, are both of them Vices. Now where the *Excess* and *Defect* do make Vices, or such things as ought not to be, there the *Mediocrity* must denote something that ought to be, and consequently must be a Virtue, and have in it the obligation of Duty.

7. 7. *If in any Matter offered to Consideration, the Probabilities on both sides be supposed to be equal: (In this case, though an impartial Judgment cannot be obliged to incline to one side rather than to the other, because our Assent to things must, by a Necessity of Nature, be proportioned to our Evidence for them; and where neither side doth preponderate, the Balance should hang even) Yet even in this case, Men may be obliged to order their Actions in favour of that side, which appears to be most safe and advantageous for their own Interest.* Suppose a Man travelling upon the Road to meet with two doubtful Ways, concerning neither of which he can have any the least probability to induce him to believe that one is more like to be the true Way to his Journey's end, than the other; only he is upon good grounds assured, that in one of these Ways he shall meet with much Trouble, Difficulty, and Danger, which the other is altogether free from: In this

case, though a Man be not bound to believe that one of them is a truer way than the other, yet is he obliged in prudence to take the safest.

Nay, I add farther, if the Probabilities on the one hand should somewhat preponderate the other, yet if there be no considerable hazard on that side which hath the least probability, and a very great apparent danger in a mistake about the other ; in this case, Prudence will oblige a Man to do that which may make most for his own safety.

These are those preparatory Principles which I thought fit to premise, as a necessary foundation for any debatè with captious Men about the first grounds of Religion. And they are each of them (I think) of such perspicuity, as to need little more than the bare *Proposal* of them, and the *Explication* of their Terms, to evince the truth of them.



## C H A P. IV.

*Concerning the Existence of a Deity, Arguments for it. The I. Argument, From the universal Consent and Agreement of Mankind; and the Objections answered.*

**T**Hese Things being premised, I betake myself to that which was at first proposed as the chief design of this Book, namely, to prove the *Reasonableness and the Credibility of the Principles of Natural Religion*.

By *Religion*, I mean that general Habit of Reverence towards the Divine Nature, whereby we are enabled and inclined to worship and serve God after such a manner as we conceive most agreeable to his Will, so as to procure his Favour and Blessing.

I call that *Natural Religion*, which Men might know, and should be obliged unto, by the mere Principles of *Reason*, improved by Consideration and Experience, without the help of *Revelation*.

This doth comprehend under it, these three principal Things.

1. A Belief and an Acknowledgment of the Divine Nature and Existence.

2. Due

2. Due Apprehensions of his Excellencies and Perfections.

3. Suitable Affections and Demeanour towards him.

Concerning each of which I shall treat in order.

I. There must be a firm Belief of the Divine Nature and Existence. *Primus est Deorum cultus, Deus credere*, saith *Seneca*. Answerable to that of the Apostle, *He that* Heb. xi. 6. *comes to God must believe that he is*. Now that this is a Point highly credible, and such as every sober rational Man who will not offer violence to his own Faculties, must submit unto, I shall endeavour to evince by the plainest Reason.

In treating concerning this Subject, which both in former and later times hath been so largely discussed by several Authors, I shall not pretend to the Invention of any new Arguments, but content myself with the Management of some of those old ones, which to me seem most plain and convincing. Namely, from

1. The universal Consent of Nations, in all Places and Times.

2. The Original of the World.

3. That excellent Contrivance which there is in all natural Things.

4. The Works of Providence in the Government of the World.

1. From the universal Consent of Nations in all Places and Times, which must needs render any thing highly credible to all such as will but allow the Human Nature to be rational, and to be naturally endowed with a Capacity of distinguishing betwixt Truth and Falshood.

\* *Aristot.*  
Top. It is laid down by the \* *Philosopher* as the proper way of Reasoning from *Authority*, That what seems true to *some* wise Men, may upon that account be esteem'd *somewhat* probable; what is believed by *most* wise Men, hath a *further* degree of probability; what *most men*, both wise and unwise, do assent unto, is yet *more* probable: But what *all men* have generally consented to, hath for it the highest degree of Evidence of this kind, that any thing is capable of: And it must be monstrous Arrogance and Folly for any single Persons to prefer their own Judgments before the general Suffrage of Mankind.

*Var. Hist.*  
*lib. 2. c. 31.* It is observed by *Ælian*, that the Notions concerning the Existence and Nature of God, and of a Future State, were more firmly believed, and did usually make deeper Impression upon the *illiterate Vulgar*, who were guided by the more simple dictates of Nature, than upon several of the *Philosophers*, who by their art and subtilty were able to invent disguises, and to dispute themselves into Doubts and Uncertainties concerning such things as might bring disquiet to their Minds.

That



That all Nations of Men now do, and have formerly owned this Principle, may appear both from present Experience, and the History of other Times and Places. And here I might cite abundance of the best Authors that are extant, concerning the truth of this in all other Ages and Nations. But for brevity's sake I shall mention only Two, *Tully* and *Seneca*. *Quæ gens est, aut quod genus hominum, quod non habeat sine Doctrina, anticipationem quandam Deorum, quam appellat*  $\omega\epsilon\theta'\lambda\eta\psi$  *Epicurus*. 'What kind of Men are there any where, who have not of themselves this prenotion of a Deity? And in another place: *Nulla gens est, neque tam immansueta neque tam fera, quæ non, etiamsi ignoret qualem habere Deum deceat, tamen habendum sciat*. 'Amongst all Mankind there is no Nation so wild and barbarous, who, though they may mistake in their due Apprehensions of the Nature of God, do not yet acknowledge his Being.' And elsewhere: *Nulla est gens tam fera, nemo omnium tam immanis, cujus mentem non imbuerit Deorum timor*. 'There is no Nation so immensely barbarous and savage, as not to believe the Existence of a Deity, and by some kind of Services to express their Adoration of him.' So *Seneca*, *Nulla gens usquam est, adeo extra leges moresque projecta, ut non aliquos Deos credat*. 'There is no where any Nation so utterly lost to all

Nat. Deor.  
lib. 1. 32.

De Legib.  
lib. 1.

Tusc. Qu.  
lib. 1.

Epist. 118.

‘ things of Law and Morality, as not to believe the Existence of God.

He that shall traverſe over all this habitable Earth, with all thoſe remote Corners of it, reſerved for the Diſcovery of theſe later Ages, may find ſome Nations without Cities, Schools, Houſes, Garments, Coin, but none without their God. They may, and do vaſtly differ in their Manners, Inſtitutions, Cuſtoms: But yet all of them agree in having ſome Deity to worſhip.

And beſides this Univerſality as to *Nations* and *Places*, it hath been ſo likewiſe as to *Times*. Religion was obſerved in the beginning of the World, before there were Civil Laws amongſt Men, I mean any other than the mere Wills of their Princes and Governors.

The Works of *Mofes* are by general conſent acknowledged to be the moſt ancient Writings in the World. And though the deſign of them be to preſcribe Doctrines and Rules for Religion, yet there is nothing offered in them by way of Proof or Perſuaſion concerning the *Exiſtence of God*; but it is a thing taken for granted, as being univerſally acknowledged and believed. Nor do we read that any of the other ancient Law-givers or Founders of Commonwealths, who thought fit to preſcribe Rules for the *Worſhip* of God, have endeavoured to perſuade the People concerning his *Being*; which yet had been moſt neceſſary,

necessary, if any doubt or question had then been made of it ; as being the very foundation of Religion, and a disposition so requisite to qualify Men for Society and Government.

And as it hath been thus in former times, so it is now amongst the Nations more lately discovered, and not known to former Ages. 'Tis excellently said by *Tully*, *Opinionum commenta delet dies, Naturæ judicia confirmat*: That Time wears out the Fictions of Opinion, and doth by degrees discover and unmask the fallacy of ungrounded Persuasions, but confirms the Dictates and Sentiments of Nature ; and 'tis a good sign that those Notions are well established which can endure the Test of all Ages.

De Nat.  
Deorum,  
lib. 2.

There are two Things may be objected against this Argument.

1. That there is no such universal Consent as is pretended.

2. If there were, this would signify but little, because it may as well be urged for *Polytheism* and *Idolatry*.

1. That there is no such universal Consent as is pretended, because there are some Nations in the World so wild and savage, as not to acknowledge any Deity ; which by several Historians is reported of the *Cannibals* in *America*, and the Inhabitants of *Sol-*

*dania* in *Africk*, who are so sottish and grossly ignorant, that they differ very little from Brutes, having scarce any thing amongst them of *Civil Policy*, and nothing at all of *Religion*, or any publick Assemblies for Worship: Besides such particular Persons, pretending to Learning and Philosophy, as in several Ages have openly asserted, and professedly maintained Atheistical Principles, as *Diagoras*, *Theodorus*, *Pherecides*, and others are said to have done.

To this it may be said, that supposing these Reports to be true, there may almost in all kinds be some few Instances, besides and against the general course of Things, which yet can no more be urged as Prejudices against the common and most usual Order belonging to them, than Prodigies may to prove, that there is no Regularity in the Laws of Nature. Is there any Equity or the least Colour of Reason in this; for a Man to take an Essay of the Nature of any *Species* of things from such particular Instances, as in their Kinds are monstrous? Because Beasts may sometimes be brought forth with five Legs, and it may be two Heads, is it reason therefore to conclude, that no other Shape is natural to their Kind? *Specimen naturæ cujuslibet, à natura optima sumendum est* (saith *Tully*) The Essay of any kind is rather to be taken from the best and most usual, than from the worst and most depraved  
part

part of it. Will it therefore follow, that Honey is not naturally sweet to our taste, because a sick Palate doth not judge it to be so? Such dissolute persons as are altogether immersed in Sensuality, whereby they have befotted their Judgments, cannot be looked upon as the most competent Instances of what belongs to Human Nature.

Where there is either a Defect of Reason, or a gross Neglect in exciting a Man's natural Faculties, or improving his Reason, by a due Consideration of such Consequences as do most naturally result from it: In such cases, it cannot otherwise be expected, but that he must come short of that Knowledge which he is naturally capable of, and should have, were it not for their Defects.

Some Men are born blind, or have lost their Sight, will it hence follow, that there is no such thing in Nature as Light or Colour? Others are Lunatics or Idiots, should any Man from hence infer, that there is no such thing as Reason? No Man may raise any doubt from such Instances as these, but he that will make it a serious Question, who are the mad Men, whether those in *Bedlam*, or those out of it? Whether Idiots are not the wisest of Men, and all other the veriest Fools, according as they are at the widest distance from them? Can that Man be thought to need any farther Confutation or Pursuit, who is forced to fly to such a Retreat?

As

As for those Instances of *particular Persons*, whom Stories deliver down to us, as being *professed Atheists*, it may be said,

1. 'Tis plain, that some of these were counted Atheists and Despisers of Religion, because they did endeavour to confute the Fopperies of the Heathen Worship, and deny the Sun and Moon, and the several Idols that were adored in their Countries to be true Gods: The loose and vicious *Poets*, having so far debauch'd the Understandings of the Vulgar, in those darker Ages, as to make them believe vile and filthy Things of their Gods, unfuitable to all Principles of Sobriety and common Reason: Upon this, several Men, who were more Judicious and Virtuous than others, thought themselves obliged to reclaim the People from such mischievous Fopperies: In order to which, besides the most serious Arguments which they made use of, they did likewise by Jeers and Scoffs endeavour to render these vicious Deities contemptible, and to deride them out of the World. And for this were they by the foolish superstitious Multitude counted *Atheists*, which was the Case of *Anaxagoras, Socrates*, and others.

2. Let it be supposed that some Men have declared a Disbelief of the Divine Nature in general; yet as there have been always some *Monsters* amongst Men, in respect of their *Bodies*, so may there be likewise in respect  
of

of their Minds : And this no prejudice to the Standing-Laws of Nature. And besides it ought to be considered, that the same Stories which mention such Persons as profess Atheists, do likewise give an Account of diverse signal Judgments, whereby they were witnessed against from Heaven.

3. But I add farther, There never yet was any such Person, who had any full and abiding conviction upon his Mind, against the Existence of God. *Mentiuntur qui dicunt se non sentire esse Deum, nam etsi tibi affirmant interdum, noctu tamen & sibi dubitant.* “ They lie who say that they believe there is  
 “ no God (saith *Seneca*) though they may  
 “ profess this somewhat confidently in the  
 “ Day-time, when they are in Company,  
 “ yet in the Night and alone they have doubt-  
 “ ful Thoughts about it.” ’Tis their *Wish*, but not their *Opinion*. The Interest of their Guilt doth make them desire it. But they are never able with all their endeavours wholly to extinguish their natural Notions about it. Witness those continual Fears and Terrors, whereunto such kind of Men are above all other most obnoxious.

The second *Objection* was, That if the Consent of Nations be a sufficient Evidence to prove the *Existence of God*, it may as well prove *Polytheism* and *Idolatry*, for which the like consent may be pleaded.

To this two Things may be answered :

1. Tho’

1. Tho' the *Unity* of the Godhead, and the Unfitness of worshipping him by *Idols*, be discoverable by the Light of Nature; yet these things are not so *immediate*, and so obvious to every one's Understanding as the *Being* of God is, but will require some deeper Consideration, and some skill in the Rules of reasoning. Now it could not be reasonably expected, that either the generality, or any considerable number of the *Vulgar*, should attain to such a degree of Knowledge, as their own natural Reason, duly exercised and improved, might have furnished them with: Partly by reason of the *Prejudice of Education*, which must needs incline them to acquiesce in what is delivered down to them, as the *belief* or *practice* of their Forefathers; and consequently hinder them from an impartial Enquiry into the Nature of things: But chiefly for want of *sufficient leisure* to apply themselves to the business of Contemplation, by reason of their being immersed in the Affairs of the World, either Pleasures, Ambition, Riches, or else being wholly taken up with Cares, about providing the Necessaries of Life for themselves and their Families; which must needs much divert them from the serious Consideration of things, and hinder them from the improvement of their natural Light to all the due Consequences of it.



2. The most considering and the *wisest* Men in all Ages and Nations, have constantly differed from the *Vulgar* in their Thoughts about these things, believing but one supreme Deity, the Father of all other subordinate Powers.

—*Hominum sator atque Deorum.*

Whom they called *Jupiter* or *Jove*, with plain reference to the *Hebrew* Name *Jehovah*. And to this one God did they ascribe several Names, according to those several Virtues they supposed to be in him, or Benefits they expected from him. *Bacchus* and *Neptune*, *Nature*, *Fortune*, *Fate*: *Omnia quidem Dei nomina sunt, variè utentis sua potestate*, saith *Seneca*. So likewise *Pythagoras*, *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Aristotle*, &c. And they advise Men to worship this God, not so much by *Images* or by *Sacrifices*, as by inward Goodness, by endeavouring to be like him; as I shall shew more largely afterwards: Now though the Opinion of the *Vulgar*, with the Consent of the *Wise*, may be of great Authority, yet being separated from or especially opposed unto, their Opinion, who are best able to judge, it must needs signify but little.

If the Question should here be proposed, How comes it to pass, that Mankind should thus consent and agree in the notion of a Deity, and to what Ground or Cause may it be ascribed?

To

To this I shall suggest something by way of answer, both *negatively* and *positively*.

1. *Negatively*, From what hath been said it may appear, that this belief doth not proceed from any particular *Infirmity*, or *occasional Prejudice* in the Judgment, because it hath been so constant and universal amongst Mankind: And besides, there is not the least probability for those things which are assigned as the grounds of this Prejudice, namely, *Fear*, *Policy*, *Stipulation*.

1. Not *Fear*, or a certain jealousy of the worst that may happen. For though it must be granted natural to the Minds of Men, to be possessed with an awe towards such things as are able to hurt them; yet 'tis much more probable, that the fear of a supreme Being, is rather the Consequence and Effect of such a Belief, than the *Cause* of it. For this reason, because the Notion of a Deity doth comprehend under it infinite *Goodness* and *Mercy*, as well as *Power* and *Justice*; and there is no reason why *Fear* should dispose a Man to fancy a Being that is infinitely *Good* and *Merciful*.

2. Not *Policy* or the device of Statists, to keep Men's Consciences in awe, and oblige them to subjection. 1. Because the greatest Princes and Politicians themselves, have in all Ages been as much under this conviction of a Deity, and the lashes of Conscience, as any other Persons whatsoever; which could

not be, had they known this business of Religion to have been a Device or State-Engine, whereby their Subjects were to be imposed upon. 2. Because this Belief is amongst the more rude and savage Nations, such as in all other Regards are ignorant and wild, and utterly destitute of all common Policy.

3. Not *Stipulation* or mutual Agreement, for the same Reason: Because 'tis amongst those barbarous and savage People, who decline all kind of Commerce with others. Nor is it imaginable, how such kind of Persons should agree together to promote any Opinion, who are widely separated from one another, by Seas, and Mountains, and Deserts; and yet not at so great a distance in their Habitations, as in their Customs and Manners.

From all which it may appear, That this *Opinion* or *Belief* which is so *general*, amongst Men, doth not arise from any prejudice or partiality upon their Minds; but rather the *doubting* or *questioning* of these Things, which *belongs but to few*. There is reason enough to believe, that *this* may be founded in prejudice. Nor is it difficult to determine whence their prejudice doth arise, namely, from the vicious Inclinations of Men, which will corrupt and bias their Judgments. When once Men are immersed in sensual Things, and are become Slaves to their

their Passions and Lusts, then are they most disposed to doubt of the Existence of God. Whereas on the contrary, the more just and honest any Man is, the more willing and careful he is to walk up to the dictates of his natural Light, by so much the more firmly are such Persons convinced of this Truth. 'Tis the Conscience of Guilt which makes it the Interest of some that there should be no God. And consequently being desirous to have it so, this makes them studious how to find out some doubt and obscurity about it.

2. *Affirmatively*, It is a known Rule, *That the Cause must be as universal as the Effect is*. If this belief have been *one and constant* in all Places and Times, then must the Cause of it be so likewise. And what is there imaginable that hath a fairer pretence to this, than the very *Nature of our Minds*, which are of such a frame as in the ordinary exercise of their Faculties, will easily find out the necessity of a supreme Being? And it seems very congruous to Reason, that he who is the great Creator of the World, should set some such Mark of himself upon those Creatures that are capable of worshipping him, whereby they might be led to the Author of their Being, to whom their Worship is to be directed; as is observed in a late *Discourse*, wherein there are many other Things to this Purpose.

*The Wisdom of leading Religious.*

Such

Such kind of Notions as are *general* to Mankind, and not confin'd to any particular Sect or Nation, or Time, are usually stiled κοινὰ ἔννοιαι, Common Notions, λόγοι σπέρματικοί, Seminal Principles; and *Lex nata*, by the *Roman Orator*, an innate Law, in opposition to *Lex scripta*, and in the Apostle's Phrase, the *Law written in our hearts*. Which kind of Notions, though they are of themselves above all other matters most plain and perspicuous, yet because learned Men do somewhat differ in their Apprehensions concerning the first rise and original of them, I shall therefore take this occasion to suggest briefly, that which to me seems the most easy and natural Way for the explaining of this, namely, by comparing the inward Sensation of our Minds and Understandings, with that of our outward Senses.

It hath been generally agreed upon, and we find it by sufficient Experience, that the Acts of our Mind are reducible to these three Kinds.

1. Perception of such single Objects as are proposed to them, which is called *simple Apprehension*.

2. Putting together such single Objects, in order to our comparing of the Agreement or Disagreement betwixt them, by which we make Propositions, which is called *Judging*.

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3. The

3. The discerning of that Connexion or Dependance which there is betwixt several Propositions, whereby we are enabled to infer one Proposition from another, which is called *Ratiocination*, or Discourse.

Now as there is an universal Agreement in the Sensation of outward Objects; The *Eye* and the *Ear* of all sensitive Creatures, having the same kind of perception of *visible* and *audible* things: Those things which appear Green, Blue, or Red to one, having the same appearance to all others. So must it be with the Understandings of Men likewise, which do agree in the same kind of Perception or simple Apprehension of intelligible Objects.

And as in making of Propositions, or compounding our Apprehensions about sensible things, we determine that the Green in this Object is like the Green in that other, and unlike the Yellow or Blue in a third; that it is more or less, or equal to something else, with which we compare it: So likewise is it for compounding other simple Notions belonging to the Understanding, by which we judge one thing to be like or unlike, agreeable or disagreeable, equal, or more or less in respect to something else compared with it.

Now those kind of Apprehensions wherein all Men do agree, these are called *natural Notions*. And of this kind are all those Opinions which have in them such a suitableness

to the Minds of Men, as to be generally owned and acknowledged for true, by all such as apply their Thoughts to the Consideration of them.

As for such Doctrines as depend merely upon Institution, and the Instruction of others, Men do frequently differ both from themselves, and from one another about them; because that which can plant, can supplant.

If mere Institution be able to fix such Opinions, it may be able to unsettle them again. Whereas no kind of Institution will be sufficient to irradicate these natural Notions out of the Minds of Men.

But now, though the Understanding have naturally this power belonging to it, of *Apprehending*, and *Comparing*, and *Judging* of things; yet it is not to be expected, either from Infants, or from dull sottish People, or from such as are destitute of all the Advantages of Education, that they should improve this natural Ability, to all the due Consequences of it. But in order to this, 'tis necessary that Men should first be out of their Nonage before they can attain to an actual use of this Principle. And withal, that they should be ready to exert and exercise their Faculties to observe and consider the Nature of Things, to make use of that help which is to be had, by the Instruction and Experience of those with whom they converse. Nor can this be any just Exception against

the naturalness of such Notions, that they are promoted by the Experience and Instruction of others ; Because Mankind is naturally designed for a Sociable Life, and to be helpful to one another by Mutual Conversation. And without this Advantage of Discourse and Conversation, whereby they communicate their Thoughts and Opinions to one another, it could not otherwise be, but that Men must needs be strangely ignorant, and have many wild and gross Apprehensions of such things as are in themselves very plain and obvious, and do appear so to others.

For the better understanding of this, let us suppose a Person bred up in some deep Cavern of the Earth, without any Instruction from others, concerning the State of Things in this upper Surface of the World : Suppose this Person, after he is arrived to a mature Age, to be fetched up from this solitary Abode, to behold this habitable World, the Fields, and Towns, and Seas, and Rivers, the various revolutions of Seasons, together with the beautiful Host of Heaven, the Sun, and Moon, and Stars : It could not otherwise be, but that such a Person must at first view have many wild Imaginations of Things. He might conceive those useful and beautiful contrivances of Houses and Towns, to spring up and grow out of the Earth, as well as  
Trees ;



Trees; or else that Trees were made and built by Men, as well as Houses. But supposing him to be a Man, he must be endowed with such a Natural Faculty, as upon farther consideration and experience, will quickly satisfy him, That one of these was *Natural*, and the other Artificial; and that the Buildings were framed to that Elegance and Convenience by the Art and Skill of Men.

It would not at first seem credible to him, that a large Tree should proceed from a small Seed or Kernel: That an Egg should produce a Bird. And as for Man himself, he would not be able to have any conception of his true Original, how it could be possible, that a Young Infant should be bred in his Mother's Womb, where it should continue for so many Months inclosed in a bag of Water, without breathing; yet upon Experience these things would appear to him unquestionable, and of *Natural Evidence*.

From what hath been said, it will follow, that such things are evident by *Natural Light*, which Men of a mature Age, in the ordinary use of their Faculties, with the common help of mutual Society, may know and be sufficiently assured of, without the help of any special Revelation. And when it is said that the Notion of God is natural to the Soul, the meaning of it is, That there is such a Faculty in the Soul

of Man, whereby, upon the use of Reason, he can form within himself a settled notion of such a first and supreme Being, as is endowed with all possible perfection. Which is all I shall say as to this first Argument. I shall be briefer in the rest.



C H A P.



## C H A P. V.

## II. Arg. From the Original of the World.

Nothing can be more evident, than that this visible Frame, which we call the World, was either from all *Eternity*, or else that it had a *Beginning*: And if it had a Beginning, this must be either from *Chance* or from some *wise Agent*. Now if from clear Principles of Reason, it can be rendred more credible, that the World had a Beginning, and that from some wise Agent: This may be another Argument to this purpose.

I cannot here omit the mention of a late Dr. Tillotson's 1st Sermon. Discourse, wherein this Subject hath been so fully treated of, that I shall need to say the less of it, having little that is material to add to what is there delivered.

In the discussing of this, I shall purposely omit the mention of those Arguments which relate to *Infinity*, as being not so easily intelligible, and therefore more apt to puzzle and amuse, than to convince. Let it be supposed, that each of the two Theories, whether about the *Eternity* of the World, or its having a *Beginning*, are not impossible, and that neither of them does imply a Contra-

dition. And farther, that neither of them can be infallibly demonstrated by the mere Principles of Reason. In this Case the Question must be, which of them is most credible.

He that would rationally fix his Opinion and Belief about this matter, hath but these two kinds of Proof to enquire after.

1. *Testimony*, or the Tradition of the most ancient Times.

2. *Reason*, or such Probabilities as do arise from the Nature of the thing.

For the First of these Opinions, concerning the Eternity of the World, there is very little to be said from either of these.

*De Caelo,*  
lib. 1. c. 10.

1. As to *Testimony*; *Aristotle*, who was a great Patron of this Opinion, and held that the World was a necessary Emanation from God, as Light is from the Sun; doth of himself acknowledge, that the Philosophers before him, were of Opinion that the World had a Beginning; which acknowledgment of his, is no small prejudice to the Authority of his Opinion, as I shall shew afterwards. And then,

2. As to *Reason*, It is a mere precarious *Hypothesis*, having no sufficient Argument, that I know of, to render it probable.

But now for the other Opinion, namely, the Beginning of the World, there are as fair and convincing Proofs for it, of several kinds, as the Nature of the Thing is well capable of.

1. From

I. From Tradition : If the World were made and had a Beginning, it is but reasonable to expect, that so memorable a thing as this, should be recorded in some of the most ancient Histories ; And that some extraordinary Means should be used to perpetuate the Memory of it, and to convey it down from one Generation to another by Universal Tradition : And if it shall appear, that all the Evidence of this kind is for this Opinion, This must needs render it highly credible.

Now the *History of Moses* hath been generally acknowledged to be the most ancient Book in the World, and always esteemed of great Authority, even amongst those Heathens who do not believe it to be divinely inspired : And there is no Man of Learning, but must allow to it (at least) the ordinary credit of other ancient Histories ; especially, if he consider what ground there is for the Credibility of it, from the Theology of the darker Times, which is made up of some imperfect Traditions and Allusions, relating to those particular Stories which are more distinctly set down in the Writings of *Moses*.

Now *Moses* doth give such a plain, brief, unaffected account of the Creation of the World, and of the most remarkable Passages of the first Ages, particularly of the Plantation of the World by the dispersion of *Noah's* Family, so agreeable to the most ancient Remains of Heathen Writers, as must needs  
very

very much recommend it to the belief of every impartial Man.

Though the *Jews* were but a small Nation, and confin'd to a narrow compass in the World; yet the first rise of Letters and Languages is truly to be ascribed to them. It is attested by several of the best and most ancient Heathen Writers, that the *Hebrew* Alphabet, or (which is all one) the *Phœnician*, is that, from which both the *Greek* and the *Latin*, and consequently the generality of the rest now known, are derived; so *Herodotus*, *Plutarch*, *Pliny*, *Curtius*, *Lucan*, &c. From whence it may be probably inferred, that the account given by the first Language, is the most ancient, and therefore the most likely to be a true Account of the first Original of things.

The usual Course observed by all Nations to preserve the Memory of things most remarkable, which might otherwise in a tract of time be forgotten, especially amongst such as are not acquainted with Letters, hath been by some *practical Institution*, as by appointing some *Festival* for the Commemoration of such things. And thus likewise hath it been in the present Case: The *Sabbath* (as *Moses* expressly tells us) was instituted for this very purpose to keep up the Memory of the Creation. And though perhaps it may be difficult to prove, that this Day hath upon this Account been observed by any other Nation,

but

but the *Jews*; yet the division of Time by Weeks, hath been universally observed in the World, not only amongst the *Civiliz'd*, but likewise amongst the most *Barbarous* Nations. And there being no Foundation in Nature for this kind of distribution of Days, it must therefore depend upon some ancient general Tradition, the Original whereof, together with the particular reason of it, is preserv'd in the most ancient of all other Histories, *viz.* that of *Moses*.

As for the derivation of this from the seven Planets, whose Names have been anciently assign'd to them; this being well considered, will appear to be so far from invalidating what I now assert, that it will rather contribute to the probability of it.

It is commonly believed that the assignation of the Names of the Planets, to the Days of the Week, was by the *Chaldeans*, who were much devoted to Astrological Devices, and had an opinion that every Hour of the Day was governed by a particular Planet, reckoning them according to their usual order, *Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sol, Venus, Mercury, Luna*; That Planet which was ascribed to the first Hour, giving Name to the whole Day; supposing *Saturn* to belong to the first Hour of *Saturday*, then the second Hour will belong to *Jupiter*, the third to *Mars*, &c. and according to this order, the fifteenth Hour will belong likewise to *Saturn*,  
and

and so will the twenty-second, the twenty-third to *Jupiter*, the twenty-fourth to *Mars*; and so the first Hour of the next Day must belong to *Sol*, which must accordingly give the Denomination to that Day; and so for the other Days of the Week.

Now if it may appear, that in this very Account, which all sorts of learned Men do agree in, there is such a special regard to the *Jewish Sabbath*, or *Seventh-Day*, as cannot be pretended for any other; this will still render it more credible, that the Tradition of the Sabbath did precede these Astrological Names: If we suppose these Astrologers to reckon from the first Day of the Creation, and to begin with the most noble Planet the *Sun*; then the Seventh Day will be *Saturday*, or the *Jewish Sabbath*: Or (which is more probable) if we suppose them to begin their Computation, from the first Day after the Creation was finished, and from the highest Planet, of slowest Motion, and so more proper to signify a Day of Rest; according to this way of Computation, there is a peculiar Privilege belongs to the *Jewish Sabbath*, which cannot be said of any of the other Days.

The Testimony of greatest Antiquity, next to the Books of *Moses*, must be sought for amongst those ancient Nations, the *Egyptians*, *Chaldeans*, *Phœnicians*, from whom the *Grecians* derived their Learning, and  
amongst



amongst whom the first and most famous Philosophers of *Greece* were wont to travel, for the improving of their Knowledge ; it being probable that some Memorials might be preserved amongst those ancient Nations, concerning the first beginning of Things ; and that they were acquainted with what was the Universal Tradition of the first Ages. Upon which account, those *Grecian* Philosophers before *Aristotle*, such as *Thales*, *Anaxagoras*, *Pythagoras*, &c. who by their Travel were conversant amongst these Nations, must by this advantage be more competent Judges than he was, concerning the general Belief and Opinion of former Times, and what Grounds they had for it.

Now it is well known to have been a general Tradition amongst these Nations, that the World was made, and had a Beginning. And though there be some prodigious Accounts amongst them, which may seem inconsistent with the Writings of *Moses*, as namely, that of the *Chaldeans*, who reckon Forty-three thousand Years from the beginning of the World to the Time of *Alexander* : yet this way of Computation is acknowledged by *Diodorus Siculus* and *Plutarch*, to be meant of *Lunary* Years, or Months ; which being reduced to *Solar* Years, will fall out to be much about the time assigned by *Moses* for the Creation.

But

But besides these Testimonies of the Ancient Nations, and the first *Grecian* Philosophers who conversed amongst them; This hath been likewise believed and professed by the most eminent Writers since, *Socrates*, and *Plato*, and *Tully*, and *Seneca*, and the generality of the rest, whether *Philosophers* or *Poets*, of greatest Repute for their Learning, who have asserted, That God was the Maker of the World.

There are several Passages to this purpose amongst those ancient *Greek* Poets, *Linus*, *Hesiod*, *Orpheus*, *Epicharmus*, *Aristophanes*, which relate to the Creation of the World; and *Ovid* particularly, who fetched his Matter from the *Grecian* Writers, doth give such a plain Description of it, as if he had been acquainted with the Book of *Moses*; in those known *Verses*:

*Metam.*  
*lib. I.*

*Ante Mare & Terras, & quod tegit omnia cælum, &c.*

Nor hath it been thus only amongst the more civiliz'd Nations; but the barbarous *Indians* likewise have owned this Tradition, and professed the Belief of it. Now it is not easy to imagine, how any such Tradition could arise so *early*, and spread so *universally*, if there were not a real Ground for it.

As for the Arguments from *Reason*, I would offer these things to Consideration :

1. If

1. If the World had been either without a Beginning, or else very old, much older than the time assigned for it in the History of *Moses*; 'tis not likely, but there should be some kind of Memorials of those former Ages, or some real Evidence that there had been such, *Quis dubitet, quin Mundus recens ac novus sit, cum Historia Græca, bis mille annorum historiam vix contineat?* saith *Macrobius*. *The World cannot be very old, because the Grecian History doth scarce extend to two Thousand Years.* This was that which convinced *Lucretius*, that the World could not be Eternal, because there were such obscure Footsteps or Reliques in any credible Story, either amongst the *Grecians* or *Romans*, concerning any Persons that lived, or any considerable Action that was done, much before the *Trojan Wars*.

Saturnal,  
lib. 1.

The first rise and progress of Arts and Sciences in the World, may likewise afford another fair probability to this purpose. *Seneca* asserts, that there was not above a Thousand Years since the beginning of Arts and Sciences, to the time wherein he lived. There is scarce any one of them so ancient, but that the Original and first Inventors of them are recorded in Story. Nor is there any Nation in the World, now accounted Civil, but within the Memory of Books, were utterly rude and barbarous. Now it is not imaginable that so sagacious, so busy a Creature as Man-  
kind

kind is, could all of them have lived an infinity of Ages, destitute of those Arts, so advantageous for the comfort and benefit of Human Life, without some successful Attempts for the supplying of their Wants by them.

If it be said, that it is *possible* there might have happen'd many general Inundations, by which former Inventions might be lost and forgotten, and such a kind of Simplicity introduced into the World, as is proper to the first and ruder Ages of it. To this I have shewed before, that a mere possibility to the contrary, can by no means hinder a Thing from being highly credible. To which I shall presently add something farther.

3. If the World had been eternal, how comes it to pass that it is not every-where inhabited and cultivated? How is it, that very probably a considerable Part of it is yet unknown? It is not yet two hundred Years since, that one half of that which is now known lay undiscover'd. Whereas if we judge of its Beginning by the present Plantations and Fulness of it, according to those Proportions wherein Men and Families are now multiplied, allowing for such kind of Devastations, by War, Famine, Pestilence, Inundations, as are recorded in credible Story to have happened in former Times; I say according to this, it will appear highly credible, that the Beginning of the World was much about the Time mentioned by *Moses* for the Creation of it;

whereas, had it been eternal, it must long ere this have been over-stock'd, and become too narrow for the Inhabitants, though we should suppose the addition but of one Man every Year. Nay, though we suppose but the addition of one Man for every thousand Years, yet long before this time there should have been a far greater Number than there could be Sands in the Earth, though the whole Globe were made up of nothing else.

If it be said, that there may have been great Checks given to the Increase of Mankind by Wars, Famines, Pestilences, and Inundations.

To this it may be replied, that either these extraordinary Devastations of Mankind, must fall out regularly, so as not to be too much or too little; and in this Case, they must be ordered by some Wise Agent, which is God; or else they must be purely Casual: And then it is by no means credible, but that the World must long ere this have been wholly wasted, and left desolate of Inhabitants, or else frequently too much replenished.

But the most plausible shift against the force of this Argument, is fetch'd from the instance of *Noah's* Flood, by which the whole World was destroyed, excepting one Family. The like whereto may frequently have hapned before, when perhaps one only Family did escape, and those such ignorant Persons, as could give no true account of what was before.

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But

But neither will this shift serve the turn; because no Man can give any rational Account, how 'tis possible that such a general Flood should come, by any *natural* means. And if it be *supernatural*; That grants the Thing I am proving, namely such a *Supreme Being* as can alter the course of Nature. But let it be supposed *natural*; How comes it to pass that so much as one Family doth escape? Such kind of Deluges, as must prevent the over-stocking of the World, must be necessary once every ten or twenty thousand Years. And there must have happen'd many Millions of them from all Eternity. And who shall take care for the adjudging of them to their proper Season? or for preventing the total destruction of Mankind? Though we should grant this possible Casualty, yet he who can believe that to be a probable Casualty which hath never come to pass in an eternal Duration, must not pretend to be an Enemy to Credulity.

By what hath been said it may appear, that there is a very great advantage in the Proofs for this Opinion, concerning the *Beginning* of the *World*, above the other for the Eternity of it.

Now for the *Difficulties* on each side: Those relating to the Eternity of the World, have been already discuss'd, in the Proofs I have lately insisted upon. And as for the Opinion, concerning the Creation of it, the chief

chief Difficulty which *Aristotle* doth mention, is from that Principle of his, *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, which is generally acknowledged to be true concerning natural Generations, but must not necessarily be extended to supernatural Productions. It is one of the natural Notions belonging to the Supreme Being, to conceive of him that he is Omnipotent. And it is very reasonable for us to believe, that our finite Understandings cannot comprehend the utmost extent of Omnipotence. And though the making of something out of nothing doth argue an inconceivable Power, yet there is no contradiction in it. And if such things must be denied which our Reason cannot comprehend, we must then deny that any thing can be Self-existent; which yet is and must be supposed, on both sides; It being altogether as difficult for us to conceive, how *any thing should be of it self*, as how *any thing should be made of nothing*. So that this difficulty is not sufficient to overthrow this Opinion, and withal it doth extend equally to both sides.

So then if it do appear, that betwixt these two *Opinions* the least and fewest Difficulties do lie on that side which hath the plainest and strongest Proofs:

There is no question to be made, which way every impartial Man will determine his Opinion.

I do not pretend that these Arguments are *Demonstrations*, of which the Nature of this thing is not capable: But they are such strong Probabilities, as ought to prevail with all those, who are not able to produce greater Probabilities to the contrary.

As for that other *Opinion*, concerning *Epicurus* his Atoms, it is so extravagant and irrational, and hath been so abundantly confuted by others, that I cannot think it expedient to spend any time in the discussing of it.





## C H A P. VI.

III. Arg. *From the admirable Contrivance of Natural Things.*

3. FROM that *excellent Contrivance* which there is in all natural Things: Both with respect to that Elegance and Beauty which they have in themselves separately considered, and that regular Order and Subserviency wherein they stand towards one another; together with the exact fitness and propriety, for the several purposes for which they are designed. From all which it may be inferred, that these are the Productions of some Wise Agent.

The most sagacious Man is not able to find out any blot or error in this great Volume of the World, as if any thing in it had been an imperfect Essay at the first, such as afterwards stood in need of mending: But *all things continue as they were from the beginning of the Creation.*

*Tully* doth frequently insist upon this, as the most natural result from that beauty and regularity to be observed in the Universe.

*Esse præstantem aliquam, eternamq; naturam & eam suspiciendam adorandamq; hominum generi, pulchritudo mundi ordoq; rerum cæ-*

De Natur.  
Deor. lib.  
2.

*lestium cogit confiteri.* “The great Elegance  
“and order of things in the World, is abun-  
“dantly enough to evince the Necessity of  
“such an eternal and excellent Being, to  
“whom we owe Adoration. And in ano-  
ther place, *quid potest esse tam apertum, tam-*  
*que perspicuum, cum cælum suspeximus, cæ-*  
*lestiaque contemplati sumus, quàm aliquod*  
*esse Numen præstantissimæ mentis, quo hæc*  
*regantur,* “What can be more obvious  
“than to infer a supreme Deity, from that  
“order and government we may behold a-  
“mongst the heavenly Bodies?

The several vicissitudes of *Night* and *Day*,  
*Winter* and *Summer*, the production of *Mi-*  
*nerals*, the growth of *Plants*, the genera-  
tion of *Animals* according to their several  
*Species*; with the Law of *Natural Instinct*,  
whereby every thing is inclined and enabled  
for its own preservation: The gathering of  
the Inhabitants of the Earth into Nations,  
under distinct Policies and Governments;  
those Advantages which each of them have  
of mutual Commerce, for supplying the  
Wants of each other, are so many distinct  
Arguments to the same purpose.

I cannot here omit the Observations which  
have been made in these latter Times, since  
we have had the Use and Improvement of  
the *Microscope*, concerning that great diffe-  
rence which by the help of that doth appear  
betwixt *natural* and *artificial* Things. What-  
ever

ever is *Natural* doth by that appear adorned with all imaginable *Elegance* and *Beauty*. There are such inimitable Gildings and Embroideries in the smallest Seeds of Plants, but especially in the parts of Animals, in the Head or Eye of a small Fly: Such accurate Order and Symetry in the Frame of the most minute Creatures, a *Louse*, or a *Mite*; as no Man were able to conceive without seeing of them. Whereas the most curious Works of Art, the sharpest finest Needle, doth appear as a blunt rough Bar of Iron coming from the Furnace or the Forge. The most accurate Engravings or Embossments, seem such rude bungling deformed Works, as if they had been done with a Mattock or a Trowel. So vast a difference is there betwixt the Skill of *Nature*, and the rudeness and imperfection of *Art*.

And for such kind of Bodies, as we are able to judge of by our naked Eyes, that excellent contrivance which there is in the several parts of them; their being so commodiously adapted to their proper uses, may be another Argument to this purpose. As particularly those in *Humane Bodies*, upon consideration of which, *Galen* himself, no great Friend to Religion, could not but acknowledge a Deity. In his Book *de Formatione Fœtus*, he takes notice, that there are in a Humane Body above 600 several *Muscles*, and there are at least ten several Intentions, or

due Qualifications, to be observed in each of these; proper figure, just magnitude, right disposition of its several ends, upper and lower Position of the whole, the insertion of its proper Nerves, Veins, and Arteries, which are each of them to be duly placed; so that about the *Muscles* alone, no less than 6000 several ends or aims are to be attended to. The *Bones* are reckon'd to be 284; the distinct Scopes or Intention in each of these, are above Forty, in all about 100000. And thus is it in some proportion with all the other parts, the *Skin, Ligaments, Vessels, Glandules, Humours*; but more especially with the several *Members* of the Body, which do in regard of the great variety and multitude of those several intentions required to them, very much exceed the *Homogeneous* Parts. And the failing in any one of these, would cause an irregularity in the Body, and in many of them, such as would be very notorious.

And thus likewise is it in proportion with all other kinds of Beings; *Minerals, Vegetables*; but especially with such as are *Sensitive, Insects, Fishes, Birds, Beasts*; and in these yet more especially, for those *Organs* and *Faculties* that concern *Sensation*: But most of all, for that kind of Frame which relates to our *Understanding Power*, whereby we are able to correct the Errors of our Senses and Imaginations, to call before us things past and future, and to behold things that are invisible to Sense.

Now

Now to imagine, that all these things, according to their several kinds, could be brought into this regular Frame and Order, to which such an infinite number of Intentions are required, without the Contrivance of some wise Agent, must needs be irrational in the highest degree.

And then, as for the Frame of *Human Nature* itself. If a Man doth but consider how he is endowed with such a *Natural Principle*, whereby he is necessarily inclined to seek his own well-being and Happiness: And likewise with one Faculty, whereby he is enabled to judge of the Nature of Things, as to their fitness or unfitness for this end: And another Faculty, whereby he is enabled to chuse and, prosecute such things as may promote this end, and to reject and avoid such things as may hinder it: And that nothing properly is his *Duty*, but what is really his *Interest*. This may be another Argument to convince him, that the Author of his Being must be infinitely Wise and Powerful.

The wisest Man is not able to imagine how things should be better than now they are, supposing them to be contrived by the wisest Agent; and where we meet with all the Indications and Evidences of such things as the Thing is capable of, supposing it to be true; it must needs be very irrational to make any doubt of it.

Now

Now I appeal unto any considering Man, unto what Cause all this Exactness and Regularity can be reasonably ascribed, Whether to blind *Chance*, or to blind *Necessity*, or to the Conduct of some wise intelligent Being.

Though we should suppose both *Matter* and *Motion* to be Eternal, yet is it not in the least credible, that insensible Matter could be the Author of all those excellent Contrivances which we behold in these natural Things. If any one shall surmise, that these Effects may proceed from the *Anima Mundi*; I would ask such a one, Is this *Anima Mundi* an Intelligent Being, or is it void of all Perception and Reason? If it have no kind of sense or knowledge, then 'tis altogether needless to assert any such Principle, because Matter and Motion may serve for this purpose as well. If it be an Intelligent, Wise, Eternal Being, This is *G O D*, under another Name.

As for *Fate* or *Necessity*, this must needs be as blind and as unfit to produce wise Effects, as *Chance* itself.

From whence it will follow, That it must be a Wise Being that is the Cause of these Wise Effects.

By what hath been said upon this Subject, it may appear, That these visible things of the World are *sufficient to leave a Man without Excuse*, as being the *Witnesses of a Deity*, and such as do plainly declare his great Power and Glory.

Rom. i.  
20.  
Acts xiv.  
17.  
Psal. xix.



## C H A P. VII.

IV. Arg. *From Providence, and the Government of the World.*

4. **F**ROM the Works of *Providence* in the Government of the World; and that continual Experience which we have of some wise and powerful Being, who doth preside over, and govern all things; not only by his general Concourse in preserving all kinds of things in their Beings, and regulating them in their Operations: But chiefly in his wise and just Government over Mankind, and Human Affairs, which may appear by such *Effects* as are  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{Ordinary.} \\ \textit{Extraordinary.} \end{array} \right.$

1. For the more *common* Effects of it; namely, that general Success which in the ordinary Course of things doth accompany honest and virtuous Actions: And the Punishment and Vengeance that doth one time or other in this World usually befall such as are wicked. Both Virtue and Vice being generally, and for the most part, sufficiently distinguished by Rewards and Punishments in this Life.

There are indeed some Instances to the contrary, concerning the Miseries of Good Men, and the Prosperity of the Wicked: But these

these have been by several of the wisest Heathen, *Plato, Plutarch, Tully, Seneca, &c.* sufficiently vindicated, by the clearest Principles of Reason, from being any Prejudice to the wise Government of Providence.

It is not either Necessary or Convenient, that Happiness and Prosperity in this Life, which is the usual Reward of Virtue, should have either such a *Physical* or *Mathematical Certainty*, as could not possibly fail. Because,

1. It would not be consistent with our dependent Conditions, that Worldly Prosperity should be so infallibly under the Power of our own Endeavours, as that God himself might not sometimes interpose for our Disappointment. If I may have leave to suppose what I am now proving, namely, a Wise and Omnipotent Providence. It must needs appear highly reasonable, that it should be left to his Infinite Wisdom and Power, to make what reserved Cases he pleases, from the ordinary Course of Things. From whence it will follow, that these unequal Dispensations can be no sufficient Ground for the Disbelief of Providence.

2. It would very much prejudice another great Principle of Religion, which is of mighty Influence for the regulating of Men's Lives and Actions in this World, namely, the Belief and Expectation of a Future State of Rewards and Punishments.

3. If



3. If Temporal Prosperity did infallibly attend all good Actions, This would be a Diminution to Virtue itself; Men would do good by a kind of natural Necessity; which would abate just so much from the Virtue of their Actions, as it does from the Liberty of them. It is sufficient, that *Moral Actions* should have *Moral Motives*. And that Virtue doth generally, and for the most part, make Men prosperous and happy in this World. We know by Experience, that all Mankind do in their most weighty Affairs, think it sufficient to depend upon such Causes as do commonly, and for the most part, prove effectual to the ends for which they are designed. So that this very thing, which is usually look'd upon as the greatest *Objection against Providence*, is really and truly an *Argument for it*.

2. For *Extraordinary Effects* of it. If we give any credit to the universal History of all Ages and Nations, it will by that appear,

1. That there have many times happened such special signal Providences for the *punishing* of obstinate Sinners, and for the *Deliverance* of such as were Religious, in answer to their Prayers, whereby the supreme Governor of the World hath so visibly pointed out his Will and Meaning, and so plainly manifested his Power, that every impartial Man must be forced to say, *doubtless there is a God that judges in the Earth*.

2. That

2. That sometimes *Miracles* have been wrought, which could not be affected without the help of some Superior Power: And sometimes there have been plain Prophecies and Predictions concerning such future things, as in their various Circumstances were contingent, of which the *Annals* of all Ages and Nations, as well Heathen as Christian, do give very particular and large Accounts. And though we may safely grant, that some of the Stories to this purpose, delivered either from the more *ancient* or *later* Times, were fabulous and vain; yet for a Man to deny that ever such things happened in the World, but that they were all mere Forgeries and Designs to cheat Posterity, this were to subvert the Credit of all History; which is so immodest a thing, as any sober Man would be ashamed of.

These Arguments are more largely discussed by others, who have writ upon this Subject: But there is one Particular which to me seems very considerable to this purpose, tho' but little notice of it be taken by others: And that is, The State of the *Jewish* Nation, who for these 1700 Years have been driven out of their own Country, having now no particular Place of abode belonging to them as a Nation; but are scattered and dispersed over all the habitable World, hated and despised wherever they are permitted to dwell; very frequently persecuted, impoverished,

rished, banished, murdered in vast Multitudes; and notwithstanding all this, they are not yet so mixed and blended with other Nations, as to be lost amongst them; but are still kept up as a distinct People; there being no Instance like this in any Story. As if they were intended for a standing Memorial and Example to the World, of the Divine Power and Vengeance. To me it seems, amongst Rational Arguments, one of the plainest, not only for the proof of a Deity, and a just Providence in pursuing that Nation with such exemplary Vengeance; but likewise for the Authority of Scripture, and the Truth of the Christian Religion.

I might here add another Argument to the same purpose, from *Natural Conscience*, which is God's Deputy, and doth *internally* witness for him, as other Creatures do *externally*. 'Tis plain, that all Mankind are in some measure endowed with this; and one may as well assert, that Hope and Fear are not natural to Men, as that Conscience is not. To this purpose I might farther argue, from those natural Notions of our Minds concerning *Good* and *Evil*, the Bounds of which are fixed in the Nature of Things, and do not depend either upon *Custom* or *Positive Law*. Those things which have in them a fitness to promote our chief End, being styled *Good*, and implying in the very Definition of them, *Comeliness* and *Reward*, those things  
which

which have in them a natural aptitude to hinder our Chief End, being stiled *Evil*; and implying in the definitions of them *Turpitude* and *Punishment*. From whence it will follow, that there must be some Superior Power, who, by framing things with such respects towards one another, may be said to have declared this Law of Nature, and to have taken care to enforce the observance of it; both these belonging to the nature of a Law. But I may perhaps have occasion to speak more particularly to this afterwards.

These Things put together, are so strong an Evidence, and so sufficient to convince the Existence of a Deity, that *that* Man must be very wilful who doth not submit and acquiesce in it. And for this Reason is it (saith *L. Bacon's* a *Noble Author*) that God never yet wrought any Miracle to convince an *Atheist*; because to a Man that is capable of being convinced, his ordinary works are sufficient to this purpose. And I should think it much more easy and rational (saith the same *Author*) to believe all the Fables in the *Poets*, the *Legend*, the *Talmud*, and the *Alcoran*, than that this Universal Frame should be without a Creator and Governor.

And now it may not be improper to look back, and take a review of what kind of Evidence hath been produced in this Matter. As for any *immediate Proof* from our *outward Senses*, this cannot be pretended to, for  
 the

the demonstration of such a Being, as is supposed to be a pure Spirit and invisible; but for the *mediate* Proofs from the effects of a Wise Omnipotent Agent, we can look no where about us, but every Object doth afford evidence of it. There is no conclusion in Philosophy (not immediately apparent to the Sense) that is capable of so full and unquestionable an Evidence from plain *Effects*, as this.

As for that kind of *Inward Sensation*, whereby we can discern the Impressions of our own Minds, They that have any Sense of a Law written in their Hearts, or any Natural Notions about Good and Evil, must, by these effects, be convinced of a supreme Being. And as for that kind of Evidence which belongs to our Understandings, if the universal Consent of Mankind be of any Authority: If this visible World, replenished with such admirable variety of Creatures, preserved and governed in such an excellent Order, be any evidence of Infinite Power and Wisdom: If besides what we our selves have known by our own Experience, any Credit be to be given to universal History, attesting to many Signal Providences that have happen'd in the World; besides the several Miracles and Prophecies that have been taken notice of in several Ages and Nations: I say, if any; or all of these things be of any force, they must needs render the Thing I am proving to be

credible in the highest degree, and even altogether unquestionable.

Chap. 3.  
Prop. 3.

Infomuch, that if a Deity be supposed, it is not imaginable by what other kind of Evidence we should be assured of it, than what we are now furnished withal. And it was before laid down as a Principle, *That when a thing is capable of good proof in any kind, Men ought to rest satisfy'd in the best Evidence for it which that kind of thing will bear, and beyond which better could not be expected, supposing it were true.*

If any should imagine, that the frequent Miracles might be a more powerful Means to convince Men of this Principle; To this it may be said,

1. That this is not *fitting*: The proper Work of Miracles being for the confirmation of such Doctrines as are not knowable by natural Light, not for such things of which Men may be sufficiently convinced by Reason.

2. 'Tis not so certain, that this would be *effectual*. Those frequent Miracles in the Passage of *Israel* out of *Egypt*; The Dividing the *Red-Sea*; The Waters out of the Rock; The Cloud and Pillar of Fire; The Mannah; The Quails; The Destruction of *Korah*; &c. did not prevail with the generality of the *Israelites*. Those constant Miracles under the *Mosaical* Dispensation; The Waters of Jealousy; The extraordinary Plenty

ty of the Sixth Year; The *Urim* and *Thummim*; the special Protection of the Coasts of *Israel* every Third Year, when all the Males were to go up to *Jerusalem* to worship; which Custom of theirs must needs be known to their Enemies who lived round about them: None of all these did prove effectual for the Conviction of obstinate Men. Those occasional Miracles wrought by our Saviour, though they were so many, and so great, as were never before wrought by any one, yet did they not prevail with many of the *Jews*.

If it be said, That none of these Proofs do so infallibly conclude, but that there doth still remain a *Possibility* that the thing may be otherwise. To this I have shewed before, That there may be an *indubitable* Certainty, where there is not an *infallible* Certainty: And that a *mere possibility* to the contrary, is not a sufficient Cause of doubting. To which I now add, That if it should be supposed, that a Man could not be sure of the Being of God, yet 'tis most evident that he could not be sure to the contrary: For this plain Reason, Because no Man can be sure of a *Pure Negative*, namely, that such a thing is not; unless he will either pretend to have a certain knowledge of all Things that are or may be; than which nothing can be more monstrously and ridiculously arrogant; or else; unless he be sure that the Being of what he

denies doth imply a Contradiction, for which there is not the least colour in this case; The true Notion of God consisting in this, *That he is a Being of all possible Perfection.*

If it be supposed, that notwithstanding all that hath been said, there may yet be some Probabilities to the contrary. To this it may be answered, that unless these Probabilities were greater and stronger than those on the other side, no Man who acts rationally will incline to them. And if there be any such, why are they not produc'd? Where are they to be found?

If Men shall yet pretend, That tho' they cannot answer these Arguments, yet they do really find some doubt in their own Minds. I would ask such, Have you seriously and impartially considered what is alledged in this Case? It should be no prejudice to any Proposition in Philosophy or Mathematicks, that an ignorant Man, who never apply'd his Thoughts to such Things, doth pretend to doubt of it. If you do in some measure understand, and have considered these Arguments: I would then ask, Have you not as much Reason for this, as you your selves would think sufficient for the proof of any thing you were not unwilling to believe? Do you not knowingly and wilfully entertain Prejudices against such things? Have you been true to so much Light as you have received? Or, have you not rather with-held it  
in



in Unrighteousness? If so, 'tis plain that you have dishonest Minds, that you measure by an Unjust Balance, and therefore cannot be competent Judges of Truth or Falshood.

If it be supposed yet farther, that the Probabilities on each side should be equal, or that those on the other side should somewhat preponderate; yet if there be no considerable hazard on that side which hath the least probability, and a very great and most apparent danger in a Mistake about the other; in this case every rational and prudent Man is bound to order his Actions in favour of that Way which appears to be most safe and advantageous for his own Interest, as I have shewed before.

So that in such Cases as may seem unto us not altogether free from some kind of doubt, and which we could not so far clear up to ourselves, as to make 'em appear wholly unquestionable; I say, in such Cases, Men that would act prudently, should enquire, Where lies the danger of Mistaking?

Why, on the one side, All the inconvenience of Believing this (if it be not so) will be, that we are hereby occasioned to tie our selves up to some needless Restraints during this short time of our Lives, wherein notwithstanding there is, as to the *present*, much Peace, Quiet and Safety: And, as for the *future*, our Errors shall die with us, there being none to call us to an account for our Mistake. But

But now, on the other side, what if there should be a Deity so holy, and just, and powerful, as is supposed? If this should prove to be a real Truth (and no Man can be sure to the contrary) what Vengeance and Indignation may such vile Mercants and Traitors expect, who have made it their Business to banish *Him* out of the World, who is the great Creator and Governor of it; to undermine his Being; to eradicate all Notions of Him out of the Minds of Men; to provoke his Creatures and Vassals to a contempt of Him, a slighting of his Fear and Worship, as being but such imaginary *Chimera's* as are fit only to keep Fools in awe? Certainly, as this is the highest Provocation that any Man can be guilty of, so shall it be punished with the sorest Vengeance.

There are two Things that *Atheistical* Men purpose to themselves, by their Prophane loose Principles: namely, to avoid the imputation of Credulity, and the Fears and Perplexities of Mind, to which Religion makes Men obnoxious: But their *Principles* are not more *irrational*, than their *Design* is *foolish*; for of all Mankind these Prophane Persons are,

1. The most *Credulous*, who can believe themselves to be wiser than all the World; who can believe the Eternity of the World; or its Production by a casual Concourse of Atoms, without any kind of Argument for it,

it, against the many Reasons that are urged to the contrary. Who, if they should demean themselves about Matters of the World, as they do about Religion, would be counted ridiculous, senseless Persons, and altogether unfit for Human Conversation.

2. The most *Timorous*. *Tully* hath observed, that no kind of Men are more afraid of God, than such as pretend not to believe his Being: These are the Men who above all others are most liable to be affected with Dread and Trembling, at Thunder and Lightning; at Solitude and Darkness, and more especially then, when it doth most concern them to be freed from such Disquiets: namely, in the time of Sicknes, and the approaches of Death.

From whence it will follow, that upon all Accounts *Atheism* may justly be accounted *Folly*; both as it is directly contrary to the Principles of *Reason*, and the Rules of *Wisdom*.

I have now done with the *first* Thing required to a state of Religion: namely, *A Belief and Acknowledgment of the Divine Nature and Existence.*



## C H A P. VIII.

*Concerning the Excellencies and Perfections of the Divine Nature: And first, of those which are commonly called Incommunicable, namely, Simplicity, Unity, Immutability, Infiniteness, } Immensity, Eternity.*

I Proceed to the Second Thing proposed as a principal Part of Natural Religion: namely, *Due Apprehensions of the Divine Excellency and Perfections.* Without which the mere belief of his Being, will contribute but little to a true state of Religion. A Man may have such unworthy Notions of a Deity, that it would in some respects be as good, nay, much better, to be without a *God*, than to have such a one, as he may frame. “It would be better (saith a great *Author*) to have no Opinion of God, than such a one as is unworthy of him; the one is but mere *Unbelief*, the other is *Contumely*.” ’Tis a common Saying, cited out of *Plutarck*’s Book of Superstition, where he professeth it much more desirable to him, that Posterity should say, that there never was any such Man as *Plutarck*, rather than that he was a fierce, unconstant, revengeful Man, one who upon the least omission of any small Circum-

stance.

Lord Bacon's Essayes.

stance towards him, by Men otherways virtuous and worthy, would tear out their Hearts, destroy their Families and Children, blast their Fields, spoil their Cattle with Lightning and Thunder. This would be such a Representation as would make the notion and remembrance of him hateful; and it were better to be forgotten, than to be remembred with Infamy. Now there are some Opinions which do thus reproach the Deity, and render him under such a Notion, that if the *Giants* had prevailed in their Attempt against Heaven, that place had not been worse supply'd. This therefore ought to be most carefully avoided.

Whereas the Divine Nature is supposed to be the first and supreme Good; therefore the *Idea* of all absolute Perfection must be essential to the Notion of him. And tho' it be very difficult for us to raise our Minds to any due apprehensions of this; yet we must endeavour in our Thoughts of him, so far as our Finite Understandings are capable, to remove and separate from him whatever is in any kind evil and unworthy, and to ascribe unto him the utmost degree of all Goodness and Perfection.

The most general Notion that Men have of God, is, that he is the *first Cause*, and a *Being of all possible Perfection*.

Some

Some of his principal Excellencies discoverable by the Light of Nature, may be reduc'd to these Heads; namely, such as are,

- Incommunicable*;
- Absolute Simplicity.*
  - Essential Unity.*
  - Immutability.*
  - Infiniteness*, both in respect of *Place* and *Time*.
  - Immensity.*
  - Eternity.*
- Communicable*; belonging either to the Divine
- Understanding.*
  - Knowledge.*
  - Wisdom.*
  - Particular Providence.*
  - Will*, namely, his
    - Goodness.*
    - Justice.*
    - Faithfulness.*
  - Faculties of Acting*, his
    - Power.*
    - Dominion over us in this Life.*
    - Distributing of Future Rewards and Punishments.*

Each of these Attributes are upon this account of very great consequence to be believed and considered, because they are the  
Foun-

Foundations of those Duties of Religion which we owe to him. According as a Man apprehends God to be, so must his *Esteem* be of him, and his *Demeanour* towards him.

And whereas these great and necessary Points, of so much influence to Religion, have been usually treated of by others either too *largely*, by the inserting of several things less pertinent; or too *obscurely*, by offering such Proofs concerning them as are less intelligible, or intermixing the Discourses about them with such Niceties as are neither very easy to be solved, nor material for Men to know: I shall therefore in this place endeavour to avoid both these Inconveniencies, by treating concerning each of them with all imaginable *brevity* and *plainness*: Observing this Method.

First, I shall endeavour to *explain* and describe what is meant by each Attribute; and then *prove*, that these Attributes, so explained, must belong to the Natural Notion of God. Which I shall make out, both by the *consent* of the wisest *Heathens*, express'd by their declar'd Opinions, and by their general Practice suitable thereunto: And from the *Nature of the things themselves*; their Congruity to the Principles of Reason, and the *Absurdities* that will follow upon the denial of them.

Those

Those are called *Incommunicable* Attributes, which are proper to God alone, and not communicated to any Creature.

The *First* of these I have proposed to treat of, is his *Absolute Simplicity*. By which I mean his Freedom from all kind of composition or mixture, either of Principles or of Parts: And that this doth belong to the Natural Notion of the Deity, may be evident,

1. From *Testimony* of the *Heathen Philosophers*, who do generally acknowledge him to be the First Cause, and the most Simple Being, and do frequently stile him *mens pura, & sincerè segregata ab omni concretionè mortali, &c.* And not only *Scripture*, but the very *Heathen* likewise do express this Attribute by the Similitude of *Light*, amongst all visible things the most pure and simple.

2. From *Natural Reason*, by which it will appear, that God cannot be compounded of any Principles; because the Principles and Ingredients, which concur to the making of any thing, must be antecedent to that thing. And if the Divine Nature were compounded, it would follow that there must be something in Nature before him. Which is inconsistent with his being the first Cause.

And here I shall take occasion to speak somewhat concerning the *Spirituality* of the Divine Nature, as having some Affinity with this, though it be none of the *incommunicable* Attributes.

I know



I know it hath been said, with Confidence enough, that the Notion of a *Spirit*, or *Immaterial Substance*, doth imply a Contradiction; and that there is an utter Impossibility of any other Being besides Matter. But tho' this hath been *said*, yet was it never *proved*, nor can it be, till either a Man be able to evince, that the Notion of the word *Substance*, according to the most general use of it (which gives Signification to Words) doth necessarily imply *Corporeity*, than which nothing can be more false; or unless a Man shall pretend to the certain Knowledge and Comprehension of all things that are or may be, than which nothing can be more *vain*.

What the *Positive Notion* of a *Spirit* is, is not so necessary to enquire after, or determine. 'Tis sufficient, that we conceive of it by way of *Negation*: namely, that it is a Powerful Intelligent Being that is not *Matter*, without Figure or Parts, not capable of Rarefaction or Condensation, not visible to our Bodily Eyes, and therefore not to be represented by any kind of sensible Image: Not subject to those necessary *Laws of Matter*, which cannot move unless it be moved, and cannot but move when impelled by another. I say, it may be sufficient in our apprehending the *Spirituality* of God, to remove all *Corporeity* and *Figure* in our Conceptions of him.

Now

Now that this Attribute doth belong to the Divine Nature, may be made evident both by *Testimony* and by *Reason*.

I. It hath been generally owned by the wisest and most learned *Heathens*: *Pythagoras* is often cited for this; by whom (saith *De ira Dei*, cap. II. *Lactantius*) God was wont to be stiled *Incorporalis Mens*, an Incorporeal Mind; and by *Plato* frequently ἀσώματος, without a Body; by other *Grecian* Philosophers νοῦς ἡσμοποιός, the *Mind* that made the World. *Plutarch* stiles him χωριστὸν εἶδος, a separated Form, not mixed with Matter, without any thing in him that is passible.

*Tuscul. Qu.* lib. I. The *Latin* Philosophers do frequently give him the Attribute of *mens divina, mens pura & sincera, mens soluta, & libera, segregata ab omni concretionem mortali*.

2. By *Reason*. That *Spirituality* is a *Perfection*, and therefore to be ascribed unto God; or rather, that *Corporeity* is an *Imperfection*, and therefore to be removed from him, may appear from hence: Because the supposing of him to be *Matter* is inconsistent with divers of his other most Essential Perfections: As,

1. His *Immensity*. If we do suppose these two reasonable *Postulata*: 1. That there are some other things in the World besides God: And, 2. That two Bodies cannot be both at the same Time in the same Place. From whence it will follow, that whatever any other

other Body or Matter is, from thence God must be excluded; and so many *Chasms* or Breaches must there be in the Divine Nature.

2. His *Knowledge* and *Wisdom*. It being not imaginable, how mere Matter should be able to comprehend, much less to contrive all that Variety of things in the World, past, present, and to come.

3. His *Liberty* and *Freedom*, and consequently with his *Goodness*. That Action not being properly good, which is not done freely and out of choice. Now the Laws of Matter are *necessary*; there can be no *ἀναγκαστικόν*, or *arbitrary Principle*, in mere *Matter*. And it is worth Observation, how this very Argument puzzled *Epicurus* and his Followers, as is represented by *Lucretius*. If all material things move by necessary Laws, and the parts of Matter be naturally so dispos'd, that they do not move unless they be moved, and cannot but move when press'd upon by other parts that are in motion; whence comes that *Liberty* which we may by an inward Sensation perceive to be within us?

*Unde est hæc inquam satis avolsa  
voluntas?*

To which he gives so wild and irrational an Answer, from the motion of declining Atoms,  
as

as doth sufficiently manifest him to be baffled by this Objection.

The second Incommunicable Attribute to be treated of, is the *essential Unity* of the Divine Nature. By which I mean, his being *One* and no more. And that this Perfection doth belong to the natural Notion of God, may be made evident both by *Testimony* and by *Reason*.

I. By *Testimony*. I have shewed before, how that notwithstanding that *Polytheism* which did so generally abound amongst the *Heathen*, yet the wiser and more considerate Persons amongst them, have in all Ages acknowledged *One Supreme Deity*. The *Egyptians* of old, tho' of all others the most infamous for their multiplicity of *Gods*, yet did assert *One* Maker and chief Governor of the World, under whom they did suppose several Subordinate *Deities*, who as his *Deputies* did preside over several parts of the Universe.

The first occasion of these *lesser Deities*, was probably from a desire that Men had, to express their Gratitude to, and to honour the Memories of, such *Heroical Persons*, as in those first and ruder Ages of the World, had either by their *Inventions* or their *Prowess*, been highly Beneficial to *Mankind*, or to their *own Countries*; who thereupon were for such publick Services, thought fit to be advanced

advanced to the highest Honour after their Deaths, and admitted in a subordinate way, to some share of Government, especially in taking care of the Welfare of their Countries. And to this doth the *Apostle* seem to allude, 1 *Cor.* viii. 4, 6. where he saith, *We know there is no other God but one; for though there be that are called Gods, both in Heaven and in Earth* (as there be Gods many, and Lords many :) *But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him.*

There are many Attestations amongst the *Heathen Writers* concerning this Attribute, the *Unity* of the Godhead. It is observed, that *Orpheus* was the first among them that wrote concerning the *Genealogy* of the *Gods*, where he reduces them to the Number of 360. But he was afterwards so sensible of this impious Folly, that he writes a particular Discourse to his Son *Museus*, and his other Friends, wherein he doth solemnly recant these wild absurd Fables, professing to them, that he thought himself obliged to rectify these Errors and Abuses, which his former *Poem* might have occasioned. And here he doth in the first place admonish them, that there is but one God, of himself, and none besides him; εἰς θεῖ αὐτοῦθεν by whom all other things are made, and upon whom they depend. And then he goes on to shew, that God is invisible, and yet sees

and knows all things ; that as he is merciful, so is he just, being the Author of those Judgments which befall wicked Men ; with several other things to this purpose : And though *Homer* doth too often follow *Orpheus* in these Fictions, concerning a Multitude of Deities, yet when he is most serious, he supposes but one, εἰς κοίτατος ἔσω. So *Sophocles*.

——— εἰς ἕστιν Θεός,

ὅς ἔβρανον τίτυχε καὶ γαῖαν μακρόν.

*There is but one God, who made the Heaven and the Earth.*

So *Pythagoras*, and several others after him, stile God by the Name of *Monas* or *Unity*.

It is commonly said, that *Socrates* was put to death for his endeavouring to undeceive his Countrymen in that Vanity they were addicted to, of worshipping a Multitude of Deities ; and that this made the *Writers* after him, more shy in speaking their thoughts about this matter : But though *Plato* do in some places (for fear of incurring the same Danger) seem to favour this popular Error, by defending *Polytheism*, yet he acknowledges these subordinate Deities to be begotten ; and he lays it down in another place as a *Principle*, that whatever is begotten is *corruptible*, and therefore incapable of being  
pro,

properly a God. And (if the 13th Epistle be truly his) there is a remarkable Passage in it to this purpose, where he gives this Note, That in those Epistolary Discourses, where he designs to be more serious, he doth mention the Name of *God* in the *singular* Number; but when he is not so, then he mentions *Gods* in the *plural*.

*Hierocles* in his *Comment* upon *Pythagoras's Golden Verses*, doth stile him Θεὸς Θεῶν, *God of Gods*, the only Maker of all Things.

*Arrian*, in his *Dissertations* of *Epiſtetus*, doth assure us, that in his time (which was about 120 Years after Christ) it was an usual Form in the Prayers of the *Heathen*, to say, *ὦχε ἐλέησον*, *Lord have mercy upon us*; whereby they did acknowledge the *Unity* of that God whom they did invoke in their Prayers. Which *Clause* is thought to be from that Usage taken into the *Liturgies* of the Christians. So far then as the Consent of the wisest and best Men, in former Times, is of any Authority, so far is this Attribute rendered highly credible.

I shall only add that remarkable Passage in *Maximus Tyrius*: “ Though Men differ *Dissert. 1.*  
 “ much in their Opinions about other mat-  
 “ ters, yet in this they all agree, That there  
 “ is *one God*, the *King*, and *Father* of all;  
 “ under whom there are subordinate Deities,  
 “ his Offspring, who are admitted to some  
 “ Share of Government with him. In this

“ the *Grecian* consents with the *Barbarian*,  
 “ the *Inhabitants* of the *Continent* with the  
 “ *Islanders*, the *Wise* with the *Unwise*.

2. But besides the Testimonies to this purpose, it may likewise be made evident by *Reason*, That a *Plurality of Gods* is not only *unnecessary*, and highly *improbable*; but that it is such a Supposition as doth imply in it many *Inconsistencies*, and therefore is *impossible*.

1. 'Tis *unnecessary*, and therefore highly *improbable*. Those have been always esteemed good Rules, *Frustra fit per plura*, &c. *Entia non sunt multiplicanda sine necessitate*. It is most suitable to that common Analogy to be observed amongst natural things, even in lesser Matters, that there is nothing amongst them superfluous or redundant; and therefore much more ought it to be so in the greatest and highest Matters of all. Now nothing can be more evident, than that one *infinite Being* may be sufficient to all Purposes whatsoever; for if it had any *Limits*, it were not *infinite*; and nothing can be more absurd, than to suppose more Gods than are necessary.

2. 'Tis not *possible*, that there should be *two* such *infinite Beings*; because either they must have *several* Perfections, or the *same*: Neither of which is consistent with the most obvious Notion of God, *That he is a Being of all possible Perfections*.



To suppose two Gods, with several *Perfections*, some belonging to one, and some to another, will plainly prove, that neither of them can be *God*, because neither of them have all possible Perfections.

To suppose *two* Gods of the *same* and *equal Perfections*, would likewise prove, that neither of them can be God (*i. e.*) not absolutely perfect, because it is not so great a Privilege, to have the same equal Perfections with another, and in a kind of Partnership, as to be alone, and superior above all others.

And to suppose one of them, whether of *several* or the *same kinds* or Perfections with the other, but only in an *inferior Degree*, may sufficiently evince that one of them is not properly God, because not *supreme*.

3. The third *Attribute* to be discussed, is the *Divine Immutability*. By which I mean a Freedom from all kind of *Change* or *Inconstancy*, both as to his *Nature* and his *Purposes*.

And that this *Attribute* is likewise very suitable to those natural Notions which Men have of God, may appear,

1. By *Testimony*. *Plato* having proposed In *Phad.* the Question, whether God be mutable and inconstant, answers expressly; 'Tis most necessary that he should be always the same and alike. His Words are most emphatical, *ὅδε ποτε ἕδαρῆ ἕδαρῶς ἀλλοίωσιν ἕδαρῆαν ἐνδέχεται*, that *he is never in any wise capable of any kind of Change whatsoever.*

De Repub.  
lib. 2.

And in another place, he mentions these *two* things, as being the grand Principles of Religion. 1. That God is the cause of all good, and in no wise of any evil. 2. That he is constant and immutable, and cannot deceive by making various Representations of himself.

De Benefic.  
lib. 6.

So *Seneca*, speaking of the Necessity of ascribing this Attribute to the Divine Nature as to his Purposes or Counsels, hath this Passage; *Statuerunt quæ non mutarunt, nec unquam primi consilii Deos pœnitet.* God is always constant to his own Decrees, and doth never repent of his Purposes. And in another place, *Necesse est ei eadem placere,*

Nat. Quæst.  
1. Tr. 5.

*cui nisi optima placere non possunt; nec ob hoc minus liber ac potens est, ipse enim est Necessitas sua.* 'Tis necessary that he should be always pleased with the same things, who can be pleased with nothing but what is best: Nor can this be any Prejudice to his Liberty or his Power, since he is his own Necessity; i. e. nothing from without, but his own natural Perfection lays this Necessity upon him.

2. By *Reason*. There is an excellent Argument to this purpose, in that place before-cited out of *Plato*, which according to his manner, he delivers in a more copious way of expression: But the Substance of it is this; All Change must be either *involuntary*, and upon Necessity; or *voluntary*, and upon Choice. Now God being the most

most *powerful* Being, cannot by any thing be necessitated to an *involuntary* Change. And for any *voluntary* Change, whereas it must be either for the *better* or the *worse*, it is not imaginable that any *wise* Being should be willing to change for the *worse*; nor is it possible that any *perfect* Being should change for the *better*. And therefore it is necessary that the Divine Nature should be immutable.

We esteem Changeableness in Men either an Imperfection, or a Fault. Their *Natural* Changes, as to their *Persons*, are from Weakness and Vanity; their *Moral* Changes, as to their *Inclinations* and *Purposes*, are from Ignorance and Inconstancy. And therefore there is very good Reason why we should remove this from God, as being That which would darken all his other Perfections. *The greater the Divine Perfections are, the greater Imperfection would Mutability be.* Besides, that it would take away the Foundation of all Religion, *Love* and *Fear*, and *Affiance*, and *Worship*: In which Men would be very much discouraged, if they could not certainly rely upon God, but were in doubt that his Nature might alter, and that hereafter he might be quite otherwise from what we now apprehend him to be.

4. *Infiniteness* is another Attribute most natural to the Notion of God. By which is meant, his not being bounded by *Place*, or

*Space*, or by *Duration*, but being *Immense* and *Eternal*.

1. This Attribute of God's *Immensity* doth signify his not being so confined by any Bounds of *Space*, but that he doth spread himself to all Places that we can see or can imagine, and infinitely beyond: So as we cannot say, he is here and not there, thus far he reaches, and not farther. Some have thought, that it is not absolutely necessary to believe such a kind of *Omnipresence* of the Divine Substance, as to be actually present in every place. But this is most necessary to be believed, That God is every where in respect of his *Power* and *Providence*, whereby he doth influence and govern all things (which is hardly possible to conceive without his actual Presence in all places) and in respect of his *Knowledge*, whereby he doth see, hear, and take notice of every thing, though never so secret; and that he can pierce through all these created things, with greater Facility than the Light doth through the Air. And that this doth belong to the natural Notion of God, may appear,

1. By the general Consent of the *Heathen*, testified by their praying to him at any Place or Time; which shews that they were persuaded that he was always and every-where present, at least by his *Knowledge* and his *Power*. Tully cites *Pythagoras* affirming, *Deum esse animum per naturam rerum omnium*

*nium intentum & commeantem*, That God is a Spirit or Mind, which doth pass through all things. And in another place, he cites it as *Thales* his Saying, which he commends, *Homines existimare oportere, Deos omnia cernere, Deorum omnia esse plena*, That Men ought to think, that God beholds every thing, and fills every place. *Plato* affirms, that God doth see and takes notice of all our Actions, Words and Thoughts. So *Virgil*,—*Jovis omnia plena*. And in another place,

—*Deum namque ire per omnes Terrasque, tractusque maris, cælumque profundum.*

So *Seneca* speaking of God, saith, *Ubique & omnibus præstò est*. He is every-where, and always at hand. And in another place, *Quocunque te flexeris, ibi illum videbis occurrentem tibi; nihil ab illo vacat, Opus suum ipse implet*. We can turn our selves no whither, but we shall meet him; no place is without him, he fills his own Work.

2. By the Principles of *Reason*. If it were otherwise, and the Divine Nature should be limited, this would contradict his universal Providence, and render all Worship of him vain and useles. Why should a Man either fear him, or serve him, if he could neither hear our Prayers, nor take notice of our Wants, nor receive our Acknowledgments.

2. For

2. For the Attribute of *Eternity*, whereby is signify'd God's being of infinite *Duration*, without *Beginning* or *End*; that this likewise doth belong to the Natural Notion of God, may be evident,

1. By the general consent of the *Heathen Philosophers*. And though there have been Disputes among them, about some of his other Attributes, yet in *this* all of them have agreed. They do indeed describe the Genealogies of their *Heroes* and subordinate Gods; but for the *supreme Deity*, he is constantly acknowledged to be without beginning of Time, or end of Days. *Epicurus* himself, who had the lowest and meanest Opinion of God, and robb'd him of as many of his other Perfections as by the utmost straining of his Wit he was able to do, yet is forc'd to leave him this Attribute. So *Tully* relates of him, speaking to those of that Sect, *Ubi igitur vestrum beatum & Æternum, quibus duobus verbis significatis Deum?* Where is that *Blessed* and *Eternal* Being of yours, which are the *two* usual *Words* whereby you describe the Nature of God? And *Lucretius*, who made it his Design to represent to the World the Doctrine of that Philosopher, doth from him give this Account of the Divine Nature,

Nat. Doctr.  
lib. 1.

*Omnis enim per se Divum natura necesse est  
Immortali ævo summa cum pace fruatur.*

It is essential to the Notion of God, that he should be happy and immortal. The *Poets* themselves, who amongst all others had the wildest Thoughts of God, yet do continually give him the Title of 'Αθάνατος, and seldom mention his Name without it: And the *Oath* most usual amongst them was in this Form, *Deos testor immortales*, I appeal to the Immortal Gods. *Aristotle* doth in several places make *Eternity* to be essential to the Notion of God. And *Tully* asserts it impossible to conceive of God without this Perfection; *Nos Deum nisi sempiternum intelligere quæ possumus? How is it possible for us to conceive of God, but as being Eternal?* There never yet was any Man, that had any conception of God, who did not esteem him to be Everlasting. To speak of a God that should be corruptible and mortal, is so monstrous an Absurdity, that a Man could not, though he should purposely study for it, devise any thing more wild and extravagant, saith *Plutarch*.

*De Cælo,*  
lib. 2.

Against  
*Colotes.*

2. There is very good reason, why this *Attribute* should not by the most *Sceptical Atheistical* Men be esteemed impossible, because they themselves are willing to grant it to the *World*, or at least to *Matter*. And if we suppose God to be the first Cause or Mover, it will thence necessarily follow, that he must always be, and could not have a Beginning; because if he ever were only in possibility,

bility, he could not from thence pass into *actual Being*, without some precedent Cause and Mover, which is inconsistent with his Being the *first Cause*. And if nothing could cause his Being, then nothing can take it away, and consequently he must be Everlasting.

It would be a great Abatement to all the other Divine Perfections, if they were finite and perishing. Besides, that it would be altogether inconsistent with some of them, namely, his *Self existence*, and *necessary Existence*. And withal, it must needs take off from the obligation to Duty of the Creatures part, if they were uncertain of the continuance of his Being, by whom Rewards and Punishments were to be distributed in the World.







## C H A P. IX.

*Of the Communicable Perfections of God : And first, of those which relate to the Divine Understanding, viz. Knowledge, Wisdom, particular Providence.*

**B**ESIDES those *incommunicable* Attributes already insisted upon, there are others stiled *communicable*, because they are in some lower degree, and by way of participation, communicated to other inferior Beings. And concerning these, there is a Necessity that we should make an Estimate of them, by such Rules and Measures as our Natures are capable of. And because the chief Perfections that we can apprehend in any reasonable Essence, must refer to one of these three Things, the *Understanding*, the *Will*, the *Faculties of Working* ; for this reason, these Divine Perfections may be reduced to these Three Heads. And whatever is the most excellent of rational Beings, must excel in each of these (*i. e.*) There is no kind or degree of Perfection that our Imaginations are able to conceive, but these Excellencies of the Divine Nature must run out still beyond it, so as  
not

not to be determined by any real or imaginary Bounds.

I purpose to treat particularly concerning each of them, beginning with those Perfections that belong to the Divine *Understanding*, namely, his *Knowledge*, *Wisdom*, and *particular Providence*.

1. By the *Knowledge* of God, I mean that Perfection or Faculty whereby he understands and considers things absolutely, and as they are in their own Natures, their *Powers*, *Properties*, *Differences*, together with all the Circumstances belonging to them. And 'tis necessary to the Notion of God, that this should be ascribed to him, in the utmost Perfection of it, infinitely beyond what the most knowing and the most learned Men can pretend unto.

1. His *Knowledge* is most deep and intimate, reaching to the very *Essence* of things; ours is but slight and superficial.

2. His is clear and distinct; ours but confused and dark.

3. His infallible; ours doubtful and liable to Mistakes.

4. His easy, and without Labour and Difficulty, always present and actual; ours gotten by *sore Travail*, and easily lost again by the Defects of *Memory* or *Age*.

5. His universal, extending to all Objects; ours short and narrow, reaching only to some  
 Eccl. i. 15. few Things, *That which is wanting cannot be numbered.* He

He hath a perfect Comprehension of all things, that have been, that are, or shall be, according to all the various Relations, Dependencies, Circumstances, belonging to each of them: So that this Attribute of his must be infinite and unbounded, both *extensive*, with respect to the several kinds of Objects which it comprehends; and likewise *intensive*, as it sees every single Object with a most perfect and infallible view. He doth not only understand all Particulars; but he knows every Particular so exactly, as if he were wholly taken up and intent in his Thoughts upon that alone. There is a vast difference betwixt the wisest of Men, and such as are grossly ignorant and sottish; and much greater betwixt Men and other Creatures, the little Insects, Ants and Worms, which are no ways fit to pass a Judgment concerning human Counsels and Designs. And yet these things hold some proportion to one another, being both finite; whereas betwixt God's *Knowledge* and Man's, the distance is infinite.

And that this Attribute doth belong to the natural notion of God, may appear,

1. From the Acknowledgment of the *Heathen*. *Tully* mentions it as an usual Saying of *Thales*, *Deos omnia cernere*, God beholds all things. So *Seneca*, *Nihil Deo clausum, interest animis nostris, & mediis cogitationibus intervenit*. *Nothing is hid from God,*

*he is intimate to our Minds, and mingles himself with our very Thoughts.*

Besides, that general Practice amongst them of swearing by him, and attesting him in their most solemn Compacts, do sufficiently imply their belief of his *Omniscience*.

2. From *natural Reason*. Nothing can be more manifest, than that *Knowledge* is a Perfection, and therefore ought to be ascribed to that Being which is supposed to have all possible Perfection. 'Tis a Perfection that we know to be in some of the *Creatures*, and therefore must be much more in the *Creator* himself. *He that made the Eye, shall he not see? He that gives to Men understanding, shall he not know?*

Besides, that the denial of this Perfection would necessarily infer many other Imperfections in the Divine Nature. It would destroy his *Wisdom, Providence, Dominion*. Where there is no Knowledge, there can be no Forecast or Provision for the Future, nor any kind of Regular Government. In brief, the denial of this Attribute must take away his *Goodness, Veracity, Justice*. That Being cannot properly be said to be *Good*, which doth act either out of Ignorance, or blind Necessity.

2. As *Knowledge* doth respect Things absolutely, so *Wisdom* doth consider the relations of Things one to another, under the Notion

tion of *Means* and *End*, and of their fitness, or unfitness for the various Purposes to which they are designed.

And that this likewise doth belong to the Natural Notion of God, may be evident,

1. By *Testimony*. The *Heathen Writers* Phad. are full of Expressions to this purpose. *Plato* asserts *Wisdom* to be a Thing of that Excellency, that it cannot properly be ascribed to any but God. It is a Saying of *Tully*, *Sapiens est Homo, & propterea Deus.* Nat. Deor. lib. 2. *Man is wise, and therefore much more God.* And in the same Book, *Deo tribuenda est ratio recta, constansque; To God is to be ascribed Right and steady Reason;* and a little after he says, it must be such as is *perfect* and *absolute*.

Nothing more frequent in *Seneca*, *Epicetus*, *Antoninus*, than to persuade Men to an Acquiescence under all the Dispensations of Providence, because they are ordered by the highest Wisdom.

2. By *Reason*. The want of Wisdom is counted a very great Imperfection, and one of the worst Defects belonging to Men, and that which every one is most unwilling to own, being content to be counted any thing rather than a Fool. And therefore there is very good Reason why we should remove this Imperfection from that *Being*, which is supposed to have all possible Perfections. And what was said before concerning the

denial of his *Knowledge*, must be equally true likewise in this case, that it must necessarily destroy his other Perfections, or render them insignificant. What reason would there be for Men to trust either to his Goodness or his Justice, or his Providence in the managing of things, if he were not withal infinitely wise? And as for his *Power*, That without Wisdom would be but a kind of a blind force, as much to be feared and hated, as loved and trusted to.

3. The Third *Attribute* to be consider'd is his *particular Providence*, whereby he does superintend and take care of every individual thing in the World; continuing them in their Beings, disposing of their Operations and Effects, in such a wise Order, as may be most suitable to those Ends and Purposes for which they are design'd. This likewise doth belong to the Natural Notion of God. Though it must be granted, that the Belief of this Attribute has met with some Opposition from several of the Philosophers, chiefly *Epicurus*; who in truth was an Atheist, and out of a pretended Respect to the Deity, did think it to be below his *Greatness*, and for the Trouble of it, inconsistent with his *Happiness*, to have any Regard to these Inferior Things; which he therefore imagin'd to be left to their own Courses, whilst the Divine Nature is wholly taken up in the Contemplation of it self.

*Semota*

*Semota à nostris rebus sejunctaque longè*, as *Lucretius* speaks. But because this might seem to argue too slight and narrow Apprehensions of the Deity, therefore others, to mend the matter, have thought that he might have Leisure, and perhaps an Inclination, to extend his Providence to *Heavenly Things*, but not to *Earthly*. Others yet more bountiful, will allow it to reach both to *Celestial* and *Terrestrial Things*: But then it must be only to the *general kinds* of them, which are to be put into a natural Course; not to *every Particular* of each kind by it self, which they conceived must needs prove too great a Trouble and Distraction to his Mind.

But 'tis evident, that all these wild Concoits did proceed from a Misapprehension of what kind of Knowledge or Wisdom does belong to the *Deity*; namely, *infinite*, and *absolutely perfect*; not to be limited, nor capable of any Difficulty to be put upon it, by the Nature or Number of Things.

Any particular Man, whom we know to be a Person of *Diligence* and *Sagacity*, may without any Trouble to himself undertake the Management of any *single* Business. Why; God can with greater facility provide for *all*, than any single Man can for *one*. Tho' we should suppose that the Particulars to be taken care of are *Infinite*, yet so is his *Wisdom* likewise; and there is the same Proportion

tion of *Infinite* to *Infinite*, as of *One* to *One*. And that this Attribute doth belong to the Natural Notion of God, may be made evident,

1. By the more general Consent of the Wise and Learned *Heathen* Writers (notwithstanding the dissent of some amongst them.) *Aristotle* himself, or whoever else was the Author of that Book *de Mundo*, amongst other Testimonies he gives of the Divine Providence, hath this for one, “ That as a Governor is to a Ship, as a Law to a City, as a General in an Army, so is God in the World; but with this difference, that they perform their Business not without Labour, Care and Difficulty; whereas the Divine Providence doth dispose of all and every particular thing, without the least kind of trouble.” *Tully* doth acknowledge that the Providence of God doth extend not only, *universo generi hominum, sed etiam singulis*, to Mankind in general, but likewise to every particular Person. And in another place: *Deorum providentiâ mundus administratur, iidemque consulunt rebus humanis, neque solum universis, sed etiam singulis.* The whole World is govern'd by Divine Providence, and not only Human Affairs in general, but likewise every particular Business. *Seneca* speaking of such as denied particular Providence, hath this remarkable Passage; *Sunt qui putant, &c.*

Chap. 6.

Nat. Deor.  
lib. 2.

De Divi-  
natione.

Nat. Quest.  
lib. 1. Pref.



“ There are some who think so well of their  
 “ own Minds, that they are able to take care  
 “ of their own Business, and to provide for  
 “ other Men’s Affairs likewise : And yet are  
 “ so absurd as to question, whether this great  
 “ Universe, wherof they themselves are but  
 “ a very inconsiderable part, be managed by  
 “ any kind of *Wisdom* or Counsel, and not  
 “ left wholly to *Chance*. *Hierocles* doth ac- *Pythag.*  
 “ knowledge, that the Providence of God *Carm.*  
 “ doth extend to Contingencies.” And to  
 say no more by way of Testimony, this may  
 sufficiently appear, by the general Practice  
 of Swearing by him, and Praying to him,  
 which doth sufficiently evince their Belief of  
 his particular Providence.

2. By *Reason*. The Denial of this Attri-  
 bute will evacuate several others; namely,  
 his *Goodness*, *Justice*, *Dominion*, which  
 must all signify nothing without *Providence*  
 in the Application of them. And withal, the  
 Denial of this doth take away the Ground of  
 Worship. The Belief of a particular Provi-  
 dence, being necessary unto that Adoration  
 which we owe to the Divine Nature. The  
 Greatness and the Excellency of the Deity in  
 it self, abstracted from any Concernment of  
 our own, will have but a very flat and je-  
 june Operation upon our Hearts. Do we  
 not find by Experience, that Men have but  
 little Regard to the Great *Mogul*, the *Cham* *Amyra-*  
 of *Tartary*, the Emperors of *China* and *Per-* *dus.*

*sia*, and such other Potentates of remote Countries? who though they are Princes of great Power and Magnificence, and are able to bring many hundred thousands of Fighting-men into the Field; yet they having nothing to do with us, nor we with them; we have therefore but a small Regard for them. Whereas, the next ordinary Gentleman, who is but Lord of a Manor, or Justice of Peace, with whom we are concerned to deal, and who hath any Power, of punishing or rewarding, of doing us either a Kindness or a Discourtesy, we use to be accordingly affected in our Esteem and Veneration towards him. And thus must it be likewise for our Adoration of the Divine Nature; which will be either more or less, according as we conceive ourselves more or less concerned in his Providence towards us.





## C H A P. X.

*Of the Perfections relating to the Divine Will ; Goodness, Justice, Faithfulness.*

2. **T**H E Perfections belonging to the Divine *Will*, were before reckoned to be, 1. His *Goodness*. 2. His *Justice*. 3. His *Truth* and *Faithfulness*.

1. His *Goodness*. By which word is sometimes signified, the notion of *Perfection* in general ; and sometimes it denotes *Moral Goodness*, in opposition to all kind of *Moral Imperfections*. Of both which kinds of *Goodness*, God is the Fountain and Author, the Rule and Measure, from whom all created *Goodness* is derived, and by conformity to whom it is to be estimated. But that more particular sense of this Word, according to which it is now to be treated of, doth respect the *Inclination of the Divine Will* toward his Creatures ; that *propension* of his, *whereby he is generally disposed to procure their happiness*, in opposition to *Envy* or *Malice*, which delights in withholding Good from others, or doing Mischief to them. And that this Attribute is natural to the Notion of God, may appear,

I. By *Testimony*. There being no one Perfection about which the generality of Men are more agreed than about this (excepting only the *Epicureans*, who attribute nothing to God but everlasting Happiness and Blessedness, which yet cannot be without *Goodness*.) *Plato* styles him τὸ κρείττον, the *best Being*. And his common Title amongst the *Latins*, was *Deus Optimus Maximus*. And our Fore-fathers in this Nation, seem to have given this very Name of *God* from *Good*. That is a known and an excellent Passage in *Seneca*, *Primus est Deorum cultus, Deos credere; deinde reddere illis Majestatem suam, reddere bonitatem, sine qua nulla Majestas.*

“ The most fundamental thing in Religion,  
 “ is to acknowledge the Being of God, and  
 “ then to demean ourselves towards him suitably to the greatness of his Majesty, and to  
 “ his Goodness, without which there can be  
 “ no Majesty.” And in another place, “ He  
 “ that doth not acknowledge the *Goodness*  
 “ of the Divine Nature, doth not take notice  
 “ of the general Custom amongst Men, of  
 “ praying to him in their Distress, and making Vows both publick and private, which  
 “ would not be, unless they had this Persuasion well fixed within them, that God  
 “ was ready to hear and to help them, and  
 “ that he is in his own Nature propense to  
 “ Kindness and Pity.” *Nec in hunc furorē omnes mortales consensissent, alloquendi*  
*furda*

*De Benefic.*  
 lib. 4.

*surda numina & inefficaces Deos.* “Nor  
 “ is it possible that all Mankind should una-  
 “ nimously agree together in so great a Mad-  
 “ ness, of praying to such Deities as they did  
 “ not believe could either hear or help  
 “ them.

And in another Place, *Quædam sunt quæ* De Ira, lib. c. cap. 27.  
*nocere non possunt, &c.* “Some things there  
 “ are of so benign and helpful a Nature, so  
 “ mild and beneficial, that nothing of evil  
 “ or hurt can proceed from them: Such is  
 “ the Deity, who neither can, nor will do  
 “ any thing that is mischievous; being as re-  
 “ mote from any Action that is injurious to  
 “ others, as to itself.”

And elsewhere, *Ecce sceleratis sol oritur,* ibid. lib. 4. cap. 26.  
*& Piratis patent Maria.* “He causeth his  
 “ Sun to shine upon the Just, and Unjust,  
 “ and the Seas are open to Pirates as well as  
 “ Merchants. He communicates his Bounty  
 “ to us in our Infancy and Childhood, when  
 “ we can have no sense of it: nor doth he De Benefic. 7. 31.  
 “ presently withdraw and cease his Favours  
 “ towards such Wretches as make a question  
 “ and doubt concerning the Author of them:  
 “ Nor is there any Person so miserable and De Benefic. lib. 4.  
 “ wretched, who hath not in several respects  
 “ had experience of the Divine Bounty.”

*Hierocles* asserts, that God is *essentially* good; Pythag. Carm.  
 not by accident, and from external Motives  
 and Considerations.

2. By *Reason*. It is so plain, so fundamental a Notion, that Goodness must belong to God, that I know not how to go about the Proof of it. 'Tis the brightest Ray of the Deity, the first and clearest Notion we have of God. We may see every Day many thousand visible Effects of this Goodness in the World. And there are some Glimpses, and weak Impressions of it amongst the Creatures, and therefore much more must it be in the Creator himself.

This is the Foundation of all Worship and Religion amongst Men, the Reason of their Prayers to God, and Praises of him. Without this his other Attributes would not afford any sufficient ground for our Love and Adoration of him. *Knowledge* and *Power* without *Goodness*, would be but *Craft* and *Violence*. He can by his *Wisdom* out-wit his Creatures, and easily impose upon them; and by his *Power* he could tyrannize over them, and play with their Misery; but that he will not do thus we are assured by his *Goodness*. This is so essential to him, that to imagine him without *Goodness*, were to imagine a God without a Deity, *i. e.* without That which chiefly constitutes him what he is: Nay, it were to imagine, instead of a God, a worse Devil, and more qualify'd to do Mischief, than any is now in the World.

2. The Second Attribute belonging to the Divine Will, is his *Justice*. By which is meant not only the Rectitude of his Nature in general, but more especially *his dealing with his Creatures according to the desert of their Deeds*.

And that this Perfection is natural to the Notion of God, may appear,

1. By *Testimony*. It is an Assertion of *Plato* Theatetus.  
*το, Θεὸς ἕδαμῆ ἕδαμῶς ἀδίκος, ἀλλ' ὡς οἷς τε δικαιοτάτος.* “ God cannot be said in any  
 “ kind or respect whatever to be unjust, but  
 “ so far as is possible to be most just.” *Tully* De Legibus, lib. 2.  
 lays it down as a Principle, that before Men are fit to associate under Government, they ought to be first convinced that God is the supreme Governor of the World, and doth take particular notice, *Qualis quisque sit, quid agat, quid in se admittat, quâ mente, quâ pietate religionis colat, piorumque & impiorum habere rationem*; “ What kind  
 “ of Person every one is, what he doth, and  
 “ what he thinks, how his Heart stands inclin'd to the Duties of Religion, and will  
 “ deal with every one according to his *Reality* or *Hypocrisy* in all such Matters.

And that this was the general Belief amongst them, may appear by the universal Custom of attesting him by Solemn Oaths; whereby they did appeal to him as a Righteous Judge, who would certainly revenge all Falshood and Injustice.

2. From *Reason*. And that not so much because Justice is a Perfection, as because Injustice is so great a Blemish and Imperfection; especially in the great Sovereign and Judge of the World, who having all Power and Authority in his Hands, can have no Temptation or Byass imaginable to do any thing that is unjust.

3. His *Truth* and *Faithfulness*. By which is meant, *the congruity of his Words to his Intentions*, especially in respect of any Promises which he hath made.

And that this doth belong to the Natural Notion of God, may be made evident,

*De Repub.*  
lib 1.

1. From *Testimony*. “*Plato* asserts, all kind of Lying and Falshood to be Imperfections, most odious both to God and Man, and that the Divine Nature is absolutely free from all kind of Temptation to it; so that there can be no imaginable Reason why God should falsify.”

*Porphry*, in the Life of *Pythagoras*, tells us, that it was one of his Precepts *μάλιον δε ἀλεθούειν*, That Men should most of all endeavour after Truth, because this only can make them like God. And he adds afterwards, That *Truth* is so great a Perfection, that if God would render himself visible to Men, he would chuse *Light* for his *Body*, and *Truth* for his *Soul*.

2. From



2. From *Reason*. It is one of the greatest Reproaches, and an Argument of Baseness amongst Men, to be counted a Liar: And therefore it must necessarily be removed from that Being which is supposed to have all possible Perfections, and to be the *Father of Truth*, as the Devil is of Lies.

That which tempts Men to falsify, is usually either the fear of some Evil, or the hope of some Advantage. The Reason why they break their Words, is either because of their rashness and inconsiderateness in making Promises, or their forgetfulness in not minding them, or their Inconstancy in not keeping to them, or their Impotence to perform them. But now the Divine Nature being infinitely wise, and all-sufficient, can have no Temptation to be otherwise than true and faithful. His infinite *Knowledge* and *Wisdom* doth secure him from *being deceived* himself; his *Omnipotence* doth exempt him from standing in need of *deceiving others*; and his *Goodness* secures us from the least suspicion of any inclination thereto.





## C H A P. XI.

*Of the Perfections belonging to the Powers and Faculties of Acting, viz. Power, Dominion, Distribution of Future Rewards and Punishments.*

**T**Hose Perfections which are essential to the Notion of God, with respect to his *Faculties of working*, are likewise three-fold :

1. His Power or Omnipotence.
2. His Dominion or Right to govern us in this Life.
3. His Distributing of Future Rewards and Punishments after this Life.

1. By the *Power or Omnipotence* of God is meant, *an Ability of doing all such things, the doing of which may argue Perfection*, and which do not imply a Contradiction, either *in the things themselves*, or to the Nature and Perfection of the *Doer*. Some things are repugnant to the Perfection of God, either *Naturally*, as that he should be sick, or die; or else *Morally*, as that he should lie, or deceive : Both which imply *Imperfection*. And some other Things may imply *Contradiction*;

*diction*, either directly, or by plain consequence. And of such Matters it is not so proper to say, *that he cannot do them*, as that *they cannot be done*. As the Object of the Understanding, the Eye, and the Ear, is that which is intelligible, visible, audible: So the Object of Power must be that which is possible. And as it is no prejudice to the most perfect Understanding, or Sight, or Hearing, that it doth not understand what is not *intelligible*, or see what is not *visible*, or hear what is not *audible*; so neither is it to the most perfect *Power*, that it doth not do what is not *possible*. Every kind of Faculty being necessarily determined to its own proper Object.

But as for all possible Things, it is natural and necessary to apprehend of God, that he can do whatsoever any other single thing, or a Combination of all other things put together, can perform, and infinitely more; and that without any kind of Labour or Difficulty: So that his Power must be infinite, *extensively*, with respect to all Objects; and *intensively*, with respect to the Acts of it, together with the *Manner* and *Degrees* of them.

That this kind of Omnipotence doth belong to the natural Notion of God, may appear,

1. By *Testimony*. It is a frequent Title given unto God by the *Grecian* Philosophers,

phers, who stile him παντοκράτωρ, Omnipotent.

And nothing is more frequent amongst the *Latins*, than the Titles of *Jupiter Omnipotens, Optimus, Maximus*: He is generally acknowledged to be the Creator and Governor of the World; upon which account they call him, *Opifex rerum*, and *Rector Mundi*. It is an Acknowledgment of *Tully*, *Nihil est quod Deus efficere non possit, & quidem sine ullo labore.* “ There is nothing which God “ cannot do, and that without any kind of “ Labour.”

*De Divi-  
nat.*

2. By *Reason*. If the Power of God could be limited or circumscribed, it must either be by something of greater Power, which is inconsistent with the Notion of his being Supreme and Sovereign: Or else by the Difficulty and Repugnancy which there is in the Nature of Things; which could not be in the first Creation of them, because there was nothing then to make any Resistance; and since that, there is nothing but what was made by him, derived from him, and is dependent upon him, and therefore must be subject to him. And besides, all such things being finite, must therefore be at a vast distance of Inequality from the *infinite* Power of God.

To which may be added, that all his other Perfections would be insignificant and ineffectual, if his Power of acting, whereby they

they were to be communicated to inferior Natures, were not answerable to them. Mere *Knowledge* without *Power*, would be but an idle Speculation; *Wisdom* to contrive, without *Power* to effect; would be but vain and useless. What could his *Goodness* and *Mercy* signify to us; if he were not able to give any Proofs of it. And so likewise for his *Justice* and *Faithfulness*, which there would be no reason to fear or to depend upon, if Rewards and Punishments were not at his Disposal; and he had not sufficient Power to perform what he promises. Nor could there be any sufficient ground for his being acknowledg'd the Supreme Law-giver. For why should any one take upon him to intermeddle in the Affairs of the World; and to prescribe Laws to others, who had no Power to dispose of things, and were not able to enforce Obedience to his own Laws?

In brief, without the Belief of this Attribute, there can be no Foundation for Religion amongst Men; because there could be no Ground for our *Faith* or *Trust*, no Reason for our *Hope* or *Fear*.

2. Besides this *absolute* Consideration of the Divine *Power*, there is likewise a *relative* Notion of it, respecting that *Dominion* and Jurisdiction which he hath over Reasonable Creatures, his Right to govern them in this Life; to command, and prohibit what he pleases, to reward and punish as shall seem

good unto him. And that this doth belong to the Natural Notion of God, may appear,

*Symposiac.* 1. By *Testimony*. *Plato* and *Tully*, and  
*lib. 8. q. 1.* *Plutarch*, do often stile him, *the Lord of all things*; the *Eternal God, Father and Creator of the World, and all things in it.* *Deo nihil præstantius, ab eo igitur necesse est mundum regi*, saith *Tully*; “ God is the  
*Nat. Deor.* “ most excellent Being; and therefore it is  
 “ necessary that he should be the Governor  
 “ of the World.” And in another place, *Deorum immortalium numine, omnia regi gubernarique credimus.* “ We believe that God is the Governor of all things.

To which I shall add that *Testimony* of a Heathen King, *Nebuchadnezzar*, in that  
*Dan. iv. 34;* Remonstrance which he published to all peo-  
 35. ple, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth, viz. that *God's dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation, and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing before him. And he doth according to his will, in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what dost thou?*

And as this was their declared Opinion, so was their Practice suitable to it; by owning that to be their Duty which they supposed to be agreeable to his Will, and which would render them acceptable to him.

2. By *Reason*. If we consider those several *Titles* which can give Right to Dominion amongst Men, we shall find them all to concur in God. Now Men claim a Right of Government, either by Conquest, or Purchase, or Compact, or by having others born in a state of Subjection under them, or by their having obliged others with any special Bounty or Favour; but above all these, there is another Ground of Subjection, which Men cannot pretend to, namely, the *giving of Being* to a thing. And this must needs, above all other Claims, be the greatest imaginable Right, for the Government and Disposal of that thing, according to the Pleasure of him that made it. *It is he that made us* (says Pfal. c. 3. the *Psalmist*) *and not we our selves*; and therefore *we are his People*, and it is reasonable that we should be under his Dominion and Government.

3. The distribution of future Rewards and Punishments to Men, according as their Lives and Actions have been in this World.

That this likewise doth belong to the natural Notion of God, may appear,

1. By *Testimony*. From all kind of Heathen Writers. Nothing has been more universally believed in all Places and Times, not only amongst the civilized Nations, the *Grecians* and *Romans*; but likewise amongst such as were most wild and barbarous.

*Tuscul.* 9.  
lib. 1.

All Sorts and Professions of Men, of any special Eminence, as Princes, Statesmen, Soldiers, Philosophers, Poets, Artists, have had great Impressions upon their Minds concerning a future State. And it may be reasonably presumed (as *Tully* observes) that those who do so much excel others in their Parts and their Virtue, are not generally mistaken in their Judgments about a Natural Truth.

Whereas several other Opinions and Doctrines, which at some times have prevailed, have afterwards been rejected; *this* hath still kept up in its Vigour and Authority, amidst all the various Revolutions of Government and Religion, of Nations and Churches.

The most ancient Philosophers amongst the *Grecians*, who reduced that People to Civility, were *Thales*, *Pherecides*, *Pythagoras*; the last of whom was for a long time of so great Authority, that no others were counted Learned but such as were his Followers; And each of these have most expressly asserted this Doctrine. And besides, there are many other Testimonies to this purpose, cited out of *Plato*, *Empedocles*, *Plutarch*, together with *Homer*, *Euripides*, *Sophocles*, for the *Grecians*; the ancient *Druids* amongst the *Gauls*; the *Brachmans* amongst the *Indians*, who are all mention'd as bearing Witness to this Truth, by *Justin Martyr*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, and others.

And



And as for the *Latins*, I shall mention only two Testimonies; That of *Tully*, *Permanere animas arbitramur, consensu nationum omnium.* Tusc. l. 1. “ We do believe that the  
 “ Souls of Men do abide after Death, by the  
 “ Consent of all Nations.” And that of *Seneca*, *Cum de animarum aeternitate differimus, non leve momentum apud nos habet, consensus omnium, aut timentium inferos, aut colentium.* Epist. 117. “ When we dispute about the  
 “ Immortality of the Soul, the general Con-  
 “ sent of Men, either fearing or worshipping  
 “ the infernal Powers, is of no small Mo-  
 “ ment with us.”

That common Practice amongst the Heathens, of worshipping their departed *Heroes*, doth suppose a general belief that their Souls did remain after Death, and were advanced unto a higher State of Happiness and Power.

In brief, all the Attestations amongst them, concerning the *Soul's Immortality*, are founded in their belief of the Necessity of this Principle, That there must be a future State of Rewards and Punishments.

Though it must be granted, that this State as to the Manner of it, is by them described in such a Poetical way, as is more fit to *amuse* and make Impression upon the *Vulgar*, than to *satisfy* the Reason of the *Judicious*.

They tell us, that Good Men shall after their Death be received into the *Elyſian* Fields and Gardens, which are always flourishing and pleaſant, where Men ſhall be continually exerciſed in ſuch kind of Employments as are moſt ſuitable to their Inclinations; ſome in Combats, Running, Wreſtling; others in Philoſophical Diſcourſes; others in Dancing or Muſick; where ſuch kind of Actions or Things, whether in themſelves worthy, or merely innocent, in which good Men during the time of their Lives, did find any ſpecial Pleaſure, ſhould be enjoyed by them in the utmoſt Perfection.

And as this ſhall be the State of ſuch as have been *Virtuous*, ſo thoſe who have been *Wicked* ſhall be thruſt down into the Infernal Regions, into Priſons and dark Caverns, where *Furies* are appointed for their Tormentors, who ſhall inflict upon them various kinds of Punishments, according to the Nature and Quality of the Crimes of which they have been guilty.

And though ſuch kind of Enjoyments wherein theſe *Heathens* placed their future Happineſs. be not altogether ſo ſenſual as the *Turkiſh Paradise*; yet are they too earthly and groſs for any Rational Man to reſt in, as his chief Felicity: And muſt, even to the Judgment of mere Reason, ſeem altogether deſpicable in compariſon to the *Chriſtian's Heaven*; which conſiſts in the raiſing  
of

of our Natures to the highest Perfection of which they are capable, in a perpetual Vision and Fruition of the Supreme Good.

It must be granted, that the principal Evidence for this Doctrine concerning a future State of Rewards and Punishments, is to be derived from *Scripture*, especially from the New Testament, where it is said *that Life and Immortality is brought to light by the Gospel.* <sup>2 Tim. i. 10.</sup>

Not but that there is Evidence for it, both from the Old Testament and from the Light of Nature. 'Tis true indeed, that Temporal things are more expressly insisted upon in the Promises and Threats of the Old Testament, upon account of the grossness and dulness of the People of the *Jews*, who being more immersed in sensible things, were therefore more easy to be wrought upon by such Considerations. But that these things were not then intended for the chief Motives of Religion, may appear from the Histories concerning such Religious Persons as lived in those first Ages. Amongst whom, there were but very few (if any) that did attain to any such perfect Felicity in respect of worldly things, but that they might very well apply to themselves the Words of old *Jacob*, and say with him, *Few and evil have the days of my life been.* And if God had intended these Temporal Enjoyments, for the chief Felicity which that Religion was to entitle them

unto ; those very Histories upon Record, where these Promises are mentioned, concerning the Sufferings of the best Men in those times, must needs have been a Disparagement and Confutation to these Promises themselves.

But besides the Testimonies to this purpose from Scripture and Revelation, it is not imaginable that in a Point of so great Moment, and so universal Consequence as this is, God should have *left himself without a Witness unto all the Nations of the World*; but that all Men should be endowed with such natural Capacities and Notions, as being improved by Consideration, will afford sufficient Evidence for the Belief of this Great and Fundamental Principle.

As for such Men who live under the Sense of Guilt, whose Interest it is that there should be no future Account; it cannot be otherwise expected from such, but that they should be willing to disbelieve this. And from hence it is, that some of the Ancient Philosophers have employed their Learning and Subtilty, to dispute themselves into some kind of doubt and uncertainty about it: And yet the generality even of these have been forced to acknowledge it much more probable than the contrary. And as for the Vulgar sort of People, who are guided by the more simple Dictates of Nature, these have in all Ages and Nations submitted themselves

to this Doctrine, and professed a firm Belief of it. And though Vulgar Opinion be but a very bad Topick, about such Matters as may gratify Men in their Ease and Sensual Appetites; yet in such other Opinions, as are cross to their worldly Interests, it may argue such things to be from some natural Impression upon their Minds, which they must believe, and cannot otherwise chuse.

The Arguments I would make use of to this purpose, may be reduced to these Three General Heads:

1. The Suitableness of this Principle to the most Natural Notions of our Minds.
2. The Necessity of it to the Government of Men's Lives and Actions in this World.
3. The Necessity of it for the vindication of Divine Providence.

1. I begin with the First, this Suitableness of it to the most Natural Notions of our Minds, and those kind of Impressions which belong to us as we are reasonable Creatures. We see by Experience that all other things (so far as we are able to judge) *Minerals, Plants, Beasts, &c.* are naturally endowed with such Principles as are most fit to promote the Perfection of their Natures, in their several Kinds. And therefore it is by no means credible, that Mankind only, the most  
excel-

excellent of all other Creatures in this visible World, for the Service of whom so many other things seem to be designed, should have such kind of Principles interwoven in his very nature, as do contain in them mere Cheats and Delusions. And therefore whatsoever those things are, which the generality of Mankind, especially the most wise and the most considerate part of them, do agree in, ought to be allowed for highly credible; otherwise it must follow, that we are fram'd with such kind of Faculties, as in our most cautious exercise of them, are more like to seduce us and expose us to Error, than to direct and lead us to the Truth.

But I shall endeavour to manifest this more particularly, by these three Considerations.

1. This Principle is most suitable to the general Apprehensions of Mankind, concerning the Nature of Good and Evil.

2. To those Natural Hopes and Expectations which the generality of Good Men have concerning a State of Future Happiness.

3. To those Natural Fears and Expectations which the generality of wicked Men are possess'd with, concerning a Future State of Punishment and Misery.

1. This Principle is most suitable to the general Apprehensions of Mankind, concerning the Nature of Good and Evil. All Men heretofore have agreed that there is such a Thing as the Law of Nature, whereby things are

are distinguish'd into Good and Bad; according to which the Actions of Men are determin'd to be either virtuous or vicious. And as the one of these doth in the Essence of it imply Comeliness and Reward, so doth the other denote Turpitude and Punishment; these things being imply'd in the very Definitions of Virtue and Vice. And from hence it will follow, That as there is some Superior Power, who hath put this Law into our Natures, so will he take care to enforce the observance of it, by rewarding and punishing Men accordingly. This being imply'd in the Nature of a Law.

If there be nothing in the naked Essence of things that makes them to differ, but what doth merely arise from Custom and positive Laws: why then; Custom and Law would be able to render it a very virtuous and commendable thing for a Man to be ingrateful, a breaker of Compacts, a false Witness, a perjurd Person; which is so monstrous a Position, that the common Reason of Mankind will abhor it upon the first Proposal. Nothing is more obvious than that there is an universal desire amongst Men of seeming honest: the most impudent and profligate Wretch being loth to be esteem'd what really he is. The very Sin of Hypocrisy, so general amongst Men, doth give a large Testimony to the Beauty of Goodness, and the Deformity of Vice. Nor is there any Account  
to

to be given why there should be impress'd upon the Nature of Men such a value for the one, and dislike for the other, if there were not in the things themselves something suitable to those contrary Affections.

We see by experience that there is such a kind of Rest and Acquiescence in the Mind, upon the discovery of Truth, and the doing of Virtuous Actions, as belongs to natural Bodies when they are in their proper places; which may argue these things to have some peculiar Suitableness to the Soul of Man, and that the Opposites to them do offer violence to some natural Principle belonging to it.

2. This Principle is most suitable to those natural Hopes and Expectations which the generality of good Men have concerning a State of Future Happiness. From whence doth arise that Confidence and Courage whereby those of meanest quality and abilities (if otherwise virtuous Persons) can support themselves in their Sufferings for that which is good, which doth necessarily suppose in them a strong, and even a natural Belief and Persuasion of such a future State, wherein their Sufferings shall be consider'd and rewarded.

Besides that, there is a strong Aversion amongst Men against a dark State of Annihilation, which no Man can think of without great regret of Mind: And likewise a natural Desire in all Men after a State of Happiness



ness and Perfection. And no natural Desire is in vain. All other things have somewhat to satisfy their natural Appetites. And if we consider the utter impossibility of attaining to any such condition in this Life, this will render it highly credible, that there must be another state wherein this Happiness is attainable; otherwise Mankind must fail of his chief end, being by a natural Principle most strongly inclined to such a State of Happiness as he can never attain to; as if he were purposefully fram'd to be tormented betwixt these two Passions, Desire and Despair; an earnest propension after Happiness, and an utter incapacity of ever enjoying it; as if Nature it self, whereby all other things are disposed to their perfection, did serve only in Mankind to make them miserable. And which is yet more considerable, the better and the wiser any Man is, the more earnest Desires and Hopes hath he after such a State of Happiness. And if there be no such thing, not only Nature, but Virtue likewise must contribute to make Men miserable; than which, nothing can seem more unreasonable to those who believe a just and a wise Providence.

3. This Principle is most suitable to those Fears and Expectations which the generality of wicked Men are possess'd with, concerning a future State of Misery. Witness those natural Suggestions of Conscience in the worst of Men, that upon any wicked Actions (tho'  
never

never so private) are oftentimes startling of them, with the apprehensions of another Judicature and Tribunal, before which they shall be called to an account for the closest Sins. All that secret Regret, and those inward Smitings, *Laniatus & Ictus*, which are so often felt in the Minds of Men, upon the commission of any great Sin, do argue some common Intimations, even in the Light of Nature, of another Judgment after this Life, wherein they shall be accountable for such Actions as Men do not punish or take notice of.

And these natural Fears do usually seize upon all kind of Men promiscuously: Even those who are most potent, who by their own will can give Laws to Nations, and command mighty Armies; yet cannot they avoid these checks and lashes of Conscience, but that they will seize upon them, and shake them as well as the poorest, meanest Subject. Nor can such as are most obstinately wicked, who with their utmost study and endeavour, apply themselves to the suppressing and disbelief of these Notions, so wholly stifle them, but that they will be continually rising up in their Minds, and pursuing of them.

Now as there is no Man whatsoever, that is wholly freed from these Fears of future Misery after Death; so there is no Creature below Man, that hath any Fears of this kind.

And

And if there be no real ground for this; then it must follow, That he who framed all his other Works with such an excellent Congruity, did yet so contrive the Nature of Man, the most noble amongst them, as to prove a needless torment and burden to it self.

If it be said, That these Notions may proceed from such Principles as Men have derived from Institution and the Teaching of others, but that they do not imply a necessity of any such natural Impressions.

To this it may be answered, That it is sufficient to denominate them Natural Notions, if they have such a suitableness to the Minds of Men, as makes them to be generally owned by all those who apply their Thoughts to the consideration of them: And that they have such a natural suitableness, may appear, because Institution cannot so easily eradicate these Notions, as it can fix them. Now if the mere teaching of others were it self sufficient to impress these Notions, without any such peculiar congruity in the things themselves, it would be as sufficient to deface them again; especially considering the advantage on this side, from that natural Repugnancy which we have to any thing which brings disquiet to our Minds. And nothing is more troublesome in this kind, than the Fear which follows upon Guilt.

But now, though there have been several Men of no mean Abilities in several Ages,  
who

who have made it their Business to root out of the Minds of Men all such troublesome Notions about a future State, endeavouring to persuade themselves and others, That as there was a Time before they were born into the World, when they were not; so at their dying, or going out of it, they shall exist no more. And yet, though it be their Interest to believe this, though they make it their Study and Business to persuade themselves and others of it, it may reasonably be doubted, whether ever yet there hath been so much as one Person, that hath hereby become absolutely free from these Fears: But for the most part, those who would have them esteemed vain and imaginary, without any Foundation in Nature, these are the Persons who are most assaulted with them.

*Hi sunt qui trepidant, & omnia fulgura pallent.*

So powerful and unconquerable are these Impressions, and therefore Natural.

2. The second Reason I proposed to speak to, was from the Necessity of this Principle, to the right Government of Men's Lives and Actions in this World, and the preserving of Society amongst them.

Nothing can be more evident, than that Human Nature is so framed, as not to be regulated and kept within due Bounds, without

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out Laws ; and Laws must be insignificant, without the Sanction of Rewards and Punishments, whereby Men may be induced to the observance of them. Now the temporal Rewards and Punishments of this Life, cannot be sufficient to this end ; and therefore there is a Necessity that there should be another future State of Happiness and Misery.

All the Rewards and Punishments of this Life are to be expected, either from the Civil Magistrate, who by virtue of his Place and Calling is obliged to the duty of distributive Justice : Or else from Divine Providence, according to that most usual course which we find by experience to be observed by him, in his dispensation of these Temporal Things. Now neither of these can afford sufficient Motives for the Government of Men's Lives and Actions.

1. Not all that may be expected from the Civil Magistrates, because there may be many good and evil Actions which they cannot take notice of ; and they can reward and punish only such things as come under their cognizance. And if this were the only restraint upon Men, it could be no hindrance from any such Mischiefs or Villanies which Men had the opportunity of committing secretly. Nor would it extend to those who had Power and Strength enough to defend themselves from the Law, and escape the Penalty of it, but that such might without any kind of

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check or fear follow the Inclinations of their own Appetites: Nor would it afford any remedy in the case of such wicked Magistrates as should invert the Order of their Institution, proving Terrors to well-doers, and Encouragers to those that do ill.

2. Not all that may be expected from common Providence: For tho' it should be granted, that according to the most usual and general Course of things, both virtuous and vicious Actions are rewarded and punished in this Life, yet there may be many particular Cases which this Motive would not reach unto; namely, all such Cases where a Man's Reason shall inform him, that there is far greater probability of safety and advantage by committing a Sin, than can be reasonably expected (according to his Experience of the usual course of things in the World) by doing his Duty. Suppose the Case of the *Three Children*, or of any other called to Martyrdom, who may be threatned with Torments and Death, unless they will blaspheme God, and renounce their Religion; if it appear to them very probable (suppose a Hundred to one) that upon their refusal, their Persecutors will really execute what they threaten: And if on the other side, it prove very improbable (suppose ten Thousand to one) that they shall be delivered by a Miracle: In such Cases, it is not to be expected, that the Consideration of the ordinary  
course

course of Providence in the dispensation of Rewards and Punishments, should be sufficient to restrain a Man from any kind of Blasphemy or Villany whatsoever.

But the Thing I am speaking to, will more fully appear, by consideration of those horrid Mischiefs of all Kinds, that would most naturally follow from the denial of this Doctrine.

If there be no such thing to be expected as Happiness or Misery hereafter, why then the only business that Men are to take care of, is their present well-being in this World. There being nothing to be counted either Good or Bad, but in order to these: Those things which we conceive to be conducive to it, being the only Duties; and all other things that are cross to it, being the only Sins. And therefore what ever a Man's appetite shall incline him to, he ought not to deny himself in it (be the thing what it will) so he can have it, or do it, without probable Danger.

Suppose it be matter of *Gain* or *Profit* he is despos'd to; if he can cheat or steal securely, this will be so far from being a Fault, that it is plainly his Duty, that is, reasonable for him to do, because it is a proper means to promote his chief End.

And so for other Cases of *Anger*, *Hatred*, *Revenge*, &c. according to this Principle, a Man must take the first opportunity of satisfi-

fyng these Passions, by doing any kind of mischief to the Person he is offended with; whether by false Accusation and Perjury, or (if need be) by poisoning or stabbing of him; provided he can do these things so, as to escape the Suspicion of others, and Human Penalties.

Now let any Man judge what *Bears*, and *Wolves*, and *Devils* Men would prove to one another, if every thing should be not only lawful, but a Duty, whereby they might gratify their impetuous Lusts; if they might either perjure themselves, or steal, or murder as often as they could do it safely, and get any advantage by it.

But these things are so very obvious and undeniable, that the most prophane Atheistical Persons do own the Truth of them. And upon this they are willing to acknowledge, That Religion and the Belief of another Life, is a very politick Invention, and needful for the well-governing of the World, and for the keeping of Men in awe, from the doing any secret Mischief. Which (by the way) is a Concession of no small advantage to the honour of Religion, considering that it proceeds from the greatest professed Enemies to it. Whereby they grant, that it is fit these things should be true, if they are not; or at least, that it is fit that the generality of Men should believe them to be true. And tho' themselves pretend to believe otherwise,



wife, yet are they not so far out of their Wits, as to be willing that those with whom they converse, their Wives, and Children, and Servants should be of the same Opinion with them ; because then they could have no Reason to expect any Safety amongst them. What Security could any Man have of his Estate, or Honour, or Life, if such with whom he is most familiar and intimate, might think themselves at liberty to do all the secret Mischief to them which they had the Opportunity to commit ?

But there is one thing more which those who profess to disbelieve this Principle should do well to consider ; and that is this, That there is no imaginable Reason, why (amongst those that know them) they should pretend to any kind of Honesty or Conscience, because they are wholly destitute of all such Motives as may be sufficient to oblige them to any thing of this Nature : But according to them, that which is called Virtue and Religion must be one of the most silly and useless things in the World.

As for the Principle of *Honour*, which some imagine may supply the Room of *Conscience* : This relates only to *External Reputation*, and the esteem which we have amongst others ; and therefore can be of no influence to restrain Men from doing any *secret Mischief*.

From what hath been said it will follow, That those who have any regard to their own Safety, ought to abandon all kind of Society with such pernicious Persons, who according to their own Principles, must take all Opportunities of doing any Mischief to others, which they are able to effect with any advantage to themselves.

Now if this be so (as I have proved) that the Nature of Man is so fram'd, as not to be effectually persuaded and wrought upon, without the consideration of such a Future State; if it be necessary to add everlasting Motives, as the Sanctions of that Law, by which the Human Nature is to be governed; this must render it highly credible, that there is such a State, because it must needs be very unworthy of God, to conceive of him, that he hath contrived the Nature of one of his best and most noble Creatures after such a manner, as to make it incapable of being govern'd without Falshood and Deceit. The necessity of this Principle to the government of Men's Lives and Actions, is the ground of that Saying among the *Rabbins*, That Paradise and Hell are two of the Seven Pillars upon which God is said to have founded the World. As if it could not be upheld without such a Support.

3. The third and last Argument I proposed to speak to, was from the necessity of  
this

this Principle to the vindication of Divine Providence. Nothing is more universally acknowledged, than that God is Good and Just; That well-doing shall be rewarded, and Evil Actions punished by him. And yet we see that his Dispensations in this Life, are many times promiscuous and uncertain, so that a Man cannot judge of *love or hatred, by all that is before him*. The worst of Men are sometimes in the best Condition: *If in this* <sup>1 Cor. xv.</sup> *life only we had hope, we should be of all* <sup>19.</sup> *men most miserable*, saith the *Apostle*, speaking concerning those primitive Times of Persecution, when the better any Man was, the more was he expos'd to Suffering. Nor is it thus only in the Case of particular Persons, or in the success of private Differences betwixt Men and Men; but likewise for some of those Decisions that are made by the Sword, in the publick Contests of Princes and Nations; these may sometimes be so stated, as to the Event of them, as may in the judgment of Wise and Good Men seem unequal, and not according to Justice, and the Right of the Cause.

Now the greater uncertainty there is, as to the present Affairs of this World, by so much greater is the certainty of a Future Judgment. It is true indeed, that Virtue may be said to be a Reward to it self, and Vice a Punishment; in regard of that Satisfaction, or that Regret of Mind which doth

accompany such things. But these are not such kind of Rewards and Punishments as Law-givers are to take care of; by which they are to excite those under the Government, to overcome the Labours and Difficulties that they may sometimes meet with in doing their Duty, and to restrain others from wicked Actions.

It would seem a wild extravagant Law, which should propose by Way of Reward, that those who had upon account of Religion or Virtue, undergone any great Dangers and Troubles, should for their Reward be put again to undergo more and greater. That they who had been guilty of Robbery, should by way of Punishment be obliged to commit Murder.

Besides those moral Advantages or Mischiefs, which are properly the effects of Virtue and Vice; there is likewise some Physical Good or Evil, that may be expected as the Reward and Punishment of them.

Would it become a just Governor, to permit his Rebellious Subjects, those who condemn his Laws, to persecute such as were obedient to him, with all kind of Scorn and Violence, Stripes, Imprisonments, Torments, and Death it self; and that for this very Reason, because they were willing to do their Duties, and to observe the Laws? Would it be a reasonable Excuse for such a Ruler to say, That one of these had received sufficient Punish-

Punishment in the very commiffion of fuch Crimes; and that the other had a fufficient Reward, both in the doing of his Duty, and in his fufferings for it? What could be more inconfiftent with the Rules of Juftice, and the wife Ends of Government?

What could be a greater difparagement to divine Providence, than to permit the Calamities and Sufferings which good Men undergo in this World, many times upon the account of Religion, to pafs unrewarded; and the many Mifchiefs and Prophanations, which wicked Men take the advantage of committing by their Greatnefs and Profperity in this World to go unpunifhed?

What great Glory would it be to prelide over this material World, Stars and Meteors, Sea and Land, Plants and Beafts, to put thefe things into fuch a regular courfe as may be fuitable to their Natures, and the Operations for which they are defign'd; and in the mean fpace to have no proportionable regard either for thofe that reverence the Deity, or thofe who contemn him?

'Tis very well faid to this purpofe by a late *Author*, That not to conduct the courfe of Nature in a due manner, might fpeak *Amyral-* *dus.* fome defect of Wifdom in God; but not to compensate Virtue and Vice, befides the defect of Wifdom, is not adjusting things fuitable to their Qualifications, but crofsly coupling

coupling Prosperity with Vice, and Misery with Virtue, would argue too great a defect of Goodness and of Justice. And perhaps it would not be less expedient (saith he) with *Epicurus*, to deny all Providence, than to ascribe to it such Defects: It being less unworthy of the Divine Nature to neglect the Universe altogether, than to administer Human Affairs with so much Injustice and Irregularity.

And therefore 'tis necessary for the vindication of Divine Providence, that there should be a Future State, and Day of Accounts, wherein every Man shall be forced to acknowledge, that *verily there is a Reward for the Righteous, doubtless there is a God that judgeth the Earth.*

Pf. lviii.  
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## C H A P. XII.

*Concerning the Duties of Religion naturally flowing from the Consideration of the Divine Nature and Perfections : And first, of Adoration and Worship.*

**H**AVING dispatch'd the two first Things I propos'd as the principal Ingredients to a State of Religion, namely, 1. A Belief and an Acknowledgment of the Divine Nature and Existence. 2. Due apprehensions of his Excellencies and Perfections : I proceed now to the Third, namely, suitable Affections and Demeanour towards him : Which must naturally follow from the former. The serious belief and consideration of those incomparable Excellencies which there are in the Divine Nature, ought not to be terminated in mere Speculation, but must derive an Influence upon the Heart and Affections ; it being natural for Men to proportion their esteem of things according to that Worth and Dignity which they apprehend to be in them. And therefore that Being which hath in it all possible Perfections, may justly challenge all possible esteem and veneration as due to it.

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In the enumerating of those several Affections and Duties, I shall observe the same method which I have formerly used in reckoning up the Attributes themselves.

1. God's Incommunicable Excellencies should dispose our Minds to *Adoration* and *Worship*.

2. The Communicable Attributes, which belong to the Divine

1. *Understanding*, namely, his infinite Knowledge and Wisdom, and his particular Providence, should work in us, *Faith, Assurance, Hope, Confidence*.

2. *Will*, namely, his *Goodness, Justice, Faithfulness*, are naturally apt to excite in us, *Love, Desire, Zeal*.

3. *Faculties of Acting*, namely, his *Power*, which should produce in us *Reverence* and *Fear*: His *Dominion* over us, and distributing of future Rewards and Punishments, which calls for our *Obedience*, both *Active* and *Passive*.

Though I cannot say, that each of these Affections and Duties are so to be restrained to those respective Attributes unto which I have ascribed them, but that the consideration of any of the rest, may have a proper Influence to dispose Men to any, or to all of them; yet that there is some more peculiar Reference and Correspondence betwixt these Attributes and these Affections and Duties, as they



they are here conjoin'd, I shall endeavour to shew in treating concerning each of them :

1. Those incommunicable and superlative Excellencies of the Divine Nature, whereby God doth infinitely transcend all other Beings, are naturally apt to work in us, a high Esteem and Admiration of him ; a readiness of Mind, upon all occasions, to express our *Adoration* and *Worship* towards him.

That *Worship* is due to God, hath been universally acknowledged in all Ages and Nations. And *Aristotle* asserts, that whoso-<sup>Topic. 1. 9.</sup> ever doth doubt of, or deny this, ought not to be dealt with by Arguments, but by Punishments.

That it is the Excellency of any Being which is the proper ground of the Worship we pay to it, hath been generally acknowledged. The *Philosophers* have owned this. So *Tully*, *Præstans Deorum natura*, &c.<sup>Nat. Descr.</sup>  
 “ The Nature of God may justly challenge<sup>lib. 1.</sup>  
 “ the Worship of Men, because of its super-  
 “ lative Excellency, Blessedness, Eternity.  
 “ For whatsoever excels, hath upon that ac-  
 “ count a Veneration due to it. So *Seneca* ;  
*Deus colitur propter Majestatem eximiam,*  
*singularemque naturam.* “ God is therefore  
 “ worshipped, because of his Excellent Ma-  
 “ jesty and Incomparable Nature. And to  
 “ this the Scripture likewise doth attest. *All*<sup>Pf. lxxxix.</sup>  
*nations whom thou hast made, shall come and*<sup>9. 10.</sup>

*worship before thee, and shall glorify thy name, for thou art great, and doſt wondrous things, thou art God alone.* And again, *Pſal. xcvi. 3.* having ſaid, *For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all Gods*; it is preſently ſubjoined, *O come let us worſhip, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker.* And yet again, *Pſal. xcviij. 7.* *Worſhip him all ye gods*: And the Reaſon is given preſently after; *For thou Lord art high above all the Earth, thou art exalted far above all Gods.*

By *Worſhip*, I mean in the general, the higheſt Eſteem and Admiration of him in our Minds, whereby we do continually bow down our Souls before him; in the Acknowledgment of his Excellencies; depending upon him, invoking of him in our Neceſſities, making our Acknowledgments to him, as being the Author of all the Mercies we enjoy; together with ſuch external Services, as may be fit to teſtify unto others that inward Veneration which we have for him, whether by the humbleſt Geſtures of Proſtration or Bowing our ſelves before him, Kneeling, lifting up our Hands and Eyes unto him; being always ready to *ſpeak good of his Name, to make his praiſe glorious.* Which muſt be accompanied with a hearty Zeal and Indignation againſt all ſuch things as reflect Diſhonour upon him.

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Besides this general habit of *Worship*, with which our Minds should always be possessed, there are likewise some particular Actions and Services, which by the light of Nature, and the consent of Nations have been judged proper to express our honouring of him : As the setting apart of particular *Persons*, and *Places*, and *Times*, peculiarly for his *Worship*.

It hath been the general Practice of all Nations, to have amongst them a distinct calling of Men, set apart to officiate *in Sacris*, to assist the People in their publick *Worship*, to instruct them in their Duties, and to excite them to the Performance of them. Which being a Work of so publick Usefulness and general Necessity, common reason will assure us, that the best Way of providing for it, is by such Persons as are bred up to it, and set apart for it. Such Men are like to have the greatest *Skill*, who have made it their Business and their greatest *Care*, and who are obliged to it by way of Office.

It is natural for Men who are joined together in *Civil Societies*, to join likewise in *Religious Worship*. And in order to this, 'tis necessary that there should be publick Places, and solemn Times set apart for such Assemblies. Which hath accordingly been the practice of all civilized Nations. And in the manner of performing their publick *Worship*,

ship, it was still required to be done with all imaginable Submission and Reverence. This the *Stoick* commends, and cites *Aristotle* for it; *Egregie Aristoteles ait, nunquam nos verecundiores esse debere, quam cum de Diis agitur, &c.* “Men are never more concerned  
 “ to be humble and modest, than when they  
 “ have to do about God. We should enter  
 “ the Temples with an humble and composed demeanour. When we approach to  
 “ Sacrifice, it should be with all imaginable  
 “ Expressions of Reverence and Modesty in  
 “ our Countenance and Carriage. As for the chief Matter and Substance of Natural Worship, unto which the Light of Reason will direct, I know no other than Invoking of the Deity, Returning Thanks to him, and Enquiring after his Will. Those things which are superadded to these in that most acceptable way of Worship revealed in the Gospel, are not proper to be discoursed of here, because they depend merely upon Revelation.

It is true indeed, that all Nations pretending to any Religion from the most ancient Times to which any Record doth extend, have agreed in the way of Worship by *Sacrifice*. And from this *general Practice*, there may seem to be some ground to infer, this way of Worship to have been directed by the *Light of Nature*. But when 'tis well considered, what little ground there is to persuade a Man, left to his own free Reason,  
 that

that God should be pleased with the killing and burning of Beasts, or with the destroying of such Things by Fire of which better use might be made, if they were disposed of some other way; I say, when 'tis well considered, what little Reason there is to induce such a Man to believe, that the killing or burning of Beasts or Birds, or any other thing useful to Mankind, should of it self be a proper and natural Means to testify our Subjection to God; or to be used by way of expiation from Sin: It will rather appear probable, that the original of this Practice was from *Institution*, and that our first Parents were by particular Revelation instructed in this way of Worship, from whom it was delivered down to their successive Generations by verbal Tradition; and by this Means was continued in those Families, who departed from the Church, and proved Heathen in the first Ages of the World; amongst whom this Tradition was in course of time, for want of care and frequent renewals, corrupted with many human Superinducements, according to the *Genius* or Interests of several Times or Nations.

As for the Reasons, why God was pleased to institute to his own People this way of Worship, there are these two Things may be suggested.

1. Sacrifices had a typical Reference unto that great Design which was to be accom-

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plished in the *fulness of time*, by the Sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross, which is at large explained and applied in several parts of the *New Testament*, particularly in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, from whence many strong Arguments may now be deduced, for confirmation of the Truth of the Gospel.

2. Because this way of Worship was most suitable to those Ages; the Providence of God having purposely adapted his own Institutions of Worship, unto the Abilities and Capacities of Men in several Times; discovering himself to his People in *divers manners*, according to sundry Times. And therefore in those first and ruder Ages of the World, when People were more generally immersed in sensible things, and stood in need of somewhat to raise and fix their Imaginations, God was pleased to amuse them with external Pomp and Solemnities, and to employ that time of their *Nonage*, about these plainer *Rudiments* or *Elements of the World*. But when they were grown up from this *Nonage*, when the generality of Men became more notional, better able to consider and abstract things; when by the spreading of the *Roman* Conquests, which extended to the most considerable Parts of the World, they had likewise spread their Arts and Civilities, reducing the Provinces which came under their Power, from that Savageness and Barbarism with which they had formerly been

been

been overspread, to the love and desire of all peaceful Arts, and the study of all useful Knowledge, whereby the Minds of Men were rendred more rational and inquisitive than before they had been, and consequently better prepared for the reception of the Christian Religion: In this *fulness of time* (as the Scripture stiles it) did the Providence of God think fit to introduce Christian Religion, a more rational and spiritual way of Worship, whole *Precepts* are most agreeable to the purest and sublimest Reason; consisting chiefly in a Regulation of the Mind and Spirit, and such kind of Practices as may promote the good of Human Society, and most effectually conduce to the perfecting of our Natures, and the rendring of them happy.

And that the most rational kind of Worship doth consist in such kind of Qualifications and Services, besides the Attestation of several Scriptures to this purpose, may likewise be made evident by the acknowledgment of the wisest Heathens. *Eusebius* quotes *Menander*, a Greek Poet, to this purpose, (sometimes cited by St. *Paul*) *Men do in vain, saith he, endeavour to make the Gods propitious by their costly Sacrifices; if they would have the divine Favour, let them love and adore God in their Hearts, be just and holy in their Conversations.* And in another place he cites the like Sayings out of *Porphyry*, in his Book *de Sacrificiis*, and *Apol-*  
Prepar. Evang. 13. c. 13.  
Lib. 4. c. 13.  
So

Dissert. 38

So *Maximus Tyrius*, speaking concerning those divers Solemnities wherewith several Nations did honour their Gods, saith, *He would be loth, by denying any of these, to derogate from the Honour of the Deity; but Men should chiefly labour to have him in their Minds, ἴσωςαυ μὲνον, ἐεάτωσαν μὲνον,* they should principally endeavour to know him, and to love him.

Epist. 95.

So *Seneca*, having discoursed concerning those external Adorations and Ceremonies, whereby several Men were wont to express their Devotion, he says, *Humana ambitio istis capitur officiis, Deum colit qui novit;* “Such Formalities may be acceptable to the  
“Ambition of Men, but he only can truly  
“worship God who knows him.” The first step (saith he) unto Divine Worship, is to believe the Being of God; and then to demean our selves towards him suitably to the greatness of his Majesty. *Vis Deos propitiare, bonus esto; satis illos coluit quisquis imitatus est.* “Would you render him

*De Nat.  
Deorum,*  
lib. 2.

“propitious to you, endeavour to be good:  
“That Man only doth truly worship him,  
“who labours to be like him.” So *Tully*;  
*Cultus autem Deorum est optimus, idemque castissimus, atque sanctissimus, plenissimusque pietatis, ut eos semper purâ, integrâ incorruptâ, mente & voce veneremur.*

Satyr. 2.

To which I shall only add that Saying of *Perseus*, where he prefers an honest and

a vir-



a virtuous Mind, above all other costly Sacrifices and Offerings.

*Compositum jus fasque animi, sanctosque  
recessus  
Mentis, & incoctum generoso pectus ho-  
nesto,  
Hæc cædo, ut admoveam templis, & farre  
litabo.*

If true Worship did consist only in costly Sacrifices, then such alone as were rich could be religious; whereas God is more ready to accept the meanest Offering, from a Person of a just, and worthy, and generous Mind, who doth truly love and devote himself to him, than of the most pompous costly Sacrifices from others.

And thus have I done treating of those kind of Affections, which naturally follow from due Apprehensions of the *incommuni- cable* Attributes belonging to the Divine Nature; namely, *Adoration* and *Worship*.



## C H A P. XIII.

*Of Faith or Affiance in God.*

I Proceed to those other Affections whereby we are to give unto God (so far as Creatures are capable) that Honour which is due to those communicable Perfections belonging to the Divine *Understanding, Will, Faculties of Acting*; namely, his *Wisdom, Goodness, Power, Dominion*, and Superiority over us, and his *distributing of future Rewards and Punishments*, which should respectively excite in us, *Affiance, Love, Reverence, and Obedience*, both *active* and *passive*. And though each of these Graces have sufficient foundation in every one of the Divine Excellencies promiscuously; yet there is some more peculiar reference and correspondence amongst them, according to this Order.

I purpose to speak to each of them severally and briefly.

First, Concerning *Affiance*; by which I mean an acquiescence of the Mind, whereby it is supported against all unnecessary Doubts and Fears, upon Account of the Divine All-sufficiency in general, with more special respect to his Knowledge, and Wisdom, and Providence; whereby he doth take notice  
of

of our Conditions, and is able to order all things for the best, and doth not permit any thing to befall us without his knowledge of it, and being concerned for it. This Grace, according to its different Relations, is usually distinguished into these Three Branches:

1. As it respects an Act of the Judgment in assenting to all Divine Truths, whether discoverable by Reason, or by Revelation; so 'tis stiled *Faith*. 2. As it imports a Resting of the Will and Affections in the Divine Goodness, whether discovered to us by the Light of Nature, or by Revelation; so 'tis stiled *Trust*; and according to the greater Measure or Degree of it, *Confidence* and *Plerophory*. So the Heathen, who have no Revelation, can support themselves in their Sufferings for that which is good, with the Consideration that God will take care of them. As it relates to the Expectation and Desire after some future *Good* which we stand in need of, or the Escaping of some *Evil* we are obnoxious unto; so 'tis stiled *Hope*. But I shall treat of these promiscuously, because they agree in the general nature of *Affiance*. And how reasonable and proper this *Affiance* in God is, will appear from these Considerations.

1. 'Tis necessary to our present state in this World, that there should be something for us to lean upon, and have recourse unto, as our Support and Refuge.

2. God alone is an all-sufficient Stay, upon which the Mind of Man can securely repose it self in every Condition.

1. 'Tis necessary to our present State in this World, that there should be something for us to lean upon, and have recourse unto, as our Support and Refuge. This the ancient *Poets* have signified in their Fable of *Pandora's Box*, which when *Epimetheus* had opened, and saw all manner of Evils flying out of it, he suddenly closed it again, and so kept in *Hope* at the bottom of it, as being the only Remedy left to Mankind, against all those Evils to which they are obnoxious. Every Man at his best Estate, is but a feeble infirm Creature: What from the Impotence of his Mind, and the Disorder of his Passions from *within*, together with the Troubles and Difficulties that he shall meet withal from *without*; the great Obscurity which there is in the nature of things, that Uncertainty which attends the Issues and Events of them; the mutability of all human Affairs, which cannot possibly be secured by all the imaginable Wisdom and Foresight which Men are capable of. From all which it sufficiently appears, that *Faith* and *Hope* and *Trust* are altogether necessary to the state of Men in this World; and that they must always be in an unsafe unquiet condition, unless they have somewhat to support and relieve them in their Exigencies. 'Tis observed of the *Hop*,  
and

and other such climbing Plants, which are not of strength enough to bear up themselves, that they will by natural instinct lean towards and clasp about any thing that is next, which may help to bear them up; and in want of a Tree or a Pole, which is their proper Support, they will wind about a Thistle or a Nettle, or any other Weed, though in the issue it will help to choak and destroy the growth of them, instead of furthering it. The Application is easy, *All flesh is grass,* Isa. xl. 6. *and the glory thereof, as the flower of the field,* of a fading impotent condition, standing in need of something *without* its self for its protection and support. And a mistake in the choice of such Helps, may sometimes prove fatal. Our conditions in this World are often in *Scripture* represented by a State of *Warfare*; wherein the Virtues of *Faith* and *Hope* are said to be our *Breast-plate*, our *Shield* and our *Helmet*, the chief defensive I Theff. v. 6. Arms whereby we are to be guarded against Eph. vj. 17. all Assaults. And sometimes by a State of *Travelling by Sea*, wherein *Hope* is our *Anchor*, Heb. vj. 19. that which must fix and keep us steady in the midst of all Storms.

2. God alone is an all-sufficient stay, upon which the Mind of Man can securely repose it self in every Condition. For which Reason he is in the *Scripture* Phrase stiled the *Hope of Israel*, the confidence of all the ends Pf lxxv. 5. of the earth, and of such as are afar off I rov. iij. 26.  
upon

Rom. xv. *upon the Sea, the God of Hope.* Which Ti-  
 13. tles he hath been pleased to assume unto him-  
 1 Pet. i. self, to teach us this Lesson, *that our Faith*  
 21. *and Hope should be in God.*

The principal Conditions requisite in that Person, who is fit to be a proper Object of our Confidence, are these four :

1. Perfect Knowledge and Wisdom, to understand our Conditions, and what may be the most proper Helps and Remedies for them.

2. Unquestionable Goodness, Love, Faithfulness, to be concerned for us, and to take care of us.

3. Sufficient Power, to relieve us in every Condition.

4. Everlastingness, that may reach to us and our Posterity to all Generations. All which are only to be found in God. From whence it will appear, that as he is the only proper Object of our Trust, so by not trusting in him, we do deny to him the Honour which is due to these Divine Excellencies, and consequently are deficient in one of the chief Parts of Religion.

1. He alone hath perfect Knowledge and Wisdom to understand our Conditions, and what may be the most proper Remedy for them. *His Understanding is infinite.* Our most secret Thoughts and inward Groanings are not hid from him. He knows our Diseases, and what Physick is fittest for us, the best

Pf. cxlvij.  
5.

best Means of Help, and the most fitting Season to apply those Means. He is infinitely wise to contrive such ways of Safety and Deliverance, as will surmount all those Difficulties and Perplexities which would put Human Wildom to a Loss. He doth sometimes accomplish his Ends without any visible Means; *filling Men's bellies with his hid treasure*, making them to thrive and prosper<sup>14.</sup> in the World, by such secret Ways as Men understand not. And sometimes he doth blast the most likely Means, so that the *battel*<sup>Ecclef. ix.</sup> *is not to the strong, nor yet bread to the wise,*<sup>11.</sup> *nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill*; but it may happen to them, as the *Prophet* speaks, that<sup>Hag. i. 6.</sup> *they sow much, yet they bring in but little; they eat and have not enough, they drink but are not filled, they are cloathed but are not warm, earn wages but put it into a bag with holes.* And therefore upon this account there is very good reason why God should be the Object of our *Confidence*.

2. He is likewise infinite as to his Goodness, Love, Truth, Faithfulness, whereby he is concern'd for our Welfare, and doth take care for us. The nearest and dearest Relations which we have in the World, in whom we have most Reason to be confident, *Our Father and Mother may forsake*<sup>Pf. xxvij.</sup> *us*: And as for such whom we have ob-<sup>10.</sup> liged by all imaginable Kindness, they may deal

deal deceitfully with us, and prove like *winter Brooks*, which in wet Seasons, when there is no need of them, will run with a Torrent, but are quite vanish'd in a time of Drought. Whilst we are in a prosperous Condition, they will be forward to apply themselves to us, with great Professions of Kindness and Zeal; but if our Condition prove any way declining, they presently fall off and become Strangers, forgetting and renouncing all Obligations of Friendship and Gratitude, rather than run the least hazard or trouble to do us a Kindness. That Man hath had but little Experience in the World, to whom this is not very evident. But now the Mercy and Goodness of God *is over all his Works*, and more especially extended to such as are in a state of Misery, the *Fatherless* and *Widows*, the *Prisoners*, the *Poor*, and the *Stranger*. *He is a helper of the friendless*. That which amongst Men is usually the chief occasion to take off their Affection and Kindness; namely, Misery and Affliction, is a principal Argument to entitle us to the Favour of God, and therefore is frequently made use of by good Men in *H. Scripture* to that purpose.

*O go not far from me, for trouble is nigh at hand, and there is none to help me; I am in misery, O hear me speedily.*

3. He is of infinite Power, for our relief and supply in every Condition; being able



able to *do whatsoever he pleaseth both in* Pf. cxxxvj.  
*heaven and in earth, and in the sea, and in*  
*all deep places.* He is the first cause of every  
 thing, both as to its Being and Operation.  
 We depend wholly upon his Power, not on-  
 ly for the Issues and Events of things, but  
 likewise for the Means. And therefore 'tis  
 in *Scripture* made an Argument why we  
 should not trust in Riches, or in any Worldly  
 thing, *because power belongs to God.* And Pf. lxiij. 10.  
 'tis elsewhere urged for a Reason why we 11.  
 should *trust in the Lord for ever, because in* I sa. xxvj.  
*the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.* 4.  
 And upon this consideration *Abraham* is said Rom. iv.  
 to have *hoped against hope, being fully per-* 18, 21.  
*suaded that what God had promis'd he was*  
*able to perform.*

4. He is everlasting, whereas all other  
 Helps and Comforts which we can propose  
 to ourselves are transient and fading. Zech. i. 5.  
*As for our fathers, where are they? And do the*  
*Prophets, or Princes, live for ever?* Their  
 Days upon Earth are a Shadow that flecteth  
 away, *their breath goeth forth, and they re-*  
*turn to the earth, and then all their thoughts*  
*perish:* Whereas he is from Everlasting to  
 Everlasting, God blessed for ever; and his  
 Righteousness extendeth to Childrens Chil-  
 dren, even to all Generations. We see by  
 daily Experience, Persons of great Hopes  
 and Expectations, when their Patrons die  
 upon whom they had their dependance, to  
 what

what a forlorn and helpless Condition they are reduced : But now this can never befall  
 Jer. xvij. 7. the Man *who trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.* And 'tis one of the greatest Privileges of Religion, that it doth furnish a Man with such a sure Refuge and Support against all kind of Exigencies, whereby he may bear up his Spirit under those Difficulties wherewith others are overwhelmed.

'Tis true indeed, it cannot be denied, but that God doth expect, and the Nature of Things doth require, that Men should be suitably affected with Joy or Sorrow, according as their Conditions are ; but yet with this difference, that those who believe the Providence of God, should not be so deeply affected with these things as other Men, they should *weep, as not weeping, and rejoice, as not rejoicing.* They should not upon any Occasion fear or sorrow as *men without hope,* but should demean themselves as Persons that have an higher Principle to be acted by, and to live upon, than any of these sensible Things.

I cannot omit to suggest one Observation concerning this Duty of *Affiance,* which I have now been insisting upon ; That tho' this particular Virtue, and others of the like Affinity, be evidently *moral Duties,* our Obligation to them being clearly deducible from the Light of Nature and the Prin-

Principles of Reason, and consequently must be owned by the Heathen Philosophers; yet they do in their Writings speak but sparingly concerning those kind of Virtues which are of a more spiritual Nature, and tend most to the Elevating and Refining of the Mind. And on the other side, the Scripture doth most of all insist upon the Excellency and Necessity of these kind of Graces. Which is one of the main Differences betwixt the Scripture and other moral Writings. And for this Reason it is, that in speaking of these Graces and Virtues, I do more frequently allude to Scripture Expressions.



## C H A P. XIV.

*Of the Love of God.*

SEcondly, As for those *Perfections* belonging to the Divine *Will*; namely, his *Goodness*, his *Justice*, his *Truth*, and *Faithfulness*: The due apprehension of these should excite in us the Virtue of *Love*, with all the genuine Fruits of it. By *Love*, I mean an esteeming of him, and a seeking after him, as our only Happiness.

So that there are two Ingredients of this Virtue of *Love*, Estimation and Choice.

1. An *Estimation* of the Judgment; a due Valuation of those Excellencies which are in the Divine Nature, whereby we look upon God as the Supreme Being *in genere boni*: From whom all created Goodness is derived, and by conformity to whom it is to be measured. And this Notion is the proper importance of the word *Charity*, whereby we account a Thing dear or precious. And in this Sense doth our Saviour oppose *Despising* to *Loving*; *Either he must hate the one, and love the other; or he must hold to the one, and despise the other.*

Mat. v. 24.

Now these Perfections of the Divine Nature may be considered, either absolutely or relatively.

1. *Absolutely*, as they are in themselves, abstracting from any Benefit that we ourselves may have by them. And in this Sense they can only produce in us an esteem of our Judgments, without any desire or zeal in our Will or Affections. The Devil doth understand these absolute Perfections of the Divine Nature, that God is in himself most wise, most just, and powerful: And he knows withal that these things are good, deserving Esteem and Veneration. and yet he doth not love God for these Perfections, because he himself is evil, and is not like to receive any Benefit by them

2. *Relatively*, with reference to that Advantage which may arrive to us from the  
Divine

Divine Goodness. When Men are convinced of their infinite need of him, and their misery without him; and that their utmost Felicity doth consist in the Enjoyment of him: This is that which properly provokes Affection and Desire, namely, his relative Goodness as to us. There is scarce any one under such transports of Love, as to believe the Person whom he loves, to be in all Respects the most virtuous, wise, beautiful, wealthy that is in the World. He may know many others, that do in some, if not in all these Respects, exceed: And yet he hath not an equal love for them, because he hath not the same hopes of attaining an Interest in them, and being made happy by them. So that this Virtue doth properly consist in such a kind of esteem, as is withal accompanied with a hope and belief of promoting our own Happiness by them. And this is properly the true ground and original of our love to God. From whence will follow,

2. Our *Choice* of him, as being the only proper Object of our Happiness, preferring him before any thing else that may come in competition with them. Not only (as the Scripture expresseth it) loving him *above father and mother*, but *hating father and mother, yea and life it self for his sake: Counting all other things but dross and dung*, in comparison of him.

Mat. x. iij.  
Luk. xiv.  
26.  
Philem. 3.

Now it cannot otherwise be, but that a due apprehension of the Divine Excellencies

in general, especially of his particular Goodness to us, must excite in the Soul suitable Affections towards him. And hence it is, that the Misapprehension of the Divine Nature, as to this Attribute, doth naturally produce in Men that kind of Superstition stiled *δεισιδαιμονία*, which imports a frightful and over-timerous notion of the Deity, representing God as austere and rigorous, easily provoked by every little circumstantial Mistake, and as easily appeased again by any flattering and slight Formalities. Not but that there is sufficient Evidence from the Principles of Natural Reason, to evince the contrary: But the true ground of their Mistakes in this matter, is from their own vicious and corrupt Affections. 'Tis most natural for selfish and narrow Men, to make themselves the Rule and Measure of Perfection in other things. And hence it is, that according as a Man's own Inclinations are, so will he be

Psal. l. 21. apt to think of God; *Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself.* Those that are of ill Natures and of little Minds, whose Thoughts are fixed upon small and low Matters, laying greater weight upon Circumstances, Salutes, Addresses, than upon the real worth of Persons and substantial Duties, being themselves apt to be provoked unto wrath and fierceness, upon the omission of these lesser Circumstances, and to be pacified again by any flattering and formal Services; such

such Men must consequently think themselves obliged to deal just so towards God, as they expect that others should deal with them. And according to the different Natures and Tempers of those Men who mistake this Notion of the Divine Goodness, so are the Effects and Consequences of this Mistake various (as a learned Man hath well observed :) When it meets with *stout* and *sturdy* Natures, who are under a Consciousness of Guilt, it works them to Atheism, hardens them to an Opposition of him, to an endeavour of undermining and destroying the Notion of that Deity, by whom they are not like to be safe or happy. If with more *soft* and *timerous* Natures, Men of base and slavish Minds, it puts such Men on to flatter and collogue with him, and to propitiate his Favour by their Zeal in lesser Matters. And though in this kind of Temper and Carriage there may be a shew of Religion, yet the terminating of it in such things is most destructive to the nature of it, rendring all converse with the Deity irksome and grievous, begetting a kind of forced and praternatural Zeal, instead of that inward Love and Delight, and those other genuine kindly Advantages which should arise to the Soul from an internal frame of Religion.

Mr. Smith's  
of Super-  
stition.

And that the Perfections of the Divine Nature, and particularly his Goodness, should excite our Love of him, may be made evi-

dent by all kind of Proofs; there being no kind of Motive to Affection, whether *imaginary* or *real*, but 'tis infinitely more in God than in any thing else besides. I shall mention only these three Things.

1. His absolute Goodness and Excellency.

2. His relative Goodness and Kindness to us.

3. The Necessity we are under of being utterly lost and undone, without an interest in his Favour.

1. His absolute Perfections are infinite, being the Original of all that Good which we behold in other Things. Whatever Attractives we find diffused amongst other Creatures, by which they are rendred amiable, they are all derived from him, and they are all, in comparifon to him, but as little drops to the Ocean. There is much of loveliness in the Fabrick of this beautiful World, the *glorious Sun, the Moon and the Stars which he hath ordained*; which is abundantly enough to render the Notion and the *Name of him excellent in all the Earth*. We may perhaps know some particular Persons so very Eminent for all kind of Accomplishments, *Virtue, and Wisdom, and Goodness, &c.* as to contract an Esteem and Veneration from all that know them. But now the highest Perfections that are in Men, besides that they are derived from him, are so infinitely disproportionable to his, that they may be said

not.



not to be in any of the Creatures. There is some kind of communicated Goodness, and Wisdom, and Power, and Immortality in Men; and yet these Perfections are in Scripture appropriated to the Divine Nature in such a manner, as if no Creature did partake of them. *There is none good, or wise,* Mat. xix. 7. but he. He is the *only Potentate, who only* 1 Tim. i. 17. *hath immortality.* No Man can take a serious view of the Works he hath wrought, ch. vj. 15. whether they concern Creation or Providence, but he must needs acknowledge, concerning the Author of them, that he is altogether lovely; and say with the *Prophet, How great* Zech. ix. *is his Goodness? and how great is his Boun-* 17. *ty?* The comeliness of them is upon all accounts so eminent and conspicuous, as cannot but be owned by every one who considers them. For any Man to ask, what Beauty is, this is, *τύφλε ἐρώτημα*, as *Aristotle* speaks, the question of a Blind Man. Every Man who hath Eyes, may judge of it at first view: Not to discern it, is a sure Argument of Blindness and Darkness. And that the Divine Nature is not more amiable to us, shews the great Imperfection of our present Condition. It shall be the perpetual Employment of our future State in Heaven, to celebrate these Excellencies of the Divine Nature. The Blessed Angels, and the Spirits of just Men made perfect, do receive a chief Part of their Felicity, by contempla-

ting these Divine Perfections in the beatifical Vision.

2. His relative Goodness and Kindness to us; testified in so many particulars, that *when we would reckon them up, they are more in number than the sand.* He is the Author of our beings, and our well-beings.

Pfal. c. 3. *It is he that made us, and not we our selves. He spreads our tables, and fills our cups:*

Pfal. xxiii. *In him we live, and move, and have our beings.* He doth daily follow us, compass us about, load us with his benefits. He gives us all that we enjoy, and he is willing upon our Repentance to forgive us all that we offend. *And to whom much is given, or forgiven, they should love much.* To love them that love us, is a Duty but of a low attainment, *the Publicans and Sinners do the same;* nay, the very Beasts will do it, *The Ox knows his Owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib.* That Person must be void of the Reason of a Man, who will not admire and love God for his Excellencies; but he that doth not love him for his Kindness, must be more stupid and senseless than the brute Creatures.

3. We are utterly undone without an Interest in his Favour. So that if the apprehension of his *absolute* Goodness cannot work upon our *Reason*, nor the Sense of his *relative* Goodness or Kindness upon our *ingenuity* and *gratitude*; yet the Consideration of our undone estate without him, ought to

prevail with all such, as have not forfeited the first and most universal Principle of Self-preservation. The not having him for our Friend, and much more the having him for our Enemy, puts a Man into an absolute incapacity of all kind of Happiness. 'Tis a Question proposed by St. *Austin*, why we are so often in Scripture enjoined to love God and our Neighbours, but have no-where any Precept commanding us to love our selves? To which he gave this Answer, *Fingi non potest major dilectio sui, quam dilectio Dei*; "The highest and truest Self-love, is to love that which can alone make us happy." Men do not need any Motive or Argument to persuade them to love themselves. 'Tis a *natural Principle*, rather than a *moral Duty*; they must do so, nor can they do otherwise. Only this is that wherein they stand in greatest need of direction, how to set this natural Principle on work upon its due Object. Felicity must be every Man's chief End, there is no need of persuading any one to that; all the difficulty is to convince Men, wherein this Happiness doth consist. And there is no rational considering Man, but must needs grant it to be in the fruition of the first and supreme Good; so that to love God as our Happiness, is to love our selves, beyond which there is nothing to be said or fancied by way of Motive or Persuasion.

'Tis a Duty this, upon all accounts, so plain and reasonable, that no Man whatsoever can pretend to any kind of doubt or dispute about it. And therefore I shall add no more by way of proof or confirmation of the Necessity of it.

I shall only offer two Considerations, which should engage Men's utmost diligence and caution in this Matter.

1. 'Tis a business of greatest consequence, to know whether we truly love God.

2. 'Tis a matter wherein we are very liable to mistake.

1. 'Tis a business of unspeakable concernment, to understand whether we love God, or not: It being the same thing as to enquire, whether there be any thing in us of true Religion or not. 'Tis not a Question about the Fruits or the Branches, but about the Root; not about the Degrees, but about the very Essence of Grace and Holiness. There being no *Medium* betwixt loving God and hating of him. *He that is not with me, is against me,* (saith our Saviour) *Luk. xj. 23.*

2. And then 'tis a matter wherein Men are liable to mistake. There is naturally *in all Nations of men, who dwell on the face of the earth,* a kind of confused Inclination towards God, *whereby they seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him,* as the Apostle speaks. And Men are apt to mistake this natural Propension for the  
grace

grace of Love; whereas this is rather an Inclination, than a firm Choice and Resolution; rather a natural Disposition, than an acquired or infused Habit. None could have more confident Persuasions of their love to God, and their Zeal for him, than the *Jews* had; and yet our *Saviour* tells them, *But I know you, that you have not the love of God in you.* Joh. v. 42.

'Tis not an outward Profession, though accompanied with Zeal, that is a sufficient Argument of our Love. Though there are many in the World, who both live and die under this delusion, *Matt. vij. 22. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out Devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me you that work Iniquity.*

'Tis not the being gifted and called for these extraordinary works of prophesying and Miracles; 'tis not an ability to undergo the Flames of Martyrdom, and the giving our Bodies to be burned: Neither Gifts or Privileges, nor some particular Acts of Duty, tho' of the most noble kind and greatest difficulty, can be a sufficient Evidence of this Love. So that 'tis a matter wherein Men are very liable to mistake, and where a Mistake will prove of infinite consequence. And therefore will it concern us, to be very considerate and cautious in our enquiry about it.

There

There is one kind of affection seated in the *rational* part of the Soul, the *Understanding* and *Will*; and another in the *sensitive*, the *Fancy* and *Appetite*: The one consisting in a full conviction, deliberate choice, and firm resolution; the other consisting more in some sudden *impetus* and transport of desire after a Thing. The first of these may be stiled the *Virtue*, the other the *Passion* of Love. Now though a Man should, in some Fits of Devotion, love God with as great a degree of fervor, as to passionate sensitive Love, as some *Martyrs* have done; yet were it possible for him in his judgment, to esteem any thing else but equally, or never so little more than God; such a kind of Affection, though it were sufficient to make the other a Martyr, yet could not preserve him from being an Apostate, and renouncer or blasphemer of Religion (as a learned *Author* hath proved more at large;) nay, I add farther, from the same *Author*, though a Man should love God with an equal degree of Affection, yet because the Objects are so infinitely disproportionable, and 'tis the Nature of moral Duties to be measured from those Motives by which we are to be induced to them; therefore of such an one it may be affirmed, that he doth not love God. He that makes him but equal to any worldly thing, may be said infinitely do despise and undervalue him.

For the farther Explication of this, I shall suggest to you a Distinction, not commonly (if at all) taken notice of by others, betwixt *natural Principles* and *moral Duties*. The misunderstanding of which, is the occasion of many Difficulties and Confusions about this and some other Points.

1. By *Natural Principles*, I mean such kind of Impressions as are originally stamp'd upon the Nature of Things, whereby they are fitted for those Services to which they are designed in their Creation; the acts of which are necessary, and under no kind of liberty of being suspended: All things must work according to their natural Principles, nor can they do otherwise; as heavy Bodies must tend downwards. The beauty of the World, and the wisdom of the Creation, is generally acknowledged to consist in this, that God was pleased to endue the Kinds of Things, with such Nature and Principles, as might accommodate them for those Works to which they were appointed. And he governs all things by such Laws, as are suited to those several Natures which he had at first implanted in them. The most universal Principle belonging to all kind of Things, is self-preservation, which in Man (being a rational Agent) is somewhat farther advanced to strong Propensions and Desires of the Soul after a state of Happiness, which hath the predominancy over all other Inclinations,

ons, as being the supreme and ultimate End, to which all their Designs and Actions must be subservient by a natural Necessity.

2. Whereas, on the other hand, those Rules or Means which are most proper for the attaining of this End, about which we have a liberty of acting, to which Men are to be induced in a moral Way, by such kind of Motives or Arguments as are in themselves sufficient to convince the Reason: These I call *moral Duties*; *Duties*, as deriving their obligation from their conducibility to the promoting of our chief End: and *moral*, as depending upon moral Motives. So that Self-love, and the proposing of Happiness as our chief End, though it be the Foundation of Duty, that *basis* or *substratum* upon which the Law is founded, yet 'tis not properly a moral Duty, about which Men have a liberty of acting. They must do so, nor can they do otherwise. The most vile and profligate Wretches that are, who are most opposite to that which is their true Happiness, they are not against Happiness it self, but they mistake about it, and erroneously substitute something else in the room of it. So that if Men were upon all Accounts firmly convinced, that God was their chief Happiness, they would almost as necessarily love him, as hungry Men do eat, and thirsty Men do drink. I have enlarged somewhat the more upon this particular, the better to manifest the



the true Cause or Ground of this Love, to consist in this Persuasion, that our chief Happiness is in the Favour of God, and the Enjoyment of him.



## C H A P. XV.

### *Of Reverence, and the Fear of God.*

**T**Hirdly, As for those kind of Affections, which should be wrought in us, more especially from the apprehension of the *Divine Power*; these are *Reverence, Fear, Humility*, a submissive and filial awe, which is so suitable to the notion of Omnipotence, and so necessary a consequence from it, as not to be separated.

By this *Reverence*, I mean such an humble, awful, and ingenuous regard towards the Divine Nature, proceeding from a due Esteem and Love of him, whereby we are rendred unwilling to do any thing which may argue contempt of him, or which may provoke and offend him. 'Tis a Duty which we owe to such as are in a superior relation, and is in the Fifth Commandment enjoined under the Name of *Honour*; which in the Notion of it doth imply a mixture of *Love* and *Fear*, and in the Object of it doth suppose *Goodness* and *Power*. That Power

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which

which is hurtful to Men, and devoid of goodness, may raise in their Minds a Dread and Terror, but not a Reverence and an Honour. And therefore all such Doctrines as ascribe unto God what is harsh and rigorous, and unworthy of his infinite goodness, instead of this *filial*, do beget a *servile* fear in Men. This is the meaning of that Citation in St. *Austin*, where he mentions it as *Varro's* judgment, *Deum à religioso vereri, à superstitioso timeri*. The Passion of Fear and Dread belongs to superstitious Persons, but the Virtue of reverence to those that are

Benefic. l.  
4. cap. 19.  
Epist. 123.

religious. And that of *Seneca*, *Deos nemo sanus timet, furor enim est metuere salutaria, nec quisquam amat quos timet*. No Man in his right Mind will fear God in this Sense; 'tis no less than Madness to have frightful Apprehensions of that which is most benign and beneficial; nor can true Love consist with this kind of Fear.

But as for this Reverence or filial Fear, it is so essential to a state of Religion, that not only the Scripture, but the *Heathen Moralists* likewise do describe Religion it self by this very Name of *fearing God*. And Men who are pious and devout, are by the *Gentiles* stiled *εὐλαβεῖς* and *φοβούμενοι*, Men of Reverence and Fear.

Now though every one of the Divine Perfections may justly challenge this Affection as due to it, particularly his infinite *Wisdom*  
and

and *Goodness*, yet doth it more particularly belong to his *Power*. I shall speak briefly of each of these.

1. For his *infinite Knowledge* and *Wisdom*, which are things that have been always counted venerable. He knows all our *Infirmities* and most secret *Faults*, and therefore ought to be feared upon that account. 'Tis a notable Saying in *Cicero* to this purpose; *Quis non timeat omnia providentem & cogitantem, & animadvertentem, & omnia ad se pertinere putantem, curiosum & plenum negotii Deum.* “Who would not

“fear that God who sees and takes notice of  
“all Things, so curious and full of business,  
“as to have a particular concern for every  
“action and person in the World?” And in another place he makes this Notion of the Deity, and the Fear consequent thereupon, to be the chief *basis* of Government, the first Foundation of that civil policy whereby Men are gathered together and preserved in regular Societies. *Sit persuasum civibus, Deos,*

De Legib.  
Lib. 2.

*qualis quisque sit, quid in se admittat, quâ mente, quâ pietate religiones colat, intueri; piorumque & impiorum habere rationem.* “This is one of the first Principles,

“which Men who would associate under  
“Government ought to be convinced of, that  
“God takes particular notice, what kind of  
“Person every one is, with what Mind and  
“Devotion he applies himself to the Duties

“ of

“ of Religion, and will deal with Men according as they are pious or impious.” From whence will follow, such a Fear of offending him by any dishonest action, as must make Men capable of living under Government.

2. His *Goodness, Holiness, Kindness, and Mercy*, do afford another Reason why he ought to be feared; though these are the most immediate Objects of our Love and Joy, yet will they likewise afford ground for our Reverence. We read in one Text, of Hos. iii. 5. *fearing the Lord and his goodness*; which is, when Men have such a Sense of his Goodness, as thereby to be affected with an holy awe and fear of offending him. And elsewhere, 'tis said, Pl. cxxx. 4. *There is forgiveness with him, that he ought to be feared.* The meaning of which place may be this, We stand in continual need of Pardon and Remission, being utterly undone without it; and God only doth give this, and therefore upon this account we ought to reverence and fear him.

3. This Duty doth more especially refer to that Attribute of his *Power*, together with the Effects of it, in the *Judgments* which he executes in the World. Now nothing is more natural to Men, than to fear such as have power over them, and are able to help or to hurt them. The Civil Magistrate is to be feared and revered upon this account, because

because *he bears the sword, and is a revenger*: Rom. 13.

Much more the Supreme Governour of the World. Men *can but kill the body*, and after that must die themselves; but God lives for ever, and can punish for ever; he can *cast both body and soul into hell*: And there-Mat. 10. fore we have very great reason to fear him. 18.

'Tis mention'd in Scripture, as one of those Attributes and Titles whereby the Divine Nature is describ'd, *The fear of Israel, He* Psal. 76. *that ought to be feared*. And that by those 11. who need not to fear others, the Princes and Potentates of the World. Those very Persons, whom others are most afraid of, ought themselves to stand in fear of him; for *he cuts off the spirits of Princes, and* ver. 12. *is terrible to the Kings of the earth*, as it follows in that Place.

The great Prejudice which ignorant Men have against this Affection of *Fear*, is, that it is a Check and Restraint to a Man in his Liberty, and consequently brings Disquiet to his Mind; which is so far from Truth, that on the contrary it may be manifested, that one of the greatest Privileges belonging to a State of Religion, doth arise from this true Fear of God, as being that which must set us at liberty from all other tormentful Fears. That which hath the greatest Influence upon the Troubles and Discontents of Men in the World, whereby their Conditions are rendred uncomfortable, is their inordinate

Fear, those misgiving Thoughts and Surmises, whereby they are apt to multiply their own Dangers, and create needless Troubles to themselves. And whatever a Man's outward Condition may be, as to the security and flourishing of it, yet while such Fears are in his Mind, *His soul doth not dwell at ease*, as the Phrase is; whereas, *he that fears the Lord, his soul shall dwell at ease*, i. e. such an one need not be afraid of any thing else. *Discat timere, qui non vult timere; discat ad tempus esse sollicitus, qui vult esse semper securus*, saith St. *Austin*; "He that  
 " would not fear other things, let him learn  
 " to fear God; let him be cautious and so-  
 " licitous for a Time, that would be ever-  
 " lastingly secure." And in another Place, *Homo time Deum, & minantem mundum ridebis*; "O Man! learn to fear God, an  
 " thou wilt despise the Threatnings of the  
 " World." And again, *Exhorresce quod minatur Omnipotens, ama quod promittit Omnipotens, & vilescet mundus sive promittens sive terrens*; "He that hath a true Fear of  
 " what the Omnipotent God doth threaten,  
 " and a Love to what he promises, to such a  
 " one the World, whether smiling or frown-  
 " ing, will seem contemptible." The Heaven, and Earth, and Men, are all but his Instruments, and cannot do any thing otherwise than as they are permitted or acted by him. Though they should seem to be an-  
 gry

gry with us, yet he can restrain their Wrath, and, when he pleaseth, can reconcile them to us. But if he himself be offended, none of these things will be able to afford us any Comfort or Relief. 'Tis above all other things the most fearful *to fall into the hands of the living God.* That's a notable Speech to this purpose, which I find cited out of *Plutarch*; "They that look upon God as the chief Rewarder of Good and Evil, and fear him accordingly, are thereby freed from other perplexing Fears." Such Persons, *minus animo conturbantur, quam qui indulgent vitiis audentque scelera,* have more inward Peace than others who indulge themselves in their Vices, and dare commit any Wickedness."

And as on the one side, the more Men have of this Fear towards God, the less they have of other Fears: So the less they have of this, the more subject are they to other Fears. Amongst the many Judgments denounced against the want of this Fear of God, the Scripture particularly mentions a fearful Mind; *If thou wilt not fear that glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God,* Deut. 28. *the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, &c.* And this is reckoned as one of them, *The Lord shall give thee a trembling* ver. 65. *heart.* And if we consult Experience, there are none more obnoxious in this kind, than prophane atheistical Persons, who by their

vile Doctrines and Practices endeavour to harden themselves and others against this fear of God. None so cowardly and timorous as these, none so easily frightned with the least Appearance of Danger. The *Satyrift* of old observed it of them:

*Hi sunt qui trepidant, & ad omnia fulgura pallent.*

None are so fearful, as those that pretend not to fear God at all. And 'tis but justice, that those who will not reverence him as *Sons*, should be overwhelmed with Dread and Astonishment towards him as *Slaves*. And this Consideration ought to be no small Inducement to Men, to labour after this

Judg. 9. 2. Disposition. As *Abimelech* said to the Men of *Sichem*, *Judge, I pray you, whether it be better for you, that threescore and ten persons reign over you, or that one reign over you.* So in this case, consider whether it be better for you, to be distracted by the great Variety of worldly Cares and Fears, which, as so many Tyrants, will domineer over you, and keep you in perpetual Slavery, or to submit yourselves to this one Fear, the Fear of God, which is perfect Peace and Liberty.

To all which may be added, That it is by this Fear that we are to give unto God the Glory of his Power and Justice. 'Tis this



this that must make us pliable to his Will, and effectually remove all such Obstacles as may hinder us from submitting to him; subdue our Reluctancies, and make us bow down before him. Upon which Account this Expression of fearing *God* is frequently used in Scripture for the whole Business of Worship and Religion; because where this Fear is well fixed in the Heart, all other Parts of Holiness and Righteousness will naturally follow.

It hath a more peculiar Influence to stir up in us Watchfulness and Caution, and like a wary Friend is apt to suggest to us the safest Counsel and Advice: 'Tis the vigilant Keeper of all Virtues, that which must fortify us in our Temptations, and restore us in our Lapses.

He that will but seriously ponder upon what the mere Light of Nature dictates, concerning the Omnipotence of him, who is the great Creator and Governour of the World, his infinite Holiness and Justice, and that wise Providence, which extends to every particular Person and Action, whereby he takes notice of them, and will be sure to reward or punish them, according as they are good or evil; such an one must needs have his Heart affected with a great Awe and Dread towards the Divine Nature.

The very *Heathens* were wont upon this Account to paint their *Jupiter* with a Thun-

derbolt in his Hand; to strike an awe into Men, from daring to offend him who stands always ready arm'd with Vengeance against such as provoke him.

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## C H A P. XVI.

*Of Obedience: And first of Active Obedience to the Laws of God.*

**H**AVING dispatched the Duties we are more especially obliged to, with regard to God's *Wisdom, Goodness, Power*; I shall now treat concerning such other Duties, as refer more particularly to his *Dominion* and Superiority over us, his Right to command and govern us, which are comprehended under the general Name of *Obedience*.

The Habit of which may be describ'd to consist in such a submissive Frame of Spirit, whereby a Man doth always devote and resign up himself unto the Disposal of his Maker, being ready in every Condition to do or suffer that which he apprehends to be most reasonable and acceptable, and whereby he may best express his Love and Subjection.

By which Description it may appear, that this *Obedience* is of two kinds,  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{Active.} \\ \textit{Passive.} \end{array} \right.$

I. *Active.*

1. *Active*. Which consists in a Readiness of Mind to do what God shall enjoin.

2. *Passive*. In an Acquiescence of Mind under what he shall inflict. Both which do necessarily flow from the Apprehension of God's *Dominion* over us, his Right to govern and dispose of us as he pleaseth. *Obedience*, in the true Notion of it, being nothing else but that Homage which we owe to such as are in a superior Relation, who have a Right to command us. Every Relation of Superiority and Dominion being a distinct Engagement to Subjection; whether *Oeconomical*, as that betwixt *Parent* and *Child*; *Political*, as betwixt *Magistrate* and *Subject*; *Moral*, as betwixt *Benefactor* and *Beneficiary*; or lastly, that which is *Natural*, which above all other things gives the highest Title to Dominion, as that betwixt the *Maker* and his *Work*, the first Cause, and that which he bestows Being upon. And God by all these Titles, and many more, may justly challenge Dominion over us.

Under this first kind of Obedience, stiled *Active*, are comprehended these three Particulars: 1. A Knowledge of, and an Acquaintance with those Laws which we are to observe. 2. A Consent to them, or an Approbation of them. 3. A Conformity to them.

1. An Acquaintance with the Laws of God, whether discovered to us by *Revelation* (the Principles of Nature obliging us to

observe and submit to all things which we have reason to believe do proceed from God;) or by natural Light, abstracting from Scripture and Revelation, as the Substance of that which we call the Moral Law is. Now tho' such Persons only are under the Obligation of those Laws which depend upon Revelation, to whom a *Revelation* is made and sufficiently proposed, because Promulgation is essential to a Law; yet the Moral Law being discoverable by natural Light to every Man, who will but excite the Principles of his own Reason, and apply them to their due Consequences; therefore there must be an Obligation upon all Men, who have but the use of their Reason, to know these Moral Laws; and the Ignorance of them must be an inexcusable Sin. *Ignorantia juris* can be no Plea in this Case, because the Law is written in every Man's Heart by Nature, and the Ignorance of Mankind, as to any part of it, hath been wilfully contracted.

The Duties concerning natural Worship, our Adoration of the Deity by assiance, love, reverence, praying to him, expecting Mercies from him, returning to him our Thanks and Acknowledgments, being reverent and solemn in all our Addresses towards him, our Thoughts and Speeches of him, and of the Things that refer to his Service, may be evidently inferred from those natural Notions, which we have concerning the Excellencies

encies of his Nature, and our own Dependance upon him.

The Duties which concern the promoting of our own and our Neighbours Welfare, that mutual Justice, Charity, Helpfulness, which we are to exercise towards one another; these may each of them be deduced from that common Principle of Self-love, whereby every one doth naturally seek his own Welfare and Preservation. We are all of us desirous that others should be just to us, ready to help us, and do good to us; and because 'tis a Principle of the highest Equity and Reason, that we should be willing to do to others as we desire and think them obliged to deal with us, this must therefore oblige us to the same Acts of Charity and Helpfulness towards them. Now the drawing out of these General Rules, and fitting them to particular Cases; a studious and inquisitive Endeavour, to find out what our Master's Will is, in several Relations and Circumstances; this I call the Duty of *knowing the Commandments*. And 'tis necessary, that they should be thus distinctly *known*, before a Man can keep them.

2. A Consent to them, or Approbation of them, as being *holy, just, and good*. Which Rom. 7. will necessarily *follow* from a true Notion of <sup>12.</sup> the Ground and Reason of them, and must necessarily *precede* a genuine Obedience and Conformity to them. He that looks upon them as Fetters and Bonds, doth rather en-  
dure

dure them out of Necessity, than obey them out of Choice and Love. *I consent to the Law that it is good*, saith the *Apostle*; that is, I do in my judgment own the fitness and reasonableness of the things therein enjoin'd, as being the most proper means to advance the Perfection of our Natures. *The Law of the Lord is perfect* (saith the *Psalmist*;) not only *formaliter*, in itself; but also *effective*, as to us, it makes us to be so. And in another Place, *Thy Law is the Truth*, namely, such as it ought to be. There is a congruity betwixt our Well-beings, and the Nature of the things enjoin'd. And it is this Conviction alone, that must beget in us a Love of it, and a Delight to practise it. He that harbours any Prejudice in his Mind against the Ways of God, as if they were unprofitable, or unequal, can never submit to them willingly, but out of a Constraint; he may look upon them as his Task and Burden, but not as his Joy and Delight. Our external Submission to the Law, can never be kindly and regular, till our Minds be cast into the same Mould with it, and framed unto a suitability and conformity to it. And such a Temper doth, in the Judgment of *Seneca*, render the Mind truly great and noble, *Hic est magnus animus qui se Deo tradidit*. And in another Place, *in regno nati sumus, Deo parere libertas est*. "Such a Man hath a  
 "truly great and generous Mind, who can  
 "resign

De Vita  
 Beata, 15.

Rom. 7.  
 16.

Pf. 19. 7.

119. 142.

“ resign up himself to God’s disposal.” The greatest Liberty is to submit to the Laws of our Sovereign. *His Service is perfect Freedom.*

3. An Observance of them, and Conformity to them in our Lives. This is the End both of the Commandments themselves, and likewise of our Knowledge and Approbation of them, namely, the Practice of Holiness and Virtue in the Conduct of our Lives; whereby we are to be advanced unto that State of Happiness, wherein the Perfection of our Natures, and our Resemblance of the Deity doth consist.

And because the best of Men do frequently fall short of that Obedience, which is due to the Laws of God; therefore in case of Transgression, natural Light doth direct Men to Repentance, which is an hearty Sorrow for our Neglects and Violations of the divine Law, accompanied with a firm and effectual Purpose and Resolution of Amendment for the future. Which tho’ it do suppose the Commandments of God not to have been duly observ’d, yet is it the only Remedy left in such Cases.

Some have questioned, whether there be any Obligation upon us for this by the light of Nature; partly, because the *Stoicks* deny it; and partly, because Reason will tell a Man that it cannot afford any compensation to Divine Justice. To which I should say,  
That

That the *Stoicks* indeed do deny this, because it implies *Passion*, which their *wise Man* must be without; yet they will admit a Man to be displeas'd with himself for any Error or Mistake, which is much the same thing with Sorrow, tho' under another Name. And tho' this be not enough to satisfy infinite Justice, yet it is that which Reason doth oblige us to. We expect from those who offend us, that they should profess their Sorrow and Shame, beg Pardon, and promise Amendment. And the Men of *Nineveh* did upon a natural Principle betake themselves to this Remedy, and with good success, tho' they were doubtful of it, *Who*

Jon. 3. 9. *can tell if God will turn and repent?*

This Conformity to the Law of God requires a twofold Condition,

{ *Universality.*

{ *Regularity.*

1. *Universality*; Both as to the Time, and the Duties themselves; without any such picking and chusing amongst them, as may bend the Laws, to make them suitable to our own Interests and Humours.

2. *Regularity*; In the due proportioning of our Love, and Zeal, and Observance, according to that Difference which there is in the true Nature and Consequence of the things themselves; preferring *Mercy* and *Obedience*, before *Sacrifice*; and the *weighty matters of the Law*, before *tything of Mint*

*and*



and *Cummin*: *Righteousness* and *Peace*, before *Meat* and *Drink*. 'Tis true, the least Commandment is not to be neglected, as having stamped upon it the Authority of the great God: But then we are to consider, that the same Authority by which that is enjoined, doth oblige us to prefer other things before it. So that a Man doth disobey in doing a good thing, when upon that account he neglects what is far better. And the Mistake of Men about this, is the true Cause of that which we call Superstition; which is one of the Opposites to Religion, and so destructive to the true Nature of it: Men being apt to think themselves privileged for their Neglects and Failings in some greater Matters, by their Zeal about lesser Things.

Now nothing will contribute more to banish this Superstition out of the World, than a sober Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of Things, whereby we may be able to take a just Estimate of their Evidence and Importance, and consequently to proportion our Zeal about them.

I mention this the rather, because it hath been by some objected, that human Learning and Philosophy doth much indispose Men for this humble Submission to divine Laws, by framing their Minds to other Notions and Inclinations than what are agreeable to Religion.

But

But that this is a false and groundless Prejudice, may be made very evident: The true Knowledge of the Nature of things being, amongst natural Helps, one of the most effectual to keep Men off from those two Extremes of Religion, *Superstition* and *Prophaneness*.

1. For *Superstition*; this doth properly consist in a Misapprehension of things, placing Religion in such things as they ought not, for the *Matter*; or in such a Degree as they ought not, for the *Measure*; which proceeds from Ignorance.

2. For *Prophaneness*; this doth consist in a Neglect, or Irreverence towards sacred Things and Duties, when such Matters, as ought to have our highest Esteem, are rendered vile and common. And this likewise doth proceed from Ignorance of the true Nature of things. Now one of the best Remedies against this, is the Study of Philosophy, and a Skill in Nature, which will be apt to beget in Men a Veneration for the God of Nature. And therefore to those Nations who have been destitute of Revelation, the same Persons have been both their *Philosophers* and their *Priests*; those who had most Skill in one kind of Knowledge, being thought most fit to instruct and direct Men in the other. And if we consult the Stories of other Places and Times, we shall constantly find those

those Nations most solemn and devout in their Worship, who have been most civilized and most philosophical. And, on the contrary, those other Nations in *America* and *Africa*, whom *Navigators* report to be most destitute of Religion, are withal most brutish and barbarous as to other Arts and Knowledge.

It cannot be denied indeed, but that a slight superficial Knowledge of things, will render a Man obnoxious either to Superstition, or to Atheistical Thoughts; especially if join'd with a proud Mind and vicious Inclinations. He that hath made some little progress in natural Enquiries, and gotten some smattering in the Phrases of any *Theory*, whereby (as he conceives) he can solve some of the common *Phænomena*, may be apt to think, that all the rest will prove as easy as his first Beginning seems to be; and that he shall be able to give an Account of all things: But they that penetrate more deeply into the Nature of Things, and do not look upon second Causes, as being single and scatter'd, but upon the whole Chain of them, as linked together, will in the plainest Things, such as are counted most obvious, acknowledge their own Ignorance, and a Divine Power; and so become more modest and humble in their Thoughts and Carriage. Such inquisitive Persons will easily discern, (as a noble *Author* hath well expressed it) that

that the highest Link of Nature's Chain is fastened to *Jupiter's* Chair.

This (notwithstanding it be a Digression) I thought fit to say, by way of Vindication and Answer to those Prejudices, which some Men have raised against human Learning and the Study of Philosophy, as if this were apt to dispose Men unto Atheistical Principles and Practices. Whereas a sober Enquiry into the Nature of things, a diligent Perusal of this Volume of the World, doth of itself naturally tend to make Men regular in their Minds and Conversations, and to keep them off from those two Opposites of Religion, *Superstition* and *Prophaneness*.

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## C H A P. XVII.

*Of Passive Obedience, or Patience  
and Submission to the Will of God.*

**T**HUS much may suffice concerning the Nature and Duty of *Active* Obedience.

I proceed to that of *Passive* Obedience, or patient Submission under the afflicting hand of God.

And tho' this may seem one of the most difficult of all other Duties, and most repugnant to human Nature; yet is there no Subject more excellently discussed by the *Heathen Moralists*, and wherein they seem more to exceed themselves, than this.

I shall mention out of them some of those Passages, which seem to me most apposite and material to this purpose, under these four *Heads*, which contain the several Arguments to this Duty, *viz.*

1. Such as refer to God, by whose Providence all our Sufferings are procured, or permitted.
2. Such as concern our selves.
3. Such as may be derived from the nature of Affliction.

P

4. Add'

4. And lastly, such as refer to this Grace of Patience.

1. There are many Arguments to convince us of the Reasonableness of this Duty, from the Nature and Attributes of God, who either sends Afflictions, or permits them to fall upon us. I shall rank them under these three Heads. 1. His *infinite Knowledge and Wisdom*. 2. His *Goodness and Patience* towards us. 3. His *Power and Dominion* over us.

1. From the Consideration of his *infinite Knowledge and Wisdom*, whereby he takes notice of, and doth concern himself about every particular Event in the World, making *all things beautiful, and in their time*, disposing of all to the best: which is an Argument, that divers of the *Heathen* Philosophers do very largely insist upon; particularly *Antoninus*, who hath this Passage: “ If  
 Lib. 6. 39. “ God (*saith he*) do not take particular notice of, and care for me and my Affairs,  
 “ why do I at any time pray to him? And  
 “ if he doth exercise a special Providence  
 “ towards all Events, no doubt but he doth  
 “ consult well and wisely about them;  
 “ nor would he suffer any Hurt or Pre-  
 “ judice to befall me, unless it were for a  
 “ greater Good upon some other account;  
 “ and in this I ought to acquiesce.” And  
 Lib. 8. 23 in another Place, saith the same *Author*, “ I  
 “ refer

“ refer every thing that befalls me to God,  
 “ as the Contriver of it, by whom all Events  
 “ are disposed in a wise Order.”

There are also many great and excellent Sayings in *Epictetus* to this purpose. “ That Lib. 4. c. 7.

“ must needs be much more desirable, which  
 “ is chosen by the Wisdom of God, than  
 “ that which I chuse.” A Reluctancy against  
 the Divine Will, is the Ground of all Irreligion  
 and Atheism in the World. “ Why Lib. 1. c. 2.  
 “ may not a Man refuse to obey God in <sup>22.</sup>

“ what he commands, as well as to submit  
 “ to him in what he inflicts? And then  
 “ what ground can there be for any Pre-  
 “ tence to Religion? We should all (*saieth*  
 “ *he*) conform our Minds to the Will of  
 “ Providence; and most willingly follow  
 “ whither ever he shall lead us, as knowing  
 “ it to proceed from the best and wisest  
 “ Contrivance. I do in my Judgment more Enchirid.  
 “ consent to that which God would have,  
 “ than to that which my own Inclinations  
 “ lead unto. I would desire, and will just Differ. 3. 7.  
 “ so, and no otherwise than as he doth.”

And in another Place, “ Use me as thou — 2. 26.

“ pleasest, I do fully consent, and submit to  
 “ it, and shall refuse nothing which shall  
 “ seem good unto thee. Lead me whither  
 “ ever thou wilt; put me into what Condi-  
 “ tion thou pleasest; must I be in a private,  
 “ not in a publick Station; in Poverty, not  
 “ in Wealth? Ἐγὼ δὲ ὑπὸ ἀπαιτήτων τετραῶν πρὸς

“ τὸς ἀθρώπους ἀπολογήσομαι, I will not only  
 “ content to it, but make it my Business to  
 “ apologize for it, to justify and maintain  
 “ before all Men, such thy Dealing with me  
 “ to be most fitting and prudent, most suit-  
 “ able and advantageous to my Condition.”

And besides the Reasons to this purpose from natural Light, which are so excellently improved and urged by some of the *Philosophers*, there are likewise several Attestations of this nature in Scripture, wherein God is  
 Psal. 119. said to *afflict out of faithfulness*: To be  
 75. *wise in counsel*, and *excellent in working*; signifying all the Works of his Providence to be most excellent, because they proceed from the wisest Counsel.

And tho' some particular Dispensations may seem unto us to be difficult and obscure, *His judgments being unsearchable, and his ways past finding out*; yet we may be most sure, that there is an excellent Contrivance in all of them. *Though clouds and darkness may be round about him, yet righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.*

And besides the more general Assertions, which the Scripture doth frequently mention to this purpose, it doth likewise more particularly insist upon those special Reasons and Ends, whereby the Wisdom of such Dispensations are to be justified; as namely, *To*  
 Heb. 12. *make us partakers of God's holiness; to work*  
 11.



*in us the peaceable fruits of Righteousness; to save us from being condemned with the world; to preserve in us a holy Awe and Reverence. They have no changes, therefore they fear not God, Psal. 55. 19. To quicken our relish of those Mercies which we enjoy, and our Thankfulness for them; to wean our Affections from the things of this World; to prevent the Surfeits of Prosperity; to enlarge our Experience; to contract such a kind of Hardiness and Courage as may become a militant State; to keep up in our Minds a continual Sense of our dependent Condition; which are some of the principal Things wherein our Happiness doth consist.*

To which may be added, that the *Scripture* doth likewise contain several expresse Promises, to assure us of the Benefit and Advantage to be had by the Crosses that befall us. That *all things* in the issue *shall work together for our good*, Rom. 8. 28. So that there is not a Trouble or Affliction that we meet with, which we could be without, but it hath its necessary Place and Work, in that Frame and Design of Events, which the Providence of God hath ordained, for the bringing of us to Happiness. And tho' all of them may *for the present seem grievous*; and some of them perhaps not suitable to the divine Goodness and Promises; yet

of this we may be most assured, that all the  
 Pf. 25. 10. *ways of the Lord, are mercy and truth, to  
 such as keep his covenant, and his testimo-  
 nies.* And there are few Persons who have  
 been observant of God's Dealings towards  
 them, but are able to say from their own  
 Experience, that *it is good for them, that  
 they have been afflicted.*

2. A second Argument to this purpose,  
 is from the Consideration of God's *Goodness*  
 and *Patience* towards us. I have shewed  
 before from several Acknowledgments of  
 the *Heatken*, what Apprehensions they had  
 of the Divine Goodness and Forbearance to-  
 wards Sinners, from whence 'tis easy to in-  
 fer the Equity and Reasonableness of our  
 patient Submission under his afflicting Hand.

Exod. 34. He is *merciful and gracious, long-suffering,*  
 6. *abundant in goodness and truth.* The Apo-

Rom. 2. 4. *He speaks of the riches of his goodness, and  
 forbearance, and long-suffering.* He doth

indulge us in our Failings and Infirmities,  
 with such a kind of Tenderness, as Nurses  
 use to their young Children. Now there is  
 all imaginable Equity in this Consequence,  
 that if he bear with us, in what we cannot  
 lawfully do, that we should bear with him,  
 in *doing what he will with his own.* If he  
 be patient towards us in our sinning against  
 him, when we oppose and provoke him, 'tis  
 but reason that we should be patient in our

Suffer-

Sufferings from him, when he endeavours to heal and reclaim us.

*It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, and because his compassions fail not.* 'Tis a great Argument of Favour and Tenderneſs, that God is pleaſed to ſpare us in the miſt of our Provocations. 'Twere but juſtice if he ſhould ſuddenly ſnatch us out of this Life, and caſt us into Hell: If he doth abate any thing of this, *he doth then puniſh us leſs than our iniquities deſerve,* and we have more Reaſon to praiſe him, than to complain againſt him: *For he hath not dealt with us after our ſins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.*

He that conſiders the Mercies he enjoys, as well as the Evils he ſuffers, and will impartially compare them both together, may find that though his *afflictions do abound,* yet *his conſolations do much more abound;* and that upon the whole Matter, when his Condition is at the worſt, 'tis much better than what he himſelf deſerves, or what many others enjoy.

They that are ſenſible of every thing they enjoy, as being the free Gift of God, will not murmur againſt him, when he is pleaſed to reſume any thing from them. There muſt needs be much unreaſonableneſs and want of Equity in that Diſpoſition, which cannot bear with ſome Sufferings from that Hand, from which we receive all our En-

Job 2. 10. joyments. *Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?*

The Evils we suffer are much short of our desert; the Good we enjoy is much beyond our deserts. And therefore upon either account, it must be highly unreasonable for a Man to be guilty of Impatience, and Murmuring. *Iniquus est qui muneris sui arbitrium danti non relinquit*, saith *Seneca*;

Ad Polyb. c. 29.

“ That Man must needs be unjust and unequal, who doth not think fit to leave the Giver unto the Liberty of his own Gift, to resume it again when he pleaseth.” And such an one may justly be reputed greedy, who is more sensible of Loss in the restoring of a thing, than of Gain in the Enjoyment of it. He is an ingrateful Wretch, who complains of that as an Injury, which is but Restitution of what was freely lent. And he is a Fool, who knows not how to receive Benefit by good Things, any otherwise than by the present Fruition of them.

Differt.

B. 3. c. 26.

So *Epietetus* speaking concerning the unreasonableness of murmuring at any cross Events, he hath this Passage, *Τὶ ἐν θεωμαχῶ;* “ What Reason have I to fight against God? “ Why should I desire things not desirable? “ He that gave, hath Power to take, and why “ should I resist? This would not only be “ great Folly, to oppose one that is much “ stronger, but great Injustice likewise, to “ fight against a Benefactor. You have received

“ceived all that you have, and your own  
 “very Being from him, and why should  
 “you take it so heinously, if he is pleased  
 “to resume something back again?”

3. The Consideration of the Divine *power*  
 and *dominion over us*, must needs engage  
 us to a quiet Submission under his Hand.  
 There are many excellent Discourses to this  
 purpose amongst the *Heathen* Philosophers,  
 as particularly in *Seneca*: “There is no-  
 “thing (saith he) more desirable, than for a  
 “Man to arrive unto this Temper of Mind,  
 “to be able in all Troubles and Afflictions,  
 “to quiet himself with this Thought, *Diis*  
 “*aliter visum est*; God thinks not fit to  
 “have it so, and therefore I ought to be  
 “content.” Which is the same Sense with  
 that in the Scripture, *It is the Lord Jeho-*<sup>1 Sam. 3.</sup>  
*vah; let him do what seemeth good unto*<sup>18.</sup>  
*him. I was dumb, and opened not my*<sup>Psal. 39.</sup>  
*mouth, because thou didst it.*

“In all those Conditions which seem hard  
 “and grievous to me (saith the same *Author*)<sup>Epist. 96.</sup>  
 “I do thus dispose my self; I consider they  
 “come from God.” *Et non pareo Deo, sed*  
*assentior; ex animo illum, non quia necesse*  
*est, sequor*: “And I do endeavour not meer-  
 “ly to *submit*, but to *assent* to him in his  
 “Dealings; not to follow him only out of  
 “*Necessity*, but out of *Choice*.” And in ano-  
 ther place giving Counsel to such as were in<sup>Epist. 107.</sup>  
 an afflicted Estate, he thus adviseth, *Quae-*  
*cunque*

*cunq̄ue ſunt, debuiſſe fieri putet, nec velit obſurgare naturam: Optimum eſt pati quod emendare non poſſis, & Deum (quo autore cunq̄ta proveniunt) ſine murmuratione comitari:* “ Let ſuch a Man think that nothing  
 “ comes to paſs, but what ought to be; and  
 “ let him not take upon him to reprehend  
 “ Providence: ’Tis beſt for a Man to bear  
 “ what he cannot mend, and to follow God  
 “ (by whom all Events are diſpoſed) with-  
 “ out murmuring.” Let us (*ſaith he*) be-  
 ſpeak God as *Cleanthes* did,

*Duc me parens, ceſſique dominator poli,  
 Quocunq̄ue placuit, nulla parendi mora eſt.  
 Aſſum impiger; Fac nolle, comitabor  
 (gemens,  
 Maluſque patier, quod pati licuit bono.*

“ Let the great Governour of the World lead  
 “ me into what Condition he pleaſeth, I am  
 “ moſt ready to follow him; or ſuppoſe I  
 “ ſhould find a Reluctancy againſt his Deal-  
 “ ings with me; yet I will ſtill follow him,  
 “ tho’ it be ſighing, and ſuffer that as an evil  
 “ and wretched Man, which I ought to bear  
 “ as a good Man, with Patience and Submiſ-  
 “ ſion.” And a little after, *Sic vivamus, ſic lo-  
 quamur — Hic eſt magnus animus qui ſe Deo  
 tradidit; & contra, ille puſillus ac degener,  
 qui obluſtatur, & de ordine mundi malè ex-  
 iſtimat, & emendare mavult Deos quam ſe.*

“ It

“ It becomes Men both to speak and live up  
 “ to this Principle. He only is a truly ge-  
 “ nerous Man, who doth thus resign up him-  
 “ self to God; and on the contrary, he is a  
 “ little Wretch of a degenerate Mind, who  
 “ struggles against him, having a hard Opi-  
 “ nion of the Government of the World,  
 “ and thinks it fitter to mend God than him-  
 “ self.” Where is there any thing amongst  
 those who profess Christianity better and  
 more becomingly said to this Purpose? Or  
 how can the Wit of Man frame any Sense  
 or Words, that do more fully express this  
 Self-resignation and Submission to the Pro-  
 vidence of God, than is done in these excel-  
 lent Speeches of a *Heathen Philosopher*?

*Epictetus* likewise, speaking concerning  
 the reasonableness and fitness of Mens resign-  
 ing themselves up to God's Disposal, hath  
 this Passage, *Quis vero es tu? aut unde ve-*  
*nisti? aut quare?* “ Do you consider what  
 “ you are, and whence you came, and upon  
 “ what Business? Did not he give you a Be-  
 “ ing in the World? Endow you with such  
 “ a Nature? Put you into such a Condition  
 “ wherein you should be subject to his Go-  
 “ vernment and Disposal? Did not he ap-  
 “ point the Time, and Place, and Part you  
 “ are to act upon the Theatre of this World?  
 “ And this is properly your Business, to ap-  
 “ ply your self to the fittest Means of re-  
 “ presenting the Part allotted to you, not to  
 “ take

Enchirid. cap. 23. "take upon you to murmur or repine a-  
 "gainst it." *Hoc tuum est, datam personam*  
*bene effingere; eam autem eligere alterius.*  
 "It doth not belong to us to chuse our parts,  
 "but to act them. Would it not better be-  
 "come us to go off the Stage with Adora-  
 "tions and Praises of him, for so much as  
 "he hath permitted us to hear and see, ra-  
 "ther than mutinying against him, because  
 "we had no more?" And in another Place,  
 he suggests this Consideration; "That our  
 Differt. Lib. 3. cap. 24. "Condition, whilst we are in this World,  
 "is *militant*, wherein every one is without  
 "Reluctancy to submit to the Orders of  
 "his great Captain or General, in what-  
 "ever he shall appoint; whether or no it be  
 "to dig in the Trenches, or stand upon the  
 "Watch, or to fight. Every Man cannot  
 "be a Commander; and a common Sol-  
 "dier is to obey, not to dispute or offer  
 "Counsel. If thou mayest refuse the Con-  
 "dition or Work assigned thee, why may  
 "not another do so; and according to this,  
 "what Order could there be in the World?  
 Lib. 10. cap. 25. To the same purpose *Antoninus*: "That  
 "Man (*saieth he*) is to be esteemed a Fugi-  
 "tive and an Apostate, who runs away from  
 "his Master. Now the great Lawgiver who  
 "governs the World, is our common Master  
 "and Ruler, and his Will is the only Law  
 "we are to submit unto. And therefore  
 "for a Man to be angry or grieved, be-  
 "cause



“ cause things fall not out according to his  
 “ Will, what is this but revolting from him,  
 “ and declaring Enmity against him?”

Besides these Testimonies from some of the wiser *Heathens*, the *Scripture* likewise doth abound in several Attestations to this purpose, as particularly that in *Job* 34. 31. *Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have born chastisement, I will not offend any more; that which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do so no more.* And chap. 33. 12, 13. *God is greater than man, why dost thou strive against him? He gives not account of any of his matters.* As if he had said, *that* Man doth strangely forget his Condition, who by his murmuring and repining doth think to call God to an account; why, he is the supreme Lord of all, and may do whatever he pleaseth. *Should not the Potter have power over the Clay?* There is no Man but must think it just that the Potter should dispose of his Clay as he pleaseth, giving it such a Shape, and designing it to such a Use as he shall think meet. And can any one judge it reasonable, that God should have less Power over us, than we have over the Works of our hands? *Behold, O Lord, thou art our Father, we are the Clay, and thou art the Potter.* — *Who to him that stri-* Isa. 64. 8.  
*veth with his Maker; Let the Potsherd strive with the Potsberds of the earth: shall the Clay say to him that fashioneth it,*  
*what*

*what makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?* Isa. 45. 9. This Sin of Impatience and Murmuring, is here styled *striving against God*; contesting with his Wisdom and his Power, saying to him, *What makest thou*, which reflects upon his *Wisdom*; and *he hath no hands*, which reflects upon his *Power*, as if he were not able *extremam apponere manum*, to finish what he had begun; both which are not only high Affronts to the Divine Nature, but exceeding foolish and mischievous in the Consequence of them. The mutual Contention of Men amongst themselves, *testæ cum testis*, one Potsherd with another, may prove fatal to them: If two earthen Vessels dash together, they can get nothing by it, they may both be broken; but for the Clay to strive with the Potter, that is so foolish and so unequal a Contention, as nothing can be more, and must needs expose it to the worst of Dangers. Murmurers are in the *Scripture-phrase* styled *Children of rebellion*, Numb. 17. 10. Because they that speak against God, would actually resist him likewise if they could.

If we receive all that we are or have, our Beings and our Well-beings from God, nothing can be more evident, than that he may justly resume any thing again, or inflict upon us any evil, that is either short of, or but equal unto, the Good he hath bestowed upon us.

Thus

Thus much shall serve for the first kind of Arguments, referring to the Divine Nature and Attributes.

2. I proceed to the second sort of Arguments to this purpose, from the *Consideration of ourselves*; which I shall treat of in these three Particulars. 1. We are Men. 2. We are Sinners. 3. We are living Men. Upon each of which Grounds it will appear a very unreasonable thing, that we should murmur and complain against God. The *Prophet* hath put these three Considerations together, *Why doth a living Man complain, a Man Lam. 3 39. for the Punishment of his Sin?*

1. We are *Men*, which is a Mercy far above any temporal Affliction that we can suffer. God might have made us Worms instead of Men, such despicable Creatures as are below common Notice. Whereas in being Men, we are become Lords of Heaven and Earth, having an Excellency above all other Creatures that ever God made, excepting the Angels. And is it not a shame for such an one, to be a Slave to every slight Trouble? that any *light Affliction, which is but for a Moment*, should make our Souls, which are *immortal*, to bow down under it? Should not the Nobility of our Natures advance us to a more generous Temper, and make us erect and chearful under such Troubles? See how *David* was affected with this Thought; *Lord! what is Man that thou art Psal. 8. 4. mindful*

*mindful of him, or the Son of Man that thou visitest him?* 'Tis a Mercy and a Condescension to be admired, that God doth so much as take notice of us; though with his Chastisements, and therefore ought not to be the Ground of our Complaint. He might suffer us to go on securely in our Sins, without any Restraint. We do not think ourselves concerned to take notice of every little Fly or Insect, or the poor Worms under our Feet. And therefore, when he shall take such special Care of us, as to restrain us in our Wanderings, to administer Physick to us in our Diseases, we ought, upon this account; rather humbly to thank and admire him, than to murmur against him.

Again, we are *but Men*; Creatures of a dependent Being, not Lords of our own Happiness. *And who art thou, O Man! that repliest against God?* How vile and despicable in comparison to him, and how unfit to judge of his Ways? It is the common Condition of Humanity, to be exposed to Sufferings. *For Man is born to troubles as the sparks fly upwards*; that is, by a natural unavoidable Necessity. And there is no *Temptation* or Trouble *that befalls us, but what is common to men*. We are born into, and must live in a troublesome tumultuous World, where,

*Lucius;*

*Luctus, & ultrices posuere cubilia curæ,  
Pallentisque habitant morbi; tristisque  
(senectus.*

“ Which is the proper Place of Grief,  
“ and Care and Diseases, and the Infirmities  
“ of Age;” and therefore we cannot expect  
a total Exemption from these Things. *Om-* Sen. Ep.  
*nia ista in longâ vitâ sunt, quomodo in*<sup>96.</sup>  
*longâ vitâ, & pulvis, & lutum, & pluvia.*  
“ These things in a long Life, are like Dust,  
“ and Dirt, and Rain in a long Journey;”  
which it were a vain Thing for a Man to  
think he could wholly avoid, but that he  
must some time or other have his Share of  
them. Now Men usually vex and repine  
at that which is extraordinary and unusual,  
not at that which is general and common  
to all.

2. We are *Sinners*, and so Afflictions are  
our Wages, our Due; and there is no reason-  
able Man that will repine at just and equal  
Dealing; there is a special *Emphasis* to this  
Purpose in the very Phrase of that Text fore-  
cited; *A Man for the Punishment of his Sins*:  
implying, that if he be but *a Man*, if he  
have but rational Principles, he must needs  
acknowledge the Equity of being punished  
for Sin. The Thief upon the Cross had so *Luke 23.*  
much ingenuity, as to confess it reason-<sup>41.</sup>  
able, that both he and his Fellow should sub-

mit to just Punishment. Now the Apostle tells us, that *every Man* is by a natural Conviction *concluded under Sin*, for this very Reason, *that every Mouth may be stopped, and that God may be justified in his saying, and clear when he judgeth.* One chief Reason which makes Men apt to complain, that *God's ways are unequal*, is because they do not consider that their own are so. It is the Pride and Folly of our Natures, as to ascribe all the Good we enjoy to our own Endeavours and Merit, so to murmur and complain against God for the Evil we suffer; than which nothing can be more false and unequal. The *wise Man* hath observed it, that *the foolishness of Man perverteth his Ways, and his Heart fretteth against the Lord.* We first run our selves into Mischief, and then complain against God; whereas according to common Reason, the *Blame* should be where the *Fault* is. It would be a much more befitting Temper, to demean ourselves upon this Consideration, as *Elibu* advises; *Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have born chastisement, I will not offend any more, &c.* And upon this Ground it is, that the *Prophet* having in one Verse, in the fore-cited Place, dissuaded from Murmuring and Complaints, he doth in the very next Verse, exhort to Self-Examination, *Let us search and try our Ways*: implying, that he who rightly understands his own Sinfulness, will find little Reason to repine at his Sufferings.

Rom. 3.  
19.

ver. 4.

Ezek. 18.  
25.Prov. 19.  
3.Job 34.  
31.Lam. 3.  
39.

3. We are *living Men*, whereas *the Wages of Sin is Death*; all the Plagues that we are capable of, either in this or the other World, being but the due Reward of Sin. And we have no Reason to repine at kind and moderated Corrections: He might have struck us dead in the Act of some Sin, and so have put us out of a possibility of Happiness. It was *David's* Comfort, that *though the Lord had chastened him sore, yet he had not given him over to Death*: And the Advantage, which he enjoyed in this Respect, did abundantly silence him against any Complaints in regard of the other. *It is of the Lord's Mercies that we are not consumed, because his Compassions fail not*. The Words are very emphatical, *Mercies* in the *Plural*, for the *Number*; intimating a Multitude of Favours in this one Act of his Forbearance. And 'tis *Compassions* or *Bowels* for the *Nature* of them, which signifies tender affectionate Mercy.

3. From the Consideration of Afflictions, which in themselves are neither good nor evil, but *secundum modum recipientis*, according to the Disposition of the Subject. To wicked Men they may prove Curses and Judgments, Testimonies of God's Hatred and Anger. But to others they may upon these two Accounts prove Benefits; from their

*Indication*, what they signify.

*End*, what they effect.

Q 2

1. From

I. From the *Indication* of them, what they denote and signify; not God's Hatred of us, but his special Care towards us. They may be Testimonies or Earnests of God's Favour, *for whom he loves he rebukes and chastens, even as a father a son in whom he delighteth. Blessed is the man whom thou chasteneth, O Lord.* Ye are the Children of God (saith *Seneca*) and therefore, *sicut severus pater durius educat*, he carries a stricter hand over you, as having a special regard to your Welfare, that you may not miscarry; or, as the Apostle expresseth it, that *you may not be condemned with the world.* The Holy Ghost esteems Afflictions to be a special Privilege. Speaking of St. *Paul's* being a *chosen vessel, to bear his name before the Gentiles and Kings*, in the next *Verse* it is reckoned up as another Privilege, that *he should suffer many things for his name sake.* And therefore the same blessed Apostle speaks of Afflictions as a Gift; *To you 'tis given, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake. If ye are without afflictions, then are ye bastards, and not sons.* 'Tis reckon'd upon as a Curse to *have our good things in this life.* And that was one of God's severest Punishments, which he threatens to those, *Hos.* 4. 14. that he will not punish them for their Whoredoms and Adulteries. Not to be troubled like other Men, may be a sign of Neglect and Disfavour. 'Tis necessary to our Conditions



tions in this World; and God doth afflict his own Children *out of faithfulness*. He hath Pfsl. 119. so appointed, that the way to the heavenly 75. *Canaan* shall be through the *Wilderness*.

2. From the *End* of them, what they are designed for and effect, namely, our Profit and Improvement; being intended either for our Correction or Probation, for our Amendment or Trial, as I have shewed before.

4. This Virtue of Patience and Submission is highly reasonable, upon account of those Advantages, which do follow such a Temper of Mind.

1. It keeps our Happiness in our own power, by bringing our Minds to our Conditions, which is the only remedy things are capable of, when we cannot bring our Conditions to our Minds. *Hanc rerum conditionem mutare non possumus; id possumus, magnum sumere animum, & viro bono dignum, quo fortiter fortuita patiamur.* Sen. Ep. 107. “ It is not  
 “ in our power to change our Condition;  
 “ but this is in our power, to attain unto  
 “ such a greatness of Mind, as becomes worthy Men, whereby we may be lifted up  
 “ above the hurt of outward Crosses.” If a Man would be sure never to meet with any Impediment in the thing he desires, never to be forced to any thing against his Will, his only way is to conform his Mind to the Will of God, and to *let him do with us what* Dissert. l. 3. c. 26. *seemeth good unto him.* “ If he would have

Diff. 1. 3.  
cap. 26.

“ me (saith *Epicetus*) to be sick or poor, I  
“ will be willing to be so ; whatever Em-  
“ ployment he will design for me, I will not  
“ decline ; and whatever he would not have  
“ me be or do, I will be against it likewise.”

Seneca de  
Ira. lib. 3.  
c. 16.

2. It will be a means to promote our Peace, Comfort, Quiet, and to alleviate our Troubles, and make our Yoke more easy. *Ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt.* The struggling with our Yoke will but make it gall us so much the more ; 'twill be a greater Ease for us to follow it willingly, and to be led by it, rather than to be dragged along with it. *Nullum tam arctum est jugum quod non minus ledat ducentem quam repugnantem. Unum est levamentum malorum ingentium, pati, & necessitatibus suis obsequi.* “ There  
“ is no Yoke so streight and hurtful in itself,  
“ but will prove more hurtful for our strug-  
“ gling with it. The only Allay under great  
“ Sufferings, is to bear them quietly, and  
“ obey Necessity, to submit to what we can-  
“ not remedy.” It may be in the power of others to disturb our outward Conditions, but it should be in our power, that they should not disturb our Minds. And so long as we can preserve our Tranquillity there, we may be said to be truly happy.

An impatient Man is in the *Scripture Phrase*, compared to a wild Bull in a Net, being full of the fury of the Lord, *Isa. 51. 20.* As that fierce Creature, being muzzled in the Hunt-

Huntsman's Toil, doth by all his Struggling but farther intangle himself; so do Men increase their own Perplexities, by their Impatience under them. There is no one thing wherein the Folly of Men doth more appear than that foolish Exchange which they make of their inward Quiet and Peace, for outward Trifles; both as to their Impatience under the Things they suffer, and their impetuous Desires after the Things they want. *Ex eo* <sup>Ep. 42.</sup> *stupor noster apparet* (saith *Seneca*) *quod ea sola putamus emi, pro quibus pecuniam solvimus, ea gratuita vocamus, pro quibus nos ipsos impendimus.* " Herein appears the  
 " Stupidness of Men, that they esteem thoiç  
 " Things only to be bought, for which they  
 " pay *Money*; but count such Things of  
 " Free-cost, for which they pay *themselves*;  
 their inward Quiet and Tranquillity, which is far more to be valued than their outward Possessions. Whereas if they were but as wise in this kind of Merchandize, as in others, they would consider the just Rate and Value of every thing, and pay no more for it, either in the Purchase of it, or parting with it, than it is really worth.

3. 'Tis very much for our Honour and Reputation, to bear Afflictions decently.  
 " Take away from a good Man (saith *Maximus Tyrius*) the Honour of his Sufferings,  $\kappa\iota\ \alpha\pi\omicron\tau\epsilon\phi\alpha\upsilon\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \kappa\iota\ \alpha\pi\omicron\kappa\epsilon\upsilon\pi\tau\iota\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ , and you  
 " rob him of his Crown, you hide and

Sen. Ep.  
41.

“ obscure his Glory.” *Si hominem videris, interritum periculis, inter adversa felicem, in mediis tempestatibus placidum, ex superiore loco homines videntem, ex aequo Deos, non subit te veneratio ejus, &c?* “ If thou  
 “ seest a Man undaunted in the midst of  
 “ Danger, happy in Adversity, placid and  
 “ serene in a Tempest, placid in a Station  
 “ equal with the Gods, whence he looks  
 “ down upon other Men, as being in a  
 “ Vale below him; art thou not presently  
 “ possess’d with a high Reverence and Venera-  
 “ tion for such a Person?” And in another  
 place (saith the same *Author*.) *Quam venerationem præceptoribus meis debeo, eandem illis præceptoribus generis humani.* Speaking of such Persons, saith he, “ Such Vene-  
 “ ration as I owe to my Master and Tutor,  
 “ such and much more ought I to pay to  
 “ these Teachers of Mankind, who set them  
 “ such excellent Lessons for their Imita-  
 “ tion.”

Ep. 54.

Job. 2.

God himself, upon this account, seems (as it were) to glory and to triumph over the Devil, in the behalf of *Job*: *Seest thou my servant Job, that there is none like him upon earth.* ’Twas an high *Elogium*, and tended much to his Honour. And the *Apostle* tells us elsewhere, that a meek and a patient spirit is with God of great price. *The spirit of glory and of God resteth upon* such as endure Sufferings. Men think to set out

1 Pet. 4.

them.

themselves, and to get Repute amongst others, by their Haughtiness, looking upon every little Injury as a high Indignity; but of such a Frame of Mind, it may be truly said, *non est magnitudo, tumor est*; it is not Greatness, but a swelling of Mind. It shews a Narrowness and Littleness of Soul, *Invalidum omne naturâ querulum*. "The more weak any thing is, the more apt to complain." Whereas, on the other side, Patience doth enlarge the Minds of Men, and raise their Esteem, making them triumphant without fighting. The *Heathen* and their *Idolatries* were heretofore subdued, *non à repugnantibus, sed à morientibus Christianis*, as St. *Austin* speaks; *Not by the Resistance, but by the patient Sufferings of the dying Christians*. So mightily did this Grace conduce in the primitive Times, to the spreading and propagation of Christianity through the Heathen World.

But are all Complaints then in Affliction unlawful? To this I answer,

1. Natural Expressions of Grief are allowable. A Man must be sensible of his Sufferings, and consequently cannot but grieve under them. That Stupor and Benumbedness of Spirit, whereby Men are made unapprehensive of their Afflictions, is in itself both a great Sin, and a great Judgment.

2. But then these Expressions of our Grief must be rightly qualified with their due Circumstances.

1. They

1. They must not be *disproportionable* to the *Occasion*. A great Complaint for a little Cross, like *Jonah's* Trouble for his Gourd.

2. Not *unfitting* for the *Manner*; not accompanied with bitter *Invectives* against second Causes and Instruments; they should rather express our *Humility*, than our *Anger*.

3. They must not be *immoderate* for the *Degree*; as if we were without *Hope*, like *David's* passionate Complaints for the Death of his Son *Absalom*.

4. They must not be *sinful* for the *Nature* of them, blaming *God's Justice*, and reviling his *Providence*.

And now that I have so abundantly shewed the Reasonableness of this Virtue of *Patience* and *Submission*, I am still sensible how hardly Men are brought to it, when there is real occasion for the Practice of it; and therefore I think it may be of great use to add some *Directions*, which may help to prevent, or at least abate our *Impatience* under *Afflictions*, and to promote this *submissive Temper* and *Disposition*. And accordingly they shall be of two sorts, some *Negative*, others *Positive*.

I begin with the *Negative*.

1. Take heed of aggravating *Afflictions* beyond their due *Proportions*. Do not fix your *Eye* or your *Thoughts* chiefly upon the *Smart* of them, without regarding the *Benefit* of them. 'Tis true indeed (as the

*Apostle*

*Apostle tells us) No affliction is joyous for the time, but grievous, nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness, to them that are exercised thereby.* <sup>Heb. 12.</sup> 11.

'Twere an unreasonable thing, and an Argument of great Frowardness, for a Patient to mind only the Bitterness of his Potion, the Corrosiveness of his Plaister, without having any regard to the Remedy and the Health, which may be procured by them. For a Man always to have his Hand upon his Sore, will increase the Pain, and hinder the Cure of it. To insist upon every particular Circumstance, whereby Men may aggravate their Afflictions, is the ready Means to add Fuel to their Impatience, and to drive them to Despondency. This is a sure way to bring upon ourselves much needless Trouble. 'Tis all one as if a Man should chew the Pills, which ought to be swallowed whole; which will make us more sick, and thereby rather hinder the due Operation of them than promote it.

2. Beware of refusing Comfort, or rejecting the Means that are afforded us for our Relief and Support, under the Troubles that befall us. This were to take part with our Disease against ourselves, to refuse the Physick, and to pull off the Plaister that should heal us; which argues much Frowardness, besides the Folly and Ingratitude of rejecting *the consolations of God, as if they were but small to us,* as *Eliphaz* speaks. <sup>Job 15.</sup> Whatever 11.

our

our Losses or Disappointments are, he can be ten times better to us, than those Things are, by the Loss of which, we are provoked to Discontent and Murmuring.

3. Do not give liberty to Passions; which, of all other things belonging to the Soul, are most impetuous and unruly, if not restrained within fitting Bounds. The sensitive Appetite (to which the Passions belong) is the inferior and brutish part of the Soul, answerable to the Dregs of the People in a political Government, of themselves apt to be heady, tumultuous, rash, mutinous; if not restrained by some superior Power: So is it with the Passions of the Soul, which therefore ought to be watched over with great Circumspection; and the rather, because they have usually the Empire over us, during our younger Years, before Reason comes to exercise its Sovereignty: And if once we give way to them, 'twill be a Business of no small difficulty to reduce them into Order again.

Those very Thoughts which occasion much Discontent and Trouble to the Soul, whilst they lie in the Breast in a Huddle and Confusion, if they be but distinctly considered, and coolly debated, will seem much less, if not vanish into nothing. 'Tis the Nature of Disorder, to make Things appear more than indeed they are, Which is one Reason that *Philosophers* give, why the Stars seem



seem innumerable; because they are commonly looked upon, as being wildly scatter'd up and down, out of all regular Form. 'Tis so likewise with Mens inward Discontents, which are exceedingly multiplied by the Confusion of them; and would appear much less, if but distinctly reduced and examined. Most of those which occasion much perplexity, whilst they are mixed with many others in a Croud, would upon a clear View and severe Examination, appear much less considerable: And that's another good Means for the preserving of our Minds from this Impatience; to put a stop to our Passions in the beginning of their Course, before they be in their full Career, and then grow too hard for us.

4. Do not chiefly regard the Instruments of your Troubles, which will be apt to provoke Impatience and Distemper; but rather the supreme Disposer of them. Tho' Men may deal very unworthily with us, yet God is just in all his Ways. This was that which satisfied old *Eli*, *It is the Lord, let* <sup>1 Sam. 3.</sup> *him do what seemeth him good.* Tho' the <sup>18.</sup> *Sabeans* had spoil'd *Job* of his Oxen and <sup>Job 1. 15.</sup> *Asses*, and the *Chaldeans* plundered him of <sup>17.</sup> his *Camels*; yet we find no Complaints against them: he takes notice only of God as the Author of his Sufferings. *The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away, and therefore blessed be the Name of the Lord.* 'Tis worth

worth your notice to observe the strange Variety of *David's* Carriage, according as he was either mindful or forgetful of this Consideration. How meek and humble upon

<sup>2 Sam. 15.</sup> the Rebellion of *Absalom*: *If the Lord shall*  
<sup>26.</sup> *say I have no delight in thee; behold here I*  
<sup>ver. 10.</sup> *am, let him do to me as seemeth good unto*  
*him.* And so in the next Chapter, when *Shimei* did so bitterly revile him, that which pacified all impatient revengeful Thoughts, was this Consideration, *The Lord hath bid Shimei curse.* Whereas at another time, when he was not so careful to fix his Thoughts upon this, how strangely is his Carriage altered? How furious at the Churlishness of

<sup>1 Sam. 25.</sup> *Nabal*? How passionate at the Death of *Ab-*  
<sup>22.</sup> *salom*? Such great power is there in this one  
<sup>2 Sam. 18.</sup> Meditation, if seriously fixed upon, to sub-  
<sup>33.</sup> due the natural Rage and Distemper of our  
 Hearts. When he looks upon God, he sub-  
<sup>Pfal. 39.</sup> mits and is silent. *I was dumb and opened*  
*not my mouth, because thou didst it.* But  
 when he considers the Instruments, his Heart  
 begins to rise, and his Passions to tumultuate  
 and ferment into a Storm.

5. Take heed of engaging your Desires upon these transient perishable things. Learn to estimate every thing, according to its just Rate and Value; and this will be a Means to work in us weaned Affections from the World. They that love too much, must grieve too much. If we would *weep as not weeping,*

weeping, we must rejoice as *not rejoicing*. They that think the greatest Gain to be but small, will think the greatest Loss to be so too. *Neminem adversa fortuna comminuit, nisi quem secunda decepit.* Sen. Helv. cap. 5. “Those that  
 “ are most apt to be deceived and puffed up  
 “ by the Flatteries of Prosperity, will be most  
 “ apt to be dejected by the Frowns of Ad-  
 “ versity.” And therefore one of the surest  
 Ways, to make all Crosses easy to us, is to  
 have a low Esteem of these temporal Things;  
 for which we shall find reason enough, if we  
 consider the Vanity and Vexation of them.  
 There being a thousand Ways of Fraud and  
 Oppression and Casualties, whereby we may  
 be deprived of their Possession; and as ma-  
 ny, whereby they may be render’d useless  
 to us in their Possession; as in the case of  
 Pain and Sicknes, either of Body or Mind:  
 And as many, whereby they may be render’d  
 hurtful, and expose us to the Envy of others,  
 to many kind of Temptations unto Sin, and  
 particularly to many kind of Grievs and  
 Vexations upon the account of our Unwil-  
 lingness to part with them. All which are  
 to be provided against, by our entertaining  
 such Thoughts of them, as may be suitable  
 to their Value.

6. Take heed of being solicitous about the  
*Issue* of Things, and of determining your-  
 selves too peremptorily to particular *Events*.  
 ’Tis our Business indeed to serve Providence  
 in

in the use of *Means*, but the Issue of things belongs to God. We have nothing to do with them, and that which is not within our *Power*, should be out of our *Care*. Every Man's great End is Happiness. The various Events that befall us in the World, are but several *Ways* to this *End*. And therefore 'tis very reasonable and congruous, that every one should have a Traveller's Indifferency towards them. A Man upon the Road, who is travelling to such a Town, and comes to some doubtful Turnings, is not concerned either for the right or the left-hand Way, hath not an Inclination to one more than the other, any farther than to be directed to that, which is the true Way, and will bring him to his Journey's End. Now that Way, which the Providence of God doth lead us into, must needs be the best and the surest Way to this End.

Lib. 2. c. 7. "Thou foolish Man (saith *Epiſtetus*)  
 "dost not thou desire that which may be  
 "most convenient for thee? And can there  
 "be any thing better than what God ap-  
 "points? Do but then consider (saith he)  
 "what is the meaning of being eagerly  
 "solicitous about particular Events, διαφεί-  
 "ρεις ἢ κελύω, παεάγεις ἢ Σύμβουλον, thou  
 "dost thereby as much as in thee lies to  
 "corrupt thy Judge, and seduce thy Coun-  
 "sellor; than which there cannot be a  
 "greater Folly." These are the *Negative*  
 Directions. I

I proceed to those that are *positive*; and,

1. Labour for true Apprehensions of the divine Nature and Excellencies; his Infinite Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness. When our Hearts are once possess'd with right Notions, and a due Esteem of these Perfections, they will not be so apt to break out into murmuring against him. That which *Benhadad* spake proudly to *Abab*; *Thy silver and thy gold, thy wives and thy children are mine*: That may God truly say to us; what hast thou that thou hast not received? And if we have received it, as we have no reason to glory in the Possession, so neither have we to complain at the Loss of it, when he that hath lent it us, doth resume it again. It is, or should be our daily Prayer, that God's *Will may be done on Earth as it is in Heaven*. And it were a most unreasonable thing for Men to murmur at the Grant of their Petitions. 'Twas a notable Saying, which is commonly reported of *Luther*, when *Philip Melancthon* was much disquieted in his own Thoughts, at the confused State of things in the first Reformation; *Monendus est Philippus, desinat esse rector mundi*; "*Melancthon* " is to be admonish'd, that he would cease " to take upon him the Government of the " World, as if the Issue of things did be- " long to his Care." God is infinitely wise <sup>1 Cor. 10.</sup> and faithful, and will proportion our Suf- <sup>13.</sup> ferings to our Abilities. He hath promi-

Rom. 8.  
28.

sed *that all things shall work together for our good.*

2. Consider the Mercies you enjoy, as well as the Evils you suffer. That was a most unworthy Temper in *Abab*, and in *Haman*, to receive no Satisfaction in all their great Possessions and Enjoyments, because they were disappointed in some one small Particular. 'Tis the Advice of the *Wise man*, Ecclef. 7. 14. *In the day of prosperity rejoice, in the day of adversity consider.* But what is that which we should consider? Why, *that God hath set the one against the other*: And so should we too, set one against another; and then we shall find, that we have as much reason to be patient under our Sufferings, as to rejoice in our Mercies. 'Tis a remarkable Passage *that*, concerning *Mephibosheth*; when *Ziba* had, by his false Accusation, caused the King to confiscate his Goods, and bestow them upon himself; this had been enough one would think to provoke *Mephibosheth* unto high Complaints, both against the Injustice of *David*, and the Baseness and Unfaithfulness of his Servant *Ziba*: But see how he demeans himself! *I have been slandered unto my Lord the King, but do what is good in thine eyes. Thou hast set thy servant amongst them that eat at thine own table, what right therefore have I to cry any more unto the King?* Where he makes the Kindness that *David* had formerly shewn him,

1 Sam. 19.

ver. 27 28.

him, to weigh down and satisfy for the Wrong that he then suffered. And if Men had but such a grateful Temper of Spirit, they would not be so apt to murmur. Those that deserve least, do usually complain most. The most unworthy are the most impatient.

Suppose all manner of Evils and Afflictions, which are now promiscuously scattered up and down in the World, whether they concern Soul or Body; Spiritual Blindness and Obduracy, Poverty, Slavery, Reproach, Sickness, Pain, Maimedness, Deformity, &c. I say, suppose all these were now to be distributed amongst Mankind, so as every one were to have an equal share of them: Would you be content to stand to this new Distribution? I suppose there are not many Persons in this Nation, in so miserable and forlorn a Condition, that upon serious Consideration of the special Advantages they do or may partake of, above many other Millions in the World, would consent to it. And if this be so, certainly then it must be both an unreasonable, and a very ungrateful thing for such Men to be impatient, who enjoy more than their share comes to.

3. Consider the Deserts of your Sins, and then it will easily appear, that your Condition is not at any time so bad, but you have deserved it should be worse. That you have more reason to commend the Care and Wisdom of the Physician, than to complain of

Greg.  
Moral.

the Bitterness of the Potion. *Tantò quis patientiùs ferrum medici tolerat, quantò magis putridum esse conspicit quod secat;*  
 “ The more the Patient doth discern the Corruption and Danger of his Sore, the more willingly doth he endure the Lance of his Surgeon.” That is a remarkable Story in *Genesis*, c. 42. to shew that this Consideration of the Desert of our own Sins, is a very powerful Means to pacify us against all Impatience under Sufferings. The Story concerns *Joseph's* Brethren, who coming into *Egypt* to buy Corn, were there roughly treated, accused for Spies, clapt into Prison; so that one would have thought, they had reason enough to fret and murmur at that hard unjust Dealing. And yet we find their Carriage to be very humble and patient; but what that was which made them so, you may see *ver. 21.* they remember'd their Cruelty to their Brother *Joseph*, and That brought them to acknowledge this Distress to be deservedly come upon them, *because they had not pitied their brother, when he besought them in the anguish of his soul.* The like Consideration did stop *Job* in his Complaint, after all his high Contestations and Arguings with God; he no sooner thought upon his own Vileness, but he was presently silenced.  
 Chap. 40. *Behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee?  
 4. I will lay my hand upon my mouth.*



4. Be careful whilst you are in a prosperous Estate, to prepare for Trouble and Afflictions, by a prudent Consideration of the Mutability of Things. This will be a Means to alleviate the Burden of them. *Præcogitati Sen. 76.*  
*mali mollis ictus venit.* And in another place, *inexpectata plus aggravant, novitas adjicit Ep. 91.*  
*calamitatibus pondus;* “ That Stroke will  
 “ have less Force which is foreseen and ex-  
 “ pected; whereas the Suddenness and Sur-  
 “ prize of it, will add to the Weight and  
 “ Smart of it.” *In tantâ rerum sursum ac Sen. Tran-*  
*deorsum euntium versatione, si non quicquid quil. An.*  
*fieri potest, pro futuro habes, das in te vires cap. 11.*  
*rebus adversis, quas infregit quisquis prior*  
*vidit;* “ In that various Change and Revo-  
 “ lution of Events, which we behold in the  
 “ World, if we do not look upon possible  
 “ Dangers and Troubles as future, we do  
 “ thereby strengthen our Adversaries, and  
 “ disarm ourselves.” When we see at any  
 time the Losses and Imprisonments, or Po-  
 verty, or Funerals of others, we ought pre-  
 sently to reflect, this may be our Case.  
*Cuius potest accidere, quod cuiquam potest.*  
 One loses Husband, Wife, Children, Estate:  
 We ought from all such Spectacles to infer,  
 that tho’ this be not at present, yet it may  
 shortly be our Condition; and accordingly  
 by Expectation to fortify ourselves against it.  
*Hic nos error decipit, hic effæminat dum Sen. ad*  
*patimur, quæ nunquam pati nos posse præ- Mutium,*  
*vidimus. cap. 9.*

*vidimus. Aufert vim presentibus malis, qui futura prospexit.* “ This is the Error  
 “ which doth deceive and effeminate Men,  
 “ whilst they suffer such things as they did  
 “ not expect, and are not prepared for. It  
 “ breaks the Force of Evils when they come,  
 “ to foresee they will come.”

5. Often reflect upon your former Experience: That will be a Means to prevent all Despondencies, to work in us Hope and Confidence. There is no Man so mean and inconsiderable, if he will but take an impartial View of what he hath formerly seen and observed concerning God's dealing with himself and others, but may upon this account find reason enough to allay all murmuring discontented Thoughts. We have frequent Examples to this purpose in Scripture, *Jacob, David, Jehosaphat, the Apostle St. Paul,* in several places; who all have had recourse to this Remedy, when they would strengthen themselves against Discontent and Despondency. And I suppose, there is scarce any serious Man of so little Experience, but hath taken notice of, and can remember how some Crosses and Disappointments have in the issue proved Mercies and Benefits to him. And if it have been so formerly, why may it not be so again?

6. And lastly, Labour after those particular Virtues, which are of near Affinity to this of Patience; whereby it will be very much

Gen. 32.

10.

1 Sam. 17.

37.

2 Chron.

20. 7.

1 Cor. 1.

10.

much strengthened and promoted. There is a certain Chain of them mentioned, *Gal.* 5. 22. and stiled by the *Apostle* the *fruits of the spirit*, as belonging more particularly to the Spirit of Christianity. The first is *Love*, ἀγάπη, which beareth all things, and endureth all things: The next is *Joy*, χαρά, a chearful Temper of Mind, in opposition to Moroseness and Frowardness: Then *Peace*, εἰρήνη, a Composedness and Sedateness of Spirit, free from all inordinate Perturbations, and without any kind of itch of quarrelling with others: And next *Long-suffering*, μακροθυμία, whereby the Mind is not easily provoked or tired, but is easily appeased: Then *Gentleness*, χρηστότης, *Generosity*, Benignity, which signifies a Mind most ready to part with any thing, towards the Help and Relief of others, in their Necessities: Then *Goodness*, ἀσθαθσύνη, (*i. e.*) such an equal and ingenuous Simplicity of Manners, whereby Men are render'd easily tractable, and placable, and most amiable in the whole Course of their Conversations: Then *Faith*, πίστις, a Dependence upon God for our Support and Deliverance: Then *Meekness*, πραΰτης, whereby we put a Restraint upon our Anger, so as not to be provoked for any lesser Cause, or in a greater Measure, or for a longer Time, than may be fitting for the Occasion; always preserving our Minds free from any sudden Gusts of Passion. And lastly, *Temperance*, ἐξουσία,

Continnence, whereby we contain all our Passions within their just Bounds, either of *Joy* in the *Affluence* of Things, or of *Grief* in the *Loss*, or of *Desire* in the *Want* of them.

A Mind that is modelled and prepared with these kind of Virtues, will thereby be render'd generous and couragious, fit for the undergoing of any kind of Trouble or Suffering, which the Providence of God shall think fit to call a Man unto.

I have now done with the *First* thing I proposed to treat of, namely, *The Reasonableness and Credibility of the Principles of Natural Religion*; in which I have endeavoured to establish the *belief* of *God's Being*, to clear the *natural Notions* of his *Excellencies* and *Perfections*, and to deduce the *Obligation* of *Moral Duties*, from the Belief and Acknowledgement of the divine Nature and Perfections.

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T H E

## SECOND BOOK.

O F T H E

*Wisdom of practising the Duties*  
of NATURAL RELIGION.

---

## C H A P. I.

*Shewing in general how Religion conduces to our Happiness.*

**I** Proceed now to the *second* Part of my Design, which was to shew *The Wisdom of practising the Duties of Natural Religion*. In which I shall endeavour to convince Men, how much it is, upon all accounts, their chief Happiness and Interest to lead a Religious and Virtuous Course of Life.

*Solomon*, who is so much celebrated in *Scripture* for his Wisdom and Knowledge, hath purposely written a *Book*, the main Argument whereof is to enquire, wherein the chief Happiness of Man doth consist: And having in the former Part of it shewed the Insufficiency of all other Things that pretend

pretend to it, he comes in the Conclusion to fix it upon its true *Basis*, asserting every Man's greatest Interest and Happiness, to consist in being Religious. *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole of man.* That is, the serious Practice of Religion is That which every considerate Man, after all his other Disquisitions, will find to be his chief Interest, and That which doth deserve his utmost Care and Diligence.

Eccl. 12.  
13.

And because these Words of *Solomon* do so fully express that, which is to be the main Argument of my following Discourse, I shall, by way of Preface or Introduction to it, more particularly consider the Commendation, which he here gives to the Practice of Religion, in that full and significant Expression, *this is the whole of man.*

Which Words are by the *Septuagint* and *Vulgar* thus rendered, *this is All, or Every man*; the word *Duty*, which is supplied by our *English*, being not in the *Original*, or in other *Translations*. *This ought to be the way and course of all mankind*; so the *Targum*. *This is the course to which every man is designed*; so the *Syriack*. *This will be most profitable and advantageous to men*; so the *Arabick*. *Hoc est totum hominis*, this is *the whole of man*; so some of our later *Interpreters*, most properly to the Scope of the Place, it being an usual *Enallage* in the *Hebrew*,

*Hebrew, totius universalis pro toto integrante, All for Whole.*

So that according to the various Interpretations of the Words, they may contain in them a threefold Reference : To the *Essence*, the *Happiness*, the *Business* of Man.

According to which, the Sense of them must be, that Religion, or the *fearing of God*, and *keeping his Commandments*, is a Matter of so great Consequence to Human Nature, that,

1. The *Essence* or Being of Man may be said to consist in it.

2. The great *Business* or Duty of Man, is to be conversant about it, and to labour after it.

3. The *Happiness*, or Well-being of Man, doth depend upon it.

These Particulars I shall endeavour to make out by such clear Principles of Reason, attested to by several of the wisest *Heathen* Writers, as may be enough to satisfy any serious Man, who is able to understand the Reason and Consequence of Things, and will but attend and consider.

*First*, Religion is of so great Importance, that the *Essence* of Man may be said to consist in it. Man may be considered under a two-fold Notion :

1. In his *single Capacity*, according to that Principle whereby he is constituted in such a Rank of Creatures.

2. In

2. In *Society*, for which Man seems to be naturally designed, and without which he could not well subsist. Now Religion will appear to be *essential* to him, in both these Respects.

1. As considered in his *single Capacity*, according to those Principles by which he is framed. That which doth constitute any thing in its Being, and distinguish it from all other things, this is that which we call the Form or Essence of a Thing. Now the things which distinguish Human Nature from all other things, are the chief *Principles* and *Foundations* of *Religion*, namely, the *Apprehension of a Deity*, and an *Expectation of a future State after this Life*: Which no other Creature, below Man, doth partake of; and which are common to all Mankind; notwithstanding the utmost Endeavours that can be used for the suppressing of them.

As for what is commonly alledged in the behalf of *Reason*, it may be observed, that in the Actions of many *brute Creatures*, there are discernible some Footsteps, some imperfect Strictures and Degrees of Ratiocination; such a natural Sagacity as at least bears a near Resemblance to Reason. From whence it may follow, that it is not Reason in the *general*, which is the *Form* of *Human Nature*; but Reason, as it is *determined* to Actions of Religion, of which we do not find  
the



the least Signs or Degrees in *Brutes: Man* being the only Creature in this visible World, that is formed with a Capacity of worshipping and enjoying his Maker. Nor is this any new Opinion, but what several of the ancient Writers, Philosophers, Orators, Poets, have attested to; who make the Notion of a Deity, and Adoration of him, to be the true Difference betwixt *Man* and *Beast*.

So *Tully; Ex tot generibus nullum est animal præter hominem, quod habeat notitiam aliquam Dei; ipsiſque in hominibus, nulla gens eſt neque tam immanſueta, neque tam fera, quæ non etiã ſi ignoret, qualem habere Deum deceat, tamen habendum ſciat.* “Amongſt all the living Creatures that are in the World, there is none but Man, that hath any Notion of a *Deity*; and amongſt Mankind, there is no Nation ſo wild and barbarous, but pretends to ſome Religion.” Whence it ſhould ſeem, that this is the moſt proper Difference betwixt Man and Beaſts. And in another place, he makes this to be the Character of that Reaſon, which is the Form of Man, that it is *Vinculum Dei & hominis*, which imports both Name and Thing.

Of the ſame Senſe is that of the *Satyrift*, who ſpeaking of Religion and a Senſe of divine Things, ſaith this of it;

—ſeparat

Juv. Sat.  
15.

————— *separat hoc nos*  
*A grege mutorum, atque ideo venerabile*  
*(soli*  
*Sortiti ingenium, divinorumque capaces.*

“ ’Tis this, faith he, which doth distin-  
“ guish us from brute Creatures, that we  
“ have Souls capable of divine Impressions.”

*De Super-*  
*stitione.*

There are abundance of Expressions to this purpose in several other of the *Heathen* Writers. That in *Plutarch*, where he files Irreligion a kind of *Stupor*, whereby Men are as it were deprived of their Senses. And in another place, he asserts it to be “ an exceeding improper Thing, to ascribe true Reason to those who do not acknowledge and adore the Deity.” So again, *Tully*, *Esse*

*Nat. Deor.*  
*Lib. 2.*

*Deos qui negat, vix eum sanæ mentis existimem.* “ I can hardly think that Man to be in his right Mind, who is destitute of Religion.” And in another place of the same *Book*, *Quis hunc hominem dixerit? &c.* “ Why should any one style such an one a Man, who by what he sees in the World, is not convinced of a Deity, and a Providence, and of that Adoration he owes to the Deity?” *Non modo non philosophos, sed nec homines quidem fuisse dixerim,* (saith another.) “ Men that are destitute of Religion, are so far from being learned Philosophers, that they ought not to be esteemed so much as reasonable Men. ’Tis

*Lactant.*

'Tis true, nothing is more ordinary than for such Persons as are *sceptical* in these first Principles, to entertain great Thoughts of themselves, as if they had consider'd things more deeply, and were arriv'd unto a higher pitch of Reason and Wit than others. But yet the plain Truth is, they who have not attained to this Conviction of placing their chief Interest in being religious, they are so far from exceeding others in *Degrees*, that they come short of the very *Nature* and *Essence* of Men, as being destitute of those first Notions concerning Truth and Falseness, Good and Evil, wherein the *Essence* of a rational Being doth consist: besides their palpable Deficiency in such plain Consequences and Deductions of Reason, as would become those, who in any measure pretend to that Principle.

So that, by what hath been said, it may appear, that the Definition of *Man* may be render'd as well by the Difference of *Religiosum* as *Rationale*. As for that Inconvenience which some may object, that atheistical and prophane Persons will hereby be excluded: Why, so they are by the other Difference likewise; such Persons having no just Pretence to *Reason*, who renounce *Religion*: And it were well, if they might not only be *reckoned* among Beasts (as they are by the *Psalmist*, where he styles them *brutish*;) but *driven* out amongst them likewise,  
and

and banished from all Human Society, as being publick Pests and Mischiefs of Mankind, such as would debase the Nobility of our Natures to the Condition of brute Creatures, and therefore are fit only to live amongst them. Which brings me to the

2d Consideration of Man, as a *sociable* Creature. Religion is *essential* to him, in this Respect also; as being the surest Bond to tye Men up to those respective Duties towards one another, without which, Government and Society could not subsist:

There is a remarkable Passage in *Plutarch* to this purpose; where he stiles Religion *συνεχλικόν ἀπάσης κοινωρίας, καὶ νομοθεσίας ἐρείσμα*, *the Cement of all Community, and the chief Basis of all Legislative Power*. And in another place he says, “ That ’tis much  
 “ more easy to build a City in the open Air,  
 “ without any Ground to found it upon,  
 “ than to establish Government without Religion.” *A City (saith he) may make some shift to subsist without Walls, Schools, Theatres, Houses, nay, without Money; but not without Religion.*

Against  
 Celotes.

If it were not for this Notion of a Deity, and those natural Impressions which we have concerning Justice and Probity, so necessary for the Conservation of Human Society; instead of those well-ordered Governments and Cities which are now in the World, Mankind must have lived either wild and solitary

tary in Caves and Dens, like savage Beasts; or else in Troops of Robbers, subsisting upon the Spoil and Rapine of such as were weaker than themselves.

*Pietate sublatâ, fides etiam, & societas* Nat. Deo.  
*humani generis, & unâ excellentissima vir-* Lib. I.  
*tus justitia tollitur,* saith Tully. "Take  
 " but away the Awe of Religion, and all  
 " that Fidelity and Justice, so necessary for  
 " the keeping up of Human Society, must  
 " perish with it."

'Tis this Fear of a Deity, and the Sense of our Obligation to him, that is the only effectual Means to restrain Men within the Bounds of Duty. And were this wholly extinguished, there would follow such wild Disorders and Extravagancies amongst Men, as would not leave so much as the Face or least Shadow of Virtue or Honesty in the World: There being no kind of Vice which Men would not abandon themselves unto, considering the Impetuosity of their own natural Appetites, and the Power of external Temptations, were this Restraint from Religion once removed or abolished.

The two chief Opposites to Religion, are *Prophaneness* and *Superstition*. Both which are prejudicial to Civil Government: the one by *destroying* Conscience, the strongest Obligation to political Duties; the other, by *perverting* and abusing it; introducing in the stead of it a new *Primum mobile*, which ravisheth

viseth the Spheres of Government, and puts them into a præternatural Course, as a *Noble Author* expresseth it.

Lord Bacon's Essay says.

The two grand Relations that concern Society, are *Government* and *Subjection*: And Irreligion doth indispose Men for both these.

I. For *Government*. Without Religion Magistrates will lose that Courage and Confidence belonging to their Stations, which they cannot so well exert in punishing the Offences of others, when they are guilty of the same or the like themselves. *Those that sit on the throne of judgment, should be able to scatter away evil with their eyes, as Solomon speaks, Prov. 20. 8.* By their very Presence and Looks to strike an Awe upon Offenders. Which will not be so easily done, if they lie under the same Guilt themselves. *Sine bonitate nulla majestas*, saith *Seneca*; the very Nature of *Majesty* doth denote *Goodness* as well as *Power*. And without this, Governours may easily lose that *Reverence*, which is due to them from others; and consequently that *Authority*, which they ought to have over them. When they cease to be Gods in respect of their *Goodness*, they will soon diminish in their *Power*. And tho' they should be able to keep Men under, as to their Bodies and Estates, yet will they decline as to that awful Love and Reverence, whereby they should sway over the Hearts and Affections of Men.

The

The *Philosopher* in the fifth *Book* of his *Cap. 11.* *Politicks*, doth lay it down as a Rule for Magistrates, that they must be careful to give publick Testimonies of their being Religious and Devout; for which he gives this double Reason: Because the People will be less subject to entertain any Jealousy or Suspicion of *suffering Injury*, from such whom they believe to be religious: And withal, they will be less subject to attempt the *doing of Injury* against such; as knowing that good Magistrates are after a more especial manner under the divine Favour and Protection, *ὃ συμμάχους ἔχονται τῷ θεῷ, having God to fight with them, and for them.*

2. The want of this will indispose Men for the Condition of *Subjects*, and render them loose and unstable in those Duties of *Obedience* and *Submission* required to that State. How can it be expected from that Man, who dares affront and despise God himself, that he should have any hearty reverence for his Deputies and Vicegerents?

He that is subject only upon the account of *wrath*, and the *power of the sword which is over him*, will be no longer so, when he hath an opportunity of escaping or resisting that Power. Nor is there any possible way to secure Men in their quiet Subjection and Obedience, but by their being obliged for *Conscience-sake*. And therefore such kind of *Rom. 13.* Persons, as by their open Prophaneness and

tempt of Religion, do endeavour to destroy Conscience from amongst Men, may justly be esteemed as the worst kind of seditious Persons, and most pernicious to Civil Government.

That Temper of *Prophaneness*, whereby a Man is disposed to contemn and despise all Religion (how slightly soever Men may think of it) is much worse than *Infidelity*, than *Fanatickness*, than *Idolatry*; and of the two, 'tis much more eligible for a Man to be an *honest Heathen* and a *devout Idolater*, than a *prophane Christian*.

Whatever Disputes have been raised concerning the Lawfulness of punishing Men for their dissenting Consciences in matters of Religion; yet never any Man questioned the Lawfulness of punishing Men for their Prophaneness and Contempt of all Religion. Such Men as renounce Conscience, cannot pretend that they suffer for it. And certainly this Vice doth upon many Accounts deserve the greatest severity of Laws, as being *in its own Nature* destructive of the very Principles of Government, and the Peace of all human Societies; besides, the Mischiefs *consequent* upon it, from divine Vengeance.

De Benef. lib. 3. c. 6. 'Tis an Observation of *Seneca*, " That  
 " several Countries do appoint *several* Pu-  
 " nishments for the Violation of Religion;  
 " but every Country appoints *some*, and it  
 " doth not any where escape unpunished.

*Plato*



Plato in his Book *de Legibus*, would have it punished capitally, as being a thing of most pernicious consequence to Government. 'Tis a Rule in the *Civil Law*, that *Religio contaminata ad omnium pertinet injuriam*; *The Abuse of Religion is to be looked upon as being a common Injury*, and every Man is concerned to endeavour a Vindication of it. And there are some Instances in Story, of Wars that have been undertaken upon this very Account, to bring a Nation to Punishment for that Prophaneness they have expressed towards the Religion they professed and pretended to, as being injurious to Mankind, *Quod orbis viribus expiari debuit*, as *Justin* the Historian speaks, *which the whole world ought to vindicate and expiate by their common Forces*.

Lib. 10.

Lib. 4 c.  
de Hæret.Grotius de  
Jure belli  
& pac s, l.  
2. cap. 20.  
sect. 51.

Lib. 8.

There can be no Assurance from loose irreligious Persons, that they will be faithful in the ordinary Duties belonging to their several Ranks and Stations. And as for any extraordinary heroical Action, by which the publick Welfare is to be promoted, Men that are without Conscience of Religion, and a sense of Virtue, can never apply themselves to any thing of that kind, as having their Minds destitute of all such Principles as are sublime and generous, without any the least Seed of Honour, and Piety, and Virtue; and therefore they can have no Sparks of Magnanimity, nor any the least Inclina-

tion to Actions that are truly Great and Noble.

So that upon all Accounts, it is very evident, that Religion is *totum hominis* in this first Sense, as it refers to the *Essence* of Man, considered either in his *single Capacity*, or as a Member of *Society*.

2. 'Tis so likewise as it refers to the *Business* and Duty of Man, that which he ought to be most intent upon, and conversant about, as to his Employment in this World: That *General* Calling, in which every Man, of what Rank or Quality soever, is to be engaged. Men are distributed under other *particular* Callings, according as their Education, Abilities, Friends, and several Opportunities do dispose of them. But the Obligation of Religion, being of universal Concernment, doth extend to all and every Particular, there being none exempted from it. *Hoc est omnis homo*. Every Man is concerned in it. And it is *totum hominis* likewise: 'Tis his Calling, the chief Business about which he is employed.

I do not say, that a Man's Thoughts are always to be taken up about the immediate Acts of Religion, any more than a Traveller is always to have his Mind actually fixed upon the thought of his Journey's End. This would be inconsistent with the Infirmary of our Natures, and the Necessity of our Conditions in this World. But yet, as he, that

is upon a Journey, doth so order all his *particular* Motions, as may be most conducive to his *general* End; so should Men *habitually*, though they cannot *actually*, in every Affair, have respect to their chief End, so as to observe all the Duties of Religion, and never to allow themselves in any thing against the Rules of it. And he that hath this Care continually upon his Mind (tho' he be but a secular Person) may properly be said to make Religion *his Business*.

The *Wise Man*, in the Beginning of his *Book*, had propos'd it as his great Question to be discuss'd, to find out *what was that good for the sons of Men, which they should do under the Heavens all the days of their lives.* (i. e.) What was the chief Employment or Business, which they should apply themselves to in this World? And in the Conclusion of his Discourse, after an Induction and Refutation of all other Particulars, which may seem to have any Claim or Pre-  
 tence to this, he asserts it to be the Business of Religion, *Fearing God, and keeping his Commandments*: Suitable to that Precept of Moses, Deut. 10. 12. *And now, O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in his Ways, and to serve the Lord thy God, and keep his Commandments?* And the Practice of St. Paul, who made this his daily Exercise, to keep his consci-  
 Eccles. 2.  
 3.  
 Acts 24.  
 16.

Moral. I. ad Eudem. To the Reasonableness of this, several of the wisest *Heathens* have attested. That's a remarkable Passage in *Aristotle* to this purpose, where he states that to be the most desirable proportion of all worldly Felicities and Enjoyments, which is most consistent with Men's devoting themselves to the business of Religion: And that to be either too much or too little of Wealth, or Honour, or Power, &c. whereby Men are hindered in their meditating upon God, or their worshipping of him.

Differ. I. 6. So *Epietetus*, discoursing concerning the Work and Business he was designed to, hath this excellent Passage: "If I had been made  
 " a *Nightingale* or a *Swan*, I should have  
 " employed the time of my Life in such a  
 " Way as is suitable to the Condition of those  
 " Creatures: But being made a Man, capa-  
 " ble of serving and worshipping that God  
 " from whom I had my Being, 'tis but Rea-  
 " son that I should apply myself to this,  
 " as being my proper Work and Business;"  
 τὸ μὲν τὸ ἔργον ἐστίν. "And therefore here-  
 " unto will I devote myself, as being the  
 " chief Employment to which I am de-  
 " signed." I am now, as to the Condition of  
 my Body, lame and old, (saith he in the  
 same place) to which he might have added,  
 that he was sickly and deformed; and as for  
 his

his outward Quality, he was Poor, and under Servitude, being a Slave to *Epaphroditus*, one of the *Roman* Courtiers; which are Conditions that usually expose Men to repining and discontent: and yet he concludes it to be his Duty, “ wholly to devote himself to  
 “ the Praises and Worship of that God who  
 “ was the Author of his Being.” Which upbraids so many Professors of Christianity, who have both more Advantages of knowing their Duty, and greater Engagements upon them to exercise themselves in the Duties of Religion.

There is another apposite Testimony to this purpose in *Antoninus*. “ Every thing Lib. 8.  
 “ (*saieth he*) is designed for some kind of Sect. 19.  
 “ Work. *Beasts* and *Plants*, the *Sun* and  
 “ *Stars*; *ὃ ἐν τοῦτοίς τί*; and what do you conceive your Business to be? sensual Pleasures?  
 “ Bethink yourself a little better, whether  
 “ this be suitable to your natural Sentiments,  
 “ to the Nobility of your Mind, and those  
 “ excellent Faculties with which you are  
 “ dowed.”

Now 'tis the usual Course of Men to apply themselves to that as their chief Business, by which their Interest is most promoted, and which may most conduce to that main End which they propose to themselves. And can any thing be more reasonable, than for that to be the chief *business* of a Man's Life, which is the chief End of his *Being*?

3. Religion is *totum hominis*, with respect to the *Happiness* and Well-being of Man. That is properly said to be the chief End or Happiness of a Thing, which doth raise its Nature to the utmost Perfection of which it is capable, according to its Rank and Kind. This is the *chief End* which he ought to propose, that alone wherein his true Felicity doth consist, that which doth advance his Nature to the utmost Perfection it is capable of. The chief Good belonging to a Vegetable or Plant, is to grow up to a State of Maturity, to continue to its natural Period, and to propagate its Kind, which is the utmost Perfection that kind of Being is capable of. And whereas sensitive Creatures, besides those things which are common to them with Plants, have likewise such Faculties, whereby they are able to apprehend external Objects, and to receive Pain or Pleasure from them: therefore the Happiness proper to them, must consist in the Perfection of these Faculties, namely, in sensible Pleasures, in the Enjoyment of such things as may be grateful to their Senses. But now Mankind (if we allow it to be a distinct Rank of Creatures, superior to Brutes) being endowed with such Faculties, whereby 'tis made capable of apprehending a Deity, and of expecting a future State after this Life; it will hence follow, that the proper Happiness of Man must consist in the perfecting of these Faculties;

culties; namely, in such a State as may reconcile him to the divine Favour, and afford him the best Assurance of a blessed Immortality hereafter: Which nothing else but Religion can so much as pretend to.

'Tis true indeed, the Nature of *Man*, by reason of those other Capacities common to him with *Plants* and *Brutes*, may stand in need of several other things, to render his Condition pleasant and comfortable in this World, as *Health, Riches, Reputation, Safety*, &c. Now herein is the great Advantage of Religion, that besides the principal Work which it doth for us, in securing our future Estates in the other World, it is likewise the most effectual Means to promote our Happiness in this World.

In my Discourse of this, I shall first suggest something more *generally*, concerning the Nature of our chief End; and then descend to those *Particulars*, which are esteemed to be the chief Ingredients to a State of Happiness.

Under the *First* of these, I shall speak briefly to these three Things.

1. There is a Necessity that every Man who will act rationally, should propose to himself some chief Scope and End.

2. The chief End of every thing must be of such a nature, as may be most fit to promote the Perfection of that thing in its Rank and Kind.

3. This in rational Beings which are capable

ble of it, must consist in a Communion with, and a Conformity unto the chief Good, and consequently in being religious.

1. There is a Necessity that every Man who will act rationally should propose to himself some chief Scope or End. The having of an End, is not so much a *moral Duty*, which supposeth a Liberty of Acting, as a *natural Principle*, like that of the Descent of heavy Bodies; Men must do so, nor can they do otherwise. Such is the Principle of Self-preservation in all things; and this of acting for an End, in all rational Agents. The most loose and profligate Wretches that are, do and must act for an End, even in those very Courses, wherein they put the Thought of their future State and their last Account far from them. The very suppressing and hardening themselves against the Thought of their true End is in order to their present Peace and Quiet, which they do erroneously substitute in the room of their chief End. That wherein Men are commonly defective, is in not exciting the Thought of their chief End, and not sufficiently considering and stating in their own Minds, the most proper Means for the attaining of it. There are too many in the World that do *αὐτοσχεδιάζειν τὸν βίον*, live *ex tempore*, without any particular reference to their chief End, being immersed only in present Matters, *animalia sine præterito & futuro*, without any regard



regard to what is past or future ; like Ships upon the vast Ocean, without any Compass or Pilot, that do rather *wander* than *travel*, being carried up and down according as every *Wind* or *Tide* doth drive them. And this the *Philosopher* doth worthily brand with the name of Folly ; *Vita sine proposito, stultitia* Seneca.  
*argumentum est* ; “ There is no greater Argument of Foolishness, than for a Man not to be fixed upon some particular Design.”  
*Proponamus, oportet, finem summi boni, ad quem omne factum nostrum dictumve respiciat* ; *veluti navigantibus, ad sidus aliquod dirigendus est cursus*, saith the same *Author*.  
 “ There ought always to be some particular Scope and Mark proposed, as the main End and Drift of all our Actions, as the Star by which we are to be guided in our Voyage.” *Non disponet singula, nisi cui jam vitæ suæ summa proposita est.* Ep 37.  
 “ ’Twill be a hard matter to proportion out Particulars, till we know what is the main Sum.” This is the true ground of the common Mistakes amongst Men, whilst they deliberate concerning the several Parts of their Lives, but neglect the stating of what should be the main design of the whole. He that intends to shoot at any thing, must so manage the whole Action in levelling his Arrow, and regulating his Hands, and exerting his Strength so as may be most advantageous for hitting the Mark. As the *Efficient* is in *natural*, so is the *End* amongst  
*moral*

*moral* Causes, of principal efficacy. 'Tis this which is the chief Rule of all our Actions. And therefore there is a Necessity that some End be proposed and fixed upon.

2. The chief End of every thing must be of such a Nature, as may be most fit to promote the Perfection of that thing in its Rank and Kind. Any thing that is short of this, may be a Means, or a subordinate End; but cannot be the chief and ultimate End, if there be any thing desirable beyond it; *τέλος ἐστὶν ἢ ἀγαθον ἑαυτῶν μὴ δ' ἑνὸς ἔτι προσδεόμεθα,*

Mag. Mo.  
ral. lib. 2.  
cap. 2.

saith *Aristotle*; That is truly the chief End, which is desired for itself; *which being once obtained, we want no more*; "That which doth satiate and fill up the Desires. *Hæc*

Epist. 74.

*nihil vacare patitur loci, totum animum tenet, desiderium omnium tollit, sola satis est* (saith *Seneca*.) In brief, 'tis that State, wherein a thing enjoys all that good that 'tis capable of, and which is most suitable to its Nature.

3. This in rational Creatures must consist, in a Communion with, and a Conformity to the supreme Good; and consequently, in being religious. Which is the meaning of those Scripture Expressions, of *walking with God, and as becomes the sons of the Most High; being followers of him; holy as he is holy; being made partakers of a divine Nature*. And to this the Philosophers do likewise consent. This is the meaning of

of

of that Speech in *Pythagoras* πῖλθ. ἐστὶ ὁμοίωσις θεῶ, “ Every man’s chief End should be a Resemblance to God, a being made like to the Deity.” So *Plato* and *Epicetus* will have it to consist in following of God, πῖλθ. ἐστὶ ἐπεσθαὶ θεῶ. And another, *imitari quem colis*, in imitating him whom we worship. So *Seneca*, *Summum bonum est, quod honestum est, & quod magis admirere, solum bonum est quod honestum est.* Epist. 74. Not only the chief, but the only Good doth consist, in what is honest and virtuous. Now the Fruition of God cannot consist in any external Union or Contract of our Souls with the Deity, which Spirits are not capable of; nor in any mere Speculation or intellectual Gazing upon his Excellencies: But in such an Influence, whereby he doth communicate to us, such divine Qualities, as will exalt our Faculties beyond their natural State, and bring them into an Assimilation and Conformity to the most perfect *Idea* of Goodness, together with an inward Sensation of the Effects of this in ourselves.

Having thus dispatched what I had to suggest concerning the Nature of Happiness in general, I proceed to speak to such *Particulars*, as are esteemed to be the most usual Ingredients into such a State, and which do conduce to the compleating of it: whether they concern

Our

Our *present* Condition in this World; either our

*External* Welfare; consisting in

1. *Health.*

2. *Liberty, Safety, Quiet.*

3. Possessions; with respect either to the Sufficiency of them, for answering our Necessities; which is called *Riches* or *Profit*: Or to

4. The Delight or Satisfaction we receive in the Enjoyments, in the Use and Suitableness of the things we possess; which is called *Pleasure.*

5. The Esteem which we have amongst good Men, whereby we are rendered acceptable and useful to others; styled *Honour* or *Reputation.*

*Internal* Welfare, or the Happiness of our Minds; which doth consist in these two things:

1. The due *regulating* and *exalting* of our *Faculties* to their proper Function.

2. The *Peace, Joy, Contentment,* consequent thereupon.

The Happiness of our *future* State. This doth consist in such a Fruition of the Supreme Good, as our Souls are capable of; and must depend upon such Courses,

Courses, as can afford us the most rational Assurance of Blessedness and Glory hereafter.

Now, I shall endeavour to make it out by plain Reason, that the Happiness of our Condition, in all these respects, doth depend upon Religion: and that not only *morally* upon account of that Reward which virtuous Actions do entitle a Man unto, from a just and wise Providence; but *naturally* also, by reason of that *physical* Efficacy which the Duties of Religion have, to procure for us all those things wherein our temporal Happiness consists; to promote the Welfare, not only of particular Persons, but of publick Communities of Mankind in general, and of the whole Universe.

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## C H A P. II.

*How Religion conduces to our present Happiness in this World: And first to the Happiness of the Outward Man. I. In respect of Health.*

**A**ND because these things I have mentioned, (especially those of them which concern our external Happiness in this world) are the great Aims and Designs, by which the generality of Men are chiefly sway'd in their Actions; and therefore like to prove very powerful Motives to make Men religious, if they could be once effectually persuaded, that Religion is the most proper Means for the attaining of these Things: I shall therefore endeavour to make out this Truth, by the plainest and most convincing Evidence that may be. And the rather, because in such kind of Assertions, as are besides the common Opinion, and seem Paradoxes, Men will be apt to be jealous of their being imposed upon by some kind of Sophism or Fallacy.

In order to this, I shall observe this Method: First, I shall endeavour to state and define the Nature of these Things,  
and

and to shew wherein the true Notion of them doth consist. And then proceed to the Proof of this Proposition, that Religion is the most proper Means to procure and promote these Ends. And besides the Evidence to this purpose, from the concurrent *Opinions* of wise Men, in several Ages; I shall likewise make them out both by *Reason* and by *Experience*, which are all the kind of Arguments that such Matters are capable of.

Only I must premise one Caution; that when I say Religion is the Cause of these Things, the Meaning is not, that it is so necessary, and so infallible a Cause, as can never fail of its Effect. This would not be consistent with our dependent Condition, there being nothing in this World so much under the power of human Endeavours, but that the Providence of God may interpose for the Disappointment of it. To whom it must be left, to make what reserved Cases he pleases from the ordinary Course of Things. But tho' it be not an *infallible* Cause, yet it is such a Cause as doth *generally* and ἐπι τὸ πολὺ, produce its Effect: And all Mankind do think it a sufficient Inducement, to apply their Endeavours unto such Courses for the procuring of any thing, as are the best Means to be had, and do for the most part effect the Ends they are designed for.

This being premised, I doubt not but to offer such Arguments for the Proof of these Things, as shall be sufficient for the Conviction of any Man who will but understand and consider them.

I begin with the First. The Welfare of our *present Condition* in respect of our *Outward Man* doth depend upon Religion.

*First*, Religion is the best Means for *Health*. By Health I mean such a Constitution of our Bodies, whereby our Members and Faculties are inabled for the due Performance of their natural Functions, and freed from Pain; 'tis properly opposed to *Sickness* or Disease. As for the Infirmities of Old Age, these are so essential to all living Creatures, so necessarily spring from the very Principles of our Natures, that though they may be somewhat lessened and alleviated, yet are they not capable of any complete Remedy.

This Blessing of Health is so necessary to our Well-beings in this World, that without it we cannot enjoy any thing else; no, not our own selves: insomuch that Men do, and may justly put a great Value upon it, and are willing to purchase it at any Rate. And therefore to all such, this Consideration must needs be a very powerful Motive.

Now I shall make it plain that this doth depend upon Religion,

*Morally,*



{ *Morally,*  
 { *Naturally.*

1. *Morally*, By reason of those Blessings of this kind, which, by the Light of Nature, Men may reasonably expect from the Goodness of God, upon the Observance of his Laws; besides the several Assertions and Promises in Scripture to this purpose, where Sin is often represented as the meritorious Cause of Sickness, and Diseases are often threatened, and accordingly inflicted as the due Rewards of Sin: And on the other side, upon Mens observing the Duties of Religion, God promises to *take away sickness from the midst of them*, to bestow upon them *health and length of days*. *The fear of the Lord, and departing from evil, shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones*. *Prov. 3. 7, 8. Prov. 11. 19.* As Righteousness tendeth to Life, so he that pursueth Evil, *pursueth it to his own death*. *c. 2. 22. The wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.*

2. Religion is the *natural* Cause of Health, which may appear upon this two-fold Reason; because it doth remove those Things that will hinder it, and doth promote such Things as will help it.

1. It doth *removere prohibens*, it is apt to prevent and remove such Things as are the

great Impediments of our Health. Nothing is more evident, than that there are several Vices which have a physical Efficacy in the producing of Diseases, as all kind of Intemperance of Body, all inordinate Passions of Mind; to one of which, the greatest Part of the Sickness amongst Men may be ascribed; and consequently the Virtues opposite to these, Temperance, Sobriety, Moderation, must needs have a natural Causality for the hindring of these Diseases. 'Tis by Religion that Men are inabled to prevent all such Excesses as are prejudicial to Nature, to repress all such violent Transports of Passion, Hatred, Anger, Fear, Sorrow, Envy, &c. as are in themselves very pernicious to our Bodily Health, and by that violent Commotion, which they are apt to put the Humours into, do sometimes cause present Sickness, and always lay in us the Seeds of future Diseases.

2. It doth *promovere adjuvans*, promote all such things as may most effectually conduce to the improving of our Health; by obliging us upon the Account of Duty and Conscience, to a careful Observance of the most proper Means to this End; keeping us within due Bounds in our Eating, Drinking, Exercise; preserving our Minds in an equal Frame of Serenity and Calmness; supporting our Spirits with Contentation and Cheerfulness under every State of Life: so  
that

that nothing can be more true than that of *Solomon*, That a *cheerful Mind doth good* Prov. 17. 22.  
*like a medicine, and makes a healthy coun-* —15. 13.  
*tenance*; whereas *heaviness* and cares will —12. 25.  
*break a man's spirit, and make it stoop.*

I know there are other Means to be made use of, in order to the procuring of Health, various kind of Medicaments to be applied by the Art of Physick, according as the Nature of several Diseases shall require, which Religion doth oblige a Man not to neglect: But yet this, I think, may be truly said, that those who are most expert in the Profession of Physick, are not able to prescribe any *Catholicon*, which shall more effectually operate, both by way of *Prevention* and *Cure*, than the Observance of those Duties which Religion and Virtue do oblige us unto.

Nor is this true only in Theory and Speculation, but it may appear to be so upon common Experience, to which I shall appeal for the further Confirmation of it. What kind of Persons are those who enjoy the best State of Health, and the longest Lives? Are they not such generally, who are most sober and regular in their Conversations, most temperate as to their *Bodies*, most free from all kind of inordinate Passions, Fierceness, Anxiety, Cares, as to their *Minds*? 'Tis said of *Moses*, that *though he were exceeding old,* Deut. 34.  
*yet his eye were not dim, nor was his natural*  
*force abated.* Which (amongst other Cau-

ses) may be ascribed to those eminent Virtues he was endowed with, the Temperance of his Body, and Meekness of his Spirit. That *beloved disciple*, whose Thoughts and Writings seem to be wholly taken up with the divine Virtue of Love, is upon account of this Temper of his Mind, thought to have enjoyed a more vigorous old Age than any of the rest: Such a Power is there in Religion, tho' not wholly to prevent the Infirmities of old Age, yet in a great measure to alleviate and abate them.

And on the other side, if we consult Experience; Who are the Men most obnoxious to Diseases? are they not such generally as are most vicious in their Lives? most given to Surfeits, Debaucheries, and Leudness; whereby they do so far enflame their Blood, and waste their Spirits, as not to live out half their Days: Insomuch, that no Man of ordinary Prudence, who is to take a Lease for Lives, will be content (if he can well avoid it) to chuse such a one, whom he knows to be vicious and intemperate.

But these things are so obvious to common Experience, that I need not enlarge upon them: Only I would not be mistaken. I do not say, that none of those are religious, who are liable to Diseases, and are taken away in their younger Years; or that all such are religious, who are free from Diseases, and live to old Age. Some may be naturally of so

so tender and brittle a Make, that every little Blow will break them; others of so tough and strong a Constitution, as to hold out against many Batteries and Assaults; and yet neither of these to be ascrib'd, either to the Vices of the one, or the Virtues of the other, but do rather belong to their Condition and Temper; which being Natural, and not falling under the Choice of our Wills, is not therefore capable of any moral Good or Evil.

Besides, there ought Allowance to be made (as I said before) for such exempt Cases, as shall seem good to the Providence of God in the Government of Human Affairs. Some good Men may be *taken away from the evil to come*, others may be exercised with Diseases in their Bodies for the Cure of their Minds, or to make their Patience and Courage exemplary to others. And some that are good Men for the Main, may yet by their own Carelessness in using the fittest Means for the Preservation of their Health, expose themselves to Sicknes; none of which can be any prejudice to the Thing I have been proving. This being that which I affirm, that so far as the Infirmities of our natural Tempers are capable of Remedy by any thing in our power, it is the Observance of the Duties of Religion, that doth for the most part and generally prove the most effectual Means

to this purpose. Which is all I shall say to the *first* thing I propos'd to speak to, concerning the Health of our Bodies.

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### C H A P. III.

*How Religion conduces to the Happiness of the Outward Man, in respect of Liberty, Safety, and Quiet.*

**S**Econdly, Religion is the most proper Means to procure our external *Safety, Liberty, Quiet.*

By *Safety*, I mean a Freedom from those common Dangers and Mischiefs which others are expos'd to.

By *Liberty*, the being at our own Disposal, and not under Bondage, Restraint, Imprisonment.

By *Quiet*, an Exemption from those many Molestations and Troubles by reason of Disappointments, Enmity, Contentions, whereby the Conditions of most Men are render'd very burthensome and uncomfortable.

I put these things together, because of their near Affinity to one another.

Now Religion is both the *Moral* and the *Natural* Cause of these Things.

1. 'Tis the *Moral* Cause of them, upon account of that Divine Protection and Assistance, which the Light of Nature will assure us we are entitl'd unto in the doing of our Duties; besides the many Assertions and Promises in Scripture to this purpose, of being protect'd in our Ways, and secur'd in Times of Danger. *If you will keep my statutes, ye shall dwell in the land in safety.* Lev. 25. 18.  
*Whoso hearkeneth to me, shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from the fear of evil.* Prov. 1. 33.  
*There shall no evil happen to the just, but the wicked shall be filled with mischief.* Prov. 12. 21.  
*The Lord delivers the righteous out of all their troubles. When a man's ways please the Lord, he will make his enemies to be at peace with him.* Pfal. 34. 17.

2. 'Tis the natural Cause of these Blessings, by preventing or removing all such Things, whereby the contrary Evils are occasioned. The most usual and general Cause of Mens Sufferings, is from the Neglect of their Duty, and the Violations of Law; they are obnoxious to the Punishments of Banishment, Imprisonment, Loss of Goods, or of Life, upon the account of some illegal irreligious Acts; Murder, Theft, Sedition, injuring of others, needless Contentions, meddling in other Men's Affairs, where they are not concerned. 'Tis observable, that in the legal Form of indicting Men for Crimes, our Law doth ascribe their Guilt to their want  
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of Religion, their *not having the fear of God before their eyes*, which doth dispose them to commit such Acts as makes them obnoxious to legal Punishment. Now nothing can so effectually prevent such things as Religion. This will teach Men to obey Laws, and submit to Government: This will keep them within the Bounds of their Duty, both towards God and Man. This will remove all those dividing Principles, of Selfishness, and Pride, and Covetousness: It will teach them Charity and Meekness, and Forbearance, to study publick Peace and common Good, to be generous and large in their Well-wishing and their Well-doing: Which are the most proper Means to provide for our own Quiet and Safety.

And the Truth of this may be evident likewise from common Experience; by which it will appear, that for the general, no kind of Men do enjoy so much external Peace, and Freedom, and Safety, as those that are truly religious. The *Apostle* seems to appeal to that common Notion in the Minds of all Men concerning the Safety belonging to Innocence, when he puts it by way of Question, *Who is he that will harm you, if you be followers of that which is good?* Implying that 'tis a Thing generally known and taken notice of, that there is a kind of natural Reverence and Awe amongst the worst of Men towards such as are innocent and virtuous.

And



And on the other side, no Men do incur so many Hazards, Molestations, Contentions, as those that are vicious; what from their Violations of Law, their needless Provocations of those they converse with, being scarce ever free from Danger and Trouble; which the *Wise-man* seems to appeal to, as a Thing evident from Experience, in those short Questions which he proposeth: *Who hath* Prov. 23-29. *woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babblings? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?* 'Tis particularly spoken of the Drunkard, but 'tis proportionably true of other Vices likewise.

There is one Objection that lies very obvious against what I have been proving; and that is from those *Scriptures* where 'tis said, that *whoever will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution, and that the world should hate them*; besides what may be alledged from common Experience to this purpose, concerning the Sufferings of some that are good Men.

To this two Things may be said by way of Answer.

I. Every thing is not Persecution for Religion, which Men may be apt to stile so. Some Persons who for the main may be truly religious, may yet by their own Follies and Imprudence, expose themselves to needless Sufferings. And in such cases, Religion

is not to be charged, as being the Cause of their Suffering, but their Defect in it, and Mistakes about it.

2. There may be (as was said before) some exempt Cases from the general Rule, and such must those be granted to be, which concern Times of Persecution; when Religion will be so far from protecting a Man, that it will rather expose him to Danger and Sufferings. And such were those primitive Times to which these *Scriptures* do refer, when it seemed good to Divine Providence, to make use of this as one Means for the propagating of Christianity in the World, namely, by the Suffering of those that professed it. And in such Cases, when Men are persecuted properly upon the Account of Religion, God doth usually compensate their outward Sufferings with some inward Advantage, supplying them with such Patience and Courage, as will support them with Joy and Comfort in their Suffering for that which is good. But then it must withal be granted, that these *Scriptures* are not equally applicable to such other Times and Places, when and where the true Religion is publickly professed and encouraged, when *Kings are nursing Fathers*, and *Queens nursing Mothers* to the Church; because in such Times and Places, the Profession of Religion will be so far from hindring, that it will rather promote a Man's secular Advantage.

## C H A P. IV.

*How Religion conduces to the Happiness of the Outward Man, in respect of Riches.*

**T**Hirdly, as to our Estates and Possessions, I shall shew that Religion is the Cause of *Riches*. In order to the Proof of this, the First Thing to be inquired into, is, what is the true Nature of *Wealth* or *Riches*, and wherein it may properly be said to consist. And here it is to be noted, that the Word *Riches* is capable of a two-fold Sense,

{ *Absolute,*  
 { *Relative.*

1. In the more *absolute* Sense, it may be defined to consist in such a Measure of Estate, as may be sufficient for a Man's Occasions and Conveniencies; when his Possessions are so proportioned, as may fully answer all the Necessities of his Condition, and afford him a comfortable Subsistence, according to his Quality, the Station wherein he is placed. In which sense, Men of all Ranks and Degrees are capable of being rich. A Husbandman, or an ordinary Tradesman,  
 may

may be as truly stiled a rich Man, as he that is a Gentleman, or a Lord, or a King. Tho' perhaps what these can very well afford to sling away upon their Diversions, be more than all the Estate and Possessions which the other can pretend to. And upon this Ground it is, that all Men will grant, one Person to be as truly *liberal* in giving but a *Penny*, or a poor *Mite*, as another in giving a *hundred Pounds*, because these Things are to be measured by the different Conditions of the Givers: And a Man may as well be rich with a *little*, as *liberal* with a *little*.

2. In the more *relative* Sense, *Riches* may be described to consist in the having of large Possessions, when a Man's Estate and Revenue is of such a Proportion as is commonly esteemed *Great*, whether with relation to the Generality of other Men, and so only those at the upper End of the World are capable of being counted rich; or else with respect to others of the same Rank and Order, and so all such are counted rich, who do in their Possessions exceed the common sort of those that are of the same Rank with them; this kind of Wealth consisting properly in Comparison: There being not any one determinate Sum, or Proportion of Revenue, to which the Name of Riches may be appropriated, but that it may be as much below the Occasions of some Persons as it is

is above the Condition of others who yet live plentifully.

Now the First of these is the only proper Notion of *Riches*, because this alone is agreeable to the chief End of Wealth, which is to free us from Want and Necessity. And the other may be rather stiled, the being Proprietor of great Possessions, the mere having of which cannot denominate one a truly rich Man, for this plain Reason; because tho' such Possessions be in themselves great, yet they may not be sufficient to free the Owner of them from Want and Poverty, whether in respect to his real or imaginary Occasions for more: And that is not Riches, which cannot free a Man from being poor. And want of Necessaries, is as truly Poverty in him that hath much, as in him that hath but a little. He that in any one Condition of Life, hath enough to answer all his Conveniencies, such a Man is more truly rich than he whose Revenue is a thousand times greater, if it be not equal either to his Occasions, or to his Mind.

Now when it is said, that Religion is the Cause of Riches, the Meaning of this cannot reasonably be understood of Riches in the second Sense, as if he that were religious should be thereby advanced to the greatest Possessions that any Man else doth enjoy, from the Condition of a Peasant or a Tradesman to that of a Prince: Because this would

no more consist with those several Degrees and Subordinations required to the Order of the Universe, than it would for every common Soldier to be a General, or every private Man to be a King. But the Meaning of this Proposition must be, that Religion will be a Means to supply a Man with such a Sufficiency as may denominate him rich; and to free him from such Necessities, whether real or imaginary, as others of his Rank and Station are liable unto.

So that by what hath been said, it may appear, that the true Notion of Riches doth comprehend under it these two Things.

1. A Sufficiency for a Man's Occasions and Conveniencies.

2. An Acquiescence of Mind, in so much as is in itself really sufficient, and which will appear to be so, supposing a Man to judge according to right Reason.

And that this is not a mere Fancy or Notion, but the most proper Sense of the Word *Riches*, wherein all Mankind have agreed, may be made very evident.

Concerning the *first* of these, there can be no Colour or Doubt. All the Scruple will be concerning the *second*; Whether that be necessary to make a Man rich. And to this the *Philosophers* do generally attest. *Aristotle* in particular doth affirm, that the true Nature of Riches doth consist in the contented Use and Enjoyment of the Things we have,

have, rather than in the Possession of them. Those that *out of Penuriousness* can scarce afford themselves the ordinary Conveniences of Life *out of* their large Possessions, have been always accounted poor; nay, he that cannot use and enjoy the things he doth possess, may upon this account be said to be of all others the most indigent, because such a one doth truly want the Things he hath, as well as those he hath not.

That Man who is not content with what is in itself sufficient for his Condition, neither is rich, nor ever will be so; because there can be no other *real* Limits to his Desires, but that of *Sufficiency*; whatever is beyond this, being boundless and infinite. And though Men may please themselves with an Imagination, that if they had but such an Addition to their Estates, they should then think they had enough; yet that is but a mere Imagination, there being no real Cause, why they should be more satisfied then, than they are now.

He that is in such a Condition as doth place him above Contempt, and below Envy, cannot by any Enlargement of his Fortune be made really more rich or more happy than he is. And he is not a wise Man, if he do not think so; nor is he in this either wise or worthy, if he be so far solicitous as to part with his Liberty, though it be but in some little Servilities, for the increasing of his Estate.

These things being premised, it may be made very evident, that the Design of being truly rich, that is, of having enough, and being contented, will be most effectually promoted by Religion; and That both *Morally* and *Naturally*.

1. *Morally*; upon which Account this is by the Philosophers owned to be one of the Rewards belonging to Virtue; good Men only having a moral Title to Wealth upon account of Fitness and Desert. There are many Assertions and Promises in Scripture to this Purpose, of being prospered in our *stores* and *labours*, and *all that we set our hands unto*; of *lacking nothing that is good for us*. 'Tis this that must entitle us to the Blessing of God, and 'tis the *blessing of God that maketh rich*. Solomon speaking of *Religion* under the Name of *Wisdom*, saith, that *in her left hand are riches, durable riches*; that she causes those that love her to *inherit substance*, and doth *fill their treasures*. And the *Apostle* tells us, that *Godliness hath the promises of this life*.

2. Religion is a *natural* Cause of Riches, with reference to those two chief Ingredients required to such a State; namely, the supplying of us with a plentiful Sufficiency, as to our Possessions, and a Satisfaction, as to our Minds.

1. A Sufficiency as to our Estates and Possessions. There are but these two Ways that

Psal. 34  
10.

Prov. 3.  
16.

c. 7. 8. 18.

—8. 21.



that can contribute to the improving of Men's Possessions, namely, the *Art of getting* and of *keeping*. Now Religion is an Advantage to Men in both these Respects. Nothing can be more evident than that there are many Virtues, which upon these accounts have a natural Tendency to the increasing of Men's Estates, as Diligence in our Callings, *The diligent hand maketh rich*; Heedfulness to improve all fitting Opportunities of providing for our selves and Families, being provident in our Expences, keeping within the Bounds of our Income, not running out into needless Debts: In brief, all the lawful Arts of Gain and good Husbandry, as to the Exercise of them, are founded in the Virtues which Religion teaches.

On the contrary it is plain, that there are many kind of Sins which have a direct natural Efficacy for the impoverishing of Men: As all kind of Sensuality, and Voluptuousness, Idleness, Prodigality, Pride, Envy, Revenge, &c. of all which may be said what *Solomon* says of one of them, that they *bring a man to a morsel of bread, and cloath him with rags*.

2. And as for the second Requisite to Riches, Satisfaction of Mind with our Conditions, and a free Use of the Things we enjoy; this is the Property of Religion, that it can enable a Man to be content with his Estate, and to live comfortably without such things as o-

thers know not how to want. And the Ability of being content with a little, may be much more truly called Riches, than the having of much, without being satisfied therewith. 'Tis better to be in Health with a moderate Appetite, than to be continually eating and drinking under the Disease of a voracious Appetite or a Dropsy : And in this sense, *A little that the righteous hath, is better than great riches of the ungodly.*

Pfal. 37.  
:6.

But this may appear likewise from experience. Let any Man impartially consider, what kind of Persons those are amongst the Generality of Men, who in their several Degrees and Orders are counted most able, and most wealthy, and it will appear that they are such as are most serious in the matter of Religion, most diligent in their Callings, most just and honest in their Dealings, most regular and sober in their Conversations, most liberal towards any good Work ; upon which account it is, that such Places, where Men have the Opportunity of being instructed in, and excited to the Duties of Religion, do thereupon thrive and flourish most ; it being one Property of Religion to civilize Men, and make them more inquisitive in Learning, and more diligent in practising their several Professions.

And as for Contentment of Mind, this being in itself a Virtue as well as a Privilege, it is not to be attained but upon the account  
of

of Religion; nor are there any that enjoy it, but such as are truly virtuous.

There are several Objections that may be made against what I have been proving, but all of them capable of a plain and satisfactory Solution.

I. There are some kind of Virtues that seem to have a contrary Tendency; as Charity to those that want, Bounty and Liberality to any good Work, which in *Aristotle's* Ethic lib. 4. c. 1. Judgment is scarce consistent with growing rich.

By that Saying of *Aristotle*, may be meant Riches in the second Sense, as it denotes large Possessions, which this Virtue of Liberality doth not naturally promote; but it may very well consist with Riches in the first and most proper Notion of it, as it denotes Sufficiency for our Occasions; and the Ability of contributing in some proportion towards any worthy and charitable Work, is in the Esteem of every good Man, one of those Occasions and Conveniencies required to such a Sufficiency, and cannot any more be a Prejudice to it, than it would be for a Man to lay up some part of his Wealth in the safest Place, to lend it out upon the best Interest, to part with it for the Purchase of the same Favour and Assistance from others in the like Exigencies; to lay it out upon his Pleasure, with respect to that inward Comfort and Satisfaction, which doth accompany

the Conscience of doing worthy Things. And besides all this, Experience will assure us, that there is a secret Blessing which doth for the most part accompany such Actions; so that Men grow the richer, and not the poorer for them: And they that in this kind *sow bountifully*, do very often, even in this World, *reap bountifully*.

2. There are some kind of Vices that seem to have a Tendency to the enriching of Men, as *Fraud, Extortion, Sordidness*, all kind of unlawful Ways of getting and keeping an Estate. But to this it may be said,

1. These Vices may tend to the increasing of Mens Possessions, but not to the making of them truly rich: And 'tis a plain Argument that such Persons do not think themselves to have a Sufficiency, who can apply themselves to such wretched Courses for the getting of more.

2. 'Tis commonly seen upon Experience, that there is a secret Curse attends such Practices, a Canker that eats into such Gain, a Hole in the bottom of the Bag, by which it Jer. 17. 11 insensibly dreins out and wastes away. *As the partridge sitteth upon eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at the end shall be a fool.* As that silly Bird doth sometimes take much needless Care and Pains, in sitting upon and cherishing subventaneous Eggs, such as can  
never

never be fruitful, which (as *Naturalists* observe) that Creature is very subject unto, or as the fecund Eggs of that Bird being laid upon the Ground, are many times trod upon by Passengers or wild Beasts, after it hath bestow'd much Pains for the hatching of them: So are the wicked Designs of Gain often disappointed in the *Embryo*; and the Contrivers of them, instead of approving themselves to be more wise and subtile Men than others, do appear at last to be Fools. He that will carefully observe the usual Course of things in the World, may from his own Experience find Instances enough, to confirm those Sayings of the wise Man; *There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth;* Prov. 11. *and there is that withholdeth more than is* <sup>24.</sup> *meet, but it tendeth to poverty. Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished. The* cap. 13. *wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.* <sup>11, 22.</sup> *He that oppresseth the poor to increase his* cap. 22. 16. *riches, shall surely come to want. He that* cap. 28. 8. *by unjust gain increaseth his substance, shall gather it for him that will pity the poor.*

3. There are some good Men that are poor. And 'tis said that *God hath chosen the* Jam. 2. 5. *poor of this world, to receive the Gospel, and to be rich in faith.* To this it may be said,

1. The Providence of God may so order it sometimes, as to reduce good Men to great Exigencies, *to wander up and down in sheep-*  
*skins*

*skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.* But then these are such particular exempt Cases, as are not suitable to the most usual and general Course of Things. And besides, such as are good Men, may sometimes be defective in several of those Duties which Religion doth oblige them to, Diligence, Caution, &c. And the Poverty of such may justly be ascribed to their Defect in Religion.

2. As for that Scripture, that *God hath chosen the poor in this world*; it is not to be understood in the more *absolute* Sense, for such as want Necessaries; because 'tis plain from other Texts, that though some of the Primitive Believers were, by reason of the Persecution of those Times reduced to great Exigencies, yet the Generality of the rest were very liberal in their Contributions towards them. But it must be understood in the *relative* Sense, concerning such as might be stiled comparatively Poor; (*i. e.*) such as are of a lower Rank, and meaner Condition than others, and consequently had less Temptation to corrupt and seduce them, than those that did more abound in these earthly Things.

## C H A P. V.

*How Religion conduces to the Happiness of the Outward Man in respect of Pleasure; or the chearful Enjoyment of outward Blessings.*

*F*ourthly, Religion is the most proper Means to promote the Interest of *Pleasure*.

In the handling of this, I shall first endeavour to state the true Nature of *Pleasure*, and to shew what is the most proper Notion of it. Now *Pleasure* doth consist in that Satisfaction which we receive in the Use and Enjoyment of the Things we possess. It is founded in a Suitableness and Congruity betwixt the Faculty and the Object. Those are called pleasant Tastes and Smells, which are apt to excite such a gentle Motion, as is agreeable to the Nerves appointed for those Functions. Now, it cannot be denied, but that *Beasts* and *Insects* may be said to be capable of Pleasure proper to their Kind, as well as *Men*. Only this must withal be granted, that the more noble and the more capacious the Faculties and the Objects are, the greater will the Delights be  
that

that flow from the Union of them. Upon which account, all intellectual Delights do far exceed those that are sensual; and, amongst Persons that are capable of intellectual Pleasures, their Enjoyments must be greatest, whose Faculties are most enlarged, and most vigorous. 'Tis true indeed, Men of vitiated and depraved Faculties, though they are thereby disabled for passing a true Judgment upon the Nature of Things, being apt to mistake sour for sweet; yet will it not thence follow, that they are incapable of Pleasure: They may have such peculiar kinds of Gusts, as will be able to find a Satisfaction and Sweetness in such things as appear nauseous and loathsome to others. And 'tis the Congruity of things, that is the Foundation of Pleasure. But then such Persons are beholden to their Ignorance and their Delusion, to the Distemper of their Faculties, for their Relish of these things: None but those that are *foolish* and *deceived*, and under the Servitude of *divers lusts*, devote themselves to such kind of things for Pleasures. Supposing a Man to have sound healthy Faculties, such an one will not be able to find any true Satisfaction and Complacency, but only in those things which have in them a natural Goodness and Rectitude. They must be regular Objects, that have in them a Suitableness to regular Faculties.

This



This being premised by way of Explication, I shall proceed to prove, that Religion is the most proper means for the promoting of this Interest; and this it doth

{ *Morally.*  
 { *Naturally.*

1. *Morally*; as it is one of the Rewards belonging to Virtue, which alone upon its own account doth deserve all such Advantages, as may render its Condition pleasant and comfortable in this World.

Besides the several Assertions and Promises in Scripture to this purpose, *Prov. 3. 17.* speaking of Religion under the Name of Wisdom, it is said, that *her ways are ways of pleasantness. The yoke of it is easy,  $\chi\rho\nu\sigma\omicron\varsigma$  Mat. 11. 30. gracious and sweet, and the burden light. The commandments of it not grievous. The fruits of it are love, and joy, and peace.* <sup>1 Joh. 5. 3.</sup> <sup>Gal. 5. 22.</sup>

The Duties of Religion are in several Places of Scripture compared to Musick and to Feasting; and are said to be *sweeter than the honey and the honey-comb. I delight to do thy will, O my God, Psal. 40. 8.*

2. Religion is the *Natural* Cause of *Pleasure.* Which I shall endeavour to make out by Reason and Experience.

1. By Reason: Religion hath a *natural* Efficacy in promoting the Interest of Pleasure, teaching a Man a chearful liberal Use  
 of

of the things he enjoys, how to *make his soul enjoy good in his labour*; how to sweeten and allay all the Difficulties and Troubles of this Life. Nor doth it restrain Men from any such sensible Pleasures, as are agreeable to Reason, or our true Interests. It only prohibits Mistakes and Excesses about them, teaches us so to regulate our selves in the use of them, that they may truly deserve the Name of Pleasure: how to provide against that natural Emptiness and Vanity, which there is in all such Things, whereby they are apt quickly to satiate and weary us; and upon this account it may be said to promote rather than hinder the Interest of Pleasure.

As for the Pleasures of the Appetite, these abide no longer than till the Necessities and Conveniencies of Nature are satisfied; and so far Religion doth allow of them. When our Hunger and Thirst is well appeased, all that follows after is but a faint kind of Pleasure, if it be not rather to be stiled Satiety and a Burden.

As for those kind of Things, which we call by the Name of Sports and Diversions, Religion doth likewise admit of a moderate Use of these; and what is beyond such a moderate Use, doth rather tire Men, than recreate them: It being as much the Property of such Things, to weary a Man when he is once sufficiently refreshed by them, as  
it

it is to refresh him when he is wearied by other Things.

We read indeed of *the pleasures of sin*: but besides that they are of a baser and grosser kind, 'tis said also, that they are *but for a season, but for a moment, and the end of them is heaviness.* The Ways of Sin may seem broad and pleasant, but they *lead down to death, and take hold of hell.* There are some Vices that seem sweet to the Palate, but do after *fill the mouth with gravel.*—Job 20. 5. Prov. 5. 20. 17. There are several Sins which have very specious and tempting Appearances, which yet upon trial do *bite like a serpent, and sting like an adder.*—23. 32.

By what has been said, it appears, that Religion is a natural Cause of promoting these sensible Pleasures; besides, that it affords Delights incomparably beyond all these corporeal Things, such as those who are *Strangers* to Religion cannot understand, and *do not intermeddle with.*

2. But besides the Reasons to this purpose, it may appear likewise from Experience, that the great Pleasure of Men's Lives is from the Goodness of them; such only being capable of a free and liberal Enjoyment of what they possess, who know how to regulate themselves in the Fruition of them, to avoid Extremities on either hand, to prevent those Mixtures of Guilt and Fear, which will imbitter all their Enjoyments.

joyments. Such Persons only who have *good Consciences*, being capable of having a *continual Feast*.

The great Objection against this will be, from the Difficulty of the Duties of Mortification, Repentance, Self-denial, taking up the Cross, &c. All which do imply in them a Repugnancy to our Natures, and consequently an Inconsistency with Pleasure.

For answer to this, it must be observed, That *Difficulty* doth properly arise from a Disproportion betwixt the Power and the Work; as when a Person of little Strength is put to carry a great Burden, when one of a mean Capacity is put to answer an hard Question in Learning. Now, supposing Men to retain their vicious Habits, it must be granted, to be as difficult for such to perform the Duties of Religion, or to forbear the Acts of Sin, as for a lame and impotent Man to run, or for a Man under a violent Fever to be restrained from drinking. But suppose these Men cured of these Maladies, and their Faculties to be rectified, then all this Disproportion and Unsuitableness will vanish; and those Things will become easy and delightful, which were before very difficult and unpleasant. Now, it is the Property of Religion, that it changes the Natures of Men, making them *new Creatures*. *It puts off the old man,*  
*which*

*which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts, and puts on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.* It removes our vicious Habits, and endows the Mind with other kind of Inclinations and Abilities. And though there should be some Difficulties in the very Passage from one State to another, yet this ought not to be objected as a Prejudice against Religion; because there are far greater Difficulties and Pains to be undergone in the Service and Drudgery of impetuous Lusts. The Trouble of being cured, is not so great as that of being sick; nor is the Trouble of being sober, comparable to that of being debauched and intemperate. That godly Sorrow which is required as one of the first Acts in the Change of our Condition, is always accompanied with secret Pleasure: And as it is said of *wicked men*, that *in the midst of laughter their heart is sorrowful*; so may it be said of *good men*, that *in the midst of their sorrow their heart is joyful*. And when the Conditions of Men are once changed, when they are passed over to another State, it will then prove as easy to them to observe the Duties of Religion, as it was before to follow their own sinful Inclinations. An evil Tree doth not more naturally bring forth evil Fruit, than a good Tree doth bring forth good Fruit.

As for that Moroseness and Sourness of Carriage which some Men, who pretend to Religion, are noted for; this is not justly to be ascribed to their Religion, but to their want of it. Joy and Chearfulness being not only a Privilege, but a Duty which Religion doth oblige Men to, whereby they are to adorn their Profession, and win over others to a Love of it.

## C H A P. VI.

*How Religion conduces to our Honour  
and Reputation.*

**F***ifthly*, for the Interest of *Honour* and Reputation. This is one of the greatest Blessings which this World can afford, much to be preferred before Riches or Pleasures, or Life it self. *A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.* One that is a generous virtuous Man will chuse to die, rather than do any thing that may expose him to Infamy. *St. Paul* was of this Mind. *It were better for me to die, than that any should make my glorying void.* And because 'tis a thing of so great Excellency, therefore we do pay it, as the best Service we can do to God, and to his Deputies,  
Magi-

Prov. 22.  
1.

1 Cor. 9.  
15.

Magistrates and Parents. 'Tis by this that we are render'd useful and acceptable to others. And besides the Advantage we have by it while we live, 'tis one of those Things that will abide after us, when we are gone out of the World; and for that Reason a special Regard is to be had to it. And the more wise and virtuous any Man is, the more care will he take to transmit a grateful Memory of himself to future Times; and since he must be spoken of after his Departure, to take care that he be well-spoken of, that his Name may be as a precious Ointment, leaving a Perfume behind it, that Men may rise up at the mention of it, and call him blessed. Nor can any Man despise Honour, but he that doth either despair of it, or resolve against doing any thing that may deserve it.

Now Honour is properly the Esteem and good Opinion which Men have concerning the Person or the Actions of another, together with such external Expressions of Respects as are suitable thereunto.

And I shall make it appear, that this kind of Happiness doth depend upon Religion, both

{ *Morally*,  
{ *Naturally*.

1. *Morally*. Nothing being more generally agreed upon amongst all the *Philosophers*,

phers, than that Honour is the peculiar Reward of Virtue, and doth not properly belong to any thing else. And that Shame is the proper Reward of Vice, nor can it belong to any thing else.

The Scripture is very copious in Expressions to this purpose. Such as are Religious, are styled the *excellent of the earth*, Psal. 16. 3. and said to be *more excellent than their neighbours*, Prov. 17. 27. They are *God's peculiar treasure*, the *dearly beloved of his soul*. *He sets apart the man that is godly for himself*. Though such Persons may be but low in their outward Condition, being put to *wander up and down in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented*, seeking for refuge *in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth*; yet are they upon the account of Religion, of such an excellent Value, that in the Judgment of the *Holy Ghost*, *the world is not worthy of them*, Heb. 11. 37, 38.

The *Wise-man*, speaking of Religion, saith Prov. 19 that *it shall be an ornament of grace to thy head, and as a chain about thy neck*. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee, and bring thee to honour. She shall give to thy head an ornament of grace, and a crown of glory. God hath engaged himself by Promise to those People that are religious, that *he will set them above other nations; they shall be made*



*made the head, and not the tail. He will* <sup>1 Sam. 2.</sup>  
*honour those that honour him.* And cer- <sup>30.</sup>  
 tainly, he who is the King of Kings, must <sup>Joh. 12.</sup>  
<sup>26.</sup>  
 needs be the Fountain of Honour, and be  
 able to dispose of it as he pleases.

And on the other side, Shame is in *Scripture* said to be the proper Reward and Consequent of Sin, especially in the Writings of *David* and *Solomon*. Religion is stiled by the Name of *Wisdom*, and Sin by the Name of *Folly*. And the *Wise man* having said, *Prov. 3. 35.* that *the wise shall inherit glory*, 'tis added, *but shame shall be the promotion of fools*: it shall be *their promotion*; the utmost that such Persons shall ever attain to, will be but disgrace; when they are exalted and lifted up, it shall prove to their disparagement, to make their Shame more conspicuous. And *Prov. 13. 5.* 'tis said, *A wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame.* The Word translated *loathsome*, properly denotes such kind of Persons to be as nauseous and offensive to the Judgments of others, as the most loathsome unfavoury Things are to their Tastes or Smells. They are stiled by the Name of *Wolves* and *Bears*, *Swine*, *Dogs*, and *Vipers*, things both hurtful and hateful.

Men that are truly virtuous, have a Reverence paid them by all that know them. And on the other side, vicious Men are despised. Not but that wicked Persons may be inwardly honoured, by such as do not know

them to be wicked; and on the other side, those that are good, may by others be esteemed and used, as being the Rubbish and Off-scouring of all things. But this is to be ascribed chiefly to their Mistake and Ignorance of them, whilst they look upon such Persons as being the most dangerous pernicious Persons. But the Generality of Mankind have heretofore, and still do pay a Reverence to any Person whom they believe to be Innocent and Virtuous.

2. Religion is the *natural* Cause of Honour and Reputation, so far as such Things are capable of any physical Efficacy. This I shall endeavour to prove, both from Reason and Experience.

I. By Reason. For the better understanding of this, we are to take notice, that *Honour* may be consider'd under a twofold Notion.

1. According to the Desert and Foundation of it, in the Person *honoured*.

2. According to the Acknowledgement or Attribution of it, in the Person *honouring*.

Now Religion doth by a natural Causality influence both these.

1. According to the Foundation of it, in the Person *honoured*, which is true Virtue and Merit. I have shewed before, that the Essence of Man may be said to consist in being religious, and consequently this must be the Rule and Measure of a Man's real

Worth:

Worth ; it must be our excelling in that which makes us Men, that must make us better Men than others. All other things have some kind of Standard, by which the natural Goodness of them is to be measur'd ; so is it with Men likewise. And this is usually from their Suitableness to that chief End they are design'd for. *Quæ conditio rerum, eadem & hominum est ; navis bona dicitur, non quæ pretiosis coloribus picta est, &c.* (saith *Seneca*.) “ We do not therefore esteem <sup>Epist. 76.</sup> “ a Ship to be good, because it is curiously “ painted and gilded, or carved and inlay'd, “ but because 'tis fitted for all the Purposes “ of Navigation, which is the proper End of “ a Ship.” Nor do we therefore count a Sword to be good, because it hath a rich Hilt and an embroidered Scabbard, but because it is fit for the proper use of a Sword, which is to cut, &c. *In homine quoque nihil ad rem pertinet, quantum aret, quantum sæneret, à quàm multis salutetur, sed quàm bonus sit.* It should be so likewise in our Esteem of Men, who are not so much to be valued by the Grandeur of their Estates or Titles, as by their inward Goodness. The true Stamp of Nobility is upon the Minds of Men, and doth consist in such virtuous Habits, as will enable a Man for worthy Designs and Actions ; when the Image of God, who is the Rule of Excellency and the Fountain of Honour, is in any Measure restored upon it.

Every Man is endowed with a natural Principle inclining him to a State of Happiness, and hath in some measure both an Ability to judge of, and a Freedom and Liberty for applying himself unto, those Duties, which are the proper Means for the promoting of this End : Nor is he upon any other account to be justly praised or blamed, but according to the right or wrong Use of this natural Liberty. And therefore as such a Man doth find either in himself or others, a constant and firm Resolution to make a right use of this ; so should he proportion his Esteem accordingly, preferring this inward Greatness, this Rectitude of Mind, whereby a Man is resolved in every Condition, to do that which shall appear to be his Duty, before any kind of external Greatness whatsoever.

There is a Respect and Honour due to all kind of Virtues whatsoever, as rendring Men amiable and lovely. But amongst the rest there are two, which are by general Consent esteemed venerable, and such as do greatly advance the Reputation of those who are endow'd with them ; namely,

{ *Wisdom,*  
 { *Courage ;*

Because they have a more intrinſick Riſe, and do leſs depend upon external Advantages,

tages,

tages, but seem rather to be rooted in the inward Frame and Temper of our Minds; and withal are most beneficial both to our selves and others. The former signifying a Man to have those *intellectual* Abilities which are proper to his Kind, whereby the human Nature is to be distinguished from other Things: The other, because it argues a Rectitude in the *Will*, and a Power to subdue the Passion of Fear, which is most natural to our present State of Infirmary; and withal doth support a Man against Difficulties, and enable him for those two great Services, of *doing* and *suffering* as he ought. And for this Reason, the Vices that are opposite to these, are amongst all others counted the most shameful; there being no greater Re-proach to be cast upon any one, than to be esteemed a Fool or a Coward.

Now a Man that is irreligious cannot justly pretend to either of these Virtues.

I. For *Wisdom*. This is so essential to Religion, that in the Scripture-phrase they both go under the same *name*. And there is very good Reason, why it should be so; because there is such an intimate Agreement between the *Natures* of them. The *Philosopher* doth define Wisdom to consist in an Ability and Inclination, to make choice of right *Means* in the Prosecution of our true *End*. And nothing can enable a Man for this but Religion, both as to the *subordinate* End  
of

of *temporal* Happiness in this World, and chiefly with respect to that great and *supreme* End of *eternal* Happiness in the World to come.

2. And then for *Courage*. 'Tis not possible for a Man to be truly valiant, unless he be withal truly religious: He may be bold and daring, and able in a fearless manner to rush upon any Danger; but then he must stifle his Reason from considering what the Consequences of things may be, what shall become of him hereafter if he should miscarry: There being no Man whatsoever so totally free from the Apprehensions of a future State, but that when he is serious and considerate, he must be startled with Doubts and Fears concerning it: So that there cannot be any rational, sedate, deliberate Courage, but only in such as have good Hopes of a better Estate in the other World; and 'tis Religion only that can enable a Man for this.

2. Honour consider'd according to the Acknowledgement or Attribution of it in the Persons *honouring*; which is the external Form, or as the Body of Honour, being much in the power of others. And this may be distinguished into these two Kinds,

{ *Inward*,  
 { *Outward*.

1. *Inward* Honouring is properly an Act of the Understanding, in passing Judgment upon

upon the Nature of Things: When we do, in our Minds, own and acknowlege the real Worth or Virtue of a Thing or Person. And every one who will act rationally, not miscalling good evil, and evil good, must proportion his Esteem of Things, according to the real value of them. Nor is it in any Man's power, so far to offer Violence to his own Faculties, as to believe any thing against Evidence; to esteem that Man to be either worthy or unworthy, whom he knows to be otherwise. He may call him and use him as he pleases, and he may be willing to entertain Prejudices, either for or against him; and in this sense, *Honor est in honorante*: But he cannot inwardly think or believe otherwise than according to his Evidence. For Men of no real worth to expect this inward Honour from others, as it is very *unequal, requiring brick without straw*; and very *unlawful*, it being as well a Man's Duty to *contemn a vile person, as to honour those that fear the Lord*: so neither is it *possible*, because Men must necessarily judge according to the most prevailing Evidence; nor can they esteem such a one to be worthy, whom they know to be otherwise, any more than they can believe that to be white and streight, which they see to be black and crooked.

There are indeed some other things, that do commonly go under this Name, as the  
several

several Degrees of Nobility, Titles, and Places of Dignity which are usually called by this Name of Honour; but these things (as they are abstracted from Magistracy) being wholly extrinſical, have no more due to them, but a mere external Reſpect. They may challenge from us, that we should give them their due Titles, and demean ourselves towards them with that Observance and Ceremony, which becomes their Quality: But then as for that inward Esteem and Valuation of our Minds belonging to good Men, ſuch Persons can challenge no greater Share of this than according as their real Merit and Virtue shall require. The Royal Stamp upon any kind of Metal may be ſufficient to give it an extrinſick Value, and to determine the Rate at which it is to paſs amongſt Coins; but it cannot give an intrinſick Value, or make that which is but Braſs to be Gold.

'Tis true indeed, there are ſome Callings and particular Relations of Men, to which an inward Veneration is due, though the Persons themselves should not be virtuous; namely, *Magiſtrates*, and *Ministers*, and *Parents*, and *Benefactors*; who having ſome-what of a Divine Stamp and Impreſs, may therefore challenge from us, that we should demean ourselves towards them, both with ſuch an *outward* Reſpect as becomes their *Places*, and with ſuch an *inward* Reſpect too,

as



as may be suitable to that *Image* which they bear; to our *Dependence* upon them, and *Obligations* to them. But then we cannot be obliged to think such Persons good Men, unless we have some Evidence to believe them to be so, or at least not to be otherwise; so that they are beholden to something extrinsical to their Persons, namely to their Callings and Relations, for that Honour which is paid to them.

2. *Outward* Honouring is, when Men do by their Words or Actions testify that Esteem and Respect which they have for the Worth of others. And this indeed may be truly said to be in the power of others, because Men have a greater Command over their Words and Actions, than they have over their Belief. Now all Men that are truly Virtuous and Religious, will be ready to give unto every one his due Honour; and such are the best Judges of it. Upon which account *Tully* defines true Honour to be *consentiens laus bonorum*, the concurrent Tusc. Q. 2. Approbation of good Men; such only being fit to give true Praise, who are themselves praise-worthy.

As for vicious and irreligious Persons, 'tis not to be expected that they should be forward to commend that which is opposite to them. But then 'tis to be consider'd, that these are no competent Judges of such matters: And for a Man to resent deeply the  
Con-

Contempt of unworthy Persons, were overmuch to honour them, as if their Esteem could add any thing to his Reputation.

And yet, even these Persons cannot avoid having an inward Veneration for Goodness and Religion, which is the Reason why they are so forward to dissemble it, to disguise themselves under the shew of it. Men do not use to counterfeit common Stones and Metals, but such as are precious, Jewels, and Gold; nor would any one take the pains to counterfeit being religious, if he did not think it a matter of some Value, and a means to procure Esteem from others. And when such Men do revile and persecute any one for being religious, yet is there such a natural Veneration belonging to the Thing itself, as makes them to disguise it under the Name of Hypocrisy, Heresy, Superstition, &c. whereby they may justify themselves in their opposing of it.

II. But this is only general Discourse, and in the Notion. The best Argument to this purpose would be from *Experience*; by which I mean that practical Knowledge, which every Man may attain by his own Observation of the usual Course of Things in the World. And by this it will appear, that no kind of Persons have been more highly revered in the Hearts and Consciences of others, than those that have been most eminent for their Virtue and Religion; which hath been al-

ways

ways true, both with respect to publick Communities, and private Persons.

1. For *Nations*. If we consult the Histories of former Times, we shall find that Saying of *Solomon* constantly verified, That *Righteousness doth exalt a Nation, but Sin* Prov. 14. *doth prove a reproach to it.* And more especially the Sin of Irreligiousness and Prophaneness: As this doth increase in any Nation, so must the Honour and Reputation of that Nation decrease. The *Roman* Empire was then at the highest, as to its Name and Greatness, when it was so as to its Virtue; when they were most punctual in observing the Rites of their Religion, (tho' that were a false way of Worship) most heroicall in their Justice, Courage, Fidelity, Gratitude; then it was that they deserved to govern the World, and to be had in greatest honour above all other Nations. And not only *Cicero* and *Polybius*, two Heathen Writers, who, upon that account, might be thought more partial; but *St. Austin* also and *Lactantius*, two of the Fathers, do ascribe the flourishing of that Empire, when it was at its height, to the Religion, and Piety, and Virtue of those Times: and as they did afterwards degenerate from this, so did they decline likewise in their Greatness and Honour.

2. Thus also hath it been with *particular Persons*; amongst the *Heathen*, what Elogies

gies do we find in the Honour of *Socrates*, *Aristides*, *Cato*, *Epietetus*? The last of whom, though but a poor Slave, had yet such a Veneration paid to his Memory, that his Earthen Lamp, by which he was wont to study, was, after his Death, sold for three thousand Drachms.

Nor was it otherwise amongst the *Christians*: The *Apostles* were but poor Fishermen, illiterate Mechanicks: Many of the *Martyrs* were but of mean Condition, much opposed and persecuted in the World; and yet these Men, during the time of their Lives, were highly revered amongst those that knew them; and since their Deaths, what can be more glorious than that Renown which they have amongst Men, when the greatest Kings and Princes will not mention their Names without Reverence; when whole Nations are willing to set apart, and to observe solemn Days and Festivals in honour of their Memories?

And as it hath always been thus formerly, so I appeal to every Man's Breast, whether it be not so now. Let them but examine what their Inclinations are towards such Persons whom they believe to be truly virtuous; not only to such among them, as are their particular Acquaintance and Friends, but likewise to Strangers, nay, to very Enemies, whether they do not esteem and love them, and will-well to them.

It cannot be denied, but that there are too many in the World, who propose to themselves such Ways and Courses for the promoting of their *Honour* and Reputation, as are quite opposite to that which I have now been discoursing of; namely, Prophaneness and Contempt of Religion, despising that which other Men stand in Awe of; by which they think to get the Reputation of *Wit* and *Courage*: of *Wit*, by pretending to penetrate more deeply into the Nature of Things, and to understand them better than others do; not to be so easily imposed upon, as other credulous People are: Of *Courage*, by not being so easily scared at the Apprehension of Danger at a Distance.

But the plain Truth is, such Persons do hereby prove themselves to be both *Fools* and *Cowards*.

*Fools*, In mistaking their great Interest, in making choice of such Means, as can never promote the End they design. There being no kind of Men that are more exposed (whatsoever they themselves may think of it) than those that seek for Credit by despising of Religion. *Fools*, in venturing their *future Estates* and their *Souls* upon such Hazards, as all Mankind would cry out upon for the most palpable Folly and Madness, if they should do the like towards their *temporal Estates*, or their Bodies.

*Cowards*; In being more afraid of little Dangers, because they are *present*, than of greater, because they are *future*, and at a Distance. As that Soldier who doth more dread the present Danger of fighting, when he is obliged to it, than the future Danger of suffering by *Martial* Law for running away, may justly be esteemed a notorious Coward; so may that Man, who is more afraid of a *present* Inconvenience, by incurring the Prejudice and Displeasure of his loose Companions, to whom he would be acceptable, than of a *future* Mischief from the Judgment of God. No Man will esteem another to be truly Valiant, because he is not afraid to do such vile unworthy things as will expose him to the Displeasure and Punishment of the Civil Magistrate; much less should he be so accounted, for daring to do such Things, as will in the Issue expose him to the Divine Vengeance.

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## C H A P. VII.

*How Religion conduceth to the Happiness of the Inward Man, as it tends to the regulating of our Faculties, and to the Peace and Tranquility of our Minds.*

**A**S for the *Internal* Welfare of our Minds, this (as I observed before) doth depend upon these two Things.

1. The perfecting and regulating of our Faculties, inabling them for their proper Functions, and the keeping of them in due Subordination to one another.

2. In the Peace, Quiet, Contentment, consequent thereupon.

And both these do likewise depend upon Religion.

1. For the perfecting and regulating of our Faculties, and inabling them for their proper Functions. These things do depend upon Religion, both

{ *Morally,*  
{ *Naturally.*

1. *Morally* ; As these things are Blessings and Privileges, so do they belong to Religion

as the proper Reward of it. Those Men only being fit to have free and large Minds, and refin'd Faculties, who are willing to improve them to the best Use and Advantage. To this Purpose there are several Expressions in Scripture: *A good understanding have all they that do his Commandments. Thou thro' thy Commandments hast made me wiser than mine Enemies. He that doth the Will of God shall know it.*

2. *Naturally*; As these Things are *Duties*, so are they the proper Effects of Virtue.

The Generality of the *Heathen* Philosophers have agreed in this, that Sin is the natural Cause of debasing the Soul, immersing it into a State of Sensuality and Darkness, deriving such an Impotence and Deformity upon the Mind, as the most loathsome Diseases do upon the Body. And therefore it must be Religion and Virtue, on the other side, that must enlighten and enlarge the Mind, and restore it from the Degeneracy of its lapsed Estate, renewing upon us the Image of our Maker, adorning us with those Beauties of Holiness, which belong to *the hidden man of the heart*. 'Tis the proper Work of Religion, to frame the Mind to the nearest Conformity unto the Nature of God; upon which account it is said in Scripture to consist in *a participation of the divine nature*. Other Things may be said to have some remote Resemblance to the Deity; but Man only



only amongst the visible Creatures, is capable of those more immediate Communications from him, by Religion; and all kind of Perfection is to be measured by its Nearness or Remoteness to the first and chief Pattern of all Perfection.

As all kind of Vice doth go under the Name of *Impotence*, so Religion is describ'd to be *the spirit of Power, and of a sound Mind*; because it doth establish in a Man a just Empire over himself, over all those blind Powers and Passions, which of themselves are apt to raise Tumults and Comotions against the Dominion of Reason. That which Health is to the Body, whereby the outward Senses are enabled to make a true Judgment of Things; That is Virtue to the Mind, whereby the inward Faculties must be fitted and disposed to discern betwixt Things that differ, which those who are under the Power of vicious Habits are not able to do.

But to speak more particularly, Religion doth,

1. *Enlarge the Understanding*, enabling it to see beyond the narrow Bounds of Sense and Time, to behold Things that are invisible; God being in the intellectual World, as the Sun is in the sensible World; and as natural Blindness doth disable Men from seeing the one, so will spiritual Blindness for the other.

2. It doth *exalt and regulate the Will* to a Desire after, and Acquiescence in such things as will promote the Perfection of our Natures, and consequently will beget in the Mind, the truest Liberty, Ingenuity, Generosity, which are altogether inconsistent with the Servitude of Lusts and Passions.

3. It doth *reduce the Passions* unto a due Subordination to the superior Faculties; restraining the Violence and Impetuousness of them, from whence the greatest Part of the Trouble and Disquiet of Men's Lives doth proceed. As he that is of a healthy Constitution, can endure Heat and Cold, and Labour, with little or no Prejudice to himself; so can one of a virtuous Mind undergo various Conditions without receiving any Hurt from them. Such an one is not lifted up by Prosperity, nor dejected by Adversity: He is not a Servant to Anger, Fear, Envy, Malice, which are the great Occasions of disturbing our inward Peace and Quiet.

2. The second Thing wherein the Welfare of our Minds doth consist, is Peace, Tranquility, Joy, Confidence, in opposition to inward Disquiet, Anxiety, Grief, Fear, Diffidence. And these do depend upon Religion likewise, both

§ *Morally,*  
 § *Naturally.*

I. *Morally;*

1. *Morally*; As these things may be considered under the Notion of Blessings and Privileges, so they belong to the Rewards of Religion: All *Philosophers* having agreed in this, that inward Serenity and Composedness of Mind is the proper Reward of moral Virtue.

To which the Scripture doth attest, in those Expressions, where 'tis said, that *a good man is satisfied from himself; in the fear of the Lord is strong confidence. The righteous is bold as a lion. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee. That the fruits of righteousness, shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. That tribulation and anguish shall be upon every soul that doth evil; but to him that doth good, glory, and honour, and peace, Serenity and Composedness of Mind, peace that passeth all understanding, joy that is unspeakable and full of glory.*

Prov. 14.  
14.  
ver. 26.  
c. 28. 1.  
Isa. 26. 3.  
Isa. 32. 17.

Rom. 2. 9,  
10.

Gal. 5. 22.

2. *Naturally*; As these things are consider'd under the Notion of *Duties*, so they are the most genuine Fruits and Effects of Religion; which doth oblige us to them, and enable us for them.

1. Religion doth oblige Men to Joy and Peace and Confidence. The very *Heathens* have acknowledged these to be such Things, as all good Men are bound to upon the account of Duty. And the Scripture doth

abound in Precepts to this purpose. *Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice. Commit thy ways unto the Lord, and he shall bring it to pass. Be careful for nothing. Cast thy burden upon him, as knowing that he takes care for thee.*

These kind of Duties do formally and in the very Essence of them, contain in them the Nature of Happiness.

And on the contrary, the opposite Vices do contain in them the true Nature of Punishment, and render Men formally miserable. Such a Man must needs be unhappy, who lives under the Power of continual Anxieties, Sorrow, Fears, Diffidence, Self-will, Malice, Envy, &c. of several of which, that may be said which the Poet speaks concerning one of them.

*Invidiâ Siculi non invenère Tyranni  
Tormentum majus.*

The *Sicilian* Tyrants who were of old famous for inventing Engines of Torture, as that of *Phalaris* his Bull, were not able to find out any kind of Torment for the Body, equal to that which some of these Vices do occasion to the Mind.

2. And as Religion doth oblige us to, so likewise doth it enable us for this kind of Happiness, and that upon a twofold Account.

1. From

1. From the general Nature of Religion and Virtue consider'd in itself.

2. From the most natural Effects and Consequences of it.

1. From the general Nature of Religion consider'd in it self. All kind of Virtues containing in their very Essence these kind of inward Felicities, either formally or virtually: The very Foundation of Happiness and Misery, Reward and Punishment, being laid in the very Nature of these Things themselves. That natural Appetite, whereby Men are carried out after a State of Happiness, is for the Nature of it so universal and radical, so closely fixed to our first Principles; and for the Degree of it, so ardent and impetuous, that 'tis not possible for Men to be disappointed in it, without a very quick Sensation, and some proportionable Trouble for it. The more eager Men are in their Desires, the more sensible must they be of Gain or Loss. Now all such Courses as have a natural Tendency to the satisfying of this Appetite, are upon that Account, Parts of our Happiness. And on the other side, those which are cross to it, must needs make us miserable. And if it be so (as I have already proved) that our Happiness must consist in such a Similitude and Resemblance to the Supreme Good, as we are capable of; it must  
hence

hence follow, that Religion is formally Happiness. He that lives under the power of Godlike Dispositions in his Mind, and doth accordingly exercise them in the Course of his Life, may be said, *eo nomine*, to be a happy Man: Holiness and Happiness being but two distinct Names for the same thing. I shewed before, that the true Nature of Pleasure was founded in a Suitableness betwixt the Faculty and the Object: From whence it will follow, that reasonable Actions have in them a Suitableness to reasonable Minds: And the more virtuous and religious any Man is, the more Delight must such a Man take in such kind of Actions. That Man who hath a just Sense of his own impotent dependent Condition, and how much it is for the Interest of the World, and the good of all human Affairs, that there is a Supreme Governour who is infinitely Wise, and Powerful and Gracious, and how reasonable it is that Men should demean themselves towards him suitably to this Belief: He that is convinced how necessary it is for the promoting his own private, as well as the publick Welfare, that Men be forward to do all good Offices of Justice and Friendship towards one another; I say, he that is under this Conviction, must needs find much Satisfaction and Pleasure in such kind of Actions. As for *first-Table* Duties, which consist in Acquaintance with God, Communion with  
him,

him, in meditating upon his Wisdom, Goodness, Power; in Affiance, Love, Reverence; if these were not Acts of the highest Pleasure, they would never have been appointed for the Happiness of our future State in Heaven. And as for *second-Table* Duties, What greater Pleasure and Satisfaction can there be to a generous Mind, than to do worthy Things; to be employed about Acts of Justice, and Charity, and Beneficence; to promote publick Peace and Good-will amongst Men? Eating and Drinking is not a more proper Satisfaction to those natural Appetites of Hunger and Thirst, than the doing of good is to the rational Inclinations of a good Man. As all Light, and Love, and Joy are from above, from the Father of Lights; so all Darkness, Sorrow, Fear, Disquiet, must be from below, from the *Prince* of Darkness. Wicked Men are well compared to the troubled Sea, which cannot rest, but by reason Iſa. 57. of its being tossed to and fro by contrary Winds, is still casting up Mire and Dirt. He that lives under the Servitude of Lusts and Passions, must always be in an unquiet restless Condition; because such Masters can never be satisfied in any one Service they employ us about; besides the Interfering and Contrariety of those Employments which they will exact from us. Vice is multiform, *scelera dissident*, and therefore must they needs be inconsistent with Rest and Quiet.

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One principal Requisite to a State of Serenity of Mind, doth consist in an uniform Agreement about that chief End which we are to pursue, together with the Means conducing to it; whereas they that have many and contrary Things in Design, must needs be distracted about them. The Soul that cannot fix it self upon the Enjoyment of God, who is the only All-sufficient Good, and consequently the only Center of Rest, must be like those disconsolate Spirits, which our Saviour speaks of, who being cast out of their Habitations, were put to wander up and down through Desert Places, seeking Rest but finding none.

Mat. 12.

2. From the most natural Effects and Consequences of Religion, in respect of that inward Confidence, Peace, Joy, which must follow the Conscience of Well-doing; inso-much, that there is not any kind of Tree which doth more naturally produce its proper Fruits, than the Habits of Virtue do bring forth Joy and Serenity in the Mind. When a Man shall sit down and take a serious Review of what he hath done, and finds it to be most agreeable both to his Duty and Interest, from hence there must needs arise an inward Satisfaction of Mind. And on the other side, a Fountain doth not more naturally send out Waters, than Vice doth Punishment and Misery. Nor is this any mere Notion or Fancy, which some severe  
melan-



melancholy Divines would impose upon the World; but it is most agreeable to those natural Sentiments, which the very *Heathen* have had, and do frequently mention: *Seneca* in particular; *Res severa est verum gaudium; unde sit, interrogas? dicam, ex bona conscientia, ex honestis consiliis, ex rectis actionibus.* All solid Comfort must arise from a good Conscience, and honest Actions.

I appeal to the Experience of all considering Men, whether this doth not appear to them, that the Generality of those who live most pleasantly in the World, are the most religious and virtuous Part of Mankind; such as know how to regulate themselves in the Fruition of what they have, how to avoid the Extremities on either hand, to prevent those Mixtures of Guilt and Fear, which are apt to sour and imbitter all our Enjoyments? Whether lawful Pleasures, which a Man may reflect upon without any Sense of Guilt, be not much to be preferred before others? Whether those intellectual Delights, that flow from the conscience of well-doing, be not much better than any sinful sensual Pleasure? Whether the doing of any worthy Action, such as all good Men must think well of, and commend, doth not afford a more solid lasting Pleasure, than can be had from any sensible Enjoyments? Whether any thing can be more suitable, and consequently, delightful to a generous Mind, than an Opportunity of being

ing grateful to those by whom a Man hath been obliged; the making of an ample Return for the Favours he hath received? Whether that noble way of conquest, *overcoming evil with good*, surprizing an Enemy by Kindness, when we have it in our Power to be severe towards him, be not a far greater Pleasure than that, which is by some counted the sweetest of all other things; *Revenge*?

Religion doth likewise advance the Soul to an holy Confidence, concerning the Divine Favour and Good-will towards us. *If our hearts condemn us not, we have confidence towards God.* A good Conscience will set us above all those Fears, and Doubts, and Cares, whereby the Lives of Men are render'd uncomfortable. When in Decrepit Age a Man cannot find Comfort in other Things, *when the grinders shall be few, and appetite cease*, then will this be a *continual feast*. The most rational, solid, sublime, compleat, durable Delights, of all others, do flow from the Conscience of Well-doing. 'Tis a chief part this, of that Heaven which we enjoy upon Earth, and 'tis likewise a principal Part of that Happiness which we hope to enjoy in Heaven. Next to the Beatifical Vision and Fruition of God, is the Happiness of a good Conscience, and next to that, the Society of Saints and Angels.

Whereas on the other side, he that lives under the Sense of Guilt, and a Consciou-  
ness

ness of his Obligation to Punishment, must needs be destitute of all inward Peace and Comfort: Such an one can have nothing to support him, with Patience, under a State of Affliction in this World, nor can he have any rational Grounds to expect a better Condition hereafter; and therefore must needs have very dreadful Apprehensions of Dying, and *be all his life-time subject to bondage through the fear of death.* And that Man must needs be very miserable, who can neither have true *Joy in Life,* nor any *Hope in Death.*

This the *Heathen* Philosophers have acknowledged, that there is always a secret Dread, which doth accompany Guilt. So *Seneca* in particular, speaking of wicked Men, he saith, *tantum metuunt quantum nocent,* that such Men must have Fears proportionable to their Guilt. And a little after, *dat pœnas quisquis expectat, quisquis autem meruit, expectet;* those Men do really suffer Punishment, who live under the Expectation of it, and whoever doth any thing to deserve it, must needs expect it. 'Tis not easy to express the Torment which those Men undergo,

—*quos diri conscia facti  
Mens habet attonitos, & surdo verbere cedit.  
Occultum quatiente animo tortore flagellum.*  
—*Mens sibi conscia facti  
Præmetuens, adhibet stimulos, terrétque  
flagellis.*

'Tis

'Tis the Unsupportableness of this; that many times doth cause Men in the Bitterness of their Souls, to chuse Strangling and Death rather than Life. The *Heathens* do set forth such a Man's Condition, by the Fiction of *Furies* continually haunting and scourging him: But *Zophar* doth better describe it, where he saith; *Terrors are upon him; all darkness is hid in his secret places; a fire not blown shall consume him.*

Job 2. 25,  
26.

Rom. 1.

28.

Eph. 4. 18,

19.

1 Tim. 4. 2.

Though some Men are so hardened against the Sense of Guilt, as to go on in their sinful Courses, without feeling any of this Remorse for them; yet is their Peace so far from being a Privilege, that it doth render their Condition more desperate, because it supposes them to have a *reprobate Mind*, and such a Stupidity upon their Consciences, as makes them *past feeling*, being *seared, as it were, with an hot iron*. Which though it may preserve them from those present Lashes which others are tormented with; yet doth it argue their Conditions to be more remediless and desperate. All the Difference is, the one is sick of a *Calenture*, or *burning Fever*; the other of a *Lethargy*, or *Apoplexy*; the former more painful for the present, but both of them very dangerous, only the latter less capable of Remedy than the former.

## C H A P. VIII.

*How Religion conduces to our Happiness in the next World.*

**A**S Religion is the true Cause of our present Happiness in this World, whether

{ *External*  
{ *Internal*.

So likewise is it the Cause of that Happiness, which we expect in our *future States*: Which must depend upon such Courses, as can give us the most rational Assurance of Blessedness and Glory hereafter.

I shall speak but briefly to this Subject; because 'tis scarce possible for any Man to be so strangely infatuated, so wholly lost to common Reason, as to believe, that vicious Courses, despising of Religion, walking contrary to God, can be the Means to entitle him to this future Happiness, any more than Contempt and Hatred of any one, is a proper Means to procure his Favour.

What kind of Happiness this is, which belongs to our future State, and wherein the Glory of it doth consist, is, ἀρρήτων ἔ,

a Thing unspeakable, altogether above the

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Expres-

Expressions of human Orators, and passeth all Knowledge, the Heart of Man being not able to conceive it: Nor can it be expected that we should be able, in this State of Flesh and Mortality, to comprehend what kind of Irradiations glorified Souls are capable of. Only in the general, 'tis said, *we shall be like God, and see him as he is.*

This State of future Happiness, as it is above all other Things of greatest Moment; so ought it to be proportionably labour'd after, with the greatest Care and Diligence.

There are several Varieties of Metaphorical Names or Expressions, whereby this State is describ'd in Scripture; but all of them do imply something of more than ordinary Care and Industry to the qualifying  
 Lib. 5. c. 9. of Men for it, as *Bellarmino* hath observed in his Tract *De Eternâ felicitate Sanctorum.*

'Tis stiled,

" The *City of God, the Heavenly Jerusalem.* And it requires some Care and Diligence for one that is a Citizen of this World,  
 Ephes. 2. to be a *Fellow-citizen with the Saints*; it being no easy thing for one that lives in this World, not to be of it.

Matth. 7. *The house of God, where there are many mansions*; but *strait is the gate, and narrow is the way to it.*

Matth. 13. *An hid treasure, a precious pearl.* Not to be obtained without putting such a Value

due upon it, as will make a Man ready to part with all that he hath, for the Purchase of it.

A *Penny*. The Wages of our daily Service; not to be given but to such as *labour in the vineyard*, and hold out to the End. Mat. 20.

*Feast, or rich Supper*; which they are altogether unworthy of, and unfit for, who do wholly devote themselves to the Affairs of this World. Luk. 14.

The *Joy of our Lord and Master*; which they only are admitted to, who are careful to improve the *Talents* they are intrusted withal. Matth. 25.

The Solemnity of a *royal Wedding*; from which all lazy, slothful People, who have not *oyl in their lamps*, and do not watch for the *coming of the Bridegroom*, shall be shut out, and excluded into outer Darkness. Matth. 25.

'Tis a *Prize*; which they only obtain who accomplish their Race, and run to the Goal. 1 Cor. 9.

'Tis a *Crown*; which is due only to such as fight valiantly and overcome. 1 Cor. 9.

'Tis an *Inheritance*; and therefore belongs only to Sons. 'Tis an *Inheritance of the Saints*; and therefore un sanctified Persons can have nothing to do with it. 'Tis an *inheritance of the Saints in light*; and therefore cannot belong to such as still remain under the Powers of Darkness.

Heaven may be considered under a two-fold Notion, either as a

} *State,*  
} *Place.*

1. In the first Sense, 'tis the same with Holiness, consisting in such God-like Dispositions, as may make us Partakers of the Divine Nature.

2. In the second Sense, it denotes that other World, where we hope to enjoy the Beatifical Vision, in the blessed Society of Saints and Angels. Which Religion only and Holiness can qualify us for, by working in our Natures such a Suitableness and Congruity, as must make such things to be Felicities.

In brief; That Salvation and Glory, which the Christian Religion doth so clearly propose to us, is, as to the Nature and Essence of it, but the very same thing with Religion; consisting in such a Conformity of our Minds to the Nature of God, whereby we are made capable of the Fruition of him in Heaven. So that in this respect also, Religion is the *Whole of Man*, that is, the whole Happiness and Well-being of Man doth depend upon it.

I have now dispatch'd what I intended in this Discourse, namely, to prove the Reasonableness and Credibility of the Principles  
of



of Natural Religion ; which I have made appear to be in themselves of so great Evidence, that every one, who will not do violence to his own Faculties, must believe and assent unto them. I have likewise made it plain, that 'tis every Man's greatest Interest, to provide for his present and future Happiness, by applying himself to the Duties of Religion, which upon all accounts will advance the Perfection of his Nature, and promote his true Welfare, both in this World and the other. Inasmuch, that if we were to chuse the Laws we would submit unto, it were not possible for us to contrive any Rules more advantageous to our own Interest, than those which Religion doth propose, and require us to observe, upon pain of everlasting Damnation, and *in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lye hath promised, to all those who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality.*

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## C H A P. IX.

*The Conclusion of the Whole, shewing the Excellency of the Christian Religion, and the Advantages of it, both as to the Knowledge and Practice of our Duty, above the mere Light of Nature.*

I Have now at large considered the Credibility of the *Principles of Natural Religion*, and our Obligation to the several *Duties* resulting from those *Principles*. The Purpose of all which, is to shew how firm and deep a Foundation Religion hath in the Nature and Reason of Mankind: But not in the least to derogate from the Necessity and Usefulness of *Divine Revelation*, or to extenuate the great Blessing and Benefit of the *Christian Religion*; but rather to prepare and make way for the Entertainment of that *Doctrine* which is so agreable to the clearest Dictates of Natural Light. For notwithstanding all that hath been said of *Natural Religion*, it cannot be denied, but that in this dark and degenerate State into which Mankind is sunk, there is great Want of a clearer Light to discover our Duty to us  
with

with greater Certainty, and to put it beyond all Doubt and Dispute what is the good and acceptable Will of God; and of a more powerful Encouragement to the Practice of our Duty, by the Promise of a supernatural Assistance, and by the Assurance of a great and eternal Reward. And all these Defects are fully supplied, by that clear and perfect *Revelation* which God hath made to the World by our Blessed *Saviour*. And although, before God was pleased to make this Revelation of his Will to Mankind, Men were obliged to the Practice of *moral Duties* by the *Law of Nature*, and as the *Apostle* speaks, *having* Rom. 2 *not the law, were a law to themselves, shew-* 14. 15. *ing the effect of the law written upon their Hearts*; yet now that God hath in so much Mercy revealed his Will so plainly to Mankind, it is not enough for us who enjoy this *Revelation*, to perform those moral Duties which are of natural Obligation, unless we also do them in Obedience to *Christ* as our Lord and Lawgiver. As we are *Christians*, Col. 3. 17 *whatever we do in word or deed, we must do all in the name of the Lord Jesus*; and by him alone expect to find Acceptance with God.

How far the moral Virtues of mere *Heathens*, who walk answerable to the Light they have, may be approved of God, I shall not now dispute. Only thus much seems clear in the general, that the Law of Na-

ture being implanted in the Hearts of Men by God himself, must therefore be esteemed to be as much his Law, as any positive Institution whatsoever: and consequently, Conformity to it must in its kind, *in genere morum*, be acceptable to him. God loves the Societies of Mankind, and because of the Necessity of Justice, and Virtue, and Probity to the Preservation of Human Society, therefore he doth generally give a Blessing and Success to honest and good Enterprizes, and blasts the contrary with signal Judgments and Marks of his Displeasure. But we cannot from these outward Dispensations infer any thing certainly concerning such Men's eternal Conditions.

Some of the *Fathers*, indeed, as *Justin Martyr*, and *Clemens Alexandrinus*, and *Chrysostom*, have delivered their Judgments for the Salvation of such *Heathens* as live according to the Light of Nature; but the general Stream of the rest is for the contrary Opinion. I shall not now enquire into the particular Grounds and Reasons of this Difference. It may suffice to say in general, that the *goodness* and *mercy* of God, as well as *his judgment*, are a great Deep; that *he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy*; and that when God hath not thought fit to tell *us* how he will be pleased to deal with such Persons, it is not fit for us to tell *Him* how he ought to deal with them. Only  
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of this we are sufficiently assured, that in all Ages and Places of the World, all that are saved, are saved by the Mercy of God, and by the Merits of *Jesus Christ*, who is the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World; the *Scripture* having expressly told us, *That there is no salvation in any other: for there is none other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.* To be sure, there is no Reason for any Man, who lives under the Dispensation of the Gospel, to expect that he *shall escape*, if he neglect so great salvation. This is the Tenor of that Doctrine of the Gospel, which *Christ* immediately upon his Resurrection doth commissionate his Disciples to preach, *Mark* 16. 16. *He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damnèd.* And *Joh.* 3. 18. *He that believeth not, is condemnèd already.* And presently it follows, *This is the condemnation, &c.* And again, *Joh.* 7. *This is life eternal, to know Thee the only true God, and him whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ.*

Now that to us, to whom the Christian Doctrine is revealed and proposed, the Belief and Practice of it is the only Way wherein we can hope to be accepted, I shall endeavour to make out by these two Arguments.

1. From the Evidence we have of its Divine Authority,

2. From

2. From the Excellency of the Things contained in it; which are the two chief Grounds of our Obligation to it.

1. From that *Evidence* which we have for the Divine Authority of this Doctrine, above any other. It seems to be a Principle of Nature, to which all Nations have consented, that God himself should prescribe the way of his own Worship. All kind of Inventions whatsoever, that have been any way useful to human Life, especially such kind of Laws as concern Civil or Ecclesiastical Associations of Men, have upon the first Discovery of them been still ascribed to the *Deity*: As if the *Authors* of them must needs have been first illuminated with some Ray of Divinity. Nor is it probable, that ever any Nation should, with any Degree of Zeal, embrace the respective Ceremonies of their Religion, unless they had first esteemed them to have proceeded from Divine Revelation.

Upon this account was it that *Lycurgus*, and *Numa Pompilius*, and *Mahomet*, and the rest of those kind of Founders of Nations and Religions, when they would obtain a Reverence and Devotion to the Things they were to establish, they were fain to pretend at least to divine Revelation. Which Proceeding of theirs, though it did really abuse the People with gross Delusions, yet was it founded upon this common Principle, that  
none

none can think aright of God, much less serve him in an acceptable manner, unless they are first instructed by him in the true way of doing it.

Now, that the Doctrine of Christianity is thus derived to us by divine Institution, we have as clear and convincing Evidence, as things of that Nature are capable of.

As for the *Old Testament*; That hath, by the general Consent of learned Men, all the Marks of purest Antiquity; there being nothing in the World which, in this respect, is equal to it, or which may pretend to be compared with it: all other the most ancient Monuments of Antiquity coming short of it by many Ages. It was written in the first and most ancient Language; from which the very Alphabets and Letters of all other Languages (in the Opinion of the most learned *Heathens, Plutarch, Pliny, Tacitus, Lucan, &c.*) were derived. The very Number and Order of Letters most generally used in all kind of *Alphabets*, being very improper and unnatural; which it is not likely Men of several Nations would have all agreed upon, were it not barely upon this Reason, that they were taken up by Imitation, and so did retain the Errors and Imperfections of that first Original, from whence they were derived.

This Book contains as the most ancient, so the most exact Story of the World. The  
Propa-

Propagation of Men, and the dispersing of Families into the several Parts of the Earth; as I shewed before.

And though this Book were written in several Ages and Places, by several Persons; yet doth the Doctrine of it accord together, with a most excellent Harmony, without any Dissonance or Inconsistency.

And for the Manner of delivering the Things contained in it, 'tis so solemn, reverend, and majestick, so exactly suited to the Nature of Things, as may justly provoke our Wonder and Acknowledgment of its Divine Original: Insomuch, that *Longinus*, a great Master of Eloquence amongst the *Heathens*, hath observed the *Decorum* and Majesty which *Moses* useth in describing the Creation, in those Words, *God said, let there be light, and there was light.*

And as for the *New Testament*; those various Correspondencies, which it bears to the chief Things of the Old Testament, may sufficiently evidence that mutual Relation, Dependance, and Affinity, which there is betwixt them. That in such an Age there was such a Man as *Christ*, who preached such a Doctrine, wrought many Miracles, suffered an ignominious Death, and was afterwards worshipp'd as God, having Abundance of Disciples and Followers, at first chiefly amongst the Vulgar, but a while after, amongst several of the most wise and learned



learned Men; who, in a short Space of Time, did propagate their Belief and Doctrin into the most remote Parts of the World: I say, all this is for the Truth of the Matter of Fact, not so much as doubted or called into question, by *Julian*, or *Celsus*, or the *Jews* themselves, or any other of the most avowed Enemies of Christianity. But we have it by as good Certainty, as any rational Man can wish or hope for, that is, by universal Testimony, as well of Enemies as Friends.

And if these things were so, as to the Matter of Fact, the common Principles of Nature will assure us, that 'tis not consistent with the Nature of the Deity, his Truth, Wisdom, or Justice, to work such Miracles in Confirmation of a Lye or Imposture.

Nor can it be reasonably objected, that these Miracles are now ceased; and we have not any such extraordinary Way to confirm the Truth of our Religion: 'Tis sufficient that they were upon the first Plantation of it, when Men were to be instituted and confirmed in that new Doctrin. And there may be as much of the Wisdom of Providence in the forbearing them now, as in working them then; it being not reasonable to think, that the universal Laws of Nature, by which Things are to be regularly guided in their natural Course, should frequently, or upon every little Occasion be violated or disordered.

To which may be added *that* wonderful way whereby this Religion hath been propagated in the World, with much Simplicity and Infirmary in the first Publishers of it; without Arms, or Faction, or Favour of great Men; or the Persuasions of *Philosophers* or *Orators*; only by a naked Proposal of plain evident Truth, with a firm Resolution of suffering and dying for it, by which it hath subdued all kind of Persecutions and Oppositions, and surmounted whatever Discouragement or Resistance could be laid in its way, or made against it.

2. From the *Excellency* of the Things contained in it, both in respect of the

} *End* proposed,  
} *Means* for the attaining of it.

1. From the *End* it proposes, the chief Reward which it sets before us, namely, the eternal Vision and Fruition of God. Which is so excellent in itself, and so suitable to a rational Being, as no other Religion or Profession whatsoever hath thought of, or so expressly insisted upon.

Some of the learned *Heathen* have placed the Happiness of Man in the external sensual Delights of this World; I mean the *Epicureans*, who though in other respects they were Persons of many excellent and sublime Speculations, yet because of their  
gros

gross Error in this kind, they have been in all Ages looked upon with a kind of Execration and Abhorrency, not only amongst the *Vulgar*, but likewise amongst the learned sort of *Philosophers*. 'Tis an Opinion this, so very gross and ignoble, as cannot be sufficiently despised. It doth debase the Understanding of Man, and all the Principles in him, that are sublime and generous, extinguishing the very Seeds of Honour, and Piety, and Virtue, affording no room for Actions or Endeavours, that are truly great and noble; being altogether unworthy of the Nature of Man, and doth reduce us to the Condition of Beasts.

Others of the wiser *Heathens*, have spoken sometimes doubtfully concerning a future State, and therefore have placed the Reward of Virtue, in the doing of virtuous Things: *Virtus est sibi præmium*. Wherein though there may be much of Truth, yet it doth not afford Encouragement enough, for the vast Desires of a rational Soul.

Others who have owned a State after this Life, have placed the Happiness of it in gross and sensual Pleasures, Feasts, and Gardens, and Company, and other such low and gross Enjoyments.

Whereas the Doctrine of *Christianity* doth fix it upon Things, that are much more spiritual and sublime, the Beatifical Vision, a clear unerring Understanding, a perfect Tranquillity

quillity of Mind, a Conformity to God, a perpetual admiring and praising of him : than which the Mind of Man cannot fancy any thing that is more excellent or desirable.

2. As to the *Means* it directs to, for the attaining of this End, they are suitable both to the Goodness and Greatness of the *End* itself.

1. For the Duties that are enjoined in reference to *Divine Worship*. They are so full of Sanctity and Spiritual Devotion, as may shame all the pompous Solemnities of other Religions, in their costly Sacrifices, their dark wild Mysteries, and external Observances. Whereas this refers chiefly to the Holiness of the Mind, Resignation to God, Love of him, Dependance upon him, Submission to his Will, endeavouring to be like him.

2. And as for the Duties of the *second Table*, which concern our mutual Conversation towards one another ; it allows nothing that is hurtful or obnoxious, either to our selves, or others : forbids all kind of Injury or Revenge, commands to overcome Evil with Good, to pray for Enemies and Persecutors ; doth not admit of any mental, much less any corporal Uncleaness ; doth not tolerate any immodest or uncomely Word or Gesture ; forbids us to wrong others in their Goods and Possessions, or to mispend  
our

our own; requires us to be very tender both of our own and other Mens Reputations. In brief, it enjoins nothing but what is helpful, and useful, and good for Mankind. Whatever any Philosophers have prescrib'd concerning their moral Virtues of *Temperance*, and *Prudence*, and *Patience*, and the Duties of several Relations, is here enjoined in a far more eminent, sublime, and comprehensive Manner: Beside such Examples and Incitations to Piety, as are not to be parallel'd elsewhere. The whole System of its Doctrine being transcendently excellent, and so exactly conformable to the highest, purest Reason, that in those very things wherein it goes beyond the Rules of Moral Philosophy, we cannot in our best Judgment but consent and submit to it.

In brief, it doth in every respect so fully answer the chief Scope and Design of Religion, in giving all imaginable Honour and Submission to the Deity, promoting the good of Mankind, satisfying and supporting the Mind of Man with the highest kind of Enjoyments, that a rational Soul can wish or hope for, as no other Religion or Profession whatsoever can pretend unto.

What hath briefly been said upon this Argument, may suffice to shew the exceeding Folly and Unreasonableness of those Men, who are sceptical and indifferent as to any

kind of Religion. 'Tis a Vice this, that if it may not be stiled direct *Atheism*, yet certainly it is the very next Degree to it. And there is too much reason to suspect, that it doth in this Generation very much abound, not only amongst the *Vulgar*, but such also as would be thought the greatest *Wits*, and most knowing Men. It hath been occasion'd by that Heat and Zeal of Men, in those various contrary Opinions, which have of late abounded, together with those great Scandals that have been given by the Professors of Religion on several hands: from whence Men of corrupt Minds have taken occasion to doubt of all kind of Religion; and to look upon it only as a political Invention, which doth no farther oblige, than as the Laws of several Countries do provide for it. These common Scandals have been the *Occasion*; but the *true Ground* at the bottom, of such Men's Prejudice and Dissatisfaction, is the Strictness and Purity of this Religion, which they find puts too great a Restraint and Check upon their exorbitant Lusts and Passions.

I know they will *pretend* for their Hesitation and Indifferency in this kind, the want of clear and infallible Evidence for the Truth of Christianity; than which nothing can be more absurd and unworthy of a rational Man: For let it be but impartially considered; what is it that such Men would have? Do they expect Mathematical Proof  
and

and Certainty in Moral Things? Why, they may as well expect to see with their Ears, and hear with their Eyes. Such kind of things (as I shew'd at large, in the beginning of this Treatise) being altogether as disproportioned to such kind of Proofs, as the Objects of the several Senses are to one another. The Arguments or Proof to be used in several Matters, are of various and different Kinds, according to the Nature of the Things to be proved. And it will become every rational Man to yield to such Proofs, as the Nature of the Thing which he enquires about is capable of: And that Man is to be look'd upon as forward and contentious, who will not rest satisfied in such kind of Evidence, as is counted sufficient, either by all others, or by most, or by the wisest Men.

If we suppose God to have made any Revelation of his Will to Mankind, can any Man propose or fancy any better Way for conveying down to Posterity the Certainty of it, than that clear and universal Tradition which we have for the History of the Gospel? And must not that Man be very unreasonable, who will not be content with as much Evidence for an *ancient Book*, or *Matter of Fact*, as any thing of that Nature is capable of? If it be only infallible and mathematical Certainty that can settle his Mind, why should he believe that he was born of such Parents, and belongs to such a Family? 'Tis

possible Men might have combined together to delude him with such a Tradition. Why may he not as well think, that he was born a Prince, and not a Subject, and consequently deny all Duties of Subjection and Obedience to those above him? There is nothing so wild and extravagant, to which Men may not expose themselves by such a kind of nice and scrupulous Incredulity.

Whereas, if to the Enquiries about Religion a Man would but bring with him the same Candour and Ingenuity, the same Readiness to be instructed, which he doth to the Study of human Arts and Sciences; that is, a Mind free from violent Prejudices, and a Desire of Contention; it can hardly be imagined, but that he must be convinced and subdued by those clear Evidences, which offer themselves to every inquisitive Mind, concerning the Truth of the *Principles of Religion* in general, and concerning the *Divine Authority* of the *Holy Scriptures*, and of the *Christian Religion*:

F I N I S.



A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd at the

F U N E R A L  
O F T H E

Right Reverend Father in God,

*JOHN WILKINS, D. D.*

Late Lord Bishop of *Chester,*

At the *Guildball* Chapel, *LONDON,*

On *Thursday* the 12th of *December,* 1672.

---

By *WILLIAM LLOYD, D. D.*

Then Dean of *BANGOR,*

Late Lord Bishop of *WORCESTER.*

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*L O N D O N:*

Printed in the Year *M.DCC.XXXIV.*



H E B. xiii. 7.

*Remember them which have the Rule over you, who have spoken to you the Word of God; whose Faith follow, considering the End of their Conversation.*

**I**N handling this Text of holy Scripture, that we may mingle nothing of Human Affections, that our Passion may give no Interruption to you in Hearing, or to me in Speaking; I should desire to suppress them quite, if it were possible. And possible it is, where they are slightly raised, as upon common and ordinary Occasions: But where they are grounded and strong, where they dare argue, and seem to have Reason on their side, as there is too much in sight for our's; there I think it is in vain to endeavour it: The only way in this Case, is to give them some kind of Vent, to discharge them in part, and to govern what remains of the Affections,

You will, I hope, the rather bear with my Infirmary, that I cannot contain from deploring the Loss, the irreparable Loss, that we suffer, I think all suffer, in the Death of this eminent Person. He was the Man in whom his Friends had Experience of much Good, and had hopes of much more; not so much for his Greatness or Power, as abstracting from these, for what they found in himself, which was a great and manifold Blessing to all that lived within his Conversation. He was a Father, a Counsellor, a Comforter, a Helper, a sure Friend: He was all they could wish in every Relation, and, by the Course of Nature, might have been for many Years. But for our Sins, (tho' for his unspeakable Advantage) the Great and Wise God was not pleased to continue that Blessing; he took him out of this World, when, for ought we could judge, there was most need of such Men to live in it; and when we had much reason to expect more Good than ever, by his living in it.

Oh the unsearchable Ways and Counsels of God! Oh the Blindness of human Hopes and Expectations! While we please ourselves with the Good we have in hand, while we reach out for more, as if there would never be an End, within a few Days all withers, all vanisheth to this: We have nothing left, but what it grieves us to see;

we have nothing remains, but what we are willing to be rid of, a poor Shell of Earth, that we make haste to bury out of our sight.

Yes; of wise and good Men, which is their Privilege above others, there remains after Death, a Memory, an Example, which they leave behind them, as a sacred *Depositem* for us to keep and use until we see them again. Are these things nothing in our sight? They are above all Price in the sight of God; who, that they may be so to us, both telleth us the Worth, and recommends them to our Esteem, and requires the Fruit of them in many Places of Scripture: but in none with more Application to our present Occasion, than in my Text. I shall sufficiently justify my Choice of it, if I can but make it be understood: I shall shew the full Import of it, in those Duties which it contains: I shall endeavour to stir you up to practise them with respect to this present Occasion.

First, For the Understanding of my Text, we are to look for no help from what goes next before it, or after it: For the whole Business of it is contain'd within it self: It lies in the heap among other Directions, which, without any certain Connexion between them, were given by the Writer of this Epistle to the *Hebrews*; that is, to those *Jews* who were converted to be *Christians*.

For the Time when it was written, we are certain of this, that it was while *Timothy* lived; for he is mentioned as living, in the 24th Verse of this Chapter. And he being there said to have suffer'd Imprisonment for the Gospel, this brings us a little nearer to the Knowledge of the Time: For then it must be after both St. *Paul's* Epistles to *Timothy*. In the last of those Epistles, which was some Years after the other, St. *Paul* speaks much of his own Imprisonment for the Gospel: He warns *Timothy* oft, that he must suffer for the Gospel: He instructs him what to do when God shall call him to suffer. Not a Word of any thing that he had suffer'd already: nay, he counsels him as a young Man, that had never been tried. He invites him to *Rome*, which was the great Place of Trial; in which Place, as it appears in the Close of this Chapter, *Timothy* did suffer that Imprisonment for the Gospel, from which he was deliver'd, when this Epistle was written. It appears, that after the Epistle to *Timothy*, how long after we know not, he did go to *Rome*, as *Paul* will'd him. How long he staid there we know not, e'er he did suffer Imprisonment. How long he was in Prison, we know not, e'er he was set at liberty. Only we know, it was a considerable Time, we have Reason to think it might be some Years; it might be many Years that this Epistle was written after the second Epistle to *Timothy*. And

And if so, then it was written, not only as *Theodoret* says, long after the Death of *James* the Brother of *John*: But account it how you will, this Epistle was written after the Death of *James* the Brother of our Lord: Which *James* being the first Bishop of *Jerusalem*, and the other *James* an Apostle, that is, a Bishop at large, and both these being put to death at *Jerusalem*; not to search into Church-History for those others of their Order, who died before this time in other Places, nor to guess how many others were dead, that are not recorded in Church-History: If we think of no more but these two eminent Servants of Christ, we cannot be to seek for the understanding of this Text, nor for the Application to our particular Purpose: I say not, but it may have a more general Extent. There is a Memory due, not only to the Apostles of Christ, and to the Bishops their Successors, but to all other good Ministers of Christ, yea, to all other exemplary Christians. But if the Apostle had meant this only of Bishops, I cannot guess that he would have it express'd otherwise, than he hath done in my Text.

To prove this, I must have recourse to the Original, and not wholly depend upon our *English* Translation. For that he meant this of Bishops, it appears not sufficiently,  
and

and of them being dead, not at all, in our Translation. And yet from the Original, I see no reason to doubt, that our Apostle in this Text, meant no other but Bishops, and those departed this Life.

For the Order of Bishops, it is described by those Acts of *Ruling* and *Teaching*, in the Words of our Translation; but it is much more expressly by the Word *ἡγούμενοι* in the Original. For the meaning of which Word, to whom should we resort, but either to the *Greeks*, in whose Language; or to the *Jews*, for whose immediate Use this was written? Among the *Greeks* *ἡγούμενοι* is a general Word, it signifies Rulers Ecclesiastical or Civil. In this Verse they take it for Ecclesiastical Rulers: So *Chrysostom* on my Text: and *Oecumenius*, *ὡς ἐπὶ Ἐπισκόπων*, the Apostle speaks of Bishops in this Verse. If the *Jews* would say so too, what could we have more? They do say it, as much as we have reason to expect. In their Traditional Language, they call one of our Bishops *רַבִּי* which in Effect is the Word in my Text. So then we have the Consent both of *Greeks* and of *Hebrews*, that is, of them who had most reason to know the Meaning of the Word, that Bishops are meant by the Word *ἡγούμενοι* in my Text.

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That the Apostle here speaks not of living, but of dead Bishops; of them that *had* the *Rule* before *that* Time; though 'tis render'd, that *have*, in our Translation; it appeareth by other Words in my Text. *Remember them*, says the Apostle: What, those that are present? They are not the Objects of Memory, but of Sense. Remember τῶν ἡγεμένων, the good Bishops you have had: οἵτινες ἐλάλησαν, *them that have spoken to you*, that have spoken their last, and shall speak no more in this World: ἀναθεωροῦσιν, *considering*, looking back, or looking up to τὴν ἔκβασιν τῆ ἀναστροφῆς, *the end of their Conversation*. Ἀναστροφή signifies the whole Course of this Life; ἔκβασις is the End or Period of it. Look back, says the Apostle, to your Bishops deceased, *consider their End*, or *Exit*, or going out of this World.

To confirm this, if any doubt, I shall desire him to compare this Verse with the 17th of this Chapter. In both Verses the Apostle speaks of the ἡγέμενοι, that is, of Bishops, as I have interpreted and proved. In the 17th, he shews our Duty to the living, *Obey them*, says the Apostle, *and submit yourselves, for they watch for your Souls*. In this Verse he shews our Duty to Bishops deceased; *Remember them, and follow*

*follow their Faith, considering the End of their Conversation.*

I think more needs not be said, to shew the Scope of my Text, and how applicable it is to our present Occasion. It being clear, that the Apostle speaks here of Bishops, and of them being departed this Life.

I now proceed to the Duties required at our Hands; *μνημονύετε*, and *μιμῶθε*, *Remember* and *Imitate*.

First, *Remember*. 'Tis a natural Desire that Men have, to be remembered when they are dead. We do not find it is so in any other Creature; they desire to live as long as they can; but, for ought we can judge, by any Indication, they have no regard to what shall come after. The Reason is plain, for their Being determines with their Life. But for Man, among many other Tokens of Immortality, he hath, by secret Instinct, a natural Desire to be thought of, and spoken of in After-Times. We see this, not only in them that are inflamed with the Hope of a future Life; but even in those, that, for ought appears to us, know or think little of any more but the present.

What else made the *Egyptian* Kings lay out their Wealth on Pyramids, and the like stupendous Buildings? What moved the *Old Greeks* and the *Romans*, with so much  
Care

Care and Expence to leave Statues and other Monuments, with Inscriptions of their Names? What meant those in the unlettered Nations, by the much harder Shifts they have made to convey any thing of themselves to Posterity? I need not seek for Instances of this in remote Times and Countries, when we see 'tis so frequent in our Age, and perhaps no where more than in this City; for Men of Design, that think long before-hand, above all other things, do provide for this kind of Immortality. Some venture their Lives, others wear out themselves, they do and suffer any thing to get Estates; not for themselves, that might be happier without them; nor so much for their known Heirs, whom they load with Entails, as for Men whom they know not, but only hope they will be in After-times. *For their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-place to all generations: they call their lands by their own names. This their way is their folly, and those that see it are such fools to take after them, says David, Psal. 49. 11.*

But if this Design take, it must be in spite of God, who hath declared it shall not do. He will thwart wicked Men. They that provide not for the true Immortality, shall lose their Design in this  
Shadow

Shadow of it. Either their Name shall be forgotten; God hath threatned *he will cut it off, he will blot it out, their memory shall perish with them*: Or if it survive, it shall be to their Shame, *their name shall rot*, *Prov. 10. 7.* What they build for Fame, shall be like *Abfalom's Pillar*, which remains to this Day; but the Passers-by throw Stones at it, in detestation of his Memory. Such is generally, though not always, the Curse of God that pursues wicked Men.

Whereas, contrariwise, it is the Promise of God to the Just, *that they shall always be had in remembrance*, *Psal. 112. 6.* And that *their memory shall be blessed as far as known*, *Prov. 10. 7.* Promises, which, as all other temporal Things, are to be understood with Reservation to the divine Oeconomy, to that Wisdom of God, which orders all Things in the Government of the World. It becometh not the Majesty of him that governs all Things, to break his Course, and to work Miracles upon every particular Occasion. 'Tis enough that he generally provideth, that the same thing may be done otherwise, and declares it to those by whom it ought to be done. If they do it not, if there be a Failure in them, his Promise is not void, his Word is not broken, since it was given with that Condition: Which being not performed

formed by them that were to have done it, he can make Reparation to those that suffer by it; yea, he hath done it already in this, that he hath given them that which this typifies. And what if they fall short of the Shadow, when they have the Substance, in a better and true Immortality?

The mean while, we see what is required on our Parts. As the Servants of God, out of that Store which he hath given us, we are to pay what he hath promised good Men. 'Tis that which all naturally desire, but wicked Men shall not attain; only to the Just, God hath promised that we shall *remember them*, and he commands that we should do it, especially for good Bishops departed this Life.

Our Remembrance of them doth not differ in kind, but in degree, from what we owe to the Memory of others. 'Tis a Duty we are to pay them above others, in our Thoughts, in our Affections, in our Words, and in our Actions and Lives.

First, in our *Thoughts*: 'Tis not a simple *Remembrance* that God requires; for that being an Act of the sensitive Soul, as I conceive, doth not directly fall under Precept. For it is not in our power to remember or forget, either what or when we please. But it is in our power, to do those Acts which conduce to the

*A Funeral Sermon.*

exciting, or to the helping of our Memory. This is that which God requires at our hands, that we should endeavour to turn our Minds towards such Objects, and contemplate in them the Gifts and Graces of God; that as often as we think of them, we should acknowledge that Good which was in them, and which we have received by their Means: That we should pay them that honourable Esteem which we owe to our spiritual Parents and Benefactors.

If we think upon them heartily in this manner, it will work something upon our *Affections*. We cannot but be sensible of the Want of such Men, and therefore grieved for our Loss, when they are taken from us; as the *Asian* Bishops were at those Words of *St. Paul*, when he said, *they should see his face no more*. Though God intend it for their Gain, whom he takes to himself, and he takes them in that time, which suits best with their Circumstances: yet, even then we have cause to grieve for ourselves, and for the Church, who are deprived of the Presence and Use of such Men. How much more, when, for ought we know, they are taken away for our Sins? When, for ought we know, it was because the Age was not worthy of them? For ought we know,

'tis

'tis in order to some Judgment of God, which will come the sooner when they are gone, when we have filled up the Measure of our Iniquities?

When *Elijah* was taken away in a very evil Age, *Elishah* cryed out, *O my Father, my Father, the Chariots and Horsemen of Israel!* What will become of *Israel*, now thou art gone? We dare not think so highly of any one Man. We have no such Cause to despond of our Nation. When it is bad, we are to do our Parts to make it better, to pray that God would send more Labourers into his Harvest, that he would double his Gifts and Blessings on those that are left.

And for those we have lost, we must resign them to God; both acknowledging his Bounty in giving them to us, and submitting to his Will, in taking them to himself. So *St. Bernard*, on the Death of his Brother *Gerard*, *Lord*, says he, *thou hast given, and thou hast taken away; tho' we grieve that thou hast taken away, yet we cannot forget that thou didst give him.* Yea, we owe not only Submission to God, but Thankfulness too for their Sakes, who are delivered, by this Means, from so great and such manifold Evils, as continually hover about us in this Life; from Sicknes and Pain, from Labour and Danger, from

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Sorrow,

*A Funeral Sermon.*

Sorrow, and Fear, and Care, and what not? Being delivered from Sin, which is the Cause, and from that Flesh, which is the Center of all this.

They are past all Evils else, that have overcome Death: They leave Sorrow to us, who call ourselves the Living: Their Life, the only true Life, is immutable Joy, eternal Rest, Peace, and Felicity.

Which, if we seriously believe, if we desire to be with them, we cannot sorrow for our Loss, without Joy for their Gain, and Thanksgiving on their behalf, to that good God, *who hath given them the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

But thus much we owe upon the Death of every true Christian, though of never so mean a Rank and Condition. We are to be thankful to God for his Mercies, and to profess it, as we are taught in the Offices of our Church; which have the same Words of Burial for the meanest of our Communion, as for those that are highest in their Graces and Gifts.

But there is a Remembrance in Words that is due to these, and not to the other; namely, the due Praise of those their excellent Graces and Gifts, which, though they have not of themselves, but through the Bounty and Liberality of God, who is therefore to be chiefly respected and glorified,



fied, in all the Praise that we give to his Creatures: Yet since he is pleased to do them this Honour above others, and to make choice of them whom he so dignifies; we are bound to allow it them, we are to follow God's Choice, to give them Praise, whom he hath so qualified for it: only with this Care, that we do it truly, not to flatter the Dead; and profitably, for the Example and Imitation of the Living.

We have so much Reason to do this, that they who had only Reason to guide them, the *Gentiles*, upon the Death of any eminent Person, had Orations made publickly in their Praise. The *Jews*, without any particular Law for it, had Honour done to the Memory of worthy Persons at their Funerals, *2 Chron. 32. ult.* The Rites of it are partly described, *2 Chron. 16. 14.* They laid their Dead in a Bed full of the richest Perfumes, which also were publickly burnt at the Interment. To which I conceive the Preacher alludes, *Eccles. 7. 1.* where he says, *A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of one's death than the day of one's birth.*

When one cometh into the World, none knows how he may prove; if he do well in it, he goes out with this publick Testimony. After which, the *Jews* never men-

tioned such Persons, without a Blessing on their Memory.

But, above all others, the Primitive Christians were very observant this way. They saw it was the Will of their Lord and Master, that the good Work which was done upon him by *Mary* should be kept in perpetual Memory, and is therefore recorded in the Gospel. They saw how the Works of *Dorcas* were shewn at her Death, the Coats and Garments which she made for the Poor. They saw what need there was of great Incentives in those Days, when Christianity was a most dangerous Profession. It is of no small Force to make Men love a Religion, when they see it infuses excellent Principles, that it excites so suitable Practices, that it is Proof against Suffering and Death. And the Experience of that Power it hath in some, provokes and animates others to the same.

Upon these and the like Considerations, and perhaps with Allusion to that Text, where St. *John* is said to have seen the Souls of the Martyrs under the Altar; they had their *Memorias Martyrum*, their Places of Worship, where they placed the Altars over the Bodies of their Martyrs. What, with any Intention to worship the Martyrs? It was so suggested by the Adversaries,

versaries, and as vehemently denied by the Christians of those Times. By those of *Smyrna*, in the undoubted Acts of *Poly-carpus*: *We cannot* (say they) *worship any other than Christ; We love the Martyrs as being Followers of Christ: We celebrate the Days of their Passions with Joy; We do it both in remembrance of those Champions of God, and to train up and prepare others for the like Conflicts.*

Besides this, which was peculiar to the Martyrs, they had a lower Degree of Remembrance for Bishops and Confessors, and all other eminent Persons departed this Life, whom they not only praised in Orations at their Funerals, but writ their Names in their Dypticks, or two-leaved Records, which contain'd, in one Page, all the Names of the Living; in the other, the Dead that were of note in the Church.

All these were recited in the Communion Service: Where, as the Living for themselves; so for the Dead, came their Friends, and gave Oblations and Alms; which, before they were distributed among the Poor, were first offered up to God, in a Prayer like that which we use for the Church Militant here on Earth. These Doles were their only Sacrifices for the Dead; only Alms to the Poor, *with which Sacrifices God is well pleased.* And their

Prayers were not for any Deliverance from Pains; unless the Patriarchs, and Prophets, and the Apostles, and Virgin Mother of Christ, were in the same Pains too, and needed the same Deliverance: For they were all mentioned alike, and together, as it is to be seen in the ancientest Liturgies.

Among all these innocent Offices and Rites of the Primitive Christians, was there any thing of Prayer for Souls in Purgatory? Was there any thing of Prayer to Saints departed this Life? Was there any foundation for those superstitious Observances, of adoring their Reliques, of Prostration to their Images, of Pilgrimage to their Shrines, of making Vows, of saying Masses, of Offering to them, and the like? The Papists say there was; they plead the Practice of the Church for it; they wrest Places of Scripture to their purpose. Nay, the *Rhemists* and others, alledge this very Text, without which I should not have mentioned them at this time. But as the learnedest Men among themselves have been so just not to charge this upon my Text, and some of them confess they have no ground for these things, in any one Text of Canonical Scripture: so they would do us but right to acknowledge, that none of these things were practis'd for some hundreds of Years after Christianity came into the World.

In those Primitive Times, all their Offices for the Dead were either to give Testimony of that Faith in which they died, and that Death had not dissolv'd their Communion with the Living: Or they were to bless God for their holy Life, and happy Death: Or to pray to him, not for their Deliverance from Purgatory, of which there was no Faith in those Times; but for the Increase of that Good which they believ'd them to be possess'd of already, or for the Attainment of that farther Good, which they thought they were sure of; namely, for their speedy and happy Resurrection, for their perfect Discharge at the Day of Judgment, for the Consummation of their Bliss, with their own, in the Kingdom of Glory.

Not to say how the Fathers differ among themselves, in these Particulars; or, how many of these Particulars are omitted in the *Roman* Church, as well as ours; it is enough that here is nothing makes for them, but much against those their Errors and Corruptions. All that is agreed on all hands, or that we find in the Practice of the first Ages, being sufficiently contain'd in those Offices of our Church; in the Prayer for the Church Militant, in the Collect on *All-Saints* Day, and in the Office for the Burial of the Dead; where

we pray, *That it would please God, of his gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of his Elect, and to hasten his Kingdom; that we, with all those that are departed in the true Faith of his holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in his everlasting Glory.*

Lastly, *Remembrance in Action* is the other Duty enjoin'd in my Text, Μιμῆσαι τὴν πίστιν, *Imitate their Faith*, that is, their Christian Profession and Practice, their whole Life and Conversation, according to their own Belief of that Word which they have spoken.

The Reason of this Duty is plain; for it is our Business in this World to recover the Image of God in which he created us; to be like him here in Righteousness and Holiness, that we may be like him hereafter in Glory and Happiness.

To this end, God has given us those Lineaments of himself, which are written sufficiently in our Nature, but more fully and distinctly in Scripture. In which Scripture, he so oft and so vehemently requires us, *Be ye holy, as I am holy; be ye just, as I am just; be ye merciful, as I am merciful; be ye pure, as I am pure; be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

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This good Word of God, which was given by the Prophets and Apostles, is still inculcated on us by them *that speak to us the Word of God*: Which Office being primarily of Bishops, as appears in my Text, they are first, and above all others, to conform themselves to it, to shew others how possible and how practicable it is.

Our Apostle supposed this in those Primitive Bishops in my Text. God requires it of all that succeed them in the Church. So of *Timothy*, tho' he were young in Age, yet being in that Place, *Be thou an Example to Believers in word, in conversation, in spirit, in faith, in truth*, 1 Tim. 4. 12. And in the last Verse, *Take heed to thy self, and to thy Doctrine: Do this constantly, and continually, and so thou shalt save both thy self and them that hear thee.*

Whether they do this or no, they are our *Teachers* and *Rulers*; therefore in the 17th Verse of this Chapter, while they live, we must *obey* their Word, and *submit* to their Government. When they are dead, both for what they are, and were, we may do well to say no ill of them; and since we can say no good, e'en forget them, and leave them to God.

But if they are such as they ought, which the Apostle supposes in my Text, if they live as Men, that believe themselves what they

they say; 'tis our Duty, not only to *submit* and *obey* them, while they live, but also to *remember* them when they are dead: *Remember* them in our Thoughts, with that Honour they deserve; in our *Affections*, with a due Sense of our Loss, and their Gain: Remember them *in Words*, with the just Praise of their Actions and Lives: In our Prayers to God, with due Thankfulness for their Graces and Gifts in this Life, and for the Glory they receive after Death. Lastly, remember to *follow* them in that holy Way, which leads to so happy an End: In our Apostle's Words, *follow their Faith, considering the Event, the blessed End of their good Conversation.*

What my Text says in general of Bishops deceased, 'tis most easy to apply. I know it hath been done all this while, by them that knew the virtuous and great Mind that lately dwelt in this Body. They know the Truth of all I shall say, and much more that might be said in his just Commendation. But the little I can bring within the Time I have left, being said from many Years Experience, will, at least, stir up those that knew him not, to enquire; and if they find these Things true, they know their Duty of *Remembrance* and *Imitation.*



I shall be minute in drawing all I say under these Heads: For I speak to them that can distinguish and sort Things, as they belong to the one, or to the other.

To begin with the natural Endowments of his Mind; I cannot think of him without just Reflection upon that Paradox, of the Equality of Souls. He was surely a great Instance to the contrary; having that Largeness of Soul in every respect, which was much above the Rate of ordinary Men. He had an Understanding that extended to all Parts of useful Learning and Knowledge; a Will always disposed to great, and publick, and generous Things. He had a natural Aversion from all idle Speculations, and from the eager Pursuit of small and frivolous Designs. In great Matters, he judg'd so well, that he was not usually surpriz'd with Events. He pursued his Intentions with such Equalness of Mind, that he was never carried beyond the Calmness of his natural Temper, except thro' his Zeal for Publick Good, or where his Friend was concerned.

What he was in his Studies, I have reason to know, that have often been tired with studying with him. He was Indefatigable, and would have worn himself out, if he had not been relieved with Multiplicity of Business. However, he impair'd  
by

by it, a Body which seemed to have been built for a long Age, and contracted those Infirmities that hasten'd his Death.

The Effect of his Studies, in his Preaching and Writings, are sufficiently known, and would have been much more, if God had given him Time.

As for his Preaching, it was sometimes famous near this Place; tho' he sought rather the Profit, than the Praise of his Hearers. He spoke solid Truth, with as little Shew of Art as was possible. He express'd all Things in their true and natural Colours; with that Aptness and Plainness of Speech, that grave natural Way of Elocution, that shewed he had no Design upon his Hearers. His Plainness was best for the Instruction of the Simple; and for the better Sort, who were in truth an intelligent Auditory, it was enough that they might see he had no mind to deceive them. He applied himself rather to their Understanding than Affections. He saw so much of the Beauty of Goodness himself, that he thought the bare shewing of it was enough to make all wise Men, as it did him, to be in love with it.

In his Writings he was judicious and plain, like one that valued not the Circumstances so much as the Substance. And he shewed it in whatsoever Argument he undertook; some-

sometimes beating out new untravelled Ways, sometimes repairing those that had been beaten already: No Subject he handled, but I dare say is the better for him; and will be the easier for them that come after him.

If in these he went sometime besides his Profession, it was in following the Design of it, to make Men wiser and better, which I think is the Business of Universal Knowledge. And this he promoted with much Zeal and Sincerity, in hope of the great Benefit that may accrue to Mankind.

It was his Aim, as in all things, so especially in that, which I conceive is much more censured than understood; I mean, in the Design of the Royal Society. He joined himself to it with no other End, but to promote modern Knowledge, without any Contempt or lessening of those great Men in former Times. With due honour to whom, he thought it lawful for others to do that which, we have no reason to doubt, they themselves would have done if they were living.

I would not seem to excuse that which deserveth Commendation and Encouragement; or to commend other things for want of Subject in him. Therefore leaving this Theme in better hands, I proceed next to speak of his Virtues and Graces;  
and

and these the rather, as being both to be *remember'd* and *follow'd*.

And in speaking of these, where shall I begin? Nay, when shall I end, if I say all that may be spoken? I think it not worth while to speak of those that are Vulgar, tho' he had them also in no common Degree: Nor would I seem to make any Virtue a Propriety. But there are those which are not common to many, and were generally acknowledged to be in him; tho' they appear'd not so to some other Men, as they did to those that intimately knew him.

His Prudence was great, I think it seldom failed in any thing to which he applied himself. And yet he wanted that Part, which some hold to be essential; he so wanted Disimulation, that he had rather too much Openness of Heart. It was Sincerity indeed that was natural to him; he so abhorred a Lye, that he was not at all for Shew; he could not put on any thing that look'd like it. And presuming the same of other Men, thro' Excess of Benignity, he would be sometimes deceived, in believing they were what they seem'd to be, and what he knew they ought to have been.

His Greatness of Mind, was known to all that knew any thing of him. He neither eagerly sought any Dignity, nor declined any Capacity of doing Good. He  
look'd

look'd down upon Wealth, as much as others admire it: He knew the use of an Estate, but did not covet it. What he yearly received of the Church, he bestow'd in its Service. As for his temporal Estate, being secured against Want, he sought no farther, he set up his Rest; I have heard him say often, *I will be no richer*, and I think he was as good as his Word.

As for Revenge, how could it enter into the Breast of him that hated nothing but that which makes us hateful to God? I say not but he had a Sense of Personal Injuries; and especially of those that reflected upon his Name, when they proceeded from those that had good Names of their own. What others said, he despised; but by those he would often wish he had been better understood: That he was not, he bore as his Misfortune; he would not requite them with the like, but mention'd them with all due Respect, and was always ready to oblige them, and to do them good.

Yet it was not so desirable, (I say not to be his Enemy, for he did not account them so, but) to be at those Terms with him as to be his Acquaintance or Friend. They that were never so little familiar with him, could not but find, as well Benefit as Delight in his Conversation. His Discourse was commonly of useful Things; it never caused

Trouble or Weariness to the Hearer. Yet he would venture to displease one for his good ; and indeed he was the only Man that ever I knew, for that most needful and least practised Point of Friendship. He would not spare to give seasonable Reproof, and wholesome Advice, when he saw Occasion. I never knew any that would do it so freely, and that knew how to manage that Freedom of Speech so inoffensively.

It was his way of Friendship, not so much to oblige Men, as to do them good. He did this not slightly and superficially, but like one that made it his Business. He durst do for his Friend, any thing that was honest, and no more. He would undertake nothing but what well became him, and then he was unwearied till he had effected it.

As he concerned himself for his Friend, in all other Respects, so especially in that which went nearest to him of all earthly Concernments. He would not suffer any Blot to be thrown, and to lie upon his Friend's good Name, or his Memory. And that Office I am obliged to requite, in giving some Account of that which has been spoken by some to his Disadvantage.

I shall neglect, for he did so, any frivolous Reports ; but that which seems to have any Weight in it, as far as I have observed, is, that he had not that Zeal for the Church,  
that

that they would seem to have that object this. He seemed to look upon the Dissenters with too much Favour to their Persons and Ways.

As to the Persons; no doubt that Goodness of Nature, that true Christian Principle, which made him willing to think well of all Men, and to do Good, or at least no Hurt to any, might and ought to extend itself to them, among others. But besides, he was inclined to it by his Education under his Grandfather Mr. *Dod*, a truly Pious and Learned Man; who yet was a Dissenter himself in some Things.

Not that he had any Delight in Contradiction, or could find in his Heart to disturb the Peace of the Church for those Matters: He was so far from it, that as I have frequently heard from this his Grandchild and others, when some thought their Dissents ground enough for a War, he declared himself against it, and confirmed others in their Allegiance: He profest, to the last, a just Hatred of that horrid Rebellion. Now his Relation to this Man, and Conversation with those of his Principles, might incline him to hope the like of others of that Way. And when he found them farther off from the Unity of the Church, he might possibly over-do, thro' the Vehemence of his Desire, to bring them off of their Prejudices, and to

reduce them to the Unity of the Church; in which his Grandfather lived and died: Why might he not hope the same of other Dissenters?

As for himself, he was so far from approving their Ways, that in the worst of Times, when one here present bewailed to him the Calamities of the Church, and declared his Obedience even then to the Laws of it: He encouraged him in it, he desired his Friendship, and protected both him and many others, by an Interest that he had gained, and made use of chiefly for such Purposes.

How he demeaned himself then, is known in both Universities; where he govern'd with Praise, and left a very grateful Remembrance behind him. How in the next Times since, I cannot speak in a better Place. And when I have named this City, and the two Universities, I think he could not be placed in a better Light in this Nation. There were enough that could judge, and he did not use to disguise himself; I appeal to you that conversed with him in those Days, what Zeal he hath exprest for the Faith, and for the Unity of the Church: How he stood up in Defence of the Order and Government. How he hath asserted the Liturgy, and the Rites of it: He conformed himself to every thing that was commanded. Beyond which, for any Man to be vehement in little and unnecessary



cessary things, whether for or against them, he could not but dislike; and as his free manner was, he hath oft been heard to call it Fanaticalness. How this might be represented, I know not, or how his Design of Comprehension might be understood.

Sure I am, that since he came into the Government of the Church, to which he was called in his Absence; he so well became the Order, that it out-did the Expectation of all that did not very well know him. He filled his Place with a Goodness answerable to the rest of his Life; and with a Prudence above it, considering the two Extremes, which were no where so much as in his Diocese. Tho' he was as before very tender to those that differ'd from him; yet he was as before, exactly conformable himself, and brought others to Conformity, some eminent Men in his Diocese. He endeavoured to bring in all that came within his Reach, and might have had great Success, if God had pleased to continue him.

But having given full Proof of his Intentions and Desires, it pleased God to reserve the Fruit for other Hands, from which we have great Cause to expect much Good to the Church.

He was in perfect Health in all other Respects; when a known Infirmary, from an unknown Cause, that had been easier

to cure, than it was to discover, stole upon him, and soon became incurable.

He was for many Days in a Prospect of Death, which he saw as it approached, and felt it come on by Degrees. Some Days before he died, he found within himself as he often said, *a Sentence of Death*. In all this time, first of Pain, then of dreadful Apprehensions, at last in the Presence of Death; Who ever saw him dismay'd? Who ever found him surprized? or heard a Word from him, unbecoming a wise Man, and a true Christian? It was my Infelicity to be so engaged, that I could not duly attend him; and so deceived with vain Hopes, that I believ'd him not dying, till he was dead. But at the times I was with him, I saw great Cause to admire his Faith towards God, his Zeal for his Church, his Constancy of Mind, his Contempt of the World, and his chearful Hopes of Eternity. I have heard much more upon these Heads from those that were with him. Some of you may have heard other things from other Men. It hath been the way of our Adversaries to entitle themselves to dying Men, even those whose whole Life was a Testimony against them. Thus after the Death of our famous *Jewel*, the Papists were pleas'd to say, he died of their Religion. *Militiere* hath ventured to insinuate the same of our late King, of Blessed and Glorious Memory. Men's  
Tongues

Tongues and Pens are their own. But lest they should abuse them and you, and the Memory of this worthy Prelate, as they have abus'd others, (tho' nothing needs to be said to such groundless Calumnies) I declare, and that upon most certain Grounds, that he died in the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Communion of the Church of *England*, as it is by Law established.

He died only too soon for the Church, and for his Friends, but for himself he had lived long enough. He has lived long enough that dies well: For whatsoever he wants of that which we call Time, it is added, tho' it adds nothing to Eternity.

As for us that are now to try how we can bear the Want of those many Blessings we enjoy'd in him, What shall we say? We must submit to the Will of God. Our Comfort is, that we shall follow, and come together again in due time. Till when, Farewel, Pious and Virtuous Soul; Farewel, Great and excellent Man; Farewel, worthy Prelate, faithful Friend! we have thy Memory and Example, thou hast our Praises and our Tears. While thy Memory lives in our Breasts, may thy Example be fruitful in our Lives: That our Meeting again may be in Joy unspeakable, when God shall have wiped away all Tears from our Eyes.

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