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A  
PRESENT  
FOR  
PROTESTANTS, ROMANISTS,  
and JEWS:

BEING A  
FREE INQUIRY  
After the CHURCH or KINGDOM of the  
MESSIAH:

IN A  
LETTER  
TO THE  
Titular Popish Bishop of *London*,

Author of a TRACT, intituled,  
*The UNERRING AUTHORITY of the CATHOLIC  
Church in Matters of Faith, &c.*

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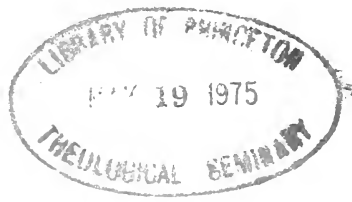
By a COSMOPOLITE.

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*Let subtle Schoolmen teach these Friends to fight,  
More studious to divide than to unite,  
And Grace and Virtue, Sense and Reason split  
With all the rash Dexterity of Wit:  
Wits, just like Fools, at War about a Name,  
Have full as oft no Meaning, or the same. POPE.  
Yea, and why judge ye not of yourselves what is right?  
Luke xii. 57.*

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REVEREND SIR,

**W**ITHOUT any Intention to detract from the Merits of your *private* Character, but only for the Sake of Truth, I address you in this public Manner. The Subject of the following Sheets being of the greatest Importance, as you yourself acknowledge, I may perhaps be *sometimes* too warm, and, in consequence of that Warmth, a little too positive: Yet, upon the whole, I hope it will appear, that I have not deviated from Modesty, Candor and Charity, *oftner* that those with whom I differ in Opinion.

Having a great deal of Matter before me, which I want to bring into a narrow Compass, my Preamble must be short. When the Subject is material and the Reasoning good, a Book needs no Preface: If the one is trifling and the other bad, a Preface cannot make them better.

There is no Point clearer in the Bible, than that the *Jews* shall be converted and dwell again in the Land of *Canaan* in the later Days: And it is no less clear, in the Reason and Nature of Things, that the Iniquities, the scandalous Examples of Christians, the many Sects into which they are split, the endless Divisions and Quarrels between Christian Princes, are insurmountable Bars to the Conversion of that People.

ple. When a *Jew* beholds the idolatrous Practices of some Nations that profess themselves Followers of the *Messiah*, and the various, discordant Creeds, or Systems of Faith, of Mens making, established in all as Terms of Communion or Conditions of Salvation ; he must be a Man of great Penetration, or else have an extraordinary Measure of divine Grace, to sift the Wheat from the Chaff, and settle himself in the Truth. Such Divisions among Christians strengthen his Prejudices and confirm him in his Incredulity : In vain do they tell him that the *Messiah* came above 1700 Years ago ; he obstinately shuts his Eyes to all the Proofs they can bring of it, because they cannot prove, to his Satisfaction, that they are the Disciples of *Christ*. If Christendom acted up to the Doctrine of the *Prince of Peace*, the *Jews* would soon be convinced that he rules in the World by the *Comforter*, the *Spirit of Truth*, whom he promised and did actually send a few Days after his Ascension, and does still send, though not in the same miraculous Manner, to all that sincerely desire to be directed by him.

But how can we expect Unity, Harmony and Peace in the Christian World, while any Part of it thinks itself absolutely, not conditionally, secured from Errors in Matters of Faith ? So long as any Set of Men believe themselves *infallible*, the natural Consequence is, that whether they be in Error or not, they will never have Charity for others : A firm Persuasion of being *always* in the Right, is necessarily attended with a domineering Spirit, and keeps Men under a moral Impossibility of



of Amendment. This stumbling Block must therefore be taken out of the Way, before any good can be done for the *Jews*. To attempt to put that Nation on a better Footing in temporal Concerns, and to be at the same Time indifferent about their spiritual Interests, looks too much like Beginning the Work at the wrong End.

That the Dispute about Infallibility is a Point worthy of the most serious Consideration, is asserted by all the Divines of the *Roman Church*.—‘ There is no Controversy in all  
 ‘ polemical Divinity (say you) the right Deci-  
 ‘ sion of which is of more Importance, than of  
 ‘ this concerning the *unerring Authority*, or,  
 ‘ as it is commonly term’d, the *Infallibility* of the  
 ‘ Church of *Christ* : Because the Resolution of  
 ‘ this Difficulty is, in effect, the shortest Way  
 ‘ to put an End to all Disputes ; at least, if it  
 ‘ may be fairly resolv’d on the Catholic Side :  
 ‘ For who will presume to dispute against the  
 ‘ Sentence of a Judge, whom he is forced to  
 ‘ acknowledge *infallible* in his Judgment ?’

To fix this Infallibility in the *Romish Church*, is the Design of a Treatise you published some Years ago, entitled, *The UNERRING Authority of the Catholic Church in Matters of Faith*, which to this Day is cry’d up by your Party as a Master-piece ; in which I agree with them in one Sense : Nay, they boast that it has never been answered; for which very Reason I have attempted a brief Confutation of it, which I send into the World only as a Specimen of the right Way of dealing with Pretenders to Infallibility.

In examining this Claim to *Infallibility*, I purpose to follow you no farther than the Places you quote from the *Old-Testament* to prove, that the Church of *Rome* is possessed of it; yet I shall take the Liberty to expound Passages by parallel ones, and take the Sense from the Context, where you lose Sight of it, in order to favour your System. This Method I chuse for Brevity's Sake, because the Texts you produce from the *Old Testament* being once set in a true Light, any intelligent, well disposed Reader may easily find out the right Application of the Passages you have quoted from the *New Testament*. And as in *setting out* upon an Inquiry *where* and *what* the true Church of *Christ* is, all the Disputants or Inquirers neither can nor ought to have any other Guide but their own Reason, to judge of the Characters and Marks given of that Church in Holy Writ; so I humbly presume you will not deny, that the *first* Steps we take must be Acts of meer Reason, however we may please to captivate our Understandings to her Authority, and acquiesce implicitly in every thing she propounds as Articles of Faith, *after* we are fully satisfied that she is the undefiled Spouse of *Christ*, who neither can nor will lead her Children into Error. Therefore, waving any Arguments I might borrow from much better Pens who have already treated this Subject in a different Method, I shall only make the best use I can of my own Faculties, in searching for the Sense of the Texts you have applied to the *Roman* Church: And as for human Authorities on either Side of the Question, it is to be observed, that

that the *Fathers* of the primitive Church, how much soever they may deserve our Veneration as learned or pious Men, are not allowed by any Sect of Christians to be infallible; so that to follow you in your Citations from their Writings, or bring any other Passages of theirs against you, would be an unprofitable Labour, since their Sentiments are not conclusive. My Business, then, being only with the *Fountain* of divine Knowledge, I proceed on a Presumption, as all Writers do, that either the Learned or the Unlearned may find in this little Tract something not unworthy of their Notice.—Thus much by way of Introduction: Let us now open the Debate with the first Preliminary of your Work, which is,

*That Christ hath always a true Church upon Earth.*

This was never denied by any that believed in *Christ*: But it does not follow, that his Church has hitherto been confined to any particular City or Nation. The Bible does not afford so much as one special Promise of this Kind made to any People *actually* or *formerly* professing Christianity. The Gospel has been preached to many Nations, and many have not yet heard the Sound of it: And of those that did receive it, some have long since corrupted it, and others have entirely lost it. However, we shall quickly find a *Place* for this true Church, where it will be for ever so visibly and gloriously fixed, that no People will mistake it, or refuse to join in Communion with it.

The

The first Passage you produce, from the Old Testament, to argue us into a Belief that the *Roman Church* is, and has been these seventeen Centuries, the true Church of *Christ*, is the 8th Verse of the 48th Psalm: ‘ *As we have heard, so have we seen, in the City of the Lord of Hosts, in the City of our God, God will establish it for ever.*’—This Psalm does indeed relate to the Kingdom or Church of *Christ*; but how it may any Way serve the Turn of *Popery*, is very far from being obvious, at least to me. The *City of the Lord of Hosts* must either be the whole Earth, or some particular Place: If the latter, it was incumbent on you to shew, that when the Prophets of the Old Testament speak of the *City of God*, they have a special Respect to *Rome*. For my part, I cannot apply the above Verse, nor the whole Scope of the Psalm, to any past State of the Christian Church, but think it is referable to a future and more ample, peaceable and perfect State of it; and that *Jerusalem*, not *Rome*, is to be the Head or Mother Church; because *Christ* forbidding Men to swear by *Jerusalem*, gave this as a Reason for it, that it was the *City of the great King*; and it may be fairly presumed he did not then strictly speak of the *rebellious City* that was to be destroyed in a few Years, but of that which is to be built when the *Fullness of the Gentiles shall be come in*. This will be farther illustrated as we go on.

Your next Proof is *Psalms lxxii. 5, 7.* ‘ *They shall fear thee as long as the Sun and Moon endure, throughout all Generations. In his Days*

‘ Days (that is after the Coming of *Christ*) shall  
 ‘ the Righteous flourish, and Abundance of Peace  
 ‘ so long as the Moon endureth.’—That this is  
 prophetically descriptive of the *Messiah’s* King-  
 dom, is not to be denied : But, for the better  
 understanding of it, suffer me to help you out  
 with two more Verses of the same Psalm ; a  
 Course which I shall frequently take with you,  
 for the Information of your \* Flock, few of  
 whom have the Bible in their Hands.

8. *He shall have Dominion also from Sea to  
 Sea, and from the River unto the Ends of the  
 Earth.*

11. *Yea, all Kings shall fall down before him,  
 all Nations shall serve him.*

In your Opinion the Prophecy in this Psalm  
 has long ago been fulfilled, and must be applied  
 to the See of *Rome* and the Churches in Commu-  
 nion with her : In my Judgment it has not yet  
 been fulfilled, and yet I acknowledge that *Christ*  
 has always had a true Church upon Earth ; but  
 it has hitherto been kept under a Cloud by the  
 Powers of Darknes and their human Agents.  
 Every Man conversant with History knows,  
 that those Parts of the World, which we call  
 Christendom, have been these many Ages as  
 much, if not more divided and distracted than  
 any other Parts of the Earth : Agreeably to the  
 Saying of our blessed *Saviour*, that he did not  
 come to bring Peace on Earth, but a Sword ;  
 which was only prophetically spoken, in order

\* The Romanists in the Diocese of London.

to undeceive those who expected that his peaceable, flourishing Kingdom, would have taken Place at that Time. Nevertheless he is, in the strictest Sense, the *Prince of Peace*; his Doctrine and Example breathe nothing but Peace and Good will to Men : But the roaring Lion, who goes about seeking whom he may devour, not being yet chained down in the bottomless Pit, inspires the Rulers of the World with Pride, Ambition and Covetousness, sets Nation against Nation and Kingdom against Kingdom, sows the Seeds of Discord and Strife in every Climate, and spreads the Flames of War all over the Face of the Earth. Hence it is that we have not yet seen the *Righteous flourish*, if thereby *David* meant that the World should be governed righteously; and nothing else, I think, can be meant, unless you insist upon applying the Prophecy to those ignorant Ages when the Bishops of *Rome* trampled on Kings and Emperors, and the Thunder of the *Vatican* kept the World in awe : But how righteous those sovereign Pontiffs were, let the Historians of their Times bear Witness. Neither have we ever seen or heard of any thing like peaceable Days, or *Abundance of Peace*, as the Royal Prophet emphatically expresses it. Therefore, as not one Tittle of God's Word can fail, we ought to look for the Completion of this Prophecy in its obvious, natural Sense, and not run away with a silly Notion that the Psalmist had an Eye to the See of *Rome*, or to any Nation or Church that conforms to her Doctrine and Practices. Shew me only one single Age, or even but half a Century, since *Christ's* Ascension, wherein the World has enjoyed Rest and Peace,

Peace, and I will give up the Point. And as to the great Extent of *Christ's* Kingdom, predicted in this Psalm, it cannot be said that we have yet seen *all Kings falling down before him, and all Nations serving him*: Scarcely one *Fourth* Part of the Earth owns the *Messiah*; and in this small Part, what Ignorance, what Corruptions prevail! How many Reliques of Paganism are retained! How few do Honour to their Profession! Now, to suppose that inspired Men use Hyperboles in Subjects of this Importance to Mankind, would be highly injurious to God's Veracity; and therefore we must take this Prophecy in the literal Sense.

After this you give us a long String of Verses out of the 89th Psalm, viz. the 3d and 4th, and then the 27th to the 37th inclusive; all which, for Brevity's Sake, I shall not transcribe, but refer the Reader to them. 'The glorious Promise in this Psalm, you say, is understood of the Church of *Christ*, the spiritual Seed of *David*, by *Calvin* himself, l. 4. Inst. c. 1. Sect. 27. and indeed cannot by any Christian be applied to the carnal Seed and Throne of *David*, which is long since gone to Ruin.'—*Geneva* and *Rome* being thus agreed in the Point, I likewise grant it: But then, that we may not bewilder ourselves, we should take this Observation along with us, which will be found of great Use for coming at the true Sense of the Prophecies of the Old Testament relative to the Church, viz. That the Prophets, in their lofty and glorious Descriptions of the *Messiah's* Kingdom, generally have an Eye to the happy Time of the Union of

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both

both *Jews* and *Gentiles* in one Faith and under one Head, and but very sparingly touch upon the intermediate Space, *i. e.* the Ages between this *Æra* and the first Promulgation of the Gospel, which include the Conflicts of the Church with Hereticks and Idolaters; the bloody Persecutions she suffered under Heathen Kings and Emperors; the Afflictions she has endured under carnal, worldly minded Princes, who, though professing Christianity in some Shape or other, have yet, through Remissness or Ignorance, suffered the Spouse of *Christ* to be driven into the *Wilderness*, nay, have been sometimes directly instrumental in oppressing and keeping her in Bondage; utterly disregarding both Law and Gospel, or making Religion a meer State Engine to serve their Ambition and other disorderly Passions. Now, Sir, if the Passages you have produced from the 89th Psalm must be understood of the *glorious* Estate of the Church of *Christ*, in what Sense are we to take the rest of this Psalm, from v. 37 to the End? It is manifestly the *Reverse*, and consequently may be taken for the low, disconsolate Condition of the Faithful in divers Ages and different Places. However, I recommend both Sides of the Picture to your farther Consideration, begging you would be pleased to solve the Difficulty by an infallible Sentence.

Having, as you imagine, so firmly laid your Foundation in the Psalms, you proceed thus :  
 ‘ In fine, to pass over many other Texts, which  
 ‘ we shall quote hereafter, the prophet *Daniel*  
 ‘ bears evident Testimony to the Church’s  
 ‘ Perpetuity,



‘ Perpetuity, when interpreting the Dream of  
 ‘ *Nebuchadnezzar*, Chap. ii. 44. he tells us,  
 ‘ *In the Days of these Kings shall the God of*  
 ‘ *Heaven set up a Kingdom* [the Kingdom or  
 ‘ *Church of Christ]* *which shall never be de-*  
 ‘ *stroyed—And it shall stand for ever.*’—It  
 is certain that this Passage, taken singly, does  
 pretty well for your System, and may satisfy  
 such as care not for nice Disquisitions that re-  
 quire long Application: Here we have a King-  
 dom set up, which is to stand for ever; and  
 you would have us take the *Roman Church* for  
 that Kingdom. A brief Exposition of the  
 whole Chapter would have been very accep-  
 table to the Illiterate of your Communion, who  
 certainly cannot form any clear Notion of  
 Times and Circumstances from the single Verse  
 you have been pleased to give them: But  
 since you have declined the Task, I shall at-  
 tempt it.

*Nebuchadnezzar* having utterly forgot a  
 Dream that had extremely discomposed his  
 Mind, *Daniel* is brought before him, and not  
 only reveals, but also gives him the Inter-  
 pretation of it, as follows:

V. 31. *Thou, O King, sawest, and behold, a*  
*great Image: This great Image, whose Brightness*  
*was excellent, stood before thee, and the Form*  
*thereof was terrible.*

32. *This Image's Head was of fine Gold, his*  
*Breast and his Arms of Silver, his Belly and his*  
*Thighs of Brass.*

33. His Legs of Iron, his Feet part of Iron and part of Clay.

34. Thou sawest till that a Stone was cut out without Hands, which smote the Image upon his Feet that were of Iron and Clay, and brake them to Pieces.

35. Then was the Iron, the Clay, the Brass, the Silver and the Gold broken to Pieces together, and became like the Chaff of the Summer-threshing Floors, and the Wind carried them away, that no Place was found for them: And the Stone that smote the Image became a great Mountain, and filled the whole Earth.

Having thus related the Dream, after a respectful introductory Compliment, the Prophet says to Nebuchadnezzar, v. 38. *Thou art this Head of Gold,*

39. *And after thee shall arise another Kingdom inferior to thee, and another third Kingdom of Brass, which shall bear Rule over all the Earth.*

40. *And the fourth Kingdom shall be strong as Iron: Forasmuch as Iron breaketh in Pieces, and subdueth all Things: And as Iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in Pieces, and bruize.*

41. *And whereas thou sawest the Feet and Toes, Part of Potters Clay, and Part of Iron: The Kingdom shall be divided, but there shall be in it of the Strength of the Iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the Iron mixt with miry Clay.*

42. *And as the Toes of the Feet were Part of Iron, and Part of Clay; so the Kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.*

43. *And whereas thou sawest Iron mixt with miry Clay, they shall mingle themselves with the Seed of Men: But they shall not cleave one to another, even as Iron is not mixed with Clay.*

44. *And in the Days of these Kings shall the God of Heaven set up a Kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: And the Kingdom shall not be left to other People, but it shall break in Pieces, and consume all these Kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.*

45. *Forasmuch as thou sawest that the Stone was cut out of the Mountain without Hands, and that it brake in Pieces the Iron, the Brass, the Clay, the Silver and the Gold; the great God hath made known to the King what shall come, to pass hereafter: And the Dream is certain, and the Interpretation thereof sure.*

This Image, I think, is allowed by all Commentators to signify *literally* the four great Monarchies: The Point is so clear, that no Man conversant with History does doubt it. In a *spiritual* Sense I beg Leave, but with Submission to better Judges, to take the Image for an Emblem of *Idolatry*, which runs thro' the *Babylonian, Persian, Grecian and Roman* Empires, gradually growing more base and abominable; otherwife, methinks, the Order of the Metals ought to have been inverted, the Head made  
of

of Iron and Clay, and the Legs and Toes of Gold. But, not to insist positively on this, let us come directly to the Point that more immediately concerns you.

*Christ*, the *Stone* mentioned above, was born in the Reign of *Augustus*, when the *Roman Kingdom* was in the Meridian of its Strength and Glory: But he did not then smite the Image upon the *Legs* nor the *Feet*; for that Monarchy still continued very powerful for about four hundred Years after, tho' sometimes terribly shaken by the *Goths* and other barbarous Nations. Towards the End of the fifth Century it was quite broken in the *West*, and out of its Ruins *ten Kingdoms* or Sovereignities arose; since which the *Eastern Part* of this Monarchy has been entirely swallowed up by the *Turks*. Thus the *two Iron Legs* are destroyed; the Strength, Grandeur and Dignity of the Empire are gone: But this, I apprehend, was not properly the Act of the *Stone* cut out without Hands, for *Christ's* peculiar Part of the Work, in demolishing this Image, is the smiting it on the *Toes*; which Blow is not yet struck.

In the Reign of *Tiberius*, *Christ* began to preach the Gospel: This was precisely the Time of the setting up the Kingdom of God, poor and oppressed in its Beginnings, the great Image standing then, and for a long Time after, on its Iron Legs. Of this Kingdom it is said, that *it shall never be destroyed*, i. e. all the Efforts of the *Roman Government* to subvert it should prove fruitless; the bloody Persecutions  
of

of the heathen Emperors having only served to spread it farther, and encrease the Number of Christians : Since which it has weathered out many other Storms, resisting the joint Attacks of Superstition and Infidelity, which have been labouring, for above a thousand Years past, to extinguish the Light of the Gospel. Then the Prophet notes, that this Kingdom *shall not be left to other People* ; i. e. no other Empire shall come after it, as the *Babylonian* Monarchy was succeeded by the *Persian*, and this by the *Grecian*, which in its Turn was swallowed up by the *Roman* : *But it shall break in Pieces and consume all these Kingdoms*, i. e. put down Tyranny, Superstition and Idolatry all over the World, triumph over the Devices of the Father of Lies, and confound the Machinations of all his human Agents. Now, the Conclusion is, that hitherto we have only seen the *afflicted* and *militant* Estate of the *Messiah's* Kingdom : Its *peaceable* and *triumphant* Estate does not commence till the *Stone* smites the Image upon the *Toes* of *Iron* and *Clay*, i. e. the last, weak, divided, base, corrupt Estate of the *Roman* Kingdom ; because 'tis not till then that *all the four Metals* and the *Clay* are broken to pieces *together*, or all *false Worship* and *Reliques of Paganism* utterly abolished : Nor does the *Stone*, till then, swell into a great Mountain, filling the whole Earth. Its Duration, in this temporal, triumphant Estate, is a thousand Years, as we may gather from the 20th Chapter of *St. John's* Revelation : In its spiritual Estate it is to endure eternally in Heaven. But the *eternal* does not exclude the *temporal* Duration ; because *Daniel* is describing a Scene on *Earth*, a Succession of

*idolatrous*

*idolatrous Kingdoms, whose Power and very Names are at last annihilated by the Kingdom of God; and as the latter comes in the room of them, so that no Place is found for them, it must consequently be likewise on Earth. All this is confirmed and illustrated in the 7th Chapter of the same Prophet, where we are told in Conclusion, that the Kingdom and Dominion, and the Greatness of the Kingdom under the whole Heaven, shall be given to the People of the Saints of the most High, whose Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and all Dominions shall serve and obey him.*

Thus far it appears that *Christ* has always a true Church upon Earth, but that the Texts you have made use of to prove it, are not applicable to *Rome*. Proceed we now to your second Preliminary, which is,

*That Christ's Church upon Earth is always visible.*

This cannot be denied. In whatsoever State the Church may be, it must needs be visible, tho' not to every Man. When *Jezabel* had slain the Lord's Prophets, *Elijah* thought himself the only remaining true Believer; and yet we read of many thousands still left in *Israel* that had not bowed the Knee to *Baal*; but though they were unknown to that great Prophet, they must needs have been visible to many other Persons, unless we suppose that each of them lived separately in Caves, Mountains and Woods. The Light of the Gospel may be sometimes *eclipsed*,  
but

but never *totally* extinguished : The Church of *Christ*, even while in the *Wilderness*, must have been conspicuous enough to every one that loved the Truth, and held it in Righteousness ; for a Man may be a true Believer and a right Worshipper of God, tho' his Bishop teaches Heresy and commits Idolatry.—But as this Way of Reasoning may not be satisfactory to you, let us see how you prove this perpetual Visibility.

For the first Proof you give us *Isaiab* ii. 2, 3. ‘ *And it shall come to pass in the last Days, that the Mountain of the Lord’s House shall be established in the Top of the Mountains, and shall be exalted above the Hills ; and all Nations shall flow unto it. And many People shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord, to the House of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his Ways, and we will walk in his Paths ; for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*’

Here we have indeed a visible and glorious Church ; but the Question is, Whether it has been so these 1700 Years past ? I answer in the Negative. The Difference, then, between us lying in Point of Time and Place, let us endeavour to set the Matter in a clear Light.

Though some Divines, besides those of your Communion, may please to take the *Mountain of the Lord’s House* for *Christ’s Church* in general, it is plain by the Context, that some particular Place is meant thereby ; so plain in-

deed, that it scarcely requires any Comment. We see all Nations flowing to it, and exhorting each other to go up to that Place, which the Prophet calls *Zion* and *Jerusalem*: But in what Sense we must take this *Jerusalem*, is the grand Question.

We know that out of *Zion* the Law did go forth, and the Word of the Lord from *Jerusalem*, by the preaching of the *Messiah* and his Apostles; but this does not fully answer the Sense of *Isaiab*, who means, that the Law and the Word of the Lord not only *go forth from Zion*, but also *abide there*; in Consequence of which all Nations flock to it. Now, though the Gospel was first promulgated from *Jerusalem*, who gave Ear to the Preachers? Very few indeed, when compared to the vast Numbers that rejected the good Tydings. Did all Nations then flow to the Church, or to *Jerusalem*? No; the *Jews* were the *first* Persecutors of *Christianity*, and brought Destruction on themselves for that and other Crimes: And afterwards the Rulers of the World set themselves against the Church, and with all the cruel Devices that infernal Malice could invent, strove to extirpate the Followers of *Christ*. Therefore, we cannot take that Time for the *last Days*.

But if you will insist, that *Jerusalem* ought to be taken in a figurative Sense, as signifying the whole Church of *Christ*, wheresoever spread; I answer, that though this Sense may sometimes be adopted, yet it cannot be admitted in this Place; because we need not be told that the Word of the Lord shall go forth from *his* Church,



Church, since no Man of common Sense ever expected it should proceed from another Quarter, or be found among any other Congregation. If this be all that we are to understand by *Jerusalem*, the World may remain divided and distracted about Religion till the general Conflagration ; since every Sect of Christians may confidently cry up their own Communion for the spiritual *Zion*, and allegorize all the Prophecies in direct Contradiction to common Sense and undeniable Facts.

It may, perhaps, be no Breach of Charity to suppose you were sensible that the 4th Verse of *Isaiab's* second Chapter might produce some Ideas very prejudicial to your System ; and therefore you omitted it, though it has so manifest a Connection with the foregoing ; for which very Reason I must not pass it over. *And he shall judge among the Nations, and shall rebuke many People : And they shall beat their Swords into plow-Shares, and their Spears into Pruning-Hooks : Nation shall not lift up a Sword against Nation, neither shall they learn War any more.* The same we read in the 4th Chapter of *Micah*, who subjoins, *But they shall sit every Man under his Vine and under his Fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid.*

Now I should be glad to be informed in what Age this Prediction has been fulfilled. Has there been any Thing like peaceable Times in this World, since the Mountain of the Lord's House was established at *Rome*, where I presume you would have us look for it ? No such Thing can be asserted ; all Historians, all

Records bear Witness of the contrary : Therefore the Prophecy is yet to be fulfilled, and *Jerusalem* is the Place from whence all Nations shall receive Instructions; which I shall endeavour to elucidate by the following Passages of *Zechariah*.

15-16 Chap. ii. ~~11, 12.~~ *And many Nations shall be joined to the Lord in that Day, and shall be my People : And I will dwell in the Midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto thee. And the Lord shall inherit Judah his Portion in the Holy Land, and shall chuse Jerusalem again.*—This cannot be the City they were rebuilding in *Zechariah's* Time, because none of the Gentile Nations were then joined to the Lord. The Person mentioned to be sent, is *Christ*, whom the *Jews*, as well as the rest of the infidel World, will acknowledge : By his Spirit (for I do not adopt the Notion of his personal Residence) he will dwell in his Church wheresoever extended, but in a more special Manner at *Jerusalem*; else what can be meant by the Lord's chusing that City again ?

Chap. viii. 3. *Thus saith the Lord, I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the Midst of Jerusalem : And Jerusalem shall be called a City of Truth, and the Mountain of the Lord of Hosts, the holy Mountain.*—This can't be the City that was re-edified under the *Persian* Monarchy and destroyed by the *Romans*.

V. 4. *There shall yet Old Men and Old Women dwell in the Streets of Jerusalem, and every Man with*

*with his Staff in his Hand for very Age. 5. And the Streets of the City shall be full of Boys and Girls, playing in the Streets thereof.*—The Jews were not blessed with Longævity after their Return from the *Babylonish* Captivity; therefore this Promise respects the *new Jerusalem* which we should yet expect. It may also serve to invalidate the Notion of those who contend for *Christ's* reigning visibly, or corporally present, in this future *Jerusalem*, with the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles and other Saints. This new City is to be inhabited by mortal Men, else the Circumstance of walking with Staves, to support old Age, would not be mentioned; and that such Men are to be the Inhabitants thereof, is made still plainer by the Boys and Girls playing in the Streets. Procreation, then, still goes on as usual; but after the Resurrection, as our blessed *Saviour* tells us, Men do not marry: Consequently, the *new Jerusalem* is not to be the Residence of the *raised Saints* during the *Millenium*. Some learned Commentators are indeed willing to admit of the personal Appearance of *Christ* only for a *short* Time at the *Beginning* of the *Millenium*, as several Passages of Scripture seem to make for it: But as the Point is not clear to me, I will neither affirm nor deny it.

V. 20, 21, 22, *It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come People, and the Inhabitants of many Cities. And the Inhabitants of one City shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of Hosts: I will go also. Yea, many People and strong Nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts*

*Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.* This tallies so exactly with the 2d and 3d Verses of *Isaiab's* second Chapter, that it is impossible to fall into a Mistake concerning the Meaning of the *Mountain of the Lord's House*.

*Zechariah* also saith, Chap. xii. 6. *Jerusalem shall be inhabited again, in her own Place, even in Jerusalem.*—The most nefarious Caviller can't distort this Passage from its obvious and natural Sense; for if *Jerusalem* is not to be taken literally, it follows that *Zechariah* has put a Banter on the common Sense of Mankind, and laid a stumbling Block for the *Jews* in particular.

The same Prophet going on with the Scene that shall happen in the *last Days*, tells' us, Chap. xiii. 2. *And it shall come to pass in that Day, saith the Lord of Hosts, that I will cut off the Names of the Idols out of the Land; and they shall no more be remembered.*—The same thing *Isaiab* tells us in the Chapter above mentioned: All Pictures are to be destroyed, and the Idols utterly abolished. The *Jews* indeed have long since cast off those Works of Vanity and Delusion; and 'tis to be presumed *Christians* will do the same in the latter Days.

Again, *Zechariah* saith, Chap. xiv. 8. *And it shall be in that Day, that living Waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them towards the former Sea, and half of them toward the hinder Sea: In Summer and in Winter shall it be.*—These living Waters are the Law and the Word of the Lord, which go forth from *Zion* and *Jerusalem*,

*Jerusalem*, as *Isaiab* saith: By Summer and Winter we may understand all Seasons and all Occasions. See this further illustrated in *Ezekiel* xlvii. 8. *Joel* iii. 18.

In fine, *Zechariah*, saith, v. 9. of the Chapter last mentioned, *And the Lord shall be King over all the Earth: In that Day shall there be ONE Lord, and his Name ONE.*—This agrees with *Isaiab's* second Chapter, where we are told, that *the lofty Looks of Man shall be humbled, and the Haughtiness of Men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that Day.* i. e. worshipped in Spirit and in Truth by all Nations, in consequence of his arising to shake terribly the Earth, and destroying Idolatry both Root and Branch.

I have dwelt the longer on your first Quotation from *Isaiab* to prove the Church's perpetual Visibility, that I may be more concise on the other Texts, whereby you would induce us to look for that Visibility at *Rome*, and in the Nations joined in Communion with her.

Your next Proof is from the same Prophet, Chap. lxii. 6. *'I have set Watchmen upon thy Walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace Day nor Night.'*—According to your Construction of this Passage, the Church of *Christ*, by which we must always understand your Church, has never wanted, nor ever will want, a perpetual Succession of Orthodox Pastors and Teachers. For my part, I cannot find so much as one single Verse in this Chapter of *Isaiab*, that may with the least Colour of Reason

Reason, be applied in favour of the Bishop of *Rome* and the Nations in Communion with him; but the whole, in my humble Opinion, must be understood of some *future* State of the *Messiah's* Kingdom, of which, 'tis plain, *Jerusalem* is to be the Head: Otherwise it will be impossible to reconcile this Prophecy with the Rules of Common Sense and Propriety of Speech, which I presume the inspired Penmen never intended to deviate from, as their Writings were designed for the Instruction of the Unlearned, as well as the Learned, in all Ages and Nations; though I allow that, for wise Ends of Providence, the Holy Ghost has directed them to wrap up certain Predictions in Metaphors and Emblems; as may be instanced in the *Apocalypse*, which abounds with them more than any other Book, for a Reason which your Divines readily enough perceive, when they set themselves to comment upon it.

The Question is, what are we to understand by *Jerusalem* in the Passage just quoted? Upon a careful Examination of the Context, we cannot but declare for the literal Sense; because we find a Promise made to a *forsaken, desolate* Land, or City, to receive her into Favour again, to *marry her*, to *make her a Praise in the Earth, and a Crown of Glory in the Hands of the Lord*. Now, Sir, I presume you will hardly allow that *Rome*, or your Church, has ever been cast off and left desolate, and needs to be restored; for this would be a Contradiction to your own Principles: Therefore, I must take Leave to apply this Promise to the *Jewish* People and the Land of *Judea*, where the Gospel will be restored

stored in the latter Days, and from thence diffused all over the Earth, as hath been already shewn. And, for your farther Satisfaction, please to take this Observation, which you will find of great Use, whenever you think fit to exercise your Talents again in expounding and applying Prophecies, *viz.* That where the *literal* Sense presents us with no *Absurdity*, or is not *impossible* in the Nature of Things, nor *repugnant* to any other express, plain Declaration in Holy Writ, we ought to adopt that Sense, and not run the Risque of bewildering ourselves with such forced Constructions and allegorical Interpretations, as Men of a fertile Invention may put upon the plainest Passages in Scripture, when Interest or Prejudice engages them to maintain any favourite System.

After urging *Matth. v. 14.* which I pass by without Notice, for the Reason given in the Beginning of my Work, you bring us again to *Isaiab, Chap. lx. 11.* ‘*Thy Gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut Day nor Night, that Men may bring unto thee the Forces of the Gentiles, and that their Kings may be brought.*’ But here, I think, you speed no better than you have already done by meddling with this Prophet, as any unprejudiced Man may perceive by the following Verses of the same Chapter, which I shall briefly expound.

10. *And the Sons of Strangers shall build up thy Walls, and their Kings shall minister unto thee: For in my Wrath I smote thee, but in my Favour have I had Mercy on thee.*—What Place can this be, but *Jerusalem*, which God destroyed in his

Wrath? This ruined City is to be rebuilt, not by the Seed of *Jacob*, but by some *Christian* Potentates: Whence it seems that the *Jews*, after their Restoration, may not be *sole* Proprietors of *Jerusalem* and the Land of *Canaan*.

14. *The Sons also of them that afflicted thee, shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the Soles of thy Feet; and they shall call thee the City of the Lord, the Zion of the holy one of Israel.*—These I take to be the *Roman* and *Mahometan* Powers, who have in their Turns successively destroyed and kept desolate the Land of *Canaan*; and these shall repent and pay Homage to *Jerusalem* in her future glorious State.

15. *Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no Man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal Excellency, a Joy of many Generations.*—Plainly importing the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, the Rejection of the *Jews*, and their future Adoption.

18. *Violence shall no more be heard in thy Land, Wasting nor Destruction within thy Borders; but thou shalt call thy Walls Salvation, and thy Gates Praise.*—If this Verse and all the rest of the Chapter is to be understood, in a large Sense, of the *Christian* Church in general, I would fain know in what Age and in what Countries we must look for this peaceable, equitable, holy State which *Isaiab* is describing. Shall we go as high up as the Reign of *Constantine*, the first *Christian* Emperor? Alas! 'tis not to be found then, nor in the Reigns of his Children and their Successors. Shall we seek it in the half  
2 Christian,



Christian, half barbarian *Gothic* States? No; there is nothing to be seen amongst them but Monkery, Superstition, gross Idolatry, Violence and Bloodshed. Is it then to be found in our Days? Christendom is indeed less barbarous and ignorant than formerly; but God alone knows how much Ground the Devil may have lost or gained by the Change: To me it seems immaterial whether Men work out their Perdition rudely or politely. However, an Increase of Knowledge is a great Step towards introducing the glorious Scene exhibited in this Chapter of *Isaiab*, which I apprehend is coincident with the *binding* of *Satan*, *Revel. xx.* in whatever Sense we may take it; for till the Temptor is restrained and confined, the World cannot be freed from Violence, Wasting and Destruction, which *Jerusalem* has felt more severely than any other Place, and from which, 'tis plain, she in particular is to be delivered in the latter Days, and made the Head of the *Messiah's* Kingdom on Earth. And now, Sir, do you think there is any thing absurd or seemingly impossible in all this? You cannot but know that the Scripture abounds with Promises of Favours and Blessings to *Jerusalem*, most of which we are certain, from past Events, and the present Condition of that City and circumjacent Territory, have not yet been performed: But I believe you would be hard put to it to produce from all the Sacred Writings so much as *one* plain, express Promise of good Things to *Rome*. I will not affirm that, on the contrary, there are dreadful Judgments denounced against her; because you would readily reply, that I take that for granted which is contro-

verted ; *Babylon*, in St. *John's* Revelation, not signifying *Rome* in her Christian State, but something else, which, however, your infallible Expositors can make neither Head nor Tail of.

After having thus unadvisedly stumbled upon *Isaiab's* 60th Chapter, you urge, for the perpetual Visibility of the *Romish* Church, *Genesis* xxii. 18. ‘ *In thy Seed* (says God Almighty to ‘ *Abraham*) *shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed.*’—Very rightly brought in for the glorious Visibility of *Christ's* Church ; but, unluckily for your Cause, it proves too much. The Word *all*, in its common Use and Acceptation, implies at least a *Majority* : But hardly a *fifth* Part of the Globe has yet enjoy'd the Benefit of the Promise made to *Abraham*. Therefore, as God's Word does not go forth in vain, the *full* Performance of this Promise is yet to come.

Neither are you more lucky in producing the 8th Verse of the second Psalm to prop up your decaying Church : ‘ *Ask of me ; and I shall give thee the Heathen for thine Inheritance, and the uttermost Parts of the Earth for thy Possession.*’—When *David* wrote this, the People of God were one little Nation, distinct and separated from all the rest of the World, who are called the Heathen in the Scripture Stile : Now, lest it should be thought, that a *few* Kingdoms submitting to the *Messiah* was all that is meant by *giving him the Heathen for his Inheritance*, the Royal Prophet emphatically adds, *the uttermost Parts of the Earth* : Which agrees with

with the Idea *Daniel* gives us of *Christ's* Kingdom in his second and seventh Chapters. Why this Prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, we may partly gather from the second and third Verses of this Psalm; *The Kings of the Earth set themselves, and the Rulers take Counsel together, against the Lord, and against his Anointed, saying, Let us break their Bands asunder, and cast away their Cords from us.* This seems to tally pretty well with what is said in the *Apocalypse*, of the Kings of the Earth giving their Power and Authority to the *Beast*, and committing *Fornication* with the *mystical Babylon*, the *Mother of Harlots*; which, whether you will allow her to be *Rome* or not, must certainly be some Place or Country that professes Christianity in some Shape or other; for where there is no *Idolatry* mixed with the Worship of God, there cannot be said to be any *spiritual Fornication*; this Crime implying the Breach of a Covenant entered into with *God* to worship him *alone*.

The next Authority you produce is the 27th Verse of the 22d Psalm: *'All the Ends of the World shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the Kindreds of the Nations shall worship before thee.'*—Will they all acknowledge *Rome* to be the Seat of *Christ's* Vicar, and join in Communion with her; or have they all done it already? The latter Part of the Question even you yourself must resolve in the Negative, and the former I take Leave flatly to deny; because that in the Prophecies of the Church's great Splendor and Amplitude, there is generally something dropt about the Extirpation of *Idolatry*:

*Idolry*: The former cannot take place till the total Abolition of the latter. But you'll say this does not concern your Church, which is quite free from Idolatry; and so I must let it pass, as this is not a proper Place to enter into a Controversy about it.

Then you refer us again to *Isaiab*, Chap. xlix. 6. ‘*It is a light Thing that thou shouldst be my Servant to raise up the Tribes of Jacob— — I will also give thee for a Light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my Salvation unto the End of the Earth.*’——Why you left out these Words in the Middle of the Verse, and to restore the preserved of Israel, I can no other Way account for, than by supposing it proceeded from a Shyness to mention any thing that squints at the Restauration or Conversion of the *Jews*, lest it should make your Readers conclude, that these glorious Promises to the Church of *Christ* are to have their full Accomplishment at or about the Time of the Calling of the *Jews*; and consequently, that the *Roman Church* is too hafty or too presumptuous in arrogating them to herself.

To shew what bungling Work the greatest Doctors are capable of making, when they don't regard the Context, I subjoin a few more Verses of *Isaiab's* 49th Chapter.

14. *But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.*

15. *Can a Woman forget her sucking Child, that she should not have Compassion on the Son of her*  
her

*her Womb ? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.*

16. *Behold, I have graven thee on the Palms of my Hands, thy Walls are continually before me.*

19. *For thy waste and thy desolate Places, and the Land of thy Destruction shall even now be too narrow by Reason of the Inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away.—*By which Passages, as well as by the whole Scope of the Chapter, we plainly perceive a special Promise of great Blessings to some particular Land or People ; and if this be not the carnal Seed of *Israel* and the Land of *Judea*, it is impossible to make Sense of the Prophecy. Does not this last Verse in particular confirm what the same Prophet says, in his second Chapter, of all Nations resorting to *Jerusalem* ? If nothing more was meant here, than that the *Gentiles* should embrace the Gospel, with what Propriety could the Prophet say, that their *waste* and *desolate* Places, the Land of their *Destruction*, should be too narrow for the Inhabitants ? Not that we are to suppose all Nations will take up their Rest in the Land of *Israel*, after the Restoration of the Gospel there, but that there will be a great Concourse of People from all Parts, and that the Holy Land and neighbouring Countries will be more populous than other Parts of the Globe. I need say no more on this Head. Let every one read the whole Chapter attentively, and judge whether it agrees with the past or present State of the World in general, or is applicable to the

*Roma:*

Roman Church in particular. The *Harlot* may indeed usurp the Prerogatives and deck herself with the Ornaments of the *Bride* : But let her think of the dreadful Sentence pronounced against her that saith in her Heart, *I sit a Queen, and am no Widow, and shall see no Sorrow.* Revel. xviii. 7.

The next Thing I am to consider is the 1st, 2d and 3d Verses of *Isaiab's* 54th Chapter, which is another of your Proofs of the Church's perpetual Visibility. ‘ *Sing, O Barren, thou that dist not bear, break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with Child; for more are the Children of the desolate than the Children of the married Wife. Enlarge the Place of thy Tents, and let them stretch forth the Curtains of thine Habitations: Spare not, lengthen thy Cords and strengthen thy Stakes. For thou shalt break forth on the Right Hand and on the Left, and thy Seed shall inherit the Gentiles, &c.*’ You should have added, *and make the desolate Cities to be inhabited.* The Design of this Omission, I think, is too glaring to be concealed or denied. Being sensible it might occur to some of your Readers, that the Land of *Judea* and *Jerusalem* have lain in a desolate Condition these many Ages, you sily skip over what plainly imports a Restauration of the *Jews* to that Land, and a glorious and more extensive Estate of *Christ's* Church at, and for a long Time after, their Conversion.

But should we even allow this whole Chapter of *Isaiab* to be only a Description of the Glory of the Christian Church, abstracting from the Conversion

Conversion and Restoration of the *Jews*, you would still lose your Point ; it being impossible, without offering manifest Violence to the Text, to reconcile the Prophet's Expressions with the History of that Church whereof *Rome* has been the Head upwards of a thousand Years, or 1700 as her Advocates maintain.

*Isaiab* says v. 13, 14. *And all thy Children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the Peace of thy Children. In Righteousness shalt thou be established : Thou shalt be far from Oppression, for thou shalt not fear ; and from Terror, for it shall not come near thee.* Now, Sir, please to tell us in what Century this comfortable Prediction has been fulfilled ; or else shew that it is not inconsistent with the Veracity of an inspired Writer to exceed in romantick Flights and Hyperboles the most licentious Poets. If you fix your Foot in the three or four first Centuries, which are allowed to be the purest Ages of the Church, we may indeed find *Righteousness* enough ; but, at the same Time, we see *Oppression* abounding and her Children in *perpetual Fear* and *Terror*. If we come down lower, and confine ourselves within the Pale of that Church which is in Communion with and dependant on *Rome*, then shall we be at a Loss to know how *all her Children are taught of the Lord*, since so few of them ever read or hear his Word.—But I ask your Pardon for this hasty Reflection : I did not consider that the Pastors of your Church are infallible, and whatever they teach must consequently be as true and as edifying as the Scriptures.

Another Text which you think will serve to prove the constant Visibility of your Church, is *Malachi* i. 11. ‘ *From the Rising of the Sun even to the going down of the same, my Name shall be great among the Gentiles.*’—I am sensible you’ll have Cause to grow very angry, if I never grant you any thing: Therefore, to put you in good Humour for half a Minute, I let this Text pass (leaving the Reader to interpret it with the Help of what has been said already) because you might silence me with the *planting of Popery* in some of the remotest Parts of the *East* and *West* within these two or three last Centuries.

Having gone thus far, you seem to think yourself invulnerable, and with an Air of Triumph proceed as follows :

‘ But nothing can be more decisive for the perpetual Visibility of the Church of *Christ*, than two illustrious Testimonies of the Prophet *Jeremiah*, the one in the 31st Chapter, the other in the 33d.’—*N. B.* I don’t dispute that Visibility, in some Degree, in every Age since *Christ* was upon Earth: My chief Business is to shew that you do not understand the Prophecies of the Old Testament; and that if all the Doctors of your Church understand them no better, their Pretensions to Modesty and Candor must stand on the same Foundation as their Infallibility.

‘ In the 31st Chapter (say you) v. 31, &c. He gives us the following Account of the establishing of the new Law.’ [Here I must again



again remind you, that the *Jewish* Prophets, when they speak of this Establishment, generally have an Eye to that Period of Time when their own Nation is to partake of the Blessings of the new Covenant, and so describe the Church in her most flourishing and glorious State.]

‘ *Behold the Days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new Covenant with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah:*’—If the Prophet does not mean all the twelve Tribes, wheresoever they may be dispersed, I am at a Loss to tell why he speaks thus distinctly of the House of *Israel* and the House of *Judah*: Or, if it seem better to you, you may thereby understand the Union of the *Jews* with the *Gentiles*, though it will be but a lame Exposition. But let us follow you a Step farther, and we shall find you stumbling again.

‘ *Not according to the Covenant that I made with their Fathers, &c.*’ Here you break off the Verse, but, with your Leave, I must go through with it, because it is very essential to the Point in Dispute; *In the Day that I took them by the Hand, to bring them out of the Land of Egypt, which my Covenant they brake, although I was an Husband unto them, saith the Lord.* A Man must be very ignorant or extremely dull, not to perceive your drift in curtailing this Passage: It too plainly signifies the *Jewish* People; and so you were under a Necessity to skip over the most material Part of it, even the Circumstance of being brought out of *Egypt*. But supposing we must take it in the Sense which makes for your Purpose, i. e. the *spiritual* Seed of *Israel*, exclusively of the *carnal*; it will then

follow, that the *Christians* have broken the Covenant which was made for *them* with the *Children of Israel* when God led the *latter* out of the Land of *Egypt*; for I hope you cannot be so extravagant as to maintain, that the *Heathen* could break a Covenant that was not made with them: And how far the *Romish* Church in particular may be affected by such a Conclusion, I leave to be determined by every Man that understands the full Force and Meaning of the *first and second Commandments*.

The 33d Verse you give entire, viz. ‘ *But this shall be the Covenant that I will make with the House of Israel, After those Days, saith the Lord, I will put my Law in their inward Parts, and write it in their Hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my People.*’—But, for the Reasons just assigned, you might as well have curtailed this Passage also, or rather omitted it entirely; the Justice of which Remark is farther evinced by the 34th Verse, which you likewise quote, except these Words at the End of it, *for I will forgive their Iniquity, and I will remember their Sin no more.* The Design of this Omission is so apparent, that I need not spend much Time in exposing it. God says here by the Mouth of *Jeremiah*, *they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them*; which, I think, implies nothing less than a general Conversion of all the Tribes of *Israel*, taking the Words in the narrowest Sense, which is the literal and natural Construction, as is evident by the Context: But in a larger Sense, which, however, is a forced Construction, they may imply a general

neral *Reformation* of Christendom, and the Conversion of all those Nations that are involved in Mahometan Delusions or immersed in Pagan Darknes. Now, if in Contempt of common Sense and Propriety of Speech, this Promise must be restrained, for its full Performance, to the *spiritual* Seed of *Israel* only, *i. e.* such of the *Gentile* Nations as have from Time to Time embraced the Gospel, it will be impossible to fix upon any Epoch in which it can be said to have been in any tolerable Degree fulfilled ; unless, to solve the Difficulty, we run into this childish Way of arguing, *viz.* That all those who in any Age or Nation did receive the Gospel and live up to it, did all know the Lord from the least to the greatest of them ; or, in other Words, that every individual good Christian was a good Christian. It would be very strange if the House of *Israel* and the House of *Judab*, in the Prophecies of the *Old Testament*, should be taken for the *Italians*, *Germans*, *French*, *Spaniards*, &c. At this Rate of interpreting, every Commentator may make the *Jews Gentiles*, and the *Gentiles Jews*, according as it serves his Turn. But being brimful of Confidence in your Infalibility, you could not be aware of any such Objections, and so you lead on your Readers through the 35th, 36th and 37th Verses of the same Chapter ; for which I am very much obliged to you, as you have thereby given me a farther Advantage over you. In the 36th Verse we perceive that the Seed of *Israel* should *cease* from being a *Nation*, (that is, if I take it right, a collective independant Body, as they were of old) but not *for ever* : In Confirmation of

of which it follows in the next Verse, that *God will not cast them all off, for all that they have done.* Being perhaps sensible that the rest of the Chapter would quite undo all your Work, you wind up your Bottom with the 37th Verse, and are positive, ‘ that by the Seed of *Israel* in ‘ this Place, can be meant no other than the ‘ *spiritual* Seed of *Israel*, the Church of *Christ*.’ But what says *Jeremiah* in the very next Verse? He plainly tells us, that the City (*Jerusalem*) shall be rebuilt, and concludes the Chapter with a Promise, that *it shall not be pluckt up, nor thrown down any more for ever.* Now it is evident that this Prophecy cannot be referred to the second City and Temple which the *Jews* built after their Return from the *Babylonish* Captivity; because they have since ceased from being a Nation, being scattered all over the Earth; and that same City and Temple have been utterly destroyed: Consequently the Prophet must mean a *third* City, which is to be built, on the same Spot, under the *new* Covenant.

It is farther observable, that the 30th Chapter of *Jeremiah* is the same in Substance as the 31st, being a Kind of Prelude to it, and having a manifest Connection with it. The former ends thus: *Behold, the Whirlwind of the Lord goeth forth with Fury, a continuing Whirlwind, it shall fall with Pain on the Head of the Wicked. The fierce Anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have done it, and until he have performed the Intents of his Heart: In the latter Days ye shall consider it.* And as the 31st Chapter begins with these Words, *At the same Time, saith the*

*the*

*the Lord, will I be the God of all the Families of Israel, and they shall be my People; we must conclude, that the Prophecies in these two Chapters, in their obvious, natural Sense, are to be fulfilled in the latter Days; and that a Time of dreadful Confusion, Desolation and Woe in divers Nations, is to precede the Restoration and Conversion of the Jews, as may be gathered from the 7th Verse of the 30th Chapter; Alas, for that Day is great, so that none is like it: It is even the Time of Jacob's Trouble, but he shall be saved out of it. See Dan. xii. 1. for a Confirmation of the same.*

Due Attention being given to my Remarks on the 30th and 31st of *Jeremiab*, you'll allow it needless to follow you in the Authorities you produce from the 33d Chapter of the same Prophet in Behalf of your Church. What you quote from Dr. *Stillingfleet* and Mr. *Lesley* does not overthrow the main Point I am contending for, which is, That the glorious Descriptions of the *Messiah's* Kingdom, in the Prophets of the Old Testament, must be referred to that Period of Time when both *Jews* and *Gentiles* shall be all united in one Faith, and under one Head, *Christ*; and cannot, without offering manifest Violence to the whole Stream of Prophecy, be applied to the past nor the present State of the World, either in *Spirituals* or *Temporals*: Which I could farther illustrate by a Cloud of other Scripture Passages; but wanting both Leisure and Inclination to write a folio Volume, I chuse to keep as close to the Chapters, from which you extract your Proofs, as the Nature of the Controversy will admit.

Your

Your third Preliminary being out of the Latitude I chuse to fail in, I pass it by; as I likewise do the 4th and 5th Preliminaries, the Proofs of which are drawn from *human* Authorities. Neither shall I trouble my Head about your 6th Preliminary, seeing you have brought no Scripture Texts to support it, but such as may be urged by any Christian Societies or Congregations that firmly believe themselves to be the true Church of *Christ*: And as for the Writings of the *Fathers*, or any other *human* Compositions, antient or modern, I cannot make use of them in this Dispute, for the Reasons assigned at my setting out. The Circumstances and Talents of the Bulk of Mankind do not admit of being burthened with such a Heap of Authorities. If an Artisan wants to make a careful and diligent Inquiry after the true Church, must he sell his Tools to buy *Fathers*, *Schoolmen*, &c. and so starve himself and Family before he can find her out? The Bible alone is sufficient to guide any Man in this Inquiry; and if I can shew that you have blundered, or wilfully prevaricated, in the Use you make of the *Old Testament* to prove the Infallibility of the *Roman* Church, his own Sense will tell him how much Credit he may give to such Parts of your Book as I take no Notice of.

Your seventh Preliminary being also foreign to my Design, which is not to set up for judging who shall be saved, and who shall be damned, I dismiss it with recommending to your serious Consideration these Words of our blessed Saviour; *If any Man hear my Words, and believe*

not, I judge him not : For I came not to judge the World, but to save the World. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my Words, hath one that judgeth him : The Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last Day. *John* xii. 47, 48. By which we may perceive, that every one is to be judged according to the Measure of Knowledge he has Opportunities of receiving, and the Use he makes of it ; and that if the Word of Life does not reach his Ears, he is not to be judged by the same.

I come now to your Eighth Preliminary, which runs thus.

‘ All the Marks or Characters of the true  
 ‘ Church of *Christ*, set down in Scripture and  
 ‘ Fathers, agree to the Church in Communion  
 ‘ with *Rome*, and none of them all to *Pro-*  
 ‘ *testants.*’

In order to prove this, you ply us again with Texts from *Isaiab*, viz. Chap. xlix. 22, 23, liv. 3. lx. 3, 11, 12. which Places having been already taken Notice of, I have nothing farther to add here. Then, being puffed up with the lofty Descriptions of that sublime Prophet, which you imagine to be all applicable to your Church, you run on in this Strain. — ‘ It was the Church of *Christ* which, *Isaiab*  
 ‘ ii. and *Micah* iv. is called the *Mountain* of  
 ‘ the *House* of the *Lord*. It was this Church  
 ‘ that was signified by the *Stone* hew’d out the  
 ‘ *Mountain* without Hands, *Daniel* ii. 34, 35.  
 ‘ which grew up into a great *Mountain* and filled

• *the whole Earth*; which the Prophet interprets, v. 44, 45. of a *Kingdom that should subdue all other Kingdoms, and stand for ever.*  
 —Now, permit me to think, that that Society, of which the Bishop of *Rome* is the visible Head, and the Prince of Delusion the invisible one, (pardon the Expression; if it be too coarse in these polite Times, it was not deemed so formerly) cannot be that Church which *Isaiab* and *Micah* say shall be exalted above the Hills, and give Laws and Instructions to all Nations; but, on the contrary, seems rather to be the People that *shall cast their Idols to the Moles and to the Bats, to go into the Clefts of the Rocks, and into the Tops of the ragged Rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the Glory of his Majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the Earth.* As for the Application you make in this Place of *Daniel's* second Chapter, though I have sufficiently obviated it already, I may further observe, that there is not the least Shadow of Reason for it, unless you insist upon the bold Pushes made by the *Roman Pontiffs* to bring Kings and Emperors under their Yoke as well in temporal as spiritual Matters; and their vigorous Efforts to recover the *Holy Land* out of the Hands of the *Mahometans*; thus arrogantly attempting a Work reserved for the Professors of true Christianity in the latter Days. But the ill Success of those Encroachments upon the Civil Powers, the horrible Scenes of Confusion and Bloodshed they were productive of in Christendom, and the dismal Catastrophe of all the Expeditions made to the *Holy Land* at the Instigation of the *Popes*, plainly demonstrate by what Spirit they were actuated: The Fruit



was answerable to the Tree: They strove against the Decrees of Heaven, ran counter to the Order of God and Nature; broke through all Principles of Equity and Humanity, and did prosper accordingly.

However, being resolved to make those Passages of *Isaiab* and other Prophets fit your Church at any Rate, you proceed to enumerate the several Nations converted to *Popery* from the 5th to the 15th Century, and then give us a short, puffy Account of the Success of your Preachers, in these latter Ages, ‘ in reducing  
 ‘ an infinite Multitude of Unbelievers to the  
 ‘ Fold of *Christ*, the Catholic Church, in all  
 ‘ Parts of the infidel World ;’ which, after all, we need not much wonder at, even though we should allow that you don’t exaggerate on this Head. The Bulk of Mankind being very prone to *Idolatry* (the Sin which, I believe, the *Old Serpent* chiefly sets himself to propagate; as it is an Inlet to all other Corruptions) whatever Christian Society will stoop to humour Pagans in this Article, by retaining *Images*, and allowing a *Plurality* of *Gods*, or Objects of religious Worship, cannot fail of making many Profelytes: And this, in my Judgment, is the most natural Way of accounting for what Success your Church may have had in those Missions; since it is notorious that your itinerant Preachers neither can nor do pretend to the same Gifts as the Apostles and some of their Fellow-Labourers had: Yet you mightily boast of the Miracles wrought by some of your modern Apostles, which, I suppose, pass among your Flock for as authentic as any recorded in

Holy Writ. But as for those modern Miracles, I hope one may call them in question without being an Infidel.

The next Characteristick whereby you think we may discover the *Romish* Church to be the true Church of *Christ*, is *Antiquity*: And here, among other Texts produced to no Purpose, you give us *Jeremiah* vi. 16. ‘*Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the Ways, and see, and ask for the Old Paths, where is the good Way, and walk therein, and ye shall find Rest for your Souls.*’—Were it not for the Specimens you have already given of your excellent Knack at misapplying the Scripture, one could almost swear you only meant to banter us in quoting this Passage; *Jeremiah* being a very improper Authority to be produced in behalf of your Church. The constant Employment of this Prop'et, the Burthen of his Song, as I may express it, was to dehort the *Jews* from the new Paths, *Idolatry*, which I perceive they were then as obstinately and stupidly determined to walk in, as the most ignorant and stiff-neck'd of your Communion can possibly be. However foolish or enthusiastical it may seem to you and others, I cannot help observing, that *Jeremiah* and all the Prophets must have been (if your Church is in the Right) meer Bunglers in Divinity, perfect Dunces in Logic, that did not understand the pretty Art of reconciling the *Commandments* of God with the *Inventions* of Men: For, without mincing the Matter, or making use of any thing like School-Distinctions and Quibbles, those inspired Writers tell us, that to set up any *Images*, or to pay any religious

*ligious Worship to the Creature, is a forsaking of the Creator, and casting him behind our Back. Alas! what Pity it is that they were Strangers to these so serviceable Terms, Latria, Doulia, relative Honour, &c.—Here, Sir, I must bespeak your Patience, while I transcribe a few Passages of *Jeremiah* to support these Reflections.*

Chap. ii. 26. *As the Thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the House of Israel ashamed; they, their Kings, their Princes, and their Priests, and their Prophets,*

*27. Saying to a Stock, Thou art my Father, and to a Stone, Thou hast brought me forth: For they have turned their Back unto me, and not their Face: But in the Time of their Trouble they will say, Arise, and save us.*

*28. But where are thy Gods that thou hast made thee? Let them arise, if they can save thee in the Time of thy Trouble: For according to the Number of thy Cities are thy Gods, O Judah.*

Chap. viii. 8. *How do you say, We are wise, and the Law of the Lord is with us? Lo, certainly in vain made he it, the Pen of the Scribes is in vain.*

If, according to your arbitrary Way of interpreting Scripture, the House of *Israel* is to be taken for the Nations that constitute your Church, and *Mount Zion* and *Jerusalem* must stand for *Rome*, when the Text may convey any Ideas advantageous to your Cause, how are we  
to

to apply these Passages? You see how the Prophet charges his Nation with the most stupid Act of *Idolatry* Men can be capable of, and how wise those Idolaters were in their own Conceit! From whence I conjecture, that the *Jewish* Doctors in those Days were not at a Loss for sophistical Arguments to sling in the Teeth of the Lord's Prophets, in Vindication of their idolatrous Practices; it being otherwise impossible, at least for me, to conceive, how the Kings, the Princes, the Priests, the Scribes or Expounders of the Law, and the whole Nation, could persist in such Errors and Abominations as the Prophets so vehemently declaimed against, (and this too after they had partly seen and felt the Judgments denounced against Idolaters) unless they had had some Sort of Excuses, something like a Shadow of Reasoning, to alledge for the *Lawfulness*, or at least the *Inoffensiveness*, of those Practices: Nor do I doubt but that if their Reasons had been recorded and handed down to us, there would have appeared no material Difference between them and the Arguments urged by modern Doctors in Defence of *Image-worship* and *Invocation of Saints and Angels*.—The Rant or Flourish with which you close your Section of *Antiquity*, is not much amiss, considering it drops from the Pen of a Pastor of an infallible Church. 'Our Religion, you say, is the old Religion. 'Tis the old Religion of *England*; the very Walls can witness it. 'Tis the old Religion of all Christendom; all Kind of Monuments attest it; our very Enemies cannot deny it. *Protestancy* came into the World 1500 Years after *Christ*; therefore it came into the World 1500 Years

‘ Years too late to be the Religion of *Christ*.’  
 —But pray, Doctor, what is to be proved by this puffy Stuff? Truly, nothing at all for your Purpose. You may indeed prove by the Walls and Monuments of *Rome* and other Places, that *Paganism* was the *old* Religion of those Countries: But would any well-informed Christian infer from thence (tho’ it would be a conclusive Argument with an Idolater) that *Paganism* is the true Religion? Upon the same Grounds the *Jewish* Doctors in *Jeremiah’s* Time might have argued, that their Way of worshipping God being older than that which *Moses* taught their Fathers, it must therefore be right: And so, at this Rate, Men of corrupt Hearts may explain away the clearest Precepts in Holy Writ.

The fourth Section of the eighth Preliminary, treating of *Apostolical Succession*, which is the fourth Mark whereby you discover the Church of *Rome* to be the Church of *Christ*, I shall say but little to. According to my Conceptions, the *Successors* of the Apostles are those that teach the same Doctrines which the Apostles taught, and do Honour to their Profession by their Morals; and whether their Numbers be great or small, spread all over the World, or confined to the narrow Limits of one Nation; whether they bear Rule in the Earth, or sit mourning in the Wilderness, waiting for a Deliverance, they alone constitute the true Church of *Christ*. In this Inquiry let every Man that has but little Leisure take the Bible for his Guide: This will tell him that worshipping *Images*, and setting up more than one Mediator  
 between

between God and Man, is *Idolatry*; that an arbitrary, persecuting Spirit, is of the Devil, who is stiled a Murderer from the Beginning. But if this does not satisfy him, let him, if he has Time and Money to spare, dip into History, and read the Lives of the *Popes* in particular; and then see, in a long List of about two hundred and fifty Bishops of *Rome*, how many *Successors* of the *Apostles* he can pick out of it.

The remaining Sections of this your eighth and last Preliminary, I skip over, my chief Business being only with such of your Scripture Proofs as I apprehend are least understood; and so I take in Hand the second Section in the Body of your Work, the Title of which is,

‘ That the Church of *Christ*, in her Councils and Pastors, is the Judge of all Controversies of Religion, and that all Christians are obliged to acquiesce to her Decisions.’

This I may partly grant, and yet without giving you any Advantage over me: For, upon the Principles of your Divines, it is requisite, in order to render a general Council infallible, that the Members of it meet together *duly qualified*, and *rightly prepared*, for interpreting the Scripture in any controverted Point; and then there is no Doubt but that the *Holy Ghost* assists those who diligently and sincerely seek him in Purity of Heart: As, on the other Hand, the Spirit of Error, the *Father of Lies*, never fails to lead Men astray that are actuated on those solemn and weighty Occasions, by worldly, carnal Motives, as Pride, Ambition, Covetousness,

ness, &c. To mention no other than your last *general Council*, can any Man of Common Sense believe that the *Holy Ghost* had any Direction or Influence at *Trent*? If he had, the Members of that Council must have been very dull or obdurate, to spend so many Years in deciding Matters which an Assembly of wise, honest Men might have determined in as few Weeks.— However, to make good your Proposition, you direct us, in the first Place, to the second Epistle of *Peter*, Chap. iii. 16. which I thus expound for you, tho', pursuant to my Plan, I ought to pass it by, as it belongs to the *New Testament*: Seeing then that the Scriptures are so hard to be understood, and that *St. Peter*, whose Successor the Bishop of *Rome* is, could spy out *dark Passages* in *St. Paul's* Epistles; we must therefore rely *entirely* on the Pope and the Bishops in Communion with him, for the Interpretation of the Bible. The other Texts offered in Support of this Section I may also pass over unnoticed, as they are not more to your Purpose than that from *St. Peter*, and may be urged by any Society resolved to exercise *Dominion* over People's Faith: And so I hasten to your third Section, the Head or Title of which runs thus:

‘ That the Church of *Christ*, which, as we  
 ‘ have seen in the foregoing Section, is by di-  
 ‘ vine Appointment the Judge of all our Con-  
 ‘ troversies of Religion, is by divine Promise  
 ‘ infallible in the Exercise of this Judgment.’

The Church of *Christ*, as I take it, must be  
 the whole Body of the Faithful, no matter  
 H where

where situated, and not the *Clergy* only; and, as such, is undoubtedly directed by the Spirit of God; yet *all* the Faithful cannot be Judges of Controversies, tho' they are sufficiently qualified to judge of what is necessary for Salvation; nor do we find by Experience, that the most learned and pious Men are more exempt from Errors in religious Speculations than in other Things. However, if the Divines of your Church could but forbear dipping into the prophetic Writings for Proofs of her Infallibility, one might be more apt to think her infallible, as a Fool, by holding his Tongue, may sometimes be taken for a wise Man. But let us see how you make out the *Roman Church's* Claim to this unerring Judgment in Controversies of Religion.

Your first Proof is taken from *Isaiab's* 59th Chapter, V. 20, 21. 'The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and to them that turn from Transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord: As for me, this is my Covenant with them, saith the Lord; my Spirit that is upon thee, and my Words which I have put in thy Mouth, shall not depart out of thy Mouth, nor out of the Mouth of thy Seed, nor out of the Mouth of thy Seed's Seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.'— Well enough urged, in one Sense, for the perpetual abiding of the *Holy Ghost* with the Faithful or the Church of *Christ*, yet no Proof that *Rome* has all along had, and still has the Spirit of Truth. But in order to come at the true Sense of these two Verses, we should carefully peruse the whole Chapter, without the least Prejudice for or against any Church now extant;



tant; and then we may perceive the Prophet complains of an universal Depravity and Departure from Truth and Righteousness: At V. 16, 17, 18. there being no Man left to set Things to Rights, we see God arising to take Vengeance on all his Enemies; the Consequence of which, as appears by the next Verse, is, that the Lord shall be feared from one End of the Earth unto the other; which has never yet been the Case with this World, or else all Histories must be false. Then, upon the overthrow of *the Enemy that shall come in like a Flood*, follows the Conversion of the *Jews*, who are enlighten'd by the *Spirit* of God, and have a Promise of his continuing with them from thenceforth for ever. This is farther illustrated by the next Chapter of *Isaiab*, which sets forth the Glory and great Extent of the *Messiah's* Kingdom, upon the Calling in of the *Jews*, and *Jerusalem's* becoming the Head of his Church. What that *Enemy*, mentioned in the 19th Verse of Chap. 59, may be, I will not take upon me to determine; but I suppose that the Gospel cannot be restored at *Jerusalem*, nor the *Jews* settled again in the Land of *Canaan*, 'till the *Ottoman* Power be broken: Nor is it likely that the Race of *Israel* will embrace Christianity, 'till they see Christendom purged from *Idolatry*, and Christians at Unity among themselves. And how *Idolatry* may be totally eradicated, 'till that particular Place, which has been the chief Promoter and main Support of it, is destroyed, I cannot well comprehend; because St. *John* is very clear in regard to the Destruction of a *great Whore that sitteth upon many Waters, a great City that reigneth over the*

*the Kings of the Earth.* See *Revel.* xvii. and xviii.

As for the Notion on which you lay so much Stress, Page 83, and are pleased to call the common Notion of Christians, *viz.* ‘ that the Conversion of the *Jews* shall not be till near the End of the World,’ I prove the Fallacy of it as follows.

In the first Place I refer you to the three last Verses of *Jeremiah's* 31st Chapter, where the Prophet, after speaking of the Establishment of the *new* Covenant with the *Jewish* Nation in particular, foretells the rebuilding of *Jerusalem*, and concludes with this special Promise, *It shall not be pluckt up nor thrown down any more for ever.* Hence it is evident there must be a long Space of Time between this Event and the End of the World.

For a second Proof that your common Notion above mentioned is false and ridiculous, please to consult the 65th Chapter of *Isaiab*, from v. 16 to the End, which, I think, puts it quite out of Dispute that the *Jews* shall be grafted into the Christian Church long before the End of the World. For the Benefit of your Flock, who labour under a Famine of the Word of God, I transcribe a few Passages of that Chapter, annexing a brief Exposition, in the Light the Matter appears to me, being ever ready to correct my Notions upon Conviction of their being erroneous.

17. *For behold, I create new Heavens, and a new Earth: And the former shall not be remembered, nor come into Mind.*—The State of this World shall be so altered, that, figuratively speaking, it may be called a new Creation. By Heaven and Earth the *Jewish* Prophets commonly mean only the World in which we live; at least the Context urges us to take it here in this Sense: In confirmation of which I may produce the *Psalmist*, who saith, that God shall send forth his Spirit to renew the Face of the Earth.

18. *But be you glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: For behold, I create Jerusalem a Rejoicing, and her People a Joy.*—Whether you take this *Jerusalem* for the whole Christian Church, or only for a *new* City built on the same Spot where the *Old* one stood, is not material to the main Point, which is, that there shall be a glorious and comfortable Change. This cannot be disputed; though whatever Blessings the World in general may receive, does not exclude a particular Pre-eminence reserved for *Jerusalem*.

19. *And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my People; and the Voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the Voice of crying.*—The old City, having been remarkably distinguished for God's heavy Judgments and Plagues, the Prophet therefore notes, for the Comfort of the Inhabitants of the new City, that it shall be free from all Afflictions: The Days of her Mourning are then ended, as he says, Chap. 60. v. 29.

20. *There shall be no more thence an Infant of Days, nor an old Man that hath not filled his Days: For the Child shall die an hundred Years old, but the Sinner being an hundred Years old, shall be accursed.*—This may be best explained by the 4th and 5th Verses of Zechariah's 8th Chapter.

21, 22. *And they shall build Houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant Vineyards, and eat the Fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: For as the Days of a Tree are the Days of my People, and mine Elect shall long enjoy the Work of their Hands.*—Signifying, if not a longer Life, at least that every body shall quietly enjoy the Fruits of their Labour: There is then no more Violence, Wasting, nor Destruction, (*Isaiab* lx. 18.) but all sit down securely under their Vine and their Fig-tree, (*Isaiab* ii. and *Micah* iv.) the Swords being beaten into Plough-shares, and the Spears into Pruning-hooks, the Nations learning War no more. All the Weapons of War are burnt, as *Ezekiel* expresses it, Chap. 39, and Peace is established in the Earth; which coincides with the Restoration of the *Jews* and the *Fullness* of the *Gentiles*, and invincibly proves the Weakness and Ignorance of those who imagine that the Race of *Israel* will not be converted till near the End of the World, if by the *End* they mean the *general Conflagration*.

Let us now examine the second Proof of your third Section, which you take from *Isaiab* ix. 6, 7.

€ For

‘ For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is  
 ‘ given, and the Government shall be upon his  
 ‘ Shoulder: And his Name shall be called Won-  
 ‘ derful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the ever-  
 ‘ lasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the  
 ‘ Encrease of his Government and Peace there shall  
 ‘ be no End, upon the Throne of David and upon  
 ‘ his Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with  
 ‘ Judgment and with Justice, from henceforth  
 ‘ even for ever. The Zeal of the Lord of Hosts  
 ‘ will perform this.

Here we have indeed a comfortable and sub-  
 lime Idea of what the *Messiah's* Kingdom shall  
 be; but I cannot allow this Prophecy to have  
 been yet fulfilled in all Points. When inspired  
 Men speak of the Throne of *David*, must we  
 understand the capital City of the *Fourth* Mo-  
 narchy? If such arbitrary Interpretations were  
 allowable, the sacred Volumes, which were  
 designed to bring Mankind to Peace, Unity  
 and Concord in this World, and to eternal  
 Happiness hereafter, would be productive of a  
 worse than *Babel Confusion*: At this Rate we  
 might allegorize the whole Bible into rank  
 Nonsense or Blasphemy.

Your third Proof is from *Isaiah xxxv. 4, 5,*  
*&c.* ‘ Behold your God will come — — — he  
 ‘ will come and save you.’ [The Prophet says,  
 that God will come with *Vengeance*; but why  
 you declined mentioning that Circumstance of  
 his coming, is best known to yourself.] ‘ Then  
 ‘ the Eyes of the Blind shall be opened, &c. And  
 ‘ a Highway shall be there, and it shall be called  
 ‘ the

‘ *the Way of Holiness ; the Unclean shall not pass over it, the Wayfaring Men, tho’ Fools, shall not err therein.*’—Therefore, according to your Method of expounding the Scriptures, believe and practise whatever the *Roman Church* dictates, and ye cannot miss the Way to Heaven.

But, in order to understand the 35th of *Isaiab*, we must give a little Attention to the preceding Chapter. In these two Chapters I think we have, not the *Planting* of the Church of *Christ*, but its *Restoration*, the Way to which is paved by God’s signal Vengeance on all who would not have him to reign over them: And this, you know, was not done in the primitive Times of Christianity, nor in any Age since. The following Passages from the 34th Chapter make it plainer than any thing I can say.

1. *Come near, ye Nations, to hear, and hearken ye People : Let the Earth hear, and all that is therein ; the World, and all Things that come forth of it.*

2. *For the Indignation of the Lord is upon all Nations, and his Fury upon all their Armies : He hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the Slaughter.*

8. *For it is the Day of the Lord’s Vengeance, and the Year of Recompences for the Controversy of Zion.*

The Scripture being best expounded by Scripture, such as want farther Light into those Passages

sages may consult *Isaiab* ii. *Jer.* xxv. *Ezek.* xxxviii and xxxix. *Micab* iv. *Revel.* xix. As for the Remainder of *Isaiab*'s 34th Chapter, it may be partly explained by the 18th of the *Apocalypse*, where St. *John* borrows some of that Prophet's Expressions in denouncing God's Judgments against modern *Babylon*. This signal Vengeance being executed, then we see, in *Isaiab* xxxv. the peaceable and glorious Estate of the Church, with a particular respect to *Jerusalem*, as the following Verses evince.

9. *No Lion shall be found there, nor any ravenous Beast shall go up thereon; it shall not be found there: But the redeemed of the Lord shall walk there.*—Alluding perhaps, by Way of Contrast, (if such an Interpretation be warrantable) to that See which pretends to be the Seat of *Christ*'s Vicar, where many a Lion and ravenous Beast has been found, such as *Gregory* vii. *Boniface* viii. &c. &c.

10. *And the ransom'd of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with Songs and everlasting Joy upon their Heads: They shall obtain Joy and Gladness, and Sorrow and Sighing shall fly away.*

Your 4th and 5th Proofs being taken out of *Isaiab*'s 54th and 60th Chapters, they require no Notice from me in this Place, as I have already dispatched you on the Subject of those two Chapters. Proceed we then to your sixth Proof, which is from *Ezek.* xxxvii. 24, 26.

‘ *David my Servant* (that is *Christ*, who is of  
 ‘ the House of *David*) *shall be King over them* ;  
 ‘ and they shall all have one *Shepherd* : They shall  
 ‘ also walk in my *Judgments*, and observe my  
 ‘ *Statutes*, and do them — — — *Moreover*, I  
 ‘ will make a *Covenant of Peace* with them ; it  
 ‘ shall be an everlasting *Covenant* with them :  
 ‘ And I will place them, and multiply them,  
 ‘ and will set my *Sanctuary* in the *Midst* of them  
 ‘ for evermore.’ This, you say, not only im-  
 plies the perpetual *Visibility* of the Church, but  
 also her *Infallibility* : But, in my Judgment,  
 your Way of reasoning seems to imply, that  
 Men must be great Fools, or something worse,  
 before they can set up for *Infallibility*. Any  
 honest, sensible Man may see, in this Chapter  
 of *Ezekiel*, a plain, express Promise to bring  
 the whole House of *Israel* to the Knowledge of  
*Christ* ; and that from the Accomplishment of  
 this Promise we must date the glorious and  
 triumphant Estate of the Church on Earth.  
 Nay, the very Verse between the two which  
 you thought would answer your End, puts it  
 quite out of Dispute, that the Prophet means  
 a general Return of the Tribes of *Israel*  
 to their own Land, upon their embracing the  
 Gospel : And their being united with the *Gen-  
 tiles*, under one Head, *Christ*, may be gathered  
 from the whole Scope of the Chapter. You  
 yourself, Sir, seem to have been sensible that  
 the 25th Verse is sufficient to overthrow your  
 Inferences, otherwise you had not skipt over it :  
 But suffer me to tell you, that its obvious  
 Connection with those between which it lies,  
 intitled it to a Place in your Work. How-  
 ever, I am willing to excuse the Omission ; the  
 Badness



Badness of the Cause might not admit of a more candid Way of proceeding : And besides, when Men have once attained to Infallibility, they need not take much Care how they reason, nor how they apply the Scripture. Hence it is that we are to take *Mount Zion* and *Jerusalem* for *Rome*, and the Land of *Canaan* for *St. Peter's Patrimony* or the *Pope's Territories*. If you think my Reflections too harsh, please to accept of the following Verses in the *same* Chapter of *Ezekiel*, as an Excuse for it.

21. *Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will take the Children of Israel from among the Heathen whither they be gone, and will gather them on every Side, and bring them into their own Land.*—So evidently applicable to the *Jews* alone, that the most subtil Sophister cannot warp it to any other Sense.

22. *And I will make them one Nation in the Land upon the Mountains of Israel, and one King shall be King to them all : And they shall be no more two Nations, neither shall they be divided into two Kingdoms any more at all.*—Before the *Babylonish* Captivity they formed two distinct Sovereignties, the Kingdom of *Judah* and that of *Israel* : But after their *last* Restoration (the Return from *Babylon* being out of the Question here) there will be no such Division ; neither will the chief Cause of it, *Idolatry*, be ever found amongst them, as we see in the next Verse.

23. *Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their Idols, nor with their detestable Things, nor with any of their Transgressions ; But I will*

*Save them out of all their dwelling Places, wherein they have sin'd, and will cleanse them : So shall they be my People, and I will be their God.*

25. *And they shall dwell in the Land that I have given unto Jacob my Servant, wherein your Fathers have dwelt, and they shall dwell therein, even they and their Children, and their Children's Children for ever, and my Servant David shall be their Prince for ever.*—This David being understood, both by *Christians* and *Jews*, to be the *Messiah*, I need only remind you here of the ridiculous Notion, that the Restoration of the latter will not be till near the End of the World : Whereas any Man may see that they and their Posterity, for many Generations, are to dwell in that very Land which *Moses* led them to, and *Joshua* put them in Possession of.

28. *And the Heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my Sanctuary shall be in the Midst of them for evermore.*

Such as may want to be better satisfied that you have grossly misapplied the 24th and 26th Verses of *Ezekiel's* 37th Chapter, need but study the 36th Chapter, from which I extract only two Passages here, to excite them to it.

10. *And I will multiply Men upon you, all the House of Israel, even all of it, and the Cities shall be inhabited, and the Wastes shall be built.*

11. *And I will multiply upon you Man and Beast, and they shall encrease and bring Fruit, and I will settle you after your old Estates, and will*

*do better unto you than at your Beginnings, and ye shall know that I am the Lord.*

Having thus turned against you all the Passages of the *Old Testament* which you bring as Proofs that your Communion must needs be the true Church of *Christ*, I leave your Proofs from the *New Testament*, as premised at my setting out, to be taken into Consideration by such as have more Leisure, and are better qualified than I am for a fuller and more accurate Refutation of your Work; which they will find an easy Task, provided they don't flight the Foundation I have built upon: And this I would recommend to the *English* Clergy in particular, who, if I conjecture right, are in more Danger of a Restoration of *Poper*y, than of the Establishment of *Judaism*, which some People apprehend will be the Fruits of a late Act of Parliament, if not speedily repealed.

I must not take my Leave of you without making some Apology for the Tartness with which I have treated you. Be pleased, then, to understand, that tho' I have made Choice of the Epistolary Stile on this Occasion, you need not take in Dudgeon any of my Reflections, even where I detect you in blundering or prevaricating. I acknowledge that no Doctor of your Party could have better maintained the pretended Infallibility of the *Roman* Church; consequently, your Mistakes, whether wilful or not, are chargeable upon the whole Body that lays claim to an unerring Authority in Matters of Faith; and you may stand acquitted of Ignorance or Disingenuity, as you have only collected and  
delivered

delivered the Sentiments and Arguments of a Society whom you believe infallible.

As for this Performance of mine, I have not Vanity enough to think it faultless. I am sensible some Criticks will say that the Subject is treated too superficially : In answer to which I shall only observe, that the most voluminous Work, were it as well connected, and as plain as mathematical Demonstrations, would make no Impression on the Slothful, the Proud, the Covetous, &c. Brevity is what I have endeavoured at, being persuaded that if what I have done is right in the main, others will be excited to improve upon it ; but if wrong, then the shorter the better : It will hurt no Man's Pocket, nor rob him of above an Hour, if he thinks it not worth a second Reading. Of *human* Compositions we can only say, that they are the *best* which have the *fewest* Faults ; and whether mine be *good* or *bad*, that you may make a *proper* Use of it, is the unfeigned Wish of

*Your humble Servant,*

A COSMOPOLITE.





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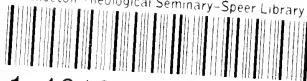


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