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T R E A T I S E  
O F  
Human Reason.

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By *M. CLIFFORD*,  
Sometime Master of the *Charter-House*.

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The Third EDITION.

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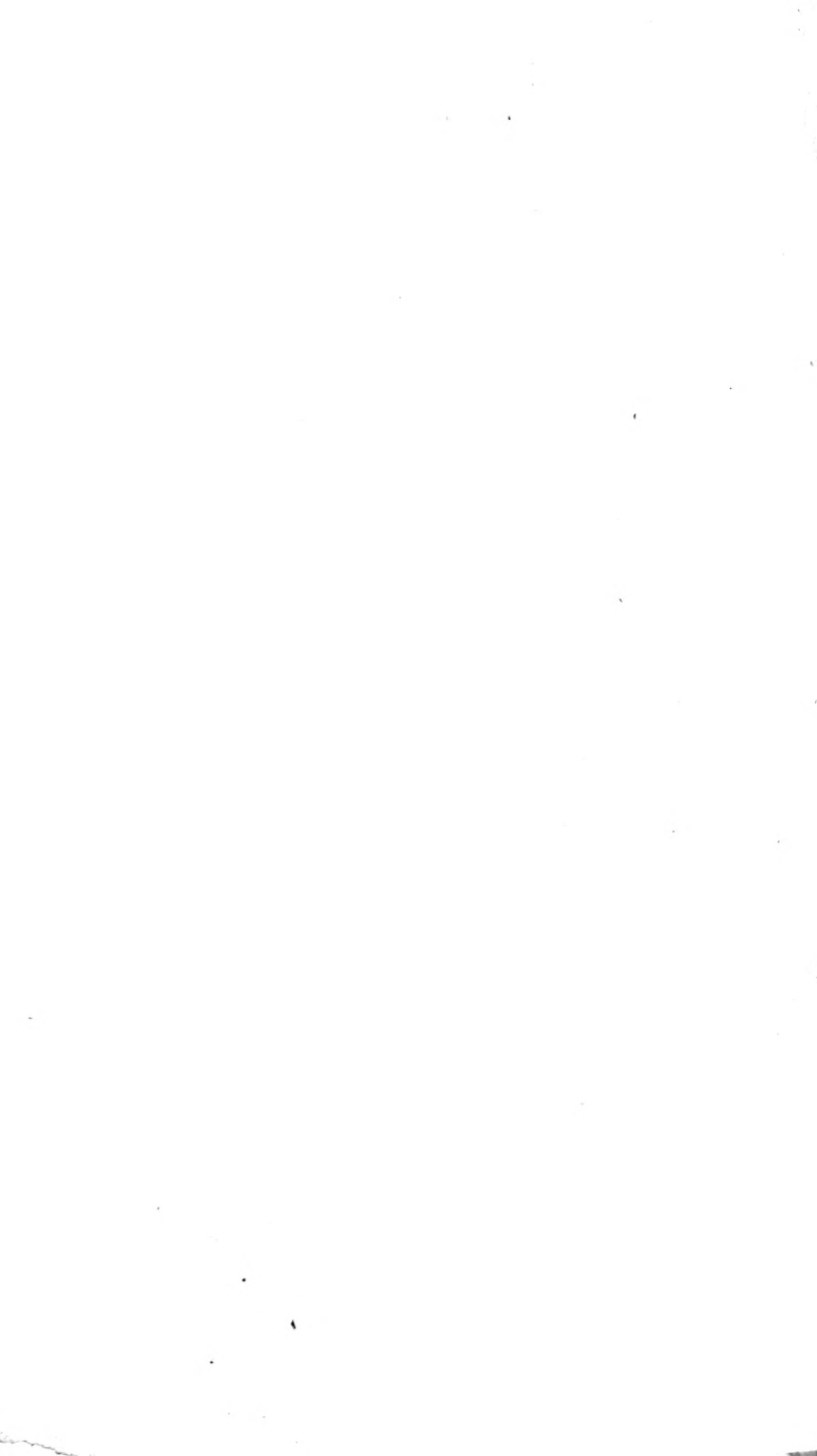
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M.DCC.XXXVI.







A

## TREATISE

ON

## Human Reason.



BEING resolv'd, according to the Duty of every private Person, to make a Search into the Nature and Quality of my Religion; and according to my Interest in Human Society, to communicate the Effects of that Search to others, if I shall believe it profitable for them: I am in the first Place to consider of the Choice of some Guide, for so long and so dangerous a Journey, where I

It will sometimes meet with no Tract or Path at all, and sometimes with so many, and these so contrary in the Appearance of their first Entry, that the Variety will confound me more than the Want; especially there being so many Mist'ns ca't before me, by the Errors and Deceits of others, that one had great Need of a better Light than is left us by the Gift of our First Forefather. And this Consideration, after a long and serious Debate thereof, will give no other Guide to me but my own *Reason*, which if it take such Directions, as it ought and may do, before it sets forth, and pursue those Directions with Care and Constancy, though it may possibly lead me into Errors, yet will bring me at last even through them, to the proposed End of my Journey, which is *Happiness*.

I am not ignorant of the many Enemies I must meet with in this Doctrin, but am fortified against them with the Thought that they who dispute most against the Power and Privileges of *Human Reason*, do it because their own Reason persuades them to that Belief; and so whether the Victory be o' mine, or o' their Side, are equally defeated. They seek to terrify us with the Example of many excellent Wits, who, they say, by following this *Janis fatans* (for so they call the only *North-Star* which God has given us for the right steering of our Course) have fallen into wild and

and ridiculous Opinions and increased the Catalogue of Heresies to so vast a Number: But truly these Men either followed not their own Reason, but made it follow their Will; or hood-wink'd it first by Interest and Prejudice, and then led it shew them the Way; or were wanting in those necessary Diligences which are required for so doubtful and dangerous a Passage: Or if without the Commission of any of these Faults, the Weakness of their Understanding has deceiv'd them, the Error is neither hurtful to themselves, nor would be to others, if this Doctrine of governing ourselves from within, and not by Example, were establish'd. Whereas on the contrary Side, the submitting our Judgments to Authority, or any Thing else whatsoever, gives Universality and Perpetuity to every Error.

They fall naturally from hence into the large Common-Place of the Frailty, Uncertainty, and Disproportion of our Understanding to divine and celestial Notions, and are eloquent herein with much of Truth. For when we say that every Man's Soul hath in itself as much Light as is requisite for our Travel towards Heaven, we do not therefore assume, that it is as clear as those Spirits which are confessed to be all a Flame. And for the Unaptness of it to receive the Impression of Spiritual Truths; though the *What* and the *How*

*How* of Religious Myſteries be out of Sight, yet that they are ſuch, is ſufficiently viſible. Eſpecially if we uſe thoſe Helps which God has prepared for us to that Purpoſe, and thoſe our Reaſon will dictate to herſelf that ſhe is to uſe. The ordinary Saying of *Democritus*, that *Truth lies in the Bottom of a deep Well*, is very applicable to this Matter: That is, that we muſt ſeek it in the Center and Heart of ourſelves, and not look up into Heaven firſt and immediately for it; becauſe by this Means we ſhall ſee Heaven in the Bottom of the Well, though we could not the Well in the Top of Heaven.

But the chief and moſt tragical Argument againſt us is, that the Allowance of this Liberty to particular Mens Diſcourſes, would beget as many Religions as there are ſeveral Perſons; and conſequently draw after it ſuch Diſorder and Confuſion, as is inconſiſtent not only with the Quiet, but the very Being of Human Society. This is a weighty and grievous Accuſation. and if our Reaſon be convinced of ſo harmful a Madneſs, it will be found neceſſary to keep it chain'd and fetter'd, and as much in the Dark as may be. But I hope it will acquit itſelf. Who knows not that the Philoſophy of the Ancients ſeparated itſelf into ſundry Parties; the *Pythagorians*, the *Peripateticks*, the *Stoicks*, the *Scepticks*, the *Academicks*, (and theſe of three

three Sorts) the *Epicureans*, the *Cynicks*, with many others; and these differ'd not in slight and verbal Controversies, but in the last Ends of Human Actions, in the Nature of Good and Evil, nay of God himself; whether Man worked freely or were compelled by an inevitable Necessity? Whether the Soul were subject to Corruption, or immaterial and immortal? Whether the World had a Beginning, or had endured from all Eternity? Whether the Gods took upon them the Government of Things below, or sat as idle themselves in Heaven as their Images were here on Earth? With divers other Questions of equal Consequence. These Opinions divided the Philosophers, and the Philosophers the People; nor were there fewer Sects in *Athens*, than are now in *Amsterdam* or *London*. And yet this Variety of Opinion neither begat any Civil War in *Greece*, neither did the *Peripateticks* (when both by the Strength of their Arguments and their Emperor, that Party was become the greatest) set up any Inquisition, or High Commission or Committee against the Rest; but every Man enjoyed his Opinion with more Safety and Freedom, than either his Goods or Wife. The same like wise happened in the Religions of the Ancients; for though several Cities profess'd the Worship of several Deities, yet we read not of any War which hath sprung from that Diversity. The Poets have made  
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the Gods enter into Factions and Quarrels for Commonwealths, but Commonwealths never did the same for their Gods. This Quiet and Happines, which (to the Shame and Scandal of the Christian Name) was enjoyed Four Thousand Years among the Heathen, continued so long and so uninterrupted, because every Man, following the Rules of his own Judgment, allowed that Liberty to others, which he found so necessary for himself. And even the *Sticks* themselves, who enslaved the Will, durst never attempt this Violence to the Understanding.

From whence then shall we say it proceeds, that since the Reformation open'd a Way to this Freedom of Conscience, so much Blood and Confusion and almost Desolation, has followed in all those Countries which admitted it? *Germany*, *France*, the *Low-Countries*, and *Scotland* are sufficient Witnesses of this; and I could wish that miserable *England* had not been added to the Number of these sad Example. But certainly, since this Liberty has been so many Ages exercised, without drawing after it those Inconveniencies which we now so justly complain of, they must be attributed either wholly to some other Cause, or to the Conjunction of some other Accidents to it, which have changed the Nature and Condition thereof: And that (having examined all Particulars which touch upon this

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Matter) I can find to be no other, than the strange and uncharitable Pride of those Men, who having with just Cause vindicated their own Reason from the Tyranny of unnecessary Bonds, endeavour nevertheless to lay them upon others; so that not the Use of such Liberty, but the appropriating of it to ourselves only, is the true, and, I think, the sole Fountain of these Disorders: For there cannot certainly in the World be found out, so mild and so peaceable a Doctrine, as that which permits a Difference in Beliefs; for what Occasion can any Man take to begin a Quarrel, when both he himself is suffered quietly to enjoy his own Opinion, and his own Opinion is this, that he ought to suffer others to do the same. But if once Men entertain an Imagination, that every Thing is wicked and damnable which complies not with their own Sense, and that in this vast Latitude of Probabilities (which is in all Kind of Disquisitions, but especially those of Religion, they being most obscure and most indemonstrable) there is none can lead one to Salvation, but the Path wherein he treads himself; we may see the evident and necessary Consequence of eternal Troubles and Confusion. For not only publick Charity will persuade us to force Men to that wherein consists their everlasting Happiness, or Calamity, if by no other Means we can induce Men to it (as without Injury we bind the Hands of a Man that would kill

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himself) but also our private Interest, and that particular Care, which every Man owes to his own Posterity, which, without Suppression of all Heresies, must run the Hazard of eternal Punishments, obliges us, by all Means, to endeavour the Extirpation of those Weeds out of the Fields of our Neighbours, which would else so quickly overgrow our own : Whereas if we had either more of Charity to others, to believe some Errors (the inseparable Companions of Human Nature) ought not to exclude Men from the Communion of the present Church, and the Hope of the future ; or less of Self Flattery to think, that all Men grope in the Dark that light not their Candle at ours, we could not be so cruel in Persecution of those Faults to which God himself is so merciful, and from which we ourselves are not exempt. I shall therefore conclude this Argument with a confident Assertion, That all the Miseries which have followed the Variety of Opinions since the Reformation, have proceeded entirely from these two Mistakes, The tying *Infallibility* to whatsoever we think Truth, and *Damnation* to whatsoever we think Error.

Another Absurdity this Doctrine is accused of, that if we guide ourselves wholly by the Light of Reason, we shall not only every one differ from every Body else, but every one frequently from himself, changing Religion almost



almost as often as our Habits, driven a'out perpetually by every Wind, and in all Probability dash'd by some one at last against a Rock ; now a *Papist*, Tomorrow a *Lutheran*, next a *Calvinist* ; and so, like the *Heathen*, dedicate every Day in the Week to a several Deity. I must confess, Inconstancy is one of the greatest Weaknesses of the weakest Sex, and much less to be endured in Man, especially in that most weighty Affair of his whole Life, the Service of God ; but I cannot conceive, that the Fear of this Scandal obliges us to a blind and inalterable Obedience of those Laws and Opinions, which either the Fate of our Birth and Education, or the Fortune of other Accidents have engaged us in ; but we ought to make a serious and long Enquiry, whether they agree most with that Light of our Understanding, which God has infused into us for that End, according to the best Extent of those Means, which are allowed by him to our Understandings for this Examination ; and whatsoever we shall fix upon after this Consideration, if it be duly made, will be upon such Grounds, as are not likely every Day, and upon every new Argument to be removed from us : For if they be, it is a great, though not an infallible Sign, that the Enquiry was not made at first with so much Diligence as was possible : And when we have once carefully settled ourselves in a Belief, though we happen to meet afterwards

with some new and unforeseen Difficulties, which may seem to evince the contrary, yet Reason will not presently advise us to a Change, because it finds itself unable to untie the Knot, but suspend a while and attempt again, and try a Thousand several Ways before it despair and yield up itself to the Argument; which remaining still after all this unconquerable, it will then turn back and consider whether if it alter now its Judgment, it be able to satisfy all those Defences which will be made for its former Opinion, and if it be overmatch'd by the Doubts on both Sides, rather chuse to continue as before, then make an Innovation without Advantage. This Rule being observ'd, we shall not be subject to the Inconvenience of frequent Changes, and yet as true it is, that we shall not be exempt from the Possibility of changing at all, which is neither requisite nor attainable in this Life; and if in this Permutation, after all our Industry and Humility therein, it shall be our ill Fortune to give away a Truth for a Faithhood, it will be (as killing a Man against our Will is no Murder, at the worst but an Error by Chance-Medly, and will both find (I had almost said claim) Mercy from God, and deserve Pity from Men. We know very well that every Man's Body is in so perpetual a Flux, that about the Space of seven Years, renders him wholly and entirely another corporeal Substance from what he

he was before, the whole Mass both of Accidents and Matter being thrust away by the continual Succession of new ones: and yet because the Soul remains still the same, and retains all the while the same Power and uninterrupted Government over the whole Succession, we justly esteem it the same Person; nay every Part of him to be always so truly the same, that at any Time of his Life he may say, With these Eyes I shall behold my Saviour, though the Accidents and very Matter of them be so often changed. Such an Identity as this is requisite to a Man's Faith: He may now be fully a Papist, and seven Years hence fully a Protestant, and yet his Faith still remains the same, because it is all the while actuated and moved by the same Soul of Faith, which is Conscience; which if he preserve inviolably, both when he was a Papist, and when he is a Protestant, he may truly say, with this very Faith I shall behold my Saviour.

But suppose this so exalted Guide of yours, your own Conscience, should direct you to forsake your Christian Belief; for which the Devil does not want such pleasant Colours and specious Fallacies, as may possibly deceive even a good Understanding?

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Before I answer this Objection, I desire to know of him that makes it, what it is (for something it must be) which he places in the same Ecclesiastical Superiority that I do Reason? The private Spirit? What if that should persuade him to this Apostacy? It cannot. Not indeed if it be true; but the same Condition will make Reason as infallible as that; and I may as well judge of the Truth of the one, as you of the other.

What is it then you will trust your Soul with, in this important Business? Is it the Authority of Men? These verily may lead you into Error, and it is not impossible, into the greatest and worst of all, which is the Desertion of Christ himself: Not that this is likely to happen, neither more probable is it, that our Reason should so far misguide us. But, alas! in this Affair of so vast and so eternal Consequence, what Security can we assume, whilst there remains a Possibility of Miscarriage? And this Possibility is evident. For let us consider it in a Council; which if there be any Assurance in the Number of Men, is that where most probably it may be found. I will not here reckon up the many Errors which great and famous Councils have fallen into themselves, and labour'd to establish in others, they are many and notorious. But certainly if a Council could take away the  
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Satisfaction of Christ's Death, and Divinity of his Person (as was done by that great one of the *Arians* which condemned *Athanasius*, not without the Approbation of the Pope and the whole World besides) a Council has already done that Thing, which you affirm impossible for it to do. For they who believed Christ to come into the World as an Example and Pattern only of Holiness, are no more to be call'd *Christians*, than *Abrahamists* or *Davidists*. If you will here contend, that even these Men deserted not wholly *Christianity*, as a Man may do by the Impulsion of his own private Reason, yet certainly you will confess, that they who fell so far into Error, might as well have sunk deeper, and exalted some other Prophet above Christ, as well as make Christ to be but a Prophet: And this Possibility of Error (even in so high a Degree) we shall find in the Nature and very Elements of a Council; for if any one Member of it may be a Heathen or Atheist in Opinion (as the Lives of many Popes, and the Speeches of some, declare that they themselves have been) why not two, not three, not more, not the Major Part, that is, the Whole Council? From the Sanctions of the *Nicene* Council, which establish'd the Worship of Images, how easy a Step was there made for the next; to the Introduction of a full, undisguis'd and heathenish Idolatry, which we must not say could not, because  
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by the Mercy of God it did not happen? And I verily believe if God had not stir'd up some Persons of Excellent Ability and Worthy Spirits (for such sure they were, though not exempt from human Weakness.) to examine by the Rules of their own Reason, those Follies and dangerous Errors in Religion, which partly by the Interest, partly by the Ignorance of Men, and insensible Advances of ill Custom, were blindly embraced by the whole World; if these Men, I say, had not discover'd the past Errors, and by that Means made their Adventuriers more cautious not to fall into any new ones, the World through the Adoration of Saints and Images, and the boundless Increase of vain and superstitious Ceremonies, would have past before this Time, to its old and abominable Worship of several Deities, and to a Religion overwhelm'd, if not with the same, yet with as many and as vain Impieties. It remains therefore, that you put your Confidence rather in the Traditions of the former, than the Commands of the present Church; but what those were, you must either trust some Number of Men present, which is not without the Possibility of being misguided; or your own Search and Diligence, which is to fall into that Opinion which you condemn in me. And truly they who build their Belief wholly upon the Authority of past or present Ages, if they look upon all the Consequences of that Opinion,

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are in much greater Danger of being drawn from the Christian Faith, than those who remit the Judgment of these Things to their own Reason: For ever since the Beginning of the Christian Belief, there has been the Authority of above an hundred to one against it; and this Authority backed and strengthened with the universal Agreement of more than Three thousand Years before it. But on the contrary, if we weigh impartially the Motives and Arguments which every Religion can produce in its own Defence; Reason itself will find more and much greater for the Christian, than it can for any other Belief whatsoever: And I am very confident, that no Man ever from a Christian, became a *Turk* or a *Jew*, because his Reason told him that was a better Religion; but because either Fear of Punishment, or Hope of Reward, or some other sinister Cause, persuaded his Reason, that the worst Religion in itself, would be the better to him upon those Conditions.

Now all those Arguments by which some Men have laboured to prove, that our *Guide* in Spiritual Matters ought to be *Infallible*, will, though they be granted for true, as I believe in some Sense they are, will not at all dispossefs Reason of this Authority, which we have declared to be her due. For the *Infallibility* of a *Guide* I conceive to be only this, That it cannot fail to bring us to that

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End, for which we chose to be guided by it; and if to this End there happen to be a thousand several Ways, it is a Guide no less infallible as to the End, if it lead us through a long, an unpleasant, and obscure Tract, than if it conduct us by a short, a delightful, and an open Road: For not the Goodness of the Passage, but Certainty of not missing the End, is that which constitutes this Kind of *Infallibility*. And truly every Man's particular Reason, if well followed (for whatsoever Guide you pitch upon, whether Scripture, Spirit, Church past or present, or any Thing else imaginable, must have that Condition annex'd, or else it will become unprofitable) will infallibly carry him at last, though, perhaps, through many tedious and troublesome Wanderings, to his eternal Happiness, if it be followed (for that Condition cannot be repeated too often) with Constancy, Diligence, and Sobriety.

This Doctrine sets the great Gate of Heaven so wide open, that it will displease those Men, who with an envious Kind of Pride think it more Honour to enter in with a few at a narrow Wicket. But I truly, out of an humble Consideration of my own Weakness, and the general Imbecillity of Human Nature, should still lament and tremble, that the Entrances to Heaven are so few and so difficult, though they were yet far more and much easier  
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than this Opinion makes them. There are enough Obstructions from the Frailty of our Flesh, the Subtilty of the Devil, the Tyranny of our Passions, and the perverse Crookedness of our corrupted Wills, without the Additions of any more from the Imperfections of our Intellect. Sufficient is the Danger we run, in not performing those Duties which we understand aright, without making our Misunderstandings damnable, and condemning that as a Guilt, which is to be pitied as a Misfortune. What then? Shall we believe *Turks, Jews, Heathens, Atheists* themselves (if there be any such) in an equal Possibility of Salvation, with the unerring Christian? Shall we save all Beasts of what Kind soever, clean or unclean, in that mystical Ark, the Church of God? Certainly, in the two contrary Excesses of Belief in this Matter, that on the Side of Mercy hath the Appearance of greater Safety; and I had rather think with *Origen*, *That the Devils themselves, by the excessive Kindness of their Judge, shall at last be exempted from Damnation, than that he himself shall be damn'd for that Opinion.* But as to this their Objection; I believe first, That Reason itself will declare to every Man in the World, that he ought to adhere to the *Christian*, rather than to any other Religion whatsoever, if all Things be propounded to him in a clear and impartial Manner; and this whosoever shall deny, I dare confidently

affirm, it is impossible for him to be a Christian. But because there are a thousand Accidents, which hinder the greatest Part of the World from the Advantages of so fair a Proposal, hence it comes to pass, that so small a Part of Mankind hath submitted to the Obedience of the Christian Faith: now to condemn all those Millions of Persons (many Millions for one that is to be saved) is so wild an Uncharitableness, that few have been so barbarously severe, as to be guilty of it: And the more those whose Ignorance in these Matters hath been invincible, they left to the Hands of God, without declaring a definitive Opinion either of their Safety or Perdition. Now if we consider rightly, what Ignorance is to be accounted invincible, we shall by this Means restore the greatest Part of Mankind into a hopeful and comfortable Condition; and none even amongst the worst Religions, will be left to a certain Ruin, but such whose Consciences have been neglected or forced aside by those who ought to have been guided by them; and such who can have no Plea against the Rigour of their Sentence, because they deserted themselves as well as God: And the Disobedience of Men to their own Conscience is not only in Things of Practice, but also of Belief and Speculation, though not in so evident and immediate a Manner, by suffering themselves to be deceived by the  
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insensible Operations of Interest and Prejudice.

No: does it follow from hence, that Christ is not the only Source and Cause of eternal Felicity ; for I ac<sup>k</sup>nowledge there is no other Name under Heaven by which Men can hope for Salvation. Put I may very well believe withal, that there are secret and wonderful Ways, by which God may be pleased to apply his Merits to Mankind, besides those direct, open, and ordinary ones of *Baptism* and *Confession* ; which I have only advanc'd briefly in this Place, being a Matter that will require a more ample and particular Examination. Now concerning the Salvation of all Sorts of Christians, except their Lives disagree from their Doctrines (which is likewise a Disobedience to their Reason ) I know not why I should be terrify'd out of my Charity by any *Anathema* whatsoever that shall proceed from the Mouth of Man. For I cannot see how any but God himself can certainly know that any Man is an Heretick, since it is only he who can discern by what close and unlawful Means he corrupts his Understanding, and hardens his own Will to the obstinate Belief of any Error ; for without that Obstinacy there is no Heresy, and without the perfect Sight of the whole Contexture of a Man's Thoughts and Actions, there is no Knowledge of such an Obstinacy : And therefore

fore when the Church declares any Opinion to be Heresy, it is to be accepted as if the Law should say, *Whosoever kills a Man is a Murderer*, which is a Sentence not absolute but to be qualified with Circumstances: Even so the Church pronounces, *Whosoever holds this Doctrine is an Heretick*, with an evident Reservation of some Circumstances in the Meaning thereof; for no Man can imagine that the Sentence includes those who never shall hear of it; not no more, say I, those, who though they hear of it, yet cannot by any Means bring their Conscience to the Assent. For to obey in Matters of Belief, without being able to believe the Thing commanded, is no less, and seems more a Contradiction, than simply to obey without Knowledge of a Command.

Thus much briefly concerning *Heresy*, which indeed is a Subject worthy a Treatise by itself. But this will not suffice, unless we can also clear ourselves from the Imputation of *Schism*, the ordinary railing Word in all Controversies, and a Slander which is often fatal in making, where it falsely accuses, a Separation; of which they are truly guilty (the Word itself bearing Witness against them) who break the precious Unity of the Christian Church: But that is done not so much by them who differ in Opinions, as by them who will not allow of such a Difference. Who  
knows,

knows, whether that God who liked best that no Mens Bodies should have the same Complexion, no Mens Faces the same Figures, no Hands the same Lines, no Voices the same Sounds, nay not so much but their Motions and Gestures should be distinguishable, has not likewise best pleased himself with no less Variety in the Parts of Men that are immaterial, and even in the most immaterial Actions of those Parts, which is the Worship and Adoration of a Deity? Does God gain any Thing by our Devotions? Does he receive Hurt from one Kind of Worship, and Advantage by another? Is he pleased with any Smell in the Sacrifice, besides that of Obedience? And can a plain, uniform, unalterable Obedience be expected, without Commands of the same Nature? Without Doubt, he who gave Rules, which might accept of so many several Interpretations, when he might have made them as plain to all in one Sense, as they seem now to every Man in his own, is likewise well contented, that they shall be interpreted severally: And as the Divines confess, that the same Words of Scripture admit of a Literal, Typical, Anagogical Sense, and that all those Senses are both true and intended by the Holy Ghost, that Spirit of Unity that writ them; so, I say, the Commands of God, concerning Religion, are equally obeyed and fulfilled by all the various Kinds of Obedience, which the Consciences of Men conceive

ceive themselves bound to pay unto them. As well the Mud by growing hard, as the Wax by melting ceases the Sun; nor is it less glorified by one than by the other: nor are those Diversities of Powers in the Sun, but of Capacities in the Object that receives him: Even so Faith is still properly one, though, according to the diverse Receptions of it, it produce not only diverse, but contrary Effects. It is not unobservable, that the Unity of the Church of God is compared not to the Unity of one Man, but of a Man and Woman joined in Marriage; so the *Church* in general is one with *Christ*; so the *Church Militant* with the *Triumphant*; and so every *particular Man* with the *Church Militant*. Now this *Unity* is of one Part more weak, more intam, more grose than the other; and the *Female Part* in the Similitude, is the erring Part in the Church itself; and as that by the Bond of *Love*, so this by the Bond of *Charity* is to be accounted one and the same with the other. Can any Thing be more irrational, than to say, That a Foot, when it hath the Gout, or a Hand, when it shakes with the Palfey, or a Head, when it aches, ceases to be a Part of the Body? Sound or sick, great or little, well, or ill shaped, are outward Considerations to the Nature of a Member; if it be informed by the same Soul, it requires no other Condition to make it such: Nor can you make this Soul which is

required of such Necessity to give it Life, to be a full and entire Agreement in all Points of Faith, of one Member with another ; for then in Matters of Belief you make no Distinction betwixt Sickness and Death, and the least Indisposition of Health is a total Corruption. Men of the contrary Opinion (I foresee) cannot chuse but say here, That in dangerous and infectious Diseases cut off the affected Member to save the rest ; and that he who in a Gangreen spares the Patient, is the most hard-hearted and unmerciful Physician : And truly, if Errors in Belief draw so ill a Tail after them as the Devils and Damnation ; if they be to be esteemed Gangreens, as well in Respect of their Mortality, as their spreading and infectious Nature ; not only Prudence but Charity itself will put a Sword into our Hands to cut them off. But, alas ! these Diseases are not so deadly, as the Physicians of the Soul would make them, for the exalting of their own Reputation ; and he that would presently lop off an Arm, if the Gangreen be moving in it, would not, I hope, prescribe the same Remedy, if it be but infected with an Itch : Both Evils would extend themselves over the whole Body, but the one to the perpetual Destruction of the Being, the other only to the temporary Loss of the Beauty and Quiet of it ; and therefore we rather patiently endure the Trouble and Vexation of continual Scratching (which is the true

Metaphor for the Controversies of Ecclesiastical Writers) with the Loathsomeness and Deformity of so many Sores, than take away a Member which may possibly hereafter recover its former Health and Comeliness, and is even without them, of great and necessary Uses to the whole Body.

Now as for those Men, who accuse us of Pride and Vanity for attributing so much to our own Reason, making Presumption and Self Flattery the Fountain of this Opinion; it is a Scandal so false and so ridiculous, that without much Humility I should disdain to answer it. Are those to be accounted proud and tyrannical, who being governed by their own Reason, are content that all others should enjoy the same Liberty, or those who whilst they deny that they themselves are ruled by their own Understandings, would nevertheless have all others to submit to it? Is it the Voice of Pride to acknowledge, That they who differ from me may possibly be in the Right, or if they mistake, may do it without Ruin, or to say, Whosoever is not of my Opinion is in the Wrong, and whosoever is in the Wrong is eternally to perish for his Error? It is the Custom of Presumption to be ready to lay down an Opinion once entertained (which is almost as great a Martyrdom, as laying down our Lives for the Truth's Sake) when Cause shall



shall appear for so doing ; or by claiming to ourselves the Infallibility of our Party (for he is infallible himself who agrees with them that are so) to harden ourselves into a necessary Opiniaſtreté.

These are the common Objections against this good-natur'd and gentle Doctrine : But Mr. *Hobbs*, according to his extraordinary Wit, has found out an odd, and extraordinary Argument. For in his First Chapter of Religion, in the State of God's natural Empire, making every City the supreme Judge in Matters that belong to God's Worship, and to which we ought to render an entire Obedience, says thus ; “ Otherwise all absurd Opinions of the Nature of God, and all ridiculous Ceremonies which have been admitted by any Nations, would be seen at once in the same City, by which it would happen, that every particular Person would believe all others to \* blaspheme, or irreverently to behave himself towards God ; so that it could be said of no Man, that he worshipp'd God ; because no Man worships God (that is, honours him externally) but he who does those Things by which he may appear to others to honour him. ”

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\* *Contumelia afficere.*

But, methinks, if this be true, the several unappealable Tribunals which are set up by Mr. *Hobbs* in several Cities or Commonwealths, are as well destroyed by it, as those which are placed by us in every Man's Breast; for several Cities appointing several Kinds of Worship or Honour, consisting in the Opinion not of the Worshipper or Honourer himself, but of the Witnesses and Spectators of the Worship or Honour; now if he say, That when a whole Commonwealth has but one Sort of Worship, none will be Witnesses or Spectators of it, but those who believe it honourable; first, as much Scandal from the Report, as from the Sight of it; and besides, the same, I say, will happen, if there were an hundred Religions in one City; for still their religious Congregations were to be made up of Men of the same Opinions: Again, Those who deny that a Commonwealth ought to enforce an Unity of Worship upon all its Subjects, will likewise as much deny, that Men ought to think those Worships dishonourable which are not practised by themselves: and if he say, there is no hindering of this latter, he must needs pardon me if I cannot believe that impossible, which has been in the World (even in a more ridiculous Variety than is at present, at least in our Parts) for so many Ages, and which is now exercised in some Places: And if ignorant or malicious  
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Physicians in this violent Fever, did not apply new Heats instead of Juleps, they might by Writing, Disputing, Preaching, living Charitably (which is all the former) reduce the World in a short Time to its ancient, healthful, and natural Temper. Lastly, (to strike at the Root of this Argument) it is false, that the Worship or Honour of God consists in the Opinion of others; if it did, Idolatry, for Four Thousand Years, had been the best, nay, the only Religion; and if I were now in the South Continent (where I suppose I should be the only Christian) I ought not to abstain from the Christian Worship of God (no, nor to hide or disguise it) for Fear lest the Wonder, Contempt and Mockery of Infidels, should on a sudden (I know not how) convert it into Sin and Blasphemy. True it is, that in Honour paid from Men to Men, Custom, Consent, and Acknowledgment, makes up the Business, and an Honour contrary to the Use of the Place is counted an Affront; as to put off the Hat would be in the East, and in the West to keep it on before Princes. But the Reason of this is, because Men who are not able to search into the Hearts, must be govern'd in their Judgment of them by the exterior Actions, and the Measure or Standard of those is Custom; but with God it is quite otherwise: He beholds and judges the very Thoughts of Men, which are the Fountains  
of

of his Actions, so much more fully and plainly, than we do the Actions themselves, that he needs not make a second, a mediate, a syllogistical Judgment of the Reality of Mens Worship, from the external, circumstantial, and only probable Testimonies of their outward Behaviours. And truly, if we put the Case amongst Men, methinks a great *Roman* Emperor that calls himself Master of the World, should delight to prove himself to be so, from the Variety of Homages, Tribute, and Worship, which he receives from several Nations; and no more refuse to be honour'd in several Fashions, than he would to be prais'd in several Languages. He would be glad, perhaps, to establish the *Latin* Tongue, and make that the Speech of all Countries, but finding that Design to be impossible, would at least pardon that Diversity which agrees and consents in his own Glory. Truly, if Men could cast away so much Passion, as to make but true Comparisons, they would find no more Hurt from the Use of different Ceremonies, than of different Tongues in the same City; and we might be as well allowed to serve God after the *English* Manner, as to speak *English* in the *Spanish* Dominions. As Words are the Images of our Thoughts, so our Thoughts are of the Things themselves: And as well may differing Thoughts truly represent the Worship of one God, and of his Son Christ  
*Jesus,*

*Jesus*, as differing Words can represent the same Thought : And this the *Roman* Church seems to acknowledge, which does not think sufficient Unity in God's Service to be retained, with the Allowance of more than of one Language, and for Preservation of fantastical Identity, teaches her Sons first to think, and afterwards to speak they know not what. They say first, Our Error is the same with that of the *Greeks*, which is taxed by Saint *Paul* to the *Corinthians* ; That they sought after *Wisdom*, but that the World by *Wisdom* knew not God ; That the *Wisdom* of the *Wise* was destroyed, and the Understanding of the *Prudent* brought to nothing ; that it was made *Foolishness*, nay, it was confounded by the foolish Things of the World. And against this *Wisdom* many excellent Things are spoken in the Beginning of that Epistle, and it is stricken down (as Saint *Paul* was himself) by a greater Light of Divine Truth, which came from God for that very Purpose, to amaze and confound it first, and then to convert it. But if we mark it well, we shall observe, that under this Name of *Wisdom*, which is arraigned, condemned, nay, and executed here, (for it is brought to nothing) is not signified *Human Reason*, but that which among the *Greeks* at that Time was falsely and blindly esteemed to be so : As in the Laws against *Magick*, not that which is truly, but that which is  
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falsly called so, is only condemned. And therefore Saint *Paul* names it the *Wisdom of Words; the enticing Words of Man's Wisdom;* and the *Wisdom after the Flesh;* and the *Wisdom of the Princes of the World*. By which three Names are plainly (methinks) described, the three great Suborners and Corrupters of *Human Reason* (and not at all itseif) the Desire of Reputation, of Pleasure, and Profit. By the first we forsake the Truth to make Demonstrations of our Wit and Eloquence: By the Second to compare those carnal and worldly Pleasures, which our own true Reason does not allow of, and therefore we will not allow of it: (as *Henry* the Eighth seems to have left the Pope, because he refused to dispenche with his Lusts, and to call that Matrimony, which was, indeed, Adultery :) And by the third, to comply with the Interest of States and Princes, and either willingly deceiving ourselves with the Errors of our Governors, or deceiving others with a Desire to govern them. And these three (at least the two latter) Causes of Error in the Understanding, may be the Reason contained with Truth in the Parable concerning which is strongest. That that which falsly seemed to be *Human Reason*, and not that which truly is so, is accused by Saint *Paul*, appears yet more plainly, where he says, That *God hath chosen the Things which are not, to confound the Things which are: Where the*  
*Things*

*Things which are not* can signify nothing else, but the Things which are esteemed as nothing, that is neither of Value in themselves, nor of Power to produce any Effects. True it is, that the best and truest *Human Reason* could not have found out of itself, that *Wisdom of God in a Mystery*, even that *hidden Wisdom which God ordained before the World*, which is the Mystery of Christ *Jesus*; but it was necessary it should first be revealed by that Spirit, which can only search and discover the deep Things of God. But as soon as the Spirit had reveal'd it (which it did by Miracles, by fulfilling of Prophecies and many other Means of Power and Demonstration) even *Human Reason* was able to behold and to confess it; not that *Grace* had alter'd the Eyesight of *Human Reason*, but that it had drawn the Object nearer to it. And till the Object was brought so nigh, the Wisdom of Man did as safely not discern it, as it does not now the new State of Things, which shall be revealed at the Second coming. And whereas they oppose against this the Saying of the Apostle, That *the Natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, for they are Foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*: The Word *Natural*, I take to be a very ill Translation, and conceive it ought to be render'd the *Sensual Man*, for such *λογισμός* in

the *Greek*, and *animalis* in the *Latin*; *ψυχη* many Names signifying the *lower* and *sensitive* Part of the Soul, in Distinction to *νοησις*, which is the *upper* or *rational*, as *anima* is oppos'd to *animus*, and both sometimes to *mens*. So that the Meaning is, that whilst a Man's Reason is seduced by his Appetites and Passions, it is an unfit Judge of Spiritual Matters, neither can be Umpire for a Peace, having joined itself to the Party of those Things, which are in perpetual Warfare against the Spirit. But they say this *Authority* which we ascribe to Reason, is strangely different from that *Captivity* which Saint *Paul* subjects it to, when he says, *Casting down Reasonings, and every high Thing that exalts itself against the Knowledge of God; and bringing into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ*. And what *Captivity*, say they, can there be, whilst we are only guided by the Motions of our own Understanding? All which signifies no more, but that Saint *Paul* relates (in Vindication of his own just Greatness against the Calumnies of some that despised his Person, especially as weak and rude of Speech) how he had confuted those Persons that opposed themselves by Reasonings against the Doctrine of Christ; and whereas their Understandings before were enslaved and captivated to the Desires of the sensual Soul (for which he calls them in another Place *Beasts at Ephesus*) which hindered them



them from the Obedience of Christ, he freed them from their cruel Bondage, by casting down all their strong Holds, and breaking the Chains of their fallacious Reasonings, and brought them into another Captivity by Right of Conquest, but such an one where the Yoaks are light and the Burthens easy, that is, by true Reason he overcame and captivated their false ones.

And from this Example, I desire those who would have our Understandings captivated, to convince us first by theirs that they ought to be so, and not to think to enslave our Reasons, till they first overcome them; which when they have done, then they will lose what they contend for; For by our Reasons being guided, conquered, and enslaved, theirs are become Guides, Conquerors, and Masters. So that it will appear at last impossible for *Human Reason* to lose any Thing in one Place, without gaining as much in some other.

They who follow the Apprehension of a Vision or Revelation extrinsically coming into their Souls, if it happen that that extrinical Light come from the *Father of Lights*, as the Pillar of Fire did which led the *Israelites*, they must needs be guided rightly; but if it chance to be an *ignis fatuus* (a Flame driven about, as Men commonly believe, by

malicious Spirits) the Errors which it leads them into become unpardonable ; for what Plea can they make for Mercy, since there is no Command, nor no Counsel can be alledged for the trusting of themselves to that Stranger, which they can neither know from whence he comes, nor whither he designs to go. The like happens if we obey Authority : For if that Authority prescribe Truth, we have good Fortune in our Obedience, and merely good Fortune : But if it draw us into Errors, we have nothing to say for our Excuse, because we have nothing to alledge for our Obedience to that Authority : So *Eve* pleaded the Authority of the Serpent, but both were punished : So *Adam*, with more Appearance of Innocency, *the Woman that thou gavest me for an Helper bad me eat*, and accordingly I did ; but to him too a Curse is pronounced, because he believed that which was figuratively one with him (as Members of the Church pretend to do the Church) rather than that which was most certainly and singly one with him, which was his own Reason. Thus the best that can be made of these Mens Opinions is, that after they have blindfolded themselves, amongst the many Doors where they may enter, there is one which will lead them to Heaven ; which if they miss, it will be asked, not why you enter'd not there, but why by blinding your own Eyes did you put yourself into a greater

Probability of not finding, than of lighting upon the true Passage. Now contrarywise, those who commit themselves to the Guidance of their own Understanding, if they do commit themselves *wholly* to it, are as safe on the Left Hand as on the Right, as secure of Happiness in their Errors; as others are, who are otherwise guided, even in the Truths which they happen to fall into. For there is no Danger of perishing but from Disobedience, without which every Man may often err, the Commandment of God being not to find out Truth (especially every particular one) but to endeavour the finding it: He commands no more but to *search, and ye shall find*, says he, not every particular Truth, for Experience teaches us that cannot be the Interpretation: But whether you find or no the Truth which you search for, you shall find the Reward of Searching, which is Happiness: Now he that bids you search, is cruel and barbarous in his Mockery, if he knows you have no Power or Faculty so to search as he commands you: There is therefore in Man a natural Ability of searching Spiritual Truths, and that can be nothing else but his Understanding; neither to any Thing else can the Command be directed, since all Things else are without us, and may serve for Helps and Directions in our Search, but cannot be our Search itself: Secondly, because we lay the blasphemous

Accusation of Injustice upon God, if he punish us for an Error which we could not avoid; and all Errors are such which we fall into after a full and mature Search for the Truth, according to the best Means represented to our Understanding; so that at the Liberty of our Will, and the Possibility we have of doing the contrary, makes us suffer justly for evil Actions, so the Possibility our Understanding had to have discover'd and entertained the Truth, renders us liable to Condemnation for ill Beliefs. Thirdly, We ought not to believe Errors in Faith to be damnable, because this Opinion is so wildly uncharitable, that it strikes out Ten Thousand Millions out of the Book of Life, for each single Name that it leaves in it: So immeasurably vast, if we consider the whole World, and all the Ages of it) is the Number of those who have lived and died in great, high, and manifest Errors (manifest I mean to us, for they were not so to them) above those that have been so happy as to find and to embrace the Truth. Fourthly, We ought not to teach Men, that any Errors in Belief overthrow our Hopes of Salvation, unless we could likewise give them a Catalogue of those Errors which do so; it being confess'd that all do not, because these must necessarily put all considering Men into a Doubt, or rather Despair of their own Salvation: For what Quiet or Repose can our Conscience take, whilst we

we know ourselves to be in many Errors (the Estate of a Traveller being incapable of an Exemption from them) and I believe that some Errors without knowing which, or how many, do exclude Men from a Possibility of entering into Heaven. Fifthly, Because in this Case we cannot know our Fault, and therefore have no Means of repenting of it : Now God enjoining Men Repentance, and promising Pardon thereupon for all Sins whatsoever, prescribes such a Physick as is impossible to be taken ; for Repentance presupposes Knowledge of the Fault, and Knowledge of a Fault does not consist with an Error of the Understanding, for we cannot apprehend the Thing so, and yet be sorry that we are mistaken. Sixthly, The great Probability and Appearance of Truth on all Sides, even the erring ones, ought to make us believe, that God will not punish those who err : If that be probable, which all, or most Men, or many, or the most Wise, or some wise Men receive for Truth ; What Doctrine is there, which in the whole Compass of Religions may not pass for probable, and what Cause have we to condemn the Understanding of any Man, in a Thing which he is drawn by Probabilities to assent to ? I cannot possibly conceive it agreeable to the Goodness of the Divine Nature, so to have hidden and involved, and almost disguised the Truth from us, if he had intended to have censured the  
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missing of it, with so heavy a Sentence as that of eternal Ruin ; especially seeing there is but one true Way for one hundred false ones, and no certain Mark set upon the Entry of that one, to distinguish it from the others. And let this suffice to be said upon the first Argument, to induce us to commit ourselves wholly to our Reason in the Search of Divine and Religious Verities, which is drawn from the Certainty of Safety this Way, and the great Hazard of it any other.

Secondly, As in visible Objects we receive confidently, and rest in the Report of the Sight, because Nature hath ordained and accommodated it accordingly for that Purpose, without Appeal from it either to other Senses, or to Revelations, or the Eyes of other Men : And as we do the like in all other Operations of the Sense, and all other Faculties of the Soul ; so ought we as entirely and absolutely to resign our Belief to the Dictates of our own Understanding in Things intelligible, which are as properly and naturally the Object thereof, as Things visible are of the Eyesight ; and we might as well say, we will trust our Eyes in green, and white, and black, but not in red or yellow Colours, as affirm that our Reason must guide us in the Contemplation of Nature, the Search of Arts, the Government of Publick Societies, and the Regulation of Mens Lives as far as the Bounds of Morality.

ty, but that it is not at all to be followed or obeyed in Matters that concern Religion; those two being intelligible Truths, yea the chief, and therefore most to be search'd, and a Part of the Understandings object as much or rather more than any other. Now as the Credit of the Sight is not at all to be disparaged, because some Men have the jaundice which paints every Thing yellow, some look through blue Spectacles which represent all Things to them under the same Colour, and some through divers *Mediums* which makes the straight Staff appear crooked, some are short-sighted and take Men for Trees at a Distance; so, I say, the Mistakes which Reason by accidental Disturbances leads some Men into, is not a sufficient Argument for others to refuse to be guided by it.

If it be objected, that the Sight; though it be subject to some particular Impediments, yet is generally by its own Nature much more certain and exact in the Judgment of Colours, than the Understanding can ever be made (even without accidental Hinderance) in the Knowledge of Things Spiritual. I answer, That if such things be the proper Object of such a Faculty, we are herein to be govern'd by the Dictates of it, without considering whether that Faculty be as quick and perfect as God could make it in Apprehension of its Object; neither ought we to give less Truth

to our Understanding in supernatural Truths, because it is so much inferior to that of Angels, than we do to our Eyesight in Things visible, though it be so far short of that of Eagles. Certainly, they who remove the Cognizance of Divine Truths out of the Court of Reason, take away that which most properly and naturally falls under its Determination. For when God had Created all Things else, he thought the World imperfect as yet, whilst there was nothing made that could contemplate, thank, and worship the Maker of it; and therefore he Created Man, and this was the chief End of the Production of a Rational Soul, that by it they might consider the Things which they saw, and discourse and collect out of them the Things which they saw not, and both praise and love the Maker for and in them both; which is the whole Substance of Religion; for the Manners and Kinds of doing it are accidental. So then Religion appears to be the principal End of Man's Creation, and therefore, as if Horses be made for Burthen, they have a natural Ability given them wherewith to do it; if Birds to fly, they have a Faculty and Wings given them for that Purpose (because where an End is natural, the Means are so too); so if Religion be the End of Man as he is Partaker of a Rational Soul, that reasonable Soul hath some Power naturally placed in it for the Exercise, Judgment, and Choice  
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of Religion, as far forth as is necessary to his own Happiness, that is, to the attaining the End for which he was Created.

In the third Place, This Opinion is not only most safe and most natural for every Man in particular, but likewise most agreeable to the Good and Interest of Human Society; for all Wars of late Ages have been either really for Religion, or, at least, that has been one of the chief Pretences; which if it were quite taken away, it would be difficult for those Men who disguise their Ambition with it, to draw the People into the Miseries and Uncertainties either of a Civil or Foreign War. Now if this Doctrine were generally planted in the Minds of Men, both the Reality and Pretence of fighting for Religion were utterly cancelled; and though turbulent Minds would then either find or make some other Occasion to disturb their Neighbours, yet the Ill would neither be so frequent nor so cruel as it is at present. For who would quarrel for Religion, when this were made the main and general Ground of all Religions, *That every man ought quietly to enjoy his own.* True it is, that Unity in Religion would produce the same Effect; but, alas! both Reason and Experience teaches us, that the Hopes of that are vain and impossible; and though a *State* may sometimes force all its Subjects to submit to an outward Uniformity in all Things that

concern Divine Worship, yet they must know, that every publick Disturbance in the Commonwealth, breaks all those Bonds asunder of dissent led Obedience, and that such Compulsions both leget and ripen all Disorders.

Much might be spoken in this Matter, but not necessarily here, both because I have said something of it before, in answering this Argument turn'd against this Opinion unhappily; and because the Manner of establishing this Liberty in a Commonwealth, will require a Discourse entirely by itself.

The last Defence of this Cause, and which indeed needs not the Assistance of any other, shall be, because (though Men deceive themselves herein, and as it often happens, know not their own Opinions) it is impossible that ever any Man should have been, is, or can hereafter be guided by any Thing else but his own *Reason*, as in other Things, so also in Matters of Religion; I say, impossible; for whatsoever Way we take, we shall find, that the last Anchor to which our Faith holds, the last Element into which it is resolved (and therefore it is likewise compounded of the same) is only *Reason*. For when I ask, Why you believe any Mystery of Faith? You will answer, perhaps, Because the present Church commands you: If I proceed and ask, Why do you believe what the present Church commands?

mands? You will say, Because the former Church teaches the same. Why do you believe the former Church? Because God commands you so to do. Why do you believe that God commands it? Because you find it in the Scripture. Why do you believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God? Because they were confirmed by Miracles. Why do Miracles confirm that? Because they are Works which can proceed from nothing but the absolute and immediate Power of the Deity. Why so? Because nothing contrary to, or above the Course of Nature, can be done by natural Agents; but Miracles are Effects contrary to, or above the Course of Nature; therefore they proceed from the Divine Operation. Thus you see Faith at last resolv'd into a Syllogism, which is the proper Work of the Understanding. On the other Hand, if I demand, Why you do believe that any Miracles were done for the Confirmation of the Faith? Because of the great and many Testimonies of the Truth thereof. Why do you believe those Testimonies? Because so many Persons in so several Times and Places, with so several Interests, could never agree in being deceived, or to deceive. So that you rest not at all in any Authority, but discourse first what may be said for or against the Validity of it, examine it punctually in all Circumstances, and at last submit to it upon some Syllogism, which is the only Law that binds  
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our *Reason*. Two Things are to be considered in all Authority, before we obey or believe it; First, The Condition and Quality of the Persons who command or instruct; and Secondly, The true Interpretation of their Commands or Instructions. For the First, The Persons in Commanding must have a lawful Power derived to them, either from God, Nature, or Custom (which latter depends upon the two former). And in Instructing, must have either an absolute Infallibility, or else at least a Probability of not Erring. So that no Authority is obeyable or believable in itself without farther Examination: No not that of God himself; for the Strength of God's Authority depends upon that Syllogism, which proves that the Nature of God is such, that he can neither deceive nor be deceived. Now all this Examination is purely and entirely the Work of our Reason, by measuring a Particular and an Universal. Whatsoever hath such Conditions is to be obeyed or believed; but such Person or Persons hath such Conditions, therefore such Person or Persons are to be obeyed or believed: Neither does our Reason only prescribe Obedience and Belief to us, but also searches and establishes the Bounds of both, setting up some solid and apparent Notions, by which we know our *Ne plus ultra*. True it is, that some Men Obey, and some Men Believe, without considering that they make this Discourse; but that is only  
 only

only from Inadvertency, as Men often move their Bodies, without any particular excited Thought of doing so.

Thus far then Authority wholly depends upon *Reason*. And much more in the *Second Condition*, which is the Interpretation of it : In which Business the Interposition of *Reason* is so necessary, that I shall omit either to prove or illustrate the Point.

Now as they who enslave themselves to Authority, make it the Rule and Guide of Faith, because that even the Belief that Scripture is the Law of God depends upon it, as truly it does (in my Opinion) upon the Tradition of Miracles ; so, I say, That much rather *Reason* is to be accounted that Rule and that Guide we look for, because even Authority, upon which even Scripture itself depends, depends as much upon that ; neither do we more believe the Scripture for Authority, than that very Authority for the Reason we think we have to do so. The *Samaritan* says, I have an infallible Rule, which is the *Books of Moses*, and only them. The *Jew* says, I cannot err, for I follow the *Old Testament*, which is infallible, and only that. The *Christian* assures himself of the Truth as long as he is guided by the *Evangelists* and *Apostles*, whose Writings are the infallible Dictates of the *Holy Ghost*. The *Turk* assumes

fumes the same from the *Alcoran* ; and the *Heathen* from *Oracles*, *Sybil's Books*, and the like. What shall I do ? None of all these Books can be believed by their own Light, for there are Things equally strange in them all. Follow the Authority of the Church which cannot misguide you. Most willingly : But again the same Difficulty returns in another Habit ; for as every one cries, I follow these Books which are *infallible*, so he goes on too and says, I believe these Books to be so, because our *Church* and our *Traditions* which are certainly the best Authority, assures us that they were written by *Divine Inspiration*. Let the *Christian* take heed of saying here, *But my Tradition is more Ancient and more Universal*, for in the first the *Jew* will overcome him, and in both the *Heathen*. I must in this Diversity of Ways either stand still, that is, suspend absolutely from the Belief of any Religion (which is almost impossible after the Belief that there is a God) or I must chuse out of these. Now Election is a Work so proper to Reason, that it cannot be done by any Thing else ; and therefore to be brought to a Necessity of an Election, is to be necessarily brought to submit in Matters of Religion to the Determination of our Understanding : So that in Matters of Religion wherein there is Difference, I chuse this Side rather than the other, because my *Reason* bids me ; and where there is no Difference,

even

even there I am wholly guided by my *Reason*, because the uncontradicted Concurrence of the Parties, makes up a Syllogism to persuade (I say, to persuade only) my Belief. Briefly, I cannot *Believe* but by an Act of the *Will*, nor can I *will* but according to the Directions of the *Understanding*: so that they who say they follow Authority, or they follow Divine particular Revelation, or any Thing else imaginable, do it, because that agrees with their own Reason, and will quit the Party as soon as it does otherwise.

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F I N I S.









~~Mr. [unclear]~~ L. A.











