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A  
DEMONSTRATION  
OF THE  
DIVINE AUTHORITY  
OF THE  
**Law of Nature,**  
And of the  
**Christian Religion.**



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In Two Parts.

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By SAMUEL PARKER, D. D.  
Arch-deacon of *Canterbury*.

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To the Reverend  
**D<sup>r</sup> BATHURST,**  
Dean of *W E L L S*  
And President of  
**TRINITY** College in *OXON.*

S I R,

**B**eing my self competently satisfied  
in the true reasoning, and thorough-  
ly assured of the good meaning of this en-  
suing Discourse, I am thereby encouraged  
to present it to your view, as the most  
able Judge, that I know, both of the Ar-  
gument, and the Performance, and to beg  
your impartial Censure and Opinion of it.  
I know indeed by long Experience your  
Candour and Kind-nature to be so great,  
as to be apt sometimes to sway your Judg-  
ment;

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

ment; but (Sir) I beseech you to set that aside for once, and to peruse this Treatise not with the courtesie of a Patron but the more obliging freedom of a Friend, (to which familiar Relation, after your kindness had made me in any measure fit for and worthy of it, you have been pleased long since to admit me.) And so (Sir) you very well know that of old the Philosophers and Professours of Learning were not wont to address their Discourses to great and unlearned Patrons, as has been the fashion of our modern times; but to their friends and acquaintance of the greatest skill in that sort of Learning that they profess, and that not for their Protection, as the Complement now runs, but their sincere and friendly Censure. Varro was a greater Patron than any Senatour of Rome. And though some of the eminent men of Learning were great men in the Commonwealth



## The Epistle Dedicatory.

*wealth too, yet their Friends were not wont to make their Addresses to them as Members of the Senate or the Areopagus, but of the more honourable Society of Philosophers.*

*And that (Sir) is the onely design I have in presenting these Papers to your hands, not to load your modesty with the usual complements and formalities of Dedications, but to request your free and impartial Judgment of them, and by that I shall be directed to frame my own. And if they prove so fortunate as to gain your Approbation, that alone will secure me of their Acceptance with all wise and learned Men. But whatever they are, I earnestly beseech you to accept of them as a small Token of unfeigned and indelible Gratitude from,*

S I R,

Your most humble  
and most obliged Servant,

*Sa. Parker.*



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## P R E F A C E.

**T**His Treatise being written in pursuance of a former in the Latine Tongue, ought to have been penn'd in the same Language; and so very probably it might, had it not been first undertaken at the request and for the use of an English Friend. Though upon review I cannot wish that it had been composed in any other Language, because though the Latine Tongue be of more universal use, yet the benefit of it is confin'd to learned Men, who have less need of such helps as these, and when they have, are able to satisfie themselves. Whereas the ignorant and the unlearned among our selves are become the greatest pretenders to Scepticism, and it is the common People that now a days set up for Atheism and Infidelity. And as much as the Age we live in is improved Vice and Wickedness, yet it is not so considerable for the baseness of Men's Practices as for the extravagance of their Principles. For we have not invented (because indeed we

we cannot) any new acts of lewdness and debauchery ; and the Sins that are now committed, have been sometimes (though very seldom) committed in former Ages, but then they were not defended for wise and harmless Actions. Whereas we are grown so subtle as to suit our Notions to our Vices, and will not be so rash and unadvised as our dull Forefathers were, to be wicked and not be able to justify it upon principles. They were so foolish as to act against the persuasions of their own Consciences, and condemn themselves in their own Practices, but we are so prudent and philosophical, that unless we can argue our selves into Liberty from those uneasy Restraints, we will never violently break through them. So that Atheism and Irreligion are at length become as common as Vice and Debauchery, and the Vulgar (by which I intend both sorts, as *Seneca* expresses it, the Man of Title as well as the clowted Shooe, if equally unlearned and barbarous) declare that they would not be so wicked as they are, if they thought that they lay under any obligations to be good.

In short, this is the first Age of the World that I know of, in which Atheism ever appeared

peared any where in publick open and bare-faced. For though in the corruptions of the Roman Empire Men were as prodigious in their impieties as debaucheries, yet the publick Reverence of Religion (such as it was) was in appearance preserved with some shew of sacredness among the rankest Atheists and the worst of Men, this was thought intolerable when all other wickednesses were openly allowed and practised. But how it comes to pass among us (unless it be that the Hypocrisie of one Age makes way for the Atheism of another) I know not, the Plebeians and Mechanicks have philosophised themselves into Principles of Impiety, and read their Lectures of Atheism in the Streets and the High-ways. And they are able to demonstrate out of the *Leviathan*, that there is no God nor Providence, but that all things come to pass by an eternal Chain of natural Causes: That there are no Principles of Good and Evil but onely every Man's Self-interest, nor any Self-interest but onely of this present Life: That humane Nature is a meer Machine, and that all the contrivances of the minds of Men are nothing but the mechanical Results of Matter and Motion. That the Christian Religion

has no sufficient proof of its pretended Divine Authority, and that no wise Man is under any obligation to embrace it, but onely as it happens to be commanded by the Laws of the Realm.

These and such like Doctrines are the most avowed Principles of the unlearned Herd among us. And the truth is, almost all sense of Piety is confin'd to the Men of Sense, whilst the Rabble are run into all manner of Atheism and Prophaness. (For as for that Antinomian Enthusiasm that is grown so rife among us, it looks more like Blasphemy than Religion, and is so far from making Men less wicked, that it onely makes them more confident in their wickedness;) And now when they have thrown off either all regard of duty or sense of distance towards God, they quickly cashier all conscience of honesty or even civility towards Men, and together with their Religion loose their good Manners. This is the bottom of that epidemical Falshood, Perfidioufness, Fraud, Oppression, Rudeness and Barbarity that has overspread the whole Kingdom.

Now when Peoples Wickedness is bottom'd upon Principle, it is absolutely necessary to convince them of the vanity of  
their

their Principles, before we can hope to work them to any effectual Reformation. And though I think it an imprudent thing to be disputing the Fundamentals of Religion to the common People, if it could be avoided, because it commonly rather weakens than confirms their Faith, and makes them think that to be onely problematical, which before they supposed to be unquestionable; yet when they have raised the dispute among themselves, and have by chance (for they never judge of any thing upon due enquiry, because they never make it) run away with the wrong side of the Controversie, they are to be reduced by better Information. And that is the design of this following Treatise to demonstrate to them these two great fundamental Truths, *viz.* The evident obligation of the Law of Nature, and the Divine Authority of the Christian Religion, which alone will scatter away all their little Principles and pretences of Scepticism and Infidelity; and if it do not work so effectually upon them as to reduce them to a right sense, yet it will at least destroy the rudeness and confidence of their Impiety, and force them to be more decent and modest in their Wicked-

ness, by letting them see that what they supposed an high attainment in wisdom was the effect of extream ignorance and meer want of enquiry, for there is nothing in the World so lamentably dull and silly as the Atheistical Philosophy.

And now when we have spoil'd their pedantry, that was the onely thing that spoil'd them, we have half reduced them, by letting them see that it is not for them to be philosophising. And that when all is done, it would turn to a much better account as to their own design, if instead of bewildring their fancies in the *Leviathan*, they would learn the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and the Ten Commandments in the vulgar Tongue. For after all their labour after philosophick knacks and curiosities, they are certain to loose their vanity, and instead of being admired for their learning as they design, onely make themselves despised for their conceited folly. An Ass will never become a Lion's Skin, nor a Mechanick a Philosopher's Cloak. And yet I must confess that I have scarce any hopes of reclaiming such of the multitude, as are already tainted with this plague. For I know by too much experience that there is but one thing in the  
World



World more inflexible than Ignorance steel'd and hardned with Wickedness. And therefore my onely design is to step in between the dead and the living, the infected and the sound, and, if it be possible, to give some stop to the contagion, or at least to keep the Disease from descending to Posterity. For as for this unhappy Age, it is so universally overspread with Vice and Wickedness, that it is not reasonable to expect that the Principles of Vertue and Religion should ever find any just entertainment in it. But certainly undebauched Posterity will judge more impartially; and such I know is the power of Truth upon the minds of Men, that if it can but gain Audience it will at last prevail upon all that are disengaged from Prejudice, and disdain not to attend to the results of sober Reason. And that is the aim of this ensuing Discourse, that whenever Vertue shall begin to lift up its head and recover its right, I may give some little assistance to its Restauration. And both as a Clergyman do something towards promoting the Happiness of the Souls of Men, and as an Englishman towards recovering the ancient Reputation of my native Country for Civility, Justice and Integrity.

As for the Law of Nature, which is the Argument of the First Part, I must confess there has been much talk in the World about it, but very little said. The Civilians, Canonists and School-men have attempted little more than to define it, and in that they have fail'd too. Even *Grotius* himself has so far mistaken it, as to suppose it obligatory without the supposition of a Deity. *Puffendorf* has indeed of late hapned upon its right definition in general, but has neither described its particular Branches, nor demonstrated any of the grounds and reasons of its Obligation. And the Authour of the Book *De Principiis Justi & Decori*, once or twice started the right notion of it, but quite lost it in the chace, by quitting his own scent to follow Mr. *Hobbs's* cry. Among the Ancients, both Greeks and Romans, I find as little perform'd, seldom any thing more than meer Definitions and positive Assertions, and at most some witty and fancifull reasonings in the Platonick Writers. What was done by *Tully* in his Books *De Republicâ*, where, as he informs us in his Book *De Legibus*, it was copiously treated of, is not now to be known, that excellent Treatise, which himself valued  
much

much above all his other Writings, being unfortunately perisht, but by those fragments that are remaining of it, I am apt to think that this Loss has been competently compensated by the learned and judicious Treatise of our Country-man Dr. *Cumberland* upon this Argument, who has not onely hit upon the right Notion of the Law of Nature, but has, in a method heretofore proper onely to mathematicks, demonstrated its obligation. But his Discourse being every where interwoven with mathematical, logical, metaphysical, and physiological terms and notions, I meet with very few that have been able to master its sense, and therefore I have taken his main notion alone stript of all accessional Ornaments of Learning, and prosecuted the demonstration of it my own way in a familiar style and an easie method.

As for the proof of the whole matter, it depends upon the supposition of an Author of Nature; for unless that be antecedently granted, we cannot so much as proceed to enquire after the Law of Nature. Because if he never contrived the Nature of Things, it is evidently in vain to search for his design in the Contrivance. And herein  
I have

I have a very considerable Advantage of the learned Authour that I follow, for he beginning at the Dispute of the Law of Nature, was forced to presume upon the Supposition of its Authour, which without any Presumption I demand and challenge. For having first proved all those physical Ends and Designs that he has discover'd of his Providence in all parts of Nature, if after that any moral Ends and Designs discover themselves in the same things, it cannot be doubted but that they are the effects of the same Providence, and that plainly connects the proof of one with the demonstration of the other.

Now as to the former, I have run through all parts of Nature and all sects of Philosophers, and shewn that no one thing in the World could ever have been as it is, but by the ordering of Providence: and that all their several Attempts to give any other account of the Nature of Things, are intolerably childish and beyond all things ridiculous. And this may be presumed without any breach of modesty, because Nature it self is its own demonstration, and it requires onely eye-sight to observe that it could be contrived no other way but by  
Divine

Divine Providence. But when I pretend to have routed all the mechanick Philosophers, it is so far from presumption, that there is no more glory in it, than in the Conquest of an Infant. And indeed nothing does more exactly resemble their wise contrivances than the little sports and works of Children; for just as they make their Playthings, so do these grave Philosophers make their Worlds. In short, the folly and nonsense of meer Mechanism or accounting for the nature of Things onely by Matter or Motion or any other second Causes, is so notorious, that all the Philosophers in the World never were, nor ever will be able to give any the least account how so much as a Stone should fall to the ground without a Divine Providence. This may seem a very odd challenge to be made to the great Wits and Virtuosi of Mankind, but I make it not rashly, and have thoroughly consider'd all their Attempts, and more than enough demonstrated their Vanity, and am sure upon the most diligent enquiry that it can never be done any other way than by resolving it into the force of *Magnetism*, than which in all the Universe there is not a more amazing piece of Divine Art and Wisdom.

But here, before I can proceed to what ought to have immediately followed, I am forced to thrust in a kind of preposterous digression, in answer to a very mean piece of disingenuity that I have lately met with from the Mechanick Philosophers, *viz.* That I have made too bold with the reputation of great and famous Men, and treat those that have been admired and renown'd for Wisdom and Learning in all Ages as if they were void of common sense. And thus the late Authour of the Aug-  
 p. 205. mentation to Mr. *Hobbs* his Life, when he has represented me as one of the keenest and unkindest of his Adversaries, brings off his Master with this clean Complement, that he has no reason to take it unkindly from one, that sticks not to treat the greatest even of the ancient Philosophers after the same rate, and gives the same correction even to the great *Aristotle* himself as to Mr. *Hobbs*, and as for the famous *de-Cartes* he sticks not to chastise him like any School-boy.

But in the first place methinks this is a very poor and humble Objection, and becomes not the due confidence of a Philosopher. For it is this sort of Men, that first  
 upbraid

upbraid us with the great and unanswerable Performances of Mr. *Hobbs*, and tell us that till we can answer him we may preach what we please to the People, but wise Men will be of his mind. And yet when we not onely answer but plainly demonstrate the pitifull and even childish folly of his pretended Philosophy, that is objected as an unpardonable rudeness to so learned a Man. But I would fain know what is to be done in this case, you will not be content till we undertake him; and yet if we do, you grow angry, and our very attempting it is made our crime. But yet if he be exposed, 'tis none of our fault but his own, for 'tis not in any Man's power to make his Notions better or worse than they are; and if we represent them truly, and they prove ridiculous, we cannot help it; but if we do not, it would be somewhat to the purpose if they could convince us of so unmanly a piece of disingenuity, but till then 'tis at best but a very childish thing to complain either of unkind or uncivil Usage.

And therefore, in the second place, it was done much less like a Philosopher onely to give an account of my Assertions

against Mr. *Hobbs*, without taking any notice of our Reasons and Arguments. For if I have charged any thing upon Mr. *Hobbs*, and have not demonstratively prov'd it, I am bound to give publick satisfaction to his memory. But if I have, then the severity of my charge is no fault of mine; and for that I dare and do appeal to the judgment of all impartial Men, whether I have not proved upon and against him all that I pretended to; and if I have, then it is evident that Mr. *Hobbs* has asserted a very wicked Cause very foolishly.

But, lastly, 'tis done still much less like a Philosopher to load me with that invidious charge of traducing the greatest Worthies among the Ancients. For I know no one quality more unbecoming a Man that pretends to letters and civility than an envious affectation of finding fault with the Performances of great Men. This has ever been the creeping artifice of small People to make themselves considerable onely by the greatness of their Adversaries, and it is a practice that I detest as I do Slander or Perjury. And if they could but assign one Instance in which I have in the least wrong'd any learned Man, they should not be so forward



ward to shew it as I would be to confess it. But otheways to insinuate that I spare not the greatest even of the ancient Heroes, is (to say no worse) but a sneaking way of encountring an Enemy, and indeed an inward confession of the want of some better reply. For if they thought they were able to overthrow Arguments in fair Combat, they would scorn to betake themselves to such skulking Artifices. For when all is done the whole merits of the Cause will rest upon the reason of the thing, so that if I have opposed or confuted any of the ancient Philosophers upon good and substantial grounds, I have done them no wrong in doing Truth right. If otherwise, I have not really injured them but my self, and it is in these Gentlemens power, that make the complaint, to demonstrate the fallhood or the folly of my Opposition. But till then I think it becomes not the state and grandeur of a Philosopher to condescend to such poor topicks of Insinuation. But if they will do so, it is all one to me; for my onely design is the pursuit of real Truth, I mean not useles and barren Speculation, but such as is serviceable to the Happiness of humane Nature, and that is  
all

all the Learning or Wisedom that I care for. And if any Man stand in my way, though it be *Aristotle* or *de-Cartes*, *Epicurus* or Mr. *Hobbs*, Friend or Foe, yea though it be *M. Tullius* himself, yes though it be an Angel from Heaven, I must on, and if I am forced to juttle them out of my way, I cannot help it, for I am resolved never to leave it my self.

However it is a vain thing for Mechanick Philosophers to complain of being a little derided, when they so wantonly and affectedly expose themselves to it. For how is it possible for the wittiest Men to come off with better success, that, when we see the whole World framed with such admirable Art and Wisedom, shall undertake to teach the senseless Materials, of which it is made, to be their own Architect? I will and do grant that they were very witty and acute Men, but if they will presume so extravagantly upon their own wit, as to think themselves such almighty Conjurers as to be able not onely to raise all the parts of dead Matter into Life and Motion, but so to inspire them as to make them dance of their own accord into exact Order and Symmetry, I think the greatest right that their  
Friends

Friends can do them is to tell the World that much Learning has made them mad; for it is scarce to be imagin'd that any Man in his right wits could ever so much as dream of so wild a design. It is just as if a Person famous for Architecture should grow so odly conceited of his skill, as to take upon him with the greatest gravity to instruct the World how to build Houses and Palaces without Work-men, by teaching his Art to the Materials themselves, whereby Stone, Morter, Timber, Lead, Iron, Glass shall be enabled to work and contrive themselves into a regular Building; his Friends certainly could never take it unkindly if any Man should conclude him a little beside himself. And yet this is the very case of all our Mechanick Philosophers, that they will be building of stately Worlds without an Artificer. For in that alone lies all their folly, and it is so enormous in it self, that no Man's wit can ever help or mend it. Whereas if they would but take the Divine Wisedom into their Mechanicks, and make their severall ways of mechanism the effects of his contrivance and not the results of blind and stupid Matter, for me they might play at *mechanising* as long and

as variously as they please. But till then I must beseech them not to take it unkindly if some splenetick People cannot hold, and if after this they shall persevere in their complaint, the next thing they can doe will be to pity them. And thus having removed this poor but plausible Objection, that I found spitefully thrown in my way, I may now proceed where I broke off.

Well then, if the physical Ends of things are so obvious in the whole contrivance of Nature, and if they are laid for the groundwork by the Divine Providence, the great lines of Morality that are so plainly interwoven with them, must so much the more evidently appear to have been drawn by the same hand. For things Moral are not so plain and visible in their own nature, as things Physical, or the Rules of Good and Evil so easily observable as the Contrivances of Art and Wisdom; and therefore when those are drawn out of and connected with these, they cannot but derive a greater light from them than they are able to give themselves. Thus for example, there is nothing more evident than that the Sun (whatever other uses it may have) is design'd to give Light and Comfort to this  
lower

lower World, and that the regular motions of one or both are so artificially contrived, as to be most serviceable to this design, in-  
somuch that if any the least alteration were made, it must prove a considerable prejudice to this whole Globe. Now if the same cause that contrived this exact harmony between the Sun and the Earth, has in any part of this Contrivance intimated any Laws of Life, then is it as certain that he as much intends that Mankind should govern themselves by those Laws, as that the Sun should give light to this World.

This connexion between the physical and moral ends of things being thus firmly knit, the first Observation of Nature will direct us to one great end of Morality, and that is universal and mutual Love, Kindness and Benevolence between all rational Creatures, in that the nature of Things is so laid as to make it appear that he that made it, first design'd the Happiness of all, and then secondly to oblige us all to prosecute his own design, has so ordered the natural course of things, as to make every single Man's Happiness to depend upon their honest and sincere endeavours to promote that of the Community. And that is all that is re-  
(c) quisite

quisite to make a Law or enact an Obligation; the first declaring the Will of the Law-maker to all his Subjects, that are capable of observing it; the second engaging their Obedience to it by the Sanctions of Rewards and Punishments. But though this be all that the Philosophers think requisite to be proved upon this Argument, yet here also as I began higher, and founded my Argument of the Law of Nature not upon the bare supposition but the evident demonstration of a Deity, so have I proceeded farther to the certain inference of a future State. For though that be the natural course of things, as they are settled by the Divine Providence, and as far as our Actions are in our own power, that Interest should be connected with Honesty, yet it may and often does so happen that by the voluntary wickedness of other Men they are opposed. What then is to be done in that case? If Interest ought to be preferred, then there is no such thing as Honesty, for then are we cast upon the Principle of all Wickedness, that is, not to care what we do, so it be in order to our own particular Self-design, and if that be once taken up for our Resolution, nothing can ever  
bring

bring us under any true obligations of Vertue and Goodness. If Honesty must be preferred, what recompence shall we receive for the conscientious discharge of our Duty? For in this Life it is supposed that in this case they run counter, and therefore unless the Providence of God have some reserve for it in a Life to come, he has obliged us to a Duty without any sufficient Reward, that is to say, he has obliged us without a sufficient Obligation. So that from hence it is as evident that the same Providence that made the World, and has interwoven in the make of it the Laws of mutual Justice for the attainment of our common Happiness, has withall secured a future state of Reward for all that uprightly comply with his design, because without it, they may, when they have discharged their Duty, be defeated of their Happiness by the default of bad Men. For as all moral Goodness is resolved into that one Principle of seeking the common Good in the first place, so is all Wickedness and Immorality into the contrary Principle of neglecting or opposing it.

Seeing then that all Men have some power over their own Actions (for with-

out the supposition of that all Morality sinks into non-sense and nothing) and seeing we find by too common experience in the Affairs of the World, that good Men when they have done all they can as to the discharge of their Duty and Obligation, may be defeated in this Life of their Reward by the wickedness of bad Men, what can more evidently follow than that the same Providence that has obliged them to their Duty, should secure their Reward in a Life to come. These things are so inseparably connected, that if one be true, all is true; if one false, all is false. So that if there be a Deity, there must be a Law of Nature; and if a Law of Nature, a future State. And on the contrary, if no future State, then no Law of Nature, and if no Law of Nature, no Deity. So that the proof of all the rest ultimately resolves into the proof of a Deity; and that being the most evident thing in Nature, it gives the same evidence to all other Principles that are so inseparably connected with it.

And having brought our Argument to that head, there we may safely leave it, and challenge the assent of Mankind to both the other, till they can rationally quit themselves



selves of the belief of that. And 'tis for this reason chiefly that I have waved all physical Arguments for the Soul's Immortality, because how valid soever they may be, they cannot be so certain (nor indeed any thing else) as the existence of a Deity, which is the most certain thing in Nature, and of which I have as good assurance as of my own Being. Beside I am quite tired out with the dulness of Mechanical Philosophy, with which I must have engaged, if I had undertaken the Physical Argument; but alas when they are not able to give any tolerable account of a Stone's falling to the Earth by meer Mechanism, what wretched work are they like to make of it, when they would make out all the Actions of humane Understanding by the fortuitous workings of Matter. And when Mr. *Hobbs* tells us that *Reflection* upon our own Thoughts is nothing but the *Reaction* of one parcel of Matter upon another, the Notion is just as wise and philosophical, as if the witty old Gentleman had told us, That when one bowling Stone beats back another, the repercussion is Understanding. I know some attempts of the same kind have been made by wiser Men, but as long as they

termi-

terminate in meer Matter, and make the Brain any more than the Instrument of Conveyance between the operations of the Mind and the Body, their discourse is full as wise, as if they would undertake to turn Custards and Mince-pies into Philosophers or Statesmen. And therefore I cared not to meddle with this part of the Argument, because I must confess I was ashamed to be caught at Childs play.

However if there be any Mechanism (as no doubt there is) it is Divine Mechanism, but as for that I will not be so presumptuous as to pretend to fathom it, and though it were easie enough from philosophick Reasons, Observations and Experiments to demonstrate that God has actually made humane Nature something more Noble, yet because there is nothing in all natural Philosophy so evident as the Being of the Divine Providence, and because the future state of Mankind is so apparently connected with it, that alone far exceeds the evidence of all other demonstration. And I have so much the rather pursued this Argument, because though I find it suggested by several Authours both ancient and modern, yet it is not, that I know of, prosecuted

cuted by any. If I would have been more copious than was absolutely necessary, after I had shewn that there was no account to be given of the Providence of God in the Government of Mankind without the supposition of a future State, I might have run through the whole Series of humane Affairs, and shewn not onely how just but how wise the Providence of God is in the management of all things upon this Supposition. But alas when it is once proved that Divine Providence cannot be justified without it, it will immediately and of it self clearly prove how excellently it is quitted by it. All Objections from the real Vanity of this World, and the seeming inequality of Justice towards good and bad Men are clear'd up by the certainty of a future reserve. But the proof of this being so easie and obvious after the proof of the other, it is needless to treat of it apart, because it does not so much follow upon it, as go along with it, and at the same time we perceive that Providence cannot be justified without it, we cannot but see how admirably it is justified with it.

Thus far may we advance by following the nature of Things and the conduct of natural

natural Reason; and it is a sufficient declaration of the will of God to Mankind, supposing that he has endued them with a faculty of Understanding, and that they are pleased to make use of it; for if he has, the connexion of these things is evident enough to any Man that will observe it, but if he will not, he is not capable of any kind of Information, no blindness more incurable than when Men will not see. But as bright as the light of Nature shines, it is but a dimm thing, if compared to that great glory that is reveal'd in the Gospel; there Life and Immortality are brought to Light, so as to be made evident not onely to our Reasons but our very Senses, our belief of it is founded upon visible experiment and ocular demonstration. And that is the Argument of the Second Part, to demonstrate that the original proof of it is on all sides so evidently confirm'd, and so advantageously guarded against all Objections, that it is not possible for the wit of Mankind to have laid the same design, so as to have made it more unquestionable. For that is an undoubted proof of its being a contrivance of the Divine Providence, in that if we would onely suppose that the Providence,

dence of God should set such a design on foot, we cannot comprehend how it was possible to recommend its truth to the World with greater Advantage. And as it was at first attended with all imaginable Evidence, so is the Testimony, whereby the knowledge of it is conveyed down to us, so undoubted and uninterrupted, that if we our selves had been Eye-witnesses of it, we could scarce have had a greater assurance of its truth and reality; in brief, there are so many and so forcible Arguments to prove it apparently true, that I cannot think it too much confidence to affirm that it is scarce possible to be false.

And therefore for the more effectual demonstration of it, I have gone that way to work, to make out its proof from the monstrous and infinite absurdities of Unbelief; and shewn that it must believe every thing that is incredible, all the contradictions to humane Nature and humane Affairs. I have laid the whole stress of my Argument upon the Evidence of the matter of Fact, and for its greater advantage I have leapt over fourteen Centuries, and taken a prospect of things in the same posture, in which they stood the three first Ages of

the Church. For then the History of our Saviour's Reformation was as certain and undoubted to the Men of that Age, as the change of Religion under *Henry* the Eighth is or can be to the Men of this. And here I have so closely traced the Tradition of it up to the very Beginning, that if it had not the Beginning that it pretends to, it could never have had any Tradition. And therefore I shall onely desire the Reader, to suppose himself as near to the time of our Saviour as he is to the Reign of *Henry* the Eighth, and then to consider with himself which way it was possible, that there should ever have been any such thing as the pretence of Christianity in the World, if it had not come with all those miraculous proofs of Divine Authority that it pretends to. And that I hope, if it be made out, is satisfaction enough to any reasonable, nay to any unreasonable Man. It is needless here to trouble the Reader with any farther Account of the particulars of my Argument, because if he desire a view of them beforehand, they are all distinctly drawn up in the following Schemes of the Contents of the several Sections. Where all the chief materials of the whole Discourse

course may be seen, though not the connexion of its parts with each other.

I have no more to say but onely to desire the Reader, to peruse the whole with the same honest and impartial mind wherewith it was written, for I will assure him that I have given the Cause no more advantage than that has given me. And as I may challenge my Reader's Honesty, so I must his Ingenuity too, *viz.* That whereas I have built my whole Argument upon matter of Fact, so he would receive every matter of Fact onely as I have presented it: For some things, and indeed very nigh all, that I have urged, I insist upon as undoubted Records and demonstrative Proofs, yet some few there are that I have onely propounded problematically, and have asserted them not because I thought them any way necessary to the Argument, which though they were granted to be false, stands unshaken upon its own undeniable evidence, but because I thought them more than probable Conjectures, which if true might reflect some little glimmering light upon the main demonstration. Neither indeed do I mention them of my own choice or urge them as any part of my positive proof,

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proof, but onely bring them in by way of objection in answer to the humourfome singularity of some learned Men, who of late affect, out of I know not what vain ostentation, to disparage, what in them lies, the Records of the Christian Church and the Evidences of the Christian Faith. Of

*De Sybill.  
Orac. cap. 11.*

whom the learned Mr. *Vossius* thus justly complains: *Profecto nullos Religio Christiana infensiores habet hostes, quàm ipsos Christianos, cum vix ullum apud antiquos de Christo aut Vaticinium aut Testimonium invenias, quod non complures etiam doctissimi viri labefactare aut etiam penitus evertere fuerint Conati.*

“ The Christian Religion has met with no Enemies  
 “ so fierce as Christians themselves, when  
 “ so many learned Men have made it their  
 “ business to discredit, and, if it be possible,  
 “ to destroy every Propheſie and every Record that might do it service. And this he speaks with regard to the old *Sybilline* Verses, which some of late have so confidently rejected with a scornfull reflection upon the credulity of the ancient Fathers: though beside those miserable slight pretences that they have for their confidence, it is undeniably evident from the very Books them-



themselves that they were composed by some body out of the Writings of the ancient Prophets; so that these critical Gentlemen might, when ever they are disposed to it, as reasonably flee at the Original Prophecies, as at these Translations of them. And this is clear enough as to all those passages that are quoted in the Writings of the ancient Fathers, and that is more than enough to justify their sincerity; but it is by no means ingenuous or indeed honest, to load their credit, as some learned Men have done, with the forgeries of later and barbarous times.

But the things that I chiefly intend in this Premonition are the Testimony of *Josephus* concerning our Saviour, the reconciling him with Saint *Luke* about the Tax of *Cyrenius*, the Testimony of *Phlegon* concerning the Eclipse at the Passion, the Letter of *Pontius Pilate* to *Tiberius*, the *Therapeutæ* in *Philo*, whether they were Christians, and lastly the story of *Agbarus* King of *Edeffa*. All which I first intended to prosecute rather as digressions than as any direct part of my Argument, and therefore though they all prove true (as I think they do) yet I cared not to lay any argumentative

tative stress upon them, because the evidence of their truth is so weak and dusky in comparison of that undoubted and noon-day certainty of the other matters of Fact, upon which I have founded my demonstration. But finding a fantastick and unnecessary coyness in our great Professours of critical Learning against the foremention'd particulars, and that upon reasons very far short of that great confidence wherewith they are pleased to vote them down, I thought it would not be altogether unseasonable to give some little check to this light and wanton humour, by shewing that these stories were not so improbable as these Men would force us to believe, nay, by proving that they are very good and authentick Records, notwithstanding all that they have been able to object against them.

As for the Testimony of *Josephus*, it is well known with what an unanimous cry of the whole Pack it has been run down, and yet upon such lamentable pretences, as would rather amaze than startle any Man to consider them, so that I must profess that upon the utmost enquiry that I can make, I cannot see any the least ground

to doubt. of that particular passage more than of any other in the whole History of *Josephus*. And therefore though I at first intended to use it onely as an accessional proof, yet it does more service than I expected from it, and by its own force makes its own way into the main body of my Argument, and stands there as unmovable as any other Testimony whatsoever. The Reconciliation of Saint *Luke* and *Josephus* is endeavour'd onely to prevent a critical Objection; for though it cannot reasonably be required in a matter so remote, and in a time of so much variety of civil Action, as was the Reign of *Augustus*, that we should be able to give an exact account of the time and circumstances of every particular Affair, and make an agreement among all Writers about it. Yet when both these stories may be made to run clear together onely by making one easie conjecture and mending one obvious mistake, I thought it could not be amiss to propose it to the Reader's satisfaction.

As for the Testimonies of *Phlegon* and *Pontius Pilate*, I cannot see any the least ground of calling the truth of either into question, beside this that the Criticks have  
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got the Itch. And as for *Philo's Therapeutæ* being Christians, his description of them agrees so exactly to the state of the Primitive Church, that it cannot without manifest violence be applied to any other party of Men; so that I take it to be as full a Testimony as any the most undoubted Record of the Christian Church; and in this I am since the writing of it very much confirm'd by an excellent Discourse that I have met with upon that Argument in Dr. *Beveridge* his learned and judicious Defence of the *Apostolical Canons* against all the *Dalleans*, Lib. 3. cap. 5.

And, in the last place, as for the *Edeſſean* story, I will, because I would not be too retentive, grant that it may be more questionable than any of the other; For though there is not the least ground of suspecting the Integrity of *Eusebius*, when he protests that he translated it out of the publick Records of the City, upon which alone I ground my proof, yet it is not impossible but that this story might have been foisted into the Records themselves, and that this learned Man might with too much greediness have swallowed such a strange and surprizing story. At least he could not have  
that

that opportunity of making that exact enquiry into its truth, that he did into the other ancient Records of the Christian Church, because it stood singly by it self, and could not, as the others were, be vouched by concurrent Writers; so that though it were not easie to impose upon *Eusebius* with any forgery thrust upon the Greek Church, yet even he was no more able, as having no better means, to judge of the truth of a Record so remote, than any other Person less learned. And this I say, not because I see any ground to suspect it of forgery, but because I am not willing to lay too great a stress upon it upon the score of its solitude and privacy. For otherwise the weightiest Objections that are made against it, are too light to weigh any thing in my Opinion. These are the two chiefest; First a passage in our Saviour's Letter taken out of the Gospel of Saint *John*, when the Gospel it self was not as yet written: Secondly, such a mistake in Chronology, as antedates our Saviour's Passion three years.

But as for the first, *viz.* *Blessed art thou, O Agbarus, who, though thou hast not seen, yet believest on me; for it is written of me, That*

they who see should not believe, and they who see not should believe and be saved. This passage is of a quite different sense from our Saviour's words in Saint John chap. 20. v. 29. *Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* Where seeing and believing are not opposed, as in the former words to *Agbarus*, but believing upon that rational Evidence which our Saviour had given the World of his Divine Commission, without that certainty of sight that *Thomas* had, is prefer'd as more ingenuous and commendable. But, secondly, it is evident from the words themselves, that our Saviour quotes them not as an historical Record but as a prophetick Prediction, and therefore uses the same form of speech that he does in the Evangelists, as often as he applies the Prophecies of the Old Testament to himself, *ὡς γέγραπται* it is written of me, i. e. it is foretold. But then the difficulty will be where to find out this Prophecie; *Valesius* has spied out a passage as he thinks somewhat like it in the sixth of *Isaiab*, but as the passage it self is very obscure, and cannot without too unnatural a force be brought to parallel this saying,

saying, so I think it needless to accommodate the saying it self to any particular Prophesie, when it agrees so fully with all those innumerable Predictions concerning the stubbornness and infidelity of the Jews, among whom our Saviour conversed, and the wonderfull conversion of the Gentile World to his Faith, who were strangers to his Person and Conversation. Infinite are the passages to this purpose in the holy Evangelists, especially as to the strange unbelief of the Jews, which is every where represented as a thing so monstrously stupid, as if no other account could be given of it than by the utter loss of the use of their Eyes and Ears, as if they neither saw nor heard those things that were daily said and done in their presence. And therefore it is no wonder if our Saviour use this saying of himself without alluding to any particular Text, when it is so exactly suited to the whole Tenour of all the ancient Prophesies concerning his entertainment in the World.

As for the other Objection, if it could be certain, it might be of some moment, but chronological mistakes are so very easie, and indeed in length of time unavoidable,

that all Histories would be overrun with them, were we not directed either by some other passages in the History it self, or by some other contemporary Writers, to find out the faults and mistakes crept into the Copies. So that in such a singular story as this, if there should be any mistake of a Transcriber, we have no means to correct it. And that it is actually so in this case is evident from the great variety of Copies, that are so strangely different, that learned Men could never make any probable conjecture of the certain time of their date, till *Valesius* referred it to the *Edessean* account. But then (say they) according to that it must have hapned in the 15<sup>th</sup> year of *Tiberius*, whereas learned Men are now agreed that our Saviour suffer'd not till the 18<sup>th</sup>, after which time *Thaddæus* must have come to *Edessa*. But be it so, yet the difficulty is very easily solvable, for if the date in *Eusebius* refer (as it is most probable it should) to the time of our Saviour's writing, it falls in exactly enough with the 15<sup>th</sup> of *Tiberius*, in which our Saviour first publicly enter'd upon the exercise of his Office, and went to the Passover at *Jerusalem*, where Profelytes of all Nations were then assembled, and  
whither



whither some might as well repair from *Edeffa* and the parts about it, as the Eunuch from *Ethiopia*, from whom King *Agbarus* might receive his information concerning *Jesus* the same year; especially when the account of the *Edeffean* year commenced from the Autumnal Equinox, which was a considerable time from the Passover, and might take in a great part of the year following, and so include the second Passover. So that if this account be applied to the main transaction between our Saviour and *Agbarus*, and not to the coming of *Thaddæus* (as *Valesius* has done) to *Edeffa*, which was but an Appendix to it, the Chronology is very punctual, and therefore upon the whole matter I can as yet see no reason to suspect the Record of forgery, and that is all that I undertake, *viz.* To vindicate it from the confident but groundless exceptions of learned Men, and desire them till they can produce some more material demurrs against it, that its plea may be admitted. Though otherwise because it is a single and unassisted Testimony, I should be wary of laying any more stress upon it, than as it agrees exactly with all those other innumerable Records, that I think I have

have proved unquestionable. But if I am mistaken either in any of these or any other historical or chronological Nicities, they are no more than the fringes of my Argument, which is demonstrative either with or without them. And now this being premised that the Reader take all matters of Fact as I have intended and represented them, and lay the same stress upon them that I have done, I will upon the perusal of the whole leave it to his own choice to make his own conclusion.

I am not ignorant that it is commonly lookt upon as an invidious thing for an Authour to seem to speak with any assurance of his own performance; but for that I am not concern'd, for I onely make use of my own liberty to judge of the nature and capacity of my Argument, and leave others to theirs. And as I would not be so vain as to overvalue, so neither would I be so formal as to undervalue a Discourse, onely because it is my own, lest by this seeming and counterfeit modesty in my self, I reflect but a scurvy and uncivil complement upon my Cause. For Writers, when all is done, do not create their Topicks of Reasoning, no more than Workers  
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in the Mines do their Oar, but onely dig up such Materials as the Vein will afford. So that if I should pretend to less Evidence than my Cause has given me, I should onely wrong that, for I do not make, but find it. And therefore though I would not forestall my Reader's Judgment, much less upbraid his Ingenuity by pretending too confidently to demonstration, but leave every Man to the result of his own impartial thoughts, yet this I cannot but declare for my own part, That the Evidence that the good Providence of God has given me of my Christian Faith, is much greater than I could in reason have expected, and I am sure much more than I should in modesty have desired. And the satisfaction that upon a thorough Enquiry I have received is so very great, that as much as I think myself obliged to the Goodness of the Divine Providence for the strange work of my Redemption, I think myself not less obliged for the wonderfull and amasing Evidence that he has given me of it. The security of the Gift is as valuable as the Gift it self. For it is the certainty of our Title to good things, that gives our Minds satisfaction in them. And certainly it is the highest contentment.

tentment that humane Nature is capable of, to live, not with a meer fluctuating Hope and unexamin'd Belief, but a just and reasonable Assurance of immortal Happiness. But if in this this following Discourse fall short of demonstration, yet however I am ensured of its acceptance with all good Men from the goodness of its design, which is to doe some honour to our dear Saviour and his Divine Religion. And if by this Undertaking I have done any thing towards that, it is enough, and I may from this time forward as cheerfully, as the good old Man did, when he had his Saviour in his Arms, sing my *Nunc Dimittis*.

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THE  
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A Demonstration  
 OF THE  
**LAW** of **NATURE**,  
 FROM THE  
**NATURE** of **THINGS**;

And of the Future State of Mankind,  
 from the Law of Nature.

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P A R T I.

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§ I. **H**AVING already from all those admirable contrivances that are visible in Nature, and from all those wise designs that discover themselves in the frame and constitution of things, demonstrated that there is a Sovereign Lord and Governour of the Universe: I shall now endeavour in the same method and by the same argument to discover that model of Government that he has set down to himself, and those Laws that he has prescribed to us, and those Sanctions by which he has recommended them to our practice; And here I shall desire nothing more to be granted me than what I think I have sufficient right to demand, *viz.* what I have already proved, that there is a God, or an Authour of the Universe, and that is the last result of this Enquiry; for if

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there be no Deity, there is an end of our present Disquisition, and we must turn back to the former Question, which must be determin'd before we can proceed to this Enquiry: but that being granted, the other unavoidably follows, that if the world be govern'd by a divine Providence, there are then some certain Laws and Rules of Government. And therefore the *Epicureans*, when they would take away all natural Obligations to Religion, Justice and Honesty, first endeavour to free the minds of men from all apprehensions of a Divine Providence; for it is certain that without a Lawgiver there can be no Laws; so that if there be no Deity, or if the Deity that is, have no Regard to or Knowledge of humane Affairs, he can neither prescribe any thing to our Actions, nor abet his Prescriptions with Rewards and Punishments. These men are consistent with themselves and their Principles, but Master *Hobs*, that he may be constant to his own way of contradicting himself as well as all the World beside, has given us a Body of Natural Laws that were never enacted by the Authority of a Legislator; for upon that one absurd Supposition he founds all his Morality, beginning his Hypothesis from a supposed State of Nature, in which nothing is or can be just or unjust, which can never be supposed, if there be a Deity, and to suppose it, is to suppose no Deity; and then whatever Laws the Philosopher afterwards provides for the Government of the World, they are made Laws by himself, and require Obedience without the Will and Command of a Governour. And there is the whole Mystery of all his Politicks, by this sly Supposition to leave the Deity out of the Government of the World; and without it there is no difference between his Laws of Nature and those of all Mankind: for though he boasts himself the

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Founder of all Morality, yet he gives us the very same that have been acknowledged in all Ages, onely we must not receive them upon the Authority of God, but upon his own; for by virtue of his own Wit, after he has discarded the Authority of God, he has (as he thinks) found out a way to make them obligatory to all the World. But how ineffectually to his own purpose and how inconsistently with himself I shall not now trouble my self to enquire, having elsewhere sufficiently proved that by that one Supposition he has irrecoverably let all Mankind loose to all manner of Wickedness and Vilany. But if we will own any Laws of Nature to any material purpose of Life, we must first suppose a supreme Governour, by whose Authority they were enacted, and to whom we are accountable for our Duty and Obedience. So that all that remains to be accounted for is, to demonstrate from the Nature of Things a Divine Institution of the Law of Nature enjoying its Observance to all Mankind. For if the Nature of Things were made and contrived by a wise and intelligent Cause, that proposed to himself some Design in the Contrivance of every part, then whatever Effects result from the Nature of Things as they stand contrived and constituted by him, are to be ultimately resolved into his Providence. And therefore whatever Notions or Observations are imprinted upon our Senses or upon our Minds by outward Objects, he is as much the Cause of all such Impressions as if they had been stamp'd upon us immediately by himself. If then from the Observation of the Nature of Things that present themselves to our Senses we are made to understand that such Actions produce such Effects, it is the same thing as if we had received our Information from the supreme Authour himself, because he has on purpose so contrived them as to make it neces-

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fary for us to take notice of that Information that is given us by their being so contrived. And herein consists the Institution of the Law of Nature, that God has signified to us his own Design and Intention towards Mankind in the Contrivance of it, and has induced us to pursue the same Design with himself by Rewards and Punishments resulting from the Nature of Things as we comply with or disobey his Will. For that is all that is proper or necessary to make a Law, or to pass an Obligation, first, to declare the Will or Command of the Legislatour; secondly, to enforce Obedience to it by consequent Rewards and Penalties. So that if it can be proved that the Authour of Nature has signified any certain Rules of Life to Mankind by the very Order and Frame of Nature, and that he has farther made them obligatory to all the World by making the same necessary connexion between the Duty and the Reward as there is between every natural Cause and Effect, their Obligation will be establish'd upon no weaker Grounds or Proofs then of certain Demonstration, and we shall have the same Assurance that they are design'd for the Rules of our Actions as we can have that any natural Cause was ordain'd to produce its natural Effect: And it will be as manifest from the whole Constitution of Nature, when it is consider'd and reflected upon, that God intended Mankind should govern themselves by such certain Principles as that it is the Office of the Sun to give Light to the World. This is the thing that I here attempt to prove and hope to perform. And the Proof of it will consist of these two parts, first, to demonstrate the Publication; secondly, the Sanction of the Laws of Nature.



§ II. 1. As to the Sufficiency of the Publication of the Law of Nature, the plain Account of it has been obscured by nothing more, then that it has alwaies been described and discoursed of in metaphorical and allusive Expressions, such as *Engravings*, and *Inscriptions*, and the *Tables of the Heart*, &c. As if the Law of Nature consisted of a certain number of Propositions that were imprinted upon the Minds of Men, and concreated with their Understandings, by attending to and reflecting upon which they were instructed or bound to govern their moral Actions. Perhaps this may be true, and God may possibly have put some secret Notices into the Minds of Men for the greater security of Justice and Honesty in the World; but then, beside that there is no way to prove the Certainty or demonstrate the Obligation of any such inward Record, this plainly resolves the Authority of the Law of Nature into uncertain and unaccountable Principles, or such as may be pretended, and, when they are, ought to be admitted without any Proof or Evidence of Reason, and this amounts to no more then all the idle and precarious Pretences of Enthusiasm; and whatsoever some Men affirm or fancy to be written upon their Hearts must immediately pass an Obligation upon all Mens Actions, and the Finger of God may be as wildly pleaded in all cases that are not to be accounted for by the Principles of natural Reason and Conscience, as the Spirit of God has been. But though that influences the Minds of Men with secret and undiscernible Impressions, yet it must not be made use of to warrant the Lawfulness of any Undertaking; but that must be decided by the common and avowed Rules of Vertue and Religion; because it is certain that the Spirit of God always acts according to their Intendment and Direction: so that

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by them we must judge of its Impulses, and not suffer our selves to be determin'd in any Affair, but where they will abet or justify our Proceedings, whether we really are or are not acted by any other Principle, otherwise there could be no certain Rule of moral Actions.

And thus too may Men that are bold and confident call every thing the Law of Nature that they have a mind or fancy to, without being bound to give any Proof of its Reasonableness or Account of its Obligation; it is no more but calling it the Law written in their Hearts, and then it must right or wrong pass for the Universal Law of Mankind: so that after this rate there will remain no certain method whereby we may discern mens own Fancies, Prejudices and Inclinations, from the true Dictates of right Reason and the natural Grounds of Good and Evil.

And therefore these Phrases are not to be taken in exact propriety of Speech, but only in a loose and popular way of Expression; and so they were intended by those that first used them, that only alluded to the known Customs and Solemnities of enacting Laws, that were always wont to be declared and published to the Subject by Writing or Proclamation; and in allusion to this they came to describe the Law of Nature by the Voice within, the Book of Conscience, the Tables of the Heart, &c. because the Laws of Nature are as certainly declared reasonable and obligatory by the State of Nature, as if they had been written upon our Minds by the finger of God, or proclaim'd by an audible voice to our Consciences.

However, Though we should allow them in their literal sense (and so, for any thing I know, we may) yet we can never derive the certainty of their Obligation from such uncertain Suppositions, at least we  
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need not, when they are so clearly demonstrable from Reason and Experience, from the Observations of Nature and the Necessities of Life, from the Advantages of Justice and the Comforts of Society; this gives a complete and satisfactory Account of their Authority to the Minds of Men, and they may come to a sufficient Knowledge and Understanding of their Duty by their own Thoughts and Reflections without any other declaration or express discovery of the Will of God.

And this seems to be the meaning of Saint *Paul* in his description of the case of the *Gentiles*, Rom. 2. 14, 15. where it is observable that he describes the Law which he affirms to be written in their Hearts (in allusion to the Mosaick Tables) not by the common expression of *Κοινὰί ἐννοιαί* general Notions or Instincts of Good and Evil, but by the word *Λογισμοί* Reasonings, or such evident Results or Conclusions as it is natural or at least very easy for the Mind of Man to make from its experience and observation of things; for the Heathen World had no other Objects to exercise or entertain their Thoughts withall, but what Nature presented to them, and therefore those Reasonings of their Consciences that Saint *Paul* here speaks of, must of necessity be deduced from this Principle and no other.

And thus are the Laws of Nature drawn forth into use and bound upon the Conscience, not by any express Voice or immediate Impression of the Legislator, but by vertue of the workings of our own Minds and the unavoidable Results of our own Consciences, that as long as we act sincerely and meditate impartially upon the Nature of things, will lead us into some knowledg of our Duty and convince us of the reasonableness and necessity of our Obedience.

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There is no man so desperately dull and stupid as not to be able to perceive and examine the Truth of the first Problems in Morality, when (as we shall prove) they are so evident from the whole frame and constitution of Nature, and when they are found so usefull from all the experience and observation of humane Life, that it is even impossible to open our Eyes or to look abroad without observing their Goodness; so that we cannot suppose any Person to live without any sense of Vertue and Religion, without supposing such a brutish Stupidity as can scarce be supposed incident to a Rational Creature.

But if any Man will choose inadvertency, and resolve to make no serious Reflections upon the most common Objects that present themselves to his outward Senses, there is nothing in the World so plain or so obvious that he may never so much as take notice of. But then this is such a brutish Affront to his Nature, such an affected and wilfull sottishness, that it is of all Crimes the most unnatural and inexcusable. It is indeed not impossible but a Man may be so wretchedly regardless of all things as never to have made one Observation all his life-time, and to be ignorant even of the Truth of that Proposition, that the whole of any thing is bigger then a part of it; but then nothing can ever be pleaded to excuse such a palpable brutishness and inadvertency; and all the World will impute so gross an Ignorance to the most shameful and unpardonable neglect of his natural Abilities; and no Man will ever pretend in his behalf that he wanted sufficient Means for making the discovery.

And thus it is in the first and fundamental Principles of good and evil; they are so legible in the whole Contrivance and all the Appearances of Nature; they are so necessary to the Being and Preservation of Mankind;

kind; their Equity is so apparent and their Convenience so obvious in every Action of humane Life, that no man can reflect upon any thing either within or without him, but it must make him sensible of their Obligation; and he that does not perceive it, is guilty of the same unconceivable Stupidity, as the Man that should pass through the World without ever knowing that twice two make four.

§ III. For there are but two Rules of humane Actions, either the greater or the smaller Morals, as the *Platonists* divide them.

The first takes in all the great and fundamental Principles of Morality; whose evidence is so notorious, that it is not possible for an Upright man not to discern their Goodness and Obligation; and whose Usefulness is so common and diffusive, and so necessary to the good of all Mankind; that it is not so much as possible for any Society to subsist without some regard to their Authority: and in these great and fundamental Measures of good and evil all Men and all Nations agree, the most civil and the most barbarous People consent in the first Principles of natural Religion, and the first Provisions of natural Justice.

We have no reason to believe there are any Corners in the World void of all Notices of a Deity and all sense of Humanity; and though some men that may tell us any thing what they please, are pleased to tell us that there are, yet they give us very little ground to credit their Report, because their Converse in those places was so very short, and their Enter-  
course with those People so very imperfect, and with-  
all their Languages so utterly unintelligible to one  
another, it is easy enough to suppose the Inhabitants  
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might have divers Notions of which Strangers were not capable of making the least Observation, no nor so much as any Enquiry; at least it is sufficient to destroy the Credit of their Testimony concerning their Manners and Customs, when the best Information they were capable of was so imperfect and so incompetent.

But however, suppose there were any part of Mankind so desperately debauched as to live without all sense of God and good Manners; yet there are none so much as suspected of so great a degeneracy, but such as give us too manifest Tokens of extreme Sottishness and Stupidity as to all the other Necessities and Conveniencies of Life, and that live altogether like the brute-Beasts heedless and regardless of themselves and their own Natures, without making any reflections upon their own Minds, or improving any observations from their own Experience.

Now I will not deny but that it is possible for Creatures so utterly supine and negligent, to be ignorant of the most common and most obvious Notions of things. For all Knowledge is the effect of some Attention; and if Men will not attend, they deprive themselves of all means of Information; If they will not make use of their Faculties, it is not the certainty nor the evidence of Truth that can force or obtrude an Impression upon their Minds; and though perchance it is possible that the Almighty Power of God may overcome their Dulness, yet this is violent and preternatural, and it is not to be expected that he should alter the course of Nature only to repair our wilfull Sottishness; for that were to destroy the Principles of all Morality and to make us incapable of all practice of Good and Evil by forcing, *i. e.* destroying our Wills. And therefore humane Kind must be govern'd

vern'd in an humane way, and not be overpowred by any such forcible and vehement means as may offer violence to its Liberty. So that when the Divine Providence has done all that is fit or necessary to bring them to the knowledg of their Duty, it must after all be left to their own Power and the freedom of their own Choice, whether they will or will not make use of the means that he has left them for that purpose.

And therefore as to this it matters not whether the natural Law be written upon the Mind of Man or the nature of Things. For wheresoever it may be recorded or howsoever collected, it cannot be drawn forth into use and practice without the help of Reflection. And though it were properly *ῥῶμα ἐπιτετα* a certain number of Propositions imprinted upon the Heart or Conscience of Man, yet he may as easily take no notice of what is legible within him, as not observe what is plainly deducible from the whole frame and constitution of Nature without him, in that the knowledg of both depends entirely upon his own Animadversion.

So that if the Author of Nature have made any sufficient discovery of his Will and Pleasure either by Instinct or by the Order of Nature, that is a sufficient Provision for the due government of Mankind, and the common welfare of the World; and though there are some few in it so monstrously dull and sottish, as not to take the least notice of the most obvious Truths, yet that is meerly the defect of their own Will, and not any default of his Wisdom; and it is enough to secure the common good, that their usefulness is so great and notorious, that it cannot but be observed by all that make any use of their Understandings. And thus is the Consent of Nations a great

proof and confirmation of the Laws of Nature, for though their differences are numberless as to casual and arbitrary Customs, and as to their municipal Laws, and their more remote and less usefull Rules of Morality, yet as for the great and fundamental Laws of Justice and Religion, they are vouch't by the Catholick Consent and Practice of all known Nations both Civil and Savage.

The belief of a Deity, the obligation of Oaths, love to Parents and gratitude to Benefactors; and to doe to all Men as we would be done to our selves, are catholick and obligatory all the World over, and are the Laws of Nations as well as Nature, or (as *Aristotle* expresses it) are of the same force in all places, as fire burns every where alike, and is of the same use in *Greece* and in *Persia*. And these if attended to will provide competently for the great necessities and the main duties of Mankind, and from them may easily be derived all other emergent and subordinate Rules of Good and Evil; though it is not to be expected they should be ratified with the same consent of Nations, and require an equal Obligation in all times and all places, because their Usefulness is neither so great nor so certain; and by consequence not so likely to be attested with the same agreement of Voices: For where the Evidence is not so very notorious and the Obligation so very reasonable, it is an easy matter for Men to differ in their Perswasions about them.

Especially if we consider how Mankind are everywhere more or less determin'd by uncertain and casual Principles, by wild Customs, by superstitious Fancies, by National Interests, &c. and therefore though all the World agree in the first and fundamental Principles of Morality, yet they differ endlessly



lessly in deducing and drawing forth particular Laws from them into use and practice ; and all Nations have their own proper Usages, that they set up to themselves as the Rules and Measures of Civility and good-Manners, and judge all People wild and barbarous, whose Practices do not agree with their own National Customs.

And from hence it comes to pass that many Propositions are reckoned into the Laws of Nature, that derive all their Authority from accidental Prescriptions, or at most from emergent Cases of Necessity ; for it may and often does fall out that an Action may be highly usefull at a certain time or place, and so be fit to be established into a standing Law, and yet may afterwards by change of things lose the ground and reasonableness of its Institution ; and yet if it have once been honour'd with publick Reputation, and have perhaps acquired a religious Opinion with the People, it is not after that to be revers't or violated without the most horrid and unnatural Impiety ; and those Nations are supposed to be fall'n from all the good Principles and Inclinations of humane Nature, that live in contrary or but different Customs. And this is in no other Instance more remarkable than in the several ways of Burial and Ceremonies of treating the Dead, which though they are capable of no other Decency or Determination than what is derived upon them by the manners of the Place, yet are they everywhere lookt upon with a religious Reverence ; and therefore all that use different Customs must be lookt upon by the People at least as brutish and unnatural.

But setting aside such fancies as have no other obligation but of old Usage and strong Conceit, the differences about the real Laws of good and evil are neither

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ther great nor many, at least among the better-manner'd and more civil Nations, *i. e.* among such as have consider'd the reasonableness of things and the conveniences of Life; and if men will be upright in their Endeavours, and honestly and impartially weigh the Reasons and true Accounts of things, though they may and always will differ in their Perswasions, and entertain very hard and unkind Opinions upon the account of their Differences, yet their Errors can neither be very wicked nor very dangerous. Integrity ensures both their own Innocence and the Divine Acceptance; for the man that really pursues his best apprehensions of things can never fall into great and enormous Mistakes, and if he run into less important Miscarriages, he may be secure to have them discharged upon the score of his Sincerity: And when God has prescribed him no particular Rules of Duty, but left him to the conduct of his own Reason and Observation, and when the Man has followed the best notices of things that he was able to discover in his circumstances and according to his abilities, it is as certain as that the Almighty is good and just, that he will accept the uprightness of his Purposes and the worthiness of his Endeavours.

So that in these less material and more remote Instances of Morality the Divine Wisdom has sufficiently provided for the government of the World and the Happiness of Mankind; for if they will but attend to the first Results of their own Minds, and the most evident Principles of good and evil, and guide their Actions and Sentiments by a respect to them, they can never be dangerously deceived or abused in all other apprehensions of things, so that all the difficulty that is required to secure our Obedience both to the greater and the lesser Laws of Nature is plainly no  
more

more than to resolve to be honest and upright Men; If they will, that alone will instruct them in all the Obligations of their Duty: if they will not, it is certain all the Revelations in the World can never master wilfull Perverseness or Ignorance; and this is enough to prove (if it prove true) that the Providence of God has not been defective in making sufficient Provisions for the government of Mankind.

The other Rule of Manners comprehends all the Laws and Prescriptions of Decency that serve chiefly to adorn and set off the practices of essential Goodness; which though it be beautifull and amiable enough in it self, yet it appears much more lovely to the World, when it is accompanied with handsomeness of Address and Behaviour, and that is the proper meaning of Civility and good-Manners; in opposition to Rudeness and Barbarity; it is not to be practised and disciplined in Formalities and fashionable Gestures, but it is confined to the exercise of Vertue, to take off all seeming sullenness and austerity from it by the smoothness and agreeableness of Conversation.

But then all its Rules are the results of Prudence and Wisdom, of Custom and Observation, and are not (as the former) capable of any certain determination, and especially because they depend upon and are only to be determin'd by that infinite variety of Circumstances that are incident to humane Actions; and though in some emergent cases a prudent Man may possibly miss in arts of Ceremony, yet he can scarcely fail in the more material Rules of Decency. However to be ready at them and exact in them requires rather wit than integrity; and therefore though they are great advantages to Vertue, yet are they no parts of natural Morality, and so are not to be sought for

for from the nature of things, nor to be consider'd among the Laws of Nature; and by consequence have no concernment in our present Enquiry. Only give me leave to prescribe one general Rule concerning them, because its Observation is of so very great usefulness to the real interest of Vertue.

And that is that every man for the wise and decent management of himself and his own Affairs would have a special regard to the capacity of his Nature and the particular tendency of his Humour. For beside that all strein'd and forced Behaviour is plainly undecent, it probably betrays men into unhandsome Shifts and Actions, in that nothing is more uneasy than to carry on an humour that is unnatural; and then when they have entangled themselves in streights and difficulties, they are forced to break loose by false Stories or false Promises, or some other unjust and unworthy Artifices.

Thus severe men can never sustain the Person of the courtly and the facetious, but will quickly run themselves into such inconvenient Obligations, as they can neither handsomly keep nor honestly break: and therefore it is not only a Rule of Prudence but of Honesty not to affect unnatural Imitations, but that every man live after his own manner, and provided the design of his life be vertuous, that he pursue it in his own way. Thus men of quick and ready thoughts, that know how to meet with suddain turns of Affairs, and can foresee probable Events and Contingencies of things, may be more reserved and designing in the prosecution of their Ends, because they are to be obtained by nothing so much as Secrecy, and whenever they are discover'd, are defeated.

But as for Persons of a more blunt and downright humour, that are not nimble or foreseeing  
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enough to way-lay all changes, it is more advisable to live with more openness and simplicity of manners, and to pursue their Ends rather by Courage than Dexterity, it is more becoming their Person and more usefull to the World; so that as long as the cause of Vertue and the good of Mankind lie at the bottom of mens Intentions, it is not material which way they work out their Ends. But every man must perform his own part in his own way, *i. e.* as Nature has furnisht him with Abilities, and so he abstain from fraud or violence (that directly contradict all pretensions to Vertue) he may behave himself in all Entercourses of life, either with closeness or openness of Address, according as he shall find himself most able to manage and maintain the humour.

Now these smaller Morals being fil'd off the Account, because though they are pretty ornaments of civil Conversation, yet are they not absolutely necessary to the happiness and security of Mankind, which is the only Principle by which we are to guide our selves in our Inquest after the Laws of Nature; reckoning therefore no Rules into their Account, but such as apparently provide for our natural and common Necessities; we shall find their Obligation as evident and unavoidable as their Necessity; and though this might be proved beyond all contradiction by an induction of Particulars, yet the clearest method of Demonstration is to reduce all particular Cases to one general Head, in which all the rest are apparently included, or from which they are unavoidably deduced.

§ IV. And that is universal Justice or Humanity, or so much love and good-will to all Mankind, as obliges every man to seek the welfare and happiness of the whole Community and every Member of it,

as well as his own private and particular Interest ; and this one Proposition ( if once consented to ) is enough to restrain him from all wrongs and injuries ; in that they never proceed from any other Principle than too much love and concernment for a man's own self, without any regard to the good of others ; whereas had he any affection for their welfare together with his own, he would have no inducement to invade their Rights for the enlargement of his own Propriety.

And this becomes more forcible upon his Mind, if he be seriously convinced that the most likely way to improve or secure his own private Weal is to consult and promote the common Good ; and that his own happiness depends so much upon his contributing, according to the measure of his ability, his serious endeavours to procure the good of all, inasmuch that it cannot possibly subsist but in conjunction with it and subordinate to it, and yet all this, Nature it self declares to every man that will observe it, and that is all that is needfull to establish a Law or pass an obligation ; and this is the thing that I say is so plainly observable from the whole contrivance of the Universe, that it cannot possibly escape any Man's knowledge without wilfull Ignorance and Perverseness.

And now if this one general Rule be so legible in the nature of things, it draws after it all the particular obligations of Vertue and Honesty, and whoever is upright in his Intentions of behaving himself in all things according to the best of his Understanding by its guidance and direction, cannot easily fall into any considerable mistakes or miscarriages in matters of Justice and Equity, but must necessarily quit himself like an honest man in all entercourses and towards all Relations.

And yet the reasonableness and necessity of this Rule is so obvious, that a man cannot so much as look abroad into the Fields without being inform'd of its Obligation; for there he beholds the Fruits of the Earth provided for the preservation and the comfort of the life of Man, which himself can never expect to reap and enjoy, unless he will be content with the Comfort of his own share, and allow every man else his lot and proportion; So that the knowledg of this Vertue and the benefit that accrues to every man by it requires no deep and philosophical Speculation of things, but is plainly visible in the most common prospect of Nature. In which it is certain that the provisions made for the preservation and the comfort of the life of Man were made by the Authour of Nature for the use and benefit of his whole Family, so that if any one or some few should go about to engross them to themselves and exclude all others from partaking with them, they cannot but be conscious to themselves that they act cross to their Maker's design. And as it is certain that God design'd that all his Offspring should share in the Blessings of his Providence, so is it certain that they cannot be enjoyed but by mutual help and kindness; so that every man as he is concern'd to enjoy his own share is obliged to love and assist his Neighbour, at least to suffer him quietly to enjoy his. And this brings every man to understand all the Benefits of Peace and Society, that are so many Rewards naturally annex to the several exercises of this Duty. But because the generality of men are not so sensible of Rewards as Punishments, I shall rather choose to demonstrate the great Benefits of this Vertue of mutual love and kindness by the horrible mischiefs that must follow upon the general breach and dissolution of it: and they are so great

that though it were only to prevent and provide against them, it were abundantly sufficient to recommend its practice to Mankind, For it is manifest that if they once betake themselves to contend and scramble, and live in a perpetual state of war, every man taking care for no more than one, and standing upon his own guard in defiance to all the World beside, they will only hinder one another from the common Enjoyment of all the necessary Provisions of life, and instead of living securely and cheerfully upon the bounty of Nature, they must unavoidably destroy both that and themselves too; for certainly no man can ever expect to be safe or happy, that has all the World to his Enemy, and yet that would be the condition of every man, if we all pursued our own Interests without regard and (whenever it happens) in opposition to the welfare of all others.

What a miserable and distracted World would this be, if every man's care and kindness never reacht beyond himself? Our Lives must be for ever poor and solitary, and infinitely more unsafe than Hares and Foxes and Vermin, and we should all without a Metaphor be worse then Wolves to one another; always insecure and uneasy, eaten up with jealousies and suspicions, troublesome to our selves and to all the World beside, and in continual fear and danger from the whole Creation; and yet in spite of all our vigilance and industry every man's Life would be short and his Death violent.

All this is so manifest at first view, that one would wonder how a late Authour could be so wild as well as wicked in his Conceits as not only to define the State of Nature to be a State of War, but to lay down this Supposition as the only fundamental Principle of all Government and Morality: for if that be the State



of Nature, to which Nature-it self would guide and direct reasonable Men, though they were under no obligation of Laws or Covenants no nor Deity, then certainly the State of Nature must be a State of Peace and Friendship in that it is so apparent from the plainest and most familiar Observations of things, that Mankind is furnisht with sufficient Provisions for the necessities and comforts of life, if every man would be content with his own moderate and reasonable proportion; but if not, that then their lives must of necessity become for ever forlorn and miserable, and that they would all be so far from being ever secure in their own enjoyments, that it would be plainly impossible for every or any single Person to defend himself against the fraud or the violence of all the World beside.

If this (I say) be so visible from the very first Observation of things, Mankind cannot be supposed so wild and extravagant (unless we can suppose them all perfectly mad and void of all sense of wisdom and reason) as naturally to fall into a state of mutual hatred and enmity, when that were so manifest a contradiction to the first dictates of their own Understandings, and the most obvious directions of the nature of things. And therefore they can never come into this inhumane condition of life, till they become so unwise and so unnatural, as to act against all the principles of their own Reasons, and all the suggestions of their own Interests. So far is this from being the original State of humane Nature, that (without the supposition of a Providence) nothing can ever betray men into it but the most unnatural and unreasonable folly in the World.

So that though we could suppose that humane Race sprang out of the Earth without dependance upon or obligation to any Creatour, yet if we will be pleased  
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only to suppose them endued with the Faculties and Apprehensions of Men, they would naturally fall into a condition of Peace and Society, it being so evidently every Man's Interest to seek and procure it. So that this imaginary State of War is just so much the State of Nature as it is for all Mankind to be Fools and Madmen. But if it be more natural for this sort of Beings that we call Men to be guided in their Actions by the nature of things and the convictions of their own Minds, and the love of their own selves, that will immediately reverse the whole train of their Thoughts and Inclinations, and bend all their Designs to a quite contrary course of life, and instead of every Man's falling upon every Man he meets (as that Hypothesis imagines) he would court his Friendship, though he had no other motive to it, than that by his help and assistance, he might the better secure his own safety.

And if it be natural for every man in his wits to seek and desire that (which no man in his wits can ever doubt of) 'tis as natural to enlarge his Friendships and Dependances, in that as many as he endears or obliges, so many he engages to his service and defence; so that so far as Men live according to the first Principles of Nature and Discretion, so far do they endeavour after the love and good-will of Mankind, because their safety and happiness is greater or less according to the number of their Friends or Enemies; and therefore every Man as he is concern'd to secure his own quiet, is concern'd to secure the good-will of all Men, and to procure it by being as unfeignedly concern'd for their welfare as for his own.

For that is the most proper and effectual method to engage any Man to seek or consult my Interest, to convince him that it is most serviceable to his  
own;

own; so that the strongest motive that can be propounded to court his benevolence, is to persuade and satisfy him that it is the most natural and most probable way to endear me to his cause and service; and therefore upon the same Principle that every Man is inclined to seek his own private good, unless he will directly cross with his own designs, he is obliged to seek the publick too, *i. e.* the good of all others within the sphere of his own Power and Capacity.

But now if he be so plainly directed to this by the nature of things, and if the nature of things were so framed and contrived on purpose by a Wise and Supreme Cause; that is a sufficient Indication to Mankind, that it is his mind and will that they should govern themselves and their Actions by its direction; because, as I premised at the beginning, the whole train of natural Effects are ultimately to be resolved into his Providence, that is the only cause of the nature of things, and of all the properties that result from it; and therefore if the usefulness and necessity of this Rule be so evident in the whole Contrivance of Nature, it is the Authour of Nature that has made it so; and then there is no avoiding the Conclusion without downright and wilfull perverseness, but that he intended that those of his Creatures, that were able to make Observations upon his Works, should take it for the Rule of their Actions.

So that if there be an Authour of Nature, this is a demonstrative proof of the Law of Nature; and no Man can desire a greater Evidence than he has or may have of the truth of that Supposition. For if there were no God, 'tis certain we can be under no Obligation; but if there be one, and if he have so clearly discover'd his Will in all the Effects of his Providence, he has done all that can be required to establish

blish it into a Law, and declare it a matter of our Duty.

So that by the same method that we arrive to the knowledg of the Supreme Cause, are we forced into an acknowledgment of his Sovereign Will and Pleasure; and if from all the wonderfull and curious Contrivances that appear in the nature of things, it be reasonable to conclude that they were so disposed by a Wise and Intelligent Being; the very same Appearances that discover him, discover his Intention too. And therefore whoever goes about to avoid the Obligation of the Law of Nature, must first casheir the Being of a God; and then indeed (as I observed at first) our work is done; for it is in vain to vindicate the Goodness and Wisdom of his Providence, if there be no such thing at all; for that destroys the matter of Enquiry and the Supposition upon which we argue; and then we must betake our selves to a new dispute, and prove the Existence of a Deity; and when that is granted, we may then and not till then, proceed to demonstrate from all the Effects of his Providence the Obligation of his Laws. And that is all that can be demanded or need to be performed, upon supposition of a Supreme Governour of the World, to assign by what Laws he governs it; and he is a very unreasonable Man that requires greater Evidence of the Being of a Law, than can be given of the Being of the Lawgiver himself; and if we have so much, we have enough and all that we can justly desire, and he that would have more, is not to be satisfied without a contradiction.

This then being granted that there is a Sovereign Cause of the Universte, which must be supposed in the order of Nature, before we can proceed to any farther Enquiry; the best and easiest way to find out the

the rules and methods of his Government, is to reflect upon the naturall order and tendency of things; for that being altogether contrived and design'd by himself; it manifestly discovers to all that are able to observe the connection between causes and effects, what he principally intends and aims at.

So that all things in Nature being so order'd as to inform every Man that the happiness of all Mankind and every member thereof is to be obtain'd by mutuall Benevolence, and by nothing else, that is a clear and satisfactory evidence to them all, that as it is the end of all his purposes, so it is his intention to oblige all his Subjects to act in pursuance of the same design. And what could be done more effectually to engage them to it, than to let them know (if they will know any thing at all) not onely that it is his own will and pleasure by that order that he has establish't in the world; but also that he expects that they should comply with it, as they intend to enjoy all the comforts and escape all the miseries of life; and that he has done to purpose, when he has made every Man's private Good so manifestly to depend upon his sincere and serious Endeavours to promote the Good of all, with the same necessary connexion as naturall Effects do upon their naturall Causes; and therefore seeing we have such an ample assurance of the nature of our Duty, and such vehement Enforcements to perform it, we have all the conditions that can be required to bring us under the Power of a Law or an Obligation to Obedience.

§ V. Now this sense of mutuall Benevolence, as it contains in it all the duties of Justice and Equity, and is able (if attended to) without any other direction to preserve men honest and vertuous in all their entercourses of life, so it erects (without any train of

Consequences) the two things, that are the most necessary to the happiness and security of mankind, *Society* and *Propriety*; in that it consists in nothing else than a just and reasonable Division of every Man's Love between himself and the publick, *i. e.* between himself and all others to whom his Power and Concernment reaches.

Now if there be a common interest, in which every Man is concern'd, as he is concern'd in his own, that is it that makes Society; and if no Man from the naturall condition of his faculties be able to carry on either the one or the other without having a peculiar share divided and appropriated to himself for the exercise and employment of his industry; it is that that assigns and settles propriety; so that both these result immediately from the constitution of nature, and are as evident to any Man that observes the natural frame of things, as any experiments in naturall Philosophy, or problems in Mathematicks, and resolve themselves into such propositions as these, that those causes that preserve the whole, preserve its parts also; and that those that preserve the parts, preserve the whole; but for a fuller and more distinct demonstration of both, we shall prove and consider them apart.

And first as for Society; it is absolutely necessary to the support and comfort of the life of Man; for were this once dissolved, and should Mankind once betake themselves to the Woods and the Deserts, and imitate the manners of wild and unsociable Creatures, they must subsist by destroying and preying upon each other; and then the most innocent would always be the least secure, as never being apt to invade other mens rights, and lying always exposed to other mens wrongs and injuries; and on the contrary the most injurious would always upon that account  
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be the least unhappy, ever studying to enlarge the bounds of their Power by wily and unjust Invasions; and then the wanton and the violent Leviathan must at length devour all, as being the cruelest, and so more apt; the strongest, and so more able to oppress the rest.

( Whence that saying of one of the Ancients that Laws and Societies were established for the sake of wise and good men, *viz.* to preserve them from the injuries and oppressions of the bad; for as much as if these would but be content to prescribe bounds to their appetites, and moderate their desires by the capacities of Nature, they would never be disposed nor invited to encroach upon other mens enjoyments; but whilst their Appetites are unbridled and exorbitant, and not restrain'd within the necessities and conveniences of Nature, they must be invading the Shares and Proprieties of their honest and harmless Neighbours to satisfy their wanton and unreasonable Humours.

This then is the proper end and usefulness of Society, to institute a common Amity and Friendship amongst men, to unite multitudes together into combinations of Friendship, to endear them to each other by mutuall Offices of love and kindness, and by a joynt defence of their common welfare against all foreign Injuries and Invasions; so that to be just and honest is onely to be true and faithfull to our Friends; and were Mankind as faithfull to one another as the condition of their Nature requires, and the Author of it expects, there would be no need of civil Laws and Penalties, that are onely a second and subsidiary help to force a few bad men to preserve that amity and friendship, which, were they good and vertuous, they would choose of their own accord, as most reasonable in it self, and most agreeable to humane nature.

So that this is plain, that if Men will but reflect upon the Condition of their Natures; consider the insufficiency of their own personal Strength to their own Security; observe the necessity of a publick Concern in order to the preservation of every Man's private Interest, that alone (unless they were in good earnest resolved to work their own destruction) would combine and embodie them into Societies to maintain each others Rights by a common Assistance against all the Invasions of Fraud and Violence. And without this what could be more wretched, forlorn, and melancholy than the Life of Man? for if we suppose him in that State of War, that as our Authour tells us, could we suppose him out of Society, must be natural and unavoidable, every Man must then live in perpetual dangers, fears and jealousies, seeing he must have every Man to his Enemy; and is not his Condition sufficiently desperate, that must trust to his own single Strength and Wit to guard and defend himself against the Fraud and Violence of all the World beside?

There is nothing more obvious than that this eternal Warfare is the most improper State for the Happiness of Mankind in general, or the security of every Man's particular Possessions and Accommodations; and that is it certainly destructive of all those Comforts and Advantages, that are to be reaped from and enjoyed in a State of Peace and Society. And therefore no Man that has any kindness for himself can ever think it wise or reasonable in it self, or well-pleasing to their Maker, for all men to continue in such a State, in which they must all for their own security be obliged to seek their own mutual Mischief and Destruction.

And if a State of War and Anarchy be so manifestly uncomfortable, that alone is a sufficient Direction



to all men in their wits to think of conditions of peace and mutuall defence; and men must be supposed so cross grain'd to themselves, that they must wittingly choose to thwart both their Interest and their Reason, before they can reconcile their minds to any other thoughts than of Love and Society. And if it were possible ever to imagine Mankind out of a condition of Government, we can never conceive them so absur'd, as to choose to continue in a posture so unsafe and so uncomfortable.

And therefore it is as wild as confident an assertion of our Philosopher of *Malmsbury* to lay it down as the fundamentall Principle of all Government, that Mankind is inclined and determined by Nature to acts of mutuall hatred and hostility. For what does he mean by the nature of Man? If those passions and inclinations that are common to him with other Creatures; even that is manifestly false as we shall prove in the sequell of this discourse by an induction of particulars, in that every thing in humane nature has a vehement tendency to acts of love and good-will.

But suppose his brutish part to be wild and savage, yet if we take in the whole account of our Nature, and onely suppose our selves intelligent and rationally Beings, nothing will appear more extravagant than to affirm that nature inclines or rather (as he determines it) forces us into a posture of War and mutuall Cruelty; and here it is not at all materiall whether Reason be an innate faculty, or onely an acquired habit and result of Experience; but 'tis sufficient to my purpose that every Man has or may have ability and sagacity enough to observe what tends to, and what contradicts his own happiness; and to govern his appetites and passions, so as may be most serviceable to the comfort and chearfulness of his own life.

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And then it is as absur'd to say that it is naturall to Mankind to hate and destroy one another, as that it is prudent and reasonable for every Man to follow such courses, as are apparently contradictory to his own safety and interest, for nothing is more plainly so, and more freely acknowledg'd on all hands to be so, than a State of perpetuall war and enmity; and so it is largely enough represented by the Author himself of that Hypothesis. So that if it be most naturall to Mankind to love their own ease and happiness, and to use and pursue those means that are absolutely necessary to its attainment, then it follows unavoidably that nothing is more naturall than to seek peace and friendship, without which the life of Man must of necessity be sadly unsafe and uncomfortable.

So that we can never suppose it naturall to every Man to quarrell with every Man, till we can suppose it naturall to all Mankind to be raving and bedlam mad, and to endeavour by all violent means as well to make away themselves as to destroy one another; and when we have supposed that, it will then (I must confess) not be impossible but that his Philosophy may meet with some entertainment in the World; but as long as men are content to continue in their Wits, they will always judge it most naturall and most reasonable to choose such a method of life, as is at least consistent with their own quiet and safety, and by consequence will abhor nothing with a more naturall Aversion than thoughts and designs of an eternall War, that is so palpably inconsistent with it.

And as for what is pretended of the equality of all mens strength by nature, that it causes mutuall fear, and that mutuall fear puts them upon mutuall violence, every Man endeavouring to secure himself by  
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anticipating the attempts of every Man. This is so far from being any likely motive to contention, that there cannot be a more effectually Argument to persuade and force men to Friendship, and to assist and oblige each other by all the Offices of love and kindness.

For if their Forces are equal, so is the danger of the Combate too, and if they engage it is possible they may both perish by the event of War, at least the Victour cannot gain so much by his Enemies destruction as he ventures by the hazard of his own life; and therefore seeing there is so little advantage to be got in this way of defence, every Man can have but very little reason or inclination to make use of it for his own safety. And then beside as their power is equal to injure, so it is to help each other; and if I employ my strength for anothers benefit, that is the likeliest way to oblige him to a just and honourable Requitall; and certainly his inclination to do me good turns is somewhat more comfortable than his displeasure or hostility; and therefore it must needs be a much more forcible inducement to win his good-will by Anticipations of Friendship, than to provoke his rage and revenge by invading his Rights, and making the first Assault upon his Life and Liberty.

But if we farther consider how vastly every single Man's Power is surmounted by the Power of all men, and how unable one man is to defend himself against the violence of a multitude, and withall how much his interest is secured and enlarged by the accession of all mens love and assistance, then if men are by nature bereaft of their understandings, if they are born possess'd with wild and lunatick Spirits we might suppose they would all run raving and foming up and  
down

down the World, and every Man fall upon every Man he meets with, and that for no other reason than because they are an equall match, so that if he did not give, he must take the first blow.

But if we suppose them in their right minds, with any sense of humanity or discretion about them, able to reflect upon the great advantages of mutuall Benevolence, and the horrible mischiefs of a perpetuall Hostility, it is easie to imagine how ready and forward such sober People would be to oblige one another by kind and civill Treatments, and to rejoyce in any opportunities of doing good Offices to others for the Comfort and Cheerfulness of their own lives. So that the result of all this dispute, *viz.* what use men would naturally make of their Power upon one another from the consideration of its Equality; is onely to enquire whether Mankind be by nature in or out of their wits; if the former may be taken for granted, the case is very plain that men (unless they are alter'd by preter-naturall distempers) are creatures tame and civill enough; but if it must be presumed that they are all naturally frantick, and void of all principles of reason and sobriety, that indeed will be a proper foundation for the Hobbian Politicks, and upon that supposition it is possible they may be allowed; I am sure they never can upon any other.

And as for what is farther pretended of the passion of fear, the desire of Glory, and some other affections of humane Nature, that they naturally dispose men into a posture of mutuall violence. This too is onely credible upon the former supposition; for if all Mankind were acted purely by unaccountable humours and whimsys, and were driven upon the wildest and most extravagant attempts without their own consent and deliberation, then indeed we might  
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suppose they might be hurried upon rash and fool-hardy actions, they know neither why nor how.

But if these passions (how vehement soever) are or may be brought under the conduct of reason and discretion, and if we have so much power over them, as that we may (if we please) not indulge them any farther than may be consistent with our own quiet and tranquility, then the Question is what course a prudent man would take to gratifie these inclinations. And that is answer'd from the premises that any Man in his wits, whatever he designs, would endeavour to carry on all his projects in ways of peace and civility; and especially if he were afraid of all other Men, he would think it his wisest course rather to court them by offers of friendship, than to provoke them by injuries and ill-turns.

So that the inclination of these passions can onely be accounted for in conjunction with the Reasons and Understandings of Men; and then what way a prudent man would naturally determine himself, that must be supposed their naturall tendency. They are not capable of any certain determination from themselves, but receive their Biass from the bent of Mens designs and resolutions, and may be inclined either way as they choose to act rashly or advisedly; and the same passions that make Fools and Mad-men turbulent, make all Men in their wits modest and peaceable.

And here to this purpose it is pretty to observe that when Mr. *Hobbs* treats of War and the causes of War, it is then manifest in that Chapter that Men are forced into it by the violent passions of Fear, and Hope, and Glory; but then when he proceeds to discourse of Peace and the inducements to Peace, the same passions are ready to serve his purpose thereto, and the

very same naturall causes may be assign'd either for War or Peace as it pleases him and serves his turn and his cause. But after this rate of talking it is an easie matter to prove any thing out of any thing, it is no more than first to lay two propositions together, and proceed to say this follows that, though there be no other reason for it, than because it did not go before it, and that is an Hobbian Demonstration.

But this may suffice to shew that as mutuall Benevolence is necessary to the happiness of Mankind, so is society necessary to the exercise of mutuall Benevolence; and if so, then if there be a supreme Governour of the World, that is an unquestionable proof of its Institution by virtue of his Authority; in that without it, it is manifest he can never obtain the end of his Creation, which (if it be any at all) must be the happiness of his Creatures, a thing plainly impossible to be hoped for without the benefit of Society.

Especially when he has vested all Mankind in an equall and common Right, to the comfort and felicity of their Lives, and when we know that he desires and intends the well-fare of all his Off-spring, and when he has made that to depend so unavoidably upon the care and the safety of a common Interest; all that is a sufficient declaration of his will to all his Creatures, that are able to observe and reflect upon that order of things that he has instituted and establish't in the frame of his Creation, that he expects they should pursue the same end with himself (which is the good of all) and make use of such means as are absolutely necessary to its attainment (which is Society) especially when he has farther enforced it by such powerfull Rewards and Penalties, as to annex every single Man's Happiness to the performance, and his Misery to the neglect of this Duty.

§ VI. Secondly, as for Propriety, it is as plainly instituted and enjoined by Nature, or the Authour of Nature as Society; and that upon these two accounts, in that every Man's naturall power and capacity is limited, and that unavoidably and by it self introduces a limited use and enjoyment of things; for no Man can claim a greater right from Nature than he is capable of enjoying, and therefore seeing that is fully provided for by a parcell that is proportion'd to it self and its necessities, he cannot challenge by virtue of his naturall Right any power over the Remainder; but will be content to leave whatsoever he cannot enjoy himself to other Mens use and advantage; and certainly that is very reasonable to allow our Neighbours to challenge their share of happiness when our own turn is fully served and satisfied. So that Nature by setting bounds to the capacities of our Appetites and Enjoyments thereby plainly determines the limits of our Rights, without setting them forth by any other lines and descriptions.

For the right of Nature neither is nor can be (as some Lawyers and Philosophers have wildly enough defined it) any such state of life in which Mankind may be supposed free from all manner of Laws and Obligations, because this very supposition is made inconsistent and impossible from the Nature of created Beings, which can never be supposed to exist without depending upon and being subject to some superiour Power, and that implies or at least inferrs their Obnoxiousness to Duty and Obligation; and then his will or pleasure by whatsoever means it is reveal'd and discover'd becomes the measure both of their Duty and their Liberty.

And therefore it must needs be a wild account of things that supposes any right of Nature antecedent

to the Law of Nature, because it is so flat a contradiction to the naturall state of things, that carry conscience of Duty and engagements to Obedience in their very existence; and therefore to suppose them to be, and not to be subject to the law of Nature or the will of its Authour, is to suppose them both to be and not to be at the same time. And though Man be made a free Agent, that is endued with a Power to doe whatsoever pleases him, yet Power is not Right, but the right use of Power is; and when he does or desires such things as are fit and consonant to his Nature, he observes its Laws and maintains its Rights, because he is allowed every thing that is naturall and forbid nothing but what is not.

So that the Law of Nature is no restraint superinduced upon the desires and liberties of Nature (as it is generally conceived) but it is such a rule of life as is most agreeable to the naturall state of things; and it is onely a regard to that that determines the measures of our Duty, and from thence the bounds of our Liberty. Naturall Justice consists in restraining our desires to our naturall Appetites, all that exceeds them, it forbids; that is the Law of Nature; all that does not, it permits, and that is the right of Nature; so that it is plain that Nature sets bounds to it self by the limitedness of its own Being, and that it is impossible there should ever be any state of Nature capable of an unlimited Right, for its Liberty can never be greater than its Capacities, and therefore if its Powers are confined within certain measures, its Rights must be restrained to the same allowances, for it is apparently absurd to say that any Man has a right or a licence to doe more than he can doe.

So vain a conceit is it to suppose that in the state of Nature every Man has a Right to all things, when it  
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is so contradictory both to the nature of things, and so inconsistent with the reasonable claims of all other Persons; and supposes no less absurdity than that Nature and right Reason advise a Man to engross to himself whatsoever he can, though it be of no advantage to himself and injurious to all the world beside; than which nothing can be conceived more disagreeing with the state of Nature and the dictates of right Reason; for that being of a limited capacity, every Man's understanding cannot but inform him that he ought to challenge no more by virtue of its Right, than what it is capable of enjoying; and if he do, that then he claims it in vain and to no real purpose, and that certainly agrees neither with the dictates of Nature nor of right Reason.

So that though we should remove the Divine Providence out of the world; yet notwithstanding the Right or at least the Necessity of Propriety would arise from the naturall constitution of things; which will direct every Man to confine his desires to his Appetites, and when he has his own share of happiness to content himself with its enjoyment, and not to disturb himself or defraud his Neighbours without encreasing his own felicity, a thing so apparently absurd that nothing can be more so, than to suppose that this is the naturall humour of Mankind, and especially of the wiser part of it.

But then if we suppose a Divine Providence, (as here we must do) we must suppose too that he has given us all a naturall Right and Claim to our portion of happiness, from whence it follows that it is but just and reasonable, and agreeable to his will that every Man should be willing that others should have Liberty to enjoy their own proper share of Felicity, as well as he desires to enjoy his; because the same Pro-  
vidence:

vidence that vests me in a Right to my own Propriety, has granted the same Right to all Mankind beside; and therefore naturall equity and regard to his Sovereign will commands me to be content with my own allowance, and to suffer them to enjoy what is allotted to their share. So unavoidable is the Institution of Propriety from the limitedness of our Natures and their naturall Capacities.

And therefore following the supposition that there was once no Propriety, and that all the World lay in common to all its Inhabitants, yet the Nature of things would have directed them to a division, it being so plainly necessary both to the preservation of the whole species and of every individual Man. And so all rational Creatures would be obliged by the same Law, and with the same Sanctions to establish Propriety, by which they are obliged in obedience to their Creatour's will to promote the publick good. And yet this very supposition is a flat contradiction to the naturall condition of Mankind, every Man being born in a state of Society and limited use of things; for, as Mr. *Hobbs* himself states it, we are no sooner born, but we are actually under the Power and Authority of our Parents, so that it is as naturall to Man to be in subjection as to be born. Neither for the Proof hereof is it needfull to appeal to the Testimony of the sacred History or any other ancient Record concerning the Original of Mankind, humane Nature it self is a demonstration of its own beginning, for seeing it cannot subsist but in individuals, and seeing every individual Man is mortall, there must be some other cause of the whole race of Mankind. And he having so disposed the natural condition of Men as that no Man can come into the World but in a limited state of things

things, that is a demonstrative evidence of its Divine Institution.

2. But then Secondly, we are forced upon it in that as single Persons cannot enjoy their own Lot, so neither can they contribute their Assistance to the publick good but by a limited and appropriated use of things, for their naturall Powers being of a finite and contracted force as well as their naturall Appetites; they can serve the Common-wealth onely according to the proportion of their Abilities, and therefore seeing one man cannot do all things, it is necessary every Man should take some particular task for the carrying on of the publick Welfare.

And if right reason *i. e.* the mind of Man guiding it self by an upright observation of the Nature of things, commands every Man to seek and endeavour the happiness of all Men, it commands us to confine our endeavours within the reach of our own Activity, for it can require nothing but what is possible by Nature, and therefore its Obligation must stint it self to the bounds of every Man's Power, and so it promotes the Interest of the Community by engaging every single Member of it to do his own work and mind his own business.

So that whoever performs the duty of his Station and Employment, serves both himself and the Common-wealth; in that the Prosperity of the whole arises from the Industry of the severall Parts, and their Industry cannot be employed without assigning them distinct Offices and divided Interests; for till that be done it will be impossible to prevent those eternall Quarrels and Contentions, that must arise about the limits of every Man's Right, and the proportion of every Man's Work; and whilst they are taken up with their own picques and animosities, the Earth must lye unculti-

uncultivated and the publick Weal neglected, from whence nothing else can naturally follow but perpetual want and misery.

And the most common experience informs us that there is no way of avoiding or ending Contentions but by dividing the common Interest into particular shares, and setting out every Man his own Propriety, so plainly does there follow from the fundamental principle of seeking the publick Good an Obligation upon every Man to accept his own Lot, and to leave all others undisturbed in theirs, whereby he fully acquits himself as to all the duties of Justice or Honesty, whether publick or private.

And for this Reason has the Divine Providence distributed among the Sons of men variety of Abilities, whether naturall or artificiall, suitable to all the needs and conveniencies of humane life, that so by a joynt contribution of every Man's Talent and Faculty, all our wants may some way or other be tollerably supplied; so that to do good Offices cannot so properly be said to give as to exchange Favours; and they are duties of Justice rather than Charity; every Man stands indebted by the bonds and engagements of Nature to cast his Symbol into the publick Stock, and therefore if he expect to enjoy the industry of other Men without making any return of some service of his own, he does not onely cheat them, but he robs and defrauds the whole Society. And he that carries on no designs of good but purely for himself, is not onely wretched and nigardly, but he is false and injurious.

In short all the Laws of Justice and Society are contain'd in that one excellent and comprehensive Rule, Whatsoever ye would that Men should doe unto you, even so doe unto them. And therefore unless a Man  
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would be content (which no Man can be) that all other-Men should mind nothing but their own meer selves, and that in opposition both to his own and the publick Interest, he is unjust or does not as he would be done by, if he perform not to others the same Offices that he expects from them, in all his respective capacities: but if he does, he is an honest man, a good Neighbour, and a good Subject, and discharges all that can be required of him towards all Relations.

So that Propriety and Commerce are so far from being of any positive Institution, that Mankind are forced upon it by the first necessities of Nature, and naturally fall into it for their own subsistence and preservation. Its benefit is so obvious and its practice so unavoidable, that Men betake themselves to it almost antecedently to their Reasonings. The limitedness of every Man's own Nature confines him to a certain Propriety, and the convenience of his own life invites him to trade and transact with others thereby to partake the use of their Proprieties as well as his own; for that is the proper advantage of Commerce to improve and enlarge the comforts of life by mutuall Exchanges, whereby every Man enjoys what every Man possesses.

And this is the naturall Originall of dominion too, that is nothing else but a lasting and continued Propriety; for if at present I have a Right to a divided use of things, both for my own preservation and the common Good, their future enjoyment has the same Relation to the future security of both, as their present has to the present, and therefore it is as naturall and as necessary that I should be vested with a perpetuall Power to hold my Estate against all other claims and pretences hereafter, as it is that I should use

or enjoy it at present ; and that is all that we mean by Dominion. This may suffice in general to shew how plainly Nature , and God by Nature informs Mankind of these great and fundamental Duties of Justice and Morality ; their Knowledge is so obvious as to make their Obligation unavoidable.

§ VII. But beside this undoubted signification of his Will, that he has given from the Constitution of all things without us, he has farther secured our regard and obedience to it from the Constitution of all things within us : there is no Faculty or Passion in humane Nature that does not incline us to, or rather enforce us upon their Observation, insomuch that we cannot neglect them without doing violence to all our own Inclinations as well as affronting all the dictates of Reason, and the directions of Nature. I shall not insist upon all Particulars, but shall content my self with onely these Three.

1. The natural Activity of the Mind of Man.
2. Its natural Sense and Appetite of Happiness.
3. Some natural Instincts and Inclinations of humane Nature.

All which necessarily leade to the Knowledge and engage to the Practice of the Laws of Nature. All which will amount to no inconsiderable proof of the abundant care that the divine Providence has taken to acquaint us with the nature of our Duty, and to endear it to our Regard.

1. The natural Activity of the Mind of Man ; it cannot avoid to reflect upon its own Nature, and observe its own Inclinations and Faculties ; and by that means it immediately perceives it self to be a thinking or a reasonable Being ; and then it is as natural to it to act suitably to the condition of its Nature, as

it is to all other Creatures to follow the Instincts and Appetites of theirs; for as the brute-Beasts are prompted to pursue agreeable Objects by an inward Sense of their own Desires and Necessities; so is Man inclined to act rationally by that inward Assurance he has that he is endued with Reason and Understanding; and that alone is sufficient to bring an Obligation upon him without any other express and positive Command.

For as by this Reflection he is lead into the Knowledge of Himself and his Nature, so by that Knowledge is he instructed in the Rule of his Duty; which is onely to live and behave himself as becomes a reasonable Creature; and in that consists the morality of his Actions; so that from the Nature of Man, and from the Knowledge of his own Nature (of which yet it is impossible for him to be ignorant) results the Sense and the Conscience of his Duty; because he cannot so much as reflect upon himself (and yet that he cannot avoid) without being conscious of the Faculties of his Mind; and when he is so, it is not more necessary to follow its Dictates and Suggestions, than it is to inform him how to satisfy his natural Appetites, or to teach him that when he is hungry or thirsty, it will be convenient for Nature to eat or drink. His own inward Sense is enough to convince him of their Use and Comfort, and that without any other Instruction minds him of seeking such Objects and doing such Actions as will please and satisfy his Appetites.

The case is the same as to the suggestions of our Minds; to be sensible of them is of it self sufficient to oblige us to act accordingly; and therefore there is nothing more needfull to acquaint Mankind with the Obligations of the Law of Nature, than onely to let

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them know that they are rational Creatures; and it is as easy for them to know that, as it is to know that they are. But as it is unavoidable for the Mind of Man to understand it self and its own Abilities; so is it to take notice of all such things as are any way presented to its Observation, and then to reflect upon its own Knowledge, and then to weigh and consider the nature of its Objects and to compare them among themselves, and out of all to draw Conclusions for its own Use and Satisfaction; especially when it perceives it self employed in such matters as have any considerable influence upon its own Welfare and Contentment.

And yet such are all the first Apprehensions of Things, they thrust and obtrude themselves upon our Thoughts, and are so obvious and so perpetually before our Eyes that it is scarce in our Power to shift their Notice. Thus has every Man a natural Notion of Pain and Pleasure, and he feels by daily Experience what things are gratefull or unpleasant to the respective Faculties both of his Body and Mind, and those he pursues and these he shuns with a kind of fatal Necessity.

So that if he will but attend honestly to his first Observations of Things, that alone will leade him into a clear and distinct knowledge of his Duty, *i. e.* to apply himself to such a course of life as he apprehends and feels to be most serviceable to his own Interest. And that a very little Experience (if he be at all upright) will convince him, is rather to be obtain'd in the ways of Justice and Integrity than of Fraud and Violence; and this, if he will be true to his Principles, immediately enters him upon the serious Practice of all moral Vertues. So that upon this account too it is impossible for any Man to avoid the knowledge



ledge of his Duty without wilfull and affected perverseness. He must choose to be ignorant of his own Being, he must resolve not to reflect upon the most common Objects of his Senses, or to act cross to the most necessary and unavoidable Convictions of his own Mind, before he can ever think of reconciling himself to unjust and vicious Practices; and if so, then can no Man ever pretend that he wants competent Means to bring him into a sense and an acknowledgment of his moral Obligations.

For in the result of this Principle there are but two things necessary to a Life of Vertue, and they are Consideration and Integrity; both which are so entirely within our own Power, and so easily secured without pains or study, that no Man can possibly fail in either of them without wilfull Prevarication. As for the first it is (as I have already proved) natural and unavoidable to the Mind of Man, that is of so spritely and active a Temper, that it cannot subsist without thinking and reflecting upon its own Thoughts, and of this every Man is convinced from the workings of his own Mind.

When he is at leisure and free from all other Employment, that is seldom or never Idle, but is always framing some Conceits and Apprehensions of Things, and entertaining it self with its own Thoughts and Reasonings, so that it is so far from requiring any strength of Intention to consider of Things, that it is scarce in any Man's Power to avoid it: Especially when there are so many outward Objects that perpetually thrust themselves upon his Observation, as all the Appearances of Nature do; so that at last there is nothing more requisite to make him acquainted with whatsoever that suggests, than onely to take notice of what he cannot but behold. And such Animadversions

madversions are so familiar and so importunate, that to overcome their force and vehemence, a Man must first take no little pains to stifle and neglect them; so easy is the knowledge of the Laws of Nature, that no Man can escape it without labour'd Ignorance.

And then as for Integrity, it is so far from requiring any new task to secure it, that (unless we will wilfully pervert the workings of our own Minds) it unavoidably follows upon Consideration: For certainly there is nothing more natural or more agreeable than for a Man to act suitably to the Dictates and Results of his own Thoughts; and the Man that determines to act otherwise, resolves to be cross and peevish to himself and his own Counsels; so that if Men will but onely suffer themselves to follow the plainest Directions of their own Minds and Judgments, that alone will keep them Upright and Innocent as to the main and most important Matters of their Duty.

And that is enough to secure the Welfare of Mankind and the Peace of Societies, and to satisfy every Man's own Conscience, and to obtain the Divine Acceptance, in that he does all that can reasonably be expected or demanded from any Person in his Condition; and to suppose that the Almighty requires more, is plainly to destroy the Goodness and the Justice of his Providence. For if once he exacts of any Man beyond the proportion of his Abilities, he may as reasonably impose all the impossible things in Nature, in that there are no degrees of Impossibility; so that if he injoyn me any one thing that is never so little above my Power (so it be but above it) he may as well injoyn all the Contradictions that are impossible to Omnipotence it self, for to Me and my Powers they are both alike Impossible. So that unless we will

will (and that in defiance to our own experience) charge God's Government of the World with the most petulant and unreasonable Tyranny, it is manifest that there is nothing more easie or more obvious in Nature than for Mankind to know his Will and procure his Favour ; it requires nothing more than not to be wilfull Sots and Fools.

§. VIII. The Second Principle that forces us into a knowledge of our Duty is that natural sense and desire that every Man has of his own Happiness ; the apprehension and the appetite whereof result from the first and the strongest instinct of Nature, in that it is without doubt natural to Mankind, as well as to all other Creatures, to love and desire their own Welfare, and consequently to consider by what means and in what methods it is attainable. And now the bare proposal and prosecution of this design immediately brings every Man into a sense of all the main duties of Morality.

For, upon the serious consideration of the nature of Things, he cannot but discern in the result of all, that Justice and Benevolence has a more effectual tendency to procure his Happiness than Fraud and Oppression.

And then, if, upon the force of that persuasion, he set himself upon resolutions of Vertue and Honesty, he will, by a little care and experience, gain such a skill in their practice, as Men usually do prudence and dexterity in the management of those Affairs that they choose for the serious employment of their Lives. For they, according to the sagacity of their minds, quickly grow subtil and curious in their own proper business ; so as to be able to perceive the less discernible degrees of advantage and disadvantage, and to follow them

them with greater readines and to improve them with greater art.

And so is it if they make it any part of the design of the business of their Lives to look after and obtain their own Contentment, and so betake themselves to those courses and manners of life as are most apparently serviceable to that end; they cannot but arrive at a competent knowledge and sufficiency, not onely in the great and fundamental rules of Morality, but in all the subordinate measures and less observable circumstances of good and evil. So that it is made almost unavoidable, even from the very first instinct of Nature, but that all Men must have some sense and notion of their Duty, because it is impossible but they must sometimes have some thoughts and some designs of being happy; and then if they act in order to it, according to the dictates of their own minds and the directions suggested to them by the nature of things, they must determin themselves to pursue it in such ways as are agreeable to both, *i. e.* by living according to the Laws of Nature and the Principles of Integrity.

Or by being sincere in their pretences of Kindness and Benevolence to all Men, and faithfull to this Principle in their Entercourses and Transactions with them, which alone will easily leade them into the knowledge and bring them under the obligation of all the Duties of Morality; because they so naturally arise out of this Principle, or are rather so apparently contain'd in it, that whoever embraces it as the best Rule of his Actions, and the most usefull Instrument of his Happiness, cannot, as occasion is offer'd, but acknowledge himself bound to act according to the rules and prescriptions of all the particular Vertues that are but so many ways and means of pursuing this one general End: And in whatsoever capacity we consider Man-kind,

kind, if we are resolved to seek our own happiness in conjunction with the common good, (and yet nothing is more manifest than that it is not to be compassed upon any other terms) this will secure a worthy and honest behaviour in all regards and towards all Relations.

Thus take them in their greater or their lesser Societies, this still enforces them to pursue what is usefull or necessary to the good of all; some things there are necessary to the welfare of Mankind in general, and these take in the fundamental Rules of Morality and the Laws of Nations; (which are nothing else than the Law of Nature, as exercised between Nation and Nation) and some things there are that are usefull to one City, or a certain Body of Men united under one civil Government, and these are provided for by national and municipal Laws; and some things there are that have a peculiar Influence upon the good of particular Families, and these direct to us the performance of all œconomical Duties as we stand engaged in our severall domestick Relations; and lastly, some things there are that relate onely to the concernments of single Persons, and by these is every Man obliged to deal justly and candidly in all his affairs and transactions.

So that if Men have any sense of or design for their own Happiness, and if they will be upright in the use of those means that they cannot but understand to be most effectual to procure it, this alone will irresistibly drive them into a sense and acknowledgment of all their respective obligations. And in the same manner might I proceed to draw forth the whole System of all moral Vertues from this natural appetite of Happiness; but that is too large an undertaking, and more than is necessary to our present purpose; it is enough

that if Men will follow their own natural Instinct of self-love, and take those courses as cannot but appear to themselves most agreeable to it, that this alone will guide them into a sufficient knowledge of all the rules of Good and Evil.

§ IX. Thirdly, The observation of this Law is farther recommended, and in some measure secured, by its agreeableness with all the Appetites and Inclinations of humane Nature; all our natural desires are not onely just and reasonable in themselves, but they incline us to such designs and actions, as naturally tend to the good and welfare of Mankind. And if there be any practices that have a more remarkable consonancy to our Reasons, and are of a greater necessity to our Happiness, they are peculiarly gratefull and acceptable to our strongest Instincts and Appetites.

So that before a Man can cast off his Obedience to the Laws of Nature, he must doe violence to all its Inclinations, and pervert the bent of its first Impressions as well as affront the dictates of his Understanding, *i. e.* Injustice and Cruelty are Unnatural as well as Unreasonable; and all Men are guarded and prejudiced against such attempts by the temper and constitution of their Natures; that recoils at an unjust or an unkind action, and has some affections so tender, that they cannot naturally endure to entertain injurious or wicked designs; and withall so strong and vehement that they force him to a prosecution of the most commendable acts of love and kindness.

So that though they were not establish't into Laws, nor received any Sanction from the meer inclinations of Nature (though that they must, if we suppose an Authour of Nature) yet are they thereby endear'd to  
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our care and observation ; and that is a very considerable advantage to secure their credit and reputation in the world ; in that it is impossible for any humour to keep up its esteem for any time, that is not acceptable to Nature : and therefore how much soever Men may labour to debauch their Minds by wicked Customs and affected Impieties, yet in spite of all their sturdy Resolutions, natural Affection will at last overcome, and there are very few (if any) that can so far harden themselves as to shake off or vanquish all natural Endearments. But for a more satisfactory account of this Principle it is necessary to specify some particular Passions that incline Mankind to a love of Society and Good-nature, or (in other words) to Justice and Friendship and Honesty.

1. Conjunction of Sexes for propagation of the kind: and this becomes necessary from the same Causes that are necessary to the preservation of every single Person, and this not onely inclines but compels them to delight in each others Society, with the highest Affections of mutual Love and Kindness.

So that they cannot take care of their own support without being obliged to extend their Affections beyond themselves ; and this inclination is of greater force and has a stronger tendency to Society in Mankind than in any sort of Creatures, in that it is constant and perpetual, and not confined to certain times and seasons ; and that makes them more capable of these tender impressions : and thus are the generality of Men carried on by the instigation of Nature, as well as some other motives to seek Marriages, and take upon them the care of Families and the education of Children ; and that obliges them to Justice and Civility as well for the sake of their domestick Relatives as for their own.

For the preservation of Propriety is as necessary to the preservation of Families as of Persons; and therefore as I would not provoke my Neighbour to invade my own Enclosures, I must avoid to lay waste or plunder his; and as I would secure my own Plantation, it concerns me to oblige the affections and assistance of all others that lie within the compass of my Affairs, *i. e.* of all that are able to succour me with their Friendship or annoy me with their Injuries.

And thus are we all enforced to neighbourly kindnesses from the same principle that endears us to our nearest and natural Relations, and this concern extends it self from House to House through whole Kingdoms and Countries; for every Man has the same tenderness for his own Family as for himself, and therefore are they all equally concern'd to have their Rights kept safe and inviolable. And thus are great Empires and Common-wealths but so many Combinations of so many Families for their own mutual defence and protection; and now if Men are strongly inclined by Nature to enter into Families; and if a regard to their own Families oblige them to be just and honest to their Neighbours; and if both these combine them together into greater Societies, both for their private and their common Safety, the Institution of Government is so far from being any far fetch't contrivance, that it is natural for Men to fall into this Order; its necessity is so great and so apparent, that no Man can refuse or dislike it without being very unwise or very unnatural.

2. The strength of natural Affection between Parents and Children; and this proceeds from the same mechanical Necessity with the passion of Self-love; *Eurip.* Ἀπαισι δ' Ἀνθρώπων ἄρ' ἵν' ψυχὴ τέων, in that they are made up of the same material Principles that  
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necessarily beget a sympathy between their native Contextures and Dispositions; so that setting aside the workings of their Minds and the improvements of their Understandings, that alone must quickly oblige natural Relations to mutual Endearments. The propriety of their Constitutions and the peculiar mold of their Bodies disposes them to agreeable passions and inclinations.

Children are, (as the Ancients phrase it) *ὑποπαύματα*, pieces of their Parents, and the matter of which they are formed is stamp't with the same Characters and Propensions. And this is very visible in the outward signatures and features of their Bodies; but it is much more certain in the inward complexion and modification of their humours; and it is impossible but that must breed an agreeableness of temper and affection. At least from whencesoever this *σοφὴν* may arise, it is evident from the most universal Experience that there is no passion more natural or more acceptable to Mankind; insomuch that no people were ever able to resist or to overcome the vehemence of its bent and inclination; neither were there ever any able so much as to attempt it, unless here and there such a Monster, as affected both to put an affront upon the strongest principles of his own Nature and the most avowed practices of Mankind.

And their singularity is so unnatural, that how boldly soever these wretches may seem to pretend to it, they can never be confident or serious in such an enormous baseness. It is impossible for any thing that has the shape or the bowels of a Man to be cruel to his own off-spring without a sad regret and recoil of his own Nature. And now when this Instinct is imprinted upon us with such deep and lasting Characters, when the force of its inclinations is so strong and vehement;

herent; and when it is very nigh as natural and inseparable as the love of our selves, it is a mighty inducement to seek peace and exercise good will as well for their sakes as our own.

Beside that this endears us to something out of our selves, and obliges us to some concernment beyond our own meer self-interest, and is the first beginning of a Society, and lays the first foundations of a publick Good, that spreads it self into a wider extent with the increase of Families and Kindreds, which being related to each other as well as single Persons make up Kingdoms and Common-wealths; beside all this, it cannot but be a mighty inducement to all persons to settle Peace or Obligations of mutual Love as well for the sake of posterity as for their own, in that it is equally necessary to the happiness of all Mankind in all times and all places; and therefore as they desire the happiness of their off-spring (which yet it is natural for them to desire as vehemently as their own) they cannot but be concern'd for the continuance of Peace and Amity among them.

And this obliges them not onely to keep the World in good order for their own time, but to take care of the settlement and tranquility of future Ages. From whence proceed the establishments of Government and the standing Laws and prescriptions of Justice: this then is plainly no inconsiderable enforcement to the practice of Vertue and Honesty, when it is so absolutely necessary to the gratifying of so strong and so natural an Inclination.

3. Natural Pity and Compassion. The Divine Providence has implanted in the Nature and Constitution of humane Bodies a principle of Love and Tenderness, and the bowels of Men are soft and apt to receive impressions from the complaints and calamities  
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of their Brethren; and they cannot, without doing violence to themselves and their own natural sense of Humanity, be altogether senseless of the miseries and infelicities of other Men. It is possible indeed that some few may so long accustom themselves to savageness and cruelty, as to have no more sense of any kind and humane passions than Wolves and Tygers; but then these are Monsters, and such as have apparently debauch't or affronted all the principles and inclinations of their own Natures.

But as for the generality of Men their hearts are so tender and their natural affections so humane, that they cannot but pity and commiserate the afflicted with a kind of fatal and mechanical Sympathy; their groans force tears and sighs from the unafflicted, and 'tis a pain to them not to be able to relieve their miseries. All mercy is mingled with some grief, and we are so far interess'd in the sufferings of others, as to make us apt to rescue them from their sorrows for our own ease as well as theirs.

And though every Man is not endued with the same degree of Tenderneſs, yet there are no natures or tempers so fullen and morose as not to have some sense of Compassion and Humanity, at least so much as shall oblige them to succour the extremely miserable, when they can doe it without any damage or disadvantage to themselves; and he that refuses to light his Neighbour's Candle (as old *Ennius* discourſes) when it may be done without diminishing the light of his own; and he that suffers a Stranger to perish for Thirst, rather than be at the pains to lift up a Finger to direct him to the next Fountain; and he that should wittingly let a Garment perish for want of use, and a naked Brother perish for want of it, would be detested by all Mankind, as a degenerate Churl  
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from that natural Instinct of love and pity that they (as well as almost all other Creatures) have to their own kind.

Now this passion has a vehement tendency to the Institution of Friendships and Societies, not onely in that it gives restraints to the fury of Men (supposing them in a state of War) by making them even ashamed to add more load of misery to the extremely calamitous, and to fall foul upon one that adverse Fortune has already beaten to the ground, an outrage so more than brutish, that even Beasts of prey themselves are reported to abhor it ; but beside, by making opportunities of mutual Assistance, and by endearing the good will of all that any Man has the good fortune to help or relieve, especially when there are so many inconveniences and infelicities of life, and when some of them are so incident to all states of Men, that there is no man so perfectly and independently happy, as not at some time or other to accept of anothers pity, if not to stand in need of his help : And thus by virtue of this passion are all Men not onely in a natural capacity of obliging each other, but under a strong inclination to a state of mutual Benevolence.

And here I might subjoin that the Faculty or Passion of Laughing is peculiar to Mankind : The cause (they say) is a certain branch of Nerves derived from the Brain partly to the Heart and partly to the Diaphragm ; from whence it comes to pass that upon every gratefull Imagination the Heart is moved and affected with joy , and the Diaphragm drawn into such motions as usually appear in Laughter. But whatsoever the physical reason of it may be, this is certain, that it is a great delight of humane Life, and endearment of humane Society ; the pleasure of friendly  
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Conversation, and the main ease and divertisement of all our Labours; without which the life of Man would be irksome, tedious and solitary; caten up with perpetual cares and melancholy thoughts, and this draws and allures Men out of their dens and retirements, and makes them to rejoice in that satisfaction they find in each others company; and nothing can tend more naturally to the creating of kindness and cementing of friendship than that mutual complacency they reap from each others mirth and cheerfulness; so that both sorts of passions, as well the pleasant as the grave, are so contrived as to incline us to the love of Society, and the exercise of mutual Benevolence.

§ X. And now when we lay all these premises together, and consider how many ways the Divine Providence has signified the intentions of his will and pleasure to all his intelligent Creatures; and by how many motives he has endear'd and recommended it to their regard, it will amount to no less than a demonstrative assurance of their perpetual and universal Obligation; He has made their knowledge so obvious and so unavoidable, that there is no possible way to escape their Observation but by the most inexcusable ways of neglect, either wilfull Ignorance or wilfull Perverseness,

How could the Almighty have made fairer provisions to guide and instruct us in our Duty, than by making every thing in Nature, within and without us, an argument and declaration of it? He has first furnish't us with wit and understanding enough to consult the comfort and happiness of our own lives; and then he has so contrived the nature of things, as to let us see (if we will but make any use of our natural abilities) that there is no peace nor safety to be had,

nothing but trouble and misery without engagements of mutual Love and Friendship, that alone is sufficient to discover the intention of his Mind and the matter of their Duty, and to oblige them without any farther enquiry to apply themselves to act accordingly.

So that if Men will but suffer their own Minds to attend to the most unavoidable Objects of their own Senses, and the impartial Results of their own Thoughts, they cannot avoid to conclude that it is the will and intention of the Authour of Nature, that they should conform themselves to those directions that he has prescribed to them in the Order of Nature, and that is to conform all their designs and actions to this comprehensive principle of mutual and universal Benevolence.

Which because it can never be reduced to practice without Society and the establishment of a common Interest, that is an unquestionable evidence of the Divine Institution of it, for whoever commands the End, thereby commands the necessary Means, and therefore if it be so manifest from all things in Nature that every Man is enjoind by his Creatour (if he own and acknowledge any) to love and bear hearty good-will to all Men as well for his own as their Interest; and if it be as manifest from all the same appearances of things, that this can never be done without entring and engaging themselves into Societies, that is an undoubted proof of their Institution.

So that though we could suppose that they were not at first form'd by God himself (though no supposition can be more uncooth and unimaginal) but that Mankind once lived without them, and ranged themselves into several Bodies and Combinations by their own voluntary Consent, yet if they were certainly instructed and commanded so to doe by the  
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supreme Governour of all, that clearly resolves the Institution of Society into his Will and not their Choice, in that they are determin'd to it in Obedience to his Command.

And now this being so plainly establisht by virtue of his Authority, it comprehends all things that are necessary to its Exercise or Preservation, especially Propriety and Dominion, without which no Man can doe any service to the common Interest, and by which Men are forced to live in the practice of mutual Justice and Honesty; so easily and almost irresistibly are they drawn under an obligation of the main Duties of Morality, if they will but make any reflections upon the natures of Things, and the observations of their own Minds; and that one would think is enough to acquit the Divine Providence from any the least suspicion of being defective in giving any part of Mankind sufficient Rules and Instructions for the due Government of themselves and their moral Actions.

And yet is he not content to provide such means, as cannot but be effectual without extreme sottishness, but withall makes some accessional security to prevent us from the danger of that, and to force us to take some notice of his Mind and Will: so that unless we can prevail with our selves to stifle all the workings of our own Minds (as busie and thoughtfull as they are) unless we can prevail with our selves to take no care for our own Happiness; unless we can overcome the most vehement instincts and inclinations of our own Natures, all these must unavoidably carry us into a knowledge of his Will, and by their own force determine us to a compliance with it.

So that, all these things being first seriously weigh'd apart, and then lay'd together, they will prove such a mighty demonstration of the existence of a Law of

Nature, that if we can with any confidence conclude any Discourse with an  $\delta\pi\epsilon\rho\ \epsilon\delta\epsilon\iota\ \delta\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\gamma\alpha\iota$ , we may much more doe it in this, there being no one Argument in the world, except the existence of a Deity, upon which it is founded, that can equal it in the pregnancy and the variety of its proof. And this may suffice for the proof of the declaration of the Law of Nature; the next thing to be consider'd is its Sanction.

§ XI. And this comes to our knowledge in the same way of conveyance or publication with the Law it self; for as the Authour of Nature declares to Mankind by the Order of Nature, that he seriously intends the welfare and happiness of the whole Community; so does he at the same time and by the same means require of all and every Member of it to act according to his will and pleasure under the enforcement of natural Rewards and Penalties, and those motives of obedience are the proper Sanction to make the Law obligatory.

For Obligation properly signifies nothing but laying a Necessity upon us to act according to the direction of the Law; not that the Mind of Man can be determin'd by outward force or violence, or that any Law-giver whatsoever can compel it to a compliance and submission to his will against its own: It is onely to be wrought upon by Reason and Perswasion, by Arguments of Hope and Fear, by Rewards and Punishments; the consideration whereof though it does not by its own direct influence over-power the Minds of Men, yet it does it effectually enough by virtue of that natural Instinct that is implanted in them to pursue their own Happiness.

For being determin'd by a Necessity of Nature to pursue such things as are productive of it, and to shun such



such as are inconsistent with it, all such considerations as inform or assure us what Actions are so, bring a kind of Necessity upon our Understandings, forasmuch as it is natural and therefore necessary to seek our own Happiness and the means of acquiring it. And that is the proper meaning of Obligation, not to bind any fetters and restraints upon our Wills; but to propound such powerfull motives and arguments to them, as cannot but determine their Choice, if they will either attend to their reasonableness, or follow the first Appetite and strongest Inclination of their Natures.

So that if the Divine Providence have so order'd the Constitution of Things, as to make it necessary that such a proportion of happiness should follow in the course of Nature upon the performance of such a Duty, and on the contrary as much misery upon its neglect, he has plainly establisht it into a binding Law by all the force and energy that is proper to Legislation; and if he had reveal'd it to the world by an exprefs voice and declaration, or any other visible way of intercourse, it would not have been a more proper Sanction and more powerfull enforcement of his Will.

Seeing all the use of any such Revelation must have been to move them to Obedience by Arguments of Hope and Fear; so that if he have set before us by the frame of Nature so many effectual Motives of this kind, they are of the same force, as if they had been first made known to the world by Writing or Proclamation or any other Solemnities of inacting Laws. So that onely supposing an Authour of Nature, which (as I have often already suggested) must be supposed in the order of Nature antecedently to all enquiries after the Law of Nature, this matter will demonstrate it  
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self from the most obvious effects of his Providence, and the most undoubted designs of his Government.

For it is demonstratively certain by induction of Particulars that every Vertue has some natural efficacy in it to advance both the publick Good and the private Interest; so that these things being so inseparably join'd together, and that by an order and necessity of Nature, *i. e.* by the contrivance and wisdom of that Divine Providence that made it; what can be more evident than that he commands and requires all his Creatures, that are capable of any knowledge of his Will and sense of their Duty, to act suitably to that order of things that he has establisht in the World, and to that declaration of his Mind that he has made by that Establishment.

And thus is it notorious from the first Principles of natural Philosophy and the most obvious appearances of daily Experience, that Temperance, Love of Friends and Neighbours, Faithfulness in Oaths and Promises, an Aptness to kind and obliging Offices, Gratitude to Benefactors, Love and Affection to natural Relations, and a gentle and peaceable Disposition towards all good Men are highly usefull or rather absolutely necessary to all the comforts of humane Life, to Peace and Quietness, to Safety and Contentment, to health of Body and satisfaction of Mind, as well as to happiness of Society, the preservation of Government, and the securing of all Men in their just Rights against all manner of Injuries and Oppressions.

And 'tis certain from the same Principles that all contrary Vices have the quite contrary Effects, and tend both to the destruction of the publick Safety, and of every Man's private Tranquility, Unpeaceableness, Injustice, Perfidiousness, and all other acts of excessive and unreasonable Self-love, that looks meerly

to its own Interest without any regard to or concern for the good of others naturally produce all the Mischiefs and Calamities of Life; and in the same proportion that these prevail in the practice of the World, in the same do they abate the Peace of the Society, and the Safety of every Man's Life, and the Quiet of every Man's Mind.

So that these things being thus apparently tied together by such an inevitable train of Causes and Effects, and their connexion being so obvious and so palpable to every Man's notice, what can we imagine the Divine Providence could have done more to recommend their Practice and enforce their Obligation? and for a farther proof of this I might resume all the Heads of Discourse, that I have already represented to discover the Sufficiency of the Publication of the Law of Nature, and shew what particular Rewards are entail'd upon the performance of particular Duties, and what Punishments are in the course of Nature inflicted upon their Neglect.

But what I have performed in the former part of this Discourse supersedes the necessity of any distinct account of it here; because I have all along, as I have proceeded, demonstrated together with their subserviency to the publick Weal their serviceableness to every Man's private Interest, and that includes as well the Sanction as the Declaration of the Law. And therefore without descending to all Particulars, I shall onely in general treat of those Enforcements, that Nature or the Authour of it has added to all his Laws, and they alone will give us a sufficient account of their Obligation; in that they are so many and so obvious to the most vulgar Experience and most easy Observation, that there is nothing else that concerns the Life of Man, the knowledge whereof is more familiar and more unavoidable.

§ XII. The first Reward of Vertue is its own natural and intrinsick Pleasure. Acts of Love and Kindness are in themselves gratefull and agreeable to the temper of humane Nature; and all Men feel a natural Deliculousness consequent upon every Exercise of their good-natur'd Passions; And nothing affects the Mind with greater Complacency, than to reflect upon its own inward Joy and Contentment. So that the Delight of every vertuous Resolution doubles upon it self; in that first it strikes our Minds with a direct Pleasure by its suitableness to our Natures, and then our Minds entertain themselves with pleasant Reflections upon their own Worth and Tranquility.

And this is made so apparent from the plainest and most easy Experience, that it cannot possibly escape any Man's Animadversion; There is no Man that does not perceive more satisfaction in the Affections of Love and Joy and Good-will, than in the black and unquiet Passions of Malice, Envy and Hatred, that do but torment the Mind with Anguish, Restlessness and Confusion. A base and ill-natur'd Disposition frets and vexes it self with perpetual male-contentedness; and the Man that gives himself up to any spite and rancour of Mind, is not so much as within the capacity of Happiness: at least in the same proportion that good or bad Passions prevail in the Minds of Men, in the same are they affected with Joy or Misery. Now this being made so plain and visible in the whole Entercourse of humane Life, it must needs lay a mighty Enforcement and manifest Obligation to a suitable Behaviour; for what Motive can we conceive of nearer concernment, than when the Action it self is its own Reward or Punishment?

And as the kind Passions are most agreeable to the temper of our Minds, so are they most healthfull to  
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the Constitution of our Bodies, and have a natural Influence upon the Cheerfulness and Preservation of our Lives. The Affections of Love and Hope and Delight cherish our natural Heat, sweeten our radical Moisture, beget gentle and vigorous Spirits, promote the Circulation of the Blood, and make the Heart and all the vital Parts more brisk and lively. Whereas on the contrary, Hatred and Envy and Discontent stifle the motion of the Blood, oppress the Heart, damp the Spirits, and hinder the functions of the Brains and Nerves, and breed Diseases and Obstructions of the Spleen.

For when the briskness of the vital Heat is checkt, and the contraction of the Heart weakned, the Blood grows thick and cold in the Extremities of the Vessels, and is not able to thrust it self forward through the remoter Branches of the Arteries into the Fibres of the Veins; but stagnates in all the more narrow Passages of the Body; especially in the more curious and delicate Vessels that are every where spread up and down through the substance of the Brain; from whence proceed tremblings in the Heart, paleness in the Face, and (if they are strong and inveterate) scorbutick Distempers through the whole habit of the Body.

So that as a Man desires length of Life and preservation of Health, he is obliged to shun all bitter and unkind Passions; in that they are in the constitution of Nature necessary causes of Discrasies and Diseases; and though their Symtoms, unless they are very vehement, are not so obvious and palpable, yet are they certain from all the Experiments and Observations in natural Philosophy; and in what proportion soever they prevail over Mens Minds, in the same do they disorder and disturb their Bodies. So that the Law

of Nature is recommended to the nature of Man in all its Capacities, and is suited to the satisfaction of all its respective Faculties of Body and Mind, and by consequence is design'd to make up the completest and most entire Enjoyment of Pleasure and Happiness.

But besides this, as it extends its Delight to all our Appetites, so does it make the sense of their Felicity more intense and affecting, and entertain the Mind with the most vehement and transporting Joys. For there are but two things requisite to raise Pleasure up to the height of Beatitude; and they are the spriteliness of the Act and the excellency of the Object. Now the Good of all Mankind (which is the general notion and scope of all Vertue) being of the largest and most diffusive extent, and the biggest Design that we can either desire or propose to our selves, it calls forth all the vigour and earnestness of our Minds, and employs the utmost force and vehemence of our Passions, and transports us with perpetual Delight and Satisfaction.

Every Man enjoys a sensible Complacency in every act of Kindness, his Good-will reflects back upon himself, and when he is concern'd to procure anothers Happiness, he thereby increases his own; but when the Object of his Affections is so vast and unbounded a Good, it excites a force and quickness of Mind proportionable to its own greatness; it equals the utmost capacity of all our Powers, and we can never outdoe its worth; it is sufficient to entertain all our Thoughts and to employ all our Actions; and the Man that propounds this to himself as the delight of his Soul and the design of his Life, never wants for objects or opportunities of Content, but enjoys a complete and continual Felicity from the exercise of his own goodwill and the reflections of his own Mind.

And though no Man can be capable of so pure and unmixed a Satisfaction in this Life, there being so many Calamities out of their own power and disposal to discompose it, yet are the degrees of a Man's Happiness (as far as he is master of it himself) always proportion'd to the improvement of this temper of his Mind; his Joy and his Delight are of the same extent with his Love and his Good-will, and he that most dilates the exercise of his kind Passions, most widens the capacity of his Enjoyments; and so much as a Man falls short of this universal Kindness, so much does he afflict himself with Anguish and Discontent, and that is sufficient encouragement to excite him to work up his Mind to habitual Resolutions of Love and Kindness, when they are all along their own Reward in proportion to their own strength and vigour; and he that is possess'd with most Good-will, becomes thereby the happiest and most contented Man, and he that is possess'd with nothing else enjoys his full and adequate Felicity.

Though so great a Goodness and by consequence so great an Happiness is onely agreeable to the description of the Joys of Heaven, where eternal Love will be our eternal Bliss; yet seeing in this World there is a difference as to the Misery or Happiness of every Man's Life in proportion to the degrees of this Affection, that is a sufficient inducement to him to habituate himself to its free and constant Exercise; when he is so plainly engaged as he desires and designs the improvement of his own Content, to procure and delight in the Content of others; and so far as he extends his concernment for their welfare, so many Objects does he provide for the entertainment of his most pleasant and agreeable Passions.

Which being all the Happiness that is within our own power, it is the most proper motive to determine our Wills to such Thoughts and Actions as are most effectual to attain or to advance it. For that is the proper use of Rewards and Penalties to set before us such Considerations as are suited to determine our Wills to such Designs and Actions as lie within our own power; if they do not, all the Arguments in the World are to no purpose, and nothing is more absurd than to court or threaten a Man into the doing of what is impossible. And therefore seeing the casual or the fatal Calamities of humane Life are altogether out of our own disposal, and will befall us whether we will or will not, they can have no possible influence to determine the choice and the resolution of our Minds, but the onely things that can affect us as moral Agents, are such Proposals of good or evil, as we know our selves able to dispose of, as we are pleased to incline our own Wills.

What then though the natural Calamities of Life are incident to the Good equally with the Bad, it is not in our power to avoid or overrule their Necessity, but when they happen to us, all we have then to doe, is to bear them as we are able. And what will enable us to bear them as we ought, I shall represent in the second part of this Discourse. But because there are some things that have some influence upon our Happiness, that are altogether out of our own disposal, shall we therefore take no care of all those that are altogether within it? That may become the humour of peevish and unreasonable People, but certainly no prudent Man, because he cannot overpower all things to comply with his own Will, will therefore conclude with himself that it is in vain to be concern'd about those that he is able to command.

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And therefore all those we must set aside as of no use and consideration in matters of Morality, in that they are of another Nature, and depend upon other Causes; it is enough at present that the Providence of God has left a certain proportion of our Felicity to our own disposal, by a regard to which we ought (if we are wise) to order our Designs and Actions; and that he has annexed such degrees and advantages of Happiness to such practices and habits of Vertue; and that is all that can be done to recommend them to our choice and good Opinion; especially when the Act it self is its own Reward, and is the most pleasant Exercise of the Mind of Man.

§ XIII. 2. If there be a Deity or Sovereign Cause of all things (that is ever supposed in this Enquiry) we must of necessity suppose him endued with the highest measures of Reason, Wisdom and Goodness; for these are Excellencies that we perceive to reside in some degree within our selves; and therefore much more in him whose Idea comprehends all Perfections, and who is the onely cause of all ours. Now right Reason is the same in God and in his Creatures, because it is measured by the same Rule, and that is the Nature of Things; and when it agrees with that, it passes a true Judgment, and when it does not, it is false and erroneous; and therefore if it be consonant to the Reason of Man and the Nature of Things to judge that the Good of all is preferable to the advantage of a single Person, it cannot be supposed that the unerring Wisdom of God should fall into a different or a contrary Perswasion, for that were to reconcile no less than contradictory Propositions to right Reason.

And therefore this Rule of Justice and Goodness results unavoidably from his essential Attributes, and therein consists the whole Account and Employment of his Providence to carry on the common Good of his Creatures by proper and effectual Instruments; and all Goodness and Wisdom and Vertue is reducible to these two Principles, first to propound worthy Ends, and then to pursue them by suitable means; there is nothing else capable of praise and commendation, and therefore if the Good of all be the noblest End that he can design, it is certain that it is agreeable to his Will, that all his Creatures (that are sensible of it) should seek it by those means that they shall judge most agreeable to his Understanding.

And this is much more evident, if we consider the Deity not onely as the most excellent of all rational Beings, but as the supreme Cause of their Existence, and then it is but reasonable, if he first created them, to conclude that he desires their continuance and preservation; otherwise he must have made them without design and to no purpose; and then if therein consists the common Good of all that they should continue to enjoy those Natures and improve those Perfections that he bestowed upon them; that cannot but be conceived most acceptable to the Intention of his Will, and most agreeable to the Scope of his Creation.

Especially if to all this we shall adde those Intimations of his Mind that he has so plainly interwoven with the whole Systeme of Things, in that all the Effects of Nature are the Effects of his Will; and therefore when any thing in Nature declares any Proposition to be true, and enforces or invites us to accept of it as the Rule of our Actions by discovering its  
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good and bad Consequences to our selves, God onely by that means discovers to us what it is that he requires of us.

So that the natural Trains and Results of Things being laid and framed by his Providence, when they thrust themselves upon the Observation of our Senses or our Minds, they onely inform us (if we will at all attend to our own Experience) upon what Rules and Principles he has establisht the Government of the World, and by consequence instruct us how to behave our selves suitably to his Will in all our Designs and Actions. So that it is past all Controversie that whatsoever force the Law of Nature carries along with it, is derived upon it purely by virtue of the Divine Authority.

And therefore they cannot pass any proper Obligation upon any of his Creatures, but onely such as are capable of knowing that they proceed from Himself, in that all their obligatory Power depends purely upon that Supposition; and from hence it is that they are peculiar onely to those that are endued with Reason or Understanding, in that they alone are in any condition of knowing from whom they are derived; and this being premised, all that remains to be enquired after is to find out by what natural Sanctions God has bound his Precepts upon the Minds of his reasonable and intelligent Subjects.

For when his Almighty Wisedom did so contrive the Nature of Things, that such Effects should naturally follow upon such Actions, and withall made their connexion so necessary that they could not but be foreseen by all that were not wilfully blind or perverse; it is not to be doubted but that he intended that they should seriously weigh and consider them before they address't themselves to Action, and so determine

termine their Wills according to the strength and direction of their Motives.

And that such Effects there are, I have already in part proved in the Premises by shewing the necessity of universal Good-will to the satisfaction of our Minds, and shall farther make good in the sequel by shewing its necessity to the preservation of our Beings: Though all this I have sufficiently made good in the former part of this Discourse concerning the Declaration of the Law of Nature, wherein is demonstrated that Mankind cannot subsist but in a condition of mutual Love and Assistance, and that certainly is sanction or obligation enough to a suitable Behaviour.

And now this Concernment of the Divine Providence in our Actions being taken into the consideration of our Affairs, as it resolves the total obligation of the Law of Nature into the Will of God, so it backs and enforces it with the most powerfull and effectual Sanction in the World, *viz.* the Pleasures or Torments of Conscience, or the Judgment of a Man's Mind upon his own Actions in reference to the Judgment of God; and this of all things has the most irresistible Influence upon every Man's Happiness or Misery.

I shall not here heap up all the Horrors that naturally arise out of an accusing Conscience; Grief and Shame and Distraction and Fear and Restlessness and Despair, and every thing that can vex and torment our Minds; nor on the contrary all the Felicities that follow upon an acquitting Conscience, Peace and Quietness and Confidence and Joy and Courage and Assurance of the Love and Favour of God. These have been often enough described to the World, and every Man is able to describe them to himself. It is sufficient to observe in general that those Laws must  
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needs be strictly tied upon us, that are bound on with a regard to the Judgment and Observation of the Almighty, from the Apprehension whereof result all the forementioned Effects of a good or a bad Conscience. And to specify no other particular Effects, I shall mention onely these two.

1. The first Effect of an honest and upright Conscience is the unspeakable Pleasure and Satisfaction that a Man reaps from the inward Assurance that he has of the Agreement of his own Mind with the Wisdom and Goodness of the supreme and most perfect Understanding; then which nothing can be conceived more pregnant with Delight and Joy; in that every Man has the highest esteem and opinion of the Deity that he worships, and it is his greatest ambition to imitate and resemble Him in his Attributes and Perfections; and he is satisfied and pleased with himself according to the degrees of his confidence of approving himself to the Divine Mind by his conformity to it. And on the other side the contrary Effects of Shame and Discontent follow upon an evil Conscience, or the sense of his falling short of the Glory of God, and of his defection from the Excellency of his own Nature.

2. And then secondly as every good Man approves himself to the Wisdom of the Divine Understanding, so also to the Acceptance of the Divine Will; in that he knows that whatever may be propounded to him as the first Inducement of his Obedience, it is certain that the last End of the Legislatour is the good of all his Creatures, and by consequence to seek and procure that is the most effectual way to render a Man gratefull and acceptable to him. His Goodness extends it self to all his Works, and his Providence is concern'd for the Welfare of all his Subjects. That is

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the great design of his Creation, and the main care of his Government; and for that purpose onely did he bestow their Beings upon them, to put something into a capacity of being happy beside himself, and nothing can so much honour or gratify him as their Felicity.

So that it is certain that nothing can so much please or oblige the supreme Governour of the Universe, as that all his Creatures that observe the Conditions of the common Peace and live according to the Rules of common Justice should be treated with all manner of kindness and fair-dealing; and that nothing can so effectually force him to the greatest severity of Revenge and Punishment, as when any of his Subjects set themselves to act cross to a Design that is so dear and tender to him.

For as it is certain that the Creatour of all intends the Good of all, so it is as certain that all right Reason (and by consequence the Reason of God) judges it necessary for its security and preservation by some proportionable Punishments to restrain all Attempts inconsistent with it. And then because no wickedness (how secret soever) can escape the Divine Cognisance, it cannot be doubted but that he will peremptorily determine to punish it according to the Tenour of his Threatnings, because he knows it to be so highly usefull to the last and greatest end of all his Providence.

§ XIV. 3. But then in the third place, there is no Man but that owes more to the kindness and assistance of others for the Comforts and Enjoyments of his Life than to his own personal Care and Providence; our Plenty is so short, that we cannot subsist without foreign Supplies; and our Strength so weak, that

that we cannot defend our selves without foreign Assistance, and let any Man reflect upon his own Self-sufficiency, and then consider, whether as the Nature of Things is contrived, if he were impertinent to all the World beside, and no Man else were concern'd to relieve his Wants, whether then, I say, his Life would be comfortable enough to render it at all desirable.

Were States altogether unconcern'd for the Welfare of their Subjects; were Parents utterly regardless of the Education of their Children; should one Sex give a Bill of Divorce to the other; should every individual Person separate himself from his Family and from his Prince and from his Country; should all Mankind agree to break up Society, and resolve every Man to shift onely for himself, and take no care in the World for the Welfare and Preservation of all the rest, they would be the most helpless and forlorn Creatures in the World; they would become an easy Prey, not onely to the Beasts of their own kind, but to all those of the Wilderness; Man is born so defenceless, and so without all those Weapons, wherewith Nature has furnisht some other Creatures, that he has nothing to arm himself against their Fury, but by united Strength and Counsel. *Fac nos singulos, quid sumus? præda Animalium & victimæ, ac vilissimus & facillimus sanguis.* Sen. 4. de Benef. c. 18.

The Mischiefs and Calamities of Life are so many and so unavoidable out of the state of Society or mutual Good-will, that nothing can be more unquestionable than that if there be any such thing as a Divine Providence, it was his Intention not onely to oblige them to seek, but to forcè them to enter into a Condition of Peace and Friendship. And this dependance of the Happiness of Mankind upon each others Benevolence

comprehends so great a variety and accumulation of things, that there is scarce any Man that is not or may not be in a condition of assisting or obstructing another Man's Affairs, and therefore it is alike every Man's Interest and Wisdom to win the widest and most diffusive Friendship that he is able to compass or manage in all the ways of Integrity, thereby to strengthen and secure his own Interest, that one way or other or at some time or other might otherwise be endanger'd by the Enmity of those who now secure it by their Friendship.

And to this he is obliged (as he would consult his own Content) not once or twice but through the whole course and design of his Life, because his Happiness always depends upon the Good-will of others; and therefore in every Action he is bound to consider what Opinion other Men have of it as well as himself, because their good Opinion has so powerfull and so necessary an Influence upon the right carriage of his Affairs. So that as he desires Success in all his Undertakings he is highly concern'd to purchase their Good-will by all civil and obliging Offices.

And then if they will obey the Dictates of right Reason, they will think themselves obliged to bear the same Affections to him and to each other as he expresses to them all, because the Happiness of them all singly has the same foreign Dependence with his own. And thus if Men will have any regard to the quiet of their own Lives are they brought under the plainest and most unavoidable Obligation to mutual Love and Friendship, and they improve the Comforts of their Lives in proportion to the degrees of their Benevolence; its lowest Exercise is rewarded with proportionable Benefits, but as it improves it self to higher and more friendly Offices, so its Advan-  
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tages increase all along with the kindness of its Intentions.

Thus Innocence or a meer forbearance of Injuries is the lowest exercise of Benevolence and Humanity, and yet this defends from all those mischievous and malevolent Attempts that otherwise would destroy the common security of Mankind; for if we suppose them in a condition of defiance to all ingagements of Kindness, and settled in a perfect state of War, in which they were bound to endeavour each others Destruction, and doe the utmost mischief they were able, nothing could be expected but utter misery and wretchedness, and it would unavoidably bring in all the Evils to which humane Life can any way be supposed obnoxious; so that when Men refrain from this wild and wanton Cruelty, that proceeds from some sense of Humanity, and is of it self a very considerable ease and security to the Life of Man.

We are hereby permitted to enjoy what we can get by our own Industry without disturbance from others, though our Labours are not eased by their Assistance; and this is a little more comfortable than to be in perpetual danger of being rob'd both of our Enjoyments and our Lives by every Man that hapned to find out our Dens and lurking Holes. Nothing can be imagin'd more miserable than a state of perfect Inhumanity, and that is a sufficient Signification to us, that the Divine Providence if he ever design'd the Happiness of any of his Creatures or ever intended that they should design it themselves (and these are two very modest Suppositions if there be any Providence at all) that he requires them to avoid it under the severest and most dreadfull Penalties.

And the farther off they keep from this savage State, the nearer do they approach to the Contentment and

Tranquility of their Lives; and if they resolve not onely to refrain from weakning each others Interest by Wrongs and Oppressions, but to advance it by all the Offices of Love and Kindness, and adde Beneficence to Innocence, they raise the happiness of their Condition according to the height of their Friendship. Nothing is in this Life so satisfactory and comfortable as an entire Affection and Fidelity between Friends; it is the Consummation of all humane Joys; and as much as any Man falls short of this perfection of Kindness, so much does he abate of the complacency of his Life.

This is visible in all the experience of the World and the management of all Affairs, and there is no Man that regards the natural Consequences of Things that does not understand the advantage that accrues to himself from all his good Turns and Obligations past upon others. And for this Reason all Men that pretend to any Wisdom or Sobriety, are thereby easily determin'd to a courteous and obliging Conversation, and therefore it is needless to represent to such Persons the convenience and prudence of their own choice: the onely People that need information in these matters that so nearly concern them, are the negligent and inconsiderate part of Mankind. These do not think or observe enough to see into the probable Events of things, and are to be made sensible by nothing but the actual Infliction or certain Foresight of Misery, and therefore letting pass that part of the Sanction that comes from the Reward, I shall onely a little particularise that part of it that is derived from the Punishment, and shew into what manifest disadvantages every Man runs himself by every unjust and dishonest Action.

§ XV. 1. He thereby manifestly impairs and often forfeits a proportion of his own Interest, in that his Happiness (as well as every Man's else) depends in some considerable measure upon the good-will of his Neighbours, and it is always in their power either to promote or to hinder his welfare; and then their Friendship or their Enmity is chiefly determin'd by his own Behaviour; if they perceive him sincere for the advancement of the common Good, and forward to all offices of Kindness and Humanity, that is a considerable obligation to them to requite his Goodness with a suitable Behaviour, but if he neglect opportunities of doing good, and shew himself regardless of all manner of Interests but his own, that naturally estranges their Affections, and they throw off all inclinations of Kindness to him; as a Person that disclaims all designs of Kindness to them. And then a Man's condition is uncomfortable enough, when he is forsaken of all the World, and left all alone to shift for himself with a bad Conscience. The bare want of Friends is a sad punishment of all selfishness; and though he be in Prosperity, it is no pleasant reflexion to consider that he is scorn'd and neglected and hated by the publick Vote of all good Men: but if he fall into Adversity (and that sometime or other happens to every crafty and dishonest Man) he is left to the sadness of his own Fortune, and no Man is concern'd to assist or relieve him, but the whole Society triumphs and rejoices in his Ruin.

2. The next natural Punishment of Injustice is Insecurity; for let the wickedness be committed with never so much craft and privacy, yet no Man can ever certainly assure himself to escape discovery; so many unforeseen and unsuspected ways are there of betraying the most secret Crimes: so that though it  
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were possible to shake off all apprehensions of a Divine Displeasure, yet there is no Remedy against the perpetual Fears of Revenge from Men. And thus *Epicurus* after he had set Men loose from any regard to the Observation of Providence, yet he thought it so difficult and so almost impossible to conceal any enormous baseness for ever, that he concluded no wise Man could venture upon it but with the uneasiness and terror of an accusing Conscience.

*Οὐκ ἔστι λάθρα τι ποιεῖν*, no Man can be secure of privacy: and though it is possible he might be so dexterous or so fortunate as to have pass't through a thousand Impieties with credit and impunity, yet all this while the Man enjoys but little comfort in himself and his unjust possessions, because he cannot but be always diffident that first or last once before he dies by some unlucky accident or other, he is either intrapt in some new Attempts, or betrayed in some old Wiles.

So that though dishonest Men may sometimes have the fortune, yet they can never have the confidence, to pass unpunished, and the incessant fear of this robs them of all real mirth for the present, and all security for the future, *Potest nocenti contingere ut lateat, latendi fides non potest*. So that howsoever he may shift the publick Justice, there is no avoiding the punishment of his own Fears, especially when there is so much likelihood that some time or other he is surpris'd and discover'd, and when it is so very probable and usual in the order of humane Affairs for all Guilt some time or other to be brought to Judgment. *Plerumque* (says *Torquatus* in *Cicero* prim. de fin.) *improborum facta primò suspicio insequitur, deinde Sermo atque fama, tum accusator, tum iudex, multi etiam se indicaverunt*.

3. The Man that is false and injurious does not onely forfeit the advantages of being loved and trusted and protected, but he provokes all Men even from their natural principle of self-love to seek and contrive his destruction, and engages them all (as they tender their own safety) into a combination against him. And that is the proper use and design of publick and capital Punishments, it is onely an agreement or confederacy of the whole Society to cut off all such private Members of it as disturb the common Peace, and thereby endanger every particular Man's Safety; and it becomes the joint and equal Interest of all that are peaceable or desire so to be, to declare open War against him; and that Man has disadvantage enough that contends with his single Strength against the Power of a Multitude; and yet so does every one that declares by his practices, that he is not concern'd what becomes of their Interest by not sticking to oppress and oppose it in all the ways of fraud and violence for the advancement of his own.

And to punish such is the defence of the publick Weal, and the equal Interest of the whole Community and every Member of it, and therefore it is but reasonable that every injurious Person should expect that they should appear and rise up with one consent against him and his Interest. They have all a tender sense of their own Happiness as well as he of his, and are sufficiently jealous of all designs and entrenchments upon their Rights; so that if they once observe a Person that cares not how much he lays them waste, for the enlargement of his own Power and Propriety, 'tis natural for them to fall upon him with all the keenness of Revenge, and to treat him as a common Enemy without Mercy or Compassion.

And though the injury may possibly in its direct intention reach no farther than a single Person, yet the affront and disobligation extends it self to all; for he thereby plainly discovers that he is prepared for any mischief against any Person for the advancement of his own Ends, and every Man has reason to conclude that he would serve him in the same kind, if ever he hapned to fall into the same circumstances; so that though he suffer not at all by the Oppression of his Neighbour, yet he cannot but resent it even for his own sake, and if it ever lie in his power revenge it too.

And now that Man can have but little assurance of his Safety, or comfort of his Life, that knows it to be the common concernment of all, that have any power in or over his affairs, to work and contrive his Ruine; and though he may escape all his days (as some Thieves and Out-laws do) unpunisht and unrevenged, yet the apprehension of his danger and sense of his insecurity are enough to destroy all the quiet of his Life and tranquility of his Mind, and he is or has reason to be fearfull in the same proportion that he is wicked and unjust.

And now so much as a Man hazards of the safety of his Enjoyments, so much does he abate of their Value. So that though this part of the natural punishment of Vice that is to be expected from the persons injured or offended, is not always certain and unavoidable, in that all humane Actions are in their own nature contingent, and so it is possible that the Persons they provoke may never have the Power or the Will to revenge their Wrongs, yet because the consequence is so very probable as it is, that carries in it such a certain and valuable proportion of Evil, as may serve to deter all Men from venturing to incur  
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their displeasure by unjust or unkind Attempts, and may be so design'd and propounded by the supreme Law-giver as inducements to all his Subjects, that have any regard to their own Happiness, to have some regard to this in all their Affairs and Entercourses with Men.

The case is the very same here as it is in all civil Laws, where it is not necessary that every Malefactor should be certainly brought to publick Justice; but yet because there is so fair a likelihood that one time or other he comes to execution, the very fear of so probable an Event is a sufficient Sanction and an effectual one too upon the generality of Men to refrain them from a course of open and professed Violence. And thus when it is mighty odds, though it is not absolutely certain that every injurious Person shall (considering the natural passions of Men) not onely be fully repayed in his own kind, but be forced to suffer a greater damage by his breach of Peace and Faith (for that is done by every act of Injustice) than he can ever hope to gain advantage by it, if he should have the good fortune (that seldom happens) to escape unpunished: this consideration alone is in all common cases an overruling Argument with any Man of any tolerable Understanding to determine him to resolutions of just and honest dealing with all Men.

I might add innumerable other particulars to this purpose, but they occur so easily to every Man's Observation, that after I have given this Specimen of it, that alone is abundantly sufficient to the satisfaction of sincere and ingenuous Minds; so that it were to be tedious to very little if any purpose to represent the whole Train of good or bad Consequences that naturally follow upon all good or bad Practices; but it is enough that in the ordinary course of Nature and

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Providence, the Happiness and Safety of every Man's Life is proportion'd to the degrees of his Vertue and Honesty. And if Men will but be at the pains to attend to this single Observation, that alone will bring them into some competent knowledge of all the subordinate Duties of Morality, and under a sufficient obligation to their serious and habitual Practice; and no Law of what nature soever is capable of a more proper or more powerfull Sanction. And therefore to conclude, and not to recapitulate all particulars, the premises seriously laid together, will, I think, amount to a fair and forcible demonstration of the Problem I undertook to prove, *viz.* The certain Institution of the Law of Nature, in that the Authour of it has signified to us his own design and intention toward Mankind in the contrivance of it, and has obliged us as far as our actions are in our own Power to pursue the same design with himself by Rewards and Punishments resulting from the nature of Things, as we comply with or disobey this publication of his Will.

§ XVI. Hitherto I have endeavour'd to demonstrate that if there be a supreme Cause and Governour of the World, that then the design of his Government is the common Happiness of all Mankind, and that for the attainment of this general End, he has so contrived the nature of Things as to make every Man's particular Happiness to depend, as far as things are within his own power, upon his endeavours of promoting that of all. Which two fundamental Principles being laid, first, of the Being of a Providence, and then of the Goodness of it, that will certainly guide and direct us to something farther than what we have hitherto demonstrated. For all that I have already proved is not sufficient to make us actually Happy, but rather



rather puts us into a capacity of being so. If indeed the Providence of God had not taken so much care to secure the common Peace and mutual Love of Mankind, we had all been certainly and fatally miserable; though when this provision is made it is not enough to make us happy, and therefore he has in vain done so much for us, unless he doe something more. Especially when, after all our best endeavours to attain Happiness in that way that the Providence of God hath chalk't out to us, it is possible to be defeated of it by some other causes without our own default, and then what must follow but that the Divine Providence (if it be constant to its own design, and unless it be so it is no Divine Providence) is obliged to compensate or secure it some other way. For it is certain that a great part of our Happiness is out of our own power, and therefore notwithstanding all our endeavours after it, we may not attain to it, and then if the design of the Divine Providence be to make us happy in the way of Vertue, (as I have proved it is) in this case he has obliged himself to ensure it by some other means, unless we can suppose that he has proposed to himself an end without providing sufficient means to effect it; which is to say that this excellent Being, that has contrived the whole Creation with such wonderfull Art and Wisedom, has done all this in order to a thing impossible: or that he has engaged us to the performance of our Duty by the promise of a Reward, and yet when we have faithfully done our Work that he should defraud us of our Wages.

And this brings in the second part of my Argument, That seeing God designs our Happiness, and seeing he has contrived things so as to oblige us as far as it is in our own power to procure it in the way before described; and seeing that alone is not sufficient  
for

for the attainment of this End; and if it were that yet notwithstanding we may be defeated of it, there must (I say) remain some other design of Providence than what we have hitherto discover'd. And here unavoidably comes in the Happiness of a future state. For if it be made evident, after the proof of the Premises, that we are not capable of Happiness, or after our best endeavours after it that we may be deprived of it, it then undeniably follows that either there is such a state, or that there is no such thing as a Divine Providence. And this I shall endeavour to make good from these two plain and easie Propositions.

First in general, That without it no Man is capable of being happy.

Secondly in particular, That without it no Man can be obliged to be vertuous; nay, on the contrary, that the best Men may, and frequently are, upon the account of their Goodness, notwithstanding all that care God has taken of them in this world, the most miserable. From whence it is manifest that either there is no Providence, which I have already proved, and therefore now suppose; or if there be, that upon that supposition there is the same certainty of a future state as there is of the Being and Providence of a Deity, so that whoever denies one must be forced to disavow both, which I now undertake to prove from the fore-mentioned Principles.

First, That without a future state Mankind is utterly incapable of Happiness. And for the more convincing demonstration hereof I shall consider the most famous Opinions of Happiness among the Philosophers; and that I may the more easily doe, because they are not so many as some men would persuade us they are; for as for the known and common citation out of *Varro* insisted upon, and if true, justly  
upbrai-

upbraided by Saint *Austin* of their being divided into 288 different Sects and Opinions, it is obvious enough that this was but a crude and injudicious Collection; for if we impartially consider those various Instances, more distinctly recorded or collected by other Authors, we shall find them either so many differences of Words and not of Conceits, or else Motto's and little Sayings, (according to the fashion and affectation of the Greeks) rather to express their own fancy and peculiar humours than their serious and Philosophical account of things. And it is obvious that all their discourses about it, relate either to the general and abstracted Notion of it, or to the Causes and Objects that produce it. As for the first it must be confessed that they describe it by an infinite variety of Expressions; but as for the things productive of it, there neither are nor can be more than those three famous Opinions, that place it either in Pleasure onely, or in Vertue onely, or in both together with the goods of Fortune; to which all other subdividing Sects, how numerous soever, are easily reducible. And here, that I may represent them to the best advantage, I shall chiefly consider them as they are discoursed of and accounted for by *Tully* himself; because of all Men of all Ages he was most able to set them out with all the beauty of Wit, and force of Reason, and accordingly has, in those admirable Books of his about the Ends of Good and Evil, and his *Tusculan Questions*, discharged this noble Argument as became himself, *i. e.* with all the possible advantages of Wit and Reason; insomuch as (if I may presume to judge so much, and yet the case is so plain that it needs no presumption) all the other Discourses beside upon the same Subject are not to be compared, either for Use or Delight, to these two Treatises. For as he has

omitted

omitted nothing that is either plausible or pertinent to his Argument; so has he recommended his Notions with a singular and unimitable force of Expression. For though possibly others (and yet if any, very few) may have equal'd him in Philosophick Skill and Knowledge, yet all the World falls short of him in his *miraculous* Art of Eloquence. And so I call it, in that it looks like more than a Prodigy, that one Man should so strangely excell all the rest of Mankind, and stand alone, as it were, a Being of a superiour Order; Inso-much that when all the great Wits of all Ages since have swol'n and labour'd to rival his Glory, he has been so far from having an Equal, that he never yet had one that could attain the honour of being his Second; but still, after all their utmost endeavours, they appear no more than the Toad to the Ox or the Stars to the Sun. And therefore, in my following Discourse, I shall in the first place confine my self to a stricter and more particular examination of his performance, though under him I shall take an occasion to give an account of the several endeavours of other valuable Authours upon the same Argument.

§ XVII. First then as for the Epicurean Hypothesis, with which he begins, he has indeed done us that kindness, as in part to shew us its insufficiency, but then himself has not been able to direct us to a better; and all the instructions he has given us afterward for the obtaining of Happiness are chiefly borrowed from the Canons of *Epicurus*. Neither indeed was it possible to be otherwise, for how variously soever Men may delight to amuse themselves with their own particular Fancies and Hypotheses, there are no more than two real accounts of the state of humane Nature, either that which supposes Immortality, or that  
which

which does not; so that the supposition of Immortality being taken away, all the other accounts of Happiness can amount to no more than that of *Epicurus*, placing it in the pleasures of this Life alone. And yet for the fuller demonstration of the thing I shall consider them singly, that thereby it may appear how plainly defective all the various arts and methods of Philosophy are without our Supposition. And as for *Epicurus*, the Question between him and his Adversaries is, Whether Pleasure be the Sovereign Good: In answer to which our Authour's Discourse consists of two parts, first, to settle the right Notion and Definition of Pleasure: secondly, to prove that this one Principle blows up all the foundations of Justice, Vertue, and Honesty. As for the first, I shall not much concern my self about the Grammatical signification of the word Pleasure. For I must confess that both *Epicurus* and his followers are by many Authours too crudely reviled in general terms for placing our sovereign Happiness in Pleasure, when it is so very clear that they are but equivalent terms to express the same thing. For by Pleasure all Men mean that content and satisfaction that is agreeable and proper to the Nature of any Being, so that when it enjoys and possesses all those Objects of Delight that are suitable or adequate to its respective Capacities, it is then, in all Mens account, arrived at the state of its perfect Happiness or full Contentment. And therefore it is but an idle and needless dispute between them and the Stoicks, whether Pleasure or Vertue be the supreme Good. For whatsoever may be the reason of the goodness of Vertue, yet the reason of our choice must, in the last account of things, be resolved into its subserviency to our delight and satisfaction; And if moral Goodness be (as it is) our supreme

Felicity, it is so because it is most agreeable to the perfection of our Natures, and most conducive to the quiet and satisfaction of our Minds. For 'tis a contradiction to the Nature of created Beings to act without any regard to some self-ends, unless we can suppose them devided of self-love, than which no Supposition is or can be more impossible. And therefore this, as it is not a reasonable, so neither is it the proper ground of exception against the Epicurean Philosophy: but its mischief and malignity derives from a much worse Principle, *viz.* its unworthy conceptions of the mean and narrow capacities of humane Nature, to which it is necessary to reduce the proportion of humane Happiness. And therefore, the Epicureans allowing no other Principle of Being to Men than the Engine of their Bodies, and by consequence no other sensation than what results from the contrivance of the parts of matter, from hence it plainly appears that they resolve our sovereign delight purely into sensual enjoyments; because, upon their Principles, we are, from the condition of our Natures, utterly incapable of any other gratifications. And therefore we dispute not with *Epicurus* whether Pleasure be the end of Vertue, but what Pleasure. If he had taken in the full capacity of humane Nature as it consists of Soul and Body, he had said nothing less than the best and wisest Philosophers do or ought to say. But when he intends the Pleasure of the Body alone, he destroys the very Being of Vertue and humane Happiness, and resolves all our enjoyment into meer brutishness and sensuality. And that he intends nothing more is past all dispute to any Man that is not resolved to abuse himself, in that he never taught any thing more constantly, concern'dly and expressly than this, That Man is nothing else beside

beside the fabrick of his Body. In this one desperate Principle lies all the poison of his Philosophy of old, and so does that of another of late, that makes Self-interest (which is but another word for Pleasure) the onely end and reason of all humane actions. For if he had meant the Self-interest of the whole Man as it comprehends the interest of the Soul and Body, that is, his present and his future state, it had been an honest and a pious assertion: But when he intends nothing more than the narrow interest of our present advantage, and takes off all regard to the future, this defeats all the obligations of Vertue, Religion and Honesty, and leaves all Men at liberty to doe all things indifferently, as they shall apprehend most convenient to their own private ends and interests, ease and pleasure.

§ XVIII. Great numbers of Apologies have indeed been made by learned Men to abate or rather altogether excuse the meanness of *Epicurus* his Opinion, but all in vain. For what though (as they plead) he distinguish't between the Pleasures of the Body and the Mind, and gave the latter the Preheminence, yet 'tis notorious not onely that by the Mind he never intended any Being distinct from the Body, but onely the power of Imagination, which, in his Philosophy, is supposed the highest instrument of sensual perceptions; but (what is more palpable, as I shall shew more at large anon) that he placed our supreme Felicity onely in the pleasures of the Body. Though here their Opinion is so very foul, that they are forced upon all turns to talk ambiguously, and for the most part inconsistently with themselves, sometimes they will have their sovereign Pleasure to signify the actual enjoyments and gratifications of Sensuality;

sometimes nothing more than indolency or meer freedom from pain; sometimes both together, with the reflexion of the Mind upon them. Thus *Epicurus* speaks out plainly, that he understands not what Happiness is, nor where it is to be found, if it be not in the delights of the Palate and some other that modesty forbids to name. So the wise *Metrodorus* (for that title *Epicurus* was pleased to bestow upon his Friend as well as himself) expressly teaches that the Belly is the onely proper seat of Happiness, and that no Arts or Sciences are any way usefull or valuable than as they are subservient to its delights. But because this account of the utmost improvement of humane Happiness and Wisdom too seem'd too mean and brutish for those lofty expressions wherewith they had set off their own Happiness, making it equal with that of the Gods themselves; they sometime tell us that by Pleasure we are not to understand the meer actual delights and gratifications of the Body, but partly a freedom from the pain and trouble that is removed thereby, and chiefly those delightfull reflexions that we naturally enjoy upon it; so that they intend not the pleasures of Sensuality, but that innocent satisfaction of Mind that naturally ensues upon their enjoyment; in that when the desires of the Appetite are quieted, and its wants supplied, the pure consideration of this affects the Mind of every wise Man with great joy and tranquility of thought. And this poor slender Subtilty they fancy to be of mighty use to palliate the foulness of their Doctrine, and to enhance their grave and philosophical account of the Divine Felicity of humane Nature; and herein do all the Epicurean Apologists, with a singular confidence, triumph, as if their great Master had undoubtedly placed our sovereign Happiness purely in the Operations of the Mind.

But



But beside what I have already observed that *Epicurus* spoke out too bluntly to find any subterfuge in this Apology; it does not at all mend the matter that they would excuse. For if to resolve all our Happiness into the actual delights of Sensuality, be thought somewhat too shamefull to own, it is very little more honourable to place it in entertaining the Fancy with reflections upon them. And if it be below the dignity of humane Nature to doe nothing better than to Eat and Drink, it is altogether as unworthy of it to think of nothing greater: this is onely to remove its Happiness from the Table to the Couch. All their boastings concerning the pleasures of the Mind amount to no more than this; and therefore *Plutarch*, when the Apology is made, takes them up quick for it. Yes, yes, says he, this Plea were to some purpose if they would acknowledge any Pleasures wherewith the Mind might entertain it self distinct from those of the Body: but when they openly declare and protest that it is not capable of any other satisfaction than what it enjoys in providing for or reflecting upon its sensual delights, do they not avowedly resolve all the Happiness of the Mind into pure Sensuality, when they onely make use of it as an Instrument to repeat or improve that sort of Pleasures, as it were by preserving the fumes of them in the Fancy, and when the sensual delight it self is gone, feeding upon its meer imagination. So that all that this pretence amounts to is, that the Mind continually pleases it self with the memory of past Pleasures and the hope of Pleasures to come. And is not this a brave account of all the Wisdom and Happiness of the Mind of Man, that it is onely a Cook to cater for the Body, that it is ingenious to provide for the pleasures of the Flesh, that it has a quick and a strong Fancy that makes it

as happy as God himself by being perpetually fixed upon them? At least this great satisfaction (that they will have to be the onely privilege of a wise Man) is the very height of brutish Lust, and onely serves when the natural Appetite is satisfied, to provoke it

to new and preternatural desires. Δεινὸν  
 Plut. non posse ἄδ' ἐμπαίνει καὶ διερώδῃ περὶ τὰ γινόμενα  
 suaviter. καὶ προσδοκώμενα τῆς ἡδονῆς ἔργα τεραχὴν  
 καὶ λύσαν ἢ τοσαύτη πρὸς ἀναμνήσεις βέλ-  
 χευσις αὐτῆς τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ πρόβησις. This lustfull kind

of rowling past Pleasures in the thoughts serves onely to keep up the rage and fury of our beastly Appetites, and, if there be any Pleasure in them, it is not so much in chewing over our past delights, as in provoking our Appetites to new desires. And is not this a strange description of a wise Man, one that approaches nearest to the condition of the Gods, that he thinks of nothing but the pleasures of his Belly, that the onely design of all his thoughts is to enflame his Lusts and make them more vehement and outrageous than they could have been without the assistance of this Divine Wisdom and Philosophy? The very brutishness of this Opinion, one would think, should make it too shamefull and dishonourable for any person that pretends to any modesty or ingenuity openly to assert it, and yet that is the last resolution of all their contemplative and philosophick Happiness. So that, admitting this Apology, it is plain that the Epicurean Doctrine falls in exactly with the ignominious Philosophy of *Aristippus*. For whereas this places all Happiness entirely in the actual pleasures of the Body, that onely adds to it the complacency of the Fancy, so that still sensual Pleasures are the onely matter of all their Happiness, and all that tranquility of Mind, of which they speak so loftily, as if it so very much exceeded

exceeded the poor delights of Sensuality, has no other Object wherewith to entertain and support its satisfaction. So that it matters not whether those passages that are objected against *Epicurus* by the Ancients were (as is falsely pretended) foisted into his Writings by the *Stoicks*: his Opinion is as foul by their own Apologies as his enemies Calumnies can make it. For what though *Epicurus* himself never protested that he knew no other Happiness than the pleasures of the Belly? What though *Metrodorus* never said that the Belly was the chiefest seat of Happiness? yet these Propositions are the true and plain account of all their Philosophy. For if all Happiness consist in Pleasure, and if there be no Pleasure but that of the Body, what need of any farther contention? the case is very plain, that, according to them, there is nothing else of any real use and value in humane life. And then; lastly, as for those great out-cries that they raise of the blessed and heavenly state of indolency, they signifie no more than their magnificent stories of the pleasures of the Mind; for it is a plain case that Felicity cannot consist in, or result from the meer absence of misery; that is the Happiness of Stocks and Stones, that are neither sensible of pains nor subject to calamities; so that this it self does not directly affect with any sense of Happiness, but all that results from it is derived from the reflexion of the Mind upon its blessed and godlike freedom from misery. And is not this a soveraign piece of Happiness to think now and then, when at leasure, that I am not actually miserable? It must needs be a wonderfull support to the Mind of a thinking Man to consider with it self that the very best of its condition is to be sometimes out of pain. This is a lanker Happiness than that of *Aristippus*, for that carries in it some real and positive satisfaction,

such

such as it is, but this contents it self meerly in not being dissatisfied. Who can exprefs or conceive (as *Plutarch* derides them) the Happiness that these Men reap by rejoycing in not being miserable? Have they not great reason to think and speak so extravagantly of themselves? Well may they talk of immortal Pleasures, and boast themselves equal to the Gods, and rave and rant with the transport of that divine Happiness, that they alone of all mortals feel, when all their Heaven is nothing else than that at present they are onely not miserable.

§ XIX. And thus having briefly unravel'd the little knots and mysteries of the *Epicurean Philosophy*, and clear'd it from those obscurities that they themselves have been forced to cast upon it in their own defence, I have by that alone dispatcht the greatest part of the Controversie with them: For in all disputes with this sort of Men, it is a much harder task to make them own their own Doctrines, than it is, when owned, to confute them. And therefore it has ever been their custom to keep their Notions in the dark and under some disguise, lest if they should appear in the open light, and in their own naked form, they should, without any curious survey, discover their own foulness and falshood. As in our present case. All Happiness, say they, consists in Pleasure. What in sensual Pleasure? No, that is too gross and filthy. In what then? In indolency. But meer indolency, say I, is the Happiness of Stocks and Stones. The highest Pleasure of all therefore, say they, consists in tranquility of Mind. But whence arises that tranquility? From its reflecting upon the pleasures of the Body. Now the plain truth is forced out, that the pleasures of the Body are the onely sovereign  
Happi-

Happiness, and that all the pleasures of the Mind result wholly from them, and are entirely resolved into them. But I shall not concern my self in their Greekish subtilties, and shall onely discourse with them according to the common sense and understanding of Mankind, and therefore will suppose that by Pleasure they mean, as they ought to do, all the Happiness we are capable of in this life, be it actual enjoyments, or a sense of present indolency, or both, or any thing else that can contribute to our present contentment. And upon this state of the Question, which is the fairest that can be made, I shall proceed with them. And here two very frightfull Objections against the pleasures of this life taken alone, immediately present themselves to our view; first, their notorious Vanity; secondly, their wofull Uncertainty. So that if they were solid, yet their falshood and treachery would rife their satisfaction; and if they were constant, yet their meanness would render them inconsiderable; but when they are both vain and insecure, if the Providence of God, that has taken care in some measure to provide for us, has not provided some farther Happiness, after all his wise contrivances for the good Government and happy estate of Mankind, he has in effect done no more than if he had done nothing at all. As for their Vanity, I shall defer to discourse of it till I come to the more plausible account of the *Peripateticks*, who though they place not so great a value upon them, as to make them the whole Happiness of humane Nature, yet they make them a part of it subordinate to Vertue, which I shall there prove to be as lank as the *Epicurean Hypothesis*, without the addition of Immortality; but with it, to carry in it as much contentment and satisfaction as the nature of the thing is capable of, and as the Providence of

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God

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God can be supposed to design by it. And that will be enough, upon the supposition of the Divine Providence, to prove the necessity of a future state. But at present its meer fickleness and uncertainty is more than enough to destroy all its delight. For the two great Ingredients of Happiness that they (and truly enough) require, are present contentment, and security of it for the future; so that if this last be an impossible thing, that alone overthrows all the designs of Happiness. And this is as certain, by the daily experience of all Mankind, as that there are such Creatures as Men upon the face of the Earth. For what Man can be secure of his present good condition, I will not say all his life, for that supposition is too enormous, but a year, a month, a day, an hour, nay the next moment? For considering how many are the Evils of humane life, how many ways they may befall us; that there is nothing within, nor nothing without us, that may not discompose our present Tranquility, he must be a very vain and foolish Man, that can secure himself from all future trouble and disturbance; and if any Man could flatter himself to so high a degree of stupidity, yet his own experience would quickly convince him of his folly. Nay, so far are we from being any ways happy by our security for the time to come, that the meer foresight of future evils is one of the heaviest and most unavoidable miseries of humane life: Εὐδὶαν ὅ

Plut. non posse  
sua. &c.

χειμερινὴν μάλλον ἢ τὴν ἰσθμίου ἀσθενεῖαν  
ἐλπίζειν αὐτὰ παραμένειν βεβαίως, A Man  
may sooner expect a Winters constant

Summer, than hope for a perpetual ease and health of Body. So that suppose a Man in never so happy a condition at present, he cannot avoid being troubled with the foresight of all those sad accidents that may probably

probably befall him, and in his greatest ease whilst his Mind is employed in reflecting upon its present repose, it must withall be thinking how obnoxious it is to innumerable Pains and Miseries. And this one lean Meditation of the shortness and uncertainty of his present ease, and the foresight of all those Evils that in a little time may, and some time or other must discompose it, must devour all the other delights of Life, were they much bigger and much more solid than they are.

§ XX. And of this the *Epicureans* themselves were so forcibly convinced by the most obvious experience of things, that they thought it was in vain and too great a confidence to deny it; and therefore seeing that we can never hope to escape all the Miseries of Life, they have furnished us with several Antidotes or rather Charms and Conjurations to relieve us against them. For alas all their Prescriptions are onely so many little Sayings and Apothegms fit for Schoolboys Declamations, but are by no means such Reasons as become the wisdom and gravity of Philosophers, or can afford any the least satisfaction to a wise and sober Man. Nay so far are they from that, that they are like the Dreams of frantick People, stubborn and wild Conceits persisted in against the nature of things and the experience of Mankind. As that *length of time makes no accession to a Man's happiness.* He might as well have told us that continuance of Pain makes no accession to his Misery, and that the Man who suffers any Pain a year, endures no more than he that suffers the very same Pain but an hour. However, there is no Man that thinks himself happy, but must for that Reason desire its continuance, and if it be not eternal, fear its loss. So that when he

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tells us that Eternity it self could not improve our Felicity, he is inconsistent both with the nature of things, and with himself. With the nature of things, because all Pleasure is enjoyed at the present time, from whence it is undeniably evident that how much longer time any Man has of his Enjoyment, so much more does he enjoy of Happiness. In short, we are either happy in this present State, or we are not; if not, then according to the *Epicurean Hypothesis* we are never happy; if we are, then the case is plain that no Man can ever be reconciled to the loss of his Happiness. It is in vain then to tell us that time makes no addition to our Felicity, when we are certain that the cutting off of time alone utterly kills and destroys it for ever. And as he contradicts the nature of things, so himself; in that he places the peculiar Happiness of his God's in this, that they are not onely happy at present, but are secure to continue so for ever. And indeed without it their present Happiness would afford them but a very slender Contentment; nay the greater it is, so much the more would the certainty of its future loss afflict them. For what Being can we imagine more miserable than one that being advanced to the utmost pitch of Happiness knows it self condemn'd to be in a little time cast down from it for ever? In this case the more happy, the more miserable; for by how much the more any one delights in his present Condition, by so much the more must he dread the loss of it. So that length of time does not onely make accession to our Happiness, but makes the very Happiness it self.

And as *Maximus Tyrius* very well observes, Ὡςπερ γὰρ, οἶμαι, καὶ τὸ ὅλης γῆς  
 Dissert. 32. εἰ ἀρέλοι τίς τὰ λόγῳ τὸ ἔδεσθαι καὶ τὸ μόνον,  
 συναρῆλεν αὐτῆς καὶ τὸ εἶναι καὶ τὸ ἡλίας εἰ  
 ἀρέλοι τίς τὸ κίνησαν καὶ τὸ δρόμον, συναρῆλεν αὐτῶ τὸ  
 εἶσταν.



εἶσαν ἕτως καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν εἰς ἀρέτοι καὶ ἀκρίβειαν καὶ τὸ  
 εἶσαν, συναρῆεν αὐτὸ καὶ τὸ φῶς. We may as well  
 suppose the Earth without stability, and the Sun  
 without motion, as Happiness without perpetuity;  
 take stability from the Earth, and you take away its  
 Being; or motion from the Sun, and you had as good  
 take away the Sun it self; so separate perpetuity from  
 Happiness, and separate Happiness from it self. And  
 yet they are bold enough to tell us that a wise Man is  
 not onely able to preserve his Contentment under the  
 prospect of future Miseries, but under their present  
 Pressures. Why so? Because all Pain, which accor-  
 ding to *Epicurus* is all Misery, is *short if great, light  
 if long.* But this though it be one of the most admi-  
 red Decrees of their Philosophy and the choicest Re-  
 ceipt in all their *Dispensatory*, 'tis nothing better than  
 a charm of jingling words. For who is ignorant that  
 there are some very sharp Pains of a very long con-  
 tinuance? What relief then will this Proposition af-  
 ford against their Assaults? But if our Philosopher  
 would have taught us any real use of this Principle,  
 he should first have defined what he means by long  
 and short, great and small, and then have made some  
 application of it to some particular cases. First, how  
 few or how many days, months or years denominate  
 a Pain long or short, and what degree of Pain makes  
 it great or little: and if that were done (which yet  
 they never will doe) we might perhaps understand  
 the benefit of this Advice; but without it, it can  
 onely serve to entertain a Philosophers fancy when  
 he has no use of it, but not at all to relieve him  
 when he has. For whenever it is reduced to practice,  
 it is baffled and affronted by the most vulgar experi-  
 ence of the World, the acutest Pains being for the  
 most part of the longest duration; particularly those

two great racks of Mankind, the Stone and the Gout. How many years do they assault People before they destroy them? And yet what sort of Pain is there more exquisite? Now then when a Man has suffer'd under either of these five or ten years, would it not be a very strong and effectual lenitive to be told by a Philosopher, *si magnus brevis, short if sharp?* Nay I will onely suppose a Person fretted continually with the Toothache, should a Philosopher seriously go about to give him ease with this little charm, I am very apt to think he would more provoke his Choler than assuage his Pain. And yet this sort of Cordials, as phantastick as they are, are as much trusted to by other Sects, particularly the *Stoicks*, as the *Epicureans*, an Abstract whereof we meet with in *Seneca's* 78 Epistle so much magnified by those two great Men, *Lipsius* and *Gassendus*; and because it is so full an Account of all the Epicurean Wisdom, I shall here a little consider it, though it consists onely of a great many provoking Sayings to a wise Man, but much more to a Man in pain. First he would demonstrate by natural Philosophy that all Diseases in the Nerves and Membranes, which are of all others the most acute, quickly vanish of their own nature. Which no doubt must be a wonderfull satisfaction to such Persons as have been all their life-time troubled with the Stone, the Cholick, or the Headache. They tell me it is impossible that I should for any long time have been tormented with them, because they are of that sort of Diseases that from their own nature are of a short continuance, and this as I am a wise Man I am obliged to believe, notwithstanding that I know by sad experience that they have lasted as long as I my self. In the next place, *noli mala tua facere tibi graviora*. Impatience does but exasperate the pain.

True,

True, but yet Patience does not assuage it; the Torment is not the less because it is born with the greater stubbornness of Mind, for if that prevent new Troubles, it does not at all alleviate the old ones. And yet were it so that patience would lessen pain, yet is it not able to support it self under great extremities (*i. e.* when we stand in most need of it) without some better Principles than we are furnished with out of the Epicurean Shop. But then *levis est si nihil illi Opinio adjecerit*, your pain is light enough in it self if you would not imagine it great. But this is still harder when a Man feels the most exquisite pains, to be told that they are light enough of themselves, if he would not greaten them by his own weakness: this is to upbraid a Man's misery, not to relieve him; and to adde Reproach to his Calamity by making his Infelicity his Folly. But supposing his Fancy to be so foolish, how shall he prevent it? It is no more in a Man's power to avoid being sensible of what he feels, than it is to avoid the sense it self. Or if it were, I am sure it is not in his power, as he is here advised (*levem illam dum putas facies*) to make a great pain a little one onely by thinking it so. In the next place, *circumcidenda duo sunt, & futuri timor & veteris incommodi memoria*. We must neither remember past nor fear future evils. And this Prescription were of some use against enflaming our pains by our thoughts, if it were practicable; but alas it is not in any Man's power to forget his last fit of the Stone, or not to think that when this is over, it will some time or other return again; and the very certainty of that is a very great part of his misery. But however this concerns not his present actual sensation; For whether he think or think not of past or future Evils, it is certain that he now feels all that he feels. And here

here the next advice ought to have been according to *Epicurus* to solace himself with the remembrance of his past-pleasures. Which at best is but a very mean Satisfaction, and for the most part rather affects with trouble than delight, in that it reminds us of a happiness that is already perisht, *i. e.* lost for ever. And certainly such Thoughts are like the Reflections of old Men upon the pleasures of their Youth, that rather trouble them because they are past, than delight them because they were once present. But suppose there may be some pleasure in these Reflections, yet how mean, how abject, how unsatisfying an happiness is this to think to day under extremity of pain, that yesterday I allayed my hunger and quenched my thirst? So that when the Object of our Thoughts is in it self so mean, they can give us no more contentment than that affords. Seeing therefore that its real enjoyment is altogether so unable to procure any substantial and satisfying happiness, how much like a meer shadow is that delight which we create to our selves by a meer phantastick and imaginary reflection upon it. *But if it have intervals, it will be the more tolerable.* It will so, but yet the future ease does not take away the present pain. It onely proves it to be a less misery than if it were continual, but does not make a Man at this present time feel less than he feels. Beside, these intervals do him no kindness against the Evil I am now chiefly discoursing of. For though in them he may be free from actual pain, yet is he then grieved with the memory of the sharpness of his past-pains, and the expectation of his next approaching fit; and that is the thing that I am here representing as inconsistent with Happiness. *But a wise Man must command his Memory, so as onely to remember his pleasures and forget his pains.* This is another very imperious

perious Edict, for we can no more command our Memories than our Senses. And the sharper our miseries have been, the more importunately will they thrust themselves upon our Thoughts. The next advice then is, *toto contra illum pugnet animo, vincetur si cesserit, vincet si se contra dolorem suum intenderit.* Let him resist with all his might, if he fly, he shall be vanquish't; if he stand his ground, he conquers. But this is onely to put us off with metaphors and similitudes, that because when a Man is assaulted by his Enemy, it is safer to resist than fly, therefore the same course is to be taken with Pains and Diseases. And it were well if it could, but alas in these cases it is not in our power either to fly or to resist. And then it is in vain to exhort us to either. And therefore instead of advising us to this, he would have done much more like a Philosopher, if he would have instructed us how to doe it, and furnished us with Arms and Weapons for the Combate; otherwise it would have been more advisable to lie down under the Burthen then to think of making resistance to no purpose. For that is onely a new trouble and vexation, and adds fury to pain, like a Captive that will not yield to his imprisonment, but bites his Chains and fights with the Stone-walls to assert his Liberty. Or to keep more closely to our Authour's metaphor, that resolves not to lie down under a weight, though he knows that he cannot bear it. For so he immediately tells us, *Nunc hoc plerique faciunt, attrahunt in se ruina-m, cui obstandum est. Istud quod premit, quod im-pendet, quod urget, si subducere te cæperis, sequetur, & gravius incumbet: Si contra steteris, & obniti vo-lueris, repelletur.* Men draw ruine upon themselves by shunning what they ought to bear; when they would avoid what lies upon them, it presses them so

much the heavier ; but if they keep their station, they support it : But what if I cannot bear up under it, must I not then yield? whether I will or no, I must ; and it is no more in my power to thrust away a Disease by force, than to support the Ruins of a falling Rock. Some more advices there are to the same purpose, that is to no more than that (supposing the Firmament it self should fall ) they should advice us to prepare our Shoulders without the help of any other props to bear it up.

§ XXI. But if there is no Remedy we must not fear to die, and this the *Epicureans* reckon to be the first point of Happiness. For seeing Death is unavoidable, that Man can never enjoy any tranquillity of Mind that continually dreads so great an evil. And therefore here they begin to lay their first foundations of Wisdom in the overthrow of their worst and greatest Enemy. And indeed they that have conquer'd the fear of Death, have nothing else to fear. But alas that is an insuperable Evil and the most insupportable Calamity of humane Life. So that though Happiness were otherwise acquirable in this World, this alone is more than enough to sadden all our joys and overwhelm them with perpetual melancholy and sorrow. For suppose a Man born with all the advantages of an healthfull Body and a chearfull Mind, and blest with all the circumstances of Success and Fortune, yet when he had compassed all his Projects, when he was happy to the utmost of his capacities, when all things had conspired to complete his Felicity, so that there remain'd no unsatisfied hopes or desires ; even then having no farther Expectations, wherewith to entertain his Mind, he would naturally fall into the melancholy meditation of Death  
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and the Grave. Now what Reflection can be more sad and dismal than the inevitable necessity of bidding an eternal adieu to all his mirth and happiness? What a tormenting satisfaction must he enjoy in his freest Caresses of pleasure and delight, whilst he knows the fatal Knife to hang perpetually over his Head? So uncomfortable would be the Condition of the most happy and fortunate Men in the World, that when they had arrived at the highest pitch of humane Felicity, the most pleasant prospect they could take from thence would be the gloomy Regions of everlasting Death and Darkness; and all the advantage they should gain by their height, would be onely to see themselves encompassed with the Grave and bottomless Dungeons of Oblivion, which they know must after a few days swallow them up for ever. And now what can create greater horreur than the fear of an eternal Annihilation? What is there so much shrinks and affrights the Mind of Man as the dark and fearfull Thoughts of its own Mortality? How must it for ever die and languish under the dreadfull expectations of eternal Darkness, when after a short mushroom life it must return into dust and silence, and be for ever buried in the horreur and loathsomness of the Grave? So that when men have done and talked all they can, nothing can ever vanquish the fear of Death but the hope of Immortality. This, and this alone is able to scatter all the black and melancholy Apprehensions of our approaching Fate, and to support our Minds against all its Horrors. And without this, however Men may pretend to comfort themselves with Apothegms, Paradoxes and brave Sayings, the Terrour of Death is insuperable to all other Principles and Resolutions.

Thus what a lame and silly device is that great Subtily of *Epicurus*, to this purpose, *That death cannot hurt us, because when that is, we are not?* For, first, there is no appetite either more strong or more natural to any thing, that is sensible of its Being, than the desire of the continuation of its Existence. This desire results from the same instinct of Nature with the passion of self-love. And it is as possible to reconcile a Man to an abhorrency of himself, as 'tis to the thoughts of his Annihilation. For if he delight in the enjoyment of his Being, he cannot but dread the loss of his enjoyment; and therefore 'tis a dismal meditation, do what we can, to think of being blotted out of Life for ever. So that, notwithstanding this device, the continual foresight of this black and inevitable Fate of things, cannot but damp all our mirth and embitter our biggest joys with the saddest accents of grief and sorrow. And it is in vain to advise us, as *Epicurus* does, to accustom our selves to the thoughts of Death, when Nature it self recoils and stands aghast at the very apprehensions of it. And the Man that is seriously possess'd with the Opinion of its being an everlasting Annihilation, can never after lift up his head with any cheerfulness and clearness of spirit; but will droop away his life, in spite of all his arts and diversions, with a perpetual inward dismayedness and discontent. And I may safely appeal to the sad experience of *Epicurus* himself and all his followers, whether any thing so much checks and abates the comfort of their lives as the importune thoughts of dying. If they would speak out their inward pangs, they must confess, that when they have done all they can to reconcile themselves to this necessity of Fate, that they dread nothing with so much anguish and confusion as the approach and apprehension of Death.

It is:



It is a stupifying horror and strikes Nature it self with an infinite and unexpressible amazement. But *Epicurus* himself (say they) a little before his death, when he was quite worn out with the Stone and Strangury, the torment whereof he thought so exquisite that nothing could increase it, was able to magnifie that mighty pleasure and happiness, that he then reaped from the remembrance of his wife thoughts and inventions. But certainly, if he expected to be believed, either himself was none of the wisest, or he thought his Friend *Hermachus*, to whom he wrote his dying Letter, very credulous. For what were these comfortable and ravishing inventions that could so much beatifie a Man in that sad condition? That God takes no care of Men, that Men have no other Being than their Bodies, that Death annihilates them for ever, that they have no greater Happiness than to gratifie their sensual appetites, and to please themselves with reflecting upon it. Ravishing inventions these to compose the thoughts of a dying Man! For, first, what comfort or happiness can there be in casting off all intercourse and commerce with a Deity? Is it not much better to have a modest and awfull reverence of a Divine Providence, than to cut off all dependence upon his bounty and goodness? Nothing can equal the satisfaction of Mind that a good Man reaps from his trust and confidence in God; for he is ever secure of his care and kindness in all conditions; and what greater quiet can he enjoy than to have a well grounded assurance that he stands upon good terms with, and has a powerfull interest in the great and sovereign Governour of all things? He is in all conditions safe under his almighty Protection, in that there is, upon the supposition of a Divine Providence, a kind of Friendship between God and all good Men;

so that

so that it is not in his power not to be good to the good. Thus what happiness can exceed that of *Hermogenes*, in *Plutarch*, who could say of himself, the Gods that know all things, and can doe all things, are so much my Friends, and so highly concern'd for my welfare, that I am never, night nor day, out of their watchfull Providence, but whatever I doe, I have their assistance, and whatever I design, their direction. And now beside the gifts of Providence in themselves, this is that which affects with the greatest delight to think that they are tokens of the Divine Love and Goodness. But by taking away the Being of a Divine Providence the Epicurean robs himself of that which is most delightfull in his happiness, and leaves nothing wherewith to relieve himself in his afflictions. For,

*Adv. Colot.* in the next place, when he thinks to take refuge in Death, that (as *Plutarch* observes) is such another kind of comfort, as if you should tell a Man in a storm at Sea, that your Ship has no Pilot, and that there is no hopes of allaying the Tempest, but yet however be not afraid, for in a little time the Ship shall split and sink, and when you are drown'd then the Storm will trouble you no longer. Such is the Philosophy of the Epicureans in all great calamities. Do you hope for any ease from the Deity by your Prayers? You are too vainly conceited, his blessed Nature is concern'd about nothing but it self. Do you expect a recompence in the life to come? Be not deceived: when you are dead, you shall be for ever incapable of Sense, and therefore of Pleasure; and for this reason I advise you to eat, drink and be merry in the fury of the Storm; because by and by you shall sink and sink for ever.

So that granting to *Epicurus* his darling Principle, that after Death there remains nothing of us sensible of Pain or Pleasure; and therefore though we lose our Beings, yet as long as we are not capable of being affected with the loss, we thereby become no more miserable than we were before we were put into Being; Granting, I say, all this, yet the love of Being, and the desire of self-preservation is so vehement and earnest, that the very fear of ever being defeated of it is a desperate confusion of all the joy and tranquility of present life. Such a Man knows not which way to determine his thoughts and designs, but his Soul or (as they will have it) his Fancy pines and languishes for want of some futable Object to entertain it self withall, and sinks for ever into despair and melancholy. The utmost Happiness of this life is in it self so vain and empty, that in spite of all the arts of diversion and forgetfulness, 'tis infinitely unable to appease our discontents; and Men that have nothing else to trust to, what dismal and disconsolate lives must they live in every condition? If they lie under calamities and afflictions, this is an intolerable accession to the load. For is it not a sad reflection to consider that when the period of life is so short and fading, so much of so little should be lost and worn away in sorrow and misery? And no doubt it cannot but be hugely comfortable to a Man, that groans under the sorrows of a sharp Disease, to despair of any other remedy or deliverance but in eternal Death: and it must be a mighty relief against the unavoidable cares of Life to consider that, when a Man has spent the greatest part of his days in toil and drudgery, he must then die for ever. So that, according to this Hypothesis, the whole and best account of Life will be no better than this, that it is a short period of trouble  
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and misery, and that Men are born into the world onely to grieve and die. And no doubt they cannot but be much in love with their Beings, that they cannot value at an higher rate. For if the date of our existence expired with that of our lives, and if our whole duration were but threescore years and ten, if all our hopes were buried with our Bodies, and if we were thrust into Being onely, after a few days or years, to be thrust back into nothing, it is much more eligible never to have been born, than to be born onely to drop a tear and vent a groan and die. For who would choose to float up and down a few minutes in this stormy and tempestuous world, instantly to disapper and sink back into nothing? Who would be born for no other end than that he might be put into a capacity to die? Who would enter upon this tragical Scene of things onely to appear and so return into dust and silence? Who would dance upon these restless Waves a little while, till either Violence crushes or Nature sinks the bubble into an eternal nothing? But if on the contrary a Man should happen to enjoy the delights of ease, affluence and prosperity, a perpetual health, and an undisturbed tranquility; how does this meditation dash and scatter all his joys? With what a weight of dispair and astonishment must it lie upon his oppressed Mind? And how must he for ever droop and languish under the expectations of his endless fate? In a word, what is or what can be conceived more frightfull to the minds or the fancies of Men, especially in Prosperity, than the aspect of eternal Death? And yet this representation haunts and follows such Persons like a murther'd Ghost in all companies and all delights. Nothing is able to lay or divert its importunity. It frights away all considerations, and the more Men study to reconcile their  
Minds

Minds to their Fate, the more it scares and distracts their thoughts. There is no charm nor counsel against necessity; and a terrour that is unavoidable is above the power and the relief of Philosophy, and will not be vanquish't by stubborn thoughts or proud words. So that it is altogether as easie to prevail with a Man to hate and abhor his own Being, as to reconcile him to the thoughts of his own destruction. For by the same necessity that Nature loves and desires the continuance of it self, it recoils and starts back from all thoughts of its dissolution. This then is, upon the Epicurean Supposition, a vain, an useles and unreasonable advice, being 'tis so insuperable a contradiction to the nature of Things. So that the fear of Death, which is the thing I am now to represent, is as certain and inexorable as Death it self, and Men may as soon devest themselves of their own Natures, as suppress the convulsions of this inbred passion. And now when it is so incurable, and yet withall so importunate and disquieting, it is easie to imagine what desperately cheerfull lives those Men must live, that always live under its sad and dismal apprehensions.

§ XXII. But beside this great and sovereign Antidote against the fear of Death, they have several other little receipts scatter'd up and down in their Writings, I shall but briefly mention them because all that little force which they seem to have, depends upon the former fundamental principle. First, say they, let us be thankfull to the bounty of Nature for making our lives so long, instead of repining at it for making them no longer. But I say, if our whole Being be at all mortal, we have no reason to be at all thankfull for it, and if our whole Being be worn out with this Life it is much more eligible never to have been.

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But then, say they, we were admitted into Life upon this condition, that we should give place to others, as others have given place to us. Were we so? Then were we all admitted upon unacceptable terms. Yes but by troubling our selves in vain we do but add one misery to another. It is true, but that is a fatal misery, and it is as necessary to fear Death as it is to die, and that is it that makes up the complaint, that we are put in such a state of Being which we cannot enjoy without this continual anguish and perplexity annexed to it. So that how wise or foolish a thing it is to fear Death is not at all material, but whether it be unavoidable, though if it be, I am sure it is a very foolish thing to endeavour against it. But how irksome soever Death may be, yet seeing it is fatal, we ought to make it as easie as we can by a voluntary compliance with it; but this beside the folly that is common to all the rest, that it advises to an impossibility, is not so properly compliance as despair, and is like the condition of a condemn'd Malefactor that goes to his Execution onely because otherwise he must be driven and whipt to it. And no Man has any other comfort all his Life-time against the terrours of Death than a Thief upon the Gallows, that would, if it were possible, counterfeit to die cheerfully because there is no remedy. To the same purpose is that other advice, that it is in vain to fear Death, because it is natural, necessary and inevitable; that is, because it is remediless, and there lies the very agony of all our horror, that a thing so infinitely terrible should withall be so utterly unavoidable. And when they tell us how strange a folly and madness it is to torment our selves with the fear of that, which we are infallibly certain we can never escape, they do but perswade us to the madness of despair instead of courage and resolution.

lution. For how foolish or unreasonable soever this fear may be, it is natural, antecedent to the choice of our wills and the discretion of our understandings, and so above all the rules of Prudence and prescriptions of Philosophy: They can onely guide and instruct our Minds in things subject to their own election, but cannot affect, much less over-rule the instincts of Nature. In the next place, we are already dead, say they, to so much of our Life as is past and gone; so that so much as we live we die, and that which we call Death is but our last Death, and therefore as we fear not our Death that is past why should we that which is to come. But what Child understands not the difference between Life and Death? and if to live be to die, notwithstanding this quibble we are troubled never the less that this new way of dying puts an end to our old way of dying; and if we have been dying ever since we were born, that is the thing that grieves us that we cannot be dying so for ever. But

*Bassus Aufidius*, the Epicurean old Man in *Epist.* 30. *Seneca*, reconciled himself to his approaching Death with this reason, because it was as absurd to fear Death as old Age, which yet all Men desire to come to, in that as old Age follows Youth, so Death follows old Age. But if he were in good earnest satisfied, it is a sign that he had lived not onely to his old Age but to his second Childhood. For old Age is desirable not because it follows Youth, but because it defers Death, and that is it which makes it so much less valuable than Youth, because it is so much nearer to Death. And the Philosophers reason had been altogether as comfortable if he had preferr'd old Age before Youth, because his Youth was very old, it being many years since he was a young Man, whereas his old Age was of a later date, he having been but

a little time an old Man. By which device he might have proved to himself that Youth is old Age and old Age Youth. Much like this is that other reasoning wherewith *Gassendus* himself seems so much pleased, that whereas we now count our selves happy if we live to an hundred years, yet if the natural course of our Life were as much shorter we should be as much satisfied with twenty; and if our natural course reach't to a thousand years, we should then be as much troubled to die at six hundred as now at sixty, and so forward. It is like all the rest of the Philosophick comforts, and is so far from reconciling us to Death at any time, that it is a demonstration that there is no time in which an Epicurean can or ought to be content to die; and that be our lives longer or shorter, yet unless they are eternal, we cannot rid our selves of this importunate and intolerable evil. And of the same nature is that witty saying of *Seneca*, that a little or great circle are both equal in perfection of figure though not in quantity, so is the Life of Man whether it last to twenty or to an hundred years. But certainly no Man that might live to an hundred would be content to die at twenty years of Age for this reason, because a little circle is as round as a great one. But, lastly, *Gassendus* has a very remarkable device, with which the learned Man is so much pleased as often to repeat it, that though a Man's Life may be short in it self, yet may he make it equal with the duration of the whole World, because he may converse with the transactions of all former times, and be as well acquainted with them as if himself had then actually lived. And as for the time to come, he knowing that nothing shall be but what has been, understands all future events as if present; so that a wise Man, partly by memory, partly  
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by foresight, may extend his short Life to all Ages of the World. But if he could, unless he could make himself immortal too, the Objection would still lie as heavy as ever. Beside, can any wise Man be so very fancifull as seriously by this device to perswade and satisfie himself, that though he is not above forty years old, he was born at the beginning of the World, and that though he die to morrow he shall live to the end of it? If he can, he must be a very foolish Man too; if he cannot, it will be no support against the approach of Death that he hath already lived to the World's end. This is the full account of all the Happiness of humane Nature, according to the Epicurean Principles, which you see, without this support of a future state, sinks of it self into a bottomless want and misery. And therefore, to anticipate our Exceptions, *Gassendus*, at the beginning of his moral Philosophy, has warily (as he thinks) distinguish'd between a twofold Happiness of Man: the one supernatural, which we are taught by Religion, that instructs us in the knowledge of that future state of Bliss, that good and pious Men shall enjoy in the vision of God. The other natural, which we are taught by Philosophy, whereby we are instructed, to live as happily in this Life as the condition of humane Nature in general, and every Man's own circumstances in particular, are capable of. And this, he says, is all the Felicity that Mankind can naturally desire or justly aspire to. But this is like all the rest of his excuses, particularly that of his account of *Epicurus* his *filial Reverence* to the Gods as opposed to the vulgar *servile Fear*, when by denying their Providence he expressly destroys all manner of reverence to them. So again when he distinguishes of two sorts of Sense, the one external, that of the Body; the other internal, that of the

Mind;

Mind; and that when *Epicurus* affirms that all sense is extinguish'd in Death, it may be interpreted of all sense of the first kind; when nothing can be more evident than that he intended all manner of sense whatsoever. So now here does he distinguish between supernatural and natural Happiness, and that it was proper for *Epicurus* to treat onely of the latter as a Philosopher, when it is so notorious that as a Philosopher he made it his utmost endeavour to overthrow the very Being and belief of the former. But however, if this Happiness which he calls natural be all that Mankind is naturally capable of, then is he naturally capable of none at all. And as for the two Arguments he subjoins to perswade us to be content with it, they onely aggravate and upbraid our wants instead of satisfying our desires. As, first, that otherwise we forget our Mortality and the frailty of our Nature, in that we are born expos'd to innumerable mischiefs and miseries; which is nothing else but the description of a forlorn and miserable condition, and amounts to no more than this, that a wise Man must be happy, *i. e.* content with his condition, because he knows his condition to be miserable. And, secondly, that it is some comfort that when all Men are expos'd to misery, and when there are so many degrees of it, that you are less miserable than others, and that you are as little miserable as the condition of your Nature will admit of. That is to say, that though I endure most of the calamities of humane Life, yet must I think my self an happy Man, if there be any one Man in the World that endures more; and though I feel my self actually miserable, yet Philosophy teaches me to think my self happy, because I feel as little misery as any of my Neighbours. If these are the great Topicks of philosophick Consolation, they had better prescribe

prescribe but this one Remedy instead of all, *viz.* To make our selves happy onely by despairing of ever being so, for that is the last result of all their Propositions. And therefore, to conclude, it is remarkable that *Hegesias* his Philosophy, who vehemently perswaded all Men to be their own Executioners, was but the natural emprovement of that of *Aristippus*, whose Scholar he was; For when the Master had once taught that there is no Happiness but in the pleasures of the Body, it was easie for the Disciple to add that then there is none at all, and therefore Death is the best thing that we can either pray for or give our selves. For our Bódies are liable to such an infinite number of Evils, and our Minds so sensible of what our Bodies feel, that it is much more eligible not to be at all, than to be in a state of so much misery. And that is the unavoidable consequence of all Opinions that take away a future Immortality. Though it is pretty to observe that this same *Hegesias*, as warm and eloquent as he was in perswading other Men to throw away their lives, when King *Ptolomy* threatned him himself with Death if he would not forbear those kind of Discourses to the People, how easily he was cured of his Pedantry. For how pleasant soever the death of others might seem to him, yet when it concern'd himself it was quickly too hard for his Philosophy. And that is the true desperate condition of all Men of the same Principles, that they neither care to live nor care to die.

And now upon these phantastick Principles after what a rate do we rant, and with what magnanimity and greatness of Mind do we desie all the miseries of Life and pangs of Death? And how do we boast, that in spite of the extremest torments that tyranny it self can inflict upon us, we will enjoy Pleasures equal

equal to the Happiness of the Gods? Roast us in the Bull of *Phalaris*, we will make it more pleasant than a Bed of Roses, and instead of roaring out through extremity of pain, we will spoil the Tyrants jest, and onely laugh and sing *quàm suave hoc est, quàm hoc non curo*. But could one think it possible that the same Man, who had placed all Happiness in Pleasure and all Misery in Pain, should be so artificial as to reconcile his sovereign Happiness with all the anguish and extremity of Pain; that is to say, to think himself most absolutely happy when he is most extremely miserable? But certainly he must be a very cunning rather than a very wise Man, that can by meer subtilty be too hard for the nature of Things, and by the meer force of imagination make an agreement between the widest of Contradictions.

§ XXIII. But, secondly, as upon the Epicurean Supposition, all Happiness is no more than a shadow, so upon the same is all Vertue no better than an empty name. For beside that it thereby loses the foundation on which it ought to stand, in that, if there be no such thing as Happiness, there remains no motive for Men to act at all, when whatever they doe, they must doe in order to that or to nothing; so that Happiness being taken away Vertue loses all its force and obligation, and that Man is good in vain that is never the better for his being good. But beside this, and granting such a thing as mortal Happiness, yet it is too weak and narrow a Foundation for the stability of Vertue; in that it resolves the measure and the reason of all the Vertues purely into their subserviency to corporeal Delights, and makes the whole account of their goodness and usefulness to lie onely in this, that they are greater arts and more prudent  
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improvements of the pleasures of Sensuality, and were it not for that there were no other ground of difference between Vertue and Vice. *Si ea, quæ sunt luxuriosis efficientia voluptatum, liberarent eos deorum & mortis & doloris metu, docerentque qui essent fines cupiditatum, nihil haberem quod reprehenderem, &c.* Upon supposition that the extravagancies of debauchery had but hapned to be as serviceable to the ends of Pleasure, and did as much deliver Men from the torment of superstition and the terrours of Death, as a discreet, regular and temperate course of Life, they would be of equal goodness and excellency: but because it so happens that the practice and the observation of the Laws of Vertue is more serviceable to the delights of the Body than the enormities of Vice, therefore and therefore onely is this Vertue more valuable than that Vice. And that is the onely office of all the retinue of moral Vertues to wait and attend upon the commands of sensual Pleasure, to direct the Body how to use its delights to its utmost advantage, to assist it in the contrivance and right management of its proper joys, and to minister to the content and satisfaction of all its Appetites. *Egregium habet virtus apud vos officium voluptates prægustare.* This is a brave account of the essential reasonableness of moral Vertue, that 'tis a discreeter and more healthfull Luxury; that is, that it is a thing of no greater excellency than the art of Cookery, that a piquant Sawce is as valuable as an heroick Vertue, and that *Apicius* and those practical Epicures that were à *secretis* to the voluptuousness of the Roman Emperours, and studied all the improvements and advantages of an healthfull and an easie Luxury, were not onely the best Philosophers but the best Men. And

Seneca de Vit.  
Beat. c. 11.

that the Treatise that *Apicius* wrote *De Gulæ irritamentis* was more beneficial to the life of Man and the advancement of Vertue than all the Volumes of the Greeks and Romans beside.

But this will best appear by an induction of Particulars; and we will begin with the Vertue of Temperance, in which they pretend most to glory in defiance of all those enormous slanders that have been cast upon them, as placing their sovereign Happiness in Luxury and Voluptuousness. All which they easily prevent both by *Epicurus* his Doctrine and Practice. For who (say they) has more severely inveighed against all sottish Pleasures? Who has more passionately commended a sober and abstemious Life? Who has with more indignation shewn the inconsistency of all manner of Intemperance with Wisdom and Contentment? Who has left a more illustrious example of Abstinence and Moderation? Whoever lived upon meaner fare, his ordinary diet being onely course Bread and Water, and sometimes a little Sallet? And therefore, say they, it is in vain to conclude that upon *Epicurus* his Principles there can be no such thing as the Vertue of Temperance, when himself has answer'd all Objections by his own certain and undeniable Practice. But it concerns not us to enquire what *Epicurus* his Practice was, but what it ought to have been if conformable to his own Principles. Especially when it is so usual a thing with him to contradict himself upon all Arguments; as when he had denied the Providence of God, to stand in it that yet notwithstanding he has left Devotion; when he has taught that all Friendship must be contracted purely for the sake of Self-interest, and yet that Men are bound to undergo the greatest Miseries, even Death it self for the sake of Friends. So here, when he has placed our  
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highest Pleasure in the delights of the Palate, he places the highest Pleasure of those delights in their lowest Enjoyment. But beside the natural stupidity of the Man, we are beholden for such Doctrines as these not to the severity of his Vertue but the weakness of his Stomach, which was so very infirm that it was not able to digest the most simple and easie diet. No wonder than if he made a vertue of necessity, or if he so far envied the rest of Mankind, that because himself was incapacitated to enjoy his sovereign Pleasure, he spitefully perswaded all others to quit theirs. But otherwise to tell us that the meanest and the coarsest Fare is the most delicious, argues the Man (as *Tully* observes) to have lost his taste as well as his understanding. For, as he discourses, if I were to describe the pleasures of Luxury, I would not, as the Epicureans are wont to do, paint such Sots as are carried sick from their Table to their Bed or their Couch; that suffer the penance of a surfeit for every debauch; that doze away their whole lives in perpetual folly and sottishness; that are never sober enough to relish and enjoy their own Pleasures; that every day load themselves with a fresh stowage before they have discharged the crudities of their last debauch; that have little more sense than a Sponge; that eat and drink themselves into a continual Lethargy, and are senseless before they are dead. The case is plain that these are of all Men the most miserable. But beside these there are your neat, your polite, your witty, your artificial *Epicures*, that study all the arts and improvements of an easie Luxury; that avoid all irksomeness by the skill of their Cooks, the delicacy of their Meats, the picquancy of their Sawces, and the richness of their Wines; that give themselves entirely up to sensual Pleasures and Gratifications, and are concern'd for no-

thing but meerly how to eat and drink to the utmost improvement of Delight. And if these may be accounted temperate Persons, then have we found out a Vertue destructive of the Peace and Welfare of Mankind; for that, as I have demonstrated, cannot be preserved but by seeking the good of others as well as our own; whereas this utterly neglects the publick, and meerly regards every Man's private satisfaction. And if all Men should betake themselves to this course of Life, it is obvious to every Man what would become of humane Society. But seeing *Epicurus* casts these Self-indulgers out of the number of his wise Men, I would fain know how he can do it and be consistent with his own Principles. For if our sovereign delight consist in those Pleasures, and if he be the happiest Man that enjoys them most, and if he be the wisest Man that most consults his own Happiness, there is no avoiding it but that *Apicius* will carry the cause from all their Philosophers.

§ XXIV. And so again if we once take off those obligations to Justice and Honesty that are laid upon us by our relation to the Life to come, it will be ever after absolutely impossible by all the arts and devices in the World to preserve any sense of them any other way. For whatever advantages Men may think to reap as to their present Interest from their observance of the Laws of Justice and Integrity, that may make them crafty, but never honest. And when they are once got loose from the tyes of Conscience, they are then not concern'd to be innocent but onely to seem to be so; and this does not at all restrain them from designing and doing vile things, but onely engages them to be cunning in their wickedness. And agreeably to this Principle and these Consequences does

*Epicurus*



*Epicurus* discourse, when he challenges the World, after they have set aside the consideration of present Pleasure and Self-advantage, to assign him any other possible reason or end of Vertue beside popular fame. For that, says he, when all is done is the onely measure of common Honesty. And if you once remove the Opinion of the multitude, there remains nothing in it self either praise-worthy or dishonourable. But this again (says he) is the Fate of Mankind, that the vulgar rout take up with prejudices and invincible conceits of things; and then whatever they authorise into Customs, must out of meer compliance with their importunity be voted the standing Rules of Vertue and Honesty. So that a wise Man, setting aside all regard to his own present convenience, can see no other reason to be Just and Honest beside compliance with casual Custom and popular Opinion that it seems must be submitted to, as he ever intends to enjoy any peace or quiet of Life; in that the rabble are always so impatient of all contradiction to their customary belief. And this is all the account that he or any other of his persuasion is able to give of the turpitude and deformity of Vice. So that a Philosopher might justly and wisely betray his Friend and his trust to defeat him of his pledge; or murder his Father to secure the Inheritance, if he can but avoid the shame of discovery and the inconvenience of popular hatred. So that if we remove the folly and the ignorance of the Rabble, there is no other difference between Vertue and Vice, Integrity and Treachery, but what is made purely by the consideration of every Man's own private Interest: So utterly destructive are these Opinions not onely of the Happiness of humane Nature in general, but of the Peace of every particular Society of Mankind.

And such as spread and propagate their repute in the World, do but instruct Men in the fundamental Principles of Falshood, Treason and Perjury. And therefore deserve greater severity from Government than Out-laws and open Rebels, as being beside their impiety more dangerous and mischievous to the Commonwealth for their Pedantry : In that they are not only content to doe wicked things, but think themselves concern'd in honour to bring their own wicked Practices into Reputation, and to infect all others with such Principles, as will oblige and encourage them to imitate their Villanies. However these Principles, are so far from procuring the Happiness or securing the Duty of single Men, that if embraced and reduced to practice, they must unavoidably involve all Mankind in eternal mischiefs, wickednesses and confusions. And it is to these accursed Principles that we owe the miseries of common Life, they being the fundamental Rules and Maximes of all the Tyranny, Fraud and Oppression in the World.

But if the shame of the World or the fear of the People were sufficient to restrain from open and avowed Wickedness, what shall withhold from secret Attempts ? Insecurity and fear of discovery, says *Epicurus*. But besides that this onely obliges wicked Men to be more crafty and cautious in their Villanies, it is not powerfull enough to give a true and real restraint to dishonest actions, in that the advantage is certain, but not the discovery, and a certain good is a much stronger motive than an uncertain evil. And though it may give check to Fraud and Violence in some common cases (as it is of very good use and service in humane Life) yet those accidents are very frequent, in which Men may be very highly wicked, and yet very secure in their Wickedness.

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As when Saint *Peducæus* was entrusted by his Friend with his last Will and Testament, and that with so much privacy, that if he had kept the whole Estate to himself no body could have suspected his dishonesty; that then he should surprize the right Heir, who expected no such thing, with the news of a great Inheritance, it was done like a Gentleman of a Roman Education, but he could not be forced to it by any obligation upon the Epicurean Principles; in that they could not requite his Integrity with a reward equal to so fair a Fortune. A great Estate and a fine House are of more value than the empty names of Justice and Friendship, and so they are to the Man that counts upon no other Interest and expects no other Happiness than in this Life. And *Sestilius*, who by a forged Writing cheated his Friend's Children, that were left to his trust, of their Inheritance, and secured the Estate to himself and his Posterity by a Decree of Law, was upon the Epicurean Principles, much the wiser and nothing the worse Man. For by this one Act he made provision for the Happiness of his whole Life, and yet was so far from any fear of discovery, that his Fraud, being abetted and secured by Law, was no small accession to the pleasure and satisfaction of his good fortune. And in truth this restraint is so far from reaching all cases of Fraud and Oppression, that one half of the wickednesses of Mankind are unavoidably abetted and ratified by the Laws themselves. For seeing they can judge and determine onely according to Evidence, and seeing the Persons, who invade other Men's Rights, will not stick to make out their Title by any falshood and villany, then as long as the forgery is not discover'd (and that is no easie matter) the Law is forced to pass Judgment on the wrong side. But beside the injuries of Fraud, the greatest miseries brought upon

Mankind

Mankind by Injustice are supported by Power and Greatness; and in such cases the Tyrant and Oppressor defies all discovery, and though he cares not if all the World sees his Wickedness, yet if any Man shall pretend to have his Eyes open, he shall forfeit his head for the boldness of his Eye-sight. So that if this were the onely state of things the Governour of the World has provided neither sufficient rewards for Justice and Honesty, nor restraints from Fraud and Oppression. And if he has not, then he has laid no effectual obligation upon Mankind to be Just and Honest; for the force of every Command depends upon its Sanction, and therefore if he have injoin'd this Duty, and have not backt it with sufficient motives of Obedience, he has onely enacted useles and ineffectual Laws. In short, the onely difference between the Man that is Honest and the Man that is not, is meerly this that the one prefers his Duty before his present Interest; and the other his present Interest before his Duty. For if he observe the Rules of Justice onely so far as they conduce to his own ends, then whenever they happen to thwart, he is obliged to quit his Duty rather than his Interest. And when he does so, he is so far destitute of all Principles of Honesty, that he is entirely govern'd by the fundamental Maximes of Fraud and Oppression. And if this be the onely difference that distinguishes Good and Bad Men, I would fain know what motive or reason a good Man has, to pursue his Duty when contrary to his Interest; or a bad Man has to quit his Interest out of respect to his Duty, if there be no other state of things than the present. And therefore, without Immortality, Justice is so far from deserving our regard in all cases, that in many it is a contradiction to the first Instinct of Nature, that is self-love,

in that it obliges a Man to act cross to that without any reason or recompence for his so doing. And therefore seeing the Providence of God has prescribed to us those many and plain Laws of Justice that I have discover'd from the Nature of Things in the precedent Discourse, it unavoidably follows that upon that Supposition those Laws that he has prescribed must be abetted with the Rewards and Punishments of a future State, because those of this, if taken alone and separate from those of that, are not of sufficient force and validity.

And as Justice the most necessary, so Fortitude the most noble of all Vertues will have no Foundation upon the Epicurean Principles, or rather will sink together with them. For if there be no such thing as Justice, to what purpose should any Man run himself into hazards and hardships for the sake of it; and yet that is the onely Office of Magnanimity, which when separated from a good Cause is no more than folly and fool-hardiness, and in a bad Cause is no better than cruelty and oppression. And beside this, as every Vertue must have some Principle to warrant its Wisdom and Reasonableness, so above all others Magnanimity, because it puts us upon the severest and hardest Service, and does, more than any Vertue beside, endanger our own Interest for the sake of Duty. But if there be no other Interest than that of this Life, it is apparent madness for any Man to hazard Life and Fortune, and all that is dear to him here for any thing whatsoever; when all other Motives that can be proposed to him are of less concernment to himself than his own Self-preservation. Beside, true Magnanimity bottoms all its Courage and Assurance upon no other Principle than the Conscience of its own Integrity: It is that alone that gives a Man a

sufficiency and satisfaction from himself; that raises him to a contempt of all outward things; that makes him fearful of all Assaults and Dangers; and that supports him under all Losses and Misfortunes, as esteeming all things whatsoever as mean and worthless Trifles in comparison to the Happiness of its own Reflections. But then as Conscience is the onely support of Courage, so is immortality of Conscience; for that is nothing else but the Mind of Man acting with reference to the future Judgment of God. And therefore from thence alone it derives all its Force and Authority, and without that all seeming regard to it is nothing but Pretence and Pageantry. For what comfort will a good Conscience afford a Man, if he be to give no Account of his Actions? Upon that Supposition the Guilty and the Innocent are upon equall Terms, when the best Man is ne'er the better for all his Vertues, nor the other the worse for all his Villanies. If then Integrity of Conscience be the onely Principle of all Magnanimity, and if the firmness of that depends meerly upon Immortality, then that being taken away, the one sinks into Craft, the other into Cowardize. In short, there are but two Offices of Magnanimity, either to doe or to suffer gallantly, both which are manifest Contradictions to the Epicurean Principles; For what Inducements can that Man have to put himself upon Hardships, who knows no other Happiness but Ease and Laziness? And therefore upon their Supposition it was wise Advice of *Metrodorus* to his Brother, not to concern himself in defence and preservation of his Country, but to eat and drink with philosophick Wisdom and Discretion. And then as for bearing up decently under Calamities, I have already shewn that they have not one Principle wherewith to support themselves, and without such

Principles as can supply the absence of their present Happiness, nothing else can relieve their Loss; and therefore instead of bearing up with any cheerfulness under Miseries and Afflictions they must for ever sink into insupportable Anguish and Despair.

And now from these Premises (to mention no more Particulars, because all the other Vertues depend upon these) it is demonstratively evident that to root up the sentiments of Immortality out of the Minds of Men is to blast and put out the Sun, and to overwhelm the World in eternal Night and Darkness: Erasing all the Foundations of Happiness, tearing up all the Roots of Vertue, and laying wast all the Principles of humane Nature and humane Society. And (as *Plutarch* discourses) where such Principles *Adv. Colotem.* of Philosophy prevail as enervate the Laws of Vertue, Men have nothing left to distinguish them from Brute-beasts, but that they want the Claws of Lyons, and the Teeth of Wolves, the Stomachs of Oxen, and the Backs of Camels. In a word, upon this single Principle of a future State depend all the differences of Good and Evil; if this stand firm Vertue is secure, but otherwise (after all that care that the Divine Providence has taken to recommend it to us) it is all no more than Craft or Folly.

§ XXV. And now having thus far and fairly cashier'd the Epicurean Principles, I shall be so much the more brief with the Stoicks: partly because of the great agreement between their Paradoxes and the Decrees of *Epicurus*: Both being onely so many stubborn Opinions taken up against the Nature of Things and the Experience of Mankind. And notwithstanding that the Stoicks may seem so contradictory in many of their Propositions to the Epicureans, yet af-

ter all they relie upon the same Principles, and therefore when reduced to practice will resolve themselves into the same Actions. But chiefly because they onely amuse us with the noise of wrangle and disputation : so that almost all their Disquisitions upon this noble Argument spend themselves in vain and impertinent Contentions about technical Terms and Phrases, that serve neither to promote the attainment nor to unfold the nature of true Happiness; but rather to obstruct all serious and effectual endeavours after it by entertaining and diverting the Minds of Men with innumerable curious and useles Niceties. And though the Writings of *Cicero* and *Seneca* may supply us with many excellent Rules and Helps for the tranquillity of our Lives; yet their value is strangely abated, and their use sadly defeated by their too much mixture of dry and barren Speculation; insomuch that a Man may sooner arrive at the end of true Happiness, than of their Disputes and Distinctions about it. And for that Reason I shall wave enquiring into any of their logical and metaphysical Subtilties, and onely represent in general the vanity of their attempts after Virtue and Happiness in their way of philosophising. They therefore gravely considering with themselves that these outward things could never afford but very little and very uncertain satisfaction to the Minds of Men, in that they were liable to so many Chances and foreign Contingencies; and therefore being unwilling to be indebted to Fortune for their Content, confined its disposal entirely within themselves, so that every Man's Happiness was to be spun out of his own Bowels. And thence discarding all the outward Advantages of Life, Riches, Honour, Power, Health, and Friends as things altogether indifferent, they summ'd up all the numbers of their Happiness singly  
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in the Joys and Pleasures of a Life conducted by the Rules of Vertue. This indeed were a great and glorious Account of things, were it supported by any wise and sober Principles; but alas it is so far from having any real Foundation, that it is inconsistent with the first and fundamental Principle of humane Nature, as it is own'd by the Stoicks themselves. For they begin from the Catholick Doctrine of all the Philosophers, the natural passion of Self-love, that Mankind as well as every other Creature has to its own welfare and preservation, to pursue what it supposes will advance its Content and Happiness, and shun whatever may impair or destroy it. Now what is humane Nature according to them but a Being compounded of Body and Soul? and if so, then it is oblig'd as it loves it self to seek the welfare of both. How then comes it to pass that it should so far forsake it self as utterly to forget one moiety of it self in its pursuit of Happiness? So that they must either renounce their first Principle of our Love to our whole selves, or their first Maxim that our whole Happiness relates to the Mind alone. But that is the peculiar vanity of these Men, that they would be philosophising after the rate of Angels, and discourse without considering that their Bodies are one half of their Natures, and that their Souls are not disengaged from Matter, and by consequence have sensual Appetites too gross to be satiated by bare Thoughts and Reflections, and sensitive Pains too sharp to be allay'd by Words and Subtilties. This I say is the peculiar Pedantry of this Sect of Men to be disposed of by the power of Phrases, without attending to the nature and reality of things; and they would cheat our Senses and delude our Appetites with tricks and arts of Sophistry. That which all the World dread and fly from, they forbid us to acknowledge.

knowledge to be evil, though we are convinced it is so by sad and sensible Experience. And when *Dionysius* a reverend Sage of the Sect was so rackt and torn apeices with the torments of the Stone, that the continuance and unintermission of his Pain had tired out his Patience and vanquish't his Apathy, and at last forced him to cry out in the extremity of his Anguish, O Pain, I yield, I must and do acknowledge thee to be an Evil; this Confession put *Cleantes* that Bigot of Stoicism into such a fit of zeal and outrage that he could not refrain to chide and upbraid his Apostacy with the most satyrical sharpness of Expression, and the poor Man was in great danger of being expell'd the Sect for not being able to outface his Misery. But if you demand why Pain is not to be reckoned among things evil, their answer is ready, because it is not vicious and criminal. This is a doubty Solution, and worth the wagging of a Sages Beard; for all the World knows Pain or Sicknes to be no immorality, 'tis in vain to prove it; but when I feel my self restless and miserable, let them, If they can, convince me whether it be indifferent or equally eligible to be at ease in perfect Health, or to endure the torments of a Feavour. O yes, say they, for though it have no relation to or influence upon our Happiness, yet ought it to be rejected, because 'tis unpleasent, unnatural, uneasy, grievous, and troublesome. Here is plenty of Phrase and synonymous Expression for what other People in one word call Evil; and by what title soever we may pretend to despise it, that is no aswaging the Pain, and if it be greivous I am not less miserable than if it were Evil. So that after all their Rants and Braveries they are forced to submit to the common Fate and Calamity of Mankind, and to acknowledge from the conviction of their own

Senses that a Sage, however he may swagger, is obnoxious to sadness and misery, as well as other ordinary Mortals. And so *Seneca De Constan.* objects to himself without ever attempt- cap. 3.ing to answer it. You boast of mighty things, things too great not onely to be wish't for, but to be understood: and when you have vented these glorious Braveries, viz. that it is impossible for a wise Man to suffer poverty, you deny not but that he may as often as others want Food and Raiment. When you say that he cannot be obnoxious to madness, you deny not but that he may be beside himself, rave, talk wildly, and doe all the other Pranks of frantick People. When you affirm that he cannot be any Man's Servant, you deny not but that he may be sold for a Slave and doe all the offices of a *Black*. And so when you have talk't after this proud and supercilious rate, after all you submit to the real Condition of other Mortals, onely abusing your selves with big and lofty Words. And there indeed lay all the Wisdom and all the Folly too of the Stoicks, that they would needs change the Natures by the change of the Names of things. And if there be any thing peculiar to their Philosophy it consists in the invention of new Words and pedantick Distinctions. And therefore *Tully* very unhappily brings in *Zeno* thus rating all the Philosophers that went before him, and that were content to suit their Principles to the Nature of Things and the Experience of Sense: what can be more absurd, more foolish, and more insufferable than to reckon Health, Plenty, and all the other Comforts and Advantages of Life into the accounts of Good things? I tell you *Plato*, and you *Aristotle*, you are dangerously and wofully mistaken, to call those things *Bona* that are onely *præposita*. A desperate

rate Error, that unavoidably destroys all the Rules and Obligations of Vertue, and confounds all the differences of Good and Evil. This change of words, as small a matter as it may appear, has so much influence upon the practice and improvement of Morality, that sufficiently recompences all the pains and disputations of the Porch. *O magnam vim ingenii*, (as he concludes) *causamque justam, cur nova existeret disciplina !* O brave Zeno, it is gallantly done to reform the Manners and the Wisdom of the World ; Thou, upright as thou art, wilt not be born away by carnal compliance with the Corruptions of the Age, or by the Authority of self-seeking Philosophers, that yield so much to the degenerate and low conceptions of the Vulgar as to acknowledge that it is some kind of blessing to enjoy the Comforts of Health and Plenty. O brutish and Epicurean Sottishness to adopt such fordid, such common and such uncertain things into any part of our Happiness ! This is to expose a wise Man as well as one of the common Heard to the insolence of Fortune ; and she may, if she please, in spite of Vertue, rattle him of some share of his Happiness. This is not to be endured that any thing should have any influence or power over a Sage beside his own sovereign and imperial Will. And therefore however any Disease may rack or torment you, keep your Courage, and never confess it to be Evil, 'tis nothing worse than a meer *Refusable Event*. And then no doubt the poor Man's Mind is at perfect ease, and bravely fortified against all manner of Pain and Impatience. And that is the great power of their Philosophy to assuage Pains and cure Diseases by exotick words, and by giving it a greek name they can make Sickness, Poverty, or any other Calamity of Life harmless things. And let a Vertuoso determine a fit  
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of the Stone to be no more than *ἀποπεποιημένον*, a refutable thing, and not *κακόν*, an Evil; and he makes it as pleasant and agreeable to himself as the Joys of Paradise. And think not to convince *Zeno* or *Antisthenes* of their mistake with racks and tortures, alas they laugh at all your vain attempts, and what have they to doe with the *πὰρ ἔκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν*; no, they too are as much at ease in the Bull of Phalaris as upon a Bed of Roses. The Fire has not so much power or confidence as to dare to singe one hair of a Philosophers Beard, and if it should be so bold as to attempt them, they will damp and baffle all its fury with a querk of Logick. In short, these Men talk more like Magicians than Philosophers, and can doe any thing or be any thing by virtue of a strange word. *Ex iisdem verborum præstigiis* (as *Tully* to *Ca. De Fin. l. 4. to*) *Ἐ regna nata vobis sunt Ἐ imperia, Ἐ divitiæ, Ἐ tantæ quidem, ut omnia, quæ ubique sint, sapientis esse dicatis.* From these juggling tricks and legerdemains of Words you raise, and as it were conjure up to your selves Kingdoms and Empires, and Wealth so much, that nothing less will satisfy you, unless every wise Man among you may be master of the whole World. But to leave them to their own conjuring Arts, I shall briefly discourse with them according to the true and real account of things. If then there be no such thing to be reasonably expected as a future State, let us onely see what ground of Happiness is to be enjoyed from Vertue, and what obligations of Vertue can be passed upon the Stoical Principles. As for Happiness they lay the foundations of it (as I have already observed) upon that self-love that every Creature bears to it self and its own preservation. Either then humane Nature is nothing but Body, or compounded of Body and Soul; if it be no-

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thing but Body, then upon the Stoical Principles it is capable of no Happiness at all, seeing they pass nothing in their Account of Good and Evil but onely the Vertues of the Mind, and therefore if they are nothing but Body, all the qualities of their Mind are nothing. But if beside that we have a Soul, either it perishes with the Body or it survives it; if it perishes then it is no more than the sense of the Body it self, and it plainly casts us back upon the Epicurean Principle, that there is no Happiness but present Pleasure and Interest; if it survive, then that entitles it to an Happiness beside that of this Life, and so we are advanced to our own Hypothesis. As for Vertue the whole Sect place it in one Catholick Principle of living according to Nature. But then the difficulty is to discover what they mean by Nature, and there every Man is a Sect to himself, and we have as many different Accounts of it, as there are ruling School-masters of the Porch. But what Interpretation soever we follow, unless founded upon our Supposition, we are still forced back to the School of *Epicurus*, for his Principle too was to live according to Nature, which was to enjoy the utmost Pleasure of this present Life; and if there be no other State, it is certain there can be no other way of living according to Nature. Thus *Zeno's* ὁμολογία, *i. e.* a constancy to a Man's self, and some settled course of Life, would amount to no more than this, that every wise Man ought to consult how to live here with as much ease and pleasure as he can; for if there be no other State, he cannot be wisely constant in the pursuit of any better Design. And then as for *Cleanthes* his Notion, that living according to Nature is to comply with universal Nature, that is to submit to the Providence of God. This properly concerns the single Vertue of Patience, and

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yet affords us no more Comfort than that forementioned Principle of the necessity of the thing ; for if I am any way fatally involved in misery, whether by Providence or by Chance, I am equally miserable. But then this Rule, if applied to the Duty of Man in general, signifies nothing at all. For what is it to follow the Providence of God unless it be to approve of and comply with every thing that comes to pass? If so, then seeing Villany does as often prosper as Virtue, by that alone the Providence of God would recommend it to our choice. And that no doubt would be an admirable Rule of Justice and Honesty (as we have found by late Experience) that destroys all difference between Good and Evil but what is made by the event of things, and changes their Natures with the change of Times and Fashions. The third and last Opinion is that of *Chrysippus*, that to follow Nature is to follow our own proper Nature or the guidance of our own Reason. But then if there be no other Estate of things beside this, every Man's own natural Understanding will easily inform him that he is concern'd in nothing else then to consult his own present Pleasure and Advantage. But this Conclusion is so evident that I shall pursue it no farther, so that though after I had considered their general Principles, I intended to have enter'd upon the particular Treatises of *Seneca*, *Antoninus* and *Epictetus*; I now find it absolutely needless, of which any Man that will reade them over may satisfie himself, for if he reade them with our Supposition he will find them for the main wise and rational Discourses; but if without it, they all vanish into meer Poetry and Elysian Dreams.

§ XXVI. In the third place, the Platonists, and from them the Peripateticks were pleased to enlarge

the Bounds of humane Felicity, and make our Happiness of equal extent with our Capacities; making every thing an Ingredient thereof, that is any way gratefull or suitable to our Natures. And therefore to a vertuous Life they superadded all the Goods of Body and Fortune; and to render a Man truly and completely happy they required, beside the Endowments of the Mind, all the other Comforts and Enjoyments of humane Life. And this they assert reasonably enough from the first Principle of Nature, in which alone all Sects of Philosophers agree; that every sensible Being bears an innate love and kindness to it self, and from that is possess'd with a natural desire not onely of its own preservation, but of the most perfect state and condition that its Nature is capable of. So that the parts and degrees of our Happiness are to be measur'd onely from the capacity and variety of our Faculties: And therefore humane Nature being compounded of two Principles, Body and Mind, they must both be gratified in their respective Sensations to make up the adequate Notion of humane Happiness. And as for the gratification of the Mind, that they say consists principally in the constant exercise of Vertue; and subordinately in Knowledge, Wisdom, Contemplation, or any other exercise of Wit and Ingenuity. And then as for the Happiness and Well-being of the Body, that consists chiefly in an healthfull, sound, and vigorous Constitution; and subordinately in all the other accidental advantages of this present Life, that are so many instruments of Pleasure and Delight. These Men discourse more consistently than the other Sects to the constitution of humane Nature, and give a fuller account of the condition of humane Happiness, in that they take in all our Capacities, and do not with the Epicureans confine it to the Body alone,



nor with the Stoicks to the Mind alone; but take our Nature as they find it, and suit its Happiness not to the workings of their own Imaginations, but to our real state of Being. But though these approach nearer than either of the former to the true notion of Happiness, yet are they as distant as either of them from its acquisition: Inſomuch that when they come to reduce their Principle to practice, they are at laſt forced to delude themſelves with the very ſame Maximes and Paradoxes. And therefore though *Tully* has, in his Books *de Finibus* fully confuted the Hypotheſes both of the Epicureans and Stoicks, yet when he comes, in his *Tuſculine Questions*, to diſcourſe practically concerning the ſame things, he at laſt produces no better grounds of comfort and contentment than thoſe that he had at firſt rejected, and is in the reſult of every Diſcourſe either an Epicurean or a Stoick, or both. And this I ſhall prove diſtinctly in both the forementioned heads of diſpute. Firſt, that he is able to give no better account of Happiness than the Epicureans. Nor, ſecondly, to lay any better grounds for the ſtability, or aſſign any more effectual motives for the practice of Vertue. From both which it will evidently appear that there is ſome further account to be given of theſe things than what he has given upon ſuppoſition of the Soul's Mortality, if there be a Providence that has made Happiness our End and Vertue the means to attain it.

And firſt he begins with the greateſt difficulty of all, the fear of Death; where all the philoſophick Conſolation he is able to give us, is built upon little tricks and ſubtilties, and chiefly upon that pitifull ſophiſm of *Epicurus*, that Death can never doe us any harm, becauſe when that is, we are not. But, firſt, let him ſay what he will, it is inconſiſtent with his own firſt  
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and fundamental Principle, *viz.* That the most vehement passion of humane Nature is a love of it self and its own preservation; and therefore to endeavour to reconcile a Man to utter death and dissolution is to perswade him to contradict himself and his own Nature. This Principle then of self-preservation being once supposed as natural and necessary, it prevents the very consideration of all manner of Discourses opposite to it. And to what purpose is it for *Tully* with all his Wit and Eloquence to perswade me not to dread Death, when he has beforehand told me it, as the most undoubted truth in all Philosophy (and so it is) that I cannot avoid to love and desire Life? He must first renounce his Principle, and I my Nature, before we can begin to philosophise upon this Argument. And therefore, secondly, be it so, that when Death is, we are not, yet what relief is this against the melancholy thoughts of the living, who as much as they love their own existence by virtue of their former Principle, cannot but as much dread by virtue of the same the apprehensions of its utter dissolution? So that as long as this invincible instinct of Nature remains, that can neither be destroyed nor commanded, the anguish of this single Meditation is too close and affecting to be allayed or over-ruled by any other. Or, as himself has framed the Objection, without so much as attempting to answer it, *Quid? qui vivimus, cum moriendum sit, nonne miseri sumus? Quæ enim potest in vitâ esse jucunditas, cum dies & noctes cogitandum sit, jam jamque esse moriendum.* What though after Death we shall never be sensible of the loss of Life, yet whilst we live what comfort can we enjoy, if we lie under such an invincible necessity of dying? What freedom and satisfaction can we reap from all our Pleasures, whilst this ugly thought haunts us day  
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and night, *jam jamque esse moriendum*? Whatever diverting arts we may fly to to stifle this reflection, it is so unwelcome to our Minds and so affrightfull to our Natures, and so insuperable to all the powers of Reason and Philosophy, that when all is done there is no remedy but we must lie down and languish all our days under its fatal and intolerable expectations; so that if any thing can be said well of Death, it is onely this that it delivers us from the fear of it self. But however (proceeds he) Death ought not to appear so formidable to a wise Man, though it were for no other reason than that it delivers us from the miseries of Life. And when it is objected that, granting all his subtilties, and that there is indeed no capacity of Misery where there is no Sense, yet *illud angit vel potius excruciat, discessus ab omnibus iis, quæ sunt bona in Vitâ*, 'Tis this that grieves and gripes our Souls, that we must for ever forsake all the joys and comforts of this Life; he returns upon the Objection with this brisk and nimble Answer, *Vide ne à malis dici verius possit*. You miserably mistake your self in the framing your Objection, instead of the Joys and Comforts you should rather have said the Evils and Miseries of this Life. And when you consider the emptiness and dissatisfaction of all its Enjoyments, and reflect upon the smart and the weight of all its Calamities, you will be so far from trembling at the horrour of your Fate, that you will esteem it your greatest Privilege; and there may you, when you please, take Sanctuary from all those troubles and vexations that pursue you and all Mankind through the whole course of Life. And now is not this, think you, a mighty support to the Minds of Men, to be informed that all the Happiness they are capable of is onely to cease to be miserable? With what cheerfulness and tranquility

can those Men live, that live all their days upon this lank Meditation, that though I must endure Torment as long as I endure Life, yet the time will come when I shall escape both, and cease to be miserable by ceasing to be. Oh the transport and ravishment of these philosophick Reflections! Who can desire greater ease and complacency of Soul, than to be always thinking (if thinking at all) that though my present state be so utterly forlorn and restless, yet however this is my comfort that I shall one day be at quiet, when Death shall deprive me of all Sense and Being for ever. Is not this a very comfortable representation of the best condition and whole capacity of humane Nature to be uncessantly bandied up and down (like the old Britains between the Sea and the Barbarians) between two such formidable Evils? The sorrows of Life drive us to Death for refuge, and the horrors of Death fright us back upon the Miseries that we fly; and thus whether we resolve to live or to die we are equally distressed and miserable. So that he is so far by this principle of Consolation from giving us any comfort against the terrour of Death, that he has instead of that destroyed all the comfort of Life too.

But Nature ( he tells us ) has not granted us our Beings upon the Title of Fee-simple, but has onely lent us the use of our Lives for a certain time, and that during pleasure, and therefore we have no reason to complain of her, whenever she demands them back, because she gave them upon no other condition than that we should always be ready to resign them upon demand. But if Nature have clogg'd her Kindness to us in bestowing our Beings upon us with this hard Condition, she had been much kinder if she had never bestowed them at all. For the severity of the Condition annexed to the Gift, not onely destroys all the  
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pleasure and enjoyment of it, but turns it into anguish and misery. And this is all along our very complaint against Nature, that she has put us into such a condition of Life, as that we cannot enjoy it without continual grief and horroar of Mind. So that she has sent us into the World, not like her Offspring, but like Malefactours, with the sentence of Death passed upon us as soon as we are born. And therefore to tell us that this is the order and disposition of Nature is not to answer but to grant the Objection, because that alone makes us fatally miserable. So that when Monsieur Charon asks me, *If it grieveth thee to die, why wert thou born?* I tell him plainly, if I was born with that Condition of dying for ever, I was born to no other purpose than to be miserable: So that if it could have been in my power to have prevented my coming into Being, I should more passionately have fled from Life than now I do from Death; And being I could not avoid to be born, I am bound all my days to curse and hate the Cause that gave me so wretched a Being. At least if Nature resolved to beget us Mortal, she might have been so kind as to have kept from us the knowledge and foresight of our own Mortality, and then might we have enjoyed our present lives with some competent content and cheerfulness; but when she has given us so strong a love of Life, continually to embitter that with as vehement a fear of Death is onely to make our very existence a scene of Misery, and to give us our Beings to be a torment to themselves. And whereas, as he adds for our comfort, that there is no such thing as length or shortness of Life in it self, but that it consists meerly in comparison; and that the Insect, whose Life begins and ends with one half revolution of the Sun, is as old at the evening of the day as a Man at threescore; beside

that this is but a poor shift of Sophistry, as I have already shewn against the Epicureans, I would be content to exchange my Life of sixty years with your little happy Insect that lives but a day. For when the Sun has scatter'd all the chill horrors of the night and darkness, and gilded the World with light and splendour, then it is that this little Creature thrusts up its Head, assays its Wings, forsakes the Clod that bread it and mounts up into the calm and gentle Air; where it sports and revels and rejoices in that Light and Warmth that gave it Being, and dances away all its little Age with mirth and gaiety. Its Life is short indeed but pleasant, ours long and tedious; its Age is all sunshine, the greatest part of ours darkness and sorrow; it sports away its little interval of Being, but ours is fretted and consumed away with restless cares, mournings and afflictions. But that which makes the main difference between us is, that this little Creature as it lives merrily so it dies unconcernedly; whereas my whole Life, howsoever otherwise happy, is turn'd into meer anguish and bitterness with the perpetual and intolerable horrors of Death. And the longer it lasts, the more miserable it is, in that it is nothing else than to be so much the longer tormented with the

fearfull expectation of a certain Evil; and

*De Consol. l. 1.* therefore as the Law (as *Cardan* observes) takes care that at the execution of Malefactours the more modest and less Criminal should be first dispatched, but the bolder and greater Offendours be made Spectatours of the Death of others before they suffer'd themselves; so Nature, where she has a mind to shew the greatest kindness, puts soonest out of pain, but where she intends severity she keeps Men longer in suspence, and makes them to behold their Friends and Companions Fate before she brings them to their

own Execution. In short, this is a very strange oversight of all the Philosophers, that when they have instructed us that the love of Life is of all passions the most Natural, they should notwithstanding that with the same unanimity agree to perswade us not to fear Death because that is natural too. What a contradiction is this in Nature to force us to desire the continuance of Life, and yet require us not to fear its discontinuance? But if the first be (as it is) the most natural of all our passions, it prevents the force of all others that are inconsistent with it. So that if in the first place we desire to live, it is a vain attempt to perswade us not to fear to die, because upon the supposition of the love of Life, the fear of Death is unavoidable. So that the Philosophers having unanimously laid the love of Being as the fundamental Principle of all their Morality, it spoils all their consolatory Discourses, from what Topicks soever, against the dread and terrour of dying; and therefore it is needless for me to pursue any more of their particular Reasonings upon this Argument, because they all at first view dash so apparently against this first Principle.

§ XXVII. And now having, as he supposes, vanquish't this King of terrours the fear of Death, he thinks it an easie task to rout all the little evils of Life; and had he done that, he had without any farther pains perform'd his whole design. For what can hurt the Man who fears not to die? For Death is a remedy always at hand, so that if he think it not convenient to struggle with the miseries of Life, by dying he may put an end to all. But having beaten him out of that Sanctuary, which he had rais'd by his first days Conference, we shall follow him through

the rest of his ensuing Disputations. The two next Enemies therefore that he undertakes are Pain and Grief. And though his Discourses upon these Arguments are very large, copious and eloquent, yet all the Philosophy of them is comprehended in two or three short Propositions. The first is, That Dishonour is worse than Pain; and yet nothing can be more dishonourable to the courage of a Man, or more unbecoming the dignity of a Philosopher than complaints and impatience, or an abject behaviour under Calamities. Yes, no doubt there is a decency in bearing Afflictions with a manly Courage. What then, is this any remedy to relieve or assuage the Pain? For, first, wherein consists this ground of comfort? Is it not that other Men judge that you behave your self handsomely and like a Man? Now who are they? They are either the foolish or the wise part of Mankind. But how can the Opinion of Fools afford any comfort to a wise Man? Especially when you have (and that justly) discarded the common People as an ignorant, idle and regardless herd. And as for the Opinion of the Wise, which way can that alleviate any Man's Pain? For if you are in Pain, and counterfeit that you are not, if they are wise they know that you dissemble, and certainly their knowledge of your Hypocrisie can be no comfort; or if they thought you in good earnest, it is not conceivable how their false Opinion should afford any true satisfaction to a wise Man. But, secondly, how does the decency of my behaviour any way assuage my Pain? Or do the Cholick, the Gout and the Stone rage ever the less for the stoutness of my look? And then if the Pain be not rebated by my Courage, though I have strength of Mind enough to seem to follow this advice, yet am I notwithstanding never the less miserable. Not that



that I deny it to be a wise advice, for though it is not sufficient to remove our Pains, yet it instructs us not to double their smart by fretting under them. And that is the most material difference between a wise Man and a Fool in this case, that the one endures onely the simple and natural sense of his Pain, whereas the other by his impatience adds to that the anguish of his own resentment, which affects quicker and pierces deeper than the Pain it self, and makes way for it through the Body into the very Soul. But though the advice be wise not to make our selves more miserable than we needs must be, yet it is utterly ineffectual to make us less miserable than we really are. And therefore it is no remedy against the Distemper for the cure whereof it is prescribed, because the Pain it self is the same with all the resolution in the World as it is without it. And yet that is the thing that he undertakes, to bring us to an absolute neglect and contempt of all Pain. And then, lastly, we are in quest of Happiness, whereas this onely instructs us how to behave our selves under Misery; and so destroys the Supposition of the Subject of our Question, which is, Whether a Man under Pain can be Happy? and that he cannot is very evident, because all Pain is Miserable. And if it be so, Sentences will doe no good, unless he could give us some real ground of comfort to support our Minds and cheer up our Spirits; and for that there can be no other than the thoughts of and reflections upon an Happiness to come. And that indeed would make all our Pains very light and tolerable, but without it there is no remedy but they must lie upon us with their full load. But Vertue, he says, requires Patience. It does so, but it does not assuage Pains. And if it could, yet taken alone, it is so far from supporting our Minds that

that it cannot support it self; as I have in part proved already, both against the Epicureans and the Stoicks, and shall do more largely when I come to consider our Authour's Discourse upon that Argument. And this is all that I meet with material in his Second Book. For as for the Examples of the Lacedæmonian Boys and the Roman Gladiatours, and other Instances of Hardiness, they onely prove the strange power of Custom and Education, but are no proof that they are less affected with their Pain because they are able to stifle the natural expressions of it. But however it looks brave and generous out of Principles of reason to be able to doe what they are able to doe out of a meer customary Hardiness. It is so, and more than that, it is wise too. But yet that, I say, is no relief against the Pain; and if it be not, our Philosopher falls short of his whole design. For as in his former Discourse he endeavours to deliver us from that misery that we suffer from the fear of Death, so in this he undertakes to rescue us from that which we suffer from bodily Pain; and then if he has prescribed nothing to remove it, he has done nothing to his purpose. Though after all, his Discourse is very wise and usefull, in that it keeps us from encreasing our Pains when we cannot allay them. And that alone is of very considerable use in humane Life. And I doubt not but we may (as he says we may) arrive to a great degree of Patience and Constancy by an habitual Firmness and Resolution of Mind, or as he expresses it, by an inward discourse with our selves to doe nothing that is weak and unmanly; and therefore, whenever we see a Calamity to approach us, to betake our selves to these thoughts as it were to our Arms, and to stand prepared to receive it with a steady Foot and an undaunted Look; and then  
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though we cannot repulse it, yet we shall bear it more firmly.

§ XXVIII. The next Passion that he undertakes is that which he calls *Ægritudo*, Grief, Trouble, or Discontent of Mind for all losses and misfortunes that either have or may betide us. And, first, he confesses that this is an humane Passion, that we are not made of Flints, nor hew'd out of Rocks, but that there is a natural softness and tenderness in Mankind, which forces them to yield to the weight of those miseries that oppress them; and therefore that it was not absurdly said of that eminent Philosopher of the Academy *Crantor*, that *Indolency* was so far from being the perfection of Wisdom, that it was the effect either of outrage in the Mind or numbness in the Body, and that as long as a Man has the use either of his Senses in the one or his Understanding in the other, he cannot avoid to shrink wherever he feels it smart. And yet for all this he undertakes to rid us of all kinds of disturbance; which if he could perform, I must confess his Philosophy is much more powerfull than his Oratory, though here his Eloquence must be very great too to persuade us out of our very Senses; For that is the main Argument of his Discourse, That whatever Trouble we may think we lie under never arises from any real Cause but meerly from Fancy and Opinion. But this methinks he ought to have proved by running through all the supposed Miseries of humane Life, and if he could shew that there is no reality in any of them, that would plainly make good his Undertaking, that there is no real cause of trouble in the World, nay that would save him the labour of all his other philosophical Discourses; for it is plain that if there be no such thing as Evil, there is no need of  
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any comfort against it. But instead of this he onely makes good his own Proposition by his own Definition; a fault, of which all the Philosophers are extremely guilty: all trouble says he is unreasonable because all perturbation is a motion of the Mind either void of or contrary to Reason, that is to say, because it is unreasonable. And yet this (I am sorry to say it) is all the proof that this great Man brings to make good so strange a Paradox, that whenever Men complain of any thing that disquiets them, they do not really feel any inconvenience at all, but onely dream and fancy that they do so. As if all Mankind were in the same condition with the Mad-man *De Consol. l. 1.* that *Cardan* speaks of, that though he had a great Estate and his Barns and Store-houses full, yet because he could find no Corn in the Straws, that he was wont to pick in his raving fits, was continually bemoaning himself that he must be famisht for want of Bread. But whether the Evils of Life be real or phantastick, there is a very cunning trick to avoid all their trouble; that is, by foreseeing and expecting them, in that it is not so much the Calamity as the Surprise that afflicts the minds of Men. And here, in the first place, I grant that this preparation of the Mind to receive the blows of Fortune does not a little deaden their stroak, and that the Man who throughly considers to what innumerable Miseries humane Nature is obnoxious, when any of them befall him is not half so much grieved as he that thinks of nothing but Sunshine and Prosperity. But though this may perhaps make us less Miserable, yet it does not make us in any degree Happy, which is the thing that our Philosophy here promises, and if it do not perform it, our Objection still stands good, That upon their Principles there is no such thing as humane

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Happiness ; and then as to that point it matters not what arts and methods there may be of lessening humane Misery. But then, secondly, this Artifice as much as it abates in the intenseness of the trouble, so much it encreases it by extending it. For as a foreseen misfortune affects not the Mind with so sharp an Agony when it comes, yet the very foresight it self is some degree of Anxiety, so that it takes off no more of the present evil than it has inflicted beforehand ; as standing upon the guard to expect an Enemy, though it prevents the fright that would have been made by a suddain Assault, yet is it a considerable piece of pains and hardship in it self. So that though the misery may seem more tolerable by being undergone by degrees rather than all at once, yet taken all together it is never the less misery. And therefore it was a moot Point even among the sensual Philosophers themselves which was most eligible, to suffer all at once, as the *Epicureans* ; or to anticipate some of the present misery by premeditation, as the *Cyrenaicks*. *Epicurus* his prescription was never to think of miseries till they came, but on the contrary *Aristippus* his advice was to be ever thinking of them. And which was the wisest counsel it is very hard to determine ; for it is a very melancholy thing to be always reckoning upon being miserable ; and beside the natural anguish of such thoughts themselves, they inflict upon us innumerable Evils, that would otherwise have never befallen us ; they make every misery that is but possible, to be an actual grief and torment. And on the other-side, it is very grievous to be surpris'd with an unsuspected misery ; the fright is as great as the smart, and the defeat of our expectations greater than both. So that though in this Controversie our Philosopher is pleas'd to side with the *Cyrenaicks*, he brings no reason

for his so doing beside his running down the *Epicurean* Philosophy in gross; and yet that as much concerns the *Cyrenaicks* as themselves; for though they differ in this particular Proposition, they both agree in the same general Principle, that there is no Happiness but of the Body. And that being supposed, it is hard to say who gives the wisest advice to prevent misery, either he that by foresight abates but extends the Pain, or he that by neglect contracts it into a sharper but a shorter fit. Though which soever is best, they are both no better than the comforts of Despair, which is the very abyss of misery; for they both resolve into one and the same Principle, that we are condemn'd to misery; and therefore, says one, count upon it aforehand, and then you will feel it less when it comes; no, says the other, think as little of it as is possible, it is enough to endure when we cannot avoid it. And this is all the comfort that our Philosopher, and indeed all Sects of Philosophers send us in against the Evils and Misfortunes of Life, to let us know that such and such is the condition and fate of Mankind. Art thou tortur'd with any violent and sharp Disease? why! thou wert born with a Body liable to such Distempers. Has Death robb'd thee of thy dearest Friend? why! he was born Mortal. Hast thou suffer'd great Losses? why! then Fortune is unconstant, &c. A strange way to be happy this, onely by counting upon being miserable! Can this mitigate the tortures of the Stone, to be told that my Body is expos'd to their rage? does this lessen my Pain? Has it any influence upon my sensories, or does it at all dull and mortifie their sensations? Nay, is not this the very root of all my misery, that I have such a sad and experimental conviction of the inevitable Evils of humane Life? And when a Man is rackt and torn

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apieces with torments, 'tis no more ease than it is news to him to be told that indeed he may suffer them. So that the result of all came to no more than this, we all know the worst of our condition, that it is fatally miserable, and therefore we must resolve to bear it as we can, which is not to make us patient, but sullen, discontented and desperate. What then will you say, is there no difference between a Fool and a Philosopher? Truly upon their Principles very little as to this Point. They are both equally liable to the sorrows and calamities of Life, and equally destitute of any grounds of comfort to support their Minds under their sufferings. For it is not Paradoxes and great Sayings that can doe the business, and they may preach to us ten thousand witty Apothegms, but nothing can ever really affect us, unless the discovery of some real and substantial good; that indeed would enable us to endure all our present sorrows, not only with patience but with cheerfulness; in short, nothing but the reasonable hope and expectation of the happiness of another Life can bear us up under the sorrows and calamities of this. And therefore, this Principle being not taken in among their philosophick Rules, Advices and Receipts of Happiness, they fell as short of its attainment as the vulgar and the ignorant part of Mankind. Though I will not say that they were altogether as miserable, because the foolish people superinduce their own voluntary trouble from within to their casual calamities from without. Thus though a Philosopher does not assuage his Pain by his Patience, yet a Fool increases it by his Impatience. Though the main advantage of all their Philosophy was this, that it instructed them in the true value of the things of this Life, so that they might not abuse themselves and their hopes with too swelling and vain

expectations, and so forgo the actual comforts of their lives, such as they are, for pompous and troublesome nothings. And that is the unhappy condition of the vulgar herd, that they understand neither themselves nor the World, but are bred up to Covetousness or Ambition, and fancy to reap such a vast Happiness out of their designs, that is not in the least suited to their present condition, but is onely such a Paradise as they dream of; and thus not being aware of the meanness of their capacity, forgetting their mortality, and not considering that they creep upon the Earth, they think to lift their heads aloft, and fancy they walk among the Stars, take mighty pains to compass their little great designs, and if at last they doe it, they are then sadly cheated of their expectations; if they doe it not, they are then infinitely undone, and for ever strangled with insupportable grief and anguish. This, I say, is the great and common folly of humane Life and the ground of Mens renouncing that little quiet they might otherwise have enjoyed, onely to pursue some great and anxious fancy. Whereas wise Men deal faithfully with themselves, reflect impartially upon the condition of their Natures, understand the true state of humane Affairs, and expect no more from the World than the World is able to afford; and hence they moderate their designs and desires, and do not lose that little present tranquility that they might enjoy, with furious and restless prosecutions after such an Happiness as they can never obtain. But though they do not load themselves with needless cares and vexations, yet they must with all the rest of Mankind couch under such as are necessary and unavoidable, because they have no substantial good to support their Minds under them, and for want of that the difference between a Fool and a Philosopher in  
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point of positive Happiness is very little and inconsiderable.

§ XXIX. And thus having taken in as it were all these little Outworks of the Philosophers, we now come to lay siege to their very Capital, *viz.* That let our condition be what it will, Vertue will supply all Wants and overcome all Miseries; or that that alone is, as *Brutus* expresses it, abundantly sufficient to its own Happiness. Than which there is no one thing more greatly and magnificently said in all Philosophy, and it is a Sentence worthy the noble Courage and Gallantry of its Authour, by which he apparently stear'd the whole course of his Life, though it seems it fail'd him at his Death. But if there be any such thing as Vertue (says our great Philosopher) it is entirely satisfied in it self, and being so, it is above all the attempts of Fortune, and then may with confidence and bravery despise all whatsoever, that can befall it. This, this is the true ground of all philosophick Wisdom, slighting all other things as trifles wholly to employ our selves in this great and noble exercise of Life. O thou sovereign Guide of humane Kind, thou Patroness of good Men, and Scourge of Vice, how forlorn and despicable a thing were the Life of Man or Man himself without thee? Thou didst at first found Cities, thou didst at first call that wild Beast Man out of Caves and Dens into Societies, thou wert the first Authour of all Domestick and Civil Friendships, thou art the onely Foundress of all Laws and good Manners; to thee alone doe we owe all the Comfort and Happiness of humane Life, and to thy Divine Discipline do we entirely submit our selves; one day spent according to thy Precepts is infinitely to be preferr'd to an Eternity of Vice or Luxury.

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With many more such flights and transports are we entertain'd in this eloquent Discourse, and it seems to have been written with a more than usual warmth and spirit out of that vehement delight he ever had to oblige and gratifie his justly admired *Brutus*: But as for Arguments he is forced to satisfie himself with such as himself has already confuted. For it is very observable that he here wholly quits his own Sects of the Peripateticks and Academicks, and turns perfect Stoick, and cashieres all the Goods both of Body and Fortune out of the accounts of Happiness, and confines all the nature and exercise of it onely to a Life conducted by the Rules and Laws of Vertue. First then, let us see for what reasons he forsakes his own Discipline; and, secondly, by what Arguments he establishes that of the Stoicks. As for the reason of the first it is very obvious, forasmuch as no Man can be Happy that is in Misery; and therefore if that may be created by the Evils of Body or Fortune, then no Man, how good or wise soever, is capable of being Happy. For if there be three kinds of Good and three kinds of Evil, as they say there is, then he that is tortured with all the Evils of two of them, that is, he that is racked with all manner of pains in his Body, and is oppressed with all the spites of Fortune in his Estate is, notwithstanding all the Happiness that he can reap from the third sort of Good, sufficiently miserable. Secondly, no Man can be happy that is not secure of his Happiness, in that his very insecurity is so much Misery; and therefore he that places two shares out of his own power can have no security of their Enjoyment, and so no Happiness. So that if health of Body and prosperity of Fortune be two necessary ingredients of humane Happiness, the case is plain that it is impossible to secure that, because it is impossible

impossible to ensure their continuance. But of the uncertainty of these things I have already discoursed against the Epicureans, and now I shall, in a few words, represent their Vanity. Suppose then a Man blessed with all the advantages that the whole World is able to afford him, what is it all but a shadow and a phantasm? And, to make short work of it, how vain and imaginary are the Prerogatives of the most envied and desired conditions of Life? For Princes cannot enjoy beyond the capacities of private Men, and though they may possess the whole World, yet they can use and taste no more of it than inferiour Persons. Their Appetites are as finite as other Mens, and when they have all the delicacies that a wanton or a witty Luxury can devise, they can but enjoy and feast to Satiety, and so can the meanest and most despicable Cottager. In short, they enjoy nothing beyond others but tumults of Pomp and Ceremony, unless great Cares and Anxieties make up any part of humane Happiness. And of this *Cardan* propounds *De Consol. l. 3.* a very apt instance in *Charles* the Fifth, King of *Spain* and Emperour of *Rome*, the most fortunate Prince, not onely of his own time but of many foregoing Ages; who enjoyed a very large Empire: not onely in *Europe* but in the *Indies*; who was successfull in all his Enterprises beyond his hopes and desires; who was not onely absolute Sovereign in his own Dominions, but Umpire between all Christian Princes, and disposed of Seignories and Kingdoms at his imperial will and pleasure. And yet this mighty Man lived always in danger of the IncurSIONS of *Solyman* the Great, was continually fretted with the endless Divisions of the German and Italian Princes, perplexed with the loss of this Fleet and that Army. Now, says he, shall we esteem this Man happy, that

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was so perpetually disquieted with such cares, such dangers, such losses? May I perish if I would not rather choose the condition of a poor Carthusian, though it is in reality no better than that of a Slave. And as if this had been a real prophesie, that great Prince ratified it not many years after by his own choice, taking Sanctuary from all his Greatness and Prosperity by entering into a monastick Life. And should we ransack the Histories of all the most fortunate Princes in the World, we should quickly find all their Felicity embitter'd with so many Grievances and Crosses as to conclude with *Pliny*, after all his search, that there never was any such thing as an happy Prince in the World. And now, when we have cut off the vanities of State and Grandeur, that so much dazle and amuse those that know them not, and so little satisfy those that do; the delights of Nature that remain, and that all Mankind doe or may equally enjoy, though they are not altogether as useless and impertinent, yet are they altogether as unable to minister any competent satisfaction to the Minds of Men. For as for the pleasures of the Body, their enjoyment consists rather in allaying Miseries than in any true and real Delight; for they are Pleasures upon no other account than their supplying some present wants, and when the indigence of any Appetite is appeas'd, its Pleasure then ceases, and when *Apicius* has glutted himself with the choicest delicacies that wit or wealth can compass, he does then loathe and nauseate them more than he ever desired or relisht them. Beside this τὸ σαρκῶδες (as *Plutarch* styles it) this little lump of Flesh is of all things the unfittest to be made the seat of Happiness; not onely because all the Pleasures it is capable of, are so vain, short and transient, but because it is liable to so many, so sharp, so lasting, and so stubborn pains,

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any one whereof is heavy enough to weigh down our biggest Happiness, though it were much more solid and substantial than it is. And yet there is no Man that does not labour under some distemper or other, and though possibly at present he may be free from its actual pain, yet he cannot avoid its perpetual fear and foresight; and certainly no Man can be happy that lives either in actual misery or under the constant expectation of it, and yet into these two seasons is humane Life as naturally divided as into Night and Day. And then as for the Goods of Fortune, no Man was scarce ever yet so compleatly lucky as to have her always to comply with his desires. *Aristotle* here reckons up Riches, Friends, Authority, good Birth, vertuous Off-spring, Strength, Beauty, a sufficiency not onely for a Man's own personal Wants, but all the necessities of Kindred, Friends and Neighbours. What a strange variety of Ingredients is here prescribed to make up an unattainable Happiness? For can any Man ever be so phantastick as to imagine he can compass all these particulars? If he can, he is certain to enjoy more Happiness from his Fancy than ever he can reap from his actual Enjoyment. No, the World is too thick crowded with Evils for any Person that passes through it to escape them all; and yet one single sorrow embitters all our comforts, and one disaster rifles the magazine of all our joys. At least one acute Disease withers the most *Cicero*. prosperous and flourishing condition; so that suppose a Man whose Enjoyments are as great as his Desires, enriched with Vertue and in favour with Fortune, yet one sharp Distemper despoils him of all his Comforts, and one rebellious Humour is enough to poison a whole Sea of Content, and mountains of Joy are not able to counterpoise one single Misery.

Suppose a Man advanced to the top of all possible Prosperity, and encircled with an affluence of all Delights, yet a fit of the Stone disrobes him of all his Grandeur, and casts him into a condition infinitely more comfortless than the most desperate and forlorn Poverty. And this is the saddest proof of the inevitable misery of humane Life, to consider to what innumerable sorrows we are obnoxious, and how impossible it is to escape them all; and yet if one single Misery do but mix it self with all our Joys, how suddainly do they vanish and disappear, and how fatally do we sink under the intolerable Burthen. In short, all the Glory and all the Happiness of Mankind, is not able to support him under an ordinary Distemper. To say nothing of the Gout, the Cholick, the Stone, Pleurifies, Feavours, Consumptions, and a thousand more Instruments of humane Miseries; the Palpitation of the Heart, that is scarce accounted among Diseases, if *Fodag. Enc.* we may believe *Cardan*, who knew it very well, is like the pains of the damned. Nay, if but a fit of the Tooth-ache make any Man miserable, he can neither eat nor sleep; and whilst it lasts it is not in the power of all the Wealth and all the Philosophy in the World to help or to relieve him. From all which it is sufficiently evident what good reason he had to renounce his own Masters, that would have every wise Man secure of his Happiness, and yet make the goods of Body and Fortune part of it, of which no Man can have any security. And now let us see how he acquits himself upon his own new Principles.

§ XXX. First he refers us to his foregoing Disputations, that if he have there concluded as he ought according to the Rules of Logick, that then Vertue alone is abundantly sufficient to its own Happiness; because

because he has there effectually taken away all perturbations both of Mind and Body; which being removed, every thing is avoided that is destructive of an happy Life; for it is they, and they onely that make him miserable; so that Vertue being able to cure or remove them all, 'tis for that reason alone sufficient to its own Happiness. But then if he have performed nothing of all this in his former Disputations, then this way of arguing turns back upon himself, that Mankind is fatally miserable, in that it is exposed to so many Evils, which it is not in our power either to fly or conquer. For as himself argues, how is it possible for any Man not to be miserable, that fears either Death or Pain, when the one is often present and the other always at hand? to which if you add all the innumerable calamities of Life, some whereof we feel; and all we fear; and if we have no remedy against all that trouble they create, we are not onely not happy but in the highest degree miserable; so that, having shewn that he has performed nothing of what he has undertaken in his former Disputations, I may now justly conclude him by his own Argument, that there is no relief against the miseries of humane Life. But then, secondly, what though we are furnished with Antidotes against Evils, yet that does not place us in a condition of Happiness, for it is one thing to be happy and another not to be miserable; so that, all miseries taken out of the way, there is still something more required to give us actual content and satisfaction. No, says he, but as the Sea is made calm onely by the ceasing of Storms, so is a Man happy by the cure of his Passions. This is a pretty Similitude; but (as most Similitudes are) a very weak Argument, for the calmness of the Sea is a stupid, life-less and insensible thing, but Man's Happiness

ness arises from his own Sense and Reflection; and therefore it is not enough for him not to be ruffled with Sorrow and Discontent, but to render him really happy, he must enjoy some substantial and suitable Good, that may gratifie his Faculties, and satisfy his Mind. So that though he had performed what was promised in the former Discourses, yet notwithstanding that, has he done nothing towards the acquisition of any real and positive Contentment.

But he proceeds; every Creature has its proper Perfection, the proper Perfection of the Mind of Man is Reason, the Perfection of Reason is Vertue, Vertue therefore is the Perfection, that is the complete Happiness of humane Nature. And it is true that every Creature excels in some peculiar Faculty, but then all its Pleasure and Satisfaction consists not in the single gratification of that Faculty, but beside that all its other Appetites are to be gratified in their several Sensations; and if they are not, that alone will overthrow all the Delight that can arise from the exercise of its supreme Faculty. Thus the most accurate Sense in a Spaniel is smelling, which yet can afford but little contentment, if he be tortured in all his other Senses. And so it is plain that the highest Faculty in a Man is his Reason, but then it is plain too that the utmost improvement of that can never place him in a state of sovereign Happiness, if he endure Pain and Misery in his other inferiour Faculties; so that it is not the Perfection of our highest Faculty, but of our whole Nature that is our supreme Felicity. And therefore that consisting of Sense as well as Reason, it is not Reason alone howsoever accomplished and improved that can complete our Happiness. And then secondly, if there be no immortality, not Vertue but Self-interest is the perfection of humane Reason; for if Man be  
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capable of no other but his present Happiness, then his Reason will tell him that he is onely concern'd to take care of that, and to value Things and Actions not as they are good and evil, but onely as they are subservient to his own present Advantage. And then is the very Being of Vertue overthrown, which were not Vertue if it did not oblige to Duty contrary to Interest; for that is the onely difference between a good and a bad Man, that one prefers Duty before Interest, the other Interest before Duty. Again, all Happiness, says he, is matter of Joy, all Joy delights to shew it self, what delights to shew it self is glorious, what is glorious is praiseworthy, what is praiseworthy is honest, and therefore nothing is good but what is honest. Or thus, whatever is good is desirable; whatever is desirable, deserves approbation; whatever deserves approbation has worth and dignity in it self; whatever has worth and dignity in it self is praiseworthy, whatever is praiseworthy is honest, and therefore whatever is good is honest. Which Argument he pursues after the manner of the Stoicks in an hundred other ways of connexion; but howsoever it is varied all the stress of it lies onely in the connexion of *laudabile* with *honestum*, praise or commendation with Vertue; for how great soever compass they may take, that is still the last medium by which they joyn Happiness and Vertue together. So that though the Stoicks wrote numberless Books of Sorites (as they call'd them) upon this Argument, they all amounted to no more than this one short Syllogism; whatever is good is praiseworthy, whatever is praiseworthy is honest, and therefore whatever is good is honest.

*De Fin. l. 4.* But this, as *Tully* himself has elsewhere answered, is a very trifling and precarious way of arguing. For who (says he) that affirms  
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the goods of Body and Fortune to be part of our Happiness will be so easy or so silly as to grant the first Proposition, that all good is praiseworthy; or that being granted, there is no need of proceeding to the second; for there is no doubt of it, but that if all good be praiseworthy, all good is honest too. And therefore *Aristotle* and the whole School of the Peripateticks, against whom they dispute, will flatly deny the Assertion, and tell you that Health, Strength, Riches, Friends, Authority are very good things, and yet deserve not that which Men call praise and commendation, that is the imputation of moral Goodness. So that to pass this Proposition as they do without any farther proof, is first to take what no Man will grant, and then to conclude from it what themselves please. And now this one false step being barr'd, there is an end of all the Stoicks voluminous Disputations, and of all our Oratours rhetorical Flourishes, that are onely so many artificial transports and forms of Eloquence in praise of this one Proposition; all which, if it be false, can never make it true; and therefore till that is done, 'tis all nothing but empty Declamation. And for that Reason I shall pursue him no farther here, but shall return back to his foregoing Discourses, and shew first that he himself, after all his pains, has not been able to lay better Grounds than the Epicureans for the stability of Vertue, nor more effectual Motives for the obligation of its practice. And secondly, that when he has said all he can, that Vertue alone is so far from being any sufficient ground of Happiness, that it is not able to deliver us from any single Misery; from both which it evidently appears, that there is some farther Account to be given of the Government of the World, if there be such a Providence as I have proved, that has made  
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Happiness our End, and Vertue the means to attain it.

§ XXXI. And first, the state of the Controversy between him and the Epicureans is, whether Pleasure or Honesty be the Supreme Good. That Pleasure in the sense of *Epicurus* is not we have already proved; and now we prove that Honesty alone without some Motives and Enforcements beside it self is so weak a thing, that sensual Pleasure and Self-interest must get the upper hand of it in the Minds and the Actions of Mankind. And if once we can prove that, we have routed the whole design of all his mortal Morality; and for its proof we shall follow his own steps. And first, whereas he defines Honesty to be such a thing, as taking away from it all other Rewards and Advantages is justly commendable for its own sake, he makes it onely a glorious nothing. For what does this great word Vertue signifie when separated from all other Considerations? Do not all the Philosophers agree there can be no such thing without Prudence? And will not common Discretion dictate to any Man not to doe, much less to suffer any thing for the sake of Vertue unless upon prudential Motives? and then they ought to give us some account of the Grounds and Reasons that we have to prefer Vertue for her own sake above all things else, and that without any present regard to our selves; for if we act with regard to that, then we act not meerly for the sake of Vertue, but for the sake of the present Reward. But, say they, Vertue is its own Reward. Be it so, then this turns us back upon our own Principle, that it is of no force of it self but by virtue of its Reward; and then if we choose Vertue because it is its own Reward, we choose it for the same reason as if it were recom-

recommended to us by any other Reward: But how is it its own Reward? For if it be true Vertue it must foregoe all things rather than it self, otherwise still it is nothing else but present Design and Self-interest. Now then, how can Vertue taken alone give me any recompence or satisfaction for any loss that I sustain meerly upon her account? How can Justice alone requite my Honesty if I lose either my own Estate because I will not violate her Laws; or my Neighbours, when I might have gotten it by Fraud or Oppression? How can Fortitude that puts me upon all manner of Dangers even of Life it self, recompence my pains, if it have no other Reward beside the unaccountable Happiness of enduring them? So that this Maxim, that in general looks so great and glorious, when applied to particulars is plainly no better than a shining and an empty bubble. And then to tell us as he does, that Nature alone obliges us to Vertue, is to say nothing at all, unless he would inform us too by what Sanctions this Nature ties her Obligations upon us. For there can be no obligation that is not enforced by Rewards and Penalties; so that if Nature bind Men to Honesty against present Interest, it must give them some reason of the Duty; that is, it must propound to them some advantage on the side of Justice, and then they do not choose their Duty against their Interest, but foregoe a lesser for a greater advantage.

So that if Nature put us upon the practice of Vertue, it is by virtue of some Reward; but where that fails, it is in vain to talk of the power and authority of Nature; or any thing else. And whereas he adds that other Creatures have no apprehension but of their present Necessities, that yet Mankind is endued with such a vigour and sagacity of Mind as to foresee all  
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the consequences of Things, and to take the whole compass of humane Life into consideration, and thereby to determine it self to the designs of Vertue and Honesty. This amounts to no more than what *Epicurus* himself affirms, *viz.* that in the whole Account of things Vertue is for the most part most pleasant and advantageous; and that where it is not so, there is no solid Reason why it should be most eligible: So that still *Epicurus* is plainly in the right, that whilst we discourse of Happiness as attainable in this Life only without any expectation of future Rewards, Honesty if separate from Interest is no more than an empty Name, and amounts to no more dignity than popular Opinion.

And as for all the fine Stories that he tells us of some brave and heroick Men that have been just to their own disadvantage, when they might have been unjust without danger or discovery; it argues the generosity of their Nature and their Roman Education, but does not prove that they lay under any the least Obligation to it, and wholly resolves it into an empty Name, and enforces it with no other Reward but meerly Vainglory. For if it be recompensed with no advantage in this Life, nor have hopes of any in the next, there remains no other motive to perswade its practice than barely to be talked of.

And this was the case of his own famous Countrymen, *Curtius*, *Torquatus*, the *Decii*, &c. that cast themselves upon extravagant and desperate Attempts, onely to be praised by their Fellow-citizens, that is out of vanity and ostentation; for if they had no prospect of a future Reward, they could have no other inducement to sacrifice their Lives and Beings. So that all the fine Stories both of the Grecian and Roman Heroes signify no more than those of the Boys at *Sparta*,

and the Gladiators at *Rome*, who endured any hardship, even Death it self with a steady Countenance for no other Reward but the applause of the Spectators. And if this be all the ground of Vertue, we are again turn'd back to the Epicurean Hypothesis, viz. that it has no Foundation beside the Opinion of the common People, and yet that that is none at all; I think I have already proved more than enough against the Epicureans.

But lastly, as Vertue alone is no sufficient Foundation for it self, so much less is it able to secure our Happiness.

For first, granting all their strein'd Panegyricks, that it is (as it is) without all competition the noblest and most raised Satisfaction of humane Nature, yet it is no security against the common Calamities of humane Life; and though it may instruct how to bear the blows of Fortune, yet is it no enchantment against its force, nor impenetrable to its spites. Its Votaries are no more exempted from Disasters and sinister Accidents than the Profligate and the Vicious. But all Mankind are equally assaulted by those Troops of foreign Calamities that harass the confines of humane Contentment with perpetual Alarms and Encounters. And though it were possible for Philosophy (as it is not) to alleviate our Miseries, yet it can never transmute them into Joys; and though the infusion of Vertue into the Cup of Affliction may lessen, yet it cannot abolish its bitterness. In short, though wise Men were able to abate the sense of their Calamities by prudent Reflections, whilst the froward and passionate double their Resentments by their impatience; yet they can neither make themselves senseless of evils and malicious Events, nor so far alter the Natures of Things, as to extract Pleasures out of painfull

Sensations. For howsoever any Sect of Men may affect to vent Paradoxes and speak big Sentences, yet the most Stoical and conceited Apathist of them all would have but little heart to boast of his Pleasures under Cholick pangs. Sicknes and Poverty lose not their Stings when they fasten upon good Men; and Vertue, whatever it does, reprints us not from the impressions of Sense; and therefore howsoever our Minds are qualified, we are always exposed to the Casualties of Body and Fortune. So that still a calamitous Vertue is so far from rendring us completely happy, that it cannot make us less miserable; and is rather an Object of pity than desire, and apter to move compassion than envy.

But secondly, the great service of Vertue is to support us under and recompence us for those Losses that we suffer upon her account. Now how is it imaginable that she can doe this? By her self alone? But I have already shewn that so she is nothing; and that no good Man can draw any satisfaction from his being undone for having done well, if meerly his having done well be all the Reward of his so doing, because he can never satisfie himself that he has done wisely too; and then Vertue separated from Prudence becomes Folly, and that can give no wise Man any real Contentment; and if it should he would neither be a wise Man, nor his Content real. *But a good Conscience is the effect of Vertue, and that alone makes every good Man happy.* But if Vertue have no other Reward beside it self, it lays no ground for a good Conscience to bottom it self upon. For what Comfort can it be to any wise Man onely to be conscous to himself that he has undone himself for the sake of Vertue, when he can give himself no reasonable account, why he should stick so stubbornly to her in

opposition to his own Interest? For, that Vertue alone is no reason, is already proved; and if there be any other, then is there some other ground of Happiness beside meer Vertue and Conscience, and that is the thing we are in quest of; but without it, a good Conscience alone is the same thing as Vertue alone. *What then, shall Vertue ascend the Rack and the Gibbet, and leave Happiness behind it?* Yes, if Vertue will be so hardy as to encounter Racks and Gibbets by her own naked strength, she may thank her own rashness if Happiness forsake her there: For as there is no Pleasure in being racked and torn asunder, so neither is there any in suffering it meerly for the sake of Vertue. But then, as Happiness cannot ascend the Rack, so Vertue will not: For to what purpose should a wise Man endure Torments for no other recompence than onely his enduring them, and yet that is the highest Exercise of his Vertue. If he be wise, he will say or doe any thing rather than suffer the least thing for he knows not what; and if he be a Fool, it is not Vertue but Folly that mounts the Gibbet. So that which way soever Men turn themselves, all Morality sinks to nothing without our Supposition; and therefore seeing the Governour of the World has provided so carefully for it even in the Nature of Things, there is no avoiding the Conclusion but that this must be added to it, because without it all his other Provision would be useles and ineffectual.

Upon supposition then that there is a Deity, and that this Deity has enacted those Laws for the government of the World, that I have described in the former part of this Discourse; it follows with undeniable demonstration that for that Reason alone, though there were no other, he has withall provided some other state of things beyond that of this present  
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Life; because otherwise when he has built this World with so much art, and contrived the Nature of Things with so much wisdom, he has done it all to no purpose; and then there is neither Art nor Wisdom. So that these being antecedently proved, this that is so unavoidably connected with them, though it had no other proof, stands upon the same evidence of Reason. Especially when it is so needfull not onely to moral but to natural Philosophy, that without it not onely all the Laws of Vertue vanish into nothing, but the whole frame of Nature sinks into utter Chaos and Confusion.

For that the World was built by a Principle endued with Wisdom and Understanding is I hope sufficiently demonstrated from those evident Ends, Uses and Designs of Things that he propounded to himself in their order and contrivance; and yet unless we suppose some other state of things than what is at present visible, after those undeniable Demonstrations of all those wise Designs that appear in every part and parcel of Nature, it will as demonstratively follow that the whole was made to no end at all. Which because it is so plain a contradiction to what was before so evidently demonstrated, that alone is as evident a Demonstration of this, that is so certainly connected with it, as it is of it self.



A Demonstration  
 OF THE  
 DIVINE AUTHORITY  
 OF THE  
 CHRISTIAN RELIGION,

From the undoubted Certainty of the Matter of Fact, and the uninterrupted Tradition of the Church.

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P A R T II.

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§ I. **H**AVING demonstrated the general Providence of God in the Government of the World by those Laws of Nature that he has enacted and proclaimed to all his rational Creatures; and proceeded, as far as the natural use of our Faculties would guide me, to discover both the Duty and the Happiness of Mankind. I now advance to a much greater and more glorious discovery of both, by that particular Revelation that he has made both of them and himself in the Christian Institution. And here the Advantages both as to the Certainty of the Reward and the Perfection of the Law are so exceedingly great, as almost utterly to supersede the necessity and usefulness of the former Discourse.

For, first, we were there forced to make out the Law of Nature to our selves by various Observations of Nature and Trains of Reasoning, but here we find them all distinctly and exactly drawn forth for our present use into particular Rules and Precepts, and made easie to our practice by familiar Instances and Examples of Life: so that now without any laborious workings of our own Minds, without any knowledge of Nature, and without any skill in Philosophy, our whole Duty is made known to us in a System of plain and easie Propositions.

And then, secondly, when we had wrought out the Laws of Nature to our selves from the nature of Things, after that we were forced to work the proof of a future Reward out of them; and though the connexion, when it is discovered, is very evident and undeniable, yet it requires some carefull intention of Mind, and competent skill in the Art of Reasoning to discover it; whereas now it is made evident to us beyond all doubt and exception both by certain Revelation and experimental Proof; the knowledge whereof is conveyed to us by such undoubted Records that we could scarce receive greater satisfaction of the matter of Fact by the Testimony and Conviction of our own Senses. And the Divine Providence has given us so great an Assurance of the Being of a future state, that we have not much more of the present. At least the Grounds and Motives of our Christian Faith are so convincing and demonstrative as not onely to perswade, but even to enforce our Belief; so that no ingenuous and unprejudiced Mind can withstand their Evidence, though it is possible that malice and peevishness may defeat their Efficacy; and so it may too, if it please, over-rule the Power of Mathematical Demonstration.

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But if Men will be honest and impartial in the Enquiry, and not do manifest violence to their own Convictions, it will be as easie for them to doubt of or disbelieve all the Problems about Lines or Numbers as to suspect the Foundations of the Christian Faith. Not that it is capable of the same kind of Evidence, but because its Proofs are so forcible in their own kind, that upon the same ground that any Man shall distrust or demur upon their credibility, he is obliged to an universal unsettledness and irresolution of Mind. For when we have weigh'd and consider'd the whole account of Things, we shall find the rankest Scepticism to be very little more unreasonable than Infidelity. Because though the Evidence of all matters of Fact and Faith be onely historical, yet some historical Evidence is so strong and convictive as in the last result of things to equal Mathematical Demonstrations. I know indeed we are told by some learned Men that in matters of this nature we are not to expect demonstrative Arguments, when the things themselves are not capable of any other than *moral* Certainty.

But here I would first enquire, What they mean by moral Certainty. And to this their Answer is ready, That it is all the certainty that the Nature of the thing is capable of. But if that be the definition of moral Certainty, then is all certainty moral, for every truth is capable of its own kind of certainty.

But then, secondly, There are very many things, from which I am in reason obliged to suspend my Assent, because they are not capable in their own Natures to warrant its Wisdom; and though I cannot rationally expect more certain grounds concerning them, yet I cannot rationally give up my Assent to them, because their Evidence (though the

clearest that in that case I can expect) is too obscure and uncertain to found any confident Assent upon. Thus have I a moral Certainty that *Romulus* was the Founder of *Rome*, *i. e.* I have all the proof of it that the matter is capable of, and yet have I not sufficient grounds to venture any thing that nearly concerns me upon the truth of it; because the first beginning of the Roman Story is in many things very fabulous, and in all very far from being sufficiently certain.

And therefore, thirdly, If by moral Certainty they mean any less degree of evidence, as they plainly do when they distinguish it from the more certain ways of proof, then the scruple that remains after this their determination is this, that the very thing, the belief whereof is made the very Foundation of our Religion, is capable of no higher degree of evidence than onely moral Certainty. In that it seems not consistent with the Divine Wisdom and Goodness to lay any thing as the Foundation of Faith, but upon the firmest and most evident Principles, when it is a matter of so vast and infinite concernment to Mankind: so that when the Object of our Faith is a matter of the greatest moment, it is but just and reasonable that the evidence of its Truth should be proportionable to the weight and value of its Importance.

In short, If they mean that this particular History has as great evidence as it is capable of, then all that they say, amounts to no more than this, that it has as much proof as it has. If they mean that this historical Truth has as much certainty as any historical Truth whatsoever is capable of, then why should they call this kind of certainty moral rather than any other? Historical certainty it is, but historical certainty is as certain in its kind, as physical or mathematical are in their kinds. And I have as great assurance that

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the Fanatique Rebels murder'd King *Charles* the First, as I have of any Proposition in *Euclid*; and a much greater than I have of any thing in natural Philosophy, except the Being and Providence of a Deity which indeed equals it. And the same evidence do the Grounds and Motives of our Christian Faith carry along with them; in that the History of it asserts it self with so great and so many demonstrative circumstances, as makes it impossible to be false.

§ II. For though their direct evidence be made up of many less evident Particulars, yet the accumulation of all together amounts to the full evidence of demonstrative Certainty. It being impossible that so vast a multitude of fair and plausible things should conspire to vouch and authorise a meer Imposture. And that a palpable Lie should by chance have as much evidence of proof as can be demanded for the most unquestionable Truth of the same Nature. Or what can be more absolutely incredible than that a meer Fable should be set off with all the Advantages of Argument, that the truest and best vouch't History in the World can pretend to? And yet, I say, so many and so reasonable are the inducements of our Faith, that though it be possible to hold out against their single force, yet in their united strength they grow into an evidence so great that it is little less than irresistible. They come so strong and so thick upon our Minds, that they force their own way; so that it is scarce left in the power of an honest Mind to resist such armies and legions of Reason; though I know a stubborn Man may struggle with the strongest conviction, and if he be resolved to be humour-some in his Infidelity, it is not in the power of all the reason and all the demonstration in the World to force

a wilfull Understanding. And yet at present I shall wave all that variety of Argument that by direct force asserts and proves the Divine Authority of the Gospel, and rather choose to proceed in an inverse method, by turning the Infidels Weapons and Sceptical Objections upon themselves. So that whereas they are wont to attempt the Foundations of our Faith with a few weak and little Cavils, I will load their Infidelity with such an intolerable heap of Absurdities as shall for ever dash their Confidence and disarm their Impiety. And if I can demonstrate the horrible Absurdity of Unbelief, that will be an irresistible demonstration of the Reasonableness of Belief. And I chose this way of procedure rather than the other, because though perhaps it is not more evident in it self, yet is it more affecting to the generality of the Minds of Men; For I find most Men so ill-natur'd as to be much more apt and forward to discern a Falshood than to acknowledge a Truth, so that it is much more easie to convince them by the Absurdities of that, than by the rational Proofs of this. Though the chief reason why I pitch upon this method is because it is most proper and suitable to the temper of this present Age: In that there are a sort of Men too common among us, who, because they can say four or five witty things against the Christian Religion, will by all means be setting up for Infidels, in spite of all that innumerable multitude of sober and reasonable Arguments, that, if they do not utterly prevent, yet infinitely out balance all their little Talkings. And if they can but pick up two or three unhappy Remarques upon the holy Scriptures out of that foolish Book the *Leviathan*, they think themselves made for ever, and how happy are they in the luckiness of the discovery. It mends their humours and raises their parts, and they that

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t'other day were but ordinary Mortals as to the endowments of Nature, and sufficient Dunces as to the improvements of Learning, immediately become great Philosophers and deep Clerks. The forward Youth sets up in his Country for the Man of Logick and Disputation, makes the simple and ignorant People stand amased at the Wit and Profoundness of our young Master's Discourse, and the poor Village Curate is sure to be the Trophee of his Confidence; and if at any time he chance to encounter a Man of Learning, with what briskness does he attaque his Gravity; a Gnat is not more troublesome with its little sting and buzz, than he with his small Sophistry. And though the Truant be no better furnished than the *Jews* supposed the Carpenter's Son to have been; you shall find him upon all occasions disputing with the Doctours and Rabbies of the Temple. And he shall disperse all that heap and accumulation of Arguments that the most learned of them is able to produce in defence of the Christian Faith with any pitifull Repartee, that beside that it is void of all Reason, has scarce Wit enough to tempt any Man to laugh beside himself.

Now it is in vain to convince such Men by downright dint of Argument, and therefore seeing they have not Wit or Learning enough to be reason'd into Truth and Sobriety, I shall take another course with them by shaming them into it.

Let us then turn the Tables, and consider a little how many strange and incredible things those Men are forced to believe, that are resolved to disbelieve the Gospel. And here immediately appear such vast numbers of horrid and ghastly Incongruities, as are enough to scare any ingenuous Man into the belief of any thing in the World rather than be troubled with such a monstrous and unreasonable Infidelity. They  
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must force their understandings to believe numberless contradictions to the common reason and experience of all Mankind; and they swallow not single absurdities, but every Article of their unbelief is pregnant with swarms of extravagant and incredible conceits.

§ III. And for the proof hereof I shall represent no more than the incredibility of one, *viz.* that our Saviour is not risen from the Dead. And herein I follow his own wise and admirable Advice, to begin the demonstration of his Divine Authority from the undoubted and undeniable evidence of his Resurrection. For to that alone he refers us as the last and most satisfactory proof of his Commission, and depends upon it as the clearest demonstration not onely of his Doctrine, but of all the other Arguments whereby he proved his Doctrine. And for that reason it is that we find him so often injoining his Disciples not to publish his other Works and Miracles till after his Resurrection.

Thus when his Apostles had declared to him the firmness of their Belief that he was the true Messias, he streightly charges them (*Matt.* 16. 20.) that they should then tell no Man of it, and takes occasion thence to acquaint them with his approaching Death and Passion, and prepare them for the belief of his Resurrection from the Grave, Ascension into Glory, and Mission of the Holy Ghost. By which great Miracles he was, as *Saint Paul* observes, (*Rom.* 1. 4.) to be declared the Son of God with Power, but chiefly by his Resurrection: for it was (as the same Apostle elsewhere expresses it) *the working of the might of his Power, which he wrought in Christ, when the Father of Glory raised him from the dead*, *Ephes.* 1. 19. And this probably was the meaning of those words immediately

diately added by our Saviour to his foremention'd Discourse, *Verily I say unto you, there are those here present that shall not taste of Death till they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom*: (Matt. 16. 28.) In that he was as evidently declared by this to be the Messias or Son of God, as if they had seen him solemnly enthron'd in Heaven by the holy Angels.

So again when the Devils that he cast out were forced to confess him to be the Messias, he still commands them silence. He was not willing that there should be too much notice taken of him before his Resurrection, because by that he intended to give such a palpable proof of his Divine Authority, as should give undoubted credit to all his former Miracles.

And so again when he had taken his three chief Disciples to behold his Transfiguration, thereby to confirm their Faith against the time of his Suffering, when he had done that, *he charges them, saying, tell the Vision to no Man untill the Son of Man be risen from the dead*: (Matt. 17. 9.) Because the great evidence and certainty of that would give undoubted credit to this and all their other Reports; whereas till then Men would be very difficultly perswaded to believe such prodigious and unusual things; though after that, and the undeniable power of the Holy Ghost in the Apostles who attested it, it would be so far from being at all difficult to yield to their Testimony, that it would be almost impossible to distrust it. And therefore accordingly the first Preachers of the Gospel laid the whole stress of their Faith upon this one Principle. This was the resolution of all their Disputes with the unbelieving World; and when Men in those days enquired after the truth of the Christian Religion, the onely state of the Question was whether Christ were risen from the dead. This alone without  
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the assistance of any other proof was thought such a forcible and convictive confirmation, that it superseded the consideration of all other less evident and important reasonings; and where this was not able to prevail upon the minds of Men, they despaired of any success from any other Topicks and Principles.

This then being so, I shall in this one Article specify according to the method before proposed those wild, those extravagant, those incredible absurdities that must be swallowed upon its disbelief.

§ IV. First then, they believe that the Apostles, Evangelists and Disciples of Jesus, who pretended to have been eye Witnesses of it, both would and could impose upon the World with a manifest lie, and in that they believe ten thousand absurdities. For it is easily credible no doubt, that Men endued, I will not say with Principles of common Sense, Reason and Discretion, (that is more than I need suppose) it is enough to our present purpose onely to suppose them possess'd with that natural Instinct, that they have in common with all other Creatures, *viz.* Love of Life and desire of self-preservation; It is, I say, easily credible that such Creatures as these would so willingly, so wilfully forgo all advantages of Pleasure and Profit; so cheerfully expose themselves to so many Hazards and Hardships, so many Reproaches and Contumelies; and so undauntedly endure so many Tortures and Miseries, so many Bonds and Imprisonments, so many Martyrdoms and Persecutions, onely to bear Testimony to what themselves knew to be a lewd and shameless Imposture. 'Tis a likely thing that so many plain and simple Men should conspire together to the manifest ruine of all their worldly Interests onely to gain credit and belief to a palpable Falshood. That so  
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many hundreds that pretended to be eye Witnesses both of all our Saviour's Miracles in his Life-time and his Resurrection after Death should lay down their Lives to attest a false Report ; and that no Torments, no nor the most cruel Death could ever prevail upon any of them to deny or disown their Testimony.

It is possible indeed, though not very usual, that Men should lay down their Lives for a false Opinion, because it is possible for them to believe it to be true ; but it is by no means credible that they should persist to Death for the justification of a false Testimony ; For if it were false, they knew it to be so, and then if they will die in defence of its truth, they contradict the first instinct of their own Natures, and throw away their Lives for nothing. Especially when beside that there was no present advantage in the Lie it self, so none could ensue upon it ; For they could not possibly expect any reward of Wealth, or Honour, or Power from the propagation of an extravagant and a proofless Lie. Nay, they quickly found that they must either part with all that was dear to them in this Life, and even Life it self, or forbear to spread and divulge the Fable. Now that Beings endued with humane Nature should act and suffer after such a rate for no design at all, nay, against the design of all designs is a thing so cross to all belief, that I may challenge all the Infidels in the World to assign any one thing that is more incredible.

If a great number of harmless and well-meaning Persons should offer their Oaths to attest any matter of Fact, it justly commands and immediately overrules our Belief. And yet it is an easie thing to suppose that a great multitude would seal it with their Blood that they saw Jesus doe so many miraculous things, though they were conscious to themselves that they

never saw him doe any one of them. They were certainly in a very pleasant humour, when they covenanted among themselves to sacrifice both their Lives and Fortunes to abuse the World with an unprofitable cheat; but yet however one would think Racks and Gibbets would have spoil'd the frolick. And it is highly credible that any Men, but much more these Men, who have given us no ground to suspect their integrity, because they could have no motive to forgoe it, should prevaricate after such an odd and extravagant manner with Mankind, yes and themselves too. And when so many plain and simple Men, so apparently without Craft, and without Design, without Advantage, without Interest, have given the World the most unquestionable proofs that they were serious and in good earnest as to the certain truth and reality of what they related, after all this what wise and wary Man would not suspect the Forgery and disbelieve the Relation?

But this Argument I find prosecuted by *Eusebius* with extraordinary acuteness both of Wit and Reason. Supposing, says he, that our Saviour never wrought any of those Miracles that are unanimously reported of him by his Disciples, we must then suppose that they enter'd into Covenant among themselves after this manner: Men and Brethren, what that Seducer was that lived among us t'other day, and how justly he suffer'd Death for his vile Imposture, we of all Men have most reason to know; and though others that were less intimately acquainted with him and his ways of deceiving, might have some opinion of his worth and honesty; yet we, that were the daily Companions of his Conversation, saw nothing in him answerable to the greatness of his pretences, but that his whole design

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design was by all the boldest Arts of Craft and Hypocrisie to get a Name in the World, and therefore let us one and all join hands and enter into solemn Covenant among our selves to propagate the Belief of this impudent Cheat among Mankind, and to fain all manner of Lies for its Confirmation; to swear that we saw him restore Eyes to the Blind, Ears to the Deaf, and Life to the Dead; and though it be all impudently false, yet let us confidently report it, nay, and stand too it to the last drop of our Blood. And because, after all his great and glorious Pretences of being no less than the Son of God, he was at last executed as a vile Malefactor, with all the circumstances of shame and dishonour, we must agree among our selves upon some Lie to wipe off this disgrace.

Let us therefore resolve to affirm with an undaunted impudence, that after he was thus dishonourably Crucified, the third Day he arose again, and often conversed with us in the same familiar way, as he had always done before his Execution. But then we must be sure to stand unalterably to the impudence of the Lie, and to persevere to Death it self in its assertion. For what absurdity is there in throwing away our Lives for nothing? And why should any Man think it hard to suffer Stripes, Racks, Bonds, Imprisonments, Reproaches, Dishonours, and Death it self for no reason at all? Let us therefore unanimously and vigorously set our selves to the design, and with one consent agree to report such impudent Falshoods, as are of no advantage either to our selves, or to those we deceive, or to him for whose sake we deceive. Neither let us be content to propagate this Lie onely among our own Country-men, but let us resolve to spread it through all parts of the habitable World, impose new Laws upon all Nations, overthrow all their old Religions,

command the Romans to quit the Gods of their Ancestours, the Greeks to renounce the Wisedom of their Philosophers, and the Egyptians the pretended Antiquity of their Superstition. Neither will we take the pains to overthrow these ancient Customs of the most polite and most powerfull Nations in the World by the force of Learning or Wit or Eloquence, but by the meer Authority of our crucified Master. Neither will we stop here, but we will travel to all barbarous Nations in the World, reverse all their ancient Laws, and command their obedience to a new Religion, and this let us resolve to go through with an undaunted courage and resolution. For it is not an ordinary reward that we expect for our Impudence, nor is it for vulgar Crowns and Trophies that we engage our selves in such hard and hazardous enterprises. No, no, we are sure to meet with the utmost severity of the Laws in all places whereever we come, and the truth is we deserve it for disturbing the publick Settlement onely to establish a ridiculous Cheat and Imposture. But for this who would not endure all the torments in the World, burning, hanging, beheading, crucifying, and being torn in pieces by wild Beasts? All which we must, as we will secure the honour of the Impostor, encounter with a cheerfull and resolved Mind. For what can be more praise-worthy than to abuse God and affront Mankind to no purpose, and to reap no other benefit from all our labours beside the pleasure of vain, foolish and unprofitable lying? And for that alone will we blaspheme all the Religions that have been from the beginning of the World to gain worship to a crucified Malefactor; nay, we will lay down our Lives for his Reputation notwithstanding that we know him to have been an impudent Impostor; and for that reason is it that we honour him



so highly, because he has put such a dishonourable abuse upon our selves. Who would not doe or suffer any thing for the sake of so vile a Man? Who would not undergo all manner of Sufferings for a Cause that himself knew to be meer falshood and forgery? And therefore let us constantly to the last breath averr, that he raised the Dead, cleansed Lepers, cast out Devils, and wrought all manner of Miracles, though we are conscions to our selves of the gross falshood of the whole Story, that we have meerly forged out of our own brains: And therefore let us deceive as many as we can, and if people will not be deceived, yet however we shall sometime or other enjoy the pleasure of suffering, and perhaps of dying for, an unprofitable Lie. It is no doubt credible that Men should discourse and act after such an extravagant rate as this, or that humane Nature that has above all other Creatures an high sense of the love of Life and Self-preservation, should thrust it self upon a voluntary Death without any motive or any reward; or if they should, that when so great a multitude had agreed among themselves to carry on such a frantick design, they should all persevere in the Lie to the very Death, and not one of them be wrought upon by all the threatnings and all the flatteries in the World to betray the Plot, and yet this was the case of the Apostles if their Testimony were not true. So that it is plain that there is no more required to demonstrate the truth of the Christian Cause against Infidelity than onely, to suppose that the Apostles were Men. And that certainly is as modest and moderate a Postulatum as can be premised to any Question. And yet that onely being granted it is evident from the Premises that nothing can be more unaccountable than Infidelity from the very Being and Constitution of humane Nature.

§ V. But to advance one step farther : Either we suppose that the Apostles were endued with common Sense, and Discretion or that they were not. If they were. Then as we cannot suppose that Men possess with the natural Instinct of Self-love, so much less that Men endued with the least degree of Understanding would ruine themselves and their Families, would encounter all kinds of Hazards and Hardships, would endure Bonds and Imprisonments, would suffer Persecutions and Martyrdoms, and all for no other than meerly to win credit to a known Falshood. For still so it must be, if they were not really eye Witnessses of the Resurrection. Yes, but you will say they did it for the sake of their Master and their Religion. But then they either believed their Religion to be true, or false. If true, then it is true that they saw Jesus doe those Works that they related of him ; if false, then we are as we were, that Men of common Prudence should doe and suffer so much for nothing. And as for their Master, they were so far from being under any obligation to doe any thing for his Reputation, that they were concern'd more than any others to discover his Imposture. For when he had enticed them to forsake all and follow him, when he had flatter'd them with such magnificent hopes, when he had abused them into an opinion of his being no less than the Son of God and Saviour of the World, and when he had promised them to rise again from the dead, and then to vest them with wonderfull Power and Authority, when they found all this to be grossly false, it is very credible that they should after that think themselves obliged to endure the sharpest Tortures and even Death it self for the Reputation of such a vile and accursed Impostor.

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But beside this, how could Men of ordinary prudence undertake a Design so unlikely to succeed? For if Christ were not risen from the dead, how could they expect to gain credit to a Lye that might be so easily contradicted and confuted by exposing the Body to publick View? For if he were not risen, he was still detain'd in the Grave; and therefore when they presently divulged his Resurrection in the very place where he was crucified, the Jews were concern'd, as they would clear themselves from being guilty of the Blood of the Son of God, to discover the Imposture by exposing the Carcass. Which if they had done, that must have forever overthrown and confounded the Testimony of the Apostles; and if they could, but did not doe it, they too must be supposed as much bereft of common Understanding as the Apostles themselves.

And therefore seeing the Apostles cannot be supposed so fool-hardy as to vent a Lye, that was so easy to be confuted, and seeing the Jews were for very good reason obliged to doe it, and yet did it not, that is an evident Argument that they were not able to doe it; and that is a plain Demonstration that the Body was not to be found in the Grave. But if we suppose that the Disciples conveyed him away by Night, as the Jews ridiculously pretended to prove by the Testimony of sleeping (that is for that time absent or dead Witnesses) yet still I enquire to what purpose all these hazards for a Lye and an Impostor.

But beside that, how could they expect to succeed in so strange and bold an Enterprize? For to say nothing of the shamefull Cowardise, that they betrayed at their Masters apprehension, and so supposing that they might have had Courage to venture upon this Design, yet how was it possible that they could any way

way expect to come off without discovery? For that they could not hope for, unless they could first presume that all the Guard should fall asleep at the same time, and then that themselves should come at the very same moment; and lastly, that with all the noise which must be made by rowling away the Stone and removing the Corps, they should never awake so much as one of the Souldiers. So many strange and lucky Accidents as these no wise Men could ever promise themselves, and yet without them no wise Man could ever undertake the Design. So that if Men of common prudence could not be supposed to make such a wild and hazardous Attempt for no end, then it is evident that the Body was not conveyed away. And if it were not, then it is evident that Men of common prudence could never affirm its Resurrection, when they were so certain of being convicted of Forgery. But lastly, if they were Men of common prudence, how could they expect to gain belief to a Story that themselves knew to be false, and in it self next to incredible, purely by the Authority of their own bare and naked Relation? For what Story could be received with more difficulty, and examin'd with more severity than this of a Man so miraculously raised from the dead? Especially at that time, and in that place, *i. e.* of one that was but the other day ignominiously executed for Treason and Blasphemy. If they were not assured of some greater Assistance than barely the strength of their own Testimony, they must be worse than Madmen to go about to publish so incredible a Story with such a slender Authority. But if they knew it to be a meer Fiction of their own, and yet could expect to gain any belief to it onely by their bare Affirmation, that must exceed all degrees and examples of humane Madness.

Nay farther, they must not onely believe that the Apostles and first Witnessses of this strange thing were frantick and infatuated Persons, but also that a great part of Mankind both in that and the next following Ages were born without the usual Sense and Understanding of Men. For how else is it possible they should suffer themselves to be imposed upon with so prodigious a Tale onely upon the report of some foolish and frantick Fishermen?

We know very well that the belief of the Story was propagated with incredible swiftness through all parts of the habitable World, not onely without any assistance of Power and Wit, but against all sorts of Opposition, whether of Force, or Zeal, or Prejudice, or Interest, or Learning: And now that this should come to pass without any other Proof or Evidence than the meer Relation of a company of foolish or frantick People, is a thing so extravagant to suppose, as exceeds all the folly of humane Nature. And yet it is much more so, that they should work all ranks and conditions of Men, the learned as well as the unlearned, to that height of Infatuation, as not onely to win their serious belief to such a wild and proofless Fable, but to prevail upon them so prodigally to sacrifice their Lives and Fortunes in its justification. But of this I shall treat more distinctly in its proper place; this may suffice at this present upon this Argument as far as it concerns the Apostles and first Preachers of Christianity. That if they were not absolute Fools they had never undertaken it, if false; and if they were, they could never have proceeded with any success in it.

§ VI. But, lastly, We must either suppose the Apostles and first Witnessses of Christianity to have been

in good earnest, or not. If they were, then the truth of their Testimony is unquestionable. For the matter of Fact of which they pretended to have been Eye-witnesses was no Magick Story, or any thing capable of juggling Tricks and Illusions; but a plain and common Object of Sense, of which they had the same Assurance as we have or can have of any thing that we see or hear. And they had the same Evidence of our Saviour's Resurrection as we are capable of having of one another's Conversation. And what is more, they were jealous and incredulous, and suspected some Mistake or Illusion, and forced him to appeal to the Judgment and convince them by the Testimony of all their Senses.

And now 'tis likely when it was so impossible that they should be deceived themselves that they would take so much pains and endure so many Miseries to persuade the World to believe an impudent and an unprofitable Fable. Which if they did, then we must suppose that they were not in good earnest; and if they were not, then beside all the foremention'd Absurdities, this Supposition labours under one very enormous difficulty peculiar to it self, *viz.* that such profligate Cheats and Impostors should concern themselves with so much zeal as they did for the credit and propagation of Vertue and Goodness in the World.

For that it is the design of Christianity to promote and advance the practice of all true Morality, no Man, that understands what it is, can question; and if it be, then they could be no other than good Men that labour'd as the Apostles did in promoting of Christianity. But that, perhaps you will say, is a frequent Artifice for Men of the worst Designs to make the best Pretences. It is so, but then they must have some

some Design to carry on under their Pretences; whereas if the Apostles very Pretence were not their real Design, they had none at all. And that is the difficulty proper to this Supposition, that wicked Men, that were conscious to themselves of their own Wick- edness, should spend their Days and loose their Lives for the interest and advancement of Goodness with- out any design or advantage to themselves.

And therefore as from the former Premises we have sufficient reason to conclude the Integrity of the Men; and from the Integrity of the Men to prove the Divi- nity of their Master's Doctrine; so in this place does the Divinity of his Doctrine prove the Integrity of the Men. For as they pretended to have seen the Works, so to have heard the Sermons of Jesus, and were not less zealous to publish the one than the other to the World; nay, they divulged his Miracles onely for the sake of his Doctrines.

Now what was it that he taught and they recorded? Are they not the most perfect Rules of Vertue and Holiness that were ever delivered to Mankind? And as wonderfull as his Actions were, his Precepts were scarce less admirable: The Goodness of his Laws, if it does not outdoe, yet it equals the Greatness of his Miracles; and their own innate Excellency is one of the strongest Arguments of their Divinity. But of this I hope to give an Account in a Treatise by it self, in which I shall make it apparent that he has com- manded all the Laws of Nature and right Reason, that he has not omitted any Instance of moral Good- ness, and that no Law nor no Philosophy can so much as pretend to a Morality so wise, so good, so usefull.

And now if the truth of our Saviour's Doctrine and his Miracles rely upon the same Testimony, and the same Persons who report that he did such mighty

Works, record also that he taught such excellent Laws, and that he wrought those Works of God for a proof and confirmation of his Divine Authority; what can be more probable than that the same Persons should in the same Design be guilty of the greatest Vertue and greatest Villany in the World; and at the same time sacrifice their Lives and Fortunes to the Interest of Vertue and Holiness, and the Credit of Blasphemy and Imposture? For if those things that they report concerning the Miracles and Resurrection of our Saviour are not true, then was he as lewd and wretched an Impostor as ever appear'd in the World, in bearing out as if he were the Son of God and Saviour of the World; and they as bold, atheistical, and ungodly Wretches knowingly to abuse Mankind with such a palpable and blasphemous Cheat.

Is it not then likely that Men should doe and suffer after their rate for the propagation of an accursed Imposture, that were so infinitely zealous for the concernment of Truth and Integrity? How awkerdly do these things piece together? What strange Contradictions are reconciled in this odd Supposition? The same Men dye Martyrs to the worst Imposture and best Institution in the World! To lay down their Lives to gain credit to what themselves knew to be a notorious Lye, and yet dye to advance the credit of Uprightness and Integrity! 'Tis none of the most conceivable things in the World that so many plain and simple People should conspire together in the contrivance of so lewd a Forgery, and then seal the truth of the Fable with their Blood; but how does the Prodigy heighten; that such profligate Wretches should so easily foregoe their Lives rather than their Innocence and Integrity? So that it is plain that their zeal for the Interest of Truth and Goodness is a most undeniable



niable Demonstration of the faithfulness of their Testimony. And the more Men tumble and tofs their Thoughts about to raise jealousies and suspicions upon the Report, the more do they entangle themselves in Absurdities and Contradictions. But I shall prosecute this Argument no farther, because in truth, to say no more, he must be a very odly conceited Man, that can but perswade himself so much as to suspect that the Apostles were not in good earnest.

And now if we review these Circumstances of our Saviour's Story as it was told by the Apostles, 'tis favour'd with all the utmost advantages of Credibility. So that if it be possible to suppose it an Imposture, yet had it been the Truth of God, 'tis not to be supposed how it could have been vouch'd with stronger and more enforcing motives of Belief.

There is no Satisfaction that Mankind can reasonably desire, which God in his infinite Goodness and Wisdom has not given to the truth of the Christian Faith. All Scruples and Exceptions are so fortunately prevented that there is not any possible escape or pretence left for Infidelity.

For, first, We have all the Assurance in the World both of the Sufficiency and Sincerity of the Witnesses.

Of their Sufficiency, in that they were Eye-witnesses of his Miracles and Companions of his Conversation, and were themselves sufficiently suspicious and incredulous, and refused to be convinced till their distrustfull Minds were overborn by evidence of Fact.

Of their Sincerity, not onely from the agreement of so great a number of honest and upright Men in the same Report, but from their readiness to seal the truth of their Testimony with their Blood.

And

And what greater Assurances was it possible for them to have of the truth of their Testimony than to be Eye-witnesses of what they reported? And what greater Evidence is it possible for us to desire of the certainty of their Report, than they have given us of their Fidelity? So that here to withhold or deny our Assent, is first a direct affront to the Faith and Reason of Mankind, 'tis to give the Lye to all the World, and suppose none worthy of any Belief beside our selves. For unless we will distrust the truth of all manner of Testimony, and believe nothing but by the immediate information of our own Senses, there is no remedy but we must of necessity quit all degrees of diffidence and suspicion in this Affair.

Secondly, We must believe that Men endued with the first Principle of humane Nature, love of Life, should conspire to throw away their Lives onely to gain credit to an impudent Lye.

Thirdly, We must either believe that Men endued with the Principles of common Sense would lose their Lives for a ridiculous Fable, or that a company of Fools and Madmen could so easily perswade the World to believe such a wild Story meerly by virtue of their Report.

Lastly, We must believe that Men who made it their onely employment to advance Truth and Vertue in the World, should yet dye Martyrs to Falsehood and Villany; and that when they layed down their Lives for the sake of Jesus, they were not in good earnest.

Now laying all these things together, and onely supposing that there was at that time such a Person as Jesus of *Nazareth* in the World, I will appeal to the common Sense of Mankind, whether 'tis possible for any History or Report to come attested with more  
various,

various, more pregnant, more unquestionable motives of Credibility, than his Actions, particularly his Resurrection, as publisht to the World by his Apostles.

And thus having considered the evidence of their Testimony as given in by word of Mouth, I come in the next place to consider their Testimony as recorded in their Writings, and to shew into what wild Absurdities we must again run our selves, if we will not believe the truth of the Scripture-history.

§ VII. First then, We must believe either that the Gospels were written by those Persons, whose Names they bear, or that they were not. If they were, then we must believe that the things that they relate of their own knowledge were either true or false. If true, then we believe the truth of the Christian Faith. If false, then either for want of sufficient knowledge or sincerity. Not for want of knowledge, for two of the Evangelists, Saint *Matthew* and Saint *John* were immediate Disciples and constant Companions of the Person, whose History they wrote, and so were present at his Works and Miracles and Eye-witnesses of his Resurrection: Saint *Mark* and Saint *Luke*, if they were not Disciples during our Saviour's abode upon the Earth, they were intimate Associates with the chief Apostles that were: So that if they wrote not from their own immediate knowledge, yet however they wrote from the information of Eye-witnesses. And as for the Acts of the Apostles written by Saint *Luke*, Saint *Luke* himself was interested in the greatest part of, if not all the History. And so for the Epistles pretended to be written by the Apostles; either they were, or they were not; if they were, then their case is the same with that of the Gospel's, that

that they had sufficient knowledge of the things they wrote of.

So plain is it, that if those Persons wrote the Books of the New Testament, who go for their Authours, that we have no ground to suspect the truth and certainty of their Reports for want of sufficient knowledge and information.

And then as for their sincerity, the case of their writing is the same with that of their preaching, and so labours under all the foremention'd Difficulties, and one more peculiar to it self, *viz.* that when they had been so wicked as to contrive a wilfull Lye, and so foolish as to publish it to all the World, they should meet with no contradiction in so gross and manifest a Forgery. These things were written in a very short time after they were done, and therefore if they were false, it is not possible that they should escape discovery or obtain any the least belief.

For example, When Saint *Luke* reports that a Person born lame, and known to all the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem* by his having beg'd daily for many years at the chief Gate of the Temple was cured by Saint *Peter* onely with invocating the Name of Jesus; and that this Miracle was so very well known at *Jerusalem*, that it immediately converted no less than five thousand Persons to the Christian Faith: If all this had been a Fable, the meer publication of it had provoked thousands of People, nay the whole Nation of the Jews, and especially the Citizens of *Jerusalem* to discover the falsehood; and it could not but have met with so much Opposition as utterly and for ever to disgrace and destroy it self.

And so again, When Saint *Paul* tells the Corinthians that our Saviour after his Resurrection was seen not onely by the Apostles and himself, but by above

five hundred Persons at once, most of whom were then surviving: If this had been a Lye, it had been a very foolish and impudent one, and too bold for any Man to vent that was not lost not onely to all modesty but all discretion; and if any Man could have been so rash as to venture upon so lewd a falsehood, it is impossible that he could ever have escaped the shame of discovery: Especially when it was written to baffle some Fanatick Persons, who denied that there was any such thing as a Resurrection; for as all others would be eager to enquire into the truth of it for the satisfaction of their Curiosity, so would those Men especially be concern'd to examine it more strictly, if it were possible, to confute their Adversary. So that it is equally incredible that Saint *Paul* should be so weak as to vent so great a Lye that might be so easily contradicted, and that when he had vented it, he should be so lucky as to escape all manner of Contradiction from those who were concern'd to oppose him. For if he had been convicted of falsehood in it, all the Corinthians must immediately have turn'd back to their Infidelity; and therefore when we find the Christian Faith prevailing every where upon such appeals and challenges as these, that is an evident Demonstration of their undoubted truth and reality.

And this may suffice for the proof of the truth of Scripture-history, supposing the Books of it were written by those Persons whose Names they bear.

Though beside this, it is no inconsiderable proof of their Integrity, that *Eusebius* has observed in their impartial way of writing. Demonst. Evang. Lib. 3. Sect. 5.

Thus onely Saint *Matthew* himself of all the Evangelists takes notice of his own dishonourable Employment before his Conversion; and Saint *Mark* who

wrote his Gospel from the information of Saint *Peter*, is observably sparing in those things that might tend to the praise of that Apostle, and so could not with decent modesty be reported by himself; but more exact than any other of the Evangelists in the description of his shameful Fall.

Thus when Saint *Peter* had so frankly own'd our Saviour for the Messiah, Saint *Matthew* relates our Saviour's Answer with a high Commendation of him: *Blessed art thou Simon Bar Jona, for Flesh and Bloud hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church: and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven. Then charged he his Disciples that they should tell no Man that he was Jesus the Christ.* Whereas in Saint *Mark* all these magnificent Expressions of our Saviour to Saint *Peter* are modestly omitted, and all the Answer that is there made is no more than this: *And he charged them that they should tell no Man.*

And so again, though Saint *Mark* in all his other Relations is more compendious than any of the other Evangelists, yet in the Story of Saint *Peter*'s denial of his Saviour, he is most of all circumstantial. And whereas Saint *Matthew* and Saint *Luke* set off the greatness of his Repentance afterwards by saying that he wept bitterly, Saint *Mark* expresses it more modestly, onely that he wept. Now when Writers pass by such things as make for their own praise, and record their own Faults and Miscarriages, that without  
their

their own discovery might never have been known to Posterity, they are of all Men least to be suspected of falsehood, and give the strongest proof in the World of their love to Truth and Sincerity.

So again, granting that they would not stick at any falsehood to advance their Master's Honour and Reputation, yet to what purpose should they forge Lyes of his Disgraces and Sufferings, especially all those shamefull Circumstances that they have recorded of his Condemnation and Execution? Now if we believe them in the black and tragical part of the Story, why not in all? For if they onely design'd to set off their Master's Greatness, why do they so carefully acquaint the World with the History of his Misfortunes? Why do they tell us of his great Agony before his Passion, of his scourgings and Mockings, of his purple Robe, and reeden Scepter, of the Contumelies and Reproaches that were thrown at him whilst he was hanging on the Gibbet, of his being forsaken by all his Followers, of his being abjured by the most zealous of them all, and that without the application of Racks or Torments? These things if not true, to what purpose should they invent them? nay, if true, why should they not doe what they were able to stifle them, if the onely design of their Romance had been to gain Honour to their Master? So that if they were honest and faithfull in those sad Relations concerning him, why not in those that carry Triumph and Reputation in them? For if they had design'd to lye for his Glory, they must have baulk't every thing that might any way offend the Reader. And if they had design'd a Romance, instead of that plain Story that they have recorded to Posterity, they would have told us that *Judas* had no sooner given the treacherous Kiss, but he was turn'd into a Stone: that the

Hand that struck him, was immediately wither'd; that *Caiphas* and his Accusers were struck blind; that the Souldiers who supposed they had apprehended him, had onely seized a Phantasm, whilst he vanisht away; that his Judges were befoold in all their phantastick Procces against him, whilst he stood invisible among them despising their Mock-solemnity. In short, was it in all humane Accounts much more becoming the grandeur and dignity of that Person, that he pretended to be, that he should not have been obnoxious to the common Miseries and Calamities of humane Life, but that when by his Divine Power he had establisht his Kingdom in the World, he should have return'd back to Heaven without any suffering and with all the Ornaments of Glory and Triumph. This certainly had been much more proper matter for a Romance, if they had design'd nothing but their Master's Greatness, than to have fain'd those mixt Actions that are recorded of him in the Gospels, and those that would have believed their other Reports, would not have disbelieved these. And therefore seeing they would not corrupt or suppress the Truth in the unpleasant part of the Story, we have no ground to suspect them of the least falsehood in any other part of it, howsoever in it self strange and miraculous, when it is so evident that their design was real Truth and not their Master's Greatness.

§ VIII. But if we believe the Books of Scripture were not written by those Authours, whose Names they bear, then we must believe that either they were forged in their days or afterwards: If in their days, then they either own'd them as true, or not. If they vouch'd them, they gave them the same Authority as if they had been indited by themselves: If they



they disown'd them as containing Reports that they knew to be false, then they themselves were obliged to discover the Imposture; which having never done, that is an undeniable evidence that, if they were written in their time, either they themselves writ them or at least approved of them. But if they were written afterwards, how came they to meet with such an early and universal reception in the Christian Churches? We find them always own'd as the undoubted records of the Evangelists and Apostles in the most ancient Writers, that lived after them, nay, some with them. Now how is it possible that Books that contain in them matters so strange and wonderfull, if they had been counterfeit and spurious, and thrust upon the World after the death of those Persons whose names they pretend to bear, should command such a catholick and unquestionable reputation? If indeed they had pretended to have lain obscure for some time, and to have been afterwards retrieved, there might have been some ground of suspicion. But when they are own'd as the most ancient and undoubted records of the Church, when they are quoted as such by those Persons that lived next and immediately after them, and have passed from the very first Age through all Ages downward with an unquestionable Authority, there is no possible account to be given how they should first come by it, and then for ever after retain it, unless they were for certain the Works of those Men whose names they bear.

Thus particularly Saint *Matthew's* Gospel is quoted by *Clemens of Rome*, a Familiar of Saint *Paul*, by *Ignatius*, by *Policarp*, by *Papias* the Disciples of Saint *John*; not to mention *Justin Martyr*, *Athenagoras*, *Irenæus*, and all the other Writers of the Age next after the Apostles.

Now if this be so:

Then, first, Either this Gospel was written in the Apostles time, or it was not. If not how could it be cited by those that were their Contemporaries?

Secondly, The things reported in it were either true or false; if true, then so is the Gospel too; if false, then it had destroyed its own credit by publishing known fallhoods. For though it is easie to forge a Story acted in former times without discovery and contradiction, yet to make a Forgery of so wonderfull a transaction, as was the History of *Jesus of Nazareth*, so near the time, in which it was pretended to have been acted, and that without controll or contradiction, nay, with full credit and undoubted Authority, as appears by these Apostolical Mens unanimous Testimony, is, if any thing in the World, absurd and incredible enough to make up another Article of Infidelity.

Thirdly, Either this Book was written by Saint *Matthew*, or it was not. If it was, then it was the Testimony of an eye Witness, that conversed with our Saviour both before and after his Resurrection. If it was not, then how could it be thrust upon him in his own Age, and gain so unquestionable an Authority with those Men that conversed either with him or with his Companions? And now if we gain the Authority of this one Gospel, that alone is a sufficient proof of the Divine Authority of the Christian Faith; in that the main Foundations of it are here recorded, *viz.* The Life, Death and Resurrection of our Saviour, which being believed as they are here recorded, are an infallible demonstration of his Divinity.

The same account I might give of almost all the other Books of the New Testament, in that they were received from the beginning as the most unquestionable Records of the Apostles. But that were onely  
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to repeat the same Argument so many times over ; and therefore supposing the same ancient Testimony concerning them as we have concerning Saint *Matthew*, I shall leave the Reader to apply the same Argument that I have urged concerning him. Neither do I this onely to avoid needless Repetition, but because it has been often done by other hands, particularly by *Eusebius* of old, and *Huetius* of late, who have vouched every Book by it self from the Testimony of the earliest Antiquity. And therefore as for the truth of the matter of Fact I had rather refer to them than transcribe them, though that being supposed, the Argument is of the same force in every one as it is in Saint *Matthew's* Gospel.

§ IX. It is true that some few Books were for a good time doubted of, as the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, the Second of Saint *Peter*, the Second and Third of Saint *John*, and the *Apocalypse*.

But then, first, Suppose their Authority was still questionable, the Christian Faith can subsist very well without them, by the remaining Authority of those that were never questioned. And though they are very usefull and excellent Discourses, yet have they little peculiar in them that is not to be found in the other Apostolical Writings. And if we understand the matter aright, though they are written by Divine Inspiration, yet are they not of the Foundation of the Christian Faith, but onely pious Discourses proceeding upon the supposition of it. Being written occasionally, either to exhort us to an effectual belief of those things that are recorded in the Gospels, or to encourage us against Tryals and Persecutions, or to allay Schisms and Contentions, or to confute Errours and Heresies, or to reform Abuses and Corruptions; so  
that

that though they had never been written, the Foundations of our Faith were before firmly laid in the History of our Saviour's Life, Doctrine, Passion and Resurrection. And therefore the Authority of all the rest is at last resolved into that of the historical Books, that is, the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles; which being supposed true, they warrant both the Reason and Authority of the Apostolical Epistles, that onely deduce those proper and natural Conclusions that flow from their Premises.

Nay farther, 'tis not primarily necessary to Christianity to believe that the Books of the New Testament were dictated by an infallible Spirit, but it is sufficient that the historical Books are good and authentick Records of the Life of our Saviour and the design of his Errand into the World, and that the Writings of the Apostles are pious Discourses consonant with and conducing to the Ends of Christianity. The Foundation whereof seems to lie in this one thing, that Jesus Christ was sent into the World for the Work he pretended to come about by Divine Commission. For God, having set several Hypotheses of Providence on work in the World to bring all things to their end and perfection, at last design'd this as the most compleat model of all Vertue, Goodness and Morality. So that if the History of those things which Jesus both did and taught be truly recorded by the Evangelists, that is a sufficient evidence of his own Divine Authority. But as for his Historians, that comes in upon another score, in that we know that the Authors of all those Writings were inspired and directed by the Holy Ghost, but then that we know onely from the Writings themselves, and therefore their Truth must be supposed antecedent to their Divine Authority, and that being supposed our Saviour's Di-  
vine

vine Authority is thereby proved, and that being proved, that alone is a full demonstration of the Divinity of the Christian Religion.

But, secondly; If those few Books were so long debated before they were admitted into the Canon, that is an Argument of the great care and caution of the Church in its belief, in that it would not lightly receive any Book till it was fully satisfied of its being Authentick; and therefore its long doubtfulness and disputation about these Books, clears it from all suspicion of rashness and credulity as to those that she always own'd with a full and unanimous Approbation.

Thirdly, The Controversie concerning the disputed Books relates not so much to their Antiquity as their Authour, and they are not brought in question, because they were not written in the Apostolical Age, but because it seem'd uncertain by whom they were then written. Thus the Epistle to the *Hebrews* some attribute to Saint *Paul*, some to Saint *Luke*, some to *Barnabas*, some to *Clemens*; but if it were written by any of them, it is not much material, so it were written by some of them; and that it was so, is very evident from *Clemens* his Epistle, who has borrowed divers passages out of it word for word. And to the same purpose is the Controversie concerning the *Revelations*; all allowing it to have been of Apostolical Antiquity, onely some will have it to have been written by Saint *John* the Apostle, others by Saint *Mark* surnamed *John*, others by Saint *John* call'd the Elder; but whosoever it was that wrote it, it was written in the Apostolical Age, and that is enough. Though it is moreover sufficiently attested that Saint *John* the Apostle was the Authour of it, both by the Testimony of *Justin Martyr* and *Irenæus*, who lived very near the time of its writing.

Lastly, Those that were at first doubted of, were not afterwards rashly admitted into the Canon, but were admitted upon carefull enquiry, mature deliberation and unexceptionable Testimony. For as they were at first own'd by some, and disputed by others, this became a matter of debate in the Church; and that obliged them to make farther enquiry after the evidence of their Authority; and by that means the whole Church was at last satisfied of that, which at first onely a part of it was able to prove. And this might come to pass after this manner: the Apostles directed many of their Epistles to particular Churches, so that it is possible that some of them might be known to some Churches, and not to others; who therefore doubting of them put those who asserted them to have been true Apostolical Writings to prove their Assertion, and they it seems brought such evident proof of their Tradition, as gain'd the consent of the whole Church to their Authority. And this probably they did by producing the Originals written under the Apostles own hands, and reserved in the Archives of the several Churches; For that many such there were *Tertullian* informs us, even in his time, and to them refers the Men of his own Age for their full satisfaction.

§. X. And therefore it is but a very slender Witticism of Mr. *Hobbs* in derogation of the Authority of the holy Scripture, when he has acknowledg'd that the Writers of the New Testament lived all in less than an Age after Christ's Ascension, and had all of them seen our Saviour, or been his Disciples, except Saint *Paul* and Saint *Luke*; and consequently that whatsoever was written by them is as ancient as the time of the Apostles, yet were they made canonical Scripture onely by the Authority of the Church,

Church, that is, the Council of *Laodicea*, which first collected the Canon of the Scriptures, and recommended them to us as the Writings of those Apostles and Disciples under whose Names they go; hereby wittily intimating, or rather broadly asserting, that these Writings were not canonical Scripture till that Council, that is, till the year 364.

But, first, Supposing that it is not the Authour but the Authority of the Church that makes a Book Canonical, then were the Books of the New Testament made so long before the Council of *Laodicea*, in that we find them enumerated in the Apostolical Canons, which though they were not compil'd by *Clement*, as was vulgarly supposed, yet were they the Decrees of Councils in the first and second Ages succeeding the Apostles. So that upon this account they were stamp'd Canonical almost as soon as they were written.

Secondly, The Testimony of the Church neither is nor can be any more than a proof or an argument of the Original and Divine Authority of the canonical Books, as any other Testimony is or may be. Thus when we cite *Clement of Rome*, *Ignatius*, *Policarp*, *Justin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, yes and *Celsus* himself, that lived either in or near the Apostles times, as giving in Testimony to their Writings, no Man can, without very wilfull impertinence, thence infer that it is they that give the Books their Divine Authority; when it is so evident that they are onely made use of as competent Witnesses to attest that they were no forged Writings, but were pen'd by those very Persons under whose Names they go; and if they are, then they themselves make good their own Authority. For Authority is nothing else but the right or power of binding our Assent, which unless it be done by the Authour himself, it is impos-

sible to be done by any other; and all the Councils in the World can never give Divine Authority to any Book, if it had it not before. All their Office is to bear testimony to their Authenticalness, and it is no inconsiderable Evidence of it when so many grave and learned Men of the first Ages of Christianity, upon mature deliberation of the whole matter in Council, declare that upon the strictest enquiry they are fully satisfied that those Books were written by those very Authours whose Names they bear. But from hence to infer, as the *Leviathan* does, that their canonical Authority, that is, their being the Law of God, depends entirely upon the Decree of the Church, as if it could give or take it away at pleasure, onely becomes Mr. *Hobbs's* Logick and Modesty; and them it becomes equally, for it is very hard to determine whether the Conclusion be more impudent or more impertinent.

§ XI. And now beside this direct demonstrative proof of the Apostolical Antiquity and Authority of the holy Scriptures, which alone is a full demonstration of the Divinity of the Christian Institution, there is another more remote way of proving the truth of the History, insisted upon by learned Men, that is, by the concurrent Testimony of foreign Writers, Jews or Heathens, who lived in or about the same time; but this Evidence is so weak in comparison of that which I have already produced, that I shall not prosecute it as an Argument in my Cause, but rather consider it as an Objection against it: *viz.* That if the History of our Saviour were so known and notorious as is pretended, how comes it to pass that so little notice is taken of it by any Authours but onely such as were his own Disciples? There were many  
other



other excellent Writers, especially Historians, about that time, so that if his Actions had been so great and remarkable as his Disciples tell us they were, it is scarce credible that they should pass him over with so slender a regard, and scarce any mention of him.

In answer to this I shall, in the sequel of this Discourse, give a satisfactory and rational account of the Infidelity both of Jews and Heathens, notwithstanding Christianity brought along with it all that Evidence that we pretend it did. But beside this, I shall here shew that the best Writers of that time concur with, and so confirm the main strokes of our Saviour's History, and by consequence all the rest that is interwoven with them; especially when what they write is purely to deliver matter of Fact without any design to serve the cause of Christianity. For when all things in the Gospel, that other Historians are concern'd to record as well as the Christians, are exactly true, that is at least a very fair probability that the Christian Writers were faithfull in those other Relations that are peculiar to their own History. And this is all that can be expected from foreign Testimony; for if such Writers had been exact in the Records of our Saviour's Actions, they had then been Christians, and not Jews or Heathens: Supposing them therefore, as they were, no Friends to Christianity, they have given in all that suffrage to it that can be reasonably demanded from them.

And now as for the proof hereof it had been much more easie than it is, had it not been for the pride and vanity of some of our modern Criticks, who care very little what becomes of the truth or falshood of things, so they can shew their censuring Faculty upon words; and particularly they have in this case set themselves with their utmost critical Severity to disparage

parage or destroy the most eminent Testimonies, cited by the Ancients out of foreign Writers, in behalf of Christianity. *Scaliger*, the Father of them all led the Dance, upon what motive I cannot imagine, unless it were out of Envy to the Fame and Glory of *Eusebius*, against whom he particularly set himself and his endeavours; but however the design looking like a Novelty, and carrying in it an ostentation of Learning, for that reason alone he could not want a great number of Followers among that sort of Men. But to what little purpose they have spent all their pains and peevishness I now come to represent.

And here, first, *Josephus* the Jew, who was contemporary with the Apostles, agrees all along with the Evangelists in the History of that time. He gives the same account and description of *John* the Baptist as we read in the Gospels. He gives us the same narration of *Herod* the Tetrarch, and particularly of his marrying his Brother's Wife. He mentions the Tax of *Cyrenius*. He records the Acts of the several Governours of *Judæa*, *Pontius Pilate*, *Felix* and *Portius Festus*, and describes the succession of the several High-priests, *Caiaphas*, *John* and *Alexander*, the death of *Herod Agrippa*, and of Saint *James* the Brother of our Lord; nay, he gives not onely a just History but an high Character of our Lord himself. All which our learned Men are willing enough to pass as certain and warrantable History, excepting onely that passage concerning our Saviour. Onely there is one difficulty in the Tax of *Cyrenius*, which Saint *Luke* says was about the time of our Saviour's Nativity, but *Josephus* not till after the Banishment of *Archelaus*, which hapned at least nine years after the Death of *Herod*; so that which way to reconcile this difference learned Men have been much puzzled, and  
towards

towards its solution have started variety of Conjectures. And therefore, though it is of no very great concernment, I shall give some account of it before I proceed to the Testimony concerning Jesus.

§ XII. And first of all *Baronius* tells us plainly that *Josephus* is mistaken, but then this is to cut the Knot, not to untie it, for our business is to reconcile him and the sacred History; but if we utterly reject him, instead of answering the Objection we grant it, *viz.* that there are irreconcilable differences between him and the Evangelists. Though here I cannot but wonder at the unusual disingenuity of *Casaubon*, who, whereas *Baronius* affirms that *Josephus* does in many things of Chronology contradict *Saint Luke*, and therefore if we must stand to his Authority, that will enforce us to reject the Evangelist; he, I say, inveighs and declaims upon this as if it were *Baronius* his Assertion and not his Argument, and rates him severely as if he had positively affirm'd that the Testimony of *Josephus* was sufficient to oblige us to quit that of the Evangelist. Whereas he onely makes use of it as a forcible Objection against appealing to *Josephus* in any matters wherein he contradicts the Scriptures, for in such cases, says he, we cannot admit him without rejecting them. Now, I say, from hence to infer that *Baronius* affirm'd that we were obliged so to doe became not the ingenuity of a learned Man. But the truth of it is (to observe once for all) *Casaubon* was little less partial towards one Extreme than *Baronius* towards the other. For as it was the custom of that learned *Cardinal* and the Writers of the Church of *Rome* to rake together every thing that might serve their Cause, embracing the forged and  
spurious

*Appar.*  
n. 82, &c.

*Exerc. I.*  
n. 28.

spurious as well as the true and undoubted records of Antiquity. So *Casaubon* and the learned Men of his way have been as diligent to weaken the Authority of all the most ancient and most authentick Writers; so that there is not the least slip in any of the Ancients that they have not observed in their critical Notes upon them, and beside that they reject whole Books of the best and earliest Antiquity. But by this means they have between them both done this great service to the Christian Church, that as they have discover'd the fraud of supposititious Books, so they have confirm'd the Authority of the true and genuine. And it is by occasion of their disputes that we are come to a certain knowledge of all the sincere records of Antiquity. So that at last the Epistles of *Ignatius* and the Apostolical Canons that have been most of all oppos'd, have, by those great endeavours that have been employed to destroy their Authority, gain'd and will for ever keep as undoubted a credit as the most unquestion'd pieces of *Justin Martyr* or *Irenæus*.

*V. Scal. in*  
*Euseb. Chron.*  
*p. 174.*  
*Grot. in Luc.*  
*c. 2. v. 2.*  
*Casaub. Exerc. 1.*  
*n. 28, 29, 30, 31,*  
*32.*

The next guess is that of *Beza*, which is followed and variously improv'd by *Scaliger*, *Casaubon*, *Grotius*, and others, viz. That *Cyrenius* was employ'd by *Augustus* to take two several Musters of the People, one with a Tax, and the other without it, and that was it that was made at the time of our

Saviour's Birth. For *Augustus* designing that compendious Account of the Roman Empire, which Historians so often speak of, and which he left as a guide and direction to his Successors in the Empire, sent several Officers through the several Provinces to take an exact account of the number and condition of the Inhabitants; and for this purpose though *Quintilius*  
*Varus*

*Varus* were then Prefect of *Syria*, *Cyrenius* was join'd in Commission with him, as a Person that was, by reason of his residence in *Syria* and his Wars in *Cilicia*, exactly acquainted with the Affairs of the East; as afterwards he was sent with *C. Cæsar* on the same Errand; and when *Judæa* was reduced into the form of a Province after the Banishment of *Archelaus*, and the first Tax to be imposed immediately by the Romans upon the People, he was particularly singled out as the Person most able to manage it. So that it is not unlikely that he might be employed in this business, though not himself, but *Quintilius Varus* was then Prefect of *Syria*. And if this be so, then this difficulty is cleared, in that there were two Musters of the People, both made by *Cyrenius*, one under the Government of *Quintilius Varus* without any taxing; the other, some years after, under his own Government with a severe Tribute; which made great tumults and commotions among the People, and occasion'd the sedition of *Theudas Gaulonites*; and this is the onely Tax or Census that is mention'd by *Josephus*, as containing in it something remarkable to the History of his Country; whereas the other is wholly passed over in silence by him, in that it contain'd nothing memorable as to that, but was transacted meerly for the Emperour's own private use and information. And this conjecture of a twofold Muster is not a little favour'd by Saint *Luke* himself, who says that this taxing was first made when *Cyrenius* was Governour of *Syria*, whereas it ought to have been rendred this first taxing was made, &c. which implies that there was a second, otherwise that could never have been called the first.

But, first, This is no more than a meer conjecture without any ground of Story, for that *Quirinius* was

employed in any Tax before the death of *Herod*, there are no footsteps in the Roman History; so that if the guess be true yet it is altogether precarious, and invented meerly to solve a difficulty that was not otherwise to be avoided.

And then as for the little Criticism that this was the first Tax made when *Cyrenius* was Governour of *Syria*, though it may be so interpreted, yet the interpretation is as natural and more common, that this Tax was first made when *Cyrenius* was Governour; and if so, the Text of Saint *Luke* gives not the least favour to the conjecture of a double Tax.

But, in the last place, Supposing that *Quirinius* was sent into *Syria* in the time of *Quintilius Varus* for the management of the Tax, yet this will not piece with Saint *Luke's* story, who expressly affirms that this Tax was made when *Cyrenius* was Governour of *Syria*; now it is very odd if *Quintilius Varus* were (as it is certain he was) then Governour of *Syria*, that another Person that then acted under him onely by virtue of an extraordinary Commission should be styled by the Title of Governour. And though *Casaubon* bestir himself to prove that this Title was given to others that were onely extraordinary Commissioners and not standing Presidents of Provinces, yet it is very plain that this was onely done when there was no President resident before their coming, and they were commissioned with as full power for the time as if they had been ordinary Prefects. But that when there was a settled Governour any extraordinary Commissioner should be honour'd with that Title is a case without Precedent.

Thirdly, Others conjecture, and that much more probably and to much more purpose, that *Augustus Cæsar* designing to tax

to tax the whole Empire, did in the first place take an account of the number of Persons in each Province, thereby the better to direct himself for the equal levying and proportioning the several divisions of the whole Tax. Now a work so great must be a work of no small time; so that though he might begin the Muster at the time of our Saviour's Nativity, yet he might not finish the Tax till the Prefectship of *Cyrenius*. And he being then Prefect when the Tax was actually gather'd, both the Tax it self and all that was done in order to it, might reasonably enough be attributed to the time of his Government.

But the most probable and natural Conjecture of all is that which was first started by *Ludovicus Capellus*, and has since been more largely prosecuted by *Huetius*; that there has been some mistake in the Transcriber writing *Κυρήνι* for *Κυιντίλι*, a mistake very easie to be made, the difference between the names being very small; but when once made, much more easie to be continued; in that the Tax of *Cyrenius* was so very famous, it being the first that was immediately imposed by the Romans themselves upon the Jews after they were reduced into the form of a Province; and therefore when Saint *Luke* calls the Muster at our Saviour's Birth the First Tax, it was very obvious for the Transcribers, that came after, to mistake it for the Tax of *Cyrenius*, that being commonly call'd *The Tax*, and so we find *Gamaliel* expressing it, *Act. 5. 37. In the days of the Taxing.* And now this small mistake of a Letter or two, that might be so easily run into, being supposed, it clears the whole matter; in that it is certain that *Quintilius Varus* was President of *Syria* at the time of our Saviour's Nativity, his name therefore being onely restored

*Hist. Jud.*  
*comp. p. 107.*  
*Demonst. Ev.*  
*p. 391.*

instead of that of *Cyrenius*, the whole History runs clear.

And indeed the exact Agreement of both Histories in all particulars saving this one circumstance is no small ground for the conjecture that there must have been some such mistake. And such literal mistakes as these are unavoidable to all the Books in the World, and if it have hapned here, the circumstances of things themselves direct us to the true Reading. For when we are certain, as we are, that *Quintilius* was then President, it is easie and rational to conclude that *Quirinius* was put in afterwards in his stead, because of that famous Tax that was vulgarly call'd by his name. And it is not a little countenance that is given to this Conjecture by *Tertullian*, who affirms that this Census or Muster of *Augustus* was made under the Prefectship of *Sentius Saturninus*; and for the proof both of that and of the time and place of our Saviour's Nativity, he often refers to the Register it self in the Roman Archives, and this was not onely extant in his time, but in Saint *Chrysoptom's*, who refers to it, as we might do to a Parish Register.

Now though the Census of the Eastern part of the Empire was begun under *Saturninus*, as *Tertullian* observes out of the Roman Tables; and he being in a small time removed from his Office, as we know he was, and succeeded by *Quintilius Varus*, the Successour went on in the work where the Predecessour ended. So that the work, as it was managed in *Judæa*, fell out in the time of *Quintilius Varus*, in the time of whose Presidentship our Saviour was born. Which is so much the more likely, because *Saturninus* residing in *Syria* would first finish the design near home, before he would undertake to go about it in remoter parts; especially in *Judæa* that was then under the

Kingly



Kingly Government of *Herod*, and so was onely muster'd in order to the settlement of the future state of the Empire. So that though this Census were begun under *Saturninus*, and so according to custom enter'd under his name in the Roman Register, as *Tertullian* assures us it was, it is certain that the greatest part of it was taken under the Government of *Quintilius*.

Now though this be no very material circumstance, and though the mistake I have suggested be so very easie, and though there might be an hundred other ways of solving it, that we cannot know at this distance, yet I could not lightly pass it over, because it is the onely material difference between *Josephus* and the Holy Scriptures. For though he passes by some remarkable things that are there recorded, yet in all other cases, where he happens upon the same thing, he makes the same Narration. For the onely place beside in which he may seem to differ, is in the Death of *Herod Agrippa*, which he says hapned at the appearance of an Owl, but Saint *Luke* by the invisible stroke of an Angel. And that an Owl might then by chance appear is possible, but that the meer sight of it should affect him after such a wonderfull manner is not credible, notwithstanding a German Soothfayer had foretold that it should be the certain Omen of his Death. That indeed might not a little disturb his Fancy, but it could not naturally in a moment putrifie his Bowels into worms and rottenness. But it is too manifest that *Josephus*, through the whole course of his History, too much endeavour'd to imitate the Greek and Roman Historians, whose constant custom it was to ascribe all extraordinary Calamities to some portentous Omen. Otherwise it is not conceivable that so strange and unheard of a misery should all on a sudden seise upon a Man in the height of all his Glory,  
and

and in the very act of so great a Blasphemy, without some miraculous and invisible Power. So that there is scarce a greater Instance upon Record of an immediate Divine Infliction than in the miserable Death of this prophane Man.

And thus having cleared the Parallelism between *Josephus* and the Evangelists, as to the most material passages of the Histories of their own times, I now proceed to that particular passage of his concerning our blessed Saviour: which is so full a Testimony of the Truth of the Gospel History, that our learned Criticks think it too great for a Jew to give, and for that reason principally suppose it to have been foisted into him in after-times.

§ XIII. But upon what just grounds this surmise is built let us now consider, and first let us set down the passage it self, which is to this purport:

“ At this time lived *Jesus* a wise Man, if yet it be  
 “ lawfull to call him a Man; for he wrought many  
 “ wonderfull Works, and instructed such as were wil-  
 “ ling to entertain the Truth, and drew after him great  
 “ numbers both of Jews and Gentiles. This was Christ,  
 “ who being accused, by the Princes of our Nation be-  
 “ fore *Pilate*, and afterwards condemn'd to the Cross  
 “ by him, yet did not those who followed him from  
 “ the beginning, cease to love him for the ignominy  
 “ of his Death. For he appear'd unto them the third  
 “ day after, as the Divine Prophets had foretold the  
 “ same, and divers other wonderfull things of him,  
 “ and to this day the race of Christians, as they are  
 “ call'd after his name, continue.

And now here, first, It is excellently observed by *Huetius* that it is very strange that so diligent a Writer as *Josephus* should never make the least mention  
 of the

of the History of so famous a Person as *Jesus* of *Nazareth*, for if he has not done it here, he has done it no where. And yet whatever he was, it is certain that under the Government of *Pontius Pilate* there was such a Man that pretended to be the *Messias*, that drew great numbers of Disciples after him, that instituted a new Sect of Religion, that occasion'd great commotions in *Judæa*, that was reported to have taught such peculiar Doctrines, and to have done so many and so great Miracles.

And now after all this how is it credible that *Josephus* should never hear of so remarkable a Person, or not think him worthy so much as to be taken notice of in his History? For whatever Opinion he had of him, whether good or bad, it is not to be supposed that he could wholly omit to mention him in the History of that time, especially when he has not omitted any of the false Pretenders to the *Messiahship*; so that though he had thought him an Impostor, he could not have wholly baulk't some mention of his History. Nay, when he gives so exact a description of *John* the Baptist, and of Saint *James*, whom to make the better known he describes by being *the Brother of Jesus, who is call'd the Christ*, how is it possible that he should never give any account of *Christ* himself? So that how much soever it may appear incredible that *Josephus* should make any honourable mention of him, it is much more so that he should make none at all.

And now when after this we come to weigh the Objections against this Testimony, that have made so much noise and talk of late in the World, they are so very trifling as scarce to deserve (I am sure not to need) any Answer. For beside some Grammatical Observations, in which the Criticks exercise an arbitrary

trary Power, and from which they make what determinations they please, some for the Affirmative and some for the Negative: the whole force of the Objection is resolved into this one Principle, that *Josephus* in this Paragraph spoke his own sense, and wrote not as an Historian but as a Confessour; whereas it is evident from his own story that he was a Man of no very settled Principles, according to the humour of the Age and of the Place that he lived in, and so was no otherway concern'd in any Controversie than barely to deliver matter of Fact. So that whereas he seems to assert that Jesus was the Christ, they might as rationally conclude that *Pontius Pilate* believed him to be so too when he crucified him, because he put this Title upon his Cross, *Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews*; and when he was solicited by the chief Priests not to write the King of the Jews, but that he said I am the King of the Jews, he would not yield to their importunity, but answer'd them peremptorily, *What I have written I have written.* From hence, I say, our learned Criticks might after their rate of drawing conclusions infer that *Pontius Pilate* seriously believed him to be the King of the Jews, that is, the Messias. Whereas it is evident in it self that he onely used the common form of speech, when he gave him that Title which he pretended to: And of the same nature is that expression of *Josephus*, when he says, *Ὁ Χριστός ἔτος ἦν*, *This was the Christ*, that is, this was he that was call'd the Christ, a Title so appropriated to him in common speech, that it was familiarly given to him by his greatest Enemies. And therefore we do not make use of this Testimony of *Josephus*, as if we design'd to gain any credit or authority from his Opinion, but onely to prove from it that there was such a transaction then on foot, and that there was a

party

party of Men in the World at that time who attested the truth of all those things that were reported concerning Jesus; and if they did so, we have in the Premises sufficiently proved the validity of their Testimony. And that is all the use that we can pretend to make of these foreign Witnesses, to evidence that there was such Testimony then given, and if there was, then its being given in such circumstances as it was, is more than enough to maintain it self without their farther assistance.

Now this being premised in vain does *Tanaquil Faber* insist upon it that the most zealous Christian could not speak more magnificently of Christ than this unbelieving Jew. For what wonder is that, when the unbelieving Jew onely reports the sense of the zealous Christian? In vain does he urge that *Josephus* was of the Sect of the Pharisees, which Sect of all others bore most spleen and hatred to our Saviour. For of what Sect soever he was, he was far from being any of the greatest Zealots, and as far from being a serious Jew as a good Christian, how else could he have been so prophane as to apply all the Prophecies of the Old Testament, concerning the Messias, to the Person of *Vespasian*, an Heathen and an Idolater? But beside this our Authour forgets himself in objecting *Josephus* his being a Pharisee, when a little after he informs us out of *Josephus* himself, that he had passed through all the Sects of the Jews, and had at last enter'd himself into the Discipline of *Banus*, a Disciple and Successour of *John* the Baptist. And it is no wonder that a Disciple of that Institution should speak favourably of Jesus; so that if we should suppose him in good earnest in his Character of our Saviour, it would be no very hard supposition: but that he should describe him by those

Titles that his own Disciples gave him, he could not avoid it, of what Sect soever he were, as he would quit himself like a faithfull Historian. And though, after his entring himself into the Discipline of *Banus*, he join'd, as himself informs us, with the Sect of the Pharisees, yet that was onely in outward shew and upon a political account; they being then the most powerfull Party among the Jews, so that by their assistance he first prefer'd himself to publick Employment, and at last obtain'd the Government of all *Galilee*, which he was so far from ruling like a Jewish Zealot, that in all things he behaved himself like a Roman Gentleman, and the main thing objected to him by his Enemies was his indifferency and unconcernedness as to the Ceremonies of their Religion.

Again, in vain does our learned Critick aggravate that *Jesephus* should give our Saviour the Title of God, when that is more than the Jews themselves believed of their Messias. For it is evident that he onely uses a very common and almost proverbial form of speech, nothing being more frequent with the Greek and Latin Writers (whose schemes of speech *Jesephus* every where endeavours to imitate) than to give the Title of Gods to all Great and extraordinary Persons; so that when *Jesephus* gives our Saviour this Title, it is the same thing as if he had styl'd him Hero, or something that though a Man, yet by his miraculous works seem'd greater than a Man.

Lastly, in vain does he urge that if *Jesephus* had believed our Saviour to be the Messias, he would have explain'd to the Greeks, for whose sake he wrote in their Language, what was the Nature and the Office of the Messias. So probably he would if he had been an Apostle, and designed to convert the World to Christianity, but when he writes of him onely as an  
Historian,

Historian, what concernment had he upon that occasion to run into so great a digression? He told the plain Story as he had it from the Disciples of Jesus, and left it to the Reader to judge of its truth or falsehood.

But still our Critick is much more severe in his next Injunction, when he requires of the Historian, that if he believed Jesus to be the Messias, to have given an account of *John* the Baptist's being his Fore-runner. For whether he believed it or not, I cannot see what reason or obligation he had for so doing, unless it is not possible to give a compendious Character of a Person without setting down every particular circumstance of his Life and Actions.

But now our learned Authour advances from his Arguments to his Authorities.

And first of all *Origen* expressly asserts that *Josephus* did not believe Jesus to be the Christ. And I know no body that affirms he did; but yet could he not give him that Title that was so familiarly given him, unless too he asserted the justice of the Title? All that he affirms, is onely that this was the Man that was at that time call'd the Christ, though he happens to express it by saying *this was the Christ*, a very common form of speech among the Greeks to put *ἦν* for *δ λεγόμενον*, was for was called. And if so, I hope an Historian might relate the Opinion that was had of him without declaring his own.

In the next place, *Justin Martyr* and *Tertullian* (says our Authour) wrote against the Jews, and if this passage had been extant in *Josephus* in their times, it is scarce credible that they should altogether overlook so remarkable a Testimony. This is the hard condition that our Criticks have of late put upon all Authours, to quote all that ever they read, and to think of every

thing that is pertinent to their Cause; but this seems too severe an imposition upon the memories of Mankind. And yet supposing these Fathers were not ignorant of this passage of *Josephus*, to what purpose should they have alledged it? when it is their evident design to dispute against the Jews purely out of the writings of the Prophets, and by them alone to prove *Jesus* to be the Christ. And if so, what does the Testimony of *Josephus* signifie to confirm the truth of that which they had already proved by the Testimony of God himself? So that these Authours were so far from being obliged by their Cause to hale in this passage, that they could not but have brought it in very impertinently. In short, it is enough that in those Writings they appeal onely to Divine Authority, and then it is no particular neglect of *Josephus*, if he be pass'd by as well as all other Authours of his rank and condition.

And thus have I given a full and exact account of all those weighty Objections that have been levied against this passage of *Josephus*, and so leave it to all wise Men to judge whether our learned Criticks might not have better employed themselves than to raise so much noise against it to so little purpose.

And now having dispatch't this great Testimony of *Josephus*, I might add to him *Suetonius*, *Tacitus*, the younger *Pliny*, *Seneca*, who give us the same relation of the great pretences of *Jesus*, and the greater prevalency of his Religion. But their Testimonies have been so often recited, and are so vulgarly known, that it were labour in vain to give my self or the Reader the trouble of their Repetition. Especially when they prove no more than what no Man can doubt of, *viz.* That there was at that time such a Man as *Jesus* of *Nazareth*, and that in a short time he drew great numbers



numbers of Disciples after him. The first is certainly past question, and the second is as evident meerly from the History of *Nero's* Reign, under whom what vast multitudes of Christians suffer'd both Civil and Ecclesiastical. Historians unanimously agree. And therefore I shall pass over these more general Records, and onely suggest two or three particular Narrations that relate not onely to the existence of our Saviour's Person, but to the veracity of his Pretences.

§ XIV. The first is that known History of *Pblegon*, Gentleman to the Emperour *Adrian*, in his general History of the Olympiads, concerning both the Eclipse of the Sun and the Earthquake at our Saviour's Passion. And it is a Testimony so exactly agreeing with the Evangelical History both as to the year and the very hour of the day, and the most material circumstances of the thing, that had it not been for the vanity of Criticks, it could never have met with dispute or opposition. But those Men will not stick to move the Earth from its Centre, rather than loose the honour of being the Father of one Criticism; otherwise certainly this passage, so confidently appeal'd to by the Writers of the Christian Church, as agreeing with the publick Records of the Empire, together with that of *Thallus* another Heathen, cited by that accurate Chronologer *Africanus*, could not but have escaped their censuring severity. And yet it must come under their lash, because (say they) *Pblegon* speaks of it as a natural Eclipse. But this they say out of their own heads; for he onely records the matter of Fact, but whether it were natural or præternatural concerns not him either as a Courtier or an Historian. And though it is demonstrable that if it hapned at that time,

V. Huet. Prop. 3.  
Sect. 8. Grot. in  
Luc. c. 27. v. 45.

time that he says it did, it was præternatural, and though himself expressly affirms that it was such an Eclipse that never the like hapned; yet waving all this, it is enough that he affirms that such an Eclipse hapned at the same time even to the very hour of the day; and so it is rationally urged by *Apol. c. 21. Tertullian, Eodem momento dies medium Orbem signante Sole subducta est, deliquium putaverunt, qui id quoque super Christum prædicatum non scierunt, & tamen eum Mundi casum relatum in Archivis vestris habetis.* “At the very moment of our Saviour’s Crucifixion the Sun was darkned at mid-day, “and though they supposed it onely an Eclipse, that “knew nothing of its relation to the Passion of Christ, “yet this strange accident, be it what it will, you may “find registred in your publick Records. And if that be true, it is all that can be desired in this case from an heathen Historian to vouch the truth of the Story. And yet this is more, for if it be true, it is from thence evident that this Eclipse was miraculous and præternatural, in that it hapned at the full of the Moon.

§ XV. The next heathen Testimony is of an higher nature, and relates more immediately to the Divinity of our Saviour; and that is the Opinion of *Tiberius* concerning him, upon that Account and Narrative that he had received of his Life, Death and Resurrection out of *Palestine*, and that from *Apol. c. 5. Pilate* himself. Thus *Tertullian* tells the Governours of *Rome* in his Apology, that *Tiberius*, in whose time the Christian Religion came into the World, having received an account out of *Palestine* in *Syria* concerning the truth of that Divinity that was there revealed, brought it to the Senate with the Prerogative of his own Vote, but

but that it was rejected by the Senate, either because themselves had not in the first place according to form of Law approved of it, or rather out of flattery to the Emperour, because himself had refused that honour when offer'd to him by the Senate; for the words, *quia non ipse probaverat*, are capable of either sense; but though they denied this Title to our Saviour, upon what account soever, whether of State or of Courtship, our Authour tells us expressly that the Emperour himself continued of the same mind.

Now though *Tertullian* be a Christian Writer, yet he durst never have presumed to impose upon the Senate themselves with such a remarkable Story as this, if he were not able to prove it, and that he was is evident from *Justin Martyr*, who often *Apol. 2.* appeals to the Acts of *Pilate* concerning the History of our Saviour, and requests the Emperours to satisfie themselves from their own Records concerning those things that were reported of him. For it is a known Custom among the Romans, for the Governours of Provinces to transmit an account of the most remarkable things that hapned under their Government to the Senate of old time, and of later times to the Emperour. And that *Pilate* had done so is evident from this Appeal of *Justin Martyr*; for if there had been no such Acts, scarce any Man, much less such a Man as *Justin Martyr* could have been so foolish or so confident as to affirm a thing, in which it was so very easie to convict him of falshood. And if such Acts there were they are a great Evidence of the truth of our Saviour's Miracles, when the Emperour, that was none of the best Men nor very apt to listen to such Stories, was so surpris'd with the strangeness of them, and that upon no less information than of *Pilate* himself; and when *Pilate*, upon a more full enquiry than

than it seems he was able or willing to make concerning the Works of Jesus at his Condemnation, was so abundantly satisfied as to the truth of those strange things that were related of him, as to think himself obliged to acquaint his Master with a Story so strange and wonderfull.

But here *Isaac Casaubon* endeavours to shrivle and criticise these Acts of *Pilate* into as little Authority as possibly he can, and tells us that *Justin Martyr* does not call them the Acts of *Pontius Pilate*, but the Acts under *Pontius Pilate*. Though it is an undoubted thing that the Acts under *Pilate* reserved in the Imperial Archives were the Acts of *Pilate*, that is, they were compiled either by himself or by his command, but transmitted by himself, for the Emperours received no other Acts but from the Governours themselves; and therefore the learned Man might have spared his Grammatical Criticism, when it is certain from the thing it self that the publick Acts under the Government of *Pontius Pilate*, must be transmitted by *Pilate* himself, and so must be the Acts of *Pilate*.

Now that *Pilate* should give such an Account after our Saviour's Resurrection; cannot seem strange if we consider his circumstances. For setting aside the Relation of the Evangelists concerning him, that he would if possible have rescued our Saviour from the fury of the Priests and the tumult of the People; that he was satisfied of his Innocence, as he declared upon the Bench; that he gave Sentence upon him, I will not say against his Conscience (for being an Atheist he had none) but against his own Judgment and Opinion. I say, setting aside all this that hapned before the Passion, the truth of our Saviour's Resurrection proved it self upon him by so many lucky circumstances of  
the

the thing it self, that it could not but perplex his Mind which way to avoid its Evidence. For he was certain that Jesus was Crucified, Dead and Buried, that the Sepulchre was sealed with a great Stone and guarded with a Watch, and yet in a very short time after, it was preached up and down publickly by his Disciples that he was risen from the dead.

Now whether *Pilate* himself were upon this so curious or so concern'd as to search the Sepulchre it is certain the Body was gone, otherwise it would have been produced and publickly exposed by the Jews to disprove the immediate report of his Resurrection. So that there could remain no other imaginable pretence against its Truth but the idle Tale of the Soldiers, that his Disciples came by night and stole him away, whilst they slept. This was an admirable contrivance, and worthy the sage wisdom of the great Sanhedrin, to appeal to the Testimony of such Persons, that could not tell their story without contradicting and defeating their own Evidence! For were they not doubtly Witnesses of a thing that was done whilst they were fast asleep? Questionless our Governour was wonderfully satisfied with this subtile Answer, that really carries no other sense in it, than if they had deposed, That they saw his Disciples convey him away whilst they slept. But if they slept they saw it not, and if they saw it not, they were no more competent Witnesses than if they had been upon the Emperour's Life-guard; and had they hired Knights of the Post, that were at that time at as great a distance as *Rome* from *Jerusalem*, it had not been more absurd and ridiculous than this contrivance of producing sleeping Witnesses.

Beside this, he could not but farther reflect with himself how likely a thing it was that Men so timerous

should have courage enough to venture upon such a daring Attempt. What wretched cowardise they betrayed from the time that their Master was apprehended he very well knew, and therefore could not but think it very improbable such faint Spirits should so soon undertake such bold and difficult Enterprises. But suppose they should, 'tis strangely lucky that all the Guard should fall fast asleep at the same instant of time, and more so that the Disciples should have the strange fortune as to come at that very moment, and most of all so that with all that noise that they must of necessity make by removing the Stone that was roll'd upon the mouth of the Grave, they should not awake so much as one of the Souldiers.

But beside all these difficulties that he could not but observe in the action it self, it was obvious for him to reflect, that if they who affirm'd that Christ was risen from the dead, knew that he was not, to what purpose they should take all this pains and run all these hazards for an Impostor, that had abused them with romantick Tales and Promises? This is past my comprehension, for though it is possible for simple Men to throw away their Lives for a false or mistaken Opinion, yet that a number of Men should doe it to ratifie a Testimony that they knew to be false, without any prospect of advantage either to themselves or others, as it has no precedent in all former Ages, so it is incredible to any Man that in the least understands the Constitution of humane Nature. And therefore from these and the like Premises it is no wonder if he concluded that there was something more than ordinary in this business, or as

*Apol. c. 21. Tertullian expresses it, Ea omnia super Christo  
Milatus, & ipse jam pro sua Conscientia Chri-  
stianus, Cæsari tunc Tiberio nunciavit.*

§ XVI. The last Instance I shall give of this kind of Witnesses is the Story of *Agbarus* King of *Edessa* lying beyond *Euphrates*, who being afflicted with some chronical Distemper not curable by humane Art, and hearing such prodigious reports concerning the Miracles of one *Jesus* in *Judæa*, that he made the Blind to see, the Lame to go, cleansed the Lepers, restored the long diseased to Health and raised the dead to Life: He therefore dispatches a Letter to him by a special Messenger, requesting him to take the pains to come to *Edessa* and cure his Malady, and the rather, because he heard the Jews design'd to doe him mischief, to take up his Residence there in safety, where he might live with all accommodations of Life, and, if he pleased, share with the Prince himself in the Government.

To this courteous Letter our Saviour immediately returns a brief and pithy Answer, and that probably by the same Messenger, in which he informs him That all things touching his Message were to be fulfill'd in *Judæa*, and then he was to return to his Father, but after my Assumption I will send one of my Disciples, who shall cure thy Malady, and restore Life to thee and to all them that be with thee. Which was accordingly done by *Thaddæus*; the manner of whose address and procedure is particularly and largely described by *Eusebius*. L. 1. c. 13. In all which I cannot find any thing that may in the least shake or impair the credit of the Story. Nay, the contents of our Saviour's Letter agree so exactly with the whole design of his Life in the Gospels, as by that alone to give it self considerable Authority, viz. to put off the exercise of his Power, and obscure the reputation of his Glory as much as he could till after his Resurrection.

Now if this Epistle were forged, either this passage was put into it by chance or by design. If by chance, it was a very lucky chance that so odd and yet so apt a passage should be dropt into it. And yet it could not well be out of design, for though this observation be obvious enough in it self, I do not remember that there are any footsteps of it to be found in any of the Ancients. Neither is it at all strange that all the Evangelists should be utterly silent concerning it, when it is manifest that it was their design to confine their whole History to *Palestine*, and probable too that they were altogether unacquainted with this particular Transaction, in that our Saviour might with privacy, as his custom was, dispatch his Reply by the same Messenger that brought the King's Letter, and by that means the business might pass wholly unobserved. And it is much less to be wonder'd at that none of the Ancients before *Eusebius* should make any mention of it, when it was lock't up both in the Records of that City and the Syrian Tongue, to which Language the ancient Greek and Latin Fathers were altogether strangers, and if they had not, yet they might easily be ignorant of so remote a Register. But that there were such Records we have all the Faith of *Eusebius* at stake, who positively vouches it that he found them enrolled in the publick Registry of *Edessa*, and faithfully translated them out of the Syrian into the Greek Tongue. Not to mention Saint *Ephraem*, who lived before the time of Saint *Austin*, and was a Deacon in the City of *Edessa*, who makes the same honourable mention of these Epistles with *Eusebius*, though that is a pregnant Testimony by it self, but much more so from its exact agreement with *Eusebius* his Relation; but passing by that, and much more the Epistle of *Darius* to Saint *Austin*



and of *Theodorus Studita* to Pope *Paschal*, v. Baron. An. 31. n. 60. because it is possible they might rely wholly upon the Authority of *Eusebius*, I shall lay the whole stress of the Testimony upon him alone; whom we cannot suppose guilty of such a gross and meer forgery, as to have framed the whole story only out of his own Brain.

I will grant that he may sometimes seem partial and favourable to his own cause, and be apt to make more of a Testimony than the Testimony it self will bear; but that he should forge and falsie a publick Record, and that in a matter of this weighty nature, he has given us no reason to entertain so hard and unkind a suspicion of him. For he is a stranger to *Eusebius* that knows him not to be as nice and curious in examining the credit of his Authorities as any the most critical Authours whatsoever; and for this reason he has rejected many excellent passages that might have been very serviceable to his Cause meerly because of their doubtfull Antiquity, allowing nothing as Authentick that he cannot vouch by the Testimony of ancient and contemporary Writers. Now that such a Man should be guilty of such a gross and groundless Lye as this, is past the ill-nature of Mankind to suspect.

Nay farther, though some of our late Masters of Censure are very forward to observe the slips and mistakes of this great Man, and charge them smartly upon him as if done out of meer design, yet the whole matter being impartially weigh'd, we have more reason to impute them to haste and inadvertency. For though sometimes he may seem to improve Testimonies, yet does he as often lessen them, which plainly shews that he trusted too much to his memory. But still he is ever in the right as to the main of the Story; and

and fails onely in circumstances and that chiefly of Chronology, by confounding sometimes one Story with another; but otherwise he tells no false Stories, and onely makes some mistakes of memory upon true ones, and as many of them to the disadvantage as to the advantage of his Cause, as might be shewn if it were worth the while, by comparing all particulars. But for the present this is sufficiently exemplified in the very last passage that we insisted upon, *viz.* The Testimony of *Pilate* concerning our Saviour, in which the chief thing, as it is set down by *Tertullian*, is our Saviour's Miracles, and yet it is left out by *Eusebius* when he transcribes the rest of the Testimony. And though it is possible that he might follow the Greek Translatour of *Tertullian*, yet however we see he is as easily drawn into a lessening as a magnifying mistake; and it is much more likely that *Eusebius* should through haste clip the Translation, than that the Translatour should clip the Original, for he onely consulted the passage occasionally, and so might in his hasty transcribing overlook a part of it; but for the other who made that Translation his particular business, it was not easie to overlook so material a passage.

In short, Whatsoever faults *Eusebius* may be guilty of, no Man can suspect him of meer Forgery without the forfeiture of his Ingenuity. Neither, in the last place, is the date of the Record an inconsiderable circumstance to prove the Record it self; for *Eusebius* tells us that at the bottom of it was subscribed, *These things were done the 340<sup>th</sup>. year.* Which though it has heretofore puzzled learned Men, is excellently clear'd by the *Epocha* of the *Edeffean* Computation, who began their Account from the first year of the 117<sup>th</sup>. Olympiad,

*V. Valef. Nor.*

*in l. 1. c. 13.*

Olympiad, when *Seleucus* began his Reign in *Asia*; now from that to the 202<sup>d</sup>. Olympiad, in which year, being the 15<sup>th</sup>. of *Tiberius*, our Saviour suffer'd, is just 340. years. So that *Thaddæus* was dispatched to *Edessa* in the very same year in which our Saviour arose from the dead; that great work, it seems, being once over, he would no longer delay the good King's request.

These are all the foreign Testimonies that I think convenient to represent in this place, though many more I shall be forced to observe, when I come to give an account how it comes to pass, that though our Saviour did those Miracles that are recorded of him, and though there were all that evidence given of them that we pretend there was, yet so great a part of the Men of that Age, both Jews and Gentiles should live and dye in Inidelity.

§ XVII. Having hitherto demonstrated the impossibility of the fallhood of the Apostles Testimony concerning the truth of Christianity from its contradiction to the first Instincts of humane Nature, to all the principles of common Prudence, and to their own design it self, and from the undoubted certainty of their Records, and from the concurrent Testimony of foreign Writers; I now proceed to the next part of the Argument, that, supposing the Apostles, Evangelists, and first Disciples of Christ, would have endeavour'd to impose upon the World with a palpable and unprofitable Lye against all the foremention'd contradictions to Nature, to Sense and to Themselves, to demonstrate the impossibility that they could ever have prevailed so effectually and so speedily as they did, upon the Faith of Mankind. And as many thousand Absurdities as there were in the former Supposition

sition, there are so many ten thousands in this; for the inequality of the number of the Persons was not less; the first Preachers of the Gospel being very few in comparison of the vast multitudes of their first Converts. And yet if Christianity were false, all these must be guilty, not onely of all that folly that we have represented in the case of the Apostles, but much more, in that they did not onely suffer themselves wilfully to be deceived into the belief of the strange Story of Jesus without sufficient evidence of its truth; for if it had sufficient evidence then it was no Imposture; if it had not, then all that profess their belief of it were wilfully deceived, *i. e.* They pretended to believe that to be a Divine Revelation, though themselves knew that they had no sufficient ground or motive for so strange a belief.

But beside this grand Absurdity of wilfully deceiving themselves to no purpose, nay, against all the foremention'd inconveniences, they must be so far beside themselves that when they had abused themselves with a proofless Tale, they should join their zeal to the first Impostors for propagating the Cheat, to the manifest ruine of their Fortunes and hazard of their Lives; and that such vast numbers of them should with such unheard of courage and constancy endure the most exquisite Pains and suffer all kinds of Death either without ever inquiring into the truth of the matter of Fact for which they suffer'd, or suffering for it after that rate without any satisfactory Evidence of it.

Here, in short, we must believe that such a Doctrine as Christianity, published in such a manner as it was, should find such an universal entertainment in so short a time, without any the least rational proof or evidence of its Divine Authority. A Doctrine,  
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the truth whereof depended entirely upon a matter of Fact, so that if it were false, it could not then have escaped confutation, and unless it were undoubtedly true could never have obtain'd any belief. A Doctrine so unkind to the vicious customs and practices of the Age, so contrary to the prejudices of Men and the establish'd Religions of the World, so displeasing to Flesh and Bloud, so hated and so full of danger. That when this Doctrine was published by such Persons, Men of mean Education, void of Craft or Learning or Eloquence, they should without any other help than barely telling a false Story perswade such vast numbers of Men to forsake the Religions in which they were educated, and without any hope of profit, nay, with a certain prospect of all the miseries of Life, yes and Death it self, to embrace this new, this despised, this hated, this persecuted Forgery.

Lastly, That great numbers both of the most learned and wisest Men that lived in the Ages next and immediately after it, should, after the strictest enquiry concerning the truth of these things, not onely suffer themselves to be imposed upon by so late and palpable a Fiction, but hazard; nay, loose their Lives and Fortunes in its defence. And yet this was the case of the primitive Converts, as I come now to demonstrate by a review of particulars.

§ XVIII. Now as for the reality of the matter of Fact, the speedy entertainment of Christianity in all parts of the World, that is a thing so unanimously attested by all Writers, that it is rather to be supposed than proved. Ἀδρόως οἶα τις ἡλῖς βολὴ τὴν σύμπασαν οἰκωμένην ὁ σωτήριος κερτιύαζε λόγος, The Gospel of our Saviour like the Sun enlightned all the World at once,

Euseb. Eccles. Hist. l. 2. c. 3.

and infinite multitudes of People both from Cities and Villages were by the Apostles preaching brought into the Church like Corn crowded into a Granary: And they who had been long enslaved to the Superstition and Idolatry of their Ancestours were set at liberty by the preaching and miracles of the Disciples of Christ; and renouncing that rout of false Gods that the merciless Dæmons had introduced into the heathen World, return'd to the worship of the onely one true God the great Creatour of all things.

So when *Celsus* objects the novelty of Christianity, *Origen* answers that there lies the wonder, that in so short a time a new Doctrine should so strangely prevail over all the World, conquer both Greeks and Barbarians, the learned and unlearned, all ranks and professions of Men; and possess them with so firm a belief of its Divine Authority, as to be ready to seal their Faith with their Blood, a thing that was never done for any Opinion in the World before.

And so *Justin Martyr*, in his Conference with *Trypho* the Jew, affirms that there is no part of Mankind, Greeks or Barbarians, nay, not those wild and uncivilized People that were wont to live without Houses and Cities, amongst whom Prayers and Supplications were not made to the Father and Creatour of all things, in the name of the crucified Jesus.

It is an excellent passage of *Clemens Alexandrinus* to the same purpose, at the end of his

Sixth Book of Collections: The Philosophers (says he) pleased the Greeks alone, neither did every one please all; *Plato* followed *Socrates*, *Xenocrates* *Plato*, *Theophrastus* *Aristotle*, *Cleanthes* *Zeno*, every Master had his own particular School and Scholars; but

but our great Master's Philosophy was not confin'd, as theirs was, to their own Country, within *Judæa* alone, but spread it self over all parts of the habitable World, and was entertain'd by whole Cities and Nations both of Greeks and Barbarians; it bore away whole Families and Villages, and no single Person could resist its force, that would but give himself leave to hear its Wisdom, infomuch that it gain'd over many of the Philosophers themselves. And if any Magistrate did any where suppress the Grecian Philosophy, it soon vanisht; whereas our Institution from the first publishing of it has been every where persecuted by Kings and Emperours and Tyrants, by Prefects of Provinces, by Commanders of Armies, and which is more furious then all the rest, by the Multitude. These have join'd all their power and their malice utterly to extirpate our Religion, but still it flourishes more and more, and does not wither away as it must have done had it been a meer humane Invention, but it stands invincible as the power of God that nothing can restrain or alter, and this notwithstanding that it was foretold by the Founder of it, that all its Followers must suffer Persecution.

And *Tertullian* assures the Senate of *Rome* that the Christians had fill'd all Places and all Offices; that they were of strength enough to master the Roman Empire; nay, that so great were their numbers, that if they would but agree to retire out of it, the World would stand amazed at its own solitude. And in his Book against the Jews, he tells them that it enlarg'd its conquests beyond those of the Roman Empire; that it subdued those places that were inaccessible to their Armies, and reckons up multitudes of People from one end of the habitable World to the other,

*Apol. c. 37.*

*Cap. 7.*

that were converted to the Faith of the crucified Jesus.

And in the same manner does *Arnobius* *Lib. 2.* challenge the unbelieving World. Methinks, says he, this should not a little shock your unbelief to see the Authority of this despised name to prevail in all places in so short a time, that no Nation is so utterly barbarous and lost to all civility, whose manners have not been reform'd and polish'd by this gentle Institution; nay, more than this, it has matter'd the great Wits, the Oratours, Criticks, Lawyers, Physicians and Philosophers; and not onely so, but all its Disciples are so serious and sincere in their profession, that they will forgo all advantages of Life, even Life it self rather than forsake the cross. So that notwithstanding all your Laws and Interdicts, your Threatnings and Executions, your Hangmen and Dragg-hooks, and all your innumerable ways of torture they grow not onely more numerous but more vigorous in their resolutions. Can you think all this comes to pass slightly and by chance, that Men do not consider what they are about when they dye for their Religion, that there is a conspiracy of Sots and Madmen all the World over to undoe themselves and throw away their Lives, without so much as thinking what they are doing?

It were endless to heap up all the Testimonies that might be collected out of the primitive Writers upon this Argument, when it was so known and confessed a thing even by the Enemies of the Religion: So that this was the ground of *Pliny's* Letter to the Emperour concerning the Christians, the multitude of Persons of all conditions, which he says was so great that the Temples and Sacrifices were almost utterly forsaken. And *Tacitus* tells us of an *Ingens multitudo*, that were put to death by *Nero* in *Rome* alone for  
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firing the City, which was not much above thirty years after our Saviour's Passion, and in the time of the Apostles, some of whom suffer'd in the Persecution; in short the prevalency of the Christian Religion was so observable among the Heathens that it was vulgarly stiled ἡ κερτασσα δοξη and the Christians Κερτασται, that the prevailing Doctrine, and they the prevailing Sect; several Instances whereof are collected by *Valesius* out of *Damasius*, *Porphyry* and *Julian*.

Annor. in  
Euseb. p. 62.

And therefore I will add no more Testimonies to prove a thing so unquestionable, but shall onely rescue one that is more ancient than any of the rest, from that violence that has been offer'd to it by some learned Men, and that is the Testimony of *Philo* the Jew; for whereas in his little Treatise concerning a Contemplative Life, he gives a large description of a certain Sect of Men and Women (that he calls Θεραπειται and Θεραπειτησίδες) that were at that time very famous and numerous in the World, especially in *Egypt* and about *Alexandria* where he chiefly resided, but most of all in the *Mareotick* Prefecture; this *Eusebius* will have to be understood of the primitive Christians, and that for this one very good reason, because it is such an exact description of their way of Life, Worship and Discipline, that if *Philo* had design'd to have done that, he could not have done it more accurately; and the truth is, there is scarce in all the Records of Antiquity a fuller account of the manners of the primitive Christians, as to their renouncing the World for the love of Heaven, their parting with their Estates for the benefit of the Poor, their great Temperance and Chastity, their meeting every Seventh-day for religious Worship, their Love-feasts, their great Festivals of *Easter* and *Pentecost*, &c. All which

as they agree in every circumstance to the primitive Christians, so to no other Sect, of which we find any other memory or mention in all the Records of Antiquity; and that, one would think, were Argument sufficient to conclude that *Philo's* description appertain'd to them and none else.

But *Scaliger*, according to his usual custom of quarrelling with *Eusebius*, will not have it applied to the Christians but to the Jewish Essenes; of which, he affirms, there were two sorts, the Practical and the Speculative, and that in the former Book *Philo* treated of those, of these in this. And the ground of his mistake was *Philo's* transition from the first to the second Book, viz. That having in the former given an account of the Essenes, who lived a practical Life and conversed in Cities, he now came to treat, *περὶ τῆς θεωρίας ἀσπασαμένων*, of those that live a contemplative Life, i. e. says *Scaliger*, of those Essenes; but that without any ground from the words themselves, which being onely general, of those Men that live a contemplative Life, may with as much reason be understood of any other Sect as appropriated to the Essenes. But what if *Philo* had call'd them Essenes, and thought them so, yet there is no necessity they should have been so; for seeing the Essenes were accounted Men of the strictest Lives among the Jews, when *Philo* saw this Society of Christians, then newly founded by Saint *Mark* in those parts, that so much resembled the Essenes in their Manners and Discipline, it was easie for him to suppose them a branch of the same Sect, and pass them under the same name. And yet after all, this is a distinction meerly of *Scaliger's* own framing to salve his own groundless conjecture; for *Philo* no where calls them Essenes, which he would have done, if

Essenes

Essenes they had been of what sort soever; and therefore constantly giving those in the former Book the Title of Essenes and never giving it to these, it is plain that they were of a different Sect from all Essenes. Neither are there any the least footsteps of these two sorts of Essenes in all Antiquity; and *Josephus*, though he does more than once give an account of this Sect, makes no mention of these speculative Essenes, which so diligent a Writer could never have omitted, if they had been so famous and so numerous in the World as *Philo* says these Therapeutæ were. Beside that there were no Essenes out of *Judæa*, as *Philo* himself more than once informs us, and expressly in the former Book, whereas this Sect was spread, as he affirms in this, through all parts of the World. Neither were there any Women admitted among the Essenes, whereas both Sexes were indifferently enter'd into this Sect, from whence it is evident that it must have been of a different Constitution.

And for these reasons *Valesius* disagrees with *Scaliger* for understanding the Essenes here, yet agrees with him for not understanding the Christians, but upon Arguments so weak and unconcluding, that he had as good gone through with him in the whole matter, as leave him half way to so little purpose.

Annot. in  
Euseb. p. 34.

As, first, That these Therapeutæ read the ancient Writings of the Authours of their Sect, which could not be understood of the old Prophets, because they are expressly distinguish'd by *Philo* from them; nor of the Evangelists and Apostles, because himself lived in their time, and therefore could not term their Writings ancient.

But, in answer to this, it is evident that *Philo* was not thoroughly acquainted with the Principles of this Sect,

Seēt, but had onely been present sometime at their Assemblies, and from what he had there observed, had drawn up this description of them. And therefore, finding that they had peculiar Books to themselves and distinct from those of the old Prophets, he might easily think them more ancient than really they were, especially when they were valued by the Christians, or the Men that he speaks of, as the most authentick Commentaries and Expositions of the Prophets themselves. But however, *Antiquity* is a relative term, and therefore the Writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, being the first Records of the Church, might, nay, must be term'd the most ancient; and so *Philo* seems to expound himself when he adds that they were such as were written by the first Authours of the Seēt, and that they could be none other is plain enough, because there were no other Books beside those of the Old Testament peculiar to any Seēt among the Jews.

But in the next place it is objected, That *Philo* affirms that his Therapeutick Seēt prayed onely twice a day, whereas it is very well known that the primitive Christians had their several other hours of Prayer.

Yes, and so they might have, and *Philo* not know it. However, their most solemn seasons were Morning and Evening Prayer, when, as *Philo* tells us, they resorted to their consecrated Chapels, and that being their publick Devotion, he therefore takes notice of that alone; whereas their other hours of Prayer were rather set apart for private Devotion, which was more or less frequent according to the zeal of the Votaries.

But *Philo*, says he, affirms that this Seēt composed Hymns, and those in various Measures, and yet this custom

custom is very well known not to have been used in the Christian Church till after the Reign of the Antonines.

It may be so, in the Greek and Latin Churches, but in a Church purely Jewish, as it is certain this was, and is so agreed to have been by all hands, this custom was used from the beginning. Neither was it any new Invention of the Christians, but continued by them in imitation of the ancient Jewish Church.

But lastly, says he, The Men of this Sect, according to *Philo's* description, were very numerous and scatter'd all the World over, whereas at that time there was but a very small number of Christians.

And it must be confessed that so they were if compared either to the rest of Mankind at that time, or to their own multitude in after-ages. And yet their numbers were very great if consider'd, as they were by *Philo*, as a philosophick Sect, and so at that time Christianity was more observable than any other Sect, spreading every where so fast, and wherever it came prevailing so much.

But if this great and famous Sect that *Philo* speaks of were not Christians, our learned Authour would have done very well to consider, how it is possible that such a peculiar Sect of Men, should at that time have been disperst through all parts of the habitable World, and never be so much as taken notice of by any Writer of that Age but onely in this little Pamphlet of *Philo*. At least considering the exact agreement of the description it self to the Christians; and the utter silence about any other Sect to which it might agree, that seems to me no less than a demonstrative proof that it must be intended of them; and of them alone.

And beside the evidence of the thing it self, the reason of the Name is obvious enough; for though, as *Eusebius* says, it is not much material to enquire whether *Philo* himself coined this Name, as most agreeing with the manners of the Persons that he describes; or whether the Christians might not have that Name given them in that place from the beginning, the Name of Christians not being then used in all places, yet it is but a synonymous word with that of Christians, especially when turn'd out of the Hebrew into Greek, for the word *Jesus* indifferently signifies either *Σωτήρ* or *Θεραπευτής*, Saviour or Healer; and therefore it was easie for *Philo*, who was an Hebrew-Greek, to interpret it by the Name *Θεραπευτής* or Healer, especially considering its near affinity both in sound and signification to the word *ἰδοῦσαι* to heal, so that the meaning of the Appellation is that they were the followers of *Jesus*, *i. e.* the Healer.

And thus having recover'd this ancient Church from the perverseness of learned Men, I shall conclude this Argument with an excellent passage of *Irenæus*, a very early Writer in these Western parts of the World. Though, says he, there is a vast variety of Languages in the World, yet the Tradition of the Christian Faith is one and the same in all places, in *Germany*, in *Spain*, in *France*, in the East, in *Egypt*, in *Lybia*, in the remote as well as in the middle parts of the World; and as there is but one Sun in the Universe, so are all Men every where, that are disposed, enlightned by the same Truth. Of the Unity of this Tradition I shall discourse in its proper place, at present it is enough to our purpose that we have from hence a very early Testimony of its Universality.

§ XIX. This then being so that the Christian Religion prevailed as never Doctrine did, let us a little consider what extraordinary advantages it had to recommend it self to the good Opinion of Mankind; and here it is at first view apparent that it laboured under all the possible disadvantages in the World, excepting onely its own naked and unassisted Truth; so that had it not been for that undeniable evidence of proof, that it brought along with it of its Divine Authority, it was impossible it should ever have gain'd one profelyte over to its belief.

And here the first thing to be consider'd is that the whole frame of the Christian Faith is built upon a matter of Fact, and that in it self so incredible, that it could not have been believed, had it not been vouched by some Testimony so unquestionable, as to surmount its own incredibility. For the Story was plainly this, That under the Prefectship of *Pontius Pilate* there was a poor young Man in *Judæa*, of mean Birth and no Education, who pretended to be sent from God to cancel that Law, which God himself had establish'd by *Moses*, to reform all the World, to bring in a more perfect rule of Life, and a more excellent way of Worship; and that for a proof of his Commission he pretended to a power of working Miracles, and often cured the Blind, the Lame, the Leprous, and sometimes rais'd the Dead; but by this means drawing great multitudes after him, the Governours of the Jewish State grew jealous of his designs, and so apprehended him as a disturber of the publick Peace, and an enemy to the establish'd Religion; and for those crimes condemn'd him to the ignominious death of the Cross, and that they took care that he should suffer with all the aggravations of shame and disgrace, in sight of all the People of *Jerusalem*; and yet not

withstanding that his heart-bloud was let out with a Spear, whilst he was hanging upon the Cross, he rose again the third day, conversed familiarly with his Disciples, and at last in the presence of great numbers of them ascended up into Heaven.

Now this Story was in it self so strange and prodigious, so without precedent, so full of appearing inconsistencies, so contrary to the prejudices of the Jews and the opinions of the Greeks, and withall so publick and so notorious, that if it had not been certainly true, it could never have been believed, and if it had been false, must have been demonstratively confuted. For the passages and transactions of his Life were open and conspicuous to the World; he laid not the scene of his actions in a dark, unknown or undiscover'd corner of the Earth, but he appear'd in one of the most eminent places of all *Asia*; all his Works were perform'd amidst his Enemies, and he chose the Jews, the most jealous and the most prejudiced People in the World, for the Eye-witnesses of his Miracles, and the Companions of his Conversation: But above all, *Jerusalem* it self, the most famous City at that time in that part of the World, was the scene of his most publick Actions; there it was that he was put to death in the presence not onely of that City but of the whole Nation; there it was that he rose from the dead, there it was that his Disciples first publisht his Resurrection, and there it was that some of them wrought undeniable Miracles, in proof of the Divinity of his Power and the Truth of their own Testimony.

*Lib. 2.*

And *Origen* has observed very well that the publick Death of Jesus in the sight of all the People of the Jews, was design'd by the Divine Providence as an advantageous circumstance to demonstrate the



the truth of his Resurrection; for if it had been private and not notorious to all the Nation, though he had afterward risen from the dead as he did, the obscurity of his Death might have been pleaded against the certainty of his Resurrection. But beside the notoriety of the matter of Fact among the Jews, the strange Stories that were reported of him in a little time fill'd the World with noise and wonder. No Affair in that Age was more talked of than the Story of *Jesus of Nazareth*, every body made enquiry into the circumstances of his Actions, and they were exposed to the malice of the Jews and the curiosity of the Philosophers.

There was never Man born (as *Eusebius* Hist. Eccles. L. 1. c. 3. observes) upon whose account the whole World was so much concern'd as upon that of *Jesus of Nazareth*; Mankind being as it were at first divided concerning him, so that the controversie is not improperly styled by *Nicephorus* σεισμὸς ἡ οὐκ ἐκμύνη, the struggling and concussion of the World.

Now 'tis a likely matter and worthy our belief that a few simple and illiterate persons should have the confidence, but much more the ability to perswade the World into the belief of a Legend so palpable and so obnoxious to contradiction. That they should be so impudent as to begin to publish the strange Story of his Life and stranger one of his Resurrection, even in *Jerusalem* it self, and amidst his most implacable Enemies, where, though it were so easie to discover the bold and manifest cheat, if a cheat at all, that, yet it should pass without any contradiction of the matter of Fact, and meet with such prodigious and unparallel'd entertainment in the Minds of so many thousands of its Inhabitants. Certainly they must have been puissant and irresistible Arguments where-  
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with they could so briskly bear down and vanquish Jewish stubbornness. Their prejudices were too strong to be overcome by any weaker proof than evident and undeniable demonstration, and had they not brought some such thing along with them, they might to as much purpose have preached to the Stones of the Temple as to the People of *Jerusalem*. But that, I say, is the wonder that they should first publish this strange story in the very place where it was acted, and yet if it were false, not only escape being convicted of Forgery, which it was impossible they should upon supposition of its being false; but force great numbers of Persons against their most stubborn prejudices to own and submit to the truth of their Relation, and from that very place in a short time to propagate the belief of it all the World over. This is the thing that I affirm not to be at all possible in the course of humane Affairs, that a matter of Fact of such a nature and under these circumstances, if really and indeed false, should ever gain so great a belief of its being true. I will grant that Mankind may be imposed upon in matters of meer Opinion, as much as any Man can require, but matter of Fact is of a quite different nature, that depends not so much upon Mens Understandings as their Senses, and the Senses of all Mankind are alike, here is no difference between the learned and the unlearned. And though a false Story may for a while be imposed upon the common People, yet unless it appear to prove it self true with an evidence proportionable to its weight, it either dyes and vanishes of its own accord, or is convicted of Forgery by the more wise and judicious, when they come to enquire into its grounds and pretences. And yet this Story the more it was enquired into the more firmly it was believed, and learned Men every where and of  
all

all persuasions, when they came to examine into it, could not bring their Minds to any issue concerning it, till at length they were forced to resign up themselves to its full belief.

I have indeed heard some witty Gentlemen, as our phantastick Age very much abounds with such shrew'd persons, compare the first propagation of Christianity in those parts of the World, with that of the late growth and spreading of the folly of Quakerism in *England*, than which nothing could be more enormously surmised; for setting aside a thousand other defects in the comparison, it is notorious that that wild and enthusiastick Sect did not set up upon the pretence of a new Revelation, but onely pretended to raise some foolish and fanaticque conceits of their own upon supposition of the truth of an old one. But if the leaders of that Rabble, when they first appear'd about thirty years since at *York* and *Bristol*, had pretended to have wrought in those great Cities such kind of Miracles as are recorded of our Saviour and his Apostles, no Man can doubt but that they had been long since buried in contempt and oblivion. And yet that is the case of Christianity, that such a matter of Fact as that was gain'd such a firm belief in the place where it was first published and acted too, and from thence all the World over onely by the undeniable evidence of its own Proofs and Miracles. For the Men of that Age were every whit as cautious and incredulous as the Wits of ours, and, as I shall shew anon, their Minds were prepossess'd with stronger prejudices of Atheism and Infidelity. How then could this Story of Jesus prevail so effectually upon them but by the undeniable evidence of its truth and certainty, and when it carried with it nothing in the World whereby it might bribe their belief, nay, when it labour'd under all other objections

objections but onely evidence of Truth, I will challenge any sober Man to frame any the least tolerable Hypothesis how it was so much as possible that it should prevail, had not its truth been vouched by the most undoubted and unquestionable proofs in the World.

§ XX. This is the first invincible Impediment of Christianity, supposing it had been false; but whether true or false it labour'd under many other great disadvantages, that it could never have surmounted, but by the irresistible evidence and certainty of its truth.

And the first is its contrariety to the Vice and Wickedness of that Age in which it was first divulged. The World being at that time, as is evident from the Records that are left of it, extremely debaucht both in its Manners and Principles. For *Julius Cæsar* having violated all the Laws of his Countrey, and overthrow the old Government, that had always kept up a generous sence of Vertue and Integrity, and by that means chiefly raised it self to that vast Greatness, that afterwards so much exposed it to the attempts of ambitious Men. (For though that spirit began to work in the time of *Marius*, and passed down through all the great Men, *Cinna*, *Sulla* and *Pompey*, all of them struggling for the sole Sovereignty of so vast an Empire, the design was never compleatly compassed but by the boldness and activity of *Julius Cæsar*.) Now the success of the Cæsarean Faction, that were generally Atheists and Epicureans, against the Patriots of the old State, that were as generally eminent for Worth and Honour, Vertue and Integrity, and Zeal for the publick Good, made the thriving Principles and Practices quickly come into Fashion and Reputation with the World. And after the Death of *Brutus*, we find

no such thing as an ancient Roman, but what he said in passion was seriously and universally embraced as a great truth, That Vertue was nothing but an empty name. So that if we survey the Roman History before and after the Usurpation of *Cæsar*, it does not look like the History of the same Nation; the former abounding with the bravest examples of Gallantry and Magnanimity, whereas in the latter we are generally entertain'd with no other politicks than Fraud and Treachery. Even the admired wisdom of the great *Augustus* himself was no better than craft and dissimulation: And though his Successour, *Tiberius*, be particularly remarked for that Vice, it was onely because he was not able to act his part so artificially as his Predecessour had done, who dyed with that particular comfort to himself that he had so skilfully played the Comedy of humane Life; and certainly of all Princes upon Record he had the most subtile faculty of appearing highly honest, without any design of ever being so.

In short, under his Reign all the Principles of Atheism and Impiety were prevalent in the Court of *Rome*, that then prescribed Manners to the best part of the then known World, neither were their Practices disagreeing to their Principles; for as they cast off all restraints of Vertue and Modesty, so they entirely devoted themselves to Luxury and Sensuality, and studied nothing else than to improve their brutish Pleasures to the utmost extravagance of Enjoyment. And as was the great Court of *Rome*, so were all the other lesser Courts of their several Prefects and Governours. And that not onely by imitation but by the natural baseness of the Men themselves. Scarce any but the worst of Men, that is, Epicureans and Vilains by Principle being prefer'd by *J. Cæsar* to Authority in

the Empire; though things grew much worse under the Tyranny of *Mark Anthony*, a Man kneaded up of Lust and Malice, and the onely reason why he was not more of each was because he was all both; for he would never, unless for the sake of his Lust, quit his Cruelty; nor ever, unless to satisfy his Cruelty, forsake his Lust: and as himself was made up of all manner of Baseness, so he would advance none to preferment but such as had recommended themselves to his good liking by their more than ordinary Wickedness. And for that reason it was that *Judæa* and the parts about it, were at that time more over-run with Vice and Debauchery than in any former Age; in that *Herod*, one of the vilest Men that ever lived, had, by the patronage of *Mark Anthony*, obtain'd their Government, and by a long Reign over them after his Patron's Death under *Augustus*, had familiarised all manner of the most licentious Wickedness to the People, even so much that one half of the leading Men even among the Jews themselves, that had been so famous through all Ages for their reverence to their Religion, were no better than open and avowed Atheists.

Now how was it possible for such a Doctrine as Christianity, that consists of Precepts of Chastity and Sobriety, of Truth and Honesty, of Kindness and Charity, and of renouncing the Pleasures of this Life for the Rewards of another, to make its way into such a wicked World as this? Men of atheistical Principles are of all others the most stubborn and inflexible, they scorn all manner of better Information, and will not endure to enquire into the truth of any thing that might possibly undeceive them; so that there is no way to overcome Persons so prejudiced and so conceited, unless we can by the meer evidence of things force them into conviction. And as for Men

of luxurious Lives, they have neither Mind nor Leisure to attend to any thing that may reclaim them. It is Pain to them to think of parting with their Pleasures, they will labour to preserve them upon any terms, and as long as they are able to resist, no information shall be able to fasten on them; and therefore when the Christian Religion so suddenly reformed infinite numbers from all sorts of Vices, it must have brought along with it a real Evidence equal to its pretended Authority; for as it pretended to a Divine Commission, by virtue whereof it required strict Obedience to all its Commands, so it must have proved the reality of its Commission by such certain Evidence that it was not possible for the most refractory Persons to withstand its force; and therefore when we find such multitudes so wonderfully prevail'd upon to quit their most beloved Lusts and Vices, we have reason from thence onely to conclude, that they were more than convinced of the undeniable truth of its pretences.

§ XXI. The next disadvantage of Christianity was its bold and open defiance to the establishd and inveterate Religions of the World. For of all prejudices those of Religion are the strongest, and the older they are, the deeper root they take. And therefore when its Enemies could plead the antiquity of many hundred years against it, it could not but be a very difficult task to perswade them out of such an ancient Prescription. Its meer Novelty was an Objection of no small force, but when a new and upstart Religion would not be content with its own Authority, but must disgrace all the settled Religions in the World, and refuse its own settlement, unless they may be utterly extirpated; this could not but seem too sawcy a demand, especially to Princes and great-Men, to re-

quire of them not onely to give way to an upstart Sect, but to renounce the Religion of their Ancestours, confirm'd as well by their own Laws as ancient Custom; and submit themselves and their power to the Authority of a few Galilæan Fishermen; and this the Authours of that Age say was the main reason why the Christian Religion was at all adventure rejected by the Roman Senate, because it would allow none other beside it self.

And first as for the Jewish Religion, beside its very great Antiquity, it was establisht by Divine Authority, and therefore with plausible appearance of reason believed by the Jews to be of eternal Obligation, at least not otherways reversible but with the same dreadfull signs and appearances of the Divine Presence, wherewith it was at first enacted; and therefore when a young Man should take upon him to cancel the onely true way of worshipping the onely true God, that design seem'd so like to Blasphemy and Idolatry, that his very pretending to it, without any farther enquiry, was, whatever he could say or doe, an invincible prejudice and an unpardonable crime. This is evident through the whole History of his Life, that the Jews every where concluded him an Impostor, because he set up against *Moses*, and then let him work what Miracles he would, they would regard neither him nor them.

And particularly this was the case of the Controversie when he cured the Man that was born Blind, when the matter of Fact was evident beyond all contradiction by the Testimony of his Parents, and by the confession of all the Neighbours, who knew him to have sat and begged in a certain place for many years; yet notwithstanding all this the Pharisees concluded against his doing any Miracles, because he

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was a Sinner, that is, as they thought, a Blasphemer of *Moses* Law; and when the blind Man argues with them that it was such a Miracle as had never been done from the beginning of the World before, it was all one for that, they answer all with this peremptory Assertion, *We know that God spake unto Moses; as for this fellow we know not from whence he is.* So that whatever Miracles he worked, they were not to be regarded, because he derogated from the Authority of *Moses*.

And therefore *Origen* very well observes Lib. 2. p. 92. that the difficulty of our Saviour's Work was much greater than that of *Moses*, from the great prejudices of the People against his Undertaking. For *Moses* had to doe with the Offspring of *Abraham*, who had all along observed the Law of Circumcision, and those other Rites and Customs that he had delivered down to his Posterity, and onely undertook to deliver them from a grievous Bondage, and bring them into that happy Land that God had promised to their Forefathers. But our Saviour was sent to a People to command them to forsake that way of Worship in which they had been educated, and to prescribe a new model of Religion against an old one that had been settled by Divine Authority, and therefore instead of being complied with as *Moses* was, he was sure to meet with all the fiercest contradiction both of Zeal and Malice. And for this reason, says he, it was that it was so requisite that he should doe greater Miracles than *Moses*, or any of the Prophets were recorded to have done, to convince them that God had given him greater Authority, and so thereby obliged them to submit to his Discipline as they had hitherto done to that of *Moses* and the Prophets. And as the Eternity of the Law of *Moses* was at that time

an insuperable prejudice against Christianity, so is it to this very day, as may be seen in the Writings of the Jewish Doctours, who always lay this supposition at the bottom of their Disputes against the Divine Authority of the Christian Law.

But of the prejudices of the Jews I shall give a farther account, when I come to shew the reasons of their Infidelity, notwithstanding the Gospel brought all that evidence along with it, that we pretend it did. And then as for the Religion of the Gentiles, beside its proud pretence to the greatest Antiquity, it now valued it self upon a much prouder title of being the Religion of the Empire; and by reason of the vast extent of that, it was rooted in all parts of it with more strength and unity than it could have been under several Governments, and there is nothing that can make People more fond of their Religion than to possess them with a belief of its Universality. Now when a Religion so Catholick was settled by the Laws, was own'd by the Emperours, and was made the onely Religion of Power and Interest in the World, its Votaries could not endure to see it treated with scorn and dishonour by an upstart Sect of Men destitute of all Power and Authority. And for this reason is it that *Pliny*, *Tacitus* and *Suetonius* inveigh against Christianity with so much scorn and indignation, not that they had any concern for Religion themselves being profest Epicureans, and so inwardly as great despisers of Paganism as the Christians could pretend to be. But they were angry that a Religion abetted by the Emperours, and the great Statesmen, such as themselves were or pretended to be, should be so dishonourably born down by a company of superstitious and despicable Jews.

And that proved another very great disadvantage to Christianity, the force of Laws and the interest of Government against its reception. In that Statesmen are ever jealous of all Innovations in Religion as dangerous to the present Government: so that though themselves look upon all Religion as a meer design of State-craft, yet they are very zealous for that which they find already establisht, as that by which they enjoy their present security, and therefore vigilant against all alterations as naturally tending to the subversion of the Civil State. So that it is none of their business to enquire into the pleas of a new Religion, but its being new is with them a sufficient reason of proceeding against it, as being Sedition, *ipso facto*, against the establisht Law. And this was the main reason of most of those many severe Edicts and Rescripts of several Emperours against the Christians, who looked upon their numerous Assemblies upon pretence of Religion as dangerous Associations against the State of the Empire: and particularly *Trajan*, a wise and politick Prince, who, either because he would not give the Christians the advantage of pleading Religion or suffering for it; or rather out of his particular jealousy and fear of Tumults, put in execution against them the Law against the Heteriæ, which forbad all manner of numerous Meetings, upon what account soever, though onely of Friendship or Good-fellowship, for which those Heteriæ were first institutted, so that upon pretence of this Law he seem'd not to proceed against them upon the account of Religion, but as unlawfull Riots and Tumults against the State.

§ XXII. Now from the concurrence of all these mighty prejudices against Christianity, it met with all the opposition that Mankind could make it; it was

was forced to encounter the Fury of the Multitude, the Zeal of Superstition, the Hatred of the Jews, the Contempt of the Greeks, the Power of the Romans, the Pride of Philosophers, and the Policy of Statesmen; and by all these together, that is, by all means possible was it every-where harrassed with all the outrage and cruelty of Persecution. No other party of Men in the World were ever hunted with that keenness of Malice, or sacrificed with that cheapness and contempt of humane Blood; and as the Enemies to Christianity supposed it to be a new thing in the World, they resolved its Punishments should be so too; invented new methods of Torment, studied all the arts of Pain, and were not satisfied with the death of Christians, unless they might tire them out of their Lives with length and variety of Tortures. In short, it wanted not the utmost opposition that could be made against it by Men or Devils; if we suppose (as we may for argument sake) that there are any such malignant Beings. And yet notwithstanding all disadvantages it grew and flourished after such a rate all the World over, as if it had met with all the contrary ways and methods of encouragement.

Now what could be the reason of all this? There is no other imaginable account to be given of it, but that irresistible force of evidence that it gave of its Truth and Divine Authority. For when every thing else was against it, and yet notwithstanding it prevailed so wonderfully by the power of its own truth, it must be clear of all doubt and suspicion that could bear away the Minds of Men with so great a force against all Arguments and Motives in the World beside. For I do not urge this at present as an argument of God's Providence being concern'd in its propagation, but for the reasonableness of the thing it self: *viz.* that a Doctrine labouring

labouring under all these mighty and unparallel'd disadvantages should ever have prevail'd with such sudden and admirable success, had it not come attested with the clearest and most irresistible Proofs. For is it not utterly incredible that an Institution so destitute of secular Power and Interest, so uncouth to the Principles and Prejudices of Education, so contrary to the Vices and Inclinations of Men, so contradictory to the settled Laws, and (what was much more considerable) to the establish'd Religions of Commonwealths, so much oppos'd by all the Power, all the Wit, and all the Zeal in the World, should yet so effectually bear away all resistance, and force the struggling World in spite of all their opposition to yield up all that was dear to them to the evidence of its Divine Authority? For seeing it could have nothing else to recommend it to the World, nay, seeing it had all other things to oppose it, and yet found such strange and otherwise unaccountable entertainment, that alone, I say, is a demonstrative proof of its infinite evidence and certainty. Neither am I ignorant that learned Men both Ancient and Modern usually ascribe it to the Almighty and miraculous Power of God overruling the Minds of Men: And the truth is, the thing was so prodigious, that it is scarce accountable how it could be done without a Miracle.

But though I do not doubt of the secret and inward workings of the Spirit of God upon the Minds of Men, yet I can by no means allow the reason of any thing to be resolv'd into that alone; for if that be the onely reason of any Man's assent, then his assent is unreasonable, and all the account he can give of his Faith is that he finds himself vehemently inclin'd to believe he knows not why. But that is not a proper way of determining rational Creatures, and

therefore we cannot suppose that God would force the Minds of Men to a stronger assent than the evidence of the thing assented to requires; for that instead of helping the Understandings of Men would utterly destroy them. And therefore how strong soever the influences of the Spirit of God were upon the Minds of the Primitive Christians, as no doubt they were very extraordinary, yet the outward and rational evidence that he gave them of the truth of Christianity was still proportionable to that inward confidence that he wrought upon their Minds, otherwise they had more confidence than they had reason for; and then all that they had over and above was unreasonable.

Seeing therefore their Faith was so infinitely confident, I shall demonstrate that the grounds and motives that they had for it were equal to their greatest assurance, and they were chiefly these two, undeniable Miracles; and undoubted Tradition; from both which they had so great an assurance of the Christian Faith, that it was not possible for them to be deceived; and if they had so much, they had as much as can be desired, because no Man can have more.

§ XXIII. I have already shewn in the beginning of this Discourse the great and unparallel'd credibility of the Apostles Testimony, taken by it self, as it stands upon their own naked Reputation, in that we have all the evidence in the World that they were sincere and serious in their Design, so that meerly by virtue of their own Authority they might justly challenge the Faith of Mankind.

But to the undoubted Integrity of the Witnesses, God was pleased to adde a more forcible Testimony of his own, by enduing them with a power of working Miracles; and thereby demonstrating to the World that

that as they who pretended to be his Ambassadors were serious and in good earnest in their Design, so was he too. And in truth, unless he had endued them with this power from above, they could never have had the courage so much as to have undertaken the work; but instead of travelling into all parts of the World, to tell a Story to the People, of which they could not understand one word, as being utter Strangers to the Language in which they spake, they must have concluded it a wiser course to resolve upon mending their old Nets, and betaking themselves to their old Trade. But this *Eusebius* has excellently represented to us in their own Persons. In that when our Saviour commanded them to go and teach all Nations, they ought to have replied upon him, how is this possible, that we who are unlearned Persons and understand onely our mother Tongue, should discourse in their severall Languages to the Romans, Grecians, Egyptians, Persians, Armenians, Chaldeans, Scythians, Indians, and all the other numberless Nations of the barbarous World: And if we cannot (as without a Miracle we cannot) to what purpose is it to travel from Pole to Pole, and tell an unintelligible Story to the People. Nay, how can we so much as dream that it is possible for us to perswade them to renounce their Country-Gods, and to worship a new and unknown Deity? What eloquence, what unheard-of power of words must we be inspired with, to encourage us to set about such an Undertaking, to reverse all the ancient Laws and Religions in the World, and to introduce every where not onely a different but a contrary state of things? These things (says he) if they should have objected, he could have return'd them no other answer, had he not prevented the Objection by the

*Præp. Evang.  
Lib. 3. Sect. 6.*

promise of his miraculous Assistance. And therefore, when they were obedient to his command, it is evident that they were already, by his Divine Works, convinced of his Divine Authority. For that they believed in him must be granted in that they so readily obeyed him, in a little time leaving their own native Country to instruct the World in the Faith of Jesus, and soon saw the promise of his Divine Assistance not onely made good, but abundantly exceeded by their incredible success.

But when they went about such a Work as this, after what manner think you did they address themselves to the People? Did they go into the Marketplace, and there summon up an Auditory of all Passengers, or did they apply themselves to particular Persons? Take which you please, I pray which way did they win their Attention, when they began their Story at the most ignominious Death of their Master, whom they set forth as the onely Instructour of Mankind; the Son of God, and Saviour of the World? For if they had conceal'd that part of his History that related to his Passion and Sufferings, and onely trumpeted out his great Vertues and much greater Miracles, it had been very difficult to overcome the Faith of Mankind to a report so very strange and in it self incredible. And yet if they had done this, they might have kept their Story within some bounds of probability. But when they acknowledged that the same Person, whom they magnified as a God, lived like a miserable Man, encountred perpetual Affronts and Contumelies, and at last suffer'd the Death of the worst and most ignominious Malefactors, who that heard them, would not laugh at the gross contradiction of their own Story? Or at least how could any Man be so credulous, as upon the bare report of un-

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known Persons to believe that a Person so shamefully executed, should be so conspicuously risen from the dead and ascended into Heaven, when he was not able to rescue himself from so dishonourable an Execution? However who could have been so easie as to forsake the Religion of their Countrey, and that way of Worship that had been used, as they believed, from the beginning of the World, by the meer Authority of a company of mean and ignorant Mechanicks and a crucified Malefactor, who, notwithstanding his contemptible Life and dishonourable Death, would bear himself out as the onely Son of God? While (says he) I revolve these things in my Mind, and consider the improbability of the Story in it self, I cannot imagine how it is possible meerly by their own bare report to prevail upon the Faith of any one Man. And yet when I reflect upon the strange Effect of their Endeavours, and that such despicable Persons as they were in themselves should prevail upon such innumerable multitudes of Men, and that not in barbarous and obscure places onely, but in the most famous Cities of *Rome, Alexandria, Antiochia*; nay, in all parts of the World, *Europe, Asia and Africa*, I am forced to enquire into the rational Account of so strange an Event, and find that nothing could ever have brought it about but a manifest Divine Power, whereby they were able when they pleased, as we find in their Records, to work Miracles, and that alone was more than enough to vanquish and subdue the minds of Men to their Authority. For when they saw their Miracles, they could not but be concern'd to enquire by what Means they wrought such Effects: And when they were told that they were empower'd by Jesus, and did whatever they did by virtue of his Authority, that alone over-ruled their Minds, and without farther proof

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commanded entire submission to his Doctrine. So that it was not the evidence of the thing it self, nor the credit of their Testimony, but the undeniable power of God discovering it self in their miraculous Actions, that so easily subdued the World before them.

And it is impossible (as *Origen* observes) *Contra Celſ. l. 1. P. 34.* that the Apostles of our Lord without these miraculous Powers should ever have been able to have moved their Auditours, or perswaded them to desert the Institutions of their Country, and embrace their new Doctrine, and having once embraced it, to defend it to the death and defie all manner of dangers in its defence. But then, as it was impossible to have wrought this wonderfull change in the World without these miraculous Powers, so with them it was impossible for Men to withstand so clear a demonstration of Divine Authority. And therefore they did not so properly convert the World by their Preaching as by their Actions, whilst they perform'd such things as (though they themselves had never opened their Minds) proclaim'd their Divine Commission. And when People were once convinced of that, little perswasion would serve the turn to engage them to the belief of that Doctrine, which by their works they had already proved to be of Divine Authority. And this, if we consult the Apostolical History, was the usual method of their proceeding, first to shew a Miracle and then to declare its meaning.

Thus the first time that they appeared in publick, after their Commission to preach the Gospel to the utmost parts of the Earth, was at the great Festival of *Pentecost*, when Profelytes of all Nations resorted to *Jerusalem*, to whom they preached in their several Languages; and this being noised abroad that a few  
illiterate

illiterate Fishermen were all on a sudden inspired with the gift of speaking all the Languages of the known and habitable World, curiosity brought great multitudes to hear them, and when the multitude was convinced of and amased at the Miracle, then was it a proper time for Saint *Peter* to begin his Sermon of the Resurrection of Jesus, and prove it by their own Testimony. *This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all Witnesses.* That is, we that are, as you see, endued with this miraculous gift of speaking all Languages, in order to our preaching in the name of Jesus to all Nations, do here assure you that we were no less than Eye-witnesses of his Resurrection. And there lay the main strength and efficacy of Saint *Peter's* Sermon, it was the Miracle that so soon converted thousands to his Doctrine.

Acts 2. 32.

So again, when it was blazon'd abroad that the famous Cripple, that was so well known to every Boy in the City to have kept for so many years together his begging stage at the chief Gate of the Temple, styled Beautifull, because made, as *Josephus* informs us, of Corinthian Brass, was so miraculously healed by one of the company onely by a word speaking, this could not but enflame their curiosity, and every Man was concern'd to satisfy himself in the truth or falshood of a report so near and yet so prodigious. And when they had (as it was an easie matter) assured themselves of its truth and reality, this could not but provoke them to an eager enquiry after the meaning of so strange a thing. And when they were assured that the Miracle was wrought by the Followers of that Jesus, who was lately crucified, and that they declared themselves Eye-witnesses of his Resurrection from the dead, and withall professed that they were endued with this

power

De Bello Jud.  
l. 7, 12.

power of Miracles from Heaven, onely for an undoubted evidence and confirmation of the truth of their Testimony, they had not power to withstand the force of such a mighty and astonishing demonstration. And it was this demonstration of the Spirit and of Power (as Saint *Paul* styles it) rather than the strength of their Arguments, as cogent as they were, that first baffled the unbelieving World into Christianity, and forced in the assents of Men to the truth and Divine Authority of its Doctrine. They did not put their Auditours to the trouble of examining the validity of their Testimony, but prevented all enquiries by this infallible confirmation. The evidence of their Miracles was such an irrefragable Argument of the truth of their Testimony, as surmounted the power of all other demonstration. And what rational Man would stay to expect any other proof of a Divine Testimony, that has seen it unquestionably attested by a Divine Power? Or who could doubt and dispute, after he had seen Devils dispossess'd, the Sick healed, and the dead raised? This was such an almighty attestation to their preaching, that it upbraided away their Scruples, and bore away their Understandings. And by this means it was that the Gospel prevail'd so easily and so speedily over all the World. Its first preachers converted whole Cities and Nations in a moment, and founded new Churches upon one undeniable Miracle; and nothing less, considering all circumstances of things, and all the disadvantages under which it laboured, could so soon have propagated the Gospel over all the World.

And thus if we trace the Apostolical History, we scarce find any thing transacted without a Miracle, insomuch that the People at length familiarly resorted to them for the cure of all kind of Diseases,

*Acts* 5. 12. And this power was so vulgarly known at that time, that Saint *Paul* insists upon it as the proof of his true Apostleship, *Rom.* 15. 18, 18. *2 Cor.* 12. 12. which had been too absurd a thing to alledge to his Followers in confutation of his Enemies, if it had been a meer Fiction; for if it were they knew it to be so, when he appeals to the Signs and Wonders he had already wrought among them, and if he had wrought none they could not but convict him of falshood. But though I have already proved the certainty of the Records of the New Testament, and so might from thence rationally enough make out the truth of these Apostolical Miracles; and though I have in part proved the sufficiency of the Tradition of the Church to attest both them and all things contained in them, and shall anon more distinctly shew the undoubted and uninterrupted conveyance of it from the very Apostles themselves, so that if they had not been true, they could never have gain'd belief; yet in this present Argument I will not build upon these or any other suppositions: and indeed if I suppose them, this Argument would be needless; for once granting the Scriptures to be true and authentick Records of the Apostles actions, to what purpose is it to go about to prove that they were endued with a power of Miracles, when the Record alone is an undoubted proof of it? And therefore I onely argue from the nature of the thing it self, *viz.* That it is impossible the Christian Faith, lying under all those disadvantages above represented, could ever have been propagated with that speed and facility that it was all the World over, any other way than by this power of working Miracles; and on the contrary, that supposing this evidence that they gave the World by their Miracles, that then it was natural and almost necessary that

they should meet with the success they did. Here then lies the force of my present Argument, that when it was impossible they should compass their design any other way, and when it was natural, if they took this course, to succeed in it, and when it is certain that they had such wonderfull success, that is a manifest Argument that they were endued with such a power of Miracles as is reported of them. And therefore I did not produce those Testimonies of Scripture but now alledged as proofs to justify the truth of the Argument, but onely as instances to exemplifie the practice of it, *v. g.* how incredible it is that 3000 People, when they heard the Apostles affirm at *Whitson-tide* that the same Jesus, whom they had seen so shamefully executed at *Easter*, was risen from the Grave and ascended into Heaven, should so immediately believe them upon their bare Report; but when they beheld that miraculous effect of the Holy Ghost in them, whereby such illiterate Persons were enabled to speak all manner of Languages, that alone could not but satisfy them of the truth of their Testimony. So that I argue not from the truth of the Record but from the nature of the thing it self, which could not have been done any other way than as it is recorded to have been done.

I might here also confirm the truth of their Miracles by the confession of their greatest Enemies, in that I do not find that ever any of them denied them to have been done, but instead of that ascribe them to the power of Magick, though how foolish that evasion is I shall shew when I come to consider their evasions to this Argument; at present this very surmise is a plain confession of the reality of the thing it self, and that goes a great way as to evidence when coming out of the mouth of an Adversary; but

but this having suggested, I shall not farther insist upon it.

§ XXIV. Onely there is one thing remaining that adds great force to the strength of this Argument, *viz.* That this power was not meerly confined to the Apostolical Age, but was continued down to the next Ages of the Church; which if true, it is an undeniable Evidence of the truth of the Apostolical Miracles in particular, and of the Divinity of the Christian Religion in general. And yet of the truth of these we have no one thing for which we have better Records. It is unanimously attested by all Writers of those times, and that in such a publick and extraordinary way, as raises their Testimony up to certain demonstration, for they do not barely report it, but they upbraid it to all their Adversaries as a thing undeniable; they challenge Emperours, Proconsuls, the whole Senate in their Apologies and publick Writings to convince them by experiment; they urge it in their Disputes with learned Men, and dare them to contradict it; and not onely offer to cast the whole Controversie upon this one-proof, but their Lives too.

Now all this they could never have been so foolish or so impudent to have done, if it had not been true; or if they were, they could not have escaped that disgrace that was due to their folly and impudence. And yet they were so far from being ever convicted of forgery, that it was chiefly by virtue of these challenges that the Christian Faith so wonderfully prevail'd in all places. Many and pregnant are the passages to this purpose in the Writings of *Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, Saint Cyprian, Saint Austin, Origen, Arnobius, Lactantius, Minutius Felix, Prudentius, Firmicus,*

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and indeed all, that appear'd in defence of the Christian Faith in the first Ages of the Church: and though most of them have been often alledged by modern Authours, yet being of a peculiar use as to my Argument, when join'd to the Apostolical Miracles, it will be very requisite to represent at one view the most material passages to this purpose.

*Apol. 1.* I begin with *Justin Martyr*, who lived in the next Age to the Apostles, who tells the Emperour and Senate, that they may, if they please, inform themselves of our Lord's power over their Demons by what was daily done under their own eyes, when so many who had been tortur'd and possessed by them, throughout the whole World and in the very City of *Rome* it self, whom all their several kinds of Exorcists were not able to relieve, had been often cured by Christians through the name of Jesus that was crucified under *Pontius Pilate*, and that at this very time they still cured them. And the same thing he frequently upbraids to *Trypho* the Jew in their personal Conference, which, had it been a meer Fable, he could never have done with so much confidence; or if he had, he could not have passed without confutation, especially when in a short time after he published it to the World.

And in the same Age *Irenæus* proves against the Hereticks the right succession of the Catholick Church to the Apostles from their power of working the same Miracles, as casting out Devils, foretelling things to come, curing the Sick by imposition of hands, and raising the Dead, many whereof, he says, conversed among them many years after; beside innumerable other Gifts, which the Church throughout the World does every day freely exercise in the name of Jesus Christ crucified.



cified under *Pontius Pilate*, for the benefit of Mankind.

But *Tertullian*, as his manner is, speaks *Apol. c. 23.* very daringly, for having convinced the Heathens of their folly in worshipping their Gods, by Argument, he challenges them to doe it by matter of Fact. Set, says he, before your publick Seats of Judgment any person possessed, as you suppose, by some Demon, and there let any Christian onely command him to confess what he is, and the Spirit shall as certainly acknowledge himself to be a Devil, as at other times he confidently pretends to be a God. Nay, take any person that you suppose inspired by any of your greatest Deities, be it *Ceres* or *Æsculapius*, and if they do not confess themselves to be Devils, not daring to lie to a Christian, let that foolish Christian, that undertakes it and fails of doing it, pay for his confidence with his blood. What can be more evident than this matter of fact? What more satisfactory than this kind of proof? The certainty of the truth lies before you, its own power will maintain it self, for it is a ridiculous thing to suspect that this can be done by any magick tricks, believe not one word that I say, if your own Eyes and Ears do not force you to it.

What a bold challenge is here to appeal to the Senses of their Enemies, and that with the hazard and pawn of their Lives? It is such an height of assurance as I think nothing can exceed, though his appeal to *Scapula* seems to equal it, when he refers him to the Officers of his own Court, some of whose Servants had been healed by Christians; but not to insist, says he, upon inferiour People, I could name persons of Quality and Reputation that have been so cured, and particularly *Severus* the Father of the Emperour *Antoninus Caracalla*, who was so cured by *Proculus*,  
whom

whom he ever after highly esteemed, and entertain'd him in his Court till his Death. And to this he subjoins the Testimony of *M. Aurelius* concerning the Miracle of the Christian Souldiers in the German Expedition, That when the Imperial Army was reduced to great streights, and ready to perish through thirst, and in that extremity of weakness forced to Battel by the Enemy, the Christians, by the power of their Prayers, immediately drew down great showrs of Rain upon their own Camp, and Thunder and Lightning upon the Enemies. This he here urges upon the President *Scapula* as a thing vulgarly known; and in his Apology to the Senate proves it by the Letters that the Emperour had not long before sent to themselves. Which certainly he could never have been so presumptuous as to have done, had there then been

*Animad. Eu-*  
*seb. p. 222.*

no such Letters extant: and yet *Scaliger*, to make it as doubtfull as he can, has found out a very lean Conjecture, *viz.* That *Tertullian* does not positively affirm the thing, but onely says, *Si Literæ M. Aurelii requirantur*, If you make search after the Letter of *M. Aurelius*, from whence he infers that *Tertullian* himself never saw it, because of his hypotheticalal way of expression.

But 'tis a strange thing that so great a Critick as *Scaliger* should not know that there is no one form of Speech more vulgar with all kind of Writers, than when they are most assured of any thing, to express it hypothetically, and thereby refer what themselves certainly know to the farther enquiry of others; so that the most natural meaning of the words is this, *viz.* As to this matter I need not take pains to satisfie you, which you may do your selves, if you please, by examining the Emperour's own Letter to your own House. Neither is his suggestion much more  
weighty

weighty when he infers that this Letter was not extant in the time of *Eusebius*, because if it had, so diligent a Writer would have preserved a Copy of it. And so it is very likely he would, had it been extant in the Greek Tongue, but being written in the Latin to which he was a stranger, it lay out of the compass of his diligence. Yes, but, says he, it was the custom of *Eusebius* to translate Latin Monuments into the Greek Tongue, as he has several passages out of *Tertullian*. One would think that *Eusebius* had familiarly cited the Writings of *Tertullian*, whereas he never quoted but one short Book of his, and that is his Apology, which it is very probable that *Eusebius* himself did not translate, but made use of another's translation, especially when it is plain by those few passages that he has made use of, that it is very short of the usual care and diligence of *Eusebius*. So that though *Scaliger* have proved the Letter now extant at the end of *Justin Martyr* to be spurious, as is too evident from its unskillfull inscription, yet that there were such Letters then written is as evident from this Appeal of *Tertullian* to the Senate it self not long after the thing was done.

However, as for the substance of the Story, that was so well known as to be painted upon Tables, some whereof *Themistius* says he saw in his time, the Emperour himself being drawn with his Hands and Eyes lift up, and the Souldiers receiving the Rain in their Head-pieces. Neither is it less vouched by Heathen than by Christian Writers, as *Dion*, *Julius Capitolinus*, *Claudian*, *Lampridius*, who attribute it partly to the Emperour's own prayers to *Jupiter*, but chiefly to the enchantments of Chaldean or Jewish Magicians, *i. e.* Christians, who by the Heathens were looked upon as no other than Jews, and were at that time generally

nerally esteemed Magicians for those strange things that were reported to be done by them. So that these very Writers have unwittingly cast the honour of this Miracle upon the Christians alone, in that onely they, at least no other Jews were at that time famous for Magick, by which these Writers suppose it to have been effected. However the matter of Fact being put past question by so unanimous an attestation of it, I leave it to the judgment of any Man of common sense whether it were done by Magick or by Miracle.

But with as much assurance as *Tertullian* insists upon the Miracles of Christians, *Origen*, if it be possible, out-does him, sending numberless challenges *l. 1. p. 5.* upon this point. Here he begins both his dispute and his triumph over *Celsus*. We

have such a proof of the Divinity of our Discipline, as your Greekish way of demonstration cannot afford, that which the Apostle calls the demonstration of Spirit and Power, *i. e.* Prophecies and Miracles; and of the truth of the latter beside many other Proofs

we have this assured evidence that we see *p. 7.* Instances of it even at this day. And when *Celsus* sets it at the front of his Calumnies that the

Christians cast out Devils by Diabolical Inchantments and Invocations, *Origen* insults over the Calumny, because, says he, whatever they doe, all the World knows it is done by invoking Christ's not the Devil's name. Though beside that, this is a plain confession from an Epicurean, who really believed there was no such thing as a Devil, that the Christians did something so extraordinary, that no probable account could be given of them, unless they were done by some power more than humane. And so again

*p. 35.* *Origen* having asserted the certainty of the Apostolical Miracles, both from the wonderfull success

cess of their Doctrine and the undoubted Records of them, he farther proves it by those many Instances and Examples of it, that were to be seen at that time, of many whereof himself had been an Eye-witness; and though *Celsus* and other such Sceptical and Atheistical Persons, that are beforehand resolved to believe nothing of this kind, may make themselves merry with it, yet God bears Witness with my own Conscience that I do not endeavour by any falshoods but by various miraculous Examples to recommend the Divine Religion of Jesus. So that here he does not barely vouch the truth of his Assertion, but burthens his Conscience with it, which is no less than attesting it upon Oath. And in another place, when *Celsus* scoffingly asks what wonderfull things our Saviour did at his Passion, *Origen* answers that he could tell him of a great many both out of the Christian and Heathen Records, but yet quitting them all, it is more than enough for the satisfaction of all that are ingenuous, that at this day Diseases are cured onely by virtue of his name. And again, that himself had seen many, who by having the name of God and Christ call'd over them, had been deliver'd from the greatest Evils, Frenzy and Madnes, and infinite other Distempers, which neither Men nor Devils had been able to cure. And speaking elsewhere of the Christians power over Devils, this, says he, is familiarly put in practice by the vulgar sort of Christians, the grace of Christ thereby discovering the contemptibleness and infirmity of the Devils, when there was no need (as your Philosophers dream) of learning or any thing extaordinary in order to their Ejection. I might add divers other passages out of his Writings, but these are enough, if not too many.

After him follows *Minutius Felix* a famous Advocate at *Rome*, who with the same assurance appeals to the very Senses of his Adversaries. Every Man knows (says he) and you your selves, that the Devils, whenever they are tortur'd and vexed out of the Bodies that they possess, by the Prayers of Christians, are forced to confess themselves to be but Devils; even *Saturn*, *Serapis* and *Jupiter*, and whatsoever other Demon you worship are forced to confess what they are, and you may be sure that they would not belie themselves especially in your presence; and therefore we onely desire you to take their own Testimony and their own confession. For when they are adjured by the name of the onely true God, it puts them into tremblings and convulsion fits, and forces them to quit their possession.

And in the same manner does Saint *Cyprian* challenge *Demetrian*, a stubborn and a prejudiced Enemy, to come and see the Demons whom he worshipt how they were as it were whipt by Christians out of the Bodies that they possessed, when, weeping and howling they confess that the time of their Judgment is come, come you and satisfie your self that what I affirm, is true. But there is no end of these challenges in the primitive Writers of the Christian Church, and I am tired with so often transcribing the same thing, and therefore if any Man desire it, he may reade it repeated in *Eusebius* contra *Hieroclem*, c. 1. in *Lactantius* de *Justitiâ*, l. 2. c. 15. l. 4. c. 27. l. 5. c. 21, 22. in *Firmicus* de *Errore profanæ Religionis*, in *Prudentius* *Apotheos*. in *Theodoret* de *curand. Græc. affect.* Serm. 3.

And now after all, it is no doubt very credible that such a number of learned and sober Men, that lived in such remote and distant places, should be such impudent Sots and Fools, as to publish the truth of such things.

things upon their own certain knowledge, to appeal to the Senses of their greatest Adversaries, to challenge them to convince them by trial and experiment, and to devolve the issue of the whole cause upon the event, and that with the pawn of their Lives, in the face of the Sun, in their publick disputes with Philosophers, and Apologies to Emperours and Proconsuls, 'tis likely (I say) that they should doe all this, had it all been a manifest and palpable Fiction.

§. XXV. This is that mighty demonstration of power, to which the primitive Christians constantly appeal'd with the greatest assurance of Mind to the very face of their fiercest Enemies. How then could they avoid its force? by denying it? Never, nay they confesse it as a thing undeniable. Thus *Hierocles* freely grants our Saviour's Miracles, but then he says that they onely proved him to be a Divine Man, but not what he pretended to be, a God. But if they were true, then whatever he was, they prove him to be what he pretended to be, and that is enough to our present purpose against Paganism and Infidelity, viz. That he came from God, and after that whether he were to be truly and properly to be styl'd God, or onely esteem'd of as an Ambassadour from him is a dispute that supposes his Divine Commission. So that this very confession of *Hierocles* proves no less, because we all know that he profess'd to teach and act by no less Authority.

Euseb. adv.  
Hier. l. 1.

In the next place the Emperour *Julian* does not deny but diminish the wonder of our Saviour's Miracles, in that there is nothing so very remarkable recorded of him, unless to cure the Lame and the Blind, and to cast out Devils in the Towns of *Galilee* may be

reckoned among the works of greatest magnificence.

But this is objected rather like an Empe-  
*Demonst. Evang.* rour than a Philosopher. For, as *Hue-*  
*prop. 9. cap. 39.* *tius* very well replies to it, it is the grea-  
*sect. 2.* test work of ambitious Princes to raise  
 Armies, to dispeople Nations, to erect prodigious Build-  
 ings, here to demolish a great City, and there to re-  
 edifie a greater. But alas these are works within the  
 power of Art and Nature, and are to be wrought out  
 by the wit or the industry of Men, whereas those that  
 were wrought by Jesus were quite of another stamp,  
 and such as could never have been effected by any  
 power less than Divine. These are works truly mag-  
 nificent and becoming the greatness of the Son of God,  
 and therefore it was very weakly objected of a great  
 pretender to Philosophy that he did nothing so extra-  
 ordinary, when to raise one Man from the Grave pro-  
 ceeds from a power that infinitely exceeds that of *A-*  
*Alexander* or *Cæsar* in sending so many millions thither.  
 But the most usual shifts made use of to evade the  
 force of this Argument, is either to ascribe all this  
 train of Miracles to the power of Magick, or to vye  
 against them the wonderfull works of other Men, that  
 never made any such lofty pretences. And at this  
 lock we find *Celsus* at every turn, and whenever he is  
 pressed hard, he still takes shelter in one of these eva-  
 sions, and for that reason we cannot avoid to take no-  
 tice of them.

And first as for the pretence of Magick, its own  
 vanity is its own confutation, for if he  
*V. Euseb. Dem.* were such a Magician as is pretended,  
*Ev. l. 3. § 6.* then either himself was the first Inven-  
 tour and Master of his own Art, or he  
 learnt it from others; if he had no Teacher, and yet  
 acquired the skill of doing things so extraordinary,  
 that



that alone seems something divine and wonderfull, that a young Man without Learning, without Books, without Tutours, without Instructions, should by the strength of his own Faculties arrive to an higher degree of knowledge than all the learned Men in the World beside; for it cannot be denied that the Actions recorded of him infinitely exceed the very pretences of all others. Yes but, say they, he had Masters in *Egypt* from whom he learnt all those Magick Mysteries, by which he afterward made himself so famous in *Judæa*. But why then do we hear of no such eminent Magicians at that time either in *Egypt* or any where else beside himself? Why was there no fame of them in the World before his Accusation? Why was there not any the least memory of them preserved, whilst his Name is so universally celebrated? or when did any Magician from the beginning of the World, either among the Greeks or Barbarians doe such things as he did?

But what need I say more, our Saviour's works themselves are the fullest confutation of this vain pretence, for whatever the powers of Magick may be, no Man can ever believe that any thing less than a Divine Power could with a word speaking cure all manner of Diseases, give sight to Men born Blind, recover dying Persons at a distance, and raise the Dead themselves. To ascribe such actions as these meerly to Magick is a conceit so utterly extravagant, that it were an affront to the understanding of Mankind, at least at this time, to think it needed any other confutation beside its own impossibility. Though if any Man will be so humourfomly credulous in his Infidelity as to pretend some such suspicion, I shall onely refer him to a smart Discourse of *Lib. 1. Arnobius* in answer to it, who first pursues all

our Saviour's miraculous actions and the manner of their performance, and then appeals to the common sense of Mankind concerning each particular, how it was possible that they could ever have been effected by any power less than Divine. But in my Opinion this thing is so evident of it self that at this time it would be a very needless piece of Industry to spend so much pains upon it, whatever it might have been in his Age, when it was so easie, and indeed so usual a thing to impose upon the superstitious vulgar with such vain Romances. Infomuch that the Enemies to Christianity were not content to perswade them that Christ was a Magician, but told them that he was a Teacher of Magick too, and writ a Book to instruct his Disciples in the same Art, especially *Peter* and *Paul* to whom he inscribed it. So ignorantly do these Calumniatours falsifie, when it is so well known that our Saviour had left the World a considerable time before *Paul* became his Disciple; but beside that the story is altogether groundless and without proof; and if it were not, yet it confutes it self by its own silliness and absurdity, *viz.* That the Apostles should learn to doe those things that they did by Rules of Art. But either these Men that tell us of this magick Book have seen it, or they have not; if they have not, they speak at random; if they have, why are they not able to doe the same things themselves? why do they not cure their sick Friends, or conjure them out of their Graves? As for the Fable of the Jews, that our Saviour had stoln out of the Temple the *Shem Hampa-rash*, or the Name of God written in its proper Characters, which they say it was not lawfull for them vulgarly to doe, and by virtue of that was enabled to work all kind of Miracles, it is a Fable so very despicable, that I am ashamed to repeat it, and therefore much more scorn to confute it.

§ XXVI. Their next evasion to this Argument is to vye other Stories with that of our Saviour and his Apostles, and thereby to abate either their wonder or their credit; and this they chiefly doe as to the Resurrection, especially *Celsus*, who has in this point more than any other shewn the strength of his Malice and the weakness of his Cause. And he is so weak as to fetch Testimonies out of the fabulous Age it self, and to compare the descents of *Orpheus* and *Hercules* into Hell, and of *Rampsinus*, who went thither to play at Tables with *Ceres*, with our Saviour's Resurrection; but such trifles as these are to be laughed at, not to be answered; and therefore in the next Book he pieces up these Fables out of the Poets with some Examples out of Historians; but those so remote, so obscure, so lamentably attested, and so altogether without any grounds or motives of belief, that the Metamorphoses of the Poets are scarce more incredible. And therefore *Origen* very well puts it to him whether he believes the stories that he relates, or not; if he does not, then they are nothing to his purpose; but if he does, then he shews his strange partiality that whilst he rejects the story of our Saviour, he believes things so ill-vouched in comparison of it. For it is not the matter of the Narrative but the motives of credibility that are the ground and reason of our Assent, and the same Relation may either be a meer Fable or an undoubted Truth as the matter of Fact it self, and the onely thing that makes the difference is the Testimony wherewith it is vouched, and that is the onely difference between the story of our Saviour's Resurrection, that is so strongly confirm'd by all that Testimony that I have represented; whereas the Tales that they oppose to it, are destitute of all manner of

proof,

Orig. adv.  
Cels. l. 2.

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proof, and when pursued home to their original Authority appear no better than poetick Fables.

The first and chiefeft of them is that of *Aristeas Proconnesus*, who is reported by *Herodotus* to have often died and lived again. But upon what Authority? Nothing but an old-wives Tradition among the People. But to whom did he appear? First to the People of *Proconnesus*, and between two or three hundred years after to those of *Metapontum*. How then was any Man at that distance of time able to affirm that it was the same Man? But as vain a Fable as it is, it is not, as *Huetius* conjectures, without some ground of History, in that there was such a Man as *Aristeas* of great Authority in the Town of *Proconnesus* about the Reign of *Cyrus*; but beside him there was another in the fabulous Age, the Son of *Apollo*, whom the Poets feign'd to have taken a sudden flight to Heaven; now it was easie to report of the one what was feign'd of the other, especially by his own Country-men, it being the custom of the Greeks to apply the deeds of their Gods to the honour of their own Citizens; and here they had an especial advantage from the Identity of their Names, and that is the most natural foundation of the whole story, that he was Namesake with one of whom these things had been fabled of old time. Another is, that there was a Poem call'd *Arimaspea* falsely ascribed to this *Aristeas*; where the Poet begins, as the usual manner of Poets is, with the imagination of his being conveyed out of himself by *Apollo* to a certain place where he might have the most convenient Prospect of what he was to describe. Now what he thus spake in a Poetick Scheme, they afterward understood in rigour of Speech, and when once the mistake was raised, it easily supported it self

*Demonst. Evang.*  
c. 142. § 6.

it self among the common People, from whom *Herodotus*, as himself confesses, a long time after received it. Now is not this a worthy story to vye with our Saviour's Resurrection, when this has all the proofs in the World of its truth and certainty; that not one, but on the contrary all the signs of folly and fiction? And it were easie to give the same Account of *Cleomedes*, *Hermotimus*, *Epimenides*, but the stories are so apparently fabulous, and so utterly void of all original Authority, and so very like meer Mythology, that seriously to confute them were to betray my own Understanding and affront my Readers.

But beside these Romances of Antiquity they insist upon some few Miracles of a later date, but those too so slenderly attested, that onely to compare them is enough to destroy them. Those of most seeming credit are the stories of *Vespasian* and *Apollonius Tyanæus*. As for *Vespasian*, he was strangely befoo'd with the Ambition of being the Messias, that is as he understood it, the Monarch of the World, which some say was the first rise and occasion of his Glory; for being naturally inclined to an easie belief of Prophecies and Predictions, and there being at that time (as the Roman Historians attest) a strong and unanimous Opinion among the Eastern People of an Universal Monarch, that was foretold by some ancient Prophets about that time to come out of *Judæa*, he first applies this Prophecie to himself and then applies himself to fulfill it. *Percrebuerat Oriente toto* (says *Suetonius*) *vetus & constans Opinio, esse in fatis ut eo tempore Judæâ profecti rerum potirentur.* And so *Tacitus*, *Pluribus persuasio inerat antiquis Sacerdotum literis contineri, eo ipso tempore ut valesceret Oriens, profectique Judæâ rerum potirentur.* And this, he says, was the main reason

*In Vita  
Vespas.*

*Lib. 5.  
Histor.*

of the Rebellion and ruine of the Jews, the application of this Propheſie to themſelves, whereas it is evident from all circumſtances that it marked out *Vefpaſian* and *Titus*.

And then beſide the Propheſies themſelves, he was groſſy abuſed (as vain-glory is ſufficiently credulous) by the flatteries of *Joſephus*, who accommodated all the Characters and Deſcriptions of the Meſſias to his Perſon and the circumſtances of his Affairs. And not onely ſo, but he added great authority to his Prediction by his great confidence, perfevering in his flattery in ſpite of *Vefpaſian's* unkindneſs; for when he had caſt him into Priſon, *Joſephus* made light of it, and aſſured himſelf and his Friends, that he ſhould in a ſhort time be delivered by *Vefpaſian* himſelf, but that it ſhould not be done till after he was poſſeſt of the

Suet. in  
Vefpaſ. c. 5.

Empire, *Unus ex nobilibus captivis Joſephus, cum conjiceretur in vincula, conſtantiſſimè aſſeveravit fore, ut ab eodem brevi ſolveretur, verùm jam Imperatore.* And

Eufeb. Eccleſ.  
Hiſt. l. 3. c. 12.

it ſeems he was ſo taken with this conceit of his Meſſiahſhip, that he is ſaid to have ſearched after and ſlain all that pretended to have been of the poſterity of *David*, thereby to ſecure the Title to himſelf againſt all Rivals and Competitours.

Fluſht with theſe pleaſing Omens in *Judæa*, but much more with ſome answerable ſucceſs, finding all his Competitours removed but onely *Vitellius*, whom he feared leaſt of all, he repairs to *Rome*, and by the way viſits *Egypt* to ſecure thoſe parts, or to fulfill a *Sibyllan* Propheſie; and here he was more abuſed with the flatteries of *Apollonius Tyanæus* than he had been before by *Joſephus*; for he was no ſooner come to *Alexandria* (where that wandring Pedant hapned to  
be

be at that time) but he begged of him his confirmation of those Omens that he brought along with him from *Judæa*, begging of him upon his knees to make him Emperour; to whom *Apollonius* with the state and authority of a God, answered I have made thee so, viz. by my Interest with the Gods, and he so far gratified the vanity of the Man, as to seem to receive the Empire at his hands, and thus was he assured of his Empire by Men of greatest Reputation for both Religions; for as there was no Jew at that time to be compared to *Josephus* for knowledge and learning in the Antiquities of his own Nation; so *Apollonius* was then the most famous and renowned Saint in the World for the Heathen Religion: now whilst he stayed at *Alexandria*, a Blind and a Lame Man, being warn'd so to doe by the God *Serapis*, address themselves to him for a Cure, and obtain it; so that considering the circumstances of the story by it self, it looks so like fraud and flattery as to betray it self. For the report of his having been abused into the conceit of being the Messias in *Judæa*, being probably come to *Alexandria*, where great numbers of Jews resided, it is likely that they would not come short of their Country-men in doing honour to the Emperour, and so put these two counterfeits upon the design, and there are enough of such dissembling Cripples to be had in great Cities; for it being foretold that the Messias when he came should among other Miracles cure the Lame and the Blind, they thought it an acceptable piece of flattery thus to way-lay his Ambition: or rather this design was set on foot by the Egyptians, a fawning, crafty and flattering sort of People; but chiefly by *Apollonius*, for the honour of that Religion for which he was so zealous, and therefore by this artifice confirm'd his own

Philost.  
l. 5. c. 9.

prediction of the Empire by the Authority of his Gods, for they were sent on their Errand by *Serapis*. But whoever contrived it, and however it pleased the Emperour's humour, it at first surpris'd him, so as to move his laughter and scorn, and to refuse the attempt with a very great deal either of seeming or real Reluctancy; though at last he suffer'd himself to be overcome by the great importunity of the by-standers and the assurance of the Physicians that the thing was possible, and then perform'd it in publick with all imaginable pomp and solemnity, either as if himself had been beforehand privy to the plot, or had now smelt out the design of the Complement.

Now what wise Man could compare this one theatrical piece of Court-flattery with all the Miracles of our Saviour and his Apostles? the meer suspicion of these pretended Cripples being counterfeits, at least the absolute uncertainty of it, destroys its credit; whereas the impossibility of suspecting any fraud or flattery in our Saviour's Miracles is an undoubted demonstration of their reality. Beside that, the Emperour was assured by the Physicians that the Men were not past a natural Cure, and so not to be compared with our Saviour's Miracles, most whereof were done upon Persons naturally incurable. But to wave this, I cannot give so much credit to a story that smells so rankly of imposture as to suppose the possibility of its truth, and therefore I shall onely desire the Reader to compare it as he finds it under so many disadvantages of suspicion, with the credibility of all those motives of belief that we have produced for the History of our Saviour's Life, Death and Resurrection, and then leave it to his own ingenuity to judge whether it be reasonable to oppose one story so miserably suspicious to a thousand others guarded with all the advantages.



vantages of proof against all possible cavils and exceptions.

§ XXVII. But the Man of Wonders is *Apollonius Tyanaeus*, of whom they boast and insult as the true Heathen Messias; in that he wrought not, as *Vespasian* did, one or two chance Miracles, but his whole Life was all prodigy, and equal to our Saviour's both for the number and the wonder of his Works. But here first we have in part already shewn what undoubted Records we have of the Life of Jesus, whereas all the credit of *Apollonius* his History depends upon the Authority of one single Man, who, beside that he lived an hundred years after him, ventured nothing, as the Apostles did, in confirmation of its truth, but onely composed it in his Study, thereby, as appears from his frequent digressions, to take occasion of communicating all the learning he had raked together to the World. Nay, so far was he from incurring any loss by the Work, that he was set upon it by a great Empress, whose religious Zeal in the Cause would be sure to see him well rewarded. And though he made use of the Commentaries of *Damis*, the inseparable Companion of *Apollonius*, yet he confesses that *Damis* himself never publisht his own Commentaries, but that a Friend of *Damis* communicated them to the Empress, which himself might probably have forged (as is common in Courts) to pick her pocket. However, as for *Damis* himself it is evident, from *Philostratus* his whole Story, that he was a very simple Man, and that *Apollonius* onely pickt him up as a fit *Sancho Panche* to exercise his Wit upon, so that upon all occasions we find him not onely baffling the Esquire in Disputes but breaking Jest upon him, which he always takes with much thankfulness and more hu-  
mility

mility, still admiring his Master's Wisdom but much more his Wit.

But after all, what the Story of *Damis* was, or whether there were ever any such Story, we have no account unless from *Philostratus* himself, and therefore we must resolve it all into his Authority alone. And there it is evident that he was neither a God nor a Divine Man, as his Friends boasted, nor a Magician or Conjuror as his Enemies imagin'd, but a meer fanatick and pedantick Pythagorean, that for the honour of his Sect travel'd, as many others have done, into all parts of the World, and when he return'd home told his Country-men that all Men renown'd for Wisdom all the World over were of the Sect of the Pythagoreans; and then for the advancement of their Authority told strange and prodigious tales of their wonder-working Power. Though here either he or his Historian has acquitted himself so awkwardly as utterly to spoil the tale and defeat the design. This *Eusebius* has shewn at large in his Book against *Hierocles*, by taking apieces all parts of the Story, and discovering all its flaws and incoherences; but I shall content my self with proving the vanity of the whole from the notorious falshood of one particular Narration, upon which depends all that extraordinary power that he pretends to, and that is his conversation with the Indian Brachmans, from whom, if we may believe his account of himself, he learnt all that he could doe more than the common Philosophers of *Greece*. And if this prove a Romance, all the rest of the History must unavoidably follow its fortune; and for this little proof will serve the turn, when most of the Stories are so very mean and childish as to be more contemptible than those little tales wherewith Nurses are wont to quiet little Children. For what  
could

could be contrived more unphilosophically l. 3. c. 3.  
 than the Bramans keeping Tubs of Rain, c. 5.  
 Wind and Thunder by them, which they bestow up-  
 on their Friends as their necessities require; And  
 the swelling of the Earth like the Waves of c. 8.  
 the Sea onely with the stroke of a Braman's Wand:  
 Though the most pleasant Scene of the whole  
 Comedy was their Feast, in which there was  
 no need of any Attendants; but the Chairs and the  
 Stools, the Pots and the Cups, the Dishes and the  
 Plates understood every one their own Offices, and  
 so served in the Entertainment themselves, and run  
 hither and thither as the Guests commanded or their  
 Attendance required. But of all Lyes the Geographi-  
 cal Lye is the most unhappy; for the matter of them  
 being perpetual, and not, as the actions of Men are,  
 transient, they may be confuted in any Age. And  
 yet in this very thing he has out-done Sir *John Man-*  
*devil* himself for incredible Monsters and Fables, de-  
 scribing Men and Beasts of strange shapes, that were  
 never seen by any Man but himself, as a sort of c. 14.  
 Women half Black, half White; a Nation of  
 Pygmies living under ground, Griffins, Apes as big  
 as Men, Beasts with the Faces of Men and Bodies of  
 Lions, Wool growing like grass out of the Earth, and  
 Dragons as common almost as Sheep in other c. 2.  
 Countries; all which being so vulgarly known  
 at this day to be meer Fables, they cannot but over-  
 throw the credit of the whole Story. For either he  
 really wandred as far as the *Indies* or not; if not,  
 then his saying that he did, is one Lye for all; if he  
 did, then it is evident from these particulars that he  
 made no conscience of truth or falsehood, but design'd  
 onely to amuse the World with strange and prodigi-  
 gious reports of the power of Pythagorism. And that  
 is the

is the most that I can make of the Story, though I know that *Huetius* is of Opinion that all the substantial Miracles are stoln out of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, and that for the most part in the very words and phrases of Saint *Luke*. And this he has endeavour'd to make good by a great variety of parallel Instances, and then thinks it a manifest discovery both of the vanity of *Philostratus* and the Imposture of *Apollonius*, when he is onely adorn'd with borrowed Feathers, but a great accession to the credit of our Saviour, that when his Enemies would frame the Idea of a Divine Man, they were forced to steal their best Features from his Picture; so that, he says, it was no wonder that *Hierocles* should so confidently compare the Miracles of *Apollonius* to those of *Jesus*, when those of *Jesus* were with so little disguise clapt upon *Apollonius*.

This were a pretty Discovery if it stood upon good grounds, but alas most of the Parallelisms are so forced, or so slender, or so far fetched, that it were easie to make as many and as probable between any other Histories whatsoever. And indeed, in such a design as this of *Philostratus*, viz. To make up a Story as full of strange things as he could well contrive, it is scarce possible not to have hit upon some things like some of those Miracles that are recorded in the Gospels. So that in some few of them there may be some resemblance, as particularly there seems to be in that of the Gadarean Démoniack and the Corcyrean Youth, yet it is very obvious to apprehend that this might happen not by design but by chance.

And whereas *Huetius* will needs have it that *Philostratus* has stoln not onely the Stories but the very Words of Saint *Luke*, I find no Instance

Instances of it but onely in this one relation, where they both it seems use the word *βραυλιζεν*, and this they might easily doe without theft or imitation, it being the common Greek word that signifies *to torment*, so that they could no more avoid that in Greek than we could this in rendring it into English. Nay, setting aside this one Story, I find so little resemblance between the History of *Philostratus* and that of the Gospels, that I scarce know any two Histories more unlike. For it is obvious to any Man that reads *Philostratus* that his whole design was to follow the train of the old Heathen Mythology, and that is the bottom of his folly by his Story to gain historical Credit to the Fables of the Poets; so that it is a very true and just censure that *Ludovicus Vives* has given of him, that as he had endeavour'd to imitate *Homer*, so he had abundantly out-lyed him. For there is scarce any thing extraordinary reported in the whole History, in which he does not apparently design either to verifie or to rectifie some of that blind Ballad-singers Tales. But especially in conjuring *Achilles* out of his Tomb and discoursing with him about the old Stories that were told of the Trojan War.

And yet after all, few of *Apollonius* his Miracles are sufficiently vouched even by his own History, *v.g.* the last that I mention'd of the Apparition of *Achilles*, that had no other Testimony but of *Apollonius* himself, who stubbornly refused to have any Companion or Witness of the Fact; beside many other absurdities in the Story it self, as his rising out of the Tomb five Foot long, and then swelling to twice the length, his being forced to vanish away at Cock-crowing, and the Nymphs constantly visiting of him.

And so again, he pretended to understand all Languages without learning any, and yet when he came

to the Indian King he was forced to converse with him by an Interpreter. And whereas the Story tells us of the Devils being cast out of a young Man by a Mandate from the Bramans, yet it gives us no account of the event of it, onely they pretended to doe it, but whether it were effectually done we do not find that either *Apollonius* or *Damis* ever enquired. But the great faculty he pretended to was the understanding of the Language of Birds and Beasts, which, he says, he learnt from the Arabians, and the Citizens of *Paraca* in *India*, who acquired it by eating Dragons Hearts. Now all Stories of Dragons are very hard of belief, but especially of his Indian Dragons, that, he says, were as commonly hunted by the Inhabitants as Hares in other Countries. But granting there were so great numbers of them in his time, though since that they were never seen by any Man, it is very hard to believe that the meer eating a piece of their Hearts should inspire Men with such an odd and singular faculty. Though the great Miracle of all was his vanishing away at his Tryal before *Domitian* in the presence of all the great Men of *Rome*, but then though our Historian be very desirous we should believe it,

yet he falters afterward like a guilty Lyer  
 l. 8. c. 4. in his confidence; for whereas at first he positively affirms, ἠφανίσθη τῷ δικαστηρίῳ, that he quite vanisht away, at last he onely says, ἀπῆλθε, that he went away, and this though he would seem to affirm that it was after a wonderfull manner and nobody knows how, is a pitifull abatement to the bigness of his former expression *vanishing away*. Though the truth is, if he had stood to it, it must unavoidably have proved it self a Lye, for it is utterly incredible that so strange a thing as that should have been done in so great a presence as that, and yet never any notice be taken of it.

But

But in the last place the Historian would fain bid at something of his Hero's appearing after Death, yet he does it so faintly, that in the conclusion of all it comes to nothing, especially when he tells us that the time of his Death was altogether unknown, and that the uncertainty of it took in no less than the compass of thirty years, and then they that were so utterly at a loss as to the time of his decease, and that for so long a space, were likely to give a very wise account of the certain time of any thing that he did after it. But how or to whom did he appear? *L. 8. c. 13.* Why, to a young Man, one of his Followers, that doubted of the Immortality of the Soul for ten months together after his Death. But how or where? Why, the young Man being tired with watching and praying to *Apollonius* that he would appear to him onely to satisfie him in this point, one day fell into a dead sleep in the School where the young Men were performing their several Exercises, and on the sudden starts up in a great fright and a great sweat crying out, *πεισομαι σοί, I believe thee, O Tyaneus.* And being asked by his Companions the meaning of his transport. Why, says he, do you not see *Apollonius*? They answer him no, but that they would be glad to give all the World that they could. 'Tis true, says he, for he onely appears to me and for my satisfaction, and is invisible to all others, and so tells them what he had said to him in his sleep concerning the state of Souls. This poor account of a Dream and a Vision of an over-watched Boy, is all that this great Story affords to vye with our Saviour's Resurrection.

And now, upon review of this whole History, it seems evident to me that this Man was so far from being endued with any extraordinary or Divine Power that he does not deserve the reputation of an ordinary

Conjurer. For though *Huetius* has taken some pains to prove him so, yet he gives no evidence of it beside the Opinion of the common People; and if that were enough to make a Conjurer, there is no Man of an odd and a singular humour (as *Apollonius* affected to be) who is not so thought of by the common People. And therefore when he was accused for it before *Domitian* the Emperour when he came to hear the cause, flighted both him and his accusers, and dismiss him the Court for an idle and phantastick fellow. And it is manifest from the whole series of his History that he was a very vain Man, and affected to be thought something extraordinary, and so wander'd all the World over in an odd Garb to be gazed at and admired, and made himself considerable in that Age by Wit, Impudence and Flattery, of all which he had a very competent share. But for his Wonder-working Faculty which he would needs pretend to, he fetcht that as far off as the *East Indies*, that is the farthest off as he thought from confutation. And yet the Account that he has given of those parts is so grossly fabulous, that that alone convicts his whole Life of imposture and impudence. And this may suffice to make good this part of the demonstration of our Saviour's Divine Authority from the certain Evidence both of his own and his Apostles Miracles, and to set it above the reach of all manner either of Objection or Competition.

§ XXVIII. But though the History of *Jesus* of *Nazareth* have this advantage of all others, in that the Tradition, whereby it has been conveyed down to us, has proved the truth of its own Testimony by plain and undeniable Miracles; yet if we set aside this peculiar Divine Attestation, and consider the Tradition  
by



by it self as meerly Humane, and deliver'd down in the ordinary course of things; it has been so constant, so catholick and so uninterrupted as to be its own demonstration. For if there had been no such thing as the Story of *Jesus of Nazareth* in that Age, there could never have been any such Tradition; or if there were, it was so early, that if it had been false, it must immediately have perished as a manifest Lye, in that when it comes so near the very time in which the thing it self was acted; nothing but undoubted Truth could ever have maintain'd its Authority. For though it is easie at a distance to tell strange stories of the times of old, as we find by those many idle and incredible Legends added to the History of the primitive Church in the after-ages of ignorance and superstition; yet to raise a story so strange and remarkable as that of *Jesus of Nazareth* and his Apostles, without any ground or foundation for it, nay, against the certain knowledge of those who lived in the place where it was first broacht, and to gain Profelytes to such a notorious Fiction, is a thing not possible in the course of humane Affairs. For to pass by all the other disadvantages that I have already represented, that this Tradition must labour under if it rise not up to the very time that it pretends to, especially that of its being a matter of Fact, which must unavoidably have destroyed it, if false; that which I have already proposed and come now to prosecute seems as insuperable as any of the rest, *viz.* That great numbers of learned and wise Men, who lived in the Ages next and immediately after it, should, after the strictest enquiry concerning its truth, not onely suffer themselves to be imposed upon by so late and palpable a Fiction, but lay down their Lives in defence of it. This is not credible unless they were fully assured of the undoubted certainty

tainty of the thing it self, and their assurance alone is to us a sufficient demonstration of it. But though that be enough, yet I will undertake more, *viz.* To give an account of the grounds and reasons of their Assurance, by tracing up the certain Tradition of the thing it self to the very times of the Apostles, and from them deriving it down to after-ages through the hands of wise, learned and judicious Men; and that, as I take it, will make a new and distinct demonstration of the infallible certainty of the Christian Faith.

Now this Tradition is conveyed two manner of ways, either by a succession of Churches or of single Persons. First by a succession of Churches: and this way of conveyance is insisted upon by the Ancients themselves in justification of the Catholick Truth both against Hereticks and Infidels. Thus the *Adv. Hæres.* Apostolical Tradition, says *Irenæus*, is spread  
*l. 3. c. 3.* all the World over, and this every Man that pleases may find in every Church; and we are able to reckon up all those that were appointed by the Apostles to be their Successours and Bishops in the Churches of Christ down to our own time. But because it would be too tedious in such a Discourse as this to enumerate the Succession of all Churches, I shall onely instance in those great, ancient and famous Churches that were founded at *Rome* by those two glorious Apostles Saint *Peter* and Saint *Paul*, hereby to shew the Tradition of that Faith that was preached by the Apostles, to have been safely conveyed by the Succession of Bishops down to our own time. And I choose to exemplifie this thing in this Church rather than any other, because of its great preheminance and resort from all parts of the World, upon which account its Tradition must needs be more publick and better known.

The blessed Apostles therefore having laid the Foundations of the Church, delivered the oversight of it to *Linus*, of whom Saint *Paul* makes mention in his Epistle to *Timothy*, to him succeeds *Anacletus*, then *Clemens*, who familiarly conversed with the Apostles, and had their Preaching still sounding in his Ears, and their Tradition before his Eyes. In whose time there hapned a great Schism in the Church of *Corinth*, to allay which the Church of *Rome* directed an excellent Epistle to them, in which she exhorts them to Peace and Unity, rubs up their memory of the primitive Faith, and sets before them the fresh Tradition of the Apostles themselves. To him succeeds *Evaristus*, to *Evaristus Alexander*, and then *Sixtus*, *Telesphorus*, *Higinus*, *Pius*, *Anicetus*, *Soter*, and now *Eleutherius* in the twelfth place from the Apostles. This is a clear and an accurate account of the Apostolical Succession of that Church, so that it is impossible to understand how there should ever have been a Bishop in it, unless we begin the Succession from the Apostles, and then this is an undeniable proof of the certainty of their Tradition, as in all other places, so particularly in that great and populous City. And this very Argument *Epiphanius* insists upon against the Carpocratians: And let no Man wonder, says he, that I so accurately and carefully set down every single Person in the Succession, because hereby the undoubted truth, that has been from the beginning, will evidently appear. And the truth is granting the Succession, it would be a pretty hard task to avoid the Tradition, and yet against that there lies onely one poor exception, *viz.* That some ancient Writers place *Clement* in the first place, who here stands in the third; but that (to pass by many other conjectures, and especially a very probable one of

*Epiphanius*) is clear'd by one that is more than probable and founded upon the Authority of the Ancients themselves; that there were at first two Churches at *Rome*, one of the Circumcision, over which *Saint Peter* presided, another of the Uncircumcision founded and govern'd by *Saint Paul*; who, as we read in the last Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, left the obstinate Jews to preach to the Gentiles, neither is this conjecture a little confirm'd by this very passage of *Irenæus*, who speaks not of the Church of *Rome* as a single Church, but as two distinct, and those eminent Churches from the beginning: so that though *Clement* were immediate Successour in one of them, yet he might be the third in the other, in that, surviving *Linus* and *Cletus*, and the difference between Jew and Gentile being in a great measure worn away, both Churches might naturally unite into one Body under his Jurisdiction. Others object to mudd the succession that some Writers place both *Cletus* and *Anacletus* before *Clemens*, as if they were distinct Persons. But this is a mistake of later Writers, who sometimes finding these different names in the Copies of the ancient Books, concluded them different Persons; but herein they go against the Authority of all the ancient Writers themselves, and particularly of *Eusebius*, whose account ought to be valued beyond all others, because he collected the succession of Bishops out of the Archives and Diptychs of the Churches themselves, to which he particularly refers in the succession of the Church of *Jerusalem*. So that here is no real difficulty or labyrinth as to the succession, and all that seems to be, is onely occasion'd by an easie and obvious mistake of some later Writers against the more ancient and unquestionable Authority.

*Hist. Eccles.*  
l. 5. c. 12.

After the same manner does *Tertullian* triumph over the Hereticks, by challenging them to prescribe for their Opinions from the beginning, as the Catholicks were able to doe for theirs. The truth, says he, will appear from its Antiquity: that is true and delivered by the Lord himself that we find most ancient, but that is foreign and false that was brought in afterwards; and if they shall dare to pretend to the Apostolical Age, let them produce the Originals of the Churches, let them describe the succession of their Bishops, and so derive it from the beginning, as that the first Bishop should have succeeded to some Apostle or some Apostolical Man that conversed with the Apostles. For in this way it is that the Apostolical Churches prove their Original, as the Church of *Smyrna* will produce *Polycarp* placed there by Saint *John*, the Church of *Rome* *Clement* ordain'd by Saint *Peter*; and so for all other Churches they shew you the Men that were settled in their Episcopal Office by the Apostles themselves, and conveyed down their Doctrine to Posterity. And again, this is the onely Testimony of the truth, its possession from the beginning, and for this you that are concern'd to enquire more diligently after your Salvation, may travel over the Apostolical Churches, where the very seats in which the Apostles presided are still remaining, where their own authentick Letters are still extant. Do you live in or near to *Achaia*? go to *Corinth*. In *Macedonia*? to *Philippi* or *Thessalonica*. In *Asia*? to *Ephesus*. In *Italy*? to *Rome*. And this certainly as it was sufficient to prescribe to all the Innovations of the Hereticks, so was it to demonstrate the undoubted truth and certainty of the Christian Religion, when it was so clearly and so uninterruptedly deliver'd down from the first Founders

*Præscript.  
Heret. c. 32.*

*c. 36.*

of it. And the truth is, the succession of Bishops in the principal Churches was so accurately recorded by the Ancients, that it had never been so much as call'd in question, had not some Men been forced to it onely to justifie themselves in their departing from it; it having been the custom of all but especially the most famous Churches to keep an exact Register of the Names and the Deaths of their Bishops, which they call'd Diptychs; and though it is objected that these Records are now lost, (and so are the Tables of the Consuls) yet they were very carefully preserved in those times, and as easily consulted by any inquisitive Person, as any other publick Record, and were so by all learned Men who made it their business to enquire into them or to convey the account of them to after-ages; and particularly *Eusebius*, who, as he made use of many other helps and had all the other advantages of information, would not want this that was so easie and so satisfactory, as himself particularly informs us concerning the succession of *Jerusalem*, that he transcribed it out of their own Archives. Though setting aside the information that he received thence, the History of the succession is sufficiently preserved by other Writers. That of *Rome* is already cleared, that of *Antioch* is as clear, onely some Men are willing to raise a dispute about the immediate Successour to the Apostles, whether it were *Euodius* or *Ignatius*, probably it might be both as it was at *Rome*, but if *Euodius* were the first, it is enough that his Successour, *Ignatius*, was an Apostolical Man, and familiarly acquainted with the Apostles, and that from him the succession runs clear and undisputed down to the Council of *Nice*, to which *Eustathius* its then present Bishop was summon'd; and as he was a Man of eminent learning, so he

*Hist. Eccles.*  
l. 5. c. 12.

he bore a considerable sway in it. As for *Alexandria* the succession runs so clear there, that I do not find that the most sceptical Adversaries in this point dare so much as question it, and indeed the succession of learned Men in that Church was so early and so uninterrupted, that it was no more possible for them to be ignorant of the succession of their Bishops, than it is for any learned Man now not to know the succession in the See of *Canterbury* from the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*. To these it were easie to add many more if it were not too tedious, but though I do not meet with any reasonable suspicion of an interrupted succession in any eminent Church, yet I shall instance onely in two, that, next to those already mention'd, most deserve our notice, that is, the Churches of *Corinth* and *Athens*, an account of whose succession we have from *Dionysius* a learned Man and Bishop of *Corinth* in the time of *M. Antoninus*, as indeed we have of many other Churches in his Eipstles to them; as for his own Church it were a vain thing to demand a particular account of its succession, when himself was so near the fountain head, and has withall accidentally let us understand his knowledge of what was transacted there before his own time, and particularly by his account of Saint *Clement's* Epistle. As for the Church of *Athens* he expressly affirms that *Dionysius* the *Areopagite* was their first Bishop, and after him mentions *Publius* and *Quadratus*, so that it was not possible there should be any unknown interruption in so short an interval. This may suffice for a brief specimen of the certain succession in the most eminent Churches from the Apostles, and by consequence of their undoubted Tradition.

Apud Euseb.  
l. 4. c. 23.

§ XXIX. The next part of the Argument is to prove its more particular conveyance down from the very time of the Apostles through the hands of a great many wise and learned Men: And for this reason it was that *Clemens Alexandrinus* after he had passed through the Discipline of several Masters and several Sects, acquiesced at last, without any farther search, in the Christian Institution, because they that preserved the Tradition of this heavenly Doctrine, received it immediately from *Peter, James, and John, and Paul*, the holy Apostles; as a Son succeeds a Father, and by the Providence of God have brought it down to us, planting those seeds of Doctrine which they derived from their Ancestours and the Apostles. And it is a very good reason and becoming the wisdom of that learned Man, supposing the matter of Fact to be true; and that it is, is evident from the succession it self, in that the first Witnesses of Christianity next to the Apostles familiarly conversed with the Apostles themselves or with Apostolical Men. As Saint *Clemens* Bishop of *Rome*, who wrote an excellent Epistle to the Church of *Corinth*, received with great veneration in the Christian Church, valued next to the holy Scriptures, and therefore read with them in several Churches, but especially the Church of *Corinth*. And as it was the most ancient next to the Apostolical Books, so was it the most undoubted Writing of the Christian Church; it was, says *Eusebius*, ἐκ τῆς ἀνωμιολογημένης πατρὸς πάντων, received without controversy. And it is cited by *Dionysius*, Bishop of *Corinth*, a short time after, who affirms that it was then read in that Church every Lord's Day; It is magnified by *Irenæus* not onely for its

*Strom. l. 1.  
p. 201.*

*Hist. l. 3.  
c. 16. 33.*

*Apud Euseb.  
Hist. l. 4. c. 23.*

*Adv. Hæres.  
l. 3. c. 3.*



own strength and piety, but for the primitive Antiquity of its Authour, who, he says, was conversant with the Apostles, received his Christianity from them, had their preaching still fresh in his memory, and their customs and traditions in his eye, as divers others there were then living, that were taught by the Apostles themselves. And *Clemens Alexandrinus* quoting this Epistle (as he often does) Strom. l. 4. gives him the Title of Apostle for his primitive Antiquity. But beside that it was unanimously attested by the Ancients, it was never call'd in question by any of our modern Criticks, who though they have taken infinite pains to destroy or impair; as much as in them lay, the credit of all the ancient monuments of the Church, yet have pass'd this Epistle as undoubtedly genuine with an unanimous approbation. Now this supposes the owning and the settlement of the Christian Religion in the World, it asserts particularly the truth and certainty of our Saviour's Resurrection, and, beside several other Books of the New Testament, quotes the first Epistle of Saint *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, in which the Apostle proves its undoubted certainty by the Testimony not onely of himself and the Apostles, but of above five hundred Witnesses beside, most whereof were then alive. Beside this he tells us of the great labours and martyrdoms of Saint *Peter* and Saint *Paul* in asserting the Christian Faith; and the great patience and constancy of vast numbers more for the same cause; and this he speaks of as a thing present. Let us, says he, consider the generous and worthy Examples of our own Age: through emulation and envy the faithfull Pillars of the Church, were persecuted even unto a most grievous Death. Let us place before our Eyes our holy Apostles; and so he proceeds to the acts and sufferings of

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Saint *Peter* and Saint *Paul*. Now how could this have been done at that time if Christianity had been a meer Fable, or what more unquestionable Tradition can we have of its truth, especially of the Resurrection, when he quotes the Gospels in which it is recorded, the Epistle of Saint *Paul* in which it is proved by such a number of Eye-witnesses, the Testimony of the Apostles and innumerable others that lived at the same time, and laid down their Lives out of that undoubted assurance they had of its truth and certainty? We may now with much more reason doubt of what was done to his late Majesty in *January*, 1648. than they could at that time of the Testimony of the Apostles concerning the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus. Neither did the current of this Tradition stop here in the Corinthian Church, but as it came down from the first Witnesses, so it descended in the same chanel to after-times: for as the Apostolical Writings are own'd by this Epistle, so is this Epistle by those who could not but be certain of its Authority, especially *Dionysius* Bishop of that Church to whom it was written; for as Saint *Clement's* Epistle was written not long after the time of the Apostles, probably in the Reign of *Domitian*; so was that of *Dionysius* written not at a greater distance from Saint *Clemens*, for he flourished in the time of *M. Aurelius*, and had full assurance of its being authentick, from its having been constantly read in the Corinthian Church. So that the Tradition of the Apostles Testimony was as certain in that Church in the time of that Emperour, who began his Reign about the year, 161. as it was in their own time; so that if the Corinthians who lived in the time of *Dionysius* had been contemporary to the Apostles themselves, they could not have had a more satisfactory and unquestionable information of  
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the truth of those things that they preached, than was given them from so clear and uninterrupted a Tradition: for that being so entirely free from all manner of doubt and suspicion, the distance of time made no alteration as to the certainty of the thing.

§. XXX. To the Testimony of this Apostolical Man we may joyn that of *Ignatius, Policarp, Papias* and *Quadratus*, as having all conversed with the followers and familiars of our Saviour. And first, as for *Ignatius*, he was educated under the Apostles themselves, and by them constituted Bishop of the great City of *Antioch*, where he sat many years, and govern'd his charge with extraordinary zeal and prudence, and at last with infinite courage and alacrity suffer'd Martyrdom for the Testimony of his Faith. There have been great Controversies of late in the Christian World concerning his Epistles, though with how little reason on their side that oppose them I have accounted elsewhere, and though I shall by and by make use of their Authority and make it good too, yet our present Argument is not concern'd in that dispute; for whether these Epistles that at this time pass under his name be genuine or counterfeit, it is certain that there was such a Man and that he wrote such Epistles; and if so, then he is another competent Witness of the truth of the Apostolical Testimony; and his great sense of Immortality, and earnest desire of Martyrdom shew his great assurance of our Saviour's Resurrection, upon which they were founded; so that he is another undoubted Witness of the Apostolical Tradition, *viz.* That the Christian Faith descended from the Apostles, and that they gave that proof of their Testimony that is recorded of them in the holy Scriptures. And by his Testimony of the  
truth

truth of all that Christianity pretends to, is the Tradition of the Apostles connected with the certain History of after-times, so as to leave no dark and unknown Interval, wherein the Story, pretended to have been formerly acted by the Apostles, might have been first obtruded upon the World, but on the contrary to make it undeniably evident that there could never have been any such Story, had it not first descended from the Apostles.

But though this be enough to my purpose for attesting the truth of the Apostolical History by such a near and immediate Witness to make the Tradition of the Church certain and uninterrupted; yet I will not wave that advantage that I have from this glorious Martyr's Epistles, because they breathe so much the genuine spirit of the ancient Christianity, especially as to the undoubted assurance of a future Immortality, which shews what mighty satisfaction they had of the reality of the thing, that they so firmly believed and so vehemently desired. And as for the Epistles themselves they are so strongly and unanimously attested by the Records of the ancient Church, that they had never been so much as question'd but for their resolute Opposition to some Mens Prejudices; for they being resolved in their own Innovation of Church-government contrary to that of the Apostolical and primitive Constitution, which these Epistles so zealously assert, and that as establish'd by the command of God, and thereby made necessary to the peace of the Christian Church; they had no way left but stubbornly, I ought to have said impudently, to reject their Authority. But alas that is so admirably vouch'd as if the Providence of God had purposely design'd to secure their credit for ever; And particularly in the first place by his Friend *Policarp*, who  
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sent a Copy of them to the Church of *Philippi* with a Letter of his own, now *Policarp's* Epistle was never question'd, nay, it was for some hundred years after publickly read in the Churches of *Asia*, how then is it possible to avoid so clear and certain a Testimony as this? they have no other way but onely by saying that this particular passage was foisted in, without any shadow of ground for the surmise; nay, contrary to the common sense of Mankind, that an Epistle so universally known to the learned and the unlearned should be so easily corrupted, and the corruption never taken notice of, and when this counterfeit passage was thrust into it contrary to the faith of all the publick Books, it should pass down uncontrou'd and un-question'd to all after-ages. Nay, farther, if it were forged, it must have been before the time of *Eusebius*, who gives an account of it and believes it genuine, and yet himself affirms that it was at his time publickly read in Churches, as *Saint Jerome* afterwards that it was in his; now it is a very probable thing that *Eusebius* would be imposed upon by one private Copy contrary to the faith of all the publick Books, or that he should impose the mistake upon all that followed him, when the same Books were preserved in the same publick manner till the time of *Saint Jerome*.

But beside this they have another shift altogether as groundless and not less bold, *viz.* That it is true that there had been such Epistles of *Ignatius* that *Policarp* speaks of, but that a little before *Eusebius* his time the true ones were lost, and a counterfeit Copy put upon the World; which as it is nothing but meer conjecture for the sake of a desperate cause, and void of all pretence of probability, so it is incredible in it self, and not possible in the course of humane Affairs

that such a famous Writing of such an ancient and apostolical Bishop, of such an eminent and glorious Martyr, written at such a time, at the very point of his dissolution, as his Legacy to the Christian Church, communicated to several Churches, publickly and vulgarly known, attested by Saint *Policarp*, *Irenæus*, *Clemens* of *Alexandria*, and not long since by *Origen*, 'tis not possible that all the Copies of such a Writing as this should be lost about one and the same time, and that a false one should immediately rise up in their stead, and that *Eusebius*, a Man so familiarly acquainted with the choicest Libraries of that part of the World should embrace so late and so gross a Forgery, and put the mistake upon all learned Men that followed after him. The Man that can satisfie himself with such wild surmises and suppositions as these, there is nothing so absurd but he may easily swallow its belief, nor so demonstratively proved but he may withstand its evidence.

Now the Authority of these Epistles being vindicated (and I am apt to think that they will never more be call'd in question) they are a brave and generous Assertion of the truth of the Christian Faith, being written with that mighty assurance of Mind, that shews the Authour of them to have had an absolute certainty or a kind of an infallible knowledge of the things that he believed. In every Epistle his Faith is resolved into that undoubted evidence that he had of our Saviour's Death and Resurrection; and particularly in that to the Church of *Smyrna* he protests that he could no more doubt of its reality than of his own chains, and again positively affirms that he knew it to be true. And yet notwithstanding that all the ancient Copies and all the quotations of the Ancients out of him agree in this sense, that *he knew Jesus to be in the flesh*  
after

after his death, because in Saint *Ferom's* Translation (who excuses himself for the haste and carelessness of the work) it is rendred that he *saw Jesus in the flesh*, this is made use of by the learned Men of our new Church of *Geneva* as a sufficient Objection to overthrow the Authority of all these Epistles. It is possible indeed he might have seen Jesus in the flesh but it is not probable, neither is it his design to affirm it in this place, seeing he proves its truth from the Testimony of the Apostles as Eye-witnesses, and not from his own immediate knowledge; but when he onely says that from them he knew it to be true, to put this assertion upon him that he saw it with his own eyes, against the reading of all the ancient Books from a careless Translation, proves nothing but the invincible stubbornness of prejudice and partiality. But the truth is, these Men have been so zealous for their Faction as not to care how in pursuit of it they endanger'd, nay, destroyed their Religion. For whereas one of the greatest Pillars of the Christian Faith is the Testimony of the Ancients in the Age next to the Apostles, in that it is hereby particularly proved that it is no figment of an unknown time, and that the Records of it were of that Antiquity that they pretend to be, yet because they do as positively assert the original Constitution of the Christian Church, which this faction of Men have hapned to renounce, they have labour'd with indefatigable industry utterly to overthrow all their Authority, but, thanks be to God, with that ill success, that by their endeavour to shake our Faith, they have onely made it to take the better root; for by this occasion the most ancient Tradition of the primitive Church has been much more inquired into and better clear'd, than if it had passed without any dispute or contradiction.

But to keep close to our *Ignatius*, what has been the bottom of all the zeal and fury against his Epistles, but his earnest pressing all good Christians to submit to the government of the Church as to the Ordinance of God, or rather because he describes the Constitution of the primitive Platform so accurately as to condemn their Discipline of folly and rashness in departing from the prescription of God himself. And yet all the ancient Doctours of the Church have done the same thing, laying as great a stress as he has done upon the duty of Obedience to their Ecclesiastical Governours as set over them by Divine Institution. For as there was nothing of which they were then more tender than the Peace and Unity of the Church, so they thought it could be no other way preserved than by submission to those Guides and Governours that Christ had set over it. This it were easie to make evident out of their Writings, especially Saint *Cyprian's*, who as he was a Person of very great prudence and discretion, so is he full as peremptory in this point as *Ignatius*. But I shall onely instance in the Epistle of Saint *Clement* because of its greater Antiquity. For if that assert a certain form of Church-government established by our Saviour and observed by the Apostles, that prevents and confutes the groundless conjecture of an unknown time immediately after the Apostles, in which the whole power of the Church devolved upon the Presbyters, because they had appointed no one particular and perpetual form of Government. And this Saint *Clement* asserts in these positive words: “ The  
 “ Apostles were appointed to preach the Gospel to us  
 “ from our Lord Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ from  
 “ God himself: Christ being sent by God, and the A-  
 “ postles by him; the sending of both was in an or-  
 “ derly manner after the will of God. For the Apostles  
 “ receiving



“receiving their command, and having a full confi-  
“dence through the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus  
“Christ, and faith in the word of God, with an as-  
“surance of the Holy Spirit, went forth publishing  
“the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, which was  
“erecting. They therefore preached the Word  
“through divers Countries and Cities, ordaining eve-  
“ry where the first fruits of such as believed, having  
“made proof and trial of them by the Spirit, to be  
“Overseers and Deacons to minister unto them that  
“should afterwards believe. So that it seems they  
were so far from neglecting to provide Governours  
for the future state of the Church, that they were  
carefull beforehand to provide Governours for fu-  
ture Churches. And this he affirms the Apostles did  
“because they understood by our Lord Jesus Christ  
“that strife and contention would arise about the Title  
“of Episcopacy, for this cause therefore, having abso-  
“lute knowledge beforehand thereof, they ordained  
“the forenamed Officers, and for the future gave them  
“moreover in command, that whensoever they should  
“dye, others well approved of should succeed into  
“their Office and Ministry.

So that it is evident that the Apostles themselves by  
virtue of our Saviour's order observed and prescribed  
a particular form of Government to be continued down  
to future Ages. And though our Authour does not  
express the several distinct Orders by the common  
names of Bishop, Priest and Deacon, yet he describes  
them as expressly by allusion to the Jewish Hierarchy,  
under the names of High-priest, Priest and Levite.  
However, it is evident from hence that the Apostles  
settled a perpetual form of Church-government, to  
which all Christian people were indispensably bound  
to conform; and then, if that form were Episcopacy,

and

and if they settled that by our Saviour's own advice with an Eye to prevent Schisms and Contentions, the case is plain that *Ignatius* his pressing all Churches so earnestly to obedience to their Bishop, was nothing else but a prosecution both of our Saviour's and their command.

And then, that it was Episcopacy is so evident from the unanimous and unquestionable Testimony of all Antiquity, that it is positively asserted by all the Ancients and not opposed by any one; but that would be too great a digression from the present Argument, and therefore I shall not pursue it, though I have gone thus far out of my way to shew for what reasons some Men have endeavour'd to impair the credit of the Records of the ancient Church, not for any real defect and uncertainty that they found in them, but because they give in such clear and undeniable Witness against their fond and unwarrantable Innovations. And therefore I would advise these Gentlemen, as they value the peace either of the Church or their own Consciences, that they would cease to struggle any longer against their own convictions, renounce their Error, when they can neither defend nor deny it, and not be so headstrong as rather than part with a wrong Notion or confess a Mistake, endeavour what in them lies to blow up the very foundations of the Christian Faith. Or, to bespeak them in the Words of Saint *Clement* :  
 " Is there any one then that is bravely spirited among  
 " you ? Is there any one that hath compassion ? Doth  
 " any one abound in Charity ? Let him say, if this  
 " Sedition or Contention or Schism be for me or by  
 " my means ; I will depart, I will go my way whi-  
 " ther soever you please, I will do what the Society  
 " commands, onely let the Sheepfold of Christ enjoy  
 " peace with the Elders that are placed over it. He  
 " that

“ that shall doe so, shall purchase to himself great glory in the Lord. Thus they doe, and thus they will doe, who leade their lives according to the rules of God’s policy.

This was the gentle and peaceable temper of the primitive Christians, but if they thought it their duty to quit their Country, rather than occasion the disturbance of the Churches peace, how much more to forgoe a false or an ungrounded Opinion? And therefore to deal plainly with them I shall load their Consciences with this one sad and serious truth, that when Men have once rashly departed from the Church that they live under, and persevere in their Schism in spite of the most evident conviction, they have renounced together with the Church their Christian Faith, and are acted meerly by the spirit of Pride, *i. e.* the Devil. And therefore I do with all compassion to their Souls request such Men among us impartially to reflect upon themselves and their actions, and if they are convicted in their own Consciences of having made causless Schisms in the Christian Church (as I know they must be by those peevish pitifull pretences that they would seem to plead in their own excuse) with all possible speed to beg pardon of God and his Church; and as they would avoid the Judgment and displeasure of Almighty God against Pride, Envy, Peevishness, Contention and Sedition, to make publick confession of their fault to all the People that they have drawn after them into the same sin, and with all humility and lowliness beg to be admitted into the bosom and communion of this truly ancient and Apostolick Church. But my tender Charity to these poor Men that I see driving with so much fury, self-conceit and confidence to utter destruction has again drawn me out of my way, to perswade them if  
it

it be possible to turn back into the way of peace and salvation : however it is high time for me to return to my Discourse.

§ XXXI. After this great and glorious Martyr, the next eminent Witness of the original Tradition of the Christian Faith is his dear Friend and fellow Disciple Saint *Policarp*; who as he was educated together with him under the Discipline of Saint *John*, so he out-lived his Martyrdom about sixty years, and by reason of his very great Age was able to give his Testimony not onely to that but to the next period of time; so that as he conversed with Saint *John*, *Irenæus* conversed with him, and withall gives an account of his Journey to *Rome* in the time of *Anicetus*, and of his Martyrdom under *M. Aurelius*, which was not till the year 167. So that through the great Age of Saint *John* and Saint *Policarp* the Tradition of the Christian Church was by them alone delivered down to the third Century, for *Irenæus* lived into the beginning of it, not suffering Martyrdom himself by the earliest account till the year 202. And this is the peculiar advantage of his Testimony beyond all others that as it was as early as any, so it continued into the most known times of the Christian Church, for it was under the reign of *M. Aurelius* that the greatest part of the Christian Apologists flourisht, and beside that his great courage and constancy in suffering for the Faith proves the great and undoubted certainty of his Tradition. He was familiarly conversant with the Apostles and Eye-witnesses of our Lord, and therefore *Ignatius* recommended to him the care of his Church, as knowing him to be a truly Apostolical Man, and so he continued his care of the Christian Church for many years with great Faith and

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Resolution, and at last seal'd his Faith with his Blood. I shall not need to give a particular account of his Life, it is enough that, as he declared at his Trial, he had faithfully served his Lord and Master fourscore and six years; but among the Records of his Life there is none more certain or more remarkable than his own Epistle to the Church of *Philippi*, and the Epistle of the Church of *Smyrna* concerning his Martyrdom, in both which is shewed his great assurance of Immortality: In the first, he bottoms his Exhortation to an holy Life upon no other principle than the certain evidence of their Saviour's Resurrection and firm belief of their own; in the second, he cheerfully resigns up his last breath with the greatest assurance of Mind concerning it in this short and excellent Prayer:

“ O Lord God Almighty, the Father of thy well-  
 “ beloved and ever-blessed Son Jesus Christ, by whom  
 “ we have received the knowledge of Thee; the God  
 “ of Angels, Powers and of every Creature, and of the  
 “ whole race of the Righteous, who live before Thee; I  
 “ bless Thee that Thou hast graciously condescended  
 “ to bring me to this day and hour, that I may receive  
 “ a portion in the number of thy holy Martyrs, and  
 “ drink of Christ's Cup for the Resurrection to eternal  
 “ Life both of Soul and Body in the incorruptibleness  
 “ of the Holy Spirit. Into which number grant I  
 “ may be received this day, being found in thy sight  
 “ as a fair and acceptable Sacrifice, such an one as  
 “ Thou thy self hast prepared, that so Thou mayest  
 “ accomplish what Thou, O true and faithfull God,  
 “ hast foreshewn. Wherefore I praise Thee for all thy  
 “ Mercies, I bless Thee, I glorifie Thee, through the  
 “ eternal high Priest, thy beloved Son Jesus Christ;  
 “ with whom, to thy self and the Holy Ghost, be  
 “ glory, both now and for ever. *Amen.*

To this eminent Martyrdom of Saint *Policarp* and the *Asiatics*, I cannot but subjoin that of *Pothinus* Bishop of *Lyons* and his Companions, in that they suffer'd under the same Prince, with the same Christian Courage and Resolution, especially because *Pothinus* also was of a very great Age, and almost as near the Apostolical times as *Policarp*, and probably sent by him into these Western parts; and lastly, because it is attested by publick and undoubted Epistles sent from the Church of *Lyons* by *Irenæus* to the Bishop of *Rome* and the Churches of *Asia*, of

*Animad. Eu-*  
*feb. p. 221.*

both which Epistles *Scaliger* himself has given this just and deserved Encomium, that as they are of the most ancient Martyrdoms in the Church, so the reading of them cannot but so affect every pious and devout Mind, as never to be fatiated with it; and as for my own part, says he, I do protest that I never met with any thing in all the History of the Church, by the reading whereof I have been so much transported, as scarce to be my self; and particularly of the Acts of the Martyrs of *Lyons*, what can be read more brave or more venerable in all the Monuments of Christian Antiquity? And the truth is it is a very amazing Story, and one of the greatest examples both of the Modesty and the Courage of the primitive Christians; for as they were treated with new and unheard of Cruelties, so their behaviour under all their Torments was decent, and free from all appearance either of Vanity or Passion.

Now what can be the meaning of these things, that such Men as *Policarp* and *Pothinus* (to whom I should have added *Pionius*, that suffer'd gallantly about the same time) who lived so near the time of our Saviour, who had such opportunity to search into the truth of those things that were reported of him, should thus  
frankly

frankly resign their Lives upon any less account than the full assurance of the truth of those things that they believed? But though this be sufficient to make good the Evidence of the first and apostolical Tradition of the Church from the Testimony of these two eminent Martyrs, yet before I quit it, it will be convenient to clear off one Objection, in which, as the ancient Church in general, so *Policarp* in particular is concern'd, and that is the contradictory Tradition about the observation of *Easter*, both Parties pretending to derive their different Customs from the Apostles; *Policarp* and the Churches of the lesser *Asia* from Saint *John*, the Church of *Rome* from Saint *Peter*. Now if this be so, why should it not destroy the credit of their Tradition, when they make so little Conscience as to fasten contradictions upon the Apostles themselves. Great use has of late been made of this Objection by all the Enemies of the primitive Church: Mr. *Hales* in the time of his peevishness and before he was reconciled to the Church of *England* has with great scorn upbraided its grossness and folly. And it is one of *Daille's* Topicks against the use and authority of the Fathers, and how often it has been since objected by others it is needless here to repeat. And yet when all is done it proves nothing but that some Men have a very great Itch to be finding fault, for otherwise this grossness and folly, this phantastick hurry in which all the World were Schismatics, as Mr. *Hales* is pleased to speak of it with a great many other good words, is a very remarkable instance both of the faithfulness, the wisdom and the temper of the primitive Christians. For that the custom of the Eastern and Western Church in this thing was different from the beginning is evident from their different practice, and so must have descended from the Apo-

ftles themselves, who might in this as well as other things casually and without design prescribe different Usages, Saint *John* in those parts of *Asia* where he resided continuing *Easter* after the manner of the Jewish *Passover*; Saint *Peter* and Saint *Paul* in other places, to prevent too much Judaifing in its observation, making the same little alteration in its time as was made in the Sabbath; and in this matter of complying with or changing Jewish Customs, the Apostles varied their Orders according to circumstances of time and place, sometime coming up closer to them, sometime keeping at a greater distance, according to the judgment of their own discretion. Now these different Customs about *Easter* being once casually settled in the Church, in process of time they began to be matter of contention among the People, as we know the common People are always zealous for their own Customs, whatever they are. And therefore to stifle this fire that was broke out among them, *Policarp*, a Man of the greatest Authority in *Asia*, undertakes a Journey to *Rome*, if possible to allay and compose the Controversie: where, upon debate between him and *Anicetus*, they conclude it the most proper course that could be taken for the peace of the Church, that both Parties should retain their own Customs, without any breach of Charity or Communion, and to declare this to the World they communicate together at the holy Sacrament, *Policarp* consecrating the Eucharist in the Church of *Anicetus*, and so they parted lovingly, and continued ever after good Friends. .

This is all the grossness and folly that I know of that these good Men were guilty of in their management of this Controversie. Though it seems it was afterward revived by the indiscretion of one Man, *Victor* Bishop of *Rome*, who would needs take upon him to command



command the *Asiatics* to conform to the practice of his and all other Churches, under the penalty of Excommunication. To this they return him a sober Answer, represent the inconvenience of changing so ancient a Custom, disclaim his Power and Jurisdiction over them, and advise him rather to consult the Peace and Unity of the Catholick Church, than to impose upon them particular Customs contrary to the practice of their Ancestours. Neither was this done by them alone but by almost all the Bishops of the Christian World, though they were of his own way, unanimously condemning his heat and rashness in so trivial a thing; and among the rest *Irenæus*, having convened a Synod in *France*, writes him a *Synodical Epistle* to this purpose; That he agreed with him in his Observation of *Easter* but not in the Necessity of it; that it was a very unadvised thing to think of excommunicating whole Churches, for observing the ancient Customs derived down to them from their Ancestours; that there was as little agreement among themselves concerning the manner of the preparatory Fast before *Easter*, and yet this variety being of long standing among them, no Man thought himself obliged to impose his own particular conceit upon others in such an indifferent thing; and last of all minds him of the prudence and moderation of his Predecessours, especially *Policarp* and *Anicetus*, who did not so much as go about to perswade one another to change the ancient custom of their Church. And the effect of these Epistles from all places, especially of this of *Irenæus* probably was this, that they diverted *Victor* from pursuing his design. For we do not find that he ever actually excommunicated the *Asian Churches*, but onely that he threatned it. But whether he did or did not, it is a worthy piece of ingenuity to charge the folly

of one furious and intemperate Man upon the whole Church, and that in spite of their own protestation against it. And yet this is all the *grossness and folly* wherewith our *Innovatours* have made so much noise against them. And thus having removed this poor Objection, which I could not avoid, because it has of late appear'd among us with so much huff and confidence, I proceed to the remaining Witnesses of our primitive Tradition.

And here I cannot pass by *Papias*, for though he were a Person of no great Learning or Judgment, yet he was a Man of clear Honesty and Simplicity, and living near the time of the Apostles themselves, did not search after their Story in Books, but made it his particular business to enquire of their familiar acquaintance after their Sayings and Customs.

*Apud Euseb.*  
*l. 3. c. 39.* If any came in my way, says he, that was a follower of the Apostles, forthwith I enquired of him after the Sayings of the Ancients, what *Andrew*, what *Peter*, what *Philip*, what *Thomas*, or *James*, or *John*, or *Matthew*, or any other of the Lords Disciples, what *Ariston*, and *John* the Elder (distinguish'd from *John* the Evangelist, and out of the Catalogue of the Apostles) Disciples of the Lord were wont to say, for I did not think I could profit my self more by reading their Books than by the more lively report of those Persons who are still alive and heard their discourses. This is a peculiar sort of Testimony given in to a matter of Fact by a Man plain and simple, and yet curious and inquisitive, who inform'd himself of the truth of the things so lately transacted, not onely by reading the Narratives that were written of them, but from the more lively information of such who received it from Eye-witnesses. I will easily grant that he was, as *Eusebius* describes  
 him,

him, *ομιλες ἑ ἑν*, a Person of a small Judgment, and by consequence of little Authority as to his Opinion, especially of the *Millennium*, of which yet himself was not the first Authour, but was betrayed into it by the Tradition of the Jews, who generally believed that their Messias should reign a thousand years upon Earth in all manner of greatness and glory; and therefore it was no wonder if those, who were converted from Judaism to Christianity, brought this Opinion along with them, onely understanding the Jews more gross and carnal Notion in a more refined and spiritual sense; and this was the dispute in those early days against the Jewish Hereticks, particularly *Cerintus*, who believed of our Saviour, as they had of the Messias that they expected, that he should come once more upon Earth, and reign at *Jerusalem* in all manner of pomp and grandeur—but be that as it will, *Papias* was ever thought of as a Man of a downright and untainted Integrity, and had both the advantage of conversing with those that conversed with the Apostles, and the curiosity of recording all the Traditions, which they delivered to him by word of mouth; and lastly, was satisfied in that way of information of the truth of all those things that were registred concerning *Jesus* and his Apostles. To him ought to be ranked *Quadratus*, who wrote an Apologetick to the Emperour *Adrian*, in which he positively avers that many of the Persons cured by our Lord of their Diseases were alive in his time, and *Aristides* a Christian Philosopher at *Athens* who at the same time presented a learned and eloquent Apology to the same Emperour in behalf of the same cause.

Apud. Euseb.  
l. 4. c. 3.

§ XXXII. This is the first file of Witnesses next and immediately after the Apostles, though I might have reckoned the following rank into the same Catalogue, because they are twisted with them as they are with one another; for as these that I have already mentioned are not all precisely of the same Age, yet being of Antiquity enough to be competent Witnesses of the Tradition of the Apostles, may be join'd together into one complicated Testimony of it; so their next Successours followed them by the same degrees as they followed one another; for Succession is not conveyed down like a Chain by certain Links, but like a Cord by the same continued interweaving, every part being some part of the part above it; And though the Ages of the Church are distinguish'd by Centuries, yet the Lives of Men are not, and the beginning of the next series lived with some of the former as they lived with the first that lived with the Apostles, so that there is no possibility of making an Interruption any where between the Chancel and the Fountain head, wherever we find the Stream that alone will certainly lead us up to its own Original.

But this will appear more distinctly by the degrees of its Conveyance; having therefore brought the Tradition down to the time of *M. Aurelius*, that is a considerable time beyond that of *Trajan*, to which time *Scaliger* and some others are pleased to complain of a defect of Records, but with what reason we have in part already seen, and shall now further discover by our following Witnesses, who were not onely able to testify of their own times but of the foregoing Ages. Among whom *Hegeſippus* deserves the first place, not onely for his great antiquity but for his manner of writing as an Historian, and so not concern'd meerly to give an account of the Affairs of his own Age, but  
to

to make a diligent enquiry into the Records and Transactions of former times. He wrote five Books of Ecclesiastical History, which he styled *Commentaries of the Acts of the Church*, wherein he has in a plain and familiar style given an account of the Tradition of the Church and the most remarkable passages in it from our Lord's Death till his own time, which was about or rather before the Reign of *M. Aurelius*; for he says he came to *Rome* and stayed there till the time of *Anicetus*, now *Anicetus*, according to the latest computation, succeeded in that See at the beginning of the Reign of *Aurelius*, but, according to the earlier account, under *Antoninus Pius*, so that it is probable that he was at *Rome* before *Policarp*. And this description he has given of his Voyage, that coming to *Rome* he met with many Bishops, and found them all of one Mind, and teaching the same Doctrine, and having given some account of *Clement's* Epistle to the *Corinthians*, he adds that the Church remain'd after that in the pure and right Doctrine untill the time of *Primus* Bishop there, with whom, sayling to *Rome*, I conferred and abode many days; being come to *Rome*, I stayed there till the time of *Anicetus*, whose Deacon was *Eleutherius*, whom *Soter* succeeded, and after him *Eleutherius*. In all their Succession and in every one of their Cities, it is no otherways taught than as the Law and the Prophets and the Lord himself preached.

This is a singular Testimony of the sincere Tradition not onely of one or two or a few Churches, but of the Catholick Church. And as he described the Ecclesiastical Succession every where, so has he the rise and birth of Heresies, and particularly in the Church of *Jerusalem*. After that *James*, surnamed the

*Just* had suffer'd Martyrdom, his Uncle *Simeon* the Son of *Cleophas* was chosen Bishop, being preferred by the unanimous Vote of all, because he was the Lord's Kinsman. And hitherto that Church was call'd a pure Virgin, because as yet it had not been deflour'd with any false Doctrines. But *Thebalis* being displeas'd that he was not chosen Bishop secretly endeavour'd to debauch it, from whom sprang those many Heresies that he afterward reckons up, and so having elsewhere described the Martyrdom of Saint *Simeon* he adds, untill those times the Church of God remain'd a pure and undefiled Virgin. For such as endeavour'd to corrupt the perfect Rule and the sincere delivery of the Faith, hid themselves till that time in secret and obscure places, but after that the sacred Company of the Apostles was worn out, and that generation was wholly spent, that by special favour had heard with their Ears the heavenly Wisdom of the Son of God, then the conspiracy of wicked and detestable Heresies, through the fraud and imposture of such as affected to be masters of new and strange Doctrines, took rooting. And because none of the Apostles were then surviving, they published, with all imaginable confidence and boldness, their false conceits, and impugned the old plain certain and known truth.

At these passages I must stop a little, because, though they are a great Testimony of the purity of the primitive Church, yet, I find them very confidently made use of by Innovatours as unanswerable Arguments for rejecting its Authority. Thus *Git-Ruari tichius*, an eager *Socinian*, contending with *Ruarus* both concerning *Grotius* his way of writing, in making so much use of citations, out of the ancient Fathers, in his Commentaries, and  
withall

withall concerning the primitive Faſts of the Church, which *Schliclingius* and ſome of that party began to imitate, condemns it not onely as altogether ufeleſs but dangerous: *De antiquitate in Religionis negotio ſtatuo extra ipſas ſacras novi ſæderis literas, & in iis exempla Apoſtolorum, nullius omnino antiquitatis habendam cuiquam Chriſtiano ullam rationem.* And then proves his Aſſertion from this paſſage of *Hegesippus*, and the more ancient he ſays the Tradition is after the time of the Apoſtles, ſo much the worſe it is, becauſe from the very time of their diſſolution the Church was overrun with Hereſie and Superſtition. So peeviſh are Men againſt the honour and authority of the ancient Church, when they are ſenſible of their own Apoſtaſie from it. And the truth is, all our Innova-tours agree in this one principle, and that for this one very good reaſon, becauſe the ancient Church, if it were permitted to give judgment upon them, condemns them all.

For theſe Men, finding errors and corruptions in the Church of *Rome*, inſtead of reforming them as they ought to have done according to the Conſtitution of the primitive Church, they fall to contriving new Models and Bodies of Divinity out of their own brains. And among others *Socinus* diſliking the *Calvinian* Theology, as contrary, not onely to the holy Scriptures, but, to the firſt principles of natural Religion, ſets up a new Divinity of his own contrivance, without ever enquiring into the Doctrine and Diſci-pline of the ancient Church; and being adviſed of his flying ſo wide of it, he, together with his followers, rather than part with their own fine new Notions, of which they had the honour to be the firſt Authours and Abettours, will by no means allow of any ſuch thing as a true and uncorrupted Church ever ſince the

time of the Apostles. But with what vanity and arrogance it is none of my present task to enquire, onely in answer to this Objection I must reply, that it is a very wide, and I am sure very far from a civil, Inference, to conclude that, because there were Heresies in the primitive Church, there was nothing else. And they might with as much reason have applied the Objection against the Apostolical Church it self, because then, as the Apostles themselves complain, the Tares were sowing, though it seems not so openly and so impudently as afterwards. Nay, upon these terms it is impossible their should ever be any such thing as a true Church in the World; for as long as there are such things as Pride and Vanity among Mankind, there will be such Men in all Societies as will be tainted with their own idle dreams and conceits, and then rub their itch upon the common People.

But though there were Heresies in the primitive Church, which, I say, was not to be avoided as long as it consisted of Men, yet they were never able to prevail, but, after some struggling for admittance, were sooner or later utterly stifled. And we have as certain a Tradition of the Birth, Growth and Death of Heresies, as we have of the true Doctrines of the Church; and it is very considerable that all the ancient Doctours of the Church overwhelm the Hereticks with this one Argument, by convicting them of apparent Innovation, and deriving down their own Doctrines from the Apostles themselves. So that though there were Heresies in the primitive Church, yet its Apostolical Tradition was never mixt or tainted with them, but run down in a pure and clear chanel by it self. And therefore it is a very childish as well as disingenuous Objection against its Authority, that there were some Men in it that would have been corrupting the purity  
of



of its Doctrine, but were never able to compass their design; especially when they were so far from passing undiscover'd or uncontroul'd, that we have as certain an account both of the Men, and of their Opinions, and their inconsistency with the Apostolical Tradition, as we have of the new fangled conceits of our own present Innovatours. And therefore there is no more danger of our swallowing down old Heresies together with the Tradition of the Church, than there is of sucking in their new ones whilst we adhere faithfully to that.

And thus having, upon occasion of this particular passage of this ancient Authour, cleared the Authority of the ancient Church in general, it remains that I make good the credit of his own Testimony in particular, that has been assaulted by the great *Scaliger* with too fierce and concern'd a keenness; for though he is a very diligent reprover of *Eusebius*, yet he is much more severe upon *Hegesippus*, for what reason I cannot imagine, unless that by reason of his so very great nearness to the Apostolical times he was an unexceptionable Witness of the primitive Tradition, for that seems to have been *Scaliger's* main design, to weaken its Authority by picking out faults and oversights in its Records; and for what end he has been so diligent in it is shrewdly to be suspected, though perhaps it was not out of any bad intention, but onely to gratifie his critical pride, which naturally delights in nothing so much as the humour of correction.

The particular passage that he has cull'd out for the exercise of his critical faculty is the Narrative of the Martyrdom of *James the Just*, l. 2. c. 23. transcribed by *Eusebius*; in which, he says, beside extream heedlessness, the Historian is guilty of many absurd falsehoods. To which I first answer in  
general

general, That the whole Story, as to the substance of it, agrees with the account of *Josephus*; and that being (as it ought to be) passed by *Scaliger* for authentick, is an evident proof of its reality. Secondly, It is possible that *Hegesippus* might meet with the common fate of the best Authours, to be either corrupted or interpolated, and though we could not discover it, yet the very likelihood of it is enough to keep any prudent Man back from any such harsh censure of such an ancient and venerable Authour; and since *Scaliger's* time learned Men have made several grammatical Emendations, which, if he had known or observed himself, might have saved a considerable part of his pains.

As for his particular exceptions they are chiefly these; First, That out of respect to the singular holiness of *James the Just*, he should be familiarly admitted into the Holy of Holies, whereas, says *Scaliger*, it was not lawfull for any to be admitted thither but onely the High-priest, and that, as every one knows, but once a year. But this whole exception proceeds from a meer mistake of *Scaliger's*: for *Hegesippus* does not say that he was admitted into the Holy of Holies, but εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν, the holy place, viz. That part of the Temple in which the Mercy-seat, the Shew-bread the Candlesticks and the Altar of Incense were placed, where it was ordinarily lawfull for the Priests alone to come, and that they did in their daily ministrations. And this is it that *Hegesippus* observes as a remarkable Testimony from the Jews themselves of the singular holiness of this good Man, that purely out of respect to that, though he were not of the priestly Order, yet in the worship of God he was admitted a place among the Priests themselves, which was a very unusual dignity, and peculiarly remarked as such by *Hegesippus*.

*Hegesippus*. To which I might add the observation of *Petavius* that it was no unusual thing for the Ancients to give the title of *Holy of Holies* to this place that was peculiar to the Priests Station, but the former answer does so utterly blow up the foundations of the Objection as to make this needless.

Secondly, to say nothing of *James's* wearing the priestly Habit, because that is the same with the former Objection, *Scaliger* excepts against the Gentiles meeting together with the Jews at the Passover as *Hegesippus* affirms, whereas the Gentiles never resorted to that Feast. But here our learned Critick does not onely fall into a gross absurdity himself, but betrays manifest ignorance, when every child knows that the Gentile Profelytes attended the worship of the Temple as constantly as the Jews, and had a peculiar Court to themselves erected for that purpose, and this he might have learnt concerning the Passover from Saint *John* himself, *And there were certain Greeks among them, that came up to worship at the Feast.* Nay beside this express Text he might have been inform'd of it out of his own *Josephus*, out of whom *Valesius* has noted several Examples of it.

12. 20.

Annot. in  
Euseb. p. 40.

The third Objection is, That the twelve Tribes should be said to be present at this action of the Martyrdom of Saint *James* at the time of the Passover, whereas it is well known that there were but two remaining, the other ten being long since lost in Captivity. But I am sure it is as well known that this was then the vulgar phrase for all the People of *Israel*; for though the main Body of ten Tribes were transported, yet many that were left behind and many that return'd back mixed with the two that remained, and so kept up the name and title of the twelve Tribes, and

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and therefore Saint *James* directs his Epistle to the twelve Tribes, *i. e.* to all the People of the Jews: and Saint *Paul*, in his defence before King *Agrippa*, pleads thus, *And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the Promise made of God unto our Fathers: unto which promise, our twelve Tribes instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.*

In the fourth place, It is objected that at Saint *James's* declaring *Jesus* to be the *Messias*, the People cryed out. *Hosanna* to the Son of *David*, which the Critick says they were never wont to doe unless at the Feast of Tabernacles. But though that might be the first rise of this custom, yet it grew afterwards, as *Io Pæan* among the Greeks, to be the common form of joy and exultation, and so was used by the People at our Saviour's entrance into *Jerusalem*. But this Acclamation, says our learned Man, could not be given to *James*; though why he might not be saluted the Son of *David* I know not, when he was so very near akin to our Lord. But however to save our selves the trouble of answering this little scruple, this Acclamation was not made to *James* himself, but to our Lord upon his confession of him.

But in the next place, *Hegesippus* quotes a Text out of *Esaias*, that he ought to have cited out of the *Wisdom of Solomon*, *viz. Let us remove the just Man because he is an offence or reproach unto us.* But this at worst is but a slip of memory, to which all our Authours are liable, and yet it is not so much, but it is to be punctually read in the third Chapter of the Prophet *Esaias*, from whom the Authour of the Book of *Wisdom* borrowed it. But *Hegesippus* says *James the Just* was a *Nazarene* and neither ate Flesh nor drank Wine, which, if true, says *Scaliger*, he could not have eaten the last Supper with our Lord and his Apostles.

But

But this is as slender as all the rest, for though the *Nazarenes* in their common course of life neither ate flesh nor drank Wine, yet they abstain'd not from the rites and solemnities of their Religion, but ate the Paschal Lamb as all other *Jews* did, in that it was indispensably injoyn'd them by God himself antecedently to their Vow. But one of the Priests a *Recabite*, says *Hegesippus* interposed to save *James* from the fury of the People. But this says *Scaliger* could not be, for the *Recabites* were of the Tribe of *Judah* and so incapable of the Priesthood. As if the Original constitution of either had been exactly observed at that time, especially of the Priesthood when it is so well known, that ever since the time of *Herod* the Great, those Offices even of the High-Priesthood it self were entirely disposed of by their Governours, who at pleasure put them in and out as they did any other Officers of State.

But they placed him says *Hegesippus* on the Pinnacle of the Temple, whither great numbers of the People went up to cast him down, which says *Scaliger* they could not do, because it was, as *Josephus* tells us, so very thick set with pointed Irons, as to keep the Birds from settling upon it. And so it is probable the greatest and highest Battlement of all was, but it is very far from being in the least probable that *James* should be placed there to Preach to the People, when it was impossible to be heard from so great an height, or that he should not be dash't apieces when he was cast thence, instead of falling alive upon his Knees as the Historian reports. And therefore this *ἄστυγιον*, which signifies any covering or Battlement, must have been some lower frame of building, from which he might be most conveniently heard of the People.

Now as from these Objections, says *Scaliger*, we may learn what to think of this *Hegesippus*; so say I from these Replies to them, may we learn what to think of this *Scaliger*, that upon such poor surmises as these, will not stick to destroy and villifie the best and most Ancient Records of the Christian Church. And now the credit of this Ancient Author being fully Vindicated, it does not only make good his own Testimony, but of all others that were Recorded in his History between our Saviour's time and his own; and to mention no more, his account of the Bishops of *Jerusalem* goes a great way; For next to *James the Just* he informs us that *Simeon* the Son of *Cleophas* and Cousen German to our Lord succeeded in the Bishoprick, and sat there till the Reign of *Trajan*, under whom he suffered Martyrdom only for the old jealousy of *Vespasian* and *Domitian*, of being of the Line of *David*, and so a Rival to the Empire. So that here the Tradition of the Church was conveyed down to that time by as short a Succession as we have already shewn it to have been in the Church of *Corinth*, from *St. Paul* to *Clement*, and from *Clement* to *Dionysius*; and in the *Asian* Church, from the Apostles by *Policarp* to *Pothinus* and *Irenæus*.

§. XXXIII. Next to *Hegesippus* follows *Justin Martyr*, though had not the other been an Historian, he might, as being somewhat his Senior, have gone before him, being converted to Christianity in the time of *Adrian*, about the end of the First Century after our Saviour's Passion, and within Eight years after address an excellent Apology to *Antoninus Pius* in behalf of the Christian Faith, and afterwards a Second to *M. Aurelius* his Son and Successor. He was a Person of Eminent Parts and Learning, the most judicious Philosopher

osopher of his time, that had Surveyed all the Tenets of the several Sects, and studied all kinds of useful Learning for the settlement and satisfaction of his own mind; and having passed through the Schools of the *Stoicks*, the *Peripateticks*, the *Pythagoreans*, and the *Platonists*, of which himself hath given a pleasant account in the beginning of his Dialogue with *Trypho*, he was at last advised by an unknown Grave Old Man, that met him in his retired Walks, to consider the Christian Philosophy, to which he had no sooner applyed himself, but he found it the only certain and satisfactory Philosophy.

In short, he was such a Proficient in all kinds of Learning, that his own Writings make good *Photius* his Character of him, that as he was admirably furnished with all sorts of Reading and History, so he was arrived to the Perfection both of the Christian and Heathen Philosophy, and therefore immediately after his Conversion gave a Learned and Rational account of the Vanity of the Gentile Religion. As afterwards in his Apologies and his other Writings he did of the certain truth and Divine Authority of the Christian Faith, both from the undoubted Miracles that in his time were wrought for the demonstration of it, and from the certain Proof of our Saviour's Resurrection, and the uninterrupted conveyance of it down to his own time. And the assurance of his Faith he frequently avows with the greatest freedom and courage of mind, and at last Seal'd it with his Blood. And though he foresaw and foretold it, not from any Spirit of Prophecie that he pretended to in it, but from the probable course and most natural event of things, yet notwithstanding this, he did not in the least slacken his Zeal for the Christian cause, but went on with all assurance of mind in its defence, till it brought him to

the encounter of Death, which he did not only meet with his Eyes open, but with all Joy and Alacrity, as being Arrived at the end of his hopes, and the beginning of his happiness,

Next to *Justin Martyr*, *Irenæus* follows in order, who lived much about or a little after the same time; but of him I shall need to say the less, because I have already shewn the certainty of the Tradition that he had of the things that he believed from *Policarp* and *Pothinus*, and his acquaintance with other Apostolical men; only some few Remarks remain to make up his perfect Character, and make out his perfect knowledge, and for this that excellent Epistle of his to *Florinus*, deserves to be consider'd in the first place. "This Doctrine of thine (*O Florinus*) that I may frankly declare the truth, savoureth not of the sincere Faith, disagreeeth from the Church, and betrayeth such as listen to it into extream Impiety. This Doctrine no not the Hereticks which were out of the Church durst ever Publish, this Doctrine such as were Elders before us, and Disciples of the Apostles never delivered unto thee. I saw thee when I was yet a Youth with *Policarp* in the lesser *Asia*, living Gorgeously in the Emperour's Palace, and mightily buisying thy self to get into favour and credit with him. For I remember better the things of old than latter affairs; for the things we learn in our younger years, sink deepest into our minds and grow together with us. So that I particularly remember the very place where *Policarp* sate when he taught, his going out, and his coming in, his course of life, the figure and proportion of his Body, the Sermons he made to the People, the report he made of his Conversation with *John* and others which knew the Lord; how he remembered their sayings, and what he heard from their mouths concerning the Lord,



“ Lord, his Power, and his Doctrine, reciting his  
 “ Commandments and all other things agreeable to the  
 “ Holy Scriptures, out of their very mouths (I say) who  
 “ had seen with their Eyes the word of Life incarnate.  
 “ These things at that time through the mercy of  
 “ God which wrought in me, I diligently marked, and  
 “ Printed, not in Paper but my heart, upon which con-  
 “ tinually through the Grace of God I Ponder and Me-  
 “ ditate. And I am able to testify before God, that if  
 “ that Holy and Apostolick Elder had heard any such  
 “ thing as you Teach, he would immediately have dis-  
 “ avowed it, and after his manner stopping his Ears  
 “ cryed out, Good God into what times hast thou re-  
 “ served me, that I should hear and suffer such Discourses!  
 “ Yea, and would straight have quitted the Place where  
 “ he had heard them.

In short, this is evident from the Epistles which he wrote to Neighbour Churches or to particular Brethren. And beside *Policarp* he frequently quotes in all his Books Apostolical Ancients, though he does not mention their names.

He was a diligent Enquirer into the Records of the Church, and has particularly described the order and occasion of the Writing of the Four Gospels, to which might be added his knowledge of the Epistles of *St. Clement*, *Ignatius*, the Books of *Justin Martyr*, his searching into the Records of the most Famous Churches, his enquiring into the Writings and Traditions of the most Eminent Doctors, and with this Argument putting to silence the Hereticks, by demonstrating to them, what was and what was not derived from the Apostolick times. All which considered, how could we have a more sufficient Witness of the Primitive Tradition? for allowing him some very few small slips and mistakes, which must be allowed to all Humane Writers.

Writers in the World, his knowledge as to all the material parts of the Christian Doctrine was built upon the most complicated and uninterrupted Tradition. And the certainty of his own knowledge he has Recorded with all possible assurance, discovering in all his Writings a vehement zeal and a Spirit highly prepared for Martyrdom, which he at last suffered with the same Christian courage that appeared in all that went before him. And that is a mighty accession to the weight of their Testimony, as if it had been peculiarly design'd by the Providence of God, that as they proved the certainty of their Faith by undoubted Tradition, so they seal'd its sincerity with their Blood.

Though the Testimony of these Witnesses be so abundantly satisfactory, both from their number, their quality, and their agreement, that I need produce no more, and the truth is, I should have been very thankful for half so many, but could never have had the confidence to ask for more; yet because a great number beside offer themselves, we cannot in civility altogether refuse their kindness, but that I may not be too tedious, I shall at present onely give in a List of their Names, that any man may examine them at his leisure.

About this time then there was beside those that I have mention'd, a great concourse of Learned men, that were not only Confessors but Defenders of the Christian Faith, as *Athenagoras* the Christian Philosopher of *Athens*, *Theophilus* Bishop of *Antioch*, *Melito* Bishop of *Sardis*, *Apollinaris* Bishop of *Hierapolis*, *Tatian* the *Affyrian* and Scholar to *Justin Martyr*, who all wrote in the time of *M. Aurelius*. And in the Reign of *Commodus*, *Pantænus*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Miltiades*, *Tertullian*, who were closely followed by *Origen*, *Minutius Felix*, *Arnobius*, *St. Cyprian*, all men  
of

of Learning, who diligently enquired into the truth and falsehood of things, and have given their reasons of renouncing Heathenism and embracing Christianity; in short, they have all maintain'd it with their Pens, and most of them with their Blood. And most of their works being still remaining, it were an easie task, were it not too tedious, to give an account of every man's performance, but there is enough of that said already, and to say more, were only so much needless repetition of the same matter of fact upon the same Argument: And the most material passages of Record extant in these Authors, I have either alledged already, or shall have occasion so to do hereafter. Therefore all that is requisite to be done at present, is only to suppose that there were such Writings of such men, and that I may easily do, because they are so very common, and so very well known at this day, and then upon that supposition to argue the certain conveyance of the Christian Tradition through their hands, and that compleats the demonstration of its truth and Divine Authority. For when I have proved the certainty of its Original from the undoubted Testimony of the Apostles; and the Tradition of their Testimony by the complicated attestation of others that lived either with or immediately after them, and so downward from age to age, and that by very short Periods of time into the Third Century (for beyond that it were very impertinent to pursue the Argument) if I say this be performed in the premises, I do not understand how any man can in reason or modesty demand a greater Evidence, and more satisfactory demonstration of his Faith.

§. XXXIV. But if Christianity came into the World attended with all this variety and train of proof that I have

have represented, how came it to pass that such great numbers of the men of that Age lived and dyed in Infidelity? If the evidence were so full and free from all exception as is pretended, how was it possible for any man that had eye-sight enough to discern the mid-day Sun, not to submit to its Conviction? Much less; how could such Creatures as men endued with Rational faculties, be so utterly blind or extravagantly mad, that when Almighty God had given such undeniable Proofs of his own Divine Authority, they should hate, oppose and persecute this Religion? Mear stupidity or want of Enquiry might have left men in Infidelity, though the State of things had been as evident as we say it was, but when men concern'd themselves with all their Zeal and Power to root it up, they must understand what it was that they so eagerly opposed. Neither was this done by the ordinary sort of Mankind alone, but by the Wise and the Learned, who did not only reject it as an idle Fable, but bestir'd themselves with all their might, to suppress it as pernicious to the peace and quiet of the World.

This is an Objection in appearance very great, for it cannot but look very strange, that men Learned and wise should be so foolish and so Ignorant as not to perceive such evidence of demonstration, nay to scorn and to despise it. And yet as big as this Objection is in shew, it is in reality none at all, and if it were any is abundantly answered by the Premises. For it is plainly impossible that so great a part of the World, especially the Learned and Inquisitive should ever have been prevail'd upon to embrace such a Story, in all those circumstances and under all those disadvantages that I have described, if it had been nothing but mear falsehood and forgery. And yet by reason of those very many and great disadvantages, let its evidence have

have been never so bright, it is possible for men either not at all to see or to wink at it.

So that at best this is but a Negative Testimony opposed to an Affirmative, and in this particular case and under these circumstances, though it were in it self not altogether useles, of no force at all. For unless Christianity were true, it could never have been vouched as it is; and though it were as certainly true as we pretend it was, yet there was no necessity imposed upon all Mankind to yield to its belief. Especially when it had all the disadvantages of present Interest to weigh against naked Truth; and Interest alone, as is too well known by experience, has a more forcible influence upon most mens minds than Integrity. So that here I might again run through all the fore-mention'd particulars, and shew what force each of them singly, much more all joyntly might have to hinder men from believing or owning the Christian Faith, notwithstanding all that Evidence that it gave of its Divine Authority; and particularly I might declaim upon the wonderful power of prejudice in this case, and make a long common place of it, to shew the equality of its strength to Truth it self.

But I shall make shorter work of it, and consider only the matter of fact and the History of the thing, and shew that whatever Opposition Christianity met with in the World, was from unreasonable men, and upon unreasonable grounds. And if that be proved no man can think the Opinion of such men ought to weigh any thing by it self, but much less against all that evidence of Reason and Record that we have laid together in the premises. And this I shall now make good. But for our clearer method of proceeding, I shall divide my discourse into these particulars. First to give an Account of the unreasonable Infidelity of

the *Jews*; and of this first as to the whole Nation, secondly, as to their several Factions, first *Saducees*, secondly *Pharisees*. And then I shall proceed in the second place to the Heathens, and shew how all unbelief in them proceeded meerly from the blindness either of Atheism or Superstition, and this I shall demonstrate both as to the publick Persecutions and Private Oppositions that Christianity met with; and thus when I have taken the Objection into pieces, from the emptiness of each part, it will appear that there is nothing in the whole.

And first the grand reason of the Infidelity of the *Jews*, notwithstanding the demonstrative Evidence of the truth of Christianity, was their invincible prejudice in honour of *Moses*, so that they would not care to hear any thing that might derogate from him, much less our Saviour that pretended to excell him. And the truth is, this prejudice had some reasonable force in it self, that when Almighty God had in such a miraculous way deliver'd the Law by *Moses*, and by virtue of that Law kept up his own true Worship in opposition to Idolatry, that prevail'd every where but only in *Judæa*; and when it was enacted with some expressions, that seem to imply its perpetual and unalterable obligation, and lastly when it had flourish'd so many years, and notwithstanding all that opposition that was made to it by the Heathen World, it was so far from abating its force, that it prevail'd upon its Enemies, and brought over great numbers of Profelytes from Heathenism to the *Jewish* Church. After all which, at first sight it could not but appear very strange, that an obscure Person, a *Galilean*, a Carpenters Son, should without any Appearances of Thunder and Lightning, take upon him so confidently to repeal this Ancient, this Divine, this Venerable Law.

The

The very pretence could not but seem an unanswerable Objection to it self; for what could his design be in throwing down the Law of *Moses* that was the only Bulwark against Idolatry, than to let in all the Idolatry of the Heathen Nations upon them? Besides, if *Moses* acted by Divine Commission, whatever was spoken to the disparagement of *Moses* reflected upon God himself, so that this Person by pretending to enact a more perfect Law than that, seem'd to make himself wiser than his Maker.

Such Objections as these were so natural and so obvious to the prejudiced People of the *Jews*, as to keep them back from so much as making enquiry after such wild and Frantick Pretences.

And this as I have already intimated from *Origen*, was the peculiar difficulty of our Saviour's work, and as appears from the whole History of his Life, was objected against all his Miracles, as I have particularly shewn concerning the cure of the Man that was Born blind; so that though they saw the truth of the Miracle, yet they would not believe it, because it was impossible that any man should come from God, who could be so daringly Blasphemous as to prefer himself to *Moses*. And this Objection our Saviour confesses so forcible, as to acknowledge that nothing could answer it but his unparallel'd Miracles, *John* 15.24. *If I had not done among them the works which never any man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen, and hated both me and my Father.* That is, they had been excuseable in rejecting him and his pretences of Establishing a new Religion, if his Miracles had not exceeded those of *Moses* and the Prophets, whom yet they believed to have been sent from God; but now when they have seen me do such works as none but God can do, curing all manner of Diseases, feeding

thousands with a few Loaves, raising the Dead, and all only by the power of a Word as God at first Created the World, after all this if they reject me, it is plain that they affront him too. And so again when he cured the man that was Blind and Dumb; because they could not deny the Miracle, they Blaspheme it, and say, it was done by the help of the most powerful of all the Devils, for who else could assist the man that opposed *Moses*, and therefore our Saviour having demonstrated by rational proof, that he acted not by the power of *Belzebub*, he tells them that it is evident from his Miraculous works, that the Kingdom of God is come to them, that is, the Reign of the *Messias*, as it is called *Daniel* II. 14. And adds that all calumnies are pardonable, but only that against the Holy Ghost, that is, the Power of God, by which he discover'd his will to Mankind, by which they barr'd their minds against all the means of Information, and if they would not acknowledge that, when they saw it in his Works, it was not possible for him to make any impression upon them as men, and so they thereby put themselves into a state of impenitence, and an utter incapacity of Pardon.

Now it is plain, that this obstinacy of the *Jews*, though it was grounded upon the Divine Authority of *Moses's* Law, was in it self very unreasonable, in that as Almighty God had confirm'd the Law of *Moses* by Signs and Wonders, so he vouch'd all that our Saviour either taught or pretended to beyond that, by enduing him with a much greater power of Miracles, than was ever given to *Moses* or the Prophets. And yet that they might be guilty of it, is obvious enough to any man's apprehension, if we consider the strange power of religious prejudices, and upon what plausible grounds theirs were bottom'd, the natural stubbornness



borness of the *Jewish* Nation, but most of all the pride and waywardness of Superstition. For that as I shall shew afterwards in the case of the Pharisees, was the bottom of all their rage and indignation against our Saviour, in that he so freely upbraided their degeneracy from the Law of *Moses*, and convinced them of the folly and the childishness of those Superstitious conceits that they had made out of it, upon the Observation whereof they so highly valued themselves.

This is evident through the whole History of the Gospels, but in no one case more than that of the Sabbath, which as it was at first commanded by God, so they observ'd it with infinite Superstition. And for that reason our Saviour set himself to controul them in it, and therefore wrought most of his Miracles on that day, and yet they were so foolish as to think that a sufficient objection against his Divine Authority. And though one would think no man could be so absurd, when he had seen a Blind man cured only by commanding him to open his Eyes, as to slight, nay, find fault with the Miracle meerly because it was done on the Sabbath day, yet this was the common case of the *Jews*, so invincible above all other things is the power and prejudice of Superstition.

§. XXXV. The Second was a very dazling prejudice, and that was the magnificent State and Glory, in which they expected their *Messias* should appear. For the whole World was at that time fill'd with expectations of a mighty Prince; all the Ancient Prophecies concerning the *Messias* were Glorious and Wonderful, and their descriptions of his Kingdom seem'd to exceed that of the *Roman* Greatness; the Glory of *Augustus* was to be Eclips't by the Appearance of a Greater Monarch; the Grandeur of his Court,

Court, and vastness of his Empire, were but ordinary things in comparison to those that were foretold of this Prince's Universal Government. The splendour of these great Prophecies flusht and abused the ambition of the great Spirits of the Empire, and every hopeful and aspiring Prince of the Family of the *Cæsars* pushed forward for an Universal Monarchy. And every prosperous Commander of the *Roman Armies*, flattered himself with hopes that it might be he, that was design'd to be indeed, and not in Title onely, Lord of the whole World.

And particularly this as I have shewn out of his own Historians, was the first rise and occasion of *Vespasian's* Glory. And this was the thick conceit of the *Jews* as well as the *Gentiles*, as *Celsus* discourses

in the Person of a *Jew*, *ὅτι μέγαν καὶ δυνατὸν*  
*Orig. adv. καὶ πάντων τῶ Ἰησοῦ, καὶ πάντων τῶ ἔθνων καὶ στρα-*  
*Celsus l. 2. τωπέδων κωλύων φασιν οὐ περὶ τῆς εἰς τὸ ἔπιδη-*  
*μύσαντα,* That the Person foretold by the

Prophets, that was to come, should be a mighty King, a Leader of great Armies, Lord of all the Kingdoms and Nations of the Earth. And after the same manner

does *Trypho* the *Jew* argue against our Saviour's being the *Messias* from the meanness of his Condition, whereas the true *Messias* was to be a mighty and Renowned Person, and to receive from the Ancient of

Justin Mar-  
tyr dial.  
cum Tryp.  
p. 249.

days a perpetual Kingdom: They imagin'd their *Messias* to be such another fighting Man as his Father *David*, that should break the Power of the *Romans*, and by his Victorious Arms redeem the People of God from Heathen Tyranny and Oppression. They hoped the time would come, when a Circumcised King should keep his Court in *Augustus's* Palace, and when the *Sanhedrin* should possess the Senate-house, and there

there Issue out Decrees for the Circumcision of all People, Nations, and Languages. And this confidence in the *Messias* seems to have been the great support of the pride and ill nature of the *Jews*; for when he came they were resolved to take their fill of Revenge upon the Gentile World for all those Insolences, where-with they had affronted Gods own People.

And this (as the Historians of that Age observe) was the ground of their frequent Tumults and Rebellions about that time, and at last of the utter destruction of their Common-wealth. They were grown impatient in the Expectations of their *Messias*, and were no longer able to endure the reproach of being subject to the pride and power of uncircumcised miscreants. And all the Nation of the *Jews* were so fully and impregnably possess'd with this Dream of a Temporal Prince, that the Apostles themselves seem'd at first to have followed our Saviour for hopes of present preferment; nothing less could serve the Sons of *Zebedee*, than to sit the one at his right and the other at his left hand in his Kingdom; to be the Grandees, and chief Favourites of his Court, his *Agrippas* and *Mecænas'es*, they were not content with being Heads of Tribes, unless they might have the principal place next to the Royal Throne. And perhaps *St. Peter*, till he understood better things, promised himself for a reward of his zeal, no less Dominion than what his pretended Successours claim from him; so that when upon his Confession of our Saviour's being the true *Messias*, our Saviour immediately declares the speedy approach of his death, *Mat. 16. 21.* *Peter* remonstrates to that as inconsistent with the whole design, and when our Saviour continues from time to time to warn them of the set time when he was to be betrayed, he very faithfully buys him a Sword to fight in his defence.

And

And *St. John* being so great a Favourite, could be no less than Principal Secretary of State, and *Judas* no doubt expected no less office than of Lord Treasurer, And the Women too counted to have no small share in the Government, as appears by *Old Zebedee's Wife*. And as some were to manage affairs at Court, so others were to have their Governments and Provinces abroad, *Herod* and *Pilate* were to be displaced, and one was to be President of *Judæa*, and another of *Galilee*; and if there were any one more modest than the rest, it is likely he contented his ambition with being Lord Mayor of *Capernaum*. And this conceit was so deeply rivetted in their Fancies, that all our Saviour's discourses were not able to dispossess it; and though he so often Preached to them the Doctrine of his Death and Passion, in the plainest and most Familiar words, yet they were so Drunk and Light-headed with it, that they understood him no more, than they did the Language of *Moses* and *Elias* at his Transfiguration. For though he taught his Disciples and said unto them, *the Son of man is deliver'd into the hands of men, and they shall kill him, and after that he is kill'd, he shall rise the Third day, yet they understood not that saying*, Mark. 9. 3. One would think the saying were as plain as words could make it, but though they understood the Grammatical sense of them, yet they were so possess'd with this Jewish Prejudice of his being a great Temporal Prince, that nothing that seem'd inconsistent with it could enter into their heads; so that the meaning of those words, *they understood not that saying*, is that they understood not how they could be reconcil'd to those Prophecies that they had of the Kingdom of the *Messias*. And therefore upon occasion of all such Discourses, they still minded him of the recovery of his Kingdom, and when

when those hopes were buried in his Grave, then all their expectations utterly dyed together with him. Saint *Peter* thinks of returning to his old trade of Fishing. *And we trusted,* John 21. 3. say the two Disciples, *that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel,* Luke 24. 21. And after they were assured of his Resurrection the very first thing they were sure to put him in mind of was the interest of his Crown, *Lord wilt thou not at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel,* Acts 1. 6.

These were the big and swelling expectations of the whole Nation of the Jews concerning their Messias, but whilst they were eagerly gazing upon the outward pomps and glories of the World, the Providence of God so orders it, that their Prince should slip into it cloathed in all the dressees of meanness and humility, that he might have nothing to recommend him to Mankind but meer evidence of truth. Every circumstance of his Birth, Life and Death was design'd cross to all the Grandeur and Vanity of the World.

Thus was he born, not at *Jerusalem* the Imperial City, but, at *Bethlehem*, the least among the Cities of *Judah*; not in the Town, but in the Suburbs, in a poor Cottage, not in the dwelling House but in the Stable among Beasts and Beggars; Rags were his onely Imperial Robes, and his first Throne a Manger. And instead of posting away Curriers to the Courts of *Rome* or *Persia*, the Message of his Birth is imparted to a few plain and honest Pesants; they were Shepherds, a simple and innocent sort of People, that made the first Address, and did the first Homage to this Infant Prince. And the whole progress of his Reign was but agreeable to this humble Coronation, he was subject to his poor Parents, and as some, who were no incompetent Witnesses, tell us, wrought at

his Fathers Trade, and got his living by making of Ploughs and Yokes. And after he enter'd upon his Office and declared who he was, he chose for the principal place of his residence *Galilee*, the most ignoble part of all *Judæa*, not onely because it lay most remote from *Jerusalem*, the place of their Court and Temple, but because it was inhabited by a mixt sort of People, and thence commonly styled *Galilee of the Gentiles*; partly in that lying next to them and having more commerce with them, they were not so coy of admitting them into their Kindreds as the other Jews, and partly in that it was inhabited by some of those Jews that return'd from the Captivity, who settled there among the Gentiles, that had, during the Captivity, placed themselves in it; so that the Galileans were lookt upon as a sort of Mungril Jews, and a Galilean was little better than a name of reproach, whence the Proverb *Shall Christ come out of Galilee?* And as he chose the worst part of his Country for the chief place of his Residence, though at times he shew'd himself in other places, but still under the disadvantage of a Galilean, so he chose the meanest of his Country-men for the Ministers of his Kingdom, Fishermen, a poor and beggarly sort of People, and yet they were made so much the poorer by being his Disciples. We have left all (says *Peter*) to follow thee: and this *mighty all* was nothing but a few tatter'd Nets, but yet with them were they able to get a small maintenance for their Families, whereas when they left their Trade to follow him, they became perfect Beggars, for the Foxes have holes, &c. Nay, what was still a greater condescension, he conversed not onely with the meanest, but, as his Office required, with the worst of Men, Publicans and Sinners, the most hated and most scandalous Persons, insomuch that his Enemies

mies took advantage from it to reproach himself as a Person that lived a Life of Looseness and Debauchery.

And thus he past on through perpetual Affronts, Reproaches and Calumnies, till he purposely went up to *Jerusalem* to deliver up himself into the hands of his Enemies; and with what Scorn, Insolence and Cruelty he was there treated, and with what Meekness, Patience and Humility he there behaved himself I need not here represent. They indeed put upon him a royal Robe, but it was in Derision, they crown'd him, but it was with Thorns, they bowed the Knee before him, but it was in Mockery, and they writ him King of the Jews, but it was upon his Cross, where he suffer'd himself to be executed with two Thieves, and that in the midst of them as the greatest Villain of the three. All which as he suffer'd for other weighty ends, so not least of all in order to his Resurrection; partly, because that being design'd as the ground-work of his Religion, the Providence of God took particular care to make it stand upon its own unassisted Evidence, and for that purpose not onely laid it so very deep, but clear'd away every thing that might seem to give it the least Assistance: partly, because being the most material Article of our Faith, and withall most difficult to be believed, God was pleas'd to confirm its truth by sensible Experience.

As *Arnobius* has very well observed, *Cumque Lib. I.*  
*novitas rerum, & inaudita promissio audientium*  
*turbaret mentes, & credulitatem faceret hæsitare, vir-*  
*tutum omnium Dominus atque ipseus mortis extinctor*  
*hominem suum permiserit interfici, ut ex rebus conse-*  
*quentibus scirent in tuto esse spes suas, quas jamdudum*  
*acceperant de animarum salute, nec periculum mortis*  
*aliã se posse ratione vitare.* “When the strangeness  
 “ of the Doctrine, and the greatness of the promise of

“immortal Happiness amazed Men’s Minds and stum-  
 “bled their Belief, the Lord of all Power and Con-  
 “querour of Death permitted his humane Nature to  
 “be slain, that from his Resurrection and those things  
 “that followed after his Death, they might be assured  
 “of the truth of their Faith as to the future Salvation  
 “of their Souls.

Now this humble Appearance of Jesus being de-  
 sign’d so utterly cross to the proud and revengefull ex-  
 pectations of the Jews, who thirsted for the coming of  
 their Messias, onely to be avenged of all their Enemies,  
 it did not onely raise their prejudice but their indig-  
 nation against him. But especially when he took up-  
 on him the great Prerogative of the Messias, and would  
 have all their mighty expectations fulfill’d in himself  
 alone, and yet disclaim’d all temporal Power, and  
 taught that the Kingdom of the Messias was not a  
 Kingdom of this, but another World; so strange a  
 disappointment as this could not but work in them a  
 fierce and angry averfation both to his Person and to  
 his Doctrine. For by this very thing all their hopes  
 of being deliver’d from the Roman Yoke were utter-  
 ly defeated, and yet that was the onely benefit that  
 they expected from their Messias. And therefore it is  
 no wonder that they entertain’d him with so little  
 kindness, when, by his pretence of being the Messias,  
 he not onely fail’d their expectations of himself, but  
 destroyed all their hopes for ever.

To all which may be added the extream Wicked-  
 ness of the Jews at that time; their manners being  
 universally debauch’t under the Reign of *Herod*, and  
 their chief Men tainted with Principles of Atheism  
 and Irreligion; but of that I have partly discoursed  
 already, and shall doe so again under the next Head  
 when I come to treat of the Sect of the Sadducees, and  
 therefore



therefore at present I shall onely refer to *Jofephus* his History of that time, from whence it will appear that they were faln from all fenfe of common Humanity; that they were more barbarous than Canibals or Banditi; and that no History in the World can equal thofe Instances of Cruelty that were committed by the Jews among themfelves at the Siege of *Jerufalem*. Now fuch degenerate Brutes as thefe, whofe delight and trade it was to be cutting throats were very likely to give audience to the mercifull Inftitution of *Jesus*, and leave off their former high-way practices to take up his Crofs and follow him.

§ XXXVI. Thefe are the moft general and obvious Prejudices that might bar up the Minds of the Jews againft the entertainment of Christianity, notwithstanding all that Evidence that it brought along with it; The more particular Prejudices are thofe that relate to the chief Factions and leading Sects among them, that is, the Sadducees and the Pharifees, who befide the Prejudices common to them with all other Jews, were blinded by fome others peculiar to themfelves. And in truth thefe were the onely Enemies that oppofed themfelves to the Doctrin of *Jesus*; for it was they that made ufe of the forementioned Prejudices of the People thereby to raife their rage and fury againft him. So that whatever oppofition was made by them, proceeded not directly from themfelves, but was fet a work and managed by thefe Mens infligation; and therefore if we would find out the true ground of the oppofition that was made to the Christian Doctrin by the Jewish Nation, we muft difcover the reafons, motives and defigns upon which thefe leading Men proceeded. And they will appear fo unjust and fo unreafonable, as that, inftead of reflecting

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flecting any disparagement upon the cause they oppose, its being opposed upon such accounts will it self be no small Evidence of its Truth and Goodness.

And first, as for the Sadducees, the case is plain that they were no better than rank and avowed Atheists. For though they pretended to own some parts of the Jewish Religion, yet that was onely to pass a complement upon the common People, that would not in former times endure any such thing as open and downright Atheism. But otherwise to what purpose is it to talk of any such thing as Religion whilst they deny the future state of the Souls of Men, without which all pretences to Vertue and Piety are meer contradictions to themselves, false braggs and empty talk. *In Matt. 22. 23.* And though *Grotius* will by no means suffer them to be reckoned with the herd of *Epicurus*, in that they denied not the Providence of God in the Government of humane Affairs, but onely confin'd its Rewards and Punishments to this present Life. Which is the same Doctrine with the Epicureans in other words: For they too allow of the present Rewards and Punishments ordinarily annexed to Vertue and Vice as well as these, so that as to that point they stand upon equal terms. But when they seem to be parted, as they often are, what then is to be done, but that whatever becomes of Vertue or Duty, both of them are alike concern'd to take care of their own present welfare. So that Immortality being once cashier'd, 'tis after that Vanity and Nonsense to talk of any Obligations to Justice or Religion. And yet this was not onely an Opinion entertain'd by the Sadducees, but it was the fundamental Principle of their Sect. Upon this alone they esteem'd themselves wiser than all other Men, and this was their great point of Controversie with  
the

the Pharisees; so that when our Saviour so avowedly sided against them in it, he was for that reason their Enemy, and they obliged by it to endeavour his ruine. Now at the time of his Appearance they were the most powerfull Faction in the Sanhedrin, as appears not onely from the Scriptures but *Josephus*, the High-priest himself and his Kindred being of that Sect. And it is very observable that they were much fiercer than the Pharisees in prosecuting the Apostles for attesting our Saviour's Resurrection, and are therefore more particularly mention'd than the others, *Acts* 4. 1. 5. 17. And the reason of their fierceness was because all their hopes were in this Life onely, and therefore they were more carefull to preserve the peace and quiet of the World, and therein their own; and that made them the more zealous against all Innovations or Alterations in Religion, for fear of publick disturbances. And then beside, if Jesus were risen from the dead, there was an end of their Sect, and they must yield the Victory to the Pharisees in the great point of Controversie between them. So that for the very honour of their Sect, they would not endure to hear of it, and its very mention put them into choler and passion. And by that alone did Saint *Paul* raise so great a dissension between the two Factions, as to endanger a publick tumult in the Common-wealth, *Acts* 23. 6, 7.

Now this Sect of Men being thus detein'd by this Principle, they were not concern'd to enquire into the truth of any matter of Fact that might overthrow it. But their custom was to jeer and flout at it as a ridiculous Story, and when they came to argue with our Saviour about it, they seem to have design'd rather to make themselves merry, than to enter into any serious discourse with him. Atheists are always proud and conceited People, and scorn to make any enquiry

enquiry after any thing that may convince them; they confute all with the impossibility of the thing it self, and when Men once think themselves secure of that, it is in vain to tell them any story against it, for without ever enquiring into its truth or credibility; they are aforehand undoubtedly assured of its forgery. And this was the particular case of the Sadducees; their main Argument against a future state was the impossibility of the thing, and after that when Men reported that to have been done, which they knew impossible to be done, what followed but away with them for idle Cheats and Lyars. And therefore without ever examining them they thrust them into Prison with all manner of scorn and indignation, *Acts 5. 17, 18.*

Secondly, as for the Pharisees, who were of the greatest power and reputation with the People, they were a strange sort of ignorant, supercilious and conceited Fanaticks. And there is no temper of Mind so fixed and stubborn as religious Pride and Self-conceitedness; 'tis of all Illusions the most delightfull to the minds of Men, and when they are once thoroughly possess'd with it, it barrs up their Understandings against all Arguments, it takes away the use of their natural Faculties, and to go about to convince them of their folly and hypocrisie, is onely to provoke their rage and choler. This was the state of the case between our Saviour and the Pharisees. They pretended to the strictest Piety, and valued themselves at a mighty rate beyond all other Men for the singularity and exactness of their devotion. And yet this they placed not in any conformity to the Divine Laws, but in the observation of some vain Customs and Traditions derived from their Forefathers. Now this being so gross and so foolish an Imposture, our Saviour set  
himself

himself particularly to represent its vanity, and took all occasions to convince them that they had utterly forsaken the Law of *Moses*, for which they pretended so much reverence, and that the Customs they were so fond of, were no part of his Religion, because no where injoin'd in his Law, but meer arbitrary conceits of their own devising. And this it was that raised their displeasure against him to so great an height of hatred and indignation, that a Person who pretended to so great an Office and Authority as that of the *Messias*, should represent them so contemptibly in his publick and constant discourses to the People. And therefore instead of considering the nature and truth of his Doctrine, they all along set themselves to trap him in his Discourses, and minded nothing else but to pursue their revenge against him, and never rested till they had wrecked all their malice upon him as the mortal Enemy of their Sect.

Now 'tis no wonder that Persons of this complexion were so strangely blinded against all that evidence that our Saviour gave of his Divine Commission. For none so blind as those that will not see, and none so wilfull as those that are in love with themselves, and no self-love so doting as that which is grounded upon a false conceit of Sanctity and Religion. And yet notwithstanding this, some of the more ingenuous among them, as *Nicodemus* and *Joseph of Arimathea* were overcome by the Divinity of his Works, and afterward even *Gamaliel* himself was startled at them. For the advice he gave to let the Apostles alone seem'd to have proceeded meerly from the unsettledness of his own Mind, that was not then thoroughly satisfied concerning the truth or falshood of their pretences. And the truth is his advice took with the Sanhedrin not from the reason of the thing but the authority of the Man, for

otherwise it was but very foolish Counsel, that if this Work be of Men it would of its own accord come to nought, for by that principle they must give liberty to all the Impostors in the World to disturb, as much as in them lies, the publick peace and quiet of Mankind. But when it was doubtfull, as it Acts 5. 39. then seem'd to him, lest haply by punishing the Apostles, they might be found to fight against God, upon this supposition it was not onely wise but pious advice to stay for a little farther tryal of the Cause, before they undertook its utter extirpation. And it is not a little observable that though some of the Pharisees were shockt out of their Prejudices, the Sadducees were all impregnable; for we nowhere reade that any of them were ever converted to the Christian Faith, and the reason is plain because their first Principle supposed its truth utterly impossible, and then they would not so much as enquire after it or hear any thing concerning it. But the Pharisees, not lying under this invincible Prejudice, were, notwithstanding all their other great hindrances, in some capacity of conviction. So that though we find that notwithstanding they were at first the fiercest Enemies to our Saviour's Doctrine, yet afterwards they were out-strippt by the Sadducees in their zeal and fury against it. For as in the Gospels the Pharisees are every where noted as his most implacable Enemies, so in the Acts of the Apostles after our Saviour's Resurrection, the Sadducees are remarked as their most bitter and vehement Prosecutors. And now this I think may be a sufficient account of the Incredulity of the Jews, notwithstanding our Saviour gave all that Evidence of his Authority that we pretend he did. And it is obvious enough to any Man, that understands humane Nature, to apprehend how easie

easie a thing it is for Men not onely byassed but pressed down by all these Prejudices to avoid or neglect the force of all the Arguments and Demonstrations in the World.

§ XXXVII. And thus having described the severall unreasonable Prejudices that withheld so many of the Jewish Nation from embracing of the Christian Faith; we proceed now in the last place to the grounds that the Heathens went upon in their Opposition to it. And these were as much more absurd and unreasonable than those of the Jews as was their Religion. For that the Jews had some appearance of pretence against our Saviour's alteration in Religion we have already shewn, in that it was own'd by himself to have been establish'd by Divine Authority. But as for the War that the Heathen World rais'd against it, they grounded it upon such false Principles, as, though Christianity it self had been false, betray their own folly and absurdity. Atheism and Contempt of God and all Religion was their master-objection against the Christians, and the onely thing they set up and contended for in opposition to it, was their own wretched Idolatry and Superstition, both which are too great demonstrations of an invincible prejudice and inflexible partiality. And they are both so very absurd, that which is most so, 'tis very hard to determine. For whatever the Christians were guilty of, it is certain that they were at the greatest distance from Atheism of any party of Men in the World. And as for the Religion of the Gentiles, it was so grossly wicked and foolish, that it was impossible for any wise Man to embrace it without affronting both God and his own Conscience.

This was the true state of the Controversie between them, they never enter'd into the debate of the matter of Fact, or so much as once enquired into the merits of the Cause, but for this reason alone they reputed all Christians as vile and profligate Persons, because they would not join with them in their Atheistical Idolatry. And this was the grand motive of all their persecutions against them; in which they proceeded upon no other Article than that they refused to sacrifice to their Gods. So that if the Heathen Religion were absurd, and it is certain that nothing could be more so; and if all their hatred to Christianity were founded meerly upon their zeal to that, this gives a plain account of the unreasonableness of their opposing the Christian Faith, notwithstanding the undeniable evidence of its Divinity. And this I shall endeavour to prove, as I have in the case of the Jews, from the matter of Fact it self. And thereby it will appear not onely that the Assertion is a probable but a certain truth, and so will not onely answer but confute the Objection, by proving that all the reason that Men had to oppose Christianity was their being grossly unreasonable. And this I shall make good, first as to publick Persecutions, secondly private Oppositions.

The first Persecution was raised by *Nero*, a Prince sufficiently branded for all manner of Folly and Wickedness, but above all for his brutish and inhumane Cruelty, and therefore it ought to be no wonder that a Person so barbarous to all Mankind, even to his dearest Friends and nearest Relations, should vent some of his fury upon the Christians. But as bad as he was, and I do not remember any Prince unless *Caligula* more wild and extravagant in his manners, and will allow the truth of that Character which *Suetonius* gives of him, *Ita degenerasse à suorum Virtutibus Nerone*,  
*ronem,*



*ronem, ut tamen Vitia cujusque quasi tradita & ingenua retulerit,* That he lost all the Vertues of his Ancestours and retain'd all their Vices, yet for all that I cannot but think him to have been painted a much greater Monster than he deserved. I will indeed grant his Folly to have exceeded the ordinary rate of Madness, especially his Vanity of Fiddling, Singing and acting of Plays, for which he so highly valued himself, and was so ridiculously flattered by others, and for the glory of it neglected all Affairs of State, left *Rome* to shew his skill in the Cities of *Greece*, return'd home with triumphal Pomp in the habit of a Player and with the shews of all his Victories. In short, he was not so jealous of a Rival in the Empire as of a skillfull Comedian, and at his fall was much more grieved to be upbraided with being a bad Fidler than a bad Emperour. Neither was he less exorbitant in his Lust than in his Vanity, and it was both together that so much exposed him to the publick scorn and hatred of the People.

But for the Vice of Cruelty, wherewith he is so severely charged, and of which no doubt he was highly guilty, I cannot but think him overloaded by the Historians. It was indeed a wild Paradox attempted by *Cardan*, though wittily perform'd, to write an Encomium of his great Vertues, but above all, his Clemency, in which he will have him to have excelled the best of the Roman Emperours; yet that he was not so bloody as he is usually represented, appears as by many other Acts of Mercy towards his Enemies, so particularly, as tender as he was of his Reputation, by not punishing, as most other Emperours were wont to doe, the known Libellers against his Person and Government with capital Penalties. And as for his other Severities, this at least is to be pleaded in his behalf, the  
prodigious

prodigious and unparallel'd Wickedness of the Age, that was so universally debauched, that there was scarce a Man in it of reputation enough to give Testimony against him: So that though he were both hated and condemned by the Senate it self, yet the ground of the contention between them was who should have the greatest Empire in Wickedness, and his restraint of their Enormities, particularly their inhumane Extortion, is no improbable account of their great displeasure against him. And for this reason the number of his Executions is no proper Objection against his Government; for that might come to pass not from his cruelty, but from their own wicked practices, and therefore nothing can be determin'd from that against him but by inquiring into the cause of those that suffer'd, and unless it appear (as it does not) that they were falsely accused and unjustly condemned, their being executed proves nothing either for or against him. And as for his cutting off so many of his nearest Kindred, the question is, whether themselves forced him not to it in his own defence, and if they did, then it was not choice but necessity. And whatever he did for reason of State was, according to the practices of those times, very allowable. As for the Death of his Father *Claudius* there is no evidence that he had any hand in it; that was wholly the Wickedness of *Agrippina*. And though he seem'd too ungratefull to his memory by speaking reproachfully of him, it is apparent that he was put upon it by the instigation of *Seneca*, whom it seems that dull Emperour had disobligh'd. As for *Agrippina*, she was a Woman of intolerable Pride and unheard of Cruelty; she had poison'd her Husband to derive the Crown upon her Son, she had threatned to poison him and transfer it to *Germanicus*; in short, she would not suffer him to  
enjoy

enjoy any share or any quiet in the Government. Now what was to be done with a Woman of this temper? Indeed to kill her, she being his Mother, how wicked soever, was inhumane and unnatural, yet however her practices could not but force him to some undecent severity. At least it is plain that at first he used her with due respect, and bore her insolence with extraordinary patience, till he saw both his Life and his Empire attempted, and then it was but time to secure himself, though he ought to have done it some gentler way than by putting her to Death. In short, if *Agrippina* were so bad as the Historians represent her to have been, *Nero* was not, because his cruel usage of her was in a great measure forced by her own wickedness. As for *Germanicus*, he must dye, not onely as a declared Rival to the Empire, but as the true and rightfull Heir of the Crown. And this practice was grown so familiar, that there was not an Emperour but either got the Crown or secured it by murther. All which came to pass by the prodigious dotage of *Augustus*, who, after all his great craft, instead of securing the Empire to his own nearest Kindred, onely obliged his Successours to murther them for their own security. For when he passed over the right Heirs to settle the Empire upon *Tiberius*, it was obvious that *Tiberius* could never think himself secure in his Throne, till all that had an antecedent right to it were removed out of the way. So that the blame of *Tiberius* his Cruelty is in a great measure to be charged upon *Augustus* his Folly, who, by his preposterous settlement of the Crown upon him, made it necessary upon reason of State, and that he too well knew in his Court outweighed all other considerations. And hence came that constant succession of Murthers in the Empire, whereby all of his

own

own Family were in the first place cut off, and afterwards all his Kindred. So imprudent a thing is it to think of disposing of Crowns against the Right of Inheritance, it certainly entails Murthers upon the Royal Family and Civil Wars upon the Kingdom.

But to return to *Nero*, these are the main Instances of Cruelty wherewith he is usually branded, some others there are that I shall here pass by, and onely concern my self in that he is charged with against the Christians. Against whom it is evident that he proceeded not either from any enquiry into their cause or any voluntary cruelty of his own, but deliver'd them up to the Peoples fury, onely to deliver himself from it. For the City happening to be destroyed by a sudden Fire, *Nero's* Enemies, to render him more odious, cast reports among the People that he was the Authour of the mischief, and the more to exasperate them add that he beheld the sad sight from *Mecenas* his Tower with no small joy and pleasure, singing the destruction of *Troy*. Whether this report were true or false it matter'd not, the People were ready enough to run away with any thing in their rage and anguish, and though it was, for any thing that appears, altogether groundless and malicious, it was then believed and is so to this day. And therefore *Nero*, to bring himself off, transfers the Odium upon the Christians, whom he knew to be sufficiently hatefull to the common Rabble, as despisers of their Gods and their Religion, and by turning them loose to their rage and cruelty, diverted, or at least somewhat asswaged, their fury against himself. Neither does this seem to have been *Nero's* own device, but rather to have been first prompted by the People themselves: for it is more than likely that the Idol Priests, upon occasion of so sad a Calamity, should blow the suspicion into the Peoples

Peoples heads, that it came from the Christians, who as they hated their Gods, hated their Temples too, and so would not stick to set the City on fire on purpose to destroy them. And such a suggestion as this being once kindled among the Common People, it would quickly prevail like the flames themselves, and in the extremity of their anguish transport them to the utmost excess of rage and indignation. And therefore, as the Historian observes, they did not think simple punishment enough, unless they added scorn to their cruelty, and so would not suffer them to be put to death in the shape of men, but worried them with Dogs, in the skins of Wild Beasts. But whether *Nero* fired the City or not; or whether he contrived this device to save himself, or onely made advantage of the folly of the People, it is certain that neither he nor they proceeded against them upon any mature deliberation, but that they were Sacrificed meerly to the outrage of the Rabble.

And this is the plain account of the *Neronian* Persecution, in which the Prosecutors were so far from entering into the merits of the cause, that it was wholly managed by popular Tumult, that was raised by Calumny, and enraged by Superstition. So that the Christians in it suffer'd not as Christians, but onely upon occasion of this accident, the People fell foul upon them as Enemies to their Idol-Gods. And that was natural for the blind and furious Rabble to doe, whatever the Christian cause might be, for without enquiring into that, they were onely zealous for their old Superstition. And therefore their Opposition to Christianity can be no objection against it, for though we suppose its truth and Evidence, yet notwithstanding that, it could not have avoided their displeasure. And yet in most of the other Persecutions

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it will appear that they were both set on foot and carried on onely by the folly and fury of the Multitude.

§. XXXVIII. The Second Persecution was raised by *Domitian*, the Second to *Nero* for fierceness and cruelty, though neither did he proceed in it upon any account of Religion, but purely out of jealousy of State. For as he exceeded all other Princes in suspicion and ill-nature, so upon the least shadow of pretence he would never stick at any cruelty to secure himself. Thus he Murthered *Metius Domitianus* for no other reason than because he was Born, as the Astrologers affirm'd, under an Imperial Horoscope: And slew his own Unkle *Flavius Sabinus*, because when he was chosen Consul, the Clark whose Office it was to declare the choice to the People, by mistake pronounced him Emperour instead of Consul. And though it was commonly said that he slew his Kinsman *Flavius Clemens*, whose two Sones he had adopted to succeed him in the Empire, upon the score of Christianity, yet it is much more probable that his displeasure was suddenly taken up upon some pretence of State, as *Suetonius* expressly affirms, *Repentè ex tenuissimâ suspitione tantum non ipso ejus consulatu interemit.*

And this, as we have the Story from *Euseb. l. 3. c. 20.* *Hegeſippus*, was the true Original cause of his troubling the Christians: Against whom he did not proceed in general as Christians, but onely against some of our Saviour's Kindred, who were accused before him as descending from the Royal Line of *David*, out of which the *Messias* or Universal Monarch was to come, of whom *Domitian*,  
saves

fays the Historian, was not less jealous than *Herod* himself. But upon Examination, finding both the Poverty and the Innocence of the Persons, he dismiss them, and by a Publick Edict forbad all farther Prosecution against the Followers of Jesus. Thus far *Hegesippus*, and it is one would think a plain and an easie Story, and Recorded by a Person that lived very near the time in which it was Transacted; and yet our great *Scaliger* in pursuit of that Scholastick Authority, which he has taken to himself of correcting the Ancients, but especially *Hegesippus*, is pleased not to pass it for so much as credible, and that with so much Confidence and so little Reason, as too grossly discovers his affectation of finding fault. For first he wonders that there should be no more than two of the Posterity of *David* left, and those of the Family of *Judas* the Brother of our Lord, as *Hegesippus* affirms. Whereas *Hegesippus* affirms no such thing, but onely says that two of the Posterity of *Judas* the Brother of our Lord were accused before *Domitian*. But that they were all that were remaining of the Family of *David*, he does not so much as intimate, neither had *Scaliger* any ground for this surmise, unless from thence to seize an Opportunity to give the World an account of his knowledge of the History of the *Jews* at *Babylon*, where he tells us of many of the Posterity of *David* in great honour. But granting the truth of his Story (though all the Stories of the *Jews* after their dispersion, are altogether false and frivolous) what is that to what hapned at *Rome*? So that had there been never so many of the Posterity of *David* at *Babylon*, there might have been no more than two found at *Rome*. And therefore if *Hegesippus* had affirm'd, that there were only two, all *Scaliger's* Stories of *Babylon* are

*Animad.*  
*Euseb. Anno*  
 MMCXII.

to no purpose: But when he has affirm'd no such thing, but on the contrary gives us a distinct account of *Simeon* the Son of *Cleopas* Bishop of *Jerusalem*, who lived there after the time of *Domitian*, *Scaliger* could have no motive to make the Objection, but onely to empty his Common-place-book of two or three Rabinical Quotations. But yet his next Exception is much worse; *viz.* that there was no such Person as *Judas* of the Kindred of our Lord menti- on'd in the Gospels. But suppose there were no such upon Record, it seems very hard dealing with an Ancient Writer, that lived so near the times that he Writes of, and had opportunity of enquiring into the Genealogy of the Family, when he affirms that there was such a Branch of it, to deny the truth of the mat- ter of Fact, onely because it hapned not to be menti- on'd in the Gospels; whereas nothing is better known than that divers more material passages relating to our Saviour's Family are there omitted, their design be- ing to describe his own descent from *David*, and not to give any account of the several present Branches of the Family. And yet after all *Scaliger's* confidence that there was no such Man upon Record, do we find him expressly reckoned among our Saviour's nearest Kindred, *Mat. 13. 15.* *Is not this the Carpenters Son? Is not his Mother called Mary? And his Brethren James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?* So blind is the humour of Criticising, as to overlook the most ob- vious passages rather than loose the Glory of one new discovery.

This passage I have vindicated not because that it self was at all needful to my purpose, but onely to maintain the credit of *Hegeſippus*; for if there were no such Story, that saves our labour of giving any account of it; if there were, then we must take it



as we finde it in *Hegeſippus*, according to whoſe account it was no Perſecution for Religion, but onely a jealousie of State. Neither is it to be wondred at that *Domitian* (though of all men moſt ſuſpicious) ſhould be ſo ſtrongly tainted with it, when the ſame conceit had for a long time been of ſo great force among his Predeceſſours. For it is very obvious from the Hiſtories of thoſe time, that the Jewiſh Notion of their Meſſias had got deep footing in the Gentile World, from the Authority of the *Sybilline Oracles*; in that the Old Books of the *Sybil*s, that had been for many Ages Religiouſly preſerved in the *Capitol* were together with the *Capitol* it ſelf burnt about Eighty years before our Saviour's Birth, and to retrieve their loſs, three Ambaſſadours were about Seven years after when the *Capitol* was rebuilt, diſpatcht into *Aſia*, to gather together what Records they could there find of thoſe Propheſies, and brought back with them about a thouſand Verſes. By whom they were firſt Compoſed I am not concern'd to enquire, though it is probable (as the Learned *Iſaac Voſſius* conjectures) that they were Collected by the Jews out of the Ancient Prophets, as appears from their agreement with the Holy Writings, and eſpecially in the great Prediction of a Meſſias or Universal Monarch. Which it ſeems was ſo plainly foretold by them, that in a little time it alarm'd the Senate it ſelf to forbid the reading of them, and that for very good reaſon too. When they found every aſpiring Spirit in the Common-wealth to apply them to himſelf. For this was one of the Foundations of *Catiline's* Conſpiracy, as *Tully* informs us concerning *Lentulus* in his Third Oration againſt *Catiline*.

And when *Cæſar* had made himſelf Maſter of all, it was vulgarly believed to have been the effect of  
this

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this Propheſie, as the ſame Author Triumphantly tells us in his Second Book of Divination, which was written immediately after *Cæſar's* fall. *Cum Antiftitibus agamus, & quidvis potius ex illis libris quàm Regem proferant, quem Romæ poſthæc nec Dii nec homines eſſe patientur.*

The great thing that offended the zealous Commonwealths-Man in them was the name of a great King. And if we may believe *Suetonius* or his Author *Julius Marathus*, the ſame year that *Augustus Cæſar* was Born, the Senate upon the account of this Prediction, *Regem populo Romano naturam parturire*, “ that nature was then in labour with a King of the Romans. Decreed *nequis illo anno genitus educaretur*. Not unlike the practice of *Herod*, when he Murther'd the Children of *Bethlehem* to ſecure the Title of *Shiloh* to himſelf, which ſome of the Atheiſtical Jews of the Sect of the Sadducees had flatteringly applyed to him, and were for that reaſon ſtilled *Herodians*. And this conceit himſelf cheriſhed with very great care among the Jews, as the fulfilling of *Jacob's* Propheſie upon the departure of the Scepter from *Judah* to himſelf, thereby to conciliate the greater reverence and Authority to his Government. And this probably was the reaſon, as very an Atheiſt as he was, of his building ſo magnificent a Temple, becauſe the Jews expected ſuch a glorious work from their Meſſias. Now this conceit being ſo familiarly entertain'd in the minds of men in that Age, it is no wonder if all that were in actual poſſeſſion of Authority, (whether themſelves believed it or not) were ſo watchful againſt all pretenders to it, but much leſs in ſuch a ſuſpicious Prince as *Domitian*, eſpecially as to the Family of *David*, who by the conſent of the Jews,

that

In *Auguſto*  
c. 94.

that were the great Masters of these Prophecies, had the first Title to this great Prerogative. And yet it was not so much, but onely as far as appears by Story, they were presented by some flattering and officious Informers to the Emperour, which occasion'd some trouble both to themselves and the followers of Jesus; but when the jealous Emperour came to enquire into their Claims, he was so satisfied of the Innocence of the men, that he immediately dismiss'd the Inditement as frivolous, and revoked all Edicts against the Christians as Partisans in the same cause. This is the true account of all his proceedings against them, though if he had proceeded upon other reasons, all his reasons could be nothing but reasons of State, and all his executions nothing but acts of Savageness and Cruelty. But whatever they were, there is no evidence of his entring into the merits of the cause, and if he did not, his brutal Tyranny can be no objection. Nay if he did, all that can be inferr'd, is that Christianity was not pleasing to one of the worst of Princes, and that is the best that can be made of his Persecution, and there we leave it, that as *Nero* was the first so *Domitian* was the second Enemy to Christianity, and conclude with *Tertullian*. *Consulite commentarios vestros, illic reperietis primum Neronem in hanc sectam cum maxime Romæ orientem Cæsariano gladio ferocisse. Sed tali dedicatore damnationis nostræ etiam gloriamur. Qui enim scit illum, intelligere potest non nisi grande aliquod bonum à Nerone damnatum. Tentaverat & Domitianus, portio Neronis de crudelitate; sed qua & homo, facile cœptum repressit, restituit etiam quos relegaverat.* “If you search your own Records” you “will find that *Nero* was the first Emperour that im-  
“brued his hands in Christian Blood, but we glory

“ in the hatred of such an Enemy as *Nero*, for who-  
 “ ever knows the Man, cannot but know that it must  
 “ be some very great good thing, that *Nero* hates.  
 “ And *Domitian* too a piece of the same cruelty made  
 “ the same attempt, but having in him either some  
 “ little humanity or the inconstancy of Mankind  
 “ (for which of these *Tertullian* means by his *qua* &  
 “ *homo* is altogether ambiguous) he desisted from his  
 “ design, and revoked his own proscriptions.

§ XXXIX. The Third Persecution hapned under the Reign of *Trajan*, and was set on foot upon variety of designs, all which were very remote from any fair Inquiry into the cause of Christianity it self. The first was the old jealousie of our Saviour's Kindred and the Line of *David*, and this  
*Apud Euseb.* as *Hegesippus* informs us, was started by  
*l. 3. c. 32.* the Jews and the Gnosticks against *Symeon* the Son of *Cleophas* the Brother of *Joseph*, then Bishop of *Jerusalem*, and that at a time when all the Royal Family of *Judah* were sought after, and dispatched out of the way as pretended Rivals of the Empire. And for this reason was this good Old man put to death in the Hundred and one and twentieth year of his Age.

The Second motive of this Persecution was the Emperour's great jealousie of those Societies call'd *Heteriæ*, that had often created great mischief and trouble to the Empire, and therefore for the prevention of such disturbances, he strictly forbad all manner of associations and publick meetings; and in this point of Government he was so peremptory, that when *Pliny* moved him to erect a Corporation of Smiths at *Nicomedia*, as a great convenience to the City, he would by no means be induced to allow it.

Now

Now the Assemblies of Christians being grown numerous, they fell under the edge of this Law, and it was accordingly executed against them by the Governours and Pro-consuls in their several Provinces. It is commonly supposed that this Edict against these Illegal Societies, was published on purpose to ensnare the Christian Meetings, and it is possible it might be so; yet there is no ground for it in History, but on the contrary it is manifest that this Emperour was possess'd with a particular jealousy against all kinds of Assemblies, as appears in the foremention'd case of the Smiths of *Nicomedia*. And that he had no particular design against the Christians is evident from his answer to *Pliny's* Letter, by which he inform'd the Emperour how he had executed this Edict in his Province against them, and what numbers he had punished for their obstinacy against the Law, but having made enquiry into the design of their meetings, he was sufficiently satisfied of the innocence of the men, and therefore desires directions from him after what manner he should proceed against them, or whether at all.

The Emperour upon this account that he received of the peaceableness of the Christians, takes off the severity of his Edict against them, and gives instructions, that they should not be sought for as being really innocent, yet if they were accused and Convicted, they should be punished according to Law, that is, for the good example of Government. This seems to have been all that Emperour's design in his Laws and Proceedings against the Christians, otherwise certainly he would never have remitted the Execution of a Law, of which he was so tender, onely for their sakes.

But because this was the first Prosecution, in which

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we meet with any thing like legal Proceedings against the Christians, I shall give an account of all the unjust and unreasonable methods of procedure against them, both in this and the following Persecutions; and so without troubling the Reader with a distinct Narrative of every one, give him a true State of the grounds and reasons of all, and from thence it will evidently appear that they proceeded not upon any sober enquiry, but were meerly driven on by brutish folly and madness. The heads of their accusation then were either real or feigned, the feigned were apparently the contrivances of malice, and the real were as apparently the charges of folly, as I shall shew in each particular.

The first and great charge of all was the Christians contempt of their Gods and Religion. But here the cause of Paganism was so foul and brutish, that it was the most dishonourable abuse that ever was put upon humane nature; and were not the matter of fact undeniably evident, it would have been incredible that Mankind should ever sink into such a senseless stupidity.

The Barbarous People whom the *Greeks* and *Romans* so much despised, Worshipped onely the Heavenly Bodies, but these Polite, these Civilised, these Philosophical Nations deified the worst of things and the worst of men, and replenisht Heaven with such a rout of Deities, as made it look more like a Jail full of Rogues and Villains, than an Habitation of Gods; and they relate such foul things of them, that one would scarce believe such ill reports of the vilest of Men; and if their Enemies would have set themselves to have contrived Stories, that might render them odious and contemptible, the blackest calumnies they could have fastned upon them must have fall'n short of  
the

the extravagance of their own Reports. And as were their Gods, such was their Worship too, all lewdness and Debauchery, and such things were acted in their Temples as were not allowed in the publick Stews. The foulest uncleannesses were their highest Devotions. How lascivious and obscene were the Ceremonies of *Cibele*, *Priapus*, *Flora*, and *Venus*, who were Worshipt with nothing but the vilest Lust and Wantonness? So foul and beastly were the celebrated Mysteries of *Bacchus*, that the Senate of *Rome* it self was at last forced to banish them out of *Italy*, as the foulest example of Lust and Debauchery.

In short, the prodigious Stories that they told of their greatest Deities, *Saturn*, *Jupiter*, *Ceres* or the Mother of the Gods as much exceeded the wickedness of Mankind, as Heaven is higher than the Earth. Though the truth is, they represented them much worse than they were, whilst they made them work Miracles to compass their brutish ends, for when all is done, they were neither better nor worse than Mortal Men. *Saturn* and *Jupiter* were known Tyrants in *Crete*, *Apollo* a common Fidler, the *Muses* Servant Maids, *Æsculapius* a Tooth-drawer in *Arcadia*, *Venus* a known Strumpet to *Cinyras* King of *Cyprus* not long before the *Trojan* War. These and like these were the Gods they Worshipt, and how this folly first began it is not easie to imagine, but it must certainly have been in the most Brutish and Barbarous Age of the World, and so afterwards gain Authority onely by virtue of Ancient prescription. For otherwise it was so monstrous and ridiculous in it self, that its most zealous Patrons could make no better defence for it, and were at last forced to turn it into Allegories, contrary to the Faith of their own Histories. And though the Primitive Christians insisted very severely

upon this Argument against the Heathens, of Worshipping dead men for Gods, I do not find that any of the Heathens that opposed Christianity, ever took upon them its defence, but all their Writings against the Vanity of the Pagan Religion past uncontrou'd, so uncapable was it of any defence, that no Man durst so much as undertake it. And nothing was done for it, but onely by force of Law and Government it was settled in the Empire, and therefore must be complied with, and object what you please against its Impiety, that concerns not Statesmen, the Laws must be preserved.

And now upon this account it chiefly was that the Primitive Christians suffer'd, it was not so much for any thing that was charged against their own Religion, but onely for refusing to comply with the Heathen Idolatry. That was their form of Tryal, *Will you Sacrifice to the Gods?* If they did, that alone absolved them; if they did not, that was certain death. Now if this were the case of the Christians, what was to be done? to comply with the Heathen Worship were in them downright Atheism, and if they would not comply, it was so in the Opinion of their Enemies, and so they were vulgarly esteem'd, and put to death as Enemies to all Religion. But if this were the State of the Heathens, proceedings against the Christians, it is evident that they concern'd not themselves to enquire after the Christian pretences, it was matter enough for Condemnation, that they would not Worship their Gods.

§ XL. Neither were these Tryals and Executions set on foot so much by the Governours themselves, as by the rage and fury of the People, that for the most part forced the Emperours and Pro-consuls



to put the Laws in Execution. *Romani nec ulli magis depostulatores Christianorum quàm vulgus. Planè cæteri Ordines pro Authoritate religiosi ex fide. Nihil hosticum de ipso Senatu, de Equite, de Castris, de Palatiis ipsis spirat.* Apol. c. 35.  
 “ It is the Vulgar Rabble (sayes *Tertullian*) that are  
 “ the vehement Accusers of Christians, the other or-  
 “ ders are civil and courteous in their respective  
 “ Offices, neither the Senate nor the Knights, nor the  
 “ Camp nor the Court breath out any hostility against  
 “ us. And this was the meaning of *Trajan's* Rescript to *Pliny*; that he cared not that the Christians should be sought for, but if the People accused them, the Laws must be Executed.

And though his Successour *Adrian*, under whose Reign the next Persecution Commenced, were as great a Zealot for the *Grecian* Rites, as he was a Pretender to their Learning, and was himself initiated into their *Eleusnian* Mysteries, yet he was rather the occasion than the cause of the Persecution. For that zeal that he had shewn to the rites of *Greece*, encouraged the Common People to fall foul upon the Christians, and therefore *Eusebius* ascribes the beginning of this Persecution, not to the Emperour but to the forwardness of some ill-minded men. But the fury of the People run so high, that the Government was forced to give a stop to it, in so much that *Serenius Granianus* Pro-consul of *Asia*, wrote to the Emperour in behalf of the Christians, that it was very unjust that for no Crime, but onely at the out-cry of the People they should be put to death. For that was grown the common Custom to Sacrifice them to popular Tumults and Meetings at the publick Theatre, which is the meaning of that Proverbial saying, *Christianos ad Leones*, viz. that if the People askt it

at the publick Shews, the Pro-consuls and Presidents were forced to yield to their demands, as they did not onely in this but innumerable other cases: Nothing being more common both at *Rome* and in the severall Provinces, than for the People to extort what they pleased from their Governours at these Tumultuary meetings. And therefore to prevent their Barbarity upon these occasions against the Christians, the Emperour returns this serious and severe Answer to *Minutius Fundanus*, that immediately succeeded *Gratianus*.

“ I received the Letters which were sent me by  
 “ the most excellent *Serenius Gratianus* your Prede-  
 “ cessor. Nor do I look upon it as a matter fit to be  
 “ passed over without due enquiry, that the Men may  
 “ not be needlessly disquieted, nor Informers have  
 “ occasion and encouragement of fraudulent accusati-  
 “ ons Ministred unto them. Wherefore, if the Sub-  
 “ jects of our Provinces be able openly to appear to  
 “ their Indictments against the Christians, so as to  
 “ answer to them before the Publick Tribunal, let  
 “ them take that course, and not deal by Petition and  
 “ meer noise and clamour; it being much fitter, if  
 “ any accusation be brought, that you should have  
 “ the Cognisance of it. If any one shall prefer an In-  
 “ dictment, and prove that they have transgressed the  
 “ Laws, then give you sentence against them accor-  
 “ ding to the quality of the crime. But if it shall  
 “ appear that he brought it onely out of spite and  
 “ malice, take care to punish that Man according to  
 “ the mischief of his own Intention.

A Copy of which Epistle he sent to severall other Governours of Provinces; from whence it appears that the Magistrates themselves were so far from being satisfied with any rigorous proceedings against the Christians,

stians, that they did it onely to gratifie the clamours of the People, and interposed their Authority to skreen them from their fury.

And *Tertullian* reckons up several Presidents to *Scapula*, who either avoided or refused to proceed against the Christians and particularly *Pudens* out of regard to this Rescript. But though it was able to check and bridle their fury during that Emperour's Reign, yet it broke out again in the time of his Successour *Antoninus Pius*, and extorted from him a more severe Letter to the States or Common Council of *Asia*, Prohibiting all such Wild and Barbarous proceedings against the Christians. But still the Laws are in force, and ready to be seized upon at all turns by publick zeal or private malice, and so they were under the succeeding Reign of *M. Aurelius*. For whilst himself was busie in his Wars, several Persecutions were raised in several Parts of the Empire, at *Smyrna* where *Policarp*, at *Rome* where *Justin Martyr*, and at *Lyons* where *Pothinus* suffer'd. *Policarp* was meerly Sacrificed to the Out-cry of the People. *Away with the Atheists, let Policarp be sought for*, upon which being apprehended by a Fanatick and hot-headed Justice of Peace, he was put to death by virtue of the Law that commanded to Sacrifice to the Gods, and to swear by the Emperour's Genius. *Justin* was Prosecuted by *Crescens* the Cynick Philosopher, a Man proud and Ignorant, and according to the humour of his Sect ill-natur'd and implacable, and as *Tatian*, who was very intimately acquainted with him and his manners, describes him, given up to all manner of Vice and Wickedness.

Now it hapned that *Justin* in publick Disputes, had exposed the extream Childishness and Ignorance of this vain-glorious Pedant, who to be revenged of him,

him, accuses him before the Prefect of the City, who after he had in vain taken some pains to perswade him to renounce his Saviour and to Sacrifice to the Gods, pronounced this Sentence against him and Six more. *They who refuse to do Sacrifice to the Gods, and to obey the Imperial Edict, let them be first Scourged, and then Beheaded according to the Laws.*

The Persecution at *Lyons* began at the Rabble, as it is plainly described in the Epistle of that Church to the Churches of *Asia* and *Phrygia*. “In the first place “(say they) they encountred with admirable courage “and patience, all the outrages and indignities of the “promiscuous Rabble, as Tumultuous Out-cries, “Scourgings, Draggings, Spoiling, Stoning, and Fettering, and whatsoever else the Heady and Savage “Multitude are wont to practise against their most “hated Enemies. And by them were they haled before the Governour’s Tribunal, and by him deliver’d back to their fury, which they Executed upon them with all the Arts and Circumstances of Fanatick Zeal and Barbarous Cruelty.

This I say was the usual Method to Sacrifice the Christians to the outrage of the Superstitious Rabble, and if at any time any Prince engaged himself in the opposition of Christianity, it was because that opposed the Pagan Religion. But that was such an exorbitant contradiction to the common sense of Mankind, and to all the first Principles of good and evil, that it was impossible any Man could be in love with it, after any fair and impartial enquiry about it. So that what such Men acted against Christianity, proceeded not from any rational and sober Counsel, but meerly from vulgar custom and prejudice. And therefore if *M. Aurelius* or any other Emperour, that ought to have had more wit and temper than the Common  
People,

People, shewed any zeal against the Christian Religion, their judgment is as little to be regarded in this case as that of the multitude, because it is evident that they were acted meerly by superstitious zeal and folly. If indeed they had opposed Christianity originally upon its own account, the reasons of it might have deserved some consideration, but when the ground of all their displeasure against it was founded upon their love of Paganism, the meer absurdity of that cause is too great an exception against their understandings in this Controversie. Thus supposing that *M. Aurelius* himself was as forward as the People in his zeal against Christianity, it is evident that he was as wise too. For whatever he was beside, he was a great Superstitiousist, and to a degree of stupidity zealous for the Pagan Follies, out of that vain affectation that had possess'd him, to be accounted the second *Numa* of *Rome*, which one conceit transported him to a more than childish zeal for the old Rites and Ceremonies of their Religion. And this seems to have been the case of *Decius* and *Dioclesian* in setting on foot the eighth and tenth Persecutions, to which they were hurried by a vehement and unlearned zeal for the Pagan Religion. This, in short, is the truest account that I can find of all the Persecutions, by which it plainly appears that Christianity was not so much opposed by its greatest Enemies for any thing they had to object against it self; as because it so shamefully exposed the brutishness of their Idolatry.

And yet as absurd as the Worship of the Heathen Gods was; the giving Divine Worship to their Emperours was much worse. For though their Gods were nothing better than dead Men, yet having lived in Ages remote and almost unknown, and thereby gain'd the advantageous reverence of Antiquity, the common

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People were not aware of their Original, but finding them in the possession of their Divinity, they gave them the Worship due to that Title. But to give Divine and Religious Worship to the Roman Emperours, whose Deaths and whose Vices were so fresh in the memories of Men, was such an unmanly piece of flattery, as any Man that had any sense of Generosity ought not to submit to, but every Man that had any sense of God or Religion ought to despise. And yet so infinitely were those Men besotted with Pride and Insolence, that they all had their Temples and Priests dedicated to their own Divinity, excepting onely *Tiberius*, who, being a great dissembler himself, chose to refuse so gross a flattery, and would not so much as permit his Statue to be placed among the Images of the Gods, but onely among the Ornaments of private Houses. But as for all the rest, they either took to themselves all the Titles and Dignities of Divinity, or had them conferr'd on them by their Successours: And when they were once advanced among the Gods, all Men were required under pain of Death to pay them Divine honour. Nay, as *Tertullian* too truly upbraids them, they were more religious toward their Emperours than their supreme Deity, *Majore formidine & callidior timiditate Cæsarem observatis quàm ipsum de Olympo Jovem*. And all this though it were scarce a greater blasphemy against God than an affront to Mankind, yet so base and degenerate were the spirits of Men at that time, that they refused not to submit to so dishonourable a flattery. Onely the Christians, out of that serious regard they had to the honour of their Creatour, unanimously scorn'd it with open and publick defiance. And for their generous freedom herein they were as familiarly proceeded against as for the contempt of their Gods. But now  
if this

if this were another ground of the Heathens acting against the Christians, it is so far from being any reasonable pretence, that it is one of the greatest shames of humane Nature. So that setting aside all that Evidence that is to be produced in behalf of Christianity, the opposition made to it upon this or any of the fore-mention'd accounts, cannot reflect the least shadow of disadvantage upon the truth or the goodness of its Cause.

§ XLI. These were the real Articles of accusation in their charges against the Christians, but they were not so frivolous as their forged and counterfeit pretences were malicious. For the Heathen Priests thought it not enough to enflame the rage of the People with fanatick Zeal, unless they fed their Malice (as all Impostors do) with Lies and Calumnies. But when Men are once reduced to this low and dirty Artifice in defence of any Cause, it is a sign they are drawn down to the very dregs of Malice. For it is onely for want of Argument that they are forced to make use of Slander, which the natural ingenuity of Mankind would scorn if they could support themselves and their Party without it. So that in the true account of things, when Men betake themselves to this Weapon against any Cause, it is a plain confession that it is liable to no real exception. And if the Heathens had thought that they were furnisht with matter of sufficient Argument against Christianity it self, they would never have loaded it with the pretended bad practices of its Professours, but for want of more material Objections they were forced upon these indirect courses. For what is it to the truth or fallshood of the Religion it self whether those that pretend to it live not up to its Principles? If indeed the Principles themselves were bad,

then the Practices that follow from them were a pertinent Objection against their entertainment ; but otherwise if Men that own good Principles live bad Lives, that concerns not their Principles but themselves. And therefore if the Accusations against the Christians had been true, they are of no concernment in the Cause of Christianity it self, and so deserve no consideration in this Argument. Yet because they were made use of to blind the Eyes of the People, by possessing them with an hatred of all those that might convince them, I shall give a brief account of them, because that will be another distinct reason for the unbelief of so many Men in the first Ages of the Church, notwithstanding that evidence of demonstration that Christianity brought along with it.

I shall say nothing of the out-cry of Atheism, though that made the greatest noise, because I have accounted for that already ; onely I cannot but observe that the imputation of this crime to the Christians was not more absurd than their method of convicting them was unjust. For their crime was so much taken for granted, that they never so much as enquired after any proof, but the meer name of a Christian was taken for a full conviction, and if any Man own'd it, that without any farther trial passed for a confession of Atheism. And this it is that all the Christian Apologists complain of, that onely the name should be persecuted, and for that alone they should be exposed to all the malice and cruelty of their Enemies. Though upon the vulgar supposition that the name of a Christian was synonymous with that of an Atheist, it was crime enough, so that in the result of all that absurd supposition was their onely crime.

But beside this they charged the Christians with all manner of brutishness and immorality, *Thyestæan Feasts*



or eating their own Children at their private Meetings, promiscuous Lust, Incest, and every thing that was beastly and immodest. Things so incredible in themselves that they could never gain any serious belief with wise Men; but any thing will serve turn to abuse the Rabble, for great is the power of Lying, as we of this Age know by too sad experience, that have not long since seen an establishd Church and State meerly belyed into confusion. But though the Adversaries of Christianity were ashamed to make use of these Calumnies in their publick Writings, yet they easily served to transport the People into tumults against the Christians, and so justifie any illegal and barbarous proceedings against them. Thus when *Justin Martyr* at the beginning of his Conference challenges *Trypho* the Jew, whether he really believed that the Christians ate Man's flesh, and put out the Candles at their Meetings to run together into promiscuous Lust: the Jew, being a pretended Philosopher, scorns the mention of such wild stories as unworthy any wise Man's regard, and yet notwithstanding that these very stories did the business with the People upon all occasions.

Thus in that famous French Persecution, in which the People exceeded their own usual bounds of Barbarity, they first raised these reports against the Christians, and then rackt some of Euseb. l. 5. c. 1. their Heathen Servants till they vouched them, *viz.* "That they used the Feasts of *Thyestes*, and  
 " the Incest of *Oedipus*, with divers other enormities  
 " that can neither be thought of nor exprest with modesty, nor so much as be believed to have been  
 " ever practised among Mankind; and yet when  
 " these very things were bruited abroad among the  
 " the People, they were with one consent so enraged  
 " and

“and incensed against the Christians, that those who, upon the account of Neighbourhood or Kindred, had before behaved themselves with some civility, were hereby transported into the greatest excess of violence and outrage. Neither did they design by these Calumnies to cheat the People onely, but, as *Athenagoras* complains in his Embassie to the Emperours, by the greatness and horror of those crimes that were so vulgarly reported of them, they kindled the hatred and displeasure of great Men, Princes and Governours. And that was the main design of that excellent Apology to demonstrate that the Christians were meerly slandered into Accusations, and that the slanders wherewith they were so confidently loaded, were as false as wicked.

And this was the unanimous petition of all the Christian Apologists, that the crimes objected against them might be examin'd, and if any Man that pretended to be a Christian were found guilty, that he might be punisht with the utmost severity of Law; but if they proved meer malicious tales without any evidence of proof, that for the time to come the Government would be pleased to secure them from such barbarous wrongs and injuries. We onely beseech you

*Apol. 2.* (says *Justin Martyr*) that those things charged upon the Christians should be enquired into, and if they be found to be so, let them have their due punishment, nay, let them be more severely punisht than other Men; but if not guilty, then it is not reasonable that innocent persons should suffer meerly upon report and clamour. And to the same purpose do we find *Athenagoras*, *Theophilus*, *Tatianus*, *Arnobius*, *Lactantius* and *Tertullian* frequently complaining of such proceedings, and onely requesting so much humanity from them that they might have the favour that was  
allowed

allowed all other Malefactours, to have their crimes examin'd and be proceeded against according to evidence of Fact. Nay, *Tertullian* proceeds so far as to make himself merry with the folly of their Tales, and tells them it would be a work worthy the zeal of some officious President, to find out such a *Lundsford* Christian that had already devoured at least an hundred fat Boys for his own share. *O quanta illius Præfdis gloria, si eruiſſet aliquem, qui centum jam infantes comediffet.* I know that the Fathers pleaded many other things in vindication of their Innocence, but I would not ſtuff my Diſcourſe with more quotations than are neceſſary to my Argument, and this one thing that I have repreſented is a manifeſt demonſtration of the injuſtice and unreaſonableneſs of their Enemies in their proceedings againſt them, and that is the onely thing that I am here obliged to make good, *viz.* That all the Oppoſition that was made to Chriſtianity was made upon unreaſonable grounds and by unreaſonable Men.

§ XLII. This may ſuffice for the Grounds and Reaſons of the publick Perſecutions that were raiſed againſt Chriſtianity; but as for that private Oppoſition that it met with from Philoſophers and pretendedly learned Men, it was ſo very contemptible that it ſcarce deſerves conſideration. For though one would expect to have found all the learned World engaged in a Controverſie that concern'd the whole World; yet they were very few that concern'd themſelves againſt the Chriſtian Cauſe; and thoſe that did ſo, onely pelted at it with remote and far-fetcht cavils, but never came up to the matter of Fact, which is the onely pertinent ſubject in this Enquiry; and if that ſtand firm, all other Oppoſition falls ſhort of the Argument, and breaks its own force upon it ſelf, by endeavouring to diſparage

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disparage the truth of a thing that it cannot deny, or to prove the same thing to be false that it cannot but confess to be true. Nay, so far were they from putting the matter of Fact to the question, that they were all forced to take it for granted. *Porphyry* and *Celsus* impute our Saviour's Miracles to Magick; *Hieroles* and *Trypho* say onely that the Christians make too much of them, by making a God of a divine Man; *Julian* tells us that he did no such great matters, but onely cure the Lame and the Blind. So that it seems none of them were at that time hardy enough so much as to think of controuling the reality of our Saviour's Actions for fear of too much disadvantage in the Controversie.

Now after this it is easie to foretell with what trifling pretences they must satisfie themselves; and they were so very trifling, that it will require but very little pains to shew their Vanity. All the Opposition then that was made to it this way, proceeded meerly either from gross Superstition or avowed Atheism. The first is coincident with the former account of the publick Persecutions, and was nothing else than a meer fanatick zeal for the old Pagan Idolatry. And this was chiefly managed by the *Pythagoreans*, the onely superstitious Sect among all the Philosophers, who were all along so zealous of the Grecian Rites, that they may properly be styled the Monks and Friars of that Religion. This humour they derived from their first Founder *Pythagoras* himself, who having learned that part of natural Philosophy from *Thales* and *Anaximander*, that explain'd the mechanical contrivances of Matter and Motion, to which alone those Philosophers pretended, he quickly perceived, either by the sagacity of his own Mind, or the instruction of *Pherecides*, that there was some intelligent Being  
in

in Nature, that was the cause of the order and harmony of Things. And it was this that so strongly possess'd him with the notion of a Deity, whom he defin'd to be a Mind diffus'd through all Nature, from whom all things receive their Life and Activity. As not being able to understand how the natural effects that are constantly and every where visible in the World, could be brought to pass but by the present and immediate assistance of such a power.

And now having his Mind thus thoroughly touch'd with a sense of the Divinity, and finding the *Orphean* Rites and Constitutions, at that time, the most sacred Solemnities of Religion in the World, he grew very zealous of them as the most religious Symbols of Divine Worship. Neither was his zeal satisfi'd with the superstition of his own Country, but he travel'd into all parts of the World, to inform himself of their several ways of worshipping their Gods. And then compos'd a Service of his own, partly out of the *Orphean*, partly out of the *Ægyptian*, partly out of the *Chaldean*, partly out of the *Eleusian*, and partly (to mention no more) out of the *Samothracian* Rites, which together with his own theurgick Ceremonies must make up a compleat Rhapsodie of all the Superstition and Idolatry of the Heathen World. And though some of his Followers, *Leucippus*, *Democritus* and *Epicurus* apostatis'd so far from his Institution, as to fall into the rankest and most audacious Atheism, yet all that persevered in their Master's Discipline, were sure no doubt to be most of all strict in his Religion. And it was onely this Sect of Philosophers (who were Men rather devout than learned) that all along gave authority and reputation to the old Heathen Idolatry. And therefore when Christianity began to bear it away, it could not be expected but that they should appear the most forward

Champions to defend their Fanes and their Temples, their Altars and their Oracles against the new and prevailing Religion.

The first and the ablest Champion was *Porphyrie*, a Man at that time eminent for Wit and Learning, but so entirely eaten up with fanatick zeal for his Religion, that he had not patience so much as to hear of any thing that opposed it, and this set him all on fire against Christianity. For being by nature of a fierce and angry temper, insomuch as he attempted to cut his own Throat (as he describes himself in the *Life of Plotinus*) and withall very much inclined to Austerity and Devotion, (for he was a very strict observer of the Pythagorean Rules) this fixt him in his fanatick and superstitious zeal, than which there is nothing more insuperable. Though when this happens to be join'd with a natural eagernefs of temper, it grows into meer fury and outrage, and so transports Men out of the use of their natural Understandings. And this seems to have been the case of *Porphyrie*, not onely from that description that he gives of himself, and that account that his Friends give of his Life, but also by that Character that is given of his Writings against the Christians, which is described by the most impartial Writers as full of rage and bitterness. Though how he performed what he undertook is not so certainly determinable, in that not onely his own Book, but all those that were written against it are utterly perisht. But by those fragments that remain of it in the Writings of the Ancients, it does not at all appear that he ever ventur'd to deny the matter of Fact of our Saviour's Miracles, but granted them so far as to impute them to the power of Magick. But how vain that pretence is we have already shewn, at least the whole of the Controversie depends upon the truth

truth of the matters of Fact, that are recorded of our Saviour, none of which I do not find that he ever undertook to controul, and as long as that stands firm, all other Opposition is but trifling.

However he was a Person so infinitely superstitious that his Opinion can be no prejudice against the cause of Christianity, because he was at no liberty to make any enquiry into the truth of its pretences. And of the same Kidney was *Hierocles*, especially if he were (of which there is little doubt) the same zealous Person, that was first Judge at *Nicomedia*, and afterward Prefect of *Ægypt* under *Dioclesian*, and a great Agent in his bloody Persecution; however he was a zealous *Orphean*, and extreemly addicted to the old Pythagorick Superstition. But whatever he was otherwise, his work against the Christians was so contemptible, that it was slighted as none of his own, and made up altogether of borrowed Feathers out of other Mens Writings, which he was not ashamed to transcribe word for word into his own Rhapsodie, especially out of *Celsus*, insomuch as *Eusebius* sticks not to affirm that there is but one passage in all his Book, that was not answer'd aforehand by *Origen*. And that was his parallel between our Saviour and *Apollonius Tyanæus*, but how evenly that runs we have already consider'd. And therefore here I need say no more, onely that from hence it appears that he did not so much as question, much less deny our Saviour's Miracles; but onely vyed the unvouched Stories of that pedantick Impostor with the so well voucht History of Jesus. Nay, he was so far from gainsaying their truth that he was forced to yield that he was a Divine Man, and the onely thing for which he was so much offended against the Christians was, that nothing less would serve their turn unless he might be reputed a God too.

So that his whole Opposition to the cause of Christianity amounts to nothing less than a clear confession of the truth of the matter of Fact; and that is all that at present I am concern'd to prove.

And then as for the Emperour *Julian*, as he was the fiercest of all the Enemies to Christianity, so was he the most impotent too, being too angry and passionate to make any just enquiry into the cause, and withall of a strange lightness and vanity of Nature, which those Historians, that would most admire him, remark as the most predominant principle in all his actions, this hurried him, according to the eagerness of his temper, against the Christians, because their Doctrine brought contempt upon all the old Constitutions of *Greece*, of which he was so fond. And this was the main of his Argument in his Book against the Christians, that they disparaged the Heathen Gods and the Heathen Philosophers. So that the bottom of all his zeal was nothing but pedantry and superstition. For he valued himself not a little upon the Opinion that he had of his skill in the Grecian Learning, and especially the mystical Philosophy of *Plotinus*, *Iamblicus* and the latter Platonists; but much more upon his zeal for the old Superstition, of which he was so childishly fond, that it exposed him even to the contempt of the superstitious Rabble it self, that flouted him as if he design'd the utter extirpation of Oxen as well as Christians. And as he was so vain as to think himself *Alexander* the Great, according to the Pythagorean Doctrine of the transmigration of Souls, which put him upon his unfortunate Persian Expedition, as not doubting to return with the same honour and success as he had done before; so was he most ambitious of imitating *Marcus Aurelius*, as he was of *Numa*, in his zeal for the Worship of the Gods.



And it was this wild zeal lighting upon his temper, that was naturally hot to a degree of madness, that transported him into all his extravagant attempts against the Christians. But as he was not naturally capable of any sober reasoning, so much less in this case, in which he was so much blinded with pride and passion. And it is too evident with what little reason he opposed Christianity, when the main thing that he always charged upon it was Atheism, the very falshood and disingenuity of which charge is a manifest indication of his passion and partiality. And as for his Book that he wrote against it with all possible keenness and indignation, he dares not so much as come near the matter of Fact concerning our Saviour's Actions, but plays aloof off against the Jews of old and the Christians of his own time. But as for our Saviour's Miracles, upon which the whole Controversie depends, he does not so much as undertake to contradict them, but onely says that it was no such wonderfull thing in him to cure the Lame and the Blind. Seeing therefore he has not so much as meddled with the main Argument of Christianity, the matter of Fact; the evidence of that alone must of it self baffle all other Attempts. At least till that is consider'd, all other considerations are short of the Argument, so that this alone may suffice as an answer to all his Cavils, to refer him to the matter of Fact, and if that prove it self true, he can prove nothing, but if it do not, he need prove nothing, it sinks of its own accord.

§ XLIII. However, if they have any cavils that may seem to have any appearance of reason in them, they are all raked together by *Celsus* the Epicurean, who, of all the Enemies to Christianity, was both the boldest

boldest and the ablest, as appearing with less folly and more malice. For being an Atheist, and so not at all tainted with their superstitious conceits, he escaped all those disadvantages into which they run themselves by their fanatick zeal. But being an Epicurean too, he was the more exasperated against the Christian cause, because that confuted all his wisdom by sensible experiment, which was the onely proof of things that they would admit of in their Philosophy. And therefore when they had so bravely deliver'd all wise Men, that is, themselves, from the fear of a Divine Providence and the care of a future State, it could not but be a very grating provocation upon Men of their proud, peevish and ill-natur'd Principles, to have so clear a baffle put upon all their wisdom, and that in their own way. And as this was the main motive of the peculiar displeasure of the Sadducees against the Apostles among the Jews, so no doubt it wrought the same effect upon Men of the same Principles among the Heathens.

But of all others *Celsus* seems to have been most angry at the defeat, and therefore lays about him to load it with all the cavil and calumny that wit or malice can invent. And for the greater plenty of Objection, he takes upon himself a double Person, of a Jew and of an Heathen. Though the truth is, he personates the Jew full as awkerdly as the Ass did the Lion in the Lion's Skin, his Epicurean Ears every where shew themselves through his Jewish Livery. And he is so eager in his pursuit of Christianity, that at every turn he forgets the Person he bears, and falls as foul upon the Jews themselves as the Christians. We shall engage him in both his shapes, and leave it to any impartial, either Jew or Heathen, to judge of the reasonableness and validity of his Discourse. His two great  
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battering Engines, that he plants in all parts of it, we have already dismounted, *viz.* His imputing our Saviour's Miracles to the power of Magick, and his vying the Resurrection of others in Heathen Story with that of our Saviour. And by this means we have already dispatched the greatest part of our business; for being conscious to himself of the slightness of most of his Cavils, he at every turn claps one or both of these upon them to make up the Objection. And yet beside that they are a confession of the matter of Fact it self, they are things of which he was obliged by his Principles to entertain as little belief as of the Christian Faith. For the power of Magick supposes some Spirits or Beings distinct from Matter and Motion, and the Resurrection of Men from the Grave supposes Souls distinct from Blood and Brains, both which are meer contradictions to the Epicurean Philosophy. And therefore he could not design to oppose them to the cause of Christianity for any truth that he supposed in them, but onely thereby to intimate that as they were Fables, so might that too. Which is such a slender way of arguing as onely betrays its own weakness; for when I have demonstrated the truth of a thing with all the Evidence that any matter of Fact is capable of, is it not a poor come off onely to reply, That yet there are the same kind of Stories that neither I nor perhaps any Man else believes. There are so, but then the difference is this, that the Story that I believe is vouched with all the Testimony in the World, and that is the reason of my belief; but the Stories that I do not believe, are on the contrary destitute of all manner of Attestation, and that is the reason of my disbelief; so childish is this great and shrewd reflection of this witty Philosopher.

But beside these, there are several other passages that we have already consider'd, and therefore shall not here repeat, neither is it fit to pursue every bubble that he has blown up, but whatsoever is any way pertinent to the matter of Fact, that is indeed to the Argument, though never so remotely, I shall give it as much confutation as, and perhaps more than, it deserves. And when I have done, that will make up a new demonstration of the truth of Christianity, for thereby we shall see how little its greatest Enemies were able to object against it.

The Cavils of his first Book then are such as these, *viz.* Their clancular Meetings against the Laws; their being a barbarous Sect, as springing from the Jews and not the Grecians, *Moses* not being so ancient as is pretended, the World not being created as he relates, because eternal, and his teaching the Jews to worship Angels; our Saviour's being a Magician, himself being poor, and his Disciples ignorant. First then they kept clancular Meetings against the Laws. Against what Laws? Why against such as forbid the Worship of the onely true God, and in its stead injoin the Worship of Idols and dead Men. But as for the publick Laws against the Christians I have already given a sufficient account of their Iniquity. Though, as *Celsus* has managed the Cavil, it needs no reply, because it is a vain thing meerly to urge the Laws, unless he had vindicated their goodness and justice, in that there may be bad as well as good Laws. And therefore unless he would have undertaken to make good the piety of those Laws that command the Worship of their Heathen Gods (that himself knew to be no better than very bad Men) he had much better have let the Laws alone.

But in the next place, the Christians are a Barbarous Sect, that had their beginning among the Jews, not the *Grecians*. But 'tis no matter whence they sprang, so they bring a good evidence of the truth of their cause, and of this *Origen* tells him, they had from the very beginning to that very day, a demonstration that exceeds all their pretended Learning, and that is the demonstration of power, or the power of Miracles. But alas this objection of Barbarity is nothing more than meerly an Instance of the Pedantick pride of the Greeks, who valued themselves above the common rate of Mankind, and looked down with intolerable scorn and contempt upon all the World beside. But as for their great improvements in learning above other Nations, of which they so much boasted among themselves, I need here say nothing, though I must confess I find nothing so valuable among their choicest Philosophers, but when I lookt for the reasoning of Men, I could find little better in any of them than Childish tricks and sports of Sophistry. But however to pass that by, I am sure no Nation in the World ever equall'd the Greeks in the Barbarity of their Religion, and though with this *Celsus* and his Companions were at that time sufficiently upbraided, yet it is too well known that they could never be prevail'd with so much as to undertake its defence.

But in the next place, Christianity (he sayes) gives no Laws of Morality, but such as the Philosophers taught and were common to Mankind before. To this *Origen* replies, 'tis very true, in that there could be no exercise for the Justice and Providence of God, or obligation of the duty of Men, without a sense and knowledge of the Laws of good and evil. And therefore it was requisite to have the Seeds of those

Moral Notions; which God taught by his Prophets and his Son, planted in the hearts and consciences of all Mankind, that in the final judgment, every Man might be justly call'd to an account for the faithful discharge of his duty. But beside, is not this a fit objection to follow that of Barbarity, or their Ignorance in the Grecian Philosophy, that the Christian Church agreed in all their main points and Doctrines with the Schools of the Philosophers?

The next thing objected is credulity and contempt of humane Learning. But the charge of credulity is already answer'd by those undeniable proofs that are produced for the Divine Authority of the Christian Faith. And as for the humane learning that they despised, it was nothing but the Pedantry of the Grecian Philosophers, who whilst they pretended to the height and perfection of all Wisdom, fell into the extreamest ignorance and folly. And to mention no more, what thinks he of the celebrated Founder of his own Sect, who with abundance of pride and arrogance boasted, that he had rid the World of a God and a Providence, but with such trifling reasonings as are below the Babblings and Follies of Children. Let them therefore cease to upbraid the Christians with the neglect of their Learning, when there cannot be a greater Argument of true wisdom and a right understanding of things than to see through its folly.

And in the next place as for the Antiquity of *Moses*, he had as good have let that alone too, when *Porphyrie* or any other Learned Man conversant in Histories of Ancient times could have told him that nothing is more evident or undeniable than that *Moses* lived many Ages before *Linus* or *Orpheus*, or any other the most Ancient Writers among the *Grecians*. But it is the custome of *Epicureans* to be confident upon

upon the slightest Enquiries; Otherwise if he had taken never so little pains in searching and comparing Ancient Records, he could never have put such a trick upon himself, as to think of bringing down the History of *Moses* below the known times of *Greece*. As for the Eternity of the World, which follows next, I shall not answer him here, because if it were true as I have elsewhere proved it false, it runs too far from the present Argument of the truth of our Saviour's History. And as for *Moses* his commanding the Jews to Worship Angels, I scorn to answer it, because it is so impudently false, when the great Commandment of his Law is to Worship one God alone, and when himself had but a very little before objected this as a singularity in the Jews against all the World beside.

And then as for our Saviour's being a Magician, I hope I may now let that pass too without being suspected as guilty of any Omission. And as for his Meanness and Poverty, I think I have sufficiently accounted for that too already, in that it was but suitable to the design of the Divine Providence, that he should be sent into the World stript of all Worldly advantages, that he might subdue it purely by the power of Truth. And therefore that alone is to be consider'd in this Enquiry, whether he wrought such Miracles in Confirmation of his Doctrine, or not; if he did, the meanness of his condition is no objection against the truth of his Miracles; if he did not, he is to be rejected for a much worse objection. Nay this is so far from bringing any real disadvantage upon the Christian cause, that it brings a considerable accession to its demonstrative proof and evidence. In so much that without it, it must have ever been liable to suspicion; for if he had appear'd with Kingly splendour,

splendour, and all the advantages of earthly power, the strange and wonderful entertainment of his Doctrine might have been imputed to Worldly Interest and not to the force of truth, and Men would have followed him for politick Ends, and not for any Conscience of Religion. And therefore to be secure of the Integrity of his Disciples, he gives them no secular Encouragement, nay on the contrary ensures to them all the miseries of humane life in their propagation of the Christian Faith. His Institution was pure Religion, and conscience towards God was its onely Obligation, and therefore it was but agreeable to its own intention, that it should carry along with it no other recommendation.

And thus I remember when *Julian* objects the meanness of our Saviour's condition, in that he was born a Subject of the Empire, which as he fancies was below the dignity of the Son of God. *St. Cyril* answers, that if he had appear'd with Imperial Power, and by virtue of that, commanded the Obedience of Mankind, Men must have submitted to him for Worldly Interest, and not out of any sense of duty or Religion, and he had been just such another Deity, as *Caligula* and the rest of their Emperours were, who forced Men in spite of themselves to give them the shew of Divine honour by their own Laws. And whereas you object (says he) that he was subject to *Cæsar*, what is that to the purpose, when he did such things as neither *Cæsar* nor any other Man ever did? He raised Men from the Dead, did any of your *Cæsars* ever doe so? What then if he were subject to *Cæsar*, it is evident from his Works that he was greater, and they alone demonstrate him to have been the same Person that he pretended to be. So that being the  
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Son of God, he scorn'd all your outward pomps and shews of Majesty, and would receive no honour but what reflected upon him from the glory and greatness of his own Works. To which might be added *Origen's* reply, that it is no wonder for Men that have all the advantages of Birth and Fortune to make themselves considerable in the World, but this is the thing that is most wonderful in Jesus, that a Person so obscure upon all Worldly accounts, should raise himself to so great a fame and reputation; that a Man so poor and meanly Educated, and never instructed in the arts of Eloquence, should take upon him to convert the World to a new Doctrine, to Reform the Religion of the Jews, and to abolish the Superstition of the Greeks: and yet that without any force or Artifice, he should so speedily effect what he undertook, this, sayes he, is a thing singular in him, and was never done by any Man, that I know of, in any other Age. Nay farther beside the obscurity of his Life, and all other things designedly laid to Eclipse his Glory, his ignominious death one would think should have put it out for ever, and that even those that he had deluded in his Life-time, should then have been convinced of the grossness of the Imposture. And therefore it is most wonderful of all, that if the Apostles had never seen our Saviour after his Resurrection, or had no assurance of his Divinity, how it could ever come into their minds to leave their Country, and expose themselves to all hazards and hardships, to publish and propagate the belief of a known falsehood. So that we see that the meanness of that State in which our Saviour appear'd, is so far from being any material Objection against his Divine Authority, that upon several accounts in the last result of things, it lyes at the bottom of its demonstration.

In the next place he flouts at the Relation of the appearance of the Holy Ghost and the voice from Heaven at our Saviour's Baptism, as a thing in it self absurd and incredible. But here the Epicurean forgets that he is a Jew, in that there are many Relations of such appearances in the Old Testament; which yet if this objection hold good, every Jew is bound to believe false and impossible. But to treat with him as an Epicurean, why is it impossible? Because all Stories of God's concerning himself in Humane affairs are undoubted Fables. An admirable way this of confuting a matter of fact, onely by saying that it is impossible upon a precarious Principle of our own. So that the last result of this rude objection against the Faith of the Evangelists is onely this, that it cannot be true, because there is no such thing as a Divine Providence. But he adds that there was no witness of it, but onely *John* the Baptist, his Companion in wickedness. And this is another unhappy mistake of a Man that sustein'd the Person of a Jew, when all the Jewish Nation, even the greatest Enemies to Jesus, had a very great Reverence for *John* the Baptist. And yet it is not his Testimony that we rely upon for the truth of the Story, but the truth of the Evangelists that have Recorded it, they knew what Evidence they had of its reality, and we know what evidence we have of their sincerity.

And now having discharged all his little Topicks of Calumny against our Saviour's own Person, in the last place he falls foul upon his Apostles, and that with the same unhappy success. For as little as he gain'd by objecting the meanness of our Saviour's condition, he gains just as much by insulting over their Ignorance, that is but another enhancing circumstance of his Divine Authority. For as it was a  
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wonderful thing for so obscure a Person to make such an alteration in the World, so was it much more so to effect it by such contemptible Instruments. For no Man that ingenuously considers the prodigious success of the Apostles, can ever impute it to any other cause, than either some Divine and extraordinary Power, or the great and irresistible evidence of the thing it self. In that by the Objection it self, it is plain that they were destitute of all the Arts of Eloquence and Learning, by which it was possible that they might persuade, or deceive the People into any belief: Whereas if Jesus had chosen the Learned and the Eloquent for the propagation of his Doctrine, he might have been justly suspected of the same design with the Philosophers of erecting a new Sect by the Power of wit and Rhetorick. But when a few Fisher-men that wanted all the improvements of Learning and Education, as the Evangelists Record, and *Celsus* objects, effected it with such prodigious success, it is not conceivable how they should do it any other way than by Miracle either in their words or actions. And thus all along the more they object the contemptibleness of the means, the more the strangeness of the Event returns upon themselves, so that if there had not been something more than Humane in the design, it could never in the way, in which it was Prosecuted, have taken any effect.

In the Second Book the counterfeit Jew first rates his Country-men for quitting the Laws of their own Nation to follow this Innovatour. But setting aside the answer of *Origen*, that the Christians did by no means forsake the Religion of *Moses*, but pursue and improve it. Still this is short of the Argument, and comes not up to the reasons, for which they did it. If they had none, their lightness was justly blameable; but

but whether they had, or had not, it concern'd not this Atheist to enquire. And then this becomes *Celsus* the Jew and the Epicurean very well; that when the Epicurean had begun his discourse with a disparagement of the Impostor *Moses*, the Jew should make this an Argument against the Christians, that they renounced the Man, that his Friend had proved an Impostor.

In the next place, when he objects our Saviour's Cowardise, that he fled and hid himself, and such other trash, it is equal malice and folly, without ground or pretence; in that there was no History of Jesus extant beside the Evangelists, who all affirm that he went up to *Jerusalem* purposely to deliver up himself into the hands of his Enemies. Now, says *Origen*, I leave it to any Man of common sense to judge, which is most reasonable to believe, these unvouched and vagabond surmises, invented out of meer hatred to the Christians; or to believe things as they are deliver'd by the Evangelists, who pretended either to have been Eye-witnesses, or to have had a full information of the matter of fact, and were ready to seal the truth of their Testimony with their blood. This strange constancy and resolution even to death it self, is not like Men who were conscious to themselves of having forged a false Story, but on the contrary a clear and manifest Argument, that they were serious and very well satisfied in the truth of the things that they Recorded. Is not this then an ingenuous way of proceeding, to oppose the truth of their History with flying Reports, that have neither Author nor Authority, and indeed such, that whilst there is malice in the World, no true Story can escape? But, says *Celsus*, though he was pleased not openly to shew his Divinity before, yet at least he ought

ought to have done it, by vanishing miraculously from the Cross. No, no *Celsus*, he had a farther design to demonstrate not onely his own Divinity but Man's Immortality. If he had onely disappear'd, you might have imputed that to a trick of Magick, but when he arose from the dead, after he had been so publickly executed, this was both an undeniable proof of his Divine Authority, and a full assurance to Mankind of their capacity to subsist after Death. And though there were other indispensable reasons, why he suffer'd himself to be sacrificed upon the Cross, yet if it were for these alone, he had sufficient reason to suffer what he did. Especially when himself had, through the whole course of his Life, refer'd the proof of his Authority to his Resurrection, so that if he had, according to *Celsus* his advice, withdrawn himself from the Cross, he had apparently defeated his own design, that he had laid through the whole History of the Gospel. But beside this by his Death, Passion and Resurrection he has demonstrated to Mankind that the Divine Providence has reserved the happiness of humane Nature to another Life, and clear'd up the future existence of Souls by an undeniable Experiment: And that is the thing that so much frets the Epicureans, that he has put so clear a baffle upon their Impiety.

But as for his next Cavil he is really to be pitied, when he asks, Why we do not Worship all other crucified Malefactors? It is an Objection worthy the wisdom and gravity of a learned Philosopher; but yet for his satisfaction it is fit to let him know that we Worship all such Malefactors as our Saviour was, who own'd himself to be the Son of God, and then suffer'd himself to be murder'd, to prove it by his Resurrection. But, he says, his Disciples forsook him, and would dye neither with nor for him. They

did so by sudden surprize, but what did the same Disciples immediately alter upon his Resurrection? They that were but a little before seized with so much Cowardise, feared then no danger to attest it to the World, and most of them dyed for the truth of their Testimony. So that this Objection of Cowardise in the Apostles is just such another advantageous circumstance to the cause of Christianity as that of their ignorance and want of learning. For as it is an Argument of the great Evidence of their Cause, when Men neither learned nor eloquent were able so successfully to propagate it among Mankind, in that they could give it no more advantage than it brought along with it: So when Men so timorous and cowardly should afterward grow so very fearless in asserting it even to the Death, that is an unquestionable evidence that they were abundantly satisfied in the truth of what they attested.

But as for *Celsus* his insinuation that the Apostles onely dream't and fancied that they saw *Jesus* after his Resurrection: as it may be applied to any matter of Fact in the World, and turn even all the actions of his own Life into dream and fancy; so if it be compared with all the peculiar circumstances as to this thing, they prevent the folly of so ridiculous a surmise. And he has no ground to bear him out in it, but onely his Epicurean conceit that the Resurrection from the dead is a thing impossible. But as for that we will not dispute it with him at present, though it is evident that, according to the Principles both of their own and all Philosophy, it is altogether as easie and conceivable as the generation of a Man. The matter of Fact what has been, is the onely Argument of our debate, and we will not go so far about as to dispute its possibility, when we have demonstrated its actual certainty.

certainty. And yet in the conclusion of all, *Celsus*, after he has taken so much pains, and that in the Person of a Jew, to prove the impossibility of a Resurrection, is so wretchedly sottish as to declare his own belief of the Resurrection even of the Body to eternal Life, and that the first proof and specimen of it is to be given to the World by the Messias.

In the third Book he begins to dispute in his own Person, and first objects that the dispute between the Christians and Jews was of no moment, in that both believed that there was to be a Saviour of the World, and onely differ'd in this, whether he were already come or were yet to come. And yet this, beside the gross absurdity of the Objection it self, is a meer contradiction to all the former Discourse by the personated Jew. For if the difference between the Jews and the Christians were so small as he pretends, then all the sad out-cries and invectives of the Jew against the Christians were onely clamorous Nothings. But this is objected like an Atheist, that lookt upon these and all other differences about Religion as trifling Fooleries. And therefore *Origen* in answer to it shews him the excellency of both in the Worship of the supreme Deity, as opposed to the folly and impiety of the Heathen Idolatry.

But beside that, as for the difference between the Jews and the Christians concerning our Saviour, nothing but extreme ignorance could have objected its Vanity. For is it nothing whether he were the promised Messias, the Son of God, the Saviour of the World, the Judge of Mankind, as the Christians believed: or whether he were a bold Impostor that pretended to these great Titles onely by virtue of magick Art, as the Jews believed? If the first were true, that commands the obedience of all Mankind to his Laws,

as the onely terms of Salvation; and if so, then nothing could more concern them than to be satisfied in its truth and reality. So that it is so far from being a trifling Controversie, as *Celsus* foolishly objects, that there was never any Controversie started in the World of greater concernment to Mankind. But the Epicurean's real meaning is that all Controversies about Religion are trifling, because all Religion is a Cheat, and if it be so, then indeed it is but a childish thing to contend about it. But otherwise, if there be a Providence that governs the World, then certainly, if any thing in the World does, it highly concerns all Men to inform themselves of those certain rules of Duty that he has prescribed to their practice.

But against both Religions the Epicurean objects that they began in Sedition, the Jewish against the Egyptians, and the Christian against the Jews. But in the first he supposes the Jews to have been originally Egyptians, which, because it is a vain and proofless presumption, can prove nothing. And yet it is much more vain to charge Christianity with Sedition, because all Sedition either designs or acts some violence against the Government, whereas it is evident that our Saviour allowed no Weapons to his Followers but Sufferings, and has threatned no one offence with greater severity than endeavours of disturbance to the civil State under pretence of Religion. So that it is plain that if his Religion be true, it could not have been brought in more inoffensively to the powers of the World: And therefore it cannot with any ingenuity be charged with Sedition, till its truth or falsehood be first determin'd. For that is the onely Controversie in this matter, which if *Celsus* and his Partisans had but the courage to undertake, they would have had no need of these petty and remote reflections.

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The next Cavil is that the Christians affected nothing but singularity. Very likely this, when so many of them travel'd into all parts of the World with the extreme hazard of their Lives, to convert, if it were possible, all Mankind to Christianity. But though they seem'd to agree at first, they alterward divided into Factions. But this is an objection against the levity of humane Nature, not the truth or excellency of Christianity. For beside what *Origen* answers, that there was never any thing of great reputation in it self, or usefulness to the World, about which Men did not raise disputes and make parties: I would onely ask him, Whether, supposing the truth of Christianity, it was not in the power of Men to raise Controversies about it; if it was, then their doing so is no objection against it; if it was not, that is to say no Religion can be true unless it bring a fatal necessity upon all that pretend to it to be both wise and honest; which is such an awkerd condition of things, as destroys, not onely all the Principles of Religion, but of humane Nature it self. But, says he, they scare the People with Fables and Bugbears. Tell what, says *Origen*, beside future Rewards and Punishments. We indeed believe that there is a sovereign Governour of Mankind, and that hereafter he will sit in Judgment upon all our Actions. And in this belief we instruct the People out of the holy Scriptures, and exhort them to live as they ought, that must give an account of themselves to the great Governour of the World. These indeed are Fables to an Atheist and an Epicurean, but not to any Man that believes any thing of the Providence of God or the Obligations of Religion. And that is the thing that *Celsus* writes against, not meerly Christianity, onely he is fiercest in his opposition to that, because it is so full a check to his impiety,

impiety, though otherwise the main of his Objections, that he levels against that, aim as directly against all Religion. And thus the Bugbears of a future State with which he here upbraids Christianity, are common to all Mankind but onely his own Sect. And though he would make us believe that he would not for all the World take away the Opinion of Rewards and Punishments in the next Life, this Vizard is too ridiculously put upon an Epicurean, 'tis too gross a contradiction to himself, and he renounces his first Principle to impose upon the People; but though they indeed may easily be imposed upon by any thing (as they were by his Master *Epicurus*, who frequented their publick Sacrifices, to make himself sport at home with the folly of their Superstition) yet he should never have been so fool-hardy as to publish it to the World, because he could not but expect that wise Men should take notice of and expose his Hypocrisie. But whatever himself was pleased to believe, I am sure if there be no future Rewards and Punishments, that then there is no Religion; if there are, let *Celsus* tell if he can with what other Bugbears Christianity scares the People.

From hence he falls into his old Stories of Heathen Miracles, for this Topick makes up one half of every Book. But beside what I have already shewn that they prove nothing against Christianity, his insisting upon them with so much stubbornness is an argument of nothing but his own confidence. For if he believes them not, they are nothing to his purpose; if he does, he shews a strange partiality in believing things so ill vouched in comparison of the History of our Saviour. But whether he does or does not, he plainly contradicts either himself or his design. For when he tells us of several Miracles wrought in several Temples of  
Greece;

Greece; if he believes that some Dæmon or Heroe, that could doe such things as exceeded humane Power, inhabited in those places, then farewell to his Epicurean Doctrine, that there is no such thing as Dæmons or Spirits. If he believes it not (as he does not) it is very ridiculous in him to argue from the supposition of the truth of those Stories which he not onely supposes, but (as himself thinks) knows to be false. Though he is still more and more unhappy, when he compares the Apotheosis of *Antinous Adrian's* Boy with that of our Saviour. All the Christian Apologists indeed luckily enough upbraided the Heathens with this fresh Instance of their Idolatry, as an exemplification of the rise and preferment of all their more ancient Deities; and to this purpose they mind them of many horrid and foul Stories of *Bacchus, Venus, Cupid, Ceres, Proserpine*, that exceeded all the lust and debauchery of later times. But to compare this impure Beast, that was made a God to the shame of Mankind, with our Saviour, who if he were worshipt for a Deity, could obtain that honour by nothing but his divine and miraculous Actions, very well becomes both the modesty and ingenuity of an Atheist.

From hence he falls into his old Calumny (for now we have little but repetition) that the Christians were Enemies to all Learning. But the ground of this is their neglect of the dull and atheistical Philosophy of the Greeks, that could not arise to the contemplation of any thing above matter. But as for that true Philosophy that, from the contrivance of visible and material things, leads on to the discovery of the Wisdom, Goodness and Providence of God, it was most of all studied and improved by the Christian Philosophers. The remaining Calumnies, that, according to the Laws of Christianity, God accepts onely of bad Men  
and

and refuses the good, and that because it allows Repentance to the worst of Sinners, it allows them too in the worst of Sins, they are so apparently disingenuous, splenetick and malicious, that they onely reflect back shame and dishonour upon the Man, that blushes not to vent such impudent forgeries in the face of the Sun.

And thus have I given a sufficient Specimen of this pretended Philosophers way of disputing against Christianity, whereby the Reader may perceive that he opposed it not with any rational or true philosophical Principles but meer Cavils and Calumnies. And now being tired out with so much dulness, I shall travel no farther in him, because all that follows is of the same Nature, and for the most part the same materials too, so that there is very little new, and that which is so, is either very remote or very trifling. And therefore I shall here put an end not onely to my engagement with him, but to my whole Undertaking; and upon this true and impartial representation that I have made, on one hand of all that variety of demonstration that accompanied the Gospel into the World; and on the other of the weakness and impotency of all that Opposition that could be made against it by Learning or Power, by Zeal or Malice, by Wit or Prejudice, by Philosophy or Superstition, I leave it to the Reader to think with himself which way it was possible for the Providence of God, if he had intended to set such a design on foot, to have given a greater assurance of its truth and authority to the World. Let him lay all the premises fairly together, and then I once more leave him to his own thoughts to make his own conclusion.

§ XLIV. And when he has done so, I must desire him to make one more, and that is to govern the constant course and tenour of his Life according to the dictates of his own Conviction. Though one would think that this consequence is so unavoidable, that it were needless to put Men in mind of its force; and so the Ancients thought, as *Clemens Alexandrinus* concludes his Exhortation to the Gentiles, that if he could but once bring them over to the Christian Faith, he was then secure of their Obedience to the Christian Law. For when all is done, says he, As a Man's Thoughts or Designs are, so are his Words; as his Words, so are his Actions; and as his Actions, so is the habitual course of his Life; so that the whole Life of every Man that is seriously a Christian, cannot but be conformable to the Laws of his Religion, *i. e.* universally good and vertuous. For, considering the greatness of the Rewards and Punishments propounded in the Gospel, it is not to be conceived how any Man, who seriously believes them, can be in any doubt or suspence which way to determine his choice, much less that he should be so strangely wild and extravagant, as peremptorily to prefer Misery and Destruction before everlasting Happiness.

And thus *Athenagoras*, when he had described the great and eminent Vertues of the Christians, gives this rational account of their Actions. This we doe, says he, because we are assured that there is a God who takes notice of the actions of Men, and who created both us and the whole World; and because we know that we must give an account to him of all the passages of our Lives, therefore we choose the most moderate, humble, kindest, and, as may appear to the greatest part of Mankind, the most contemptible course of Life. For we are peremptorily agreed that

no evil in this Life, not loss of Life it self can be great enough to weigh against that unconceivable happiness, that we expect from the great Judge of all Men, which he has promised to such as are of an humble, kind and gentle deportment. And so it was supposed in those days that Mankind had so much sense as to conform their Practices to their Principles, and the supposition was thought so just and reasonable, that by the experience of its truth the Christian Apologists gain'd the advantage of confuting all the Slanders and Calumnies of their Enemies, *viz.* That those wicked Practices that were charged upon them were too grossly inconsistent with the Principles of their Religion, and so *Athenagoras* tells the Emperour plainly that it is no less than impossible for a Christian to be a bad Man, unless he were an Hypocrite and a meer Dissembler. And for a farther proof they still appeal'd to the undeniable innocence of their own Lives and Conversations. They challenged the strictest Trials of their Enemies, and even forced from them publick confessions of their Vertue and Integrity. And though they were strictly religious towards God, yet they accounted that no Worship was acceptable to him, but what is recommended by a just, an honest and an usefull Life.

He that is carefull to preserve his Innocence, says *Minutius Felix*, honours his Lord; he that observes Justice in his dealings offers Sacrifice to God; he that abstains from Fraud presents a Peace-offering; he that relieves his Neighbour brings an ample Expiation; these are our Sacrifices and these the Solemnities of our Devotion, and with us he passes for the most religious Man that is the most honest. And thus they rated their Piety chiefly by the usefulness of their Lives, and the first things they sacrificed to Heaven

were

were their own Lufts and Passions. They did not think it enough in those days to say their Prayers, unless they lived them too, that is, unless their Actions were conformable to their Devotions in a constant and uniform obedience to the Laws of their Religion. In short they knew no other terms of Salvation but the habitual practice of Piety and Devotion, of Justice and Honesty, of Mercy and Charity, of Humility and Meekness, of Temperance and Sobriety, of Continence and Chastity, of Obedience and Subjection to Government, of Unity and a peaceable Disposition among themselves, but above all of Heavenly-mindedness and contempt of the World, and Courage and Constancy in suffering for their Religion.

Now it is evident that these Men were serious and in good earnest in their profession of the Christian Faith, and that may be added to all that accumulation of Argument that I have laid together in this Discourse to demonstrate the infinite truth of Christianity, that Persons who by their nearness of Age to its beginning had so much advantage of enquiring into it, were satisfied with an undoubted assurance of its Divine Authority, when it made such a prodigious and otherwise unaccountable change in all parts of their Lives and Conversations. And as by it they shewed themselves sincere Christians, so rational Men too in pursuing the natural consequence of their Principles. For upon supposition of the certain truth of the Christian Faith, it was infinitely reasonable, that they should give the exactest and most punctual obedience to the Christian Laws. Nay, they then thought that it was impossible to doe otherwise, and though they made allowances for the lapses and infirmities of humane Nature, yet they lookt upon a Christian that was habitually vicious as the grossest of contradictions;

and the truth is, nothing can be more apparently absurd and enormous, if we onely consider the greatness of those Rewards and Punishments wherewith the Laws of Christianity are enacted. The most difficult Duty that it requires is that of Martyrdom, yet even that whilst it is undergone within the prospect of Heaven and Immortality is a very easie, not to say an eligible thing. And so the learned *Clemens* of *Alexandria* discourses in the Fourth Book of his Collections. The Man that truly loves our Lord, cannot but be very willing to be deliver'd out of this Life, so as to account himself beholden to his Accuser as the cause of his escape, because he gave him a lawfull occasion, which he could not give himself, to shew his love to his Lord, and for it be welcom'd by him into the place of Happines: and excellently to the same

purpose does that wise, that pious, that courageous Prelate Saint *Cyprian* discourse to the Confessours in Prison to prepare them for their Martyrdom. So far are you, says he, from having any reason to fear Death, that you ought to desire it, as not worthy to be weigh'd against the recompence of Immortality, where he that overcomes shall be crown'd with eternal Happines, what vigour, what greatness, what courage ought to lodge in such Breasts, that are fill'd with such heroick thoughts? For where no lower Meditations are entertain'd than of the Laws of God and the Promises of Christ, there can be no sense of any other design but to doe the will of God. And though you are still confin'd to this present state of things, yet you do not live the Life of this World but of the World to come. And how passionately does that brave Martyr *Ignatius* rejoice in the near approach of his Martyrdom. O that I might come to those wild Beasts that are prepared for



for me, how do I wish that I might instantly encounter them, I could even invite and encourage them to dispatçh me, nay, I could even provoke them to it: I am concern'd for nothing either seen or unseen more than to enjoy Jesus: let Fire and the Cross and the fury of wild Beasts, breaking of Bones, distortion of Members, tormenting the whole Body, yea, all the punishments which the Devil can invent befall me, so as thereby I may come to the enjoyment of my blessed Lord and Saviour. This was the Courage and these the Resolutions of those times. But alas, their brave Examples rather upbraid than instruct our degenerate Age, and the height of their courage, instead of inviting, scares our endeavours, 'tis almost pain to us to conceive the Idea of their Vertues. Their flaming Spirits lie raked up in their own Ashes, not a spark of their heavenly Fire glows in our Bosoms, there is nothing heroick left, all that is brave and gallant has fled the World, and our Age produces no such Heroes; whose actions may convince us that the Miracles of the ancient Faith were possible things.

But what do I talk of the wonders of Martyrs and Confessours, the effects of an extraordinary assistance for an extraordinary work, when it would be wonder big enough for our degenerate Age, if we could but see the common fruits of Christianity. But alas, we are entertain'd with a greater, at least a more unaccountable prodigie than all the Miracles that have been represented for the demonstration of the Christian Faith, when we daily see such vast numbers of Men, that are seriously and passionately concern'd to believe the Truth of the Gospel, and yet so utterly unconcern'd to obey its Precepts, for this can be no less than a direct and barefaced affront to the Authority of God himself, to own and yet disobey his Laws.

Our

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Our blessed Saviour imputes it as an unpardonable sin of disingenuity to the Scribes and Pharisees, that when they were convinced by the evidence of the matter of Fact of the Divine Power of his Miracles, they yet disbelieved the Divine Authority of his Doctrine. But how much greater violence do these Men offer to the convictions of their own Reason and Conscience, that submit to the Authority, and yet despise the Obligation of his Laws? This is more palpable Blasphemy, and the Man that is guilty of it is so much worse than a professed Infidel as *Judas* was worse than a common Pharisee. He in some measure believed his Master to be the true Messias, and yet betrayed him, and so is every vicious Christian guilty of the same traitorous Wickedness: He believes our Saviour to be the Son of God and the Saviour of the World, and yet behaves himself towards him as if he really believed him a Cheat and an Impostor. This Man sins knowingly against all the Obligations of his Duty and his Conscience; and every act of disobedience is not onely an Affront to his Reason as it was in the Pharisees, but to his Faith as it was in *Judas*. What a strange contradiction is a vicious Christian both to himself and his Profession? 'Tis so great, that to me, I must confess, it is an unconceivable instance of Sottishness, that any Man should in good earnest believe that the Divine Providence should, after such a miraculous manner, engage it self for the contrivance and procurement of Man's Felicity, and that to this purpose the Son of God himself should come into this lower World to carry on the work of our Redemption, and should suffer all the Agonies of an ignominious Death for the expiation of our Sins, and when he had recover'd us into a capacity of Happiness, and put us into a condition of peaceable intercourse with his Father, he should

should prescribe to us some Laws of Life to keep and continue us in that state, into which he had redeemed us; and that (to secure all) he had enforced them by the most powerfull motives of obedience, and establisht their obligation upon no less Sanction than the certain assurance of Happiness or Misery in the Life to come. I say, to me it is an unconceivable brutishness that any Person who seriously believes these things, should act so grossly against his own Interest, against all the reasons of things, and against the strongest inducements both of his Hopes and Fears, as to live in a daring and habitual disobedience to any of the Laws of Christianity.

What an intolerable aggravation must it be of their Wickedness, whilst it is committed against all the endearments of Love and Goodness, and all the inducements of Interest and Ingenuity, *i. e.* against all the obligations, that it is possible to lay upon the Minds of Men. And to this purpose the Apostle discourses very appositely, *Heb. 2. 3, 4.* *How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation, which at the first was published by the Lord, and was confirm'd unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing witness to them with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost?* Here lay the emphasis that aggravated the neglect of their Salvation, that God had sent his own Son into the World to preach and to procure it: that he had given us the greatest assurance of it by the undoubted Testimony of Eye-witnesses; and that he had farther confirm'd the truth of their Testimony by the wonderfull gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the undeniable power of Miracles.

After all these Motives and all this Assurance, if any Man can be so wretched as to neglect so easie conditions of so great Salvation, how is it possible he should  
escape

escape the just reward of his desperate and incurable stupidity? For what should prevail upon such Minds as are proof against such Motives? And yet as strange as this appears, what do we find more vulgar? when a wicked Believer is so far from being thought a Monster in our Age, that there is scarce a greater Prodigie in it than an entire true Christian. The true spirit of our Religion seems to be fled to Heaven with its primitive Professours, and there is scarce any such thing as real Christianity to be found in the World, *i. e.* a serious and habitual conformity to all its Laws, and whatever Men may doe or pretend without this, it may be Humour or Faction, or any thing but Religion.

No design (how great soever) less than this was worthy our Saviour's Embassy, and when the Son of God was sent on an Errand into the World, it could not be of any less concernment than its Reformation. The last scope of all the mystery of Godliness is onely to oblige all Mankind to be good and vertuous, and the Man that will not be so, defeats all the love and wisdom of Heaven in sending the Holy Jesus into the World. And therefore let me challenge my Reader, as he would not frustrate the whole design of our Saviour's Birth, as he would not baffle the truth of all those Prophecies concerning the innocence and the purity of the Lives of Men under the reign of the Messias, and as he would not hereafter wish that his Saviour had never been born, nor himself neither, that he would be carefull for his own part to answer the end of his Incarnation, and let him see by the vertue and holiness of his Life, that he was born to some purpose and that he died not in vain.

Nay let me challenge all Christendom not to give him occasion to complain, Have I deserted Heaven  
and

and all its glories, and exposed my self to all the shame and misery upon Earth, have I wrestled with all the malice of Men and Devils, have I lived and died in disgrace, and suffer'd all sorts of affronts and ill usages, to restore the practice and reputation of Vertue to this lower World? And is this all the Issue of the travel of my Soul, that I have onely founded a new Faction of Men in the World, that are not to be distinguished from the rest of Mankind by any thing else than that they signalize themselves by the name of Christians? Is this all the purchase of my Bloud, to be onely followed by a few wicked and vicious Profelytes? I had as good have suffer'd the World to continue in its degenerate state of Heathenism, as doe and suffer all that I have done onely to give a new name to those parts of it call'd Christendom, without reforming their old manners. I neither design nor accept any other separation of my Church from other parts of Mankind than what is made by the Vertue, the Innocence and the Holiness of their Lives. Without this all their pretended Faith in and Zeal for my Institution is to me no better than scandal and impudent Hypocrisie, and serves to no other purpose than to aggravate their Impiety and increase their Punishment.

And in truth what can more provoke our Saviour's displeasure than Christian Wickedness? This brings disgrace and dishonour upon his Religion, and prostitutes it to the scorn of Atheists and Infidels. It breaks through all the best Rules of Duty and strongest Obligations to Obedience, 'tis aggravated with all the circumstances that can heighten its baseness, 'tis without all plea of excuse or palliation.

And this certainly is the true account of the unexemplified severity of the Divine Justice against

Christendom. For never was any part of the World haras't with such remarkable Plagues and Judgments as this has been; in that their biggest Impieties were but ordinary things if compared to the vileness of our Apostasie. The times of their ignorance (as the Apostle discourfes) God winked at, but now that his wrath is so clearly revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of Men, if they shall at any time persevere in hardness and impenitence, they cannot but treasure up to themselves anguish and tribulation and wrath against the day of wrath, and be still heaping up stores of vengeance till some time or other the flood-gates shall be opened upon them, and overwhelm them in irrecoverable ruine and destruction.

At least to conclude with my believing Reader (for if he be an Infidel, I turn him back to the premises of this Discourse) our Saviour has a second coming, when he shall, as he has said he will, once more rise up from his Throne of Majesty, shall put on the Robes of Justice, and return accompanied with an innumerable Army of blest Spirits, to destroy the wicked and disobedient, and take vengeance of his open Enemies, but much more of his disloyal and treacherous Friends.

And if so, I shall onely desire him to consider what horrour and anguish must then seize all guilty Souls; with what trembling and infinite amazement must every careless and disobedient Christian appear before all this dreadful Glory? And how will even their spirits dye away under an intolerable fear and confusion of Conscience? Who can conceive the bitterness and the agonies of guilty Minds, whilst they receive their last Sentence?

What a wild and stupid thing is Man, that can believe and yet forget these things, and sleep careless under the expectations of a day of Doom? For 'tis as  
certain

certain that our Saviour will once come to condemn the World as he once came to redeem it; and if he be the true Messias, 'tis then past question that he shall be our Judge, and yet after all this, how do Men who seriously think that they seriously believe these things, live as if they were secure that they should never be call'd to any future account, careless and forgetfull of all things but a few vanishing pleasures and trifles here below, with slender regard or total neglect of their eternal Condition.

In brief, the terrours of a future Judgment, and the different portion of woe or blis hereafter are so evidently declared in the Gospel, that for any Man, who believes it, to live careless of them, is in truth a sottishness that I can neither conceive nor express, much less load or upbraid with any higher aggravation than barely its own folly; and therefore I shall onely leave this great Meditation upon the Minds of my Christian Readers, and conjure them all to a serious and habitual practice of Vertue and Piety, as they hope for any benefit from our Saviour's first coming, and desire to escape the terrour of the second.

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T H E E N D.

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E R R A T A.

P Age 1. line 4. from the end, in the Preface, for *Vice* r. *in Vice*, p. 127.  
l. 1. for *Sextus* r. *Saint*; pag. 130. l. 3. for *fearless* r. *fearfull*.

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