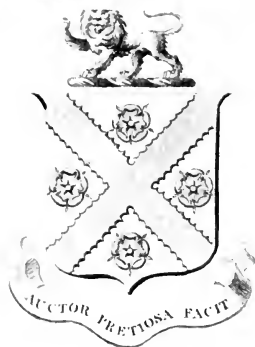




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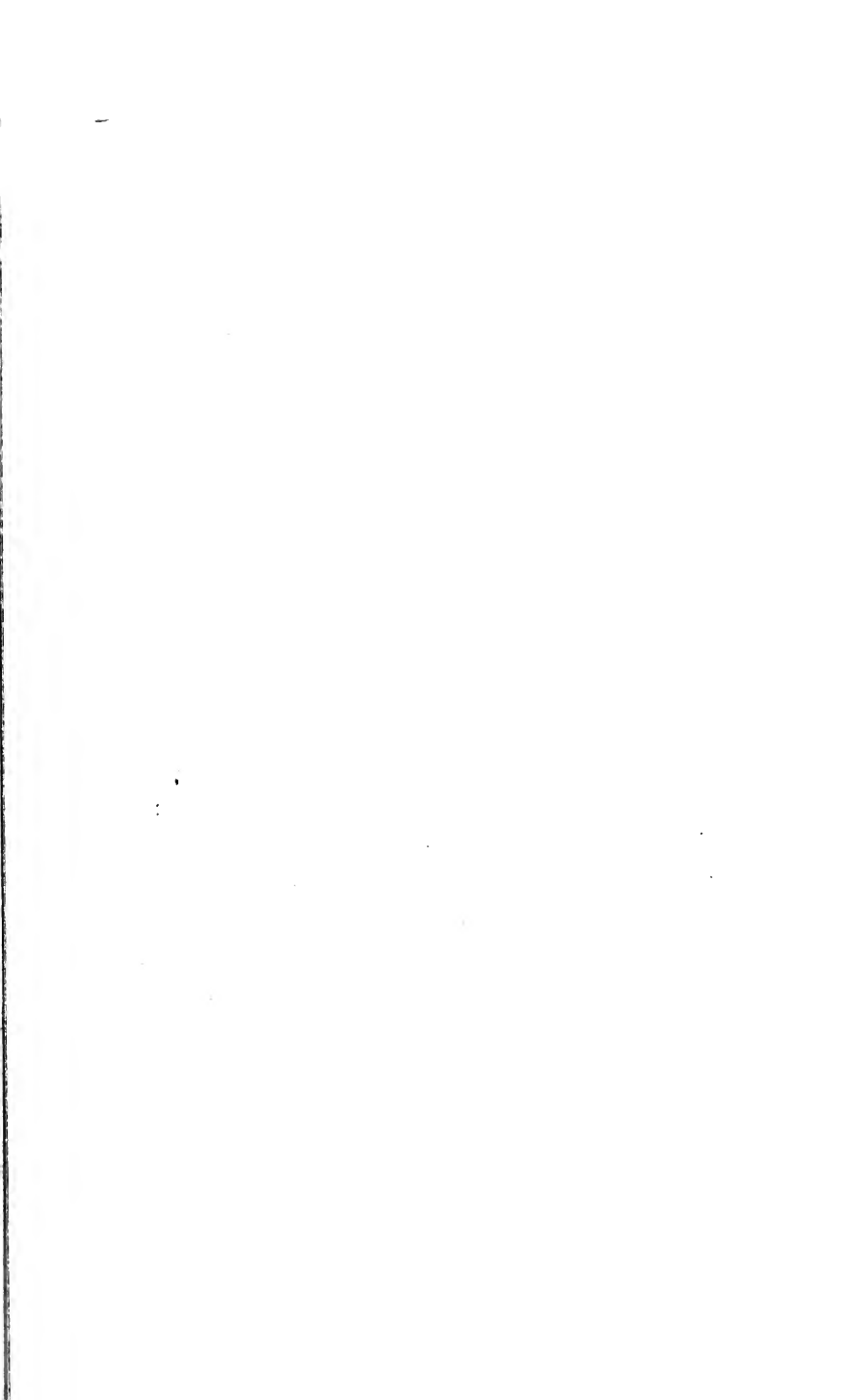
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T H E

CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Wherein is shewed,

- I. The Worth and Excellency of the Soul.
- II. The Divinity and Incarnation of our Saviour.
- III. The Authority of the Holy Scripture.
- IV. The Obligation of the People to read the Scripture.
- V. A Diffuasive from Apostacy.

VOL. V. and Last.

By JOHN SCOTT, D. D. *late*
Rector of St. Giles in the Fields.

The E I G H T H E D I T I O N.

L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN BEECROFT, at the *Bible and Crown* in *Paternoster Row*, MDCCLVII.



To the Honourable

SUSANNA NOEL,

(Mother to the Right Honourable *Baptist*
Earl of *Gainsborough*)

T*HIS last Volume of the*
Work of my dear deceased
Friend, the Reverend Dr. Scott,
is humbly and gratefully dedicated,
by

Her Honour's

Most obliged,

And most devoted Servant,

Humphrey Zouch.



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OF THE
Christian Life.

V O L. V.

MATT. xvi. 26.

What is a Man profited if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?

IN the 24th Verse our Saviour urges his Disciples to that necessary Duty of *denying themselves*, that is, of surrendering up their Wills to the Conduct of his, and renouncing all their *worldly* Interest when it comes in Competition with their Duty, and of taking up their Cross, and following him; that is, of preparing themselves to endure Persecution for his sake, and to persist courageously in the Profession and Practice of his Religion, whatsoever Oppositions they should meet with from the World. And to press them herunto, he urges this Argument, *ver. 25. For whosoever will save his Life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his Life, shall find it.* Where the Greek Word *ψυχή*, which we render *Life*, may perhaps be better rendered *Himself*, it being familiar both with Hebrews and Syrians to call a Man's Life and Soul *Himself*; so the Psalmist, *Thou shalt not leave my Soul in Hell*, that is thou shalt

Vol. V. B not

not leave me perishing in my Grave, *Pſalm* xvi. 10; and *Leviticus* xx. 25. *You ſhall not make your Souls abominable*, i. e. yourſelves; and that it ſhould be ſo rendered here is evident, becauſe St. *Luke* ſo expounds it, *What is a Man profited, if he gain the whole World and loſe himſelf, or be caſt away?* *Luke* ix. 25. And indeed the Soul being the *principal* Part of a Man, and that which advances him into a *Species* of Being above that of a mere Animal, may very well be called *himſelf*, according to that of *Hierock's*, *ὅτι γὰρ εἶ ἡ ψυχὴ, τὸ δὲ σῶμα σόν, τὰ δὲ ἐξῆς τῆς σωματίου.* *Thy Soul is Thee, thy Body Thine, and thy outward Goods thy Body's.* And if inſtead of Life we render *ψυχὴ Himſelf*, the Words will be very plain and eaſy; for whoſoever will ſave himſelf by renouncing me and my Religion, ſhall loſe himſelf for ever; and whoſoever will be content to loſe himſelf for my ſake, ſhall ſave himſelf for ever. And this he farther enforces in the Text, *What is a Man profited if he ſhall gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul? Or what ſhall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?* that is, what will it avail Man to gain the whole World, if he for ever ruin himſelf by it? And when he hath thus ruined himſelf, what would he give, if it were in his power, to ſave and recover himſelf again? The Words thus explained, I ſhall reſolve the Senſe of them into theſe five Propoſitions.

I. That a Man, or the Soul of a Man is a Thing of *ineſtimable* Price and Value; for our *Saviour* here weighs it againſt the whole World, that is, againſt all the *Pleasures, Profits, and Honours* that this *inferior* World can afford; and

and declares, that in the *just* Balance of his Esteem it out-weighs them all. And certainly that must needs be *exceeding precious*, whose Worth the whole World cannot *counterpoise*.

II. That this *precious* Soul may be lost. This our *Saviour* plainly supposes in these Words, *if he lose his own Soul*.

III. That our *renouncing* of *Christ* and his *Religion* will most certainly infer this Loss. For these Words, as I have shewed you, our *Saviour* urges as an Argument to dissuade Men from *Apostacy*; but if without *losing* our Souls, we might *renounce* him, and *apostatize* from him, there would be no *Force* in all this Argument to dissuade us from it.

IV. That when this Soul is *lost*, 'tis *lost* irrecoverably. *What shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?* where the Greek Word ἀντάλλαγμα, which we render *Exchange*, is used in the same Sense with ἕξιλασμα, which signifies a Price of Redemption, denoting, that if a Man should or could give never so much to buy his Soul from Perdition, yet no *Price* of Redemption will be *taken* for it.

V. That this *irrecoverable* Loss of a Soul is of such a *vast* Moment, that the Gain of the whole World is not *sufficient* to compensate it. *What is a Man profited*, that is, he is not at all *profited*, nay he is so far from *that* that he is a *vast* Loser.

I. That the Soul of a Man is a Thing of an *inestimable* Price and Value. And for the Proof of this Proposition, I shall endeavour these *two* Things.

First, To represent to you of what *vast* Worth it is in respect of its own *natural* Capacities.

Secondly, To shew you of what *vast* Esteem it is in the Judgment of all those who, as we must needs suppose, do best *understand* the Worth of it.

1. I shall endeavour to represent to you of what *vast* Worth it is in respect of its own *natural* Capacities, particular in these *four*.
 (1.) In respect of its Capacity of *Understanding*.
 (2.) Of *Moral Perfection*. (3.) Of *Pleasure* and *Delight*. (4.) Of *Immortality*.

1. The Soul of Man is of *vast* Worth in respect of its Capacity of *Understanding*. For certainly to *understand*, is the *greatest* and *noblest* Operation that a Being is *capable* of ; for it is this that gives Beauty and Excellence to all our *other* Operations, whether they be *natural* or *moral* : 'Tis this that proposes the *Ends*, and directs the Course, and prescribes the Measures of all our *other* Actions ; and though we had never so much *Force* or *Power*, yet unless we had *Understanding* to guide and manage it, it would be altogether insignificant. For *blind* Power acts at random, and if we had the Force of a *Whirlwind*, yet without a *Mind* to steer and manage it, it would be an *equal* Chance whether we did *well* or *ill* with it. So that unless there were some *Understanding*, either *within* or *without* us to conduct our *active* Powers, and determine them to our *Good*, we were as good be altogether without them ; because while they act by *Chance*, it is at least an *equal* Lay whether they will *injure* or *advantage* us. Since therefore *Understanding* is the *Rule* and

and *Measure* of all our *other* Powers, it necessarily follows that *itself* is the *greatest* and *noblest* of them all. What an *excellent* Being therefore must a Soul be, in which this *great* and *sovereign* Power resides? A *Power*, that can collect into itself such *prodigious* Numbers of *simple Apprehensions*, and by comparing *one* with the *other*, can connect them into *true* Propositions, and upon *each* of these can run such *long* and *curious* Descants of Discourse, till it hath drawn out all their Consequents into a Chain of wise and *coherent* Notions, and sorted these into such *various* Systems of *useful* Arts and Sciences; that can discern the *harmonious* Contextures of Truths with Truths, the *secret* Links and Junctures of *coherent* Notions, trace up *Effects* to their *Causes*, and sift the *remotest* Consequents to their *natural* Principles; that can cast *abroad* its *sharp-sighted* Thoughts over the whole *Extent* of Beings, and, like the *Sun* with its *out-stretched* Rays, reach the *remotest* Objects; that can in the *Twinkling of an Eye* expatiate through all the *Universe*, and keep *Correspondence* with *both* Worlds; can prick out the Paths of the *heavenly* Bodies, and measure the Circles of their Motion, span the whole *Surface* of the Earth, and dive into its *capacious* Womb, and there discover the *numerous* Offsprings with which it is continually teeming; that can sail into the World of *Spirits* by the *never-varying* Compass of its *Reason*, and discover those *invisible* Regions of *Happiness* and *Misery*, which are altogether out of our Sight whilst we stand upon this *hither* Shore: In a Word, That can ascend from Cause to Cause, to *God* who is the *Cause* of all, and with its

Eagle-Eyes can gaze upon that glorious Sun, and dive into the *infinite Abyss* of his divine Perfections. What an excellent Being therefore is that *Soul* that is endowed with such a *vast Capacity* of *Understanding*, and with its *piercing Eye* can reach such an *immense Compass* of Beings, and travel through so *vast* an *Horizon* of Truth? Doubtless, if *human Souls* had no other Capacity to *value* themselves by, but only this, *this* were enough to give them *Pre-eminence* over all *inferior Beings*, and *render* them the most glorious Part of all this *sublunary World*.

2. The *Soul* of Man is of *vast Worth* in respect of its Capacity of *Moral Perfection*. For by the Exercise of those *human Virtues* which are *proper* to it in this State of Conjunction with the Body, it is capable of raising itself to the *Perfection* of those *angelical Natures*, which of all Creatures do most nearly *approach* and *resemble* the great Creator, and *Fountain* of all *Perfection*. For by keeping a *due Restraint* upon its bodily Appetites, and thereby gradually weaning itself from the *Pleasures* of the Body, it may by degrees be *educated* and *trained* up to lead the Life, and relish the Joys of *naked* and *immortal Spirits*; it may be *contempered* to an *incorporeal* State, so as to be able to enjoy itself without *eating* and *drinking*, and live most happily upon the *Fare* of *Angels*, upon *Wisdom* and *Holiness*, and *Love* and *Contemplation*. And then by governing its *own Will* and Affections by the Laws of *Reason* and *Religion*, it may by degrees improve itself so far in all these *Moral Endowments*, which are the *proper Graces* of every *reasonable Nature*, as to be at last as *perfectly*
wise

wise and reasonable in its own *Choices* and *Refusals*, in its *Love* and *Hatred*, in its *Desires* and *Delights*, as the *Angels* themselves are. For though it cannot be expected that in this *imperfect* State a *Soul* should arrive to such a Pitch as this, yet even now it may be *growing up* and *aspiring* to it; which, if it doth, as I shall shew you by and by, when *this* is *expired*, it hath *another* Life to live, which being antecedently prepared for by those *spiritual* Improvements it hath made *here*, will furnish it with Opportunities of *improving* infinitely faster than *here* he did, or possibly could. For in that *Life* it shall not only be *freed* from those many Incumbrances which do *here* retard it in its *spiritual* Progress, nor shall it only be associated with a World of *pure* and *blessed* Spirits, whose *holy* Example and *wise* Converse will doubtless wonderfully edify and improve it; but be also admitted into a more *intimate* Acquaintance with *God*, who is the *Author* and Pattern of all Perfection; the Sight of whose *ravishing* Beauty will *inflame* it with a most *ardent* Love to him, and *excite* it to a most *vigorous* Imitation of him: All which considered, it is not to be imagined how much the State of *Heaven* will immediately *improve* those *happy* Souls that are prepared and disposed for it. But then considering that *Moral Perfection* is as *infinite* as the *Nature* of *God*, in which there is an *Infinity* of *Holiness*, and *Justice*, and *Goodness*, within this *boundless* Subject, there will be room enough for Souls to make *farther* and *farther* Improvements in,

even to *Eternity*. And then when they shall still be growing on so fast, and yet be still *for ever* improving, to what a *transcendent* Height of *Glory* and *Perfection* will they at last arrive? For though no *finite* Soul can *ever* arrive to an *infinite* Perfection, yet still it may be growing on to it, because there will still be *possible* Degrees of it beyond its *present* Attainments; and when it is arrived to the farthest *imaginable* Degree, yet still it will be *capable* of farther, and so farther and farther to all *Eternity*. And if so, *O blessed God*, of what a *capacious* Nature hast thou made these *Souls* of ours, which though they will doubtless *improve* in *Goodness* as fast in the *other Life* as is possible for them, with all the Advantages of a *Heavenly* State, yet will never attain to an *utmost* Period, but still be growing *perfecter* and *perfecter* for *ever*.

3. The Soul of *Man* is of *vast* Worth in Respect of its *immense* Capacities of *Pleasure* and *Delight*: For its Capacity of *Pleasure* must necessarily be as *large* and *extensive*, as its Capacity of *Understanding*, and of *Moral Perfection*; because the *proper* Pleasure of a Soul results from its own *Knowledge* and *Goodness*, from its *farther* Discoveries of *Truth*, and *farther* Proficiency in *inward* Rectitude and *Virtue*, and consequently as it improves *farther* and *farther* in *Understanding* and in *Moral Perfection*, it must still gather *more* and *more* Fuel to *feed* and *encrease* its own Joy and Pleasure. For the Pleasure of every Being consists in the *vigorous* Exercise of its Faculties about
convenient

convenient and agreeable Objects; but the *Faculties* of a Soul are *Understanding* and *Will*, to which the only agreeable Objects are *Truth* and *Goodness*; and therefore the more *Truth* there is in the *Mind*, and the more *Goodness* there is in the *Will*, the more vigorously will they *employ* and *exercise* themselves about them, and consequently the more they will be *pleased* and *ravished*. Since therefore, every new Discovery of *Truth*, and every new Degree of *Goodness*, gives new Life to our *Minds* and *Wills*, and renders both more *sprightly* and *vigorous*, it hence necessarily follows, that our Souls are capable of as much *Pleasure* as they are of *Truth* and *Goodness*; and how vastly capable they are of both these I have already shewed you. So that it is not to be imagined by us, who have here so little Experience, what *Heavens* of Joy a Soul is capable of; only at present we find by Experience, that the more we improve in *Knowledge* and *Goodness*, the more pleasant and chearful we find and feel ourselves, and that our *Faculties* still grow more active and light some the more we disburden them of that *Ignorance* and *Sin* that clogs and incumbers them. And upon great Proficiencies in *Knowledge* and *Virtue* we find a strange Alacrity within ourselves; we are as it were in *Heaven* upon *Earth*, and do feel a *Paradise* springing up within us, the *Fragrance* of whose Joys grows many times so strong, that our frail Mortality can hardly bear them. When therefore such Souls do cast off this Mortality, which now doth only fetter and intangle them, and have made their Entrance into the invisible Regions
of

of *Blessedness*, how *sprightly* and *active*, how *lightsome* and *cheerful* will they feel themselves? For in the *first Moment* of their Admission, all that *Mist* of *erroneous* Prejudice, which now interrupts their Prospect of *Truth*, and all those Remains of *irregular* Affection, that check and distract them in their Choice of *Goodness*, will be *for ever* chased from their *Minds* and *Wills* by the *clear* Light of the *heavenly State*; and their Faculties having disburthened themselves, and shaken off every Clog, with what *unsepeakable* Vigour will they *move* and *act*, especially in the Presence of such *suitable* Objects as the *heavenly State* will present before them? When *infinite Truth*, and *infinite Goodness* shall be always present to their *free* Minds and undistracted Wills, and nothing shall *interpose* to hinder them either in seeing the *one*, or in chusing the *other*, here will be Work enough for both to all *Eternity*; and both being freed from all Incumbrance, the *one* will be discovering every *Moment* farther and farther into that *infinite Truth* which it loves and admires, and the *other* will be improving every *Moment* more and more in that *infinite Goodness* which it chuses and adores. And then every *new* Discovery and *new* Improvement will spring *new* Heavens of Joy in the Soul, and by reason of those *new* Acquests of *Truth* and *Goodness*, which we shall every *Moment* make, we shall every *Moment* be entertained with *new* Pleasures, and so before we have spent *one* Joy, *another* will succeed, and *another* that, and so on *for ever*. For when a *God* of *infinite Truth* and *Goodness* becomes the *objective Happiness* of
a finite

a *finite* Nature, which cannot comprehend and enjoy him, but in an *infinite* Succession, every *new* Delight the *Enjoyment* of him creates in us must necessarily raise a *new* Desire, and every *new* Desire immediately find a *new* Delight, and so round again to all *Eternity*. Of what a *vast* Capacity therefore is this Soul of ours, in which there is room enough *successively* to entertain all the *ravishing* Joys and Pleasures that make an *everlasting* Heaven; that can drink in those *deep* Rivers of *Pleasure* as fast as they *spring* up and *flow* from God's right Hand for evermore? What Tongue can express the *innumerable* Joys that such a Soul can hold, whose Capacity is so *large* as *Heaven*. and so *near* to *infinite*, as to be able to contain all those Joys and Pleasures that *infinite* Truth and Goodness can create?

4, and *lastly*, The Soul of Man is of *vast* Worth in respect of its Capacity of *Immortality*. For by its Operations it is evident, that the Soul is not composed of *corruptible* Matter, but is a *spiritual* and *immaterial* Substance; for if it were *Matter*, it would *act* and *move* only when *other* Matter presses upon it, and not be able to determine the Course of its *own* Motion, but would be forced to move *backwards* or *forwards* according as it was *thrust* on by that *outward* Matter that continually moves and presses upon it, and all its Motions would be as *necessary* as that of a Stone in the *Air*, when it is *thrust* up by an *impressed* Force, and *pressed* down again by the Weight of the *Air* above it: Whereas in this Soul.

Soul of ours we sensibly *feel* and *experience* a *natural* Liberty of acting, a Power to move itself, and to determine its *own* Motions which way it pleaseth ; when it is pressed *forward* never so vigorously by the *strong* Impulses of *outward* Objects, it is in its Power to go *on* or *retreat*, and to *divert* the Current of its Thoughts into a quite *contrary* Channel to that whereinto it is thrust and directed by all the Impressions of its Sense. For thus in the midst of the *Alarms* and *Shoutings* of an *Army*, of the *Noises* of Drums and Trumpets ringing in our Ears, our Soul can recollect itself, and reduce its *scattered* Thoughts into *profound* Contemplations of a *sweet* and *blessed* Peace ; and when it is *pressed* from *without* with never so much Importunity to *this* or *that* *particular* Choice, it is in its power to *reject* the Motion, and to *choose* the quite contrary : By all which it is *apparent*, that the Soul hath an *innate* Liberty of *acting*, that *she* is not *necessitated* from *without* by the *different* Concourses and Motions of the *several* Particles of Matter ; but that all the Diversity of her *Wills* and *Opinions* is principally owing to her *own* *Freedom* and *Power* of Self-Determination, and to make the *least* Doubt of it, is to question the *common* Sense and Experience of Mankind. Since therefore the Soul is not determined in its Motions by the different *Pressures* of *material* Things, as all *other* Matter is, but hath Power to *swim* against the *Torrent*, and *move* quite counter to all *foreign* Impressions, it hence necessarily follows, that it is *immaterial*. And indeed, considering

considering how much its *Operations* do exceed the *utmost* Power of *dull* and *passive* Matter, I cannot but wonder that any Man should be so *forsaken* of his *Reason*, as to rank it among *material* Things; for how is it *possible* that a *Piece* of *dull unactive Matter*, that a *little* Grass or Dirt, or Mire, after all the *Refinings*, *Macerations*, and *Maturations*, that can be *performed* by the Help of *Motion*, should ever be able to make a *thinking* Being, or grow up into the Soul of a *Philosopher*? That a Company of *dead Atoms*, which cannot move unless they are moved, can ever be *capable* of framing *Syllogisms* in *Mode* and *Figure*, and disputing, *pro* and *con*, whether they are *Atoms* or no? That such *inert* and *sluggish* Bodies should by their *impetuous* jostling together awaken *one another* out of their *senseless* Passiveness, and make *each other* hear and feel their *mutual* Knockings and Jostlings, and then from this *Sense* into which they have thus awakened *one another*, and (which they are as *incapable* of as a *musical Instrument* is of hearing its *own* Sounds, or taking pleasure in the *harmonious* *Airs* that are played upon it) should proceed and consult together to make *wise* Laws, and contrive the *best Models* of *Government*; to investigate the Nature of *Things*, and deduce from them the *several Systems* of *Arts* and *Sciences*; in a Word, how is it *possible* that a Company of *fluid* Motes and Particles of *Matter* should ever be so artificially *complicated* and *twisted* one with another, as to form an *Understand-*
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ing that can lift up its Eyes, and look beyond all this *sensible* World into that of *immaterial* Beings, and conceive *abstracted* Notions of Things which can never be *Objects* to any *material* Senses ; such as a *pure* Point, *Equality* and *Proportions*, *Symmetry*, and *Asymmetry* of *Magnitudes*, the *Rise* and *Propagation* of *Dimensions*, *infinite Divisibility*, and the *like* Notions that never were in *Matter*, nor consequently could ever be extracted out of it : That can correct the *Errors* of all our *material* Perceptions, and demonstrate Things to be vastly different from what they apprehend and report them ; can *prove* the *Sun*, for instance, to be *one hundred* and *sixty* times *bigger* than the *Earth*, when to our Eye and Imagination it appears no *bigger* than a Bushel ; that can lodge *within* itself all that *Mass* of *sensible* Things which taketh up so much Room *without* it, and when it hath piled them *up* upon *one another* in *vast* and most *prodigious* Numbers, is still as *capacious* of more, as when it was altogether *empty* ; in a Word, that can grasp the *Universe* with a *Thought*, and comprehend the *whole* Latitude of *Heaven* and *Earth* within its *own indivisible* Centre ; how *senseless* is it to imagine that such *noble* Operations as these can be performed by a *mere* Complex of *dead Atoms* and *senseless* Particles of *Matter* ? And if they cannot, as doubtless they cannot, then from hence it will necessarily follow, that the Soul of Man is an *immaterial* Thing. Furthermore we see, that though the Soul takes in *Objects* of all *sizes*, yet when once they

they are *in*, they are not as *Bodies* in a *material* Place, in which the *Greater* take up more Room than the *Less* : For the *Thought* of a *Mile*, or ten thousand *Miles*, doth no more *fill* or *stretch* a *Soul*, than that of a *Foot* or an *Inch*, or a *Mathematical Point* ; and whereas all *Matter* hath its *Parts*, and those extended *one* without *another* into *Length* and *Breadth* and *Thicknes*s, and so is *measurable* by *Inches*, *Yards*, or *solid Measures* ; there is no such thing as *measurable* Extension in any thing belonging to the *Soul*. For in *Cogitation*, which is the *Essence* of a *Soul*, there is neither *Length*, nor *Breadth*, nor *Thicknes*s, nor is it *possible* to have any *Conceit* of a *Foot* of *Thought*, or a *Yard* of *Reason*, a *Pound* of *Wisdom*, or a *Quart* of *Virtue*. And if what belongs to a *Soul* be *immaterial*, it will necessarily follow that the *Soul* itself is *immaterial* too, and as such *capable* of *Immortality*. For *immaterial* Natures being *pure* and *simple*, having neither *contrary* Qualities nor *divisible* Parts in them, as *material* Things have, can have no Principles of *Alteration* and *Corruption* in them ; and being *devoid* of these, they must needs be *capable* of *living* and *subsisting* for ever. What *noble* Beings therefore are the *Souls* of Men, which, together with those *vast* Capacities of *Understanding*, of *Moral Perfection*, of *Joy* and *Pleasure*, are naturally *capable* of *Immortality*, and consequently of *improving* in *Knowledge*, in *Goodness*, and in *Joy* and *Pleasure*, unto all *Eternity* ! And therefore certainly a *Soul* must needs be a most *precious* Thing, that can thus *outlive* all *pe-*
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lunary Beings, and subsist for ever in so sublime a State of Glory and Beatitude.

Having thus shewn you the *invaluable* Worth of the Soul, in respect of its *own natural* Capacities, I proceed,

2. To shew you of what *vast* Esteem it is in the Judgment of all those who we must needs suppose to best understand the *Worth* of it, and that is the *whole* World of *Spirits*. For to be sure *Spirits* must *best* understand the Excellency of *Spirits*, because they have a *clearer* Insight into *each* others Natures, and a more *immediate* Prospect of the *Virtue*, *Power* and *Excellency*, of *each* others *Faculties*. For as for us, whilst we are in this *imbodyed* State, and do understand by *corporal* Organs, we generally judge of the *Worth* and *Excellency* of Things by the Impression they make upon our Senses; and as these are *more* or *less* gratified and affected with them, we set a *higher* or *lower* Value upon them. Since therefore *Spirits* are a *sort* of *Beings* that cannot touch or affect our *Bodily* Senses, it is impossible we should be competent Judges of the *true* Worth and Value of them; and therefore in this Matter we ought to be guided by the Judgment of *Spirits*, who must needs be *supposed* to have a more *intimate* Acquaintance with *one another's* Natures. And if we will be guided by these, we shall find the *whole* World of *Spirits*, even from the *highest* to the *lowest*, unanimously *rating* the Souls of Men at an *inestimable* Price and Value. And to make this appear, I shall shew you the *vast* Price there is set upon them;

1. By God the Father.
2. By God the Son.
3. By God the Holy Ghost.
4. By the Holy Angels.
5. By the Devils.

1. Let us consider the vast Price which God the Father hath set upon Souls. For when he intended to form these noble Beings, and transmit them into *terrestrial* Bodies, that so being compounded with a *sensitive* Nature they might clasp the *spiritual* and *animal* Worlds together; he being sensible of the vast Hazards and infinite Snares they would be exposed to, was so deeply concerned for their Preservation, that he thought nothing too dear to save and secure them. And fore-seeing their Fall from that *terrestrial* Happiness which he originally designed them, notwithstanding the liberal Care he had taken to preserve them in the State of *Innocence*, he designed to remove the Scene of their Happiness from *Earth* to *Heaven*, being resolved, if possible, to repair the Loss of a *terrestrial* with a *celestial* Paradise. For which end, instead of the *Covenant of Innocence*, the Blessings whereof by their Sin they had for ever forfeited, he introduces the *Covenant of Repentance*, that so by the help of this Plank after their general Shipwreck, they might be preserved, and go safe to the Shore of a happy Eternity. And that by this *Covenant* he might the more effectually recover them, he designed to grant it to them in such a Way, and upon such a wise and weighty Consideration, as might at once affect them with the greatest Sense of his Love, and the deepest Awe of his Severity; that

so whilst by the *former* he *allured*, by the *latter* he might *terrify* to Repentance: To which *end* he determined not to grant it to them upon any *other* Consideration than that of *another's* suffering for them, and *undergoing* the Punishment of their Sin in their stead; that so whilst he shewed his *Love* to them in admitting *another* to *suffer* for them, he might express his *Hatred* to their Sin in not pardoning it without another's suffering. And that he might manifest *this* his *Love* to them, and *this* his *Hatred* to their Sin in the *highest* Degree, as he admitted *another* to *suffer* for us, so he resolved to accept no *meaner* Suffering than that of his *own beloved* Son. And that *this* his *Suffering* might be the more *effectual*, he *proposed* to send him down to us into this *lower* World *cloathed* in our Natures, that so he might not only the more familiarly *instruct* us by his *Doctrine* and *Example*, but the more exactly *personate* us in *undergoing* the Punishment of our Sin; and upon his undertaking to undergo it, the most *Merciful* Father agreed to this *Covenant* of *Mercy*, by which he obliged himself to receive us into his Favour upon our *unfeigned* Repentance, and *impowered* his Son to govern us according to the Tenour of it, that is, to *crown* us with the *Rewards* of it if we repented, and *inflict* on us the *Punishments* of it, if we went on in our Impenitence. And that there might be nothing wanting to render this Government of his Son *successful* and us *obedient* to it, he also agreed upon *this* his *mighty* Undertaking to *substitute* to him the *Holy Ghost* to be the *supreme* Minister of his Government, that so by the *Agency* of this

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vicarius Power, he might *bow* and *incline* the Hearts of Men to submit unto him, and comply with the Terms of this *merciful* Covenant in which their *everlasting* Welfare is so abundantly provided for.

This is the *mighty* Project, which, for the sake of the Souls of Men, the Father of *Spirits* hath contrived, and upon which he hath acted and proceeded even from their *first* Fall to this very *Moment*: And by this he hath most plainly *expressed* the *high* and great Veneration that he hath of them; for doubtless had they not been exceeding *precious* in his Eyes, he would never have thought it worth the while to project and act such *mighty* Things to redeem and save them: He would rather have left them to their *own* Fate, and not have concerned himself about them, or not have concerned himself to that Degree as to make them the *Subjects* of such a *vast* Design. For all *wise* Agents measure their Designs by the *Worth* and *Value* of the Things they aim at, and do never lay *great* Projects for the sake of *little* Trifles; and unless *God* had a *mighty* Value for the Souls of Men, his making such vast Preparations to save them, would be like that *foolish* Emperor's raising a *numerous* Army, only to go and gather Cockle-Shells.

2. Let us consider the *vast* Price which *God the Son* hath set upon Souls; for it is plain he valued them at that *mighty* Rate, as that for their sakes he willingly undertook to execute this *vast* Design of his *Father*, and that to save these *precious* Beings he thought it would be very well worth his while to come down from

Heaven and veil his Divinity in our Natures, to put on the Form of a Servant, and make himself of no Reputation; to live a miserable Life, and die a painful and accursed Death. And can we think he would ever have laid down so vast a Price, as his Glory and Happiness, his Life and Blood amount to, for things of a mean and inconsiderable Value? Had he so low an Esteem of his Father's Bosom, and his own Heavenly Glory, as to part with them for Trifles? Such slight Apprehensions of Shame and Sorrow, Pain and Misery, as to cast himself into them for the sake of Beings he had little or no Esteem of? Could any thing but what is inestimable countervail to that Glory he parted with, and that Misery he endured? Or, can you think those Souls of little Worth which the Son of God thought worth his dying for? No, certainly, if we knew nothing of our Souls but this, that the Son of God thought them a good Purchase at the dear Price of his Bliss, his Glory and his Blood; yet from thence we have infinite Reason to conclude them most precious and inestimable Beings, it being impossible that he who doth so perfectly understand the Worth and Value of Things, should ever be so overseen as to pay so vast a Sum for slight and cheap Commodities.

3. Let us consider the *vast Price* which *God the Holy Ghost* hath set upon Souls; for 'tis for their sakes that he doth so industriously operate in the Kingdom of our Saviour, that he takes so much Pains in it, as he doth and hath always done, ever since it was *first* erected, to drive on that *blessed* Design of making the Souls of Men,

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the native Subjects of it, happy. It is upon their Account that he hath made so *many* Revelations of God's Will to the World, and confirmed them by so *many* Miracles, that so he might extricate those *precious* Beings out of those Labyrinths of Error in which they had involved and lost themselves, and direct them into the way to *true* Happiness. And it is for their good that he still continues shedding forth his *Heavenly* Influences upon them, that he still inspires them with so many *good* Thoughts importunes them with such *urgent* Motives, presses upon them with such *earnest* Strugglings and *vigorous* Efforts, not only of his *preventing* but of his *assisting* Grace too, that if *possible* he may awaken them into a Sense of their Danger, and excite and quicken them to pursue the Methods of their *own* Safety and Happiness. So infinitely *jealous* is this *blessed Spirit* lest these *precious* Beings should miscarry, that though one would think them sufficiently *safe-guarded* in their Voyage through this *dangerous* Sea, under the Convoy of their *own* Reason, yet he dares not trust them to themselves, but bears them Company all along, and keeps a watchful Eye over them, and when any Rock is nigh he warns them of it, and when they are beset with *evil* Spirits, those *mischievous Pirates* that lie in wait to captivate and *enslave* them, he presently comes in to their Assistance, and unless they are resolved to betray themselves, always brings them *off* victoriously. Nay, though they many times not only yield to these *Piratical Spirits*, but join their Forces with them to resist and beat *off* their *merciful* Friend and

Deliverer, yet he doth not therefore presently abandon them, but being infinitely concerned for their Rescue, follows them even to the Mouth of the Enemy's Harbour with his *blessed* Motions and Importunities, and never gives over the Pursuit of them till he hath either actually recovered, or left them past all Hopes of Redemption. And when he sees that they are utterly lost by their *own* Madness and Folly, and that it is in vain to follow them any farther; he casts a *sorrowful* Look upon them, and like a *grieved* Friend, after the utmost Strugglings and *extreme* Efforts of his *affronted* Goodness, unwillingly leaves them to their own *sad* Fate, and gives them up as it were with the Tears in his Eyes. And can you think this *blessed Spirit* would be so *industrious* as he is in his Ministry for Souls, that he would take such *infinite* Pains to save them, be so extremely *urgent* and *solicitous* for their Welfare, if he did not know them to be a sort of Beings of an *inestimable* Worth and Value? O *blessed* God, what are not our Souls *worth*, that are worth all the Pains thy *blessed Spirit* takes to save, and make them *happy*! That not only *thou* thoughtest *worth* all those *vast* Thoughts and Counsels, which thou hast spent upon them; that not only thy *Son* thought *worth* all those *vast* Condescensions he stooped to to put those Thoughts in Execution; but thy *blessed Spirit* also thinks *worth* all that *unwearied* Pains and Endeavour, all that *incessant* Care and Importunity, which he employs about them to save and rescue them from Sin and Misery? Doubtless those Beings must needs be exceeding *precious*, for whose
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Safety and Welfare all the *blessed Trinity* are so unspeakably concerned.

4. Let us consider the *vast* Price which the *Holy Angels* put upon Souls: For though they are the Crown and Top of all the Creation of God, and do by their *essential* Perfection border *nearest* upon him, yet such is their Opinion of the Souls of Men, that they think it no Disparagement to converse with and minister to them; but from the beginning of the World till now have been always ready to maintain a *close* Intercourse and *intimate* Correspondence with them; and so far forth as they are permitted by the Laws of their *invisible* World, they are continually attending to stretch forth a *helping* Hand to them in all their Needs and Necessities. Though they are the most *illustrious* Courtiers of *Heaven*, yet they disdain not to be the *Life-Guards* of Souls, to *pitch their Tents round about them*, as the *Psalmist* expresses it, *Psal.* xxxiv. 8. and interpose between them and their Danger; to prompt them *to*, and assist them *in* their Duties; to strengthen them against, or to remove their Temptations; to comfort them in their Sorrows, and chase away from them those *malignant Spirits* that are always about them, watching all Opportunities to seduce and destroy them. Hence, *Heb.* i. 14. they are said to be *ministering Spirits sent forth to minister for them, who shall be Heirs of Salvation*. And how much they are concerned for the Safety and Welfare of these *precious* Beings they are charged with, is evident by that Passage, *Luke* xv. 16. *There is joy in the Presence of the Angels of God over one Sinner that repenteth.*

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penteth, So *considerable* are the Lives of Souls to the *Angels* of God, that though they are always entertained with the most *ravishing* Pleasures, yet *Heaven* itself cannot divert them from being overjoyed at the Repentance of a *perishing* Soul, and celebrating its Recovery with a *new* Festival. And whenever the *happy* News is brought them, that such a *dying* Soul is reviv'd, they not only attend to it in the *midst* of all their Joys and Triumphs, but upon the Hearing of it they shout for Joy, and fill the Heavens with a *new* Acclamation. And whenever such a *penitent* Soul hath bidden adieu to the Body, those *blessed* Spirits stand ready to receive and guard it through those *Legions* of *malignant Spirits* that do always infest these *lower* Tracts of Air, and to conduct it safe to those *happy* Abodes where it is to lodge till the Resurrection ; for is said of *Lazarus's* Soul, *Luke* xvi. 22. *That it was carried by Angels into Abraham's Bosom.* All which is a *clear* Demonstration of the *vast* Esteem which those *blessed Angels* have of Souls. For can it be thought that such *noble* Beings who have a *God* and themselves to converse with, and have so *immediate* a Prospect both of *his* Beauty and their *own* to exercise their Faculties and employ their Contemplation, would be so *ready* and *willing* as they are to attend upon Souls, and minister to their Safety and Happiness, if they had not a *mighty* Value and Estimation of them? Surely if these *immortal* Spirits within us were not unspeakably *dear* and *precious*, those *angelical* Beings, who have always the most *sublime* and *enraving* Objects before them to employ
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and entertain their Faculties, would never have thought it *worth the while* to stickle so zealously in their Affairs, and concern themselves so much about them. And thus our Saviour himself argues, *Mat. xviii. 10. Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones ; for I say unto you, that in Heaven their Angels do behold the Face of my Father which is in Heaven ;* that is, do not undervalue any Soul ; for how *mean* or *little* soever some of them may appear to you, they are under the *Guardianship* of those *blessed Angels* that are the Courtiers of God, and do always attend upon his *Majestic Presence*.

5. And *lastly*, Let us consider the vast Price which the *Devils* themselves do put upon Souls ; for ever since those *malignant* Spirits through their *own* Pride and Ambition revolted from God, and conspired to make War with *Heaven*, and revenge their Expulsion thence, the *constant* Drift of all their Designs and Actions hath been to seduce and ruin them, being conscious that of all the Beings that are within the reach of their Power, there are none so *dear* to God as these, and that by seducing from him these his most *precious* Creatures, they shall do him the *greatest* spight, and most effectually revenge upon him their *own* Damnation. For doubtless were there any Beings below the Moon *more dear* to God than *these*, they would bend their Force and Malice against them, and not make these as they do, the *only* Centers of their *mischievous* Activity. Had they any *nobler* Game to fly at, their *ambitious* Malice would disdain to stoop to the Quarry of Souls ; but because of all others these are the *noblest* and best *worth* the

the ruining, therefore do these *malignant* Spirits turn all their Artillery upon them, and level all their *fiery* Darts against them. And how *ambitious* they are of seducing our Souls, and training them on to Perdition, is evident by the *infinite* Wiles, and Snares, and Stratagems they contrive against them, by their *unwearied* Diligence to watch all Opportunities against them; to surprize them where they are *careless*, and assault them where they are *weakest*, and cheat them with *disguised* Suggestions; to inspect their Humours, and apply themselves to their Interest, and nick their Tempers, with convenient *Temptations*. And if after all their Labour, Craft and Contrivance, they can but seize the Game they hunt for, the Blood of a Soul is so *rich* a Draught, that they think it a *sufficient* Recompence for all their *painful* and *mischievous* Devices; for St. *Peter* tells us, that *they go about like roaring Lions, seeking whom they may devour*. And to be sure those *malignant* Spirits would never be so impertinently *mischievous*, as to spend their time in catching Flies; and did they not know our Souls to be *noble* Preys, they would never go so far about as they do, nor take so much Care and Pains to catch and ensnare them, So that from their *unwearied* Diligence to seduce and ruin us, we may most certainly conclude either that they are very *foolish* Devils, or that our Souls are very *precious* Beings; but howsoever, their Diligence to destroy them is a *plain* Argument that they esteem them *precious*, it being by no means to be supposed, that such *wise* and *intelligent* Beings as they are, would so much concern themselves,

selves, as they do, about things which they had *little or no Esteem for.*

And thus you see at what a *vast* Rate our Souls are valued by the whole World of Spirits; how from the *highest* to the *lowest*, those *best* and *wisest* Judges of the *just* Worth of Souls, do all unanimously concur in a *great* and *high* Estimation. So that whether we value them by their own *natural* Capacities, or by the Estimation of those who are best able to judge of their Worth and Excellency, we have *abundant* Reason to conclude them most *precious* and *inestimable* Beings. And now I shall conclude this Argument with some Inferences.

1. From hence I infer, by what it is that we ought to value ourselves and estimate the Dignity of *our own* Natures, *viz.* by our *rational* and *immortal* Souls, those *excellent* Beings that are so *invaluable* in themselves, and so highly esteemed by the *best* and *wisest* Judges. 'Tis this *intelligent* and *immortal* Nature within us, that is the Crown and Flower of our Beings; 'tis by this that we are exalted above the Level of *mere* Animals; by this that we are allied to Angels, and do border upon *God* himself: And he that values himself by any thing but his Soul, and those things which are its *proper* Graces and Ornaments, begins at the *wrong* End of himself, forgets his Jewels, and estimates his Estate by his Lumber. And yet *good God!* what *foolish* Measures do the Generality of Men take of themselves? Were we not forced by *too* many *woeful* Experiments, it would be hard to imagine that any Creature that believes a *rational* and *immortal* Soul to be a Part of its Nature,

Nature, would be so *ridiculous* as to value itself, by the *little trifling* Advantages of a *well-coloured* Skin, a Suit of fine Clothes, a Puff of popular Applause, or a *few* Bags of *white* and *red* Earth; and yet, *God Help* us, these are the only things almost by which we value and difference ourselves from others. You are a much better Man than your Neighbour; he, alas, is a *poor contemptible* Wretch, a *little creeping despicable* Thing, not worthy to be looked upon, or taken notice of by such a one as you. Why in the Name of God, what is the Matter? Where is this mighty Difference between you and him? Hath not he a Soul as well as you? A Soul that is *capable* to live as long, and to be as *happy* as yours? Yes, yes, 'tis true indeed; but notwithstanding, *God* be thanked, you are another-guess Man than he; for you have a much *handsomer* Body, your Apparel is much more *fine* and *fashionable*, you live in a more *splendid* Equipage, and have a *larger* Purse to maintain it, and your Name *forsooth*, is more in Vogue, and makes a far *greater* Noise in the World. And is this all the Difference between your *mighty* selves and your *pitiful* Neighbours? Alas? poor Men? A few Days more will put an End to this, and when your rich Attires are reduced to a *Winding-Sheet*, and all your *vast* Possessions to *six Feet of Earth*, what will become of all those little Trifles by which you value yourselves? Where will be the *Beauty* or *Wealth*, the *Port* or *Garb*, which you are now so *proud* of? Alas! Now that *lovely* Body looks as *pale* and *ghastly*, that *lofty* Soul is left as bare, as poor and naked as your despised Neighbour's.

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Should you now meet his *wandering Ghost* in the *wide World* of Spirits, what would you have to boast of more than he, now your *Beauty* is withered, your *Wealth* vanished, and all your *outward Pomp* and *Splendor* shrouded in the *Horrors* of a *silent Grave*? Now you will have nothing to distinguish you from the most *Contemptible*, unless you have *wiser* and *better* Souls, and by so much as you were more *respected* for your *Beauty* and *Wealth*, your *Garb* and *Equipage* in this World, by so much will you be more *despised* for your *Pride* and *Insolence*, your *Covetousness* and *Sensuality* in the other. Let us therefore learn to value ourselves by that which will abide by us, by our *immortal* Souls, and by those *heavenly* Graces which do *adorn* and *accomplish* them; by our *Humility* and *Devotion*, by our *Charity* and *Meekness*, by our *Temperance* and *Justice*; all which are such *Preeminences*, as will survive our Funerals, and distinguish us from *base* and *abject* Souls for ever. But for a *rational* and *immortal* Creature to *prize* itself by any such *temporary* Advantages, is altogether as vain and ridiculous, as it was for the Emperor Nero to value himself for being an *excellent* Fidler.

2dly, From hence also I infer how much we are obliged to live up to the Dignity of our Natures. Should a *Stranger* to Mankind be admitted into this *busy* Stage of *human* Affairs, to survey our Actions, and the *paultry* Designs we drive at, certainly he would hardly imagine that we believed ourselves to be such a noble Sort and Strain of Beings as we are. If you saw a Man seriously employing himself in some *sordid* and

and *beggarly* Drudgery, could you imagine that he believed himself to be the Son of a King, and the Heir of a Crown? And when it is so *apparent* that the *main* of our Design is to prog for our Flesh, and make a *comfortable* Provision for a few Years Ease and Luxury, who would think that we believed ourselves to be *immortal* Spirits that must live *for ever* in an *inconceivable* Happiness or Misery? When we consider the high Rank which we hold in the Creation, the *vast* Capacities which there are in our Natures, and the *noble* Ends which we were made and designed for, are we not ashamed to think how *poorly* we prostitute ourselves, and vilify *our own* Faculties by the *sordid* Drudgeries wherein we exercise and employ them? When we think what a Reputation we have throughout all the World of Spirits, what a *vast* Rate we are valued at by *God*, and *Angels*, and *Devils*, are we not confounded to think how we *undervalue* ourselves by those *low* and *inglorious* Ends, which we pursue and aim at? O good God, that thou should'st give me a Soul of an *immortal* Nature, a Soul that is *big* enough for all the Joys which thy *everlasting* Heaven is composed of, and I be such a Wretch to myself, such a Traytor to the Dignity of my *own* Nature, as to give *up* myself and all my Faculties to the Pursuit of such *vain* and *wretched* Trifles! That I who am akin to Angels, should make myself a *Muckworm*, and chuse *Nebuchadnezzar's* Fate, to leave Crowns and Scepters, and live among the *savage* Herds of the Wilderness! That having such a *great* and *noble* Nature, I should content myself to live like a
Beast,

Beast, and aim no *higher* than if I had been born only to eat, and drink, and sleep, and wake, for *thirty* or *forty* Years together, and then retire into a *silent* Grave, and be *insensible* for ever? Wherefore, in the Name of God, let us at last remember what we are, and what we are born to. Let us consider, that we have Faculties that are *capable* of exerting themselves *for ever* in the most *inravishing* Contemplation, and Love of the *eternal* Fountain of Truth and Goodness; of copying and transcribing his most *adorable* Perfections, his *Wisdom*, *Goodness*, *Purity*, and *Justice*, from whence the *infinite* Happiness of his Nature derives; and thereby of glorifying us into *living* Images of God, and rendering us *like* him both in Beauty and Happiness; in a Word, that we have Faculties to converse with Angels and with blessed Spirits, to bear a part in the *eternal* Comfort of their Joys and Praises, and to relish all those *unknown* Delights of which their *everlasting* Heaven doth consist. And having such *great* and *noble* Powers in us, is it not a *burning* Shame that they should be always condemned to an *endless* Pursuits of Shadows and Impertinencies? Let us therefore rouse up ourselves, and shake off this *sordid* and *degenerate* Temper that sinks and depresses us, and makes us act so infinitely *unbecoming* the Dignity of our *immortal* Natures. And since we are descended from and designed for the *Heavenly* Family, let us learn to demean ourselves upon Earth, as becomes the Natives of *Heaven*. Let us disdain all *base* and *sordid*, all *low* and *unworthy* Ends of Action, as Things beneath our *illustrious*

strious Rank and Station in the World of Beings, and live in a *continual* Tendency towards, and Preparation for that *Heavenly State* which is the *proper* Orb and Sphere of our Natures.

3dly, From hence also I infer how much they undervalue themselves, that sell their Souls for the Trifles of this World. For since we know beforehand that the Wrath of God is revealed from *Heaven* against all Unrighteousness and Ungodliness of Men, and he hath plainly assured us that our Souls must smart *for ever* for our Sins, it necessarily follows, that whenever we knowingly suffer ourselves to be enticed into Sin, we make a *wilful* Forfeiture of our Souls. He that knows that such a Draught, however *sweetened* and made *palatable*, is yet compounded with the Juice of *deadly Nightshade*, and notwithstanding that will have the *poisonous* Draught, is wilfully bent to murder and destroy himself. And when we see that the Pleasure of our Sin draws after it the Ruin of our Souls, and yet will Sin notwithstanding, we do in effect stake our Souls against it, and with our Eyes open, make this *desperate* Bargain, that upon Condition we may enjoy such a *sinful* Pleasure, we will willingly surrender up our *immortal* Spirits to the Pains of an *endless* and *intolerable* Damnation. And if so, *O blessed God*, how do the generality of Men depreciate and undervalue themselves? For how often do we see Men in their *little* Frauds and Cozenages, sell their Souls for a Penny gain; in their *lascivious* and *intemperate* Humours, barter their Souls for a Moment's Mirth or Pleasure; in their *ambitious* Projects and Designs,

part

part with their Souls for a Blast of *vulgar* Breath and *popular* Noise. For in every Temptation to Sin, the Devil cheapens our *immortal* Souls, bids so much *Pleasure*, or so much *Profit* for them; and in every Compliance with the Temptation, we take his Offer, and strike the *fatal* Bargain; so that if we will sin, we had need sin for something, since we must pay so dearly for it. But, alas! there is no Proffer the Devil can make us, that is a *tolerable* Price for the Blood of our Souls; though he should offer us the *whole* World for it, our *Saviour* assures us, that he would bid us infinitely to our Loss; and if so, what *wretched* Sales do we make of our Souls, when we sin for Trifles, *lie* and *cheat* to get a Penny, consent to a *wicked* Motion for a Pleasure that will wither while we are smelling to it, and expire in the very Enjoyment? For so much we value our Souls at, and do in effect declare, that in our Esteem these *precious* Beings, which *God* and *Angels* set so high a Price on, are worth no more than what that *Profit* or *Pleasure*, for which we sin, amounts to. O good God! What *cheap* and *worthless* Things then are our Souls in our Esteem, who sell and barter them every Day for such *mean* and *worthless* Trifles? How do we part with our *Gold* for *Dross*, and exchange our *Jewels* for *Pebbles*? What *sordid* Thoughts, what *wretched*, *vile* Opinions have we of ourselves, that are so ready, upon all Occasions, to sell ourselves for nought, or which is next to nought, for the *sorry* Proffers of every *base* and *infamous* Lust? O would to God we would at last make but a *just* Estimate of our-

selves, and thereupon resolve, as is most *reasonable* we should, never to comply with any *sinful* Motion, till we can get more by it than our Souls are worth, and then I am sure we should be *for ever* deaf to all the Proffers which the *Devil* or *World* can make us.

4thly and *lastly*, From hence also I infer how much we are obliged, above all Things, to take care of our Souls: For since they are Beings of such *vast* Capacities in themselves, and of such an *high* Estimation in the World of Spirits, methinks we should all be convinced, that to take care of their Welfare, and prevent their *everlasting* Miscarriage, is the *highest* Concern and Interest of a Man. And yet, *God* forgive us, if we consult the *common* Practice of Mankind, we shall find that there is scarce any thing in which we have any Interest at all, that is more *slighted* and *disregarded* by us. Our Body is the Darling that hath our Hearts, and takes *up* all our Care and Thoughts; and to entertain its Appetite, and accommodate it with Pleasures and Conveniencies, there is no Expencc either of Labour or Time grudged, or thought much of; but as for the Soul, that *precious* and *immortal* Thing, which will be living, and perceiving *unspeakable* Pleasures or Pains when this Body is *dead* and *insensible*, that is overlooked as a Thing not *worthy* our *serious* Notice or Regard. And though we cannot but be *sensible* how much it is diseased in all it Faculties, how much its *Understanding* is *over-loaded* with *Error* and *Ignorance*, its *Will* festered with *unreasonable* Malice and Obstinacy, and its *Conscience* oppressed with
Loads

Loads of Guilt *sufficient* to sink it to the *nethermost* Hell ; yet we seem, for the Generality, to be no more concerned at it, than if its Ruin or Recovery were equally indifferent to us. We can see it perishing before our Eyes, without any Remorse or Compassion ; we can pass Day after Day without making the *least* Offer or Attempt to recover it, without offering *up* a Prayer for it, or entertaining a *serious* Thought what will become of it *for ever*. O *insensible* Creatures that we are, thus to neglect and abandon the most *precious* Part of ourselves ; the Part that makes us Men, and by which alone we are *capable* of being *bappy* or *miserable for ever* ! Let me therefore beseech and conjure you, even by all that is *sacred* and *serious*, by every thing that is *dear* and *precious* to you, by your *best* Hopes, and the most *important* Concern of your *everlasting* Fate, to take pity upon your *perishing* Souls, to consider the *amazing* Dangers whereunto you have exposed them, and to consult the Means of their Recovery ; to prick and affect your Hearts with the Sense and Consideration of their *impending* Ruin, till you have forced them to cry out, *What shall we do to be saved* ? To bathe their Wounds with the Tears of Repentance, and to pour into them that most *sovereign* Balm of a *serious* Purpose and Resolution of Amendment ; to pray earnestly for them, and keep a continual Guard about them, and to strive vigorously with those *sinful* Inclinations that threaten to sink and ruin them. And if we will be but *content* to undergo these *necessary* Cares and Pains to secure them, we shall be sure, when they leave these

Bodies to reap the Fruits of all in the Possession of an unspeakably *happy* and *glorious* Eternity.

II. I proceed now to the second Proposition, contained in these Words, *that our precious Souls may be lost*. And this 'our Saviour plainly supposes, *If he gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul*. The Greek Word is ζημιωθῆναι, which properly signifies to receive a Mulct, or to suffer Damage; and therefore it is here opposed to κερδήσει, *if he shall gain*. So that the Word doth not denote the *absolute* Loss or Extinction of the Soul, but its undergoing some *dreadful* Mulct, or suffering some *irreparable* Damage. For, as *Hierocles* hath observed, ὡς οἶστε ἀθάνατῳ ὅτια θανάτῳ μέγας μνταλεχῆν, ὃ τῇ εἰς ὃ μὴ εἶναι ἐκλάσει, ἀλλὰ τῇ τε εὖ εἶναι ἀποπῖῶσαι. *Immortal Substances cannot so die as to lose their Being, but so as to lose their Well-being they may*. And accordingly our Saviour himself calls the Punishment of the Wicked in Hell-Fire, destroying them, *Mat. x. 28*. *Fear not them which kill the Body—but fear him which is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell*. Where, by *destroying*, he doth not mean putting a *final* End to their Being, but putting them into an *irrecoverable* State of Ill-being; for in this State of Destruction, they still continue to act, to *weep* and *wail*, and *gnash their Teeth*, as *Christ* elsewhere tells us, *Mat. xiii. 42*; which Actions plainly suppose their Continuance in Being, though in a most *wretched* and *deplorable* Ill-being. So that by the Loss of the Soul here is not meant the Destruction of its Being, but its being exposed to an *irreparable* Damage in the *other* World. And to prove that
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in this Sense a Soul may be lost, I shall endeavour these two Things.

First, To shew you what Damages the Soul is *liable* to in the *other* World.

Secondly, Upon what Accounts it is *liable* to, and in Danger of them.

I. What Damages the Soul is *liable* to in the *other* World. To which I answer, that there is a *sevenfold* Damage whereunto the Soul of Man may be exposed *hereafter*.

1st. It is *liable* to be deprived of the *highest* Happiness it is capable of.

2^{dly}. It is *liable* to the most *dreadful* Punishment and Correction of the Father of Spirits.

3^{dly}. It is *liable* to the Fury and Violence of Devils, and *other malignant* Spirits.

4^{thly}. It is *liable* to be confined to the most *dismal* and *uncomfortable* Abodes.

5^{thly}. It is *liable* to the *perpetual* Vexations of its own *cross*, *wild* and *furious* Passions.

6^{thly}. It is *liable* to the *intolerable* Anguish of its own *guilty* Conscience.

7^{thly}. It is *liable* to endure all these *dismal* Things *for ever*.

1st. The Soul of Man is *liable* to be deprived of the *highest* Happiness it is *capable* of. The *highest* Happiness that a Soul is *capable* of is to enjoy God; that is, to *know*, and *love*, and *resemble* him; and to be admitted into the *noble* Society of those *pure* and *blessed* Spirits that do thus enjoy him; of all which Happiness a Soul may be *for ever* deprived by its own *vicious* and *depraved* Temper. For besides, that by such a Temper it may provoke the *just* and *holy* God, who hath the Disposal of the Fate of

Souls, to deprive it of, and banish it from this Happiness *for ever*; it may thereby also utterly *incapacitate* itself from ever enjoying it; it may promote and raise that Temper to such a degree of *Aversion* and *Antipathy to God*, and *canker* it into such an *inveterate* Enmity to all the Perfections of his Nature, as that at last it may be utterly *incapable* of any such *beatifical* Knowledge of them, as can any ways incline it to love and imitate him; For the *Apostle* tells us, that *the carnal Mind is enmity to God*, Rom. viii. 7. From whence it is evident, that in every Degree of Sin, there is a Degree of Aversion to *God*, which Aversion may be improved into such an *implacable* Malice against him, as that our Knowledge of him, instead of *endearing* him to us, or engaging us to imitate him, may only *avert* us from, *provoke* and *irritate* us against him, and by presenting to us those *immense* Perfections, for which he deserves our *dearest* Love, and *deepest* Adoration, may only fill our Minds with the *greater* Rage and *more invincible* Horror. And when the Soul is arrived to such a Degree of Malignity against *God*, it is as *impossible* for it to enjoy him, as to be *recreated* with Torment, or delighted with the Objects of its own *Antipathies*. And for the same Reason also, it must be *incapable* of enjoying the Society of *blest Spirits*; because it hath acquired a Temper that is infinitely *repugnant* to their *heavenly Genius*: so that if such a *prejudiced* Soul should, when it is arrived into *Eternity*, find the Gates of *Heaven* open to receive it, it would doubtless be so offended at every thing that is *heavenly*, be startled at the Sight of *God*, and the Displays
of

of his *bated* Perfections, and seized with such a Horror against those *god-like* Beings that dwell there, and are perpetually *contemplating* and *adoring*, *loving* and *imitating* him, that it would fly away of its *own* Accord from that *blissful* Habitation, as Bats and Owls do from the Light of the Day, and rather chuse to banish itself into *eternal* Darkness and Despair, than be shut up *for ever* in a *Heaven* so infinitely *repugnant* to its Nature. And certainly to be thus excommunicated from the *supreme* Happiness of *our* Natures, and be forced to live in *everlasting* Exile from *God* and *blessed* Spirits, and wander about like *wretched* Vagabonds that are chased and driven from all Hopes of Contentment, will be *unspeakable* Damage to our Souls.

2dly. The Soul of Man is *liable* to the most *dreadful* Punishment and Correction of the *Father of Spirits*. There is no Doubt but *spiritual* Agents can strike as immediately upon Spirits, as *bodily* Agents can upon Bodies; and though we, who are Spectators only of *corporeal* Action, cannot discern the Manner how *one* Spirit acts upon *another*, yet there is no Reason to doubt of the Thing; and if there be such a *mutual* Communication of Action between them, there is no doubt but they can mutually make *each other* feel each others Pleasures and Displeasures; and if so, then it is only to suppose that the *less powerful* Spirits are subject to the *violent* Impression of the *more powerful* ones, and consequently that all *finite* Spirits are liable to the Lash of an *infinite* one; for why should it be more *difficult* for the Father of our Spirits to correct our Spirits, than it is for the Parents

of our Flesh to correct our Flesh? For though our Souls are no more *impressible* with *material* Stripes than Sun-Beams are with the Blows of a Hammer, yet are they liable to *horrid* and *dismal* Thoughts, and to be as much pained and aggrieved by them, as our Bodies are by the most *exquisite* Torments. So that if God be displeased with us, he can imprint his Wrath upon our Minds in *black* and *ghastly* Thoughts, and cause it perpetually to drop like *burning Sulphur* upon our Souls. He cannot only abandon us to the *furious* Reflections of our own *natural* Consciences, which, as I shall shew you by and by, will be *hereafter* extremely *painful* and *vexatious*, but he can also infuse *supernatural* Horrors into us, and pour in such Swarms of *terrible* Thoughts upon us as will give us no Rest, but sting us perpetually Day and Night with *inexpressible* Anguish. And of this you have a *woeful* Example in that *miserable* Wretch *Francis Spira*, who, upon that *fearful* Breach he made in his Conscience by a *cowardly* renouncing of his *Religion*, was without any Symptoms of a *bodily* Melancholy immediately seized with such an *inexpressible* Agony of Mind as *amazed* his Physicians, *astonished* his Friends, and *struck* Terror into all that conversed with him. For he was so *near* to the Condition of a *dammèd Ghost*, that he verily believed *Hell* itself was more *tollerable* than those *invisible* Lashes that were continually laid upon his Soul; and therefore wished he were in *Hell*, and would gladly have dispatched himself thither, in hope to find Sanctuary there from those *vengeful* Thoughts which continually preyed

preyed upon his Soul. And if in this World our Soul is so *liable* to the Rod of the *Father of Spirits*, we may be sure it will be so in the *other* too, where *God*, if he pleases, can render it an *eternal Hell* to itself, by pouring continually into it *fresh* Floods of *horrible* Thoughts, which being thrust on by an *Almighty* Power, and perpetually urged and repeated on the Mind, must necessarily create in it not only *exquisite*, but *uninterrupted* Torment. And it being in his Power thus to Lash our Souls, to be sure, when once he is implacably incensed against them, (as he will be *hereafter*, if we do not appease him) he will let loose his Power upon them, and make them feel his *wrathful* Resentments in those *dire* and *frightful* Thoughts with which he will sting and scourge them *for ever*. And if the Soul carry into *Eternity* with it those *provoking* Lusts which do here incense *God's* Displeasure against it, it will there have no Shelter from the Storm of his Vengeance, which like a Shower of *Fire* and *Brimstone*, will be continually pouring down upon it. For while it continues in this Shop of Vanities, it hath a *great* Variety of Objects to divert those *dismal* Thoughts which *God* many times insuses into it; but in the *other* World all these *diverting* Objects will be removed, and then every *dismal* Thought which *God* lets loose will seize and fasten upon it, and, like *Prometheus's* Vultures, prey on its *wretched* Heart *for ever*.

3dly. The Soul of Man is *liable* to the Fury and Violence of *Devils*, and other *malignant Spirits*. For whenever the Souls of Men do
leave

leave their Bodies, they doubtless flock with the Birds of their own Feather, and comfort themselves with such *separate* Spirits as are of their *own* Genius and Temper ; for besides that Likeness doth naturally *congregate* Beings, and cause them to associate with their *own* Kind, *good* and *bad* Spirits are by the *eternal* Laws of the *other* World distributed in *two separate* Nations, and there live apart from one another, having no *other* Communication or Intercourse, but what is between *two hostile* Countries that are continually designing and attempting *one* against *another*. So that when *wicked* Souls do leave this *terrestrial* Abode, and pass into *Eternity*, they are presently incorporated, by the Laws of that *invisible* World, into the Nation of *wicked* Spirits, and confined *for ever* to their most *wretched* Society and Converse ; and then how *miserable* must their Condition be, who are damned to such a *hellish* Neighbourhood, and are allowed no *other* Company but Devils and *devilish* Spirits ? For since, as I have already shewed you, Spirits can as well act upon *one another* as Bodies, what can be expected when such *malignant* Spirits meet, but that they should be continually snarling among themselves, and baiting and worrying *one another* ? When *Wrath* and *Envy*, *Malice* and *Ill-Nature*, are the *common* Genius that inspires and acts the *whole* Society, what can their Conversation be, but a *continual* Intercourse of *mutual* Mischiefs and Vexations ; especially considering how they have here laid the Foundations of an *eternal* Quarrel against *one another* ? For *there* the Companions in Sin will meet,

meet, who, by their *ill* Counfels, *wicked* Insinuations, and *bad* Examples, did mutually contribute to *each* others Ruin; and when these shall meet in that *woeful* State, how will the *tormenting* Sense of those *irreparable* Injuries they have done *each* other, incite them to exercise their *hellish* Fury upon, and play the Devils with *one another*? And when a Company of *waspsish* Spirits so implacably incensed against *one another* shall meet, and like so many *Scorpions*, *Snakes* and *Adders*, be shut up together in the *infernal* Dens, how is it *possible* they should bear *bissing* at, and *stinging*, and *spitting* Venom in *one another's* Faces? But then besides the *mutual* Plagues which those *incensed* and *furious* Spirits must needs be supposed to inflict upon *one another*, they will be also nakedly exposed to the *powerful* Malice of the Devils, those *fierce* Executioners of God's *righteous* Vengeance, who, as *we now* find by Experience, have Power to suggest *black* and *horrid* Thoughts, and to torture our Souls with such *dreadful* Imaginations, as are far more *sharp* and *exquisite* than any *bodily* Torment. And if *now* they have such Power over us when God thinks fit to let them loose, what will they have *hereafter*, when these our *wretched* Spirits shall be wholly abandoned to their Mercy, and they shall have a *free* Scope to exercise their Fury upon us, and glut their *hungry* Malice with our Vexations and Torments? It seems at least a mighty *probable* Notion, that that *horrid* Agony of our Saviour in the Garden, which caused him to *strick* and *groan*, and *sweat* as it were *great* Drops of Blood,

Blood, was only the Effect of those *preternatural* Terrors which the Devils, with whom he was then in Combat, impressed upon his *innocent* Mind. And if they had so much Power over his *pure* and *mighty* Soul, that was so strongly guarded with the most *perfect* and *unspotted* Virtues, what will they have over ours when God hath abandoned us to them, and throws us as Preys into their Mouths? With what an *belly* Rage will they fly upon our *guilty* and *timorous* Souls, in which there is so much Tinder for their *injected* Sparks of Horror to take fire on? When therefore our *guilty* Spirits shall not only be *liable* to the Scourge of God, but Devils and *dammned* Ghosts too shall have their *full Swing* at them, doubtless the *Hell within* them will be far more *intolerable* than any *Hell* of Fire and Brimstone *without* them.

4thly, The Soul of Man is also *liable* to be confined to the most *dismal* and *uncomfortable* Abodes. What or where the Abode of *wicked* Spirits is till the Morn of the Resurrection, is no where expressly determined in the *Holy Scripture*; but since, wheresoever they are, they are doubtless under the Power and Dominion of the Devil, who, as the *Scripture* assures us, is *Prince of the Power of the Air*; it is highly *probable* that their *present* Residence is in these *lower* Regions of the World; that either being chased by those *infernal* Powers under whose Tyranny they are, they are continually hurrying about in these *inferior* Tracts of Air, or, which perhaps is more *probable*, that they are imprisoned by those *invisible* Ministers of the
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divine Justice within the *dark Abysses* and *under-ground Vaults* of the Earth, and not permitted, but upon *special* Occasions, to come abroad into this *upper* Region of Light and Liberty. But wheresoever they are, it is doubtless in some such *horrid* and *dismal* Prison, as is fit only to receive such *vile* and *desperate* Malefactors, and secure them till the *great Assizes*, when they shall be brought forth to receive their Trial and *final* Judgment: And then being united to their Bodies, and thereby made *liable* to *corporeal* Torments, the *Scripture* expressly affirms that they shall be shut up in *everlasting* Flames, and be tormented *for ever* in a Lake of Fire and Brimstone; for then the *Lord* himself shall come in Flames of Fire to render Vengeance to all those that obeyed not his Gospel; and having, with those *raging* Flames, set every Part of this *lower* World on Fire, he will *reascend* with all his Train to the *celestial* Mansions, and leave the *Wicked* weltering *for ever* in this *burning* Vault below; for it is plain, that the *everlasting* Fire, to which he will then sentence them, is the Conflagration of the World, which, after the *Just* are raised, and caught up in the Clouds above the Reach of its *aspiring* Flames, shall break forth on every side, and turn all this *Atmosphere* into a Furnace of *inquenchable* Fire, and therein shall those *wicked* Miscreants that would not be reclaimed, be condemned to live *for ever*. For the Judgment being ended, the Judge and all his Retinue shall return, and leave them in the midst of a *burning* World, surrounded with *Smoak* and *Fire*, *Darkness* and *Confusion*, and

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wrapt in *fierce* and *merciless* Flames, which shall stick close to, and pierce through and through their Bodies, and *for ever* prey upon, but never consume them. And what an *intolerable* Mule& this is, I leave every Man's *natural* Sense to judge.

5thly, The Soul of Man is also *liable* to the *perpetual* Vexations of its own *cross*, *wild*, and *furious* Passions. We have *sufficient* Experience in this Life how *vexatious* our *cross* and *excessive* Passions are; for when our Passions are divided, and *contrary* Objects have raised *contrary* Desires and Appetites in us, how do they rend and distract our Souls, and cause *perpetual* Mutinies and Tumults within us? But by reason of those many *sensual* Gratifications with which we now make a shift to stop the Mouths of those Daughters of the Horse-Leech, when they cry out, *give, give*, we cannot be so *sensible* of the Trouble and Vexation of them; unless we now subdue and mortify them, we shall be forced to carry them into *Eternity* along with us. For by being *separated* from their Bodies, the Souls of Men are never *separated* from their *prevailing* Tempers, but in their *separated* State are, for the main, of the *same* Disposition as they were *here*, and do retain the *same* Passions and Appetites. 'Tis true, they cannot be supposed to retain their *bodily* Appetites, after they have thrown off their Bodies, but when they have wholly *accustomed* themselves in this Life to *fleshy* Pleasures, and have never experienced *spiritual* ones, it is impossible but that, in the *other*, they should be tormented with an *outrageous* Desire of
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being *imbodied* again ; that so being *incapable* of relishing any *other*, they may repeat those *fleshy* Pleasures which heretofore they were accustomed to, and act over the *brutish* Scene anew. And this *vehement* Hankering of these *carnalized* Souls to return into their *bodily* State, is perhaps the only Sensuality that a *separate* Soul is *capable* of ; but it is such a Sensuality as must necessarily render such Souls extremely *miserable* ; for in *that* State it will be like the Hunger of a *starving* Man, that is immured between *two dead Walls* , that is, it will be a *fierce* Desire without Hope of Satisfaction, a *corroding* Hunger, sharpened with Despair of Food, than which there is nothing more intolerably *grievous* and *tormenting*. For how will it vex the *wretched* Spirit to look back from the Shores of Eternity into this *corporeal* World, and to ruminate thus with itself ; O *miserable* Creature that I am ! here am I cast away for ever upon a *strange* and *desolate* Shore, where I must famish for want of Food, pine away a long *Eternity*, and wander to and fro for ever, tormented with restless Rage, and hungry unsatisfied Desires ; where is not one Pleasure that I can relish, not an Object that I can taste any Sweetness in. Woe is me ! yonder are all my Joys and Comforts, all that is dear and precious to me. O that I might go back again, and be once more restored to the Enjoyment of them ! but alas ! between me and them there runs an impassable Gulph, that deprives me of all Hope of returning ! For thus will the unhappy Soul torment itself with an outrageous Longing for that

that which it can never hope to enjoy. But then, besides this Appetite of Sensuality, which it will there be vexed with, it will also carry along with it all that *Envy* and *Malice*, that *Wrath* and *Impatience*, *Pride* and *Insolence*, which it here contracted ; which *black* and *hellish* Passions will prove *perpetual* Furies in its Bosom ; for in that *wretched* State it will not only have Objects always *present* to excite them, but such objects *too* as will excite them all at once to the most *outrageous* Excesses. For when all at once it shall see others advanced to the *greatest* Heights of Glory and Happiness, and itself not only rejected but abandoned to *endless* Misery, the Sense of this must necessarily irritate all its *devilish* Passions to the *highest* Extremities, and cause its *Pride* to swell, its *Envy* to burst, and its *Wrath* to boil into a *diabolical* Fury ; and what a *continual Hell* must this create in the Soul, to be perpetually *worried* with so many *black* and *rubbid* Passions, to have all its *inferior* Parts and Affections, like those of the *Monster Scylla*, whom the *Poets* talk of, as so many Dogs continually *barking* and *snarling* at one another, and yet remain *unseparable*, as being *Comparts* of the same Substance ?

6thly, The Soul of Man is also *liable* to the *intolerable* Anguish of its own *guilty* Conscience. *The Spirit of a Man*, says *Solomon*, *can bear his Infirmities*, but a *wounded Spirit who can bear ?* Intimating, that of all the Passions which *human* Nature is *liable* to, there are none so *grievous* as that of a Mind awakened with the Sense of Guilt. And of the Truth
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of this, we have some Experience even in this Life, though now we can make a shift, either to divert ourselves, by our *sensual* Mirth and Jollities, from listening to the Clamours of our *guilty* Minds, or else to deceive ourselves into a *groundless* Peace, by *indulgent* and *fallacious* Principles; but unless we expiate our Guilts here, we shall carry them into Eternity with us, where all those *sensual* Pleasures, with which we now divert ourselves from reflecting on our Actions, will be removed, and all those *fallacious* Principles, with which we cheat and deceive ourselves, will be baffled by a *woful* Experience. So that then our Soul will be nakedly exposed to the Lash of its own *furious* Thoughts, and have nothing to guard or defend itself against the *cutting* Reflections of a *guilty* Conscience, which being roused up and kept awake by the *unintermitting* Sense of our Misery, will be always clamouring upon us, and continually torturing our *wretched* Minds with *sharp* and *vexatious* Reflections: And besides, whilst our Soul doth act by *bodily* Instruments, and work in this Mire of Flesh, it is *impossible* it should be so *nimble* and *expedite* in its Motions, as it will be when it is a *naked* Spirit. For then its Perceptions will be much *clearer*, its Convictions more *strong* and *evident*, and all its Reflections *active* as the Lightning, and *quick* as the Wing of an Angel. So that whereas now the *sharpest* Stings of our Conscience have an Intermixture of Fancy and Imagination in them, being *gross* and *material* Powers, do dull and rebate the Edge of them, and render them less *pungent* and *sensible*; when

we are *stripped* out of our Flesh, and sent *naked* into the *other* World, we shall have no Clog about us to break or allay those *sharp* Reflections, with which we shall be forced to lash ourselves *for ever*. And then our Conscience will cut to the quick, and sting with a *corroding* Venom; then will the Remembrance of those Guilts, which brought our Miseries upon us, rouse up such a swarm of Horrors in our Minds, as we shall be *able* neither to avoid nor endure. For the Sense of our Misery will be every Moment suggesting those Guilts to our Minds, that were the Cause of it, and continually upbraiding us with those *desperate* Follies, by which we ran ourselves into it; the Consideration of which will cause us to hate and curse ourselves *for ever*, and to discharge our Fury upon *our own* Heads, which will make our Soul turn Devil to itself, and force it to be its *own* Executioner. For it being now *conscious* to itself, that its Miseries are nothing else but the *rueful* and *pitiless* Deserts of its *own* Folly and Madness, it will be continually meditating *horrible* Reflections, and singing Satires on itself. So that while it is wandering among *wretched* Ghosts through the *dismal* Shades below, it will never cease lashing itself with its *own sharp* and *stinging* Thoughts, till it hath chafed itself into a Fury, and boiled up its *self-condemning* Rage into *everlasting* Madness.

7thly and *lastly*, The Soul of Man is also *liable* to endure all these *dismal* Things *for ever*: For that our Souls are naturally *immaterial* and *immortal*, I have already proved; so that
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If God in his infinite Justice shall think fit to sentence wicked Souls irrecoverably to all these above-named Miseries, they must, by the Constitution of their *own* Natures, live in, and undergo them for ever. And that he doth think to pronounce and execute such a Sentence upon them, he himself hath assured us; for so in *Scripture* he hath plainly declared, that their Punishment shall be *everlasting*, *Mat. xxv. 7.* These, saith he, speaking of the Wicked, *shall go away into everlasting Punishment*; and accordingly the Fire in, and with which they are to be punished, is called *everlasting Fire*, *Mat. xxv. 41.* and that they shall subsist for ever in this Fire, and be *co-eternal* with it, is evident by those Passions and Actions that are attributed to them in it; for, *Rev. xiv. 11.* they are said to *have no Rest Day nor Night* in it, but to be in a *continual unintermitting* Fever, that will necessarily burn and scorch them, and not allow them the *least* Intervals of Ease and Comfort. And in *Mat. xiii. 42.* the *bitter* Anguish which they shall endure in this Fire is described by their *weeping* and *wailing*, and *gnashing* their Teeth; which Actions are *plain* Indications not only of their subsisting in this *everlasting Fire*, but of the *extreme* Horror and Anguish that they shall therein endure, And indeed when God sentences any *immortal* Being to Misery, its Misery must be supposed to continue as long as it lives, and consequently to continue *for ever*, since it is to subsist and live *for ever*. And what a *fearful* Accession is this to all those above-named Miseries? If we were to endure the *softest* and most *gentle*

Pain without any Interval, for *thirty, forty, or an hundred Years*, the Prospect of that which is to *come*, would render that which is *present* so *intolerable*, that we should quickly grow weary of our Lives, and wish ourselves in our Graves. *Lord!* what shall we then do, when we come to languish out a *long Eternity* in the *tormenting Agonies* of *damned Ghosts*? How will it imbitter every *present Torment* to us, to think of that *never-ending Duration* of *Torment* to come, that after we have consumed *Millions of Millions* of Ages on the Rack, we have still an *eternal Hell* behind, and are as far *distant* from the End of our Misery, as we were when it *first* began? O! now if we could die, and be *insensible for ever!* what *welcome Tidings* would it be? How gladly should we receive that *fatal Blow*, that could put an end to a *woeful Eternity*? But now it will be in vain for us to cry, *O Death, Death, have Mercy upon us, and dispatch us quickly into an eternal Grave.* For Death is *deaf* and cannot hear, every Moment it stabs and wounds, but, *woe is me!* it cannot kill; it strikes and strikes, but cannot strike home, and so is forced to continue as struggling under the Pangs of an *immortal Death*. If there were any Prospect of an End of our Misery, though it were after a *Million* of Ages, this would give some Ease to the *languishing Sufferer*; but *never, never* — O how that *fatal Word* stabs the *wretched Soul*, and rankles its Anguish into *eternal Desperation!* For to be in *extreme Misery*, and see no End of it, is the Perfection of Hell, and the *utmost Possibility* of Damnation.

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And thus have I endeavoured to represent unto you the *fearful* Mulets our Souls are *liable* to in the *other* World: which are such as, one would think, were *sufficient* to awaken the most *stupid* and *insensible* Creature.

II. I now pass on to the *second* Thing proposed, which was to shew you upon what Accounts it is that our Souls are *liable* to these *dreadful* Things; or what it is that exposes us to the Danger of them. In general it is *our own* Sin and Wickedness, which doth not only incense the *holy* God against us, who is [of *purser* Eyes than to behold Iniquity, and provoke and urge him to inflict these *endless* Miseries upon us as the *just* Retributions of our *desperate* *holly* and *Obstinacy*; but doth also, by its own *natural* Causality, prepare us for, and sink us into that *miserable* State: So that if God should not damn us, yet *our own* Wickedness would; Misery of Damnation being *little* else but the Perfection and Consummation of Sin. For the Sting of *eternal*, as well as *temporal* Death, is Sin, and it is *Goodness* and *Wickedness* that makes *Heaven* and *Hell*, those two *opposite* Hemispheres of the *invisible* World; and as if *Goodness* were plucked out of *Heaven* it would cease to be *Heaven*, and be overcast immediately with the *dismal* Shades of *Hell*; so if *Wickedness* were banished out of *Hell*, it would be *Hell* no longer, but presently clear up into Light and Serenity, and shine forth into a *glorious* *Heaven*; but wheresoever Sin and Wickedness reigns, there is *Hell* and Damnation in its *necessary* Causes. Since therefore in *necessary* Causes, that which is the Cause of the

Cause is also the Cause of the Effect, our *best* way to be resolved what it is that renders us *liable* to these *future* Miseries, will be to enquire what it is that renders us *liable* to fall into a *sinful* Condition at the *present*; for whatsoever renders us *liable* to Sin, must necessarily expose us to the Danger of Misery. Now, the Danger of our falling into and continuing in a State of Sin, proceeds from these *following* Causes.

1. From the *natural* Liberty of our Wills to *Good* and *Evil*.

2dly, From the many Temptations to *Evil* among which we are placed.

3dly, From the more *close* and *intimate* Access which these Temptations have to us, than the *contrary* Motives to *Goodness*.

4thly, From the *great* Correspondence of these Temptations with the *corrupt* Inclinations of our Nature.

5thly, From the *unwearied* Diligence and *great* Subtilty of the Devil to make use of, and apply these Temptations to us,

6thly, From the *plausible* Pretences we are furnished with to *excuse*, and *justify* our Compliance with them.

7thly, From the *extreme* Difficulty which this our Compliance brings us under to *reject* and *vanquish* them for the future.

1. We are *liable* to fall into a *sinful* State. and from thence into *eternal* Misery, from the *natural* Liberty of our Wills to *Good* and *Evil*. If, indeed, we were necessarily determined to *Good*, our Happiness would be intailed upon our Natures, and it would be as *impossible* for

us to be *miserable*, as it is for the Fire to *freeze*, or for the Ice to *burn*; but to be so determined, I am apt to think is not *consistent* with the Condition of a Creature. For to be *good* by a *natural* Necessity requires an *infallible* Understanding, or a Mind that is infinitely *removed* from all Possibility of being deceived and mistaken; and this no *finite* Mind can be: But how should the Will be in all Particulars necessarily determined to what is right, so long as it is under the Conduct of a *fallible* Mind, that hath a *natural* Possibility of misleading it? So that to be *naturally*, *necessarily*, and *essentially* *good*, seems to be an *incommunicable* Prerogative of the *Divine Nature*, according to that of our Saviour, *There is none good, save one, and that is God*, Luke xviii. 19. For since no Will can be *essentially good* but that which is guided by an *infallible* Mind, and no Mind can be *essentially infallible*, but that which is *infinite* in Knowledge, it hence necessarily follows, that to be *free* to *Good* and *Evil* is as *natural* to *reasonable* Creatures, as it is to be *finite* in Knowledge and Understanding. 'Tis true, the *greater* Light of Knowledge there is in the Mind, the *less* Freedom to *Evil* there must be in the Will, unless it hath some *antecedent* Biass and Inclination to *Evil*; and consequently, the Angels being of far more *intelligent* Natures than we Men, must needs be naturally *less free* to *Evil*; but yet that even they are naturally *free* to it is evident, for that some of them have actually lapsed into Devils; and if they are so by their Natures, then much more are we by ours, who are so much their

Inferiors in the *rational* World. For as we are *finite* Intelligences, we must necessarily have some Degree of Freedom to *Evil* in us, but as we are of the *lowermost* Rank of Intelligences, we must naturally have *greater* Degrees of this Freedom in us than any *other* Order of *intelligent* Natures: And if this were all, yet this very Condition of our Natures renders us more *liable* to degenerate into an *evil* and *sinful* State, than any *other* kind of *reasonable* Creatures. If we were now in a State of *perfect* Innocence, yet, of all *intelligent* Creatures, we should have the greatest Reason to apprehend the Danger of our Fall; because being the *least intelligent*, we have the *greatest* Freedom to *Evil*, and consequently are, on that account, in the *greatest* Danger of falling into it. By the very Condition of our Natures, we are, of all *rational* Creatures, placed *nearest* to the Brinks of the *fatal* Precipice, and therefore have most Reason to apprehend the danger of falling *headlong* into it. For, doubtless, among *innocent* Creatures, there are none so near the Danger of sinning, as those whose Wills are *least* restrained from it; and therefore, though we were now as *innocent* as the *blessed* Angels are, yet our Condition would be unspeakably more *unsafe*; because by how much we fall short of them in Knowledge and Understanding, by so much we should exceed them in our Freedom to *Evil*, and consequently be so much the more *liable* to it. But this alas! is the *least* of our Danger: For,

2dly, We are liable to fall into a *sinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Misery, from the
many

many Temptations to *Evil* among which we are placed. For this State of Being in which we now are, being intended by *God* for our Trial and Probation, it was *requisite*, in order thereunto, that we should be placed among Difficulties, that we might have *sufficient* Opportunity to exercise our Skill and Courage in *Religion*; for unless we had some such Difficulties to encounter, there could no Proof or Trial be made of our Virtue. Hence therefore hath *God* placed our *rational* Souls in *mortal* Bodies, which do naturally abound with *brutish* Appetites and Desires, and compassed us round with this World of *sensual* Goods and Evils, which continually importunes and excites them, that so we might have sufficient Opportunity to exercise those *human* Virtues, which consist in the Dominion of our *rational* Faculties over these our *bodily* Appetites and Desires, that we might never want occasion to give the most *glorious* Proofs of our *Patience* and *Chastity*, *Temperance* and *Equanimity*, *Meekness* and *Sobriety*; all which are *proper* to us as Beings made up of *Soul* and *Body*, whence all those *brutish* Appetites arise, in the *good* or *bad* Government whereof consists the Nature of *human* Virtue and Vice. So that this *present* State of *human* Life is intended by *God* for the Field of Combat between *Reason* and *Sense*, between the Law in our Minds, and the Law in our Members; and that the Victory of Reason might, through the Difficulty of it, be rendered more *glorious* and *remarkable*, he hath furnished its *Antagonist*, viz. the *bodily* Appetite, with *various* Weapons, with the Temptations
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of a World of *sensitive* Goods and Evils to assault and oppose it, to try its Metal, and exercise both its *active* and *passive* Virtues; and upon the Success of this Combat depends the *everlasting* Fate of the Soul. If Sense prevail, and lead her finally Captive into Vice and Wickedness, she is lost *for ever*; but if Reason get the Victory, and finally reduce the Desires and Appetites of Sense, under the Dominion of Virtue, when this *mortal* Life ends she shall triumph *for ever*, and be translated hence into a *free* and *disintangled* State, where she shall be vexed and inticed no more with the Importunities of *sensual* Lusts and Affections, but to all *Eternity* enjoy the Serenity and Pleasure of a *pure intellectual* Being. This being therefore the *true* State of Affairs, it is *too* too *obvious* how *liable* the Soul is to miscarry, when it is placed in a Body among so many *brutish* Passions and Appetites, and that Body is placed in a *tempting* World, among so many *sensitive* Goods and Evils, that are continually importuning those Appetites to *mutiny* against Reason, and carry us away Captive into Folly and Wickedness. How much Reason have we to look about us, when we are placed in the midst of so *many* Dangers, and have such *numberless* Snares on every side ready to decoy and intangle us? But this is not all neither: For,

3dly, We are *liable* also to fall into a *sinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Misery, from the more *close* and *intimate* Access which these Temptations have to us, than the *contrary* Motives to Goodness. For the *great* Advantage which these Temptations to Vice have over the
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most *powerful* Motives to Virtue is this, that they are all of them *present* and *sensible* ; for as for those *grand* Motives to Goodness, that are drawn from the Consideration of our *future* State, they propose to our *Hopes* and *Fears*, those Master-Springs of our Motions, such *Goods* and *Evils* as are a *great* way *off*, and beyond the Prospect of our *bodily* Senses, which makes the Landskip of them appear exceeding *dim* and *faint* upon the Mind ; their Futurity, which is one sort of Distance, causing them, like Things afar *off*, to look *confused* and *indistinct*, by reason of which, they cannot affect us so powerfully, and draw such *strong* and *lasting* Draughts of themselves upon our Minds : For Goods, like Magnets, have always the *strongest* Attractions when they are *nearest* ; but as for those *invisible* Goods of the *other* World, they are at such a Distance from us, that they can hardly reach us, who live upon the *remote*st Circumference of the Sphere of their Attraction. And as Distance lessens all Objects to the Eye, and renders them much *smaller* in Appearance than they are in Reality ; so the *remote* Futurity of those *eternal* Goods, which the Motives of Virtue do propose, detracts from their *just* Magnitude, and makes them, though unspeakably *vast* in themselves, appear exceeding *small* and *inconsiderable* to our *short-sighted* Minds. And the same is to be said of those *future* Evils also, which they denounce against us ; and besides, being not only *remote*, but *invisible* too, they cannot strike upon our Senses, by which the most *vigorous* Impressions of Things are made upon our Minds ; whereas the Temptations of Vice are all
present

present and *sensible*, and do so circle us round as soon as we look abroad into the World, that which way soever we turn our Eyes, they are still before us, thrusting themselves into our Minds, and with their *constant* Importunity stirring and working our Desires. So that whenever these *outward* Goods or Evils do assault us, we lie *bare* and *open* to them, and they continually press so close upon our Sides, that we are not able to avoid their Invasions: When any *outward* Good invites us to a sinful Action, it hath the *vast* Advantage of being *present* and *sensible*; by reason of which, it having a more *immediate* Access to our Minds, doth many times prevail, before we can rally up a *sufficient* Strength of Considerations against it; and when we set ourselves to resist and struggle with it, the *best* of our Weapons is a Company of *thin* and *faint* Notions of Things *afar off*; Things that we never saw nor felt; which whilst we are recollecting, the Vice we are tempted to, hath its Powers ready to seize upon the Will, which having oftentimes experienced the Pleasure it invites to, is the more easily *seduced* to a *fresh* Compliance. And whilst our Enemies are so *near* us, and our Helps and Succours so far *off*, we must needs acknowledge our Danger very *great* and *urgent*.

4thly, We are *liable* to fall into a *sinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Misery, from the *great* Correspondence of these Temptations with the *corrupt* Inclinations of our Natures. For by reason of the Nearness and Sensibleness of those *outward worldly* Goods, by which we are continually tempted and solicited to Evil, they having the Advantage of preingaging our
Affections

Affections to them, before we arrive to the Use of our Reason; for in our *tender* Years these are the only Goods that we can relish, they are these that do *feed, clothe, and furnish* us in hand with whatsoever our *natural* Appetites do gape for; that are the *sole* Entertainment of our *childish* Fancies, and the only Objects our yet *unfledged* Thoughts and Desires can reach at; and our Youth being thus entirely inured to them, by that time we are grown *up* to the Age of Reason, and the Capacities of Virtue and Religion, we have generally contracted such an *excessive* Inclination towards them, and are so strongly biassed with the Love of them, that whensoever they beckon to us we are ready to follow them through all the *forbidden* Tracts that lead to *everlasting* Ruin. For our Nature being thus *vitiated*, the Temptations *without* us have a strong Party *within* us, a Party of *traiterous* Inclinations, which, upon every Summons, solicits us to yield, and surrender up our Virtue and Innocence; and no sooner can any Temptation from *without* give the Alarm, but presently *our own* Lusts are *up*, raising a Mutiny *within* us, and with the Hearts of our *corrupted* Fancy, do many times so disorder our Understanding, that it cannot rally up its Considerations against them. For before ever our Understanding could be furnished with Considerations, our Hearts were prepossessed with such an *excessive* Degree of *ambitious, covetous, and luxurious* Inclinations, that when afterwards the *Pleasures, Profits and Honours without* begin to hold forth their *grateful* Lures to us, and to tempt us away to *Fraud or Treachery, to Vanity*

nity or *Licentiousness*, those *depraved Inclinations* have gotten such Head *within* us, that they prove most commonly *too strong* for all our Consideration, and with their *impetuous Current* carry us away, and drive us *headlong* down towards *eternal Ruin*; and unless we put forth all the Strength of our Reason and Resolution, and the Grace of God also come *in* to our Aid, it will be *impossible* for us to stem such a *furious Tide*, when it is driven by the Wind of an *outward Temptation*. When therefore *our own Inclinations* do so vigorously conspire with the Temptations *without*, to thrust us on into Sin and Perdition, how can we be *insensible* of the *imminent Danger* we are in of miscarrying for ever? But,

5thly, We are *liable* also to fall into a *sinful State*, and from thence into *eternal Misery*, from the *unwearied Diligence* and *great Subtily* of the Devil to make use of, and apply these Temptations to us. For that the Devil doth commonly, as an *assistant Genius* to the Corruption of our Natures, excite and provoke Men to Wickedness, is very evident from *Scripture*; where he is said *to work in the Children of Disobedience*, Eph. ii. 2. *To fill the Heart of Ananias to lye to the Holy Ghost*, Acts v. 3. *And to take away the Word out of Mens Hearts, lest they should believe and be saved*, Luke viii. 12. All which Expressions do plainly imply, that the Devil is a *constant Agent* in the Sins of Men. And being a *spiritual Agent*, he must needs be supposed to have a *nearer Access* to the Soul than any *material Cause* whatsoever. For though he be totally debarred of all kind of Intercourse with the *immediate Operations* of

of the *reasonable* Soul, and can no more look into the Thoughts than we can into the Bowels of the Earth; yet he can easily get into the Fancy, which stands next to that *mysterious* Chamber that is open to no Eye but God's, and make what use he pleases of the *infinite* Images and *Phantasms* that are in it, and dispose, and order, and distinguish them into the Pictures of what Objects he pleases, just as the Painter doth his *numerous Colours*, that lie confusedly before him in their *several* Shells, and continue and repeat those Pictures and Representations as *long* and as *oft* as he pleases. And then considering what the *natural* Use of the Fancy is, both to the *Understanding* and *Will*, how it prompts the *one* with Matter of Invention, and supplies it with Variety of Objects to work on, and draws forth and excites the *other* to chuse or reject those Objects it presents, according as they are pleasing or displeasing; we must needs suppose that the Devil hath a *vast* Advantage of insinuating his *black* Suggestions into the Soul, by having such *free* Access into the Fancy. And accordingly he is said to *put it into the Heart of Judas to betray Christ*, John xiii. 2. But then he being not only a *spiritual*, but also an *intellectual* Agent, of a *vast* and *capacious* Understanding by Nature, and particularly improved in the *black* Art of Tempting, by a *long* Experience of his Wiles and Stratagems, having been a Tempter almost ever since he hath been an Angel; he must needs be supposed to be wonderfully *expert* and *sagacious* in it; that after having had *five thousand* Years Experience of the Methods of seducing

seducing Souls to increase and perfect his *natural* Subtilty, he must by this be fully instructed, when and how to apply himself to every Age and Constitution. For this hath been his *sole* Business, wherein he hath been infinitely *intent* and *active* ever since he became a Devil, and if from a Man, then much more from a Devil of one Business. *Good Lord deliver me*, from a Devil that for *five thousand* Years hath been continually making Experiments of Temptations, and drawing them into Rules to direct and order his *mischievous* Practice on the Souls of Men. But besides, as the Devil is of a *spiritual* and *intelligent* Nature, so he hath a *vast* Number of his *black* Angels continually roving about the World, to seduce and captivate us into Sin and Ruin. And though these *malignant* Spirits have no Ligament of *natural* Love between them to tie and oblige them to *one another*, yet, by that *perfect* Hatred which they all bear to *God* and *Men*, they are united together in an *inviolable* League, and go hand in hand with *one another*, in pursuance of their *desperate* Design, to involve our *wretched* Souls in the same *eternal* Ruin with themselves, which renders their Force so much the more *formidable*. And when we have so many *spiritual*, *subtle*, and *powerful* Adversaries combining against, and continually wandring *to and fro* like *roaring Lions* to devour us, we cannot but apprehend our Danger exceeding *great*; especially considering the *infinite* Temptations from *without*, that this World affords the great Variety of *sensual* Goods and Evils, which they have to object to our *carnalized* Minds. For these

these *mischievous* Spirits having so *great* Insight into our Tempers, and so *great* a Choice of Objects to suggest to our Fancies, can never be at a Loss how they may nick us with a *convenient* Temptation: and that which gives their Temptations a *vast* Advantage over us is, that we know not how to distinguish them from the Motions of *our own* Hearts: For could we see the Devil at our Elbows, or hear him whispering at our Ears every time he insinuates his *wicked* Suggestions into our Minds, we should doubtless reject them with an unspeakable Horror; but because when they are conveyed into us, we know not how to distinguish them from the *natural* Births of *our own* Minds; therefore we do make no scruple to *bug* and *dandle* them in our Thoughts, and entertain them with an *actual* Complacency. And when the Devil can convey his Poison into us in such an *invisibile* manner, without discovering his Devil's Face; when he can thus prompt us behind the Curtain, and so disguise his Whispers that we can't discern them from the *secret* Lustings of *our own* Hearts; how can we be safe, without great Care and Watchfulness, from the Malice of such a *formidable* Enemy? But,

6thly, We are also *liable* to fall into a *sinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Misery, from the *plausible* Pretences we are furnished with to excuse and justify our Compliance with them. When by *our own* Folly and the Devil's Malice we are actually betrayed into any *willful* Sin, a *speedy* Repentance would recover us immediately, and heal the Wound as soon as it is made; but instead of that we have a *thousand*

plausible Excuses to palliate and skin it over ; but alas ! in the mean time it rots inwardly, and is festring apace into an *incurable* Gangrene. For when our Conscience begins to fly in our Faces, we have no *other* Way, but either presently to repent of, or to excuse and cloak our Wickedness ; the *latter* of which is usually pitched on, as being both the most *easy*, and the most *agrecable* with our *corrupt* Inclinations. And indeed there are so many Coverts which Men have found out for their Lusts to shelter them from the Persecutions of their Consciences, that this Way there are no Men can be long to seek : for either they may blanch them over with an *innocent* Name, and call their Intemperances, *Good-fellowship* ; their Knaveries, *ingenious Fetches* ; and their Incontinences, *Tricks of Wit* ; or else they may extenuate and mince them into *Peccadillo's*, and smooth over their *grossst* Rebellions with the softer Name of *human* Failings and Infirmities ; or else they may furnish themselves with some Shew of Argument to vindicate their Vices and assert them *lawful*, as some of late have done in the Case of *Fornication* and *Uncleanness* ; or else they may set up for *Philosophical* Sinners, and quote Texts out of their Gospel, *the Leviathan*, against the *eternal* Differences of *Good* and *Evil*. But if their Consciences will not be put off with such *poor* Pretences as these, there are *religious* Pretences enough in the World to protect and give Countenance to all their Impieties ; and they may either fly to the *Romish* Doctrines of *Confession* and *Penance*, of *Venal Sins*, and of *probable Opinions*, with
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any one of which they may easily reconcile their Lusts and Consciences: Or if they chance to have an *Antipathy* to the Name of *Roman Catholick*, they may furnish themselves with such Doctrines out of some of our *modern Enthusiasts*, as will be as *favourable* to their Lusts as they need, or wish, or desire; that will consecrate their *irregular* Passions into Signs of Grace, and dwindle their *grossest* Crimes into the Sports of God's People; that will exalt a *mechanick* Train of Fancies and Passions into a *sincere* Conversion, and improve an *Hysterical Fit* into a *spiritual Experience*. By these, and such like ways, may Men easily excuse their Vices to their Consciences; and when they are furnished with so many Expedients, whereby to inable themselves to sin on quietly, in how much Danger are they of falling *fast asleep* in the midst of their Guilts, and never waking again till they flame out about their Ears into *everlasting Burnings*? For whereas this Faculty of Conscience was implanted within us by the Author of our Natures, to be a Guard to our Innocence, and a Scourge to our Lusts, the generality of Men have invented so many Tricks to shift and evade it, that it is become almost totally *useless* to them. And when they have thus disabled their Consciences from defending them against the Importunities of their Lusts, in what *unspeakable* Danger must they be, not only of *falling* into, but *continuing* in them till they have utterly ruined and destroyed them?

7thly, and lastly, We are also liable to fall into a *sinful* State, and from thence into *eternal*

Misery, from the *extreme* Difficulty which this our Compliance with those Temptations brings us under, to reject and vanquish them for the future. For every *new* Compliance with Temptations to *Evil* foment and enrages our *evil* Inclinations, and when once these *evil* Inclinations are by our *customary* Compliances educated into *sinful* Habits, it will be *impossible* for us, without a *mighty* Assistance of *divine* Grace, to vanquish and subdue them. So that as upon the *former* Accounts we are in extreme Danger of falling into *sinful* Courses, upon this Account we are in no *less* Danger of continuing in them. For by complying with *this* Temptation, I shall very much disable myself from withstanding the *next*; and if I yield to *that* too, the *third* will find me much more *ready* and *tractable*, and so on, till at last the Temptation grows first *familiar*, and then *natural* to me, and then it will be *hard*, and then *harder*, and then almost *impossible* to reject or deny it. And when Things are reduced to this Issue, that my Sin is *naturalized* to me, and grown into an inveterate Habit, *the Lord have Mercy upon me!* for now I am in the *Suburbs* of *Hell*, but one Remove from the State of the *Damned*, and am so far gone in a *confirmed* State of Impiety, that I have almost lost my Liberty of returning; and unless I am speedily rescued by some Miracle of Grace it is *morally impossible* I should ever escape. Thus as we go on from *one* Degree of Wickedness to *another*, we do as it were break down the Bridge behind us, and do what in us lies to disappoint ourselves of all Hopes of any *future* Retreat. For every

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Step *forwards* in our *sinful* Progress, renders our Return more *difficult*; and when once we have proceeded into a Custom and Habit of Sin, we shall find Repentance so *irksome* to us, and so much against the Grain of our Nature, that it is a thousand to one but that the Difficulty of it will utterly *dishearten* us from attempting it; and so rather than take so much Pains as we must necessarily do in swimming against the *impetuous* Stream of our Natures, we shall tamely yield to it, and suffer ourselves to be borne down by it into the *dead Sea* of *endless* Misery. When therefore there are so many Causes conspiring together to betray us into *sinful* Courses, and when there are so many Difficulties when once we are *in* to oppose and hinder our Retreat, what *imminent* Danger are we in of falling into, and persevering in Sin to our *everlasting* Ruin? And thus you see how extremely *liable* we are upon all these Accounts to be *lost for ever*, that is, to plunge ourselves into all those *endless* Miseries which the Loss of our Souls implies.

What then remains, but that being seriously affected with the Sense of our Danger, we presently awake out of our Security, and with the *deepest* Concern for our *immortal* Souls, cry out with St. Peter's Auditors, *Men and Brethren, what shall we do to be saved?* Verily, when I reflect upon the *strange* Unconcernedness of Men about their *future* Condition, I am tempted to think either that they do not believe that they have an *immortal* Soul in them, or that if they do, they believe it is *impossible* it should *for ever* mis-

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carry. For how is it *conceivable* that Men, who in *other* Matters are so *sollicitous* when their Interest is at stake, and exposed to the *least* Hazard, should believe that they have Souls in Danger of perishing *for ever*, and yet take no more Care or Regard of them, but (like the *forgetful* Mother, who, when her House was on fire, to save her Goods, forgot her Child) lay out all their Thoughts upon the *little* Concerns of this *frail* and *mortal* Life, and in the mean time forget their *precious* Souls, and leave them perishing in the Flames of Perdition? O *stupid* Creature! what art thou made of that canst consider that thou hast an *immortal* Soul, surrounded with so many Dangers of being lost *for ever*, and yet be no more concerned for its Preservation? Methinks if thou hadst any Sense in thee, having a Prospect of such *endless* Miseries before thee, the *remotest* Possibility of falling into them, should be enough to startle and awake thee; but when thou art so near the Brink of those Miseries, and hast so many Causes round about thee shoving thee forward, and thrusting thee *headlong* down into them, and yet be no more concerned at it, is such a Prodigy of *senseless* Stupidity, as Heaven and Earth may justly be astonished at. 'Tis true, if the Danger thou art in were such as is *impossible* to be evaded, it would then be the *wisest* Course thou could'st take to concern thyself as *little* as may be about it; but rather to live merrily whilst thou may'st, and not *antedate* thy Misery, by thinking of the *dismal* Futurity. But God be praised this is not our Case, though our Condition be *dangerous*, yet it

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it is far from *desperate* ; for if we will use our *honest* Endeavour, and vigorously exert the Faculties of our Natures, we not only may, but shall escape. There are indeed a *great* many Causes of our Danger, a *great* many Enemies concurring to our Ruin, but none of these are able to affect it, unless we ourselves join Hands in the *fatal* Conspiracy : If we will be but *faithful* Friends to ourselves, and true to our own *eternal* Interest, it will be beyond the Power of all those Causes together to do us any *material* Injury. For *blessed* be the *good* God, those that are for us, are far *greater* and *mightier* than those that are against us ; against us we have the *World*, the *Flesh*, and the *Devil*, the *weakest* of which is, I confess, a *dangerous* and *puissant* Enemy ; but for us, we have *God* and *Angels*, and *our own* Reason, assisted with the most *invincible* Motives, with *vast* and *glorious* Promises, that stand beckoning to us with Crowns of Immortality in their Hands, to call us *off* from the Pursuit of our Lusts to the Practice of Virtue and Religion ; with *direful* Threatenings, that are continually alarming and warning us of the *dreadful* Consequents of our Sins ; and sundry other such *mighty*, I had almost said *Almighty* Motives, as, if we would seriously attend to, would certainly render our Souls *impregnable* against all the Temptations of Vice. And besides our Reason thus armed and accoutred, we have on our side the *Holy* Angels of *God*, who are always ready to prompt us, and to assist us in our Duty, and to *second* us in all our *spiritual* Combats against the Enemies of our Souls. And besides all these,

we have with us the *Almighty Spirit* of God, who upon our sincere Desires and *honest* Endeavours is engaged to aid us, and *co-operate* with us in working out our Salvation; whose Grace is abundantly *sufficient* for us, to strengthen us in our Weakness, to support us under our *greatest* Difficulties, and carry us on victoriously through the most *violent* Temptations. And being backed with such *mighty* Auxiliaries, how is it *possible* that we should miscarry, unless we are resolved to betray *ourselves*, and give Fire to to the *fatal* Trains of our Enemies; and if we are so bent, there is no Remedy for our Obstinacy, and it is *just* and *fit* we should be left to the *dismal* and *pitiless* Effects of *our own* Folly and Madness. For if when we see ourselves in so much danger, and it is yet in our Power to escape if we please, we will notwithstanding *precipitate* ourselves into Ruin; all the World must agree upon an *impartial* Inquisition for the Blood of our Souls, that we *murdered* ourselves, that God is *just*, and that his Hands are *clean* from any Stain of our Blood, and that *our own* Ruin is wholly owing to our own *invincible* Obstinacy.

III. I proceed now to the *Third* Proposition, *That our renouncing of Christ, and his Religion, will most certainly infer the Loss of our Souls.* For, as I have shewed you, these Words are urged by our *Saviour* as a Motive to deter his Disciples from forsaking him, as is plain from *Vcr.* 24. 25. which necessarily supposes that upon their forsaking him, their Loss would most certainly and inevitably follow. In the Prosecution therefore of this Argument, I shall endeavour these *two* Things.

1. To shew you what that forsaking of Christ is, which infers this Loss.

2. Upon what Accounts our thus forsaking him infers it.

1. What that forsaking of *Christ* is, which infers this Loss. To which I answer, there is a *fourfold Forsaking of Christ*, which the *Scripture* takes notice of as *capital* and *damnable* to the Souls of Men.

1. When we *forsake* him by a *total* Apostacy.

2^{dly}, When we cowardly *renounce* the Profession of his Doctrine, or any Part of it, notwithstanding we still believe and are convinced of the Truth of it.

3^{dly}, When by *obstinate* Heresy we either add to, or subtract from the Faith of *Christ*.

4^{thly}, When by any *wilful* Course of Disobedience we do virtually *renounce* the Authority of his Laws.

1. We lose and forfeit our Souls, when we forsake Christ by a *total* Apostacy from him : When after we have been baptized into his Name, and thereby have made a *visible* Profession of our believing his Doctrines, and obeying his Laws, we turn Renegadoes, and cast *off* our Belief of the *one*, and disown our Obligation to the *other* ; we do most justly incur the Loss and Forfeiture of our Souls. For so *strong* and *cogent* is the Evidence of *Christianity*, that it is not to be supposed that any *professed Christian* can be either innocently or excusably seduced into a Disbelief of it ; for *Religion* being a Matter of the *vastest* Moment and Concern, he is a Traitor to himself, that either takes up
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his Religion without Examination, or that upon Examination refuses to be swayed by the *strongest* Reason; and I am sure it is *impossible* for any Christian to turn *Infidel*, that is but so *honest* to himself as *first* to examine carefully the Reasons of his Faith, and then to resolve sincerely not to reject it, till better Reasons appear to the contrary: But if either through their *wilful* Ignorance of the Evidence of Christianity, or *vicious* Prejudice against the Purity of it, they suffer themselves to be seduced into *Apostacy*, they are *false* Traitors to themselves, and as such are justly *liable* to all those *eternal* Damages they expose themselves to. And hence it is said of those that *draw back*, that is, *apostatize* from Christianity not only that God's Soul shall have *no Pleasure in them*, but also that they *draw back to Perdition*. Heb. x. 38, 39. and 2 Pet. ii. 20. It is said of those *Apostates*, that *their latter End is worse than the Beginning*; and that it had been better for them not to have known the way of *Righteousness*, than after they have known it, to turn from the *holy Commandment*; which implies, that *Apostates* from Christianity do not only forfeit their Souls, but that, without Repentance, they will be *for ever* forfeited to the most *wretched* Condition, even to the *nethermost* Degree of Perdition.

2dly, We lose our Souls, when notwithstanding we do still believe, and are convinced of the Truth of Christ's Doctrine, we do cowardly *renounce* the Profession of it, or any Part of it. For when once we have received the Faith of Christ, we are thereby obliged not to renounce the

the Profession of it, whatsoever Hazard it may expose us to, our *blessed Lord* having assured us, that if we *deny him before Men, he will also deny us before his Father which is in Heaven.* Mat. x. 33. And St. Paul also having warned us, *that if we deny Christ, he will also deny us,* 2 Tim. ii. 12. That is, that he will reject and abandon us before God and Angels to *everlasting* Misery and Damnation; for so St. *John* assures us, Rev. ii. 8. that the *Fearful and Unbelieving, i. e. the faint-hearted* Cowards that, for fear of Persecution, renounce the Profession of the Gospel, *shall have their Part in the Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimstone.* Not that in Times of Persecution we are always bound to make an *actual* Profession and Publication of our Faith, to run to the Tribunals of our Persecutors, before we are sent for, and accuse ourselves of those Doctrines for which we are persecuted; but whenever we are *apprehended, accused and examined* by them, either upon Knowledge or Suspicion, we are bound, under the Penalty of *forfeiting* our Souls, to *own and confess* our Faith, and not to deny any Doctrine or Article of it, whatsoever the Consequence may be. For, in this case, to deny our Belief is not only a *wilful Lye*, which is in itself a *damnable Crime*, but an Act of *High Treason* against our *Lord and Saviour*; for by renouncing any Doctrine which he hath revealed and committed to us, we do not only betray his Trust, but blaspheme his Veracity; to deny what we believe he hath revealed, being in effect to declare him a Cheat and Impostor. And having thus incurred the Guilt of so *black a*

Treason

Treason against our *Saviour*, and wilfully persisting in it, what can we expect the Consequence of it should be, but the *eternal* Loss and Perdition of our Souls?

3dly, We forsake *Christ* to the Loss and Forfeiture of our Souls, when by *obstinate* Heresy we add to, or subtract from that *heavenly* Doctrine which he hath revealed to us. By *Heresy* I do not mean barely a *false* Opinion in our *Religion*, whether it be of *greater* or *lesser* Moment; for I doubt not but the same Error may be an *innocent* Mistake in *one* Man, and a *dammable* Heresy in *another*; that in the *one* it may be the Effect of a *weak* Understanding, but in the *other*, of a *perverse* and *obstinate* Will; and when the Understanding misleads the Will it is Weakness, but when the Will misleads the Understanding it is Wickedness. For *simple* Error is only a Defect of Understanding, which, in a *fallable* Creature, is every whit as *inculpable* as Sickness in a *mortal one*; but Heresy is a Fault of the Will, which is the only Subject of Virtue and Vice. When therefore, by the *wicked* Prejudice of our *corrupt* Wills against the Purity of *Christianity*, our Understanding is betrayed into *loose* and *erroneous* Principles; when we understand by our *vicious* Affections, and adapt our Opinions to the Interests of our Lusts; when we believe for the sake of any *darling* Vice, and suffer *our own factious, covetous, and extravagant* Passions, either to tempt us to profess those *erroneous* Opinions which we do not believe, or to prejudice us into a Belief of them; then is our Error no longer to be attributed to the Weakness

ness of our Understanding, but to the Wickedness of our Wills, which improves our Error into a *damnable* Heresy. For he would be a *wicked* Man, though he were not an Heretick, that harbours those *sinful* Lusts, which betrayed him into Heresy; but by being an Heretick he is much more *wicked*, because now he is *wicked* under a Pretence of Religion, and cloaks his Impieties with the Garments of Righteousness. And what *greater* Profaneness can any Man be guilty of, than to make his *Religion* a Bawd to procure for his Lusts? So that if out of a *vicious* Propension of Will, we obstinately persist in any *religious* Errors, we are not only guilty of that *wicked* Propension, which is of itself *sufficient* to ruin our Souls, but we are also *accountable* for *vitiating* our *Religion* with those *erroneous* Mixtures, by which we have rendered it a Shelter and Protection to our Lust. And what the Consequence of this will be St. Jude will inform us, who speaking of *certain* Hereticks, who, to gratify their own *wicked* Inclinations, had *sophisticated* Christianity with sundry *black* and *poisonous* Principles, pronounces this *fearful* Doom on them; *for whom is reserved the Blackness of Darknes for ever,* ver. 13.

4^{thly}, and lastly, We forsake *Christ* to the Loss and Forfeiture of our Souls, when by any *wilful* Course of Disobedience we do virtually renounce the Authority of his Laws. For whilst we continue in any course of *wilful* Sin, we live in an *open* Rebellion to our *Saviour*, and do, by our Actions, declare that we will not have him to reign over us. And accordingly,

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Tit. i. 16. the *abominable* and *disobedient* are said to *deny God in their Works*, even while they profess to *know him*; and what the Fate of such will be, St. Paul hath forewarned us. Rom. ii. 8, 9, *But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness; Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish, upon every Soul of Man that doth Evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.* And the same *Apostle* speaking of these *obstinate* Rebels, who live and persist in an *open* Defiance to our Saviour's Authority, tells us, *that they shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord*, 2 Thes. i. 8, 9. But before we dismiss this Argument, it will be requisite more particularly to explain what those *wilful* Courses of Sin are by which they thus renounce him; all which may be reduced to these *three* Heads. *First*, We renounce the Authority of his Laws, when we sin against him out of *wilful* Ignorance of them. *Secondly*, When we sin on against him out of *wilful* Inconsideration of our Obligation to them. *Thirdly*, When we persist in our Sin against Knowledge and Consideration.

I. We virtually renounce the Authority of our Saviour, when we sin on against him out of *wilful* Ignorance of his Laws. For the Laws of our Saviour, in which the great Lines of our Duty are described, are so *plain* and *legible*, that no Man can be long excusably *ignorant* of them. But if our Ignorance proceed either *first* from a *profane* and *profligate* Mind, that is altogether regardless of God, and hath utterly worn off its *natural* Sense of Religion, and so
neither

neither heeds it nor concerns itself about it, but is become quite *deaf* to all the Means of Instruction; or if it proceed, *secondly*, from the *vicious* Prejudice of our Wills, and we industriously set ourselves for the sake of some *darling* Lust, to exclude from our Minds all the Means of Conviction; and either studiously to avoid all Thoughts of *Religion*, that we may sin on without Disturbance, which is the way of those that are openly *profane* and *irreligious*; or to use all *possible* Arts to wheedle our Understandings into the Belief of such Principles as are most *indulgent* to our Lusts, which is the way of *Hypocrites* and *false Pretenders* to *Religion*. If, I say, our Ignorance of Christ's Laws proceed from either of these Causes, it will no more excuse our falling into Sin, than the want of Light will a Man's falling into a Ditch that shuts his Eyes at Noon, and winks on purpose, lest he should see, and escape the Danger that is before him. But then,

2dly, We virtually renounce the Authority of our *Saviour*, when we sin on against him out of a *wilful* Inconsideration of our Obligations to obey him. For we being *reasonable* Creatures, are bound, by the very Constitution of our Natures, to act considerately, especially in Matters of *Religion*, which are of the *greatest* Moment and Importance to us; so that if we miscarry herein through *wilful* Inconsideration, we are every whit as *inexcusable* as if we had considerately betrayed ourselves. Now *wilful* Inconsideration is either *actual* or *habitual*; *actual* is either, *first*, when notwithstanding we have been sufficiently warned by

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precedent Surprizes, we take no care for the *future*; for though it cannot be expected we should always keep so *strict* a Guard upon ourselves, as never to be surprized by an Enemy; yet when we have been overtaken, there is all the Reason in the World we should take warning by it, and grow more *wary* and *vigilant* for the future; that we should awaken in our Minds such Considerations as are *necessary* to prevent our being surprized again, which if we do not, our *next* Surprise will be *inexcusable*. And if the Sense of the *Lapse*, which was perhaps but an *innocent* Error, or at most but a Sin of Infirmary, doth not make us more *careful* of ourselves for the future; the *next* will be a *wilful* Fall: Or else, in the *second* Place, this *actual wilful* Inconsideration is, when, upon the *presenting* of any *beloved* Temptation, we either quench the *good* Motions of our Minds, and refuse to consider the Evil and Danger of the Sin we are tempted to, lest we should be thereby deterred from committing it; or purposely contrive to baffle *our own* Consideration, by opposing it either with some *ungrounded* Hope of Impunity, or some *fallacious* Promise of *future* Amendment; and if to make way for our Sin, we do either of these Ways wilfully drive all good Thoughts from our Minds, lest they should disturb and interrupt us in the Enjoyment of it, our Inconsideration is to be resolved into the Wickedness of our Wills, and not into the Weakness and Infirmary of our Natures. And he that will not consider because he will sin, and afterwards extenuate his Sin by his Inconsideration, urges *one* Sin in excuse for another

another, and makes that which is his Fault his Apology. Whensoever therefore we sin out of any *actual* and *wilful* Inconsideration, we sin wilfully, and consequently do thereby virtually renounce the Authority of our *Saviour*; the *final* Event of which, without our Repentance, will be our *everlasting* Ruin and Perdition. But then besides this *actual*, there is also an *habitual* Inconsideration, which is *wilful*; and that is, when by often stifling the Convictions of our Consciences, we have seared them into a *deep* Insensibility of *Good* and *Evil*, so as that now we sin on without any Remorse or Reluctancy, and return to our Lusts with the same Indifferency as we do to our Beds or our Tables, without either considering what we are doing, or reflecting on what we have done; and this is so far from palliating our Sin, that it is one of the *highest* Aggravations of it: For as it is no Excuse that we sin out of an *evil* Habit, which we voluntarily contracted by *frequent* Acts of Sin, so neither will it at all excuse us that we sin out of an *habitual* Inconsideration, which we *wilfully* contracted by often refusing to consider. But a *vicious* Habits have a *proper* Evil and Guiltiness in them *distinct* from those *vicious* Acts that produced them; so *habitual* Inconsideration hath in it a *peculiar* Venom of its own, beyond what was in those *actual* Inconsiderations whereby it was acquired. And accordingly it is described in the *Scripture* as the *worst*, the most *desperate* and *incurable* State of a Sinner: It is called a *reprobate Mind*, Rom. i. 28, 29. a *seared Conscience*, 1 Tim. iv. 2. a *hard and unrelenting Heart* that trea-

sureth up Wrath against the Day of Wrath, Rom. ii. 5. So that if we go on in Sin without considering, with a Mind habitually *regardless* and *insensible*, we are *hardened* and *inveterate* Rebels, that have not only renounced the Authority of our *Saviour*, but have also forfeited ourselves, and that almost irreparably, against all his Methods of conquering and subduing us. But then,

3dly and lastly, We virtually renounce the Authority of our *Saviour*, when we persist in our Sin against *Knowledge* and *Consideration*. For to sin on obstinately against *Knowledge* and *Consideration*, argues an *invincible* Malice of Will; for though the Condition of the *ignorant* and *inconsiderate* Sinner be very *sad* and *deplorable*, yet there is much more Hope of him, because he hath never yet had the Force and Efficacy of *Knowledge* and *Consideration*, which, perhaps, if ever he be brought to experience, may prove a *successful* Means of his Cure and Reformation. But the *knowing* and *considerate* Sinner hath tried and conquered the Remedy, hath experimented the only Means of his Cure, and yet it grows *worse* and *worse* under the Application; he knows what his Sin is, and considers the Consequence of it, and yet sins on; which argues a *desperate* Resolution of Will in him, thus to run himself upon a *foreseen* Ruin, and leap into *Hell* with his Eyes open. And what Hope is there of dissuading *him* from his Sin, that knows and considers the Arguments against it, and every Day breaks through them all, at the Call of every *sinful* Temptation? And as his Condition is
most

his Soul is not guilty of
innocent; for every Act of his sin is an open
 Defiance to the Authority of God and his Sa-
 viour; his Rebellion is *barfaced*, and hath no
 manner of Pretence wherein to mask or dis-
 guife itfelf; and he knows and owns himfelf
 to be in a Rebellion, and yet perfeveres in it,
 which extremely aggravates and enhances the
 Guilt of it. For the *Sinfulnefs* and *Immorality*
 of Actions are to be meafured by the Degrees of
 Will that are in them, and the Degrees of Will
 in them are *more* or *lefs* proportionably, as the
 Nature and Evil of them are *more* or *lefs* known
 and confidered. Hence is that of St. James iv.
 17. *To him that knoweth to do Good, and doth*
it not, to him it is Sin. Had he not known
 the Nature of his Action, the Weaknefs of his
 Underftanding would have excufed the Error
 of his Will, and rendered it *pardonable* at
 leaft, if not altogether *innocent*: But when his
 Underftanding hath difcharged its Office, and
 fhewed him the Evil that he ought to avoid,
that hath fairly acquitted itfelf, and can ftand
 no longer *chargeable* for his Mifcarriages: So
 that now the Man chufes his own Peril, and if
 he ftill chufe what he ought to avoid, his Un-
 derftanding is *clear*, and his Will alone is *cul-*
pable. And when our Rebellion againft our
 Saviour is not only *wilful*, but the *Wilfulnefs*
 of it is fo extremely *aggravated* by our Know-
 ledge and Confideration, what the Confequence
 of it will be, that *fearful* Paflage will affure us,
 Luke, xii. 47. *The Servant that knoweth his*
Masters Will and doth it not, fhall be beaten
with many Stripes. And thus I have endea-

voured to represent to you what that forsaking of Christ is, which exposes us to the Hazard of losing our Souls.

II. I proceed, in the *next* Place, to shew you upon what Accounts it is that our *forsaking of Christ* infers this *fearful* Loss; of which, I shall briefly give you this *four-fold* Account.

1. Our thus *forsaking of Christ* infers the Loss of our Souls, as it is a most *inexcusable* Contempt of the *greatest* Mercy.

2dly, As it renders us the most *unfitting* Objects of Mercy for the future.

3dly, As it is an *open* Violation of the *fixed* and *stated* Condition of Mercy.

4thly, As it is an *utter* Rejection of our *last* Remedy.

1. Our forsaking of Christ, by any of the *above-named* Instances, infers the *everlasting* Loss of our Souls, as it is a most *inexcusable* Contempt of the *greatest* Mercy. For when the *Son of God* came down from *Heaven*, he brought from thence with him the *largest* Offers of Mercy that *Heaven* itself could make to a *sinful* World; he did not only bring down with him a Grant of *universal* Pardon and Indemnity, under the *Broad-Seal* of *Heaven*, for every Sinner that would lay down his Arms, and return to his Allegiance, together with the most *endearing* Invitations of the *God of Heaven*, to *woo* and *win* us to accept it; but he also brought along with him all that an *everlasting* *Heaven* means, Crowns of *immortal* Glory and Pleasure, to encourage us to, and reward our Acceptance of them. And what greater Mercy could the *God of Heaven* have expressed to us,
than

than to send down his *blessed Son*, not only to tender to us an Indemnity, but also to invite us to accept it with a Promise of Heaven? So that if now we reject him, now he is come to us with such *vast* and *endearing* Proposals, what an *intolerable* Slight will it be to the tender Mercies of *God*, when we shall declare by our Actions that we will not exchange the sordid Pleasures of our Lust for the Pardon of *Heaven*, for the Favour of *God*, and for all the Hopes of a *glorious* Immortality? How can we expect any *farther* Relief from *God's* Mercy, after we have put such an *intolerable* Affront upon it by preferring such an *unworthy* Rival before it? When *God* hath laid his Pardon, his Love, and his *Heaven* in our Way, to stop us in our *sinful* Courses, what a *barbarous* Indignity will it be to trample upon them all, and run over them into Hell? With what Face can we hope for any *farther* Kindness from *Heaven*, after we have treated its Kindness with so much Rudeness and Contempt? Certainly for *sinful* Men to reject and run away from their *Saviour*, when he comes to them with so much Kindness, when he courts them with such *astounding* Expressions of Mercy, is a Provocation *sufficient* to incense an *infinite* Goodness, and turn the tenderest Mercy into an *implacable* Fury. When *infinite* Love is so infinitely provoked, what less Expiation can it claim and exact, than the *everlasting* Ruin and Perdition of our Souls?

2dly, Our *Forsaking of Christ* infers the *everlasting* Loss of our Souls, as it renders us the most *incapable* Objects of Mercy for the future. For when we are arrived to that Height of

Wickedness as finally to reject *Christ*, and the Mercies of his *Gospel*, there is no farther Mercy that we are *capable* of; if after this God should be so *kind* and *indulgent* as to pardon us, alas! What would it signify? for we should still be *wretched* and *miserable* in Despight of his Pardon; and that *wicked* Temper of Mind which made us reject our *Saviour*, would be an *everlasting* Hell to us, though it should indemnify us. What will a Pardon avail a Man that is dying of the *Stone* or *Strangury*? He can but die if he be not pardoned, and die he must tho' he be. And as *little* Advantage it would be to a *wicked* Soul to be pardoned and absolved by God, while she hath a Disease within her that preys upon her Vitals, and hastens her to a *certain* Ruin. She could have been but *miserable* in the *future* Life if she had not been pardoned, and *miserable* she must be if she continues *wicked*, whether she be pardoned or no; there being an *everlasting* Hell in the very Nature of Wickedness, which no *outward* Act of Pardon can quench or extinguish. Nay, if after our rejecting *Christ*, and the Mercies of the *Gospel*, God should not only Pardon, but admit us into *Heaven*, and indulge us the *free* Enjoyment of all its Pleasures and Felicities; yet that *vicious* Temper of Mind which finally *seduced* us from our *Saviour*, would render us for ever *incapable* of relishing the Joys of it. Those Rivers of *heavenly* Pleasure would never agree with the *hellish* Temper of our Minds, which, like a *feverish* Tongue, would utterly disgust their *delicious* Streams by Reason of its own *overflowing* Gall. So that after we have finally re-
jected

jected our Saviour, we are neither *capable* of being indemnified from *Hell*, nor of enjoying *Heaven*; and having cast ourselves beyond the Reach of all Mercy, into a State wherein we can neither begin to be *happy*, nor cease to be *miserable*, our Case is *desperate*, and there is no Remedy, but our Souls must be lost and undone *for ever*.

3dly, Our forsaking of *Christ* infers the *everlasting* Loss of our Souls, as it is an *open* Violation of the *fixed* and *stated* Condition of Mercy. The *fixed* and *immoveable* Condition of the Mercy of the *Gospel* is, that we should constantly adhere to our *Saviour* by a *true* Faith and a *sincere* Obedience, and that whenever we fall off from him, either into Infidelity, or Heresy, or Disobedience, we should remember from whence we are fallen, and return again to him by a *deep* and *serious* Repentance. And indeed this Condition is so *low* and *condescending*, that it was *impossible* for the *wise* God and Governor of the World, to propose his Mercy to us at a *lower* or *easier* Rate; and if God should have asked our Consent upon what Conditions he should propose to us the Mercies of his *Gospel*, this would have been the *utmost* Favour that we could in Modesty have craved of him, that he would be so gracious as to accept our *unfeigned* Faith and *sincere* Obedience; and that whenever we fall off either from the *one* or the *other*, he would admit us to Repentance, and receive us again upon our Return and Amendment. And should he have proposed his Mercy to us upon *lower* Terms, he must of Necessity have let go the Reins of his

G 4 Government,

Government, and given us a *free* Toleration for all manner of Wickedness. Had the Condition of his Mercy been but one Step *lower* than Repentance, it had totally dissolved the Obligation of his Laws, and reduced the *human* World into a *perfect Anarchy*. For should he have prostituted his Mercy to *impenitent* Sinners, he must have made it a Refuge for *obstinate* Rebels to fly to, and shelter themselves from the Reach of his Authority; and how *inconsistent* would this have been with the Wisdom of his Government? This therefore being the *lowest* Condition upon which the *wise* and *holy God* can propose his Mercy to us, there is no Ground to hope that after we have rejected *this*, and are finally fallen *off* from it, he will make any *new* Proposal to us. For he hath yielded as much already to the Weakness and Inconstancy of our Natures, as he could possibly do with Safety to his Government; and if this will not suffice, we may depend upon it, that he will rather consent to sacrifice our Souls to his *righteous* Vengeance, than his *own* Authority to our *obstinate* Wills. So that when once we have finally rejected our *Saviour*, and shaken Hands *for ever* with Faith and Obedience, and Repentance too, we are quite beyond the Reach of any *wise* Mercy; and then how *deplorable* must our Condition be, when things are reduced to this *desperate* Issue, that God must either consent to be foolishly *merciful* to us, or to abandon our Souls to *everlasting* Perdition?

4thly and lastly, Our *forsaking of Christ* infers the *everlasting* Loss of our Souls, as it is an
utter

utter Rejection of our *last* Remedy. For the *last* Remedy which *God* hath prepared for Mankind to heal the Malignity of their Natures, and recover them from *eternal* Misery, is the *meritorious* Death and Sacrifice of his *Blessed Son*, who voluntarily undertaking to be the *Attorney General*, and *Common Representative* of *sinful* Men, suffered Death in our stead as a *vicarious* Muleſt and Punishment for our Sins; upon which the most *merciful* Father hath granted to all *believing* and *truly penitent* Sinners a *general* Indemnity from *eternal* Punishments, to which they were bound over by their Sins and Rebellions; by virtue of which Grant, as soon as we believe in *Chriſt*, and do thereupon sincerely repent of our Sins, we are totally absolved from those *everlaſting* Punishments whereunto they have exposed and obliged us. And this Sacrifice of *Chriſt*, being the last Remedy which *God* hath provided for our *Guilt*, and the Grant of Pardon *God* hath made in Consideration of it, being confined to *believing* and *penitent* Sinners, it hence necessarily follows, that they who finally persist in *Unbelief* or *Impenitency*, do thereby *for ever* cut themselves off from all Interest in that Sacrifice; and from all Title to that Pardon that is granted upon it, and consequently leave themselves *for ever* destitute of all Hope of Pardon and Indemnity for the future. So that by renouncing *Chriſt* we do renounce his Sacrifice, which is the *last* and *only* Remedy we have to depend upon. Hence, *Heb. x. 26.* we are told, that *if we ſin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no*

more

more sacrifice for Sin; that is, if after we have been baptized, and *plunged into Christianity*, we relapse into Intemperance or *total* Disobedience, we do thereby forfeit our Interest in Christ's Sacrifice; and when we have rejected our Interest in that, there remains no other Sacrifice for Sin, *i. e.* no other Sacrifice upon which God will pardon and absolve us. So that now all that remains to us, is that which follows in the next Verse, *viz.* *A certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries.* For when we have finally baffled our *last* and *utmost* Remedy, the Condition of our Souls must needs be *desperate* and *incurable*. When by our *obstinate* Unbelief or *final* Impenitence we have *out-sinned* the Virtue of our Saviour's Sacrifice, we are out of the Reach and Compass of God's Pardon, and so consequently are sunk beyond all Hopes of Recovery, into *endless* and *irreversible* Damnation. For now that *precious* Blood, which, if we had believed and repented, would have spoke *better* things for us than the Blood of *Abel*, will rise in Judgment against us, and, like the Blood of those Souls that are under the Altar, will charge and impeach, and be continually imprecating the Vengeance of *Heaven* upon us. And when that which was prepared for the *last* and *utmost* Remedy of our Souls shall be converted into that Bane, and that which was intended for their Advocate shall become their Accuser; when that *vocal* Blood and those *speaking* Wounds which pleaded for, shall plead against, and cry out instantly for Judgment upon them; what can they henceforth

forth expect but *everlasting* Ruin and Destruction?

What then remains, but that since our *for-saking of Christ* will so infallibly infer the Ruin of our Souls, we all return to, and cleave *fast* to our *Saviour* in our Belief and Obedience: That we who are fallen *off* from him into a Course of *wilful* Sin and Disobedience, immediately return again by a *deep* and *serious* Repentance. For the Way in which we are walking leads directly to Destruction; every Step of it is a Descent into Hell, and next to the *lowermost* is the *bottomless* Pit, and for all we know, the very *last* Step we took brought us to the Brinks of the flaming Abyss; and if we did, one Step further will set us beyond all Hope of Recovery. For in our *sinful* Progress we are wading forwards in a *shelving* Pool, which the farther we go, the *deeper* it is, and so *deeper* and *deeper* till we come to the Bottom of it; so that at every Step we are in Danger of going beyond our Depth, and plunging ourselves into an *irrecoverable* Ruin; for we know not how soon we may be snatched away in our Iniquities; and if it should so happen, that after we have sinned *this* Moment, we should die the next, this will determine our *everlasting* Fate, and sink us into *eternal* Misery.

Wherefore as we tender the Safety of our *precious* Souls, let us speedily forsake this *dangerous* Road in which Perdition *way-lays*, and *Hell* gapes to devour us every Step we go; and return unto our Lord in whom our Safety lies. As yet the Opportunity of Salvation is in our Hands, but before to-morrow Morning it may
slip

slip away from between our Fingers, and vanish
for ever, and we that are *this Day* wallowing
 in our Sins, may before the *next* be roaring in
Hell. So that while we defer and put *off* our
 Repentance from Day to Day, we do as it were
 cast Lots for our Souls, and venture our *ever-*
lasting Hopes upon a Contingency, that is not
 in our power to dispose of. As yet the Gate
 of Mercy is open to us, and our *blessed Lord*
 stands ready with his Arms *out-stretched* to
 welcome and receive us ; but for all we know,
 if we enter not presently, the Gate may be shut
 within a *few* Moments, and then though we
 knock and cry till our Hearts ake, *Lord, Lord,*
open to us, we shall receive no *other* Answer,
 but *Depart from me, I know you not*. O good
 God, how are we besotted then, that rather
 than begin our Repentance *to-day*, we will
 wilfully run the Hazard of being eternally
miserable before *to-morrow Morning* ! For
 if this should be the *Evening* of our Day of
 Trial, as for all we know it may be, our *Life*
 and *Eternity* depend upon what we are now
 doing ; and therefore one would think it should
 highly concern us wisely to manage this last
 Stake, the *winning* or *losing* whereof may prove
 our *making* or *undoing*. In Pity therefore to
 our *perishing* Souls let us return to our Saviour,
 before it be *too late*, before our Feet *stumble*
on the dark Mountains, and we fall down into
everlasting Darknes. And being returned and
 reunited to him, let us have a care we do not
 revolt again ; for if we draw back we cancel
 our Repentance, and forfeit all its *blessed* Fruits
 and Benefits ; and unless we stedfastly persevere
 and

and hold out to the end, all the Pains we have taken in our Christian Course will be *for ever* lost, and the Remembrance of it will only administer to our *future* Misery. For how will it vex us in the *other* World to consider the Labour it cost us to take *Heaven* by Storm? How vigorously we strove to mount the *Scaling-Ladder*, through how many Difficulties we had forced our way to that height of Virtue and Religion we were arrived to, and then when we were got as it were to the *topmost* Rounds, and had laid our Hands upon the Battlements of *Heaven*, just ready to leap in and take Possession of all its Joys; how basely we let go our Hold, and so tumbled down from that *stupendous* Height into the *bottomless* Abyss of *endless* Misery? Doubtless this Consideration must necessarily sting our *woeful* Souls hereafter, and *for ever* enrage them against themselves. Wherefore, as we value the Safety of our *precious* Souls, let us, who by our *wilful* Rebelions have gone astray, return, and constantly adhere to our *blessed* Saviour. Alas! where can we be *happier* than in his Service, who imposeth nothing on us but what contributes to our Welfare? Where can we be *safer* than in his Arms, and under his Protection, who hath the Command and Disposal of all Events, and to whom all Power is given in *Heaven* and Earth? Where can we be placed more to *our own* Advantage than under his Guidance and Authority, who never permits any to serve him for nought, but hath engaged himself to recompense our Labour with a Crown of Glory that fades not away? And is it not *strange*,
that

that after so many *advantageous* Invitations; we should need to be *fear'd* to our Duty? That after our *blessed Master* hath enjoined us such a *reasonable, gentle, and infinitely beneficial* Service, he should be forced to terrify us into it with the Flames of Hell?

IV. I proceed now to the *fourth* Proposition, *That when the Soul is lost, 'tis lost irrecoverably*; where the Greek Word *ἀντάλλαγμα*, which we render *Exchange*, is used in the same sense with *ἐξίλασμα*, which signifies a Price of Redemption, denoting that when once a Man hath sold his Soul to Perdition, it is *unredeemable*, and that no Price will be excepted for its Ransom and Deliverance; when a Man's Soul is in *Hell*, under the wretched Bondage of a *damned Spirit*, how *little* soever he regards it now, he would give all the World, if it were in his power, to be released again; but if he had a *thousand* Worlds it would not do, his Bondage being such as will admit no Ransom. For these Words of our *Saviour* seem to have been a *common Proverb* of the Age he lived in, and that derived from those Words of the Devil in *Job*, *All that a Man hath, will he give for his Life*; that is, when a Man is dying, he would willingly part with all to redeem his Life, but all will not do. Which *Proverb* our *Saviour* adapts to his *own* Argument, in which he proceeds from *temporal* to *eternal* Life: If a Man would give so much for his *temporal* Life, what would he not give for his *eternal* one? But as our *temporal* Life is not to be redeemed, so neither is our *eternal* one, when once it is lost; for when once our Soul is *lost* or *abandoned*

abandoned to the State of the Damned, it is *lost for ever*, and there is no *ἀντάλλαγμα*, or Ransom that will be accepted of by *God* for its Redemption thence. In the Prosecution of which Argument, I shall endeavour these two things.

1. To shew you that if *God* be so determined, he may, without any Injury either to his *Justice* or *Goodness*, detain *lost* Souls in the Bondage of *Hell for ever*, and absolutely refuse to except any Ransom for them.

2. That he is actually determined so to do.

1. That if *God* be so determined, he may, without any Injury either to his *Justice* or *Goodness* detain *lost* Souls in the Bondage of *Hell for ever*, without accepting any Ransom for them. And this, I doubt not, will plainly appear, upon the *due* Consideration of these following Propositions.

1st, That *God* being the *sovereign* Being of the World, hath an *unalienable* Right to impose Laws upon all *other* Beings.

2^{dly}, That having this Right, he may justly inforce those Laws with whatsoever Penalties he sees *necessary* or *convenient*.

3^{dly}, That when those Laws he imposes are for the *Good* of his Subjects, it is not only *Justice* but *Goodness* in him, to inforce them with the *severest* Penalty.

4^{thly}, That the Penalty of *eternal* Bondage under Misery, is the *severest* and most *effectual* way to inforce those *beneficial* Laws, and oblige us to the Observance of them.

5^{thly}, That if *God* think *Good* to inforce his Laws with this Penalty, he hath as much Right to *exact* it when we disobey, as he had to *threaten* and *impose* it.

6^{thly},

6thly, That his *actual* exacting of it can no more impeach his *Goodness*, than his *threatening* and *denouncing* it.

1. That God being the *sovereign* Being of the World, hath an *unalienable* Right to impose Laws upon all *other* Beings. For he being the *greatest* and most *powerful* Being, can himself be *subject* to no *other* Law, but only that of his *own* Nature; and his *Power* being *infinite* and *unconfined*, as well as his *Wisdom*, *Justice*, and *Goodness*, doth sufficiently warrant him to do whatsoever is *consistent* with them. For to be sure a Being of infinite Power and Greatness, can have no Superior, but must be necessarily exalted above all *other* Authorities, by this *incommunicable* Prerogative of his Nature; and being raised above all Authorities, he must have Authority above all, and his *essential* Dominion having no *other* Law to bound it, but only that of his own Nature, he must necessarily have a Right to command whatsoever is *consistent* with his *Wisdom*, *Justice*, and *Goodness*. His *Will* therefore being, by the *infinite* Pre-eminence of his Power and Greatness *supreme*, all *other* Wills are obliged to bow before, and prostrate themselves to its *sovereign* Authority; and there is no Law whatsoever, but he may justly impose upon them, provided it be not *repugnant* to that *supreme* Law that is founded in his *own* Nature. This therefore being premised, that God hath a Right, as he is the *sovereign* Being, to give Laws to all *other* Beings; it hence follows,

2dly,

2dly, That he may justly enforce those Laws with whatsoever Penalties he sees *necessary* or *convenient*. For Laws without Penalties are rather Petitions than Commands; and unless they carry Force enough with them to *overawe* the Subject, and make themselves obeyed, they want the *formal* Sanction and Obligation of a Law. To have a Power therefore of imposing Penalties must necessarily be *inseparable* from the Power of making Laws, because they are the Penalties that make the Laws to oblige, that give them Power to command, and enforce them with an *awful* Authority. And as the Power of giving Laws supposes the Power of imposing Penalties, so it supposes a Power of imposing such Penalties as may be *sufficient* to incline and awe the Subject into Obedience, against all Reasons to the contrary. For unless the Penalty be *great* enough to *outweigh* all other Considerations, the Law which it enforces will be extremely *defective* in Point of Obligation, and leave the Subject as much Reason to disobey as to obey. God therefore being by his own *natural* Right the *Supreme* Lawgiver of the World, must be supposed to have an *equal* Right of enforcing his Laws with such Penalties, as in his own *infinite* Wisdom he shall think *necessary* to oblige his Creatures to obey him; and there is no Penalty can be too *rigorous* or *severe*, which is *necessary* to enable his Laws to oblige and command us. Wherefore, according as he sees his Subjects *more* or *less* tempted, or inclined to disobey him, so will he need *greater* or *less* Penalties to oblige us to Obedience; and therefore foreseeing what a *strong*

Propensity of Evil there would be in our Nature, and with what *importunate* Temptations this would be excited and wrought upon, he could not but foresee that the *severest* Penalties would be necessary to back and enforce his Laws, and being *necessary* for that End he must needs have a Right to impose them, how *severe* soever they might be. Nor is this Severity less *good* than it is *just* ; considering,

3dly, That when those Laws he imposes are for the *Good* of his Subjects, it is not only an Act of Justice in him to impose them with the *severest* Penalties, but of Goodness. And this is really the Case as to those Laws which *God* hath imposed upon us ; for the Matter of them all is something tending to our Good, something or other that is *perfective* of our Natures, and conducive to our Happiness ; and being so, the *greater* the Penalty is which they are back'd and enforced with, the *greater* Demonstration it is of God's Care and Zeal for our Happiness. For the End of Penalty is to oblige us to Obedience ; and when all Obedience is for our *Good*, the more strictly he obliges us to it, the more he befriends us. When a *distracted* Man is endeavouring to mischief and destroy himself, it is Kindness to bind him, though it be with Chains of Iron. When therefore *God* found us so *prone* to injure ourselves by *wicked* and *mischievous* Actions, it was Mercy to bind our Hands with his Threatenings of Punishment ; and the *stronger* his Bands are, the more they express his Kindness ; because the more they oblige us to be *kind* to *ourselves*, and *true* to *our own* Interest. And certainly for *God* to
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lay us under the *strongest* Obligations to be *happy*, is so far from being a Blemish to his Goodness, that it is a most *glorious* Expression of it ; but if we will be so *obstinate* as to run into the Mouth of those Threatenings which he hath levelled against us to scare us into Happiness, it is *just* with him to discharge them upon us, and make us feel the Effects of our Folly and Madness. Since therefore the Reason of the Penalty wherewith *God* hath enforced his Laws, is to oblige us to be *happy* ; and since the *greater* it is, the more Force it must have to oblige us, it hence necessarily follows, that though it be not only a *great* but an *eternal* one, yet it is not at all *inconsistent* with his Goodness ; especially if we consider,

4^{thly}, That the Penalty of *eternal* Misery, as it is the *severest*, so it is the most *effectual* to enforce those *beneficial* Laws which *God* hath imposed on us, and to oblige us to the Observance of them. For to deter us from Sin, who are so vehemently prone to it, it was very requisite that the Penalty denounced against it, should not only be *great* as to the Degree, but endless also as to the Duration of it ; that so it might cut us *off* from all Pretence of Presumption, and leave us no Ground of Encouragement to be *wicked*. For we are exceeding *apt* to flight and undervalue those *Evils*, which are proposed to deter us from the *Goods* which we vehemently desire, especially when these *Goods* are *present* and *sensible*, and those *Evils* *future* and *invisible*. For thus we conclude, the *Good* that is before us we may enjoy a great while ; and, which is very considerable, we may pre-

sently enter upon the Possession of it ; but as for the *Evil* that is *consequent* to it, it may be a long while before it befalls us ; and when it doth, there is this Comfort, that it will at *last* have an End ; and therefore let what will follow, let us ever seize the *present Good*, and make the *best* use we can of it ; and as for the *future Evil*, whenever it happens, the Prospect of its End, tho' it be never so *remote*, will enable us to bear it more chearfully. For *ten* Years *present* Pleasure vehemently desired, will far more effectually persuade us, than a *future* Misery of *double* the Duration ; and therefore if the *future* Penalty denounced against our Sin were *finite* and *temporary*, it would not be *sufficient* to balance those *present* Pleasures with which we are continually importuned and solicited ; for the Penalty being proposed to deter us from Pleasures which we dearly love, we are upon that Account inclined to make as *light* of it as may be, and to flatter ourselves with the *softest* and *easiest* Representations of it ; so that to be sure if there were any one *comfortable* Circumstance in it, our Thoughts would presently insist upon that, and urge it as a Reason why we should not be afraid of it. So that if the Penalty of our Sin had in it but the Circumstance of being *finite*, to be sure whenever it controlled our *vicious* Desires, we should still make this a Pretence to despise it ; *Well, let it be never so terrible, it will have an End*, Wherefore to enable it to terrify us effectually, it was requisite that it should not only be *great*, but *endless* ; that it being stripped of all *tolerable* Circumstances, we might be

be *able* to find nothing in it to qualify the Terror of it. But now it being not only *great* but *eternal*, the Threat of it, which, like a Cloud, hangs *lowering* over us, hath no *bright side* to divert our Thoughts from the Blackness and Horror of it; so that whenever we think of it, and weigh it in the Balance with our Sins, we must resolve to forsake them, or chuse to be *desperate*, Since therefore an *eternal* Penalty was so necessary to enforce God's Law, and since his Law is for our *good*, it is *plain* that his so enforcing it can blemish neither his Justice nor Goodness. Wherefore though we should smart *for ever* for our Disobedience hereafter, we can have no *just* Reason to complain of God; especially considering,

5thly, That if God shall think *good* to enforce his Law with such an *eternal* Penalty, he must be supposed to have as much Right to exact it upon our Disobedience, as he had to threaten and impose it. For as *Supremacy* over all *other* Beings gives a Right to make Laws, and enforce them with Threatenings of Punishment; so when he hath actually imposed Laws upon us, our Disobedience to them gives a Right to inflict on us the Punishments which he threatened when he imposed them. For in all *legal* Punishments the Right of threatening them is founded on the Power of the *Sovereign*; but the Right of executing them in the Disobedience of the *Subject*; and if the Penalty be such, as that upon the Subjects Disobedience the *Sovereign* cannot justly execute it, it was *unjust* for him to threaten it; for to threaten legally, is to claim a Right to punish upon

Condition the Law be broken and violated ; and that *Sovereign*, who upon condition of the Subjects Disobedience, claims a Right to *more* Punishment than he can justly exact on him when he disobeys, pretends to *more* Right than he really hath, and so by consequence his Claim is *unrighteous*. If therefore by the Threat of his Law *God* may justly claim a Right to punish us *for ever* if we disobey, then doubtless when we have actually disobeyed, he may as justly exact it, and doth no more exceed his Right when he inflicts what he threatened, than he did when he threatened to inflict it. If he had Right to say, *I will punish you for ever upon condition you transgress my Laws*, then upon our performing that Condition he must necessarily have Right to do as he said. So that our transgressing his Law being a *sufficient* Condition for him to found a *rightful* Claim to punish us *eternally*, by our doing this Condition we justly forfeit ourselves to *eternal* Punishment, and by *our own* Act and Deed voluntarily resign up our *precious* Souls to the *just* Lash of an *everlasting* Vengeance ; which as the *Justice* of *God* is no way obliged to suspend, so neither is his *Goodness*, which now is our only Reserve ; considering,

6thly, and lastly, That *God's* exacting this *eternal* Penalty of us can no more impeach his *Goodness*, than his threatening and denouncing it. That it is highly *consistent* with his *Goodness* to threaten it, I have already proved ; but if it were not also *consistent* therewith to inflict it, to be sure his own Wisdom would never admit him to threaten it. For to what End should

should he threaten to act contrary to the *Goodness* of his Nature? Either he must design to make us believe that he intends to act, or not; if the *first*, he must thereby design to abuse and misrepresent himself in the Opinion of his Creatures, to blemish the Reputation, and expose the Honour of his own *infinite Goodness*. But if he did not design to make us believe it, to what End should he threaten it, since unless we believe it, it can no more affect us than the firing of a *Gun* that is charged with nothing but Powder, and was designed to make a Noise only, but to do no Execution? So that if it be *repugnant* to God's *Goodness* to execute this Penalty, it must be *repugnant* to his *Wisdom* to denounce it; but it being not only *consistent* with, but an Expression of his *Goodness* to denounce it, when he designs thereby to oblige us more firmly to our Duty, in which our *everlasting* Happiness is included, it may be no *less* an Expression of the same *Goodness* to execute it upon us, when we, by our *obstinate* Persistence in Sin, have rendered ourselves *incapable* of Mercy. For now there being no more *Good* to be done upon us, it will be an Act of *Goodness* in *God* to punish us *for ever*, if thereby any *Good* may be done to *others* by us; if by making us *everlasting* Monuments of his *just* Indignation, he can everlastingly warn and secure *others* from those *desperate* Courses that ruined us. For in this Case, his punishing us *for ever* may be an *effectual* Means to do that *Good* to others which he intended to do to us by threatening to punish us *for ever*, and they may take warning by our Punishment, though

we would take none by his Threatening. And when by being obstinately *deaf* to the Threat of *eternal* Perdition, which *God* denounced on purpose, to oblige us to be *happy*, we have not only forfeited ourselves to it, but have also *sinned* ourselves into an Incapacity of having any *good* done upon us; the only Use which the *Divine Goodness* can make of us for the *future*, is to do *good* to others by us; which it can no otherwise do, but by making our *everlasting* Suffering an *everlasting* Example for them to take warning by. For though there is no doubt but every *virtuous* Soul shall be hereafter so confirmed in its State of Beatitude, as that it shall never fall from it, yet shall it be confirmed no otherwise than by the Force of those Reasons and *invincible* Motives which shall then continually urge, and immovably determine it unto that which is good: One of which Reasons, as we may reasonably suppose, will be their Prospect of the *endless* Miseries of the *Damned*, which will be an *everlasting* Monitor to them, and together with their *own* Sense of the *ravishing* Pleasures of *Goodness*, will secure them *for ever* from falling. For if the *Angels* of *Heaven* took warning by the Fall and Ruin of their *Apostate Brethren*, as doubtless they did, and thereupon became more immovably confirmed in *Innocence* and *Goodness*; why may we not as well suppose, that one of those Reasons by which the *Spirits of just Men* are so immovably confirmed in their *heavenly State*, is the *sad* Example of the *endless* Miseries of the Wicked? If therefore when *God* hath denounced *eternal* Misery against

against us on purpose to threaten us into Happiness, we will take no warning, it is an Act of *Goodness* in him to inflict it upon us, since thereby he may so effectually contribute to the confirming of *others* in *eternal* Happiness. For if we will not be wrought on by such a *dreadful* Denunciation, there is no good to be done upon us; and when we are past Recovery, and are forfeited by *our own* Obstinacy into the Hands of God's Vengeance, it will be an Act of Goodness in him so to dispose of us as may be most for the *Good* of others, and consequently to dispose of us to *eternal* Misery, and by so doing to make use of us as Arguments to confirm and establish *others* in *eternal* Happiness; that so our Sufferings may be to them what his Threatenings were to us, Arguments to oblige us to be *happy for ever*. And so I have done with the *first* Thing proposed; which was to shew you that if *God* be so determined, he may, without any Injury either to his *Justice* or *Goodness*, retain *lost* Souls in the Bondage of *Hell for ever*, and absolutely refuse to accept any Ransom for them.

I now proceed to the *second* Head of Discourse, namely, to prove that *God* is actually determined so to do. And this I shall endeavour to demonstrate by these *three* Reasons.

1. Because he hath already exacted a Ransom for the Souls of Men, to which no *other* can be *equivalent*; from whence we may reasonably infer, that if this be rejected he will accept no *other*.

2. Because he hath expressly declared *himself* to be thus determined.

3. Because

3. Because having thus declared himself, we must suppose that either he intended this Declaration only, for a *Scarecrow*, or that he is determined to act accordingly.

1st, That *God* is determined to conclude lost Souls under *endless* Misery, and admit no Ransom for them, appears from hence ; because he hath already exacted a Ransom for them, to which no *other* can be *equivalent* ; from whence we may reasonably infer, that if *this* be rejected, he will accept no *other*. When by our *first* Apostacy from *God*, we strained the Innocence of our Natures, and forfeited our Lives to the *just* Vengeance of *Heaven* ; so terribly was it then incensed against us, that it would accept no *meaner* Ransom for us than the *precious* Blood of the *Son of God* ; for so *St. Peter* tells us, *That we were not redeemed with corruptible Things, as Silver and Gold ; but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without Blemish, and without Spot*, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. And though this Ransom was of such a *vast* and *incomparable* Value, that all the Treasures in *Heaven* and *Earth* are *insignificant* Trifles to it ; yet was the Virtue of it to extend no further than to those, who, by a *lively* Faith, and *unfeigned* Repentance, returned from their Rebellion to their Duty and Allegiance ; which if we do not, but instead thereof obstinately persist in our Wickedness and Folly, we renounce all our Part and Interest in the Blood of our *Saviour* ; and do in effect declare, that upon such Terms as those we will not be beholden to him for our Ransom ; but that rather than accept of Redemption upon such *ungrateful*

grateful Conditions, we will trust to the Courtesy of the Vengeance of *God*, and abide the most *fatal* Effects of it. When therefore by persisting to the End in our Unbelief and Impenitence, we have finally rejected the Blood of *Christ*, and utterly extinguished all our Right and Title to it; what Pretence of Reason have we to hope, that *God* will ever accept of any *other* Ransom for us? When to the Sins, by which we made the *first* Forfeiture of our Souls, we have added the *rank* and *horrid* Impiety of trampling on the Blood of the Son of *God*, and so are not only not redeemed by it from the Vengeance to come, but are a *thousand* times more deeply enthralled to it, by reason that *additional* Guilt we have contracted by squandering away the Price of our Redemption; with what Face can we expect, in the midst of such *black* Circumstances, that *God* should accept of any Exchange for our Souls? He that would not release us from the Obligation of our *first* Guilt upon any *less* Consideration than the Blood of his Son, what *Likelihood* is there that any Consideration should move him to release us after we have so prodigiously augmented our Guilt by rejecting his Blood, and finally renouncing all our Interest in it? Doubtless, he that demanded so *vast* a Ransom for us when our Guilt was so comparatively *small* and *inconsiderable*, will account no Ransom *sufficient* when we have so transcendently increased and multiplied it. For if the Blood of *Christ*, which is of such an *unspeakable* Value, can give us no Relief without our *willing* Acceptance of it upon the Terms it is proposed to us, then
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when we have finally refused it on those Terms, it must be something that is more *valuable* than his Blood that must relieve us ; something that is *sufficient* not only to redeem us from those Guilts which his Blood was a Ransom for, but also to expiate the Guilt of our trampling on his Blood, which is the *greatest* and *blackest* of all. But since the Blood of *Christ* is incomparably the most *precious* Ransom that *Heaven* and *Earth* could afford, what hope is there, that when *this* is rejected by us, *God* should accept any *other* in exchange for our Souls ?

2dly, That *God* is really determined to conclude *lost* Souls under *endless* Misery, and admit no Ransom for them, appears also from hence, because he hath expressly declared himself to be so determined. For so our *blessed Saviour*, who was the *great* Messenger of his Will to the World, hath expressly told us, that the *final* Sentence of the Wicked shall be to *everlasting Fire*, *Mat. xxv. 41.* and that the Fate of *obstinate* Sinners, whom he compares to Chaff, shall be to be *burned up with unquenchable Fire*. But perhaps you may object, that these Texts only prove the *Everlastingness* of the Fire in which they shall suffer, and not their *everlasting* Suffering in it ; for this Fire perhaps may immediately consume, and utterly destroy them, and render them *insensible* of Misery *for ever*. To which I answer, That the contrary is most evident ; for they are expressly said to live in this Fire, and to perform the Functions of *living* Beings in Misery ; *to weep and wail, and gnash their Teeth*, *Mat. xiii. 42.* and in the

Parable

Parable of *Dives*, he is said to *lift up his Eyes in Hell, being in Torments*, and to *see Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his Bosom*; and to cry out to Abraham, *Father Abraham, have Mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the Top of his Finger in Water, and cool my Tongue, for I am tormented in this Flame*, Luke xvi. 23.——A plain Evidence that this Fire is to torment and not to consume them. Well, but this you will say imports no more than their being tortured in *Hell* for some Period of Time, after which, it may be, they may cease to be, and consequently to be *miserable*. To which I answer, That elsewhere it is expressly asserted, that this Torture is to endure *for ever*; for *these*, saith our Saviour, speaking of the Wicked, *shall go away into everlasting Punishment*, Mat. xxv. 46. And how can their Punishment be *everlasting*, unless we suppose them to subsist everlastingly in it? If you say it is *everlasting*, only as is an *everlasting* Destruction, or Privation of their Being: I answer, That in other Places of *Scripture* it is expressly asserted, that this *everlasting* Punishment is a *positive* Thing; for it is said to be a *Worm* that never dieth, Mark ix. 44. that is, that to all *Eternity* lives and preys upon the *wretched* Sufferers; and more expressly yet, Rev. xx. 10. those that are *cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone*, are said to be *tormented* there *Day and Night for ever and ever*: Where the Greek Word βασανίζονται doth plainly denote *positive* Torment, and referring peculiarly to a Rack, denotes the kind of this *positive* Torment to be such as is not designed to put an end to our
Lives,

Lives, but to continue them with *inexpressible* Pains. For this we know is the *proper* Use and Design of a Rack ; and accordingly upon this *tormenting* Rack of *hellish* Punishment they are said to have *no Rest Day nor Night*, Rev. xiv. 11. So that the *eternal* Misery of *lost* Souls is as fully and expressly asserted in *Scripture*, as it could well have been, had it been expressed with a Design to leave no Pretence of Exception for Gainsayers ; and when a Thing is as plainly asserted to *be* as it could well have been if it really were, either we must suppose the Thing to *be*, or else the Assertion to be *fallacious*. So that if we think that God's *own* Word doth truly signify his Determination, we must from hence be forced to conclude, that he is really determined to shut up *lost* Souls in *eternal* Misery, and admit no Ransom for them.

3dly, and lastly, This also appears, because if after he hath thus declared himself, there were any Reason to think that he is not determined to act accordingly, that Reason would warrant us to believe that this Declaration was only intended for a *Scarecrow*, and consequently to contemn and despise it. For against all that hath been said, it may be (and is by some Men) objected, That *God* is not bound to do as he threatens ; that when by our Disobedience we have incurred the Penalty he threatens, he hath an *undoubted* Right indeed to inflict it upon us, and consequently may, if he please, inflict it without any Wrong or Injustice ; but then, if he please, he may dispense with it *too*, either in the *whole*, or in part, as he sees convenient. For the Punishment being only a Debt which
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the Sinner owes to him, he is no more obliged than *other* Creditors are to exact the *utmost* Farthing of it; but may exact or remit the *whole*, or abate what Part soever he pleases; and therefore it is to be hoped, that he being a *merciful* Creditor, will not be so *extreme* and *rigorous* as to exact of us the *utmost* Punishment we owe him; but that when he hath made us *smart* a while for our Folly, he will either release us into a more *happy* Condition, or put an End to our Beings and Miseries together. To which I might answer, That when by our Sins we have forfeited ourselves to the *just* Vengeance of *God*, it is *infinite* Mercy and Goodness to others, to punish us according to his Threatening; and therefore when we by our Sins have rendered ourselves *incapable* of his Mercy, that Mercy which now inclines him to do *Good* to *us*, will then equally incline him to do *Good* to *others*, by the *dreadful* Example of our Punishment; and so he may be a very *merciful* Creditor, and notwithstanding exact of us the *utmost* Farthing. But this I have already largely insisted on, and therefore, *2dly*, I answer, That what *God* may do is not for us to determine, when he may, or may not, and is obliged to neither; but when he hath expressly denounced what he will do, we can have no Reason to hope that he will be *better* than his Word. For if after that he hath denounced, that if we persist in our Sin he will punish us *for ever* for it, he should have left us any *just* Reason to hope that he will not, he would thereby have countermined himself, and baffled the Design of his *own* Denunciation, which is
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to terrify his *rebellious* Creatures from their Sins, and to awe them into Obedience to his Laws. But how much Reason soever he hath given me to hope, that he will not be so *severe* to me as he threatens, so much Reason he must have given me not to be afraid of his Threatenings. If I had any *just* Reason to believe that he will be more *merciful* than to inflict what he denounces, it is an *irrational* Thing for me to dread his Denunciations ; for I know *God* will do as *just* Reason directs, and therefore I must conclude either my Reason to be *false*, or God's Denunciation to be a *Scarecrow* ; for if there be any *just* Reason why his Mercy and Goodness should interpose, and avert the Execution of his Threats from me, I ought not to be afraid of them, because I am sure he can do nothing that his Mercy and Goodness forbids : But if there be no Reason for such an Interposure, I am unreasonably *presumptuous* to expect it. So that either my Expectation must be *groundless*, or my Fear of God's Threatenings *irrational* : And can it be imagined that the *wise* God would ever go about to awe his Creatures into Obedience, by threatening their Sin with such Punishments as he knows they have *just* Reason not to be afraid of ? Whatsoever therefore *God* may do, I am sure if we go on in our Sins, we can have no Reason to hope that he will either not punish us at all, or *less* than he hath threatened ; or consequently, that he will abate us *one* Moment of that *eternal* Misery which he hath so plainly and expressly denounced against us. What then remains, but that since when our Soul is *lost*, it is *lost* for ever,

ever, we now take all *possible* Care to secure it while we may.

V. I proceed now to the *fifth* and *last* Proposition ; *That this irrecoverable Loss of the Soul is of such VAST and UNSPEAKABLE Moment, that the Gain of all the World is not sufficient to compensate it : What shall it profit a Man, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul ?* That is, It will not profit him at all ; nay, it will be so far from *that*, that it will turn to his *unspeakable* Loss and Disadvantage : Though by renouncing his Profession of my Doctrine, or his Obedience of my Laws, a Man were sure to make himself Lord of all the World, and to possess and enjoy it as long as he lived ; yet if for so doing he should afterwards lose his Soul, as most certainly he will, he will find in the Issue that he hath made a *woeful* Bargain of it, and be forced to acknowledge himself a *vast* Loser, when he comes to suffer those *intolerable* Damages which the Loss of a Soul implies. For the Proof of which, I shall run a Comparison between the *Gain* and the *Loss*, and therein endeavour to represent to you how much the Evil of *this* Loss exceeds the Good of *that* Gain ; and this I shall do in these *following* Particulars :

1st, The *Good* that is in the Gain is *imaginary* and *fantastical* ; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss is *real* and *substantial*.

2^{dly}, The *Good* that is in the Gain is *narrow* and *particular* ; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss is *large* and *universal*.

3dly, The *Good* that is in the Gain is *convertible* into *Evil* ; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss is never to be improved into *Good*.

4thly, The *Good* that is in the Gain is *mixed* and *sophisticated* ; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss is *pure* and *unmingled*.

5thly, The *Good* that is in the Gain is *full* of Intermixtions ; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss is *continual*.

6thly, The *Good* that is in the Gain is *short* and *transitory* ; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss is *eternal*.

1st, The *Good* that is in the Gain is *imaginary* and *fantastical* ; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss is *real* and *substantial*. For whatsoever we gain of this World's *Goods* beyond what is *necessary* to serve the *real* Occasions, and *modest* Conveniencies of this *present* Life, administers to no *other* Purpose, but only to gratify an *extravagant* Fancy ; For all the *real* Need that a Man hath of these *worldly Goods*, is only to maintain and provide for his Body ; for his Soul hath no more need of them, than an Angel hath of Money to buy Victuals and Clothes with : And one would think so *small* a Thing as an *human* Body is, could not need *many* Things ; and that a Piece of *animate* Matter, some six Feet long, might be very *easily* and *cheaply* provided for : And indeed so it would be, if we could once forbear fancying its Needs to be *greater* than they are ; but if we let loose the Reins to an *ungoverned* Fancy, that will so extend its Needs beyond the Capacities of its Nature, that all the World will be *too* little to content the *extravagant* Appetites

petites of this *little* Clod of Earth. Lay but your Fancies aside, and you will want no *other* Apparel but what is *sufficient* to keep you warm, and *clean*, and *modest*, and with this you may be very cheaply provided; but if you will resolve to humour that *capricious* Thing, you will want the Revenue of a *Lordship* to cover your Nakedness. Keep but your Fancies in order, and your Appetites will be contented with *plain* and *wholesome* Provisions, and this a *small* Income will furnish you with; but if once you let loose that *roving* Faculty, and suffer it to grow *wanton* and *delicate*, that will so stretch your Appetites, that the Stores of all the *four Elements* will scarce be *sufficient* to gratify their Luxuries. And so it is in all *other* Things appertaining to the Body; whose Wants, according to Nature's Measures, are *small*, but according to Fancy's are *infinite*. So that if a Man had all the World in his Possession, yet all but that *little little* Part of it that is either naturally *necessary*, or rationally *convenient* for his *bodily* Subsistence, would be *good* for nothing but to humour the Desires of an *extravagant* Fancy, which are so far from being quenched, that they are but the more inflamed by Enjoyment. If I had all the Wealth of *Cæsar*, the good Fortunes of *Cæsar*, and the Dominions of *Alexander*, what would it advantage me? I should only have abundance of Things, that I have no *real* need of; Things, that if I would myself, I might easily be as *happy* without, as I can be with them. For would I but make my Nature and my Reason the Measure of my Wants, I might always live next Door to

Satisfaction ; and as for my Wants, they would be so *light* and *portable*, that I might easily take them, and carry them along with me, and lay them down almost wheresoever I pleased. Whereas if I permit my Fancy to grow *wild* and *imaginative*, I shall always find my Wants doubled with my Enjoyments ; and whereas when I had but *five Pounds*, I needed but *five hundred* ; when I have *five hundred*, I shall need *five thousand* ; and so on, till at last I need beyond all possibility of Satisfaction. Since therefore all that this World can do for me, besides the supplying of a *few modest* Needs, which a very *little* of it will do, what a *miserable* Loser shall I be, if merely to gratify my Fancy, I forfeit my Soul, and incur the *real* Miseries of a *woeful* Eternity in pursuit of the *fantastick* Joys of a Moment ? If to purchase things which I shall never be the better for, which while I have not, I do not need, and which when I have I shall not enjoy, I should not only squander away the most *substantial* Happiness, but plunge myself into a *vast* Abyss of *real* and *intolerable* Miseries ; O good God, what a *woeful* Bargain shall I have of it ? For though the Pleasure of our Sin doth always vanish on the Brink of Fruition, and like a *golden* Dream, concludes in a *disappointed* Expectation ; yet the Sting that is to follow it will produce in us not only a *real*, but an extremely *sharp* and *dolorous* Perception ; so extremely *sharp*, that it will pierce our very Hearts, and cause us to roar out with Anguish for ever. And, alas ! what a *poor* Compensation is it for a Man that must e'er long be enduring the Tor-
tures

tures of a *tadious* Famine, to be entertained a *few* Moments with the Picture of a Feast, or the Story of *Cleopatra's* Banquet? Or what Man in his Wits would ever forfeit himself, for the *mere* Fancy of a Pleasure, to the *lingering* Torments of a Rack? And yet, *O wretched* Sinner, thou aatest a *thousand* times more extravagantly; who, by thy *unlawful* Pursuits of the *imaginary* Pleasures of the World, betrayest thy Soul to the *bitter* Torments of *Hell*.

2dly, The *Good* that is in the Gain of this World is *narrow* and *particular*, but the *Evil* that is in the Loss of a Soul is *large* and *universal*. 'Tis but a Part of ourselves, and that the *worst* Part *too*, that this World's *Goods* can benefit and advantage; they can only clothe our Bodies more splendidly, and feed them more deliciously, and furnish them with more Plenty of *outward* Accommodations; but, alas! for the Soul, they are as *insignificant* to her, as *musical* Sounds are to the Eye of the Body, or *magnificent* Shew to the Ear: They cannot improve the *meanest* Faculty about her, nor make her in any respect either the *better* or the *wiser*. And as for the Body itself, wherein all their Lines do centre, there are a *thousand* Cases in which they are perfectly *useless*; for they cannot give *Health* to it in any *Sickness*, nor *Ease* in any *Pain*; they cannot recover a *lost* Sense, nor restore a *withered* Limb, nor rectify a *deformed* Feature; nor is it in their power to relieve it from the Grave one Moment beyond the *natural* Period of its Mortality. So extremely *narrow* are these *worldly* Goods which

we are so greedy of, that they can extend their Benefits no farther than the Body ; nay, and even to *that* they are vastly *inadequate*, there being a *thousand bodily* Necessities whereunto they cannot extend themselves. So that if to purchase these we expose ourselves to *eternal* Perdition, we shall have in comparison but a *Drop* of Good to compensate ourselves for an *Ocean* of *Misery*. For the Misery of *Hell* is as *vast* and *extensive* as our Capacity of Suffering, and hath in it an *appropriate* Torment for every *sensible* Part of our Natures. It racks the *wretched* Soul in every Faculty, and fills *up* all its Capacities of Misery with Anguish and Vexation : It afflicts its Mind with *horrid* Apprehensions, wounds and gnashes its Conscience with *dismal* Reflections ; it festers its Will with *black* and *venomous* Passions, and starves its Desires with *everlasting* Famine. And as it leaves no Part of the Soul untormented, but covers it over from Head to Foot with Wounds and Bruises, and *putrifying* Sores ; so when the Body at the Resurrection is reunited to it, the Misery of Hell will extend to this also ; for then it will have superadded to its *spiritual* Plagues, the most *exquisite* Instrument of *corporal* Torment, *viz.* the *dark*, and *noisom*, and *scorching* Flames of a *burning* World, which will seize upon the Bodies of *reprobate Sinners*, they being finally abandoned to them by the *last* and *final* Sentence, and stick close to, and burn through them *for ever*. And their Bodies being thus wrapped and clothed in *flaming* Sulphur, must needs be exquisitely vexed in every Part and Member, and feel as many Torments

as they have Senses to endure them. Thus the Miseries of *Hell*, you see, are far more *extensive* than the *Goods* of this World; for whereas *these* extend only to our Bodies, and can relieve them but in a *few* of their Necessities, *those* overspread both the Body and Soul, and are both *coeternal* and *cocqual* with their *utmost* Capacities of Suffering: So that when by our *unlawful* Pursuits of the *Goods* of this World we forfeit ourselves to *eternal* Perdition, we plunge our *whole* Nature into *intolerable* Misery, for the Ease and the Pleasure of one *particular* Part. Now, would any Man in his Wits, do you think, eat *Ratsbane* for no *other* Reason, but only because it is *sweet*? Would he, to please his *liquorish* Palate, diffuse a *tormenting* Poison over all his Parts and Members? Or would he think the Pleasure of one *sweet* Gust, a *sufficient* Compensation for all the *succeeding* Spasms and Convulsions? Surely, no; none but a Madman could ever admit of such an Extravagance. And yet, *O wretched Sinner!* thou art far more *wild* and *extravagant*; for a *particular* Good thou throwest thyself headlong into an *universal* Misery; and to gratify thy Body in a *few little* Things, dost utterly ruin both thy Body and Soul. To please thyself in *one* Part, thou punishest thyself in *all*; and for the gratifying *one* Sense, derivest a *tormenting* Venom over all the Senses of thy Nature; and so, *in fine*, wilt have nothing but the Pleasure of a Taste or a Touch, to compensate thee for all the Agonies and Torments that thy Body and Soul together are *able* to sustain. And what a *poor* Compensation this is, I leave you to judge.

3dly, The Good that is in the Gain of this World is *convertible* into Evil; but the Evil that is in the Loss of a Soul is never to be improved into Good. When we are arrived to the Possession of those *outward* Goods which at present we do so greedily grasp after, it is a very *uncertain* thing whether they will *prove* Goods to us, or no; whether, even as to this Life, we shall be the *better*, or the *worse* for them. For it is very often seen that these *worldly* Goods prove the *worst* of Plagues to those that are the Owners of them, and that those things which we account the Blessings of this Life, do prove the Curses and Miseries of it. When by a *thousand* Lyes, *Flatteries* and *Circumventions*, a Man hath raised himself up to that Pinacle of Preferment which his Ambition aspired to, how often hath that Height proved the Occasion of his Fall, by exposing him to those Storms of Envy and Misfortune which would have blown over his Head, had he sat quietly *below*, and been contented to enjoy himself in a more *private* Fortune? And so, when by an *infinite* Number of *Rapines* and *Oppressions*, *Frauds* and *dishonest Compliances*, a Man hath amassed together a *vast* deal of Wealth, how often hath *that* proved the Occasion of his Undoing? Sometimes by exposing him to the *rapacious* Covetousness of *others*, but most commonly to the *ill* Effects of his own *extravagant* Luxuries. For usually when Fraud is the *Procurer* of Wealth, Wealth is the *Bawd* of Luxury; this being the *best* Expedient to drown the Cry of the Guilt of our Dishonesty. And then by that time Luxury hath

hath produced its *natural* Effects, it commonly leaves the *wealthy* Possessor in a far *worse* Condition than Poverty; it leaves him so racked with the *Gout* or the *Stone*, so overwhelmed with *Catarrhs* or *Dropsies*, that the *miserable* Man would be heartily contented to part with all his Wealth for Ease, and to return to Poverty, so he might but return to the Health of an *honest* Ploughman; whereas, would he have contented himself with the *honest* Acquest of a *moderate* Fortune, he need have wanted nothing but Temptations to Luxury, and Provisions for *tormenting* Diseases. So that in short, whilst we are pursuing this World's Goods, we know not what our Game will be till we have seized on it; peradventure, instead of *Venison* we are hunting a Serpent, which, when we have caught, will sting and in venom us, and prove a Plague instead of a Satisfaction. And is it not *extravagant* Madness then for Men to run themselves into all those Miseries, which *everlasting* Ruin and Perdition implies, for the sake of such *uncertain* Goods, which when they are possessed of, for all they know, may do them a *thousand* times more Mischief than Good? For as for those *future* Miseries, which by our *sinful* Pursuits of these *present* Goods we incur, they are all such *absolute* and *essential* Evils, that there is not one Drop of Good to be extracted out of them; for as they are *eternal*, they are of an *unalterable* Nature, and the same *insupportable* Plagues they were yesterday, they will continue to be to-day, and *for ever*. Indeed if we were to outlive them, they might be accidentally *advan-*
tageous

tageous to us ; they might discipline our Natures for an Happiness to come, and serve as so many Toils to our *future* Pleasures ; and when they are past, the Remembrance of them, like *bitter* Sauce, might give a Relish to our Joys, and render them more *grateful* and *delicious* : But we being to endure them for ever, there is nothing good can succeed them, no *possible* Advantage can be derived from them ; for in Miseries that have no End, there can be nothing but Misery. And is it not very strange then, that Men should forfeit their Souls to such *unalterable* Miseries, for such Goods as may be Plagues to them ? when, for all they know, there may be such a Train of Mischiefs at the Heels of these *Pleasures*, and *Profits*, and *Honours*, they are so greedy of, as may outweigh all the Good of them, and render them a *dear* Pennyworth, though they had never pawned their Souls for them ? And if it so prove, as it is very *probable* it may, then their Bargain is *worse* than if they had pawned their Souls for nothing ; because they have incurred *one* Misery only to seize upon *another*, and have waded through a *temporal* to come at an *eternal* one.

4thly, The *Good* that is in the Gain of this World, is *mixed* and *sophisticated* ; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss of a Soul is *pure* and *unmingled*. Should a Man sell his Soul for never so *great* a Share of this World's Goods, he would find he had gotten but a very *uneasy* Purchase ; a Purchase as he can neither secure, without a *great* deal of Care, nor yet enjoy without a *great* deal of Dissatisfaction. For
what

what we call ours, is really ours but for our Portion of Expence and Use ; and all that is ours beyond this, is only the Title and the Care, and the Trouble of securing and dispensing it ; for let but your Servants walk into your *Gardens of Pleasure*, and the Air shall fan them with as *gentle* Gales, the Flowers delight them with as *fragrant* Odours, and the Birds entertain them with as *ravishing* Melodies. And, in some Sense, your *meanest* Servants enjoy what you have with *far* more Freedom than you ; for your Possessions are like a *great* Harvest, which many Labourers must bring in, and more must eat of ; only you are the Centre of all the Care, and you they fix on ; but the Profits run out to all the Lines of your Circle, who usually enjoy their *several* Shares with much more Peace and Quiet than you. You take the Pains to dig the Well, and undergo the Care of supplying and maintaining it ; and when you have done, you can drink no more of it than the *meanest* Slave about you ; but what you drink can't be so *sweet* and *pure*, because it is dashed with many more Cares and Disturbances. For considering the *infinite* Hazards these *worldly* Goods are exposed to, they must needs carry with them abundance of Care and Disquietudes ; so that when you are possessed of them, you only grasp a Bundle of *gilded* Thorns, which, while they *please* your Eyes, will *prick* your Hearts, and continually disease you in the Enjoyment of them. And then for the Enjoyment itself, considered abstractedly from those Cares that surround it, alas ! it is such as rather creates Desire than Satisfaction ; for
though

though at a distance these *Terrestrial* Goods do promise us *fair*, and raise in us *vast* and *boundless* Hopes, yet still when we approach nearer to them, we find ourselves miserably deceived. And then our Enjoyment falling so vastly *short* of our Expectation, all those *swelling* Hopes that flattered and toiled us on, fall flat immediately under the Disappointments of Fruition; and accordingly our Desires missing their *promised* Satisfaction, grow more *outrageous* and *violent*. And thus our Enjoyments, as they are compassed with Vexations, so are they mingled with *restless* Discontents, as being all *too little* for our *vast* Desires; which are therefore rather enraged than satisfied with them. What *infinite* Losers therefore must those Men be, who to compass those *sophisticated* Goods which have so many Evils intermixed with them, forfeit their Souls to *everlasting* Perdition; which is so *vast* and so *intense* an *Evil*, as will admit no degree of *Good* to be intermingled with it; a Misery so *pure* and *unalloyed*, as that it totally excludes all Communication with Happiness, and will not admit the *least* Hope of Ease or Refreshment. For what Ease can we hope for in the *everlasting* Burnings? What Refreshment can we expect in the *unquenchable* Lake of Fire and Brimstone? Doubtless we may as soon hope to find a Cordial in the Sting of a Scorpion, or *sprightly Nectar* in the Nest of Wasps, as one Degree of Ease or Comfort in *Hell*. There is not a Gleam of *Light* in all that Region of *Darkness*, not a Drop of *Sweet* in all that *vast* Ocean of *Gall* and *Wormwood*; but it is all Misery, *sharp* and *exquisite*

exquisite Misery, without the *least* Mixture of Ease, or Hope of Mitigation. Can we then be so *stupid* as to imagine the enjoying this World's *Goods*, which are all such Compositions of *Good* and *Evil*, worth the enduring such *pure* and *abstracted* Miseries for ever? Would you for the Pleasure of an *intemperate* Draught that will quickly end in a Qualm or an Head-ach, be contented to endure the Torment of being *impaled*? Or provided you might spend this Night in your *lascivious* Enjoyment, which after a *few* Moments will conclude in Shame and Remorse, would you be willing to roar upon the Rack all the Night after? Doubtless you would not. And yet, God knows, these *Pleasures* are not comparably so *disproportionate* to those *Pains*, as the Pleasures of this World are to the Pains of *Eternity*. How then is it *possible* that such *bitter Sweets* as these are, *Sweets* that are chequered with so many Cares, and allayed with so many Discontents, and Disappointments, should be *sufficient* to counter-vail those *intolerable* Miseries which the Loss of our Souls implies?

5thly, The *Good* that is in the Gain of this World is *full* of Intermissions; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss of a Soul is *continual*. If I were Lord of all the World, I should never be able to live in a *constant* Enjoyment of it. For such *wretched* Counterfeits are all the Pleasures of Sense, that they will not endure the Test of a *long* Fruition; for at the best they are but Frolicks of Delight, that never *seize* us but when we are turned *up* to them in *Moods* and *Fits*, and all the Complacencies we have in
them

them are nothing but the *little* Starts of our Appetite, which, as soon as it hath done craving, grows *a weary* of them, and so enjoys and loaths them by Turns ; for they can dwell no longer upon the Appetite than while the Necessities of Nature do continue ; and every *fresh* Morfel after the Hunger is satisfied, is but a *new* Labour to a *tired* Digestion, and so instead of being a Pleasure becomes an Oppression. So that it is but a very *little* while that the Pleasure of any *outward* Enjoyment continues ; for till it hath pleased us it is not a Pleasure, and when it hath, it ceases to be so ; and so it dies as soon as it is born, and its Nativity is only a *Prelude* to its Funeral. Thus all our Enjoyments are stinted by our Appetites, which are naturally *incapable* of a *continued* Fruition. But then besides this, our Enjoyments are *liable* to a thousand *other* Interruptions, which are not in our power to prevent or avoid, for whether we will or no, we must be sometimes out of Humour, and then all the Pleasures in the World are most *tedious* Impertinencies ; and sometimes we must *sleep*, and then we are *insensible* of them ; and sometimes be *sick*, and then they are as *tasteless* as a Cork ; and sometimes be *gripped* with *guilty* Thoughts, and *ill-boding* Reflections, and then, instead of Pleasures, they are our Horrors and Vexations. Thus our Enjoyment, like an Ague, is *full* of Intermissions ; now we are *pleased*, and anon we are *displeased*, and immediately after the *hot Fit* is over, the *cold one* returns ; and thus it would be if we had all the World in our Possession. And indeed the Intervals of our
 Enjoyment

Enjoyment of these *Terrestrial* Goods are usually *longer* than the Enjoyment itself, and the *hot Fits* of our Pleasure and Fruition are generally sooner over, than those *cold ones* of Displeasure and Dissatisfaction that succeed them. So that if I could command all the Goods in the World, they would be so far from yielding me a *continued* Happiness, that, in all Probability, the Interruptions of my Happiness would take up a *greater* part of my Life than the Enjoyment of it; and perhaps for every *one* Moment of Fruition, I should spend *two* either in Pain, or in Non-perception of Pleasure. How then is it *possible* that such a *broken* and *discontinued* Happiness as this should ever make us amends for those Miseries that are included in the Loss of our Souls? For to lose our Souls is to be *miserable* without any Interruption, to be eternally grieved and tortured without any Intervals of Ease or Refreshment. For the State of Perdition is a *continual* Torment spun out into an *endless* Duration, wherein there are no *Days* of Rest, nor *Nights* of Sleep, nor *intermediate* Pauses of Ease; where the Fire never ceases burning, nor the Worm gnawing, but *Woe* succeeds *Woe* without Intermission, and Miseries, like the *nimble* Minutes of Time, follow Miseries, and tread close upon *one another's* Heels. Hence, Rev. xx. 10. those that are cast into the Lake of Perdition, are said to be *tormented Day and Night for ever*; which plainly implies that their Miseries are all but one *uninterrupted* Torment, or *continual* Succession of *dolorous* Perceptions *for ever*. And if so, O *blessed* God, what a *poor* Compensation for it are the *broken* Joys of this World? For if the Misery of *Hell*

were to last no longer than the Happiness of this World, yet if for *one* Week's Happiness here I were to endure *another* Week's Misery *there*, I should have a *miserable* Bargain of it ; because the Happiness being so *interrupted*, and the Misery so *continued*, I must in the same Space undergo at least *double* the Misery that I enjoyed Happiness. And what Man would be contented to live all the *next* Week in a Cauldron of *boiling* Oil, wherein he knows he shall be continually *tormented*, provided he may spend *this* Week in an *uninterrupted* Enjoyment of the most *grateful* Luxuries, which he knows he must be as often and as long *insensible* as he can be *sensible* of ?

6thly, and *lastly*, The Good that is in the Gain of this World is *fading* and *transitory* ; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss of the Soul is *eternal*. For so *impotent* are all this World's *Goods*, that they cannot insure us of one Moment's Enjoyment of them. It may be, as soon as ever we have filled our Bags and Barns with the Wages of our Iniquity, and have a *plentiful* Provision for many Years Ease and Luxury, we may be snatched away upon the very Brinks of Enjoyment, and hurried into a *woeful* Eternity, there to consume those Years in Misery and Torment, which we promised to spend in Pleasure and Voluptuousness. This you know was the Case of the *rich Epicure* in the *Gospel* ; how did the *jolly* Wretch congratulate and applaud himself in the *golden* Purchase of his Frauds and Oppressions ? How did he vaunt of his *own* Prudence, and *good* Conduct, and strut and swell with *munificent* Conceits of the *happy* Condition he was now arrived to ? when all of a sudden

Sudden his *unprepared* Soul was surprized with a Summons to Eternity? And then how *blank* did the *Fool* look upon the *fatal* News, that *that* Night must put an end to all his Hopes and Pleasures, and deprive him of all those *future* Enjoyments with which he had promised to recompense all his *past* Toils and Labours? With what Regret and Reluctancy was he dragged from the *dear* Purchase of his Sweat and Sin? And in what Agonies of Horror did he groan out his *wretched* Spirit, when instead of enjoying the *Goods he had laid up for many Years*, he felt himself sinking into a *woeful* Eternity, and lie weltering *there* in *unquenchable* Flames, whilst he hoped to have been wallowing *here* in Ease and Voluptuousness? But suppose we should enjoy the many Years Ease which this *vain-glorious* Fool was disappointed of, alas those Years will quickly expire and *Threescore and ten*, or *Fourscore* at most, is the *utmost* Period we can hope to arrive to; but then from thence commences an *Eternity* of Misery, which *Millions of Millions* of Ages can neither shrink nor exhaust, and compared with the *longest* Life of Pleasure, hath not the Proportion of one *single* Moment. So that if in Exchange for our Souls we could purchase a Lease of Life as long as *Methuselah's*, and a Lease of Happiness parallel to that Life, yet in the Conclusion we should find it a most *woeful* Bargain; because when both these Leases are expired, as they must at last though it be *long* first, we must remove into a State of *intolerable* Misery, whose Duration will be always equally because it will be always infinitely *distant* from a Period; and when we are there, all that *long* Train of Happiness that

is *past*, will seem but a Minute's Dream in Comparison of that *Eternity* of Misery that is to come. But, O Good God, when for *thirty* or *forty* Years Pleasure upon Earth, I have suffered a *thousand* Years Torment in *Hell*, and after that have *endless* *Thousands of Thousands* more to suffer, how dearly shall I rue my *own* Folly and Madness, that for the sake of a *few* Moments Pleasure have run myself headlong into such an *endless* Misery! Consider therefore, O my Soul! within a *little* while all these *outward* Goods which I have purchased by my Sin, will signify no more to me than if they had never been, and all their *alluring* Relishes will be gone and forgotten *for ever*; but then for *Ten thousand* Millions of Ages after I shall be feeling the Smart, and enduring the Stings of them. When all my *ill-gotten* Wealth is shrunk into a *Winding-sheet*, and my *vast* Possessions into *six Feet* of Earth, and I have none of its Pumps or Pleasures *left* either to go along with, or to follow after me, then will the Guilt of all stick close to me, and raise a Cry on me as *high* as the Tribunal of *God*; a Cry that will draw down an *everlasting* Vengeance on my Head, and ring Peals of Thunder in my Conscience *for ever*. Lord! what a *poor* Amends then is the *momentary* Enjoyments of the Goods of this World to me, and that after a *few* Years must pass into *another*, and there languish away a *long* *Eternity* under the *intolerable* Anguish of a *damned* Spirit.

And thus you see, upon a *just* Survey of the Gains of this World, and the Loss of a Soul, how infinitely *short* the Happiness of the *one* is to make us any *tolerable* Compensation for the Miseries of the *other*. And if the Gain of all the
World

World be *too little* to countervail this Loss. what *miserable* Losers are the Generality of Men, that forfeit their Souls upon a far *less* valuable Consideration? For no Man was ever yet, or is ever like to be so *prosperous* in his Sin, as to gain the whole World by it; that is a *Scramble* in which Millions are engaged, and of which every one will be catching a Share. But alas, for the Generality, the Purchase of Mens Sin is so *small* and *inconsiderable*, that it is scarce a *valuable* Consideration for the Soul of a Rat. For what doth the *common* Swearer get by all his *senseless* and *impertinent* Oaths, which are capable of serving no *other* Purpose but only to stop the Gaps of his Speech, or to man his Rage, that he may rave, and play the Fool a little more genteely? What doth the Drunkard gain by all his Intemperances, but only a *short* Fit of *frantick* Mirth, and *extravagant* Jollity, which, after a *few* Hours, ends in a *sleepless* Night, a *sick* and *uneasy* Stomach, and a *fottish* Confusion over all his Senses? What doth the *envious* and *malicious* Man get by all his *studied* Mischiefs and Revenges? When he hath pluck'd out his Enemy's Eye, he cannot put it into his own Head, nor can he encrease the Stock of his *own* Happiness by diminishing his Adversary's. When he hath made *another* the *worse*, he is never the *better* for it; nor do his Injuries grow *less* by being retaliated: So that he vexes and disquiets himself to no purpose, but to make his Enemy bleed; he keeps his *own* Wound *green*, and consequently multiplies Evils in vain, and prosecutes Mischief only for Mischief's sake. I confess there are some Vices that are not altogether so *unprofitable* as these; in *some* Vices there is a Prospect of *worldly*

Gain and Greatness, in *others* of *sensitive* Pleasure and Delight; but alas, when after a *few* Days Enjoyment of those Gains and Pleasures, I am called away from them, and transported into a *woeful* Eternity, there to expiate the Guilts of them with those *sharp* and *everlasting* Torments I shall be made to endure, how shall I be astonished at my own *desperate* Folly to think what a *mad* Bargain I have made? What an Happiness I have sold to purchase those Gains? What a Misery I have incurred to grasp and enjoy those Pleasures? O! now what would I give for a *Gael-delivery* from *Hell*, or but for the *least* Mitigation of my Agonies and Torments! If I had all the Wealth that I purchased by my Sin, and ten thousand times more, how willingly would I part with it to bribe my Flames, and corrupt my Tormentors? O! now I shall wish a thousand and a thousand times that I had rather chosen to famish for want of Bread, than to enjoy those *accursed* Profits and Pleasures that were the Fruits and Wages of my Iniquities; but now alas it will be *too late* to repent. As yet we have the Opportunity to retrieve *our own* Folly, and to revoke and cancel this our *desperate* Bargain, and by our *serious* Repentance and *heartly* Renunciation of the Temptations of this World, we may release ourselves from our Covenant with Death, and Agreement with Hell. But if we out-stay our Opportunity a *few* Moments longer, till Death hath put an end to it, the *fatal* Bargain will be sealed past all Revocation.

OF THE
Divinity *and* Incarnation
OF OUR
S A V I O U R.

J O H N i. 14.

And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of his Father) full of Grace and Truth.

THESE Words contain *Three distinct Propositions*:

I. *The Word was made Flesh*:

II. *And dwelt among us full of Grace and Truth*:

III. *And we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of his Father.* Of each of these I intend to discourse in their Order.

I. The first is, That *the Word was made Flesh*. In handling of which I shall do these three things:

1. Shew you what we are here to understand by the *Word*.

2. Why is it called *The Word*.

3. What we are to understand by *The Word's* being made *Flesh*.

1. What is meant by *the Word*? I answer in general, That by *the Word* here we are to understand Christ: For in the following Verse you will find that this *Word* was he of whom *John the Baptist* was the *Forerunner*, and to whom he bare Witness, saying, *This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me, is preferred before me; for he was before me.* And in the other *Evangelists* you will find that it was *Christ*, whose *Forerunner* the *Baptist* was, and to whom he gave this Testimony, as you may see at your Leisure, *Mat. iii. 11.* and *Mark i. 7.* *Luke iii. 16.* where you find *John Baptist* giving the same Testimony to *Christ* which here he gives to *the Word*, especially ver. 27. of this Chapter. Which is a plain Evidence that *Christ* and the *Word* are only *different Titles* of the same Person. But that I may more particularly explain to you the Meaning of this Phrase, I will briefly deliver my Sense of it in these following Propositions.

1. That this Phrase, *The Word*, as it is by Way of *Eminence* applied to a particular Subject, is derived into the *New Testament* from the *Theology* of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*.

2. That the *New Testament* giving no distinct Explication of it, it is most safe and reasonable to fetch the Sense of it from that *antient Theology* whence it was derived.

3. That the *Theology* from whence it was derived, uses it to signify a *vital* and *Divine Subsistence*.

4. That therefore our *Saviour*, to whom it is applied in the *New Testament*, is that *vital* and *Divine Subsistence*.

I. That this Phrase *The Word*, as it is by way of *Eminency* applied to a particular Subject, is derived into the *New Testament* from the *Theology* of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*: Which will plainly appear to any one, that shall consider the exact Agreement between those Titles and Characters which are given to our *Saviour* in the *New Testament*, and those which the *Jews* and *Gentiles* give to the *Word*, so often mentioned in their *Theology*. For as for this Phrase, $\delta \lambda \acute{o} \gamma \omicron \varsigma$, *the Word*, it is very antiently used in the Writings both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*. For *Rab. Azriel* in his Treatise of Holiness, quotes it out of the *Book of the Creation*, which was written by *Rab. Abraham*, an antient *Cabalist*, who the *Jews* say was the Patriarch *Abraham* himself. *The Spirit*, saith he, meaning the most High God, *bringeth forth the Word and the Voice, and these three are one God*. Thus also it is frequently used in the *Chaldee Paraphrase*, as eminently appropriated to a *Divine Person*: So in *Isaiah* xlv. 17. instead of *Israel shall be saved in the Lord*, they read it, *by the Word of the Lord*; and *Jeremiah* i. 8. instead of *I am with thee*, they read, *because my Word is with thee*; and *Gen.* xv. 1. instead of *I am thy Shield*, they read, *my Word is thy Shield*; and so in sundry other Places. And, which is very observable, *Psalms* cx. 1. instead of *the Lord said unto my Lord*, they read, *the Lord said unto his Word*; which Words our *Saviour* applies to himself, *Mat.* xxii. 44. as being himself that *eternal Word*, or $\lambda \acute{o} \gamma \omicron \varsigma$, there mentioned. And in the same Sense also it was very antiently used in the Writings of the

Gentile Philosophy. Thus Zeno, as Tertullian tells us *, speaks of a λόγος by which the World was made, and which he calls *Fate*, and *God*, and the *Soul of Jupiter*. And the *antient Orpheus*, as he is quoted by *Clemens Alexandrinus* †, exhorts Men to behold and contemplate the divine Word, who is the immortal King of Heaven. And *Plato* ‡ tells us, that the Motions of the Stars were disposed and ordered by the Word. By which it is plain, that this Phrase was used as appropriate to a divine Person, both by Jews and Gentiles, long before the writing of the *New Testament*. And that the *New Testament* derived it from their Writings is apparent, for that it attributes to *Christ* the same Titles and Characters which they were wont to attribute to the λόγος. Thus, as the *New Testament* calls *Christ* the *Messias*, the *Word*, so the *Chaldee Paraphrase* expressly tells us, that *Messias* is called the *Word of God*. *Osee*, Cap. 7. Thus, as *St. Paul* calls him the *King immortal*, so *Orpheus*, in the aforementioned Place, calls him ἀνακτὶς ἀθάνατον, the *King immortal*. And whereas *Christ* is said to be the *Image of God*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. to be the shining forth of his *Glory*, and the express Character of his *Person*, Heb. i. 3; *Philo* calls him χαράκτις Θεῶν ||, the σκια and εἰκὼν Θεῶν §, that is the *Character of God*, and the

Shadow

* Tertul. Apologet. c. 36. Pam. Hunc. (i. e. λόγον) Zeno determinat factitorem qui cuncta in dispositione formaverit, eundemque & fatum vocari & Deum & animum Jovis. † Stromat Lib. v. p. 607. Εἰς ὃν λόγον Θεῶν βλέψας, τέτω πεισίδρις τῷ θύον γεσίνος νοερόν κύριον εὐ δ' ἐπὶ βαίνει Ἀτρεπίτῃ μῦνον δ' ἐσέει ἀόμοιο ἀνακτὶς ἀθάνατον. ‡ Epinomis. || Lib. ii. de Agriculturâ, p. 169. Edit. Genev, 1613. § Leg. Alleg. l. ii. p. 60.

Shadow and Image of God: And Plotin, That it is a Light streaming forth from God, even as Brightness doth from the Sun. And as St. John, in the first Verse of this Chapter, tells us, That the Word was from the Beginning with God, and that it was God; so Philo tells us, That by Prerogative of Eldership he abided with the Father; and Zeno, in the afore-named Place, That he is God; and Plotin † tells us, That being the Word of God, and the Image of God, he is inseparably conjoined with him. And whereas Christ tells us, That he is the Light of the World, John viii. 12. the Manna which cometh down from Heaven; and the Bread of Life, John vi. 33, 35; the same Philo styles him the Word, the Light ‡, the Manna||, the ἄρτος and τροφήν ἡν ἔδωκεν ὁ Θεὸς τῇ ψυχῇ §, that is, the Bread and Food which God hath given to the Soul. And whereas it is said, that the Father is in Christ, that he dwells and abides in him, John xiv. 10; the same Author says, πατέρι δέοικεν ὁ λόγος, ἐν ᾧ διαταῖται |||; that is, the Word is the House of the Father, in whom he dwells. Whereas Christ is said to have a Name, Phil. ii. 9. and to be advanced above all Principalities and Powers, Eph. i. 21; Philo tells us, that this divine Word is ὑπεράνω πάντος τοῦ κόσμου καὶ πρεσβύτατος τῶν ὅσα γέγονε ¶; that is, above all Worlds, and the most antient of all Things that are. Whereas Christ is said to be the High Priest over the House of God. Heb. x. 21; Philo tells us, that the World is the Temple*

of

* Enn. 5. l. c. 6. † Ibid. ‡ Philo de Opif. mundi, p. 4, 5. || Quod det. pot. inf. fol. p. 137. § Leg. Alleg. l. ii. p. 70, and 71. ||| De Migrat. Abrah. p. 304. ¶ Leg. Alleg. p. 71.

of God, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἀρχιερεὺς ὁ προτόγονος αὐτοῦ θεῶς, λόγος.*; that is, in which the first-born Divine Word is the High Priest. Whereas Christ is said to be the Son of God, and the first-born of every Creature: Plato calls him, the begotten Son of the Good†; Plotin, the Son of God‡; and Philo, the first-begotten Son and Word of God§. Again, whereas God is said to have created the World by Christ, Heb. i. 2. and to have committed the Government of it to him; Philo calls the θεῶς λόγος, the ὀπηνδαιέχων καὶ κυβερνήτης τῶ παντός||; that is, the Governor of all Things, and the ὑπαρχος θεῶς**, the Viceroy of God; and also ὄργανον θεῶ δι' ἃ ὁ κόσμος κατασκευάσθη††; that is, the Instrument of God by whom he made the World. As in Christ the Fullness of the Godhead is said to dwell, Colos. ii. 9; so Plotin tells us of the νῆς, or λόγος, that it is filled with God§§. As Christ is called the great Shepherd of our Souls, 1 Pet. ii. 25; so Philo tells us, that God, who is King and Pastor of the World, hath appointed the Word his first-begotten Son, τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν τῆς ἱερᾶς ἀγέλης διὰτι μεγάλη βασιλείως ὑπαρχος διαδέξεται|||, to undertake the Care of his sacred Flock, as his own Viceroy and Substitute: And accordingly in the same Place, he makes The Word to be that Angel whom God had promised to send before the Camp of Israel to conduct them through the Wilderness. In short, as the Angels are said to be subject unto Christ, 1 Pet. iii. 22. and as Christ is said to be the Angel, or Messenger of God,

* De Somniis, p. 463. † De Repub. l. vi. ‡ Enn. 5. l. viii. c. 12 § De Somn. p. 463. || De Cherub. p. 83. ** De Somn. p. 466. †† Lib. Cherub. p. 100. §§ Ennead. 5. l. iii. c. 12. ||| De Agricult. p. 152.

God, John ix. 4; so *Philo* calls the most ancient Word the ὁ ἀρχάγγελος*; that is, the Prince of the Angels, and the τὸν ἄγγελον Θεοῦ†; the Angel or Messenger of God, And, to name no more, as *Christ* is called the Mediator of the New Covenant, Heb. xii. 24. and the Intercessor between God and Man, Heb. vii. 25. and the Propitiation and Atonement: so, saith *Philo*, (which is highly worthy of our Observation) the Word ἰκέτης μὲν ἐστὶ, &c.‡. is the Intercessor for Mortals with the immortal God, and also the Ambassador of that great King to his Subjects; which Office, saith he, he willingly undertook, saying, I will stand in the Middle between the Lord and you, as being neither unborn as God, nor born as you; but being a Medium between those two Extremes, I will be a Pledge for both; for his Creatures, that they shall not utterly apostatize from him; for God, that he will not be wanting in his Fatherly Care towards them. And in another Place he tells us, that the Θεῖον λόγος is τῆς ἀρεσκείας κεφαλὴ καὶ τέλος§; that is, the Beginning and the End of God's Good-Will to the World; which is all one with Propitiation.

And these Authorities of *Philo* I have the rather insisted upon, because he being a Jew, and a Platonick Philosopher, must needs understand the Theology of Jews and Gentiles: and living about the Time of our Saviour, he must be supposed to have written in Terms that were then in use, and were very well understood both by Jews and Gentiles: And if so, then it must

* Quæst. Rerum divin. hæc. p. 397. † De Somn. p. 466.

‡ Quæst. Rerum. divin. hæc. p. 397. § De Somniis, p. 447.

must necessarily follow, that this Phrase *The Word*, so common in that *Author*, was very commonly used both by *Jews* and *Gentiles* in our Saviour's Time, and consequently, that it was derived from them, and so appropriated to our Saviour by the *inspired Writers* of the *New Testament*. And, indeed it is not to be imagined how those *inspired Writers* should ever have so exactly agreed with the *Jews* and *Gentiles* in the Titles and Characters of the *eternal Word*, had not either they themselves, or the *Spirit of God*, which dictated to them, purposely derived it from them.

2. That the *New Testament* giving no distinct Explication of this Phrase *The Word*, it is most safe and reasonable to fetch the Sense of it from that *antient Theology* whence it was derived. I do not deny but it is usual with all Writers to use *Terms* and *Phrases* by way of Accommodation, and to illustrate their Sense by alluding to something that is like it, and therefore are not always to be understood in the Sense which those *Terms* and *Phrases* do most commonly signify, but in a Sense that hath some Proportion with it, as the Drift and Connection of their Discourse doth plainly intimate. But when Writers use Words in a *literal* Sense, without any Note of Allusion, and without explaining themselves into any *different* Sense, either they must mean the *same* Thing which those Words do commonly signify, or else they must mean to deceive and impose upon their Readers. And thus stands the Case before us; our Saviour is here stiled *The Word*, a *Term of Art*, which was very common both in the
Jewish

Jewish and *Gentile Philosophy*; and neither here, nor any where else, is there the *least* Intimation that he is called so, only by way of Allusion; nor is it in all the *New Testament* explained into any *other* Sense than that wherein it was commonly used; and therefore the Intent of the *sacred Writers*, in using it, must be either to denote the same Thing which it signified before, or to deceive and impose upon the World. But doubtless, if the *Holy Spirit*, which inspired those Writers, had meant any thing else by it than what it ordinarily signifies, he would have told us of it, and not have given us such an *unavoidable* Occasion to mistake in so *great* a Doctrine, by clothing its Sense in such a *Phrase* as generally signifies what he never meant. For when he called *Christ* by the *same* Name, and attributed the *same* Titles and Characters by which the *Jews* and *Gentiles* were wont to describe their ΛΟΓΟΣ, he could not but foresee that all *inquisitive* Persons would be apt to conclude that he meant the *same* Thing; and therefore if he had not meant so, he would doubtless either not have given him that Name, and those Titles, or else, to prevent our being imposed upon by them, he would have explained them into some other Meaning; which since he hath not done, we may safely and rationally conclude, that he hath meant the same Thing by this Name and those Titles, with those from whom he did derive them; and consequently that the most *certain* Way for us to understand what is the Sense of *Christ's* being *The Word*, is to consider what those *Jews* and *Gentiles* meant
by

by it from whose *Philosophy* it was first borrowed and derived.

3. That both the *Jewish* and *Gentile Theology* used this Phrase, *The Word*, to signify a *vital* and *Divine Subsistence*. For as for the *Jews*, it is plain that by *The Word* they meant the *Messias*; and therefore, *Pf. cx.* which they say contains the Mysteries of the *Messias*, the *Chaldee Paraphrase*, instead of *the Lord said unto my Lord*, read *the Lord said unto his Word*; that is, consequently, to his *Messias*. And *Rab. Arama* upon *Genesis*, explaining that Passage in *Pf. cvii. 20.* *The Lord sent forth his Word, and they were healed*, expressly tells us, that by this *Word* is meant the *Messias*. And *Rab. Simeon* the Son of *Jobni*, expounding those Words of *Job. xix. 26.* *Yet in my Flesh shall I see God*, saith, that the Mercy which proceeds from the *highest Wisdom of God*, shall be crowned by *The Word*, and take Flesh of a Woman; by which it is plain, that by *The Word* he understood the *Messias*. And that by the *Messias* they understood a *divine Subsistence*, is evident from *sundry Places* in the *Chaldee Paraphrase*, which often applies the Name *Jehovah* to the *Messias*; which according to the Opinion of the *Jews*, ought not to be imparted to any Creature; as particularly, *Isa. xxviii. 5.* *Jehovah Sabbaoth* (for so it is in the *Hebrew*) *shall be a Crown of Glory unto the Residue of his People*; which those Interpreters understand concerning the *Messias*. So also, *Isa. xviii. 7.* *In that Time shall the Present be brought unto the Lord of Hosts*; that is, say they, unto the *Messias*. So also, *Jer. xxxiii. 16.*

By

By *Yshovab our Righteousness*, they understand the *Messias*; and by the Name of the *Everlasting*, *Moses Haderjan* understands the Name of the *Messias*, or *Anointed King*. And certainly, had they not believed the *Messias* to be a *divine Subsistence*, they would never have attributed to him this *incommunicable Name* of God; of which they had so *high* a Veneration, that they thought it *too* sacred for *any* Creature to name, and much more to assume. And the *Commentary* upon the fourth *Psalms* expressly saith, *Because the Gentiles cease not to ask us, Where is our God? the Time will come that God will sit among the Righteous, so as they shall be able to point him out with the Finger*; which plainly refers to the Coming of the *Messias*. And so also the *Septuagint* change *Skaddai*, the *undoubted Name* of the *Omnipotent God*, into ΛΟΓΟΣ, *The Word*, *Ezekiel* i. 24. where instead of *the Voice of God*, (as it is in the *Hebrew*) they read φωνὴ τοῦ λόγου, *the Voice of the Word of God*. And so also the *afore-named Paraphrase*, as I have already hinted, doth often use the *Word of God* for *God* himself, and that more especially with relation to the Creation of the World. Thus instead of *I made the Earth*, *Isa. xiv. 12.* they read it, *I by my Word made the Earth*: And instead of *God made Man*, *Gen. i. 27.* the *Jerusalem Targum* reads, *And the Word of the Lord made Man*: And instead of *They heard the Voice of the Lord*, *Gen. iii. 8.* the *Paraphrase* reads it, *And they heard the Voice of the Word of the Lord God*. And *Philo* expressly calls *this Word* the δευτέρον Θεόν, or *second God*, next to the πατέρα τῶν πάντων.

And

And as the *Jews* believed *The Word* to be a *divine Subsistence*, so did the *Gentiles* also. For so *Numenius the Pythagorean*, as he is quoted by *St. Cyril**, calls the *Father* the *First*, and the *Word* the *Second God*; and *Plotin* tells us †, that this *Word*, or *Image of God*, beholdeth *God*, and it inseparably joined with him; and *Porphyry*, as he is cited by the fore-named *Father*‡, tells us, that the *Essence of God* extends to three *In-Beings*, viz. the highest *Good*, which is the *Father*, and the *Maker of all Things*, which is the *Word*, and the *Soul of the World*; and these he also calls the *first*, and *second*, and *third God*. And of *Pythagoras*, *Proclus the Platonist* affirms, that he commended three *Gods* together in *ONE*, (even as *Plato* also doth) the *second* of which was the *Word* or *Wisdom*, whereunto he attributes the *Creation of the World*. And *Plato*, in his 6th *Epistle*, so far owns the *Divinity of the Word*, that he earnestly exhorts his *Friends* that they should ὑπομνύειν τὸν τῶν πάντων Θεὸν ἡγεμόνα τῶν τε ὄντων καὶ τῶν μελλόντων, ὅτε ἡγεμόνῳ καὶ αἰτίῳ πατέρα κύριον; that is, *invoke God, the Governor of all Things that are and shall be, and also the Lord and Father of that Prince and Governor*; by the *first* of which he evidently means the *Word*, since 'tis to the *Word* that he elsewhere || attributes the *Government of the Stars and Heavenly Bodies*. By all which it is apparent, that by the *Word* they understood some *divine Subsistence*, whose *Nature* is exalted above all *finite Beings* whatsoever; and therefore,

4. And

* Cyril. cont. Julian. l. viii. † Enn. 5. l. i. c. vi. ‡ Cyril. ibid. l. i. || Plat. Epinom.

4. And lastly, Our *Saviour*, to whom this Phrase *the Word* is applied, must be that *divine Person* or *Subsistence*. And so we find him stiled in the first Verse of this Chapter ; *In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* Which Expressions are so exactly agreeable to the Phrase of the *Gentile Theology*, that *Amelius*, the Disciple of *Plotin*, and a great Enemy to the *Christians*, was forced to acknowledge that this is that *Word* which was from *Everlasting*, and by whom all Things were made, as *Heraclitus* supposed : And, *per Joannem*, saith he, *Barbarus iste*, meaning *St. John*, *cum nostro Platone consentit, Verbum Dei in Ordine Principii esse* *. *This Barbarian is of our Plato's Mind, that the Word of God is ranked among the Principles.* And indeed, unless we understand this Place of the *eternal Deity of the Word*, I know not how it will be possible to make any *tolerable* Sense of it ; for if by *in the Beginning* here, we understand, as the *Scinians* would have us, in the *Beginning of the Gospel* when *John Baptist* began to preach, the Words will imply a *gross* Tautology, and the Sense of them must be this, that *Christ* was when *John Baptist* preached that he was, or which is all one, that he was when he was : For how can it be worthy of an *Apostle* so solemnly to assert, that *the Word* had a *Being* in the Beginning of the Gospel, when we know the *Baptist* taught as much himself ? Who therefore came baptizing with Water, that he should be made manifest to *Israel*, John i. 31. And

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* St. Austin. De Civit. Dei. l. x.

when St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke*, who wrote before, taught us more than this, *viz.* That he was in being *thirty* Years before, when we are sure it was as true of any *other* then living as of *the Word*, even of *Judas* that betrayed him, and *Pilate* who condemned him. By *in the Beginning*, therefore must be meant the *Beginning* of the World; and that even then, *The Word was with God, and the Word was God.* So Phil. ii, 6. 7. *Who being in the Form of God, thought it no Robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no Reputation, and took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the Likeness of Men.* From whence these *three* Conclusions do most naturally result; *First*, That *Christ* was in the *Form of a Servant* as soon as he was made Man: *Secondly*, That he was in the *Form of God*, before he was in the *Form of a Servant*: And, *Thirdly*, That he was in the *Form of God* that is, did as really and truly subsist in the *Divine Nature*, as in the *Form of a Servant*, or in the Nature of Man: For the Words literally translated run thus; But emptied himself taking the Form of a Servant, being in the Likeness of Men: Which plainly implies, that *Christ* was full before he emptied himself, that he emptied himself by taking the *Form of a Servant*, that he took the *Form of a Servant* by being made in the *Likeness of Men*; which *Emptying* presupposes a *precedent Plenitude*, and which *Plenitude* consisted in being so in the *Form of God*, as to think it *no Robbery to be equal with God.* So Rev. i. 11. he solemnly proclaims his *own Divinity*; *I am Alpha*
and

and Omega, the first and the last ; which is the *incommunicable* Title by which God describes his own Being, and distinguishes it from all others. And *Isa.* xliv. 6. *I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God.* These, and many other plain Assertions there are in the *New Testament*, of the *Eternal Deity* of the *Blessed Word*. But since the *Eternal God* was constantly, both by the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, signified by this Phrase *the Word*, there is no Reason to imagine that *St. John* should make use of it in any *other* Notion ; since in so doing he would have imposed upon the World, and taken an *effectual* Course, to make us believe that he meant what he never intended.

And so I have done with the *first* Thing proposed, which was to shew you what is here meant by Christ's being *the Word* ; the Design of which, you see, is to express his *Eternal Godhead* and *Divinity*.

2. I now proceed to the *next* Thing proposed, which was to shew you for what Reason it is that he is here called the *Word*. In Answer whereunto, it is to be considered that the Word ΛΟΓΟΣ hath a *two-fold* Signification : *First*, It signifies *Reason*, which is the inferring *one* Thing from *another*, and this is the Birth and Offspring of the Mind. *Secondly*, It signifies *Speech*, which is an *audible* Expression of our Thoughts and Reasonings, and this is the Image and Interpreter of our Minds ; and it is also the *Executor* of the Mind, especially in those who are in *sovereign* Authority, and do rule by their Word and Command. Now our *Blessed*

Saviour is called *the Word* upon both these Accounts, both as he is the *Reason* and the *Speech* of God; and accordingly his being *the Word* denotes these four Things,

1st, His being *generated* of the Mind of the Father.

2^{dly}, His being the *perfect* Image of that Mind.

3^{dly}, His being the *Interpreter* of his Father's Mind to us.

4^{thly}, His being the *Executor* of his Father's Mind.

1st, His being *generated* of the Mind of the Father, even as our *Word* or *Reason* is the Issue and Offspring of our Minds. For it was the Opinion both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, that the *eternal Word* is nothing else but that most *perfect Notion, Idea* and *Conception*, which God from the Beginning had formed of *himself*, and Beings in his own Mind. For thus the *Jews* tell us, that every thing *below* hath some Root above; which Roots, say they, are the *Sephiroth*, or Seals by which all these *inferior* Substances are stamped, and shaped, and fashioned; and these Seals, they tell us, are those most *perfect Ideas* of Things which God did form in his own Mind, according to which he fashioned all the Beings that are in the World. For, they*, all the three Worlds, that is, the *Rational, Sensative, and Inanimate*, were printed with the Print, and sealed with the same Seal; (that is, that great Seal in the Mind of God, consisting of the *Ideas* of all Things) and that which is sealed, and receiveth the Sealing here below,

* Vide Dr. Cudworth of the *Union of Christ and the Church*.

*below, is like to the Shape and Form of those Things above which did seal and stamp the Signature upon them. And these three Worlds, say they, being one below another, God set upon them the Seal of Sephiroth so hard, that he printed them quite through the Bottom of them, that is, he stamped them all into an exact Resemblance to those Ideas which he had formed of them in his own Mind. So that according to them, before God made the World, he framed the Idea and Model of it in his own Understanding, which, together with that Idea, or Notion, which from all Eternity he conceived of himself, they called the ΛΟΓΟΣ or Eternal Word of God. Hence Philo calls the Word of God, the εἰκόνα Θεῶ, and also the σφραγίδα *, and the ἀρχέτυπον παράδειγμα, and the ἰδέα τῶν ἰδεῶν || : And tells us, that as a City before it was made, existed only in the Mind of the Builder ; so the World had no other Place, ἢ τὸν Θεὸν λόγον τὸν ταῦτα διακοσμήσαντα ; that is, than the Divine Word that made it. And afterwards he tells us, that the intellectual World, that is, the World which contains the Ideas of all Things, οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἔστιν ἢ Θεῶ λόγον ἡδὴ κοσμοποιῦντα §, is nothing else but the Word of God now making the World ; and accordingly the Jews call the Word the Wisdom of God, and tells us †, that this Wisdom is of the most inward Understanding of God, who beholds himself in himself. From all which it is apparent, that the Jews attributed the Original of this divine Word*

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* De Mundi Opif. p. 5.

|| Ibid. p. 3.

§ Ibid. p. 4.

† Rab. Isaac Ben Schola on the last Verses of the cxi. and cxii. Psalms.

to the *Mind* of the Father, it being according to their *Divinity*, nothing else but that most *perfect Conception* and *Idea* which God from *everlasting* formed of *himself* and all other Beings, in his own Mind. In which Opinion, the most *divine Philosophers* of the *Gentiles* also do most exactly consent. And hence they generally call the *Word* *vēs*, or *Understanding* of the Father, he being the *perfect Idea*, or *Conception* by which the Father understands *himself* and all other Things. And accordingly *Alcinous* tells us *, that both *Socrates* and *Plato* taught that God is a Mind, and that in the same there is a certain *Idea* which in Respect of God, is that Knowledge which God hath of himself, and in Respect of the World, is the Pattern or Mould thereof, and in Respect of itself, is very *Essence*. And *Plotin* tells us †, that God is both the Party that is conceived in the Mind or Understanding, and also the Party that conceives him; and he makes the *Word* to be that which God doth mind in himself, which is *Himself*, and his own *immense* Perfections; and that the Nature of that *Idea* of himself which he beholds in himself, is an Act that issues from him, which consists in beholding and minding of himself, and in beholding him becomes the *self-same* Thing with him; and this *Understanding* or *Knowledge* which God hath of himself, he calls §, the Son of the Sovereign Father, that bears the like Resemblance to him, as the Light doth the Sun in the Firmament. And to name no

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* Alcin de Doctrinâ Platonis. † Plot. Enn. 5. l vi. c. i.
 § En. 5. l. viii. c. xii. and Enn. 5. l. i. c. vii.

more, *Porphyrus*, as he is quoted by *St. Cyril*, tells us, *That it was the Doctrine of Plato, that of the Good (which elsewhere he calls the Father) is begotten an Understanding in a Manner unknown to Men, in which are all Things that truly are, and the Essences of all Things that have a Being; that is, the substantial Ideas of God, and all created Things whatsoever; and upon this Account it is, that they call this divine Subsistence the Word, because it was generated by the Mind of the Father, even as our Words are generated by our Minds.* And accordingly the *antient Jews* and *Christian Fathers*, do generally expound that *great Elogium of Wisdom*, *Prov. viii.* concerning the *Eternal Word*; where it is said, that *Wisdom was set up from everlasting, and possessed by God in the Beginning of his Way, that it was brought forth by him before the World*; and that when he appointed the Foundations of the Earth, then *was it by him, as one brought up with him, and was daily his Delight, rejoicing always before him*, *Ver. 22—31.* And this Notion the *New Testament* doth plainly refer to, when it calls *Christ the Wisdom of God*, *1 Cor. i. 24.* which is the same Title that both *Jews* and *Platonists* give to the *Word* upon the Account of his being that *Eternal Knowledge and Understanding* which *God hath of himself* and all other Beings; and in this, *John i. 4.* the *Apostle* seems plainly to hint this Notion to us; for speaking there of the *Word*, *In him*, saith he, *was Life, and the Life was the Light of Men.* Now I think it will be hard to give

any *natural* Account how that *Life* that was in the *World* should enlighten Men, unless we suppose his very *Life* and *Being* to consist in *Knowledge* and *Understanding*; for by the *Light of Men* here, is plainly meant that *Divine Knowledge* which is revealed to the *World* by *Christ*; and this *divine Knowledge* he tells us is the very *Life of the Word*, or the *Life* that was in the *Word*: And afterwards he expressly calls the *Word* the *Light* itself, from whence all our *Knowledge of God* and *Goodness* is derived, v. 9. which is exactly the same with what *Philo* saith of the *Word*, viz. that he is the *intellectual Sun* that is altogether *Light*; and with what *Plotin* saith of the *ēs*, or *Divine Mind* *, that he is a *Light shed forth every where, streaming from God, and begotten of him*; which is a plain Evidence of *Christ's* being the *substantial Light, Knowledge, or Idea*, of all Things which *God* from *Everlasting* formed in his own *Mind*, and of his being therefore called the *Word of God*, because he is the *Offspring* of *God's Understanding*, even as our *Reason* is the *Offspring* of ours.

2dly, He is called the *Word of God*, because he is the *perfect Image of God*, even as the *Word* is the *Image of the Mind*: For thus, as I have already told you, the *Eternal Word* is very frequently called the *Image of God*, both by the *Jews* and *Gentiles*: For so *Plotin* †, that this *Divine Understanding*, being the very *Word of God*, and *Image of God*, everlastingly beholds *God*, and cannot be separated from

* Enn. 5. 1. 1.

† Enn. 5. 1. 1. c. 6.

from him; and * that it is the begotten Issue, Word, and Image of the Sovereign God. And Plato himself calls him † the begotten Son of the Good, and most like unto him in all Things; the ἔκγονοι τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ ὁμοιότατοι ἐκείνῳ, and afterwards, τὸν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἔκγονον ἐν ταγαθῶν ἐγγέννησεν ἀνάλογον ἑαυτῷ; that is, the begotten Son of the Good, who is most like unto himself. And Rab. Moses, the Son of Nebeman, as he is quoted by Masius, proving that that Angel of God's Presence which went before the Camp of Israel was the *Messias*, or *Eternal Word*, tells us, that he is therefore called the *Angel of God's Presence*, nimirum qui ille Angelus est facies Dei; because he is the Face of God, in whom God's Face was to be seen. And so Philo the Jew also doth very frequently call the Word ‡ the Image and Resemblance of God, and the ἀπεικόνισμα, the most perfect and exact Representation of God. For they suppose that God being Omniscient, he must necessarily know himself, and that knowing himself, necessarily he must act *ad extremum Virum*, to the utmost of his Power, even as all other necessary Agents do; that acting to the utmost of his Power, he must by knowing himself produce as perfect an Image, Idea, or Notion of himself in his own Understanding, as it was possible for him to do; that it was possible for him to produce such a vital and substantial Idea of himself as is vested with all the infinite Perfections of his Nature; and consequently that such an Idea he hath produced, and that this

Idea

* Ibid. l. ii. † Plato de Repub. l. vi. p. 478. ‡ Philo Legis Alleg. l. ii. p. 60.

Idea is the *Eternal Word*. For *God* can do whatsoever doth not imply a Contradiction: Now there is nothing in *God* but what he can communicate without a Contradiction, but only *Self-existence*; that implies a Contradiction indeed, for *God* to cause *another* Thing to be without any Cause, and to exist of itself. But as for all his *other* Perfections he may communicate them; and when he acts necessarily, as he is supposed to do in the Generation of *the Word* he must, because then he acts to his utmost Possibility. So then *the Word* must have the same *Nature*, *Essence*, and *Perfections* with the *Father*; and the only *imaginable* Difference between them must be this; that whereas the *Father* exists of himself, *the Word* exists of the *Father*; which is exactly agreeable to the *Catholic* Notion of *Christians*. And indeed if it be granted that *God*, who is infinitely *knowing*, must necessarily know himself perfectly, then it will seem to follow, that there must be the *same* Perfections in that *Idea* or Notion by which he knows *himself*, that there are in himself; for else it is not one *perfect Idea* of him. And hence it is that our Notions do so imperfectly *resemble* Things, because we cannot communicate to them that *Life* and *Substance* that is in the Things themselves; and therefore if *God* knows himself perfectly, as he must needs do, being infinitely *knowing*, he must communicate *Life* and *Substance* to the Notion of himself, or else 'twill be no *perfect* Notion of his *Life* and *Substance*; and he must communicate to it all the *immense* Perfections of his own Nature, or else 'twill be no *perfect* Notion of his
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own Perfections. So then the *eternal Word*, which is here supposed to be the most *perfect* Notion of the *Father*, must be a *vital* and *substantial Idea*, endued with all the Perfections of the *Divine Nature*, which is also very agreeable with the *Christian* Notion of the *Divine Word*: For he is described to be the *Image of God*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. *the Brightness of his Glory*, and *the express Character of his Person*, Heb. i. 3. and being so, he must necessarily be what *God* is, *i. e.* *God essential*. or else he cannot be the *perfect* Image, and *express* Character of *God*. And accordingly in the *New Testament* he is called *God over all*, *blessed for ever*, Rom. ix. 5. and the Perfections of the *Divine Nature* are very frequently attributed to him, as particularly *Omniscience*, John xvi. 30. *Eternity*, Heb. i. 12. and Rev. xxii. 13. *I am Alpha and Omega*, *the Beginning and the End*, *the first and the last*. So that upon this Account also he may very properly be called *the Word of God*, because as our Words are the Images of our Minds, so *He* is the most *perfect* Image of *God*.

3dly, He is called *the Word*, because he is the *Interpreter* of the Father's Mind, even as our Words also are the Interpreters of our Minds to *others*. And this *Philo* the Jew doth also take Notice of, as the *proper Work and Office of the Word* to be $\omega\gamma\epsilon\sigma\beta\epsilon\upsilon\tau\eta\varsigma\ \tau\tilde{\epsilon}\ \eta\gamma\epsilon\mu\acute{o}\nu\Theta\iota$. $\omega\pi\acute{o}\varsigma\ \tau\acute{o}\ \epsilon\upsilon\chi\eta\kappa\omicron\upsilon\omicron\nu$ *, *the Ambassador of the great King to his Subjects*, to communicate his Mind and Will to them; and also *the Angel and Messenger of God to Men*, to declare his Will and Pleasure to them;

* Quis rer. div. hæc. p. 397.

them: And that in the Execution of this Office he doth τοῖς μὲν ὡς βασιλεὺς ἃ χρὴ πράττειν ἐξεπιτάγματ' παραγγέλλειν, &c. * *Some as a King he commands what they shall do ; others, as a School-master, he profitably instructs ; others, as a Counsellor, he faithfully admonishes ; all which he performs as the Interpreter of the Mind of God. And* elsewhere he calls him the Θεοποίητ' ἡλίου †, *the Divine Sun that enlightens the Souls of Men ; and elsewhere he expressly calls him the Interpreter of the Mind of God to Men : So that it seems it was upon this Account as well as others, that he was called by the Antients, the Word of God. And the same Account is given of it in the New Testament. So John i. 18. No Man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son, which is in the Bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. Where there is a particular Reason assigned, why though other Men interpreted the Mind of God to us, yet Christ alone is called the Word of God ; because he only was the immediate Interpreter of the Divine Will, even as the Word which we speak is of ours. For he was in the very Bosom of the Father, and there understood his Mind not by the Instructions of an Angel, nor by Dreams and Visions, nor only by the Holy Ghost, but by an immediate Intuition of his Thoughts and Purposes, which from all Eternity were exposed to his View and Prospect. For as St. Gregory Nazianzen hath observed, He had the same Relation to the Father, as the inward Thought hath to the Mind, because of his intimate Conjunction with him, and Power* to

* De Somn. p. 461.

† De Charitate. p. 552.

to declare him to the World. For the *Father* is known by the *Son*, who is a *brief* and *easy* Demonstration of the *Father*, as every thing that is begotten is $\sigma\omega\tau\omega\nu\ \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$, the *silent Word* of that which doth beget it.

4thly, and lastly, He is called *the Word*, because he is the *Executor* of his Father's Will, even as the Word and Command of a King is the Executor of his Will and Pleasure; For according to the Sense of the *Antients*, God hath from the very Beginning governed the World by his *eternal* $\Lambda\omicron\tau\omicron\varsigma$, whom they therefore call the *immortal King*, the *Governor* of all things that are, or shall be, and the *Viceroy* of the great God, as I have already shewed you at large. And it was by this *Word* that God executed his Will when he made the World: For by his *Word* he made the *Heavens*, and all the *Host* of them by the *Breath* of his Mouth, Psal. xxxiii. 6. He did but say the Word, *Let there be Light*, and there was *Light*; and to his *powerful* and *efficacious Fiat*, the whole Frame of Nature was but a *real Echo*. For these Expressions, *Let there be Light*, and *let there be a Firmament*, &c. are not perhaps so to be understood as if God did actually pronounce those Syllables, but they rather seem to be a *popular* Description of the *infinite* Energy of the *Eternal Word* by which God made the *Heavens* and the *Earth*, to whom it was as easy to give Being to the World as it was to command it to be; and that Passage of the Psalmist, *By the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made*, and of the Author to the Hebrews, Heb. xi. 3. that *the Worlds were framed*

framed by the Word of God, seem rather to denote that *powerful* Act of Creation which was exerted by the *vital* and *substantial* Word of God, whereby he instantly, and, as it were, with a Word's speaking, gave *Existence* to those Beings he intended to create, than any *articulate* Words or Phrases, pronounced by God himself; because in this Chapter, and many other Places of the *New Testament*, it is expressly said, that God made the World by *Christ*, who is that *living* and *substantial* Word that was with God from the Beginning. Well therefore may *Christ* be called *the Word of God*, since by him God doth as effectually execute his Will, as if it were done by the Word of his own Mouth. For *Christ* hath such Power, both in *Heaven* and *Earth*, that at his Word and Command all things are presently done according to his Will; and therefore you may observe in that *Vision* to St. *John*, Rev. xix. 13. *Jesus*, being represented as the *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*, clothed in a royal purple Robe, is called by the Name of *the Word of God*, when he was executing the *Divine* Vengeance upon the *Nations* by that Power which he hath at God's right Hand.

3. I now pass on to the *third* and *last* Thing, namely, what we are to understand by *the Word's being made Flesh*; of which I shall give you a *brief* Account, and then conclude with a few short Inferences from the whole. Which Words, *being made Flesh*, we ought not so to understand as if the *eternal* Word was changed, or converted into Flesh, as *Cerintbus* taught; or as if the Flesh was changed, or converted into
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the Word, as *Valentinus* ridiculously asserted ; for the *Deity* is *immutable*, and as it can be changed into *nothing*, so *nothing* can be changed into it. But by *Flesh* we are to understand *Man*, a *Part* being put for the *whole* ; for so the *Scripture* doth very frequently call *Man Flesh*, that being *one* of the *Ingredients* of his *Nature*. Thus *Psalms* lvi. 4. *I will not fear what Flesh can do unto me.* *Jeremiah* xvii. 5. *Cursed be the Man that maketh Flesh his Arm* ; that is, that puts his *Confidence* in *Man*. *Mat.* xxiv. 22. *Except those Days be shortened, no Flesh shall be saved* ; that is, no *Man* : And *Rom.* iii. 20. *No Flesh shall be justified in his Sight* ; that is, no *Man* shall be justified. So here, *The Word was made Flesh* ; that is, *The Word* was made *Man*. Not that the *Divine Nature* was converted into the *Nature* of *Man*, but the *Meaning* is, it was made *one* with *Man*, even as our *Soul* is not turned into, nor confounded with the *Body* ; yet they *two*, though *distinct* in *Natures*, grow into one *Man* : So the *Manhood* of *Christ* was assumed, or taken into the *Word*, both being united into *one* *Person*, the *Natures* being preserved *entire* and *distinct*, without any *Mixture* or *Confusion*. For as the *fourth General Council* hath defined it, *He was so made Flesh, that he ceased not to be the Word, never changing that he was, but assuming that which he was not.* And though our *Humanity* was advanced by it, yet his *Divinity* was not at all diminished ; and the *Mystery* of *Godliness*, *God manifested in the Flesh*, was no *Detriment* to the *Godhead*, which is always *unchangeably* the same : And therefore the *seeming* *Harshness* of this *Expression* may be

be molified by comparing it with others of the same Import ; for elfewhere it is faid, that he *was manifelt in the Flefh*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. which only denotes that the *Divinity* was made known, and did appear in the World in a *human Nature*. Elfewhere it is faid, that *he took on him the Nature of Man*, Heb. ii. 16. which only denotes that the *Divinity* did affume the *human Nature* to it, and was perfonally united with it. So here *the Word was made Flefh* ; that is, *the Word* was made *one* with the *Flefh*, by affuming the *human Nature* into a *perfonal Union* with itfelf.

Having thus explain'd to you the Senfe and Meaning of the Words, I fhall now conclude this Argument with *three* or *four* fhort Inferences from the Whole.

I. From hence we may infer the *eternal Divinity* of our *blessed Saviour*, even from this *great Name The Word*, that is here attributed to him. For fince it is fo apparent that this Phrafe is a *Term of Art* derived from the *Schools* of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and fince by it they did all fo generally underftand a *Divine Perfon* fubfifting from all *Eternity* ; it muft neceffarily follow, that the *Holy Ghoft*, deriving it from them, and applying it to our *blessed Saviour*, muft ufe it to the *same Senfe* ; for otherwife He were better never to have ufed it at all, becaufe by difcourfing in the *same Language* with them, he will give us *juft* Occafion to think that he means the *same Thing*, namely, that *Chrift*, whom he calls *the Word*, is a *Divine Perfon* fubfifting from all *Eternity* ; which if he doth not mean by uſing
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that Term, he will almost necessarily betray us into a *false* Belief concerning our *Saviour*. As, to instance briefly in a Case of another Nature : Our *Saviour* in his Sermons doth frequently press us to *Meekness* and *Patience*, *Humility* and *Charity*, all which are *Terms* frequently used long before in the *moral Philosophy* both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, by which they signify such and such *particular* Virtues. Since therefore our *Saviour* doth use the *same* Terms with them, we have *just* Reason to conclude that he means the *same* Virtues by them ; and should he mean any thing else, his very using of these Terms would necessarily impose upon us a *false* Sense of his Meaning ; for how should we understand his Meaning but by his Words, and how should we understand his Words but by the *common* Import and Signification of them ? And can we imagine that the *Spirit of Truth* would have ever described our *Saviour* by a *Term* that was so generally used to signify a *Divine Person* subsisting from all *Eternity*, and used it *too*, as he doth, without any Restraint or Limitation ; nay, and so seemingly at least to the *same* Purpose, as he doth in the *three first Verses* of this Chapter, where he describes the *Divine Nature* and *Operations* of *Christ the Word*, in the *same* Terms in which the *Jews* and *Gentiles* were wont to describe the *Divinity* of their ΑΟΤΟΣ : Can we imagine, I say, that the *Holy Spirit* would have done thus, had he known *Christ* to be nothing but a *mere* Man that never was before he was born of his Mother ? Far be it from us to charge that *blessed Spirit* with imposing such a Delusion upon Mankind.

2. Hence I infer the *astounding* Love of our *blessed Saviour* in condescending so low as to be made *Flesh* for us, and assume our Nature. For what he was before he took our Nature, you have heard already : He was no *less* than the *eternal Word of the Father*, in whose Bosom he enjoyed the *supremest* Degree of Bliss and Happiness, being crowned with Glory, and encircled about with the *essential* Rays of the *Divinity*. And yet such was his Love to *poor* Mortals, so *infinite* was his Zeal and Concern for our Happiness, that, seeing the Misery we were plunged into, he could not rest, no not in the *blessed* Arms of his Father, but strips himself of all his Majesty and Bliss, and comes down among us, and assumes our Nature, to save and rescue us, and invite and lead us to those *Heavenly* Mansions from whence he descended to us. Lord, what a *Prodigy* of Love was here, as doth not only *puzzle* my Conceit, but *out-reach* my Wonder and Admiration ! For when I seriously consider it, though it be a Blessing beyond all my Hopes, and such as I could never have had the Impudence to desire ; yet it fills my Mind with an *awful* Horror to think, that there was a Time when the *great* God was here upon the Earth in my Form and Nature, and conversed familiarly with such *mortal* Wights as myself, and for my sake, and such *poor* Worms as I, patiently underwent the *common* Infirmities of Men, and willingly exposed himself to the Contempt and Scorn of a *malevolent* World, and the Malice and Cruelty of those *barbarous* Men to whom he gave Being, and could with the Breath of his

his Nostrils have scattered into *Atoms* ; and all this in *mere* Compassion to a Company of *apostatized* Natures, who had so highly deserved to be thrown from his Care and Mercy *for ever*. O my Soul, how am I astonished at this *Miracle* of Love ! Methinks, when I consider it, I am looking down from a *stupendous* Precipice, whose Height fills me with a *trembling* Horror, and even oversetting Reason.

3. From hence I refer what *mighty* Obligations we have *for ever* to love and serve our *blessed Redeemer*. If our Hearts are capable of being warmed into *any* Degree of Affection, sure 'tis impossible but we must be affected at such an *unheard-of* Instance of Love. For the *Son of God* to leave his Father's Bosom, where he was infinitely more *happy* than we can express and think of, and disguise himself in *mortal* Flesh, and become a *Man of Sorrows*, that he might make me a *Man of endless* Joys : Can my Heart hold when I think of this ? Is it possible I should reflect upon such a *prodigious* Instance of Affection without being wrapt into an *Ecstasy* of Love ! *Blessed Jesus*, what *barbarous* Hearts do we carry about with us, that will not melt before the Flames of thy Love ! Flames that are sufficient to kindle *Seraphims*, and to fill all *reasonable* Breasts with *burning* Affections towards thee ! For how is it possible that any *Man*, I had almost said, that any *Devil* should be so *dissingenuous* and *ill-natured*, as not to be affected with such *stupendous* Kindness ! When we see a Child slight his *careful* and *indulgent* Parents, we are ready to account him an *unnatural* Monster ;

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when we see a Man neglect his Friend, or disregard his Benefactor, we presently call him *base* and *ungrateful*; nay, when we see one abuse a *poor brute* Creature that fawns upon him, and expresses its Kindness to him, we look upon it as an *undoubted* Sign of a very *hard* Heart, and an *ill* Nature: What Term then can we find in all *the World of Words*, that is *odious* enough to express our Disaffection to our *blessed Redeemer*, to whom we are so infinitely obliged? *Base*, *Disingenuous*, *Ill-natured*, and *Ungrateful*, are all too soft; 'tis something beyond *barbarous* and *devilish*. For one would think that neither the most *inhuman Canibal* on *Earth*, nor the *blackest Devil* in *Hell*, could ever be guilty of so *foul* a Crime, which had something in it *too monstrous* for any Words to express. Well therefore may the *Heavens* be astonished, and the *Earth* tremble, and all the Creation of *God* stand amazed at us, to see how *insensible* we are of this most *ravishing* and *endearing* Love! Well may we be amazed at ourselves, and wonder at our own Stupidity, to think that the *Son of God* should be so *kind* as to come down from *Heaven* to visit us, to leave the Habitation of his Glory, and shroud his *Divinity* in *mortal* Flesh, and make himself a *miserable* Wight, merely that he might make us *happy*, and advance us to that Glory and Bliss which for our sakes he willingly abandoned; and yet that we are no more touched and affected with it, than with the most *indifferent* Thing in the World! *Blessed God*, what are we made of! What kind of Souls do we carry about with us,
that

that no Kindness will oblige us ; no, not the most *endearing* that ever was known or heard of ! Doubtless, should any Man have shewn us but half this Kindness, should a *Friend* but offer to die for us, or a *Prince* to descend from his Throne, and put himself into the State of a *Beggar*, to enrich and advance us in the World, we should have thought ourselves bound to him as long as we lived ; and should we have thought any Services too much, any Requitals too *dear* for him, we should have been looked upon as *Monsters* of Ingratitude, as the Reproaches and Scandals of *human* Nature, and been hissed out of all Society for a Company of *infamous* Villains, *unworthy* of the *least* Respect or Favour from Mankind. But for a *Friend* to die, or a *Prince* to become a *Beggar* for our Sakes, alas ! what *poor inconsiderable* Things are they, compared with the Condescensions of the *Son of God*, who humbled himself much *lower* in becoming a Man, than the most *glorious* Angel in *Heaven* could have done in assuming the Nature of a Worm. And can we be so *inhuman* as not to be moved by such a Miracle of *condescending* Love ! Is it the less, because it is the Love of God, or doth it less deserve our Requitall ? What Excuse then can we make for our *wretched* Insensibility ? O *ungrateful* that we are ! with what Confidence can we shew our Heads among *reasonable* Beings, after we have so barbarously slighted our *best* Friend, and behaved ourselves so disingenuously towards our *greatest* Benefactor ? How can we pretend to any thing that is *modest* or *ingenuous*, *tender* or *apprehensive*,

in *human* Nature, when nothing will oblige us, no not that *astounding* Love that made the *Son of God* leave all his Glory, and become a *poor miserable* Mortal for our Sakes? O *blest* *Jesus*! what do thy *holy Angels* think of us! how do thy *blest Saints* resent our Unkindness towards thee! yea, how justly will the Devils themselves reproach and upbraid our Baseness, who, *bad* as they are, were never so much Devils yet as to spurn the Love of a Redeemer, coming down from *Heaven* to die and suffer for their Sakes! Wherefore, as we would not be hissed at by all the *reasonable* World, and become Spectacles of Horror to *God*, and *Angels*, and *Devils*, let us endeavour to affect ourselves with the Love of our *Redeemer*, and to inflame *our own* Souls with the Sense of his Kindness, who hath done such *mighty* Things to endear and oblige us.

4. From hence I infer what *monstrous* Disingenuity it would be in us to think much of *parting* with any thing, or *doing* any thing for the Sake of *Christ*, who for our Sakes parted with his Father's Bosom, and all those *infinite* Delights which he there enjoyed, and united himself to our *miserable* Nature, that he might make us *good* and *happy* for ever. And now, after all this, with what Conscience, or Modesty, can we grudge to do any thing which he shall require at our Hands? Should he command me to descend into the *lowest* Form of Beings, and to become the most *wretched* and *contemptible* of all Animals, could I be such a *Caitif* as to deny him, who descended much *lower* for the Sake of me?

Should

should he remand me back into *Non-entity*, and bid me cease to be *for ever*; alas! the Distance is nothing so *great* between me and *nothing*, as it was betwixt *him* and that *human Nature* which he assumed for my Sake. Should he require me to die for him under all those *lingering* and *exquisite* Tortures which the *blessed Martyrs* suffered for his Name, what Proportion were there between what he requires of me, and what he hath done for me! He only requires that I should pass through *Death* to *Heaven* for him, but he came from *Heaven* to pass through *Death* for me; so that for his Sake I should only put *off* a *wretched* Garment of *Flesh*, that I may be enrobed with *Glory* and *Immortality*; but for my Sake he put *off* his Robes of *Glory* and *Majesty*, that he might wear my *frail* and *mortal* *Flesh*, and therein reconcile me to *God*, and make me everlastingly *happy*: And when I may advance myself into an *Equality* with *Angels*, by suffering the Agonies of a *miserable* *Death* for him, shall I refuse, or think much of it, when he who was *equal with God* in *Glory* and *Happiness*, was so ready to be born a *wretched miserable* Man for me? Should he require me to give my Substance to the *Poor*, and leave myself *destitute* of all Supplies and Comforts, could I deny so *poor* a Request to *him*, who forsook a *Heaven* of *infinite* Pleasures for my Sake, and exposed himself *naked* to the Mercy of a *wretched, wicked, and ill-natured* World, from whom he could expect nothing but the most *barbarous* Contempt and Cruelty? Sure, one would think it were impossible for any

reasonable Being to deny such *poor*, such *inconsiderable* Boons, to such a *great* and *deserving* Benefactor ! and yet these are much more than what he ordinarily requires at our Hands. For that which he ordinarily requires of us, is, that we would forsake those *Vices* which are as *injurious* to us, as they are *hateful* to him, and which are therefore *hateful* to him, because they are our Enemies ; and that we would practise those *Virtues* in which the Perfection and Happiness of our Nature is involved, and which we can no more be *happy* without, than we can *be* without Being. And can I think much to part with those Lusts for his Sake, which are my Shame and Infelicities, who never grudged to part with *Heaven* for *mine* ? Can they be as *dear* to me, as his Father's Bosom was to him ? And yet he left *that* for Love of *me* ; and shall not I leave *these* for Love of him ? Methinks, if we will not part with them for *our own* Sakes, as being *destructive* to our Peace and Happiness ; yet, had we the *least* Spark of Ingenuity in us, we should gladly part with them for the Sake of our *Saviour*, who for *ours* was so ready to part with all that was *dear* to him. Can we be such Wretches as to refuse to serve him, when he requires nothing of us but what we are obliged to by *our own* Interest ? Are we so *lost* to all that is *ingenuous* and *modest*, that we will not obey *him*, when he only requires us to be kind to *ourselves* ? O wretched Mortals ! doth his coming down from *Heaven* to save you, deserve this *barbarous* Treatment at your Hands, that to spite *him* you should injure *yourselves*,

yourselfes, and wound his Authority through *your own Sides*? Had he been wholly *indifferent* to you, it had been very *unreasonable* to reject his Service, when it altogether consists in serving yourselfes; but to disobey so *dear* a Friend, to whom we are obliged by such *stupendous Favours*, when he enjoyns us nothing but the Means of *our own Happiness*, is such a Piece of *monstrous* and *unnatural* Baseness, as the *Devil* himself can hardly parallel. O *unkind* that we are! that we will not be good to ourselves for our Saviour's Sake, and that when he conjures us to it, as he doth, even by all the Love that we owe him! For so *John* xiv. 15. *If ye love me, saith he, keep my Commandments: Consider what mighty Things I have done for you; how I left my Throne in Heaven for your Sakes, and became a miserable mortal Man: And now that I am going from you, and am offering up my Life to redeem you, if ever I have merited any Love at your Hands, express it in keeping my Commandments. It is no great Matter that I require of you; it is only that you would be kind to yourselfes, that you would let Misery alone, and endeavour to be as happy as Heaven can make you. This is all the Requital that I expect at your Hands, that you would be as good and happy as I would have you; and this which is the Sum of all my Commands, I conjure you strictly to observe, even by all the Love that you owe me. O blessed Jesus, one would have thought thou hadst been requiring some mighty Trial of our Love to thee, that we should do some great Thing for thee, to*
which

which nothing could prompt us but only our Gratitude and Kindness : But when thou only requirest us to express our Love to thee, in doing that which is the *highest* Expression of our Love to *ourselves*, can we be so *disingenuous* as not to do that for *thy* Sake, to whom we are so infinitely obliged, which we are bound to do for *our own* Sakes, as well as thine ?

5. And lastly, Hence I infer what a *glorious* thing it is to do *Good*, since the *Son of God*, having so great an Opportunity of doing *Good* to the World, thought it worth his while to come down from *Heaven*, and assume our Natures, and undergo our Miseries, as if he esteemed it more *glorious* and *becoming* the Majesty and Divinity of his Person to dwell upon Earth with *poor miserable* Mortals, among whom he might do the *greatest Good*, than to sit *above* upon the Throne of *Heaven*, and receive the most *bumble* Adorations of *Angels* ; for it was only for an Opportunity of doing the *greatest Good*, that he exchanged the Glory and Happiness of *Heaven*, chusing rather to become a *miserable* Man to make others *good* and *happy*, than to continue among those *infinite* Delights with which the *heavenly State* abounds. What a most *glorious* thing then is it to do *Good* ? when our most *wise Redecmer* chose it before *Heaven* itself ; when he thought it more *elegible* to come down upon Earth and make us *happy*, than to dwell in the Bosom of his Father, and shine in *Heaven* with the Brightness and Glory of his Divinity. And if there be nothing in *Heaven* so *glorious* as doing *Good*, what is there upon *Earth*

Earth that may be compared unto it? What *dim*, what *jullied* things are all the *Pomps* and *Splendors* of this World compared with the Glory of doing *Good* to *others*, when *God* preferred it before *Heaven* itself! To conquer Kingdoms, to lead the World in Triumph after us, how *mean* and *inconsiderable* are they compar'd with that Glory which the *Son of God* forsook, merely to do *Good* to the World! A thing which he esteemed so *great* and *illustrious*, that he did not only leave *Heaven* for it, but scorned and despised the Kingdoms of the *Earth*, finding nothing *below* that was worthy of him, but only to go about doing *Good*! For this was his *constant* Employment, as you may see, *Acts* x. 21. And now is it *possible*, that after this *great* Example, we should think Beneficence a *cheap* or *vulgar* thing? Can we think it a Dishonour to stoop to the *meanest* Offices, whereby we may serve the *Souls* or *Bodies* of our Brethren, when the *Son of God* came down from *Heaven*, and veiled his Glory in *mortal* Flesh for no other End but to do *Good*! O *foolish* Creatures that we are! Did we but understand and consider what a *magnificent* thing it is to supply the Necessities of Men, and contribute to their Happiness, we should, doubtless, embrace it as our *greatest* Preferment, and think ourselves bound to bless God *for ever*, for furnishing us with Occasions of doing *Good*; that he doth deem us worthy of such an *illustrious* Employment, to have some Share with himself in the Glory of it; that he will vouchsafe to us an Opportunity to *honour* and *magnify* ourselves by acting this *Divine*, this *Godlike*, Part in the
World.

World. Never then let us think that we dishonour ourselves, tho' we stoop *never* so low, when it is to do *Good* ; no, though it be to *visit* a Beggar, to *dress* the Sores of a *poor Lazarus*, to *instruct*, or *comfort*, the *meanest* Wretch in all thy Neighbourhood. For now thou actest the Part of *God*, in doing the most *glorious* thing in all the World ; a thing for which the *greatest* Princes may envy thee, and the *blessed* God for ever applaud thee ! Now thou art doing that which the *Son of God* came down from *Heaven* to do, and which he thought more worthy of his Choice, than to reign over *Angels* in *Heaven* : So that either we must say, That he was *unwise* for preferring it before *Heaven*, or else we must acknowledge, That we are infinitely *foolish* in preferring any thing in the World before it.

II. I now proceed to the *second* Proposition, *And dwelt among us full of Grace and Truth*. For that these *latter* Words [*full of Grace and Truth*] belong to the *former*, [*And dwelt among us*] you may plainly see by the *Parenthesis* in your Bible, by which they are interrupted and broken off from one another. In the Explication of these Words, I shall do these *two* Things :

1. Enquire what is here meant by the *Word's dwelling among us*.

2. What we are to understand by his being *full of Grace and Truth*.

1. What is here meant by the *Word's dwelling among us*? In the *Greek* it is ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν ; that is, he pitched his Tabernacle among us ;
which

which seems plainly to refer to God's Dwelling in the Tabernacle under the *Mosaic Law*. For the *Greek Word* σκηνώω comes immediately from the *Hebrew Shacan*, and differs from it only by the *Greek Termination*; and from *Shacan* comes the Word *Shechinah*, by which the *Hebrews* were wont to express God's *glorious Presence* upon Earth, and especially his Habitation in the *holy Tabernacle* between the *two Cherubims*, where he is said to dwell, 1 *Sam.* iv. 4. and 2 *Sam.* vi. 2. because from thence *God* was wont to speak, and discover himself by a *visible Brightness and Glory*: And accordingly this Presence, or Habitation of *God*, is called in the *Greek* δόξα, and ἐπιφάνεια, *Glory and Appearing*. Thus, *Numb.* xvi. 19. it is said, That when the *Congregation* drew near to the Tabernacle, the *Glory of the Lord appeared* unto them; and *Ver.* 42. it is said, That a *Cloud covered the Tabernacle, and the Glory of the Lord appeared*. So when the *Glory is said to be departed from Israel*, 1 *Sam.* iv. 21. it is plain, that by that *Glory* is meant this *visible Appearance of God* in a *glorious Brightness* from between the *Cherubims*. So *Rev.* 21. when it has been said of the *New Jerusalem*, that it was σκηνή, the *Tabernacle of God with us*, *Ver.* 3. that being repeated again, *Ver.* 11. is said to have the *Glory of God* in it, and the *Glory of God* to enlighten it, *Ver.* 23. Now it seems most probable, that this *glorious Shechinah*, Presence, or Habitation of *God*, consisted in the Presence of *Angels*; who being the *Courtiers of Heaven*, where they appear, there *God* is said to be peculiarly present. And hence it is that the *Well Lab-*
-ri,

roi, where the *Angel* appeared to *Hagar*, Gen. xvi. 7, 14. is by the *Jerusalem Targum*, stiled the Well, *ubi manifestatata illi fuit Præsentia Domini Majestatica*, where the Presence of God in Majesty was manifested to her: And that visible Glory which appeared from between the Cherubims, is called by the same Name, viz. the *Gloria Majestaticæ Præsentia Domini*, the Glory of the Majestatick Presence of God; which is a plain Evidence that the Jews believed the Majestatick Presence of God to be nothing else but the Appearance of Angels. And of the same Mind was the *Author to the Hebrews*, Heb. ii. 2. For the Law, saith he, was spoken by Angels; and so St. Stephen, Acts vii. 53. The Law was received by the Disposition of Angels; and St. Paul, that the Law was ordained by Angels in the Hand of a Mediator, Galat. iii. 19. Whereas *Exod.* xix. 11. compared with xx. Ver. 22. it is said, that The Lord came down in the Sight of all the People, and talked with them; that is, as you will there find, he spoke the Law to them. Which is a plain Evidence, that that glorious Descent of God's Presence upon Mount Sinai, where the Law was spoken, was in the Opinion of the *Author to the Hebrews*, nothing but the Presence of Angels; who when they were to represent the Divine Presence, were wont to appear in bright and radiant Bodies; and therefore where it is said in *Isaiab's* Vision, *Isaiab* vi. 1. that he saw the Lord sitting upon a Throne, and that his Train filled the Temple; that is, his Train of Angels; and this Train of Angels our Saviour calls the Glory of the Lord,

John

John xii. 41. which is the same with the *Shechinah*, or *Majestick Presence* : And therefore, perhaps, they are called *Angels of Light* in reference to that *lucid, shining, flaming* Appearance which they were wont to make : And in *Psaln* civ. 4. *God* is said to make his *Ministers* a *flaming Fire* ; that is, when they are to make a visible Representation of his *Majestick Presence* to Mankind. But, besides this, *Isaiah* lxiii. 9. you have mention made of the *Angel of God's Presence which saved Israel* ; which seems to denote the *Head and Chief* of those Angels, which by their *glorious* Appearances did represent *God* to Mankind. By which Angel the *Jews* did generally understand the *Messias*, or *eternal Word* : For so *Philo* *, speaking of *God's* committing the Care of his Flock to his *first-born Son*, *The Word*, tells us, *That this is that Angel whom God promised to send before the Camp of Israel, even the Angel of his Presence*. And so also *Rab. Menahem* upon the xivth of *Exod.* 19. tells us, that the *Angel which went before the Camp of Israel was Shechinah, the Presence, or Majesty of God, and that he is called the Angel, or Prince of the World, because the Government of the World is in his Hands*. And to the same Purpose *Moses*, the Son of *Nebeman*, *Præterea Scriptum est*, saith he, & *Angelus faciei ejus salvos fecit ipsos*, &c. that is, *It is written, the Angel of his Presence shall save them*, viz. that Angel which is the Presence of *God*, of whom it is said, *My Presence shall go before thee, and I will cause thee to rest*. Moreover, saith he, *this is that Angel*

Angel of whom the Prophets foretold, The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his Temple, the Angel of the Covenant whom ye desire ; which both the antient Jews and Christians interpret to be the Messias : And this, saith he, is He who governs the World, that brought the Children of Israel out of Egypt, and to whom the most high God communicates his own Name. And this, without doubt, was he whom God calls his Presence, when he promised Moses, That his Presence should go along with him, Exod. xxxiii. 14. for this Presence is there said to be the Angel of God ; both which put together, make him to be the Angel of God's Presence, Exod. xxiii. 20. And accordingly, instead of, Say not before the Angel of the Lord, Ecclef. v. 6. the Septuagint renders it, Say not before the Presence of God, that is, before the Angel of his Presence. And since to this Angel of his Presence, God doth attribute not only his Prerogative of forgiving Sins, but also his own Name, as you may see he doth, Exod. xxiii. 21. it seems very probable, what not only the Jews, but many very learned Christians do assert, that it was no created Angel, but the eternal Word, or Messias : For, saith God to Moses, Behold I send an Angel before thee, &c. beware of him, and obey his Voice ; provoke him not, for he will not pardon your Transgressions for my Name is in him ; that is, my Name Jehovah, which is the proper and incommunicable Name of God. And accordingly you frequently read of an Angel that is called by the Name Jehovah, which I doubt not, was the same with this Angel of God's Presence. Thus that

that Angel of the Lord which appeared to *Moses* in the *burning Bush*, is called by the Name *Jehovah*, and stiled, *the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, *Exod. iii. 2. comp. 4. 5.* And one of those Angels that appeared to *Abraham* in the *Plains of Mamre*, is called the *Lord*, and *the Judge of all the Earth*, *Gen. xviii. 1, 25.* So also he that stood on the Top of the Ladder in *Jacob's Vision*, is in *Gen. xxviii. 13.* called *the Lord God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac*; whereas in *Gen. xxxi. 11.* he is called *the Angel of the Lord*, and afterwards, *Ver. 13. the God of Bethel.* Which seems to me a plain Evidence, that that *Angel* of God was *God*, since both those Titles were attributed to the same Person; and that he was also that very Angel of *his Presence* whom God promised to send before the *Camp of Israel*, since in him it is apparent the Name of God was, *i. e.* the Name *Jehovah*. And it is very observable, that this very Angel, both *Philo* and the *Chaldee Paraphrase* stile the *Word of God*, and therefore those Words of God to *Joshuae* *Jos. 1. 5.* *As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee*, the *Paraphrase* renders thus; *As my Word was assisting to Moses, so it shall be assisting to thee.* And it is the Observation of the learned *Masius*, that generally where the *Hebrew Text* speaks of God, either conversing with Men, or managing their Affairs, that *Paraphrase*, instead of God, uses this Phrase, *the Word of God.* From whence it is evident, that it was the received Doctrine of the *Jews*, that God was always present with Mankind by his *eternal Word*; which is therefore the more

considerable, because it so exactly agrees with the Doctrine of the *Primitive Fathers*. For so *Tertullian*, *Christus semper egit in Dei Patris nomine*; *ipse ab initio conversatus est cum Patriarchis & Prophetis*. And in his Book against *Praxian* he tells us, *That from Adam to the Patriarchs and Prophets, Christ always descended to discourse with Men*; and that that *God who conversed upon Earth with Men, was no other than that eternal Word that was to be made Flesh*. And the same thing is strenuously asserted also by *Justin Martyr* in his Discourses with *Trypho the Jew*. Nor can I see any Reason why he should not be the *Angel of God's Presence*, since elsewhere he is expressly called the *Angel* of that Covenant by which *God* hath obliged himself to be present with his *Church* for ever, *Mal. iii. 1*. And the *New Testament* so often declares him to be the *Image*, and *Character*, and *Representative* of *God*; and himself tells *Philip* that he did so perfectly represent the Father, that *whosoever had seen him had seen the Father*, *John xiv. 9*. And if this be so, as it seems highly probable, that *The Word* was the *Angel of God's Presence*, that is, the *Chief*, or *Prince* of those Angels that represented *God* in the World, then it will follow that the *Shechinah*, or *Majestick Presence* of *God*, consisted in a glorious and visible Appearance of the *Word*, with a Troop of blessed Angels attending him in bright and luminous Forms. And this I conceive was the glorious Presence of *God* which came down first upon *Mount Sinai*, and afterwards removed into the *Tabernacle*, and abode between the two Cherubims,

Cherubims. And this I am rather induced to believe, because I find the Descent of God's Presence upon *Mount Sinai*, is described in the same Manner as Christ's Coming to Judgement; for so *Mat. xvi. 27.* it is said, that *he shall come in the Glory of his Father, with his Angels*; and *St. Jude* tells us, that *he shall come with his Holy Myriads, or Ten Thousands*, *Ver. 14.* for so it ought to be rendered: And the Lord in the same Manner is said to come from *Sinai with his holy Ten Thousands, or Myriads*; for so it is in the *Hebrew*, *Deut. xxxiii. 2.* And since they are both described in the same Manner, it seems to follow, that they were both the *same Majestick Presence* of God, even the *eternal Word* assuming a *glorious Form*, and attended with *Myriads of bright and shining Angels*. And this same *Presence* it was that was afterwards displayed in the *Tabernacle*, which was said to be filled with the *Glory of the Lord*, which shone from between the Cherubims with a *bright and visible Splendor*; that is, with the *illustrious Appearances* of the *eternal Word*, and those *glorious Angels* that attended him. And upon *that Mount*, and in *that Tabernacle*, did this *blessed Word* represent his Father, even as the *Viceroy* doth the *Sovereign Prince*; for there in his Father's Person, and by his Authority, he gave forth his Laws and Oracles to the Seed of *Abraham*, and as the Vicegerent of the most *high God*, governed the House of *Israel*, and distributed to them *Rewards* and *Punishments*, according as they behaved themselves towards him: For upon all the *fore-named Reasons* it seems highly probable, that

he was the Lord who spoke to *Moses*, and from between the Cherubims, and that thence delivered the Law to him. So that as he was the *Shechinah*, or *glorious Presence* of the most *high God* in the Tabernacle, he did there represent his Person by bearing his Authority, and ruling the House of *Israel*, as his *Substitute* and *Viceroy*.

And that the Words of my Text do refer to this *glorious Appearance* of *the Word* in the Tabernacle, and to his representing of the most *high God* there, is very evident, in that it is not only said that he tabernacled among them, which evidently alludes to his dwelling in the *old Tabernacle*; but that they saw *his Glory* too, which is a *plain Allusion* to that *Glory* of his which filled the Tabernacle. So that the Meaning of these Words, *He dwelt among us*, seems to be this; that as *Christ*, who is the *eternal Word*, was the *Shechinah*, the *Divine Presence*, or *Angel of God's Presence*, which in the Tabernacle, of *old* represented the most *High* to the *Jews*; so he also abode, or tabernacled in our *Flesh*, as the *Representative* of his Father to Mankind. In the Tabernacle of our *Flesh*, he display'd the *Glory* of his Father to us; he openly manifested and represented him to the World, even as of *old* he was wont to do in the Tabernacle of *Moses*. For *The Word* to tabernacle among us, must necessarily signify more then barely to dwell, or live among us; for it must signify to dwell as the *Shechinah* in the Tabernacle, that is, as the most *glorious Presence*, or *Representative* of the most *high God*, as one that was vested with the *divine Authority*,

Authority, and that was the *Viceregent* of the Father of all Things. So that, *He dwelt among us*, seems to signify the same with, *He reign'd among us* in his Father's Stead, as one who bore his Authority, and represented his Person, and to whom, for the future, we were to pay the *same* Homage and Reverence that we were bound to render to the most *High* himself, who under *himself* hath authorized him to be our Prince and Governor, to declare his Divine Will to us, and exact our Obedience thereunto, by *rewarding* and *punishing* us according to the Tenor of those Laws which he hath established in his *blessed Gospel*; for this is plainly implied in his *Shechanizing* or *Tabernacling*, viz. his being the *glorious* Representative of *God* in the World. He tabernacled among us, that is, he acted in *God's* Stead, as one that represented his Father; and this he did in our *Flesh* in a far more *glorious* Manner than ever he did in the *Mosaic Tabernacle*: For in our *Flesh* and *Nature* he tabernacled *full of Grace and Truth*; which brings me to the next Enquiry, viz.

2. What is here meant by his *dwelling among us full of Grace and Truth*? By these two Phrases the Design of the *holy Penman* is, doubtless, to distinguish the Manner of his dwelling among us, from that of his dwelling among the *Jews* in the *Tabernacle*: For a little after he uses the *same* Phrases in *Contradistinction* to the *Law of Moses*: *The Law*, saith he, *was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth by Jesus Christ*, v. 17. *God, the eternal Word*, gave the *Law* to *Moses*, and *Moses* gave it to the *People of Israel*; but *Jesus Christ*

that is, the *eternal Word incarnate*, gave not the Law, but *Grace and Truth*. So in the Text, *The Word incarnate*, or tabernacled in our Flesh, did *Shعانize*, or perform the Part of his Father's *supreme Representative* among us *full of Grace and Truth*; which implies something beyond what he did when he dwelt in the Tabernacle of *Moses*, and there, as the *Viceroy of God*, reigned over the *House of Jacob*. That I may therefore more fully explain this Matter to you, I will briefly consider these *two Phrases apart*, and shew you in what Particulars they each of them distinguish his dwelling among us, from his dwelling in the *Mosaic Tabernacle*.

1. He dwelt among us *full of Grace*, which distinguishes his dwelling among us from that more *severe and rigorous* Manner in the *former Tabernacle*; and that in these following Particulars :

1/*st*, He dwelt among us *full of Grace*, in respect of the *Sweetness and Obligingness* of his Behaviour, in Contradistinction to that more *dreadful and terrible* Manner of his Conversing with the *Jews*, when he tabernacled among them. The *Jews* being a most *stubborn and stiff-necked* Generation, (as they are often called in the *Old Testament*) the *eternal Word* thought fit to converse among them in such a way as was most *suitable* to their *Genius and Temper*, to break their Stubbornness with the Dread of his Power, and awe them with the Terror of his Majesty. And accordingly you find that when he came down first upon *Mount Sinai*, he was attended with a *loud sounding Trumpet*, with *Thunders and Lightenings*, with *Fire and Smoak*, and all the

the Equipage of a most *dreadful* Majesty, such as caused the Mountain and the People to tremble, *Exod.* xix. 16, 20. And afterwards it is said, that the Glory in which he appeared, when the People saw him upon the Mount, was like a *devouring* Fire, in which *glorious* Appreance he afterwards removed iuto the *Tabernacle*, and there abode between the *Cherubims*, *Exod.* xl. 34, 35. And when in all this *dreadful* Majesty he appeared unto them, they are kept at a *great* Distance from him, and were severely forbid to approach him, least he should *break forth upon them, and destroy them*, *Exod.* xix. 24. And whenever they provoked him by their Murmurings and Rebellions, his Wrath broke forth like *Lightening* upon them, and consumed the *ring-leading* Rebels, that by their Example the rest might be warned to do no more wickedly. Thus in all his Converse with them he clothed himself in a *formidable* Majesty, to break and awe their *sturdy* Spirits, and force their *stiff* Necks to yield to the Yoke of his *Sovereign* Authority. But when he assumed our Nature, and tabernacled among us in our Flesh, he laid by that *astonishing* Majesty that was wont to render him so dreadful to the *Israelites*, and put on all the Condescensions and Sweetnesses of a most *familiar* and *endearing* Conversation, and conversed amongst Men in such a *generous, friendly*, and *courteous* Manner, as was most apt to charm and enamour the World. He was free, without being *vain* or *trifling*; serious, without being *sour* and *morose*; his Humour always *cheerful* and *uniform*, and his Gravity

was equally distant from Moroseness and Vanity; and, in a Word, his Deportment was made up of all the Accomplishments that can command either Love or Honour. And though now and then he falls into high Expressions of Indignation, yet it was only against those base Fellows the *Pharisees*, who under a Pretence of being *Saints* and the *godly Party*, were *bloated* up with Pride and Arrogance, and *cankered* with Malice and *ill Nature*; for which they were so abominable in his Eyes, whose Temper was altogether so *loving* and *divine*, that he could not mention them without calling them *Hypocrites*, and the *Children of the Devil*. And if to all this you add his *profound Humility* and *Condescension*, his *Meekness* under Reproaches, and his *Constancy* and *Patience* under the *greatest* Sufferings; how much more *sweet*, *graceful*, and *charming*, was this, than when he appeared in such a *dreadful* and *astounding* Majesty upon *Mount Sinai*, and in the *Tabernacle of Moses*? It is true, the *Innocency* and *Purity* of his Life, the *Divinity* of his Doctrine, and the many mighty Miracles that he wrought, could not but imprint an awful Majesty upon his Person; but yet it was a graceful Majesty, a Majesty full of Grace and Sweetness, and such as was much more *apt* to *endear*, than to *affright* Men. For, as for the *Virtue* of his Life, and the *Divinity* of his Doctrine, it could not but attract all those who had any Love and Esteem for Virtue and Goodness. And as for his Miracles, they were vastly *different* from those which he wrought in the *Wilderness*, which had *little* else in them but
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Matter of Terror and Astonishment ; but these were all such as did express his Kindness to the World, and so were much more apt to oblige, than to terrify those that beheld them : *For he went about doing Good, and healing all that were oppressed with the Devil, Acts x. 38. and healing all manner of Sickness, and all manner of Diseases among the People, Mat. iv. 23.* So that in respect of the *Sweetness* and *Obligingness* of his Conversation, he tabernacled among us *full of Grace*, in Contradistinction to that *terrible* Majesty in which he tabernacled among the *Jews*.

2dly, He tabernacled among us *full of Grace*, in regard of the *Sweetness* and *Gentleness* of his Laws, in Contradistinction to those many *burthensome* Precepts which he gave when he tabernacled among the *Jews*. It is apparent by the History of that People, that they were obstinately addicted to the Customs of *Egypt*, from whence they were brought, and of the *neighbouring* Nations round about them ; and thence it was, that notwithstanding those *manifest* Discoveries that God had made of himself to them, and of his being the only *true God*, such as one would have thought had been *sufficient* to have convinced the most *obstinate* Gainstayers ; yet *ever* and *anon* we find them starting aside to the *idolatrous* Customs of the *Gentiles*, and revolting from that *God* who had so gloriously manifested himself among them. The *Eternal Word* therefore, when he came to *tabernacle* among them, he gave them abundance of Laws, the Matter of which was in its *own* Nature perfectly *indifferent*, that by
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those, as by so many Bounds and Fences, he might keep them from breaking out of God's Inclosure into the *wild Common* of *Gentilism*; and such were the *greatest* Part of their *Ceremonial Laws*, some of which were instituted in Compliance with the more innocent Rites of the *Heathen*, and *others* in Opposition to those which were purely *magical* and *idolatrous*. And hence it is that in the Law of their Ceremonies, there are so many Things enjoined them, of which we can give no *tolerable* Account, they being either innocent Customs derived from the *Heathens* in Compliance with the *Jews*, or Prohibitions of those *magical* and *idolatrous* Customs in which the *Jews* had been educated in *Egypt*, and to which they were always very prone and inclinable; so that merely to comply with the *Jews* in what was innocent, and to restrain them in what was *hurtful* and *idolatrous*, the *Eternal Word* was fain to impose a *vast* Number of *positive Laws* upon them, which contained nothing but what was purely indifferent, and might have been done or undone without any Prejudice to the *eternal* Rules of Goodness. And accordingly, *Ezek. xx. 24, 25.* it is said, that *because their Eyes were after their Fathers Idols, therefore God gave them Statutes that were not good*; that is, had no *intrinsic* Goodness in them; and *Judgments whereby they should not live*. And that God imposed these Things, not as *good* in themselves, but as *accommodated* to the *present* State and Temper of the *Israelites*, is evident from what the *Psalmist* says, *Psal. li. 16. Thou desirest not Sacrifice*;

Sacrifice; thou delightest not in Burnt-Offerings. Though it is evident he had a farther End in imposing very many of these *sacred Rites*, namely, to shadow out by them the *Mysteries of the Gospel*, and give them some *preludious Hints* of that *glorious Kingdom of Christ*, that was afterwards to be established in the World: But by this Means the *Jewish Law* was multiplied into so many Precepts, and those many of them so *expensive and burthensome*, that the *Apostle* calls it a *Yoke*, which neither they, nor their *Fathers* were able to bear, Acts xv. 10. and elsewhere, a *Yoke of Bondage*, Gal. v. 1. Thus while the *Eternal Word* tabernacled among the *Jews*, his Laws were very *rigid and cumbersome*, being clogged with so *vast* a Number of *positives Rites and Observances*: But when he came to tabernacle in our *Flesh*, he abolished all these *numerous Ceremonies*, and imposed nothing upon the World but what is *sweet*, and *easy*, and *full of Grace*. And hence himself tells us, *Mat. xi. 30.* ὁ ζυγὸς μου ἥπιον ἐστίν, *My Yoke is gracious*, (for so it is in the *Greek*) and *my Burthen is light*; for it imposes nothing upon us but what is most *agreeable* to our *rational Natures*, nothing but what we ourselves, if we were *wise and good*, should reckon ourselves obliged to, though he had never enjoined it. For all the *Duty* he requires of us results immediately from the *Frame of our Natures*, and the *unalterable Relations* we stand in to *God* and the *World*. For the *Sum of all Christian Duty* is contained in those *three Generals*, to live *soberly*, and *righteously*, and *godly*, in this *present World*;
and

and these must necessarily oblige us so long as we carry *such* Beings about us, and continue in *such* Relations. Whilst God is our God and Creator, we cannot be disobliged from living *godly*; that is, from *honouring* and *loving* him, from *fearing* and *trusting* in him, from *serving* and *adoring* him; for unless we could destroy our Relation to him, and cease to be his Creatures, the Dueness of these Acts of Homage and Worship from *us* to *him*, must necessarily abide *for ever*: Whilst we continue to be *reasonable* Animals, we cannot be freed from the Obligation of *Sobriety*, which consists in governing our Passions and Appetites by our Reason; for till we can lay by our Reason, which is the *superior* Principle of our Nature, and step into *another* Form of Beings, it will be always fit that our *inferior* Powers should be subject to its Conduct and Government. Whilst we continue in the *Society* of Men, and are Members of the Body of Mankind, we cannot be released from the Ties of *Righteousness*, which contains in it *Charity* and all other *social Virtues*; and till we cease to be related to Mankind, it can never cease to be *reasonable* for us to do what becomes our Relation, that is, to be *just*, *benign*, and *charitable* to *one another*. So that all that the *Word incarnate* hath enjoined us, is to do what we ourselves must needs acknowledge is most *just* and *reasonable*, and what we should chuse to do before any thing in the World, were we not prejudiced against it by our own *base* Lusts and *unreasonable* Passions. So that in respect of those *gracious* Laws he gave us whilst he dwelt among us, he may well be said to dwell among us *full of Grace*.

3dly, He dwelt among us *full of Grace*, in respect of that *full Pardon* and Remission which he hath granted to Sinners in his *Gospel*, in Contradistinction to that *partial* and *incomplete Pardon* which he gave when he tabernacled among the *Jews*. For whilst the *Eternal Word*, as his Father's Representative, reigned over the Nation of *Israel*, he gave no *other Pardon* but *temporal*, by the Law of *Moses*, which was the Rule and Instrument of his Government. And I am sure that from the xxth of *Exod.* to the xxviith of *Deut.* in which Compass that whole Law is comprized, there is not the *least* mention of any *other Pardon* or Forgiveness, allowed to Offenders, but only what respects their *temporal Punishment*: Nay, in *some Cases* this was not allowed; as particularly, in the Cases of *Blasphemy*, *Idolatry*, and *Murder*, no, not though they heartily repented of it. For all that Pardon which the *Mosaick Law* allowed, was indulged to them upon their offering up *propitiatory Sacrifices*, which in these *exempted Cases* were not allowed of; but yet the *Apostle* tells us of all these Sacrifices in general, that *the Blood of Bulls and of Goats could not take away Sin*, Heb. x. 4. that *they did sanctify only to the purifying of the Flesh* Heb. vii. 13. that *they could not make him that did the Service perfect as pertaining to the Conscience*, Heb. ix. 9. that is, that they only released Offenders from the Obligation to *civil* and *ecclesiastical Punishments*, but could by no means free them from the *eternal Punishments* of the *other Life*. Not that I make the *least* doubt but that truly *penitent* Offenders

were

were forgiven the *eternal* Punishment *then*, as well as *now*, and forgiven *too* for the Sake of *Jesus Christ*, the Lamb that was intentionally slain from the beginning of the World; but by what hath been said, it is plain they were not forgiven by virtue of that Law whereby the *Eternal Word* reigned over the House of *Israel*, but rather by virtue of that *Gospel* which was first preached to *Adam*, and afterwards to the *Patriarchs*; wherein *Christ*, the *Seed of the Woman*, and the *Seed of Abraham*, is promised, in whom all Nations of the Earth should be blessed. It is true, the Sacrifices of the *Law* were *typical* of the Sacrifice of *Christ*, and so consequently was that *temporal* Pardon obtained by them, *typical* of that *eternal* Pardon which we do obtain by the great Propitiation of our *Saviour*; for so the *Apostle* tells us, that *the Law had in it a shadow of good things to come*. Heb. x. 1. But we must not imagine that *eternal* Remission, which is the Effect of *Christ's* real Sacrifice, could ever be obtained by those Sacrifices which were only the Shadows and Resemblances of it. So that *that* Remission of Sins which the *Eternal Word* gave whilst he tabernacled among the *Jews*, was nothing near so *perfect* and *complete* as that which he afterwards proclaimed in the Tabernacle of our *Flesh*, because it neither extended to all Kinds of Sins, nor yet to all Kinds of Punishments; it left *some* unforgiven, as to the Punishments of this *Life*, and it left *all* unforgiven as to the Punishments of the *Life to come*. But having pitched his Tabernacle in our *Flesh*, he did, by the *meritorious*

ritorious Sacrifice of himself, obtain of his Father this *publick* Act of Grace, this *free* Charter of Mercy for all Mankind, that whatsoever would repent and amend, whatsoever Sins he is guilty of, whatsoever Punishments he is obliged to, he shall certainly be forgiven them all, and be as freely received into God's Grace and Favour, as if he never had offended him; for he is the Propitiation for the Sins of the World; *And by him* saith the Apostle, *all that believe are justified from all Things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses.* Act xiii. 39. In this respect therefore the *Eternal Word* dwelt among us *full of Grace*, in that he proclaimed such a full and perfect Pardon of all Sins, and of all Punishments, to all that with a true Faith and hearty Repentance should turn unto him; and accordingly this Pardon is frequently called by the Name of *Grace*, or *of the Grace of God*, and *of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Acts xv. 11. Heb. xii. 15. and Rom. iii. 24.

4thly, He dwelt among us *full of Grace*, in respect of the *internal* Grace and Assistance, which he so abundantly afforded us above what he did to the *Jews* under the Law of *Moses* when he tabernacled among them. I make no Doubt but God in all Ages hath been always ready to assist good Men in their Duty. This the very *Heathens* themselves believed, that *ἡ τοῦ δαίμονος ἐν δυνάμει ἀγαθῆς*, that *God* did concur with all good Men, and that no Man did ever arrive to any eminent Degree of Virtue without a *divine* Afflatus, or Assistance. And had the good Men among the *Jews* been ignorant of

of this, what should move them to pray, as we find they often do, that *God* would *wash* and *cleanse*, and *quicken* and *strengthen*, and *enliven* them? For so, in the *Book of the Psalms*, you find good *David* very often praying, that *God* would *teach him his Commandments*, and *incline his Heart to keep them*, and *keep him back from presumptuous Sin*. By which Prayers it is evident, they had good Encouragement to hope that *God* would be ready to concur with them, and to bless their *pious* Endeavours with the *internal* Assistance of his Grace and Spirit. And this Encouragement, I suppose, they might have partly from their *natural* Notions of *God*, which must needs suggest to them that He being infinitely *good*, as he is, will never be wanting to his Creatures in any thing that is *necessary* to the obtaining those *noble* Ends for which he created them, and consequently that he will be assistant to them in their Duty which is the Way to that End, and not to leave them to contend with Difficulties which are *insuperable* to their *natural* Power and Ability; and partly from those *general Evangelical* Promises which *God* made to them by the *Patriarchs* and *Prophets*, from whence they might fairly infer, that he who had promised to do so much for them, upon Condition they persisted in their Duty and Allegiance to him, would never be wanting on his Part to strengthen and enable them to it. But I can by no Means allow, that they were encouraged to hope for any such Assistance from any Promise of that Law which the *Eternal Word* gave them, when he tabernacled among them, and by which, in
his

his Father's Stead, he ruled and governed them; and that both because there is no such Promise found in all that Law, and because the *Apostle* tells us, that *the Law was weak through the Flesh*, Rom. viii. 3. and calls it *the Ministration of Death written and engraven in Stones*, in Opposition to *the Ministration of the Spirit that is not written in Tables of Stone, but in fleshy Tables of the Heart*, 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8. compare with ver. 3. And Gal. iii. 13, 14. you find the *Apostle* opposes to the *Curse of the Law*, the *Blessing of Abraham*; and the *Blessing of Abraham* he tells us is *the Promise of the Spirit through Faith*, that is by the *Gospel*. And thus under the Law there was doubtless an *internal Grace* and Assistance vouchsafed to good Men, though not promised by it; yet after the *Eternal Word* forsook the Tabernacle of *Moses*, and came to tabernacle in our *Flesh*, it is evident that then he did more plentifully communicate this his Grace to the World than ever; for then the *Spirit* was said to be shed upon us abundantly through *Jesus Christ our Lord*; and in the 16th Verse of this 1st of *John*, we are said of *his Fulness to receive χάρις ἀπὸ χάριτος*, Grace upon Grace, that is, Grace heaped upon Grace, and a vast overflowing Abundance; according to that of *Theognis* δέσμις τ' αἰτ' ἀνῶν ἀρίστας, that is, thou givest me Calamities upon Calamities. So that unless we will ourselves, it is now impossible we should fall short either of our Duty, or the blessed Reward of it, since our *Saviour* is become such an overflowing Fountain of Grace to us, and hath promised to communicate it to us in such plentiful Effusions if we will sincerely ask, and

honestly endeavour after it; and therefore in this Respect also he may well be said to dwell among us full of Grace, in that while he dwelt among us he obtained for, and promised to us such an accumulated Plenty of inward Grace and Assistance; to encourage and enable us to do his Commandments.

5thly, He dwelt among us full of Grace in Respect of the Vastness of the Recompence which he promised to us, and which infinitely exceeds whatsoever he promised when he dwelt in the Tabernacle of Moses. For when the eternal Word reigned over Israel as the Viceroy and Substitute of his Father, he only acted the Part of their Civil Sovereign or Governor; which Part he continued till they chose another King, and then he resigned his Title to the succeeding Heirs of David. And accordingly we find, that when the Israelites first desired a King of Samuel, God bids him hearken to their Cry: For, saith he, they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. Sam. viii. 7. Which is a plain Argument, that before he only acted as their political Prince, in that he interprets their desiring another King, to be a rejecting of him from reigning over them. For had he been no otherwise King over Israel, than as he is over other Nations where the true Religion is owned and professed, his Dominion might have fairly consisted with that of another King, or Sovereign; and it would have been no more a rejecting God's Rule for Israel to desire a King, than it is for France, or Spain, or England. For it is plain the Israelites did not reject God's
divine

divine Dominion, which he claims over the World as the *Omnipotent* Creator of all Things ; for then their Desire of a King had been *Idolatry*, and the Kings whom they desired had been *Idols*, or *false* Gods. It is plain therefore, that it was his *political* Dominion only which they rejected, by desiring *another* King to reign in his stead, which he interprets as their Intention to rob and divest him of that *Civil Authority* which till then he had claimed and exercised among them. So that the *plain* Sense of their Desire was this ; *God* shall no longer be our *Civil Sovereign*, but for the *future* we are resolved to have a King from among *ourselves*, even as *other* Nations round about us, whom we will invest with the same *Civil Authority* which hitherto he hath challenged and exercised among us. *God the Eternal Word* therefore being their *Civil Prince*, or Ruler, as such he gave them the *Mosaick* Law, which he only designed to be the Rule, or Instrument of his *Civil* Government and Dominion ; which is the Reason why in *that* Law he only promised *Civil* or *Temporal* Blessings, because it was only a Law of *Civil* Government, and as such could design no further than the *Civil* or *Temporal* Happiness of those who were to be ruled and governed by it. And accordingly, if you peruse the Promises of that Law, you will find that they all consist of *outward* and *temporal* Blessings ; such as *Health* of Body, and *Victory* over their Enemies, *Peace* among themselves, and with their *neighbouring* Nations, *Plenty* of Bread, and the *Conveniencies* of Life, and *Success* and *Prosperity* in all their Affairs ; and

therefore the *Author to the Hebrews* calls the *Gospel*, the bringing in of a *better Hope*, and upon this Account opposes it to the Law of *Moses*, Heb. vii. 19; which plainly implies, that *that* Law brought in no *better Hope* than that of a *temporal* Happiness; and those Words of the *Apostle*, Gal. iii. 12. *The Law is not of Faith; but the Man that doth them shall live in them*, do plainly seem to imply this Sense. The Law proposing only *present* and *sensible* Blessings to such as do it, such as that *Thou shalt live a happy and prosperous Life in this World*, doth not require Faith properly so called, which is the *Evidence of things not seen*; that is of the *invisible* Blessings of the *other Life*; and ver. 21. he plainly asserts, that if there had been any *other* Law besides the *Gospel* that could have given that *promised* Life, *Righteousness would have been by that Law*, and therefore since, as he asserts, *Righteousness* was by no other Law but the *Gospel*, it follows, that no other *Law*, no, not that of *Moses*, could give, or promise, *Life eternal*. Not that I make the *least* Doubt, but good Men under the Law of *Moses*, did firmly believe a *future* Happiness; for this the very *Heathens* themselves had very *great* Hopes and Expectations of, though they never had so much Reason as the *Jews* to induce them to believe: For, besides all these *weighty* Arguments which were *common* to them with the *Heathens*, they had those *general evangelical* Promises which *God* made to the *Patriarchs* of being *their God*, and *their exceeding great Reward*; the Histories of the Translations of

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Enoch and *Elijah*, and of *undry* most *eminent* Examples of God's *exceeding* Love to Goodness and *good* Men; from whence they might easily infer, that sure he had *better* Rewards in Store for them than any of the *transitory* Blessings of this Life, especially when they saw how many good Men were deprived of these, and left *naked* and *destitute* of all worldly Comforts: Besides all which, in every Age they had Prophets that were divinely inspired, and who, among all the Secrets that were revealed to them, cannot be supposed to have been wholly unacquainted with the *typical* Meaning of their Ceremonies and Polity, which, among other Things, presignified the *glorious* Recompences of the Life to come. But however they came by it, I think it is very apparent from *undry* Passages in the *Book of Psalms*, *Ezekiel* and *Daniel*, that they were far from being Strangers to the Doctrine of a *blessed* Immortality *hereafter*; though I think it is very apparent from what hath been said, that they did not derive their Belief of this Doctrine from any express Promise of their Law. But yet it is very apparent, that though they were not altogether unacquainted with it, yet it was never so clearly discovered to them by the *eternal Word*, as it was afterwards to us by the *Word incarnate*, since, as the *Apostle* tells us, *He brought Life and Immortality to Light by the Gospel*: For therein he hath most clearly promised it to us, and as far as human Language can express, explained and unfolded its Nature; and by his own Resurrection and Ascension into *Heaven*, hath given us a *clear*

and *visible* Demonstration of its Truth and Reality; so that now the Existence of it is become as certain to us, as it is possible for a *Matter of Fact* to be; and we cannot be more infallibly assured of it than we are, unless we had been personally in *Heaven*, and had there surveyed its Glories with our own Eyes. Well therefore may He be said to have dwelt among us *full of Grace*, since he was graciously pleased to make us such express Promises of future Happiness, and give us such ample Assurance of its Reality and Existence. And so I have done with the first Note of Distinction between Christ's dwelling among *us*, and his dwelling in the *Mosaic Tabernacle*: He dwelt among us *full of Grace*.

2. The *other* Character by which his dwelling among *us* is distinguished from his dwelling in the *Mosaick Tabernacle*, is this, that he dwelt among us *full of Truth*. It is *plain* that *Truth* here is not to be understood as opposed to *Falshood*, because in that Sense it is no Note of Distinction between these *two* Dwellings, or Tabernaclings of *Christ*, unless we suppose that he did falsely dwell, or act, and represent *God* in the Tabernacle of *Moses*, which would be to blaspheme his Truth and Veracity. *Truth* therefore must here be understood as opposed to *Obscurity* and *Shadow*, and so must denote *Clearness* and *Reality*, as it very commonly doth. As when we say a Picture is not a *true* Man, we do not charge the Picture with a *Lie*. If it could speak indeed, and should call itself a Man, we should then say, it were a *lying* Picture for pretending to be what it is not, being

being only a *silent* Resemblance of him. Thus when the *Apostle* saith, *He dwelt among us as full of Truth*, and thereby distinguishes his tabernacling among *us*, from the manner of his dwelling among the *Jews*, it is not so to be understood as if he had dwelt among them in a *false*, or *lying* Manner, or that *that* Representation which he made to them of *God* and *divine* Things were *false* and *imposturous*; no, God forbid: But thus, whereas when he inhabited the Tabernacle, he was *full* of *Hieroglyphicks*, or *mystical* Representations, which tho' they were *true* Pictures, or Shadows of *divine* Things, yet have not the Truth and Reality of the things themselves in them, and consequently would be Lyes and Cheats, should they pretend to be what they only represent, but now he is come to dwell among us, he is *full* of the Things themselves, of those *Realities* which formerly he only gave us the *Types* and *Shadows* of; now he hath removed all that Scene of Pictures and *mystical* Representations, and brought the Things themselves upon the *Stage*, and exposed them *naked* to the View of the World. So that *now* he doth not entertain us, as *heretofore* he did the *Jews*, with *Emblems* and *Shadows*, but with Truth, and the *real* Substances of Things. And thus the Word is very frequently taken in the *New Testament*: Thus *Heb.* viii. 2. the *Christian Church* is called *the true Tabernacle* in Contradistinction to the *Tabernacle of Moses*; not as if *that* were a *false* Tabernacle, but a *typical* one, it being designed only as a Shadow of the *Christian Church*, which is the *true* Reality

and Substance which was pictured and represented in it; for so the *Apostle* himself explains it, *Heb. ix. 24. For Christ*, saith he, *is not entered into the holy Places made with Hands, which are the Figures of the true, but into Heaven itself*: From whence it is plain, that therefore those *holy Places* are opposed to *true Places*, because they were only *Figures*, or *mystical Representations* of something that is *real and substantial*. So, *Dan. vii. 16.* when *Daniel* desired to know the Truth of that *Prophetick Scene*, it is said, that *One stood by, and made him know the Interpretation of the Things*; that is, what was the Reality and Substance that was represented in those Types and Figures. So here, *He dwelt among us full of Truth*; that is, when he dwelt among us he was full of the Substance and Reality of those Things, which before he was wont to represent by *obscure Emblems* and *Shadows*; now he presents to us the Things themselves, and not the *mystical* Types and Figures of them, as formerly he was wont to do. For I think it is very evident, that the *whole Model* of the *Jewish Polity* was purposely contrived to be an *Emblem* and Representation of the *Gospel*, and that the *main Reason* of those *numerous Rites and Ceremonies*, was to delineate and shadow out the *glorious Mysteries* of *Christianity*: For the *Apostle* plainly tells us, that they were all a *Shadow of Things to come*, and that the *Body*, or Substance of that Shadow, was *Jesus Christ*. *Col. ii. 17.* And the Author to the *Hebrews* calls them the *Patterns of the Things in Heaven*, or the *heavenly*

venly Things; by which it is plain he means *Christ*, or the Subjects of the Kingdom of *Christ*, since he tells us, that as it was necessary that those Patterns should be purified with Blood, so it was necessary that those heavenly Things represented by them, should be purified by a better Sacrifice. Heb. ix. 23. And what other heavenly Things are there but only *Christians* that are purified with this better Sacrifice of *Christ*? And in another Place the same Author tells us, that *the Law bath in it a Shadow of good Things to come.* Heb. x. 1. And thus very frequently in the *New Testament*, the sacred Rite of the *Mosaick Law* are declared to be Types and Shadows of the *Mysteries* of the *Gospel*, as particularly in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, which is almost wholly spent upon this Argument, and this the *Jews* themselves seem to be acquainted with long before the Publication of the *Gospel*: For so the most antient *Jews* looked upon the Temple as a Type and Figure of the heavenly State; and *Philo the Jew*, in his *Allegories of the Law*, and almost in all his other Writings, makes the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Mosaick Law* to be Types and Figures of some *Divine* or *Moral* Truth, and particularly the *High Priest*, to be an Emblem of the *Eternal Word*, and his Crown and Vestments to be Representations of his Authority and *Divine* Perfections, wherein he exactly agrees with the Author to the *Hebrews*. And from sundry Passages in the *Book of Psalms* it seems evident, that the good *Jews* had a Prospect beyond the *Outside* and Letter of the Law, even into the typical Sense,

Sense and Meaning of it ; and that through its *glimmering* Shadows and Resemblances, they beheld very much of the Substance and Realities of the *Gospel* : For hence probably was that of *David*, Psal. xxv. 14. *The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him* ; for certainly the *Secret of the Lord* here cannot be meant the *Fore-Knowledge* of *future Events*, since under the *Old Testament* that was neither restrained to *good Men*, nor much *less* was it universally with them that feared *God* ; and therefore it seems more probable, that by it we are to understand those *then secret* Mysteries of the *Gospel*, which were so obscurely represented in Types and Figures of the *Law* ; especially if we compare this with that Prayer of *David*, Psal. cxix. 18. *Open thou mine Eyes, that I may behold the wondrous Things out of thy Law*, which methinks plainly intimates that the *good Man* did believe there were some *wondrous* Mysteries contained under those *dark* and *typical* Representations : And afterwards, ver. 27. *Make me to understand the way of thy Precepts, so shall I talk of thy wondrous Works* ; which implies that he believed that there were some things very *mystical* and *hard* to be understood, contained within the Precepts of their *Law*, which in their *literal* Sense were *easy* and *obvious*, and had nothing of Depths or Mystery in them ; and therefore, certainly, had he not seen something within them beyond their *Rind* and *Outside*, he would never have prayed so earnestly as he doth, *that God would teach him his Laws*, and that *he would not hide from him his Commandments*,

as he doth, *ver.* 19. Much less would he have imagined, that by *understanding of them he should be enabled to talk of such wondrous Things.* Afterwards, *verse* 69, he tells us, that *he had seen an End of all Perfection, but God's Commandments are exceeding broad;* which denotes that he who had seen an End of all Things else, had discovered so *vast and boundless* a Depth in the Commands of God, that he could see no End of it; whereas it is plain, that the *literal* Meaning of them was very *narrow and contracted*, and far from being so exceeding *broad*; which argues that the *good* Man had discovered, under the Letter and Surface of them, a Mine of *mystical* Sense which he could not reach the Bottom of, and that God had given him a Glimpse of those *glorious* Secrets of the Gospel which he had wrapped up, and involved in the *typical* Precepts of the Law. Thus the *Eternal Word*, while he tabernacled among the *Jews*, revealed his Gospel to them by *Types* and *Shadows*, and *mystical Representations* of it, which, though it was very *obscure and imperfect*, yet seems to have been the *best and clearest* that the *present* State of that People could admit of. For it seems plain by the History of the *Jews*, that they were naturally a very *rude and untractable* People, and doubtless they were never worse than when they came out of the Land of *Egypt*, where their *bad* Temper was doubtless very much improved by those *gross* Idolatries in which they had been educated; so that being *bad* themselves, and also extremely *debauched* by the *wicked* Manners of the

Egyptians,

Egyptians, it is not to be supposed that they were Subjects capable of the Heights and Purities of *Religion*; for if from the *Depth* of *Immortality*, whereinto they were sunk, *God* should have immediately strained them up to the *highest* Pitch of *Gospel-Purity*, in all Probability they would never have borne it; but like the Strings of a *musical Instrument*, being wound *too high*, would have been apt to crack and fly in pieces, and wholly to revolt from *God* into those *gross* Idolatries which yet they were hardly weaned from, and which were still so *suitable* to their Genius and Temper. So that as yet there was so *great* a Gulph between *them* and the *Gospel*, that it was hardly possible ei her for them to go to *that*, or for *that* to come to *them*. And therefore as *God* in his own *high* Wisdom hath placed a *Twilight* between the Night and the Morning to secure our Sight, lest our *weak* Eyes should be dazzled by a *too sudden* Irruption of the *Broad-Day's* Glory; so did he deal with the *Jews*: He thought it not *convenient* immediately to post them out of *utter* Darknes into *perfect* Light, but first interposes a *less pure Religion* as a *Medium* or *Twilight* between the *Heathen* and the *Gospel State*, that so by *that* he might prepare their Sight for the Reception of a more *perfect* Splendor, and make them fit to entertain the *severer* Purities of the *Gospel*, without being offended or dazzled with its Glory. But yet in Wisdom he hath so contrived and modelled this *less perfect Religion*, as to make it most *instructive* and *useful*, having so ordered its *sacred* Rites and Ceremonies,

monies, as to make them *Representative* of the whole Method and *Oeconomy* of the *Gospel*; and though those *typical* Representations were very *obscure* and *dark*, so that the *Gospel* seemed to run under Ground in the midst of those *ceremonial* Observances, yet it frequently broke forth, and opened itself in the midst of them, and by Degrees, in the *prophetick Age*, did make it a larger Channel, till by its Force and Violence it did overthrow those Banks that stood in its Way, and overspread the Face of the whole Earth. So that it is plain that the Obscurity of those *typical* Representations did not render them wholly usefess, since they were not so obscure, but those who were *good*, and *diligent*, and *serious* in the Study of them, might be, and were instructed by them in whatsoever was *necessary* to make them *good* and *happy*. For though those *Types* had not a Mouth to speak out the *Gospel*, yet they had a Hand to point to it, they being as it were *rude* Draughts of that which was afterwards to be drawn to the *greatest* Life and Exactness; and this, it is plain, was understood by all *good* Men, whose Hearts were carried beyond the *outward* Letter of the Law, to the more *inward* and *spiritual* Meaning of it; wherein they discovered those *Evangelical Mysteries* that were *veiled* and *hidden* under the *outward* Ceremonies, which made up that true *spiritual Cabala* which seems constantly to have been preserved among the *true Israelites*, and which afterwards was more largely commented on by the *Prophets* of the *succeeding* Ages, whose Care it was to unlock this *Cabala*, or *spiritual* Sense

Sense of the Law, and to raise up the Hearts of that People to a *higher* Expectation of the *great* Things which were to come. So that you see the State and Condition of the *Jews* would not admit of a plain Discovery of the *Gospel* to them, but required an *outward Ceremonial Religion*, that being most *accommodate* to their Genius and Temper; and therefore though the *Eternal Word* for the *present* Existence established such a *Religion* among them, yet he wisely framed and modelled it into a *typical* Representation of the *Gospel*, that so thereby he might prepare them for it, and so far instruct them in the Knowledge of it as was *necessary* to their Welfare and Happiness. And hence the *Apostle* tells the *Jews*, that *the Law was their School-Master to bring them unto Christ*, that they might be justified by Faith, and that now after *Faith* was come, they were *no longer under their School-Master*. Gal. iii. 4, 25, that is, while they were in their *Infantine, Childish* State, and *incapable* of a more *perfect* Institution, God set the Law as a *School-Master* over them, that *that* by its *Types*, and *Pictures*, and *Emblems*, might gradually instruct them in the *Mysteries* of *Christ*, and the *Gospel*, that so when it was openly revealed they might be *justified* by the Belief of it; and therefore now since the *Gospel* was come, they were no longer under the Tutorage of that *School-Master*; now they were no longer to learn *Christ* by *Types* and *mystical* Representations, since he himself was present with them, and had openly revealed those *divine* Mysteries which under those *Types* were so obscurely *adumbrated*.

So

So that you see the *Eternal Word* tabernacled among the *Jews* in a far *different* Manner from what he did when he pitched his Tabernacle in *our* Natures; for when he tabernacled among *them* he was *full* of *Types* and *Shadows*, and *mystical Emblems*; he instructed them in *divine* Things by *Symbols*, and *obscure* Representations; but when he came to tabernacle among *us*, and *our* Natures, he was *full* of *Truth*, that is, of *Substance* and *Reality*: For then instead of the *Shadows* and *Pictures* of them, he exhibited to us the Things themselves; then he brought down the *Mysteries* of the *Gospel* out of that *Cloud* of *Types* in which they were before involved, and set them before us in a *clear* and *open* Light.

But that I may more *fully* demonstrate this to you, I shall briefly give you some *particular* Instances of his dwelling, or conversing among us *full* of *Truth*, in Contradistinction to that *obscure typical* Way of his conversing, or tabernacled among the *Jews*; which I shall rank under these four Heads:

1. His *Personal* Transactions.
2. The *Purity* and *Spirituality* of his Laws.
3. The *Condition* and *Quality* of his Kingdom.
4. The *Rewards* and *Recompences* which he promises to his Subjects.

1. One *great* Instance of his conversing among us *full* of *Truth*, in Contradistinction to that *obscure* and *typical* way of his Conversing among the *Jews*, is his *own personal* Transactions. The
eternal

eternal Word being to assume our Natures, thought fit to give the *Jews*, whilst he tabernacled among them, a *Specimen*, or Pattern of those *glorious* things he was to transact in his *incarnate State*; and this he did chiefly by the *High Priest*, and those *expiatory Sacrifices* which he ordained and instituted among them, as you may find it demonstrated at large in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*. For, as to the *High Priest*, He was to be called, and ordained of God, Heb. v. 4; in which the *eternal Word* represented to them his Commission from the Father, to descend into the World as his *Embassador* to Men. Secondly, He was to be born of a Woman that came a *pure Virgin* into the Arms of his Father, Levit. xxi. 14; in which he seems to represent to them his own *pure Nativity* of a *Virgin-Mother*. Thirdly, He was to be washed with Water, and his Flesh and Loins were to be covered with the *whitest* and the *cleanest* Linen, Exod. xxix. 7. and xxviii. 42; by which Christ typified to them the *IMMACULATE* Sanctity and Innocence of his *human Life*. Fourthly, He was to be cloathed in the most *glorious* Garments that could possibly be made by the most *excellent* Workmen, Exod. xxviii. 2, 3; which seems to denote the *Majesty* of Christ's Person, and those *glorious* Works by which he rendered himself so *illustrious* in the World. Fifthly, The Colours of the *Embroideries* of his Garment being *blue, purple, scarlet, and white*, seem to denote the *Truth* of his *prophetick Office*, the *Majesty* of his *Royal*, the *Perfection* of his *Priestly*, and his *Innocence* and *Sanctity* in the

the Execution of them all. *Sixthly*, He wore a *holy Crown* on his Head, and a *Plate* on his Forehead engraven with *Holiness* ; which denotes the *Divine Authority* of *Christ*, and the *Sacredness* and *Divinity* of his Person. And, *Seventhly*, Upon his Breast he wore the *Urim* and *Thummim*, in which was prefigured the *Height* and *Purity* of *Christ's* Doctrine, and the *Holiness* and *Perfection* of his Laws. In a Word, the *High Priest* was to offer Sacrifice for the Sins of the People, on the *great Day of Expiation*, which Sacrifice was to be a *Beast without Blemish*, voluntarily presented at the Door of the Tabernacle, whither the *High Priest* being come, he was to strip off his *glorious* Garment, to lay his Hand on the Head of the Beast, and to confess the Peoples Sins over it, and then to slay the Beast, and carry some of the Blood of it within the *Veil*, and sprinkle it upon, and before the *Mercy-Seat*, by which he is said to make an Atonement for their Sins ; that is, to obtain Authority from God to bless and pardon : In which the *eternal Word* gives us a plain Representation of his *future Sacrifice* upon *Earth*, and *Intercession* in *Heaven* ; for he being both our *Sacrifice* and *High Priest*, did freely divest himself of the Glory and Dignity of his *divine Nature*, and offer up himself to die for us ; by which he laid his Hand, as it were, upon his own *spotless* and *immaculate* Head, did, as our *Representative*, acknowledge what he had deserved, that for our Sins we have justly merited to die *for ever* by the Hand of *God*, even as He for our Sakes, did submit to die by the

Hand of Man : And having performed this *bloody Sacrifice*, he enters into *Heaven*, which is the true *Holy of Holies*, and there, by the Obligation of his Blood and Obedience, makes an Atonement for our Sins, and obtain Authority from his Father to pardon and receive into Favour every truly *penitent* Offender in the World. Thus you see how the *personal Transactions* of our *Saviour* were under the Law of *Moses* represented in *mystical* Types and Figures ; but when he came to tabernacle among us, he did all *that* which before he only represented : He actually came down from the Father to us, was born of the *Holy Virgin*, lived a most *holy* and *innocent* Life, died a *Sacrifice* for our Sins, and is gone into *Heaven* to intercede for us : So that now, instead of *Types* and *Figures*, we have the *Substances* and *Realities* that were obscurely shadowed and represented in them.

2. Another *great* Instance of his conversing among us *full of Truth*, is the *Purity* and *Spirituality* of his Laws. It is *apparent* that those which he gave to the *Jews*, according to the *literal* Sense of them, did only oblige them to an *external Obedience* ; and therefore *St. Paul* calls the whole Law a *carnal Commandment*, Heb. vii. 16. and the Precepts of it he calls *carnal Ordinances imposed upon them till the Time of Reformation*, Heb. ix. 10. But yet it is *apparent*, that by these *carnal Ordinances* the *eternal Word* did designedly *typify* and represent that *internal Purity* of Soul which the *evangelical Law* doth exact : For he seeing that the *Jews* were not only a *perverse*, but also a *dull* and *stupid* People, as
those

those generally are who are born and bred in Slavery, and that therefore they were *incapable* of *sublime* and *spiritual* Precepts, and would be apt to forget *plain* ones : He therefore thought it most proper and suitable to their Capacity and Genius, to instruct them by *sensible* and *material* Signs, even as Parents do sometimes teach their Children by Pictures ; for of this his Condescension to their Dulness and Capacity, the Prophet *Isaiab* takes Notice, *Chap.* xxviii. 10, 11. where he saith, that he gave them *Precept upon Precept, Line upon Line, here a little and there a little with a stammering Tongue* ; that is, he looked upon them as Children, and so condescended to their Weakness, and spoke to them in their *own* Dialect. And this way of instructing them by *outward* and *visible* Signs, was the most *probable* to take Effect, because it was much in use in the *Eastern Countries*, but more especially in *Egypt*, whose Manners they were infinitely fond of, to wrap up their most *excellent* Precepts in *Hieroglyphicks*, which were nothing but Pictures and *material* Signs, by which they represented their *divine* and *moral* Institutions. Thus therefore by such *visible* Signs and Pictures, the *eternal Word* instructed them in the Rules of *internal* Purity and Goodness ; so by *Circumcision* he signified to them the Circumcision of their Hearts ; and by their *several Washings*, Purity from *Hypocrisy* and *Sensuality* : Yea, this was probably the Intent of that Difference of *Meats*, as *St. Barnabas* in his Epistle tells us, that Swines Flesh was pronounced *unclean*, to instruct them not to live

like *Hgs* that clamour when they are *hungry*, and forget their Masters when they are *full*; that *Eagles*, and such *ravenous Birds* were forbidden to be eat, to teach them that those who live not by *Industry*, but *Rapine*, are *abominable*; that *Fish without Scales*, which generally dwell in the Mud, were all pronounced *unclean*, to teach them the Evil of *Sensuality*, and *Earthly-Mindedness*. Thus, by these *outward Signs*, his Intent was to insinuate into them *internal Purity of Mind*; and this was very well understood by those who were *good and wise* among them: Hence we find *David* gives very *high Encomiums* of the Law, *Psal.* xix. 7, 8. *The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul, making wise the simple; rejoicing the Heart, enlightening the Eyes, &c.* which Characters are *proper* only to that *inward and spiritual Sense* of the Law, that was *decyphered* upon those *outward Signs* and Ceremonies. Which Sense seems to have been very *little* taken Notice of by the *sottish Vulgar*; for only the Ceremony itself was Matter of Law to them, which if they observed they were not *punishable* by that Law, though they never took Notice of its *spiritual Sense* and Meaning, which made them neglect that *inward Purity* which was pictured on those *outward Signs*, and place the whole of their Righteousness in an *outside ceremonious Pageantry*. Hence is that of *St. Paul*, 2 *Cor.* iii. 13, 14, 15; *I used, saith he, great Plainness of Speech: And not as Moses, which put a Veil over his Face, that the Children of Israel could not stedfastly look unto the End of that*
which

which is abolished. But their Minds were blinded ; for until this Day remaineth the same Veil untaken away, in the reading the Old Testament ; which Veil is done away in Christ. By which Veil he means those outward Shadows and Types in which the mystical Sense of the Law was wrapped and involved ; and it seems they were so taken with the Pomp and Gaiety of the outside, that they never minded that rich Treasure of Sense that was contained within it, and which the Apostle here calls the End of that which is abolished ; yea, to this Day, saith he, the Veil of outward Ceremonies stands so much in their Light, that they cannot discern the internal Sense of the Old Testament ; but now, saith he, it is done away by Christ. Now that the eternal Word hath pitched his Tabernacle in our Nature, those outward Types wherein this inward Purity of Soul was so obscurely intimated, are vanished like Clouds before the Sun, and in their Room are introduced the most pure and spiritual Laws of the Gospel, which are no longer couched in Types and ceremonial Shadows, but in plain and naked Propositions. Now internal Holiness is palpably declared to be the great Design of Religion, that we should cleanse ourselves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, and perfect Holiness in the Fear of God. This therefore is another Instance of Christ's tabernacling among us full of Truth, viz. the Purity and Spirituality of his Laws, which heretofore he mystically represented to the Jews by outward Rites and Ceremonies.

3. Another Instance of his tabernacling among us *full of Truth*, in Contradistinction to that *obscure Typical Way* of his conversing among the *Jews*, is the Condition and Quality of his *Church* and *Kingdom*. The *Eternal Word*, designing to erect a *glorious Kingdom* in the World, drew as it were a *rude Scheme*, or Draught of it, in the Form and Model of the *Jewish Polity*. For *first* he erects a Kingdom among them of which himself was King, to typify that *spiritual Kingdom* which afterwards he meant to establish in the World; then he adopts the *Jews* to be his Children by the *external Sign* of *Circumcision*, who are therefore called a *Holy Seed*, which was an Emblem of that *Holy Seed* which afterwards he designed to beget to himself by *spiritual Regeneration*, which is therefore called the *Circumcision of the Heart*, whose Praise is not of Men, but of God. His delivering them from the Bondage of *Egypt*, and leading them thro' the *Red-Sea*, and the *Wilderness*, into *Canaan*, typified his delivering of his *future Church* from the Bondage of Sin and Satan, and leading it by his own *gracious Presence* through the *Red-Sea* of Blood, and Persecutions, and the *Wilderness* of the World, to the *Canaan* of eternal Rest. His giving the Law on *Mount Sinai* in Fire, was a Figure of his delivering the Gospel by the Spirit, which came down in *fiery cloven Tongues* at the *Feast of Pentecost*. Thus his erecting the Ark in the *Wilderness* was also another Type of that *spiritual Kingdom*, which afterwards he meant to erect in the World. The *diverse* Ornaments and Instruments

of

of that Tabernacle represented the Diversity of *spiritual* Gifts and Functions in the *Christian Church*; its being covered with Skins *without*, and adorned with Gold *within*, shadowed the *mean* and *contemptible* Form wherein the *Christian Church* first appeared to the World, notwithstanding the *inward* Glory and Purity with which it was adorned and embellished. The Glory of God appearing in the Tabernacle, denoted the Presence of *Christ* in his *Church*, which he hath promised to continue to the End of the World; its being removed from Place to Place, and finding no Rest till it was lodged in the Temple, prefigured the *persecuted* State of the *Primitive Church*, which was hunted *up* and *down* the World by the mighty *Nimrods* of the Earth, and could find no Rest till it was transported to the *heavenly* Temple. By these, and such like *Types* and *Shadows*, did the *Eternal Word* prefigure the State and Condition of his *future Church*, that so when it came to be erected in the World, the *Jews* might know and own it, having seen it before hand so exactly *decyphered* and *adumbrated* in the very Frame and Model of their *own* Polity. But when he came to tabernacle in our Nature, he gave *actual* Being to those Things which before he only *shadowed* and *represented*; for then he erected this *glorious Church*, of which the *Jewish* was only a Model and Platform, delivered it from the *Egyptian* Bondage of Wickedness and Idolatry, and by his own *glorious* Presence conducted the Members of it through all the Persecutions of an *enraged* World, to the *Canaan* of *eternal Rest*; and

therefore this also is *another plain* Instance of his tabernacling among us *full of Truth*, the State and Condition of his Church, which before was so obscurely represented.

4. And *lastly*, *Another* Instance of his tabernacling among us *full of Truth*, in Contradistinction to that *obscure* and *typical* Way of his conversing among the *Jews*, is the *glorious* Recompences which he hath so plainly and clearly promised to his Subjects. For this he also obscurely *typified* to the *Jews*; for, as I have already hinted, by that *Canaan* which he bestowed upon them after their *tedious* Travel through the Wilderness, he did darkly represent to them that *Canaan above* flowing with *infinite* Delights, which he hath promised to bestow upon his *faithful* Servants after they have passed through the Wilderness of this World. So also by their *Sabbaths*, and especially their *Year of Jubilee*, wherein they were to rest from all their Labours, and keep a *perpetual* Festivity, He did obscurely *decypher* to them that *Sabbath of Rest*, and *Jubilee of endless* Pleasure, which *virtuous* Souls shall enjoy in *Heaven* after they have finished their Labours here on *Earth*, as you may see at large, *Heb. iv.* Now by these, and such like *Shadows* of their Law, which possibly the *Prophets* by *divine* Inspiration might expound to them, those who were *wise* and *good* among them, it is very probable, were instructed in the Article of *eternal Life*. Hence it may be might arise that *famous* Controversy among the *Jews* concerning the *written* and *oral* Law, which they call the *Cabala*, or the Law by Tradition;
not

not that this *traditional* contained any thing that was not in the *written* Law, but because those Things which were obscurely contained in the *Types* of the *written* Law, were explained and interpreted in this their *traditional* Law. But it is *apparent* that the *Types* of *eternal Life* were not fully explained in this *traditional* Law till after the *Babylonish Captivity*, after which the Prophet *Daniel*, and after him *Ezekiel*, began to speak more plainly of the *Resurrection of the Dead*; and from that Time forwards the Doctrine of the *Resurrection* and *eternal Life* began to be more openly taught among the *common People* till about the Time of the *Maccabees*, when it was brought forth into the Light from under those *Types* in which it was so obscurely represented, and became a Principle even of the *popular Religion*, and an Article of the *Jewish Faith*, as plainly appears from the Records of those Times, particularly 2 *Macc.* vii. 23, 26. compared with *Heb.* xi. 35. And indeed it was very *necessary* that then this Article should be more clearly revealed, to fortify the *Jews* against those many Persecutions whereunto they were exposed for the Sake of their *Religion*, that they might not be terrified to *apostatize* from it by those *cruel Martyrdoms* which in the Time of the *Maccabees* they many of them endured; and besides, now the Time of the *Gospel* was approaching, and consequently its Mysteries, like the Light of the *rising Sun*, began to break forth *clearer* and *clearer* from under that Cloud of *Types* wherein it was wrapped and involved, till at last the *Sun of Righteousness* himself
arose

arose and dispersed those Clouds, and brought *Life and Immortality to Light by the Gospel*. But as for the *Sadducees*, who give no Heed to the *Cabala*, or *traditional Law*, in which this Doctrine was first discovered, and adhered only to the *written Law of Moses*, they still continued Infidels in this Point, and believed neither *Angels* nor *Spirits*, nor the *Life to come* : So very obscurely was it represented in the *Types and Shadows* of the *written Law*. But when once the *Eternal Word* came to tabernacle in our Flesh, he revealed this *great Article* so plainly and clearly to the World, that it is impossible for any one not to believe it, that believes him to be the *Messias*, or *incarnate Word*.

And thus you see, by all these Instances, what a *vast* Difference there was in respect of *Truth*, between Christ's tabernacling in our Nature, and in the Tabernacle of *Moses*. And now I shall conclude this Argument with two or three *practical* Inferences.

1st, He dwelt or tabernacled among us.] From hence I infer the *high* Authority of *Christ*, and that *holy Religion* which he hath revealed to us. For to tabernacle among us; as I have already shewed you, signifies to dwell in the midst of, as the *Shechinah*, *Presence*, or *Representative* of the most *high God*, as one that acted in his Father's Person, and was vested with his Authority, and consequently as one who hath as *great* a Right to exact our Obedience as the *Eternal Father* himself, should he have come down from *Heaven* in his own Person to give Laws to Mankind.

kind. For so when the *Eternal Word* went before the Camp of *Israel* as the *Shechinah*, or *Angel of God's Presence*, God requires them that they should obey him as himself: *Beware of him and obey his Voice*, saith God; *provoke him not, for he will not pardon your Transgressions, for my Name is in him.* *Exod.* xxiii. 21, and *ver.* 22. To obey the Voice of this *Angel* is interpreted to be the same Thing as to obey the Voice of the most *High God* himself; *but if thou shalt indeed obey his Voice*, saith God, *and do all that I speak, then I will be an Enemy to thy Enemies, &c.* So that for the *Israelites* to disobey this *Angel* (who, as I have proved to you, was the *Eternal Word*, or *Representative* of the most *High God* to them) was to all Intents and Purposes the same Thing as if they had disobeyed the most *High* himself. And accordingly our *Saviour* tells the *Jews*, *He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on the Father that sent me*; that is, he doth not merely believe on me, but on the Father too, whose Authority I have, and whose Person I represent; for so he explains himself in the following Verse. *He that seeth me, seeth him that sent me*; that is, I being my Father's *Shechinah*, or *Representative*, *John* xii. 44, 45. And therefore as every Contempt of the *Deputy*, or *Vice-Governor*, is an Affront to the *Sovereign Prince* whose Person he bears, and by whose Authority he acts; so every Rebellion against *Christ* is an open Defiance to the *Sovereign God*, whose Person he represents, and by whose Authority he reigns. Hence our *Saviour* tells the *Jews*,
John

John v. 23. that *He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him*; which plainly intimates that God the Father resents those Indignities which we offer to *Christ* and his Laws, as if they were done to his own Person, and that if *himself* should speak to us from the Battlements of *Heaven*, or proclaim his Law to us in a *Voice of Thunder*, we should not be more displeased to hear us openly declare that we will not obey him, than he is to see us trample upon the Laws of his *Son*, which he hath stamped with his own *Sovereign Authority*. So that if we were not infinitely *fool-hardy*, methinks, we should never dare to violate our *Religion*, in which the Authority of the most *high God* is so immediately concerned. For whatsoever our *Religion* requires of us, it requires in his Name, who hath an *undoubted Right and Authority* to command us; for from all *Eternity* he was invested with an *absolute and unlimited Power* of doing anything that is not *unbecoming* his *Divine Perfections*, and in this the Right of his Dominion over us is originally founded. For he that hath Power, must needs have a Right to exercise it so far as it is *just and becoming* his Nature, otherwise his Power would be altogether in vain; and therefore since *God* from all *Eternity* hath a Power of doing whatsoever he pleases, so far as is *consistent* with his Holiness and Goodness, there is nothing can be pretended against the Right of his Dominion and Authority over us: For *God cannot* but have an *eternal Right* to exercise his own Power, and he cannot but have an

immutable

immutable Right to exercise it over his own Creatures. And as from all *Eternity* he had Power to do whatsoever was *just* and *becoming* him, so from his creating of us it became most *just* and *becoming* that he should rule and govern us ; for we became *his* as soon as we were created by him ; all our Powers of Action were from him, and by that he hath acquired an *unalienable* Right in whatsoever we are able to do. We have nothing but what is *his* Gift, and therefore can do nothing but what is *his* Debt ; we received *all* from him, and therefore must owe *all* to him ; for by Right of Creation he is the *supreme* Proprietor of all our Powers and Faculties, and, as such, hath a *just* Claim to all the Homage and Obedience that we are able to render him. So that as God's Dominion over us is originally founded in his most *absolute* Power to do whatsoever is *just* and *becoming* him ; so the Justice and Becomingness of his Dominion over us doth immediately result from his creating of us, by which he hath *for ever* entitled himself to all the Obedience we can render him. And by Virtue of this *immutable* Title doth he claim our Obedience to the Laws of *Jesus Christ*, whom next to himself he hath made our Prince and Ruler, having vested him with his own *sovereign* Authority, and constituted him his *supreme* Representative in the *Church*. So that by disobeying his Laws, we incur the Guilt of the most *monstrous* Injustice in the World ; we resume ourselves from *him* to whom we owe our Being, and refuse to own *ourselves* to be his Creatures, from whose Bounty we receive
even

even the Power of rebelling against him ; we alienate our Faculties from those *sacred* Uses whereunto they were designed and consecrated, and turn these *living* Temples of God into Dens of *impure* Thoughts and *filthy* Lusts : In a Word, we fight against God with his *own* Gifts, and arm the Effects of his Bounty against his *sovereign* Authority. And what do we think will be the Consequence of these Things ? Can we be so *sottish* as to imagine that the *Almighty* Father will sit above in the *Heavens*, and see how his Laws are trampled upon, his Authority contemned, and exposed to Scorn and Derision by a Company of *impious* Wretches, that owe their very Beings to him, and never be concerned at it ? Do we think him so *stupid* a Being as that no Provocations will awake his Vengeance, that he will *for ever* sit *unconcerned* with his Hands in his Bosom, whilst his *violated* Laws, like the *Souls under the Altar*, are continually crying out to him, *How long, O Lord, holy and true ! dost thou not avenge our Quarrel upon the Heads of these audacious Rebels that every Day trample us under Foot, and have no more Regard for our Authority, than they have for the Whistling of the Wind !* For God's Sake, Sirs, let us consider before it be *too late*, what is like to become of us, what *probable* Hopes of Security we can propose to *ourselves* if we persist in this *unjust* Rebellion. Gird up your Loins like Men, and I will demand of you in the Name of God, do you think that the *wise* Governor of the World will be *for ever insensible* of all the *rude* Affronts and Provocations you offer him ? If
so,

so, pray where is his *Wisdom*, or in what Sense doth he govern the World, if he takes no care to secure his Laws by *punishing* Offenders, and lets his Subjects alone to do as they list? Or have you an Arm as *strong* as God's? Can you grapple with his *Almighty* Vengeance, or withstand the Stroke of his Thunderbolts? Sure such a *ridiculous* Conceit can never enter into any *reasonable* Breast? And if not, in the Name of God, what do you propose to *yourselves*, when you can neither hope for Favour from God, nor Security from *yourselves*? Are you so *abandoned* of all your Reason, as wilfully to shut your Eyes against your Danger, and run the *desperate* Venture of falling into the Hands of the *living* God? Hath not our *blessed* Lord most fairly warned us what we are to trust to? Hath he not told us how he *values* his Laws, and how dreadfully he will *punish* the Transgression of them? Hath he not most seriously protested to us, that unless we do *repent* and *amend*, he will never forgive us, either in *this* Life, or *that to come*; and that if we still persist in our Rebellions, he will at last banish us from his Presence *for ever*, and assign us our Portion with *Devils* and *damned Ghosts*, in that Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone? And hath he not taken it upon his Death that all this is true, when he so freely *sealed* his Doctrines with his Blood? And now after all this, is it possible we should be so *senseless*, as to think we can be *safe* in our Wickedness, when God the Father is engaged both in *Wisdom* and *Honour* to avenge it as an Affront to his Authority, and God the

Son hath revealed his Father's Wrath from *Heaven* against all Unrighteousness and Ungodliness of Men? And therefore, as we value our own Safety, it concerns us either to submit to that *Divine* Authority which is stamped upon the Laws of our *Saviour*, or else to secure ourselves of some Retreat, or Sanctuary, from that *Almighty* Vengeance which our Rebellion will certainly arm against us.

2dly, He dwelt among us *full of Grace*.] Hence I infer what *mighty* Encouragement we have to serve and obey our *blessed Master*, who in his dwelling among us was *full* of every thing that can render his Service *lovely*, or *desirable*, and abounded in all those *amiable* Graces that can oblige us to love and obey him. For what was there wanting in our *blessed Master* that any reasonable Subject can desire in his *Prince* and *Sovereign*? Would he desire a Prince of a *sweet* and *gracious* Temper, one that is *full* of Love and Tenderness to his Subjects? Such a one, in the most *eminent* Degree, is our *blessed Lord*; for how doth the History of his Conversation upon Earth abound with the Expressions of a most *sweet* and *loving* Temper? For Love was the Principle of all his Actions, the Life and Soul of his Conversation; and in all that he did, or spoke, he made some new Discovery of his *unfeigned* Affection to the World; for he *went about doing Good*, and his whole Life was nothing but one *continued Act* of Charity to Mankind. For still you find him either *instructing* the *Ignorant*, or *reproving* the *Erroneous*, or *comforting* the *Dejected*, or *feeding* the *Hungry*, or *curing* the *Sick* and *Diseased*.

Diseased. From Morning to Night he was constantly engaged in *one good Action* or *other*, and the whole Race of his Life, like that of the Sun, was spent in *enlivening*, or *enlightening* the World. So *endearing* was his Behaviour, that he obliged his very Enemies, and when he had won them, treated them with all the Tenderneſs and Affection of a moſt *loving* Father towards his *deareſt* Children. From all he converſed with he extorted Reſpect and Veneration, and none were able to reſiſt the Charms of his *viſtorious* Love, but thoſe whoſe Hearts were harder than the *nether* Millſtone. But that I may convince you of the *infinite* Goodneſs and Tenderneſs of his Nature, I will give you but that *one* Inſtance, *Luke xix. 41.* And when he was come near, he beheld the City, and wept over it ; which, as you will ſee afterwards, was occaſioned by the Foreſight of its *approaching* Ruin and Deſtruction ; and yet at the ſame time he foreſaw the Cruelties which thoſe *barbarous* Villains were about to praſtiſe upon him, how they would ſcourge his Body with *knotty* Whips, and nail his Hands and Feet to the Croſs, and thruſt a Spear into his Heart : He ſaw how they would *triumph* over his Miſery, mock at his Calamity, and dance to the Muſick of his *dying* Groans. And now one would have thought ſuch a Proſpect as this would have *for ever* enraged his Soul againſt them, and made him rejoice to ſee that *ſweeping* Deſtruction that was coming upon them ; but ſuch was the *incomparable* Sweetneſs of his Temper, that while he *foreſaw* them plotting his Ruin, he could not but ſigh over *theirs*,

and while he beheld their Malice all *reeking* in his Blood, and sporting itself with his Torments and Agonies, yet at the Sense of their *approaching* Destruction, his very Bowels *yearned*, and his Heart *melted* with Commiseration, and he could not forbear weeping, to think that those *curfed* Instruments of all his Miseries, must e'er long be so *wretched* and *miserable* themselves, earnestly wishing that they who so greedily thirsted for his Blood, had known *in that their Day the things which belong to their Peace*. And though one would have thought the *barbarous* Entertainment he met with here upon Earth, would have *for ever* quenched all his Affection to Mankind, yet still it lives, and in Despite of all the Affronts and Outrages he endured, burns as vigorously in his Breast as ever. So *unconquerable* was his Love to his Subjects, that all the *bloody* Cruelties they practised upon him, when they chased him out of the World, were never able to *alienate* his Heart and Affections from them ; but after all their Cruelties he still retained his fatherly Bowels towards them, and when he could endure their Torments no longer, breathed out his *loving* Soul in an *earnest* Prayer for their Pardon, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do*. And now that he is in Heaven among *Angels* and *glorified Spirits*, where he cannot but remember how unkindly we treated him when he was upon *Earth*, and perhaps doth still bear upon his *glorified Body* those very Wounds which he received from our Hands, which one would think were *sufficient* to incense him against us *for ever* ; yet his
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Heart is the *same* towards us, *full* of all those *kind* and *tender* Resentments that first brought him down from Heaven, and rendered his Conversation among us so *full* of Sweetness and Endearments. And now being so infinitely kind as he is, why should we be disheartened from serving him? Methinks the Sense of his Love to us, if there were no *other* Argument in the World, should be *sufficient* to bind us to his Service *for ever*. For, O my Soul, *how can I do too much for so kind a Friend! How can I be too submissive to so good a Master! that is so infinitely tender of all his Servants, and loves them a thousand times more than they love themselves!* Sure if we had any Spark of Ingenuity in us, the Sense of his *matchless* Kindness towards us, would be *sufficient* to turn all our Duty to him into Recreation, to make us thirst after his Service, and catch at all Opportunities of expressing our Loyalty and Obedience to him: We should embrace his Commands as Preferments to us, and wear them as the *greatest Favours*, and think ourselves more *honoured* in being the Servants of *Jesus Christ*, than in being made *mighty Kings* and Potentates.

2. Consider, as he is *full* of Grace, in Respect of his own *personal* Disposition, so he is also in Respect of his Laws, in which as I have already shewed you, he requires nothing of us but what is for our *Good*, nothing but what tends to the Perfection of our Natures, and the Consummation of our Happiness. All that our *Saviour* requires at our Hands, is only that we should act according to the Laws of a *reasonable*

Nature, and constantly pursue the great End of our Creation, which can never be obtained by us, unless we regulate our Actions by those *wise* and *excellent* Rules which he hath prescribed us, and which he hath prescribed us upon no other Inducement, but only to oblige us to be *happy*. For as to any Advantage that will accrue to him from our Actions, it is altogether *indifferent* to him whether we obey him or no; for he was always infinitely *happy* within himself, and would have always been so, though we had never had a Being; so that his Felicity depends not upon us: and were it not that the *superabundant* Goodness of his Nature doth *for ever* incline him to make us *happy* as well as *himself*, he would never have concerned himself about us, but would have let us alone to do as we list, and abandoned us to the Fate of *our own* Actions. He therefore being infinitely *happy* within himself, can have no Self-Ends to serve upon his Creatures; because within the Circle of his own *divine* Being, he hath all that he needs, and all that he desires; but being infinitely *good*, as he is infinitely *happy*, we are sure that our Good must be the only End of his intermeddling with our Actions, and his giving Laws to direct them. And if we consult the *particular* Laws which he hath given us, we shall find they all of them most naturally tend to *perfect* and *rectify* our *disordered* Natures, to *exalt* and *spiritualize* our Affections, and inspire us with all those *divine* Dispositions that are requisite to qualify us for the Happiness of the World to come. And now, methinks, if we had any Sense of

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our own Interest, this Consideration should mightily encourage us to Obedience, to think that while we are serving our *blessed Master*, we are serving ourselves to the *best* Purposes, and that his Service and our Interest are so combined and united, that by the same Actions we may gratify *him*, and do *ourselves* the *greatest* Kindness in the World; that he exacts nothing from us, but what he was obliged to do by the *infinite* Care and Concern he hath for us; and that he had been less *kind*, should he have required *less*, and must necessarily have subtracted from us some Degree of our Happiness, should he have abated us any Part of our Duty. *O blessed Jesus!* who can complain of thy Service, when thy very Commands are Tokens of thy Love; when all the Duty thou requirest of us, is only to be *kind* to *ourselves* in doing those Things, which, if thou hadst never commanded, *our own* Interest would have obliged us to, had we but understood it as well, or regarded it as much as thou dost?

3. But then consider again, as He is *full of Grace* to us in his own *personal* Temper, and in those *mild* and *gentle* Laws which he hath given us; so, *Thirdly*, He is *full of Grace* to us also in respect of that *gracious* Pardon and Forgiveness which he hath procured for, and promised to us, if we will heartily repent and amend. I confess, though his *personal* Temper should be never so *sweet*, and his Laws never so *gentle*, yet if he should, upon every *wilful* Offence, exclude us from all Hope of Pardon, it might justly discourage the Generality of Men from engaging any farther in his Service;

because, *more or less*, we have all sinned, and fallen short of the Glory of God. So that if upon every *wilful* Act of Rebellion, we should stand *for ever* excluded from his Favour, we should generally be left in a *desperate* Condition, and then to what Purpose should we serve him any longer, when by all our *future* Loyalty and Submissions, we must never hope to be re-admitted into his Grace and Favour ! To remove this *great* Discouragement therefore the *blessed Jesus* hath obtained for us this *publick Grant* and *Charter* of Mercy from his Father, that if now at last we will repent and amend our ways, notwithstanding all our *past* Rebellions, we shall find Mercy, and be as freely received into his Grace and Favour, as if we never had offended him ; and this *merciful* Grant he hath published to us in the Promises of his Gospel : So that now we cannot make the *least* Doubt of our Pardon and Acceptance with him, upon our *unfeigned* Repentance, without calling his Truth and Veracity into Question. And now what *reasonable* Cause of Discouragement have we from returning to the Service of our *blessed Master*, when we are so amply assured that our *past* Disobedience to him shall, upon our Return, be forgotten *for ever* ? For in the Name of God, what can we desire more ? Is it *reasonable* that the *wise* Governor of the World should pardon Offenders, whether they repent or no ; that he should let them take their Swing in Wickedness, and never take any Cognizance of their Actions ? Let us speak plainly ; would we have him govern us or no ? If not, we are infinitely

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besotted, that for the Sake of a few paltry Lusts, that are our *Plague* and *Shame*, would deprive ourselves of all the Blessings and Benefits of his Government. But whatsoever we would have, it is by no means fit that he should surrender up his *just* Authority over us, because we are Fools and Madmen ; and if we think it fit that he should govern us, we cannot be so *senseless* as to think it *reasonable* that he should pardon our Sins till we repent of them ; because by so doing he would give up all, and leave us *absolute* Masters of ourselves. So that if we *ourselves* had been called to the *Privy Council* of *Heaven*, to give our Vote to those Laws by which we were to be ruled and governed, doubtless we could not have had the Confidence to ask either *gentler* Laws, or *greater* Indulgences, than the *blessed* Jesus hath freely granted us in his *Gospel*. If God should have told us, that he would impose nothing on us without *our own* Consent, and bid us ask for ourselves any thing that is *fit* and *modest*, doubtless the utmost that any *modest* Man could have craved, would have been only this ; *Lord, if thou wilt be but so merciful as to give us such Laws as are suited to our Natures, and are conducive to our Happiness, and so far to consider our Weakness and Instability, as not to cast us away from thy Favour for ever upon every wilful Transgression, but to pardon and receive us again upon our unfeigned Repentance ; this is all the Favour we would ask, and for this we would praise and adore thy Goodness for ever and ever.* Since God therefore, out of his own Grace

and Goodness, hath granted this Indulgence to us, why should we be discouraged from returning to our Duty. Though we never so notoriously violated and neglected it? For now we are fully assured that we can never be excluded from all Hope of Pardon, till we are past all Possibility of Repentance.

4. He is *full of Grace* to us also, in respect of that *abundant* Assistance which he hath promised and vouchsafed to us. I do confess, though notwithstanding our *former* Rebellions, he should be never so ready to receive us into Favour again upon our *unfeigned* Repentance; yet unless he will also assist us in *our* Repentance, and enable us to conquer the Difficulties of it, we have still very *great* Reason to be discouraged from his Service: For by *our own evil* Habits, we have so disabled ourselves from returning to our Duty, that without the Concurrence of a *supernatural* Grace, it will be in vain for us to attempt it: For he that from a State of *habitual* Sin, enters into a Course of Repentance, must strive all along against the Current of his Nature, which at first especially, and when he is *weakest*, will be so *swift* and *impetuous*, that by his *own single* Strength, it will be impossible for him to *stem*, or conquer it, and unless it be assisted by a *greater* Strength than his *own*, he will be inevitably borne *down* and carried away with it, though he struggle never so vigorously against it; so that it is no Encouragement at all to the Service of *Christ*, that he will receive us to Pardon when we heartily repent, unless he will also enable us to repent by the Concurrence of his *Grace* with

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with our *honest* Endeavours. But this Discouragement also he hath removed out of our Way, by making us a *publick* Grant and Promise of his Grace and Assistance ; for he hath assured us, that he will give *his holy Spirit to every one that asks it*, Luke xi. 13. that if we will *work out our own Salvation he will work in us to will and to do*. Phil. ii. 12, 13, and that *to him that bath*, that is, improves that Grace which he hath, *it shall be given more abundantly*. Mat. xiii. 12. So that though we cannot do all by our own *single* Strength, yet we can do so much as will oblige our *blessed* Master to enable us to do all ; and therefore that we do not do all, is as much our Fault as if we could, because we are able to do all through *Christ*, who will strengthen us, if we will but do what we can ; so that this, methinks should be sufficient to encourage any *reasonable* Man in the World to undertake his Service, to consider that he who is my Master, will *co-operate* with me, and *proportion* my Strength to the Work he enjoins me ; that he will not stand *still* with his Arms in his Bosom, and see me struggle in *vain* under an *insupportable* Burthen of Duties, but that he will set *to* his *own* Shoulders, and contribute his *own* Strength, and enable me, by Degrees, to undergo it with Ease and Alacrity ; so that though through the *Weakness* and *Impotency* which I have voluntarily contracted, my Duty is become *too heavy* for my Shoulders, yet I will never be disheartened so long as I am sure it is not *too heavy* for my Saviour's, for if I heartily endeavour I am *confident* I shall undergo

dergo it, if it be in the Power of an *Almighty* Grace to enable me.

5. And *lastly*, He was *full of Grace* to us also, in respect of that *glorious* Recompence which he hath promised to us, and prepared for us. I confess, were his Service all Work, and no Wages, there were some Reason to be disheartened ; but when he hath promised, and so amply assured us, that after we have spent a few Days, or Years, in his Service upon *Earth*, he will receive us into the Participation of *his own* Joys, where we shall commence as *happy* as it is possible for an *everlasting* Heaven to make us, methinks we should kiss his Yoke, and court his Service, and think we can never do too much for such a *bountiful* Master, who rewards all his Servants with such *immortal* Preferments : For what is the Labour of a few Moments. compared with that *everlasting* Rest and Pleasure wherein it shall shortly terminate ? And when once we are arrived to the *heavenly Canaan*, and have tasted those *ravishing* Delights with which it flows and abounds, how *light* and *inconsiderable* will all these Difficulties in our Voyage appear to us, which now do so startle and affright us ? How shall we wonder at *our own* Sloth and Faint-heartedness, to think that ever we should be such *wretched* Cowards as to be afraid of any thing that hath *Heaven* at the End of it, which is a Happiness so *vast* and *unspeakable*, that the Hope of it is *sufficient* to turn Torments into Recreations ? How shall we be astonished at *ourselves*, to think that we could ever be such *wretched* Fools as to deliberate *one* Moment, whether

Heaven

Heaven were preferable before all the Pleasures of Sin, or whether it were more *eligible* to dwell with *Harlots* and *Drunkards* for a Moment, and wallow in their *beastly* Pleasures, than to enjoy the Society of *God*, and *Saints*, and *Angels*, to all *Eternity*? The Odds will then appear so *vast*, and the Disproportion so *unspeakable*, that we shall wonder how we could ever be so *senseless* as to make a Comparison between them. Sure, Sirs, we do not believe that *Heaven* is the Recompence of *Christ's* Service; for if we did, methinks we should more heartily engage in it. For could we stand thus *deliberating* upon the Shoar, whether, we shall bid adieu to our Lusts, take leave of all their *fulsome* Pleasures, and embark *ourselves* in the Service of our *Saviour*; could we stand pausing thus as we do, whether we shall venture into those *petty* storms that are like to attend us in our *spiritual* Voyage, did we verily believe that a few Leagues Distance lies that *blessed* Shore, where we shall be crowned as soon as we are landed with all the Joys that an *everlasting* *Heaven* means? Certainly the Belief of this is *sufficient* to put Life and Courage into the most *crest-fallen* Soul in the World, and to give her Spirit and Vigour enough to carry her triumphantly through all the *weary* Stages of her Duty. So that considering how, in all Respects, our *blessed* Lord abounds in Grace and Goodness to us, we have the *greatest* Encouragement imaginable to engage us to his Service.

3dly, *He was full of Truth.*] From whence I infer, that the *Christian* Religion is a very
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plain and *intelligible* thing. For this, as I have shewed you at large, is one of the *great* Notes of Distinction between Christ's tabernaciling among the *Jews* and among *Christians*, that whereas among the *Jews*, he was *full* of *obscure* Types and *mystical* Representations ; among us *Christians*, he is *full* of Truth ; that is, he is *plain*, and *open*, and *clear*, without any *dark* Reserves or Mysteries ; now he hath plainly revealed that which before he did so obscurely *decypher* ; now he hath *unriddled* all those *mystical* Types, and turned them as it were *inside outwards*, and given us their *hidden* Sense and Meaning in *plain* and *naked* Propositions ; and of these our *holy Religion* is composed. So that those Doctrines which before were all *Mystery*, whilst they lay obscurely couch'd under the *Types* and *Figures* of the Law, are now brought forth from behind the Curtain into the *open* View of the World, and presented *barefaced* to our Understandings in the most *plain*, and *easy*, and *familiar* Sense : Not but that *Christianity* hath some Mysteries in it still, whose Depths we are not *able* to fathom ; but it is not because *Christ* hath not revealed them, but because our Understandings are *incapable* of comprehending them ; such are the Doctrines of the *Holy Trinity*, the *Incarnation* of our *blessed Saviour*, and the *Hypostatical Union* of the *divine* and *human* Nature in him : Nor indeed is it much to be wondered at, that we, who with all our Wit and Reason, are not able to explicate the Mysteries of a *Mite*, or *Flea*, of a *Plant* or a *Stone*, or any of those *innumerable* Things, that are before us, should
not

not be able to understand such *incomprehensible*, to order such *infinite*, or define such *ineffable* things ; but though we cannot comprehend the *Modes*, nor understand the *strict Philosophy* of them, yet if we would but strip them out of their *false Disguises* into their *original Plainness* and *Simplicity*, we might doubtless easily disentangle them from all Repugnancy and Contradiction, which is *sufficient* to render them rationally *credible*, they being contained in that *excellent Religion*, whose Truth is demonstrated by such *abundant Evidence*. But perhaps, as God continued all the Doctrines of *Christianity* in a Mystery among the *Jews*, and reserved the *clear Revelation* of them to the Coming of the *Messias* ; so for the same Reason he hath still reserved the *clear Discovery* of those Doctrines which are still Mysteries to us *Christians*, for the *future State*, and then, it may be, we may as fully understand *these*, as the *believing Jews* (after the Coming of *Christ*) did those *other Doctrines* of the *Gospel*, which before were all Mysteries to them. But, God be praised, whatsoever is *necessary* to make us *good* and *happy*, is now so plainly discovered to us, that we cannot be *ignorant* of it unless we wilfully shut our own Eyes. We need not dive into *mystical Senses*, or *gripe* after Truth among *Shadows* and *Umbrages*, as the good *Jews* were fain to do under the *Mosaick Dispensation*, all that is *necessary* to our Salvation being written as it were upon the very *Surface* of our *Religion*, and openly exposed to our View in *plain* and *literal Proposals*. And yet notwithstanding the *Plainness* and *Simplicity* of the *Christian Religion*,

Religion, there are too many, both among *ourselves*, and in the *Church of Rome*, who have industriously set themselves to resolve all its Doctrines again into Darkness and *unintelligible* Mysteries, having, instead of the *plain* Propositions of our *Saviour*, introduced a *new fashioned mystical Divinity*, made up of nothing but certain *empty* Schemes of *effeminate* Follies and *wild* Enthusiasms, which are impossible for any Man to understand that cannot *conjure* for the Meaning of them. And those Doctrines which our *Saviour* purposely delivered in the most *plain* and *literal* Sense, that so the *meanest* Understanding might be instructed by them, these Men have blown *up*, like so many Bubbles, into *swelling* Mysteries, which, being stripped of those *glittering Allusions*, and *pompous Metaphors*, wherein they are clothed, vanish immediately into Air, or sink into *flat* and *empty* Nonsense. For thus the Doctrine of *Faith*, and *Repentance*, and *Justification*; which lie as *plain* in the *Scripture* as Words can make them, are by their Divinity rendered more *obscure* and *mysterious* than ever they were whilst they were couched under the *Types* and *Figures* of the Law, more of the *true* Nature being discovered in *Circumcision*, and the *legal Washings* and Atonements, than in a *hundred* Volumes of *modern Systems of Divinity*. For, whatsoever is *intelligible*, they look upon as *carnal*, and till they have subtilized it into some *unaccountable* Mystery, it is not *spiritual* enough to be admitted into their *System of Divinity*, as if they thought it below the *Majesty of Religion*, to expose itself to the View
of

of the World, and there was no way to secure it from Contempt, but to lock it *up* in Mysteries and Obscurities ; for else to what Purpose should they wrap it round with Clouds as they do, unless they design to make a Trade of it, and so draw a Curtain before it, as Men do before their *Puppet-Plays*, that so they may get Money by shewing it : For it is *apparent* that *Religion* itself suffers extremely by it ; for whilst they thus *spiritualize* it into Air, and do, as it were *juggle* it out of Sight in the Clouds of their *mystical* Nonsense, they render it extremely *suspicious* to all that are *wise* and *inquisitive*, and will not suffer themselves to be imposed upon by the Trains of their *mysterious Gibberish*. And as for their more *credulous* Followers, whilst they thus lead them by the Nose through a Valley of *Shades* and *Darkness*, they utterly deprive them of the *vigorous* Warmth and Comforts of *Religion* ; for how should they know how to make use of the Arguments and Motives of *Christianity*, when those *excellent* Doctrines from whence they are deduced, are wrapped in *unintelligible* Mysteries ? For how should they draw forth from the Articles of their Faith, those *practical* Principles that are lodged in them, when those Articles are converted into Riddles, which they do not nor cannot understand ? Thus, by turning *Christianity* into a *Mystery*, they do not only thwart the Design of our *Saviour*, which was to bring it forth from under the *mysterious* Representations of the Law, and propose it to the World in the most *plain* and *intelligible* Manner ; but they also *dispirit* *Religion*

ligion itself, whose Life and Energy consists in being understood, and expose it to the Contempt and Scorn of those that have Wit enough to detect their Follies of their *Enthusiastical* Mysteries.

4thly and lastly; *He dwelt among us full of Grace and Truth.*] From hence I infer the Inexcusableness of those Men that persist in their Disobedience to the *Gospel* now that our *blessed Lord* hath expressed so much Grace towards, and so clearly made known his Mind and Will to us. What Excuse can we urge to palliate our *wretched* Disobedience? If you will but imagine yourselves for a *little* while to be standing before the Tribunal of your *Saviour*, where, ere it be long, you must all appear, I will briefly draw up what in probability will be your Plea, and what may be reasonably presumed will be his *Answer*. “ In the Name of
 “ *Jesus* then let me demand of you, what
 “ can you plead for your selves, why that
 “ *fearful* Doom which he hath pronounced
 “ against you, should not be passed upon you?”
Why, Lord, we know that thou wer't an austere Man, that thou wouldst exact of us to the utmost Punctilio, and that if ever we failed in the least Circumstance of our Duty, thou wouldst immediately let loose thy implacable Vengeance upon us; and this utterly disheartened us from thy Service, considering how impossible it was for us to please thee.
 “ Ah *wretched* Creatures! can you have the
 “ Face to charge me with Rigour and Severity,
 “ who have had so many *notorious* Experi-
 “ ments of the Sweetness of my Nature, and
 “ *Tenderness*

“ Tendernefs of my Affections towards you ?
“ What *one* Action was I ever guilty of in all
“ my Converfation among you that could give
“ you the *leaft* Suspicion that ever I would
“ prove an *aufere* Master to you, or that I
“ would not be ready to conftrue you in the
“ moft *favourable* Senfe, and to pity and pardon you wherefoever you were excufable ?
“ Did I ever give you *any* Occafion to think
“ that I was of a *peevifh* or *captious* Nature,
“ apt to be provoked with Trifles ? Yea, had
“ you not all the Reason in the World to conclude from the *Sweetnefs* of my Temper,
“ that I would be always ready to confider
“ your *Infirmities*, and pity your *Weakneffes*,
“ and judge you by the Meafures of a Friend ?
“ And do you now pretend that it was the
“ Dread of my Severity that difheartened you
“ from my Service ? ” But, Lord, the Laws
which thou gavelt us were fo intolerably burthenfome, that neither we nor our Forefathers were able to bear them : We would willingly have obeyed thee if it had been poffible ; but when we faw thy Burthen exceeded our Strength, we concluded it was in vain for us to attempt the bearing it. “ O ungrateful
“ Rebels ! dare you accufe me of Tyranny,
“ when you know in *your own* Confciencces I
“ never impofed any Law upon you, but what
“ had a *necelfary* Tendency to your Happinefs,
“ and was fo far in its *own* Nature from being
“ a Burthen to you, that it commanded nothing
“ but what would have been an Eafe and
“ Refreshment ; and if you can produce any
“ *one* of my Commands that obliged you to

“ any thing but to be *kind to yourselves*, or
 “ convince me that I could have enjoined *less*
 “ upon you without being *less kind or mer-*
 “ *ciful* to you, I will freely admit of your Plea
 “ as *just*, and immediately pardon all your
 “ Disobediences against me. But when all my
 “ Laws are Instances of my Love to you, and
 “ Expressions of my Zeal for your Welfare,
 “ who but such *Monsters* of Ingratitude as
 “ yourselves would ever have charged me with
 “ Tyranny and Oppression ? ” But, Lord, thou
 knowest we are *fickle and mutable* Crea-
 tures ; and though we did heartily resolve
 that we would never revolt from thy Service,
 yet through the many Temptations that per-
 petually sollicited us, we were at last seduced
 into a Rebellion against thee : And though
 when we reflected upon what we had done, we
 were full of Sorrow and Remorse, and wished
 from our Souls that we had never done it ; yet
 then, being desperate of Mercy, and past all
 Hopes of Pardon, we concluded that it was
 too late to repent, or to think of returning to
 our Duty again. “ Ah, unworthy Wretches !
 “ with what Confidence can you impute the
 “ Continuation of your Rebellion against me
 “ to your Despair of ever finding Mercy at
 “ my Hands, when you know in *your own*
 “ Consciences that I died to procure Forgive-
 “ nefs for you, and that by my Death I ob-
 “ tained an Act of *Indemnity* and *Oblivion* for
 “ all that would come in, and return to their
 “ Duty upon the Proclamation of my Gospel ?
 “ When you cannot but know that I tendered
 “ you your Pardon sealed with *my own* Blood,
 “ and

“ and courted you to accept of it ; and though
“ Time after Time you scornfully refused and
“ rejected it, yet in hope that at last you might
“ be prevailed with, you know how long I
“ waited upon you, even till you had tired out
“ my Patience, and I saw there was no Re-
“ medy ? And do you now charge your not
“ returning to your Duty upon your Hopeles-
“ ness of Pardon for your *former* Rebellions ; ”
*It is true, Lord, we cannot deny but thou didst
offer us Pardon ; but, alas, it was upon an
impossible Condition, even upon a hearty Re-
pentance, and a thorough Reformation, which
thou knewest we were not then able to per-
form. For by a long Custom of Rebellion
against thee, we had contracted so many in-
veterate evil Habits, which had so weakened
and debilitated our Powers, that we were no
more able to reform and amend ourselves than
the Leopard is to change his Spots, or the
Æthiopian his Skin : To what purpose then
should we attempt Impossibilities, or set our-
selves to wrestle with Difficulties which we
knew we were never able to surmount ?*
“ But pray how did you know that it was
“ *impossible* for you to repent, when by all the
“ Arguments I used with you, I could never
“ persuade you to make Trial of it ? You know
“ in *your own* Consciences that there are *many*
“ Things that you could do : You could have
“ betaken yourselves to a *serious* Considera-
“ tion of the Duties and Motives of *Religion* ;
“ you could have attended, and abstained at
“ least from the *outward* Acts of Sin, and
“ humbly implored my Grace and Assistance ;

“ and that to encourage you to do this, and
 “ what else was in your Power, I gave you
 “ the most *ample* Assurance in the World, that
 “ I would *back* and *enforce* your Endeavours
 “ with the Aids of my Grace, and in Despite
 “ of all Opposition, crown them with Success.
 “ So that though by your own *single* Strength
 “ indeed you could never have effected your
 “ Repentance, yet it was far from being *im-*
 “ *possible* to you, since you know that by doing
 “ what was in your Power, you should infalli-
 “ bly oblige me to enable you to do all the
 “ rest.” But, *blessed Lord, what Encourage-*
ment had we to repent and return to our
Duty? For if we had done it, we must have bid
adieu for ever to all those Pleasures and De-
lights by which we were invited and detained
in the Service of our Lusts; and Thou offeredst
us nothing in Exchange for them, but only
Sighs and Tears, with other ungrateful Ri-
gours of a bitter and severe Repentance,
How then canst thou blame our Disobedience
against thee, when we had so many inviting
Temptations to it, and so little Encouragement
to the contrary? “ O prodigious Impudence!
 “ with what Face can you assert such a noto-
 “ rious Falshood, when you know in your
 “ own Conscience, that besides all those Plea-
 “ sures that are *connatural* to my Service, and
 “ which do vastly exceed all the Pleasures of
 “ Sin, I laid an *immortal* Crown at your Feet,
 “ and faithfully promised you, that if you
 “ would but spend a *short* Life in my Service,
 “ I would at the End of it receive you into
 “ that *blissful* State where you should be *happy*
 “ beyond

“ beyond all your *Wishes*, and to the *utmost*
“ Capacity of your Nature; where you should
“ live with *God* and *Angels* in the most *raptu-*
“ *rous* Exercise of *everlasting* Love and Joy,
“ which one would have thought had been
“ *sufficient* to recompence you for those *silly*
“ Pleasures, for whose Sake you deserted me
“ and my Service? But since you have tram-
“ pled upon all my Offers, and would by no
“ means be persuaded by all those *mighty*
“ Tenders I have made you, Go, ye deservedly
“ cursed, into ever——*Hold, Lord, we beseech*
thee, and before thou passest thy irrevocable
Doom upon us, hear this last Petition we shall
make for ourselves: We now confess that we
are fully convinced (and O that we had un-
derstood it sooner!) what infinite Reason we
had to adhere to thee and thy Service. It is
our Misery that these Things were not sooner
discovered to us, or at least, that they were
not so clearly discovered as to convince and
persuade us. Had we but known what we
now know, we would never have deserted
thee as we did; and therefore we beseech thee
have Pity upon our Ignorance, and impute not
to our Wills the Faults of our Understandings,
which are not in our Power to remedy.
“ Why, is this the *Utmost* that you can plead
“ for *yourselves*? Have I not told you all
“ these Things before-hand as plainly as Words
“ could express them? Have I not instituted
“ an Order of Men in my *Church* to explain
“ these Things to you, and to put you in
“ Mind of them? So that whatever you pre-
“ tend, you could not but know and under-

“ stand them ; or if you did not, it was be-
 “ cause you would not. And if you would
 “ wilfully shut your Eyes against the Light, it
 “ was *your own* Fault that you did not see,
 “ and you may thank *yourselves* for the Conse-
 “ quences of it. I plainly told you where
 “ your Wickedness would end, and unless you
 “ were wilfully *blind*, you could not but see
 “ what the Event of your Sin would prove
 “ even while you were committing it ; and you
 “ know in *your own* Consciences, that this
 “ *fearful* Doom, which now you deprecate,
 “ you were fairly warned of, when you might
 “ have easily avoided it by a *timely* Submis-
 “ sion, but you would not. And seeing you
 “ would be so *mad* as to reject *Heaven* when
 “ it lay before you, and leap into *Hell* with
 “ your Eyes open, your Blood be upon *your*
 “ *own* Heads. For I have tried all the Arts
 “ of Love and Methods of Kindness to re-
 “ claim you ; and since you have rendered them
 “ all *ineffectual*, what remains but that you de-
 “ part from me, like *accursed* Wretches as you
 “ are, into that *everlasting* Fire prepared for the
 “ *Devil* and his *Angels*.”

And now, I beseech you, do not *your own*
 Consciences consent to the Justice and Righte-
 ousness of this Procedure ? Is there any
tolerable Plea you can urge at the Judgment-
 Seat of *Jesus Christ* which here hath not been
 fully answered ? And if so, how *inexcusable*
 shall we be when we come to plead *our own*
 Cause in the *great* Assembly of Spirits ? For
 when these Aggravations of our Disobedience
 shall be laid open, our Guilt will appear so
foul

foul and monstrous, that we shall doubtless be condemned by the *unanimous* Vote of the *reasonable* World ; and as soon as the *great* Judge hath passed his Sentence upon us, *our own* Consciences will be forced to echo, *Just and righteous art thou, O Lord, in all thy Ways.* Wherefore, as we would not be found *inexcusably guilty* when we come to plead for our Lives before the Tribunal of our *Saviour*; let us all be persuaded to return to his Service, and faithfully to continue in it, that so, instead of *Go, ye Cursed*, we may hear from his Mouth that *welcome* Approbation, *Well done, good and profitable Servants, enter into the Joy of your Master.*

III. I come now to the *last* Proposition in the Text, *viz. And we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only Son of the Father.* In handling of which I shall do these two Things :

1. Explain to you what this *Glory* of the *Word* was which the *Apostle* tells us they beheld.

2. Shew you that it was *the Glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father.*

1. What was the *Glory* of the *Word*, which the *Apostle* tells us they beheld ? I answer in general, By this *Glory* here must be understood something that is *resembling* to the *Glory* of his dwelling in the Tabernacle ; because, as I have already shewed you, the *Apostle* seems plainly to refer to it, in that he doth not only tell us that the *Word* tabernacled among us,

which alludes to his tabernacling among the *Jews* ; but he also tells us, that they saw his Glory, which alludes to that Glory of the Lord which the *Jews* beheld in that *antient* Tabernacle. Since therefore the *Apostle* mentions this Glory of the *Word incarnate*, by way of Allusion to the Glory of his *divine Presence* in the Tabernacle, it must necessarily bear some Resemblance, or Proportion to it ; because else it would be no *proper* Allusion. The best Way therefore for us to discover what this Glory of *Christ* was which they beheld, is to consider wherein the Glory of the *divine Presence* in the Tabernacle did chiefly discover itself ; and that, you shall find, was in these four Things : *First*, In a *bright and luminous Appearance*. *Secondly*, In exerting of an *extraordinary Power*. *Thirdly*, In giving Laws and Oracles. *Fourthly*, In *sensible* Significations of its own *immaculate Sanctity and Purity*. And in Proportion and Correspondence to these, the Glory of the *Word incarnate* also must consist in these four Things :

1st, In the *visible* Splendor and Brightness with which his Person was arrayed at his *Baptism*, and more especially at his *Transfiguration*.

2^{dly}, In those *great and stupendous* Miracles that he wrought in the Course of his Ministry.

3^{dly}, In the *incomparable* Purity and Goodness of his Life.

4^{thly}, In the *surpassing* Excellency, and Divinity of his Doctrine.

1st, That Glory of the *Word* which St. *John* and the *Apostles* beheld, consisted in that *visible* Splendor

Splendor and Brightness with which his Person was arrayed at his *Baptism*, and more especially at his *Transfiguration*; in Resemblance to that *visible* Splendor and Brightness in which he appeared in the *Mosaick Tabernacle*, where it is frequently said, that the Glory of the Lord abode and appeared; as you may see, *Exod.* xxiv. 16. and xl. 34. Which Glory it is evident discovered itself in an *extraordinary visible* Splendor that shone from between the *Cherubims*, and diffused itself thence all over that *sacred Habitation*. And accordingly in *Ezek.* xlii. 2. it is said, that *the Glory of the God of Israel came from the Way of the East, and the Earth shone with his Glory*; which denotes that it was *extraordinary bright and luminous*, since the Earth shone with the very Reflection of it. And in this same *glorious* Splendor was *Christ* arrayed *first* at his *Baptism*, and *afterwards* at his *Transfiguration*. For at his *Baptism* it is said, that *the Heavens were opened unto him, and that he saw the Spirit of God descending like a Dove, and lighting upon him*, *Mat.* iii. 16; where by the *Holy Ghost's* descending like a Dove, it is not necessary we should understand his descending in the Shape, or Form of a Dove, but that in some *glorious* Form, or Appearance, he descended in the *same* Manner as a Dove descends; and therefore *St. Luke* expresses it thus; *And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily Shape like a Dove upon him*, *Luke* iii. 22; that is, he descended in some very *glorious* and *visible* Appearance, in the same Manner as Doves are wont to descend when they come down from
the

the Skies, and pitch upon the Earth. But what that Shape was in which he appeared, is not here expressed; but that which seems to be most *probable* is this; that the *Holy Ghost* assuming a Body of Light, or surrounded as it were with a Guard of Angels appearing in *luminous* Forms, came down from *Above* just as a Dove with his Wings spread forth is observed to do, and lighted upon our Saviour's Head; and the Reason why I think so, is this; both because where-ever any mention is made of God's, or the Holy Ghost's appearing in an *indefinite* Form, it is always in a Body of Light and *visible* Splendor, of which I have given you fundry Instances; and also because it seems to have been a very *early* Tradition in the *Church*, that it was in a very *glorious* Appearance of Light that the *Holy Ghost* came down upon our Saviour: And therefore in the *Gospel of the Nazarens*, as *Grotius* observes, it is said, that upon the Holy Ghost's Descent, εὐδὺς περιέλαμψε τὸν τόπον φῶς μέγα, *immediately a great Light shone round about the Place*; and *Justin Martyr*, speaking of our Saviour's Baptism, saith expressly, πῦρ ἀνέφθη ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ, *that there was a Fire lighted in the River Jordan*; that is, the Water, immediately after he was baptized in it, seemed to be all on Fire by the Reflection of that *bright* and *flaming* Appearance in which the *Holy Ghost* descended upon him; so that while he wore this Crown of *visible* Light, his Head, as the Painters are wont to express it, was circled round with the Rays of that Glory in which he was wont to appear from between the Cherubims. And this

this Glory of his was questionless seen by many of the *Apostles*, who were *undry* of them Disciples to *John the Baptist*, and so may reasonably be supposed to be present at the Baptism of our *Saviour*.

And as for his *Transfiguration* upon Mount *Tabor*, it is said, that upon it, *his Face did shine as the Sun*, and that *his Raiment was white as the Light*; or as St. *Luke* expresses it, οἱ ματισμὸς αὐτῶ λευκὸς ἐξαστράπτῃ; that is, his Raiment was like the Whiteness of a Flash of Lightning, *Luke ix. 29*. So that from Head to Foot he was all enrobed in a *visible* Glory, and covered with all that Brightness and *dazzling* Splendor in which he was wont to appear in the Tabernacle of *Moses*. And accordingly you have mention made of a Cloud that overshadowed the *three Disciples*, whilst *Jesus* remained in his Transfiguration, which is exactly agreeable with that Cloud that covered the Tabernacle of *Moses*, whilst the Glory of the Lord filled it, as you may see, *Exod. xl. 34*. And that this *glorious* Transfiguration was a Part of that Glory of the *Word* which St. *John* here says they beheld, is evident, because *himself* was one of the *three Disciples* that were Eye-Witnesses of this *glorious* scene, and it is expressly said of him and his Brethren, that they *saw his Glory*, and the two Men that stood with him, *Luke ix. 32*.

2dly, This Glory which they saw consisted in those *great* and *stupendous* Miracles that He wrought in the Course of his Ministry, in Proportion to that *extraordinary* Power in which the Glory of the *divine Presence* discovered itself

itself in the Tabernacle of *Moses*. For thus we find that it was from the Tabernacle that God exerted all that *miraculous* Power by which he punished the Rebellions of the *Jews*, and wrought those *miraculous* Deliverances for them. It was from the Tabernacle that he commanded the Earth to open, and swallow up *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, and that he sent forth that *devouring* Fire which consumed their *two hundred and fifty* Accomplices. It was from the Tabernacle that he smote the *false* Spies with the Plague, and sent forth an Army of *fiery* Serpents to destroy the *murmuring* Israelites. It was by his Presence in the Tabernacle that he conducted them through the Wilderness, and drove their Enemies before them ; that he divided the River *Jordan* to open them a Passage into *Canaan*, and made the Wall of *Jericho* to fall flat at the Blasts of a few *Rams-Horns*. And upon the Account of this *miraculous* Power which he exerted from the Tabernacle, the Ark that was contained in it, and was the *special* Seat of his Presence, is called *the Ark of his Strength*, *Psal. cxxxii. 8* ; and God is said to *send them Help from his Sanctuary*, and to *strengthen them out of Sion*, where the Ark was reposed in the Sanctuary of the Temple, *Psal. xx. 2*. Thus also those Words are to be understood, *Psal. lxxx. 2*. *Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up thy Strength, and come and help us* ; because the Ark, from whence God was wont to put forth his Strength in saving of *that* People, marched immediately before these *three* Tribes. And this was very well understood

understood both by the *Israelites* and the *Philistines*; for when the *Philistines* had overthrown them, they desired that the Ark of the Lord might be fetched out of *Shiloh*, that so when it came among them it might deliver them out of the Hands of their Enemies, *1 Sam. iv. 3.* And when the *Philistines* understood that the Ark was brought into their Camp, they were fore afraid, and cried out, *God is come into the Camp: Woe unto us; who shall deliver us out of the Hands of these mighty Gods? These are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the Plagues in the Wilderness,* v. 7, 8. From whence it is evident, that they both looked upon the Tabernacle as the Seat of God's *miraculous* Power, and this *miraculous* Power is called the Glory of God; for thus when the Ark was taken by the *Philistines*, it is said that God *delivered his Strength into Captivity, and his Glory into the Enemies Hand.* *Psal. lxxviii. 61.* And his Glory, and the Miracles that he wrought from the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, are mentioned as *synonymous* Terms, *Numb. xiv. 22. Because all these Men have seen my Glory, and my Miracles which I did in Egypt, and in the Wilderness, &c.* So that it is evident, that he exerted his *miraculous* Power from the Tabernacle, and that this *miraculous* Power was his Glory.

And consonantly hereunto, it was from the Tabernacle of *human* Nature wherein he dwelt, that the *Eternal Word* exerted that *miraculous* Power whereby he *cured the Sick, calmed the Sea, and raised the Dead, vanquished the Devils, and wrought all his miraculous Works,* which

which were so *many* and so *great*, that they ravished his Friends with Joy to behold them, and struck Terror and Amazement into his Enemies ; for so it is said, that *they were all amazed at the mighty Power of God* that was in him, *Luke ix. 43.* And that when they saw how the Devils trembled, and fled before him, *they marvelled*, saying, *It was never so seen in Israel*, *Mat. ix. 33.* So that by their *own* Confession, that *miraculous* Power which he exerted in the Tabernacle of *human* Nature, did far exceed that *miraculous* Power which he exercised in the Tabernacle of *Moses*. And this *miraculous* Power of his is also expressly called *his Glory*, *John ii. 11.* *This Beginning of Miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his Glory, and his Disciples believed on him.* So that as his *miraculous* Power was called his Glory when he tabernacled among the *Jews*, so it was also when he tabernacled in *human* Nature, and so by Consequence, this also was a Part of that Glory of his, which his *Apostles* saw while he dwelt among them.

3dly, This Glory which they saw consisted also in the *surpassing* Excellency and Divinity of his Doctrine, agreeably to that Expression of his *glorious* Presence in the *old Tabernacle*, *viz.* his giving Laws and Oracles to the *Israelites*. For thus we find that God told *Moses*, that he would *meet him in the Tabernacle, and commune with him of all Things, which he would give him in Commandment to the Children of Israel*, *Exod. xxv. 22*, and *Numb. vii. 89.* you have the Manner of his communing with them described ;

described ; for when *Moses*, saith he, *went into the Tabernacle, he heard the Voice of one speaking unto him from off the Mercy-Seat that was upon the Ark, from between the two Cherubims.* For Christ, as I have formerly shewed you, being the *Civil Prince* or Sovereign of the *Jews*, the *Cherubims* were the Throne upon which he sat, and from whence he gave Laws and Directions for the Administration of the Affairs of his Kingdom : And accordingly, he is said to *dwell between the Cherubims*, Psalm xcix. 1 ; and *to ride upon the Cherubims*, 2 Sam. xxii. 11 ; and the Sanctuary wherein the *Cherubims* were seated, is expressly called the *Throne of the Lord*, Jerem. xvii. 12 ; because here it was that he sat in all his Majesty, and gave forth his Laws and Ordinances to the Kingdom of *Israel*. And this was an *eminent* Expression of the Glory of his Presence among them, because hereby he asserted his sovereign Authority, and did publickly challenge to himself that Right to his *glorious* Power which from all *Eternity* was *inherent* in him : And hence the *Apostle* calls the giving those divine Laws and Oracles a *glorious Ministration*, and plainly asserts it to be an Instance of the Glory of the *divine Shechinah*, or Presence in the Tabernacle, when he grants that the *Ministration of Death written and engraven in Stone, was glorious*, yea, and that *Ministration* to be Glory in the Abstract, 2 Cor. iii. 7, 9.

And in Correspondence hereunto did the *divine Word*, when he tabernacled in *our* Nature, give forth *divine* Laws and Oracles to the World ; all which are yet remaining among
us,

us, and do contain in them the Substance of our *holy Religion*; which being so *divine* and *god-like*, and altogether composed of the *purest* Laws, and most *heavenly* Doctrines, is a most proper Instance of that Glory of the *Eternal Word* which the Apostles beheld, though not with the Eyes of their Bodies, yet with those of their Minds. For what can be more *glorious* in the Eye of *Reason*, than those *illustrious* Discoveries which he hath made to us in his *Gospel* of the *Nature of God*, and the *Duty of Man*, and the *immortal* Recompences of the *World to come*, in which he hath so far exceeded whatsoever *human* Wisdom was able to discover of them, that all the *Philosophy* that ever was *before* him must confess itself eclipsed and out-shone by him, and all the *Philosophy* that ever *succeeded* him, hath been forced to derive and borrow Light from him: And accordingly we find his *Gospel*, in which his Doctrines are contained, stiled by the Name of *the glorious Gospel*, 2 Cor. iv. 4; which in Comparison with those *dark* and *confused* Discoveries which the World had formerly made, the *Apostle* resembles to the first breaking forth of the Light out of the *rude* and *obscure* Chaos, 2 Cor. iv. 6. *For God*, saith he, *who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness*, hath shined into our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the Face of Jesus Christ: Where, by the Face of Jesus Christ, the Apostle seems plainly to allude to that *divine* Glory and Lustre with which *Moses's* Face shone when he came down from seeing the Glory of God, Exod. xxxiii. 29. So that his

Meaning

Meaning is this ; that as the *Children of Israel* with their *bodily* Eyes saw the Glory of God shining upon the Face of *Moses*, so *they*, the *Disciples* and *Apostles* of our Saviour, had far more clearly beheld with the Eyes of their Minds the *divine* Glory displayed in his Doctrine and Ministry.

4thly and lastly, This Glory of the *Eternal Word* which they saw, consisted also in the *incomparable* Sanctity and Purity of his Life, semblably to that Expression of his glorious Presence in the *old Tabernacle*, viz. the *sensible* Significations he gave of the *immaculate* Purity and Holiness of his Nature. For by those *outward* Cleansings of all Things and Persons that did any ways belong to the Tabernacle, or did at any time approach it, he did openly represent and signify the Purity and Sanctity of his *own* Nature, which being infinitely *separated* from all manner of *Impurity* and *Uncleanness*, cannot endure that any thing that is *filthy* or *impure* should approach it. For thus we read that the Tabernacle itself, and all the *Utenfils* of it, were to be *purified* and *sanctified* with Oil before the Entrance of the *Shechinah*, or *divine Presence* : So also the *High Priest*, the *Priests*, and the *People*, were to be cleansed and purified before they were suffered to approach the *holy Habitation* ; and if at any time they had contracted any of those *legal* Uncleannesses that are specified in the Law of *Moses*, they were to be excluded from the Communion of the Congregation, and from all the Exercises of *publick Worship* and Devotion, till they were cleansed and purified

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again : The Intent of all which was to signify to that People, how *irreconcilable* his Nature was to all Impurity and Wickedness, that it could not admit of the Neighbourhood of any Evil, nor dwell within any Lines of Communication with it ; for this is expressed in the very Reason why these *Legal Purifications* are so strictly required : *For I the Lord your God, am holy*, Levit. xix. 2. *For I the Lord which sanctify you, am holy*, Levit. xxi. 8. Plainly intimating, that the Intent and Reason of all those *ceremonial Purifications*, was to signify to that *dull and stupid* People the *immaculate Holiness* and Purity of his *own* Nature, which is so infinitely removed from any thing that is *impure* and *unkoly*, that he could neither communicate with, nor endure the Approaches of it. And in this, it is evident he placed a great Part of the Glory of his *majestical Presence* in the Tabernacle, since a great Part of that *Religion* which he there instituted, was intended to signify the Glory of his Holiness to them ; and accordingly he is described to be *glorious in Holiness*, Exod. xv. 11.

And agreeably hereunto did the *Eternal Word*, when he tabernacled in *our* Natures, signify to the World the *unspotted Purity* of his Nature, by that *incomparable* Example of Holiness which he gave in his Life and Conversation among us. For whereas before he expressed his Holiness by *mystical Types* and *ceremonial Observances*, he hath now signified it by a Life *full* of Virtue and Goodness, and a Conversation exactly *conformable* to the *eternal Rules* of Righteousness. For, as a Creature
in

in respect of his *Humanity*, he never failed in the *least* Punctilio of that *Duty*, *Honour* and *Devotion* which he owed to the most *High* God, his Creator : As a Man, he never swerv'd, either in his Passions or Appetites, from the *strictest* Rules of *Sobriety* and *Temperance* ; as a Member of *human Society*, he never was guilty of an *unrighteous* Action, either towards his *Superiors*, *Inferiors*, or *Equals* ; but all his Life was a *walking* Monument of Goodness, and his whole Conversation a most *perfect* Transcript of those *divine* and *heavenly* Laws which he gave to the World. So that he was all *glorious without* as well as *within*, his Practice being a *living* Comment and Paraphrase upon that *immaculate* Purity and Holiness which is the Glory of his *divine* Nature. This therefore was doubtless a Part of that Glory which the Apostles beheld in the *Eternal Word*, even that *immaculate* Sanctity and Holiness of which he gave so many *glorious* Significations in the whole Course of his Conversation : And accordingly, we find this his Purity and Holiness described by the Name of *the Glory of the Lord*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. *But we all with open Face, beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord* : Where it is plain, that by *the Glory of the Lord*, must be meant his Holiness ; because it is into the Image of *that*, that we are transformed. So that the Meaning of the Words is this, we all beholding the Holiness of *Christ*, which is his Glory, in the Glass of his Doctrine and *incomparable* Example, are transformed

into the Likeness of it, and do gradually pass on from *one* Degree of this Glory of his Holiness to *another*, under the Conduct and Assistance of the *Spirit of Christ*.

And so I have done with the *first* Thing proposed, which was to shew you what that Glory of *Christ* was which the *Apostle* here tells us they beheld.

2. I now proceed to the *second* Branch of my Discourse, which was to shew you, that this was the Glory as of the *only begotten Son of the Father*: But before we proceed to the Proof of it, it will be *necessary* to explain this Phrase, *δοξαν ὡς μονογεῖου*, *the Glory as of the only begotten Son*. Which Word *ὡς*, or *as*, is in *Scripture* taken *two* Ways, sometimes as a Note of *Similitude*, or *Comparison*; so *Mat. vi. 10.* *Thy Will be done in Earth, ὡς ἐν ὁραῶ, as it is in Heaven*; that is, like as it is in *Heaven*; and if we take it in this Sense, then the meaning of the Words must be this, *And we beheld his Glory which was like unto the Glory of the only begotten Son of the Father*; that is, like unto that Glory in which the only begotten Son was wont to appear when he dwelt in the Tabernacle, and conversed with the *ancient Patriarchs*. And in this Sense I have shewed you already how it was *as* the Glory of the *only begotten Son*, by shewing you the *great* Agreement and *Similitude* there was between the Glory of *Christ* when he dwelt in the Tabernacle of *Moses*, and in the Tabernacle of *our* Nature. And when I consider how plainly this Text doth allude to the *Shechinah*,

or *divine Presence* of the *Word* in that *antient* Tabernacle, I am very much induced to think that we ought not to exclude this Sense of it, namely, that as he dwelt in the Tabernacle of *our* Nature, *like* as he dwelt in the Tabernacle of *Moses*; so that Glory of his which they beheld in the Tabernacle of *our* Nature, was like unto that Glory in which he appeared in the *antient* Tabernacle.

But then this Word *ὡς*, is sometimes also taken for a Note of *Confirmation*; so *Psalms* lxxiii. 1. *ὡς ἀγαθὸς ὁ Θεός*, Truly God is good to Israel. And thus St. Chrysostome understands it here, *ὡς ἐν ὁμοιώσει ἐστὶν ἐδὲ παραβολῆς, ἀλλὰ βεβαιώσεως, &c.* It is not a Note of *Similitude* and *Comparison*, but of *Confirmation* and *unquestionable Distinction*; as if the Evangelist had said, we saw his Glory, such as *became*, and was *fit* for the *only begotten* and truly *natural Son of God*. For my part, I see no Reason why the Words may not be fairly understood in *both* Senses, since they are no ways *opposite* to, nor *inconsistent* with *one another*; and if so, then this must be the Meaning of the Words; *We beheld his Glory which was like unto that Glory in which the only begotten Son appeared in the old Tabernacle, and which was such as was every way becoming the only begotten Son to appear in.* The *first* of which Senses I have proved to you already, that the Glory of *Christ* in the Tabernacle of *our* Natures was *like* unto his Glory in the Tabernacle of *Moses*; and therefore now I shall only prove the *second*, that it was such as *became*, and was every way *worthy* of the *only begotten Son of the Father*;

and this, I doubt not, will plainly appear by considering the *several* Particulars of it.

1st, That *visible* Splendor and Brightness in which he appeared at his *Baptism* and *Transfiguration*, was such as *became* him, and was *worthy* of him : For in all probability, that Splendor consisted of *Angelical Beings*, cloathed in *bright* and *luminous* Bodies ; because as I have formerly proved to you, that Brightness in which he appeared upon the *Mount*, and which he displayed from between the *Cherubims*, was nothing else but those *Angels of Light*, or *ministering Spirits* which he made to appear as Flames of Fire round about him ; and therefore that Train of Angels whom *Esfay* saw filling the Temple, *Esfay* vi. 1. our *Saviour* calls the *Glory of the Lord*, John xii. 41 ; that is, that *visible* Glory in which the Lord appeared from between the *Cherubims*. And if that *visible* Glory consisted in a Train of *Angels* appearing in *glorious* Forms, then there is no doubt but that *visible* Glory of our *Saviour* at his *Baptism* and *Transfiguration* was the same ; since, as I have already shewed you, it is described by the *same* Name, and in the *same* Manner and Appearance ; and, if so, how well did it become the *only begotten Son* to be surrounded with the *illustrious* Guards of his Father's Court, and attended on with those *high-born* Spirits, whose Office it is to minister before the Throne of the most *High* ? For never was the most *glorious* Potentate upon Earth attended with such a *splendid* Train and Retinue, the *meanest* of which was far more *illustrious* than the *greatest* and most

most *high-born* Monarch in the World. So that as the most *high* God did, by a Voice from *Heaven*, both at his *Baptism* and *Transfiguration*, declare him to be his *beloved* Son ; so by the *glorious* Train of Attendants he sent him, he manifested the Truth of his Declaration ; for we must needs suppose him to be the Son of the most *High*, when we see the most *glorious* Beings in all the Creation, so willingly submit themselves to his Service and Attendance : And when we see the most *High* adorning his *Outside* with the *luminous* Bodies of Angels, we may reasonably conclude that there was a *Divinity within*, and that the *Jewel* was *God*, because the *Casket* was *Angels*. But whatsoever this *glorious* Splendor was in which he was cloathed at his *Baptism* and *Transfiguration*, it was apparently such as very well became the *only begotten Son*, not only because, as the *Philosopher* saith, that if *God* would ever take upon him a Body, it would be certainly Light, which is a Vestment most *suitable* to his Glory and Majesty ; but also because that *miraculous* Splendor was an *infallible* Token of the Presence of the *Divinity* in him ; for it never was but where *God* was present ; and therefore it is called the Glory of *God*, it being the *inseparable* Concomitant of his more *peculiar* Residence. For thus, as I have shewed you upon the *Mount*, and in the *Tabernacle*, it was a *visible* Demonstration of the *special* Presence of the *invisible* *God*, and wheresoever, in all the *Old Testament*, any Mention is made of its Appearance, you shall find that there *God* himself did peculiarly reside : And there-

fore it is not to be imagined that *God* would have communicated to our *Saviour* this *inseparable* Token of his *own* Presence, unless the *Divinity* had resided in him. For *Jesus Christ* was the only Person upon whom this *visible* Glory descended; never did the Hand of *Heaven* put forth such a Robe and Diadem of Glory upon any Person in the World, as this which our Saviour wore at his *Baptism* and *Transfiguration*; which plainly denotes, that he was the only Person in whom the *Divinity* was *substantially* united, and did *essentially* dwell. So that as this *visible* Glory was a *certain* Token of *God's peculiar* Residence in the Tabernacle and Temple, so it was also of his *special* Presence in *Christ*; for the History of his *Baptism* tells us, that it did not only make a *transient* Appearance, but that it remained on him, signifying that the *Divinity*, whose Presence was denoted by it, had made him his Habitation and Place of *constant* Abode. For though that *visible* Glory after some Time disappeared and went *off* from him, yet the Thing signified by it, *viz.* the *divine Presence*, always remained in him; for by that *outward* Glory he was clearly manifested to be the *Holy One of God*, the Tabernacle and Sanctuary in which God was, and where he had taken up his Residence *for ever*, that his *human* Nature was that *sacred* Temple where the *Divinity* intended to dwell, and from whence for the *future* he would deliver all his Oracles, and communicate all his Blessings to Mankind. So that in this Respect this *visible* Glory was such as highly *became* the *only begotten Son*, because

it plainly denoted that the Fulness of the Godhead dwelt *bodily* in him, and had chosen him for his Habitation for ever ; and therefore *John Baptist* tells us, that though he knew him not, yet this God had revealed to him, *Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.* And I saw and bear Record that it was the Son of God, John 1. 33, 34. Where you may observe, that though it was revealed to him only that he was the Person that should baptize with the *Holy Ghost*, upon whom the Spirit descended, yet he bare Record also that this Person was the Son of God, rationally concluding that this *visible* Glory, which was such an *infallible* Token of the *special* Presence of the *Divinity*, was never to be communicated to any but the Son of God. And it is very observable, that at both these Times, when our Saviour was arrayed in this glorious Splendor, he is declared by a Voice from Heaven to be the Son of God, it being the Father's Intention at once to manifest him to be his Son both by *Word* and *Deed* ; and at the same Time, when he declared him to be his Son, to array him in such a Glory as became the Dignity of his Person.

2dly, The great and stupendous Miracles that he wrought were such as became his only begotten Son. It is true, it cannot be denied but several Miracles have been wrought by meer Men, they being authorized by God, and assisted by his Almighty Power ; but so many and so great as our Saviour wrought were never performed by any Mortal. For as to the Number
of

of them, they were more than ever were wrought by *Moses* and all the *Prophets* together ; for, besides those that are recorded, which were all performed within the Space of *four Years* at most, *St. John* tells us, that he wrought so many that the World could not contain the Records of them, *John* xxi. 25 ; which though it be an *hyperbolical* Expression, yet denotes thus much at least, that the Number of them was so *great*, that they were almost *innumerable*. And as to the Greatness of them, they did apparently exceed all that ever were wrought before in the World. For he did not only raise the Dead, but he raised *himself* also after he had been *barbarously* murdered by his Enemies. He made the *Winds* and *Sea* obey him, and with the Word of his Mouth vanquished the *Devils*, and drove them from their Habitations, and forced them against their Wills and their Interest to acknowledge him to be the Son of God. And whereas the Miracles of *Moses* and the *Prophets* were most of them *noxious*, they being Acts of *divine* Vengeance upon the *Wicked* and *Ungodly*, and consequently more apt to terrify, than to oblige those that beheld them ; the Miracles of our *Saviour* were all of them Expressions of his *unfeigned* Love and Good-Will to the World. For among all that *vast* Number of wondrous Works that he wrought, there is not *one* to be found by which any Man was ever prejudiced, unless it was his dismissing the Devils into the Swine of the *Gadarens*, which without all Doubt he did in Kindness and Good-Will to the Owners ; who being so *cruel* to themselves,

as to prefer their Swine before their *Saviour*, it was *great* Charity and Mercy to deprive them of that which was so *apparent* a Hindrance to their Enjoyment of a far *greater* Good. So that all his *wondrous* Works were nothing but Acts of Kindness and Beneficence ; for he went about doing Good, *curing* all that were *possessed* with the Devil, and *healing* all manner of Diseases. And whereas none of those that wrought Miracles before him could ever pretend to perform them by any *immanent* Power of their own, but had only a *transient* Power given them for the *present* Miracle, which they either obtained from *God* upon their Prayers and Supplications, or was given by *God* for the Execution of his *own* Will and Command ; the *blessed* *Jesus* had this Power subjected and abiding in him, so that he could exert it *when*, and *where*, and as *often* as he pleased ; and whether he were *absent* or *present*, with the Word of his Mouth he could do what he would : Yea, and many times he performed his *wondrous* Works without any Word or Sign intervening, even by a *silent* Virtue proceeding from that *miraculous* Power with which he was endued ; and of all his Miracles, there is only *one* which he performed upon Prayer and Supplication to his Father, and that was his raising *Lazarus* from the Dead, the Reason of which he himself gives, *John* xi. 42. *Because of the People which stand by, that they may believe that thou hast sent me :* Intimating that he did not offer up this Prayer to his Father with Design to obtain of him a *new* Power of working Miracles, which he was
already

already endued with in an *abundant* Measure ; but that hereby I might signify to the People how *acceptable* I am to thee, and let them see that I do all my Works in thy Name. And that he had this Power, is evident in that he did so plentifully communicate it to his *Apostles* and Followers, which neither *Moses* or the *Prophets* were ever able to do. For thus, *Luke* x. 19. he expressly tells his *Seventy Disciples*, *Behold, I give you Power to tread on Serpents and Scorpions* ; and so also when he dismissed his *Twelve Apostles* into *Judea*, *Mat.* x. 8. he bids them, *Go, heal the Sick, cleanse the Lepers, raise the Dead, cast out Devils* ; for *freely you have received*, saith he, and therefore *freely give*. From all which it is apparent how far the *miraculous* Works of our *Saviour* did exceed all those that ever were done before him ; and being so *great* and *excellent*, so far *transcending* all that ever was done by any Mortal, they plainly demonstrated him to be the *Son of God*, and very well became the Dignity of his Person : For how could he have done all these *mighty* Things by a Power *immanent* in himself, had he not been the *Son* of an *omnipotent Father* ? And in what more *becoming* Way could he have expressed that *omnipotent* Power which he derived from his Father, than in those *astonishing* Miracles of Love which he wrought in the World ?

3dly, The *excellent* and *divine* Doctrine which he taught was such as *became* the *only begotten Son*. For certainly, if we consider the *excellent* Frame and Contrivance of the *Christian Religion*, we cannot but confess it to be

be most *Divine* and *God-like*, most *worthy* of that *infinite* Wisdom and Goodness from whence it was derived. For *Religion* in general is the Means of advancing *rational Beings* to that Perfection and Happiness for which the *great* Creator hath designed and intended them ; and certainly never was there any *Religion* in the World more adapted to advance this *noble* Design of *God*, than that which our *Saviour* hath taught : For, as for its *Agenda*, what it requires to be done, they all consist in acting reasonably, and according to the Dignity of our Nature, in *thinking*, *speaking*, and *practising* ; in *loving* and *hating*, *desiring* and *delighting*, *hoping* and *fearing*, as becomes *reasonable Beings*, placed in our Condition and Circumstances ; and do require nothing of us, but that we should regulate our Practice by the Rules of *right* Reason, and direct all our Faculties and Affections to their *proper* Ends and Objects ; and when we come to this Pitch, always to *think* that which is most *reasonable*, and always to *practise* what we think so, then we are advanced to the *topmost* Round of our Perfection, in which is founded the *utmost* Happiness we are capable of : So that in all the Course of our *Christian* Practice, we are in a *direct* Progression and Tendency towards our Perfection and Happiness. And as for the *Credenda* of *Christianity*, the Doctrines it requires us to believe, they are all of them pregnant with the most *strong* and *vehement* Motives to engage us to the Practice of what it enjoins ; Motives that have such a *Potent*, I had almost said *Omnipotent* Force in them, that it is im-

possible

possible for any Man heartily to believe, and thoroughly to weigh and consider them, and not be effectually persuaded by them. Since therefore it was so highly convenient that the *Son of God* in Person should come down from *Heaven* among us, that so the Dignity of his Person might give Authority to that *Religion* by which the World was to be governed; and since he did come down upon this *honourable* Errand, it was impossible for him to have taught any Doctrine that could more effectually have promoted the *great* End of *Religion*, or more fully expressed his *infinite* Wisdom, and Goodness, and Zeal for the Welfare of the Souls of Men, than that which is contained in the *Christian Religion*, which is every Way so adapted to make Men *good* and *happy*, so accommodated to the Nature and Condition of Mankind, that there is nothing could better become the *only begotten Son* to teach in the World, or that could be more *worthy* of all those *infinite* Perfections that are lodged in his Nature, and do speak him to be the most *genuine* Offspring of the most *High*. For so *excellent* was his Doctrine, that his very Enemies were astonished at the *Wisdom* that was given him, *Mark* vi. 2, 3. and wondered at the *gracious* Words that proceeded out of his Mouth, *Luke* iv. 22. Well therefore might he say of himself, *I am the Light of the World, he that followeth me shall not walk in Darkness, but shall have the Light of Life*, *John* viii. 12.

Atly and lastly, The *incomparable* Sanctity and Purity of his Life was such as very well
became

became the *only begotten Son*. For as it was highly *convenient* that he should come down into the World, and in his *own* Person teach us that *Religion* by which he intended to govern us, that thereby he might stamp it with a more *aweful* Authority; so to render it more successful, it was no less *convenient* that he should come down in *our* Natures, that therein he might be capable of practising what he taught us, and setting us an Example of what he would have us to do, that so we might see that he enjoined nothing upon us but what was *practicable*, and what did become the most *glorious* Person, that ever did assume our Natures; that thereby we might be encouraged to our Duty, and animated with a *noble* Emulation of treading in his blessed Footsteps. Since therefore all this was so highly *convenient*, and the *Son of God* in Compliance with this Convenience did actually assume *our* Nature, it was impossible for him to lead a Life that *better* comported with this Design of his *Incarnation*, or *better* became the Dignity and Excellency of his Person than he did. For now that he was become a Man, he was obliged to act *suitably* to his Nature; and should he have done any thing that was *unsuitable* to the State and Circumstances of his Nature, he would not have acted becoming himself. So that it was highly *convenient* that he should become a Man, and being a Man, it was indispensably *necessary* that he should live like a *wise* and a *good* Man in the Condition and Relations wherein he was placed, and nothing could be more *worthy* of, or *becoming* him,
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than so to do, though he was still the *only begotten Son* of the Father. For it is the Glory of *God* himself, that he always acts most reasonably according to the State and Relations of a *God*; and therefore when *God* becomes Man by assuming *our* Nature to his *own*, it is his Glory to act most reasonably in the State and Relations of a Man. And thus did the *blessed Jesus* do in the whole Course of his Conversation upon Earth; for his Life was a most *exact* Pattern of all *human* Virtues, in which all that is *ornamental* to *human* Nature was represented in its *fairest* Colours: There you may see a *fair* Example of the most *ardent* Love to, and *constant* Dependance upon *God*, of the most *profound* Humility, and *perfect* Resignation to his *heavenly* Will. There you may behold the Moderation of *human* Passions and Appetites set forth to the Life, and fairly delineated in its most *exquisite* Perfections; in a Word, there you will find *Loyalty* and *Submission* to *Superiors*, *Fidelity* and *Justice* to *Equals*, *Courtesy* and *Candour*, and *Condescension* to *Inferiors*, *universal* Love, and an *unbounded* Charity to all, practised to the Height and Exactness; and which Way soever you turn your Eyes on this *fair* Monument of Virtues, you can discover nothing but what is *lovely* and *adorable*, and infinitely becoming the *only begotten Son of the Father*.

Having thus explained and demonstrated the Proposition to you, I shall conclude with these four Inferences from this *fourfold* Glory of the *Word* which they saw.

1. They saw the *glorious* Splendor which invested his Person at his *Baptism* and *Transfiguration*: From whence I infer his Deputation from the most *High God*, and Father of all Things, to be his Representative and Viceroy in the *Christian Church*. For this *visible* Glory with which he was invested, was always the *peculiar* Character of the *immediate* Representative of *God*; and therefore by Way of Approbation it is called the *Glory of God*, and *the Glory of the Lord*; and wheresoever *God*, as *supreme* Monarch and Governor, is represented as residing and taking up his *Royal Habitation*, there you always find him displaying himself in this *visible* Glory and Splendor. Thus, when by the *Eternal Word* he was represented among the *Jews* as their *supreme* Lord and Governor, he always manifested his *majestic* Presence among them by some *bright* and *shining* Appearance; the first Instance of which was his Appearance to *Moses* from out of the *burning Bush* upon Mount *Sinai*, where he first acted, under *God the Father*, as *Sovereign King of Israel*, in commissioning *Moses* to be their Captain and Leader out of *Egypt*; for here it is said, that he *appeared in a Flame of Fire*. *Exod. iii. 2.* That is, in a *visible* Glory that resembled the Brightness of a Flame of Fire. For this Mountain he had chosen for the Seat and Throne of his *majestical* Residence, from whence he intended to give Laws to *Israel*, and to exert his *Royal* Dominion over them; and therefore here he appears in that *visible* Glory which was always the Character of the

divine King, and *immediate* Representative of God to that People. And indeed if that be true which *Josephus* tells us, this Mountain was looked upon as the Habitation of God long before ever *Moses* came thither; for therefore, says *Josephus*, did *Moses* drive his Father *Jethro's* Flock thither to feed, because of all other Places it most abounded with Pasture, * *διὰ τὸ δύξαν ἔχειν ἐν διατρίβειν αὐτῷ τὸν Θεὸν ὃ κατανεμνηθεῖος πρότινον, ὃ πολυμῶντων ἐμβατεύειν εἰς αὐτὸ τῶν ποιμένων*; that is, *because it was famed that God dwelt there, which was the Reason that the Shepherds never durst to drive their Flocks thither, because of the Sacredness of the Place.* And if this Report were true, then it seems this Mountain was the Seat of the Royal Residence of the *Eternal Word* before ever *Moses* came thither, and consequently the Glory and Brightness in which *Moses* saw him appear, was nothing but the Display of his *Majestic* Presence which did there make its *ordinary* Abode. But whether that be *true* or *false*, it is most *plain* and *apparent*, that wheresoever he appeared as the King of *Israel*, or Representative of God to them, he always cloathed himself in a *visible* Glory and Splendor. Thus he appeared to them, in a Pillar of Fire, that is, in a most *bright* and *luminous* Form, when he conducted them through the *Red Sea*, and the *Wilderness*; and when he came down upon Mount *Sinai* to give the Law to them, it is said that the Glory in which they beheld him was *like devouring Fire.* *Exod. xxiv. 17.* That is, it was unspeakably *bright* and *refulgent*,
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even like that of a most *intense* and *vehement* Fire; and in all this *radiant* Glory did he display himself from between the Cherubims when he removed from the Mountain, and chose the Tabernacle for the Seat of his *future* Residence and *Royal* Abode. Thus wheresoever he appeared in his *Kingly* Majesty as the *publick* Representative of his Father, this *visible* Glory is always made mention of, as that which was the *peculiar* Character of his Presence and Person. It is true, it is recorded of *Moses*, that when he came down from the Vision upon the Mount, his Face shone so brightly that the *Israelites* were not able to approach him; which seems to argue that this *visible* Glory was not so *peculiar* to the *Eternal Word* as his Father's Representative, as we would have it, since we plainly see it was *common* to *Moses* with him. But this doth no Ways destroy our Assertion; because it is plain that *that* Glory which covered the Face of *Moses*, was all derived from the Glory of the *Eternal Word*, with whom for *forty* Days he had conversed in the Mount. For *Moses* being sent down as an Apostle to the *Jews*, to promulgate those Laws to them which he had received upon the Mount, the *Eternal Word*, to convince the *unbelieving Jews* that he had sent him, reflects upon his Face some Rays of Glory from that Sphere of Light in which he appeared to, and conversed with him, that *that* might be an *ocular* Demonstration to them, that *Moses* came from him, and was commissioned by him to preach and promulgate his Laws to them. So that *Moses* his Glory being derived

from the *Word*, declared him to be his Apostle and Minister; even as the Glory of the *Word* being derived from the Father, declared him to be his Representative and Viceroy; so that from its shining upon the Face of *Moses*, it by no Means follows that this *visible* Glory is not the *peculiar* Character of God's *immediate* Representative; because that which shone upon his Face was only the *Parbelius*, or Reflection of the *visible* Glory of him who was God's *immediate* Representative. For so the Earth also is said to *shine with the Glory of the God of Israel*. Ezek. xliii. 2. And as the Glory with which it shone was not the Glory of the Earth, but the Glory of the *God of Israel*; so neither was that Glory upon the Face of *Moses* the Glory of *Moses*, but the Glory of that *divine* Person with whom he had conversed, derived to, and reflected upon him; and it being still the *proper* Glory of that *divine* Person, may very well be said to be the *peculiar* Characters of his being the *immediate* Representative of *God*, notwithstanding it reflected from him upon *Moses*; especially considering that this *reflected* Glory upon *Moses* his Face was to be an Evidence to the *Jews*, that he came down to them as an Apostle from the *Eternal Word*, with Authority to publish and declare his Laws to them. For if this *derivative Splendor* was an Evidence that *Moses* came down as an Apostle from that *divine* Person on the Mount, then the *original* Splendor of that *divine* Person whence it was derived and reflected, was at least an *equal* Evidence that he came down upon the Mount

as the Apostle, and *immediate* Representative of the most *high* God himself.

And in the same Manner we find that the *Word Incarnate* did give Evidence to the Commission of his *Christian Apostles*; for upon the *Day of Pentecost*, when they were assembled together, it is said, *that there appeared unto them cloven Tongues like as of Fire, and sat upon every one of them*, Acts ii. 3. That is, there were several Flashes, or Beams of Glory, which, like *bright* Flames of Fire, did cleave asunder in many Places according to the *natural* Motion of Flames, of which every Part, as it extends itself in Length, grows more *Spire-like*, or *Pyramidal*, and so divides from the Part next to it; and upon the Head of every one of the Apostles, did one of these *divided* Flames of Glory rest in the Form of a Tongue, which, like a Flame, grows *sharper* and *sharper* towards the Top: For thus the *Hebrew Idiom* for a Flame of Fire uses the *Tongue* of Fire, because of the Resemblance that is between them, *Isa. v. 24*. So that, as the *Eternal Word* did evidence to the *Jews* the Apostleship of *Moses* by that *visible* Glory which he reflected on his Face, so did the *Word Incarnate* evidence to the *Christian Church* the Apostleship of the *Twelve* by this *visible* Glory which he derived upon them. For now, according to *John the Baptist's* Prediction of him, he baptized them *with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire*, Luke iii. 16. That is, by the *outward* Sign of that *visible* Glory which rested like Fire upon them, he solemnly initiated them into their *Apostleship*, and de-

clared them to be the *Heralds* of his Will to the World. And as this *visibly* Glory with which he baptized them, was an Evidence of their being sent *from*, and commissioned by *him* to bear his Authority, and represent his Person ; so that *visible* Glory with which he was baptized from *Heaven*, first in the River *Jordan*, and afterwards upon Mount *Tabor*, was an *undoubted* Evidence that he was sent from *Above* to be his Father's Representative in the *Church* : For if their shining with his Glory was an Evidence of their being invested with his Authority, then his shining with his Father's Glory must be an *equal* Evidence of his being invested with the Authority of his Father. And as this *visible* Glory was always the *peculiar* Character of God's *immediate* Representative, and the *royal* Crown and Robes, as it were, with which the most *High* adorned him at his *Inauguration*, and Investment with his *own* *kingly* Authority : so St. *Peter* expressly tells *Cornelius* and his Company, that *God* had *anointed* him *with the Holy Ghost*, and *with Power*, Acts x. 13 ; that is, by that *outward* Sign of the *visible* Glory in which the *Holy Ghost* descended upon him, he had invested him with *regal* Power, and deputed and declared him to be King of the *Church*. And this, in all Probability, was the Reason why he forbade his Disciples to declare his Transfiguration till after his *Resurrection from the Dead*, Mark ix. 9. because he knew that if they did, the *Jews* would not believe it, but would maliciously interpret it to be a *false* Pretence of his to the Title of God's *immediate* Representative

tative and Viceroy, that *visible* Glory in which he appeared being the *proper* Character of that *divine* King by whom the most *high* God had formerly governed them ; and therefore in all the History of his Life you find he did industriously avoid openly to avow his *regal* Authority, and only insinuates it by Consequences and *obscure* Intimations. For so violently were they prejudiced against his being their *King*, upon the Account of his *obscure* Parentage, and *mean* Condition, that he could not but foresee how *unseasonable* it would yet be publicly to own his *regal* Authority, and consequently the Glory of his Transfiguration which did so apparently infer it ; till by more *miraculous* Effects, and particularly by his *Resurrection from the Dead*, he had sufficiently proved and demonstrated it ; and then he openly declares, without any Reserve, that *all Power was given him in Heaven and Earth*. Matt. xxviii. 18. Since therefore it is so apparent by this *characteristical* Glory, in which his Person was enrobed, and which the *Apostle* assures us they saw him invested with, we have all the Reason in the World to conclude, that the most *high* God hath deputed him to be King and Lord of the *Church*. For when the *Apostle* tells us that they saw this *visible* Glory which shone upon him at his *Baptism* and *Transfiguration*, he doth as good as say, that they saw all the Solemnity of his *divine* Coronation, that they beheld the most *high* God circling his Brows with the *royal* Diadem, and investing his *sacred* Body with the *imperial* Robes of the *great* King of the World. So that if it

be true what St. *John* says, that they did see this Glory, (as we have all the Reason in the World to conclude it is, because he offered to seal his Testimony of it with his Blood, and the other *two* that saw it with him actually did so) then we cannot but acknowledge the *blessed Jesus* to be *our King*, to whose *divine Authority* we are bound to pay the *lowest* Homage and Obedience; and that whensoever we wilfully transgress his Laws, we do openly rebel against our most *rightful* Sovereign, to whose Service we are bound by all *possible* Ties and Obligations.

2. They saw the Glory of that *miraculous* Power, which he exerted in the Course of his Ministry; from whence I infer the Credibility of the *Christian Religion*: For the many *stupendous* Miracles that he wrought, were a most *plain* and *unquestionable* Evidence of a *divine* Power, residing in him, and accompanying his Ministry. For never were there so many *miraculous* Effects produced, either *before* or *since*, in the World, by the most *renowned* Workers of Miracles that ever were; and all that hath been done by the most *famous* Magicians, that are recorded in History, were but like the *little* Tricks and Delusions of *Jugglers*, compared with the *wondrous* Works of our *Saviour*; and yet it is apparent that his Education had been most *plain* and *simple*, that he never had been instructed in any *mathematical* Science, or *mystical* Rights, or in any *other* Art of performing Wonders, either by *human* Wit, or *diabolical* Assistance; but was bred up under the Care of his *poor honest* Parents,

Parents, who were forced to earn their Bread with the Sweat of their Brows, and so in all Probability was trained up in his Father's Profession, that so by his *daily* Labour he might be able to contribute to the Charge of his Maintenance. And yet it is plain, this *home-bred* Person sometimes, only by speaking of a Word, sometimes merely by the Touch of his Hand, sometimes by a *silent* Virtue proceeding from him without any *outward* Sign intervening, did *more*, and far *greater* Wonders in *three* or *four* Years Time, than all the most *skilful Physicians, Magicians, and Mathematicians* could ever do, either *before* or *after* him. Now how was it possible that such a Person should ever have accomplished such *great* and *mighty* Things as he did, had he not been endued with Power from above? And if he was endued with such a Power, what *greater* Evidence can we desire of the Truth and Divinity of his Doctrine? For it is not *supposable* that the *God* of Truth would have endued our *Saviour* with this *miraculous* Power, had that Doctrine been false which he sought to confirm by it; because in so doing he would have openly *patronized* a Cheat, and designedly contributed to the Propagation of an Imposture, which is utterly *inconsistent* with his Truth and Veracity: So that now the Truth of *Christianity* finally resolves into the Veracity of *God*, which is the Foundation of all the Certainty in the World. For admitting that *God* can either *deceive*, or be *deceived*, we do not know but our Faculties may be constantly imposed upon, and then there is nothing in Nature that we
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can be certain of. So that if it be true, as St. *John* here testifies, that they did see the Glory of our Saviour's Miracles, that is a most *undeniable* Evidence of the Truth and Divinity of his Doctrine; and that they did see it, I think is as evident: For it is not imaginable that any *single* Man would openly testify a *known* Lye without some Temptation inducing him thereunto; much less that so many *Hundreds* of Persons as the *Eye-Witnesses* of our Saviour's Miracles were, should conspire to cheat the World, not only when they had *no* Temptation to it, but when they had *all* the Reason in the World against it; for they saw their Master suffer a *shameful* Death before their Eyes, by which they might easily divine what their *own* Fate would be if they persevered to preach up his Miracles and Doctrine, which they could not resolve to do without bidding adieu to all their *temporal* Hopes, and engaging themselves to undergo all the Miseries and Calamities in the World; and if they testified what they knew to be *false*, they transgressed the Rule of their *own* Religion, and thereby forfeited all their Hopes of a *blest* Immortality in the Life to come. And can it be imagined that so many Men should at the *same* Time so unanimously agree to report and testify the Miracles of a Man whom they had lately seen crucified before their Eyes, when they knew in their *own* Consciences, that it was all a *mere* Forgery, and could not but foresee, that by persisting in it, they should incur an *inevitable* Ruin in this Life, and an *eternal* Damnation in the Life to come? Was there

there ever such a *desperate* Piece of Madness heard of from the Beginning of the World to this Day? And yet this *monstrous* Thing, which is by a *thousand* times more *incredible* than any thing in the *Christian Religion*, we must not only imagine may *be*, but believe that it really *was*; or else confess that St. *John* says true here, that they did see the Glory of his Miracles, which is so *undoubted* an Evidence of the Truth of his Doctrine. Wherefore since we are compassed about with such a Cloud of Witnesses, let us by a *lively* and *vigorous* Faith adhere to the Truth of our *holy Religion*, and then we shall find it *quick* and *mighty* through *God*, to the casting down the strong Holds of our *vicious* Habits, and implanting in us all those *divine* Dispositions, which are necessary to qualify us for those *endless* Joys which our *blessed Lord* hath promised to, and prepared for us.

3. They saw the Glory of that *divine* and *incomparable* Doctrine which he taught: From whence I infer the Unreasonableness of Mens entertaining *mean* and *contemptible* Opinions of the *Christian Faith*, since it is so *excellent* in itself that it was a Glory to the Son of God to be the Author of it. We have a Sort of Men among us who would fain be accounted the *Wits* and *Virtuoso's* of the Age, who pretend to acknowledge a *God*, and a *Providence*, and all the Principles of *natural Religion*, and yet openly profess a very *mean* and *contemptible* Opinion of *Christianity*, and take all Occasions to represent it as a *ridiculous* Fiction, fit only to be imposed upon the *credulous* Vulgar.

Vulgar. But I would fain know of these *mighty Men of Reason*, what *plausible* Pretence they can urge for this their *bold* and *blasphemous* Censure? Is it because *Christianity* is a *revealed Religion*? Or, because there is any thing in it that is *unworthy* of *God*, whom we pretend to be a Revealer of it? Or, because there wants *credible* Evidence of its being revealed by him? If they pretend to reject it because it is a *revealed Religion*, I would beseech them to consider how it could have comported with the Goodness of *God* never to make any Revelation of his Will to the World, when the Generality of Men were lost in such a *Midnight* of Ignorance in respect of *natural Religion*; how even the *natural* Notions of the *Deity* were corrupted into all manner of Follies and Vanities, and Men had formed Religions not only *hateful* to *God*, but *nauseous* to all that were *wise* among themselves; and how defective also they were in the *best* and *purest* Precepts of *Morality*, having at last consecrated their Vices, and enthroned them among the Graces of *Religion*: In which *miserable* State of Things, it is so far from being *unreasonable* to expect a Revelation, that it is hardly *possible* to vindicate *God's* Goodness without supposing it. For should he have *for ever* left Mankind in this *bewildered* State without Revelation, he would have been more wanting to Man, who is the *noblest* of all his *earthly* Creatures, than he is to the most *contemptible* Animal; for to his *meanest* Creatures he hath given *sufficient* Ability to attain the *highest* End of their Beings, which Mankind can hardly be supposed to have
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in his *corrupt degenerate* State, without supposing a *new Revelation* from *Heaven*. For we have an *innate* Notion within us of a *supreme Being* above us, that is superlatively good, and endued with all *possible* Perfection; our *natural Reason* dictates to us, that to converse with, and enjoy him *for ever*, is the *highest* Good that we are capable of, and the most *suitable* to our *rational* Natures; but by what means we may be reconciled to him in this State of Revolt whereinto we are fallen, and how at length we may arrive to the Enjoyment of him, could never have been sufficiently made known to us in this *Maze* of Ignorance wherein we were involved, without some *divine* Revelation: And therefore to suppose Revelation *unreasonable* in our *miserable* State and Circumstances, is to suppose it *unreasonable* for the *great and good* Governor of the World to furnish his *noblest* Creature *Man* with *sufficient* means to obtain his most *excellent* End. And if it be acknowledged that there is a Revelation, because it is so highly *reasonable* that there should be, let us consider which of all the Religions in the World, that pretends to be from *God*, is most likely to be the Revelation of his Will, and then I doubt not if we impartially compare them, but our Reason will soon give its Vote for *Christianity*. If you enquire for this Revelation of the *Enthusiastick Poets* of the *Heathen*, how wild and extravagant is that Religion, which we find in the *Theology* of *Hesiod*, the *Hymns* of *Orpheus*, the *Odes* of *Pindar*, and the *Poems* of *Homer*, *Virgil*, and *Ovid*? If you consult the *Heathen*
Oracles

Oracles of *Delphos*, *Dodona*, and *Jupiter Hammon*, how vain and frivolous, how uncertain and fallacious, are all their Responses? Besides that, the Books and Records of them are long since perished and consumed. If you enquire for this Revelation in the *Old Roman Theology*, which *Numa* pretended to receive from his Goddess *Egeria*, that also is lost, being burned by the *Roman Senate*, as *Valerius Maximus* tells us; for that it contained many Things in it not only destructive to the Gods and Religions of other Countries, but also to his own and the *Roman* Profession: Or shall we confront *Christianity* with the *Alchoran* of *Mahomet*, which he often pretends to have received from God? There we shall find every Page almost abounding with monstrous Cheats and Impostures, the Whole being nothing else but a confused Medley of impious and contemptible Fopperies, heaped together by a *Triumvirate* of *Arians*, *Jews* and *Pagans*, who were all of them known Impostors in the Ages wherein they lived: So that to confront *Christianity*, with any of these, is to light up a *Rusk-Candle* and resolve to out-face the Sun with it. For as for *Christianity*, it is a Religion made up of the most divine and Godlike Institutions; its Precepts being such as are most worthy of God, enjoining nothing but what is either true Godliness, and most generous Morality, or what are the most efficacious Means and Instruments of promoting them. And as for its Doctrine, it partly consists of those Principles of natural Religion which all wise Men, of whatsoever Nation or Religion, have owned and

and acknowledged, such as the *Existence*, *Unity*, and *Providence* of the *Godhead*, the *Immortality of the Soul*, and the *Rewards* and *Punishments of another Life*, together with the *great Day of Accounts*, wherein Men shall receive according to what they have done in the *Flesh*: And even the *Doctrine of the Holy Trinity*, which is the *profoundest* Mystery of all our *Religion*, hath been owned and professed by the *greatest* and most *famous Philosophers* that ever were. And as for those *Doctrines* that are purely *Christian*, such as the *Birth*, and *Life*, and *Death*, the *Resurrection* and *Ascension* of our *Saviour*, together with his *Sitting on the Right Hand of God* and coming at the *last Day* to judge the *World*, they are all of them so excellently contrived to serve the *great Ends of Religion*, so wonderfully *pregnant* with *Motives* and *Arguments* to engage Men to the *greatest Purity* and *Goodness*, that by their *own native Beauty* and *excellent Contrivance*, they manifest themselves to be the *Products of a divine Wisdom*. So that there can be no *reasonable Pretence* to contemn *Christianity*, either because it is a *revealed Religion*, or because it contains any thing in it that is any ways *unworthy* of the *Revealer*: And that there wants not *sufficient Evidence* to demonstrate it to be the *Revelation of God*, I have already proved in the former *Inference*. So that after all the *leud Talk* of these confident Men, it is apparent there is not the *least Colour* or *Reason* for their *impious Censures of Christianity*. But alas! it is evident that the

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Foundation of their Quarrel against it lies not so much in their Reason, as their Lusts. *Christianity* lays them under *severe* Restraints, and will not permit them to be *wicked* in quiet, which provokes them to arm their Wit, and the *little* Reason that they have, against it ; that so having baffled, or rather laughed themselves out of their *Religion*, they may be left at Liberty to play the Fools and Madmen without Controul or Disturbance. And I make no doubt, but if instead of that *strict* Piety and Virtue which *Christianity* enjoins, it had but indulged to them the Liberties of the *Heathen* Religion, so that they could have but acted all their Wickedness with Devotion, sacrificed to the Gods in *drunken* Bowls, and worshipped in the Arms of a *Strumpet*, there are no Men in the World would have been more *zealous Christians* than they. But let no Man be so *foolish* as to imagine that he can alter the Nature of Things by laughing at them, or, that *Christianity* will cease to be *true* in Compliance with our *wicked* Interest and Desires ; no, no, Things will be as they are in despite of us, and howsoever we will please to fancy them. And if after all our *rude* Contempts of *Religion*, it be found to be *true*, as I doubt not but it will, we shall be *sensible* when it is *too* late that it had been more for our Safety to have played before the Mouth of a *Cannon* while it is spitting Fire, or to have caught hold of a *Thunderbolt* as it comes roaring down from the Clouds, than to have played with *Religion*, and made it the Subject of our *impious* Scorns and Buffooneries.

4. and lastly, They saw the Glory of his *immaculate* Holiness and Purity : From whence I infer, that Holiness and *true* Goodness is the *greatest* Glory and Honour to *human* Nature. For this was the Glory of the *Son of God* himself when he assumed our Nature, and dwelt among us ; and there is nothing more *glorious* in *Christ* than his Goodness ; and notwithstanding those *excellent* Doctrines that he preached, those *stupendous* Miracles that he wrought, and that *visible* Splendor in which he was inrobed, he had not deserved the Name of a *great* and *glorious* Man if he had not been *just* and *charitable*, *temperate*, and *humble*, and *Heavenly-minded* and *eminent* in all those *divine* and *human* Virtues, which are the *proper* Glory and Ornament of *human* Nature. For that which makes a Man more *honourable* than a *mere* Animal, and advances us into the *next* Degree of Beings to Angels, is our Reason, by which alone we border upon the Divinity, and do claim Kindred with the *angelical* Natures. That therefore which is truly our Honour and Glory, consists in living according to that Reason by which we are advanced above all *sublunary* Natures ; that is, in governing our *Passions* and *Appetites*, *Words*, and *Actions*, according to those *eternal* Rules of Righteousness which *right* Reason dictates to us ; and if instead of doing thus, we wholly resign up ourselves to the Dominion of our *brutish* and *unreasonable* Inclinations, we thereby render ourselves more *despicable* and *infamous* than the most *bestly* Brutes in all the Creation, and even those *Goats*, and *Wolves*, and *Swine*, and *Tygers*, whom we re-

semble in our *beastly* Manners, could they see our Shame, would doubtless hiss at us, and reproach us for *greater* Beasts than themselves; for they all live *up* to the *best* of their Natures, and regularly pursue the *highest* End for which they were created; whereas we, who are allied to the *noblest* of Beings, and are created and designed for the most *glorious* Ends, do by our *base* and *unreasonable* Condescensions shamefully undervalue ourselves in pursuing no Ends but what are extremely *unworthy* of us: So that it had been much more for our Honour and Reputation to have assumed the Shape and Nature of Brutes, when we assumed their Manners and Customs: for then our Actions would have very well become us, and neither *God* nor *Man* could have justly upbraided us for them. But to lead the Lives of *Brutes* in the Shape and Nature of *Men*, is *monstrous*; it is to advance the *Beast* above the *Man*, to place our *Heels* where Nature hath placed our *Head*, and become our own *Reverse* and *Antipodes*.

OF THE
AUTHORITY
OF THE
HOLY SCRIPTURE.

JOHN v. 39.

Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal Life.

BY the *Scriptures* here must be meant the Old Testament; for as yet the greatest Part of the *New* was *unrevealed*, and the whole of it *unwritten*. They were those very *Scriptures* which the *unbelieving Jews*, to whom our Saviour was now preaching, owned and acknowledged to be the Word of God; *for in them*, says our Saviour, *ye think ye have eternal Life*; which it is certain they did not think of any other *Scriptures* but only those of the Old Testament; and *they are they*, says he, *which testify of me*. And to be sure there were no other *Scriptures* which could testify of Christ to the *unbelieving Jews*, but only those of Moses and the *Prophets*, these being the only *Scriptures* whose Testimony they credited. But yet the Reason which our Saviour urges to

move them to read the *Old Testament*, doth as much oblige us to read the *New* as well as the *Old*, as it did them to read the *Old*; *for in them ye think ye have eternal Life*; that is, in them ye think ye have *eternal Life* promised, and all the Necessaries to be believed and done by you, in order to your obtaining it, proposed to you. And indeed as they thought, so it was; they had *eternal Life* proposed to them in *Hieroglyphicks*; for *that* was the Mystery of their *Holy of Holies*, *that* was the Interpretation of their Land of *Canaan*, and the *spiritual* Sense of all their *general* Promises of good Things to come: They had all the Articles of Faith, and all the Instances of Duty that were *necessary* to their Attainment of *eternal Life* exhibited to them in the Writings of their Prophets, and the Types and Figures of their Law. For it was by this Rule alone that all the *holy* Men of the *Jewish Nation* did live and believe; and either this was *sufficient* to guide and direct them to *eternal Life*, or they were left under a *fatal* Necessity of falling short of it: It was the *Law of the Lord* that did *enlighten their Eyes*, and *rejoice their Hearts*, and *convert their Souls*; and it was *in keeping it* that they found *great Reward*, Psalm xix. 7, 8, 11. And therefore either they fell short of the Reward of *eternal Life* notwithstanding this their Illumination and Conversion, or they found it in keeping that Law by which they were illuminated and converted; and if in keeping their Law they found *eternal Life*, then it is certain that in their Law *they* had it. So that these Words of our Saviour (*for in them ye think ye have*

have eternal Life) do not imply that they were mistaken in thinking so, or at least they only imply that they were mistaken in thinking to obtain *eternal Life* by adhering to the *prime* and *literal* Sense of their Law, without pursuing the *Mystery* and *Spiritual* Meaning of it; which was indeed the Error of the *Pharisees*, with whom our *Saviour* is here discoursing. For the *internal* Sense and *Mystery* of their Law was the *Gospel*, all whose Articles of Faith, and Precepts of Duty, were (though darkly and obscurely) expressed and represented in the Types and Figures of the *Mosaic* Institution. And hence the Apostle tells, that both the *Priests* and their *Oblations* did serve unto the *Example* and *Shadow* of heavenly Things. Heb. viii. 5. So that the *heavenly Things* contained in the *Gospel* were the *substantial* Ideas which those *legal* Types and Patterns contained and represented; and the same Author calls that Law a *Shadow* of good Things to come, Heb. x. 1; that is, when an *obscure* Scheme of Prefiguration of the Mercies of the *Gospel*, of which *eternal Life* is a *principal* Part. Since therefore the Law was nothing else but only the *Gospel* in *dark* and *obscure* Cyphers, if in *this* we *Christians* have *eternal Life*, in *that* the *Jews* had it also: And therefore the Reason which our *Saviour* here urges to oblige the *Jews* to search the *Scriptures* of the *Old Testament*, (*for in them ye think ye have eternal Life*) doth at least equally oblige us *Christians* to search the *Scriptures* both of the *Old* and *New*. For if they had *just* Reason to think they had *eternal Life* in the *Old Testament*; and were

thereupon obliged to search into it, we have rather *more* Reason to think that we have *eternal Life* in the *New*, since the *New Testament* is nothing else but only the *Old* decyphered and unridled; and therefore we must not only have *eternal Life* in *this*, as they had in *that*, but we must also have it far more expressly than they. In the Prosecution of this Argument therefore, I shall endeavour these *Two Things* :

I. To shew you that in the *Holy Scriptures* we have *eternal Life*.

II. That this is a very *forcible* Reason to oblige us to search them.

I. First, that in the *Holy Scriptures* we have *eternal Life*; that is, that in them we have *eternal Life* proposed to us, together with all that is *necessary* to be believed and practised by us in Order to our obtaining it; or in other Words, that the *Holy Scripture* is a *sufficient* Rule, both of Faith and Manners, to guide and direct us to *eternal* Happiness. And this is *one* Article of the Faith of the *Church of England*, which we are required to explain to the People; for so in her sixth Article our *Church* professes, *that the Holy Scripture containeth all Things necessary to Salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, or may be proved thence, is not required of any Man, that it should be believed as an Article of Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to Salvation.* Now to make the *Scripture* a *sufficient* Rule as to all Things *necessary* to Salvation, there are *two* Things necessary; *First*, That it should

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should be *full*; and *Secondly*, That it should be clear; both which the *Holy Scripture* is in an *eminent* Degree, as containing in it all that is *necessary* to be believed, and done in order to *eternal Life*. And this will evidently appear from these three following Propositions:

1. That the *Holy Spirit* inspired the Writers of the *Scripture* with all that is *necessary* to *eternal Life*.

2. That they preached to the World all those *Necessaries* with which the *Holy Spirit* inspired them.

3. That all those *necessary* Truths which they preached, are comprehended in those *sacred* Writings of theirs of which the *Holy Scripture* consists.

1. That the *Holy Spirit* inspired the Writers of the *Scripture* with all that is *necessary* to *eternal Life*. For *first*, our *Saviour*, by whom they were originally instructed, declares, that as the *Father* loved him, and shewed him all Things that himself did, John v. 20. so he had made known to them all Things that he had heard of his *Father*, John xvii. 8. And then when he went from them, and ceased to instruct them in his own Person, he promised that by his *Spirit* he would teach them all Things, and bring all Things to their Remembrance whatsoever he had said unto them, John xiv. 26, and that by the same *Spirit* he would guide them into all Truth. John xvi. 13. If therefore the *Spirit* did perform this Promise to them, (as there is no Doubt but he did) then

we are sure that he did teach them over again whatsoever *Christ* had taught them before, and if *Christ* had taught them whatsoever he had heard of his Father, (as he declares he had) then it is certain either that he taught them all Things *necessary to eternal Life*, or that he himself had not heard from his Father all Things that are necessary thereunto.

2. That as they were taught by the Spirit all Things *necessary to eternal Life*, so what they were taught, they preached and delivered to the World. For so our *Saviour* commanded them to go forth into all the World, and *teach all Nations to observe all those Things which he had commanded them.* Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Which Injunction of his they strictly observed; for so we are told, that in Obedience to it, *they went forth, and preached every where.* Mark xvi. 20. And that their preaching extended to all Things *necessary to Salvation*, is evident from their *own Testimony*: For thus St. *Paul* tells the *Ephesians*, that he had not *skunned to declare unto them the whole Counsel of God.* Acts xx. 27. And to be sure in the *whole Counsel of God*, all that is *necessary to Salvation* must be included. And concerning *that Gospel* which he had preached to the *Corinthians*, he thus pronounces; *By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in Memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.* 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2. But how could they be saved by that *Gospel* he preached to them, unless it contained in it all Things *necessary to Salvation*? And this very *Gospel* which the Apostles in their *constant Ministry* proposed

proposed to the World, St. James calls the *engrafted Word*, which is able to save our Souls. James i. 21. And for the same Reason it is also called the *Word of Reconciliation*, 2 Cor. v. 19; The *Word of Salvation*, Acts xiii. 26; And the *Word of Life*, Acts v. 20; And the *Saviour of Life unto Life*, 2 Cor. ii. 16; And also the *Power of God unto Salvation to every one that believes*, Rom. i. 17. Neither of which it could be justly stiled, supposing it to be *defective* in any thing *necessary* to the *eternal* Happiness of Men.

3dly and lastly, That all those *necessary* Truths which they preached, are comprehended in those Writings of theirs, of which the *Holy Scripture* consists. It is true, before the *Christian* Doctrine was collected into those *Scriptures* of which the *New Testament* now consists, it was all conveyed by *oral Tradition* from the Mouths of the Teachers, to the Ears of the Disciples; but in a *little* Time those *holy* Men who first preached it, found an *absolute* Necessity of committing it to Writing, as a much *surer* Way of preserving it *uncorrupted*, and transmitting it down to all *succeeding* Generations; for thus *Eusebius* tells us, * *That the Romans not being satisfied with St. Peter's preaching of Christianity to them, earnestly desired St. Mark, his Companion, that he would leave them in Writing, a standing Monument of that Doctrine which St. Peter had delivered to them by Word of Mouth, which was the Occasion, says he, of the writing of St. Mark's Gospel: Which*
Thing

* Hist. Eccles. Lib. ii, c. xv.

Thing St. Peter understanding by a Revelation of the Spirit, being highly pleased with their earnest Desire, he confirmed it by his own Authority, that it might afterwards be read in the Churches. It seems in those Days the Romans did not think oral, or unwritten Traditions, a sufficient Conservatory of divine Truths, nor did their Bishops then forbid the reading of the Scriptures to the Laity in their own Language. After which he tells us *, that St. Matthew and St. John were the only Disciples of our Lord, who had left written Commentaries of the Things which they had preached behind them; and it was, says he, Necessity that impelled them to write. For Matthew having preached the Faith to the Hebrews, and intending to go from them to other Nations, wrote his Gospel in his own Country Language, that thereby he might supply the Want of his Presence to those whom he left behind him. And afterwards when Mark and Luke had published their Gospels, John, who had hitherto only preached the Gospel by Word of Mouth, being at length moved by the same Reason, betook himself to write. And the three former Gospels, says he, arriving to the Knowledge of all Men, and particularly of St. John, he approved them, and with his own Testimony confirmed the Truth of them. From which Relation it is evident, that that which moved those holy Men to commit their Gospels to Writing, was this; that they judged it necessary for the Conservation of the Christian Doctrine, that so these

* Lib. iii. c. xxiv.

these in their Absence might be *standing* Monuments of the Faith, to preach that *Gospel* to Mens Eyes which they had preached to their Ears: And if they wrote to preserve the Faith, to be sure they would leave no *necessary* or *essential* Part of it unwritten. There are several Propositions in these *Gospels*, which, though very *useful*, are far from being *essential* Parts of *Christianity*; and can we imagine that those *holy* Men who wrote on purpose to conserve *Christianity*, should take so much care to write many Things which are not *necessary* Parts, and in the mean time omit any Things that are? *Eusebius* tells us of St. *Mark* in particular, ἐὸς γὰρ ἐποίησατο πρόνοιαν τὸ μὴ ἐν ὀνήκασε παρ' ἀλιπέν ἢ ψέυσαι τι ἐν αὐτοῖς; i. e. *he took great Care of this more especially, not to pretermitt any of those things which he had heard, even from St. Peter*) nor to affix any thing to them that was false: And if he were so careful not to omit any thing, to be sure he would be particularly careful not to omit any thing which he judged *necessary* to the *eternal* Happiness of Men. But what need we depend upon *human* Authority, when as, if we consult those *sacred* Writings themselves, (which so far as they go, all *Christians* allow to be the *Word of God*) we shall find they give this Testimony of themselves, that they comprehend in them all Things *necessary* to *eternal* Life. For thus the Writers of the *New Testament* testify of the *Old*, *That they are able to make us wise unto Salvation, through Faith which is in Jesus Christ.* 2 Tim. iii. 15. And if the *Old Testament* alone was able to do this, then

then much more the *Old* and *New* together ; but how could they make Men *wise to Salvation*, if they were *defective* in any Article that is *necessary* to Salvation ? And then the same Author goes on and tells us, that *all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness ; that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works ;* ver. 16, 17. And if the *Old Scriptures* were *sufficient* to make the Man of God *perfect*, and to furnish him thoroughly unto all good Works, one would think that the *New* and *Old* together should not be *defective*. For that the *Scriptures* of the *New Testament*, as well as of the *Old*, contain in them all Things *necessary* to *eternal Life*, they themselves do plainly testify of themselves : For thus St. *Luke* in the Beginning of his *Gospel* tells his *Theophilus*, to whom he writes, that *forasmuch as many had set forth a Declaration of those Things that were surely believed among Christians, it seemed good unto him also, having had a perfect Understanding of all Things from the first, to write them down, in order that he might know the Certainty of those Things wherein he had been instructed* : From whence I infer, that supposing St. *Luke* performed what he promised, his *Gospel* must contain a *full Declaration* of the *Christian Religion* : For, *First*, by promising to give an Account of those Things which were surely believed among *Christians*, he engaged himself to give an *entire Account* of *Christianity*, unless we will suppose that
there

there were some Parts of *Christianity* which the *Christians* of that Time did not surely believe. *Secondly*, In promising to give an Account of those Things of which he had a *perfect* Understanding from the first, and in which his *Theophilus* had been instructed, he also engages himself to give a *complete* Account of the whole *Religion*, unless we will suppose that there were some Parts of this *Religion* which St. *Luke* did not perfectly understand, and in which *Theophilus* had not been before instructed. Thus also St. *John* testifies of his *Gospel*, Chap. xx. 31. *These Things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have Life through his Name.* And if it be objected, that by *these Things* the Apostle only means the Miracles of *Christ*, which are the Motives of our Belief, and not his Doctrines which are to be believed by us; this is notoriously *false*, since by *these Things* St. *John* means his *Gospel*, in which not only the Miracles, but the Doctrines of *Christ* are contained; and therefore in his first Epistle, Chap. v. 13. he saith, *These Things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that you may know that ye have eternal Life, and that ye may believe, or continue to believe on the Name of the Son of God; where by these Things, it is plain he means only the Christian Doctrine, which he had been teaching throughout the whole Epistle. From which two Places I argue, that all Things necessary to eternal Life are written, because he expressly tells us, that these Things were written to this*

End,

End, that they might beget and nourish in us that Faith by which we may obtain *eternal Life*; but if that Faith which these *written Things* were designed to beget in us, be not *sufficient* to *eternal Life*, then were these Things written in vain, and the End of writing them, which was that we might obtain *eternal Life*, by believing them, was wholly frustrated; but if that Faith was *sufficient* to *eternal Life*, then these *written Things* which begot that Faith, and were the Object of it, must contain in them all Things *necessary* to *eternal Life*; for how can they beget in us a Faith that is *sufficient* to *eternal Life*, unless they propose to our Faith all Things that are *necessary* thereunto?

And thus I have endeavoured to demonstrate from *Scripture* itself, which all agree is the *Word of God*, and consequently the most *concluding* Authority in the World, that the *Holy Scripture* is in itself a *sufficient* Rule of Faith and Manners to direct Men to *eternal Life*. And if this be so, I would fain know by what Warrant, or Authority, any Man, or Church, can pretend to obtrude upon the Faith of *Christians* any *unwritten Traditions*, or Doctrines of Faith, and Rules of Worship, not recorded in *Scripture*, as of *equal* Authority with those recorded in *Scripture*, and equally *necessary* to the *eternal* Happiness of Men. For that there have been such *bold* Imposers in the *Christian* World, *Irenæus* assures us in the 2d Chapter of his 2d Book against *Heresies*; where he tells us of a Sort of *Hereticks* who taught, that *the Truth could not be found*

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in the Scriptures by those to whom Tradition was unknown; forasmuch as it was not delivered by Writing, but by Word of Mouth. And these Hereticks, * as Tertullian observes, confessed indeed that the Apostles were ignorant, and that they did not at all differ among themselves in their Preaching, but said they revealed not all Things unto all Men; some Things they taught openly, and to all, some Things secretly, and to a few; which secret Things were the unwritten Traditions which they sought to impose upon the Faith of Christians. And how far the Church of Rome itself doth in this Matter tread in the Footsteps of these antient Hereticks, is but too notorious: For thus in the Preface of their Catechism it is expressly affirmed by the Council of Trent, that the whole Doctrine to be delivered to the Faithful, is contained in the Word of God, which Word of God is distributed into Scripture and Tradition. And in the Council itself they declare, and define, that the Books of Scripture and unwritten Traditions are to be received and honoured with equal pious Affection and Reverence: In which Words they expressly own another Word of God besides the Scripture, viz. Tradition, which they equalize with the Scripture itself. And this is almost verbatim the very Assertion which both Irenæus and Tertullian condemn for Heresy; and as they are the same, so we find they are grounded on the same Authority: For those very Texts of Scripture, which those antient Hereticks urged for their Tradition, are

* De Præscrip. Hæret. c. xxv.

are urged by *Bellarmin* for the *Tradition* of his *Church*. Thus for their *Tradition*, as *Irenæus* and *Tertullian* acquaints us, they urged that of *St. Paul*, *We speak Wisdom among them that are perfect* ; and also, *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy Trust* ; and again, *That good Thing which is committed to thee, keep* : All which Texts are urged by *Bellarmin* in his 4th and 5th Books *De Verbo Dei*, in Behalf of that *Tradition* which the *Church* of *Rome* contends for : And it is something hard that *that* which was damned for *Heresy* in the *primitive Church*, should be made an *Article of Faith* in the *present Roman*. Not that we do disallow of *Traditions* universally received in all *Churches* and *Ages* ; for we frankly acknowledge that what is now contained in *Scripture* was *Tradition* before it was *Scripture*, as being *first* delivered by Word of Mouth before it was collected into Writing ; and therefore whensoever it can be made evident to us that there are any *unwritten Doctrines* bearing the same Stamp of *divine Authority* with those that are *written*, we are ready to receive them with the same Veneration as we do the *Scriptures* themselves. For it is not their being written that doth *authorize* them, but their being from *God* and our *Saviour*, and his *Apostles* ; and therefore when once it is made appear to us that *Christ* or his *Apostles* taught *so* and *so*, that is *sufficient* to command our Assent and Submission, whether it be made appear from *Scripture* or *Tradition*. So that the Reason why we may embrace *some Doctrines* and reject others, it is not merely because the

one are written, and the *other* not; but because to us, who live at so great a Distance from *Christ* and his *Apostles*, it can never be made so evident, that what is not written was taught by them, as what is. What is written hath been delivered down to us by the *unanimous Tradition* and Testimony of the *Church of Christ* in all Ages, which I am sure can never be justly pretended of any *one* of those *unwritten Traditions*, which the *Church of Rome* now imposes upon the Faith of *Christians*. Let them but produce the same *unanimous Testimony*, that any one of these *twelve Articles* which they have thought meet to super-add to the *antient Creeds*, was taught by *Christ*, or his *Apostles*, as we do that what is contained in *Scripture* was so, and we will as readily embrace it as any Proposition in *Scripture*; but if *this Article* be neither to be found in *Scripture*, nor delivered down to us as taught by *Christ*, or his *Apostles*, by the *unanimous Testimony* of the *Church of Christ* through all Ages, we must crave their Pardon if we cannot receive it as Part of the *Word of God*. But how *impossible* it is to prove by the *unanimous Testimony* of the *Church*, that any *unwritten Doctrine* is Part of the *Word of God necessary* to be believed by all *Christians*, is evident from hence, because for *several Ages* after our *Saviour* the *Church* unanimously taught, that whatsoever was *necessary* to be believed was contained in *Scripture*; and for the same *Church* at the same Time to testify that *this* or *that unwritten Doctrine* is a Part of *God's Word necessary* to be believed, and

yet that all Doctrines *necessary* to be believed are *written*, is plainly to contradict itself. And yet we find the *primitive Fathers* unanimously attesting that the *Scripture* is the Rule from whence we draw all the Assertions of our Faith, the *last Will and Testimony* of our Saviour, by which all Controversies are to be decided, the Boundaries of the *Church*, out of which it is not to depart, the Touchstone of Truth, the Foundation and Pillar of our Faith for the Time to come, and the only certain Principle of *Christian Doctrine* and Demonstration in Matters of Faith. These are their *own Expressions*, and abundance more than these we meet with to the same Purpose; and which is very observable, they not only assert the *Scripture* to be a *full and adequate* Rule of Faith, but severely declaim against all Additions to it. Thus *Eusebius Pamphilus* in the Name of the *Fathers* of the Council of Nice, τοῖς γεγραμμένοις πιστεῦε τὰ μὴ γεγραμμένα μὴ ἐννοεῖτε μὴδὲ ζητεῖτε, i. e. those Things which are written, believe; those Things which are not written, neither think upon, nor enquire after. Thus also *St. Austin*, Quicquid inde audieritis è Scriptura sacra, hoc vobis bene sapiat; quicquid extra est, respuite, ne erretis in nebula: Whatsoever ye hear from the Holy Scripture, let it savour well with you; whatsoever is without them, refuse, lest ye wander in a Cloud. *St. Basil* declares, that it is a manifest falling from the Faith, and an Argument of Arrogancy, either to reject any Point of those Things that are written, or to bring in any of those which are not written; and that it

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 is the Property of a faithful Man to be fully
 persuaded of the Truth of those Things that are
 delivered in the Holy Scripture, and not to dare
 either to reject or add to any Thing thereunto.
 Thus Tertullian advers. Hermog. *Si enim non
 est scriptum, timeat Væ illud adjicientibus aut
 detrahentibus destinatum* : If what he pretends
 be not written, let him fear that Woe that is
 denounced against such as add, or take away.
 What Likelihood therefore is there that
 they who thus severely forbid adding any
 thing to the *written Word of God*, did ever
 so much as dream of *another Word of God*
 consisting of *unwritten Traditions* ? And in-
 deed methinks it is very strange if there had
 been any *other Word of God* besides what is
written, there should be no Notice taken of
 it in that which is *written* ; especially consider-
 ing that if it be as *necessary* to be believed as
 the *Roman Church* defines it, it is as *necessary*
 that we should have Direction where to find it,
 and how to know it when we have it ; but of
 this we have not the *least Intimation in Scrip-
 ture*. For as for those Words of St. Paul,
*2 Thess. ii. 15. Hold the Traditions which ye
 have been taught, whether by Word, or our
 Epistle*, all that can be justly inferred from them
 is only this, that the *Thessalonians* at the
 writing of this Epistle, had only an *oral Tra-
 dition* of a great Part of that Gospel which
 St. Paul had preached to them, the Gospels
 being as yet either not collected into Writing,
 or not dispersed abroad into the Churches ; so
 that then *this*, and his *former Epistle* to them,
 were perhaps the only *written Part* of the

New Testament that was yet arrived to their Hands; and if so, then this Command of *holding the Traditions by Word*, did oblige no longer than till they had received the *written Gospel*; because then those *Traditions by Word* were all recorded in *Scripture*, and being there recorded, they were henceforth obliged to hold them as *Scripture*, and no longer as *Traditions by Word*. But supposing there are still *unwritten Traditions* in the Church that are not in *Scripture*, but yet were delivered by *Christ*, or his *Apostles*, and so are equally the *Word of God* with the *Scripture*; I would fain know how we who live at so great a Distance from *Christ* and his *Apostles*, should either know where to find, or be assured, that they are such when we have them. We know very well that even in the *Primitive Ages* there were sundry *counterfeit Traditions*, which *Hereticks* pretended to derive from *Christ* and his *Apostles*; and if it were so *easy* a Matter to counterfeit *Tradition* then, how much more *easy* is it now? I confess *Vincentius Lirinensis* gives us a very good Rule how to distinguish *counterfeit* from *true Traditions*; *Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est, hoc est vere propriæque Catholicum*: That which was every where, and always, and by all *Christians* believed, that is truly and properly *Catholick*. And by this Rule we are willing to abide; if they can shew us any Article of *Christianity* not recorded in *Scripture*, which hath been every where, and always believed by all *Christians*, we will readily admit it as an *unwritten Word of God*, and with the same Respect

Respect and Reverence as we do that which is *written*: But this we are fully assured they will never be able to perform, seeing, as was shewn before, the *Primitive Church* doth with *one* Consent attest the *Scripture* to be an *entire* Rule of Faith, in which all the Articles of *Christianity* are contained.

But we are told that for these *unwritten Traditions* we must rely upon the *present Church* of every Age, and receive as a *divine* Tradition whatsoever she defines to be so; where by the *present Church* is meant the *present Roman Church*; that is to say, whatsoever *this Church* defines, we must believe it, because she defines it; which we cannot but think is a *hard Case*: *First*, Because we know very well that the *Roman Church* is at *best* but a Part of the *Church universal*, and we know no Right that any *Part* hath to impose upon the *Whole*, and to oblige it to believe whatsoever she proposes, merely because she proposes it. *Secondly*, Because in Fact we are very well assured that the *Roman Church* is so far from being a *sincere* Preserver of *Tradition*, that there is no *Church* in the World hath more studiously attempted to counterfeit and deprave it; of which *innumerable* Instances are given by our Authors, many of which are now acknowledged even by their Authors to be *true*. For even their *vulgar Latin Edition* of the *Bible* itself, which they prefer before the *Originals*, is confessed by themselves to abound with *manifest* Errors and Corruptions; and even to the very *Canon* of the *Bible* they have added *sundry Apocryphal Books*, which we

certainly know the *Primitive Tradition* never admitted as Parts of the *sacred Scripture*; and it is notorious to all the World how many Books and Writings they have forged, and how many of the Writings of the *Antients* they have *gelded* and *interpolated*, to defend and support those *pretended Traditions* which they have imposed upon the World as Articles of Faith. And after she hath been guilty of so many *apparent* Falsifications, we cannot but think it a very *hard* Case that we should still be obliged to believe her upon her own *bare* Word. For in the *third* Place, at this Rate of Proceeding we must, in many Instances, condemn the *Traditions* of the *Primitive Church* in Compliment to those of the *present Roman* which, if we believe *our own Eyes*, and the most *authentick* Histories and Records of those Times, do expressly thwart and contradict *one another*; and since, if we would never so fain, we can never believe both Parts of a Contradiction; we must in believing the *one* give the Lye to the *other*. Nay, *Fourthly*, and *lastly*, though we should be persuaded, as we think we have Reason to be, that many of the *Traditions* of the *present Church of Rome* are not only not mentioned in *Scripture*, but directly contrary to it; (as for Instance, their performing *Divine Service* in an *unknown* Tongue, which we think is as *contrary* to 1 Cor. xiv. as *one* Proposition can be to *another*;) yet if that *Church's* Definitions do by their *own* Authority oblige our Faith, we must believe her against *Scripture* itself. And this we think *intolerable*, that any *Church*, or *Christian*, should

should be obliged to believe the *unwritten Word* of the *Church of Rome* in a Matter wherein, upon the most *diligent* and *impartial* Search, they are verily persuaded it contradicts the *written Word of God*, and if the Sentence of the *one* or the *other* must be made *void*, we think it is very *reasonable* that the Voice of her *pretended unwritten Word* should be silenced by that more *certain* one of the *lively Oracles of God*. But after all, if what I have endeavoured to prove be proved, *viz.* that the *Holy Scriptures* are a *sufficient* Rule of Faith and Manners to conduct us to *eternal Life*, this will be enough to evacuate all that is pretended for this *unwritten Word of God*. For *God* and *Nature* we know do nothing in vain; and therefore if *one Word of God* be *sufficient*, *viz.* that which is *written*, what Need have we of this *other* which is *unwritten*? And so I have done with the *first necessary* Property of a Rule of Faith, *viz.* that it be *full*; and shewn at large that the *Holy Scripture* is so as to all Things *necessary* to Salvation; and therefore shall now proceed to,

II. The *Second*, *viz.* That it be *clear* and *intelligible* to those whose Faith and Manners are to be regulated by it.

I do not mean, when I say that the *Scripture* is *clear*, and *plain*, and *intelligible* to all those to whom it is a Rule of Faith and Manners, that it is throughout so in all its Proposals; for it cannot be denied but there are many Things not only in *St. Paul's Epistles*, but also in *other Parts of Scripture* hard to

be understood; and such as do not only exceed the Apprehension of *common* Capacities, but also puzzle the Understandings of the most *acute* and *profound* Enquirers. But that which I assert is this; That all those Doctrines of Faith, and Rules of Manners which are *necessary* for Men to believe and practise, in order to their Attainment of *eternal* Life, are so plainly and clearly revealed in *Scripture*, that there is no *honest* teachable Mind that is *capable* of understanding *common* Sense, but may from thence receive *full* Information of them upon *faithful* and *diligent* Enquiry. And though in *some* Texts these *Necessaries* are not so plainly proposed as in *others*, yet in *some* Text or *other* they are all of them so plainly proposed, that no Man can read the *Scripture*, and still be *ignorant* of them, without being wilfully *blind*; for which there is no Remedy either in the *Scripture*, or *out* of it. And this I shall endeavour to prove,

1. From the *express* Testimony of *Scripture*.
2. From the *avowed* Design of writing the *Scripture*.
3. From the *frequent* Commands *God* lays upon us to read the *Scripture*.
4. From the Obligation that lies upon us under Pain of Damnation to believe, and receive all those *Necessaries* to Salvation contained in it.

1. From the *express* Testimony of *Scripture* it is evident, that in all things *necessary* to Salvation, at least, the *Scripture* is *clear* and *plain*. For to be sure if in any thing the *Scripture*

Scripture be *plain*, it is in those Things that are most *necessary* to be believed and known; and therefore if it be *obscure* in these Things, we may reasonable presume it is *plain* in nothing: But that it is in many Things plain and easy to be understood, is evident from its *own* Testimony: For thus of the *Mosaic* Law it is expressly affirmed by *Moses*, *This Commandment which I command thee this Day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.* Deut. xxx. 11. Where *Moses* speaks not only of the *Ten Commandments*, which consisting for the most part of Laws of Nature, are upon that Account more *easy* to be understood; but of all the Commandments of *Moses* in general, whether *Ceremonial*, *Judicial*, or *Natural*. For so, *ver.* 16. *This Commandment*, we find, contains as well the Statutes and Judgments, as the Commandments of the Law, all which must take in the whole *Mosaic* Institution. And accordingly, *Psal.* cxix. 105. *David* calls this *Word of God*, a *Lamp unto his Feet*, and a *Light unto his Path*; which how could it be if it did not burn *clear* enough to guide and direct him? And if it did, then to be sure it burned *clear* enough to direct him in those Things wherein it was most *necessary* for him to be directed. Again, in *Psal.* xix. v. 7. 8. we are told, that *the Testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple*; and that *the Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the Eyes*. But how can any Law make the *simple* *wise*, or enlighten the Eyes of Men, unless it be so plainly and clearly delivered, as that the *simple* may be capable of apprehending

ing, and the Eyes of Men of discerning the Sense of it? I know it is objected by *Bellarmin*, that these Words do only imply, that this Law indeed being understood, doth enlighten Mens Eyes, and direct their Practice ; but by no Means that it is *plain* and *easy* to be understood. But this is a meer Cavil ; for it is plain that it is by understanding the Law, that the *simple* are made *wise*, and the Eyes of Men enlightened. If therefore this Law be so *obscure* in itself, as that it cannot make itself understood by all that sincerely enquire into it, how is it *possible* that it should make them *wise*, or enlighten the Eyes of their Minds? But it is plain that the Intent of those Passages of *David* was to excite, and encourage Men to study and observe the Law : But what though the Law makes the *simple* *wise*, when they understand it ; what Encouragement is this for the *simple* to study it, if it be so *obscure* that they cannot understand it? And since they must understand it before they can observe it, what Encouragement doth this Consideration give them to observe it, that it will make them *wise* when they understand it, if it be not plain enough for them to understand it? But then that foresighted Passage of *Moses* doth in *express* Words contradict this Cavil of *Bellarmin* ; for he tells the People, that *the Commandment he gave them was not hidden from them* ; whereas, if it had been so obscurely delivered to them by *Moses*, that upon their *sincere* and *diligent* Enquiry they could not understand it, it is certain that it had been still hidden from them, how *wise* soever it might make them when they

they did understand it: And to say that such a Proposition will make me *wise* when I do understand it, is no Argument at all that it is not hidden from me, if it be so obscurely expressed, as that upon my *sincere* Enquiry I am not capable of understanding it. But that the *Old Testament*, at least in all *necessary* Matters, was *plain* enough, even to *common* Capacities, is evident from the *frequent* Appeals our *Saviour* makes to it in his Contests with the *common People of the Jews*. Thus in the Text he bids them *Search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of me*; and in other Places, *What saith the Scripture?* And doth not the Scripture say so and so? Now how *impertinent* would it have been for our *Saviour* thus to appeal to it at the Tribunal of the People, if he thought it so *obscure* that the People were not *capable* of understanding it? How *trifling* would it be for a Man to appeal to *Suarez's Metaphysicks* in a Controversy with a *Plowman*, or to refer him to *Euclid's Elements* for the determining the Bounds and Measures of a Field?

And as from what hath been said, it is apparent that the *Scriptures* of the *Old Testament* were at least in all *Necessaries* *plain* and *clear* to the *Jews*; so it is no *less* evident that the *Scriptures* of the *New Testament* are so to *Christians*, since it gives the *same* Testimony to itself of its *own* Clearness, as the *Old Testament* doth. For thus, 2 *Cor.* iv. 2, 3, 4. the Apostle tells us, that they did not *handle the Word of God deceitfully, but by Manifestation of the Truth, commending themselves to Men's*
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*Consciences in the Sight of God. But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them which believe not, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them. Supposing then that they wrote with the same Plainness and Clearness with which they spake, (which there is no Shadow of Reason to doubt of) then from these Words it is evident, First, That they did neither in their Preaching nor Writings affect to discourse dubiously, or obscurely, but that their great Design was so to manifest and make known the Truth, as that by their Plainness and Simplicity they might recommend themselves to the Consciences of all that heard, or read them. Secondly, That in Fact they had in their Sermons and Writings so clearly taught the Gospel, that if after all it remained *hidden*, or obscure to any, it was only to such as were *lost* and *irrecoverable*. Thirdly, That *that* which rendered the Gospel which they had taught and written, *hidden* or *obscure* to such, was not the Obscurity either of the Matter which they taught, or of their Manner of teaching it, but their own *worldly* Affections which blinded their Eyes, and hindered them from seeing that which in itself was illustriously *visible*. Which is an *unanswerable* Evidence of the Clearness and Plainness of the Scriptures of the *New Testament* in all *necessary* Things; for if they are *clear* to all but such as wilfully shut their Eyes against them, they are as *clear* as they need be to *honest* and *teachable* Minds; for there is nothing can be*

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clear enough to such as are not willing to understand. And accordingly the *Gospel*, which the Apostle calls *the Grace of God which bringeth Salvation*, is said to have *appeared*, or shone forth, to all Men; teaching us, that denying *Ungodliness and worldly Lusts*, we should live *soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World*, Tit. ii. 11. Now if the *Gospel* did shine forth unto all Men, it must be in the *Sermons and Discourses* of those that had preached it to the World; and if they so preached it as that it shone forth to all Men, they must necessarily have preached it very plainly and clearly: Either therefore it was wrote as it was preached, or it was not; if it was not, it was not wrote truly and sincerely; if it was, it was wrote very plainly, so as to make it appear and shine forth to all that read it. It is true, there are some Things *obscure* both in the *Old Scriptures* and *New*; but then these are such Things as are no Parts of the *Necessaries and Essentials of Religion*; such Things as Men may be safely *ignorant* of, or be *mistaken* about, without any Hazard of their *eternal Life*. For all that the *fore-cited* Testimonies prove is only this; that *that true Religion* by which God governs the Faith and Manners of Men, is so far forth as it is *necessary* to be believed and practised, plainly and clearly revealed to them in the *Holy Scriptures*. But besides this, all Men agree there are a *great many other* Things revealed in *Holy Scripture*, which, because they are not *necessary* for all Men to understand, are many of them not so plainly revealed as that all Men may under-stand

stand them. But since the *Scripture* was written to teach and instruct Men, to be sure it teaches them most plainly that which is most *necessary* for them to know; and therefore since there are some Things plainly taught in *Scripture*, as is evident to any one that reads it, to be sure among these Things are contained all that is *necessary* for Men to know and understand.

2. From the *avowed* Design of writing the *Scripture* it is also evident, that in all Things *necessary* it is *plain* and *clear*. For thus concerning the *Old Testament*, St. *Paul* tells us, that *whatsoever Things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures might have Hope*, Rom. xv. 4. And if they were written for our Learning and Instruction, to be sure they were so written as to teach and instruct us, that is, plainly and clearly, especially as to those Things wherein we have most Need to be instructed. And then as for the *New Testament*, St. *Luke* tells his *Theophilus*, that the Reason of his writing his *Gospel* was, that he might know the Certainty of those Things that were surely believed among *Christians*, and wherein he himself had been instructed: And if it were to ascertain us of the Principles of *Christianity* that he wrote his *Gospel*, certainly he would take Care to write it after such a Manner as that those that read it might understand it, otherwise he must run counter to his *own* Design. Thus also St. *John* saith, that he wrote his *Gospel* that Men might believe that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of*
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of God; but how could his Gospel induce Men to believe this, unless it be so *written* as that Men may understand it? And so also for his Epistles, he tells us that he wrote them that *they that believed in Jesus might know that they have eternal Life, and that they may believe, or continue to believe, on the Name of the Son of God*: And if this were his End, to be sure he would take Care to write so as that they might understand; otherwise, how could they know by his Writing that they had *eternal Life*, or be moved thereby to continue to believe on the Name of *Jesus*? For there is nothing can create in Men either Knowledge or Faith, but what they understand. Seeing therefore the *great End* of Writing the *Scripture*, was to instruct the World in the *great Things* of *Religion*, either we must say that both the Writers of the *Scripture*, and the *Holy Ghost* that inspired them, were *defective* in Skill, or in Care, so to write as to obtain this End; or that their Writings are an *effectual Means* to obtain it, which it is *impossible* for them to be, unless they are *plain* and *clear* as to the *great Things* of *Religion*. In short, every *wise Agent* pursues his End by the most *proper* and *effectual Means*; and I would fain know whether to write plainly, or obscurely, be the most *proper Means* to instruct Men by Writing; if to write plainly, then either the *Apostles* wrote so, or they were not *wise Agents*, since to instruct was the *great End* of their Writing. The most *natural Way* of conveying to Mens Minds the Notices of Things, is by Words either *spoken*, or *written*, and seeing whatsoever
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can be *spoken* in plain and *intelligible* Words may be *written* in the same Words, there can be no Doubt but those Words will be as *intelligible* when they are *written*, as when they are *spoken*; for why should the same Words be more *obscure* when conveyed to us by our Eyes, that when conveyed to us by our Ears? Seeing then the Sense of *Scripture* may be as plainly conveyed by Words *written*, as by Words *spoken*, and seeing that even those who deny the Plainness of *Scripture*, do yet allow that the Sense of it may be plainly conveyed by Words spoken, or, which is the same Thing, *Oral Tradition*; if the *Scripture* be not *plain*, it can be resolved into no *other* Reason but this, that *God* would not have it so; for there is no Doubt but he could have *spoken* as plainly as Men, and have *written* as plainly as he spoke; and therefore if he hath not done so, it was because he would not; but to say that he would not write those Things plainly which he thought *necessary* for all Men to know, and which he wrote on Purpose that all Men might know, is to say that he would, and would not at the same Time; or that he wrote them on Purpose that Men might know them, and yet that he wrote so as that they might not know them.

3. From the *frequent* Commands *God* lays upon us to read the *Scripture* it is also evident, that in all *necessary* Things it is *plain* and *clear*. That *God* doth not only allow, but wills and requires us to read the *Scripture*, I shall shew at large hereafter, when I come to treat of *searching the Scripture*. Supposing therefore at present the Thing to be *true*, I would fain know
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to what Purpose should God require us to read the *Scripture*, if in those Things which are necessary for Men to know and believe, it be not *plain* and *intelligible*? Doth God require us to read it for the Sake of reading it, or for the Sake of understanding it? If the *former*, reading any *other* Book might as well have answered God's End as reading the *Scripture*; because Reading is Reading whatsoever it be that we read; if the *latter*, then either the *Scripture* is *plain* and *intelligible* as to all those Things which he requires us to understand, or he requires us to read it in vain. For to what purpose should we read that we may understand, if that which we are to read be not *plain* enough to be understood by us? As for Instance; the *Bereans*, Acts xvii. 11. are highly commended for *searching the Scriptures daily*; now I would fain know, was this a Virtue in them, or was it not? If not, why are they commended for it? If it was, it was certainly their Duty. What was the Intendment of it; was it only that thy might be expert Readers? Why are they so commended for reading the *Scriptures* above any *other* Book, seeing that reading any *other* Book would have done as well for that purpose as reading the *Scriptures*? But the Text itself tells us, that the Intendment of their reading the *Scripture* was, *that they might know whether those Things were so* or no, which St. Paul had preached to them; but how should they know this by reading the *Scripture*, if the *Scripture* which they read was not *plain* enough to be understood by them? Again, St. Paul gives this as a great Commendation of

his Son *Timothy*, that *from a Child* he had known the *Holy Scriptures*; whence by the Way we may learn, that it is not so great a Reproach to our Church as the *Romanists* intend it for, that we permit *Women* and *Children*, *Tinkers* and *Coblers* to read the *Scripture*. But I pray, what was the Meaning of *Timothy's* knowing the *Holy Scripture from a Child*? Was it that he knew the Words of it only, or the Sense of it also? If the former, a *Parrot* may be taught as much as *Timothy* had learned, and consequently deserve as high a Commendation as he; if the latter, then it seems the *Scripture* is plain enough for a well-disposed Child to know the Sense of it, so far forth at least as it is necessary to be known, and this is as much as we desire. If therefore God requires us to read the *Scripture*, as *Timothy* did, to the End that we may know and understand it as he did, then either we may understand the Sense of it, by reading it, or else God requires us to read it in vain.

4. and lastly, From the Obligation we lie under upon Pain of Damnation to believe and receive those *Necessaries* to Salvation contained in *Scripture*, it is also evident that as to all those *Necessaries* it is plain and clear. That we are obliged to believe under Pain of Damnation all that the *Scripture* proposes as necessary to our Salvation, is agreed on all Hands; but how can Men be justly obliged to believe such Things as are obscure and doubtful, and uncertain, and of which they can have no certain Knowledge? Either the *Necessaries* to Salvation must be plainly and clearly expressed in *Scripture*, or

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we have not *sufficient* Reason to believe them; and to say *God* will damn us for not believing those Things which he hath not given us *sufficient* Reason to believe, is to charge him with the most *outrageous* Oppression and Injustice. But we are told, that though *God* hath not clearly revealed to us in *Scripture* those Things which he hath obliged us to believe, upon Pain of Damnation, yet he hath left us *sufficient* Reason to believe them; for he hath left us to the Conduct of an *infallible Church*, that is to say, of the *present Church of Rome* in all Ages, whom he hath *authorized* to explain and define to us all Things that are *necessary* to be believed, which we are to receive upon her Authority, and not upon the *Scripture's*; so that if we firmly believe what she designs and proposes to us, we are sure to believe all Things that are *necessary* to be believed. Now in Answer to this Objection, which indeed is the *great* Foundation that the Faith of those of the *present Church of Rome* relies on, I desire these Things may be seriously considered.

1. That before we can reasonably rely upon the Authority of the *present Church of Rome*, in defining and proposing to us the Articles of our Faith, there are *undry* Things that we must believe upon the Authority of *Scripture*.

2. That these Things which we must believe from *Scripture* before we can rely upon the Authority of *that Church*, are at *least* as obscurely revealed in *Scripture*, as any *other* Article of our *Christian* Faith.

3. That after all these Things, upon our relying on that *Church's* Authority, we are left

to the *same*, or *greater* Uncertainties, than upon our relying upon the Authority of *Scripture*.

4. That in relying upon the Authority of the *Scripture* we are left to no *other* Uncertainties than just what is *necessary* to render our Faith *virtuous* and *rewardable*; whereas by relying upon the Authority of *that Church*, supposing it to be a *certain* Ground, as it is pretended, our Faith would have *little* or *nothing* of *Virtue* in it.

I. That before we can reasonably rely upon the Authority of *that Church* in defining and proposing to us the Articles of our Faith, there are *sundry* Things that we must believe upon the Authority of *Scripture*. As for instance, we must in the *first* Place believe that there is a *Church*, or Society of *Christians* separated from the World, or incorporated by a *peculiar* divine Charter. Now whether there be such a *Church* or no, is a Question that must be resolved by the *Scripture*, and not by the *Church*; because to believe that there is a *Church*, because the *Church* saith there is a *Church*, is to take that for granted which is the Thing in Question. *Secondly*, We must believe that this *Church* hath Authority to define and propose to us the Articles of our Faith, which must also for the same Reason be believed on the Authority of the *Scripture*, and not of the *Church*. For to believe that there is a *Church* that hath Authority to propose to us the Articles of our Faith, is to believe that there is a *Church* which we are obliged to believe; and how can I believe this upon the *Church's* Authority, unless I can believe it before I do believe

believe it? *Thirdly*, Before we can rely upon this *Church's* Authority in defining and proposing to us the Articles of our Faith, we must believe that this *Church* is *infallible*; for if she be not *infallible*, how is it *consistent* with the Truth of *God* to oblige us to believe her, seeing in so doing he must oblige us whensoever she errs to believe her Errors? But that she is *infallible* is not to be believed upon her *own* Authority; for then her *infallible* Authority must be the Reason of our Belief that she is *infallible*, that is, we must believe her *infallible*, because we believe her *infallible*. Seeing then we cannot believe it on her *own* Authority, if we believe it at all, it must be upon the Authority of *Scripture*. *Fourthly*, Before we can rely upon the *Church of Rome's* Authority to define to us the Articles of our Faith, we must believe the *Church of Rome* to be this *infallible* Church: But seeing this is no *self-evident* Principle, we must have some *other* Evidence besides herself to induce us to believe it; and what else can that be but *Scripture*? We are told indeed by some of her *greatest Divines*, that there are *certain* Marks and Notes of a *true Church* peculiar to the *Church of Rome*, by which we are obliged to believe her the *true Church*; such as *Antiquity*, *Universality*, *Holiness of Doctrine*, &c. But seeing no Doctrine can be *holy* that is not *true*, we must be satisfied that *that Church* is *true* before we can know that it is *holy*; so that before we can reasonably submit to her Authority, we must be very well assured that her Doctrine is *true*, and this we cannot be assured

of by her Authority, because that as yet is the Matter in Question; and therefore we can be no otherwise assured of it, but only by the Authority of *Scripture*; and when we are assured beforehand by the Authority of *Scripture*, that her Doctrines are *true*, her Authority comes *too* late to assure us. Seeing therefore it is evident that there are some, if not all the Articles of the *Roman Faith*, that must be known and believed by us upon the Authority of *Scripture*, before we can safely rely upon her Authority to define them to us, how can we be obliged to settle our Faith upon her Authority, when as before we can reasonably admit her Authority, we must believe several of the Articles of our Faith upon the Authority of *Scripture*? For I would fain know, are these Articles of Faith, or no? *That there is a Church; that this Church hath Authority to define the Articles of our Faith, and that in so defining, this Church is infallible, and that this infallible Church is the Church of Rome*? If they be, as they themselves own they are, then there are some Articles, it seems, that must be believed without the Church's Authority upon the *single* Authority of *Scripture*; and if *some*, why not *all*? Why should not the *Scripture* be as *sufficient* to authorize us to believe the Rest as these, since its Authority is as *great* in *one* Text as in *another*? Especially considering,

2. That these Things which we must believe from *Scripture* before we can rely upon the Authority of the *Church of Rome*, are at least as obscurely revealed in *Scripture* as any *other* Article of our *Christian Faith*. The *great* Reason

Reason urged by the *Romanists* against our Reliance upon the *Scripture* for our Faith, is the Obscurity of it ; and if this be a *good* Reason, it proves a *great* deal more than they would have it, *viz.* that we ought not to rely upon *Scripture*, even for those Articles, without believing of which we can have no *sufficient* Ground to rely upon the Authority of their *Church*: For I would fain know, is it *clear* and *plain* from *Scripture* that the *present Catholick Church* of every Age hath Authority to define Articles of Faith, and that in all its Definitions it is *infallible*? and that the *present Church of Rome* is this *Catholick Church*? If so, how came those Texts upon which those Articles are founded to be understood in a quite *different* Sense, not only by us, but by the *greatest* Part of the *primitive Fathers*, as hath been abundantly proved by *Protestant* Writers? Supposing that we should be so *blinded* by our Partiality to *our own* Tenets as to misapprehend *plain* and *clear* Expressions of *Scripture*, it is very *strange* methinks that the *Fathers*, who were never engaged in the Controversy, and so could not be biassed either *one* Way or *another*, should yet misapprehend them too. What is this but to say, that let Men be never so *indifferent*, yet they may be easily mistaken in the Sense of very *plain* and *clear* Expressions ; and if so, what signifies either Speaking or Writing? But to proceed to some Instances ; will any *modest* Man in the World affirm, that the *Church of Rome's Infallibility* in defining Articles of Faith to all *succeeding* Generations, is more plainly expressed in those Words of our *Saviour*,

Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church, than the *Divinity* of our Saviour is in the Beginning of the *first* Chapter of *St. John's Gospel*, where it is expressly affirmed that he is *God*; whereas in the *other* there is not the least Mention either of the *Church of Rome*, or of *Infallibility*, or defining Articles of Faith? Why may we not then as well depend upon the *one* Text for the Article of our Saviour's *Divinity*, as upon the *other*, for that of the *Church of Rome's Infallibility*? Again, are there not *innumerable* Texts of Scripture, wherein the Articles of *Remission of Sin*, the *Resurrection of the Dead*, the *last Judgment*, and the *World to come*, are at least as plainly expressed as the *present Church of Rome's Infallibility* is in any of those Texts that are urged in the Defence of it? And therefore if we believe the *latter* upon the Authority of *Scripture*, notwithstanding the pretended Obscurity of it, why may we not as well upon the same Authority believe all the *former*, since the *former* are at least as plainly expressed as the *latter*? Either therefore the *Scripture* is *plain* enough to be relied upon, as to *this* Article of the *Church of Rome's Infallibility*, or it is not; if it be not, we have no Ground for our Dependance upon the Authority of her Definitions and Proposals; if it be, it is *plain* enough to be relied upon in all other *necessary* Articles of Faith, since these are all as plainly at least expressed in *Scripture* as that. For if we may not rely upon the *Scripture* because it is not *plain*, then where it is equally *plain*, it is equally to be relied on.

3. That when we come to rely upon this *Church's* Authority, we are exposed to far greater Uncertainties than while we relied upon the Authority of *Scripture*. For in the *first* Place, we are of all Sides agreed that the *Scripture* is *infallible*, and that *such* and *such* Writings are Parts of *Scripture*; and therefore are absolutely *secure*, that if we follow the *true* Sense of it, it cannot mislead us. But the much greater Part of *Christians* deny that the *Church of Rome* is *infallible*; even the *Church of Rome* itself owns the Authority we rely on to be *infallible*, but all *Christians* all the World over, besides those of her own Communion, disallow *hers* to be so; and to forsake our Dependence upon an *Infallibility* which all own, to rely upon an *Infallibility* which but few in Comparison admit, is certainly a very dangerous Venture. And then, *Secondly*, As for the *Infallibility* of *Scripture*, we are *certain* where to find it; *viz.* in every Text, and in every Proposition therein contained, which being all the *Word of God*, must be all *infallible*. But as for the *Infallibility* of the *Roman Church*, as they have handled the Matter, it is almost as *difficult* to find as to prove it; some cry, lo it is here; and some, lo it is there; some place it in the *Pope* only, others in the *Pope* and his College of *Cardinals*; some in the *Pope* presiding in a *general Council*; others in a *general Council* whether the *Pope* preside in it or no. So that in this *Church* it seems, there is *Infallibility* somewhere, but what are we the better for it if we know no where to find it? If we go to the *Pope* for it; there
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have been *two* or *three Popes* at once that have decreed against *one another*; and therefore *one* or the *other* of them to be sure were mistaken. How then shall we know which is the *true infallible* one? And when I have found the *true Pope*, others tell me I am not yet arrived at the Seat of *Infallibility*, until I have found him in his *College of Cardinals*; and when I have found him here, I am still to seek, seeing I find the same *Pope* (*Eugenius the Fourth* for Instance) decreeing *one* Thing in his *College of Cardinals*, and the quite *contrary* in a *general Council*; and therefore I am sure he could not be *infallible* in both. Therefore others send me to the *Pope* in a *general Council*; but when I come thither, I find myself at a Loss again; because I meet with several Instances of *one Pope's* defining *one* Thing in *one general Council*; and *another Pope*, the quite *contrary* in *another*; and therefore in *one* or the *other Council*, I am sure the *one* or the *other Pope* was mistaken. And as for *general Councils* themselves, there are *sundry* of them which are owned by *some*, and rejected by *others* of the *principal Doctors* of the *Roman Communion*. And even when *Councils* are legally assembled, there are so many *nice* Disputes among them, what it is that makes them *general*, and when it is that they act *conciliariter*, as they call it; that is, so as to render their Decree perpetually and universally obliging; that though we were resolved to build our Faith upon the Authority of *this Church*, yet if we will use that Caution in believing that we ought to do in a Matter
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of so great Moment, we should find ourselves involved in greater Uncertainties concerning these Things, than we are concerning the Sense even of the most *difficult* Places of *Scripture*. But then, *Thirdly*, When we are passed over all these Difficulties, we are still at as *great* a Loss to understand what is the Sense of the *Church* to be believed by us, as what is the Sense of *Scripture* : For the *Church* hath no *other* Way to deliver her Sense to us but either by *oral Tradition*, that is, by Word of Mouth, or by *Writing*; if she deliver her Sense to me by *oral Tradition*, how can I know what that is who never heard her speak either in its *diffused* Body, or in a *general Council*, or in any *other* Representative; unless it be that of my own *Parish-Priest* perhaps, who for all I know, may be *ignorant*, or *heretical*, and so either not understand himself the Church's *oral Tradition*, or wilfully pervert it to a *contrary* Meaning? And if the *Church* deliver her Sense to me by Writing, as she hath done in the *written* Decrees of her *general Councils*, must I read over all her Decrees? How should I do that, who understand not so much as the Languages in which they are written? Or suppose they were translated, how shall I know that they are faithfully rendered, any more than I do that the *Scripture* is so? But suppose I were *certain* of this, and should thereupon proceed to read them, alas, I find in them a *great* many *difficult* and *dubious* Expressions; yea, and at least *seeming* Contradictions to *each other*; how then can I be more certain of the true Sense of these Writings than of the Sense

of the Writings of *Scripture*? But you will say, the *Church* hath digested her Sense of all her Articles of Faith into a *plain Creed* and *Catechism*, viz. that of the *Council of Trent*, whereby the plainest Reader may, without any *laborious Enquiries*, be ready instructed in what he ought to believe. This, I confess, is something; but as for those Articles of Faith wherein *We* and the *Church of Rome* are agreed, we find them as plainly expressed in *Scripture* as in that *Creed* and *Catechism*; and therefore we have Reason to believe, that if those Articles wherein we disagree had ever been intended for Articles of Faith, they would have been as plainly expressed there as these; but it is no Wonder we should not find them plainly expressed *there*, when we cannot find them expressed *there* at all. But do we not find that the Scriptures, even in the *plainest* Expressions of Articles of Faith, have yet been perverted by *Hereticks* into a *contrary* Meaning? And what then? Are not the Words of *Councils* as liable to be perverted into a *contrary* Meaning as the Words of *Scripture*? For do not the *Roman* Doctors differ as much about the Sense of their *Councils*, as we do about the Sense of our *Scriptures*? Yea, and have we not a *notorious* Instance of it at this very Day? For what can be more *contrary* than *Belarmine's* Exposition of the *Trent Faith*, and the *Bishop of Condom's*? And yet both allowed by the *Pope*, who by the Authority of that *Council* is made *sole* Arbitrator of the Sense of it. But then *Fourthly*, and *lastly*, As to the Sense of *Scripture*, our Reliance on the Authority of
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that *Church* leaves us at as great an Uncertainty as it found us. For where the *Scripture* designs to speak plainly, as it doth in all Things necessary to Salvation, the *Church* cannot speak plainer; and therefore there we may understand the *Scripture* as well without the *Church* as with it; but where it doth not speak plainly, the *Church of Rome* hath left us no infallible Commentary whereby to understand it; so that where the *Scripture* is plain, she hath not made it plainer; and where it is obscure, she hath left it as obscure as ever: So that after all the Noise that is made of *Infallibility*, her Doctors are fain to apply themselves to the same Methods of understanding *Scripture*; that is, to consult the Sense of *Antiquity*, and compare Text with Text, and the like, that we *Jesuite* Protestants do; and when they have done all, are as liable to be mistaken as we. Nay, they themselves confess, that even *general Councils* themselves may be mistaken in their Applications of *Scripture*; that is, that they may misapply them to wrong Purposes, which they cannot do without mistaking the Sense of them, of which there are a great many notorious Instances in the second Council of *Nice*; which to prove it the Duty of *Christians* to worship Images, urges God's taking Clay, and making Man after his own Image; and likewise that of *Esay*, *There shall be a Sign and Testimony to the Lord in the Land of Egypt*; and also those Passages of *David*, *Confession and Beauty, is before him. Lord, I have loved the Beauty of thy House. O Lord, my Face hath sought for thee. O Lord,*

Lord, I will seek after thy Countenance. O Lord, the Light of thy Countenance is sealed over us. And from that Passage, *As we have seen, so have we heard*, they argue that there must be Images to look on; and because it is said, *God is marvellous in his Saints*, they conclude that the Church must be decked with Pictures: And from *No Man lighteth a Candle and putteth it under a Buskel*, they wisely infer that Images must be set upon the Altar; all which are as remote from their Sense as the first Verse of the first Chapter of *Genesis*. What greater Certainty have they with their *Infallibility*, than we without it? We can know as well the Sense of plain Texts of Scripture, as of plain Texts of Councils, or Creeds, or Catechisms; and we can as easily pervert the Sense of the one as of the other: And as for those that are not plain, even general Councils you see, for all their *Infallibility*, may be mistaken about them as well as we. So that when all comes to all, by forsaking the infallible Authority of Scripture to rely upon the infallible Authority of that Church, we are so far from arriving at a greater Certainty of Faith, that we are involved in greater Uncertainties than ever. But then,

4. and lastly, In relying upon the Authority of Scripture, we are left to no other Uncertainties than just what are necessary to render our Faith virtuous and rewardable; whereas, by relying upon the Authority of the Church of Rome (supposing it was as sure a Ground of Faith as it is pretended) our Faith would have little or nothing of Virtue in it. It is pretended (though

(though falsely you see) that *that Church's* Authority is so *sure* a Ground of Faith, that while a Man depends upon it he cannot be mistaken in any *necessary* Article of Faith; which in Reality amounts to no more than this; that while a Man believes as *that Church* believes, which infallibly believes all that is *necessary* to Salvation, he infallibly believes all that is *necessary* to Salvation; and it is equally *true*, that while a Man believes as the *Scripture* teaches, which infallibly teaches all that is *necessary* to Salvation, he infallibly believes all that is *necessary* to Salvation; that is, both are equally *false*. For no Man can infallibly believe either the *Church* or *Scripture*, because *Infallibility* exceeds the Capacity of *human Nature*; no Man can so believe *either*, but that he may be mistaken, and if he may be mistaken, it is *possible* he may not believe all that is *necessary* to Salvation, whether he grounds his Faith upon the *Church*, or the *Scripture*. But because this *Church* pretends so to secure my Faith while I depend upon her Authority as that I cannot be mistaken, for this very Reason I cannot depend upon it, because I am sure of this, that *God* never designed for me any such Means of believing as should render my Faith *infallible*. For to what End should he require me to take so much Pains and Care to secure my Faith from Errors, if he hath furnished me with any *certain* Means of being *infallible*? It would be but applying that Means, whatever it is, and my Danger would be immediately over; and then I need trouble my Head no further, being now so *secured* as that I cannot
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be mistaken ; after which it would be very *impertinent*, methinks, for God to trouble me with those *unnecessary* Injunctions of trying all Things, and holding fast to that which is good ; of searching the Scriptures, and trying the Spirits whether they be of God ; and taking heed whilst I stand, lest I fall. What need a Man be at the Expence of all this Labour and Caution, whose Faith is already secured ? Seeing therefore God requires these Things at our Hands, it is a *plain* Case that he never intended us any Method how to be *infallible* in believing ; and therefore since the Church of Rome's Authority is pretended to be such a Method, for that Reason it ought to be rejected. It is plain that God intended that our Faith should be a Grace and a Virtue, and consequently that it should be an Act of our Wills, as well as of our Understandings, which supposes the Evidence of it to be *irresistible* ; for what Virtue is it to believe that the Sun shines when it glares full in our Eyes ? Since therefore our Faith must be a *free* and *voluntary* Assent upon such Motives as are *sufficient* to satisfy an *honest* Mind, but not to compel either an *obstinate* Infidel, or *self-deceiving* Hypocrite ; God did not think fit so to secure our Faith as to leave it *impossible* for us to err *damnably* ; and indeed if he had, it would have been no Virtue in us to believe *savingly* ; for what Virtue is it for a Man to do that which it is *impossible* for him not to do ? It is *sufficient* that we cannot err damnably in our Faith without some *damnable* Fault in our Wills ; but if we either refuse to enquire into this Revelation for what is *necessary*

sary for us to believe, or will only enquire into it with a Mind that is biassed with *wicked* and *sinful* Prejudices, or will not submit our Understandings to it upon the *clearest* Conviction, there is no Doubt but we may be *ignorant*, and we may be deceived in Things of the *greatest* Moment, and it is but *just* and *fit* that we should: And if, notwithstanding these Faults, we could not err, for God's Sake what Virtue would it be to be *Orthodox*? But if with *honest*, *humble*, and *teachable* Minds, we will diligently enquire into *divine* Revelation, we shall there find all the *Necessaries* to Salvation so clearly and plainly proposed to us, that it will be *morally impossible* for us either to be *ignorant* of, or deceived about them. So that by relying on *Scripture*, you see we are exposed to no *other* Uncertainties than just what are *necessary* to render our Faith a Virtue; and God doth as much require that our Faith should be *virtuous*, as that it should be *Orthodox*; that it should be the Act of an *honest*, *humble*, *diligent*, and *teachable* Mind, as that it should be extended to all Things *necessary* to Salvation. Now our Faith may be *Orthodox* without an *infallible* Certainty, but it cannot be *virtuous* and *rewardable* with it. To what Purpose then do the *Romanists* talk of an *infallible* Certainty in Believing? Is it *reasonable* to expect more Certainty than God ever intended to give? He hath given as much as is *necessary* for *honest* Minds, and no more, and whether *Knaves* and *Hypocrites* believe *right* or *wrong* is of no *great* Concernment. If therefore our Faith be *liable* to no *other* Uncertainty than

just what is *necessary* to try our Honesty, that is much *better* for us in respect of the Virtue of our Faith than an *infallible* Certainty. Supposing therefore that the *Church of Rome* were as *infallible* as it pretends, it is certain that the *Scripture* is as *infallible* as that; but whether we rely upon *one* or the *other*, we are *fallible* still. And could that *Church* render us as *infallibly certain* as it pretends, it would thereby preserve indeed the *Orthodoxy* of our Faith, but then at the same Time it would destroy the Virtue of it: For to believe *right*, when we cannot believe *wrong*, is *fatal* and *necessary*; but to believe *right*, when through *our own* Default we may believe *wrong*, this is *virtuous* and *rewardable*.

By what hath been said therefore, I think it is sufficiently evident, that it is upon the *Scripture* we are to rely, and not upon the *Church*, especially upon the *Roman Church*, for all Things *necessary* to Salvation; and therefore since we are obliged to believe these Things upon Pain of *eternal* Damnation, it necessarily follows that they must be *plain* and *clear*, and *Scripture*; otherwise we could not be justly so obliged to believe them. And thus I have shewn at large that the *Scripture* is the *great* Rule of our Faith and Manners, and that as such, it is both *full* and *clear*, as containing in it all Things *necessary* to Salvation, and proposing them so plainly and clearly, as that upon an *honest* and *diligent* Enquiry, all Men may find and discover them.

OF THE

Obligation of the People

TO READ the

SCRIPTURES.

I JOHN v. 39.

Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal Life.

WHETHER these Words are to be rendered *indicatively* [*Ye do search the Scriptures*] as some would have them, or *imperatively* [*Search the Scriptures*] as our Translation renders them, amounts to the same Thing; for if we render them *indicatively*, [*Ye do search the Scriptures*] it is evident, that they are spoken with Approbation, *Ye do read the Scriptures, and ye do very well in so doing*: For thus we find the *Bereans* commended for *searching the Scriptures*, and *Timothy*, for *knowing them from a Child*. And if to search the *Scriptures* be a commendable Practice, then to be sure our Saviour here mentions it at least with Approbation; and what he approves when done, that to be sure he would have us do. Whether therefore it be delivered in the Form

of a Command, or of a *bare* Assertion, it is *equivalent* to a Command, it being at least an Assertion of a Thing which he approves, and consequently would have all Men to practise. But because there is a numerous Party in the *Christian* World which doth not only forbid the People to search the *Scriptures*, but represents it as a Practice of very *dangerous* Consequence, it is hereby become *necessary* that we should not only assert, but prove their Obligation to it, which otherwise would be very *needless*, there being nothing more *plain* and *evident* in itself. Now to prove that the People are obliged to search and read the *Scriptures*, I shall, as briefly as I can, argue the Point from these following Topicks.

1. From the Obligations which the *Jews* were under to read and search the *Scriptures* of the *Old Testament*.

2. From our *Saviour's* and his Apostles Approbation of their Practice in Pursuance of this their Obligation.

3. From the *great* Design and Intention of writing the *Scriptures*.

4. From the Direction of these *Holy Writings* to the People.

5. From the *great* Concernment of the People in the Matters contained in them.

6. From the *universal* Sense of the *Primitive Church* in this Matter.

1. From the *general* Obligation which the *Jews* were under to read and search their *Scriptures*. For so *God* requires them to keep
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Peoples Obligation to read the Scriptures. 341
the Words which he commanded them, in their
Hearts, and to teach them diligently to their
Children, and to talk of them as they sat in
their Houses, and as they walked in the Way,
and when they lay down, and when they rose up,
and to bind them as a Sign upon their Hands,
Deut. vi. 6, 7, 8. And elsewhere, this Book
of the Law shall not depart out of thy Mouth,
but thou shalt meditate therein Day and Night,
speaking to the Children of Israel in general,
Joshua i. 8. And again, Ye shall lay up
these my Words in your Heart, and in your
Soul, that your Days may be multiplied, and
the Days of your Children, in the Land which
the Lord swore unto your Fathers to give
them, as the Days of Heaven upon the Earth.
Deut. xi. 18, 21. And to meditate on God's
Law Day and Night, David makes a Part
of the Character of the blessed Man. Psalm
i. 3. Now if they could not keep God's Laws
in their Hearts, as most certainly they could
not, if they could not teach them to their Chil-
dren; if they could not talk of them upon all
just and proper Occasions; and in a Word, if
they could not meditate on them Day and
Night, without being very well acquainted
with them by diligent Search and reading them,
it is most certain, that to read and search into
them was their indispensable Duty. Now if
there be the same Reason why we should read
the Scriptures as there was why the Jews
should, then the Obligation of these Commands
must extend to us as well as to them; because
the Reason of the Law is the Law; but 'tis
evident, even beyond Contradiction, that there

is no *good* Reason assignable for the *one*, which is not of *equal* Force for the *other*; and whatsoever is objected by our Adversaries in this Point against our reading the *Scriptures*, is of *equal* Validity against the *Jews* reading them. It is objected, That our reading them, through our Incapacity to understand them, must occasion a great many *Errors* and *Heresies* in the *Church*. And why should not their reading them occasion the same, since neither their Understandings were *larger* than ours, nor their *Scriptures* *clearer* and more *intelligible* than ours? It is farther objected, that because of the many *ill* Examples recorded in *Scripture*, it is *dangerous* for the People to read it, because of their Aptness to be misled and corrupted by Example. But I beseech you, are there not more *bad* Examples in the *Old Testament* than in the *New*? And were not the *Jews* as apt to be corrupted by them as we *Christians*? And therefore, since these Objections do press as much against their reading the *Scriptures* as ours, it is certain they ought to keep *both* from it or *neither*. Seeing therefore notwithstanding these Objections, *God* obliged the *Jews* to read them, it is plain they are not of Force enough to disoblige us from doing the same.

2. From our *Saviour* and his *Apostles* Approbation of this Practice of the *Jews* in Pursuance of their Obligation to it, it is also evident, that we are obliged to the same. That the *common People* of the *Jews* did ordinarily read the *Scriptures* in our *Saviour's* Time, is evident not only from the Text, *Search the*
Scriptures

Scriptures (which if you take them *indicatively*, are an exprefs Declaration that they did read them ; and if you take them *imperatively*, necessarily imply that they themselves owned that they ought to read them) but alfo from thofe Questions which our *Saviour* frequently asked them in his Conferences with them ; fuch as, *Have ye not read ? Have ye never read in the Scripture ? And hath not the Scripture faid fo and fo ?* Which Queition would be very *impertinent*, if reading the *Scripture* were not then ordinarily practifed by that People. And that even their *holy Women* were then fo well inftructed in the *Scriptures* as to be able to inftruct their Children, *Timothy* is a *fignal* Instance, who, though his *Father* were a *Heathen*, had *known the Holy Scriptures from a Child*, 2 Tim. iii. 15 ; which Knowledge he muft neceffarily have derived from his *Grandmother Lois*, and his *Mother Eunice*, whose Faith St. *Paul* celebrates, 2 Tim. i. 5. And this Practice of reading the *Scriptures*, which was fo *common* among that People in our *Saviour's* Time, is fo far from being difcontinued, either by *himself*, or his *Apostles*, that it is always mentioned by them with Applaufe and Approbation. Thus the *Bereans* are commended as a People of a *nobler* Strain than thofe of *Thelfalonica*, becaufe *they fearchd the Scriptures daily*, whether thofe Things which St. *Paul* had preached to them, were fo or no. And St. *Paul* is fo far from reprehending *Timothy* for meddling with the *Scriptures* whilft he was a *Layman*, that he mentions it to his Honour, *that he had known the Scrip-*

tures from a Child. And in all those Passages where our *Saviour* takes it for granted that the *common People* of the *Jews* did read the *Scripture*, we have not the *least* Intimation of his Dislike of their Practice, which we should certainly have had, had he apprehended it to be either *dangerous* or *unwarrantable*. Seeing therefore neither our *Saviour* nor his *Apostles* do in the *least* disallow of the *Scriptures* being read by the *common People*, but on the contrary do expressly commend it; this is a *plain* Argument that it was their Intention to perpetuate the Practice of it to *future* Ages. For seeing the *Jews* read the *Scriptures* in Obedience to an *express* Command of *God*, as was shewn before, had our *Saviour* intended that they should not continue it, he would doubtless have repealed that Command by some Countermand, which he was so far from doing, that he not only every where allows of their reading the *Scriptures*, but also expressly approves and commends it; whereby he plainly establishes the *Obligation* of that *antient* Command, in Obedience to which they did read them.

3. From the *great* Design and Intention of writing the *Scriptures*, it is also evident, that the *People* are still obliged to read them. It is plain the *great* Design of writing the *Scriptures* was to instruct Men in the Knowledge, and persuade them to the Practice of *true Religion*; for thus of the *Scriptures* of the *Old Testament* St. *Paul* tells us, that *whatsoever Things were written aforetime, were written for our learning*, Rom. xv. 4. and *for our Admonition*, 1 Cor. x. 11. And as for the *New Testament*,

we are told, that it was written *that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing we might have Life through his Name*, John xx. 31. And St. Peter tells us, that he wrote both his Epistles to *stir up the pure Minds of Christians by way of Remembrance, and to put them in Mind of the Words which were spoken before by the Holy Prophets, and of the Commandment of the Apostles of our Lord and Saviour*, 2 Pet. iii. 1. And St. John gives us this Account of his writing his Epistles; *these Things have I written to you that ye sin not*, 1 John ii. 1. And St. Jude, this of his: *Beloved, when I gave all Diligence to write unto you of the common Salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints*; v. 3. These are the Ends for which the Scripture was written; but how can the Writing of it contribute to these Ends, if we are not permitted to read what is written? For the Scripture was written to the *People* as well as to the *Clergy*, as I shall shew by and by; but to what Purpose should it be written to the *People* to instruct and admonish them, if the *People* are not allowed to read its Instructions and Admonitions? What Influence could the writing it have upon the *People's* Belief, that *Jesus Christ is the Son of God*, if they had been debarred from acquainting themselves with what is written concerning him? How could it stir up their Remembrance, if they might not read what it suggested to their Memory? By what *other Way* can it keep
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the *People* from sinning, but by Motives and Persuasions? But how should its Motives and Persuasions affect their Minds, if they are not allowed to consult and understand them? Upon what Account can it move the *People* earnestly to contend for the Faith once delivered to the Saints, if they are not allowed to learn from it either what that Faith is, or what those Reasons are which oblige them to contend for it? So that to write to the *People* on Purpose to instruct and reform them, and at the same Time to purpose to debar them from reading it, is either to suppose, that the Writing will operate like a Charm, or to purpose a downright Contradiction. For how oddly would it have looked, if in the *afore-cited* Passages, the *Apostles* had expressed themselves thus: “*These Things are written for your Learning and*
“*Admonition; but it is by no Means fit you*
“*should learn from them what they teach and*
“*admonish you. These Things are written,*
“*that ye should believe that Jesus is the*
“*Christ and the Son of God; but they are not*
“*written that you should enquire of them*
“*whether Jesus be the Christ, or the Son of*
“*God. These Things are written to put you*
“*in Mind of what hath been spoken by the*
“*Prophets and Apostles; but they were not*
“*written that you might acquaint yourselves*
“*by them what the Prophets and Apostles*
“*spake. These Things are written that you*
“*should not sin; but beware you do not read*
“*them, lest the bad Examples recorded in*
“*them occasion you to sin.*” In short, “*These*
“*Things were written to excite you earnestly*
“*to*

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“ to contend for the Faith once delivered to
“ the Saints ; but you are by no means allowed
“ to enquire into them, lest you should misun-
“ derstand them, and so, instead of contending
“ for the Faith, you should contend for Heresy
“ and false Doctrine ?” Had the Apostles thus
expressed themselves, I appeal to any reasonable
Man, whether these Passages would not have
startled his Understanding, and tempted him
to question whether the Authors of them were
well in their Wits ; and yet this must have
been their Meaning, supposing that they meant
that the People should not read what they
wrote.

4. From the Direction of these *holy Writings*
to the *People*, it is also evident, that the *People*
are still obliged to read, or acquaint themselves
with them. For so we find the Law of *Moses*
was delivered by *God* to all the *People* as well
as to *him* and *Aaron* ; and (as was shewn
before) they were all of them commanded to
search and enquire into it : And so also were
the *Sermons* of the *Prophets*, which are usually
prefaced with an *Hear, O Israel, hear, O*
House of Judah, hear, O House of Jacob, and
hear all ye of Judah. So also our *blessed*
Saviour preached his *Sermons* and *Parables*,
not only to his *Apostles*, and *seventy Disciples*,
but also to the *People*, and to the *Multitudes*.
And so also his *Apostles* direct their *Epistles*,
not only to the *Saints*, to the *Faithful in Christ*
Jesus, to the *Beloved*, which in the Language
of *Scripture* includes every *Christian* ; but also
to all that are at *Rome*, to all that in every
Place call upon the Name of *Jesus Christ our*
Lord,

Lord, to all the Saints which are in Achaia, to all the Saints which are at Philippi, to the twelve Tribes which are scattered abroad, to the Strangers scattered through Pontus, Galatia, &c. and to them which have obtained like precious Faith with us; that is, to all the Jewish Christians dispersed over the World. Seeing therefore the Scriptures were directed to all, as well Laity as Clergy, this not only gives a Right to all to read them, but also lays an Obligation upon all to acquaint themselves with them. For the very directing such a Writing, or Epistle, to such or such Persons, doth, in the Sense of all the World, imply, that he who writes doth design and intend, that they to whom he directs it should read and peruse it; and therefore, since the Scriptures were written to all, that is a plain Intimation that it was the Intention of the Writers that all should read them. And for us not to read what God hath written, and directed to us, is by Implication of Fact, a profane Neglect and Contempt of his Mercy, and looks as if we either thought him such an insignificant Being, or ourselves so little concerned in any Thing that he can say or write to us, as that it would not be worth our while to receive, and peruse the Contents of those sacred Epistles, which by the Hand of his holy Penmen he hath vouchsafed to direct to us. Nor is it a sufficient Excuse for our Contempt, to say, that in Consideration of our own Proneness to err and mistake, we ought to content ourselves with this, that our spiritual Guides should read God's Writings for us, and deliver the

Sense

Sense and Contents of them to us : For to be sure, had *God* intended that the *Priests* only should read them, he would have directed them only to the *Priests*, and ordered them only to deliver the Sense of them to *the People* ; and therefore, since he hath directed them to *both*, this necessarily implies that it was his Intention that *both* should read them. For if *God* had not directed them to Men, neither *Priests* nor *People* were obliged to read them ; and therefore seeing the *great* Reason why any Men ought to read them is, because they are directed to Men, this Reason obliges all Men to read them, because they are directed to all Men. For not to be highly concerned to know and understand what it is that *God* writes to us, is an Argument that we have a very *mean* Regard both of his Majesty, and his Mind, and Will. But to be sure whosoever is highly concerned to know what such a Writing contains, will, if he can, be very *curious* to peruse it with his *own* Eyes at least, supposing that it is not *unlawful* for him so to do ; because there is nothing gives that Satisfaction to a Man's Mind as the Information of his *own* Sense. So that for Men wilfully to neglect reading the *Scripture* which *God* hath so expressly directed to them, and thereby not only licensed, but obliged them to read it, argues a very *profane* Disregard both of the Author of it, and of the Matter it contains ; and for any Man, or Society of Men, to forbid the *People* to read what *God* hath written and direct to them, is not only to deprive them of a Right which *God* hath given them, but also to acquit them of a Duty which
he

he hath laid upon them. For *St. Paul*, in those Epistles which he wrote to the *Christian People* in general of such and such Churches, still takes it for granted that they would read them, as being not only warranted, but obliged thereunto by his writing them; for so *Ephes. iii. 3, 4.* speaking of that great Mystery of the Calling the Gentiles which God hath revealed to him, concerning which, saith he, *I wrote afore in few Words, whereby when ye read ye may understand my Knowledge in the Mystery of Christ.* So also *2 Cor. i. 13.* *We write no other Things unto you, than what you read;* that is, than what you may, at least, and are obliged to read by Virtue of our writing them to you. And as for his Epistle to the *Thessalonians*, which he wrote to that whole Church, he gives Charge that it should be read to all the holy Brethren, *1 Thess. v. 27.* So also for that of the *Colossians*, *When this Epistle is, or hath been, read amongst you, cause that it be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the Epistle from Laodicea.* Where you see he all along either supposes or requires that what he wrote to all should be read by all, and to all. If therefore this Authority of *St. Paul* be sufficient to overrule the Authority of any pretended Successor of *St. Peter*, then it is certain that reading the Scripture is still the Duty of Laymen, notwithstanding any *Papal* Prohibition to the contrary.

5. From the great Concernment the People have in the Matters contained in Scripture, it is also evident that they are obliged, if they are

are able, to read it and acquaint themselves with it : For as for the Matters which the *Scriptures* contain, they are such as are of *everlasting* Moment to the *People* as well as to the *Clergy*. The Articles of Faith which the *Scripture* proposes are as *necessary* to be believed by the *People* as by the *Clergy*. The Precepts of Life which the *Scripture* prescribes are as *necessary* to be practised by the *People*, as by the *Clergy*. The Promises and Threats with which the *Scripture* enforces those Precepts, are as *necessary* to be considered by the *People*, as by the *Clergy* : And seeing both are equally concerned in the *great* Matters which the *Scriptures* contain, what Reason can be assigned why *both* should not be obliged to acquaint themselves with them? I know it is pretended that it is the *proper* Office of the *Clergy* to study the *Scriptures* for the *People* as well as for *themselves*, and that therefore the *People* are obliged to receive the Sense of the *Scriptures* upon Trust from their Teachers, without making any farther Enquiry. But I beseech you, are you sure that your Teachers are *infallible*? That they are not so is most *certain*, it being *notorious* that most of the *prevailing Heresies* of *Christendom* were *first* set on Broach by the Teachers of the *Church*, and it is impossible they should be *infallible*, who have so often actually erred even in Matters of the *highest* Moment. Suppose then what is fairly *supposable*, that your Teachers should mislead you, and not only in to *dangerous*, but *damnable* Errors ; are you sure that they shall be damned for you, and that you shall escape? If so, then *Heresy* in
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the *Laity* can never be *dammable*, if they receive it upon Trust from their *Teachers*; and consequently, their Souls are as *safe* under the Conduct of *false Teachers* as *true*; provided always that, *right* or *wrong*, they believe what is taught them. But if yourselves must give an Account to *God* as well for your Faith as for your Manners, and are *liable* in your *own* Persons to *eternal* Damnation (as most certainly you are) as well for *Heresy* as *Immorality*, then it is the most *unreasonable* Thing in the World that you should in all Things be obliged to believe your *Teachers* upon Trust; for at this Rate a Man may be eternally *damm'd*, merely for believing what he is obliged to believe. If it be said that the *People* are not bound to believe what their *particular Pastor* teaches, but what the *Church* teaches them, and the *Church* cannot err, though their *particular Pastor* may; I would fain know how shall the *People* be otherwise informed what the *Church* teaches them than by the Expositions of their *particular Pastors*, they being at least as *incapable* of informing themselves what the Doctrine of the *Church* is, as what the Doctrine of the *Scripture* is; and therefore if their *Pastor* should err damnably in expounding to them what the *Church* teaches, as it is supposable he may if he be not *infallible*, there is no Remedy but they must err damnably in believing whatsoever their *Pastor* teaches. But we are farther told, that it is *sufficient* for the *People* that they believe in the *Gross*, that whatsoever the *Church* teaches is *true*, and that as for the *Particulars*, there is no Necessity
that

that they should be informed about them; because he who believes that all that the *Church* teaches is *true*, implicitly believes all that is *necessary*, seeing the *Church* teaches all that is *necessary*. But the Mischief of it is, that this *compendious* Way of Belief is utterly *insignificant*, and doth no way comport with the Design and Intention of a *Christian's* Faith. For *God* doth not require our Faith merely for its *own* Sake, but in order to a farther End, that it may purify our Hearts, and Influence our Lives and Manners; that is, that the Matters which we believe might by being believed by us affect our Wills, and continually move and persuade us to abstain from *all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World*; and if our Faith hath not this Effect upon us, St. *James* assures us that it is a *dead* Faith, and will profit us nothing. But how is it *possible* that our believing *such* and *such* Propositions should move and persuade us, if we do not know what those Propositions are, and what is the *true* Sense and Meaning of them? What Man can be persuaded by such Proposals as he doth not understand, and of which he hath no Manner of *explicit* Knowledge? An *Heathen* that believes that whatsoever *God* teaches is *true*, doth implicitly believe that *Jesus Christ* came from *God* to reveal his Will to Mankind, because it is certain that *God* teaches this; but what is he the *better* for this his *implicit* Belief? What Influence can it have upon his Heart and Manners, who, perhaps, never heard of *Jesus Christ*, nor of any *one* Proposition which he revealed to the

World? And so he who believes that whatsoever the *Church* teaches is *true*, doth implicitly believe that there shall be a *future Judgment*, a *Resurrection of the Dead*, and an *everlasting State of Happiness, or Misery, after Death*, because all these Things the *Church* teaches; but if he never hears of them, or hath no *explicit* Knowledge and Belief of them, how is it *possible* they should operate on his Will and Affections, or ever persuade him to be the *better Man*, or the *better Christian*? And the same is to be said of all the *other Articles of Christianity*. So that either we must believe to no Purpose, and content ourselves with an *insignificant* Faith that will not at all avail us; or take up our Faith upon Trust from *fallible* Teachers who may mislead us into *damnable* Errors, and if they should, we must be *liable* to answer for it in *our* Persons, and at our own *eternal* Peril; or, which is the Truth of the Case, we must be allowed to enquire, and judge for ourselves, at least, in all Things *necessary* to our *eternal* Salvation. Seeing therefore there are many Things in *Scripture* which the *Scripture* itself obliges me upon Pain of Damnation to believe; it hence necessarily follows, that so far forth as the *Scripture* obliges me to believe what it teaches, it obliges me to understand what it teaches, otherwise I must believe I know not what, which is impossible; and so far as the *Scripture* obliges me to understand what it teaches, it must oblige me to *search, enquire, and judge* what it teaches, because I cannot understand without enquiring and judging: But how can I
enquire

enquire what the *Scripture* teaches, if I cannot be admitted to read and consult the *Scripture*? And so again, there are many Duties in *Scripture*, which the *Scripture* itself obliges me to practise upon Pain of *eternal* Damnation; but how can it oblige me to practise what it doth not oblige me to understand? Or how can it oblige me to understand what it doth not oblige me to enquire after? But how can I enquire what it is that the *Scripture* obliges me to practise, when I am forbid all Access to it, and it is locked up from me in an *unknown* Tongue? In short, therefore, seeing the Things contained in *Scripture* are of the *highest* Moment to the *People*, and it is as much as their Souls are worth not to believe and practise what it teaches; and seeing they can neither believe nor practise what they do not understand, it is of *infinite* Concern to them so far at *least* to read, consult, and understand the *Scripture*, as they stand obliged to believe and practise its Doctrines and Precepts.

6. and *lastly*, From the *Universal* Sense of the *Primitive Church* in this Matter, it is also evident, that the *People* are obliged to read or acquaint themselves with the *Holy Scripture*. For the *Primitive Church* for above *six hundred* Years were so far from debarring the *People* the Use of the *Scripture*, that it continually urged and pressed it upon them as a Matter of *indispensible* Obligation. For so *Origen* wishes, That *all would do as it is written*, viz. *Search the Scriptures*. So also *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Hearken ye that are afar off, hearken ye that be near; the Word of God is hid from no*

*Man : it is a Light common to all Men, and there is no Darkneſs in it. So alſo St. Auſtin *, Think it not ſufficient that ye hear the Scriptures in the Church, but do you alſo read the Scriptures yourſelves in your own Houſes, or get ſome other to read them to you. So alſo St. Jerom §, The Lord hath ſpoken to us by his Goſpel, not that a few, but all ſhould underſtand. And elſewhere, ſpeaking of the Women that were at Bethlehem with Paula, It was not lawful, ſaith he, for any one of all the Siſters to be ignorant of the Pſalms, nor to paſs over any Day without learning ſome Part of the Scriptures. And elſewhere †, We are taught, ſaith he, That the Lay-People ought to have the Word of God not only ſufficiently, but alſo with Abundance, that ſo they may be able to teach and counſel others. So alſo St. Chryſoſtome ‡, Hear me, O Laity, get ye the Bible, the moſt whoſom Remedy for the Soul; and if ye will no more, at leaſt get the New Teſtament, St. Paul's Epistles, and the Acts, that they may be your continual and earneſt Teachers. And elſewhere he affirms ||, That it is more neceſſary for the Lay-People to read the Scriptures, than either for the Monks or Priests, or any others. And to cite no more of the infinite Authorities of the Fathers to this Purpoſe, St. Baſil obſerves **, The Scripture of God is like an Apothecary's Shop full of Medicines of ſundry ſorts, that ſo every Man may there chuſe a convenient Remedy for his Diſeaſe.*
And

* In Orat. adhort. ad Gent. § In Pſal. 86. † Ep. ad Coloff. c. 3. ‡ Ep. ad Coloff. Hom. 9. || In Mat. Hom. 3.
 ** In Pſal. 1.

And that the *People* as well as the *Priests* were then allowed the Use of the *Bible*, is evident from a *notorious* Matter of Fact; for when the *Roman Emperors* endeavoured to force the *Christians* by Persecution and Torments to deliver up their *Bibles* to be burnt, that so by extinguishing those *Sacred* Records they might extinguish *Christianity*, they examined not only the *Bishops* and *Clergy*, but also the *People* of all Degrees and both Sexes; many of whom as well Women as Men, owned that they had *Bibles*, but rather chose to die than to deliver them up; and many *others*, who to avoid Death, delivered up their *Bibles*, and are therefore branded with the *ignominious* Name of *Traditors*, for which they were excluded the *Communion of the Church*, and could not be re-admitted without a *long* and *severe* Penance. But it is impossible the *People* could have been *Traditors* if they had had no *Bibles* to deliver up; and therefore being so, is an *undeniable* Argument that the *People* were then allowed the Use of the *Scripture* as well as the *Priests*. And by the way, it's very *strange* that any Community of *Christians* should think *that* a *proper* Way to extinguish *Heresy*, which those *Heathen Persecutors* made use of to extinguish *Christianity*. But that in those *first* Ages these *People* were allowed the Use of the *Bible*, is a Case so *plain*, that they who of *later* Ages have thought meet to repeal this Allowance, have never been able to produce so much as one *probable* Colour of *Primitive* Authority to warrant their Practice. And though in *other* Points they not only claim but ravish *Antiquity*

in despite of Modesty, as well as Truth; yet here they are so abandoned of all Pretence to it, that they are not able to produce so much as *one* Passage of any *Primitive Father* that seems to discourage the *People* from reading the *Scripture*, and much *less* that forbids them so to do: And 'tis notorious to all the World, That in the *Primitive Ages*, when the *Latin* was the *vulgar* Language of the *Romans*, the *Bible* was translated into that Language for the Use and Instruction of the *People*, but when through the many Incurfions of the *barbarous* Nations into the *Roman Empire*, this Language was worn out by Degrees, and instead of being the *vulgar*, became an *unknown* Tongue to that *People*; the *Governors* of that *Church*, having to serve their own secular Ends, introduced into it fundry *corrupt* Doctrines and Practices which they feared the Light of the *Scripture* might detect to the *People*, they thought it most *advifable* not to translate it into the *new vulgar*, but to let it remain locked up from their Cognizance in the *Old Latin*, which by this Time very *few*, except the *Clergy*, understood. And when for some Time it had lain hid from them in an *unknown* Tongue, they proceeded at last wholly to forbid the Use of it to the Laity. So that about the *Ninth* and *Tenth* Ages, which all agree were over-cast with *gross* Darkness and Ignorance, the *Scriptures* were shut up, like the *Sybilline Oracles* in the *Capitol*, and none but the *Priests* were allowed to read and consult them. And though upon the Commencement of the *Reformation*, the *Bible* was for some
time

time set forth again in *fundry vulgar Languages* among the *People*, yet did the *Guides* of that *Church* soon find it *necessary*, for Defence of their own *Unscriptural Doctrine* and Practices to remit it to its *old Confinement*. For *First*, The *Council of Trent*, in the *Fourth Rule* of their *Index Expurgatorius*, forbids the *Laity* to read, or so much as to have the *Bible* in the *Vulgar Language*, tho' translated by those of their own *Church*, without a Licence in Writing from the *Bishop* of the *Diocese*, or the *Inquisitor*; and this upon Pain of not receiving Absolution of their Sins unless they delivered up those their *Bibles* to their *Ordinary*. To which Rule, *Pope Clement the Eighth* afterwards added Observation, *That hitherto by the Command and Practice of the Holy Roman and Universal Inquisition, the Faculty of granting such Licences for reading or keeping Bibles in the Vulgar Tongue, or any Summaries or Historical Compendiums of the said Bibles, is taken away; which is to be inviolably observed.* And in the *Index of Prohibited Books*, published by *Pope Alexander the Seventh*, not only those *Bibles* that are translated and printed by *Hereticks*, but also all *Bibles* in any *Vulgar Tongue* are absolutely forbidden. And though, where the *Reformation* hath prevailed, they are forced against their *own Laws* more freely to indulge the Use of the *Scripture* to their *People*; yet in those Countries where they are *sole Masters*, this Privilege is very rarely granted.

And now being thus *necessitated* to deprive the *People* of the Light of the *Scripture*, lest

they should thereby discover their Errors and Corruptions, it was *necessary* for them to invent some *plausible* Pretences to justify a Practice so contrary both to *Scripture* and *Primitive* Antiquity, and so enormously *derogatory* to the *common* Right of *Christians*; and when it must be done, it is a very *hard* Case if Men of Wit and Learning cannot find something to say for any thing. Now the *two main* Pretences that are urged in this Case, are, *First*, That a *general* Permission of the Use of *Scripture* to the *People* must necessarily open a *wide* Door to *Errors* and *Heresies*: *Secondly*, That it will prove an *unavoidable* Occasion of *great* Corruptions in Manners.

1. That a *general* Permission of the Use of *Scripture* to the *People* must necessarily open a *wide* Door to *Errors* and *Heresies*; because there are many Things in *Scripture* which are *hard* to be understood, and which the *Unlearned*, who are *unqualified* to understand them *aright*, will be apt to wrest into a *wrong* Sense to their *own* Destruction. To which I answer,

1. That this Reason holds as *good* against the writing and publishing the *Scripture* at *first* in Languages that were vulgarly known to the *People*, as against the translating them now into the *vulgar* Languages. For the *Hebrew*, in which the *Old Testament* was written, was the *vulgar* Language of the *Jews*; and the *Greek*, in which the *New Testament* was written, was then the most *vulgar* Language of the *Jews*, and *Gentiles*; and yet notwithstanding there were the same *hard* Things *then* in

in the *Scripture* as *now*, and the *People* were as *unlearned* then, and as apt to wrest these *hard Scriptures* to their *own Destruction* then as *now*; yet *God* notwithstanding thought fit to write and publish it in Languages that were most *known* to the *People*: and therefore, either we must say, that he did not take that Care that he ought to have done to prevent *Errors* and *Heresies*, or that this is no good Reason why the *People* should be debarred of the *Scripture* in their own *vulgar* Language. For why should not the Writing the *Scriptures* at *first* in the *vulgar* Languages as much open a Door to *Heresies*, as the Translating them afterwards, seeing it is neither their being written in the *vulgar* Language, nor their being translated into the *vulgar* Language but their being in the *vulgar* Language, that is here pretended to set open this *dangerous* Door to *Heresies*.

2. This Objection strikes with *equal* Force against *God's* writing and publishing the *Scripture* to the *People*, as against their reading and consulting it. For that *God* wrote these *Scriptures* to the *People*, and that in so doing, he not only gave them a Right, but also laid on them an Obligation to read them, I have already shewed. If therefore the Reading the *Scripture* by the *People* be such an *unavoidable* Inlet of *Error* and *Heresy*, as this Objection pretends, it was doubtless very unadvisedly done of *God* to publish such a *dangerous* Book to the World; which those for whom he published, and to whom he directed it, cannot familiarly converse with without *imminent* Peril of being infected with

with *Heresy*. And if the *Scripture* be such a quarrellsome Knife as these Men say it is, that the *People* can hardly touch it without cutting their Fingers, they are certainly more beholden to the *Church* for taking it from them, than they are to *God* for bestowing it on them.

3. This Objection makes as much at least against the *Priests* reading the *Scripture* as the *People*. For most of those *Heresies* that have been broached to the *People* were *first* brewed by the *Priests*, from whose Lips the *People* do commonly derive their *Errors*, as well as their *Knowledge*: Witness those famous *Heresies* with which the *Christian* World hath been so distracted from *one* Generation to *another*, such as the *Novatian*, the *Donatist*, the *Arian*, the *Pelagian*, the *Eutichian*, the *Eunomian*; all which Counterfeits, and a great many more, were *first* coined by the *Clergy*, and dispersed for *current Christianity* among the *Laity*. And therefore, if this Pretence, that the Reading of *Scripture* opens a Gap to *Heresy*, be a *sufficient* Reason why the *Laity* should not read it, it is a much more *sufficient* Reason why the *Clergy* should not read it. For it requires Skill and Learning as well to wrest the *Scripture* into such *false* Senses as are likely to impose upon the *World*, as to interpret it into its *true* Sense; and I am very sure that it ordinarily requires more Wit and Art to extort from the *Scripture* probable Errors, than it doth to discover by it *necessary* Truth; and if so, then if the Danger of letting in *Heresies* is a *true* Reason why any should not read it, it is much more a *true* Reason why the *Learned* should

not read it than the *Unlearned*; and consequently why the *Priests* should not read it than the *People*, seeing the *former* are more qualified to extract *Heresies* from it than the *latter*. If therefore this Objection signifies any Thing, it must be this, That it is a very *dangerous* thing for any Body to read the *Bible*; that this same *Divine* Book, which *God* thought fit to publish to the World, and which the *Primitive Church* thought fit to oblige all that were able to peruse and study, is now become such a *dangerous* Inlet of *Heresy*, that like *Pandora's Box*, you can no sooner open it, but Swarms of *Errors* and *False Doctrines* will presently fly abroad into the World; so that it would be very well for the World if it were either utterly extinguished, or hid in some *inaccessible* Repository, where no *Mortal Eye* might ever approach it.

4. This Objection expressly contradicts our *Saviour*, and the *Primitive Fathers*. For *Mat. xxii. 29.* our *Saviour* tells the *Sadducees*, who were cavilling with him about the Resurrection, *Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures.* Had therefore the *Sadducees* been of the same Mind with our *Objectors*, they would doubtless have told him, *by your good Leave, Sir, in this Point you yourself are in an Error; for in all Probability had we known the Scripture, or been intimately acquainted with it, we should have erred much more.* Either therefore our *Saviour* was mistaken in charging the Error of the *Sadducees* upon their Ignorance of *Scripture*, or our *Objectors* are mistaken in making it so *necessary* an Expedient for the Prevention

vention of Error to forbid the *People* being acquainted with *Scripture*; for 'tis plain *He* and *They* are of quite different Opinions in the Case. But whatever their Opinion is, I am sure the *Primitive Fathers* were of the same Opinion with our *Saviour*: For *Irenæus* writing of the *Valentinian Hereticks**, *All those Errors they fall into, because they know not the Scriptures.* So *St. Jerom* †, *We must search the Scriptures with all Diligence, that so as being good Exchangers, we may know the lawful Coin from the Copper.* And elsewhere, *That infinite Evils arise from Ignorance of the Scriptures, and that from this Cause the greatest Part of Heresies have proceeded.* *St. Chrysostom* is of Opinion, *that if Men would be conversant with the Scriptures and attend to them, they would not only not fall into Errors themselves, but be able to rescue those that are deceived; and that the Scriptures would instruct Men both in right Opinions, and good Life.* And to name no more, *Theophilaët* tells us, *that nothing can deceive them who search the Holy Scriptures; for that, saith he, is the Candle whereby the Thief is discovered.* But it seems, according to modern Experiments, this Candle of *Scripture* rather serves to light the Thief into the House, than to discover him when he is there; and therefore it is thought necessary for honest Mens Security, either that it should be wholly extinguished, or at least hindered from giving Light by being shut up in a dark Lanthorn of an unknown Tongue. But when they who were once the honest Men are become the Thieves, it

* Lib. 3. c. 12.

† In Ep. ad Ephes. l. 3. c. 4.

it is no wonder that they should thus change their Note, and complain of the Light of this Candle as *dangerous* to them, which *heretofore* they esteemed their *greatest* Security. I am sure the Reason assigned by St. Peter why some Men wrested the *Scriptures* to their own Destruction, was not their reading the *Scripture*, but contrariwise, their not reading it enough, *which they that are unlearned*, saith he, *wrest to their own Destruction*, 2 Pet. iii. 16. *Unlearned* in what? Why doubtless in the *Holy Scripture*. For as to *human Learning*, St. Peter himself was as *unlearned* as they; and if it was their being *unlearned* in *Scripture* that occasioned them to wrest it into an *heretical* Sense, then it is not Mens reading the *Scripture* that leads them into *Heresy*, but their not reading it enough. To say therefore that the Peoples reading the *Scripture* is an Inlet of *Heresy*; and to say, no it is not their reading it, but their not reading it enough is the Inlet of *Heresy*, is an *express* Contradiction; the *former* our *Objectors* say; the *latter* our *Saviour*, his *Apostles*, and the *Primitive Church* say; and I think it is no *hard* Matter to determine which of these *two* Contradictions we ought to believe.

5. and *lastly*, According to this Objection, the *best* Way to keep Men from being *Hereticks* is to deprive them of all Means of arriving at the Knowledge of the Truth: And this, I confess, is a very *certain* Way; though not a very *honest* one. Let Men know nothing of *Religion*, and to be sure they cannot be *Hereticks*, it being *impossible* for Men to err in their Conceptions

ceptions of those Things whereof they have no Notion. Put out a Man's Eyes, and you certainly prevent his being imposed upon by *false* Mediums of Sight to mistake *one* Colour or Figure for *another*; and yet I fancy most Men would think this a *cruel* Kind of Courtesy. But if Men must not be allowed *Scripture* to instruct them in the Truth, for this Reason, because it may occasionally mislead them into *Errors* and *Heresies*, then they must be allowed no Means of Instruction that may occasion them to err, and consequently no Means at all, there being no *imaginable* Means of Instruction which may not be an Occasion of *Errors* and *Heresies*. Is the *Scripture* itself in its *own* Nature an Occasion of misleading Men into *Heresy*, or not? If you say it is, consider before you say it, how it could consist with the Truth and Veracity of *God*, to publish such a Book to the World as tends in its *own* Nature to seduce and mislead the Understandings of those that read it. If you say it is not *so* in itself, but only that it may be so accidentally, I would fain know what Means of Instruction is there which may not accidentally become an Occasion of misleading Men into *Heresy*; and therefore if this be a *sufficient* Reason to deprive Men of *Scripture*, it is *sufficient* to deprive them of all *other* Means of Instruction. And seeing the Knowledge of *Religion* is the Food of Mens Souls, to keep them in Ignorance for fear they should err, is to deny them Food for fear they should surfeit. There is no Doubt but Men whose Minds are tinctured with *heretical* Perversity, will be apt enough to extract the Poison
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of *Error* out of the *clearest* Conveyances and Discoveries of Truth; but what then? Do not *bad* Men ordinarily apply the *best* Things to the *worst* Purposes? If Men fall into *Heresy* by reading the *Scripture*, where lies the Fault? Not in the *Scripture* sure, no *Christian* will pretend that; and if it be in themselves, in their *Pride*, or *Vain-Glory*, or *Covetousness*, or *Sensuality*, (as it is demonstrable it is) is it *just* that *all* should be deprived of it, because *some ill* Men have made an *ill* Use of it? Some Men have surfeited by Eating and Drinking, is it *just* that all Mankind therefore should be deprived of Meat and Drink? Suppose a Prince, pretending to be an *infallible Geographer*, should issue out a Proclamation commanding all his Subjects to travel at *Midnight*, and should assign *this* as the Reason of it, that he had been certainly informed that *several* of them had lost their Way at *Noon*, and wandered into Bogs and Precipices by the Light of the Sun; would any *one* imagine *this* to be the *true* Reason, or rather would not every *one* believe that his *true* Design was to keep his People in Ignorance of the Roads and Situation of his Country, that so they might never be able to discover the Errors of his Maps, which would perhaps discover him to be not only a *fallible Geographer*, but also a very *erroneous* one? And where the *People* are forbid travelling in the Light of the *Scripture*, whatever may be pretended, *wise* Men will believe that the *true* Reason is not to prevent the Peoples falling into *Errors*, but to prevent the discovering the *Errors* of those to whose Guidance and Direction

tion they are wholly and solely subjected. And this I conceive is a *sufficient* Answer to the *first* Objection, *viz.* That the Allowance of the *Scripture* to the *People*, is a *dangerous* Inlet of *Error* and *Herefy*, I proceed therefore to the *Second*, which is this ;

Object. 2. That there are *many* Things recorded in *Scripture* which are very *apt* to suggest *lewd* Thoughts to the *People*, and thereby to corrupt their *Manners* ; as particularly the many *bad* Examples therein related, which are of a very *contagious* Nature, and consequently *dangerous* for the *People* to converse with. In answer to which I desire these *four* Things may be seriously considered.

1. That this *Objection* strikes as much against the *Scripture* itself as against the *Peoples* reading it. For what *worse* Thing can be said of the *Scripture* than this, that it is such an *infectious* Book, so *apt* to excite *impure* Thoughts in Mens Minds, and to kindle *lewd* Affections in their Hearts, that it is by no Means fit the *People* should read it? Should this be said to a *Turk*, or a *Heathen*, who had never read *one* Word in the *Bible*, he would certainly conclude it to be nothing but a *Canto of Ribaldries*, written for no *other* End but to provoke and entertain the *lascivious* Inclinations of Mankind. And certainly had our *Objectors* but as much Reverence for this *Holy Book* as they pretend, they would rather oblige their *People* to read it than with-hold it from them, upon a Pretence that doth so scandalously reflect upon its Reputation. If there be any such Passages in *Scripture* as are *apt* to start *lewd* Thoughts in Mens Minds,

Minds, the utmost that can be fairly pretended, is, That those Passages ought to have been left out of the Peoples *Bibles*, or at least to have been left *untranslated*: But to urge *this* as a Reason, why all the rest of the *Scripture* should be denied to the *People*, insinuates, as if the *whole* were nothing else but a mere Kennel of *contagious* Obscenities. For to urge that for a Reason, why the *Scripture* in general should not be read by, or to the *People*, (which at most is only a Reason why some *few* Passages of it should not be read by them) is to suppose the whole *Scripture* to be made up of such Passages as are *apt* to infuse *vicious* Thoughts into the *People*; than which what can there be supposed more *false* in itself, or more *derogatory* to the *Scripture*?

2. This *Objection*, if it proves any thing, doth as well prove that it was *unfit* for *God* to publish the *Scripture* to the *People*, as it is for the *People* to read it. For is it fit, that *He*, who is a *God* of purer Eyes than to behold *Iniquity*, should publish such things to the World as are *apt* to engender *impure* Thoughts in Mens Minds? And yet though Mens Minds were as *apt* to imbibe *impure* Thoughts when these Things were *first* published, as they are now, this hindered not *God* from publishing them to the World in such Languages as are best known and understood by the *People*. Either therefore *God* did not so well know what is *apt* to corrupt Mens Minds as our *wise* Objectors; or he was *less* concerned than they to preserve them from being corrupted; or what

they object is both *false* and *scandalous*. For to say, That the *wise* and *holy* God hath published such Things to the World as his Ministers find *necessary* to conceal from the World, lest its Thoughts should be corrupted by them, is in effect to say, that his Ministers are grown *wiser* than he, or are more concerned for the Interest of Holiness than he. If the *vicious* Examples, for instance, that are recorded in *Scripture*, are more *apt* to deprave Men than to instruct them, what need they have been recorded? What is there in the *mere* Story of *Noah's* Drunkenness and Incest, and *David's* Adultery, considered abstractly from the *good* Instructions it gives, that should move *God* to deliver it down to all *future* Posterity? If it serve no *good* Ends, it is recorded to a *bad* Purpose; and therefore, if for this Reason, because it is *apt* to corrupt Mens Minds, the *Church* be obliged to conceal it now, for the very same Reason *God* was obliged to have concealed it *for ever*. Either therefore we must say that *God* did very *ill* in publishing it, or that the *Church* doth very *ill* in suppressing it; for *God* could have no *other* End in publishing it to the World, but only to instruct the World by it. If therefore it be not *instructive*, *God* was mistaken; but if it be, it is *fit* the World should be acquainted with it.

3. That this *Objection* doth expressly contradict the *Scripture* itself: For whereas it tells us, that the *bad* Examples recorded in *Scripture* would be apt to deprave the Peoples Minds and Manners, *St. Paul* tells us the quite contrary:

trary: *These Things were our Examples, to the Intent we should not lust after evil Things, as they (i. e. the Israelites in the Wilderness) lusted: Neither be ye Idolaters as were some of them: Neither let us commit Fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one Day three and twenty Thousand: Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of Serpents: Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the Destroyer: Now all these Things happened unto them for Ensamples; and they are written for our Admonition, upon whom the Ends of the World are come,* 1 Cor. x. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Whereas this Objection urges that there are *sundry Passages in Scripture, which should the People read, would excite evil Thoughts in their Minds; the same St. Paul tells us, That all Scripture is profitable, not only for Doctrine and Reproof, but also for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness.* 2 Tim. iii. 16. Whereas this Objection pretends, that it would be very *unsafe*, for young People especially, to be allowed the Scripture, because there are several *amorous Stories and Passages in it which will be apt to suggest wanton Thoughts to their gay and amorous Fancies; David, it is plain, was of a quite contrary Mind; for wherewith, saith he, shall a young Man cleanse his Ways? By taking heed thereto according to thy Word.* Psalm cxix. 9; than which two Passages, what Assertions can be more contrary one to another?

4, and *lastly*, That supposing this *Objection* to be thus far *true*, that there are some *Passages* in *Scripture* which may sometimes occasionally excite *bad* Thoughts in Mens Minds, yet this is no *just* Reason why the Use of *Scripture* should be forbid to the *People*. For every thing which the *People* occasionally make *bad* Uses of, is for that Reason to be forbid to them ; even *Prayer* and the *Sacraments*, and the *Profession* of *Christianity* ought to be forbidden them as well as the *Scripture*, seeing of the *one* as well as of the *other*, many *People* do occasionally make very *bad* Uses. So long as the *Scripture* is *good* in itself, and *apt* in its *own* Nature to instruct and edify those that read it, this is *sufficient* not only to warrant the Peoples Use of it, but to enjoin and require it, and if it sometimes occasions *corrupt* Thoughts in *corrupt* Minds, this is no more a Reason why the *People* should be deprived of the Light of it, than some *bad* Mens making ill Use of the Light of the Sun is, why the Sun should be extinguished, or why the *People* should be *for ever* shut up from the Light of it in *dark* and *dismal* Dungeons. But as for those very *Passages* in *Scripture*, which do sometimes occasion *ill* Thoughts in Mens Minds, they are so far from doing it of their *own* Natures, that as they are delivered in *Scripture*, there is nothing more naturally *apt* to repress *bad* Thoughts, and to arm and fortify Mens Minds against them. As for instance, the *bad* Examples recorded in *Scripture* are generally delivered with *infamous* Characters,

ters, *severe* Prohibitions, and *dreadful* Instances of God's Vengeance attending them, which render them much more *apt* to repress than to excite *evil* Thoughts in Mens Minds ; to quicken them to *Prayer* and *Watchfulness* against Temptations, and when at any Time they have been overcome by them, to encourage them to Repentance ; or when they have overcome them, to stir them *up* to *grateful* Acknowledgment of that *preventing* and *assisting* Grace of God, by which they have been enabled to resist and repel them. These are the *natural* Uses of those *bad* Examples recorded in *Scripture* ; and therefore, if instead of making these Uses of them, some Men pervert them to *bad* Purposes, that is *their* Faults and not the *Scripture's*. It is *sufficient* that the *bad* Examples in *Scripture*, as they are there recorded, are in themselves of *excellent* Use to the *People* ; but should Men be deprived of the Use of every *good* Thing they abuse, I would fain know what one *good* Thing would be left free to their Enjoyment. And now having proved at large the Peoples Right and Obligation to use and search the *Holy Scripture*, and answered the *main Objections* against it, I shall conclude with these two Inferences from those.

1. If the *People* were obliged to acquaint themselves with *Scripture*, then they are obliged to receive upon the Authority of *Scripture* those *divine* Truths which it pro-

poses to their Belief. For to what *other* End should we be obliged to read and consult the *Word of God*, but only that we may learn from it what is his Mind and Will? But how should we learn from *Scripture* what God's Mind is, if we are not to believe what he herein declares upon *Scripture* Authority? If I must not believe when I read the *Scripture* that this is God's Mind, because the *Scripture* says so, it is *impossible* I should ever learn God's Mind by reading it; and consequently I am obliged to read it to *no* Purpose: For there is nothing can teach me what God's Mind is, but that which gives me *sufficient* Ground to believe that what it teaches is the Mind of *God*. When therefore I read the *Scripture*, and find such a Proposition plainly asserted in it, is this a *sufficient* Ground or no, for me to believe it to be the Mind of *God*? If it be, then the Authority of *Scripture* is a *sufficient* Ground for my Belief; if it be not, then the *Scripture* cannot teach me what God's Mind is; because it cannot give me *sufficient* Ground to believe any *one* Proposition in it to be the Mind of *God*. We are told indeed, that we are not to receive the Sense of the *Scripture* from the *Scripture*, but from the *Church*, who alone hath Authority to expound it to us, and whose Expositions in all Matters of Faith are *infallible*. But if this be so, to what End should we read the *Scripture*, seeing the only End of Reading is to learn the Sense of what we read, which according to this Principle is not to be learnt from *Scripture*? So
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that though there be no other *wise* End of reading the *Scripture*, but only to learn from it what it means, yet it seems, for Men to read it for this End is a *perfect* Labour-in-vain ; seeing it is not from the *Scripture* but from the *Church* that they are to learn the Meaning of *Scripture*. For as for the *Scripture*, if these Men are to be believed, it is nothing but a Heap of *unsensed Characters* ; so they expressly term it : But what do they mean by it ? Is it that the *Scripture* consists of a Company of Letters, and Syllables, and Words, that carry with them no *determinate* Sense, that *God Almighty* hath written and published a Book to the World that means nothing ? If so, then when the *Church* by its *infallible* Authority pretends to expound the *Scripture*, her Meaning is not to expound the Sense of it, but to impose a Sense on it which was never in it ; for how can she expound the Sense of a Book which hath no Sense in it ? If the *Church* is to expound the Sense of *Scripture*, the *Scripture* must have a *certain determinate* Sense in it before she expounds it ; for to expound the Sense of *that* which hath no Sense, is Nonsense : And if the *Scripture* hath a *certain* Sense in it antecedently to the *Church's* Exposition of it, why do they call it a Parcel of *unsensed Characters* ? If their Meaning be only this, that the Sense of *Scripture* as it is delivered in *Scripture*, is so *obscure* and *ambiguous*, that without the *infallible* Exposition of the *Church*, we can never be *certain* what

it is ; besides, that this is notoriously *false*, the *Scripture* in all *necessary* Points, both of Faith and Manners, being so very *plain* and *clear*, that any Man that reads it with an *unprejudiced* Mind, may be as *certain* of the Sense of it, as he can be of the Sense of any Writing, and consequently of the Sense of any *written* Exposition of the *Church* ; besides this, I say, it is *evident*, that whatever these Men pretend, it is not merely because of the *Obscurity* of *Scripture* that they oblige Men to ground their Faith upon the *Church*, and not upon the *Scripture* ; for they own as well as we, that in many Things the *Scripture* is very *plain* and *clear*, and yet they will by no Means allow Men to ground their Belief of these Things upon the Authority of *Scripture*, but all must be resolved into the Authority of the *Church*. By which it is evident, that if all the *Scripture* were as *plain* as the *plainest* *Scriptures* they would still contend for the Necessity of Mens relying upon the *Church*, and not upon the *Scripture* ; and consequently that the *true* Reason why they contend for it, is not because the *Scripture* is *obscure*, but because they are resolved to advance the *Church's* Authority. We own as well as they, that where the *Scripture* is *obscure*, Men ought to be guided by the Authority of the *Church*, which we freely allow to be the *best* Expounder of *Scripture*. But the *true* State of the Difference between *them* and *us*, is this, that whereas we require *plain* Men to judge of *plain* Things with their *own* Understandings, and all Men so far
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forth as they are *capable*, to judge for themselves in Matters of *Religion*, and not content themselves to see with the *Church's* Eyes, where they are able to see with their *own*; nothing will satisfy these Men, but to have all Men, as well *Wise* as *Simple*, surrender up their Faith and Judgment to the *Church*, and wink *hard*, and believe whatever the *Church* believes, purely because the *Church* believes it. Whatever they pretend therefore, the Truth of the Case is this; They will by no Means allow us to believe upon the Authority of *Scripture*; not because the *Scripture* is *obscure*, (though this they pretend, for were it never so *plain* the Case would be the same) but because they are *sensible* that this will inevitably subvert their *usurped* Dominion over the Faith and Consciences of Men. But we must believe upon the Authority of the *Church*; and who is this *Church* I beseech you? Why they themselves are this *Church*. So that whereas God hath published a Book called the *Bible*, on purpose to declare his Mind and Will to the World, here are started up a sort of Men that call themselves the *Church*, who very gravely tell us; *Sirs, You must not so much as look into this Book, or if you do, must not believe any one Word in it upon its own Credit and Authority. For though we do confess it is the Word of God, yet we are the sole Judges of the Sense of it; and therefore whatsoever we declare is its Sense, how unlikely soever it may seem to you, you are bound*

bound in Conscience to receive and believe it for this very Reason, because we declare it. In short, you must resign up your Eyes, your Faith, your Reason, and Understanding to us, and see only with our Eyes, and believe only with our Faith, and judge only with our Judgment; and whithersoever we shall think fit to lead you, you must tamely follow us, without presuming to examine whether we lead you right or wrong. But yet after all, to induce us thus to enslave our Understandings to them, they themselves are fain to appeal to *Scripture*, and allow us in some Things to judge of the Sense of it, and to believe those Things upon its Authority. For no wise and honest Man will ever believe, either that they are the *Church*, or the *infallible* Judges of the Sense of *Scripture*, without some Proof and Evidence; and for this they are fain to produce several Texts of *Scripture*, such as, *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church*. Now supposing that to be true, which is notoriously false, viz. That those Texts do necessarily imply that they are the only true *Catholick Church*, and that as such they are constituted by God *infallible* Judges of *Scripture*; yet before I can believe so, I must judge for myself whether this be the Sense of them or no; and if I judge it is, I must believe that they are the *Church*, and *infallible* upon the *Scripture's* Authority and not theirs; for their Authority is the Thing in debate, and I cannot believe upon it before I believe it. So then, though

we must believe nothing else upon *Scripture* Authority, yet upon this very Authority we must believe that they are the *Church*, and that they are *infallible*, which are the *fundamental* Principles of their *Religion*; that is to say, we must believe as much upon *Scripture* Authority as will serve their turn, and no more. But may I be *certain* of the Truth of these *two Fundamental* Principles upon *Scripture* Authority or no? If I may, why may I not as well be infallibly *certain* upon the same Authority of *other* Principles of *Christianity* as well as those, seeing there are no *common* Principles of *Christian Religion* but what are at least as plainly revealed in *Scripture* as these. But this will spoil all; for if Men may be infallibly certain of the Principles of *Religion* upon *Scripture* Authority, what will become of the Necessity of Mens relying upon the *Church*, which is founded upon this Principle, that Men can arrive at no *infallible* Certainty in *Religion* by relying upon the Authority of *Scripture*, or indeed any *other* Authority but the *Church's*? But if I cannot be infallibly *certain* of those *two* Principles, *viz.* that they are the *Church*, and *Infallible*, by those Authorities of *Scripture* which they urge to prove them, how can I be infallibly *certain* of any thing that they declare and define? For if I am not *certain* that they are the *Church*, for all I know the *Church* may be *infallible*, and yet they may be mistaken; and if I am not *certain* that they are *in-*
fallible,

fallible, for all I know they may be the *Church*, and yet still be mistaken. In short, no Authority can render me *infallibly certain*, but that which is *infallible*; no *Infallibility* can render me *infallibly certain*, but that of which I have an *infallible* Certainty. Either therefore the *Scripture* can render me *infallibly certain* of the *Infallibility* of their *Church* (and if it cannot, I am sure nothing can) or it cannot; if it can, why may it not as well render me *infallibly certain* of other Principles of *Christianity*, which are at least as plainly revealed in it as that? If I cannot, how can I be *infallibly certain* that any thing she defines and declares to me is true? If then the Authority of *Scripture* can give us an *infallible* Certainty, we have as *just* a Pretence to it as they, it being upon this Authority that we ground our Faith; if it cannot, neither they nor we can justly pretend to it; because they cannot otherwise be *infallibly certain* of their *own Infallibility* but by *Scripture*. But the Truth of it is, *God* never intended either that *they* or *we* should be *infallibly certain* in the Matters of our *Religion*; for after all the Means of Certainty that he hath given us, he still supposes that we may err, and plainly tells us that there must be *Heresies*, and that even from among the Members of the *true Church*, where *infallible* Certainty is (if it be any where) there should arise *false Teachers*, who should bring in *damnable* Doctrines; which could never have happened, if he had left any such Means to his

Church

Church as should render her Children infallibly *certain*. All that he designed was to leave us such *sufficient* Means of *Certainty* in *Religion*, as that we might not err either dangerously or damnably without *our own* Fault. He hath left us his Word, and in that hath plainly discovered to us all that is *necessary* for us to believe in order to *eternal* Life. He hath left us a *standing* Ministry in his *Church* to explain his Word to us, and to guide us in the Paths of Righteousness and Truth; but still he requires us to search the *one*, and attend to the *other* with *honest*, *humble*, and *teachable* Minds; and if we do not, we may err not only dangerously but damnably, and it is but *fit* and *just* we should. But if we diligently search the *Scripture*, and faithfully rely upon its Authority, without doing of which we search it in vain; if we sincerely attend to the *publick* Ministry, with Minds prepared to receive the Truth in the Love of it; tho' we may possibly err in Matters of *less* Moment, yet as to all things *necessary* to our *eternal* Salvation, our Faith shall be inviolably secur'd; and this is as much as any *honest* Man needs, or as any *honest Church* can promise.

2. From hence also I infer, that in the Matters of our *Faith* and *Religion*, God doth expect that we should make use of *our own* Reason and Judgment. For to what End should he put us upon searching the *Scriptures*, but that thereby we may inform ourselves what those Things are which he hath required us to believe
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and practise ? But if it were his Mind that we should wholly rely upon the Authority of our *Church*, or of our *Spiritual Guides*, and submit our Faith to their Dictates without any Examination, what a *needless* and *impertinent* Employment would this be for us, to search and consult the *Scriptures* ? Consult them, for what, if we are not to follow their Guidance and Direction, and to take the Measures of our Faith and Manners from them ? And if for this End *God* hath obliged us to consult them, (as to be sure it can be for no *other* End) then he hath obliged us to employ *our own* Reason and Judgment, to consider what they say, and enquire what they mean ; otherwise he hath obliged us to consult them to no Purpose. It is as evident therefore that *God* will have us use *our own* Reason and Judgment in discerning what we are to believe, and what not, in *Religion*, and not *lazily* rely upon *others* to *see* and *discern*, and *believe* for us, as it is that he would have us search and consult the *Scriptures* ; and that I think is evident enough, from what hath been said, to any one that is not resolved not to admit of a Conviction. And indeed seeing our Reason is the *noblest* Faculty we have, it would be very strange if *God* should not allow it to intermeddle in the *highest* and most *important* Affair wherein he hath engaged us ; and seeing it is our Reason only that renders us *capable* of *Religion*, what an *odd* thing would it be for *God* to forbid us making use of our Reason in the most *important* Concerns of *Religion*, that is, in distinguishing what is *true Religion*

Religion from what is *false*, and what we ought to believe from what we ought to reject? I know it is pretended by those who urge the *absolute* Necessity of submitting our Reason to the *Church*, that they allow Men to make use of their *own* Reason and Judgment in discovering which the *true Church* is, and that all they contend for is only this, that when once Men have found the *true Church*, they ought to enquire no farther, but immediately to deliver up their Reason and Understanding to it, and believe every thing it believes without any farther Examination. So that before Men come into their *Church*, it seems they are allowed to see for themselves, but after they are *in*, they must wink and follow their Guides, and depute them to see and understand for them; which to such Men as are not quite *sick* of their *own* Reason and Understandings, should methinks be a *great* Temptation to keep them out of their *Church* *for ever*: For if I may judge for myself while I am *out* of it, but must not while I am *in* it, I must be very *fond* of parting with my *own* Eyes and Reason if ever I come *into* it at all. But suppose I was always *in* it, and had been bred *up* in its Communion from my Infancy, will they allow me when I come to the *full* use of my Reason fairly to question whether theirs be the only *true Church* or no, and to hear the Reasons, and examine the *Scriptures*, and consult the Doctors on both sides? No, by no means; this I am forbid under the Penalty of being deprived of the Benefit or *Priestly* *Absolution*.

Absolution. So that in short, they will allow me to make use of my Reason if I have been bred an *Heretick* in order to my Reconciliation to their *Church*, but if I have never been an *Heretick*, I must never use my Reason to examine the Truth either of my *Church* or *Religion*; that is to say, I may use my Reason when there is no *other* Remedy, and I must continue a *Heretick* if I do not: But it were much better that I had never had Occasion to use my Reason at all. So that according to these Men, the use of our Reason in *Religion* is only the *least* of *two* Evils; it is not so *bad* as to continue a *Heretick*, but if I had never been one it would be very *bad*, and a *certain* Way to make me one; which methinks looks very *odd*, that the Use of my Reason should be *necessary* to reduce me from *Heresy*, and the Disuse of it as *necessary*, when I am reduced, to preserve me from relapsing into *Heresy*. 'Tis a *memorable* Passage of the *Bishop of St. Mark* in the *Council of Trent*, that *Seculars* are obliged humbly to obey that *Doctrine of Faith* which is given them by the *Church*, without disputing or thinking farther of it. Where by the *Church*, he means the *Clergy* assembled in that *Council*. So that according to this Man's *Doctrine*, the Faith of the *People* is a *meer* Beast of Burthen, that *right* or *wrong* must bear all the Load that the *Priests* shall agree to lay upon it; and though it should feel itself *oppressed* by them with never such *gross* Contradictions or Absurdities, it must think no farther of it, but
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tamely trudge on without starting or boggling At this Rate what Tricks may not the *Priests* play with the Faith of the *People*? Let them invent what Doctrines they please to serve the Interest of their *own* Ambition and Covetousness, the *People* must believe them without asking *why*; or if they should ask why, they must expect no *other* Answer but this, because we have thought fit to define and declare them. For it is by no Means *allowable* that the *People* should exercise any *private* Judgment of their *own*, about Matters of Faith; no, I confess it is not, where the Matters proposed to their Faith are *false* and *erroneous*; because it is a *thousand* to one but *one* Time or *other* the *People* will discover the Frauds and Impostures of the *Priests*, and this would spoil all. But if the Matters of Faith are *true*, in all Probability the farther the *People* enquire into them, the better they will be satisfied about them; and if in the Exercise of their *private* Judgments they should in some *Particulars* err, that is far more *tolerable* than that they should be utterly deprived of the Means of being able to give an Answer to every one that asks them a Reason of the Hope that is in them. But when God hath given the *People* *reasonable* Faculties on Purpose that by them they may be able to distinguish what is *true* from what is *false*, for any Party of Men to forbid them the Use of these Faculties in distinguishing what is *true* from what is *false* in Religion, in which above all Things they are most highly concerned, it is a most *injurious* Usurpation upon

the *common* Rights of *human* Nature. For by this Means our *best* Faculty is rendered *useless* to us in our *greatest* Concerns ; and whereas *God* gave it to us on Purpose to guide and direct us, we are utterly deprived of its Guidance where we have most need of it, and where it will prove most *fatal* to us if we should happen to err and go astray.

A
D I S S U A S I V E
F R O M
A P O S T A C Y.

I TIM. i. 19.

*Holding Faith and a good Conscience ; which
some having put away, concerning Faith have
made Shipwreck.*

THESE Words are a Part of St. Paul's Charge to his Son *Timothy*, wherein he pathetically exhorts him as a *valiant Bishop*, to take all *possible* Care to preserve the Purity of the *Christian* Doctrine in his Diocese of *Ephesus*, which at that Time abounded with *false* Teachers, whose Business it was to sow the Tares of Heresy and *false* Doctrine in that large and fruitful Field, the Cultivation whereof St. Paul had committed to his Charge. And that he might discharge this Office the more effectually, the *Apostle* warns him in the first Place to take care of himself, that he did not suffer *his own* Faith and Manners to be depraved and corrupted by those *lewd* and *irreligious* Principles which those *Antichristian*

Seminaries were then scattering among his People ; that so he might be an Example to his Flock, as well as a Teacher of *pure and undefiled Religion*. And this, *ver.* 18. he presses upon him from the Consideration of what had been foretold of him by *divine* Inspiration, before ever he entered upon his Ministry, *viz.* That *he should war a good Warfare*, that is, prove a *constant* and *couragious* Champion of the *Christian Faith* ; which Prophecies, he exhorts him to use his *utmost* Endeavour to verify both in his Profession and Practice, *by bolding*, or as it is in the Original, *ἔχων*, *having*, or *keeping Faith and a good Conscience*, which latter, *viz.* a *good Conscience*, *some* having put away, concerning the *former*, *viz.* *Faith*, have made *shipwreck*.

Before we proceed to the Design of these Words, it will be *necessary* briefly to explain some Terms in them ; as,

1. What is meant by *Faith*.
2. What by a *good Conscience*.
3. What by putting away a *good Conscience* : And,
4. What by making *shipwreck of the Faith*.

1. As for the *First*, What is here meant by *keeping the Faith* ? I answer, By this Phrase *Faith*, we are to understand the *Christian Creed*, or Summary of those *necessary* and *essential* Doctrines whereof the *Christian Religion* is composed : For at that Time there was *little* else professed and taught in the *Christian Churches*, but only the *fundamental Principles* of
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of *Christianity*, together with the *nearest* and most *immediate* Inferences from them ; so that few then misbelieved but such as misbelieved in *Fundamentals*, and every Error in Doctrine was generally a Heresy. The *Christian* Faith in those Days lay within a *narrow* Compass, and so it continued till the Wantonness and Curiosity of *succeeding* Ages started *disputable* Opinions, and as they prevailed, *adopted* them into the Family of Faith ; inso much, that in Process of Time, *sundry* Opinions were received that were never so much as heard of in the *Apostolical* Age ; and as soon as they were received, they were presently declared necessary Articles. And as for the *contradictory* Opinions, though *Christianity* was little or nothing concerned whether they were *true* or *false*, yet they seldom underwent any *milder* Name than *Heresy*, or *gentler* Doom than Damnation ; which hath been one of the *grand* Occasions of all the Ruptures and Divisions that have happened in the *Christian* World. But as for the Faith which the *Apostle* here speaks of, it was of a much *less* Bulk than what it is now arrived to, by rolling through the *wild* Opiniatry of *sixteen* *disputation* Ages, which by Degrees have swelled it from a *short* Script into a *large* Volume. For if we look into the *New Testament*, and into the Writings of the most *Primitive Fathers*, we shall find the Sums of *Christian* Faith therein contained, consisting of very *few* Articles, and those such only as are *essential* to *Christian Religion*, and such as wherein almost all the *differing* Persuasions of *Christians* do to this Day concenter. To hold

the Faith therefore is to persevere immovably in the Profession of the *true Christian* Doctrine, so far as in us lies, and not to be prevailed upon to desert or forsake it, either through *Fear* of Persecution, or *Hope* of *temporal* Advantage, or the *knavish* Arts and sly Insinuations of *false* Teachers.

2. The *second* Term here to be explained, is, What is meant by keeping a *good Conscience*? Conscience in general is nothing but our *practical* Judgment directing us what we ought to *do*, and what to *avoid*, and *approving* or *reproving*, according as we follow its Directions, or run counter to them. The Conscience therefore is *good* or *bad*, according as the Directions are which it gives for the Government of our Lives and Actions. If our Judgment be *false* and *erroneous*, and directs us to *do* what we ought to *avoid*, or to *avoid* what we ought to *do*, it is a *bad* Conscience, that instead of being a Light to guide our Steps in the Paths of Righteousness, is only a *wandering Night-Fire* that leads us into Bogs and Quagmires. As on the contrary, a *good* Conscience is our *practical* Judgment well informed, and truly directing us in the Course of our Actions what we ought to *do*, and what to *avoid*: For a *good* Conscience is the *true* Echo of *God* within us, that faithfully resounds his Voice, and upon all Opportunities of Action, repeats after him to our Wills and Affections. To keep a *good* Conscience therefore implies *two* Things: *First*, To maintain in our Minds a *true* Sense of *Good* and *Evil*, and so far forth as in us lies, to preserve our *practical* Judgment *pure* from all *false* Principles

Principles of Action, and not to suffer either our *vicious* Inclinations, or *worldly* Interest, to warp and seduce it, and cause it to mistake *Evil* for *Good*, and *Good* for *Evil*. Secondly, It implies our following the Dictates and Directions of a *good* Conscience, our doing what it *bids*, and abstaining from what it *forbids*, and faithfully resigning ourselves to its Conduct and Government, and not to be prevailed upon by any Temptation whatsoever to act counter to its Sense and Persuasion. In short, To keep a *good Conscience*, is to live in a *strict* Conformity to the Dictates of a *well-informed* Judgment, and not to allow ourselves in any Course of Action which this Vice-God within us forbids or disapproves.

3. The *Third* Term to be explained in the Text, is, What is meant by *putting away a good Conscience*; which being directly opposed here to keeping a *good Conscience*, must denote the Contraries to it. To put away a *good Conscience* therefore, is either, *first*, to corrupt *our own* Judgment of Things and Actions out of *vicious* Affection or *worldly* Interest, and impose upon ourselves *false* Notions of *Good* and *Evil*; or, *secondly*, to act directly contrary to our Sense and Persuasion; to leave *undone* those things which *our own* Conscience tells us we ought to *do*, and to *do* those things which it tells us we ought not to *do*. In short, to put away a *good Conscience* is to live in any *known* Course of Sin, either of *Omission* or *Commission*; to practise Contradictions to *our own* Judgments, and to follow the Inclinations of our Wills against the Light and Conviction of our Consciences.

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4. The *last* Enquiry is, What is here meant by making *shipwreck of the Faith*? Which being here set in Opposition to *holding* or *keeping the Faith*, must signify oppositely, and consequently must denote not holding and keeping it; or which is the same thing, losing and abandoning it: For in this *Allegory*, the *true Christian Faith* is represented as a Ship, and a *good Conscience*, or a *pure and holy Life*, as the Pilot that steers and governs it. And indeed, in that State of Things there was no *other* Pilot, but Purity of Conscience and Holiness of Life, was able to conduct and preserve this Ship, and carry it *safe* through those *incessant* Storms of Persecution, wherein at that Time it was tossed and agitated. For when *Christians* have once thrown off the Obligations of a *good Conscience*, by abandoning themselves to a *wicked and dissolute Life*, what is there left to restrain them from abandoning their Faith, when it stands in Competition with their worldly Ease and Interest? And though there should be no Competition between their Faith and Interest, but they might freely enjoy them both without any Disturbance; yet their *wicked Lives* will naturally tempt them to corrupt their Faith with *wicked Principles*; of which latter in the next Verse, he gives an *eminent* Instance in *Hymenæus*, who had not wholly deserted *Christianity*, but only renounced *one fundamental Article* of it, *viz.* the Resurrection of the Dead: As of the *former*, he gives *another* Instance in *Alexander*, who, as it seems probable, had through the Fear of Persecution deserted *Christianity* itself.

The Words thus explained may be resolved into this Sense, *That Mens living wickedly against the Convictions and Obligations of their Conscience, doth very much expose them to Apostacy from true Religion into gross and impious Errors.* Thus to the *Love of Mency*, which is the *Root of all Evil*, the *Apostle* attributes Mens erring from the Faith, 1 Tim. vi. 10, And that which exposed those *silly Women*, 2 Tim. iii. 6. to the Seduction of *false Teachers*, was their being laden with *Sins*, and led away with *diverse Lusts*. And the same *Apostle* ascribes *Demas's Apostacy* to his *Conceitfulness*, or *inordinate Love of this present World*. 2 Tim. iv. 10. But that I may evince this Truth more fully, I shall give you some *particular* Instances of the *mighty Tendencies* there are in every *vicious Course of Life* to Error and Apostacy from *true Religion*.

1. It *corrupts and debauches* Mens Reason and Understanding.

2. It renders the Principles of *true Religion uneasy* to their Minds,

3. It deprives Men of the *highest Encouragements* to Constancy and Stedfastness in Religion.

4. It weakens the *natural Force* of their Consciences, which is the *greatest Restraint* from Apostacy.

5. It strengthens the Temptations to Apostacy.

6. It provokes *God* to give us *up* to the Power of Delusions.

1. Living in any *known* and *wilful* Course of Sin, corrupts and debauches Men's Reason and Understanding. So long as a Man lives in any *known* Sin, he doth not only live without, but against his Reason, which, instead of being the Guide of his Actions, hath nothing at all to do with them, but like an *idle* Spectator, doth only behold the *brutish* Scene without any Part or Concern in it. And whilst a Man thus abandons himself to the Government of his own *blind* Will, and lives not only in the *perpetual* Neglect, but Contempt of his Reason, it is impossible for him not to waste and impair it: For as our *rational* Faculties are improved and perfected by Exercise, so they naturally languish and decay through Disuse and Inactivity; and consequently, the *less* Use we make of them in the Government of our Lives and Actions, which is their *proper* Office and Employment, like *standing* Waters, they must corrupt and putrify. And indeed there is no *impure* Lust but doth, by its own *natural* Efficacy, disable Mens Reason and Understanding; for while we are in these Bodies, our Mind is fain to work by *bodily* Instruments, and to make Use of *Brains*, and *Blood*, and *Spirits*, in all its Operations; and according as their Temper is *good* or *bad*, its Operations will be *more* or *less* *perfect*: But while a Man indulges himself in any *impure* Affection, that will naturally distemper these Organs of his Mind, and indispose them for the Use of his Reason. For so Madness, which is such a Distemperature of the *Brain*, and *Blood*, and *Spirits*, as doth wholly.

wholly alienate them from the Use of Reason and Discourse, is usually found to be the Effect of some *wild* and *extravagant* Affection, such as *Pride*, or *Covetousness*, *Anger*, or *Fearfulness*, *Jealousy*, or *Lust* ; and if these Passions, being once arrived to their *utmost* Rage and Excess, do so often run into *down-right* Madness and Distraction, to be sure every *inordinate* Degree of them must be a Tendency towards it, a *great* Disturbance of Mind, though not a *total* Distraction ; and how much they exceed their *due* Bounds and Measures, by so much they must taint and vitiate these *necessary* Instruments of our Mind and Reason. Thus every *inordinate* Lust doth by a *natural* Influence disturb Mens Reason, and sully the Clearness of their *discerning* Faculties. So that what *Clearness* is to the Eye of the Body, that *Purity* from *vicious* Affection is to the Eye of the Mind ; it brightens its Apprehensions, and renders its Conceptions of Things more *quick*, *distinct*, and *vigorous* : Whereas on the contrary, all *disorderly* Affection doth *more* or *less* cloud and disturb the Brain, chill or inflame the Spirits, hurry them into *tumultuous* Motions, or render them *listless* and *inactive* ; by which *continual* Disorders, our *discerning* Faculties must by Degrees be extremely weakened and confounded. And whilst the Mind is thus *lost* in the Fogs of *inordinate* Affection, it is an *easy* Matter to seduce and mislead it, it being through the Dimness of its Sight apt to be imposed upon by *false* Colours, and tinged with Prejudice and *undue* Apprehensions of Things. *Weak* Minds are easily abused, especially

cially in Matters of *Religion*, which being placed beyond the Prospect of Sense, require a *severer* Attention in order to the forming of *right* Apprehensions concerning them; and therefore the *more* Men weaken their Understandings by their Lusts, the *more* they must be exposed to Errors and Delusions. But then,

2. Living in any *known* Course of Sin, renders the Principles of *true Religion* uneasy to Mens Minds. Whilst a Man leads a *wicked* Life, his *religious* Principles, if they are *pure* and *true*, will perpetually reproach and upbraid him: For there are no Contraries in Nature more *irreconcilable* to one another than *true* Faith and *bad* Manners; the *great* Design of all *true* Faith being to move and persuade Men to abstain from all Ungodliness, and to *live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World*. If therefore a Man's Faith be *true* and *genuine*, he cannot live wickedly without acting against the *full* Persuasion of his *own* Mind, which must necessarily render him very *uneasy*; for in this State of Things he acts with a *self-condemning* Judgment, and every Compliance with his Inclination sets him at odds with his Reason; all the while he is meditating any *wicked* Design, he struggles with his Conscience, and confronts and outrages his *own* Convictions; and when he hath acted it, every Reflection he makes on it is a *bitter* Invective against himself: Thus so long as the Principles of *true Religion* possess his Mind, he finds himself continually haggd and oppressed by them; they sit as an *uneasy* Load upon

upon his Soul, and will not suffer him to sin in quiet, but perpetually cause his *sinful* Delights to go off with an *ungrateful* Farewel, and recoil upon him in many a *sickly* Qualm and Convulsion. In which State of Things he hath no *other* Remedy, but either to forsake his Principles, or his Lusts, or to live in *perpetual* Variance with himself; and therefore, if he still resolve to sin on, in all Probability he will soon grow quite weary of *true Religion*, and quit his Mind as soon as possibly he can, of those *stern* and *inflexible* Principles which create these Discords in his Breast. And whilst he is in this Temper, it will be an *easy* Matter to prevert him to any *Religion* that will give Ease to his *strait-laced* Conscience, and cast a more *favourable* Aspect on his Lust; for being resolved to follow his *vicious* Inclinations, he now sees through them, and understands by them; and whilst his Mind runs upon the *false* Biass of his Lusts, that *Religion* which is most *grateful* to them will seem most *reasonable* to him. Shew him a Way how he may worship God acceptably without the Expence of a *strict* Attention, and the *inward* Devotions of a *pure* Heart, and *heavenly* Affections; merely by numbering so many Prayers on a String of Beads, by seeing a Priest act over such a Set of Ceremonies, and hearing him in *varied* Tones sometimes pronounce. and sometimes murmur a *Form of Words* in an *unknown* Language; and though at first view it may seem very *absurd* to him, yet the very Looseness and Carnality will be apt to engage his Affections to it; and then they by Degrees will

go near to wheedle his Understanding into a more *favourable* Opinion of it. Propose to him an Expedient how he may go to *Heaven* at last, without undergoing the Severities of a *sincere* Repentance and Amendment; tell him there is a *certain Church* in the World, whose Priests, if he confess his Sins to them with any Degree of Sorrow and Remorse, have *full* Power to pardon and absolve him; so that if he do but take care not to die without Confession, however he lives, he cannot miscarry for ever. He may indeed go into a very *hot* Place called *Purgatory*, and there suffer awhile very *grievous* Things before he get to *Heaven*; but if instead of parting with his Lusts while he lives, he will part with his Money when he dies, he may at *easy* Rates purchase of that *Church* such a Number of *Masses*, *Requiems*, and *Indulgencies*, as will in all Probability soon procure his Dismissal from those *temporary* Sufferings into *eternal* Happiness. How *oddly* soever this Doctrine may appear to his Reason, to be sure it will be *charming* enough to his Lusts; and when once a Man's Lusts are retained, the Cause is half carried at the Bar of his Judgment. And so in all *other* Instances it is a *great* Disadvantage to *true Religion*, and as *great* an Advantage to *false*, that Mens Faith and Reason are so much swayed and biaſſed by their Lusts. For though there is no *Religion* can be *true* but what is *pure* and *holy*, yet it is the Holiness of *true Religion* that doth provoke their Lusts against it, and 'tis their Lusts that do provoke their Reason; and when all is done, there is nothing doth
more

more strongly incline, or frequently pervert *depraved* and *wicked* Minds to *false Religion*, than its Compliance with their *vicious* Affections, though this very Thing is one of the most *certain* Signs in Nature of its Falseness.

3. Living in any *known* Course of Sin, deprives Men of the *greatest* Encouragements to Constancy and Stedfastness in the *true Religion*: For doubtless the *highest* Encouragement to Perseverance in the Truth against all Oppositions and Temptations, is the Hope of those *glorious* Rewards that await them in the World to come. 'Twas this that guarded the Faith of the *antient* Martyrs safe through all the Rage and Cruelty of their Persecutors; their having an Eye to the Recompence of Reward, the Sight of which *inspired* the *drooping* Souls with an *invincible* Courage, made them despise *Racks*, and *Wheels*, and *Flames*, and exult and triumph under the most *exquisite* Torments. And indeed what *less* Encouragement than the Hope of being eternally *happy* within a *few* Moments, could have enabled a Company of *tender* Virgins, *delicate* Matrons, *infirm* and *aged* Bishops, to endure those *long* and *dolorous* Martyrdoms, as many Times they did, when their Tormentors took their Turns from Morn to Night, and plied them with all Kinds of Tortures, till oftentimes they were forced to give over, and confess themselves overcome either through Weariness or Compassion? But now, by indulging ourselves in any *known* Course of Sin, we throw away this *Sovereign* Cordial, and leave ourselves naked and destitute of all the mighty Supports it is able to give us
under

under any Temptation to Apostacy. For how can we hope for any Good from *God*, and much less for so great a Good as a *Heaven of immortal Joys* amounts to, whilst we persist in *open Rebellion* against him; especially when he hath expressly suspended this *mighty Recompence* upon our *constant and faithful Obedience* to his Will, and told us plainly before-hand, that we might know what to trust to, that if we fail of *this*, he will be so far from admitting us into that Place and State of Blessedness, that he will banish us *for ever* from his Presence into *outer Darkness*, and *eternal Wretchedness* and Despair? When by *wilful Sin* therefore we have cast away our Hope of Heaven, what have we left to support our Constancy to the Truth if ever we should be called to suffer for it? How can it be expected, that rather than renounce our *Religion*, we should be contented to part with our *Goods*, or *Liberties*, or *Lives*, when all our Hope is shut up in this Life, and we have no Prospect of Compensation either *here* or *hereafter*? If ever therefore we would be *stedfast* to the Truth against all Temptations, we must above all Things take care by a *holy Life* to cherish and keep alive the Hopes of *Heaven* in our Breasts, which is the only Anchor that can hold and secure us in a *stormy Sea* from making Shipwreck of our Faith.

4. Living in any *known Course* of Sin weakens the *natural Force* of Mens Consciences, which is the *greatest* Restraint from Apostacy. Indeed for Men to *apostatize* from their *Religion* to secure their *worldly Interest*, is a
Thing

Thing so *base* and *infamous*, so *foul* an Instance of a *cowardly*, *degenerous*, and *prostitute* Soul, that if a Man were under no *other* Restraint but only that Sense of Honour that is lodged in all *brave* Minds, he would scorn so *mean*, so *poor* a Condescension. But yet when all is done, there is no such *powerful* Restraint upon Men as that of a *good* Conscience, which is the *natural* Bridle by which *God* curbs our *head-strong* Nature, and keeps it from flying out into all the *wild* Extravagancies it is inclined to. For it is from *God*, and in *God's* stead, that Conscience acts, who is the most *powerful* Being in the World: When it *commands*, it is with *God's* Authority; when it *rebukes*, it is with *God's* Majesty; when it *applauds*, it is with *God's* Complacency: It proceeds not upon Principles of *mere* Policy or Prudence, which require us to act this way *now*, and *anon* the contrary, as Circumstances alter; but upon the *awful* Principles of Divinity, which oblige us by all that we can hope or fear *for ever*, and require of us the self-same Things and Actions in all Circumstances; and the *sole* Reason it insists on is the Will of *God*, whose Pleasure or Displeasure can make us *happy* or *miserable* for ever. The Voice of Conscience is not, *This I judge most expedient for thee to do, and this to avoid, but this thou must do, and this avoid, as thou tenderest the Love of God, and darest his everlasting Hatred and Revenge*: And it is no less than *eternal* Bliss that Conscience allures our Hope with, and *eternal* Vengeance that it alarms our

Fear with ; and if Men will not be with-held by such *powerful* Restraints as these, what can with-hold them ? Whilst therefore a Man cherishes his Conscience by complying with it, and follows its Directions, this, if any thing, will secure his Stedfastness to the Truth against all Temptations ; whilst this hath any Power over him, he will as soon eat Fire as *sacrifice* his Faith to his Interest. For, for a Man to renounce his *Religion* upon any Prospect of *temporal* Gain or Loss, is such a *flagitious* Violation of all that is *Sacred*, such a *monstrous* Instance of *High Treason* against God, such an *open* Blasphemy of his Truth, such a *bold* Defiance of his Majesty, and in a Word, such a Complication of *vile* Perfidy, *base* Ingratitude, and *impious* Falshood, that but to think of it is like looking down from a *stupendous* Precipice, that swims the Head, and strikes the Mind with Horror and Amazement ; so that while a Man's Conscience hath any Power over him, he will no more be able to prevail with himself to commit the *one*, than to throw himself headlong down from the *other*, whilst he is under the Horror of the Prospect ; and he will find it so much more *easy* to endure the worst of Persecutions, than to commit such an Outrage and Violence on his Conscience, and undergo those *horrible* Reflections, and *stinging* Remorses, that must follow it : But after a Man, by wilful *sinning*, hath often wounded his Conscience, the *natural* Tenderness of it will by Degrees wear off, till at length it grows quite *callous* and *insensible*. For what is reported

ported of *Mithridates*, that by often drinking of Poison, he had so *familiarized* it to his Constitution, that at length it sate quietly on his Stomach, and gave him no Disturbance, is true of Conscience, which at first recoils at every *sinful* Potion, and cannot swallow it without suffering *violent* Spasms and Convulsions; but having been a while accustomed to it, it by Degrees grows more and more *natural*, till at length it goes more glibly *down* without straining, and goes quietly *off* without Remorse or Reluctance. And when once a Man's Conscience is frozen over by a Custom of Sinning, it will every Day grow *harder* and *harder*, and at length be able to bear the *heaviest* Loads of Guilt without relenting; and when once Things are reduced to this State, *Good* and *Evil*, *Virtue* and *Vice*, are Things *indifferent* to him, which he chuses or refuses as they come to hand, and are *more* or *less* *subservient* to his *present* Convenience. He can *blaspheme* and *pray*, *oppress* and *give Alms*, with the same Unconcernedness of Mind; and to act the *Devil* or the *Saint* are Parts so *indifferent* to him, that he can perform them both with the same Remorselessness. And when a Man is thus got loose from the Restraints of his Conscience, there is nothing so *bad* that can come amiss to him. If therefore while he stands in this Posture, his *temporal* Interest should chance to beckon him to change the *best Religion* in the World for the *worst*; to pray to *insensible* Images, and *dead Mens Ghost*, instead of the *everlasting God*; to let go Substances to catch

at Shadows and Ceremonies, and to part with the most *rational* Truths for the most *palpable* and *fulsom* Cantradictions; he hath no Principle in him *strong* enough to with-hold him from a *base* Compliance, his Conscience being laid fast asleep, which whilst awake would have trembled at such an *horrid* Proposal. And though by thus prostituting his Faith to his Interest, he at once renounces his *God*, his *Saviour*, and all his Hopes of *future* Immortality; yet his *insensible* and *remorseless* Heart is no more touched or affected with it, than if it were the *slightest* Peccadillo. Thus by letting go a *good* Conscience, Men pave themselves an *easy* Way to Apostacy from *true* Religion, which otherwise would be one of the most *craggy* and *difficult* Passages in all the Highway to *Hell*.

5. Living in any *known* Course of Sin doth very much strengthen and enforce the Temptations to Apostacy. He who lives under the Conduct and Government of a *good* Conscience, takes care to regulate his Affections towards the Things of this World, so as neither to fear the *Evils* of it *too* much, nor love the *Goods* of it *too* well; but makes a *just* and *equal* Estimate of both, and by that proportions his Affections towards them; and he who doth this, disarms them of their *tempting* Power, which is chiefly owing to ourselves, and the *false* Estimate we make of them. 'Tis *our* own Imagination that gives Life and Efficacy to the Charms and Terrors of the World, and renders them so *successful* and *victorious*: We
fancy

fancy *that* to be in them which is not, and so are affected not so much with the Things themselves, as with the *false* Representations that we make of them. But he, who by following the Dictates of a *good Conscience*, hath reduced his *wild* Affections within the Lists of Reason and Sobriety, can from thence defy the World, and maintain his Post against all its Temptations. He loves its *Goods* no better than they deserve, and consequently he loves them not so well as to part with his Virtue, his Innocence, and his Soul for them. He dreads its *Evils* no farther than they are truly *dreadful*, and consequently is fully satisfied, that to sin is much more *dreadful* than to suffer; and he hath found, by often Experience, that in the *faithful* Discharge of his Duty, there is far more *Peace*, more *Joy*, and *Satisfaction*, than in all the *vain* Allurements of this World. He hath found another *Heaven* upon Earth, besides these *temporal* Enjoyments; a *Heaven* within *his own* Breast, composed of *joyous* Hopes, and *blessed* Expectations; and in this *Heaven* hath often found himself a thousand times more *happy*, than among all the Festivities of an *earthly* Paradise; and therefore knows very well that he is bid to his Loss, whenever he is tempted to exchange the *one* for the *other*. He is thoroughly sensible, having already found it to his Smart, that by sinning he shall sustain a much *heavier* Loss, and expose himself to far more *exquisite* Agonies of Mind than any this World can threaten him withal; and therefore certainly reckons upon it, that

whenever to avoid a Sin he incurs a Suffering, he wisely chuses of *two* Evils the *least*. And while his Soul stands thus affected, it is *shot-proof* against all Temptations, and much more against those Temptations, which sollicit him to renounce his *Religion*, and in which he knows by Experience, there is far more *Good* than the World can propose to him in exchange for it. He knows both how *little* the World, and how much *true Religion* is worth; and having made a *just* Estimate of both, to propose to him any *worldly* Hope as a Price for his Faith, is the same thing as to offer a Miser Dross for his Gold. His Mind is fixed in this Persuasion, that all the Mischiefs *this* World can do him, are *inconsiderable* to one who must live *for ever* in *another* unspeakably *happy* or *miserable*; and therefore to threaten him into an Apostacy with any *worldly* Fear, is to attempt to blow *up* a Rock of Marble with a Squib of Wildfire. But when once a Man hath taken *off* the Restraints of his Conscience from his *wild* Affections, and let them loose to the World, they will aid and assist its Temptations against him, and animate them with a thousand times more Life and Vigour than is in their *own* Natures. For as for the *Goods* of this World, they can never bewitch us as they do, did we not give a Dress to them; we paint their Faces, and varnish them over with an *artificial* Beauty, and then fall in Love with *our own* Fucus; and so much as we value and affect them beyond their *natural* Worth, so much Power we give them

to conquer and enslave us. When therefore, by leading a *sensual* and *wicked* Life, a Man has wholly devoted himself to the World, he hath put himself into the World's Power to be commanded and disposed of as it pleases. And now if any *worldly Good* beckons and invites him, his *mad* Affection will presently hurry him after it, though it be through *thick* and *thin*, through the most *flagitious* and *enormous* Courses. If any *worldly Evil* threaten and alarm him, he must immediately fly, though it be from *Virtue* and *Innocence*, from *God* and *Heaven*, and all that is *Sacred* in *Religion*. His Affections have rendered him a *mere* Laquey to the *Goods* and *Evils* that are *without* him, and whither ever they send him, he must go, wherever they lead him, he must follow, let their Vagaries be never so *wild* and *wicked*. If therefore, while his Soul is thus enslaved to the World, he should be tempted by him to *apostatize* from his *Religion*, what hath he to restrain or secure him? For ever since he got loose from his Conscience, he is wholly led by his Affections, and these being chained and fastened to the World, hale him after it which way soever it moves. So long as his *Religion* and his *worldly* Interest consist, and go Hand in Hand, he is very well content to own and follow it; but if ever a Storm of Persecution should part them, in all Probability he will follow his Interest, and like the *treacherous Orpha*, give his *Religion* a *parting* Kiss, and leave it. For his Heart is now so wedded to the World, that he esteems

nothing so good as its *Goods*, and nothing so evil as its *Evils*; and the *one* being his *Heaven*, and the other his *Hell*, all other Considerations are overcome by them; and to obtain the *one*, and avoid the *other*, he must stick at nothing, no not at renouncing his *God* and his *Religion*, together with all his *Hopes* of a future Immortality.

6. and lastly, Living in any known Course of Sin, provokes *God* to give us up to the Power of Delusion: For so long as Men submit themselves to the Guidance and Direction of a good *Conscience*, the Spirit of *God*, who is a Spirit of Truth, abides with them, and not only directs their Wills, but also informs their Understandings, and enables them to discern the Beauty and Reality of those heavenly Truths, which he hath revealed to us in the *Holy Scriptures*. For though since he hath revealed already the whole Will of *God* to us concerning our eternal Salvation, we have no Reason to expect that he will reveal new Truths to us; yet seeing so far forth as it is necessary, he hath promised and engaged, that he will co-operate with us to enable us as well to understand the Will of *God* as to perform it; we have the greatest Reason in the World to depend upon it, that so long as we cherish his heavenly Inspirations, by yielding to them our free and ready Compliance, he will be so far an assisting Genius to our Understandings, as to suggest to us those Truths which he hath already revealed, and set them before our Eyes in so fair a Light, as that we shall not fail

fail more clearly to discern, and more distinctly to apprehend them than otherwise we should or could have done. For when he writes his Truths upon our Minds, it is with such a *vic-torious* Sun-beam as will endure neither Cloud nor Shadow before it. Whenever he speaks, he speaks not to our Ears but to our Minds, and represents Things nakedly and immediately to our Understandings. He converses with our Spirits, as *Spirits* do with *Spirits*, without involving his Sense in *articulate* Sounds or *material* Representations ; but objects it to us in its own *naked* Light, and *characterizes* it immediately on our Understandings. And as he proposes the *divine* Light to us, so he also illuminates our Minds to discern and comprehend it : He raises and exalts our *intellectual* Powers, and as a *vital* Form to the Light of our Reason, invigorates and actuates it, and thereby renders its Apprehension of Things more *quick*, and *piercing*, and *sagacious*. Thus doth the *Holy Spirit* more or less assist us in the *true* Understanding of *divine* Things, as he finds us *more* or *less* compliant with his *heavenly* Pleasure ; and though he stands no more obliged to render our Minds *infallible* than our Wills *impeccable*, yet so long as by our *sincere* Obedience to his *holy* Suggestions, we keep ourselves under his Conduct and Direction, we may depend upon it, he will either preserve us from all *dangerous* Errors, or if for *just* Reasons he should permit us to fall into any such, they shall not prove *dangerous* to us, but either we shall be convinced of them while we live, or obtain Pity and

and Pardon for them when we die. But whilst we persist in any *wilful* Course of Sin, we do not only violate *our own* Conscience, but also repel those *good* Motions of the *Spirit of God*, whereby he strives to reduce and reclaim us; in doing which we continually grieve him, and if we do not forbear, shall at length provoke him wholly to forsake and abandon us, to give us up to *our own* Hearts Lusts as *desperate* Wretches, with whom he hath hitherto strove and struggled in vain, and of whose *future* Recovery there remains no *farther* Hope or Prospect. And when he hath forsaken us, our Mind will not only be left *naked* and *destitute* of all those Helps and Advantages for the Understanding of *divine* Truths, which it receives from him, but also be exposed to the Cheats and Fallacies of *Evil Spirits*, whose Recreation it is to put Tricks upon our Minds; to banter and play upon our *easy* Faith, to cast Mists before our Eyes, and therein to juggle away all *true Religion* from us, and foist in the room of it, the most *fulsom* Errors and Mistakes. For so the *Apostle* tells us of *Antichrist* the great Deceiver, that he should come with all the Deceivableness of *Unrighteousness* to them that perish, because they received not the Love of Truth, that they might be saved. And that for that Cause, *viz.* their not receiving the Truth in the Love of it, God should send them a strong Delusion that they should believe a Lye; that is, by abandoning them to the Power of cheating and deluding Spirits: That they all might be damned, who
believed

believed not the Truth, but had Pleasure in Unrighteousness, 2 Theff. ii. 10, 11, 12. And God grant that this at last prove not our Fate, that because we have sinned against the *clearest* Light, and gone astray in all Unrighteousness under the *best* and *purest* Religion in the World, we are not at length given up by God to follow the *wild* Delusions of *Antichrist*, and to believe all those *fulsom* Lyes and Impostures which he from Age to Age hath been imposing upon the World. But whether it proves thus or no, this I am sure of, that by persisting in any *vicious* Course against the Light and Conviction of our Conscience, we highly provoke *Almighty God* to withdraw his Grace from us, and give us up to our own Hearts Lusts; and when this is done, our own Hearts Lusts will soon betray and give up our Faith to *false* and *vicious* Principles of Religion.

And now having shewn at large what *strong* and *prevalent* Tendencies there are in a *wicked* Life to Apostacy from *true Religion*, I shall conclude this Argument with *two* or *three* Inferences.

I. From hence I infer, What a *great* Malignity there is in Mens being *inconstant* to, and *apostatizing* from the *true Religion* in Compliance with their *sinful* Affections; it being, as you see, the ill Daughter of a *bad* Mother, (a *debauched* and a *dissolute* Conscience) and consequently partaking of all its *natural* Bane and Malignity, even as all other *bad* Effects do of the *malignant* Nature of their *bad* Causes. But the Truth of this will more
fully

fully appear by considering the *particular* Evils which Mens Inconstancy to, and Proneness to revolt from, the *true Religion* imply; of which I shall give you these five Instances:

1. The *great* Impiety of it.
2. The *desperate* Folly of it.
3. The *foul* Dishonesty of it.
4. The *shameful* Cowardice of it.
5. The *vast* Hazard and Insecurity of it.

1. Consider the *great* Impiety of it. He who can part with his *Religion*, or any Principle of it, upon any *other* Terms than a *full* Conviction of the Falshood of it, is either a *down-right* *Atheist*, who believing no *Religion* to be *true*, governs himself by this Principle, That the *wisest* Course is to profess none but that which is uppermost, and most for his Interest: or a *profane* and *impious* Wretch, who, though he believes his *own Religion true*, exchanges it for *another* which he believes to be *false*, upon no *other* Consideration, but so much *temporal* Advantage to boot: By which he plainly declares, that in the Balance of his Estimation, the Odds between *Truth* and *Falshood*, the Declarations of *God*, and the Impostures of the *Devil*, are so *inconsiderable*, that the *least* Addition of the *transitory* Goods of this World to the *latter*, renders it of *sufficient* Weight to turn the Scale against the *former*, and that for his Part he is not much concerned whether the *Almighty* be his Friend or Foe; and provided he may but enjoy his Ease and Pleasure

sure a *few* Years longer here, he is very well contented to part with all his Hopes and Interest in *God* for ever. For this is the *natural* Construction of Mens Apostacy from the *true Religion* in Consideration of their *worldly* Interest, that *that* Interest is in their Esteem far more *eligible* than *God* with all his Power and Goodness, that it is *better* to be without *God* in the World than without Preferment, and that *that* Man makes a very good Bargain, who gets a good Place in Exchange for his *Maker*, and with the treacherous *Judas* sells his Saviour, though it be for *thirty Pieces of Silver*: Which is such a monstrous Degree of Impiety, as one would think, should be *sufficient* to scare and affright the most *courageous* Sinner, that hath but the *least* Apprehension of *God*, or Sense of *Good* and *Evil*. But then,

2. Consider the *desperate* Folly of Mens abandoning their *Religion* in Compliance with their *vicious* Affections. For he, who without *thorough* Conviction abandons the Profession of his *Religion*, whether it be *true* or *false*, doth together with that most certainly abandon all the *blessed* Rewards, and incur all the *dreadful* Penalties that *true Religion* promises and denounces, because though his *Religion* perhaps may be *false*, yet in renouncing it whilst he believes it *true*, his Will doth as maliciously renounce the *true Religion*, as if it really were so. He thought it *true*, and yet renounced it, by which he plainly declares, that if it had been *true* he would have renounced it ;

it ; so that whether it be *true* or *false*, it is all one to him, his Will is the *same*, his Crime and Guilt the *same* ; it is *true Religion* he intentionally renounces, and therefore in so doing, he doth intentionally renounce all his Concern and Interest in *true Religion*. Now what a *desperate* Piece of Folly is this for a Man to part with all his Stock in the *Common Bank of Religion*, which if it be not a *downright* Sham and Imposture, is of *everlasting* Moment and Concern to him, only for a *present* Gratification of some *vain* and *unreasonable* Lust ; to divorce himself *for ever* from the Love of *God*, to quit all Title and Interest in the *precious* Blood of the *Saviour* of the World, only to curry a *short-lived* Favour with Men, with Men whose Breath is in their Nostrils, and who with a *few* Days or Years must go *off* the Stage, and leave us here perhaps *forlorn* and *desitute*? To part with all my *glorious* Hopes of *Heaven*, which are my *best* Heaven upon Earth ; and which is *worse*, with *Heaven* itself, where I have Treasures of Bliss sufficient to maintain me in the most *happy* Port to *eternal* Ages ; only to gain or secure a *transitory* Estate or Preferment, which, while I have, it cannot make me *happy*, and from which ere long I shall be torn and divided, and not be a Farthing the *better* for *for ever* ; to expose oneself as a *publick* Spectacle of Scorn and Contempt to God and Angels, and all the *wise* and *good* Part of the *rational* World, for a *short* *extemporary* Blaze of *pompous* Splendor and Greatness, which lies at the Mercy of every

every Counter-blast of Fortune, and in all Probability will, ere long, expire in *Smoak* and *Stink*, *Wretchedness* and *Infamy*; to plunge oneself headlong into all the Agonies and Torments, the Horrors and Desparations of a *woeful Eternity*, only to escape a *short* Persecution, and a *glorious* Martyrdom; when a little after perhaps I shall suffer a *great* deal *more*, and *longer*, under the *Gout*, or *Stone*, or *Strangury*, without the Comfort of dying in a *brave* Cause, and being assured of an *immortal* Recompence, than I could have done under the Hand of the Executioner with it? And yet all these *mad* Pranks that Man plays at once, who abandons his *Religion* in Compliance with his Lusts.

3. Consider the *foul* Dishonesty of it: For, besides that our *Religion* being the most *sacred* Pledge committed to us by *God* for *our own* Use, and the Use of our *latest* Posterity, we cannot viciously desert and abandon it without betraying of *God*, and falsifying our Trust to him; and which is *worse*, without squandering away the most *inestimable* Good that ever he committed to Men, upon our own *base* Lusts, and his most *execrable* Enemies, which is dishonestly blackened with the *foulest* Ingratitude: Besides this, I say, by forsaking our *Religion* in Compliance with any *lewd* Affection, we not only do a *dishonest* Thing at *present*, but also totally discard the Obligations to *Honesty* for the *future*: For there is nothing can rationally oblige a Man to be thoroughly *honest* but only his *Religion*, or
inward

inward Sense that it is his *indispensible* Duty towards *God*, before whose *righteous* Tribunal he must one Day give an Account of all his Actions. The *two* great Motives of *human* Action are *Religion*, and *worldly* Interest: Now as for *Religion*, that consists of *fixed* and *unalterable* Principles, which will by no Means ply or bend to the Alterations of *outward* Affairs and Circumstances; but do in all Conditions move and oblige us with *equal* Force and Vigour; whereas *worldly* Interest is a *fickle* and *mutable* Thing, that varies and alters with every *outward* Turn and Revolution: So that *that* which is my Interest *to-day*, may prove my Damage *to-morrow*; and if it should, whatever Part I act *to-day*, it will oblige me to act the contrary *to-morrow*. When therefore a Man hath let go his *Religion*, and hath nothing but his Interest to hold him, it is *Cross* or *Pile* for the *future*, whether you find him an *honest* Man or a *Knave*; because from henceforth he will be *Knave* or *Honest*, according as it serves his Turn, and that which serves his Turn *to-day*, may prove his Loss and Prejudice *to-morrow*; so that whether *to-day* or *to-morrow* he proves a *true* Man or a Cheat, wholly depends upon the *Die* of Fortune, and you must consult his Stars to find the *lucky* Hour or Moment when you may safely trust him. For after the Wretch hath been so *perfidious* as to renounce his *God* and his *Religion*, he hath no *one* Principle remaining in him upon which you can fasten any *lasting* Confidence. As for his

Interest,

Interest that is such a *fickle* and *inconstant* Thing that there is no trusting it; if it plead for you *now*, the *next* Turn of Affairs it may be retained against you, and the Man being got loose from all the Ties and Obligations of Fidelity, you may be sure he will stick at nothing, be it ever so *foul*, that his *present* Interest invites him to to serve himself; he will make no Bones, whenever he hath a *fair* Opportunity, to *cheat* and *betray* his own Father, or supplant his *dearest* Friend or Benefactor; and what should hinder him, his Conscience and Religion being gone, and with them all *binding* Principles of Truth and Honesty? For when a Man forsakes his *Religion* out of any *vicious* Affection, he doth in Effect make this publick Declaration to the World, *By this my own Act and Deed, I do here for ever renounce all the Obligations to Honesty and fair Dealing with God or Men, and am resolved for the future to be deaf and inexorable to all the Importunities of Conscience and Religion. From henceforth I will listen to no other Call but that of my worldly Interest; when that bids me be honest, I will be honest; and when it bids me play the Knave, I will play the Knave; and therefore for the future, I warn all that know me to trust me no farther than they can make it my Interest to be true, and not to venture the most trifling Matter in which they are unwilling to be wronged, either upon my Faith, or Word, or Oath, without demanding of me such ample*

Securities as may render it impossible for me to wrong them without wronging myself. For this is the Principle I now intend to live by, That is always best and fittest to be done, that is most subservient to my present Interest. This in Construction of Fact is the Profession which that Man takes up, who in Compliance with any vicious Affection abandons the Profession of his Religion.

4. Consider the *shameful* Cowardice of it. The Advantages of *true Religion* are great enough to encourage a Mind of any Constancy or Firmness, to charge through the *greatest* Difficulties the World can interpose between *them* and *him*. Who that hath the Spirit of a Man, would ever boggle to wade through a *narrow shallow* Stream of *temporary* Sufferings, whilst on the *farther* Shore he beholds a *Heaven* of *immortal* Joys ready to receive and reward him? But for a Man to turn his Back, and run away from *God* and *Heaven*, for fear only of being disappointed by some *lewd*, or *covetous*, or *ambitious* Hope, is such an Instance of *vile, prostitute* Baseness, as is beneath even Contempt and Derision. For what Danger or Difficulty dares that Wretch encounter, that dares not stand by his *Religion*, in which he confesses all his *future* Hopes are involved, for fear of losing *such* a Place, or being disappointed of *such* a Preferment, which within a *few* Days or Years he knows very well he must lose *for ever*? He who hath a Mind capable of being scared out of his *Religion* by such *mean* Considerations

tions as these, is *good* for nothing but only to be made the Foot-Ball of Fortune, to be kicked *up* and *down* upon her *scornful* Toe at Pleasure, who by threatening him with the *smallest* Evil, can huff him out of the *greatest* Good, and finding him a *wretched* *passive* Thing that hath not Strength enough to resist her *weakest* Impressions, makes him her Sport and Recreation, and turns him into any Thing, and tosses him whither she pleases ; from *Truth* to *Fals-hood*, from *God* to the *Devil*, and from *Heaven* to *Hell*, without the *least* Controul or Opposition. For the *poor* Man's Soul is grown so *tender* and *effeminate*, that for the *greatest* Good in all the World, he cannot endure the *least* Air of Suffering to blow upon him : Tell him of Suffering for *Righteousness* Sake, and the very Thought of it frights and appales him. Present but a Persecution at his Breast, and bid him stand and deliver, and the *crest-fallen* Poltroon is presently ready to cry out, O *spare my Life, spare my Skin ! And take my Religion, take my God, and all my Hopes of Heaven and Immortality.* And who but an *infamous* Coward, would ever endure to be hector'd out of so *vast* a Good by the *weak* and *im-potent* Evils of this World ; which if they do their *worst*, can only rob him of a *few* *transitory* Enjoyments, which without their Constraint he must ere long take his leave of *for ever* ? How *ridiculously* *mean-spirited* would it be for a Man to deliver *up* his Purse to a Thief, who he knows hath no *other*

Weapon but a *slender* Switch to hurt and offend him? But for a Man to deliver *up* his *Religion*, and with that his *God* and his *Heaven*, at the Demand of a *short* *Skin-deep* Affliction : which can only diseafe him for a *few* Moments, and shall then determine in *everlasting* Pleasure and Delight, is a thousand times more *mean* and *ridiculous*.

5. and *lastly*, Consider the *vast* Hazard and Insecurity of a Man's parting with his *Religion* in Compliance with his *vicious* Affections : For that which moves him to it is only his Prospect of living at Ease a *few* Years longer, or gratifying some *covetous* Desire or Ambition ; but whether he obtain these Ends by parting with his *Religion*, is vastly *hazardous* and *insecure*. Perhaps when I have acted this *impious* and *perfidious* Part, I may be cast into such Circumstances, as may force me upon *impartial* Reflections, and make me see, whether I will or no, the Blackness and Infamy of my Revolt and Apostacy ; which if it should happen, would inevitably raise such a Swarm of Horrors in my Conscience, and cast me into such Agonies and Convulsions of Soul, as will render me a *Hell* and a *Devil* to myself, and give me a thousand times more Pain and Uneasiness than all those *temporal* Evils could have done, for fear of which I ran away from my *Religion*. And if to shun *Poverty*, I should throw myself into *Desperation* ; if to avoid a *Prison*, which to an *innocent* Mind with a *righteous* Cause can make a *Heaven* upon Earth, I should cast myself into a *Hell* upon

upon Earth ; if to keep in a *whole Skin*, I should bring upon myself the *intolerable* Anguish of a *wounded Spirit* ; if to escape being *rejected, disgraced, and discountenanced* by Men, I should expose myself to the *perpetual* Clamour and Reproaches of *my own* Conscience : If these Things, I say, should happen, as it's very *probable* they may, I shall find myself miserably disappointed of that Ease and *quiet* Enjoyment, for the Sake of which I basely abandoned my *Religion* ; I shall find that to save my Garments from being singed, I have thrown my Body into *a consuming* Flame, and only exposed my Breast to save my Buckler. But then suppose this should not happen, suppose my Conscience should be *stupid and insensible* enough to bear the Guilt of my Apostacy without Remorse or Relenting ; yet my Prospect of Gain and Advancement in this World, is extremely *hazardous and insecure*. For it is a thousand to one, but they to whose *Religion* I turn, and upon whose Favour I depend, will by *one Means or other* discover my Falshood and Infincerity, and if by the Course of my Actions, or any other *suspicious* Indication, they should find Cause to be *jealous* that I embraced their *Religion* only to serve my Interest, and against the Persuasion of *my own* Mind ; if they are *wise* they will treat me as a *dangerous* Person, upon whom there is no Reliance : For how can they imagine that I should be *true* to them, who have been *false* to my *Religion* ? It is a *Proverb* among

the Jews, That *Profelytes* are not to be trusted to the tenth Generation; and by too many *woeful* Instances in our own Neighbourhood, we find it a Maxim in some Mens Politicks, That a *new Convert* is no more to be trusted than an *old Heretick*. And though for a while they may think fit to use me as a *proper* Tool to serve a *present* Design, yet to be sure they will use me no longer than they needs must; and when I have done their Work, I must expect to be thrust out, to make Room for such as they can more safely depend on, And if this should not happen, as it is very probable it may; yet seeing all *human* Affairs are liable to *perpetual* Turns and Mutabilities, perhaps upon the *next* Revolution a *contrary* Interest may appear upon the Stage, and then I shall find myself deserted of all my *present* Supports and Dependencies, and like a *forlorn* Wretch, utterly abandoned both by *God* and Men, without any *other* Company to entertain me in this my *mournful* Solitude, besides the *woeful* Remembrances of my Guilt and Shame. To such *infinite* Uncertainties of obtaining their Ends are those *miserable* Men exposed, who desert their *Religion* in Pursuit of their *worldly* Interest. And so I have done with the first Inference: But then,

2. From hence I infer, How *cautious* a Man ought to be in changing his *Religion*, or any Principles of it, lest that which induces him to it be not so much his Conviction as his *profligate* Conscience, I do not pretend

pretend that Men are always to maintain the same Persuasion in Matters of *Religion*; for such an Obligation would as effectually serve the Interest of *false Religion*, as of *true*. Whatever some Men pretend, we are all of us, from *Top* to *Bottom*, a Company of *fallible* Creatures; and if we are in an Error, as it is possible we may, it is our Duty to endeavour to be *better* informed. Nor do I deny, but an *honest-minded* Man, without being in the least influenced by a *bad Conscience*, may be innocently, or at least pitiably seduced from *Truth* to *Error*, by *false Colours*, and *probable Appearance*, for want of *sufficient* Sagacity to distinguish between *Sophistry* and *true Reason*. But if in Compliance with any *vicious Affection*, or in Pursuit of any *worldly Interest*, a Man deserts the Truth, and takes up *false* and *erroneous* Principles, his Error is no longer imputable to the *Weakness* of his Understanding, but to the *Wickedness* of his Will; and a *wilful* Error in his Faith will prove as *fatal* and as *damnable* to him, as a *wilful* Wickedness in his Manners, and whenever his *wretched* Soul shall appear before the *great Searcher of Hearts*, it shall certainly be treated by him as a *wilful* Apostate, that hath perfidiously renounced his *Baptismal Vow*, and abjured his *God*, his *Saviour*, *Truth* and *Religion*. And seeing it is thus, it very highly concerns Men, as they love themselves, or have any Regard of their own *everlasting* Well-Being, not to desert their *Religion*, or any Principle of it, upon any *other* Motive

than a *thorough* Conviction of its Falshood; not to suffer themselves to be seduced from it by any *temporal* Interest, or *vicious* Affection, lest in so doing they *reprobate* themselves from God, and all the *blessed* Hopes of a *glorious Eternity hereafter*. For when Men are upon changing their Persuasions in *Religion*, it is an *ordinary* Thing for their Interests and Passions so to intermingle with their Reasonings, that without some Care and Observation of themselves, they will not be able to discern which of the *two* hath the *greater* Influence upon them; infomuch, that I am very apt to think that there are a great many *careless* and *unreflecting* People, that are hurried merely by their Interest and Passions, out of *one Religious* Persuasion into *another*, who yet, through *gross* Neglect and Inobservance of themselves, believe themselves to be Converts upon *pure* Reason and Conviction. Perhaps upon the Sollicitations of *worldly* Interest, their Minds were wrought into a *strong* Inclination to a Change; infomuch that they vehemently wish that they could but satisfy their Reason and Conscience of the Truth and Reality of that *new* Persuasion, which these their *importunate* Passions so earnestly invite them to embrace; and then with this *strong* Bias of *worldly* Interest upon their Minds, away they run hunting after Reasons and Arguments to convince and satisfy themselves; and if in this Heat of Affection they can but light upon any *little* Shew of Probability, that will quickly im-
prove

prove them into *irrefragable* Proofs and Demonstrations: For when a Man enquires whether such a Doctrine be *true*, with a *strong* Inclination of Will to find it so, he will be afraid to consult the Reasons and Arguments against it, lest they should convince him that it is *false*, and thereby defeat his Inclination. And when once a Man is so prepossessed, as that he will listen only to *one* side of the Question, be that side never so *absurd* and *ridiculous*, it is a *hard* Case if he cannot find Reasons enough to wheedle himself into the Belief of it; for his very Inclination to believe it will deter him from entering into a *strict* Examination of those Reasons, and being afraid to examine them *too* far, lest he should find them *false* and *unconcluding*, if he can but discern the *least* Colour of Probability in their *first* View and Appearance, that will be sufficient to convince him, and render him a *warm* and *zealous* Convert: For indeed, the Man was a Convert in his Heart upon Reasons of *worldly* Interest, before ever he thought of those Reasons of *Religion* that made him a Convert in his Judgment; so that 'twas his Interest that converted his Affections, and his Affections that converted his Faith; and yet all this while, for want of *Self-Reflection*, the Man imagines that his *new* Faith is wholly owing to the Reason and Evidence it carries with it; whereas, would he but impartially consult himself, and take a *little* Pains to review the Steps and
Progress

Progress of his Change, where it began, and how it proceeded and concluded, he would soon be forced to acknowledge, that the *first* and *fundamental* Reason of it was nothing but a *worldly* Interest. Wherefore to secure you against this *dangerous* Piece of *Self-Delusion*, by which I doubt there are *too* many Men do eternally ruin and destroy themselves, I will endeavour to give you some *certain* Signs and Indications by which you may be able to judge, if ever you should be tempted to change your *present Religion* or Persuasion, whether you do it sincerely, and upon *pure* Conviction of Mind, or in *mere* Compliance with any *vicious* or *worldly* Affection: And I shall give them to you in these *following* Queries, which I earnestly beseech you seriously to propose to your *own* Souls, whenever any such Temptation shall befall you.

1. Whether upon your *first* Entrance on the Debate of changing, your Prejudice lie on the side of your *present Religion*, or of that you are invited to turn to?

2. Whether you have not some Distaste in your Affections to your *present Religion*, before you entertained any Overtures of changing it?

3. Whether that which gave you *first* Inclination to change, was not some *temporal* Interest?

4. Whether before you entertained any Intention to change, you were fully resolved
to

to consult impartially on both sides of the Question ?

5. Whether when you *first* entered upon this Consultation, it was your *unfeigned* Intention, whatever shall happen to you, to adhere to that side which should appear most *reasonable* ?

6. and *lastly*, Whether before you were inclined to change, you did conscientiously comply with the Obligations of *Religion*, and continued to do so afterwards ?

1. When you fall under any Temptation to change, ask your *own* Soul whether your Prejudice lie on the side of your *present* Religion, or of that which you are tempted to turn to ? There is no Man that sincerely professes any *Religion*, but must be strongly prejudiced for it, especially if he imbibed it betimes, and was principled in it by his Education ; for how can he sincerely profess it, without engaging his Affections towards it, and heartily espousing its Interest ? For though I confess it is a Fault for Men so to pre-engage themselves to any *Religious* Principles, especially such as are not exceeding *clear* and *evident*, (and such are all the *Fundamentals* of *Christianity*) as to shut their Ears against all *contrary* Reasons, and obstinately resolve never to part with them, or so much as to admit into Consideration any Argument or Evidence against them ; yet after all it is impossible for any *sincere* Professor of any *Religion*, whether it be *true* or *false*, to be
so

so indifferently *affected* towards it, as not to side with it in his Will as well as in his Faith and Judgment; so that whenever he is tempted to desert it, the Temptation must necessarily find him strongly pre-engaged for it; and unless it bring along with it *sufficient* Evidence not only to convince his Reason, but also to captivate his Prejudice, it will never be able to prevail. For if ever the Man loved his *Religion*, his Passion will contend for it as well as his Reason; so that all Arguments against it, be they never so *strong* and *cogent*, will at *first* especially find a *difficult* Access to, and an *ungrateful* Reception in his Mind; and though he is so overborne by the Strength of the Evidence against it that he can no longer forbear *doubting* and *suspecting* it, yet still he is very loth to part with it, and still he wishes it were *true*, though he is not able to evince it so, till after having endured a *long* Siege of *strong* and *pressing* Arguments, he is driven at length out of all his Defences, and then his Prejudice yields as well as his Judgment, to surrender *up* his *erroneous* Faith to the *prevailing* Power of his Convictions: This is the *natural* Temper of every *sincere* Professor of any *Religion*. When therefore you are at any Time tempted to change your *Religion*, before you proceed, pause a while, and consider seriously how you stand disposed, and which way your Heart is pre-engaged; whether to the *Religion* you have hitherto professed, or to *that* for which you are invited to change it. Consult a while with *your own*
Souls

Souls to which side of the Question you are most inclined to listen, whether to the side which asserts your *present* Persuasion, or to *that* which contradicts and opposes it. Observe but which Way your Wishes and your Passions move, whether *for* or *against* it, and which Reasons and Arguments you are most concerned for, *those* that oppose, or *those* that defend it. For assure yourselves, if the Temptation to change find you *lukewarm* and *indifferent*, or so much as *easy* and *pliable* to its Proposals ; if it finds you *unaverse* to admit of a *contrary* Persuasion, or *forward* to catch at every Shew of Evidence against that *Religion* which you have hitherto professed, or ready to be *staggered* out of it upon the *first* Appearance of any Reasons or Probabilities against it ; if, I say, you find any of these *evil* Symptoms upon you when you are *first* tempted to change, you have *great Reason* to suspect that you are a *false Hypocrite* to that Profession which you have hitherto made ; that there is some *vile* Affection in you that hath got the Ascendant of your *Religion* and your Conscience, and that if in this Temper you proceed to a Change, you will be found to be a Convert of your Lusts and not of your Convictions.

2. When you fall under any Temptation to change your *Religion*, examine whether you have not entertained some Distaste to it in your Affections, before you proceed any farther ; whether you have not entertained some Quarrel against it upon the Account of
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the Disturbance it gives you in your *vicious* Delights and Enjoyments; or because it *too* severely exacts of you *universal* Sanctity of Life and Manners, to which of all things in the World your Heart is most averse, and without which the *inflexible* Principles of your *present* Persuasion will not permit you to hope for any Favour from God, either *here* or *hereafter*. Consider, whether upon these Accounts your Mind be not cankered with a *secret* Enmity against your *Religion*; whether under those Qualms of Conscience it often gives you, your Heart doth not rise against it, and you do not sometimes secretly wish that you could release your Faith from its *tyrannick* Principles, which give you so much Pain and Disturbance, and submit it to some *gentler Religion* that would permit you to sin in quiet, or at *least* prove more indulgent to your Lusts: For if this be your Temper, you are in very *great* Danger of being betrayed by it into any *false* and *corrupt Religion* that shall be tender'd you in exchange for your own. For if this *other Religion* offer but any *fair* Terms to your *vicious* Affections, or propose but any Expedient how to accommodate the *vexatious* Quarrel between them and your Consciences; if it doth but any way reconcile your Hope of *Heaven* to your *vicious* Manners, by directing you to some *easier* Terms of Salvation than that of forsaking all Unrighteousness, and *worldly* Lusts, and live *soberly*, and *righteously*, and *godly* in this *present* World; if it will but admit

admit of any Commutation of that *unsufferable* Penance of Godliness for *bodily* Exercise, of *inward* Mortification for a long Fast or a *sound* Whipping, of putting off the *Old Man* for putting on a *Hair Shirt*, of running the Race of a *holy* Life for a *sauntering* Pilgrimage, or the like; this is a *Religion* for your *Tooth*, with which your *naughty* Heart will be ready enough to fall in love upon the *first* Interview; and when once it hath gained our Hearts and Affections, if we do not take the *greater* Heed they will quickly gain our Faith and Judgment: For when a Man is *angry* with his own *Religion* because it sits *uneasy* on his Conscience, if a more *easy Religion* presents itself to him, he can hardly forbear wishing it were *true*, though as yet he hath no Evidence that it is so; and then a very *slender* Evidence will suffice to induce a Belief of the Reality of any thing which a Man earnestly wishes and desires. If in this *ill* Temper of Mind therefore you should be tempted to change your *Religion*, it concerns you as much as your Souls are worth to look about you; for you have a Seducer in your Breast, a *prevalent insinuating* Seducer, *viz.* some *vile* and *sinful* Affection, who, if you listen to his charming Persuasions, will certainly betray you into a most *damnable* Apostacy. Wherefore before you proceed to examine the Merits of the Cause, consider seriously with yourselves, that *that* Disturbance which your *present Religion* gives to your *vicious* Affections, for which you are

so *angry* with it, is so far from being a *just* Ground to suspect it, that it is a *real* Evidence of the Truth of it ; because it is a *sensible* Demonstration of its Holiness, which is an *inseparable* Concomitant of Truth ; and therefore for you to desert it upon this Motive, is in Effect to pronounce it a *false Religion*, because it gives you a *sensible* Experiment of its Truth and Reality.

3. When you fall under any Temptation to change your *Religion*, consider whether that which gave you the *first* Inclination to change was not some *temporal* Interest ; whether before ever you admitted any Thought of a Change, you did not perceive *another Religion* appear upon the Stage, attended with all the *fair* Hopes and Advantages of this World, and whether this Prospect did not *first* suggest to you a *great* Inclination to enter into its Retinue. I do not deny, but that even *worldly* Considerations may so far influence *honest* Minds, as to put them upon a more *severe* and *impartial* Scrutiny of their *present* Persuasions in *Religion* ; and unless it be in Case of *palpable* Truth or Falshood, it is but *honest* Prudence, when a Man's *temporal* Interest lies at stake, to take Care that he is sure of his Hand, that he doth not throw it away upon a *false* Persuasion in a Fit of *blind* Humour or Obstinacy, and sacrifice that to an *erroneous* Judgment which he owes to no *other* Altar but Truth's. And indeed before I throw myself upon any Suffering, whether it be *Loss* or
Pain,

Pain, I am bound in Conscience diligently to enquire whether it be for *Truth* or *Righteousness* sake, lest instead of receiving the Crown of Martyrdom, I am sent away to seek my Reward in the *Paradise of Fools*. But if merely upon the Consideration of any *present* Loss or Advantage, I find myself strongly inclined to change my *Religion*, before ever I enter into the Merits of the Cause, to examine the Reasons *pro* and *con*, it is a *certain* Sign that *that* Loss or Advantage that inclines me, hath a more *powerful* Influence upon me than my *Religion*; that I love the World better than God, and do prefer my *earthly* Expectations before all my Hopes of *everlasting* Happiness. And if in this *ill* Temper of Mind I should be tempted to a *present* Change, it concerns me as much as my Soul is worth to be very *careful* what I do; for I stand upon the Brink of a Precipice, the *foul* and *fatal* Precipice of Apostacy, into which if I fall, I am ruined *for ever*. For if in changing my *Religion*, it be found that I followed this my *wicked* Inclination more than any *sincere* Conviction, I must expect to be treated by God as an *Apostate* and *Renegado*, as a *wilful* Defserter of his Cause, and Betrayer of his *sacred* Truth. But if I change while I stand thus inclined, it is fearfully *hazardous*, but this will be found to be the Truth of the Case; for in all Probability my *wicked* Inclination will cast a Mist before my Understanding, and so darken its Prospect that it

will hardly be able to distinguish the *grossest* Sophistry from the *clearest* Reason. So that now those Arguings which before I saw thro' with half an Eye, and looked upon as most *absurd* and *ridiculous*, will appear to my *abused* and *biassed* Mind, in the Colours of *clear* Evidence and *plain* Demonstration, and I shall be ready to surrender up my Faith to those *trifling* Pretences of Reason and Authority, which before I laughed at and despised: Now, *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church*, will seem a very *pregnant* Proof, that all the *Bishops of Rome* from *St. Peter*, are ordained the *Supreme Heads* of the *Church*, and the *Fountains* of all *Ecclesiastical* Authority, though they are not so much as mentioned in it, no, nor from any Thing that appears, so much as thought of. Now, *This is my Body*, looks like a *substantial* Evidence of the Truth of *Transubstantiation*, and of all those *wild* Absurdities it contains; though those Forms of Speech, *I am the true Vine*, and *I am the Door*, do as substantially prove that *Christ* bears Grapes, and turns upon Hinges. Now every Thing will appear to me in a quite *different* Guize from what it did before, and I shall fancy that I spy Demonstration where before I could only discern Probability; for a *good* Sum of Money, or a *rich* Preferment, is a *strange* Clearer of some Mens Eyesight. Thus when a Man begins to think of changing his *Religion* under the *powerful* Influence of his *worldly* Interest, that is usually the
only

only *effectual* Reason that leads and persuades him : As for *other* Reasons, they only serve for Form-fake, to disguise the *foul* Apostacy into some Resemblance of a *sincere* Conversion ; for till his Interest struck in with them, they signified nothing with him, made not the *least* Impression on his Mind ; but being backed with that, all on a sudden they are wondrous *cogent* and *persuasive* ; from whence it is evident, that they received their Strength and Force from his Interest, without the Air of which they are not able to operate ; and consequently that the Change of his Faith is owing to the *over-ruling* Interest of his Covetousness and Ambition, and not at all to the Prevalence of Reason and *sincere* Conviction. For 'twas *that* Interest that strongly inclined him to change before ever he knew any Reason for it, and then it was *that* Inclination that made his Reasons, and created his Convictions ; and let him talk what he pleases of *Reason*, *Scripture*, and *Authority* ; if he was strongly inclined to change before he was moved to it by Reason and Evidence, it is plain that the prevailing Motive of his Conversion, was either the Fear of losing some *good warm* Place, or the Hope of gaining some *important* Station or Preferment. And if this be found the Truth of his Case when he comes to appear before the Tribunal of *God*, it had been a thousand times *better* for him that he had never been born ; for then he will be found a *base* *Deserter* of his *God*, a *treacherous* *Judas* to his *Saviour*, and a *perfidious* *Rene-*

gado from his *Religion*, and according to the Quality of his Sin and Guilt, receive his Portion of Damnation.

4. Consider whether before you entertained any Intention to change, you were fully resolved impartially to consult both sides of the Question. I doubt there are *too* many among us that *first* resolve to change their *Religion*, and then begin to enquire after Reasons and Arguments against it, and that their Resolution to change is so far from being the Effect of *sincere* Conviction, that their Conviction is the Effect of their Resolution, *First*, Some *vile* Affection, or some *temporal* Interest, recommends another *Religion* to them, that either gives them Leave to be *wicked* without Remorse or Disturbance, or promises them Gain and Advancement; upon which they resolve *right* or *wrong* to entertain and embrace it; and then to excuse themselves to their own Consciences, or to vindicate their Reputation to the World from the Scandal of being *down-right* Apostates, they fall a hunting after Reasons and Arguments to convince themselves of the Truth of it, or at least to make the World believe, that it was not their Interest but their Conviction that turned them. And when Men thus resolve *first*, and enquire *afterwards*, to be sure their Enquiry will be very *partial*; for being fully resolved to change their *Religion* upon some *vicious* or *secular* Motive, it is become their Interest to pick Holes in it, and to reason or cavil themselves out of the Belief of it. And this makes them shy of bringing the
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the Matter under a *fair* and *impartial* Examination, lest while they are seeking Reasons to overthrow their Faith, they should find Reason to establish and confirm it. So that they begin their Enquiry with these secret Intentions; *We will listen only to one side of the Cause, and leave the other to shift for itself. and seek for as many Arguments as we can against our Religion, but none for it. We will read the Books and consult the Teachers of one side only, viz. the opposite side to our present Belief and Persuasion, and if among them we can but find Arguments enough to render the contrary Persuasion any way probable, we will submit our Faith to it without any farther Enquiry, and not trouble ourselves to examine the Evidence on the other side, for Fear we should be convinced in Spight of our Teeth that the Truth lies there; and then our Conscience will never let us be quiet, but be perpetually clamouring against us for base and impious Apostates.* That this is the *foul* and *hypocritical* Intention of too many among us, is *notorious* enough by their Practice; they leap from *Church* to *Church*, and from *one* Communion to *another*, without any Pause or Consideration; they are with us to *Day*, and gone from us to *Morrow*, and are such *Mushroom*, *extemporary* Converts, that before ever we hear they doubted of their *own*, they are confirmed in a *contrary Religion*. In short, they steal out of their *Religion* so softly, and with so little Noise, that they are commonly gone before ever we

hear they are going, as if they were afraid we should stop and detain them by *better* Reasons and *fuller* Convictions. Whereas had these Men any Conscience or Honesty in them, they would consider, that *Religion* is a Thing *too sacred* and *serious* to be thus dallied and trifled with, and that to change one's *Religion* is a Matter of such *vast* Importance, as requires a *long* and *thorough* Consideration, and a very *clear* and *full* Conviction of Mind ; and there is *too* much depends upon it to part with it upon *slight* Pretences, and that it concerns them as much as an *Eternity* of Bliss amounts to, not to desert it upon any *other* Inducement but that of a *thorough, well-weighed* Persuasion of Conscience. And if they had *had* any such *honest* Thoughts about them while they were under the Temptation to change, they would never have admitted any Doubt of their *Religion*, but upon *great* and *palpable* Evidence ; and then they would have doubted long before they would have concluded against it, and not have precipitated their Judgment *hand over-head* into a *contrary* Persuasion, till they had *first* applied themselves for Resolution again and again to their *old* Guides, and Pastors, and with all *due* Deference to their Authority, had strictly examined all their Reasons and Answers, 'till they had thoroughly inspected their Arguments *pro* and *con*, and equally heard both sides of the Cause ? 'till they had read, advised, and consulted on both sides, and weighed the whole Matter *over* and *over* with the *greatest*

Care

Care and Exactness. But when Men run away from their *Religion* in an Instant, without ever observing this *regular* Process of *sincere* Enquiries, it is a *plain* Case that their Wills were resolved before their Understandings, and that they were converted before ever they were convinced; and consequently that it was not Reason and Conviction that turned them, but Lust or Interest: For though when they are turned they may perhaps be very *diligent* to seek Conviction, yet this is only an After-Game which they are fain to play to save their Conscience or their Reputation.

3. Consider before you entertain any Intention to change, Whether it be your *unfeigned* Intention, whatever shall happen to you, to adhere to that side which shall appear most *reasonable*. Perhaps you are not yet arrived to that Height of Impiety as to resolve *right* or *wrong* to change your *Religion*, whether you find it *true* or *false* upon a *just* and *fair* Examination; for this is such an *horrible* Defiance of *God*, such an *express* and *absolute* Renunciation of all that is *sacred* and *good*, as no Man can be guilty of who is not utterly abandoned of all his *natural* Sense of *Religion*, and Relish of *Good* and *Evil*. But yet perhaps you may be tempted to change with the Prospect of such Advantages on the *one* side, and Calamities on the *other*, which though it doth not obtain of you that *base* and *wicked* Resolution, yet doth so far prevail, as to engage you upon a *fresh* Enquiry, to try whether upon *second* Thoughts

and *better* Consideration you can satisfy your own Minds of the Truth of that *Religion* you are invited to turn to, that so you may, if possible, comply with a *good* Conscience, and secure your Interest in doing your Duty. And thus far you are safe enough; but before you proceed any farther, it concerns you, as you tender your *everlasting* Interest, to look into your *own* Souls, and consider seriously whether you are unfeignedly resolved, whatsoever the Consequence of Things may be, to cleave fast to the Truth of *God* on which side soever you shall find it. Put the Question to yourselves over and over, *O my Soul, here are such Advantages, and such Calamities before you, importing you to change your present discountenanced Religion for a more thriving and prosperous one: Are you now resolved fairly and impartially to examine the Merit of the Cause? And if there-upon you still find Reason to believe that your present Religion is the very Truth of Jesus, will you rather renounce those Advantages and incur those Calamities than forego it? Will you follow the Truth wheresoever you find it, and whithersoever it shall happen to lead you, though it be from Preferment to Persecution? Are you resolved by the Grace of God to prostrate all your temporal Hopes and Fears before it, and rather to lose any Good or suffer any Evil than desert it? For let me tell you, if you find your Heart shrink at this Proposal, or that you have any reserved Intention, if the worst come to the worst, rather to part with your Religion right or wrong, than to shake Hands with your*

temporal

temporal Interest, you are in a very *unsfitting* Temper^t to examine on which side the Truth lies. For it is a *plain* Case, your Mind is under a *prevailing* Bias of *temporal* Hopes and Fears, which will be sure to incline it to favour that side of the Question which is most for your Interest, and 'twill be impossible for you to examine fairly and judge impartially whilst your Judgment is thus bribed and corrupted by your Interest. For your Will hath already determin'd upon the Matter before ever your Understanding hath heard the Cause, and it is your *secret* Intention, right or wrong, to forego your *Religion* rather than your Interest, if ever they come in competition. So that now you will be obliged, in your *own* Defence, to use your *utmost* Art to set the *fairest* Colours upon the Evidences against your *Religion*, and to stifle and enervate those that assert and maintain it, lest they should so confirm you in the Belief of it, as that when Occasion requires, you will not be able to surrender it *up* without committing an *horrible* Outrage and Violence upon yourselves. Wherefore, before you suffer your *worldly* Hopes and Fears to summon your *Religion* upon a *new* Trial, be sure you fix this Resolution in your Souls ; *By the Grace of God I will now lay aside all Interest and Affection, and strictly examine the Evidence on both sides with an equal and unbiassed Judgment. I will attend to nothing but the Reasons of Things, and the pure Merits of the Cause ; and wherever I find the Truth lies, whether on the side of my Interest or against it, I will be sure to follow it, whatsoever shall be the Event and Issue.* For if
upon

upon the Temptation of any *worldly* Interest, you bring your *Religion* to a *new* Trial with this *secret* Intention, that though it should still approve itself to your Judgment, yet you will rather part with it than abandon *that* Interest, this very Intention will be apt to blind and mislead your Judgment to arm your Wit and Reason against your *Religion*, and to set all your Faculties at work to argue you out of it, and pervert you from it to a *contrary* Faith and Persuasion; which if it should accomplish, you will certainly be found *guilty* of a *wilful* Apostacy when you come to be tried before the Tribunal of *God*, to whose *all-seeing* Eye the most *secret* Motions of your Souls are as *visible* as if they were written on your Foreheads with a Sun Beam, who sees your *treacherous* Heart, and *false* Intention, rather to forsake his Truth than your Interest, and knows very well that it is this that seduces you, and gives Force to those *false* Reasons and Convictions that impose upon your Judgment, and betray your Faith.

6, and *lastly*, When you fall under any Temptation to change your *Religion*, consider whether before you were inclined to change you did conscientiously comply with the Obligations of it. We have *too many* Men that pretend to be mighty *inquisitive* after the *true Church* and the *true Religion*, and yet live as if there were no such thing as *true Religion* in the World, and quietly allow themselves in such *impious* Courses as do openly affront the *common* Principles of all Religions. There is nothing
they

they dread so much as *Heresy*, and, if you will believe them, are monstrously concerned to examine whether the *Church* with which they now communicate be *Catholick*, or *Heretical*; and yet all this while they persist, without any Concern or Remorse, in the most *damnable Heresy* in the World, and that is, a *wicked and immoral Life*. So that upon comparing their *Atheistical Lives* with the loud Cry they make about the *true Catholick Faith* and *Church*, one would be tempted to think that their *Christianity* began at the *wrong End* of their *Creed*, and that they believed in the *Holy Catholick Church* before they believe in *God the Father Almighty*, or in *Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord*; which is such a *gross and fulsome Piece of Hypocrisy*, as one would think any *modest Man* should be ashamed of. For in the Name of *God*, Sirs, What have you to do to wrangle and make a Noise about *Religion*, whose *profligate Manners* are a Shame and Scandal to *common Humanity*? It is a Reproach to any *Religion* for you to name it, and Shame to any *Church* for you to pretend to it; and therefore, when such as you raise a Cry after the *true Church* and *true Religion*, it is a *plain Case*, that whatever Pretence you bring upon the Stage, you are prompted by some *base Interest* behind the Curtain. And is it not a *pleasant thing* to hear such *Profligates* as these pretend to be *Converts*, who only turn from *one Opinion* to *another*, but still continue as *wicked and unreformed* in their Manners under the Opinion they turn to, as they were under *that* they turned from? These are such

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Converts, as there is no *Church* in the World that advances *true* Piety above *worldly* Interest, but would glory to lose, and blush to gain : And what *Diogenes* said of a *wicked* Fellow that praised him, that the *Religion* may say which those Men turn to, *What Hurt have I done, what wicked Principles am I guilty of, that such vile Wretches as these should commend and embrace me ?* For, for God's sake, what is it that they are converted to ? Is it to any thing that renders them *wiser* or *better* Men ? No, the contrary is *too notorious* through the whole Course of their Actions. Well then, it seems they are converted to something that doth them no manner of Good, that serves them to no *true* End of *Religion*, that is, to a *mere empty* Notion that only gingles about their Understandings, but hath no *good* Influence on their Hearts and Manners. Had their Conversion proceeded upon *pure* Principles of Conscience, that would have obliged them to change their Manners as well as their Opinions ; there being very *few* Opinions in *Religion* so *contradictory* to the *natural* Sentiments of Conscience as a *vicious* and *immoral* Life. Supposing that the *Papal Supremacy*, *Purgatory*, and *Transubstantiation*, were true, yet that the *contrary* Doctrine to these are Errors, can never be so evident to any Man's Conscience, as that *Drunkenness*, *Adultery*, *Fraud*, and *Oppression*, are Sins ; and therefore, for any Man to pretend that he forsook *those* Errors out of Conscience, who yet makes no Conscience of continuing in *these* Sins, is such a *transparent* Hypocrisy as hath not Vizard and Disguise

Disguise enough to abuse either the most *Candid* or *Credulous*. If therefore, before you are resolved to forsake your Sins, you are tempted to forsake your *Religion*, it is a *plain* Case that it is not your Conscience or Conviction that tempts you, but your Lust or Interest. Had it been Conscience, it would have been far more *importunate* with you to reform your Manners than your Faith, and to become *good* Men than *Catholic Believers*; and therefore under your *present* Circumstances you ought to be very *careful* what you do, and how you comply with the Temptation, lest to all the rest of your Sins you add that *foul* and *fatal* one of Apostacy, and thereby fill up the Measure of your Iniquities, and *finally* provoke *Almighty God* to abandon you as you have abandoned him, and give you up for *lost* and *desperate*.

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